

King's Island Walled Town Integrated Urban Strategy

April 2025



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Government of Ireland



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Introduction

1.1 Background

In May 2024, Limerick City – King’s Island, was one of 26 town centres that was successful in securing funding under Strand 1 of THRIVE – the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme. The funding of €200,000 supports local authorities to develop a new Integrated Urban Strategy or enhance an existing one. THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-27.

THRIVE incorporates the core values of the New European Bauhaus - sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion. The scheme promotes a citizen-centred community-led approach to planning, design and project selection under the Town Centre First Framework. THRIVE is focused on publicly owned heritage buildings. Heritage buildings under the scheme are classified as structures that form part of the architectural heritage and have unique architectural, historical, archaeological or artistic qualities, or are linked to the cultural and economic history of a place.

Limerick City and County Council published the King’s Island Walled Town Framework (KIWTF) in 2024 prior to successfully obtaining THRIVE funding. On receipt of funding, LCCC undertook further analysis and public engagement in various forms to produce this document.

This document is now the *Kings Island Walled Town Enhanced Integrated Urban Strategy(IUS)*.

- Covering the geographical area of the King’s Island Walled Town.
- It describes the existing strategic documents concerning the study area.
- Provides analysis of the development needs and potential of the area.
- Outlines the integrated approach to address the identified development needs and potential of the area
- Outlines the partners involved and the multi-level governance and bottom-up approach
- Lists the potential projects for the redevelopment/regeneration or adaptive reuse
- Identifies the priority project for which a funding application will be made to Strand 2 of THRIVE which is seen as key to activating the wider King’s Island area.



- KEY
- ① Walled Town [English Town]
 - ② King's Island
 - ③ Irish Town
 - ④ Georgian Town

FIG. 1.1: STUDY AREA CONTEXT

1.2 Study Area

The Walled Town sits within King's Island, a naturally defensive and strategic location on the River Shannon. The Walled Town Area of King's Island was the site of the earliest settlement in this locality, leading to the establishment of the City of Limerick.

The study area is located on the northern expanse of the city centre zoning, as identified in the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028, see Fig. 1.3. The study area is defined by the Walled Medieval Englishtown, featuring a rich tapestry of historical landmarks. Among these treasures are the 13th century King John's Castle, the venerable St. Mary's Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace from the 1740s, the Alms Houses dating back to 1691, and iconic structures such as the Limerick City Exchange Walls. Central to this historical narrative is Nicholas Street, serving as a vital spine that connects many of these sites and stands as a potential focal point for tourist activity in the City.

The southern expanse of this study area features the presence of the Limerick City and County Council Offices along with the Limerick Court House, emphasising the civic importance of King's Island. Extending to the outer core, notable locations include the historic zone of Verdant Place, the former Convent lands, the residential area of the Abbey, and a blend of uses around George's Quay and Abbey Bridge. Ongoing regeneration initiatives, dating back to the late 1980s aim to safeguard and enrich the area's historical and architectural significance. The study area is bounded by the River Shannon to the west and north, and the Abbey River to the east and south. Island Road marks the eastern boundary and key connections to the city centre and residential zones are facilitated by various bridges.



FIG. 1.3: ZONING PER LIMERICK DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028



FIG. 1.2: STUDY AREA

1.3 Strategy Overview

This strategy aims to tackle key issues within the area by:

- Revitalizing brownfield land, vacant premises, derelict and infill sites in a way that honors the historic significance of the walled town, while encouraging uses that increase footfall, activity, and meet the needs of the community and the tourism sector.
- Improving connectivity between the walled town and the broader city, as well as its hinterland and beyond.
- Promoting a diverse tenure mix to provide more affordable private housing options.

The Strategy envisions comprehensive activation of the area, while promoting reuse of the existing built heritage, creating vibrancy and sustainability and aligning with the Town Centre First policy.

1.4 Environmental Assessment

While non-statutory, the King's Island Walled Town Integrated Urban Strategy (IUS) serves as a guidance for the transformation of this strategically significant area in Limerick City. The preparation of this IUS was built on the core values and principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) in its design, implementation, and outcomes, and is based on a multi-level governance and bottom-up approach. Designed to guide and stimulate future investment, this document

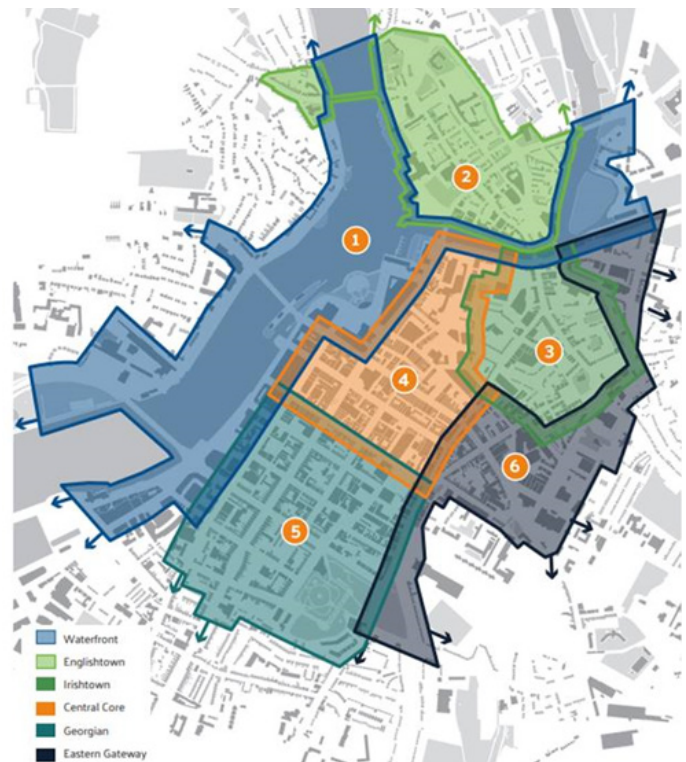


FIG. 1.4: CHARACTER AREAS OF LIMERICK CITY

identifies a pipeline of priority projects and plans, key urban spaces, streetscape enhancements, and the public realm's role in emphasising a sense of place in King's Island, specifically focusing on Nicholas Street. The goal is to balance brownfield regeneration, with a strong focus on conservation and the adaptive re-use of built heritage stock while addressing vacancy and dereliction, ensuring proper conservation of King's Island's archaeological remains.

1.5 Environmental Assessment

A screening exercise was undertaken in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment as part of the preparation of this Strategy.

This Integrated Urban Strategy is not a statutory plan and is at the lowest level in a hierarchy of Plans. It is not anticipated that the implementation of this Strategy will lead to any significant environmental effects associated with its interactions with other plans. This Strategy has been prepared in compliance with higher level plans. The proposal within this strategy seeks to renovate historic buildings, improve the public realm, increase and improve connectivity, and create enhancements to the green and blue networks. All of these are expected to have positive effects on the environment.

This Strategy is consistent with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. As part of the preparation of the Development Plan a full Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken which involved extensive assessment and consultation with the Environmental Authorities. This Strategy does not lead to the alteration of any of the existing objectives within the Development Plan and continues to support environmental protective objectives.

The conclusions of the SEA screening assessment set out that the Integrated Urban Strategy is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore, SEA is not required.

Equally the Appropriate Assessment Screening process concluded that there are no likely potential impacts, whether direct, indirect or cumulative/in-combination which could give rise to significant effects on the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any designated European Site, in view of their conservation objectives. Consequently, this strategy does not require Appropriate Assessment and can be screened out.



Chapter Two

Policy Overview

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Policy Overview

Section 2.1

Policy Context – Kings Island Walled Town Integrated Urban Strategy (IUS)

The IUS for King's Island sits within a hierarchy of plans and programmes both statutory and non that supports sustainable community building in this area.

2.1.1. New European Bauhaus

New European Bauhaus (NEB) is a policy and funding initiative that makes green transition in built environments enjoyable, attractive and convenient for all. Even the smallest communities on the ground deserve living spaces that improve their well-being and sense of belonging. The initiative promotes solutions that are not only sustainable, but also inclusive and beautiful, while respecting the diversity of places, traditions, and cultures in Europe and beyond.

It is designed as a movement that embraces art, culture, science and technology in a collaborative and life centric perspective inspired and learning from nature. The New European Bauhaus is part of the European Green Deal, a broader initiative of the European Commission, with three main ambitions: make Europe the first climate-neutral continent, disconnect the use of resources from economic growth and leave no person or place behind. The NEB supports research and innovation in the built environment sector that goes beyond the strictly technological solutions and functional methods and embraces the social, cultural and design dimension. It is an open dialogue across cultures, disciplines, genders and ages.

The European Commission intends to deliver the New European Bauhaus by:

- financing testing and demonstration, to enhance examples
- integrating NEB objectives in EU programmes
- recognising bottom-up initiatives through prizes
- communicating extensively to increase awareness and mobilisation. The result of these actions is that the European society empowers itself with the NEB concepts to create the living spaces of our next generations

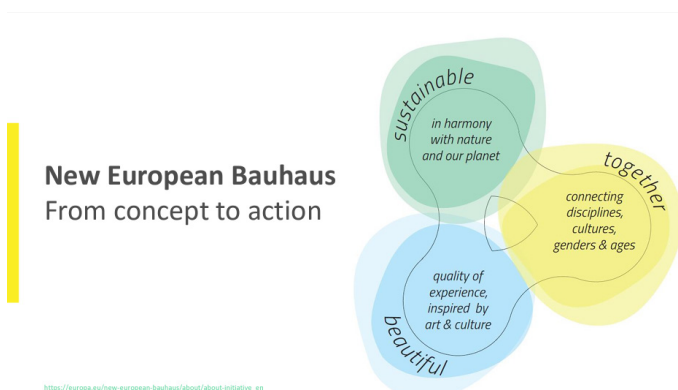


FIG. 2.1: NEB CORE VALUES

The NEB movement invites us to imagine our future under three core values: Beautiful, Sustainable and Together.

Beautiful means looking beyond the functionality and recognising the inspirational power of aesthetic and design in the human experience. A well-designed built environment cultivates a sense of place, identity and cultural expression, evoking emotions and connecting individuals and communities.

Sustainable means integrating nature-based solutions, energy efficient technologies, renewable energy, circular methodologies throughout the building life cycle, addressing the climate goals, carbon neutrality and preserving the biodiversity on the planet. It is about creating a positive relationship with nature.

Together means that no one will be left behind. The future of the built environment needs to be shaped by all of us, regardless of the background or abilities. Participatory approaches strive to acknowledge diverse perspectives ensuring a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and well-being for all. Spaces designed for all and by all that are accessible and affordable.

2.1.2. Sustainable Development Goals

Ireland is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Transforming our World. The 17 no. SDGs reflect economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and set a framework for national level policies and agendas to 2030, higher level plans, such as the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 have been informed by the Sustainable Development Goals and these principles have been used to inform the preparation of this Integrated Urban Strategy.



FIG. 2.2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2.1.3. National Policy Context

There is a strong national policy framework in place, which supports the Town Centre First approach, from the overarching aspect of Project Ireland 2040, through to specific policies on compact growth, town centre living, climate action, housing and rural development.

2.1.3.1. Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF)

Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) is a strategic framework which seeks to guide public and private investment, and to protect and enhance the environment. It sets out a spatial planning hierarchy of urban centres, which are in line for significant population and economic growth. It also sets out the key principles that will guide future development across the country, addressing issues such as compact growth, making stronger urban places, creating strong and vibrant communities, and ensuring a healthy, liveable environment.

The Walled Town Framework accords with a number of the National Strategic Outcomes, which are critical to the delivery of the NPF, including NSO 1 – Compact Growth, NSO 5 – A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills, NSO 7 – Enhanced Amenity and Heritage, NSO 8 – Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society and NSO – 9 Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources.

2.1.3.2. Project Ireland 2040 – National Development Plan (NDP)

Aligned with the NPF, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2030 sets out the government’s overarching investment strategy and budget for that period, enabling delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes and priorities set out in the National Planning Framework. This significant funding source supports both urban regeneration and rural rejuvenation through €3 billion Regeneration and Development Funds. The NDP seeks to ensure that well targeted public capital investment is distributed appropriately, which can have a transformative impact on employment opportunities, economic development and regional growth.



FIG 2.3: NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2.1.3.3. Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns

The Town Centre First Policy seeks to support and complement existing policy documents and the key objective of this policy is to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hubs for the local community.

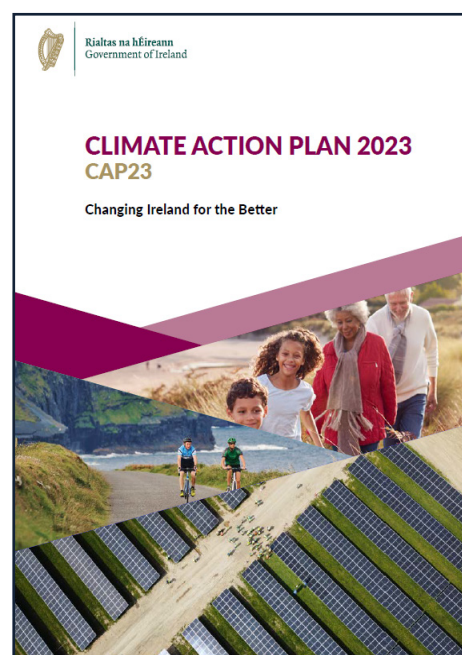
The policy lays the foundation for towns to develop their own plan, which paves the way to rejuvenate their town centre and sets the foundations for funding streams to deliver projects, which are crucial to this revival.



2.1.3.4. Climate Action Plan 2023 – Changing Ireland for the Better

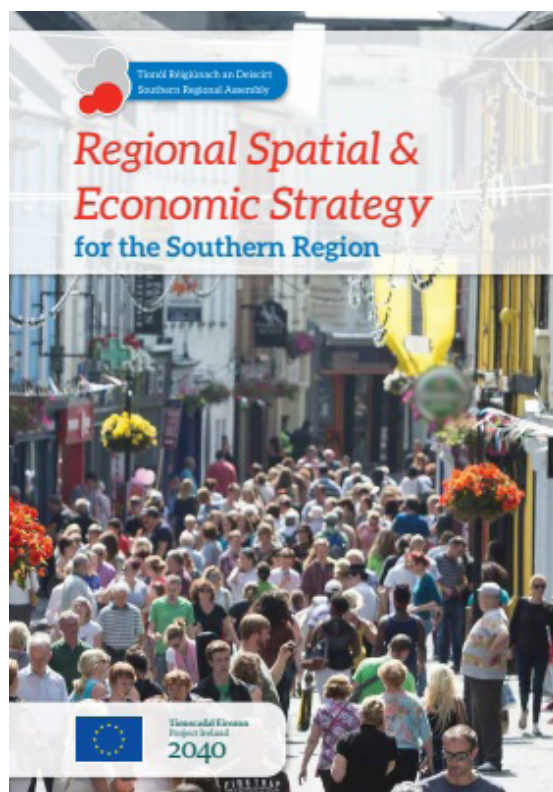
The Climate Action Plan sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to half our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government. Climate Action Plan 2023 sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions that are required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

The King's Island Walled Town Integrated Urban Strategy, seeks to align with the policy framework of the Climate Action Plan, in terms of delivery of an enhanced quality of life through improved access to heritage amenities and the proper conservation of same.



2.1.4. Regional Policy Context

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides the strategic framework for regional development in the Southern Region. Its primary goal is to implement Project Ireland 2040—the National Planning Framework—at a regional level, ensuring balanced and sustainable growth across the region. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), all City and County Development Plans and their variations must align with the RSES and relevant national policies. When a local authority drafts or proposes changes to a development plan, it must refer these documents to the Regional Assembly. It defines the strategic regional development framework to implement Project Ireland 2040 at the regional level. It supports the achievement of balanced regional development across the Southern Region. The Southern Regional Assembly will function as a member of the THRIVE Steering Group and the Evaluation Panel.



2.1.5. Local Policy Context

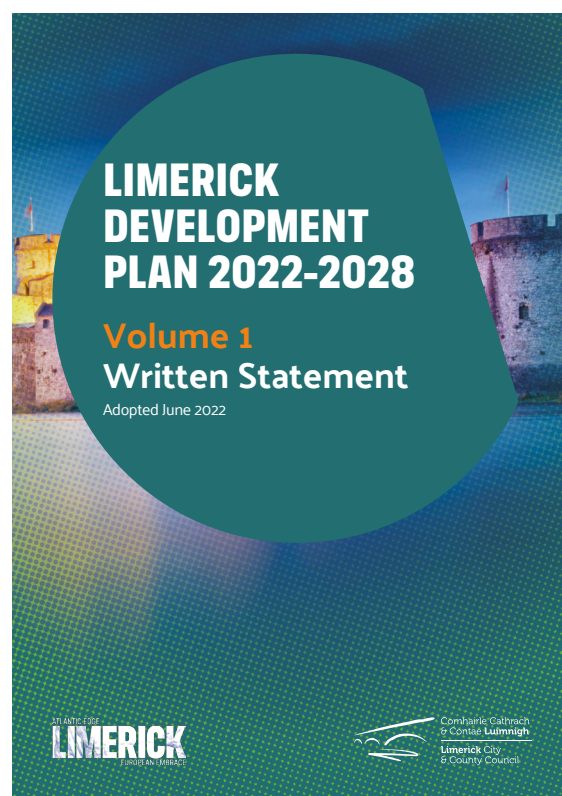
2.1.5.1. Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 sets out the blueprint for the physical, socio-economic, and environmental development of Limerick over a six-year period up to 2028 and beyond and identifies the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Limerick over the plan period. The Plan has been formulated to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Framework and the Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. The Plan aligns with the principles of compact growth, developing sustainable transport capitalising on natural assets, enhancing connectivity and supporting a high quality of life for the residents of Limerick. Specific sections within the Development Plan identify the challenges the Kings Island Walled Town area faces. Specifically, Section 3.4.6.6 St Marys Park and King's Island sets out

- Significant number of derelict sites in key locations, particularly along Mary Street and vacant properties, particularly along Nicholas Street;
- Presence of under-utilised historic assets, eg. Upstanding remains of Fanning's Castle and the remains of house with carved stone fireplace on Nicholas Street and objective MK01 St. Mary's Park and King's Island.

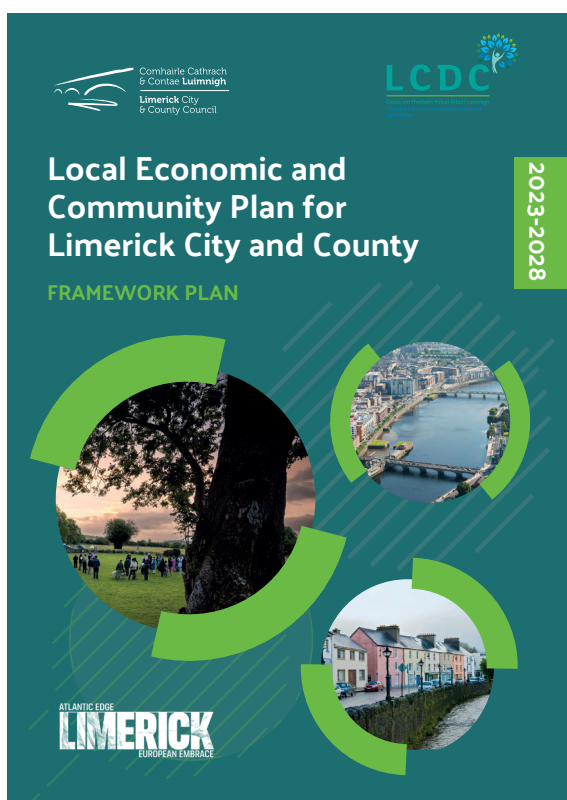
It is an objective of the Council to:

- Promote the development of key strategic sites within Nicholas Street and Bridge Street for potential enterprise development attracting further inward investment.



2.1.5.2. The Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is a 6-year plan to support local economic and community development. It is about working to achieve the sustainable development of communities in Limerick. The LECP and the Local Community and Development Committee have an important role to play in co-ordinating and overseeing local and community development funding, which may be important in supporting the delivery of projects within King's Island.



2.1.5.3. Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan 2013

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan came into effect in 2013.

The Framework was based on a recognised need to diagnose and treat the root causes as well as the symptoms of social and economic exclusion in Limerick's regeneration areas – Moyross and St Mary's Park on the city's Northside and Southill and Ballinacurra Weston on the Southside - so that future generations don't face the same challenges as current and former residents.

Although St Marys Park is not within the study area of the walled town, the LRFIP makes many references to King's Island throughout the three volumes, including, significantly how "Nicholas Street is the core town centre street with retail opportunities, connecting the southern part of King's Island to the Castle. It is an important thoroughfare in the regeneration of the area". There have been multiple strategies prepared for the enhancement of St Marys Park, those which include interventions within the study area of this Plan include:

- Examine options to improve permeability and connections from St Mary's Park to its wider context at the following locations, whilst ensuring protection of the integrity of the environmentally designated sites:

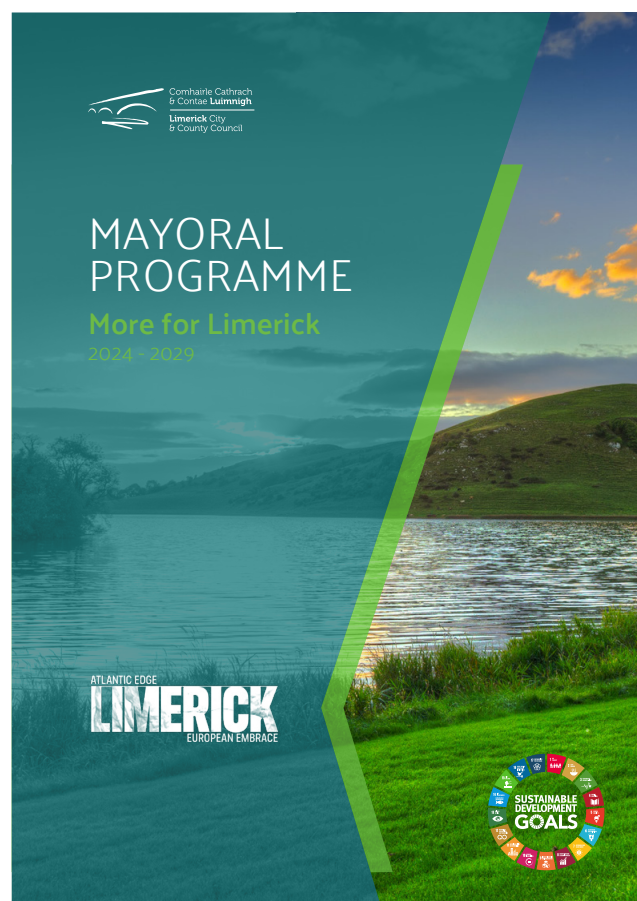
At Island Road:

Improve connectivity from St Mary's Park to the Medieval Quarter by transforming from a route that is predominantly designed for the movement of vehicles to a traffic calmed street where the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are prioritised. Measures to balance the needs of different street users, for example the narrowing of carriageways, the redesign of the major roundabout at Island Road and side-road entry treatments, will be incorporated to improve safety for all road users.

- Improve local connections converging on the existing St Mary's Park Community Centre at the following locations:
 - a) A one-way link road from the Toll House to Verdant Place. This proposal recognises the restricted dimension between the Toll House and the Bridge and the lack of pedestrian footpaths in the area.
 - b) A new street, at Island Gate, from Verdant Place to Dominick Street.

- Promote the development of key strategic sites within Nicholas Street and Bridge Street for potential enterprise development attracting further inward investment.
- Support the creation of an identity for Nicholas Street, the main commercial street within King's Island and St. Mary's Park. Develop stronger relationships with the creative, tourism and cultural industries sector whereby on-site employment opportunities are created for members of King's Island and St. Mary's Park to work near where they live and where the employment offer generates complementary supporting facilities.
- Regenerate unutilised or underutilised land and buildings in St Mary's Park and King's Island by considering alternative uses of a temporary nature, 'meanwhile uses', to ensure a productive use.

Develop the site at Googoos Hill ('the Orchard' site) for elderly housing. Small Area Population Statistics (2011) for King's Island and St. Mary's Park show relatively high elderly dependency ratios with 20% of the population recorded as being over 60 years old. The site at Googoo's Hill will assist in delivering the anticipated demand for elderly housing in the future.



2.1.5.4. Limerick Mayoral Programme 2024-2029 – ‘More for Limerick’

In 2019, the people of Limerick voted in favour of implementing a directly elected Mayor, making a significant step towards enhancing democratic accountability and local governance. This landmark decision culminated in an election held on June 7, 2024 and the inauguration of Ireland's first ever directly elected Mayor.

In his first 100 days in office the Mayor delivered a Mayoral Programme which sets out an ambitious vision for the future of Limerick City and County. This document outlines the Mayor's vision and objectives for his term in office, as mandated by the Local Government (Mayor of Limerick) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2024.

The programme makes a number of references to the study area and the wider King's Island Area including:

MTR 04 Master plan Kings' Island and make our historical neighbourhoods more desirable places to live, including development of an enhanced the public realm strategy along with specific actions.

ML77 Fix the acres of poor quality of green space in the city centre, such as for example in Garryowen (especially close to St Patrick's Well) and in Kings Island by not just cutting the grass but incorporating into the design outdoor sporting and performing arts amenities and areas for communities to meet with each other and others visiting or passing through

ML59 Establish and seed-fund an initiative in conjunction with the Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) to establish an interactive museum of fashion and work-spaces and retail outlets for our creatives, near or on Nicholas Street, to reflect Limerick's strong tradition in clothing and the creativity of our new fashion industry.

ML94 In tandem with the THRIVE project, have begun a focused and time mapped plan to restore and reanimate buildings along Nicholas Street and restore that street and the surrounding heritage assets and public spaces to the more central position they deserve in our city



Castle Lane

Merchants Quay

Nicholas Street

Bridge Street

Athlunka

Mary Street

Chapter Three

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Understanding King's Island Walled Town

3.1 Background

Over the years, King's Island as a study area has been the subject of numerous documents, action plans and regeneration proposals aimed at revitalising this historic area and unlocking its full potential. These plans, dating back to the "Limerick Heritage Precinct: Proposal for the Revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter (1988)" provide valuable insights. These plans had varying levels of public input, and in order to understand the past, to analysis the present and move forward a comprehensive literature review of all previous studies focusing on the study area has been conducted.

Key documents include:

- Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028
- Review and Update of the Limerick 2030: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick
- Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy (2023)
- Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (2022)
- Limerick Building Height Strategy
- Limerick Wayfinding Strategy
- MKO Literature Review & Implementation Plan for Limerick's Medieval Quarter Action Plan (Draft 2020)
- Limerick Tourism Development Strategy Action Plan 2019-2023
- The Orchard Site and The Garden Site – ABK – (2014 & 2019)
- Constraints Study for Flood Relief Scheme at King's Island (2018)
- Shannon International Development Consultants Nos. 35-39 Nicholas Street Limerick – Interim Report 2018
- Development and Archaeological Strategy for Kings Island (2017)
- Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (2013)
- Limerick City Medieval Quarter Public Realm Plan (2011)
- Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan (2011)
- Site Capacity Study – Healy & Partners (2009)
- King Island Strategy Stage 2 (2003)
- King's Island Integrated Action Plan (1994)
- Kings Island Action Area Plan(s) – Muir Associates (1993/4)
- Limerick Heritage Precinct: Proposal for the Revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter (1988)

For more detailed summary of the previous studies please see Appendix 1.

3.2 Area Context Profile

3.2.1 Historical Significance

3.2.1.1 King's Island

The City of Limerick was established in the 9th century by the arrival of the Vikings, they chose the area known today as King's Island to settle due to the proximity to the River Shannon for trade and defensive purposes from sieges. It was between c.1100 and 1600 that the distinct settlement of Englishtown was established. The street layout developed from the 13th century. The medieval town was defined by stone walls, gates and towers. Specifically, Englishtown was the location of St. Mary's Cathedral and King John's Castle, the main religious and defensive structures. Suburban development began in 1691, establishing expansion beyond the medieval walls. Development and urban sprawl continued and by c.1760 many stretches of the medieval walls were demolished, which allowed closer connections between the existing medieval town and early 18th century developments.

Today, its ancient landmarks, such as the iconic King John's Castle, stand as proud testaments to centuries of history, attracting many visitors eager to explore the city's past. In recent years, King John's Castle alone has welcomed over 100,000 visitors per annum. However, amidst the bustling tourism activity within this area of Englishtown lies a sobering reality of vacancy and deprivation for locals. Despite the allure of these historic attractions, vacancy levels within the study area remain high and there is a need for inclusive economic growth and community development. In navigating the intricate tapestry of King's Island's past and present, the task is to preserve its cultural legacy while addressing the pressing challenges that hinder its full potential.

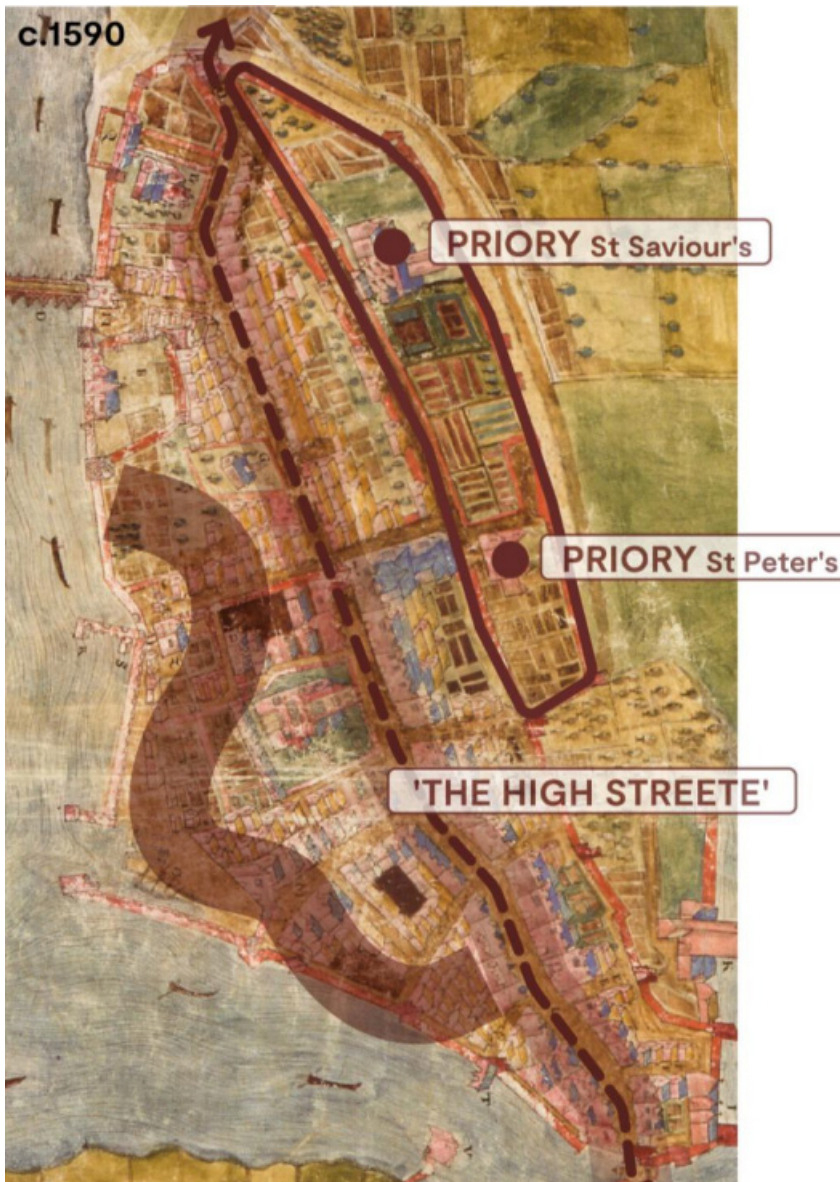


FIG. 3.1: LIMERICK c.1590 (SOURCE TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY)

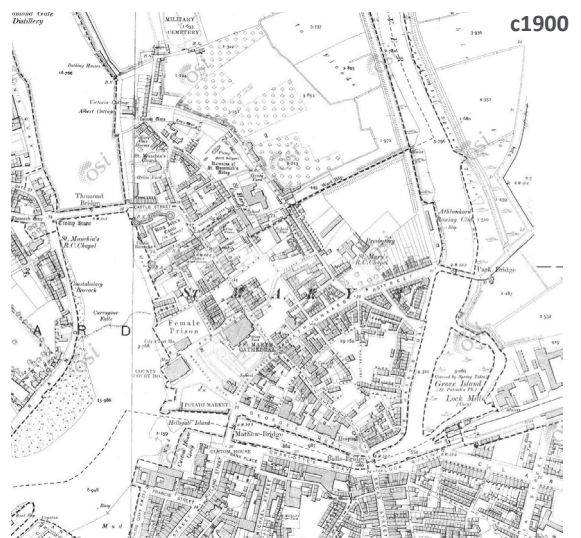
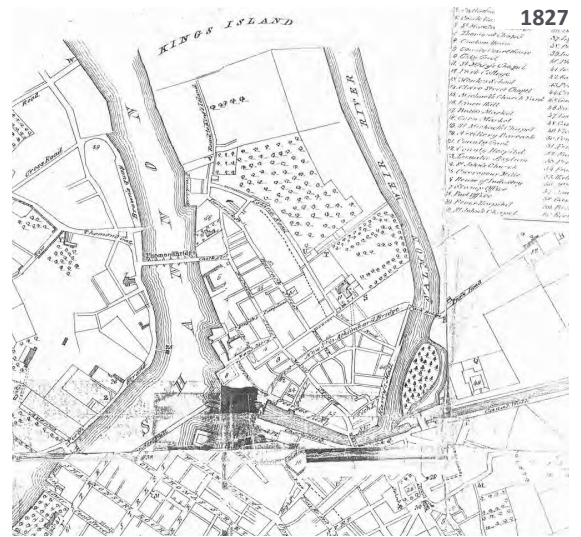


FIG. 3.2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF KING'S ISLAND

3.2.1.2 Nicholas Street

The origins of Nicholas Street trace back to the ancient settlement on King's Island around 150 AD, with the arrival of the Vikings in 922 leaving a lasting imprint on its street layout. Nicholas Street holds a significant place in the culture and history of King's Island. Once the bustling thoroughfare of the old walled town of Englishtown, it served as the central hub of activity during Medieval times, connecting St. Mary's Cathedral and King John's Castle.

The street's rich history was marked by the presence of the historic St. Nicholas's Church, which fell victim to the ravages of the 1651 Siege of Limerick. Today, the site of this church is occupied by the Cinema Cafe, formerly known as Stix. Numerous historic monuments and protected structures line Nicholas Street, contributing to its designation as part of an Architectural Conservation Area. This designation ensures that buildings of profound historical significance are safeguarded, preserving their heritage for future generations. Over the centuries, Nicholas Street and Mary Street formed the nucleus of the city, witnessing its expansion and evolution.

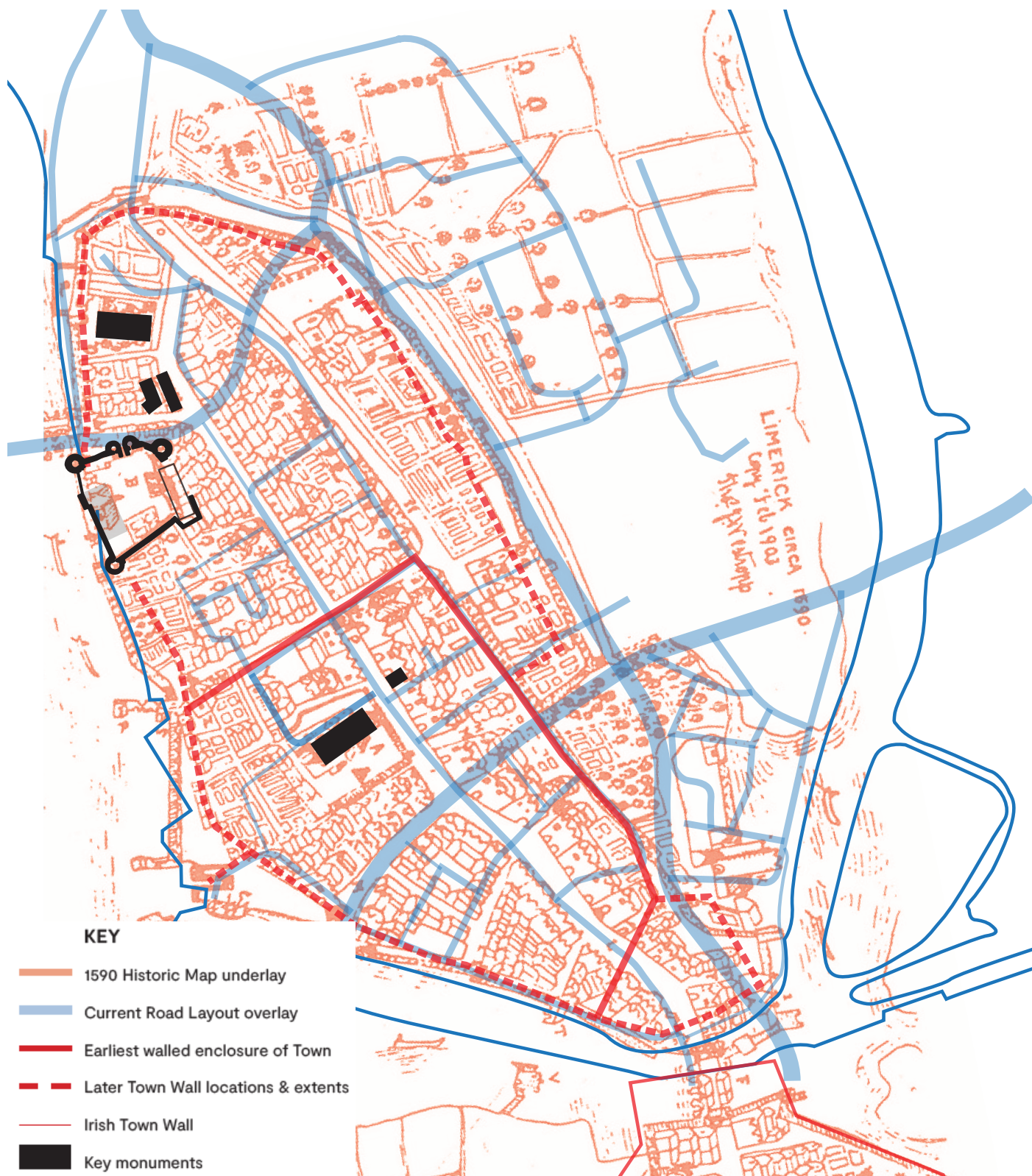


FIG 3.3: URBAN FORM

3.2.2 Archaeology and Built Heritage

Today, the area's historical importance is underscored by various statutory designations, including those as historic monuments, protected structures, and an Architectural Conservation Area. Legal protections afforded by the National Monuments Acts and Planning and Development Acts, along with initiatives such as the Irish Walled Towns Network, ensure that the invaluable heritage of King's Island remains preserved and celebrated, enriching the cultural landscape of the area for generations to come.

3.2.2.1 Zone of Archaeological Potential

Figure 3.4 shows the Zone of Notification incorporating the Historic Town of Limerick, Thomond Bridge, further defences on the west bank of the Shannon and the medieval mill sites within the River Shannon. Zones of Notification are established around individual archaeological sites which are included on the Record of Monuments & Places for referral purposes of proposed works at or in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument (Section 12(3) National Monuments Amendment Act 1994)*.

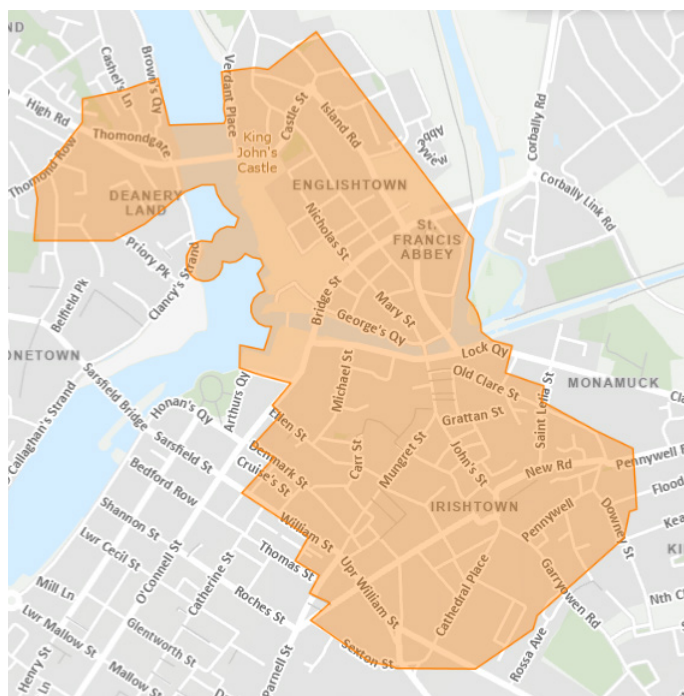


FIG 3.4: ZONE OF NOTIFICATION

The Recorded Monument Number for the City is LI005-017 and within the Zone of Notification for the whole town (Englishtown & Irishtown) there are currently 189 individual entries of which 161 are in Englishtown. They range from the majestic King John's Castle (LI005-017014) to a 17th century graveslab (LI005-017034).

*The new Act viz *The Historic & Archaeological Heritage & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023* has been voted into law but is being enacted incrementally & therefore The National Monuments Act 1930-2014 remains in place as this Strategy is being completed.

3.2.2.2 Architectural Conservation Area

Limerick has diverse architectural heritage that is reflected in the significant number of areas of special character, which are defined as Architectural Conservation Areas within its Development Plan. These areas are recognised for their distinct character and intrinsic qualities based on their historic built form and layout. They are afforded special protection given their contribution collectively to the historical streetscape in areas designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). The King's Island area is contained within ACA 7 in the Limerick Development Plan.

Architectural Conservation Area 7 - Part of Thomondgate, Castle Street, Verdant Place and part of Nicholas Street

Description from Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028:

"The architecture in this area extends over a significant period from Medieval times. The architecture varies from the 13th Century Norman architecture of the Castle, to simple Victorian terraced housing (Osmington Terrace), to Gothic Revival influences on the tollhouse, to Romanesque features at St. Munchin's Church of Ireland, and the classical proportions of the Bishop's Palace. These features highlight just some aspects of interest in this area. The area also includes a vernacular townscape of retail/commercial on ground floor with residential



FIG 3.5: ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA: THOMONDGATE, CASTLE ST., VERDANT PLACE, NICHOLAS ST.

overhead. This ACA is part of the historic town, designated by the National Monuments Service and there is an abundance of National Monuments in the area comprising a bridge, town defences, tollhouse, castle, historic well, churches, historic graveyards and alms houses. The NIAH recognises the regional significance and special interest of 14 structures in this ACA.

This ACA refers to:

- *Part of High Street, Castle Street, Church Street, the Parade;*
- *Part of Nicholas Street from King John's Castle to the junction with Crosbie Row and St. Francis Street;*
- *Part of Merchant's Quay."*

The existing ACA comprises a portion of King's Island, centred on Thomond Bridge, King John's Castle, and their environs. The ACA follows an historic route into the city, crossing the bridge from Thomondgate into the walled city. Aside from the Castle, the majority of the structures in this ACA date from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. A portion of Nicholas Street, the former high street within the medieval walled town, is included in the ACA. The buildings on this street are largely 19th century but likely incorporate surviving medieval fabric including walls of the medieval houses.

There is potential to expand the ACA to include a wider area of the former walled medieval city, and areas of architectural interest in its immediate context.

This area is of clear architectural, archaeological and historical interest. As the location of the 10th century Viking settlement, King's Island has witnessed over a millennium of growth and evolution. Many of the layers of this evolution remain legible today, in the historic buildings, fabric and in the street pattern and layout.

The expanded ACA may include key areas within King's Island, including:

- Merchant's Quay: the location of the former Viking settlement from the 10th century and former harbour, this area has historically been of importance within the commerce and

administration of the city. It includes key landmark buildings, including St. Mary's Cathedral, the Courthouse, and the Potato Market.

- Abbey River: the area adjacent to the Abbey River, to the south of King's Island. This incorporates the former Customs House, the historic quay walls and bridges, and the start of the Georgian expansion southwards from the medieval city. A small section of Broad Street is also included, following the line of the historic route from 'Englishtown' to 'Irishtown', and thereby linking the two walled towns.
- 'Englishtown': the area within the walls of the walled Medieval city, including surviving sections of the city walls and King John's Castle. The existing street layout reflects the historic plans of the medieval city, and this history is also represented in the street names. The buildings within this area often comprise a layering of fabric from different eras.
- Thomondgate: similarly to Englishtown, the structures in this area reflect layers of growth and evolution. The area is of historic importance as a key access point into the walled city. The buildings in this area include 18th and 19th century terraces and 'suburban villa' type dwellings.

- Athlunkard Street and Environs: this area of extramural development is largely 19th century in appearance today, but as with Englishtown and Thomondgate, older fabric may survive incorporated into the existing buildings.

3.2.2.3 Record of Protected Structures

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires each Planning Authority to include in their Development Plan objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical or social interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register referred to as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). There are 31 structures within the Kings Island Area included on the RPS list with 10 of those sites identified on the pipeline of priority list later identified in this report.

1. Villiers Alms Houses
 2. St. Marys Convent Graveyard
 3. St. Marys Convent School
 4. Barringtons Hospital
 5. Mary Street Garda Station
 6. Limerick Institute of Technology - School of Art
 7. The Exchange
 8. Charity Blue Coat School
 9. City Hall Facade of former Gaol
 10. Widows Alms Houses
 11. Limerick county Courthouse
 12. The Potato Market
 13. Matthew Bridge
 14. Gerald Griffin Memorial Schools
 15. Saint Mary's Cathedral
 16. The Toll House
 17. Bannatyne Pyramidal Mausoleum
 18. Jones Mausoleum
 - 19-21. Church Street Alms Houses
 22. Fanning's Castle
 23. Bishop's Palace
 24. Remains of Medieval Mill
 25. Exterior Wall of Old Gaol - Medieval House
 26. Baal's Bridge
 27. Thomond Bridge
 28. Bourkes House
 29. King John's Castle
 30. Boyd Mausoleum
 31. The Fireplace Site
- For additional information on the Record of Protected Structures, please refer to Appendix Three.

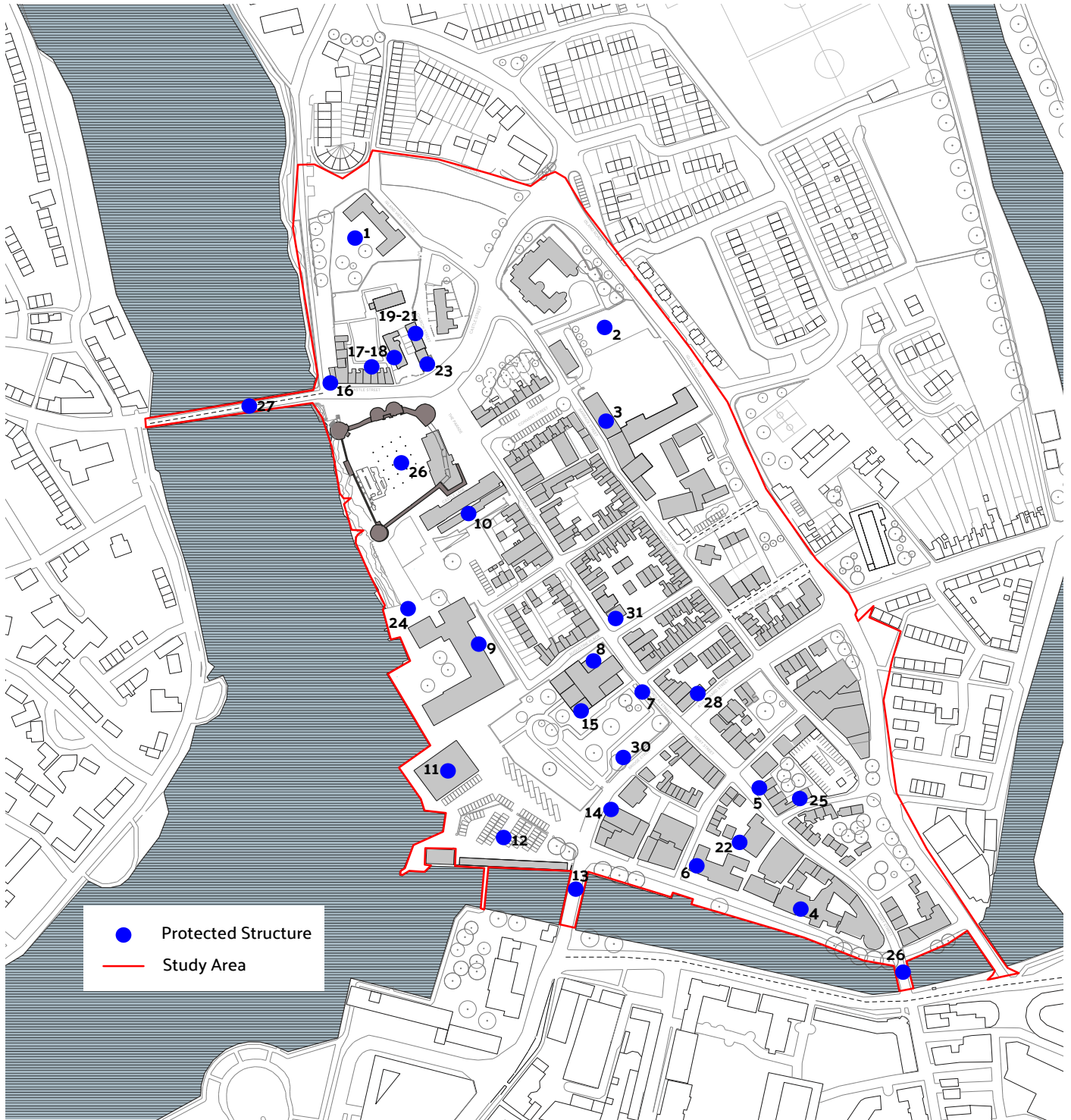


FIG. 3.6: MAP OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES WITHIN STUDY AREA.

3.2.2.4 Record of National Monuments

Limerick is extremely rich in the diversity and quality of its archaeological monuments. The location of each archaeological monument is provided in the Record of Monuments and Places, which is maintained and up-dated by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The following are the Record of National Monuments within the Kings Island area. A number of these monuments are identified later in this report on the pipeline priority projects, and it includes the priority project chosen for an application to Strand 2 of Thrive -the Fireplace site (number 31 and 32).

1. Thomond Bridge
2. Old Bishops Palace
3. Medieval Town Defences
4. St. Munchins Church Graveyard
5. Tomb of Elinor Young
6. Well at 9 Church Street
7. Archaeological Dig Site
8. Small Stone Tower, Wall
9. Stone House on later Bishops Palace
10. Mungret Gate Stone
11. King John's Castle
12. Castle Ringwork
13. Three late 12th/early 13th century houses
14. House walls
15. Dominican Priory of St. Saviour
16. Stone House Ruins
17. St. Saviours Dominican Priory Burial Ground
18. Old Barracks
19. Augustinian Priory of St. Peter
20. Site of the Siege of Limerick
21. St. Nicholas's Church
22. St. Nicholas's Church Graveyard
23. Archdeacons House
24. Manor of the Chanter
25. Medieval House
26. Thomas Arthurs Mill, Curragower Castle, Queen's Mills
27. Residence of the Dean of St. Marys Church
28. Vicars Choral of St. Mary's Cathedral
29. Remains of Two Medieval Homes
30. Medieval Building: "House C"
31. Medieval Building: "House B"
32. Medieval Building
33. Walls of late 16th/early 17th century home
34. Post-medieval Well
35. Bourke's House
36. 17th Century Graveslab
37. Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary
38. Cross
39. St. Mary's Cathedral Graveyard
40. Castleated House – Ireton's House
41. Templar Knights Hospitaller
42. Potato Market: previously Quay
43. Six-Gun Battery
44. Medieval Building: "House B"
45. Series of Houses
46. Early Weir, Comyn's Mills
47. 1840's House Walls
48. Late Medieval House
49. Fanning's Castle
50. Georgian House Walls
51. Medieval Building: "House A"

- 52. Courthouse/Town Hall
- 53. Ruins of a Stone-built House
- 54. Part of Old City Wall
- 55. Clay Pipe Kiln
- 56. Medieval Dump Deposits
- 57. Medieval Town Wall
- 58. Burial Ground
- 59. Ball's Bridge

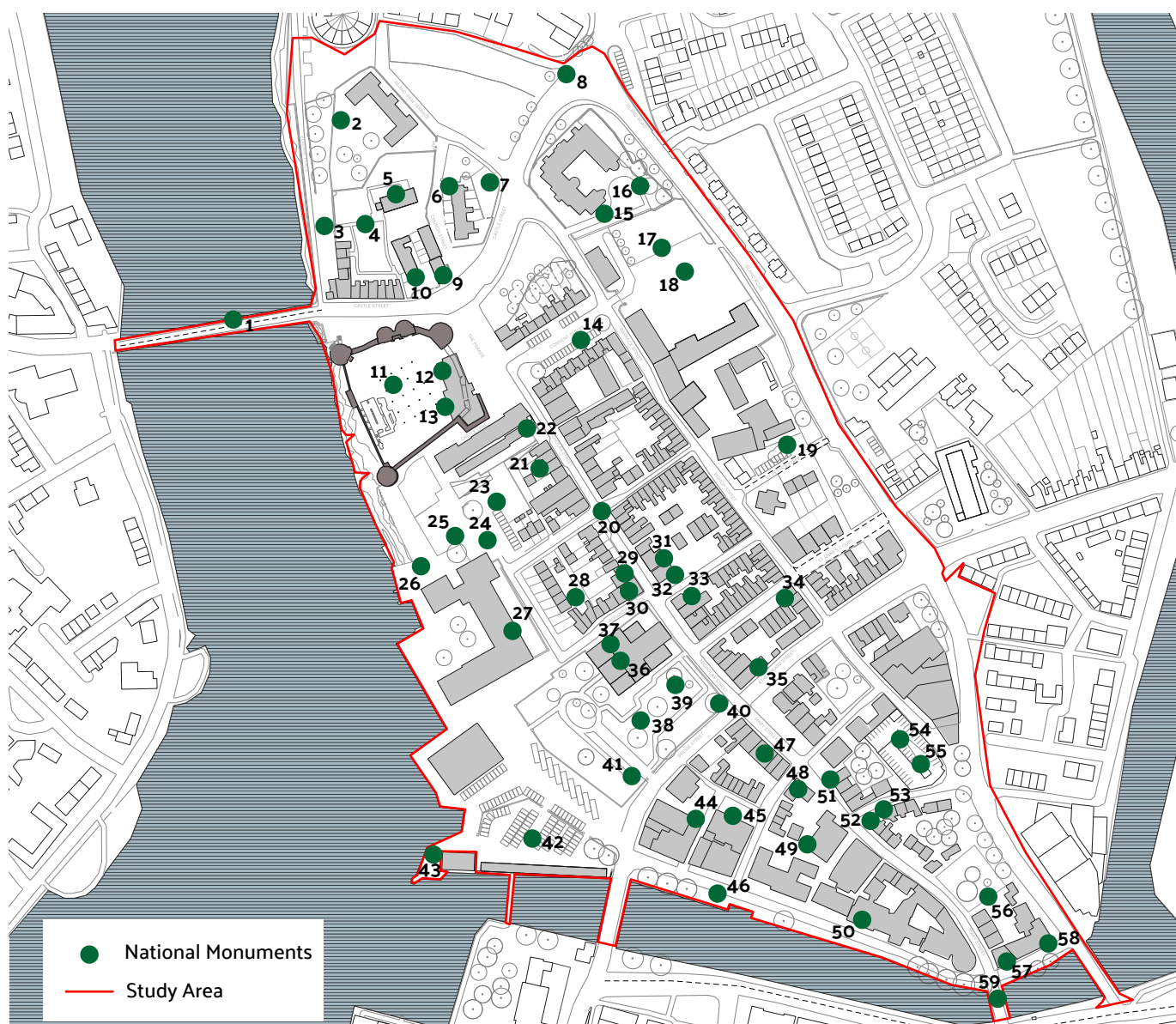


FIG. 3.7: MAP OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS IN THE STUDY AREA

3.2.2.5 Medieval Walls

The remains of the original medieval walls are identified on the map. The upstanding portions of the walls are seen as isolated objects, and do not create a coherent sense of the extent of the historic town. There is an opportunity to use the line of the walls to define thresholds and gateways to the historic urban core. Over the years extensive works have taken place to maintain and restore these walls and this will continue.

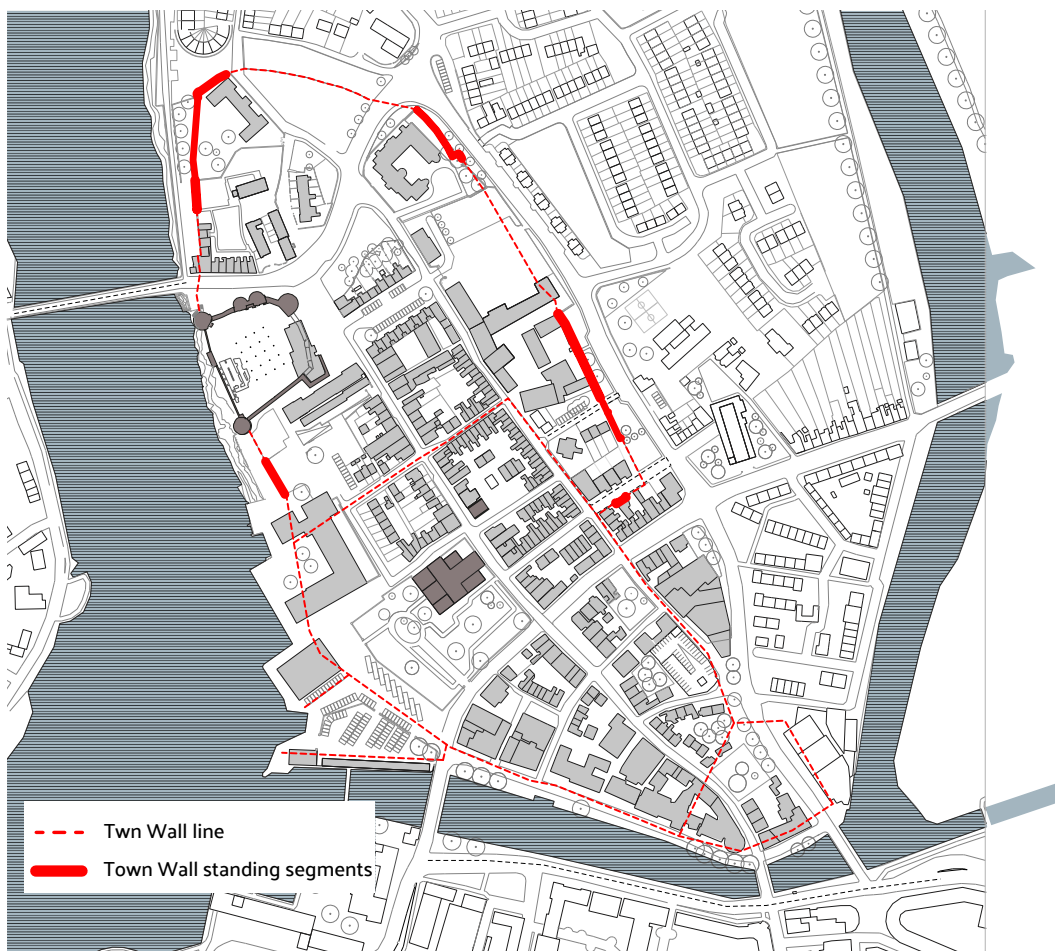


FIG. 3.8: CITY WALLS MAP

3.2.3 Socio-Economic Landscape

3.2.3.1. King's Island Demographics – CSO and Pobal Analysis

Population

Kings Island as a whole has a total population of 2,288 (2022) distributed across three Electoral Divisions (ED: John's A (St. Mary's Park, 747 persons), John's B (including Nicholas Street, Bishops Street and the older traditional social housing estates of Lee Estate and Assumpta Park, 1,038) and John's C (including Sir Harry's Mall and Georges Quay along the river bank and Mary's Street, 503 persons). Since 2016, the population of the three areas has increased by 121 persons or 5.6%, which was lower than the increase for Limerick (7.5%) and the national average (8.1%). The Walled Town study area includes 5 separate Small Area of Population (SAPs) in whole or in part and has an estimated population of 800.

For the purpose of this report, the socio-economic analysis will include some analysis of John's A ED, but will primarily focus on two specific Electoral Divisions (EDs)– John's B and John's C EDs - as these areas encompass the core study area. It is evident that the area is characterised by social and economic inequalities across several key indicators which are considered in the following analysis.

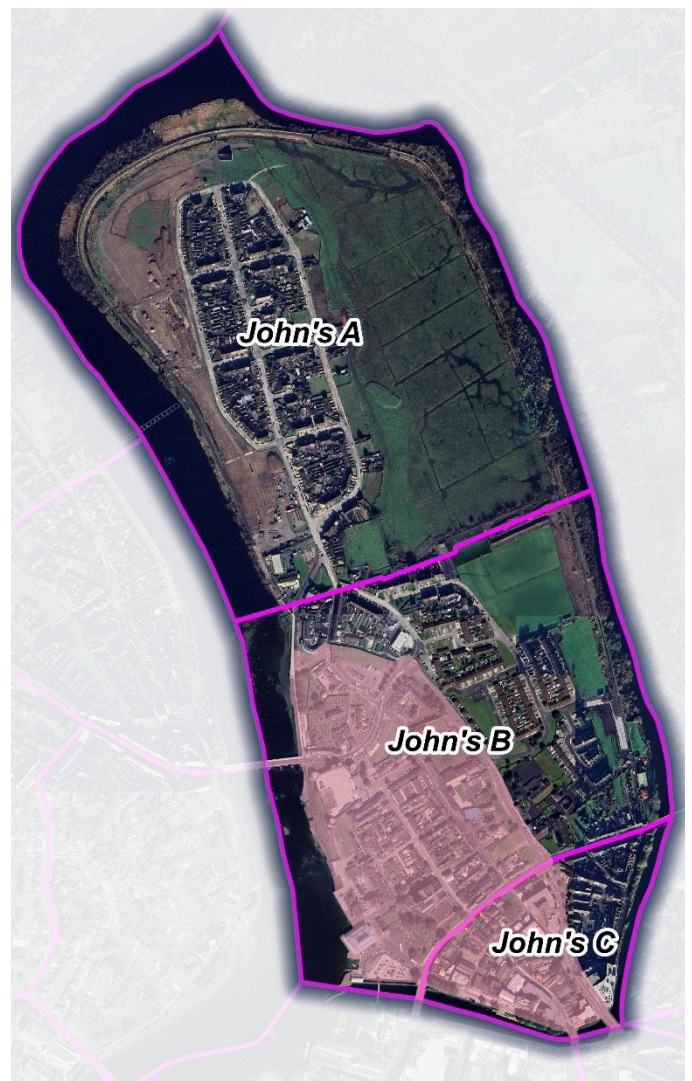


FIG. 3.9: ELECTORAL DIVISIONS AND STUDY AREA

Deprivation, Unemployment and Educational Attainment

John's A Electoral Division (St. Mary's Park) is the most socially disadvantaged ED in Limerick and in the State. St. Mary's Park is classified as Extremely Disadvantaged, while parts of St. John's B are classified as Extremely Disadvantaged and Very Disadvantaged and areas in John's C ED are classified as Disadvantaged under the Pobal Relative Deprivation Index (2022). The index factors in a number of indicators to calculate the relative index

score including population change, unemployment, educational attainment, age dependency, persons per room, and professions.

The Pobal Relative Deprivation Index (2022) shows that Limerick City has a strong pattern of social inequality. In relative terms, the geographic distribution of disadvantage remains largely the same as previous years. This reinforces the findings of previous research that disadvantage is a long term, geographically entrenched phenomenon.

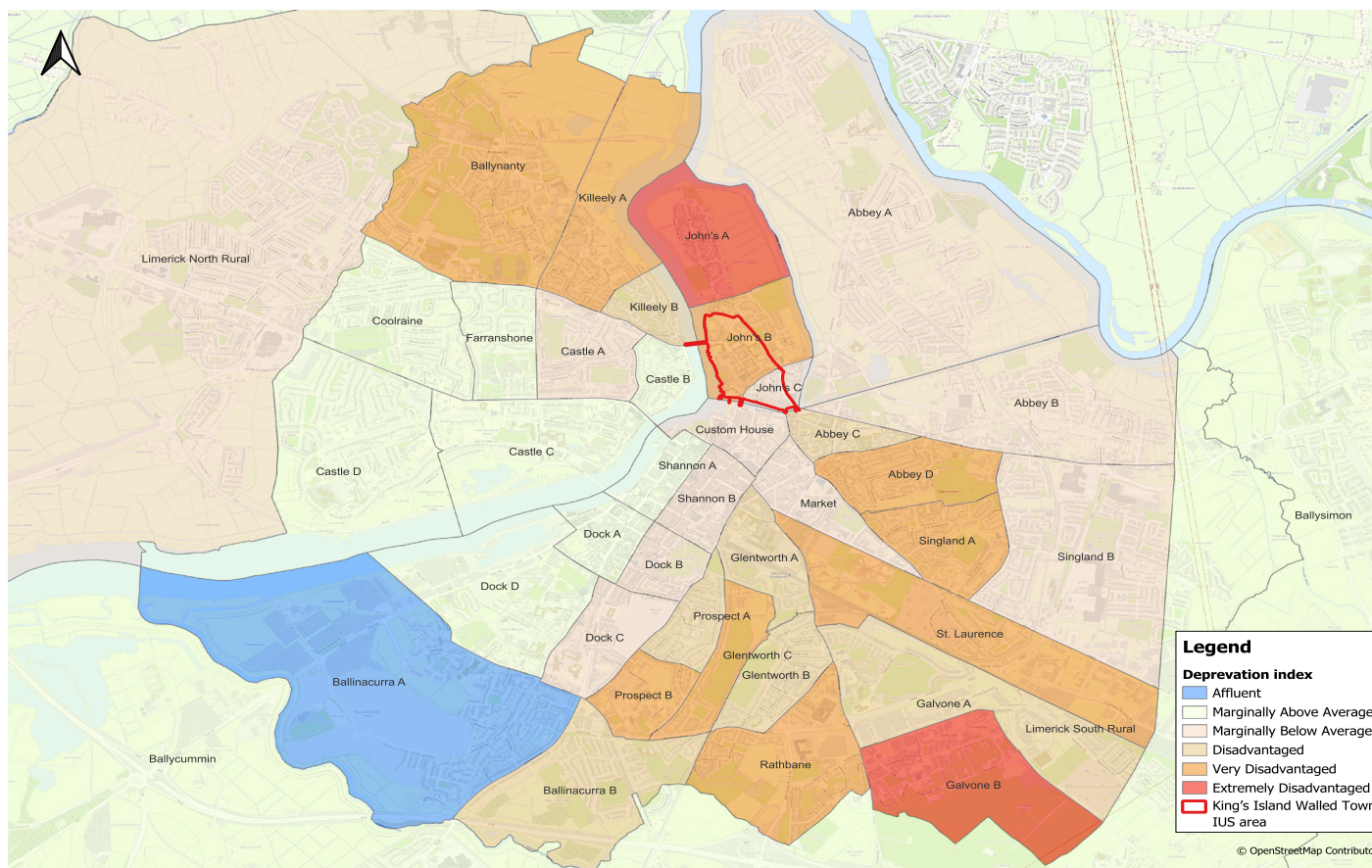


FIG. 3.10 : POBAL RELATIVE DEPRIVATION INDEX (2022) LIMERICK

Structural unemployment remains a problem in the area. Census 2022 shows that St Mary’s Park recorded an unemployment rate of 33.6%, which was almost four times the average for Limerick City and County (8.6%) in 2022. The unemployment rates for John’s B ED (including Nicholas Street) (20.3%) and John’s C (15.6%) EDs were also considerably higher than the average for Limerick and the State (8.3%), further highlighting the ongoing issues with unemployment in the area.

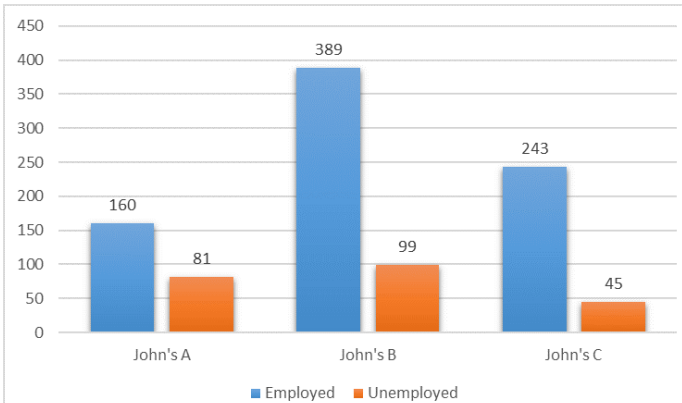


FIG. 3.11: POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED 2022, JOHN’S A JOHN’S B AND JOHN’S C (CSO)

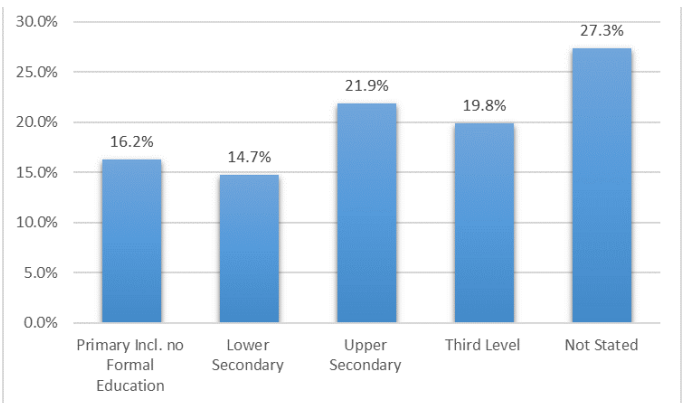


FIG. 3.12: POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL COMPLETED, JOHN’S B AND JOHN’S C (CSO)

Migration

With respect to migration non-Irish citizens accounted for 15.5% of the total population, which was significantly higher than the average for Limerick (11%) and the State (12.6%). It must be noted that a significant proportion of residents did not state their nationality (15.5% or 237 persons) in Census 2022. Among the non-Irish residents, the largest group was from the 'Rest of the World' as presented in Figure 3.13. This was followed by 'Other EU27 (excluding Ireland and Poland)'. The following figure shows the population of the area by place of birth

and citizenship in 2022. Of the usual population aged 1 year and over, there were 55 people who had moved to the area in the year before Census 2022. This included 24 people who had moved from elsewhere in the county, 13 people who had moved from elsewhere in Ireland, while 18 had moved there from outside of Ireland. Factors including more affordable housing, established community networks and proximity to employment opportunities in the City Centre, are likely to be influencing the relatively higher levels of inward migration to the area. Some 1,461 residents were at the same address in the year before the Census.

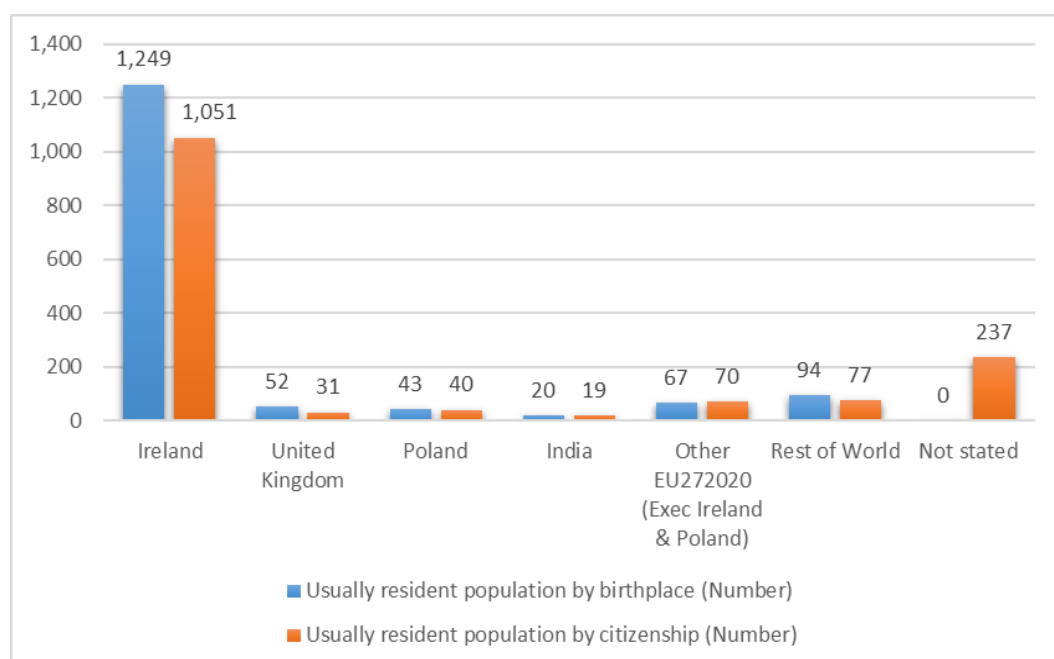


FIG. 3.13: USUALLY RESIDENT POPULATION BY PLACE OF BIRTH AND CITIZENSHIP, JOHN'S B AND JOHN'S C ELECTORAL DIVISIONS, 2022 (CSO)

Age Profile

The age profile of John’s B and John’s C Electoral Divisions, shows that the overall area has a relatively older population with 20.6% of residents aged 65 years and older. This compares to an average of 16% for Limerick City and County. Some 37.7% of the population is aged 35 years and under in comparison to 44% for Limerick (Figure 3.14 below). An older population in the area can provide additional challenges, exacerbating existing social and economic issues.

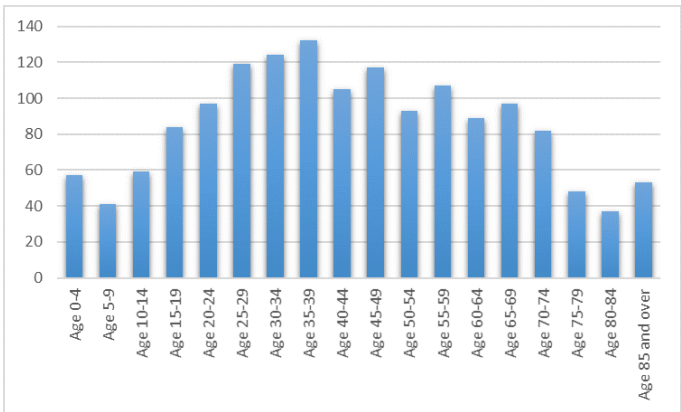


FIG. 3.14: POPULATION BY AGE, 2022, JOHN’S B and JOHN’S C AND JOHN’S C ELECTORAL DIVISIONS (CSO, 2022)

Families

There were 224 families living in the area in April 2022. The majority of these were two person households (132 families or 59%), with 17 three person households, and 7 four-person households. The figure below outlines the family composition in the John’s B and John’s C EDs in 2022.

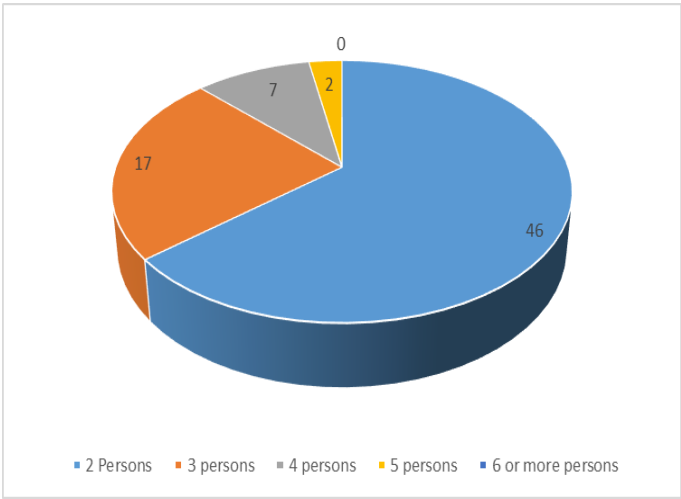


FIG. 3.15: NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS (NUMBER), JOHN’S B AND JOHN’S C ELECTORAL DIVISION (CSO 2022)

3.2.4 Economic

Employment, Occupations and Industry

With respect to employment in the King's Island area, several key employers contribute significantly to the local economy including Limerick City and County Council, while King John's Castle and the Absolute Hotel provide a variety of jobs in the tourism, hospitality and events industry. Together, these employers support a diverse range of employment, as well as supporting local businesses including restaurants, shops and cafés in the area.

Census 2022 indicates that some 119 persons at work who were living in the John's B and John's C Electoral Divisions were employed in Commerce and Trade, while 118 residents at work were employed in Professional Services (Figure 3.16). This varies from the

average for Limerick with the Manufacturing Sector accounting for the largest number of workers in the City and County, followed by Human, Health and Social Work Activities.

However, it must be noted that Census 2022 shows the employment industry for a significant proportion of residents (42.2% or 267 persons), was 'other' indicating that they did not state their occupation.

Similarly, a large proportion of persons at work or unemployed in the John's B and John's C Electoral Divisions (54.7% or 415 persons) did not state their occupation in Census 2022. Of those who stated their occupation, the majority of persons (57 persons) were working in Professional Occupations, followed by Sales and Customer Service Occupations (55 persons). This mirrors the trend in Limerick, with Professional Occupations accounting for the highest number of those at work or unemployed. The following figure provides a breakdown of persons at work or unemployed in 2022 by occupation.

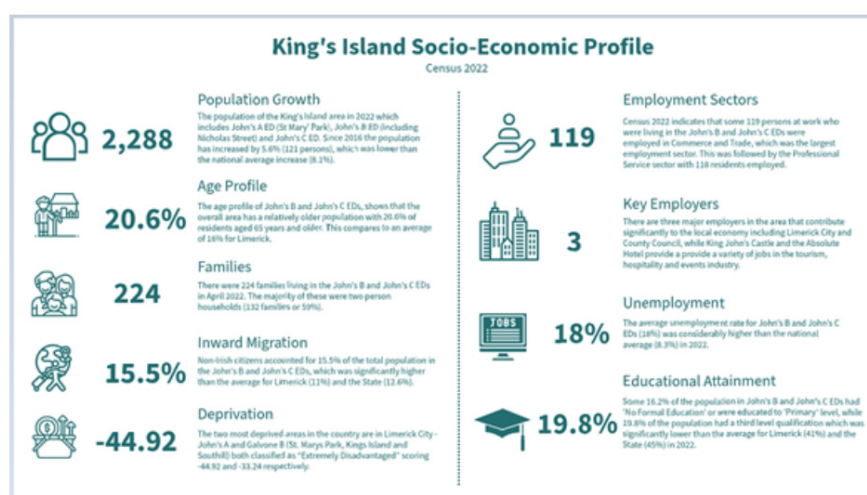


FIG. 3.18: USUALLY RESIDENT POPULATION BY PLACE OF BIRTH AND CITIZENSHIP, JOHN'S B AND JOHN'S C ELECTORAL DIVISIONS, 2022 (CSO)

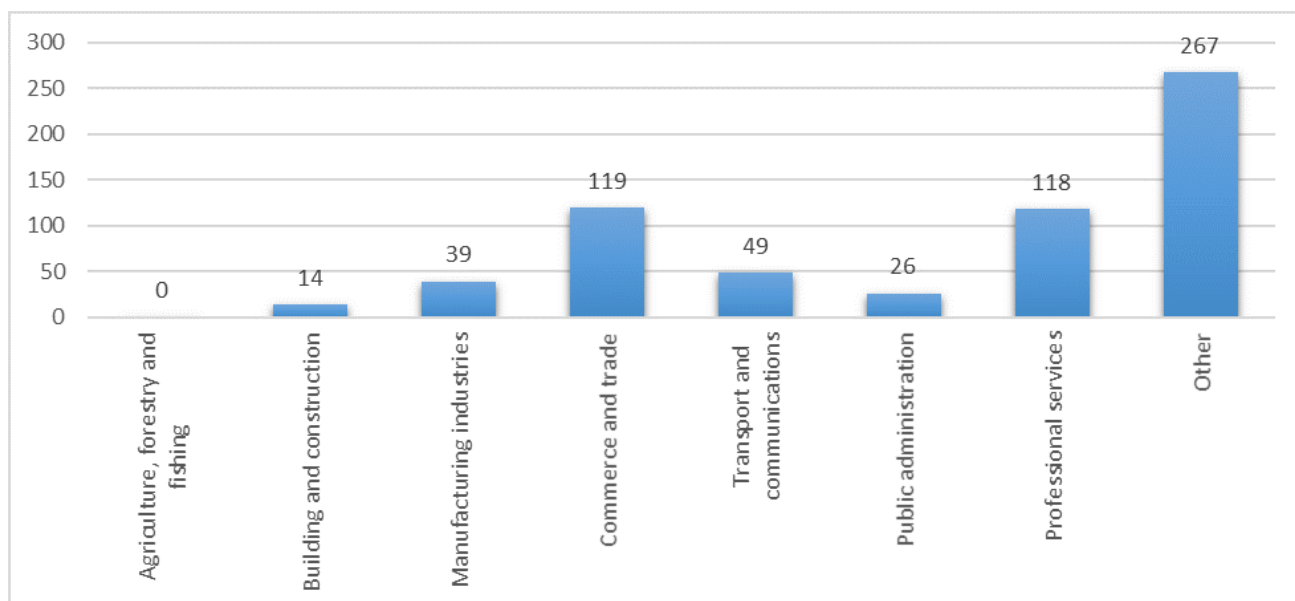


FIG. 3.16: PERSONS AT WORK BY INDUSTRY 2022, JOHN'S B AND JOHN'S C ELECTORAL DIVISIONS, CSO 2022

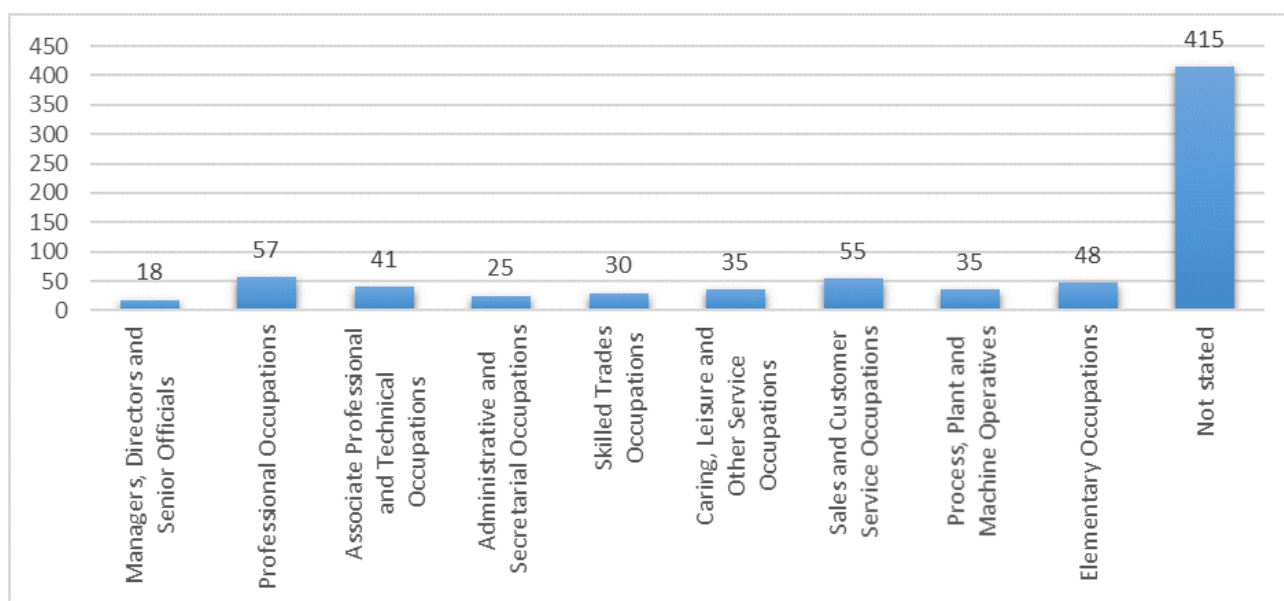


FIG. 3.17: PERSONS AT WORK OR UNEMPLOYED BY OCCUPATION 2022, JOHN'S B AND JOHN'S C ELECTORAL DIVISIONS, CSO 2022

3.2.5. Land Use Vacancy Survey

The Forward Planning Team in Limerick City and County Council carried out a Health Check Survey for Limerick City in February 2025. This comprehensive survey is carried out annually, and focuses on the land zoned 'City Centre' in the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028. This coverage includes the entirety of the Kings Island Walled Town area, except for a northern section of Castle Street, which was incorporated into the City Centre Health Check specifically for the purpose of this strategy.

Within the surveyed area, a total of 399 units were identified which includes 220 residential units, 24 leisure services, 19 public services, 6 health and medical services, 8 retail and 2 financial and business services. Additionally, there were 25 vacant units, with 21 classified as commercial and 4 as residential, indicating that the area has a very high level of commercial vacancy. Furthermore, 14 units were categorised as derelict. The ground floor vacancy rate in Nicholas St in Q1 2025 was identified as 38%. Further the data indicates that over 11.5% of the total building stock within the wider walled town is currently either vacant or derelict as of February 2025 and has increased 1.3% on 2024, highlighting that vacancy and dereliction, which is a hallmark of economic decline, is a key issue affecting the area. This is reflective of changes in retail and commercial/service functions in the City Centre. The issue of vacancy and dereliction needs to be addressed by re-imagining the design and function of the area to create an attractive, vibrant and safe environment to live, work and visit.



FIG. 3.19: LAND USE VACANCY SURVEY

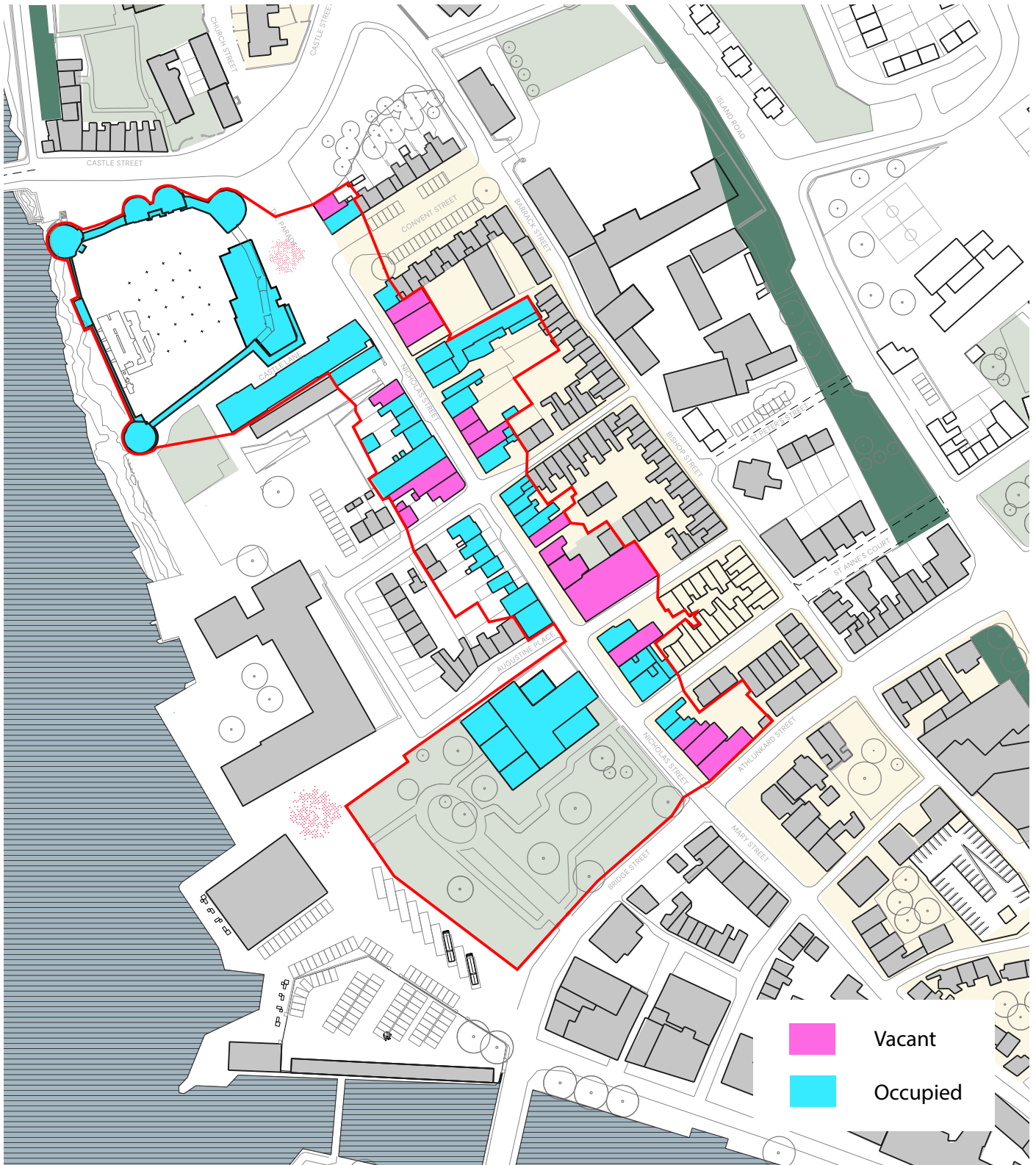


FIG. 3.20: GROUND FLOOR VACANCY Q1 2025 IS 38% (EXCLUDING KING JOHN'S CASTLE AND ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL)

Land Use Vacancy Survey

February 2025



399

Number of Units

The Health Check Survey for Limerick City carried out in February 2025 identified 399 units in the Kings Island Walled Town area.



220

Residential Units

The number of residential units identified in the area in the survey.



66

Public Services and Commercial Units

The units in the area include 66 units that are either public sector or commercial units including 24 leisure services, 19 public services, 6 health and medical services, 8 retail, 2 financial and business services and 2 storage and warehousing units.



25

Vacant Units

The number of vacant units identified in the survey, with 21 classified as commercial and 4 as residential, indicating that the area has a very high level of commercial vacancy.

38%

The ground floor vacancy rate on Nicholas Street.



14

Derelict Units

The number of derelict units in the Kings Island Walled Town area in February 2025.

11.5%

11.5% of the total building stock within the walled town is either vacant or derelict as of February 2025, which has increased by 1.3% since 2024.

FIG. 3.21: SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES PERTAINING TO VACANCY AND DERELICTION IN KING'S ISLAND

3.2.6. Tourism

Tourism plays a pivotal role in bolstering the local economy of King’s Island. The presence of renowned attractions, such as King John’s Castle and St. Mary’s Cathedral, attracts a substantial number of tourists annually, significantly contributing to the area’s economic vibrancy. An analysis of Three Mobile Phone Data for John’s B Electoral District in 2024 offers valuable insights into the area’s economic landscape, particularly regarding tourism and visitor patterns. Mobile phone data analysis can provide a good indicator of tourism flows to the area, as currently there is a lack of visitor data at the local level. Furthermore, the mobile phone data is available daily and therefore, it can highlight any correlations between music, sporting and cultural events in Limerick and the immediate impact on the number of persons in the Nicholas Street area. The mobile phone data collected by Three provides a very good indicator

of persons in the John’s B ED as Three is Ireland’s largest mobile telecommunications provider with 48% market share (as of September 2024). However, it is important to note that the number of persons in the area per day is considerably higher than the data presented in this analysis, as it does not include persons who use other mobile phone networks or persons aged 15 years and under.

The Three data reveals a notable impact of tourism on the local economy, with an average of 1,530 tourists in the area daily from January to November 2024. Tourists are defined as those aged 16 years and over, who have a non-Irish mobile phone number. Peak tourist months, including May, June, July and August, coincide with major events and cultural activities, resulting in significant spikes in visitor numbers. For instance, events like Riverfest, concerts and rugby matches, attract substantial crowds, highlighting the economic potential of leveraging cultural and sporting events to drive tourism. A peak in tourist numbers to the area was noted in August when a daily total of

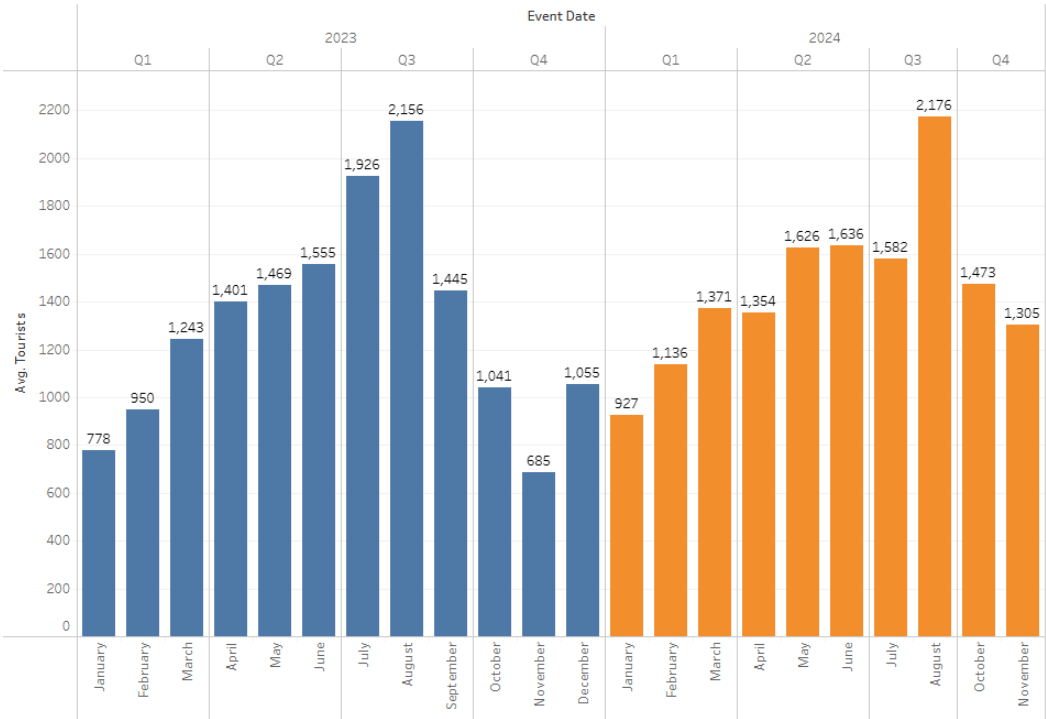


FIG. 3.21: AVERAGE TOURISTS PER DAY EACH MONTH JANUARY 2023- NOVEMBER 2024 (THREE)

2,494 tourists was recorded on the 10th of August, while 2,228 tourists were observed in the John’s B Electoral District on the 4th May which coincided with Riverfest Limerick. The following figure indicates the average number of tourists in the John’s B ED per day by month in 2023 and 2024, which highlights that August has the highest number of daily tourists to the area for both years.

The mobile phone data for January to November 2024 shows that the top 10 days for tourists to the John’s B Electoral Division was during the month of August. Table 3.1 reveals that there was a significant increase in the number of tourists to King’s Island over consecutive days in August. This spike in visitors is likely influenced by several factors, including the timing of school holidays, favourable weather conditions, and the peak of the summer tourist season. Community events took over the streets of Limerick City Centre for the month of August.

This spike in visitors is likely influenced by several factors, including the timing of school holidays, favourable weather conditions, and the peak of the summer tourist season. Community events took over the streets of Limerick City Centre for the month of August, which evidently impacted on the number of tourists to the area with the Mayor’s Programme of activities for the month. Events included pop up cinema screenings, Dance Fest, Féile na Gréine festival, evening history tours, wellness events as well as National Heritage Week from 17th-25th August.

Date	Tourists
14/08/2024	2,371
22/08/2024	2,371
23/08/2024	2,440
06/08/2024	2,448
07/08/2024	2,468
09/08/2024	2,477
12/08/2024	2,491
10/08/2024	2,494
21/08/2024	2,545
13/08/2024	2,577

FIG. 3.22: TOP 10 DAYS FOR TOURISTS IN THE JOHN’S B ED, JANUARY- NOVEMBER 2024 (THREE)

Visitors to the area are defined as non-locals and non-tourists, and therefore, refer to domestic persons from elsewhere in the city, county and other Irish counties which would include those commuting through the area. The data from Three shows a very high number of visitors aged 16 years and over per day, in the area in 2024. Figure 3.23 below shows the top 10 days for visitors from January to November 2024 and the corresponding event, which indicates a high correlation with sporting events/Munster Rugby, Riverfest Limerick and Bank Holiday weekends. As mentioned previously, as the Three data captures a share of visitors to the King’s Island area, the overall figure is likely to be considerably higher.

The mobile phone data unveils a predominantly young demographic profile, with the majority aged between 25-34 years. This demographic insight is crucial for tailoring economic development strategies to meet the preferences and needs of both the local population and visitors. By leveraging events, optimising visitor experiences, and investing in the local economy, King's Island can unlock its full economic potential and thrive as a vibrant destination for residents and tourists alike. However, despite these attractions, the lack of vibrant and inviting public spaces, coupled with high levels of dereliction and vacancy on key streets like Nicholas Street, hinders the ability to capitalise fully on the tourist influx. As a result, once visitors have explored the main attractions, there are limited options for them to continue their experience, leading many to return to the city centre. This vacancy and dereliction not only detract from the overall visitor experience but also contributes to the decline of the local economy. Investing in the revitalisation of these key streets and

public spaces is essential to capitalise on the existing tourist traffic and drive economic growth. Creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environments will not only extend visitor stays but also encourage spending at local businesses, cafes, and shops. Moreover, enhancing the public realm's appearance will attract more tourists, residents, and businesses alike, creating a more vibrant and economically resilient community.

Drawing on the analysis of the socio-economic conditions, good quality recreation infrastructure and amenities, further developing tourist attractions and public spaces for people are key factors for enhancing quality of life, and would facilitate people to live, work and establish businesses in the area in addition to enhancing visitor numbers to King's Island. The appropriate development of the area is of crucial importance for the future success of the City Centre by reducing vacancy and dereliction and bringing back commercial life and creating civic, cultural and recreation space and residential development in the area.

Date	Visitors	Corresponding Event / Holiday
30/03/2024	24,342	Munster Rugby Vs Cardiff Rugby, Thomond Park/Easter Bank Holiday Weekend
15/06/2024	24,880	Munster Rugby Vs Glasgow Warriors, Thomond Park
25/10/2024	24,902	Friday of the October Bank Holiday Weekend
15/03/2024	25,457	Friday of the St. Patrick's Day Bank Holiday Weekend
07/06/2024	25,842	Munster Rugby Vs Ospreys, Thomond Park
11/05/2024	26,031	Munster Rugby Vs Connacht Rugby, Thomond Park
02/11/2024	26,205	Munster Rugby Vs All Blacks, Thomond Park
04/05/2024	29,857	Riverfest Limerick/May Bank Holiday Weekend

FIG. 3.23: AVERAGE TOURISTS PER DAY EACH MONTH JANUARY 2023- NOVEMBER 2024 (THREE)

Footfall and Tourism



1,530

Average Daily Tourists

The Three mobile phone data shows that there was a daily average of 1,530 tourists to the John's B ED from January to November 2024.



2,494

Peak in Tourist Numbers

A peak in tourist numbers to the area was noted in August when a daily total of 2,494 tourists was recorded on the 10th of August, while 2,228 tourists were observed in the John's B ED on the 4th May which coincided with Riverfest Limerick.



24,342

Visitor Footfall

A peak in the number of visitors (defined as non-tourists and non-locals, and therefore refers to domestic persons from elsewhere in the City, County and Ireland) was recorded in the area on the 30th March which correlated with the Munster Rugby Vs Cardiff Ruby match in Thomond Park and in addition it was the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.



25-34

Age Profile

The mobile phone data regarding tourists and visitors to the area unveils a predominantly young demographic profile, with the majority aged between 25-34 years.

FIG. 3.24: SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES PERTAINING TO TOURISM IN KINGS ISLAND

3.2.7 The Living City Initiative

The Living City Initiative is a scheme of property tax incentives designed to regenerate both historic buildings and other buildings in specified cities. The scheme applies to certain ‘special regeneration areas’ (SRAs) in the centres of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Kilkenny. These areas have been designated for the purposes of the scheme by Order of the Minister for Finance. The boundaries of the SRAs for Limerick are outlined in Figure 3.25. There is a revised Living City Initiative Tax Incentive in place since 1st January 2017 until end of December 2027.

The initiative focuses on the regeneration of retail and commercial districts and encourages people to live in the historic centres, bringing life back to the heart of the relevant cities. The relief applies to both residential and commercial refurbishment and conversion work that is carried out during the qualifying period. A team has been established by Limerick City and County Council to manage the roll out of the Living City Initiative to regenerate a core part of the city centre. The initiative offers income tax deductions to people carrying out refurbishment of homes, rental properties, commercial and retail spaces in the SRAs of historic Limerick. Despite the existence of the Living City Initiative its uptake along Nicholas Street has been very poor, particularly, given that there are several properties for sale along the street for a prolonged period.

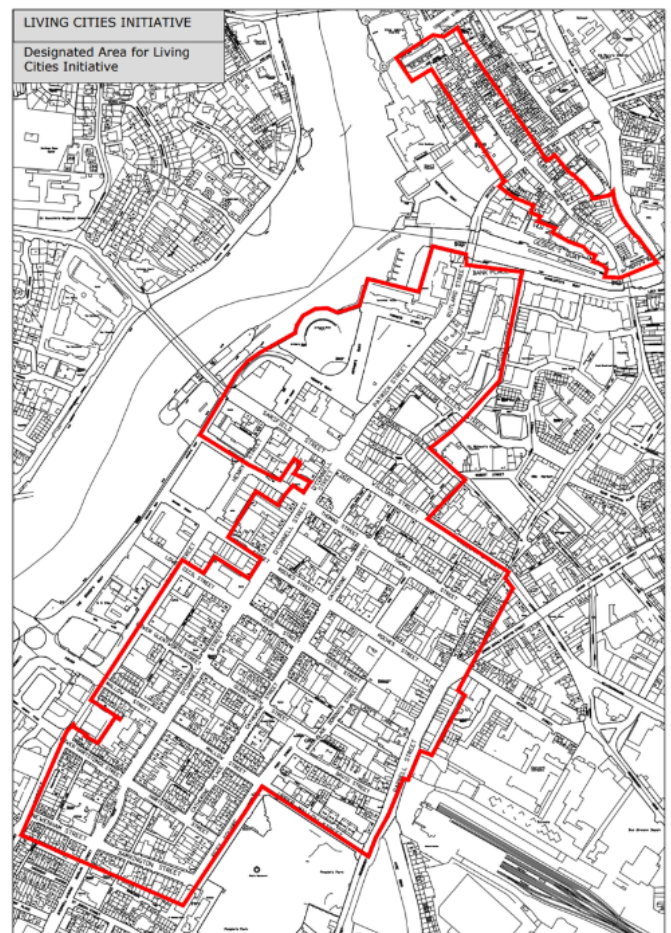


FIG 3.25: EXTENT OF THE LIVING CITY INITIATIVE BOUNDARY IN LIMERICK CITY

3.2.8 Environment and Climate

3.2.8.1 Natural Heritage

King's Island boasts a rich natural environment that forms the backbone of its unique character and potential for sustainable growth, particularly with the proximity to the River Shannon which is designated as a 'Special Area of Conservation'.

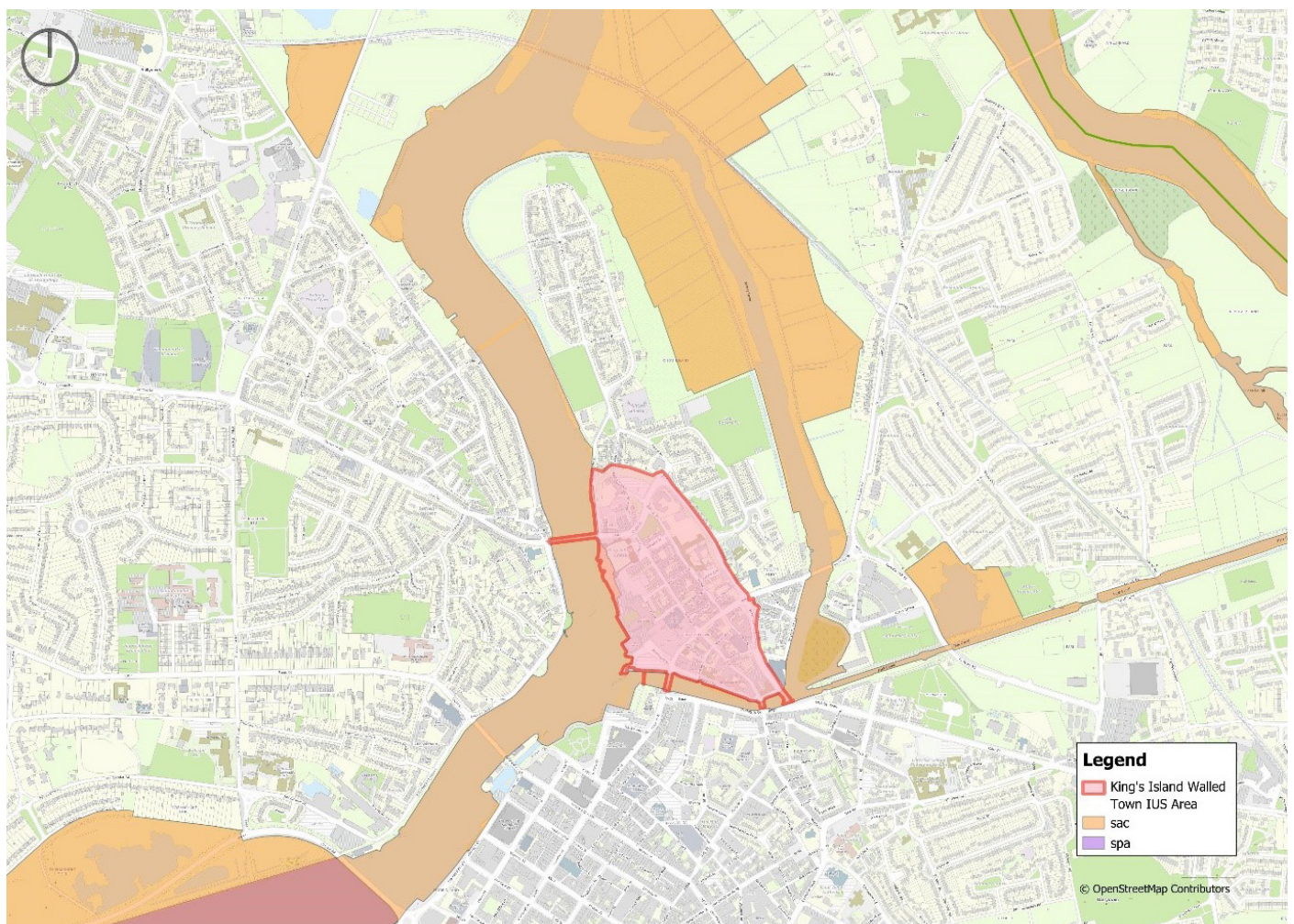


FIG 3.26: SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

3.2.8.2 Blue Green Infrastructure

While King's Island showcases an impressive blend of historic charm and contemporary vibrancy, there is an exciting opportunity to further enhance its natural landscape in harmony with urban development. Currently, King's Island enjoys pockets of greenery and open spaces, namely informal areas at Merchants Quay, adjacent to Katie Daly's and nearby Verdant Place. Yet there is room for improvement to strike a balance between urbanisation and ecological preservation. Efforts are underway to integrate more green spaces, street trees, and vegetated areas, enhancing not only the visual appeal but also nurturing the ecological health of the area. Furthermore, embracing Limerick's vision as a green city necessitates a concerted effort to introduce more tree cover and soft landscaping within the city centre. As identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy for Limerick, innovative initiatives, such as the proposed King's Island Fosse SuDS feature, represent a forward-thinking approach to surface water management. This visionary scheme holds promise in directing stormwater away from built development while transforming the existing fosse into a modern civic feature that adds to the area's charm and resilience.

Moreover, by strengthening linkages between existing and proposed Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) assets, King's Island can foster a more interconnected urban ecosystem that supports biodiversity and enriches environmental quality. Integration of wet meadows and riparian woodland into public green spaces would create inviting settings for both residents and visitors while preserving vital habitat networks. Planting proposals, including rain gardens, street trees, and green spaces, offer not only aesthetic enhancements but also practical solutions to improve water infiltration and manage surface water runoff. Additionally, the integration of active travel and recreational routes would not only promote a healthier lifestyle but also contribute to the area's flood defences and create a seamless riverside walking and cycling experience. By embracing these opportunities and prioritising ecological considerations in urban development, King's Island can unlock its full potential as a vibrant, resilient, and environmentally conscious community that celebrates its unique natural heritage.



FIG 3.27: POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE BLUE GREEN LINKAGES

3.2.8.3 Air Quality

In October 2024, more than 400 citizen scientists measured levels of the harmful air pollutant, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), in Limerick's Metropolitan District area as part of the Clean Air Together Limerick City project.

Clean Air Together (CAT) is a citizen science project where people voluntarily sign up to measure levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) pollution in their local area. NO₂ is predominantly a traffic-related air pollutant that can cause negative health impacts. NO₂

particularly impacts children, people with pre-existing heart and lung conditions such as asthma, outdoor workers, the elderly, and those communities who may be more exposed to air pollution because of where they live or work.

Clean Air Together (Limerick City) is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) led project, in partnership with Limerick City & County Council. The project aims to create a better understanding of NO₂ air pollution across our major cities. The air pollution measurements taken by citizens help verify national air quality maps produced using models developed within EPA's LIFE Emerald project.

This huge level of public interest and the volume of results points to a public willingness to participate in citizen science and illustrates the success of the initiative.

Nitrogen Dioxide levels (see fig. 3.28 overleaf) across Limerick's Metropolitan District area were generally low, with 73% of study results falling in the lowest NO₂ category (0-10 µg/m³). Higher levels of nitrogen dioxide were found along some of the busiest roads in Limerick city, which can be expected as NO₂ comes mainly from traffic:

- Hassett's Cross
- Island Road
- Patrick Street
- Upper William Street
- Castle Street
- High Street

The results clearly show the impact of traffic on NO₂ air pollution levels: the more traffic there is, the higher the levels of NO₂. Moving outwards to the suburbs and away from major roads, the measurements drop to lower levels of NO₂ (dark and light blue dots).

The results also suggest that the greater the distance between a dwelling and a busy road the lower the NO₂ levels. NO₂ quickly reduces with distance, for example a long front garden or living on an upper floor of an apartment building can offer some protection against NO₂ pollution. This finding is

important as Limerick continues to grow and change. The results in fig 3.29 show that Kings Island Walled Town area, and it is evident that traffic associated with Island Road and Castle Street create higher levels of NO₂ category (20-30 µg/m³). Therefore, there is a need to enhance and promote sustainable transport and urban greening to help combat the air quality in this location.

NitrogenDioxide levels across Limerick's Metropolitan District

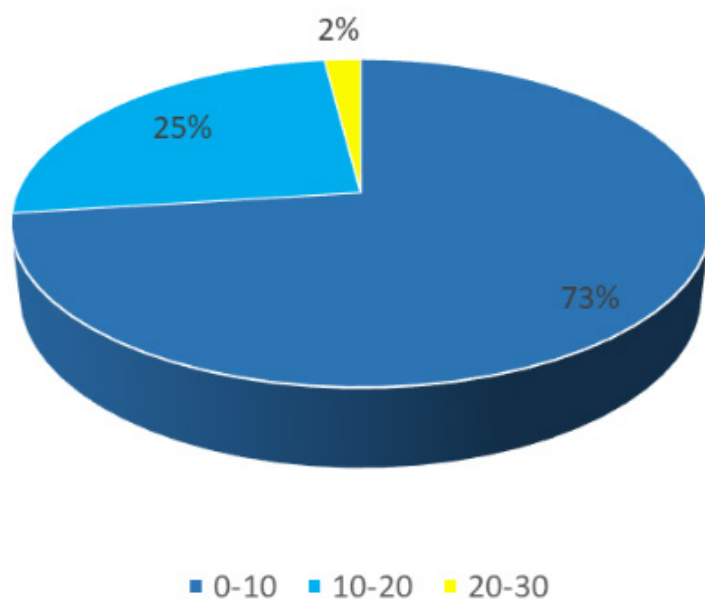


FIG 3.28: DISTRIBUTION OF CLEAN AIR TOGETHER (LIMERICK CITY) RESULTS

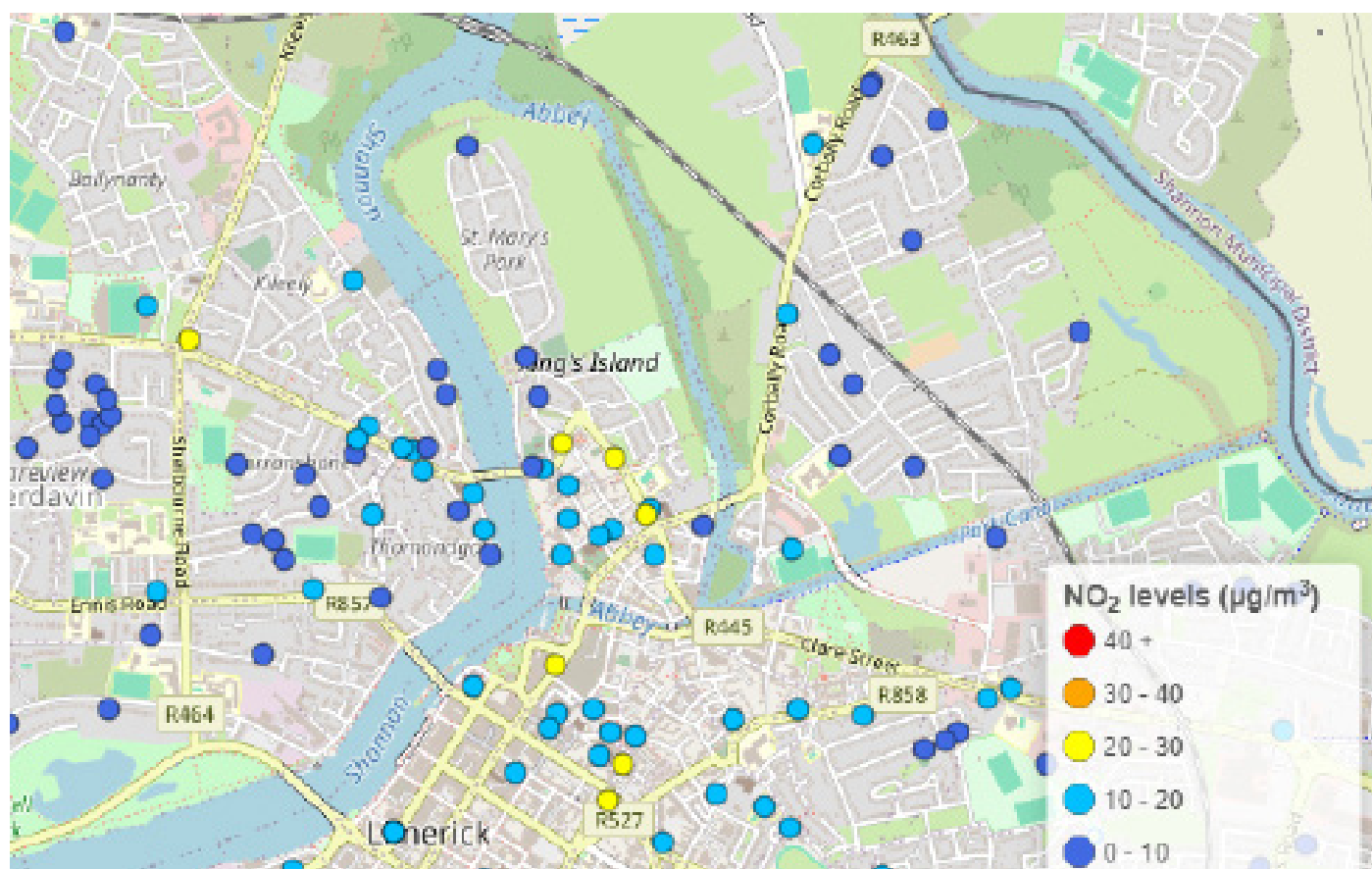


FIG 3.29: CONCENTRATION OF NITROGEN DIOXIDE LEVELS IN THE STUDY AREA

3.2.9 Connectivity and Accessibility

3.2.9.1. Sustainable Movement

The medieval city structure still defines the street layout of the Walled Town with Nicholas Street, once the medieval high street still functioning as the thoroughfare through King's Island today.

The central core of the Walled Town was used for residential and retail units and is characterised by small scale and a dense urban grain.

The land encompassing the inner town to the East was used as church land, defining larger, greener plots.

The Western side was used for civic and industrial purposes that required access to the river - for example a prison and breweries.

The construction of the modern-day Castle Street broke up the regular grid in the north side of the town, isolating the area around the Bishop's Palace and St. Munchin's Church from the rest of the area.

The Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 promotes the development of sustainable movement throughout Limerick, enhancing ease of movement and a better quality of life for all through a modal shift in favour of more active modes of travel. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on more sustainable modes of transport, in order to mitigate the potential impacts of climate change and to remove congestion and make Limerick a more attractive place to live, work and relax. This requires increased priority for cycling, walking, car share/carpooling and public transport infrastructure and a greater uptake in the use of cleaner greener vehicles.

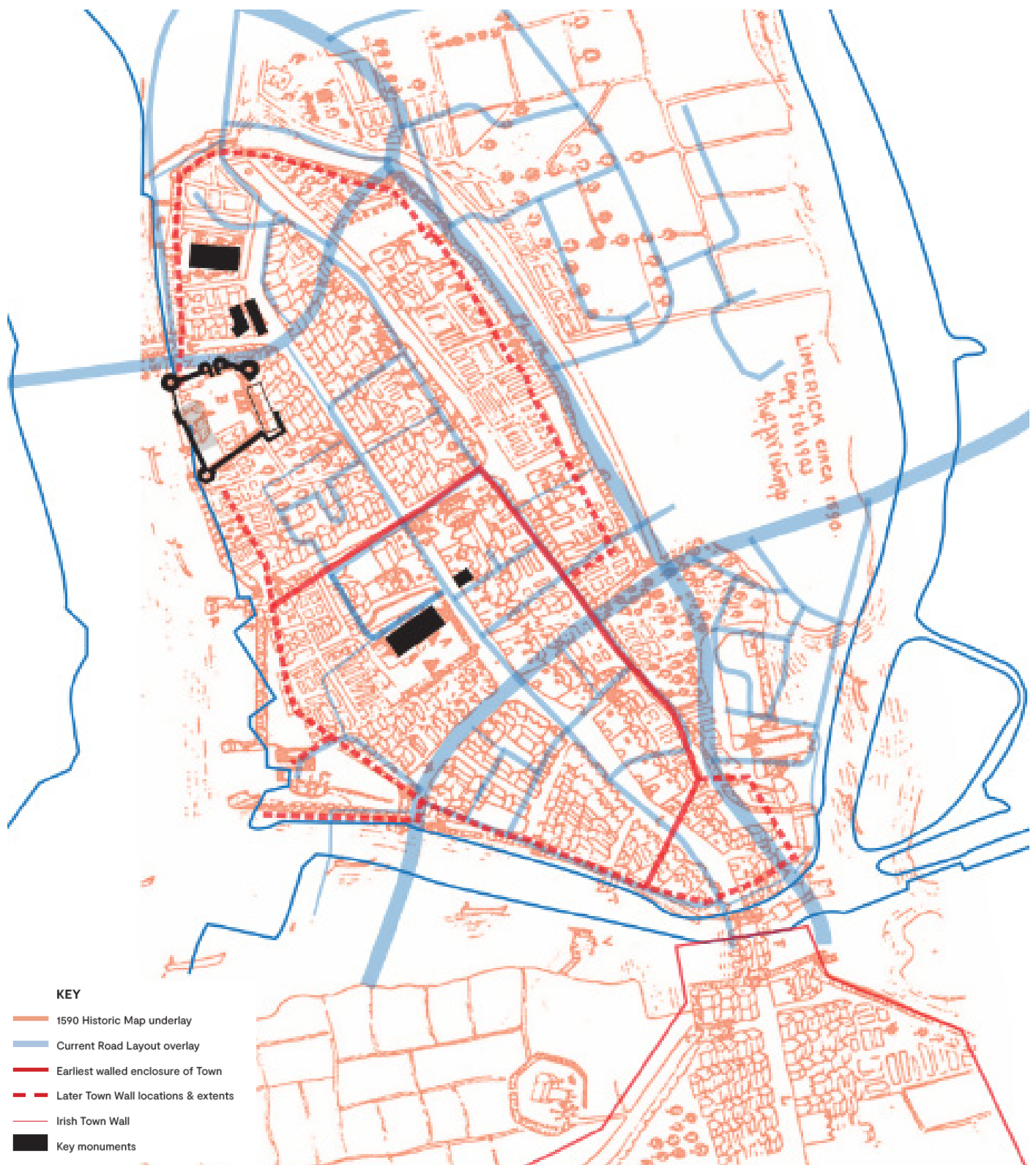


FIG 3.30: HISTORIC STREET PATTERN OVERLAY

3.2.9.2. Pedestrian and Cycle Environment

There is potential for improved pedestrian linkages within the study area and connections to the wider city. This will include the provision of new connections (e.g. Island Road to Convent Street) and provision of improved pedestrian facilities at junctions and improved footpath width and quality. In addition, there is an opportunity for enhanced intuitive wayfinding with enhancements in the public realm. According to the Census 2022 publication, of 229 households within the King's Island area, 96 of those do not have a car at the residency. Meaning almost 42% of locals do not have access to a vehicle and therefore rely heavily upon the pedestrian network and public transport for movement in and around the city. In terms of the modal split of means of travel to work/school/college the Census 2022 data shows that of 230 respondents, 107 of those walk, 10 cycle,

82 either drive or are a passenger in a car and 31 use the bus.

It is encouraging that the majority of residents within the study area have chosen walking as their primary method for travelling to work/school/college. It is likely that this is attributed to the proximity to the city centre and the pedestrian footbridges connecting the study area with the city. Access to Nicholas Street is primarily from the crossroad at Bridge Street and Athlunkard Street, with the street divided into two zones: a standard two-way street and a one-way street section between the junctions of Convent Street and St. Francis Place. Access to the one-way section is only available from Convent Street. The implementation of this one-way system enhances pedestrian safety by enabling better traffic control and reducing obstructions caused by street closures. This is particularly important in an area frequented by large numbers of tourists and events.

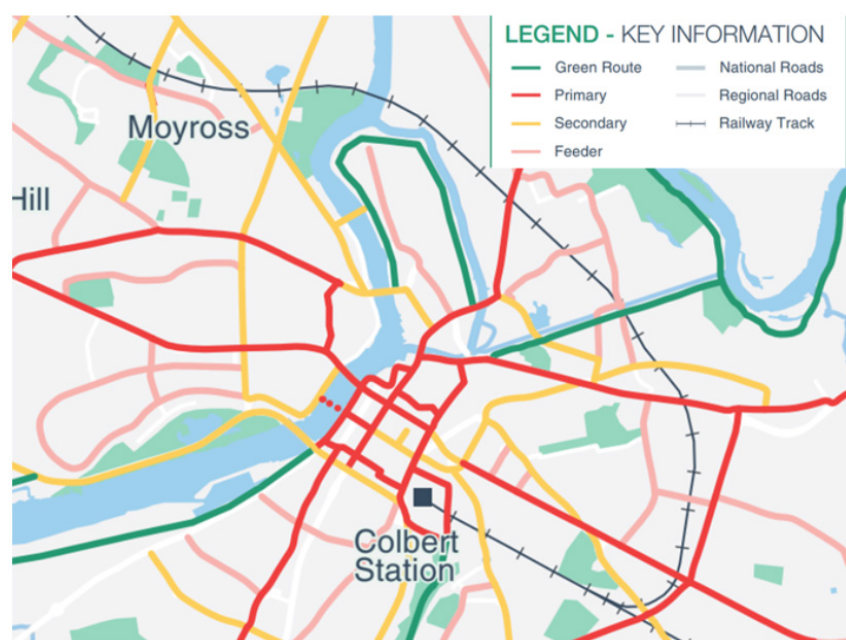


FIG 3.31: CYCLECONNECTS NETWORK

3.2.9.3. Public Transport

The following maps illustrate the final routes for the planned BusConnects high-frequency bus network in Limerick, published in December 2023. Proposed Route 5 (Mungret to St. Mary's Park) offers a service with a 30-minute frequency along Island Road, while Proposed Route 1 (University Hospital to Westbury) will operate with a 15-minute frequency along Athlunkard Street.

With the introduction of the proposed CycleConnects routes under the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS), it is expected that

cycling in the area will increase, providing a more sustainable and efficient mode of transportation.

Island Road and Nicholas Street have been identified as a Feeder Link and Urban Secondary Routes, respectively. These routes connect to Athlunkard Street, which serves as the Urban Primary Route, offering a direct link to the City Centre.

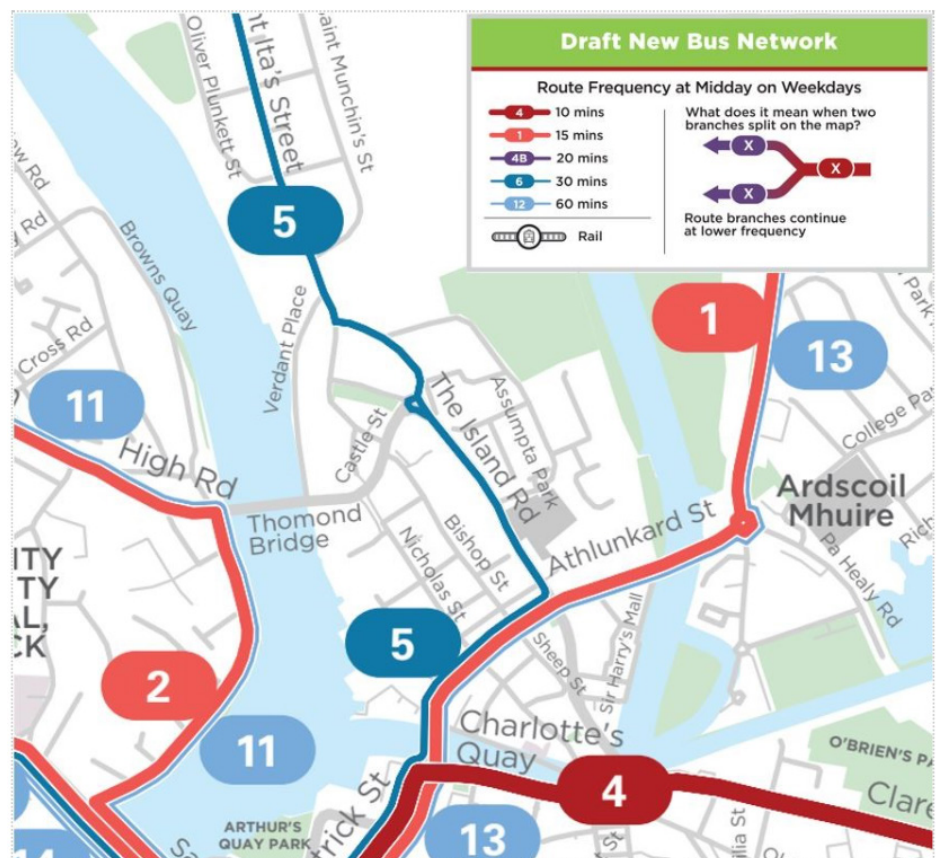


FIG 3.32: BUSCONNECTS NETWORK

3.2.9.4. Public Realm

The public realm throughout the study area is uncoordinated, this is particularly apparent on Nicholas Street. Nicholas Street being the central spine of the area has mixed material containing Wicklow granite, paving blocks and footpaths of various widths. The footpaths on opposite sides of the street do not match and there is a lack of uniformity. There is visual clutter from a plethora of bollards, lamp posts and directional signage. A large number of overhead cables around the junction of St. Peter Street and St. Augustine Place detract from the street scene.

There is a need to improve the physical environment of Nicholas Street making it more legible liveable and attractive, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of Limerick City's heritage. Although the public realm is lacking, Nicholas Street's unique sense of place remains. There is an opportunity to provide a safe, enjoyable legible public realm proposal to add value to the overall area and to intuitively lead people through the walled town and onwards to the city centre. Public realm proposals for Nicholas Street must reinforce the street as the preferred route for visitor's journey.

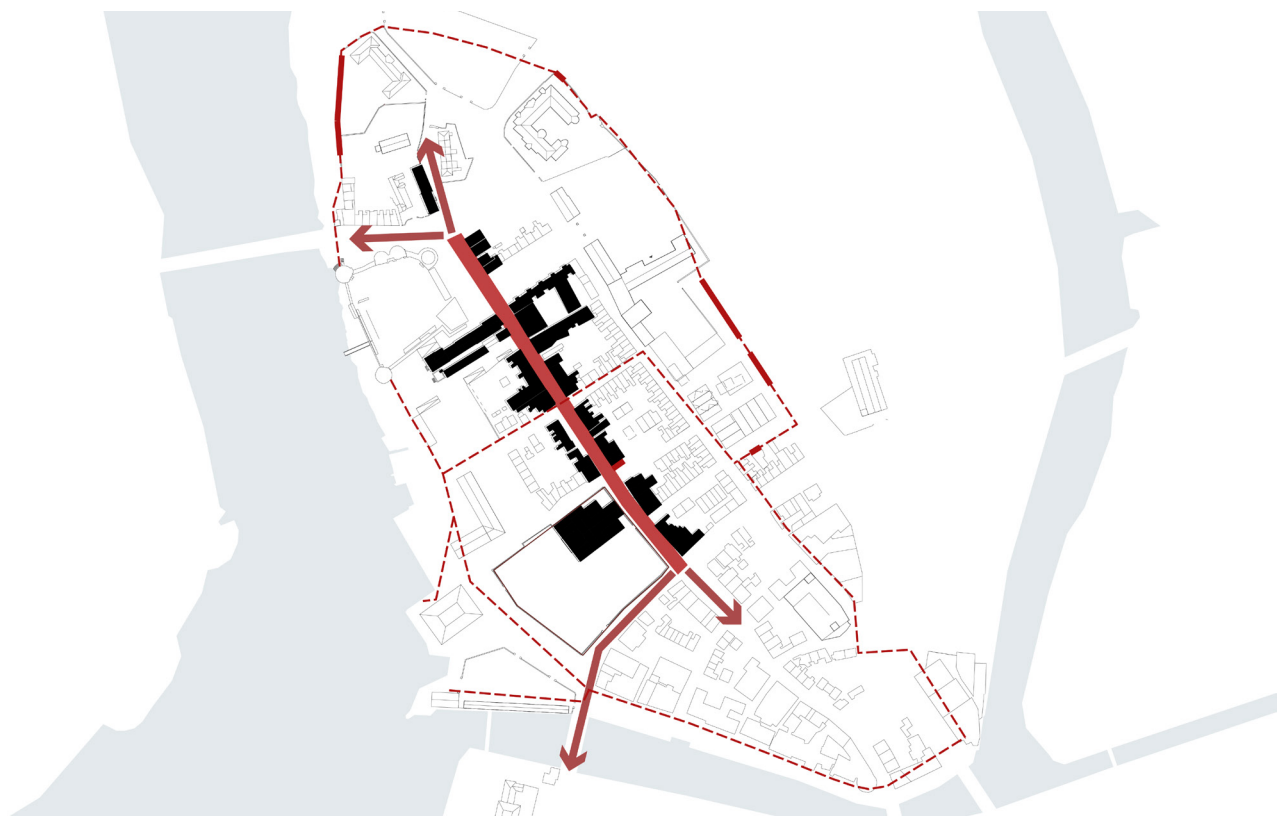


FIG 3.33: NICHOLAS STREET CENTRAL SPINE

3.2.10 Cultural Corridor

The Kings Island Walled Town is an integral part of the wider Cultural Corridor of the City as a whole, and there is an opportunity to reinforce these connections and promote the concept of a cultural corridor.

Enhancement to the public realm on Nicholas Street and the reactivation of vacant premises would encourage tourists to explore more and increase dwell time in the area. The Cultural Corridor should be promoted through marketing and potential for a Limerick Visitor or Heritage Trail App. In addition, vacant shop windows should be utilised for tourist information about the wider city attractions.

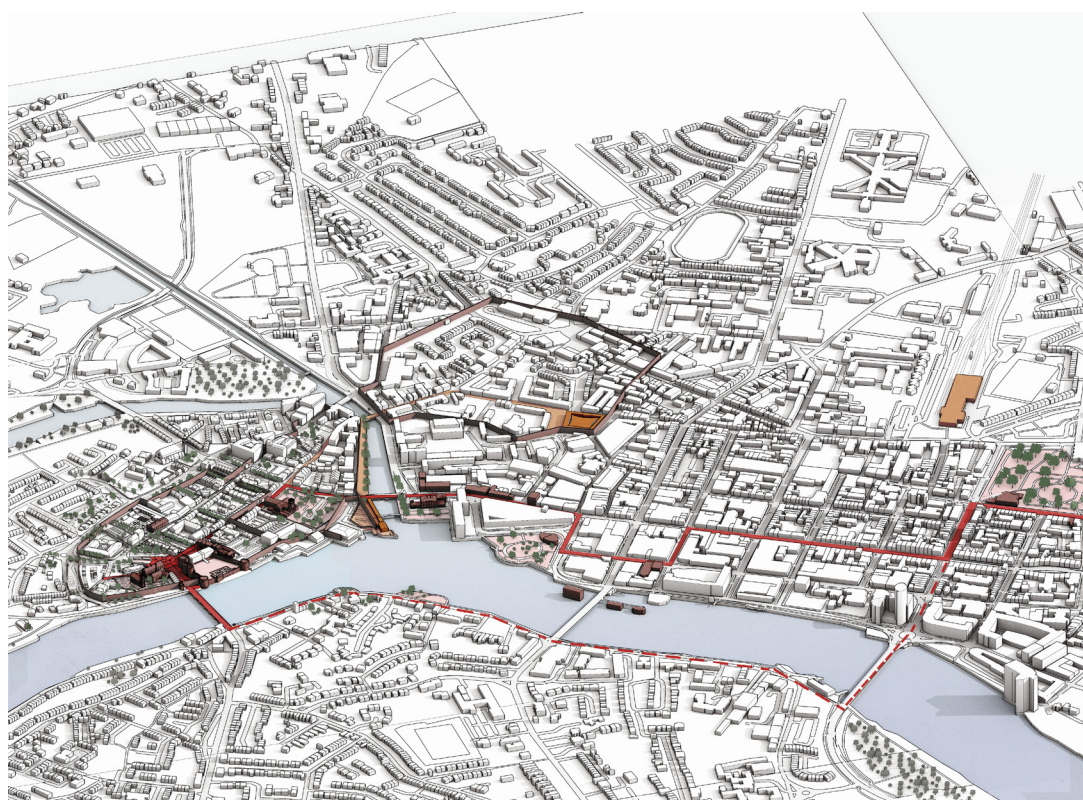


FIG 3.34: ROUTE OF POTENTIAL CULTURAL CORRIDOR INCLUDING NICHOLAS ST AND THE WIDER KING'S ISLAND



Chapter Four

Engagement Approach

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Engagement Approach

4.1 Collaboration and Engagement

As part of enhancing the King's Island Walled Town Framework and aligning with the values and principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB), Limerick City and County Council conducted a series of public engagement and participation events. It was noted that the term "citizen engagement" was deemed inappropriate at the local level and could be seen as discriminatory. Therefore, this document refers to public engagement as a collective term rather than "citizen" and "stakeholder" involvement. Training in NEB was provided to the in-house multi-disciplinary team and to key stakeholder within the Council ensuring staff facilitating the engagement events have appropriate knowledge and skill to ensure meaningful participation in accordance with the ethos of THRIVE.

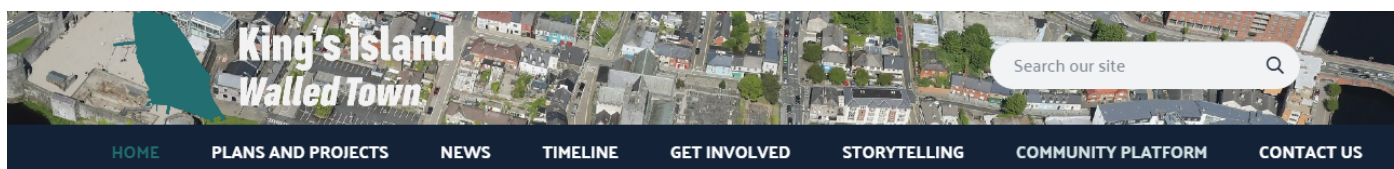
4.2 Public Engagement Plan

A comprehensive engagement plan was developed, identifying the objectives, values, and outcomes of the process. Communities to be consulted were carefully considered, including traditionally under-represented groups such as youth, migrants, people with disabilities. Engagement events were organised in collaboration with local and national stakeholders, ensuring a multi-faceted approach to public engagement.

Participatory engagement methods were employed during open public events, using methods to gather insights at various levels of community life. The tools

allowed participants to express their views on local infrastructure, community engagement, and broader city-wide issues. Events were structured to facilitate either individual or group discussions, ensuring active participation and information exchange between participants and local authority representatives.

To address potential barriers to participation, awareness-raising efforts were extensive, including advertisements in local media, social media promotion, emails to community groups, targeted outreach to stakeholders, leaflet drop to all premises in the study area and radio interviews. The Directly Elected Mayor also promoted the project along with the values and working principles of the NEB under THRIVE, through a promotional video. All events were held in accessible venues at both evening and daytime sessions to accommodate diverse schedules. Materials and consultation tools were clear and accessible, making available both visual interactive material and also written material ensuring that all participants can engage meaningfully in the process. The engagement plan was somewhat fluid as it was important to review events and see "who wasn't in the room", and then to target those groups where necessary to ensure a multi-level governance principles and bottom-up approach. Importantly, the public could give their thoughts at any time outside of the scheduled events via a dedicated project website for the duration of the project.



About

Limerick City and County Council has received funding of approximately €200,000 under THRIVE – the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme – Strand 1 for the King's Island Area of Limerick City.

THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-27.

Funding for this project will be to support the following activities:

- Enhancement of an existing Integrated Urban Strategy – The King's Island Walled Town Framework.
- Identification of projects that promote the conservation and adaptive reuse of our built heritage stock while reducing vacancy and dereliction in town centres.
- Prioritisation, development and specification of project proposals to

King's Island Walled Town Framework

The **Kings Island Walled Town Framework (KIWTF)** is a non-statutory document that was published by Limerick City and County Council in April 2024. It builds on all previous studies carried out for the area and aims to guide and stimulate future investment on King's Island by identifying a number of priority projects, key urban spaces and streetscape enhancements.

The **King's Island Walled Town Framework** serves as a guidance for the transformation of this strategically significant area in Limerick City. Designed to guide and stimulate future investment, this document identifies priority projects and plans, key urban spaces, streetscape enhancements, and the public realm's role in emphasising a sense of place in King's Island, specifically focusing on Nicholas Street.



Fig 4.1: KING'S ISLAND WALLED TOWN FRAMEWORK WEBSITE

The website contains details of the THRIVE project, a link to the King's Island Walled Town Framework document and the list of key sites as identified. In addition to this, the site contains local news items, information on the Storytelling Street project and details of how to get involved.

Priority projects contained within the original King's Island Walled Town Framework were the basis of our public engagement events, both in person and online. Through the extensive engagement sessions,

the public were asked to pick their top three sites that would be prioritised as part of the enhanced Integrated Urban Strategy.

4.3 THRIVE Strand 2 Project

Additionally, for the purposes of determining a candidate site for a THRIVE Strand 2 application, it was important to inform people at engagement events that one priority project site would be brought forward as a candidate for THRIVE Strand 2 funding. A number of buildings were identified as being suitable candidates which met the following criteria for a funding application to THRIVE Strand 2:

4.3.1. Heritage Buildings

It is expected that a heritage building will be a Protected Structure, a Proposed Protected Structure, or will contribute significantly to the character of an Architectural Conservation Area, each as defined under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

4.3.2. Vacancy & Dereliction

Local authorities will be required to provide confirmation that an eligible building or buildings is vacant, derelict or underused and to clearly demonstrate that the buildings rehabilitation and reuse has potential to drive significant town centre regeneration.

4.3.3. Public control or ownership

The heritage buildings included in a Strand 2 project must already be in local authority ownership and/or the local authority must have a property transfer or property sharing agreement in place with another state body prior to submitting an application.

4.3.4. Sustainable end-use of heritage buildings

Projects will be required to identify sustainable viable end use/s of the heritage buildings. This might include utilisation for public services/administration, education or training, community and youth activities including arts/gallery, culture, tourism, sports and leisure.

<i>Building</i>	<i>Public Control or Ownership</i>	<i>Heritage Building (Protected Structure/ACA)</i>	<i>Vacant/Derelict</i>
No. 19 Nicholas Street	Yes – Limerick City and County Council (LCCC)	Yes – ACA No. 7	Yes – Vacant
Nos. 35-39 Nicholas Street (The Fireplace)	Yes - LCCC	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No: 7016)	Yes – Derelict
Mary Street Garda Station	Yes - LCCC	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No: 3347)	Yes – Derelict
Fanning’s Castle	Yes - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No: 3015)	Yes – Derelict ruin

FIG 4.2: SUITABLE CANDIDATES FOR INCLUSION AS STRAND 2 PROJECTS

The buildings contained in Table 4.2 above were identified as being suitable candidates for inclusion as Strand 2 projects at the beginning of the engagement process. All buildings were in public ownership/control, were considered to be a heritage building and were vacant or derelict. This aligned with the definitions in the THRIVE Application Guidelines.

4.4 Events, Engagement, Collaborations and meetings at Pre-draft stage

Pre-strategy engagements was undertaken and provided a wealth of insights into the aspects that matter most to the community regarding the King's Island Walled Town. Participants shared their thoughts on what they cherish about the area, its key challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

The following is a list of events, engagements, collaborations and meetings which took place pre-strategy:

Date	Type of Event	Location
15 th August 2024	Open event	Limerick City and County Council Office
16 th August 2024	Pop-up Event	The Parade/Nicholas Street
12 th September 2024	Workshop with 2 nd Year Architecture Students from UL	Limerick City and County Council Office
12 th September 2024	Workshop with 6 th class students from St Mary's National School	Limerick City and County Council Office
13 th September 2024	Tourism Focus Group	Limerick City and County Council Office
13 th September to 20 th October 2024	Online survey	
20 th September 2024 Culture Night	On street event	Nicholas Street
24 th September 2024	Internal LCCC Steering Group Meeting	Limerick City and County Council Office

FIG 4.3: SCHEDULE OF EVENT WHICH TOOK PLACE PRE-STRATEGY

15th August 2024 – Open event – Limerick City and County Council Offices

The first engagement event took place in Merchants Quay at Limerick City and County Council's office, located within the study area. The drop in event ran from 2pm until 7pm and allowed attendees to learn about the ethos of THRIVE, the New European Bauhaus (NEB), its values and principles and to discuss the study area in detail. A large map of the study area was located at the entrance door with copies of the existing King's Island Walled Town Framework. Throughout the room there were large aerial photographs of the study area highlighting the priority project sites. Attendees were asked to take three stickers and place a sticker on their preferred sites.

Attendees were also asked for their suggestions on preferred uses for each site, e.g., residential, retail, community, etc, which was all recorded on a large display. Large sheets for each priority project site were displayed throughout the room and attendees were invited to suggest their preferred use for each site.

Multi-disciplinary Council staff were on hand at all times to answer any questions or to discuss the THRIVE project with attendees. Galmstrup Architects who were appointed develop a master plan for King John's Castle were also present on the day and used the event to engage with the public on the redevelopment of King John's Castle.

Approximately 150 people attended the event. Attendees included local residents, local business owners and staff, residents of the wider city and county, elected members, TDs, local media and community groups. Radio interviews were conducted at the event with both organisers and attendees and presented as a news segment on Limerick's Live 95Fm in the following days.

For the Fireplace Site, the most common uses suggested were a hotel/hostel, a creative/cultural space and a museum.

Regarding Nicholas Street, many suggested that improvements should be made to the public realm as well as tackling vacancy and dereliction to entice new retailers to the area. Many cited that the closure of Tracey's shop/Bakehouse 22 on Nicholas Street in 2022 as a major blow to the area.

For Mary Street Garda Station, many suggested that the site has been vacant for too long and that a new use should be found as soon as possible. The most common suggestions included a creative/cultural venue, a café/restaurant, a tourist information centre, a museum or housing

The event was extremely well attended and allowed the Council to promote and explain the THRIVE project to the attendees.



Outcome:

The exercise whereby people were invited to place three stickers on their preferred sites enabled us to get a clear idea of the preferred sites to prioritise as part of the enhancement of the King's Island Walled Town Framework, it also created a fun atmosphere for participants and induced conversations among all. There were clear front runners which included The Fireplace Site, Nicholas Street and the Mary Street Garda Station.



16th August 2024 – Pop-up Event on The Parade/Nicholas Street

The pop-up event took place on Friday 16th August at The Parade on Nicholas Street, directly outside King John's Castle. The aim of this event was to engage with people who would otherwise not attend an engagement event, particularly tourists visiting King John's Castle and persons using the area with impaired mobility or disabilities. A significant number of respondents on the day were tourists, those using the Three Bridges Walk for leisure purposes, in addition to locals.

A branded gazebo was erected in front of the castle which contained informative material and a large aerial photograph highlighting the priority project sites like the previous day's event. Once again, passers-by were asked to identify their preferred sites and suggest proposed uses for them.

Galmstrup Architects were present on the day to engage with people on a proposed masterplan for King John's Castle.



Outcome:

The pop-up street event allowed interaction with both local residents, business owners as well as visitors to the area. By speaking to visitors and tourists from as far away as Asia and the United States, we were able to understand 'first impressions' of the area which are often so important to a place's reputation.

Many tourists commented on the amount of history and old buildings within the area but suggested that wayfinding could be improved, particularly when coming from the city centre area around O'Connell Street.

Others suggested more shops and cafés in the area would allow them to spend more time in the area after visiting King John's Castle or St. Mary's Cathedral.

12th September 2024 – Workshop with 2nd Year Architecture Students from UL

On 12th September 2nd year students from the School of Architecture at the University of Limerick (SAUL) were invited to attend a workshop in the Council Chamber in Limerick City and Council Offices at Merchant's Quay.

In a similar format to previous engagement events, large maps of the study area were displayed throughout the room as well as large aerial photographs of the study area highlighting the potential project sites.

The students were asked to review each of the sites contained on the maps and to make suggestions of uses for each one and suggest other possible sites. It was a useful exercise for the students who could incorporate architectural principles and skills into their choices.



Outcome:

The session provided valuable insights and perspectives from a group of young people in their late teens and early twenties, whose voices are often overlooked. Their suggestions included the incorporation of sustainable designs that prioritise environmental considerations, as well as ideas to make the streets of King's Island more vibrant, such as pop-up shops, markets, restaurants, and housing. The students were able to apply their skills and architectural knowledge to offer informed suggestions for various sites within the study area.

Additionally, the students gained valuable experience by engaging in a real-life project, which not only enhanced their understanding of design and place-making but also introduced them to essential concepts such as New European Bauhaus, planning, masterplanning, conservation, and heritage. These elements will play a crucial role in their future careers as architects.

12th September 2024 – Workshop with 6th class students from St Mary’s National School

5th and 6th class students from St. Mary’s National School on Bishop Street were invited to attend a workshop in the Council Chamber.

The main aim of this workshop was to engage the younger people from the community in the development of this framework but to also give them a voice. Young people and children have very different needs to adults, and it is important that their voices are heard.

To get the kids involved, the workshop started with a quiz to engage them with the history and geography of their area. The quiz (see appendix 2) included a variety of interactive activities to make learning exciting. This included asking the children:

- To locate their school and other key buildings on the study area map
- Did they know what the oldest building on Kings Island is and how old it is?

The story of Nicholas Street was shared and how the street was named after Saint Nicholas of Myra, who is more widely known today as Santa Claus – a fun fact for the kids!

The focus then moved to the potential projects site and the children’s opinion and potential use of each site.

Outcome:

Many of the children who attended the event were from local areas located on King’s Island.

The feedback from the children was incredibly valuable, as their suggestions differed from those of adults. They expressed a strong desire for more green spaces, playgrounds and sports pitches. Additionally, they advocated for more community services for young people and emphasized the need for a safer environment for kids in the area. They were very aware of wider social issues and suggested providing homes for those who don’t have one. Finally, they lobbied for more room for their school.

13th September 2024 – Tourism Focus Group

This group was originally convened in 2022 to engage on the branding of King's Island and has worked on a number of projects in the area since.

The group includes representatives from Fáilte Ireland, attractions stakeholders, local business owners, hoteliers and a number of community representatives as well as some key staff from within Limerick City and County Council from the Tourism, Regeneration Sections and the Arts Office.

Clear trends and priorities had emerged in the engagement events to date. The desire for Nicholas Street to be reinvigorated and the need for a potential candidate THRIVE Strand 2 project to be catalyst for the regeneration of the area were clear. Discussion centred on the groups thoughts on the study area and their priorities and the results of the engagements to date.

Outcome:

It was concluded that while Limerick is underserved in terms of tourist accommodation, it is well served by budget type accommodation and that the potential for an upmarket hostel while valid may not be viable in terms of pricing relative to the existing supply of 3-star hotel offering throughout the City.

The idea of cultural and creative uses was also a forerunner in engagements; however this is a very broad term, and the group delved into the idea of what this could be and how it could best suit the area and support the wider cultural corridor. Potential uses such as a museum, artist studios/artist in residence and craft retailing was suggested. The need for further investigation into the potential cultural and creative uses was identified and the Assistant Arts Officer suggested arranging a meeting with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland to get a better understanding of what artists want in a space. A follow up paper was produced on potential museum ideas such as A Story Museum, a Gaming Museum and an Irish Inventions Museum.

13th September to 20th October 2024 – Online Survey

In anticipation of Culture Night (annual citywide celebration of culture, creativity and the arts) and to target a wider audience across Limerick and beyond, a survey was prepared with a series of questions relating to the study area and to each specific site. The survey was posted on Limerick City and County Council's MyPoint Consultation Platform and was open from 13th September until 20th October 2024. The survey was also posted on Limerick City and County Council's social media platforms including X, LinkedIn and Instagram, as well as on the King's Island Walled Town website. This allowed people unable to attend the in-person engagement events to contribute to the enhancement of the framework. The survey was also promoted on the 'Storytelling Street' event on Nicholas St for Culture Night which took place on 20th September.

The survey contained a number of important questions such as

- What is your main reason(s) for visiting King's Island?
- How often do you visit King's Island?
- Which sites should be prioritised as part of the King's Island Walled Town Framework?
- What are your favourite things about the area?
- What are the main issues that need to be addressed in the area?



Outcome:

The survey was completed 161 times and proved to be extremely valuable in identifying the priority project sites for the King's Island Walled Town Framework. It also gave people the opportunity to share their thoughts on what they enjoy most about King's Island and areas that could be improved.

Unlike in-person events, the survey reached a broader audience, including people from Limerick and beyond. Running for five weeks, the survey offered flexibility and gave people the time they needed to reflect on their responses, and the anonymity of the survey encouraged honest and open feedback.

The survey revealed that the most frequently selected sites were Nicholas Street, the Fireplace Site, Mary Street Garda Station and the Potato Market.

20th September 2024 – Culture Night - Nicholas Street

From the outset of the THRIVE project, Culture Mapping was identified as a useful tool to help people see and hear how buildings were used in the past; to understand their heritage, acknowledge the present and think about future uses.

As part of Culture Night, Limerick City and County Council collaborated with The Hunt Museum, King John's Castle, Paul Partnership and Limerick Island Community Partners to run an event called 'The Storytelling Street'. As one of Limerick's oldest street Nicholas Street has long been associated with intrigue, fascinating characters and buildings with a rich history and folklore.

Posters with details of former residents of the street were placed on several buildings along the street. Each poster contained a short overview of the person who lived in the building in times gone by, accompanied by a QR code which linked to the King's Island Walled Town project website. The website contained the full stories featured on the posters. On Culture Night, spectators were treated to a number of stories told by local storytellers while actors re-enacted these tales at various points along the street. There were three sessions which started at 4pm, 5pm and 6pm and started at King John's Castle where spectators were told about the tale of 'Drunken Thady and the Bishop's Lady'.

The Storytelling trail proceeded along Nicholas Street and culminated at the Fireplace Site where Limerick City and County Council staff engaged with patrons



on the THRIVE project. The final story told was at the Fireplace Site on Nicholas Street. Until the mid-1990s, this was home to Michael Healy's shoe repair business.

After the stories concluded, Limerick City and County Council staff gave a brief overview of the THRIVE project and invited people to take the online survey by scanning QR codes or by using tablets with the survey open. Posters and boards also contained information about the THRIVE project and the priority project sites. Staff were on hand to answer any questions that people had about the project.

Outcome:

The event was a huge success and created strong relationships with those involved in the event which included local organisations and residents, tourism bodies and local tourism attractions. Community Engagement is at the heart of THRIVE and through this event, it has resulted in new working relationships with various stakeholders in the King's Island area.

Nicholas Street is a street with layers of history and the Storytelling Street project which aimed to unearth stories of the past lined up well with the core values of the THRIVE project through revitalisation of space and promoting heritage.

The online survey was promoted on the night and allowed people to select their priority sites and uses in a quick and efficient way. This event engaged with people who would otherwise not have taken part in the THRIVE project.

At the end of the engagement process 4 key buildings that were earlier identified as potential projects for a THRIVE Strand 2 funding application were further assessed.



Table 4.4 identifies these 4 buildings and outlines reasons for the inclusion/exclusion of particular sites. Consequently, Nos. 35-39 Nicholas Street and the former Mary Street Garda Station were identified as potential candidates for a THRIVE Strand 2 funding application as it was determined that certain buildings were not suitable for consideration based on factors such as insufficient floor space and ownership issues. As a result, No. 19 Nicholas Street and Fanning's Castle were excluded from contention.

Building	Public Control or Ownership	Heritage Building (Protected Structure/ACA)	Vacant / Derelict	Opportunities / Constraints	Outcome
No. 19 Nicholas Street	Yes – Limerick City and County Council (LCCC)	Yes – ACA No. 7	Yes - Vacant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small site, only suitable for use as dwelling and/or retail unit. 	<i>Excluded</i>
Nos. 35-39 Nicholas Street (The Fireplace)	Yes - LCCC	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No 7016)	Yes - Derelict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prominent site on Nicholas Street. Vacant and idle for 25+ years. Site of historical significance. Huge public interest in site. 900sqm site. 	<i>Included</i>
Mary Street Garda Station	Yes - LCCC	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No: 3347)	Yes - Derelict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical building. Vacant for over 20+ years. Key building on Mary Street. Public desire to see redeveloped. 	<i>Included</i>
Fanning's Castle	Yes - Department of Housing,	Yes – Protected Structure (Reg No:3015)	Yes – Derelict ruins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility issues which include land surrounding 	<i>Excluded</i>

FIG 4.4: EMERGING PREFERRED OPTIONS

4.4.1 Public Preferred Sites

Throughout the extensive engagement events both in person and online, the public was invited to select their top three sites to be prioritised as part of the enhanced Integrated Urban Strategy. The charts below outline the preferred sites of the public. The three sites that emerged as the most popular choices were Nicholas Street, The Fireplace Site, and The Potato Market.

Other highly favoured sites included the former Mary Street Garda Station, King John's Castle and the World-Class Waterfront. This process allowed the project team to pinpoint the main project sites that would become pipeline projects as part of this Enhanced Integrated

Urban Strategy and for one site to be selected for submission as a candidate for THRIVE Strand 2 funding.

Although Nicholas Street came through as the public's preferred site, it was ultimately deemed unsuitable for THRIVE Strand 2 funding, as it fails to meet criteria outlined in Section 4.3 above. As a result, the next most favoured site, The Fireplace Site, was selected. The Fireplace Site meets the necessary criteria for inclusion, as it is owned by Limerick City and County Council and is a Recorded Monument (LI005-017006 and LI005-017123). Additionally, the regeneration of the Fireplace site would support the revitalisation of Nicholas Street also, which was identified as the key priority for the study area. This in turn supports policy objectives in the Limerick Development Plan and organisational goals.

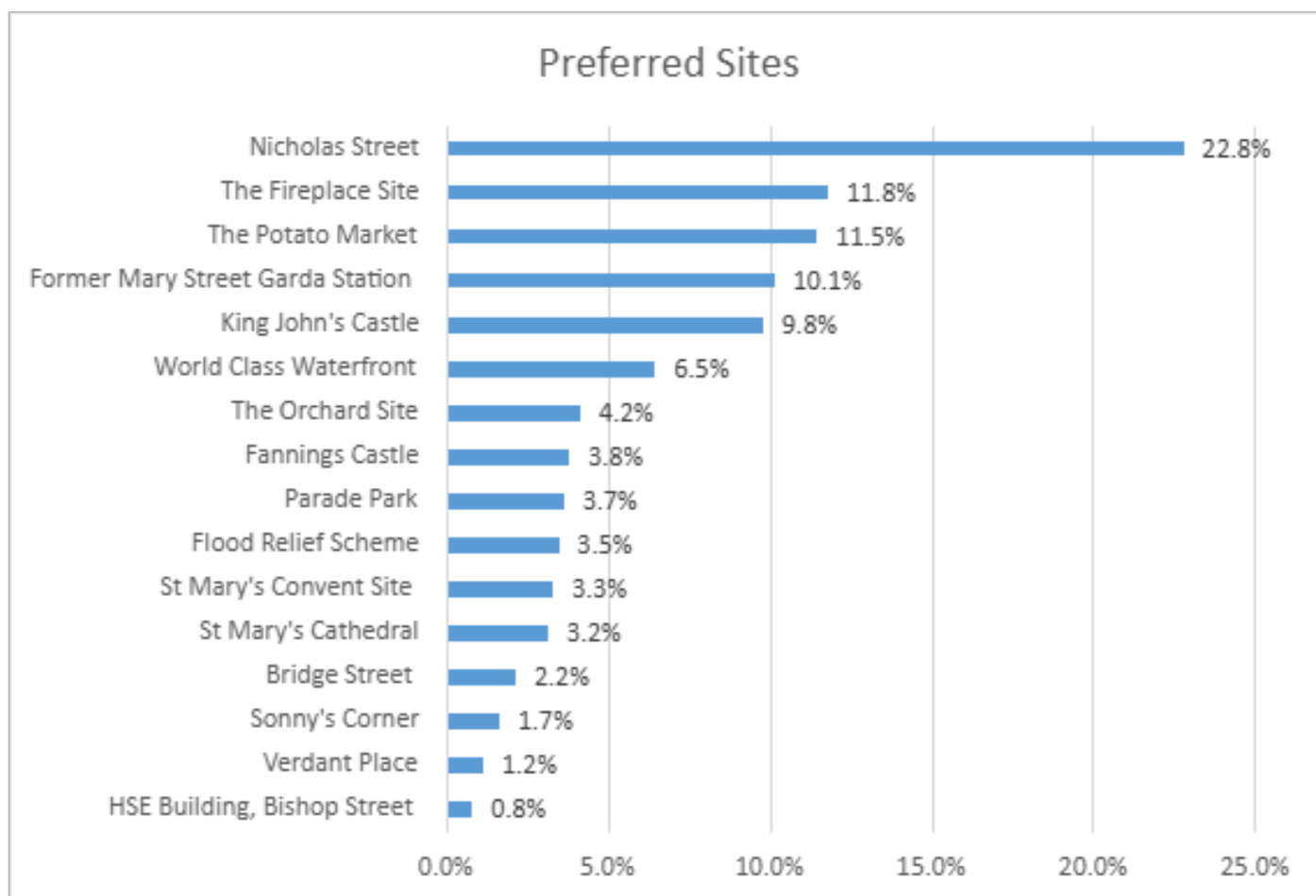


FIG 4.5: PREFERRED SITES PER PUBLIC OPINION

4.4.2 Public Preferred Uses

The graphs below identify the preferred uses for the top four priority projects.

Many people expressed strong opinions about Nicholas Street, so it was not surprising to see it emerge as a priority in public engagement events. A recurring theme throughout the discussions was the desire to revitalise the street through upgrades to the public realm and the establishment of new businesses in vacant units. The most popular suggestion was to introduce cafés, bars and restaurants, with 24% of respondents supporting this idea. This was closely followed by cultural and creative uses at 18.5%, and retail/commercial spaces at 14%.

As can be seen from Figure 4.7 over 30% of respondents wanted to see the Fireplace Site used for a cultural or creative use, with Tourism (20%), Community (14%) and café/bar/restaurant (14%) being the next most popular uses.

Figure 4.8 shows over 23% of respondents wanted to see the Potato Market used for more cultural or creative use, with retail (19%) and café/bar/restaurants (18%) ranking highly as alternative uses.

Figure 4.9 shows over 23% of respondents wanted to see the former Mary Street Garda Station redeveloped as a Cultural/Creative venue with café/bar/restaurant (18%) and Community (15%) being preferred uses. A residential use was selected by 13% of respondents showing the need for increased housing in the area.

Feedback from public engagement sessions has been used to develop a proposal for each site based on the public's input. Information on each site can be found in Section 6 of the Integrated Urban Strategy which also includes site-specific information obtained from the public engagement events.

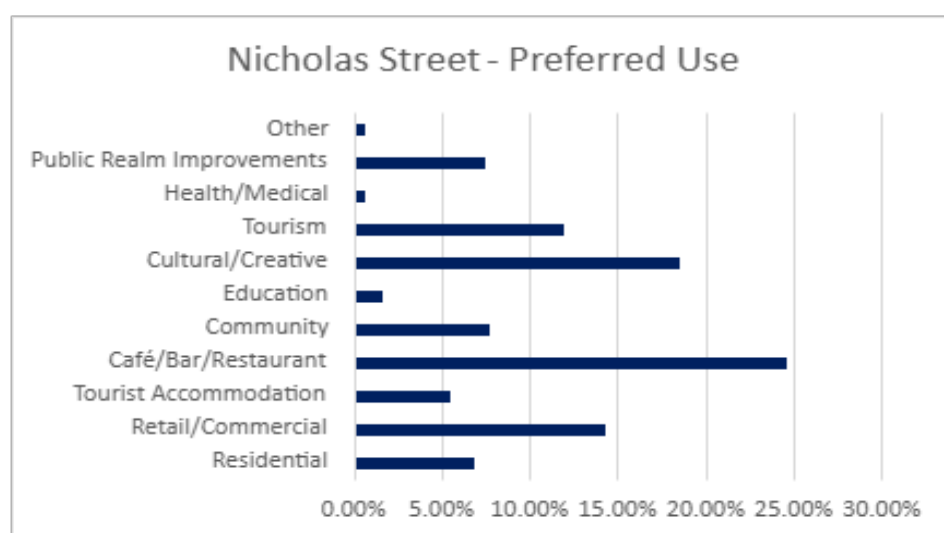


FIG 4.6: PREFERRED USES FOR NICHOLAS STREET PER PUBLIC OPINION

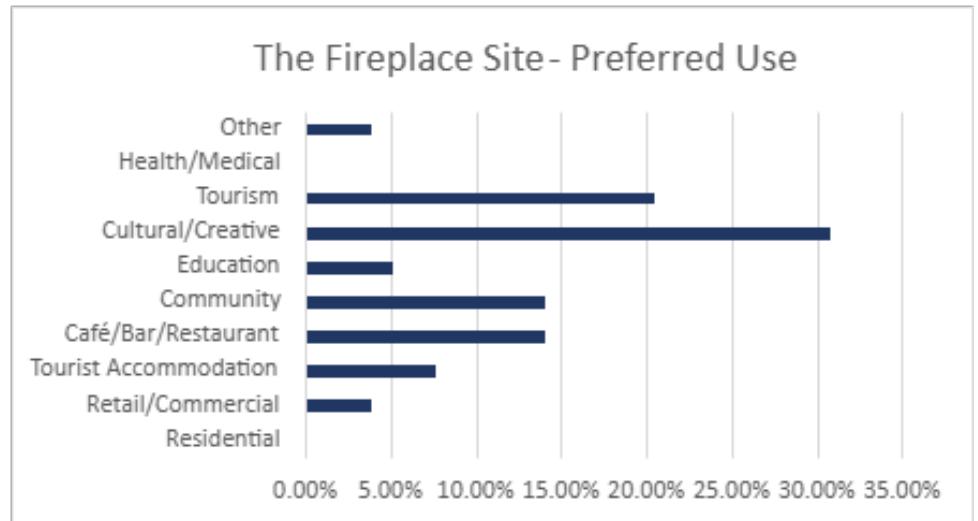


FIG 4.7: PREFERRED USES FOR FIREPLACE SITE PER PUBLIC OPINION

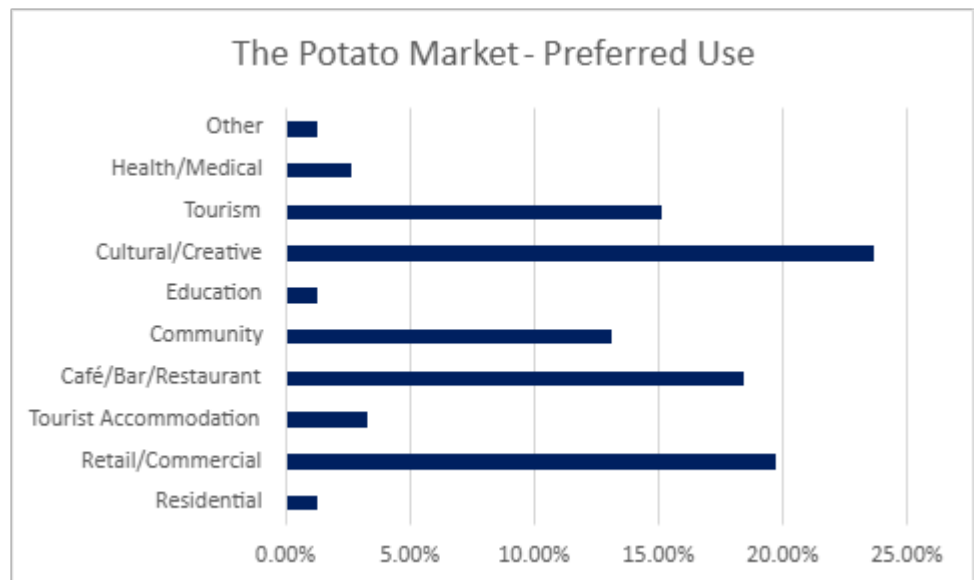


FIG 4.8: PREFERRED USES FOR POTATO MARKET PER PUBLIC OPINION

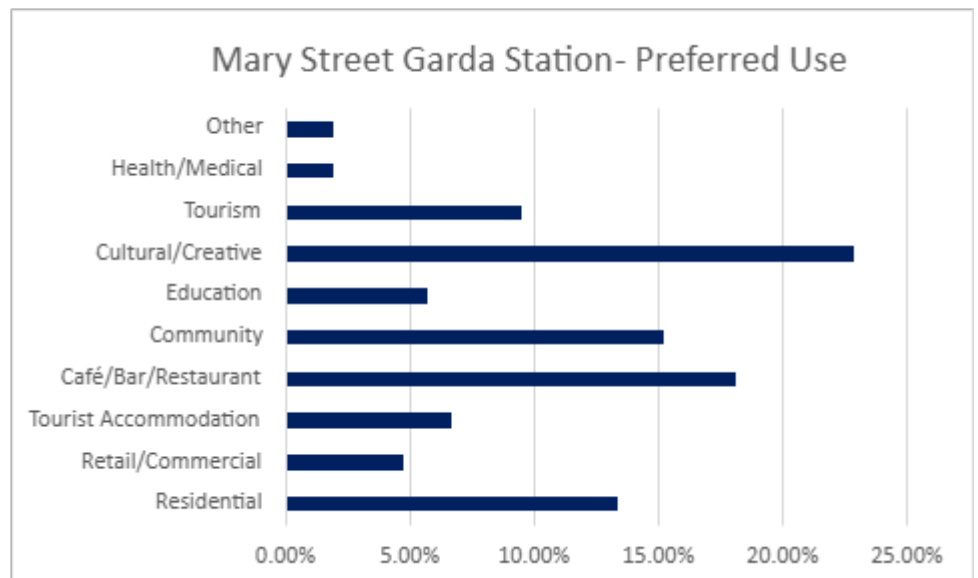


FIG 4.9: PREFERRED USES FOR MARY STREET GARDA STATION PER PUBLIC OPINION

4.5 Pre-Strategy Engagement Outcome and Conclusion

Engagement with the public and stakeholders was critical in identifying pipeline projects and viable end uses. The selection of potential projects was guided by alignment with community needs and the core values of the New European Bauhaus which embraces multi-level engagement, a transdisciplinary approach and participatory process.

After the engagement events, the project team analysed the data and the feedback collected.

4.5.1. Key Themes from Feedback:

Enhanced Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure

- There is a clear desire for better facilities for walking and cycling, ensuring safer, more accessible routes.

Addressing Vacancy and Dereliction:

- The community wants to see improvements in areas that are underused or deteriorating, emphasising the need for revitalisation.

Creating More Public Spaces:

- There is a strong push for more accessible public areas where people can gather, relax, and engage with the community.

Preserving Cultural and Historical Identity:

- Residents are passionate about maintaining the area's unique cultural and historical characteristics. This suggests a focus on heritage conservation in any future development or improvement efforts.

Connection to Nicholas Street, the Riverside, and Historic Sites:

- The community has a deep attachment to these locations, and there are likely opportunities for enhancements in these areas that would resonate with local pride and history.

4.5.2. Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop infrastructure that connects and strengthens these key areas, such as safe walking and cycling paths along the riverside.
- Invest in revitalisation programs to address vacancy and dereliction, possibly incorporating community-driven solutions for reusing buildings or spaces.
- Create greener, public spaces for social interaction, play, and recreation.
- Consider initiatives that honour and celebrate the historical identity of the area, perhaps through public art, signage, or heritage trails.

4.5.3. Selection of Priority Site - The Fireplace

Following extensive engagement and consultation across a very broad representative spectrum of people, interest groups, stakeholders etc and based on an assessment of buildings and sites against the Thrive Strand 2 funding criteria the building/site which emerged as the most appropriate site was the Fireplace site as it satisfied the following:

- Is a Heritage Building - a Recorded Monument (LI005-017006 and LI005-017123) and included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- Is vacant, derelict and underused and its reuse would drive wider regeneration in the Kings Island Area.
- Is owned by the Local Authority
- And a sustainable end-use of the building is explored in the next section of this document.

4.6 Events, Engagements and Collaborations and meetings at Project Design and IUS completion

The following is a list of events, engagements, collaborations and meetings which took place following the conclusion of public engagement events. These meetings aimed to facilitate the completion of the co-design approach to the development of The Fireplace building including the preparation and approval of a Part 8 application:

The following is a list of events, engagements, collaborations and meetings which took place on the proposed project design and in the completion of the strategy:

Date	Type
9 th October 2024	Meeting with Forge Design Factory
25 th October 2024	Online meeting with the Design and Craft Council of Ireland
7 th November 2024	Presentation to Elected Members of the Metropolitan District
7 th November 2024	Meeting with Greater King's Island Residents Association
21 st November 2024	Presentation to master's students from Mary Immaculate College
4 th March 2025	Briefing to Elected Members on the proposed Part 8 proposal for the Fireplace site as the candidate THRIVE Strand 2 application.
14 th April 2025	Presentation to the Strategic Policy Committee Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Planning

FIG 4.10: SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AT PROJECT DESIGN AND STRATEGY COMPLETION STAGE

9th October – Meeting with Forge Design Factory

Following a series of engagement events, a recurring theme emerged: the desire to further develop Limerick's vibrant arts scene. Many participants expressed interest in establishing a dedicated space where artists and designers could develop their skills. This would encompass studios, workspaces, exhibition areas, and a retail space where artists could sell and showcase their work. Ideas ranged from providing sewing machines for textile designers to kilns for ceramicists.

In discussions with the Economic Department Section of Limerick City and County Council, it was noted that the Forge Design Factory (FDF) shared similar visions and goals.

Forge Design Factory is part of a global network of 40 design factories and stands as the first of its kind in Ireland. As an interdisciplinary design and learning hub, Forge Design Factory (FDF) brings together students, educators, researchers, and industry professionals to collaborate and innovate.

The establishment of FDF is a result of a collaborative initiative involving the following key partners:

- Technological University of the Shannon / Limerick School of Art and Design
- University of Limerick
- Clare County Council
- Limerick City & County Council
- Tipperary County Council
- Irish Centre for Business Excellence

Forge Design Factory envisions the creation of a dynamic ecosystem that connects designers, industry partners, and key stakeholders in the Midlands and Midwest regions of Ireland. This ecosystem will focus on developing impactful solutions to address real-world challenges. Their goal is to build long-term, collaborative design partnerships that drive innovation, foster growth, and create lasting value for all involved. By working closely with industry partners, they aim to cultivate a vibrant, innovative design ecosystem in the Midlands and Midwest of Ireland.

A meeting was arranged for 9th October to understand more about FDF and to explore a potential collaboration with FDF for a THRIVE Strand 2 project. During this meeting, we presented the THRIVE project and identified the Fireplace Site as a candidate for THRIVE Strand 2 funding. Given the public's preference for a cultural or creative venue, the idea of a craft and design centre for King's Island was discussed.

Outcome:

FDF expressed strong support for participating in any Strand 2 project. They acknowledged that the proposed craft and design centre closely aligned with their own aspirations. Rather than viewing this as competition, both parties recognised an opportunity to collaborate and create a synergy between Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) and FDF. This meeting proved pivotal in establishing a new partnership with the FDF, ultimately securing a potential end user for the Fireplace Site proposal.

25th October – Meeting with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland

Following overwhelming feedback and suggestions for additional artist and design spaces, particularly along Nicholas Street and at the Fireplace Site, Limerick City and County Council's met with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCI). DCCI, the national agency for craft and design in Ireland, supports designers and makers in developing sustainable businesses and advocates for the societal benefits of craft and design.

An online meeting was held with DCCI, during which they provided an overview of their organization and shared insights into how Kilkenny became a hub for craft and design in the 1970s. The meeting offered valuable information on how artists and craftspeople operate, highlighting the need for dedicated spaces to accommodate them. DCCI expressed strong support for creating such a space in Limerick, seeing it as an opportunity to foster a vibrant creative and cultural ecosystem.

Outcome:

The meeting proved to be highly beneficial, with the Head of Design at DCCI outlining the advantages of establishing a craft and design centre at the Fireplace Site. They highlighted the potential benefits of local material fabrication, rather than outsourcing production to mainland Europe or Asia which is common practice. This insight was particularly valuable for a proposal to develop the Mary Street Garda Station into a design and fabrication centre. The creation of multiple design hubs within the small

area of the King's Island Walled Town study could foster an integrated ecosystem of creators, artists, and designers, helping to cultivate a unique identity and culture for the area.

7th November 2024 – Presentation to Elected Members of the Metropolitan District

A special briefing was held with the Elected Members of the Metropolitan District. The focus of the briefing was to provide an update on the THRIVE project thus far and to review engagement feedback. It included an overview of the works undertaken including engagements but also allowed Councillors to ask any questions or make suggestions on the project including the list of Priority Project Sites. Elected Members were advised that based on the finding of the extensive public engagement and having regard to the terms of THRIVE funding No.35-39 including the Fireplace Site on Nicholas Street was proposed for Strand 2 funding. Three potential uses were proposed for the site; a Creative/Design centre, a hotel/hostel and a Cinema/Theatre, one of which would form the proposed use.

All sites which formed part of the Draft IUS were discussed with the Councillors. Once again, it was highlighted that public's input helped shape the prioritisation of all sites and their proposed uses. Outcome:

The elected members were satisfied with the process and supportive of No.35-39 including the Fireplace site to proceed to THRIVE Strand 2 funding.

The members were advised that a Part 8 application would be submitted to Limerick City and County Council for their approval for the site. The support of the Elected Members for the site to proceed for funding was essential for in terms of bottom-up approach and multi-level governance.

7th November 2024 – Meeting with Greater King’s Island Residents’ Association

Project staff attended a meeting of the Greater King’s Island Residents Association to provide an overview on the THRIVE project and the engagement efforts undertaken, the Strand 2 project, and its design and the Draft Strategy proposals. During the meeting, members had the opportunity to input into the Strand 2 project and provide their views on the Draft Strategy.

Outcome:

The Residents’ Association was very supportive of the work carried out to date and the 35-39 including the Fireplace site as the Strand 2 project. The Associations feedback on the Draft Strategy considered for in the final document.

13th November 2024 – Co-Design Meeting with Forge Design Factory

A meeting was held with the Forge Design Factory (FDF) team to discuss the fireplace site and explore the possibility of FDF being the end user. The discussion was productive in understanding how the space could be designed to meet their needs. FDF

was asked to share their vision for how they would use the building, outline their specific requirements, and identify how we could support these needs through thoughtful design.

Outcome:

During the meeting, the FDF team outlined their requirements for the building. They also emphasised how the project will significantly contribute to the circular economy by reusing materials and incorporating natural resources. Some of these materials could potentially be sourced from small green spaces on the site, further enhancing the building’s sustainability. There was several follow up meetings and co-design sessions held.

21st November 2024 – Presentation to Master's Students from Mary Immaculate College

Members of the project team presented to master's students at Mary Immaculate College about the THRIVE project, which included a focus on the Strand 2 project and the Draft Strategy. The students, who were undertaking a module in Heritage Management, found the project highly engaging, as it focuses on the revitalisation of town centres through the renovation, refurbishment, and adaptation of vacant and derelict heritage buildings.

Outcome:

The students gained invaluable insights into the THRIVE project and had the opportunity to inquire about the significant role public engagement played in advancing the King's Island Walled Town Framework, the Strand 2 project and the Draft Strategy. The students' feedback on the Draft Strategy was considered for inclusion in the final document.

16th December 2024 – Briefing on Proposed Part 8 Application to Elected Members

As part of the proposal to develop the 35-39 including the Fireplace Site on Nicholas Street, a presentation was made to the members of the Metropolitan District during their monthly meeting. As part of the Part 8 process, it is the responsibility of the members to vote on the approval of a Part 8 decision. This meeting was, therefore, crucial to ensure that members were fully informed about the upcoming Part 8 and the process that led to its inception. The

presentation provided an overview of all the work and stakeholder engagements carried out to date as part of the THRIVE project including the enhancement of the King's Island Walled Town Framework. Additionally, it was essential to give Councillors the opportunity to ask questions regarding the proposed development and offer suggestions for its design and use.

Outcome:

Members of the Metropolitan District were very supportive of the proposed scheme for the Fireplace Site stating that it has the potential to help revitalise Nicholas Street and serve as a space for artists and designers to develop their skills and forge their career. The details of the briefing and interviews with project members were shared by local Media Outlets and very positive feedback was received.

13th January 2025 to 24th February 2025 – Public Display/Observation Period for Part 8

A Part 8 proposal for the Design and Innovation Hub at Nos. 35 – 39 Nicholas Street was submitted to Limerick City and County Council and went on public display on 13th January 2025. As part of the public consultation process, the plans and supporting documents were made available for public viewing until 10th February 2025, with submissions accepted up to 24th February 2025. The proposal was actively promoted through local media, encouraging public engagement and feedback. All submissions received were supportive of the project.

Outcome:

Reflecting this strong public endorsement, the proposal was formally approved by the elected members at the Metropolitan District meeting on 10th March 2025.

14th April 2025 – Briefing Strategic Policy Committee Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Planning

The finalised Kings Island Walled Town IUS was presented to members of the Strategic Policy Committee of Economic Development, Enterprise, Tourism and Planning.

4.7 Project co-design and completion of the strategy - Outcome and Conclusion

Engagement continued to form a key element of the design and completion of the Strategy as outlined in the extensive and wide-ranging interactions set out above. The outcome of this was a Part 8 was approved by the Elected Members for the development of a design and innovation hub at the Fireplace site, and the IUS was finalised having regard to the extensive engagement and bottom-up approach and multi-level governance system.

4 | Saturday 25 January 2025

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News

REDEVELOPMENT

Plans for Fireplace site to ignite the flames of artistic creativity

by Katie O'Donovan
katie@limerickpost.ie

PLANS are set to see a long-vacant site in the heart of Limerick City's medieval quarter ignite new flames of creativity.

The site at 15 to 19 Nanka Street, including the well-known ruins at the Fireplace site, could be set to give a home to local artists if plans by Limerick City and County Council are given the green light.

The Council has lodged a Part 8 planning application for the site to develop artist studios, workspaces, a retail area, exhibition space, and a café or restaurant with additional outdoor seating.

The development would consist of the building of a new part-two-storey, part-single-storey building incorporating the existing walls of the medieval house and their associated fabric and features as far as 15 Nanka Street, the change of use from residential, refurbishment, and renovation of the building at 15 Nanka Street.

The plans would also see the demolition of a two-storey extension to the rear of number 15, and its replacement with a three-storey extension, the creation of a single-storey workshop unit to the rear of 15 and all associated site works, the planning documents show.

A Council spokesman said that the plans have been put forward in an attempt to "revitalize this historical area of the city."

"The overall vision is to establish a Design and Innovation hub which will contribute to the local economy and community and will also reduce vacancy and dereliction."

"The design of the project is sensitive to the historical context of the site, with particular respect to the medieval walls," the spokesman added.

"The plans are the result of intensive public consultation and engagement, ensuring that the project is well-aligned with the needs and aspirations of the community," the spokesman said.

It is hoped that capital for the project will come from the THRU2 Strand 2 funding, which is co-funded by the government and the European Union, and aims to support the restoration, refurbishment, and adaptation of vacant and derelict heritage buildings to new centres.

If the funding application is successful, the Council spokesman said, Limerick City and County Council will move forward with construction on the Fireplace site, "which has the potential to transform this historically significant area in Limerick City," he concluded.

The project design is open to public consultation with the public, who can share their views on www.limerickpost.ie.

An artist's rendering of the plans for the Fireplace site.

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Chapter Five

Visions and Objectives

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Vision and Objectives

5.1 SCOT Analysis - Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats

The SCOT analysis provides us with a comprehensive overview of the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats within the King's Island Area. It also helped inform the overall development strategy for the area.

Drawing insights from Section 3 - Understanding Kings Island, Section 4 - Public Engagement and having regard to the review of a suite of policy documents, for example the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, it is clear that issues ranging from vacancy to ongoing challenges in heritage preservation, still linger in the King's Island area today. However, this review, also sheds light on the modern opportunities and strengths present in the area, showing how we can leverage them to enhance King's Island. Balancing the competing demands of events, residential needs, the night-time economy, sustainable tourism, and environmental security is crucial to ensuring the area's continued prosperity and resilience.

5.1.1. Strengths

- Historic Landmarks: St. Mary's Cathedral, and King John's Castle draw significant tourist traffic (105,000 visitors to King John's Castle in 2024).
- Origins of Limerick: Strong historical context in the area, the narrow street pattern and use of cobblestones add to the distinct architecture of King's Island which should be protected.
- Proximity to City Centre: The area is located a short walk from Limerick's main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street.
- The Three Bridges Walk provides a recreational amenity through the area and increases footfall particularly on Nicholas Street.
- Community Identity: A strong sense of place and community adds to King's Island's distinctive character.
- Broad range of community and voluntary groups, representing various interests in the area.
- Significant number of publicly owned buildings.
- Established large employers in the area including Limerick City and County Council, Absolute Hotel and King John's Castle.
- Eclectic mix of locally owned businesses including antique stores, art gallery and micro-brewery.
- High levels of inward migration relative to Limerick and national trends to the area (Census 2022).

5.1.2. Challenges

- Flooding: Development impeded by flooding concerns and lack of SuDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) Infrastructure.
- Socio-economic challenges: The area faces serious socio-economic hurdles and high deprivation.
- Image issues: King's Island contends with preception challenges, specifically as an area of deprivation and social economic problems.
- Anti-Social Behaviour: The area is frequently marked by antisocial behaviour, including petty crime, drug use and drug dealing. This, coupled with the low foot traffic, contributes to a negative perception and fosters a sense of unease among those who live or work in the vicinity as well as visitors.
- Connectivity gaps: Lack of clear wayfinding methods connecting the area to the city centre, with only one bus stop within the study area and the frequency of service being every 30 minutes.
- Housing Mix: There is a lack of diverse housing tenure in the area, particularly in the provision of affordable private housing.
- Dereliction: A significant number of derelict and vacant properties in King's Island, especially along Nicholas Street.
- Underutilised Buildings: Key historical assets are underutilised, including the upstanding remains of Fanning's Castle and the remains of the medieval structure of carved stone fireplace on Nicholas Street.
- Public realm absence: A lack of safe and usable public spaces impacts the overall environment.
- Permeability: A lack of legible routes linking King John's Castle with the waterfront
- Riverwalk route along alleyway lacks surveillance and accessibility for wheelchair users

5.1.3. Opportunities

- Creative Placemaking: Implementing creative placemaking projects to activate public spaces, foster community engagement, and celebrate the area's cultural heritage.
- Mixed-Use Redevelopment: Encouraging mixed-use redevelopment projects that integrate residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to enhance vibrancy and vitality.
- Image Overhaul: Opportunity to reshape and reimagine King's Island's image.
- Enhance accessibility: Consideration of new access routes and streetscape reconfiguration.
- Heritage Tourism Development: Developing heritage tourism initiatives, guided tours, and interpretive signage to highlight the area's historical significance and attract heritage conscious visitors.
- Storytellers Project: The success of the Storytelling Street and Storytelling events can be built on and become a unique feature of the area, for both locals and visitors.
- Vibrant Events Scene: King's Island possesses the potential to host diverse cultural and recreational events, attracting visitors and fostering community engagement through part time employment opportunities.

- **Night-Time Economy:** Enhancing the night-time economy through strategic initiatives can contribute to local businesses' growth and create a dynamic social atmosphere, improving security in the area later into the evening.
- **Brownfield and infill development:** Opportunity for development on pipeline sites for a range of uses including community, cultural and residential uses.
- **Public realm works associated with King's Island Flood Relief Scheme and World Class Waterfront**

5.1.4. Threats

- **Lack of Community Support:** Without active participation and buy-in from the community, initiatives may struggle to gain momentum. People are less likely to contribute their time, resources, or energy to projects that they feel disconnected from.
- **Dereliction:** The presence of vacant and underutilised buildings can signal economic decline, which affects property values, and this can impact community morale. They also pose safety hazards and can foster a sense of neglect, further discouraging community involvement and investment.
- **Attraction challenges:** A lack of attractiveness, either in terms of physical infrastructure, amenities, or overall appeal, can result in stagnant population growth, migration, or underinvestment in key sectors. This can contribute to economic stagnation and leave the community struggling to

meet its long-term goals.

- **Economic Disparities:** Persistent disparities can create divisions within the community and hinder economic growth by limiting opportunities for certain groups.
- **Seasonality of Tourism:** The majority of tourists that visit the area takes place in the summer months, in particular June through August.
- **Limited Incentives** for people to open new businesses.

5.2 Defining the Vision for King's Island Walled Town

As we shape the vision for the Walled Town of King's Island, it is essential to leverage its strengths, address challenges, capitalise on opportunities, and mitigate potential threats. Drawing from the identified strengths, which include rich historical landmarks, a scenic riverside setting, and a strong community identity. As set out in all previous plans, the vision for King's Island centres on becoming a thriving and culturally rich destination that seamlessly blends historical charm with modern vibrancy. The strategic utilisation of brownfield land, underutilised sites and to address issues of vacancy offers an opportunity for thoughtful development that respects and enhances the area's unique character. Simultaneously, the vision acknowledges and seeks to overcome identified weaknesses. By addressing flooding constraints, socio-economic challenges, and image issues, the aim is to transform King's Island into a resilient and inclusive

community that attracts positive attention and investment. Connectivity gaps and the absence of recreational amenities and public spaces are targeted for improvement, envisioning a King's Island that is easily accessible, socially vibrant, and offers a high quality of life for its residents. Opportunities present possibilities for a major transformation. By restoring the historic fabric, addressing vacancy and dereliction levels, reshaping the area's image, enhancing accessibility, and embracing sustainable development practices, King's Island can evolve into a model for historic preservation, community engagement, and environmental responsibility. Threats highlight areas demanding proactive measures. Fostering community engagement is paramount to encourage change and practical benefits for the area, while addressing the dereliction and vacancy trend and actively promoting King's Island's appeal/image are crucial for attracting both people and investment. In summary, the vision for King's Island encapsulates a harmonious blend of historical significance, contemporary vitality, and community resilience. It envisions an area that not only preserves its unique heritage but also propels itself into a dynamic future, inviting residents, visitors, and investors to partake in its journey of transformation and growth.

5.3 Vision Statement

"King's Island Walled Town envisions a vibrant blend of its rich history and modern life, becoming a lively destination by the beautiful River Shannon. The aim is to create a place where history meets today's energy, making it a great place to live and visit. The commitment is to preserve local unique heritage, engage everyone in the community, and develop in a way that keeps the local environment healthy. King's Island's vision is to be a strong and dynamic neighbourhood, connecting the past with the present and inspiring generations to come"

5.4 Specific Objectives for Transformation

This section outlines objectives and actions as informed by the public engagement events while having regard to statutory objectives of existing documents previously outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. These objectives are further aligned with the overarching vision statement, as well as with statutory frameworks like the Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The aim is to drive positive transformation within King's Island, ensuring that each objective is not only realistic and measurable but also strategically positioned to realise the community's vision effectively.

5.4.1 Archaeology and Built Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

Key Objectives:

- Protect historic street patterns and building lines.
- Secure preservation, awareness and appreciation of the historic Medieval City Walls.
- Protect the integrity of all Natura 2000 in the vicinity.
- Support delivery of the CFRAM Limerick Flood Relief Scheme Programme.
- To strike a balance between conservation and regeneration, through early engagement with archaeological authorities.

5.4.2 Public Realm and Streetscape Improvement

Key Objectives:

- Prioritise public realm improvements in key areas, particularly the provision of attractive and user-friendly pedestrian facilities.
- Create streetscapes harmonious with the historic and cultural quarter.
- Establish Nicholas Street as the main spine of the area and ensure that there is appropriate way-finding and legibility within the study area and the wider city.

5.4.3 Economic Development and Employment

Key Objectives:

- Promote enterprise development within the study area, particularly on brownfield sites.
- Encourage employment-generating activities.
- Attract occupiers/find uses for vacant buildings on Nicholas Street.
- Promote the development of pipeline sites on King's Island for potential enterprise development attracting further inward investment.
- Promote tourist attractions in the area, such as King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral.

5.4.4 Housing and Urban Development

Key Objectives:

- Prioritise the development of a more diverse tenure mix, delivering more affordable private housing.
- Promote the development of strategic and infill sites.
- Prioritise the delivery of community facilities in tandem with any proposed housing development.
- Promote high quality residential built environment, with a better mix of units and increased densities, on brownfield sites proposed for replacement housing, in line with Government legislation and guidelines.

5.4.5 Connectivity and Accessibility

Key Objectives:

- Improve connectivity and legibility between tourist attractions.
- Prioritise public realm improvements for better connectivity.
- Explore options to improve integration of King's Island into the City Centre core through selective site redevelopment and improved connections and wayfinding.

5.4.6. Community Engagement and Education

Key Objectives:

- Supporting community initiatives to build greater sense of social cohesion.
- Celebrate cultural heritage through community festivals or events.
- Increase community awareness of sustainable practices through educational campaigns.
- Strike a balance between tourism events and residential vibrancy.

5.4.7. Urban Greening and Biodiversity

Key Objectives:

- Develop urban greening projects in collaboration with local schools and community groups.



Chapter Six

Proposed Priority Projects

6.1 Realising King's Island Walled Town

6.1.2 Specific Projects

1. Nicholas Street Public Realm
2. 35-39 Nicholas Street including The Fireplace Site
3. St. Mary's Cathedral
4. St. Augustine Place Pocket Park
5. Bridge Street Site
6. Convent Street
7. Fanning's Castle
8. Mary Stret Garda Station
9. Gaol Lane
10. Sonny's Corner and St. Anne's Court
11. HSE Building, Bishop Street
12. The Fosse
13. The Convent Site (Irish Wheelchair Site)
14. The Orchard Site (King John's Castle Car Park)
15. Verdant Place
16. Parade Park
17. King John's Castle
18. Council Carpark and Castle Green area
19. Flood Relief Scheme
20. World Class Waterfront
21. Vacant site Mary St former Gaelcholaiste Playground



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an Deiscirt
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Assembly



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City
& County Council



Proposed Priority Projects - Urban Spaces and Streetscape Enhancements

6.1 Realising King's Island Walled Town

Nicholas Street is central to the strategic vision for King's Island, where a concerted effort is directed towards addressing dereliction, revitalising shopfronts, and the creation of more play spaces within the community. This section identifies projects and sites identified during the public engagement which will add to the overall character and appeal of the King's Island area. These proposed priority projects extend beyond aesthetics, aiming to cultivate a vibrant medieval quarter ambiance, enjoyed by locals and attractive to visitors.

Specific Projects:

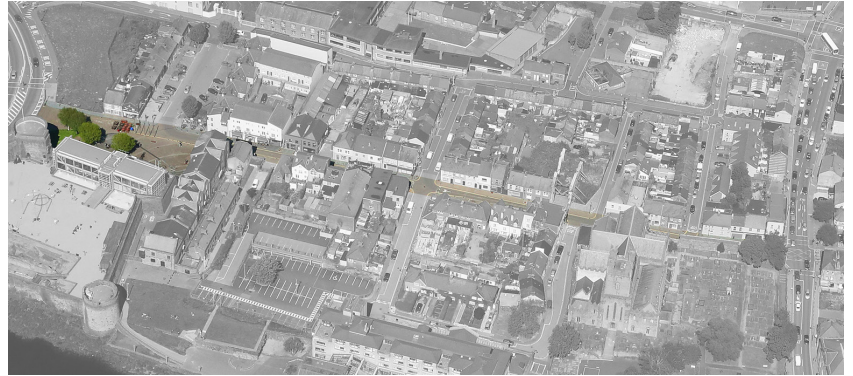
1. Nicholas Street Public Realm
2. The Fireplace Site
3. St. Mary's Cathedral
4. St. Augustine Place
5. Parade Park Landscaping
6. Bridge Street
7. Fanning's Castle
8. Mary Street Garda Station
9. Gaol Lane
10. Sonny's Corner
11. HSE Building
12. The Fosse
13. The Convent Site
14. The Orchard Site
15. Verdant Place
16. Parade Park
17. King John's Castle
18. Council Carpark and Castle Walls Park
19. Flood Risk Scheme
18. World Class Waterfront
19. Gael Cholaiste



FIG.6.1: PROPOSED PRIORITY PROJECTS

6.2 Specific Projects

1 Nicholas Street Public Realm



Background:

Nicholas Street is one of the oldest and most historically significant streets in Limerick City. It dates to medieval times and was once the main thoroughfare, linking key landmarks such as King John's Castle and Saint Mary's Cathedral.

The street was named after Saint Nicholas of Myra, the patron saint of sailors, reflecting its historical importance as a hub for trade and civic life along the River Shannon. Despite periods of decline, Nicholas Street retains much of its medieval charm, with many buildings still following the original burgage plots

In recent years, the street has suffered from high levels of vacancy and dereliction.

Nicholas Street is the central spine of the study area from which connections are made from King's Island back to the mainland and the wider city.

Public Engagement Response:

During the public engagement process, Nicholas Street was recognised as a vital asset not only for

King's Island but for the broader Limerick City. It was identified as the top priority project for the study area. The street is seen as a community that fosters a strong sense of place and has its own unique stories to tell. The need for physical enhancements to the public realm, along with interventions to address vacancy, dereliction, and safety concerns, while promoting the street's heritage, was strongly emphasised.

Key areas for interventions identified were:

- Need for commercial activity including retail, cafe, bars, restaurants
- Public Realm
- Public Lighting and Artistic Illumination
- Shopfront/Paint Scheme
- Activation of vacant or underutilised buildings
- Storytelling Street
- Events Space

The outcome of the public engagement mirrors objectives of current and past plans and strategies which all acknowledge the importance of Nicholas Street as the nucleus of the area.

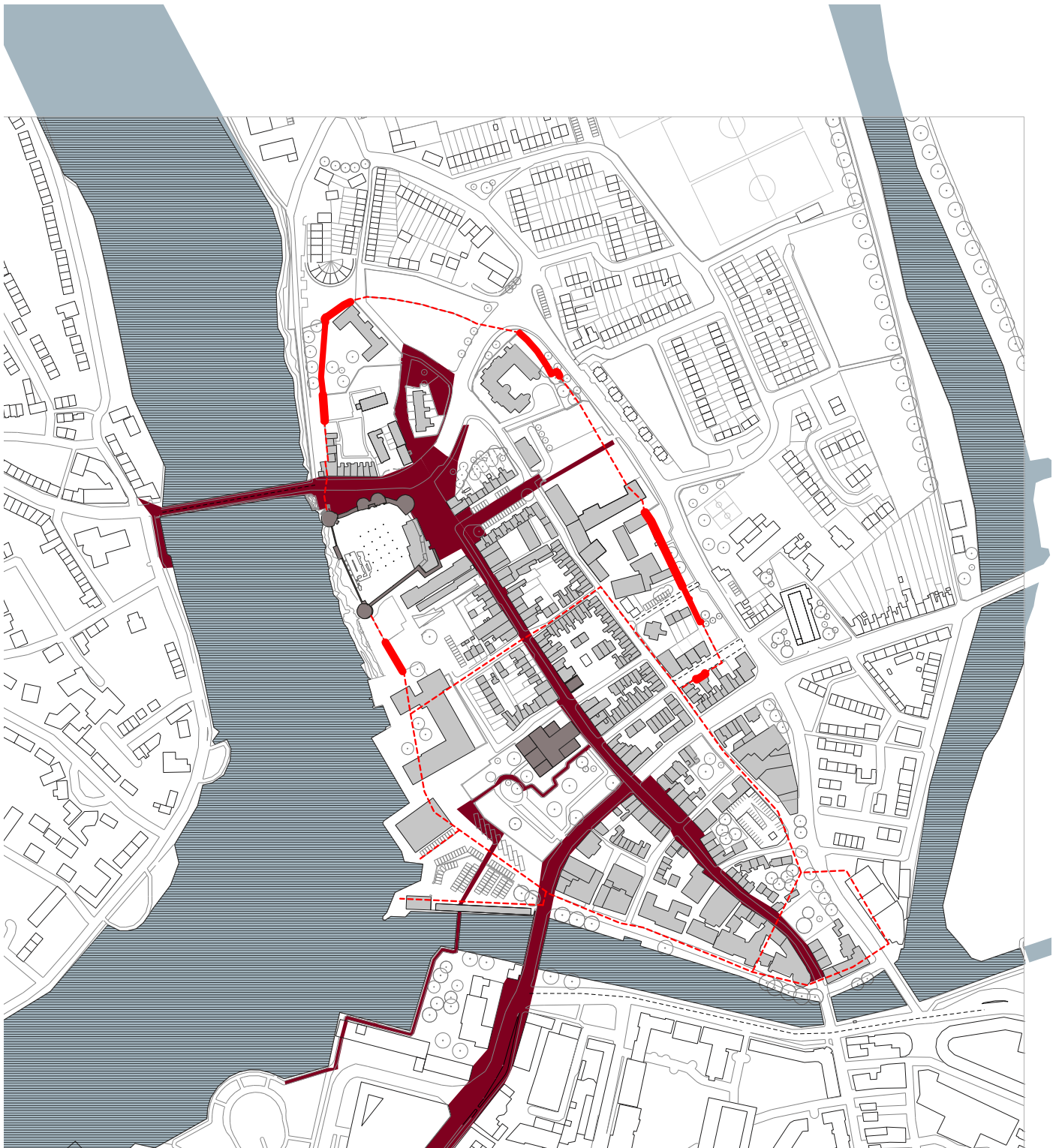


FIG.6.2: NICHOLAS STREET AS THE PRIMARY SPINE OF THE AREA

Public Realm:

The public realm's appearance greatly influences economic development and tourism. Places with pleasant, user-friendly, and well-functioning public spaces attract visitors, residents, and businesses alike. An attractive and high-quality public realm would enhance King's Island's competitive edge, serving as a magnet for tourism and making vacant units more attractive for investment. Enhancing the environment and improving accessibility to businesses would not only bolster the local economy but also increase foot traffic, extend visitor stays, invigorate evening activities, attract more tourists, and ultimately result in greater expenditure in the locality.

The existing public realm has mixed material containing Wicklow granite, paving blocks and footpaths of various widths. The footpaths on opposite sides of the street do not match and there is a lack of uniformity.

There is visual clutter from a plethora of bollards, lamp posts and directional signage. A large number of overhead cables around the junction of St. Peter Street and St. Augustine Place detract from the streetscene.

There is a need to improve the physical environment of Nicholas Street making it more legible liveable and attractive, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of Limerick City's heritage.

The aim is to enhance public spaces, roads, footpaths, and squares. The introduction of these improvements would breathe new life into Nicholas Street, making it more appealing to both visitors, residents and businesses. A successful public realm depends on a straightforward and consistent design approach. Investing in a more sustainable public realm is a proven method to improve places at many levels, expanding on its attractiveness and increasing the quality of life of its inhabitants socially and economically.

Project Phasing

The Public Realm Proposal is as follows:

- Use hard landscaping to re-create the urban realm with attractive
 - Gathering spaces
 - Spaces for dining
 - Walkable routes
- Enhance pedestrian facilities for all user on King's Island, making them legible, attractive and user-friendly.
- Improve connectivity between various tourist attractions such as The Limerick Museum, The Hunt Museum, the Riverside Walkway, King John's Castle, St Mary's Cathedral, The Bishop's Palace, The City Walls and Masons Lodge.
- Provide facilities that support the commercial redevelopment of Nicholas Street, including improvements in paving, lighting, bollards, bins, street furniture, and occasional street closure
- Improve legibility of the street and its connection to the wider City with a coherent approach to surface finishes and differentiate Nicholas Street as the central spine of the area

Project Principles/ Development Guidelines

Any public realm enhancement should;

- feature a revitalised street surface with high quality paving respectful of the historic area and its location within an Architectural Conservation Area.

- involve a level surface to allow for the street to function as a unified accessible space when the street is closed to through traffic.
- Use pattern making and scale of pavers to create vibrant contemporary response, that nonetheless complements and enhances the Walled Town heritage and unique sense of place

The aim is to contribute positively to the local economy throughout the day and into the evening time and to attract more visitors to Nicholas Street, encouraging extended dwell time and enthusing people further into the City.

The overall design will also cater for local events at King John's Castle as well as on the street itself like on Culture Night. The public realm scheme should allow for the street to be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic during times of high pedestrian activity.

Timeframe and Delivery:

The Public Realm project will be initiated by Limerick City and County Council, bringing this from conception to reality. This will be a medium to long term project, developed in the short to medium term and delivered in the longer term involving key stakeholders internally and externally.

Project Phasing

It is proposed that the Nicholas Street Public Realm Plan would be split into two distinct phases, focusing on the street itself, and also the major gateways into King's Island and Nicholas Street itself.

Phase One – Nicholas Street

Phase one would focus on the revitalisation of Nicholas Street with the aim of increasing the footfall in this area and attracting tourism and business. This phase seeks to introduce changes to the streetscape, in particular the resurfacing of the street and adapting the area to follow best practise in terms of design principles.

Phase Two – Castle Street

Phase two would look at transforming Castle Street to respond to the changes occurring on Nicholas Street. This will be achieved through the re-surfacing of a section of Castle Street which will create a safer space for the pedestrians of this area and will allow for easier access and movement throughout the area.

Activation of vacant or underutilised buildings

Nicholas Street in recent years has suffered from high levels of vacancy and dereliction. A City Centre Survey carried out by the Forward Planning Team within LCCC in February 2025 reports a vacancy rate along Nicholas Street of 38% of the total units, compared to 11.5% in King's Island study area and 8.49% in Limerick City Centre (Q1 2024). There are several private commercial properties currently for sale on the street for a significant length of time. Through derelict sites legislation the council has acquired several other properties on the street, which are lying vacant.

There is now a need to find a use for these Council owned units allowing them to contribute to the activation and revitalisation of the street. There is an identified need for a convenience store to serve the area. The Council has recently carried out survey work on these buildings to commence the process of bringing them back into use.

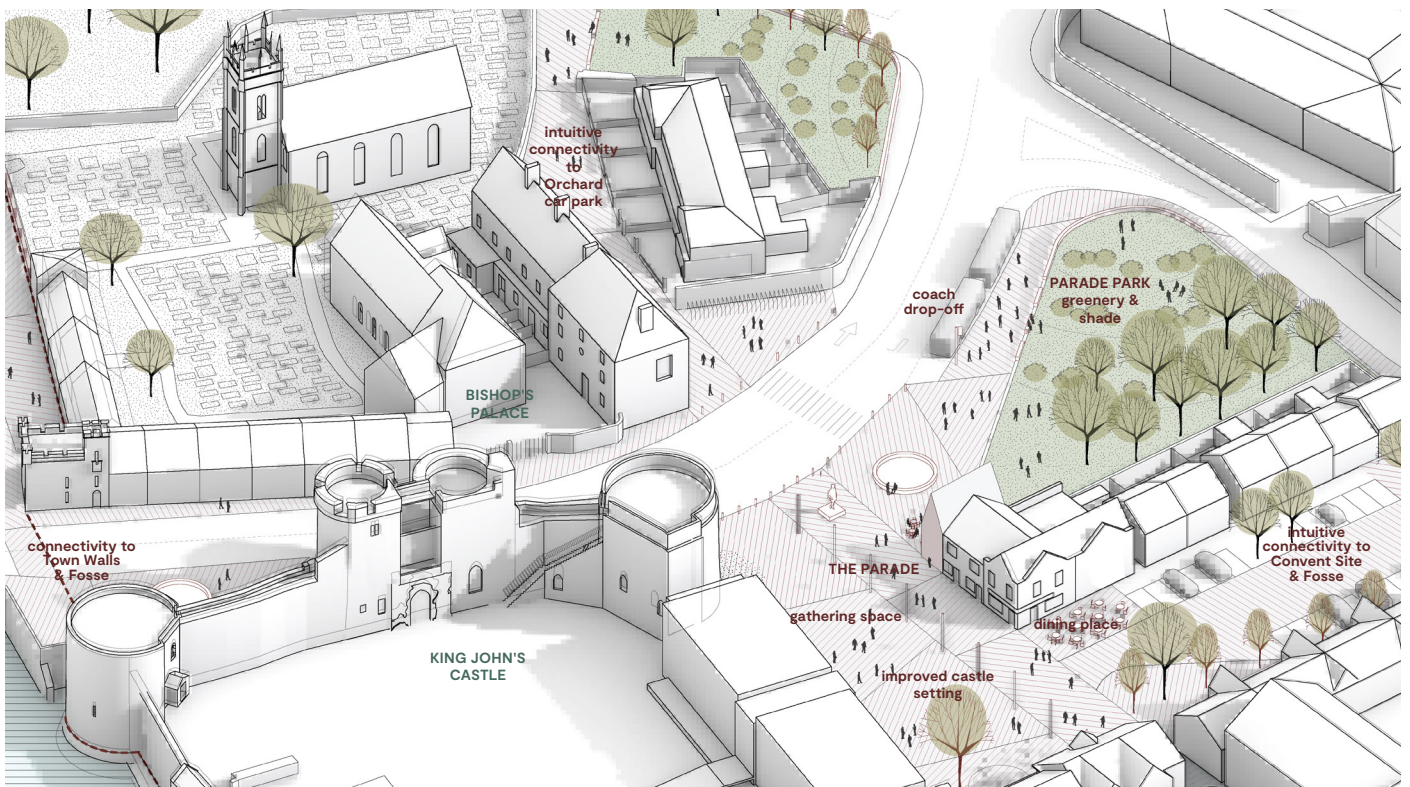


FIG.6.3: CASTLE STREET

Meanwhile Uses

There is potential for renovated vacant units to act as pop up shops along Nicholas Street or to be temporarily used during certain periods such as Summer, Christmas and Halloween where the street could take on certain themes in association with events happening in the castle or festivals across the wider City.

Limerick City and County Council has started discussions with Limerick School of Art and Design about using vacant buildings or sites for an illuminations project which would see buildings lit up through projections in a similar manner to King John's Castle for events such as Christmas and St. Patrick's Day.

There is also an opportunity to use vacant shopfronts for displays, community information and tourist information or to decorate the windows of vacant units with paintings or artwork. This could be done as a collaboration with local schools or youth groups particularly in coordination with festivals and events.



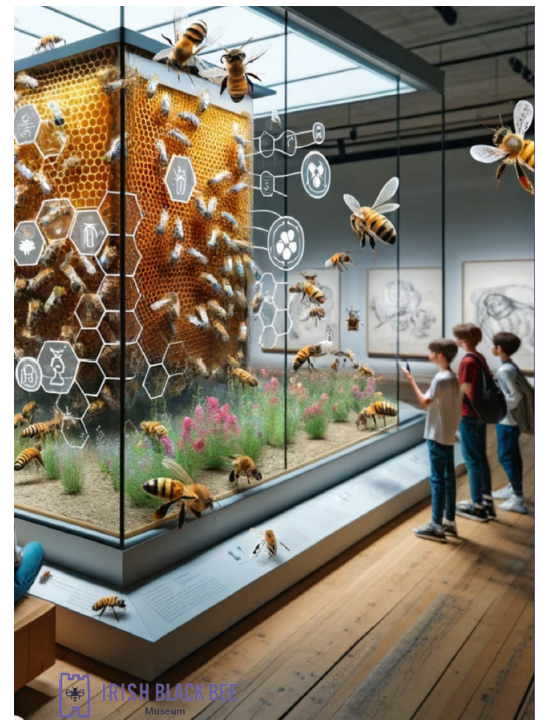
FIG.6.4: 29 NICHOLAS STREET - AN EXAMPLE OF A VACANT COUNCIL-OWNED BUILDING

Irish Black Bee Museum

Plans are underway by Limerick Island Community Partners (LICP) to develop a new museum dedicated to the Irish Black Bee. The Irish Black Bee Museum will be located in the Widow's Alms Houses which is currently home to LICP's offices and a small coffee hatch.

The Museum aims to transform the historic 17th Century Widow's Alms Houses into an engaging, family-friendly experience. It will feature multimedia exhibitions, interpretive displays, and beekeeping artefacts. The museum will also feature educational rooms showcasing the lifecycle of the Irish Black Bee, highlighting their vital role in pollination, agricultural and maintaining ecological balance. This in turn will bring more activity to what is an underutilised building on Nicholas Street and diversify the tourism offering.

Subject to funding, it is anticipated that the Museum could be operational by 2029.



Storytelling Street

As part of the THRIVE project, Limerick City and County Council collaborated with several local groups, including Paul Partnership, Limerick Island Community Partners, King John's Castle, the Hunt Museum, and local residents, who were hosting an event for Culture Night. The aim was to build on the success of previous indoor storytelling events at the Hunt Museum and Treaty City Brewery, and bring the magic of storytelling onto Nicholas Street, one of Limerick's oldest thoroughfares.



The event took spectators on a journey through time, with local storytellers sharing tales from the past. Uncovering a land of vice, greed, devious deeds, saintly folk, and villains as stories galore were revealed of the feisty and ferocious characters that lived along the street long ago. Local people told local Limerick stories and old stories brought to life with re-enactments and mini plays. The stories focused on the buildings along Nicholas Street and the people who lived and worked in them from bakers to bootmakers, with actors on hand to re-enact these vibrant historical moments.

As part of the event, display boards were displayed on various buildings along Nicholas Street, each telling a story. A QR code on each poster directed people to the dedicated THRIVE King's Island Walled Town website, where they could explore all the stories in detail, along with information about the THRIVE project, local news, and the Strand 2 candidate project at 35-39 Nicholas Street.

Beyond the success of the event itself, the display boards have a lasting interest on the street and provide a trail for tourists and visitors alike exploring the heritage and history of the street.

The Display Boards were featured on well-known YouTuber Spanian's tour around Ireland. The unconventional travel blogger has amassed some 1 million followers on YouTube and can be heard in his video stating "I love this storytelling street, bro. What a street we came across".

Lighting and artistic illumination

As part of any proposed public realm enhancements to Nicholas Street, public lighting should be appropriately upgraded. Limerick City and County Council have engaged the services of a lighting consultant to prepare a new Lighting Scheme for the street.

Existing lighting fixtures on the street are old and there is a mix of free-standing lamp posts, wall-mounted luminaires and in recent times, festoon style lighting draped across the street.

The aim is to make Nicholas Street a more inviting, attractive and enjoyable place to live, work and visit. One element of this is to provide a public realm lighting scheme for both atmospheric and functional lighting to illuminate the area and ensure a safe environment.



Proposed Strategy

- Improve the visual aesthetic of the street
- Provide a public realm lighting scheme for both atmospheric and functional lighting to illuminate the area ensuring safety.
- Highlight heritage features, e.g., up light the arches of the Exchange Wall
- Lighting scheme should be zonal having regard to the residential, commercial and plaza nature of the area
- Ensure lighting scheme is environmentally sensitive and efficient.

Events Space

In recent years, the street has taken on a new lease of life and become an event space during certain times of the year. In some cases, the street has been temporarily closed to allow for more pedestrian space. These events included:

- Concerts at King John's Castle (May to August)
- Culture Night (September)
- Samhain Parade (October)
- Treaty City Brewery Christmas Markets (December)

There is opportunity for the street to become a dedicated space for street events and any proposed public realm plan should incorporate this concept into its design.

The establishment of Nicholas Street itself as an event space has resulted in interest in the street for future events by Limerick School of Art and Design and for events ahead of the Ryder Cup, which is taking place in Adare in September 2027.

Shopfront Scheme/Paint Scheme

Shopfront Scheme

Despite Nicholas Street's cultural and architectural heritage, the street grapples with persistent challenges, including high levels of vacancy and dereliction. The appearance of these vacant units which have suffered from lack of upkeep and maintenance has a negative impact on the appearance of the street. Not only does this give a bad impression to visitors to the area but it can be disheartening for local residents and businesses owners too, many of whom take huge pride in the appearance of their homes and businesses.

The general inconsistency in security grills and use of shutters, many of which remain closed permanently further detracts from the overall character of the area.

Limerick City and County Council has prepared Shopfront Design Guidelines which aims to establish minimum guidance for shopfront across Limerick City and County. Through these guidelines, Limerick City and County Council hopes to celebrate Limerick's

heritage and ensure its preservation for future generations.

As part of the publication of these guidelines and as part of the King's Island Walled Town IUS, it is proposed to run a shopfront pilot scheme with Nicholas Street as one of the trial streets. Funding will be available to existing and new businesses along the street who wish to upgrade shopfronts on existing businesses or install new shopfronts for new businesses.

Paint Scheme

In a similar manner to the shopfront scheme and to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the street, it is proposed to implement a paint scheme similar to one previously completed in 2019. This initiative will be open to both residents and businesses along the street, encouraging community participation. The aim is to create a more vibrant and inviting atmosphere that fosters a sense of place. By improving the street's appearance, it's hoped to not only enhance the visual appeal but also contribute to a more positive and connected environment for everyone in the area.

2 The Fireplace Site (35-39 Nicholas Street)



Background:

At the centre of this site lies the remains of a number of late medieval houses, distinguished by a beautifully preserved carved stone fireplace and accompanying architectural features, such as corbels and a stone party wall. These elements were uncovered during the demolition of derelict buildings in the 1990s, revealing the architectural and archaeological significance of the site. The Fireplace site is listed as a protected monument (RMP Ref: LI 005-017123) under the National Monuments Act 1930-1994, highlighting its cultural importance. The site is also a Protected Structure R.P.S., Reg. No. 7016.

For almost 30 years the site has remained undeveloped but retains its archaeological significance. The medieval stone fireplace serves as a tangible link to the City's past, illustrating the craftsmanship and domestic architecture of the late medieval period. Recently, the site was utilised as one of seventeen venues for the 40th EVA International

in 2023, showcasing its potential as a cultural and artistic space. Artist Clodagh Emoe's work, *Reflections on a City Lot*, exemplified this potential by integrating the site's natural and historical elements into a contemporary art installation, drawing attention to the site's historical and ecological narratives

The site also includes the adjacent No.35 which is a former dwelling which is vacant for a number of years and in poor condition. The site measures approximately 930sqm and is owned by Limerick City and County Council.

For Culture Night 2024, the Fireplace Site was used as the last stop on 'The Storytelling Street' trail along Nicholas Street. The event attracted over one hundred spectators as local storytellers spoke of times gone by.

Posters commissioned as part of the 'Storytelling Street' and created by local artist Hugh McMahon were installed at the site. They contained details of the life of John Stundon who ran a pub and grocers at No. 35 Nicholas Street, and Michael Healy who ran a well know cobblers/bootmakers at Nos. 38/39 Nicholas Street.



FIG.6.5: CLODAGH EMOE REFLECTIONS ON A CITY LOT

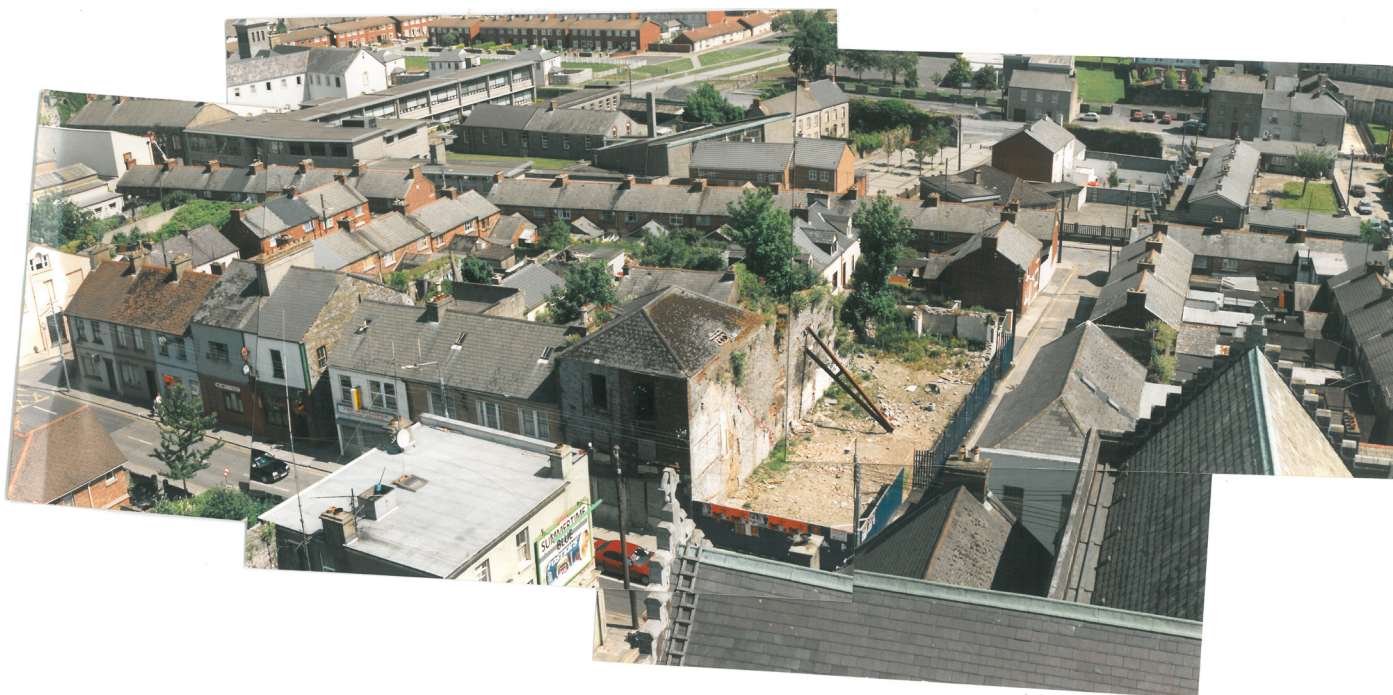


FIG.6.6: IMAGE OF SITE IN LATE 1990'S FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF NO'S 38 AND 39 NICHOLAS STREET

Public Engagement Response:

Throughout the engagement events, the Fireplace site attracted considerable attention, consistently being identified as a prime location for development. Many participants expressed that this site would benefit the most from Strand 2 funding stating that the redevelopment of this key site could act as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of Nicholas Street and the wider area. Having remained vacant for nearly 30 years, the site is a prominent feature in the minds of those who frequent the street, with a strong community desire to see it revitalised.

There is a particular focus on its archaeological significance, as many recognise the importance of preserving and showcasing the medieval walls that make the site unique. The public interest in the site's potential highlights the urgency of action, ensuring that its rich history is both protected and celebrated.

The main suggestions for the site have centred on transforming it into a cultural or creative venue. Ideas such as artist studios, exhibition spaces, and performance venues were mentioned repeatedly. Many believe that Nicholas Street, with its inherent edginess and artistic vibe, has not yet been fully realised. Developing the Fireplace Site for such purposes would not only help rejuvenate the site but could also inject new life into the entire street.



FIG.6.7: CORNER OF NICHOLAS STREET IN MID-1990'S PRIOR TO DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS

Strand 2 Project:

Throughout the engagement events, the Fireplace Site consistently emerged as a priority project for the community. Through extensive multi-level engagement (see Section 4) it was chosen as the THRIVE Strand 2 Candidate Site. The Fireplace Site meets the necessary criteria for inclusion, as it is owned by Limerick City and County Council and is a Recorded Monument (LI005-017006 and LI005-017123) and became a Protected Structure in March 2025. Additionally, the regeneration of the Fireplace site would support revitalisation of Nicholas Street also, which was identified as the key priority for the study area. This in turn supports policy objectives in the Limerick Development Plan and organisational goals.



FIG.6.8: JOHN STUNDON STORY

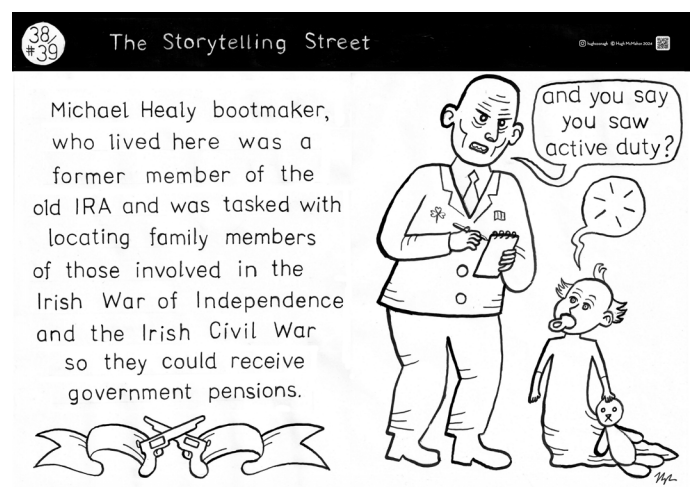


FIG.6.9: MICHAEL HEALY STORY

Proposed Use:

The proposed use for the site is as a design and innovation hub to include workspace, studios, retail space and a cafe. Upon successful completion of the proposed development, subject to funding, the building will be occupied by the Forge Design Factory.

The Forge Design Factory is a dynamic design hub for creativity, innovation and enterprise, dedicated to supporting and driving the regional creative industries. It offers versatile studio spaces alongside short programmes in digital technologies and entrepreneurship, as well as networking events and design-thinking workshops that nurture fresh perspectives and practical solutions. These initiatives strengthen the region's cultural and economic landscape and empower businesses to embrace sustainable, circular design practices.

Design:

The Fireplace site is emblematic of the evolution of Limerick's urban fabric, capturing visible layers of development from the late medieval period to the present day. Its location on Nicholas Street positions it as a key anchor in the City's heritage corridor, connecting major landmarks and serving as a focal point for cultural and economic activity within the Medieval Quarter.

In preserving the existing silhouette of the medieval house and integrating contemporary uses, the redevelopment of the Fireplace site offers a unique opportunity to celebrate Limerick's historical legacy

while driving future growth and engagement in the area.

By weaving together historical preservation, sustainable practices, and community engagement, the ground floor design offers an immersive and meaningful experience for all visitors.

The integration of indoor and outdoor spaces ensures the site becomes a dynamic hub that celebrates its past while embracing a vibrant future. Visitors enter through a medieval carriageway, passing preserved masonry and gaining views of workshops where sustainable craft activities, including waste material reuse, are demonstrated by an Artist Design Group.

The centrally located reception area connects to a flexible space for exhibitions, retail, and community events. The café, set against a medieval wall, offers a traditional dining experience with outdoor seating accessible from both the café and St. Peter Street.

A natural dye garden and landscaped corner provide green spaces with views of St. Mary's Cathedral and the River Shannon. The ground floor features a SUDS-enabled park, promoting sustainability and relaxation. Reused materials throughout the site honour its history and ecological principles.

The upper floors of the building feature a flexible workshop space focused on sustainability, utilising materials from the Limerick Materials Bank. An opening connects it to No. 35 Nicholas Street, offering access to additional craft and exhibition areas. The building repurposes historic materials, preserving heritage while minimizing environmental impact. The layout combines history, sustainability, and accessibility, with green technologies and inclusive design. The workshop also doubles as a podium for events.

The second floor houses an attic studio designed for creative activities, such as linen repair, and overlooks a solar-panelled workshop, emphasizing sustainability. The studio is accessible via a staircase and wheelchair lift, ensuring inclusivity. The design follows the New European Bauhaus principles of beauty, sustainability, and inclusivity, integrating historic preservation with modern sustainable solutions.

Feature lighting accentuates the medieval masonry, creating an atmospheric experience, particularly at night.

Part 8 Development

The Part 8 application was approved by the Elected Members at a meeting of the Metropolitan District on 10th March 2025.

The development of a Design and Innovation Hub at Nos. 35 – 39 Nicholas Street (a Proposed Protected Structure (Ref. No.: P.P.S. 2024/A)) to comprise artist studios, workspaces, retail area, exhibition space and café/restaurant with associated outdoor area adjoining St. Peter Street. The development will include the erection of new part two storey, part single storey building incorporating the upstanding walls of the medieval house and their associated fabric and features at Nos. 36- 39 Nicholas Street, the change of use from residential, refurbishment and renovation of No. 35 Nicholas Street, the demolition of a two storey extension to the rear and its replacement with a three storey extension, the erection of a single storey workshop unit to the rear of No. 35 and all associated site works. This development is within the site of Recorded Monuments, LI005- 017006 and LI005-017123, both classified as House-medieval.

First look at planned designs for new Nicholas Street Innovation Hub

< All Live95 News

Tuesday, 21 January 2025 16:44

By Live95 News Team



Plans for the design of a new Design and Innovation Hub on Nicholas Street in the city have been revealed.

Limerick City and County Council revealed the designer's image as they announced the commencement of the Part 8 public consultation process for the development of the new space which will include the historic Fireplace site.

This exciting project will feature artist studios, workspaces, a retail area, an exhibition space, and a cafe/restaurant with an associated outdoor area adjoining St. Peter Street.



FIG.6.10: SAMPLES OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE PART 8 IN EARLY 2025



FIG.6.11: PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT FIREPLACE SITE PER THE PART 8 APPLICATION

3 St. Mary's Cathedral



Background:

St. Mary's Cathedral, founded in 1168 AD, stands proudly over the City of Limerick, gracefully overlooking the River Shannon. It is one of Ireland's most significant medieval buildings to have survived intact, still serving its original purpose as a place of worship.

The Cathedral is believed to have been built on the site of a Viking meeting place and later the royal palace of the O'Brien kings of Thomond. Over the centuries, it has endured invasions, sieges, battles, wars, famines, and times of peace. Today, it remains a living testament to Ireland's rich history and is a remarkable repository of Irish religious art.

St. Mary's Cathedral is listed on both the Record of Protected Structures and the Record of Monuments and Places, preserving its significance for future generations.

As well as remaining an active place of worship for Limerick's Church of Ireland community, the Cathedral plays host to numerous events throughout the year including lunchtime and evening concerts and in 2024 hosts inauguration events for Limerick (and Ireland's) first Directly Elected Mayor and the new

Public Engagement

St. Mary's Cathedral received an abundance of positive feedback, and it's clear that the people of Limerick take great pride in the Cathedral and its contributions to the community. Throughout our discussions, many suggestions focused on how to build upon the incredible work already being done by the Cathedral and its community, further enhancing its impact on Limerick.

Some noted that the Cathedral while a tourist attraction and events venue is still a place of worship for Limerick's Church of Ireland community, and this should not be forgotten about. There is room for the Cathedral to foster both spiritual and cultural engagement. It has the potential to be a vibrant cultural hub for the church community amongst others.

As one of Limerick's most beautiful and historically significant buildings, it is vital that conservation efforts continue. The Cathedral is noted as being in fantastic condition and ongoing care will ensure its preservation for future generations.

The use of the Cathedral for events including concerts offers a unique cultural experience. Expanding the use of the cathedral as a venue for events in the evening could make better use of its stunning interior.

It was suggested that the areas surrounding the Cathedral including Nicholas Street and Mary Street should be maintained to respect the Cathedral. Cleaner, more welcoming streets would enhance the

visitor experience. The cathedral should maintain its historical significance while adapting to the needs of the community and visitors. Any changes should respect its heritage.

Opportunities

Conservation Plan

In November 2023, a Conservation Plan for St. Mary's Cathedral was prepared by Quinlan Architects. This conservation plan, which was funded through the Community Monuments Fund scheme, came about because there was a recognition by the Dean and select vestry that there was a need to assess the building and to put in place a managed approach for its future development.

Integration with King's Island and the City including strengthening the historic links with the wider setting was one of the key recommendations that evolved from the plan. From a spatial perspective, the distinct precinct of the cathedral both marks it as a special place and, also sets it apart. There is a strong desire in the cathedral community of St. Mary's to be part of the wider island and city community and to play a greater part in the development of the area.

There are a number of policies set out in the Conservation Plan and those of particular relevance to the future development of the wider area are listed below:

- Policy 51: Develop policies in this area that have a dual social and environmental focus, with the local community and the city centre in general. The connections with the wider city are best developed from the perspective of inner-city regeneration, in which the quality of the built environment is a key factor.
- Policy 52: Create a physical link with Nicholas Street by opening the north end bay of the Exchange arcade to give access to Saint Mary's and its grounds. This seems to have been a link in the late 19th century on the evidence of the 1870 map. Its restoration might help to overcome the setting apart, by its railed enclosure, of the cathedral from the local community visually, physically, and perhaps psychologically.
- Policy 53: Consider the replacement of the masonry blocking with well-designed railings to open up the grounds visually. Had the Exchange footprint not been used for burials, it would offer a remarkable opportunity for a unique landmark building on the main thoroughfare of King's Island.
- Policy 55: Build on the strong rugby tradition in Limerick and, in particular, on the island. In all probability, only a fraction of the twenty thousand or so regular attendance at Thomond Park has even been inside Saint Mary's Cathedral. Consider an appropriate way of marking a number of significant commemorations and anniversaries which are coming up in the next year or so thereby welcoming a great number of local first-time visitors.
- Policy 60: Work to make the Cathedral, Castle and the link between them a busy and attractive place for residents and for visitors. Regard Saint Mary's as being an important part of the urban future as well as part of historic Limerick.

Exchange Wall:

In line with the Conservation Plan for St. Mary's Cathedral, there is a significant opportunity to enhance public access by thoughtfully and sensitively opening sections of the Exchange Walls. This approach would improve connectivity to and from Nicholas Street while respecting the historic character of the site.

Opening up the Exchange Wall would provide an opportunity to highlight its significance, as it often goes unnoticed by those passing along Nicholas Street or visiting the Cathedral grounds.

Events

St. Mary's Cathedral should continue to build upon its success as a events space. In August 2024, the Cathedral was named one of five venues across Ireland to receive a share of €1 million from Fáilte Ireland. This funding is part of an initiative to develop Gala Dinner Venues, aimed at attracting business and promoting regional tourism throughout the country.

In alignment with this, any proposed public realm plan should establish a clear and intuitive connection between King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. This link will support the objectives outlined in Policy 60 of the Cathedral's Conservation Plan, fostering both cultural heritage and tourism growth in the area.

Development Strategy:

Limerick City and County Council will work closely with the Cathedral and support the opening up of the Exchange Wall onto Nicholas Street, subject to all appropriate assessments, to create better connections and improve permeability with Nicholas Street.

As part of any proposed public realm upgrades and lighting schemes provide appropriate lighting of the Exchange Wall on Nicholas Street, subject to appropriate environmental criteria.

4 St. Augustine Pocket Park



Background:

This site is situated at the corner of St. Augustine Place and Crosbie Row, nestled in the shadow of St. Mary's Cathedral. Currently, it features a paved area with mature *Robinia pseudocacia*, also known as False Acacia or Black Locust.

Public Engagement Response:

This small area of King's Island has generated numerous comments. While comments are not negative, many suggested that it could benefit from enhancements such as more planting, seating, and some maintenance in general. Adding a small play area for children was a suggestion that many felt could really bring the space to life.

Opportunities:

The existing paving requires an upgrade and as part of this, there is potential to enhance the site's appearance through the addition of additional planting and the installation of street furniture.

There's also a natural desire line that runs right through this corner site, and this could become a key feature in any new paving design.

Additionally, the site could add to local biodiversity by incorporating a bug hotel and a natural play area.

The gable end of the house on St. Augustine Place which forms part of the site presents an opportunity to be part of the Nicholas Street Paint Scheme. The wall could also be used to display a mural that reflects the rich history of the area.

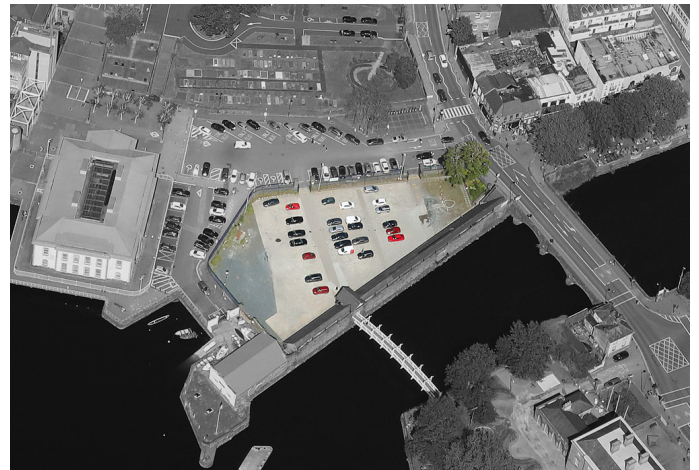
Proposed Strategy:

- Develop this hardstanding area into a pocket park
- Improve the biodiversity of the site
- Investigate the creation of a mural on the gable wall of the house which faces the site.



FIG.6.12: POCKET PARK LAYOUT

5 The Potato Market



Background:

The Potato Market is an enclosed former marketplace, located where the Abbey River meets the River Shannon. Established in 1843, the market operated until the 1940s, after which it became redundant. The Sylvester O'Halloran Bridge connects the market to the grounds of the Hunt Museum on the opposite side of the river.

Restored in the 1980s by Limerick Civic Trust at a cost of approximately £400,000, the renovated Potato Market was envisioned as a vibrant space for markets, similar to the Milk Market, as well as for hosting music festivals and open-air theatre events. Despite these plans, the use of the market in this way never gained traction, and by the early 2000s, the site was largely used for car parking.

Today, the site is used as a car park from Monday to Saturday. In recent years, a Ferris wheel has also occupied the space during Riverfest, the city's May Bank Holiday festival.

The site adjoins Architectural Conservation Area 7 and is located within the Recorded Monument classified as "The Historic Town". The Record of Protected Structures includes the Potato Market itself (RPS No. 3320), St Mary's Cathedral (RPS No. 3009), and County Courthouse (RPS No. 3012). The City Walls formerly ran through the area, tightly framing the historic port. The site also adjoins the Lower River Shannon SAC and Inner Shannon Estuary – South Shore Proposed Natural Heritage Area.

Public Engagement Response:

An overarching theme from our engagement was that the use of the Potato Market for car parking was not considered the optimum use of the site. Many suggested that the Potato Market should be transformed into a vibrant public plaza, serving as a space for community events such as markets, concerts, and gigs. It was also highlighted that there were no residential properties directly adjacent and therefore events and associated noise would not cause any unwelcome disruption to residential amenities.

It was proposed that the walls of the Potato Market be removed to create an open space, merging it with Merchant's Quay to form a large, unified plaza.

One particularly innovative idea was the installation of outdoor swimming baths, utilising water sourced from the nearby Abbey River.

Opportunities:

The Potato Market functions as a car park from Monday to Saturday. There is opportunity for the site to function as an event space on Sundays or Bank Holidays when the car park is closed.

The Potato Market could be reconfigured to become a flexible space capable of hosting events occasionally. The Potato Market is a protected structure and therefore, only minor modifications to the RPS

will be undertaken if permitted to the perimeter walls including the Greek-revival gate posts. As part of wider plans for Merchant's Quay, there are opportunities to reconfigure the area of Merchant's Quay between St. Mary's Cathedral and the Potato Market. This includes widening footpaths and creating a greater sense of place between the Courthouse, Cathedral and Potato Market which is a heavily used pedestrian route.

Development Strategy:

Investigate an appropriate design to allow the site to function as an event space.

Any development should consider nearby Heritage Assets include the walls and pillars of the Potato Market (RPS No. 3320) as well as nearby buildings such as the County Courthouse (RPS No. 3012) and St. Mary's Cathedral (RPS. No. 3009).



FIG.6.13: ILLUSTRATION IMAGE OF THE POTATO MARKET POTENTIAL AS EVNTS SPACE

6 Bridge Street



Background:

Located close to St Mary's Cathedral and Creagh Lane School, the site has been vacant for over 20 years.

In 2017, Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with Limerick Civic Trust transformed the site from a derelict site into a small green area as a meanwhile use. The standout feature of the site is an eye-catching mural of Sionna, the Goddess of the River Shannon.

Public Engagement Response:

As part of our public engagement efforts, this site did not attract as much interest as others.

However, some individuals suggested adding seating to the existing green area, as well as incorporating a statue or sculpture.

One person also proposed this location as a potential spot for retail, more specifically a convenience store which King's Island is lacking.

Planning History/Previous Plans:

08/269 – Permission to demolish of a single storey structure and the construction of a 4-storey office development and ancillary works to site adjacent to the former post office – Granted

10770173 – Permission for alterations to planning ref: P08/269 to include change of use of ground floor from office use to cafe and apartment units and change of use of first, second and third floors from office use to apartment units (12 apartments in total), alterations to internal layouts minor alterations to floor areas, alterations to elevations and ancillary works. Further information/revised plans to include provision of parking at ground floor (apartments omitted at ground level), apartments units 1st-3rd floors only (nine apartments in total) rearrangement of third floor internal layout, provision of shutters to

balconies, elevation changes and ancillary works at site adjacent to the former Post Office – Refused

Opportunities:

This site is currently subject to assessment for development potential for residential development. This would include the existing Bridge Street site and the adjacent old Post Office building at the corner of Bridge Street and Courthouse Lane.

Development Strategy:

The site should be developed in conjunction with the adjacent Post Office Site at the corner of Bridge Street and Courthouse Lane.

Any future scheme should maximise the views towards St Mary's Cathedral.

Design must be respectful of adjacent buildings such as the old City Courthouse/former Gerald Griffin Memorial School (RPS No. 3043) and St. Mary's Cathedral (RPS No. 3009).



FIG.6.14: MURAL OF GODDESS OF THE SHANNON- SIONNA

7 Fanning's Castle



Background:

The remains of a five-storey tower house, built of roughly squared limestone blocks of varying sizes. It was built c. 1641 by Mayor of Limerick Dominic Fanning.

Fanning's Castle is on the Record of Protected Structures and Monuments (RPS no. 3015) and is also a National Monument (No. 383) and Recorded Monument (RMP No. LI005-017004).

Owing to its historical importance, Fanning's Castle is under the custodianship of the Office of Public Works (OPW) while the site on which it sits is owned by the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS). The site is closed to the public and gates that allow access to Fanning's Castle from Mary Street are closed. The third-party ownership of the land around the remains currently restricts the potential of this historical asset.

Public Engagement Response:

Many people suggested that Fanning's Castle should be more publicly accessible. Gates to the Castle from Mary Street are usually locked and many feel the building which is a National Monument is hidden away. It has been suggested that the building should be lit up at night to allow greater visibility subject to ecological studies.

Opportunities:

There is potential for a link between the Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) George's Quay Campus from George's Quay through the site onto Mary Street and Creagh Lane to develop permeability and further activate Mary Street. This link would allow permeability through the LSAD campus at George's Quay and could be closed when the building is not open.

With any proposed development at the old Garda Barracks on Mary Street, a link between the LSAD Campus and Mary Street would allow a direct route from George's Quay.

Development Strategy:

Work with Technological University of the Shannon, the owners of the site, to Improve permeability and access to the site in particular from Mary Street which would provide better links with Fanning's Castle.

8 Mary Street Garda Station



Background:

Originally a barracks for the Royal Irish Constabulary, the former Mary Street Garda Station is a three-bay two-storey red bricked building located on Mary Street. It is a Protected Structure (RPS No. 347). The building fell out of use in the early 2000s when the Garda Station began to operate from temporary accommodation to the rear. An Garda Síochána vacated the site in 2013 and all services were transferred to Mayorstone Garda Station.

The site measures approximately 0.1ha and is currently vacant and idle since the Garda Station closed on site in 2013. The red brick building fronting Mary Street has been vacant since the early 2000s and requires substantial work to bring it back into use.

Public Engagement Response:

A range of potential uses for the old Mary Street Garda Station have been proposed, with the majority suggesting that the site could serve cultural and

community purposes.

Among the ideas, a popular suggestion was to transform the space into a community hub, featuring a café or restaurant.

Additionally, some proposals recommended reinstating the site as a Garda Station to help address ongoing concerns with anti-social behaviour and crime in the area.

Opportunities:

Identified as a strategic site, it is suggested that the site should be used for cultural/creatives uses. The existing building on site, a protected structure (RPS. No. 3347) shall be retained and become a hub for the creative industry. The site can be extended to the rear along its boundary with Meat Market Lane and Sheep Street, where existing buildings are between four and five stories.

There is potential for Mary Street and nearby Nicholas Street to become a creative quarter by linking with the nearby Limerick School of Art and Design campuses on Clare Street and George's Quay and developing as an eco-system of design.

Through discussions with the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, it was revealed that fabrication for small scale designers including prototypes and haute couture is largely outsourced to countries such as Portugal and Italy and further afield in Asia.

There is an opportunity for the Mary Street Garda Station to be redeveloped into a small-scale fashion fabrication centre which also acts as a living museum showcasing Limerick's long association with textiles, and fashion.

From Limerick Lace to the establishment of the Limerick Clothing Factory which supplied uniforms to the British Army, the Canadian Volunteer Militia and the Confederates in the American Civil War, Limerick was at one point renowned for its textile making and innovation. The large site at Mary Street offers scope for modern buildings to be developed to the rear of the original building while the existing building which fronts Mary Street could be carefully restored.

The site also presents an opportunity for a "meanwhile use," where it could serve as a training centre for the repair and restoration of heritage buildings and their features. For instance, it could be used to teach skills such as repairing timber sash

windows, restoring timber flooring, or pointing walls.

Additionally, the site could function temporarily as a materials bank, similar to the one currently operating at the Cleeves Site. This would involve storing old or unused materials, such as paving stones, bricks, and street furniture, until they can be repurposed for future projects. The materials bank would contribute to reducing waste and preventing these items from being sent to landfill.

Development Strategy:

Future development should ensure that any additional buildings on the site are complementary and appropriate in scale and design to the existing Protected Structure.

The site has the capacity for taller buildings to the rear of the Garda Station building, along the northern boundary with Sheep Street.

9 Gaol Lane



Background:

The site at Gaol Lane is located to the rear of No. 38 Mary Street. The site was home to the Tholsel, first established in 1449 as a medieval town hall. It also served as a customs house, a courthouse, and a chamber of commerce.

Tholsels were common across Ireland and had many functions including as courthouses, prisons, a market houses, customs houses, guild halls, meeting places for merchants, place where tolls or taxes were collected, and marketplaces among others.

The Tholsel building was demolished in 1936, but a small section of the building's walls on Gaol Lane remains.

Planning History:

158004 – Part 8 application for (i) the provision of two no. residential units; (ii) the provision of solar panels at roof level; and (iii) all associated ancillary works (the works are proposed within the curtilage of a protected structure, the Old Gaol (RPS No. 3053) – Undetermined / Withdrawn.

Opportunities:

The site covers approximately 290sqm and features historical walls that are associated with the Tholsel, dating back to the 18th century. There are opportunities to develop the site with a modest building that incorporates these protected walls.

Additionally, there is potential to connect the site on Gaol Lane to the Mary Street Garda Station by utilising the rear of existing properties on Mary Street, which historically formed a medieval laneway running from Gaol Lane to Meatmarket Lane.

Development Strategy:

The site is suitable for a residential unit.

Any development at Gaol Lane should incorporate the former walls of the Tholsel Building.

A full assessment of the walls should take place prior to any development.

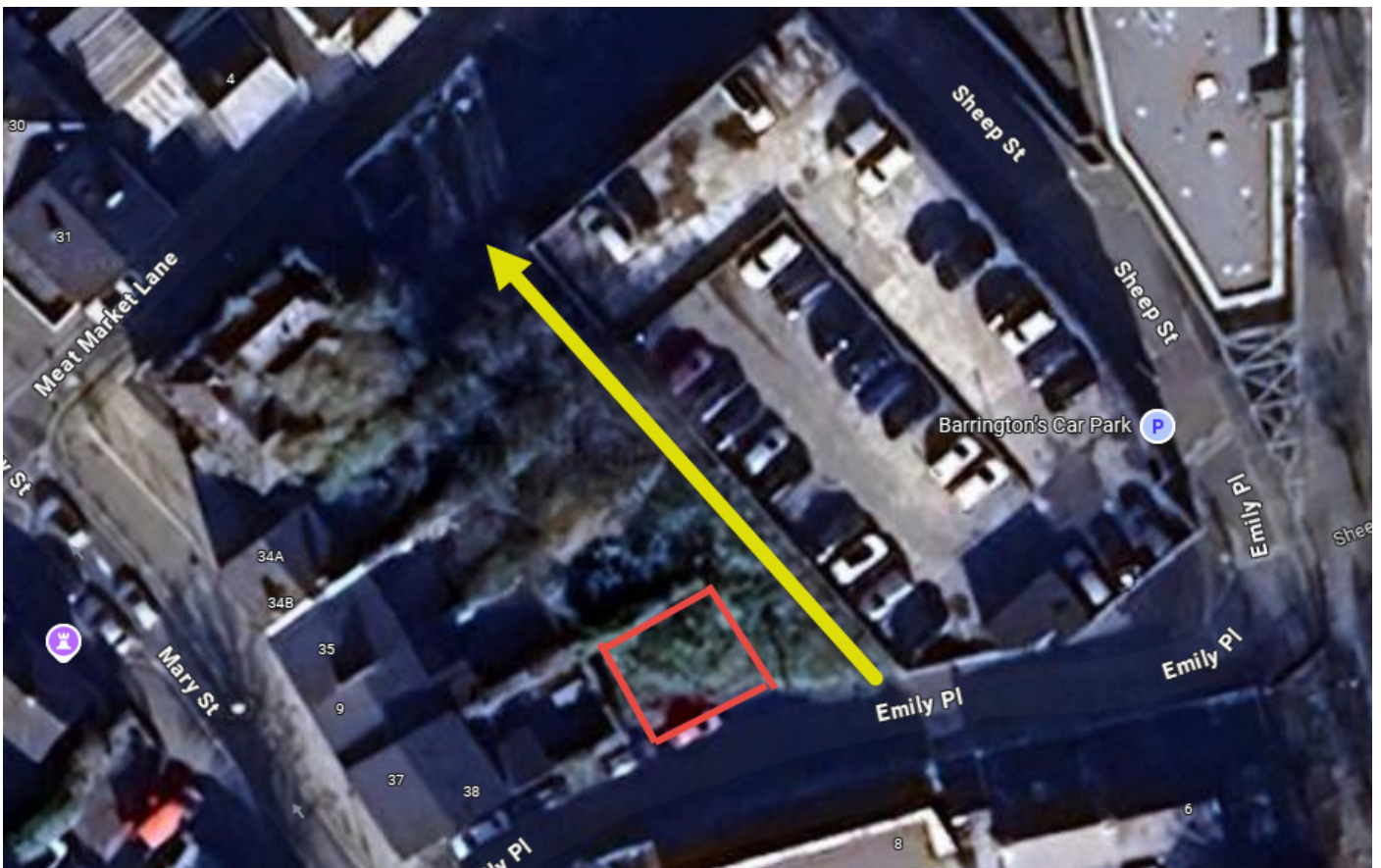


FIG.6.15: GAOL LANE

10 Sonny's Corner and St. Anne's Court



Background:

This prominent corner site at the junction of Island Road and Athlunkard Street has been used as an informal green space for a number of years. A gable mural currently provides a pop of colour to passers-by.

Public Engagement Response:

Many people were aware of the housing plans for the site with the majority of survey respondents expressed support for the proposed residential development at Sonny's Corner and St. Anne's Court. However, some suggested incorporating retail spaces on the ground floors to help keep the street active.

At other engagement events, a "meanwhile use" for the area was proposed. People suggested that while the housing plans are being finalized, the site could be temporarily transformed into a pop-up park with planting, seating, and additional murals, which have become a popular feature in the area.

Planning History/Previous Plans:

10770011 – Permission sought to demolish two buildings, 9A and 9B Athlunkard Street, and construct two retail units and 18 no. apartments with parking and associated site works – Application Withdrawn

Proposed Development:

Plans are at an advanced stage for a 22-unit housing development at this site. The proposal will deliver a mixed-tenure infill development that respects the adjacent Walls of Limerick and the Fosse.

The housing mix features:

- 11 x 2-bed apartments/duplexes
- 11 x 1-bed apartments

Additionally, the proposal features a shared street surface between Island Road and Bishop Street, designed to enhance the local public realm.

This development also aims to establish a stronger connection with the Fosse and the medieval walls along Island Road. The ground-floor units of the proposed building at the corner of Athlunkard Street and Island Road will provide views overlooking the Fosse and the historic medieval walls, further integrating the development with its rich heritage.

The project seeks to foster vibrant communities, support local businesses, and contribute to the revitalisation of King's Island.

Key features include:

- A new urban streetscape that integrates the old city wall, transforming it into a destination location for King's Island.
- An upgrade of the existing city moat, the "Fosse"—a green space running along the city wall, with landscape features co-designed in collaboration with the local community.
- Common facilities for residents and new

pedestrian-focused access in the area, with best practices in Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) integrated into the green space design across the block.

- A new walk along this section of the city wall, potentially featuring an information pavilion dedicated to the history of the city wall, as well as highlighting the likely location of the Little Island Gate (which was a former tower on the City Walls). The design will celebrate and re-establish the line of the wall and the gate's location through the paving and urban realm.

The design of the development will be informed by findings related to the alignment and features of the city walls discovered on the site, ensuring that the final design fully addresses the historical significance of the area.

Time Frame Delivery:

A Part 8 application is expected to be submitted in May 2025.



FIG.6.16: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT SONNY'S CORNER AND ST ANNE'S COURT

11 HSE Building, Bishop Street



Background:

The site contains a small single storey building dating from the mid-20th Century.

The site is owned by the HSE and is used on occasion for clinics and appointments. Its use as a HSE clinic has been reduced significantly in recent times and is identified as an underutilised building/site.

Public Engagement Response:

During public engagement events, it was pointed out that the building is currently underused and has become an eyesore. A lack of activity on site has often resulted in cases of antisocial behaviour.

There were suggestions to redevelop the site for housing, which would align with the nearby proposed developments at St. Anne's Court and Sonny's Corner linking Island Road to Bishop Street.

Opportunities:

The site occupies a prominent corner site at Bishop Street and St. Peter's Cell. The existing building on site is underutilised and there is scope for the site to be redeveloped for alternative uses such as housing to adjoin proposed housing developments at Sonny's Corner and St. Anne's Court.

Proposed Strategy:

Any new development would likely need to complement the surrounding architecture of the area and the existing scale of development around Bishop Street and St. Anne's Court.

12 The Fosse



Background:

The Fosse refers to the area situated just outside the medieval Walls of Limerick.

A fosse is a moat or ditch designed to offer additional protection to a fortification.

The Fosse is most prominent along Island Road, a route that would have run outside the original fortifications. Today, it forms a green strip that lies between the roadway and the remaining parts of the old walls.

The site extends from Sonny's Corner northwards to the Orchard site and Verdant Place connecting back to the Parade and King John's Castle.

Public Engagement Response:

The proposal for a linear park extending from the Sonny's Corner housing development along the Fosse on Island was met with widespread approval.

Many view it as an opportunity to enhance the green strip that currently stretches along Island Road, while also emphasising the historical significance of this site.

Several individuals expressed that they were unaware of 'The Fosse' and its role in bolstering the defences of the Walls of Limerick.

Opportunities:

The designation of the Fosse as a linear park along the Walls of Limerick transforms an existing green space into a structured and purposeful urban feature. This initiative presents an opportunity for enhanced landscaping, including planting and the integration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage rainwater effectively.

SuDS contribute to urban water management by aligning drainage systems with natural hydrological processes such as storm surge overflows, soil percolation, and bio-filtration. By implementing these systems, the project aims to mitigate any impact on the natural water cycle, particularly in controlling surface runoff and reducing water pollution.

The Fosse's transformation into a linear park along Limerick's historic walls formalises its role as a green space while incorporating SuDS to improve

water management. These systems help regulate stormwater, enhance soil absorption, and reduce pollution, ensuring a more sustainable urban environment.

The Fosse will serve as both a linear park extending along Island Road through The Orchard Site and Verdant Place. The Fosse will function as a tourist trail, tracing the old Walls of Limerick from Island Road to King John's Castle, enriching both green space and historical exploration.

Proposed Strategy:

Consolidate and enhance the identity of the strip of land as the 'Fosse' and create an urban recreational space and walkable green route alongside the path of the medieval town walls

Link the new green route to green alleys leading into the heart of the Walled Town

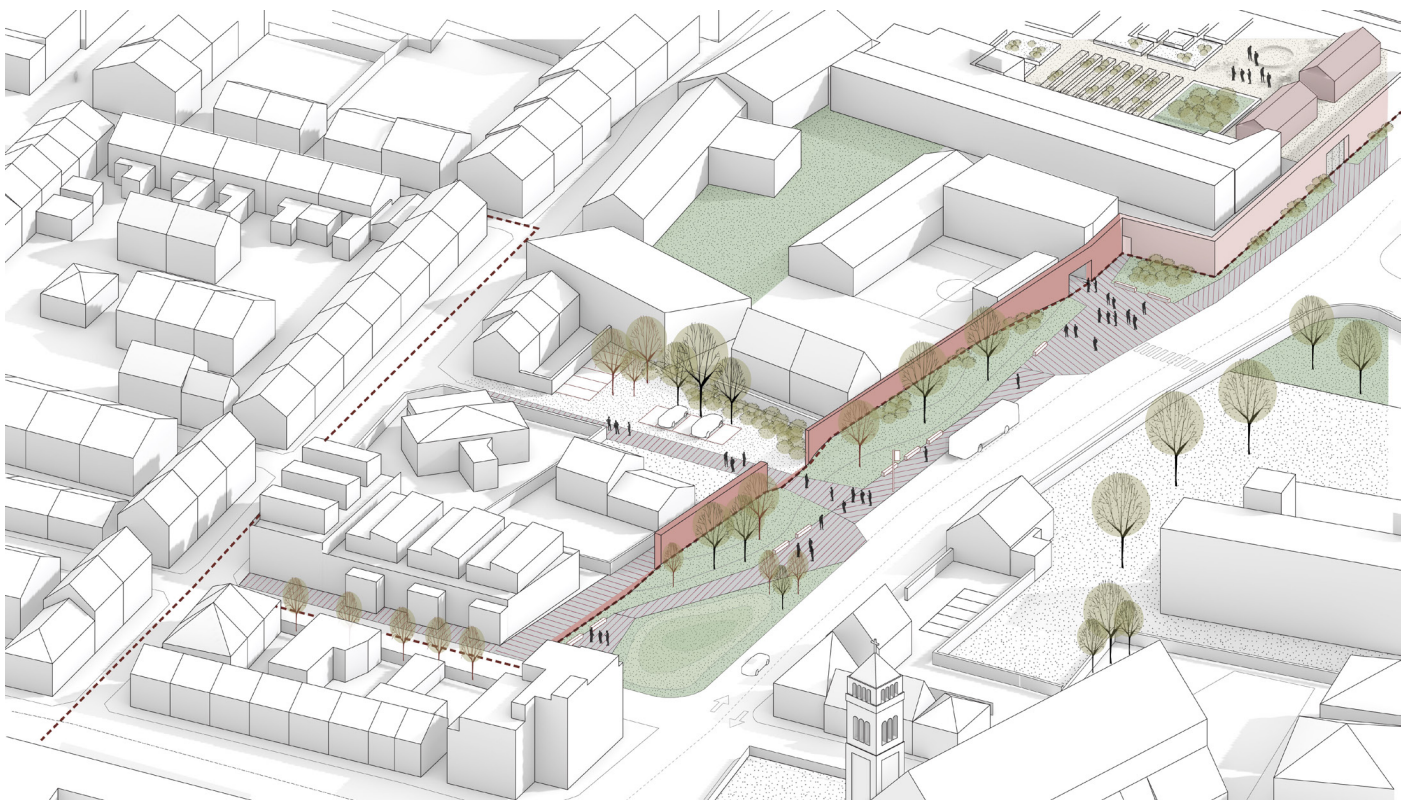


FIG. 6.17: THE FOSSE ALONG ISLAND ROAD

13 The Convent Site



Background:

This site once housed St. Mary's Convent, established by the Sisters of Mercy. It was demolished in the late 1990s, and the site has remained largely vacant since then. The site was gifted to the Irish Wheelchair Association who had plans to develop an outreach centre on the site. However, these plans never came to fruition and the site has remained empty. The site is in private ownership and is not open to the public.

Public Engagement Response:

The Convent Site is located in a strategically advantageous area, with common proposals emphasising the creation of community gardens, public spaces, and a vital connection between Island Road and Convent Street. Additionally, some suggestions have highlighted the potential for residential development on the site or use in part associated with the school.

Planning History/Previous Plans:

08770082 – The development will consist of the construction of a mixed use development to include a Resource and Outreach Centre comprising retail, dining, recreational, therapy and administration facilities, 4 no. apartments, car parking, widening of entrance gate opening onto Island Road for service and emergency use and erection of new gates to same, landscaping and all associated site works. The site is within the curtilage of a protected structure. The site is of archaeological interest. – Granted

Opportunities:

The site presents a significant brownfield site and has potential to function in a number of ways. Any future development of the site should achieve enhanced connectivity.

The site is accessible from both Island Road and Convent Street/Barrack Street/Bishop Street.

Connectivity:

To enhance connectivity, a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly pathway should be created with any proposal, linking Island Road through the site to Bishop Street and Convent Street. This will improve access to public transport, encourage active travel, and help reduce car dependency in the area.

Community Garden:

A central feature of the site, the community garden will provide local residents with an opportunity to connect with nature, cultivate their own food, and strengthen community bonds. This space will include raised garden beds, flower patches, and communal areas designed for gatherings and small events.

Housing Development:

The site is also suitable for a housing development. This could involve developing residential properties

and creating a new street that strengthens the connection between Island Road and Convent Street. The housing plan could be designed to accommodate diverse demographics, with an emphasis on affordability, particularly for local residents.

Development Strategy:

Any future development of the site shall provide for connectivity from Island Road to Bishop Street and Convent Street. The design of any future development will be guided by the alignment and features of the city walls to the east of the site and shall be complementary to the fosse. Any future development shall ensure adequate privacy to the adjacent St. Mary's National School on Bishop Street.



FIG. 6.18: FORMER ST MARY'S CONVENT (NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND)

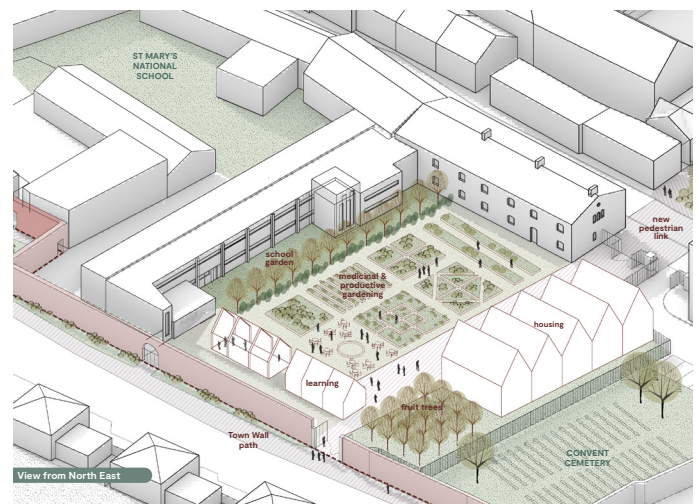


FIG. 6.19: ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING OF THE SITES POTENTIAL

14 The Orchard Site



Background:

Known locally as Googoo's Hill, this site is used as a car park for the nearby King John's Castle.

The Orchard site was historically an orchard supporting the Walled Town. Today it provides parking for visitors to King John's Castle. It also function as loading and storage place for large events at the Castle. The site is accessible from Island View Terrace. Open daily from 9:30 to 18:00 and until 16:00 on Sundays. The northern part remains a green field within the parking area.

The car park features a soft gravel ground covering and is enclosed by palisade fencing on its southern and eastern boundaries facing Castle Street.

Public Engagement Response:

The site has been earmarked for housing for several years and a Part 8 application (Ref. 198004) was approved in 2019 and a number of people suggested that the site should be used for housing.

However, some people suggested that the proposed housing development (Ref. 198004) is unsuitable for the site and that the any housing development for the site should be revised to reduce its scale, height and design.

Many suggested that the existing car park should be retained as it is important for the operation of King John's Castle and provides parking for tourists and tour buses as well as accommodating HGVs associated with staging/equipment when the castle is used for concerts.

People who suggested retaining the car park stated that its appearance should be improved to make the area more visually appealing. Suggestions included the replacement of the existing gravel surface with a more permanent surface and the removal/ replacement of the fencing and the installation of railings and hedging to soften the appearance on the landscape as well as the planting of trees in various locations throughout the site.

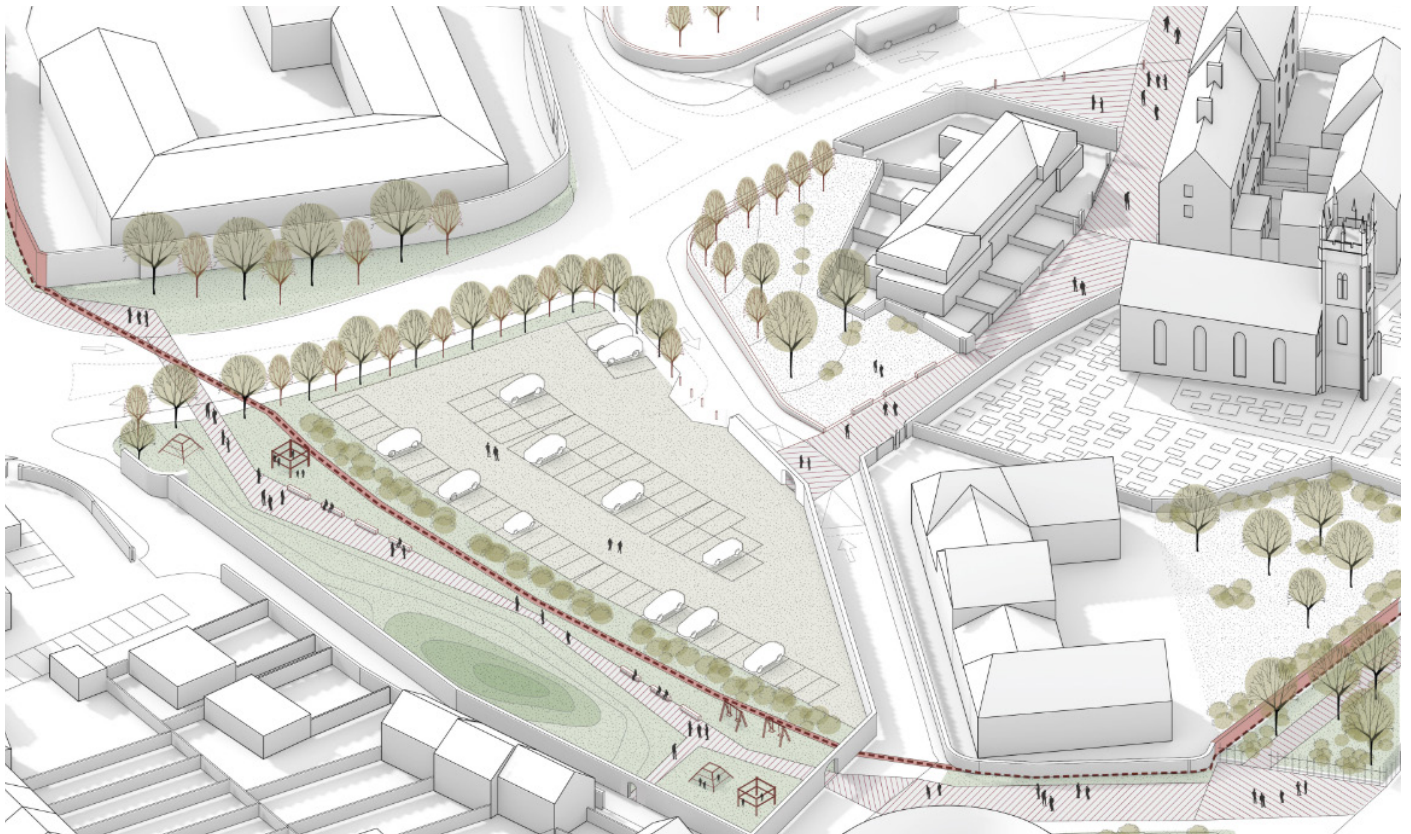


FIG. 6.20: ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING OF THE SITES POTENTIAL



FIG. 6.21: INDICATIVE LAYOUT

Planning History/Previous Plans:

198004 – Part 8 Development, the provision of older person's residential accommodation consisting of 27 units on two adjacent sites specifically, 6no. 1-bed and 14no. 2-bed apartments in buildings varying in height from 1-3 storeys organised around a central garden and new pedestrian route together with works adjacent to the City Wall, a recorded archaeological monument and protected structure, and associated landscaping and works to existing boundary walls, 3no 1-bed and 4no 2-bed apartments in buildings varying in height from 1-2 storeys including modifications and re-paving of a section of Old Dominick Street, vehicle and pedestrian access road, footpaths and 10no car parking spaces, open space and soft landscaping to public and private amenity spaces, alterations and construction of new infrastructure, all associated site works.

Several proposals, including the 2014 ABK Orchard Site Masterplan and the 2019 Orchard Site Older Person's Accommodation. The latter, led by ABK Architects, resulted in a Part 8 Plan for 27 residential units for older persons, creating a public space between Parade Park and Church Street. Traffic calming measures, shared surfaces, traffic lights, and upgraded street furniture were proposed to enhance the civic and pedestrian nature of the area.

The 2011 Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan identified the Orchard Site as a Strategic Site. It proposed promoting the site for new commercial/ mixed-use development, possibly featuring a cultural building, museum, or large-scale retailer. The plan

supported the construction of Island Road, car parking, a coach park on the old convent orchard site, a hotel at Verdant Place, and remodelling Nicholas St into a primarily pedestrian-oriented zone without full pedestrianisation. The Development and Archaeology Strategy Report for King's Island marked the Orchard Site as high archaeological potential, indicating that the site is bisected by a supposed line of the City Wall.

Opportunities:

The current car park features a basic design, with a gravel surface and palisade fencing. There is potential to enhance the space by upgrading the surfacing, incorporating more landscaping, and creating a visually appealing environment. This could include replacing the existing palisade fencing with a low wall and railings, contributing to a more inviting aesthetic. The need for a car park within close proximity of the Castle has been identified in the Castle masterplan study.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to make use of an existing archway, which could serve as a pedestrian entrance/exit. This would provide a direct route for pedestrians along Church Street to King John's Castle and onwards toward Nicholas Street, further enhancing connectivity and accessibility.

The northern boundary of the Orchard Site contains the line of the old Walls of Limerick, and any redevelopment of the car park should be considerate of the archaeological sensitivities of the site. The northern boundary should become a feature of the site that showcases the line of the old Walls and the Fosse.

There is significant potential for the site to be integrated into a linear park along Island Road, which could extend towards the Fosse, creating a more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing space.

Development Strategy:

Any proposed development should incorporate measures to preserve, protect, and potentially enhance the visibility of the route of the medieval walls to the north of the site. Proposals should employ a permeable hard surface treatment to facilitate car parking, greening and good infiltration of rainwater.

Prior to any proposed works, an in-depth archaeological survey should be conducted to determine the exact layout and condition of the medieval walls and other heritage features.

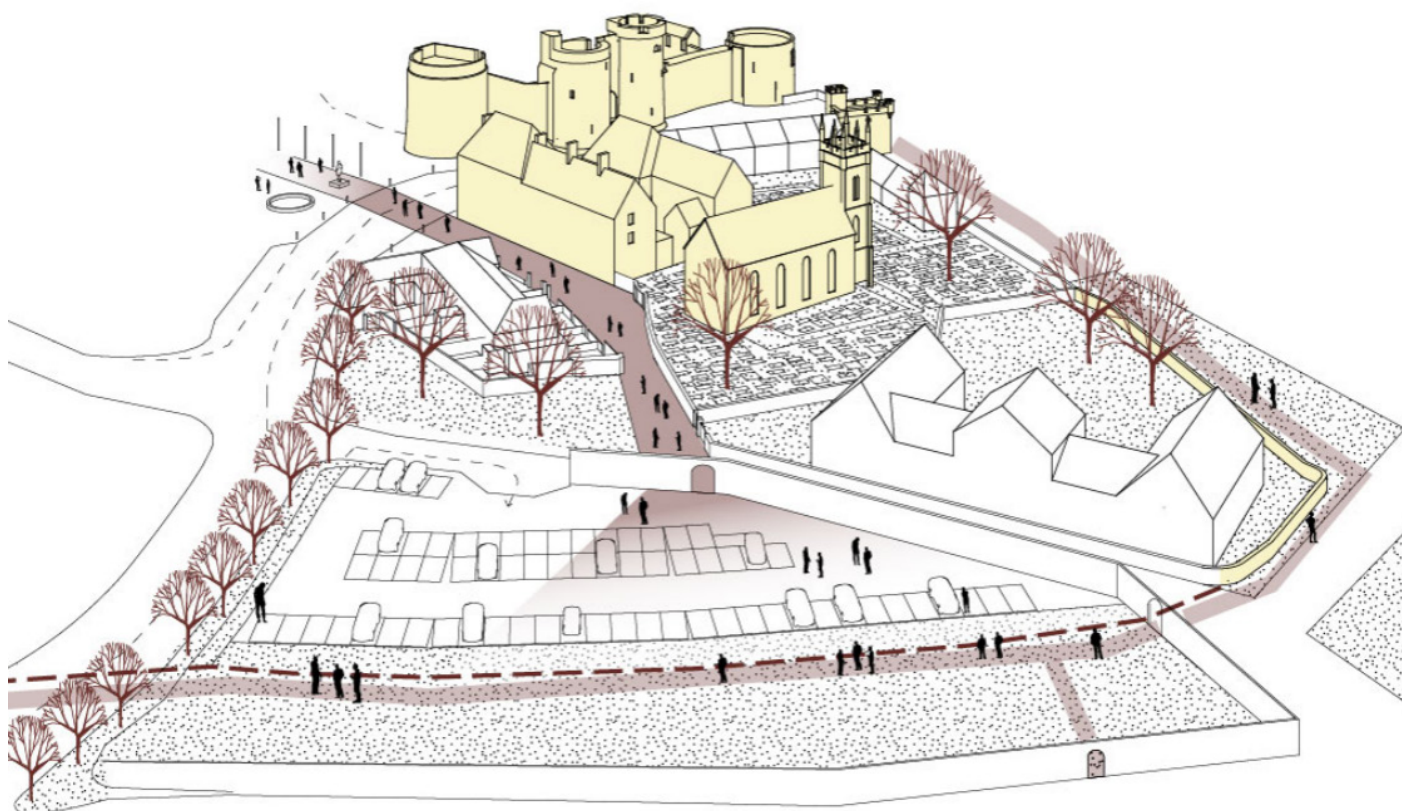


FIG. 6.22: ILLUSTRATE IMAGE OF THE POTENTIAL LAYOUT OF THE ORCHARD SITE

15 Verdant Place



Background:

A small green space that is currently closed off from the public by railings and a gate. It is located adjacent on Verdant Place adjacent to the Toll Cottages and the Toll House on Thomond Bridge.

The site is currently a privately owned green space and a small area of paving that is publicly accessible

Public Engagement Response:

Feedback from the engagements revealed a range of opinions. Some participants expressed support for opening the green area to the public, envisioning it as a connection between Verdant Crescent and Verdant. In contrast, others believed the area should remain as it is, closed off from public access.

There were suggestions for improving pedestrian facilities within the space, with particular emphasis on upgrading the paved area between the green space and the Toll Cottages.



Planning History/Previous Plans:

168000 – Part 8 Development, the provision of flood defences consisting of; new flood defence walls (ranging from 0.8m and 2.2m higher than existing ground levels), new footpath from Thomond Bridge to the existing embankment at the north of the community centre, realignment of the existing road to include a one way traffic system and ancillary works (works are proposed in the immediate setting & amenity of the following protected structures former Thomond Bridge Toll House (RPS No. 3038), Verdant Place stretch of the City Wall (RPS No. 3059) and Thomond Bridge (RPS No. 6057) – Permitted



FIG. 6.23: THE FULL EXTENT OF THE FOSSE POTENTIAL (INCL. VERDANT PLACE)

Opportunities:

This green space is historically part of the Fosse, a moat that once ran along the outer walls of Limerick. There is a unique opportunity for this site to become a key component in a network of linear parks stretching along Island Road, The Orchard Site, Verdant Place and linking back to Castle Street and King John's Castle, enhancing the city's green space connectivity.

Development Strategy:

The project emphasises the utilisation of the green space for public benefit, aligning with the community's needs and expectations. The Development and Archaeology Strategy Report for Kings Island marked Verdant Place as an area of high archaeological potential, indicating that the location of the toll cottages in proximity to Thomond Bridge act as an entrance to the historic town, also the rear of the adjacent Toll Cottages is formed by historic city walls.

Elements of the brief are elaborated upon below.



16 Parade Park



Background:

Located opposite King John's Castle on The Parade, this site holds significant historical value, with a street pattern that has evolved over the centuries.

In the 1990s, several buildings on the site were demolished to make way for the construction of the Limerick Northern Relief Road, aimed at reducing traffic congestion in the city centre. A new road redirected traffic from Nicholas Street along Island Road, while a new river crossing over the Abbey River to Locke Quay completed the orbital road.

Since then, the site has remained largely vacant. For many years, it was fenced off, but in more recent times, the area has been opened up and is now used as an informal green space. A notable feature of the site is a mural on the gable end of a building on The Parade, which honours Dolores O'Riordan, the late lead singer of The Cranberries. The mural has become

a popular destination for visitors to the area to take photographs.

Public Engagement Response:

Through the engagement events, several suggestions were made regarding Parade Park. Many expressed a desire to retain the green area while enhancing it and transforming it into a more formal park.

The key responses are summarised below:

- The site could contain allotments, accessible to key holders.
- The space could be preserved as a public green open area, with additional flowers, planting, public art, and benches.
- It could be developed for a new museum building
- Another suggestion is to develop the site into an orchard.

Planning History/Previous Plans:

13778003: Construction of a public park, with associated hard and soft landscaping works to include a sculpture, pedestrian pathways, boundary treatments, lighting, seating, signage and ancillary works. The site is bounded to the northwest by Castle Street, to the northeast by Barrack Street, to the southwest by the Parade and to the southeast by the rear boundaries of the row of houses on Convent Street. (2013)

The Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan 2011 identified this as one of the strategic sites near the Castle that could be used to support the activities of the Castle and should ideally be reserved for a use or uses that would act as a key attraction in the area. Such a use might be a significant cultural building, museum (children's museum/attraction, science museum, and interpretative centre), an exhibition centre, an entertainment venue or a medium to large scale retailer specializing in the arts, crafts and/or textile markets.

Opportunities:

Guided by the public engagement events, there is clear support for retaining this green space for the local community. Therefore, Parade Park is envisioned as an urban garden offering seating and rest areas to both local community and visitors of King John's Castle. The existing community garden is to be integrated and strengthened with urban furniture while providing protected coach drop-off areas.

There is potential to incorporate its upgrade with any proposed public realm improvements to Nicholas Street and The Parade, ensuring a seamless connection between the spaces.

Although there is potential for the site to be developed for a building in the future, it is believed that upgrading the existing green space could serve as a valuable and functional use and protecting the vista of the Castle.

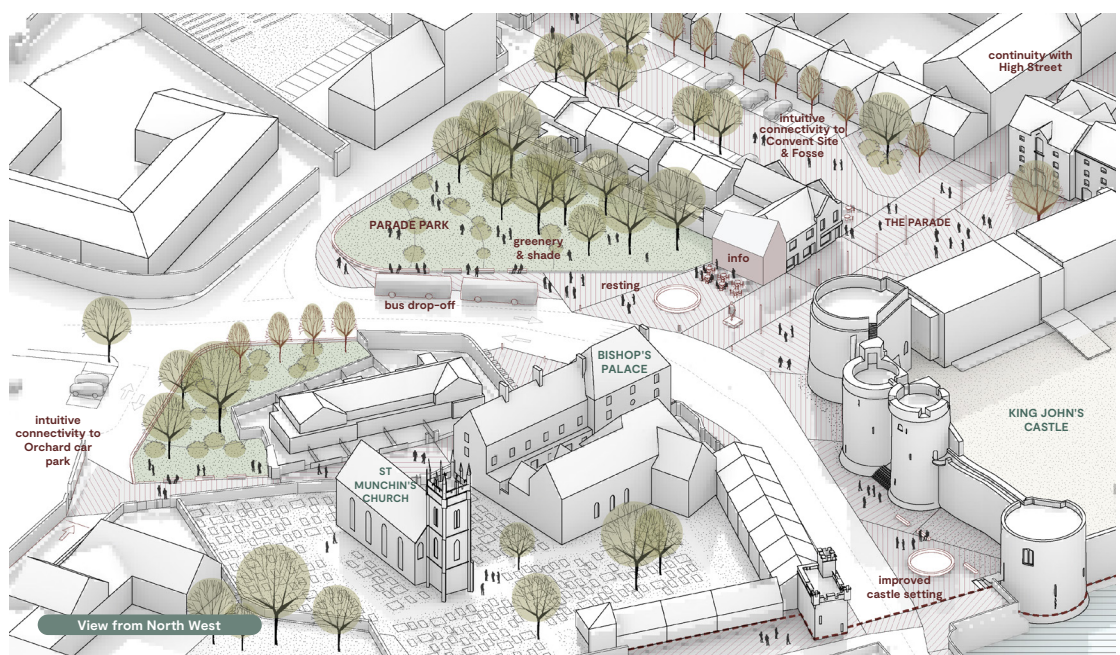


FIG. 6.24: ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING OF THE SITES POTENTIAL

17 King John's Castle



Background:

King John's Castle is a 13th-century castle located on the banks of the River Shannon; the castle itself was built on the orders of King John of England in 1200.

King John's Castle is a historic fortress located in the heart of Limerick City, on the banks of the River Shannon. Although the site dates to 922 when the Vikings lived on the Island, the castle itself was built in the early 13th century, around 1210, by King John of England, from whom the castle gets its name. The castle was designed to control the strategically important crossing of the River Shannon and to serve as a stronghold for the English during their conquest of Ireland.

This site is open all year round as a tourist attraction in Limerick. Using 21st century technology, visitors can travel back in time to an era of soldiers, sagas and sieges on the banks of the River Shannon. In recent years the Castle has also played host to various events and festivals.

Limerick City and County Council took over the operation in April 2022. Discover Limerick DAC (Designated Activity Company) was established to operate and develop key tourism attractions which includes King John's Castle.

There were 107,000 visitors in 2022, 110,000 visitors in 2023 and 105,000 in 2024.

Public Engagement Response:

King John's Castle is one of the city's most iconic landmarks, but it has the potential to become even more integrated into the cultural fabric of Limerick. The castle received a big response during engagement events which are summarised below:

Historic Restoration and Integration

- Integrate the visitor centre more seamlessly with the existing castle walls, potentially rebuilding parts of the structure using historical techniques. This would offer a more authentic experience, allowing visitors to feel like they're stepping back in time.

Public Engagement Response:

King John's Castle is one of the city's most iconic landmarks, but it has the potential to become even more integrated into the cultural fabric of Limerick. The castle received a big response during engagement events which are summarised below:

Historic Restoration and Integration

- Integrate the visitor centre more seamlessly with the existing castle walls, potentially rebuilding parts of the structure using historical techniques. This would offer a more authentic experience, allowing visitors to feel like they're stepping back in time.
- Incorporate advanced technology, like virtual reality or augmented reality, to transport visitors back to different eras of the castle's history.

More Events and Entertainment

- Increase the number of concerts, gigs, and festivals, including live music and themed events that reflect the castle's history and medieval roots. This could attract both locals and tourists, breathing new life into the castle grounds.

- Bring the Christmas market to the castle, along with family fun days and other seasonal festivals that showcase the Castle and its place in Limerick's history.
- Need for better management of crowds outside the Castle before and after events to protect residence along Convent Street in particular.

Improved Surroundings and Land Use

- Invest in landscaping along the riverfront, planting mature trees and installing seating areas where visitors can relax and enjoy the view. Enhance the green space between the castle and the council offices, offering a serene spot with park benches.
- Make the surrounding streets more pedestrian-friendly to improve access to the castle and make the area more welcoming for families and tourists alike.

Improved Surroundings and Land Use

- Invest in landscaping along the riverfront, planting mature trees and installing seating areas where visitors can relax and enjoy the view. Enhance the green space between the castle and the council offices, offering a serene spot with park benches.
- Make the surrounding streets more pedestrian-friendly to improve access to the castle and make the area more welcoming for families and tourists alike.

Proposal/Opportunities:

By focusing on the historical integrity of the castle, offering more interactive experiences, improving the surrounding amenities, and creating a more diverse event calendar, King John's Castle could become a dynamic and essential part of the city's cultural and tourism landscape. It would provide more opportunities for locals, attract more tourists, and foster a deeper connection between the public and the city's rich history.

In March 2024 a multi-disciplinary design team led by international design practice Galmstrup Architects was appointed to create a road map to maximise the potential of the castle. The Castle can become the catalyst for regeneration of the walled Town and Kings Island. The castle and Nicholas Street projects are complementary to each other.

A total of €2.26m has been secured from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to develop the site as a key tourist attraction in the region.

The masterplan is expected to identify opportunity for investment in an exciting and innovative visitor offering for the Castle that takes a holistic approach to the city-wide and site-wide components of the visitor experience, increasing the value of the castle as a visitor attraction that delivers sustainable socio-economic benefits for the city and region.

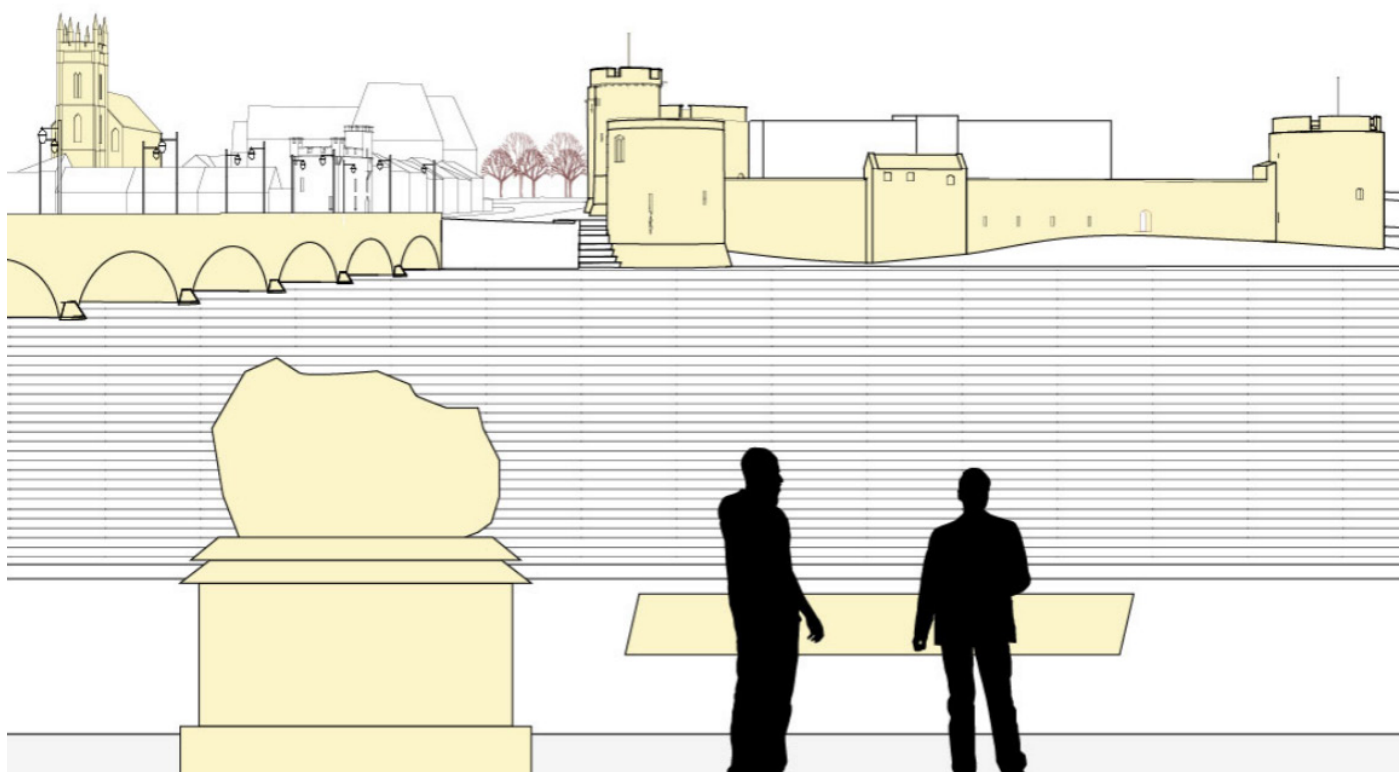


FIG. 6.25: ILLUSTRATED IMAGE WITH VIEWS TO KING JOHN'S CASTLE FROM THE LIMERICK TREATY STONE

18 Council Car park and Castle Green Area



Background:

This area is located between Limerick City and County Council's offices on Merchant's Quay and King John's Castle and forms part of the 'Three Bridges Walk'.

The green area adjacent to King John's Castle and Castle Lane is heavily used in summer by walkers and as a place for people to gather and relax.

It offers spectacular views of the City Centre along the River Shannon as it flows into the Shannon Estuary and during the summer months, it is the perfect spot to watch the sunset over the city.

The Council Car Park is located to the rear of the Council Offices and provides limited car parking to Council employees. It functions from Monday to Friday but on the weekends is closed.

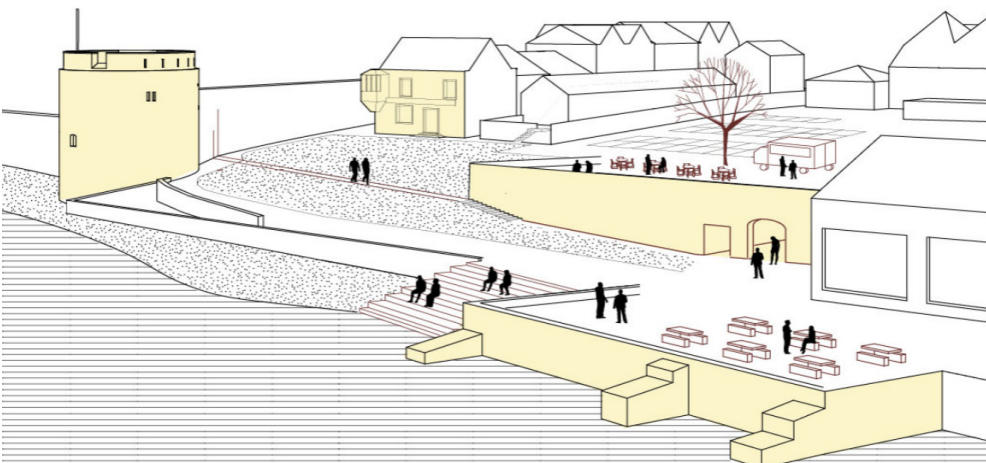


FIG. 6.27: ILLUSTRATED IMAGE OF THE POTENTIAL USES OF THE COUNCIL CARPARK/CASTLE GREEN AREA

The car park is opened to public on occasions such as Christmas to attract people to the city centre.

In late August 2024, the Council Car Park was used to host a basketball jam by Basketball Ireland and a movie night hosted as part of Film Track, a 3-day showcase of film screenings and talks celebrating independent filmmaking in Limerick.

Engagement Response:

Many people shared their appreciation for the green area near the Castle, highlighting it as a popular spot to relax and socialise, especially during the summer months.

Many participants offered suggestions for enhancing the space, such as incorporating additional landscaping, seating, bins, and lighting to make it more inviting.

The closure of Castle Lane was a point of concern for several individuals, and this feedback has been forwarded to Galmstrup, who are currently working on a masterplan for King John's Castle.

Additionally, some people proposed using the Castle walls as a backdrop for movie projections, which could further activate and energise the area.

Opportunities:

As part of the King's Island Flood Relief Scheme (No. 19) and the World Class Waterfront (No. 20), there are opportunities to improve the public realm and landscaping of this popular recreation spot. This includes adding additional seating areas and improving lighting both and clear and defined link to the entrance to King John's Castle through improved wayfinding measures.

As part of the King John's Castle Masterplan, there is potential for Castle Lane to be reopened to the public as a direct route from The Parade on Nicholas Street to the riverside.

There are opportunities for the car park to become a flexible space when not in use for staff parking.

This could take place during weekends particularly in the summer months and for events such as Riverfest, Samhain and 'Christmas in Limerick'.



FIG. 6.26: USE OF THE PARK IN SUMMER 2024 (SOURCE DEIRDRE POWER)

19 Flood Relief Scheme



Background:

King's Island by its nature is susceptible to flooding, particularly due to the tidal nature of the Shannon River. Significant flooding occurred in February 2014 when existing defences failed locally allowing flood waters onto the Island and surrounding areas. Dozens of homes on King's Island including in St. Mary's Park and on Athlunkard Street were damaged.

Public Engagement Response:

The public, particularly local residents, were highly supportive of the flood relief scheme, as it provides vital protection against high tides and river swells during storms.

Additionally, there was strong backing for the public realm improvements included in the Flood Relief works, especially the reinstatement and reopening of the Island Bank Walk. This scenic path, which loops around St. Mary's Park, has been closed since the flooding event in 2014.

Project Overview:

The Flood Relief Scheme will incorporate new and upgraded flood defence walls, stone cladding, glazed panels, earthen embankments, and public realm improvements. A Constraints Study informed the feasibility study, considering environmental conditions, constraints, and opportunities.

The scheme explores the potential use of the fosse on King's Island as a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs) feature, integrating it into a modern civic feature with stormwater management.

The scheme encompasses several key components designed to enhance flood protection and improve local amenities:

Flood Embankments: Construction of approximately 2,200 meters of 2.5-meter-high earthen flood embankments, incorporating a 3-meter-wide footpath and cycleway, along with public lighting.

Quay Wall Upgrades: Renovation of existing quay walls, including deconstruction, lime mortar repointing, lime grouting, and stonework repairs.

Flood Defence Walls: Installation of 290 meters of flood defence walls featuring glass panels and 810 meters of stone-clad reinforced concrete walls.

Access and Recreational Facilities: Development of 600 meters of access routes leading to the flood embankment walkway and a new fisherman's access point.

Public Realm Enhancements: Upgrades including road resurfacing, granite and limestone paving, installation of railings, public lighting, topsoiling, and landscaping to improve the area's aesthetics and functionality.

Timeline:

Advance works contract was completed in October 2017. Detailed design, site investigations, and archaeological excavations were conducted throughout 2022 and 2023.

In February 2024, Ward & Burke Construction Ltd was awarded the contract and construction commenced in November 2024 and is expected to be completed within 24 months.

Benefits:

Upon completion, the scheme is projected to protect 506 residential and 22 non-residential properties from tidal flooding, providing a standard of protection against a 0.5% annual exceedance probability event. Beyond flood protection, the project aims to enhance residential amenities, promote business and tourism, and safeguard culturally and economically significant sites. The development of new footpaths and cycle paths is also anticipated to improve recreational and tourism opportunities around King's Island.

This initiative underscores the commitment of Limerick City and County Council, in collaboration with the Office of Public Works, to bolster flood resilience and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in the King's Island area.



New
Embankment

New RC
flood wall

Raising of
existing walls

Glass
panels

Outer
embankment

FIG. 6.28: OUTLINE OF FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

20 World Class Waterfront



Background:

The World Class Waterfront is a project for the enhancement of Limerick's riverside areas. Funding of €73.4 million has been allocated to Limerick as part of the government's Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). It contains two projects; the Cleaves Riverside Quarter and public realm and development works along the River Shannon.

The proposed public realm works incorporate a significant part of King's Island including George's Quay, Merchant's Quay and the area around King John's Castle.

The existing areas that comprise the 'World Class Waterfront' are already part of popular recreational routes around the city which includes the well-known 'Three Bridges Walk'. King's Island and the King's Island Walled Town are an integral part of the 'Three Bridges Walk'.

Public Engagement Response:

- Enhance the Castle as a focal point at night, making it more visible and iconic with lighting
- Many mentioned how they enjoyed the Three Bridges Walk and the riverside.
- It was suggested by some to add more decorative elements like hanging lights, greenery (e.g., flower baskets or vertical gardens), and seating areas on or near the bridges which would create a more pleasant walking experience and encourage people to explore the area.
- The visual appeal of well-maintained bridges can make a significant difference. Many suggested painting the Sylvester O'Halloran Bridge highlighting that a fresh coat of paint could revitalise the bridge.
- Some people feel that the route through the Potato Market can be unwelcoming, with the movement of cars in the car park creating a sense of hostility at times.
- Many suggested that Castle Lane should be reopened to the public as a through way. As part of any redevelopment of King John's Castle, it could be a pedestrian area with shops, cafés, and historical markers.

Proposal:

The Riverfront area in question is mainly hard landscaping with minimal tree coverage and is exposed to prevailing wind direction from the west. The development strategy here is to create an attractive open space and create clear visual links to an active Nicholas Street. The scheme will integrate public realm with flood relief scheme introducing SUDs. There is a need to address the prevailing wind issue by introducing trees and create less windswept spaces for play and seating areas. The scheme will also strengthen pedestrian access from Kings Island to the City Centre between Arthur's Quay and the Potato Market via Hunt Museum.

Timeframe and Delivery:

The first phase of the World Class Waterfront initiative is centred on the development and implementation of the Arthur's Quay Framework, while Limerick Twenty Thirty is currently in the detailed design stage for a mixed-use development at the Cleeve's Riverside Quarter.

Upgrades to the riverside and waterfront areas surrounding King's Island are anticipated to be completed at a later stage, within the medium to long term.

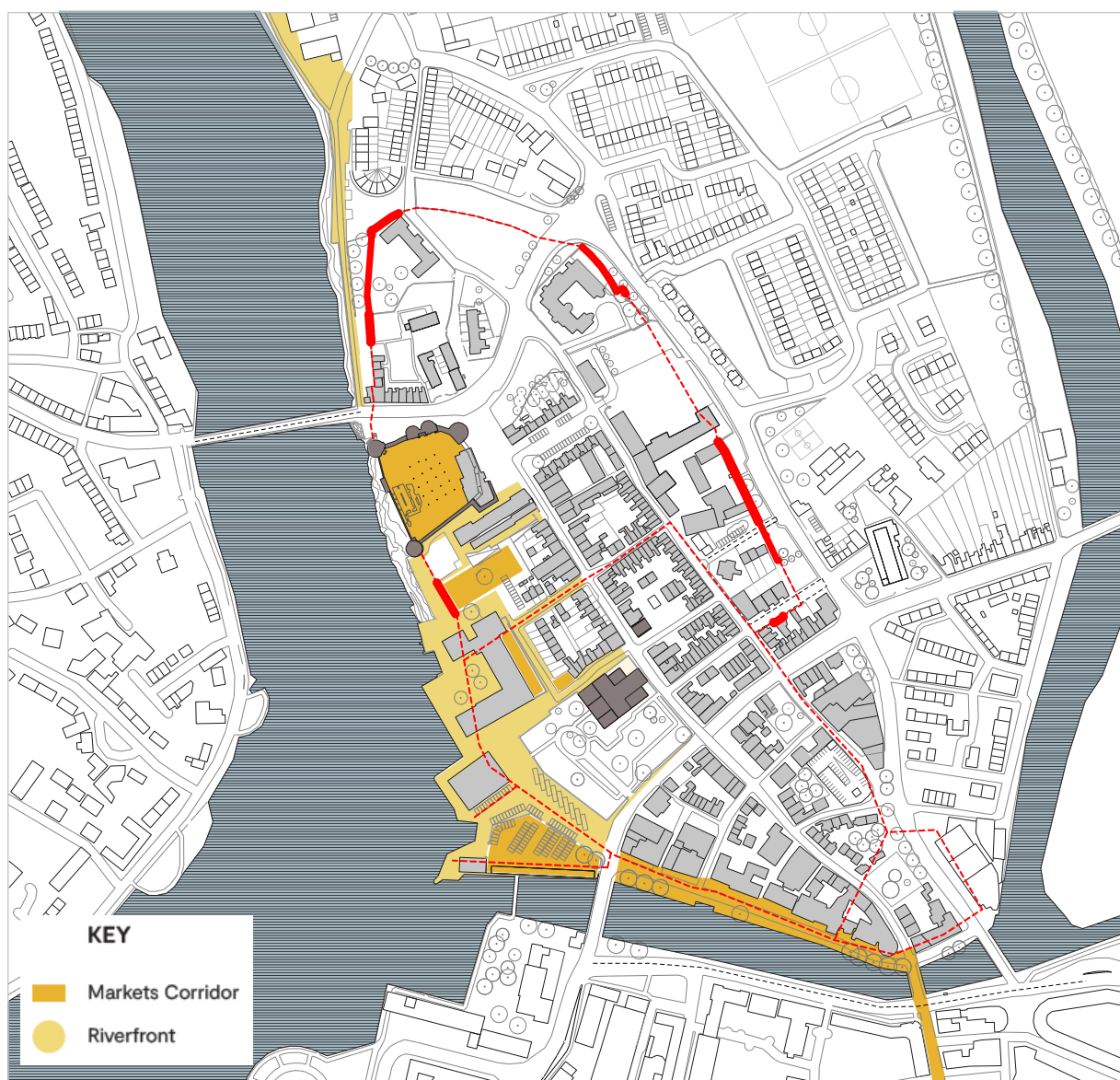


FIG. 6.29: WATERFRONT

21 Vacant site Mary St former Gaelcholaiste Playground



Background:

The site is located between Mary Street and Sráid Seamus O Cinnéide and previously functioned as the playground for Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh until 2023 when the school relocated to a purpose-built campus on Clare Street. The site measures approximately 700sqm and is accessible via Mary Street.

Public Engagement Response:

This site was not included in the original King's Island Walled Town Framework however, it was highlighted by many participants during engagement events. As a result, it was deemed appropriate to incorporate it into this the enhanced Framework.

Various suggestions have been made for the site, including the potential development of housing in the area. Alternatively, some have proposed transforming



the site into a public park, featuring amenities such as basketball hoops and other recreational equipment, like those found in O'Brien Park on Clare Street.

Proposed Strategy:

The site is suitable for a development of approximately 4 storeys which would match the height of adjacent developments including Barrington's Hospital, the former Gaelcholáiste building and the Absolute Hotel.

Any proposed development should be considerate of single storey and two storey developments along Mary Street and to prevent overlooking or overshadowing.

Any proposed design shall make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

Strategic Sites Adjoining the Study Area

The Opera Site, Arthur's Quay and the Market Quarter projects are identified as major catalysts for the wider King's Island economy. These projects are at varying stages of development and will support the tourist/retail economy and strengthen links to Heritage assets of the study area and wider city.

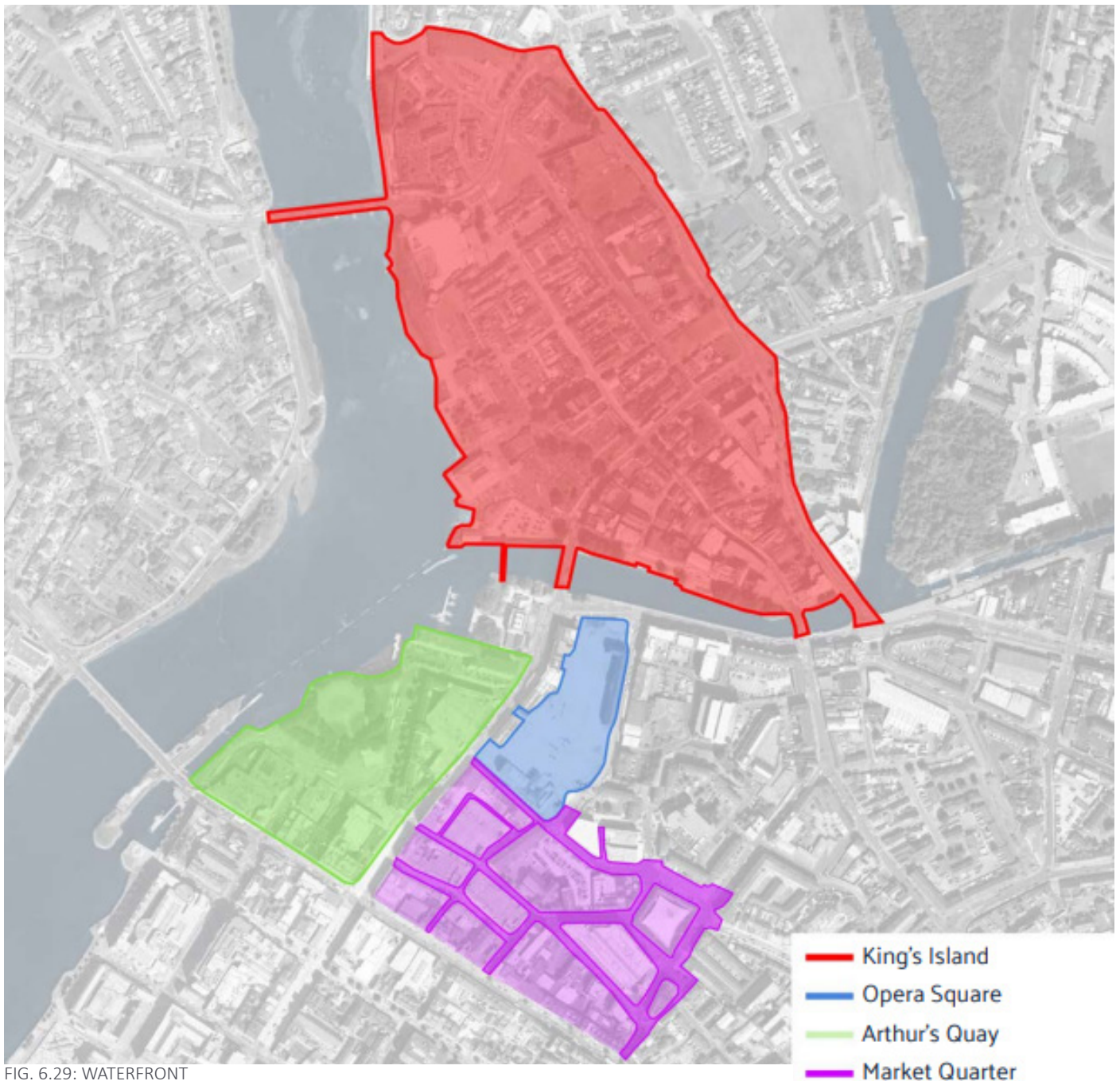


FIG. 6.29: WATERFRONT





Chapter Seven

Next Steps for King's Island Walled Town

7.1 Collaborative action Plan for Kings Island Walled Town



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiliú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach
an Deiscirt
Southern Regional
Assembly



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City
& County Council

ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

Next Steps for King’s Island Walled Town

7.1 Collaborative Action Plan for King’s Island Walled Town

As part of the commitment to revitalising and enhancing King’s Island, Limerick City and County Council is dedicated to working closely with local stakeholders, including landowners, business owners, residents, tourist groups, cultural organisations, and other relevant community groups. The goal is to form a co-working team that combines expertise, and professional skill sets with the insights and perspectives of those who have a vested interest in the area and those who live and work within it. Involving residents and stakeholders in the implementation of these actions will foster a stronger sense of ownership, identity, and connection to the area.

The actions outlined in the following table have been derived from the findings of this framework. Through this comprehensive assessment, a sequential plan of short-term interventions to longer-term initiatives aimed at addressing key issues and maximising the area’s potential has been identified. By collaboratively implementing these next steps, the aim is to create a vibrant, sustainable, and thriving Kings Island for generations to come.

In alignment with the vision statement for King’s Island, the Collaborative Action Plan set out underneath, sets forth a series of strategic steps aimed at realising this vision. Each action outlined in the table contributes directly to the goal of creating a dynamic and thriving neighbourhood. By enhancing

accessibility, regenerating underutilised spaces, and fostering community engagement, the foundations are laid for a vibrant destination along the River Shannon SPA/SAC.

Furthermore, Limerick City and County Council is committed to fulfilling the environmental responsibilities outlined in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, particularly EHP1 and EHO1, which emphasize the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity. Limerick City and County Council is dedicated to preserving the unique heritage of the area and sustainably underpins every action. Limerick City and County Council aim to shape King’s Island into a strong and dynamic neighbourhood that meets the needs of its residents and visitors alike. In these next steps, community engagement and support remain paramount.

By fostering a cooperative and inclusive environment, challenges can be addressed and change embraced thoughtfully. The King’s Island Walled Town Framework serves as our guide, illuminating possibilities for sustainable enhancements that benefit the entire community. Together, we are working towards a future where King’s Island thrives as a beacon of history, culture, and modern vitality.

Archaeology and Built Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

Action	Stakeholders	Timeframe
Continue the restoration of the upstanding city walls as required and link to heritage assets	LCCC Public Realm & Heritage / Irish Walled Town Network	Short to Medium Term
Define the public realm where the medieval walls are underground with a consistent material palette thus identifying the medieval enclosure.	LCCC Public Realm & Heritage	Medium Term
Take learnings from the URBACT GreenPlace Project as it applies to the medieval walls and greenspaces in Irish Town and determine if its expandable to the Englishtown medieval walls.	LCCC Public Realm & Heritage	Short to Medium Term
Consider and investigate the extension of the existing Architectural Conservation Area No. 7 which includes parts of King's Island including Verdant Place, Church Street and some of Nicholas Street.	LCCC Conservation	Short Term
Investigate the potential of a meanwhile use in the former Mary Street Garda Station to train people in the construction and restoration of historic structures. This may include training in traditional skills and crafts, such as building with lime mortar, thatching, iron - work, weaving, traditional stone wall building and repair	LCCC Heritage/ Heritage Council	Short Term
Promote Conservation and Heritage Grant Opportunities such as the Historic Structures Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme.	LCCC Conservation	Short Term
Promote the conservation and reuse of publicly and privately owned historic properties and foster best practice conservation and management culture to prevent loss of historic fabric and character for the benefit of the community, the environment and regeneration of the area.	LCCC Conservation and Living City Initiative Economic Development and Property	Short Term
Ensure that new buildings within the area respect the existing grain and respond closely to the character, general scale and width of the streets, in particular, where development potential lies within smaller infill sites.	LCCC Planning	Short Term
In co-operation with bodies such as School of Architecture University of Limerick (SAUL), the Department of the Built Environment at Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) and the History and Geography Departments at Mary Immaculate College to examine innovative means of promoting our built	Educational Institutions UL/TUS/MIC	Short Term

Public Realm and Streetscape Improvement

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop and implement a public realm plan for Nicholas Street from Church Street/Castle Street to its junction with Athlunkard Street. The Plan shall reinforce Nicholas Street as the central spine of the area.	LCCC Public Realm	Medium to Long Term
Prepare an appropriate lighting scheme for Nicholas Street.	LCCC Public Realm	Medium Term
Prepare a decluttering programme, with a particular focus on overhead cables around the junctions of St. Peter Street and St. Augustine Place.	LCCC Public Realm	Short to Medium Term
Ensure new development is generally in the range of 2-4 storeys and does not impinge on the overall height markers of the existing key and local landmark buildings.	LCCC Forward Planning Housing DM	Ongoing
Work with Limerick School of Art and Design in the animation of the Nicholas Street and or key heritage assets as appropriate.	LCCC Forward Planning Trade/ Investment	Short to Medium Term
Promote the meanwhile use of vacant shop windows for promotion of events and tourist Information on Nicholas Street as set out in the Shop Front Design Guidelines.	Economic Development/Public Realm	Short Term
Investigate how the Storytellers Project could be incorporated into the public realm.	Public Realm/Paul Partnership	Short Term
To develop a pocket park at St. Augustine Place to include additional planting and appropriate street furniture	Public Realm/Environment	Short Term

Economic Development and Employment

Action	Stakeholders	Timeframe
<p>Revitalise underused or derelict buildings through the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to improve building facades along Nicholas Street, in line with the Shopfronts Design Guideline. Develop an incentive to encourage businesses to upgrade shopfronts through paint scheme and/or shopfront scheme. Facilitate and foster start-up creative businesses. Encourage small-scale shops and food/drink uses. Promote the area as a destination for pop-up shops and businesses. 	<p>LCCC Forward Planning and Public Realm LCCC Property LCCC Trade and Investment LCCC Community</p>	Short to Medium Term
Work to repurpose vacant and underutilised Council-owned buildings located on Nicholas Street (specifically Nos. 19, 27 and 29) to bring them back into active use.	LCCC Property and Economic Development	Short Term
Promote Financial Incentives and Grant Opportunities such as the Living City Initiative and Business Incentive Schemes.	LCCC	Short Term
Regenerate vacant or underutilised sites with temporary or 'meanwhile' uses in the short-medium term.	All	Short Term
Create an enhanced visitor experience at King John's Castle through collaboration with Discover Limerick DAC.	Discover Limerick DAC	Short to Medium Term
Encourage events to take place in the area including King John's Castle, St. Mary's Cathedral, Nicholas Street and the Potato Market.	<p>LCCC Tourism LCCC Arts Office Discover Limerick DAC St Mary's Cathedral, Night time Economy</p>	Short Term
Promote the King's Island Walled Town for events and festivals, including Samhain, Féile na Gréine and the 2027 Ryder Cup.	<p>LCCC Tourism LCCC Art LCCC Ryder Cup Co-ordination Team Heritage Team Festival Stakeholders</p>	Short Term
Make heritage venues more accessible with extended hours and guided walks.	Night Time Economy Advisor	Short Term
Explore the potential of developing a Limerick City Tourism app to include Tourism Routes, such as the Medieval Trail, or the Storytellers Street which would include key attractions.	LCCC Conservation IT Tourism	Short to Medium Term

Housing and Urban Development

Action	Stakeholders	Timeframe
Seek to increase residential population within the area through redevelopment of vacant and underutilised buildings including 'over the shop' living.	LCCC	Short to Medium Term
Work closely with any new owner of Barrington's Hospital to determine the best future use for the site, whether it remains as a healthcare facility or is repurposed for an alternative, suitable use.	LCCC	Short to Medium Term
Continue to take a proactive approach with Derelict Sites legislation.	LCCC	Ongoing
Develop the Fireplace site as a priority project as a Design and Innovation hub.	LCCC	Medium Term

Connectivity and Accessibility

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Develop small-scale SuDs interventions and encourage local management of same for increased community interaction.	Forward Planning Environment	Short to Medium Term
Improve connectivity, accessibility and legibility through a public realm scheme for Nicholas Street.	LCCC Placemaking	Medium to Long Term
Investigate opportunities for pedestrian crossings at key locations to provide direct and convenient access between local amenities at the following locations between along Castle Street between Verdant Place and Island Road.	Roads and Public Realm	Short to Medium Term

Community Engagement and Education

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Establish a co-working team for the ownership and implementation of the actions set out in this framework.	LCCC	Short Term
Work with local groups to develop the Storytelling Street project, including potential permanent installations like storyboards or public art in the public realm.	LCCC Arts Office LCCC Tourism Storytelling Group	Short Term
Further the development of a Cultural Quarter in line with objectives outlined in the Mayoral Programme.	All	Short to Medium Term
Develop and strengthen relationships with creative and cultural industries and institutions.	All	Short Term
Develop an upgraded river walk from Thomond Bridge to the City Centre core as part of the King's Island Flood Relief Works and the World Class Waterfront.	CFRAMS Placemaking	Short to Medium Term
Build on new and existing relationships that have been formed through extensive engagement events.	All	Ongoing
Support the provision of an extended multi-use community centre at King's Island Community Centre, to provide flexible and accessible spaces adaptable to the communities' needs.	All	Short to Medium Term





Appendices

Appendix One

Previous Studies and Findings

Appendix Two

Fireplace Site Potential Use Review

Appendix Three

Record of Protected Structures and

Record of National Monuments

Appendix Four

Design Principles and Technical Standards



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiliú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach
an Deiscirt
Southern Regional
Assembly



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae Luimnigh
Limerick City
& County Council

ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

Appendix One

Previous Studies and Findings

In preparation of this Plan, Limerick City and County Council has amalgamated insights from two pivotal documents:

- the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, and;
- the MKO Literature Review & Implementation Plan for Limerick's Medieval Quarter Action Plan (Draft 2020)

The MKO Draft Action Plan, although not finalised, extensively reviewed the suite of documents listed in Section 1.2 of this report (excluding the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028) and therefore serves

as a critical reference point. It identified common recommendations, policies, and objectives that, when implemented, would universally benefit King's Island.

Subsequent to the MKO draft, the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 was officially adopted in June 2022. Identifying findings and objectives outlined in this statutory document ensures a comprehensive understanding of the strategic development direction, incorporating the latest statutory considerations. This synergy provides a solid foundation for a cohesive strategy for King's Island.

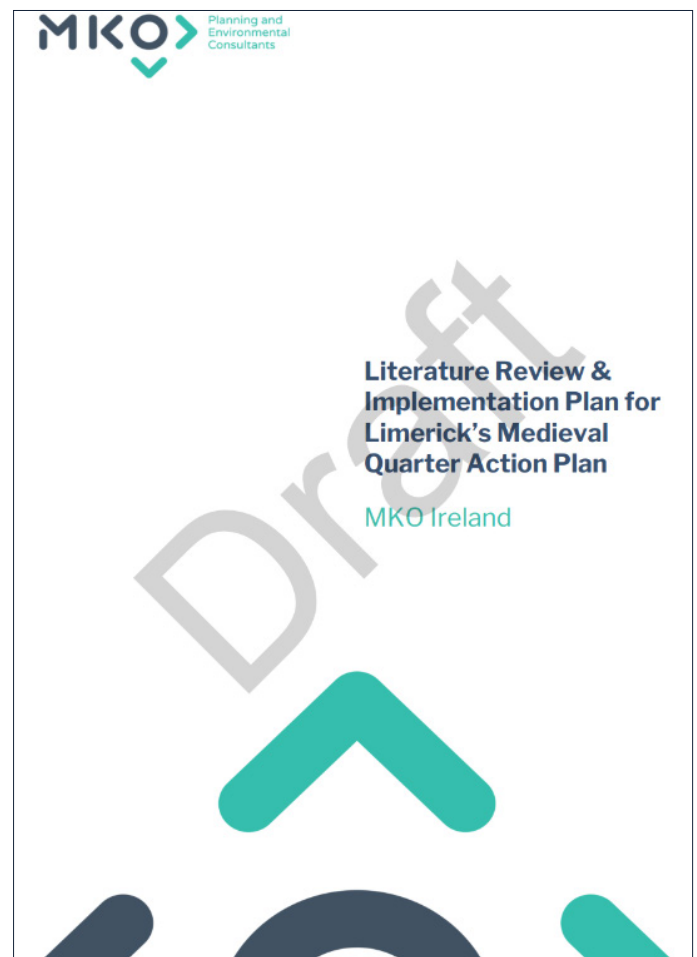
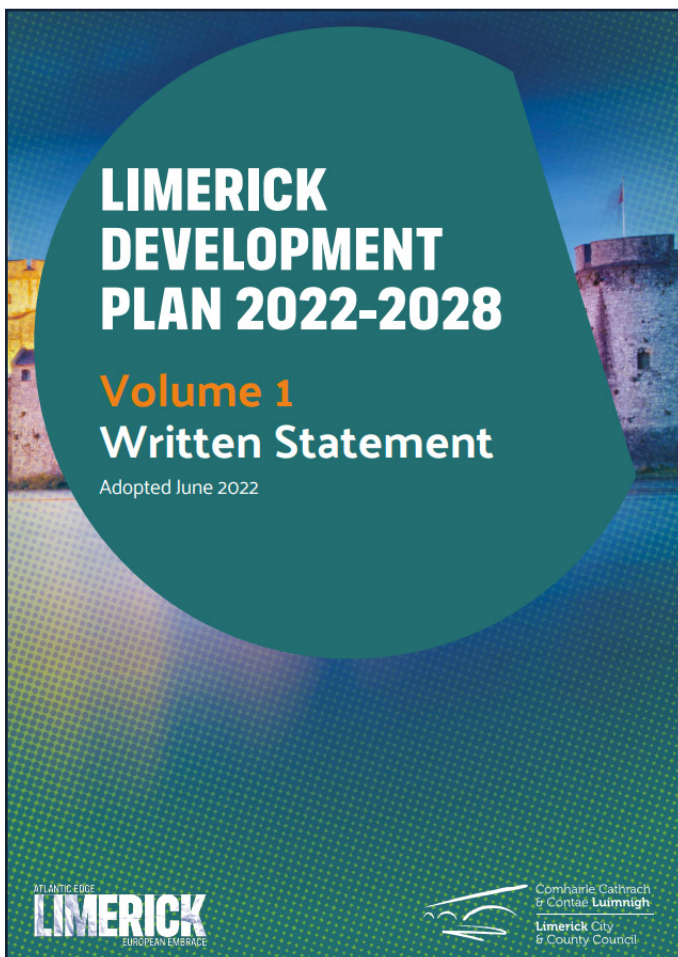


FIG. 31: LIMERICK DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND MKO LITERATURE REVIEW DOCUMENT

Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 was adopted by the Elected Members of Limerick City and County Council at a Special Meeting on 17th June 2022 and came into effect on 29th July 2022.

In 2014 Limerick City and County Council was formed through the amalgamation of the former City and County Councils. The Limerick Development Plan is the first to be prepared for Limerick City and County and has replaced the Limerick City Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as extended) and the Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 (as extended).

The Plan is underpinned by a strategic vision intended to guide the sustainable future growth of Limerick. At the core of the vision are cohesive and sustainable communities, where our cultural, natural and built environment is protected. The vision embraces inclusiveness and a high quality of life for all, through healthy place-making and social justice, including the ongoing development of the Regeneration Areas and disadvantaged communities. An integrated approach will align housing and public transport provision. Human and environment wellbeing including climate adaptation are at the core of the vision. The strategic vision of the Plan reads as follows:

A Green Region

Limerick will develop as an environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy - a pioneer in sustainable growth. This will be underpinned by the promotion of active mobility for all, creating an attractive and distinctive place to live, work and visit.

Embracing the River Shannon

Limerick will provide room for people to enjoy the River Shannon/ Estuary. The animation of the waterfront will increase public access and create new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Resilient, Connected and Inclusive Communities

The future development of Limerick will make it easier to live sustainably and be well prepared for the future, increasing opportunities for movement and connectivity between communities.

A Sustainable, Innovative and Competitive Economy

The Limerick region will be an inclusive, self-sustaining economy built on growth and innovation and which maximises its competitive edge. This will enhance local enterprises, attract international investment in a manner which guarantees quality of life.

The Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 identified the same challenges as the previous City Development Plan within the St Mary's Park and Kings Island area, however has devised new objectives for the area:

Objective MK O1 St. Mary's Park and King's Island:

- (f) Develop a strategy to integrate King's Island into the City Centre core through selective site redevelopment and improved connections
- g) Return the eastern side of St. Munchin's Street to parkland once demolition of the area has taken place.
- h) Restrict development on the strip of land east of St.

Munchin's Street which, was used as a landfill site and filled with domestic refuse

- i) Examine options to improve connectivity at Island Road from St. Mary's Park to the Medieval Quarter by transforming from a route that is predominantly designed for the movement of vehicles, to a traffic calmed street where the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are prioritised; whilst ensuring protection of the integrity of the environmentally designated sites
- j) Provide crossings for pedestrians and cyclists which will provide direct and convenient access between local amenities at the following locations: i) At Star Rovers Football Club; ii) At the Primary Health Care facility at Island Road; iii) At St. Mary's Community Centre, Verdant Place.
- k) Promote the development of key strategic sites within Nicholas Street and Bridge Street for potential enterprise development attracting further inward investment.
- l) Promote employment growth in King's Island and St. Mary's Park through the re-use of underutilised sites, derelict buildings and the upgrading of sites already in employment uses.

The Kings Island Walled Town Framework aligns with several objectives outlined in the Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028, ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks and promoting cohesive development strategies for the area.

Objective RA O1 of the Limerick Development Plan emphasises the regeneration of key areas,

including St. Mary's Park and King's Island. This objective recognises the significance of King's Island as an asset to the city, acknowledging its ecological importance, archaeological significance, and tourism potential. The challenges identified within the Development Plan for St. Mary's Park and King's Island, such as poor connectivity, unattractive public realm, and under-utilised historic assets, are addressed in the Kings Island Walled Town Framework through proposed actions aimed at improving accessibility, enhancing public spaces, and revitalising historic assets for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors.

Similarly, Objective MK O1 outlines various strategies to promote the development of St. Mary's Park and King's Island, including improving waterways, enhancing street networks, protecting environmental integrity, and supporting flood relief schemes. The Kings Island Walled Town Framework aligns with these objectives by proposing measures to improve connectivity, protect natural habitats, and integrate King's Island into the city centre core through selective redevelopment and improved connections. Moreover, the plan supports the redevelopment of key strategic sites within Nicholas Street and Bridge Street to attract further inward investment, aligning with the economic development objectives outlined in the Limerick Development Plan. By promoting employment growth, reusing underutilised/derelict sites, and upgrading existing infrastructure, the Kings Island Walled Town Framework contributes to the economic resilience and vitality of the area.

In addition, the plan emphasises the importance of urban tourism and waterfront development, recognising King's Island's greatest attribute – its location. The Plan focuses on unlocking King's Island as a potential tourism hotspot with its historic landmarks and scenic views. By enhancing public realm, improving accessibility, and supporting cultural attractions, the plan aims to enhance the visitor experience and position King's Island as a base for visitors to stay and experience the Wild Atlantic Way. Overall, the Kings Island Walled Town Plan integrates with the statutory spatial plans outlined in the Limerick Development Plan, ensuring a coordinated approach to sustainable development, heritage preservation, and economic growth in King's Island and its surrounding areas.

Draft Limerick City Public Realm Plan 2024:

The purpose of the Strategy is to guide the enhancement, management, use and development of the public domain in the City with the key aim is to develop a simple, uncluttered and consistent design approach across the City's public realm.

Review and Update of the Limerick 2030: An

Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick

The Limerick 2030: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick was prepared in November 2014. The Plan has addressed economic, social and physical features of the City and County as a whole. It has taken account of the Regeneration programmes and uses much of the work that has already been completed or is underway as a starting point – though challenging

and adjusting where it is appropriate to do so. It has involved extensive engagement with public, business and voluntary sector stakeholders, and allowed a clear vision for Limerick to be defined, drawing on Limerick's strengths and addressing challenges faced into the future. The Plan seeks to deliver a new Vision for Limerick:

“Limerick will become a major economic force in the Irish and European economy, a leading centre for commercial investment – both foreign direct investment and endogenous business growth, capitalising on the strength of its higher education institutions (HEIs), the skills of its workforce and its environmental and heritage attributes. The City Centre will be at the heart of this economic force – an attractive magnet for retail, leisure, residential, commercial, educational and cultural growth. Growth will benefit all citizens across the City, County and Mid-West Region.”

King's Island will be seen as a definable City Centre District with more visitors, more employment, and new places to live and featuring a more accessible Waterfront and better public spaces to visit, and relax in. Development identified for this area includes housing and retail on Nicholas Street, housing on Castle Street and research & treatment on the Medieval Park Site.

Under the section spatial implementation plan the following is set out as a priority for 2021 – 2024 :

- Public Realm Priority Plan for King's Island

- Improved Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure, King's Island perimeter
- Improved Pedestrian connectivity, King's Island South and St. Mary's Park
- Thomond Bridge Pedestrian Improvements
- O'Dwyer's bridge pedestrian and Cycling improvements

Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

The Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy has been prepared for Limerick City and Environs as a key document, underpinned by the Strategic Vision and Key Ambitions outlined in the Limerick Development Plan.

The overarching aim of the GBI Strategy is to inform and guide the planning and management of a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces, helping drive the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

King's Island has been identified as a key landscape feature within Ireland's first city-scale strategic planning and environmental corridor – the 'Limerick Blue Green Ring'. The Limerick Blue Green Ring proposal will serve to deliver multi-functional benefits across the entire Strategy Area, linking the entire city, protecting and enhancing key green and blue ecosystems, as well as local heritage, whilst also facilitating healthy modes of travel and forming the basis to provide a series of GBI Priority Actions within the Strategy Area.

The Fosse on King's Island is identified as a case study within the Strategy document. The existing moat around the City Wall can be designed as a SuDS feature and work in conjunction with the King's Island Flood Relief Scheme. The potential exists to reinterpret the fosse as a modern civic feature which directs stormwater away from built development as part of an integrated surface water management scheme. Forming a new urban blue / green connector, the proposals would provide the opportunity to connect various urban/green spaces, forming a people focussed transport spine for King's Island.

"The scheme should be used to 're-stitch' the urban realm, whilst retaining and delivering enhancements to the existing habitat networks and preserving archaeology. Existing wet meadows and riparian woodland would be utilised to provide an attractive setting to the proposed public green space."

– Limerick City and Environs Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

The strategy document also references that upon completion of the King's Island Flood Relief Scheme and subject to appropriate environmental assessments, the provision of a walkway circumnavigating King's Island, along the River Shannon and Abbey River, inclusive of St. Mary's Park, also has the potential to be an additional accessible riverside route for consideration.

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy, published in November 2022, sets out the framework for the delivery of the transport system required to further the development of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area as a hub of cultural and social development and regeneration; as the economic core for the Mid-West; as an environmentally sustainable and unified metropolitan unit; as a place where people of all ages can travel conveniently and safely; and a place that attracts people, jobs and activity from all over Ireland and beyond. The function of the LSMATS is to provide a long-term strategic framework for the planning and development of transport infrastructure and services for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area. The Strategy proposes that in order to support the compact growth aspiration of the NPF, Limerick City Centre will become the focus for significant regeneration opportunities at brownfield locations that include Kings Island.

Limerick Building Height Strategy

This Building Height Strategy for Limerick City forms a volume within the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. The Strategy seeks to deliver a robust framework for decision-making that will facilitate increases in building height in line with the requirements of the Departments Building Heights Guidelines. This Building Height Strategy provides guidance on the appropriateness or not of increased

height buildings in particular settings within the City and identifies areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for redevelopment, regeneration and infill development in line with Policy SPPR 1 of the Building Heights Guidelines.

In terms of the study area the strategy sets out that English town, located within the Inner City Core Area, across the Abbey River, the English Town Character Area encompasses the southern part of King's Island, the medieval heart of the City. While little of the original medieval structures remain this area is distinctive due to its network of narrow streets, generally low buildings, 2 storeys, and the materiality of its historic buildings, including inter alia King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. These buildings of importance are emphasised by their solid stone construction and their height, notably the spire of St. Mary's Cathedral which is a striking feature on the south-eastern part of the Island. English Town remains the location of important civic buildings with Limerick City and County Council Offices and the Circuit Court located to the south of King John's Castle on the banks of the River Shannon. While these buildings, due to their distinctiveness and height in their context, act as focal points within English Town and on approach to the City Centre from the west, they are not as prominent in the rest of the City Centre.

The urban grain in the area is described as very diverse. The strategy further describes the nature of the streets of English Town as predominantly no

more than 2 storeys, the main features of height being the historical buildings, in particular King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. There are some street corners which rise slightly in height but usually no more than 3/4 storeys. Unlike other areas of the City there are few gaps within the elevation of the streetscape, with the exception of some smaller opportunity sites dotted throughout the area and a couple of larger opportunity sites which are located at the northern point along Island Road. The strategy indicates that Important vertical landmarks of key and local significance should be protected by future development include and include King John's Castle; Bishops Palace; City Hall; and St. Mary's Cathedral.

The objectives relative to the area are set out in Section 3.3.4 of this report.

Limerick Wayfinding Strategy

The Limerick Wayfinding and orientation signage project consists of the removal of 45 existing pedestrian wayfinding & information signs and the installation of 70 new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signs across the city centre comprising 18 Map Totems, 19 Route Markers and 33 Finger Posts and all associated site works.

The existing pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signage within Limerick City consists of a variety of signage types ranging in age, style, design language, type and level of information and general condition. In order to create a cohesive pedestrian and visitor experience within the city centre, this project proposes the replacement of the existing varied

signage with an updated, expanded signage family with a unified and consistent design language.

MKO Literature Review & Implementation Plan for Limerick's Medieval Quarter Action Plan (Draft 2020)

Although never officially published, MKO prepared a literature review and implementation plan for the Medieval Quarter, Limerick City. The purpose of the literature review and implementation plan was to identify common recommendations, policies and/or objectives devised from previous policy documents and feasibility studies relating to Limerick's Medieval Quarter and King's Island; the implementation of which will benefit the Medieval Quarter as a whole. MKO then identified the following themes to categorise the common recommendations/policies/objectives from each of the documents/studies:

- Flooding
- Cultural Quarters
- Connectivity and Movement
- Underutilisation of Sites
- Ecology
- Housing
- Archaeology
- Tourism
- Public Realm / Urban Design
- Commerce / Business
- Employment
- Community

Following that, MKO devised an Implementation Plan for the common actions set out under each of the

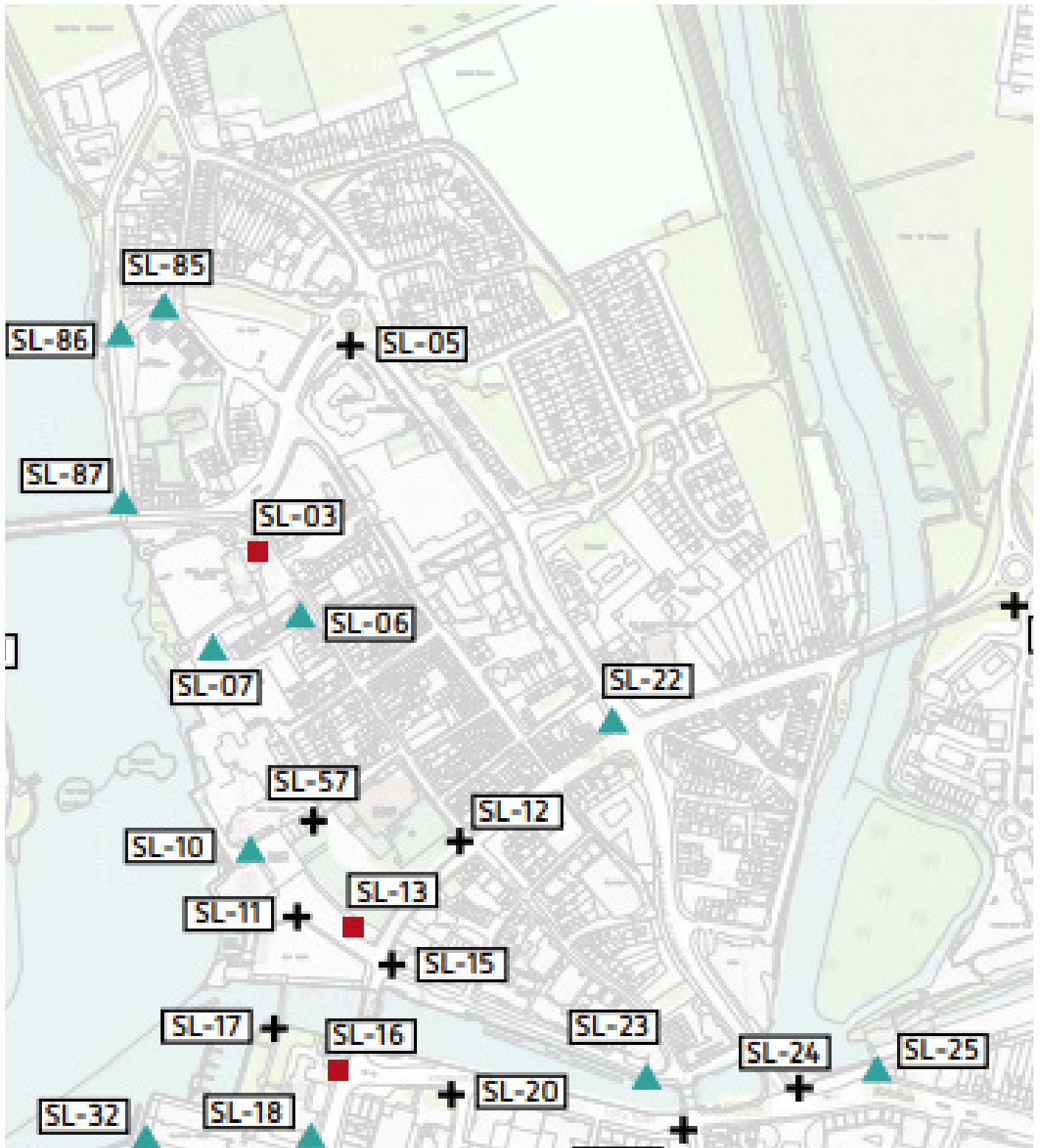


FIG. 32: PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGNAGE LAYOUT PLAN

identified themes. This implementation plan sets out the key actors involved in each action and proposes an indicative timeframe for delivering each action. The draft document concludes following this section.

Limerick Tourism Development Strategy Action Plan 2019-2023

The purpose of this tourism strategy is to provide a clear direction and enabling framework for a cohesive and integrated approach to tourism development and growth in Limerick. Priority themes and associated transformational actions are proposed providing a framework to drive forward the sector so that Limerick can rival the success of neighbouring counties as a premier tourism destination, and deliver widespread benefits to the local economy and communities.

The strategy was developed following a detailed analysis of the county's tourism offer, developed through comprehensive research of the tourism environment and involving a review of all available tourism information. This involved a wide range of sources, including: Fáilte Ireland, Limerick City and County Council, tourism attractions' own records, and direct conversations with tourism product providers and key stakeholders across the county. Strategic conversations were held with several key stakeholders across the city and county to gain further insights on the character of visitor experiences, information on the resource or attraction and the potential for collaboration and future growth.

The Limerick Tourism Development Strategy Action Plan 2019 – 2023 specifically references King's Island once within 'Theme 3 – Vibrant History', this theme is further broken down into four 'networked clusters of historic strongholds' within the County, Limerick City being one of those and Kings Island Medieval Core identified within it. This section is followed by a series of generic objectives and actions to improve the tourism offering of these areas:

- Be dynamic in the use of heritage venues - audit existing venues to assess opportunities to adapt the space for different types of uses and immersive interactive events that make best use of the setting to tell the heritage story.
- Make heritage venues more accessible to visitors by:
 - Extending the opening hours and number of open days for heritage venues and supporting a more active presence at significant heritage sites (include the participation of local heritage groups in organising guided walking tours etc).
 - Creating discounted networked heritage cluster packages – explore the feasibility of introducing a heritage leap card for discounts on entry to attractions around the county.
 - Improving the visitor experience offered by existing medieval heritage centres/museums – tell the heritage story, drawing the visitor back in time through immersive interactive experiences.
- Encourage the visitor to stop and stay - building on existing plans, service the hospitality needs of visitors through the provision of restaurants, cafes, pubs and accommodation and support

visitors in moving around the networked heritage clusters through the provision of thematic sign posting.

- Consider the feasibility of a Historic Quarter in Limerick City and other key locations within the heritage clusters.
- Build awareness of the significance of the heritage as a resource for tourism and work with communities to:
 - equip local people with the knowledge to support them in acting as local ambassadors (refer also to Section 5.0 Gearing Up and Delivery),
 - support groups such as Tidy Towns in local area enhancement initiatives and creating attractive settings in line with the ambition for tourism.
- Learn from good practice exemplars in heritage led tourism, and draw inspiration from initiatives such as the Irish Walled Town Networks and advance plans to establish a twinning programme between heritage towns e.g. Kilmallock with the walled town of Niedernhall, Germany.
- Facilitate collaborative working between each of the four heritage clusters by:
- Building on the many existing sources of information available on heritage throughout the county, profile and consolidate Limerick's medieval heritage via promotion and branding of the four networked heritage clusters
- Implementing a navigation and signage strategy to align with emerging interconnected network

of paths/trails.

- Scheduling a programme of linked events to take place within key heritage hubs of the four networked clusters

The Orchard Site and The Garden Site – ABK – 2014 & 2019

In 2014 Limerick City Council appointed a Design team, led by ABK Architects, to develop a design for sheltered housing to cater for the needs of older persons on the Orchard Site at Island Road and Castle Street, Kings Island, Limerick. The design team consists of ABK Architects, Punch Consulting Engineers, Homan O'Brien Environmental Engineers and AECOM Cost Consultants.

The project was divided into two design stages, namely:

- The preparation of a context study of the immediate environs in order to establish an understanding of the character of the wider area in question and its relationship to the Limerick City.
- The development of a design for sheltered housing on two sites separated by Old Dominick Street, 'The Orchard Site' and 'The Garden Site'.

The project consists of the development of 27 residential units for older persons on two plots either side of Old Dominick street consisting of:

- Orchard Site: 6no. 1-bed and 14no. 2-bed apartments in buildings varying in height from 1 to 3 storeys organised around a central garden



FIG. 33: PROPOSED DESIGN FOR THE ORCHARD SITE AND THE GARDEN SITE BY ABK ARCHITECTS

- Old Dominick Street Site: 3no. 1-bed and 4no. 2-bed apartments in buildings varying in height from 1-2 storeys.

Constraints Study for Flood Relief Scheme at King's Island (2018)

The purpose of King's Island Constraints Study is to inform the feasibility study through the identification of the general baseline environmental conditions of the study area together with the potential environmental constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed flood scheme. The study will inform the design process.

Shannon International Development Consultants No.'s 35-39 Nicholas Street Limerick – Interim Report 2018

The Shannon International Development Consultants No.'s 35-39 Nicholas Street Limerick – Interim Report 2018 document serves as an investigation of the different appropriate uses for the site at 35-39 Nicholas Street. These uses are analyzed under a variety of criteria, in an attempt to determine the most appropriate use for the site.

The consultants were tasked with the following:

- Identify examine and analyze feasible and practical options for the further development of the tourism potential of the existing Nicholas Street site

- To include options in terms of the operating model including but not limited to:
 - Local Authority
 - PPP
 - 3rd Party (sale or lease)
- Develop Business Cases for the top 3 options (to be agreed in consultation with
- LC&CC) based on the options report.
- Complete draft designs for the selected options, including indicative capital and operating
- costs
- Analysis of the target tourism markets as part of the Business Case.
- Provide advice on the resources required - including staff and management structure
- An outline implementation plan

Development and Archaeological Strategy for Kings Island (2017)

The primary aim of this Development and Archaeology Strategy Study for King's Island is to help ensure that the re-development of sites considered in this project (i.e., that DASKIL plots) can be delivered in a manner that can maximise the preservation and conservation of the archaeological resource (in line with current government policy). At the same time the urgent necessity for the physical regeneration of the study area is recognised.

In relation to King's Island, the rich archaeology and cultural heritage were identified as being constraints on the area's future re-development. In order to deal with this constraint in a positive and proactive way,

Limerick City and County Council commissioned this study to set out the predicted impacts on the archaeology and wider cultural heritage and to offer mitigation proposals to allow for the rich archaeological resource of the area to be protected properly while at the same time allowing for the effective re-generation of the area.

Forty-five plots on King's Island were proposed for analysis. At the time of writing, most of the plots are in the ownership of the City and County Council and the remainder are in private ownership. The specific brief for the project was formalised by the Office of Regeneration. It may be summarised as follows; A study entitled A Development and Archaeology Strategy for King's Island Limerick was required. (This document represents this study.) This study is an articulation of a strategy for ensuring that the development of sites considered in this project could be delivered in a manner that could maximise the conservation of the archaeological resource (in line with current government policy), while recognising the urgent necessity for the physical regeneration of the area within the study. Therefore, a balance between these two objectives is essential.

The study considers both the potential subsurface and extant archaeological remains of King's Island within its zone of archaeological potential. The study proposes the following recommendations for the regeneration of King's Island:

- A key component in the regeneration of any historic centre is the early engagement of the

authorities responsible for regeneration with their archaeological resource. Ideally, as is the case with this regeneration of King's Island, archaeology should be considered at the earliest possible opportunity in a project design, so that it can be planned for and it can inform other processes and regeneration decisions, such as foundation and superstructure choices.

- In larger projects, such as DASKIL, the appointment of a project archaeologist to advise the client in all archaeological aspects of the project is recommended. Comprehensive archaeological briefs and specifications for archaeological works are preferably written by or in consultation with the project archaeologist and should be used to maintain best practice archaeological standards across the DASKIL area, ensuring both quality and value for money.
- Geotechnical and intrusive site investigations have the potential to have a negative impact on subsurface archaeological remains, by destroying archaeological layers without record. If archaeology is engaged with at an early stage it is feasible in any project that geotechnical and archaeological investigations can be carried out in tandem to avoid these negative impacts occurring. Archaeological and geotechnical data can then be used in tandem to inform design to produce sustainable re-development. Regeneration re-development in King's Island should also take cognisance of its sometimes subtle and nuanced historic streetscape character, for example, the urban artisan red

brick dwellings of Bishop's St, the urban cottages of Mary St and Gaol Lane or the former boat houses of the Abbey area.

- In order to progress the DASKIL re-development as part of the wider regeneration of the study area, further archaeological assessment and testing is required. This exercise is one of data gathering and fact finding, in order to inform whether archaeology is present on a particular plot.
- The current government policy on the preservation of archaeological deposits is that in the first instance they remain preserved in situ. Archaeological excavation or preservation by record (i.e. excavation) is only progressed if it can be demonstrated that preservation in situ is impossible due for example, to the unviability of an entire project.
- The archaeology and cultural heritage of King's Island is a particularly rich resource not just in county Limerick but nationally, and it would be a lost opportunity not to explore its wider regeneration potential, when archaeology is included in the overall cost of any physical regeneration. With a little forward planning and innovative thinking, archaeological remains and historic fabric can also add value to a locality in the context of economic and social regeneration and thus contribute to wider societal benefits.

Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (2013)

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan came into effect in 2013. The

vision and strategy of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plans (LRFIP) are shaped by the analysis of the socio-economic and physical context. The development of the LRFIPs has also been informed by an analysis of the policy context in the key fields of planning, urban design, architecture, environment, social policy and economic policy, taking into account the policy frameworks from EU, through national to local levels. The vision for the regeneration areas is to create:

“Safe and sustainable communities where people of all ages enjoy a good quality of life, a decent home and feel a strong pride of place. Well serviced and attractive neighbourhoods will be fully integrated with the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick.”

The identified aim of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan is twofold:

- To improve the quality-of-life and wellbeing of the communities in the regeneration areas by responding comprehensively to the problems (physical, social, community safety and economic) that exist, addressing the identified needs of people and adopting a sustainable development approach.
- To promote greater social and economic inclusion in the regeneration areas so that they reach the averages for the wider city and see increased public and private sector investment. This will be achieved by opening access to training and education opportunities, harnessing and promoting existing resources and making

early interventions – recognising that it is often as early as pre-school or at primary school that life courses are set

The Plan itself is split into three volumes, the first of which provides as an introduction to each regeneration area setting out context and baseline conditions, the second volume relates to the vision and strategy for each area and the third volume is focused on the implementation and delivery of actions for each area.

One of the areas identified within the document is St Marys Park. Although St Marys Park is not within our study area for this Plan, the LRFIP makes many references to King’s Island throughout the three volumes, including, significantly how “Nicholas Street is the core town centre street with retail opportunities, connecting the southern part of King’s Island to the Castle. It is an important thoroughfare in the regeneration of the area. However at present, there are numerous vacant and under-utilised sites and buildings along this street.”

There has been multiple strategies prepared for the enhancement of St Marys Park, those which include interventions within the study area of this Plan include;

- Examine options to improve permeability and connections from St Mary’s Park to its wider context at the following locations, whilst ensuring protection of the integrity of the environmentally designated sites:

a) At Island Road:

- to improve connectivity from St Mary's Park to the Medieval Quarter by transforming from a route that is predominantly designed for the movement of vehicles to a traffic calmed street where the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are prioritised. Measures to balance the needs of different street users, for example the narrowing of carriageways, the redesign of the major roundabout at Island Road and side-road entry treatments, will be incorporated to improve safety for all road users.
- Improve local connections converging on the existing St Mary's Park Community Centre at the following locations:
 - a)** A one-way link road from the Toll House to Verdant Place. This proposal recognises the restricted dimension between the Toll House and the Bridge and the lack of pedestrian footpaths in the area.
 - b)** A new street, at Island Gate, from Verdant Place to Dominick Street.
- Promote the development of key strategic sites within Nicholas Street and Bridge Street for potential enterprise development attracting further inward investment.
- Support the creation of an identity for Nicholas Street, the main commercial street within King's Island and St. Mary's Park. Develop stronger relationships with the creative, tourism and cultural industries sector whereby on-site employment opportunities are created for members of King's Island and St. Mary's Park

to work near where they live and where the employment offer generates complimentary supporting facilities.

- Regenerate unutilised or underutilised land and buildings in St Mary's Park and King's Island by considering alternative uses of a temporary nature, 'meanwhile uses', to ensure a productive use.
- Develop the site at GooGoos Hill ('the Orchard' site) for elderly housing. Small Area Population Statistics (2011) for King's Island and St. Mary's Park show relatively high elderly dependency ratios with 20% of the population recorded as being over 60 years old. The site at Googoo's Hill will assist in delivering the anticipated demand for elderly housing in the future.

Volume 6 - Housing Strategy and Housing need Demand Assessment, Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan

There are four statutory regeneration areas identified in the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan, one of which is the St. Mary's Park/King's Island area. The Regeneration Framework aims to revitalise these areas so that they become more attractive neighbourhoods that can contribute to Limerick's overall success as a thriving city. A key aim is the diversification of tenure in these areas in order to counteract undue segregation in housing between people of different social backgrounds and incomes. This will also be pursued in order to tackle concentrations of social deprivation in the regeneration areas and to tackle social stigmatisation.

As a result, a key aim in these areas will be providing new homes for private ownership and private rental, with social housing provision focussed on upgrading or replacing existing homes.

A key aim is the diversification of tenure in these areas in order to counteract undue segregation in housing between people of different social backgrounds and incomes.

Policy Objective PO2:

To aim for housing to be available to meet the needs of people of all needs and incomes in Limerick, with an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types, and tenures in suitable locations.

Policy Objective PO6:

To require lands zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses and any land which is not zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, in respect of which permission for the development of 4 or more houses is granted, to comply with the Affordable Housing Act 2021 and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and any subsequent amendments thereof. The Council reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of 'Part V' Cost Rental and/or affordable purchase delivery on individual sites on a case-by-case basis.

Policy Objective PO10:

To endeavour that new housing delivery over the strategy period shall support urban renewal and shall strengthen the roles and viability of Limerick City

and of towns and villages in Limerick County. The council will endeavour that new housing delivery support identified regeneration priorities in Limerick City, address social deprivation and inequality, and counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds. The Council shall work with relevant bodies including the Land Development Agency, central government, AHBs, private housing providers, and community groups to ensure that housing delivery meets urban regeneration priorities.

Limerick City Medieval Quarter Public Realm Plan (2011)

The Limerick City Medieval Quarter Public Realm Plan was prepared in support of the Project Initiation document that accompanies an application to Fáilte Ireland for funding of public realm improvements to the Medieval Quarter of Limerick. The need to undertake the project has been identified by Limerick City Council and Shannon Development. The Medieval Quarter is the main tourist attraction in Limerick City. The area enjoys dramatic views of the River Shannon and is within walking distance of the city centre, bus station and rail station. It is recognised that a more attractive public realm will encourage more tourists to visit and enjoy the historic cluster attractions in the Medieval Quarter and help promote the numbers visiting King Johns Castle. The project will also complement the funding of €5.7 million already secured by Shannon Development for the development of King Johns Castle. It also reflects the vision of both the Limerick City Council Riverside



FIG. 34: PROJECT PHASING MAP, LIMERICK CITY MEDIEVAL QUARTER PUBLIC REALM PLAN 2011

Strategy and the City Centre Development Strategy.

This plan includes a number of project objectives for the Medieval Quarter;

- To provide attractive and user-friendly pedestrian facilities for tourists visiting the Medieval Quarter.
- To provide greater connectivity between the tourist attractions including the Riverside Walkway, King Johns Castle, St Marys Cathedral, The Bishops Palace, The Hunt Museum, The Limerick Museum, The City Walls and Masons Lodge
- To provide facilities to encourage the commercial development of Nicholas Street.
- Improving access and signage linking the City Centre and Tourist office with the attractions in the Medieval Quarter
- The provision of temporary public car park opposite King Johns Castle to increase pedestrian traffic on Nicholas Street and facilitate its commercial development.
- Installation of consistent fingerpost signage
- Improved pedestrian linkage and upgrading of footpaths
- Installation of information/interpretation boards at key points of interest
- Replacement of waterfront railings
- Refurbishment of lanterns along the waterfront
- Installation of themed information banners along Nicholas Street
- Installation of traffic bollards to prevent unauthorised parking
- New tree planting

The key elements of the various proposals here include:

- Public Realm Improvements to the castle forecourt and to Nicholas Street
- New public car/coach park opposite King John's Castle
- Promoting redevelopment of Nicholas Street
- Installation of consistent fingerpost signage
- Improved pedestrian linkage and upgrading of footpaths
- Creation of major civic space outside City Hall
- Addition of boardwalks and viewing points
- Installation of information/interpretation boards at key points of interest
- Replacement of waterfront railings
- New Waterfront and street lighting
- Floodlighting of key buildings and the river
- Introduction of consistent street furniture style and surface materials

Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan (2011)

The Kings Island Framework Implementation plan seeks the sustainable development of the Kings Island area. The Framework Implementation Plan provides general development and design guidance for vacant and infill sites that are situated in the Medieval Quarter. The rationale for extending the brief of the study beyond St. Mary's Park and into the Medieval Quarter.

The Kings Island Framework Implementation Plan provides general development and design guidance

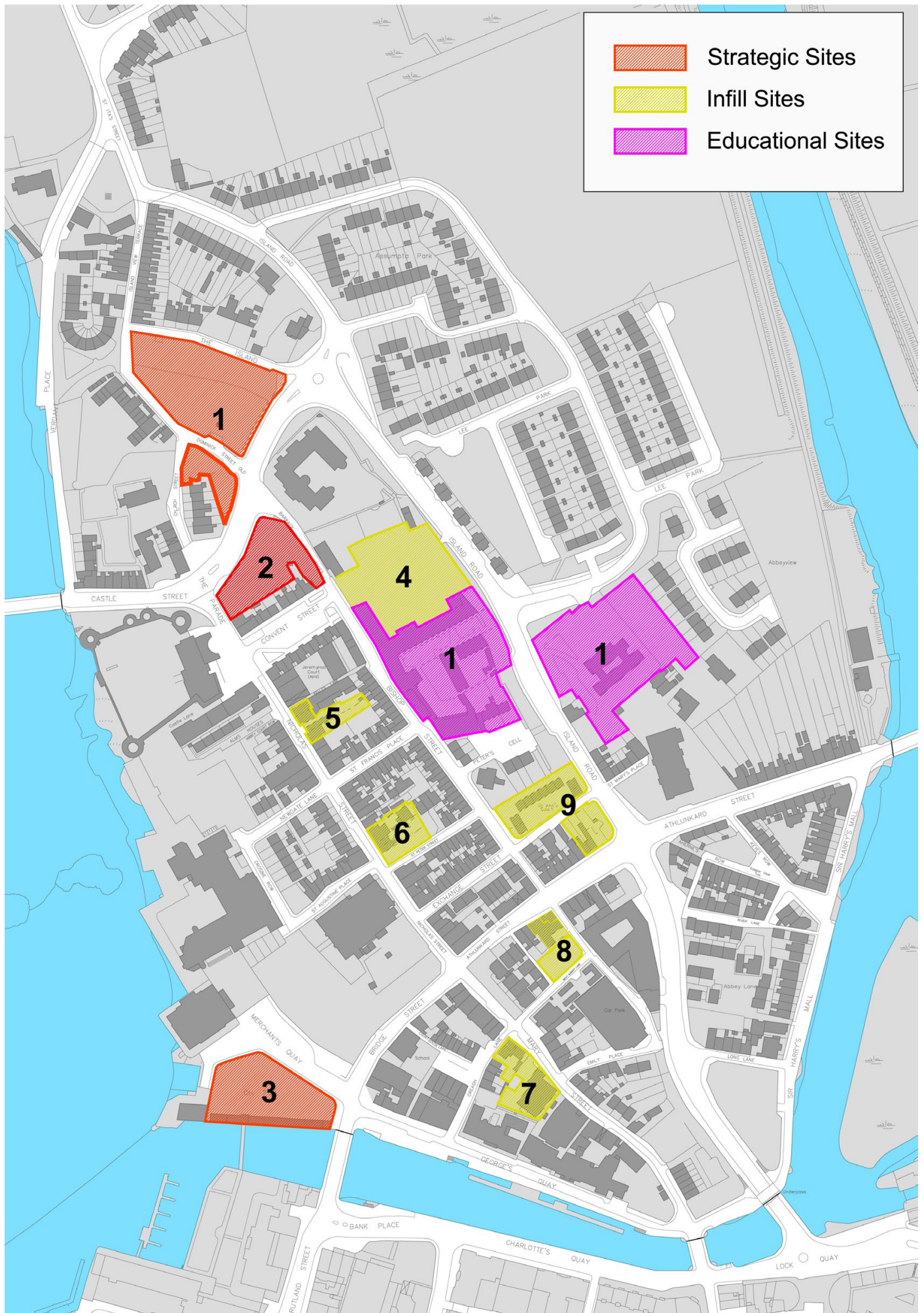


FIG. 35: SITE MAP EXTRACT FROM ISLAND FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2011

for vacant and infill sites that are situated in the Medieval Quarter. In considering the redevelopment potential of these sites and the smaller infill sites on the Island, attention is drawn to the King's Island Strategy Stage 2 (Final Report, May 2003) which was prepared by Nicholas de Jong Associates (and others) on behalf of Limerick City Council. Section 4 of that document, entitled 'Projects', sets out environmental projects for the Island, in addition to Development Guidelines and Tourism/Community Related Developments. The Development Guidelines set out proposals for a number of sites in Kings Island. The Framework Implementation Plan does not seek to duplicate the work of that study but instead refines and updates part of that study as it relates to infill sites. In the eight years since 2003, there have been significant changes to the national and local economy, and some sites have now been redeveloped and the context for redeveloping others has changed. This changed context merits a review of the development guidelines for sites on Kings Island.

The sites identified in the Framework Implementation Plan are as follows:

1. Orchard Car Park
2. The Parade/ Castle Street
3. Potato Market
4. Former St. Mary's Convent
5. 24 - 27 Nicholas Street
6. 35 - 39 Nicholas Street
7. Creagh Lane
8. Sheep Street
9. Island Road / Athlunkard Street

The Site Development Briefs within this Plan are purposely not overly prescriptive, they are to be considered as guidance for investors and are indicative only. Each brief defines the location, area, environmental constraints, heritage context, existing and proposed use as well as relevant development guidelines.

Site Capacity Study – Healy & Partners – 2009

A Site Capacity Study was undertaken by Healy & Partners Architects in partnership with Limerick Regeneration Agencies in 2009 on two sites in the St. Mary's Park Area in Limerick City. Site A is Verdant Place and is undeveloped, whereas Site B has undergone a landscaping intervention which has partially developed some of the lands.

The study proposed a development of 6no. single storey elderly units on site A, each of those units having a plot ratio of 0.35 and 10sqm of private open space. The total area of Site A is 777sqm, and possible locations for car parking to both the north and south of the site.

Site B has a total area of 850sqm, and 18no. units were proposed on this site, 6no. double storey units and 2no. of 3 storey buildings. Access to the site is proposed to be on foot, as there is an existing car park located opposite (Orchard Site).

King Island Strategy Stage 2 (2003)

The Stage 2 Strategy for Kings Island was commissioned by the Kings Island Task Force in 2003,

which is composed of representatives from Shannon Development, Limerick City Council and Kings Island Traders, and is intended to update existing plans for the area by setting out objectives and strategies for its future development. The main purpose of the study is to capitalise on the successes to date by developing a phase two strategy that clearly sets out opportunities for the future.

The strategy recommended that a comprehensive Area Regeneration strategy was required that addresses the inter-related issues of Socioeconomics, Movement, Development and Environment, Heritage and Tourism; Upgrade Nicholas/Mary Street as the principal Spine Route of the area, with an extension eastwards to link with Sir Harry's Mall, including improved lighting and signage, and better pedestrian crossing facilities; Introduce a coach drop-off and pick-up strategy that encourages greater visitor interaction with the Heritage Area.

King's Island Integrated Action Plan 1994

The King's Island Integrated Action Plan is a study that reviews the navigational potential, tourism potential and development potential of King's Island. This formulates an integrated action plan that relates to physical strategy, socio economic strategy, implementation strategy and sources of funding.

This study incorporated a profile and an overall context and preface to the action plan, investigated the navigational potential of the River Shannon and Abbey River as a key issue which was likely to influence the area, considered tourism potential and

other development potential under the headings of residential, commercial, industrial and infrastructure. It included an integrated action plan strategy and a detailed action plan for four areas: the heritage precinct, Verdant Place / King John's Castle, Upper Island / St. Marys Park and the Abbey Area.

The Heritage Precinct as described in the Action Plan is made up of Merchants Quay, Nicholas/Mary Street and Georges Quay. A proposal for the redevelopment of Merchants Quay was the introduction of a restaurant at the Potato Market site overlooking the River Shannon, in connection with the Hunt Museum with the pedestrian bridge. The Action Plan also encouraged a dramatic reduction in traffic volume on Nicholas Street/Mary Street, remodelling the street surface to become primarily a pedestrian-orientated zone, but not fully pedestrianised. The Action Plan also recommended the widening of footpaths, together with the introduction of rich paving textures, lighting, and general street furniture, creating an ambience which will encourage private business to locate there.

The development of a new road, which is now constructed and known as Island Road was supported in the plan. Other projects supported in the plan included provision of car parking and a large coach park on the old convent orchard site, provision of a hotel at Verdant Place, remodelling of the street surface on Nicholas St as a primarily pedestrian orientated zone but not a pedestrianised street.

Kings Island Action Area Plan – Muir Associates – 1993/4

In May 1994, Muir Associates, together with a Study Team published an engineering report on River Navigational Potential of the King's Island Action Area Plan.

The report begins by setting out the context of the difficulties encountered in the area, stressing that the navigational link in proximity to King's Island is less than satisfactory. Curragour Falls to Thomond Weir shallows to an extent at low tide making the route impassable during this time. Other local waterways such as the O'Dwyers Bridge, Mathew Bridge and Baals Bridge suffer from similar constraints during low tide.

The Plan identifies that the only practical option involving raising water levels exist on the Abbey River, and therefore recommends a number of engineering schemes at the Abbey for the benefit of both the local waterways and the regional waterway of the River Shannon, namely;

- **Construction of Tidal Gates and Locks at each end of the Abbey River**

This scheme would involve controlling the level of the Abbey River at 1.5m OD with flood/tidal control gates and locks at each end of King's Island, costing circa £4.75m.

- **Dredge a Channel in Abbey River**

This projects involved the dredging of the Abbey River to 1.5m below OD to allow for adequate water draft. Costing circa 5m it would provide for a 100% navigational window, and vastly improve the general visual environment in the lower stretches of the Abbey. However, it could result in significant deterioration of the Abbey water quality during the construction works until a main drainage scheme is implemented.

- **Construct Permanent Weirs and Locks at each end of the Abbey**

In order to impound tidal flows, an option would be to construct a permanent weir and lock both ends of the river at King's Island – this would minimise the level of dredging needed, provide a 65% navigational window and cost circa £3m.

- **Dredge a Channel in Abbey and provide Variable Crest Weir and Lock at Mathew Bridge**

Dredging of a 1.5m channel below OD in the upstream section of the Abbey to a level of 0.4m OD downstream, creating a variable crest weir and lock system – providing for a 65% navigational window.

- **Dredge Channel in Abbey and Provide Permanent Weir**

This scheme involves dredging a 20m wide channel in the Abbey River to a level of 1.5m OD and controlling the water level at the lower end using a permanent weir and lock. The

permanent weir required at the outlet to the Shannon might have slight detrimental effect on the upstream water quality and on flood flow capacities.

- **Reduction of bed levels within Defined Channel in Shannon Combined with Provision of Lock Structure**

This scheme involves dredging a 20m wide channel through the rock cill in the Shannon from Thomond Weir to Curragour Falls to a level of 1.8m OD. The lower end of which will be controlled by a lock beside the Curragour Falls to maintain water levels, this project is projected to cost circa £3m.

The Action Plan identifies Options 2, 4 and 6 as the preferred options and discusses those at greater detail. The report concludes by highlighting that although Option 6 would bring about the most benefit to the waterways surrounding King's Island the demand is not great enough to justify the additional £1m cost of the project in comparison to options 2 or 4.

Limerick Heritage Precinct: Proposal for the Revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter (1988)

The Limerick Heritage Precinct: Proposal for the Revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter was commissioned by Mr. Michael J Noonan T.D, Minister for Defence in 1988 who brought together a task force drawn from Limerick

Corporation, Shannon Development, Office of Public Works and the Limerick Civic Trust to research and submit proposals aimed at the revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter. The objective was to develop an imaginative and realistic programme of environmental, housing, industrial and tourist related projects which are capable of being implemented by 1991 and which when established would form the bases of an ongoing revitalisation programme for the Kings Island Medieval Quarter. An objective for the Revitalisation of Limerick's King's Island Medieval Quarter was:

"for the development of an imaginative and realistic programme of environmental, housing, industrial and tourist related projects which are capable of being implemented by 1991 and which when established would form the basis of an ongoing revitalisation programme for the King's Island Medieval Quarter."

In addition, the summary of benefits is as follows:

- The combination of elements will establish Limerick Heritage Precinct within its Medieval Quarter. 90,000 tourists are projected which would increase to 200,000.
- Provision of jobs.
- Establishment of tourist attraction.
- The establishment of an Irish Emigrant Museum is achieved.
- Provision of 70 temporary construction jobs and 55 permanent jobs are secured.
- The combination of these factors will provide a major encouragement to commercial tourist

related investors.

The Castle and Cathedral have been identified as the two primary medieval buildings. This study recommends the creation of a route commencing at the Granary, incorporating the primary and secondary elements of interest within the Medieval Quarter connecting the two primary buildings and becoming a major tourist attraction. The development of this route and its associated areas necessitates the following work:

- Environmental Work: this includes high quality paving, cobbles, hard and soft landscaping features, appropriate lighting, Identified derelict sites along the route should be purchased and developed, and appropriately designed street signage should be erected throughout the quarter.
- King John's Castle: The development of the castle as a primary tourist attraction involves the demolition of the 22 Local Authority houses located within the courtyard and the development of a Museum and Exhibition space.
- Roadworks: it is recommended that the proposals to construct a relief road along the Eastern Line of the city's fortifications be expedited, thus dramatically reducing the present heavy volume of traffic through the Medieval street network and affording the opportunity of upgrading the area.
- Public Realm: The quality of the environment at the Nicholas Street entrance to the Castle will require improvement. Convent Street is envisaged as accommodating tourist buses and the development of this facility will necessitate

Appendix Two

Record of Protected Structures



1. Villiers Alms Houses

RPS No. 3001

NIAH No. 21508009

Location: Dominick Street/ Old Verdant Place



2. Dominican Priory Wall and Nuns' Graveyard

RPS No. 3006

NIAH No. 21508010

Location: Barrack Street



3. St. Mary's Convent School

RPS No. 3343

NIAH No. 21508011

Location: Bishop Street



4. Barringtons Hospital

RPS No. 3016

NIAH No. 21513053

Location: George's Quay/ Mary Street



5. Mary Street Garda Station

RPS No. 3347

NIAH No. 21513055

Location: Mary Street/ Meat Market Lane



6. Limerick Institute of Technology - School of Art

RPS No. 3468

NIAH No. 21513070

Location: George's Quay



7. The Exchange

RPS No. 3010

NIAH No. 21513057

Location: Nicholas Street



8. Charity Blue Coat School

RPS No. 3466

NIAH No. 21508021

Location: Nicholas Street



9. City Hall Facade of former Gaol

RPS No. 3058

NIAH No. 21508013

Location: Crosbie Row



10. Widow's Alms Houses

RPS No. 3005

NIAH No. 21508012

Location: Nicholas Street



11. Limerick County Courthouse

RPS No. 3012

NIAH No. 21513060

Location: Merchant's Quay



12. The Potato Market

RPS No. 3320

NIAH No. 21513061

Location: Merchant's Quay



13. Matthew Bridge

RPS No. 6061

NIAH No. 21513015

Location: Bridge Street/George's Quay

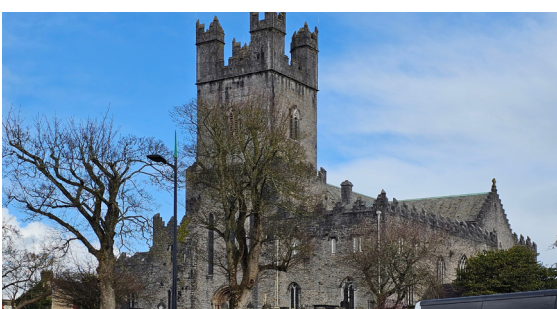


14. Gerald Griffin Memorial Schools

RPS No. 3043

NIAH No. 21513056

Location: Bridge Street/Court House Lane



15. Saint Mary's Cathedral

RPS No. 3009

NIAH No. 21508014

Location: Nicholas Street/Athlunkard Street



16. The Toll House

RPS No. 3038

NIAH No. 21508002

Location: Verdant Place/ Castle Street



17. Bannatyne Pyramidal Mausoleum

RPS No. 3048

NIAH No. 21508019

Location: Saint Munchin's Church of Ireland, Church Street



18. Jones Mausoleum

RPS No. 3049

NIAH No. 21508008

Location: Saint Munchin's Church of Ireland, Church Street



19-21. 2, 3, 4 Church Street Alms Houses

RPS No. 3055, 3056, 3057

NIAH No. 21508004, 21508005, 21508006

Location: Church Street



22. Fanning's Castle

RPS No. 3015

NIAH No. N/A

Location: Rear of St. Anne's Technical Institute



23. Bishop's Palace

RPS No. 3042

NIAH No. 21508003

Location: Church Street/ Castle Street

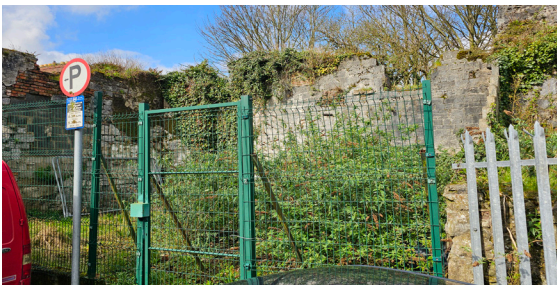


24. Remains of Medieval Mill

RPS No. 3050

NIAH No. N/A

Location: Civic Public Open Space, City Hall



25. External Wall of Old Gaol - Medieval House

RPS No. 3053

NIAH No. N/A

Location: 37 Mary Street/Goal Lane



26. Baal's Bridge

RPS No. 6062

NIAH No. 21513031

Location: Mary Street/Broad Street



27. Thomond Bridge

RPS No. 6057

NIAH No. 21508001

Location: Castle Street/High Road



28. Bourke's House

RPS No. 3011

NIAH No. N/A

Location: Athlunkard Street



29. King John's Castle

RPS No. 3004

NIAH No. N/A

Location: Castle Street/ Nicholas Street



30. Boyd Mausoleum

RPS No. 6042

NIAH No. 21513059

Location: St. Mary's Cathedral



31. 35-39 Nicholas Street

RPS No. 7016

NIAH No. N/A

Location: Nicholas Street/St. Peter Street

Record of National Monuments

National Monument on Map	RMP Number
1. Thomond Bridge	LI005-017002
2. Old Bishop's Palace	LI005-017166
3. Medieval Town Defences	LI005-017010
4. St. Munchin's Church Graveyard	LI005-017044
5. Tomb of Elinor Young	LI005-017045
6. Well at 9 Church Street	LI005-017127
7. Archaeological Dig Site	LI005-017127
8. Small Stone Tower, Wall	LI005-017174
9. Stone House on later Bishop's Palace	LI005-017104
10. Mungret Gate Stone	LI005-017171
11. King John's Castle	LI005-017014
12. Castle Ringwork	LI005-017124
13. Three late 12th/early 13th century houses	LI005-017125
14. House walls	LI005-017173
15. Dominican Priory of St. Saviour	LI005-017047
16. Stone House Ruins	LI005-017120
17. St. Saviour's Dominican Priory Burial Ground	LI005-017121
18. Old Barracks	LI005-017051

National Monument on Map	RMP Number
19. Augustinian Priory of St. Peter	LI005-017046
20. Site of the Siege of Limerick	LI005-017183
21. St. Nicholas's Church	LI005-017144
22. St. Nicholas's Church Graveyard	LI005-017114
23. Archdeacon's House	LI005-017167
24. Manor of the Chanter	LI005-017168
25. Medieval House	LI005-017140
26. Thomas Arthur's Mill, Curragower Castle, Queen's Mills	LI005-017075/LI005-017074
27. Residence of the Dean of St. Mary's Church	LI005-017169
28. Vicars Choral of St. Mary's Cathedral	LI005-017164
29. Remains of Two Medieval Homes	LI005-017129
30. Medieval Building: "House C"	LI005-017007
31. Medieval Building: "House B"	LI005-017006
32. Medieval Building	LI005-017123
33. Walls of late 16th/early 17th century home	LI005-017126
34. Post-medieval Well	LI005-017175
35. Bourke's House	LI005-017003
36. 17th Century Graveslab	LI005-017027

National Monument on Map	RMP Number
37. Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary	LI005-017015
38. Cross	LI005-017155
39. St. Mary's Cathedral Graveyard	LI005-017016
40. Castleated House – Ireton's House	LI005-017103
41. Templar Knights Hospitaller	LI005-017165
42. Potato Market: previously Quay	LI005-017072
43. Six-Gun Battery	LI005-017073
44. Medieval Building: "House B"	LI005-017008
45. Series of Houses	LI005-017132
46. Early Weir, Comyn's Mills	LI005-017186/LI005-017069
47. 1840's House Walls	LI005-017131
48. Late Medieval House	LI005-017130
49. Fanning's Castle	LI005-017004
50. Georgian House Walls	LI005-017151
51. Medieval Building: "House A"	LI005-017005
52. Courthouse/Town Hall	LI005-017170
53. Ruins of a Stone-built House	LI005-017128
54. Part of Old City Wall	LI005-017149

National Monument on Map	RMP Number
55. Clay Pipe Kiln	LI005-017152
56. Medieval Dump Deposits	LI005-017148
57. Medieval Town Hall	LI005-017153
58. Burial Ground	LI005-017115
59. Ball's Bridge	LI005-017001

Limerick City and County Council wishes to formally acknowledge and extend its sincere appreciation to Galmstrup Architects for their valuable contribution to the Integrated Urban Strategy. Their preparation of a comprehensive series of drawings—specifically Figures 1.1, 3.19, 3.20, 3.34, 6.1 - 6.3, 6.13, 6.17, 6.19, 6.20, 6.22 - 6.24, 6.25, 6.27, and 6.29 has significantly supported the visual articulation and overall development of the Strategy.



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ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
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