

# Westgate 2040 - Drogheda, Co. Louth

## Design Statement

December 2023



Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
Louth County Council



Rialtas na  
hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
**2040**

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# 1. Introduction

Louth County Council (LCC) appointed Turley as the lead consultant of a multi-disciplinary design team to prepare an integrated, comprehensive and planned urban regeneration proposals for a 1.89ha site on lands within the 'Westgate Vision Area' of Drogheda in Co. Louth.

## Purpose of the Statement

This Design Statement has been prepared as part of a wider planning application package which is submitted to An Bord Pleanála in compliance with sections 177AE and 175 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). It has been prepared by Turley, in conjunction with the wider multi-disciplinary design team, to help visually describe and provide an overview of the proposed project in terms of the vision and design approach for the proposed public realm improvements.

The Westgate 2040 proposals and planning application represents the next stage of the Westgate Vision<sup>1</sup>, launched by Louth County Council in 2018, which is a targeted planning response aimed at channelling investment into this core area of Drogheda.

This Design Statement should be read in conjunction with the wider technical planning application drawings and documents which provide a detailed overview of the specific proposals and an assessment of any potential impacts. These documents include:

- Architectural/Technical Drawings
- Planning Statement
- Natura Impact Statement
- Environmental Impact Assessment Report
- Preliminary Construction Environment Management Plan
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- Access and Active Travel Management Strategy
- Road Safety Audit (Stage 1)
- Tree Survey
- Public Lighting Design Reports

## Project Brief

The overall objective of the project (known as the 'Westgate 2040 Project') is to act as a catalyst to support positive regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in the 'Westgate Vision Area' of Drogheda and the wider Drogheda Town Centre. A key objective of the project is to prepare an application for funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF). This current project stage is funded under the same scheme. The Project Brief includes the following key objectives:











- Create a quality gateway / arrival space, public spaces, pedestrian linkages and public realm.

<sup>1</sup> See page 7 for further details on the Westgate Vision – also available online [here](#).

- Ensure inclusivity for all members of the community; the very young, the youth, the old, the mobility impaired, socially disadvantaged, the pedestrian and cyclist.
- Develop proposals which meet the design principles of national and international best practice.
- Promote an environment which leads to both day and night-time activities.
- Improve connectivity and legibility for all members of the community and for visitors/tourists to the town.
- Capitalise on, and respect, the rich heritage of this town centre location.
- Operate / employ sustainable development principles by minimising energy consumption and maximising the use of renewable energy technology.

## Design Team

The multidisciplinary design team members are identified in the image below and comprise a range of experts from a wide range of specialisms.

	Turley 4 Pembroke Street Upper Dublin 2 D02 VN24		Arrow 25 Leeson Street Lower Dublin D02 XD77
	RSK Bluebell Business Centre Old Naas Road Bluebell Dublin 12		Nicholas O'Dwyer Nutmeg Office Park Nutmeg Avenue Dublin 14 D14 V3F6
	Hegsons Pembroke Hall 38/39 Fitzwilliam Square Dublin 2 D02 NX53		Mesh 69 Middle Abbey Street Dublin D01 P5Y4
	DCON Safety Consultants Suite 5 Fitzwilliam Square East Dublin 2 D02 K8W2		O'Carroll Fitzgerald Project Management Unit 19, Charleville Town Centre Charleville Co. Cork P56 R228
	Unit G1, Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow A63 KT32		La Vallee House, Upper Dargle Road, Bray, Co Wicklow, A98 W2H9

## The Collaborative Process

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration vision has been informed by a rigorous and integrated approach to engaging with the community, key stakeholders and Elected Members. This approach helps to ensure that the 'Westgate 2040' proposals are designed to align, as much as practicable, with the ambitions and aspirations for the area.

## 2. Drogheda and The Westgate

The 'Westgate 2040' project is located within the 'Westgate Vision' area of Drogheda. This section of the Statement sets out context on the town of Drogheda as well as the Westgate Vision Area and provides an overview of previous frameworks/guides prepared by Louth County Council for the area.

### Drogheda

Drogheda is located predominantly within the southern edge of Co. Louth, with some southern areas of the town located in Co Meath. The location of Drogheda within Co. Louth is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below, being an extract of 'Map 2.1 - Core Strategy Map' of the Louth County Development Plan (LCDP) 2021-2027.



Figure 2.1: Extract of 'Map 2.1 - Core Strategy Map' of the LCDP 2021-27

### A Brief History of Drogheda

Drogheda is one of the oldest and most distinguished urban centres in Ireland with a history stretching back to its founding in 1194. It was also one of the largest and most successful port towns in medieval Ireland.

Drogheda takes its name from the Gaelic 'Droichead Átha' meaning "the bridge of the ford", referring to the town's strategic location at the lowest bridging point of the River Boyne, between the provinces of Ulster and Leinster.

Drogheda was officially founded by colonising Knights, Hugh de Lacy and Bertram de Verdon, who founded respectively the Meath and Louth sides of the town around the year 1180. The Borough as it is known today, came into existence in 1415 when the two separate settlements previously operating independently on the north and south sides of the Boyne River, were united by a single constitution and local authority. Drogheda went on to become one of the largest walled towns in Ireland for a time surpassing the size even of Dublin.

Drogheda has found itself at the epicentre of many of the most seismic events to have shaped Irish history. The best known of these events is the 1649 siege of Drogheda and subsequent massacre by an English Army led by Oliver Cromwell. To the west of the Borough, the Battle of the Boyne was fought in 1690 whilst the prehistoric megalithic World Heritage Sites at Bru na Boinne are also in close proximity to the Borough.

Figure 2.2 is an extract from Robert Newcomen's Map of Drogheda, dated 1657, which provided the first detail of the internal layout of the walled town. The Westgate area is at the top left corner of the map and both the West Gate and the Abbey of St Mary d'Urso are shown.



Figure 2.2: Figure 16.5: Extract from Newcomen's Map of Drogheda, 1657

Drogheda's story and significance can be appreciated in the extent, quality and variety of the physical fabric remaining from the medieval and post-medieval town constructed from the 17th to 19th century.

The medieval town is still evidenced in the remains of churches and religious houses and the network of lanes and streets. The barbican of St. Laurence's Gate is symbolic of the elevated status, wealth and importance of Drogheda in late medieval Ireland. The post-medieval town can also be appreciated in the wealth of 18th buildings, in particular the merchant town houses such as Barlow House, as Drogheda entered the modern era.

### Drogheda Today

Drogheda is designated as a 'Regional Growth Centre' within national, regional and local planning policy which recognises its growth potential as a driver of regional development.



Figure 2.3: View Across Drogheda Town [Source: <https://www.discoverboynevalley.ie>]

The town is strategically located along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor being an economic corridor of national, regional and local importance and is also benefitted by significant transport infrastructure, such as the M1 Motorway and the Dublin-Belfast railway line.

A key national, regional and local priority for Drogheda is to promote the continued sustainable and compact growth of the town as a regional driver of city scale with a target population of 50,000 by 2031. This priority is supported by objectives to regenerate the town centre, promote compact growth in the town's hinterlands and enhance the role of Drogheda as a self-sustaining strategic employment centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

<sup>2</sup> Available here: <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/publications/development-plans/drogheda-development-plan-urban-design-framework-plan-drogheda-heritage-quarter.pdf>

### Westgate

The Westgate 2040 area is located within the western area of Drogheda along the northern bank of the River Boyne between the Bridge of Peace and St. Dominick's Bridge.

The area has been earmarked for regeneration by Louth County Council as part of previous targeted interventions and strategies including the 'Urban Design Framework Plan for The Heritage Quarter, Drogheda' dated May 2013 and the 'Westgate Vision - A Townscape Recovery Guide for Property Owners, Investors and Developers' dated June 2018.

### Urban Design Framework Plan for The Heritage Quarter, Drogheda<sup>2</sup>

The Framework Plan, dated May 2013, identified the Westgate area as being an area for 'Intervention – Recovery – Opportunity', as illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

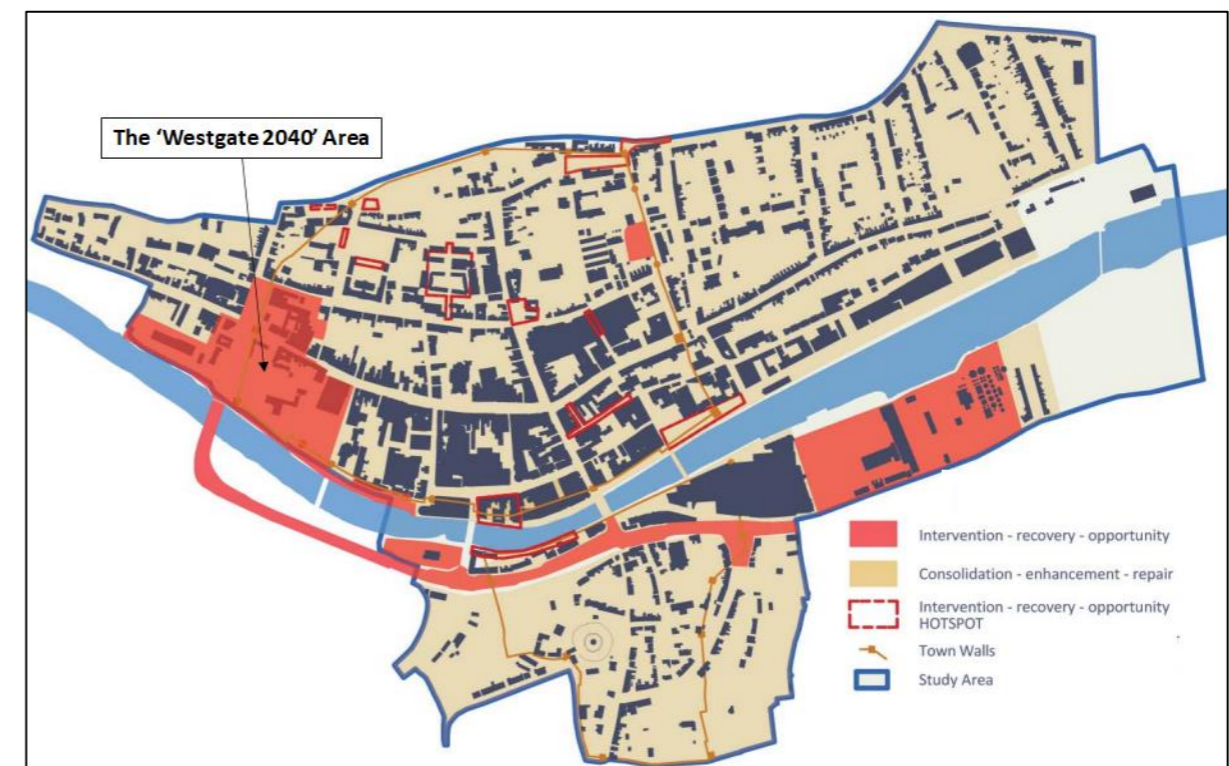


Figure 2.4: Extract of Map 5.11: General Townscape Analysis of the 'Urban Design Framework Plan for The Heritage Quarter, Drogheda'.

The Framework Plan stated that the red shaded areas required more focused intervention to recover their townscape coherence but noted that these areas contained some important and valuable elements which could contribute to recovery and which should inform design proposals.

The Framework Plan recommended that development Briefs and Masterplans should be prepared for these areas, including for the Westgate area.

### Westgate Vision - A Townscape Recovery Guide for Property Owners, Investors and Developers<sup>3</sup>

Recognising the recommendations contained in the wider Urban Design Framework Plan (2013), Louth County Council published the Townscape Recovery Guide for the Westgate area in June 2018.

The Townscape Recovery Guide states the following with respect to the Westgate area:

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

The study area for the Townscape Recovery Guide is illustrated in Figure 2.5 below and comprised lands located at the western extremity of the town centre around the former medieval West Gate.

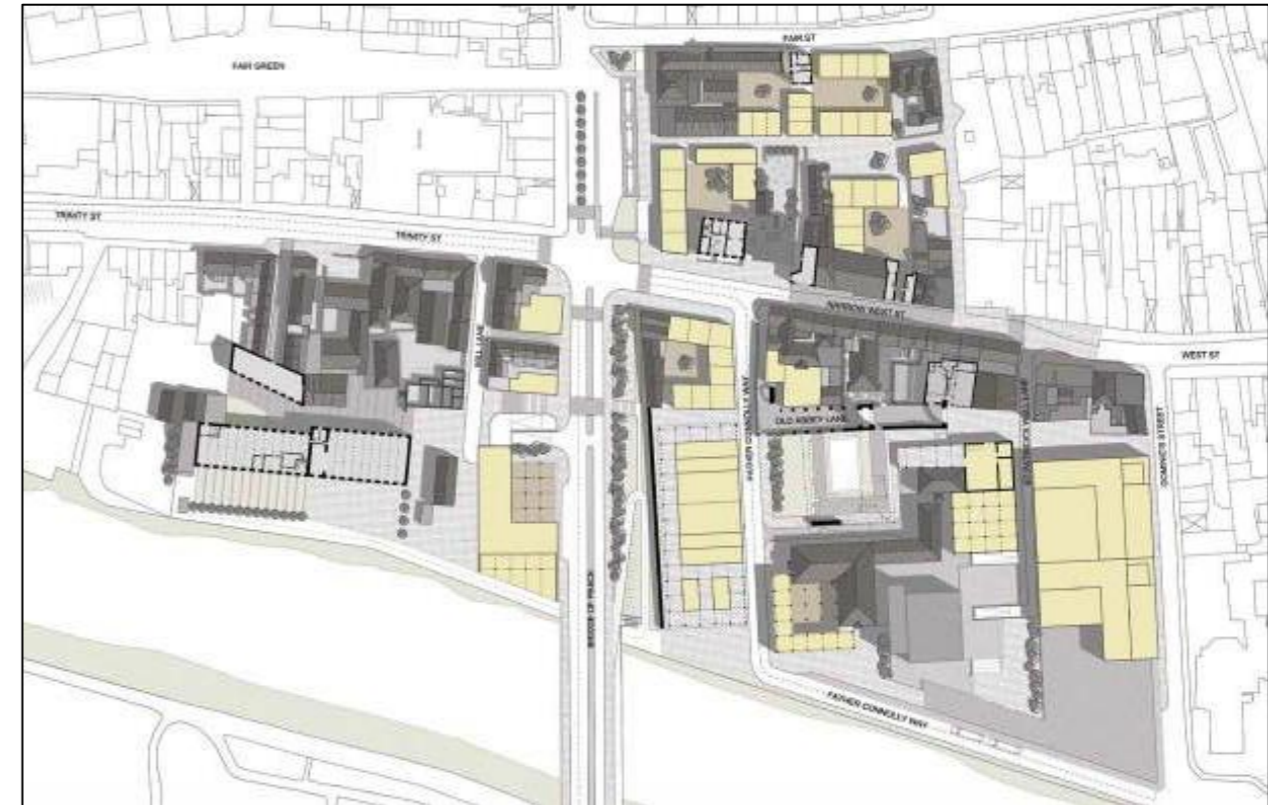


**Figure 2.5: Extract of 'Map 2.1 – WGV Study Areas' of the Westgate Vision - A Townscape Recovery Guide**

The study area of the Townscape Recovery Guide became known as the Westgate Vision (WGV) area, and this area comprised three interdependent sub-areas, these being the 'Donaghys Mill' area to the west of the R132, the 'Barlow' area to the north of West Street and the 'Old Abbey' area to the south of West Street.

The WGV area is described as having a high level of underutilised buildings and vacant land an issue which still persists today in the area. However, the Townscape Recovery Guide notes that a significant amount of the vacant and brownfield lands are in public ownership which can enable effective strategic land management and enhanced development potential.

The Townscape Recovery Guide sets out an overarching vision for the WGV area which included short term (0-3 years), medium term (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 year) public realm and development opportunities as well as details on the potential redevelopment proposals for opportunity sites within the area, as illustrated in Figure 2.6.



**Figure 2.6: Extract of 'Figure 3.52 - The Westgate Vision Diagram' from the Westgate Vision - A Townscape Recovery Guide.**

It is noted that the 'Westgate 2040' proposals seek to take forward the vision, principles and objectives of the Townscape Recovery Guide, as much as practicable, and also respond to detailed design testing and feedback received through consultations with the community and stakeholders.

It is further noted that the 'Westgate 2040' proposals do not fully align with the extent of the WGV area as they are focused predominantly on streets/roads/lanes and public realm areas and so do not comprise any opportunity plots/sites identified for redevelopment in the Townscape Recovery Guide.

Further details on the 'Westgate 2040' proposals are provided in the below sections of this Statement.

<sup>3</sup> Available here: [https://assets.website-files.com/622f1d4b8d6de050c3fdd210/62b43203c96ec84522e8c246\\_westgate-vision-a-townscape-recovery-guide-june-2018\\_compressed\\_compressed.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/622f1d4b8d6de050c3fdd210/62b43203c96ec84522e8c246_westgate-vision-a-townscape-recovery-guide-june-2018_compressed_compressed.pdf)

### 3. 'Westgate 2040'

The 1.89 hectare 'Westgate 2040' regeneration site is located within the western area of Drogheda's Town Centre, as illustrated in **Figure 3.1** by the red lines.

**Figure 3.1** also provides a spatial overview of site's context within the wider area and identifies important features, amenities and infrastructure.

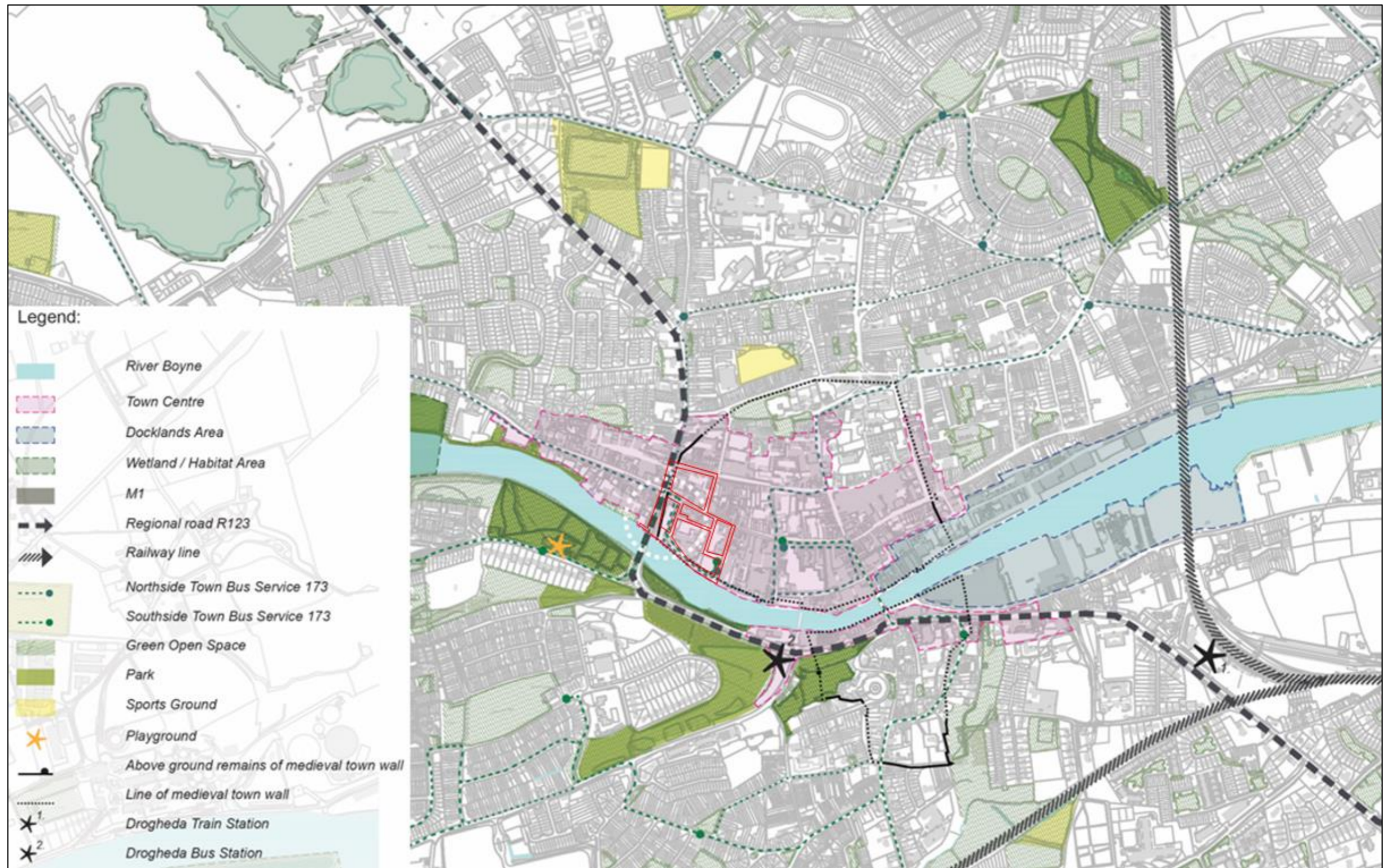


Figure 3.1: Context and Analysis Diagram



**Figure 3.2.** identifies the general extent and location of the 1.89 hectares 'Westgate 2040' regeneration site.

The application site is located in the townland of Moneymore, Drogheda and includes the following lanes/streets/roads/areas and their adjoining footpath/public realm areas: R132/Bridge of Peace/George's Street (including a section of the underpass on the northern side of the River Boyne); George's Square; Father Connolly Way (including part of the existing car park area); Dominick Street; Patrickswell Lane; Old Abbey Lane; Scholes Lane; R900/West Street/Narrow West Street; Fair Street; and Wellington Quay.



**Figure 3.1:** Extract from the Site Location Plan accompanying the Planning Application

The site also comprises third party lands, being the rear of No. 56/57 West Street and a small area of the Office of Public Work's (OPW) existing car park adjacent the former town wall/River Boyne/Father Connolly Way.

Noting the significant extent of the 'Westgate 2040' area, it is not surprising that it contains a diverse range of site features/land uses/public realm areas, including:

- George's Square which includes a public parking area, public footpaths, public toilets, a bus stop area and adjoins existing premises;
- Medieval Wall ruins adjacent to the eastern side of the Bridge of Peace/George's Street (R132);
- The 'Old Abbey' ruins within Old Abbey Lane including the freestanding gable ruin;
- Lands beneath and adjacent to the Bridge of Peace/George Street on the northern side of the River Boyne;
- Road infrastructure including carriageways, footpaths, retaining walls, junctions, bus stops, loading bays, car parking spaces, etc;
- Public utilities such as post boxes, street lighting, overhead electrical cabling and poles, underground services, CCTV cameras, electrical boxes, manholes, signage, parking meters, etc;
- Street furniture including public art, seating/benches, planter boxes, raised flower beds, bins, bicycle parking, hanging flower baskets, water fountain, railings, etc;
- The embankment of the River Boyne;
- Hard landscaped areas including stepped, sloping and level components; and
- Soft landscaped areas including grass, trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers, etc.

Photographs are provided overleaf which help to visually describe the existing character of the area and its main features/land uses/public realm areas.

Photo 1: George's Square



Photo 4: West Street



Photo 7: Remains of Medieval Town Wall



Photo 2: George's Square/George's Street (R132)



Photo 5: Barlow House



Photo 8: Remains of Medieval Town Wall



Photo 3: George's Street/West Street



Photo 6: Narrow West Street



Photo 9: River Boyne/Father Connolly Way



Photo 10: 'Shafts of Light' art installation

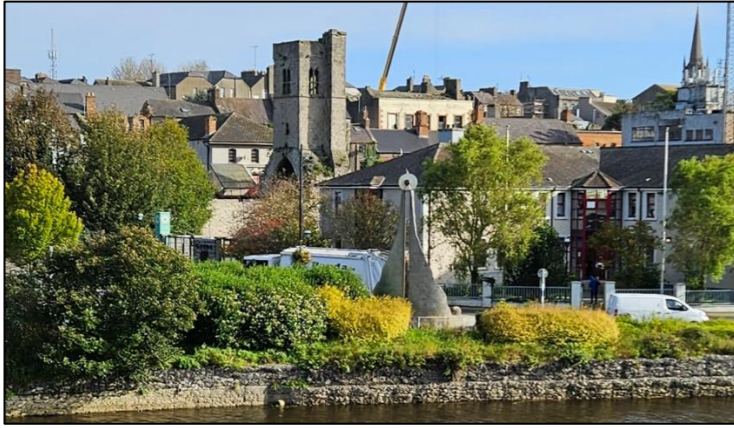


Photo 11: Old Abbey Lane



Photo 12: Central Bell Tower of Old Abbey



Photo 13: West Gable of the North Aisle



Photo 14: Fair Street



Photo 15: Scholes Lane



Photo 16: Father Connolly Way



Photo 17: Patrickswell Lane



Photo 18: Dominick Street



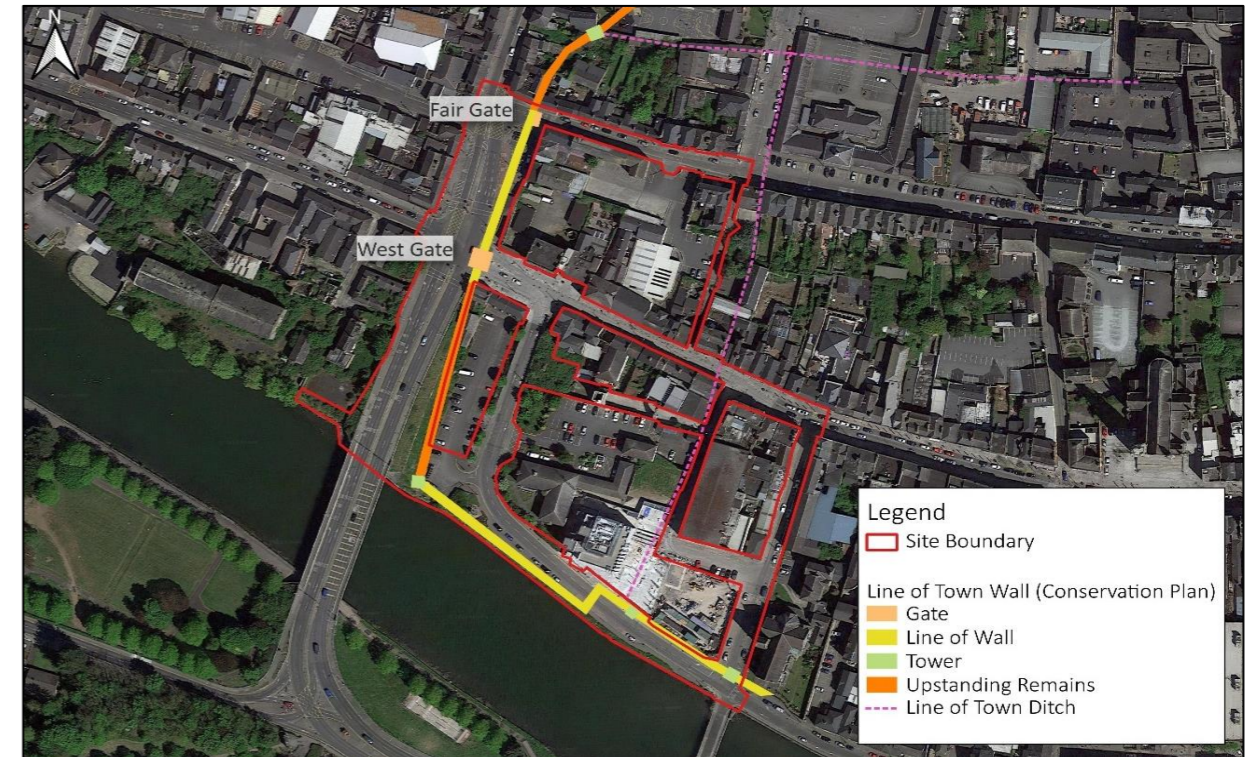
## Heritage

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area contains, and is bound by/adjoins, a rich array of archaeological, built and cultural heritage assets. The following is of particular note:

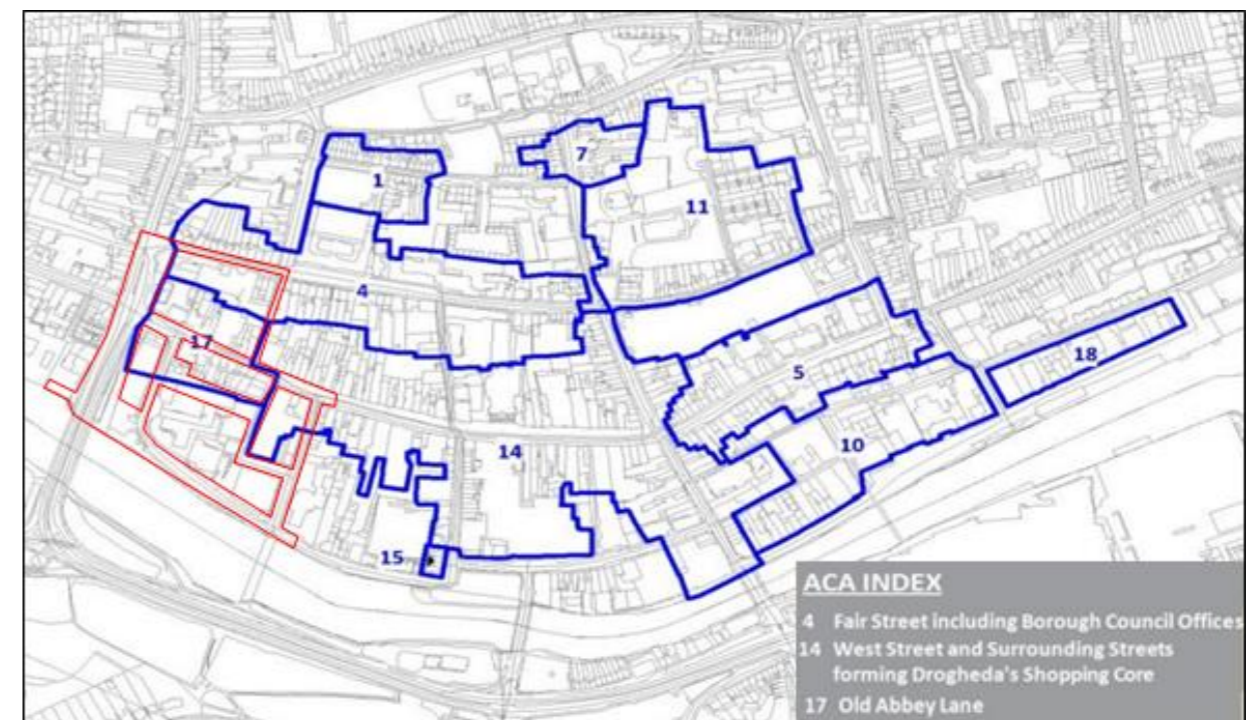
- The application site is predominantly located within the zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Drogheda (LH024-041), which is a recorded monument.
- There are three individual recorded monuments within the proposed development area, comprising the Old Abbey [Abbey of St Mary d'Urso (LH024-041011)], the path of the medieval town wall and the site of two gates (recorded as town defences LH024-041014), which are both National Monuments and a site of a quay (LH024-041079).
- A number of protected structures of national, regional and local importance adjoin and/or are located in the wider area surrounding the application site, including Barlow House (13618010), West Gate House (13618009), a large concentration of C18th and C19th terrace houses, and etc.
- The Shafts of Light' public art installation is located within the application site.
- A northern section of the application site is located within the Fair Street Architectural Conservation Area.
- An eastern section of the application site is located with the West Street and Surrounding Streets Architectural Conservation Area.
- A central section of the application site is located within the Old Abbey Lane Architectural Conservation Area.

Some of the most significant and notable heritage assets within the area have been identified in the preceding photographs and Figures 3.3 and 3.4 provide further details in terms of the location and extent of the assets and designations within/adjoining the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area.

Further information on, and analysis/assessment of, the relevant archaeological, built and cultural heritage assets and designations is provided within the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment Report (see Chapters 16 and 17).



**Figure 3.2: Town defences of Drogheda (LH024-041014), showing the proposed development area [Source: IAC Archaeology – Chapter 16 of the EIAR]**



**Figure 3.3: Extract from Louth County Council map showing Architectural Conservation Areas in Drogheda – annotated by Turley**

## Land Use

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area principally comprises public realm areas and public road/footpath areas, but it is noted that parts of the site are zoned 'D1 – Regeneration'.

The site also adjoins lands that are zoned 'B1 – Town Centre' and 'G1 – Community Facilities' but no works are proposed as part of this application to lands within the 'B1 – Town Centre' or 'G1 – Community Facilities' zoning.

Noting the site's location within Drogheda Town Centre, it is not surprising that the immediately surrounding and wider areas comprise an eclectic mix of land uses typically found in such urban locations, including retail, residential, mixed use, service, health, institution, recreation, hospitality, food and beverage, arts/culture, places of worship, education, administration and etc.

However, it is noted that the Westgate 2040 area contains a high level of derelict and underutilised buildings and vacant land which has been an issue for some time and is detracting from the rich built and natural heritage in the area.

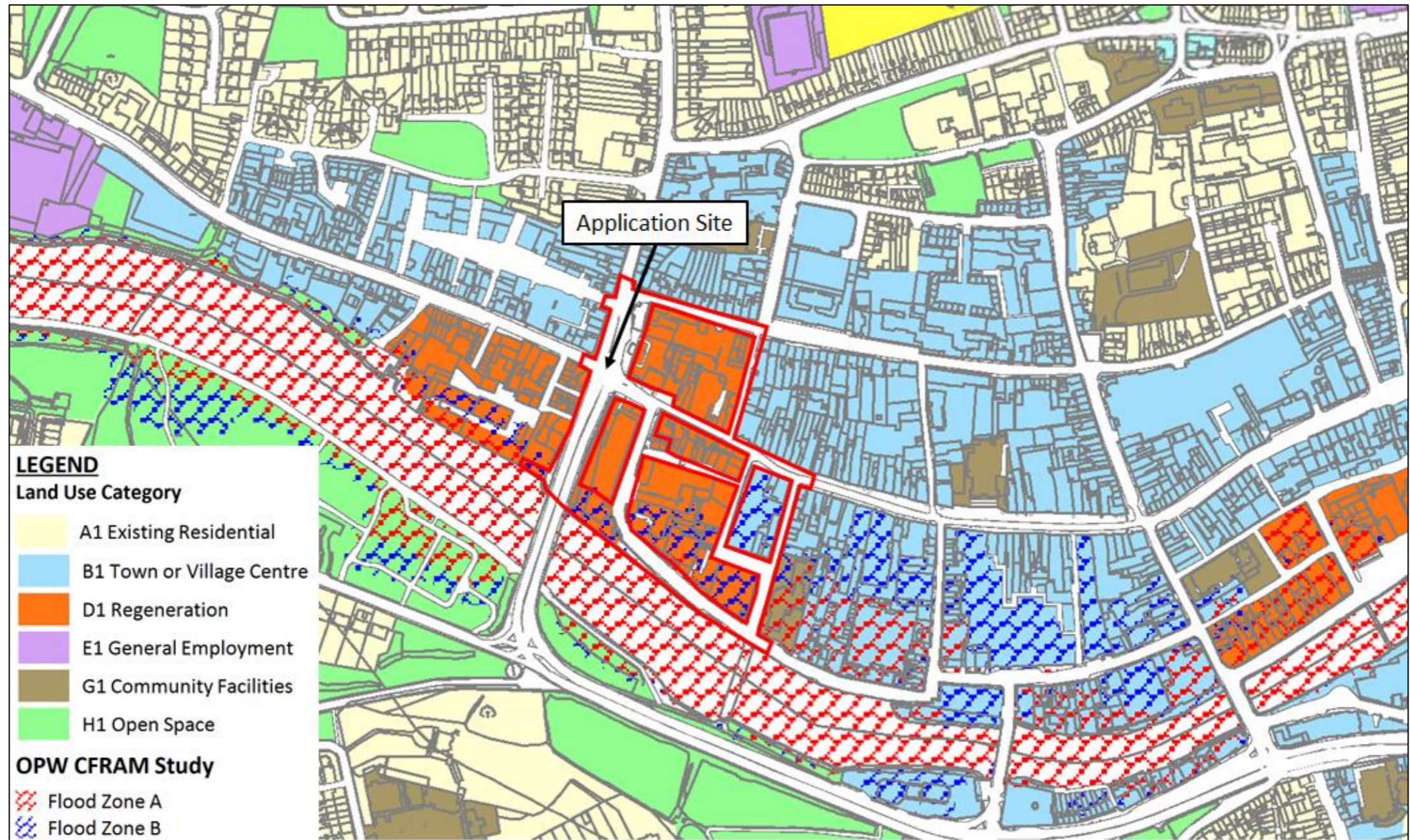


Figure 3.4: Extract of 'Map 1.1 - Drogheda Zoning and Flood Zones' from Volume 1A of the LCDP 2021-27 – annotated by Turley.

## Urban Form

### Drogheda

The strong presence of the historic urban form and structure of Drogheda has persisted over time and remains a dominant and distinctive part of its physical character.

This is underscored by the many historic landmark structures and their location which all form part of a rich medieval inheritance.

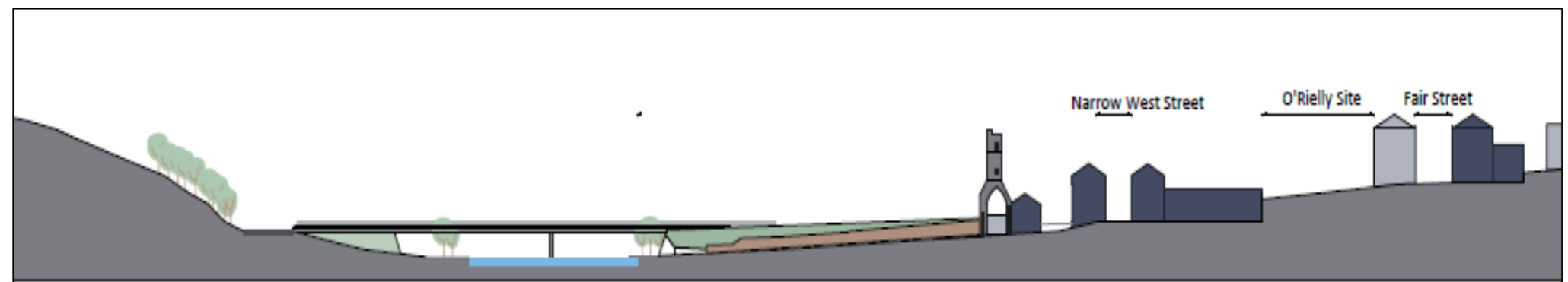
The topography of Drogheda and the River Boyne are also dominant in the town's spatial sequence and the town's medieval street pattern is heavily influenced by both of these natural features.

Drogheda is laid out in a series of terraces facing south, giving rise to sunlit streets and lanes such as Peter Street, Duke Street, Scholes Lane and Patrickswell Lane intersected by the longer curved West Street which is often in shade.

### Westgate

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration site is also heavily influenced by the topography of Drogheda and the River Boyne. Indeed, its street pattern is characterised by the sloping topography from a ridge line near Fair Street downwards in a southern direction towards the northern bank of the River Boyne.

This sloping topography is illustrated in the aerial image to the right and the section drawing extracted from the Urban Design Framework Plan for The Heritage Quarter, Drogheda (2013) which shows an existing section through Fair Street/ Narrow West Street/ Old Abbey Lane/ Father Connolly Way/Bolton Street / Patrick Street.

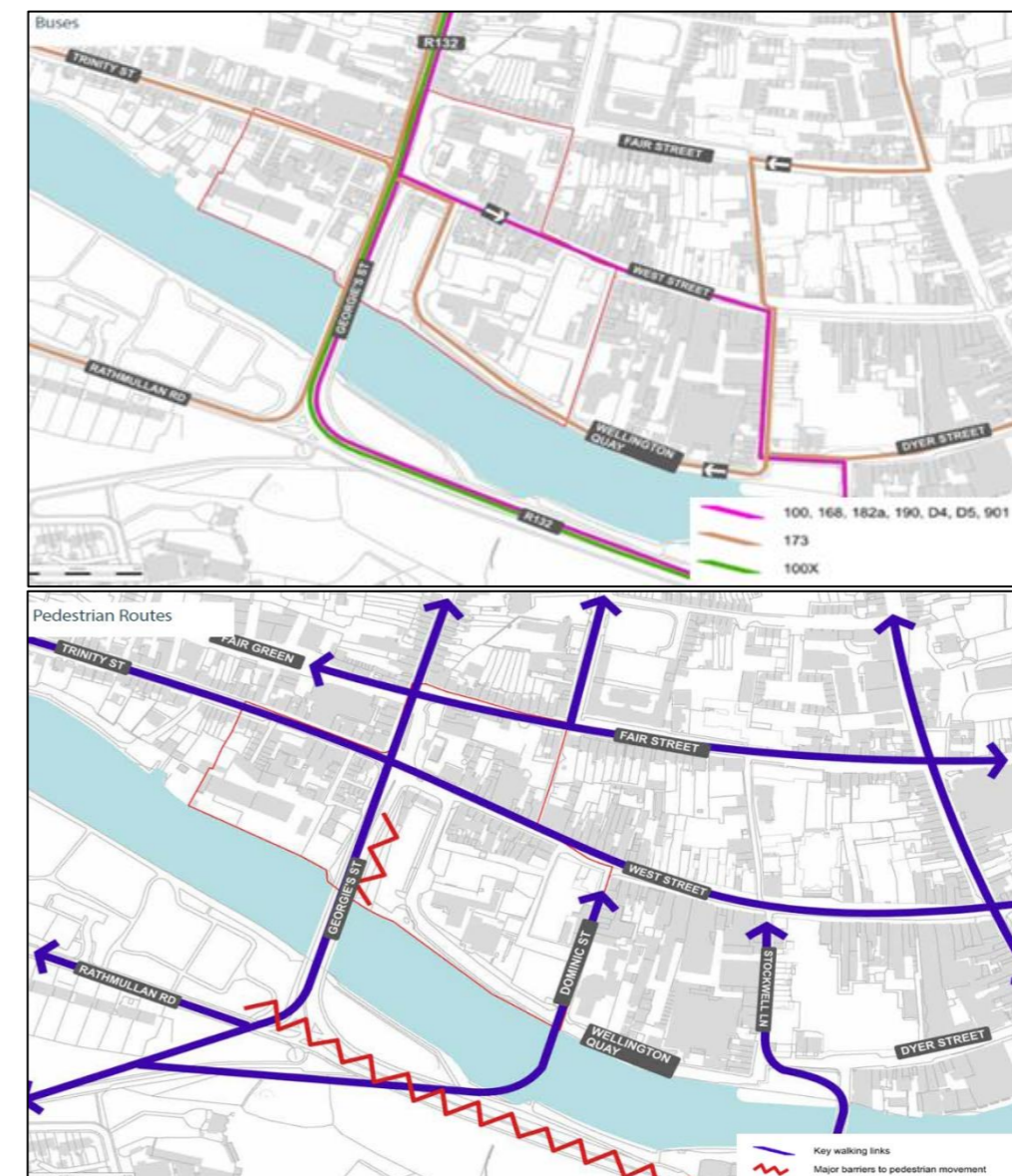
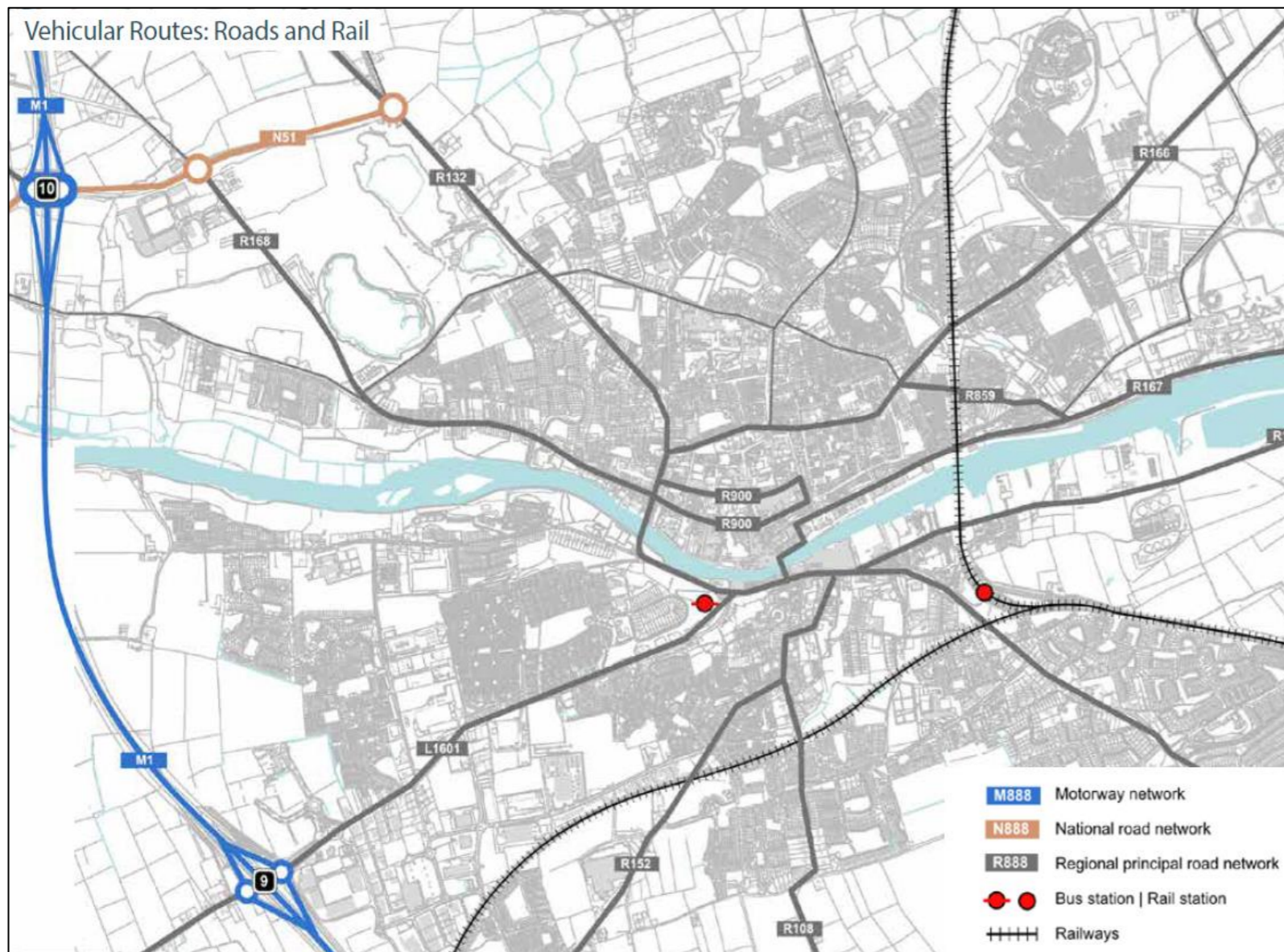


## Movement

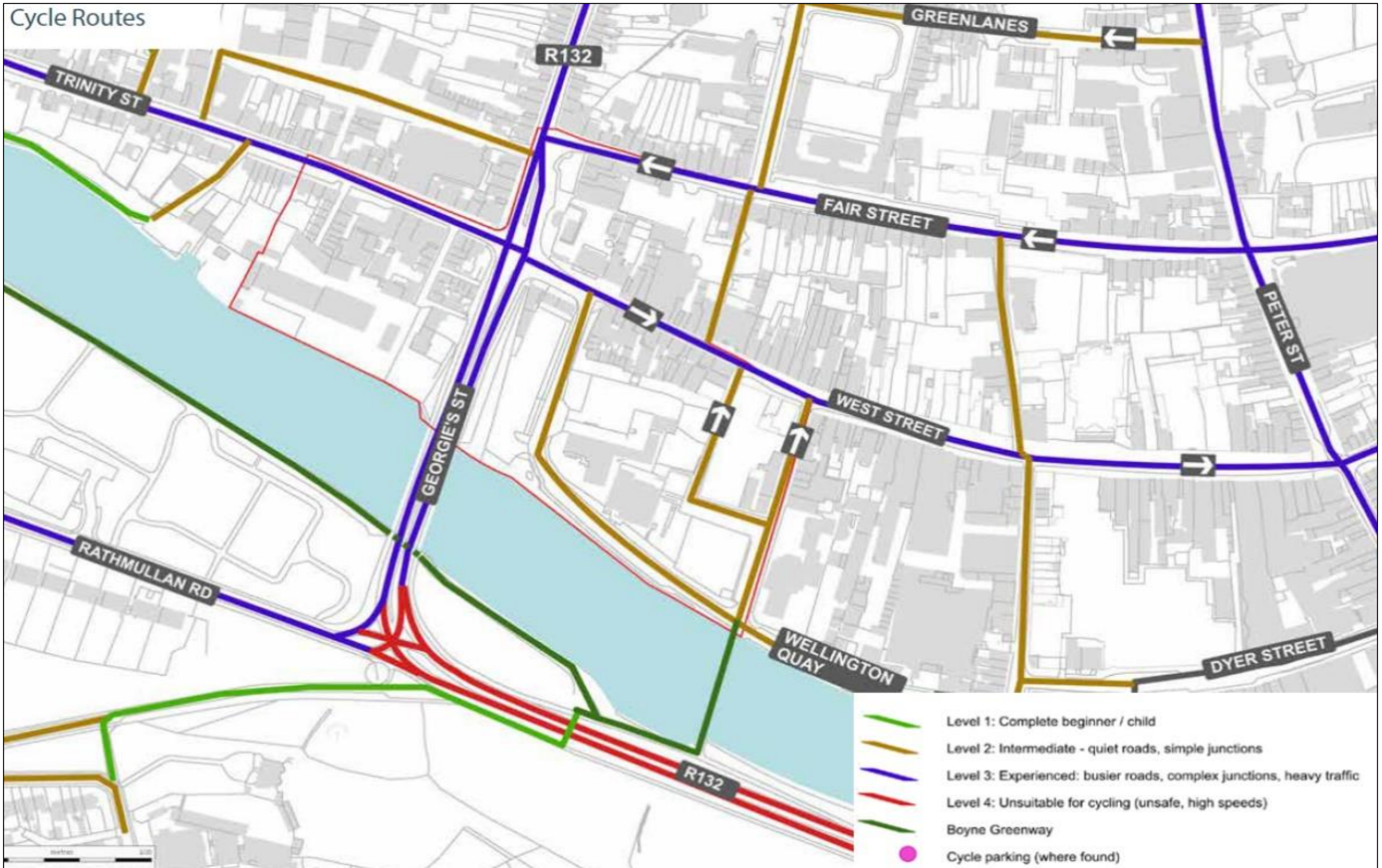
Drogheda boasts an enviable location along the eastern seaboard of Ireland and is well connected to the major urban cities and centres in Ireland via high quality road networks, including the M1 motorway and linking motorways including the M50 and M2/N2. Due to the presence of this road network, Drogheda lies within 30 minutes commuting distance of both Dublin City Centre, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port. Drogheda is also easily accessible to the International and George Best City Airports in Belfast and Belfast Harbour at an approximate 1.5 hour drive time.

Drogheda also benefits from a high degree of public transport accessibility noting that it is served by the Dublin to Belfast Enterprise long distance rail service and noting that Drogheda is a major centre for public bus services. Links with the Greater Dublin Area are on a high frequency basis. There are also frequent long distance services to Dundalk, Newry and Belfast.

As part of the initial site analysis, a detail review of the transport/access/parking/movement components of the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area and surrounding/wider areas was undertaken. The following diagrams were prepared to help inform the preparation of concept design proposals.



# Cycle Routes





## 4. Shaping the Vision

### Project Objectives

A key objective of the project is to prepare an application for funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF). This current project stage is funded under the same scheme.

The Westgate 2040 Project brings forward a vision for urban regeneration with the following objectives at the forefront:

- Create a quality gateway / arrival space, public spaces, pedestrian linkages and public realm.
- Ensure inclusivity for all members of the community; the very young, the youth, the old, the mobility impaired, socially disadvantaged, the pedestrian and cyclist.
- Develop proposals which meet the design principles of national and international best practice.
- Promote an environment which leads to both day and night-time activities.
- Improve connectivity and legibility for all members of the community and for visitors/tourists to the town.
- Capitalise on, and respect, the rich heritage of this town centre location.
- Operate / employ sustainable development principles by minimising energy consumption and maximising the use of renewable energy technology.

These objectives, along with the feedback received during stakeholder and community consultations, have informed the project vision and design principles, which are outlined in the following sections.



## Vision Inputs

The 'Westgate 2040' vision has been shaped by the following components:

- Extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders;
- Detailed initial site investigations/analysis by a multidisciplinary team;
- Review of previous strategies prepared by Louth County Council, such as:
  - Urban Design Framework Plan for The Heritage Quarter, Drogheda (2013)
  - Westgate Vision - A Townscape Recovery Guide for Property Owners, Investors and Developers (2018)
- Review of relevant European, national, regional and local policy, guidance, standards which are addressed in the accompanying Planning Statement.

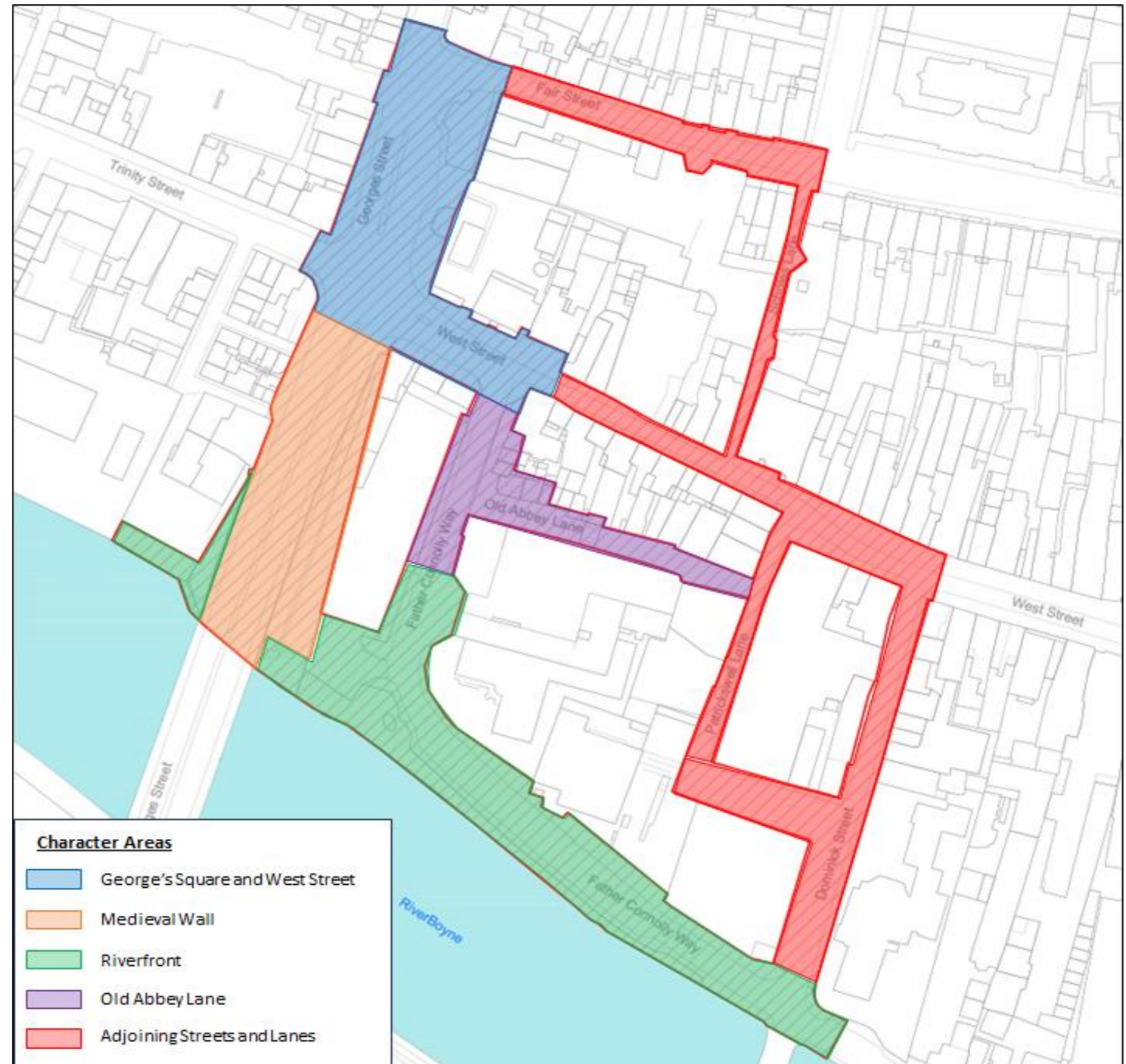
## Character Areas

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area has been divided into sub-areas referred to as 'Character Areas'.

This approach recognises the extensive nature of the area and the distinctiveness of different areas within the site.

The character areas are listed below and their locations/extents are illustrated in Figure 4.1:

- George's Square/West Street;
- Medieval Wall;
- Old Abbey Lane;
- Riverfront; and
- Adjoining Street and Lanes



## Design Principles

Having completed detailed site analysis and reviewed the feedback received from the community and stakeholder consultations (see the accompanying Planning Statement for further details), the Design Team established design principles to help guide, inform and shape the overarching 'Westgate 2040' vision and site-specific proposals/interventions. These principles also respond to the project brief set out by Louth County Council and align with best practice principles for a number of specialisms, including:

- Urban Design
- Landscaping
- Conservation (Natural and Built Heritage)
- Transportation/Access/Parking
- Sustainability
- Drainage

## DESTINATION



Capitalise on, and celebrate, Drogheda's rich built and natural heritage to create a 'destination' of choice for the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area.

## IDENTITY



Deliver innovative public realm areas with a unique sense of identity and sense of place to establish a 'wow-factor' and put Westgate 'on the map'.

## ARRIVAL SPACE



Create a network of 'arrival' spaces at key interfaces which physically and visually announce arrival into the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area.

## FORMER WEST GATE



Re-establish the former West Gate at the entrance to West Street using a piece of bespoke urban architecture/public art.

## FORMER TOWN WALL



Improve access to the upstanding remains of the former medieval town wall in a sensitive and celebratory manner.

## RIVERFRONT



Develop a bespoke strategy for the riverfront area which helps to improve its functionality, amenity and tourism credentials.

## WAYFINDING



Incorporate a unique approach to wayfinding in the area with a mix of urban design and architectural features to help improve legibility.

## SUSTAINABILITY



Develop highly sustainable and durable public realm areas which align with climate change and sustainability targets.

## CONNECTIVITY/PERMEABILITY



Enhance connectivity of the area with the wider town centre and the riverfront and improve permeability for both pedestrians and cyclists.

## INTEGRATED



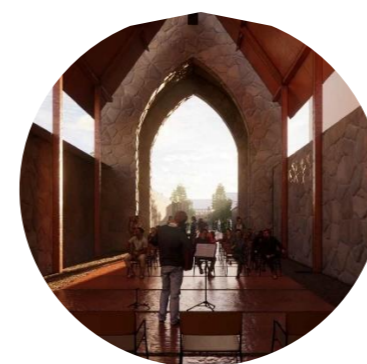
Deliver a coherent public realm, access, transport and parking network which integrates with the wider Drogheda 'active travel' scheme.

## ACCESSIBILITY



Ensure that all new public spaces and routes are designed to be universally accessible for all abilities and ages in accordance with the Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document M - Access and Use.

## FLEXIBLE



Introduce an effective framework of flexible public realm areas that can accommodate a range of social, cultural, art and performance events.

## INNOVATION



Incorporate creative solutions, adopting innovative approaches towards materials, maintenance and management.

## ACTIVE STREETScape



Promote activity, animation, direct and passive surveillance opportunities to help enhance safety and reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour throughout the area.

## 5. The Vision

*“...combining bold architecture and pioneering urban design, the ‘Westgate 2040’ regeneration area will be transformed to create a multi-functional, innovative and welcoming destination of choice, which celebrates and capitalises on the area’s rich natural and built heritage assets and acts as a catalyst to support positive regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in the area and wider Drogheda Town Centre ...”*

- WEST GATE -  
- BY THE RIVER -



DROGHEDA'S HERITAGE & SCENIC - MEETS - THE SCANDINAVIAN IDEAL; THE  
SETTINGS BY THE RIVER BOYNE CITY DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE

## George's Square/West Street

The George's Square/West Street character area comprises George's Square, part of George's Street/R132, part of West Street and the junction of Fair Street and George's Street.

George's Square will be enlarged and transformed into an attractive public realm plaza area with enhanced permeability and new high quality soft and hard landscaping features, including a Corten steel ground insert delineating the location of the former town wall and a mix of playful and natural interventions.

George's Street (R132) will be reprioritised to enable the enlargement of George's Square and it will also be upgraded to include new dedicated cycle lanes to integrate with LCC's wider active travel proposals.

The West Street area, together with George's Square, has been designed to act as a new gateway/arrival space. The former West Gate will also be re-established in the urban landscape with the introduction of two bespoke freestanding Corten steel structures to mark its former location.

A new shared surface treatment is also proposed to the front of Barlow House with a level profile to provide a flexible space that can act as a new 'cultural' square and accommodate evening and/or weekend events.

The West Street area has also been designed to integrate with, and provide a seamless connection between, the new public plaza at George's Square to the north, the Medieval Wall character area to the south and the Old Abbey Lane character area to the southeast. Computer-generated artistic impressions of this area are provided for context.





## Medieval Wall

The Medieval Wall character area comprises the area of land located between the former medieval town wall and the embankment of George's Street/R132/Bridge of Peace and part of George's Street/R132/Bridge of Peace.

This area has been designed to provide a renewed focus on the upstanding remains of the former medieval town wall so that it becomes an important and celebrated historical artefact in Drogheda's urban landscape. The area will incorporate a mix of high quality soft and hard landscaping interventions to deliver a medieval garden feel and an enhanced user experience.

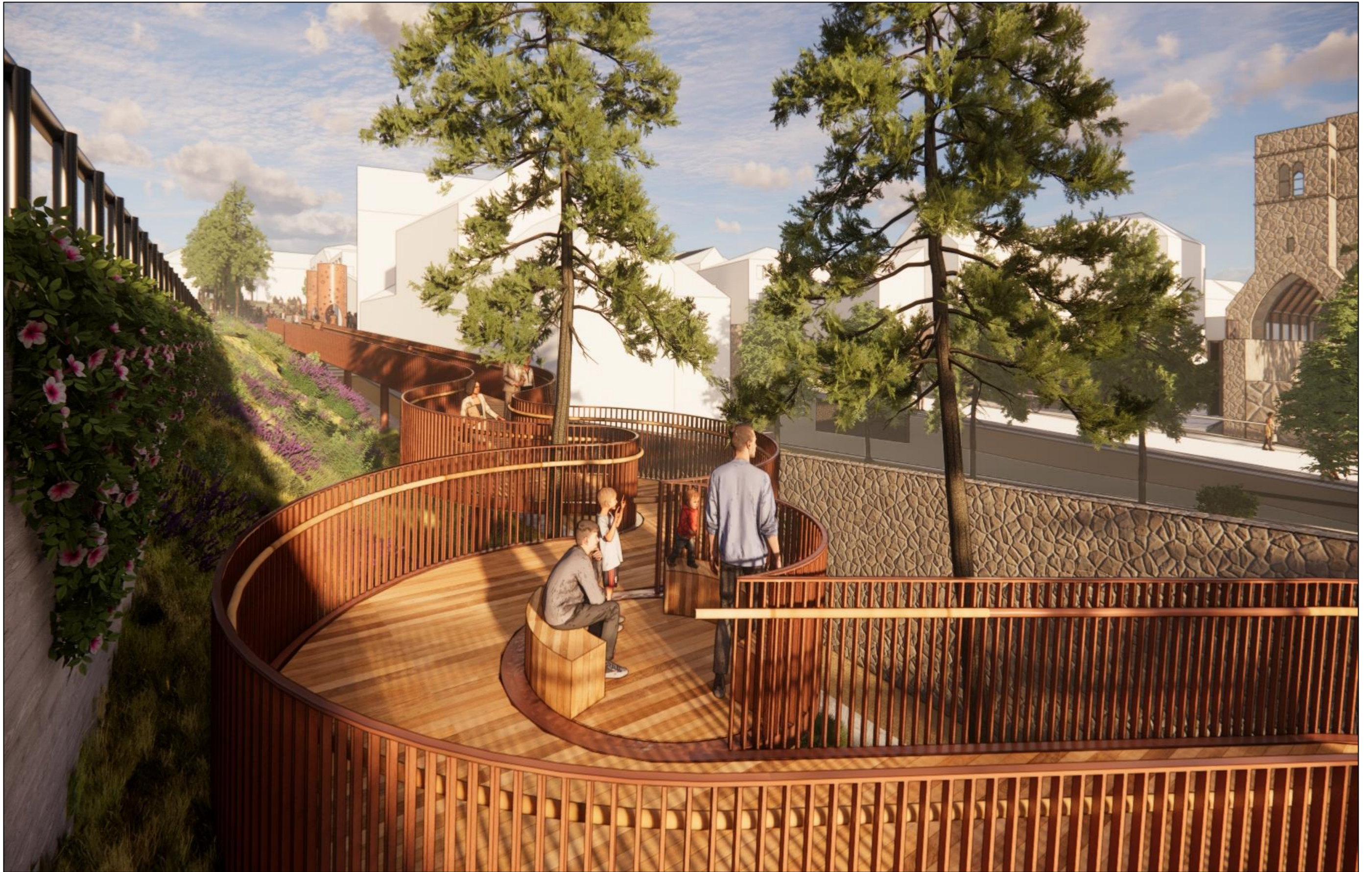
The area has also been designed to integrate with, and provide a seamless connection between, George's Square, West Street and the Riverfront character areas and will incorporate a bespoke universally accessible raised walkway as well as a more direct ground level pedestrian path as a secondary route.

The new water feature within George's Square will continue into and through this character area as a narrow and shallow rainwater channel terminating within a new rainwater retention pond SuDS feature which will enhance the sustainability credentials of the area. During normal operation, water will soak to ground in situ, but during periods of heavy rainfall it will overflow into a pipe that is connected to a nearby storm drain.

Computer-generated artistic impressions of this area are provided for context.







## Old Abbey Lane

The Old Abbey Lane character area comprises lands located within Old Abbey Lane, the adjoining areas of Father Connolly Way and a small area to the rear of No. 56/57 West Street.

The proposals for this character area have been designed to sensitively and respectfully celebrate its rich history including the upstanding remains of the Old Abbey [Abbey of St Mary d'Urso (LH024-041011)] including part of the nave, chancel, the west gable of the north aisle and the central bell-tower.

A new freestanding Corten steel canopy will be constructed within, but offset from, the remains of the Old Abbey to create a flexible and covered outdoor space which can be used for a variety of culture, arts and community events/performances. The freestanding west gable ruin will be reinstated with sensitive maintenance and repair works with spacing around the gable enabling it to act as an important focal point.

A new enlarged 'Abbey Square' public realm area will also be created with new tree planting, hard landscaped and public seating areas. A section of the wall located between Old Abbey Lane and Father Connolly Way will be demolished to create a new direct physical and visual link to/from West Street/Father Connolly Way/Old Abbey Lane.

A freestanding Corten steel sign will also be erected at the western entrance to Old Abbey Lane as a piece of bespoke architecture which enhances legibility and provides a unique branding opportunity.

Computer-generated artistic impressions of this area are provided for context.





## Riverfront

The Riverfront character area comprises lands located along the northern bank of the River Boyne including the underpass of the Bridge of Peace and part of Father Connolly Way.

This area has been designed to revitalise the northern embankment of the River Boyne with a strong focus on delivering improved connectivity and permeability in the area as well as with the wider town centre. The rich natural and built heritage in the area will be celebrated and new public realm improvements will create an attractive riverfront setting with enhanced functionality and amenity.

A new freestanding Corten steel pavilion will be erected over a new hard landscaped promenade area to provide a bespoke piece of urban architecture in the area and create a new covered and flexible outdoor space which can be used for a variety of social and cultural uses/events.

A new pedestrian boardwalk will be constructed along the riverfront with new seating areas to enhance accessibility and enjoyment of this area. A segregated two-way cycle path will also be constructed which will integrate with existing cycle infrastructure along St. Dominick's Bridge to enhance active travel credentials in area and which can tie into future phases of a wider cycle network along the River Boyne.

The natural soft landscaped areas will be enlarged as much as possible with existing trees retained and new trees planted to enhance biodiversity value in the area. New high quality hard landscaping improvements will also be provided including a shared surface treatment along Father Connolly Way and a Corten steel ground insert delineating the location of the former town wall.

We set out below computer generated artistic impressions of this area for context.





## Adjoining Streets and Lanes

The adjoining streets and lanes comprise Fair Street; Scholes Lane; Narrow West Street; Patrickswell Lane; and Dominick Street.

These areas have been included as part of the application site as they form part of the wider Westgate Vision Area and have a direct physical relationship/connection with the abovementioned character areas.

These areas have been designed to align, and be consistent, with the proposed design language and treatment for the abovementioned character areas to ensure a holistic design approach throughout the Westgate 2040 area and to deliver a consistent, complementary, functional and safe built environment with a harmonious look and feel.

A unique wayfinding concept is proposed for these areas which incorporates a Corten steel ground insert flush with the street surface to create an inclusive trail which guides people through the area and towards the new public realm, bespoke architecture and landscaping interventions.

The pedestrian will be prioritised as much as possible within these areas and new public realm improvements will include rationalised parking and footpath areas, new high quality hard landscaping, tree planting and soft landscaping, moveable street planters with benches and new ambient lighting such as festoon lighting.

We set out below computer generated artistic impressions of this area for context.



## 6. Design/Material References

This section provides an overview of the materials and colours to be incorporated throughout the area as part of the proposed interventions and also contains precedent imagery which has helped to inform the design of the proposed interventions and which also help to illustrate the look, feel and character that the proposals are seeking to achieve.

### Hard Landscaping

The hard landscaping design approach has been directly informed by the overall vision for the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area which seeks to deliver innovative and unique public realm areas.

The design ambition is to deliver a coherent and consistent physical and visual connection between the key character areas and the adjoining streetscape by using the same high-quality material and colours. Clear design of paving is essential to give a simple uncluttered appearance to the streetscape and, to help achieve this, the surface material palette is limited to a few complimentary choices to be laid out in a coordinated manner.

All existing paving is proposed to be replaced with a high-quality paving, including natural stone slabs and setts with tactile paving to be introduced, where required. Other ground materials will include asphalt/coloured asphalt for carriageways and bicycle lanes, concrete for the George's Square water feature and its stepping elements, bound gravel within Old Abbey Lane, fire-retardant timber and Corten Steel for the raised walkway within the Old Medieval Wall area and Corten steel ramps within George's Square. The design intention is to select a durable materials palette using local stone, where possible.



### Bespoke Architecture

The 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area will feature a number of new bespoke architectural components and structures which have been carefully designed to enhance the overall experience in, and functionality of, the area for residents, tourists and visitors. The design of these new bespoke components have been inspired by the existing structures in Westgate to help celebrate the past and to create coherency and harmony with the existing character of the area while also creating a clear distinction between the 'new' and 'old'.

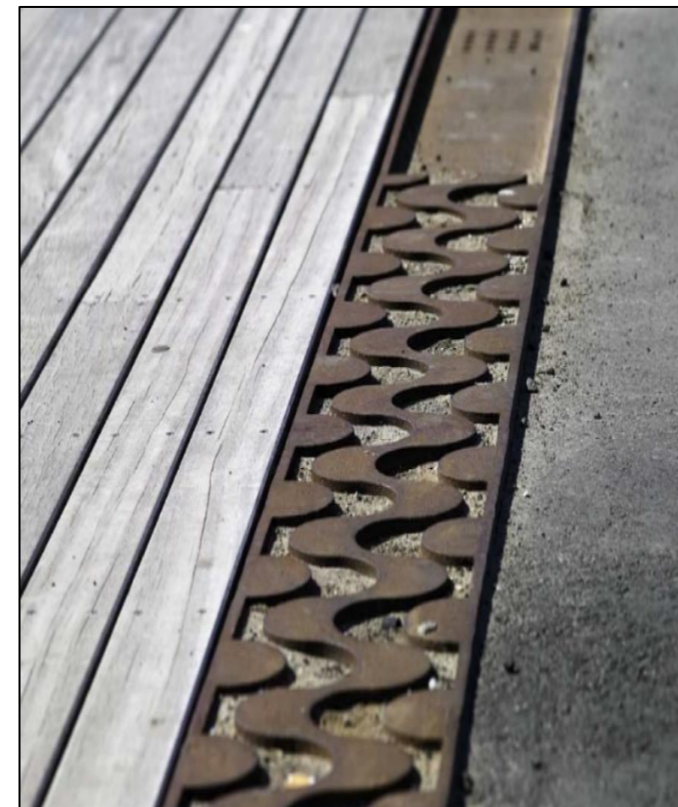
### Corten Steel Ground Inserts

To celebrate the past and the rich heritage of Drogheda, a specially designed Corten steel ground insert is proposed which will create a link between the important heritage in the area and the new townscape regeneration.

The Corten steel ground insert will be well-articulated to delineate the historical location of the former medieval town wall and will guide residents, visitors and tourists from George's Square down along the remains of the Medieval Wall to the new publicly accessible riverfront.

A separate and narrower Corten steel ground insert will also be provided within the adjoining streets and lanes to complement the former medieval wall identifier and act as a wayfinding feature to guide people through the wider regeneration area and towards the key character areas and new interventions.

The images below identify design references which have helped to inform the proposals for the freestanding Corten steel structure within the Old Abbey.



**Freestanding Corten Steel Structure – Old Abbey Lane Area**

Historically, where the Abbey served the local community, we are proposing a new freestanding Corten steel structure that will help to regenerate the derelict ruin and give it back to the community of Drogheda. We imagine a flexible and functional covered space which can be used for a range of purposes, such as an outdoor performance space for the creative community of Drogheda which can complement the arts and cultural community within Barlow House and the surrounding area.

The design of the freestanding pavilion will follow the shape of the existing structure and will sit within the perimeter of the abbey but will be offset from the surviving remains in a respectful manner to help reduce any potential impacts.

The design is kept simple and clean to let the character of the Abbey be the main experience. In terms of materiality, we are proposing Corten Steel, which will help to tie it together with the other interventions proposed throughout the ‘Westgate 2040’ regeneration area and also help to differentiate the ‘old’ from the ‘new’, while still having a tactile feeling, just like the ruin. Perforations in the canopy will create an interesting play between light and shadows, inspired by the character and atmosphere of the Abbey.

The images below identify design references which have helped to inform the design concept for the freestanding Corten steel structure within the Old Abbey.

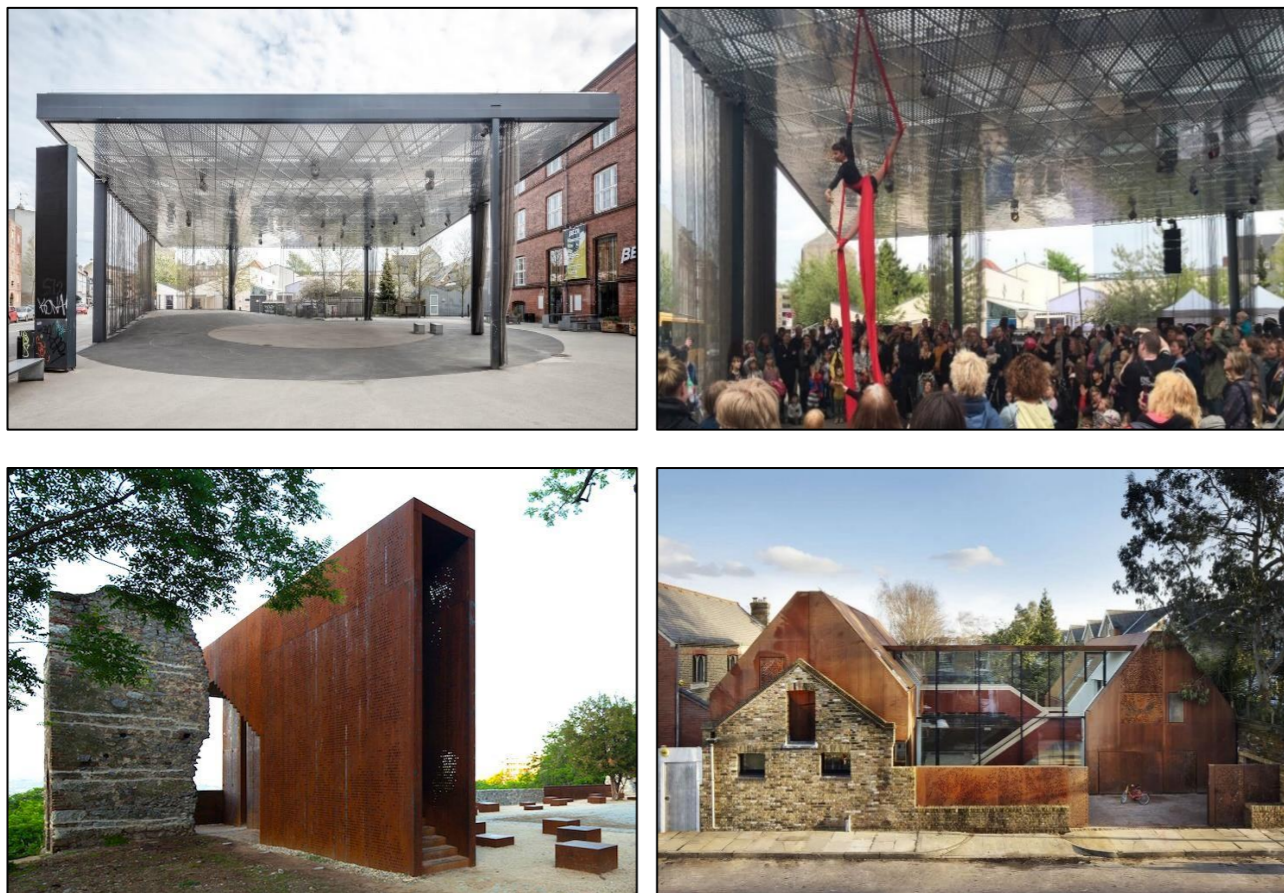
**Freestanding Corten Steel Pavilion – Riverfront Area**

The riverfront pavilion has been designed to serve the wider community. It will incorporate a large footprint to provide a flexible and functional covered outdoor space, which could host a range of events, including outdoor culture, social and community-based activities, farmer markets and etc.

The design of the riverfront pavilion aligns with the design and materiality of the freestanding Abbey pavilion and will provide a harmonious design language throughout the ‘Westgate 2040’ regeneration area as well as creating a clear connection between the historical part of the town and the regenerated riverfront area.

The design of the riverfront pavilion opens up towards the townscape to the north and frames the scenic view of the river and the park to the south. With its strategic location in close proximity to the Dominican Church and the pedestrianised St. Dominick’s Bridge, it naturally ties the new Riverfront to the rest of the Town and will become a vital urban node.

The images below identify design references which have helped to inform the design concept for the freestanding Corten steel pavilion at the Riverfront.





### Raised Walkway – Medieval Wall Area

The design approach of the raised walkway seeks to create a natural urban link, while at the same time making a unique experience out of something rather practical. The design aims to create a logical pedestrian flow with universal (Part M) access from George’s Square linking through the Medieval Wall area and down to the revitalised Riverfront area.

The raised walkway enables space to be freed up and the creation of a medieval garden below which would otherwise be comprised of hardscaped pathways, steps and etc. The medieval garden component will provide space for the historical wall to be experienced in closer detail and also links historically to the importance of the typical medieval garden.

The raised walkway is designed as an experience, rather than a necessity, and contains several seating and breakout areas/spaces which will provide opportunities for users to view and appreciate the medieval wall and also look across the area and discover other new interventions within Old Abbey Lane and the new Riverfront.

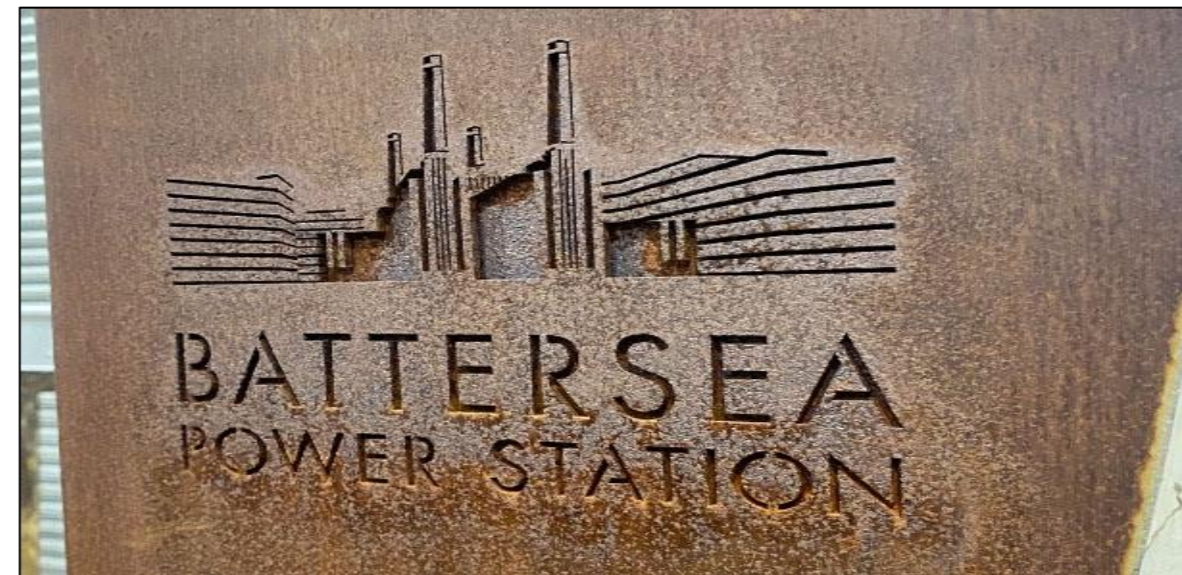
The images below identify design references which have helped to inform the design concept for the new raised walkway.



### Branding/Signage

New signage is proposed within the George’s Square and Old Abbey Lane areas to provide a unique opportunity for branding and photo opportunities as well as improving wayfinding in the area. Two new freestanding Corten steel structures are also proposed to mark the location of the former West Gate.

The graphical presentation, design and materiality of the new signs and structures will create unique branding and photo opportunities and will integrate with the other bespoke architectural components within the ‘Westgate 2040’ regeneration area. The proposed signs will incorporate the Irish translation for their areas to celebrate the past and the Irish language/culture.



## Street Furniture and Planting

Street furniture and planting components, such as benches, railings, tree gratings, raised planters, bicycle hoops, and etc, have been designed to align with the overarching design language for the wider area including the bespoke architectural interventions discussed above. The design has also been influenced by the industrial heritage of the area and the riverfront location of the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area.

A coordinated and considered approach has been adopted to ensure that street furniture is appropriately located and enables good accessibility, that it is simple in design, easy to use and to maintain, and makes a positive visual contribution to the streetscape. Serviceability and durability are also key to material selection.

New trees of suitable species, size and form will be planted throughout the area (see accompanying landscape plan) and will incorporate tree pit design that will ensure long term health while protecting the integrity of pavements and existing/new utilities.

Street level activity will benefit from the proposed street furniture and planting proposals which will help to define rest, relax, play and transition spaces. These interventions will also help to create a unique sense of place for the area and improve the overall aesthetic and functional appeal of the area to help attract more residents, workers, visitors and tourists. The images below identify design references which have helped to inform the street furniture and planting design concept.



## Lighting

Suitable levels of street lighting within the town centre are essential for ensuring an environment that feels safe and welcoming by day and night. Lighting can play an important role in reducing actual crime and the perception of crime, it prolongs the active period of space and helps to support a night-time economy.

The external artificial lighting design for the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area has been designed with both architectural and maintenance considerations in mind. The same light fittings and poles have been specified throughout all areas of the site to deliver a consistent 'look and feel'. Corten steel poles have been proposed throughout with 3 no. luminaires on each pole to make the lighting an attractive part of the scheme.

Feature lighting is also proposed for the new bespoke architectural elements with uplighters and spotlights being introduced to highlight specific features of the new interventions and the existing heritage and archaeological assets (refer to the lighting drawings for further details). Festoon lighting is also proposed along Scholes Lane and Patrickswell Lane to enhance their character.

It is proposed to utilise the existing ESB mini-pillars within the area for power provision to the new proposed lighting. These are indicated on the site services drawing provided. Commando sockets shall be mounted to all lighting poles to allow for connection of seasonal festive lighting and festoon lighting in along Scholes Lane and Patrickswell Lane. Metered supplies will be required to all lighting poles in this regard.

All light fittings will be the same type from Urbis Schreder and are readily available. Light fittings will be powder coated to a RAL similar to the brown Corten steel poles. The light types proposed are illustrated below.



## 7. Conclusion

The Vision for the 'Westgate 2040' regeneration area has been informed by extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders, detailed site investigations/analysis by a multidisciplinary team, previous strategies prepared by Louth County Council and relevant policy, guidance, standards, and etc.

By combining bold architecture and pioneering urban design and landscaping interventions, the proposals will transform the area by creating a multi-functional, innovative and welcoming destination of choice, for residents, workers, visitors and tourists alike which will act as a catalyst to support positive regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in the area and wider Drogheda Town Centre.

Proposals have been designed to accord with international and national best practice and to achieve a respectful balance between protecting and celebrating/capitalising on the area's rich natural and built heritage assets.

This Design Statement provides an overview of the proposals and should be read in conjunction with the wider planning application drawings package and technical reports/documents which provide a detailed overview and assessment of the proposed development.





Comhairle Contae **Lú**  
**Louth** County Council



Rialtas na  
hÉireann  
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