



Section 2: Local Context





Cliff Road, 1930 -1950, Enniscrone

2. Local Context

2.1 Setting and Existing Urban Form

2.1.1 Historic & Cultural Development

The first recorded reference to Enniscrone dates back to the 11th Century. The parish, known as Kilglass, extended far beyond the boundary of Enniscrone town itself, encompassing much of the surrounding hinterland. This region around Enniscrone was the centre of power of the principal clan from this part of Ireland – the O'Dowd's. They were a maritime power of considerable ability in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Enniscrone displays a host of archaeological remains, which reveals its rich heritage extending from the megalithic age. The oldest recorded artefacts in the area are the scattered ruins of two possible passage tombs, dating from approximately 2500 BC, which are sited on a hill west of the castle. Ancient ring forts, souterrains and stone formations are also evidence of the cultural heritage of Enniscrone and indicate a long settlement history.

The ruins of Enniscrone Castle lie in an elevated position to the north east of the town in the open space area known as Castle Field. Enniscrone Castle, also known as Nolan's Castle, is an example of an early 17th century semi-fortified house. This was built mainly for reasons relating to comfortable living standards, rather than for defence purposes. The western towers survive intact, but two other towers have been destroyed since the last century.

Valentines Church, located in close proximity to Enniscrone Castle, is named after Rev. Thomas Valentine, who became rector here in 1712. The existing church seems to have been built upon an earlier foundation at the start of the 17th Century.

There are many derivations of the name 'Enniscrone' such as Inishcrone, Inniscrone and the Irish equivalent Inis Crabhann. An early written reference to Enniscrone is from a poem dated 1417, where the name is spelt "Enniscrone". The name recorded locally for the little stream in the Castle Field is the "Inis"; it is possible that the derivation of the name came from this.

The modern development of Enniscrone appears to date from the 1840's. The pier was built between 1884 and 1887 and a coastguard station was also erected at this time. (see Historical Map, Map 2)

2.1.2 Setting and Context

Enniscrone is situated within an area that can be characterised as a coastal plain, consisting of low-lying, gently rolling green fields divided by stonewalls and native hedgerows, sloping to sea level along the coast and rising up at the centre of the town. Scenic views of the Ox Mountains to the south east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west can be observed, lending to the more immediate scenic qualities of the town. The Bellawaddy River flows from a southeasterly direction and drains into the sea at the western edge of Enniscrone, with wetland areas occurring alongside the river and numerous streams.

Enniscrone has essentially developed as a traditional coastal tourist town. The area is renowned as a family holiday resort, with the main focus of attraction being the 6km stretch of sandy beach and mature dune system. This beach has been awarded the EU Blue Flag Status since 1996.¹ The internationally renowned



Undulating topography of Enniscrone

¹ The European Blue Flag Campaign is organised by An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland, with support from the Department of the Environment and on behalf of the Foundation for Environmental Education. Each Blue Flag location needs to meet a range of environmental and safety criteria, which collectively represent a high level of environmental quality. The Blue Flag Award is valid during the bathing season only and is re-assessed every year.

Enniscrone golf course is located in the townland of Bartragh, south west of the town and Kilcullen's Bath House (established in 1912), which provides steam and seaweed baths, is situated on Cliff Road, overlooking the Atlantic. In recent years an indoor aqua centre, 'Waterpoint', has been established to the north of the town, catering for indoor water/gym activities for tourists and local residents alike.

The main linear access route to and through Enniscrone, the R297, operates as the main commercial artery of the town, encompassing a number of commercial and office outlets, as well as residential dwellings. There are four local roads leading north and southwards from this main route facilitating the towns expansion.

Killala Bay and Moy Estuary, to the west and north west of the town, are national environmentally designated sites, which extend from the bay along the beach to the old seaweed bathhouse in the north west of the town. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), have identified this area as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) due to the presence of fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation, which is a priority habitat listed in the EU Habitats Directive. This area is also a Special Protection Area (SPA) for Birds, due to the internationally important numbers of Brent Geese, which overwinter at the site. Overlapping these sites is also a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHA's are legally protected.



View of Main Street, Enniscrone

2.2 Existing Conditions and Trends

2.2.1 Demographic Profile and Population Change

The demographic and economic profile of a town or area provides useful information from which to base and calculate future population projections. This in turn can aid in assessing the facilities required in a town to cater for and improve future development and achieve sustainable living standards. A detailed analysis can be found in Appendix B.

2.2.1.1 Demographic Profile

Enniscrone is located in part within two Electoral Division's (EDs) namely Kilglass and Castleconor West. Enniscrone itself has a relatively small population, with the 2002 Census recording 668 persons living within the town. The population had increased between 1991 and 1996 by 82 persons, representing a 13.4% increase, significant for a town of this size however the population has declined by 3.5% since 1996. This is interesting as housing applications and actual house completions for the area have risen during this period, which is most likely due to falling persons per household and holiday home developments. (see Figure 2, page 11), (also see Appendix B, Table 1 & Table 7)

2.2.1.2 Tourism Profile

Due to the tourism profile of the town, there are significant fluctuations in population levels between the summer and winter months. The population of Enniscrone in its peak season (July and August) can exceed 3,000 persons². This includes local inhabitants, day-trippers and holidaymakers. The summer time resident population has increased substantially since 1996 following the completion of a large number of residential/holiday home developments granted under the Tax Relief Seaside Resort Scheme (see section 2.2.2.1 and see Appendix B, Table 2).

² Sligo County Tourism Action Plan 1995-1999

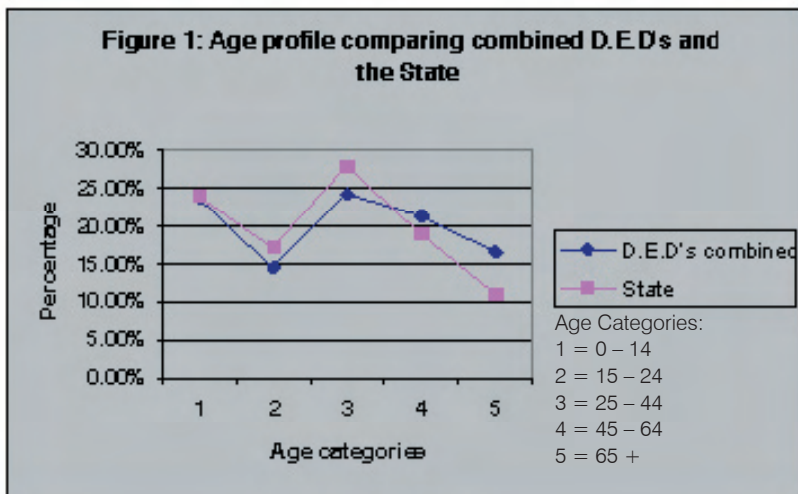
Map 2: Historical Map of Enniscrone, surveyed between 1910 - 1911



2.2.1.3 Age Profile

The dependent population (those aged under 15 years and over 65 years) comprised 36.5% of the 2002 population in the combined EDs of Kilglass and Castleconor West. This is significantly higher when compared to the State figure of 32%. The 65+ age group was 5.5% higher than the National average. This could be due in part to the presence of a nursing home located within Enniscrone town. The nursing home consists of 34 bed spaces and is presently full to capacity. A further nursing home has recently been established in Enniscrone, with facilities to cater for 51 full time residents. Therefore, a further increase in the 65+ cohort in Enniscrone is likely (see Figure 1 below). This needs to be taken account of when looking at the provision of amenities and facilities within Enniscrone.

The 15-24 cohort of the combined EDs was 13.5%, compared to the national average of 17%. This lower percentage may be related to young adults (18-24) out-migrating to larger urban areas in order to continue their education and training, and also have access to a larger job market.



Although these figures cover two EDs, they do incorporate the town itself and are therefore representative of the plan area. (see Appendix B, Table 3)

2.2.1.4 Employment / Unemployment Profile

In 2002 the unemployment rate for the combined EDs (at 5%) was comparable to the national average. The largest proportion of unemployed in the combined E.D.'s were male, at 64%.

Retirees accounted for 18% of the population in Kilglass ED. This reflects a large retiree population attributable to the presence of a nursing home located in Enniscrone town. (see Appendix B, Table 4)

The 2002 Census indicated a heavy reliance on Agriculture³, with 16% of the population employed in this sector, compared to only 6% in the State. This is most likely a result of the rural character of the area in question.

2.2.1.5 Occupational Profile

Kilglass and Castleconor West EDs have a slightly lower percentage of professionals than that of the state – 27% in comparison to 30.3% respectively. As farming is now seen as a declining industry, Enniscrone must strive to improve its business environment in relation to all sectors, while continuing support for the existing farming community. (see Appendix B, Table 5)

³ As defined by the Central Statistics Office under the broad Industrial groupings Agriculture, forestry & fishing.



Secondary school, Enniscrone

2.2.1.6 Educational Profile

The percentage of the population who were educated to Upper Secondary and Third Level is comparable to the state figures of 55%. Future policy for the town should aim to further increase educational attainment in the interest of providing a skilled workforce, which could strengthen Enniscrone's business, enterprise and entrepreneurial base. (see Appendix B, Table 6)

2.2.1.7 Household Structure

According to the 2002 Census there were a total of 233 households in Enniscrone an increase of 6.4% from the previous census of 1996.

Figures on planning permissions and actual housing completions show that there has been considerable development in and around the town since 1996. From 1996 to the date of survey (July 2002) approximately 265 house completions have been undertaken. This is significant as it exceeds the total number of houses that have been built in Enniscrone during its entire settlement history. However, it is important to note that many of the house completions since 1996 were given tax incentives through the Seaside Resort Scheme (approx. 194). Since 1996 approximately 73% of residential new build planning applications were for holiday homes while 27% were built to cater for full time residential living. Therefore many of these dwellings are only inhabited on a seasonal basis and do not function as full-time residential abodes (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Approx. Unit no. of Planning Applications and House Completions (1996-2002)

Total planning applications for <i>Housing</i> (including 'Total planning applications for holiday homes' below)	493 units
Total <i>granted</i> planning applications for <i>Housing</i>	438 units
Total <i>housing completions</i>	265 units
Total planning applications for <i>holiday homes</i>	222 units
Total <i>granted</i> planning applications (included in All granted planning applications for <i>housing</i> above) for <i>holiday homes</i>	217 units
Total <i>holiday home completions</i> (included in All house completions above)	194 units

Source: Desktop Study of planning applications since 1996 - June 2002 and site survey

The average persons per household remained static at 3.17 throughout the 1991 – 1996 period, comparable to the national average of 3.14 persons per household. However since 1996 there has been a dramatic decrease in household size to 2.9 persons comparable to the national average, which is set to continue to decrease in line with the European average of 2.6. Therefore although the population of Enniscrone has decreased since 1996 the number of households has increased. (see Appendix B, Table 7)

2.2.1.8 Population and Household Projections

Projections are based on a range of factors for which assumptions must be made. A considerable amount of house building has occurred within Enniscrone since 1996 as shown through the housing application survey. However these findings are at odds with the 2002 figures published by CSO which show that there has been a 3.5% decrease in Enniscrone's population. This anomaly is most likely due to holiday home development and decreasing household sizes. By encouraging employment opportunities, increasing the residential land supply and improving transport connections the population of Enniscrone should increase in the future.

According to the current *Sligo County Council Housing Strategy, 2001 - 2007*, 156 new houses should be built in Enniscrone to satisfy future demand. This would facilitate a population increase of 452 persons.

2.2.2 Existing Land Usage

Map 3 illustrates the existing land uses in Enniscrone. The majority of development has occurred along the main route through the town (route R297) and to the north following the coast, demonstrating a predominantly linear pattern of development. The commercial/retail core is focused along Main Street, with the fringe of the town dominated by low-density residential development and agricultural land.



Recent residential development, Enniscrone

2.2.2.1 Residential Developments

Residential development is evident along the main street of the town, and also north along the coastline, exploiting the spectacular views of Killala bay, Enniscrone Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. A higher density development of social housing is located to the east of the town. The majority of residential housing estates, within Enniscrone are relatively new and have been constructed within the last 6 years. The more recent residential developments (since 1996) have chosen layouts with a preference for cul-de-sacs. Residential development previous to this was integrated along Main Street or took the form of individual housing sites on the periphery of the town.

At present the housing market in Enniscrone is strong, with the demand for coastal and sea-view properties high. Due to the tax incentives of the Seaside Resort Scheme many outside buyers and investors are interested in the Enniscrone housing market, and holiday home investment has been considerable.

The Seaside Resort Scheme, 1995, provided tax incentives for holiday homes. Investors were entitled to claim tax incentives for a period of 10 years from the date of approval. The property market has been inundated with this type of development thereby decreasing the opportunities for locals to buy into the market. Due to this tax incentive scheme the housing market has been distorted with many houses only being occupied for part of a year. Many of these tax incentive schemes within the time frame of this plan will be approaching fruition. At the end of the tax incentive period it will be interesting to note the emerging property market, those investing in the seaside resort scheme will no longer be entitled to tax incentives, therefore investors may be willing to sell previously designated holiday homes for full time residential living.

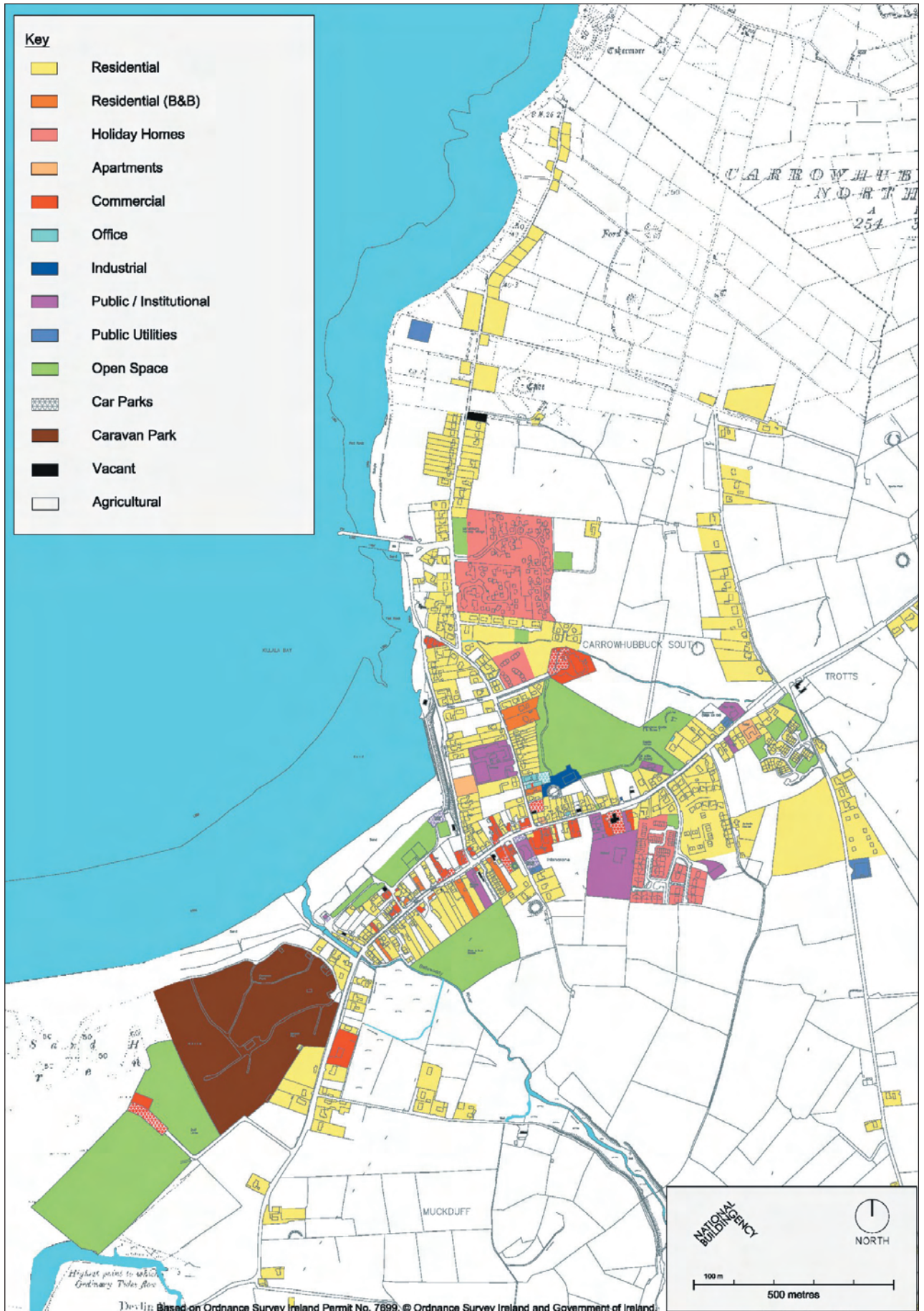
The availability of middle and higher priced houses is good, with location playing a major factor in the price. Houses located along the coast have a significantly higher open market value than those situated further inland. However, these houses tend to be unaffordable for local people. The most popular house size is three to four bed, with a limited number of apartments for sale. Investors are however interested in the apartment market as higher prices can be gained from renting as short-term self-catering units. To date two apartment schemes have been developed in Enniscrone.

2.2.2.2 Natural Environment, Open Space and Recreation

- **Natural Environment and Open Space**

Enniscrone town and environs incorporates three areas of designated natural importance, a Special Protection Area (SPA), a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). (see

Map 3: Existing Land Use



Environmental Parameters Map, Map 4). These areas are located to the west of Enniscrone and provide the community with a unique natural setting in which to observe flora and fauna in an undisturbed manner.

The 6km beach and coastline act as a natural recreational amenity area. The beaches both east and west of the Bellawaddy River attract a high number of tourists during the holiday season. These beaches are patrolled by lifeguards at designated times.

Enniscrone boasts a number of significant sized recreational open spaces. Castle Field recreational area is located adjacent to and north of Main Street. This parkland area consists of active and passive recreational facilities, by way of a football pitch, walkways, sites of archaeological interest (namely Enniscrone Castle and St. Valentines Church) and a natural esker providing a ridge top from which to view the town and surrounding area. This amenity area, which is currently underutilised, offers great potential as an area of significant open space, centrally located within the town.

Adjacent to the beachfront is the area known locally as The Hollow, which is currently held in trust by The Town Improvement Society. As suggested by the name, this area is situated in a low-lying depression, bounded by the backlands of Main Street to the south of the site and the sand dunes to the north. It currently comprises a children's play area and crazy golf course, which is accessed upon paid entry. Surrounding grassed areas, adjacent to this play area and the dune system, accommodate interspersed benches, and to the west there is a parking area for 35 cars. The Hollow also accommodates the occasional use of circus, carnival and amusement events. A hard surfaced tennis court and an amusement arcade building (which is currently vacant and regarded by the community as an eyesore) are located adjacent to the car park. The Town Improvement Society envisages further development of the Hollow as a recreational area, with better defined uses and improved integration with surrounding uses. (see section 4.2.2).

Private recreational open space in the town includes a high standard golf course, which is well renowned and further promotes tourists to visit the area. There is also a pitch and putt facility centrally located.

Incidental amenity open space is located within some of the housing estates. Due to the rural character of the area, open space facilities do not seem lacking or insufficient for Enniscrone. However, existing areas of open space are in need of improvement and maintenance in order to fully realise their recreational potential. (see section 4.1.3).

- **Recreational Amenities**

A wide variety of amenity/leisure recreational facilities are catered for within Enniscrone including land and water based activities. Horse riding facilities are available in Enniscrone and horse and pony trekking can take place along the beach up to 10am in the morning.

Kilcullens Bath House was established in 1912 and is situated on the Cliff Road in Enniscrone. The bathhouse provides treatment in the form of steam and seaweed baths, which is unique to this area. This form of activity and natural health relaxation offers a distinctive appeal for the more passive leisure pursuit.



Environs, Enniscrone



Open Space in county council housing estate, Enniscrone

Map 4: Environmental Parameters



An indoor water facility, Waterpoint, located off the Burma Road, was completed in 1998. Moy Valley Resources were involved in the development of this aqua centre and any profit made is reinvested into the centre and into plans for its future expansion. Waterpoint contains a children's pool, adult pool, a water slide, health suite, cafeteria and also has gym facilities, with a variety of classes on offer. The centre also caters for swimming classes for schools and facilitates various clubs and groups. The centre is open all year round and visitor figures are up from 55,000 in 1999/2000 to 59,000 in 2000/2001. This facility offers a great opportunity for the town in regards to indoor leisure.



Enniscrone beach

Applications for tourism funding are being sought at present, with specific areas identified for allocation of expenditure. These include the extension of Waterpoint Leisure Centre, proposal for a Golf Academy of Excellence and re-development of The Hollow recreational area.

The redevelopment of the Pier and Harbour for marine leisure remains restricted due to a lack of a boat shelter, and the steep, cobbled slipway, which limits ease of access by boat. Other restrictions are also evident, such as the lack of facilities for boat parking, and a lack of bait, tackle and angling information kiosks within the town. In the context of the *Investment Programme 2000-2006 for the Water-based Tourism and Leisure Sector*, prepared by the Marine Institute, Enniscrone is identified as part of the under-developed water-based tourism and leisure cluster of Blacksod Bay to Killala bay. At present there is a high level of interest and participation in marine leisure activities such as coastal viewing, coastal walking, beach activities, jet skiing and surfing. Enniscrone possesses significant potential in terms of the further development of a number of watersports including surfing, sea kayaking, kayak surfing and both sea and shore angling.

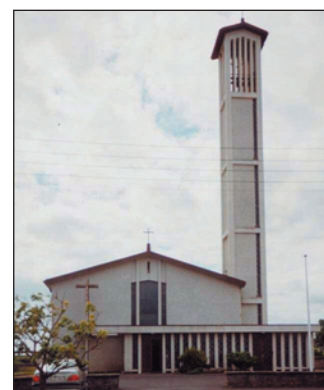
2.2.2.3 Community Facilities

Public / Institutional land comprises of two schools (one primary and one secondary), two nursing homes, a church, health centre, garda station and fire station. The public burial ground for the Enniscrone community is located at Kilglass.

- **Educational Facilities**

At the time of survey there were a total of 96 pupils attending Enniscrone National School (June 2002), however this figure is declining, with 16 pupils due to leave at the end of the school year in June 2002 and only 7 new pupils enrolled for the next school year. The school is mixed in gender, represented by 50 females and 46 males. There are 6 classrooms and at present 4 teachers are employed. There is adequate space within the existing school building for expansion if the need arose. Indoor and outdoor recreational facilities are seen to be adequate; outdoor recreational facilities consist of a grassed play area large enough to facilitate a kick-about and a hall is provided for indoor recreational facilities. The majority of pupils live in Enniscrone, therefore few students use public transport to get to and from school.

The Jesus and Mary secondary school currently has 350 pupils enrolled, with numbers steadily increasing (in 1995 there were 285 pupils attending the school). The gender mix within the school is approximately half and half. The school presently consists of 23 classrooms, computer room, staff room and an indoor gym hall. Recently the school has applied to the Department of Education for additional classrooms, as there is no space left in the existing school building. Additional lands on the adjoining convent property are available for new build.



Enniscrone church

Recreational facilities are seen to be adequate, consisting of 3 basketball courts and access to a public playing field across the road from the school (Castle Field). Students commute to school via a number of modes of transport, consisting of bus, private car, bicycle and foot. Bus Eireann school transport is available, as is a private mini bus service. Pupils attending The Jesus and Mary Secondary School come from all over the district. National Schools feeding into the secondary school include Enniscrone, Kilglass, Corbally, Kilunes, Rathley, Easkey, Owenbeg, Dromore West, Liffeyney and two primary schools in Ballina.

- **Healthcare Facilities**

A Health Centre for Enniscrone is located along Main Street. This centre provides a number of services for the town on a full time, part time and when needed basis. The facilities offered consist of a health nurse, speech & language therapist, dental facilities, chiropody, area medical officer, community welfare officer, psychologist, ophthalmics and meals for the elderly.

Santa Maria Nursing Home, Main Street, consists of 34 bed spaces and is presently full to capacity. There are no day patients, all patients being full-time residents. Forty staff in total are employed at the nursing home on a part-time basis. At present there are no plans for expansion. Amenities and facilities in Enniscrone are seen to be satisfactory to cater for the residents of Santa Maria Nursing Home, which is located in a central location and is therefore close to the shops, church and seafront.

Ard na Greine Nursing Home has recently been established, opening at the beginning of July 2002. This nursing home has facilities to cater for 51 full time residents and expects to receive this quota within one year. Currently 17 staff are employed, 15 part-time and 2 full-time. There is plenty of room at the present site for further expansion if the need arose. Amenities and facilities are generally satisfactory to cater for residents and staff.

- **Fire Station**

A Fire Station was provided in Enniscrone in 1996 to serve the town and surrounding districts.



Enniscrone fire station

2.2.3 Existing Economic Development

2.2.3.1 Tourist Accommodation

During the last number of years Enniscrone has been the subject of a number of studies, the main focus of which have been the development of the tourism industry and the provision of new tourist attractions.

In 1995 Sligo County Council identified Enniscrone as one of the towns to be incorporated into the *Pilot Tax Relief Seaside Resort Scheme*. The main objective of this scheme was to improve the range and quality of product available to the tourist by harmonising the interactions between tourism, the physical environment and the host communities. Fifteen seaside towns were identified for this project, which was promoted through tax incentives. The scheme allowed for improvements to and construction of guesthouses, family and budget hotels, self-catering accommodation, public houses, restaurants, shopfronts, marinas and leisure amenities. Enniscrone experienced significant development pressure from investors wishing to avail of tax relief for tourism accommodation. The types of units developed include apartments, B&B's and holiday home villages.

Tourism is regarded as being the most significant industry within Enniscrone, with the town now having an extensive base of visitor accommodation, which in terms of bed spaces, is dominated by self-catering holiday homes (an estimated 3,500 bed spaces – *Strategic Review of Selected Visitor Attractions 2002, Northwest Tourism Board*). This focus on the provision of self-catering tourist accommodation has distorted the availability of local housing supply. The majority of development in tourism accommodation has occurred to the north of the town along the Cliff and Pier roads. Evidence suggests that 75% - 100% occupancy rates are achieved over 7-12 weeks in the season (June, July, August). Outside of this the self-catering properties remain largely unused (*Sligo County Tourism Action Plan 1995-1999*).

The range of visitor accommodation is limited in the serviced accommodation category, there are three hotels located along the Main Street in Enniscrone and various guesthouses and B&B's located throughout the town. However there is a lack of a 4 or 5 star hotel which could cater to the needs of large groups or gatherings.

There is one caravan park located within the study area, the Atlantic Caravan Park. This comprises a total of 250 static mobile home sites, approximately 35 temporary touring sites for recreational vehicles (R.V's) and provides an area with a capacity for approximately 40 tents. The majority of the static mobiles are in permanent ownership with a limited number being rented. In addition, planning permission has recently been granted for twenty log cabins. The total area of the caravan park is approximately 40 acres (16.2 hectares). Three permanent staff and one additional person during the summer months are employed to run and maintain the park. A range of facilities are provided for inhabitants including, washrooms, laundrettes and a kitchen. The caravan park fronts onto the main R297 road south of the Bellawaddy River and is somewhat screened by the dunes along its coastal side. There are three pedestrian accesses through the dunes from the caravan park to the beach.



Holiday homes, Enniscrone



Caravan park, Enniscrone



Commercial facilities, Enniscrone



Enterprise units, Enniscrone

2.2.3.2 Commercial Development

Commercial development is mainly focused along Main Street, the key access route through the town, and comprises of a number of public houses, restaurants, convenience stores, hotels, leisure & beauty facilities, a service station and a post office. Comparison good shopping facilities are lacking as are banking facilities. Inhabitants of Enniscrone have to journey to Ballina, or other towns, in order to carry out any banking transactions. The lack of diversity of commercial functions in the town is evidence of its limited role as a service centre for the surrounding rural/agricultural economy. Enniscrone suffers from the service/retail impact of both Ballina and Sligo City and lacks the critical mass to sustain a diverse range of retail, commercial and service functions, however it is located a sufficient distance from these two towns to ensure a need for its role within a local context. To encourage a growing population base, the town will need to expand upon its commercial and retail function in the future.

2.2.3.3 Industrial and Office Base

Industrial and office enterprise in the town has been completely lacking until recent years. The Enniscrone and District Community Development Ltd. was formed in 1985 with the objective to improve the economic and social enhancement of the village, in co-operation with social partners and the public sector. The development of enterprise units was facilitated through this approach. Six enterprise units (with an area of 353 sq. metres) were constructed at Pier Road in 1986. An advanced factory unit was also developed, comprising 465 sq. metres. These developments have provided a reasonably priced enterprise space for local enterprises and have greatly assisted in attracting new businesses and employment to the town.

2.2.4 Existing Infrastructure

2.2.4.1 Road Network / Traffic and Circulation

Enniscrone is served by the R297 road, which runs through the town and serves the villages along the coastal route between the larger towns of Sligo and Ballina. This road connects to the N59, 6km from Enniscrone, linking Ballina and Sligo. The R297, which forms the towns Main Street, is very narrow in parts, approx. 5.8 metres, and all traffic going through or in and around Enniscrone has to merge onto this route.

The road network facilitating this area is relatively simple. A number of minor roads branch off Main Street with an emphasis northwards. Two roads running north from Main Street, Cliff Road and Pier Road, run parallel to each other and convene by the pier in a loop system. One road then continues northwards and terminates by the Promontory Fort. All roads within Enniscrone are dual way. The junction of Main Street and Pier Road has become busier in recent years due to the development of the indoor leisure centre off Pier Road and there have been a number of minor accidents. Signage and road markings have recently been implemented at this location. At present there is limited to no linkages between the varying areas of development north and south of the town. It is important to create increased vehicular and pedestrian access in and around the town. This would relieve pressure on the existing roads, which are prone to congestion and traffic build up.



Vehicular congestion, Enniscrone

For much of the year the road network is adequate to meet the needs of the resident population. However, at holiday times, especially during the summer months, and particularly on warm, sunny weekend days, Enniscrone beach attracts numerous day-trippers, resulting in traffic congestion. This is also a

matter for concern regarding access for emergency vehicles such as the fire brigade. If the road system is left as it is further congestion will occur as a result of future development within Enniscrone and this will affect its popularity as a destination on summer weekends.

The road surfaces in and around Enniscrone are generally of an adequate condition. Road improvements are presently being carried out along a 900-metre stretch 1 mile from the centre of Enniscrone town along R297 route towards Easkey.

2.2.4.2 Car Parking

There are a number of car parking areas within Enniscrone town constituting public and private use. Approximately 125 designated public off-street car-parking spaces are located within the town. The main public car park consisting of 35 car parking spaces is located to the west in the area known locally as the ‘Hollow’. (see Map 5, Car Parking within Enniscrone)

The parish church provides the town with approximately 40 public parking spaces, while retail and commercial facilities along Main Street provide up to 45 spaces. A small number of additional parking spaces are located adjacent to the public toilets on the beachfront.

There are a greater number of private/commercial car parking spaces (approx. 240) than public within Enniscrone. Sixty designated car-parking spaces serve the Waterpoint leisure complex and the Golf club provides up to 80 spaces. Bus and Coach parking facilities are provided at the Waterpoint leisure complex. The Hotels along Main Street provide up to 75 spaces, while the office enterprise centre provides 25 spaces.

Car-parking facilities for the most part of the year are adequate to meet the demands of the population. However during peak summer time, demand increases due to the influx of visitors to Enniscrone. Inappropriate parking and lack of use of designated car parks results in the occurrence of congestion and traffic problems. (See Appendix C, Car Parking Requirements)

During peak season times it is common practice for cars to park along the beachfront. Vehicular access can be gained at one point; this is immediately west of the river Bellawaddy. According to the *Enniscrone Coastal Report* formulated in 1996 by Sligo County Council there may be up to, at any one time, 300 cars parked along the beach adjacent to the dunes. The council manages traffic on the beach, by a system of cones put into place on busy summer bank holiday weekends and other peak times. The Coastal Report indicated that vehicular traffic on the beach is not environmentally damaging. Such vehicular traffic does not pose an immediate erosional threat to the beach system. However, access should be controlled for safety and amenity reasons.

On-street car parking at certain locations in the town reduces road widths, leading to disruptive conditions. Areas at which this is apparent are:

- by the petrol station along Main Street,
- From the junction of Main Street and Pier Road along both sides up to the entrance of the school,
- Main Street from Clarke’s restaurant to the Pilot bar,
- Main Street opposite Tracy’s restaurant (see Map 5)

Parking is to be restricted at these locations to inhibit a reduction in road capacities.

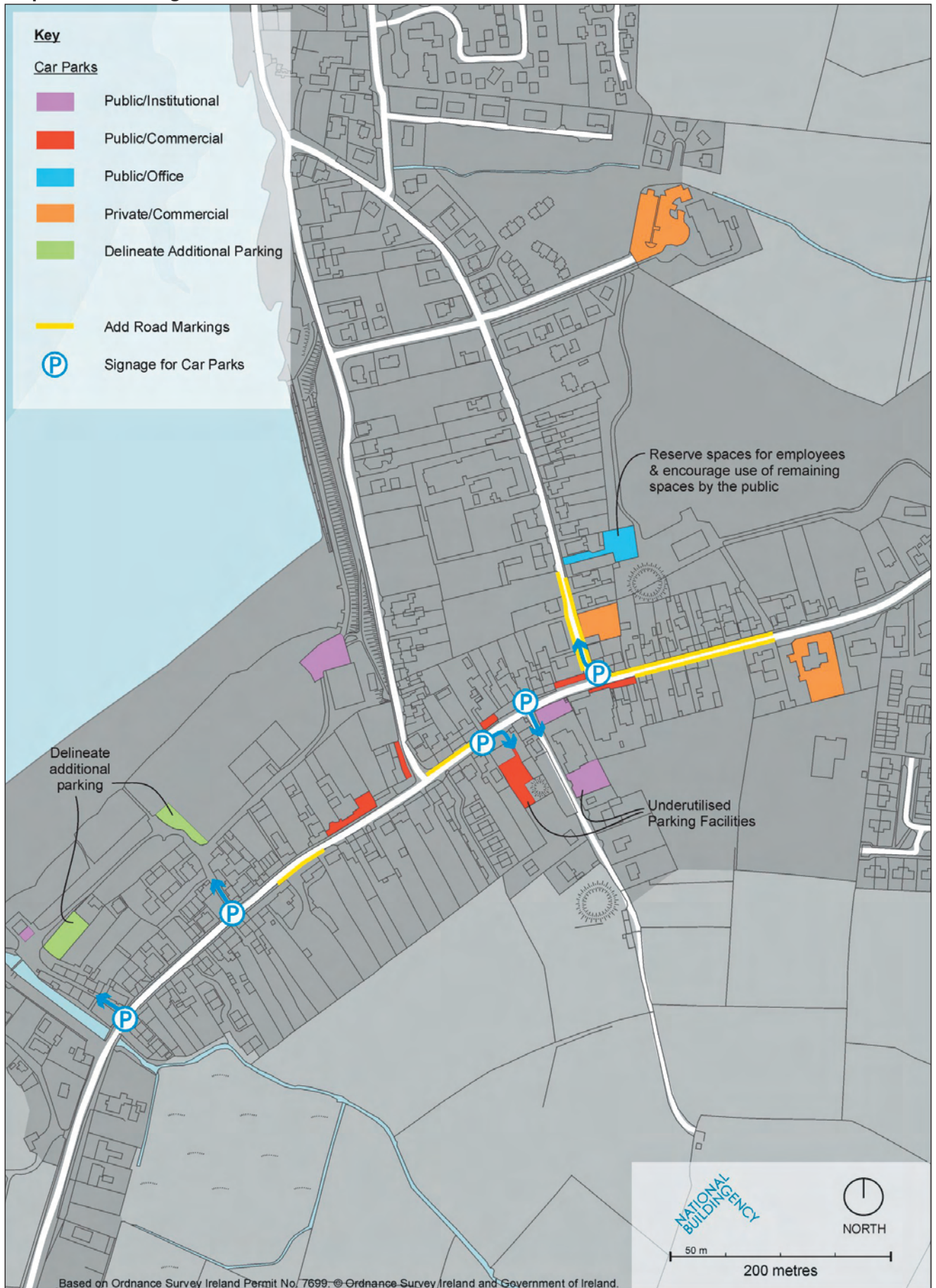


Church car-park, Enniscrone



Hollow car-park, Enniscrone

Map 5: Car Parking within Enniscrone



2.2.4.3 Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities

Pedestrian facilities along Main Street are generally poor and in a number of areas are completely lacking. A significantly large proportion of the pathways are inadequately maintained with surfaces uneven and unsatisfactory. Poor pathway surfaces are not just a safety hazard but also have implications for the overall physical appearance of the town.

There are a number of permeable pedestrian linkages throughout the town, the most notable of which are located in the Hollow area. Several pedestrian links run from the Main Street into the Hollow. A walkway has also been constructed from the Hollow along the cliff edge to the old seaweed bathhouse, with a pathway continuing along the road to the Pier. There are four major access points through the low band of dunes separating the Hollow from the beach. These existing linkages should be maintained and strengthened. Further development should not be allowed to encroach onto existing pedestrian connections.

Within Enniscrone there are few pedestrian rights of way and sign-posted walks. To the South West of the town there is a pNHA, SPA and cSAC, the majority of which is largely inaccessible. Access to Cahirmore Archaeological Promontory Fort, located to the north of Enniscrone, is restricted by fencing. Castle Field, located in the centre of the town, holds the setting for Enniscrone Castle and ruins of St. Valentine's church. Limited access and circulation are provided within this amenity area. (see section 4.2.1)

There are no provisions made for cyclists. Cycling has become an increasingly popular way for tourists to see the countryside and Enniscrone is situated in a most advantageous scenic position. A cycle tour incorporating Enniscrone from Ballina to Sligo City could be promoted if the correct infrastructure was in place. Road edges are, in general, poor and throughout the town there are no cycle stands to lock bicycles.

2.2.4.4 Water Supply

The water supply for Enniscrone is sourced from Lough Easkey and currently has a design capacity for a population of 4,400. There are currently no operational difficulties with the current system.

2.2.4.5 Wastewater Services

The present sewerage system capacity for Enniscrone is for a design population capacity of 3,100. The existing system is now experiencing operational difficulties, due to the significant increase in population during the summer months. This system needs to be upgraded to enable further development within Enniscrone to take place.



Promenade walk from the Hollow to the old seaweed bathhouse