

Sligo City Centre Public Realm Action Plan

September 2018



BDP.



SLIGO
COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE SHLIGH

Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Design Manual	18
3	Specific Projects	29
4	Stephen's Street & Cultural Plaza	44
5	Implementation	53
6	Emerging Actions	56
7	Appendix	58

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Executive Summary

This Public Realm Action Plan sets out the future approach to the streets and spaces of Sligo's city centre.

The aim of the vision statement is to:

Enhance the image and setting of this historic city through the enhancement of its streets and spaces, conservation of its built heritage, encouraging people to explore, businesses to flourish and creating a vibrant street scene.

There has not been any significant enhancement to Sligo's public realm for many years, which has led to a degraded streetscape which lacks quality and is not pedestrian friendly. In many instances it is not adaptable for the uses and activities that will allow the city to thrive.

The action plan is set out over a number of chapters and includes an understanding of the existing, influencing factors; feedback received through engagement with stakeholders; and a series of action points which are demonstrated through specific projects.

The Design Manual chapter highlights areas that need improvement and provides guidance for all interventions within the public realm.

The guiding principles are as follows:

- 1. Put people first. Design spaces for people.**
- 2. Simplify the streetscape.**
- 3. Ensure consistency in design and use of materials.**
- 4. Create memorable and identifiable spaces where people want to be.**
- 5. Protect and enhance Sligo's character and heritage.**
- 6. Design spaces to be flexible and suitable for multiple uses.**
- 7. Resist overdesign.**
- 8. Ensure that all public realm improvement projects / works support the proper functioning of the city centre.**

To demonstrate the intentions of the Design Manual and vision, a number of key projects have been identified which are illustrated in Chapter 3. In each case a series of design considerations has been established which are site-specific and in line with the aspirations of the Design manual.

The Stephen Street car park has the potential to become the animated central square which Sligo needs.

This development is reviewed in more detail, with considered proposals put forward in this document.

The steps for implementing public realm projects are set out towards the end of the document. Here, recommended strategies are given for programme, funding, design, procurement and delivery.

A set of emerging actions has also been outlined for Sligo, with each contributing to the quality and aspirations for the public realm.

Two public consultation events took place with invited stakeholders and locals. Summaries of each event can be found in the Appendix in section 7.



Introduction

This Public Realm Action Plan seeks to set out how publicly accessible areas should be designed for today's and future generations. This includes the proposed conservation and enhancement of Sligo's streets, lanes, parks, squares and bridges where appropriate.

Sligo ...

Approximately two and a half hours drive from Dublin and two hours from both Galway and Derry, Sligo City is the capital of a coastal county on the Wild Atlantic Way that is rich in cultural, natural and heritage amenities. The 'capital of the North West' and a nominated "regional growth centre" under the National Planning Framework, Sligo is one of the largest urban centres in Ireland's northwest and the principal economic, social, and administrative centre for the County and surrounding regions. Recent archaeological finds suggest that County Sligo may have been one of the earliest parts of Ireland to have been settled, and today the County has a population of approximately 65,000, a third of which live in Sligo City and its immediate environs.

What makes Sligo City distinctive is the compactness and attractiveness of its historic streetscapes, but more important is its relationship with the Garavogue River and the sea, which literally bisects its main streets. Hemmed in by mountains, lake and sea, this physical setting is what made the city a strategic objective for warring parties vying for control of the only fording point on this ancient route between Connaught and Ulster in earlier times. It is this setting that today provides the potential for Sligo to be the tourism capital of the North West and the northern route of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Sligo's Aspirations ...

Sligo's first Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 envisions the County as "an enterprising, inclusive, resilient and environmentally sustainable place, which values and celebrates its unique landscape, rich culture and heritage, and where the wellbeing of future generations is central to everything we do". Sligo City is the centrepiece of this vision.

The Sligo and Environs Plan (part of the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023) describes the future Sligo City as a "compact, accessible, green creative city, where people will want to engage with the city centre, where residents can enjoy attractive, healthy living places".

Sligo County Council will pursue this vision through the enhancement of the city core, the creation of a vibrant city centre with pedestrian priority, safe streets, new linkages and urban spaces around key amenities such as the Garavogue River, its estuary and existing parks.

Public Realm ..

This is commonly defined as all areas between buildings including streets, laneways and open squares that are accessible to the public. From earliest times, public spaces have played an important role in the cultural, political, commercial, social and recreational development of communities. Extensively studied and written about, public spaces are simply places where people can meet, mix, engage and exchange. Well designed and planned public spaces enhance the physical environment and improve the 'livability' and sustainability of urban centres. They provide a geographic focal point for the community and a place where residents and visitors alike can congregate for a variety of purposes.

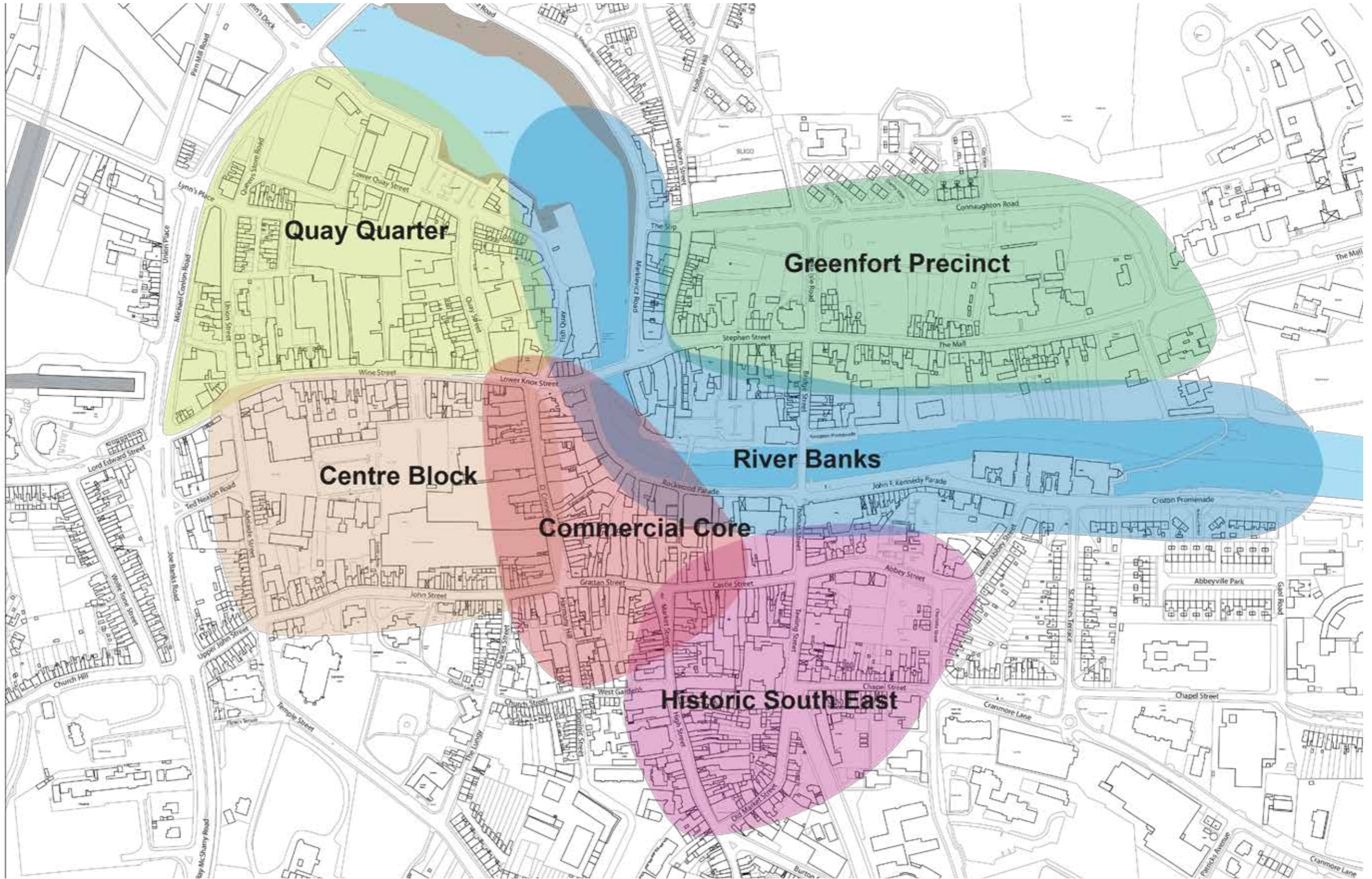
Sligo County Council states a vision of Sligo as a "compact city, a city for people, an accessible city, a green city, an enterprising city, a creative city." It calls for the transformation of:

"...the urban core of that city is to be a place of safety and human scale, free of the barriers created by traffic congestion and delivered back to the pedestrian in such a way that provides sustainable streets and places, that provide a balance between the demands of commercial realities and the need for calmed places for people to meet, carry out their business affairs and avail of the amenity that civic places, squares, and greens can provide."

The need for a public realm action plan...

The Public Realm Plan for the City of Sligo seeks to achieve the ultimate goal of transforming Sligo into the leading city in the north-west region through the design of an attractive and vibrant city centre in which people want to live, socialise and shop. A single, coherent concept for the city centre's public realm is an essential element to achieving this ambition for Sligo.

The recommendations within this document are to be implemented through both public and private development projects that may impact on Sligo City centre's public areas. The Public Realm Plan will also inform the forthcoming Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan

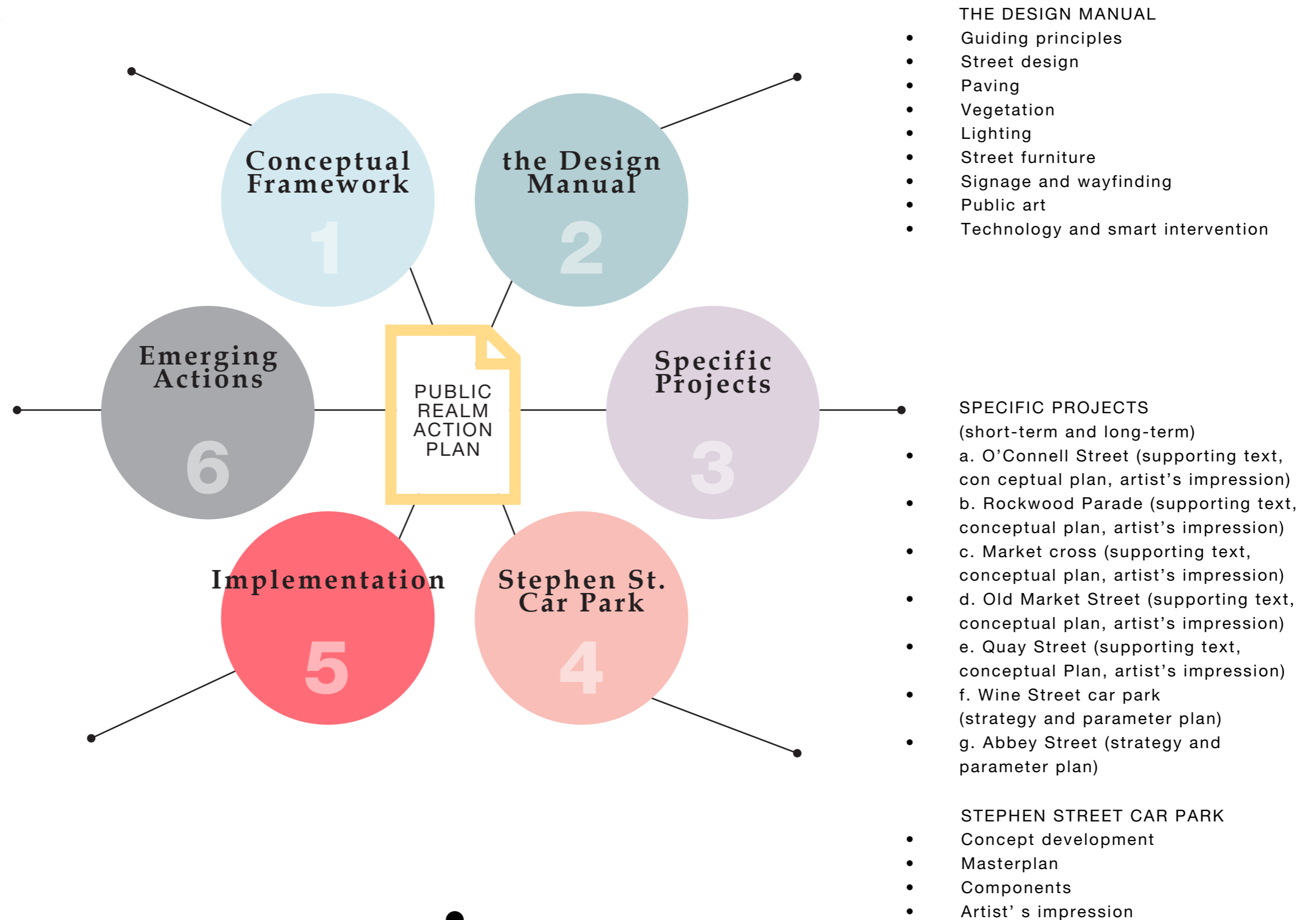


Character Areas in the City Centre

The public realm action plan

This diagram sets out the contents of the public realm action plan, which includes the different components and specific projects within this document.

the Public Realm Action Plan

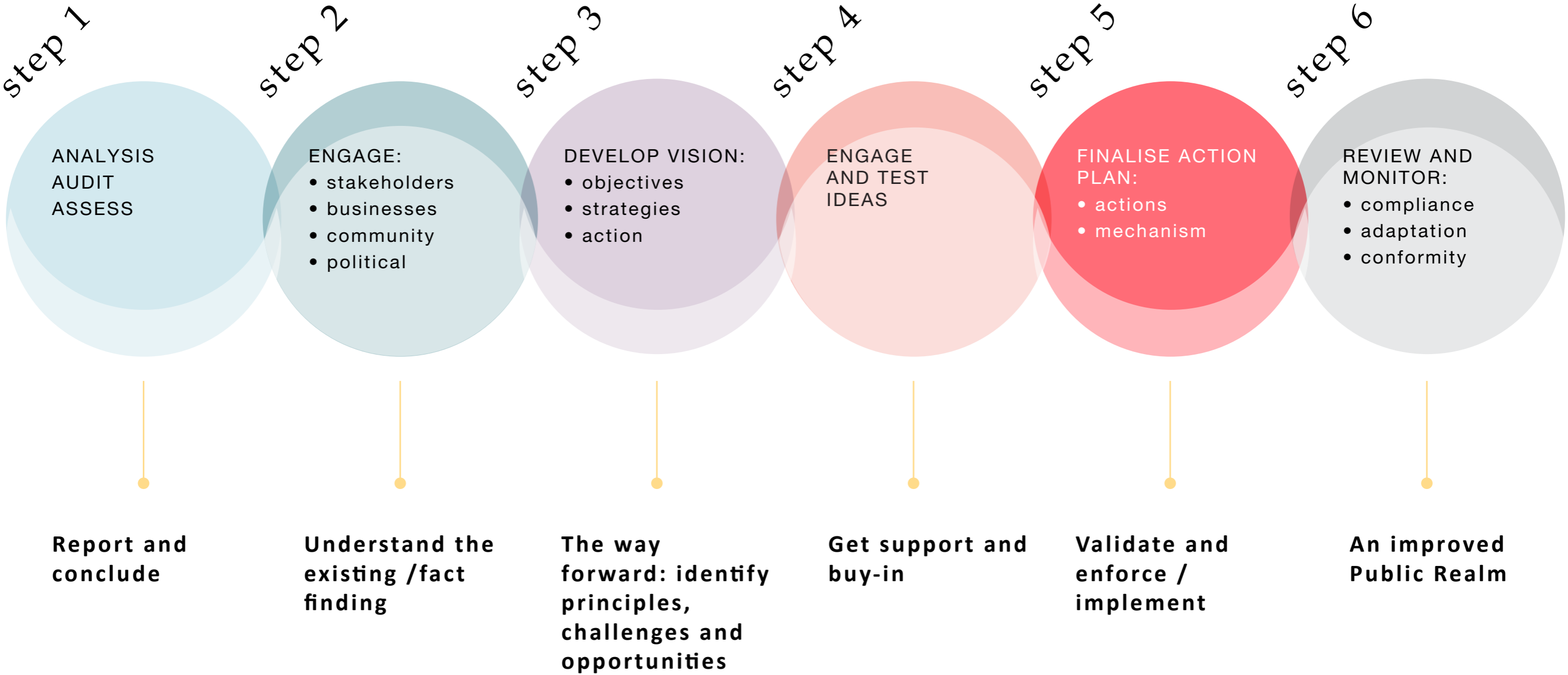


Methodology

The production of the action plan followed a logical process which included continued testing of the ideas with key stakeholders as the plan emerged over a six-month process.

the Public Realm Action Plan

METHODOLOGY



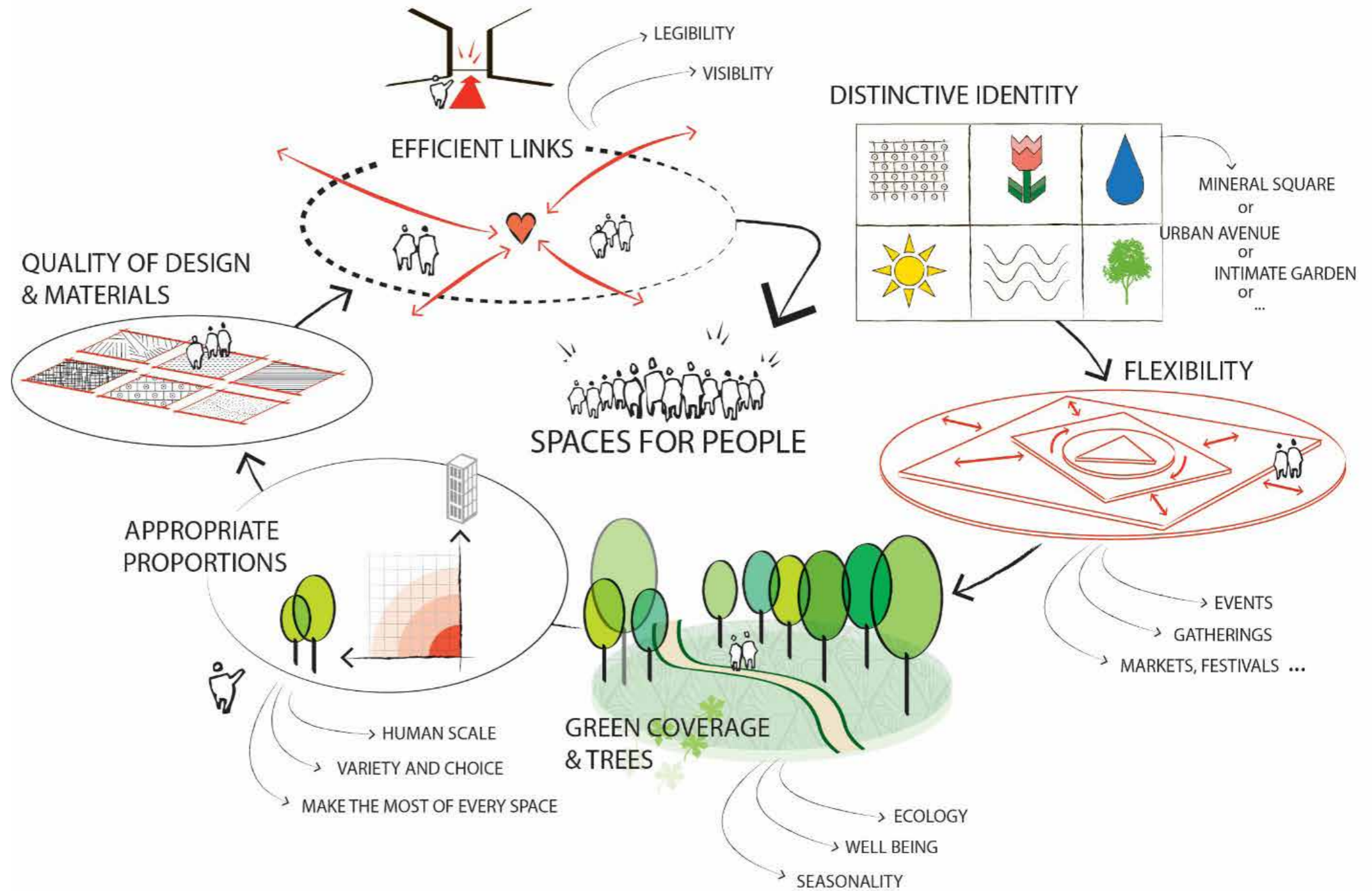
What makes a good public realm

The “public realm” consists of all areas to which the public has access (such as roads, streets, lanes, parks, squares and bridges). It includes the publicly accessible spaces between buildings, along with the buildings or other structures that enclose them.

A good quality, well considered public realm plays a major role in a positive user experience that will encourage return visits, just as a poor public realm on a cold, rainy day might discourage visitors.

The quality of the public realm plays a vital role in the creation of a place with an enhanced sense of identity, where people will choose to spend their time. It gives great scope for public art, community-based activities, temporary interventions/ events, ‘greening’ the town/city centre with landscaping and the inclusion of creative lighting schemes.

The public realm provides the context for highlighting the built heritage. Well-maintained and presented buildings are an important component of the public realm.



**People
Function
Activities**

Designations

Spatial Integrity

Culture

Context

Legibility

Permeability

Identity

Inclusivity

Heritage

Surveillance

Architecture

Sustainability

The value of public realm

The diagram below highlights the importance of the public realm relative to Sligo City Centre. Every intervention and decision made must be considered against the physical setting, reflecting on the value socially, environmentally, economically and functionally.

the value of Public Realm in TOWN CENTRES



SOCIAL

- › Makes space more accessible for physically impaired people and older adults
- › Provides a venue for community events, community cohesion
- › Creates a place where people want to be and meet
- › Assists in the interpretation of heritage
- › Improve well being through exercise
- › Produces a heightened satisfaction for users

ENVIRONMENTAL

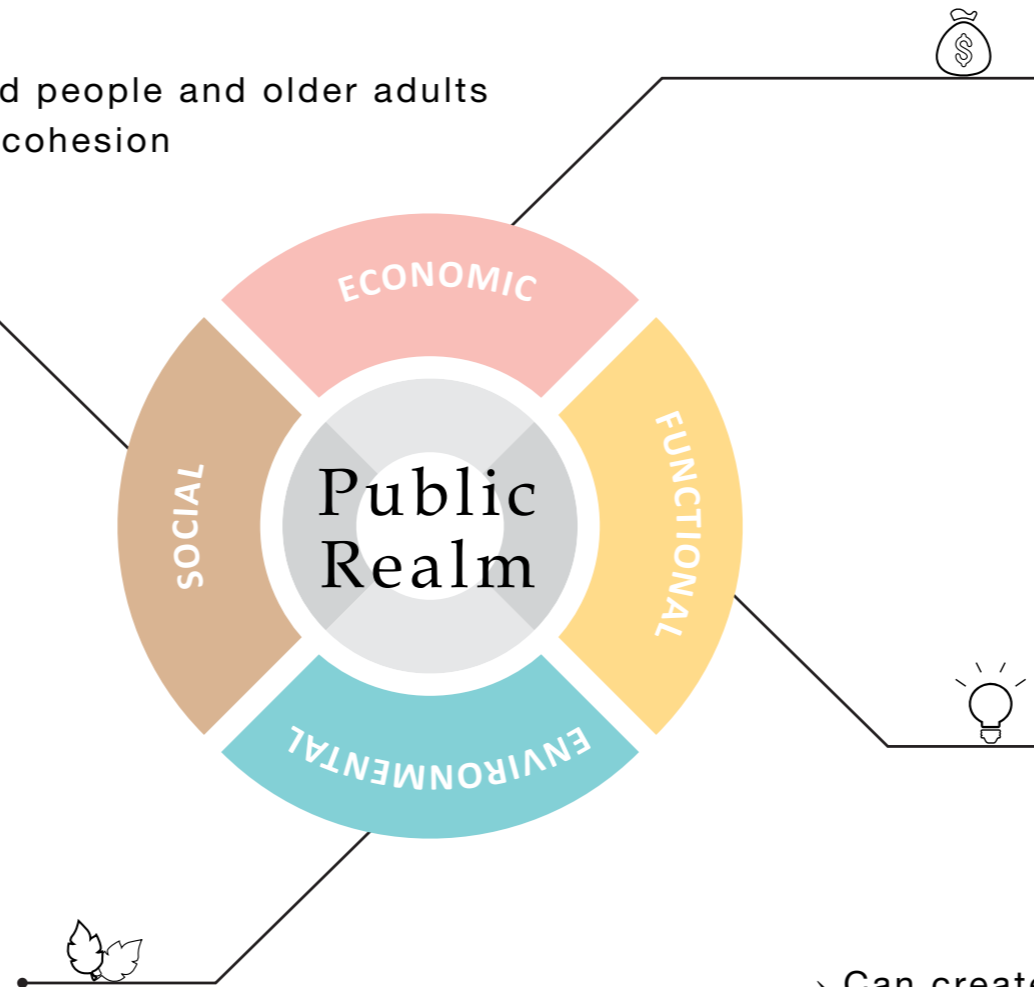
- › Reduces air pollution
- › Enhance the identity of a place
- › Aids in the softening / greening of the city
- › Brings nature and biodiversity in the city
- › Protects, conserve and enhances heritage
- › Helps with rain water management and attenuation
- › Contributes to positive image and perception

ECONOMIC

- › Attractive to investment and development
 - › Invest to save (reduced maintenance)
 - › People stay longer and help vitality
 - › Encourages inward investment
 - › Impact on property value
 - › Increase tourism

FUNCTIONAL

- › Supports public art
- › Encourage walking and cycling
- › Improve orientation and wayfinding
- › Make public transport more accessible
- › Inclusive for all users, universal design
- › Help rationalising movement and transport
- › Can create outdoor space associated to retail and leisure



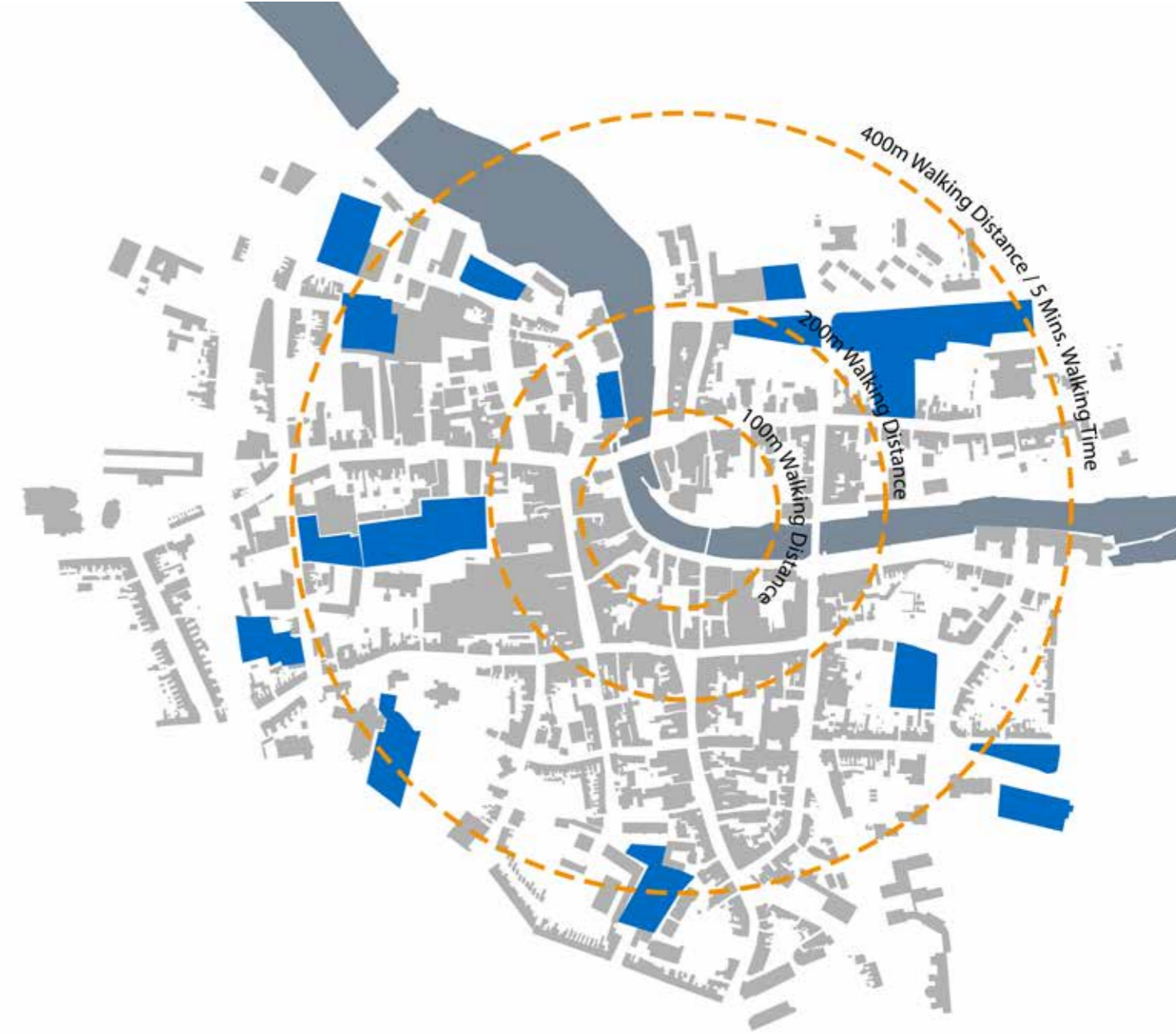
Urban Structure

A physical and geographical understanding of the layout of the city and its associated heritage and structure is considered fundamental to determining the nature of the streets and spaces.



- The Garavogue River
- Rich urban grain
- A defined centre
- Radiating streets

Urban grain

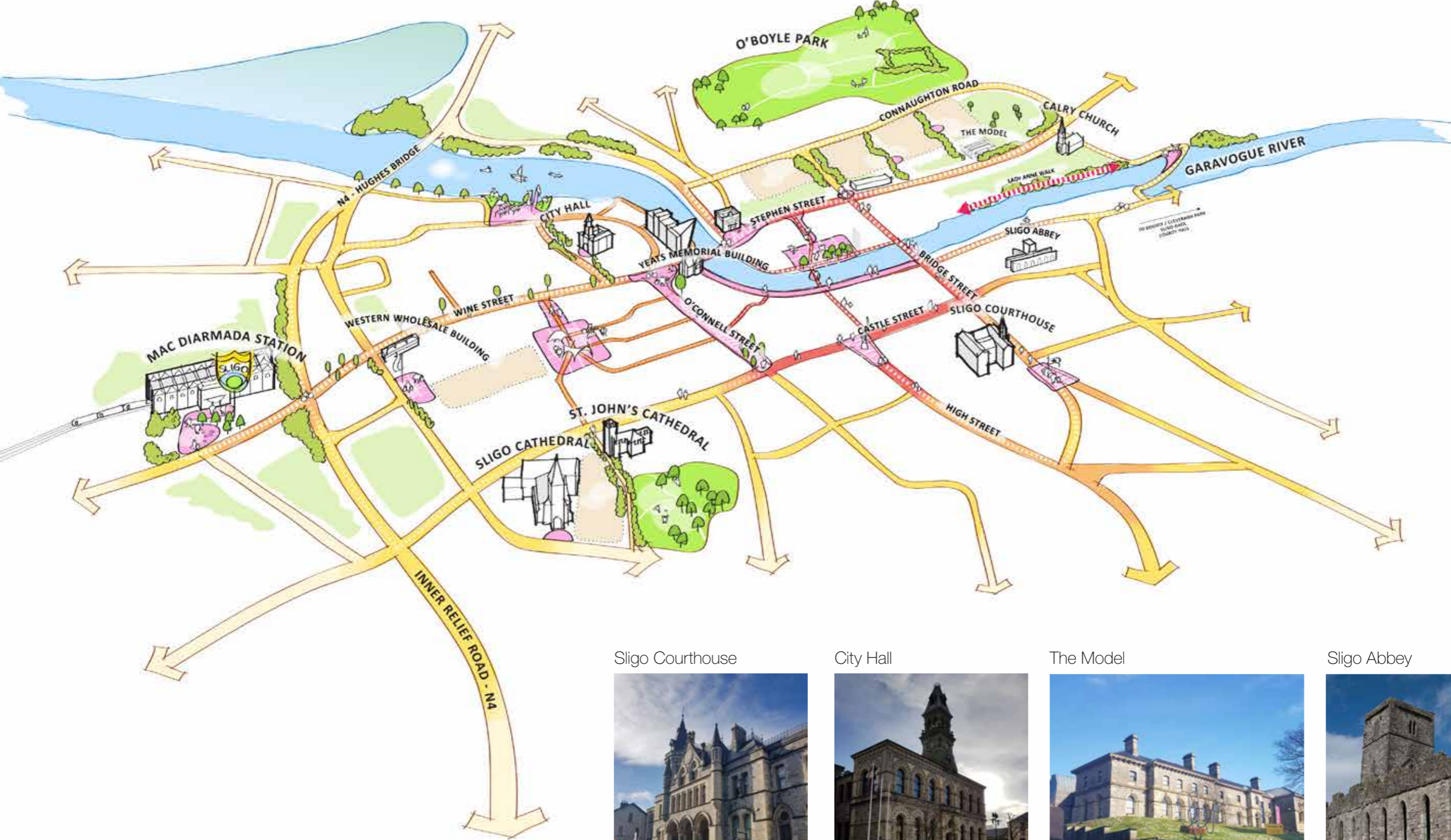


- Availability of off-street parking
- A walkable city over relatively short distances

Car parking and walking distances

Key buildings

There is a rich array of heritage and architecture within Sligo. These assets need to be enhanced in terms of their setting, connectivity and ease of access.



Sligo Courthouse



City Hall



The Model



Sligo Abbey



What people have told us

As part of the process, we have engaged with stakeholders and key interest groups to ensure that the people of Sligo have an input into the emerging Public Realm Plan

Groups consulted:

Council departments
Heritage groups
Arts community
Tourism bodies
BIDS team
Chamber of Commerce
Community services
Educational facilities
Design representatives
Business representatives

Responses from the stakeholder workshop:

Initial consultation
7th March 2018:

Positives

- A walkable, compact city
- Lots of interest and character
- Great potential
- Human scale of buildings and streets
- A sense of heritage and variety
- The river and surrounding areas
- New safe bus park at the Model
- Good sense of natural environment in the town
- Aware of nature – river and geographical backdrops
- Stephen Street events and culture in the city

Negatives

- Lack of gathering space / public space / public square
- Too many cars / car dominated
- Excessive parking
- Poor arrival points
- Not pedestrian friendly
- Not cycle friendly enough
- Difficult to navigate – for cars, pedestrians and bicycles
- Lack of connections between spaces
- Not universally accessible
- Too many bollards
- Street clutter – too much and very poor quality
- Lack of uniformity in street furniture
- No covered space
- No identity of each street and loss of language of the town landscape

Thoughts / Suggestions

- Less on-street parking
- Retain and enhance the historic core
- More green spaces including planted links – trees and pollinators
- Minimalistic covering of public open spaces
- Wider footpaths
- More accessible pedestrianised spaces
- Lessen / remove visual clutter – signage
- Create a consistent language of materials / unified paving
- Open up the Abbey to the river
- Universal public plaza on the river
- Places where people can congregate
- Town centre market
- Town square / performance space
- Create a positive identity that is specific to Sligo
- Activity that connects with the landscape
- Embrace the historic while encouraging a fresh approach
- Pedestrian friendly
- High quality street and shop signage
- Improved treatment to shopfronts.

Draft PRP consultation
22nd May 2018:

Comments on emerging PRP

- Good for citizens, health
- Reducing parking will mean more resting spaces needed around the town
- Seen as a positive, uniform strategy
- A positive reaction to Stephen Street being used “properly”
- Positive reaction to including the pier at Quay Street

- Will the East-Link bridge be addressed in the plan?
- The inclusion of the Abbey site was welcomed
- The need to address the river level – possibly through the construction of a weir

Actions

Develop and implement an engagement and public relations strategy to encourage public ‘buy-in’ and ownership of the Plan

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion following engagement:

Positives

- A walkable city with lots of opportunity to explore
- Contrasting and interesting street typologies
- The river provides a unique setting
- A rich architectural array of buildings

Negatives

- Pedestrian movement is sometimes uncomfortable
- Few defined pedestrian spaces
- Lack of public realm quality and consistency
- The ground plane often lets the overall image down
- Extensive dereliction and vacancy
- Poor presentation of streets in terms of inappropriate signage and shopfronts

Actions

Set up a “city centre team” to manage all aspects of the public realm and ensure implementation of the Plan across all sections of the Council. The team should include a representative from:

- Town Centre Management (to be appointed)
- Planning
- Architects
- Heritage
- Infrastructure
- Tourism

Depending on the nature of each project, one of the above needs to be selected as project manager to lead the initiative. A Director of Service / senior level officer must be identified to lead the plan and be a champion of its intent.

	Issue / Risk	Potential	Recommended way forward
1	The quality of the public realm detracts from the built environment and few capital public realm projects have taken place over the last 20 years.	This is an opportunity to redefine the quality of the public realm and set the benchmark of quality in terms of both design and physical components	The Council has two pilot projects - O’Connell Street and Stephen Street car park to demonstrate how change can positively impact the city as a whole, an opportunity where it is fundamental to achieve the necessary quality. It is recommended to ensure that appropriate design and thought process are applied to each of these projects. All projects must be design-led to achieve their full potential.
2	The public realm action plan will highlight the need for multi-million-Euro investment.	There are a number of external funding sources which can be investigated. The public realm plan for the city should be considered over what might be a 15 to 20-year period of improvement	Implement the public realm plan and ensure it is not compromised by the desire to improve through low-cost schemes due to the lack of funding. Success attracts funding and it is imperative that the city showcase what it is capable of.
3	The public realm plan is proposing a change to how the streets and spaces are currently used	The success of urban spaces is the experience of what it offers, which in turn improves the vitality and success of the shops and businesses	Strong political support is necessary to promote change and encourage an improved environment for all users. Strategically, improvements may need to be made outside the town centre and on linking streets to facilitate changes within, especially with regards to vehicle movements and parking.
4	There are a number of different groups and stakeholders, all promoting Sligo in different ways	A cohesive image and brand is key to success. A stronger alliance between the different groups could be the catalyst for lasting change	Set up a city centre team dedicated to everything that concerns the social, environmental, economic and functional issues bringing together the great work of existing initiatives and presenting them as a single entity.
5	Convincing stakeholders and the public that changes are necessary	The feedback from the engagement process suggests that the people of Sligo are accepting of the need for change. There is a great potential to build support and community cohesion.	Develop an ongoing engagement and public relation strategy for the improvement of the items listed in 4 above and the public realm, making it clear that this is a long term process with some quick wins.
6	The risk of loss of heritage within the city	Sligo has a rich culture which needs to be showcased. New spaces need to be created and streets adapted to allow a variety of uses and flexibility.	Follow, without compromise, the public realm action plan to ensure that the heritage value is enhanced.
7	The risk of loss of culture within the city	Sligo has a rich architectural heritage which needs to be protected and enhanced.	Implement Stephen Street as the proposed ‘cultural plaza’ ensuring the public realm action plan is followed, without compromise. Consider how Sligo could become Ireland’s next City of Culture.
8	Continued decline of businesses and vitality in the city centre	Sligo has a compact centre. This naturally should promote more footfall in its core through appropriate street design, and a complementary parking strategy and improvement of linking streets.	Refurbish O’Connell Street to improve the pedestrian experience and promote the links and businesses along this street and within the city centre. Ensure the public realm action plan is followed, without compromise, promoting a well designed and high-quality primary street for Sligo.
9	Missed off the tourist trail - Sligo has not yet become a mainstream tourist destination	The rich heritage and culture of Sligo present a great tourism opportunity, linked to the Wild Atlantic Way and well connected to other attractions within Ireland.	Develop and promote a single brand, bringing together all of the great work being achieved currently by different bodies. Develop and promote an annual programme of events in the new Stephen Street Square as a focus point for locals, occasional visitors and tourists passing through.
10	The public realm action plan ‘sits on the shelf’	The action plan is only the starting point to the enhancement of the city centre environment. It’s an ongoing process which requires consistent, dedicated management.	Formally implement the plan and put in place a team (across interests groups as suggested in point 4) to ensure that its recommendations are followed through. This team should initiate further steps and commission complementary studies when funding becomes available.

Vision

Enhance the image and setting of this historic city through the enhancement of its streets and spaces, conservation of its built heritage, encouraging people to explore, businesses to flourish and creating a vibrant street scene.



Street hierarchy

The layout of the city, its compact nature and the concentration of uses allow the definition of a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces.

The strategic approach to the three zones is as follows:

Core streets (Red)

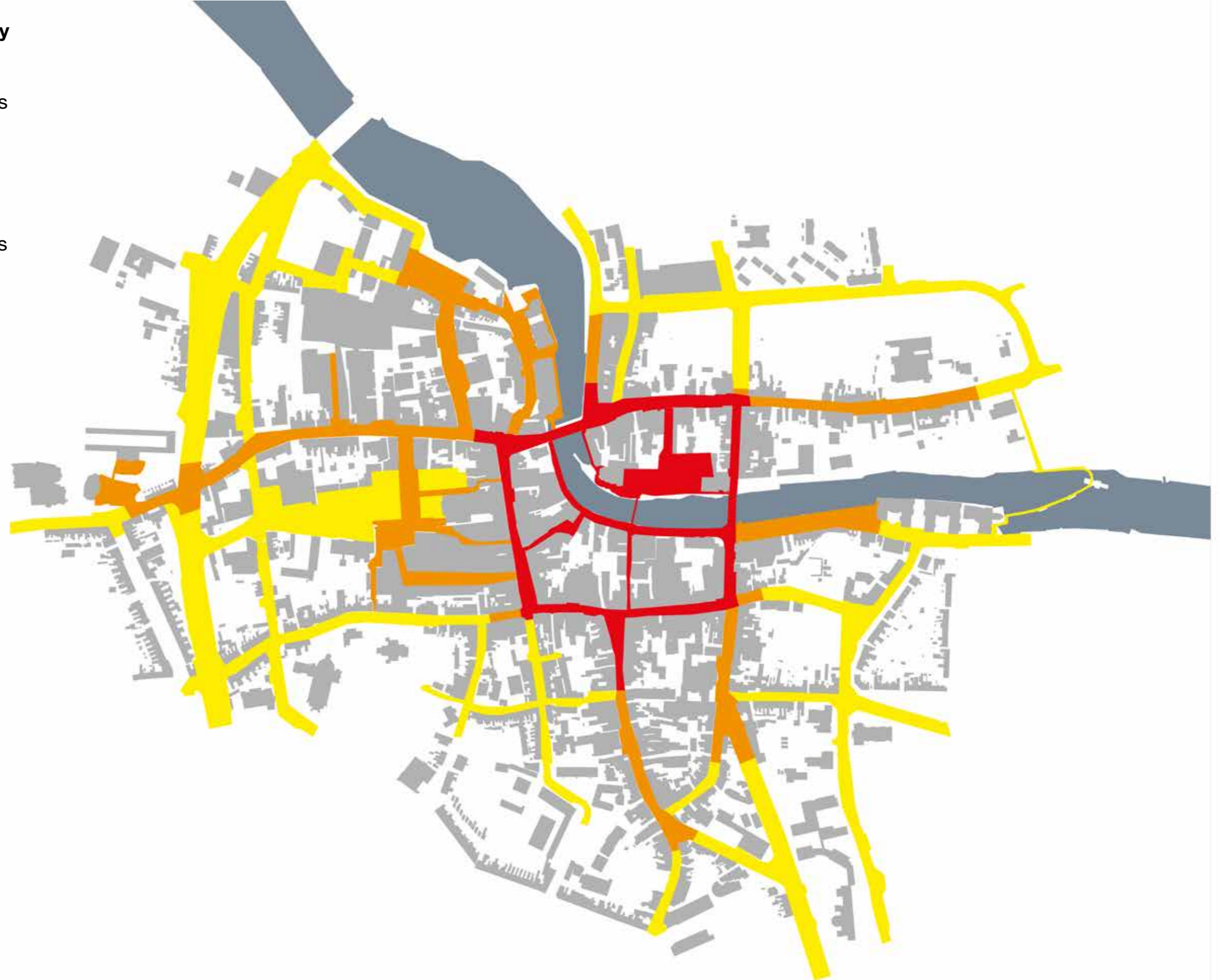
- a defined heart of the city centre
- a pedestrian focus
- minimal car parking with car-free areas

Integral streets to the central core (Orange)

- a natural progression from the city core
- an even balance between cars and pedestrians

Adjoining streets (Yellow)

- continuity through wayfinding
- acceptance of on-street parking and vehicle priority



Mobility

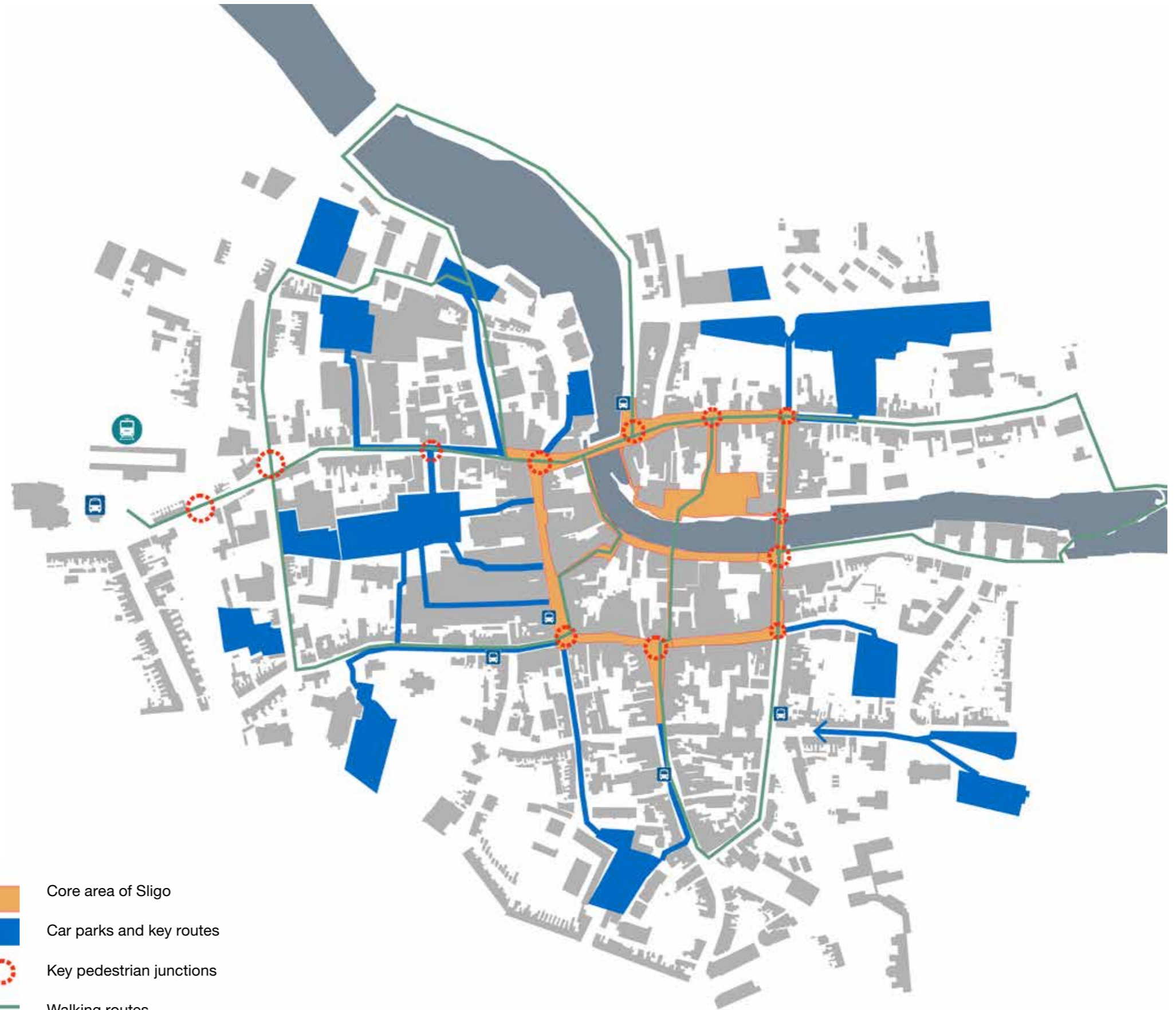
Ease of movement, connectivity and accessibility are all key success factors for towns and cities. In order to enhance the public realm of Sligo, key interventions in the townscape are proposed. This will necessitate the displacement of car parking. A supporting strategy to improve connections to car parking must be formulated and implemented.

The adjacent diagram defines the following:

- Links to car parks to and from the core area which need to be enhanced.
- Pedestrian crossing points which need to be reviewed to improve the ease of movement.
- The public realm within the core area which needs to be consistent in quality and design.
- Walking routes to link the heritage and cultural assets of Sligo.

All interventions must be based on universal design principles and put people first. This is supported by the findings of a walkability survey.

- Pedestrian priority will be a focus for the core of the city.
- Car parks adjoining the city core will promote less on-street parking.
- Improved links, where feasible, between car parks and the core area. Capital works will be undertaken to improve the quality of the public realm.
- Improvements are required to key junctions and pedestrian crossing points.
- Wayfinding to and from car parks surrounding the core area must be enhanced.



Guiding principles

1. Put people first. Design spaces for people.

Apply the principles of universal design to all interventions in the built environment.

2. Simplify the streetscape.

This includes decluttering (signage, street furniture, projecting structures, bollards, etc) and the coordination of street components.

3. Ensure consistency in design and use of materials.

Use an appropriate palette of high-quality paving, including natural stone, relative to heritage, use and location within the city.

4. Create memorable and identifiable spaces where people want to be.

5. Protect and enhance Sligo's character and heritage.

6. Design spaces to be flexible and suitable for multiple uses.

7. Resist overdesign. Improve the visual appearance of places with appropriate public art, lighting schemes and high-quality paving.

8. Ensure that all public realm improvement projects / works support the proper functioning of the city centre.



www.sligotourism.ie



www.sligosummerfestival.com



www.magnumlady.com

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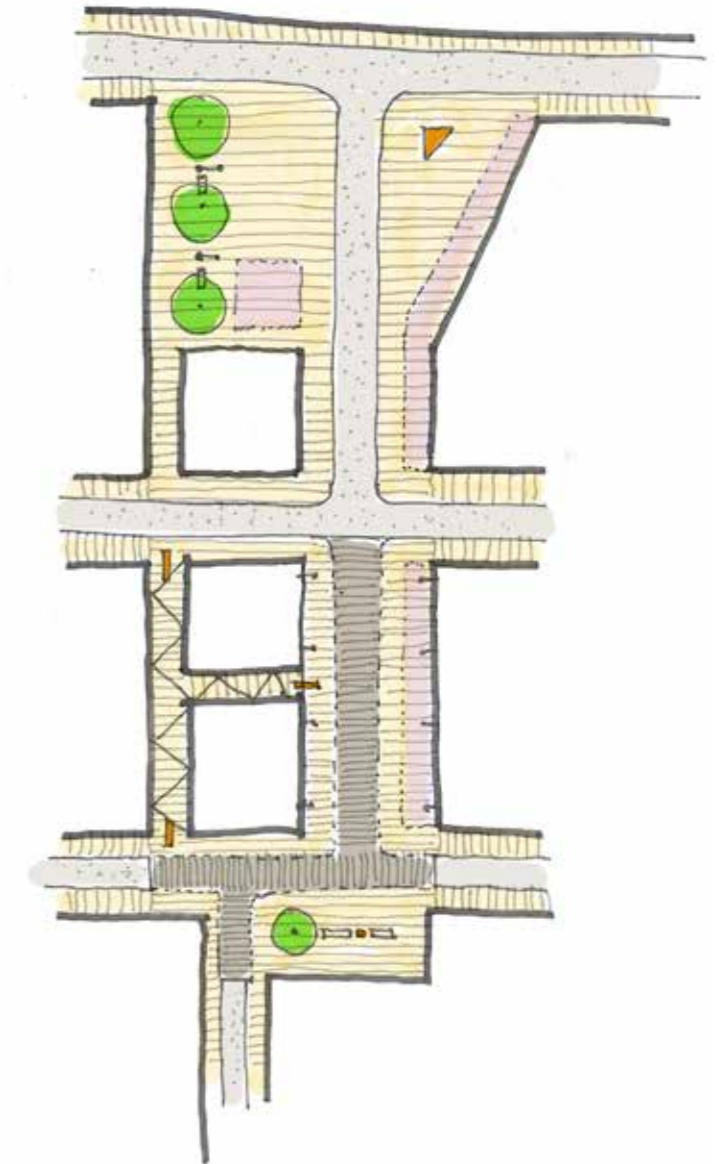
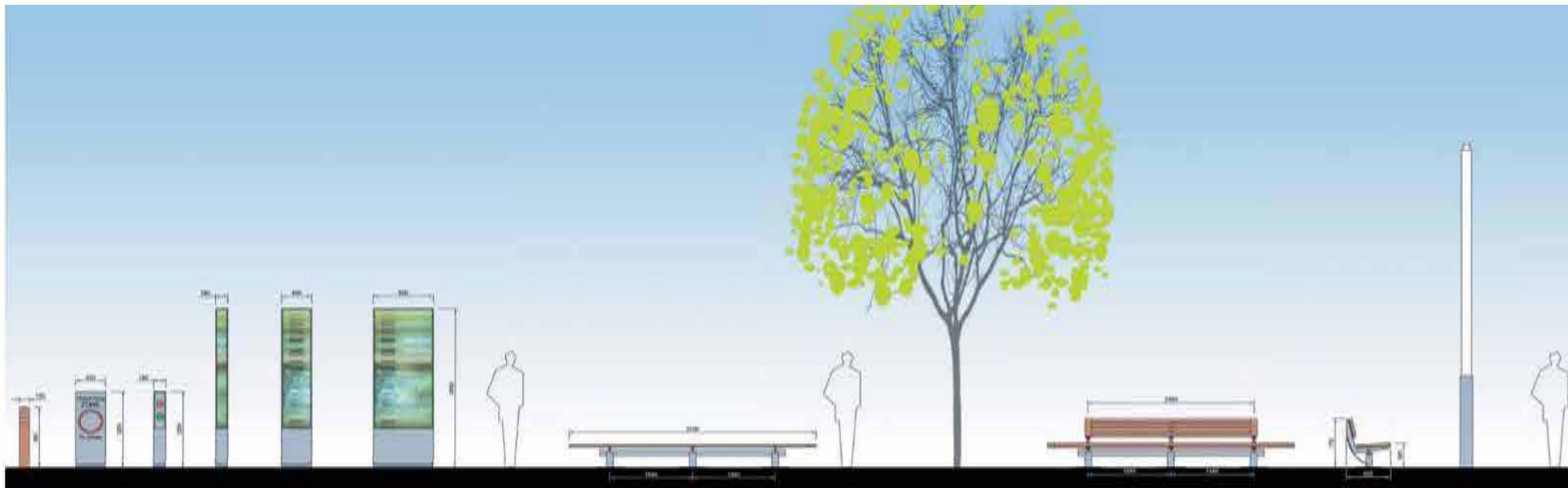
Design Manual

Design Manual Introduction

The design manual provides guidance for all improvements within the public realm. It can be used for comprehensive new projects and also for enhancements to components of the existing public realm.

The following categories are covered:

- Paving
- Vegetation
- Lighting
- Public art
- Street furniture
- Smart technology
- Building and shopfront interface



The design manual utilises a typical arrangement of streets to describe the design approach to street layout, paving, vegetation, lighting, signage, street furniture and public art.

Paving Strategy

All paving should be of high quality and suitable to withstand the function of the area. Durability, lifespan and visual appreciation should all be considered when specifications are being determined.

The pedestrian areas of inner city centre streets should be natural stone, granite or similar, laid on a rigid concrete base with mortar bedding and joints. Small unit slabs are suggested for ease of use, weight and cost for such areas, nominally 60mm thick. Where natural stone is being used in vehicle areas, thicker setts should be used.

The choice of natural stone is made for the following reasons:

- Appropriate to the heritage of the area.
- Durability - when laid on a concrete base, it will achieve a long lifespan with minimal maintenance.
- Stone products appreciate in value with natural weathering.
- Depending on colour and source, the material cost difference to concrete products is minimal.

The vehicular carriageway should be a high quality asphalt laid between granite kerbs. Kerbs to be a maximum 100mm high, lowering to a minimum 50mm where a shared environment is more appropriate. It is essential to use radius sections, quadrants and dropper kerbs within the design.

In adjoining streets (light purple on adjoining diagram), a modular concrete sett is to be used for the pedestrian areas. This has already been used in a number of areas in Sligo.

The small unit slabs / setts allow ease of laying and achieve levels tying in to both thresholds and crossing points without the need for triangular cuts, which should be avoided. All paving falls are to be compliant with Building Regulations and universal design standards.

Drainage units, manhole covers and other components in the paving should be flush with surrounding areas. They should be integrated within the design to avoid trip hazards.

Paving infill covers are not required. However there should be a maximum 10mm gap between the frame and outer paving.



Paving infill cover with inconsistent gaps to paving



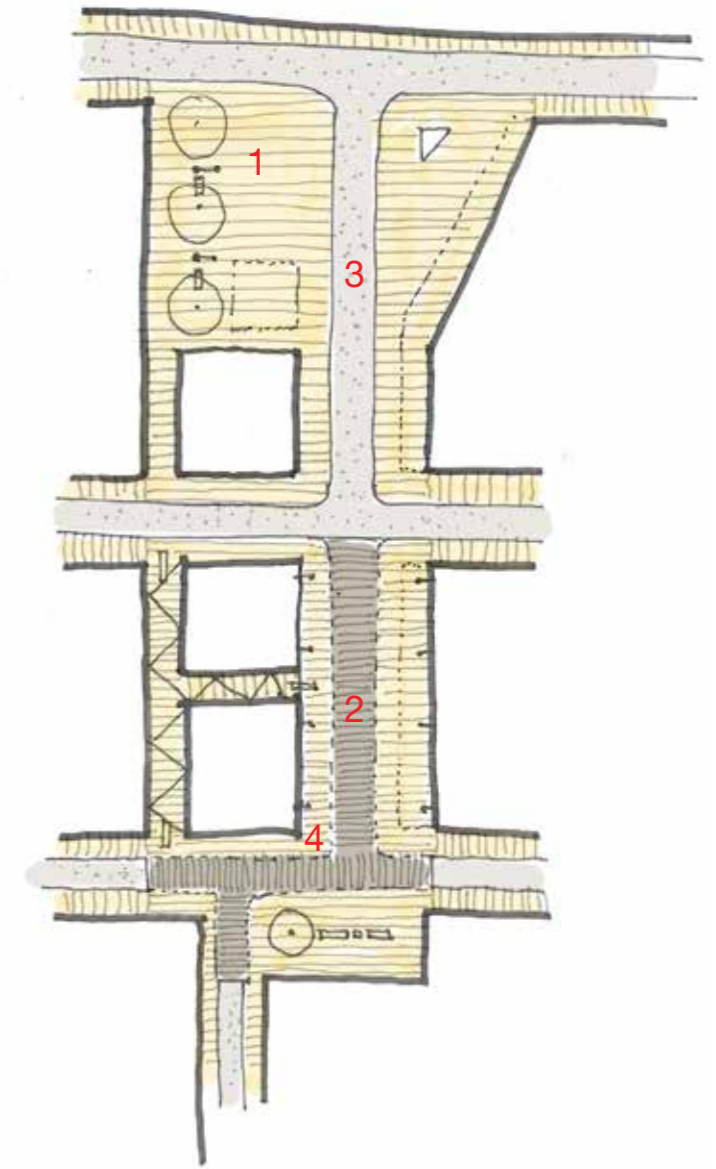
Small unit granite slabs



Granite setts



Concrete setts



1. small unit granite slabs
2. granite setts
3. asphalt carriageway
4. shared surface - 50mm kerb height

Core city streets (dark purple)

- Small unit slab granite paving for all pedestrian areas.
- Granite kerbs throughout.
- Asphalt carriageways.
- Granite setts for raised pedestrian crossings.

Radiating streets (light purple)

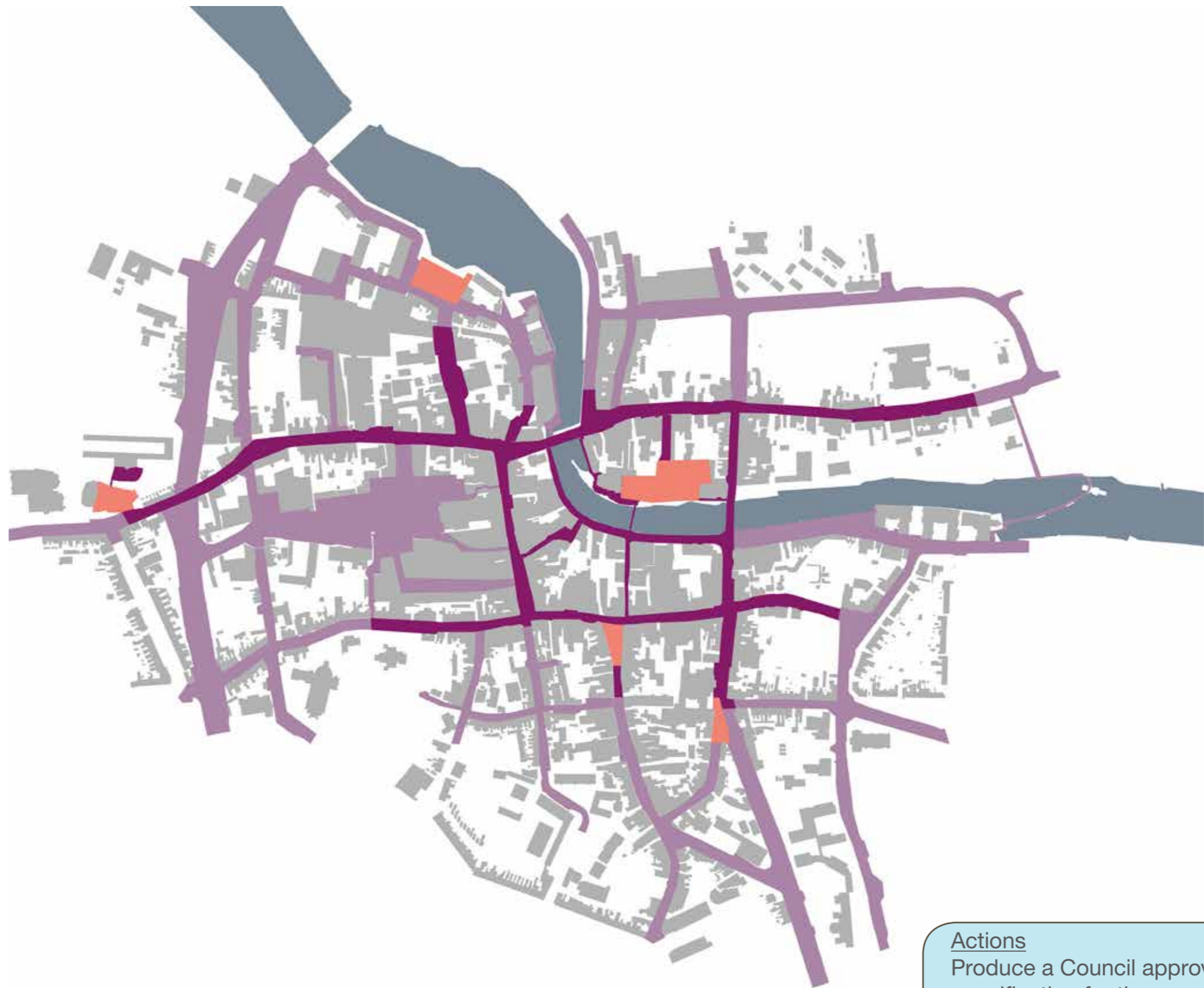
- Concrete modular paving for all pedestrian areas.
- Granite kerbs throughout.
- Asphalt carriageways.
- Dropped pedestrian crossings.

Key defined spaces (orange)

- Natural stone paving, potential to contrast to add variety.
- Small unit slab paving / setts relative to proposed use and overrun.

General

- Minimise road widths to reduce vehicular speeds and allow integration of cycling without designated lanes within the town centre.
- The layout of the street and degree of sharing should be appropriate to the function of the street.
- Kerbs should clearly define the carriageway.
- The carriageway should be a contrasting colour to footpaths where there are considerable vehicle flows, to assist the visually impaired.
- All footpaths and pedestrian crossings should be designed with acceptable gradients, to universal design standards.
- Street furniture should be rationalised and coordinated so as not to impede pedestrian movement.
- Access (degree of control) needs to be integrated into the design.



Actions

Produce a Council approved specification for the use and application of materials within the public realm, relative to the different zones within the city.

Vegetation

There are a number of types of vegetation that should be considered within the public realm. These include trees, shrubs, vertical surfaces, ground cover, grass and temporary displays.

Plant selection should be appropriate to the context, considering scale, climate, form, durability, sightlines and maintenance.

When considering trees, the species, grouping and ultimate size should be taken into account. Due to the narrow streets in Sligo and their historic nature, many of the inner streets are not suitable for lines of trees. Instead more needs to be made of opportunities in the larger spaces and along the river banks. It is deemed appropriate to add single specimen trees at key locations, to add interest and greening to the city. Care needs to be taken not to mask heritage features, key buildings or shop fronts – all trees should have a minimum 2.3m clear stem.

Other factors which should be considered are daylight, orientation, tree biodiversity and the trees' ability to reduce pollution – both of which are generally not present in a single species.

Growing medium and volume are critical to the longevity and success of any tree. Wherever possible, trees should be flush with the pavement level and have a substantial tree pit with a target size of 5-8m³. Structural tree cells and root barriers should be used to allow the tree pits to be extended under paving and adjacent to utilities. All street trees should be planted as semi-mature with underground guying, aeration and irrigation points.

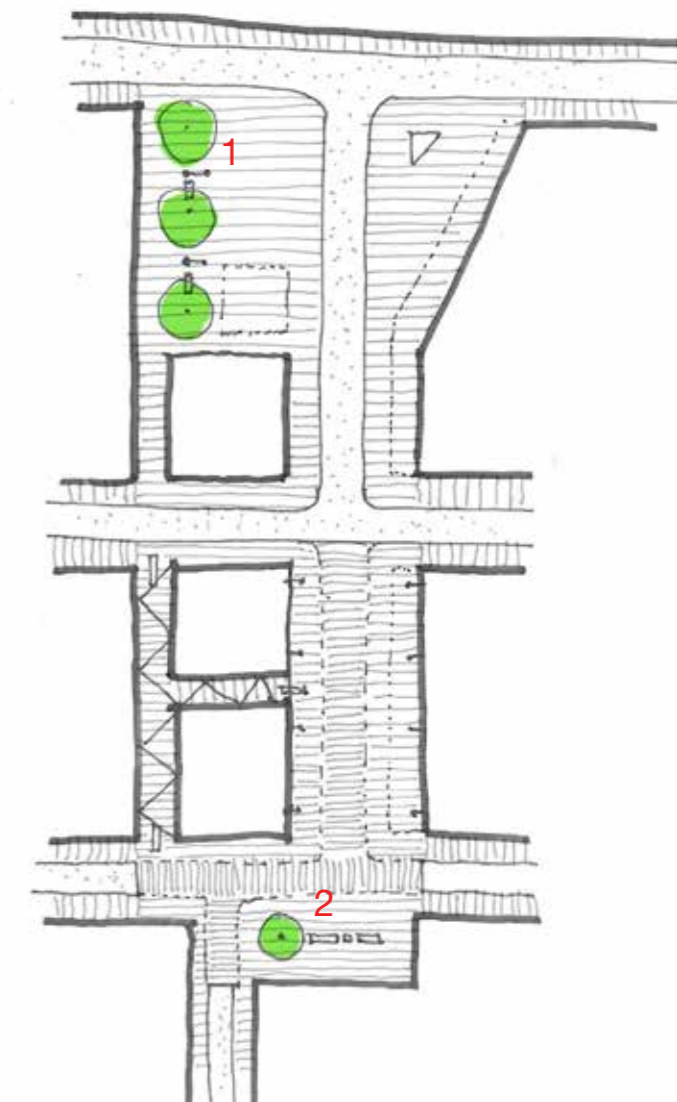
Shrub planting should only be used where space allows. Ground cover is preferable to larger shrubs, so as not to block visibility across spaces. Vertical surfaces should be encouraged in appropriate places, if adequate maintenance and irrigation are possible.

Grass areas in the town centre add interest and a family amenity. Reinforced grass turf should be considered to aid maintenance and usage. A good example of where this can be used is Stephen Street Square.

Temporary displays, hanging baskets and window boxes need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis where attached to buildings. Such additions are encouraged provided that they are well maintained and appropriate to the building facade. They should be placed above the shop sign level.

Hanging baskets should be avoided on columns and railings within spaces or streets, with exceptions such as on Rockwood Parade, along the river bank.

Stand-alone planters should also be avoided, as they detract from and add visual clutter to the streetscape. If needed, designated planting beds should be considered and “designed into schemes” rather than added at a later date.



1. A linear arrangement of trees is appropriate where the space allows, ensuring views are not compromised and that the trees enhance the setting of the street or space.

2. Singular specimen trees are appropriate in certain spaces to add interest and seasonal variation, without obstructing views.

Actions

Carry out an audit on a street-by-street basis to assess the appropriateness of adding (or removing) vegetation and greening the city.

Lighting

There is a variety of types of lighting that can be used within the public realm. Lighting must achieve two goals – provide standard lighting levels and add visual interest, delight and mood.

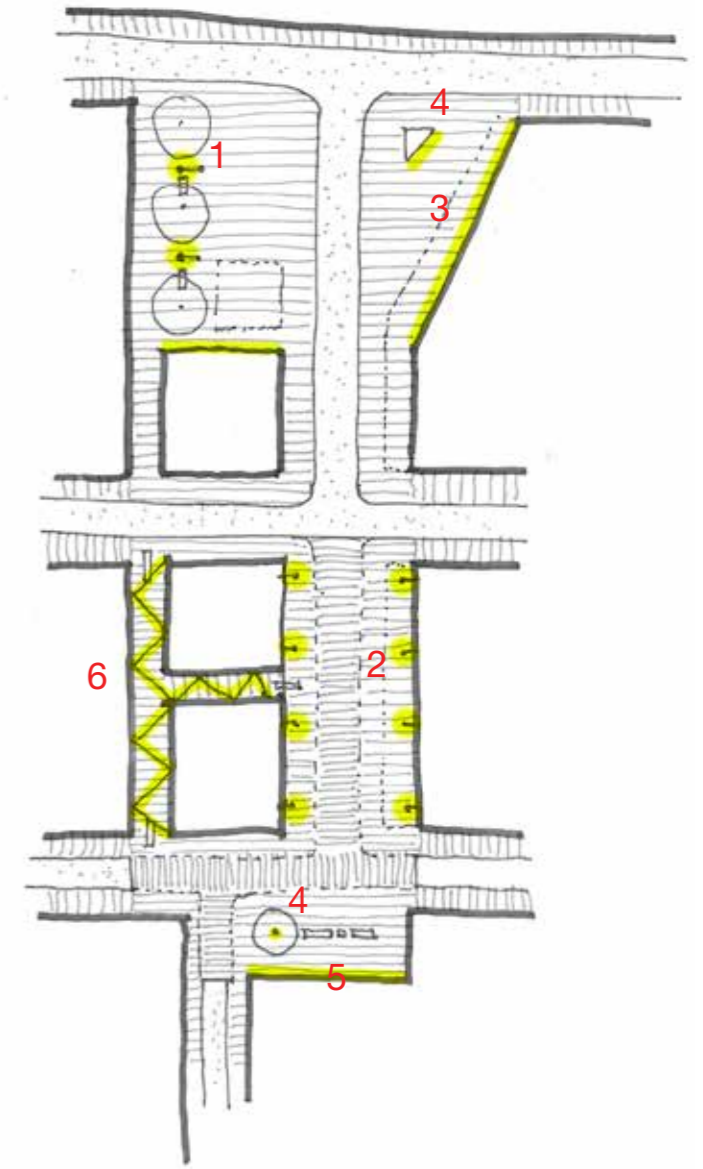
Light quality - a minimum classification of CE2 (20 lux) should be achieved with a uniformity of 0.4 suitable for mixed modal streets. This creates a safe environment during darkness. These light levels will predominantly be achieved through columns, generally 6-8m high, with LED luminaires. Columns should be neutral in design throughout the city centre so as not to compete with the building facades or monuments. Feature columns with multiple luminaires should be considered in well-defined spaces. Building-mounted luminaires should be used where possible at a consistent height and where way-leaves are obtainable.

Feature lighting should complement the street lighting and can take the following forms:

- Facade lighting to key buildings
- Lighting to art and monuments
- Integrated into street furniture
- Catenary in narrow lanes

Care must be taken to position lights so as not to produce any light pollution and avoid over-lighting streets and spaces. Electrical feeder pillars should always be located at the edge of spaces or against buildings or upstands.

- Consideration should be given to:
- Integrating and supporting festive lighting, power sockets within spaces.
 - Lighting columns vs building-mounted (way-leaves/easements).
 - Feature lighting to facades and monuments.
 - Security and safety.
 - Light pollution.
 - Power consumption.
 - CCTV and Wi-Fi inclusion.



1. 6-8m light columns
2. building-mounted luminaires
3. shop fronts
4. feature lighting to trees and art
5. feature lighting to building facades
6. interest lighting, catenary or similar

Actions

Undertake a street lighting appraisal and strategy with the aim of upgrading the public street lights to LED and consider enhanced lighting to key buildings and monuments.

Public Art

Sligo's cultural heritage presents an excellent opportunity for the placement of art within the city.

Currently there are a number of murals and monuments which add interest to the streetscape. These should be integrated into a city centre art strategy.

Monuments – current locations and surrounds to existing monuments should be reviewed. For example, at Market Cross the trees and lighting columns compete with the Lady Erin statue and should be removed to provide an enhanced streetscape, which respects the heritage. At Quay Square, the Famine monument should be relocated within a new public pedestrian space closer to the river edge.

Murals – these should be encouraged and reviewed on a case-by-case basis,

with a general rule of one mural visible from any vantage point, so as not to be overwhelming. The colour schemes should be appropriate to adjacent building facades.

Inlaid detail should be incorporated within paving at entrances to the narrow lanes.

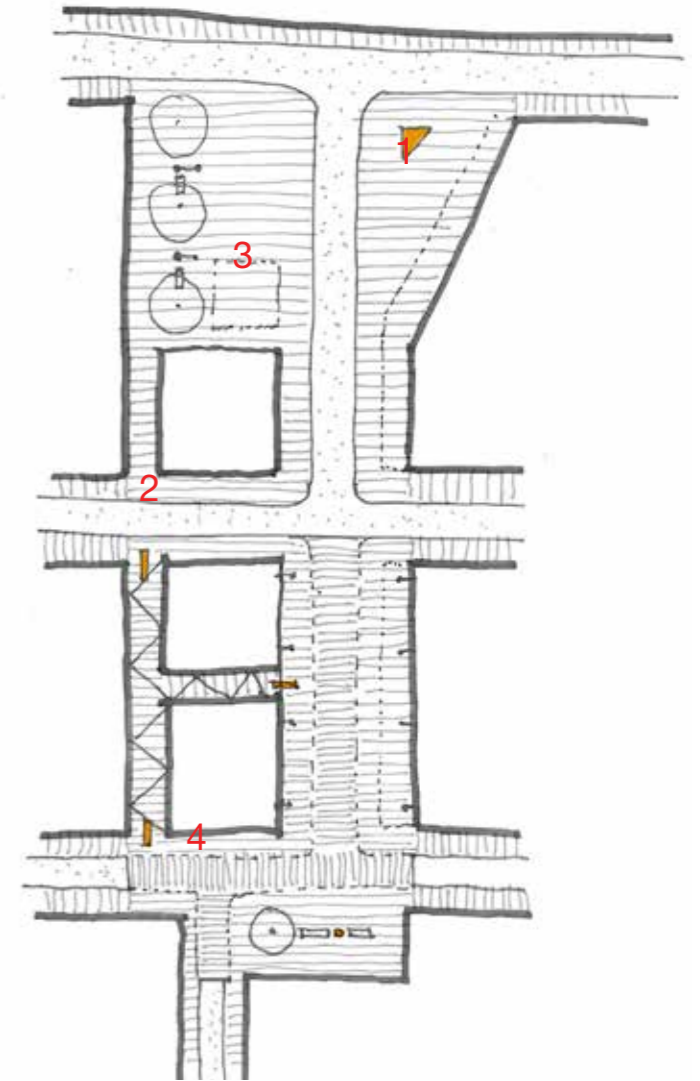
Contemporary art – there are few examples of this in Sligo and new pieces should be considered. These can be objects within a space, integrated in street furniture and lighting. An example is the proposed canopy in Stephen Street square, which should be considered as a piece of art.

As part of a city centre art strategy, the process of commissioning and potentially decommissioning should be explored. Collaboration with artists and the local community as part of the design of public realm schemes will provide identity and originality within the town.

Functional necessities such as public safety, access, maintenance and power supply should be considered as part of the strategy and on a case-by-case basis.



- Existing monuments
- Potential new locations
- In-ground art



1. Feature art piece / sculpture / monument
2. In-ground paving detail
3. Location for temporary art exhibitions
4. Mural art

Actions
 Produce a public art strategy for the city centre.
 Consider temporary art exhibitions as to provide educational and entertaining additions to the street scene.

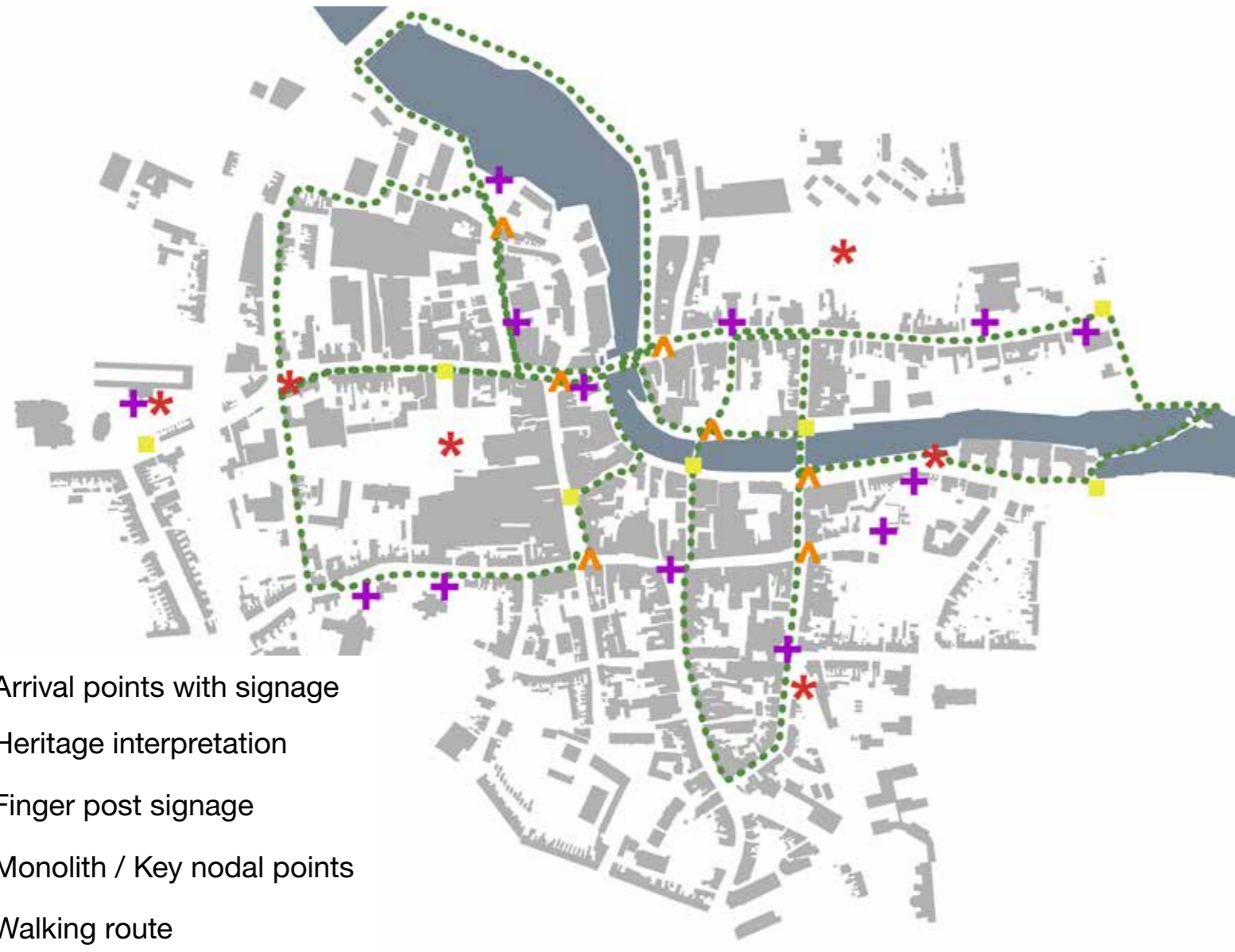
Signage and wayfinding

There are essentially three types of signage within the public realm:

- Vehicle: statutory road signs should be kept to a minimum and rationalised wherever possible to avoid clutter.
- Directional: as part of a city centre wayfinding strategy. This should be a coordinated family of forms including maps at key arrival points, monoliths at decision points and finger posts to aid orientation.

- Interpretation: graphic signs or plaques should be positioned next to buildings and points of interest that have a historic, cultural or architectural importance linked to a discovery trail.

Signage should be coordinated where possible with light columns, bollards or building mounted. All signage should be durable, with the possibility of changing text / information.



Actions
Carry out and implement a wayfinding and signage masterplan to better orientate visitors around the City and aid connectivity between interest points and car parking.

Street furniture

All elements of street furniture should be designed into the public realm and not as an afterthought. Coordination and combination between elements should be considered, to avoid visual clutter.

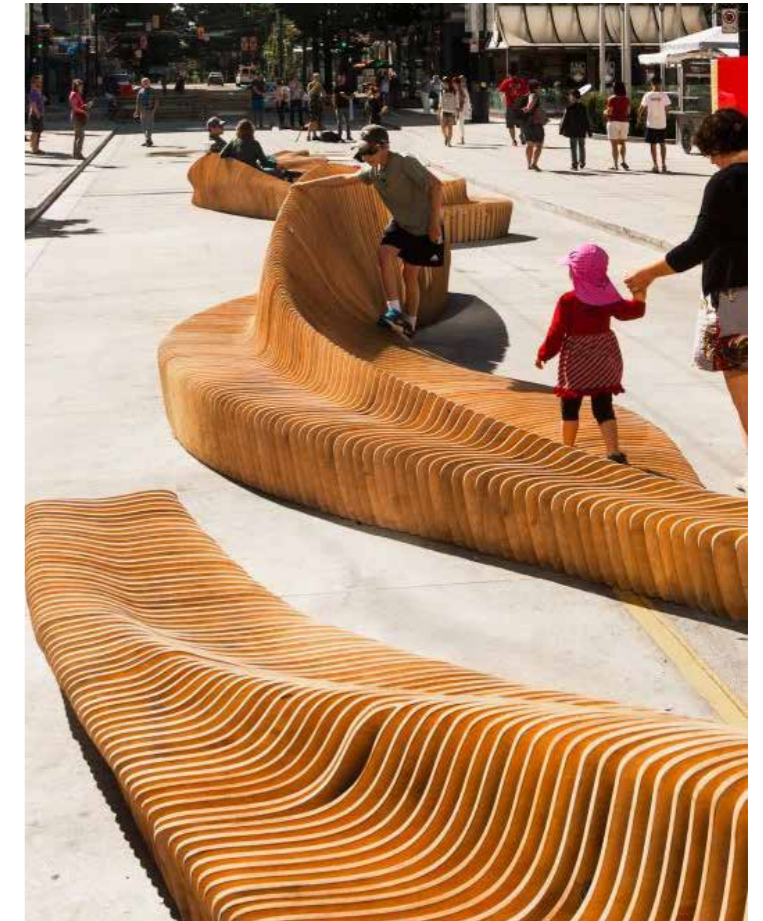
Generally all items of street furniture should be from a standard palette and neutral in design – the exception being when singular items of street furniture are considered as art and are site-specific.

Seating: A variety of seating options should be incorporated, including benches with armrests and backs, benches as seating platforms, ledges and steps. Seating must not impede natural movement, while seating arrangements should encourage social interaction.

Bins: Should be located at key junctions and spaced at regular intervals along the streets. They should be neutral in design and part of a coordinated street furniture palette.

Bollards: The use of bollards should be avoided wherever possible. Where necessary, they should be 1.1m high, slender and coordinated with other pieces of street furniture.

Cycle racks: These should be located in small clusters, in places where cyclists enter the pedestrian zones, in visible locations, not impeding circulation.



Actions

Determine a standard palette of street furniture for everyday use and a performance specification for special artistic pieces.

Smart technology

Sligo County Council's Vision

To position Sligo as an internationally recognised smart city destination where technology will be incorporated into the fabric of our city life to provide better information, improved services, more choice, more convenience and less waste for our citizens, businesses, communities and public services.

Objectives

- To create a coherent and sustainable smart city strategy in the form of a roadmap, with milestones for achieving specified targets.
- To leverage technology and underused Council infrastructure to create performing assets utilising a collaborative model, where communications infrastructure is open and operator-neutral.
- To develop partnerships with other stakeholders in the public and private sector as well as academia, such as The Institute of Technology, with the goal of embedding smart capabilities into most major projects or service redesigns.
- To establish guidelines for building ducts, recommendations on standards of ducts, sub-ducts and multi-core fibre-optic cable, including recommendations for dealing with cables found in Council ducting.
- To examine potential funding mechanisms and make recommendations covering possible national and European grants, the potential income from the fibre network as it is built in segments, and the monetisation of street furniture.

- To design a governance model for the management and longer term development of the project.
- To use Sligo as a test bed for pilot projects under a collaboration between Sligo County Council and Sligo I.T.

And to;

- Identify potential users and uses in order to inform the design, including but not limited to Wi-Fi, 5G antennas, Bluetooth, sensors, Smart Parking, Smart Traffic Management, Digital Signage, Real-time Transport Information, Geofencing and Proximity technologies etc.
- Examine Council owned public buildings such as County Hall and City Hall and assess suitable applications of Smart Cities technology.

Focus on Local Priorities and Strengths

Many opportunities exist for the use of technologies and Sligo has its priorities in terms of social, environmental and infrastructural challenges. The smart city vision and strategy must align with local needs and goals. Specific smart city developments will include:

- Building of an ubiquitous town centre Wi-Fi.
- Centrally Managed Traffic Light System.
- CCTV systems.
- Incorporation of future Government policy on electric cars.

With William Butler Yeats' Sligo connections, the Yeats collection located at Sligo library, with the Yeats building and The Model which contains the Niland

Collection of art featuring works by Jack B Yeats and others, it is intended to enhance the visitor experience using technology such as augmented reality. Proximity beacons and geofencing capabilities are central to this.

Similar technologies can be used for purposes such as assisting people with disabilities, by encouraging the development of specific apps to help navigate streets, businesses and services around town.

With the blurring of boundaries between physical space and the digital environment, it will become necessary for the public realm elements to support new ways of using and experiencing the city. How cities and towns respond to advances in technology may determine how successful they are for future generations.



Actions

Produce a Council policy and specification for the future proofing of public space through the inclusion of the necessary coordinated infrastructure.

Building and shopfront interface

Buildings and shopfronts contribute to the quality and character of the public realm. The following guidance is set out in Sligo County Council's County Development Plan.

The design of all shop fronts and building facades should promote appropriate interventions and improve standards and legibility within the city as a whole.

In the County Development Plan, the key points which relate to the public realm are:

Signage

- Signs should not clutter or dominate the facade of a building, nor the entire street frontage, and should not detract from or obscure the architectural features of the building. Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be limited in size and number to prevent clutter.
- The size, design, colour and material of signs should be subdued. They should generally be positioned well below the first floor.
- Projecting signs should be located at fascia level and should be limited to one per building frontage. The size of hanging signs should be proportionate to the building. They should not dominate the facade or obscure the architectural details.
- The height of signs and advertising on a building will be controlled. Advertising on the upper floors and beyond the eaves will generally not be permitted.
- Plastic or vinyl banner-type signs on the exterior of buildings will be discouraged. Only high-quality materials (e.g. wood, metal etc.) will be used in Architectural Conservation Areas and other sensitive areas.

- Signs should not be placed above eaves or parapet levels and will not project above the roofline of buildings.

Lighting

- External illumination of buildings will generally not be permitted, but careful feature lighting of key buildings of particular architectural quality may be considered.
- Limited and discrete lighting of hanging signs and fascias may be allowed in the case of businesses open in the evening, such as restaurants, pubs and clubs.
- Internal illumination of signs will not be permitted, except for pharmacies.

Composition of traditional-style shopfronts

- This should be encouraged where appropriate, with a sympathetic design which complements the heritage quality of the building and street.

Composition of contemporary shopfronts

- All contemporary interventions should be well designed, to ensure they do not detract from the overall streetscape.

Details

- Doors should be in a style and should use materials which are compatible with the rest of the shopfront and building.
- Roller shutters should be placed internally, behind window displays, and they should be see-through. External roller shutters will not be permitted.
- Traditional awnings are preferable to fixed canopies.
- Independent access to upper floors should be retained where possible.



Actions

Conduct an audit of existing shopfronts on a street-by-street basis, identifying opportunities for improvement or rationalisation.

3

Specific Projects

Specific Projects Introduction

To help demonstrate the intentions of the public realm plan a number of key projects have been identified and are illustrated within this chapter.

In each case a series of design considerations has been established. These are site-specific and in line with the aspiration of the design manual.

A draft sketch plan shows a typical layout and an artist's impressions captures the potential of the space.

It must be stressed that each of these projects must undergo an intensive engagement and a comprehensive design process to arrive at a final design. The images within this report are meant to provide vision and guidance on what can be achieved.

In addition to the six urban spaces shown on the right, two other areas - The Abbey and Wine Street car park - have been identified with their corresponding action.



O'Connell Street



Rockwood Parade



Market Cross



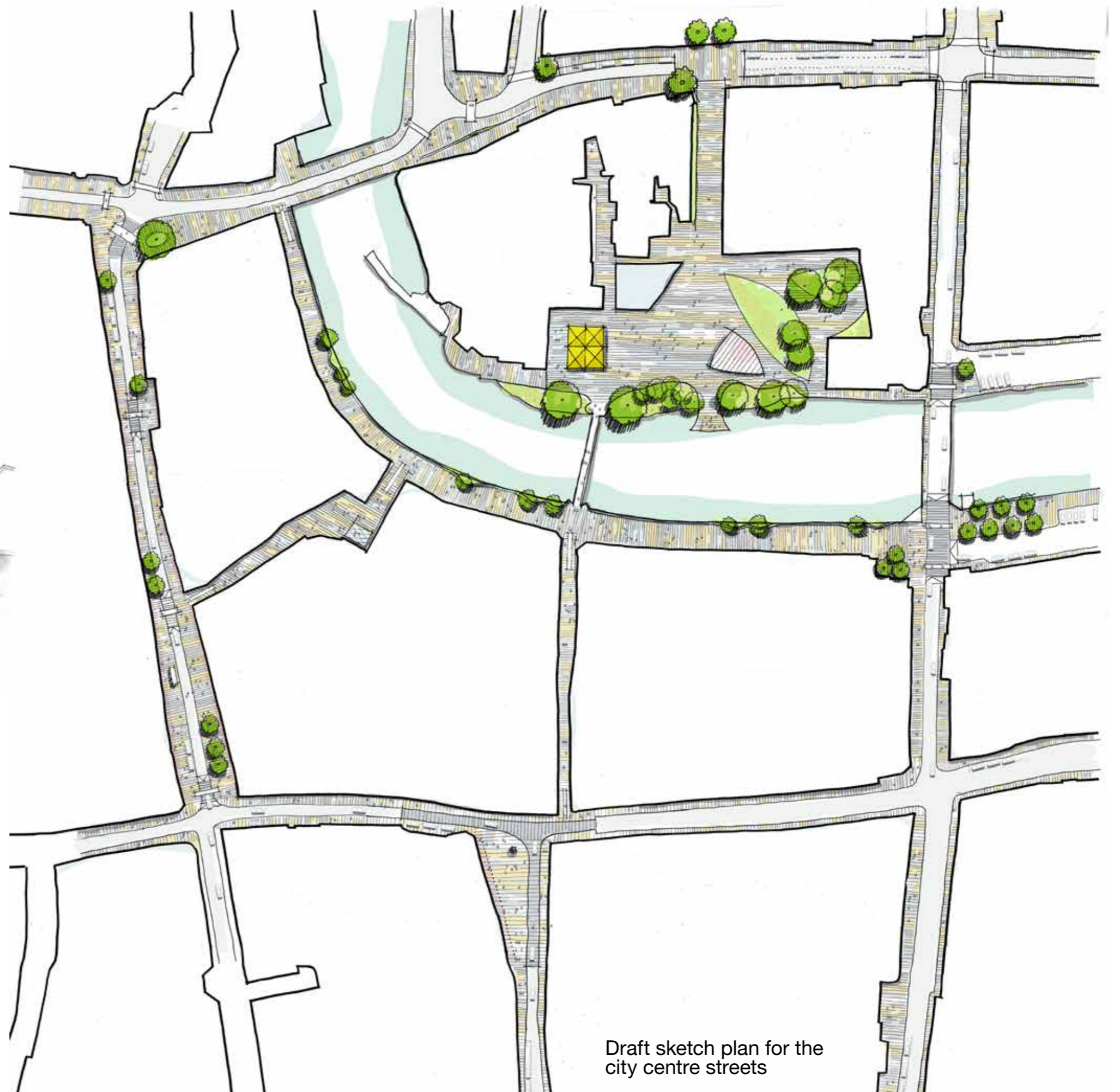
Old Market Street



Quay Street



Stephen Street



Draft sketch plan for the city centre streets

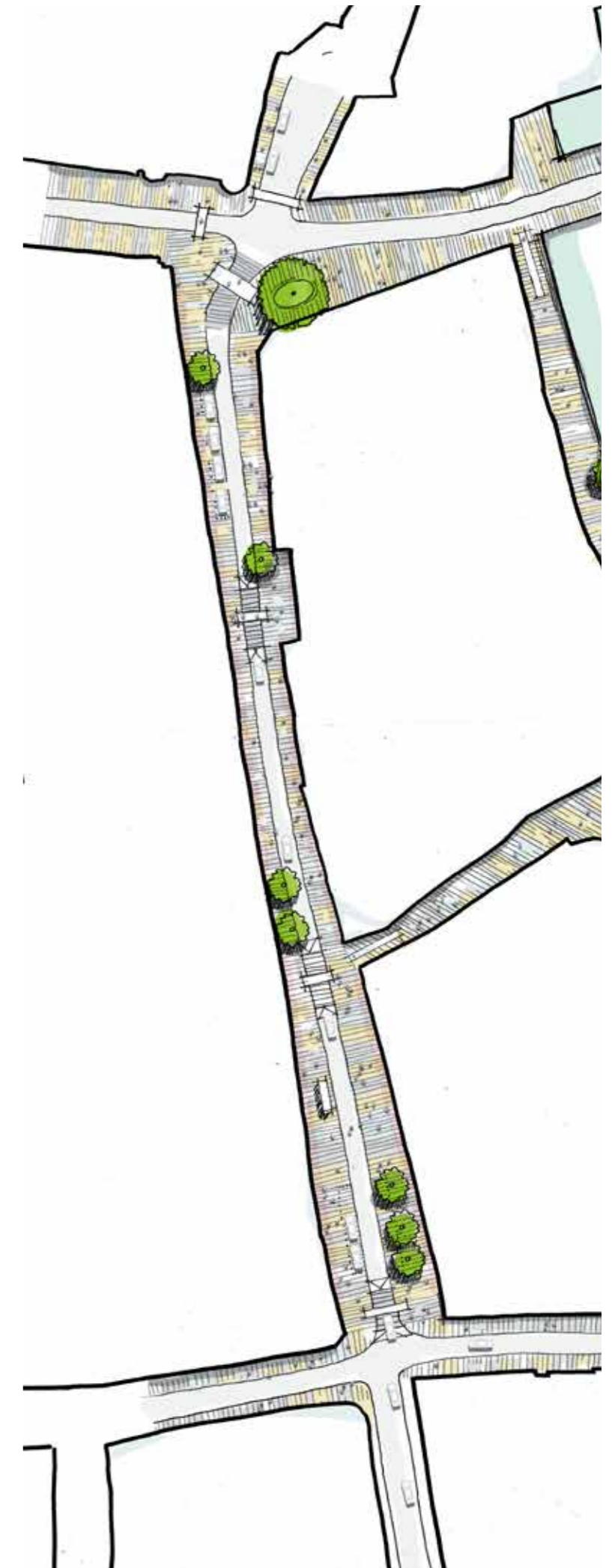
O'Connell Street

O'Connell Street is the main shopping street in Sligo, situated in the core of the city centre. The opportunity to enhance this street and correct the balance between cars and pedestrians will set the benchmark of quality for all future public realm projects in Sligo.

Key design considerations:

- Retain vehicular traffic as single-lane, northbound.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Widen the footpath with improved consistent paving.
- Reduce carriageway width.
- Promote the street as a key retail street in Sligo.
- Seek a balance between vehicles, parking and pedestrians to suit a “High Street” environment.
- Deter indiscriminate parking.

- Introduce an appropriate palette of materials.
- Minimise street clutter.
- Ensure design enhances the heritage and built form of the street.
- Encourage forecourt usage where practical and appropriate (i.e. use of a strip of footpath space in front of shops, especially for display purposes).
- Ensure the scheme is durable and consider maintenance.





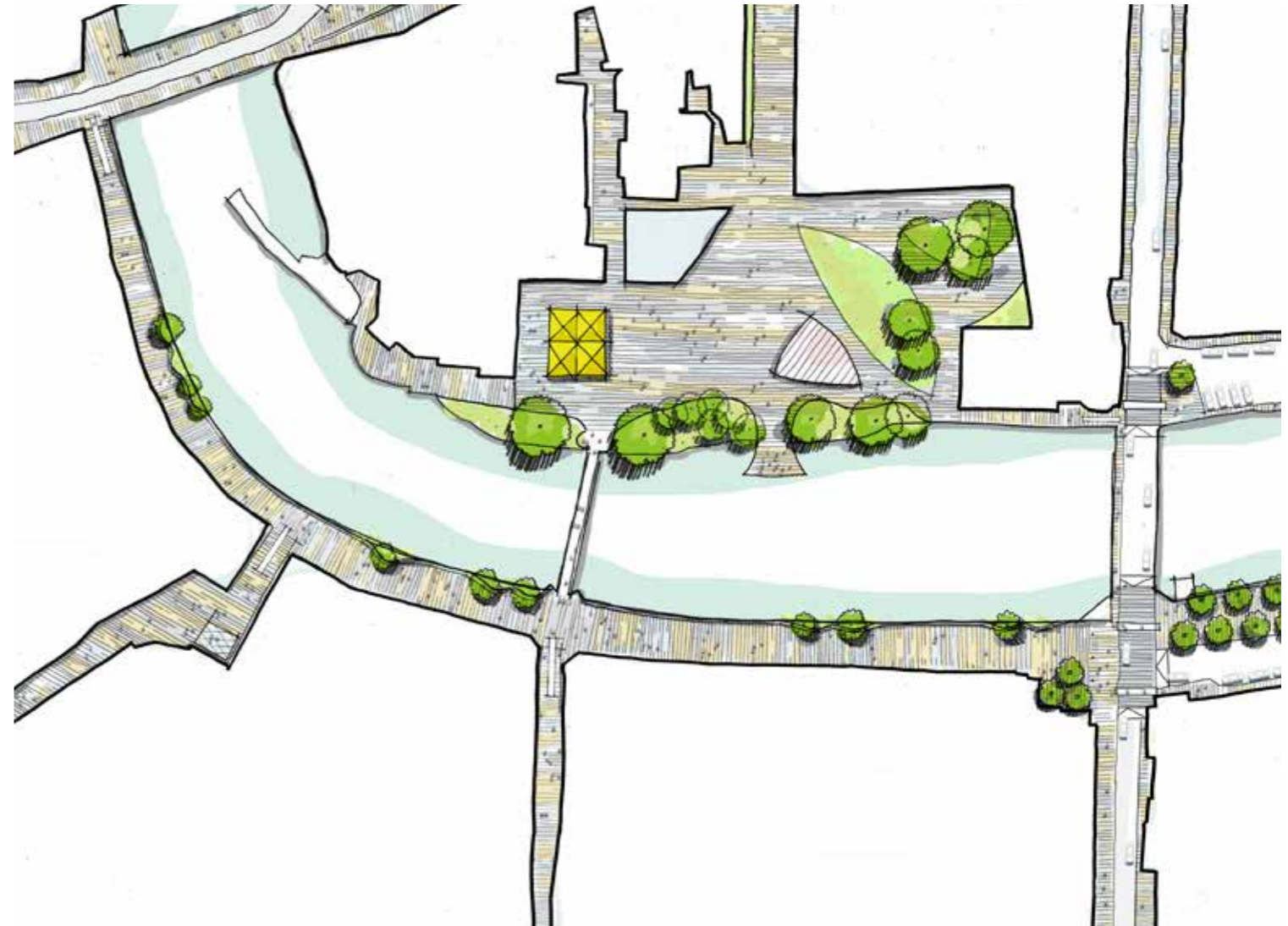
Rockwood Parade

Rockwood Parade is a centrally located riverside street. This presents an opportunity to create a more welcoming space for pedestrians and encourage interaction between shops, businesses and the street.

Key design considerations:

- Create a shared-surface pedestrian priority environment, where vehicular and emergency access is maintained.
- Utilise consistent paving materials along the full length of the parade.
- Minimise on-street clutter.
- Provide more consistent seating opportunities along the river, particularly on south-facing river banks.

- Provide more raised planting opportunities that tie in with existing planting.
- Promote shop and building front improvements.
- Encourage forecourt usage where practical and appropriate (i.e. use of a strip of footpath space in front of shops, especially for display purposes).





Market Cross

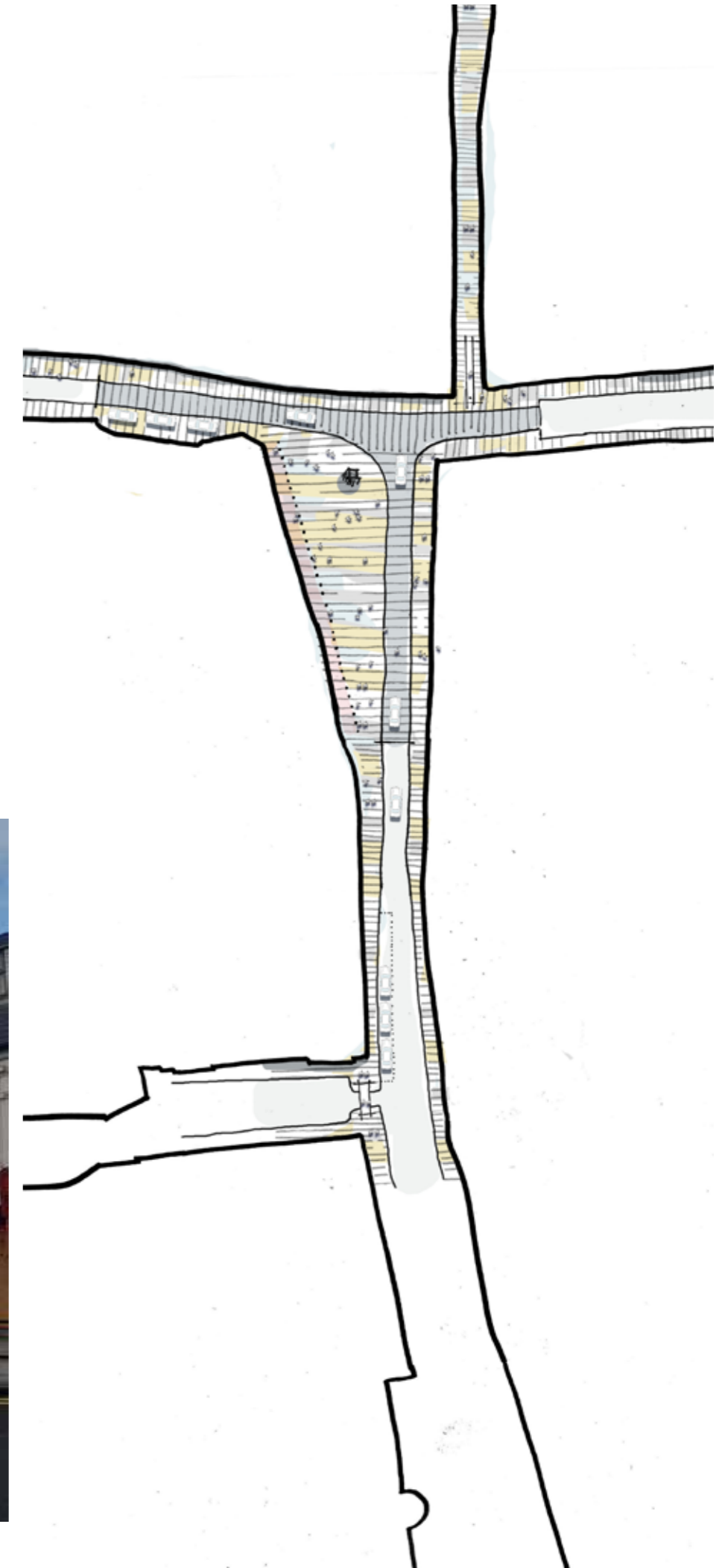
In one of the most historic spaces within the city, there is substantial potential to enhance the setting of the Lady Erin statue and celebrate the heritage of the area.

Key design considerations:

- Widen footpaths and narrow carriageway, with shared space environment.
- Improve pedestrian crossings.
- Deter indiscriminate parking.
- Introduce an appropriate palette of materials.
- Minimise street clutter.
- Restore the prominence of the Lady Erin

statue by de-cluttering and removing or reducing vertical elements nearby.

- Ensure that design enhances the heritage and built form of the street.
- Ensure the scheme is durable and consider maintenance.
- Adjust tree locations to suit new layout / consider their removal.
- Improve central public space through reorganisation or removal of car parking.





Old Market Street

There is an opportunity to create a sense of arrival into the city, at the same time as enhancing the setting of the Courthouse. A new public space to the north of the site could be defined by quality paving and street trees.

Key design considerations:

- Retain link to Old Market Street while calming traffic.
- Reduce carriageway, widen footpaths and improve pedestrian crossings.
- Deter indiscriminate parking.
- Introduce an appropriate palette of materials.
- Minimise on-street clutter through design.

- Ensure the design enhances the heritage and built form of the street.
- Ensure views are not obstructed to the Courthouse when seen from the south along Pearse Road.
- Ensure the scheme is durable and consider maintenance.
- Promote public space as a potential location for public art or street art.
- Ensure that future development opportunities to the rear of the courthouse are considered and not impeded through any design changes.





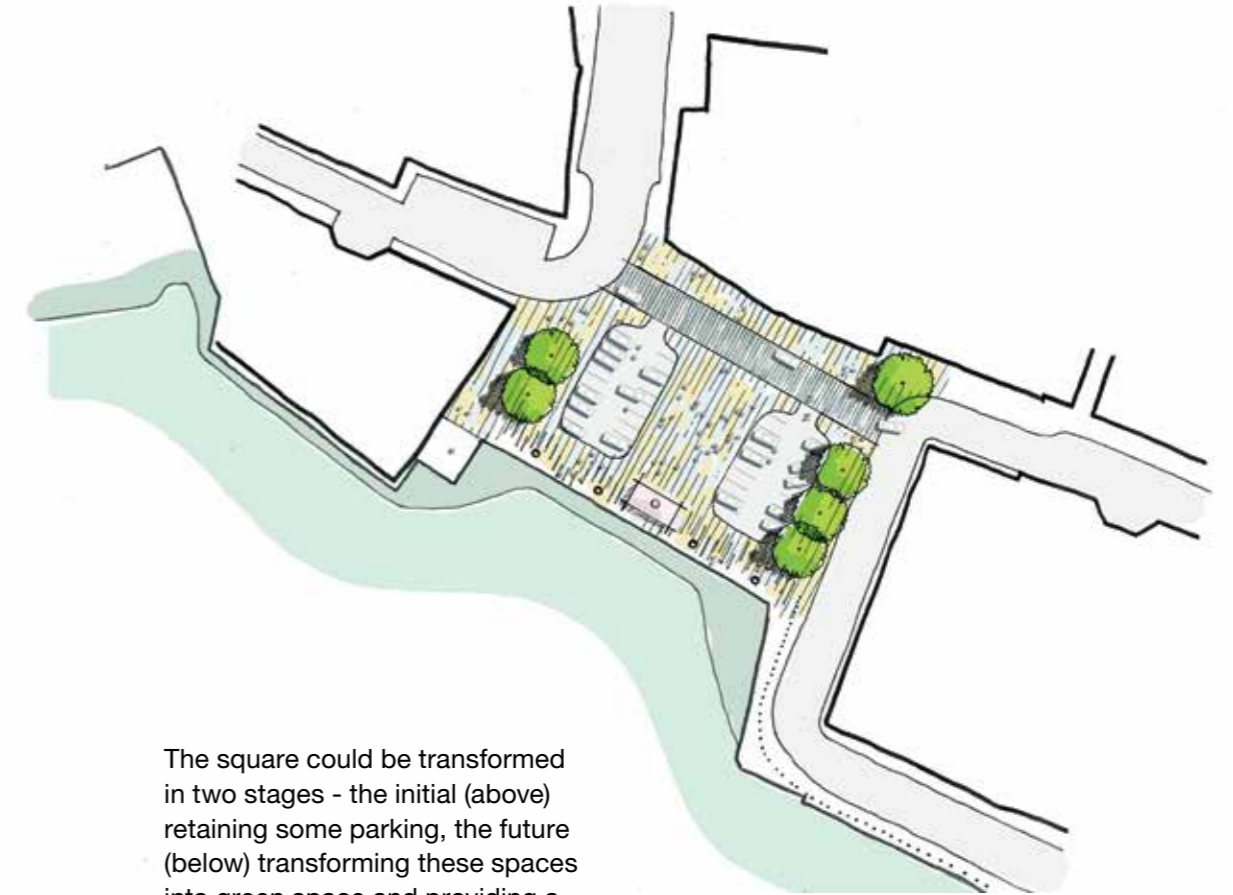
Quay Street

The existing car park can be transformed into a new public space along the riverfront, that can be a catalyst for future regeneration of this quarter.

Key design considerations:

- Wide vistas across the Garavogue River to be retained with all proposals.
- Seek to create a new civic space.
- Reduce the amount of car parking.
- Adjust the location of the Famine monument to suit revised layout.
- Reduce carriageway width, widen footpaths and improve pedestrian crossings.

- Ensure an enforceable scheme, deter indiscriminate parking.
- Introduce an appropriate palette of materials.
- Ensure the scheme is durable and consider maintenance.
- Investigate the inclusion of public art.
- Retain the slipway to the estuary and maintain access for specified use only.
- Highlight and enhance the quay wall and associated fixtures and fittings as a feature of the new square.
- Consider the removal of the Malbec (sunken boat) and the installation of a pontoon for small boats.
- Promote urban regeneration of the existing buildings to lift the overall space.



The square could be transformed in two stages - the initial (above) retaining some parking, the future (below) transforming these spaces into green space and providing a pedestrian riverfront square.



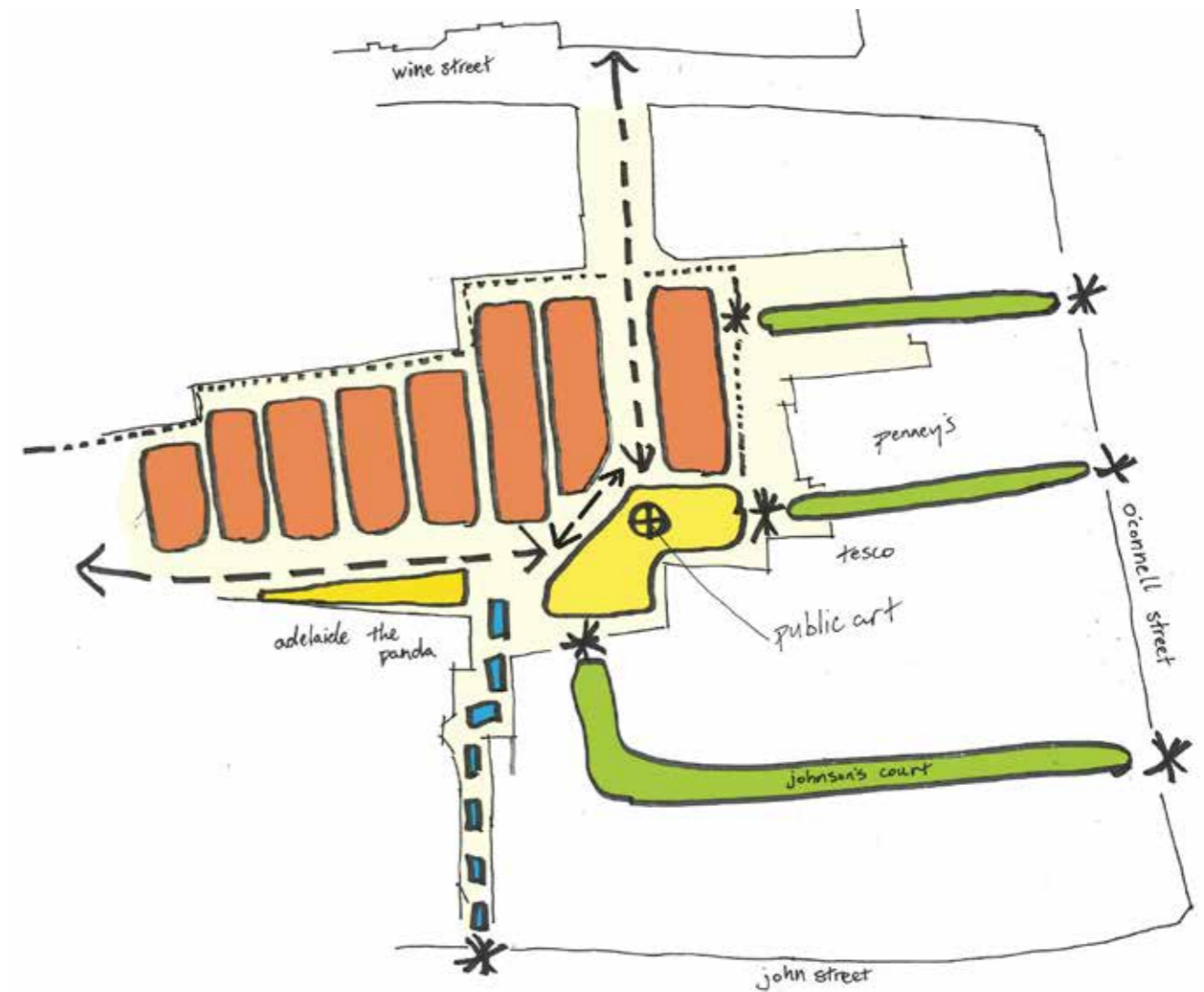
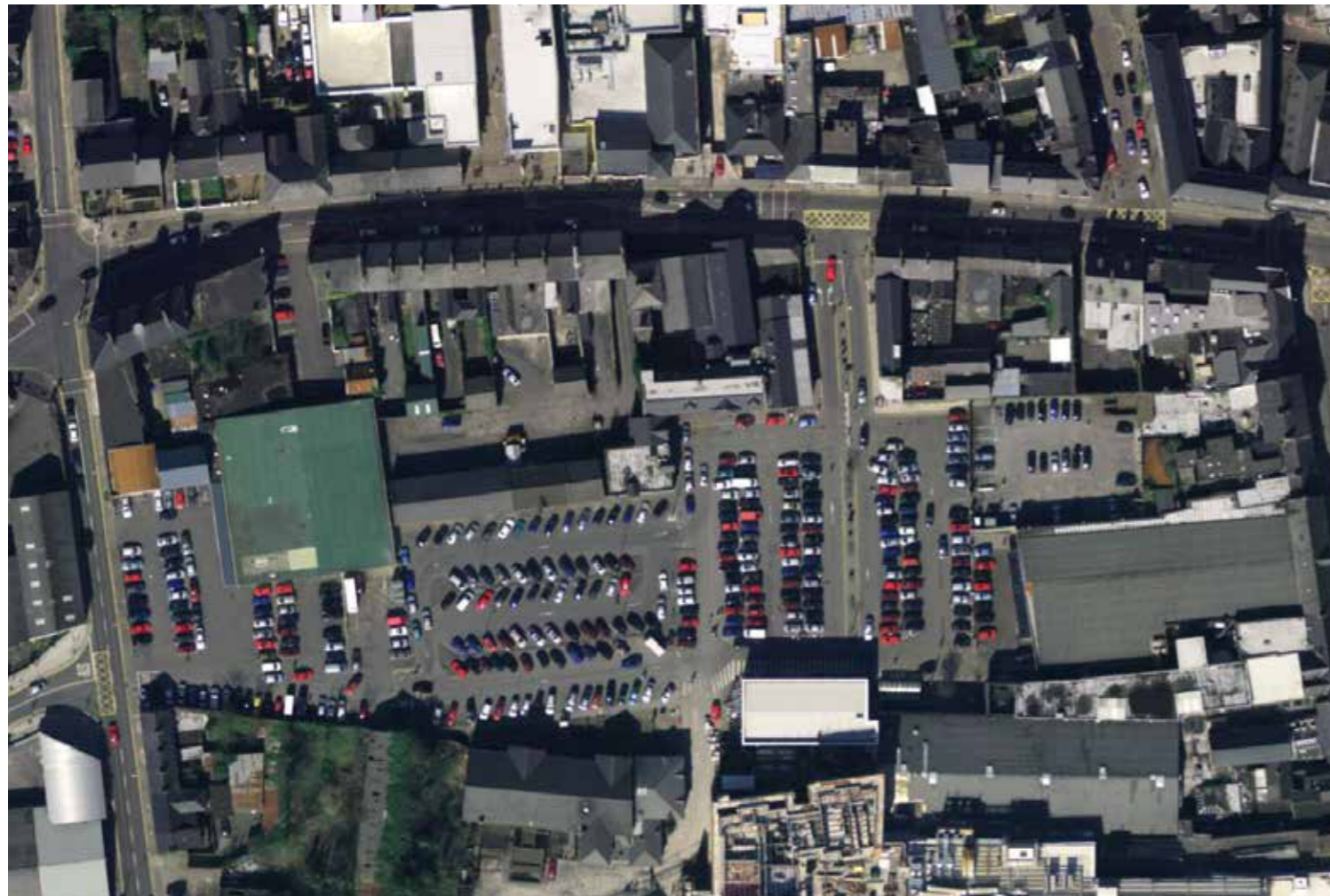
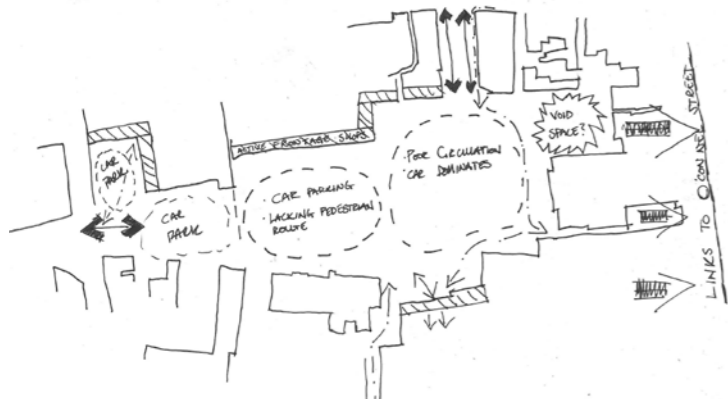


Wine Street Car Park

Wine Street Car Park is one of the largest undeveloped areas in the centre of Sligo. This presents an opportunity for both new buildings and associated public spaces in the medium-to-long term.

Key design considerations:

- Improve the general experience for all users.
- Design clear, safe pedestrian routes.
- Rationalise the parking layout to make it easier to navigate.
- Improve links to O'Connell Street.
- Create pedestrian space at the pivotal point outside Tesco and the shopping centre.
- Ensure any design interventions are future proofed and permit development opportunities.



Actions

Short term - improve the nature of the car park.

Medium / long term - undertake a masterplan process which brings together all the current interest groups and landowners to determine a viable regeneration plan.

Abbey Street

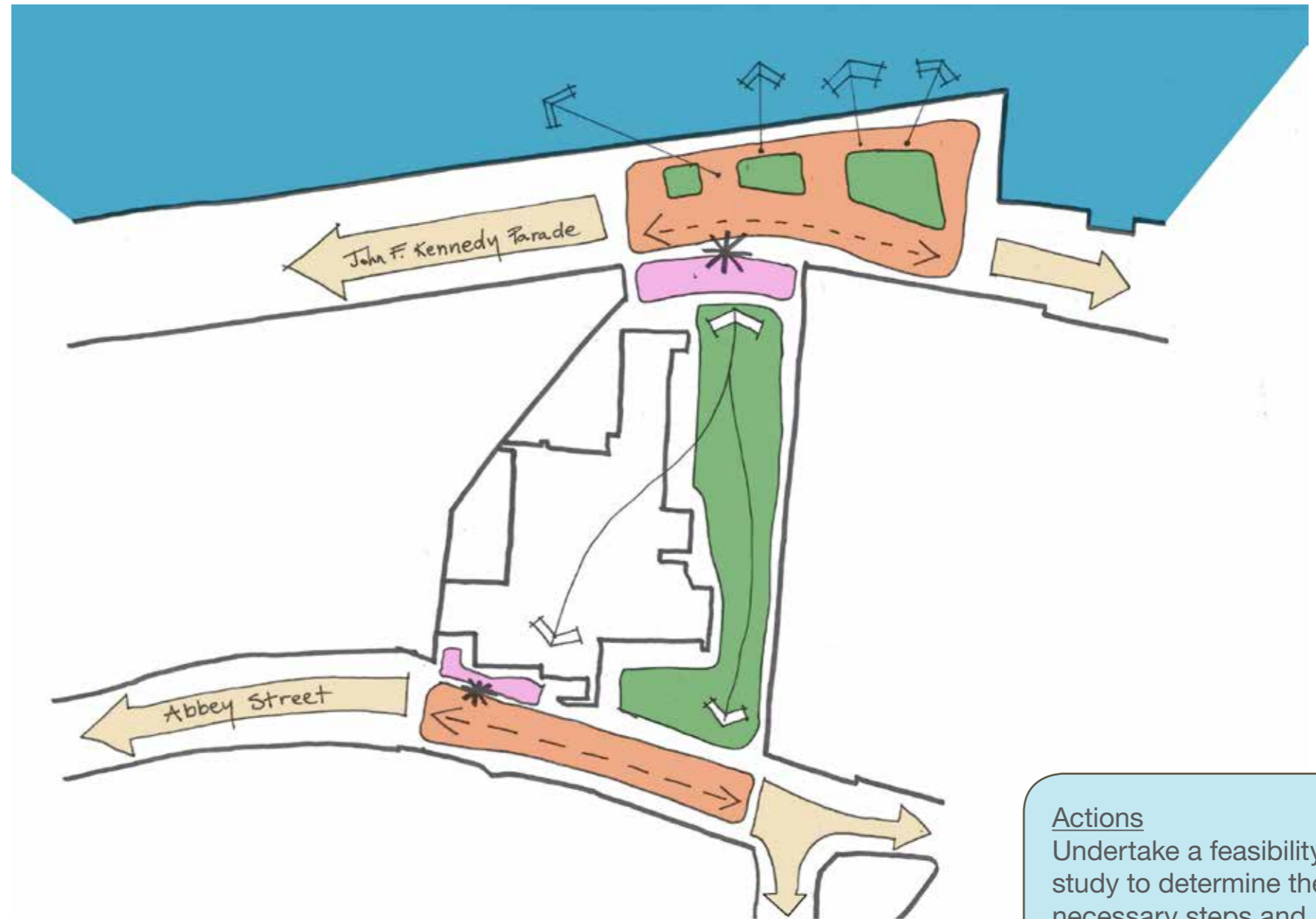
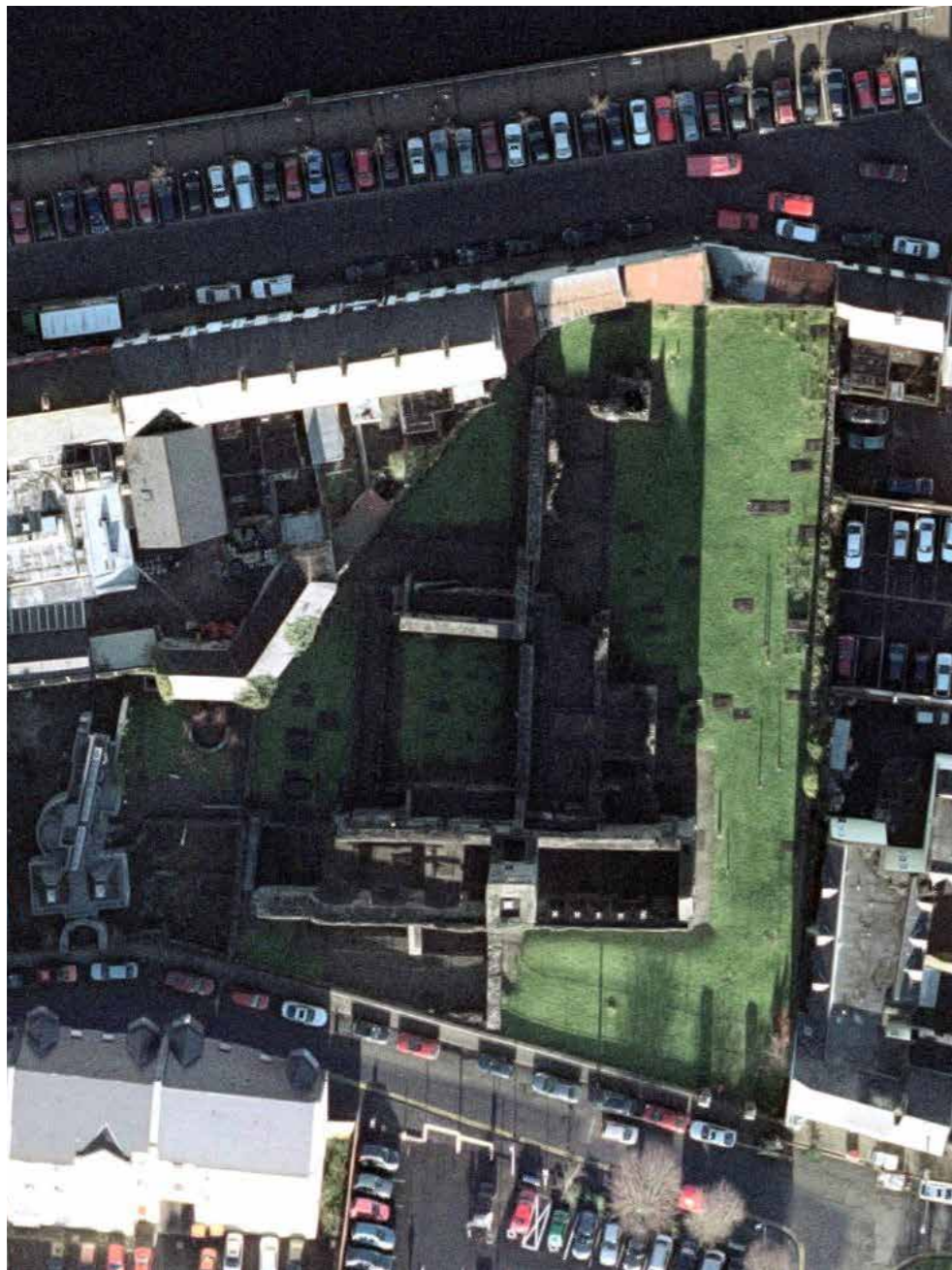
Sligo Abbey is a hidden gem which needs to be reconnected with the river and the city, thus enhancing the heritage value for all to enjoy.

Key design considerations:

- Open up the view of the Abbey to the riverbanks.
- Improve pedestrian access/wayfinding

to the Abbey from Teeling Street and the riverbanks.

- Enhance the public space in front of the Abbey.
- Extend the standard palette of materials for the town to the monument along Abbey Street.



Actions
Undertake a feasibility study to determine the necessary steps and potential to open up the Abbey to the river.

4

Stephen's Street & Cultural Plaza

Stephen Street and Cultural Plaza

Stephen Street car park has the potential to be the central, animated square which Sligo needs. This will help promote the city as a destination and provide the opportunity to host a wider range of events and activities.

Located across the river and connected to O'Connell Street by way of a footbridge and riverside walk, the Stephen Street car park is a town centre space that has in recent years been adapted to allow for larger events such as concerts, festivals, markets and public screenings. It has become, in essence, Sligo's central public space, albeit one that, like O'Connell Street, is transformed back to its original purpose – in this case a public car park, at the conclusion of any event it hosts.

The Sligo and Environs Plan's 'Open Space Strategy' envisages a network of different types of open space, including playgrounds and parks, all linked by cyclist and pedestrian-friendly green corridors. A specific objective of the Plan is to 'Establish Sligo as a premier green city of Ireland.'

'Sligo lacks public open spaces in the heart of the city.' In its Urban Design Strategy, the Council proposed the development of new, pedestrian-linked urban squares within the city centre, including one, Stephen Square, 'a new urban square on the existing Stephen Street car park site which would be capable of accommodating a variety of open air activities'.

This proposed new amenity "will address the Garavogue riverside. The size of the square would allow it to accommodate

a variety of open-air activities, such as an outdoor market for the sale of arts, crafts, antiques and specialist food items, including locally produced organic fruit and vegetables on the weekends. This market could also provide an outlet for local artists and organic farmers, building on Sligo's reputation for culture and fine food produce. Stephen Square would also serve as a transition space, with a niche market between the main retail area and the emerging Greenfort cultural precinct located to the north-east, between The Mall and Connaughton Road."

In addition to being capable of accommodating various activities, the ambition is to retain the existing mature trees and develop a children's play area at the city centre site.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the space the existing parking must be removed. Orientation to alternative parking in close walking distance should be enhanced. This necessitates improved pedestrian crossing points along Stephen Street, new signage with directional information showing parking and exploration of new links to car parking to the rear of the library.

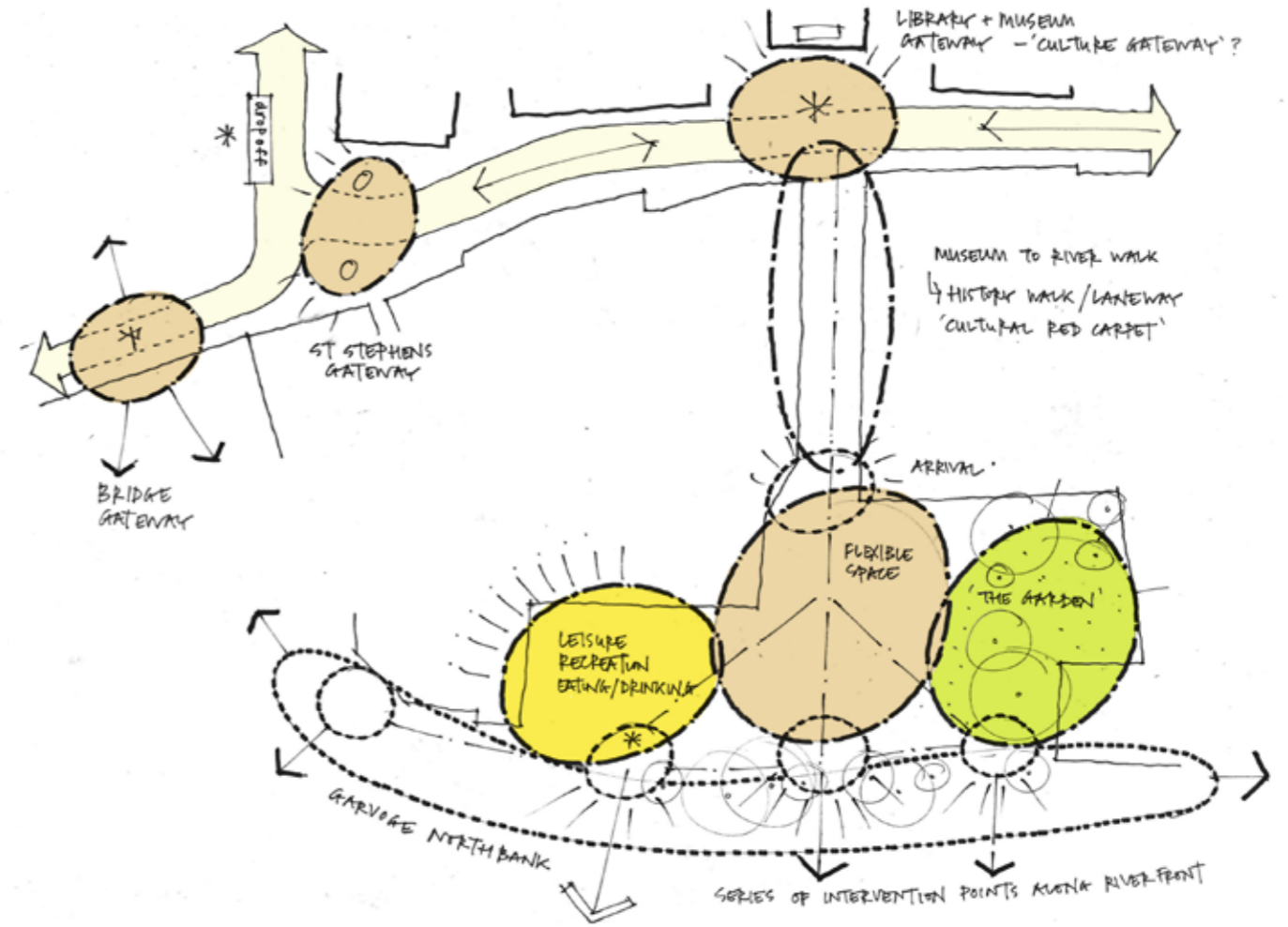
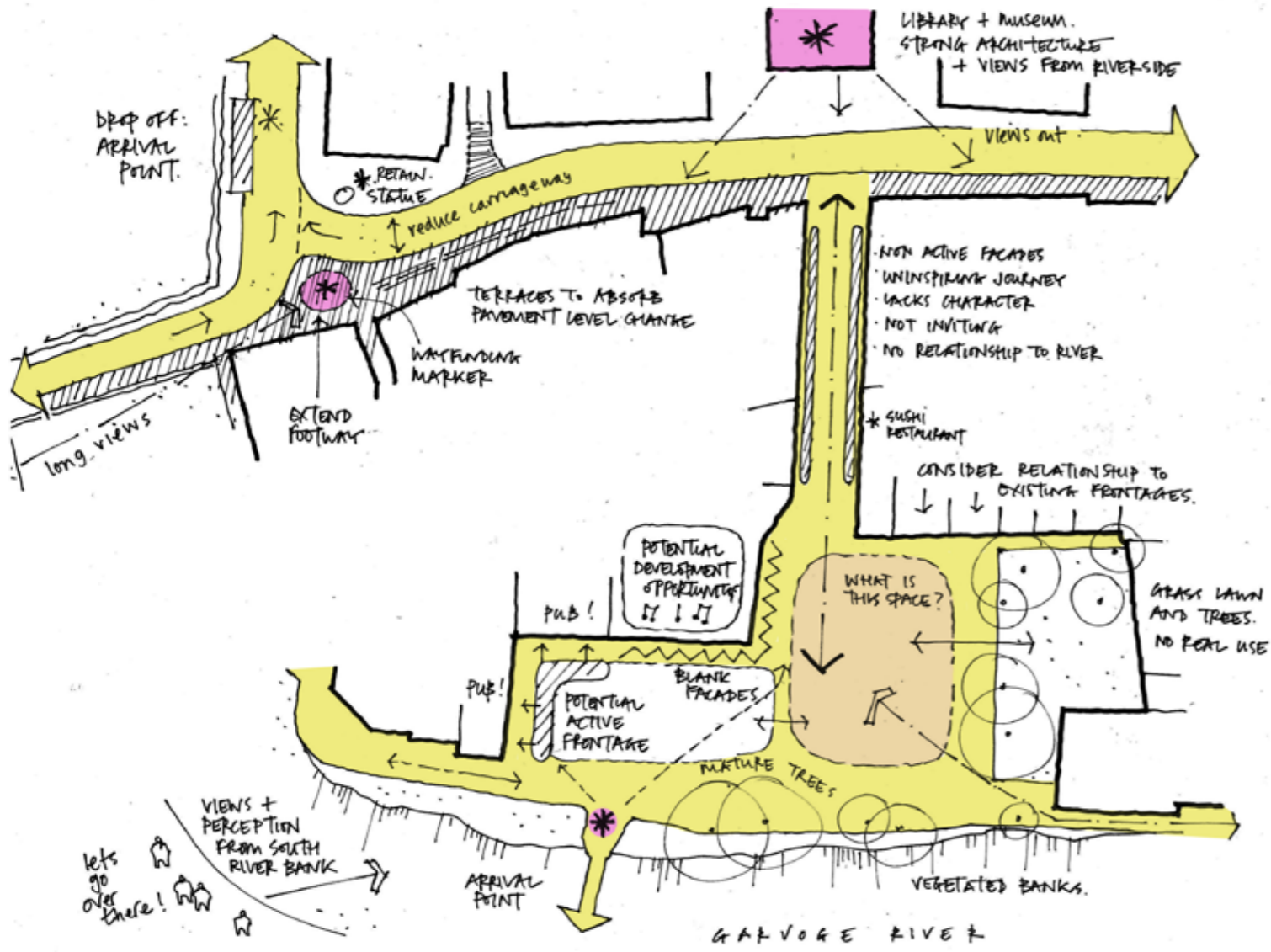
Given that the parking is being removed to create a pedestrian space, a rolling series of programmed events, including the existing large events and smaller weekly events must be organised to demonstrate the value achieved by the creation of the pedestrian space and increase footfall and dwell time in the square and the city centre as a whole.

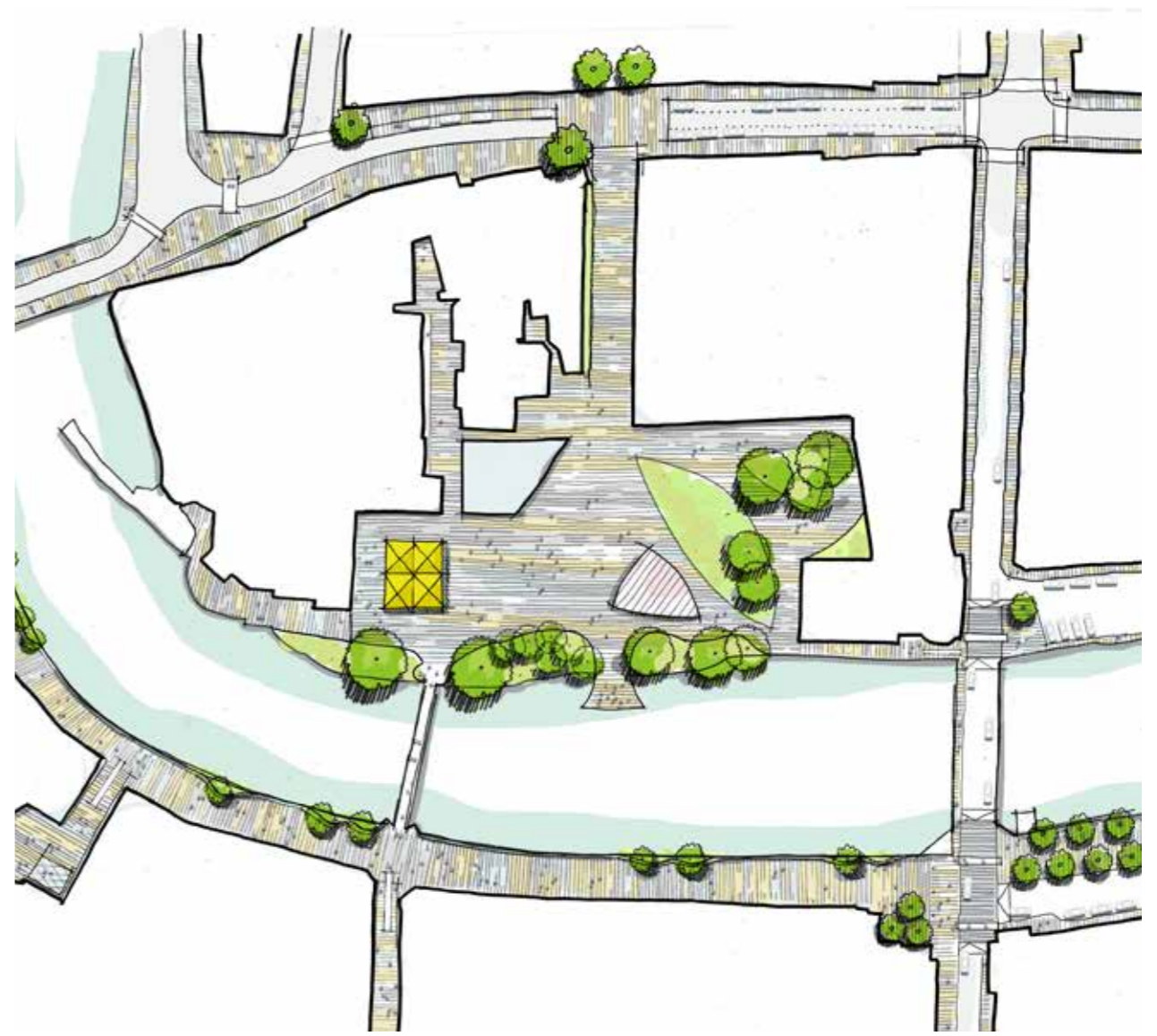
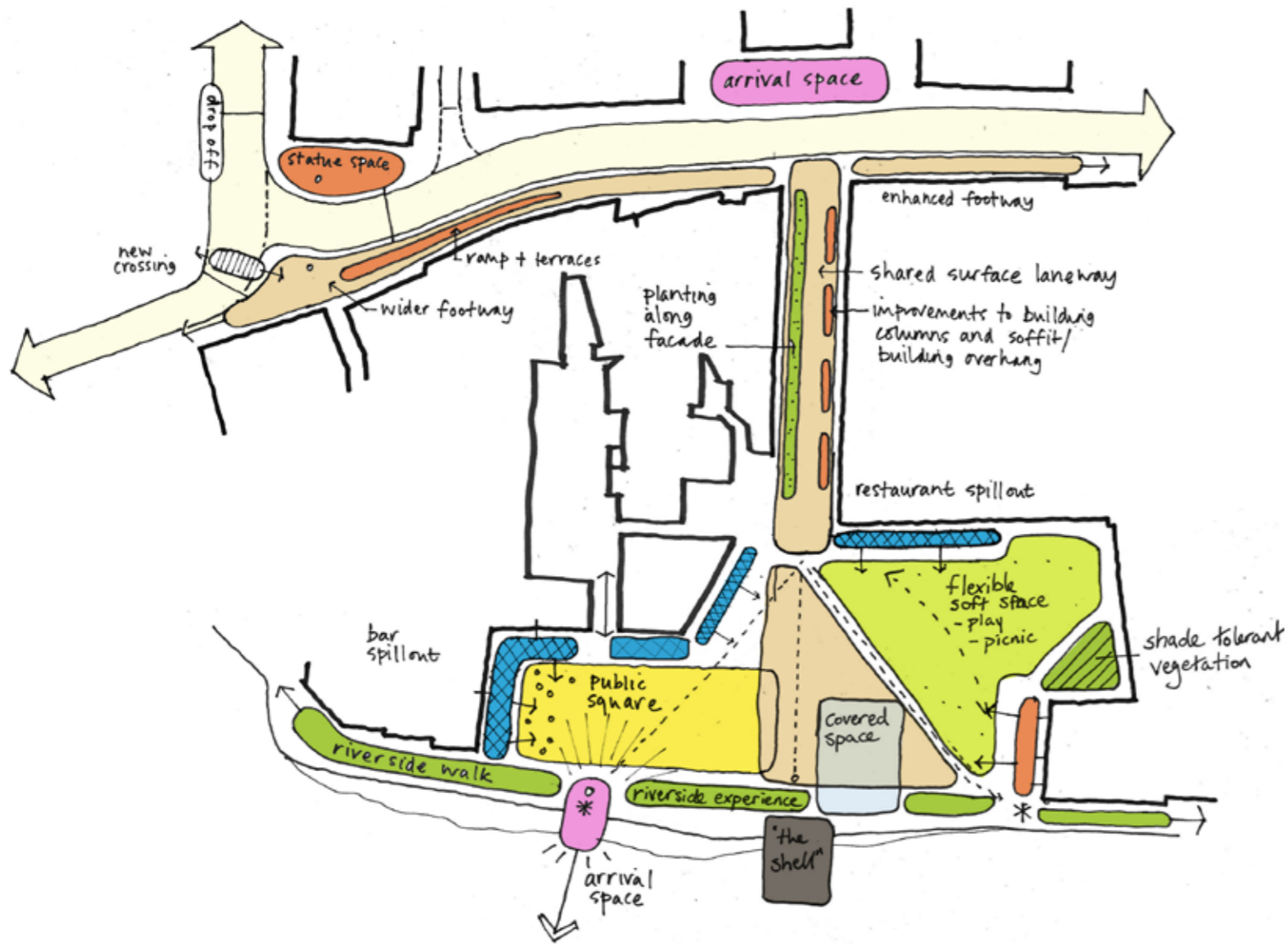
The Stephen Street car park has considerable potential for development as a public space for a range of cultural, recreational, social and other activities, given its city centre location, accessibility, and the scope for development on this site. While much has been achieved along the banks of the river with the earlier development of Rockwood Parade and the footbridge, this is an unfinished project waiting to achieve its full potential.

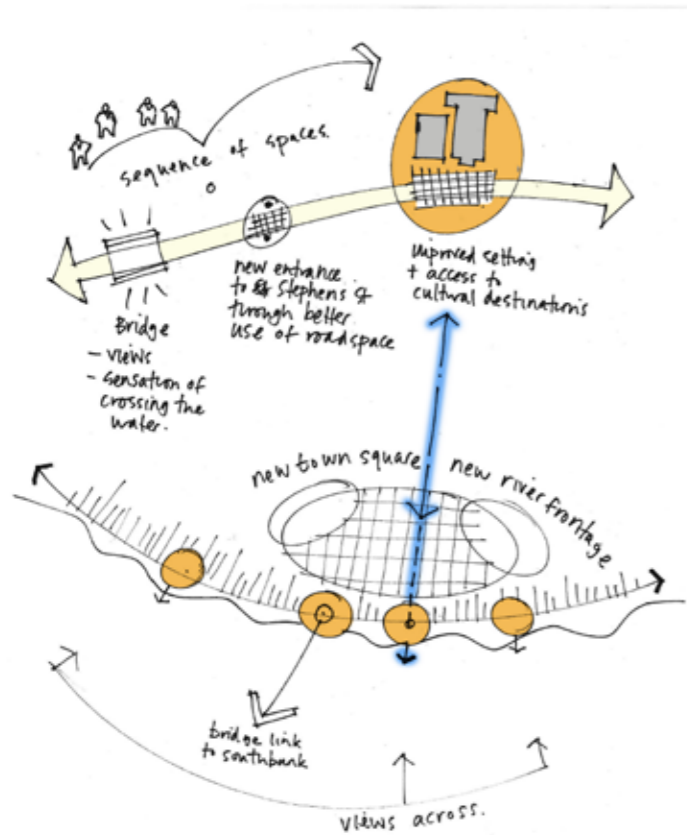
Key design considerations

- Replace Stephen Street car park with a multi-use civic space for the city.
- Incorporate existing design solutions for "the Shell".
- Provide a covered space or spaces.
- Provide space for large events – capacity to at least match the existing.
- Enhance existing frontages for bars and cafés.
- Provide integrated play space for children, considering nature, form and location.
- Retain, where appropriate, existing trees and introduce other elements of soft landscape at an appropriate scale and link to adjacent river walkways.
- Reduce carriageway width along Markiewicz Road / Lower Knox Street / Stephen Street and improve the footpath with consistent paving.
- Retain delivery and service access into the car park space.
- Seek a balance between vehicles, parking and pedestrians to suit a "High Street" environment to Stephen Street.

- Improve the setting of the buildings along Stephen Street leading to The Mall, with a focal space outside the library.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience through changes to levels along the southern side of Stephen Street.
- Introduce an appropriate palette of materials.
- Ensure the scheme is durable and consider maintenance.
- Explore the potential of the back of the Bank of Ireland building and the gap site adjacent to the coffee shop as either a site for a new building or an extended space.
- Investigate the inclusion of public art.







Stephen Street Cultural Plaza Vision

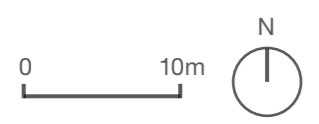


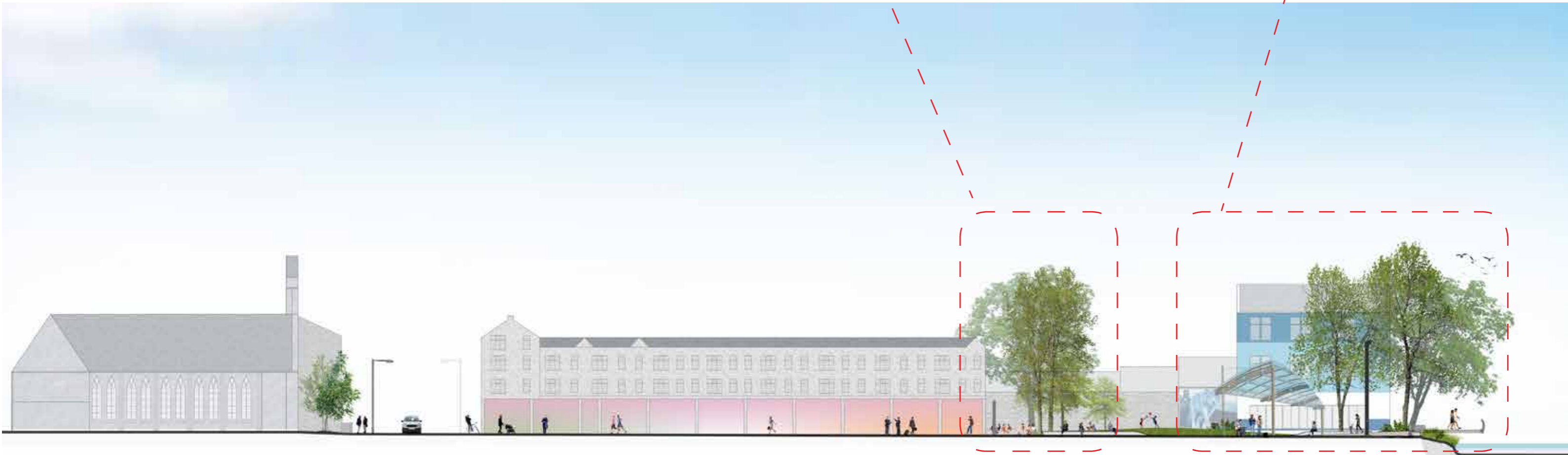
Artist's impression of the new square showing an ideal infill and feature building edges to further help animate the space.

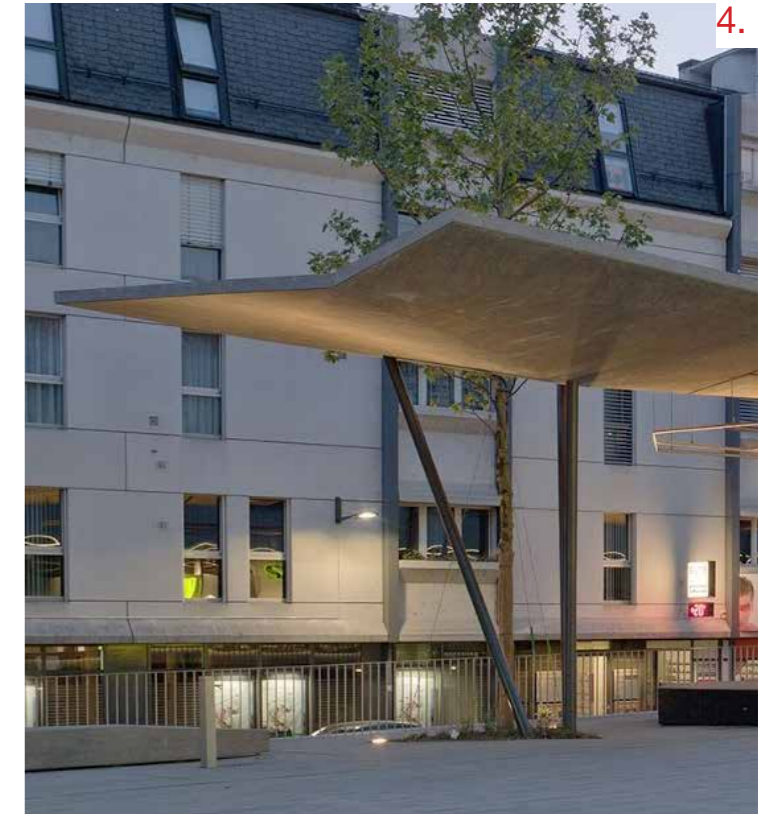


Key

- 1. Fixed canopy to be subject to architectural competition.
- 2. "The Shell" - a cantilevered stage to be subject to a separate part 8 process.
- 3. Retractable canopy.
- 4. Granite paving.
- 5. Retractable bollard.
- 6. Feature bench.
- 7. Interpretation and heritage.
- 8. Play elements.
- 9. Art feature.
- 10. Low shrub planting.
- 11. Lawn.
- 12. Reinforced grass.
- 13. Notional area for stage for large events - 10 x5m.







Stephen Street Cultural Plaza components:

1. Granite seating.
2. "The Shell" - cantilevered walkway.
3. Retractable canopies to forecourts.
4. Large multi-use canopy.
5. Granite boulders inset in re-enforced lawn.
6. Granite paving.
7. Coherent palette of street furniture.
8. Street lighting.
9. Low shrub planting.

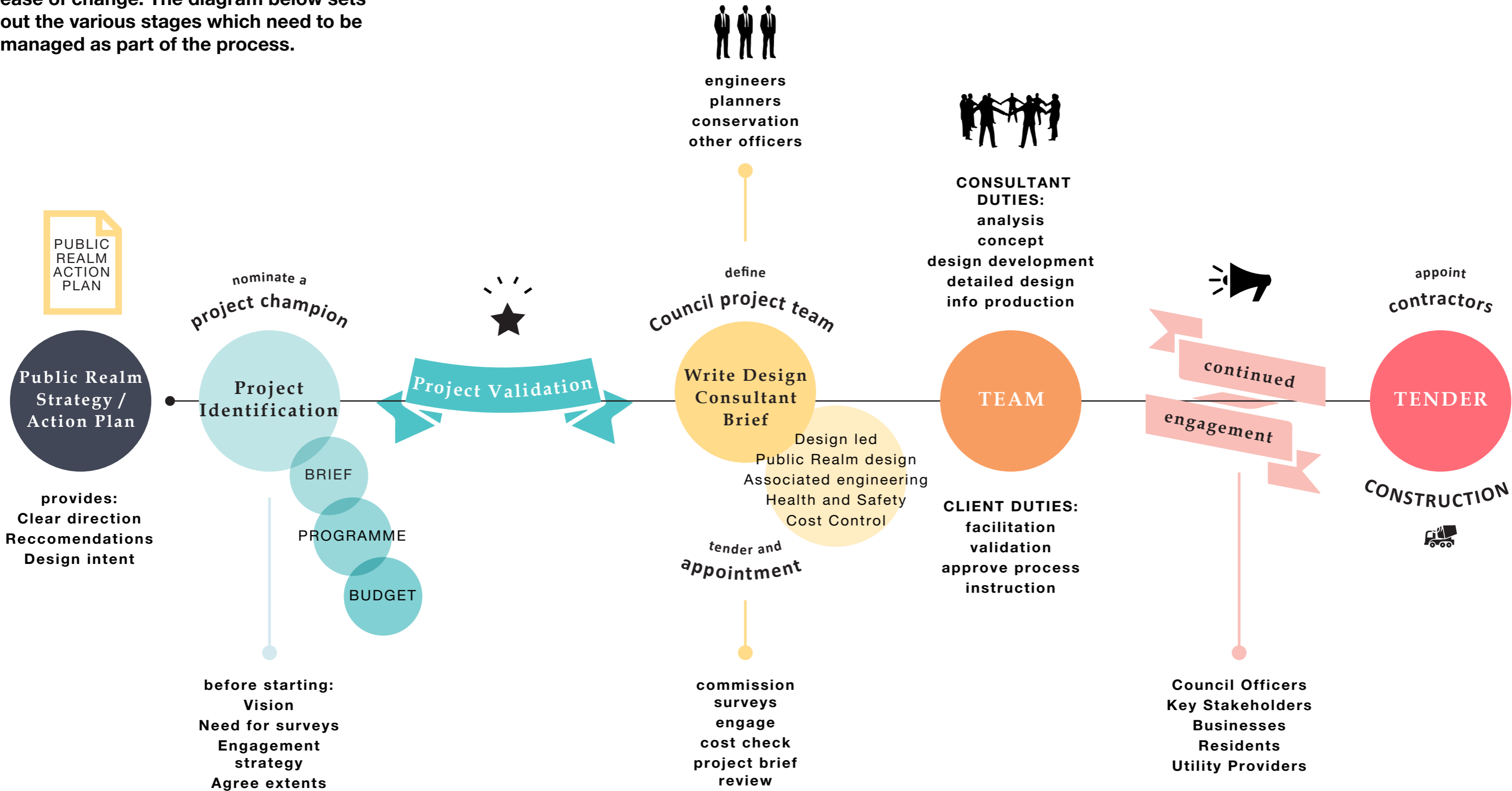
5

Implementation

Implementation Process

The process for every individual public realm project is complex and unique to each location. It is dependent on the site constraints, engagement, approvals and ease of change. The diagram below sets out the various stages which need to be managed as part of the process.

PROCESS chart



Programme

It is suggested that a five-year programme is put in place. The programme should be updated and extended quarterly, to ensure momentum and a logical progression in making changes within the public realm. As a starting point, each of the actions should be detailed with tasks, milestones and assumed delivery dates.

The programme needs to allow each public realm scheme the appropriate time for the various design stages, engagement, procurement and installation. As a general rule, one year is the minimum time to get from inception to start on site.

Funding

There are a number of potential funding streams available for public realm projects. It is unlikely that adequate funding for anything other than routine maintenance will be provided by Sligo County Council, hence the need to pro actively approach external funders. These may include the European Union, The Heritage Council, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and other bodies.

It is critical that any project presented for funding represents the quality aspired for and is not compromised by an insufficient budget. A public realm scheme in line with the design manual will generate a cost of between 350 – 500 Euros per m2.

Design

It is fundamental that all public realm schemes are design-led with integrated engineering, not the reverse. This represents a vital step change for Sligo that should be addressed by the City Centre Team. Design quality must be paramount and suitable consultants must be procured from inception. It is recommended, to ensure the best design approach, that consultants bid for work and are evaluated on quality, working within a provided cost bracket.

A public realm scheme requires the input of landscape architects, urban designers, engagement, multiple engineering professions, cost control, H&S and other professions depending on the project. As a general guidance, the overall consultant cost should be in the region of 10-15% of the capital value, half of which is for design.

Procurement

The capital cost of a public realm scheme is not only determined by the design and materials specified. The method and logistics of implementing the scheme within an urban environment and the associated constraints will directly influence the budget and the procurement procedure.

It is recommended to always provide a detailed site logistics plan, setting out all the constraints and limitations as part of the tender package, and to be mindful of the balance between working zones and disruption to business. As a general rule, working zones should be a maximum of 100m in length along a street. Traffic should be diverted where possible and pedestrian access and movement retained for business as usual.

Delivery

The quality of workmanship is fundamental to achieving a high-quality public realm. Adequate monitoring should be included and benchmarks and control samples agreed at the start of the scheme.

It is vital that the scheme is constructed in line with the specifications, without compromise, to ensure that the full design life of the public realm is achieved.

A healthy contingency, minimum 10%, should be in place to deal with unknowns below the paving surface. Full coordination with utilities must be commenced in the design stages.

Actions

Prepare a detailed five year programme for the implementation of this plan detailing specific tasks required for each project and an estimated timeline for same.

6

Emerging Actions

Emerging Actions

The following actions are proposed for Sligo, each contributing to the quality and aspirations for the public realm

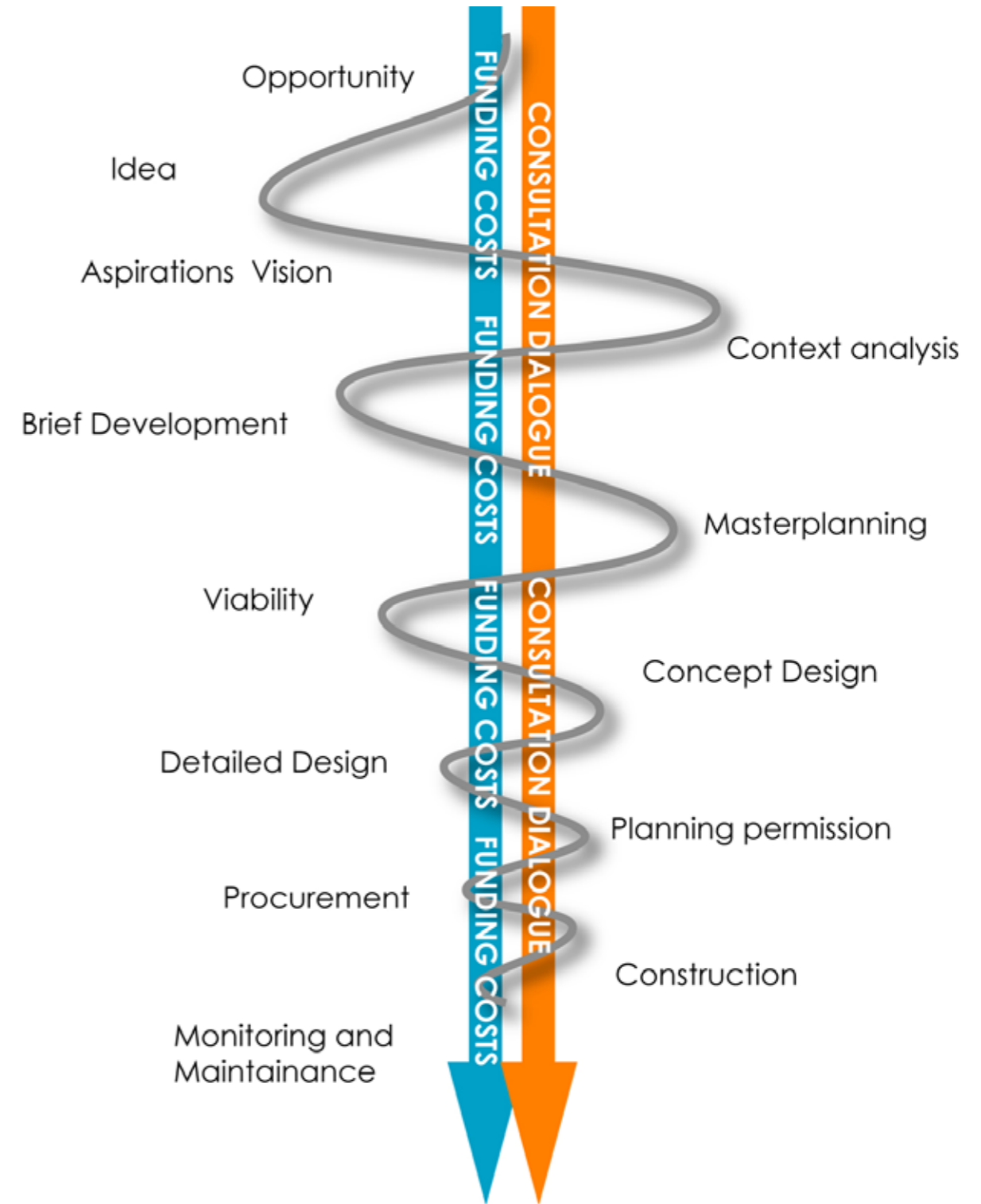
1. Set up a “city centre team” to manage all aspects of the public realm and ensure implementation of the Plan across all sections of the Council. The team should include a representative from:
 - Town Centre Management (to be appointed)
 - Planning
 - Architecture
 - Heritage
 - Infrastructure
 - Tourism
2. Develop and implement an engagement and public relations strategy to encourage public ‘buy-in’ and ownership of the Plan.
3. Produce a Council-approved specification for the use and application of materials within the public realm relative to the different zones within the city
4. Carry out an audit on a street-by-street

Depending on the nature of each project, one of the above needs to be selected as project manager to lead the initiative.

A Director of Service / senior level officer must be identified to lead the plan and be a champion of its intent.

basis, to assess the appropriateness of adding vegetation and greening the city.

5. Undertake a street lighting appraisal and strategy with an aim to upgrade street lights to LED and consider enhanced lighting to key buildings and monuments.
6. Produce a public art strategy for the city centre. Consider temporary art exhibitions which act as an educational and entertaining addition to the street scene.
7. Carry out and implement a wayfinding and signage masterplan to better orientate visitors around the City and aid connectivity between interest points and car parking.
8. Determine a standard palette of street furniture for everyday use and a performance specification for special artistic pieces.
9. Produce a Council policy and specification for the future-proofing of public space through the inclusion of the necessary coordinated infrastructure.
10. Conduct an audit of existing shopfronts on a street-by-street basis, identifying opportunity for improvement or rationalisation.
11. Apply for funding for the proposed capital projects.



7

Appendix

Stakeholder Consultation - 7th March 2018

Groups consulted:

Council departments
Heritage
Arts community
Tourism
BIDS team
Chamber of Commerce
Community services
Educational facilities
Design representatives
Business representatives

Responses from the stakeholder workshop:

1. What are the good things about the streets and spaces in Sligo?

A walkable compact city
Lots of interest and character
Great potential
Human scale of buildings and streets
A sense of heritage and variety
The river and surrounding
New safe bus park at the Model
Good sense of natural environment in the town
Aware of nature – river and geographical backdrops
Stephen street events and culture in the city

2. What issues exist within the streets and spaces?

Lack of gathering space/public space/
public square
Not enough people living in town centre
Lack of night time activity
Too many vacant shop units
Commercially difficult to draw in retail
High costs to renovate existing buildings,

therefore nothing happens
Too many cars/car dominated
Hard to increase footfall
Excessive parking
Poor arrival points
Not pedestrian friendly
Not cycle friendly enough
Difficult to navigate – for cars, pedestrians and bikes
Lack of connection between spaces
Not accessible for wheelchairs and other users
Centre block route access to train station
Too many bollards
Street signage – clutter, too much and very poor quality
Rain channels to the street – uncomfortable walking
Uncomfortable metal seats
Lack of uniformity in street furniture
No covered space
No identity of each street and loss of language of the town landscape

3. What improvements could be made?

Develop a masterplan to interconnect streets
Careful placement of public places – awareness of natural environment
Public spaces that allow natural softness mixed with practical hard landscaping
Incentives to live in the town centre - expand
HC incentive to get people to live above shops
Completion of the Yeats Mile
Reduce multiple car parks with underground or multi-storey, with some designated on-street parking
Better public transport
Less on-street parking
Retain and enhance the historic core
Greening of the public realm - more green

spaces including planting link - trees and pollinators
Minimalistic covering for public squares / Covered walkways
Wider footpaths
More accessible pedestrianised spaces, with views
Lessen/remove visual clutter – signage
More comfortable seats, including sunny positions
Create a consistent language of materials / Unified paving
Free Wi-Fi in public spaces
More art/sculpture
Open up the Abbey to the river
Play spaces & bike lanes & rental
Universal public plaza on the river
Places where people can congregate
Town centre market
Town square/performance space

4. The vision – what should this include?

Create an identity that is specifically Sligo – positive identity
A unique city – centre of international activity
Sligo to be an international destination, not just a country town – heritage, literature, technology, academia
Activity that connects with the landscape
Embrace the historic while encouraging a fresh approach
Pedestrian friendly
Family friendly and safe
A living city – people/families living in the city centre
Recognise potential of city centre
Connect existing green space and view points
Views embraced/pathways encouraged
Built on its heritage and streets

Improved river and amenities
Improved green spaces and links
High quality street and shop signage

5. Objectives/initiatives – what should this include?

Strict planning guidelines for commercial premises & residential & colour plan
Link from Cathedral to Greenfort
Uniform high quality – consistent design
City centre public gardens
Improved river/waste amenities
Views embraced and pathways encouraged
Yeats' history embedded in furniture design
Car parking – park on outside of town
Quay Street – turn Quay Street into a park
Encourage more town centre living
Tourism initiative to be coherent with plan

6. Potential key areas for intervention

Regularisation of on-street parking/loading bays
Stephen Street car park development
Better directions to the centre, especially Castle Street and High Street
The Abbey – connect to the river
Quay Street car park and associated riverside views
Wine Street car park
The setting of Civic buildings and arrival points – e.g. Ulster Bank
More public art/sculpture
Improved links from train and bus station into town
Use empty commercial space as cultural/ arts & crafts pop-ups/artist incubation space
Green trail to link town & Peace Park & Fort

Stakeholder Consultation - 22nd of May 2018

Groups consulted:

Council departments
Heritage
Arts community
Tourism
BIDS team
Chamber of Commerce
Community services
Educational facilities
Design representatives
Business representatives

Attendees

Michael Kirby
Wendy Lyas
Pat O'Brien
Darragh Murphy
Gillian Ní Chaiside
Elizabeth Clyne
Allen Banks
Leo de Bré
Tony Conway
Una Parsons
Peter Tiernan
Martin A.
Des Paul
Finbar Filan
Aidan Doyle
Fiona Candon
Conor McCarthy
Richard O'Beirne
Chris O'Malley
Michael Barrett
Jim Lawlor
Gail McGibbon
Miriam Crowley

Overview Comments

- Consideration of access from N4
 - People may be by-passing Sligo on the Wild Atlantic Way
- Will the project include the east-link bridge?
- Safety – from 7PM onwards the streets see considerably less people - “a ghost town”
 - o People needed to live in the town
- Will there be interim testing of the plan?
 - o Temporary bollards?
 - o Test the use of high quality materials?

Market Cross

- Similar to Bath, UK – has BDP considered having footpath and roadway at the same level?
 - o Flat spaces – can be used as a multi-purpose space
- Care should be taken to avoid ending up with an improved public realm and no shop vendors present (concern with removal of parking)
- Question raised regarding consideration of use of rumble strips at entrances to pedestrian priority areas

Old Market Street / Pearce Street

- Concern with access to antique shop, seen as a niche store in the town. Consideration of loading bay type suggested

O'Connell Street

- Route taken questioned – was there consideration to have the carriageway meander down the street with bollards, similar to Killarney
- Have breaks in traffic been considered – such as crossings?

Stephen Street

- Can articulated trucks use Stephen Street?

Rockwood Parade

- Consideration of a “photospot” for Ben Bulbin (unique views towards Ben Bulbin and the coast) / interpretation point
- Will treatment of the weir feature in these proposals:
 - o Missed opportunity if not
 - o See proposals from Sean Martin
 - o River needs to be addressed
 - o Fundamental to overall project

Quay Street

- The pier is seen as a great pace.
- Controlling the water level should be considered here.
- Removal of the shipwreck present advised.
- There is a sense of arrival when approaching the city via the N4 – should do more to reflect this – “a nice site”
- Prime development area Wine Street
- Quayside Shopping Centre route – between 2 sites

Abbey Street

- A real shame that it closes so early
- Part of the medieval town
- A “gem”
Stephen Street Cultural Plaza
- New position of stage – north where street runs to Stephen street
- Public toilets – calls to address public toilets raised were quashed by other stakeholders
- Signage needed – wayfinding towards hotels
- Has a full covered space been considered by BDP?

- Point raised that a bigger canopy would attract markets and bands
- Will there be seating other than wall seating / - deemed uncomfortable without

General Comments

- Shopfronts – can anything be done?
 - o All shops should have awnings with a similar colour
- Smart city? Has this been considered
- O'Connell Street will be the most important
- A very “promising” report
- Sell as a positive for new development – similar to Westport, Galway
- What happens to the median on the N4 – Would trees planting be possible?

