



Tobergal Lane, Sligo

2.4 Urban Renewal and Regeneration

2.4.1 Background and Context

Sligo has been the beneficiary of two programmes of urban renewal since the introduction of the Urban Renewal Act in 1986. Significant infill development in the city centre has taken place and several areas have been developed as a result, including Rockwood Parade, Tobergal Lane and Market Place. In the process of securing tax designation under the last scheme, an Integrated Area Plan for Sligo was prepared (1998). It included several areas, such as the Wine Street Centreblock, the 'Cultural Quarter', the 'Abbey surrounds' and areas to the south-east around Market Street and the High Street.

However, many of these areas have not yet reaped the benefits of their current designation, and the identification of additional areas worthy of future consideration should not detract from the importance of achieving the stated goals for the current areas. The Development Plan will be renewed before the expiry of the current Integrated Area Plan. The central areas designations have already been passed by the elected representatives and sealed by government approval, so it therefore follows that this development plan must incorporate the proposals of the Integrated Area Plan. If the centre block masterplan is a constituent of the Integrated Area Plan, the development plan must in its course incorporate this plan also or at least must incorporate those provisions or principles which are adopted by the elected representatives. Since the Development Plan will then be current for a period of at least six years the masterplan as adopted is secured as the stable development framework for the block for some time to come. This certainty thus gives developers and traders a secure framework within which to work towards implementation. Thus, it is the policy of this development plan to adopt the Integrated Area Plan and the Wine Street Centreblock framework plan as integral elements of this development plan.

2.4.2 Urban Renewal Sites

The Planning & Development Act, 2000 requires local authorities, in preparing their development plans to include objectives for the development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration. To fulfil this obligation and so as to assist in future designations the NBA has carried out an extensive survey in 2002 of areas that require urban renewal (see Urban Renewal Maps - Maps 14 - 14.3). Two distinct types of area have been identified as suitable for urban renewal tax incentives. Firstly, buildings in need of refurbishment, due to poor condition or dereliction and which are worthy of retention. The second type of area identified in the survey is a brownfield site. This latter type can include buildings or structures, although in most cases they are of no special character and do not merit retention. The term 'brownfield' requires some clarification in the context of this survey. It refers to under-utilised or vacant sites within the urban fabric, and occasionally may include certain functions which are deemed to be inappropriate in their current location.

The Urban Renewal Survey partially built upon work that had already been carried out in the Building Condition Survey of January 2002. This was a comprehensive survey of all buildings within Sligo that identified those that were deemed to be in poor condition, derelict or vacant. Results can be viewed in Map 15.



Sligo contains many centrally located brownfield sites

2.4.3 Urban Renewal Framework Plans/Development Briefs

From the total number of sites identified on the Urban Renewal Maps - Map 14 -14.3, there are a certain number of sites that are in multiple ownership, or which display certain constraints in relation to car parking, access or which require a particularly sensitive approach to their design and layout. For these reasons, a number of sites have been identified for the preparation of 'Development Briefs' or 'Urban Renewal Framework

Plans,' which will seek to establish a co-ordinated approach to the redevelopment of sites and offer a guide to potential developers and landowners as to the sites redevelopment potential. These briefs and plans may also provide the basis for compulsory acquisition, i.e. use of CPO powers in the public interest.

These identified sites focus on the city centre, since it is not considered appropriate to divert the focus of renewal upon outer area localities when several key central sites are in need of attention. Their identification in this context does not necessarily make them suitable only for built development, but merely acknowledges they are suitable for re-use of some description, be it for business, residential, retail use or civic, cultural or environmental amenity.

The sites are discussed below and illustrated in the Objectives Map. (Note: Sites are not prioritised).

1. Backland areas to the west of Wolfe Tone Street.
2. An undeveloped area, including backlands in an area bound by The Lungy (to the west), and situated behind the residential streets of Church Street, Dominic Street and Temple Street (to the south) and bound by Market Place (in the east).
3. Area of grassland between Temple Street and Gallows Hill.
4. Buttermarket & Sligo Harbour South Bank above Lower Quay Street.
5. Former Wharf, Fish Quay.
6. Area south-west of Hughes Bridge. Lynn's Dock.
7. Station rear-ground as far north as Finnisklin Road.
8. Site of proposed civic square and north-west edge of Adelaide Street.
9. Stephen Street Car Park.
10. Riverside northbank, Kempton Promenade to J.Fallon footbridge.

2.4.4 Sligo Docklands

In April 2002, the government announced a grant aid allocation of one million euro for Sligo Harbour under the BMW Region – Seaports Measure of the National Development Plan. This funding is intended to enable Sligo Harbour Authority to initiate its Sligo Harbour Regeneration Plan 2001. The plan aims to develop the harbour's estate, maximise income from under-utilised assets and develop new sources of revenue from its existing property portfolio to underpin a broad range of developments at the harbour. Sligo harbour is trading profitably and has a considerable inventory of leasehold assets but needs to exploit its potential as a mixed purpose harbour. The harbour has the potential to develop marine tourism and leisure activities to complement local sailing activity.



View of Sligo Harbour from the N15 road

Local participation by Sligo County Council is essential to the successful future of the harbour. The government intended that the investment will facilitate transfer of responsibility for the harbour in line with government policy as provided for in the Harbours Act 1996, to the local authority who represent the ultimate beneficiaries of the activities of the harbour and its users. Sligo County Council will be expected to take control of the harbour and would be hopeful of a tax-designation to kick start the redevelopment of the dock area.

As outlined in the Retail & City Centre Strategy, lands to the immediate North West of the proposed Inner Relief Road will be suitable for expansion of the city centre in the long term beyond the lifespan of this plan. The vision for this area is to create a vibrant mixed-use development zone on a par with any modern European city, with an integration of business, office, live-work units, and a strong residential component



Waterfront Development

of 'urban living space.' In addition, the local authority will encourage commercial developments and locally generated retail development, particularly at ground floor level, including bars, restaurants and cafes. Leisure and entertainment facilities will also be encouraged in the area, especially where they may have greater space requirements than a city centre location can offer. Most of these activities will be encouraged north and east of the railway line - between Finnisklin Road and Ballast Quay.

In order to achieve this image or vision, some incompatible industrial uses will be encouraged to move further west into redundant dockland areas or into other industrial areas. Port related activity will be encouraged to consolidate their activities along Deep Water Quay. Lands in these areas have the potential to accommodate a number of 3000-4000 sq.ft size units of office/industrial development, including incubator space for hi-tech firms as highlighted by Enterprise Ireland's Regional Development Strategy.

Public access to the harbour frontage remains a priority, and development should incorporate a riverside walkway or boardwalk for public access and the provision of a cycleway. The aim is to have a continuous pedestrian and cycle route from Quay Street, which will extend the length of the Harbour. Provision of a boardwalk should be designed in such a way as to minimise any harm, either directly or indirectly, to the delicate environmental ecosystem. It should therefore be designed in close consultation with Duchas - the Heritage Service, given the European status of environmental designations of Sligo Harbour. The provision of bars, cafes and restaurants will be considered favourably in locations fronting the Harbour provided they are of appropriate scale and do not hinder public access along the proposed harbour side walkway/cycle path.

2.4.5 Policies

It is the policy of the local authorities to:

- Ensure that developers have regard to the provisions of the adopted Integrated Area Plan (1998), the Centre-Block Masterplan (1999) and the IAP Framework Plans (2000).
- Promote the development of a vibrant mixed use zone in former docklands areas in the vicinity of Ballast Quay and the Railway Line, which will include offices, business use, live-work units, apartments, commercial activity and locally generated retail developments (such as convenience shops, laundry facilities, video rental, etc.) in addition to cafes, bars and restaurants. In order to promote this a comprehensive masterplan or local area plan will be required, incorporating a clear and comprehensive structure and form for the redevelopment of the area. Piecemeal or one-off developments will be discouraged in the absence of such a plan or comprehensive vision for the area (Refer to Objective UD1 in section 2.13).
- Promote the future provision of a tourist boat service from a site at Ballast Quay that is in proximity to the city centre.
- Promote, subject to environmental assessment, marine tourism and leisure activities within the harbour.
- Promote the re-use of redundant dock buildings, particularly for apartments, where structures are in good condition and are worthy of retention.
- Consider the use of CPO powers, where necessary, in order to secure appropriate and integrated development.
- Adopt the Centre Block Masterplan (1999) as an integral and constituent part of the development plan to act as the principal framework for the development of the urban block delineated by Adelaide Street, Wine Street, O'Connell Street and John Street (This document is available for review and/or purchase at the Offices of the Planning Authority).



Riverside Development, Sligo



Aerial Photograph of Sligo emphasises the need for Urban Renewal in certain areas of the city

2.4.6 Objectives

It is the objective of the local authorities to:

- UR1** Prepare as resources permit, site development briefs and urban renewal framework plans for those sites identified under Section 2.4.3 and as indicated in the Development Objectives Maps - Map 21 & 21.1.
- UR2** Ensure for any redevelopment proposal associated with the docklands or quayside, that there are adequate provisions of a harbour side walkway and cycleway.
- UR3** Promote the urban renewal and regeneration of those sites identified on the Urban Renewal Maps 14, 14.1, 14.2 & 14.3.
- UR4** Continue to promote the renewal and regeneration of previously identified sites as identified on the Objectives Map 21.1.
- UR5** To prepare a development brief or action area plan for the lands behind Union Place and the former railway line. Such an action area plan should enable a more comprehensive redevelopment of the area and also present other possibilities for accessing the backlands.
- UR6** Implement the Centre Block Masterplan (1999) as a matter of priority, while having regard to the following critical factors:
 - UR6.1** The development of 15,000 square metres of retail floorspace in the centre of the Adelaide Street/O'Connell Street block, as outlined indicatively in diagram 708 of the Centre Block Masterplan.
 - UR6.2** A new network of pedestrianised urban spaces.
 - UR6.3** The elimination of all surface car parking within the block in tandem with the development of a multi-storey car parking facility for the accommodation of 1,000 cars.
 - UR6.4** Permitted building heights of up to five and seven storeys as represented indicatively on diagrams 804 and 805 of the Centre Block Masterplan.
 - UR6.5** Generally discourage residential use within the block except within the perimeter buildings to Wine Street, O'Connell Street and John Street, or the use will be open for consideration in limited locations by agreement with the Local Authority.
 - UR6.6** The development of two covered pedestrian malls between O'Connell Street and the centre of the block.
 - UR6.7** The elimination of any public pedestrian access between the centre of the block and John Street.
 - UR6.8** The development of bulk vehicular and service access to the block only from its west or Adelaide Street side.
 - UR6.9** The encouragement of leisure uses on the upper floor levels within the block subject to the satisfaction by the Borough Council that no disturbance shall be experienced by surrounding traders and residents.
 - UR6.10** Support the trading environment of existing business in Wine Street and O'Connell Street.
 - UR6.11** Facilitate and assist in the rational and orderly development as set out above by assisting in the assembly of the site and if appropriate in this regard by the use of the Council's powers of compulsory acquisition.

Map 14: Urban Renewal Map

Map 14.1: Urban Renewal Map

Map 14.2: Urban Renewal Map

Map 14.3: Urban Renewal Map

Map 15: Building Condition

