



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Area of Study

This study is focused on the urban block delineated by the following streets – Castle Street – Teeling Street – Old Market Street – High Street – and Market Street. For ease of reference, this area will be referred to as the ‘Courthouse Block’, given the fact that the Courthouse is the most significant landmark public building associated with the area.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a framework for the development of the area and to supplement this with urban design guidelines.

To date development within the block has occurred through incremental change and it has been through this process that this area, like much of Sligo, has retained its character. The aim of this plan is to identify the critical parameters which will allow for an intensification of activity within the block, while having regard for its inherent character.

This area is one of the oldest parts of Sligo town, and though it is in need of rejuvenation, it contains many historical features of interest. Following a statutory obligation in the Planning and Development Act 2000, on local authorities to include an objective for the preservation of the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010, has identified two ACAs that relate to the Courthouse Block.

The plan will examine the development pressure that exists in the area and provide guidelines that will seek a balance between the development pressures on the one hand and the conservation concerns on the other.

1.3 Background Documents

There are a number of background documents that have an influence on the development of the area. These documents are as follows:

- Sligo Integrated Area Plan (1998)
- Sligo Integrated Area Plan Urban Framework Plan (2000)
- Sligo and Environs Development Plan, 2004-2010

Other documents that have been of relevance include the Draft Architectural Conservation Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Dúchas, 2000).

In addition to these there have been a number of planning applications submitted for various sites within the block. Planning applications that have been granted by the Planning Authority (without appeal) are valid for a period of five years. The framework plan will examine which of these applications are still ‘live’ or under construction as such schemes are likely to have an influence the future pattern of development in the area.

Finally, in some instances the decision of the Planning Authority to grant planning permission has been successfully appealed to An Bord Pleanála (ABP). In such instances, the application is reviewed in its totality and the Bord can assess the application on any criteria it sees fit. ABP’s Inspector’s Reports have been examined to determine the independent view of the Bord in relation to the future development of the area.