Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

WESTGATE VISION

Townscape Recovery Guide

For Property Owners, Investors and Developers

Westgate Vision Area

Nationally, the importance of urban design in achieving quality outcomes is recognised whilst area based urban renewal has a proven record in achieving sustainable and systematic urban regeneration. In the context of the specific challenge of the Westgate Area, it was considered that area based urban design guidance was required to support and supplement the implementation of the Urban Design Framework Plan for the Heritage Quarter, Drogheda (2013). The Westgate Area was chosen for reasons including; its visual prominence, historic fabric, dereliction and vacancy, capacity to create a positive domain in a compact area and potential to catalyse development in adjoining areas.

Study Area 1
Barlow

Study Area 2
Old Abbey

Study Area 3
Donaghy's Mill

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

WESTGATE VISION

The following **six Strategic Guiding Objectives** are identified in response to the challenge in Drogheda:

1. Westgate and the broader town centre as the **vibrant heart** of the **wider hinterland**
2. Westgate as the **gateway** to Drogheda's **historic Town Centre** and the **Boyne Valley heritage sites**
3. Recovery of the townscape in Westgate to **act as a catalyst** for positive regeneration in the broader town centre
4. Delivery of **quality homes** and **employment** opportunities
5. **Directional environment** for private and public sector **investment decisions** & the co-ordination of built environment **regulation and guidance**
6. Implementation of **Best Practice Conservation**

Westgate Vision

Part 1
The Challenge

- Details historical, spatial & urban context
- Identifies interdependent hinterland
- Principal challenge is decay of centre & surburban growth
- Costs of investing/developing in centre compared to developing greenfield sites.

Part 2
The Response

- Identifies spatial extent of WGV Area
- National, local and economic
- Vision & Strategic Guiding Objectives
- Area based urban design strategy to recover townscape, etc

DESIGN C

1

Arrival Space at George's Square Gateway to Drogheda & Boyne Valley

2

Cultural, Entertainment Recreation cluster at Old Abbey Lane/Narrow West Street

3

New Homes = Ne
New population fo
safeguard the future
Town Cer

Part 3

The Recovery

- Identify the possibilities to realise the Vision
- Opportunity Sites selected
- Public realm improvements
- Re-use & adaption of existing buildings
- Integrated urban design strategy to recover the streetscape
- The Westgate Vision Area identifies 5 Design Concepts which are:

Part 4

Delivering the Vision

- Breakdown in 3 Stages
- Short Term 3 mths - 3 yrs
- Medium Term 3 - 5 yrs
- Long Term 5 - 10+
- Prepare monitoring report, etc

CONCEPTS

3

New Activation
for Westgate to
ture of Drogheda
Centre

4

Town Scale Public Space
(South of Abbey Shopping Centre) =
Civic focal point and activation of
the river promenade

5

Re-development of
Donaghy's Mill

Opportunity Sites

The Townscape Recovery Guide analyses the existing urban fabric and identifies a number of existing and proposed opportunities where feasibility for redevelopment and public realm improvement is examined within the 3 Study Areas of Barlow, Old Abbey and Donaghy's Mill.
The principal identified Opportunity Sites are as follows:

The development of these sites has the potential to physically transform and recover the townscape.

Delivering the Vision

This is to provide the Vision with leadership and administrative expertise and investigate the feasibility of the delivery of the objectives, which will be primarily through the realisation of the concepts and activation of the opportunity sites.

Stage 1

3mths - 3 yrs

- **Quick Wins** (Please see overleaf)
- Establish a Westgate Vision Team
- Provide 'One Stop Shop' for development proposals
- Review Traffic Management Plan & Prepare Landscaping Plan
- Explore feasibility of OAP housing at O'Reilly's Yard
- Facilitate redevelopment of Donaghy's Mill
- Interpretation & showcasing of medieval Town Walls
- Continue to seek heritage funding for Old Abbey
- Develop detailed plans for public realm projects
- Explore potential uses of LCC owned Protected Structure building on Fair Street adjoining O'Reilly's Yard
- Explore possible location for tourist coach park

Stage 2

3 yrs - 5 yrs

Embedding a Positive Dynamic

(Guide community/developers in their consideration of future development from feasibility to construction stage)

- Review Traffic Management & Landscape Plan including any updates on available data
- Redefine relationship with the River Boyne including public realm interventions
- Development of dedicated car park in Drogheda Town Centre
- Provision of parking south of Abbey Shopping Centre and at Donaghy's Mill
- Encourage cafe culture with residential & entertainment cluster in the Narrow West Street/Old Abbey Lane
- Housing at O'Reilly's Yard car park
- Investigate feasibility of redeveloping Abbey Shopping Centre and provision of undercroft car parking to the south
- Development of tourist infrastructure

Stage 3

5 yrs - 10 yrs plus

Consolidation & Growth

(Consolidate previous & potential investment decisions)

- Provision of quality homes within the vision area
- Realising concept of George's Square as an arrival space
- Consolidation of Old Abbey & Narrow West Street as integrated residential/ entertainment cluster
- Realising public space goals and provision of car parking
- Redevelopment of Donaghy's Mill
- Full recovery of townscape including new build and conservation of historic buildings
- Catalyse positive regeneration
- Consolidating pedestrian walkways/ greenways on the banks of Boyne linking to areas beyond the town

Quick Wins

The short term actions include a number of 'Quick Wins' deliverable within a 3-18 month timeframe, which can bring about physical change with immediate positive impact in a cost effective manner.

Narrow West Street

- Encourage the painting of Westgate House and the upkeep of prominent buildings at junctions and elsewhere
- Inject instant colour at the entrance to West Street by introducing new 'French style planting' and marker trees at limited and carefully chosen locations
- Create new soft landscaped public realm areas where the footpath is of sufficient width, to include 'French style planting' and appropriate, innovative street furniture
- 'Warming' the overall street through the introduction of vibrant colours in an appropriate paint palette in accordance with best conservation practice
- Proactively promote the uptake of both the Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme and the Business Incentive Scheme (BIS)
- Encourage the removal of inappropriate shopfront signage/ projecting signs and replace with appropriate signage in accordance with LCC Shopfront Design Guidelines
- Actively seek removal of Estate Agents' advertising signage (as per Planning Regulations)
- Create visual re-imaging through the introduction of bright contemporary graphics at suitable prominent locations
- Clean/ replace informational signage
- Rationalise existing finger post signage (e.g. junction of R132 and Narrow West Street)
- Provide new clear road markings where appropriate
- Paint lamp and other appropriate standards
- Rationalise litter bins

Old Abbey Lane (Abbey of St. Mary d'Urso)

- Facilitate pedestrian access through Old Abbey Lane to Narrow West Street by removal of existing palisade fencing and continue to keep area clear of all unwanted vegetation
- General housekeeping
- Potential venue for events such as farmers market, artisan food stalls, musical performance area, outdoor cinema, heritage trail, etc
- Continue works to stabilise and repair tower of Abbey of St. Mary d'Urso
- Improve and make more appealing the eastern entrance and approach to the Old Abbey Lane from Patrickswell Lane. Encourage the removal of graffiti from the Abbey Shopping Centre and Old Abbey Lane to improve the visual appearance of the area
- Address lack of consistency in colours to improve the visual amenity of the area
- Provide new appropriately located seating
- Pave any currently unsurfaced areas

Patrickswell Lane

- Improve poor road surfacing
- Encourage improvements to the existing vacant buildings, particularly shopfronts
- Potential for a new terraced seating area on the vacant site east of the Garda Station. Provide planting and make good existing boundary wall. Potential to include historical and natural heritage information

Fr. Connolly Way

- General housekeeping in the vicinity of the 'Shafts of Light' sculpture by Ronan Halpin to better showcase this impressive artwork by the renowned Irish sculptor. This particular piece could symbolise the revitalisation and renewal of the Westgate Vision Area
- New 'French style planting' south of Courthouse, including new street furniture
- New clear road markings

Car Park at Murdock's Yard (Historic Town Wall)

- Where possible remove overgrown vegetation
- Delineate car parking bays appropriately
- General housekeeping at areas along the riverbank, bottle banks and Bridge of Peace
- Maintenance and painting of light standards
- New 'French style planting' at appropriate locations

St. Dominic's Bridge

- Promote increased pedestrian movement
- Improve overall appearance through painting, wall/plaque cleaning and provision of enhanced bollards
- Resurface/cobble lock the bridge with provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- Greening with new 'French style planting' and other appropriate landscaping
- New street furniture
- Signage to encourage pedestrian walkway/movement along River Boyne

Abbey Shopping Centre

- Encourage the removal of graffiti and inappropriate advertisements from all elevations

George's Square

- Encourage the removal of inappropriate shopfront signage/ projecting signs and replace with appropriate signage in accordance with LCC Shopfront Design Guidelines
- Encourage upkeep of prominent buildings at junctions and elsewhere
- Introduce new 'French style planting' and marker trees.
- New street furniture
- Rationalise all signage

Miscellaneous (WGV Area)

- Engage with and encourage local retailers/stakeholders in the uptake of LCC Grants to improve shopfronts including removal/ upgrade of existing inappropriate advertising
- Revitalise green area to west of the historic Town Wall, including re-opening the existing steps adjoining West Gate House, thus providing linkage to the River Boyne
- Consider up-lighting of historic Town Wall to better highlight and showcase to members of the public
- Identification and mapping of all historical public realm elements (e.g. iron mongery, paving, etc.)
- Connect WGV Area to the Boyne Cycle Trail including improved trail signage
- Improvements to public lighting/painting of lamp standards
- Where appropriate provide new clear road markings
- Clean/replace signage
- Rationalise litter bins

Monitoring

It is proposed to prepare a monitoring report at the end of each of the **3-stages of Delivering the Vision.**

The 6 performance indicators of Delivering the Vision

1. **Heritage** protect and exploit potential
2. **Vacancy** address and eliminate
3. **Clustering** create destination to counter balance east-end Drogheda
4. **Tourism** develop and embed
5. **Urban living** a template for Drogheda town centre living
6. **Quality of life** enhance and transform

DROGHEDA

INCREASED

IT'S POPULATION, UNLIKE OTHER

LARGE IRISH TOWNS

THE POPULATION OF THE **URBAN AREA** OF DROGHEDA TOWN HAS **INCREASED** BY **6.2%** SINCE 2011 TO **40,956**

WESTGATE OPPORTUNITIES

1/3	1/3	1/3
EXISTING	NEW BUILD	REFURBISHMENT

Comhairle Contae Lú
Oifigí Cathartha
Sráid an Aonaigh
Droichead Átha
Contae Lú
A92 P440

Louth County Council
Civic Offices
Fair Street
Drogheda
County Louth
A92 P440

Locall 1890 202303
T + 353 42 9335457
F + 353 41 9839306
E info@louthcoco.ie
W www.louthcoco.ie

Cuirfear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras Gaeilge - Correspondence in Irish is welcome