# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins, Evolution and Current State</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Brief History of the Town</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Context</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of Fabric &amp; Setting</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Character</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of the Proposals</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for Intervention</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature &amp; Extents of Proposals</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Descriptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: St. Georges Terrace</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Main St West &amp; Church Lane</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Main St &amp; Priests Lane</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Main St West &amp; Approach Roads</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Flynn’s Field</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Marina Boardwalk</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Details</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials Selection</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Provision</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
Introduction

These proposals are a continuation of the public realm improvement works already carried out along Bridge Street in the town centre. These Part 8 proposals represent an ambitious new phase in the town’s redevelopment which aims to combine good design quality and materials with the provision of support facilities such as parking and better access to the river. The extent of the project spans the heart of the historic town, concentrating on Main Street and St. George’s Terraces, connecting its entrance point along the Dublin Road to the Shannon’s edge behind the Old Jail site.

It is intended that this investment will be a catalyst for the economic rejuvenation of the town centre in the short to medium term, and as the basis for its sustainable redevelopment in the longer term. These proposals are not only design-driven, they propose practical means to ensuring the design ends by repurposing ‘backland’ sites for parking, so that the reduction of parking spaces along the town’s main arteries with the corresponding improvements to public realm quality can be achieved without major inconvenience while simultaneously encouraging new connections to the town centre via existing laneways.

The town’s connection to the River Shannon has shifted somewhat in recent years from the Quay at the end of Bridge Street towards the new Marina areas behind the Old Jail. These proposals provide the opportunity in the next phase to link a much-improved St. George’s Terrace, now treated as an extension of Main Street, to a new public boardwalk along the Marina. This will be of great benefit to the public, who like to use this route for walks, as well as to the water-borne tourists who will find better connections to the town centre from the berths.

The extensions of the public realm off the Main Street axis via Church and Priest’s Lanes, the Leitrim Road and the junction with Summerhill are important connections to cultural and residential sites within the town centre. These spurs are intended to encourage a balance of development between the ‘southern backlands’ around Flynn’s Field and the areas to the North of Main Street.

The design of the paving, lighting and street furniture will focus on quality of materials and consistency of detailing in keeping with the coherent urban qualities of the Town.
Origins, Evolution and Current State
A Brief History of the Town

Carrick-on-Shannon originated at a crossing point of the Shannon that has had strategic importance from the earliest times. It was the site of an early wooden bridge defended by two castles – one on the eastern bank and the other on the western one.

A town grew up on the eastern side from at least 1603 after the traditional rulers of the area, the O’Rourkes, were usurped following the defeat of the Gaelic order at Kinsale. A town was incorporated here in 1613 (some dates suggest 1607) by James 1st under the title of “The Provost, Free Burgesses, and Commonalty of the Borough of Carrigdrumruske”. This early urban settlement is noted on the Down Survey (c 1653) and was probably located along the lower end of Bridge Street. There appear to be no estate maps or surveys of the town prior to the first edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1840.

The St George family who were originally from Hatley St George near Cambridge in England, appear to have arrived in Ireland following the Cromwellian conquest in the seventeenth century and were appointed Governors of Athlone. They were later made custodians of the bridge at Carrick. Lewis states that ‘The tolls of this bridge were granted, in 1684, to Sir George St George, on condition of his keeping it in repair’. He also mentions the bridge as consisting of eleven arches and having been built in 1718 (apparently replacing a wooden structure mentioned in Petty’s Down Survey). Lewis’s account of Carrick must predate 1846 however, since this is the year that the earlier stone structure he describes was replaced by the current bridge.

A market house had been “lately erected” by the St Georges, again according to Lewis “but is not much frequented”. The Jail on the other hand has “10 wards” and “a good tread-mill”. There is also an intriguing account of the construction of the Church of Ireland chapel: “The parish church of Kiltoghert, which, prior to 1698, was at a distance, was removed in that year by act of parliament into the town, and erected on a plot of ground given by Sir George St. George, Bart.” This suggests that the original parish church, perhaps of mediaeval origin, was dismantled, moved and rebuilt. Lewis goes on to mention that this church was itself rebuilt in 1829. The St Georges also part-funded the erection of a Roman Catholic chapel in the town, built in 1807 (replaced by the current and much larger structure in 1879). Its location in a prominent position beside the Main street and its construction almost a generation before Catholic emancipation are remarkable by the standards of the time.

The St Georges built Hatley Manor c. 1830, according to Mark Bence-Jones, but that date is unlikely since it does not appear on the 1st edition OS. However, it could have been built in the late 1830s and not appear on the map since much of the surveying of Leitrim and Roscommon was carried out in 1829 to 1831. It seems to have started its architectural life as a fully Italianate villa since the number of bays and ope sizes to the rear match those of the front. The rear was subsequently reworked in an act of superficial gothicization to give the juxtaposition of classical proportions and Gothic details, such as the lancet window tracery, crenellations and hood moulds, which form the contrasting characters of the house. Prior to that the St Georges appear to have inhabited a number of houses within and around the town: they are associated with the eighteenth-century house on Gallows Hill, later to become the county infirmary.

The early 1840s saw the construction of the Workhouse just outside the town and the railway came via Cortober station in 1862. By the late-nineteenth century the Marists had built a monastery and school off the Dublin Road. More recently, new development has been concentrated in a more piecemeal manner to the south and south-east of the town along the N4 mainly consisting of light industrial and large retail units, typical of recent town-edge development.
First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1837

Current Ordnance Survey view
Regional Context

Carrick-on-Shannon is the county town of Leitrim and its largest conurbation. It is located in an area of outstanding natural beauty and amenity and is a major centre of activity on the river Shannon Blueway and the most important inland waterways centre in Ireland.

The Shannon remains an important north-south route for the town, mainly for the purposes of boating traffic, most of which is recreational. Its bridge over the Shannon links Dublin to Sligo by road and this traditional east-west route is one of the main vehicular and commercial arteries between the West and East of the country. Carrick-on-Shannon will remain a vital element of the country’s transport infrastructure in the absence of any new bypass and motorway.

As one of the border-region counties, Leitrim is well-connected to the North of Ireland via Manorhamilton by land, and to Lough Erne and Fermanagh via the Shannon/Erne waterway at Leitrim Village.
Conservation of Fabric and Setting

Carrick-on-Shannon is a town with a long and rich history containing quite a number of historic structures, which include its recognised protected structures.

There is little or no historic paving material within the areas proposed for improvement and no buildings will be negatively affected by the proposals. Any existing door thresholds or steps etc. will be identified on the detailed surveys accompanying the tender documentation for preservation in-situ. It is proposed to move the Clock tower, a protected structure, to a better location within a metre or two of its current position depending on the feasibility of so doing, this will be assessed through a detailed survey and report at pre-tender stage. If approval is forthcoming and its feasibility confirmed, it may prove possible to move it without having to demount and rebuild it. A comparative study of these options will form part of the next stage of the project.

The proposals have been designed keeping in mind the historic fabric and settings of each area of the scheme. The Stage 1 Preliminary Design Report included an assessment of the character of each of these places and the design proposals included here are a direct response to these.

There are a number of historic basements extending under the footpath on the southern side of Main Street. The layouts have allowed for these by locating trees and services on the northern side of the street, for example. Any further mitigating measures required will be taken once these areas are opened up prior to the works.

As well as enhancing the conservation of existing historic fabric, the proposals will serve to further the conservation of the historic town centre as a vibrant place for business, residence and recreation. They include the provision of enhanced connections between Flynn’s Field and Main Street and, through the development of these backlands for parking, they provide a practical means of decluttering the main arteries of the town so that their urban character can be better appreciated. By freeing up the streetscape and designing shared surfaces for ease of use by all, the urban environment will be made more attractive to all users of the town, locals and visitors alike.

The material for the paving will be chosen so that there will be a strong connection between the existing local stone which appears to be predominantly a sandstone (similar to a Mountcharles sandstone) and the colour and texture of the finished surfaces. At detailed design stage, petrographic analysis of this stone will be carried out and any local sources identified as possible suppliers. Vehicular surfaces in the carriageway areas are proposed in an asphalt ‘tar-and-chip’ finish with the aggregate used as a means of tying this material into the historic material context.
Heritage: Protected Structures, NIAH recordings and National Monuments

- National Monument
- NIAH Recording
- Protected Structure
Current Character

Carrick-on-Shannon’s architectural character contains designed and vernacular elements, of which the vernacular predominates. In common with many Irish mediaeval settlements, Carrick-on-Shannon gradually coalesced into a town over a number of centuries, extending eastwards from the bridge in a relatively organic manner. The St George’s extended the town in a planned manner based on a number of architectural set pieces: the ‘Gaol’, the courthouse, the market house, St George’s Terrace itself, and ultimately their own seat, Hatley Manor.

On the margins, but within the ‘setting’ of this extension were St George’s Church followed by St Mary’s (the current structure was built in the 1870s to replace an earlier, less imposing chapel). The Jail, now largely demolished, was an imposing structure more than three storeys in height with high boundary walls, so the view from Market Square to the end of the Terrace would have been less open and inviting than is the case currently.

The character of Main Street improves as one progresses westwards from the old Dublin Road end as the frontages become more continuous and consistent in height. As a main street, it is lively and inviting but suffers from traffic congestion, particularly for pedestrians, because of narrow footpaths and the proximity of parked cars. Both Main Street and Bridge Street are relatively ‘tidy’ in appearance, due in no small part to the recent works of under-grounding cables and services. This has had a very positive effect on the town’s image and is an excellent starting point for a public realm project.

The vernacular liveliness of the town centre and the classical order of St George’s Terrace are not reflected in the planning and layout of the boating company areas which have grown to occupy the promontory to the river’s edge behind the jail site. Not only are these areas unsightly when compared to the town centre, but they are poorly connected to it and to each other. Visitors must cross poorly finished parking areas and there is no obvious route to the town centre for those arriving by boat. It is proposed to improve the appearance of the town from the river through the provision of a new boardwalk. Additional measures may include the inclusion of soft landscaping to these areas.
Flynn’s Field

This back land area behind Main Street has the potential for development for parking and housing. It has road access from local roads off N4 national primary road and pedestrian laneway access potentially to Bridge Street and Main Street.

Construction has already begun on a neighbouring site for a primary healthcare centre.

Like many Irish towns there are many used and unused laneways from the main street areas to the backlands behind the long narrow plots.

Some of these are already public routes for pedestrians. Others could be opened up and improved to facilitate permeability and connections.

This site was intended to be the economic heart of the town and this is still embodied in the Market Yard. The car dominates this busy junction with a plethora of road markings, signage and clutter.

The Clock Tower and the Costello Memorial Chapel are important monuments in this public area.

The Bridge

The Bridge is the portal into and from Carrick-on-Shannon from the Shannon side. The recently added board walk connects with the lower quay edge and County Roscommon. These connections are not well-defined and would benefit from an integrated lighting scheme.

This broad boulevard is generous in scale leading to the river’s edge. Prominent public buildings adorn this important axis and the strong urban frontage of St. George’s Terrace contributes to the overall architectural quality of the street.

The successful Dock arts centre would benefit from an extension of this space as shared surface to facilitate pedestrian engagement at cultural and festive events.

St George’s Terrace
Nature of the Proposals
Rationale for Intervention

The extent and nature of this proposed Part 8 Public consultation proposal is intended to reflect the importance of a balanced approach to the town’s further development. Carrick-on-Shannon has many existing strengths such as a viable residential population and a strong commercial vocation, this proposal has been prepared to expand, enhance upon these features and unify disparate areas of the town.

Carrick-on-Shannon is a commercial centre as well as a tourism hub. It is an essential element in a network of links to surrounding towns and counties, as well as to the country as a whole.

The proposals are rooted in the fabric of the town. They include functions for strengthening the town’s infrastructure as follows;

- Through the provision of parking
- Improvements to the accessibility of existing pavements and provision of stone paving
- Increasing footfall and facilitation of visitors through the extension of existing routes and the creation of new links
- Encouraging the town’s commercial development by improving visitor facilities, particularly in the marina area (with positive knock-on effects for all the businesses in the town)
- Celebrating the town’s cultural strengths through a high-quality public realm addition, with an emphasis on the Main Street and St George’s Terrace, the cultural axis of the town.

The proposals respect the scale and character of the town and are generally based on an adaptation of existing fabric and function rather than wholesale redevelopment. In this sense they are evolutionary rather than revolutionary, in keeping with an orderly and considered approach to the town’s ongoing development.
Nature and Extent of Proposals

The map opposite and the 3D Aerial image on the right show the extent and nature of the proposals. They are outlined here with a brief description of the nature of the interventions in each case, before being shown in more detail over the following pages.

A: St. Georges Terrace & Market Square
It is proposed to extend the public realm further west to include The town’s Georgian quarter which lends itself to a shared surface treatment. This will include its junction with Bridge St and Main St. and Market Square, containing the town clock.

B: Main Street West & Church Lane
The works include the length of the Main Street and will seek to improve conditions for pedestrians by widening footpaths and reducing parking places. Church Lane will become a stop-off public space along this route, in the same materials as the Main axis.

C: Main Street Center & Priest’s Lane
East of Church lane, the Main street will similarly be improved to accommodate all users. A consistent material palette shall be used throughout to enhance the overall appearance and setting.

D: Main Street East & Approach Roads
The logical next step is the extension of the public realm improvements towards the entrance end of the town, encompassing arrival points from the Dublin and Leitrim roads.

E: Flynn’s Field
The redevelopment of this backland site will provide significant off-street parking potential close to the heart of the town centre. It also provides opportunities for a multi-functional public space for concerts or festivals etc.

F: Marina Boardwalk
Carrick-on-Shannon is traditionally a river-edge town, an important point of landfall along the Shannon artery. The proposal includes a new publicly accessible floating boardwalk with better links to the river edge and town centre.
Extract from Planning Application Drawings showing proposed site area. Please refer to Drawing PL-102.
A: St. George’s Terrace & Market Place

This extension to the Main Street was an urban set-piece constructed during the late-Georgian period. It was Carrick-on-Shannon’s “axis of power” containing most of its public buildings. Improving this axis provides the opportunity for better pedestrian connections to the boardwalk and marina, where many visitors arrive, and to the Main Street.

St George’s Terrace is a destination for pedestrian activities and movements through the town. Its nature as a quiet street with relatively few vehicle movements makes it an ideal location for hosting large gatherings. It is proposed to facilitate this through the provision of shared surface at the east & west ends of the street. The central section shall benefit from a consistent material palette, improvements to pavements and a clear designation of parking linking the east and west ends of the street.

The public parking provision around the old prison wall will be less solicited once Flynn’s Field parking becomes functional, further reducing traffic flows. It is also appropriate that the town’s ‘cultural hub’ containing The Dock arts centre and some of the town’s most historic fabric should become a fully-public space with the opportunity that this provides for on-street entertainment, festivals and seasonal events. It also contains the Market Yard centre which has the potential to contribute to these activities and perhaps avail of the opportunity that the shared-surface provides for open-air markets and craft fairs etc.

The street finishes will be of the same high quality as those along Main Street, with the proposed addition of a line of trees on the northern side of the street to provide some privacy to the edge of St George’s Terrace while deferring to the eighteenth century tradition of tree-lined promenades.
B: Main Street West & Church Lane

Main Street, the axis of the town, provides connections to most of the primary streets of the town. It will benefit greatly from being transformed into a more public space with high-quality paving and street furniture. Pedestrian comfort will be greatly improved by widening of footpaths on both sides, reduction of on-street parking and provision of suitable uncontrolled crossing locations.

Main Street benefits from good connections through laneways, particularly on the southern side of the street, it is proposed to reactivate one of these laneways through to Flynn’s Field from the Main St. With the development of Flynn’s Field as a car parking facility it is envisioned that further laneways may be opened up to benefit from this backlands typology. The reduction of parking and enhancement of the public realm on Main Street can be offset by the inclusion of this development.

Pavements shall be widened on Church Lane to encourage footfall up to St George’s Heritage Centre (particularly tourists completing the ‘Heritage Trail’), a raised traffic platform shall be provided at the junction of Main St. & Church Lane to give pedestrian priority and enhance the setting as a focal area to the Main St. It shall extend along the Main St. to include St Marys Church.

The public realm works shall include a consistent material palette along its entire length. The design and layout will acknowledge the important presence of St Mary’s Church on its northern side while picking up the laneways and openings to the southern side of the street.

Extract from Planning Application Drawings showing proposed site plan for Main Street West & Church Lane
Please refer to Drawing PL.104.
On approaching Main Street from the Dublin Road the view of
the first terraced buildings on a sweeping corner announces
the arrival into the town. This setting will be enhanced through
the provision of high quality materials, a line of trees along the
northern side of the road, widened pavements and additional
seating areas.

Further on a number of traffic calming measures will slow
vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian safety. Widening the
pavement on the northern side of the road will increase visibility
and improve safety at the junctions to the Leitrim Road & Priests
Lane. Presently these are busy junctions at peak times. It is
proposed to include a raised traffic platform at these junctions on
approach from the Dublin & Leitrim Roads. This will act as a traffic
calming measure and also announce the ‘threshold’ to the centre
of town.

From this ‘threshold’ pedestrian movements and activities will be
given priority. Locations to sit under a tree, bicycle parking, the
possibility of stepping out into the street going from one shop to
the next, hosting large gatherings and social events will all be
catered for.
D: Main Street East & Approach Roads

The public realm redesign of the Main street will continue around the corner as far as the Dublin road and take in the beginning of the Leitrim Road to address what are currently perceived to be poorly configured entrance points to the town. At these entrance points, trees and soft landscaping will be provided to signal the entry points to the town.

All existing traffic arrangements are to be maintained under these proposals.

Traffic calming will form part of this proposal, particularly at the junction with the Dublin Road, as vehicular traffic is progressively slowed down and dissipated as it moves through the town.

Extract from Planning Application Drawings showing proposed site plan for Main Street East, Leitim & Dublin Roads. Please refer to Drawing PL-106.
E: Flynn’s Field

There have been a number of proposals to develop this site for parking over the years, so its inclusion in this application is both timely and necessary. The possibility of providing over 100 off-street parking spaces at a stone’s throw from the town centre, without any negative impacts, visual or otherwise on the town’s historic fabric is too good to miss.

This site also benefits from numerous possibilities of direct connection through existing archways and lanes with Main Street and Bridge Street. It is accessible to cars, with some minor traffic-flow modifications, via the N4 and a new network of access roads between the rear of the town centre and Main Street. It can also be connected to other public parking areas in the immediate vicinity such as the new Primary Care Centre parking (currently under construction).

The landscaping idea for the site proposes a line of trees as a boundary enclosing a self-contained space which could also be used for concerts, open-air cinema, festival gatherings, circuses, seasonal markets etc. This space has the potential to become a major asset for the town.
F: Marina Boardwalk

The existing boardwalk consists of a floating timber deck on piled posts. It was built as a private facility for the boat-users. It is nearing the end of its working life and needs to be replaced. It is proposed to replace it as a 2.5m-wide public walkway, accessible to all, which will also float, and will connect to the other public areas at the town-end of the marina. This will provide opportunities for increased amenity use by local people of this part of the river edge while providing clear wayfinding towards the town centre for visitors. This increased access for the public will be accompanied by better security for the boat-users through the addition of a security barrier at the entrance to each boat company’s pontoon. In addition, better connections will be made from the harbour area (beside the marina) to the bridge’s pedestrian walkway through the reorganisation of parking in this area.

The overall design intention here is to replace the existing boardwalk with one that is not only functional and safe but equally is sculptural, well lit and allows access to Carrick’s main slip and bathing area thus allowing pedestrians to enjoy a continuous and connected walk along the river’s edge, through the park, up into the Main Street and Bridge Street or St. George’s Terrace. These pedestrian routes already exist but have been eroded over time.
Development perspective sketch showing shared surface treatment at Market Place.
Material Selection

Carrick on Shannon has numerous locations where natural stone is used. Within the Old Jail, St. Georges Terrace and surroundings areas much of the old walls are built with a combination of a Yellow walling stone and ashlar. It is our intention to select a durable material palette using local stone where possible.

The choice of materials can contribute to the project’s sustainable credentials and be a strong element of its identity. Choosing a local stone, if it is available economically, is an obvious starting point, but several types of surface will generally be required, including asphalted carriageways for vehicles. The extent and nature of the finishes will need to be carefully balanced against budgetary limits.

Quality stone (granite and limestone) with a variety of finishes for Public Realm projects in Waterford by dhbArchitects.

Local precedent of Natural Stone Walling within Carrick on Shannon. Photos taken at The Old Jail at end of St. Georges Tce.

Material Selection showing examples of Natural Granite.

Extract from Planning Application Drawings showing proposed section on Main Street. Please refer to Drawing PL205.
Accessibility

Our proposals conform with Universal Access Guidelines. The shared surface and raised platform approach in some areas with integrated guidance strip for the visually impaired eliminating where possible kerbs and steps facilitating universal access.

Extract from Planning Application Drawings showing shared surface at church entrance on Main Street. Please refer to Drawing PL-204.

Lady Lane, Waterford by dhb Architects. Example of shared surface to street.

Holbeck Place, London. Example of raised traffic platforms & shared surface to street.

Use of large slabs to provide level, accessible pavements.

Sets used to delineate road edge and building line.

Use of blister paving at uncontrolled crossings, & tactile guidance strip.
# Parking Provision

The provision of existing parking and proposed parking are clearly illustrated on planning drawings. Please refer to drawings for locations and extent of parking provision.

The figures below have been provided as a guide to the overall changes to the provision of parking.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Existing no. of spaces</th>
<th>Proposed no. of spaces</th>
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<td>22 (2)</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main St (to church lane)</td>
<td>30 (1)</td>
<td>9 (1)</td>
<td>-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>13 (2)</td>
<td>-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priests Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leitrim Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flynn’s Field</td>
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* ( ) brackets indicate no. of spaces of which are disabled spaces