

Physical Regeneration for St Mary's Park



5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.1 Introduction

Chapter Two of this document outlines the Strategic Context in which these plans must be consistent with as the regeneration moves forward.

The Physical Plan is at this stage indicative only and very much a 'work in progress'.

The details of the various projects proposed will need to be flexible and in a position to respond to the changes that occur within the fluid environment which they operate.

From a land-use and planning perspective, matters are changing on a regular basis, for example the Regional Planning Guidelines are due for review shortly as are some of the relevant local authority development plans.

In addition the changing economic and social circumstances of the country may have some implications for population growth and development options which may in turn impact on the approaches taken with regard to regional development.

Therefore as we move forward this Regeneration Programme must continue to complement the strategies and different elements of the various national, regional and local levels as outlined in table 1 (page 19).

Chapter 3 set out the Social Regeneration Proposals of St. Mary's Park and Chapter 4 has dealt with the economic proposals to underpin these. The Physical Proposals deal with the buildings, spaces and environment in which these plans will be grounded and on which they depend to achieve the transformation of St. Mary's Park.

This Context section describes the physical issues for the design of the Physical Proposals, the key objectives and how they have been addressed. It sets out the overall form of how the Physical Plan is structured. The following sections, **Live**, **Link**, **Play**, **Learn**, and **Work**, describe what it will be like to live and work here and how new investment will be served by the neighbourhoods.

A note on names

In this document new streets, parks and neighbourhoods have been given names to make it easy to identify them. These are given only as temporary names and the selection of names for the new places of the Island Quarter will be an important process which all will have the opportunity to be involved in.

5.3.1.2 The Physical Plan

The Physical Plan defines the framework for how the regeneration of St. Mary's Park will be built. It sets out parameters for the following:

- Locations, amount and density of housing
- Alignments and key dimensions of street, locations of and sizes of public spaces
- Locations and quantity of key uses and amenities
- Design guidance for buildings and public realm
- Sustainability standards to be achieved for buildings, infrastructure and public spaces.

These parameters are intended to be flexible, and will change over time through the ongoing public consultation process, detailed feasibility studies and design and in response to changing conditions which will arise over the coming years.

It also includes material which illustrates the standards of development which the plan aspires to, by showing examples of how the buildings and spaces may look.

The principles of this plan will inform a variation to the Limerick City Development Plan which will set out the land uses and planning objectives for the site. The planning process following the publication of the masterplan stage is set out in greater detail in Section 6. Delivery.



St Mary's Park Regeneration Site

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.3 Historical context

The following text has been referenced from Aegis' Archaeological Impact Assessment, May 2007

Foundations

The origins of Limerick City lie in the tenth-century development of a Norse settlement on the island now known as King's Island (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 349; Spellissy 1998,17). This settlement grew to become the pre-eminent Hiberno-Norse centre in the region, with considerable support from the O'Briens of Thomond, and was later to become a focal point for Anglo-Norman settlement. The city received its first charter in AD1197 from Prince John (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 350). It has been suggested that King's Island's natural features, the surrounding water and a dependable water supply ensured the security of its inhabitants (Spellissy 1998, 97).



Map of Limerick dating to 1611, north to left (Speed)

The Medieval Twin Towns

The medieval city resembled an hourglass in plan and the two parts, termed the Englishtown and the Irishtown, were separated by the Abbey River. The Englishtown occupied the southwestern part of King's Island, while the Irishtown lay across Baal's Bridge to the southeast.

King John's Castle was built on the western side of the Englishtown in the early thirteenth century (Thomas 1992, 142; Killanin and Duignan 1967, 351).

The ecclesiastical development of the city played an important part in the growth of the urban centre, most notably in the Englishtown, and, in addition to St. Mary's Cathedral, foundations included an Augustinian priory off Bishop Street in 1172, a Dominican priory nearby in 1227 and a Franciscan friary outside the south-eastern wall of the Englishtown in 1267 (O'Rahilly 1995, 168-71).

The high street of the Englishtown, now named Nicholas Street and Mary Street (northern and southern sections respectively), was the most important thoroughfare in the medieval city and linked Baal's Bridge with the castle and Thomond Bridge.

The City of Limerick, as noted above, was the most important Hiberno-Norse centre in the region and this status was not diminished with the development of the Anglo-Norman city.

The city of Limerick is, perhaps, most famous as a city of sieges and as the 'City of the Broken Treaty'. In 1642 the city was captured by Confederate Catholic forces after a siege and was later taken by Cromwellian troops after a three-month siege in 1651.

The Sieges

The Williamite wars, which ranged over much of the country towards the close of the seventeenth century and had considerable international dimensions, also played a large role in the history of Limerick. The first Williamite siege took place after the battle of the Boyne in 1690, when the Jacobite forces regrouped inside the medieval defences of the city and successfully resisted the three-week siege by King William of Orange.

The second Williamite siege took place the following year and the city fell after one month, a French fleet arriving too late to be of assistance to the defenders.



The city of Limerick during the Siege of 1690, bearing to west (Lenihan 1866)



Map printed in Ferrar's History (1787), from a survey of Christopher Colles in 1769 (Limerick Museum).

Resurgence of the Eighteenth Century

During the eighteenth century, Limerick overcame the difficulties caused by the Williamite wars and began to regain its prosperity. This created a need for considerable expansion beyond the limits of the medieval town walls and a new area of the city was developed to the southwest of Irishtown. This was the Newtown or Newtown Pery, and was developed in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the Georgian style (O'Flaherty 1995, 181-3).

The Subject Site and its Environs

The area of St. Mary's Park is located on the northern half of King's Island to the north of the known alignment of the city walls. The island is formed by the River Shannon to the north and west, and the Abbey River to the east and south. This area was originally accessed from the walled Englishtown in medieval times via a gate in the wall called Island Gate.

An assessment of some of the maps of Limerick City (available for reproduction here), dating from the 16th century upwards reveal some interesting information about the northern end of King's Island and the subject site. On Hardiman's map dating to circa 1590, the subject site appears to be defined as farmland and perhaps some gardens, noted by the trees.

On a map dating to the early 1600s (informally known as the 'Hunt Museum Map', provided kindly by Mr. Brian Hodkinson of Limerick City Museum), the northern portion of the island appears empty apart from a double-walled six-pointed star-shaped fort, situated in the north-west portion of the island.

It is known from documentary sources that a number of suburb dwellings had been constructed outside the town walls by the end of the 17th century as they were demolished in 1690 by the inhabitants of the city before the first of the Williamite sieges (Limerick. A Handbook... n.d., 48).

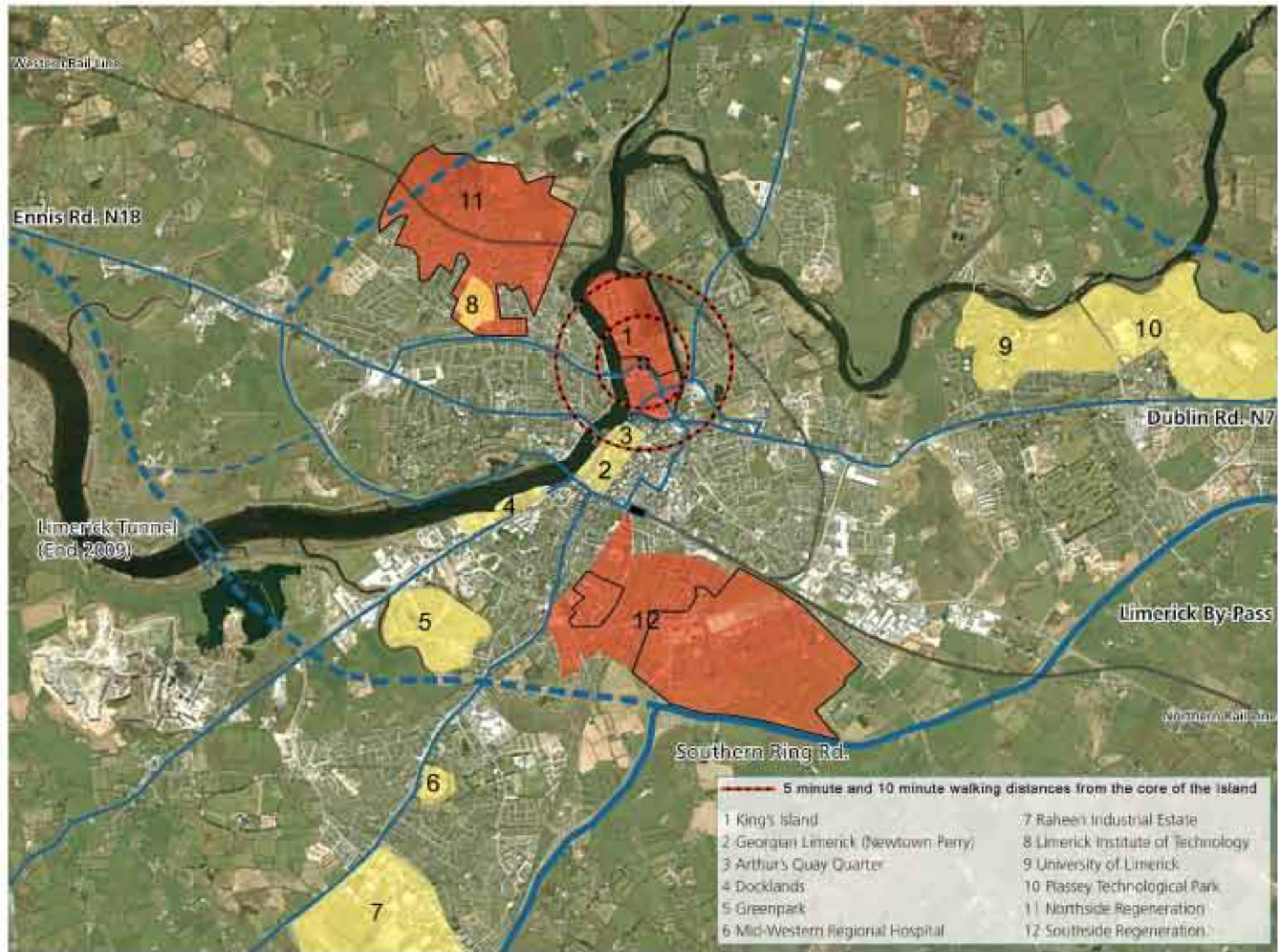
In 1866, Lenihan noted that 'Cromwell's Fort in the northwest part, can be distinctly traced, and may be roughly squared at 100 yards aside. It was a star fort' (Lenihan 1866, 750).

Lenihan also makes a further interesting reference to activities at the northern end of Kings Island. It "...was some years ago occupied by houses and gardens, of which of the latter, part of the enclosures only remain, and might be mistaken for some of the numerous military entrenchments thrown up during the olden days" (Lenihan 1866, 750). By the 19th century "*The King's Island in the southern part of which stands the English town, while the northern is used as a military field for review and exercises...*" (present writer's emphasis, *ibid.*). In 1848 'possession was obtained of the Island Bank, or roadway around the King's Island, for the recreation of the citizens' by Michael Quinn, the Mayor of Limerick (Lenihan 1866, 508).

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.4 Site Location

The figure shows Limerick Regeneration Areas and the strategic location of King's Island between the University of Limerick and the Limerick Institute of Technology. The two dotted circles indicate the five minute and 10 minute walking distances from the core of the Island. The 10 minute walk northwards to the top of the Island and the similar distance southwards to th Arthur's Quay Quarter, the prime shopping core of the city, powerfully illustrates the sustainability of this location as an urban community from the point of view of access.



Limerick Regeneration Areas and King's Island Strategic Position in the city.

The Areas at 1, 11 and 12 in the above map covered by the regeneration are outlined in black

5.3.1 Context

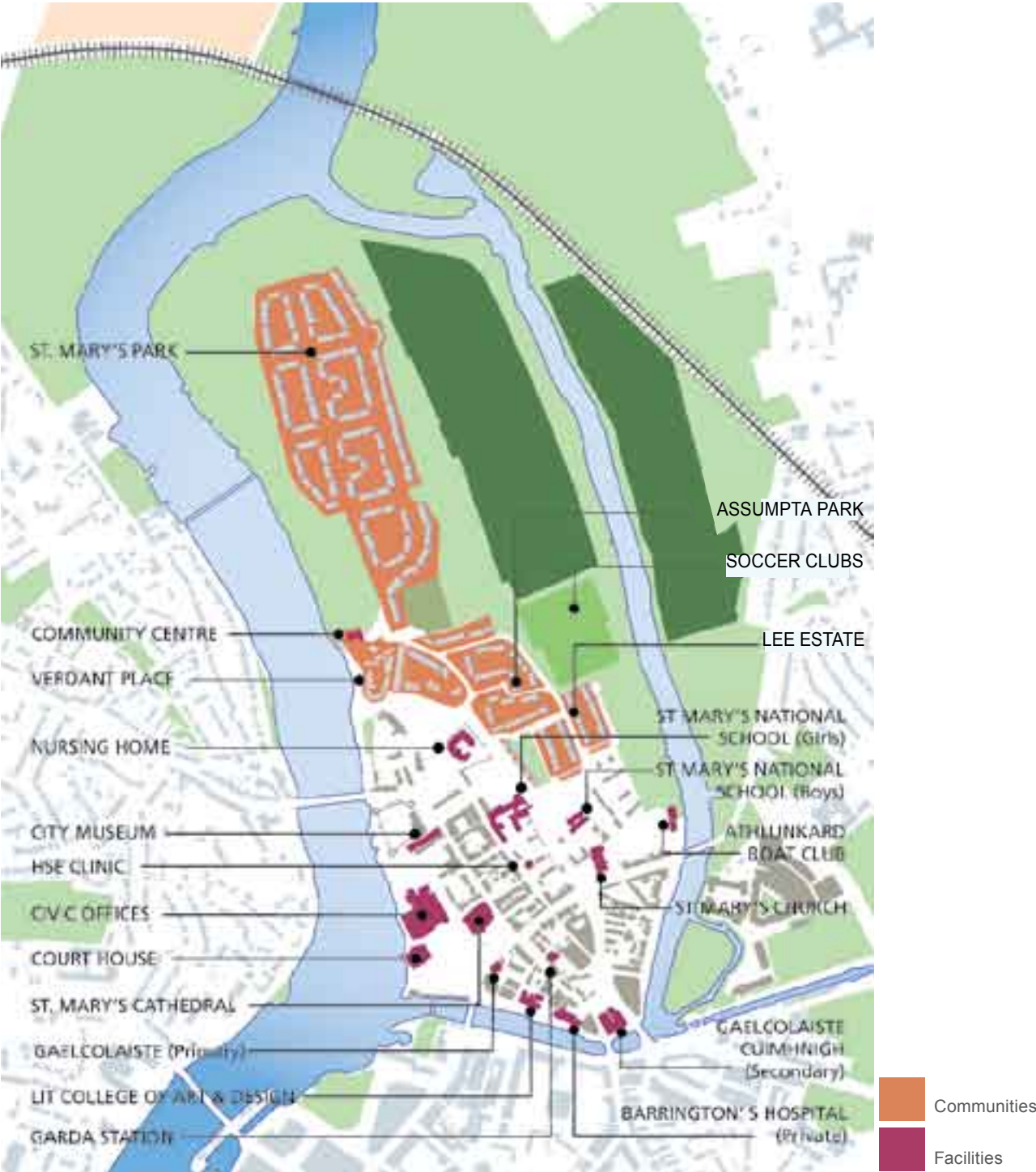
5.3.1.5 King's Island Communities and Facilities

The adjacent figure outlines the footprint of the existing local authority housing estates and the relatively poor provision of community facilities, which include a modest community centre, a boys and girls primary school, and a very modest HSE premises used occasionally for social guidance. Planning permission has been granted for a small crèche adjacent to the community centre. Planning permission has also been approved for a private doctor's surgery but this project may not proceed.

There are two Gael Scoileanna to the south of the Island. Also on the south of the island is the Limerick College of Art and Design. These tend to cater for a wider and external community.

There is a Garda station in Mary Street that has restricted opening hours and is in poor physical condition.

The County Courthouse is a fine landmark building adjacent to City Hall. The latter also houses the District Court.



Typical Street, St Mary's Park



Soccer Pitches



View of St Mary's Park from North



Community Centre



Girls Primary School

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.6 Heritage Precinct

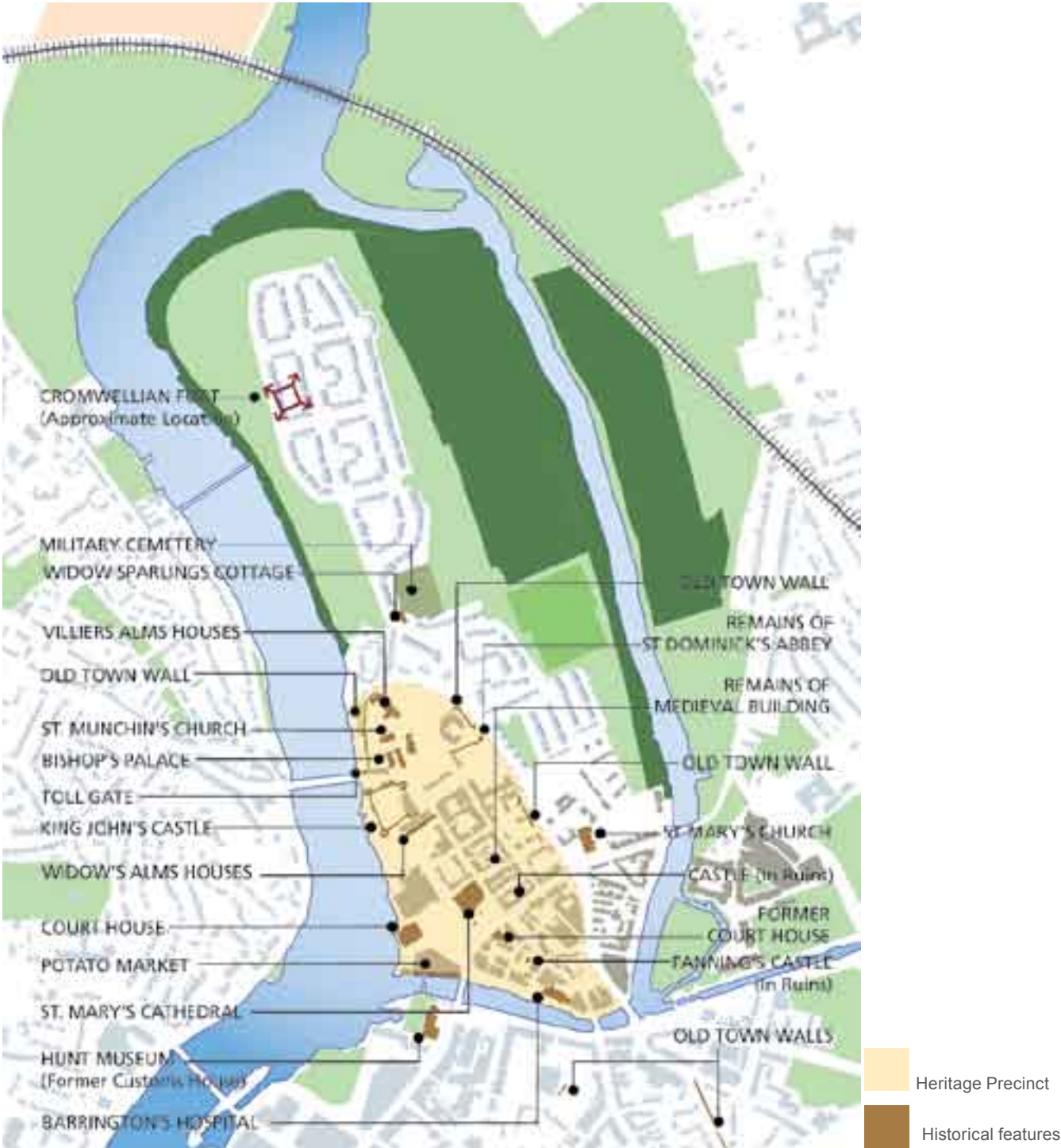
The original settlement of Limerick grew up on the south of King's Island. This is the historic core of the city, known as the 'Heritage Precinct', containing King John's Castle, St. Mary's Cathedral, old St. Munchin's Church, the Courthouse and many other important historical features. The adjacent figure summarises the rich collection of ancient buildings and sites in the southern part of the Island which form part of the Precinct.

Within the site of St. Mary's Park Estate there is a recorded archaeological monument, known as a star-shaped fort, which dates to the 17th century. Although the precise location is not known, from maps studied, it is expected to be lying under the existing 1930's housing, in the vicinity of the junction of St. Ita's Street and St. Brendan's Street.

This site is classified as a "bastion", and is protected under the National Monuments Acts. It is also on the record of protected structures, as listed in the City Development Plan, and is therefore further protected under planning legislation. Whilst the fort is clearly no longer visible, its foundations may still exist.

The military cemetery and attendant cottage at the southern end of the site (between St. Mary's Park and Assumpta Park) date to the mid 19th Century, and whilst neither feature is formally protected, they form an important use of the area at that time.

The site has high potential for archaeological remains. This is because of the history of the general area with respect to Viking influence, the activities that would normally be conducted close to the walls of a medieval city and the existence of the star-shaped fort over a period of several hundred years. The shoreline of the site also has high potential for underwater, inter-tidal or riparian archaeological remains.



John's Castle from South



Verdant Place



Toll House and John's Castle from Thomond's Bridge



Bishop's Palace, Church St.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.7 Flood Risk

The level of protection afforded to land and property adjacent to the river should take account of historic flood levels, predicted increases in sea level, and an allowance for freeboard as a minimum.

The maximum flood level recorded at Baal's Bridge on the Abbey River at the south end of Kings Island is 4.40m AODM. Adding an allowance of 0.29m for global warming and 0.30m for freeboard to protect against fluvial wave action, gives a recommend flood protection level of 4.99m AODM.

The average level of the ground floor of houses in St. Mary's Park is between 3.70m and 4.20m AODM, which means that any new housing in this area would require approximately 1.0m of fill across the site. Areas of the site not currently built on are lower, and would require between 1.20m and 2.50m of fill.

There is no recorded flooding of the housing in St. Mary's Park. This is due to the presence of the flood defence embankment on the perimeter of the site, which reaches a level of 4.3m at its lowest point. Flooding of the Abbey River has been recorded on a number of occasions at the south end of King's Island.

It is important to note that wetlands of the SAC are not part of the floodplain of the Shannon/Abbey Rivers as they are protected by the embankments. The drainage sluices close automatically as the tide levels rise.

Ground Conditions

King's Island is known to be formed of alluvial silt which has a very poor bearing capacity. Taking account of the extent of fill which will be required to mitigate against flood risk, it is likely that foundations for any new buildings of two storeys or less could be of a raft construction, but that taller buildings would require piled foundations.

The bedrock levels within this area are generally between 8 and 10 metres below ground level.

Given the historical usage, it is not anticipated that the ground will be contaminated, however ground samples will be tested to check that this is the case.



View of the Island from North East



View of the Island from South East

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

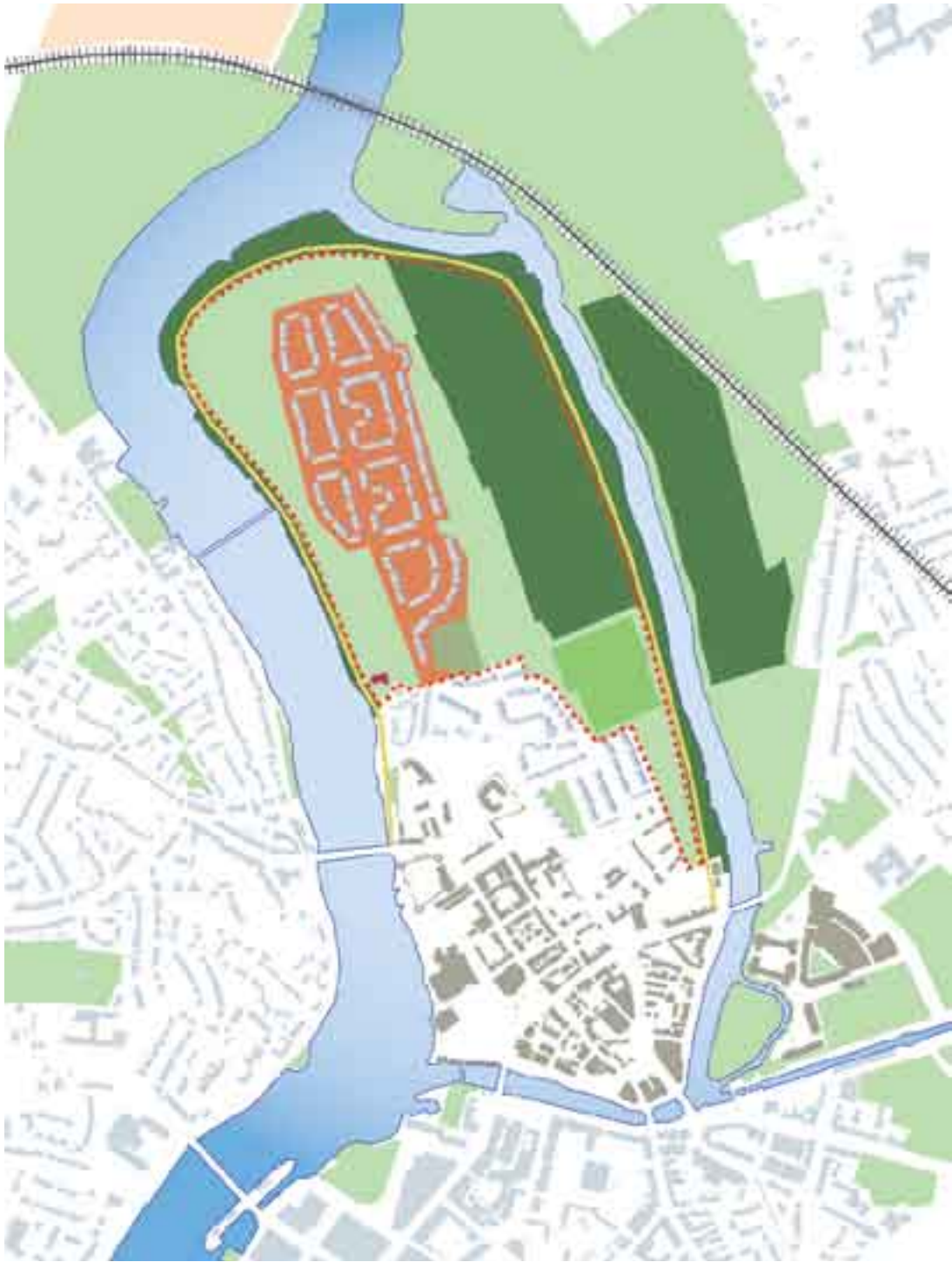
5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.8 Site Description

The original site boundary comprises 40 hectares of the northern portion of King's Island in the heart of Limerick City. It includes:

- St. Mary's Park: a 1930's local authority housing Estate of 463 houses, of which 273 (59%) are privately owned, and 190 (41%) are local authority owned
- A frontage of approximately 2 km on to the Shannon and Abbey rivers, with an embankment to control flooding that also functions as an attractive riverside walk
- A Special Area of Conservation of 10.7 hectares along the eastern edge of the Island, fronting on to the Abbey River, which extends along the banks of the Abbey and Shannon rivers
- Two soccer clubs on a combined site of 3 hectares, with short term leases from Limerick City Council
- A military cemetery of 0.6 hectares dating from the 1850's
- A modest community centre in the south-west corner with planning permission for a crèche adjacent
- Extensive open space that is low lying and generally neglected

The Proposals also takes into account the site's relationship with the Heritage Precinct and the rest of Limerick City.



- St Mary's Park
- Riverside walk
- SAC
- Soccer Clubs
- Military Cemetery
- Community centre
- Open Space



Special Area of Conservation



Shannon and Abbey River walks

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.9 Access

The Island has become more or less divided into two by the 'upgraded' R454 Island Road which accommodates a continuous heavy flow of traffic between Clare and Limerick.

Some of the Heritage Precinct (the Bishop's Palace, the Villiers Alms Houses, old St. Munchin's Church, the Toll House) is now isolated to the north of the Island Road. St. Mary's Park is separated even further north by other local authority housing, including Assumpta Park.

Access to St. Mary's Park is limited to one main entrance from the Island Road roundabout and three other older access roads. They all converge shortly after the roundabout giving, in effect, one entrance to a cul-de-sac. This single point of access/egress has contributed greatly to the isolation of the estate and it's resulting social problems.

The existing public transport services consist of a limited city bus service which operates only at restricted times.

One of the key roles of the Plan is to demonstrate how the existing physical and visual isolation of the north of King's Island can be overcome.



Access Routes

5.3.1.10 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

In the ecological context, its riverine location on the Shannon/Abbey River's within a tidal estuary, and flanked on two sides by Special Areas of Conservation, makes the site attractive and interesting from an amenity, conservation and educational point of view.

Covering approximately 10 hectares on the eastern edge of the site is a 'Special Area of Conservation' (SAC), which is included in the Lower River Shannon SAC. It comprises fresh water wetland which floods in winter and slowly drains during spring and summer.

The wetland environment is largely artificial, as the flood embankments around the site are what prevent water from draining away, and as such the habitat is not thought to be sacrosanct and unalterable.

An ecological assessment of the site notes that there are no particularly rare species within the SAC, and that of the species of interest that do exist, these are richer towards the east of the SAC, adjacent to the Abbey River.

It is proposed to build homes on 35% of the area of the SAC, on the western side, where it has been noted that the wetland species are poorer than to the east, which is adjacent to the Abbey River.

The SAC on King's Island extends around much of the perimeter of the site, between the Riverside Walk embankment and the river edges. Any proposed features within the Plan which may impact on this area will be subject to further environmental assessment.



Special Area of Conservation

5.3.1 Context

5.3.1.11 Issues and Opportunities

Apart from the social context, the main physical issues that need to be addressed if the Proposals are to be successfully implemented are:



- Inaccessibility and perception of a 'dead-end'
- Poor quality and low density of existing housing stock



- Potential flood levels
- Development restrictions in connection with the SAC



- Lease-hold entitlements on the soccer pitches and the site of the proposed creche



- The location of the military graveyard and Assumpta Park at key potential points of access



- Management of the phasing of demolition and redevelopment

The main opportunities presented by the context of this site are:



- Prime location within the City centre adjacent to the historic core



- Quality of the natural environment



- The large scale of the site, which provides critical mass relative to its economic viability and its potential impact on the regeneration of the city at a wider scale



- Increasing the inner city population and improving the social mix



- Increasing employment
- Increasing confidence in the economic potential of the Heritage Precinct as a result of the regeneration of St . Mary's Park

5.3.2 Vision and objectives

5.3.2.1 Vision

The vision is to create a model urban environment based on the following urban design principles:



Community

Provide all the ingredients of a model safe, attractive and sustainable urban community. This will include the following:

- a. **Neighbourhoods:** of appropriate scale and character that are distinctive and easy to move around.
- b. **Housing:** of a pattern that is flexible enough to respond to the needs of the full spectrum of family size, cycle, income and special needs; that is family-friendly, with a majority of own door access, that has a good balance of private, social and affordable housing; and that has essential needs within five minutes walk (crèche, local shop, playground), and other needs within 10 minutes walk (shopping, primary schools, medical/social services, public parks and other amenities).
- c. **Public Realm:** open spaces and amenities that take full advantage of the river setting and that are attractive, robust, well managed, safe and give priority to pedestrians/cyclists over the motor car.
- d. **Community Services/Facilities:** a district centre within 10 minutes walking distance that provides all the necessary community services/facilities including community centre, adult education, crèche, primary healthcare centre, supermarket, pharmacy and local shops, post office, garda, advice centre etc.



Access

Open up the vehicular access to the north of the island, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists so that the area feels open and welcoming and is fully integrated into the movement patterns of the rest of the city.



Amenity

Provide exceptional recreational and social amenities with a particular focus on water-related sporting activities, and indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, and take full advantage of the Special Area of Conservation and the linkages to the city-wide network of river-front and canal-side walks.



Education

Provide high quality resources and facilities for education to meet the needs of all ages and backgrounds.



Employment

Provide employment opportunities to satisfy the needs of the local population.
Create a new employment centre for the city based on the tourism/hospitality and innovation/design sectors.



Sustainability

Create an urban environment that is a model in the way it creatively and ambitiously sets the highest possible standards of sustainability in all aspects of its development.



City context

Take account of the city-wide context, particularly in relation to linkages and access.

5.3.2 Vision and objectives

5.3.2.2. Objectives

The objective of the Masterplan is to illustrate how the potential of King's Island can be unlocked as a major resource for the sustainable regeneration of the north end of the island and the historic core of Limerick city.

Central to this will be:



- The re-housing of the existing community in accordance with their needs



- The achievement of a significant increase in the size and social mix of the local population.



- The creation of a high quality mixed-use urban environment that offers a real and attractive alternative to suburbia by taking full advantage of the island's central location



St Mary's Park Regeneration Site

5.3.3 Evolution and structure of the plan

5.3.3.1 Steps the in evolution of the Plan

This plan is an evolution of the Strategy Report for the Regeneration of St Mary's Park prepared by Erinaceous Project Management/MOLA and others in September 2007 for Limerick City Council. The main influences in the refinement of the previous strategy were:

- **Existing Community:** The necessity to accommodate all existing residents who wish to be re-housed in the area, subject to eligibility criteria.
- **User Needs Survey:** A more detailed (but not fully complete) user-needs survey of the existing population which clarifies many aspects of their needs and aspirations
- **St. Mary's Park Regeneration Committee:** Feedback from the committee on their concerns, particularly in relation to housing types, alternative means of access to and from the island, the location of the crèche and primary school facilities, keeping existing neighbours together and the safeguarding of the independence of the local soccer clubs
- **Agencies input:** More detailed information from the HSE, Garda, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Limerick City Council
- **Moyross Plan:** Awareness of the proposals for the re-generation of Moyross and how the Plan for the two adjacent areas could become fully integrated in the long term.

As a result of the above, the main changes are:

- **Gateway:** The location of the gateway has been modified and the layout of the district centre has altered accordingly
- **Avenue:** The main north-south access route is now a two way tree-lined avenue
- **Housing:** The housing mix and layout has been refined to take more detailed account of the user needs
- **Creche:** A specific stand-alone site available for early development has been identified, given its priority in the community

5.3.3.2 Overall Key Plan

The key elements of the plan are:

1. Primary Urban Structure

A new, wider more welcoming entrance to the north of King's Island is proposed near the existing roundabout entrance to St. Mary's Park, on the Island Road. This gateway will be known as Island Gate (in reference to the historic island gate in the old city walls that existed here previously) and will be the location for the new district centre for the entire island. The district centre will be the heart of community activity for the entire island and will be the main urban space for social gatherings and community activities. It will contain a variety of mixed-uses that will be housed in a cluster of buildings that will form pedestrian friendly streets and open spaces.

Island Avenue is the main thoroughfare with a generous two way landscaped street with on-street parking, bus lanes, cycle lanes and giving access to all parts of the island. It is proposed that it will eventually be linked on the east-west axis at the top of the island by bridges to the New Road in Thomondgate to the west and to a new railway station in Corbally, to the East. The existing disused ESB Eel Weir is also proposed to be opened up to pedestrian and cyclist traffic, further enhancing linkages to the city.



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.3 Evolution and structure of the plan

2. Open Space/Play

The availability of open space and opportunities for play/recreation of high quality is an important influence on satisfaction with urban living.

King's Island is naturally endowed with abundant opportunities for the provision of open spaces of very high quality.

The existing public realm include the Special Area of Conservation, the Riverside Walk, the military cemetery and the urban spaces of old Dominic Street, Nicholas Street, Merchant's Quay and George's Quay.

Proposed amenities include the upgrading of the Riverside Walk, an urban park at the top of the island, the Island Avenue, a new park at the site of the 17th century bastion, local neighbourhood parks and pedestrianised urban spaces within the district centre at Islandgate.



The pedestrian/cyclist diagram illustrates the potential for movement throughout the island and linkages to the rest of the city. (with possible bridge access)

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.3 Evolution and structure of the plan

4. Land Uses Structure

The new entrance gateway is located in the southwest corner of the site adjacent to the historic core of the City. The District Centre is located in this area of optimum visibility and accessibility. Immediately adjacent, on the waterfront, is the higher density mixed-use area.

At the opposite end of the Island, the northern and eastern edges feature amenities and open spaces including the Special Area of Conservation and Gooseneck Park. The latter is an Urban Park designed to serve the needs of a wider population with extensive indoor and outdoor sporting facilities. It also re-houses the existing soccer clubs on the island.

In between, on the southeast-northwest axis, is primarily residential, divided into different density and scale categories by the Island Avenue and the small scale city blocks. Higher densities tend to be on the river edge and the Avenue. Lower densities tend to be in the inner blocks and facing on to the SAC.

The structure diagram also acknowledges the importance of the Heritage Precinct to the south of the site which has great potential for new development and employment in tourism and digital-hub activities.

The site of the 17th century bastion has also been identified as a potential zone for heritage and amenities.



5. Learning/Education/Employment Opportunities

The creation of a new learning, education and employment opportunities is an essential part of the regeneration strategy. The map indicates the opportunities that are catered for, including crèches; a new amalgamated primary school; adult education; education in the field of arts, sports, ecology and archaeology; and two third level facilities; UL at Munchin's Church (10) and LIT at George's Quay (13).

Opportunities for employment include all of the above and provision for workshops, mixed use, tourism and digital hub facilities.



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.3 Evolution and structure of the plan



6. Integrated Plan

The bringing together of these key elements results in a comprehensive Plan which addresses the needs of the existing and new residents and brings together the objectives of the social and economic plans.

The Key Plan summarises the Framework Plan on which the variation to the Limerick City Development Plan will be based and which will structure the new investment which will rebuild St. Mary's Park.



DISTRICT CENTRE

EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS

RESIDENTIAL Medium to High Density

RESIDENTIAL Low to Medium Density

RESIDENTIAL Low Density

MIXED USE

OPEN SPACE

PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY

DISTRICT CENTRE: Island Place, Military Square, Community Centre, Creche, Adult Education, Primary Health Care, Garda Station, Shops, Workshops, Offices, Residential.

MIXED USE: Residential, Offices, Workshops, Cafes, Restaurants, Bars, Retail.

GOOSENECK PARK: Parkland, Pedestrian / Cycle Paths, SAC (Special Area of Conservation), Indoor Sports Centre, Football Pitches, Equestrian Centre, possible River Education Centre

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.4 Live

5.3.4.1 Character Areas and Neighbourhoods

The Plan consciously divides the island into distinctive quarters of character, taking full advantage of the unique island setting and using the new Island Gate and Island Avenue as strong visual and functional reference points for making the urban structure legible and understandable.

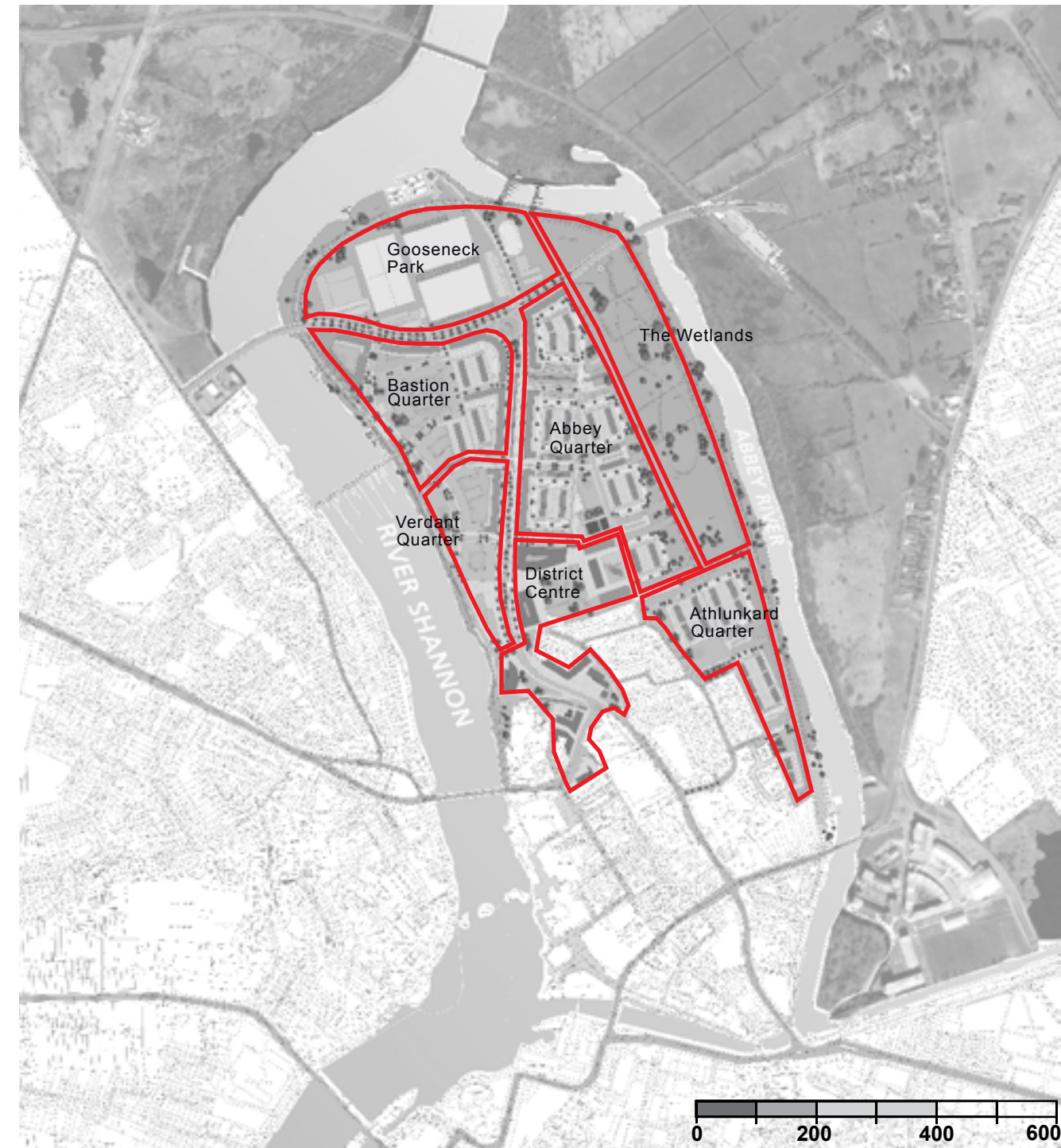
Within this structure, the scale is further broken down into Quarters and then small city blocks. The higher densities and greater mix of uses tend to be west of Island Avenue, peaking in scale on the riverfront. The medium to lower densities tend to be east of Island Avenue, with primarily residential uses.

Each zone will have clearly defined boundaries with signs notifying people when they enter and exit zones. There will be a site wide signage plan which features a clearly defined colour scheme. Walk and cycle signs will be provided on signage and there will be an individual planting scheme on the boundaries of each zone to add to the zones' identity.

A consistent community brand consisting of a limited palette of colours and sustainable materials of high quality that are appropriate to the local context are to be used, including landscaping and signage.

The appearance of the development will be visually appropriate and will complement local character whilst creating a strong identity for the new neighbourhood.

The local community should be involved in creating and identifying arts, works or programmes for the development. Potential artists should be involved early in the design process to help identify sites for the works and to develop concepts to assist in the development of a sense of place for the new community. The 1% for arts scheme based on the project capital budgets should be spent on the development and provision of public works of art in line with the Arts and Cultural Strategy of the Limerick Regeneration Agency.



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



The following is a summary description of each of the character areas:

Island Gate:

As noted earlier, this is the district centre for the entire island, housing community, social services, local retail, education, employment and other mixed uses. The adjacent figure illustrates the pattern of spaces and buildings proposed for this area.

Island Place is, in effect, the local town square. This traffic free plaza is enclosed by buildings housing the uses outlined above. Opposite Island Place is Villiers Place, another traffic free landscaped open space that incorporates the footprint of the original enclosing wall of English Town, and is an extension of the medieval street pattern of the Heritage Precinct. Other mixed use buildings flank Villiers Place to the south and north, extending the footprint of the district centre and generating additional activity.

The Island Gate extends further along Island Avenue, past Island View Terrace, as far as the Military Cemetery. Here is another cluster of buildings, higher in scale, as the location is remote from existing protected structures. They enclose a courtyard, Military Square, which has the reposeful presence of the cemetery as a centrepiece.

The square leads eastwards to the site for the new crèche (a priority project within the plan), the Energy Centre for the Island, workshops for local employment and the earliest phases of the new housing. Westwards, it leads across Island Avenue to the riverfront along Verdant Promenade.

Facilities such as a Childrens' Centre and Youth Resource Space can be provided in conjunction with other community facilities.



Island Gate

- DISTRICT CENTRE
- EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS
- RESIDENTIAL Medium to High Density
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



5.3.4 Live

Abbey Quarter

This area is primarily medium to low density residential, located between Island Avenue and the SAC. The prototype housing block outlines the transition from the four storey edge on the avenue containing housing work-live units or commercial on the ground floor and apartments overhead) to a mixture of single-family terraced housing and duplexes within the internal closes or facing on to the SAC.

There is also a triangular open space for a children's playground, allotments and Our Lady's Grotto, relocated from the existing entrance to St. Mary's Park.



Abbey Quarter

- EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS
- RESIDENTIAL Medium to High Density
- RESIDENTIAL Low to Medium Density
- RESIDENTIAL Low Density
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Athlunkard Quarter

This is located south of Abbey Quarter, between Assumpta Park/Lee Estate and the Riverside Walk. It enjoys very convenient pedestrian access to the rest of the city along the latter.

Primarily residential, it has the lowest density in the Plan, comprising terraced houses and duplexes. It also has a children's playground and allotments.

The Athlunkard Boat Club on the riverbank at the pedestrian entrance to the Quarter is an important local sporting organisation. There is potential for restoring the clubhouse for community/sporting use and perhaps a workshop for river related employment such as boat-building.



Athlunkard Quarter

- EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS
- RESIDENTIAL Low to Medium Density
- RESIDENTIAL Low Density
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



5.3.4 Live

Verdant Quarter

This area lies between Island Avenue and Verdant Promenade/Park. It enjoys the best sun orientation and ease of access to the river edge. It is proposed that this be the area of highest density and greatest mix of uses. The ground floor riverfront has potential for retail, commercial and leisure/amenity uses (including cafés, bars and restaurants).

The upper floors can accommodate a mix of commercial and residential. The avenue frontages can be a mix of commercial, residential and home-work-units.

A canal on the north boundary gives the edge a special character and enhances property values.



Verdant Quarter

- RESIDENTIAL Medium to High Density
- MIXED USE
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



(with possible bridge access)

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Bastion Quarter

Located between Verdant Quarter and Gooseneck Park, this area also enjoys excellent western river frontage on to Verdant Promenade and the Riverside Walk. Internally, all of the blocks face on to the generously proportioned Bastion Park, site of the 17th century Bastion, which will be excavated as part of the archaeological agenda for the Island. The park is a potential site for a museum/interpretive centre based on the history and archaeology of this area.

Primarily residential in use, ranging from medium to high density, it will feature a landmark building to be known as Riverbend House which will enjoy wonderful views up river, down river over the city and northwards to the Clare Hills. It is strategically positioned where the proposed Watch House Bridge from Thomondgate meets the Island.

There is potential for low to medium density residential within the core of three of the blocks although higher densities would be preferable in this Quarter, subject to market demand.

As elsewhere, along Island Avenue (and Gooseneck Road), provision is made for live-work units and/or commercial at ground level. On the southern boundary of this Quarter higher density mixed-use is provided for, as an extension of the mixed uses in the adjacent Verdant Quarter.



Bastion Quarter

- EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS
- RESIDENTIAL Medium to High Density
- RESIDENTIAL Low to Medium Density
- RESIDENTIAL Low Density
- MIXED USE
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



(with possible bridge access)

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



5.3.4 Live

Gooseneck Park

All of the area north of Gooseneck Road has been allocated to an urban park to cater for the sporting and recreational needs of the island and the city-wide population. It enjoys extensive river frontage along the Riverside Walk, with beautiful views of the river and part of it is within the Special Area of Conservation.

Facilities will include an indoor sports centre, all-weather soccer pitches or possibly a rugby or GAA pitch, an equestrian educational centre, an eco-centre and parkland areas.

A landmark feature is proposed at the top of the island, at Island Point, which could incorporate a viewing tower cum wind generator and a marina at its base. The marina would cater for boat tours up the river and around the island.

There is also potential for lock gates where the Abbey River leaves the Shannon River. This would aid navigation and the mooring of boats on the Abbey River, enhancing the tourism potential of boating in the City centre. It also affords the potential of including turbines to generate electricity for the island.



Gooseneck Park



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



The Wetlands Quarter

This is the part of the SAC between the Riverside Walk on the East Bank and Abbey Quarter. It will be protected as a natural amenity and enhanced as appropriate in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). It is an important educational and amenity resource for local residents and visitors.

Whilst NPWS are supportive of the Regeneration Proposals in principle, they have asked if part of the SAC can be returned to its original state as part of the flood plain for the River Shannon, whilst maintaining the fresh water nature of the remainder of the SAC. It is proposed to do this by separating the SAC into three cells by the creation of small embankments, which could also be used as pathways to explore the SAC. The water levels in each cell will be controlled by sluices operated by float valves which, in the case of the saltwater cell, will limit the level of flood water ingress, and in the case of the fresh water cells, will ensure that the sluices only open to allow storm water to escape once the tide has receded.

It is envisaged that the perimeter embankments will be assessed and strengthened/raised as necessary as part of the upgrading of the Riverside Walk.



The Wetlands Quarter

- EDUCATION / RECREATION / SPORTS
- OPEN SPACE
- PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE PRIORITY



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Streets

5.3.4.2 Streets. Character and Scale

Island Avenue

This is the main thoroughfare, leading from the new entrance at Island Gate northwards to Gooseneck Park at the top of the island. The objective is to create an attractive urban character of appropriate scale that sets a very high standard of urban environment unique to King's Island, while making access and movement simple, pleasurable and efficient for all users – vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian. The section below illustrates the main features of the avenue: four storey scale of enclosure, on-street parking (to maintain active street frontages) interspersed with trees, central landscaped median, separated single north and south traffic lanes, cycle and bus lanes (with potential for conversion to future tram lines).

A canal is incorporated into a portion of the central median as a distinctive landscape feature to celebrate the Island context and the importance of the role of water in the history of its development.



Verdant Promenade

This runs one-way northwards on the western edge of the island, bounded by Verdant Park and the Riverside Walk on one side and five plus one storey (minimum) mixed-use buildings on the other. It is single lane, with some on-street parking, to generate an active water's edge but to limit the negative impact that traffic can have in a high amenity area.

This is an excellent location for the main public riverside promenade, with a very active ground floor frontage of cafes, restaurants, bars and niche retail/ services.

Wide pavements and quaysides are proposed with beautiful hard and soft landscaping of paving, seating, lighting, trees and signage.

Additional amenities are proposed such as fishing stands, mooring posts and the reintroduction of open air swimming, as used to happen in this location in the past. (Zurich and Berlin are good examples of how river and lake swimming are enjoyed as summer pastimes in large urban centres).

Overhead, a mixture of apartments and commercial activities is proposed.



Section through Island Avenue



Section through Verdant Promenade

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Gooseneck Road

This links the two proposed new bridges at the top of the island to each other and Island Avenue. A two lane carriageway, it has generous footpaths, a cycle lane and is lined with trees and railings on the Gooseneck Park side. At this stage these bridges are aspirational only.



Section through Gooseneck Road

Other Streets

The others will be a series of one and two-way streets, some with on-street parking on one or both sides and others without, depending on the uses, building types and densities on the relevant street.



Section through street between houses and duplex units



Section through street between duplex units and duplex units



Section through street between houses and houses



In all cases, the design of paving, street furniture, lighting, planting and signage will be given careful consideration to ensure a streetscape quality of a standard appropriate to encouraging inner city living.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Buildings

5.3.4.3 Building Heights and Massing:

The Proposals policy on building heights and massing is influenced by the following factors:

- The relationship with existing buildings, addressing such issues as architectural heritage, rights to light, privacy and amenity
- The need to create sufficient intensity of use appropriate to an inner city site and to justify economically the significant cost of the new infrastructure. This concern is balanced with the needs and aspirations of the existing residents, the need for family-friendly living environments, and the scale of market demand
- The context and unique characteristics of each site, particularly in respect of views, sun-orientation and open space.

The following broad height strategies are proposed in the layout of the Masterplan, in response to the above issues. In general, the heights should be seen as a desirable minimum rather than a maximum and are open to review during the implementation phase of the Masterplan.

To ensure that the design of all building types underpin the sustainability of the development, individual dwellings should achieve at least an Eco Homes “very good” rating and all other buildings should achieve at least a BREEAM very good rating.



- 1-2 Storey**
 - In Abbey Quarter and Athlunkard Quarter for single family housing.
 - In Gooseneck Park for the Eco-Centre and the Equestrian Centre.
- 2-3 Storey:**
 - In Island Gate, on the site adjacent to the Bishop's Palace on Church Street and near Military Square for the Workshops, Creche and Energy Centre
 - In areas of low to medium residential densities
- 4 Storey:**
 - On both sides of Island Avenue
 - The street frontage of Gooseneck Road
 - The remainder of Island Gate
 - The street frontages on to Bastion Park
- 5 + 1 Storey:**
 - All buildings on the riverfront in Verdant Quarter and Bastion Quarter, except River Bend Tower
- 10 Storey + Landmarks**
 - Riverbend House
 - Proposed Viewing Tower at Island Point.

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5.3.4.4 Services

The Island Gate Quarter will be the focus for the location of the majority of the services for the Island because of its central location, easy access and high visibility. The concentration of these services will be an important factor in generating a vibrant, active and well used district centre.

Services will include a community centre, youth centre, arts activities, local retail, a primary healthcare centre, a Garda presence, local social/community support and voluntary agencies.

The first crèche will be nearby. Future crèches will be located in the different Quarters. It is believed that there is already adequate provision for religious facilities on the island and nearby.

Building Uses/Land-Use Plan:

The land-use plan accross summarises the broad mix of building uses.



District Centre



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

Housing - Residential

5.3.4.5 Housing

The aim is to provide a high quality, sustainable, family-friendly, urban residential environment that caters for the full spectrum of social and economic family profiles. Challenges include:

- Transforming the perception of St. Mary's Park as a socially disadvantaged, physically sub-standard and crime-ridden ghetto to one of a safe, model, urban riverside residential development
- Convincing house buyers that the convenience of urban living combined with an exceptional natural environment – is a desirable alternative to the currently available and preferred options of suburbia, or commuting from nearby villages, or one-off sites in the countryside.

The design of the residential environment will conform to current best practice and government policy as outlined in:

- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2007
- Sustainable Urban Housing - Design Standards for Apartments. Consultation draft guidelines for Local Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2007

The majority of the housing will have own door access i.e. townhouses or duplex.

Those without ground floor gardens will have external private open space in the form of a roof deck or balcony. Each neighbourhood will have its own park/ children's play areas in addition to being within: two blocks east- west of the Special Area of Conservation or Verdant Promenade; five minutes from the Island Place Community Centre, Gooseneck Park Sports and Recreational Centre.

There will be a robust and strategic management system for maintaining the public realm, developing community spirit and identity, and dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime (the latter in a highly integrated strategy with the Gardai).

Mix: In keeping with the principle of sustainability, the Plan allows for the widest possible mix of family types, in their life-cycles from young singles to elderly dependents, and in their needs and aspirations, socially and economically.

The Plan presumes that residential is the pre-dominant use in the Abbey, Athlunkard and Bastion Quarters, supported in each case by a local shop, crèche and kiddies playground.

Prototype Housing Block

The prototype housing block illustrates in more detail how a typical block in Abbey Quarter can accommodate a mix of terraced, single-family houses, duplexes, work-live units and apartments.

All housing clusters should be designed to 'Secure by Design' or equivalent standards and make a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs, allowing for secure gardens, parking and an overlooked, safe public realm. 100% of building frontages should face on to the street and there will be an involvement of a Police Architectural Liaison Officer (PALO) or Crime Reduction Design Officer (CRDO) or other specialist.



Abbey Quarter



Bastion Quarter

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Housing - Residential



The Proposals allow for three alternative densities, ranging from a maximum provision of terraced houses to a minimum in response to the needs of the existing residents. The decision on the final mix will need to be based on a fully comprehensive user-needs survey and agreement with each family on the best solution for their needs. The preliminary survey information suggests that there is potential to achieve a very good balance between the residents needs and the objectives of the Plan

The current low market demand for urban apartment/duplex living versus the availability of relatively good value suburban houses on the perimeter of the city emphasises the importance of providing an urban environment of the highest quality of design and management.



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Housing - Residential

5.3.4.6 Typologies

The generic housing block indicates the range of typologies appropriate to the Plan and the full range of family types and life-cycles. Specific provision can be made for elderly residents, who generally prefer to be integrated in to the community rather than placed in a retirement village. The Plan is amenable to the location of sheltered accommodation for the elderly where necessary.

Detailed house design is outside the scope of the Plan. There is considerable opportunity for the creative design of residential types in response to the uniquely attractive characteristics of the site. It is recommended that a variety of design teams be engaged to implement the design of different housing clusters to ensure variety and quality of design.

Design Specification: The housing design should be of the highest quality and conform to the standards previously referred to. The designs should comprehensively address the following issues.

- Family life-cycles/user need
- Floor areas/room sizes
- Access/disability
- Security/privacy
- Sun orientation/daylight/aspect
- Storage/car parking
- Energy efficiency/ventilation, including BREEAM rating
- Durability/low-maintenance



Densities

5.3.4.7 Site Capacity, Land Areas and Density

The following page illustrates three density scenarios. The three scenarios illustrate how the Plan has the flexibility to increase or decrease the number of townhouses as necessary to accommodate existing residents who want this form of replacement housing. Because town houses take up more space than duplexes or apartments, an increase in the number of town houses reduces the total number of homes which can be accommodated on the site. Similarly, a reduction in the number of townhouses increases the potential total number of homes.

The proposed Plan has a total of 1,414 homes on the site, at a density of 54.1 per hectare.



Medium density



Lower density



Higher density

The density scenarios can be modified as the housing requirements of each phase of construction becomes clearer.



Layout 1200 Residential Units provided

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Infrastructure



Layout 1403 Residential Units provided



Layout 1600 Residential Units provided

5.3.4.8 Infrastructure

The existing infrastructure in St. Mary's Park serves 463 homes. Increasing the number of homes by approximately 1,000 as well as providing 34,000m² of community facilities, commercial space and retail space will require a significant upgrade to utilities and drainage. It is proposed that all existing infrastructure is removed and replaced with new.

Primary mains supplies and sewers will enter the site at, or close to, the Southern Gateway, and will be laid under the central landscaped portion of Island Avenue, with connections off this spine route serving the individual elements of the Masterplan as they are built. The infrastructure elements can be summarised as below. Each of the utility providers have agreed the principles of the method of supply.

- **Energy Centre:** an energy centre incorporating a biomass boiler is proposed, located centrally within the Masterplan. This will provide hot water and heating for all buildings
- **Electricity:** two new 150mm ducts will form a ring main within the site, and will link back directly to the ESB station in Corbally
- **Gas:** A new 200mm medium pressure gas main could be connected to the existing gas main under Castle Street
- **Telecom:** the local Eircom exchange has sufficient capacity for the Masterplan proposals
- **Cable television:** There is an extensive cable television network within St. Mary's Park which can be extended to serve the new homes
- **Water Supply:** a 300mm water main runs along Nicholas Street and Castle Street which will provide for the regeneration site
- **Foul sewerage:** The existing system is a combined sewer for foul and storm water. Separate systems are proposed, which will significantly reduce the discharge into the Bunlicky Waste Water Treatment Plant. The new foul sewer will link into the recently completed Limerick Main Drainage System
- **Surface Water:** Surface water can discharge directly into the Shannon and Abbey Rivers. At times of exceptional high tides, water will not be able to discharge into the rivers, and when these tides coincide with very high rainfall, water storage is necessary. In this instance, the drains themselves will provide storage for most heavy storms, water from heavier storms will be accommodated by allowing the water level in the canal to rise, and the water from the heaviest rainfall (1:100 year rain event) will discharge in a controlled manner into the existing drains within the fresh water cells of the SAC.

Oil separators/interceptors will be provided to eliminate the risk of pollution from surface water run-off.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



5.3.5 Link

5.3.5.1 Movement

One of the key roles of the Plan is to demonstrate how the existing physical and visual isolation of the north of King's Island can be overcome. The following strategies demonstrates this:



Gateways (with possible bridge access)

Creation of new gateways that are open, clearly visible and easily accessible. The Island Gate will also be a focal point as a centre for local community social and retail services.



Possible Links

Creation of more points of entry and egress to open up the quarter to the rest of the city and to eliminate the existing "dead end" condition.



Public Transport Routes (with possible bridge access)

The provision of high quality, convenient, frequent and reliable public transport.



Pedestrian and Cycle Routes (with possible bridge access)

The prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclists over vehicular traffic throughout the quarter.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



5.3.5 Link

Pedestrian: Pedestrian movement is well catered for by the provision of footpaths on all streets; traffic-free zones in public spaces such as Island Place, Villiers Place, Military Square, Bastion Park and Gooseneck Park. The area is particularly well-endowed with traffic-free pedestrian routes on the Riverside Walk, along the entire perimeter of the island. Extra generous footpaths are provided along Verdant Promenade to enhance its attraction as a pedestrian-friendly environment.

The central location of King's Island and its scale – 10 minutes walk from the new Islandgate to the northern tip of the island – makes it very practical and convenient for walkers and cyclists. The riverside walk along the island perimeter embankments links back into the city and can also link to a fantastic sequence of riverside paths northwards through Corbally out to the University of Limerick (UL), and ultimately to Killaloe via the Clare Way. A more direct and similarly attractive route to UL is possible along the old Guinness Canal which is currently being restored and upgraded with paving, cycle paths, lighting and seating.

Cycling/pedestrian linkages to nearby Limerick Institute of Technology and Thomond Park using the upgraded Thomond Weir are also proposed.

Arthur's Quay Quarter – the main shopping area of Limerick City centre – is within 10 minutes walking distance of Islandgate, through the ancient street pattern of the medieval city. In the near future, with the completion of the riverside walks between Thomond Bridge and Sarsfield Bridge, it will also be possible to walk or cycle to the City centre along the riverfront, making King's Island an even more attractive and sustainable urban location from the point of view of access.

Cycle: A network of cycle paths is provided throughout the Plan with particular provision being made on the central median on Island Avenue.

Public Transport: Following discussions with Bus Éireann, a regular all day bus service is proposed which will have a 10 minutes frequency, bus stops within a maximum of five minutes walking distance and attractive, well-maintained bus shelters (with the potential to have digital electronic timetables and live information on bus locations). The road system will be designed to accommodate a transfer to light rail in the future with a minimum disruption.

There is the possibility in the future of having a train station at Corbally on the east bank of the Abbey River with a possible bridge link to the Island Quarter.

Such connectivity will greatly enhance the sustainability of the Island Quarter for urban living and working.

Public Service Vehicles: The proposed road infrastructure is designed to cope with all public service vehicles including emergency and waste management services.

Private Vehicles: The proposed road system is adequate to cater for private vehicles for local and through traffic. Island Avenue and Gooseneck Road are the main two-way traffic arteries. The majority of the remainder of the traffic routes are one-way, designed to achieve an intimate street scale and reduce the impact of traffic on the road. The residential neighbourhoods have been designed so that there are no dead-ends, minimising isolation and security issues.

Parking: It is recommended that the car parking requirements in the Limerick City Council Development Plan be reviewed to lower levels of provision, given the central city location and the policies for public transport.

The higher density areas such as apartments, commercial and office uses will provide secure underground parking. Where feasible, the medium density residential housing will use on-street parking and courtyard parking within the urban blocks.

Appropriate provision should also be made for bicycle parking.

The Heritage Precinct will have a demand for adequate parking for tourist cars and buses.

The low density residential will have car-parking within the cartilage of the house where possible.

Accessibility: All public spaces and buildings are easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, the disabled and vehicular traffic.

A traffic assessment in compliance with Eco Homes 2005 guidance must be carried out. Mitigation measures identified in the assessment are to be incorporated through the provision of infrastructure, amenities or services which will be of community benefit.

To ensure vehicle speeds are appropriate to all road users and to ensure road safety whilst allowing children to play in friendly open spaces, the traffic management plan should include design strategies for the entire site and a site-wide design speed of 50kph (30mph). Major traffic calming measures including speed humps, chicanes, and surface treatments should be employed where appropriate to around 100% of homes. There should be a major focus on road signs and road markings to indicate the presence of children playing, schools and speed requirements etc in 100% of areas across the communities.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



Movement

5.3.5.2 Views, Landmarks, Legibility (with possible bridge access)



The district centre at Island Gate has been located and designed to form a highly visible gateway to the north of King's Island.



Island Avenue, in its proportion scale, detail and landscaping, has been designed as the central thoroughfare of the Island Quarter, giving it distinctive legibility.



A possible Watch House Bridge could form a new gateway on to the Island from Thomondgate. The landmark presence of the River Bend House and the Sports Centre combined with the bridge would give this gateway a distinctive character and legibility.



The tree-lined edge of Gooseneck Road with the public park and sporting facilities will create a distinctive and memorable parkland landscape setting.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

Views and Landmarks



Verdant Promenade and Verdant Park on the river's edge, with a back-drop of cafés, bars and restaurants and mixed-uses overhead will create a distinctive and memorable urban waterside environment.



The variety of the geometry of the housing blocks, the mix of open space and their varied relationship to the Special Area of Conservation and Bastion Park means that each neighbourhood cluster will have its own particular identity and character.



All areas facing on to the rivers will enjoy attractive views of high amenity. The taller the buildings, the more distant and the higher the quality will be of the views.



Views inwards towards the Island are important. The viewing tower at Island Point and River Bend House will become important landmarks within the city, without intruding on the skyline of the existing historic core.

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

5.3.6 Play

5.3.6.1 Open Space

The adjacent figure illustrates the pattern of open spaces provided in the Masterplan. The main formal open spaces are:

- The Wetlands Quarter (Special Area of Conservation)
- Gooseneck Park
- Bastion Park
- Verdant Park
- Military Square

These comprise a total of 15.75 Hectares and provide a very rich variety of types of open space and range of activities. Tying them all together is the perimeter Riverside Walk, which is in itself an exceptional amenity of two kilometres. The central landscaped median on Island Avenue is also an important piece of the open space jigsaw, as are the urban spaces at Island Place and Villiers Place. In addition, there are the local neighbourhood parks/playgrounds within the neighbourhood clusters, which also include some allotments.



The Wetlands Quarter



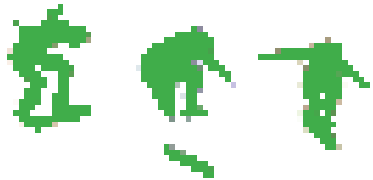
Swimming area



Military Square



Riverside walk



Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only

Sports



5.3.6.2 Sports

Gooseneck Park is proposed as the major sports facility for the Island. A hallmark of a people-friendly city is the provision it makes for easily accessible sport and recreation for its inhabitants. Limerick is famous for its wide-ranging passion for team sports, especially rugby, hurling and soccer, with the same standing true for St Mary's Parish. There are excellent facilities at the National Sports Arena in the University of Limerick (UL). However, not everybody participates in team sports, especially at the professional and quasi-professional level of elite sportsmen in rugby, GAA and athletics. A sustainable city needs a recognised destination for active and passive recreation where families of all ages and profiles can relax in an attractive natural environment, with a range of choices of activities. It not only satisfies their needs for health and recreation but it also has an important role in creating a bonding effect among its users and a sense of belonging to a community that cares for the quality of life of its citizens.

Taking cues from local history and from the existing community, the possibilities for uses of this area are very wide-ranging. On the sporting front, fishing, rowing, sailing, swimming, cycling, horse-riding, boxing, soccer, rugby and gaelic games have all featured locally over the years.

Two soccer clubs, Star Rovers FC and Athlunkard Villa FC, occupy a strategic 7.2 acres on the Island, east of Assumpta Park, on land reclaimed from what would otherwise now be an SAC. These clubs are proposed to be integrated into the Gooseneck Park Sports Complex potentially alongside other sporting and recreation facilities

and activities. Such facilities will have the potential to be used by the neighbouring clubs such as St Mary's Rugby Club, Abbey Sarsfields GAA Club and others who currently serve the community in St Mary's Park. These clubs will be supported in their development over the coming years by the Regeneration Agencies and the City's Sports Partnership. The concept of sharing facilities both within and between the various sporting codes lies at the heart of the sports strategy for the area with the intention of maximising opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity, supporting the clubs to grow strong, whilst at the same time ensuring that all facilities are efficiently and effectively managed and maintained.



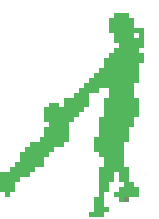
Marina



Outdoor sports facilities



Indoor sports facilities



Recreation



An Equestrian Learning Centre is proposed, given the keen interest and enjoyment that the existing community derive from horses and buggy racing. However, the current practice of owners keeping horses in their gardens and being allowed to roam free can not be allowed to continue for obvious health and safety reasons.



On the more passive side, the flora and fauna on the waterfront and the SAC (which extends to hundreds of acres to the east and north of the Island) provide the template for a beautiful setting for leisurely parkland activities such as strolling, sitting, chatting, reading and people watching. An educational agenda is also proposed, through the establishment of a visitor/ research centre focused on the ecology of the Shannon Estuary. There is also the potential for education and practice on the growing of fruit and vegetables, drawing on the history of the monastery gardens on the island and the tradition of market gardening in the nearby park area.

Provision for allotments has been made in the Plan for this purpose.



As well as the provision of playgrounds for young people, other 'fringe' and informal activities are to be encouraged , such as skateboarding, kite flying, model airplanes, frisbee, baseball and adventure sports.



Not to ignore the sporting potential of the river. Limerick has a great tradition of rowing clubs and the Athlunkard Rowing Club on the southeast corner of the Island merits support for the development of its facilities including the restoration and upgrading of the original clubhouse.



The powerful flow of the Abbey River in flood, especially when the Ardnacrusha turbines are fully open, is a deterrent to safe water sport activities and the convenient passage of boats from Limerick to Killaloe. A lock gate to control the flow of water where the Abbey River leaves the Shannon at the north-east corner of the Island may be able to resolve the problem.

These proposals would need expert hydrological review.



As an extension of the park, the Riverside Walk will be significantly upgraded to make it more accessible, comfortable, safe and attractive. This will include a renewed surface, plus seating, signage, lighting and planting. Fishing stands and the revival of old swimming locations are appropriate, subject to not conflicting with the SAC designation.



Recreation



Apart from competitive rowing and hired cruisers for tourists, the local boat designs of the gondola and sandcot deserve revival for fishing and pleasure boating.



It is assumed that there will be a managed play strategy put in place to take advantage of the provision of children's play spaces throughout the neighbourhoods.

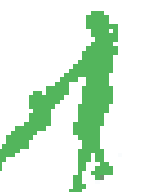
Chapter 2 (Strategic Context) set out the necessity for national, regional and local strategies to be taken into account in planning any new significant developments. It also set out the importance of collaboration, coordination and joint strategic planning between all the relevant agencies and bodies who vary from having national, regional and local objectives.

Any developments proposed in this programme around sport and recreation (including arts and culture) will require to be proofed within the context of national, regional, greater Limerick City Area and Limerick City collaborative strategies.



St Mary's Park Regeneration Site

Note: All maps and diagrams in this document are for indicative purposes only



The potential for learning facilities is summarised in the adjacent LEARN diagram.

The provision of a crèche is a priority. A site that is immediately available for development has been designated. Other crèches will be provided within local neighbourhoods as the demand increases.

It is proposed that the existing boys and girls primary schools be amalgamated into a new facility. The girls' school is the most suitable site and the existing building is of good architectural quality and will lend itself to adaptation and extension. However, the site is restricted and some of the adjacent vacant site may be required if it is to fit. The site of the boys' school would be retained as recreation space, with a pedestrian bridge link.

Second-level school spaces are available outside the site, within the city.

The University of Limerick (UL) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) already have a presence at St. Munchin's Church and George's Quay respectively. They are committed to encouraging access to pupils from disadvantaged areas.

Adult education and continuing education facilities can be best accommodated in and around the new community centre at Islandgate.

The VEC already provide a wide range of adult and continuing education facilities in the City. Consolidation of these in a central, accessible location in the City is worthy of further investigation. A new school of music to replace the rather poor facilities in Musgrave Street would have tremendous educational benefits for the locality, as well as the City.

Other educational opportunities will arise at the sports centre, the equine training centre and the ecology centre.



UL facilities at St. Munchin's Cathedral



Girls Primary School

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5.8 WORK

The scale of unemployment in St. Mary's Park is far higher than the rest of Limerick City, with only 34% participating in the labour force as compared with a city average of 55%. The availability of work is an essential component of a sustainable plan, especially with a proposed increase in the number of households to 200%.

Each of the economic opportunities identified in section 4 have been facilitated by the plan.

New workshops are proposed in the early phases of the Plan in Islandgate, at Military Square.

A boat building/repair workshop is proposed on the site of the Athlunkard Rowing Club.

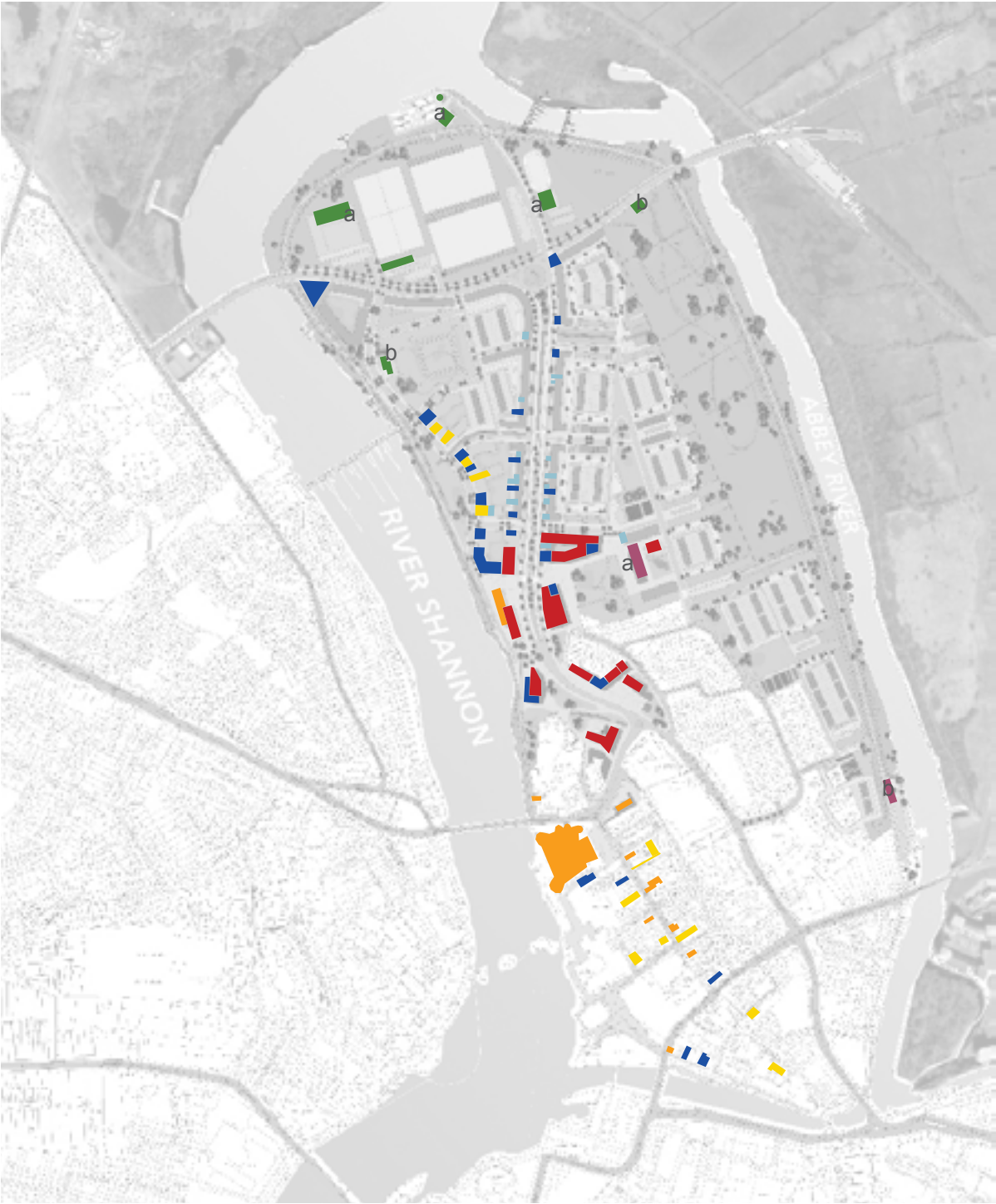
Opportunities for sport and recreation related to employment will be provided in the sports centre, the equine learning centre and the ecology educational centre in Gooseneck Park.

The regeneration will create the potential for increased tourism in the Heritage Precinct. This will create more opportunities for employment in the food, beverage, retail and tourist-guide industry, including at the Bastion Park Interpretation Centre.

The Plan also envisages significant new employment creation in new businesses related to the knowledge industries, including innovation, design and digital hub activities. It is hoped that these will grow out of the core strengths of the courses in UL and LIT, supported by Shannon Development, the IDA, FÁS, other agencies and the private sector.

Verdant Quarter and the Heritage Precinct have been identified for these activities.

A fully installed wireless broadband network package accessible to the entire community is to be provided.

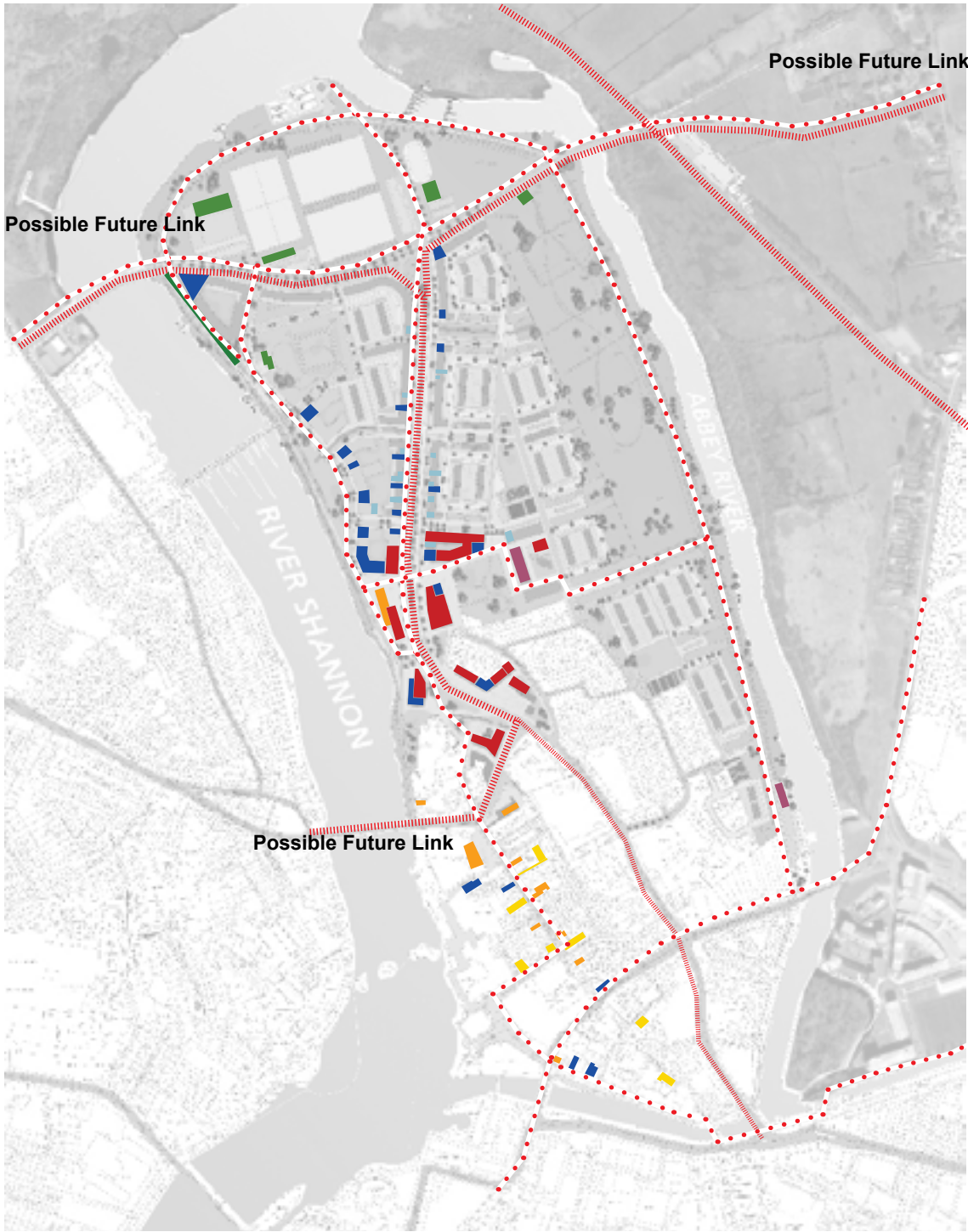


Note: In general, buildings have been coloured on the map to give a notion of the areas in which some activities of the plan could be accommodated. There is no intention to assign a definite use to any specific building.

- Knowledge based activities and employment, design and digital hub, workshops and business incubation units
- Tourism and Heritage activities
- a Business and Handcraft workshops, FÁS training scheme
- b Boat building and repair workshops, FÁS training schemes
- Community facilities
- Work live units, flexible layout convertible to commercial/retail on the ground floor (4metre floor to ceiling heights).
- a Sport and Recreation employment opportunities: Sports Centre and Equine Training Centre
- b Ecology and Archaeology employment opportunities: Ecological Centre and Bastion Interpretation Centre
- Retail and commercial, offices, cafes, bars and restaurants also local stores, convenience shops, pharmacy, laundry facilities, video rental, etc

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Employment opportunity spaces are located along or connected to public transport, pedestrian, cyclist and amenity routes providing efficient, attractive and pleasant journeys to work.

- Public transport routes
- Cycle/pedestrian routes

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