

LIMISTÉAR THÍAR LÁR CHATHAIR NA GAILLIMHE

Straitéis Uirbeach Chomhtháite

WEST AREA OF GALWAY CITY CENTRE

Integrated Urban Strategy



Allies and Morrison



Comhairle Cathrach
na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



THRIVE

Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme

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A – INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PROJECT

A vision-led blueprint for shaping the West Area

This report sets out Galway City Council's Integrated Urban Strategy for the West Area of Galway City Centre. The strategy will serve as a blueprint for shaping the physical environment and help guide the regeneration and rehabilitation of historic buildings and urban spaces. The council has been supported by a multi-disciplinary design team led by urban design and engagement specialists Allies and Morrison, and including transport and ecology specialists TOBIN, and conservation architects Karol O'Mahony Architects. The strategy has been informed by the views and ideas of local residents, businesses and stakeholders who contributed in a variety of ways through a comprehensive engagement programme. The strategy is vision-led and delivery focused.

A strategic approach to regeneration

The project is being supported under the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE), which is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Northern and Western Regional Programme 2021-27.

THRIVE encourages local authorities and communities to take an integrated, strategic approach to revitalising town centres - particularly through the renovation and reuse of vacant or derelict heritage buildings. It recognises the important role heritage plays in creating vibrant, attractive, and liveable urban centres that serve as hubs for business, culture, community and daily life.

Galway City Council shares these priorities. The Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029 places strong emphasis on removing vacancy and dereliction and promoting the conservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures.

The report is set out in four parts:

- Part A: Introduction - setting the scene for the Integrated Urban Strategy, and situating the project in context
- Part B: Understanding Galway City's West Area - analysis of the place inform the Integrated Urban Strategy
- Part C: Engagement - strategy and summary of feedback from the engagement events
- Part D: The vision, goals, objectives, and emerging projects

An introduction to the west area

The West Area of Galway City Centre is an urban neighbourhood in the heart of Galway, bounded by the River Corrib and the Eglinton Canal. This unique setting gives the area a distinct urban form and streetscape, with features including narrow streets and alleyways, principal streets, key public spaces, micro spaces and canal walkway.

It is a well-established neighbourhood, with a population of approximately 1,300 people, covering c.15 hectares. The area is home to a variety of uses, including homes, restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, shops, commercial, community and recreation. All of these uses work together to create an active and vibrant atmosphere. The area also has a strong nightlife, and becomes very popular in the evenings particularly when the timed pedestrianisation takes place over the summer months. A significant portion of the subject area is made up of older residential housing stock, where a strong sense of community is present.

The area has a rich architectural and archaeological heritage, reflected in the many historic buildings and Protected Structures which line its streets and feature in its public spaces. However, there are also challenges relating to the dereliction and/or vacancy of existing structures. The Integrated Urban Strategy will seek to address these issues, and propose opportunities for the potential re-use, re-purposing, conservation and enhancement of architectural and cultural heritage assets, as well as necessary infrastructural improvement works to streets and footpaths, the public realm, open spaces, micro spaces, laneways and canal walks.



Fig 1 West Area of Galway City Study Area

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

A policy and funding initiative promoting solutions that are sustainable, inclusive and beautiful

New European Bauhaus

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) sets a vital framework for the THRIVE funding programme. The Bauhaus is underpinned by three main pillars, “Sustainable, Beautiful and Together” which are defined as follows, each with three ambitions which reflect fundamental values of NEB. The following quotes are taken from the ‘New European Bauhaus Compass, 2022’.

Three values

Aesthetics (“Beautiful”)

Aesthetics refers to the overall quality of experience and style, beyond functionality:

- To activate:** “A beautiful project improves the physical and mental well-being of individuals by considering their senses and emotions, on top of their needs. It activates the cultural, social, and natural qualities of a place to create unique and positive experiences. The project fosters awareness of place and heritage in all its diversity, while embracing its own aesthetic.”
- To connect:** “A beautiful project enhances opportunities for meaningful social interactions and collective experiences. It reinforces a sense of belonging and enriches lives by connecting different places and people. The new attachments that emerge through the project foster openness and mutual care.”
- To integrate:** “A beautiful project enables creation, and the collective re-invention of the places, lifestyles, and communities we identify with. It integrates new cultural and social values, notably through the meaningful experience of a broader ‘us’ (including the non-human world). In doing so, it aspires to anticipate future transformations, and may generate a long-lasting movement”

Sustainability

Sustainability encompasses a wide spectrum of topics ranging from climate goals, to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity:

- To repurpose:** “A sustainable project aims to repurpose in order to avoid and reduce environmental impacts and favours durability, adaptability, recyclability. It aims at rethinking services, products

and places to reduce pollution and carbon impacts and have minimum use of resources, materials and energy. It looks at the scale of a products’ lifecycle. Projects that repurpose are aware of the impact their initiative has on the environment and have the ambition to reduce their environmental footprint.”

- To close the loop:** “A sustainable project aims to close the loop, reduce linear processes or transform them into circular processes to aim at zero pollution. It looks at the scale of an (industrial) system. Projects that close the loop actively involve all other actors in the cycle of the design, production, use and discarding phase of their initiative.”
- To regenerate:** “A sustainable project aims to give back more than it takes, enhancing rather than depleting biodiversity, incentivising the restoration and expansion of nature. Regenerative sustainability also considers how contexts and environments influence worldviews, paradigms, and behaviours. It looks at the scale of an ecosystem. Initiatives in this dimension are aware of the complete ecosystem they act in and their project’s impact over time and space on biodiversity and natural resources.”

Inclusion (“Together”)

Inclusion encourages valuing diversity and equality for all, and securing accessibility and affordability:

- To include:** “An inclusive project grants accessibility (physical, cognitive, psychological, etc.) and affordability for all, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, ability, age or sexual orientation. Equality of treatment and opportunities is essential but cannot be taken for granted, so it is important to prioritise less- represented individuals, groups and communities.”
- To consolidate:** “An inclusive project fosters and equalises relations between users and/or communities, safeguarding the principle of equal treatment and social justice over time. Inclusion and open access to services are secured by formal, structural mechanisms such as funding instruments, business models, planning, policies, regulations and other institutionalisation processes.”
- To transform:** “Inclusion inspires new ways of living together, building on solidarity and cooperation, raising awareness of discrimination and injustice. An inclusive project becomes exemplary and replicable, and has the potential to break obsolete social models, create value and bring transformative benefits on a societal level, influencing worldviews, paradigms and social behaviours.”



“The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative is an enabler for the green transition of our societies and economy. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls. It aims at transforming different sectors of economy, especially the built environment, making them contribute to our climate goals and to an improvement of the quality of life of all citizens.”

Three working principles

Projects are encouraged to embrace three working principles: a participatory process, multi-level engagement and a trans-disciplinary approach. Working across these principles is intended to achieve the highest level of ambitions in the three values.

Participatory process

This relates to the involvement of communities in the design, decision-making and implementation process:

- To consult:** “A participatory project features already-established communication channels and stakeholder participation. At this first ambition level, participation ranges from information-sharing about the project to consultation feeding into decision-making. The information flow is static and mostly one sided: the information flows from the project owner to its audience and then back”
- To co-develop:** “A participatory project engages stakeholders as key partners and advisers in defining and/or co-creating the rules and objectives of the project. The emerging ideas are developed collaboratively by the project and its stakeholders The information flow is dynamic, exchanges are on an equal foot and information becomes co-designed.”
- To self-govern:** “A participatory project aims to enable stakeholders to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with powerholders, at all stages of the project’s lifecycle (design, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and empowers the community to make decisions and govern the project.”

Multi-level engagement

Multi-level engagement encourages consideration of effects across different scales (e.g. local / global), fields (e.g. policy / activities) and times (e.g. short / long term):

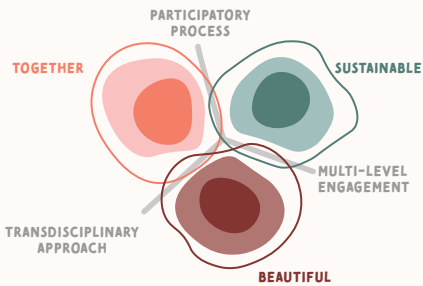
- To work locally:** “A multi-level NEB project connects horizontally informal networks (e.g. groups of individuals, neighbourhoods...), and/or formal institutions (e.g. sectoral departments, political groups...) and/or and engages with them to influence the local living environment with a placed-based approach.”

- To work across levels:** “A multi-level NEB project connects vertically informal networks (e.g. groups of individuals, neighbourhoods...) and/or formal institutions (e.g. government, administrations...) across various scales (e.g. single municipalities with regional authorities, local studies with international research programs), and engages with them to push single-scale initiatives beyond their own dimension (e.g. local, regional, national...)”
- To work globally:** “A multi-level NEB project that works at global level reaches for a wider, transformational impact beyond its initial, local scale of application and it connects networks and/or (inter)governmental institutions that, across various levels, share similar purposes looking at the future of the entire ecosystem”

Transdisciplinary approach

This refers to a desire to integrate knowledge and expertise from different disciplines to encourage more nuanced solutions:

- To be multidisciplinary:** “A multidisciplinary NEB project aims to address a common problem within one field of knowledge. Working in a multidisciplinary way means working independently alongside other disciplines that engage in similar topics.”
- To be interdisciplinary:** “An interdisciplinary NEB project aims to address a common problem or issue involving two or more academic disciplines or fields of knowledge. Working in an interdisciplinary way means collaborating with other disciplines towards a shared goal.”
- To be beyond-disciplinary:** “A beyond-disciplinary NEB project aims to integrate both formal and non-formal knowledge to achieve a common goal. It aims to bring together people from political, social and economic fields with members of the public to explore possibilities and realise new narratives. By drawing on both local and traditional knowledge and cultural norms and values, it aims to supplement and transform scientific insights for the benefit of society.”



PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The policy framework within which the Integrated Urban Strategy will site and the key policies and objectives it will respond to.

National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the government’s strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to 2040. The NPF is partnered with the National Development Plan (NDP), which outlines a programme of investment. Regional and local plans must align with shared National Strategic Outcomes of these plans.

The aim of revitalising Ireland’s towns and urban areas is strongly reflected in the objectives and priorities of the National Planning Framework. Many of the National Strategic Outcomes identified in the NPF, such as Compact Growth, Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Amenities and the Transition to a Low Carbon Society, are all closely aligned to a focus on improving our towns and supporting their increased population and employment growth in the future.

In particular, securing compact and sustainable growth is a key objective - this means tackling the inefficient recent pattern of urban sprawl through favouring more compact forms of development that focus on reusing ‘brownfield’ land, building up infill sites and reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings. Many of Ireland’s towns are well placed to support new development to consolidate within their existing footprint and provide new life and opportunities in a compact setting.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 (RSES)

The RSES provides a high-level development framework for the Northern and Western Region. including Galway City, that supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the relevant economic policies and objectives of Government. It provides a 12-year strategy to deliver the transformational change that is necessary to achieve the objectives and vision of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly.

The framework highlights that Galway has been the primary beneficiary of population growth within the region over the last two decades.

Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (CDP)

The City Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP) is centred on a vision for Galway City to be a successful, sustainable, competitive city of scale that creates prosperity and opportunity, supports a high quality of life, facilitates all forms of social inclusion, maintains its distinctive identity and supports a rich cultural experience. A central focus of the Plan is climate action, facilitating a just transition towards climate resilience and carbon neutrality framework for the conservation of key heritage sites and areas.

The CDP identifies a range of strategic priorities for the city. A number of these are particularly relevant to the West Area:

- Achieving a high quality of life for all citizens through the provision of a good quality, attractive, built environment, through the protection of the unique cultural heritage, including its linguistic heritage built heritage and natural environment and through facilitation of key economic, cultural and social supports.
- Enable Galway to become a city of scale as envisaged in the NPF and a regional driver of development that can contribute to economic growth through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic opportunities for development, innovation and investment across all employment sectors and allow the role of the City and Metropolitan Area to harness the strengths and maximise the economic development for the whole Northern and Western Region.
- Commit to climate action and enable a just transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy and society, in particular through specific promotion, adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Apply sustainability in all dimensions including encouragement of sustainable modes of transport and renewal of existing sites.
- Protect and enhance the distinctive and diverse natural environment in the city and strengthen the green and blue network and linkages,.
- Encourage a sense of collective identity and a shared vision through civic engagement on plans and projects.
- Develop a more urban compact form in the city that provides for attractive, integrated, and easily accessible neighbourhoods that are supported by appropriate levels of services and amenities.

Chapter 8 sets out policies and principles relating to Build Heritage, Placemaking and Urban Design. The Lower Dominick Street area is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), which affords protection to the special character of the area. Guidance also highlights the importance of the city’s industrial heritage, and defines general urban design and public realm principles to secure excellence in design and development.

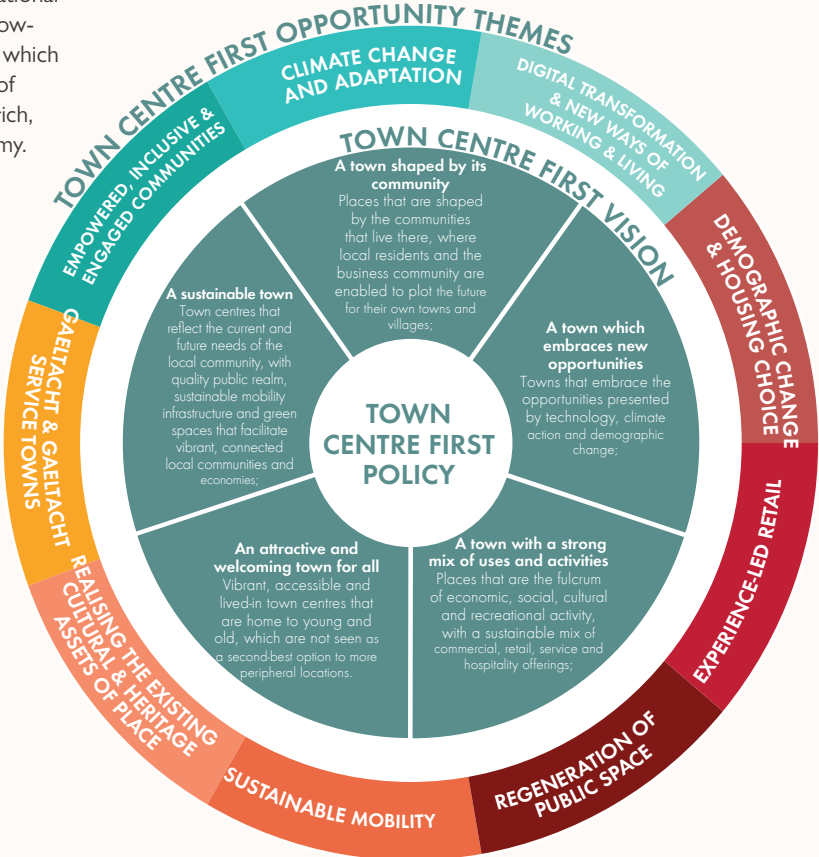
Galway City Climate Action Plan

Galway City Council (GCC) has published a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) 2024-2029, to create a low carbon and climate resilient City, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action, at the local level. The vision for the Galway City Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is to be a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral city by no later than the end of 2050. This is aligned to the Government’s overall National Climate Objective set out in the Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development National Policy Position Ireland, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

Town Centre First policy

The Town Centre First policy approach is for places to be shaped by communities that live there and to embrace opportunities presented by technology, climate action and demographic change. The policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

The adjacent diagram presents an overview of the Town Centre First policy, encompassing the policy’s vision for successful town centre and a number of key policy themes.



OVERRIDING STATUS OF THE STRATEGY

Understanding the context and status of the Integrated Urban Strategy and its recommendations.

This Strategy is situated alongside the hierarchy of statutory documents that forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework, all of which have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, this Strategy is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents throughout the implementation of this Strategy, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection, and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

This Strategy does not provide consent or establish a framework for granting consent and does not contribute towards a framework for granting consent. This Strategy is not binding on consent-related decisions. This Strategy does not introduce rules, limits, or other criteria to be used in development management. This Strategy solely sets out recommendations that may be considered for integration into the relevant parts of the decision-making and consent-granting framework – namely the Galway City Development Plan.

In order to be realised, the types of projects referred to in this Strategy will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier environmental assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. This includes provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents. It is a specific provision of this Strategy to ensure that all of the provisions from the current City Development Plan, including those identified in the accompanying Screening for SEA report, shall be complied with throughout the implementation of the Strategy.



B – UNDERSTANDING GALWAY'S WEST AREA

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

How the West Area is situated in a regional context

By water, by rail, by road

Galway City occupies a strategically important position on Ireland’s western seaboard, serving as a vital hub for regional development, transport connectivity, and coastal access. Its location at the heart of the West of Ireland, combined with strong multimodal transport links and proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, makes Galway a key urban, cultural, tourist and economic centre.

Situated on the edge of Galway Bay, the city lies at the midpoint of Ireland’s Atlantic coast and acts as a natural gateway between the rural expanses of Connemara to the west, the broader Western Region, and the rest of the country. Galway is one of the anchor cities of the Atlantic Economic Corridor, a national initiative aimed at strengthening the economic potential of Ireland’s western seaboard from Donegal to Kerry.

Galway has a mainline rail connection providing express services to Dublin (2hr20) and Limerick (2hrs), linking it to Shannon Airport and the Mid-West.

Regional roads converge in the city, with the M6 motorway providing direct, high-speed road access to and from Dublin (approx. 2hr15). The N17/N83 provides links north to Mayo and Sligo, while the N18/M18 connects south to Shannon, Limerick, and Cork. Galway’s road network also provides vital connections from rural towns in the west to the rest of the country.

The city is a major node for Bus Éireann, Citylink, and other intercity coach operators, offering frequent services to Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Knock. Local bus routes connect Galway to its surrounding neighbourhoods, towns, and rural communities.

A place of the west

Galway’s location at the mouth of the River Corrib has historically made it a strategic stronghold, a significant place of industry, and a place of trade with the opening of the canal.

While the river has brought opportunity, it also divides the city in two as it flows from Lough Corrib to Galway Bay, separating the West Area from the rest of Galway City.

The wider regional landscape is also marked by a change either side of the river, with the landscape to the west of the river quickly shifting from a low density urban character to the more rugged landscape of Connemara, with its boglands, heather-covered hills, rocky outcrops and peaty moorlands broken up with lakes and loughs. Its coastal areas offering glorious windswept beaches and coves, often bordered by dry-stone walls and Gaeltacht villages where the Irish language is spoken

East of the River Corrib, beyond the higher density urban city centre, business and technology parks, the landscape becomes flatter, with cultivated countryside and patchworks of fields supporting livestock grazing and crop farming. Fewer people speak the Irish language in this part of the region.

The River Corrib is a powerful threshold where the distinct landscapes of the wider region begin to reveal themselves within the city. To the west, the character reflects the rugged and natural qualities of Connemara, with strong connections to water, an organic settlement pattern, and historic ties to Irish culture and language. To the east, the historic city centre embodies the more formal and cultivated character of the limestone plains, expressed in its structured streets, walled town heritage, and ordered public spaces.



Fig 2 Galway City in its regional context

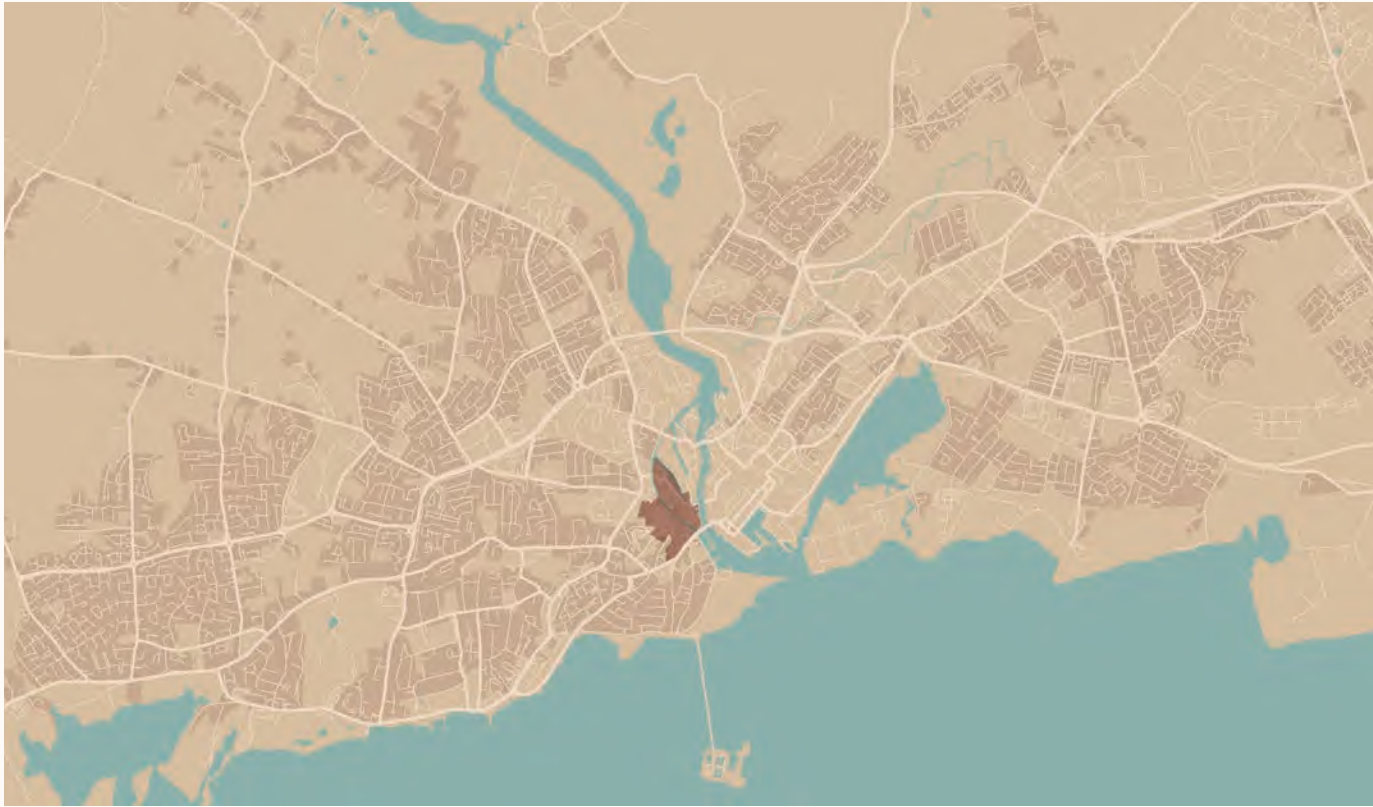


Fig 3 The West Area within the context of Galway City

CITY CONTEXT

How the West Area relates to and differs from Galway City Centre

A tale of two cities

While the West Area of Galway City is a neighbourhood which is firmly part of Galway City, it historically fell outside of the city walls and remains distinct from the city centre, both in terms of its character but also physically separated from it by the River Corrib. Equally, the communities which lived outside of the city walls lived different lives to those within the city walls, and this differing feel and character remains today.

The scale, character and identity differs significantly from the more commercial, high density and tourist-focussed uses of the City Centre. Historically, those travelling with goods from Connemara would stop to weigh their goods and trade within the West Area - rarely finding a need to travel further than O'Briens Bridge into Galway city centre.

A place of the water

Galway's location at the mouth of the River Corrib has historically made it a strategic stronghold, a significant place of industry, and with the opening of the canal, a place of trade. First mentioned in 1124, Galway was a settlement founded for the fleet of Toirdhealbhach Mór Ua Conchobhair, in order to control the west coast of Ireland.

The area's distinctive urban form and unique character is derived from being interlaced with waterways. These waterways have varying characters, including tranquil canals, small meandering streams and faster flowing rivers - all flowing into the fast moving and powerful River Corrib.

Despite waterways forming a key part of its make up, urban spaces and buildings rarely front onto or address the water, with exceptions at Raven Terrace and Manse building to the rear of Nun's Theatre. The canal and river paths are popular walking routes and defining features of the area. These should be protected and celebrated as important assets to the area, as well as symbols of the area's historic identity.



Fig 4 The West Area within the context of Galway City

A HISTORY OF THE WEST AREA

TIMELINE

A JOURNEY
THROUGH THE
RICH TAPESTRY
OF GALWAY'S
WEST AREA

ORIGINS OF GALWAY

The city takes its name from the Gallimh, meaning "stony river", known today as the River Corrib. Galway established itself at the northernmost ridge because the river was fordable at this point.

1224
Gaelic lords build a stronghold at the mouth of the river.

1232
de Burgh's family build their first castle on the eastern side of the river



Circuit of the town of Galway 1589 (Irish Historic Towns Atlas, 2016)

Persse's Distillery in 1900s (National Archives of Ireland)

1442

FIRST STONE BRIDGE

The West Bridge, linked the walled town with the west bank of the River Corrib, facilitating commercial contact between the townspeople and those living 'out west'.

1270

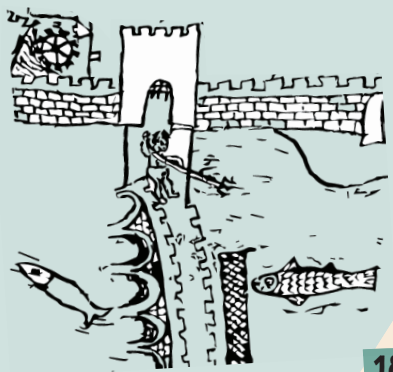
A murage charter gives authority to build a defensive wall.

MEDIEVAL GALWAY

The 'West Area' sat outside the city walls, across the bridge over the River Corrib



Plot of the town of Galway 1583. by Barnaby Googe (Irish Historic Towns Atlas, 2016)



1812

the 'West Suburbs' was home to 500 families who lived in 469 houses

LATE C18

Penal laws were removed and an industrial revolution took hold. The power of the River Corrib was harnessed to power mills, distilleries and breweries.



1838 OS six-inch map of Galway (National Library of Scotland)

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

- SHOEMAKERS
- SPIRIT MERCHANTS
- FRUITERER
- BICYCLE SELLER
- BUTCHERS
- BAKERS
- SLATERS
- GROCERS
- CONFECTIONERY
- CLOTHES SHOPS
- HARDWARE
- BRUSH FACTORY

1820

Galway was a place of industry. In the study area there were:

- 4 flour mills
- 2 distilleries
- 1 brewery

1840

Queen's College opens to the north of the West Area

1845

The Great Famine hits

THE RAILWAYS

THE EGLINTON CANAL OPENS



1892 map of Galway (Irish Historic Towns Atlas, 2016)

The canal kept Galway's citizens employed after the famine, it improved trade routes in the region, it provided a reliable flow of water to the mills, and it decreased the risk of flooding in the area.

1852

1851

The Midland Great Western of Ireland Railway opens connecting Galway to Dublin.

1895

Galway to Clifden railway route opens, used mainly by tourists. It was closed in 1935.



Divilly Brothers Butchers first opened on Williams Street West, 1927 (Divilly Meats)



1905 photograph of Hill & Co. Cycle Makers and Hill's photographic gallery, both located on Lower Dominick Street.



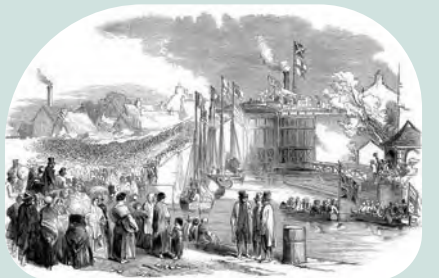
Taylor's Bar and Grocer on Dominick Street sold produce at the front and had a bar in the back, with the Taylor family living above



Jane Talbot's 2006 exhibition 'Knock, Knock' celebrates the terraced housing in The West and the third/fourth generation descendants of the original occupants living in them today.

1914

A network of two-storey cottages commissioned by Urban District Council to alleviate housing problems



The formal opening of the canal from the Illustrated London News, 1852



The potato market at Small Crane Square c. 1890 (Galway Advertiser)

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SIGNIFICANCE OF STONE

Shaping place and identity

Centuries of Limestone

Galway is a city of stone, predominantly local limestone. It contains and bridges the waterways, it provides solid surfaces underfoot, it encloses the rooms of the city both civic and domestic, and it decorates the doorways where we cross from public to private.

Limestone is the dominant visual material of the West Area, presented both hand carved and natural in endless uses from various centuries.

The large scale and precise blocks of canal and river infrastructure still stand strong against the power of flowing water while their dressed tool marks display a direct link to those hands which crafted them. Steps, paving and kerb stones display a shine of time, having been polished by the generations of feet passing over them. Perhaps only randomly remaining,

historic stones, on street surfaces should nonetheless be valued and retained even if they are few in number. Good design can incorporate them into new urban enhancements and each individual remnant is a visual reminder of the passage of foot-traffic over an extended time.

At ground level also are jostle stones, carved upright stones placed at street corners or archway entrances to protect the wall. These were a common place necessity in times of horse drawn traffic. If a cart took the corner too tight the stone pushed the wheel back out, preventing contact and damage to the building corner itself. The few jostle stones that now remain are important historic remnants. A line of several irregular examples exists on Pump Lane protecting the gable wall. One is inscribed with an Ordnance Survey benchmark from the 1840's.

Exposed limestone facades are a particular trait of Galway's streetscapes including the West Area. The traditional masonry bedded in lime mortars gives a timeless aesthetic which is robust once cared for with the correct materials and techniques. Some instances of unfortunate sand cement ribbon pointing are to be seen in the study area. This is highly damaging to the functioning of a breathable wall and takes from the natural stone appearance, instead creating a raised artificial joint pattern.



Looking up Dominick Street Lower



The lazy wall, Dominick Street Lower



Raven Terrace Turf Market



Hills of Dominick Street Lower, 1905



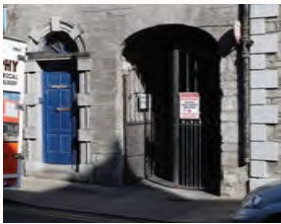
No. 36 Dominick Steet Lower



Lock Keepers House - Eglinton Canal



Áras na nGael, Dominick Street Lower



No. 42 Dominick Street Lower



42 - 44 Dominick Street Lower



Plámás Café, Dominick Street Upper



Dominick Street Lower

Dominick Street Lower is in itself a celebration of stone craft. It boasts impressive Georgian limestone facades of three storeys in height. Dressings at archways and doorways are individual to the building owner, era or craftsman with a healthy variety of decoration and engravings to be enjoyed as one traverses the footpaths. The street also hints strongly at this areas medieval origins through a series of carved stone plaques and doorcases which appear much older than their host structures. Some fine combed decorative dressings are heavily overpainted, hiding their craft and beauty.

There is a story in stone to be told along this street as a whole by picking up on the many carvings, dates and engravings to reveal their history. This story carved in stone over time

appears to be difficult to appreciate at present, yet is made all the more intriguing by features such as the corbels concealed in a nearby car park, reminding us that much of the medieval fabric of the West remains only partly understood.



Dominick Street Lower, 17th century pictorial map

PRESENCE OF WATER

Corrib & Eglinton

Eglinton Canal

NIAH : Reg No 30313013

Eglinton Canal, built c.1850, following curving path south from inflow from River Corrib Upper and passing beneath five bridges which have made watercourse non-navigable. Canal begins to north of Salmon Weir on west bank of Corrib River (upper) where small harbour is located. Canal then proceeds to move south-west with limestone block-lined banks having limestone block coping stones and narrow tarmac footpath to west bank before splitting into two separate waterways with main canal continuing to south-west and shorter but equally substantial branch proceeding south beneath road bridge and recent pedestrian bridge where branch would have serviced small group of mills which are built surrounding small harbour at end of branch. Main canal continues south-west before curving back around to continue south-east after passing beneath two recent concrete construction road bridges with concrete and steel rail parapets. Canal at these points narrowed by addition of limestone block-lined piers which reduce spans of each bridge by two metres eliminating need for more complex structures. Between these two bridges is second branch which follows south-easterly route before re-entering canal south of lock basin via stone-lined channel. Lock basin comprised of limestone block lining with limestone coping blocks, timber lock gates and box, sluice racks having recent cast-iron safety railings to banks. One set of gates removed with flow of canal now regulated by remaining gate and sluice racks to north of lock basin. Canal then continues to south-east before splitting again with south-east branch passing under William O'Brien Bridge and into Claddagh Quay and second branch travelling roughly north-east before re-entering River Corrib (lower) after passing over stone-lined weir.



Galway's West Area at image center, with the Eglinton Canal's planned sweep above and the Corrib River's more natural route below. 1953. Norman Ashe Collection.



O'Briens Bridge, River Corrib



Mill Street, Western River



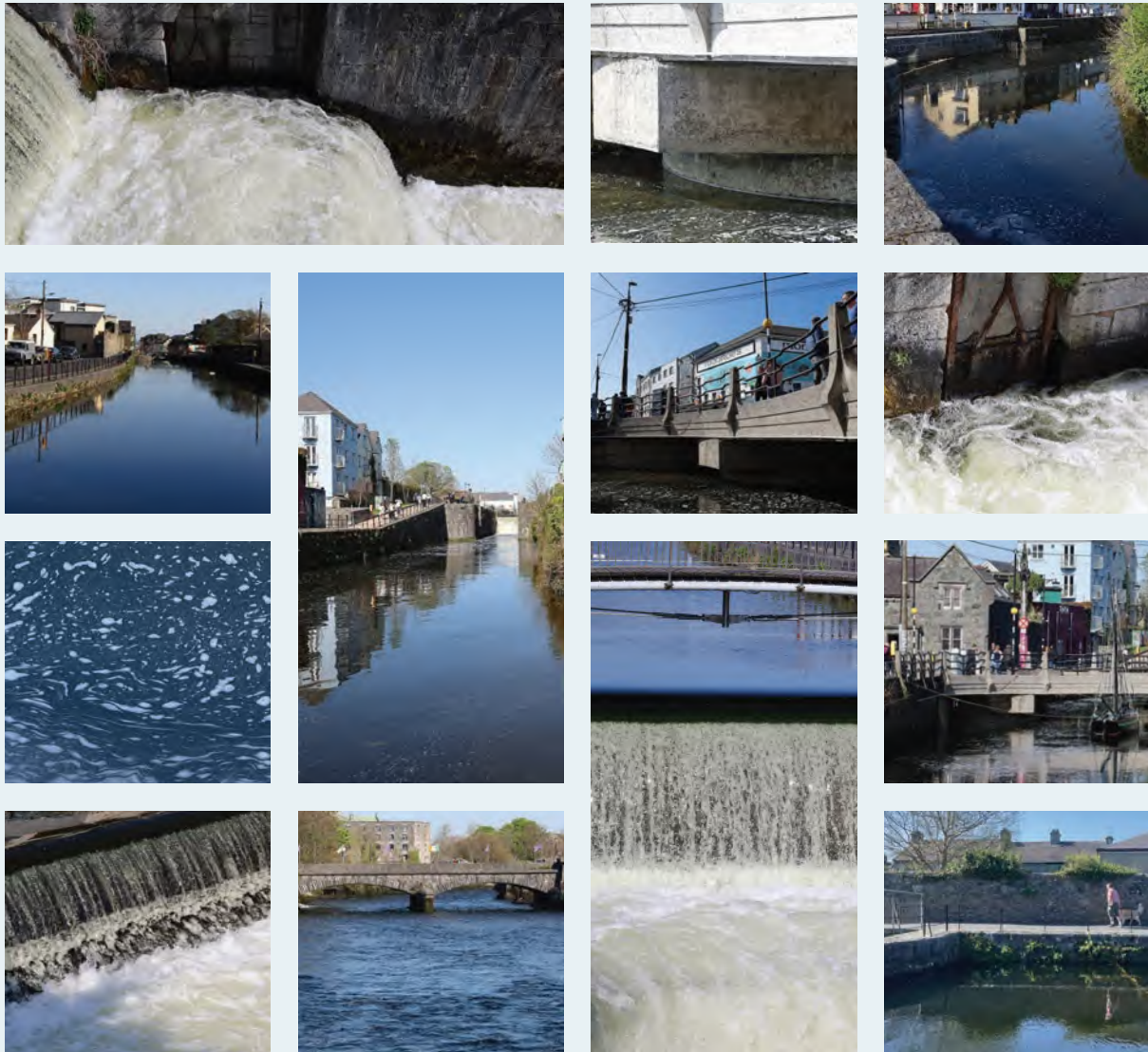
The Claddagh, looking back towards Wolfe Tone Bridge



Left bank of angling ground from West Bridge to Jail Bridge



Fig 5 Proposed plan for the Eglinton Canal and waterways prepared by Board of Works 1846, Reflections on Lough Corrib, Maurice Semple



Water shaping the West Area

The West End's distinctive character is deeply rooted in its intimate relationship with water, a connection that significantly shapes how people navigate and experience the city. The Eglinton Canal and the Western River act as natural corridors, guiding pedestrians from one place to another. This water is never static, it is in a constant state of flux, shifting and evolving across different sections of the canal, which adds a vibrant and dynamic quality to the surrounding environment. Still water allows for and creates reflections of the city while another section of water ahead might be fast flowing, loud and full, different with each passing moment.

The continuous sound of flowing water contributes to a calming ambiance within the urban landscape, a unique sensory experience within a city. This sensory experience invites the passersby to pause and connect with a quieter rhythm within Galway's city centre. The presence of various bird species and diverse plant life enriches the area's natural appeal while also softening the hard edges of the urban fabric and creating pockets of greenery and wildlife within the West End.



Together, these elements create a wonderful relationship between water, nature, and people within the city. This relationship extends beyond visual appeal, it informs how the community interact with their surroundings and way finding within the city through the connection to nature. This interaction between the built and the natural environment is a key strength of the West Area, offering open, shared spaces for everyone to use and enjoy.

MOMENTS OF MICRO SPACES

Informal Urban Landscapes

Pockets of public space

Throughout the West End, there is a network of informal public spaces that quietly complement the character of the area. Many of these micro spaces sit alongside water, by the Eglinton canal or tucked beside old stone walls, creating a naturally calming atmosphere. Often removed from the noise and traffic of the city, these places are shaped more by nature than by design. They are unstructured, understated, and inviting, spaces for pausing, resting, observing, and simply being.

These pockets of space are important not just as amenities but as part of the city's deeper identity. There are many that are already working well in their current form, while others hold great potential to contribute even more to the West End and to the city as a whole.

What unites them is their sense of openness and informality. It is these kinds of organic spaces that help make the West End unique. They deserve to be used, respected, and nurtured, not only as parts of the public realm, but in the wider urban fabric of the city.

While most of these micro spaces are clustered along the waters edge, it is the by the canal they exist with few along the Western river. The Western River, despite its powerful presence, remains less accessible and underutilised in terms of public space. There is a noticeable lack of connection between the urban fabric and the river's edge. This presents a significant opportunity to extend the character and benefits of these canal-side spaces to the Western river. By thoughtfully introducing new points of access, rest, and engagement along the river, the city could unlock another layer of richness in the West End's relationship with water connecting people more directly to one of Galway's most natural assets.

Balancing public access with ecological value is essential, as the canal and river serve as key wildlife corridors that enrich the West End's character.



Potato Market at the Small Crane



Potato Market at the Small Crane



Dominick Street Bridge 1931



Potato Market at the Small Crane, 1892



Potato Market at the Small Crane, 1892



TÁBHACHT AN TEANGA

Importance of the Language

Ceangal idir Conamara agus Deisceart an Chathair

Tá tábhacht ollmhór ag baint leis an Ghaeilge mar chuid lárnach d'fhéiniúlacht an cheantair seo. Tá nasc láidir idir Gaeltacht Chonamara agus an cheantar le blianta fada, agus deirtear nuair a thagadh daoine ón nGaeltacht go dtí an chathair go dtagadís go háirithe chuig deisceart an chathair. Tá tábhacht mhór ag baint leis sin don phobal áitiúil. Ní mór an fad idir Conamara agus an chathair, agus is rud faoi leith é sin sa tír seo, cathair a bheith chomh cóngarach don Ghaeltacht. Tá deis iontach ag an nGaeilge fás agus bláthú i nDeisceart an Chathair, ag cruthú timpeallacht Ghaeilge, bheo agus bhríomhar laistigh den chathair. Is áit í seo ina bhféadfadh an Ghaeilge fíor-chroí a bhaint amach, ag cur le cultúr saibhir agus ag spreagadh spéis i ngnóthaí, sna healaíona agus sa phobal mórthimpeall. Tá sé ríthábhachtach an deis seo a leanúint agus tacú léi chun todhchaí bheo na teanga agus na hoidhreacht a chinntiú i gCathair na Gaillimhe.

Bilingual city

The Irish language holds great importance as a central part of the identity of this area. There has long been a strong connection between the Connemara Gaeltacht and the area, and it is said that when people came from the Gaeltacht to the city long ago, they especially came to the West End. This connection is very important to the local community. The proximity between Connemara and the city is significant, and it is a unique feature in this country, a city being so close to the Gaeltacht. The Irish language has a great opportunity to grow and flourish in the West End, creating a lively and vibrant Irish-speaking environment within the city. This is a place where Irish could flourish, adding to the rich culture and inspiring interest in businesses, the arts, and the wider community. It is essential to pursue and support this opportunity to ensure a living future for the language and heritage in the West End in Galway City.



The quays Galway 1902



Women of the Claddagh c. 1890



Women with their baskets



EXTRAORDINARY IN THE EVERYDAY

Ordinary Urban Moments

Celebrating Ordinary Places and Local Identity

The sturdy area is in itself an urban village being home to many residents including the early 20th century housing schemes. These locals sustain the various small businesses which are knitted into the urban fabric, the local grocery shops, cafes, the charity shops, and the bars.

Many of the visible business in the West Area are primarily serving residents and this local economy brings a very particular relaxed aesthetic, characterised by familiarity, feeling less commercial and generally being of smaller scale.

This ordinary character must be recognised and supported. Its particular value is that it brings variety and allows residents feel at home, streetscapes which speak firstly to them. These places are also interesting and inviting for the visitor.

It is important across the broader city to recognise and respect the differing urban characters, so that areas keep their distinctiveness and are true to their individual nature. Some areas in Galways medieval city are visitor focused where commercial newness and change vie to grab the attention of the transient visitor. The urban realm breathes a little easier West of the Corrib, perhaps this is the city's back garden.

Visual vibrancy does not always have to come from design and redevelopment. There is in this west area already a sweetness and aesthetic depth which stems from slower change in the built environment, unplanned juxtapositions of the layers of history, strong industrial infrastructure remnants and homeowners own individual visual choices. Cared for ordinary aspects bring extra to the public realm, the undesigned but catching moments, the domestic window displays, an old wonky cill, the clashing colour choices, the surviving 'vintage' shop awnings.

Care, maintenance and cleanliness of all urban spaces and buildings is a fundamental necessity to allow healthy enjoyment and positive engagement. A premises does not need to strive to appear new or fashionable, such characteristics are fleeting and risk loss of individualism and variety. Being well presented is easier to encourage and achieve, and once sustained, contributes on a daily basis to the urban setting.



William Street West, Divilly Butchers



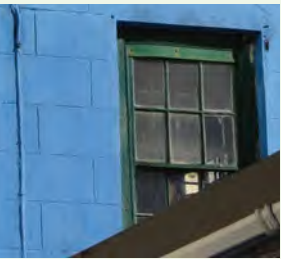
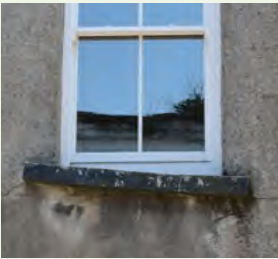
Father Griffin Rd, 1963



Bank of Ireland, Dominick Street Lower



Tailors Bar & Grocery, Dominick Steer Lower



LAYERS OF TIME

Historical, Architectural and Archeological

Industrial

The West End of Galway has a rich industrial heritage that reflects its role as a key hub of commerce and production in the city's past. Historically home to warehouses, mill races, and wholesale stores, the area thrived as a centre for trade and small-scale industry, closely connected to the adjacent railway and canal networks. Its architecture, marked by solid commercial buildings, loading bays, and functional design, still bears traces of this industrious era. Today, while the West End has evolved into a vibrant cultural and social quarter, its industrial roots remain visible in the built environment, contributing to the area's unique character and sense of place.

Through experiencing this urban realm, individual physical clues combine in conversation with the observant passerby. Over time and space they suggest and reveal the local backstory. A maker's name in iron, a boat tying hoop, a canal wall ladder, an archway gate, a strong hinge, monumental stone details. Individual ordinary remnants, in one way defunct, but these are all now essential indicators of genuine identity.

Where new fittings are required in historic industrial settings, they should not seek to mimic the surviving artefacts. New design should be restrained and functional, having its own identity but avoiding superficial decoration. Historic working spaces are strong and robust in nature, with the passage of time and use bringing beauty.

The fixed bridges now spanning the canal were built in 1954 to replace swinging bridges. These are good examples of a respectful robust design, their concrete and steel sitting well in the context while also bringing their own character. Some 70 years later, they are in themselves an interesting newer layer of urban infrastructure which deserves respect.



Cast iron weigh bridge



Sign remnant



1954 Canal Bridge



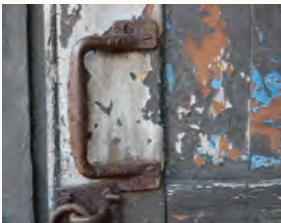
Paint layers on hand cut limestone cill



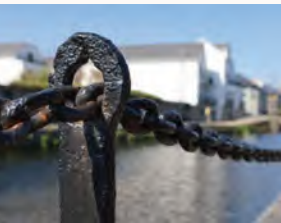
Mooring ring



Riveted flat bar railing



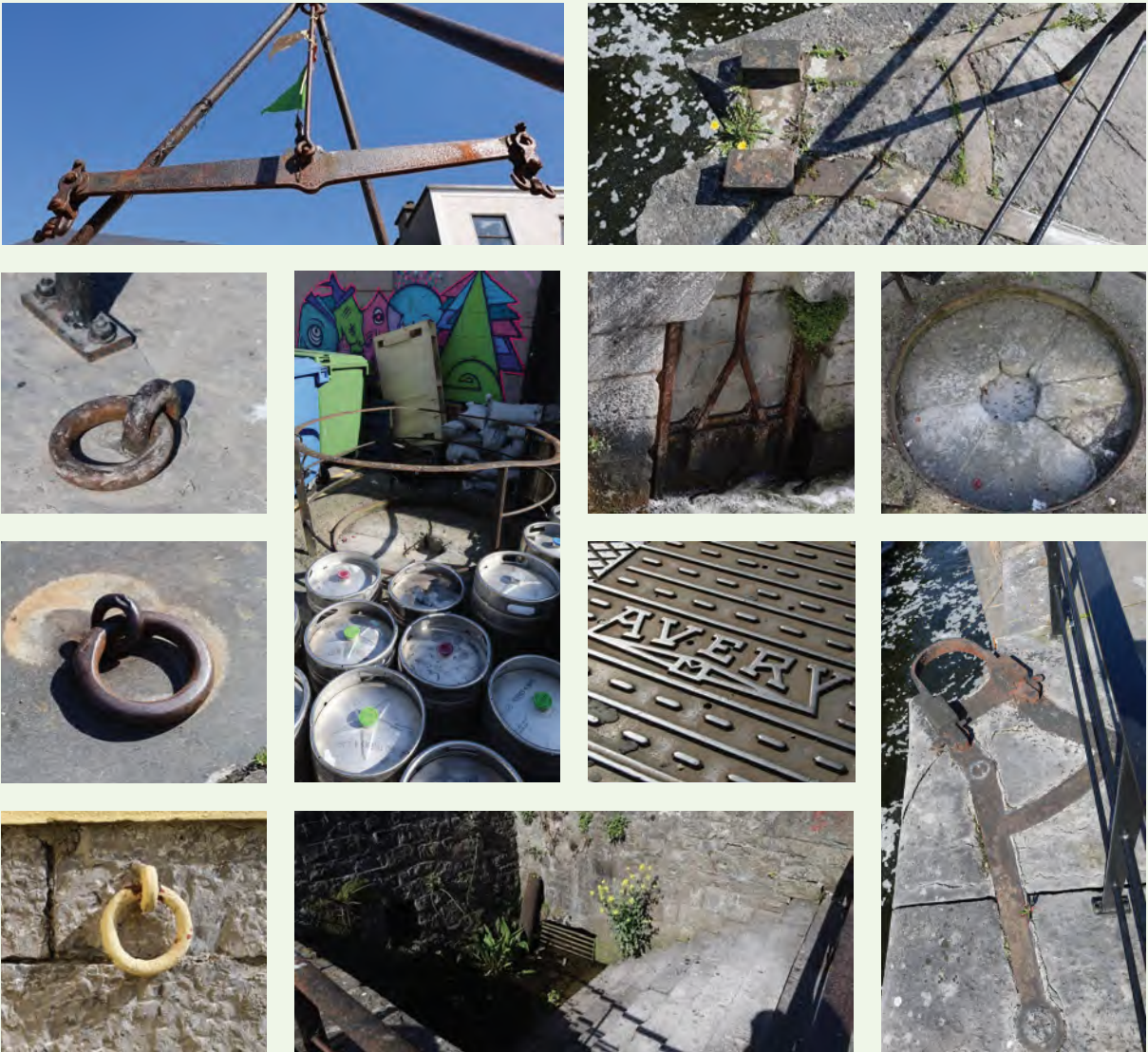
Door pull handle



Wrought iron chain and post



Fig 6 OS 25" map, surveyed 1893. West Area Study boundary outlined in green.



Cultural Heritage - MS tiles

Over the doorways of some of the houses in the study area are small, square, blue and yellow tiles bearing the monogram IHS surrounded by a circle of flaming rays. The origin of these tiles can be traced back to a retreat given by a Franciscan priest, Fr Francis Donnelly, to the Poor Clare Nuns of Galway in 1913, when he preached on the power of the Holy Name as advocated by St Bernadine of Sienna. It occurred to Fr Donnelly that something could be done under the patronage of the Holy Name to stem the then prevalent problem of drunkenness, and in the following year he established a temperance society in Cork.

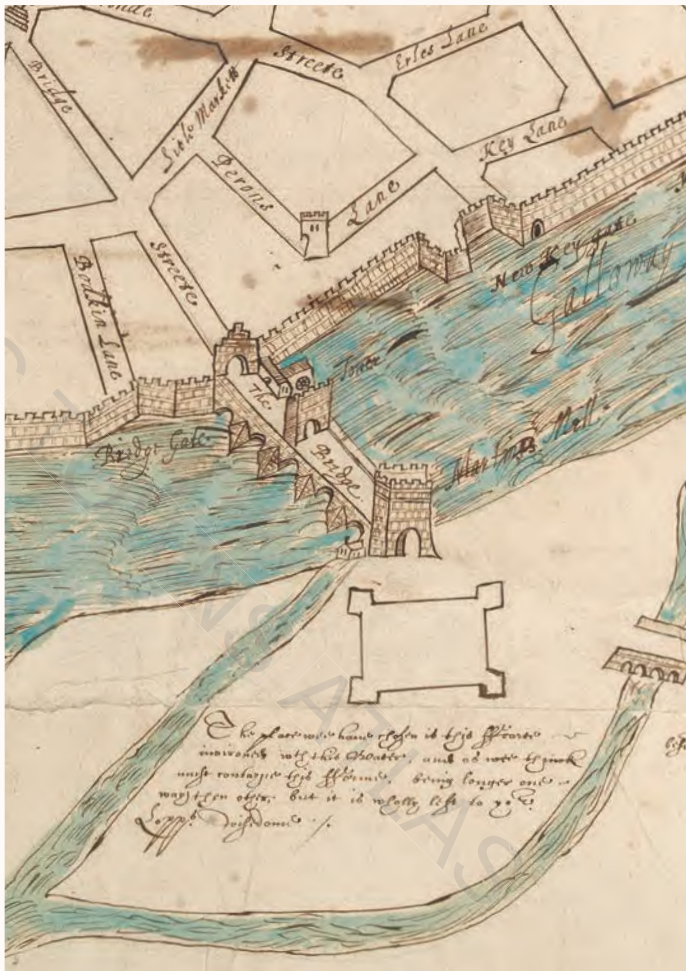
The organisation grew rapidly and encouraged by its success, Fr Donnelly turned his attention to the idea of putting the monogram of the Holy Name over the doors of houses, as preached by St Bernadine. He procured a large quantity of tiles and the devotion quickly spread throughout all the cities and towns where the Franciscan order had houses (Walsh 2001). The practice of placing the tiles over the doors of houses was revived in the 1920s in towns and villages where there was a Franciscan House. It was at this time that the tiles were likely to have been placed on the houses in 'the West'.

Abstract from - A Heritage Study of the 'West' Area of Galway City, 2007

A CULTURE OF MAPPING

Interpretation and evolving perspectives

As part of the archival research for the IUS, a rich trove of historic plans and representations of the West Area have been sourced. These are illustrated on the following pages and cover a formative period of the area's evolution from the 17th Century to the present day. The waterways and island-like forms are particularly evident throughout, as is the industrial transformation of the area which has played a key role in defining the area's current identity.



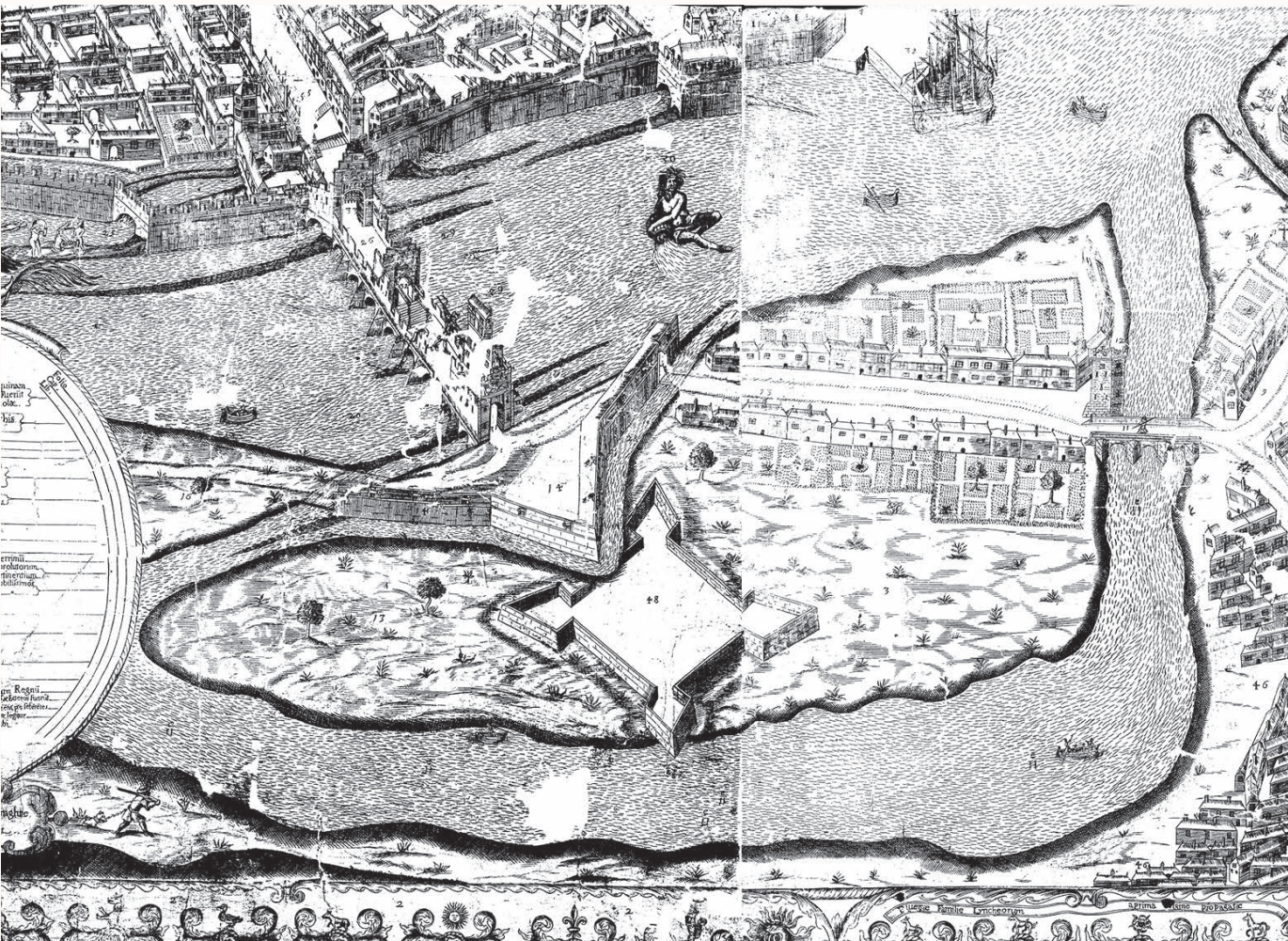
Plot of Galway, 1625 (The Board of Trinity College Dublin) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Ground plan of Galway, 1685, by Thomas Phillips (National Library of Ireland) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Prospect of Galway, looking north-east, 1685, by Thomas Phillips (National Library of Ireland) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



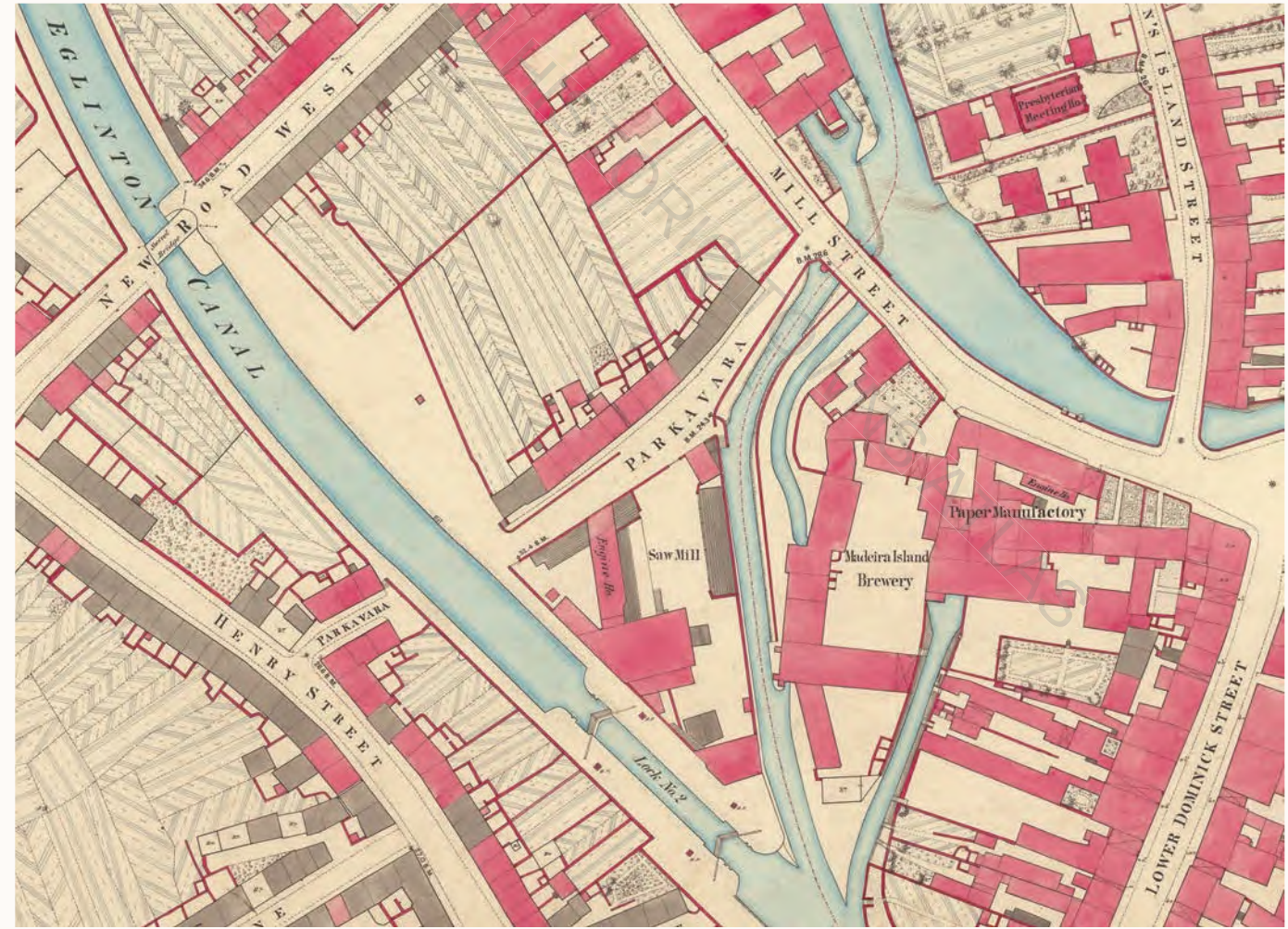
Pictorial map of Galway, mid-17th cent. (The Board of Trinity College Dublin) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Plan of Galway, c. 1691, by J.N. Bellin (National Library of Ireland) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Plan of the town and fortifications of Galway, 1747 (British Library) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Part of Galway, 1872, from the Ordnance Survey town plan (National Archives of Ireland) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Galway, 1691, by Jacobite (British Library) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Ordnance Survey, 1944, Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Galway from the air 2009, Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016

RENEWAL AND PRESERVATION

Balancing Potential with Responsibility

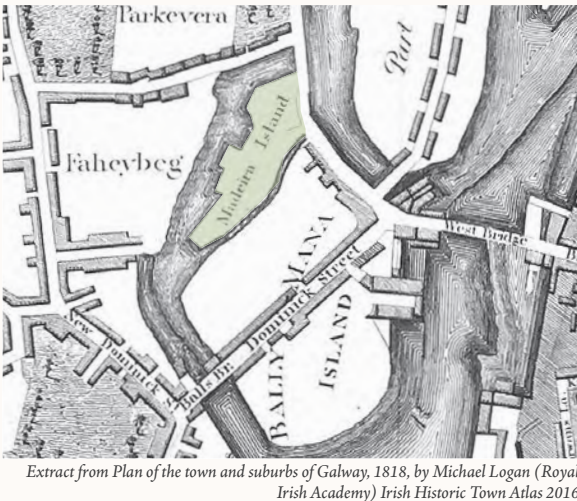


An Luamhán Beag | The small Crane

RPS:10901
c.1900 metal tripod with suspended wrought-iron balance. Cobblestones and setts

OILEÁN Madeira | Madeira Island

NIAH : GA094-104001 - Mill



Extract from Plan of the town and suburbs of Galway, 1818, by Michael Logan (Royal Irish Academy) Irish Historic Town Atlas 2016



Lána an Chaidéil | Pump Lane

RPS:7901
Shoeing Stone, Jostle stones & Washing Well (Limestone steps)
“Remains of industrial heritage, plaque, bench mark and cobble stones.”
Pump Lane and ‘the Spout Mor’
It was commonplace for women to wash the family clothes at a number of places along the riverbank and canal. One site for this activity was found at the end of Pump Lane where there was a well specifically designed for this purpose. Locally known as ‘the Spout Mor’, it is likely that the name of the Lane derives from this well.

Plaque reads “Pump Lane Shoeing Stone - This shoeing stone is an important archaeological monument associated with a 19th century forge which was located on this site. It is assembled and designed in the shape of a cartwheel. It was an essential structure which enabled the Blacksmith to place the metal rim on the wheel of a cart. Restored by Galway Civic Trust with the assistance of FAS and Galway City Council”

Abstract from - A Heritage Study of the ‘West’ Area of Galway City, 2007





Art Deco Streetscape - William Street West

The three protected Art Deco-style facades at Nos. 23, 24, and 25 William Street West form a distinctive and visually striking architectural group that enriches the character of this historic West Area Galway streetscape. Built between the 1920s and 1940s, these buildings reflect a shared design language, featuring parapet walls, decorative render details, and carefully proportioned shopfronts, while also showcasing individual craftsmanship and variation.

No. 23, with its central breakfront, floating canopy, and timber sash windows, presents a strong Art Deco expression. It is flanked to its left by No. 24 and 25, a matched pair with elegant pedimented parapets, diamond-headed crenellations, and finely detailed render shopfronts. These elements not only add rhythm and texture to the street but also speak to the area's commercial heritage.

Together, these facades offer a rare and cohesive example of early twentieth-century commercial architecture in Galway, contributing significantly to the visual and historical identity of William Street West.



23 William Street West

RPS:10906

Facade of multiple-bay, two-storey commercial building.

Art Deco Building with original Features

NIAH Reg No: 30318053

Description: Attached multiple-bay two-storey commercial outlet, built 1944, having two-bay ends and three-bay centre, with shallow entrance breakfront. Pitched corrugated-iron roof with rendered parapet wall to front, rendered chimney stacks and replacement uPVC rainwater goods. Roughcast rendered to front elevation and upper east gable, with rendered walls to other elevations. Laminated shopfronts to end bays with pilasters and with rendered floating canopy to breakfront, with render buttresses flanking windows of first floor of breakfront. Square-headed window openings with render sills and two-over-two horizontal pane timber sliding sash windows to first floor front, and fixed aluminium-framed display windows to shopfronts. Square-headed door openings with channelled stone composite reveals with recessed battened timber and metal folding doors having paned overlights. Double-leaf timber glazed doors to interior of building.



Photos privately sourced



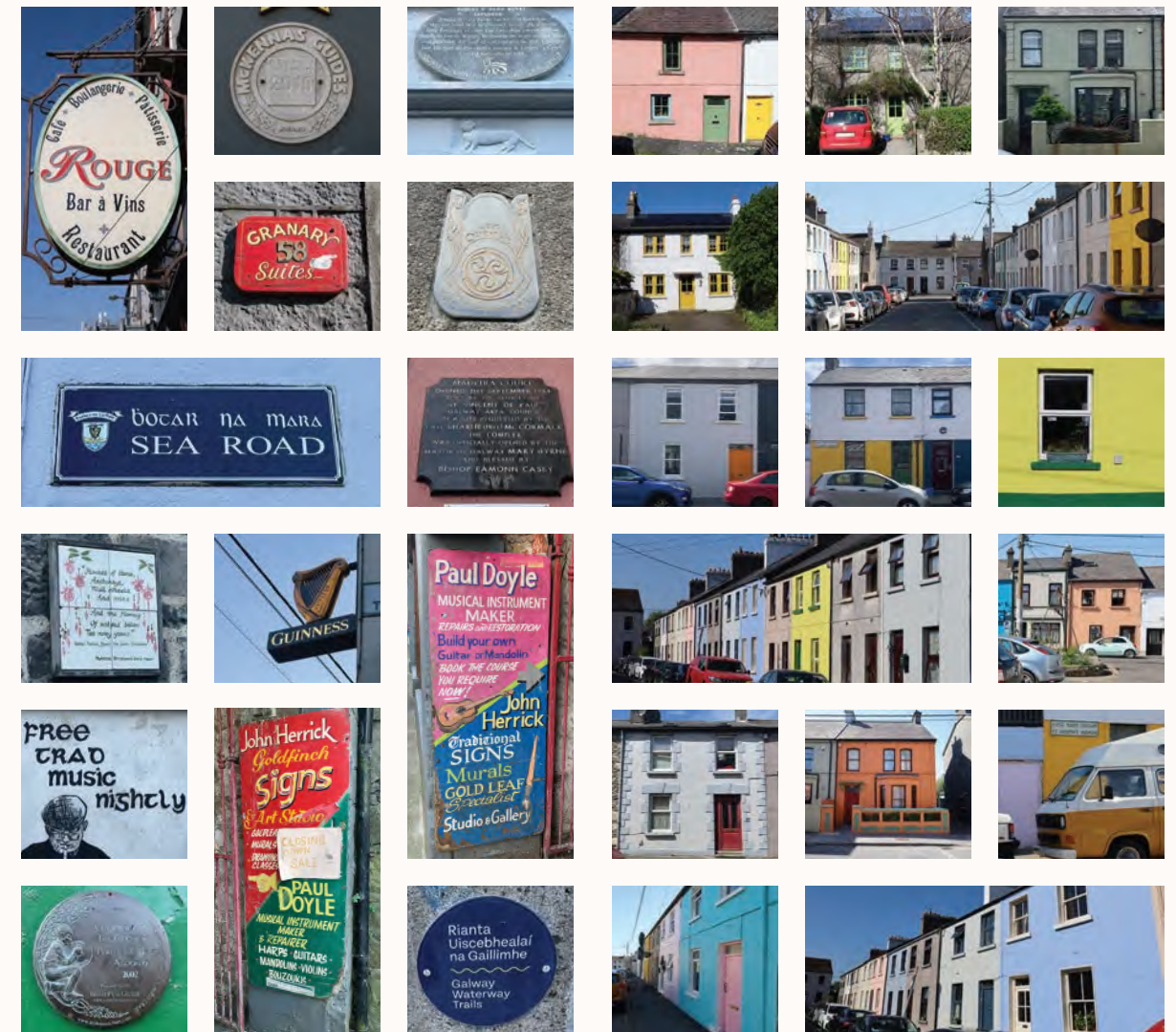
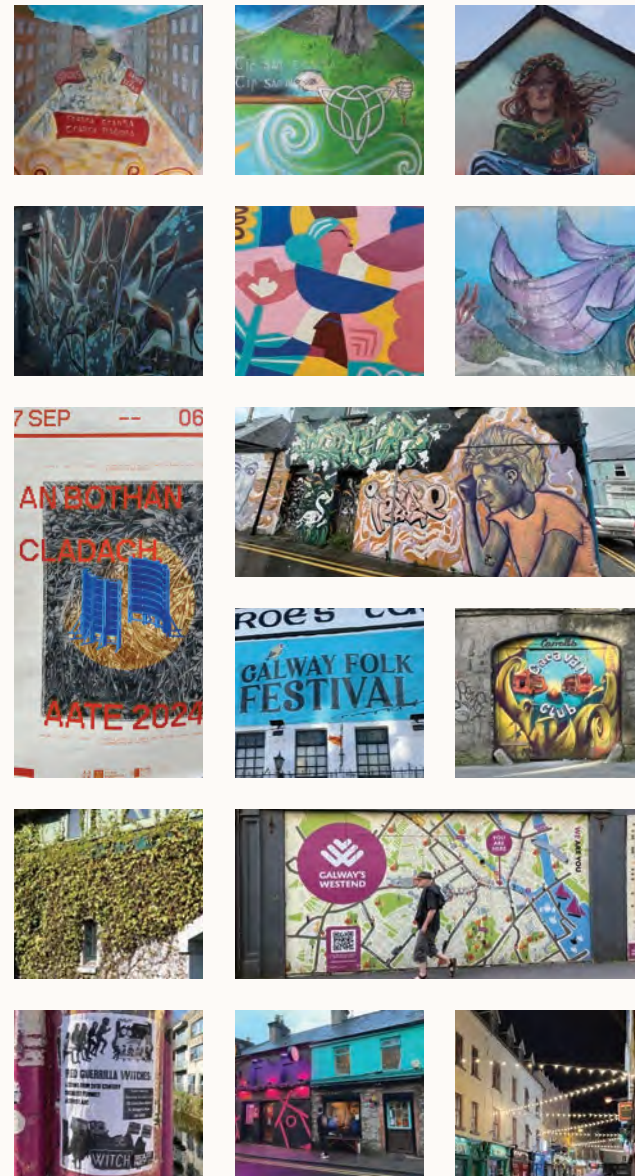
COLOUR AND MURALS IN GALWAY'S URBAN LANDSCAPE

Creative public expression

Experiencing the city through colour

The use of colour and murals shape how people experience Galway's West Area. Visual interventions can often enhance urban character and contribute to a more engaging streetscape. In a district known for its layered history, murals introduce a dynamic, human scaled element that can often soften hard edges and reclaim underused facades.

These creative expressions reinforce a sense of identity and place, making the West Area an example for how art can be integrated into the fabric of the city to support vibrancy, legibility, and cultural continuity.



Street signage and plaques

Street signage and plaques contribute to the area's distinct urban character and cultural identity. The prevalence of bilingual street signs in Irish and English reinforces Galway's linguistic heritage within the Gaeltacht cultural context. Historic enamel and cast-iron signs, where retained, provides hints to the past and give the streetscape a colourful and characterful energy. Commemorative plaques marking historical figures, buildings, or events enrich the pedestrian experience and embed layers of local memory within the public realm. Equally significant is the presence of hand-painted and bespoke shopfront signage, particularly around independent businesses and cultural venues, which reinforces the area's eclectic, community-focused atmosphere.

Building colours

The residential areas of the West Area are also distinctive in their appearance. Residents take pride in their homes, painting the facades, window frames and doors in a variety of colours ranging from more muted blues and greens to bright shades of yellow and orange. Doors, in particular, are often highlighted through the use of bright or contrasting shades. This choice brings colour, interest and fun to these modest residential terraces, not only highlighting the creativity of its local population, but also the pride and care they have for their neighbourhood. In addition to painting their properties, some residents have taken to enhancing the outside of their property with planting.

HISTORIC ASSETS

LOWER DOMINICK STREET ACA AND PROTECTED STRUCTURES

As set out in the CDP, An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscapes which is either of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in its own right or which contributes to the appreciation of protected structures.

The designation of an ACA ensures that the special character of an area is protected and can be enhanced through sympathetic redevelopment. As part of measures to protect and enhance the built heritage, ACAs can revitalise areas and be a catalyst for economic investment. The protection afforded by an ACA applies to the exterior of structures and generally does not apply to works to the interior, unless they impact on the external appearance of the structure.

The Lower Dominick Street ACA contains some of the best 18th and 19th century buildings, facades, shop-fronts and original features to survive in long uninterrupted stretches in the city. It is an area of distinct urban form and streetscape. It has a unique setting bounded by the River Corrib and the Eglinton Canal.

The ACA has a strong concentration of Protected Structures which underline the integrity of the townscape in this part of the city. Other designated structures and buildings are identified on the adjacent plan. In addition to other examples of historic frontages on Dominick Street Upper and William Street West, various other industrial and religious structures and remnants are dispersed across the study area.

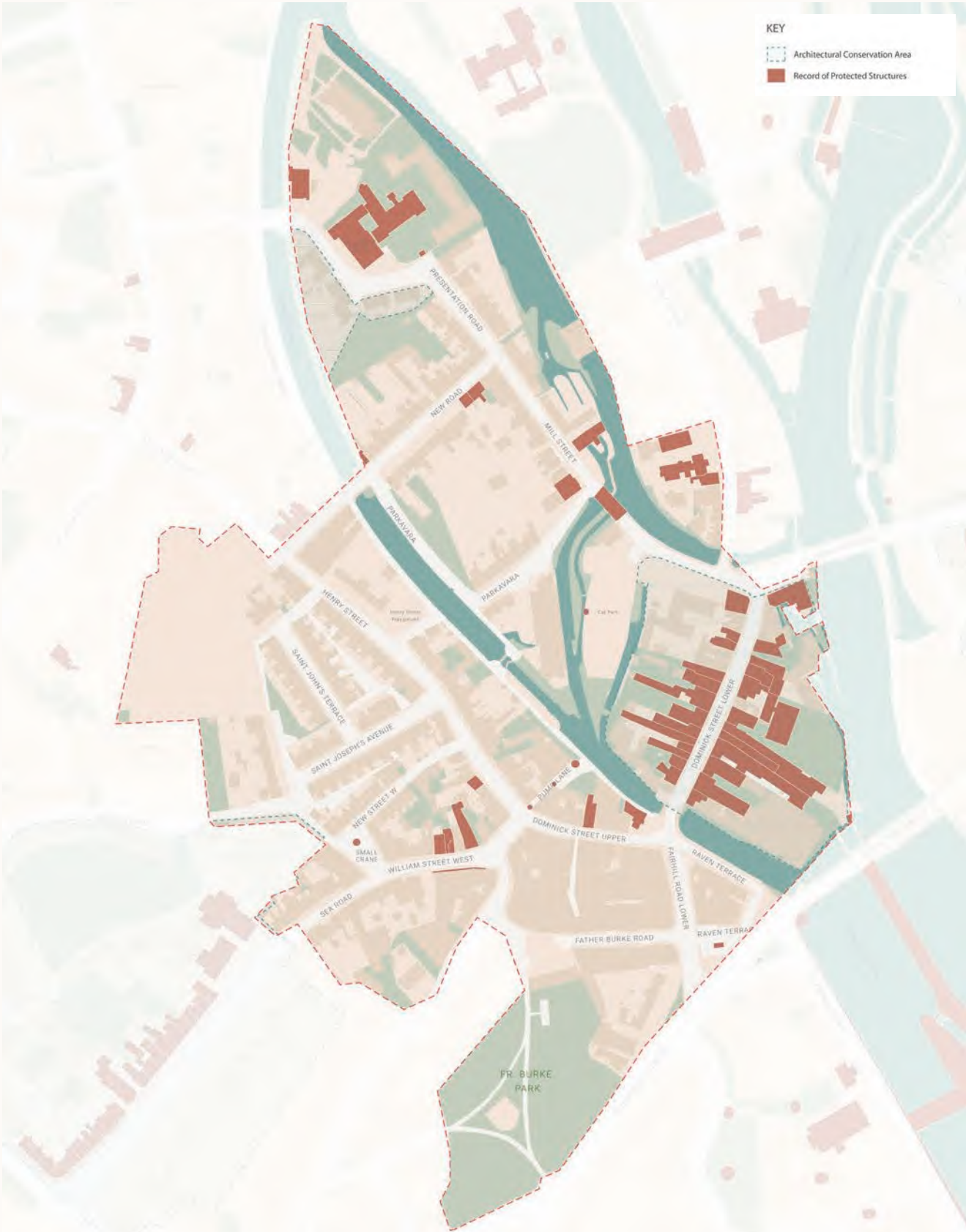
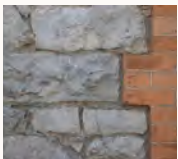
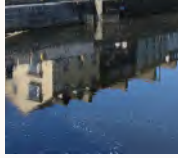
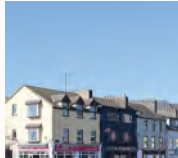
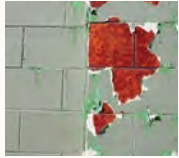


Fig 7 Map identifying historic assets in Galway West Area



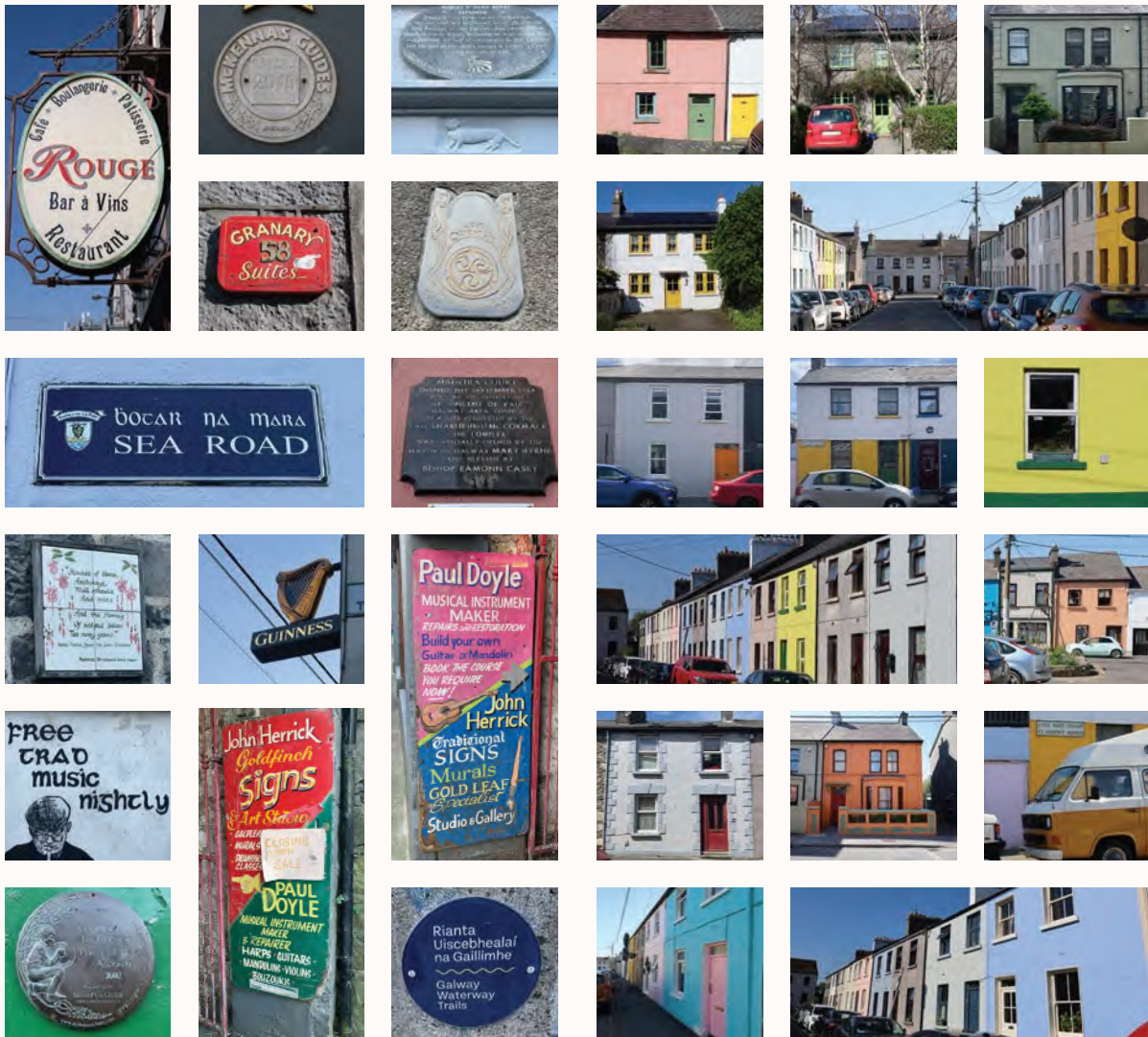
Textures & materials

Waterways, nature & wildlife



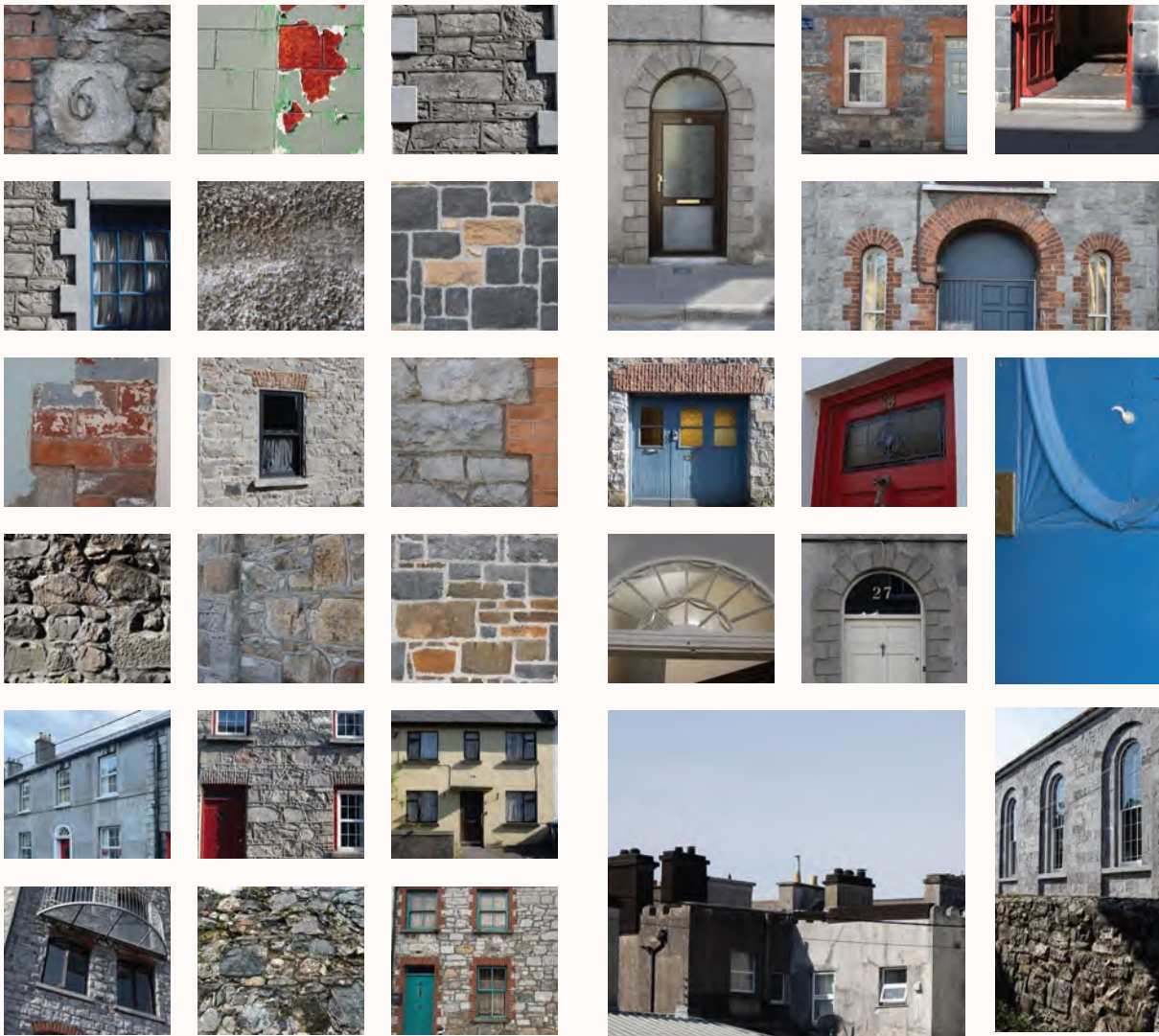
Shop fronts

Public art



Street signage and plaques

Building colours



Building materials

Detailing

URBAN ANALYSIS

Understanding the uses, activities, urban structure and key features, and the challenges or opportunities they present.

Land uses

The West Area is comprised of a rich mix of uses, contributing to making it the vibrant inner city neighbourhood it is. Commercial uses and activities are primarily focussed on the ground floor along the area’s principal streets of Dominick Street Lower, Dominick Street Upper, William Street West and Sea Road, while the rest of the area is primarily comprised of residential uses - with higher density apartments focussed along or near the key principal streets and lower density terraced homes being the prevailing use in the north and north west of the neighbourhood.

The mix and variety of commercial uses along the principal streets creates different types of activity throughout the day, contributing to the street’s character and atmosphere. The plans immediately adjacent presents the locations of uses which are primarily active during the day (blues and greens), and those which are primarily active in the evening (reds and oranges). Daytime uses include retail, cafes, health and leisure, while evening uses includes bars, pubs, nightclubs, takeaways and casinos. The following provides a summary of the mix of uses on each of the principal streets:

- Dominick Street Lower has a good balance of uses, with a concentration of restaurants and bars on the west side of its northern end, creating activity in the early evening. The southern end of the west side of the street has a stronger concentration of daytime uses, primarily shops, cafes and cultural uses. The eastern side of the street has fewer commercial uses and some vacancy, impacting the liveliness of the street.
- Dominick Street Upper has a much higher concentration of evening uses such as bars, a casino, pubs and restaurants creating a lively destination in the evenings - enhanced further by evening pedestrianisation of this street in the summer months. This predominance of evening uses might leave the street feeling less active during the day.
- William Street West continues along from Dominick Street Upper, but with a shift in the balance of daytime and evening uses creating a street which is active both in the daytime and the evening. The north side of the street appears livelier with a greater predominance of food and beverage uses, while the south side of the street is primarily comprised of retail, wholesale and residential uses.



Fig 9 Uses primarily active in the daytime



Fig 8 Uses primarily active in the evening

- Small Crane is a popular public square with a residential scale and setting. The square is almost fully pedestrianised in the summer, with chairs, tables and people occupying the space and spilling out from the popular Crane Bar which fronts onto it. While it becomes a popular evening destination, the other uses which front onto the square including a book and record shop, an architecture practice, yoga studio and acupuncture clinic, are only active during the day. There is a small concentration of health and wellbeing uses in this area, including a dentist and nearby apothecary clinic. in addition to those noted before.
- The concentration of commercial uses dissipates moving west along Sea Road, with ground floor uses seeming to serve primarily the residential community with uses such as Ernie’s grocery store, a laundrette, hairdresser and cobblers. Kai, a popular restaurant, breaks from this theme at the end of the row of terraces next to St. Ignatius Church.

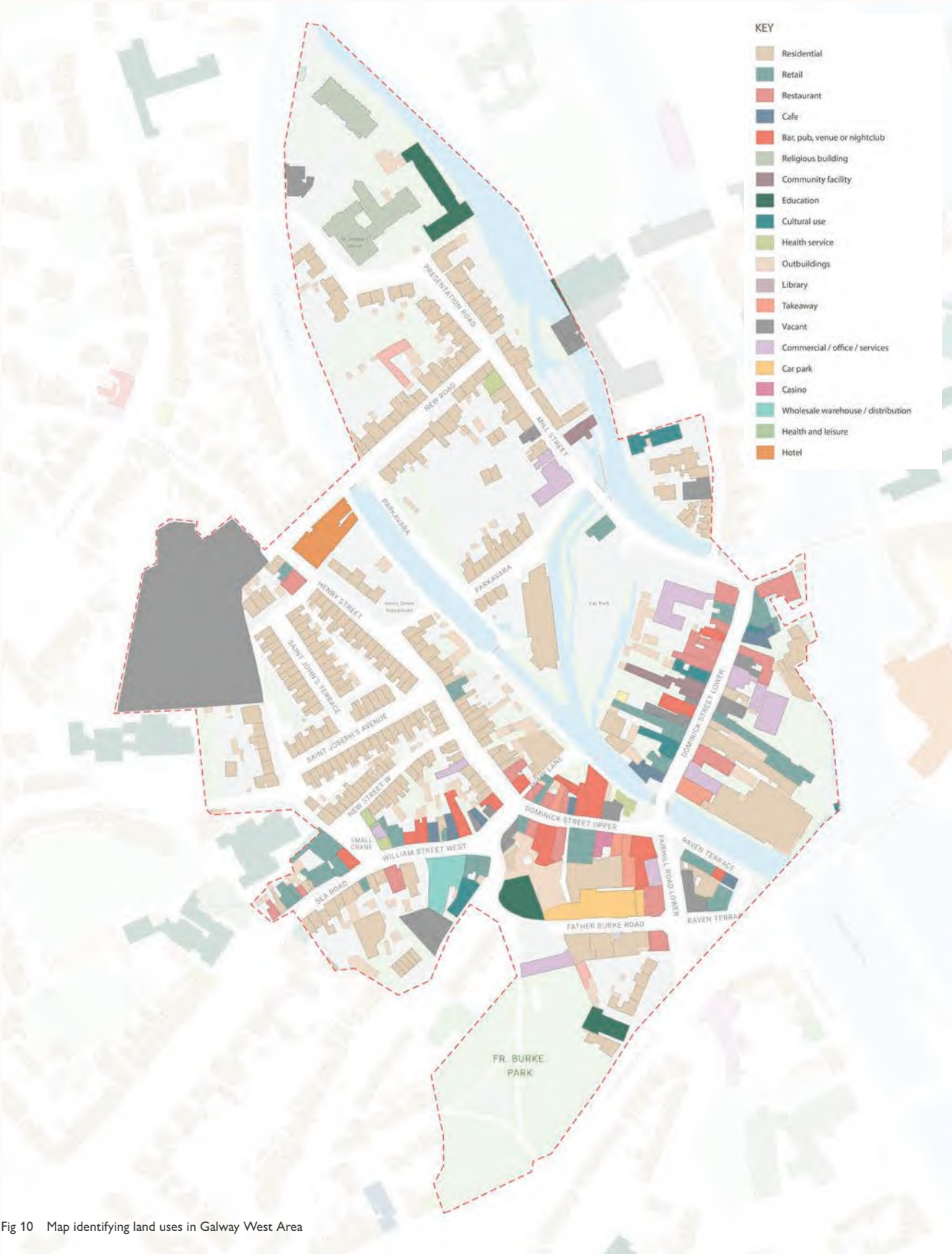


Fig 10 Map identifying land uses in Galway West Area



Active frontages

Active frontage refers to the ground floor of a building that engages with the street in some way, and is visually interesting to those passing by on the street. It's characterised by elements that encourage interaction between the public space and the building's interior, fostering a lively and safe street environment.

A key feature of active frontages is often large windows or shopfronts which reveal an active interior, or have a display which is visually interesting. The plan adjacent demonstrates where active frontages exist in the West Area. Generally active frontages exist in areas of commercial activity, and in the West Area, are focussed along the principal streets of Dominick Street Lower, Dominick Street Upper, William Street West, Sea Road, and also along Raven Terrace, Fairhill Road Lower and in Small Crane. There are, however some significant gaps in active frontages along these streets, which impact the feel of these key streets.

- While the west side of Dominick Street Lower generally has consistently active frontages, with restaurants and shops taking care to keep windows clear allowing glimpses of the activity inside, or creating visually engaging displays where the internal use is less active or interesting, the east side of the street has interrupted active frontages, impacted by vacant units and residential uses which do not interact with the street.
- A similar issue occurs in the transition from Dominick Street Upper to William Street West, where a number of vacancies on the ground floor, as well as the conversion of shopfronts into homes, has created a 'dead zone' - where the momentum of the active frontages along Dominick Street Upper is lost. In addition to this loss of active frontages, the pedestrian environment is poor - creating a challenging environment amongst an otherwise successful part of the West Area.



Fig 11 Visual display in the window of the Soundtrack and Podcast Studio on Dominick Street Lower.

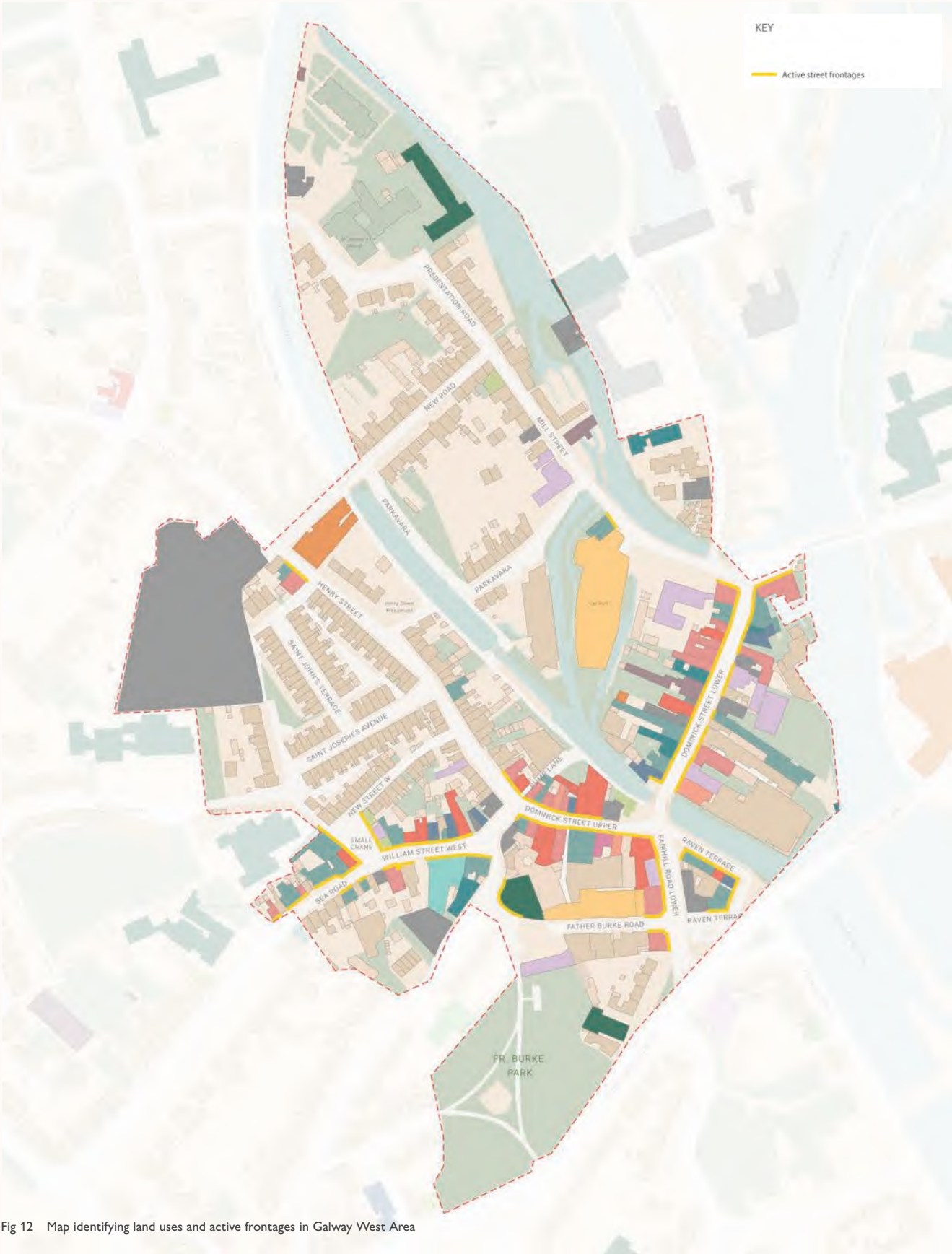


Fig 12 Map identifying land uses and active frontages in Galway West Area



Waterways

The waterways have played an instrumental role shaping the historic evolution and character of the West Area. The waterways played a historically significant role in powering mills for various industries from the 16th to 19th centuries, shaping the urban character of adjacent streets and buildings. Today, the waterways have greater importance as habitats and recreation. The waterways are a key asset for local biodiversity, as well as offering paths for walking and scenic views to appreciate the city.

It is also important to consider the diverse character of different waterways in the area, not only in terms of their form, but also in relation to the adjacent spaces and buildings. The accompanying plan defines the various stretches of waterway within the study area and beyond, grouping them into nine categories as illustrated.:

- The Eglinton Canal runs through the West Area, connecting from the River Corrib just north of the iconic Salmon Weir. The canal then divides into multiple branches before it traverses the West Area.
- The main canal runs through the length of the study area, parallel to Parkavara, connecting to the Claddagh basin adjacent to the mouth of the Corrib.
- The other branches create an island-like form with three main areas: Nuns Island (which forms a small part of the study area), Dominick Street Lower, and the Parkavara / Presentation Road / New Road area.
- The section of the canal between Nun's Island and Presentation Road is defined as a Mill Race reflecting the historic industrial use of this section. Parallel streams run either side of the Mill Street car park give a more bucolic character to the area to the rear of Dominick Street Lower.

The drawing also illustrates relatively sparse areas of frontage which address the waterways through the study area.

- A handful of residential buildings create domestic edges to the canal in the southern half of the study area.
- Raven Terrace is the only meaningful active frontage adjacent to the waterways in the West Area.
- Much of the canals, including sections with towpaths feature long sections of inactive frontage which can result in issues of safety perception at quieter times of the day.
- Opportunities to create new frontages and positive relationships exist adjacent to the main part of the canal next to Pump Lane, and the stream to the rear of properties on the northern side of Dominick Street Lower.

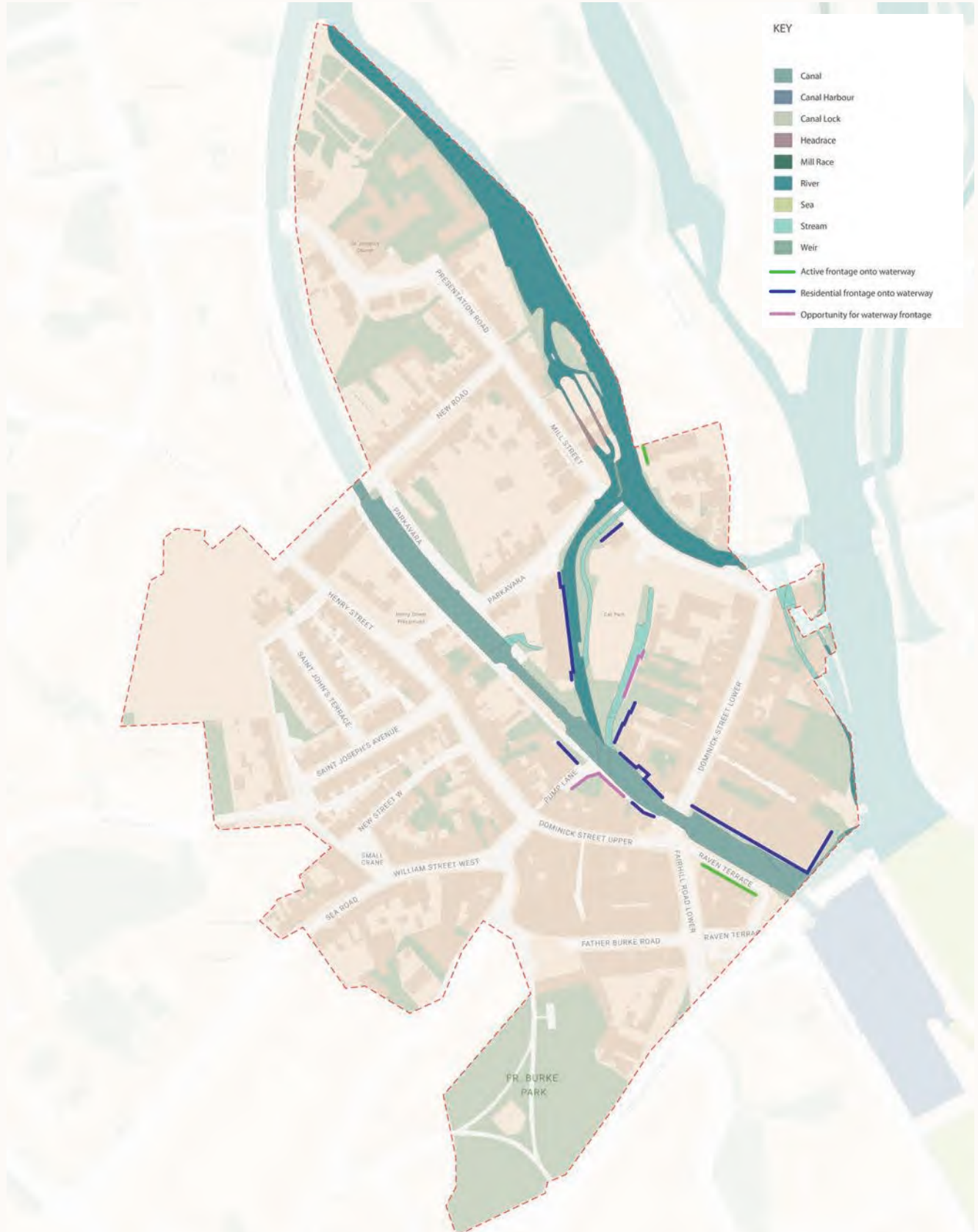


Fig 14 Map identifying waterways and frontages onto waterways in Galway West Area

Legibility

Legibility

Legibility refers to how easily people can understand and navigate an area. It is influenced by the clarity of its street network, the presence of edges, the definition of character areas, and the prominence of landmarks and nodes. A highly legible environment is one where movement is intuitive, where routes, intersections and points of reference are recognisable and memorable.

Character Areas

Galway West comprises a range of distinct character areas, shaped by land use patterns, historical development, and environmental context.

Dominick Street Lower is defined by its cohesive three-storey historic terrace, with well-preserved limestone façades and brightly painted doors tucked beneath segmental-arched openings. The scale of the street feels intimate yet stately, and its function as a busy thoroughfare lends it a vibrant, mixed-use character, with residential apartments above and commercial units at ground level.

This contrasts with Dominick Street Upper, where the urban grain tightens and the character shifts toward a more eclectic, contemporary feel. The street is lined by two- to three-storey commercial buildings and has a distinctly lively atmosphere, particularly during the summer months when the street is pedestrianised and activity from cafés, bars and restaurants spills into the public realm.

Moving westward into William Street West, the streetscape opens up and a more residential character begins to emerge, with apartment buildings and wider frontages signalling a change in scale and use.

To the south lies Father Burke Park, one of the few green open spaces in Galway's city centre. The mature trees and green lawn frame a tranquil, leafy setting that contrasts with the more urban character to the north.

There are two principal residential areas within the study boundary, each with their own identity. The neighbourhood around Henry Street, Saint John's Terrace and Saint Joseph's Avenue reflects the historic morphology of Galway, with a fine-grained street layout and modest traditional Irish housing in a calm, quiet setting. In contrast, the New Road and Mill Street area is more open and animated, influenced by proximity to waterways and featuring a wider variety of housing typologies, including terraced and semi-detached homes.

A small portion of Nun's Island also falls within the study area. This part of the city has a unique character defined by the curving road layout and framed views, creating a strong sense of enclosure and historic charm. The presence of the theatre and school here adds civic and cultural significance, contributing to a distinctive neighbourhood character.

Gateways, thresholds and nodes

Gateways mark the entrances to different areas and should communicate the character of the space they lead into. There are a number of gateway points at the site's edges, each varying in scale and character. These entrances should prioritise the pedestrian experience, offering clear sightlines, identifiable landmarks, and a welcoming sense of arrival. Thresholds mark moments of transition, where the character of space changes, often at nodes or junctions where people meet or gather. These spaces must be carefully designed to manage the shift in use or atmosphere and ensure adjoining areas complement each other. One such threshold is the junction of Raven Terrace, Dominick Street Upper and Lower, and Fairhill Road Lower, where several character areas converge. This busy node must support a blend of activities and reflect the diverse urban grain of its surrounding context.

Nodes are areas which people gravitate towards to meet and socialise. These are important areas where a comfortable and enjoyable pedestrian experience needs to be prioritised. These nodes are often located near to gateways and thresholds, for example, Monroes is a key memorable node where people meet to socialise and stands on a dominant corner making it a memorable location.

Important Views and landmarks

Due to the compact urban form and generally consistent building heights, Galway West offers limited long-range views within its core. Streets such as Dominick Street Upper and Lower and William Street West are defined by short axial views framed by the tight urban grain.

However, in the eastern part of the study area, where the built form opens up, there are important long views to key landmarks, including the Poor Clare Monastery, St Joseph's Church, and, beyond the study boundary, the spire of St Nicholas' Collegiate Church. Along the Eglinton Canal, the public realm offers picturesque views both across the water and down the canal corridor toward the Claddagh Basin, enhancing the sensory experience of this pedestrian route.

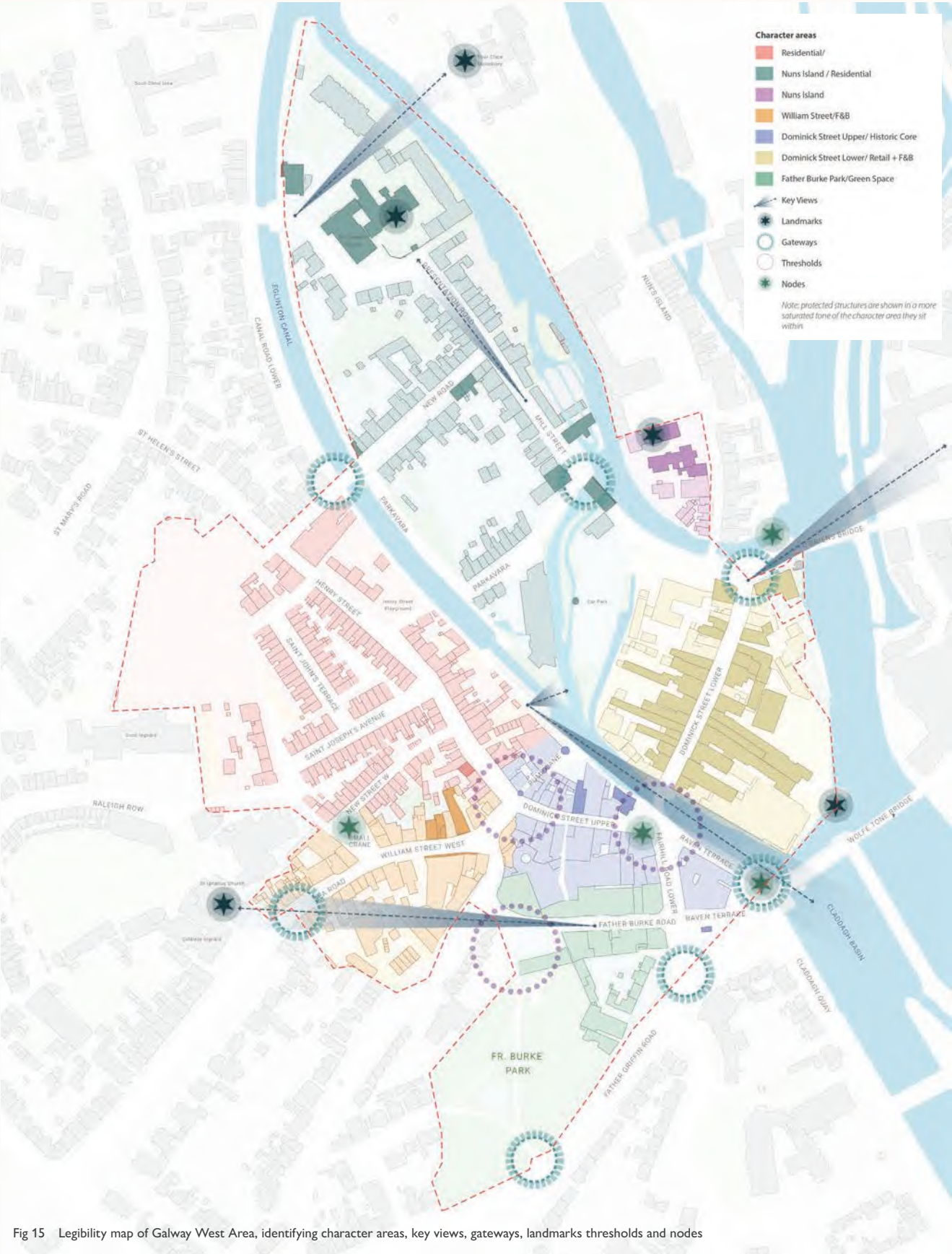


Fig 15 Legibility map of Galway West Area, identifying character areas, key views, gateways, landmarks thresholds and nodes

LANDSCAPE

Environmental features, opportunities and challenges

The public realm in Galway West Area encompasses a variety of publicly accessible spaces, where people move and interact, including streets and pavements in addition to squares such Small Crane, open spaces, such as Ravens Terrace and green spaces, such as Father Burke Park. It is vital that these spaces are accessible, safe and easy to navigate for people with a wide range of abilities and needs, both throughout the day and night.

Green spaces

The West Area is largely urban in character, but benefits from a number of pocket spaces of varying scale. Father Burke Park, which forms the southern tip of the study area is a single, larger park which plays a significant role for local people who live and work in the area.

Green spaces are summarised as follows:

- Father Burke Park: Popular and well-used park which connects from the heart of the West Area from Father Burke Road to Munster Avenue. Opportunities exist to improve the character of the park, creating a safer, more attractive space which continues to offer flexibility for a range of temporary festival uses and events.
- Presentation Road: The complex of buildings around St Joseph's Church benefit from a green setting adjacent to the canal. A large wedge of incidental green space is situated to the rear of dwellings on Presentation Road and New Road.
- Waterside spaces: A sequence of attractive incidental green spaces form boundaries to the canal. These include the canal edges to the rear of Mill Street opposite the back of The Bish school, and the green fingers of land between Parkavara and the Mill Street car park. There is also an area of green space to the rear of the Dominick Street Lower onto the Rver Corrib. These spaces typically benefit from mature trees and planting.
- Microspaces: There are a number of small, under-used public spaces across the study area. These include the tranquil fingers of space behind the Semple Mill apartments, and the tip of Mill Street car park. There are also areas of leftover space along the canalside at Parkavara, and in the thin wedge of land at St. John's Place adjacent to the edge of the Connacht Laundry site.
- Other incidental residential spaces: A number of green spaces are identified between residential dwellings within neighbourhood blocks. These include Raleigh Row, Henry Street (adjacent to the canal) and Munster Avenue.



Fig 17 Map identifying green spaces and environmental features in Galway West Area



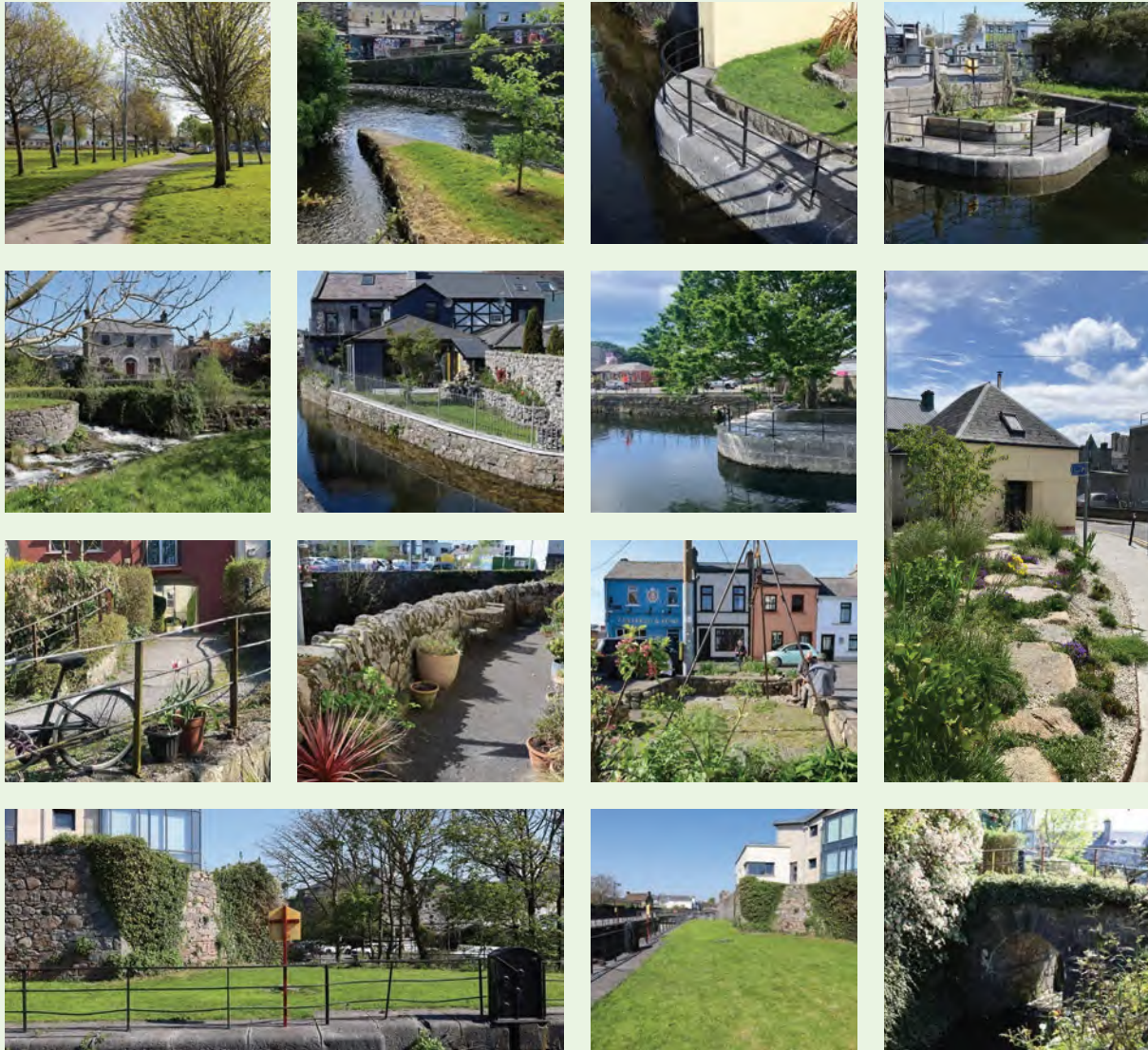
Waterways, nature and wildlife

The above images represent the range of waterways present in the West Area, and their differing characters - from fast flowing rivers, to tranquil canals, to meandering streams, to cascading locks and waterfalls - each creating a unique sound and atmosphere which informs the spaces they move through and interact with. As well as the physical movement and character of the water, these waterways provide homes and habitats for a range of wildlife, including herons, dippers, mallard ducks, otters, and a range of fish including Perch, Roach, Rudd, Pike and Brown Trout.



Trees and planting

The West Area is blessed with a range of waterways which traverse through the neighbourhood, creating not only a unique character and urban structure, but also opportunities for greening and green spaces alongside them. Most of the planting and trees within the West Area are concentrated around these waterways. Father Burke Park is the area's largest green space, and while the paths are lined with mature trees, there is little planting.



Parks, gardens and green micro-spaces



PUBLIC REALM

Creating accessible environments for everyone

The public realm in Galway West Area encompasses a variety of publicly accessible spaces, where people move and interact, including streets and pavements in addition to squares such as Small Crane, open spaces, such as Ravens Terrace and green spaces, such as Father Burke Park. It is vital that these spaces are accessible, safe and easy to navigate for people with a wide range of abilities and needs, both throughout the day and night.

Footpaths

Many footpaths in the study area are affected by cracks, uneven surfaces, and sudden changes in paving materials, posing challenges for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, and those with visual impairments. While traditional surface treatments in some locations contributes to the area's historic character and charm, they can also present trip hazards. There are, however, positive examples of public realm improvements , notably at the junction of Dominick Street Upper and Lower, where the carriageway has been narrowed to create a wider footpath, enhancing pedestrian comfort and accessibility.



Uneven surface material



Pavement without dropped kerb



Uneven surface material



Pavement without dropped kerb



Uneven surface material



Widened footpath on Dominick Street

Crossings and junctions

Many of the footpaths lack opportunities for people to safely cross the road. While some are equipped with dropped kerbs and tactile paving, in several locations, kerb heights are inconsistent or too steep, creating barriers for wheelchair users and people with mobility aids. Pedestrian crossings are heavily relied upon in the area due to the high volume of vehicular traffic, particularly near the Blue Tea Pot Theatre Company for people with intellectual disabilities.

In several locations, tight corner radii restrict sightlines, making it difficult for pedestrians to see oncoming vehicles and for drivers to anticipate crossing pedestrians. This issue is particularly evident along the stretch of William Street West between Munster Avenue and Dominick Street Upper. In such areas, ensuring safe and clearly marked pedestrian crossings is essential to reduce risk and support safe, accessible movement for all users. Throughout the study area, there are several new crossings which work well in providing tactile surfacing and clear road markings.



Uneven surface material



Uneven surface material



Pavement without dropped kerb



Pavement without dropped kerb



Fig 18 Public Realm map of Galway West Area, identifying footpaths, crossing and junctions

Poles and utility boxes

Throughout the west of Galway City, particularly in areas such as Sea Road, William Street West, and parts of the Claddagh, poles, pylons, utility boxes, and signage posts frequently obstruct footpaths. This is largely due to the reliance on above-ground electricity and telecommunications infrastructure, with overhead cables requiring the placement of poles and associated equipment along already narrow pavements. In many locations, these elements significantly reduce the available clear width, forcing pedestrians, especially wheelchair users, people with visual impairments, or those with prams, to step into the roadway. This issue is exacerbated when clusters of poorly coordinated street furniture, bins and on street parking make moving past obstructions impossible.



Lighting

Adequate lighting and good visibility is central to creating an accessible environment, throughout both day and night. However, it is important to consider the design and placement of lighting, so it does not impede the flow of movement along the streets and through spaces.

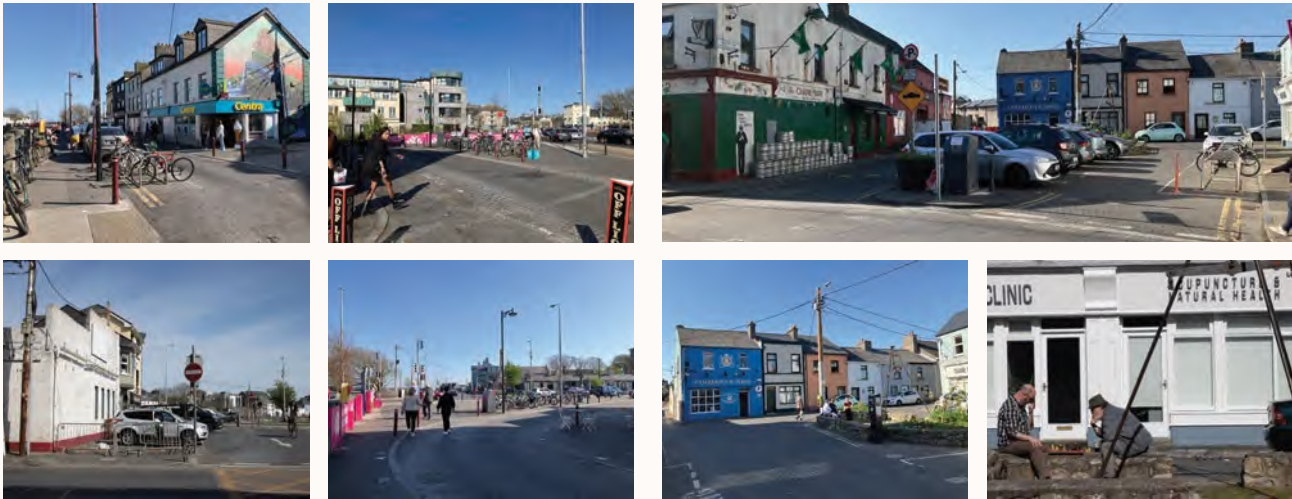
Street Furniture

The street furniture in the study area includes benches, bollards, bins, bike stands, and signage. Whilst these contribute to the area's distinctive local identity and informal charm, in many cases, their placement is inconsistent and uncoordinated, resulting in cluttered footpaths and obstructed pedestrian routes. In particular, bins and seating are sometimes positioned in narrow pinch-points, reducing the clear walking zone and creating barriers for wheelchair users and people with visual impairments.



Fig 19 Public Realm map of Galway West Area, identifying street furniture, poles, pylons and utility pylons

PUBLIC REALM: PRIORITY AREAS

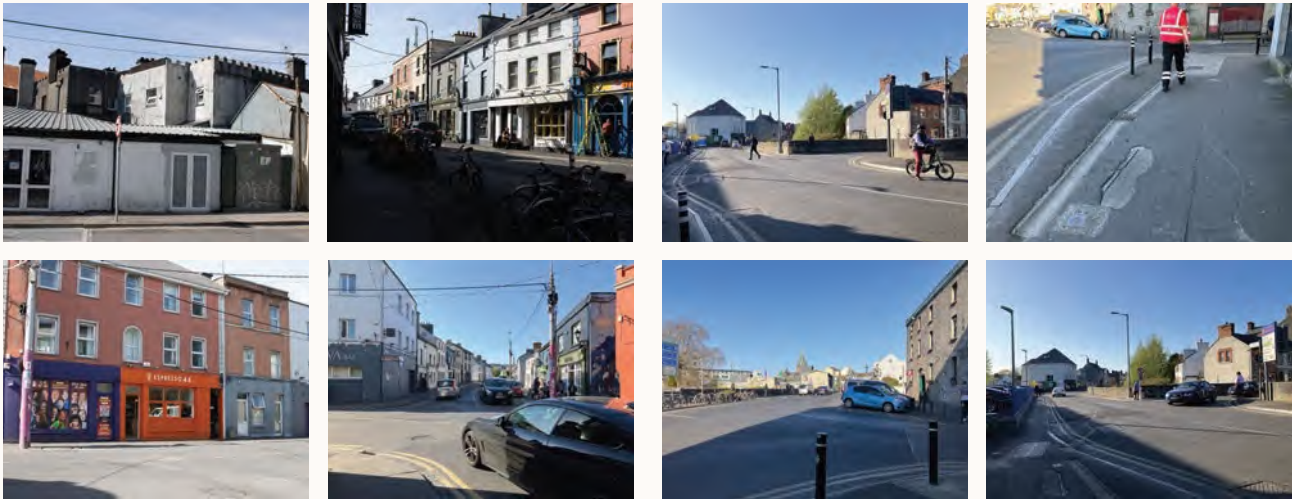


Raven Terrace

Raven Terrace occupies a strategically significant location within Galway’s West Area, adjacent to the canal and at a busy intersection of pedestrian and vehicular movement. The physical layout of the space is fragmented, with hard landscaping, an incoherent streetscape and vehicular infrastructure undermining the pedestrian legibility and comfort of the space. Excessive use of bollards contributes to visual clutter and spatial confusion, while the principal area of open space is misaligned, addressing the carriageway rather than engaging the building frontages. The street operates predominantly as a circulation corridor, rather than a space for socialising and relaxing. Despite its waterfront position, the area lacks a meaningful relationship with the adjacent canal, and views and access are limited, due to the presence of parked cars and walls. The space somewhat lacks enclosure and visual interest, due to the buildings lack active frontages and defined edges. The derelict Galway School of Motoring exacerbates the area’s inactive frontage, offering no passive surveillance and contributing to a sense of neglect. There is a notable absence of spill-out space to support outdoor dining and street-level vibrancy. A weighbridge is present in the ground, and there is scope for interpretation and enhancing the setting of this feature, which is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS Ref. No. 3911). The area would benefit significantly from a reconfiguration that prioritises pedestrian movement, embraces the canal as a defining feature, and introduces a more coherent material and spatial language to foster a sense of place and local identity.

Small Crane

Small Crane, or An Crann Beag, is a historically rich and spatially distinctive pocket within Galway’s West Area, once known as Fahey Beg, a traditional gathering space where farmers sold produce in an informal market setting. Its name and layout evoke the memory of a “little square,” and the original weighing scale, still present at its centre, serves as a tangible relic of this social and economic heritage. However, the current public realm undermines this legacy. The square has become heavily dominated by car parking and through-traffic, with vehicles circulating around the weighing scale as though it were a traffic island, rather than a civic landmark. Narrow footpaths around the perimeter, particularly outside the Crane Bar, are frequently obstructed by beer kegs and lack sufficient width for comfortable or accessible movement. The absence of a dropped kerb at key entry points further compounds issues of universal access, particularly for wheelchair users or people with mobility impairments, who are forced to navigate around parked cars or enter the carriageway. Road markings, traffic-calming infrastructure, and inconsistent paving materials detract from the square’s visual coherence and diminish its historic charm. A sensitive reworking of the public realm should seek to reclaim the square for pedestrians, enhance accessibility, rationalise surface materials, and celebrate its heritage, transforming Small Crane into a genuinely inclusive and characterful public space.



William Street West - Munster Avenue Junction

This area links the vibrant commercial activity of Dominick Street Upper with the open green space of Father Burke Park. Despite its significance as a civic gateway and route heavily used by students and local residents, the public realm is poorly configured and presents a number of safety and accessibility challenges. None of the key pedestrian crossing points at this junction are equipped with dropped kerbs, creating serious obstacles for wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, and families with prams. The footpath network is further compromised by poorly placed street furniture, including a bollard in the middle of the western footpath on Munster Avenue, which forces wheelchair users to cross the street at a location where sightlines are restricted and vehicle visibility is low. The bike parking on the corner of William Street West is positioned at a natural pedestrian crossing desire line, creating conflict between users and further contributing to spatial clutter. Sightlines when exiting Munster Avenue are obstructed, making it difficult for drivers and cyclists to see oncoming traffic from Henry Street or Dominick Street Upper, posing a particular risk at peak times. Meanwhile, the absence of public amenities, most notably bins and toilets, in nearby Father Burke Park has led to misuse of the public realm space in front of the Blue Teapot Theatre, affecting the quality and dignity of this cultural hub.

Bridge Street - Dominick St Lower Junction

This area is a key gateway into the West Area from the city centre, and vice versa. It leads to one of the West Area’s most significant streets and a hub of commercial activity, Dominick Street Lower. Despite its significance as an important route and gateway used by local residents, tourists and students, the public realm is difficult to navigate and move around, with a number of issues relating to safety accessibility. One of the most significant issues is the very wide carriageways, particularly on Mill Street and Bridge Street. This presents a serious issue, as there are no pedestrian crossings to indicate a safe place to cross the road. While there has been some build out of the pavement to allow for the installation of bike parking, the road is still too wide to cross safely. Traffic enters this junction from multiple directions, often at speed, requiring pedestrians to be alert and cross quickly which is not always possible. There are currently drop kerbs on either side of Dominick Street Lower, at either side of the southern end of the bridge leading to Nun’s Island. There is also a low or dropped kerb on the south side of Mill Street, however there are no drop kerbs on the opposite side and with a wide carriageway and cycle parking where you would naturally cross to, the road remains difficult to cross. Car parking on the south side of bridge street also prevents ease of crossing the bridge. While bollards have been installed along Dominick Street Lower and the south side of Mill Street to protect pedestrians from cars, these also create obstructions and street clutter on already narrow pavements.

VACANCY AND DERELICTION

Breathing new life into vacant buildings

Addressing vacancy and dereliction is a key priority for the THRIVE programme. The funding scheme seeks to bring vacant or under-used historic buildings back into use. Overall, the West Area has a relatively low proportion of vacant floorspace. However, a number of vacant sites and properties occupy relatively prominent locations which could undermine the overall character and vitality of the area.

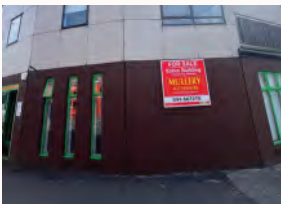
The consultant team used the most recent Galway City Council survey (undertaken in 2024) to validate vacancy and dereliction during a survey in May 2025. The survey indicated fifteen vacant properties / sites across the study area which are located as illustrated on the adjacent plan.

Locations include:

- Dominick Street Lower
- Raven Terrace / Fairhill Road Lower
- Dominick Street Upper
- William Street West
- Fairhill Lower
- Munster Avenue
- Connacht Laundry site
- Nun's Island

The survey also found three previously vacant properties on Dominick Street Upper (6), Father Griffin Road (11) and Mill Street (17).

As noted above, this is a relatively low vacancy rate overall. However, several of the buildings occupy significant positions, including a cluster in the ACA, which could have a negative impact on the overall historic character and vitality of the area. There is also a risk that long-standing vacancy could lead to dereliction and decline. Our analysis and positive conversations with local businesses, residents and stakeholders has generated several positive ideas for the rejuvenation of some of these buildings – providing potential spaces for a range of prospective uses which are explored in the final chapter.



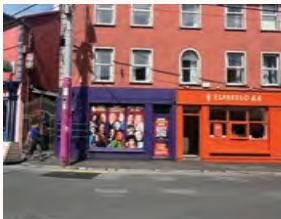
27 William Street West



17 William Street West



2 William Street West



Unit 2D William Street West



41/43 Dominick Street Lower



37 Dominick Street Lower



Nimmo's Hostel, Dominick Street Upper



Connacht Laundry Site



Father Griffin Road



Former garage, Fairhill Road Lower



Nun's Island



Munster Avenue



Fig 21 Map identifying vacant and derelict properties in Galway West Area

MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIONS

Getting around the West Area

Galway Transport Strategy

The growth of cycling in the Galway West area is not just a community-led movement; it's also a direct result of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS), a key policy guiding the city's future. This long-term plan, developed by local authorities, aims to fundamentally shift how people travel by prioritising sustainable modes like cycling and walking over private cars. For the western side of the city, the GTS provides a crucial framework for investment in new cycling infrastructure, including proposed greenways and safer on-road bike lanes. By giving cycling a central role in its vision for a less congested and more vibrant city, the GTS provides both the funding and the strategic direction needed to transform Galway into a more cycle-friendly urban environment.

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The study area roads have a posted speed limit of 30kph. The Urban Zone is identified as that within the 60kph speed limit. For roads within the 60kph speed limit, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) applies.

DMURS prioritises pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private cars following in order of importance. This aims to encourage more sustainable travel patterns and safer streets. Walking is given preference as and is seen as the most sustainable form of transport. By prioritising design for pedestrians first, the number of short journeys taken by car can be reduced and public transport made more accessible.

Cyclists follows in the line of hierarchy as the trips by bicycle have the potential to replace motor vehicles as an alternative means of transport for short to medium range trips. Cycling also promotes a healthy lifestyle. Advances have been made in this regard with the publication of the updated National Cycle Manual (2023) and the volume of active travel schemes.

Buses primarily cater for medium to long range journeys and DMURS states the movement of buses should be prioritised over other motorised vehicles. Thus DMURS places private motor vehicles at the bottom of the user hierarchy but acknowledges people will always be attracted to cars where they are a convenient and flexible option and for many users it is currently their only viable option for medium to longer distance journeys.

Overview of movement in the West Area

Roads and streets in the study area are constrained by junction alignment, on-street parking, and congestion, creating an environment that is often unsafe and unfriendly for pedestrians. The following pages focus on key locations within the West Area, and identify the factors limiting the existing streetscape and layout. The findings will inform concept designs that enhance functionality, safety, accessibility, and predictability for all users.

While recent improvements in the public realm, including wider pavements and resurfacing of footpaths and streets, particularly at the junction of Dominick Street Upper and Fairhill Road Lower as well as improvements along the canal path have helped to improve accessibility and pedestrian movement within the West Area, there are still significant issues around pedestrian movement. Pavements on principal streets are often narrow, with street clutter and very few crossings, impacting safety and accessibility.

Provision and opportunities for cycling within the study area has been considered, including cycle routes, priority measures, cycle parking and other facilities. Galway City has long had a strong culture of cycling, supported by its compact urban layout, large student population, and mild coastal climate. However, infrastructure in the West Area has not kept pace with the growing demand. In recent years, cycling has gained increasing attention within the city's transport strategy as a sustainable and equitable mode of travel.

Cycling in the West Area presents both challenges and opportunities for cycling. Dominick Street and Sea Road currently function as important routes between the city centre and western residential areas, but suffer from heavy traffic volumes, narrow footpaths, and limited or no dedicated cycling lanes. Some quiet residential streets, such as around the Small Crane, are relatively cycle-friendly due to low traffic speeds, but lack formal cycle infrastructure. There is a lack of coherent, continuous cycle lanes in the West, particularly for north-south movements between Newcastle, Shantalla, and the city centre.

Cycle parking is available at scattered locations (e.g. near the Crane Bar, Sea Road, and Fr. Burke Park), but it is often insufficient and not well-distributed. The absence of secure, covered bike parking and lack of public repair stations can be a deterrent to everyday cycling, particularly for families or older cyclists.

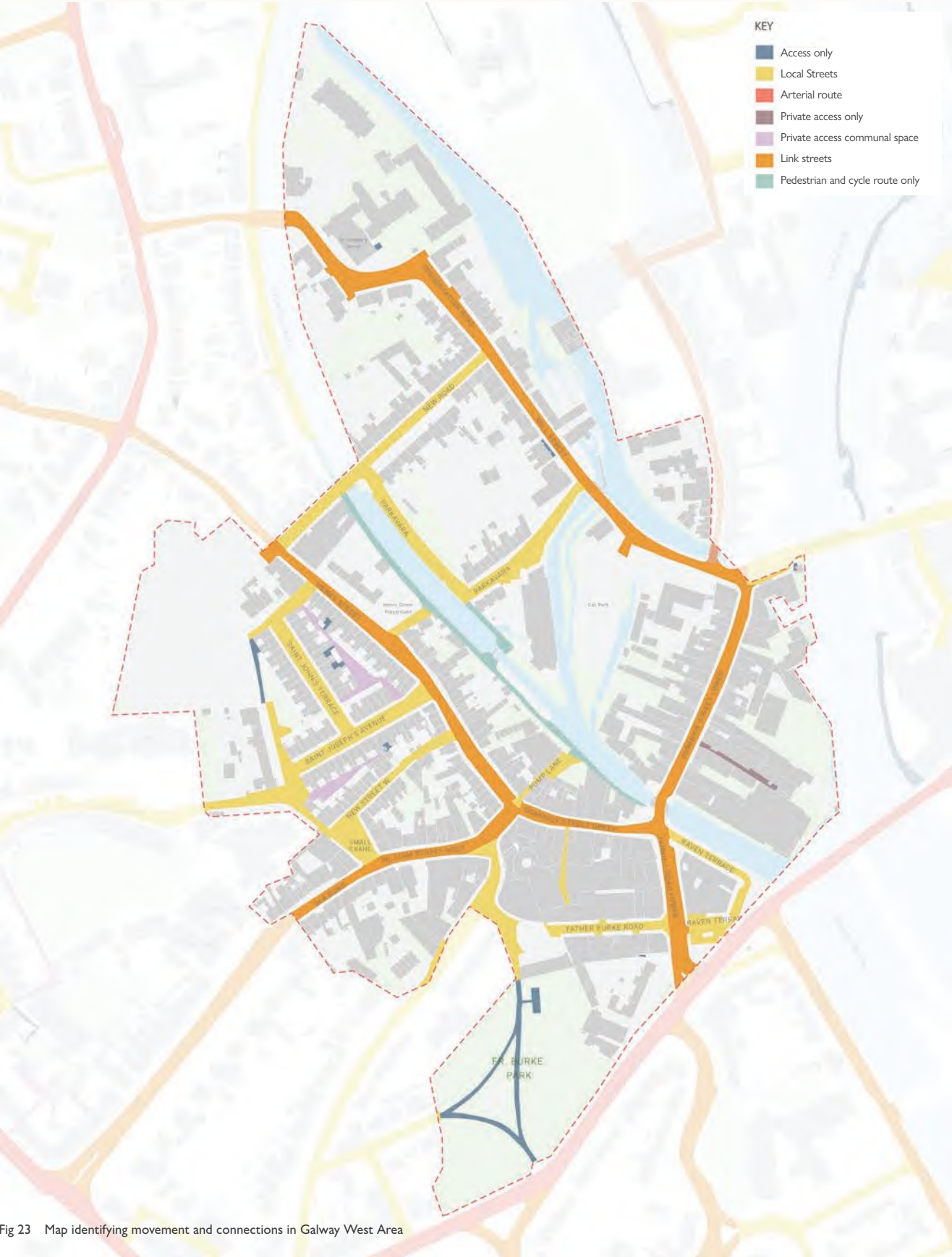


Fig 23 Map identifying movement and connections in Galway West Area

TRANSPORT ANALYSIS

Analysis of key locations within the West Area

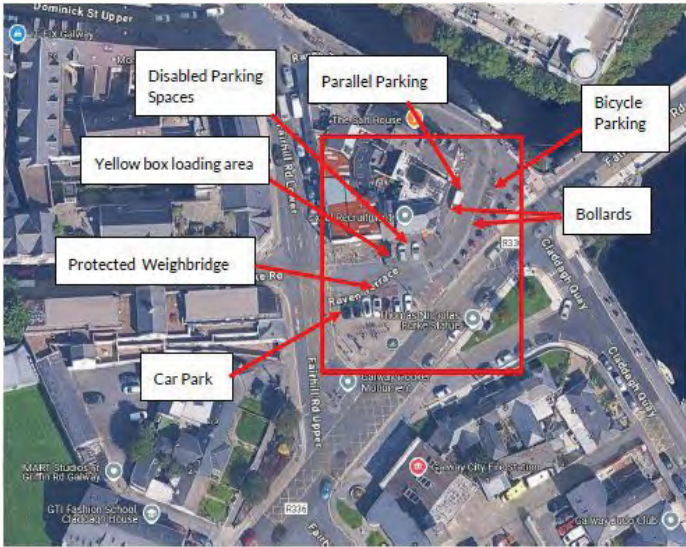
Raven Terrace

Observations

- During the site visit it was observed Ravens Terrace consists of parallel parking spaces, a car park, disabled car parking spaces, a yellow box utilised as a loading area and bicycle parking.
- An existing protected weigh bridge is within the car park.
- It was also noted the area is pedestrianised during the summer season only.
- The overall sense of Raven Terrace is vehicle dominate whereas vulnerable road users and historic features are not prioritised.
- Pedestrian activity is highest in centre streets that contain a concentration of retail and commercial frontages that directly open onto the street.

Recommendations

- A focus on the provision of pedestrian/cyclist only link would be beneficial here where the removal of a low number of parking would prioritise vulnerable road users.
- The implementation of landscape improvements that will directly add to the attractiveness of an area and reduce the use of a private vehicle and increase cycling and walking.
- Historic features help reinforce an areas character/place value. The inclusion of the protected weighbridge formally into the area will also reduce the use of a private vehicle and increase cycling and walking to the area.



Observations of Raven Terrace

Dominick Street Upper / William Street West

Observations

- It was observed on site the existing geometry along Dominick Street and William Street. The narrow footpaths in particular at the junction with Henry Street where pedestrian cannot not past two abreast.
- It is noted that both Dominick Street Upper and William Street West are pedestrianised in evenings during the summer season only. By using planters as a temporary restraint. Bollard and double yellow road marking has been utilised to prevent parking on both sides of the road way.
- No public parking is provided apart from a loading bay on Willam Street.

Recommendations

- The minimum required footway width in DMURS is based on the space needed for two wheelchairs to pass each other which is 1.8m. In densely populated areas and along busier streets, additional width must be provided to allow people to pass each other in larger groups. In this regard the width of footways should increase in city centres and as development densities increase. The width of footways should increase according to function of the streets as connectivity levels increase. The footway should be maintained at a consistent width between junctions and should not be narrowed to accommodate turning vehicles.
- Therefore increasing the footpath width would be recommend along Dominick Street and William Street at a minimum with consideration having both streets as shared surfaces street as pedestrian activities are high and vehicle movements are only required for lower level access or circulatory purposes.



Observations of Dominick St Upper and Willian Street West

Pump Lane

Observations

- Pump Lane was also examined on site which is currently used by pedestrians to access the existing canal walkway.
- Historic features were noted on site where a well, wash area and wheelwright area which are not emphasised currently on site.
- It was also noted the lane is not lit up and provides access to a loading area currently used by local businesses.

Recommendations

- Where possible, focus on formalising this route which are currently used by vulnerable road users would be beneficial to the area.
- It would also be recommend to design out anti-social behaviour such as incorporating lighting into the laneway. Good quality lighting promotes a safer environment by ensuring inter-visibility between users. Poorly illuminated areas can also make it difficult for users to identify potential hazards. The quality of lighting will also have a major impact on perceptions of security. If lighting levels are not sufficient, a place may not be perceived as safe, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. This may discourage people from walking and cycling, particularly in the winter months when days are shorter.



Observations of Pump Lane



Small Crane

Observations

- The Small Crane provides a link to two schools via a car park. The lane leads north into a recently developed 'Safe routes to school' zone however on approach no priority has been made to vulnerable road users outside of this area.
- The roadway is governed by cars where the footpaths are narrow in width in particular on approach to the safe routes to school.
- It was also observed the existing historic feature (weighing scales) is overlooked.

Recommendations

- It is recommended Small Crane may be suitable to be pedestrianised due to the high volumes of footfall and low volume of vehicle movements.
- As a minimum the footpath should be widened to allow for two wheelchairs use to pass one another.
- An assessment of significance should be prepared when dealing with interventions within historic core areas. This is seen as addressing/acknowledging essential elements of the historic urban environment which may have architectural, historical and technical significance.



Observations of Small Crane

MUNSTER AVENUE

Observations

- Muster Avenue provides connection to a pedestrian access to Father Burke Park via O’Flaherty funeral home entrance.
- The access from Munster Avenue is congested with car parking at the mouth of the junction.
- It was also observed the footpath terminates at a gate where vulnerable road users have to enter the roadway to gain access to the park.

Recommendations

- The connectivity and way finding problems at this location where walking distances are increased and users have to navigate the roadway deters vulnerable road users. The lack of connectivity is one of the key factors that discourage people from walking.
- It is recommended improved wayfinding would be beneficial at this point and improved footpath infrastructure to navigating vulnerable road users through to Father Burke Park.



Observations of Munster Avenue



FATHER BURKE ROAD

Observations

- Father Burke Road is a cul-de-sac providing local access to residential properties and Father Burke Park.
- On site, it was observed that the road is narrow and dominated by vehicular traffic, with cars frequently parked on the footpath, restricting safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists.

Recommendations

- To enhance accessibility and safety for vulnerable road users, it is recommended to provide a connectivity via a access through the existing boundary, allowing pedestrians and cyclists direct access to adjacent areas such as Father Burke Park.
- Additionally widening footpaths where possible and install bollards to prevent parking on the footpath.
- Dedicated parking spaces should be provided on the road, along with a turning head to improve vehicle manoeuvrability and reduce congestion.



Observations of Father Burke Road



TRANSPORT SCENARIO TESTING

Understanding the implications of doing nothing vs doing something.

MILL STREET AND DOMINICK STREET LOWER

Observations

- Mill Street is similar to Henry Street functioning primarily as a local street, providing access to both residential and commercial properties with the addition of a public car park.
- Parallel parking is available along the street; however, footpaths are narrow and in poor condition, limiting the ability of pedestrians to walk side by side and creating potential trip hazards. This environment constrains safe movement for vulnerable road users, including people with prams, wheelchair users, and cyclists.
- A pedestrian link to Dominick Street offers an alternative route but would benefit from accessibility and safety upgrades.



Observations of Munster Avenue

Recommendations

- To improve the existing infrastructure for vulnerable road users, footpaths should be widened and resurfaced, tactile paving installed, and dropped kerbs added to provide level access for wheelchair and pram users.
- Parking layouts should be reviewed, with pinch-point bays removed or relocated to reclaim pedestrian space.
- Furthermore, the pedestrian link to Dominick Street should be upgraded with improved surfacing, lighting, and wayfinding signage, providing a safe and fully accessible alternative route.



CONSIDERATION OF OPTIONS

As per TII standard PE-PMG-02001 (HD 18) – Road Safety Impact Assessment (December 2017), a Do-Nothing and a Do-Minimum option were assessed and compared with the alternative Do-Something options considered by the design team.

- **Do-Nothing:** This option would involve the continuation of routine maintenance of the existing roads and approaching side streets, with no significant interventions.
- **Do-Minimum:** This option would include selective widening of narrow footpath sections where land is available and setbacks permit. However, this approach would not fully address underlying safety concerns, particularly for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair users.
- **Do-Something:** More comprehensive interventions were explored to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity. These include:
 - *Implementation of a one-way system on Dominick Street Lower to reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.*
 - *Consideration of a one-way system on Dominick Street Upper to improve traffic flow and safety.*
 - *Creation of a through-route from Munster Avenue to Father Burke Road to provide a safer and more direct connection for pedestrians and cyclists.*
 - *Removal of carriageway on Raven Terrace to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist movement and improve the streetscape environment.*

The proposed Do-Something options, as shown in Drawing 12135-1001-A in Appendix A, aim to significantly improve safety and accessibility, addressing issues that cannot be resolved through routine maintenance or minor footpath widening alone.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

While no detailed traffic modelling has been undertaken as part of this assessment, the proposed interventions are expected to have the following potential impacts on traffic and road user behaviour in Galway City.

- **Local Traffic Flows:** The introduction of measures such as selective footpath widening, one-way systems on Dominick Street Lower and Upper, and the removal of carriageway on Raven Terrace may result in minor adjustments to local traffic patterns. Vehicles may be redirected along alternative routes, potentially improving circulation along narrower streets while reducing conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Vehicle Speeds:** Traffic calming measures, narrower carriageways, and self-regulating street designs are likely to reduce vehicle speeds, enhancing safety for vulnerable road users. Lower speeds may also encourage more walking and cycling trips within the study area.
- **Parking and Access:** Adjustments to parallel parking and removal of pinch-point bays may slightly reduce on-street parking availability, but will improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. Provision of dedicated parking areas and turning heads, where applicable, should mitigate potential congestion impacts.
- **Pedestrian and Cyclist Prioritisation:** Prioritising pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is expected to encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private vehicles for short trips, which may indirectly reduce traffic volumes on local streets.
- **Connectivity Improvements:** Enhanced links, such as the proposed through-route from Munster Avenue to Father Burke Road and improved pedestrian access between Mill Street and Dominick Street, may redistribute pedestrian and cyclist movements, increasing safety while having minimal impact on overall traffic capacity.
- **Historic and Sensitive Areas:** The interventions are designed to respect the historic urban environment, with minimal disruption to existing road geometry, while balancing the need for safe movement for all users.

Overall, while no quantitative traffic modelling has been undertaken, the proposed measures are expected to improve safety, accessibility, and streetscape quality without generating significant adverse impacts on traffic circulation within Galway City West Area.

SCOT ANALYSIS

The Integrated Urban Strategy seeks to regenerate and rehabilitate its historic buildings and urban spaces. The following summary provides an overview of the area’s strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats, drawing on the preceding analysis and the stakeholder and community engagement undertaken in parallel (see the following chapter for the documentation of the engagement process).

Strengths

- **Community and Identity:** The area has a strong, vibrant, and friendly community, with long-standing residents and a sense of collective identity that makes it feel like an urban village.
- **Cultural Hub:** The West Area is a significant hub for culture and the arts, with a lively music and nightlife scene, which is internationally recognised for its traditional music.
- **Natural Amenities:** The area's is home to one of Galway city's few green spaces, Father Burke Park. It also has an intimate relationship with water, including the River Corrib and Eglinton Canal, provides unique sensory experiences, such as the calming sound of water and opportunities to walk and enjoying nature.
- **Historic Character:** The neighbourhood boasts a rich architectural and archaeological heritage, with many historic buildings and remnants of its industrial past, such as the Eglinton Canal and old stone craftsmanship.
- **Independent Businesses:** The local economy is sustained by numerous small, independent businesses, including shops, cafes, bars, and pubs, which contribute to the area's relaxed, less commercial aesthetic and sense of authenticity.
- **Bilingual Heritage:** The strong connection to the Connemara Gaeltacht and the prevalence of bilingual street signs in Irish and English reinforce the area's linguistic and cultural identity.
- **Walkability and Location:** The compact urban layout makes it highly walkable, and its proximity to the city centre, sea, and canal is a key asset.
- **Active Frontages:** Key streets like Dominick Street and William Street West have active and visually interesting frontages, creating a lively street environment.
- **Visual Vibrancy:** The area's aesthetic depth is enhanced by the use of bold colours on residential facades and hand-painted or bespoke shopfront signage, reflecting creativity and pride.
- **Green Microspaces:** The neighbourhood benefits from small, informal public spaces that are often found alongside the canal, offering quiet places for rest and connection with nature.

Challenges

- **Traffic and Car Dominance:** The area is heavily dominated by vehicular traffic, with issues like excessive through-traffic, speeding cars, and a general lack of prioritisation for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Poor Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Many footpaths are narrow, uneven, and cluttered with street furniture and utility poles, making them difficult to navigate for people with mobility issues, pushchairs, and visual impairments.
- **Inadequate Crossings:** There is a notable lack of safe pedestrian crossings, particularly at key junctions, where wide carriageways and poor sightlines create hazards.
- **Lack of Public Amenities:** The area suffers from a lack of essential public facilities, such as benches, public toilets and sufficient bins, leading to litter and anti-social behaviour in some spaces.
- **Vacant and Derelict Buildings:** While the overall vacancy rate is low, a number of properties, including a cluster in the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), are vacant or derelict, negatively impacting the area's character and vitality.
- **Loss of Community Identity:** The rise of short-term holiday rentals, such as Airbnbs, is seen as a threat to the neighbourhood's residential base.
- **Over-Commercialised Nightlife:** Concerns exist that the West Area is becoming too focused on alcohol-oriented nightlife, which can lead to anti-social behaviour and disrupt the balance between residents and businesses.
- **Lack of Accessibility:** The public realm is not universally accessible; some buildings and sidewalks are particularly difficult for wheelchair users to navigate.
- **Poor Lighting and Safety Perception:** Some areas, like Pump Lane, are poorly lit, which contributes to safety concerns and discourages walking and cycling, especially at night.
- **Underutilised Spaces:** Public spaces like Small Crane and Raven Terrace are dominated by car parking and through-traffic, undermining their potential as vibrant civic spaces.

Opportunities

- **Pedestrianisation:** There's a strong desire to explore temporary or permanent pedestrianisation options for key streets like Dominick Street Upper and William Street West. This presents an opportunity to improve the public realm and street interfaces, including Dominick Street Lower, by creating more welcoming and accessible urban spaces. These improvements could also include options for one-way traffic circulation on certain streets to enhance traffic flow, improve safety, and reduce congestion.
- **Public Realm Improvements:** The strategy presents a chance to improve public spaces like Small Crane, Raven Terrace, and Pump Lane by reducing car dominance, creating better pedestrian access, and incorporating seating and greening.
- **Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Buildings:** The low vacancy rate offers an opportunity to repurpose and rejuvenate a small number of prominent vacant or derelict buildings.
- **Enhancing Waterways:** The waterways, particularly the Eglinton Canal, can be better integrated into the urban fabric by creating new frontages and positive relationships between buildings and the water's edge.
- **Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity:** There is an opportunity to introduce more green spaces, planting, and trees to re-green the streets and enhance biodiversity.
- **Improved Mobility:** The plan can address accessibility issues by widening footpaths, installing dropped kerbs, and providing better-located crossings and cycle parking.
- **Celebrating Heritage:** The rich history and heritage can be celebrated and promoted through public art, commemorative plaques and self-guided heritage trails.
- **Diversifying Uses:** There is a desire to attract more daytime traders, introduce new community and cultural venues, and create multi-purpose spaces.
- **Community-Led Projects:** The strong community spirit provides a foundation for more participatory and co-developed projects, allowing residents to take a leading role in shaping their neighbourhood.
- **Recreational Activities:** The waterways and public parks, especially Father Burke Park, offer a significant opportunity to introduce more recreational and family-friendly activities.

Threats

- **Loss of Community Identity:** The rise of tourism and short-term lets is seen as a threat, leading to a loss of the residential community and unique identity.
- **Increased Dereliction:** Long-standing vacancy in prominent locations could lead to dereliction and further decline, undermining the overall character and vitality of the neighbourhood.
- **Loss of Authentic Character:** Pressure to appeal to tourists could lead to the erosion of traditional shopfronts and a loss of an “authentic Galway” feel.
- **Negative Impact of Nightlife:** The increasing dominance of alcohol-oriented nightlife could lead to anti-social behaviour and make the area feel unsafe, particularly at night.
- **Continued Traffic Congestion:** Without intervention, persistent issues of heavy traffic could worsen, making the area increasingly difficult and dangerous to navigate for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Climate Change:** There is an ongoing threat of climate change, with potential for flooding from rising sea levels
- **Inadequate Public Transport:** The current bus service is seen as insufficient and poorly connected to other parts of Galway, contributing to a reliance on private vehicles and dependency on cars.

C- ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Engaging people at a grassroots level, focusing on neighbourhoods

Approach to engagement

Our engagement strategy was designed to ensure that the community was at the heart of shaping the vision for the West Area. We believe that the people who live, work, and operate in the area know it best, and their input was essential for developing a strategy that is not only sustainable, but also reflects the unique character and needs of the community.

Our approach was a two-stage process, with the initial stage focused on gathering a wide range of views and ideas from local people and businesses. This initial feedback helped to inform and validate our draft vision and objectives. Our methods were tailored to reach diverse groups and included:

- In-person events: We held dedicated drop-in sessions for local businesses and residents, providing an accessible, in-person forum to discuss the project and share ideas. These sessions, including walkabouts, helped us understand how the area is used and what people value most.
- Targeted engagement: We briefed key stakeholders, including elected members, to gain their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in the area.
- Digital outreach: An online survey provided an opportunity for anyone in the community to share their thoughts on key themes, local character, and potential improvements. This was a crucial tool for reaching a broader audience beyond those who could attend in-person events.
- Creative and innovative methods: We used unique, community-focused techniques to capture different voices. The “Your Dream Street” worksheets engaged young people, while an oral histories project helped us document and celebrate the West Area’s unique heritage and personal stories from long-time residents and businesses.

This multi-faceted approach was crucial for gathering diverse perspectives and ensuring the final strategy is a true reflection of the community’s priorities.

New european bauhaus principles

New European Bauhaus (NEB) is a policy and funding initiative that makes green transition in built environments and beyond enjoyable, attractive and convenient for all. Even the smallest communities on the ground deserve living spaces that improve their well-being and sense of belonging. The initiative promotes solutions that are not only sustainable, but also inclusive and beautiful, while respecting the diversity of places, traditions, and cultures in Europe and beyond.

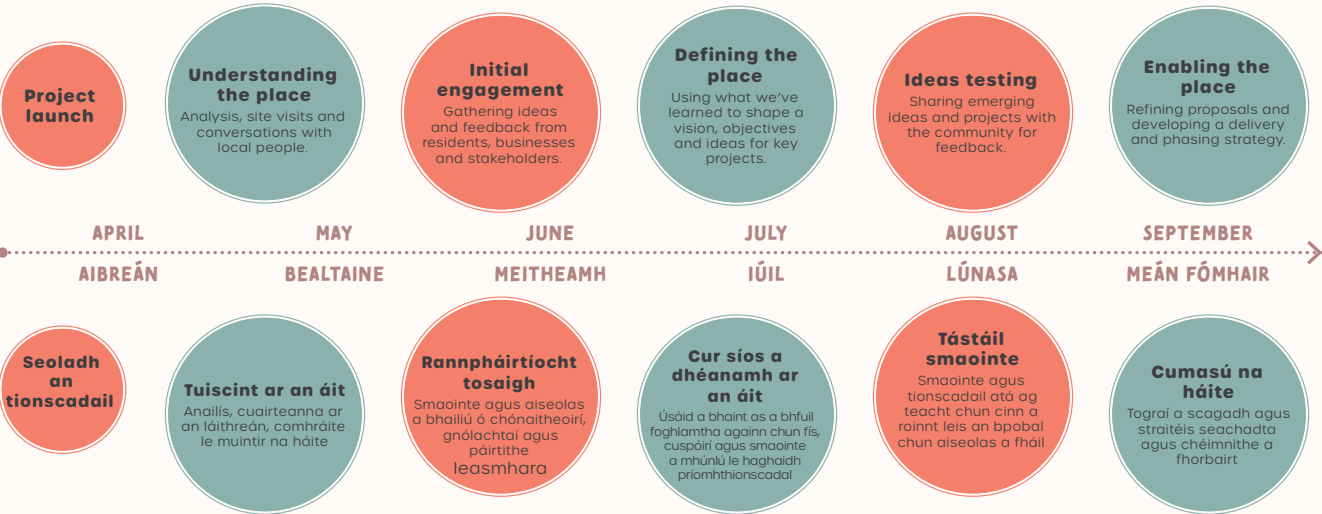
The New European Bauhaus works by :

- engaging people at a **grassroots level**, focusing on neighbourhoods
- providing **tools and guidance**
- offering **tailor-made solutions** for different communities
- incorporating the **views of various stakeholders** into the process of design and implementation
- prioritising **people** and **social inclusion** but also the **economy** to boost competitiveness and EU strategic autonomy

Process & timeline

The engagement activities have been planned in two stages, as shown in the programme before. The initial stage has sought to gather the views and ideas of a wide range of stakeholders, including local people and businesses. Through this initial stage, the team sought to gather the views of the people who know the West Area best, to better understand how the area is used, what people value most, and where there are opportunities for improvement. This initial stage of information gathering helped to inform a draft vision, objectives and ideas. These draft ideas will be shared at a further stage of public and stakeholder engagement before being refined in response to feedback, helping to shape the final integrated urban strategy and delivery and phasing strategy for future implementation.

PROJECT TIMELINE



AMLÍNE AN TIONSCADAIL



SUMMARY OF STAGE 1 ACTIVITIES

Shaping our understanding

Purpose of stage 1 engagement

This initial stage of engagement has three main objectives, as follows:

- Communicate the purpose of the project, and stages of activity.
- Seek feedback on how the study area is perceived by local people and stakeholders with a view to informing and validating our design and technical workstreams.
- Initiate the process of defining priorities which will shape the vision, key themes, goals and objectives.

Stage 1 engagement activities

Business and stakeholder drop-in event and walkabout

@ Áras na nGael, no.45 Dominick Street from 3pm to 5pm on Tuesday 29th April, and study area walkabout from 5pm to 5.45pm.

The business community is a key group within the West Area. Their independent shops, restaurants, cafes and organisations help to create a vibrant neighbourhood. As well as contributing to the character of the place, they are also active in implementing change. The Galway West Area Traders' Association, in particular, has been instrumental in delivering lighting, signage, wayfinding and other additions to, and enhancements within the West Area's public realm. Early in the process, we held a drop-in event for local businesses and stakeholders. This event helped to launch the project, whilst inviting ideas and views from those who know the area, and are already active within it.

Elected Members - Central Area Committee

Online on Thursday 22nd May 2025 at 2.30pm

The purpose of this session was to brief local Councillors on the purpose of the study, and to seek their views on key priorities for the study area. We encouraged an open discussion about the character and identity of the West Area, and the opportunities and challenges it presents. Members commented on some of the challenges in the area, including parking and traffic flow, and vacancy and dereliction (particularly on Nun's Island). They also noted opportunities around activation and pedestrianisation, noting the success of the existing timed pedestrianisation in the summer.

Residents' drop-in event

@ The Blue Teapot Theatre Company on Munster Avenue from 4pm to 6.10pm on Tuesday 27th May.

As well as a strong business community, the West Area is first and foremost a residential neighbourhood. We held a further drop-in event for local residents, providing an opportunity for them to find out more about the project, and provide their thoughts and ideas for the area.

Online survey

Launched on Tuesday 27th May and closed on Monday 30th June

The team prepared a focused questionnaire which GCC hosted on their web page. The questionnaire included a range of multiple choice answers and more open form responses in relation to key themes. This will provide a great opportunity to gauge people's attitude towards the local historic environment, and the overall character of the West Area. We also encouraged feedback on the nature of activity in the area, opportunities to enhance community use, ideas for streets and spaces, and potential improvements relating to movement and the environment. The results have assisted the team validating their understanding of the study area, and helped to inform the vision, key themes, goals and objectives.

Oral histories and stories

Ongoing project, launched at the Residents' drop-in event on Tuesday 27th May

Galway West is home to a strong community of residents and businesses, many who have been in the area for many years and even generations. During the engagement process, we began to capture their memories and stories as oral histories, helping us to better understand the area whilst providing a space to document the untold stories of the West Area, and a platform to celebrate its unique heritage and identity. This strand of engagement should form the start of an ongoing project to capture the spirit, memories, and way of life of those who have historically lived, and who now live in the West Area. This opportunity is discussed later in section D of the report.

"Your dream street" representation from the Blue Teapot Theatre

Worksheets distributed at the Residents' drop-in event on Tuesday 27th May

As part of the residents' engagement, the team prepared a set of worksheets for young people to share their thoughts and ideas for their 'dream street' which included a street and elevation and plan where ideas could be written or sketched. Students of the Blue Teapot Theatre Company completed the worksheet, as well as an accessibility study of streets within the West Area, set out in the following pages.



SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FROM DROP-IN EVENTS

Gathering views and ideas from the people that know the West Area best.

239
COMMENTS

The following pages present a high level analysis of the comments received during the drop-in event held for businesses and stakeholders. A number of overarching themes were identified, with key messages emerging under each as set out on the next page. In total, we received 239 comments.

MOVEMENT & ACCESSIBILITY (120)

This was the second most commonly discussed theme. Comments generally related to how people move around the West Area - by foot, bicycle or vehicle. Most comments related to the footpaths within the West Area, and concerns relating to safety and accessibility. Pedestrian crossings and issues relating to servicing and deliveries were also mentioned frequently. Other comments related to challenges around traffic, parking, enforcement and traffic management.

STREETS & SPACES (102)

This was the most common theme discussed within comments. Comments generally related to features within the public realm such as lighting, street furniture, trees, planting and signage. Lighting was the most commonly mentioned topic under this theme. Comments also related to activities which take place within streets and spaces, including pedestrianisation, which was the second most commonly mentioned topic. Other comments related to particular public spaces where they'd like to see improvements.

USES, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES (72)

This theme was also frequently discussed within comments, which frequently mentioned a desire for community or cultural uses. Vacancy and dereliction was also mentioned with commenters identifying current vacancies and a desire to reduce vacancy. Comments also related to a desire for more activities and activation in the area, as well as more daytime traders.

GREEN SPACES AND WATERWAYS (72)

Comments relating to this theme most frequently mentioned nature and biodiversity, with most expressing a desire for areas to be 'left for nature' or a desire for habitat creation. Other comments related to a desire for more infrastructure, such as electricity and water, being introduced in the park, as well as a desire for more activities within the park such as festivals, open-air cinema, picnics and boules. Other comments related to a desire for more trees, improved access to waterways, addressing litter in the waterways and opportunities for seating along the canal.

HERITAGE & CHARACTER & IDENTITY (52)

Comments relating to this theme primarily discussed local history, or a desire to promote and celebrate local history or heritage assets. Other comments related to a desire for public or community art.

PUBLIC AMENITIES & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS (44)

Comments relating to this theme primarily discussed the need for public facilities, particularly toilets and bins.

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT (14)

Most comments relating to participation and engagement mentioned a desire for more 'inclusive decision-making' and to be informed in advance of plans and changes.



Fig 24 Graphic representation of the number of comments received in relation to each of the key themes

BUSINESS AND STAKEHOLDER DROP-IN EVENT

Gathering views and ideas from the people that know the West Area best.



The following pages present a high level analysis of the comments received during the drop-in event held for businesses and stakeholders. A number of overarching themes were identified, with key messages emerging under each as set out on the next page. In total, we received 129 comments.

STREETS & SPACES (33)

This was the most common theme discussed within comments. Comments generally related to features within the public realm such as lighting, street furniture, trees, planting and signage. Lighting was the most commonly mentioned topic under this theme. Comments also related to activities which take place within streets and spaces, including pedestrianisation, which was the second most commonly mentioned topic. Other comments related to particular public spaces where they'd like to see improvements.

MOVEMENT & ACCESSIBILITY (26)

This was the second most commonly discussed theme. Comments generally related to how people move around the West Area - by foot, bicycle or vehicle. Most comments related to the footpaths within the West Area, and concerns relating to safety and accessibility. Pedestrian crossings and issues relating to servicing and deliveries were also mentioned frequently. Other comments related to challenges around traffic, parking, enforcement and traffic management.

USES, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES (24)

This theme was also frequently discussed within comments, which frequently mentioned a desire for community or cultural uses. Vacancy and dereliction was also mentioned with commenters identifying current vacancies and a desire to reduce vacancy. Comments also related to a desire for more activities and activation in the area, as well as more daytime traders.

GREEN SPACES AND WATERWAYS (23)

Comments relating to this theme most frequently mentioned nature and biodiversity, with most expressing a desire for areas to be 'left for nature' or a desire for habitat creation. Other comments related to a desire for more infrastructure, such as electricity and water, being introduced in the park, as well as a desire for more activities within the park such as festivals, open-air cinema, picnics and boules. Other comments related to a desire for more trees, improved access to waterways, addressing litter in the waterways and opportunities for seating along the canal.

CHARACTER & IDENTITY (6)

The comments provided in relation to this theme primarily discussed the local community, which it was mentioned were strong, friendly, vibrant and long-standing. Comments also mentioned independent shops, being authentically Irish, a good general upkeep, and desire for the 'feel' of the area to improve.

PUBLIC AMENITIES (6)

Comments relating to this theme primarily discussed the need for public facilities, particularly toilets and bins.

HERITAGE & CULTURE (5)

Comments relating to this theme primarily discussed local history, or a desire to promote and celebrate local history or heritage assets. Other comments related to a desire for public or community art.

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT (4)

Most comments relating to participation and engagement mentioned a desire for more 'inclusive decision-making' and to be informed in advance of plans and changes.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS (2)

Comments under this theme related to litter and noise.

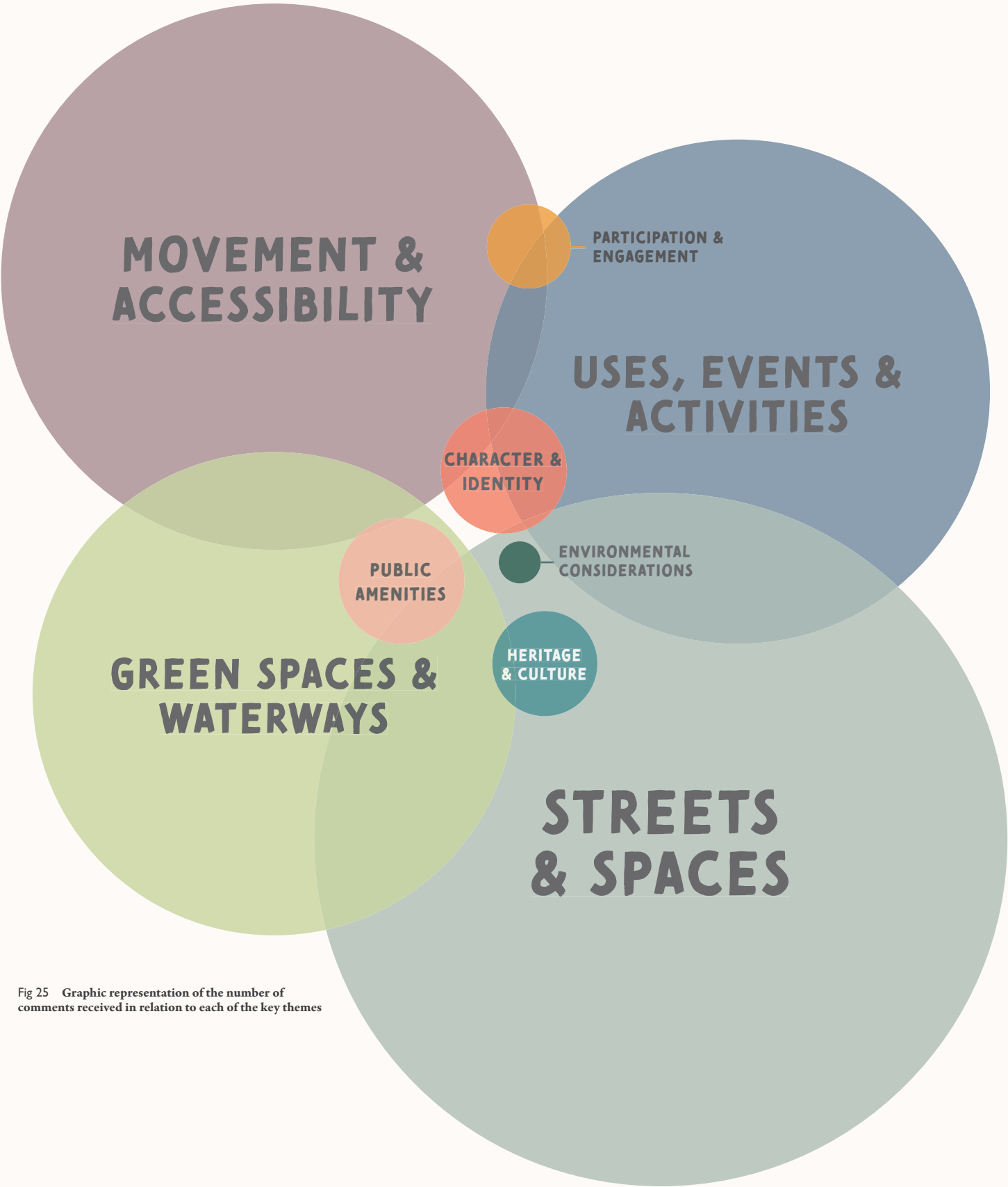


Fig 25 Graphic representation of the number of comments received in relation to each of the key themes

RESIDENTS DROP-IN EVENT

Gathering views and ideas from the people that know the West Area best.

The following pages present a high level analysis of the comments received during the drop-in event held for residents of the West Area. A number of overarching themes were identified, with key messages emerging under each as set out on the next page. In total, we received 110 comments

110
COMMENTS

MOVEMENT & ACCESSIBILITY (34)

Movement and accessibility was by far the most common theme mentioned within comments. Most comments related to parking, particularly in relation to issues for local residents. Accessibility was also a frequently mentioned topic, with other comments relating to road network changes, crossings, footpaths, ease of movement and street clutter.

STREETS & SPACES (18)

Most comments in relation to this theme expressed a desire for enhanced greening within the West Area, while others sought the improvement of public spaces such as Pump Lane and Small Crane. Pedestrianisation was also a commonly discussed topic, with attendees expressing a wide range of views.

GREEN SPACES AND WATERWAYS (13)

Comments relating to green spaces and waterways primarily discussed proposed uses and activities for Father Burke Park, which was seen as having huge potential. A number of comments also related to the desire for improved access to waterways, particularly for water activities. Other comments related to a desire for more trees, supporting wildlife, possible hydro-energy generation, safety, co-design opportunities and a desire for water fountains.

USES, EVENTS & ACTIVITIES (12)

The most frequently mentioned topic in relation to this theme was a desire for more homes in the area, with opinions varying as to the type of housing which would be suitable. A desire for community space was also mentioned frequently, as well as cultural uses and events. Other comments related to the repurposing of existing buildings, the creation of a multipurpose space, a desire for a new green space, dog park and promoting active travel.

CHARACTER & IDENTITY (10)

Comments relating to this theme highlighted the strong community spirit within the West Area, a desire to celebrate and showcase local history, and a desire for more events and activities. Other comments related to the attractive architecture, potential for creative wayfinding, and a concern around a loss of identity due to increased holiday rentals.

PUBLIC AMENITIES (10)

Play was the most frequently discussed topic in relation to this theme, with attendees generally expressing a desire for more independent play options for all ages. A desire for more bins and seating was also mentioned frequently.

HERITAGE & CULTURE (5)

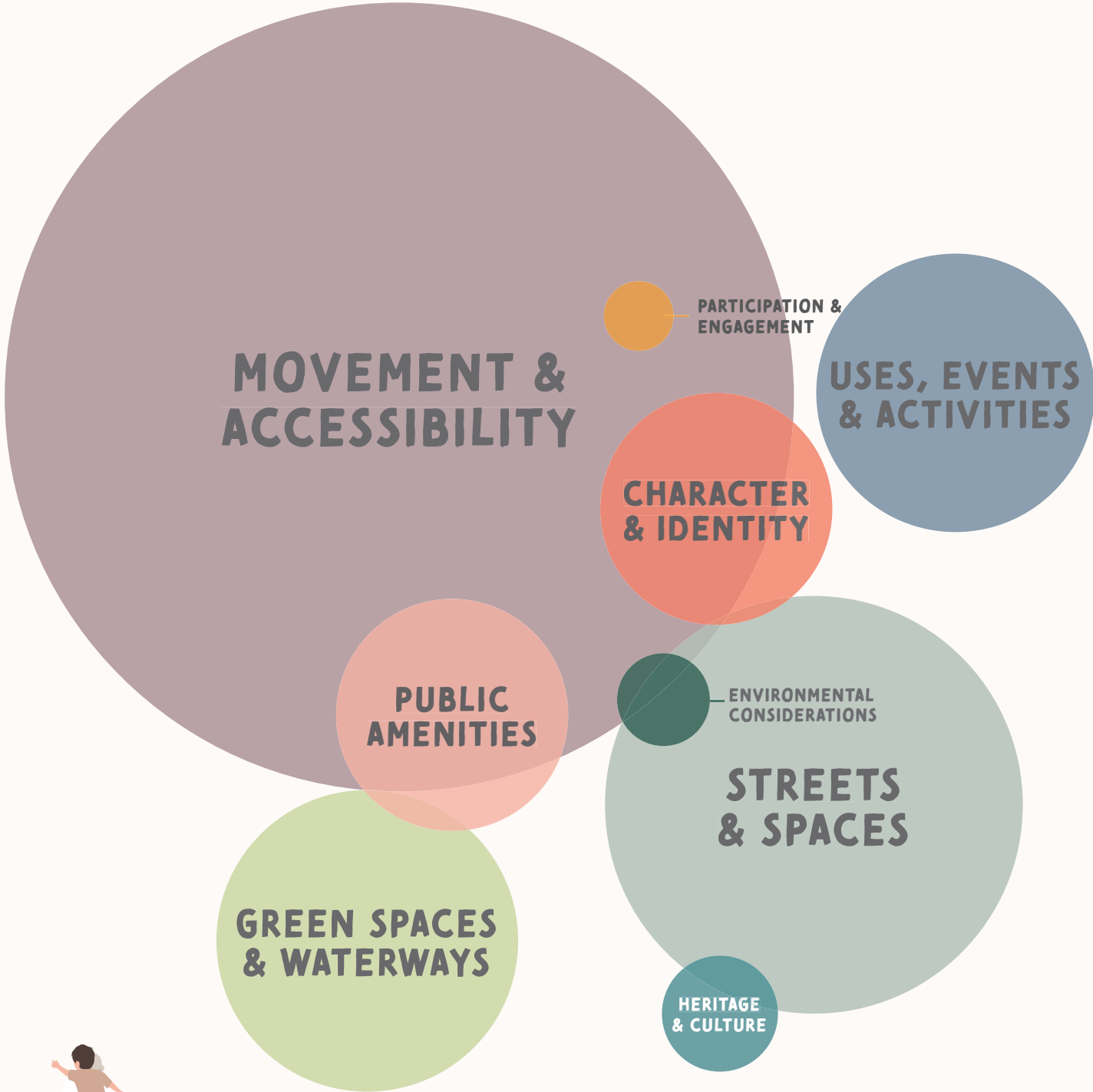
Comments generally related to a desire to see local history and local heritage assets celebrated, enhanced, or interpreted.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS (4)

Comments under this theme related to noise disturbances from activities in the West Area.

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT (3)

All of the comments mentioned in relation to this theme discuss a lack of engagement with local residents on the pedestrianisation plans - noting a lack of benefits for local residents.



PUBLIC SURVEY

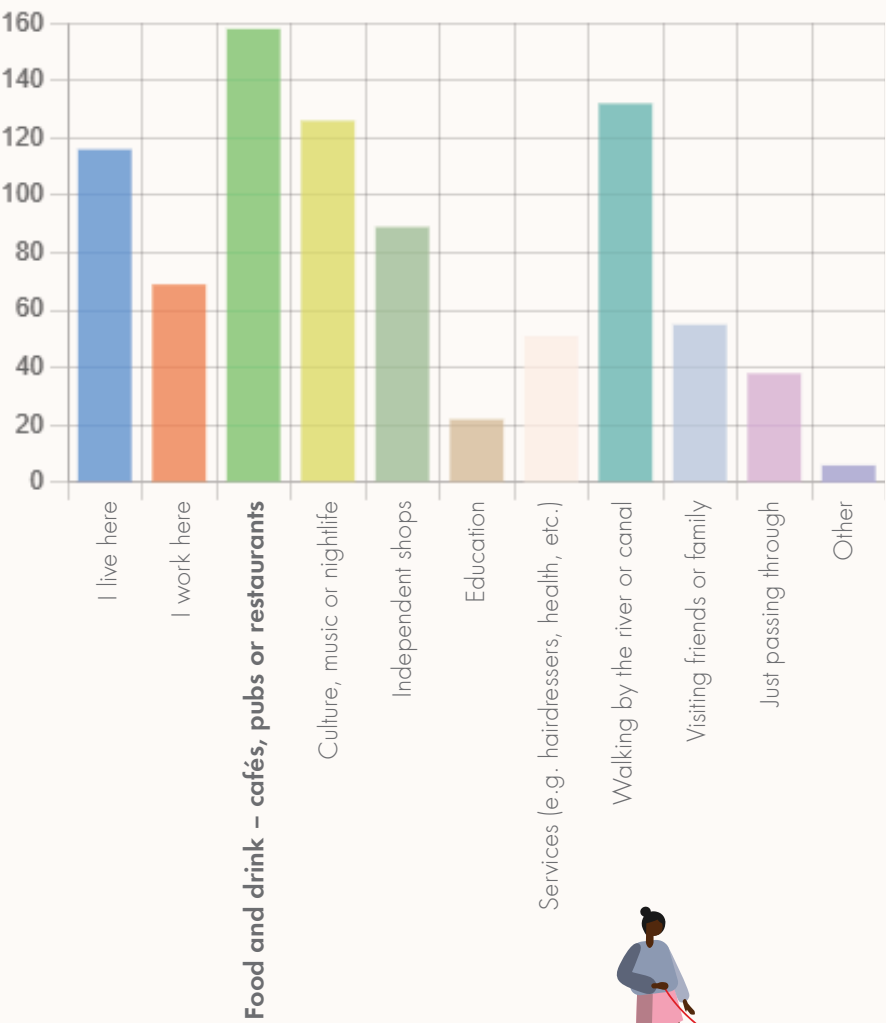
Gathering views and ideas from the people that know the West Area best.

The following pages present a summary of the key responses received from the public survey. In total 296 people responded to the survey, including 148 complete responses and 148 incomplete responses.



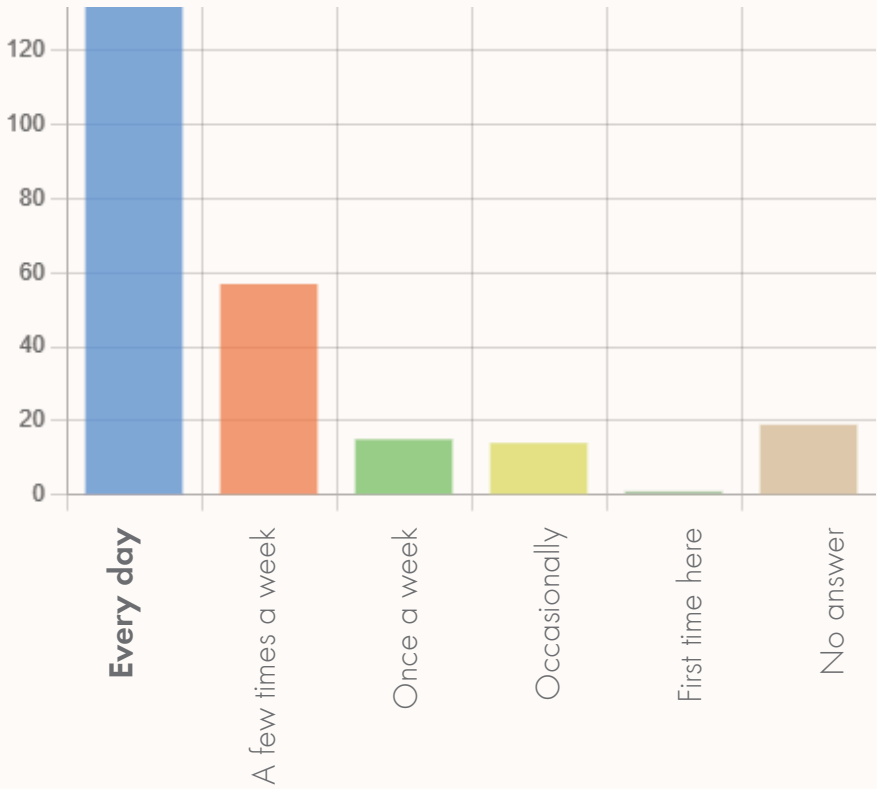
WHY DO YOU SPEND TIME IN GALWAY’S WEST AREA?

When asked how people spend time in the West Area, the most popular answer with nearly 160 responses was related to food and drink - either spending time in cafes, pubs or restaurants. Walking along the river or canal, and culture and nightlife also scored highly.



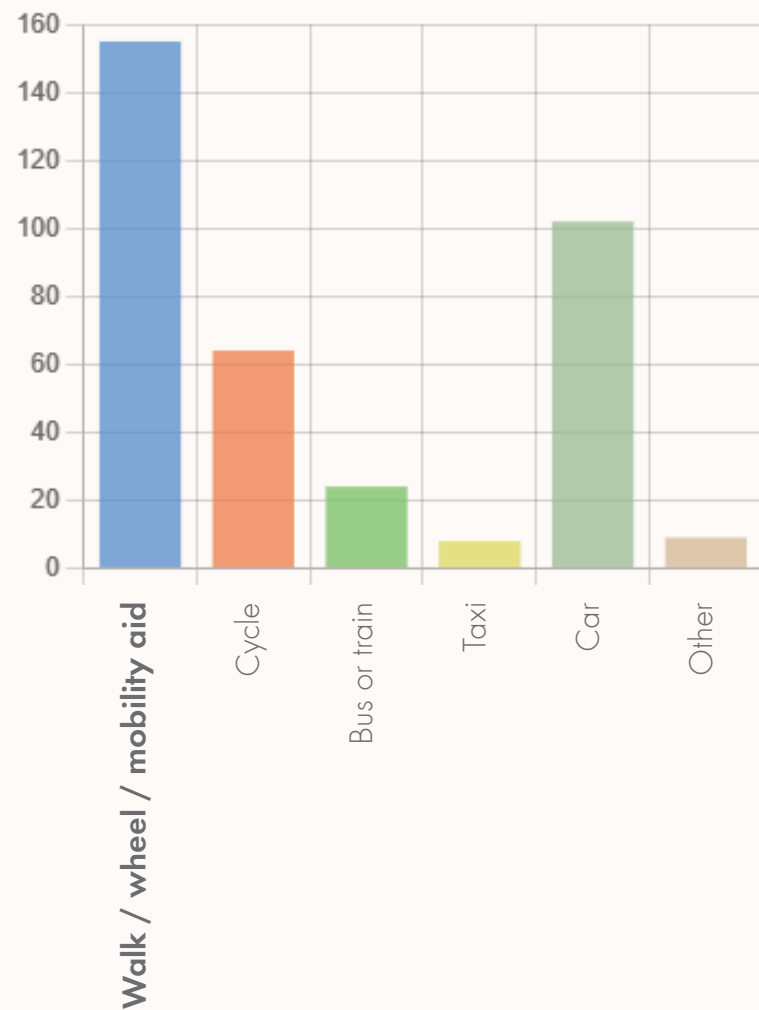
HOW OFTEN ARE YOU IN THE WEST AREA?

The majority of respondents are in the West Area every day. About 41% of respondents live in the West Area, and about 24% work here.



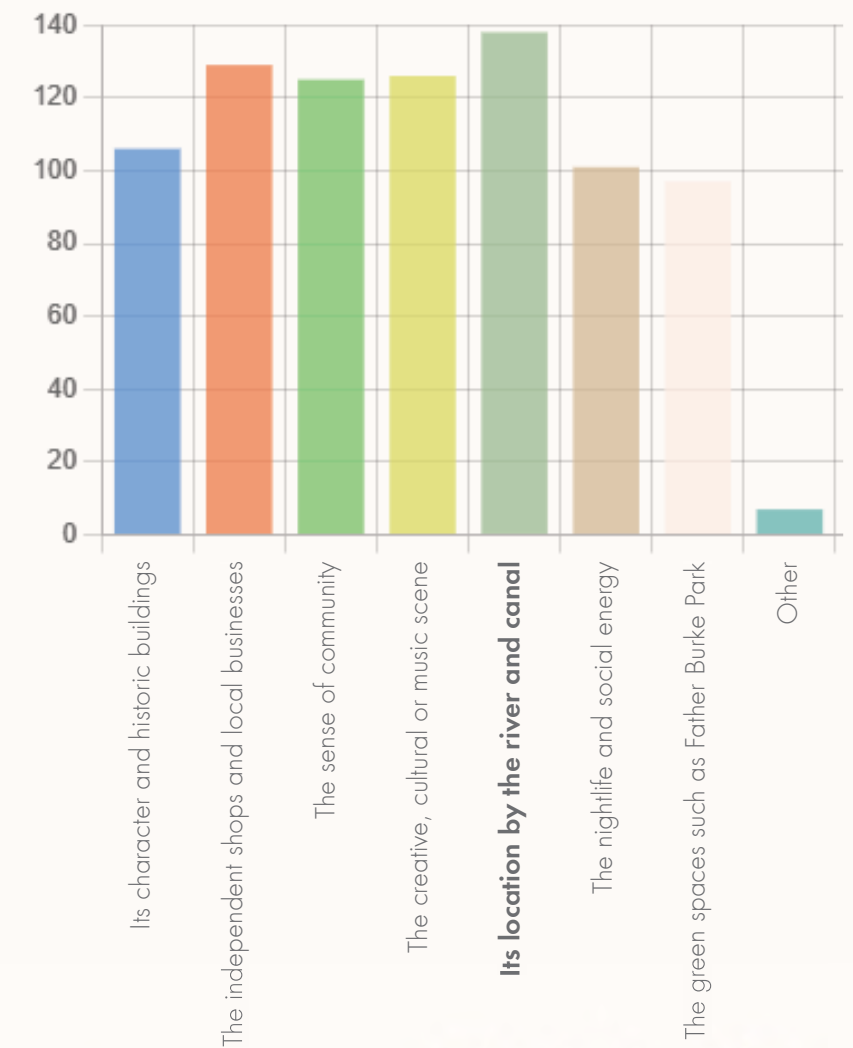
HOW DO YOU USUALLY GET HERE?

Over half of all survey respondents travel to the West Area by walking or using a mobility aid. Cars are the second most common mode of transport, while public transport and taxis are used less frequently.



WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT THE WEST AREA?

There are many aspects of the West Area that people enjoy. Its riverside and canal-side location is a highly cherished aspect, closely followed by its array of independent shops and local businesses. The strong sense of community and the vibrant creative, cultural, and music scene are also greatly valued by residents.



ARE THERE ANY PLACES IN THE WEST AREA THAT FEEL ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND WHY?

The canal is highly valued by local residents, serving as a vital place for urban respite and a popular route for walking and cycling. Among various responses, 64 individuals specifically mentioned the canal, with Small Crane and Fr. Burke Park also being frequently cited as outdoor spaces with great potential.



CANAL

64
PEOPLE SAID
THE CANAL WAS
IMPORTANT TO
THEM

- "IT'S A PEACEFUL PLACE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY."
- "IT BRINGS A SENSE OF CALM. IT IS PART OF WHAT MAKES GALWAY HOME."
- "GREAT PLACE TO EAT A SANDWICH."
- "URBAN RESPITE TO VEHICULAR MOVEMENTS."
- "BEAUTIFUL AND CALM, GOOD TO WATCH FISH AND WILDLIFE."
- "LOTS OF POTENTIAL FOR MORE USE."
- "A SAFE PLACE TO WALK AND CYCLE THAT IS QUIET AND NOT RIGHT NEXT TO A ROAD, WITH LOVELY NATURE."
- "IMPORTANT CYCLE ROUTE ACROSS THE CITY, TO THE UNIVERSITY."

This page gives a selection of quotes from the survey that highlight what people value about the places that are important to them.

SMALL CRANE

35
PEOPLE SAID
SMALL CRANE WAS
IMPORTANT TO
THEM

- "COULD BE GREAT FOR SO MANY OCCASIONS"
- "AN AMAZING OUTDOOR SPACE IN THE CITY, ESCAPE THE BUILT UP AREA. A LARGE PLACE TO PLAY WITH MY KIDS AS WE HAVE NO FRONT GARDEN. THE EVENTS THAT ARE RUN BRINGING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS."
- "I CROSS IT FREQUENTLY AND THINK THAT IT COULD WORK MUCH BETTER FOR THE AREA"
- "POTENTIAL FOR CULTURAL & COMMUNITY EVENTS. IT'S A LITERAL BREATH OF FRESH AIR."
- "HAS LOTS OF POTENTIAL."
- "WE WALK OUR DOG THERE AND OUR CHILDREN PLAY THERE MOST DAYS."
- "GREEN SPACES ARE VITAL IN ANY TOWN & CITY."
- "LOVELY CHILL AREA."
- "BECAUSE IT'S A NICE PLACE TO CHILL IN THE SUN WITH A COFFEE."
- "COULD BE GORGEOUS WITH A BIT OF LOVE."
- "COMMUNITY, ENERGY, OUTDOOR SOCIALISING, FEELING CONNECTED TO MY NEIGHBOURS AND PROUD TO WELCOME VISITORS."
- "SO MUCH POTENTIAL AS A MARKET OR COMMUNITY SPACE."
- "LOVELY SPACE, ESPECIALLY WHEN TRAFFIC IS CLOSED OFF, WITH A STRONG SENSE OF GALWAY HISTORY AND COMMUNITIES."
- "SO MUCH POTENTIAL AS A MARKET OR COMMUNITY SPACE."

DOMINICK ST UPPER

17

- "IT MORE CLOSELY REPRESENTS GALWAY THAN SHOP STREET."
- "VERY RELAXING WHEN PEDESTRIANISED."
- "NIGHTLIFE."

THE CRANE BAR

16

- PHENOMENAL MUSIC
- AUTHENTICITY
- INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED HUB FOR TRADITIONAL MUSIC, FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE

RAVEN TERRACE

13

- "LOVE SITTING ON THE WALL AND INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE, NATURE, AND SUN."
- "NICE SMALL PATH WITH A GOOD VIEW OVER THE CANAL. SEEMS ENTIRELY ILLOGICAL THAT CARS AND VANS CAN USE THIS STREET."

FR. BURKE PARK

39
PEOPLE SAID
THE PARK WAS
IMPORTANT TO
THEM

- "GREEN SPACES ARE VITAL IN ANY TOWN & CITY."

ERNIE'S SHOP

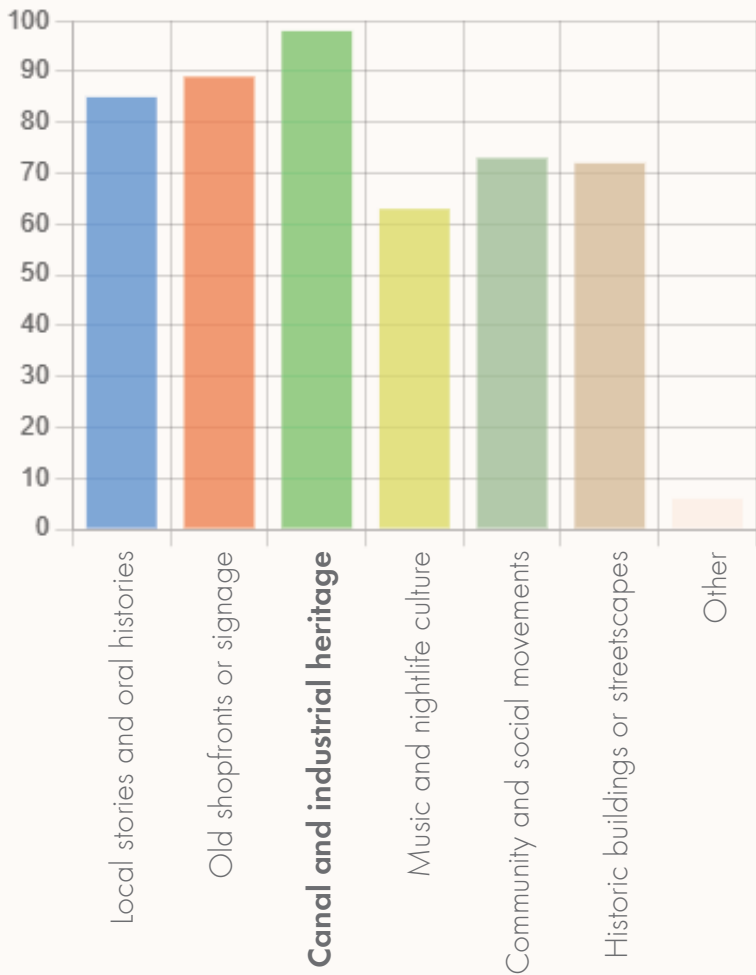
12

- "BEST SHOP IN TOWN."
- "STALWART STANDOUT, FRIENDLY - AND EXCELLENT PRODUCE."

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE WEST AREA’S HERITAGE OR HISTORY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CELEBRATED MORE?

The canal and industrial heritage of the West Area was the most popular response when asked what parts of West Area’s heritage should be celebrated more. Old shopfronts or signage was also a common answer, closely followed by celebrating local stories and oral histories - an often overlooked part of heritage.

The opposite page sets out the top responses when asked what aspects of West Area’s heritage or history should be celebrated more. The responses are varied, ranging from conserving the natural environment, to more Irish being spoken in shops and pubs (plámás is a tremendous new benefit to the community).



WHAT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE WEST AREA’S HERITAGE OR HISTORY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CELEBRATED MORE?



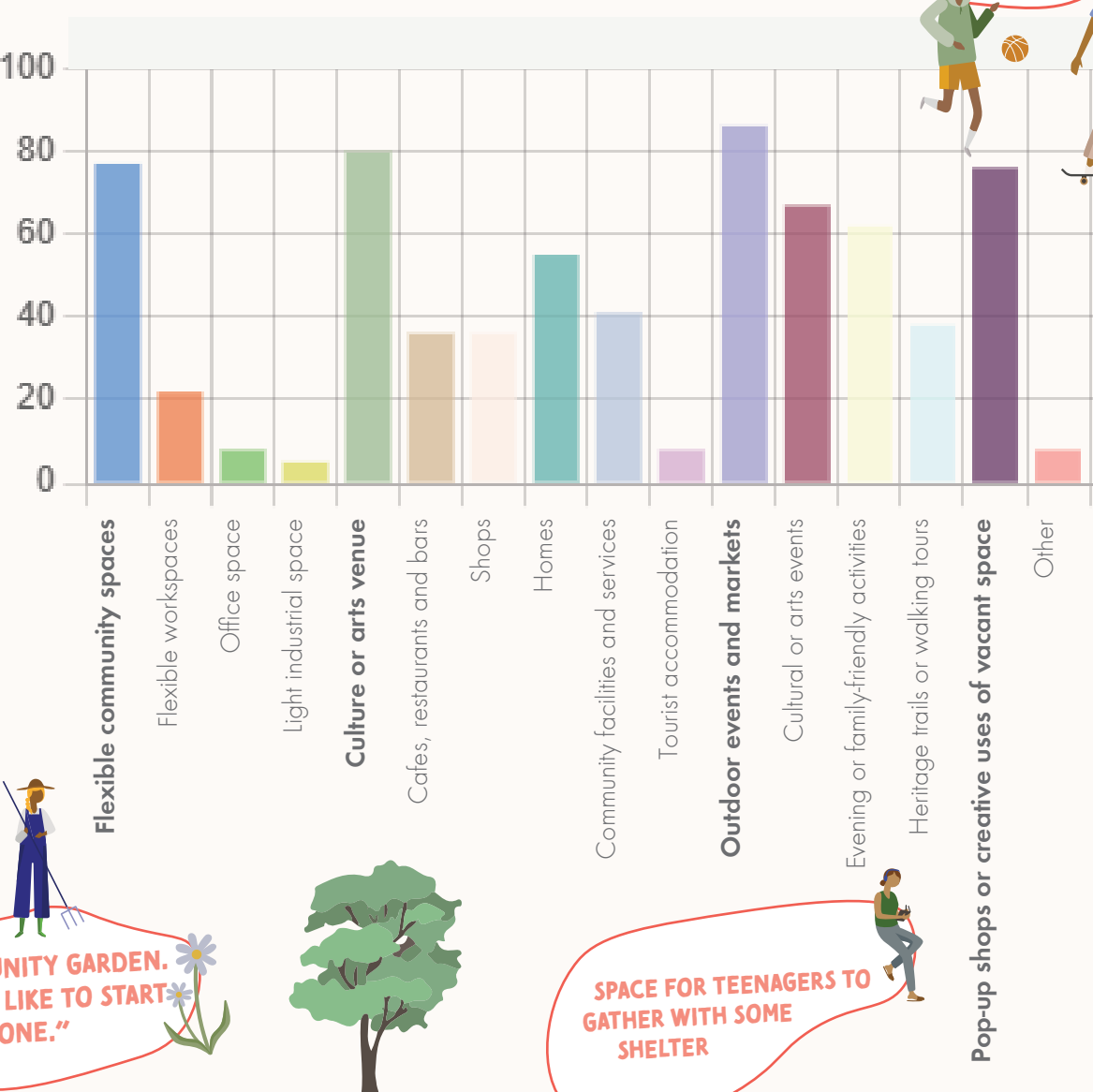
WHAT THREE WORDS COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF THE WEST AREA?

Respondents were asked to give three words to sum up the West Area. 'Community' was overwhelmingly the most frequent word given, shown by the word cloud below where the size of the word reflects the frequency of responses. 'Friendly' and 'local' were also popular answers tying in with the theme of community. The culture of the West Area is also regarded a distinctive part of its identity, which may contribute to its sense of vibrancy.



ARE THERE ANY ACTIVITIES OR USES YOU'D LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN THE WEST AREA?

There were a variety of responses when asked what activities or uses people would like to see more of in the West Area. The top four responses were for outdoor events and markets; culture or arts venues; flexible community spaces; and pop-up shops or creative uses of vacant space. Dedicated spaces for children and teenagers were specifically mentioned. Office and industrial space were less popular, along with more accommodation for tourists.



PROMOTION OF SPORT INSTEAD OF PARTYING



SPACE FOR TEENAGERS TO GATHER WITH SOME SHELTER

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE WEST AREA?

Community, distinct identity and a thriving cultural scene were frequently mentioned as key strengths of the West Area by respondents.

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PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THIS QUESTION

1. STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The most dominant theme is the deep sense of belonging, social connection, and mutual support in the area.

"IT'S A LIVING PART OF GALWAY... THE COMMUNITY ARE ITS LIFEBLOOD."

"THE PEOPLE, SENSE OF COMMUNITY. IT'S VIBRANT AND FULL OF CHARACTER."

"THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE – THE BUSINESSES SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND LOCALS ARE LOYAL."

"THE STRENGTHS ARE THE CREATIVITY, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE AREA."

2. AUTHENTICITY AND IDENTITY

Respondents frequently express pride in the area's unique, "real Galway" character, not yet overrun by tourism or commercialisation.

"COMMUNITY, AUTHENTICITY, VIBRANCY, EASY-GOING, HAS AN IDENTITY."

"KEEP IT AUTHENTICALLY GALWAY. SHUN CHAIN OUTLETS AND PROMOTE LOCALLY OWNED."

"IT STILL HAS THAT OLD GALWAY FEEL."

"THE CANAL AND WALKWAYS."

6. NATURAL FEATURES AND GREEN SPACES

The canals, river walks, and proximity to the sea are frequently mentioned as cherished aspects of the West Area.

"GOOD GREEN SPACES."

"FAMILY FRIENDLY, CONSERVATION OF NATURE AROUND THE CANAL AND RIVER."

3. CULTURE, CREATIVITY & THE ARTS

A thriving cultural and artistic scene, especially music and nightlife, is repeatedly highlighted.

"NIGHT LIFE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES."

"ARTS AND MUSIC, COMMUNITY SETTING."

7. HISTORIC CHARACTER AND BUILT HERITAGE

People appreciate the area's historic layout, architecture, and effort to preserve a traditional urban village feel.

"IT'S HISTORICAL HERITAGE, THE SMALL HOUSES AND LOCAL SHOPS."

"AN URBAN VILLAGE... OFTEN DISCOVERED LATE IN A TOURIST'S VISIT."

4. INDEPENDENT LOCAL BUSINESSES

People deeply value the presence of small, locally owned independent businesses, from shops and cafés to wellness services and artists' studios.

"IT'S AUTHENTIC WITH OWNER-OCCUPIED SHOPS."

"INDEPENDENT SHOPS, BARS, RESTAURANTS... OWNER-OWNED."

"PERFECT EXAMPLE OF MIXED-AGE COMMUNITIES CO-EXISTING BRILLIANTLY."

8. BALANCED, MIXED-USE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Many value the mix of residential and commercial spaces, and the area's diversity in terms of age, background, and business types.

"A GOOD MIX OF BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL AND TOURIST/VISITOR USES."

5. WALKABILITY AND LOCATION

Many celebrate the West Area's walkability, as well as its proximity to the city centre, sea and canal, and ease of getting around.

"SO WALKABLE, GREAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY, EVERYTHING ON YOUR DOORSTEP."

9. INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, AND ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

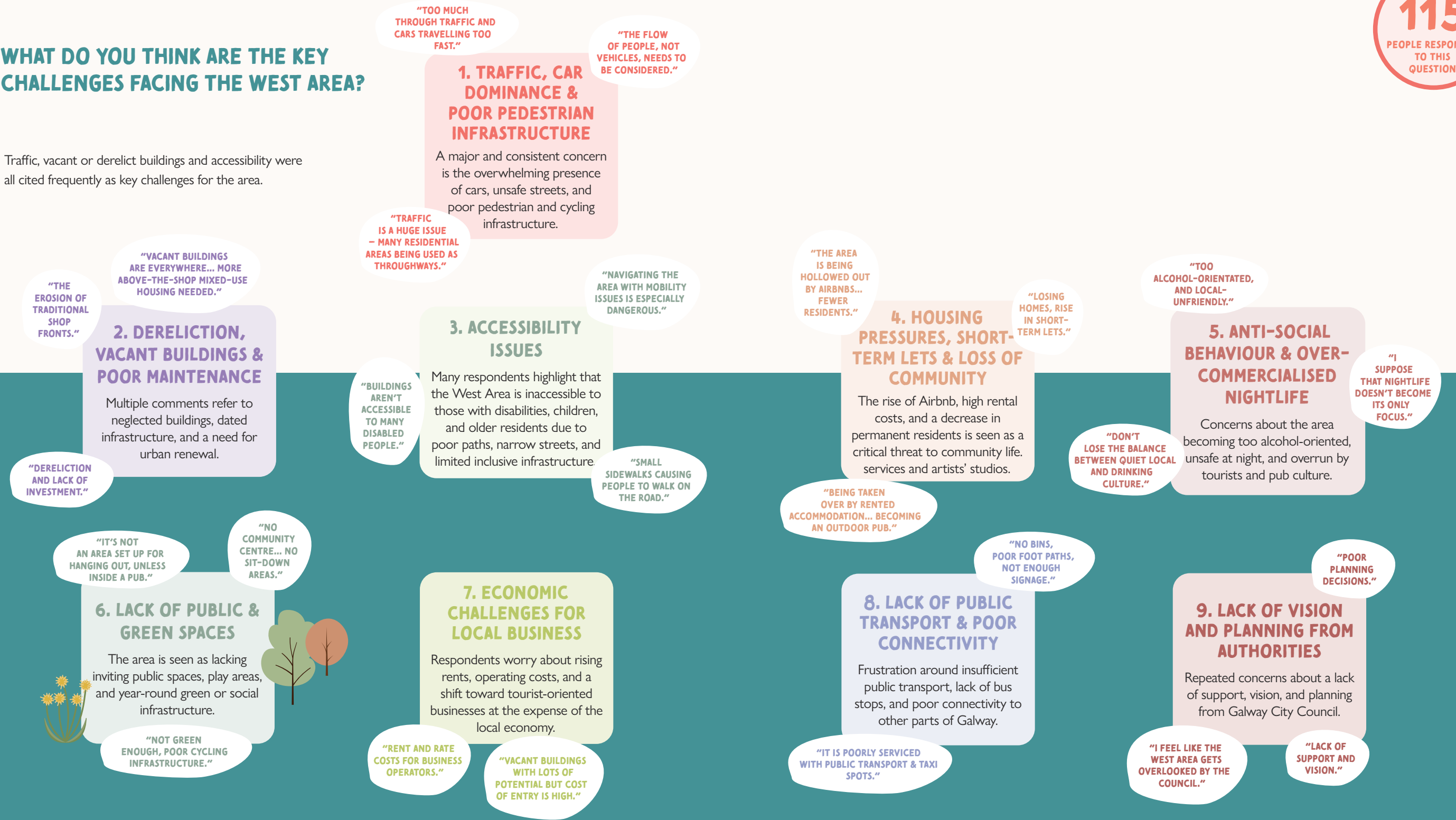
The West is seen as a place where different voices, cultures, and lifestyles are welcomed.

"YOUTHFUL, LEFTFIELD... COMMUNITY FEEL, OLD AREA OF THE CITY, NICE NEIGHBOURS."

"COMMUNITY, BELONGING, DIVERSITY AND ALTERNATIVE CULTURE."

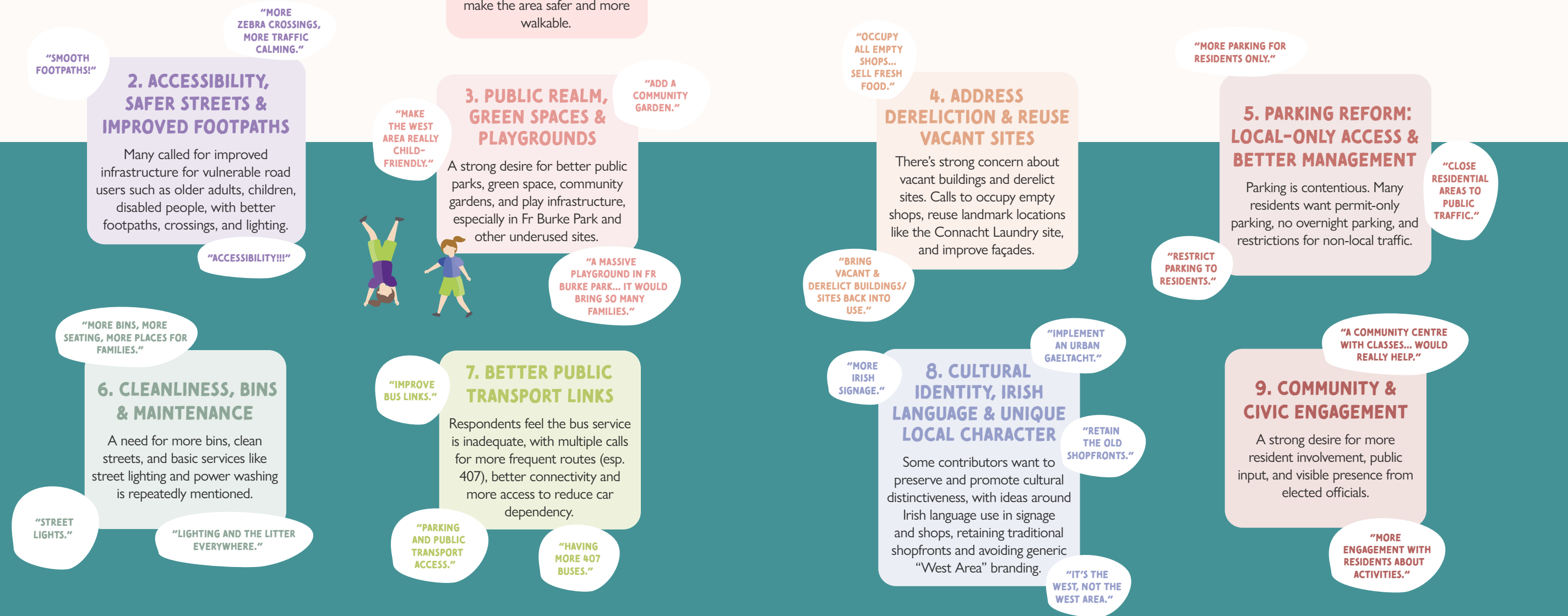
WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE WEST AREA?

Traffic, vacant or derelict buildings and accessibility were all cited frequently as key challenges for the area.



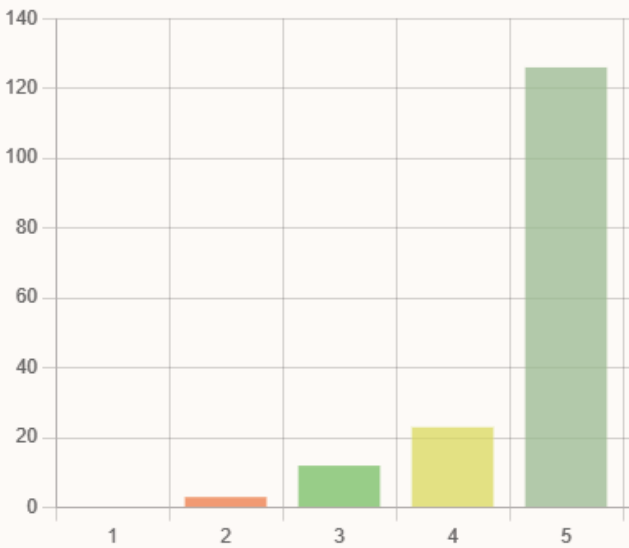
IF THERE WAS ONE THING YOU COULD CHANGE OR IMPROVE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Respondents are keen to see full-time pedestrianisation of key streets in the area, as well as improved accessibility for vulnerable road users and enhanced green spaces.

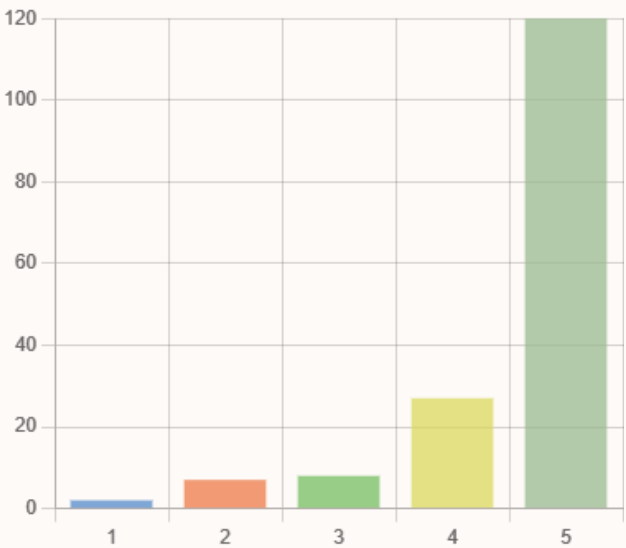


HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN THE WEST AREA AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF DAY?

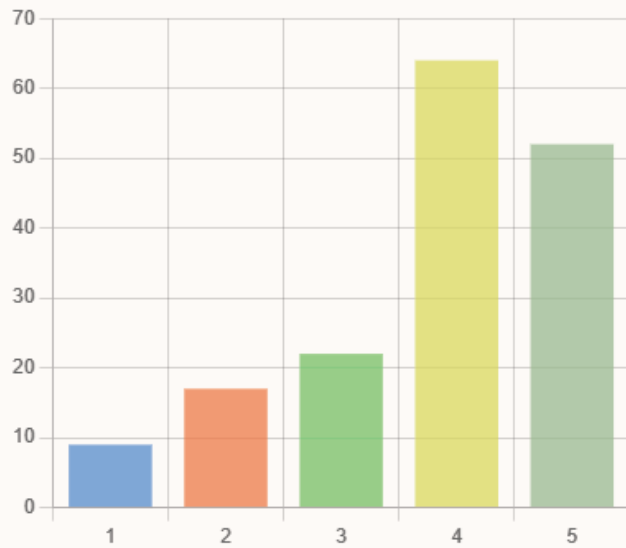
These graphs show how safe people feel at different times of day, from 1 being unsafe to 5 being very safe. Few respondents feel unsafe being in the West Area, even in the evening. The majority of respondents feel very safe during the day, but slightly less safe in the evening (4 out of 5).



Morning



Afternoon



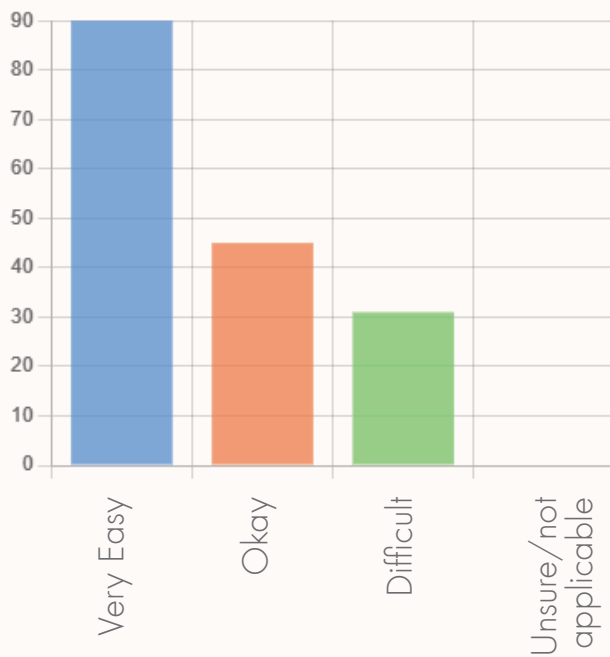
Evening

1 = unsafe and 5 = very safe

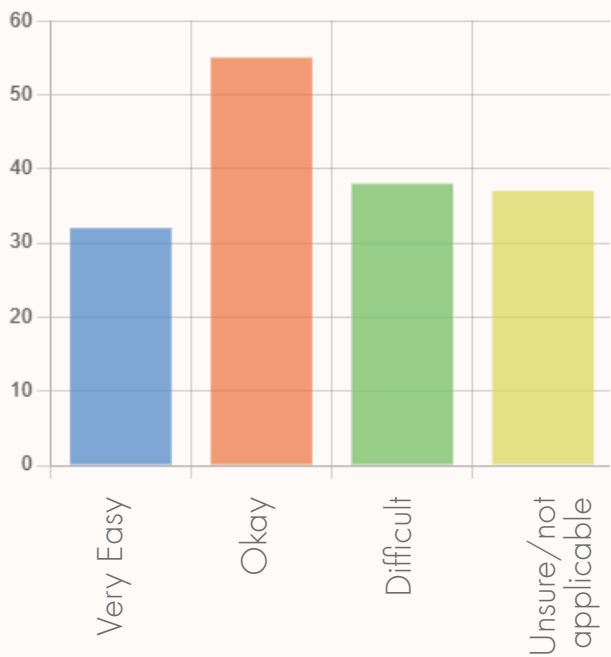


HOW EASY IS IT TO GET AROUND THE WEST AREA?

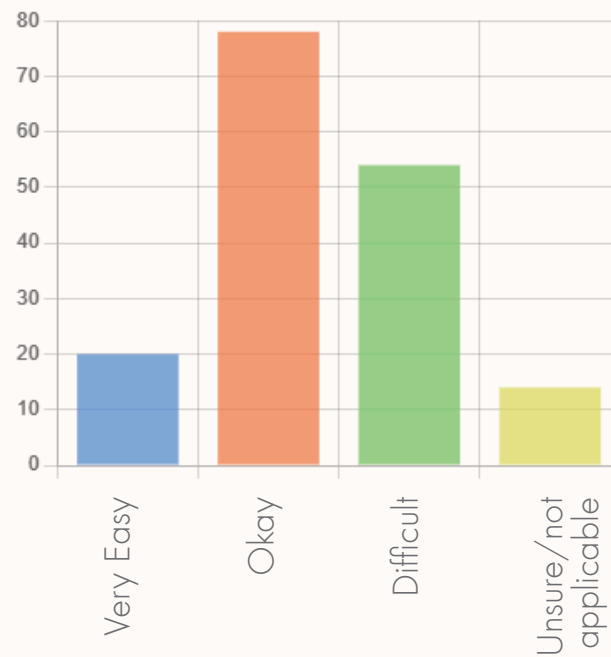
Regarding ease of movement, significant differences are apparent across transport modes. Walking is the easiest method, while public transport, encompassing both trains and buses, presents the greatest difficulty. For both cycling and car/taxi use, the most common response was 'okay'.



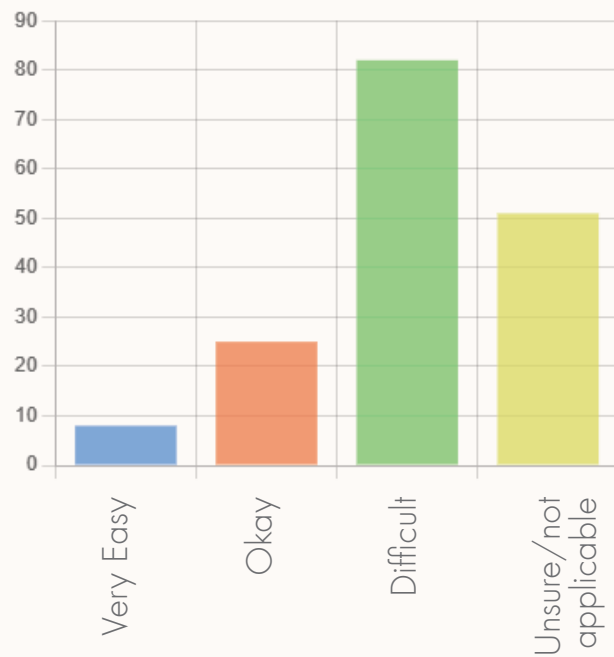
By foot



By bike



By car or taxi



By public transport

HOW SUITABLE FOR YOUR NEEDS ARE THE PAVEMENTS AND CROSSINGS?

Feedback on West Area's pavements and crossings revealed a mixed perception, with the most common rating being 'Average'. While responses were fairly distributed between 'Good' and 'Poor', only a small minority (five individuals) considered them 'Excellent'.



REPRESENTATION FROM STUDENTS FROM THE BLUE TEAPOT THEATRE COMPANY

“Your Dream Street”

First year, Second year and Third year students from the Blue Teapot Theatre Company, based on Munster Avenue, completed a worksheet prepared by the consultants entitled ‘Your Dream Street’. The worksheet invited ideas for the use of street space in West Area, which could be presented as drawings, doodles or words. The students responded by noting the following thoughts and ideas:

- Parking spaces
- Pedestrian crossings
- Traffic lights
- Bins
- Wheelchair
- Ramp
- Slopes
- Path poles or potholes

The students’ responses indicate a strong desire for a safer, more accessible environment for pedestrians and wheelchair users. It also indicates concern around vehicle movement, noting a need for ‘traffic lights’ and ‘path poles’ which is assumed to refer to bollards, and perhaps demonstrates concerns around safety.

Accessibility study

In addition to completing the worksheet, the students also helpfully produced an accessibility study of the streets around the Blue Teapot, including Dominick Street Upper, Munster Avenue, William Street West, Dominick Street Lower and the corner of Raven Terrace indicated by the ‘Centra’.



The study indicates the following:

- A desire for more pedestrian crossings, specifically located on Fairhill Road Lower from Centra to Monroe’s Tavern, at the northern end of Dominick Street Upper, on Munster Avenue, at the northern end of Dominick Street Lower and also across Mill Street.
- A desire for greater accessibility, particularly for wheelchair users, by widening footpaths and creating slopes or dropped kerbs.
- A desire to see traffic slowed, particularly around the junction of Dominick Street Upper, William Street West and Henry Street, and also at the junction of Dominick Street Lower, Mill Street, Nun’s Island and Bridge Street. Suggestions include traffic calming lights and also traffic lights at the southern end of Dominick Street Lower.
- A desire to see many more bins on the streets within the West Area, and also in Father Burke Park.
- A desire for more parking spaces next to the Blue Teapot Theatre.
- A possible desire for more greening and planting.

The accessibility study has been translated onto a plan of the area, as shown on the adjacent page. The ideas and thoughts shared with the team have helped to inform the emerging objectives, ideas and proposals within the strategy.



Fig 26 Map identifying proposals from an accessibility study carried out by students from the Blue Teapot Theatre Company

SUMMARY OF STAGE 2 ACTIVITIES

Shaping our understanding

Purpose of stage 2 engagement

The further test and review phase of engagement focussed on reviewing the draft vision, objectives, strategies and projects. This was a collaborative exercise, strengthening buy-in, and establishing a mandate for the Integrated Urban Strategy.

This stage has also been intended to assist the team in prioritising the project pipeline, and test any alternative options being considered. The intention of this stage is also to help to identify any “community champions” and potential local partners who might get involved in the ongoing development of key projects.

Market-stall drop-in event

@ Father Burke Park from 10am to 5pm on Saturday 13th September, as part of the Climate Carnival which formed part of a wider programme of events organised for the Galway Climate Inspirations Festival.

The team identified this event as a good opportunity for engaging with a wide variety of people in the local area. Father Burke Park is a key public space within the West Area, easily accessible from the neighbourhood and, with a festival taking place, likely to attract a number of people from the local area.

The team shared a pull-up banner with some key statistics from the first stage of engagement, alongside the emerging objectives which guide the Integrated Urban Strategy. The team also presented, on a large table banner, the spatial strategy which identifies the streets, spaces and buildings which have been identified as opportunities, as well as some illustrations providing a visual indication of how the ideas might look and feel once delivered.

A number of local residents and business owners visited the stall during the event, and provided feedback on the emerging vision, objectives and ideas. A summary of this feedback has been provided on the following page.

Further engagement

While it was positive that the team were able to test the emerging ideas with local people at a public event prior to the completion of the project, further public engagement would allow for more feedback and would allow local stakeholders to engage with Galway City Council about opportunities for future collaboration and partnership in delivering projects.



Fig 27 Poster promoting events at the Climate Carnival event in Father Burke Park, part of a wider programme of events for the Galway Climate Inspirations Festival.



Fig 28 Materials used in the Stage 2 engagement at the pop-up market stall in Father Burke Park, including a table banner presenting the spatial strategy and emerging ideas, and a pull-up banner presenting feedback from the Stage 1 engagement, and the draft set of objectives guiding the strategy.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM POP-UP EVENT

Collecting feedback on the emerging vision, goals and ideas for the West Area.



This page provides an analysis and summary of the main themes and topics raised in comments received during the pop-up event in Father Burke Park on Saturday 13th September from 10am - 5pm. Comments generally highlight a strong desire for pedestrianisation and sustainable mobility, alongside calls for improved public spaces, heritage recognition, and community identity. Respondents frequently referenced other successful projects in Ireland and abroad as inspiration, particularly around creating vibrant, car-free, and walkable environments. Safety, green infrastructure, and youth/community facilities also emerged as recurring themes, although less frequently.

1. PEDESTRIANISATION, CAR-FREE STREETS & TRANSPORT ALTERNATIVES (14)

Most comments call for removing cars from the West Area and prioritising pedestrians and cyclists. Ideas include permanent car-free zones (Dominick Street, Sea Road), trams, electric cars, and park-and-ride facilities to reduce city-centre traffic. Contributors also suggested the West Area could take a new approach to road hierarchy: pedestrians first, then cyclists, buses, and lastly cars. Strong support is expressed for year-round pedestrianisation.

2. WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE (10)

Improving the walking and cycling experience is a repeated theme. Footpaths are described as narrow and poor quality, making it difficult for people to walk together. Calls include wider pavements, safer crossings (notably at Raven's Terrace, Monroe's, and The Bierhaus), dedicated cycle lanes, stress-free cycling routes, and better signage. Cork's walkability was mentioned as a great example by comparison.

3. PUBLIC REALM, GREEN SPACES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS (9)

Several comments emphasise the lack of green spaces in the West Area relative to the east. Suggestions include planters (raised and downpipe-integrated), permeable pavements, edible plants, "pocket forests," pollinator-friendly planting, sensory gardens, and canopy covers for seasonal weather. There's also mention of the need for more benches, a desire for a cobblestone plaza at Monroe's junction, and tall lighting features to mark gateways into the area.

4. HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER (6)

Contributors want the strategy to reflect the West Area's history and community identity. Specific mentions include long-standing families, West United football, and places like Ernie's DCs. The area's bohemian character is celebrated, with proposals for street artists to create history-inspired works supported by interpretive boards. Key landmarks such as St Ignatius Church spire are seen as identity anchors. Calls are made for more storytelling, art, and celebration of local heritage.

5. COMMUNITY, YOUTH, AND CULTURAL FACILITIES (6)

There's enthusiasm for providing facilities that support young people and communal life: edible schoolyards, youth sports spaces (football, basketball, tennis, BMX pump track, pétanque), games (orienteering), and community book-share libraries. Several ideas aim to integrate education, culture, and shared spaces into the urban fabric.

6. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS ISSUES (4)

Some comments note problematic traffic flows, such as Munster Avenue's two-way traffic at school and funeral times, and the West Area feeling like a taxi rat run during street closures. Others mention that certain businesses require all-day vehicle access, highlighting a need to balance pedestrianisation with local economic activity.

7. BUSINESS ACTIVATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES (4)

A smaller number of comments suggest opportunities for local businesses: someone proposed a hot dog stand, others suggested enhancements and greening, retractable coverings to support year-round business, and another suggested ways in which laneways could be improved, inspired by Belfast Entries. Ideas tie business vibrancy to better public realm and cultural activity.



Fig 29 A visual representation of the themes raised during the Stage 2 engagement, with the size of the circles correlating with the number of comments raised in relation to each.

**D- VISION, OBJECTIVES
AND PROJECTS**

AN EMERGING STRATEGY – OVERVIEW

Introducing the vision, themes and projects

Part D of the report defines our vision, goals and objectives, and emerging project opportunities:

VISION

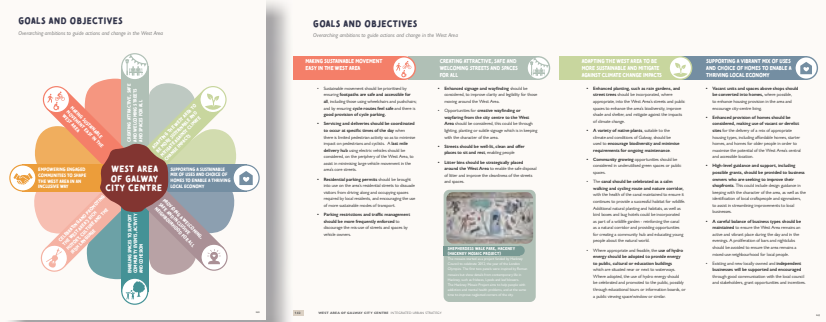
The IUS identifies a written vision statement for the West Area. This has been informed by the analysis of context, and engagement findings as set out in Parts B and C. It distills a strategic narrative for the West Area, focusing on key themes and outcomes.

The vision statement is accompanied by an illustrative sketch of the vision. This drawing highlights some of the key assets and characteristics which define the identity of the area, including the waterways, streets, spaces and activities. It also identifies some of the main project opportunities which are described in greater detail later in this section.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Building on the vision statement, the IUS also sets out eight goals and objectives. These define the overarching ambitions which will guide actions, change and transformation in the West Area.

The goals are illustrated graphically, and unpacked in more detailed objectives which provide clear principles for the management and improvement of the area.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Part D culminates in the identification of a range of key opportunities which establish the key moves, ideas and potential interventions which realise the vision, goals and objectives. The Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme supports locally developed plans that take an integrated and strategic approach to the regeneration of places.

The renovation, renewal, and adaptive reuse of vacant or derelict heritage buildings in supporting this regeneration is a key focus of the funding initiative, as well as projects which embed principles of the New European Bauhaus – beautiful, sustainable, inclusive.

The strategy sets out a range of key opportunities and ideas which have developed through an understanding of the West Area, through conversations with stakeholders, including the local residential and business community, and as outcomes from the vision, principles and objectives which were developed in response to feedback. The opportunities seek to embed the principles of the New European Bauhaus by incorporating and being led by the views and ideas of the local community, and with the overarching principles of being beautiful, sustainable and prioritising inclusivity.

The culmination of this strategy, and the projects within it, aims to support the West Area to be a viable, vibrant, and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit while also functioning as the business, service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

Each project opportunity includes an overview of project and implementation context in relation to a summary of the opportunity, key design considerations, next steps, potential partners, linked projects, and timescales. The implementation timescales are defined as short (0-2 years), medium (2 to 4 years) and long-term (5 years +).



THE VISION



Fig 30 Illustrative vision of the Galway West Area

A VISION FOR THE WEST AREA OF GALWAY CITY CENTRE

The West Area of Galway City Centre will continue to be a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable neighbourhood rooted in community, local identity, and culture. Its historic character, features, and spaces will be respected and celebrated. Stories will be shared, and pride strengthened by enhancing what the community values most.

Movement through the area will prioritise people, ensuring footpaths are safe and accessible for all, cycle routes are secure and convenient, and signage is clear. Traffic management will prioritise local residents and protect public space, reducing congestion and enhancing quality of life for both residents and visitors.

Public spaces will be enhanced to foster community vitality, creativity, and biodiversity. Streets will be clean, well-lit, and offer places to pause, play, and connect. Strategic planting and native species will green the streets, mitigate the effects of climate change, and enhance ecological value. The canals and waterways will be protected and celebrated as important historic and natural assets, a peaceful walking route and a vital corridor for nature and wildlife.

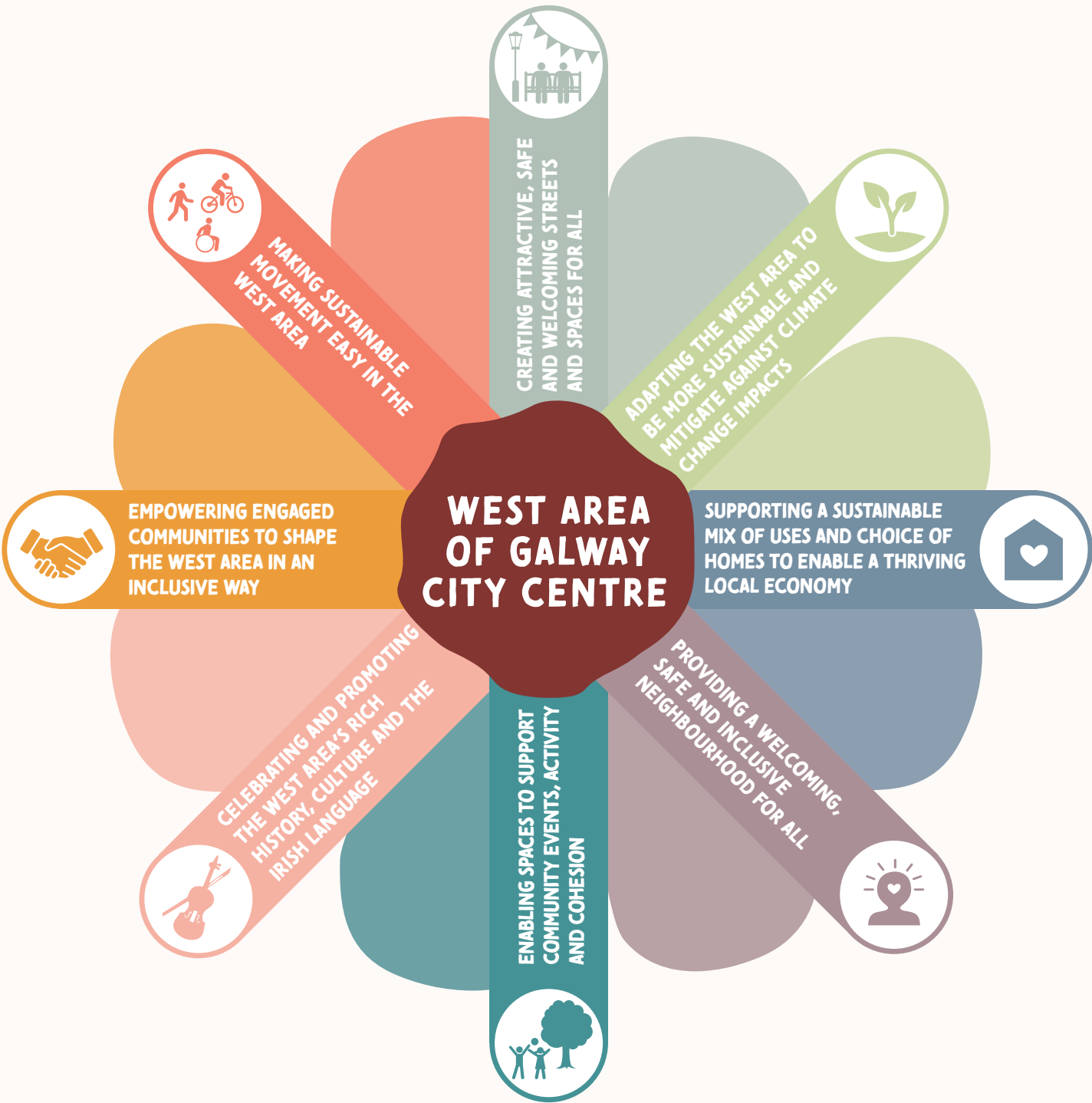
Local, independent businesses will be supported through thoughtful planning, improved shopfronts, and a carefully balanced mix of day and evening uses. Cultural life will flourish through the creation and enhancement of spaces for events, activities, and celebrations of the Irish language and heritage.

A diverse mix of homes, including affordable housing, will be delivered through the reuse of vacant buildings and underused sites, promoting vibrant city-centre living. New and improved playspaces, shelters, seating, and public facilities will ensure people of all ages and backgrounds feel welcome and included.

The West Area’s future will be shaped with the community through transparent and inclusive processes, empowering residents, businesses, and stakeholders to create a neighbourhood that is active, resilient, and unmistakably of the West Area.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Overarching ambitions to guide actions and change in the West Area



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Overarching ambitions to guide actions and change in the West Area

MAKING SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT EASY IN THE WEST AREA



- Sustainable movement should be prioritised by ensuring **footpaths are safe and accessible for all**, including those using wheelchairs and pushchairs; and by ensuring **cycle routes feel safe** and there is **good provision of cycle parking**.
- **Servicing and deliveries should be coordinated to occur at specific times of the day** when there is limited pedestrian activity so as to minimise impact on pedestrians and cyclists. A **last mile delivery hub** using electric vehicles should be considered, on the periphery of the West Area, to assist in minimising large vehicle movement in the area's core streets.
- **Residential parking permits** should be brought into use on the area's residential streets to dissuade visitors from driving along and occupying spaces required by local residents, and encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport.
- **Parking restrictions and traffic management should be more frequently enforced** to discourage the mis-use of streets and spaces by vehicle owners.

CREATING ATTRACTIVE, SAFE AND WELCOMING STREETS AND SPACES FOR ALL



- **Enhanced signage and wayfinding** should be considered, to improve clarity and legibility for those moving around the West Area.
- Opportunities for **creative wayfinding or wayfaring from the city centre to the West Area** should be considered, this could be through lighting, planting or subtle signage which is in keeping with the character of the area.
- **Streets should be well-lit, clean and offer places to sit and rest**, enabling people
- **Litter bins should be strategically placed around the West Area** to enable the safe disposal of litter and improve the cleanliness of the streets and spaces.



SHEPHERDESS WALK PARK, HACKNEY (HACKNEY MOSAIC PROJECT)

The mosaics started as a project funded by Hackney Council to celebrate 2012, the year of the London Olympics. The first two panels were inspired by Roman mosaics but show details from contemporary life in Hackney, such as frisbees, I-pods and leaf blowers. The Hackney Mosaic Project aims to help people with addiction and mental health problems, and at the same time to improve neglected corners of the city.

ADAPTING THE WEST AREA TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE AND MITIGATE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS



- **Enhanced planting, such as rain gardens, and street trees** should be incorporated, where appropriate, into the West Area's streets and public spaces to enhance the area's biodiversity, improve shade and shelter, and mitigate against the impacts of climate change.
- **A variety of native plants**, suitable to the climate and conditions of Galway, should be used to **encourage biodiversity and minimise requirements for ongoing maintenance**.
- **Community growing** opportunities should be considered in underutilised green spaces or public spaces.
- The **canal should be celebrated as a calm walking and cycling route and nature corridor**, with the health of the canal maintained to ensure it continues to provide a successful habitat for wildlife. Additional natural planting and habitats, as well as bird boxes and bug hotels could be incorporated as part of a wildlife garden - reinforcing the canal as a natural corridor and providing opportunities for creating a community hub and educating young people about the natural world.
- Where appropriate and feasible, the **use of hydro energy should be adopted to provide energy to public, cultural or education buildings** which are situated near or next to waterways. Where adopted, the use of hydro energy should be celebrated and promoted to the public, possibly through educational tours or information boards, or a public viewing space/window or similar.

SUPPORTING A VIBRANT MIX OF USES AND CHOICE OF HOMES TO ENABLE A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY



- **Vacant units and spaces above shops should be converted into homes**, where possible, to enhance housing provision in the area and encourage city-centre living.
- **Enhanced provision of homes should be considered, making use of vacant or derelict sites** for the delivery of a mix of appropriate housing types, including affordable homes, starter homes, and homes for older people in order to maximise the potential of the West Area's central and accessible location.
- **High-level guidance and support, including possible grants, should be provided to business owners who are seeking to improve their shopfronts**. This could include design guidance in keeping with the character of the area, as well as the identification of local craftspeople and signmakers, to assist in streamlining improvements to local businesses.
- **A careful balance of business types should be maintained** to ensure the West Area remains an active and vibrant place during the day and in the evenings. A proliferation of bars and nightclubs should be avoided to ensure the area remains a mixed-use neighbourhood for local people.
- Existing and new locally owned and **independent businesses will be supported and encouraged** through good communication with the local council and stakeholders, grant opportunities and incentives.

PROVIDING A WELCOMING, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD FOR ALL



- The West Area should provide a **safe, comfortable and engaging environment for people of all ages**, genders, abilities and backgrounds.
- **Playspaces should be attractive, well-designed and incorporate more nature-based play elements**, using natural materials and incorporating planting and trees to offer opportunities for shade, cooling and shelter. Shelter should also be incorporated to enable year-round play and use.
- **Sheltered spaces for young people and teenagers should be incorporated into public spaces** to enable them to spend time outdoors all year round. Consideration should be given to passive surveillance to enhance feelings of safety, with particular consideration given to the design of safe spaces for girls and young women.
- The incorporation of **public toilets** should be considered in Father Burke Park, to improve provision in the area, and make it more inclusive for families and older people.

ENABLING SPACES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY EVENTS, ACTIVITY AND COHESION



- **Key public spaces, such as Small Crane and Raven Terrace, should be enhanced and improved** to enable the local community to gather and spend time, undertake events and activities, or simply to sit and spend time.
- **Father Burke Park should be enhanced to allow for more intensive use by the community**, such as the incorporation of integrated natural-play, seating, picnic benches and opportunities for community growing, while still maintaining open space to retain flexibility of use and allow for a more extensive programme of events and activities.
- **Underutilised or vacant buildings and spaces should be considered for meanwhile uses as community and cultural event spaces, venues or artist studios.** The council should work with building owners to help improve or secure spaces to enable them to be used by the community.



A GROWING STORY, BELFAST (BRINK!)

Creative, collaborative, and climate breakdown-focussed platform 'Brink!' partnered with 'Grow' and 'quarto' to bring people from the local community together through the meanwhile use of a vacant and derelict city centre site in Belfast. Using a range of methods - growing, playing, experimenting and educating - they explored the varied heritages of growing and eating food and other plants through an entire growing season.

CELEBRATING AND PROMOTING THE WEST AREA'S RICH HISTORY, CULTURE AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE



- **Protected structures and heritage assets should be preserved, protected and celebrated**, this could include signage, interpretation and a heritage trail.
- The West Area should become a **focus of events and festivals relating to the Irish language, arts and culture.**
- **Traditional or local materials should be considered in any enhancements to public spaces** to ensure they are in-keeping with the character and identity of the West Area.
- **The arts, music and culture should be supported** in the West Area through the **regular programming of events and festivals** on its principal streets and key public spaces.
- **All signage, including shop signage, and wayfinding in the West Area should be in Irish and English.**
- **Traditional activities and crafts should be encouraged and supported**, with the use of public spaces and vacant retail units offered at peppercorn rates to those seeking to promote the Irish language and cultural activities.
- **Local artists, designers and makers should be engaged and/or appointed to assist in the development of public art or creative wayfinding**, as part of a wider strategy.
- **An Oral Histories project** should be undertaken which captures the stories and memories of the West Area's long-standing families, residents and business community. The project could seek to celebrate the unique community and way people in the West Area live. This could include a portrait photography project which could be exhibited in vacant shopfronts.

EMPOWERING ENGAGED COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE THE WEST AREA IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY



- **Local community groups, stakeholders and the council should work in partnership to shape the West Area** and deliver positive change for the local residential and business community.
- **Local community groups, businesses and stakeholders should feel empowered and supported to deliver positive change** for the local residential and business community.



STORIES OF ALDGATE EXHIBITION (LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS)

Showcasing and celebrating the rich history, diverse community, and vibrant culture of Aldgate, the public outdoor exhibition brings to life the voices of local residents, workers, students, businesses, and historic figures through a curated collection of photographs, personal stories, artworks, and interactive displays. It highlights Aldgate's evolution from a historic gateway in the City of London to a thriving modern neighbourhood, known for its multicultural spirit and creative energy. Visitors can scan QR codes under each storyteller to hear their stories.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Key moves, ideas and interventions which exemplify the vision and objectives

The strategy set out on the adjacent page identifies arrange of key opportunities and ideas which have developed through an understanding of the West Area, through conversations with stakeholders, including the local residential and business community, and as outcomes from the vision, principles and objectives which were developed in response to feedback.

These projects are described in greater detail on the following pages.

SITES (A)

A1

Connacht Laundry Site

A2

Mill Street Car Park

REFURBISHED / REPURPOSED BUILDINGS (B)

B1

Former Garage Site, Fairhill Rd Lower

B2

Nimmo's Tourist Hostel, Dominick St Upper

B3

Silke's Cash and Carry, William St West

B4

45 + 47 Dominick Street Lower ★

B5

Vacant units, Munster Avenue

B6

34 + 26 Nun's Island

PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENT (C)

C1

Father Burke Park

C2

Raven Terrace

C3

Small Crane

★

Priority project

KEY STREET/ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (D)

D1

Dominick Street Lower and Upper

D2

Munster Avenue and Father Burke Road

Improved connection between public spaces

Possible connection

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS (E)

E1

Pump Lane

MICROSPACES (F)

F1

Henry Street Playground

F2

Parkavara green space

F3

Lockside green space

F4

Madeira Island

F5

St John's Place

OTHER PROJECTS / STRATEGIES

Heritage Trail

Opportunity for sculpture

Gateway/threshold wayfinding

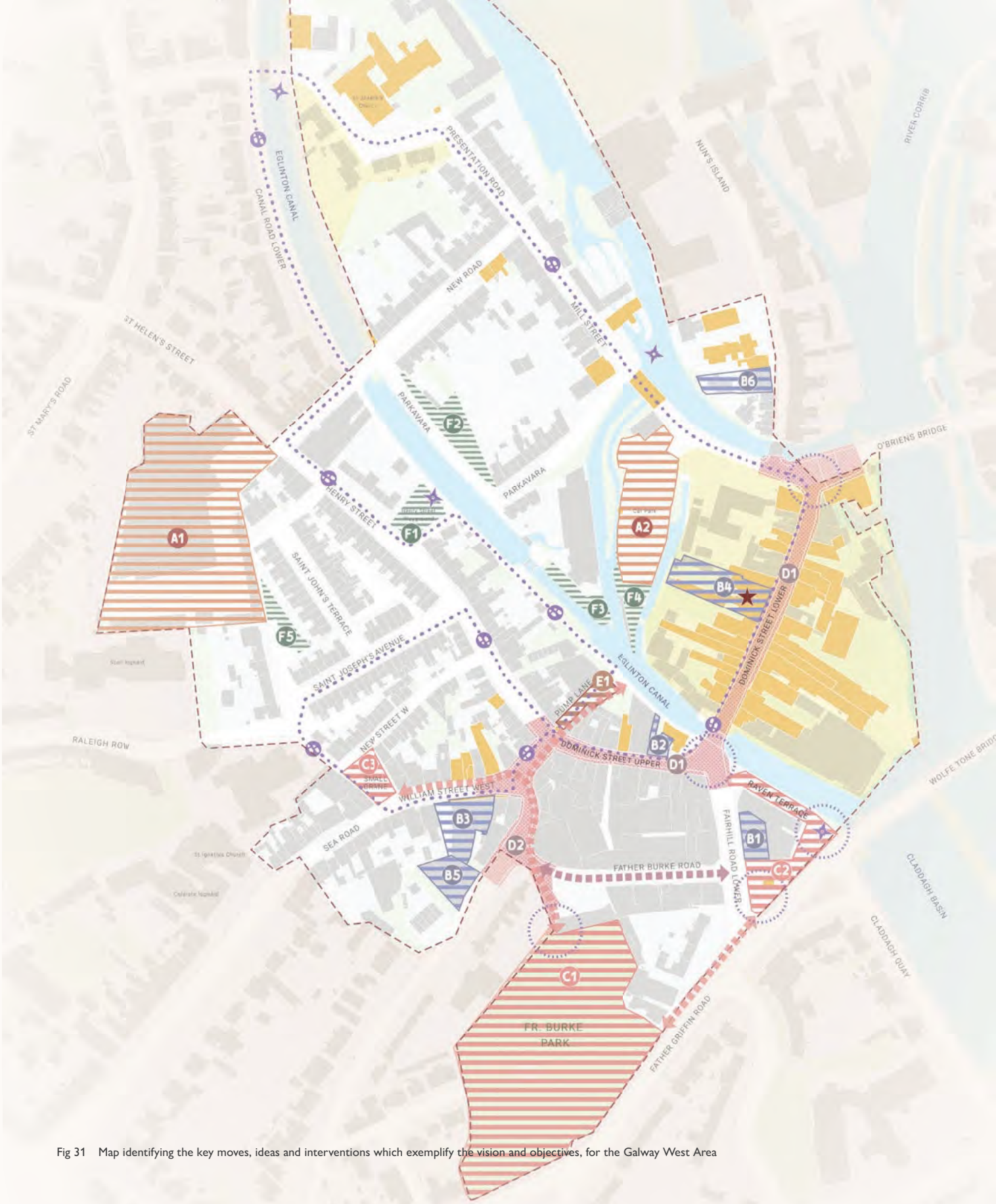


Fig 31 Map identifying the key moves, ideas and interventions which exemplify the vision and objectives, for the Galway West Area

Bringing vacant or underused sites back into use with opportunities for infill development

A1 Connaught Laundry Site

Context:

The Connacht Laundry was once a significant employer in the West Area. The 0.87 hectare site was occupied by a large industrial facility with offices. The site is now vacant, with only the skeleton structure of a warehouse remaining. The former Laundry’s tall chimney, once a defining feature in the area, collapsed during a storm in 2020. The site is an unusual shape, occupying a large plot of land to the rear of properties on St Mary’s Road, with access from St Helen’s Street. The site can also be accessed from St John’s Place, a narrow residential laneway. It sits within a primarily residential area of two storey detached and terraced homes, with a school bounding the site at its southern end. Planning permission for a hotel has previously been consented, but lapsed in 2019. The site is currently in private ownership and has been vacant since demolition of the derelict laundry buildings in 2020.

Opportunity:

The site presents a significant opportunity for the West Area, and is identified as a regeneration and opportunity site in the Galway City Development Plan (2023 - 2029). Bringing a long-vacant site back into use could have a transformational impact on the West Area.

Design considerations:

Future development should seek to knit the currently inaccessible site back into the existing urban fabric and streets, creating consistent frontages along existing streets, while creating new streets to enhance permeability and accessibility. The Galway Development Plan (2023-2029) states that “the Council will consider residential development on the full extent of the site alongside appropriate public realm and community facilities.” (p. 267).

Next steps:

Discussions with the landowner to ascertain current aspirations for the site, and openness to exploring redevelopment opportunities.

Possible partners:

Land owner, GCC, LDA

Linked projects:

F5 - St John’s Place microspace.

Timescale:

Medium - Long term



A2 Mill Street Car Park

Context:

Mill Street Car Park currently operates as a council-run pay and display public car park, and overflow car park for the adjacent Garda Station. The car park, formerly called ‘Madeira Island’, is surrounded by waterways on three sides, with vehicle and pedestrian access from Mill Street to the north. A bridge at the southern end of the site provides pedestrian access to Dominick Street Lower through a covered laneway providing access to homes. The site was once densely populated by Mills and Brewery buildings, but retained dense greenery and trees along the waterways at the south of the site.

Opportunity

There is a potential opportunity for mixed-use development on this site at some point in the future, with some element of car parking retained in the overall approach.

Design considerations:

Given the site’s central location and history of large industrial Mill and Brewery buildings, higher density development should be considered to maximise this sustainable location and pay homage to the site’s former use. Flooding challenges will need to be considered in the design approach, with parking retained at ground level to minimise impact. Designs should seek to respond to the natural character and waterways which are a key feature of the site,



with due consideration to, and assessment of, any environmental impacts.

Next steps:

A feasibility study for the site, and discussions with stakeholders to understand views, gain feedback and identify any specific requirements.

Possible partners:

GCC, LDA

Linked projects:

F4 - Madeira Island microspace

B4 - 45 + 47 Dominick Street Lower refurbishment

Timescale:

Long term



REFURBISHMENT & REPURPOSING OF EXISTING STRUCTURES

Bringing vacant and derelict buildings back into use to the benefit of the West Area.

B1 Former Garage Site, Fairhill Rd Lower

Context:

This one story former garage building holds a prominent site on the southern gateway to the West Area. The white painted pebble-dash building has been vacant for many years and has an old hand-painted sign which reads ‘Galway School of Motoring’. It has four disused and dilapidated petrol pumps outside its western facade, occupying the footpath along Fairhill Hill Road Lower, impacting accessibility for pedestrians and those using wheelchairs or buggies. The existing building does little to engage with the public realm, particularly along its southern facade which fronts onto Raven Terrace and is a prominent facade viewed on the approach into the area from Father Griffin Road.

Opportunity:

The site is identified for ‘city centre use’ in the Galway City Development plan, indicating opportunities for retail, residential or office space. The redevelopment of this site, in tandem with a range of public realm enhancements on Raven Terrace, could offer transformational benefits to the West Area. As a key gateway to the area, creating a more attractive and welcoming building and public realm would help to improve perceptions and enhance the area as a significant public space. Depending on the current condition of the building

and its interior, opportunities for meanwhile uses could be considered for the site in the short term, including as an events or rehearsal space, or artists’ studios.

Design considerations:

The site should create a more engaging or active frontage, particularly on Raven Terrace. Building design should be considered in tandem with public realm improvements. Significant remedial works and decontamination of the site are likely, given the site’s former industrial use.

Next steps:

Discussions with the building owner to ascertain current aspirations for the site, and openness to exploring redevelopment opportunities.

Possible partners:

Landowner, GCC, Cultural venues

Linked projects:

C2 Raven Terrace Public Realm improvements.

Timescale:

Redevelopment: Medium - Long term

Meanwhile use: Short term



B2 Nimmo’s Tourist Hostel, Dominick St Upper

Context:

Dominick Street Upper is a principal commercial street in the West Area, known for its successful nightlife, shops and restaurants. Nimmo’s is a prominent 4 storey building at the eastern end of Dominick Street Upper. Two vacant retail units at ground level, with hostel accommodation on the floors above. The ground floor retail units have been vacant for many years, though have potentially attractive traditional shopfronts. It is thought the upper floors are also vacant, though may be used as rental accommodation.

Opportunity:

The site is identified for ‘city centre use’ in the Galway City Development plan, indicating opportunities for retail, residential or office space. The reuse, refurbishment, and repurposing of this building offers significant benefits for the West Area. At present, the inactive ground floor at this key threshold to Dominick Street Upper, results in a loss of momentum and energy in the transition from Raven Terrace and Dominick Street Lower. The ground floor retail units should be brought back into commercial use as soon as possible. Consideration should also be given to the opportunity of bringing the upper floors back into use as homes or tourist accommodation. Meanwhile uses could be considered for the ground floor units in the short term to bring these back into active use. The current hoarding showing a map of Galway’s

West Area and its businesses offers a fun and engaging temporary solution to mitigating the negative visual impact of the building’s vacant units.

Design considerations:

Any refurbishment of this building and its retail units should consider the special character and quality of Dominick Street Lower and the wider West Area, where possible, retaining historic details of the former shopfronts.

Next steps:

Discussions with the building owner to ascertain current aspirations for the site, and openness to exploring short-term meanwhile use opportunities, and longer term refurbishment and repurposing opportunities.

Possible partners:

Landowner, GCC, local independent retailers.

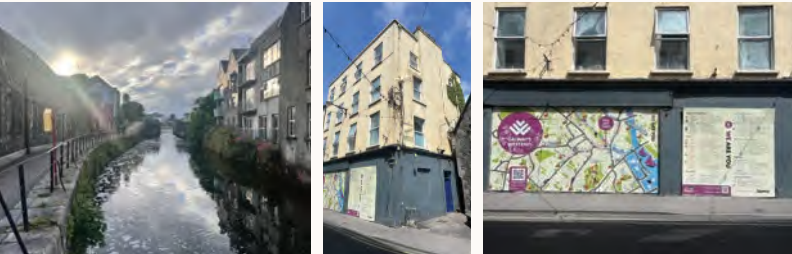
Linked projects:

D1 Pedestrian priority public realm improvements on Dominick Street Upper.

Timescale:

Refurbishment and reuse: Medium - Long term

Meanwhile use: Short term



B3 Silke's Cash and Carry, William St West

Context:

Silke's Cash and Carry is a well-known building locally with a strong presence in the William Street West townscape.

Opportunity:

An opportunity exists to support the future role of this important building, supporting the existing business operation, and considering alternative occasional uses, or longer-term options.

Design considerations:

Any interventions should retain the recognisable façade, enhancing the identity of the building and strengthening its presence on the street. Various options could be considered for the future of the building – it would be positive for the existing business to continue in the building, alongside potential opportunities for flexible alternative uses which contribute to the overall cultural vitality of the area. For example, it might be possible to incorporate occasional / flexible spaces for events. The vacant yard space to the side of the existing building might also offer an opportunity in tandem with the renewal of the building. Options might also exist for internal works or sensitive new build extensions / adaptations to re-configure the internal volumes, and secure enhancements including accessibility.



Next steps:

Work with existing occupant / landowner to explore future plans for the building in the short, medium and longer timescales.

Possible partners:

Silke's, Galway City Council

Linked projects:

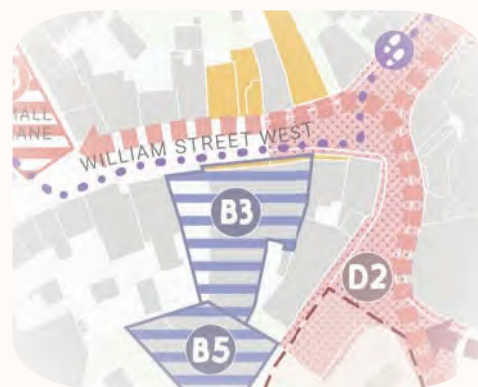
B5 - Vacant units, Munster Avenue

D2 - Munster Avenue

Timescale:

Short-term: Liaison with existing business and landowner, consider feasibility studies and potential delivery / planning routes, potential for temporary uses and events etc.

Medium-term: Consider longer-term options for the building and delivery routes with existing business and landowner.



B4 47 Dominick Street Lower

Context:

47 Dominick Street Lower is a protected structure and is owned by Galway City Council. It forms the centre of a short terrace of three townhouses (45 to 49) constructed together that are one of the earliest examples of Georgian architecture in the city. 47 became a technical school, and offices for the borough council. Áras na nGael, a cultural centre for the promotion of the Irish language has been based in 45 since 1938. Since 1988 when the borough offices were relocated, 47 has been the home of the Galway Arts Centre, including offices and spaces for the display of the visual arts.

Opportunity:

Situated at the heart of the Lower Dominick street ACA, there is a major opportunity to prioritise the sensitive repair of the building and explore future potential use of the pair of townhouses.

Design considerations:

It is vital to consider both 45 and 47 as a conjoined pair – reflecting their shared identity and interlocking form. 7L Architects has prepared a Conservation Management Plan for 47 Dominick Street in parallel with the development of the IUS. The CMP provides a comprehensive analysis of the building and clearly documents the interventions required to protect



and enhance the historic fabric and character of the building. This work has established a high-level understanding of the likely conditions in 45, but further work will be required to understand it in further detail. The key conservation priorities including building services, public safety, access and fire protection measures should be prioritised. A range of options could be explored for cultural / community-focused activities. Opportunities for the courtyard between the two buildings should be considered alongside the relationship with the waterway.

Next steps:

Further research and surveys for 45 Dominick Street. Liaison with existing occupants and landowners to explore current and future opportunities. Feasibility studies to develop potential options for restoration, re-use and programming. Consideration of funding opportunities and delivery routes.

Possible partners:

Áras na nGael, Galway Arts Centre, Galway City Council, Other cultural partners

Linked projects:

D1 Dominick Street

Timescale:

Short-term: Further research into 45, stakeholder liaison, feasibility and delivery study

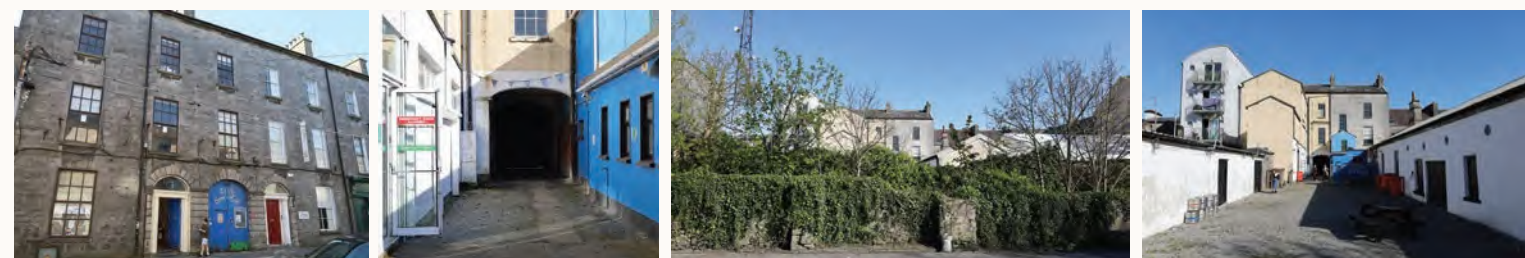




Fig 34 Conservation Management Plan for 47 Dominick Street Lower and photographs from the CMP report illustrating the historic context and existing condition of the building

Priority Project:

45 and 47 Dominick Street Lower has been identified as the emerging priority project for the West Area, presenting a key opportunity to realise the vision and objectives in the IUS. The project would present an opportunity to be an exemplar of conservation best practice, both in relation to historic fabric and the display of contemporary art in a historic setting.

In addition to the restoration of these fine early examples of Georgian architecture in the city, the proposals would also enable the improvement and transformation of the existing programme of cultural and community activities, focused on Galway Arts Centre, and Áras na nGael.

In addition, the project would also be instrumental in strengthening the connection from Dominick Street Lower to the mill race at the rear of the building, creating a new sequence of spaces which celebrate the assets of the West Area including:

- **The Street:** A stronger, more accessible and welcoming presence to Dominick Street Lower.
- **Arts Lane:** Creating a new shared route between 47 and 45 as a focus of this revitalised cultural destination.
- **Courtyard:** Flexible space for events and relaxation with views of the restored building and mill race.
- **Nature:** Potential bridge across the mill race to the Mill Street car park site to enjoy the tranquil garden at the confluence of the mill race and canal.



Fig 32 Emerging sketch concept for 45 and 47 Dominick Street Lower - this roof plan illustrates some of the potential interventions for the buildings, working with Galway Arts Centre and Áras na nGael to create an improved, more flexible cultural destination for the city. Proposals would incorporate the restoration and improvement of accessibility, environmental performance and historic identity of the building. Creation of a new lane and covered courtyard to rejuvenate the buildings as a unified set of spaces. Potential to add a bridge connection over the mill race to strengthen the relationship between Dominick Street Lower, the historic waterways and Mill Street.



Fig 33 Sketch visualisations of the potential improvements to 45 and 47. Clockwise from top left: Restoration and sensitive enhancement of the entrance to the building to create a stronger presence on Dominick Street Lower at the heart of the ACA. Top right: View down the new arts lane which unifies the two buildings, looking to the West Area beyond across the mill race. Bottom right: Courtyard space for events and activities, looking back towards the rear of the existing buildings. Potential to cover the space with a retractable awning.



B5 Vacant units, Munster Avenue

Context:

A sequence of under-used / vacant buildings including low-rise garage uses adjacent to the Blue Teapot theatre on Munster Avenue.

Opportunity:

Opportunity to consider the future potential to identify the potential for infill development of this area. Careful consideration of planning policy status will be required with supporting assessments as needed..

Design considerations:

The site occupies a transition zone between the more urban character of the Dominick Street area, and the more suburban residential streets between the West Area and Salthill. Any future development would need to navigate this shift in scale and character with care, and consider appropriate uses in planning terms. The relationship with adjacent buildings including Blue Tea Pot theatre and Silke's Cash and Carry is important. Similarly, any interventions should consider the relationship with Munster Avenue and the immediate street frontage to support the transformation of this area as a more integrated space which links into the sequence of routes and spaces in this corner of the West Area.

Next steps:

Explore aspirations for sites, design options and planning

status / delivery routes.

Possible partners:

Existing owners, Galway CC, The Blue Teapot Theatre Company

Linked projects:

D2 - Munster Avenue, B3 - Silke's Cash and Carry

Timescale:

Short-term: Liaise with landowners to consider current and future opportunities for the site. Feasibility study to explore potential design options and reflect on potential planning and delivery routes.



B6 34 + 26 Nun's Island

Context:

Nun's Island is a historically and culturally significant area within the city. More tranquil than neighbouring streets and districts such as Dominick Street and the main city centre, it has an attractive mix of residential, religious, commercial and cultural buildings which retain a charming sense of historic identity. Galway City Council is progressing plans to renovate and extend Nun's Island theatre and Church House to reinvigorate the historic theatre and create a new multi-purpose creative hub. This project has been enabled by a range of funding programmes including an earlier round of THRIVE grants. It will play a key role in transforming Nun's Island as a vibrant local destination for arts and culture. 34 / 26 Nun's Island is a vacant property which appears, from external inspection, to be in a state of advancing dereliction. Its location impacts on the experience of arriving at Nun's Island which creates a negative perception of this part of the West Area.

Opportunity:

34 / 26 Nun's Island is an important part of the historic fabric in its own right, consideration should be given to re-instate, refurbish or rebuild the building to strengthen and support the setting and townscape character of the street overall. Further work is required to explore the integrity of the

building, develop potential options for re-use / re-instatement and consider planning and delivery routes.

Design considerations:

In the first instance, there would be benefit in exploring the condition of the building to understand the structural condition of the building and the relative requirements to repair the building and safeguard it from further dereliction. Options should be considered to bring the building back into use.

Next steps:

Undertake a building survey to understand the condition and prioritise repairs to the fabric. Explore funding opportunities, planning and delivery routes to progress the project.

Possible partners:

Existing building owner, Galway City Council

Linked projects:

Nun's Island Theatre

Timescale:

Short-term: Undertake survey for the building, alongside feasibility study for re-instatement including associated delivery options. Consider potential funding sources.





PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENT

Enhancing public spaces to further enable community activity and events

C1 Father Burke Park improvements

Context:

Father Burke Park is the largest and most significant green space in the West Area. It forms the southern edge of the study area boundary and is accessed from a main entrance on Father Griffin Road, and more discreet entrances from Father Griffin Place to the south, and Munster Avenue to the north. It is a well loved and well used park by the local community, with a play park and programme of events including festivals and outdoor cinemas. Recent improvements to lighting and the integration of power points will assist in making the most of this fantastic asset, allowing for more events and enhanced safety and use. There are however some less successful aspects of the park, including unattractive blank walls, minimal planting, a lack of furniture to sit and spend time in colder months, and other facilities which might allow for more intensive use of the space at all times of the year.

Opportunity:

A range of enhancements and improved facilities in Father Burke Park could encourage greater year-round use of the park. A more diverse variety of planting within and around the edge of the park could help to enhance the ecological value of the park whilst improving the appearance of bare walls. Additional benches and tables could offer greater opportunities for people to gather and spend time, with appropriate lighting integrated to enhance feelings of safety. Toilet facilities would also facilitate more intensive use of the park, whilst addressing a need in the area and creating a more inclusive environment for families and people of all ages. Opportunities for community growing should be considered in parts of the park which are less frequently used. Greater integration of natural play elements throughout the park could help

to add interest, whilst creating alternative moments for younger people to spend time or interact with the space. The integration of a delineated cycle route through the park, as well as cycle parking and improved signage and wayfinding will help to encourage active travel in the West Area.

Design considerations

Proposals for the park should seek to maintain good flexibility of space to allow for events, festivals and activities to continue to take place. Lighting, active use of the park and overlooking should be considered to ensure the park feels safe for everyone.

Next steps:

Explore funding opportunities to undertake more detailed design work to help inform landscape masterplan.

Possible partners:

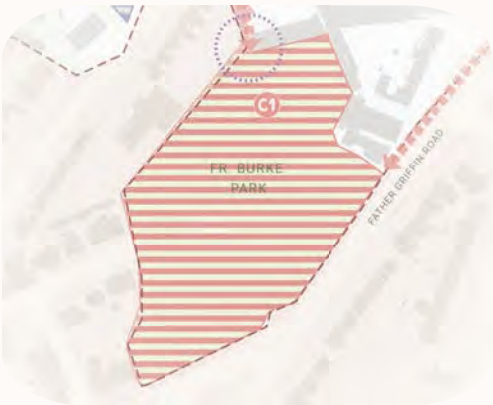
Department of Rural and Community Development

Linked projects:

D2 - Improvements to Munster Avenue and Fr. Burke Road, C2 - Raven Terrace

Timescale:

Short - medium term



FATHER BURKE PARK

The adjacent plan, and principles and opportunities detailed below, shows how Father Burke Park could be improved to enhance functionality, attractiveness, safety, and inclusion, ensuring it meets the daily and occasional needs of residents, families, and the broader community.

Overarching principles

- *Enhance safety and accessibility* at all times of day.
- *Increase attractiveness and comfort*, encouraging community use, events, and spontaneous activity.
- *Support diversity of use and multifunctional flexibility* for festivals, markets, and informal gatherings.
- *Improve ecological richness*, bolstering biodiversity and creating a habitat-friendly urban green space.
- *Foster inclusivity* with amenities that support families, older adults, disabled users, and prolonged visits.
- *Cultivate community connections*, building opportunities for social engagement and relationships

Opportunities

- 1 *Expanded play area* with stimulating natural play features suitable for a broader age range.
- 2 *Improve pedestrian and circulation*, with accessible surfacing and new cycle-friendly access from Father Griffin Road.
- 3 *Strategically placed seating and picnic areas*, including benches overlooking the children's play area and picnic tables near to cafe.
- 4 *Cafe* with outdoor seating, providing area for people to enjoy the park for prolonged visits
- 5 *Public toilets*, increasing inclusivity for families, older adults, and prolonged use.
- 6 *Dedicated area for community growing*, including small plots, pollinator gardens and herb beds.
- 7 *Retain and manage open lawn space*, preserving flexibility for future festivals and events.
- 8 *Create a distinctive statue or monument*, reinforcing place-making and reflecting local history
- 9 *Upgrade signage and wayfinding*, improving sense of arrival and navigation, particularly from Ravens Terrace
- 10 *New trees and planting* improving the frontage of the blank walls which encompass the park
- 11 *Reinforce park safety* by building on the recent Community Recognition Fund 2024 works, which included resurfacing, upgraded pathways, new public lighting, and electrical outlets for events.
- 12 Open up the existing access point, improving *permeability* of the park and connections to Raven Terrace.
- 13 Improve the interface of the park along Father Griffin Road through the use of public art, to guide people along this key arterial route into the city centre.



Father Burke Park (Google aerial)



© Nikolai Benner



Gifzsee in Offenburg designed by BHMP provides an “Island-Hopping” playground which uses grassy hills, gravel paths, rocks, and water play to create a natural setting. Soft hedges and organic materials make play fun, safe, and connected to the landscape.



© Allies and Morrison



Springfield Park’s playground designed by ares landscape architects, is crafted from natural wood and encourages creative, incidental play with climbing frames, hammocks, and swings.

Tralee Community Orchards and Gardens aims reconnect people with nature through food, landscape and community, and helps to introduce food back into the urban landscape.



Fig 35 Proposals for Father Burke Park

FATHER BURKE PARK

A range of small interventions, enhancements and improved facilities could help to create a park which can be more intensively used by the local community all year round, for gathering, playing, growing and enjoying.



FATHER BURKE PARK

Improved surfaces, thoughtfully design and positioned wayfinding and lighting can help to support a range of activities, including events and festivals, at all times of the day, and at all times of the year. This illustration shows the park hosting a festival celebrating the Irish language, with food and craft stalls supporting the events.



C2 Raven Terrace

Context:

Raven Terrace is a street and key public space at the southern gateway to the West Area. It wraps around three sides of a small urban block which comprises a range of uses, including homes, Centra supermarket, offices, an off-licence, a cafe, a puppy school and the popular Salt House pub. Currently, customers of the Salt House and adjacent cafe can enjoy outdoor dining and drinking. Raven Terrace is generally accessible to vehicles, enabling access to loading bays on the eastern edge, disabled parking to the south, with additional public parking spaces available to the north and south of the urban block. During the summer months, Raven Terrace is temporarily pedestrianised in the evenings, creating enhanced opportunities for outdoor seating. The northern edge of the block is well situated adjacent to, and overlooking, Eglinton Canal. This creates an attractive and unique urban condition within the West Area, where commercial activity rarely coincides with the many waterways which traverse the neighbourhood. It should be noted that future interventions relating to the Coirib Go Cósta Flood Relief Scheme will impact how the space interacts with the waterway. In addition to the natural asset and feature of the canal, Raven Terrace is also home to a nationally recognised Protected Structure, a large and attractive weighbridge situated in the ground of the car park to the south of the block.

Opportunity:

Raven Terrace is uniquely positioned as a key gateway to the West Area, as a rare public space and commercial street overlooking a waterway, and home to a Protected Structure. As such, it offers significant opportunity for improvement, capitalising on these assets to deliver an enhanced key public space for the West Area. Currently

much of Raven Terrace's public space is dominated by the need to facilitate vehicle movement and parking, with successful temporary pedestrianisation demonstrating the potential success of this space. Through enhancements to the public realm, including increased planting, seating, activation, accessibility and wayfinding, the space could be significantly enhanced to support activity and use.

Design considerations:

The waterway is a significant ecological corridor and habitat, and any interventions would need to be sensitive to, and consider any possible impact to the existing wildlife. The need for access and servicing of existing businesses, as well as retaining disability parking, will need to be considered in any public realm improvements. Designs will also need to take account of future interventions relating to the Coirib Go Cósta - Galway City Flood Relief Scheme, which will impact how the space interacts with the waterway.

Next steps:

Undertake further design work, and technical transport studies to ascertain the potential of the space and opportunities to reduce the impact of vehicle movement.

Possible partners:

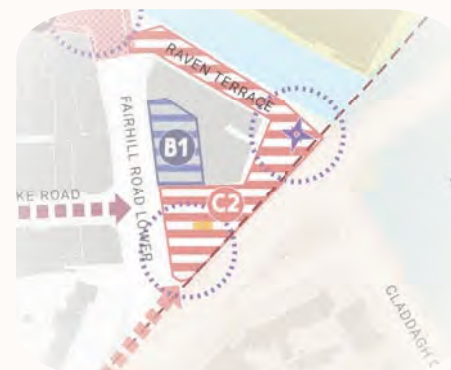
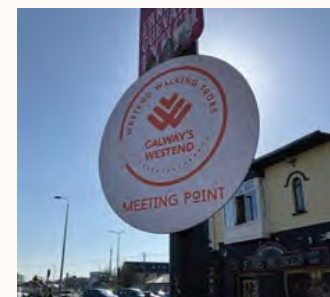
OPW, Business owners

Linked projects:

B1 - Former Garage Site redevelopment, **D1** - Dominick Street pedestrian priority improvements, **C1** - Father Burke Park improvements.

Timescale:

Medium - Long term



RAVEN TERRACE

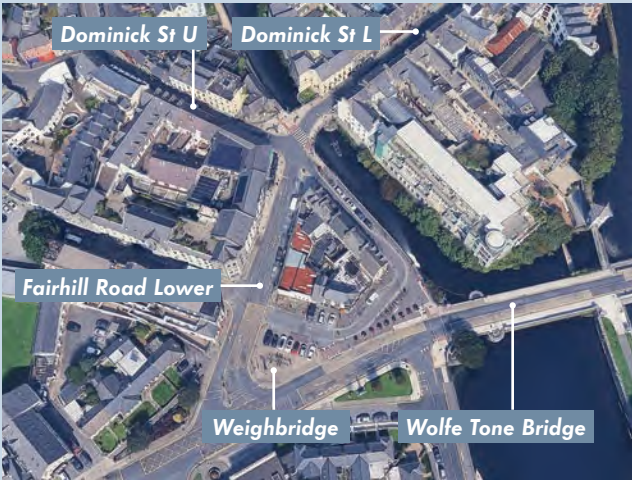
The adjacent plan, principles and opportunities detailed below shows how Raven Terrace could be improved to could prioritise people, celebrate heritage, and embrace the canal as a defining public realm feature.

Overarching principles

- **Prioritise walking and cycling**, reallocating space from vehicles to create a safer, more accessible environment.
- **Reconnect with the canal**, enhancing views, access, and seating to make it a central public feature.
- **Reduce visual clutter**, replacing bollards and fragmented surfaces with a coherent streetscape.
- **Celebrate heritage**, integrating the protected weighbridge to reinforce local character and sense of place.
- **Activate inactive edges**, encouraging reuse of vacant buildings to foster vibrancy and natural surveillance.
- **Create social spaces**, supporting outdoor dining, gathering, and community life.

Opportunities

- 1 **Pursue a coordinated approach to the flood defence** enhancements which balances flood management, historic setting and enhancements to public realm
- 2 **Pedestrianisation** to enable cafés and bars to spill into the public realm, creating a vibrant and lively setting.
- 3 **A new statue** or public artwork to serve as a memorable landmark and reinforce local identity.
- 4 **Parking limited** to loading and disabled users, freeing up space for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5 **New planting** to frame the space, provide shade, and enhance seasonal interest.
- 6 **Seating integrated with planting**, offering places to meet, rest, and socialise.
- 7 **Upgraded frontage** of the disused garage, bringing active use and ensuring safety and vibrancy throughout the day and night.
- 8 **A new cycle lane**, with the carriageway reduced from three to two lanes along Fairhill Road Lower
- 9 **A new crossing** to provide safer, more direct access to Dominick Street Upper.
- 10 **Flexible open space** retained to accommodate events, markets, and community gatherings.
- 11 Enhancing the setting of the weighbridge protected structure and explore its scope for interpretation, celebrating it as an important historic asset.



Ravens Terrace (Google aerial)



Southgate, Bath, England within close proximity to Bath Spa station, Southgate is a pleasant gateway into the town centre. The station square has been enhanced by introducing greenery, public art, street furniture & lighting.



Stockholm, Sweden Reimagined parking bays and side road with colourfully painted tarmac, portable seating, planting and cycle parking. Chess and draughts boards painted onto benches for anyone to use.



Manchester, England Canal Street is a lively, pedestrian-friendly space along the Rochdale Canal, it's the heart of Manchester's vibrant gay village. Lined with bars and public art, it's a celebrated LGBTQ+ hub.



Fig 36 Proposals for Raven Terrace

RAVEN TERRACE

Improving this important and unique public space, through the provision of enhanced planting, surfacing, seating, wayfinding and facilities will create a public space which can be enjoyed in the rain or sunshine.



RAVEN TERRACE

Other improvements, such as warm subtle lighting along the canal path, in street furniture and planting, wayfinding or public art, and a pedestrianised street will help to support evening activity on Raven Terrace.



C3 Small Crane

Context:

Small Crane is a small but well-loved former market square situated off William Street West, to the west of the West Area. It's name relates to its historic significance as place where farmers brought produce, namely potatoes, to weigh on the 'crane' and sell. The unassuming crane remains in the square to this day, acting as a feature within a small walled area with planting. The square has a mix of uses including homes, health clinics, a yoga studio, an architecture studio, a book and record store, and pub and venue for traditional Irish music. Currently this public square is used for car parking and as an access route to a local school and surrounding residential streets. In the summer months, the square is closed to traffic in the evenings, allowing people to spill out from the adjacent bar and enjoy the space. The existing public realm is comprised of hard surfacing with narrow footpaths and a lack of clarity around vehicle movement meaning pedestrian movement is hindered. Some cycle parking exists in the space.

Opportunity:

Small Crane is a historical and significant public space within the West Area. The scale, enclosed nature, and character of the space and surrounding buildings offer a fantastic opportunity to create a community-focussed public square and space to host events, or to allow for outdoor drinking and dining at appropriate times. Feedback has indicated that bins which were formerly on the square have been removed, resulting in the disposal of rubbish. Enhanced planting would help to soften the space, whilst offering drainage and shade, an elevated setting for the crane, and an

improved outlook for residents and businesses.

The significance of Small Crane's history and the significance of The Crane Bar and its promotion of traditional Irish music make Small Crane an ideal public space to celebrate Irish culture, music and language.

Design considerations:

Any public realm interventions should be in-keeping with the scale and character of the space and wider West Crane area, using appropriate materials and retaining a character which is distinct from the rest of Galway City. Any future pedestrianisation of the space should involve extensive engagement with local residents and schools to understand access and parking requirements, and to minimise any impact from outdoor and other commercial activities.

Next steps:

Engage with the local community to resolve principles for improvement of the space. Undertake further design work and seek funding for improvements to the space.

Possible partners:

Department of Rural and Community Development, Arts Council of Ireland
Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Linked projects:

D1 - Dominick Street Upper/William Street West,
D2 - Munster Avenue improvements, **G1** - Heritage Trail

Timescale:

Short - medium term



SMALL CRANE

Small Crane is an important public space with strong cultural and historic connections. Through a range of subtle interventions, the space could be transformed into a community square which supports cultural activities and neighbourhood gatherings, reinstating its former importance.



STREET / ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Creating an active, people-focused spine

- D1 Dominick Street Lower and Upper
- D2 Munster Avenue and Father Burke Road

Context:

Dominick Street Lower and Upper, William Street West and Munster Avenue form a sequence of key streets which make a significant contribution to the overall historic identity of the West Area. In addition, they are a focus for a range of business, cultural and community destinations including the nighttime economy, and are connected into some of the area's key public spaces, such as Father Burke Park. At times, this network of routes can feel dominated by traffic, and analysis and feedback from engagement highlights aspirations to make these areas feel safer and more accessible for pedestrians, and to improve the setting of the historic environment with a view to strengthening activities during the day and evening.

Opportunity:

- A range of opportunities exist to explore the enhancement of these streets holistically:
- Restoring shopfronts that are more in keeping with the existing historical context and street scene.
 - Restoring, remodelling and repurposing derelict buildings.
 - Decluttering and rationalising public realm with high quality hard landscape, appropriate lighting and new planting and street trees.
 - Considering wider footpaths to enable outdoor activity and dining.
 - Undertake further engagement, modelling and analysis and assessment to consider traffic management options, such as a one-way system, which enable the overall vision and principles (e.g. temporary or permanent pedestrianisation for

parts of the area; carriageway narrowing).

- Preparation of an implementation plan which sets out a phased approach to introducing new interventions and adjustments to highways.

Potential approaches (which would accommodate a spectrum of different vehicle / pedestrian options) are illustrated on the following pages).

Design considerations:

As noted above, it is important that this project adopts an integrated approach, embracing a “place and people led” approach with a multi-disciplinary set of criteria drawing on transport, urban design, public realm and heritage priorities. A range of practical considerations will also be key – focusing on safety and accessibility, and considering the need for retained access for emergency vehicles.

Next steps:

Consider opportunities for short-term enhancements and interventions, and a longer-term phased package of integrated measures to improve the public realm, streetscape and townscape.

Possible partners:

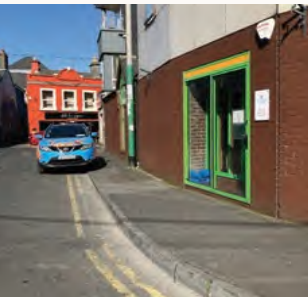
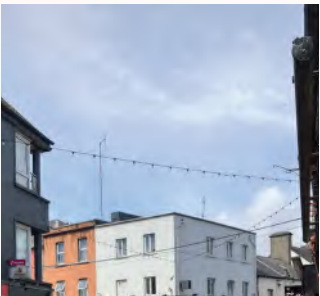
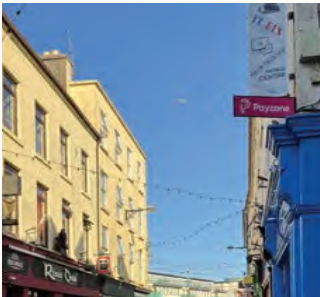
Local businesses, organisations and residents, GCC

Linked projects:

B4 45 + 47 Dominick Street Lower; B3 Silke's Cash and Carry, B5 Vacant units, Munster Avenue, C2 Raven Terrace, E1 Pump Lane, C1 Father Burke Park

Timescale:

Short-term: Develop brief and progress study to explore options for public realm, movement and spaces. Consider relationships with linked project timescales and overall phasing. Progress quick-wins.



D1 - DOMINICK STREET UPPER

Dominick Street Upper is a principal commercial street within the West Area with a vibrant evening economy, but has challenges in terms of pedestrian accessibility, traffic flow, vacancy, and a loss of historic features. A transformed street will widen footpaths and improve surfaces, control traffic flow, introduce warmer lighting, reinstate sash and case windows, repair and paint building facades, improve shopfronts and bring vacant units and above-the-shop units back into use to enhance activity on the street, supporting businesses and the evening economy.



D1 - DOMINICK STREET UPPER / WILLIAM STREET WEST

The street widens significantly at the junction of Dominick Street Upper, Henry Street and William Street West, forming almost an urban square. The wide carriageway, narrow footpaths and lack of crossings create a dangerous environment for pedestrians. By widening footpaths, controlling traffic, introducing rain gardens and street trees, the addition of warm lighting and tackling vacant will help to improve the feel of this part of the West Area.



D1 - DOMINICK STREET LOWER

Dominick Street Lower is another significant principal street in the West Area, supporting a range of daytime and evening businesses including cafes and restaurants. It is also a key gateway street into the West Area. By creating a one-way system for vehicles, footpaths can be widened and improved to allow for enhanced accessibility, outdoor dining, enhanced planting and greening. Warmer lighting and the refurbishment and enhancement of historic buildings will also help to improve the feel of this key gateway street and attract visitors to explore further.



MUNSTER AVENUE

The adjacent plan, principles and opportunities detailed below shows how Munster Avenue, and its connecting streets and spaces, could be improved to create an inclusive, accessible and vibrant public realm, which welcomes people of all abilities, celebrates local creativity and heritage, and strengthens safe, green connections.

Overarching principles

- Design an **inclusive public realm** where people of all ages and abilities, especially students and audiences of the Blue Teapot Theatre Company, can move safely and confidently. Step-free routes, clear sightlines, good lighting and intuitive layouts should be standard.
- Create **barrier-free pedestrian and cycle connections**, linking Father Burke Park, Dominick Street and Raven Terrace without unnecessary level changes.
- **Green the streetscape** with trees and planting to soften hard edges, calm traffic and create a welcoming environment for everyone.
- **Celebrate local creativity** through street art and visual cues that reflect the theatre's inclusive spirit and bring colour and character to blank walls.
- **Improve blank or negative frontages** to foster passive surveillance and a lively, safe street throughout the day and evening.

Opportunities

- 1 Create a **shared surface** along Munster Avenue, Dominick Street Lower and William Street West, with a demarcated carriageway and level surface that slows traffic and allows wheelchair users and people with visual impairments to move freely.
- 2 **Tighten the junction** on William Street West, reducing carriageway width to shorten crossing distances.
- 3 Install an **accessible pedestrian crossing** with tactile paving and clear signals for those with limited mobility or sight.
- 4 Provide a **new pedestrian and cycle link** on Father Burke Road, connecting Raven Terrace and the park through a fully accessible route.
- 5 **Planned new residential development at 1 Munster Avenue (by others)** will improve passive surveillance, and has potential for reconfigured public realm, supporting access and safety.
- 6 Retain **disabled parking** in front of the Blue Teapot Theatre for performers, students and visitors.
- 7 New **street bins** to maintain a clean and pleasant environment.
- 8 **Plant new trees** throughout to slow traffic, give shade and create a cooler, more natural and sensory-friendly atmosphere for all.



Munster Avenue (Google aerial)



Photo © Allies and Morrison



Ennis public realm regeneration project included improvements to pedestrian / vehicular movement and enhanced accessibility for pedestrians and those with mobility issues, with level paving.



Photo © Allies and Morrison

Hereford church street
Shared surface paving allows for an intimate public realm which people can move freely through.

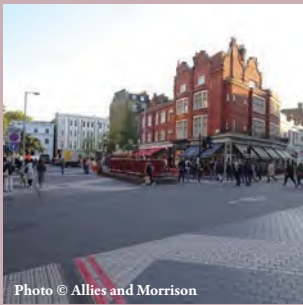
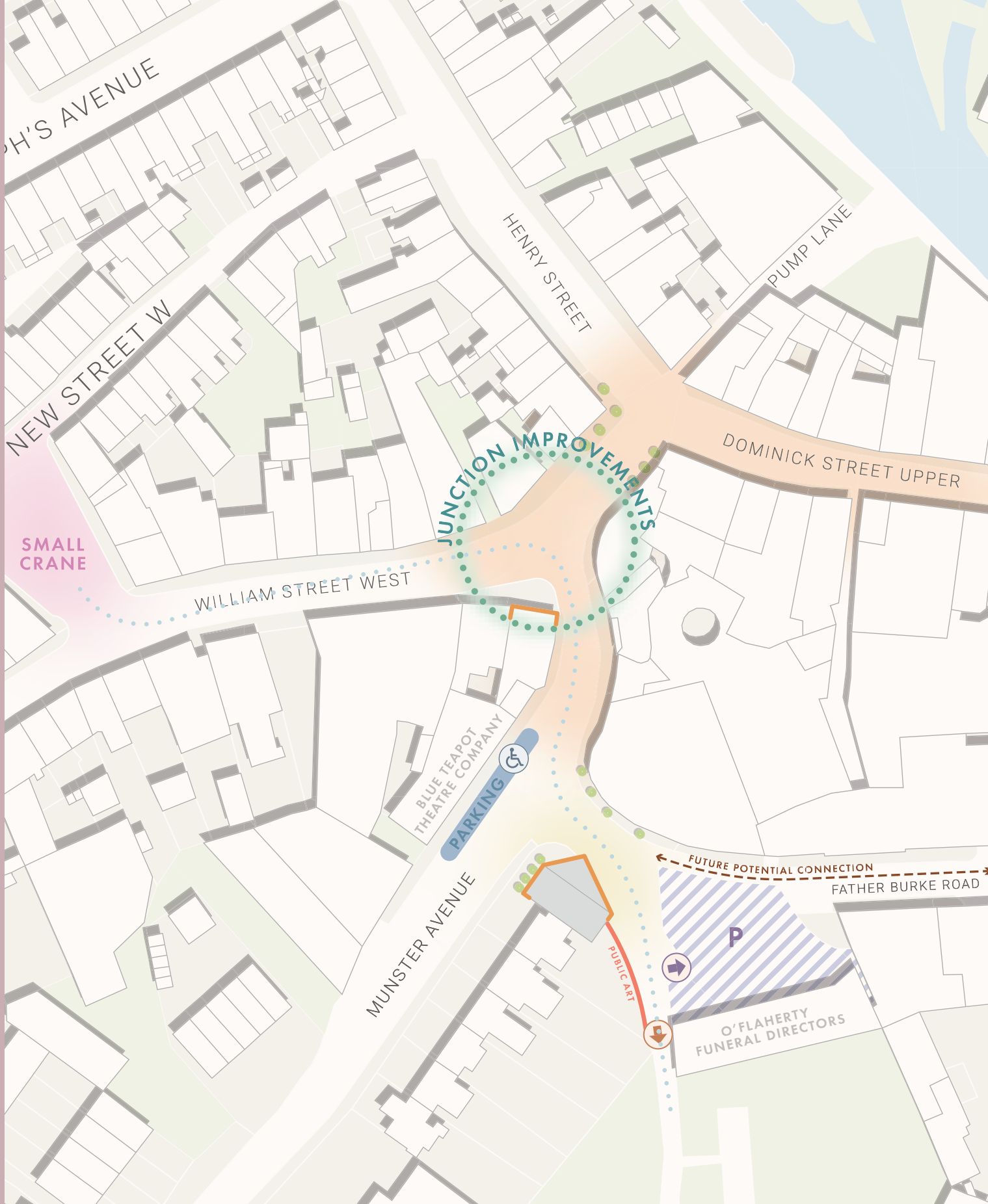


Photo © Allies and Morrison

Exhibition Road, London was transformed into a shared street, removing curbs and pavements to encourage slower driving and a smoother flow of pedestrian movement.



PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

E1 Pump Lane

Context:

Pump Lane is a public lane which leads from Dominick Street Upper to the Eglinton Canal. It has a narrow unlit access at Dominick Street Upper, between two buildings, and widens to form a small public space next to the Eglinton Canal towpath. The Lane provides vehicle access to residential apartments, and is also used for deliveries and occasionally storage for Taylor's Bar. Taylor's Bar's have a beer garden which sits alongside Pump Lane, but is not visible or accessible from the space due to an existing wall. Pump Lane is also home to a number of inconspicuous Protected Structures, namely Jostle Stones, which are visible along the edge of the narrow lane, a Shoeing Stone which is primarily made visible by the railing which surrounds it, and Limestone Steps which lead to a Spout Mór, a historic washing facility. off the main canal waterway. Currently, these historic features are easy to overlook, with only a protective railing and simple plaque providing information about the shoeing stone to alert passers by to its presence. As well as a cut-through and access for homes, Pump Lane has been adopted as a space for graffiti art. This art brings life and colour to the space, giving it a unique character which could be further enhanced.

Opportunity:

Pump Lane needs to marry a careful balance between the colourful and lovely street art for which it has become locally famous, and the concentration of protected structures which also occupy the space and require a sensitive approach. Safety should be a consideration for any approach, and lighting and opportunities for overlooking should be explored. Lighting chosen for the space could reinforce Pump Lane as a creative space, helping to enhance the street art whilst remaining sensitive to local residents and the

protected structures. The limestone steps leading to the tidal historic washing facility, or Spout Mór, is an attractive feature in the space but needs regular maintenance and clearing of litter. Further opportunities for the space are set out on the following pages.

Design considerations:

Safety is a key design consideration, and lighting and overlooking will need to form part of any future proposals. Protecting and celebrating the historic assets is also a key design consideration. In addition, activity in this space should consider the impact on adjacent residents.

Next steps:

Identify appropriate funding opportunities and partners.

Possible partners:

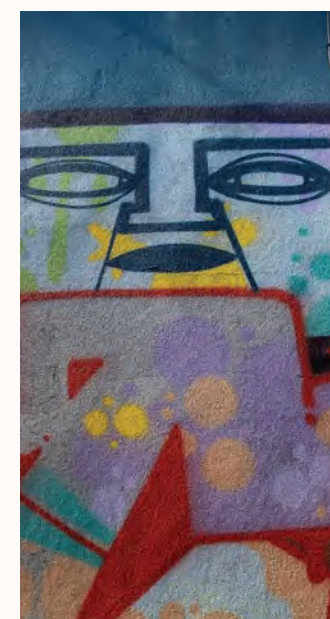
Local businesses and community, Irish Government/ EU (THRIVE), The Heritage Council (Historic Towns Initiative, Historic Structures Fund, Community Heritage Grant Scheme)

Linked projects:

D1 - Dominick Street Upper/ William Street West improvements. **G1** - Heritage Trail

Timescale:

Medium - long



PUMP LANE LÁNA AN CHAIDÉIL

Protected Features

Jostle Stones at Pump Lane

At the entrance to Pump Lane from Henry Street a line of jostle stones are still to be found along the north wall. The original function of these stones was to protect the walls from the carriage wheels which would bump against them as the carriages were brought down to the forge to have their wheels ‘shoed’. The last jostle stone before Henry St. is inscribed with a ‘bench mark’ which is an Ordnance Survey mark used to record height above sea level at this particular point. The line at the top is the actual measured height above sea level, and the ‘arrow’ underneath is the symbol of the British Army’s Ordnance Department (who were responsible for the original survey).

Pump Lane and ‘the Spout Mór’

It was commonplace for women to wash the family clothes at a number of places along the riverbank and canal. One site for this activity was found at the end of Pump Lane where there was a well specifically designed for this purpose. Locally known as ‘the Spout Mór’, it is likely that the name of the Lane derives from this well. At the meeting of the Galway Urban District Council held on November 12, 1914, it was ordered that the residents of William Street West and Henry Street should be cautioned against depositing house rubbish at Pump Lane. Today again there is evidence of litter around the well and the area is in need of cleaning and maintenance.

The Shoeing Stone

A Shoeing stone was used by the blacksmith during the process of shoeing wheels of horse drawn vehicles with iron bands. The old band is removed from the wheel and the wheel is then placed on the shoe, where it is held securely. The red hot metal band is then lowered onto the wheel and hammered into place. Once in place it is quickly cooled with water before it can burn the wood of the wheel. The cooling metal shrinks, gripping the wheel time tightly.

*Extracts from A Heritage Study of the ‘West’ Area of Galway City,
Zena Hoxtor Heritage Services*



“how local people used to do their laundry there, using the velocity of the excess water from the lock-gate on the canal. In other words, an outdoor washing machine but with a bit more elbow grease required!”

Bernie Ní Fhlatharta, Connacht Tribune, Published: June 2023



EGLINTON CANAL

Existing condition and role

Pump Lane is a key urban link, a tight but attractive tie between canal and street. Its edges are extremely active, having numerous doors, both back of house to hospitality businesses and residential entrances to apartments. The enclosing walls are busy too, varied in nature and now serving as a canvas for street art bringing visual interest and vibrancy. The space also displays its historic layers through its three protected features, jostle stones, showing stone and the Spout Mór.

The lane edges are private elevations which will always be in flux, especially by hosting ever changing artworks. The ground surface in contrast is a shared public realm which holds particular potential for enhancing the laneway.

This busy route can be elevated far beyond its current condition. It must be welcoming, clean, accessible, clear of obstructions, nicely lit and an exciting side space.

Overarching principles

- **Prioritise its role as a walking and cycling** connection, rationalising and consolidating space from vehicles to create a safer, more accessible environment.
- **Reduce or remove visual clutter and ancillary elements**, such as bins, kegs and other items associated with nearby businesses.
- **Celebrate heritage**, integrating the protected Limestone Steps and Spout Mór; Shoeing Stone, Jostle Stones to reinforce local character and sense of place.
- **Celebrate street art**, encourage local artists and street artists to use the enclosing walls as a canvas, encouraging light interpretation of the West Area and Pump Lane's history and historic uses to reinforce its historic importance.
- **Create a safe space**, by enhancing lighting and improving the space to encourage regular use, allowing for natural surveillance.
- **Develop a coordinated approach to managing the space**, by engaging with all stakeholders to understand needs and requirements of the space.



25" Map Pump Lane and context, Surveyed 1893, Published 1898

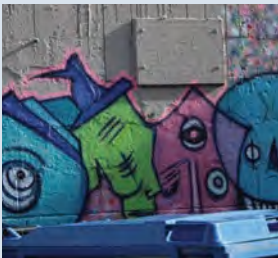
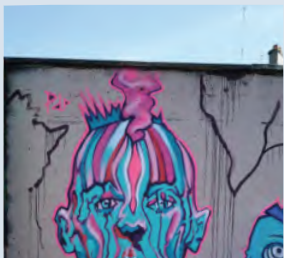


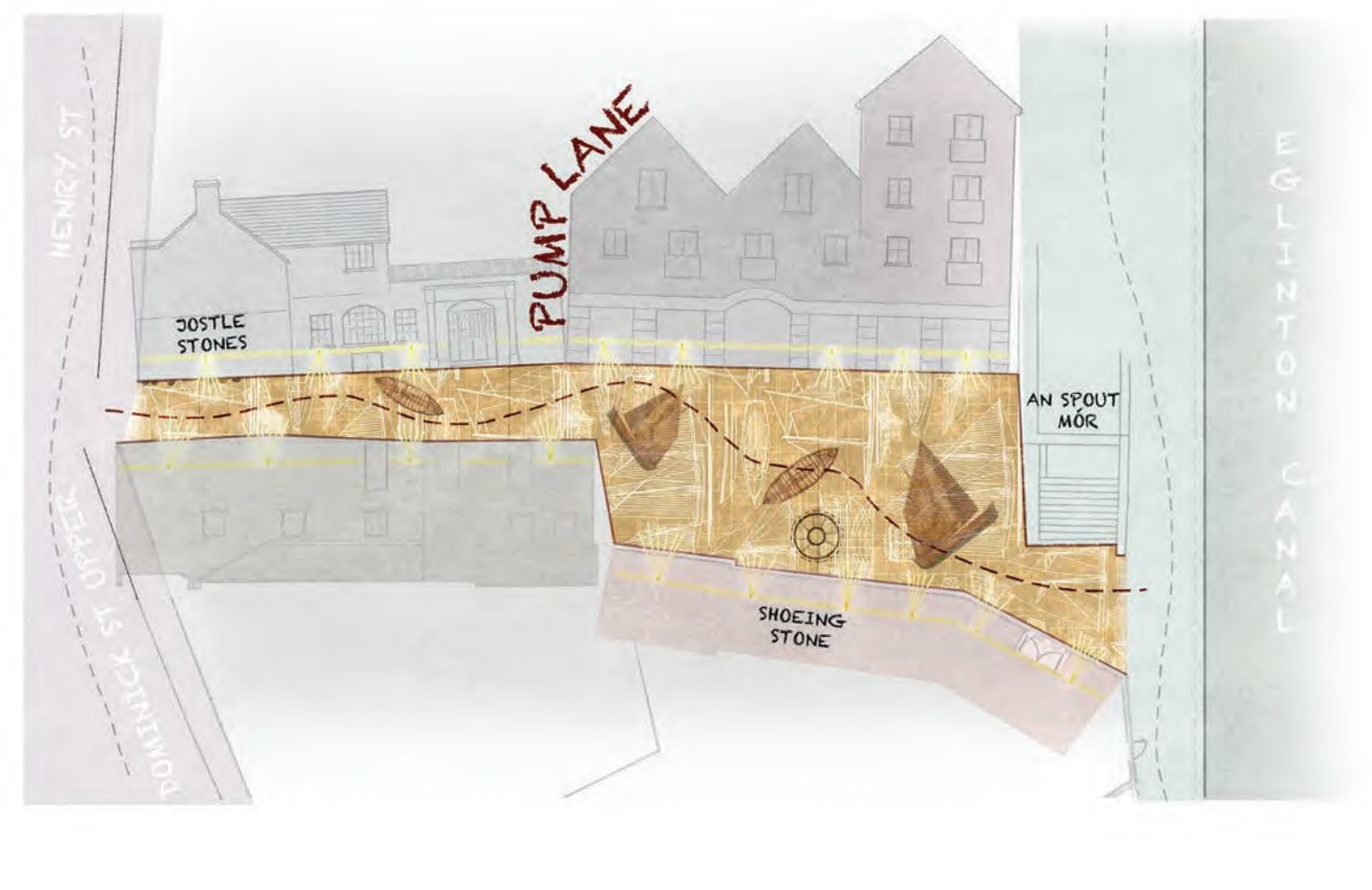
Photos © Belfast City Council



BELFAST ENTRIES PROJECT (BELFAST CITY COUNCIL)

The Belfast Entries are historic passageways linking key streets in Belfast's city centre. Once dark, littered, and unsafe, they had fallen into disrepair and were little used. Belfast City Council's regeneration project restored stonework, upgraded paving, and added lighting and signage to make them welcoming again. While preserving arches, façades, and historic layouts, the scheme also introduced murals, street art, and cultural features, blending conservation with creativity to reactivate the Entries as vibrant spaces celebrating heritage and contemporary culture.





Opportunity

A ground based project is the answer to all of these aspects. A new bright ground surface will bring coherence, expand the space and encourage respect by laying a quality finish into all corners. It shall also bring visual interest by imaging it as a shared canvas incorporating local artwork into the paving material. Line drawings could be cast in a contrasting material and the whole space should become a visual celebration underfoot showing depth, quality and variety. The content should be particular to the West Area and its realisation should be via local; artists, communities or children, it is their ground.

The surface should be bright in nature to transform the atmosphere of this often overshadowed lane. Careful lighting will provide a feeling of openness and safety, while being designed to respect adjoining residents. Low wall mounted lighting should cast across the ground canvas highlighting its detail and contrasts.

The ground art should be of quality, be historically informative and contain variety so that the space reveals more with time spent there. Our suggestion is that the lost boats of Galway's West area, no longer visible in the urban landscape, would gather in Pump Lane. Boat drawings are informative, accurate but also beautiful. A researched gathering of such drawings would be local showing canal river and sea vessels, yet would have universal appeal.

Pump Lane is a place of movement. That short transition should be via a pleasant place, taking its current positive characteristics of geometry, history and murals but raising it further via new design. A considered ground plane can create a modern urban corridor with it's unique carpet of local boats.



Galway boats 1870's Chetham Library

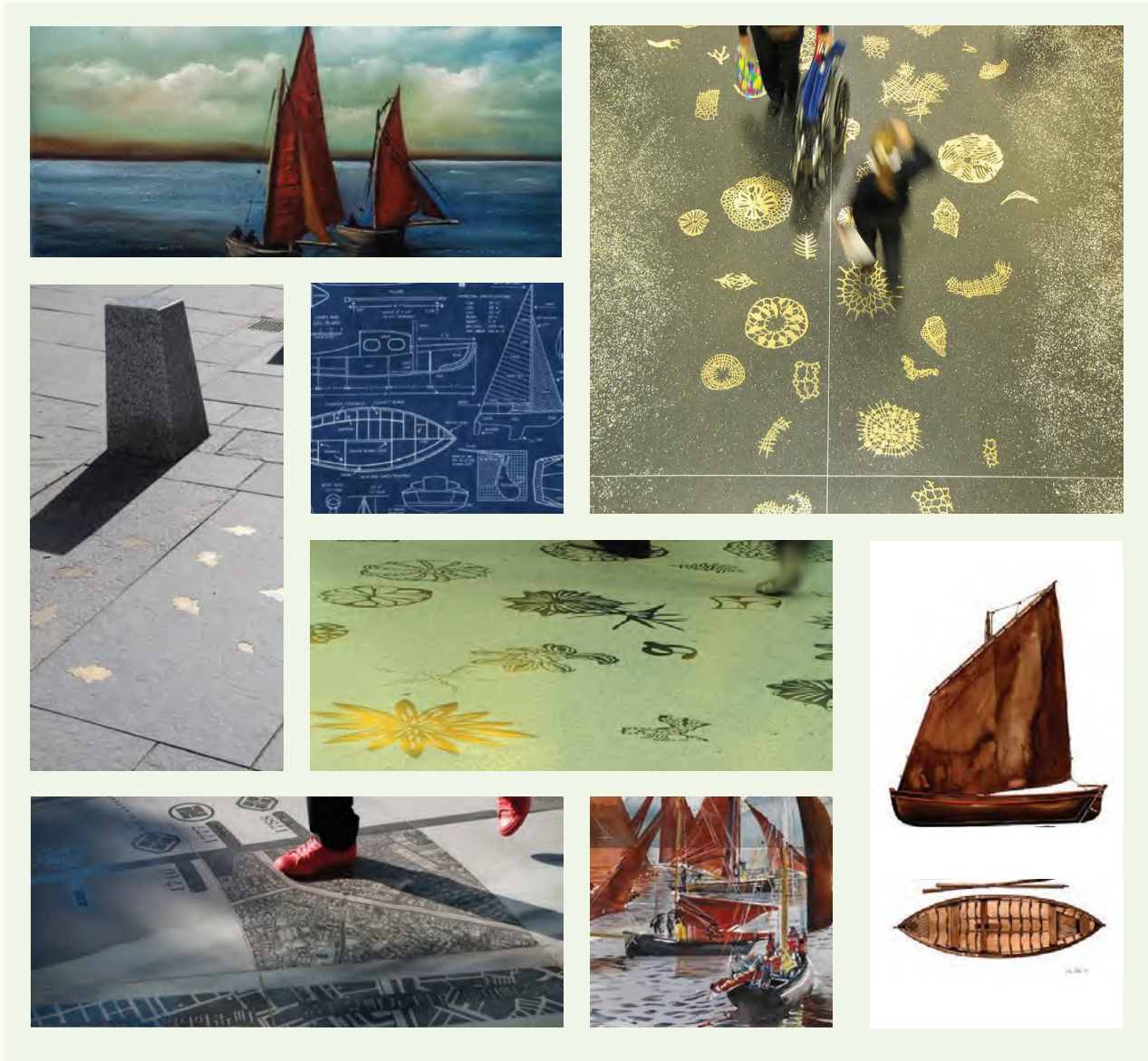


Fig 37 Precedents for possible ground surface materials and treatment, and boat imagery which could be referenced or used to inform the ground art.

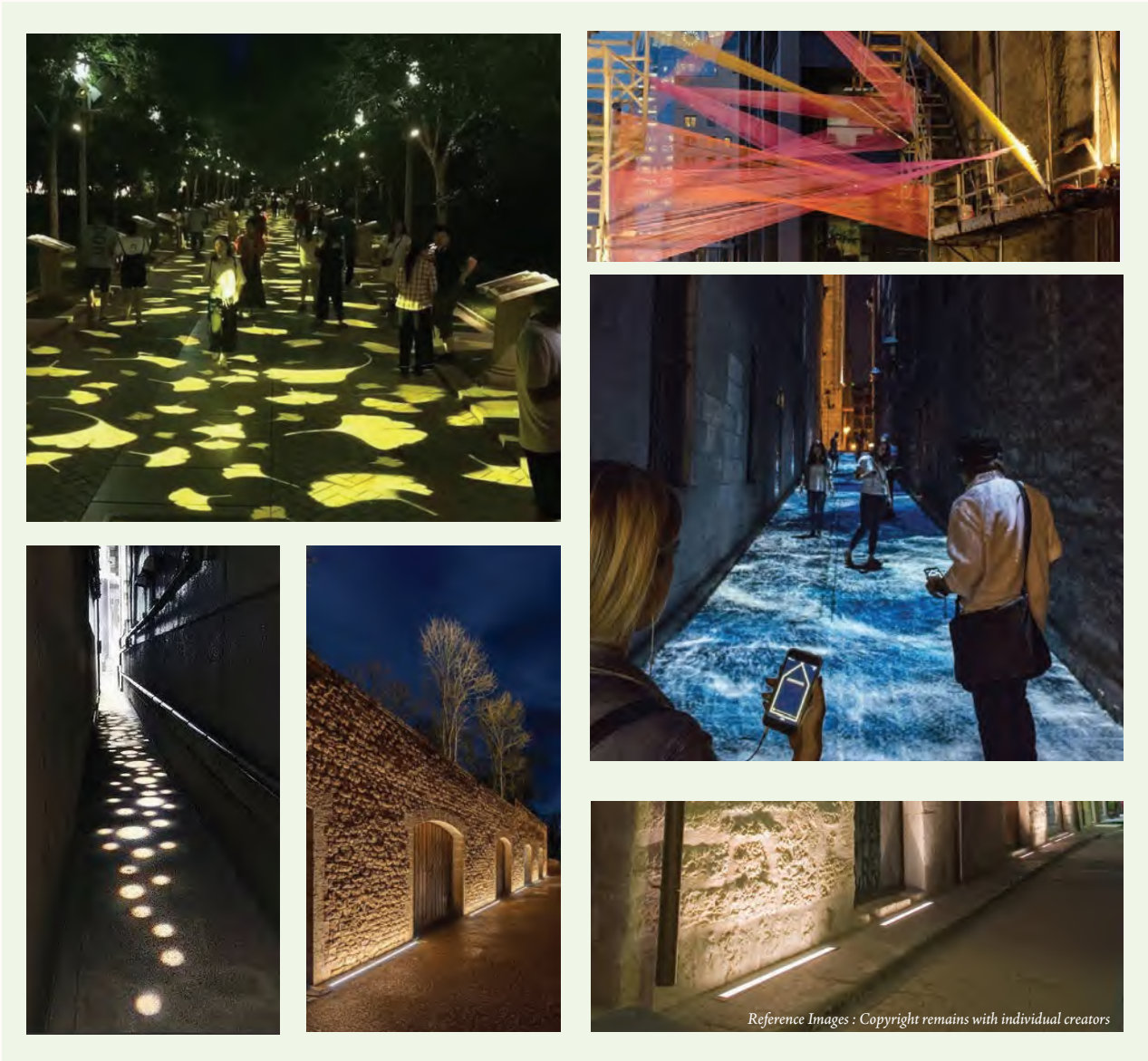


Fig 38 Precedents for high quality and sensitive lighting approaches which could inform an approach to lighting Pump Lane.



MICROSPACES

F1 Henry Street Playground

Context:

A colourful playground occupies a plot of land between Henry Street and Eglinton Canal, accessed via gates from Henry Street and the lane leading between Henry Street and the canal. It is mainly comprised of hard surfaces, with a thin strip of planting along its western edge. The current play equipment consists of two sets of swings, two slides, a climbing frame, climbing net and see-saw in a range of bright colours and materials. It is one of two key playspaces in the West Area, and is well used by young children and their parents. Exposed walls are brightly painted, and benches offer places to sit.

Opportunity:

While the existing playground is well liked and well used, feedback has indicated a desire for more imaginative and naturalistic play opportunities in the West Area. Given its positioning along the canal, and a deficit of planting in the area, the playground could be improved to offer a softer, more naturalistic playspace which incorporates natural materials and planting, also helping to reinforce biodiversity in the area and enhance shading and shelter. The playground is situated at a significant moment along the canal, where the wall falls away to create space and allow access to and from Henry Street. Therefore the introduction of wayfinding would help to enhance navigation and encourage visitors into the West Area.

Design considerations:

Interventions should consider safety, accessibility, use by a range of ages and mitigating the impact of climate change through the integration of shading, shelter and drainage. Wayfinding which directs people into the West Area would be beneficial here, and should be inkeeping with the historic character and natural materiality of the stone walls.

Next steps:

Explore funding opportunities and engage a playground design specialist and/or landscape architect to undertake design proposals.

Possible partners:

Department of Rural and Community Development

Linked projects:

G1 - Heritage Trail

Timescale:

Short - medium

F2 Parkavara green space / wildlife garden

Context:

Parkavara is a street which is formed of two stretches linking Mill Street to the canal, and along the canal to New Road. The stretch of Parkavara next to the canal currently supports a number of parking spaces, and is a rare vehicle access route which abuts the canal. It forms a continuation of the northern pedestrian canal path, and therefore could be considered a shared surface. Next to the road is an attractive green space with a range of mature trees and planting. It appears that this green space also provides access to the gardens of adjacent properties.

Opportunity:

This green space is of a good size, however it appears to be seldom used by people and could therefore be enhanced to reinforce the canal as a corridor for nature and wildlife through additional planting and enhancement of habitat for local wildlife.

Design considerations:

Future interventions should be sensitive to neighbouring residents and any access requirements to adjoining gardens. Consideration should also be given to accessibility, and enabling safe pedestrian movement along the canal.

Next steps:

Engage the local community to seek their views on the opportunity and investigate possible funding streams.

Possible partners:

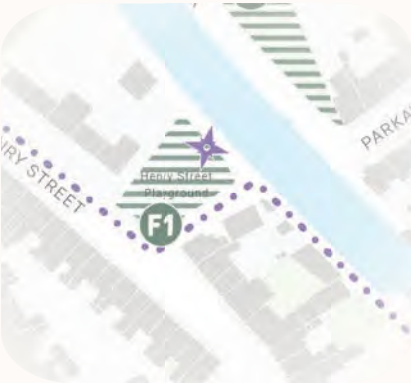
Local community and stakeholders, National Parks and Wildlife Service, The Irish Wildlife Trust, Galway City Council (Local Biodiversity Action Fund)

Linked projects:

N/A

Timescale:

Short - medium



**HENRY STREET PLAYGROUND /
PARKAVARA WILDLIFE GARDEN**

The canal has the opportunity to play an enhanced role in supporting nature and wildlife in the West Area. Increasing tree planting, native plants, and habitats for insects and mammals could help to reinforce its role as a nature corridor and a quiet space and route for people to feel more connected to the natural world.



F3 Lockside green space

Context:

The green space which occupies a long narrow piece of land on the north side of the Lock is an important and well used microspace in the area. An exposed, south-facing grassy space, framed by the tall historic Atlantic Sawmill wall on one side, and the dramatic structure of the Lock and its cascading water on the other, the space has become a popular spot to relax on the grass on sunny days and cool down from the proximity to flowing water.

Opportunity:

The West Area's microspaces perform an important function, providing spaces where people can escape from busier parts of the city and enjoy proximity to water and nature. Minimal intervention is therefore required in the space. The addition of a bench would help to make the space more inclusive for elderly or less mobile individuals. This space could also form part of the West Area's heritage trail, with the integration of accompanying wayfinding helping to celebrate the space and significance of the Atlantic Sawmill wall.

Design considerations:

Any interventions should be minimal, and should seek to enhance, celebrate, or interpret the enclosing historic wall, improve the accessibility of the space for all to enjoy, or protect, support and reinforce the role of the microspace in supporting nature and biodiversity.

Next steps:

Engage a landscape architect and conservation specialist for any potential interventions.

Possible partners:

Galway City Council

Linked projects:

G1 - Heritage Trail

Timescale:

Short - medium



F4 Madeira Island

Context:

The Madeira Island microspace sits at the confluence of the mill race and canal, at the southern end of the Mill Street Car Park. It takes the form of a grassy wedge protruding from dense foliage and trees, giving it a special natural character. It has a prominent position, and can be viewed from the towpath and the entrance to Pump Lane. It also sits to the rear of the buildings along Dominick Street Lower, which can be accessed using an attractive historic footbridge which adds additional character and a special quality to the space. The space is popular with those seeking some respite from busy streets, and also with those partaking in fishing activities.

Opportunity:

Minimal intervention is required for this already attractive and well loved microspace. Maintenance and maintained access to this space are important to retain its special character and use by the community.

Design considerations:

Any future development on Mill Street Car Park should maintain access to this space, and also maintain the special natural character of the space.

Next steps:

Consider protections for this space.

Possible partners:

Galway City Council

Linked projects:

A2 - Mill Street Car Park redevelopment

B4 - 45 + 47 Dominick Street Lower

Timescale:

Short - medium



OTHER PROJECTS / STRATEGIES

Additional projects which span the study area and/or are not spatial interventions.

G1 Heritage Trail

Context:

The West Area of Galway City Centre boasts a rich heritage, reflected in its diverse architectural styles, cultural landmarks, and the designation of several protected structures due to their historical significance. Crescent/Sea Road and Lower Dominick Street have been designated as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), preserving the distinctive charm of their traditional streetscapes and unique character. This distinctive heritage, deeply intertwined with Galway's traditions in Irish music, art, and language, underscores the importance of safeguarding these cultural treasures for future generations.

Opportunity:

Celebrate the West Area's rich heritage, and its historic features, assets and remnants of it's past by creating a heritage trail, which helps to tell the West Area's story. In creating a narrative through wayfinding interventions, and drawing attention to often overlooked or forgotten features, the trail can help to reconnect the West Area's community and visitors to the activities, people and stories of its past - helping to reinforce the neighbourhood's unique identity and way of life. There is also an opportunity to integrate sculpture, either as part of the heritage trail, or as part of its own sculpture trail - reinforcing the creative and craft-driven culture of the West Area.

Design considerations:

Heritage Trail Wayfinding should be subtle, consistent throughout, and using durable materials which are in keeping with the historic character of the area. The Trail could incorporate a QR code which links to a webpage or audio accompaniment.

Next steps:

Engage with the local community and any local historians to develop a proposal for a heritage trail around the West Area.

Possible partners:

Local historians, Conservationists, Local community, The Heritage Council

Linked projects:

E1 - Pump Lane

Timescale:

Short - medium



Fig 39 Examples of signage and wayfinding appropriate for a heritage trail

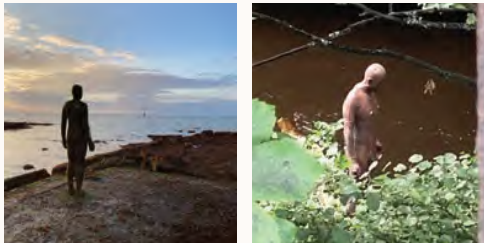


Fig 40 Antony Gormley's cast-iron life-size sculptures, placed in natural locations across the UK



G2 Gateway wayfinding lighting

Context:

The West Area is an urban neighbourhood with a distinctive character and unique charm which differentiates it from the rest of the city. At present, those not familiar with the area may not be aware of its presence or of its unique offer of independent shops, cultural offer and lively evening uses. Subtle interventions, such as lighting at the area's more prominent gateways, thresholds and nodes, would help both to identify the neighbourhood as a unique 'place' and also to draw visitors into the beating heart and vibrant streets of the West Area.

Opportunity:

Subtle but prominent wayfinding interventions at key gateways, thresholds and nodes which seek to unify the West Area as a distinctive neighbourhood, ignite curiosity and draw visitors to want to explore it further.

Design considerations:

Interventions should be in keeping with the character of the area and be positioned at prominent gateways, announcing entry into the West Area, and nodes which would encourage visitors further into the West Area. Due consideration should be given to any environmental impact, particularly bats, near waterways or in green spaces.

Next steps:

Identify possible funding streams and engage with potential partners such as Galway's West End.

Linked projects:

C2 - Raven Terrace, C1 - Father Burke Park, D1 - Dominick Street Lower and Upper.

Timescale:

Short - medium

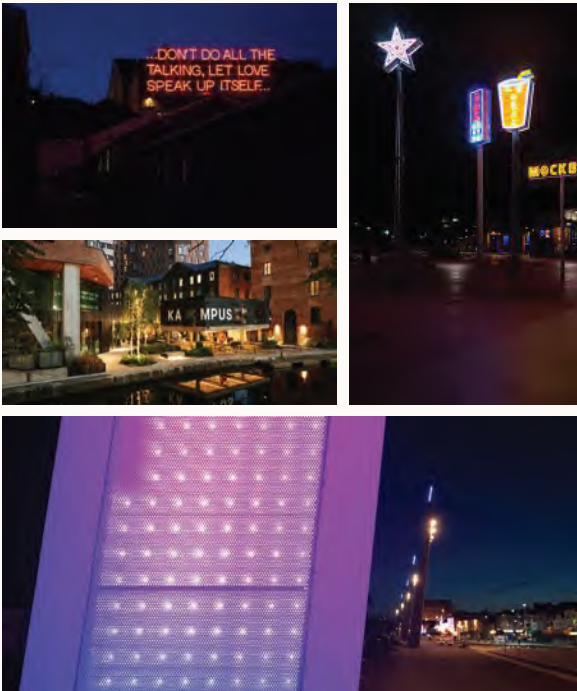


Fig 41 Precedents for possible lighting and wayfinding interventions, announcing gateways into the West Area, and encouraging further exploration into the areas at key visual nodes.



City Hall, College Road
Galway H91 X4K8
telephone 091 536400
web www.galwaycity.ie
email studio@alliesandmorrison.com

Allies and Morrison

27 Herbert Place
Dublin D02 DC97
telephone +44 20 7921 0100
web alliesandmorrison.com
email studio@alliesandmorrison.com

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