

# 14 Urban Design and Opportunity Areas

**Aim:** To create a vibrant and bustling town and to enhance the quality of the built environment.

## 14.1 Background

Through the planning process, local authorities have a key role in relation to the formation of the built environment. This chapter outlines guidelines to support a key element of the core strategy to consolidate Athy and support the achievement of a sustainable town through the identification of character areas and key opportunity sites. The chapter also sets out general guidance in relation to urban design.

The Council will proactively encourage the regeneration and conservation of the town centre whereby development and growth is managed and coordinated with the emerging role of the town using the best practice principles and the detailed design considerations outlined within this chapter. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant DOEHLG guidelines and Government policy documents listed below;

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages) (2009).
- Urban Design Manual; a Best Practice Guide (2009).
- Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2012 (2009).

## 14.2 Best Practice

To guide sustainable urban development and growth and to create a distinctive and enduring environment, the following principles should inform future development proposals;

**Character:** Development which creates an identity and character reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape.

**Continuity and Enclosure:** The creation of public and private spaces which are clearly distinguished

through continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by the built form.

**Quality of the Public Realm:** The provision of public spaces and routes which are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including older people and people with mobility impairments.

**Ease of Movement:** The creation of areas which are easy to get to and move through, achieved by prioritising people before traffic.

**Legibility:** The creation of legible places provided by identifiable routes, intersections and landmarks.

**Walkable Environment:** The creation of places that facilitate access to public transport in order to reduce reliance on the private car, and provide a well connected open space network.

**Adaptability:** The creation of places that can change easily and can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

**Diversity:** The promotion of choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses to ensure a place that responds to local needs as well as providing for a diverse society of different incomes at different stages of life.

**Environmental Sustainability:** The enhancement of local ecology, the promotion of biodiversity, the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitats and the minimisation of flood risk.

## 14.3 Strategy

The Plan seeks to build on the existing strengths of the town such as its historic core, landmark buildings and architectural heritage, urban spaces and civic amenities by identifying opportunity sites which will complement Athy's existing assets and act as catalysts for change.

The Plan also seeks to enhance the factors that have a significant impact on the image of the town and the quality of the public domain by:

- Promoting and encouraging high quality urban design;

- Formalising approaches and entrances to the town in order to create a sense of arrival and departure;
- Relieving traffic congestion within the town centre by improving permeability;
- Creating a network of quality public spaces and a legible public realm;
- Reinforcing the heart of the town and creating distinctive areas within the centre;
- Prioritising the development of derelict/brownfield and key infill/gap sites therefore ensuring that new development is based on the concept of consolidating the existing town core;
- Ensuring a mix of uses within the core;
- Enhancing the physical environment and streetscape in order to provide a pleasant shopping experience;
- Providing for sustainable urban expansion areas;
- Calming traffic flow and rationalising carparking with the use of high quality materials;

## 14.4 Townscape Analysis

### 14.4.1 Introduction

The urban analysis considers the current situation of the Town Centre in terms of;

- Athy's legibility, function and image
- Built form and visual appropriateness
- Public open space and major pedestrian generators
- Transport links and movement
- Land use and activity

A strategy based on this analysis will aim to improve the strength and vitality of the Town Centre and in doing so will have regard to the policies and objectives of the Draft Kildare County

Development Plan 2011-2017. In helping to identify areas that have the potential to develop the town centre, a full S.W.O.T analysis<sup>1</sup> of the town has been undertaken, the result of which are summarised below

### 14.4.2 Legibility, Function and Image

Athy is bisected by the River Barrow which runs in a north-south direction through the centre of the town. The town's main axis is east-west, along Leinster Street east of the River Barrow, crossing Cromaboo Bridge to Duke Street and William Street to the west of the town. On the east side of the river Leinster Street is intersected at Emily Square by Stanhope Street and Offaly Street. On the west side Woodstock Street branches northwards at the junction of Duke Street and William Street.

The retail element within the town has shifted from Leinster Street to Duke Street. Leinster Street has suffered as a result with many derelict and vacant buildings. A diversity of shops and businesses need to be attracted to Athy to ensure the vitality of the town centre. However, the through flow of traffic along Duke Street and Leinster Street combined with the lack of permeability through the town has resulted in chronic traffic congestion within the centre. Traffic congestion combined with the narrowness of the footpaths in places negatively impacts on the shopping experience within the town centre.

The Leinster Street Area with its large vacancy rates and substantially intact historic fabric has left a distinctive structure that is ideal for regeneration and a prime opportunity to act as a 'catalyst for change'. The primary aim in this context is to provide the Leinster Street/ Emily Square area with a new purpose, which builds on the distinctive sense of place the area already possesses. An opportunity therefore exists to utilise the historic core with its strong sense of place, character and culture as a tool to regenerate the town core and achieve a place with a positive public image. By developing a cultural quarter within the historic

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<sup>1</sup> The 'S.W.O.T. analysis' involved identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Athy's townscape.

town core area will reinforce Athy's status as a heritage town.

#### **14.4.3 Built Form and Visual Appropriateness**

Urban grain can be defined as the pattern and form of buildings, plots and blocks within urban areas. In cases where there is a dense pattern emerging with multiple plots/buildings fronting a street, the urban grain is defined as fine. The term loose grain is applied where the building plot is larger and the built form smaller.

Typically within historic towns a fine grain is prevalent and in this regard Athy is no exception. Plots within the town particularly along Leinster Street, Duke Street, William Street and Stanhope Street are deep plots with narrow frontage onto the street.

The development of Duke Street as the main shopping area within the town has resulted in the loss of the historic fabric particularly in the vicinity of Edmund Rice Square and St. John's Lane. This area of the town suffers from poor definition of the public realm. The built form comprises of low grade architecture combined with poor quality shop fronts as well as an abundance of derelict buildings and vacant sites. In contrast the upside to the lack of redevelopment around Leinster Street and Emily Square has meant that the historic fabric has remained largely intact. There is therefore an opportunity to redevelop this area in a manner that retains and enhances its historic sense of place.

#### **14.4.4 Public open space and major pedestrian generators**

There is a good provision of connected civic spaces particularly around Emily Square, however overall the quality of the public realm at this location is poor - typified by poor quality materials and an abundance of clutter. The main purpose of these civic spaces is the provision of car parking with the exception of Market Day. This Plan aims to improve the quality of the streetscape and the public realm.

Both the River Barrow and the Grand Canal present Athy with a unique setting and provide amenity areas beside water bodies with an attractive riverside pedestrian walkway adjacent to

Emily Square. The River Barrow waterside amenity areas also play a vital role as floodplains for the river and thereby minimise flood impact upon more developed areas within the Athy town boundary. This walkway is however poorly overlooked and has poor linkages back towards Offaly Street and the Carlow Road. An opportunity exists to improve the quality of the public open spaces along the banks of the river and to develop the amenities provided by the town's unique location adjacent to the waterways.

Athy also has a good provision of public open space for both passive and active recreation purposes. However, most of these amenity areas are disconnected from the town centre with poor linkages and permeability. This has resulted in poorly defined and underutilised public parks and open space particularly in the vicinity of the Town's Park. An opportunity exists to improve the access and use of these spaces through well design urban development.

#### **14.4.5 Transport links and movement**

There are poorly defined approaches to the town and a number of edges are of poor quality characterised by vacant and derelict sites as well as a poor quality public realm. An opportunity exists to improve the approaches to the town and provide gateways to the town to celebrate the entrances to the town centre.

Traffic congestion has become the largest threat to the success of Athy as an attractive urban centre. While the River Barrow provides Athy with many positive attributes it also represents a physical barrier with only two access points that cross the river, one vehicular and one pedestrian, providing inadequate permeability within the town centre. In order to consolidate the town; better connectivity and permeability is required to overcome the traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.

There is also a lack of pedestrian and cycling connectivity between the town centre and nearby residential areas. An opportunity exists to provide overlooked cycle and pedestrian linkages between the residential areas, amenities and the town core.

#### 14.4.6 Land use and activity

The town centre is the commercial core of Athy with many established retailers located there. Poor uptake of retail with high retail vacancy rates within the town centre has occurred through the loss of retail functions to neighbouring towns such as Carlow, Portlaoise and Newbridge. An opportunity exists to improve the quality of the retail provision within the town through the amalgamation of plots.

There are large concentrations of social housing along the western bank of the River Barrow. Recently there has been some welcome regeneration of the housing stock and the provision of community facilities within the area such as a swimming pool, basketball courts and a playground. However these residential areas remain effectively severed from the rest of the town through lack of connectivity with both the main shopping areas of the town and the schools on the eastern side of the river.

#### 14.4.7 General Urban Design Polices

This section sets out general urban design policies which address issues arising from the Townscape Analysis.

It is a policy of the Council:

- UDG 1: To utilise the towns historic core as a tool to regenerate the town centre to achieve a place with a positive public image.
- UDG 2: To facilitate the development of the historic core as a cultural quarter that reinforces Athy's status as a Heritage town.
- UDG 3: To improve access and use of new and existing amenity spaces in the town through well designed developments that provide connections from the town centre by way of good linkages and higher level of permeability.
- UDG 4: To improve the quality of the public open spaces along the banks of the river and develop the amenities provided by the town's unique location adjacent to the waterways.

UDG 5: To provide better definition of public parks and open space that allows for greater levels of use, particularly in the vicinity of the Town's Park.

UDG 6: To improve the approaches to the town and provide well designed entrances to mark the edges of the town centre at appropriate locations that reflect its character.

UDG 7: To achieve better connectivity and permeability to overcome the traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.

UDG 8: To provide overlooked cycle and pedestrian linkages between the residential areas, amenity areas and the town core.

#### 14.5 Urban Design Framework

This section establishes the general principles and strategies that are proposed for Athy, including specific proposals to guide growth and manage change in the town over the next two decades by consolidating and expanding Athy in order to create a lively urban core with a mix of residential, commercial and amenity uses. The overall aim of the strategy will be to achieve a flexible and realistic framework for growth while allowing for the continued development, regeneration and physical improvement of the town.

It is a particular objective of the Draft Plan that the established town centre be consolidated, providing for commercial and mixed-use development while creating strong linkages within the town centre. It is therefore an aim of the urban design framework to develop in an integrated manner opportunity sites within the town in order to intensify development in the existing urban centre.

The vision of this strategy is to create a vibrant and bustling town with a diverse mix of activities. The strategy seeks firstly to develop derelict and key infill/gap sites in the town centre, enhance the physical environment and streetscape of the existing town core, create zones of activity and in doing so realise the full potential of Athy's inherent character.

### 14.5.1 Consolidate the Existing Town Centre

Athy today is facing physical, social and economic challenges. The proposed bypass of the town has the potential to create both positive and negative effects. While it will ease congestion, it could also potentially lead to the further degradation of Leinster Street and Duke Street due to reduced levels in footfall associated with passing traffic. By removing congestion the bypass will however provide an opportunity to re-focus this area to provide a quality public realm and an attractive place in which to live, work, shop and recreate. It is therefore imperative that the primacy of Leinster Street and Duke Street be respected and reinforced by any expansion of the town centre; this can only be achieved if an integrated approach is adopted in order to enlarge the town centre in a sustainable manner.

### 14.5.2 Improve the Image of the Town Centre

The image of Athy is crucial to its vitality and therefore plays an important part towards the success of the town centre. The following measures will strengthen the image of the town centre and support its role as the principle commercial area. Good urban quarters are judged on their street life, therefore good streets need to be active and the areas which they serve must be permeable. Good quality streets have well defined edges and transparency or visibility at their edges (where private and public edges meet). For this to happen there must be a good horizontal grain of active frontages along a street. Thus in any block of, say, 10 shop units, there might be a range of users such as food shops or deli's, a video store, an off-licence, a patisserie/bakery, a café/bar, a gallery, a restaurant, a pharmacy or a betting shop. Successful quarters tend to have a number of activity nodes within a short walking distance of each other.

High vacancy rates within the town centre provide an opportunity to develop good quality streets with ground floor active frontages as outlined above. While improvements to the public realm in the form of high quality street furniture, public lighting, improvements to the surface material and traffic calming may improve the streetscape, the overall success of a town centre will largely rely on the

right combination and location of shops and cultural activities.

Emily Square at the heart of the historic core has a poor public realm. Its principal function is related to traffic and parking which at present, dilute the quality of the civic space with the clutter of signs, poles and overhead wires and the poor quality of some recent developments including shop fronts and other architectural elements. The historic core retains many buildings of significant architectural and historical merit such as the Courthouse, the Library, the Heritage Centre and White Castle all of which significantly contribute to the urban quality of the historic centre and provide Athy with both a sense of place and historic identity. An opportunity exists to utilise the historic core with its strong sense of place, character and culture as a tool to regenerate the town core and achieve a place with a positive public image.

Shopfronts can have a significant impact on the image of the town and the quality of the public domain. It is proposed to:

- Promote and encourage high quality shopfront design particularly within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) (Refer to Chapter 12 in this Plan).
- Encourage the retention, sensitive repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts.
- Encourage the sensitive conversion of retail units to residential use where viable.
- Reduce visual clutter by removing and preventing the introduction of poor quality projecting signage.

Leinster Street has experienced deterioration and neglect resulting in high vacancy rates. The fine urban grain is an important feature of this street; however improvement of visual identity of this area is needed given its role as the first point of entry to the town from the east.

This Plan seeks to improve the quality of new development in the town centre and to improve the general ambience of the public realm.



### 14.5.3 Intensify Town Centre Development

The regeneration of Athy Town Centre is a complex process of adaptation of existing urban areas, preservation of areas of historical significance, the balanced development within and adjoining the town centre boundaries and environmental protection and flood risk minimisation.

Therefore, this chapter seeks to:

- Develop a framework for the orderly town centre growth that balances adaptation, preservation and expansion
- Set out principles for the intensification of use of the existing grain within the established town centre
- Establish a consistent approach to key redevelopment sites by way of comprehensive design guidelines

Consolidation is necessary to reinforce the town centre as the central hub of activity resulting in a vibrant and bustling core with a diverse mix of uses. The intensification of development in Athy can occur by utilising undeveloped, backland and brownfield land within or adjacent to the town centre area.

The main spine route of Leinster Street and Duke Street are characterised by a fine urban grain with some noteworthy examples of traditional shopfronts. Despite the close knit appearance, large underutilised vacant backland plots exist to the rear of these streets. This Plan seeks to maximise the development potential of these expansion areas in an integrated manner. It is therefore proposed to strengthen and formalise existing routes within the town as well as creating new linkages along which development can take place.

In this manner the town core will expand organically overtime, allowing the continued development of a viable urban centre.

### 14.5.4 Regularise Traffic

It is the aim of this strategy to intensify and transform Athy from a busy through route to a

bustling core. Presently, Leinster Street and Duke Street are characterised by significant levels of vehicular activity that is largely associated with through traffic, however commercial activities within the town also contribute to the traffic flows in the area. The proposed Southern Distributor Road will remove significant levels of the through traffic from the town centre. Upon the construction of this road, it is therefore an objective of this strategy that traffic be calmed, most importantly at the entrances and approaches to the town in order to improve the comfort for pedestrians and enhance the public realm. This can be achieved by providing alternative routes through the town centre, reducing the level and speed of traffic through the town by appropriate use of surface material combined with pedestrian priority zones.

Athy Town Centre will therefore comprise of a fine grain network of streets and paths with defined public spaces which will allow intensity of use as well as social and economic exchanges to take place. It is proposed to develop a network of public spaces throughout the town that are easy to move between with varying activities.

Figure 14.3 shows existing and proposed streets within the town centre which will provide alternative routes in and around the town centre also serving to relieve traffic congestion along Leinster Street and Duke Street.

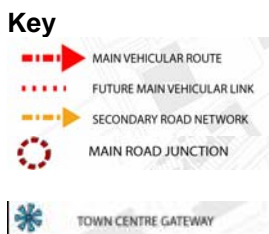
### 14.5.5 Formalise Entrances and Approaches to the Town Centre

The existing entrances to the town create a poor sense of arrival. Derelict buildings set a negative tone along the approach from the west, while vacant sites and the awkward road layout provide a poor sense of enclosure as the town is approached from the east. It is therefore proposed to mark the entrances to the town as follows:

- **The Western Approach**

Create a new approach to the town at the Tegral Site at the junction of the proposed New Town Street (Inner Relief Street) and the Kilkenny Road. A key building should signify this important entrance to the town.

**Figure 14.1 Western Approach**



- **The Eastern Approach**

Transform Leinster Street at the Junction with Church Road into a boulevard and create a new public space with a key building at the junction of the proposed New Town Street and Leinster Street.

**Figure 14.2 Eastern Approach**



### 14.5.6 Integrate Green Space and Increase Permeability

While Athy has an abundance of green space much of it is disconnected and underutilised. It is therefore proposed to provide better connectivity between areas of green space by providing green links and improving the pedestrian and cycling network between the existing parks, the town centre and community, social and education facilities.

This green network will encourage further biodiversity and provide a dedicated pedestrian and cycle network across Athy. Native tree planting throughout the town should form part of the design philosophy to encourage biodiversity and create a quality public realm.

### 14.5.7 Urban Design Framework Policies

It is a policy of the Council:

UDF 1: To consolidate the existing town centre through an integrated approach that consolidates the town centres activities in a sustainable manner.

UDF 2: To improve the image of the town centre by increasing permeability, creating well defined street edges (where private space and public space meet), developing high quality streets with active ground floor frontages

UDF 3: To strengthen the identity of the town by achieving a balance between old and new which reinforces the distinctiveness of the historic town core.

UDF 4: To improve the quality of the town's streetscape by:

- Promoting and encouraging high quality shopfront design particularly within the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) (Refer to Chapter 15 in this Plan).
- Encouraging the retention, sensitive repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts.

- Encouraging the sensitive conversion of retail units to residential use where viable.
- Reducing visual clutter by removing and preventing the introduction of poor quality projecting signage.

UDF 13: To incorporate the Key Design Guidelines set out for each of the five character areas (defined in section 14.7 of the plan) in the preparation of design statements.

UDF 5: To provide an attractive streetscape along Leinster Street, Duke Street and Emily Square by rationalising and calming traffic flow, regularising on street car parking and using high quality materials to create a quality public realm.

UDF 6: To intensify town centre development by establishing a consistent approach to key redevelopment sites by way of comprehensive design guidelines (refer to section 14.7 – character areas)

UDF 7: To allow for the intensification of the town centre by utilising undeveloped, backland and brownfield land within or adjacent to the town centre area.

UDF 8: To strengthen and formalise existing routes within the town as well as creating new linkages along which development can take place.

UDF 9: To facilitate traffic calming measures, most importantly at the entrances and approaches to the town, which improve the comfort for pedestrians and enhance the public realm.

UDF 10: To develop a network of public spaces throughout the town that are easy to move between allowing for various modes of transport.

UDF 11: To utilise and enhance the environmental qualities of the town to provide quality facilities in terms of passive and active recreational green spaces.

UDF 12: To prepare and submit a design statement for developments within the town centre, as deemed necessary by the Planning Authority.



Figure 14.3 Urban Design Framework

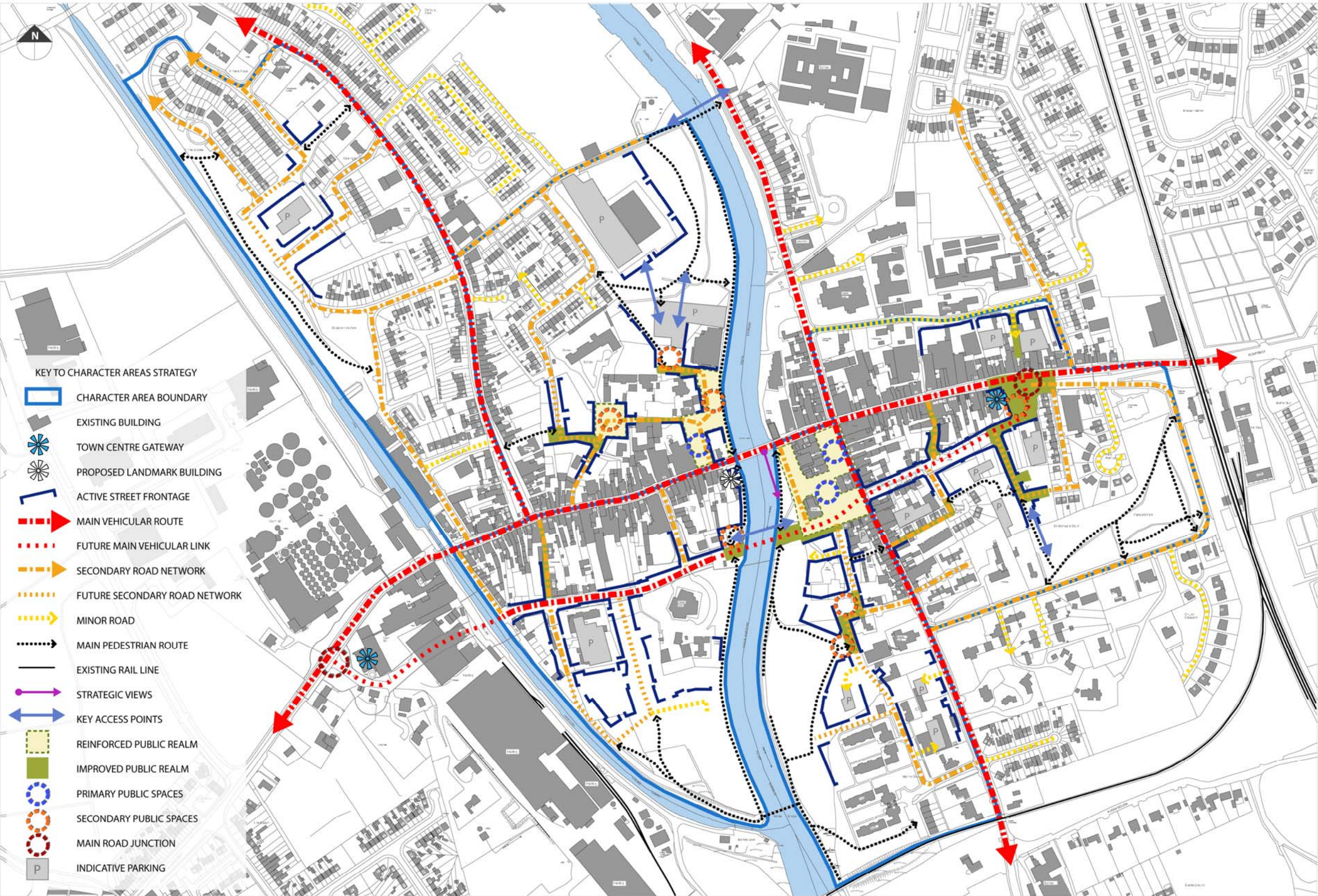
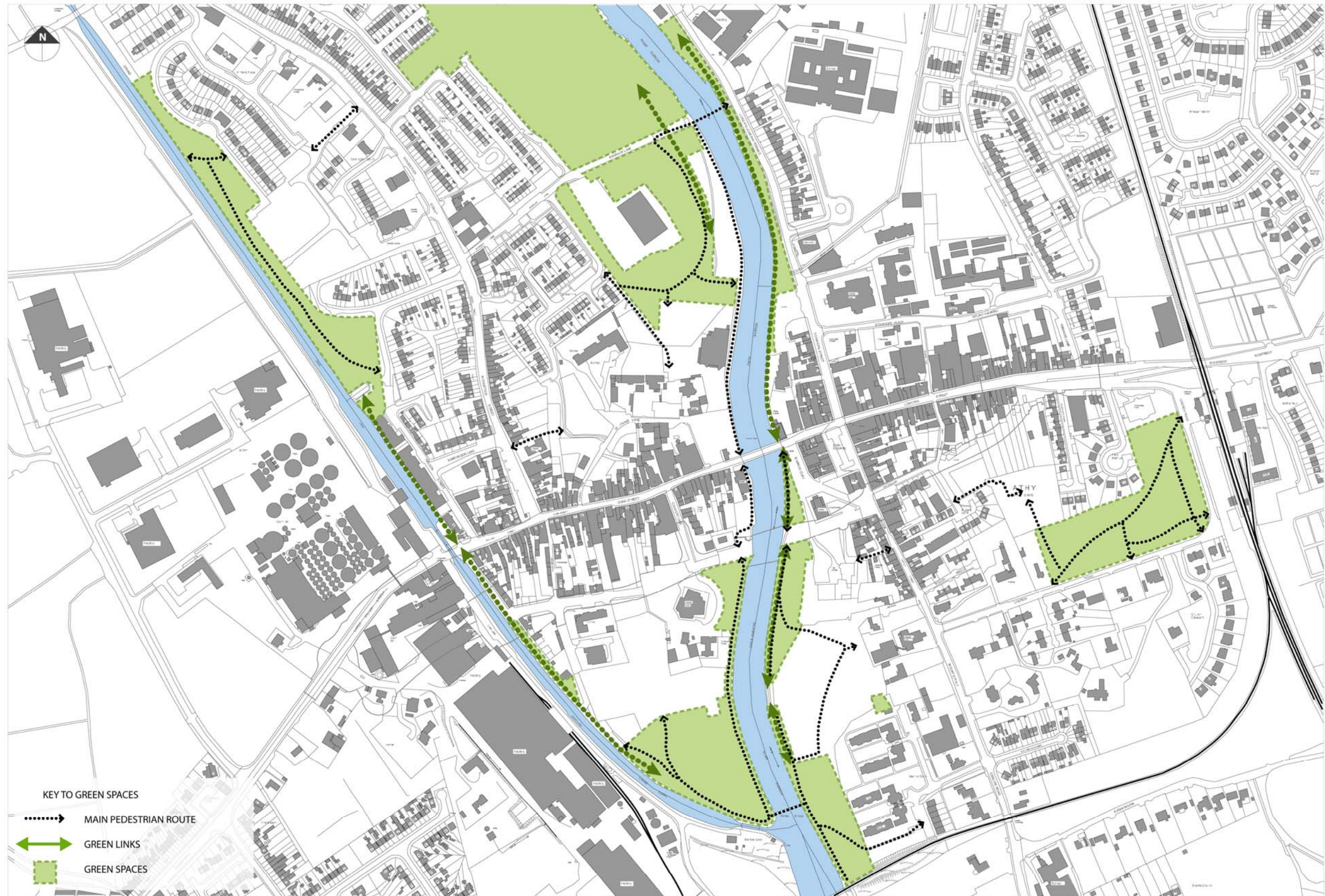








Figure 14.4 Network of Green Space





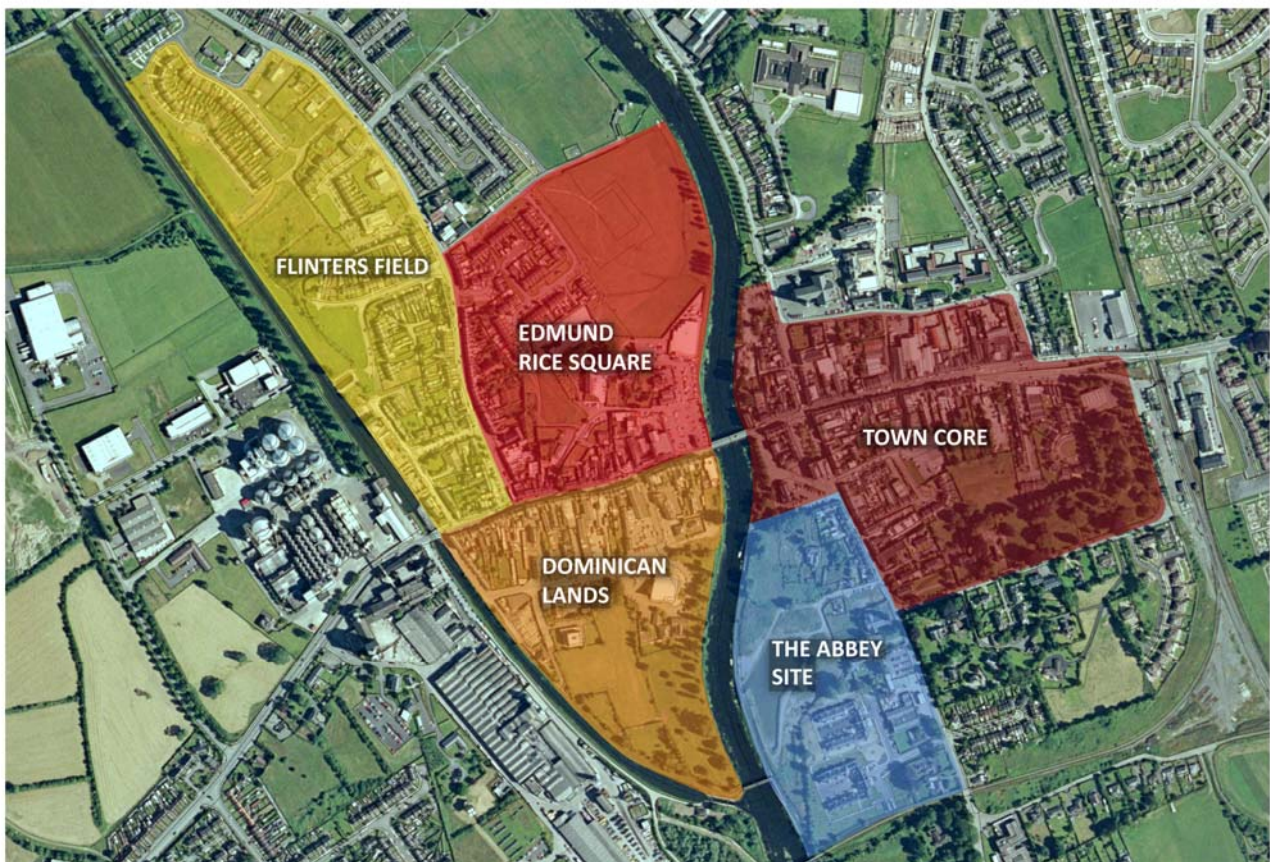


## 14.7 Character Areas

Character areas have been identified in order to assist in maximising the potential of underutilised land in the town. Indicative urban design sketches suggest how the built form (street frontages, important buildings etc.), routes and spaces could be developed in these areas. Notwithstanding the indicative sketches, a design statement which clearly shows how development proposals relate to a specific site/area will be required as deemed necessary by the Planning Authority. These character areas include:

- Town Core
- The Abbey Site
- Dominican Lands
- Edmund Rice Square (incl. Townspark)
- Flinters Field and (incl. Grand Canal)

**Figure 14.5** Character Areas





## 14.7.1 Town Core Study Area

### The Study Area

The subject lands comprise primarily of the area to the north and south of Leinster Street including Emily Square. These lands are bounded by the Railway line to the East, Kirwans Lane to the North, and Church Road and the Abbey Lands to the south and south west respectively and the River Barrow to the west.

### Key Urban Design Issues

The study area provides an opportunity to revitalise an underutilised area in the historic centre.

There are a number of key opportunity sites within the character area, mostly occurring to the rear of the existing buildings north and south of Leinster Street.

### Design Objectives

In order to increase permeability and to provide relief to the traffic congestion experienced through the town, it is proposed to develop a New Town Street to the south of Leinster Street. This street provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of extensive backland opportunity sites to the south of Leinster Street.

The character area presents an opportunity to formalise the approach and entrance and create a new well defined entrance into the town centre in order to create a sense of arrival and departure. It is envisaged that a key building at the junction of Leinster Street and the New Street will signal the significance of the site as an entrance into the Town Centre. Care should be taken that this building addresses both street frontages and must be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations. Care should be taken with regard to the scale and massing of this structure to ensure that it does not become too bulky. New developments should enhance the character of the existing historic core.

An opportunity also exists to link the Town Centre Character Area to the Peoples Park to the south thereby increasing its connectivity with the town centre. It is proposed that the New Town Street will link to Emily Square. In order to overcome the barrier of the river and increase permeability within the town centre it is proposed that a new vehicular

bridge will link Emily Square to the access road at the Dominican Church and the backlands to the south of Duke Street.

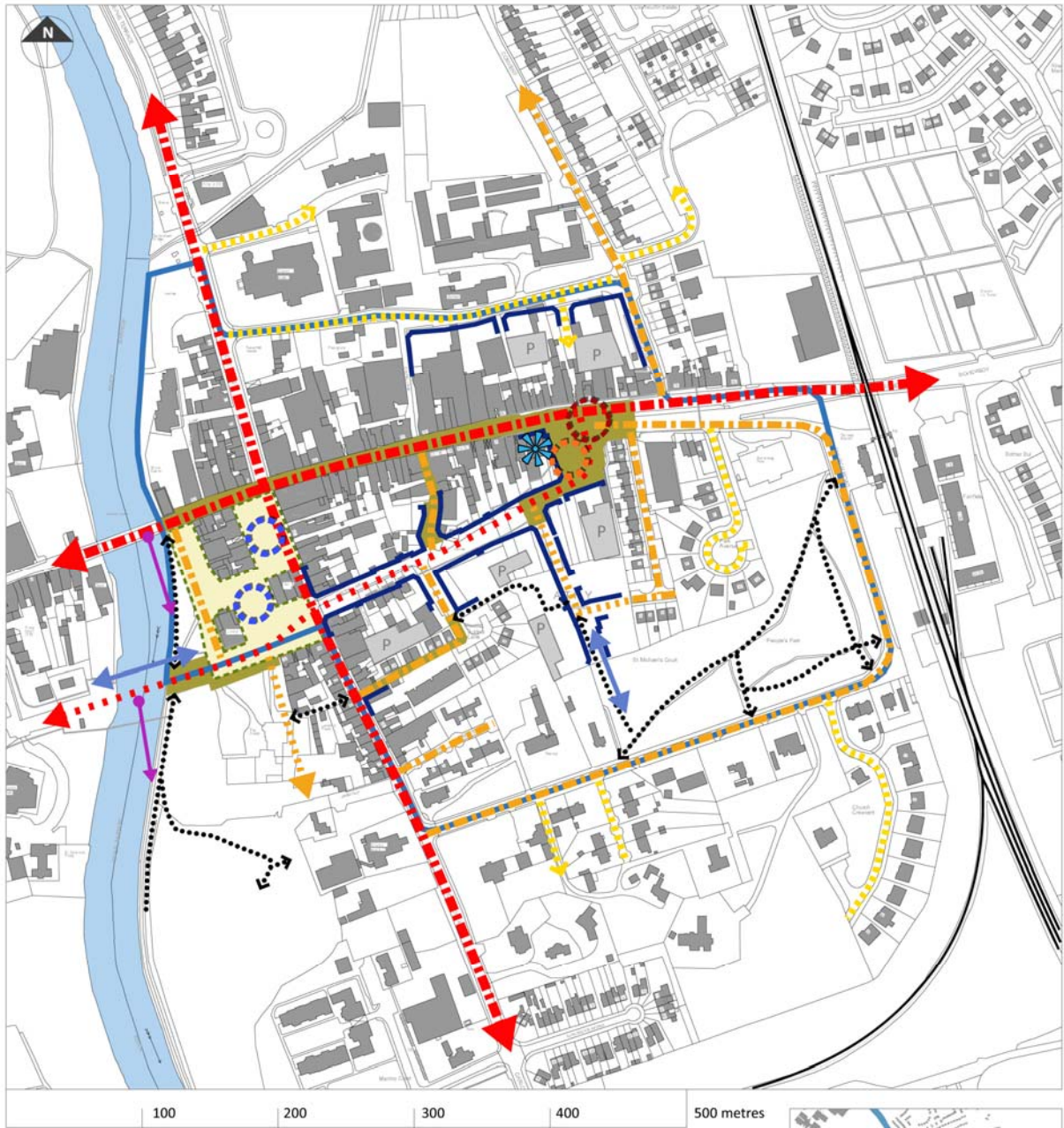
Development along the New Town Street should complement and add to the existing town core providing a successful urban centre with a concentration and variety of uses. The built form should consist of a mix of historic and contemporary structures. New proposals for this area should have regard to the surrounding character by enhancing the historic core through the use of high quality design, fine grained, active frontage blocks. Development to the rear or adjacent to the existing built form should have regard to residential and visual amenity of these buildings. The design and layout of new buildings should incorporate the principles of passive surveillance to encourage a community atmosphere that discourages anti-social behaviour, through active overlooking of public space.

Table 14.1 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.6 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.




















**TABLE 14.1 KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- Facilitate the construction of a formal gateway to the Town Centre
- Facilitate the development of the New Town Street to improve permeability and relieve traffic congestion within the town core.
- Provide additional shopping potential and improve the overall shopping experience
- Improve connectivity to the Peoples Park
- Place Emily Square at the centre of the town
- Provide additional shopping
- Provide fine grained active frontage development in the form of a perimeter block
- Parking to the rear or within buildings
- Improve the amenity area towards the river

**Figure 14.6 Town Core Character Area**



**KEY TO TOWN CORE AREA STRATEGY**

- |   |                               |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARY       |    | MINOR ROAD              |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING             |    | MAIN PEDESTRIAN ROUTE   |
|  | TOWN CENTRE GATEWAY           |    | EXISTING RAIL LINE      |
|  | ACTIVE STREET FRONTAGE        |    | KEY ACCESS POINTS       |
|  | MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE          |    | REINFORCED PUBLIC REALM |
|  | FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR LINK    |    | PRIMARY PUBLIC SPACES   |
|  | SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK        |    | SECONDARY PUBLIC SPACES |
|  | FUTURE SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK |    | MAIN ROAD JUNCTION      |
|   |                               |  | IMPROVED PUBLIC REALM   |
|   |                               |  | STRATEGIC VIEWS         |
|   |                               |  | INDICATIVE PARKING      |



**14.6.2 The Abbey Site**

**The Study Area**

The study area comprises the undeveloped lands on the site of the former Abbey and the underutilised sites along Marina Court. The lands are bounded by the Emily Square to the north and Offaly Street and the Carlow Road to the East. The River Barrow forms the boundary to the West.

### Key Urban Design Issues

This character area lies adjacent to the centre of the town providing a key expansion area within the town core. The sensitive redevelopment of this character area is required due to its pivotal location immediately south of the historic heart of Athy and adjacent to the River Barrow. The exceptional views afforded towards the site from Cromaboo Bridge and from the west bank of the River Barrow also highlight the need for the responsive redevelopment of the character area.

### Design Objectives

The character area provides an opportunity to intensify town centre development by reinforcing the urban fabric of the area. In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to Emily Square providing a point of destination and increasing the pedestrian flow to this area of the town centre.

The street network to and within this character area should provide an opportunity to unlock the backland development sites to the rear of existing residential units along Offaly Street.

It is envisaged the character area will comprise of buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, providing a strong street edge along with a quality public realm. Development should comprise a high quality design and fine grained active frontage blocks. Buildings should provide a strong frontage that delineates the public realm. Development to the rear or adjacent to the existing built form shall have regard to the residential and visual amenity of these buildings. Larger blocks may be sensitively incorporated towards the centre of the site. Two or three storey high buildings may be acceptable in this area; however it is imperative that these urban blocks 'look' outwards towards the surrounding streets, public spaces and the River

Barrow. Ground floor activity should spill out over the pavements. Where possible, surface car parking should be provided to the rear of buildings.

The development of leisure and tourist based uses within the character area will be encouraged in order to complement the amenity value of the river. It is envisaged that a high quality public realm will be provided surrounded by new residential development.

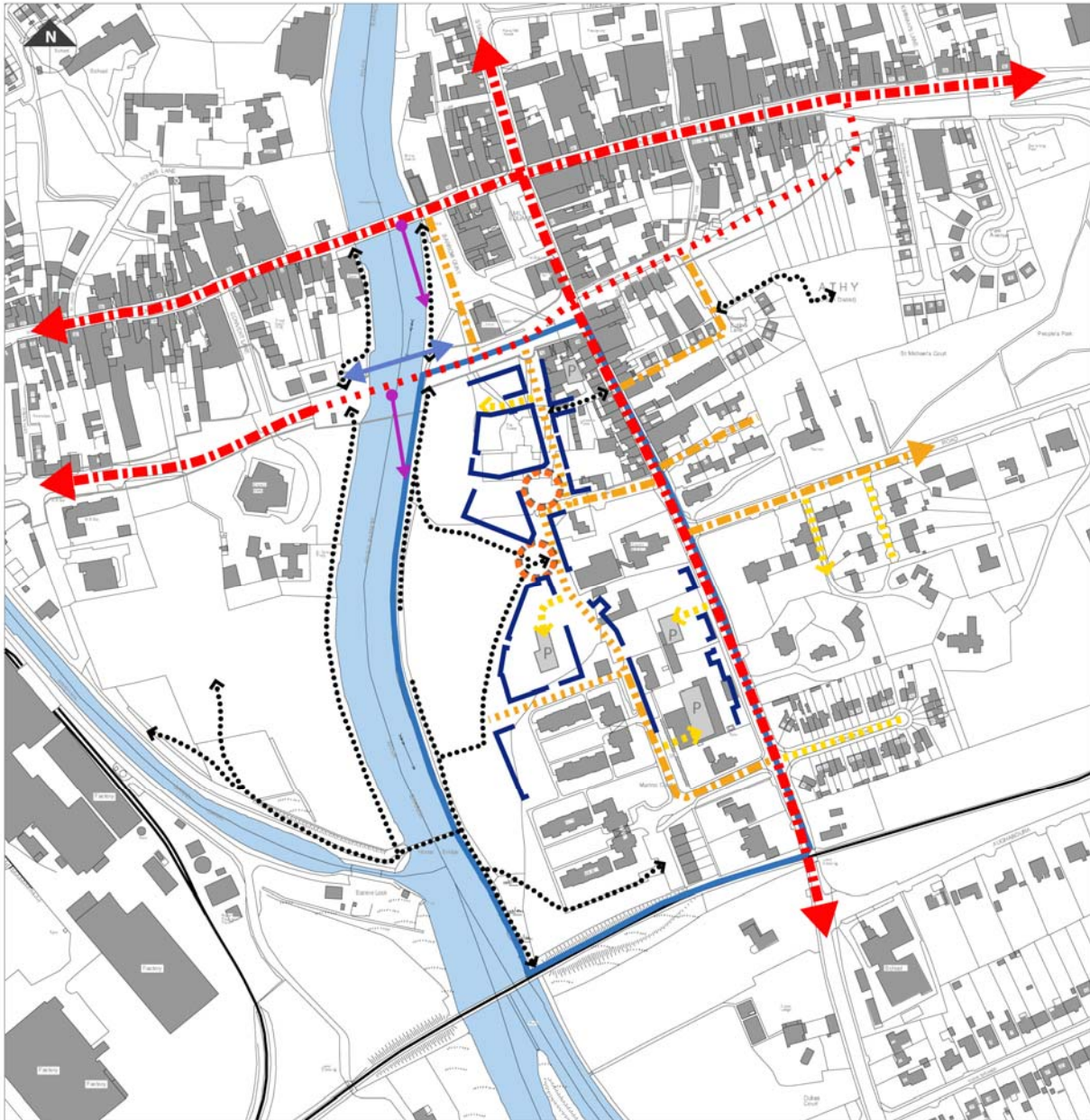
Table 14.2 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.7 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

**TABLE 14.2 KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

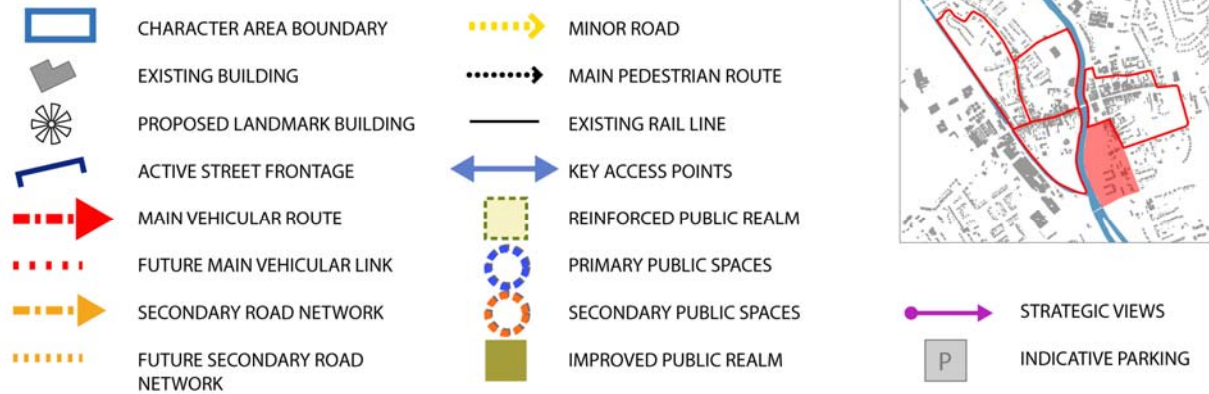
- Consolidate and reinforce the role of Emily Square as the main civic space within the town
- Provide strong street edges and active frontages in order to increase passive surveillance to the public realm
- Create a new civic and cultural urban quarter for the Town
- Develop tourist / leisure based enterprise / uses in addition to niche retailing
- Use perimeter block urban structure
- Provide additional overlooked recreational amenities along the river
- Provide a quality public realm
- Have regard to the amenity of surrounding buildings



Figure 14.7 The Abbey Character Area



KEY TO THE ABBEY SITE STRATEGY



### 14.6.3 Dominican Lands Character Area

#### Study Area

The Dominican lands are located between the Barrow Navigation of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow. The subject lands comprise of the undeveloped lands around the Dominican Church and include the underutilised and backland sites along the church access road to the south of Duke Street. A number of fields are located at the junction of the Barrow Navigation of the Grand Canal and the River Barrow. There is currently restricted access to the area via a pedestrian bridge and an access road to the church.

#### Key Urban Design Issues

Although there have been a number of modern developments in this area in recent years, the built form generally provides poor street frontage resulting in a low quality public realm and streetscape. The existing access road consists of few active frontages and town centre uses resulting in an underutilised and underdeveloped area within the town centre. Both the river to the east and the canal to the west form barriers and sever the character area from nearby Emily Square and surrounding areas and permeability is poor between these areas.

#### Design Objectives

In order to increase permeability and to provide relief to the traffic congestion through the town, it is proposed to link the existing access road to the Dominican church with the new vehicular bridge. An opportunity therefore exists to transform this access road into a bustling urban street within the town core by improving the quality of the public realm, in particular the existing connections and linkages to Duke Street and Emily Square.

The canal is an important historic and amenity element within the town. The canal itself is an underutilised asset which currently presents a physical barrier between the urban centre and the industrial lands to the west. The development of this area provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of the industrial lands to the west of the town by increasing links between these character areas and to establish links with the historic town centre.

Several opportunities exist for appropriate infill development. Infill development should have regard to the surrounding character, particularly where the proposed development is located on a small plot. It is envisaged that the street could be redeveloped in order to provide for new structures with a strong building line and active frontages. A quality public realm should be achieved using a high standard of quality finishes and treatments.

Development proposals within the character area should generally follow a perimeter block structure and comprise a mix of building types. Mixed use buildings/ schemes will be encouraged where compliant with the relevant zoning provisions. New development should overlook adjacent streets, landscaped courtyards, the canal and river.

Apartment developments may be appropriate in limited circumstances for instance on corner sites to enhance these prominent positions and take advantage of dual aspect, or within mixed use developments with residential uses above shops.

The open fields at the southern tip of the character area should be retained as an area of parkland providing passive recreational space. Parts of the area, particularly fronting the parkland, canal and river may have the capacity to absorb larger detached housing.

Quality public realm should be designed and developed to a high standard using quality finishes and treatments. Small pocket parks and more local areas, of open space should be creatively incorporated into any proposed residential layouts which should be overlooked in order to promote natural surveillance.

The existing riverside walkway ends at Edmund Rice Square and does not extend to the subject site. It is a key design objective that walks along the river and canal should be improved and extended in conjunction with new development to ensure a continuous walkway for new neighbourhoods in this area and for the town in general. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the natural heritage status of the river and canal.

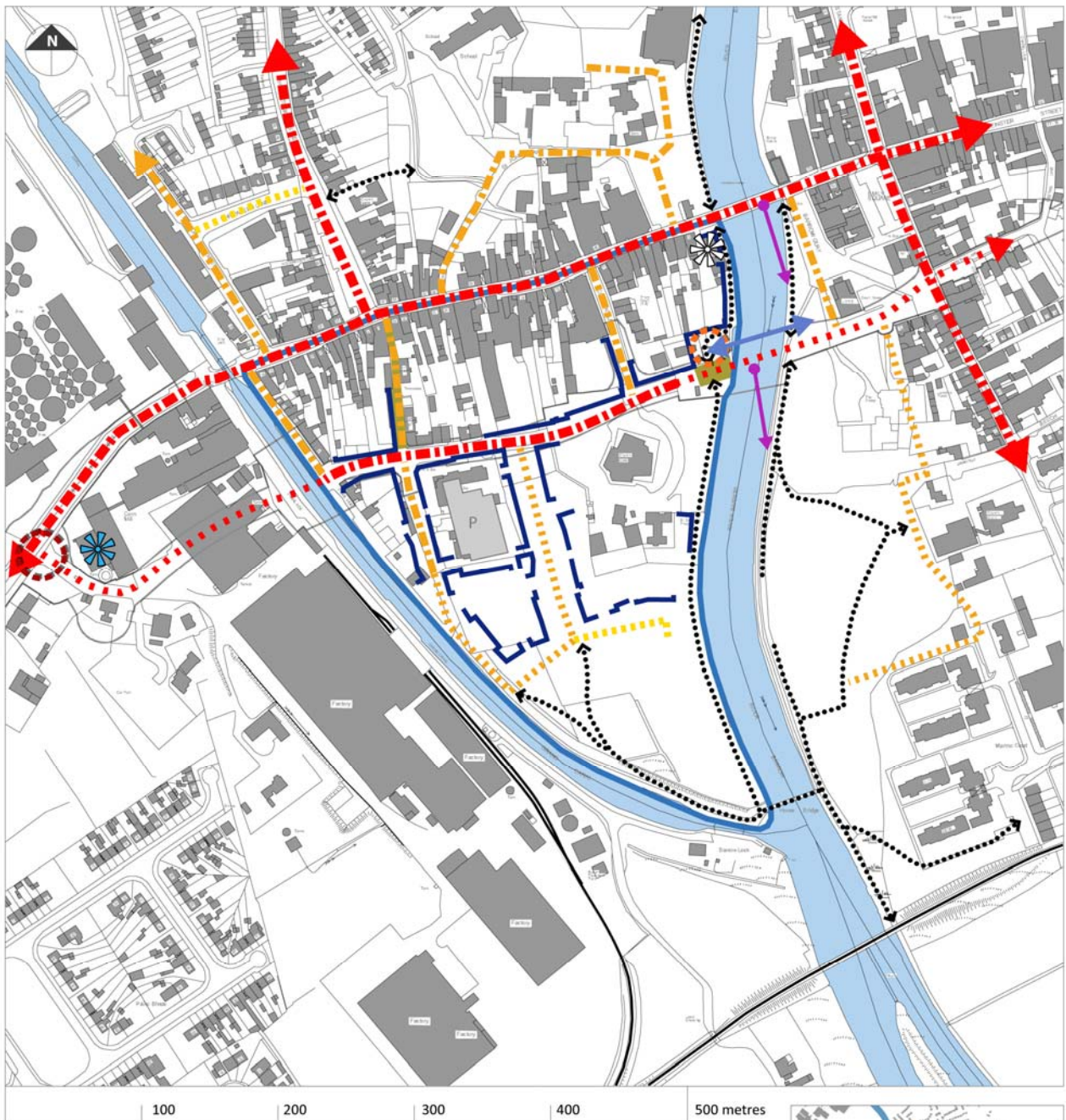
Table 14.3 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.8 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.






















### **TABLE 14.3 KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- Overcome the natural barrier of the River Barrow by providing new connections between the character area and Emily Square.
- Create a sustainable town centre extension with a mix of uses.
- Extend the river and canal side walkways.
- Transform the church access roadway (Dominican Lane) into a bustling street within the town core.
- Provide appropriate infill development with active frontages and a strong building line along Dominican Lane and Convent Lane.
- Improve the quality of the public realm and reinforce the existing linkages between the character area, Duke Street and Emily Square.
- Provide an area of passive recreational space to the south of the character area overlooked by larger detached residential development.

**Figure 14.8** The Dominican Lands Character Area



KEY TO DOMINICAN LANDS STRATEGY

- |   |                             |   |                               |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARY     |    | FUTURE SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING           |    | MINOR ROAD                    |
|  | PROPOSED LANDMARK BUILDING  |    | MAIN PEDESTRIAN ROUTE         |
|  | TOWN CENTRE GATEWAY         |    | EXISTING RAIL LINE            |
|  | ACTIVE STREET FRONTAGE      |    | KEY ACCESS POINTS             |
|  | MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE        |    | PRIMARY PUBLIC SPACES         |
|  | FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE |    | SECONDARY PUBLIC SPACES       |
|  | SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK      |    | MAIN ROAD JUNCTION            |
|   |                             |  | IMPROVED PUBLIC REALM         |
|   |                             |  | STRATEGIC VIEWS               |
|   |                             |  | INDICATIVE PARKING            |



## 14.6.4 Edmund Rice Square Character Area

### The Study Area

The subject site is located immediately adjacent to the existing Town Centre and is zoned for town centre uses. Pettits Supermarket and Shaws Department Store mainly define this area towards the town centre, while a large expanse of residential development and a public park define the character area to the north. The character area is bounded by the River Barrow to the east, Woodstock Street to the west and Duke Street to the south. The character area is outlined in blue on the following graphic, Fig. 14.9.

### Key Urban Design Issues

Edmund Rice Square provides a poor quality public realm used entirely as a surface car park. The square is currently flanked by under scaled one and two storey retail units. The current configuration of the square does little to improve the streetscape along Duke Street.

Pettits Supermarket severs the town centre from the adjacent residential area. The supermarket does not address the river or the open space to the north. The existing riverside walkway is not overlooked, is of poor quality, is poorly lit, attracts anti social behaviour and consequently is uninviting.

The existing built form along St. John's Lane is of poor quality and comprises derelict industrial buildings and vacant sites, overall providing a poor public realm.

There is no connectivity with residential development to the north of Edmund Rice Square apart from an unsupervised pedestrian walkway to the housing area adjacent to the school.

### Design Objectives

The redevelopment of the area provides an opportunity to connect with the residential development, park and community facilities to the north of the square behind the supermarket. It is

proposed to provide a new pedestrian bridge linking the park and residential area with the schools to the east of the river. It is also proposed to provide additional opportunities for community facilities within the park which will overlook an extended riverside walkway. The walkway should run from Duke Street to the proposed pedestrian bridge. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the SAC status of the River Barrow.

This plan encourages the redevelopment of Edmund Rice square to create a sustainable urban quarter with a mix of uses. New development should seek to create a compact area with priority for pedestrians. Redevelopment should increase the connectivity and permeability with adjacent residential developments.

Development shall comprise a high quality design, fine grained, active frontage blocks continuing the existing building line. New buildings should be permanent, timeless and contemporary structures and streets may be punctuated intermittently by individually designed buildings to ensure visual interest and to develop a stimulating streetscape where appropriate.

The existing built form along St. John's Lane provides a poor sense of enclosure particularly in the vicinity of the school. New development along this edge should provide a formal urban structure and strong building line. It is therefore proposed to create a formal public space at this location in order to create a formal urban structure. An opportunity exists to develop the site to the west of the school in order to provide surveillance to the pedestrian walkway associated with the adjacent residential development.

Development to the rear of or adjacent to the existing built form should have regard to the amenity of nearby buildings. Quality public realm shall be achieved using a high standard of quality finishes and treatments

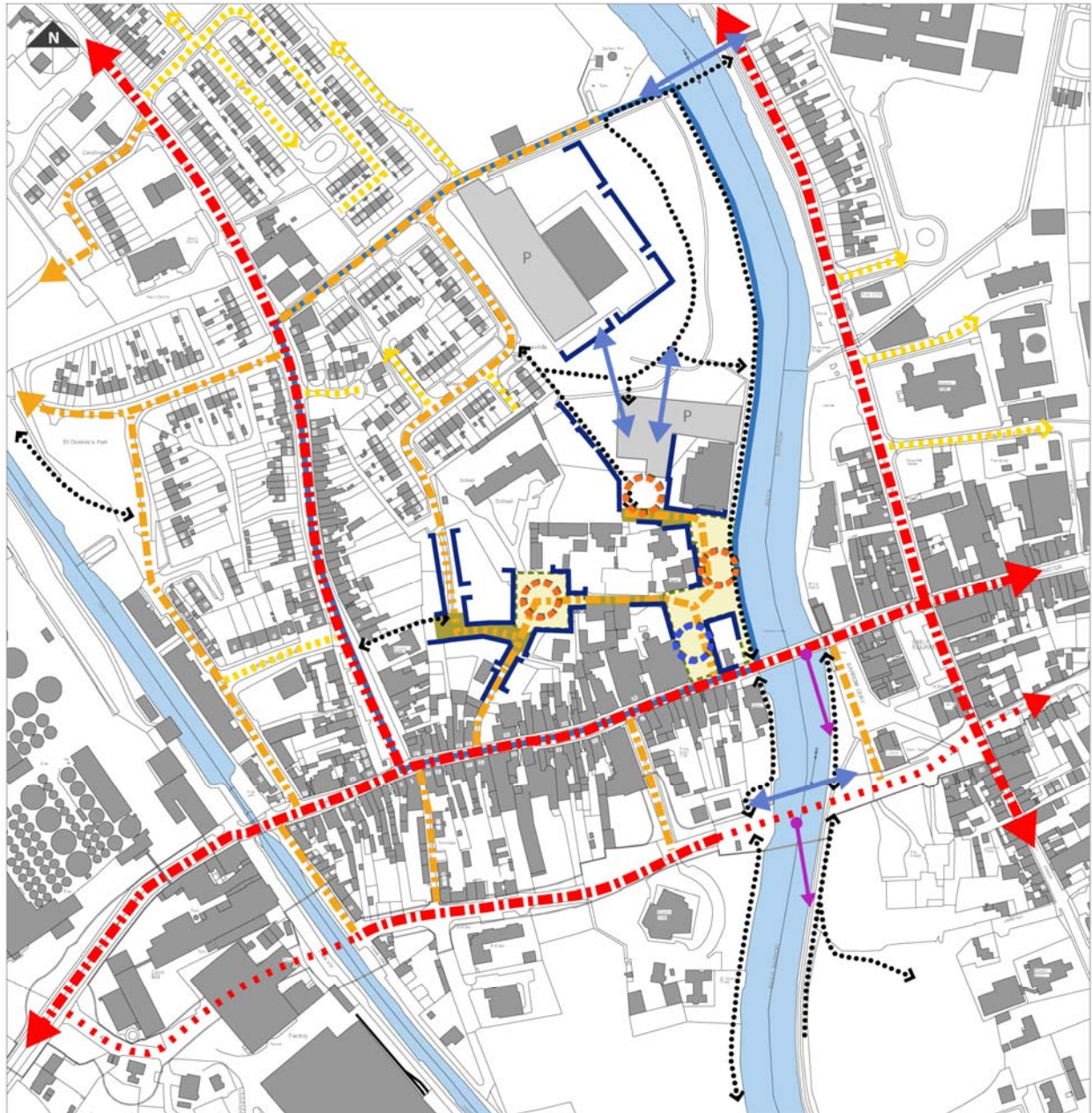
Table 14.4 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.9 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.

#### **TABLE 14.4 KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- Create a sustainable urban quarter with a mix of uses.
- Provide a new pedestrian bridge across the River Barrow linking residential and recreational uses to the nearby education campus on the Monasterevin Road.
- Provide a strong building line with active frontages.
- Provide new connections and increased permeability between the town centre and the adjacent residential developments.
- Provide a public space at the entrance to the school along St. John's Lane
- Improve the quality of the public realm at Edmund Rice Square
- Extend the riverside walkway.



**Figure 14.9** Edmund Rice Square Character Area



**KEY TO EDMUND RICE SQUARE AREA STRATEGY**

- |  |                               |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
|  | CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARY       |  | MAIN PEDESTRIAN ROUTE   |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING             |  | EXISTING RAIL LINE      |
|  | ACTIVE STREET FRONTAGE        |  | KEY ACCESS POINTS       |
|  | MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE          |  | REINFORCED PUBLIC REALM |
|  | FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR LINK    |  | PRIMARY PUBLIC SPACES   |
|  | SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK        |  | SECONDARY PUBLIC SPACES |
|  | FUTURE SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK |  | IMPROVED PUBLIC REALM   |
|  | MINOR ROAD                    |  | STRATEGIC VIEWS         |
|  |                               |  | INDICATIVE PARKING      |



**14.6.5** **Flinters Field Character Area**

**Study Area**



Flinters Field is located to the north of the town along the canal. The study area is bounded by Woodstock Street to the East, the Canal to the West and Duke Street to the south.

### Key Urban Design Issues

The character area comprises disconnected residential development and a poor quality tract of wasteland adjacent to the canal. The existing residential development follows a 'cul de sac' model of development and therefore lacks legibility and connectivity.

### Design Objectives

An opportunity exists to intensify development at this location and increase connectivity and permeability.

The built form should comprise buildings following a perimeter block/courtyard form, with a quality

public realm. Buildings should follow the existing building line that delineates the public realm.

In particular any new development should provide a strong built edge to the surrounding streets. New development should address the parkland area identified on Fig 14.10, incorporating the principles of passive surveillance to encourage a community atmosphere and to discourage anti-social behaviour.

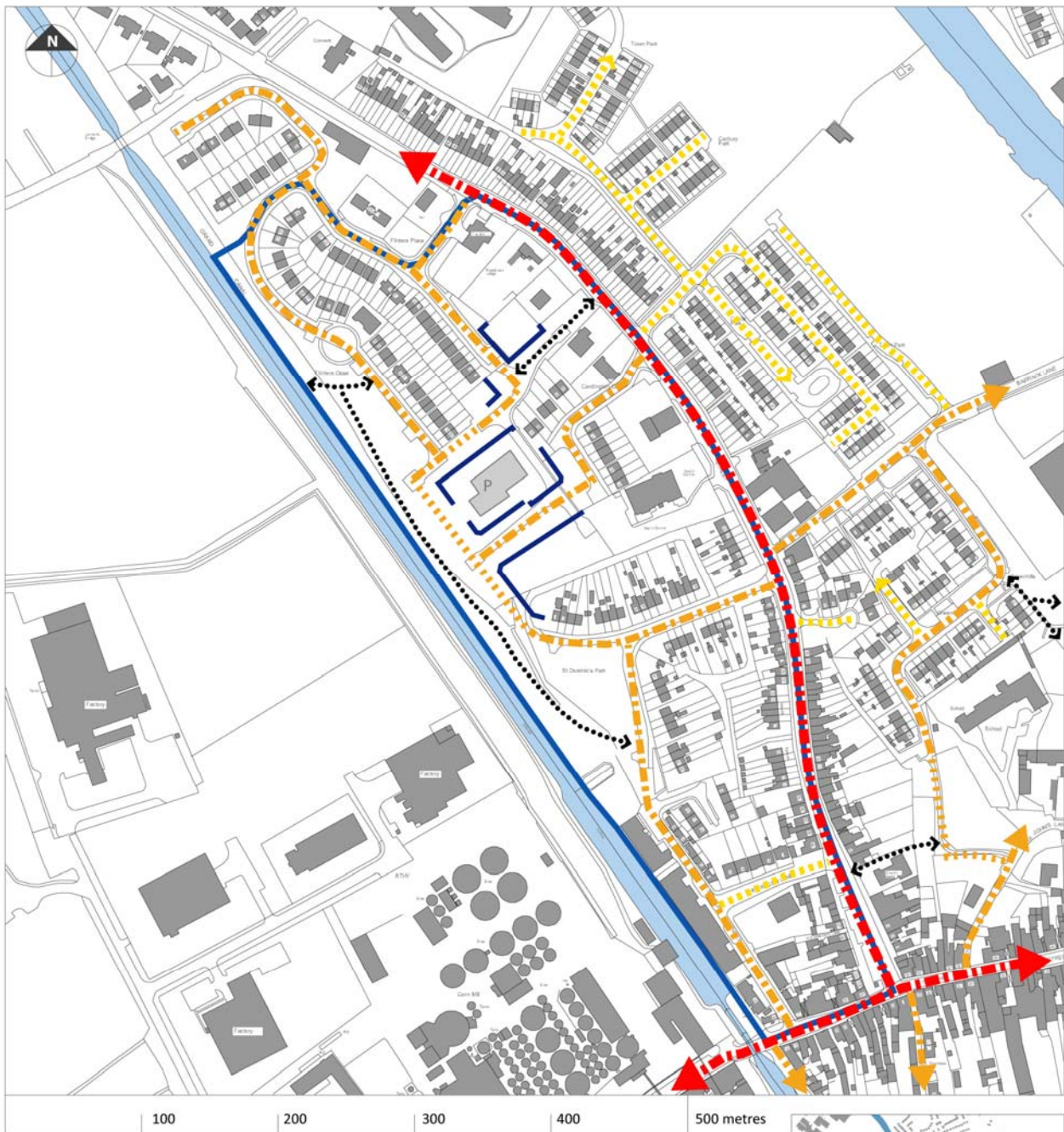
The wasteland adjacent to the canal should be transformed into a linear park which would incorporate a pedestrian walkway to provide an attractive amenity along the canal. In the development of this walkway due consideration should be taken of the NHA status of the canal.

Table 14.5 lists the key design guidelines for this character area, with Fig 14.10 providing a conceptual illustration of how they can be achieved.











**TABLE 14.5 KEY DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- Improve connectivity and permeability within the character area.
- Provide a strong street edge where appropriate.
- Use of perimeter block structure
- Provide a quality public realm
- Have regard to the amenity of surrounding buildings
- Provide passive supervision of the public realm and areas of open space
- Transform the wasteland along the canal into a linear park.

**Figure 14.10** Flinters Field Character Area



KEY TO FLINTERS FIELD AREA STRATEGY

- |   |                            |   |                               |
|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARY    |  | FUTURE SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK |
|  | EXISTING BUILDING          |  | MINOR ROAD                    |
|  | ACTIVE STREET FRONTAGE     |  | MAIN PEDESTRIAN ROUTE         |
|  | MAIN VEHICULAR ROUTE       |  | INDICATIVE PARKING            |
|  | FUTURE MAIN VEHICULAR LINK |   |                               |
|  | SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK     |   |                               |



## 14.7 General Urban Design Considerations

The following sections outline detailed urban design considerations:

### 14.7.1 Scale / Mass / Composition

The size of a building should be relative to its surroundings. Scale is therefore one of the key elements in the design consideration for new buildings.

Scale, mass or bulk essentially refers to the size of the plot, average storey height and also the manner in which the façade is articulated. If these aspects of the design of a building are excessively large when compared to adjoining buildings along a street, then the building is likely to be out of place on the streetscape. Exceptions may be permitted in the following circumstances:

- If it is a building of major public significance.
- If the nature of the use demands such a building and if the location is suitable for such a building.
- The degree to which it can contribute to the economic vitality of the town centre.

### 14.7.2 Key Buildings

Gateway and key buildings can emphasise the urban identity of a place. Their purpose is to provide a signal of a significant place either in terms of movement or use.

Suitable locations for these buildings include important street corners or junctions, the end of vistas and gateways, local centres and the edges of public squares. They ensure visual interest and develop a stimulating streetscape and should only occur at these locations.

In such instances, it may be appropriate to increase building heights so as to provide greater emphasis on the building, but there will also be a greater expectation of design quality and architectural treatment. The significance of these buildings does not always need to be expressed in terms of height. Differentiation in building materials and form can also convey their importance.

### 14.7.3 Corner Sites

Corner sites should be reinforced by buildings which address both street frontages. These buildings should be designed with windows and where appropriate, entrance ways onto both streets.

Various options can be explored e.g. an increase or stepping up in building height, a round corner, a stepped back corner (for example, to create a civic space), or a simple splayed corner. Such buildings should be designed to an exceptional standard on all elevations.



**Figure 14.11:** Example of Corner Building

### 14.7.4 Building Line

Building lines are created by the position of the building frontage along the street edge. This is important as the position of the building line determines the width of the street, therefore influencing the sense of enclosure created.

Building lines generally are continuous but not rigidly straight. They tend to be more organic in nature, staggering at certain intervals, adding significantly to the character of the street and sense of enclosure.

Generally, existing and established building lines should be maintained. Building lines may be relaxed to accentuate an important building or place or where important areas of public or civic space are required. Existing building lines may also



be relaxed where innovative design solutions can demonstrate that the design will positively enhance the streetscape.

- Materials should be chosen for their compatibility with the existing roof tops i.e., dark grey slate.
- Machine and mechanical plant rooms should be designed as an integral part of the building and ideally should not appear as a disruption of the roof line.



**Figure 14.12:** Traditional building line and roofline

#### 14.7.5 Roofline

The scale of buildings has a direct influence on the skyline. Roof tops of traditional buildings are generally constructed of slate and contain features such as chimneys which add visual interest and variety to the skyline. In many contemporary buildings, roofs tend to be flat. Where this type of roof occurs on a building with a long façade it can result in monotony. In such cases the monotony can be relieved by variations in building height at appropriate locations (i.e. stepping up heights at the corners or at the centre of a symmetrical building). Regard should be had to the following:

- Rooflines should respond to the articulation of the rest of the façade so that the building can be read from the ground floor up.
- The roofline should acknowledge the rhythm, harmony and scale of the entire street frontage.

#### 14.7.6 Perimeter Block

Residential layouts should generally utilise the perimeter block principle, as a departure from more recent cul-de sac type layouts. This will increase pedestrian permeability and legibility of a new development area and will help to define streets and public spaces.

#### 14.7.7 Courtyard Buildings

Courtyards can occur primarily in town centre developments. They should be treated as semi-public/private space and their use is to provide:

- A communal outdoor space;
- A circulation space prior to access to the rear of properties; and
- A location for secure cycle and car parking.

These spaces must be safe environments that are policed by natural surveillance from the individual properties. It is therefore imperative that dead corners that may be hidden from view are avoided.

Priority should be given to pedestrian movement as it is intended that these areas will provide informal play for small children. Courtyards should therefore be treated as shared surfaces. Seating should also be provided and orientated to capture the sunshine. This will allow casual residential users to engage with courtyard activities. Small areas of ornamental planting and patches of lawn should be discouraged.

#### 14.7.8 Building Type and Height

In order to conserve and develop the vitality of urban cores, a mix of uses and a healthy balance of economic, residential, cultural and recreational activity should be maintained. By increasing the amount of services and amenities within urban centres, the provision of a wide range of local jobs will be encouraged. It is therefore imperative that urban centres provide a diverse range of activities and uses. Development should be designed for a diverse community which encourages sustainable living and reinforces neighbourhood values.

Residential development should provide a variety of designs to accommodate a good mix of household types – including first time buyers, single people, families, empty nesters and the elderly in

order to ensure a social mix and balance is achieved.

Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skyline. Building height shall generally be considered in terms of the area and location of the site.

#### 14.7.9 Neighbourhood Centres

Local or neighbourhood centres, where appropriate, typically include services and facilities such as shops, pubs, post office, crèche, doctors surgery, health centre, community centre, civic space, as well as some local services and/or employment uses and should comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions of Chapter 6 Retail.

#### 14.7.10 Car Parking

Parking standards are set out in Chapter 15, Development Management. Regard should be had to the following in relation to the location and layout of car parking areas:

- Car parking should generally be sited within established site boundaries in such a manner as to ensure minimal impact on the amenity of adjoining premises.
- In the town centre, parking spaces should be located behind buildings, or underground wherever possible, to encourage the continuity of streetscapes.
- Landscaping and tree planting must be provided to visually enhance the appearance of parking areas.
- Where on-street parking is proposed properly marked car parking spaces should be provided with regular tree planting and a high standard of kerbing and paving. Generally not more than five perpendicular or two parallel car parking spaces should be provided between trees.
- Where surface car parking is required it should be designed to be overlooked to provide passive surveillance and should not dominate the street frontage.
- Cycle parking facilities should be conveniently located, secure, easy to use,



adequately lit and well posted. Weather protected facilities should be considered where appropriate. In addition, parking should be placed within a populated, well-supervised area, and monitored by CCTV where possible.

#### **14.7.11 Protection of the Existing Environment**

All development proposals immediately adjoining existing development should provide for the protection of existing residential amenities and have particular regard to minimising overlooking and visual intrusion. Athy Town Council places significance on the existing heritage fabric of the town. This represents a key heritage and cultural asset and includes protected structures of special architectural, historical and cultural interest.

#### **14.7.12 Building Language and Finishes**

Good modern architecture and design should prevail throughout developments. There should be consistency in materials, colour, proportions, roof pitches, building detail, street/ route surfaces, planting and street furniture within a development.

Certain principles will apply in relation to materials and finishes of development as follows:

- In general, finishes and materials should be of a high quality and should be used in a consistent and restrained manner.
- Where possible natural materials should be used including wood, stone, slate etc. The use of native Irish material should be maximised.
- Materials and finishes should as far as possible reflect a vernacular style and, where appropriate and feasible, a Kildare and local vernacular.
- Use of non-natural materials such as clay pantiles will be permitted in limited circumstances only, where it is considered that such a material contributes to the overall design quality of the scheme.
- Use of uPVC window frames and doors etc. should in general be avoided unless a particular and specific case can be made for their use. This is in the interests of

sustainable development, visual amenity and to help to promote the use of natural and native materials and more environmentally friendly materials.

- In cases where it can be demonstrated that the design of a building is of an exceptional nature and particularly in the case of gateway and key buildings, consideration will be given to the use of modern materials.
- External wall finishes may include render, dry dash, timber cladding and certain types of brick, appropriate to the context, in some instances.
- The use of colour should form part of any design proposal. This should have regard to the traditional use of colour in the Irish context.
- In general, the design of schemes should focus on having a commonality of approach in terms of particular housing areas, with a clearly different approach between housing areas.

In addition, there should also be an overall and consistent design concept for the entire scheme.

### **14.8 Overall Layout Design Considerations**

Understanding the context and the potential of a site through a detailed site analysis will inform the design process for development proposals. The new urban structure should consist of a framework of routes and spaces that provide connectivity within a development, as well as to existing and planned routes in adjoining developments.

Design considerations include the following:

- Recognisable routes, intersections and key buildings should be provided to help people navigate.
- Priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists by providing routes that are direct, safe and secure.
- Streets should be designed to prioritise pedestrian movement and therefore encourage pedestrian activity.

- Attractive and successful outdoor areas should provide a quality public realm.
- Passive supervision of the public realm is the most effective means of preventing anti-social behaviour.
- Buildings should be orientated to maximise privacy and elements such as planting and boundary treatment should be used to maximum effect.
- Residential layouts should, where appropriate, utilise the perimeter block principle as a departure from more recent cul-de sac type layouts.
- Housing should at a minimum be dual aspect and designed so that greatest advantage is taken of southwest orientation.
- Development should be designed for a diverse community which will encourage sustainable living and reinforce neighbourhood values.

#### 14.8.1 Permeability

Central to the vitality of any urban centre is its network of pedestrian paths and routes. A fine grained network is critical to the creation of a human scale environment being, attractive and accessible for the pedestrian. All new development should provide a fully permeable and recognisable, interconnecting network of streets. Any new development should open up new routes as part of the development and connect into existing routes.

#### 14.8.2 Legibility

All new development should provide:

- Recognisable routes which provide a coherent and easily read pattern of streets, lanes, squares, urban and green spaces.
- Intersections and key buildings which are provided to aid orientation.
- Main routes, should be distinguished by exploiting vistas, key buildings and landmarks.

- The activities and functions of places should be made visible, thus bringing about a sense of liveliness.

#### 14.8.3 Streetscape

The streetscape should be characterised by quality buildings and a high standard of finishes and treatments such as paving, landscaping and street furniture, creating an environment with a definite sense of place.

All streets/roads, walking/cycling routes and public spaces should be overlooked by adjoining accommodation to ensure passive surveillance. The creation of observed public spaces and route ways should not reduce or detract from the private nature of other spaces and buildings.

#### 14.8.4 Public Space

To create a vibrant bustling town and to integrate new development into backland areas the provision of a network of public spaces should be explored. These spaces should be designed to vary in size and use providing for children's play, kick about spaces, passive recreation and landscaped and planted areas to serve the entire community. Public spaces should be linked through high quality pedestrian and cycle routes combined with views and vistas and should be overlooked by adjoining accommodation to ensure passive surveillance.

#### 14.8.5 Transportation Network

Development must emphasise permeability for all modes of transport and should be designed on the basis of the following considerations and users:

- Pedestrians and cyclists
- Public Transport
- Access for emergency vehicles
- Efficient circulation of local traffic
- Externalising non local traffic

#### 14.8.6 Cycling and Pedestrian Linkages

Cycling and pedestrian linkages are necessary to promote integration and sustainable development

patterns. New development should seek to achieve:

- Convenient and prominent pedestrian access points in terms of signage, lighting and gradients;
- A pattern of footpaths/pavements which allow easy permeability, a choice of routes filtering through the area;
- Routes from houses to local facilities, including shops, schools and bus stops, should be direct and pleasant, avoiding steep slopes or steps/kerbs where possible.
- Utilising green open space networks for longer distance walks.
- Providing dedicated pedestrian routes along green corridors.

For a cycle network to be successful it should be continuous and convenient with appropriate trip-end provision.

#### **14.8.7 Street Hierarchy**

A network of high quality, attractive streets comprising high quality finishes and treatments such as paving and landscaping, to create an environment with a definite sense of place, should be achieved. All development should include a hierarchy of streets designed to recognise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and therefore encourage healthy activity. This can be achieved by paying close attention to the design of street surfaces and planting which should be integrated with passive traffic calming measures.

The purpose of any proposed network is to adequately serve the maximum extent of development whilst discouraging unnecessary through-traffic.



**Boulevards** - Access roads should be provided in the form of spacious, tree-lined boulevards to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists with associated cycle lanes, footpaths and verges which should be fronted by buildings. Boulevards should comprise a high quality public realm, planted with appropriate native species.



**Figure 14.13:** Boulevards

**Neighbourhood Streets** - The majority of circulation routes within new developments should be provided by neighbourhood streets. The design of the neighbourhood street including associated parking should vary according to the density of the area.

In most urban areas where the density is at its highest, the neighbourhood street will have a carriageway width of between 5m and 5.5m and should maintain a constant road width and continuous kerb edge. They will have dedicated 2m minimum footpaths either side and 1.5m wide grass verges. Cyclists will use the road surface. On-street parking will be provided on both sides of the street.



**Figure 14.14:** Neighbourhood Street

Where the density is medium the road width will be maintained as above but the parking will be

provided on one side only and staggered along the length of the street.



**Figure 14.15:** Neighbourhood Street



Where the built density decreases away from the urban area, the street design will largely be less formal in character at the edges of a built up area, such as variable



**Figure 14.16:** Neighbourhood Street

**Mews / Shared Surface Streets - Shared** surface streets may occur where the character is mostly urban, typically in the town centres. These streets should be designed as shared level surfaces, where pedestrians and cyclists have equal priority

with vehicles, therefore having the advantage of providing sufficient space for large vehicles to approach close to buildings without giving the impression of a 'tarmac prairie'. These streets must have building frontages on both sides.



**Figure 14.17:** Shared Surface Street



### 13.9.8 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Where swales, detention basin and/or other attenuation facilities are proposed for open /green spaces, they must be incorporated into the landscape structure of the new development and form part of a cohesive urban structure, integrated with both the streets and built form.

SUDS areas should be planted utilising indigenous species that can withstand both dry and very wet conditions. A similar landscape treatment will be utilised across the system so that it reads as a single network.

The development of an appropriate management regime is critical for the avoidance of future problems. The following illustrations show how swales may be incorporated into the design of a new area and could assist in providing developments with a sense of place.

The use of 'swales' should be explored as part of SUDS to mitigate water. Swales should be linked, have a storage and infiltration function and mainly convey runoff to shallow appropriately located storage wetlands. Swales located throughout the development lands should also provide the underlying basis of the landscape structure of new development and form part of a cohesive urban structure, integrated with both the streets and built form.

SUDS areas should be planted utilising indigenous species that can withstand both dry and very wet conditions. A similar landscape treatment will be utilised across the system so that it reads as a single network.

The system should be capable of accommodating all storm events. The design of future surface water drainage systems should be mindful of the natural drainage of areas. The development of an appropriate management regime is critical for the avoidance of future problems. The following illustrations show how swales may be incorporated into the design of a new area and could assist in providing developments with a sense of place.



Figure 14.18: Swales at Upton, Northhampton, UK



Figure 14.19: Swales at Upton, Northhampton, UK



Figure 14.20: Swales at Upton, Northhampton, UK