



LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

APPENDIX 18

Dundalk Character Areas

(Incorporated into the CDP under Variation 3 to the CDP)

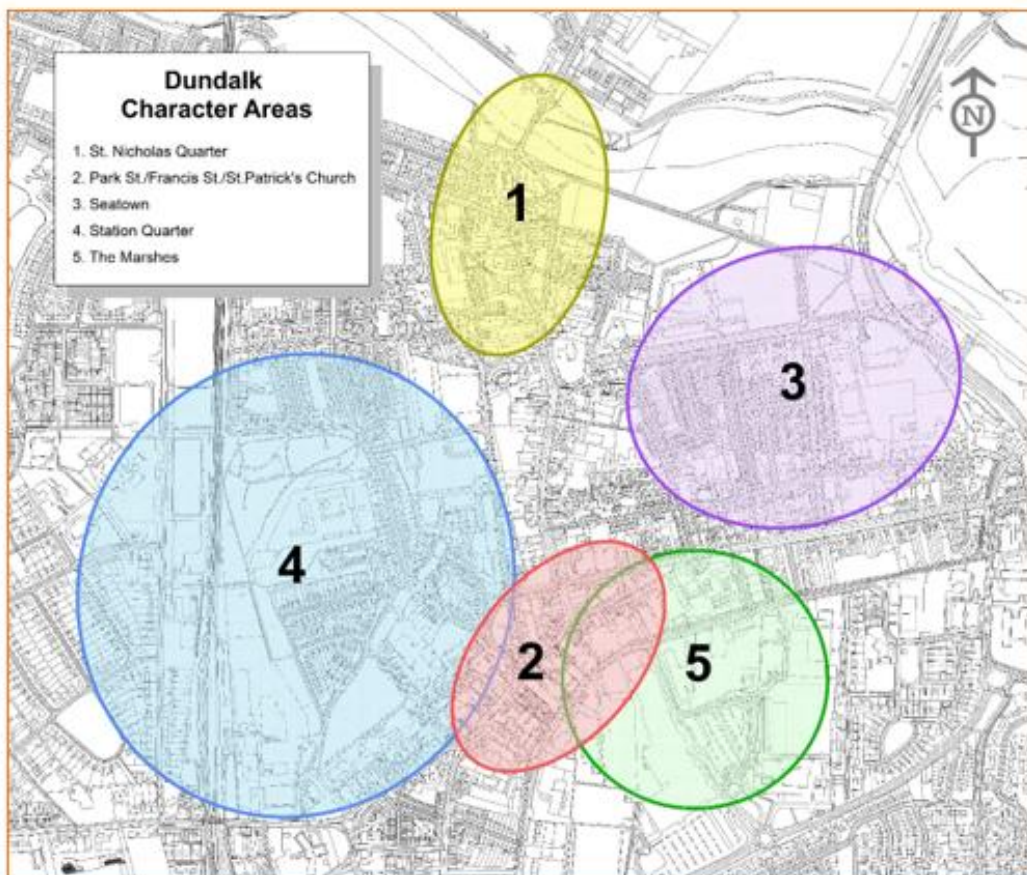
Character Areas

This Plan has identified five distinctive areas within and in the vicinity of Dundalk's urban core, each with their own unique and distinct character. Within these areas there are opportunities for small scale redevelopment and infill projects, public realm improvements and active travel measures:

1. St. Nicholas Quarter;
2. Park Street/Francis Street and St. Patrick's Church;
3. Seatown;
4. The Station Quarter; and
5. The Marshes.

It is considered that strengthening and enhancing these areas, as well as improving connectivity and permeability with the town centre, has the potential to increase footfall and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Dundalk. It is acknowledged that there is an overlap between some of the Key Development Areas and the Character Areas. This overlap is a reflection of the importance of these areas in the rejuvenation of the town centre and surrounding area.

Figure 3.1: Dundalk Character Area



No. 1: St Nicholas Quarter

Study Area

Primarily focused on the Bridge and Linenhall Streets and the Castletown River to the north. The Council is supporting the regeneration of this area through the progression of the St. Nicholas Quarter and Backland Regeneration Project. This project is being funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund. See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3 of the Dundalk LAP for more details.

Key Focal Points

St. Nicholas Church of Ireland formed the heart of the 'Newtown', is a key landmark in the area and provides a vista along St. Mary's Road. St. Nicholas' Catholic Church terminates views along Clanbrassil Street. The Castletown River to the north is a key feature of the area. There is a five-storey building to the north of Bridge Street which can be viewed from a number of vantage points in the vicinity.

Character

The Clanbrassil Street public realm project extending as far as St. Nicholas's Catholic Church, with its environmental improvements and new civic space, has significantly improved the streetscape and brought new life to the northern part of the town. However, the area from St. Nicholas' Church to the Castletown River is in need of regeneration. The area facing the Castletown River is dominated visually by a confluence of roads, above ground utility infrastructure, vacant properties, and a general lack of ground floor animation.

The area has a tight urban grain, comprising of narrow frontages with underutilised vacant backland plots. Many noteworthy examples of traditional shopfronts are present, which contribute positively to the area's character.

Opportunities

Identity: Build on the success of the new identity for the St. Nicholas' Quarter and rejuvenate the area from St. Nicholas' Catholic Church to the river.

Community: Ensure a platform for a thriving, functioning town and inclusivity for all members of the community.

Heritage: Enhance and build upon the heritage and history of Dundalk.

Connectivity: Create a quality townscape which links to and mirrors other areas of the town - Market Square, Clanbrassil Street; Church Street, Castletown Road, and the Newry Road.

Gateway: Redefine the northern access point to Dundalk Town Centre.

Sustainability: Optimise the balance between users considering vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

No. 2: Park Street /Francis Street and St Patrick's Church

Study Area

Area includes the entire length of Park Street (from its junction with Anne Street/the Dublin Road as far as Earl Street, the whole of Francis Street and St Patrick's Church). It has also been identified as a Key Development Area in the Dundalk LAP. See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.5 of the Dundalk LAP for more details.

Key Focal Points

Attractive views of the Cooley Mountains and the spire of St. Patrick's Church are available as you travel northeast along Park and Francis Street and provide a strong sense of place. The former Dunnes and bank buildings are key focal points along Park Street. When travelling eastward along Francis Street the 3-storey buildings on either side and mature treed landscape associated with 'The Crescent' and 'Kellys Monument' enhance the ambiance of the character area.

Character

Located south of Clanbrassil Street, Park Street is a busy vehicular thoroughfare with three significant road junctions. The street is located a short walk from the bus and train stations, Dundalk's town centre and the Marshes shopping centre. Park Street's northeast to southwest orientation allows both sides of the street to benefit from direct sunlight. The street features a wide variety of commercial uses with a notable hospitality offering.

Park Street's built environment presents an eclectic mixture of modern design and vernacular buildings, some of which retain their original shopfronts. Francis Street boasts numerous protected structures which contribute positively to its character, these are intermingled with re-development opportunities including a 'gap site' on its northern side and 'Williamson's Mall'. The area immediately in front of St. Patrick's Church is dominated by hard standing associated with surface car parking.

Opportunities

Permeability: Improving the pedestrian environment and public realm at the Earl Street, Francis Street, Magnet Road, and Anne Street/Dublin Road junctions. Enhance permeability to the bus and train stations and with the Marshes Shopping Centre either through Williamson's Mall and/or via the back lanes/ streets to the south.

Public Realm: Develop a cohesive public realm scheme for the entire length of Park and Francis Street and the area in front of St Patrick's Church. This should incorporate underground cabling and widening of the footpath to maximise sunlight gain as well as public realm improvements. Painting of buildings and extension of the 'SEEK' project would improve the visual amenity of the area.

Sustainability: Promote and encourage the re-use of the former Dunnes Site and Bank building. The Dunnes building has been vacant since 2009, it offers a substantial floor plate and surface car parking in the vicinity. The former bank building is currently for rent/ sale, located equidistant between the Arts Centre and Old Goal it provides an opportunity to introduce a community/ arts use.

Williamson's Mall is located along Francis Street and has been identified as an Opportunity Site. It has the potential to provide a vital link between the traditional town core and The Marshes Shopping Centre. The development of the gap site along Francis Street will enhance the built environment and improve vibrancy.

Promotion: There is an agglomeration of eateries, public houses, and night clubs along Park Street. The clustering of entertainment facilities creates synergy and is an important element of Dundalk's nighttime economy, Park Street could potentially be promoted as a 'golden mile'.

No.3: Seatown

Study Area

Located to the north-east of Dundalk, this study area is bounded to the north by St. Helena's Park, incorporates Mary Street and Castle Road to the west, Seatown and Mill Street to the south, the Inner Relief Road and part of the designated Key Development Area of Dundalk Port to the east. The Seatown area is largely dominated by Georgian and Victorian red brick.

Key Focal Points

The area is primarily defined by the established residential communities. Historically, Jocelyn Street and Seatown Place, along its southern boundary, formed an important arterial link from the town's Market Square eastwards to the Cavalry Barracks and the quay at Dundalk harbour. The windmill along Seatown Place provides a focal point.

Character

The area has suffered from severance because of the Inner Relief Road, a wide corridor with fast flowing traffic, which has effectively cut the town centre and residential area, from the historic quays and waterfront. When travelling along the Inner Relief Road the surrounding built form at the various junctions is ad-hoc and makes no reference or connection to the town centre or the Quays/Port area.

Opportunities

Sustainability: Optimise the balance between users considering vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Connectivity: Improve connectivity and entice visitors to the town centre and the Port/Quays area through the provision of traffic calming measures and public realm improvements

Open Space: Establish a network of public open spaces which have strong connections to the town centre, including St Helena's Park and the Quays area.

No.4: The Station Quarter

Study Area

The Station Quarter is centred on the bus and railway station and the intervening areas which includes Park Street, the Longwalk and the urban park at Ice House Hill.

Key Focal Points

The bus and railway stations, distillery and railway line are the key landmarks in the area. The railway line defines the character area and presents a barrier to pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles access from Cox's/Ard Easmuinn area to the town centre. Within the character area there are currently two access points that cross the railway line, one vehicular and one pedestrian.

Character

The presence of Clarke Train Station and the Longwalk Bus Station create a distinct and unique transport hub.

The Great Northern Distillery and Railway Station forms the eastern gateway into the town along St. Dominick's Road, providing the only vehicular crossing on the railway line in the character area. The stone railway bridge and tree lined banks on either side of the railway line below provide an attractive feature.

Ice House Hill is one of the main urban parks in Dundalk. The railway line severs the park from the mainly residential development to the west in Mount Avenue, a pedestrian underpass provides the only crossing point from the park to the residential area.

Opportunities

Permeability: Clarke Railway Station and the Longwalk Bus Station are in close proximity to Dundalk's town centre. An opportunity exists to upgrade the bus station thereby improving connectivity for those residing, working, or visiting the town. There is the potential to improve permeability between the bus and train. It is anticipated that such investment would attract additional footfall into Dundalk town centre.

Connectivity: Improve connectivity by delivering of a high-quality cycle route on Ard Easmuinn Road junction with Castleblayney Road (R934) to the Friary School.

Open Space: Establish a network of public open space which has strong connections to the town centre, including Ice House Hill urban park.

No. 5: The Marshes

Study Area

The area is centred around the Marshes shopping centre, bound to the west and north by the Ramparts Road, to the east by Meadow Grove Estate, to the west Hill Street and by the Long Avenue area to the south.

Key Focal Points

St. Patrick's Church provides the reference point between The Marshes and the rest of the town centre. Large retail and warehouse type developments are characteristic of the area. The Ramparts River which is partially culverted runs parallel with the northern side of Ramparts Road and is an important natural feature in the area.

Character

The area is characterised by the Marshes shopping centre and new housing development to the west.

There are large scale warehouse and retail units along the Ramparts Road, arranged in a loose urban form and typically surrounded by large areas of surface car parking. Developments are generally set back from the public road. The Marshes area has limited linkages (through Williamsons Mall and a surface car park) with Dundalk's town centre.

Opportunities

Permeability: Enhance permeability thereby encouraging those utilising the Marshes shopping Centre to avail of the retail and services in the town centre, and vice versa.

Urban Design: Transform Ramparts Road into a boulevard, establish a new strong building line, with high quality, fine grained active frontage blocks. Introduction of buildings of height in this area may also assist in establishing a stronger sense of enclosure and improve the overall streetscape (height 2.5 - 5 storey). Surface car parking should be located behind buildings and opportunities to engage with the river should be provided.

Public Realm: Maximise the setting of the Ramparts River through public realm improvements.