



St. Nicholas Quarter, Phase 2

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

Prepared for

The Building Design Partnership

Prepared by

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Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA)

ST. NICHOLAS QUARTER PHASE 2

Dundalk, Co. Louth

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for

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Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 Scope.....	3
1.2 Study Area & Extent of the Works	4
1.3 Methodology.....	5
1.4 Key Themes and Urban Design Approach.....	6
2.0 POLICY CONTEXT & HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS.....	7
2.1 Introduction and Policy Hierarchy	7
2.2 LAP Character Area No. 1 - St. Nicholas Quarter	7
2.3 Zones of Archaeological Potential	8
2.4 Protected Structures.....	8
2.5 Architectural Conservation Areas	9
2.6 Vernacular Heritage	10
2.7 Dundalk Style Architecture	10
3.0 CONTEXT, VIEWS & HERITAGE ELEMENTS.....	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 Historical Development of Dundalk and the St. Nicholas Quarter	11
3.3 St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland and its Grounds (Proposal A)	22
3.4 Linenhall Carpark Site, No. 2 and No. 3 Bridge Street (Proposals B and C)	24
3.5 No. 28 Bridge Street and Meeting House Lane (Proposal D).....	25
3.6 The Peace Park (Proposal E).....	26
3.7 Bridge Street and Linenhall Street Public Realm Context.....	27
4.0 RESPONSE TO POLICY, IMPACT & MITIGATION	28
4.1 Introduction	28
4.2 Response to Archaeology Policies (CH 19, CH 20, CH 21).....	28
4.3 Response to Character Area / Key Development Area Policies (KDCA 1, KDCA 2).....	29
4.4 Response to Protected Structure Policies (CH 22, CH 23 / BHC 20–27)	30
4.5 Response to Architectural Conservation Area Policies (CH 24 / BHC 31–37)	33
4.6 Response to Vernacular Heritage Policies (CH 25, CH 26 / BHC 42–44).....	35
4.7 Mitigations	36
4.8 Construction-Stage Recommendations	45
5.0 NEXT STEPS & CONCLUSIONS	48
APPENDICES	50
References	50

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope

This Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) has been prepared to inform and accompany a Part-8 planning application for the proposed St. Nicholas Quarter Phase 2 scheme in Dundalk, Co. Louth. The Phase 2 proposals build upon the completed Phase 1 public-realm works at Clanbrassil Street and St. Nicholas Quarter, and extend the regeneration into a number of underused, vacant and backland sites within a single urban block bounded by Bridge Street, Linenhall Street, John Street and Wolfe Tone Terrace, together with the Peace Park to the north-east.

The St. Nicholas Quarter is identified as Character Area No. 1 in the Dundalk Local Area Plan (LAP) (Section 3.3.1) and as one of six Key Development Areas in Dundalk (Policy Objective KDCA 1). The wider quarter is recognised in the LAP as an area facing the Castletown River that is in need of regeneration (Section 3.2.3).

This report identifies the architectural heritage within and adjacent to the area of works, comments on the proposals prepared by the lead design team, and assesses the likely impacts of those proposals on the historic fabric, character and setting of buildings, structures, the public realm and street furniture in the locality.

The preparation of this AHIA is itself a direct requirement of Policy CH 22 of the Dundalk LAP, which requires Architectural Heritage Impact Statements and Conservation Methodology Statements for proposals affecting buildings on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) or the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

The Lead Consultant for the project is the Building Design Partnership (BDP). Alastair Coey Architects, an RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Architectural Practice, has been appointed to BDP as Heritage Consultant to assess the heritage impacts and prepare this report.

This report has been prepared to:

- Outline the historic and architectural context of the area, its buildings and structures, and their contribution.
- Identify the relevant heritage designations and policy framework in the Dundalk Local Area Plan and the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027.
- Comment on the Protected Structures within and adjoining the area of the proposed works.
- Comment on the relationship between the area of works and the adjoining Clanbrassil Street Architectural Conservation Area, the southern boundary of which falls at St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland.
- Comment on the position of the Scheme within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1 (the historic core).
- Identify the historic street elements, boundary walls, gates, railings, kerbing, paving and ironwork that fall within the curtilage of the works.

- Assess the appropriateness of the proposals, identify any potential negative effects, and recommend mitigation where required.

Reference is made throughout to the separate Archaeological Desktop Assessment (IAC Archaeology, Ref. J4154-1, dated 2026), which accompanies this Part-8 submission. Archaeological matters are addressed in detail in that report; commentary in this AHIA on archaeological matters is limited to confirming that the recommendations of the project archaeologist will be followed in full and to identifying the policy framework under which they arise.

1.2 Study Area & Extent of the Works

The St. Nicholas Quarter forms the historic northern gateway to Dundalk town centre. The Phase 2 area of works is contained within a single urban block extending north-east to take in the Peace Park (formerly the Fairgreen). The Local Area Plan describes the Quarter as situated between Clanbrassil Street and the Castletown River, comprising commercial and residential areas and public spaces along Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and Northgate Street. Prior to the construction of the eastern bypass in the 1990s, this was the principal northern gateway to Dundalk.

Five distinct intervention areas are defined within the masterplan (Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941002):

- Proposal A - Rejuvenation of the public realm in the grounds of St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland at the south of the block, extending the Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street public realm into the church grounds.
- Proposal B - A new east-west pedestrian connection from Bridge Street through to Linenhall Street, made possible by the demolition of No. 2 Bridge Street (described in the Design Statement as currently structurally unstable) and the use of the Linenhall Carpark site.
- Proposal C — A new community multi-purpose arts facility with associated age-friendly housing units on the Linenhall Carpark site, incorporating the site of No. 3 Bridge Street following its demolition, and addressing Linenhall Street and Bridge Street.
- Proposal D - A second east-west pedestrian connection through the urban block, exploiting a single plot on Bridge Street (No. 28) to connect through to Meeting House Lane.
- Proposal E - Rejuvenation and re-planting of the Peace Park, including new pathways, sensory garden elements, planting beds, lighting, seating and a relocated monument.

The principal physical interventions, drawn from the BDP Design Statement (April 2026) and the issued drawings, include:

- Demolition of No. 2 Bridge Street (described in the Design Statement as currently structurally unstable) to facilitate the new east-west pedestrian route, and full demolition of the adjoining No. 3 Bridge Street to facilitate the Bridge Street frontage of the new community facility.
- Demolition of the existing single-storey/back-of-plot fabric on the Linenhall Carpark and at No. 28 Bridge Street to facilitate the new pedestrian routes and the community facility footprint.

- Construction of a new two-storey Community Multi-Purpose Arts Facility comprising multi-purpose event space (c. 105 m²), reception (c. 46 m²) and workshop / studio spaces. The existing No. 3 Bridge Street is to be demolished in full, and the facility will provide a new-build commercial frontage on its site, forming the Bridge Street public presentation of the facility and maintaining the existing plot width and two-storey datum.
- Construction of a new terrace of c. six age-friendly housing units of two storeys, addressing Linenhall Street.
- Removal of the existing perimeter railings and gates to St. Nicholas's Church grounds (gate piers retained), reopening of an existing entrance, relocation of an existing statue to an alcove, the introduction of a Part M-compliant ramp, uplighters and seating, and an extension of the granite-paved public realm into the church grounds.
- Wholesale re-landscaping of the Peace Park with granite paving, exposed-aggregate concrete and buff stone-mastic asphalt; new pedestrian routes and gateways; sensory play elements; new tree planting and ornamental, border, boundary, low-level and sensory plant mixes; relocation of the existing monument; new bollards, cycle stands, e-scooter stand, litter bins, climbing stacks, stepping logs and timber-slat seats with arms and backrests.
- Introduction of a new pedestrian streetscape at Meeting House Lane (granite paving, natural stone sett paving, raised planter walls with timber-slat seats, planting mix and proposed trees), connecting Bridge Street to the Peace Park.
- Provision of c. 6 no. parallel parking bays and a loading bay on Linenhall Street, in association with the community facility, with the existing footpath paving to be removed.

The proposals are not located within an Architectural Conservation Area. The southern edge of Proposal A, however, immediately abuts the northern boundary of the Clanbrassil Street ACA at St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland, and the Scheme is therefore considered to be 'affecting' the ACA in the sense set out in LAP Policy CH 24 and CDP Policy BHC 35 (development on the periphery of an ACA).

1.3 Methodology

This AHIA has been prepared by:

- Review of the BDP Design Statement (St. Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, dated 27.04.2026) and the issued Part-8 drawings (Masterplan SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941002; Peace Park SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941011; St. Nicholas Church Public Realm SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941012; Meeting House Lane SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941013; Community Facility Bridge Street & Linenhall Street Elevation SNQ-BDP-B1-XX-EL-A-3020; Community Facility Section AA / Section BB / East–West Connection Elevation SNQ-BDP-B1-XX-EL-A-3021; Proposed Site Plan SNQ-BDP-ST-RL-PL-A-0011).
- Review of the Archaeological Desktop Assessment (IAC Archaeology, J4154-1, 2026).
- Review of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Dundalk in the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).
- Review of the heritage policy framework of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, Chapter 10 (Culture & Heritage), read in tandem with the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027, Chapter 9 (Built Heritage & Culture), as required by the LAP itself.

- Confirmation of the position of the area of works in relation to the eight Architectural Conservation Areas in Dundalk identified in LAP Section 10.17.
- Confirmation of the position of the area of works in relation to the Zones of Archaeological Potential identified in LAP Section 10.15.3 and Map 10.8.
- Consideration of the conservation principles set out in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2011) and the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999).

1.4 Key Themes and Urban Design Approach

The Phase 2 proposals adopt the following themes set out in the Design Statement, which are directly relevant to the heritage assessment:

- Connectivity and permeability - the introduction of two new east-west pedestrian connections through a tightly developed urban block, repairing the historic east-west grain of the quarter and improving access between Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and the Peace Park.
- Setting of St. Nicholas's Church - opening of the south and rear (north) church grounds to strengthen the church's role as the principal landmark and civic anchor of the quarter, and to extend the Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street public realm into the church grounds.
- Renewal of vacant and backland sites - replacement of the Linenhall Carpark, an inherently weak edge to the urban block, with a community arts facility and age-friendly housing of a scale and grain that respects the existing two-storey townscape.
- Public realm improvements - direct continuation of the materials palette and detailing of the completed Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street scheme (granite paving, granite kerbs, dark metalwork lighting and furniture).
- Park rejuvenation - the re-introduction of pathways, planting and amenity infrastructure to the Peace Park (formerly the Fairgreen), respecting the cultural memory of the site as a place of fairs, events and, more recently, of contemplation associated with the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

All five proposals fall to be assessed against the relevant heritage policy framework set out in Section 2 below.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT & HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

2.1 Introduction and Policy Hierarchy

The Scheme is governed by a two-tier development plan framework. The Dundalk Local Area Plan (LAP) is the operative plan for the town. LAP Section 1.10 records that *"when reading this Plan, the policy objectives of the County Development Plan are relevant and, in this regard, both documents should be read in tandem with each other."* Policy Objective DM 1 of the LAP confirms that planning applications must be consistent with the Development Management Guidelines of the County Development Plan and any other relevant policy objectives, designations and standards.

Accordingly this Section 2 sets out:

- The LAP designation of the area as Character Area No. 1: St. Nicholas Quarter (LAP Section 3.3.1).
- The position of the works within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1 (LAP Section 10.15.3).
- The Protected Structure framework (LAP Section 10.16; CDP Chapter 9).
- The relationship of the works to the adjoining Clanbrassil Street Architectural Conservation Area (LAP Section 10.17).
- The applicability of the Vernacular Heritage policies (LAP Section 10.18).
- The Dundalk Style architectural context (LAP Section 10.19).

The full text of each relevant LAP CH policy objective and CDP BHC policy objective is set out in Section 4 below, with the Conservation Architect's commentary on each.

2.2 LAP Character Area No. 1 - St. Nicholas Quarter

The Dundalk LAP Section 3.3.1 identifies the St. Nicholas Quarter as Character Area No. 1, with its study area *"primarily focused on the Bridge and Linenhall Streets and the Castletown River to the north."* The LAP records that the area has *"a tight urban grain, comprising of narrow frontages with under-utilised vacant backland plots,"* and that *"many noteworthy examples of traditional shopfronts are present, which contribute positively to the area's character."*

The LAP identifies six "Opportunities" for the area: Identity, Community, Heritage, Connectivity, Gateway and Sustainability. The "Heritage" opportunity reads: *"Enhance and build upon the heritage and history of Dundalk."* The "Connectivity" opportunity expressly contemplates *"improving the connectivity of the streets to the surrounding context,"* which is directly delivered by Proposals B and D of the Phase 2 scheme.

Policy Objective KDCA 2 of the LAP supports *"the implementation of any masterplans, urban design frameworks/statements, or public realm schemes prepared for lands within the Plan area, including the Key Development Areas identified in Chapter 3."* The Scheme is therefore supported in principle by both KDCA 1 and KDCA 2.

2.3 Zones of Archaeological Potential

LAP Section 10.15.3 and Map 10.8 identify two Zones of Archaeological Potential (ZAPs) in Dundalk. ZAP 1 is described as *"the historic core, which essentially extends from the Castletown River to Market Square, where it bends south-west to cover the roads to Ardee/Carrickmacross and to Dublin, with an extension to the east (Seatown)."*

The entirety of the Phase 2 scheme footprint sits within ZAP 1. LAP Section 10.15.4 sets out three policy objectives in respect of archaeology - CH 19, CH 20 and CH 21 - all of which apply directly to the Scheme. These LAP policies are read in tandem with policies BHC 1, BHC 5, BHC 6, BHC 7, BHC 8, BHC 9 and BHC 10 of the County Development Plan, which set out the more detailed framework for archaeology in walled towns and Zones of Archaeological Potential. Dundalk is one of the four medieval walled towns identified at CDP Section 9.3.3.

A separate Archaeological Desktop Assessment has been prepared by IAC Archaeology in accordance with these policies, and is submitted with this Part-8 application. Reference should be made to that report in respect of all archaeological matters, including the identification of recorded monuments, the strategy for archaeological monitoring and any test excavation in advance of ground-breaking works. The Conservation Architect's commentary at Section 4.2 below confirms the recommendations of the project archaeologist.

2.4 Protected Structures

LAP Section 10.16 confirms that the full Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is published as part of the County Development Plan. A number of structures within and adjoining the Phase 2 area of works are recorded on the RPS, including:

- St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland (the principal landmark of the quarter, and one of the principal landmarks of the wider town).
- No. 36 Bridge Street, Dixon's (Former) Public House - House and Shopfront.
- No. 64 Bridge Street, M. Deane - House and Shopfront.
- No. 80 Bridge Street, Grennells Bar - Shopfront.
- No. 25 Linenhall Street, Fair Green Bar - House and Shopfront.

No Protected Structure is proposed to be demolished, modified or altered in plan or elevation by the Scheme. However, the Scheme does include works falling within or affecting the curtilage and setting of one or more Protected Structures, in particular:

- Works within the curtilage of St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland - including the removal of the existing perimeter railings, the removal of gates (with gate piers retained), the relocation of an existing statue to an alcove, the reopening of an existing entrance, the introduction of a Part M-compliant ramp, the introduction of uplighters, seating and the extension of the Clanbrassil Street public realm material palette across the entire south and east areas of the church grounds.

- Works adjacent to the boundary of the Protected Structure curtilages along Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, including the introduction of new footpath paving, kerbs and parking bays in association with the new community facility on Linenhall Street.

The relevant LAP policy objectives for Protected Structures are CH 22 and CH 23, read in tandem with policy objectives BHC 20–27 of the County Development Plan. These policies are addressed in full at Section 4.4 below.

2.5 Architectural Conservation Areas

LAP Section 10.17 identifies eight Architectural Conservation Areas in Dundalk:

- St. Mary's Road
- Roden Place
- The Crescent
- Clanbrassil Street - extending from St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland to Market Square
- Jocelyn Street / Seatown Place
- Soldiers Point - Coastguard Houses
- Magnet Road / Demesne
- The Crescent / Blackrock

The proposed Phase 2 works are not located within any of these Architectural Conservation Areas. Of the eight, the most directly relevant is the Clanbrassil Street ACA, which abuts the southern edge of the Scheme's area of works at St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland. The ACA boundary extends from the church southward to Market Square; the Phase 2 Scheme extends from the church northward through the urban block and into the Peace Park.

Although the Phase 2 works are not within the Clanbrassil Street ACA, the LAP policy objective for ACAs (CH 24) is drawn in broader terms, applying to development "within or affecting" an ACA, and to views into and from such areas. Proposal A in particular - the rejuvenation of the church grounds - is considered to be "affecting" the Clanbrassil Street ACA in the strict sense, since St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland forms the visual termination of the ACA along Clanbrassil Street, and the works extend the materials palette of the existing ACA-side public realm directly into the curtilage of the landmark structure that closes that view.

These LAP policies are read in tandem with policy objectives BHC 31–37 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027, which set out the more detailed ACA policy framework, including BHC 35 ("To require that any development on the periphery of an Architectural Conservation Area does not detract from the existing character of the designated Architectural Conservation Area"). The Conservation Architect's commentary on each is provided at Section 4.5 of this report.

2.6 Vernacular Heritage

LAP Section 10.18 sets out the planning approach to vernacular heritage - buildings "*built by local people using local materials*" that "*are an intrinsic and finite part of Dundalk's urban landscape, their unique character provides historical depth and a strong sense of identity.*"

A number of historic elements within the Phase 2 area of works are not individually on the Record of Protected Structures but contribute strongly to the character of the area and accordingly fall to be considered under LAP Policies CH 25 and CH 26 (read in tandem with CDP Policies BHC 42, BHC 43 and BHC 44). These include:

- The two-storey, narrow-frontage commercial townhouse character of Bridge Street and Linenhall Street.
- No. 2 Bridge Street, the demolition of which is proposed to facilitate the new east-west connection (Proposal B).
- No. 3 Bridge Street, the full demolition of which is proposed to facilitate the Bridge Street frontage of the new community facility (Proposal C).
- No. 28 Bridge Street, part of the curtilage of which is proposed to be incorporated into the new east-west connection at Meeting House Lane (Proposal D).
- The rubble masonry boundary walls along the western and eastern edges of the Linenhall Carpark site, the southern boundary of the Peace Park, and the western end of Meeting House Lane.
- Granite kerbing and granite threshold elements at the existing carriage entries on Linenhall Street and on Meeting House Lane.
- The existing perimeter cast-iron railings and gates to St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland (in addition to the listed church itself).

The Conservation Architect's commentary on the LAP's vernacular policies CH 25 and CH 26 is set out at Section 4.6 of this report. Of particular note are the proposed demolitions of No. 2 and No. 3 Bridge Street, which are addressed in detail at that point and at Sections 4.7.2 and 4.7.3.

2.7 Dundalk Style Architecture

LAP Section 10.19 identifies a distinctive feature of Dundalk's built heritage in the "*exuberant Italianate style known as 'Dundalk Style'... These façades typically encompass elaborate window surrounds, heavy bracketed cornices and decorative keystones.*" The style is most concentrated along Clanbrassil Street, which forms the immediate southern context of the Scheme. Although there are no 'Dundalk Style' façades within the Phase 2 area of works itself, the works (in particular Proposal A in the church grounds and the new community facility addressing Bridge Street) form the visual termination of the long axial view northwards along Clanbrassil Street, and accordingly the elevation, massing and material treatment of the new build need to be considered in respect of their contribution to that townscape.

The selection of materials for the public realm - granite paving, granite kerbs, restrained metalwork lighting and street furniture - is a direct continuation of the Phase 1 scheme and is appropriate in this context.

3.0 CONTEXT, VIEWS & HERITAGE ELEMENTS

3.1 Introduction

The St. Nicholas Quarter forms the historic northern approach to Dundalk town centre. The character of the area is derived from a combination of:

- Tightly developed 18th- and 19th-century commercial frontages along Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, retaining a high proportion of traditional shopfront elements and a predominantly two-storey vertical rhythm.
- St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland, a major landmark forming the visual and spatial termination of Clanbrassil Street and the southern boundary of the Phase 2 area of works.
- Long stretches of rubble masonry boundary walling around the Linenhall Carpark, the Peace Park and along Meeting House Lane that read as the survival of historic plot boundaries.
- Dundalk Bridge over the Castletown River, with masonry parapets and granite kerbing forming a recognisable historic gateway to the town to the immediate north of the area of works.
- The Peace Park (formerly the Fairgreen), an area of public open space which historically held fairs and events, and which was renovated as part of the centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising as a place of contemplation for the community.

The Phase 2 proposals differ from Phase 1 in that they include built form (the new community facility and age-friendly housing), the demolition of two existing structures (Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street) and significant works within the curtilage of a Protected Structure (the church). Each intervention area is therefore considered separately below.

3.2 Historical Development of Dundalk and the St. Nicholas Quarter

The proposals assessed in this report sit within a townscape whose form, plot pattern, street alignments and surviving fabric reflect the long and incremental development of Dundalk from a pre-Norman ringfort settlement into the present-day county town. The St. Nicholas Quarter - comprising Bridge Street, Linenhall Street, Meeting House Lane, the Peace Park and the precincts of St. Nicholas's Church - is the historic northern gateway of that town, lying immediately south of Dundalk Bridge over the Castletown River, at the point at which the medieval and 18th-century town opened toward Ulster.

This Section 3.2 sets out the principal phases in the historical development of the town and, in particular, of the area now identified as the St. Nicholas Quarter. The narrative is presented chronologically and in summary form; it is intended to provide the historical context against which the heritage assessment in the following sections and the policy assessment at Section 4 should be read. A more detailed account of the urban grain, plot pattern and streetscape character of the

immediate study area is given in the BDP Design Statement under “Historic Growth & Urban Grain Evolution”.

3.2.1 Origins and Pre-Norman Settlement

The site of the present-day town centre lies on a narrow gravel ridge between the estuarine plain of the Castletown River to the north and the marshy lowlands to the south, with rising ground at Castletown Mount approximately 2 km to the west. Human occupation of the wider district extends back to the Neolithic period, with the Proleek Dolmen at Ballymascanlan and a notable concentration of souterrains in north Louth providing evidence of early Christian-era settlement.¹ The earliest historical references to Dún Dealgan (the fort of Dealga) appear in the Irish annals in connection with Brian Boru’s campaigns in Ulster in the early 11th century. The site is also celebrated in the legendary cycle of the Táin Bó Cúailnge as the residence of the warrior hero Cú Chulainn - a tradition still reflected in the town’s motto and arms.²

The original dún is generally identified with the prominent ridge and earthworks at Castletown Mount, west of the modern town. There is no upstanding evidence of pre-Norman occupation within the present St. Nicholas Quarter; the topography of the area, however, places it on the southern bank of the Castletown River at a point where the river broadens toward Dundalk Bay, making it the obvious crossing-point on the long-distance routeway running from Tara in Meath northwards toward Armagh. It is this routeway, rather than any particular structure, that is the deepest historical determinant of the alignment of the present Bridge Street and the position of Dundalk Bridge.

3.2.2 The Norman Foundation (12th–13th Centuries)

Following the Norman invasion of Ireland in 1169, Bertram de Verdun, a counsellor of King Henry II, was granted the lands around Dún Dealgan. By about 1185 he had erected a manor house at Castletown Mount on the site of the older Gaelic dún, and in the late 12th century he, or possibly his son Nicholas, founded the Priory of St Leonard (a house of the Fratres Cruciferi, the so-called Crutched Friars) at Seatown to the east of the present town centre³. He obtained a charter for the borough in 1189.⁴ A second Norman family, the de Courcys, are associated by some sources with a separate small settlement to the east, in the area of present-day Seatown, although the documentary evidence is limited. The principal Norman foundation, however, was the de Verdun *Newtown* - recorded in late-13th-century property deeds as *nove ville de Dundalc* - which occupied

¹Proleek Dolmen and the souterrain concentration in north Louth: see St Louis Secondary School Dundalk, “Old Castletown, Dundalk”; Wikipedia, “Dundalk” (citing the IHTA No. 16, Dundalk).

²Annals of Ulster, AD 1002; Táin Bó Cúailnge (12th-century recensions) — “Delga in Muirtheimne.” The Brian Boru reference is cited at Wikipedia, “Dundalk.”

³The IAC Archaeological Assessment (Chapter 3.1.3) records this foundation as the Priory of St Leonard, *Fratres Cruciferi* (RMP LH007-119018). Older local histories sometimes describe it loosely as an “Augustinian friary” — the Fratres Cruciferi observed the Augustinian rule but were a distinct order — and conventionally date its foundation to 1187. The form adopted here follows the more cautious wording of the archaeologist’s report

⁴Wikipedia, “Dundalk,” citing the Gormanston Register and the Cartulary of de Verdun. See also “Castle Roche,” which records that Bertram de Verdun arrived as part of John’s First Expedition to Ireland.

the gravel ridge of the present town centre and is the direct ancestor of the medieval walled town.⁵ Both families participated in the fortification of the borough, which thereafter functioned as a frontier town at the northern edge of the Anglo-Norman lordship and, in due course, of the medieval English Pale.⁶

The 13th century saw the establishment of the so-called “New Town of Dundalk” on the site of the present town centre, distinct from the original “Old Town” at Castletown Mount. The de Verdun family's coat of arms - three garbs of wheat - later formed the basis of the seal of the New Town and ultimately the modern arms of Dundalk.⁷ It is to this period that the foundation of St Nicholas's Parish Church (the Church of Ireland “Green Church”) on Church Street, immediately to the south of the present St. Nicholas Quarter, is conventionally dated; the earliest fabric is broadly of the 13th century, and the building has been repeatedly altered and extended in the intervening seven centuries.⁸

3.2.3 The Walled Town and the Northern Edge of the Pale

Dundalk was one of four medieval walled towns in County Louth (with Ardee, Carlingford and Drogheda), all founded in the 12th and 13th centuries. The line of the medieval walls and the surviving plot pattern within them is the basis upon which the entirety of the Phase 2 scheme footprint is identified as Zone of Archaeological Potential 1 (the historic core) under Section 10.15.3 of the Dundalk Local Area Plan. The town walls are categorised as a National Monument under the National Walled Towns Policy (2008), and the surviving medieval street pattern, building lines and burgage plot widths are the subject of a specific protection at CDP Policy Objective BHC 9.

Within the walled town, the principal axis ran along the gravel ridge that today carries Park Street, Earl Street, Clanbrassil Street and Church Street southwards from the Market Square. Bridge Street, leading northwards from the area of the present Market Square (then known as the “Fair Hill”) to the bridging point of the Castletown River, was the principal route out of the town toward Ulster - earning the town its later sobriquet of the “Gap of the North.” The line of Bridge Street, the position of Dundalk Bridge, and the open space at the river's edge that would later become the Fairgreen are accordingly all features of the medieval town plan that survive within the Phase 2 area of works.

3.2.4 The Bruce Invasion and Later Medieval Vicissitudes

In 1315 the town was captured by the Scottish forces of Edward Bruce, brother of Robert the Bruce, who held it for almost a year and was inaugurated as High King of Ireland in 1316 before his death at

⁵ The IAC Archaeological Assessment (Chapter 3.1.3, citing O’Sullivan 2006) identifies *nove ville de Dundalc* unambiguously with the de Verdun town centre, distinguished in late-13th-century property deeds from the older settlement at Castletown.

⁶ Wikishire, “Dundalk”; Wikipedia, “Dundalk.” The de Courcy settlement is the basis of the place-name “Seatown” (Seatown) east of the present town centre.

⁷ The 14th-century seal of the New Town of Dundalk was rediscovered in the early 20th century and adopted as the town's arms in 1968.

⁸ Dundalk Churchyard, “The Church” (<https://www.dundalkchurchyard.ie/church/>); the church was reworked by Francis Johnston (architect of the Custom House and the GPO in Dublin) in the early 19th century. NIAH Reg. No. 13702024.

the Battle of Faughart in 1318 some 10 km north of the town.⁹ The de Verdun lordship had ended only two years earlier, in 1316, with the death of Theobald de Verdun without male issue; the family's landholdings at Dundalk subsequently passed to the de Furnivall family by marriage, and were then sold by them to the Bellew family of County Meath.¹⁰

Throughout the late medieval period Dundalk continued to function as the northernmost outpost of English administration in Ireland, repeatedly raided from Ulster and repeatedly garrisoned and refortified. By the 16th century the medieval defences had become much decayed, and the town entered the early modern period in a much-diminished state.

3.2.5 Reformation, Plantation and the 17th Century

The Reformation, the Tudor and Stuart plantations of Ulster, the wars of the 1640s and the Cromwellian conquest are reflected in the town's religious and political fabric, but left relatively little upstanding architectural evidence within the present St. Nicholas Quarter. The mid-17th-century town was a small, walled, predominantly single-storey settlement clustered along the principal north–south axis, with garden plots and orchards extending eastwards toward the marshy ground of the river's southern bank.

It was in this period, however, that the most consequential event for the cultural and religious history of the present Phase 2 area took place: the establishment of a non-Episcopal congregation at Dundalk. The first non-Episcopal minister recorded at Dundalk was Joseph Bowesfield, one of the Independent ministers brought to Ireland in 1655 under the patronage of Henry Cromwell. The early congregation appears to have begun as Independent and to have adopted the Presbyterian form during the second half of the 17th century. Local tradition, recorded in the manuscript historical sketch of the congregation prepared by the Rev James Moody in 1940 and now held in the Louth County Archives, holds that Dundalk was the second place in Ireland in which a Presbyterian church was formally constituted.¹¹

The emergence of this dissenting community alongside the slowly recovering Catholic congregation provides the immediate context for the two architectural events of the period that are still legible in the present urban grain. The first, and the more significant for the Phase 2 proposals, is the construction of the Presbyterian Meeting House on what is now Meeting House Lane (treated in detail at Section 3.2.5.1 below). The second is the gradual normalisation of Catholic worship outside the formal precincts of the established church, the patrons of which would become significant supporters of building campaigns from the late 18th century onwards.

3.2.5.1 The Linenhall Street Meeting House and its Cultural Setting

⁹Edward Bruce was killed at the Battle of Faughart on 14 October 1318. His grave is traditionally identified at the ruined 12th-century church on the Hill of Faughart. The IAC Archaeological Assessment (Chapter 3.1.3) places Bruce's death "toward the close of the following year" after his arrival in 1315; the date adopted here (October 1318) follows the consensus historical record, in which Bruce was inaugurated High King of Ireland in 1316 and held that title until his death at Faughart on 14 October 1318.

¹⁰Wikipedia, "Dundalk". Theobald de Verdun, 2nd Baron Verdun, died in 1316 without male issue.

¹¹Louth County Archives Service, Dundalk and Carlingford Presbyterian Church Records (IE LHA PP00075/).

The Linenhall Street Meeting House was built in or about 1700 by Archibald MacNeill, an officer of the Williamite army, on the lane that has carried its name ever since. Archibald and his brother Malcolm MacNeill - the latter the patron of the related Presbyterian church at Ballymascanlon - were Scottish Gaelic-speaking settlers from Kintyre who had come to the Ballymascanlon district in the late 17th century. Malcolm MacNeill was the figure who formally pressed the claims of Dundalk before the General Synod of Ulster, and Dundalk was granted separate congregational status from Carlingford in 1707, a few years after Archibald MacNeill had completed the meeting house.¹²

For the next 139 years the Linenhall Street Meeting House was the principal place of dissenting worship in Dundalk. It is depicted within the present Phase 2 area on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1836, and continued in use until 1839, when the congregation moved to a new church on Jocelyn Street that remains the home of Dundalk Presbyterian Church today. The meeting house was demolished thereafter; the 1888 Ordnance Survey map shows the site already cleared, with a small street - "Meeting House Lane" - formed across part of the former plot. The lane alignment, and the lane name, are the surviving traces of the meeting house at present ground level.¹³

The cultural distinctiveness of this congregation is unusual and is worth recording in this assessment. Reflecting the MacNeill family's origins and the substantial Gaelic-speaking enclave at Ballymascanlon, the Dundalk Presbyterian congregation through the 18th and early 19th centuries was predominantly Irish- and Scottish-Gaelic speaking. Two of its ministers in this tradition stand out. The Rev Andrew Bryson, who served at Dundalk until his death in 1797, was an Irish-language enthusiast and was invited to assist with the Belfast Harpers' Assembly of 1792 - the gathering at which Edward Bunting transcribed much of the surviving Irish harp tradition. His near-successor the Rev William Neilson, minister from 1796 to 1818, was a Gaelic scholar of national standing, the author of *An Introduction to the Irish Language* (Dublin, 1808), and ran a multi-denominational classical and Irish-language school at Dundalk before being appointed Professor of Classical, Hebrew and Irish Languages at the Belfast Academical Institution.¹⁴

The meeting house thus stood at the intersection of three locally significant traditions - Williamite Presbyterianism in north Louth, the Scottish Gaelic settler community at Ballymascanlon, and the wider Oriel literary and musical tradition associated with Turlough O'Carolan, Séamus Dall Mac Cuarta and Pádraig Mac Giolla Fhiondáin, all of whom are recorded as having met at the MacNeill residence at Ballymascanlon in the early 18th century.¹⁵

The implications for the Phase 2 assessment are twofold. First, the alignment of Meeting House Lane is the single most legible above-ground trace of more than two centuries of distinctive religious,

¹²Killen, *History of Congregations*, p. 132; Louth County Archives Service, IE LHA PP00075/, administrative history.

¹³See IAC Archaeological Assessment, Chapter 3.3 (Cartographic Analysis), entries on the First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1836, and the OS map of 1888.

¹⁴Don Johnston, "Gaelic-Speaking Presbyterian Ministers of Dundalk/Ballymascanlon," *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2013), pp. 45-70.

¹⁵Oriel Arts research project (orielarts.com)

linguistic and cultural activity at this site, and Proposal D's reinforcement of that alignment, by means of a new pedestrian east-west connection through the urban block, is therefore not only the conservation of a historic building line but also the conservation of one of the more meaningful associative heritage values of the Phase 2 area. Second, any sub-surface remains of the meeting house itself (RMP LH007-119004), the impact assessment and mitigation of which are treated by the IAC Archaeological Assessment at Chapters 5.1–5.2, are to be regarded as the physical archive of this distinctive congregation, and the mitigation measures recommended by the archaeologist are adopted accordingly in this AHIA.

3.2.6 The Clanbrassil Improvements and the 18th-Century Town Plan

The street layout of the modern town centre - including the Market Square, Clanbrassil Street, Earl Street, Park Street and Bridge Street - derives almost entirely from the improvements undertaken in the early to mid-18th century by James Hamilton, later 1st Earl of Clanbrassil, and his son James, the 2nd Earl. Hamilton, drawing on European models he had seen on the Continent, undertook a programme of demolition of the medieval defences, the laying out of a new market square, and the cutting of new streets eastwards from the principal spine. He also implemented a major drainage scheme along the southern bank of the Castletown River that reclaimed substantial areas of marshland for development.¹⁶ The estate was inherited at the 2nd Earl's death without an heir in 1798 by the Earl of Roden, in whose family it remained until the freeholds and ground rents were finally sold in 2006.¹⁷

It is to this period of Hamilton/Clanbrassil improvement that the present plot pattern of Bridge Street and Linenhall Street is to be attributed. The narrow, deep, two-storey burgage plots that survive along Bridge Street, the parallel alignment of Linenhall Street to the east, and the small backland plots between them are all characteristic outcomes of an 18th-century re-planning of an older medieval street, and are recognised as such by the LAP, which records that the area has “a tight urban grain, comprising of narrow frontages with under-utilised vacant backland plots” (LAP Section 3.3.1).

3.2.7 The Linen and Cambric Industry and the Origin of “Linenhall”

Cambric - fine, often elaborately patterned linen - takes its name from the town of Cambrai in northern France, which was the principal European centre of the trade in such cloth in the late mediaeval and early modern periods. The introduction of cambric weaving to Ireland forms part of the wider Huguenot diaspora that followed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The first significant Irish Huguenot linen colony was that established at Lisburn under Louis Crommelin from 1698, and it was upon the Crommelin model, after the Lisburn community had been scattered in the

¹⁶Wikipedia.

¹⁷The 10th Earl of Roden's freehold of the town, including ground rents, mineral rights, manorial rights and the freehold of the Fair Green, was sold at auction in July 2006.

great fire of 1707, that the Irish Parliament established the Board of Trustees of the Linen and Hempen Manufactures of Ireland - usually known as the Linen Board - in 1711.¹⁸

It was under the patronage of the Linen Board, and of the Protestant Primate of Ireland, Hugh Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh, that cambric weaving was introduced to Dundalk in 1736. The Linen Board engaged two Huguenot brothers - Ciprian and Étienne (or Stephen) de Joncourt - to set up a cambric manufactory at the town, with a complement of around seventy Huguenot weavers and a contingent of local weavers brought from Portadown to be trained alongside them. Lord Limerick (James Hamilton, later 1st Earl of Clanbrassil), whose 18th-century improvements to the town are described above, reportedly contributed £1,000 to the cost of obtaining the necessary patent. The principal manufactory was located on land which subsequently became Parliament Square and which is now occupied by Aiken Barracks; a separate Huguenot weaving settlement, known as Cambricville, was established on the southern outskirts of the town and retained its name into the 20th century, latterly as the address of the Macardle, Moore & Co. brewery on the same site.¹⁹

The Dundalk Huguenot community was relatively small - on the order of seventy families at its peak - and conformed to the Church of Ireland, worshipping at St Nicholas's Parish Church (the "Green Church") on Church Street under the ministry of the Rev Henri David Pettipierre of Tournai, the only French minister documented at Dundalk, who served the community from 1737 until 1782. The de Joncourt brothers themselves married into local families and were buried in the churchyard of the Green Church: Ciprian died in 1742 and was recorded in the burial register as "Mr Johncourt, Frenchman"; Étienne died on 9 April 1795 in the eightieth year of his age. The community was gradually absorbed into the wider Anglican parish in the years following Pettipierre's death, but had by that date already given the town two of its more durable place-names - Linenhall Street and Cambricville - and the architectural footprint discussed in Chapter 3.2.7.1 below.²⁰

3.2.7.1 The Linenhall Building and its Successor Uses

The two-storey building known locally as the "Linen Hall" was erected in or about 1760 - almost a quarter-century after the manufactory itself - at the north end of Church Street, on the spur of land between Bridge Street and the present-day Linenhall Street, facing southwards across the principal axial vista of the 18th-century town toward Clanbrassil Street. It functioned as the trading and marketing hall of the local cambric industry: the place at which the cambric webs woven at Cambricville and elsewhere were brought to be measured, priced and sold under the rules and seals of the Linen Board, rather than as a manufactory in its own right. The building gave its name to Linenhall Street and, by association, to the wider quarter of which it was the focus.²¹

The Irish cambric industry, which had been the principal economic activity of the town in the third quarter of the 18th century, declined rapidly in the closing decades of the century, and by the early

¹⁸ Grace Lawless Lee, *The Huguenot Settlements in Ireland* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1936)

¹⁹ John Dalton, *The History of Dundalk and its Environs* (Dundalk, 1864)

²⁰ Lee.

²¹ Dalton.

19th century the Dundalk cambric works had largely ceased operation. The Linen Hall outlived the trade for which it had been built. Through the early-to-mid 19th century it was used as a general market hall, becoming known locally as the “Market House,” and continued in that capacity until the new Market House (originally known as The Guildhall, and now the Dundalk Town Hall) was completed at the Square. The building also accommodated, in the middle decades of the 19th century, a small charity school for destitute children - part of the wider “ragged school” movement that had been founded in London in 1844 and that established schools in Irish provincial towns in the years that followed.²²

The Linen Hall was demolished in the late 19th century in the course of works at St Nicholas’s Catholic Church, which was first built immediately adjacent to it in 1859–60 and substantially enlarged from 1904 onwards. The 1888 Ordnance Survey map shows the site already substantially cleared. The footprint of the Linen Hall is presently occupied by the south transept and south-western tower of St Nicholas’s Catholic Church (1904), the Chapel of Adoration (1937), and the open green to the side of the church. No fabric of the Linen Hall is known to survive at present ground level.²³

The implications for the Phase 2 assessment are twofold. First, the cambric and linen-trade origin of the quarter, which gives rise to its very name, is the principal historical reason for the heritage designation of the area as a whole, and gives the present plot pattern, frontages and street alignment of Bridge Street and Linenhall Street a significance that extends beyond their architectural merit considered individually. Second, Proposal C - which provides for a new community arts facility with multi-purpose event space and associated age-friendly housing on the site of the present Linenhall Carpark - stands in a long line of craft, civic and educational uses on the same group of plots. It may legitimately be described as a re-use of the Linen Hall plots for a new but kindred public-realm purpose, and the heritage value engaged is principally one of continuity of association rather than retention of physical fabric, of which little of the 18th century survives on the precise plots of the proposed development.

3.2.8 19th-Century Industrial Expansion and St. Nicholas's Catholic Church

The 19th century saw substantial industrial expansion in Dundalk in the brewing, distilling, tobacco, textile and engineering sectors, supported from the 1840s onwards by the construction of the Great Northern Railway and by the development of the port and quays. The town also expanded considerably southwards and eastwards beyond its medieval and 18th-century footprints. Within the St. Nicholas Quarter itself, however, the principal architectural events of the period are confined to

²²For the post-cambric uses of the Linen Hall as the “Market House” and as a charity school for destitute children in the mid-19th century see Kavanagh (as note 4); for the wider “ragged school” movement, founded in London in 1844 by John Pounds and the London City Mission, see C. J. Montague, *Sixty Years in Waifdom: The Ragged School Movement in English History* (London, 1904).

²³For the architectural history of the present St Nicholas’s Catholic Church on the site, including the 1859–60 build, the 1904 enlargement, and the 1937 Chapel of Adoration, see National Inventory of Architectural Heritage record 13701004 (Saint Nicholas’s Catholic Church, Bridge Street/Linenhall Street, Dundalk; rated Regional, with Architectural, Artistic, Historical and Social interests). For the cleared state of the site by 1888 see IAC Archaeological Assessment, Chapter 3.3, entry on the OS map of 1888.

the area of the old Linen Hall and the further development of the commercial frontages along Bridge Street and Linenhall Street.

Following Catholic emancipation, the Catholic congregation of the lower part of the town required a new place of worship more conveniently located than the existing St. Patrick's in Roden Place. In 1859 ground was purchased on Bridge Street, on or immediately adjacent to the site of the old Linen Hall, and St. Nicholas's Catholic Church - a chapel of ease to St. Patrick's - was consecrated in 1860.²⁴ The building, an essay in mid-Victorian Gothic by John Murray, comprises a rectangular nave on an east-west axis, with later transepts (south transept added 1904; gabled north transept added 1937), lean-to aisles, a three-stage pinnacled tower square on plan to the south-west (added 1904), and a single-height Chapel of Adoration (1937). It is constructed in coursed tooled granite ashlar with stepped limestone angle and diagonal buttresses, with paired trefoil-headed lancet windows with quatrefoil panels and geometric tracery. The church terminates the long axial vista from Church Street and, although outside the Clanbrassil Street ACA, forms the principal landmark of the St. Nicholas Quarter.²⁵

Two features of the church's setting are of particular note for the Phase 2 assessment. The first is the rock-faced squared-and-snecked ashlar granite boundary walling with polished ashlar copings, decorative iron railings and gable-capped gate piers that enclose the church grounds on the south, east and west sides. These boundary works are recorded in the NIAH as part of the church's curtilage and are themselves of high architectural quality.²⁶ The second is the church tower, which was lowered c. 1903 after it was damaged either by lightning or by the blasting of rock during the construction of the main sewer in Bridge Street; the present tower was re-built to the design of Ashlin & Coleman.²⁷

3.2.9 The Fairgreen and the Public Spaces of the Quarter

The open ground at the north-eastern corner of the urban block - addressing the Castletown River along its southern bank - was historically known as the Fairgreen. As the name suggests, the area served as the venue for the periodic fairs and markets held under royal and seigneurial patent that were a feature of every Irish market town from the medieval period until well into the 19th century. The BDP Design Statement notes that the Fairgreen at Dundalk "held fairs, events and even the circus," and that the relationship of the area to the river's edge was historically far more direct than at present, with the Fairgreen occupying land that was formerly marshland associated with the Castletown River.

²⁴St. Patrick's Parish Dundalk, "History": ground purchased in 1859 by Rev. Dean Kieran and Patrick J. Carroll; church built in 1859 and consecrated in 1860.

²⁵NIAH Reg. No. 13701004, "Saint Nicholas' Catholic Church, Bridge Street / Linenhall Street, Townparks, Dundalk". The 1937 enlargement was designed by W.H. Byrne and Son architects; the Chapel of Adoration was added in the same campaign.

²⁶NIAH Reg. No. 13701004

²⁷St. Patrick's Parish Dundalk, "History": "the spire was in a shaky condition. Many believed this was caused by a stroke of lightning or to the blasting of rock on which the church stands in order to make way for the Bridge Street main sewer. The top of the spire was taken down as a result of the damage." The campanile and tower were rebuilt by 1903 to the design of Ashlin & Coleman.

The reclamation of this marshland in the 18th-century Clanbrassil drainage scheme (see Section 3.2.6 above) is the immediate cause of the present configuration of the Fairgreen as a roughly triangular open space bounded by Fairgreen Road, Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and the rear of the buildings on the southern side. The granite kerbing and rubble masonry boundary walls that survive along its edges, and which are catalogued for protection in this AHIA, are largely products of the period from the late 18th to the late 19th century, when the Fairgreen settled into its modern form as a public open space distinct from but intimately connected with the Bridge Street and Linenhall Street frontages.

3.2.10 The 20th Century: Commemoration and Re-purposing

The principal commemorative object within the Peace Park is the Thomas Clarke Centenary Garden, which was opened on Thursday 12 May 2016 as the Dundalk component of the national 2016 Centenary Programme marking the hundredth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. The garden takes the form of a contemplative landscaped setting on the western side of the park, organised around a granite plaque, planted beds and a paved space for the laying of wreaths, and is the principal reason for the renaming of the Fairgreen as the Peace Park.

The garden commemorates Thomas James Clarke (1858–1916), the first of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic and — in the assessment of his contemporaries and of subsequent historians — the figure most directly responsible for the planning and execution of the Rising. Clarke was not himself a Dundalk man: he was born at Hurst Castle near Milford-on-Sea in Hampshire, raised in Dungannon, County Tyrone, and based in Dublin from 1907 until his execution at Kilmainham Gaol on 3 May 1916. The Dundalk connection is one of commemoration rather than birth or residence: on 10 April 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising, Dundalk railway station was renamed Clarke Station in his honour — the only mainline railway station in the Republic of Ireland to bear the name of a 1916 signatory — and the 2016 Centenary Garden was conceived as a complementary act of commemoration in the public realm of the town centre.²⁸

The renaming reflects the wider trajectory of public commemoration in the Republic of Ireland from the late 20th century onwards, and gives the Park a layered cultural significance - a place of fairs from the 18th and 19th centuries; a place of contemplation associated with the commemoration of 1916 since the early 21st century; and now (under Proposal E of the Phase 2 scheme) a place of community use, sensory engagement and amenity for the residents of the regenerated quarter.

The 20th century also saw a number of less benign changes within the quarter. The construction of the eastern bypass (the N53) in the 1990s diverted through-traffic away from Bridge Street and the historic gateway, with the unintended consequence of accelerating commercial decline along the Bridge Street and Linenhall Street frontages. The Linenhall Carpark, occupying the site of the old Linen Hall and forming the principal redevelopment opportunity within the Phase 2 area, came into being during this period as a low-grade tarmac surface. The general condition of vacancy and

²⁸ Helen Litton, *16 Lives: Thomas Clarke* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2014)

dereliction observed in the wider quarter at the time of the LAP's preparation (LAP Section 3.2.3) is the immediate context for the regeneration project.

3.2.11 Phase 1 Regeneration and the Present Day

The Phase 1 St. Nicholas Quarter Rejuvenation Scheme (completed shortly before the preparation of the Phase 2 proposals) addressed the public realm of Bridge Street, Linenhall Street, Northgate Street, Fairgreen Road, Meeting House Lane and the immediate vicinity of Dundalk Bridge. It introduced granite paving, granite kerbs, restrained metalwork lighting and street furniture along the streets of the quarter, and selectively narrowed the carriageways to a single lane with widening of the footpaths. The Phase 1 scheme is the immediate precedent for, and is intended to be completed by, the Phase 2 works now under assessment.

The Phase 2 proposals - described in detail in Sections 1.2 above and assessed in Sections 3.3 to 3.7 below - operate at a different level from Phase 1. They include built form (the new community facility and age-friendly housing), the demolition of two existing buildings (Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street, the formation of two new east-west pedestrian connections through the urban block, the rejuvenation of the Peace Park, and substantial works within the curtilage of St. Nicholas's Catholic Church. They thereby engage every layer of the historical narrative set out above - the medieval street pattern (Section 3.2.3), the 17th-century Meeting House (Section 3.2.5), the 18th-century Clanbrassil plot pattern (Section 3.2.6), the cambric and linen-trade origin of the Linenhall site (Section 3.2.7), the mid-19th-century Catholic church and its boundary works (Section 3.2.8), and the 18th- to 21st-century evolution of the Fairgreen / Peace Park (Sections 3.2.9 and 3.2.10).

It is in this context - the cumulative inheritance of more than eight centuries of incremental town-making - that the heritage assessment of the Phase 2 proposals is undertaken in the sections that follow.



Masterplan of Proposed Works

3.3 St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland and its Grounds (Proposal A)



St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland is identified in the Design Statement as the principal landmark within the quarter and the key civic anchor for the regeneration strategy. Its position at the northern end of Clanbrassil Street gives it an important visual and spatial role within Dundalk town centre.

Proposal A is concerned exclusively with the public realm and curtilage works in and immediately around the church grounds. It does not propose any alteration, modification or extension to the church building itself. The principal interventions are:

- Removal of the existing perimeter railings around the south and east of the church grounds (gate piers retained).
- Removal of the existing gates to the south entrance (gate piers retained).
- Reopening of an existing entrance.
- Relocation of an existing statue to an alcove identified within the church grounds.
- Introduction of a Part M-compliant ramp giving level access to the church.
- Introduction of new uplighters to reinforce the church as a focal point at the head of Clanbrassil Street.
- Introduction of new seating around the southern and south-eastern parts of the grounds.
- Extension of the Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street public realm into the church grounds, with planting and tree planting to defined locations.
- Retention of the existing boundary stone pillars (gate piers) and protection of all retained existing trees.

Although these works do not affect the church building itself, the removal of historic perimeter railings around a Protected Structure is a substantial intervention and is addressed in detail at Section 4.4 below in the context of LAP Policy CH 22 and CDP Policies BHC 20, BHC 21, BHC 22 and BHC 24. The retention of the gate piers and the limited scope of the public realm works are noted as positive starting points for that assessment.

3.4 Linenhall Carpark Site, No. 2 and No. 3 Bridge Street (Proposals B and C)



The Linenhall Carpark site is identified in the Design Statement as the principal redevelopment opportunity within Phase 2. It occupies a strategic position within the urban block and currently forms a weak edge in its existing urban condition. Proposals B (a new east-west pedestrian connection from Bridge Street through to Linenhall Street) and C (the new community arts facility with age-friendly housing) operate together on this site.

The site is bounded to the south by St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland and its grounds, to the west by the rear of the Bridge Street terrace (including Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street), to the east by Linenhall Street, and to the north by Wolfe Tone Terrace. Existing features of heritage interest at this location include:

- No. 2 Bridge Street - described in the Design Statement as currently structurally unstable and proposed for demolition to facilitate the east-west pedestrian connection.
- No. 3 Bridge Street ('Mag Ally's') — a two-storey vernacular building of typical narrow-fronted Bridge Street character, presently vacant. The building is not entered on the Record of Protected Structures, is not included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area.
- Sections of rubble masonry boundary walling along the western edge of the site (where this exists between the site and the rear yards of the Bridge Street properties).
- A rubble masonry wall fragment to the south of the site, separating the carpark from the church grounds.

- The substantial level difference (c. 1.7 m) between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, which is itself a piece of cultural-historical evidence of the original ground form before successive levelling.

Proposal C envisages a new two-storey building, with the multi-purpose event space, reception and arts studios facing west onto a new pedestrianised internal courtyard / east-west connection, and a terrace of c. six age-friendly housing units addressing Linenhall Street. The proposed Bridge Street and Linenhall Street elevations (Drawing SNQ-BDP-B1-XX-EL-A-3020) show:

- A two-storey scale matching the predominantly two-storey rhythm of the existing Bridge Street and Linenhall Street terraces.
- A pitched roof form to the community facility element.
- A material treatment that reads as a contemporary, vertically articulated, narrow-fronted addition to the streetscape, distinct from but compatible with the historic terraces.

No. 3 Bridge Street is proposed for full demolition, with its site incorporated into the footprint of the new community facility, which will provide a new-build commercial frontage to Bridge Street at this point. The building forms part of the broadly continuous two-storey vernacular terrace at the southern end of Bridge Street and adjoins No. 2 Bridge Street, which is also proposed for demolition (Proposal B). The demolition of No. 3 Bridge Street is assessed at Section 4.7.3 below.

3.5 No. 28 Bridge Street and Meeting House Lane (Proposal D)



Proposal D creates a second new east-west pedestrian connection through the urban block, exploiting the plot at No. 28 Bridge Street to provide a physical opening from Bridge Street through to Meeting House Lane and onwards to the Peace Park. The Meeting House Lane Landscape Plan (Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941013) shows the proposed treatment of the lane in granite paving and natural stone sett paving, with raised planter walls incorporating timber-slat seats, planting mix and proposed trees.

Existing features of heritage interest at this location include:

- No. 28 Bridge Street - a narrow-fronted urban townhouse, part of the broadly continuous Bridge Street terrace.

- The existing rubble masonry walling at the western end of Meeting House Lane (recorded as a vernacular heritage element of the quarter).
- Existing granite kerbing on the north side of Meeting House Lane.
- The historic narrow secondary character of Meeting House Lane itself, which the proposals seek to retain and reinforce.

3.6 The Peace Park (Proposal E)



The Peace Park is the open public space at the north-east corner of the urban block, formerly known as the Fairgreen. It held fairs, events and even the circus, and was renovated as part of the centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising to serve as a place of contemplation for the community. The Phase 1 works extended the Park through the relocation of the slip road to Linenhall Street, and the Phase 2 proposals address the resulting larger park area.

Heritage elements within the Peace Park area include:

- The existing 1916 commemoration monument, which is to be relocated to a new location within the Park.

- A number of mature trees of significance to the character of the Park (some retained, some to be removed in accordance with the Peace Park General Arrangement Plan).
- The rubble masonry boundary walling defining the southern and eastern edges of the Park.
- The position of the Park immediately to the south of Dundalk Bridge, the masonry parapets and granite kerbs of which form part of the historic gateway to the town.

The proposed Peace Park works (Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941011) include re-routed pathways, new gateways, new sensory garden elements, new sensory and ornamental planting beds, new tree planting, climbing stacks, stepping logs, timber-slat seats with arms and backrests, bollards, cycle stands, an e-scooter stand, litter bins and signage. Hard landscaping is in granite paving (Types 1 and 2), exposed-aggregate concrete and buff stone-mastic asphalt.

3.7 Bridge Street and Linenhall Street Public Realm Context

Although the principal building works of Phase 2 are concentrated on the four intervention areas described above, ancillary public realm works are proposed along Linenhall Street in front of the new community facility, comprising the removal of the existing footpath paving, the introduction of c. six parallel parking bays and a loading bay. These works will adjoin a stretch of Linenhall Street that includes Protected Structure No. 25 Linenhall Street (Fair Green Bar) and the existing rubble walling adjacent to it (recorded as vernacular heritage in the example schedule).

The treatment of the existing granite kerbing, granite thresholds and any historic walling encountered along the line of these footpath works will be governed by the same principles applied in Phase 1 - careful lifting, setting aside, cleaning and reinstatement within the new paving panels, with method statements approved by the Conservation Architect prior to commencement.

4.0 RESPONSE TO POLICY, IMPACT & MITIGATION

4.1 Introduction

Section 4 sets out the assessment of the Phase 2 proposals against the heritage policy framework identified at Section 2 above. It addresses, in turn:

- Archaeology (LAP Policies CH 19, CH 20, CH 21; CDP Policies BHC 1, BHC 5–10).
- Character / Key Development Areas (LAP Policies KDCA 1, KDCA 2).
- Protected Structures (LAP Policies CH 22, CH 23; CDP Policies BHC 20–27).
- Architectural Conservation Areas (LAP Policy CH 24; CDP Policies BHC 31–37).
- Vernacular Heritage (LAP Policies CH 25, CH 26; CDP Policies BHC 42–44).

Unlike the Phase 1 scheme - which was concerned exclusively with public-realm works at street grade - the Phase 2 scheme includes built form, demolitions and works within the curtilage of a Protected Structure. The assessment below identifies, for each policy, the specific element of the scheme to which the policy applies and the mitigation by which any potential harm is to be avoided or reduced. All works to historic fabric will be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice as defined by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in the Venice Charter (1964) and subsequent charters, the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2011) and the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999).

4.2 Response to Archaeology Policies (CH 19, CH 20, CH 21)

The entire scheme footprint sits within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1 (the historic core), and the LAP archaeology policies CH 19, CH 20 and CH 21 apply in full. Dundalk is also one of the four medieval walled towns identified at CDP Section 9.3.3, engaging the additional CDP policies on town defences and medieval street pattern (BHC 8, BHC 9).

CH 19

To protect known and unknown archaeological areas, sites, monuments, structures and objects, having regard to the advice of the National Monuments Services... and the principles set out in "The Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage" (1999).

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 19

A separate Archaeological Desktop Assessment has been prepared by IAC Archaeology (J4154-1, 2026) and accompanies this Part-8 application. The proposed works will be carried out under the supervision of a licensed archaeologist appointed in accordance with CH 21. All ground-breaking works within ZAP 1 - i.e. the entire scheme footprint, including in particular the new community facility foundations, the demolition and excavation associated with Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street, the new pedestrian routes, the Peace Park re-landscaping (tree pits, lighting column foundations, drainage runs) and the new tree-pit and lighting works in the church grounds - will be subject to archaeological monitoring. Method statements for excavation in proximity to historic walls, the church boundary, the rubble walls and other surviving historic fabric will be prepared by the

contractor and approved by the project archaeologist. In-situ preservation is preferred wherever consistent with the technical requirements of the works.

CH 20

To protect the archaeological assets of Dundalk and ensure they are managed and preserved in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal, tourism and sustainable development.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 20

The Scheme directly supports the LAP's economic renewal and tourism objectives for the St. Nicholas Quarter, while protecting archaeological assets through the measures set out in the response to CH 19 and CH 21.

CH 21

To require applicants seeking planning permission to utilise a licensed archaeologist, as required, to undertake archaeological impact assessments, geophysical surveys, test excavations and monitoring.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 21

The Archaeological Desktop Assessment by IAC Archaeology, submitted with this application, complies with this policy. Archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during all ground-breaking works, with provision for test excavation in advance of any deeper excavation (e.g. for community facility foundations, demolition of Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street, deep tree pits, lighting column foundations and drainage runs). Geophysical survey, where required in advance of construction, will be carried out at locations to be agreed with the project archaeologist following review of the design team's services drawings.

Detailed commentary on archaeological matters is not provided in this AHIA: please refer to the IAC Archaeological Desktop Assessment for that purpose.

4.3 Response to Character Area / Key Development Area Policies (KDCA 1, KDCA 2)

KDCA 1

To support and promote the development of the following "Key Development Areas" in Dundalk: ... iii) St. Nicholas Quarter ...

Conservation Architect's Comment – KDCA 1

The Phase 2 Scheme delivers the next stage of the St. Nicholas Quarter and Backland Regeneration Project that this policy supports, addressing connectivity, the setting of St. Nicholas's Church, vacant and backland sites and park rejuvenation in a single co-ordinated proposal.

KDCA 2

To support the implementation of any masterplans, urban design frameworks/statements, or public realm schemes prepared for lands within the Plan area, including the Key Development Areas identified in Chapter 3.

Conservation Architect's Comment – KDCA 2

The Scheme is one such public-realm and regeneration scheme, prepared in support of the LAP's identified opportunities for the Quarter (Identity, Community, Heritage, Connectivity, Gateway and Sustainability), and is accordingly directly supported by KDCA 2.

4.4 Response to Protected Structure Policies (CH 22, CH 23 / BHC 20–27)

The LAP's headline Protected Structure policies (CH 22, CH 23) are addressed first; the more detailed CDP framework (BHC 20–27) is then addressed in turn, as required by the LAP's tandem-reading provision.

CH 22

To preserve, enhance and promote the reuse of buildings identified in the Record of Protected Structures and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such structures, including their historic character. Such proposals will include Architectural Heritage Impact Statements and Conservation Methodology Statements.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 22

This AHIA is prepared in direct response to the requirement of CH 22 for an Architectural Heritage Impact Statement. A Conservation Methodology Statement will be prepared by the contractor for each item of historic fabric requiring "method statement" approval, and will be approved by the Conservation Architect prior to the commencement of works at each location.

No Protected Structure is altered, modified or extended in plan or elevation by the Phase 2 Scheme. The principal works affecting Protected Structures are the curtilage works to St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland under Proposal A. These are intended to enhance - and in the view of the design team are capable of substantially enhancing - the setting and appreciation of the church as a landmark, by extending the high-quality Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street public realm into the church grounds, by reopening an existing entrance, by introducing universal access in the form of a Part M ramp, and by removing the visual barrier of the existing perimeter railings to allow the church to read fully against its setting.

The proposed removal of the perimeter railings is, however, a non-trivial intervention requiring mitigation.

CH 23

To address dereliction and vacancy by encouraging and supporting creative approaches to adaptive reuse, which adhere to conservation principles and practice.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 23

The proposals addresses dereliction and vacancy through the comprehensive redevelopment of a long-vacant non-designated vernacular building and of the underused backland site behind it, and it acts as a catalyst for the renewal of vacant and underused fabric within the wider quarter (LAP Section 3.2.3), as is already evidenced by the property-owner improvements observed since the completion of Phase 1. The loss of the opportunity for adaptive re-use at No. 3 Bridge Street is acknowledged, with mitigation set out at Section 4.7.3 below.

The CDP Protected Structure policies (BHC 20–27) are addressed in turn below.

BHC 20

To ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a protected structure and / or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, is compatible with the special character and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, density, layout, and materials of the protected structure.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 20

The principal Protected Structure affected is St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland, the curtilage of which is the subject of Proposal A. No alteration is proposed to the church building. The curtilage works (granite paving, granite kerbs, planting, low-level seating, an unobtrusive Part M ramp and uplighting) are of low scale and mass and do not introduce any element that competes visually with the church. The new community facility (Proposal C) is set well back from the church (across the new pedestrianised east-west connection) and is of a two-storey domestic scale matching the existing terrace, such that it is not considered to compete with or diminish the church's landmark role at the head of Clanbrassil Street.

BHC 21

The form and structural integrity of the protected structure and its setting shall be retained and the relationship between the protected structure, its curtilage and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, designed views or vistas from or to the structure shall be protected.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 21

The form and structural integrity of St. Nicholas's Church will be unaffected by the works. The curtilage will be re-presented through the public realm works rather than altered in plan. The principal designed view to the church - the long axial view northwards along Clanbrassil Street - is retained and indeed strengthened by the proposals (uplighting, removal of railings, extension of the materials palette of the ACA-side public realm into the church grounds). The proposed new east-west pedestrian connection to the north of the church (Proposal B) opens up a previously closed view of the north elevation of the church from within the urban block, which is considered a positive heritage gain.

BHC 22

To prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds of a protected structure. Any proposed development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds must demonstrate that it is part of an overall strategy for the future conservation of the entire complex including the structures, demesne and/or attendant grounds.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 22

The curtilage works under Proposal A are part of an overall strategy for the conservation and re-presentation of St. Nicholas's Church and its grounds. The works are limited to surface treatment, planting, low-level seating, ramped access, lighting and the controlled removal of the perimeter railing system. No new buildings, no above-ground structures and no significant excavation are proposed within the church curtilage itself. The works are therefore considered to be appropriate

development within the curtilage of the Protected Structure, subject to the safeguards on the railings outlined under CH 22 above.

BHC 23

To require that all planning applications relating to protected structures contain the appropriate documentation as described in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) or any subsequent guidelines.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 23

This AHIA is submitted as part of the documentation accompanying the Part-8 planning application, in compliance with this policy and with the 2011 Guidelines, and discharges the equivalent requirement of LAP CH 22.

BHC 24

To require the retention of original features such as windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, and other significant features which contribute to the character of protected structures and encourage the reinstatement of appropriately detailed features which have been lost.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 24

No significant features of the church building are altered, removed or replaced. Removal of railings is proposed, for which impact mitigations are detailed at Chapter 4.7.1. Original or historic features within the curtilage - in particular the gate piers, any retained sections of railing, any in-situ granite paving or kerbing within the church grounds, and any historic burial-ground markers or memorials - are to be retained in situ and protected during the works through the adoption of approved method statements. Equally, the historic granite kerbing at Meeting House Lane (Proposal D), the cast-iron utility covers along Linenhall Street (Proposals C and adjoining footpath works), and the granite threshold elements where they exist, are to be carefully lifted, stored, cleaned and reinstated within the new paving in accordance with the same principles applied in Phase 1.

BHC 25

To promote best conservation practice and the use of skilled specialist practitioners in the conservation of and for any works to protected structures.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 25

All works in proximity to historic fabric will be carried out in accordance with method statements prepared by the contractor and approved by the Conservation Architect prior to commencement. A Conservation Architect (RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Accredited) shall be retained to monitor works in the vicinity of the church, the gate piers, any retained sections of railing, the rubble walls within the wider scheme footprint, the granite kerbing at Meeting House Lane and Linenhall Street, and the cast-iron utility covers across the area of works.

BHC 26

To encourage the retention, sympathetic reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their settings where appropriate and where the proposal is compatible with their character and significance.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 26

The setting of St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland is enhanced by the proposals through the extension of the Phase 1 Clanbrassil Street public realm into the church grounds, the introduction of universal access, the reopening of an existing entrance, the introduction of focal-point lighting and the removal of clutter. No demolition, alteration or significant modification of any Protected Structure is proposed.

BHC 27

To permit the demolition or significant modification of a protected structure, only in exceptional circumstances.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 27

No demolition or significant modification of any Protected Structure is proposed by this Scheme.

4.5 Response to Architectural Conservation Area Policies (CH 24 / BHC 31–37)

The proposed works are not within an ACA, but the southern edge of the Scheme footprint adjoins the Clanbrassil Street ACA at St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland. The headline LAP policy (CH 24) and the more detailed CDP framework (BHC 31–37) are accordingly engaged in respect of impact on the setting and character of the adjoining ACA.

CH 24

To require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout and materials. Development proposals should not adversely impact upon views into or from an Architectural Conservation Area.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 24

The Scheme is not within the Clanbrassil Street ACA but is immediately to the north of it. The materials palette (granite paving, granite kerbs, dark metalwork lighting and furniture) is a direct continuation of the completed Clanbrassil Street public realm scheme and is accordingly compatible with the character of the ACA in terms of materials and detailing.

The new community facility and age-friendly housing (Proposal C) are located on the Linenhall Carpark site, which is set back behind St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland and is not visible from within the ACA itself. The new build is two storeys, matching the predominantly two-storey character of the wider quarter. Views southward along Bridge Street into the ACA are altered by the proposed works to the Bridge Street frontage at Nos. 2 and 3. The existing buildings are to be demolished in full and replaced (at No.3) by the new-build frontage of the community facility, designed to maintain the existing plot width, the two-storey datum and the vertical rhythm of the terrace. At No. 2, the existing structurally unstable building is removed in accordance with Proposal B, with the new opening to the east-west connection designed to read as a punctuation of, rather than an erosion of, the Bridge Street frontage.

Views northward out of the ACA from Clanbrassil Street toward St. Nicholas's Church are improved by the removal of the perimeter railings and clutter at the church grounds (subject to the safeguards under CH 22 above) and by the introduction of focal-point uplighting on the church.

BHC 31

To require that all development proposals within or affecting an Architectural Conservation Area preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that area, protect architectural features of special interest and ensure that the design respects the character of the historic architecture in terms of height, scale, layout, and materials.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 31

The Scheme respects the character of the adjoining Clanbrassil Street ACA through its choice of traditional materials and the protection of architectural features of special interest along the southern edge of the scheme footprint. The new build is sited and designed at a scale (two storeys, narrow vertical rhythm) and with a layout (continuous street frontage along Bridge Street and Linenhall Street) that respects the historic urban grain.

BHC 32

To retain any building within an Architectural Conservation Area which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area. Demolition of such structures, the removal of features and street furniture which contribute to the character of the area shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Applications for demolition shall be accompanied by a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 32

No buildings within the Clanbrassil Street ACA are demolished or altered by the Scheme. The proposed demolition of No. 2 Bridge Street is outside the ACA and is therefore strictly addressed under the Vernacular Heritage policies (CH 25, CH 26 and BHC 42) at Section 4.6 below, rather than under BHC 32. Nonetheless, the principle of BHC 32 - that demolition of any contributing structure should be supported by a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment - has been applied by analogy to No. 2 Bridge Street.

BHC 33

To ensure any new service infrastructure (installed by the Local Authority or Public/Private Sector Utility Companies) shall not be located where it will be detrimental to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 33

New service infrastructure will be co-ordinated with Louth County Council and the relevant utility providers to ensure that all new ducting and chambers are located within the carriageway or new footpath build-up where possible, and that new lighting columns and signage are positioned away from the most sensitive frontages and from views into the ACA.

BHC 34

To ensure that the protection of architectural features of special interest within an Architectural Conservation Area are retained as part of any proposed re-development.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 34

No architectural feature within the ACA is altered or removed by the Scheme. Equivalent features within the scheme footprint (cast-iron utility covers, granite kerbing, granite thresholds and gate piers) are retained and protected through method statements.

BHC 35

To require that any development on the periphery of an Architectural Conservation Area does not detract from the existing character of the designated Architectural Conservation Area.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 35

The Scheme is on the immediate northern periphery of the Clanbrassil Street ACA. The continuation of the Clanbrassil Street materials palette northward into the church grounds, the matching two-storey scale of the new community facility and age-friendly housing, the retention of the gate piers at the church, and the careful siting of the new built form behind the existing church (rather than alongside it) ensure that the development on the periphery of the ACA enhances, rather than detracts from, the existing character of the ACA. Particular attention will be required at detailed design stage to the proposed external materials of the new community facility as these will be the most visible periphery elements from within the ACA.

BHC 36

To ensure that new trading bays and all associated signage shall not be located where it will be detrimental to the character of the Architectural Conservation Area or any important building or vista in the Architectural Conservation Area.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 36

No new trading bays are introduced by the Scheme. The new community facility provides a new-build commercial frontage on the site of No. 3 Bridge Street, following the demolition of the existing building (assessed at Section 4.7.3). The detailed design of the new frontage, the signage strategy for both the commercial unit and the community facility itself, and any external lighting will be agreed with the Conservation Architect, in accordance with this policy and with LAP Section 7.6.10 (Shopfronts) and the Louth County Council Shopfront Design Guidelines, to ensure that they do not detract from views into or from the adjoining ACA. Mitigation M20 at Section 4.7.3 below sets out the detailed-design parameters.

BHC 37

To retain surviving medieval plots and street patterns in the Architectural Conservation Areas and other towns and villages where in evidence and in the course of development, to record and mark evidence of ancient boundaries and layouts etc.

Conservation Architect's Comment – BHC 37

The Scheme is supportive of this policy. The proposed new east-west pedestrian connection at Meeting House Lane (Proposal D) re-establishes a route through the urban block consistent with the historic east-west pattern recorded in the Irish Historic Towns Atlas (no. 16, Dundalk; Royal Irish Academy, 2006), and is identified in the Design Statement as "repairing the urban grain that existed historically." Surviving plot boundary walls (rubble masonry) within the area of works are retained in situ where possible, and the line of any ancient boundaries identified during archaeological monitoring will be recorded and (where appropriate) marked in the new paving.

4.6 Response to Vernacular Heritage Policies (CH 25, CH 26 / BHC 42–44)

A number of elements within the area of works are to be considered under the LAP's vernacular heritage policies, read in tandem with CDP Policies BHC 42 (vernacular built heritage), BHC 43 (stone kerbs and paving stones) and BHC 44 (re-use and adaptation of historic buildings). The proposed

demolition of two adjoining vernacular buildings: No. 2 Bridge Street, addressed by way of mitigation at Section 4.7.2 below, and No. 3 Bridge Street, addressed at Section 4.7.3 below. The principal reference framework for both demolitions is LAP CH 25 / CDP BHC 42, with LAP Section 7.6.10 (Shopfronts) remaining relevant to the design of the new commercial frontage on the No. 3 site.

CH 25

To promote, where feasible, the protection, retention, sympathetic maintenance and appropriate revitalisation and use of Dundalk's vernacular buildings and heritage, which contribute to the streetscape and to discourage the demolition of these structures.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 25

The principal vernacular heritage elements affected by the Scheme are No. 2 Bridge Street, which is described in the Design Statement as currently structurally unstable and is proposed for demolition to facilitate the new east-west pedestrian connection (Proposal B), and the adjoining No. 3 Bridge Street ('Mag Ally's'), which is proposed for full demolition to facilitate the Bridge Street frontage of the new community facility (Proposal C). CH 25 discourages the demolition of vernacular structures contributing to the streetscape. The case for each demolition accordingly requires mitigation, as detailed at Sections 4.7.2 and 4.7.3 respectively.

Other vernacular heritage elements within the area of works — the rubble masonry walls within the Linenhall Carpark site, the boundary walls of the Peace Park and Meeting House Lane, the granite kerbing on Meeting House Lane, the granite thresholds, and the gate piers at the church — are to be retained, protected during works and reinstated where lifted, in accordance with the principles set out in BHC 43 and BHC 44. Any historic fabric surviving at No. 3 Bridge Street, including any historic shopfront elements concealed behind the existing 20th-century frontage, will be addressed through the pre-demolition record and salvage provisions at mitigations M17 and M18 (Section 4.7.3).

CH 26

To encourage the re-use and adaption of existing historic buildings, both designated and non-designated, in a manner compatible with their character, and which enhances their vernacular heritage or contribution to the ACA within which they are located.

Conservation Architect's Comment – CH 26

Under the proposals, No. 3 Bridge Street is to be demolished, and the Scheme does not provide for the adaptive re-use of any existing historic building. CH 26 is an encouraging rather than a prohibitive policy, and the absence of an adaptive re-use component is not in itself a breach of it.

4.7 Mitigations

The impact assessment in this section has identified three specific areas where mitigation is deemed to be necessary: (i) the curtilage of a Protected Structure (St. Nicholas's Church), where the proposals affect existing iron railings and the adjacent Architectural Conservation Area; (ii) vernacular fabric proposed for demolition to form the new east-west connection (No. 2 Bridge Street); and (iii) further vernacular fabric proposed for demolition to form the Bridge Street frontage of the new community facility (No. 3 Bridge Street).

4.7.1 Removal of Railings at St. Nicholas's Church

The proposals to remove the railings engage four principal Policy Objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 (Chapter 9, Built Heritage and Culture):

BHC 20 (sympathetic siting, design, scale and materials in development affecting a protected structure or its setting);

BHC 21 (retention of form and structural integrity of the protected structure and its setting, and protection of the relationship between the structure, its curtilage and “any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, designed views or vistas from or to the structure”);

BHC 22 (prohibition of inappropriate development within the curtilage or attendant grounds of a protected structure, with any such development to form part of an overall strategy for the conservation of the complex);

BHC 23 (requirement for AHIA documentation in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2011).

The proposed removal of the southern iron railings is the kind of intervention that BHC 22 expressly contemplates and conditions, rather than the kind it prohibits: BHC 22 does not prohibit all development within curtilage but *inappropriate* development, and it requires that any such development form part of “an overall strategy for the future conservation of the entire complex.”

The works are presented in the BDP Design Statement as one component of just such an overall strategy — comprising the relocation of the statue, the provision of accessible entry, the reopening of the historic blocked entrance, the introduction of dedicated uplighting, and the conservation of all masonry elements (piers, copings, walling) and all railings to the east, west and north sides. Read in the round, the strategy is one of careful enhancement of the church's civic setting rather than diminution of its curtilage.

The strongest positive policy argument is engaged by the second limb of BHC 21, which extends the protection of the curtilage explicitly to “designed views or vistas from or to the structure.” St. Nicholas's Catholic Church was sited in 1859–60 to terminate the principal north–south axial vista of Hamilton's 18th-century town plan (see Chapters 3.2.6 and 3.2.8 above), and the NIAH appraisal records that the building “is prominently located at the north end of Church Street forming a vista stop between roads converging from the east and west.” The southern iron railings, although themselves of high quality, post-date the church by approximately four decades and presently interrupt the lower register of that vista. Their carefully limited removal completes a designed view that BHC 21 specifically protects, and is, on this reading, a positive policy outcome rather than a policy compromise.

The Council nevertheless properly notes, in accordance with BHC 20 and CH 22, that the boundary works are catalogued by the NIAH as part of the curtilage of the protected structure and contribute to its special character. The removal of the southern length of iron railings, even with all masonry

and the railings to other elevations retained, will result in a permanent loss of historic fabric. The assessment in this AHIA is accordingly that the proposal is policy-compliant *subject to the mitigations set out in below*. Without those mitigations the proposal would not be policy-compliant; with them, the residual impact is judged to be **slight adverse** in respect of fabric loss and **moderate beneficial** in respect of vista, accessibility and civic setting, with a net assessment of **moderate beneficial**.

M1. Pre-removal record. The southern iron railings shall be the subject of a measured drawing record (orthographic and detailed sectional drawings to a scale not less than 1:20, and high-resolution photographic record from defined viewpoints) prepared by a conservation-accredited architect prior to any intervention. The record shall be lodged with the Louth County Council Heritage Officer and the NIAH.

M2. Careful removal and curated retention. The railings shall be carefully removed by a contractor with demonstrable experience of historic ironwork conservation. A representative section of the railings (not less than one full bay between piers, including any decorative elements) shall be retained in conserved condition and stored under cover within the curtilage of the protected structure for future re-instatement, display, or use as a sample for any future replacement.

M3. Reversibility. The fixings, mortar pockets and bedding details to the retained gate piers and plinth walling shall be left in situ and made good in lime mortar in such a way that re-instatement of railings of matching profile, gauge and finish remains feasible without further intervention to the historic masonry. The detailed design of the new threshold to Clanbrassil Street shall not preclude such re-instatement.

M4. Conservation supervision. All works to the curtilage of the protected structure — including removal of the railings, intervention to the gate piers, formation of the statue alcove, ramp construction, and reopening of the blocked entrance — shall be supervised by a conservation-accredited architect on the RIAI Grade I or Grade II register, and a Conservation Methodology Statement shall be submitted in accordance with BHC 23 and CH 22.

M5. Anti-social behaviour study. The anti-social behaviour study flagged in the BDP Design Statement (p. 22) shall be completed prior to the lodgement of detailed design, and its findings should be reflected in the final detailed design of lighting, planting, sightlines and movement through the southern part of the church curtilage. The study shall be carried out in consultation with the parish, An Garda Síochána and Louth County Council's Community Safety section.

M6. Consent of the property owner. The expressed willingness of the parish to participate in the proposed works (BDP Design Statement, p. 22) shall be confirmed in writing by the relevant ecclesiastical authority, and any conditions specified by that authority in respect of the curtilage, the statue, the entrance, and the use of the resulting space shall be respected in detailed design.

M7. Limitation of scope. The consent for railings removal shall be limited expressly to the southern boundary of the curtilage, between defined gate piers, and shall not be extended in detailed design to the east, west or north boundaries.

Subject to mitigations M1 to M7 above being undertaken, the proposed removal of the southern iron railings of St. Nicholas's Catholic Church curtilage, with all masonry elements retained and all other railings retained, is assessed as compliant with Policy Objectives BHC 20, BHC 21, BHC 22 and BHC 23 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 and Policy Objective CH 22 of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, and as a positive contribution to the protection of the designed vista to the protected structure that is expressly safeguarded by BHC 21.

4.7.2 Demolition of No.2 Bridge Street

Because No. 2 Bridge Street is undesignated, the policy framework is different from that applying to demolition of a Protected Structure. The proposed works engage the following Policy Objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 (Chapter 9, Built Heritage and Culture):

BHC 35 (development on the periphery of an Architectural Conservation Area shall not detract from the existing character of the designated ACA): the demolition site is on the immediate northern periphery of the Clanbrassil Street ACA, and the visual relationship between Bridge Street and the ACA boundary at St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland is engaged;

BHC 42 (vernacular architecture, the loss of which through "demolition, replacement, or dereliction" is expressly identified by the CDP as a heritage concern at Chapter 9.8).

At local level, two Policy Objectives of the Dundalk Local Area Plan are directly applicable:

CH 25 (to promote, where feasible, the protection, retention, sympathetic maintenance and appropriate revitalisation and use of Dundalk's vernacular buildings and heritage, which contribute to the streetscape, and to *discourage the demolition of these structures*);

CH 26 (to encourage the re-use and adaptation of existing historic buildings, both designated and non-designated, in a manner compatible with their character).

BHC 32 of the CDP (which conditions demolition within an ACA on "exceptional circumstances" and requires a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment) does not formally apply because the building is outside the ACA. However the spirit of that Policy Objective informs best practice for demolition of any contributing vernacular building, and it is appropriate that the same suite of documentation be furnished in this instance.

The proposed demolition raises a more significant heritage question than the boundary works at the church (Noted in Chapter 4.7.1 above), for two reasons. First, it is the loss of the entire building, not the curtilage element of an otherwise-retained protected structure: the fabric will not be capable of restoration, and the proposal is therefore irreversible in counterpoint to the removal of the railings, which is not. Second, the policy posture of CH 25 (*discourage the demolition*) and BHC 42 (loss of vernacular architecture as a CDP-recognised concern) places the burden of proof on the proposer of

the works, who must demonstrate both that retention is *not feasible* and that the public benefit of demolition is sufficient to outweigh the loss.

On the question of feasibility of retention, the design statement asserts that No. 2 Bridge Street is “structurally unstable currently.” An assertion of structural instability, however, is not by itself a sufficient basis for a heritage-acceptable consent to demolish a vernacular contributor; the assertion must be substantiated by an independent structural appraisal, and the appraisal must address not only present condition but also *whether retention is achievable through reasonable conservation works*. The default position of CH 25 is that conservation works are to be preferred to demolition, and a finding of present instability without consideration of remedial repair does not, on its own, displace that default. This is the first and most important point of mitigation (M8 below).

On the question of public benefit, the proposal advances three substantive arguments. The new east-west pedestrian connection repairs the historic urban grain by reinstating a permeability between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street that was a feature of the medieval and post-medieval town plan but was lost during the consolidation of the present block. The connection provides a fully accessible route across a 1.7 m level difference that is otherwise traversed only by stepped or roundabout means, materially advancing the accessibility of the public realm in the quarter for users with reduced mobility. And the opening of the block at this point reinforces the role of St. Nicholas’s Catholic Church as a focal point at the top of Clanbrassil Street and within the wider quarter (BDP Design Statement, p. 36) — a benefit that engages the second limb of CDP Policy Objective BHC 21 (protection of designed views or vistas to a protected structure) in the same way as the church railings removal (Chapter 4.7.1 above).

The assessment in this AHIA is that, subject to a substantiated finding that retention is not feasible (M8) and to the suite of mitigations set out below, the public benefit of the new east-west connection is capable of outweighing the loss of an undesignated, structurally compromised vernacular building. The residual impact is judged to be **moderate adverse** in respect of fabric loss and townscape rhythm, and **moderate beneficial** in respect of urban-grain repair, accessibility and vista, with a net assessment of **slight beneficial**. Without M8 the proposal would not be policy-compliant; with M8 and the further mitigations the residual impact is assessed as acceptable.

M8. Independent structural and conservation appraisal. Prior to the lodgement of any application for consent to demolish, an independent structural appraisal of No. 2 Bridge Street shall be carried out by a chartered structural engineer with demonstrable experience of historic vernacular buildings, jointly instructed with a RIAI Grade I/II conservation-accredited architect. The appraisal shall address (i) the current structural condition; (ii) the cause of any instability identified; (iii) the scope and likely cost of remedial works that would be necessary to retain the building, taking into account both its present use and its potential adaptive re-use within Proposal B; and (iv) a reasoned conclusion as to whether retention is or is not feasible. Demolition shall not proceed unless the appraisal concludes that retention is not feasible.

M9. Pre-demolition record. The building shall be the subject of a comprehensive pre-demolition record prepared by a conservation-accredited architect prior to any intervention. The record shall comprise (i) measured drawings of all elevations, plans and sections to a scale of not less than 1:50, with detailed survey at 1:20 of any features of particular interest including shopfront, joinery, chimney-pieces and historic plasterwork if any; (ii) high-resolution photographic record from defined viewpoints externally and (subject to safe access) internally; (iii) a written description of the building's plan form, fabric and contribution to the streetscape, prepared in the format of an NIAH record; and (iv) a documentary search for any historic plans, photographs or records relating to the building. The record shall be lodged with the Louth County Council Heritage Officer, the NIAH and the Irish Architectural Archive.

M10. Selective salvage of historic fabric. Prior to demolition, a salvage schedule shall be prepared identifying historic fabric for retention and storage. This shall include, as a minimum, any surviving historic shopfront elements, joinery, chimney-pieces, ironwork, decorative plasterwork, and any datable structural members (timber roof trusses, primary timbers). Salvaged elements of suitable size and condition shall be incorporated into the public realm of the new east-west connection (for example, in seating, paving inserts, or a discreet interpretive panel) so as to retain a tangible material connection to the lost building on its own site.

M11. Interpretive provision. The new east-west connection shall incorporate an interpretive element acknowledging the former presence of No. 2 Bridge Street and the historic character of the Bridge Street frontage. This may take the form of a short text panel, an inscribed paving inset, or an integrated art commission, and shall be designed in consultation with the Louth County Council Heritage Officer and the local historical society.

M12. Frontage continuity in detailed design. The detailed design of the new east-west connection at its Bridge Street frontage shall respect the rhythm, scale and material character of the historic Bridge Street streetscape. The opening shall be designed as a punctuation of the frontage rather than as a wholesale erosion: side returns or framing elements shall be provided to maintain a perceived continuity of the street-line, and the design shall be informed by the BDP Design Statement's analysis of the "fine-grained vertical rhythm" of the quarter (p. 24). The opening shall not exceed the footprint of No. 2 Bridge Street, and shall not be capable of being extended in detailed design to incorporate any adjoining building.

M13. Conservation supervision and Conservation Methodology Statement. All demolition, salvage and adjoining-building works shall be supervised by the conservation-accredited architect engaged under M8, and a Conservation Methodology Statement shall be prepared addressing (i) the manner of demolition and any propping or protection required to safeguard the adjoining buildings (the historic frontage to the west and the corner with Linenhall Street to the east); (ii) the salvage methodology under M10; and (iii)

the construction methodology for the new connection in its interface with retained historic fabric on either side.

M14. Adjoining-building protection. A condition survey of all immediately adjoining buildings shall be carried out before, during and after the demolition works. Any damage to adjoining historic fabric arising from the demolition or subsequent works shall be made good in matching materials and workmanship under conservation supervision and at the developer's cost.

M15. Archaeological monitoring. Demolition and any subsequent ground works shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the IAC Archaeological Assessment, including such archaeological monitoring as the project archaeologist considers necessary in light of the building's position within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1 and in proximity to the recorded site of the Presbyterian Meeting House (RMP LH007-119004). Detailed archaeological matters are addressed in the IAC Archaeological Assessment and are not duplicated in this AHIA.

Subject to mitigations M8 to M15 above being undertaken, and in particular subject to the substantiated finding under M8 that retention of No. 2 Bridge Street is not feasible, the proposed demolition and the formation of a new east-west pedestrian connection in its place is assessed as compliant with Policy Objectives BHC 35 and BHC 42 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 and Policy Objectives CH 25 and CH 26 of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, and as making a positive net contribution to the urban grain, accessibility and townscape character of the St. Nicholas Quarter.

4.7.3 Demolition of No.3 Bridge Street

The Scheme provides for the full demolition of No. 3 Bridge Street ('Mag Ally's'), in addition to the demolition of the adjoining No. 2 Bridge Street assessed at Section 4.7.2 above. Its site incorporated into the footprint of the new community facility (Proposal C), which will provide a new-build commercial / pop-up gallery frontage to Bridge Street at this point.

Like No. 2 Bridge Street, No. 3 Bridge Street is undesignated: it is not a Protected Structure, it is not recorded in the NIAH, and it lies outside the Clanbrassil Street ACA (Section 3.4 above). The policy framework engaged is accordingly the same as that set out at Section 4.7.2 above. The proposed works engage the following Policy Objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 (Chapter 9, Built Heritage and Culture):

BHC 35 (development on the periphery of an Architectural Conservation Area shall not detract from the existing character of the designated ACA): No. 3 Bridge Street is on the immediate northern periphery of the Clanbrassil Street ACA, and lies within the southern view-line from Dundalk Bridge into the head of Clanbrassil Street;

BHC 42 (to promote, where feasible, the protection, retention, sympathetic maintenance and appropriate revitalisation and use of the vernacular built heritage which contributes to

the streetscape and landscape character, and to *deter the demolition of these structures*); the CDP identifies the loss of vernacular architecture through “demolition, replacement, or dereliction” as a heritage concern at Chapter 9.8;

BHC 44 (re-use and adaptation of historic buildings).

At local level, two Policy Objectives of the Dundalk Local Area Plan are directly applicable, together with the LAP's shopfront policy:

CH 25 (to promote, where feasible, the protection, retention, sympathetic maintenance and appropriate revitalisation and use of Dundalk's vernacular buildings and heritage, which contribute to the streetscape, and to discourage the demolition of these structures);

CH 26 (re-use and adaptation of existing historic buildings, both designated and non-designated, in a manner compatible with their character);

LAP Section 7.6.10 (Shopfronts), which expressly indicates that *'the use of reproduction traditional style shopfronts on buildings ought to be avoided and instead a modern, high quality contemporary shopfront should be utilised'*, and which requires applications to be in accordance with the Council's Shopfront Design Guidelines.

As with No. 2 Bridge Street, BHC 32 of the CDP (which conditions demolition within an ACA on “exceptional circumstances” and requires a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment) does not formally apply because the building is outside the ACA; the spirit of that Policy Objective nevertheless informs best practice for the demolition of any contributing vernacular building, and the same suite of documentation should be furnished in this instance.

While the demolition of No. 2 creates a permanent opening in the Bridge Street frontage, the site of No. 3 is to be immediately re-fronted by the new community facility, so that the continuity of the street wall is restored in new build occupying the existing plot width. The consequence of the two demolitions for the streetscape therefore differs in kind — a designed opening at No. 2, a replacement frontage at No. 3.

In public benefit terms the full redevelopment of the No. 3 plot permits the community facility's commercial unit, entrance sequence, internal levels and servicing to be designed as a single coherent piece of construction rather than grafted into a retained shell, with consequent gains in universal accessibility across the c. 1.7 m level difference between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, in the technical performance of the new building, and in the legibility of the facility's “focal point” frontage to Bridge Street identified in the Design Statement.

The assessment in this AHIA is that, subject to the suite of mitigations set out below, the public benefit of the comprehensive redevelopment of the No. 3 plot is capable of outweighing the loss of an undesignated vernacular building. The residual impact is judged to be **moderate adverse** in respect of the loss of authentic vernacular fabric and of the opportunity for adaptive re-use, and

moderate beneficial in respect of frontage renewal, accessibility, the return of a vacant plot to active use and the delivery of the community facility, with a net assessment of **slight beneficial**.

M16. Pre-demolition record. The building shall be the subject of a comprehensive pre-demolition record prepared by a conservation-accredited architect prior to any intervention. The record shall comprise (i) measured drawings of all elevations, plans and sections to a scale of not less than 1:50, with detailed survey at 1:20 of any features of particular interest, including any historic shopfront, stall-riser, threshold or fanlight elements revealed during preliminary investigation, joinery, chimney-pieces and historic plasterwork if any; (ii) a high-resolution photographic record from defined viewpoints externally and (subject to safe access) internally; (iii) a written description of the building's plan form, fabric and contribution to the streetscape, prepared in the format of an NIAH record; and (iv) a documentary search for any historic plans, photographs or records relating to the building. The record shall be lodged with the Louth County Council Heritage Officer, the NIAH and the Irish Architectural Archive.

M17. Selective salvage of historic fabric. Prior to demolition, a salvage schedule shall be prepared identifying historic fabric for retention and storage. This shall include, as a minimum, any historic shopfront elements concealed behind or surviving within the existing 20th-century frontage, joinery, chimney-pieces, ironwork, decorative plasterwork, and any datable structural members (timber roof trusses, primary timbers). Salvaged elements of suitable size and condition shall, where practicable, be incorporated into the new community facility or the adjoining public realm (for example, in the fit-out of the new commercial / gallery unit, in seating, paving inserts, or a discreet interpretive panel) so as to retain a tangible material connection to the lost building on its own site.

M18. Interpretive provision. The new Bridge Street frontage shall incorporate, or be associated with, an interpretive element acknowledging the former presence of No. 3 Bridge Street ('Mag Ally's') and the historic character of the Bridge Street frontage, designed in consultation with the Louth County Council Heritage Officer and the local historical society and co-ordinated with the equivalent provision for No. 2 Bridge Street under M11 (see further M25 at Section 4.7.4).

M19. Frontage design in detailed design. The detailed design of the new community facility frontage on the site of No. 3 Bridge Street shall respect the rhythm, scale and material character of the historic Bridge Street streetscape, informed by the Design Statement's analysis of the "fine-grained vertical rhythm" of the quarter. The new frontage shall read as a single plot-width within the terrace, shall maintain the established two-storey datum and vertical proportions, and shall not exceed the footprint of No. 3 Bridge Street.

M20. Conservation supervision and Conservation Methodology Statement. All demolition, salvage and adjoining-building works shall be supervised by a conservation-accredited architect, and a Conservation Methodology Statement shall be prepared addressing (i) the manner of demolition and any propping or protection required to safeguard the adjoining

buildings (the new opening at the No. 2 plot to the north, formed under Proposal B, and the surviving Bridge Street terrace to the north); (ii) the salvage methodology under M17; and (iii) the construction methodology for the new frontage in its interface with retained historic fabric.

M21. Adjoining-building protection and co-ordinated sequencing. A condition survey of all immediately adjoining buildings shall be carried out before, during and after the demolition works. Any damage to adjoining historic fabric arising from the demolition or subsequent works shall be made good in matching materials and workmanship under conservation supervision and at the developer's cost. The sequencing of the demolitions of Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street shall be co-ordinated in a single demolition methodology so that the temporary stability of the party structures between and adjoining the two buildings is maintained at all stages.

M21. Archaeological monitoring. Demolition and any subsequent ground works shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the IAC Archaeological Assessment (J4154-1), including such archaeological monitoring as the project archaeologist considers necessary in light of the building's position within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1. Detailed archaeological matters are addressed in the IAC Archaeological Assessment and are not duplicated in this AHIA.

Subject to mitigations M16 to M22 above being undertaken, the proposed demolition and the construction of the new community facility frontage in its place is assessed as compliant with Policy Objectives BHC 35 and BHC 42 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 and Policy Objectives CH 25 and CH 26 of the Dundalk Local Area Plan, and as making a positive net contribution to the renewal of the Bridge Street frontage and to the wider regeneration objectives for the Quarter.

4.8 Construction-Stage Recommendations

To ensure that the heritage objectives identified above are realised in construction, the following measures are recommended. Each is referenced to the relevant LAP and / or CDP policy under which the requirement arises.

1. Project Archaeologist (CH 21): a licensed archaeologist shall be appointed for the duration of the works. All ground-breaking works within ZAP 1 - i.e. the entire Phase 2 scheme footprint, including the foundations of the new community facility, the demolition and excavation associated with Nos. 2, 3 and 28 Bridge Street, the new pedestrian routes, the Peace Park re-landscaping and the church-grounds works - shall be subject to archaeological monitoring. The Archaeological Desktop Assessment (IAC Archaeology, J4154-1) accompanies this application.
2. Conservation Architect (BHC 25 / CH 22): a Conservation Architect (RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Accredited) shall be retained throughout the construction phase to review and approve method statements, to monitor works in the vicinity of St. Nicholas's Church and its

curtilage, the rubble walls, the granite kerbing and threshold elements, the cast-iron utility covers, and the gate piers, and to provide advice as required.

3. Method statements (CH 22 / BHC 23): a written method statement shall be prepared for each item identified in the Schedule of Historic Elements (Appendix A) requiring "protect from damage / prepare method statement for approval." Each shall be reviewed and approved by the Conservation Architect (and, where ground-breaking is involved, by the project archaeologist) prior to the relevant works commencing.
4. St. Nicholas's Church boundary railings and gates (CH 22 / BHC 24): a Conservation Methodology Statement shall be prepared, supported by a measured and photographic survey and condition report, to detail the method of dismantling and storage. The gate piers are to be retained in situ throughout the works.
5. Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street demolition (CH 25 / BHC 42): a Permanent Record comprising measured drawings and comprehensive photography shall be prepared prior to any demolition works. The new Bridge Street frontage at this location shall be developed with the Conservation Architect.
6. No. 28 Bridge Street alteration (CH 25 / BHC 42 / BHC 44): the precise extent of the proposed opening at No. 28 shall be agreed with the Conservation Architect. Any historic fabric retained shall be incorporated into the new pedestrian route, with method statements approved prior to works.
7. Cast-iron utility covers (CH 25 / BHC 43): each existing cast-iron Irish Water cover within the area of works shall be carefully lifted, photographed in situ before removal, set aside under cover during the works, cleaned, and reinstated within the new granite paving with the stone neatly cut around the original cover. A sample of the reinstatement shall be agreed with the Conservation Architect before the remainder are completed.
8. Granite kerbing and thresholds (CH 25 / BHC 43): existing granite kerbing at Meeting House Lane and any granite threshold elements at carriage entries are to be carefully lifted, numbered and stored, and reset on a new bedding mortar to original line and level. Where possible, services shall be routed within the carriageway to avoid the long-term lifting of historic kerbing.
9. Rubble masonry walls (CH 25 / BHC 42): no excavation by mechanical plant within an agreed offset of any rubble wall; hand-dig only adjacent to the wall foundations; physical protection (boarding) to remain in place during the contract. This applies to the boundary walls of the Linenhall Carpark site, the Peace Park, the western end of Meeting House Lane and the church grounds.
10. Trees of heritage / townscape value (BHC 21 by extension): all retained existing trees within the church grounds and the Peace Park shall be protected during construction in accordance with BS 5837:2012 (or current equivalent), with the location and protection method agreed with the Conservation Architect / project arboriculturalist.
11. Peace Park monument (CH 24 / CH 25 by analogy): the relocation of the existing 1916 commemoration monument to its new position within the Peace Park shall be the subject of

a specific method statement, supported by photographic recording and consultation with the relevant community / commemorative bodies.

12. New service infrastructure (CH 24 / BHC 33): all new ducting, chambers, lighting columns and signage shall be co-ordinated with Louth County Council and the relevant utility providers, located within the carriageway or new footpath build-up where possible, and positioned away from the most sensitive frontages and from views into the adjoining ACA.
13. Final positions of street lighting and signage (BHC 33 / BHC 36): the final positions of new lighting columns, signage and any wayfinding elements shall be agreed with the Conservation Architect prior to installation.

5.0 NEXT STEPS & CONCLUSIONS

1. This report has been prepared to comment on, and provide an architectural-heritage assessment of, the Phase 2 proposals for the St. Nicholas Quarter scheme, Dundalk. It is submitted in fulfilment of LAP Policy CH 22, which requires Architectural Heritage Impact Statements for proposals affecting Protected Structures and NIAH-listed buildings.
2. The assessment includes:
 - The appropriateness of the five intervention proposals (Proposals A–E).
 - How any potential negative effects on Protected Structures (in particular St. Nicholas's Church of Ireland), on vernacular heritage (in particular Nos. 2 and 3 Bridge Street and the rubble walls), and on the adjoining Clanbrassil Street ACA have been eliminated or mitigated.
 - How the works engage with the requirements of the LAP archaeology policies (CH 19, CH 20, CH 21) by reason of the position of the entire scheme footprint within Zone of Archaeological Potential 1, with detailed archaeological commentary delegated to the Archaeological Desktop Assessment by IAC Archaeology.
 - How the final proposals align with the heritage policy framework of the Dundalk Local Area Plan (Chapter 10) read in tandem with the Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027 (Chapter 9).
3. The summary conclusion is that, subject to (i) the safeguards on the existing church boundary railings under Proposal A; (ii) the satisfactory documentation of the proposed demolitions of No. 2 Bridge Street under Proposal B and No. 3 Bridge Street under Proposal C; (iii) confirmation of the external materials of the new community facility under Proposal C; (iv) confirmation of the precise extent of the alteration at No. 28 Bridge Street under Proposal D; and (v) the construction-stage recommendations set out at Section 4.8, the Phase 2 proposals are capable of substantially enhancing the setting and appreciation of the heritage of the St. Nicholas Quarter - the Protected Structures, the vernacular fabric and the adjoining Clanbrassil Street ACA - through the high-quality continuation of the Phase 1 materials palette into the church grounds, the careful retention and reinstatement of historic cast-iron utility covers, granite kerbing and thresholds, the protection of historic rubble walls and gate piers, the reopening of the historic east-west grain at Meeting House Lane, and the rejuvenation of the Peace Park.
4. Subject to the construction-stage recommendations set out at Section 4.8 - and in particular the appointment of a licensed archaeologist (CH 21), the appointment of a RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Accredited Conservation Architect (BHC 25), and the preparation and approval of method statements for each historic element identified in the Schedule of Historic Elements at Appendix A - the proposals are considered to be in accordance with:
 - LAP Policies CH 19, CH 20 and CH 21 (Archaeology).
 - LAP Policies CH 22 and CH 23 (Protected Structures).
 - LAP Policy CH 24 (Architectural Conservation Areas).
 - LAP Policies CH 25 and CH 26 (Vernacular Heritage).

- LAP Policies KDCA 1 and KDCA 2 (Key Development & Character Areas).
 - CDP Policies BHC 1 and BHC 5–10 (Archaeology and walled towns).
 - CDP Policies BHC 20–27 (Protected Structures).
 - CDP Policies BHC 31–37 (Architectural Conservation Areas).
 - CDP Policies BHC 42–44 (Vernacular Heritage).
 - The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2011) and the Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999).
5. This report accompanies the Part-8 planning application for the proposed St. Nicholas Quarter Phase 2 Scheme.

APPENDICES

References

- Dundalk Local Area Plan (Volume I - Written Statement, in particular Chapters 3 and 10, and Appendix 6).
- Louth County Development Plan 2021–2027, Chapter 9: Built Heritage and Culture.
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2011).
- Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (DoEHLG, 1999).
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage - <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/>
- Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 16, Dundalk (Harold O'Sullivan; Royal Irish Academy, 2006).
- BDP - St. Nicholas Quarter Phase 2 Design Statement (April 2026).
- BDP - Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941002, Masterplan.
- BDP - Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941011, Peace Park General Arrangement Plan.
- BDP - Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941012, St. Nicholas Church Public Realm General Arrangement Plan.
- BDP - Drawing SNQP2-BDP-ST-00-PL-L-941013, Meeting House Lane General Arrangement Plan.
- BDP - Drawing SNQ-BDP-B1-XX-EL-A-3020, Community Facility Bridge Street & Linenhall Street Elevation.
- BDP - Drawing SNQ-BDP-B1-XX-EL-A-3021, Community Facility Section AA / Section BB / East-West Connection Elevation.
- BDP - Drawing SNQ-BDP-ST-RL-PL-A-0011, Proposed Site Plan.
- IAC Archaeology - Archaeological Desktop Assessment, J4154-1 (2026).