

DRUMSHANBO TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEME

Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim

DESIGN CONCEPT STATEMENT

To accompany
A Public Consultation exercise
under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations
2001, as amended

By
McCabe Architects

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Table of Contents

1.	RATIONALE FOR INTERVENTION	4
2.	PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF TWO VACANT BUILDINGS ON MAIN ST	5
3.	PROPOSED CREATION OF A PUBLIC REALM AND ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING	10
4.	THE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF TWO DERELICT STONE OUTBUILDINGS	13
5.	RIVERSIDE AND TOWN PARK IMPROVEMENT WORKS.....	15

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1.0 RATIONALE FOR INTERVENTION

The project team has developed a general design strategy for Main Street, Market Yard, the existing parklands, and riverside walks which addresses each of the criteria from the client's brief individually while generating a coherent vision for the regeneration of Drumshanbo's town centre.

This proposal is intended to reflect the importance of a balanced approach to the town's further development.

Drumshanbo serves a significant hinterland and fulfils a key role as a focal point for retail development, social infrastructure, and provision of key services within this context. Drumshanbo also acts as a tourism gateway to surrounding areas. This proposal has been prepared to expand, enhance upon these features, and unify disparate areas of the town. The regeneration project aims to tackle the challenges that are hindering Drumshanbo's economic, cultural, environmental, and social progress.

It is envisaged that the enhanced environment within the town core and these series of interventions will increase footfall, economic and social activity and encourage active frontages on Main Street and investment into vacant and derelict premises. Public investment will lead the way with the development of the former Bank of Ireland building and Earley's building on the Main Street into a digital hub with commercial spaces, the development works to two stone outbuildings to the rear and their conversion for commercial use, public realm space, additional car parking and works to the existing parklands and riverside walks.

The protection of Drumshanbo's heritage and character as an historic market town is at the heart of the design proposal. The proposals are rooted in the fabric and rich history of the town. This objective has been considered in the general approach and will be applied in the detailed design process through the selection of materials and finishes. The proposals respect the scale and character of the town and are generally based on an adaptation of existing fabric and function rather than wholesale redevelopment. In this sense they are evolutionary rather than revolutionary, in keeping with an orderly and considered approach to the town's ongoing development. The design proposal will comprise high quality materials and finishes for surfacing, seating, planters and lighting.

By investing in this regeneration development project in the Town Centre a vibrant innovative solution will be realised that will have significant knock on economic and tourism benefits.

2.0 PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF TWO VACANT BUILDINGS ON MAIN STREET

Drumshanbo Town Centre Regeneration Scheme



Figure 1. 3D Visual of the Regeneration Project from the Main Street



Figure 2. 3D Visual of the proposed new pedestrian link from the Main Street

Proposed Works: *Proposed Redevelopment of Two Vacant Buildings on Main Street*

The redevelopment of two vacant buildings on Main Street, namely the former Bank of Ireland, a three-storey building, and the adjacent commercial building formerly known as ‘Earley’s’, a three-storey building. Development works will include the demolition of the rear extensions to the respective buildings and the erection of a linear two-storey extension to the south side linking both buildings to provide commercial use to the entire ground floor and new smart working facility to the entire first and second floors. Works will include the creation of a new pedestrian walkway on the ground floor through ‘Earley’s’ building to link with a new public realm to the rear. All services will connect to existing public mains.



Figure 3. Photograph - Existing Buildings along Main Street

Description And Appraisal of Former Bank of Ireland Building & ‘Earley’s’ Building.

Description of Former Bank of Ireland Building

Former pair of terraced two-bay three-storey houses, built c.1820, and recently used as a bank. Pitched tiled roof with rendered chimneystacks and terracotta pots. Rendered walls with plinth course and late twentieth-century bank-front. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Timber panelled door with petal fanlight leading to tiled entrance porch with stone threshold. Stone outbuilding to rear of site. Building fronts directly onto street.

Appraisal of Former Bank of Ireland Building

This former pair of Georgian houses, built in a terrace of similar structures, is situated on the west side of Main Street. Retaining features including a petal fanlight and timber six-over-six sash windows, this building makes a positive contribution to the architectural heritage of the area. The outbuilding contributes to the setting and is of architectural merit.

Description of ‘Earley’s’ Building

Terraced three-bay three-storey house, built c.1820, with 1970s shopfront. Pitched slate roof with rendered chimneystacks and terracotta pots. Smooth and roughcast rendered walls. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Panelled timber door with petal fanlight within rendered surround. Rear site with random coursed sandstone outbuilding, accessed by lane. Wrought-iron gates give access to rear site, set in bow-ended boundary wall. House fronts directly onto street.

Appraisal of ‘Earley’s’ Building

This Georgian house, built as one of three, is situated on the west side of Main Street of Drumshanbo. The intact petal fanlight and six-over-six timber sash windows add character to this elegant and architecturally significant house.



Figure 4. 3D Visual of the proposed redevelopment of Buildings 1 &2 from the new carpark



Figure 5. 3D visual from the new pedestrian walkway towards the new public realm and carpark

Proposal: *Proposed Redevelopment of Two Vacant Buildings on Main Street*

The former Bank of Ireland building and ‘Earleys’ Building form as landmark streetscape on the Main Street of Drumshanbo. The former Bank of Ireland Building ceased operating a number of years ago and has been vacant since, alongside ‘Earleys’ building that has been vacant for over 20 years. The buildings were acquired recently by the Local Authority. Leitrim County Council have the vision of creating a new smart working facility with commercial use for the Drumshanbo community consistent with the County Development Plan objectives for the town.

The vacant buildings are proposed to become commercial units at ground floor level and incorporate the smart working facility/digital hub across the combined first and second floors of their respective buildings. The non original rear extension to the former Bank of Ireland building will be demolished and the rear extension to the rear of Earley’s building (that is in very poor condition) will be demolished to make way for a contemporary two-storey extension that will traverse the respective buildings on the southern side.

The new building will open out onto a new Civic/Public space and car park to the rear of the building in providing a vibrant community space in the centre of Drumshanbo. Our key intervention proposed is to remove the arched doorway to Earley’s building and to create a pedestrian link through the building to link the Main Street with a new public realm to the rear. Other than that, a new flush traditional shopfront will replace the non-original splayed shopfront to Earley’s. The new pedestrian link will be an inviting modern entrance space to attract people from the Main Street into the building and through to the new civic space, riverside walk and People’s Park beyond.

The new uses are entirely compatible with the buildings, and it is hoped that in time the regeneration project will become a focal point in the town providing services that enhance its location and creates a prominent sense of place on the Main Street. Refurbishment works to the existing buildings include the upgrade of the thermal fabric of the building and the incorporation of new technologies creating visually impressive, bright, and spacious contemporary spaces.

Objective of the Proposed Development: *Proposed Redevelopment of Two Vacant Buildings on Main Street*

In order to facilitate the future use of the buildings, the proposed works are essential to the further deterioration of these important buildings within the Main Street and fabric of Drumshanbo. If these buildings remain unused, their condition is such that unless urgent remedial works are carried out the building will sharply deteriorate with the risk of the buildings suffering from irreplaceable structural problems. Therefore, it is vitally important and very appropriate to retain these heritage buildings in the town of Drumshanbo. The repurposing of these structures will encourage private investment in other vacant buildings in the town. The town regeneration project will benefit other vacant buildings within the town in making them more attractive for reuse. It is known that public investment generally stimulates local confidence and private investment.

Designing the works: *Proposed Redevelopment of Two Vacant Buildings on Main Street.*

Careful consideration has been given to the proposed internal works and treatment of these buildings. The proposed works to the roofs, lead flashings/valleys, chimneys, rainwater goods, external walls, windows and ceilings designed as to restore the fabric of the original building. It is also proposed to reinstate the original chimney on the gable end of the former Bank of Ireland - the gable chimney was one of six chimneys across the original terrace of three houses.

Principles dictating the layout and quality of the design are based on delivering a well-integrated facility that is respectful of the town's existing characteristics and activates under utilised spaces for the benefit of the local community and visitors to Drumshanbo.

The location of the development on Main Street within Drumshanbo will provide fantastic opportunities for local residents, new/existing businesses and visitors to access the facilities made available within the proposal. The entrance to the Digital Hub buildings addresses the Main Street with pedestrian link through to the public realm space beyond.

These buildings have been designed to allow for 'future proofing' the building use with flexibility in design considered. These buildings may be utilised as an independent start up business hub, meeting spaces or creative studio spaces. The flexibility of interconnected shared use spaces will also allow for the gathering of larger numbers for event or information evenings.

3.0 PROPOSED CREATION OF A PUBLIC REALM AND ADDITIONAL CAR PARKING



Figure 6. 3D Visual of Regeneration Project from the existing Market Street Carpark



Figure 7. 3D Visual of the proposed new Public Realm & Carparking

Proposed Works: The proposed works include the creation of a public realm and additional car parking to the rear of the newly developed renovated and extended commercial buildings on Main Street. The nature of the public realm works includes, inter alia, the opening of vehicular and pedestrian access routes through the existing stone boundary wall between the existing Market Street carpark and the former Bank of Ireland Building, lowering the height of the entire wall to 1m high, realignment works to the existing Market Street car park, the provision of new public lighting, a dedicated pedestrianized public realm that will incorporate seating, the provision of hard and soft landscaping, ramp access between Main Street and the redeveloped riverside walkway, sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) and a car park for seven car parking spaces.

As part of the development and transformation of the Drumshanbo Town Centre Regeneration Project, it is necessary to carry out works to the historic stone boundary walls that run around the perimeter of the site and between the former Bank of Ireland site and the Earley's site. Works will include the lowering of walls and the opening-up of both pedestrian links and the creation of a vehicular access route.

Proposal: *Proposed Creation of a Public Realm and Additional Car Parking*

It is proposed to create a new public realm space and additional car parking within the heart of the Drumshanbo Regeneration project. The subject area will take up the current rear yards to the former Bank of Ireland and Earley's building. A new opening will be made in the existing stone boundary wall between the Market Square carpark and the rear of the former Bank of Ireland building to create seven additional car parking spaces. The area to the rear of Earley's will be a permanent public pedestrianised area/civic space and that space will extend around to the north of the former forge building along the riverside.

The impacts on the boundary walls of the removal of rubble stonework and its replacement where relevant with framed openings in each case will be significant. However, there will be

no loss to the site of this historic fabric since it will be retained on site and reused in the redevelopment of the outbuildings.

The proposed facilities will have adequate provision for recycling/waste facilities in the form of an external service yard/bin store facing onto the existing Market Yard car park. Each building will have the capacity to store their bins within their own area in the bin store. This will encourage tenants to sort and store recycling correctly prior to collection and in turn maximise recycling. The service yard is enclosed by stone walls (reuse of stone from the historic boundary walls).

Objective of the Proposed Development: *Proposed Creation of a Public Realm and Additional Car Parking*

The built environment has been designed to be attractive and safe for community users with this new engaging public realm space designed to draw people into the heart of this urban regeneration scheme and as such is a requirement of the redevelopment and of the transformation of the place. It will provide Drumshanbo Town with a multifunctional and safe urban space of a different nature to the town's existing urban spaces acting as both a permanent pedestrianised area and a paved car park area that can become a pedestrian area at key times and events through the year.

Designing the works: *Proposed Creation of a Public Realm and Additional Car Parking*

The proposals should have little or no direct effects on historic fabric since the paving will always be one joint removed from any contact with walls or buildings. All unsightly overgrowth will be carefully removed from the historic stone boundary walls. It is proposed to recap the subject walls with a projecting coping line to help protect from the rain. Generally, where required, the pointing will be restored using a lime and sand mortar.

The impacts on the boundary walls of the removal of rubble stonework and its replacement where relevant with framed openings in each case will be significant. However, there will be no loss to the site of this historic fabric since it will be retained on site and reused in the redevelopment of the outbuildings.

The new carpark and public realm spaces will be a shared surface for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, designed with pedestrian priority in mind. However, there is a clear proposed definition between amenity spaces, footpaths, and roads to provide good separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. High quality materials are chosen to define the interfaces of the new proposal.

It was important to ensure passive surveillance was achieved when considering the overall layout of the scheme. The public realm spaces are overlooked by users (passive surveillance from windows in the rear elevation of the Digital Hub building and the outbuildings face out onto the public realm). Strong visibility is also achieved from the Main Street and enhanced by the new pedestrian link.

Finishes and materials will be identified and selected in the detail design process following the Part 8 public consultation process. In accordance with Leitrim County Council, the design team suggests a general preselection of finishes and materials to consider for the scheme. All detail design will be in full accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). It is intended to apply an overarching design language with a defined material and colour palette across the entire project to create coherence and consistency across the public realm.

4.0 THE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF TWO DERELICT STONE OUTBUILDINGS



Figure 8. 3D Visual of the Proposed re-development works to Building No. 4 – (Former Forge Building)



Figure 9. 3D Visual of the Proposed re-development works to Building No. 3

Proposed Works:

The redevelopment and partial reconstruction of two derelict outbuildings to the east of the Drumshanbo River, one of which is a former forge building. Both two-storey buildings will be redeveloped and repurposed to provide commercial use on both ground and first floors respectively, which will entail elevational changes and connections to existing foul and storm mains.

Proposal: *The Re-development and partial reconstruction of two derelict stone outbuildings*

The two derelict low-level two-storey stone outbuildings along the riverside will be redeveloped to create commercial units. The buildings will be designed to be flexible for a range of commercial uses, i.e., arts and crafts, a café or office space.

Objective of the Proposed Development: *The Re-development and partial reconstruction of two derelict stone outbuildings*

In order to facilitate the future use of the buildings the proposed works are essential to the further deterioration of these buildings within the fabric of Drumshanbo and in bringing back commercial activity to the Market Yard. The Market Yard had previously been home to multiple small businesses in the middle of the 20th century; hence regeneration will bring back this tradition.

Designing the works: *The Re-development and partial reconstruction of two derelict stone outbuildings*

The historic fabric will be retained intact (apart from some new openings created in the stone walls for doors and windows). A new steel structure will be required to be placed inside the rubble walls; this will sit proud of the walls, but the walls will be tied back into it and a new roof will rest on the new steel structure. The current rubble masonry appearance of the structure will be restored and any modern interventions will complement the original fabric.

All buildings within the scheme are designed with multi-functional, flexible use in mind. The layout of the buildings focuses activity on the proposed access routes by creating active frontages onto both the new public realm space.

5.0 RIVERSIDE AND TOWN PARK IMPROVEMENT WORKS



Figure 10. 3D Visual of the New Pedestrian Bridge over river with stepped access towards the ‘People’s Park & The Food Hub.’



Figure 11. 3D Visual of the New Pedestrian Bridge over river with stepped access towards the ‘People’s Park & The Food Hub.’

Proposed Works:

Riverside and town park improvement works to enhance the existing parklands and riverside walkway (known locally as ‘People’s Park’). The nature of the riverside and town park works includes inter-alia, the extension of the pedestrian walkway along the west of the river under

the existing park footbridge to connect with a new footbridge 30m to the south which will in turn connect with the new public realm (to the rear of Main Street), an extension of the pedestrian walkway along the eastern side of the river to connect through the curtilage of Drumshanbo Methodist Church, a protected structure on the Leitrim County Council Record of Protected Structures (RPS No.14) to connect via a new pedestrian bridge with the junction of the Carrick Road and the Food Hub/Carraig Breac housing development road. Works will also include the altering of the existing hard landscaping area at the entrance to the Food Hub/Carraig Breac housing development, provision of new footpath along Carraig Breac housing development access road to include new entrance to the People’s Park, new steps and ramp access within the park, the erection of new way finding signs, the provision of new public lighting, new hard and soft landscaping, new boundary treatments inclusive of railings, hedgerows and walls.



Figure 12. Existing Drumshanbo Methodist Church

Description And Appraisal of Drumshanbo Methodist Church.

Description of ‘Drumshanbo Methodist Church’

Detached single-cell gable-fronted three-bay Methodist church, built in 1860, with single-storey vestry to rear. Pitched tiled roof. Ashlar sandstone façade with pedimented gable with datestone. Pebble dashed side walls. Latticed stained glass lancets with tooled limestone surrounds. Timber sash windows to vestry in square-headed openings with tooled limestone block-and-start surrounds. Timber battened door with cast-iron hinges and a pointed-arched carved stone surround flanked by pointed-arched lancet windows with carved surrounds and stained glass. Link corridor connects chapel with adjacent former manse. Cast-iron railings and gates to front of site. Sandstone rubble wall to west of Church running parallel to stream.

Appraisal of ‘Drumshanbo Methodist Church’

The understated design of this church is enhanced by the interesting architectural details such as lancet windows and string course. The stained-glass windows are a colourful and artistic addition to this building. Set back from the road, the Methodist church and adjacent former manse contribute to the architectural heritage of the locality.

Proposal: *Riverside and Town Park Improvement Works*

The walkway along the east side of the river will be extended to run across the western side of the curtilage of the Drumshanbo Methodist Church (RPS No: 14) and will cross the river via a new lightweight pedestrian bridge that is set off the existing Carrick Road Bridge (NIAH Reg: 30808023) and will terminate onto the plaza at the existing hard landscaping area at the junction of the Carrick Road and the Food Hub/Carraig Breac Road. The new walkway and pedestrian bridge are required in order to create a link from the east side of the river walkway/new public realm to the Food Hub. With such a significant difference in levels across the western side of the river, this route is the most desirable, comfortable, and accessible route for wheelchair users.

Objective of the Proposed Development: *Riverside and Town Park Improvement Works*

The regeneration of the riverside backlands areas plays a vital role in bringing all other elements together. The development works proposed to the existing 'People's Park' will enhance this space, increase recreation focus and quality of life in the town centre. Opportunity to enhance pedestrian linkages within the town in encouraging spending power in town and increase footfall towards the Food Hub.

Designing the works: *Riverside and Town Park Improvement Works*

The proposal for the riverside and town park works have been directly informed by planning policy and council development guidelines in relation to creating vibrant community recreation facilities. Integration into the wider urban context is achieved through a considered design response to the existing built environment, adjacent neighbouring buildings, and site specific conditions such as views, topography and all other influencing factors.

It is intended to apply an overarching design language with a defined material and colour palette across the entire project to create coherence and consistency across the public realm.

Note: The proposed methodology of the proposed works and of this development is covered in the Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by D.M.McCabe, MRIAI Accredited in Conservation Grade III.