



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

Design focused
Guide to Inform
& Assist Change &
New Development

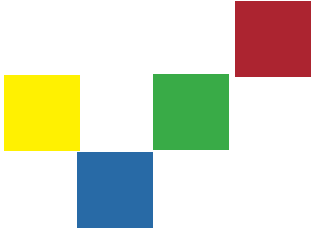


BALLYSHANNON DESIGN GUIDE

Dedalus Architecture •
Bath Terrace, Main Street,
Moville, Co. Donegal

— April 2019 —





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Introduction & Purpose of the Guide

Ballyshannon has been a regionally important town for several centuries. Within the historic town there is a significant survival of heritage buildings, particularly from the late 18th and early 19th century Georgian period. Although some areas are in need of action, the town is a great place to live and work and, as it has benefitted in the past, Ballyshannon is also considered to be inherently attractive to tourism. There is wide community appreciation of these qualities and a strong local interest in an informed approach to the regeneration of the historic town centre.

The Design Guide document provides direction to:

- Householders & businesses;
- Local community groups;
- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers & engineers;
- Statutory bodies & public authorities.

The guide highlights areas of distinctive character and other qualities valued in the town; and will assist in the task of maintaining, repairing and restoring existing buildings; informing proposals for new buildings, for development within the gaps in the town fabric, for public realm improvements and for the appropriate adaptation and reuse of the town's built heritage.

The guide will be made available on the Donegal County Council website and a limited number of printed copies will also be circulated.

A methodical survey of 300, mostly pre-1960 buildings, has been undertaken within the Ballyshannon town centre area in order to establish the extent of the surviving built heritage and to make a record of its special character. The survey identified four distinct neighbourhoods, where variations in design approach can be observed, and which have been named: the Main Street,

The Mall, Chapel Street and The Port. This detailed material has been used to inform the Design Guide and to assist in the encouragement of heritage-led regeneration in the town over the coming years.

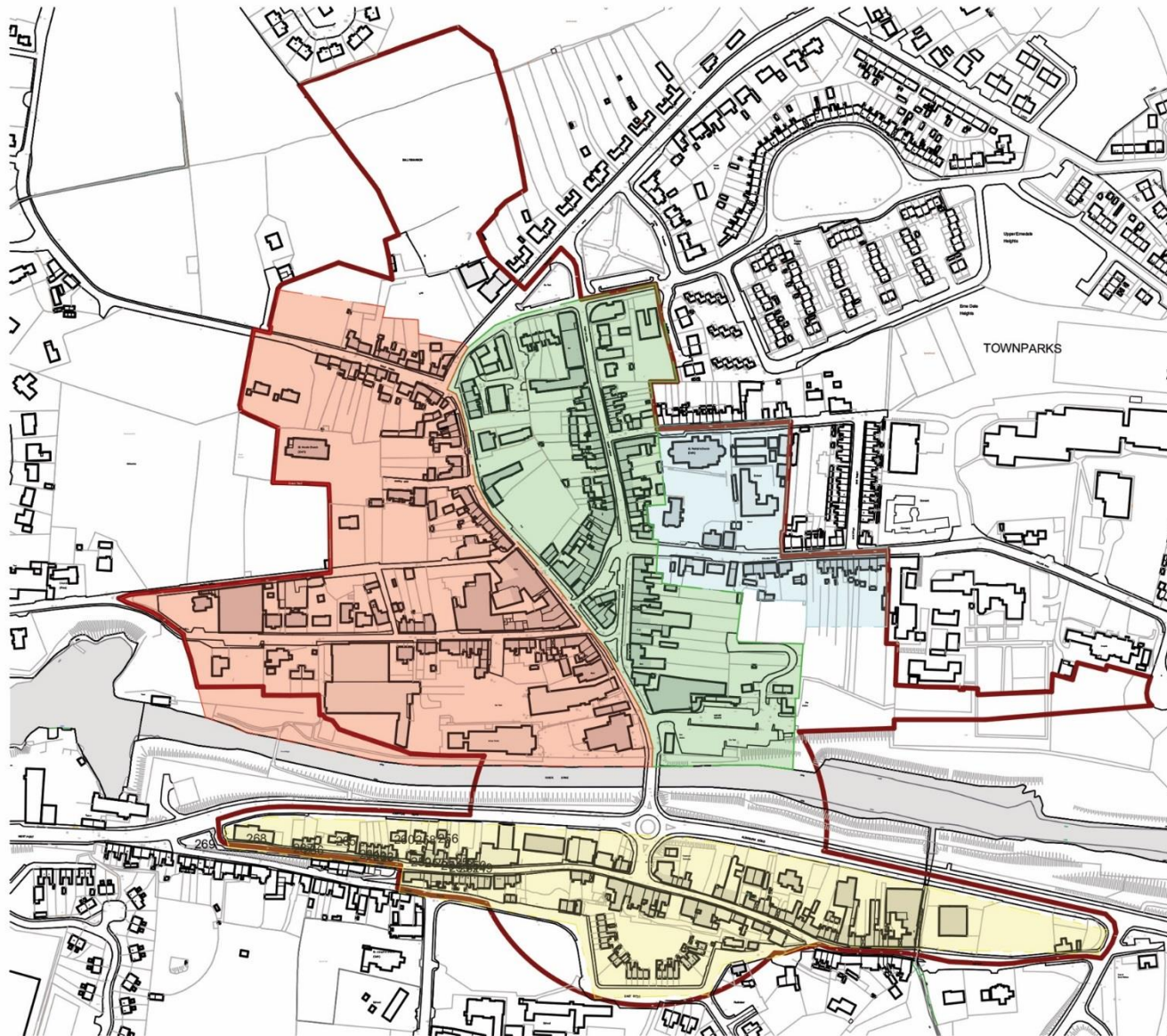
Understanding the town's existing heritage resources is essential in ensuring that it remains vibrant and contributes positively to the future of Ballyshannon. The guide describes and illustrates the existing character of each neighbourhood and also sets out good practice for ensuring that future development and change will have regard to the unique attributes of Ballyshannon and its historical context. Practical guidance is offered in relation to the type of traditional building conservation measures that will be needed in achieving this aim, with photographs showing local examples.

The design guide will thus not only be applicable to larger regeneration projects and new buildings, but also to smaller day-to-day adjustments to homes, gardens and open spaces which can incrementally alter the feel and character of the town.

Design for regeneration will involve significant elements of repair or restoration, and guidance in relation to these issues forms the largest part of the published document. The significant amount of survey material, collected in preparing for this document will be made available separately as an annexe that can be viewed upon request at any office of Donegal County Council & public libraries.

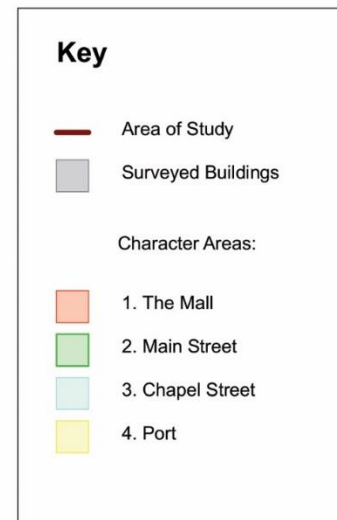
The study has benefitted from consultation with a number of local stakeholders and the draft design guide has been presented to a public workshop event before its adoption. Particular thanks are due to the local community of Ballyshannon for their valued input and contribution to the preparation of this Design Guide.





Ballyshannon Town Centre

The extent of the study area, is outlined in red and has been divided into four distinct neighbourhoods: the Main Street, The Mall & Chapel Street and the Port, separated from the remainder of the town centre by the River Erne.



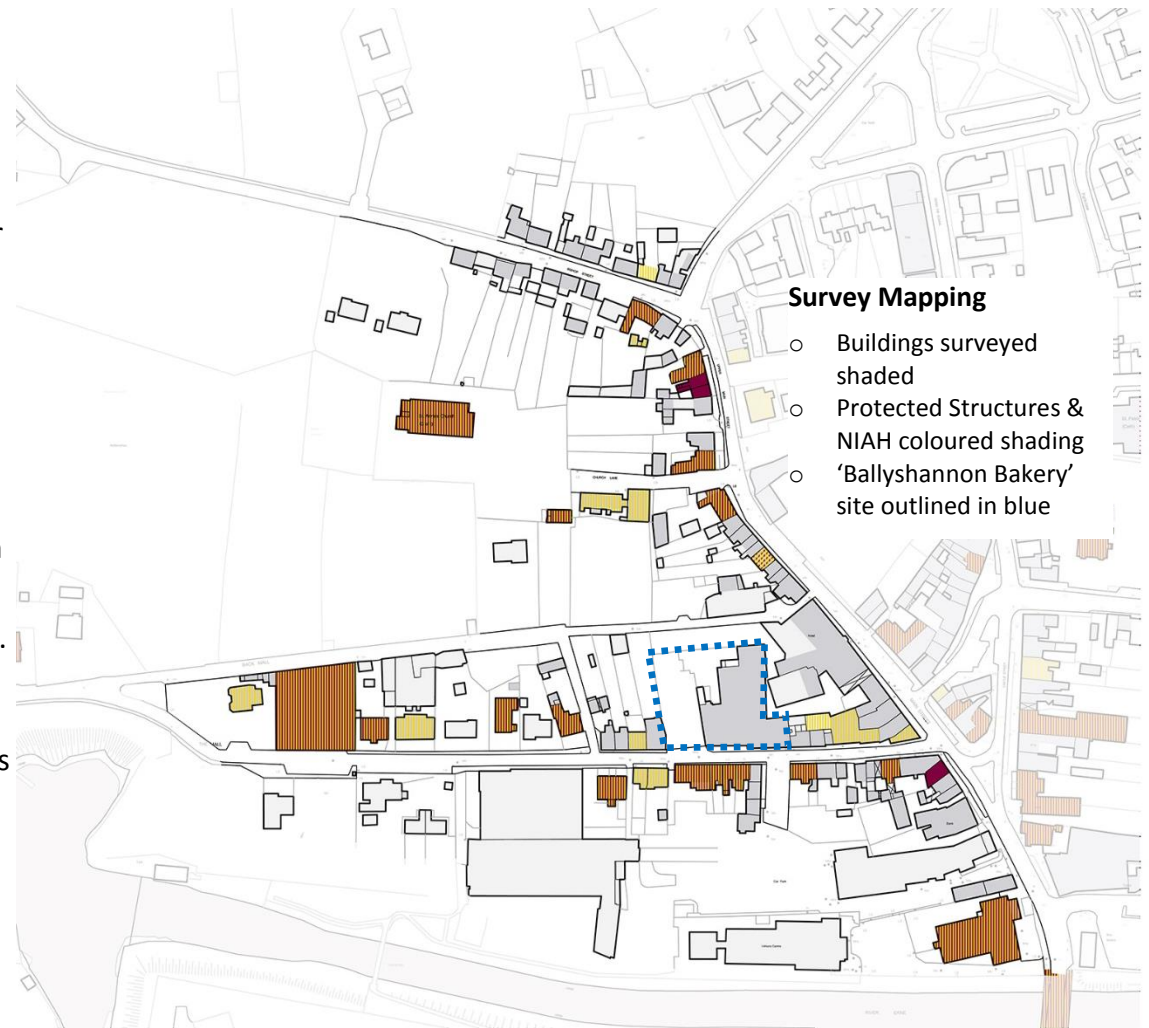


The Mall

The Mall

A popular name for a fashionable walking route in the 18th century, “The Mall” provides a circular pathway, circumnavigating the Mullanashee Hill with the Church and citadel at its centre. Starting off in the centre of the town, to the west of the Main Street leading out towards the harbour, originally taking in views of the spectacular Assaroe Falls, the Dartry Mountains to the south, the harbour and Inish Samer, the alleged landing place for the first inhabitants of Ireland, sand dunes at the coast beyond ‘the bar’, and return along the road past an ancient promontory fort and past the wooded edge to the grounds of Danby House before return to the upper Main Street. There was plenty to catch the eye and to feed the mind. Tourist guides, prints and drawings and numerous photographs from the 19th century demonstrate the value of the landscape setting of the town; most of which can be appreciated from this neighbourhood.

The Mall initially contained a mix of houses and commercial buildings, although the latter gradually made way for more houses as the town expanded. Whilst commercial activities continued, including a gas works, large houses, often associated with owners of the adjacent commercial activities were present by the end of the 19th century. Activities such as baking and brewing, continued here into the 20th century.



This is the part of the study area with the best quality Georgian period houses. The most notable example is Condon House, originally located on a larger landholding which led down to the corn market at the edge of the river. This building is in urgent need of a new use.

The Mall area also includes the former ecclesiastical and administrative centre of the town, where the former principal Church, Church School, Manor House which incorporated the local Manor Court, Masonic lodge, were all located. The hilltop position of these institutions is both dramatic and symbolic. Further away from the centre, the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches and associated Manse houses are also located along the Mall.

There are many high quality buildings in this area that would benefit from repair & renewal using guidance contained in this document. There are also several notable buildings which show what can be achieved when a conservation approach is taken.

The former bakery site, no longer in use, contains an eclectic mix of historic structures spanning more than 200 years. Now in need of redevelopment, an approach which includes in adaptation of the existing buildings and infilling of vacant gap sites, informed by analysis of the historic context, would have potential to add to the historic character of this neighbourhood.





Main Street

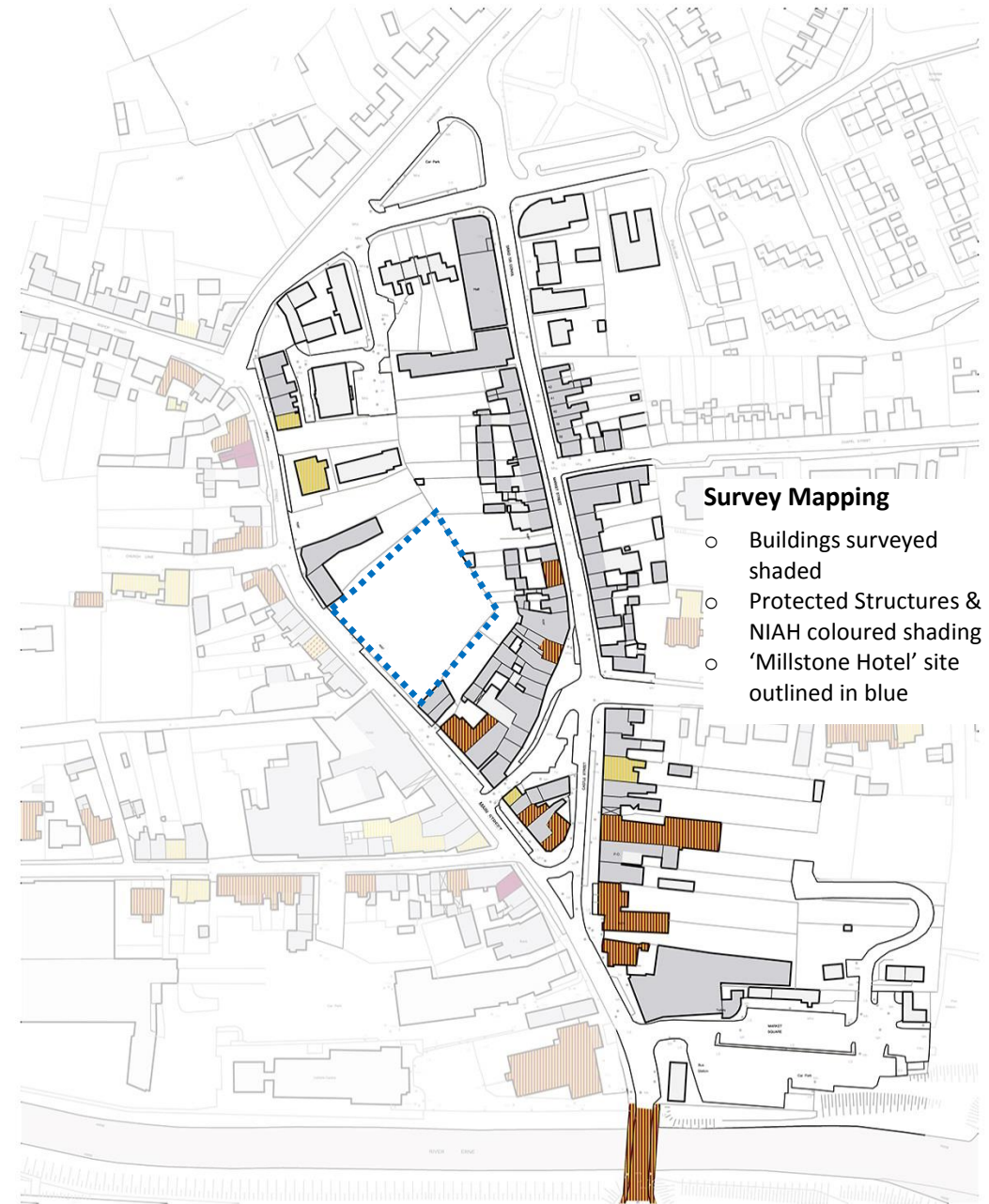
Main Street

Immediately to the east of the Mall, this is the commercial core of the town formed by Main Street, Market Street and Castle Street.

The buildings here mostly date from the Georgian period and many were built as large houses for wealthy merchants which also contained space from which to conduct business. In the 19th century, photographs show that these premises were still largely domestic in character with commercial premises indicated by occasional enlarged ground floor window openings and modest painted joinery shopfronts.

Today, the largest number of buildings are still similar in character, with the original merchant houses still evident, although this has become gradually eroded. There is potential to restore the historic streetscape using appropriate materials for new development and sparing use of commercial business and street signage. Historical photographs can be used to provide evidence where building elements are being restored or to investigate potential new proposals for shop frontages.

An essential element in planning for the Main Street to remain economically vibrant and provide public space for social interaction and commerce will be ensuring that the town centre remains an attractive place to both live and work.



The visual appearance and safety of the Main Street area requires that buildings are kept in a good state of repair, particularly those prominent historical buildings which give Ballyshannon its unique identity and character. A number of important buildings which have fallen into disrepair currently provide an exciting opportunity for their creative reuse. The guidance contained in this document provides direction in relation to appropriate approaches to their repair and renewal.

The same principles apply to the conservation of the fabric of the town itself, and where gaps have appeared, an analysis of the historic context will inform new proposals. The streetscape was determined, by the steep slope towards the River Erne and the width of the original 17th & 18th century building plots. Any new proposals for large gap sites such as that of the former Millstone Hotel (outlined in blue) should respond to the stepped pattern of development formed by the established plot sizes and building line.

There are other recent references that will inform the Design approach to properties in the Main Street area, including *“Donegal Traditional Shop Front & Signage Guidelines”*, and the Venice Biennale *“Free Market”* project which highlights the importance of the common spaces within market towns, including Ballyshannon, as places for community & social interaction, and proposes to reclaim and re-imagine them for life in the 21st century.



Chapel Street

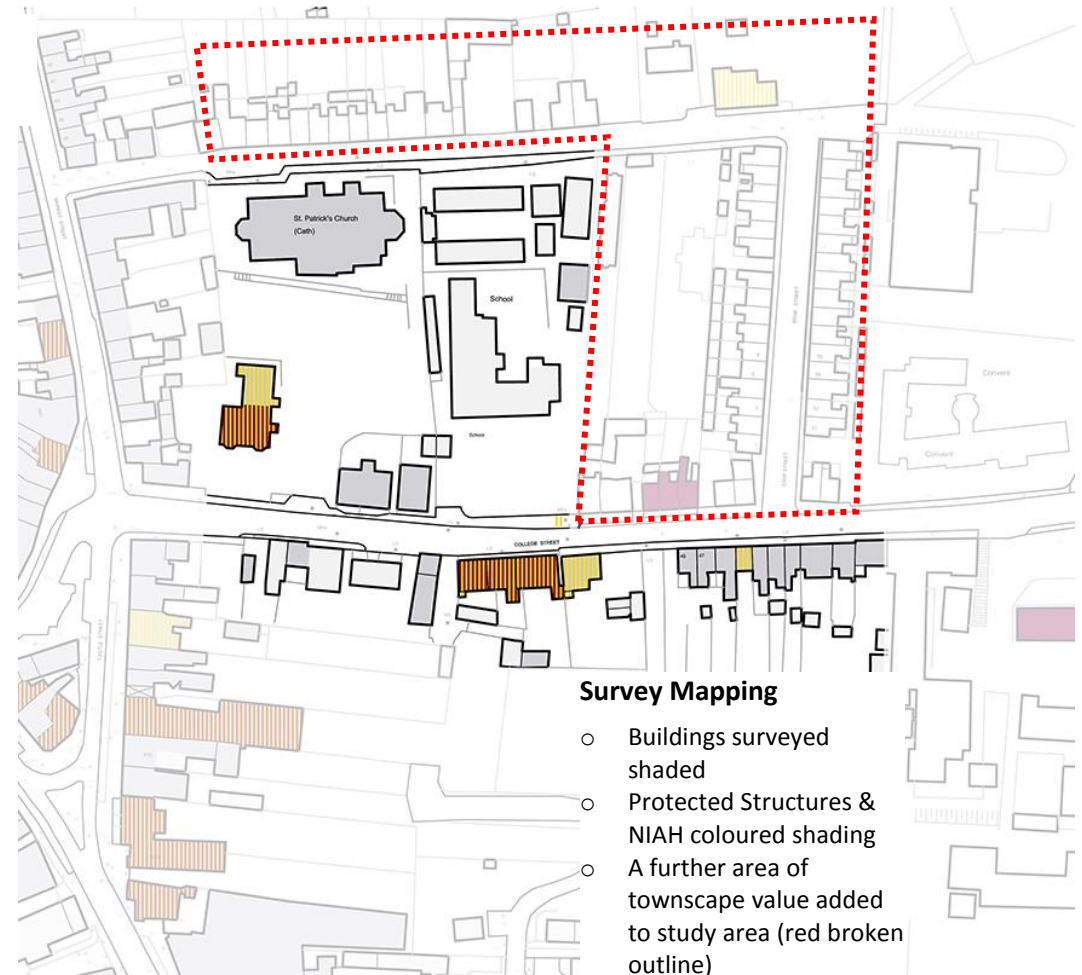


Chapel Street

The area to the east of the Main Street is the site of St Patrick's Catholic Church and Parochial House serving the town on the north side of the river Erne. The Church complex, associated land and later Convent buildings nearby, take up the greatest land mass in this area. Other institutions; Revenue Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary were also stationed within this neighbourhood.

This area also contained large gardens to the rear of the houses on Market Street & Castle Street. In addition to larger houses on College Road, there were more modest two storey houses, many also with substantial gardens. The space offered at this side of the town allowed for development and expansion of schools, hospital and other social and institutional establishments.

The area, more recently, has seen intensification of use particularly due to traffic associated with church, schools and the Sheil hospital. There are a relatively high number of houses and other buildings which retain their historical features, but the quality of the setting of these is affected by the dominance of vehicular traffic at peak times.



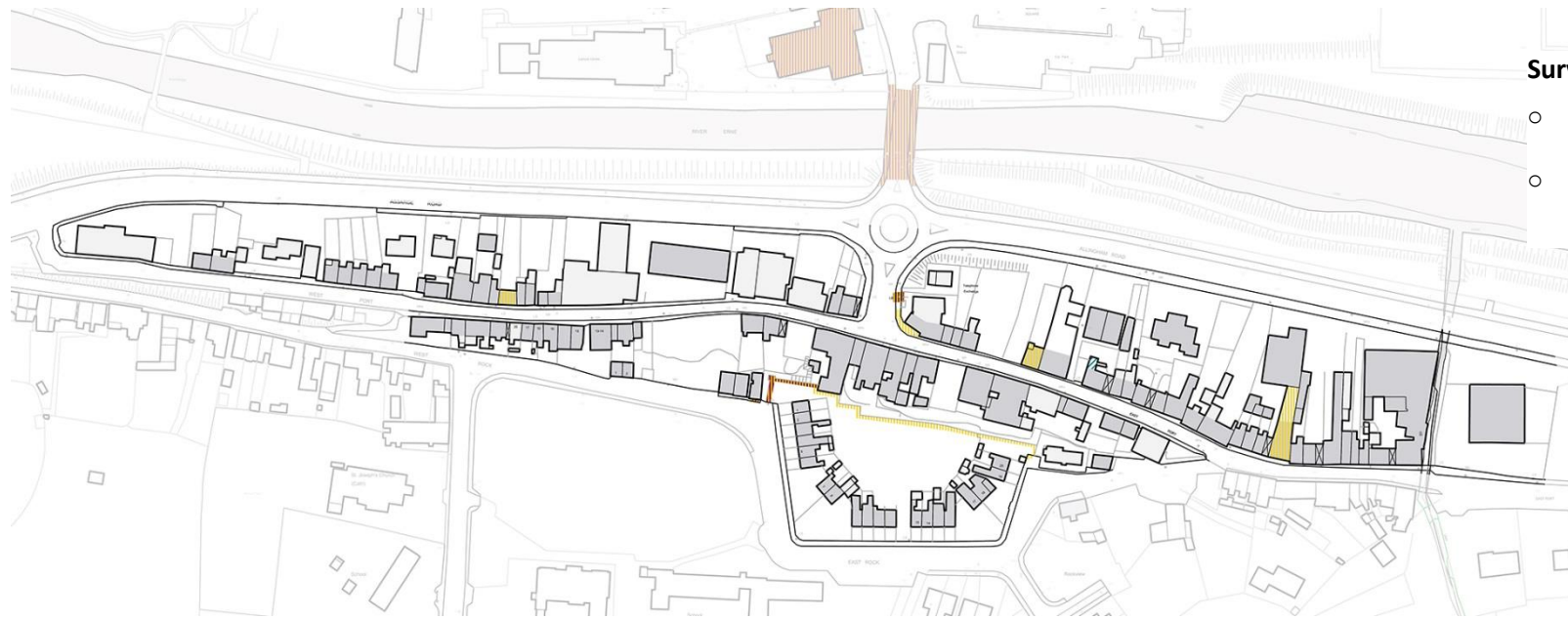
The streets in this area, unlike other parts of Ballyshannon, were developed in the 19th century and include a larger number of row houses, the character of which is due to their uniformity. Erne Street, in particular, whilst outside the original study area, was added on account of its special townscape value.

Whilst the strength of their design permits variation in colour and detail, it is important that repairs and minor alterations are made to the individual houses using appropriate traditional materials. In many streets, important original joinery features such as doors and windows have been replaced over time and the survey has recorded those which survive. The guide and accompanying record provides valuable information for those wishing to restore the architectural integrity of their homes in future.



The Port





Survey Mapping

- Buildings surveyed shaded
- Protected Structures & NIAH coloured shading

The Port

The buildings and settlement on the southern side of the Erne, most closely associated with the commercial port. Densely packed, with limited garden space and in close proximity to the Workhouse, Fever Hospital and the second Catholic Church in the town. This part of the town was apparently less well-off with a strong mixed urban character with houses and associated small businesses coexisting.

The buildings were built up against “the Rock”, over which a military barracks was constructed, as a partner to the barracks on the north

side of the river, possibly the oldest in Ireland. These features highlight the strategic military importance of the town in the past. The upper level of “the Rock” itself is quite open in nature, having been used in the past for large isolated buildings such as the old Workhouse and the site of the Fever Hospital, which although outside the limits of the study area have an impact on the character of this part of the town.

The remains of the commercial port itself, to the west of the study area, are still of great architectural interest despite the impact of the

ESB removal of the Assaroe Falls in the 1940's and demolition of the largest of the commercial buildings early this century.

The most densely developed part of the Port coincides with the access point to the 17th-century multi-arched bridge crossing the River Erne. Part of the original bridge wall survives as part of the boundary wall to the modern Credit Union building, demonstrating the extent that the new relief road, constructed between the river and the rear of the Port buildings, has taken away from the original width of the river crossing.

In the 20th century, the enclosed character of the principal street on this side of the river has eroded so that gap sites have developed and established as car parking areas.

The compact urban character of this street, which is by-passed by the relief road to the north, has potential for greater pedestrian use and reduction in the amount of vehicle traffic that would allow the gaps in the urban fabric to be filled.

The design guide will provide advice for those wishing to prevent the remaining buildings from further deterioration and the survey data identifies buildings that are considered to be at particular risk.



Elements

Building elements to be considered in repair, construction or conservation



Chimneys

Most buildings, prior to the end of the 20th century, incorporated open fireplaces with flues within chimney stacks terminating above roof level. The repeating pattern of these large masonry structures form a distinctive feature in most historic streetscapes.

The cleaning and maintenance of the flue and chimney top is essential to prevent chimney fires or flue gases to spilling back into the rooms below.

The flues also provide background ventilation in the rooms reducing the risk of condensation inside the house. The flow of air through the chimney assists in keeping the chimney structure dry. The common practise of removal, or sealing up, of chimneys is thus not to be recommended as it can lead to dampness occurring inside the building.

Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do clean flues that are in use at least once a year
- ✓ Do inspect & maintain flues & chimneys that are in use regularly
- ✓ Do ventilate redundant flues & chimneys
- ✓ Do plan removal of aerials & satellite dishes from chimneys where possible
- ✓ Do replicate original finishes and details in repair work

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't remove chimneys without obtaining planning permission



Roof, Gutters & Downpipes

The control of rainwater is the single most important task for any building covering. Most surviving historical roofs in Ballyshannon are finished with slates from Wales; although some earlier buildings, such as the early 18th century barracks, may also have incorporated local limestone slates.

Slate roofs, if properly secured, can last for centuries. Where nails are corroding and slates slipping, complete reslating is often the only solution, although many of the original slates will still be reusable. Whilst more expensive than artificial slate, natural slate roofs are by far the most economical in the long term.

Prior to the mid-19th century, the most common roof finish for houses, particularly around the Port, would have been thatch, although there is now only one thatched roof left in the study area.

Cast iron rainwater goods were most often used. These are cast in 6 foot lengths. Gutters of the same size were usually a plain half-round section. Painted finishes protect the material from corrosion and usually require up to 5 coats. If properly maintained, cast iron will survive indefinitely. However, in a marine environment like Ballyshannon, if maintenance is allowed to lapse, corrosion damage will occur quite quickly.

Where missing and also where traditional iron gutter support brackets are present, preference should be given to reinstatement of cast iron or galvanised steel gutters, as uPVC and pressed aluminium will sag between supports. Ornamental fixing brackets, where they do survive, should always be reused.



Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

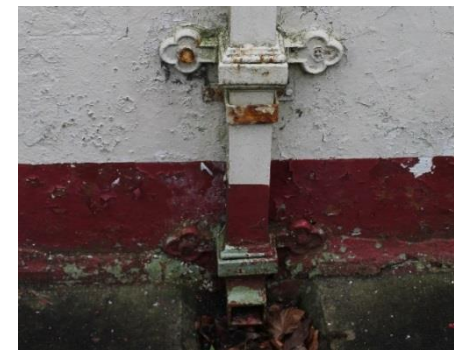
- ✓ Do identify original materials & techniques used & keep a small stock of any materials that cannot be purchased immediately
- ✓ Do reuse natural slates in re-slating work
- ✓ Do replicate original finishes and details in repair work
- ✓ Do upgrade thermal performance of roofs when re-slating
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for proposed new work
- ✓ Do inspect roofs regularly & identify annual maintenance tasks
- ✓ Do clean out gutters & gullies twice a year
- ✓ Do organise shared maintenance with neighbours
- ✓ Do use gutter clearance as an opportunity to identify annual maintenance tasks
- ✓ Do maintain paintwork to iron guttering, pipework & fittings
- ✓ Do maintain using traditional paints
- ✓ Do upgrade performance of rainwater system if the existing is undersized
- ✓ Do install gullies to remove water away from the base of the building
- ✓ Do reinstate original fittings, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't replace natural slate roof coverings with other materials
- ✗ Don't ignore slipped or missing slates
- ✗ Don't ignore spilling gutters & gullies
- ✗ Don't replace existing cast iron rainwater goods with other materials

FURTHER ADVICE

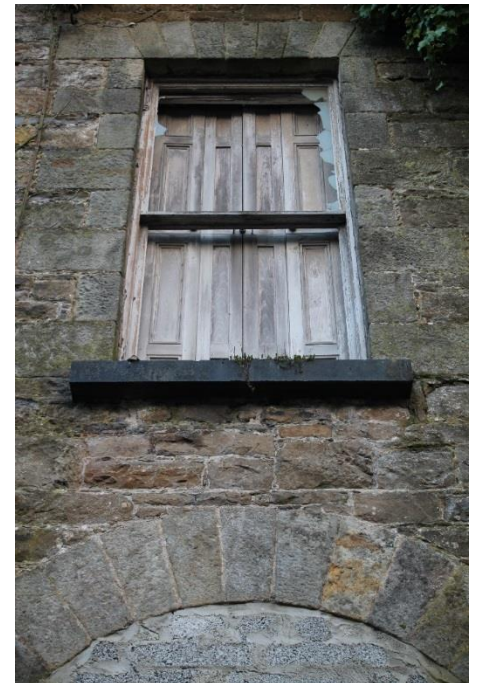
<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Maintenance-A-Guide-to-the-Care-of-Older-Buildings-2007.pdf>



Walls: Brickwork, Stonework, Pointing, Dressed Stones & Structures

Most buildings in Ireland are of solid masonry constructed from rubble stone laid in mortar made from lime, sand and gravel with lime plaster & render finishes. Lime render was either applied as a finish and then tooled to look like cut stone, or sometimes as harling or rough cast and thrown at the wall surface. Rubblestone on houses was hardly ever left unfinished, although a number were designed for the stone to be left exposed; the rubble for these was often squared and coursed, giving it a slightly more regular appearance such as at houses on College Street, East Port, a number of the churches, and most notably, at the Condon House on the Mall.

Bricks were often used to form window reveals in stone buildings and chimney stacks, where greater precision was needed. Shaped in wooden stocks, early bricks were made from clay cut from low lying deposits, often along river courses. This type of brick often dates from the 18th and early 19th century and whilst their less uniform shape give the buildings a softer textured appearance, were usually rendered because of their poor durability. With limited fuel resources for firing, other imported bricks were used during the 19th century. Wire-cut bricks, available in a number of different colours, were transported from elsewhere in Ireland, Scotland & England. Whilst the sources of brick are not all known, the simple polychrome designs of buildings within parts of the Port and College Street date from this period.



FURTHER ADVICE

<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Bricks-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Historic-Brickwork-2009.pdf>

Dressed stone was used extensively for architectural details such as window sills, string courses, door surrounds, and other mouldings. In Ballyshannon, there were local sources of both sandstone and limestone available for this purpose. A much smaller number of structures in the study area are finished in dressed stone. Examples include the 'town clock' building/ former Royal Bank, the current AIB banking hall. These buildings are faced in sandstone, presumably from Mountcharles from where they could be transported easily by boat.

Sand and gravel for mortar were in plentiful supply. Early sources of lime were from the burning of seashells, or local limestone of which much of the local geology is formed. There were two quarries located in the West Port area at the beginning of the 19th century, and a number of lime kilns shown adjacent to these. By the end of the century most of these have gone and materials were presumably sourced from outside of the town where quarrying and lime burning would have caused less nuisance.

The continuing performance of the majority of historic buildings relies on the use of 'breathable'/ vapour permeable materials. The impact over the last half century of increasing use of industrial cement and materials derived from petro-chemicals has damaged some buildings within the study area. Appropriate traditional materials are now easily available for use in repair work.



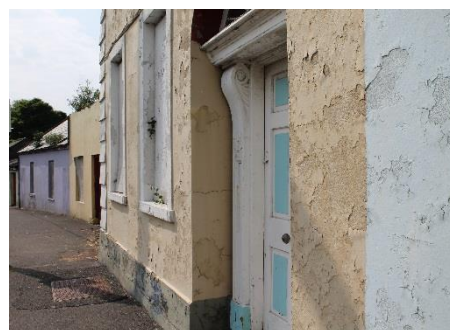
Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do identify construction materials & techniques used
- ✓ Maintain original paint & plaster
- ✓ Do maintain using traditional paints & mortar
- ✓ Do replicate original finishes and details in repair work
- ✓ Do implement all other means to improve thermal performance of building
- ✓ Do upgrade performance of walls rubble stone walls using breathable materials after taking expert advice
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for proposed new external walls
- ✓ Do attempt to match historic details exactly in any repair work
- ✓ Do remove cement based plasters and renders if they are causing dampness
- ✓ Do remove silicone sealants or acrylic paints if they are causing dampness
- ✓ Do reinstate original finishes, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work
- ✓ Do consider the embodied energy present in traditional masonry structures and their exceptional durability in comparison with other forms of construction

THINGS TO AVOID

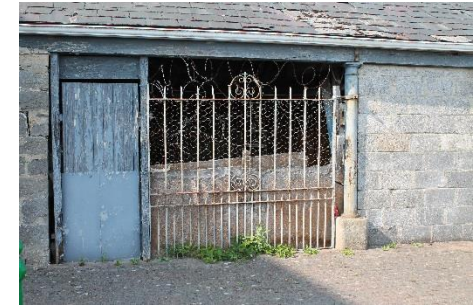
- ✗ Don't remove lime render finishes
- ✗ Don't remove internal lime plaster finishes
- ✗ Don't use cement renders or gypsum plaster for repairs
- ✗ Don't 'dry line' external walls
- ✗ Don't use proprietary external render systems without expert advice and advice on the need to obtain planning permission



Timber & Iron Structures

In addition to stones or bricks, most solid masonry external walls rely on timber lintels and beams for their support. By the end of the 19th century large timbers were being superseded by iron or steel beams in new buildings. Timber also continued to be used for most floor and roof structures although there are examples of buildings where patented fireproof structures were made from iron with composite brick arch and concrete floors. As the building interiors were not visited as part of the study it has been assumed that most floor and roof structures internally rely on timber. By the mid-18th century most timber was being imported from Scandinavia and North America. The outward passage of emigrants in the mid-19th century was often reciprocated in the return journey by a cargo of timber. Most timber up until the early 20th century, was from naturally grown forests and is a much more durable material than that which can be easily sourced today and, even when damaged by water, can usually be repaired relatively easily. Care is needed when old timbers require replacement; particularly where it is likely to take many months for wet building fabric to dry out completely.

Some iron structures were observed during the study, notably, one of the old market structures at the Market Square.



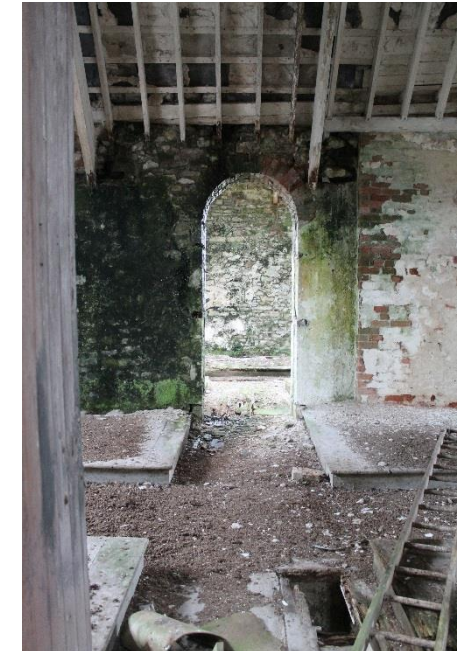
Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do maintain original structures & find new uses for abandoned buildings
- ✓ Do fire protect iron structures and timbers supporting floors with proprietary sheet materials that can be removed later
- ✓ Do check if there is lead paint present with a proprietary test kit
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for alteration of timber & iron structures
- ✓ Do attempt to match or reinterpret historic details in any new work
- ✓ Do reinstate original designs, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't take down structural systems without expert advice
- ✗ Don't use any form of chemical or coating without expert advice. The use of chemicals for timber treatment are usually irreversible and will contaminate building fabric. The long term effects of exposure to chemical contaminants is not easily predicted.



Windows & Doors & Joinery

Painted joinery formed an integral part of the character of the historic townscape, and its gradual replacement, particularly in areas where the cumulative character of a large number of buildings is being lost, is to be regretted. The presence of 'original features' can add to the economic property value.

The survey has revealed that buildings which retain original joinery are now an exception and these have been highlighted as having 'architectural quality', primarily as a resource to inform the repair of other buildings within the street.

Remaining original window sashes, because of the quality of their original material, usually have the capacity to last indefinitely if adequately maintained. Energy performance can also be upgraded economically through use of draft stripping, insulating blinds and curtains. The expected lifespan of uPVC windows is thought to be in the region of 20 to 25 years, or shorter as the failure of individual parts can require replacement of the entire window assembly. In the long term, planned replacement of uPVC windows and doors with timber more closely resembling traditional joinery patterns is to be encouraged.

Consideration should also be given to materials used for maintenance and repair work with timber selected for its durability and painted with breathable natural oil-based paints.



Traditional doors, windows and shutters are also usually able to be repaired relatively easily. Examination will often show where the lower, more vulnerable, parts of windows and doors have been spliced with new timbers in the past. Whilst repairs are often labour intensive they are still much less expensive than replacement of windows with inferior material. As with antique furniture, these layers of repair tell something about the history of a building, and are part of its unique character.

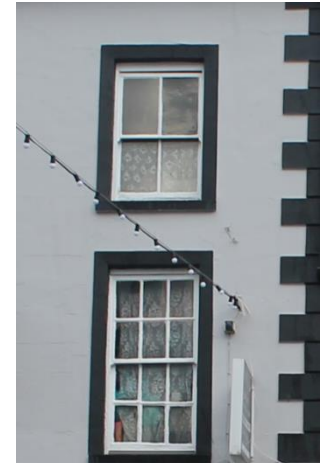
Substantial timber doors can also be upgraded easily to provide good levels of security.

Surviving old window glass is also a feature that is to be cherished giving a lively appearance to traditional building facades and should be retained wherever possible. Where appropriate traditional glass may be sourced from specialist suppliers.

In cases where new ‘historic pattern’ joinery is proposed matching designs can be achieved using slimline double glazing with panes that are as little as 6mm in thickness.

FURTHER ADVICE

<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Windows-A-Guide-to-the-Repair-of-Historic-Windows-2007.pdf>



Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do maintain original door & window joinery
- ✓ Do maintain using traditional paints & fittings
- ✓ Do upgrade performance of windows & doors with draft stripping & secondary glazing
- ✓ Do consider use of coated heat reflective glass in the course of necessary replacement
- ✓ Do check if there is lead paint present with a proprietary test kit
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for proposed new windows & joinery
- ✓ Do attempt to match historic details exactly in any new work
- ✓ Do replace failed uPVC windows with timber windows sliding sash windows, where they existed previously, when this becomes necessary
- ✓ Do reinstate original designs, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work
- ✓ Do observe local types of joinery moulding and of door & window furniture. Replace only where necessary

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't ever remove period joinery
- ✗ Don't install uPVC or aluminium windows & doors into historic buildings without expert advice
- ✗ Don't remove original window glass unless it is damaged
- ✗ Don't remove original door & window furniture



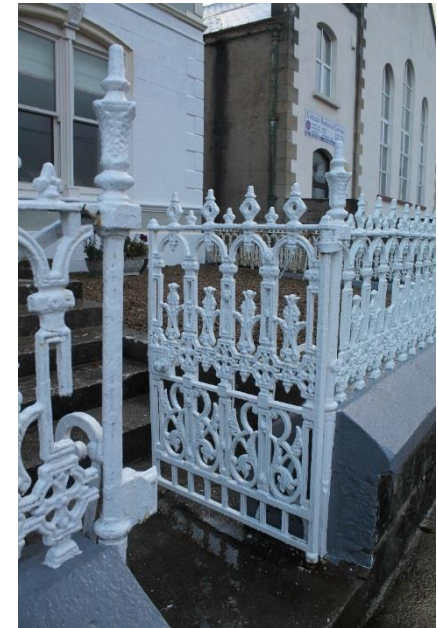
Metalwork & Ironmongery

The survey has revealed a surprising amount of surviving original ironwork in the form of gates and railings. Generally ironwork was either wrought by a blacksmith or cast in a foundry. Occasionally, wrought and cast iron are used together, however there is a risk in this situation of bimetallic corrosion occurring. Atmospheric corrosion is also a risk in a marine environment, an important aspect of the location at Ballyshannon which must be taken into consideration when selecting and maintaining metalwork and ironmongery.

Where there are no other factors causing corrosion to advance metal surfaces can stabilise once a coating of rust has developed, however, in almost all cases a good coating of oil based paint is necessary protect the metalwork. Traditional fish oil or linseed paints are especially good as rust inhibitors but require application to bare metal. Paint removal is a specialist process as it not only takes away historical evidence but old layers of paint may also contain lead. Effective modern paint systems may require up to five coats including primers and finishes in a marine environment.

Specialist suppliers can provide new iron castings where these require replacement and most traditional sections are also available fabricated in steel. Castings are also available in aluminium, however, this is not durable in a marine environment, and is no cheaper once additional coatings are taken into consideration.

Preservation of original material should be the highest priority; restoration with new material to be considered only where original ironmongery no longer exists.



Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

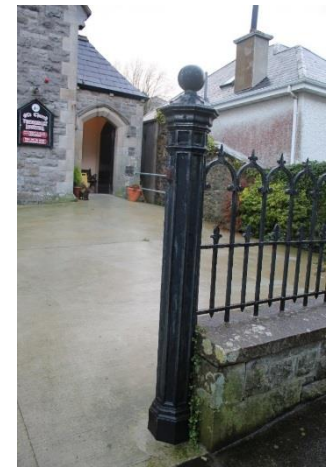
- ✓ Do identify the type of metalwork present to inform the type of repair & maintenance necessary
- ✓ Do maintain original metal using appropriate traditional materials including natural oil coatings and paints
- ✓ Do check if there is lead paint present with a proprietary test kit
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for proposed new boundary walls & railings
- ✓ Do attempt to match the type of stone and historic details exactly in any new work
- ✓ Do reinstate original designs, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't remove original railings or ironmongery
- ✗ Don't repair stonework settings with cement
- ✗ Don't mix metals in repair work where possible

FURTHER ADVICE

<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Iron-the-repair-of-wrought-cast-iron.pdf>



Boundary Walls & Paving

Boundary walls within Ballyshannon are usually made from rubble stonework. Most correspond with street patterns laid out in the 17th century and some may even date from that period. The majority of boundary walls date from the 18th or 19th century and therefore still a considerable age. Walls were constructed to enclose or even to defend property. Several examples once formed the external walls to buildings that have since been demolished. Public streets and spaces are enclosed and defined by these walls and can thus also be as important in characterising the places as individual buildings.

Often unfinished, these walls can also provide clues as to the archaeological history of the town, either due to an early date of construction or through reuse of older building materials. There are also stylistic features, particularly wall cappings, which are repeated throughout the town where limestone has been used as the general wall material.

In the town centre, limestone paving and steps announced the building threshold & division between public and private realms, with higher quality materials used around entrance doorways. Steps also provided a means of graduating changes in level of the steeply sloped streets. Worn surfaces mark the traces of past inhabitants.

FURTHER ADVICE

<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Paving-The-Conservation-of-Historic-Ground-Surfaces-2015.pdf>



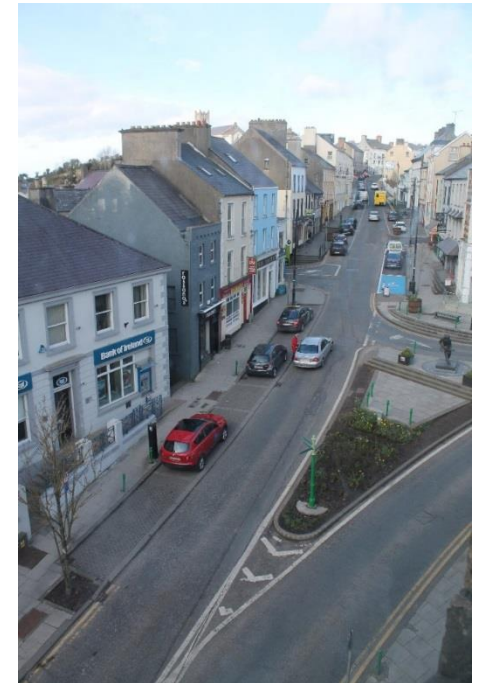
Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do identify the materials that walls & paving are made from
- ✓ Do maintain steps & paving where original material is available
- ✓ Do use locally quarried stone, or concrete slabs incorporating locally sourced aggregates
- ✓ Do plan new paving slab finishes to integrate with existing historic patterns of paving
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission, where necessary, for proposed new boundary walls, paving & for the introduction of ramps, handrails & railings
- ✓ Do attempt to match the type of stone and historic details exactly in any new work
- ✓ Do reinstate original designs, where they are known, in the course of necessary repair work
- ✓ Obtain archaeological advice for all works involving ground disturbance within the designated zone inside the town centre area

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't remove original boundary walls
- ✗ Don't cover up or remove original stone slab paving or steps
- ✗ Don't repair stonework with cement
- ✗ Don't use stonework or precast concrete kits for boundary walls within the town centre area
- ✗ Don't replace paving slabs with poured concrete
- ✗ Don't replace paving with imported stone slabs
- ✗ Don't allow utility companies to undertake work within historic town centre without provision of a method statement in relation to their treatment of paving materials and archaeology



Street Furniture

Street furniture serves a variety of functions, including: drinking fountains, rubbish bins, guardrails, seating, tree grilles, bollards & public art. In addition to their principal function, their location and design can enhance the experience of public spaces. A coordinated approach, which includes road signage and markings, can prevent an unnecessary accumulation of visual clutter.

The development of a 'family' of complementary furnishings can help distinguish Ballyshannon as a place of unique character.

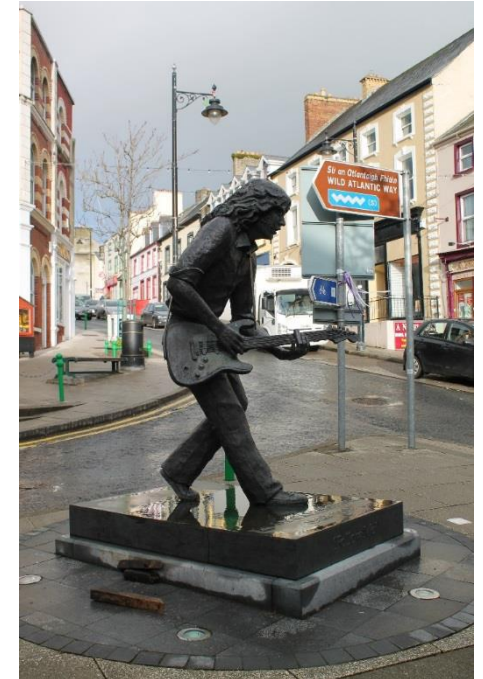
Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do curate public art, signage & lighting
- ✓ Do remove unauthorised or redundant modern signage from public areas
- ✓ Do seek professional advice on fixing of signage directly onto historic buildings to avoid damage
- ✓ Do maintain historic sculpture & street furniture
- ✓ Do continue use of a single municipal paint colour for public street furniture

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't allow signage to accumulate unnecessarily
- ✗ Don't allow excessive highways signage to be installed within the historic town centre area
- ✗ Don't allow utility companies to install cabinets & poles within historic town centre without reference to historic buildings or archaeology



Shop-fronts

A design guide to traditional shop fronts has been prepared for County Donegal as a whole which includes some premises in Ballyshannon. The guidance in that document also looks at the design principles for shop fronts in some detail, and it is not necessary to repeat this advice here. The following images focus specifically on the shops and their development within the Ballyshannon study area.

Whilst once the largest town in County Donegal and an important commercial centre, the survey has shown that there is a very significant amount of surviving historical fabric, including shop front joinery, signage and other commercial features. Whilst not the most noticeable, the most numerous shop frontage examples are simple display windows set within a domestic building façade. This treatment has allowed the largest part of the town to retain its essentially late Georgian appearance. In later years, as elsewhere, there has been some increase in the scale of commercial frontages, and the scale of these changes has sterilised upper floors of some buildings so that they can no longer be used for residential accommodation. In turn, people are forced to move away from the town centre removing life from the town centre after the shops have closed. Retaining domestic frontage within the streetscape provides a balance between commercial requirements and people living above and to the rear of business premises.

This trend has not affected the largest part of the Ballyshannon townscape so that it has retained a sense of vitality, being a place



where people can both live and work. However, the town has been affected by loss of population and there is a growing issue of vacancy which may affect the survival of historic buildings in the future. The necessary reversal of this trend is an opportunity to provide better quality and diversity of housing, and to address the threat of current and future dereliction in the town.

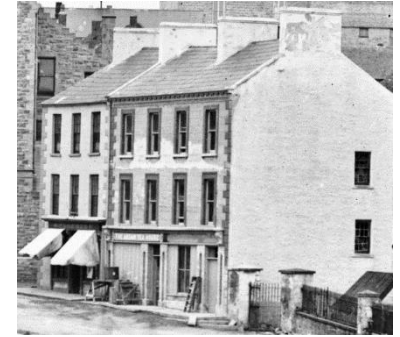
Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Do maintain original shop fronts using appropriate traditional materials
- ✓ Do seek professional design advice & obtain planning permission for proposed new shop fronts & signage
- ✓ Do retain original ironmongery or shop fittings where they are present
- ✓ Do consider illumination of the display window only
- ✓ Do use only discrete direct illumination of signage fascia only

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Don't use external security shutters
- ✗ Don't use standard shop front kits within the historic town centre area
- ✗ Don't use plastic materials for signage or window framing
- ✗ Don't use internally illuminated signs
- ✗ Don't allow signage or lighting to be fitted outside the shop front surround



Outbuildings

Whilst outbuildings are not a feature of the principal public areas in most towns they are usually close by, and are significant features in laneways to the side and rear of the larger buildings throughout the town. In Ballyshannon, the presence of the rural economy outside can be seen in the form of parked tractors and small barns around the periphery of the town. In the town centre similar simple urban utilitarian buildings are present; occasionally the landscape has required that these front onto a public thoroughfare where access to the rear is not possible. Usually these occur at the periphery of the town around parts of The Mall and The Rock, where there is slightly more space available.

Whilst often no longer in regular use and constructed with less costly materials, these buildings are still valuable to the character of these places and can often be repaired easily and cheaply.

Guidance

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ Keep outbuildings in good repair & find a use for them
- ✓ Investigate whether there are materials containing asbestos or lead paint present
- ✓ Reuse original ironmongery where possible
- ✓ Extend the life of corrugated steel and iron by painting

THINGS TO AVOID

- ✗ Remove doors and other joinery without first considering if they can be repaired



Colour & Decoration

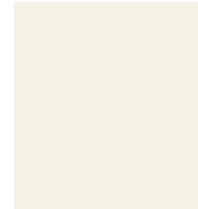
Before selecting colours, consider the purpose of decorating & the surface which is to be decorated, including recent paint layers. Naturally weathered finishes require no attention, whereas painted surfaces may need periodic maintenance. Limewash was used to strengthen lime renders & used internally for its disinfectant qualities. Occasionally earth pigments were added given a softer appearance.

There are many excellent modern paint systems, however, those based on vinyl or acrylic can cause damage to historic buildings, potentially sealing in water & causing dampness. Lime or silicate coatings are open-pored allowing substrates to dry naturally. Traditional paints using linseed or fish oil are effective for timber or metalwork, although there are some technical challenges in their use. Some old paints used lead as a pigment & to improve durability; care is needed to check if lead is present & simple precautions taken in preparation of previously painted surfaces.

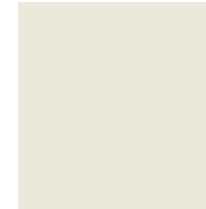
Past choice of pigments was often limited by geography and certain colours were associated with place. In architecture, certain fashions for colour or combinations were '*de rigueur*'. Both windows & doors were often painted in dark colours, not just white. Dual colour schemes for window joinery were particularly fashionable in Ulster in the 19th century.

Use of traditional coatings will often give an authentic appearance because the choice of colours is limited to what would have been available in the past. Whites were usually not very pure, were 'flat' & unreflective. With protected buildings, colours are an intrinsic part of their character & specialist advice should be sought.

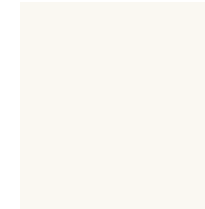
Historic Whites



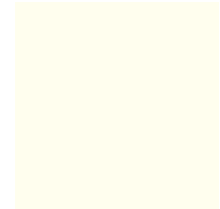
Whitening



Panel White



Old White

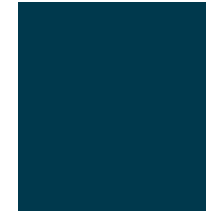


Vintage White

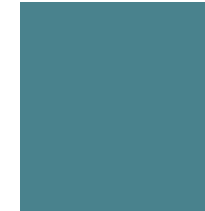
Historic Blues



Midnight Blue



Old Blue



Linseed Blue



Ultramarine

Historic Greens



Holkham Green



Spruce Green

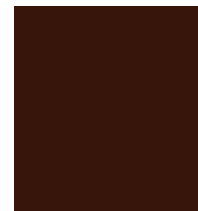


Chrome oxide green



Dún na nGall

Historic Reds



Chocolate



Iron Primer



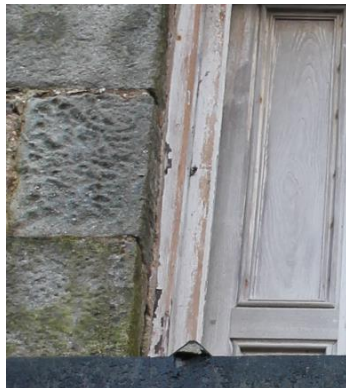
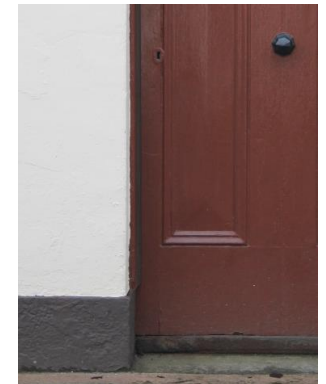
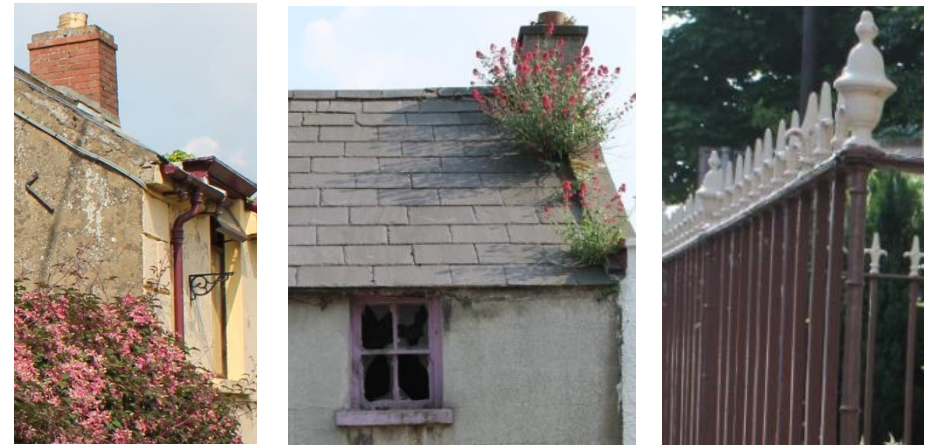
Empire Red



Russet

There are many successful examples of historic colour schemes that can still be observed in Ballyshannon. Examples include hand painted signs, joinery & metalwork to buildings that are now in poor condition.

Whilst the palette may now appear limited the effect can give a sunny and cheerful appearance to streetscapes; and the repetitive use of some common colours with sparing use of a few distinctive highlights can re-affirm the quality of this special place.





Appendix

The design guidance contained within this document has been informed by a methodical survey of 300 buildings in the Ballyshannon town centre area.

The survey findings form a substantial separate Appendix comprising a number of documents:

1. Maps (buildings numbered)

- Overview of town centre x1
- Town Neighbourhoods x 4

2. Database

- Record of 302 buildings in 2018

3. Field Records

- Data sheets & Photographs (1571 files; 3.6GB)

Survey findings are not due to be published, but are to be made available for review in public libraries and area planning offices.

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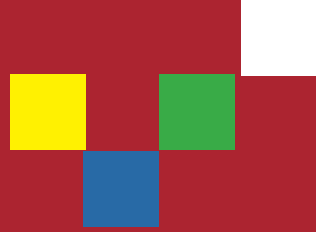
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— April 2019 —



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