



**DRAFT**

**NEW ROSS  
APPENDIX C  
HISTORY, HERITAGE  
CHARACTER  
2023**



**NEW ROSS  
TOWN  
CENTRE  
FIRST  
PLAN**



**New Ross Town Centre First Plan**

**APPENDIX C – History, Heritage, Character Report**

**Prepared by**

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**For**

**Wexford County Council**

**September 2023**

# New Ross

## History, Heritage, Character

ARCHITECTURE



### New Ross Town Centre First Plan

September 2023



Howley Hayes Cooney Architecture were appointed by Wexford County Council as part of a design team led by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds working on the Town Centre First Plan for New Ross. This project seeks to produce a place-making strategy focused on the strategic regeneration and compact development of New Ross, in order to increase the resilience of the local economy. More particularly, this report briefly sets out the historic development of the town and analyses its existing heritage and character to understand what is important and what has been damaging to it and its setting, before setting out a number of recommendations for future research and potential phased improvements.



## Contents

Preface

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Understanding New Ross
- 3.0 Relevant Heritage Planning Policy
- 4.0 Heritage in the Town
- 5.0 Character Appraisal
- 6.0 Threats and Opportunities
- 7.0 Recommendations





## 1.0 Introduction

Located picturesquely on the side of a hill that drops away to the Ross river, formed by the tidal and deep Nore and Barrow), New Ross's elevated topography and strategic siting intimately bound up with its evolution and history and is a defining part of the town's character and identity. Its natural riverine advantages led to it developing as a significant inland port and Anglo-Norman walled town with a wealth of historic buildings, places and a unique character and considerable untapped potential.

Good conservation, regeneration and placemaking starts with a broad understanding of the place, its history, its evolution, its component parts and their significance. Historic structures and their settings are of high value and embodied energy even despite sometimes having fallen out of

use, and with the urgent need for sustainability, housing and reinvigoration of New Ross, never has appropriately harnessing this existing fabric and history been more important.

With imagination and high design standards, even bold intervention, new viable purpose can be given to buildings and places.

Much has been written on New Ross's long and venerable history and this report is not intended to be an exhaustive synthesis of that, but rather a means to broadly understand its evolution, morphology, fabric and essential character. The report will then give a brief overview of its existing built and archaeological heritage, before appraising the character of New Ross. It will include building typologies, materials and prominent detailing, alterations and infill,

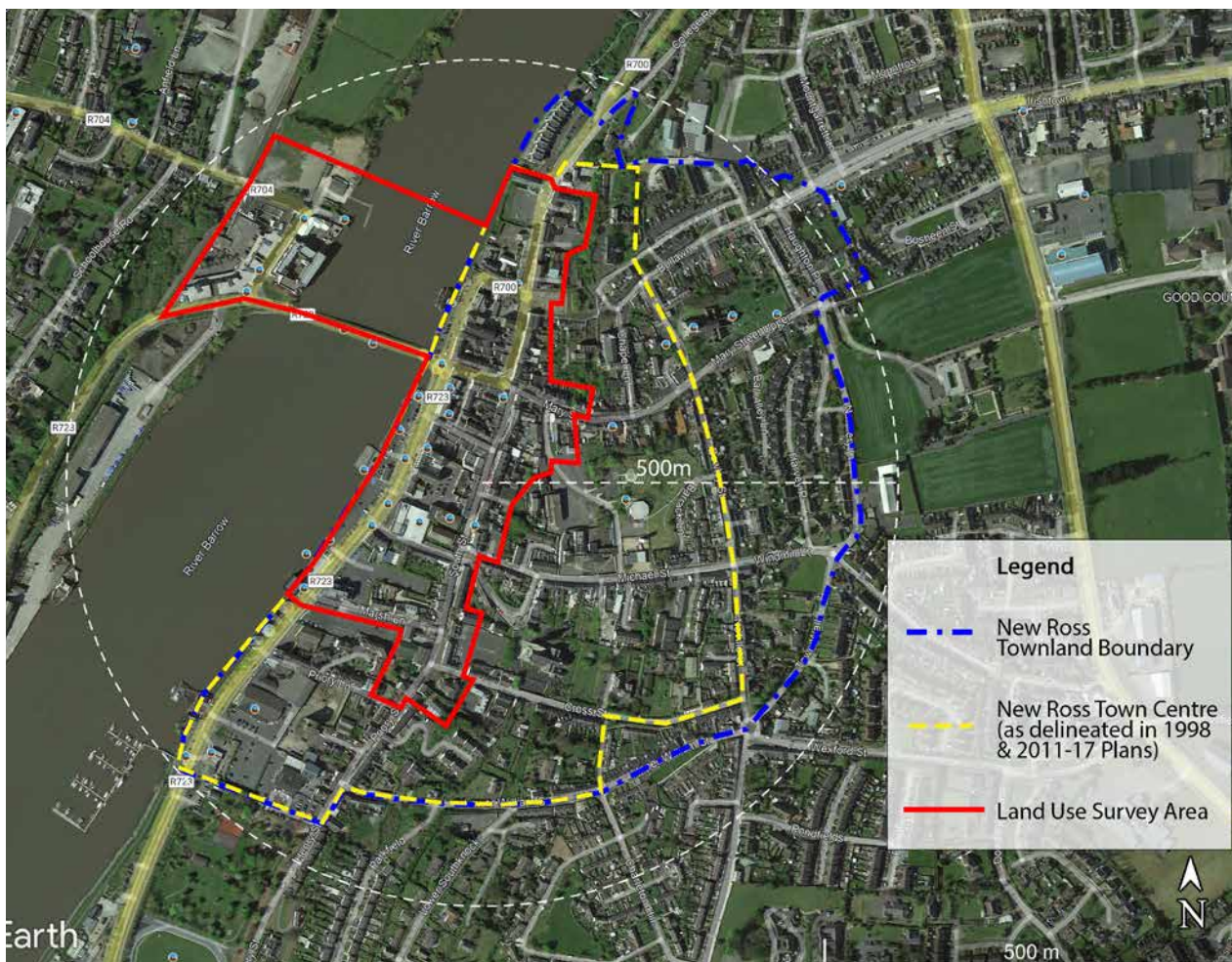


Figure 1 - New Ross Study Area

important views, street furniture and surfacing and positive and negative elements. Green space and nature are discussed in relation to the setting of built and archaeological heritage and how it contributes to the character of the town.

The report will conclude with a number of heritage recommendations and identify a number of derelict and vacant buildings and structures and that could be drivers for regeneration and greater appreciation of the town's rich heritage.

As throughout the country, the Heritage Council plays an important role in Wexford, and by extension, New Ross through the provision of funding for a Heritage Officer. It also provides a broad-ranging advice and guidance series, funding streams like the Historic Towns Initiative, conservation internships, organising National Heritage Week. Its Irish Walled Town Network (IWTN) focuses on uniting and co-ordinating the strategic efforts of local authorities and communities involved in the management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns in Ireland, like New Ross. There are four main strands to its work: providing grants for town wall conservation; providing grants for community festivals and heritage interpretation; training community groups on how best to utilise their place's heritage. Coordinating research with third level institutes and publishing advisory documents.

We would like to thank the following people who generously gave of their time and expertise to inform this report: Catherine McLoughlin, Linda Doran, Tom Banville, Tom Fox, Myles Courtney, Clare O'Morchoe.

## 2.0 Understanding New Ross

### Early History

Writing in 1837, Samuel Lewis described New Ross as an inland port, borough and market town, *'beautifully situated on the side of a hill declining so precipitously to the Ross river [formed by the Nore and Barrow], which unite about one mile to the north.'* This elevated topography and strategic siting on the tidal and deep River Barrow, Ireland's second largest river, is a defining part of the town's character and New Ross's history is intimately bound up with its fortunes.

According to Lewis, Saint Abban and Saint Evin built a monastery and church on the eastern banks of the Barrow in the Sixth Century, around which a town evolved called Rossglas, subsequently Rossmactrium, or Rossmactreion, the Wood of the Son of Treoi. New Ross was formally founded by the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshal, a leader of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, and his wife Isabella de Clare, daughter of 'Strongbow' and Eva (Aoife) MacMurrough, between 1192 and 1207. The town was developed in a strategic location near the manorial centre at Old Ross and was intended to serve as a port for the Marshal lands of the Barrow, Nore and Suir valleys.

The first bridge was constructed on the orders of Marshal by 1210, led to it becoming known as Ros Ponte or Pons Novus. By the century's end the town had become the busiest port in Ireland by. Located on the west bank of the river Barrow, Rosbercon was, prior to 1247 part of the borough of New Ross. The existence of a bridge from 1207 linking it to New Ross, and the establishment of a Dominican Priory here in 1267, may have attracted the first settlement (O'Drisceoil, 1996, 29).

New Ross was without defences until the late-thirteenth century when the 'frequent inroads and predatory excursions of the neighbouring Chieftains' and a feud between the Fitzmaurices and the De Burghs in 1264 convinced the

inhabitants of the necessity to construct a defensive wall (Coey et al, 3). A poem of 1265 written in French by Friar Michael 'Bernardi', of Kyldare provides an illuminating contemporary account of its construction by the townspeople.

*They made a resolution thus: that a wall of stone and mortar they would build around the town, for that war was causing them concern. At Candlemas [2 February] they began; to mark out the fosse they went, how the wall was to go, the chief citizens went to mark it out...they summoned labourers directly... but the hired men got little done. They sat in Council and discussed the plan as never was [put into effect] in England or France...on Monday to begin with the vintners would go to the fosse...from daybreak till the stroke of three...on Sunday the ladies go...to heave the stone and carry it out of the fosse...declaring that they will built a gate...the fosse is 20 feet [6m] deep and extends for a full league [c.4.5km]. When it is complete there will be no need to have a watch... not an Irishman in Ireland will be so bold as to dare attack it.*

(BM Harl, MS Shields 1975-6, 28-32)

Written to commemorate the walling of Ross by its citizens in 1279, a poem, Rithmus facture Ville de Ross, makes clear the disposition and trading advantages the medieval town initially enjoyed:

*In no other isle is known / Such a hospitable town;  
/ Joyfully the people greet/ Every stranger in the  
street./ Free is he to sell and buy, / And sustain no  
tax thereby.*

Soon the distinction between those living *within the walls* and those *without* began to be made. Irishtown to the north developed as a distinct suburb at this point. In 1283 a charter granted to New Ross gave specific permission for the extension of burgages by the reclamation of land from the river (Colfer, 2002, 173). It also stipulated that the burgage plots should be 20 feet wide, many of which were still evident in the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1841.



Figure 2 - 1687 Map (Courtesy of Linda Doran and New Ross Properties)

New Ross's tax exempt trading position was the source of a bitter dispute between it and the King's port of Waterford, and soon trade restrictions were introduced to limit its success. This, combined with political unrest, led to a slow decline in the fortunes of New Ross from the fourteenth century onwards, and its subsequent history was one of repeated attempts at capture.

The town repelled the Duke of Ormonde during the Confederate and Civil Wars in 1641, and later Ormonde defended the town against Cromwell. In 1643, during these wars, the first (Marshal) bridge was destroyed.

### The Plan of the Town

In 1577 'the walls stand to this day, a few streets and houses in the town, no small part thereof is turned to orchards. The greater part of the town is steep and streaming upwards.' The earliest known plan of New Ross dates from 1649 and was reproduced by Herbert Hore in his History of the Town and County of Wexford Old and New Ross (1900). The plan shows the D-shaped enclosure of

the walls with a grid pattern of streets and depicts three water gates on the quay with the block house at the southern end and a parallel tower to the north, five gates and five towers are also illustrated at this point.

A description of 1684 by Robert Thomas Leigh, Esq. of Rosegarland provides an instructive account of the town's disposition and makeup at that time:

*'New Ross is surrounded with a strong wall, built of lime and stone, seated upon a rock, which is cut on the outside of the wall in the nature of a ditch and adds much to the strength of it. It is in circumference above a mile, and is fortified by the waterside by a citadel and fort, and has twelve strong towers or castles, and four gates to the land side, besides some slips to the waterside. The town so much remains thereof built, being about 150 stone houses, slated, and as many thatched ones, lies on the side of a steep hill or rock, shelving down to the river which lies to the west of it and is navigable for ships of great burden....'*

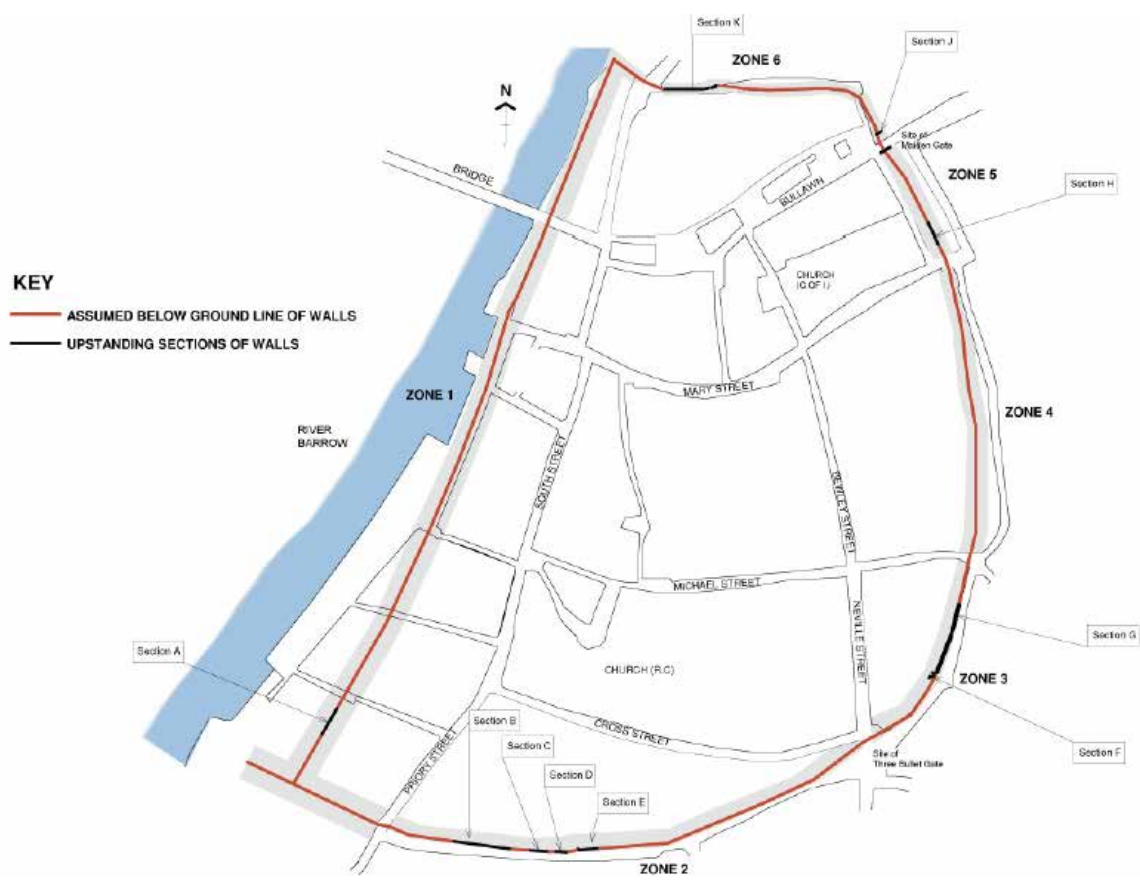


Figure 3 - Map of Town Walls (From Alastair Coey's Town Wall Heritage Plan)



Figure 4 - New Ross Axonometric Reconstruction (Courtesy of Linda Doran)

The quayside was the principal locus of economic activity in the town. *The modern frontage measures 800m in length and it is probable that the medieval quays were of similar length* and the line of the fortifications / first quay would have begun behind the line of South Street today. Though unrefined, early maps and the axonometric reconstruction extrapolated from them, give an idea of the form which the quayside might have taken and depicts the river frontage as divided into a number of projecting sections or jetties. Many of the narrow lanes running at right angles to the quays from John Street, North Street, South Street and Priory Street, probably led to these jetties (O'Drisceoil, 32)

The fosse and stone medieval town as depicted on the 1687 map is more detailed than the 1649 map. It comprised Custom House Quay and Black House Quay adjacent to the river, with North Street / South Street and Friary Street running parallel, and with Church Lane / Nevin Lane laid out to the east. These streets were intersected by narrow lanes leading west-east off the quays and broader streets, such as Cross Lane, Michael's Street, Mary's Street, Bridge Street, Maiden Lane and Market Street, many of which led to gates in the



Figure 5 - Charles 'Tottenham in his Boots' (National Gallery of Ireland)

wall, with minor streets and lanes diverging from these in several directions. Key places such as the Market Place, Priory, Chapel or Barracks served as landmarks and focal points.

From the seventeenth century, the fortunes of New Ross were synonymous with a few large landholding families, most notably the Tottenhams, who bought most of the town from the Earl of Anglesey and held high public office for centuries.

According to Linda Doran:

*'The minute books of the town commissioners of New Ross, Co. Wexford, survive from 1685 and vividly capture the unease of the late seventeenth century—the fears of the ruling Protestant minority about the attitudes and affiliations of the Catholic majority.'*

It seems that as a response to these fears, the citadel, a fortification on the quay (evident of the 1687 map) was repaired and quarters prepared for officers on constant high alert and the 'Irish' were not permitted to leave their houses at night for a time. New Barracks were constructed in 1700 to bolster military might, and the Folly House, a property close to the Market Gate of the town and the place of Cromwell's recuperation, was not to be rented to Catholics. (<https://www.historyireland.com/capturing-the-quotidian-new-ross-corporation-books-1685-1900>).

### The Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the overlaying of what became the modern town on the existing narrow, essentially medieval, street pattern and subsequent extra-mural development. Notably, in 1749 the Tholsel, the seat of political power in the town, was built to the designs of the leading London architect and landscape designer, William Kent (1685-1748) in its present location. Constructed on reclaimed land, its subsiding foundations led to it being rebuilt stone-by-stone in 1806.

In 1777 Charles Tottenham, then treasurer, organised the town's first fire engine, brought from London and costing £57.13s.11d with the fire station located on the Old Customhouse Quay (ibid, Doran). During this time, the town



Figure 6 - Fair Green (French-Lawrence Collection ca. 1865-1914)

moved from largely being a bastion of loyalism, to supporting the movement for Irish independence.

### The 1798 Rebellion

New Ross's history is intimately linked to the 1798 Rebellion as the site of one of its bloodiest and most notorious battles. Fought on June 5th 1798 between a large force of Society of the United Irishmen rebels and government forces garrisoning the town, it was a thwarted attempt by the rebels to spread the rebellion beyond Wexford. Though the Rebels succeeded in driving the defending Crown Forces across the bridge and

repulsed a counter attack, ill-discipline and poor leadership led ultimately to failure. It resulted in c.3,000 rebels and 230 garrison members being killed, wounded or going missing, just as vast tracts of the town were destroyed by fire

### The Nineteenth Century

New Ross merchants such as the Graves, Howlett and Keogh families establish strong links with ports on the North American east coast such as Savannah, Boston, Quebec and Newfoundland. The milling industry flourished and the town boasted over thirty flour and textile mills. Trade in grain, flour, livestock, bacon and butter was the life blood of the town and there was also considerable export of porter, ale, beer and stout to Newfoundland (Lewis, 1837, 26), whereas timber, tobacco, cotton and other commodities dominated the west-east trade.

W.H. Bartlett's 1830 view of New Ross depicts the then wooden bridge at the centre of the river bookended by tall structures. The walled defences are clear on the town side and tall buildings – presumably corn / grain stores - are depicted lining the Quay in the centre background.

Fairs and markets were vital to the economy of New Ross. In an attempt to control and regulate trading, a corn market was erected in Robert Street in 1818, but it was not a huge success.

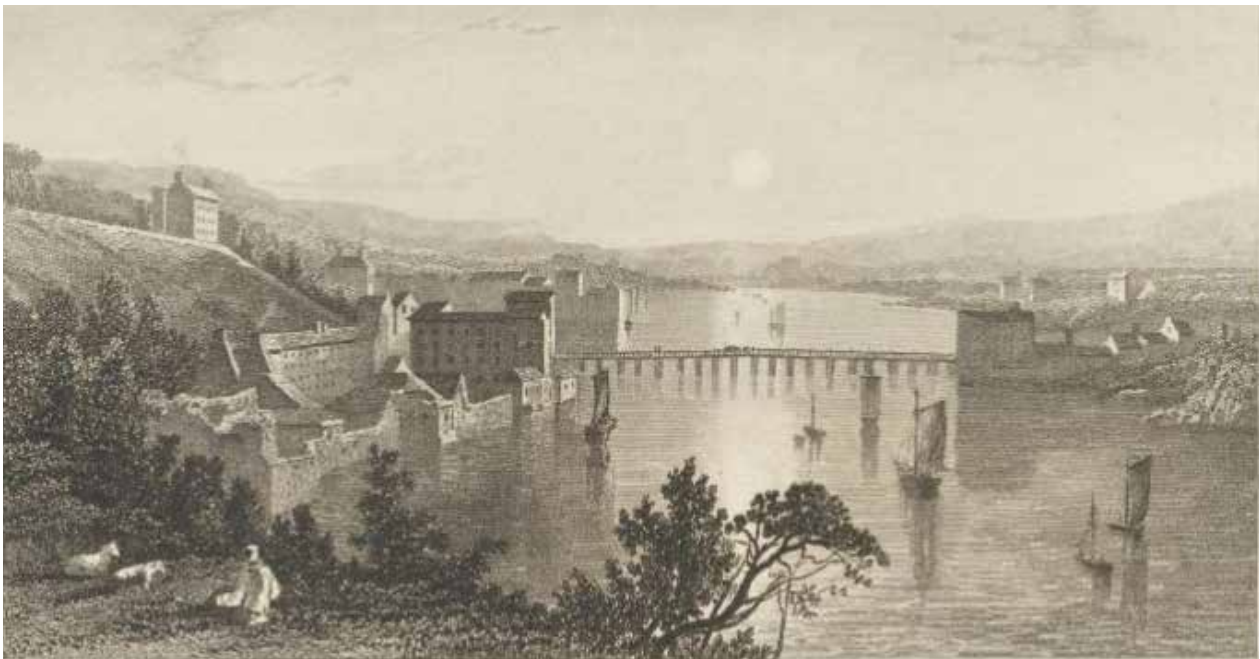


Figure 7 - 1830 View of New Ross (W.H. Bartlett, V&A)

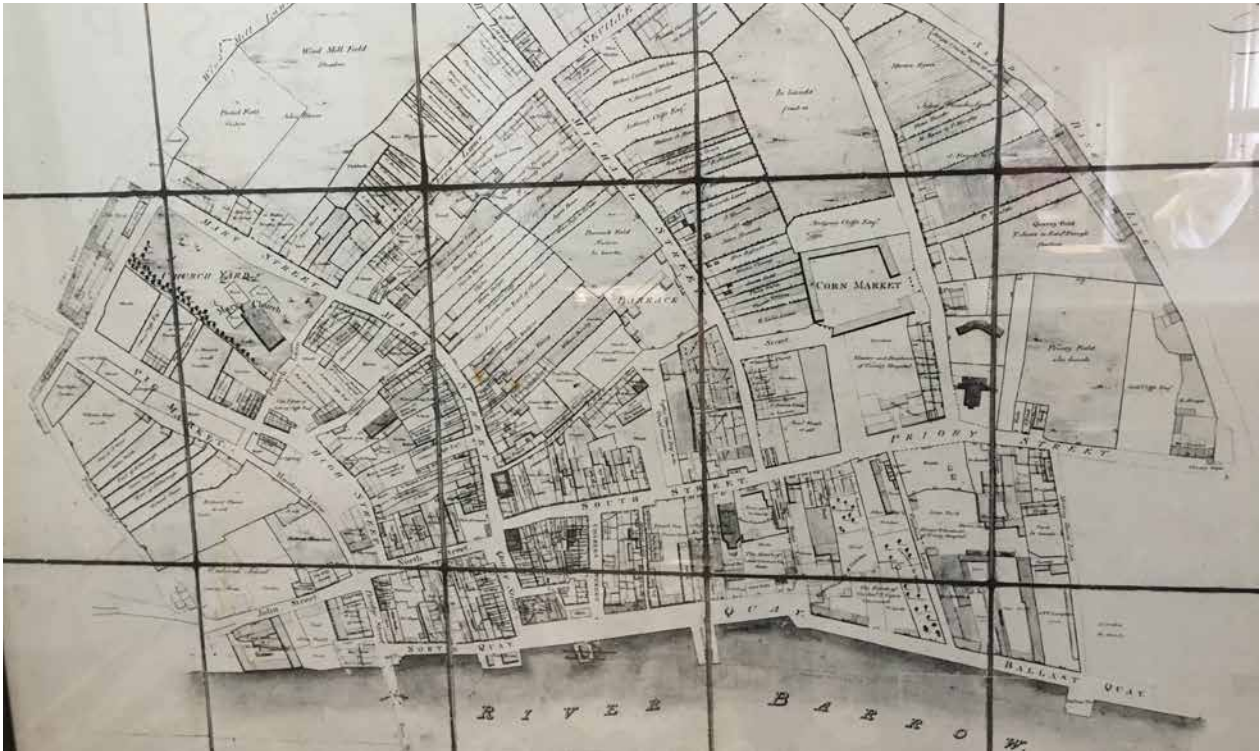


Figure 8 - 1827 Tottenham Estate Map (Courtesy of Tottenham Estate Archive)

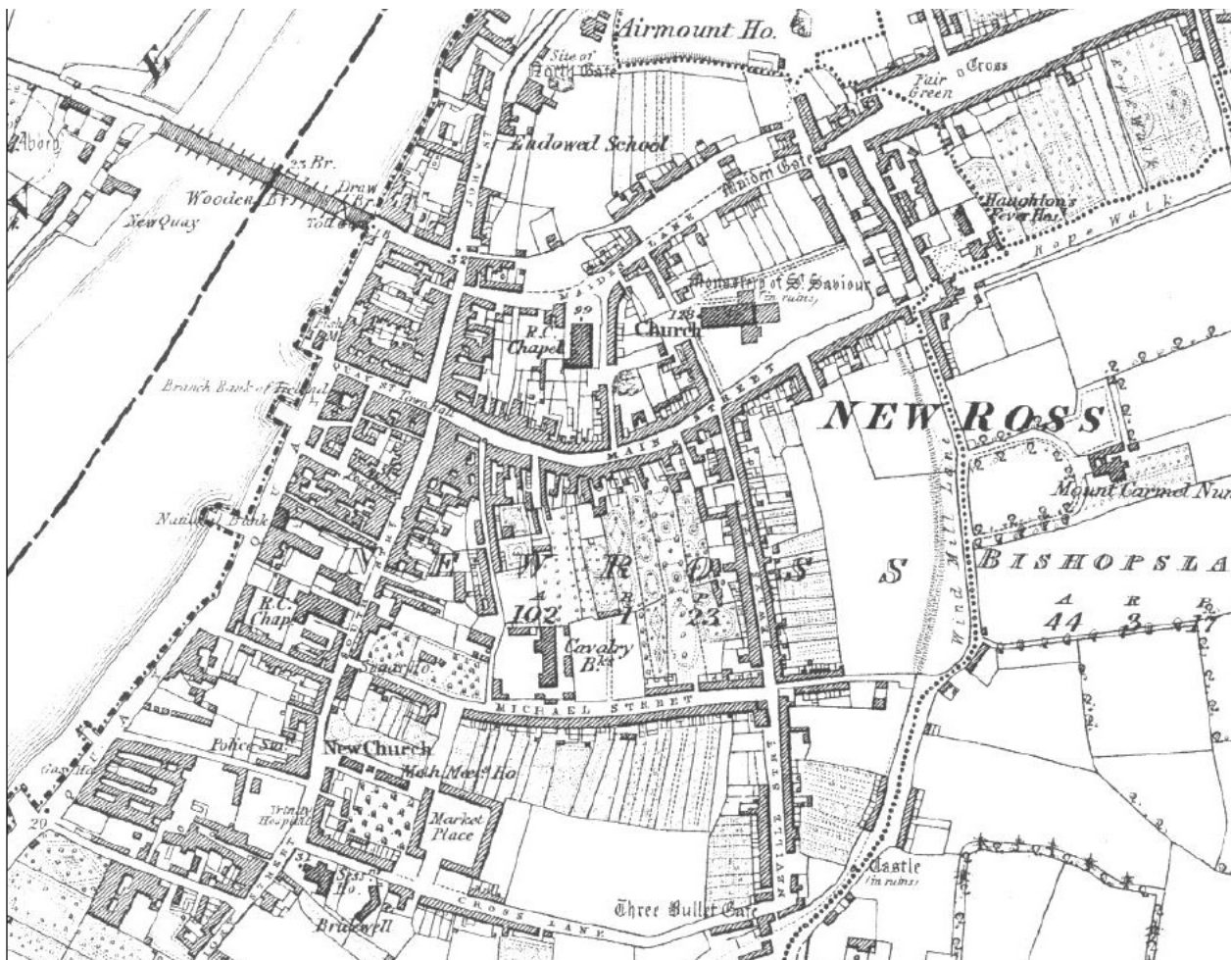


Figure 9 - 1841 First Edition OS Map



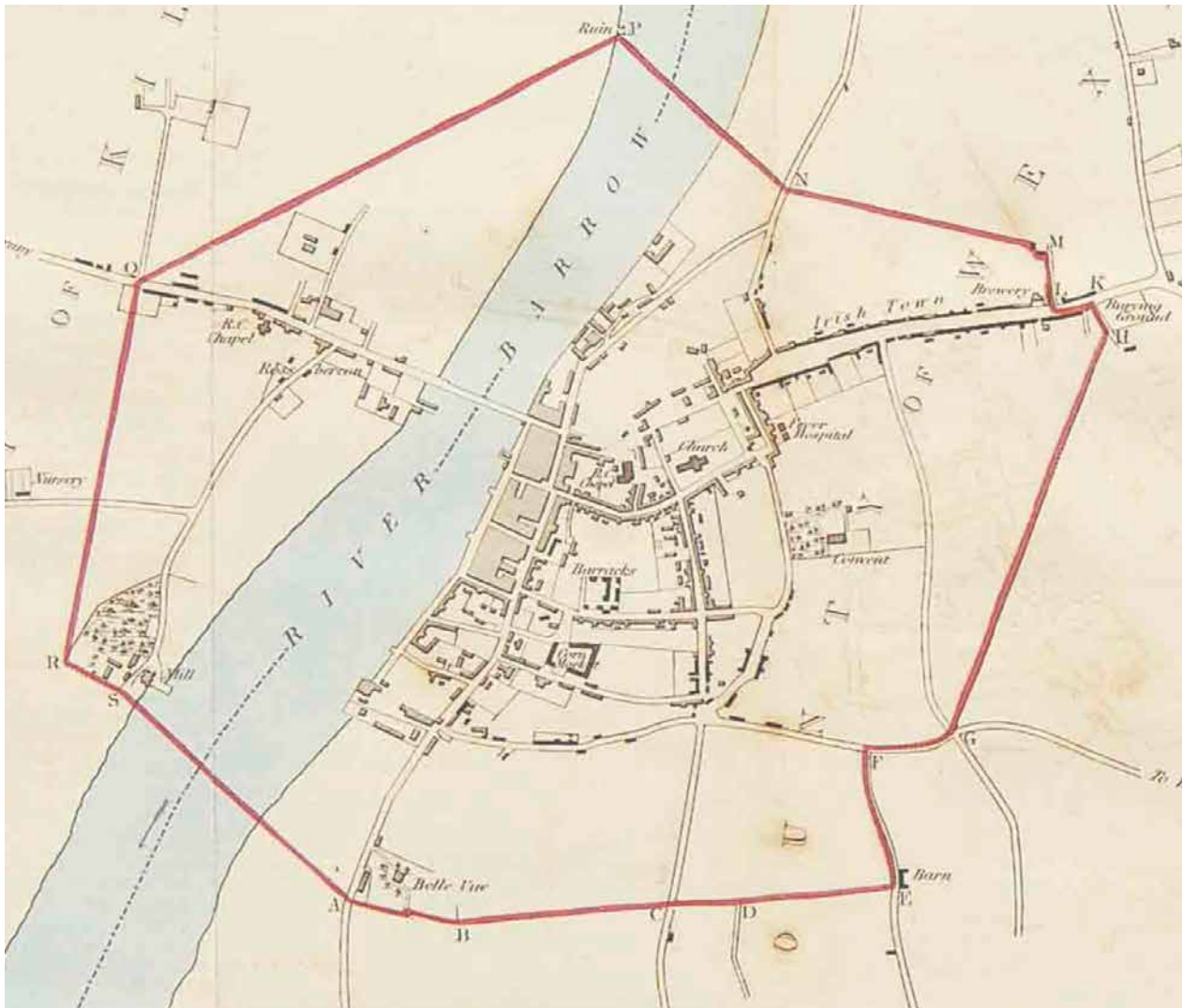


Figure 10 - 1832 Map from Parliamentary Report from Commissioners and Plans

In 1828 tradesmen were compelled to weigh and sell their corn at the market house and by 1832, standing markets, deemed an *obstruction to passengers in the street*, were to be removed to the corn market. In the same year a *Parliamentary Representation, Ireland Report* was published with an elaborate accompanying Corporation boundary map. It gives insight into the constituency and economic situation of the town at that point:

*'...the River is navigable up to the town for vessels of 200 tons...there is a wooden bridge over the Barrow... There are in the town 1,040 houses, of all sorts; and the population...is 6,284...[the town's]... general appearance does not denote prosperity; this, however, we are told is owing to the difficulty that existed of late years in obtaining land on leases of sufficient duration to encourage building...'*

Observations and passed down stories of New Ross written by Mary B. Dunphy, a teacher, were collected by the National Folklore Commission Schools Collection, between 1937-9, and provide a lively, civic and aesthetically minded account of the town, its principal buildings, spaces and economic disposition.

In a section entitled: 'The Old Peoples Story of New Ross', Dunphy very evocatively captures an earlier time on and around the Quay:

*'New Ross to-day is but a sickly ghost of its former self, according to the old people. Shipping abounded in the river. Sailors speaking many foreign languages paraded the quays and streets. The writer's father often described these foreigners to her. Some wore ear-rings, some pig-tails, some big 'baggy' coloured*

trousers. These latter were called 'Petticoat' men. There was life everywhere. The bustle and noise of business was the music of the town. Horses and carts carried grain into the large stores on the Quay from all over the countryside. Nothing is left to tell of its former greatness but the huge seven storey stores along the quayside. Alas! these are now empty; and rotting floors, doors, etc only great the eye. The walls are substantially built, however, and show no sign of decay yet. In those good old days great wages were paid for loading and unloading a ship as it would be a hurry to avail of a propitious wind or tide. A man (Mr. J. Power Maudlins) told me to-day that 21s/= per day was refused on the Quay of Ross on one occasion.'

Between the 1832 and the 1841 Ordnance Survey maps, the mantle of the modern town laid over its medieval armature is evident; more infill development is visible and the narrow streets, lanes and alleys of the central core remain, as today, densely woven, with larger grained stone warehouses by that point lining the quays characterfully defining the town's waterfront edge. The Wooden Bridge still stood and a *Fish Market* was marked on the Quay.



Figure 12 - 1840 drawing of Fair Gate by William Frazer (NLI)



Figure 11 - 1840s drawing of Three Bullet Gate by William Frazer (NLI)

At this point the Endowed School and Airmount House stood to the north of the town wall, with Fair Green lying to the north-east of Maiden Gate leading on to Irish Town. Haughton's Fever Hospital (1812) stood at this point on land between Fair Green and Rope Walk. The Monastery of St Saviour's is noted as *in ruins* and an R.C. chapel was evident to its west, with Mount Carmel Nunnery located just outside the town walls, to the east.

The Bridewell was located beside the Session House, to the south of Cross Street, with the Market Place and a 'New Church' to the north, and the Police Station fronted onto South Street and the Cavalry Barracks stood at the heart of the town to the north of Michael Street. Elaborate long narrow gardens are evident behind the houses fronting onto Main Street and Michael Street at this time.

During and in the aftermath of the Great Famine (1845-7), New Ross was the point of embarkation for many seeking to escape poverty by heading to Canada or America. Built in Quebec in 1845, the Dunbrody was a ship that carried thousands on the treacherous journey to a new life in North America. The present harbour and quay walls were completed in 1852.

She describes how the 'Big Snow' of 1867 was the catalyst for the collapse of the old wooden bridge (rebuilt in 1869):

*...there had been a heavy frost. The river, though tidal was one mass of ice. The bridge, a wooden structure of great antiquity, was ill able to bear extra weight or pressure... During the night what remained of the bridge was swept into the river. Anyhow, in the morning the town was 'snowed under' and the bridge missing.*

Dunphy describes the famous and sophisticated New Ross lace made under the supervision of the Carmelite Nuns. She says 'Point Lace' and 'crochet' were executed in the school:

*The fame of the New Ross lace resounded through the world. It won prizes at all exhibitions. The beauty of the design and the perfection of the execution in fragile thread were the marvel of the lace world... At the Chicago Exhibition in 1886 workers from this famous school plied their needles in the presence of huge admiring crowds.*

Historic photographs from the Poole, Lawrence Collection:



Figure 13 - Grain stores viewed from the 1869 Bridge



Figure 14 - Early-Mid 20th Century view over the town



Figure 15 - Parade The Quay, 1898



Figure 16 - The Quay, c. late 19th century



Figure 17 - Curved end of the new bridge with view down The Quay



Figure 18 - The Quay, c. late 19th century



Figure 19 - Corner of The Quay & Quay Street



Figure 20 - A view of New Ross across the River Barrow



Figure 21 - Berth for ships with Quay wall visible, Oct 1924



Figure 22 - River Barrow from high ground to North of town with fortified wall

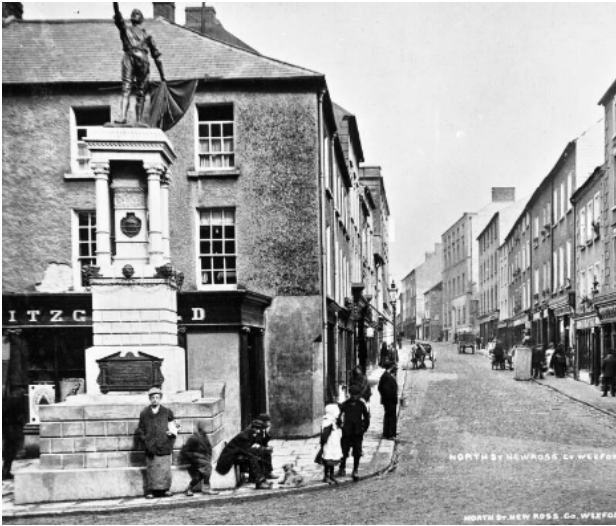


Figure 23 - North Street



Figure 24 - South Street, late 19th century



Figure 25 - 1869 bridge



Figure 26 - Boats and bridge



Figure 27 - Street view of New Ross



Figure 28 - The steps - Robert Street and Michael Street



Figure 29 - A view from Rosbercorn towards the town



Figure 30 - View towards Rosbercorn



## The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Writing in 1937-9, Mary Dunphy says of The Shambles meat market and its decline :

*This is the 'Market' where meat is or rather 'was' sold. It is situated in Main Street. Long ago all the butchers sold their meat there in their little stalls. It used to be a lively spot, full of fun and banter 'And jokes went round and harmless chat.' But one by one they decamped out of the Shambles and set up butchers' shops in the town. To-day only one vendor of meat plies his job in the Shambles while there are ten butchers' shops scattered through the town.*

Dunphy continues:

*Some people said they were stones from the architecture of the Fair Gate also called the Bishop's Gate which was demolished by the Urban Council to make room for new houses which they built right in the archway of the Fair Gate. I can recall even now to my minds' eye the particular beauty of one of these stones 'frescoed' all round. The demolition of the Fair Gate was an extraordinary act of historical desecration! One seems at a loss to explain it otherwise than to say it was due to colossal ignorance.*

Dunphy describes two former Breweries in New Ross:

*Sutton's Brewery [which appears on the 1841 map], Where the Good Shepherd Convent now stands was the site of a very progressive brewery owned by people named Sutton the last representative of these Suttons, Miss Anna Sutton, entered the Carmelite Order at the Mount Carmel Convent, New Ross, in or about 90 years ago. The Brewery then fell into the hands of the Devereux family, the distillers, Wexford, and was later acquired by the Good Shepherd Order in or about 1860. The site is now adorned with the magnificent buildings and grounds of the...Convent [which appears on the 1881 map]. Howlett's Brewery was situated in Priory Lane. It was dominated by the Howlett Residence, the large towering house in Priory Street. used now as a Garda Barracks. There were three gates on the Brewery Priory gate, Trinity gate and Marsh gate. The Howlett family were the princes of the commerical life of New Ross about 90 or 100 years ago [mid-nineteenth century]. They owned fleets of sailing boats and exported the products of the brewery, and imported raw material.*

In Dunphy's view, the most significant surviving features of the Town Walls are *The Rope Walk: New Ross being a seaport doing a large export grain trade, rope-making was carried on to an appreciable extent, in the long ago. A long rope walk belonging to Brownes North St. extended from the Town Wall at Nunnery Lane end to Bosheen-a-Slawn. All rope walks have been forgotten but this particular stretch is still referred to as 'The Rope Walk.' One of the forgotten rope-walks was in Michael St. This stretched on towards Mary St.*

New Ross's picturesque setting was the inspiration for the highly regarded Irish artists including Paul Henry (1877-1958) and Tony O'Malley (1913-2003), who for a short time in the late-1950s, made it his home.

In common with the rest of the country, New Ross experienced an economic downturn in the 1980s and '90s, prompting Failte Ireland to make it their designated 'Destination Town' in Wexford as a spur to growth. It has struggled to entirely recover, and progressive vacancy and dereliction have become a by-product of this economic decline.

Two unused buildings on South Quay, close to the key visitor attraction, the replica JFK Dunbrody Famine Ship (opened in 2001), are mooted as the location for a new immersive visitor experience, The Norman Centre, that will chart Wexford's rich Norman history.

Dedicated to the memory of John F. Kennedy, whose great-grandfather, Patrick, was born in the nearby village of Dunganstown, the JFK arboretum near New Ross, County Wexford is home to notable specimen trees and shrubs. President Kennedy returned to his ancestral roots and gave a moving address from the quay in June 1963.

In 2008, Conservation Plan for the Town Walls of New Ross was commissioned by New Ross Town Council, working in partnership with the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN). The plan has been prepared by Alastair Coey Architects, which was appointed in September 2007. The purpose of the Conservation Plan was to identify the significance of New Ross

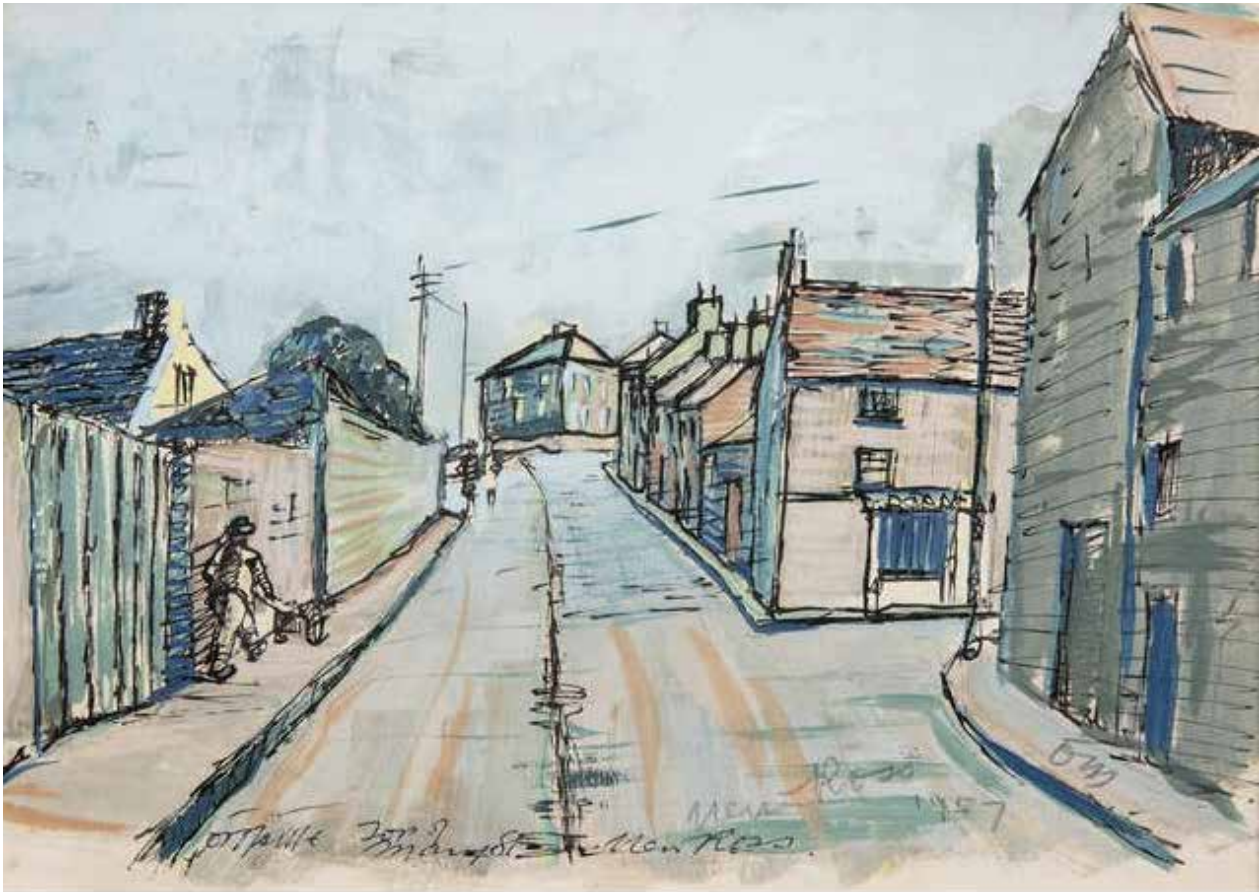


Figure 31 - Tony O'Malley Painting of Mary Street, 1957 (Whyte's online catalogue)



Figure 32 - New Ross Quays by Tony O'Malley, 1961 (Whyte's online catalogue)

Town Walls, the threats to significance, and to propose policies for the future protection and management of the Walls.

A New Ross native, Claire Keegan's tender and much feted historical novella, 'Small Things Like These,' was set in New Ross. Central to the fictional plot was the disturbing discovery by the main protagonist of a distressed young woman held captive in the Magdalene Laundry, the Good Shepherd Convent today (erected in 1881). The book is currently being made into a film, with some scenes shot in New Ross.

More recent public realm works along the quay have included the new boardwalk and have considerably increased hardstanding / car parking along the Quay. The recently completed 'High Hills' archaeology and public realm project has created a publicly accessible vertical garden that permits the appreciation and understanding of important archaeological artefacts found in and around the area.



Figure 33 - Claire Keegan's *Small Things Like These*

### 3.0 Relevant Built and Archaeological Heritage Planning Policy

Chapter 13 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out policy in relation to Heritage and Conservation. Heritage is defined in the Heritage Act, 1995 as including monuments, archaeology, heritage objects, architecture, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.

There are two primary mechanisms to protect the county's architectural heritage as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and comprising principally of the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas:

- If a structure is considered to be of special interest, the Council may designate it as a Protected Structure. A Protected Structure is one that is considered to be of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- If a group of buildings is considered special and is of significant importance, the Council may designate it as an Architectural Conservation Area.

#### Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

Section 13.4.1 of the Plan states: In relation to a Protected Structure or a Proposed Protected Structure, the meaning of the term includes the structure, the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structure lying within the curtilage and its interior and all fixtures, fittings and features which form part of the interior or exterior of the structures.

A Record of Protected Structures (RPS) was prepared and is available in Volume 5 of the Plan. The RPS presently comprises in excess of 1,400 structures...The curtilage of a Protected Structure is often an essential part of the structure's special interest. In certain circumstances, the curtilage may comprise a clearly defined garden or grounds, which may have been laid out to complement the design or function...

The Built Heritage Objectives of the Council are:

#### Objective BH01

- To protect the architectural heritage of County Wexford and to include structures considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the Record of Protected Structures.

#### Objective BHO2

- To support targeted investment in the built heritage of our region including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund to assist owners to maintain our built heritage assets.

#### Objective BH03

- To promote the development of heritage-led regeneration and engage in and promote initiatives to revitalise the historic cores of our towns and villages together with local communities, heritage property owners and other stakeholders.

#### Objective BHO4

- To consider, in the preparation of future local area plans, a Town first approach to the revitalisation of historic urban centres, which focuses on the repair and upgrade of existing historic buildings and their adaptation to new uses with regard to their architectural character and significance.

#### Objective BHO5

- To protect our Architectural Heritage in the form of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and identify important groups of buildings/localities suitable for designation as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Wexford County Council will also endeavour to undertake monitoring and review of the RPS and ACAs which may result in recommendations for additions or deletions and enlist measures to prevent dereliction and to support re-use of built heritage.

#### Objective BHO6

- To protect the curtilage of Protected Structures or proposed Protected Structures from any works which would cause loss of, or damage to, the special character of the structure and loss of or damage to, any structures of heritage value within the curtilage or attendant grounds of the structure.

#### Objective BHO7

- To ensure development within the curtilage of a Protected Structure is compatible with its character. This does not preclude putting forward innovative contemporary designs that respect the context of the Protected Structure.

#### Objective BH08

- To promote the retention of any original or early building fabric including for example timber sash windows, stonework, brickwork, joinery, ironmongery, traditional mortars, render and decorative or weather finishes and slate and vernacular architectural details (whether relating to a Protected Structure or not). Likewise, the Council will encourage the re-instatement of historically correct traditional features and retention of original ridge heights as appropriate.

#### Objective BHO9

- To protect, maintain and enhance the established character and setting of vernacular buildings which are worthy of protection or have architectural heritage value, farmyards and settlements where they make a positive contribution to the built heritage and encourage the re-use and sensitive refurbishment of vernacular buildings using appropriate design and materials and having regard to best practice conservation guidelines.

#### Objective BH10

- To ensure that applications in relation to Protected Structures include an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment report where it is considered the proposed development entails extensive or complex works with a potential to have an impact on the architectural heritage. This report should assess the implications

of the development on the character of the structure and the area in which it is located. This should be prepared by a suitably qualified person competent to make a qualitative assessment of the potential impact of works on the character and special interest of the Protected Structure and in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### Objective BH11

- To ensure that all applications for Protected Structures are assessed by taking into consideration the advice contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DAHG, 2011) and any subsequent guidelines.

#### Objective BH12

- To encourage the repair and retention of traditional timber, rendered and/or tiled shop fronts and pub fronts, including those which may not be Protected Structures. There will be a general presumption against the replacement of original shopfronts with emphasis on retention and reinstatement of traditional proportions and details.

#### Objective BH13

- To facilitate the retention of older buildings, the Planning Authority will give consideration to the relaxation of car parking and other development management requirements in appropriate circumstances.

#### Objective BH14

- To ensure that elements of the architectural heritage of the county, such as historic gardens and historic designed landscapes, stone or brick walls, ditches and street furniture that make a positive contribution to the built heritage, are retained.

#### Objective BH15

- To encourage improvements to energy efficiency in traditional buildings while maintaining the architectural character and significance in line with the Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Arts, Heritage

and the Gaeltacht, 2011) and the Advice Series Guide on Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and any future guidelines and advice.

#### Objective BH16

- To protect and manage trees in the curtilage of a Protected Structure or in close vicinity that contribute to its special character and setting.

#### Objective BH17

- To support economic development of large country houses in their role as tourist attractions and other commercial uses to ensure their continued survival.

#### Objective BH18

- In the event of catastrophic accidental fire damage the rebuilding of a Protected Structure will not be required. Support and advice will be provided in assisting the repair of damaged Protected Structures to achieve a balance between new works and the remaining original features.

#### Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)

As set out in The Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, an architectural conservation area (ACA) is defined as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of a development plan to preserve. It should be noted that ACA designation is distinct from designation as a protected structure, although protected structures may be located within an ACA area. Protected structures are subject to separate procedures and requirements under the 2000 Planning and Development Act (as amended).

Section 81 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that a development plan shall include an objective to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines

and heights, that (a) is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or (b) contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, If the planning authority is of the opinion that its inclusion is necessary for the preservation of the character of the place, area, group of structures or townscape concerned and any such place, area, group of structures or townscape shall be known as and is in this Act referred to as an *architectural conservation area*.

#### National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a State initiative under the administration of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The NIAH was established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999, to identify, record and assess the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistency, as an aid in the conservation and protection of that architectural heritage. Under Section 53 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage may use an NIAH survey to recommend particular structures to a local authority for their consideration for inclusion on their RPS.

The inclusion of structures on the RPS is a reserved function of the elected members of the local authority who may decide to exclude structures recommended by the Minister and, conversely, include structures which have not been recommended by the Minister. The NIAH Building Survey may include structures which have not been included on the RPS and, conversely, the RPS may include structures which have not been included in the NIAH Building Survey. The NIAH Survey of New Ross was undertaken in 2005.

The NIAH has also published a Garden Survey which showcases the historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens in the County. As well as being a source of information about history and society, the Council recognises the additional benefits of these landscapes for biodiversity,

climate change and, where such places are open to the public, physical and mental well-being.

### Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological sites and monuments are protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

At present, a site or monument is protected in one of four ways: –

- It is recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- It is registered in the Register of Historic Monuments (RHM).
- It is a national monument subject to a preservation order (or temporary preservation order).
- It is a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a Local Authority.
- It is the objective of the Council:

#### Objective AH01

- To conserve and protect archaeological sites, monuments (including their settings), underwater archaeology and objects including those listed or scheduled for inclusion on the Record of Monuments and Places and/or the Register of Historic Monuments or newly discovered sub-surface archaeological remains.

#### Objective AH02

- To recognise the importance of monuments and sites and protect the character and integrity of these monuments and sites where appropriate. The Council will consult the National Monuments Service where a development is proposed that may impact on an archaeological monument and/or site.

#### Objective AH03

- To protect the heritage of groups of important archaeological sites and monuments, inclusive of their contextual setting and interpretation, in the operation of development management.

#### Objective AH04

- To fully consider the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking, approving or authorising development.

In considering such protection the Council will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service and the principles set out in Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, 1999).

#### Objective AH05

- To require an archaeological assessment and/or investigation by qualified persons for development that may, due to its size, location or nature, have a significant effect upon archaeological heritage and to take appropriate measures to safeguard this archaeological heritage. In all such cases the Planning Authority shall consult with the National Monuments Service in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

#### Objective AH06

- To promote a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and settings when dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features. Where preservation in-situ is not possible the Council will consider preservation by record in appropriate circumstances.

#### Objective AH07

- To protect historic and archaeological landscapes, including battlefields, and promote access to such sites provided that this does not threaten the feature.

#### Objective AH08

- To include archaeological landscapes, battlefields and historic landscapes as part of the updated Landscape Character Assessment of the County to be prepared following the publication of a National Landscape Character Assessment.

#### Objective AH09

- To protect historic urban defences (both upstanding and buried) and associated features and safeguard them from inappropriate development in accordance

with National Policy on Town Defences (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008).

#### Objective AH10

- To identify appropriate archaeological sites in the county to which public access could be provided, and work to secure public access and the provision of signage and interpretation panels, where appropriate, in consultation with the landowner and the National Monument Service, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Volume 2.

#### Objective AH11

- To retain existing street layouts, historic building lines and traditional plot widths which derive from medieval or earlier origin.

#### Objective AH12

- To protect historical burial grounds within County Wexford and encourage their maintenance in accordance with best practice conservation principles.

#### Objective AH13

- To have regard to the Historic Battlefield sites as listed in Table 13.6 (and those which are not listed thereon but that are, or become, known) and when assessing planning applications in the vicinity of a Historic Battlefield ensure there is no harm to the physical character or setting of these sites. Where development is proposed within the identified battlefields, archaeological assessment and recording may be required.



## 4.0 Heritage in the Town

New Ross has a wealth of historic buildings, monuments, artefacts, places and streetscapes of all periods and types, formal and vernacular. Some are more obvious and declamatory, and generally recognised by a heritage designation (RMP, RPS, NIAH, ACA) and generally sit within the former historic town walls. Some are individual, whereas others are ensembles or streetscapes. There are also quieter, less obvious or appreciated features, both within the town, Irish Town and Rosbercorn, but which nonetheless contribute positively to the character and appearance of New Ross and its sense of depth in time.

There are a large number of designated assets within the defined town centre boundary (as delineated in Wexford County Council's 1998 and 2011-17 Development Plans). There are 189 heritage features included on the Record of Protected Structures (Volume 5), 165 of which are also recorded by the NIAH. As in the rest of the country, the RPS mapping only gives the approximate location of a Protected Structure but not its address and nor does not show the extent of its curtilage or boundary. Where the Protected Structure is also recorded by the NIAH, a link is, however, provided to the record. As the NIAH survey of New Ross was undertaken in 2005, almost twenty years ago, there have been numerous changes to the condition of the heritage features surveyed from that described. It is apparent from both historic mapping, street surveys, drone footage and Google Streetview, that there are a considerable number of historic structures, of variable condition, but of possible interest to the rear of buildings in the centre of the historic core and elsewhere.

All features in the town are given 'Regional' rating by the NIAH, including the surviving upstanding sections of the Norman town wall such as Goat Hill, Maiden Gate, South William Street and 'the location of three bullet gate,' which Alistair Coey's 2008 New Ross Town Walls Conservation Plan identified as being 'the most significant.' They are, however, collectively protected under the National Policy on Town

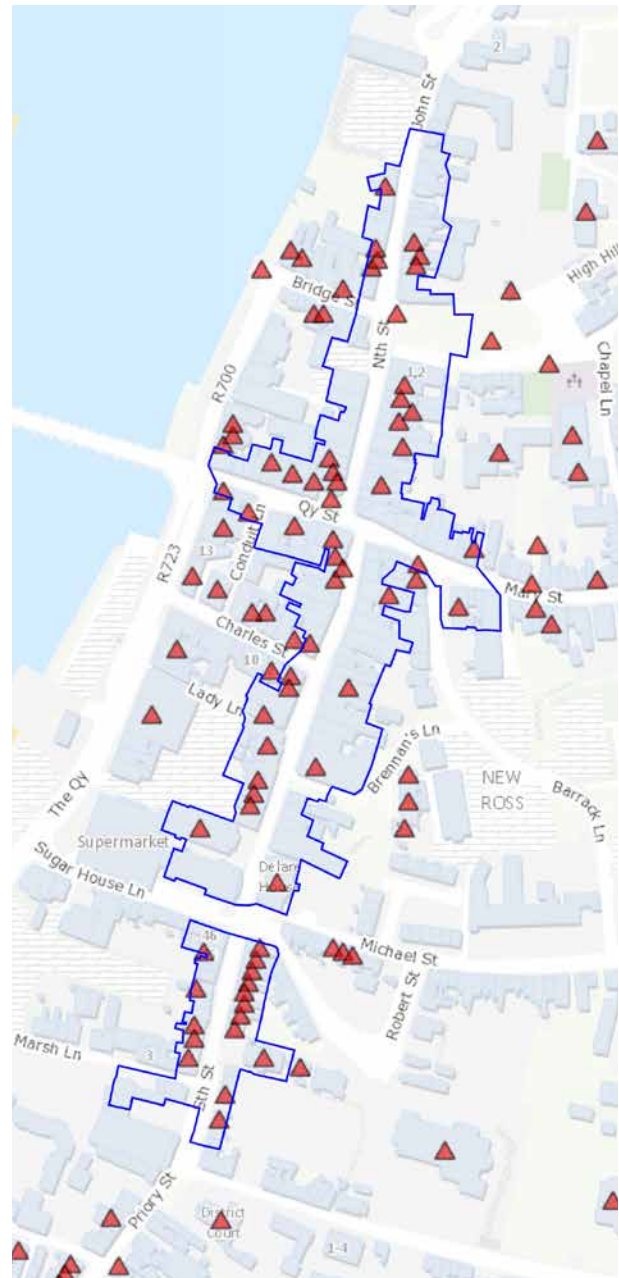


Figure 34 - New Ross Protected Structures with ACA Boundaries

Defences (2008), which states:

*'The known and expected circuits of the defences (both upstanding and buried, whether of stone or embankment construction) and associated features of all town defences are to be considered a single national monument and treated as a unit for policy and management purposes. There should be a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and preservation of their character, setting and amenity.'*

The town defences (WX029-013003) are also scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and should be considered as such. Unsurprisingly, the

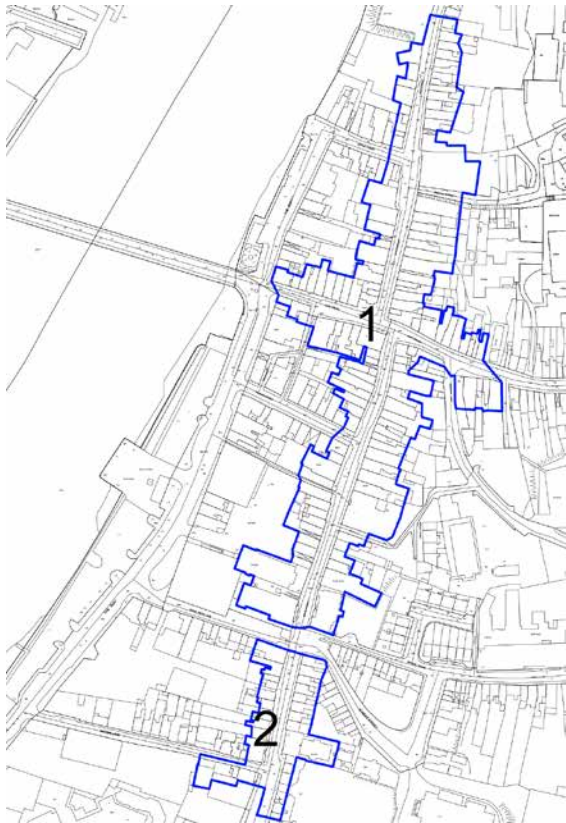


Figure 35 - Map of Current ACA's

largest number of RMP's are clustered around the former medieval upstanding remains of St Mary's Church, the historic religious epicentre of the Norman town associated with William Marshall, with others scattered throughout the town. It is notable that the remnants of the former bridge over the river are on the RPS and NIAH but that the broader historic quay wall and associated port related features do not appear to be designated.

### ACA's Boundaries

There are currently two separate designated ACA's in the town - the South Street/North Street/John Street ACA, and the Lower South Street ACA. The boundary of the former essentially follows the line of buildings fronting onto these streets but not their setting. It branches out along Quay Street and a section of Mary Street. It is unclear in places why the boundary stops where it does, sometimes including designated features and sometimes not. Starting at the northern end, the former granary building (NIAH Reg. No. 15605017) to the west of John Street is not included. The 'Steps' and all of its associated heritage are not included are neither High Street, some of Maiden Lane, Church Lane, Chapel Lane and parts of Mary Street, including

the atmospheric thirteen granite steps leading to St Augustine's Church) are not included; south to include NIAH structures standing on Sugar House Lane and the RPS structures standing on Michael Street.

It is unclear why the two almost contiguous ACA boundaries are not combined to make one with the boundary further extended to take in the designated features. An anomaly is the exclusion of the broader Quay area, the former port and raison d'être of the town and the first thing visitors to it see. Its extension to include these features would align more closely with the historic core and the current Town Centre boundary.

### Vacancy and Dereliction

A vacant site is defined as either:

- *Residential land (more than 0.05 hectares) where there is a need for housing in the area. The site is suitable for housing and the majority of the site has not been in use for an extended period of time [which is a little vague and unclear];*
- *Regeneration land (other than residential land) where the majority of the site has not been in use for an extended period of time, or the site is having a negative impact on existing amenities or on the character of the area.*

This is a register of lands in the local authority's area that are suitable for housing but have not been put forward for development.

A site can be added to the vacant sites register when the local authority decides that the property has been vacant for 12 months or more. The local authority must give written notice to the owner, of their intention to include a site on the register.

The register must contain the:

- Location of each site including a map
- Name and address of the owner
- Current market value

If you own a site on the vacant site register you may have to pay the vacant sites levy.

The Derelict Sites Act, 1990, defines a derelict site as any land that 'detracts, or is likely to detract,

to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land in question because of:

- Structures which are in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition, or
- The neglected, unsightly or objectionable condition of the land or of structures on it, or
- The presence, deposit or collection of litter, rubbish, debris or waste.'

Under the Act 1990, local authorities are responsible for dealing with derelict sites in their area. They can use certain powers to enforce the clean-up of these sites.

They can:

- Prosecute owners who do not comply with notices served;
- Make compulsory land purchases;
- Carry out necessary work themselves and charge the owners for the cost;

All local authorities must:

- Maintain a derelict sites register;
- Make the register available for public inspection - It can remove an entry from the Register when it is satisfied that improvement works have been carried out on the derelict site.

Local authorities have similar powers regarding dangerous structures.

Wexford County Council (WCC) has separate roles for Dereliction and Vacancy. There is creeping vacancy and dereliction in the town, apparently the highest rate in country, with sixteen properties officially on the derelict sites register, though there is perhaps something of a grey area between what is vacant and what is derelict in the town, with the former more often than not leading to the latter.

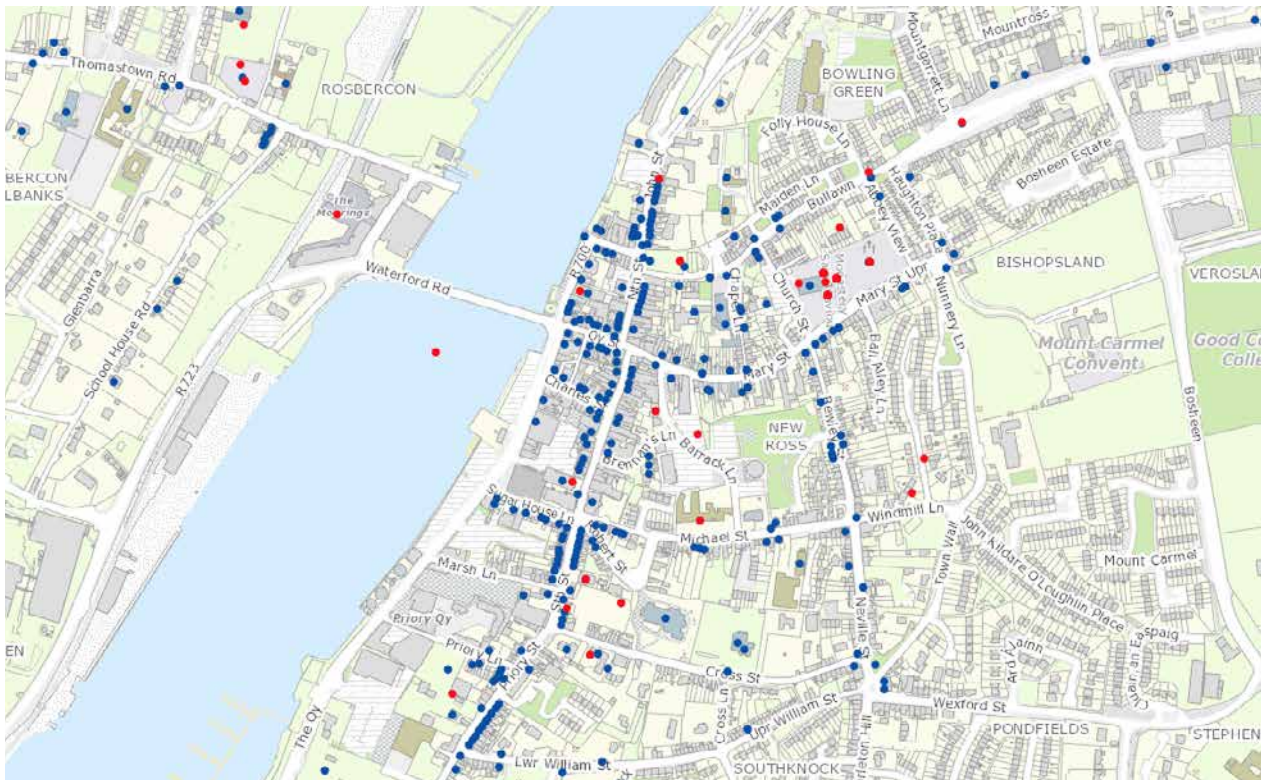


Figure 36 - HER Map showing RMP's (red dots) and NIAH structures (blue)



Figure 37 - Derelict site, Sugar House Lane



Figure 38 - Vacant historic cottages, Irishtown



Figure 39 - Surviving facade, John Street



Figure 41 - Vacant building, Houghton Place



Figure 42 - Vacant houses, Mary Street Upper and corner of Bewley Street



Figure 40 - Dilapidated house



Figure 43 - Derelict building, Priory Street

Table of WCC Currently Recorded Derelict Buildings & their Heritage Designation. This table

does not appear to reflect the additional buildings identified by the survey of the town.

Derelict Record No.	RPS	NIAH	Address
DER2014/001	N/A	NIAH Reg. No. 15605223	6 Chapel Lane, New Ross, Co Wexford
DER2014/002	RPS NR0035	NIAH Reg No.15605027	Gladneys Licenced Premises, 5 John Street, New Ross
DER2014/004	RPS NR0039	NIAH Reg No. 15605014	Harneys Shoe Repairs, 4 John Street, New Ross
DER2019/010	N/A	NIAH Reg. No. 15605033	23 North Street, New Ross, Co Wexford
DER2019/013	N/A	NIAH Reg No15605270	12 Quay Street, New Ross, Co Wexford
DER2020/003	N/A	N/A	16 Haughton Place, New Ross, Co. Wexford
DER2020/013	N/A	N/A	Bumble Bee Licensed Premises, 3-5 Priory Street, New Ross: To be inspected. In poor condition. The area to be re-developed together with New Ross Courthouse. Town and Village Funding application to be made 2023/24
DER2021/019	N/A	NIAH Reg No.	8 Mary Street Upper, New Ross Y34 CF83
DER2021/022	N/A	Reg No 15605155	9 Mary Street Upper, New Ross Y34WA06
DER2021/022	N/A	N/A	10 Mary Street Upper, New Ross Y34 A403
DER2021/037	N/A	N/A	Chilcomb House, Schoolhouse Road, New Ross, Co Wexford
DER2021/054	N/A	N/A	The Old Garage, The Quay, New Ross, Co. Wexford
DER2022/028	N/A	N/A	35 Bewley Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford
DER2022/033	?	?	Former Bike Shop, Priory Street, New Ross, Co. Wexford
DER2022/033			Old Lock Premises and yard (Old Bike Shop) Priory Street, New Ross.
DER2022/036			26 Beachside Avenue, Riverchapel, New Ross

Former Post Office, Haughton Place is one of a number of boarded up premises / buildings that do not appear on either the vacant or derelict property list.

The URDF funding has enabled greater resourcing within the Derelict Sites Team, which in turn has more recently facilitated a greater level of inspection and serving of notices on such property owners. Where there is a failure to engage with the Council, a 7% annual levy on valuation is applied, to be recouped when the site is sold. In

extremis the property is CPO'd to protect from further dereliction and sold on.

The following structures have been compulsorily purchased to protect from further dereliction. Other grant schemes of relevance for heritage in the town are: the Historic Towns Initiative, the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund, Vernacular and Thatching grants, Community Monuments Fund and Irish Walled Towns Network grant, all of which are managed by the heritage officer.

<b>CPO No.</b>	<b>RPS</b>	<b>NIAH</b>	<b>Address</b>
PML2015038	NR0068	15605110	Former New Ross Courthouse Purchased
N/A			1 & 2 Priory Street To be demolished for car park for Courthouse Project
PMD2023017	RPS NR0035	Reg No.15605027	Gladney's 5 John Street. Being sold on open market
PMC2019003	No.20 is NR0035  What is 4a?	(No. 20 is Reg No <b>15605027</b> )	4a / 20 John Street (why under the same number when it's two separate buildings on opposite sides of road?)
PMD2021030	N/A		Old Fire Station. To be sold to HSE
PMA2018012	NR014	Reg No <b>15605016</b>	Cornstores, 8/9 John Street in order to link John Street with North Quay and to extend the existing riverside walk to the end of North Gate. Basement and yard were CPO'd subsequently (John Stret/Bridge Street CPO No 11 of 2021)
PMA2021009	NR0140	Reg No 15605236	Murphy Building, The Quay - New Ross Tourism Transformation Project

### Underappreciated Heritage

- Bridging Point & Port critical factors in New Ross's development and economic success. Only the balustrade of the 1869 bridge and a small section of the granite historic quay wall remain as evocative and isolated reminders of the town's elegant former five span bridge and its rich port heritage. Built to the designs of James Barry Farrell (1810-93), Peter Burtchaell (1820-94) and Samuel Ussher Roberts (1821-1900), the bridge opened in 1869 and successfully connected the town to Rosbercorn, at that point. A benchmark used by Ordnance Survey cartographers survives carved into the wall.

- The river and the Quay is generally the first place visitors to the town see but it is currently quite severed from it. The original quay wall of the Norman fortification / citadel is approximately in the location that would have formed part of the Norman walled town. Though apparently undesignated today, the existing quay wall and its associated features presumably survive below the more recent public realm works. Usually there would be limestone and granite setts, possibly former crane tracks, mooring rings, railings, steps and material associated with its historic and present function as a hugely significant inland port historically. Does this survive?



Figure 44 - Stone (courtesy of Myles Courtney)



Figure 45 - Stone Location (courtesy of Myles Courtney)



### Key Heritage Structures / Places:

- Vestiges of the Norman Town Walls & Gates (Maiden Gate / Fair Green)
- Ruin of St Mary's Church and graveyard
- The Quay wall beneath the boardwalk and the former line of the Norman fortifications / citadel. Houses and vestiges of former bridge as an evocative reminder of the town's port function
- The *Shambles* (former meat market);
- The Tholsel – one of the most important buildings in the town architecturally & locationally
- The principal spine of the historic core – John Street, North Street, South Street, Bridge Street, Mary Street, The Quay and Priory Street that form visually impressive largely early nineteenth century streetscapes
- Surviving vernacular shopfronts
- Dominican Friary, Rosbercorn
- St Michael's Theatre
- Brennan's Lane / Conduit Lane
- Hospital of the Holy Trinity
- St Catherine's Chapel-of-Ease
- Former Sessions House (Courthouse)
- The Houghton Fever Hospital / Houghton place
- The Augustinian Steps
- Conduit Lane, Brennan's Lane
- The High Hill
- Former grain / malt / corn stores (John Street) along the Quay
- Former Cinema, South Street
- Twentieth century structures such as the post office and the former grain silo on the Quay
- Post Office – significant example of early twentieth century architecture.
- Delare House
- Irishtown / religious institutional structures in and around it.



Figure 46 - View along boardwalk with historic quay wall visible to right



Figure 47 - View North along the Quay



Figure 48 - Burnt out houses

## 5.0 Character Appraisal

New Ross's character and identity is intimately linked to its natural environment, particularly its strategically important riverine location, port history and defensible topography, key determinants in its evolution and development. Similarly, the main landowners and custodians in the town - the Tottenham, Hayden, Walshe and O'Leary families, along with the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland and Wexford County Council - have had a considerable bearing on the evolution and development of the town's character.

Prominent public and institutional buildings, historic shopfronts, terraced houses, along with the quieter, often unsung structures and features that form the fabric contribute to the character of place. Character is also derived from building materials, architectural style, groups of buildings / streetscape, the use of colour, street patterns, historic building plots, just as the remnants of the Norman town wall, boundary walls, railings and paving defines and demarcates the town's urban form. It also includes the smallest architectural and other features – fanlights, doors, post boxes and street signs. Topography, open space, trees and important views and vistas all combine to create the spirit or sense of New Ross as a place.

### **Building Typology, Materials & Prominent Detailing**

In common with most Irish towns, New Ross has a variety of building types; formal and vernacular, institutional, civic, domestic and port-related industrial and commercial of a variety of ages and scales. There is simple palette of construction materials consisting primarily of exposed local limestone, hewn from the town's former quarries or brought from Carlow, some granite and also stucco covered limestone as the most commonly used local materials, with some brick evident. Significantly, the Norman church of St Mary's was constructed using sandstone imported from England to mimic Caen stone from Normandy. More recent structures are often brick or concrete rendered and painted in a pastiche style to mimic historic styles, forms and detailing.

Elements of New Ross's deeply textured Norman history are evocatively alive in the street pattern and surviving sections of the medieval town wall, former gates and place names. With ten churches or former churches, three convents, a former Friary, a former monastery and a number of parochial houses, ecclesiastical structures - ancient and nineteenth century – form a significant element of New Ross's character from various religious traditions. The prominent landmark of St Mary's Church stands proudly over the town. Its nineteenth century gothic revival incarnation was built on the site of its predecessor, the remaining ruins of which stand atmospherically adjacent.

There are remarkably few eighteenth century buildings in New Ross. Notable among them are the largely overlooked but charming Trinity Hospital in South Street, a modest-scale range built by Charles Tottenham (1716-95) as an almshouse, and Delare House, the former town house of the Tottenham's.

Outside the town walls are many older residential areas, the most notable of which are Irishtown and Rosbercorn, the latter of which has some individual Georgian houses, Victorian Cottages and early-twentieth century detached houses and, notably, the former Franciscan Abbey.

Rebuilt in 1805, the stone Georgian Tholsel (1749) remains the civic heart of the town, with the principal spine of the historic core – John Street, North Street, South Street, Bridge Street, Mary Street, The Quay and Priory Street, dating largely from the rebuilding in the period after the Napoleonic Wars.

The principal historic spine and streets off it are characterised by a nineteenth century stucco and painted houses (a twentieth century fashion) and commercial buildings of various grains in a loose Classical style – some three storeys over a shop, some two. Conceived and constructed to fulfil a complex and evolved design relating to the display

and sale of goods, there are many fine surviving examples. These imbue the town with enormous character, with the elements of column, lintel

and cornice all variations on the form of the most accurate interpretation of the Classical orders.



Figure 49 - Pair of elegant Georgian houses, Bridge Street



Figure 50 - Cottages, Rosbercorn



Figure 51 - Restored shopfronts, Priory Street



Figure 52 - Recently painted building, Sugar House Lane



Figure 53 - Door, Bridge Street



Figure 54 - Detail to historic shopfront



Figure 56 - View down Bullawn towards St. Mary's



Figure 55 - Door and surround, Bridge Street

## The Quay / River

The River Barrow is the reason New Ross and Rosbercorn developed where they did and its dramatic expanse is, arguably, its most significant, picturesque and characterful feature. The inner edge of the Quay is characterised by smaller grained, two-storey late-Georgian houses, often rendered and painted, some with shops at ground floor. These are interspersed with imposing six-storey mid-nineteenth century stone former grain stores (Roche's etc), more recently rendered and painted. The grand granite neo-classical Bank of Ireland and former National Bank of Ireland (erected to a design of 1861) by William Francis Caldbek (c.1824-72), are handsome architectural statements that speak of historic wealth. The single-storey redbrick Edwardian New Ross post office (1904) stands in playful relief to the architectural austerity of the grain store adjacent and is a unique early-twentieth century building in the town.



Figure 57 - View along the boardwalk with historic Quay Wall visible to right



Figure 58 - Section of the historic Quay Wall visible along the Quay

### Alterations, Extensions, Infill

There have been a wide variety of extensions, remodellings and alterations to buildings within the town that have altered its historic character. These are most notable to former historic shopfronts. More recent, often ad hoc, extensions often using poor quality materials to the rear or sides appear of building have been erected with little consideration of the character of the existing historic structure, heritage feature or the wider townscape.



Figure 59 - Vacancy at ground floor and mass of electricity wires



Figure 63 - Poor maintenance, Quay Street



Figure 61 - Lack of maintenance and repair and uPVC windows



Figure 62 - Inappropriate alteration of historic house that fundamentally changes its character

### Street Furniture & Surfacing

There is a variety of street furniture in New Ross dating to different times. Rare surviving hand carved bas relief stone street signs dating to the Georgian period on the quoin stones of a corner building on Priory Place and Priory Lane are particularly characterful and evocative. Heritage wayfinding comes in a number of different forms; more recent shield-like signs affixed to cast iron. There are several surviving historic water pumps and wall-mounted post boxes in the town. In the area bordering the river there are a lot of hard surfaces, car parking but little planting or areas of natural soakage. Throughout the town there is a variety of contemporary seating, lampposts, bins, traffic signs and paving tends to be more recent and footpaths can peter out in places on narrow busy streets or roads. Wall-mounted Victorian post boxes and former water pumps survive in a number of places throughout the town and elegant cast and wrought iron railings surmount boundary walls in places. The more recently painted murals in the town are lively and well-executed though some of the subjects they depict are not related to the town's own history.



Figure 65 - Victorian postbox



Figure 64 - Stone carved street names

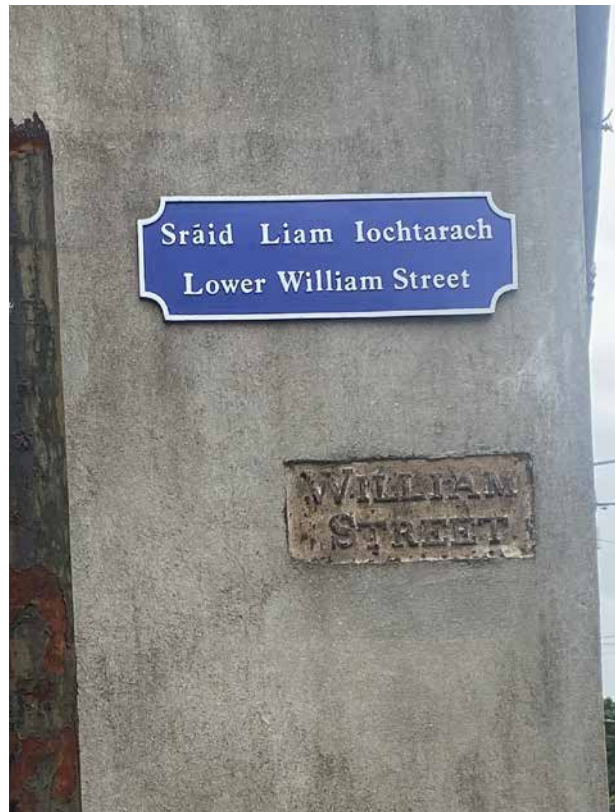


Figure 66 - Street signage





Figure 67 - Historic waterpump



Figure 68 - Elaborate railing



Figure 69 - Street and heritage signage



Figure 70 - Sign indicating where the former gates in the town wall were



Figure 71 - Historic milestone

### Townscape & Views

The nomenclature of New Ross's predominantly narrow streets reflects former uses, topography, or landowners associated with it. Topography and street or lane width varies, each lending distinctive character and framing views or glimpses. The river views along the Quay, and to and from Rosbercorn are highly significant, as are views from St Mary's, St Augustines, St Mary & St Michael's, the High Hill, Library Park and streetscape views along Priory Street, South Street, North Street, John Street and up and down Mary Street towards Quay Street and the bridge.

Views from the bridge to and from Rosbercorn are important. Less obvious but nonetheless pleasing glimpses afforded through narrow, passages, lanes or streets framed by historic buildings - such as from the Quay up Charles Street to South Street, up Robert Street and Little Michael Street from south Street / Sugar House Lane, lend a richness to the town's character. There are tantalising and atmospheric glimpses up the gated Augustinian Steps and hilly Chapel and Church Lanes. Prominently sited churches and their Church spires punctuate the skyline as visual markers within the town and from Rosbercorn towards the town.



Figure 72 - View up Michael Street and Robert Street



Figure 73 - View from St. Mary's



Figure 74 - View up Charles Street from The Quay to South Street



Figure 75 - View down Charles Street from South Street



Figure 76 - Characterful lane of houses off Church Lane



Figure 77 - View Along Irishtown



Figure 78 - Mural by the High Steps with the Tholsel in the background



Figure 79 - View up Bridge Street

## 6.0 THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES

### Positive Elements

- Shaped by both nature and centuries of history, New Ross's dramatic riverine setting and steep topography is hugely significant as are views and glimpses along and through it
- The variety of surviving historic structures and heritage features of differing types and ages that both individually, but particularly as streetscapes, are reminders of New Ross's history and define and influence its character.
- Fine surviving historic buildings, some with surviving vernacular shopfronts, doors, fanlights and historic sash windows
- The vibrant vernacular colour palette where it exists
- Surviving historic urban morphology / street patterns
- Historic street furniture such post boxes, lamps, railings and granite plinths and surviving boundary walls / treatments, Ordnance Survey benchmark stones, milestones, stone bollards etc.



Figure 80 - View from the High Steps Towards the Barrow



Figure 81 - Sugar House Lane



Figure 82 - View from the Bridge towards the Town



Figure 83 - Conduit Lane



Figure 84 - Historic Shopfront: E.W. Levingstone & Co.



Figure 85 - Glimpse of spire of St. Mary & St Michael from The Quay



Figure 86 - View down Quay Street towards Bridge and Rosbercorn

## Detracting Elements

- As with all Irish towns and cities, creeping dereliction and vacancy are a problem that is evident within the New Ross. It is particularly evident in John Street area, Bullawn, Haughton Place, Priory Street/Cross Street, the corner of Mary Street and Bewley Street, where there are a large number of historic, sometimes Protected, structures lying vacant and in poor or very poor condition

\*Subsidence is evident in many historic buildings (dropping cills etc), particularly those located nearer the The Quay as they were built on marshy reclaimed land

- Where historic timber sash or casement windows have been replaced with uPVC etc which has a significant negative effect on the character of the building and streetscape. This is particularly evident along the principal historic arteries of the town – Priory Street, South Street, John Street, Quay Street, Bridge Street and The Quay
- Poor quality or inappropriate alterations or extensions to historic buildings. These include applying inappropriate renders, smoothing off historic features, ad hoc extensions are evident to the rear of many historic structures within the town

- The apparent overprovision of car parking dominates the narrow streets, detracts from the setting of the historic structures, heritage features and streetscapes and principal open spaces such as The Quay and the main churches
- Where cement rich mortar has been used to repoint brickwork or boundary walls;
- Where natural slate tiles have been replaced with cement or plastic
- The use of garish or inappropriately scaled plastic signage and lighting to historic shopfronts
- Where new development dominates the historic character and appearance of the finer grained historic buildings in terms of scale, height massing and materiality, or impacts negatively on views within or across the town.
- Where hard-standing replaces historic gardens or green open space
- The ad hoc variety of paving
- Where collectively too much street furniture detracts from the visual legibility of both individual, often protected, buildings and their settings and the historic streetscape collectively.



Figure 87 - Car parking on The Quay





Figure 88 - Car parking and poor quality design of the SuperValu detracts from the setting of The Quay



Figure 91 - Inappropriate uPVC windows, John Street



Figure 89 - Subsidence evident, The Quay



Figure 92 - Poor maintenance evident to structure to rear of YMCA, John Street



Figure 90 - Vegetative growth adjacent to inadequate rainwater goods

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

New Ross's location, topography, built and archaeological heritage, streetscapes and their settings combine to make it a place rich in character and charm and with it, great potential. Its heritage – both the more obvious and the quieter fabric that makes up its weft and weave - is currently underappreciated. The best places are those that celebrate and imaginatively reuse their historic buildings and integrate high quality new buildings and public spaces. New Ross's richest asset is its combination of natural, built and archaeological heritage and these are the foundations on which its future growth and regeneration should be based.

It is an aspiration of New Ross's Town Team to make it the Norman capital of Ireland. In terms of the surviving physical heritage of the town, the absence of strong Norman anchor, like a castle, to tie it to is, however, something of a weakness and would need to be compensated for by strengthening other elements such as the surviving ecclesiastical sites either side of the river, the vestiges of the town wall and gates. A greater appreciation and strengthening of this facet of the town's history might, however, be achieved by collaboration rather than competition with other places in the region synonymous with the Normans, like Kilkenny and Enniscorthy – to perhaps create a Norman triangle of sorts.

The town's port history is rich and should be made more of in terms of the narrative of the town and surviving edifices relating to that, such as the grain stores, be made more of. Despite sometimes having fallen out of use, harnessing the town's existing building stock could, with imagination and high design standards, even bold intervention, find new, viable and sustainable uses, not least for housing, heritage and cultural events, activities and shopping that in turn economic regeneration.

Aspects to be potentially considered in this regard include:

- The allocation of an adequate number of dedicated Conservation Officers to WCC to deal with the large case numbers to advise the owners of protected and historic structures re repair, adaptive reuse and available refurbishment grants.
- This in turn will permit the further provision of guidance on best conservation practice / appropriate works to Protected Structure and qualified builders / craftspeople to undertake them.
- Exploring the possibility of holding workshops on this and developing traditional building skills training in the town, perhaps in one of the former grain stores or industrial buildings.
- The appointment of a dedicated County Archaeologist.
- Further clarity on when *Vacancy* becomes *Dereliction*, as it appears there are more such buildings in the town than are on the list. Today's vacant buildings often become tomorrow's derelict buildings.
- Instituting a legal mechanism / greater enforcement to stop property owners from just sitting on historic / designated structures and letting them fall into decline or make changes that negatively affect the fabric or character and appearance of the ACA / streetscape.
- A number of dispensations with regard to Building Regs, Part B (Fire) and Part M (Access) exist with regard to historic structures. The Government has instituted

- some further exemptions for those who wish to convert certain commercial premises including: turning vacant areas above ground-floor premises and former pubs into residential units do not require planning permission for such works. The exemptions are in place until the end of 2025. A limit of nine residential units can be produced under an exempted development. Someone proposing to undertake works must give the relevant planning authority at least two weeks' notice of the proposed change of use of a premises and any related works.
- With a considered conservation approach, integrating a door, hallway and stairs into an existing (non-protected) historic town house with a shop is technically feasible. Such interventions should, however, be undertaken on a case by case basis based on understanding the history and relative significance of the structure and its fabric, with expert conservation advice.
  - Earlier this year, the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) held a series of site visits relating to retail-to-home conversion aimed at sharing knowledge among those who are bringing vacant properties back into use. This event was part of the New Life For Old Buildings project, which organised a series of site visits to renovation projects in Dun Laoghaire, Cloughjordan and Limerick City. Setting up public workshops for interested people in New Ross with people who have undertaken such projects, the Heritage Council and The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and a range of conservation experts, would be very beneficial and help inform what can be done and how.
  - Possible reform of leasehold system. It is not currently permitted to issue new 35 year leases so many that were such are running their course. Repeat leases are apparently problematic and can involve a protracted legal process. There are also repeated difficult cases over curtilage / contested boundaries.
  - Explore the greater appreciation of the more 'ordinary' heritage of the town. The surviving vernacular shopfronts, laneways and streetscapes of the town are integral parts of its character.
  - The alteration of the two ACA boundaries to form one contiguous ACA that also includes significant elements of streetscape / designated historic buildings not currently included within the boundary.
  - As currently framed in national and local policy, ACA's throughout Ireland currently serve more as objectives and guidance but have little weight when it comes to enforcement regarding inappropriate alterations or development that negatively affects their character and appearance, such as uPVC windows in historic / protected buildings, lack of maintenance and repair, inappropriate signage / shopfronts, street furniture, paving etc.
  - Explore the possibility of creating an exemplar street in the historic core where all of the above facets are done correctly.
  - Singular / consistent / recognisable heritage signage and bespoke architectural lighting throughout key sites and areas in the town, to include the historic Quay wall, the location of the former fortifications / citadel.
  - The story of the Port / quay walls / citadel currently appears quite absent. Further explore ways to celebrate and appreciate and tell the story of the town, such as the surviving historic quay walls and associated Port features. Does any historic dock machinery survive and could these be landmarks and / or sculptural features? How do we tell the story of the port and part of the walled town? Use the wealth of oral history that survives (such as Mary Dunphy's accounts collected by the National Folklore Commission).

- Explore the possibility of reinstating the historic Rope Walks (are these mapped?)
- Could a food / fish market / crafts fair be reinstated in the former *Shambles*?
- Leverage National Heritage Week and Open House weekend to nationally showcase the town's wealth of built, natural, tangible and intangible heritage.
- Explore the possibility of further planting, rewilding and rationalising street furniture to provide better settings for important heritage features, including removing some car parking / hard surfaces and providing natural soakage.
- Explore the possibility of the Ros Tapestry returning to New Ross from Kilkenny and the possibility of rehabilitating / making a virtue of the formerly world famous New Ross lace.
- Explore greater appreciation of twentieth century structures like the former cinema on South Street or former industrial structures like the former grain silo by the river. Could the latter be adaptively reused as something like a climbing wall to bring people into the town and provide teenagers with something to do? Could the mid-twentieth century water tower becoming a viewing point / platform with a bar? Could the cinema reopen and form something of a culture cluster with the theatre?
- Institute a better mechanism with the OPW regarding the care of the ruins of St Mary's. Recent rainfall has caused a large hole to open up in the grounds of the ruins and vandalism is commonplace.
- Exploring how Rosbercorn can be stitched back into the town and the reuse of the Dominican Friary there was an important site/building. Could a more architecturally /structurally playful new bridge be designed to make a better environment for pedestrians and bikes and serve as a visual focal point.
- Explore the possibility of adaptive reuse / rehabilitation of buildings such as;

the old Christian Brothers School, the former courthouse, St Joseph's Primary School and St. Michaels School. Could these be used to create artists studios and workshops or a gallery space. How can a critical cultural mass of artists and makers be encouraged or created such as in Thomastown or Kilkenny?

- Institute an arts festival.

# Appendix C.1

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