

STRENGTHS

- Built Heritage** Portumna is a traditional market town with well-preserved coherent streetscapes from the late 18th to late 19th centuries. The buildings are generally of a simple vernacular style with many traditional shop fronts and residences counterpointed by neo-classical architecture of public buildings. These features provide a high level of visual amenity. There are numerous Protected Structures in the town numerous buildings are of national or regional significance. The core of Portumna Town enjoys Architectural Conservation Area status.
- Historical Buildings** The town is adjacent to Portumna Castle and Portumna Friary. These are two of many visitor attractions that bring visitors to Portumna.
- Natural Heritage** Portumna benefits from its proximity to natural amenities of River Shannon, Lough Derg and Portumna Forest Park.
- Visitor Destination** Portumna is a growing tourism hub in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.
- Street Widths** Over much of the study area, the streets are sufficiently wide to accommodate widening of footpaths, street trees, street furniture, seating areas or dining areas.
- Topography** Portumna's level topography is very conducive to providing access for all.
- Amenity Provisions** The amenity area behind the library has a well-equipped playground, public toilets, the Yew Walk, outdoor gym, outdoor exhibition space, recycling area and car park.
- Tranquility** The majority of the project area is quiet and any noise arising from traffic, commercial activity and nightlife are all concentrated around the High Street, making it the vibrant centre of Portumna.



WEAKNESSES

- Pedestrian Crossing** There is only one controlled pedestrian crossing in the study area, at the St Patrick's Street end of St Brendan's Street. Additional pedestrian crossings will be needed to provide for pedestrian and disabled users.
- Car Parking** Although there is a car park on St Brendan Street, car parking in Portumna is generally parallel parking along footpaths. Currently priority has been given to cars over other road users and parked cars along footpaths are visually dominant and block views of buildings and shop fronts.
- Access for All** Disabled car parking spaces were found adjacent to the church, St Patrick St and St Brigid's Street. However, none were found on the High Street, St Brendan's Street.
- Outdoor Dining** Many of the existing restaurants are on the north facing side of St Brendan Street. In addition, the east-west orientation of the street has potential for wind tunnel effects with the prevailing south-westerly winds. These factors may limit the appeal for outdoor dining during times when wind speeds are greater than moderate.
- Soft Landscape** Significant trees or vegetation are limited to the south-west of the project area. The streetscape to the centre and east of the study area is nearly devoid of trees or other permanent soft landscape.
- Street Clutter** In some areas the over provision of street furniture such as litter bins, seating, flag poles, bus stop signage, and planters. An example of this poor space management is at the southern boundary of St. Brendans St car park. This may lead to hazards for able and disabled alike. The lack of coordinated design in street furniture detracts from the visual appearance of the town. In addition, the presence of utility poles and overhead lines has a negative visual impact and needs to be addressed.
- Wayfinding** The current wayfinding provision is geared primarily towards motorised traffic. Existing signage along the N65 within the study area is oversized with poor co-ordination
- Civic Space** There is a lack of public space in the town that acts as a focal point for people to enjoy and congregate.
- Amenity Area** The south-western amenity area is physically and visually cut off from other project areas as it is screened behind a row of buildings. The different elements within this space are not integrated into an overall design. Car parking area takes up a large part of this space.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Street Widths** Throughout most of Portumna, the street widths are sufficient to enable widening of footpaths for outdoor dining, seating areas and street planting. Particularly in Abbey St and Dominic St.
- Active Travel** Encourage more active travel by improving pedestrian and cyclist facilities, safety and accessibility around the town.
- Cycle Hub** A cycle hub could link into future greenway or other cycle infrastructure schemes.
- Traffic Calming** Creation of raised tables at junctions, narrowing trafficked lanes and provision of shared surfaces to limit traffic speeds and improve pedestrian welfare and experience by prioritising pedestrian safety.
- Civic Space** Expand the civic area to better facilitate functions and events by creating high quality, multi-functional spaces.
- Car Parking** Establish a clear and comprehensible approach to parking and loading within Portumna Town Centre. Where appropriate remove parking spaces to widen footpaths.
- Portumna Character** Preserve and enhance the existing character of the town centre and enhance the setting of key buildings.
- Sense of Arrival** Create a sense of arrival to the centre of Portumna, through enhanced and coordinated lighting, surface treatment and signage in keeping with the built heritage.
- Wayfinding** The wayfinding strategy should make visitors to Portumna aware of all the many amenities in and around Portumna and to better connect the town centre to the surrounding amenities. Opportunities to integrate wayfinding into the public realm fabric should be explored.
- Yew Walk** Investigate options of restoring the Yew Walk as the primary pedestrian approach to Portumna Castle.



- Outdoor Market** The car park on St Brendan's Street, could be redesigned to facilitate multifunctional uses such as a weekly market or other outdoor events. Successful examples from other towns around Ireland will be studied for reference.
- Amenity Area** Make stronger visual and physical connections to the amenity area in the south-west. Redesign the layout to facilitate separate access to the playground and other amenities while also unifying all the elements into one cohesive space and exploring all options for enhancing biodiversity.
- Castle Avenue** The design of this street should visually reflect it as the main approach to Portumna Castle. Introducing an inviting feature at the junction of the castle grounds, visible from the start of this avenue will draw visitors.
- Soft Landscape** Explore the opportunities to increase soft landscape in all parts of the project area to improve aesthetics through variations in colour, texture, and height, microclimate and biodiversity.
- Hard Landscape** New high-quality materials for footpaths, road crossings and shared surfaces in keeping with the built heritage of Portumna.



THREATS/CONSTRAINTS

Street Widths

The street widths at the Abbey Street end of St Patrick Street and along Shannon Road are insufficient to provide the minimum width for motorised traffic as well as footpaths on both sides of the street. A compromise will be needed such as provision of shared surfaces or footpaths provision on one side only. In the main commercial area, St Brendan's Street, the limited space between the buildings means that there is competition for space between road users, car parking, footpath users and businesses. The additional provision of street furniture and street planting needs careful consideration to accommodate all the demands on this space.

Gateways

The best location for 'gateways' to mark the arrival into Portumna Town may not be within the project boundary, but determined by the town extents as a whole, changes in speed limit or related to topography. The design should therefore create a sense of arrival to the centre of Portumna, through enhanced and coordinated lighting, surface treatment and signage.

Future Development

Other future planned developments may be a constraint through their own access and land take requirements or uncertainty of delivery.

Climate Change

Any design needs to consider future changing conditions, particularly in relation to flooding or prolonged patterns of drought.



This figure shows the available street width, in metres, that is in excess of the minimum width required. The minimum is the width required for two way traffic lanes plus footpaths on each side. Green and yellow colour coding indicate where additional width above the minimum is available to provide car parking, footpath widening, soft landscaping or street furniture. The orange colour coding indicates area where the minimum width is not available.