



Clifden Town Centre Enhancements Project Planning Report

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Prepared by LUC



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



An Ciste um Athghiniúint
agus Forbairt Tuaithe
Rural Regeneration and
Development Fund



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



TOBIN
CONSULTING ENGINEERS



Document control

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Chapter 1

Project Context



Introduction

Galway County Council has recently appointed a design team comprising LUC , TOBIN, MKO, ACP, Moloney Fox and the Moore Group to undertake a detailed public realm and enhancements project that will bring significant regeneration to the town of Clifden. This has been approved through a successful category 2 funding application through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) and includes the 3 key project areas of Clifden Town Centre, Clifden Harbour Park and Beach Quay Road. Although set out at three distinctive project areas the design work will be well-connected to Clifden as whole, and ensure future change is cohesive across the town, strengthening local character and heritage.

Clifden was also awarded Destination Towns funding from Failte Ireland for public realm interventions in the streetscape of the town centre in advance of the RRDF funding award. The Failte Ireland's Destination Towns scheme underpins its two strategic pillars; to spread tourism across a wider geography and creating a broader tourism season so businesses can remain open for longer.

Clifden is unique in many ways, not only for its location within County Galway as a coastal town on the Wild Atlantic Way, but also for its unique, rich heritage being one of the last towns to be built in Ireland founded by John D'Arcy in 1812. The design work will seek to respect the local landscape character and built heritage whilst driving meaningful positive change to Clifden that can better cope with future tourism and environmental demands. Development will seek to reinforce Clifden's position as the 'Capital of Connemara'.

The multi-disciplinary consultant team will be involved from the preliminary design stage through planning, detailed design and overseeing the construction and transformation on the ground.

Purpose of the Project

“ The redesign and upgrade of these areas will be transformational for the town of Clifden, the design should be appropriate in its context, take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the town and the way it functions.

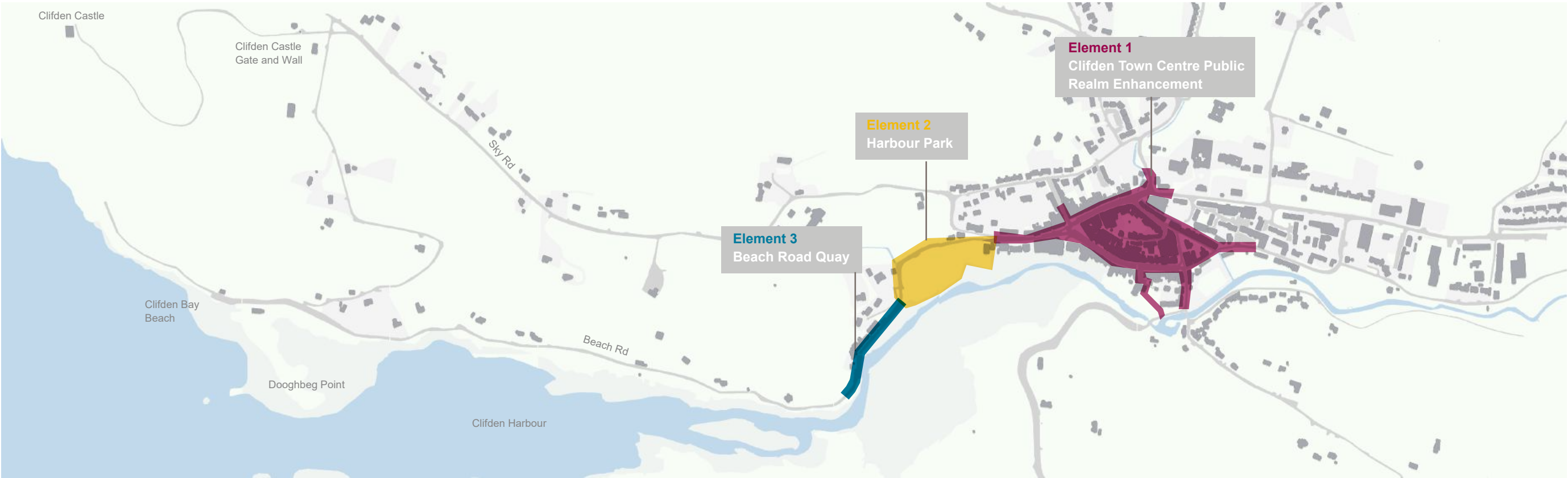
(Consultants Brief Feb 2021)

The report will set out our detailed understanding of Clifden, exploring site context, history and landscape character as well as exploring how the town currently performs with particular regard to connectivity, movement and the pedestrian experience of the built and natural environment. We will illustrate the towns key strengths and also identify areas of weakness where opportunities may existing for the design work to bring greater benefit to Clifden and reinforce its status as a 'Destination Town' both for local people and visitors. The analysis work will provide a robust evidence base for the future public realm proposals Only through a sound understanding of Clifden and an appreciation of its intrinsic values can well informed decisions be made about the towns future enhancements.

It is important that the change and growth of the town is achieved sustainably and in way that respects Clifden's rich built heritage and natural environment.



Study Area



Study Area

The project comprises 3 key project elements, the Town Centre, Harbour Park and Beach Road Quay each with varying needs and aspirations. The design team will however ensure these 3 individual elements are well connected and designed as a whole.

Element 1

Clifden Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement

The project will provide a comprehensive town centre enhancement with detailed design of the identified public realm, for the purpose of the scheme the town centre is divided into primary Street (Market Square, Market Street, Main Street) and secondary streets (Market Hill/Railway View, Hulk Street, Bridewell Lane, Ballyconneely Road). The works will be largely based within the Clifden Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

Public Realm Enhancement Objectives

- Improve the pedestrian experience and reduce the dominance of the motor vehicle in the town centre.
- Promote a sense of place and strong sense of character for Clifden Town Centre.

- Allow Market Square to become a user friendly destination and heart of the town centre.
- Improve the sense of arrival with high quality public realm interventions and gateway features.
- Reduce street clutter and improve the legibility of the urban realm with cohesive street furniture and signage.
- Improve the provision for street greening and contact with nature within the town centre.
- Create a safe and attractive 24 hour environment.
- Create high quality civic space within the town centre that can accommodate a range of events.
- Create spill out space for the many café's and restaurants in the town.
- Improve pedestrian crossing within the town generally.
- Rationalise car parking in the town centre.
- Reduce the amount of queuing traffic in peak summer months.

Element 2

Harbour Park

The project will re-design harbour park, in partnership with the Clifden and District Community Council and progress its development alongside the town centre enhancement

to present a consistent design across the two projects and deliver a town centre park that meets the needs of the local community as well as visitors to the town.

Objectives

- Creation of a new vibrant public park, consisting of hard and soft landscaped areas, tree planting, furniture and lighting that is in-keeping with local character and well connected to the town centre.
- Improve the opportunities for contact with nature and the biodiversity value of this existing greenspace.
- Create opportunities for long distance views particularly overlooking Clifden Bay.
- Create opportunities that appeal to all sections of the local community and ensure this is a greenspace that can be enjoyed by all.
- Ensure the park is resilient to flooding and climate change.
- Create a park that is fully accessible including provision of parking for less able users.

Element 3

Beach Road Quay

This project plans to re-design the public realm along the Quayside creating a high-quality designed public area, with public seating, upgraded paving and soft landscaping. The proposals will create greater connection from the town to its maritime heritage, including improved linkage from the town to the beach.

Objectives

- To create high quality public realm with improved pedestrian access.
- To ensure there is high quality street furniture that is consistent with the rest of the town centre.
- Create lighting solutions that presents a safe and attractive night-time waterside environment.
- Enhanced signage and wayfinding and interpretation.
- To enhance the setting of historic buildings along the quayside.
- Create a continuous quayside walkway adjacent to the seawall.
- Maintain access/ mooring points for boats.

Planning Context

Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)

The town of Clifden benefits not only from a national and regional planning policy context, but also from local planning policy context in the form of the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028) as follows:

Chapter 4: Rural Living and Development, seeks to support the role of rural areas in maintaining a stable population base through a strong network of villages and small towns and strengthening rural communities by supporting a resilient rural economy and the sustainable management of land and resources. Galway County Council therefore ensures that developments in rural areas are provided in accordance with the following strategic aims:

- To harness a pride of place among rural communities and to assist rural communities to promote their cultural and natural resources;
- To reinforce the vitality and future of rural villages and the open countryside and to recognise the roles that they play in the wider social and economic context;
- To encourage and support the social and economic development of rural parts of the County;
- To support local rural economies and facilitate the diversification of local rural enterprises;
- To maintain and support into the future the County's rural/coastal communities including the traditional family farm;
- To help foster 'green growth/management practices' (including food security, quality and diversity) in primary food production methods within the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors within the County;
- To support and promote the sustainable social and economic development of rural areas;
- To protect and enhance the visual qualities of rural areas through the sensitive design of associated development

Chapter 3: Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living, states that Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in relation to placemaking in our towns and villages. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To promote town and village centre living in a high-quality environment with good connectivity and access to local services;
- To reinforce the vitality and future of urban and rural settlements and recognise the role that they play in a wider social and economic context;

- To facilitate town and village centre public realm improvement works, regeneration and infrastructure upgrades as deemed appropriate;
- To ensure the delivery of good quality public open space of varying scales for use by inhabitants and visitors;

Chapter 8: Tourism and Landscape, promotes sustainable tourism as a core economic activity, by investment in infrastructure, attractions, outdoor activity facilities; festivals and events across the county as well as supporting the development of appropriate visitor infrastructure such as facilities; accommodation; and outdoor recreation and trails; and by enhancing the public realm and increasing attractiveness of urban and rural settings

Within the Development Plan, Clifden is classified as a "Small Growth Town" and Volume 2: Small Growth Towns, identifies specific policy and objectives that relate to Clifden.

Policy CSGT 1 Sustainable Town Centre, seeks to "Promote the development of Clifden, as an intensive, high quality, well landscaped, humanscaled and accessible environment, with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors. The town centre and associated main street shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity within these plan areas".

Policy CSGT 5 Tourism Development seeks to

- Promote and facilitate the further development of Clifden as a key tourist destination for the benefit of the town and its surrounding areas.
- To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies and landowners, the provision of tourism amenity routes around the town.
- Encourage and assist the development of the sustainable tourism potential within Clifden in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built, architectural, archaeological and heritage significance of the town including natural heritage and biodiversity, and its local amenities

As set out in the National Planning Framework for Ireland 2040 (NPF), there are a number of National Policy Objectives (NPOs) which are supportive of the enhancement and investment into rural Irish towns, especially those along the West Coast. NPO 17 and 18 support the growth and enhancement of culture and heritage of towns such as Clifden. Further, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region Assembly also supports the improvement and enhancement of rural towns and key tourism destinations in the region.

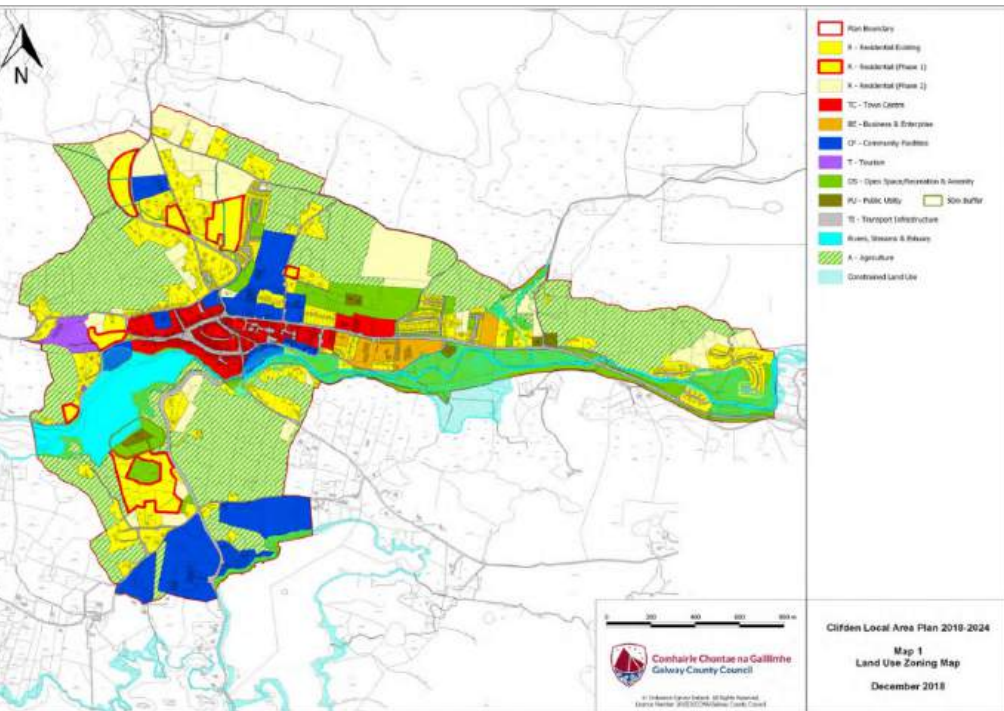


Figure 1: Clifden Zoning Map. Source: Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)

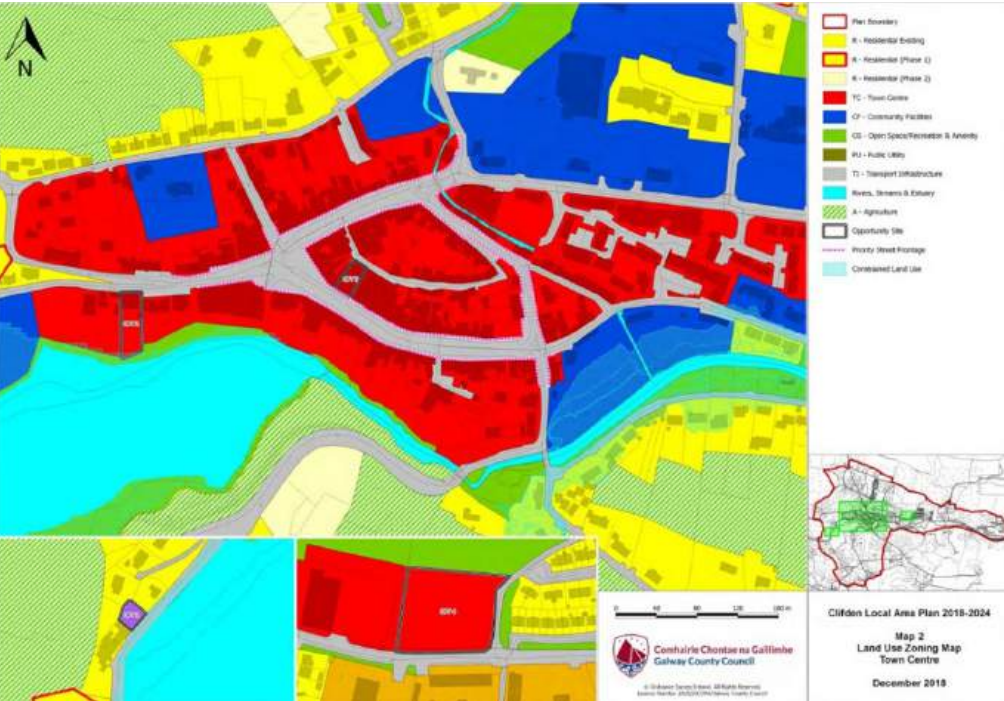


Figure 2: Clifden Town Centre Zoning Map. Source: Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)

Strategic Context

West Coast

Clifden is a coastal town in County Galway,Western Ireland. It is the largest town in the region of Connemara, West Galway, with a population of 2,609. It is the main town in Connemara and often referred to as the 'Capital of Connemara'.

Clifden is situated on The Wild Atlantic Way tourism route on the west coast of Ireland. The 2,500 km driving route passes through nine counties stretching from County Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula to Kinsale, County Cork on the Celtic Sea coast.

East Coast

Moving eastwards inland, Westport and Galway are linked to Clifden, via the N59. Galway City, the largest city in Galway County, is located just over 77km southeast of Clifden. Galway acts as a travel gateway connecting Clifden to south and east Ireland including Dublin. The distance between Dublin and Clifden is 157 miles, the most direct route eastbound on the M6 from Galway.

Westport is the next largest populated town, 66 km north of Clifden with 6,200 people. Westport railway station is also strategically important, connecting Clifden to the wider Irish Rail Network,and the north easterly towns of Ballina and Claremorris.



Regional Context

County Galway

Clifden is the furthestmost coastal town along the western coast of County Galway and is situated west of Loughs Corrib and Mask. County Galway is on Ireland's western seaboard. Its eastern areas feature rolling farmland plains. To the west are the raised bog, heathered hills, lakes and mountains of Connemara. The Twelve Bens mountain range are mostly sharp-peaked quartzite summits and ridges crossed by trails. Connemara National Park has prehistoric megalithic tombs. The park shelters a herd of Connemara ponies, as well as rich birdlife.

The county includes a number of inhabited islands, such as the Aran Islands (Irish:Oileáin Árann) and Inishbofin (Inis Bó). It shares its northern boarder with County Mayo, its eastern boarder with County Roscommon and Offaly, and southern boarder with County Clare and Tipperary.

County Galway is home to the largest Gaeltacht Irish-speaking region in Ireland. There are over 48,000 people living within this region, which extends from Galway city westwards through Connemara.

Lough Corrib borders West Galway, creating a physical barrier between the west and east county regions. The River Corrib or Galway River connects the lake to the sea at Galway City. It is the largest lake within the Republic of Ireland and the second largest on the island of Ireland.

Galway City

The county capital, Galway City, is known for its traditional music venues and has several theatres, including the world-renowned Druid Theatre and An Taibhdhearc, Ireland's first Gaelic theatre. The city also hosts the annual Galway Arts Festival and oyster and horse-racing festivals. During the late 20th century Galway was among the fastest-growing cities in Europe. Pop. (2006) 72,414; (2011) 75,529.



Image of Galway City



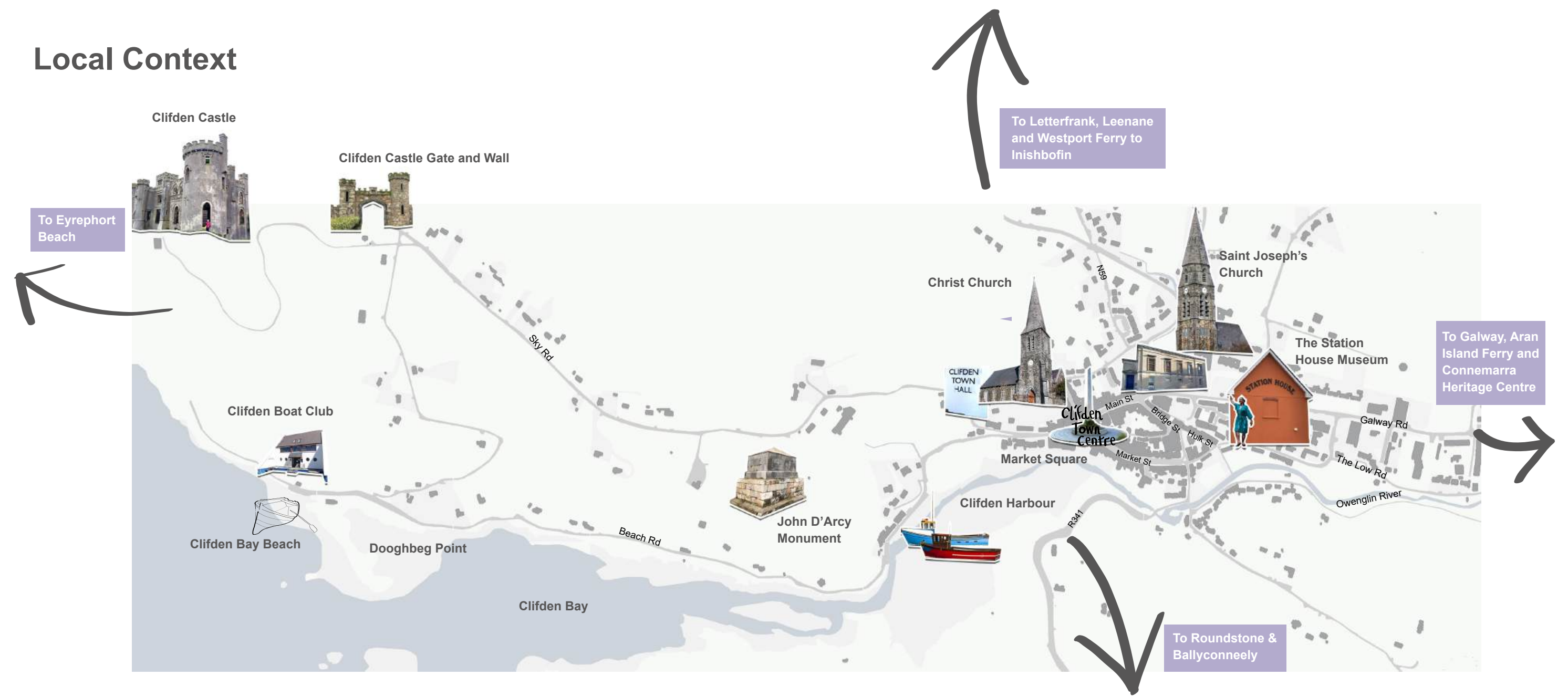
Image of Arran Islands



Image of The Twelve Bens

- Key Centres of Population
- Main Town Centre
- Study Area
- Main Transport Routes
- Wild Atlantic Way

Local Context



Clifden Introduction

Clifden is the largest town in the Irish speaking region of Connemara , referred to as a "savage beauty" by Irish writer Oscar Wilde. Clifden is nestled between the Twelve Bens mountain range and the Atlantic Ocean. The town is located on the Owenglin River, where it flows into Clifden Bay.

Walks, local monuments and places of interest

Sky Road

Sky Road is a popular tourist route that starts and ends in Clifden. From Clifden the road heads west to a junction between Lower Sky Road and Upper Sky Road. The upper path gradually rises and at the highest point you reach a vantage point with views over Clifden Bay and the offshore islands in the Atlantic Ocean.

Clifden Castle

Clifden Castle, is a ruined manor house west of the town of Clifden, built c. 1818 for John D'Arcy, the local landowner and founder of Clifden Town 1812. It is built in the Gothic Revival style. Uninhabited after 1894 it fell into disrepair. In 1935, ownership passed to a group of tenants, and it quickly became a ruin. The ruins of Clifden Castle are surrounded by lush green hills above Clifden Bay. Upper Sky Road leads to the Castle Gate, and onto a meadow-lined path, past ancient standing stones, through to the Castle.

John Darcey Monument

The best view over Clifden town can be enjoyed on the hill where the John D'Arcy monument is located and commemorates his life. (1785-1839)

The Boat Club, Beach Road.

Clifden Boat Club is a small Club situated on Beach Road near Clifden Bay Beach just 1.6km outside Clifden town Centre. One highlight, in recent years, was 2007 when Clifden hosted the WIOA West Coast Championships for the first time. The club also hold an annual sailing Regatta.

The Station House Museum

Once a small Port, Clifden was the terminus of a light railway, the Galway to Clifden railway line, in operation from 1895 to 1935 which included a stop on the Ballynahinch Castle estate.

The Station House Museum is located on the site of the old Clifden Railway Station and provides visitors with a history of Clifden and its founder John D'Arcy, the Connemara Pony, Millars Mill and Alcock and Brown (first transatlantic flight).

Clifden Harbour and the Quay Hotel

Clifden's oldest building built in 1820, is now an elegant seasonal hotel called The Quay Hotel overlooking the harbour, a 7-minute walk from the restaurants and shops in the town centre.

Alcock and Brown Statue

Alcock and Brown have a well known association with Clifden which is where the pair grounded the first transatlantic flight in 1919. The pair and their association with Clifden is that of a landmark moment in aviation history. In commemoration of this there has recently been a permanent Alcock and Brown Sculpture unveiled in the market square which celebrates the feat and Clifden's place in history.



Chapter 2

Baseline Analysis



Clifden Town Centre



Historical Background



Clifden was founded in 1812 by John D'Arcy. Clifdens development was unique in that it was entirely a planned town. It developed from D'Arcy's 20,00 acre estate which was occupied by fisherman and mountain farmers. The towns development centred on D'Arcy's vision for a thriving commercial centre and also using its natural resources such as power from the Owenglin River. With the introduction of new roads, piers and harbours Clifden had encouraged new visitors, employment and prosperity. By the 1830s this was a booming market town as pictured (left), providing a strong income for John D'Arcy. This was however short lived as Clifden and Connemara were struck by the great famine which halted the rapid development of the town. Subsequently the commercial development slowed as the population was reduced as people emigrated to other areas for greater opportunity during the 1880's. Image to the right showing the empty street along Main Street.



Following the great famine and emigration of people from Clifden in the 1880s, the 1890s saw the introduction of the Galway to Clifden railway. A 50 miles stretch of railway, funded by the government set to rejuvenate the area and develop the tourism industry. The line, which opened in 1895 ran through some of the poorest lands oppose to the well populated, richer coastline where the prospect of maritime trade was far easier. This ultimately led to the decline of the railway line which became commercially unviable and was closed in 1935. It still stands as a key feature in Clifden's past and major landmark in its development following the great famine.

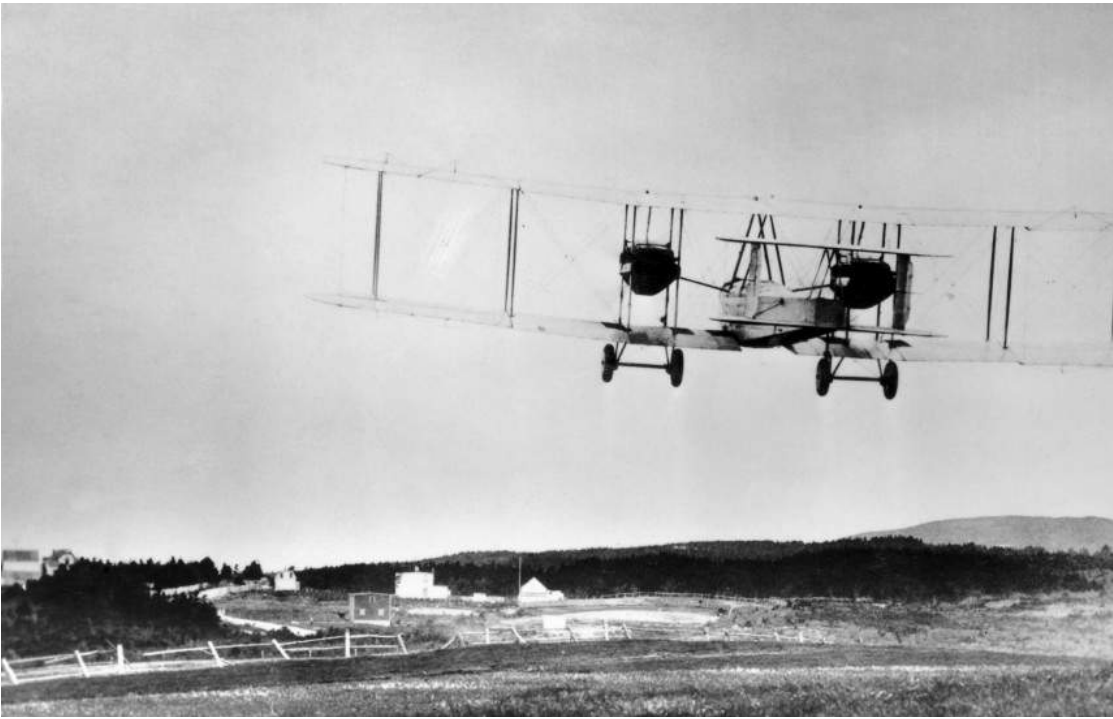


Key Historical Events



1907 - First Wireless Message

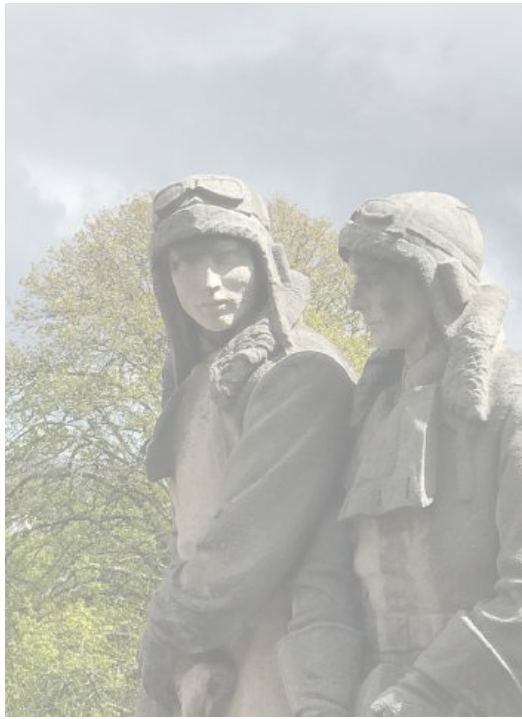
On October 17th the first commercial transatlantic wireless message was transmitted from the Marconi Wireless Station, Clifden. This was a landmark moment in Clifdens history and in the development of modern day wireless communication. Clifden was sighted as the location largely down to its location on the west coast of Ireland but also due to the expansive bog grounds and water supply that could be utilised for power on site. Only the concrete anchor blocks remain today at the site of the wireless station. The landmark event remains today as key part of Clifden's proud and celebrated heritage.



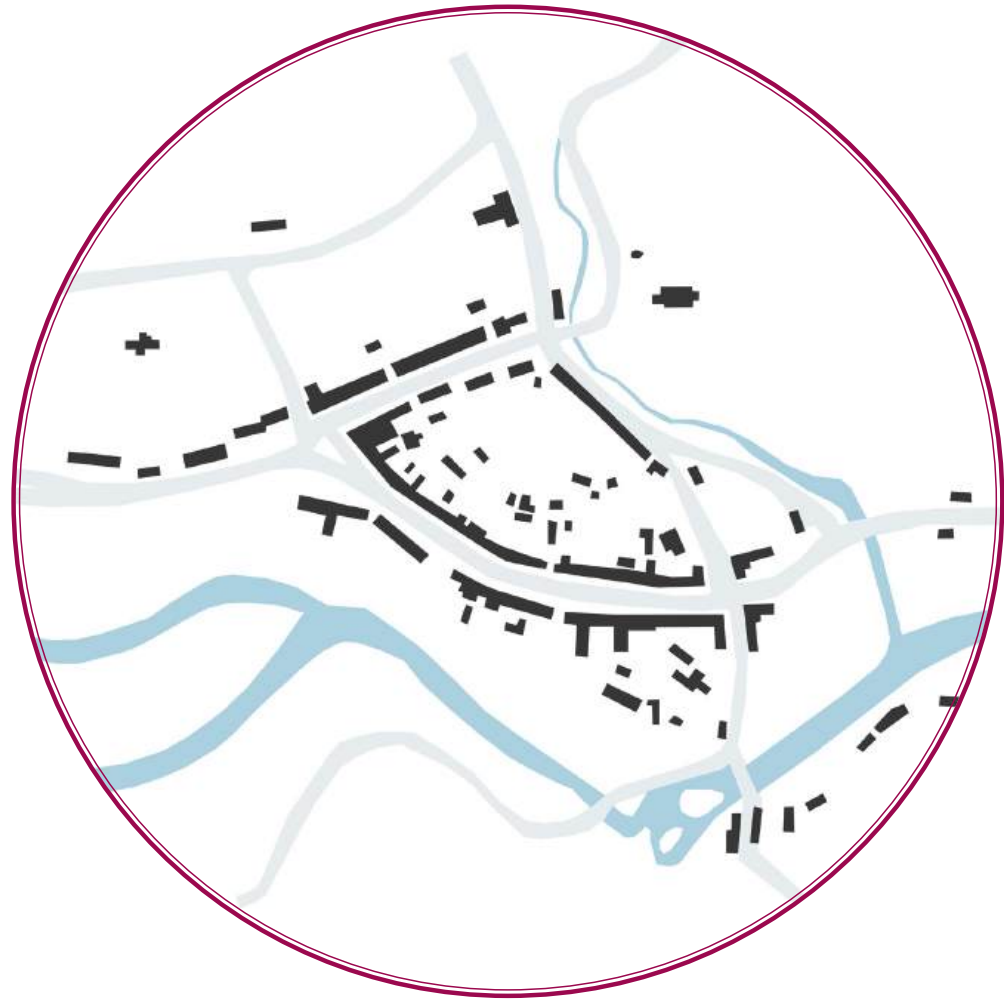
1919 - First Transatlantic Flight

Putting Clifden on the world stage as the first non-stop transatlantic flight from Canada, arriving at Clifden on 15th June 1919. The Marconi discovery and wirelss messages were of great influence to this landmark event. The flight is thought to have selected Clifden as the destination grounds as the news could have been quickly transmitted to London via the Clifden Marconi Wireless Station. The flight being a competition meant it would have been a race to the finish line and Clifden presented to quickest ground of communication to claim the £10,000 prize money.

The feat is celebrated throughout Clifden and recently in a Alcock & Brown statue within the market square.



Urban Grain and Historic Development



The south developed with industrial use where there was a brewery, distillery and mill on the banks of the Owenglin River. Clifden would have been reliant early on its transport network, piers and harbours, particularly linking to Galway given its remote setting on west coast. The development was very much focussed around 3 main streets that supported movement around the town centre, these were Main Street, Market Street and Bridge Street. There was also a rapid development in the 1820s where 46 houses rose to 290 in just a decade and Clifden was a rapidly growing and thriving market town. Development centred on these main transport links and began to shape around the river and utilising the natural topography. In its early development the churches would have dominated the skyline to the north and these are still prominent features today.



Clifden was hit by the great famine from the 1840-50s and following this there was a decline in the commercial prosperity of the town, its rapid growth was halted as people moved out of the area. The opening of the Galway to Clifden railway line in 1895 improved the economy of the town aiding the developing of the agriculture and fishing industries. This also helped to establish Connemara as a tourist destination that it is now famous for. The railway ceased operation in 1935 and since the development has been heavily reliant on tourism. Today Clifden has a tight, dense urban grain, particularly around its main roads. This modern day high density development creates a compact settlement pattern. The town turned its back on the sea, and harbour rather than embracing it. This is evident now with many views of the sea not available from within the town. Development does quite quickly become linear and scattered as you move away from the urban core.

Urban Grain and Historic Development

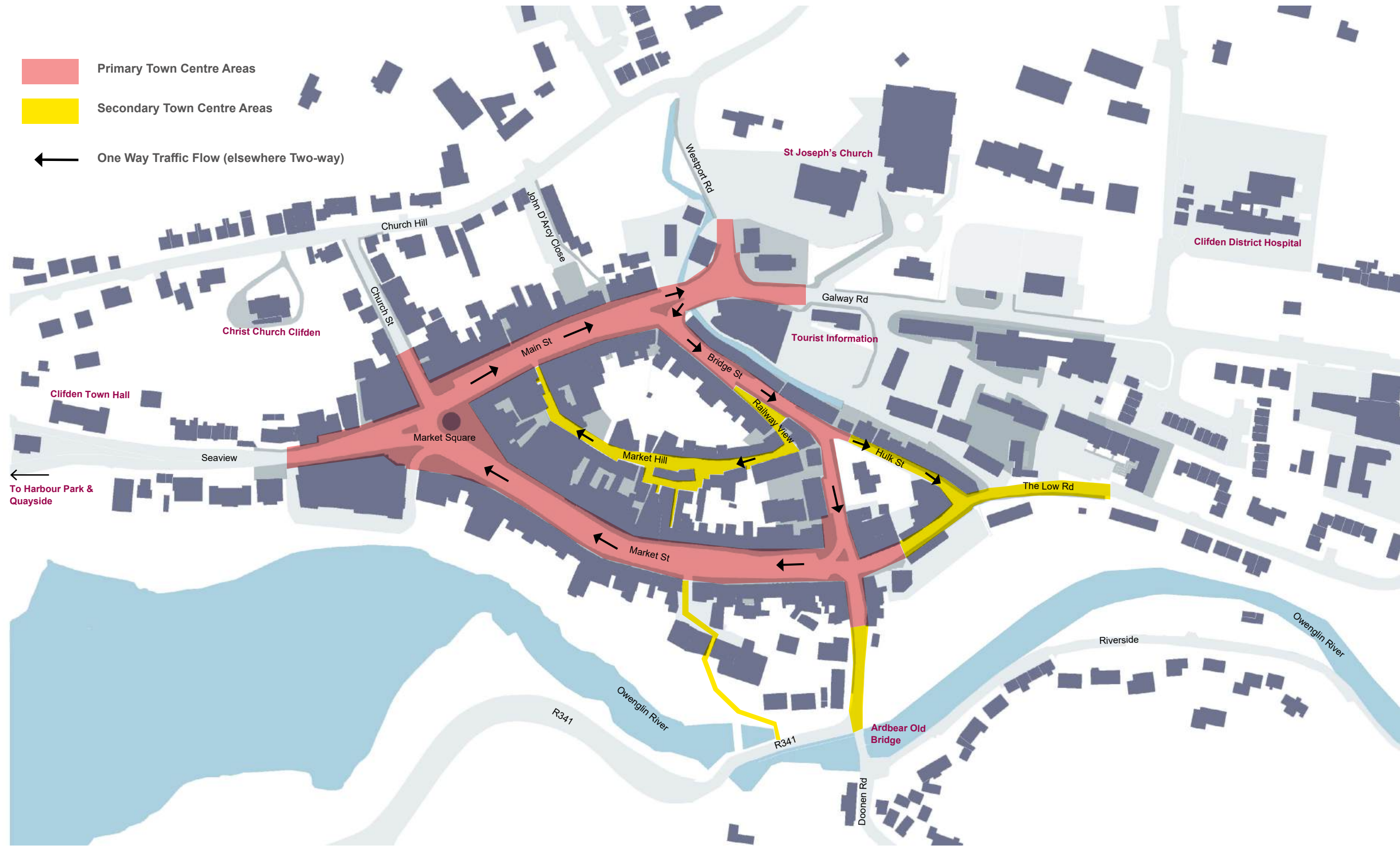


19th Century view of Clifden from the hilltop where the John D'Arcy Monument is currently located. The image shows the early development of Clifden's key roads and central urban core.



Present day view overlooking Clifden from the hilltop where the D'Arcy Monument is currently located. The image shows the urbanisation and expanse of the urban core along the key vehicular routes. Key here is that the development has occurred along immediate coastline / bay most likely due to topography.

Town Centre Study Area



Urban Design Site Analysis

Clifden has a distinctive setting and topography which is very much part of its identity. It contains a number of key buildings, most notably the church spires of Saint Joseph's Church and Christ Church which act as key visual landmarks and a point of orientation across the town. The market square is at the heart of the town and this is where the main pedestrian and vehicular routes converge at a key nodal point.

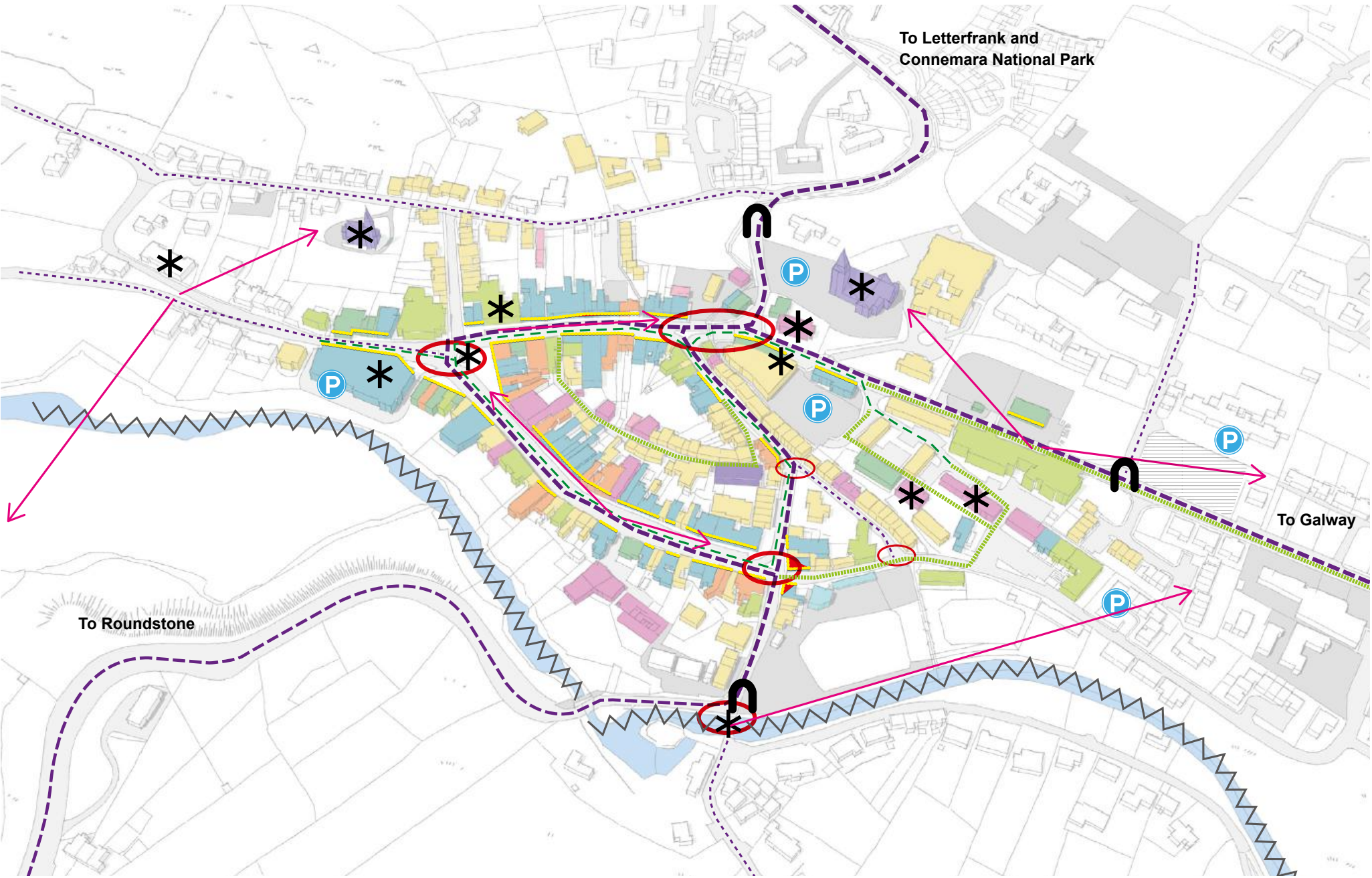
Saint Joseph's Church and Christ Church are often distinctive reference points in key views and vistas from within the town. Visually Clifden is well connected to its surroundings with long distance views possible out to the east capturing the Twelve Ben's mountain range and to the southwest overlooking Clifden Bay.

On-street / echelon parking features heavily throughout Clifden Town Centre with bays marked along both sides of Market Street and Main Street. As a result the presence of motor vehicles currently dominate the streetscape and contributes significantly to visual clutter, noise / air pollution whilst also creating barriers to pedestrian movement. Elsewhere there are car parks at the superval supermarket, St Joseph's Church and adjacent to the tourist information office.

Street level planting in Clifden is largely limited to raised planters and there is some disconnect here to the rural setting.

Key area that require attention include:

- Poor sense of arrival at gateway locations
- Poor connectivity between the town centre and key destinations such as former railway station area.
- Poor quality public realm generally
- Narrow footways and lack of civic space generally in the town centre
- Disconnect between the town and the coastline including the Quayside, Harbour Park and Beach Road
- Underused land to the south of the Low Road
- Poor pedestrian/cycle connectivity directly into the town centre from the R341
- Lack of space for the Alcock and Brown sculpture
- Lack of spill out space for restaurants and café's

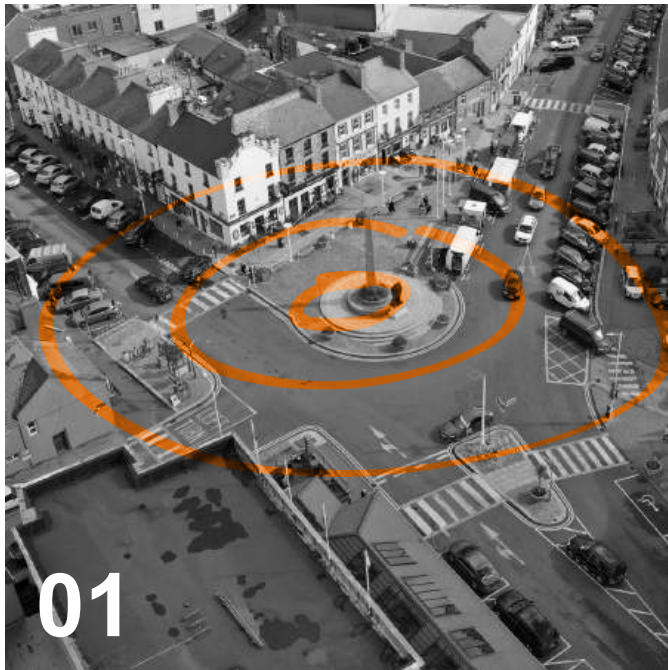


Landuse

- Residential
- Retail
- Food/Drink
- Services
- Religion
- Cultural
- Accommodation



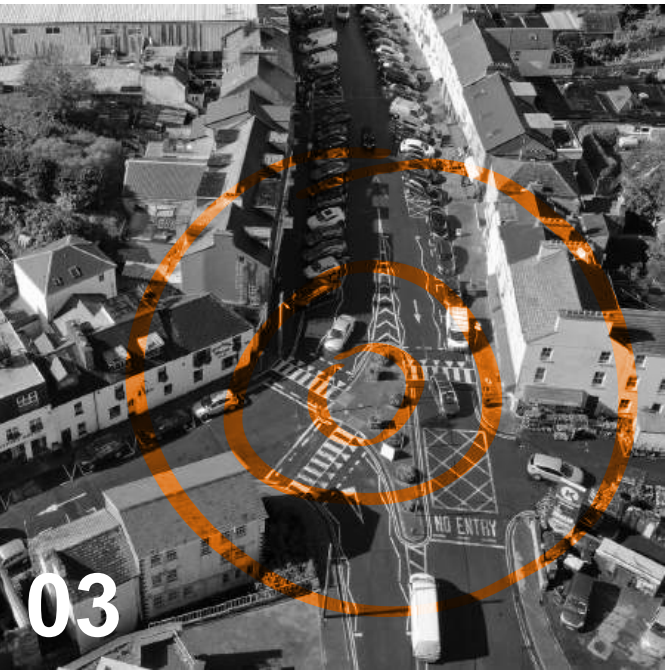
Nodes



The Market Square acts a major nodal point where 4 key transport links converge and creates a major point of arrival and orientation



A key nodal point where Market Street and Bridge Street converge



A major junction where Main Street, Bridge Street, Galway Road and Westport Road converge. This is a key nodal point on the arrival into Clifden from the east along Galway Road.



Ardbear Old Bridge marks a key nodal point into Clifden from the south where secondary access routes converge and there is a threshold crossing into the town centre over the Owenglin River.



Edges and Barriers to Movement



Main Street acts as a major vehicular route through Clifden Town Centre with echelon parking on both sides of the street. The dominance of the motor vehicle and lack of crossing points create a major barrier to pedestrian movement.



Owenglin River creates a barrier to movement with a limited number of crossing points



Barriers and changes in gradient creates barrier to access



High walled boundaries between building plots create barrier to movement in various locations across the Town Centre.

Gateway Locations



Gateway into Clifden Town Centre along Galway Road. The spire of Saint Joseph's Church is the first visually mark of arrival.



Gateway into Clifden from the north from Westport Road



Gateway from the south along Doonen Road crossing Ardabear bridge.

Key Routes



View towards Main Street



View along Galway Road, the main transport link connecting Clifden to Galway



View along Market Street



View looking along Bridge Street

Landuse

Key findings from the landuse study

- Retail is focussed along Main Street and Market Street
- Food and Drink are located predominantly along Market Street and southern side of Main Street.
- There are a number of vacant buildings occupying prominent locations in the town centre such as former Superval building
- Majority of residential uses are located within the Market Hill area or along Bridge Street and Hulk Street
- Cultural uses including theatre and museum are located in a single location on the former railway station site.
- Majority of retail use of located in the immediate town centre along Market street and Main Street

Key

- Residential
- Retail
- Food/drink
- Services
- Religion
- Cultural
- Accommodation
- Sports and recreation
- Green infrastructure
- Blue infrastructure
- Road (asphalt)
- Concrete paving
- Vacant buildings/plots
- Private garage/shed
- Gravel
- Granite monument
- Granite setts



Food / Drink

- 1 Basmati
- 2 EJ Kings
- 3 Guys bar
- 4 The Blooming Gorse cafe
- 5 Upstairs Downstairs cafe
- 6 Mcgarths Bar
- 7 Darcy twelve
- 8 Mitchell's
- 9 Lowry's whiskey bar
- 10 Mannion's bar
- 11 Jasmine Garden / Walsh's Bakery
- 12 The Connemara hamper
- 13 Vaughan's Pub

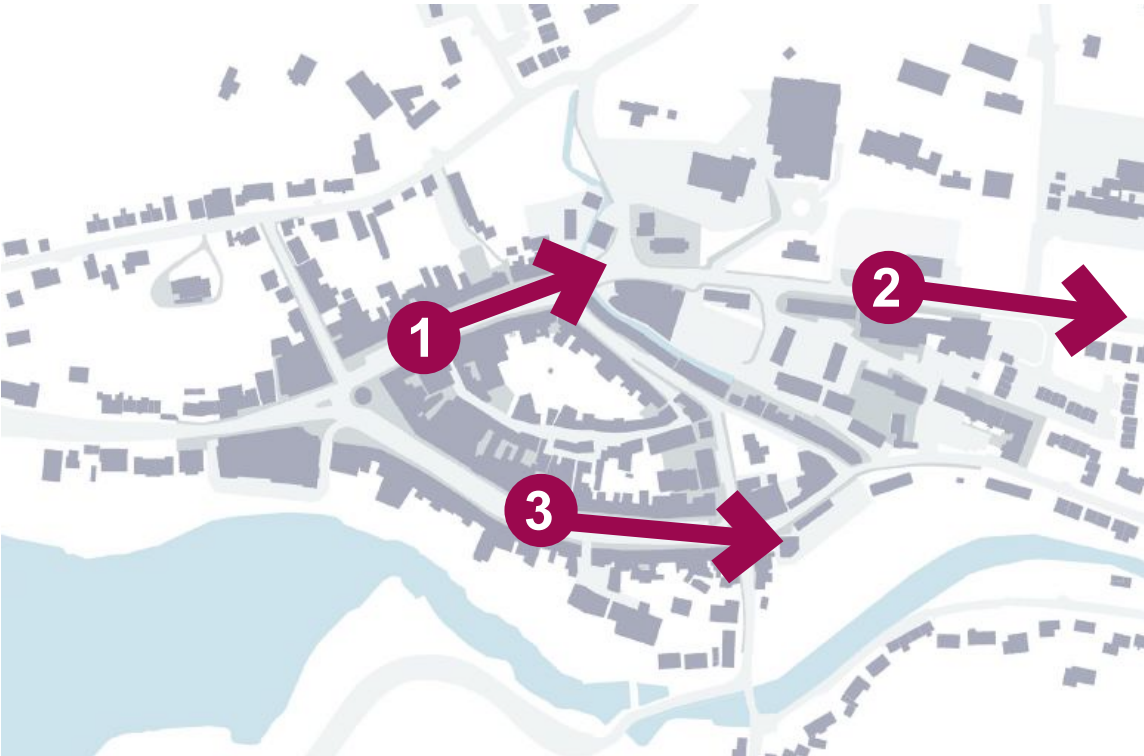
Retail

- A SuperValu
- B Gannon Sports
- C O'Daigh Jewellers
- D Viviana / King's Paper & Gift Shop
- E Connemara Florist
- F Lavelle Gallery / Whitethorn Gallery
- G Aran Islands Knitwear
- H Gannon Sports
- I O'Daigh Jewellers
- J Viviana / King's Paper & Gift Shop
- K Whistlestop / Lowry's / Vincent's / Derval Joyce / Market 57 / Connemara Horse and Country
- L Aran Woollen Store / Love Vintage / Patricia O Toole / Barbers
- M Stanley & Sons
- N Quinn's / Keanes Computer Services
- O The Clifden Bookshop
- P Connemara Blue
- Q Millars
- R Schely Electrical

Accommodation

- i Blue Quay Rooms
- ii Alcock & Brown
- iii Foyles
- iv The Central B&B / Tom Barry House
- v Ben View B&B
- vi Waterfall Lodge B&B
- vii Station House
- viii Dun Ri Guest House
- ix Atlantic Coast
- x Brookside Hostel
- xi White Weather House B&B

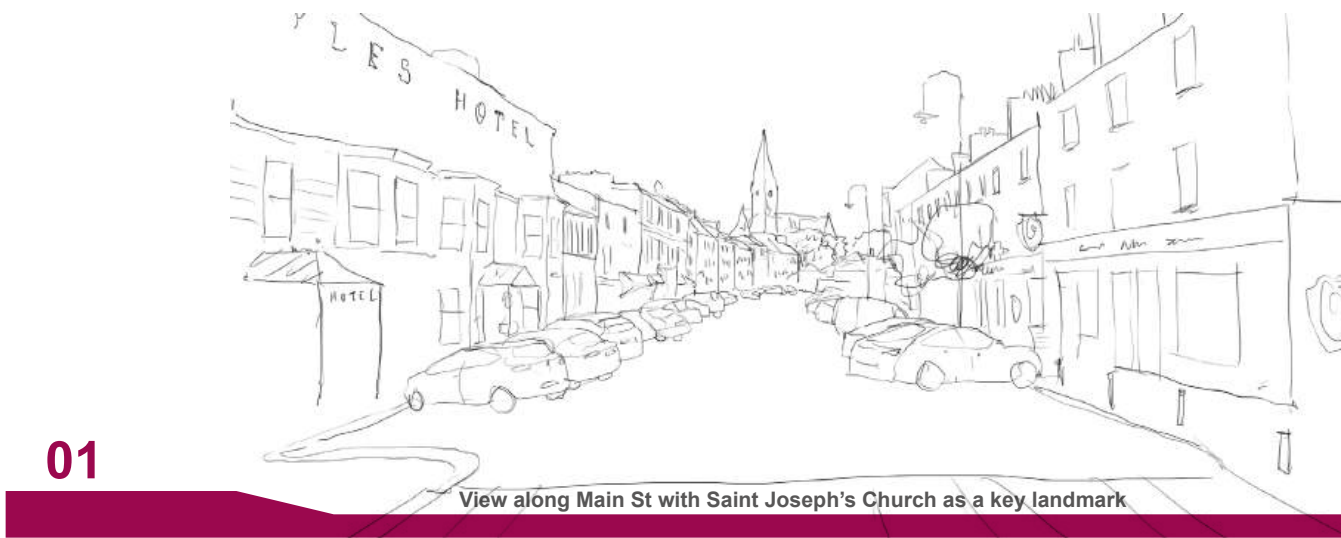
Key Views and Vistas



Visual Analysis

The Market Square is a key point of visual orientation and would be viewed as the centre of Clifden with a well contained civic space. This is the point at which 4 key transport link converge and where vistas along these routes link to local landmarks such as Spires of Saint Joseph's Church and Christ Church as well as and to the local landscape, out to the mountains within the Connemara National Park. This is a distinctive aspect to the visual experience in and around Clifden. Parts feel well contained with linear housing on both sides of the street yet sections open up to afford a strong connection to the surrounding landscape.

Although much of Clifden Town Centre is visually well connected there are areas where this weakens, particularly to the south where the connection to the river and coastal environment is limited to close range views. The town centre feels visually quite separate from the river and coastline with no views possible from the main access routes until existing the centre to the west along Seaview Road. Other key destinations / attractions such as the Station House are somewhat concealed from view and as a result have a poor visual connection from in and around the town centre impacting visitor numbers.



Landmarks and Destinations

There are a number of landmark buildings or structures that assist with legibility and wayfinding and as such are helpful to visitors navigating their way around the town.

Key visually prominent landmarks include St Josephs Church, Christ Church and the sculpture in the Market Square. The 2 church spires are visible from most locations in the town centre.

There are however few key landmarks in the immediate town centre and as a result some wayfinding would be helpful particularly for people visiting the town. Establishing a link between the historic town centre and other key parts of the town such as the stadium museum area and quayside will be particularly important.



Saint Joseph's Church



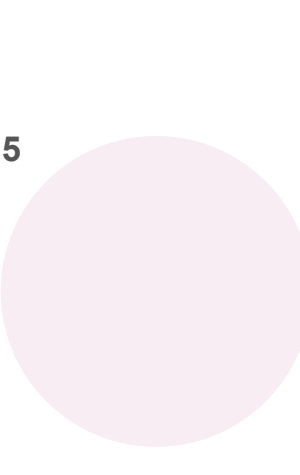
Clifden Former Train Station



The Station House Museum



Ardber Old Bridge



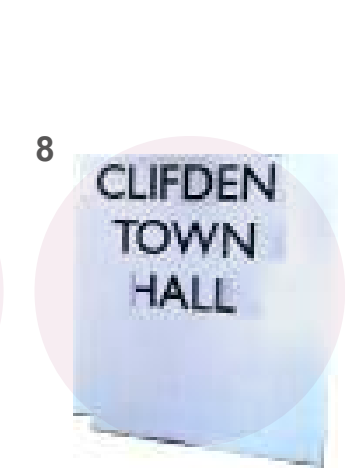
Alcock & Brown Sculpture
CHANGE IMAGE TO NEW SCULPTURE



Foyles Hotel



Christ Church Clifden



Clifden Town Hall

Architectural Heritage

The built and cultural heritage in Clifden contribute to its character and local distinctiveness. The built heritage includes both architectural and archaeological heritage and Clifden has a number of elements of both, that form part of the history and character of the Town. The preservation of this rich architectural and cultural heritage is fundamental to the retention of the distinctiveness of the Town.

The town of Clifden is one of the last towns to be built in Ireland, it was laid out and built over a 30 year period. It follows the classic nineteenth century layout. The town follows an oval plan, with three principal streets– Market Street, Main Street and Bridge Street with a Market Square.

The Council is committed to the protection and enhancement of this heritage through the measures contained in planning legislation, through the implementation of appropriate conservation led policies, as well as sensitive land use objectives, urban design principles and development standards, which will significantly enhance the architectural setting of Clifden.

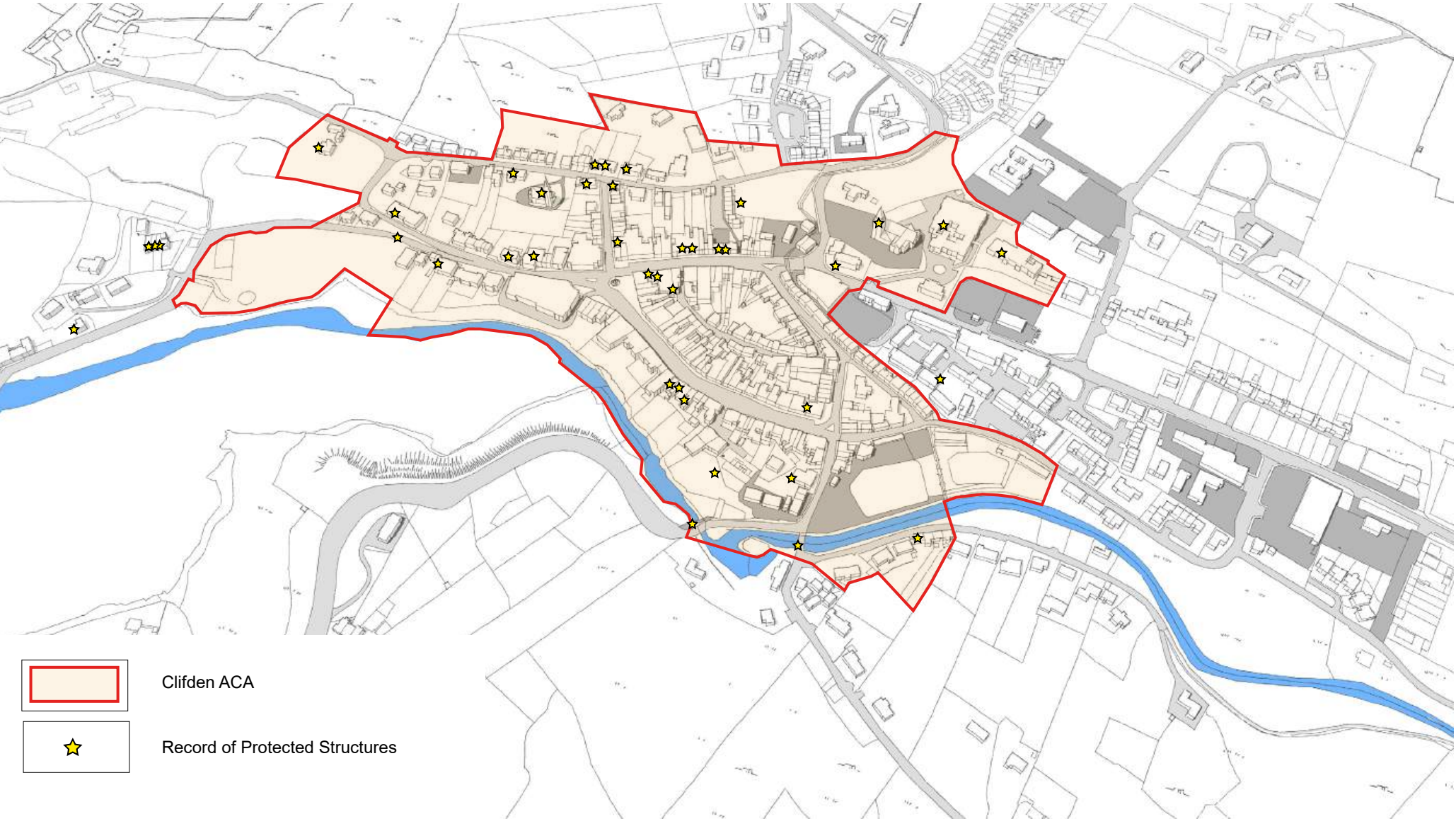
There are a number of protected structures located within the Clifden Plan area, examples include the Court House, Christ Church and St. Joseph's Church. Planning permission must be obtained before significant works which would materially alter the character of a protected structure can be carried out.

An Architectural Conservation Area is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

Planning permission must be obtained before significant works, which might alter the character of a structure or/ the Architectural Conservation Area, can be carried out to the exterior

Clifden has a designated Architectural Conservation Area and its significance lies in its historical origins, period of development, planned layout, building style, picturesque townscape and architectural coherence. The majority of its buildings span the mid 19th century and share many characteristics. Clifden was planned in a coherent manner throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, it remains today a town of strong historical character, retaining many of its original buildings and functions. A large portion are in simple vernacular style, arranged around a central core, along two wide roads which focus on Market Square. Clifden contains a number of buildings of national or regional significance. The town has long been a tourism destination, but is vulnerable to excessive or insensitive development and/or alteration.

The town of Clifden follows the classic nineteenth century layout with an oval plan and three principal streets– Market Street, Main Street and Bridge Street with a Market Square. The streetscape contains several buildings and sites in Clifden town that are included on the Record of Protected Structures, examples include the Court House (RPS No. 591), Christ Church (RPS No. 585) and St. Joseph's Church (RPS No. 590)



Example of protected structures within Clifden's ACA

Architectural Heritage

RPS Ref	NIAH Ref	Description	Significance
582	30325016	Derelict 3 bay 4 storey warehouse with coursed rubble facade, central loft door opes, small window opes and pediment, c1830. Set on quay side. X:65337 Y:250350	Regional Rating on account of its contribution to the development of the early 19th cent. town. It is also an important element of the quay streetscape.
584	30325019	Former Methodist church and ministers residence, built 1860. The asymmetrical 6 bay 2 storey rendered facade has pointed and flat arched opes with hood mouldings. Set behind railings, facing street. X:65619 Y:250540	Regional Rating because of its architectural novelty and its contribution that it makes to the towns streetscape. It also has an historical value, recalling the former Methodist community that existed in the town.
585	30325002	Christ Church, Church of Ireland Gothic revival style, 4 bay church with chancel and paired lancet windows, designed by Joseph Welland in 1850. overlooking town. X:65666 Y:250650	Regional Rating on account of its architectural quality, association with the well known church architect, Joseph Welland and the contribution that it makes to the overall townscape.
586	30325003	Detached 3 bay 2 storey house with narrow pedimented breakfront, rendered facade and stone dressings, c1835. Set behind railings on street corner. X:65710 Y:250680	Regional Rating because of its architectural quality, detail and its contribution to the streetscape. Probably built by John D'Arcy as part of the Clifden town development.
587	30325004	Detached 3 bay 2 storey house with narrow pedimented breakfront, rendered facade and porch with balustrade, 1835 X:65734 Y:250690	Regional Rating because of its architectural quality, detail and its contribution to the townscape. Probably built by John D'Arcy as part of his Clifden town development.
588	Not available	Detached 7 bay 2 storey former Church of Ireland schoolhouse with a pedimented breakfront, rendered facade and windows set in round headed recesses, c1835. Set facing street. Converted into house. X:65743 Y:250710	Regional Rating on account of its architectural style and quality and its contribution to the townscape.
590	30325008	Large Gothic revival style cruciform plan church with side aisles and chapels, apse, tower and spire. The interior has arcades, clerestory windows, gallery and an open truss roof. The alter is by Early and the mural decoration by Joshua Clarke. Built of coursed random rubble limestone with cut stone dressings. Designed by J.J. O'Callaghan in 1875.	Regional Rating because of its high architectural quality in both plan and detail. It is a fine example of Catholic Church architecture of its period. In addition it the work of a highly thought of late Victorian architect. It is also a very prominent landmark feature
591	30325007	Clifden Courthouse: Detached 7 bay double height courthouse with part basement and recessed entrance bays at either end, designed by William Caldbeck, c1837. X:65976 Y:250670	Regional Rating because of its architectural quality and execution, externally and internally. In addition the design is attributed to William Caldbeck, a prolific early Victorian courthouse architect. The building is one of the towns landmark buildings.

Selection of notable Protected Structures within Study Area. Source: Galway County Development Plan (Record of Protected Structures)

Recorded Monuments

There are a number of Recorded Monuments in Clifden which provide evidence of early settlement in the area. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 provides for the protection of archaeological heritage, including the establishment of a Record of Monuments and Places, which is a national inventory of archaeological sites and monuments, under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Some archaeological sites and monuments may also be of significant architectural heritage value and may be afforded dual protection as a Recorded/National Monument under the National Monuments Acts and as Protected Structure under the Planning and Development Acts.

The Archaeological Constraint Maps prepared for County Galway as part of the Record of Monuments & Places identify the approximate locations of archaeological sites and monuments and give an indication of the extent of the site or monument, although the area around the site or monument may also have archaeological potential and significance. Accordingly, the Zone of Archaeological Potential around Recorded Monuments and Places is typically 30m from the outline indicated on the Archaeological Constraint Maps. In advance of any new development on a site of archaeological significance or within a Zone of Archaeological Potential, there is a requirement for consultation with the Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Galway County Development Plan also provides that, where developments are located within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to a Recorded Monument, then further archaeological assessment and/or mitigation may be necessary.



Location of Recorded Monuments. Source: Myplan (<https://viewer.myplan.ie/>)

Record Number	Classification
GA035-019	Religious house - unclassified
GA035-062	Town
GA035-021	Prison
GA035-017	Monumental structure
GA035-018001	Graveyard
GA035-018-	Church
GA035-023	Courthouse
GA035-015	Church

Selection of Recorded Monuments within Study Area. Source: Mylan

Architecture and Built Form

Clifden presents as a picturesque townscape with a strong architectural coherence and several landmark buildings that create a strong sense of place.

Colourful, vibrant buildings animate the streetscape and are a distinctive part of Clifden's appearance as a coastal town with active frontages along many of the streets. The varying colour palette and roofscape creates a sense of rhythm along the streets, particularly where 3 storey to 2 storey plots are located. There is a simple, uncomplicated vernacular to the majority of the buildings and this creates a clear, legible backdrop to the public realm. There buildings are not rendered and painted these are often rendered in a natural stone of varying size and colour, again in-keeping with the local landscape character and setting. In addition to this there are many attractive shop signs and facades that have been done tastefully, adding character and distinctiveness particularly along the Market Street and Main Street.

There are however a small number of vacant plots which are often left in poor condition and tend to detract from the overall streetscape. These would value greatly from being repurposed.

It will therefore be important that the public realm materials are sympathetic to the high quality architecture and provide an appropriate setting for the towns heritage assets.



Street Level Analysis - Main Street

Perspective View



Section



Footway On-street parking Carriageway On-street parking Footway

Numbers on plan and list of key characteristics / dimensions

- One way street with echelon style parking on both sides of the road along its entire length.
- Street planting limited to small planters which often impede footway space
- Only crossing points at the start and end of the street
- Attractive building facades with featuring varying colours and active frontages
- Varying building heights create an interesting roofscape and natural rhythm along the street.
- Limited seating or well integrated signage
- Tarmac surfacing with setts to the footways
- Relatively narrow footways in relation to overall street width.
- Flat topography with strong vista towards St Joseph's Church



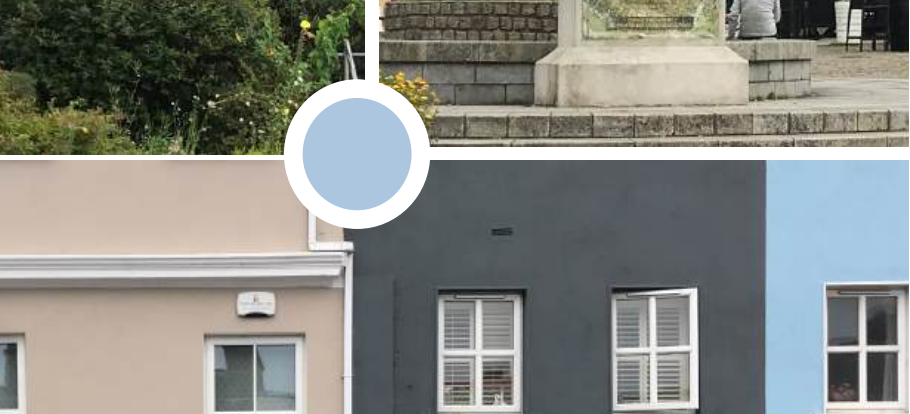
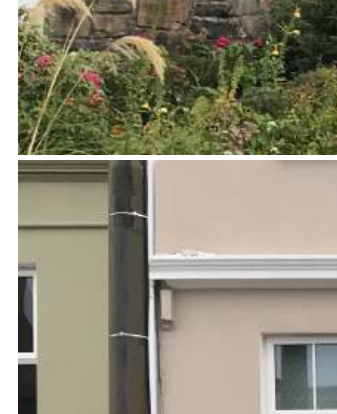
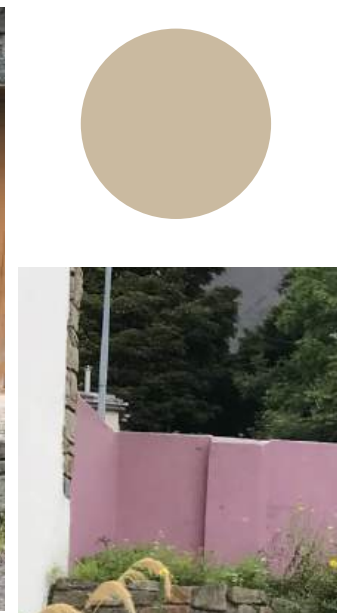
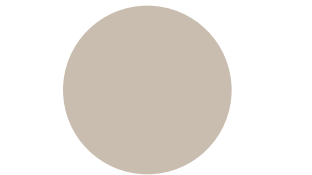
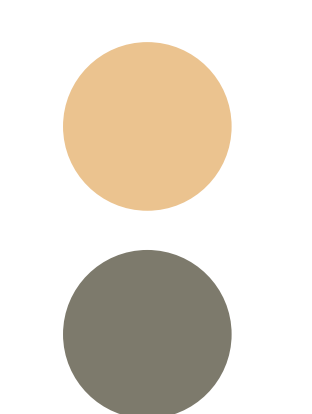
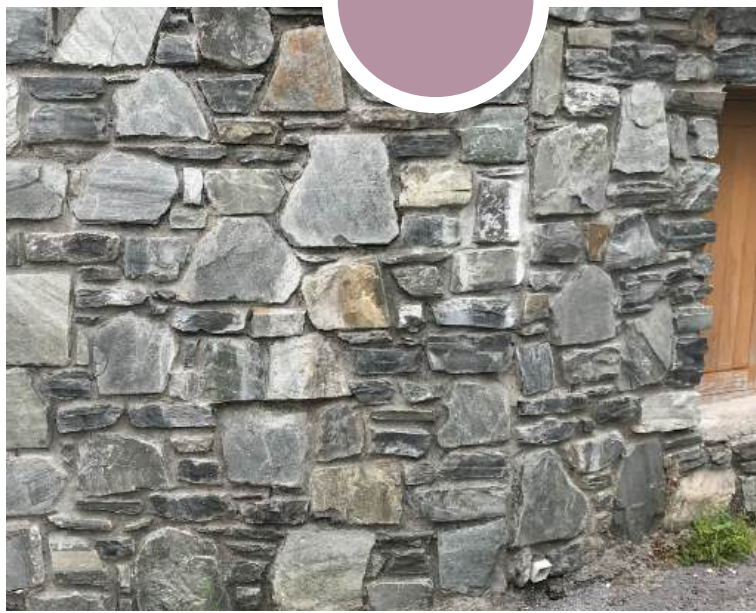
Car parking detracting from view to Saint Joseph's Church



Existing active frontages along Main Street



Attractive building frontage along Main Street



Street Level Analysis - Market Street

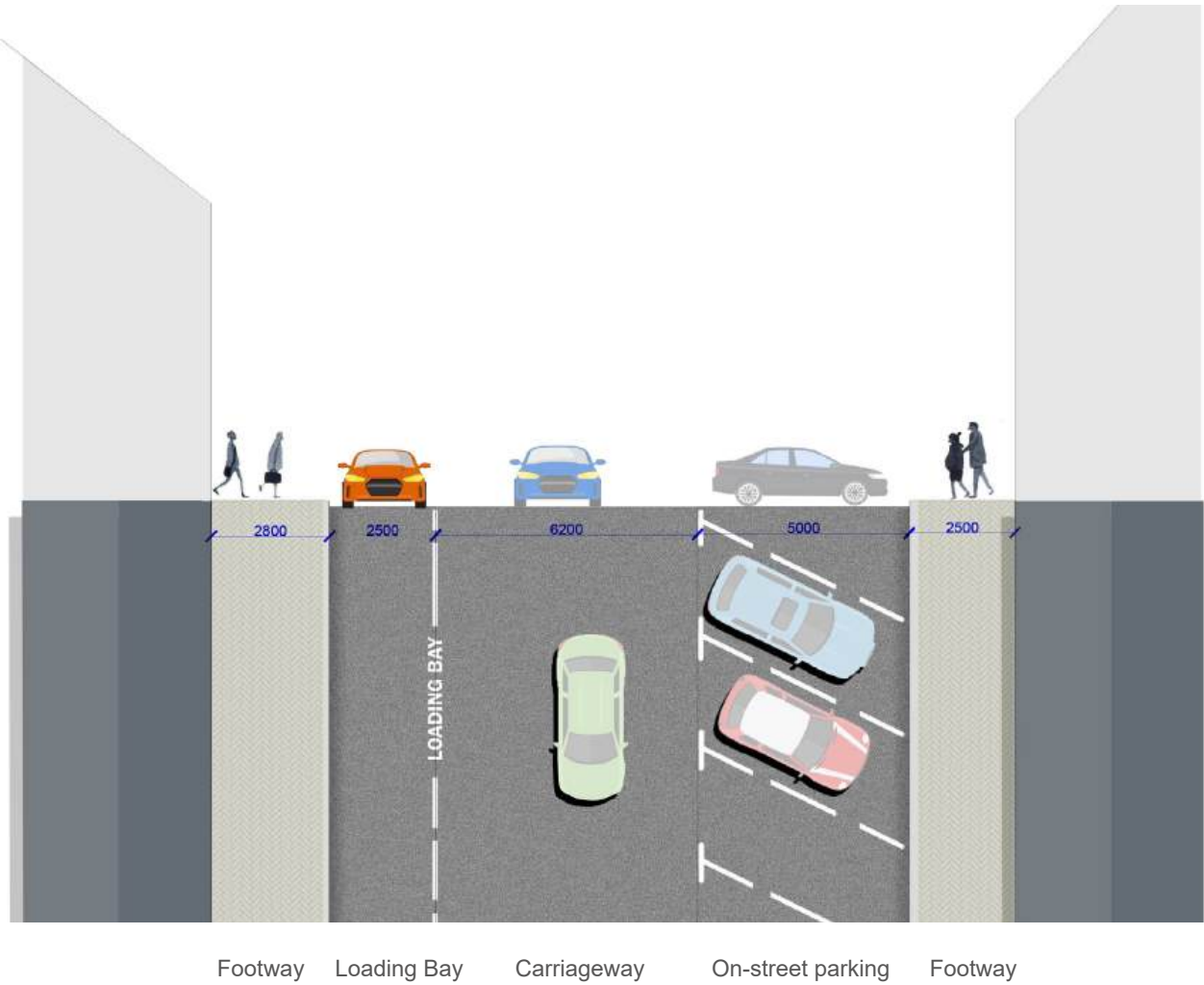
Perspective View



Numbers on plan and list of key characteristics / dimensions

- One way street with echelon style parking on both sides of the street along entire length.
- The street is influence by a rise in the gradient from east to west creating strong vistas to the surrounding landscape near the market square.
- Street planting limited to small planters which often impede footway space.
- Only crossing points at either end of the street.
- Bus stop located along the street .
- Attractive building facades with featuring varying colours and active frontages
- Varying building heights create an interesting roofscape and natural rhythm along the street.
- Limited seating or well integrated signage
- Tarmac surfacing with setts to the footways
- Relatively narrow footways in relation to overall street width.
- The street is well defined by build form with no visibility through to waterside environment.
- Strong visual connectivity from street to Christ Church Clifden

Section



Car parking detracts from the view to Christ Church Clifden



Active frontages along Market Street



Bus stop location along Market Street

Harbour Park



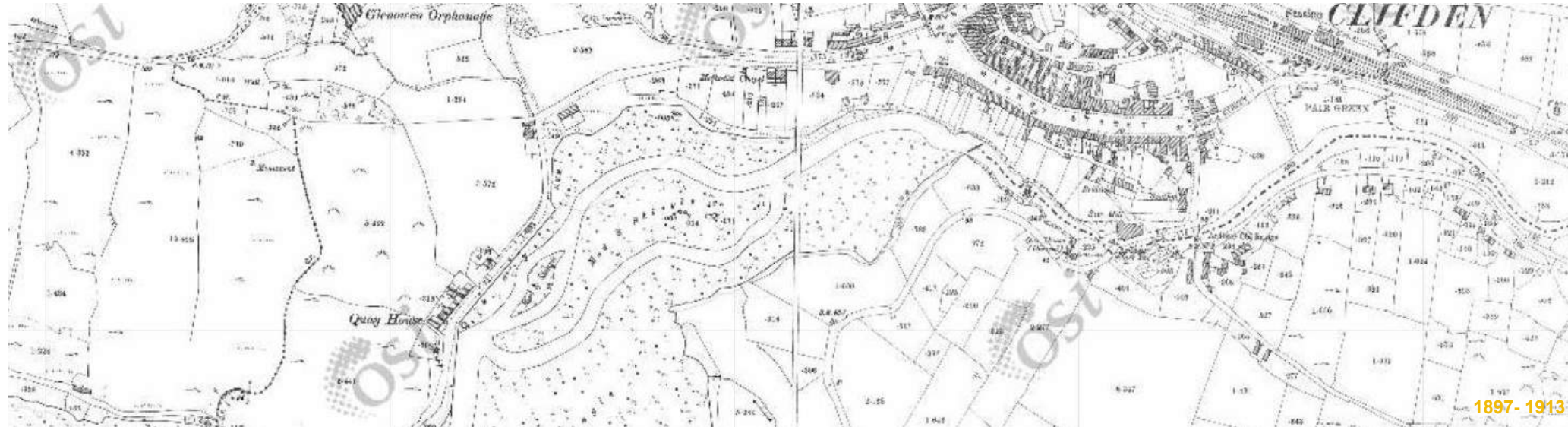
Active Travel and the Connemara Greenway



The Connemara Greenway is a proposed off road Greenway connecting Galway City with Clifden. The 76km cycle route follows the route of the historic train line that passed through Moycullen, Oughterard, Maam Cross, Recess, Ballynahinch and finished in Clifden. Sections of the Greenway are complete and already open to the public (shown in yellow), while the majority is still awaiting development. When complete, it will form Ireland's longest off-road walking and cycling trail.

As part of the proposals to ensure the sustainable development of the town as a strategic cycling hub, bicycle parking facilities and areas to park vehicles in order to load bikes will be integrated into the scheme.

Historical Context



Historic development

Harbour Park, The Quay and Beach Road are located along the shores of Clifden Bay, also referred to historically as Ard Bear Bay. The shore line has undergone successive development due to its strategic connections to both Clifden Town Centre and The Quay Beach Road. Its character and current condition has been impacted by the gradual shifts in use and community demands as the town has grown in population, developed its infrastructure and increased its transport links.

Subsequent shifts in Clifden's economy has shaped the landform we see here today. Once part of a prominent Irish Sea Port, Clifden Harbour developed its sea shores to enable not only fishing but also pastoral farming to reach as far as the sea edge. Its current development now embraces Clifden Bay as a tourist destination.

These historical maps show the subsequent development of the south of the town, Harbour Park, Beach Road and the Quay. Our attention is drawn to the area of land that now forms Harbour Park, which over the last two hundred years has reclaimed its land from the sea.

It is possible that some reclamation has occurred naturally through siltation around raised landform, however, it is probable that the remaining was artificially built up to further support maritime trade and agricultural use.

The first map from 1829-41 depicts only a small strip of land adjacent to Beach Road, upon which a building once stood. A diagonal linear demarcation along the sea bed suggest that boats may have launched from here.

The second map from 1897-1913 reveals increased areas of reclaimed sea land with delineated land plots to the east. To the left, the Harbour building has an increased area of land. This could possibly be a boat yard for smaller vessels.

Today's aerial images show the play park and MUGA to the west of where the harbour building once stood. An extension of landform in front of this now houses the current boat yard, slipway and utilities plant.

Historical Development: Reclaimed Sea Land



Left: Engraving by Barlett William Henry (1809-54). Barlett's engraving (part of a private collection), although romanticised in its depiction of the soaring Twelve Bens in the distance and cavernous cliffs, tells us the story of Clifden Harbour as a sea port.

The inshore fisheries of Connemara would have been of huge importance to the survival of the Connemara people over thousands of years.

On market days, Clifden Harbour would have welcomed fish for sale from the people of the Islands of Inish, Turbot and Turk, who would row their currachs into the harbour. The communities on these islands and the Errislannan peninsula practiced an ancient form of fishing, using a Cohill (net) that can be traced back almost 10,000 years.

Right: An early 19th century illustrative plan of Clifden Town with numbered buildings and landform. In Clifden Harbour (bottom right) we are able to identify a tall building, also plotted on the 1829 map on the banks of the Harbour.

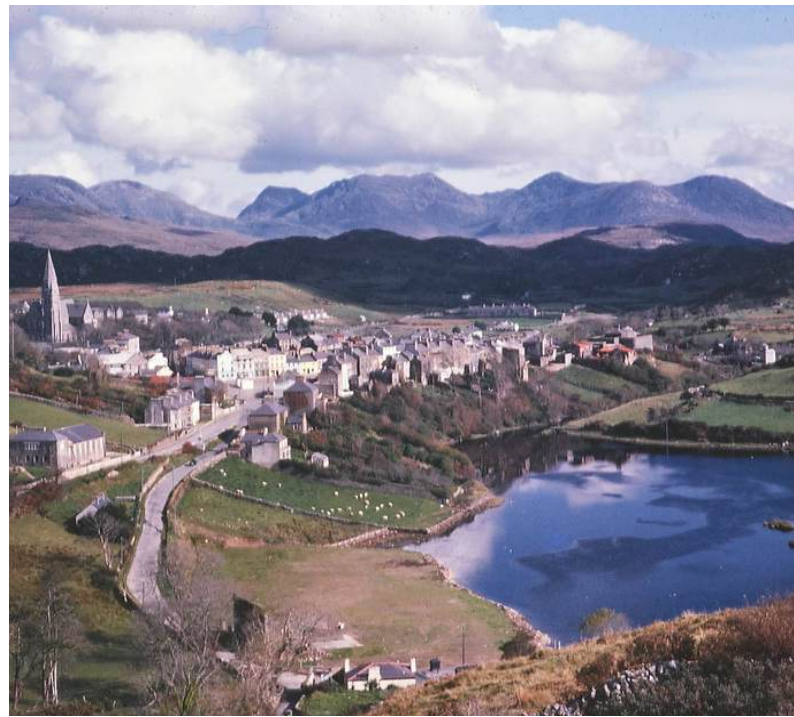
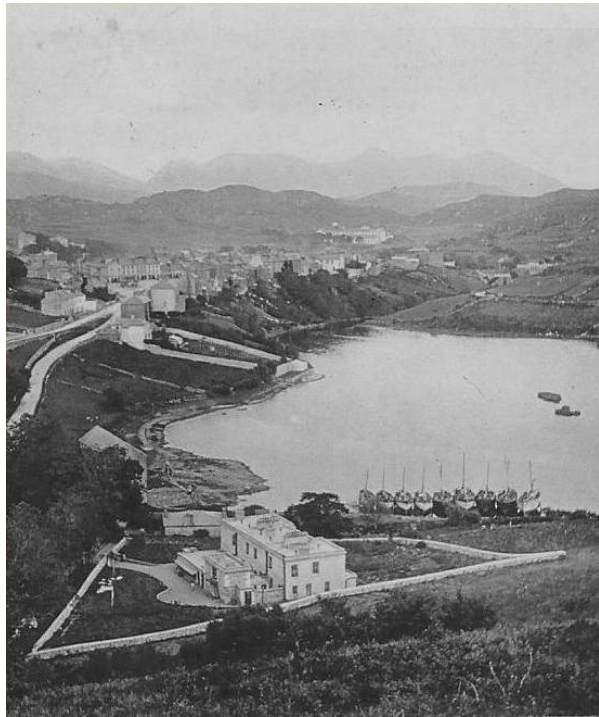


Left: Image from the National Library of Ireland (no dating). Clifden Harbour is pictured here at high tide fully submerged in seawater. In the foreground, boats are moored along the Quay. Rectilinear plots of land, divided by low stone walls, can be seen to the east.

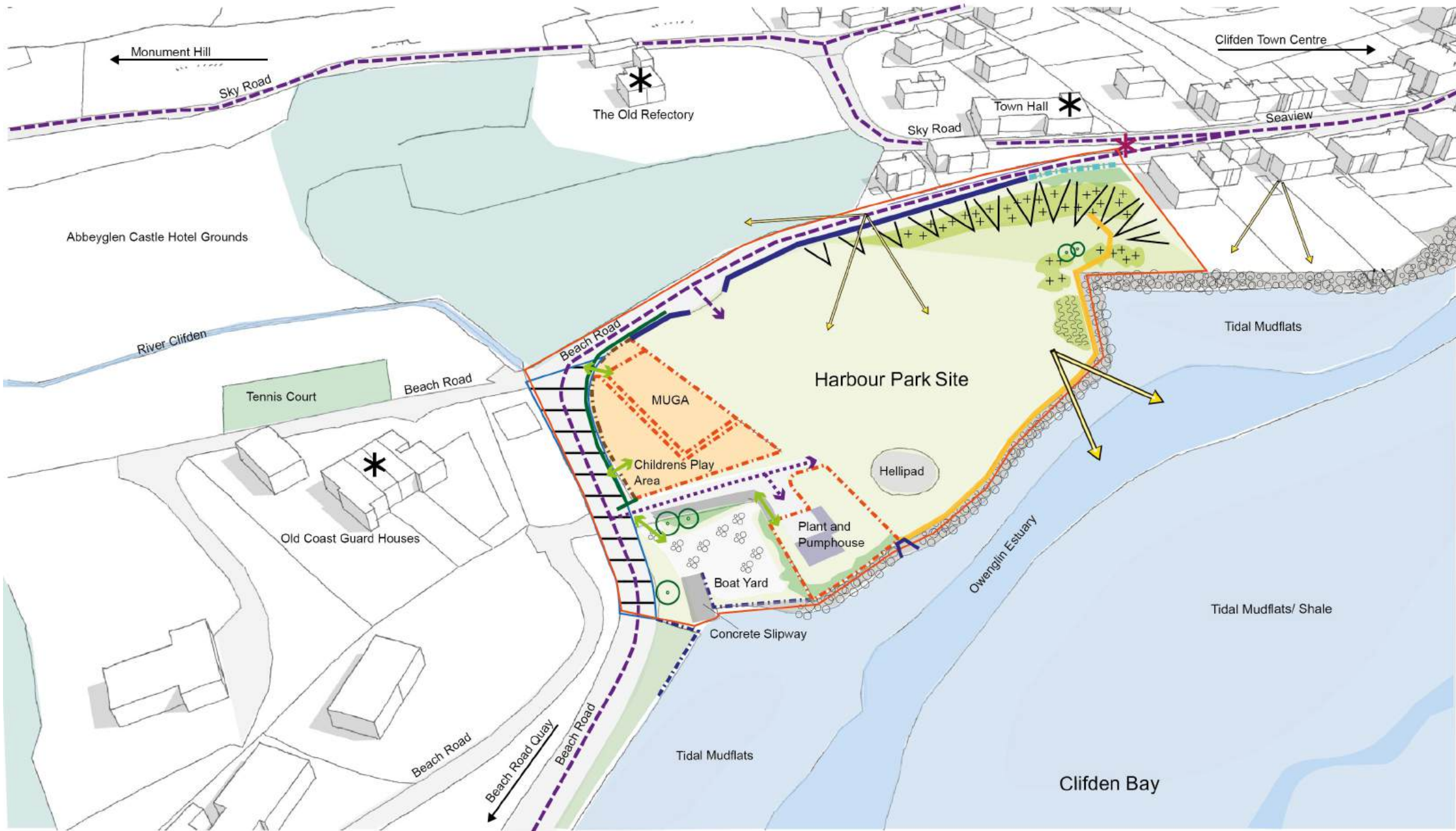
Right: Photograph (no dating). On inner Clifden bay, a number of very simple boat nausts (informal moorings) have been identified, which probably pre-date the establishment of the town in the early 19th century; Reinforcing the centrality of Clifden Bay in Clifden's cultural heritage.

In the foreground the old Coastguard's houses form part of a series of Coastguard stations along the Connemara coast. Their establishment stamped out trade in wool, butter, wine and tobacco. From that point on, the Harbour and Quay were the only places in Connemara that could export corn, oats and fish, and import salt, iron, tar, timber hemp and manufactured goods.

Far right: 1960s postcard. Harbour Park showing its current shoreline. Rectilinear plots are used for pastoral farming. The historical harbor building partially demolished.



Site Analysis



	Red Line Boundary		Key Vehicle Routes		Key Views and Vistas		Invasive Vegetation: Gunnera (Chilian Rhubarab)		Boundary Wall
	Key Pedestrian Routes		Key Vehicle Access		Steep Slopes		Invasive Vegetation: Japanese Knotweed		Timber Post and Rail Fence
	Pedestrian Access		Minor Vehicle Routes		Key Destination		Existing Trees		Metal Railings
	Potential Flood Area		Minor Vehicle Access		Monument/registered building		Verge Vegetation		Concrete Post and Rail Fence
	Play Surfacing: Rubber Crumb		Tarmac/Asphalt Surface		Tidal Mudflats		Hard Standing and Rank Grass on reclaimed sea land.		Metal Palisade Fence
	Compacted Gravel		Concrete Path / Surface		Rock Armour		Neighbouring Woodland		Water Outlet



Existing Features of Note



Playground Equipment

The current playground has a range of play equipment, mainly steel framed, with rubber cork safety safety surfaces . The equipment is in variable condition.



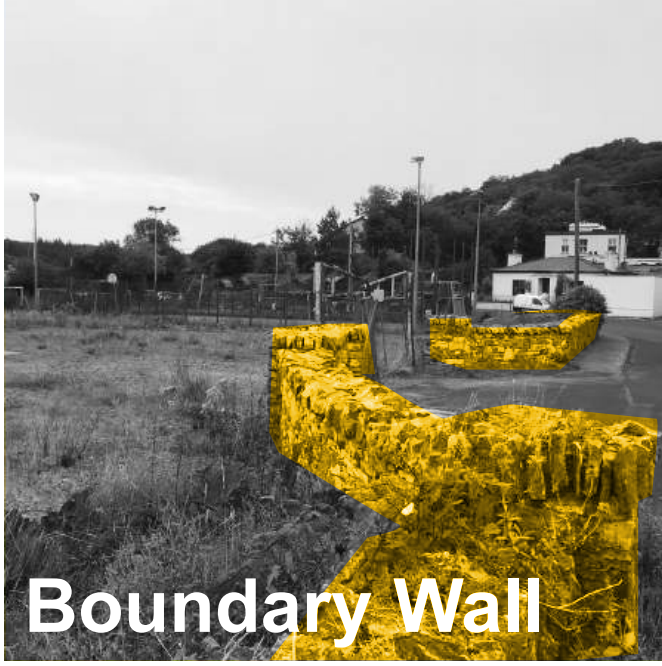
MUGA

The Multi Use Games Area is a good facility, however sits in close proximity to the playpark in a fairly awkward juxtaposition.



Murals

A building dating back to c.1810 was built on this site. Historical depictions and postcard photographs show a record of this large harbour building with multiple floors. Until recently just one wall remained, now along the base of that wall only a Mural now remains.



Boundary Wall

The Boundary wall to Harbour Park is its most valuable architectural feature. It has potential to inform future design work and weave Clifden Harbours historical narrative back into the fabric of the site.



Town Connections

The elevated topography of Clifden town centre presents a continual visual connection to the site at Harbour Park.



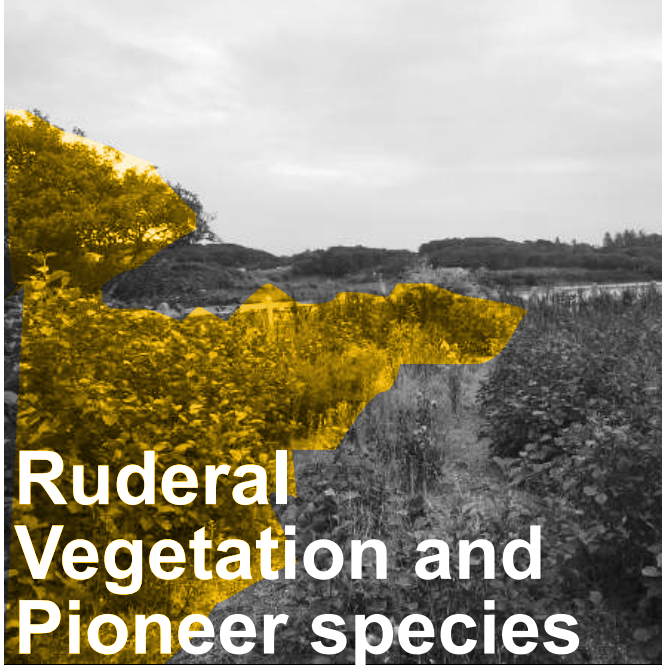
Boat Yard

The boat yard is important to the character and identity of Harbour Park. It is directly associated with the historical use of the harbour and remains important for its on going use.



Quay Connections

The Slipway is a prominent feature of Harbour Park and its trace is evident in the 1829 maps of the site. This point within the site signifies the Harbour's physical connection with The Quay. The stone quay walls are rich in heritage and define the hard boundary between land and sea, It is the transient shoreline of the harbour, between aquatic and terrestrial landscape that sets it apart from The Quay and has shaped the Park that we see today.



Ruderal Vegetation and Pioneer species

There is a wild character to Harbour Park. A layered landscape of maritime trade, pastoral farming and now a community green space. The fringed landscape has a semi coastal ecosystem and has been left to evolve. New Alder (Alnus Glutinosa) saplings are beginning dominate and to form coastal woodland buffer. Other pioneer species identified are multi stem Birch (Betula Pendula) and White Willow (Salix Alba).

Analysis- Opportunities



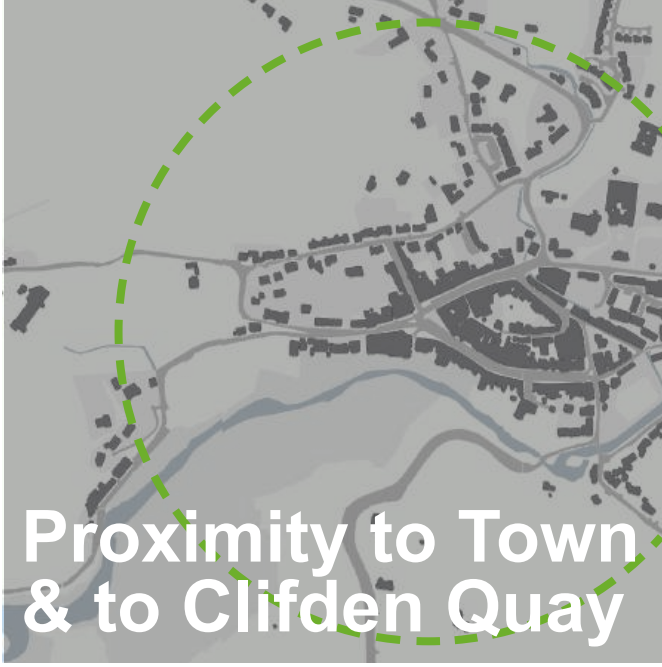
Coastal Connection

Harbour Park is located in a central location and features as a transitional greenspace connecting Clifden's coastal heritage and its town centre.



Community Connections

Harbour Park is located is within walking distance from the local community and the town centre. It is an important amenity for families and teenagers, as well as visitors and tourists.



Proximity to Town & to Clifden Quay

Clifden Quay is less than a 5 minute walk west bound from Harbour Park and Clifden's Market Square is 5 minutes eastbound.



Coastal Ecosystems

Harbour park is bound to the south east by coastal waters, tidal streams and coastal ecosystems.



Views

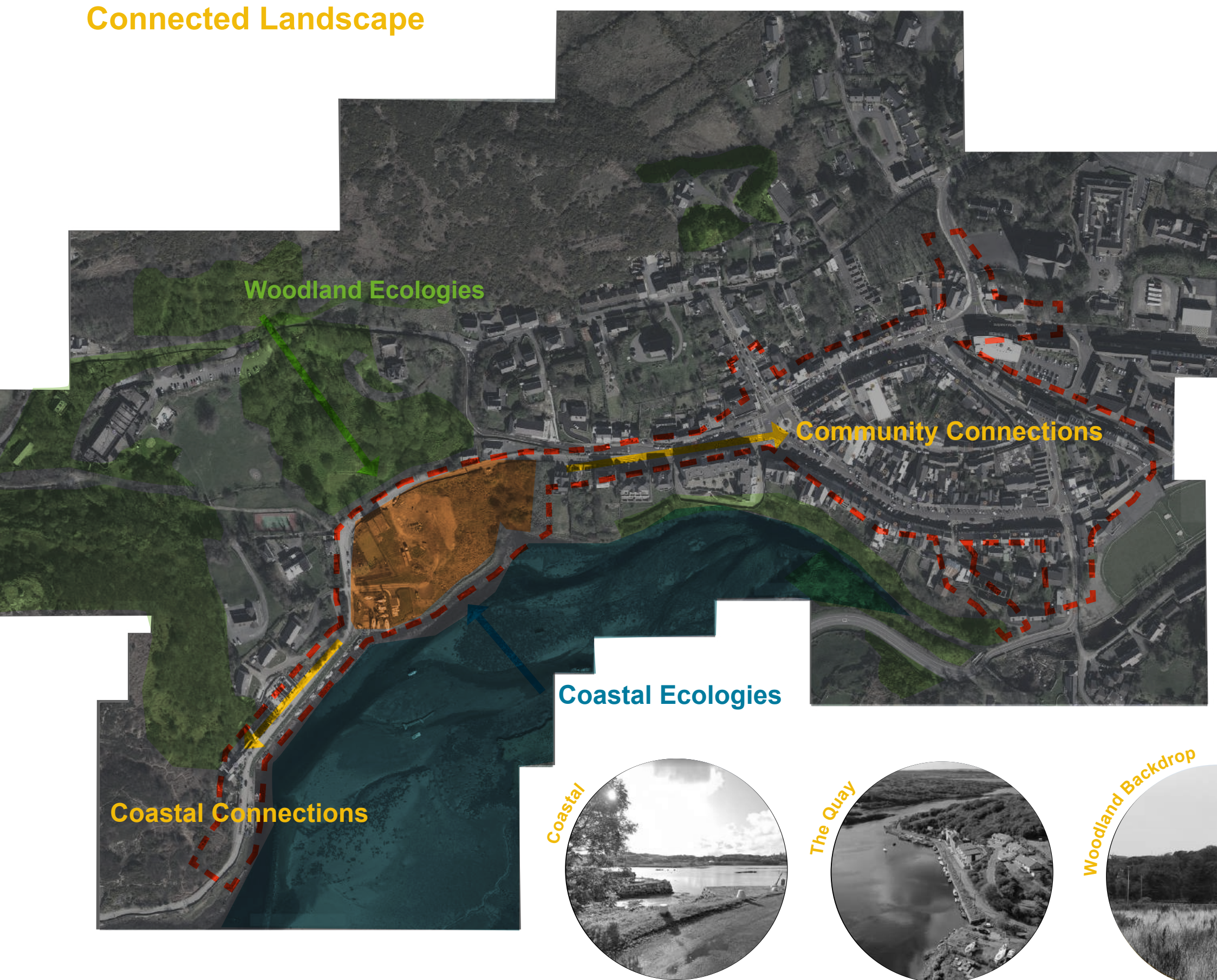
Harbour Park boasts Panormaic views across Clifden Bay over to Ardbear and in the distance the Errislannan peninsula



Wooded Backdrop

Harbour Park sits at the foot of a wooded hillside to the north and the wooded slopes of monument hill to the west.

Connected Landscape



Harbour Park is nestled between the wooded Hills to the north and west, and the estuary at Clifden bay to the south. The wildlife and vegetation that the site currently embodies reflects these surrounding contexts. The proximity of these landscape typologies provide this site with a rich and varied ecological potential.

The Coastal location provides sensational views and vistas across the bay.

The reclaimed areas of sea land and the position of the site at the foot of the hills has associated environmental challenges, such as coastal and fluvial flooding which will need further detailed consideration.

Currently the proximity of the Town and the Quay place Harbour park as an integral transitional landscape for local communities and tourist provsion.

Harbour Park's past and present land uses provide a strong starting point for further concept developments.



360° Panoramic Views



Panoramic view of Harbour Park from its southern boundary. The wooded backdrop is prominent within the image, alongside visual connections to Clifden Quay in the east and Clifden Town Centre, Clifden Bay and Ardbear in the west.



Views across Clifden Bay over to Ardbear's shores.



Views from the bottom slope, eastern corner, of Harbour Park across to Ardbeasr Shores and The Quay on the far right of the view

Analysis- Constraints



Steep Topography

The topography to the east of the site rises sharply towards Clifden town centre and away from the shoreline. All reclaimed areas of sea land in Harbour Park remain flat.



Wider pedestrian access

The only existing pedestrian path is on the outer perimeter of the children's play area, however, this does not continue along either road to the Quay or the town Centre.



Utilities Plant

To the east of the boat yard is a pumping station and utilities plant with a water outlet that falls directly in to the bay, needing consideration.



Poor Condition

There are numerous structures that appear to be abandoned and fenced off and in unsafe condition.



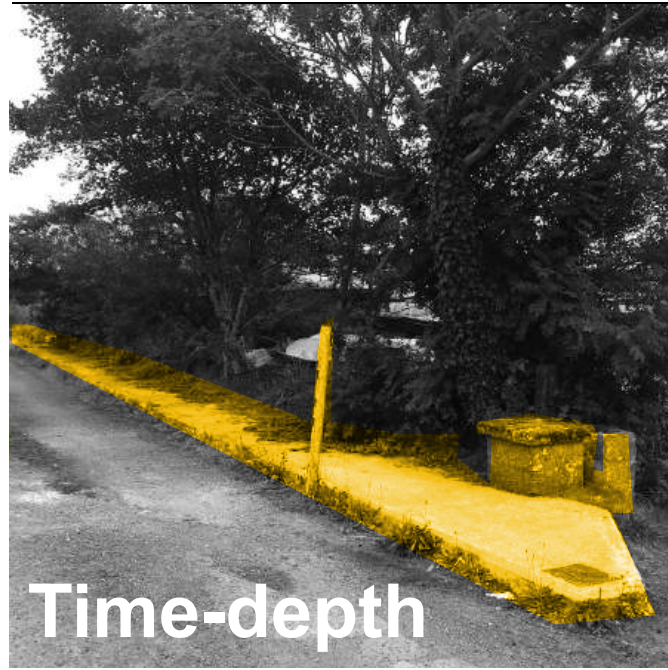
Contaminated Soils

Evidence of demolished buildings and left over construction materials litter the site. A survey of compounds within the building debris may be advisable.



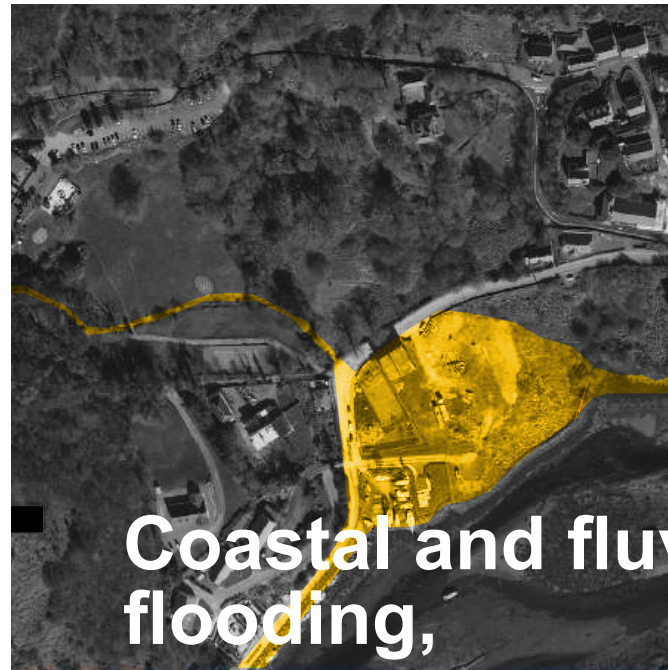
Invasive Species

The eastern part of the site at the base of the steep ground have invasive species growing. They are currently identified as Gunnera (Chilien Rhubarb) and Japanese Knotweed, needing attention, pre construction.



Time-depth

The character of Harbour Park is fairly confused as new sections of land have been reclaimed and repurposed. The result is a rather clumsy mosaic of old and new boundaries, roads, pathways, and related street furniture and signage.



Coastal and fluvial flooding,

Coastal flood events are indicative 0.5% AEP (200yr) events. However repeat localised fluvial flooding, during storm events, from the River Clifden causes flooding along the Beach Road, west of the site, indicated above.

Harbour Park

Aims/Objectives

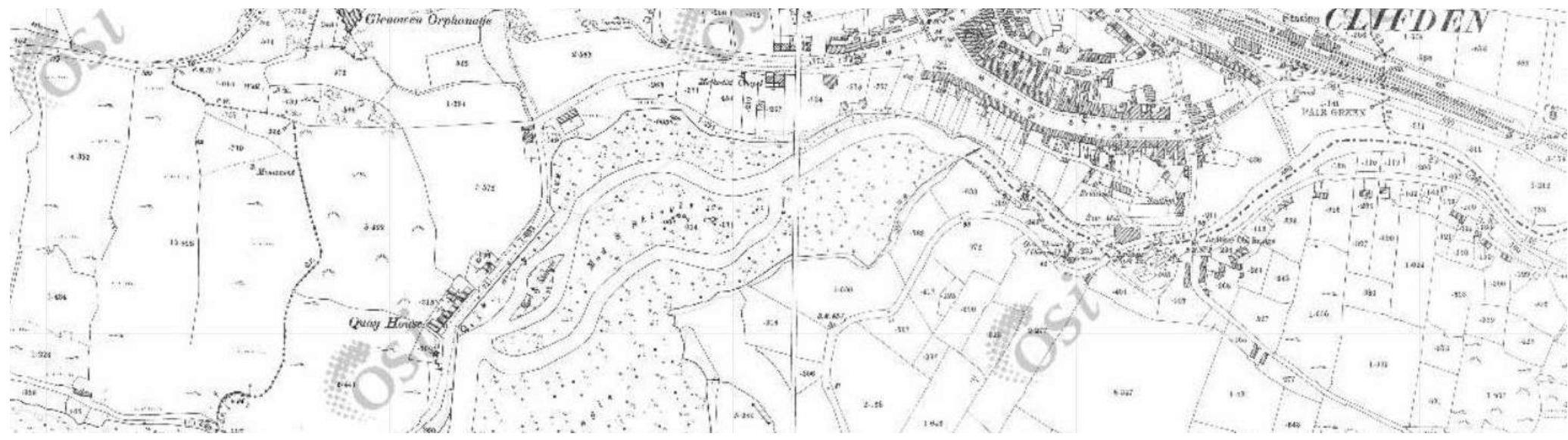
The project will re design Harbour Park, in partnership with Clifden and District Community Council. The main objectives of the park are:

- Creation of a new vibrant public park, consisting of hard and soft landscaped areas, tree planting, furniture and lighting that is in-keeping with local character and well connected to the town centre.
- Improve the opportunities for contact with nature and the biodiversity value of this existing greenspace.
- Create opportunities for long distance views particularly overlooking Clifden Bay.
- Create opportunities that appeal to all sections of the local community and ensure this is a greenspace that can be enjoyed by all.
- Ensure the park is resilient to flooding and climate change.
- Create a park that is fully accessible including provision of parking for less able users.

The Harbour Park has a rich historical narrative. The site is strategically linked to both Clifden Town Centre and to The Quay. In this section of the report we will try to recover some of the historical stories that provide Harbour part with its current character and establish Harbour Parks connections the wider landscape and cultural conext.



Beach Road Quay



Historic development

The Quay and Beach Road has undergone successive development. The town developed rapidly in the 1920s, but it wasn't until John D'Arcy commissioned the Scottish engineer Alexander Nimmo to build the Quay in 1831, as well as the roads connecting the town to the north and south, that the town's population jumped up.

These maps show the subsequent development of the south of the town, Harbour Park, Beach Road and the Quay.

The first map from 1829-41 shows limited development on the quay, but clearly indicates the Harbour master's house and the warehouse, which are now both listed structures.

The second map from 1897-1913 shows some development around the town along Beach Road and to the West of the town.

Today's aerial images show that the area behind Beach road has become more developed and residential. It also shows the formalization of Harbour Park, which was previously described as marsh in the earlier maps.



Existing Features of Note



RNLI Storage

There is a strong presence of the RNLI's work at the Quay, with both the station and the locked storage on the quayside.



Signage

Standalone sign offering some interpretation of the area.



Slipway

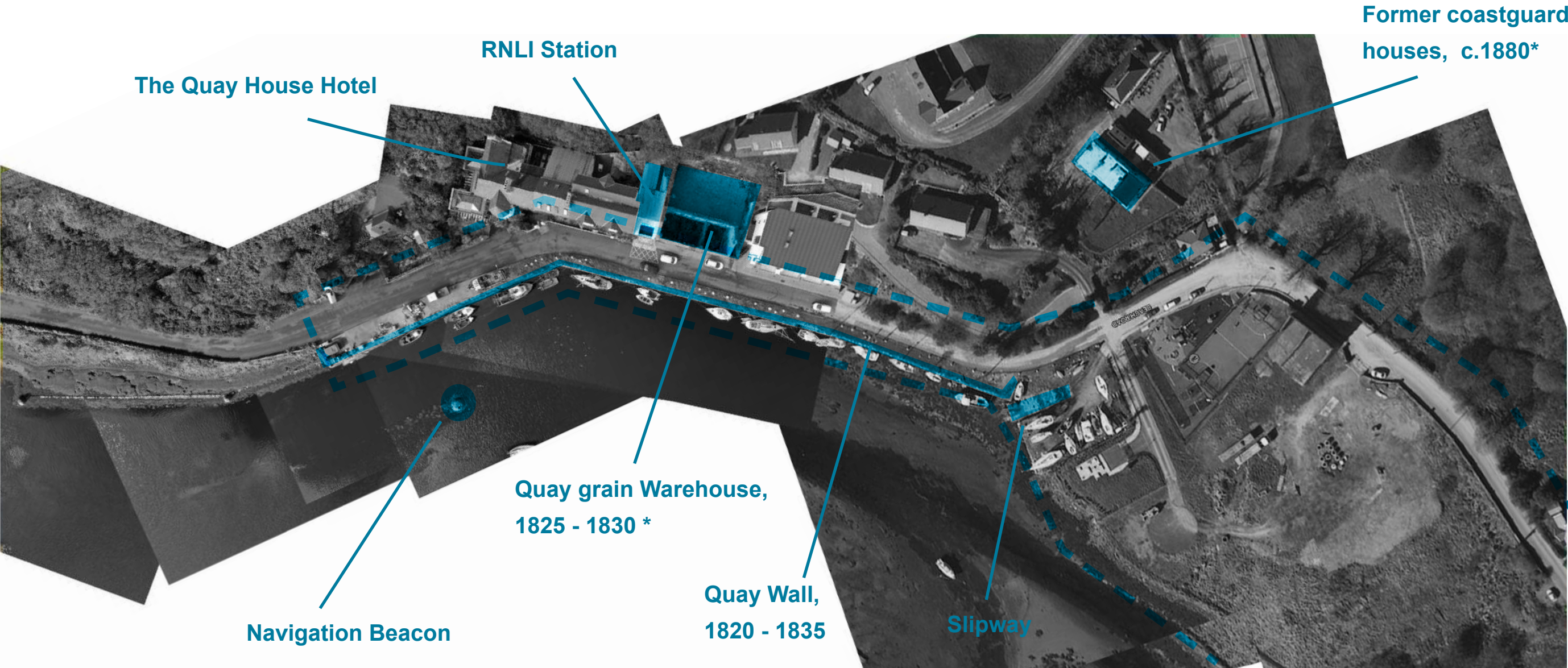
The Slipway provides access to the estuary harbour. The existing surfacing appears to be concrete.



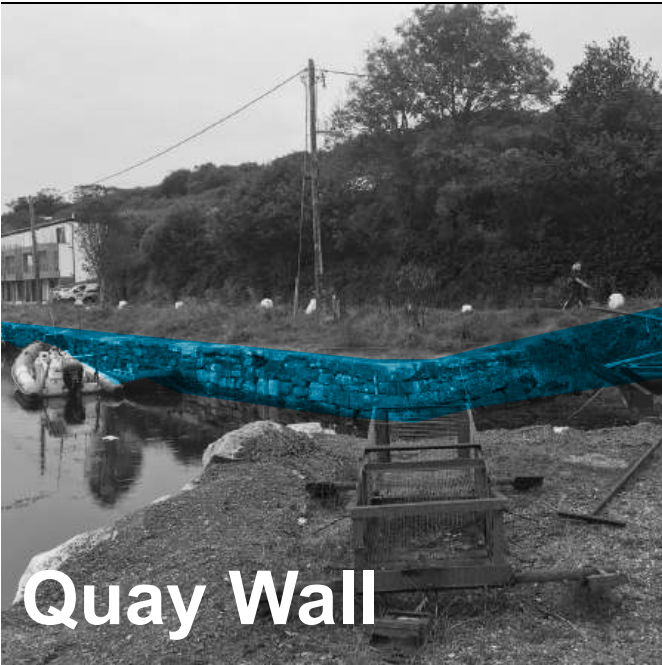
RNLI Station

Clifden Lifeboat Station provides search and rescue cover off the west coast of Ireland. The station operates both an all-weather lifeboat and an inshore lifeboat.

Existing and Heritage Features



Heritage Features



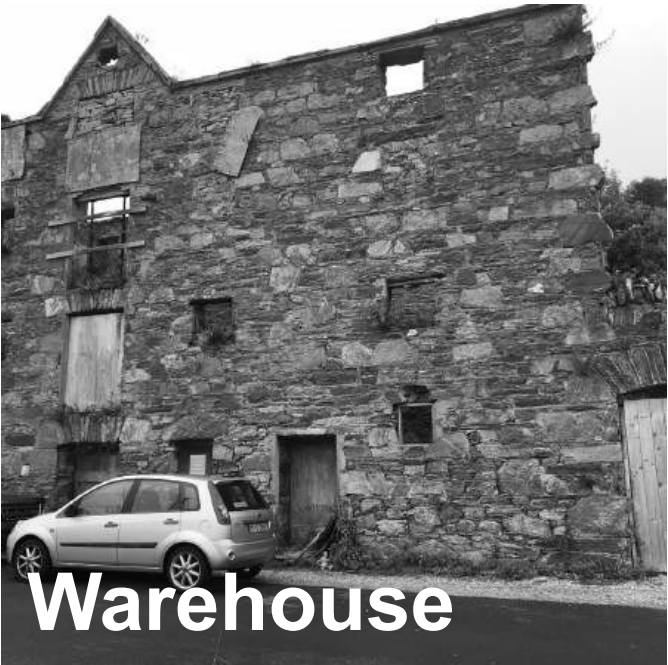
Quay Wall

The Quay was designed and built by Alexander Nimmo in 1831, who also constructed the roads south and west of the town. These improvements to the infrastructure allowed the town to grow, and opened up trade in Connemara.



Quay House Hotel

The Quay house is Clifden's oldest building. It was built by the D'Arcy family for the harbour master in 1820. It subsequently became a Franciscan monastery before being converted into a convent. It is now run as a bed and breakfast.



Warehouse

The warehouse was used by the government to distribute food to the poor during the Great Famine (1845-1852). The Quay was the only place in Connemara that could export corn, oats and fish, and import salt, iron, tar, timber hemp and manufactured goods.



Navigation Beacons

The conical navigation beacons indicate the navigable channel to the quay at high tides where the silt banks are not visible.

Quay Warehouse*



Navigation Beacons



RNLI Station



Slipway



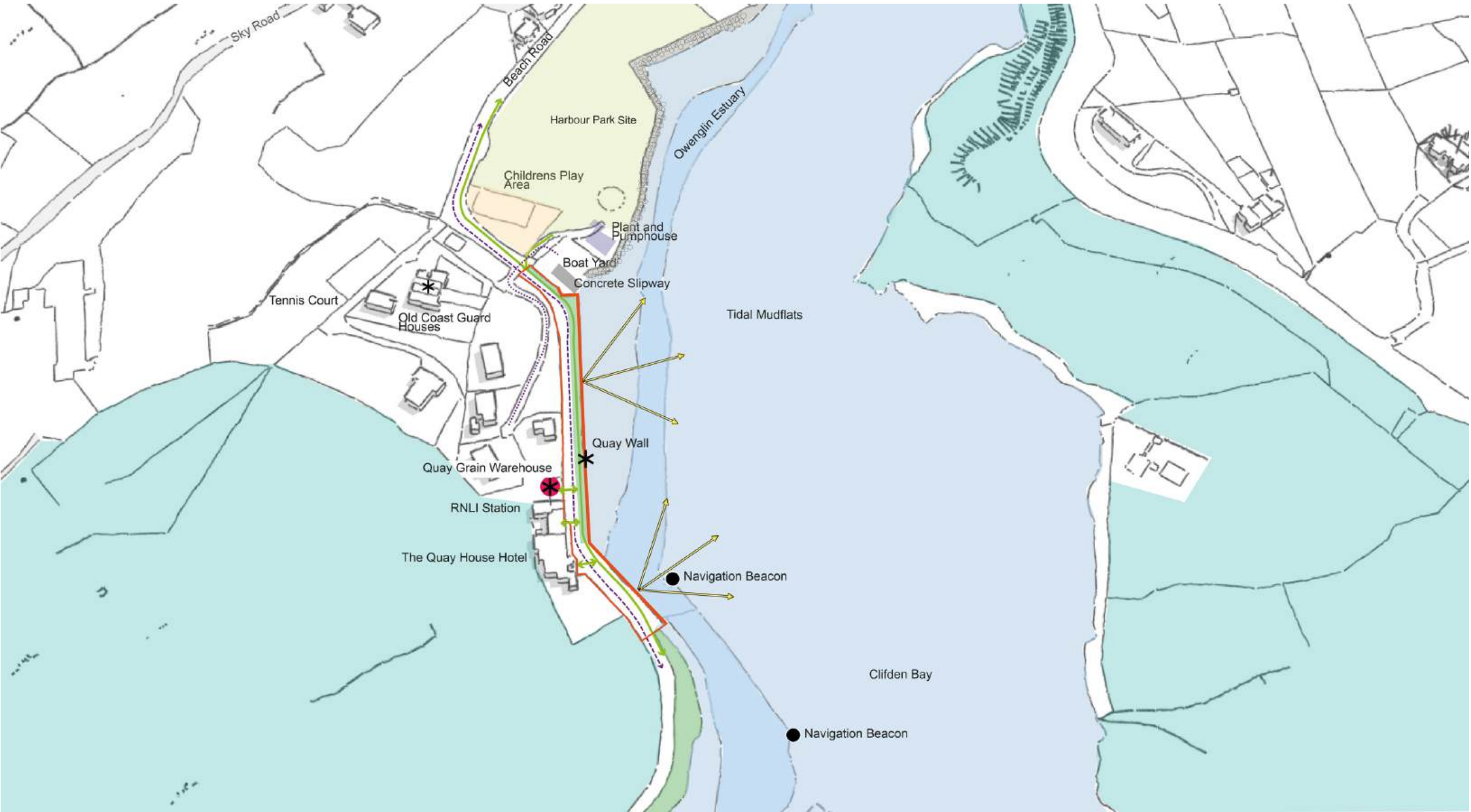
Quay wall



The Quay Hotel

*Protected Structure

Site Analysis



- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|-------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Key Vehicle Routes | | Red Line Boundary | | Tarmac/Asphalt Surface | | Verge Vegetation | | Estuary | | Navigation Beacon |
| | Minor Vehicle Routes | | Pedestrian Access | | Concrete Path / Surface | | Tidal Mudflats | | Neighbouring Woodland and Scrub | | Listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage |
| | | | Key Views and Vistas | | Rock Armour | | Play Surfacing: Rubber Crumb | | Hard Standing and Rank Grass on reclaimed sea land | | Protected Structure |

Analysis- Positives



Heritage Features

Heritage features include: the Quay Hotel which is Clifden's oldest building, the derelict Warehouse is c.1830, the Quay built by Alexander Nimmo and the navigation beacons. Set back from the Quay toward Harbour Park are the former Coastguard houses, which are also listed buildings.



Proximity to Town

Clifden Quay is less than a 10 minute walk from Clifden's Market Square.



Proximity of key heritage hotel

The Quay Hotel is one of Clifden's oldest heritage assets, and is located right on the Beach Road Quay itself.



Views

The Quay provides excellent views to the south along the Wild Atlantic Way toward Derrigilagh, as well as west toward the town centre.



Distinctive Character

The Quay's heritage buildings give the quayside a working character distinct from the rest of the town.

Analysis- Potential Issues



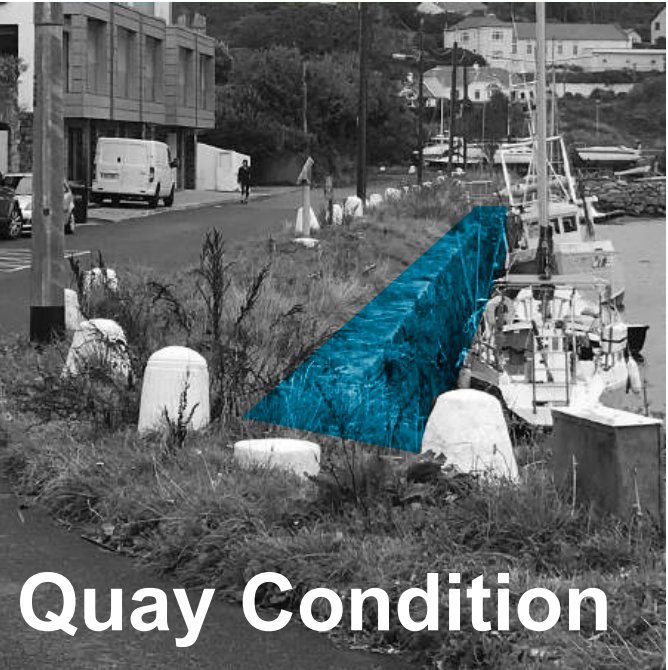
The concrete section of the quay appears to currently be used to store/ dry fishing equipment.



The Quay wall appears to be considerably lower than the level of the road. This will need to be managed carefully to ensure the quay is accessible and safe.



Painted granite bollards that are set back from quay, and some modern concrete bollards, are currently being used as mooring posts. The ropes across the grass bank introduce a tripping hazard for pedestrians.



The Quay wall is constructed from roughly dressed limestone blocks with limestone coping and steps. Some concrete repairs and cast-iron railings to south-eastern elevation, stone steps at south end of main section.



The Quay is predominantly used to moor leisure boats, though some fishing activity is present.



The Quay wall and Beach Road pose potential safety risks to pedestrians.



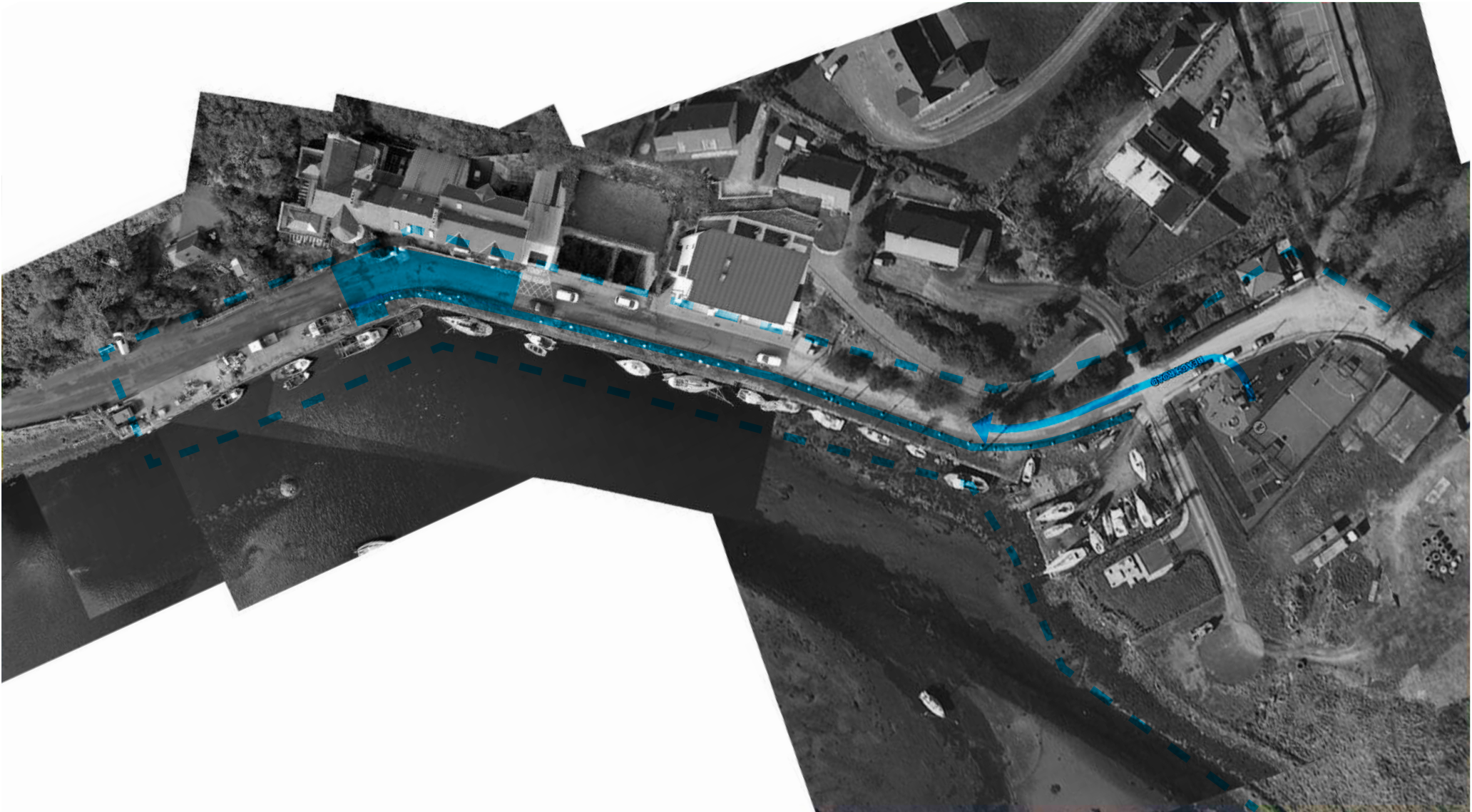
There is currently on-street parking along Beach Road for The Quay Hotel and private housing.



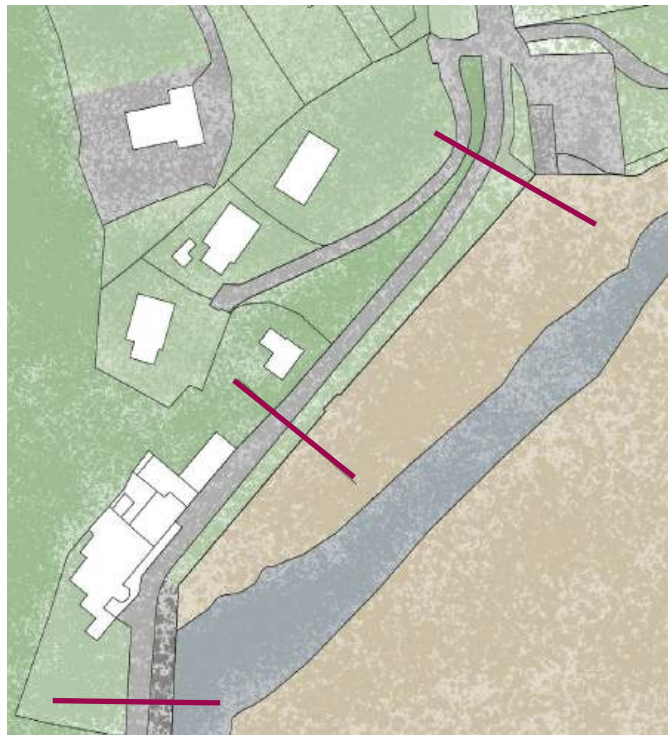
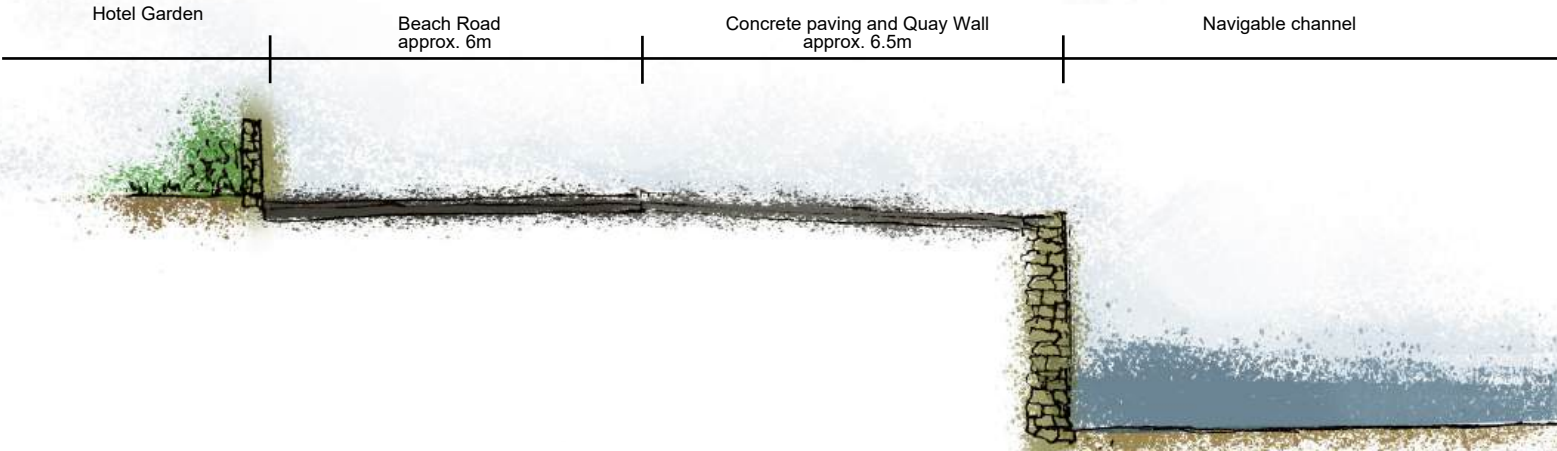
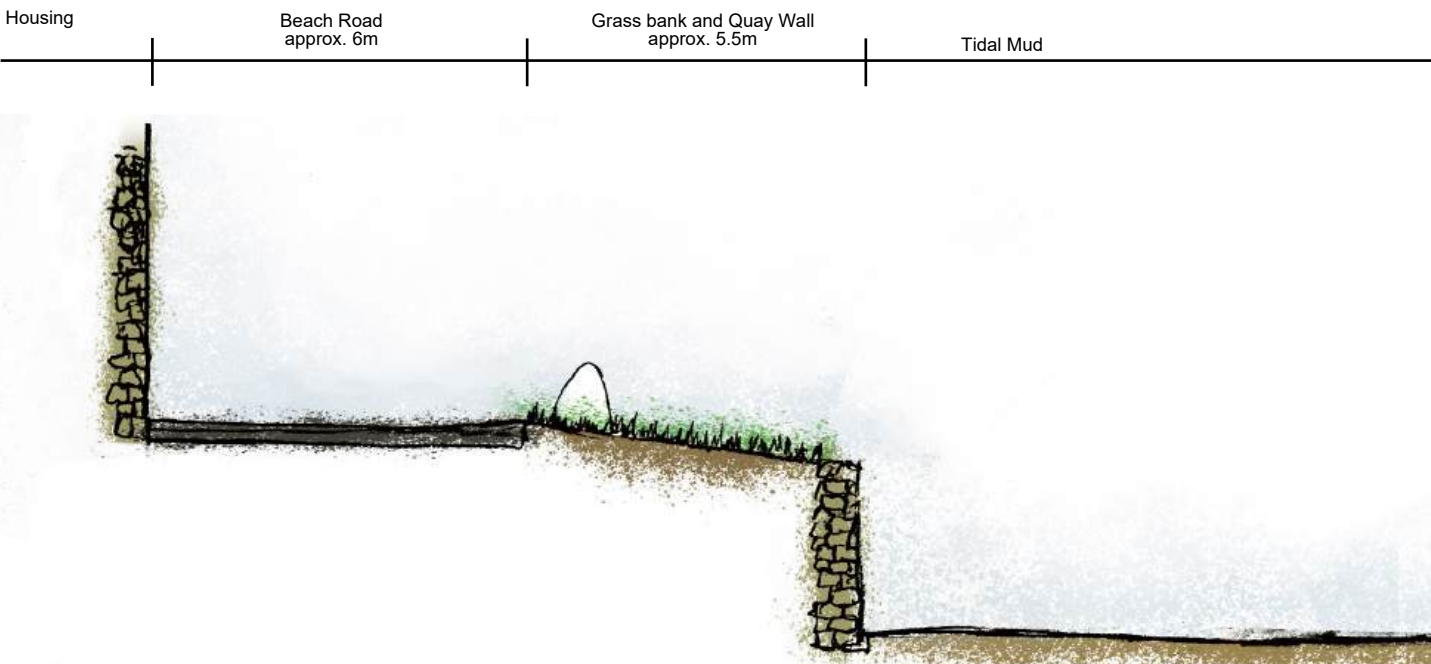
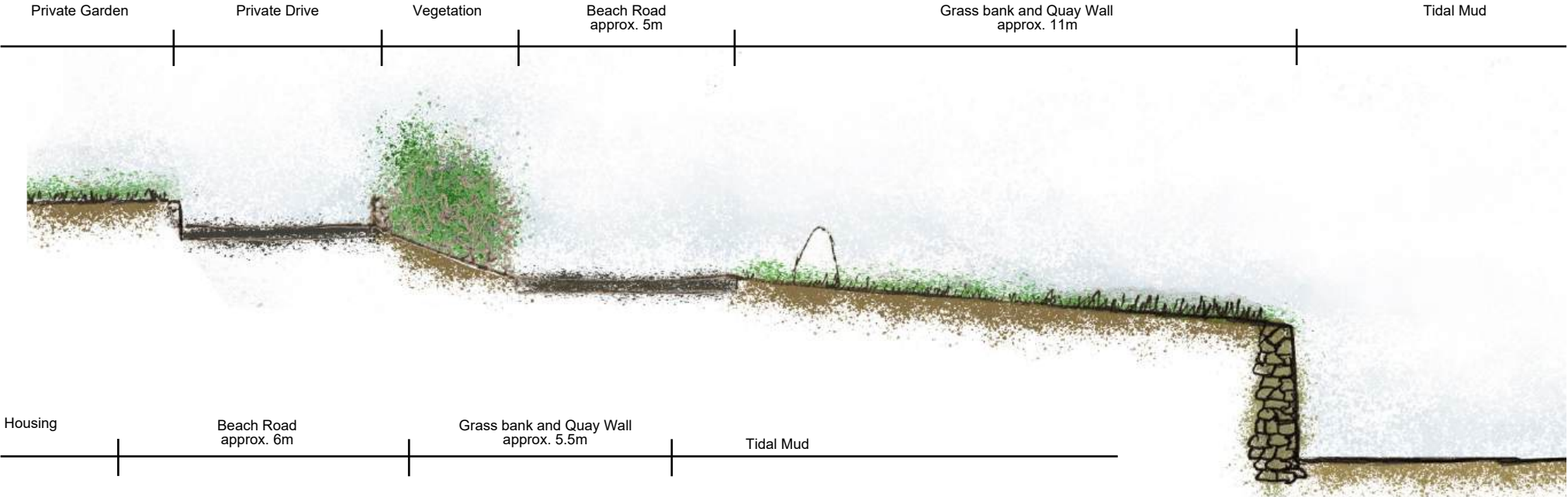
While Clifden benefits from being located in a natural harbour, the entire West coast is subject to changable atlantic conditions.

Opportunities

- **New mooring posts** closer to the Quay would avoid the current trip hazards created by ropes mooring to the granite bollards.
- **Extending a shared surface** across the road from the hotel and RNLI station increases the usable space for pedestrians and creates a destination within the public realm to reflect the importance of the site.
- Creating a clear **pedestrian access route** link between the Town Centre and the Quay, through Harbour Park, will increase permeability and visually link the areas of development.
- **Improved lighting** will help improve safety and access to the Quay
- **Level access** to the quay wall will be needed to ensure accessibility and reduce trip risks.
- Maintaining **consistent signage** between the town centre development and the Quay will help to consolidate the developments and ensure the feeling of fluidity throughout the town. The 3 development must read as one consistent design and be informed by the Clifden Orientation Study.



Quay Sketch Section



Chapter 3

Design



Introduction

The Clifden Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project has involved a collaborative working relationship between Galway County Council and the consultant team, to develop proposals for the town associated with a successful Category 2 Rural Regeneration Development Funding (RRDF) bid. Galway County Council intend to apply for RRDF Category 1 funding, in order to implement the approved scheme. once the scheme has been approved for planning. The RRDF funding process will support projects that;

- Improve public spaces
- Provide initiatives that attract visitors to rural areas
- Improve walking and cycling
- Enhance recreational facilities

The project consists of three main components:

1. Town Centre public realm improvements
2. Creation of a new Harbour Park
3. Improvements to the Beech Road Quay Area

The project which started in August 2021 has involved significant baseline analysis work, stakeholder consultation as well as community consultation in order to develop initial draft proposals. Initial options were presented to the local community, council members and local businesses at a consultation day in June 2022. The proposals were then refined to take on board community and stakeholder consultation feedback and further commented upon by the community and stakeholders so that they could be developed in sufficient detail to submit a planning application. The project will seek to reinforce Clifden's position as the 'Capital of Connemara' through the regeneration of its public realm and greenspaces.



Image of Public Realm Enhancement in Clifden Market Square

Vision

The vision of the project is as follows:

- To create **more usable civic space** and encourage people to spend more time in the town centre
- To **improve access to the town's waterside spaces** allow an appreciation of the attractive coastal setting of the town
- To enable **easier movement of people around the town centre streets and lanes** and encourage visitors to explore all the town has to offer
- To provide a **wider range of amenities** for both the community and visitors to the town
- To meet the challenges of being a **'climate ready' town**
- To **encourage active travel** within the town and **accommodate future opportunities** resulting from the Connemara Greenway cycle route.
- To create an **exciting experience for visitors** and a longer tourism season so businesses can remain open all year round
- To **enhance civic space** to accommodate the town's festivals
- To **reconnect disconnected parts of the town** with links from the town centre to the quayside



Clifden Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

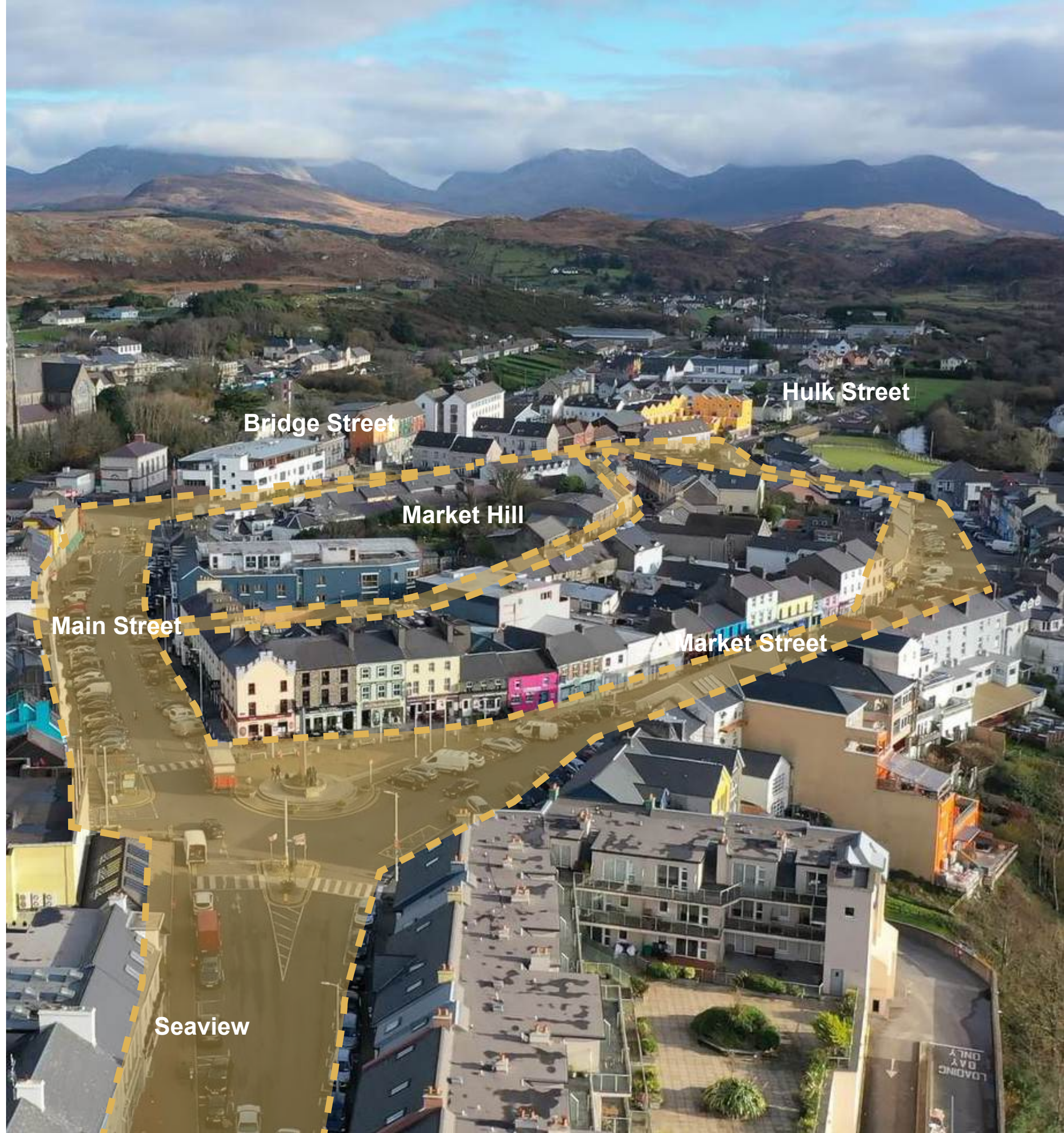
Responses from the in-person and online consultation provided a key direction for the design of the town centre public realm project. Some of the key messages that arose from the consultation were as follows:

- Creation of a more people-friendly town centre
- Retention of sufficient parking in the town centre
- The existing Alcock and Brown Sculpture should take central position in the town

Due to concerns raised about the reduction of car parking in the town centre, Galway County Council commissioned a car parking survey report which concluded that whilst the public realm enhancement project will result in the loss of on-street car parking, surplus parking elsewhere in close proximity to the town centre will more than compensate for the loss of this town centre parking.

The town centre project comprises improvements to Main Street, Bridge Street, Market Hill, Market Street, Market Square and the footpath and series of external spaces that link Market Street to Ballyconneely Road via the old Gaol site. Current areas that the town centre public realm improvements project will seek to address include:

- Expanding the town centre offer so that visitors stay and dwell in the town centre for longer periods than they currently do so
- Overcoming the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and making the town centre more pedestrian friendly
- Enhance the existing narrow pavement areas in the town as currently businesses are using parking bays for outdoor dining
- Allowing for the Connemara Greenway to come directly into the town centre
- Reduction in carriageway width to allow for improvements to pavement space and pedestrian zones
- Enhancing run-down parts of the town centre such as Market Hill, and the Old Gaol site down to the Ballyconneely Road
- Reducing the visual dominance of parking in the town centre
- Addressing the lack of greening and street trees in the town centre



- Key elements of the public realm project:**
- The provision of an off-road cycleway that enters into the town centre, thus linking the town centre directly with the new Connemara Greenway
 - **Reduction in carriageway width to allow for improvements to pavement space and pedestrian zones**
 - Use of planting in the town centre to help 'green' the town but also to mark arrival points and highlight crossing areas
 - Use of planting areas as rain gardens and nature based drainage solutions for rain water management
 - Enhanced pedestrian zones along Market Street and Main Street to create a vibrant 'café culture' by allowing businesses to spill out onto the street
 - **Introduction of shared surfaces at junctions to mark arrival points but also slow vehicles down as they enter the town**
 - Introduction of improved crossing points to improve pedestrian safety
 - Introducing a step change in the quality of public realm materials
 - Relocation of the 'Beacon' sculpture to a prominent location in Harbour Park
 - General improvements and upgrading the lighting across the town centre respecting 'Dark Sky' sensitivities and minimizing light spillage
 - New reverse in echelon type parking introduced on the southern side of Market Street and the northern side of Main Street.
 - New parallel parking introduced along the eastern end of Market Street on its northern side.



Image of Public Realm Enhancement on Main Street Clifden



Wider business spill-out space



Enhanced visitor experience



Incorporate artwork, lighting and planting



Create flexible event spaces

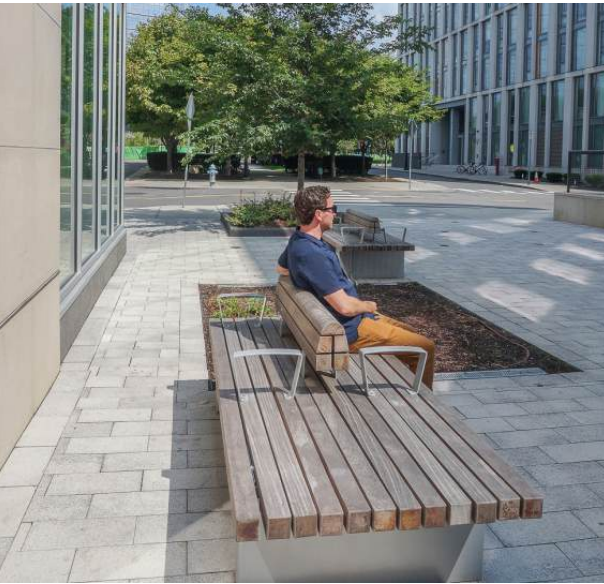
Town Centre Street Furniture Schedule

The street furniture as part of the public realm enhancements will create a consistent and coherent look and feel. A key aim is to declutter the footways and streetscape generally and the placement of seating, bins etc will be well considered to minimise the impact on pedestrian movement.

Street furniture will also be used to deter ad-hoc parking and prevent the need for excessive bollards / clutter which is currently the case throughout the study area and detracts from the streetscene and overall connectivity. Furniture will use sustainable materials wherever possible and be specified to be high-quality and long lasting. *Final specifications are subject to further detailed design*



Timber bench with backrest



Timber bench without backrest



Double facing timber bench



Powder coated cycle stands

Town Centre Materiality Schedule

The street furniture as part of the public realm enhancements will create a consistent and coherent look and feel. A key aim is to declutter the footways and streetscape generally and the placement of seating, bins etc will be well considered to minimise the impact of pedestrian movement.

Street furniture will also be used to deter ad-hoc parking and prevent the need for excessive bollards / clutter which is currently the case throughout the study area and detracts from the streetscene and overall connectivity. Furniture will use sustainable materials wherever possible and be specified to be robust and long lasting. *Final specifications are subject to further detailed design*



Natural stone paving to footway



Natural stone setts to carriageway



Example of urban seating



Example of roadside herbaceous planting



Inset tree grille



Mixed use litter bins



Fingerpost signage



Monolith Sigange Totem



Natural stone corduroy paving



Natural Stone flush kerbs



Example of rain garden planting



Example of tree species suitable for Town Centre

The Harbour Park

The site that has been identified for the new harbour park is a derelict piece of land that lies immediately to the west of the town centre. It is located between the Beach Road and Clifden Bay and, whilst currently unused offers an opportunity to create meaningful recreational facilities for the towns people, due to it's generally level topography and excellent views out towards the bay. Higher ground to the north and eastern edge of the park also create an enclosed area offering shelter and containment. The proposals seek to work with the existing topography creating viewing areas, an amphitheater and community gardens that will be set within the embankment. The space also acts as a stepping stone between the town centre and the Beach Road Quay area and improvements to this part of the town generally will greatly improve the visitor experience offer that the town is able to provide.

Current deficiencies that the Harbour Park Project proposals will seek to address include:

- Bringing a derelict piece of land on the edge of the town centre back into meaningful use
- Enhancing the existing park area that is currently limited and has a poor offer for the town
- Dealing with invasive weed species that are currently present on site
- Provision of a real community asset that will cater for local people as well as visitors to the town



Beach Road

- Key elements of the Harbour Park proposals include:**
- Making a **key feature of the Beacon sculpture** that will be relocated from Market Square to the main arrival point at the new park entrance
 - Creation of a **viewing area** and accessible ramp down into the park via a **new community garden areas**
 - Creation of a **new amphitheater and outdoor events space** set into the existing embankment
 - Creation of an **informal 200m running track** for outdoor fitness and exercise
 - Provision of a **new public park**, consisting of hard and soft landscaped areas, tree planting, furniture, lighting and boundary treatments
 - **The integration of flood prevention measures** and sustainable drainage systems, in particular in the north west corner adjacent to Ogwenlin River.
 - **Off street pedestrian route** along Beach Road and internal circulation routes/ walkways, including step-free accessible routes
 - **Provision of native planting** as well as opportunities for **increased biodiversity**.
 - **Elements of play which cater to all ages** and abilities of the local community, including young children, teenagers, and older persons. This will include a new pump track, MUGA and climbing wall
 - **Improved car and cycle parking facilities**, including accessible parking bays.
 - Appropriate **management and consideration of the invasive plant species** and asbestos currently found on site



Image of Public Realm Enhancement to Harbour Park



Harbour Park Street Furniture Schedule

The street furniture within the Harbour Park will be robust, and contain hard-wearing materials with a natural finish, responding to the sensitivities of the coastal setting of the Harbour Park. Natural forms of play, and the whole informal character of the park will be in-keeping to the coastal setting.



Timber bench with backrest



Timber picnic bench



Informal modular seating chairs



Corten steel cycle stands

Harbour Park Materiality Schedule

The street furniture as part of the public realm enhancements will create a consistent and coherent look and feel. A key aim is to declutter the footways and streetscape generally and the placement of seating, bins etc will be well considered to minimise the impact of pedestrian movement.

Street furniture will also be used to deter ad-hoc parking and prevent the need for excessive bollards / clutter which is currently the case throughout the study area and detracts from the streetscene and overall connectivity. Furniture will use sustainable materials wherever possible and be specified to be robust and long lasting. *Final specifications are subject to further detailed design*



Resin bound gravel



Self-binding gravel



Wildflower and grass



Example of native species



Corten steel bollards



Mixed use litter bins



Fingerpost signage



Monolith Sigange Totem



Silver grey granite kerbs



Natural Stone corduroy paving



Marram grasses



Example of naturalistic planting

Beach Road Quay

The existing Quay is now predominantly used to moor leisure boats, though some fishing activity is present. This presents issues with storing equipment and competing space for pedestrians, equipment and access for the RNLI Station activity. Beach Road traffic, and the risk presented by the Quay wall pose potential safety risks to pedestrians, as there is currently no pavement provision in this area. Bollards also prevent the use of the grass verge between the road and quay from being used as an alternative walking route. There is significant on-street parking along Beach Road for The Quay Hotel and private housing, which further decreases the available space for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Beach Road Quay project will involve the creation of a high quality waterside space with improved connections to the town centre and Harbour Park, which will enable people to enjoy the natural coastal setting of Clifden town.

Current issues that the project seeks to address include:

- Provision of formal mooring bollards next to the quay wall to avoid further damage to the wall and remove ropes from the grassed area
- Allowing the history and working character of the quay area to be accentuated through the use of robust, sympathetic materials and construction details
- Provision of seating opportunities to allow views to be enjoyed off the road
- Restriction of parking by the quay wall side of the road to avoid further damage to the quay wall structure
- Provision of an improved pedestrian experience when walking along the Beach Road, but still allow vehicle access
- Defining the edge of the equipment storage area to provide a visible boundary for the equipment to be located behind
- Exploring whether the overhead electrical wires could be undergrounded and new lighting columns introduced to reduce the visual clutter in the area



Key elements of the Beach Road Quay proposals include:

- Seating located within the planted areas creating off-road locations to enjoy the views across the water.
- Mooring bollards provided next to the quay wall to avoid further damage to the wall and remove the ropes crisscrossing the grassed area
- Stone material used to create the seating walls to highlight the historic character of the area
- Bollards and lighting columns located at the edge of the grassed area to stop vehicles parking on the grass
- Sections of stone wall used to indicate the edge of the equipment storage area
- Stone paving proposed across the width of the road from the equipment storage area to past the slipway to create a large high quality surfaced area which appears to be more 'pedestrian' although it is still accessible for vehicles
- Existing asphalt road surface removed between the equipment storage area to past the slipway
- Grass area retained and enhanced with coastal wildflowers and low level amenity planting which will involve locally native species



Image of Public Realm Enhancement along Beach Road Quay



Beach Road Quay Street Furniture Schedule

The street furniture for Beach Road Quay will be robust with a maritime feel, and provide the aesthetic link between the Town Centre and the more rugged, naturalistic feel of the Harbour Park.



Corten steel cycle stands



Natural stone seating wall



Mixed use litter bins



Fingerpost signage

Beach Road Quay Materiality Schedule

The street furniture as part of the public realm enhancements will create a consistent and coherent look and feel. A key aim is to declutter the footways and streetscape generally and the placement of seating, bins etc will be well considered to minimise the impact of pedestrian movement.

Street furniture will also be used to deter ad-hoc parking and prevent the need for excessive bollards / clutter which is currently the case throughout the study area and detracts from the streetscene and overall connectivity. Furniture will use sustainable materials wherever possible and be specified to be robust and long lasting. *Final specifications are subject to further detailed design*



Natural stone paving to footway



Natural stone setts to carriageway



Wildflower Meadows



Example of ornamental grasses to Beach Road Quay



Existing Stone Wall retained



Natural Stone flush kerbs



Example of ornamental planting to Beach Road Quay



Example of ornamental planting to Beach Road Quay

