

BDP/ GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Gort Town Centre Project

Inventory of Built Heritage & Impact Assessment



Dedalus Architecture

Bath Terrace, Main Street, Moville, Co. Donegal

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Document prepared by:

Duncan McLaren BSc DipArch(Lond) RIBA MRIAI
RIAI Accredited Conservation Architect Grade1

Bath Terrace
Main Street
Moville
County Donegal
Ireland

+353 (0)74 9385122
www.dedalusarchitecture.com

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Figure 1 – Cover Shopfront & Doorway facing onto Market Square

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Author of the Study

Duncan McLaren, BSc DipArch(Lond) RIBA MRIAI, is an RIAI accredited Grade 1 conservation architect.

Scope & Limitations of the Study

This Audit and Inventory of street side Built Heritage features has been commissioned by BDP in order to inform the development of proposals and a 'Part 10' Planning Application for Public Realm Works for Gort Town Centre. The findings are to further inform the detailed development of design proposals for that area, subject to obtaining Planning Permission, in due course.

The public realm areas provide the setting for the historic town of Gort, and its buildings, many of which are protected structures, and are located within a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). There is potential for many of these buildings to be indirectly affected by the proposed public realm works.

Whilst many of the the buildings can be reviewed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), the streetscapes also contain a quantity of historic features and artefacts that may also be directly affected by the proposed works. The initial objective of this study was to create a record of these previously unrecorded items.

This study is limited to those parts of the town that are subject to a 'Part 10' planning application for new public realm works; these are the southern end of Crowe Street, eastern end of Church Street, Market Square, Barrack Street, Queen Street/ Church Road, Canon Quin Park, Bridge Street, and the northern end of George Street. The brief for this scheme was prepared by Galway County Council and forms part of a Town Centre First strategy for the town of Gort.

The proposed plans that are subject of this Part 10 application have taken the proposed public realm elements and, following initial public consultation, these have been developed in detail, evolving into working designs which reflect the detailed design brief, engineering requirements and budget. In order to inform the current plans, a detailed inventory of historic street fabric has been prepared by an RIAI Accredited Grade 1 Conservation Architect. The Conservation Architect has also prepared a Built Heritage Impact Assessment of the planning application stage designs and considered their impact on the items contained within the inventory, the historic setting, and the setting of the adjacent protected structures.

As the public realm areas are already devised as part of an overall Heritage Led plan, only issues relating to detailed aspects of the proposals are considered within the Built Heritage Impact Assessment report. Some recommendations for further minor refinements are identified for inclusion at the detailed design prior to the construction phase of development. Recommendations suggest how any impacts identified might be removed or mitigated in the course of the post-planning design development and thus is also intended to be treated as a checklist.

The proposed works that are subject of the 'Part 10' planning application are the Gort Public Realm Enhancement Project, described as follows:

"Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project on Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park to include:

- 1. Redesigned paved areas along Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street and Church Street including new surface materials, installation of a new lighting scheme, hard and soft landscaping and street furniture (The proposed works are located within the Architectural Conservation Area, and in the vicinity of Recorded Protected Structures RPS No 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 3445, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3459, 3464, 3467, 3468, 3469, 3471, 3472.*
- 2. Provision of an upgraded and expanded pedestrianised civic/public space in the Market Square.*
- 3. Provision of new pedestrian crossings.*
- 4. Installation of new road alignments including reduction in carriageway widths and traffic calming measures.*
- 5. Installation of new street furniture and cycle parking.*
- 6. Rationalised on-street car parking throughout the application area including the provision of new disabled and age friendly parking provision.*
- 7. The provision of 2No. new public off-street car parks and Crowe Street and Barrack Street.*
- 8. Installation of new landscaping including street trees and planting.*
- 9. Upgrade works to the existing Canon Quinn Park including the installation of play equipment, seating, lighting and ancillary infrastructure.*
- 10. Installation of a new signage and way-finding scheme.*
- 11. Undergrounding of overhead cables and the removal of redundant overhead cabling.*
- 12. Installation of upgraded surface water drainage infrastructure including provision of nature-based, sustainable urban drainage solutions.*
- 13. The relocating of existing public bus-stop to Bridge Street/George Street and provision 1No. new coach drop off area on Market Square.*
- 14. All other associated site and ancillary works at Market Square, Bridge Street, George Street, Crowe Street, Barrack Street, Queen Street, Church Street, and Canon Quinn Park."*

Consultation

No consultation has been undertaken as part of this study, although the designers have consulted extensively through a series of public engagement workshops as the design proposals have developed. Further public consultation is requested as part of the 'Part 10' Planning Application process.



Figure 2 – map showing the Gort town centre & key to proposed public realm improvements ©BDP

The summary background below, under the heading ‘The Buildings Site & Context’ is extracted and edited from the earlier studies to provide some information about the part of the town to which the current proposals relate, where this earlier background information may not otherwise be available to the reader.

The Buildings, Site & Context

- Location & Description of Study Area
- Protection Status
- Historical References



Figure 3 – Overall landscape masterplan showing how the proposed elements are broken down in size for purposes of the drawings © BDP

Location & Description of Study Area – Gort Town Centre

The study area comprises the centre of Gort. Together, Crow Street, Barrack Street, Bridge Street, and Church Street form a crossroads with the triangular or diamond-shaped 'Market Square' at its centre. The market square is overlooked by the Courthouse at the east side, and at the west end, slightly off axis, is St Colman's catholic church. Three of the streets lead into the town along once important routes connecting Gort with Dublin, Galway and Ennis. The fourth leads to the former barracks on the site of the medieval castle and bawn. Part of this re-purposed military centre of the town is occupied by a Garda barracks and other, light-industrial and storage, uses.

Church Street and Bridge Street are connected by Church Road and Queen street, which meet in front of the former Church of Ireland, now in use as a public library. The angle of these roads, located behind the main thoroughfares, forms the Canon Quin Park creating a square garden; a shared community space between the two churches. Queen Street also forms the boundary between the former convent and school to the south which faces onto the Gort River.

Bridge Street extends down to the road crossing over Gort River, and onwards to George Street, leading south and under the railway bridge serving the town station.

The central area around the Market Square, Barrack Street and Bridge Street are lined with mostly 3-storey terraced houses and shops. These are uniform in design, mostly eighteenth century in character with well-proportioned and rendered facades with dressed limestone doorcases, chimneys and front steps still present. Some of the buildings have original pattern joinery and historic shop frontages. Other parts of the town are largely made up of 2-storey buildings, with some exceptions, more vernacular in character. Many of these buildings retain their historic detail; an increasing number appear to be vacant and requiring repair.

The extent of the application area is shown in the BDP site layout plan above.

Protection Status

Whilst the central area is the part of the town with the most uniform architectural treatment; together, the areas for which a 'Part 10' planning application is made, form a group of immense townscape character and value. This is also reflected in the Conservation Area protection that is applied to the entire area within which the application is being made.

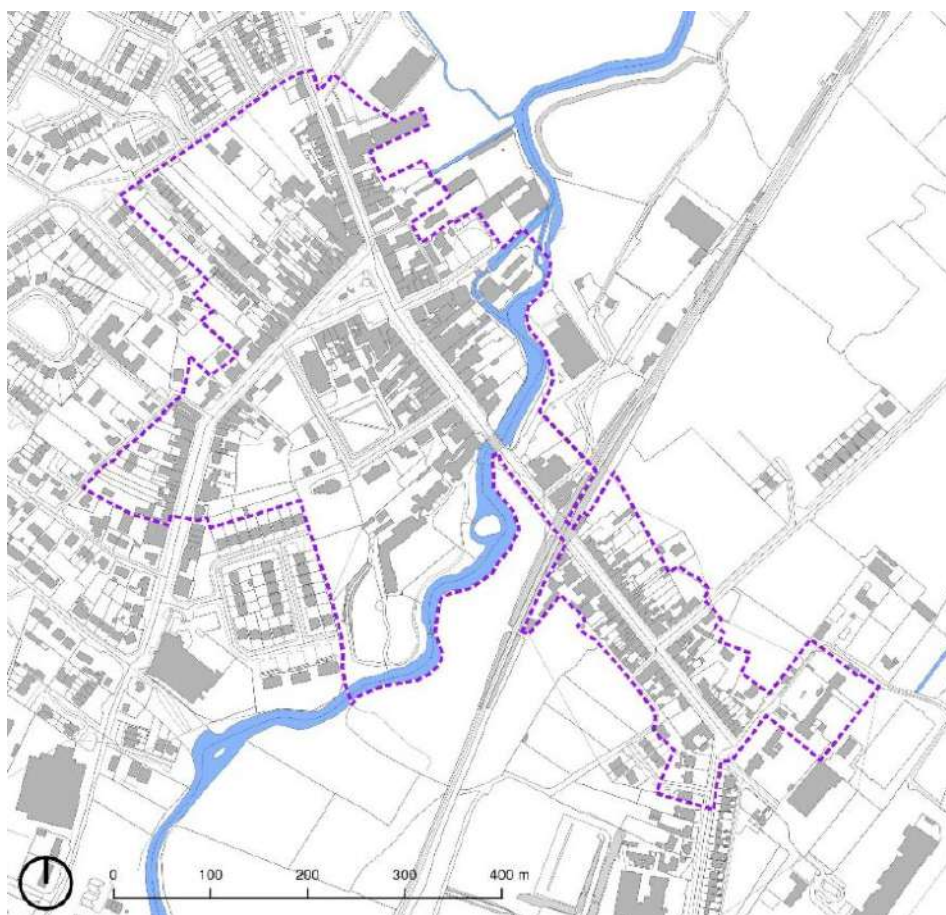


Figure 4 – Gort Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

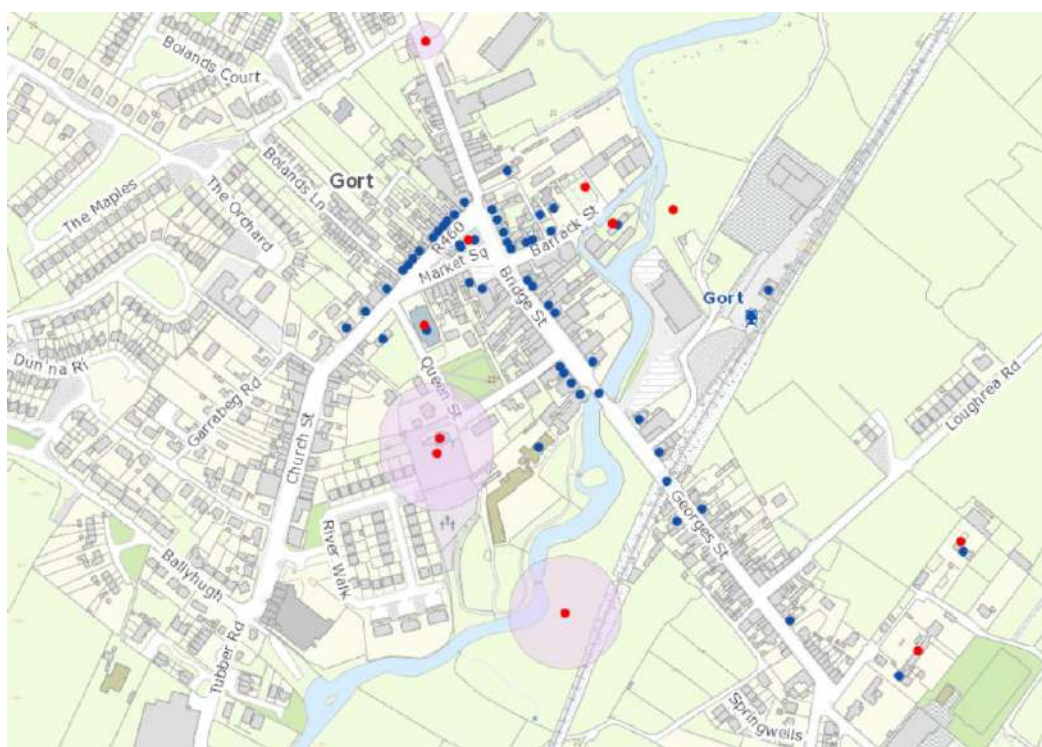


Figure 5 – Gort town centre with buildings recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) marked with a blue dot. These are also largely included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for County Galway. The red dots denote a recorded archaeological monument, and the pink circle a zone of notification within which any works requiring breaking of the ground surface will need Ministerial Notice to be given, although it is noted that the statutory notification areas shown here are incomplete.

Protection Under Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended

Protected Structures:

Within the application area there are currently approximately 43 no. locations listed in the NIAH.

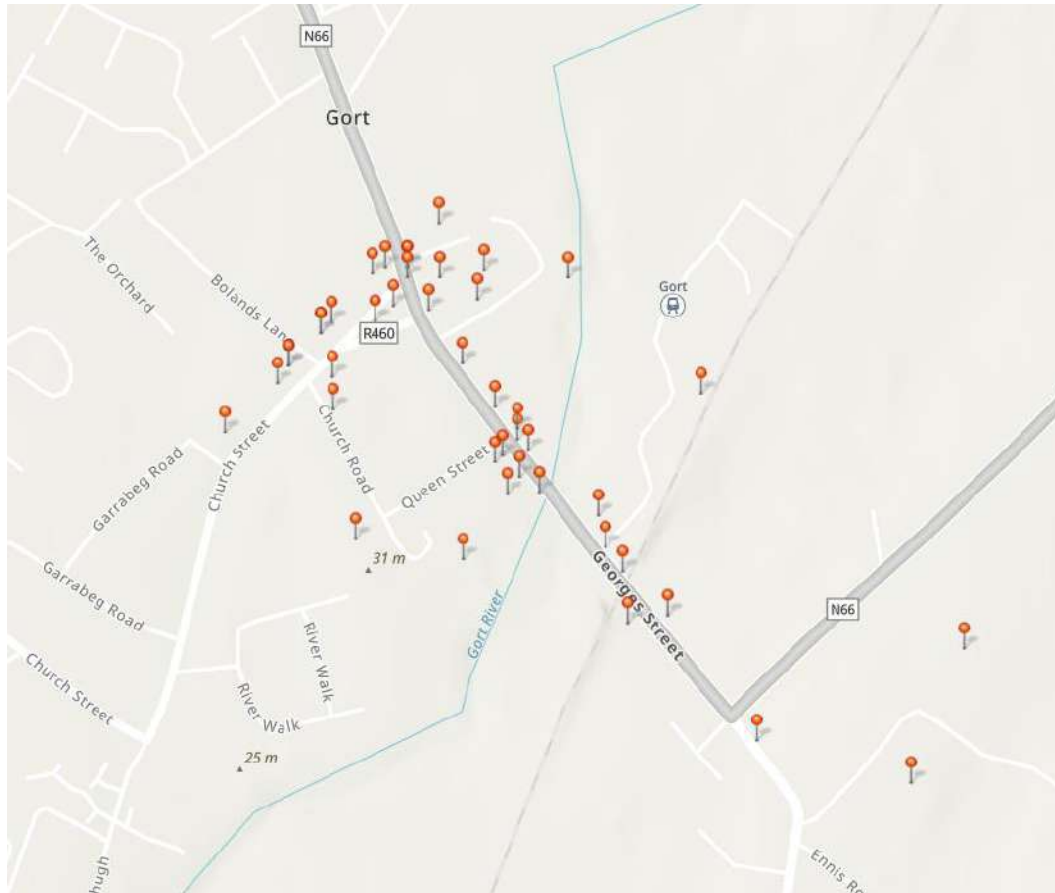


Figure 6 – Protected Structures

Within the 'Part 10' planning application area there are 16 no buildings recorded in the NIAH only; 5 no structures in the RPS only and the remaining 31 no are both Protected Structures and recorded in the NIAH. All 52 no buildings identified in the NIAH and RPS listings are highlighted in a pale orange tone in the impact assessment sheets. Whilst the 16 no NIAH only buildings, are not strictly protected by their inclusion in the RPS, they are located within the Architectural Conservation Area and are given a 'Regional' importance rating in the RPS, which is essentially a Ministerial direction that they be added to the RPS in due course:

RPS only

- 427 House
- 432 Kilroy
- 438 Roches Garage
- 439 Emerald Cleaners
- 440 Abrakebabra / Irish Permanent

RPS & NIAH

- 417/ NIAH30341030 St. Colman's Catholic Church
- 418/ NIAH 30341002 House
- 419/ NIAH 30341003 House
- 420/ NIAH 30341015 Gort Crane House
- 421/ NIAH 30341006 Dicey Reillys/T Lally
- 422/ NIAH 30341007 Finnegan ? Magic Touch
- 423/ NIAH 30341013 O'Sullivan's Hotel
- 424/ NIAH 30341014 P. J. Piggott / PO
- 425/ NIAH 30341005 Angela's Boutique
- 426/ NIAH 30341021 Gort Jewellers
- 428/ NIAH 30341017 Treasures [Angela's Boutique]
- 429/ NIAH 30341018 Courthouse
- 430/ NIAH 30341019 AIB
- 431/ NIAH 30341020 Roger Fahy
- 433/ NIAH 30341042 Gort Library
- 434/ NIAH 30341048 Gort Bridge
- 436/ NIAH 30341051 Burke
- 437/ NIAH 30341039 Medical Centre
- 441/ NIAH 30341046 Convent of Mercy
- 442/ NIAH 30341001 St Colman's Hall Heritage Centre
- 3445/ NIAH 30341002
- 3451/ NIAH 30341012 Power of Flowers Gort
- 3452/ NIAH 30341016 Críost Rí
- 3458/ NIAH 30341025 Gort Garda Station
- 3459/ NIAH 30341026 House
- 3464/ NIAH 30341036 Former Barracks
- 3467/ NIAH 30341043 Ambiance / Dragon King
- 3468/ NIAH 30341044 House
- 3469/ NIAH 30341045 Bank of Ireland
- 3471/ NIAH 30341050 Woodley B & B
- 3472/ NIAH 30341052 Railway Bridge

NIAH only

- NIAH 30341004 House
- NIAH 30341005 House
- NIAH 30341008 House
- NIAH 30341009 House
- NIAH 30341010 House
- NIAH 30341011 House
- NIAH 30341022 House
- NIAH 30341023 House
- NIAH 30341024 Stables
- NIAH 30341029 Silverfort/ House
- NIAH 30341031 House
- NIAH 30341032 House
- NIAH 30341033 House
- NIAH 30341034 Keane's/ House
- NIAH 30341037 House
- NIAH 30341038 M. Barry/ House

Whilst not necessarily notable, individually, for their architectural interest, other buildings and features within the assessment area contribute to the overall spatial, architectural, and material character of the town centre. These buildings and their setting are protected by virtue of their inclusion within the ACA. All buildings within the site of the proposed development are thus considered to be of some importance and the material impact of proposals has been assessed accordingly.

Protection Under National Monument Acts 1930 to 2004

- GA122-006---- : Church
- GA122-006001- : Graveyard
- GA122-008---- : Church
- **GA122-093---- : Town**
- GA122-097---- : Castle
- GA122-097001- : Ringfort – rath

There are 6 no recorded monuments within the application site area, with the exception of GA122-093---- and GA122-008----, each has an associated zone of notification, within which works must either be notified to the Minister or, where they are in public ownership, may require Ministerial Consent. The statutory mapping showing notification zones is set out in the Record of Monuments & Places for County Galway (RMP). The area associated with the barracks and earlier fortifications has an extensive area shown. This is confused somewhat by the online mapping which appears to be incomplete. Neither map shows a zone of notification for the town centre as a whole, although this is usually the case for other towns in Ireland. It should be assumed that most of the application site area to the north of the river will require some archaeological oversight in the course of the works.

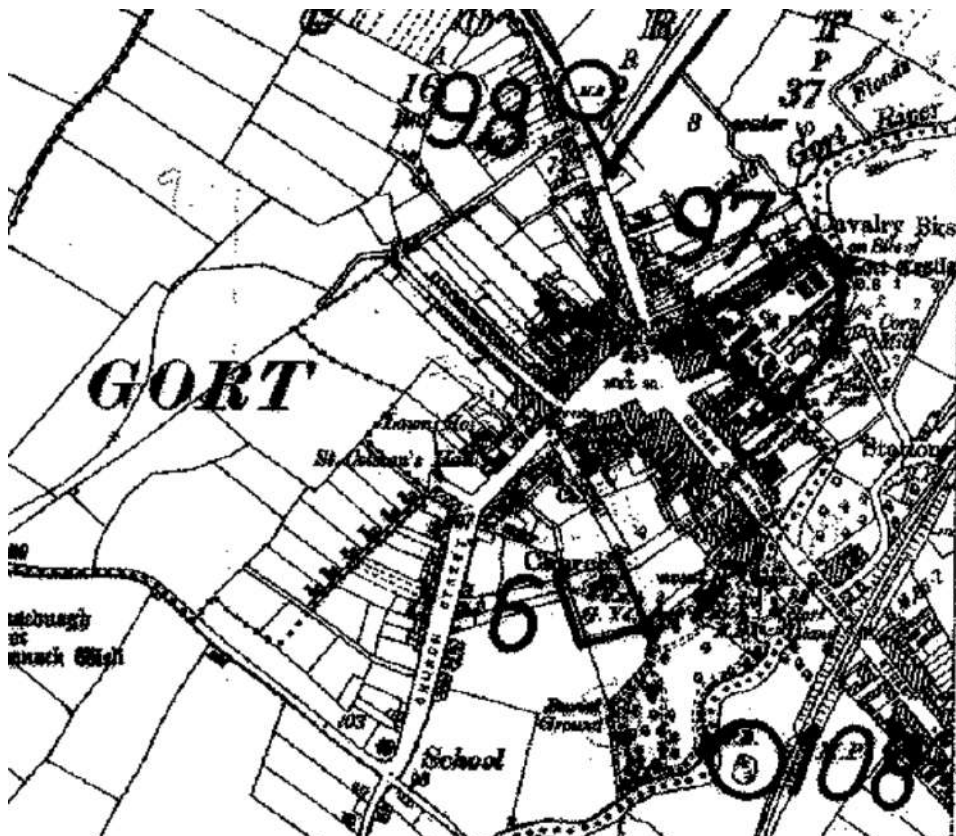


Figure 7 –statutory RMP map for Gort

Historical References

Whilst the region around Gort is famously associated with Lady Gregory, William and Jack Butler Yeats and other participants in the Irish Literary Revival, the setting of the town itself has an earlier history. Dating back to the 6th century, the parish of Gort was birthplace of Saint Colman mac Duagh. The centre of the town, where the cavalry barracks are located, is associated with the 'palace' of Colman's relative King Guaire and later as the administrative centre during the 16th century.

The entry in the Archaeological Survey of Ireland states:

"According to Fahey (1893, 211-12) the castle at Gort was built on an island on the site of the 'palace' of Guaire Aidne Mac Colmáin, the sixth century king of Connacht. It seems likely that it was the principle residence of Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy, Lord of Kineal Aedh, when he was created baronet by Henry VIII, A.D. 1545 (Fahey 1893, 212). And it was here that the O'Shaughnessy, a few years later, entertained the Lord Deputy and his escort at a banquet almost regal in its ostentatious display. 'On the 12th July he encamped near Gort, and dined at O'Shaughnessy's house so worshipfully that divers wondered at it, for such a dinner or the like of it was not seen in any Irishman's house before.' (quoted in ibid.) His son, Dermot, petitioned Elizabeth I to have it and other castles re-granted to him in 1567 (Cal. S.P. Ire. 1509-73, 340) and, in 1574, it is simply recorded as in the possession of the 'OShaghnes' (Nolan 1901, 114). As is evident from the following account a substantial dwelling house had been built close to the castle by the mid-seventeenth century and the whole enclosed by a bawn. The Parliamentary Lieutenant-General of horse, Edmund Ludlow, provides a vivid account of the taking of the castle in early June 1650. Having initially requested those in the castle to submit they refused stating that, as they had already surrendered to Sir Charles Coote, they would only give over the castle to him. Ludlow sent a letter to Coote who responded that the former had command and this was sent to those in castle 'telling them, that now I expected their obedience; but instead of that they sent me a defiance, and sounded their bagpipes in contempt of us; to which they were chiefly encouraged by one of the country, whom I had sent to bring in to me some iron bars, sledges, and pickaxes, and who under colour of going to fetch them, ran away to the enemy, and acquainted them with our want of artillery and instruments to force them. I gave orders to take up all the horses from grass, to bridle and saddle them, and to tie them to the tents of their respective troops, commanding two troops to mount the guard, and to send out scouts to discover if any enemy were near. The rest of the men I drew into several parties, and assigned them their particular attacks: every souldier carried a fagot before him, as well to defend himself, as to fill up the enemy's trenches, or to fire the gates, as there should be occasion. On one side of the wall there was an earth-work about eleven foot high, with a trench of equal breadth without. The wall of the court was about twelve foot high, well flanked. On the other side the place was secured by a river. Upon our first approach the enemy shot very thick upon us, and killed two of our men, which so enraged the rest, that they ran up to the works, and helping one another to the top of them, beat off the enemy, following them so close, that by means of some ladders which those within had made use of, they got into the court, and put to the sword most of those they found there, the enemy not daring to open the gate to receive their friends. Those of ours who had entered the court, having no instruments to force the house, made use of a wooden bar which they found, and with which they wrested out the iron bars of a strong stone window about six foot from the ground, and forced the enemy by their shot out of that room, where being entered, they put to the sword those that were there. Lieutenant Folliot finding his case desperate resolved to sell his life at as dear a rate as he could, and charged our men, who were nine or ten in number, with a tuck in one hand, and a stilletto in the other, defending himself so well with the one, and pressing them so hard with the other, that

they all gave ground; but he closing with one of them whom he had wounded, and probably might have killed, gave an opportunity to another to run him through the body, by which wound he fell, and the house was quickly cleared of the rest. Most of the principal of the enemies being got into the castle, our men fired a great number of fagots at the gates, which burned so furiously, that the flame took hold of the floors and other timber within through the iron grate, which being perceived by those in the castle, they hung out a white flag, begging earnestly for mercy, and that we would take away the fire. I commanded my men to leave shooting, and acquainted the besieged, that if they expected any favour from us, they must throw down their arms, which they presently did: whereupon I ordered the fire to be taken away, and gave a souldier twenty shillings to fetch out two barrels of powder that was near the fire, which continued to burn so fiercely that we could not put it out, but were obliged to throw up skains of match into the chambers, by which those in the castle descended to us, being about fourscore in number, besides many women and children. We secured the men till the next morning, when I called a council of war; and being pressed by the officers, that some of the principal of them might be punished with death for their obstinacy, I consented to their demand, provided it might not extend to such as had been drawn in by the malice of others. Those who were tenants to Sir Dermot O'Shortness, and countrymen, I dismissed to their habitations, upon promise to behave themselves peaceably, and to engage against us no more: the rest of them we carried away with us.' (Firth 1894, i, 271-3). This episode is also mentioned in a diary of a Parliamentary officer who records under an entry for 15 June 1650 that as their forces were returning via Gort they were 'affronted by those in the castle of Gortinse belonging to Sir Roger Shaghness, trusting to the strength of the place; our horse and dragoones notwithstanding their not haveing anything but their armes convenient for a storme yet forced the place after long and great dispute. About 40 of the rebels were slaine in the storme and after, 14 shot, the castle was burnt, but the house preserved.' (Gilbert 1879-80, iii, 239). The castle and lands passed to Dermot O'Shaughnessy who was a captain in King James II's army at the battle of the Boyne: he died in 1690 at Gort. His son William was declared attainted and fled to France. The O'Shaughnessy lands were confiscated and granted to Sir Thomas Preston in 1697 (Fahey 1893, 212). In the later 18th century the 'historic castle and mansion were levelled to the earth, to supply space and building material for the present unoccupied military barrack' (ibid., 213). The only surviving fragments are a twin-light late medieval window and possible medieval doorway which appear to have been reinstated into later barrack walls. The ITM coordinates for the castle provided here should not be considered as exact and are only indicative of its general location based on the available evidence."

Today, the town of Gort retains its largely late Georgian or early 19th century character, as set out by then landlord Lord Viscount Gort. Viscount Gort's residence was the Bridge House, later to become the Convent, before construction of Lough Cutra Castle in the countryside nearby.

The town centre buildings have a uniformity eaves level and consistent architectural detailing, much of which still survives.

Extract from – Dutton, H (1824) **A Statistical & Agricultural Survey of the County Galway** Royal Dublin Society:

“The estate of Lord Gort, as it stands near the County of Clare, to which it is one of the passes from Connaught to Munster, has a considerable share of inland trade; it possesses an excellent weekly market, and several fairs; there are extensive barracks. The appearance of this town, naturally very cheerful, has been much lately improved by the erection of a beautiful church by Mr. Paine, which is proof, amongst many others, of this gentleman’s architectural taste. Lord Gort’s residence in this town, accompanied by a very picturesque reach of the river, gives a very favourable impression, on entering it from Loughrea, and with the spaciousness of the streets, and the new houses that have lately been erected, has changed its former gloomy and neglected appearance into cheerfulness, and a promise of increasing trade.”

Entry in Samuel Lewis’ topographical dictionary of Ireland 1837:

“GORT, a market and post-town, partly in the parishes of KILTARTAN and BEAGH, but chiefly in that of KILMACDUAGH, barony of KILTARTAN, county of GALWAY, and province of CONNAUGHT, 17 miles (S. S. E.) from Galway, and 98 ½ (W. by S.) from Dublin, on the road from Galway to Ennis; containing 3627 inhabitants. This town consists of 563 houses, most of which are neat stone buildings, three or four stories high, held under perpetual leases from Viscount Gort. It is built on an eminence on the main road from Connaught to Munster, with a large square in the centre, and is in a very healthy situation on the bank of a river, which works a very large flour-mill built in 1806, and enlarged in 1836, the property of J. Mangan, Esq., in which 7000 barrels of flour may be annually made. There is a market on Saturday, for agricultural produce, at which much business is transacted; and fairs for cattle and sheep are held on May 10th, Aug. 11th, and Nov. 7th; there is also a very large pig fair on March 17th and on the Saturday preceding Easter-Sunday. The roads in the vicinity are kept in excellent order. Two mail coaches come into the town; one from Dublin, which arrives at 10 A. M. and returns at 4 P. M.; the other passes through daily from Galway to Limerick, and from Limerick to Galway.

Here are an hotel, a revenue police and a chief constabulary police station, which has dependent stations at Ardrahan, Ballytiven, Granagh, Maryville, Noggira, Normongrove, Tubber, Tiernevan, and Killafin. Petty sessions are held every Saturday, and the October quarter sessions for the county are held in the court-house, which was erected in the square in 1815, and comprises a court-hall, grand and petty jury rooms, and keepers’ rooms. Here is also a bridewell, built in 1814, and containing two cells, a magistrates’ room, and keepers’ apartments; but being now too small, is about to be rebuilt. Barracks have existed at Gort for a very long period, and £7000 have been lately expended in building houses for officers and store-rooms; they will now accommodate 8 officers, 88 men, and 116 horses. The church, which is the parish church of Kilmacduagh, was erected in 1810, by a loan of £1400 from the late Board of First Fruits, on land given by the first Lord Gort. It is an elegant cruciform building with a conical spire, and was repaired by a loan of £600 from the same Board, in 1828: the interior is handsomely fitted up with galleries and pews. A new street will be opened from Bridge-street to the church, from which a fine view of it will be obtained. The R. C. chapel was built in 1825, on a site given by Lord Gort, and at an expense of £1300, defrayed by subscription: it is a substantial cruciform building, and contains a fine painting of the Holy Trinity, presented by Lord Gort. The infirmary, which has been recently built, contains two wards, a keeper’s room, and a surgery.



Figure 8 – 19th century view of market place Source: The Historical Picture Company

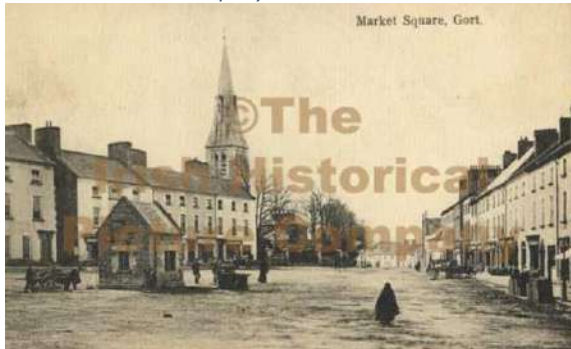


Figure 9 – 19th century view of market place Source: The Historical Picture Company

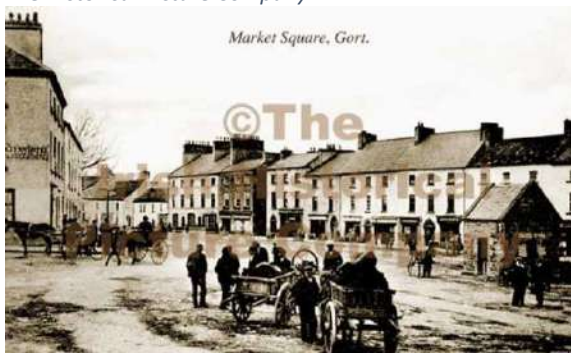


Figure 10 – 19th century view of market place Source: The Historical Picture Company



Figure 11– 19th century view of market place Source: The Historical Picture Company



Figure 12 – Guaire Issue 10 1980



Figure 13 – Guaire Issue 24 1991



Figure 14– 19th century view of market place Source: The Historical Picture Company



Figure 15 – 19th century view of the Church of Ireland
Source: The Historical Picture Company



Figure 18 – 19th century view of Bridge Street Source:
The Historical Picture Company



Figure 16 – 19th century view of Bridge Street Source:
The Historical Picture Company



Figure 17 – 19th century view of Bridge Street Source:
The Historical Picture Company



Figure 19 – Guaire Issue 4 1979

Current & Previous uses

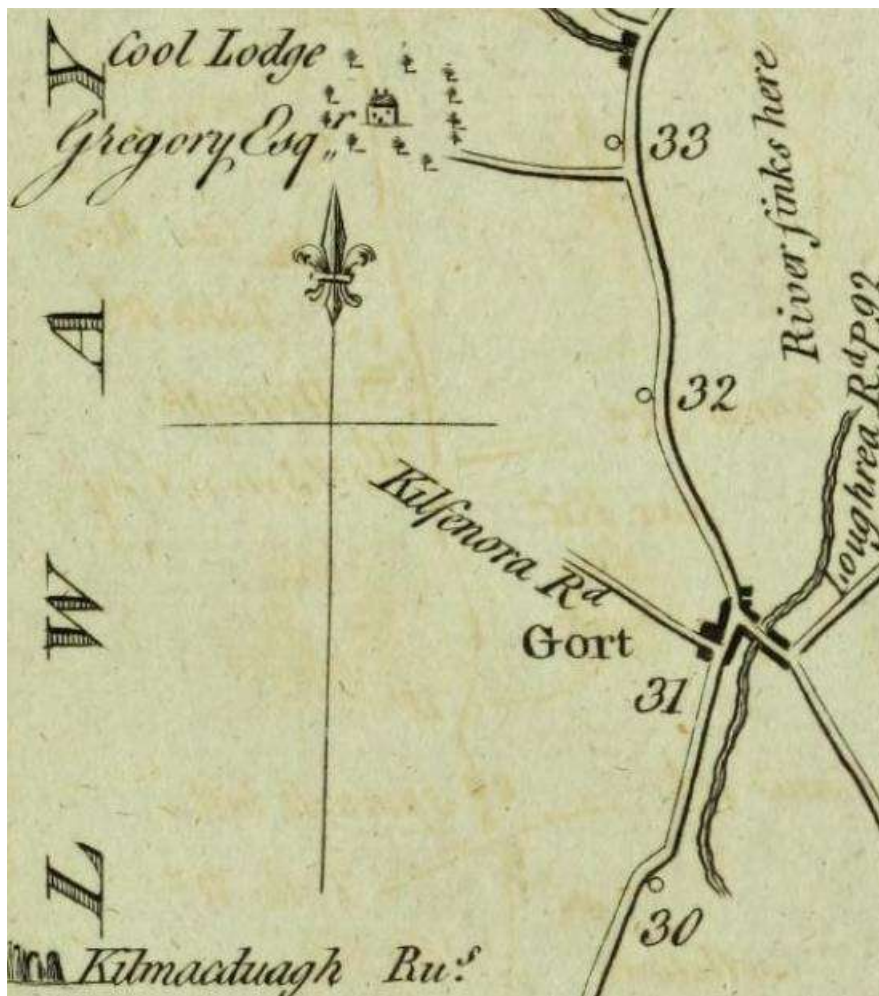


Figure 20 – Taylor & Skinner's map 1777

As in any other town centre in Ireland there was a mix of commercial and residential uses. This continues to an extent today; however, the number of commercial elements has diminished. Today only the larger commercial activities appear to be thriving. The courthouse building is still in use however, the entrance area, behind the railings, has been crudely adapted, removing some of its formal appearance from the public square.

Whilst the entire town centre has a significant residential character there is still space and potential for new commercial and other town centre activities to re-establish in future.

A number of previous developments in the town have diminished the quality of the existing streetscape rather than making improvements to it. In contrast there are currently some modest attempts at regeneration in some of the historic buildings, repairing them and working closely with the existing material rather than against it. This bodes well for the future and, with appropriate direction, would provide better examples for others to follow in future. This will be increasingly important as government funding becomes available for town centre regeneration.



Figure 21 – Extract from "A map of the county of Galway by William Larkin 1819 Source: logainm.ie

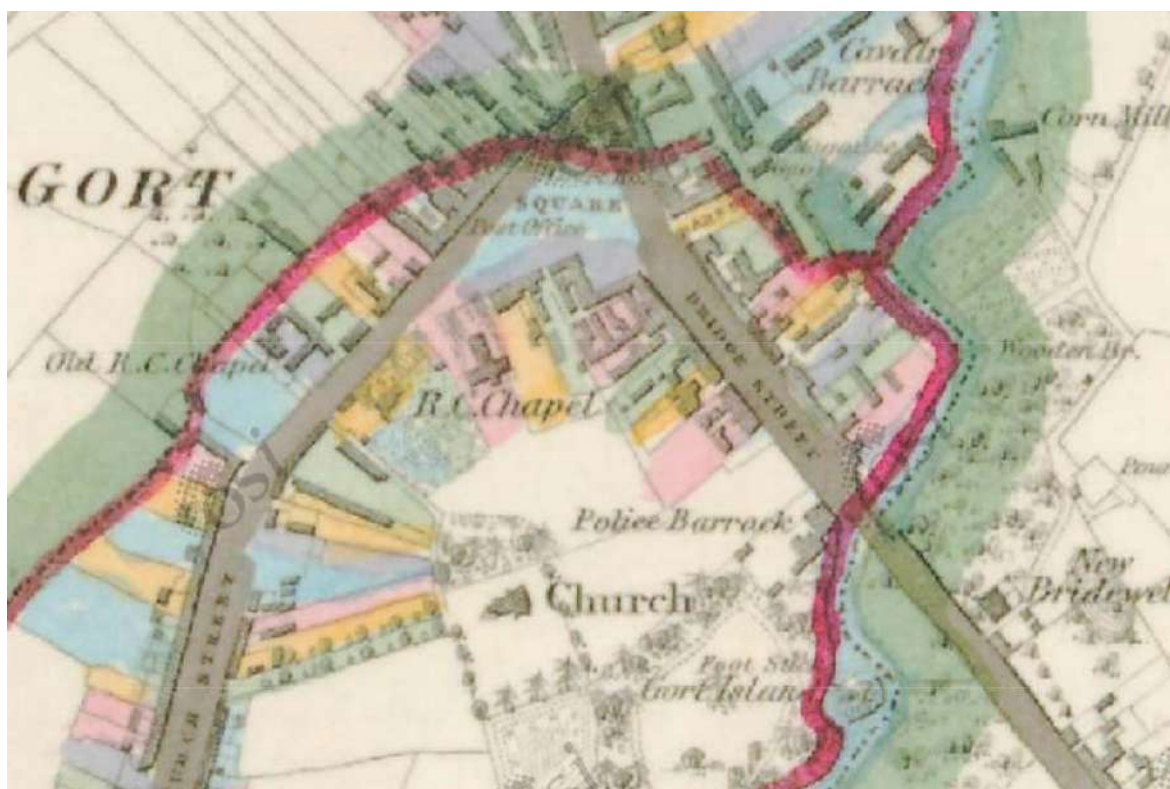
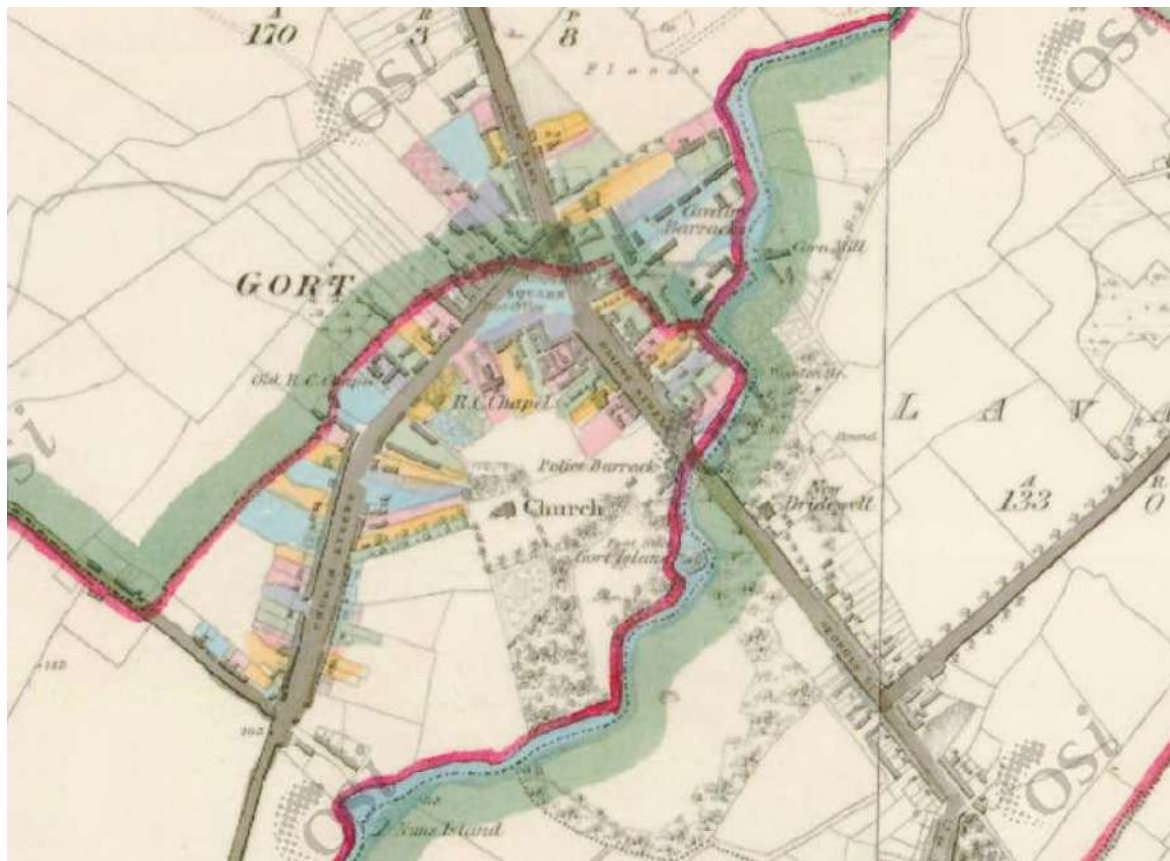


Figure 22 – 1st edition Ordnance Survey map circa 1835 ©OSI

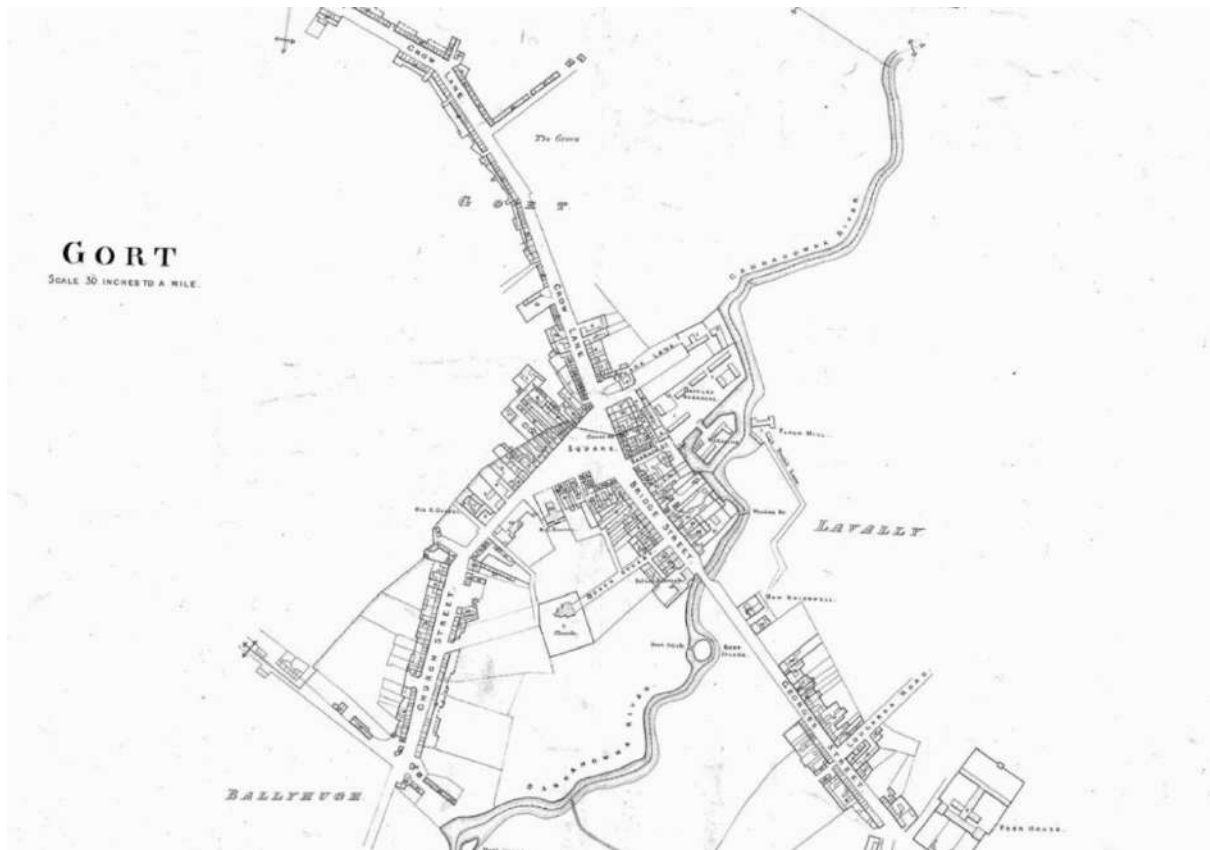


Figure 23 – Extract from Griffith town map of Gort 1856 ©NLI

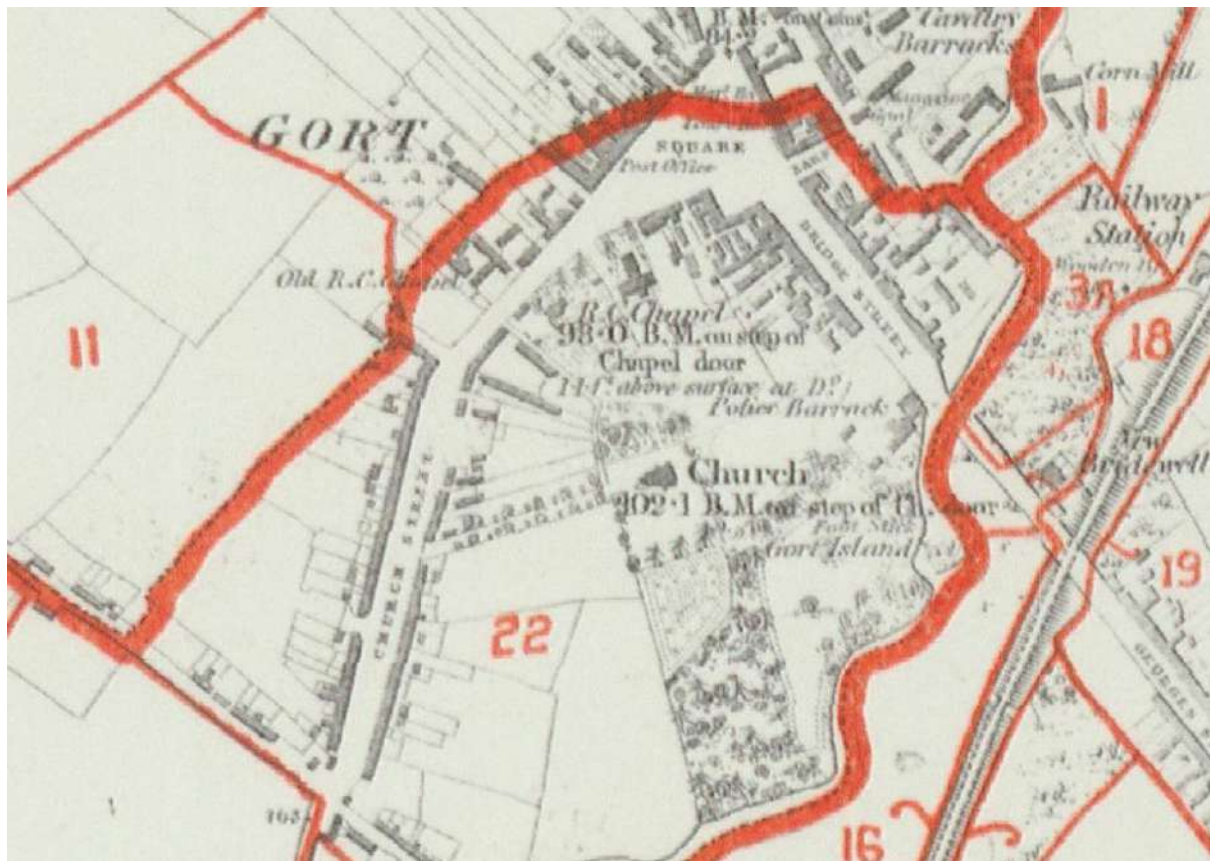


Figure 24 – Extract from Griffith valuation map of Gort 1856 ©NLI

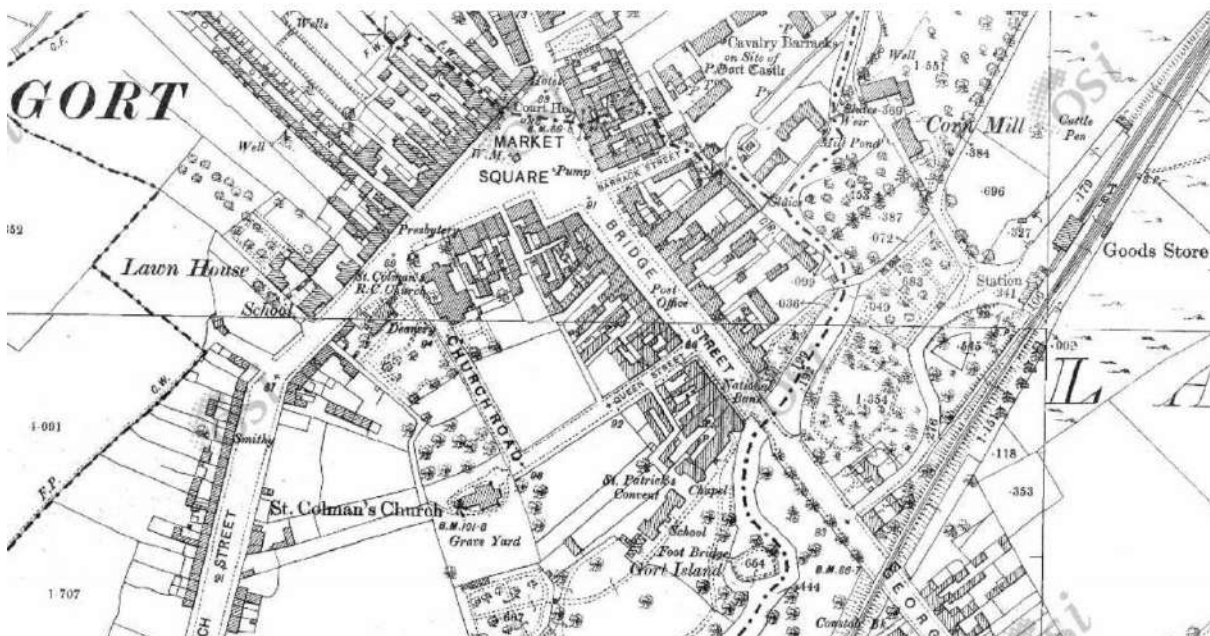


Figure 25 – 25" Ordnance Survey map circa 1900 ©OSI

Crowe Street (Crow Lane)

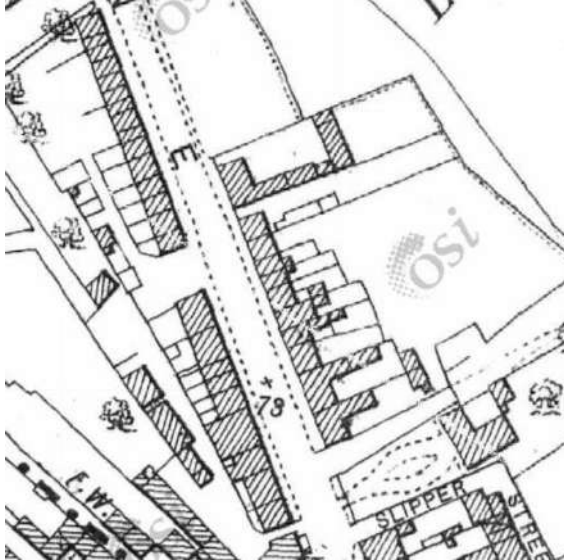


Figure 26 – 25" Ordnance Survey map circa 1900; detail at Crow Lane ©OSI



Figure 27

Church Street

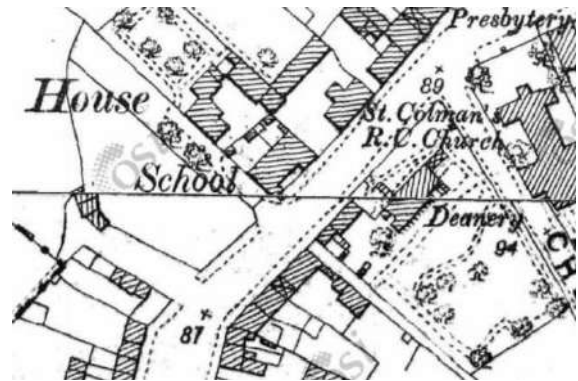


Figure 28



Figure 29

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. A large, paved parking lot is visible in the center, filled with numerous cars. To the left of the parking lot, a road runs vertically, and to the right, another road runs horizontally, creating an intersection. The surrounding area is densely packed with houses, many of which have dark roofs. There are some trees and green spaces interspersed among the buildings. The overall scene depicts a typical suburban or urban residential area.

A detailed historical map of the Cavalry Barracks on the site of Port Castle. The map shows the barracks complex with various buildings labeled 'P' and 'P.T.'. To the left is 'BACK STREET' and to the right is 'MILL PO'. The map also shows a river and a bridge.

Figure 33

Queen Street/ Church Road Canon Quin Park

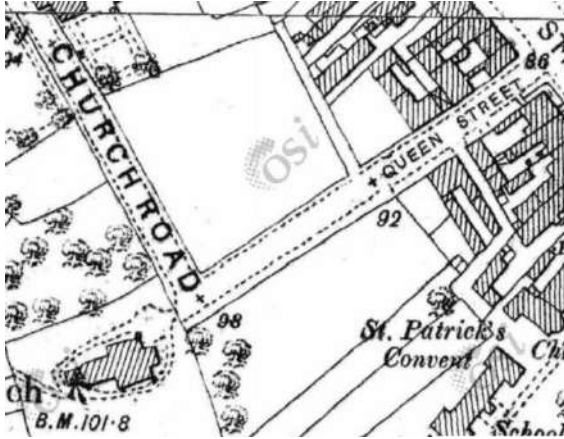


Figure 34



Figure 35

Bridge Street

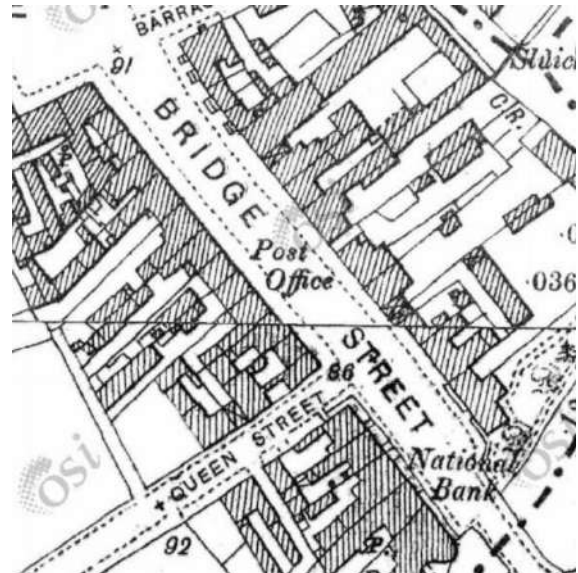


Figure 36



Figure 37

George Street



Figure 38



Figure 39

Lowery's Lane

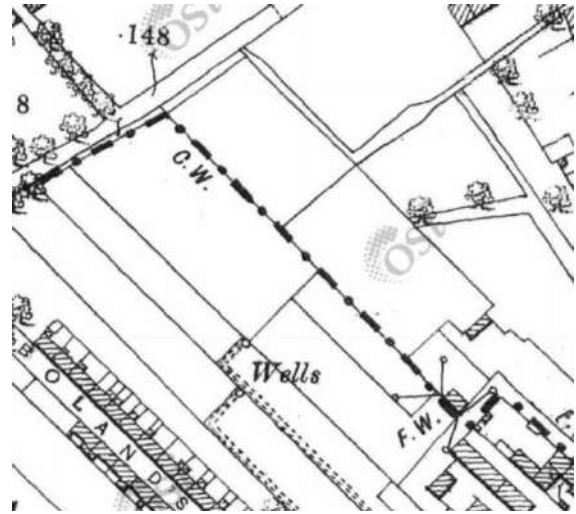


Figure 40



Figure 41

Statement of Significance

The Gort ACA document provides a succinct Statement of Significance as follows:

GORT ACA SUMMARY

Architectural Heritage Gort is a historic town with a rich architectural heritage and a number of key features, including ecclesiastical, monastic and religious buildings and structures, a historic core, street pattern, plot arrangement and historic streetscapes, mainly within the town centre. A unified cornice at eaves line indicates the controlling interest of a landlord in the development of the town. The retention of the character of the historic core is recognised as being a major attraction. Gort contains a significant number of buildings of national or regional significance for a town of its size. The river and its banks, surviving military buildings, traditional shopfronts and narrow lanes entered through carriage arches are distinctive and important features. The majority of buildings span the late 18th to late 19th centuries and share many characteristics. A large proportion of buildings are in a classical vernacular style, ranged along two wide intersecting roads which focus on Market Square. Stone walls are another significant feature of the area, particularly those around Slipper and Barrack Streets.

Statement of Significance

“Gort’s principal significance lies in the arrangement of its street pattern, plot sizes, architectural coherence, distinctive landmark buildings or groups and countryside setting. The combination of architecturally coherent buildings, narrow lanes with overhead carriage arches, extant military structures and traditional shop fronts mark Gort’s unique significance. For its size, Gort contains a generous number of buildings of national or regional significance. The town as a whole is potentially very attractive.”

For the purposes of this study, we have provided further description applicable to the specific area that is subject of the planning application:

- Architectural Significance – there are a number of protected historic buildings that are recognised individually for their architectural importance; in addition, several streets are significant for the collective form that the buildings provide. Whilst the importance of these individual buildings and their streetscape settings have been recognised for some time, their formal protection is relatively new and a cultural shift is only now beginning to take place to respect the buildings and their setting in future plans for regeneration and new development within the town. The character of the town streets and urban spaces not only relates to its form but also the colour and texture of its enclosing material. In those areas closest to the town centre, there is a palette of materials which collectively present a strong 18th & 19th century character comprising dressed limestone, painted render & timber. Individual public buildings have been deliberately located to terminate views and provide focal points within the wider urban landscape. In addition to this wider townscape character; there are a small number of buildings which, whilst not individually protected, have been identified as being significant and included in the Gort ACA. On the whole this character relates to the spatial enclosure of the street although the state of preservation of historic building fabric, including retention of original joinery features, is considered significant.
- Historical Significance – the layout of the study area relates closely to underlying landscape and topography, which in turn relates closely to the historical development of the town. The current layout of the town is thought to most closely reflect the early 19th century plans of

Viscount Gort, although vestiges of earlier are still present, especially around the former Barracks site

- Museum & Archive Collections – there is local history and archive material curated by the local history societies, tidy town groups and other community interests. In addition to national information sources referred to in this study, these are a valuable source about the social history and physical appearance of streets in the study area and should be further investigated in the course of developing detailed proposals for the repair of buildings and their setting.
- Tourism, Education & Presentation – the existing archive material is an important tourism resource providing valuable interpretative information for the interested visitor that may be made freely accessible. The buildings and streets feature in a variety of tourism guides and publications which illustrate the history and development of the town. The conservation of the buildings is potentially of widespread interest both in terms of dissemination of knowledge to other building owners as well as promoting the town as part of its cultural tourism product.
- Community & Social Value – as well as having associations for members of the public who use the town; the study area is also significant to the teachers and students for whom Gort is subject of study. Local businesses and the town itself benefit from the cultural tourism resource that the setting and its architectural legacy provides.

Individual buildings are also significant, as they collectively make up the fabric of Gort. A number have been identified, outside this study, as being 'at risk' and there is a concern that without intervention these may be lost. Any individual loss, on its own would be significant, however this also has an impact on the setting of the whole area, the value of which has been identified as being in its group importance.

The following pages also highlight individual historic features, which do not obviously form part of the fabric of any Protected Structure but which have been identified in the study as being potentially 'at risk' as a consequence of the proposed work and gives initial recommendations as to actions that might be made to either avoid or mitigate the impacts identified.

The importance of the current project is that it will provide the public infrastructure and the necessary repairs to the historic urban environment that will support and promote the regeneration of the privately owned important historic buildings that is already beginning to take place.

Photographic Inventory of Streetscape Features

Crowe Street (Crow Lane)



Figure 42



Figure 46



Figure 43



Figure 47



Figure 44



Figure 48



Figure 45



Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 54



Figure 51



Figure 55



Figure 52



Figure 53

Church Street



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59



Figure 60



Figure 61



Figure 62



Figure 65



Figure 63



Figure 66



Figure 64



Figure 67



Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 79



Figure 76



Figure 80



Figure 77



Figure 81



Figure 78



Figure 82



Figure 83



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92

Market Square



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97



Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104



Figure 105



Figure 106



Figure 107



Figure 108



Figure 109



Figure 110



Figure 111



Figure 112



Figure 113



Figure 114



Figure 115



Figure 116



Figure 117



Figure 118



Figure 119



Figure 121



Figure 120



Figure 122



Figure 123



Figure 124



Figure 125



Figure 126



Figure 127



Figure 128



Figure 129



Figure 130



Figure 131



Figure 132

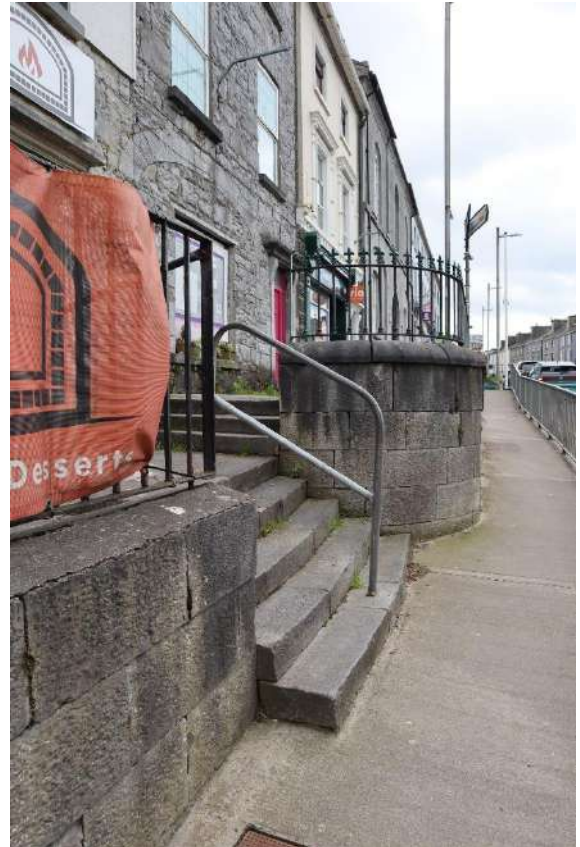


Figure 133



Figure 134



Figure 135



Figure 136



Figure 137



Figure 138



Figure 139



Figure 140



Figure 141



Figure 142



Figure 143



Figure 144



Figure 145



Figure 146



Figure 147



Figure 148



Figure 149



Figure 150



Figure 151



Figure 152



Figure 153



Figure 154



Figure 155



Figure 156

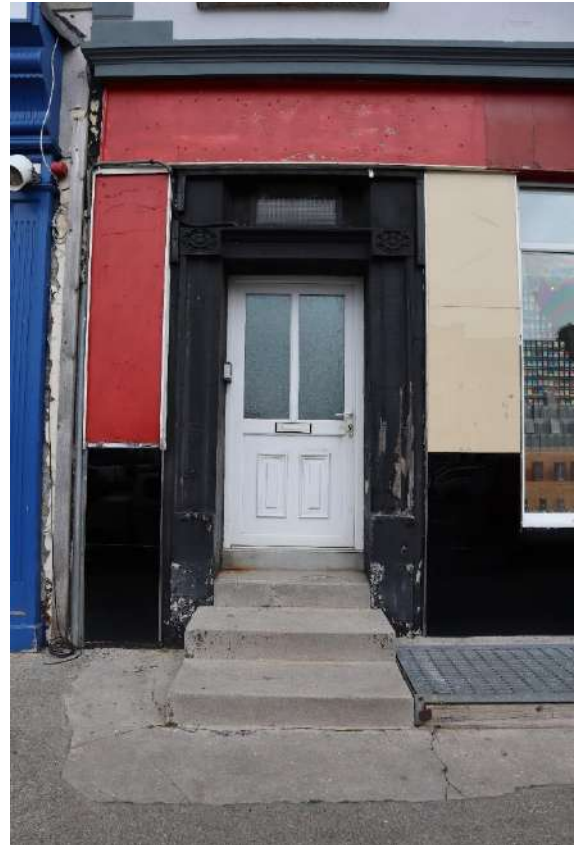


Figure 157



Figure 158



Figure 159



Figure 160



Figure 164



Figure 161



Figure 165



Figure 162



Figure 166



Figure 163



Figure 167



Figure 168



Figure 171



Figure 169



Figure 172



Figure 170



Figure 173



Figure 174



Figure 175



Figure 178



Figure 179



Figure 176



Figure 177



Figure 180



Figure 181



Figure 182



Figure 183



Figure 184



Figure 185



Figure 186



Figure 187



Figure 190



Figure 188



Figure 191



Figure 189



Figure 192



Figure 193



Figure 194



Figure 195



Figure 196



Figure 197



Figure 198



Figure 199



Figure 200

Barrack Street



Figure 201



Figure 202



Figure 203



Figure 204



Figure 205



Figure 206



Figure 207



Figure 208



Figure 209



Figure 213



Figure 210



Figure 214



Figure 211



Figure 215



Figure 212



Figure 216



Figure 217



Figure 221



Figure 218



Figure 222



Figure 219



Figure 223



Figure 220



Figure 224



Figure 225



Figure 229



Figure 226



Figure 230



Figure 227



Figure 228

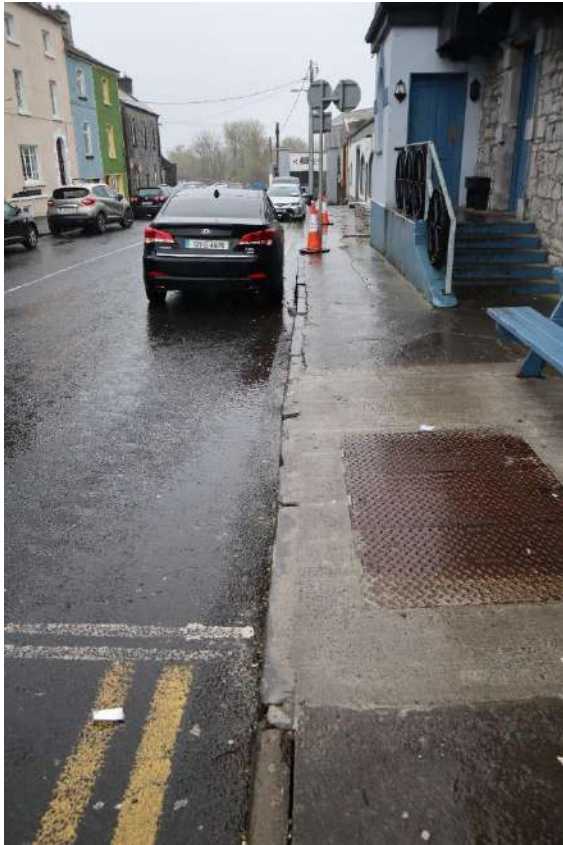


Figure 231

Queen Street/ Church Road



Figure 232



Figure 233



Figure 234



Figure 235



Figure 236



Figure 237



Figure 238



Figure 239



Figure 240



Figure 241



Figure 242



Figure 243



Figure 244



Figure 245



Figure 246



Figure 247



Figure 248



Figure 249



Figure 250

Canon Quin Park



Figure 251



Figure 252



Figure 253



Figure 254



Figure 255



Figure 257



Figure 256



Figure 258

Bridge Street



Figure 259



Figure 260



Figure 261



Figure 262



Figure 263



Figure 264



Figure 265



Figure 266



Figure 267



Figure 268



Figure 269



Figure 270



Figure 271



Figure 272



Figure 273



Figure 274



Figure 275



Figure 276



Figure 277



Figure 278



Figure 279



Figure 280



Figure 281



Figure 282



Figure 283



Figure 284



Figure 285



Figure 286



Figure 287



Figure 288



Figure 289



Figure 290



Figure 291



Figure 292



Figure 293



Figure 294



Figure 295



Figure 296



Figure 297



Figure 298



Figure 299



Figure 300



Figure 301



Figure 302

George Street



Figure 303



Figure 304



Figure 305



Figure 306



Figure 310



Figure 307



Figure 311



Figure 308



Figure 312



Figure 309



Figure 313



Figure 314



Figure 315

Lowery's Lane



Figure 316



Figure 317



Figure 318



Figure 319



Figure 320



Figure 321



Figure 322



Figure 323



Figure 324



Figure 327



Figure 325



Figure 328



Figure 326

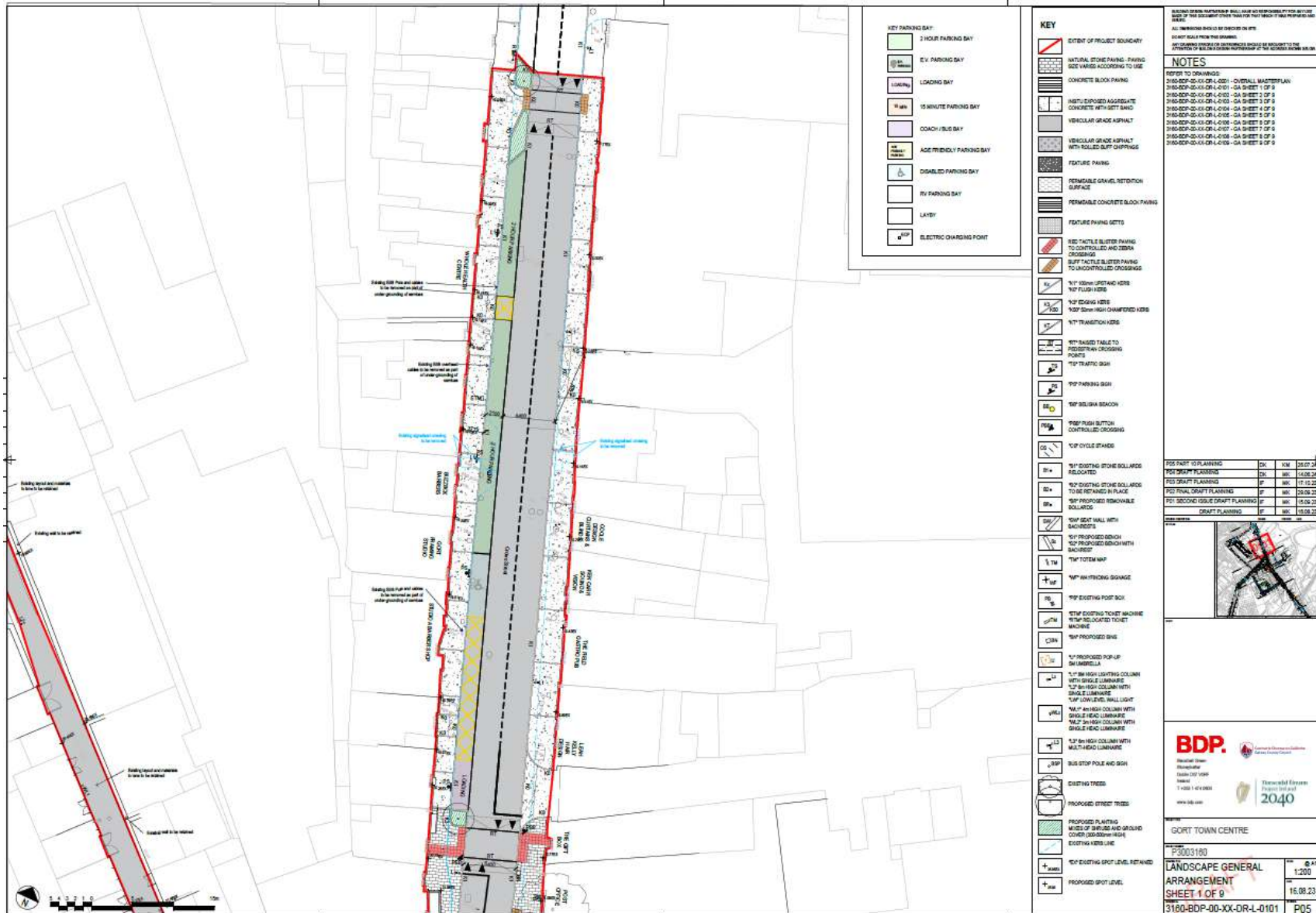


Figure 329

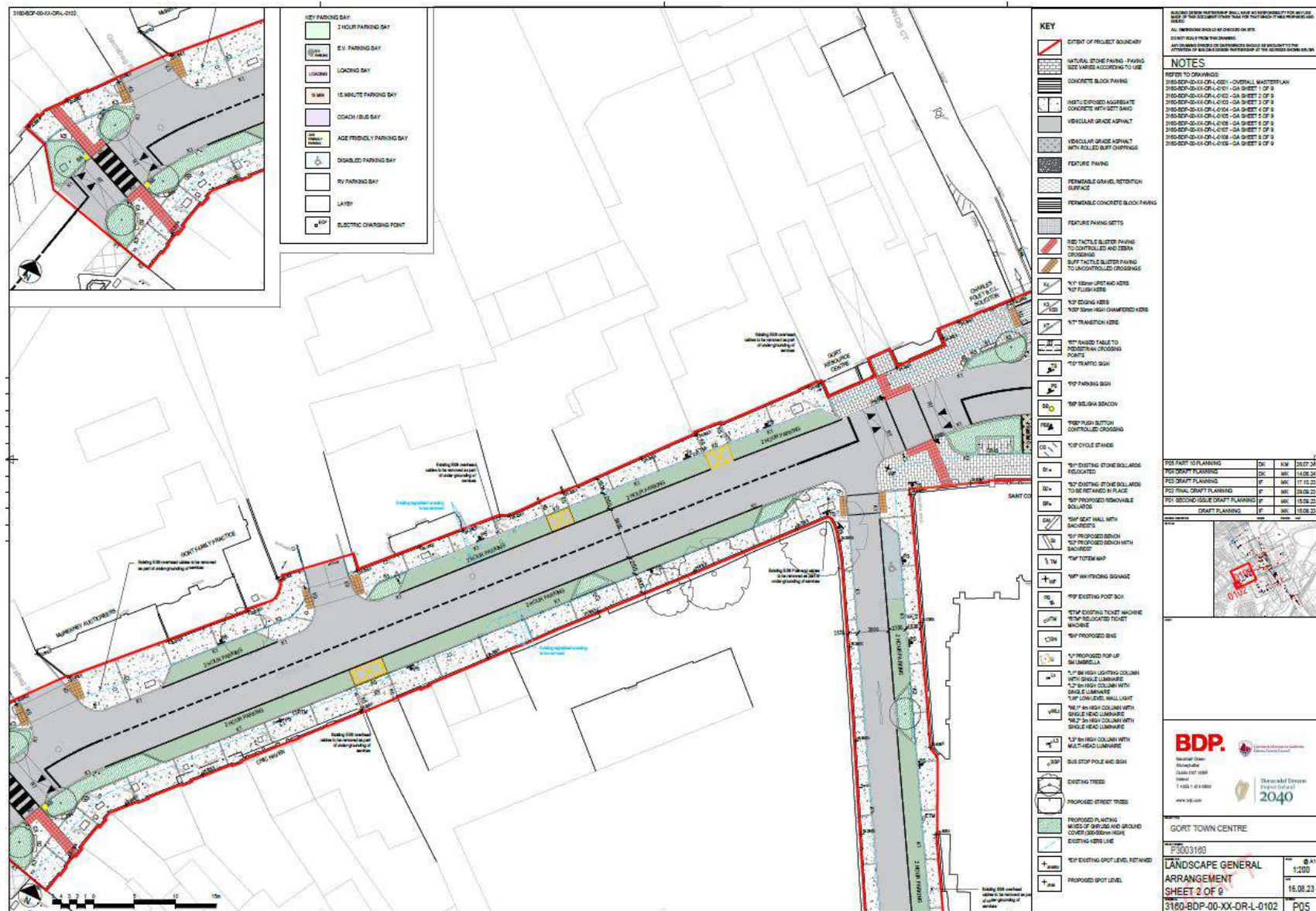


Figure 330

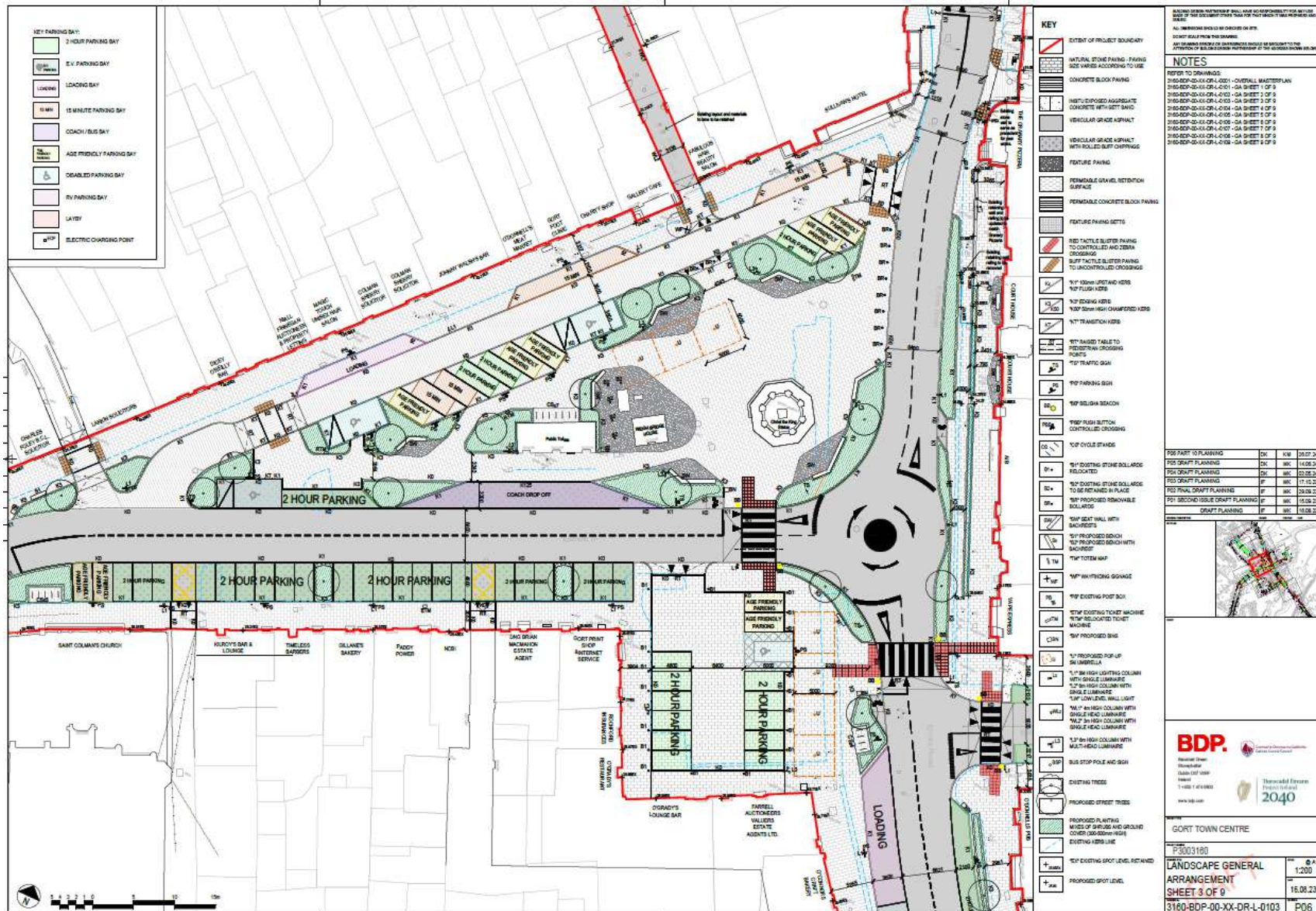
Crowe Street (Crow Lane)



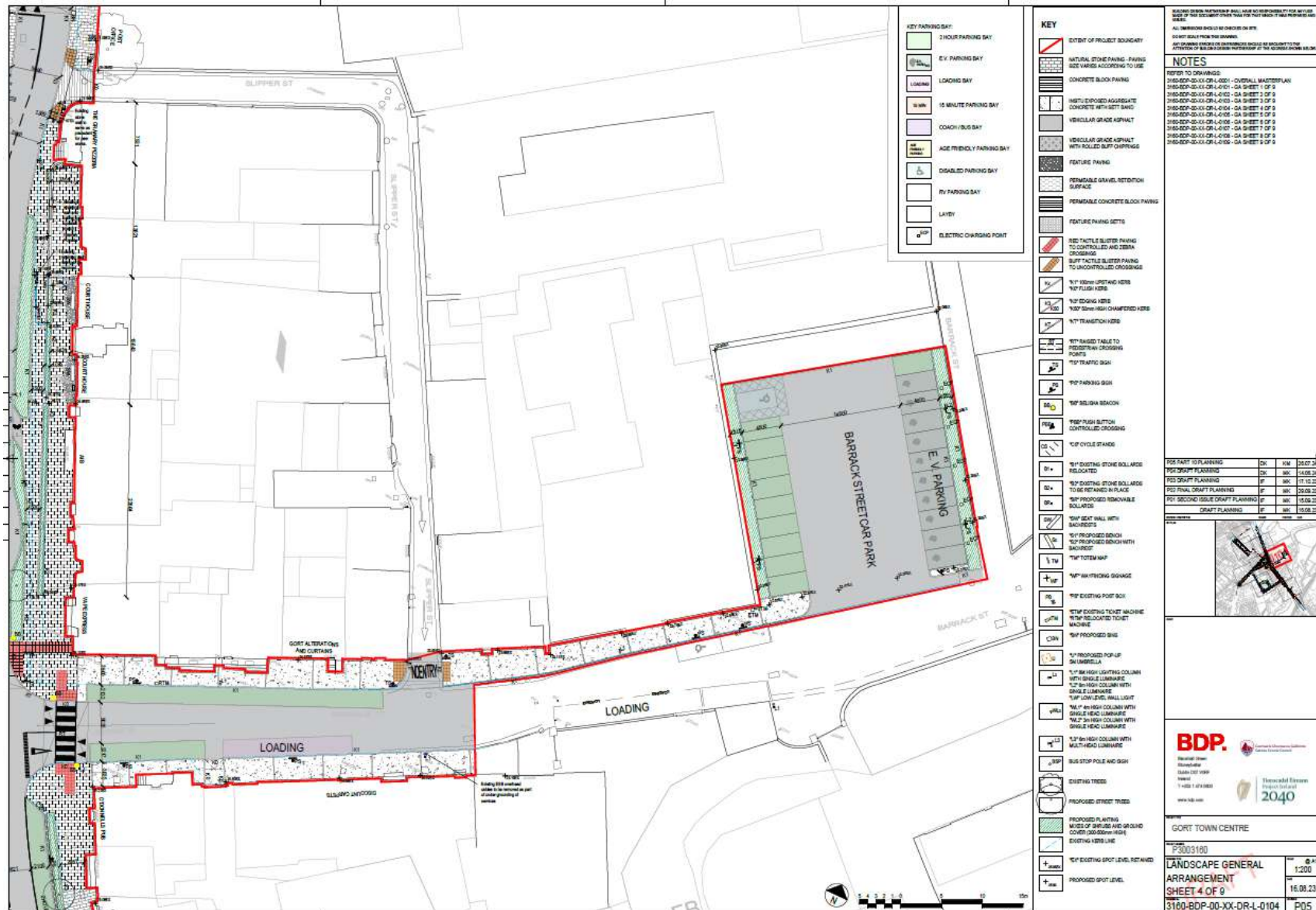
Church Street



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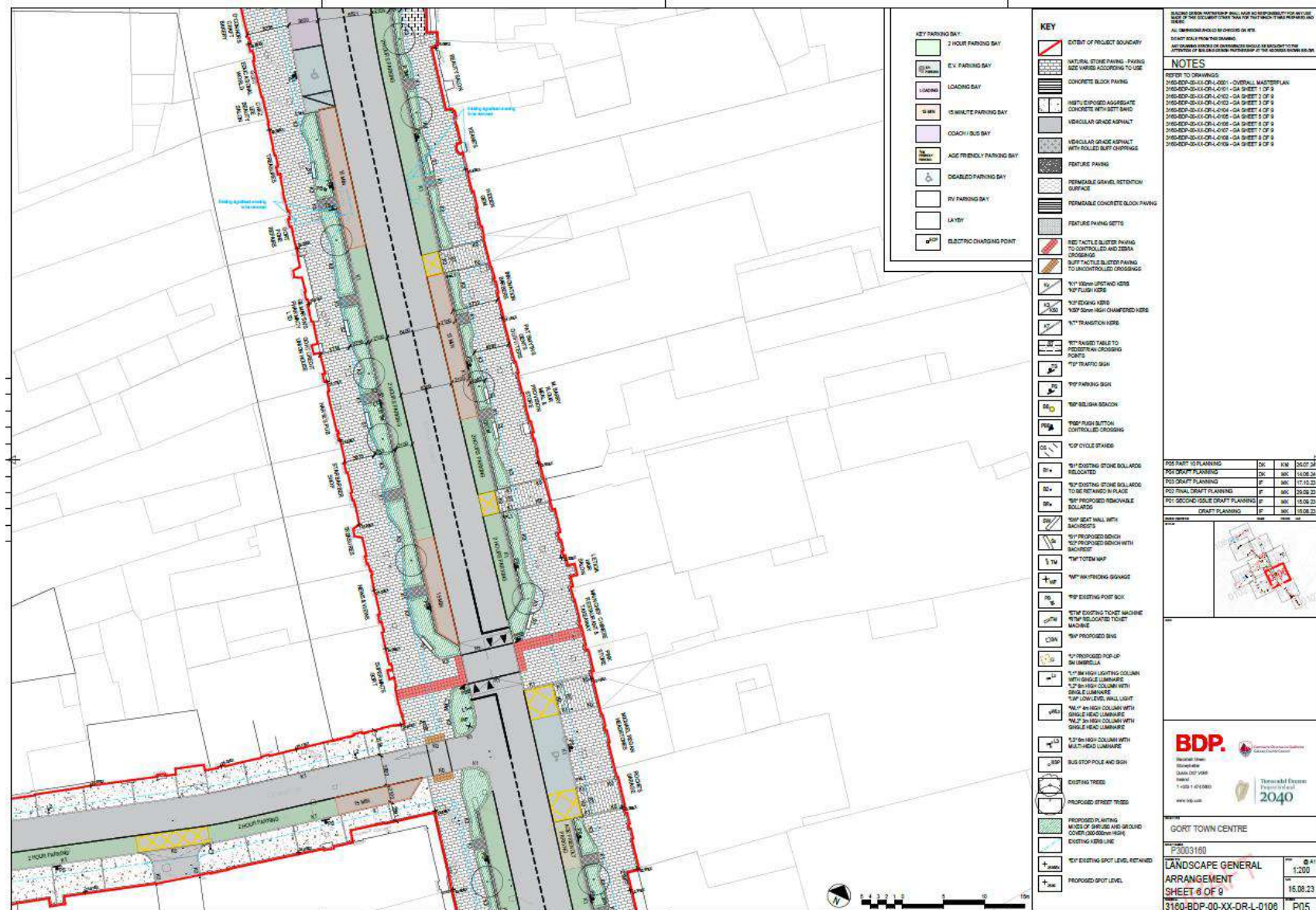


Barrack Street

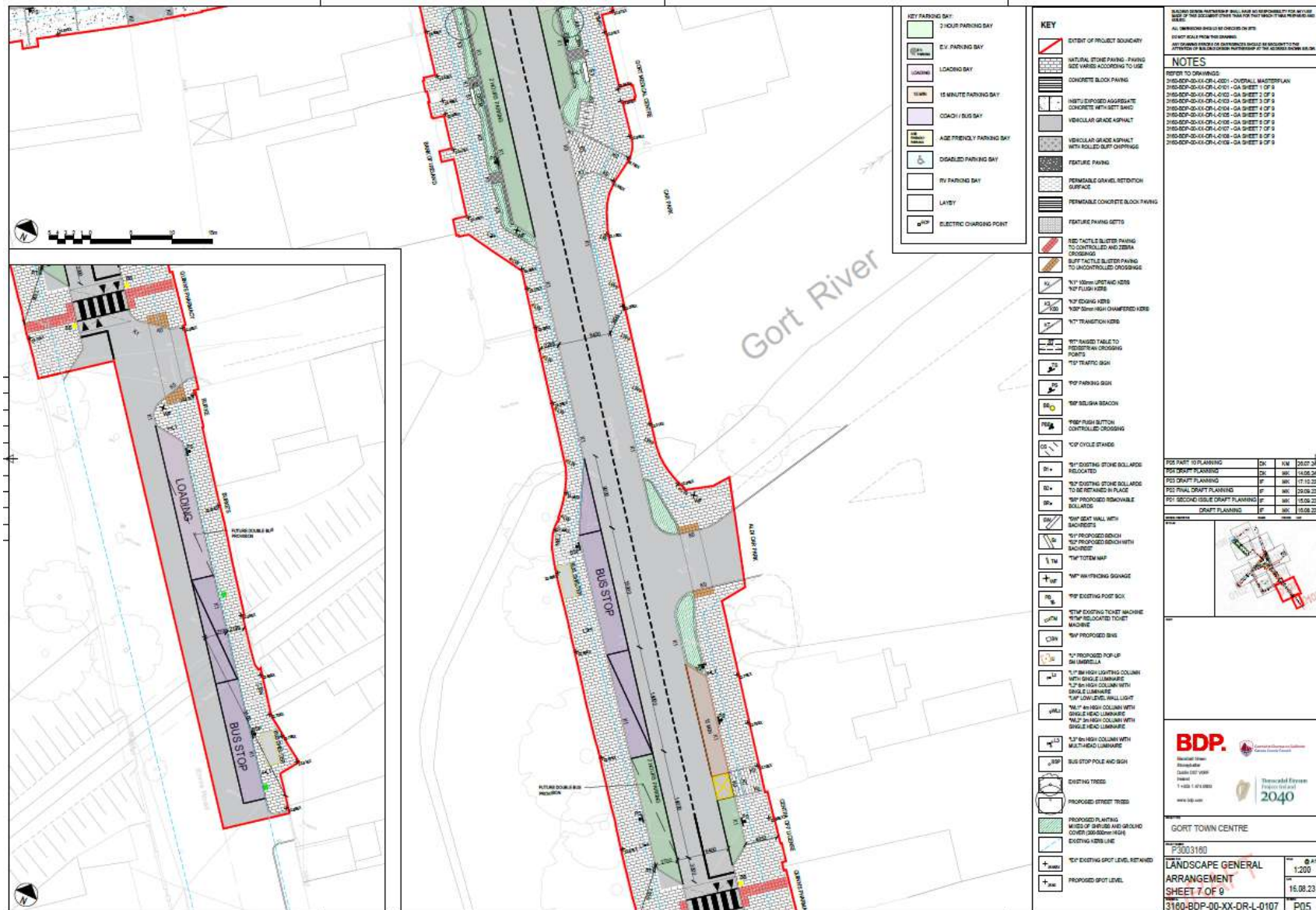


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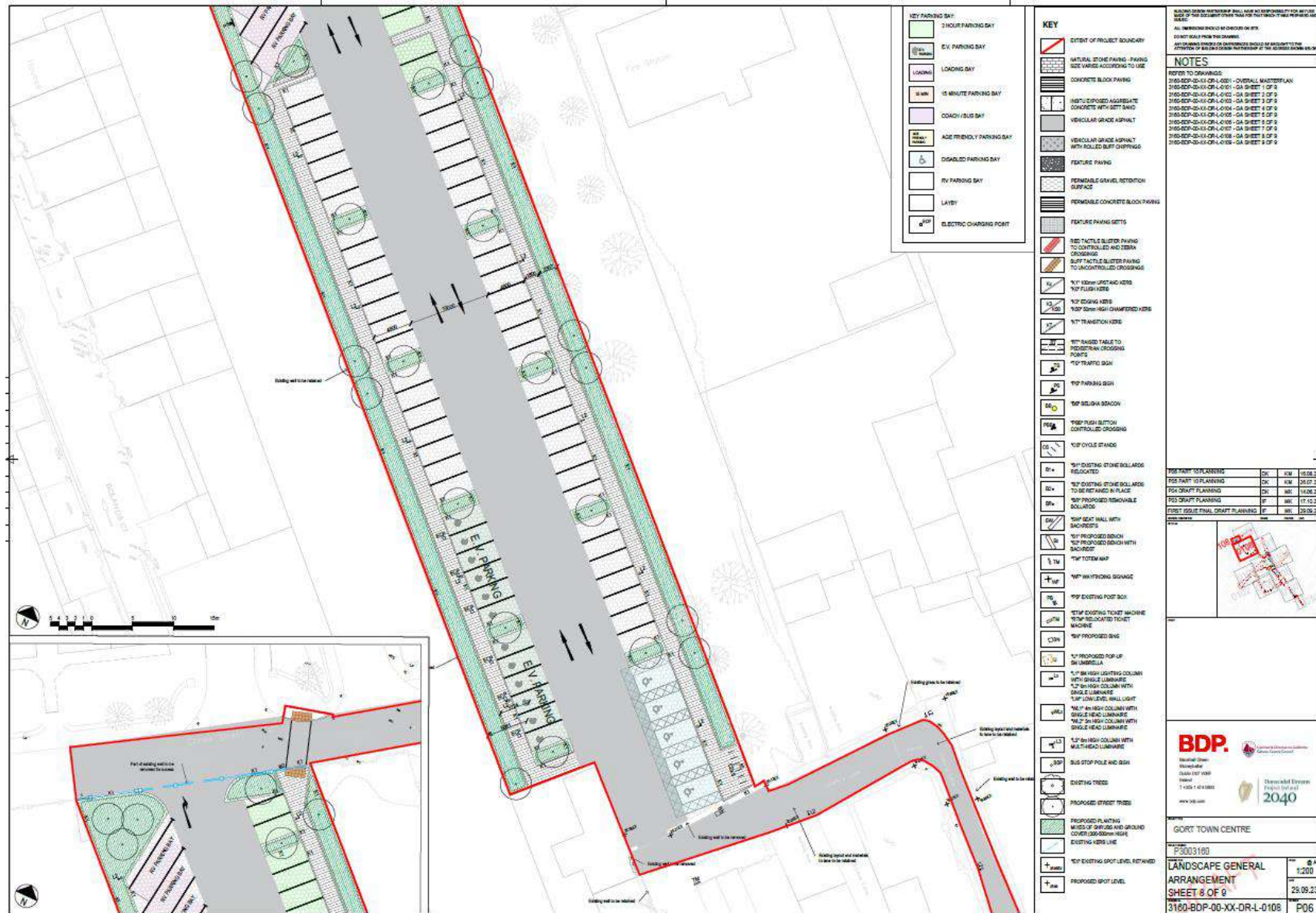
Bridge Street



George Street



Lowery's Lane



Impact Assessment

The proposed Gort Town Centre scheme, which will include the following:

- Alteration to existing road carriageway widths & turning dimensions
- Provision of increased width footpaths & dedicated parking bays
- Provision of pedestrian crossing facilities
- Relocation of Bus Stops & provision of roundabout junction at Market Square
- Alteration to existing parking provision to include the provision of disabled parking spaces.
- Soft Landscaping work to include provision of trees, shrubs & green space through the scheme.
- Provision of street furniture throughout the scheme to include, benches, seating, bollards, cycle stands, etc
- Provision of new road & wayfinding signage, road marking & public lighting
- All other ancillary site works.

 = Historic Setting of Protected Structure/ NIAH; note all buildings form part of the Gort ACA

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
	Crowe Street				
42 – 55	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & precast kerbs - no historic value	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm
	Church Street – South Side				
56 – 68	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
	Church Street – North Side				
69 – 92	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & intermittent historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman
	Market Square – North Side				
93 – 126	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & intermittent historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm . Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman. Check property boundary; historic paving & step at east end shown within public realm works
	Market Square – East Side				
127–158	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & ramp; historic dressed stone retaining walls & steps	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework. Opportunity to restore appearance of north end	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain & repair existing retaining walls & steps, by selected craftsman. Check property boundary; historic paving & step at north end shown within public realm works. Omit soft landscaping in front of courthouse; preserve symmetry with 'square'

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
	Market Square – South Side				
159-200	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & concrete kerbs; isolated historic cast iron pavement light grating	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic ironwork	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain existing ironwork in paving
	Barrack Street – North Side				
201-217	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman
	Barrack Street – South Side				
218-231	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Show levels on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm. Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman
	Queen Street				
232-241	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & concrete kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures	Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman

	Church Road				
242-250	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman
242-250	Offices/ former Bank	Door thresholds	C19 rendered rubble stone wall with rendered details	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structure	Show on detail drawings; protect from damage during works; coordinate with repairs to public realm
	Canon Quin Park				
251-258	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & re-purposed historic dressed stone features	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & relocation; removal of historic stonework	Retain existing mill stones, bollards & other features within public park area. Repair modern rubble stone boundary & associated metalwork.
	Bridge Street				
259-302	Ground surfaces	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & intermittent historic dressed stone kerbs	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Retain existing kerb stones, either along original kerb line, or carefully lifted & re-laid by selected craftsman . Note stepped kerbs along west side of street.
	George Street				
303-315	Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & precast kerbs - no historic value		Existing footpaths	Late c20 concrete path & precast kerbs - no historic value
	Lowery's Lane				
316-330	Ground surfaces	Existing laneway/ footpaths	Late c20 tar & chipping finish	Potential damage to adjacent historic building fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structures; removal of historic stonework	Shared pedestrian paved surfaces

Recommendations

The project architects have worked in consultation with Duncan McLaren, Grade 1 accredited Conservation Architect.

The impact assessment has identified a number of potential risk areas and made recommendations for inclusion in the Stage II Detailed Design Drawings. These are set out in the table above.

There are some further general points below that will also need to be addressed in the detailed stages of the project. The general points apply to all buildings within the application area; not only those highlighted in the table above:

General

Principal streets – uniform plots eaves & design. Potential for a design guide & assistance (outside scope of this planning application)

Limestone details – door surrounds, steps & kerbs; opportunity to restore missing limestone steps in public realm works

House shops – highlight historic details, paving & ironwork

Research lost details & provide template/guidance for reinstatement where opportunity arises.

Signage – hand painted signs

Opportunities to coordinate public realm work with RRDF community project; HTI, BHIS, HSF and other conservation led grant schemes.

Planting – Street tree planting in Gort has not been prevalent in the past and both current & historical images show trees present around the churches, within rear gardens and along the riverside. Generally, low level planting, rather than trees, would be more suitable means of greening the urban spaces whilst retaining their historic character. Planting should also be used, or omitted to respond to the architectural rhythm of the street, or to emphasise formality of space e.g the axial space in front of the courthouse.

Street Furniture/ Interpretative Panels – interpretative panels provide important historical & tourist information that is of interest to visitors and residents of the town alike. Curation and updating of information and the manner of their display is to be included in the scope of public realm works. Use of faux 'heritage' street furniture should be resisted as this diminishes the value of authentic but often modest original street furniture. Either authentic period fittings should be used, or simple high quality contemporary fittings that do not visually compete with historic building fabric within the streetscape. Road lighting columns in particular need careful consideration. New tall poles should be minimal in design with lighting focussed to illuminate only the road area necessary for traffic safety. Too great illumination will have significant negative impact on residential uses and potential habitat within greened areas on the street. The lighting poles also provide an opportunity to provide accent lighting to illuminate key building frontages on the street, such as the, church, courthouse, market weight house; providing a night time focal point to the public realm.

Building drainage gullies to downpipes – every building has one or more downpipes, currently discharging to a footpath, channel, or gully. Downpipes are currently shown; details for treatment of each condition will need to be agreed. It is recommended that a 'family' of agreed solutions is

developed to satisfy this requirement in due course. This will include retention of existing dressed stone drainage channels and kerbs where these survive.

Protected structures & other historic buildings – entrance thresholds, steps & ramps; the level of paving as it affects steps and thresholds will need to be clarified. Levels against external masonry walls should not be raised higher than existing and no sub-floor vents should be blocked. Existing dressed stone kerbs to be retained in situ; including wrought iron fittings.

Cast iron drain covers & vents – historic fabric which contributes to the character of the streetscape is to be retained. If necessary, proposals need to be coordinated with Irish Water, ESB, Eircom, e-charging networks and any other proposals for improvements to infrastructure in the town.

Finishes – paving slabs to be selected to complement existing dressed natural stone features which form part of the streetscape; colour and shape of natural stone aggregates for use in exposed aggregate concrete to be carefully selected for visual appearance, continuity of supply for future resourcing and replication for future maintenance repairs. Existing dressed stone kerbs and paving features, not currently shown on drawings should be plotted onto drawings and retained in the new work.

Opportunities recommended for development at detail design stage:

Crowe Street (Crow Lane)

Large number of modest traditional buildings with high quality stone details – opportunity to upgrade presentation of street – design guidance/ public workshop/ colour palette.

Flood risk area – proposed means of improving resilience

Church Street

Street layout widens naturally – with opportunity for public/ business space in addition to car parking.

Market Square

Public buildings – Restore courthouse entrance to historic design

Remove public WC & relocate in less intrusive location

Weighbridge, pump & weigh-house to be repaired/ restored

North corner – Hazel House adjacent building; relocation of public ramp access & repair/ reinstatement of stone steps & iron railings in public realm works.

Barrack Street

Historic site – intact cavalry barrack structures; castle site; potential for restoration & reuse of buildings and associated open space.

Queen Street

Former church/ library doorway is focus of street – use opportunity to improve access to library & restore railings/ gateway.

Canon Quin Park

Salvaged millstones & other reused historic dressed stone features to be retained; 1950s/ 1960's elements which characterise the existing boundary treatment, to be repaired.

Bridge Street

Reinstate uniformity of detail through design guide & HTI scheme

Bridge House – potential for the former landlord's residence and later convent complex to form an important focus within the town centre

George Street

Large number of modest traditional buildings with high quality stone details – opportunity to upgrade presentation of street – design guidance/ public workshop/ colour palette. HTI Project

Lowery's Lane

Authentic restoration of mews buildings & ruined house

Any further impacts will arise in relation to detailed design and the selection of specific materials for the work. These will require further review in preparation of the Stage II Detailed Design Drawings

Duncan McLaren BSc DipArch(Lond) RIBA MRIAI

RIAI Accredited Conservation Architect Grade 1