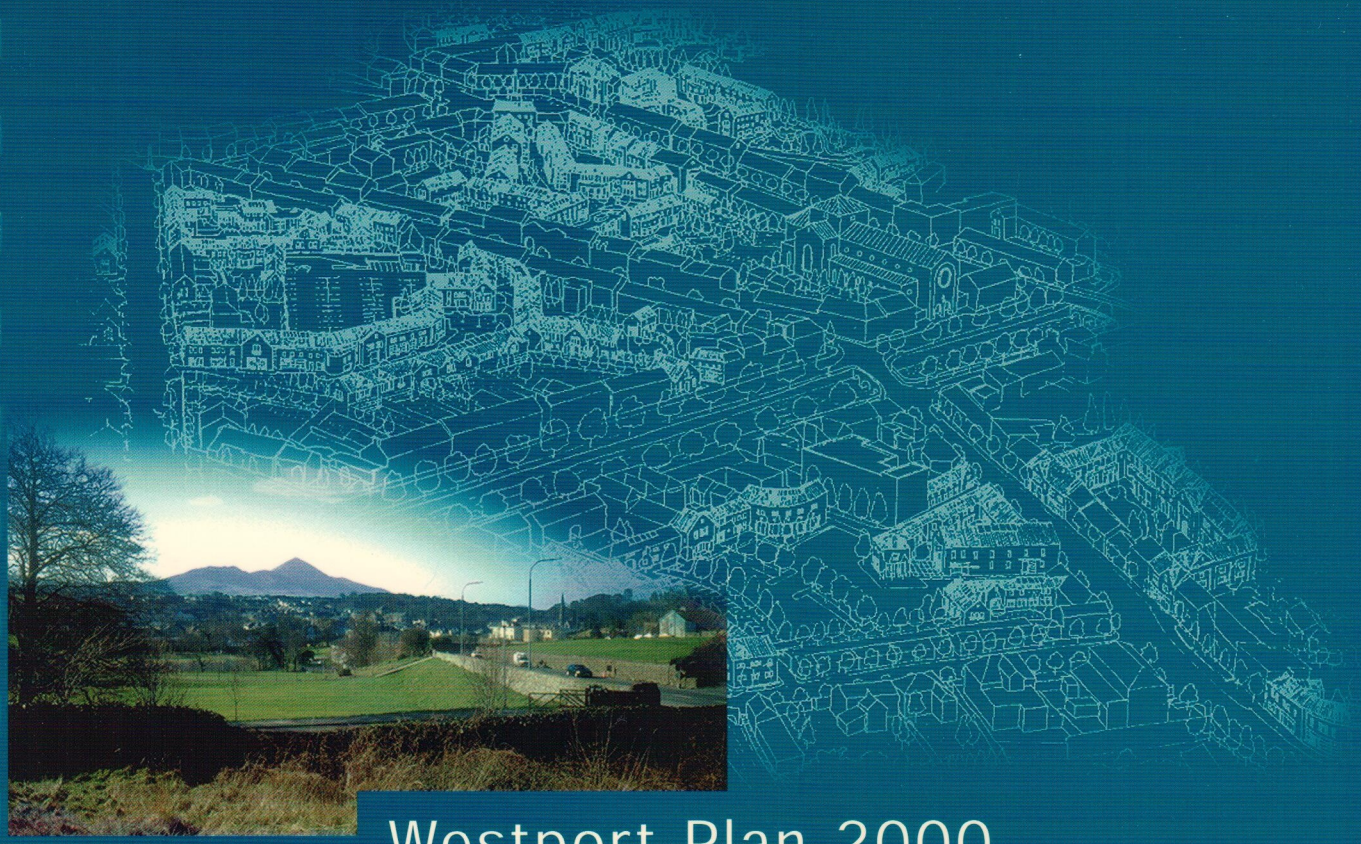
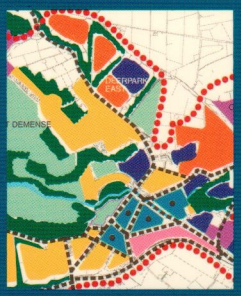
Westport Urban District Council



Westport Plan 2000

An Integrated Action Plan for Westport



December 1997

Westport
Urban
District
Council

Westport Plan 2000

An Integrated Action Plan for Westport

December 1997

Table of Contents

Executive summary

The town of Westport is physically defined in two distinct ways. Firstly, by it's creation as a geometrically-composed planned town. Secondly, by its response to the particular landscape in which it sits, its configuration and it's unique hinterland. This perfect composition in the landscape is being threatened, at the present point in time by rampant development pressure, which has resulted in an extensive expansion of urbanisation into the agricultural hinterland and deterioration of the fabric of the historic core.

The physical planning strategy outlined herein is based on a detailed analysis of the physical integration of a number of diverse factors into one coherent framework. The principal factors identified in the report are:

- the consolidation and preservation of the historic core.
- the conservation and regeneration of the Westport House and demesne and it's integration with the community at large.
- the control of peripheral development
- the rationalisation of tourism, industrial, residential and commercial development within the town structure.
- the development of a physical connection with Clew Bay.

The objective of the physical planning strategy proposed is for the consolidation and protection of the historic and natural resource base of Westport and it's environs, and for the rational expansion and mitigation of future development.

In a tourism context, Westport is of national significance and is classified as a Regional Centre and Heritage Town. As the third largest town in County Mayo, with a population of over 4,000, Westport is also a significant service and industrial centre. The projected population by 2006 is estimated at over 5,000.

The potential for tourism development in Westport is reflected in the 1989 Bord Failte Framework Plan for Tourism, the Operational Programmes for Tourism 1989-1993 and 1993-1997, and the

Tourism Plan for County Mayo 1991. Westport is one of 15 resort areas which were designated under the Finance Act 1995 for a new Plot Relief Scheme for certain resort areas. The principle tourism resources of Westport relate to it's Heritage Town status and Westport House and Demesne. The accommodation base in Westport has developed significantly over the past decade and has potential for further development.

Residential development on existing and proposed development land has the capacity to accommodate an estimated population of some 6,000.

Planning permission was granted by An Bord Pleanala for a shopping centre development adjacent to the town centre, which to date has not been implemented. There are no available sites within the town centre area which have the capacity to accommodate large scale retail developments. There are a number of sites with capacity to accommodate medium scale retail development of 2000-3000 sq. metres.

The current statutory Development Plan for Westport is that adopted by the Urban District Council in March 1992. It is envisaged that the recommendations of the Westport 2000 Study will be taken into account in the next review of the statutory Development Plan for the UDC area and for the environs which are located in the County Area. The nature and extent of the detailed design proposals as incorporated in the Westport 2000 Study are, however, considered to be too detailed for formal adoption as a Development Plan.

The urban core of Westport is among the very few planned provincial towns in Ireland. It is of high visual and amenity value and includes many fine streets, urban spaces and buildings of architectural quality. It is largely intact, but it is important to ensure that current and future development does not erode the integrity of the historic area and the encircling landscape. The future expansion of the town will put pressure on the core to accommodate further development of central area uses - retail, commercial and tourism facilities, and consequential improvement in the movement systems for people and vehicles. A balance of residential development must also be facilitated if the area is to maintain it's particular quality, and if upper stories of property are to be used and maintained.

A conservation policy setting out the ground rules for the development of the overall physical framework and, particularly, for the design of new buildings and the re-development of old buildings, is now necessary if the essential historic quality of the planned town is to be allowed to flourish.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Maintain the visual boundary of the urban core; strengthen the separation between it and the environs.
- Conserve the historic core and underpin the essential elements of its visual and physical structure.
- Provide for the expansion of all central area uses.
- Encourage residential uses and a balance of commercial, tourism and open space uses.
- Maximise the potential of the backlands
- Confirm the positive aspects of the land use pattern
- Improve the movement patterns across the town, making pedestrian movement more convenient by developing lanes and shortcuts.
- Accommodate traffic management and calming, and road improvement measures.
- Provide for "greening" of the streets
- Improve the open space network.

In the plan the town is divided into three action areas and proposals to satisfy these objectives are developed and illustrated.

Although the Town of Westport is experiencing almost unprecedented growth it is essential that the infrastructural constraints are carefully considered when determining an onward planning policy.

Insofar as drainage is concerned, there are fundamental problems with the piped system within the Town and the continued discharge of raw sewage to Cleavlagh Bay is clearly unacceptable. The implementation of the planned Main Drainage Scheme is unlikely to solve these problems by the year 2000. The Main Drainage Scheme incorporates appropriate flood alleviation measures which are also important for the Town but which could probably be refined if further data were obtained on the underground channels.

The short-term solution for Water Supply (The recently installed link to Cloonkeen) has improved the supply situation by some 400,000 - to 480,000 gallons/day and about one-third of this is already needed. The balance will provide for expected growth in demand until about 2002/2003. However this is a relatively short-term solution in planning terms, and therefore even medium-term growth in Westport is predicated on a link to Srah within about 5 or 6 years and, once again, it would be inappropriate for the UDC to allow substantial growth in the Town (where demand would again exceed supply) unless they are confident that this link is achievable in the necessary timescale. In the meantime it is essential that demand be suppressed, insofar as this is possible, by improved leakage control.

It is widely considered in Westport that traffic congestion is approaching an intolerable level. The first priority in this regard is to implement the Castlebar Road to Newport Road Link and the Castlebar Road to Westport Quay Link. The second priority is to seek to create further car parking spaces both in the Urban Core and in peripheral areas while simultaneously trying to reduce parking demand by introducing parking charges. Some traffic management and intersection improvements should also be implemented but the overall policy towards traffic and parking must be to avoid causing serious damage to the environmental quality of the Town Centre as a result of seeking to provide facilities for the ever-increasing traffic and parking demand. This approach will inevitably result in the eventual need to inhibit, constrain or discourage traffic and parking.

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

The Study Team wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance, encouragement, and advice of the Steering Committee:

Padraig Hughes
Joseph Beirne
Iain Douglas
Peter Hynes
Kieran Lynn
Mary Mc Hugh
Anthony Reidy

and for the valued advice of the County Manager, Mr. Des Mahon, and the Chairman and Members of the Westport Urban District Council, namely:

Cllr. Margaret Adams
Cllr. Declan Dever
Cllr. Patrick Durcan
Cllr. Oliver Gannon
Cllr. Martin Keane
Cllr. Dermott Langan
Cllr. John Joe O'Malley
Cllr. Michael Ring TD
Cllr. Sean Staunton

The Team would also like to thank the following groups and representatives, who through their insights and suggestions, helped frame the final strategy:

Westport Tourism
Tidy Towns Committee
Bank of Ireland
Ulster Bank
Allied Irish Bank
Sacred Heart School
Historical Society and VEC
St. Mary's Church
Garda Siochana
Architectural Practices
Harbour Commissioners
Rice College
Westport Arts Festival
Horse and Pony Society
Lions Club
I.C.A.
Credit Union
Berry Print Group
Trouw, Ireland
Allergan
Iarnrod Eireann
Lord Altamont, Westport House

Introduction

In August 1995, the Study Team was appointed by Westport Urban District Council to prepare an Integrated Action Plan strategy for the town of Westport and its environs.

The plan was commissioned by the UDC as a response to a growing concern regarding the physical expansion of Westport into its hinterland, and on pressures being brought to bear in the historic core. The brief provided for the following consultancy work:

- preparation of a detailed base-line analysis
- consultation with all interest groups to ascertain community requirements
- the preparation of an Integrated Action Plan Strategy to cover both historic core and environs.
- the preparation of urban design proposals for the historic core.
- identification of key projects in the study area and the development of a procurement strategy.

The development of the planning strategy has evolved through a series of detailed briefing sessions between the Study Team and the appointed Steering Committee, as well as through a detailed and extensive public consultation process. An outline of the prepared planning strategy was presented to, and discussed with, the Chairman and members of the Urban District Council.

The planning methodology presented herewith serves to achieve a balanced master planning strategy, where all important considerations in relation to urban and natural landscape potential are fused with community needs and, indeed, with the requirements of local government. This methodology is based on a thorough analysis of all physical, infrastructural and socio-economic considerations.

In the preparation of this study the role of the various specialist consultants was as follow:

Mitchell & Associates
Architects/Landscape Architects/Master Planners:
Overall co-ordination and direction of the study, as well as landscape planning and design inputs.

Muir Associates
Consulting Engineers:
Assessment of infrastructural potential of Westport

Jim Coady & Associates
Urban Designers:
Detailed urban design aspects of re-organisation and expansion of urban core.

Dr. Brian Meehan
Planning Consultant:
Town planning and socio-economic aspects.

1.0 General Profile of Study Area

1.0 General Profile of Study Area

1.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Figure 1.1 shows the location of Westport in the context of the East / West and Western Road Corridors as incorporated in the National Development Plan 1994/1999 and The Operational Programme for Transport 1994/1999. Westport is located on the N5 and is accessible to the existing / planned National Road network.

The Mainline Railway Development Programme, as incorporated in the National Development Plan and Operational Programme for Transport, includes the rail line extending from Athlone to Westport as "Non Co-Financed Programme". Knock International Airport is located some 35 miles to the east of Westport.

The Port of Westport at Westport Quay, while in a national context of limited significance, is important locally in terms of fishing / amenity resources and potential.

In a regional tourism context, Westport is part of the Galway Mayo Roscommon Region, as operated by Ireland West Tourism. Westport is a significant tourist centre being located on main tourist routes and acting as a tourism focal point for west Mayo. In the 1989 Bord Failte Framework Development Plan for Irish Tourism, Westport was classified as the only "Regional Centre" in the Galway Mayo Roscommon region, and Galway was classified as the only "Major Centre" in the region. The 1989 Bord Failte Plan included Westport as one of 11 "Regional Tourism Centres with growth potential".

In a regional planning context, Westport was part of the Galway Mayo Region for which a regional strategy was prepared in 1983 forward to the year 2004. The population of Westport was projected at 5,100 by 2004 based on trends since 1971. The projected population is likely to be achieved by 2004.

Figure 1.2 shows the location of Westport in the context of County Mayo. Westport is located within the western half of the County as defined in the Mayo County Development Plan, 1992.

In the context of County Mayo as a whole the principal features of Westport may be summarised as follows:

- With a 1996 population of 4,253, Westport is the third largest town next to Castlebar (6,585) and Ballina (6,852), excluding environs.

- Westport is the principal tourism centre in County Mayo, and is classified as a "Heritage Town" by Bord Failte.

Figure 1.3 shows Westport in the context of its environs. The Westport 2000 Study Area is outlined on Figure 1.3, and includes the Westport UDC and adjoining area.

1.2 PHYSICAL PROFILE: HINTERLAND

The far-flung nature of the Urban District Council boundaries creates a study area composed of widely diverse environmental types, ranging from the historic urban core of Westport town itself, to surrounding areas of virgin agricultural land.

The town forms the centre and focus of the study area and is the fulcrum around which all movement in the area is organised. Its location in the County makes it an end destination for visitors, rather than a stopping-off point on a through route.

The undulating nature of the landscape in the immediate hinterland of the town, provides a spectacular natural setting, and counterpoints the man-made order of town and demesne.

At the western end of the study area, the community of Westport Quay/Rosbeg gives onto the inner reaches of Clew Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

The physical manifestation of the prosperity that the Westport area is currently enjoying, is in the development of the residential sector, both for permanent family homes and for holiday homes. This has resulted in the extensive scattered development found outside the urban core, in what was formerly agricultural land. The urban core itself has also suffered as a result of the exponential increase in tourism, with rising land values leading to a considerable amount of over-development.

Thus, the nature of the study area, the planned town and its associated demesne set in a landscape of high visual amenity, requires a detailed examination of both natural and man-made processes, in order to understand the forces that gave Westport it's unique character and form. This examination was carried out at two distinct levels – at the larger scale of the hinterland areas, outlined hereunder, and at the more detailed scale of the town core, which is outlined in Section 1.3 of this report.

The physical analysis of the hinterland areas was carried out under the following headings:

- topography – study area morphology
- slope regime – study area morphology
- vegetation – distribution of significant types
- land use – spatial distribution of uses
- visual analysis – visual character of study area
- circulation – vehicular and pedestrian movement
- archaeology – sites and monuments record.

The intention of the physical analysis is to identify the "genius loci" – i.e. the nature or spirit of the landscape that goes to give Westport it's unique physical character and form. It is to be hoped that through the identification (and preservation) of those physical factors that give

Westport it's attractiveness, that the amenity of the town and sub-region will be enhanced, and development guided in a direction that is compatible with the preservation of the natural amenity. Furthermore, the identification of the range and distribution of important visual elements in the hinterland, will allow for the development of a planning structure which builds on the existing natural structure of the landscape, thus preserving it's integrity.

This process will ensure that over-development in relation to tourism and other uses, which has led to landscape degradation in other high activity areas which left unchecked, will not occur in Westport, due to the underlying responsive nature of a planning strategy based on a detailed analysis.

1.2.1 TOPOGRAPHY/SLOPE REGIME

The physical character of the Westport area is formed by the interaction between land and water – the small scale glaciated landscape with the inner reaches of Clew Bay. The town core proper is enclosed and defined by long, low ridges running in an east to west direction, creating a visually enclosed landscape.

To the north and east the town centre is contained by a series of low hills and their associated ridges rising to 70 metres O.D. To the south the land rises to between 50 and 70 metres O.D., sloping off gently towards the west. (Fig. 1.4).

The town of Westport itself nestles down in a hollow, at approximately 10 metres O.D., which runs east to west to intersect with Clew Bay. This glaciated topography creates strong lines of enclosure for the town, and strong visual compartments in the immediate hinterland. (Fig. 1.5) The shape of the surrounding hills and ridges is such that their flanking slopes are generally angled at between 1 in 10 and 1 in 5, which creates strong visual and physical barriers for the development of the town. When it is considered that slopes steeper than 1 in 10 are generally not economic in terms of development costs, it can be seen that the physical expansion of the urban core is severely curtailed, or modified, by the location and configuration of the enclosing slopes.

To the south of the town a long steep ridge defines the edge of development. This ridge feature is dissipated as it moves west, to become a shallow south-facing slope, only to appear once again in the undulating topography of the Rosbeg area.

A series of east-west running ridges defines the northern edge of the town. The southern-most of these accommodates a portion of the town's suburbs, while further to the north a parallel ridge defines the outer edges of the conurbation at Deerpark East.

The characteristic partition of low hills, ridges and valleys is the prime constituent in giving the area its natural character, and it's continuation into Clew Bay creates the unique drowned landscape of the inner bay.

1.2.2. VEGETATION

Given that the study area extends well beyond the developed extremities of Westport, the most extensive vegetation cover in the hinterland areas is grass in the form of pastureland (Fig. 1.6).

The other main element in the landscape is the array of dense woodland areas surrounding the town, emphasising the rolling character of the landscape, while providing important visual enclosure and shelter to the town. The bulk of the woodland occurs within the boundaries of Westport House Demesne, providing an important visual backdrop and amenity for the town. An analysis of various stands of woodland indicate that they consist primarily of broadleaved species, which are overmature in many areas. Regeneration of the woodlands is occurring with Ash, Sycamore and Alder, replacing, in time, the predominant species of Beech, Elm, Oak, Sycamore, Ash, Chestnut and Lime. (cf Arboricultural Report: Westport Demesne and Surrounds; M. Hoban, Forestry and Landscape Consultant). The core of the study area is occupied by Westport

Demesne itself with its man-made English landscape of rolling grassland enclosed by dense woodland.

There is little dedicated recreational amenity land. The town park and Fair Green are both areas of passive open space, while active recreational amenity is concentrated at the sports centre, the gaelic pitches at Deerpark East, and at the golf course. The amenity walk on the western portion of the old railway line, to the south of Cloonmonad has the potential to become a linear parkway, providing a pedestrian connection and cycleway between the town centre and Westport Quay.

1.2.3 LAND USE

The bulk of the study area, as stated previously, is in agricultural use – primarily pastureland, which is concentrated in the extreme northern and southern sections of the area (Fig. 1.7). The central portion of the study area, running on an east-west axis, consists of a range of widely-divergent land-uses. The town core and inner suburbs occupy the eastern portion of this corridor, while Westport House demesne and the satellite community of Westport Quay occupy the western portion.

Commercial uses are generally confined to the town core, while residential land uses extend out in the agricultural hinterland as sporadic single houses or in clusters.

Industrial land uses are located on the approaches to the town, on the Newport, Castlebar and Ballinrobe roads, the unfortunate exception to this pattern being the location of a fish-meal factory on Roman Island opposite Westport Quay.

Institutional uses are confined to an area immediately to the north and east of the urban core while the main recreation facilities occur to the north of the town centre, in the demesne itself and along Golf Course Road.

1.2.4 VISUAL ANALYSIS

The visual character of the town of Westport and its environs, a unique combination of cultural and natural landscapes, is formed by the juxtaposition of a number of strong, and mutually-reinforcing elements (Fig. 1.8). Thus, the study area can be divided into a series of discrete visual compartments, each with its own particular environment, but each also influencing all the surrounding compartments, as follows:-

- the historic core of the town
- Westport House and Demesne
- Westport Quay and the inner bay
- the woodland edges
- the ridge and valley area to the north
- the agricultural plateau to the south

The historic core of the town is analysed in some detail in Section 1.3 of this report. Similarly Westport House and Demesne is treated in Section 1.4

The distribution of the woodland edges around the perimeter of the historic core constitute an essential ingredient in giving Westport its character. Their role in forming vistas, defining edges and providing enclosure and shelter from the Atlantic winds cannot be overestimated.

The Deerpark East area to the north is totally visually segregated from the town centre. The enclosing ridges and high points make this an introverted landscape capable of accommodating limited development without interfering with the overall visual amenity of the hinterland area.

By contrast, the agricultural plateau to the south of the study area, consists of open farmland, with vistas towards the mountains of Maamtrasna away to the south and towards Croagh Patrick in the west.

The combination of ridges, valleys, woodland plantations and man-made elements creates a landscape of enclosures and vistas, each compartment differing in character from the next, creating a landscape pattern of great diversity.

1.2.5 CIRCULATION

As stated previously, the town of Westport forms the terminus and hub of movement through the south-west Mayo region (Fig. 1.9).

The national route, the N5, communicating through to Dublin on the east coast of Ireland, terminates in the town centre of Westport. This potentially creates problems for the town centre as will be illustrated in Section 1.3.

Five roads radiate out from the town centre – to Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Leenaun, Louisburgh and Newport, respectively. One of the roads to Louisburgh is also the connection to Westport Quay, which accommodates the greater proportion of the recent urban expansion of Westport.

The beginnings of a segregated pedestrian movement system can be seen in the creation of a walk on the portion of the old railway line connecting out to Westport Quay, and the more informally-organised traditional walk through a portion of Westport demesne, as a connection between the town and Westport Quay.

1.2.6 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

An examination of the sites and monuments record at the Office of Public Works, indicates that there are approximately twenty monuments located within the study area, of varying importance (Fig. 1.10). However, it should be noted that no qualitative assessment or ranking of the aforesaid monuments has been carried out as part of this study. It is to be assumed that these monuments will be listed in the SMR document and will be protected under the Westport UDC Development Plan objectives.

1.2.7 ECOLOGY

The western portion of the study area contains portions of a National Heritage Area (Fig. 1.10).

1.3 URBAN CORE

The historic core of Westport is among the very few planned provincial towns in Ireland. In common with other examples, it was generated by the desire of a landlord to clear an existing settlement to provide for estate development.

1.3.1 URBAN GROWTH

In the early 18th century, John Browne of Westport House began the building of Westport in its current location to allow the old town to be razed and the demesne to be extended, providing a parkland setting for the house. Successive earls extended the town from its earliest beginnings at the Octagon and the attached streets to its full development in the mid 19th century. The Brownes introduced the linen industry into the area and the town flourished in parallel with the success of weaving.

By 1770, Shop Street, Bridge Street, High Street and Peter Street were in existence and, by the end of the 18th century the Mall was completed. At its peak in the mid-19th Century the historic core, as we know it today, had filled out and population had reached 8,000 people.

The decline of the town dates from the mid 19th century - by 1880 the population had declined to 4,500. The famine of 1846 affected Westport, as it did most rural towns, and the coming of the industrial revolution adversely affected the linen industry, a major source of employment in the town and hinterland. The introduction of the railway facilitated transport of goods to and from east coast ports, particularly Dublin, and lessened the importance of Westport harbour. The dam across the river exacerbated the process of silting up. The town continued to contract in the late 19th and early 20th centuries - by 1950 the population had declined to 3,500 and a low of 3,000 was recorded in 1971. This decline was common to all rural towns and paralleled the decline in the national population from the mid-19th century to 1966, when the first

increase since the famine was noted. It was also a reflection of the continuing decline in the rural population and the migration to the major cities.

Thus Westport did not experience physical growth again until the 1950's and 60's when St Mary's Crescent, the industrial estate, the housing above the Castlebar Road, and the ribbon development linking the town to Westport Quay, were gradually developed.

1.3.2 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Westport lies in the wooded valley of the Carrowbeg River, hidden by hills on all approaches from the east, south and west, and by the wooded flank of the Westport Demesne to the north and west.

The core of the town is a series of straight streets laid out across the sloping river valley floor, terminating in a series of urban set pieces. (Fig. 1.11.)

The primary elements of the historic core are the Mall, the Octagon and the irregular grid of streets that tie them together. Beyond this core of 18th and 19th century streets lie the looser additions of St Mary's Crescent and the industrial area beyond, the ribbon development on many approach roads, and the 'development in depth' of residential enclaves along Castlebar Road and Quay Road.

The visual boundary of the urban core is still quite clear, notwithstanding the 20th century additions. The wooded and partly walled demesne of Westport House encloses the north west edge, while the North Wood, now in public ownership, rises to the horizon and blocks the view to the suburban King's Hill estate beyond. The rising ground to the east along the Castlebar Road firmly closes the view to this side though the housing to the north of the Castlebar Road uncharacteristically breaks the skyline. The ground again rises to the south and west, closing in the town, though there are some long views to hills and mountains beyond.

The historic core of the town is enclosed in a more immediate way by the line of Peter Street, James Street and Newport Street as far as the cemetery; by the Mall and the Castlebar Road to a point east of the Courthouse; by the Fair Green and Mill Street to the south; and by High Street, John's Row and Peter Street to the west. Within this core the presence of the demesne is intense, visually impenetrable and almost inaccessible.

The streets of the town are relatively long and unbroken. Individual blocks are quite large and there are few cross links or shortcuts; this is a characteristic of radially organised towns where the emphasis is on the radial pattern of arrival and returning rather than on the movement through or across the streets.

- Quay Street provides an exciting visual introduction to the core, winding and dropping to the west on entering the town. It is poorly enclosed along its northern edge.
- Hill Street and Peter Street form a continuum breasting the ridge which encloses the town, providing fine open views to the west and exciting, dropping views northwards into the town below. It is relatively well enclosed by buildings, the paths and carriageway are in poor condition and the bases of buildings are poorly connected to the street.
- John's Row is an unevenly developed street with recent housing which is out of scale with the earlier 18th and 19th century terraces. There are fine views from this street over the town to the north, and careful landscaping and built enclosure is needed along the north side at the east and west ends respectively.
- High Street is generally well enclosed but the recent developments at the south end are insensitive in the context of the earlier buildings in the street.

- Mill Street focuses on the Clock Tower at its west end and on the Fair Green at the east, neither of which is satisfactorily resolved. Mill Street has suffered from underuse and many of the earlier buildings are gone leaving it poorly enclosed along much of the north side. The recent Garda Station is only partly successful in turning the corner into the Mall and many of the recent buildings on the south side lack the scale to fully enclose the street space. The street is further threatened by the semi-derelict condition of the fine three storey terrace at the west end on the north side.
- Distillery Road is unevenly developed, buildings on the east side are loosely sited. The single storey terrace and the garage on the west side are visually inappropriate, and lack the scale to properly enclose the street.
- Castlebar Street is an urban space in transition, and the lack of strong commercial use has caused the decline of the buildings and the erosion of the visual integrity of the street. The degree of enclosure is uneven and the quality of replacement buildings is mixed.
- Newport Road and Newport Street should be visually unified, with the edges of the space enclosed by walls and railings, with tree lines behind the property boundaries on the north side and in the wide pavement on the south side. However, these linking elements are frequently broken, the street space is not sufficiently contained and there are few trees.
- James Street is generally well enclosed on both sides by buildings of relatively homogeneous character. Many buildings in the street are underutilised and the street facades have a somewhat vacant appearance, particularly towards the middle.
- The Mall is a fine boulevard enclosed by buildings of strong character on both sides. The continuity of the enclosure is complemented by the line of trees on both sides, the shaft of water, and the continuous stone banks and parapets to either side.
- Shop Street is short, wide and somewhat grand, given extra interest by the focus on the Clock Tower at one end, and the Octagon and the Glendenning Monument at the other. The street is weakened by the setback of the recent Allied Irish Bank from the general building line.
- Bridge Street is the most vital street in Westport. Its relative narrowness, the continuity of its enclosure, the varied ridge heights and the stepping gables of its buildings all contribute to the satisfactory visual scene. This is enhanced by the lively termination at the south end by the Clock Tower and the rising hills, and the dipping view to the north stopped by the Old Railway Hotel beyond the trees on the bank of the North Mall.
- The Clock Tower at the junction of Shop Street, High Street, Bridge Street and Mill Street is ugly and visually disappointing. The existing tower should be replaced with an appropriate clock or public sculpture.
- The node at the junction of James Street, the Newport Road, and the Mall has become visually confused; it should not become a full terminus to these streets but rather provide a spatial continuity from James Street to Newport Street, without visual interruption, while mediating between the formality of the Mall to the south and the meandering river bank to the north.

- The Octagon is the truly thematic space in the historic core. It is formal in architectural character and dominated by the almost centrally placed Glendenning Monument. This space is satisfactorily enclosed and full of visual interest. The axially placed Wyatt Theatre suggests a public use.
- While the town is surrounded by developed woodland there are few trees within the streets or even in the open spaces, except along the north and south malls.

Pavements within the town are generally of in-situ concrete except in the main shopping streets and the Mall where new paving is being laid. Within the main shopping streets the pavements are too narrow to accommodate the flow of pedestrians at busy times, and car parking and movement dominate the streetscape.

1.3.3 BUILDING CONDITION

Building condition is illustrated in Figure 1.12. This survey does not show the condition of individual structures but rather the trends in the condition of buildings, on a street by street basis and provides an understanding of the overall health of the building fabric.

- The building condition in the main commercial streets - Bridge Street, Shop Street, and the Mall - is good, almost without exception.
- There is a low incidence of poor condition in the peripheral commercial streets - High Street, Peter Street and James Street.
- There is a higher incidence of poor building condition on streets which lie between the residential areas of the core and the more commercial streets -principally in Mill Street, Church Street and Castlebar Street.
- The condition of the residential enclaves within the central area is generally very good; the few exceptions to this occur on sites where intensification of use is being considered or where the location requires an unusual, or expensive, design solution.
- The backlands to either side of James Street include a number of buildings, many of them of stone or brick, of significant architectural quality, which are underused and in poor condition. The lands behind the north side of Mill Street are generally cleared and are used for parking; this also occurs in the lands behind Peter Street and High Street.

This survey provides the following findings:

- The buildings in the commercial core are well used and maintained, supported by the strong economic uses to which they are being put.
- Housing on the rim of the historic core is highly valued and well maintained,
- The increasingly valuable land uses in the main shopping streets are reflecting a new commercial value on the backlands in the commercial core. Much of the land is now in active use as car parking or public open space. Increasing commercial pressure in the core will inevitably bring opportunities for intense development in these areas.
- The streets with the highest incidence of poor maintenance are those in areas of transition - streets which are of mixed use and where there is potential for change to a use of higher value. It is likely that the need to expand the commercial core and the developing market for apartments will allow these instances of dereliction and pockets of underused property to be economically redeveloped or repaired.

1.3.4 LAND USE

Land uses in the central area are illustrated in Figure 1.13. Only the dominant land use in each building was noted.

The most significant characteristics of the land use distribution are:

- Primary retail uses are concentrated in Bridge Street and Shop Street.
- The streets on the periphery of the retail area - James Street, Peter Street, High Street and Mill Street - are of mixed use, with residential and commercial uses sharing space with shopping.
- The Carrowbeg River firmly divides the open space at St Mary's Crescent and the housing beyond from the

commercial core. These areas are further separated by the backlands on the west side of James Street.

- The river and The Mall also firmly separate the mixed use areas at Newport Street and Castlebar Street from the prime retail core.
- The North Mall is occupied by uniquely public commercial uses - two banks, an hotel and the Post Office -while the South Mall has institutional uses at either end - the Catholic Church to the west and the Garda Station to the east, with principally residential uses in-between.
- Outside the commercial core, on the south west side of the town, the streets are almost exclusively in residential use.
- Institutional uses are concentrated in the north east sector of the town, including both Catholic and Protestant churches, the public library, the welfare home and, most importantly, the schools; two of these are located on Newport Street while the others are accessed from Castlebar and Altamont Streets.
- The only significant industrial use within the central area is the Northern Feathers factory, to the north of St Mary's Crescent.
- Uses of particular tourism interest including hotels, pubs and shops with a tourism orientation, are well distributed throughout the central area.
- The significant spaces in the town include the North Wood, the green in front of St Mary's Crescent, the site for the leisure centre behind James Street, the banks of the Carrowbeg River and the broad boulevard of the Mall. These provide satisfying contrast to the tight, relatively narrow, streets of the historic core. Each is capable of intensification of use and elaboration of treatment, and would benefit from a considered design intervention. They are also without any linkage or sense of continuity.
- Parking is provided on all streets and in three major parking areas - between Mill Street and Bridge Street, behind the Catholic Church and behind Shop Street and John's Row. It is intended to provide further spaces between James Street and the Carrowbeg River in association with the new leisure centre, between Bridge Street and James' Street, and between High Street and Mill Street.
- The backlands behind the streets of the core include cleared lands, the town park, large and small car parks, single storey industrial sheds and some unused buildings of considerable architectural merit.

The overall pattern of land use within the urban core is of peripheral housing, both public and private, surrounding traditional streets of mixed use. Some area have principally institutional uses while others are dominated by retail and commercial uses.

The relative softness of the land use pattern in the areas east of the Carrowbeg River, between Newport Street and the Fair Green, suggests an opportunity for expanding the commercial and retail sectors into this part of the town.

There is potential between James Street and the North Wood to intensify the land use for amenity and recreational use, to strengthen the visual structure and to make accessible the entrance to the Westport House Demesne.

The backlands of the town present major opportunities for development and consolidation of the existing core. Each backland area provides potential linkages between streets which would strengthen the urban structure and open lands to commercial use; potential sites for intensive car parking, possibly even in multi-storeyed structures; space for expansion of existing retail premises and for accommodating a major store; sites for major recreation and tourism uses, linked to other amenities; and, finally enclaves of housing, particularly for the rental market.

The Northern Feathers factory sits relatively easily into the landscape below the North Wood. However it lies inappropriately between two major housing enclaves - Pinewood and St Mary's Crescent; it also presents an ugly prospect when viewed from above. It is a non-conforming use and it should be reserved for amenity or tourism use in the future.

The most significant characteristics of the land use distribution are:

- The pattern is generally satisfactory and the concentration of retail, commercial and residential uses within cores or bands creates distinct districts, minimising friction, and maximising the economic and efficiency spin-offs between different users.
- The concentration of schools to the east of the Carrowbeg River is unsatisfactory as it generates significant traffic flows and congestion during the delivery and collection periods of each school day. This is particularly unwelcome on days when the central area is already busy and congested.

1.4 PHYSICAL PROFILE: WESTPORT HOUSE & DEMESNE

The role of Westport House and demesne is central to the evolution of the town of Westport. In effect, the existing town of Westport owes it's existence and form to John Browne, who, in deciding to develop the house and demesne in the mid-eighteenth century, was forced to build a new town in the present location in order to create the great park at Westport House.

The demesne nestles at the base of the watershed of the Carrowbeg River, contained between two east to west-running ridges, and consists of attractive, undulating parkland, enclosed and modulated by dense stands of mainly broad-leaved woodland.

The great park is conceived in the style of the great English landscapes of the eighteenth century. This style was developed by "Capability" Brown and Humphrey Repton, but there is no evidence to suggest their involvement with the Westport demesne. However, the involvement of Richard Cassels in the design of Westport House, who would have been totally familiar with the English landscape style, suggests that the design of the great park was influenced by that movement. This style of landscape was conceived and created primarily for the mild and gentle landscapes of southern England, and has translated well to the eastern and southern portions of Ireland. The success of the composition in Westport, in the harsh climate of the western seaboard, is due to it's location in a small sheltered fold in the landscape, where the Carrowbeg River meets the Atlantic Ocean. Once the prevailing Atlantic winds are excluded, it is possible to achieve an extraordinary level of growth for a wide range of species in the prevailing micro-climate.

Although the great park was conceived as inward-looking pleasure gardens, bounded by a high stone wall in order to keep, as perceived in the eighteenth century, "savage" nature at bay, it occupies a pivotal role in the urban structure of Westport as a whole. Westport was conceived

as an estate town, in the tradition of the classic Irish estate towns, and therefore owes it's very existence to the adjoining estate.

The town location on the inland side of the demesne, effectively meant separation from the bay, and led to the creation of Westport Quay as a satellite community and port. This curious three-part urban structure, of town, demesne, and port, provides the basis for the existing framework for the town's expansion, as well as creating opportunities and constraints in relation to this expansion.

The demesne itself can be divided into two district sections. The southern part of the demesne can be considered as the historic core and central focus of the demesne, containing the classic landscape. The northern section consists of a mixture of woodland and pastureland located on the hills and valleys just north of Westport.

The Golf Course road separates the two sections, although some of the lands to the south of the golf course road are not considered to be part of the historic landscape. Thus, the two sections of the demesne offer very different possibilities in terms of their potential to accept change and development. The southern portion must be preserved and reinforced at all costs, while the northern lands offer considerable opportunities for a range of appropriate developments.

It is the historic portion of the demesne, however, that gives most cause for concern. These concerns can be divided into three distinct areas, as follows:-

(a) the effective closure of the demesne towards the town creates a serious barrier for an effective physical connection with Westport Quay and for the integration of town activities with demesne activities.
(b) the range of low-grade tourism-related activities within the demesne at present are considered to be incompatible with it's historic character and importance, as a cultural landscape.
(c) the serious nature of the disintegration of this classical landscape, particularly in the decline of the tree stock.

While the first two items listed above can be dealt with by the development of a proper land-use plan for town and demesne, the issue of the woodland planting is extremely serious. The woodlands at Westport Demesne form the visual backdrop and setting to the town itself. Like all estate plantings of the late eighteenth century, these tree species came to maturity approximately forty years ago, and will last no more than another twenty years, at most. However, during that time wind-throw will reduce the woodland belts to a visual shambles, enclosure will be lost, resulting in a deterioration in micro- climate and shelter. The visual character of the town of Westport will be adversely affected.

It is therefore imperative that a major initiative is undertaken immediately in relation to the restoration of the historic landscape of Westport House and demesne, in order that the very asset that makes Westport a viable and desirable tourist destination is preserved.

1.5 SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

1.5.1 POPULATION ANALYSIS

Table 1.1 shows the change in the population of Westport as in the 1971, 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996 Census. The population change in Westport Rural District is also shown.

TABLE 1.1: POPULATION CHANGE 1971, 1981, 1986, 1991 & 1996

YEAR	WESTPORT UDC		WESTPORT RD	
	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
1971	3,023		15,758	
1981	3,378	+11.7%	16,232	+3%
1986	3,456	+2.3%	16,417	+1.1%
1991	3,688	+6.7%	15,611	-4.9%
1996 (Est.)	4,253	+15.3%	15,505	-0.7%

The population of the UDC area increased by 565 (15.3%) over the 1971-1996 period. The increase in the numbers recorded in the Electoral Register over the 1986-1991 and 1991-1996 periods, as outlined in Table 1.2. An increase of 14.2% was recorded over the 1991-1996 period, in the Register of Electors (over 18 years of age).

TABLE 1.2: REGISTER OF ELECTORS IN WESTPORT (OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE)

YEAR	ELECTORAL REGISTER	CHANGE
1986	2,464	
1991	2,711	+10.0%
1996	3,158	+14.2%

Source: *Westport UDC*

Evidence prepared by Patrick J Tobin & Co Ltd, Consulting Engineers for the Westport Main Drainage and Waste Disposal Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry, in May 1996 estimated that the 1991 population for the extended drainage area was 4,107 persons, having increased form 3,813 in 1986. The seasonal tourist residential population, based on an estimated 435 bedrooms by 1997 was estimated at 1,051. Registered and unregistered guest house accommodation totalling 238 guest-houses was allocated a peak occupancy of 400.

The Western Regional Development Strategy of 1982 predicted a population of 5,100 for Westport by the Year 2004. The 1992 Westport Development Plan projected a population of 3,780 by 1996, 3,900 by 2001 and 4,040 by 2006. In the context of the significant increase in population recorded over the past 5-10 years, it is now likely that Westport will achieve a population of 4,700 by the year 2001 and a population of 5,200 approximately by the year 2006.

The capacity of lands allocated for residential development as in Chapter 5.0 below is 6,000. An Estimated 1,000 of this is assumed to relate to holiday home population equivalents, who would not be recorded in the Census of Population data. The growth in the number of houses used as holiday homes in Westport has been of particular significance over the past 5-10 years. It is estimated that in 1996, there are 150 houses used primarily as holiday homes within the Westport UDC area. These are located mainly at Westport Quay, the town centre and in other parts of Westport.

The potential and planning implications of future holiday home developments are considered under Chapter 3.0 below.

1.5.2 EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS

The Small Area Population Statistics for Westport Urban District as derived from the 1991 Census data, lists those employed in Westport by occupation.

In Table 1.3 these occupations have been grouped together into the three principal occupational sectors. The equivalent data for Westport road have been included in the Table for purposes of comparison.

TABLE 1.3: EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP 1991

GROUP	WESTPORT UDC 1991		WESTPORT RD 1991	
	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
Primary	39	3.2	10,368	30.8
Secondary	324	26.5	7,759	23
Tertiary	858	70.3	15,537	46.2
Total	1,221	100	33,664	100

Primary: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing
Secondary: All Non Agriculture Industries
Tertiary All Service Industries

The Westport figures refer to the population within Westport UD. The figures do not include those who commute into the town.

Westport's function as a market and service centre, as well as a popular tourist town, is reflected in the fact that the highest proportion of employment, at some 70.3%, is in the service sector. The particular significance of the service sector to Westport is highlighted by the comparison with the rest of County Mayo where the service sector is less predominant, accounting for only 46.2% of employment . The proportion of the towns employment in the industrial sector is 26.5% which is a decrease from the figure in 1986 which was 32.3%. The 1991 Small Area Statistics gives the Westport labourforce at 1,473.

The Census defines the Labourforce as comprising

- Those at work
- Those out of work having been previously employed
- Those seeking their first job

In November 1995, a total of 1,403 were recorded on the Live Register at the Westport Employment Exchange. Some 960 of these were males and 443 were female.

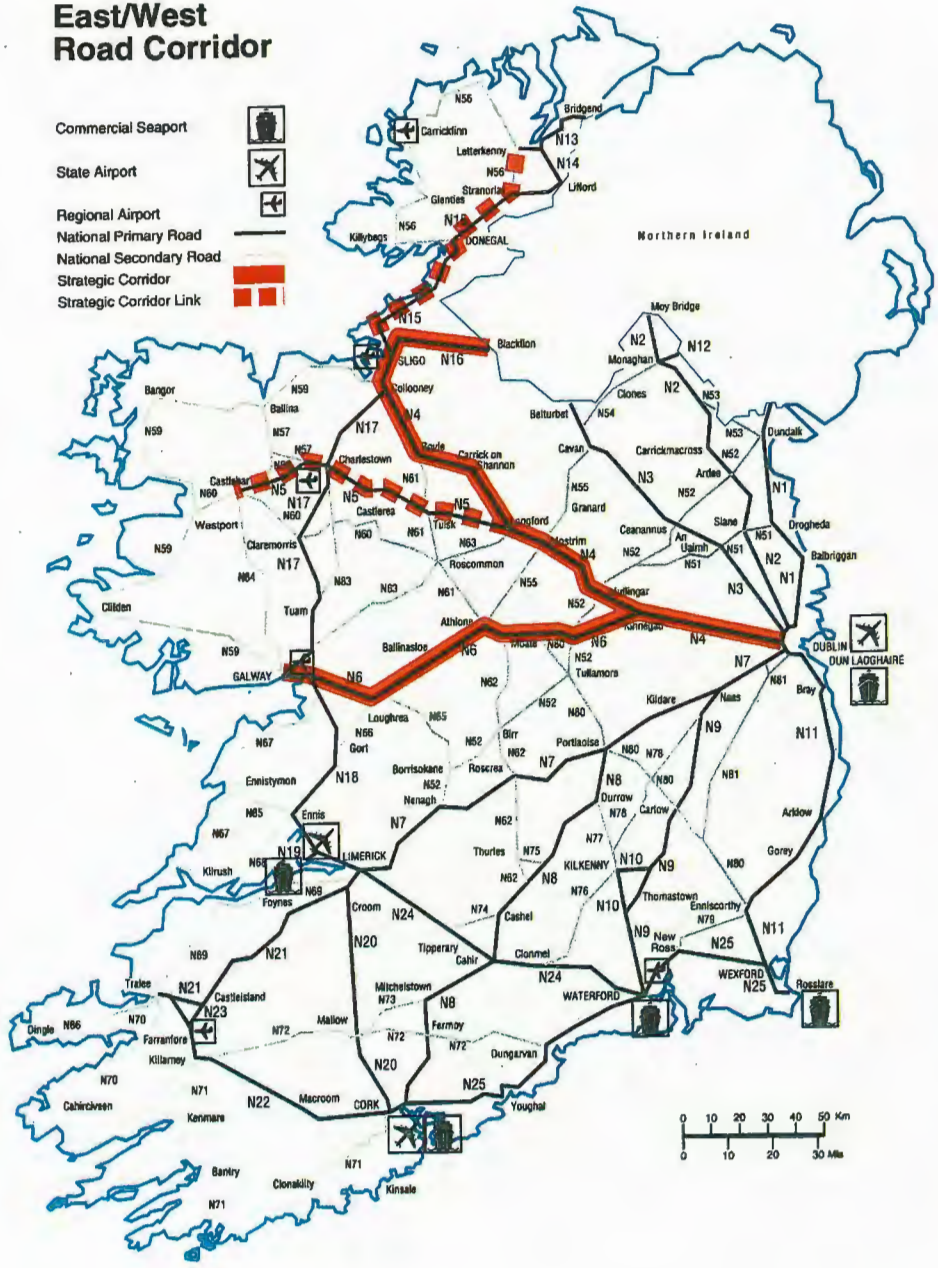
A survey of businesses was carried out by Westport Chamber of Commerce in 1993 and obtained a total of 176 responses. The number of people employed full time n July 1993 was 794 which was reduced to 524 in November 1993. The number of people employed on a part time basis was 278 in July 1993 and 142 in November 1993.

1.6 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

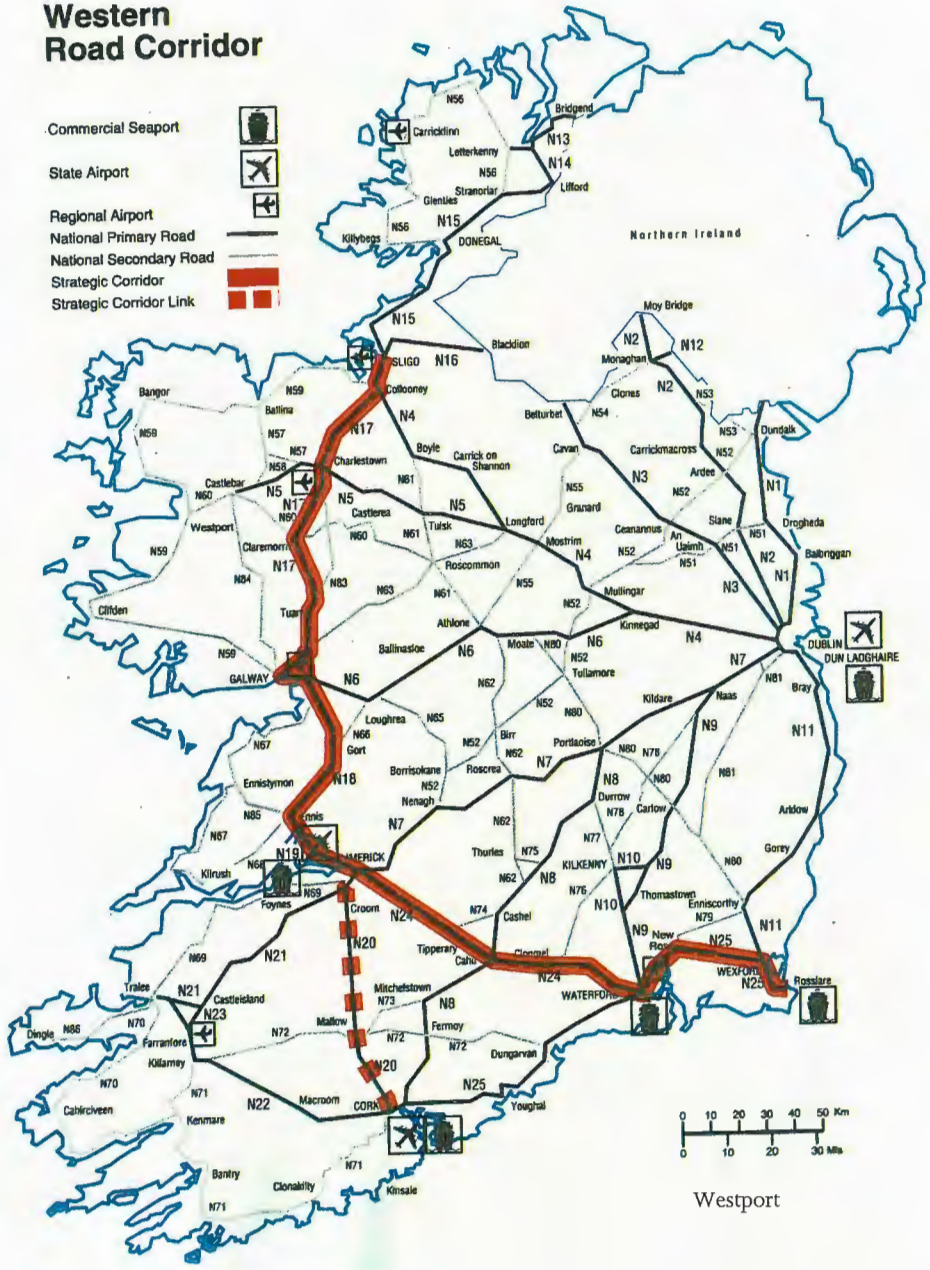
The current statutory Development Plan for Westport is that adopted by the Urban District Council on 4 March 1992. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 incorporate coloured versions of Map No. 17(Land Use Strategy), and the corresponding Town Centre Insert Map . Figure 5.3 incorporates a coloured version of Map No. 18 (Objectives) of the 1992 Development Plan with the appropriate objectives from the Written Statement summarised where referenced by a number.

It is envisaged that the recommendations and strategy of the Westport 2000 Study will be taken into account in the review of the 1992 Development Plan. The nature and extent of the detailed design proposals as incorporated in the Westport 2000 Study are, however, considered to be too detailed for formal adoption as a Development Plan.

Map 3
East/West
Road Corridor



Map 4
Western
Road Corridor



Westport

Fig 1.1 National Context

Physical & Administrative
Boundries Map No. 1

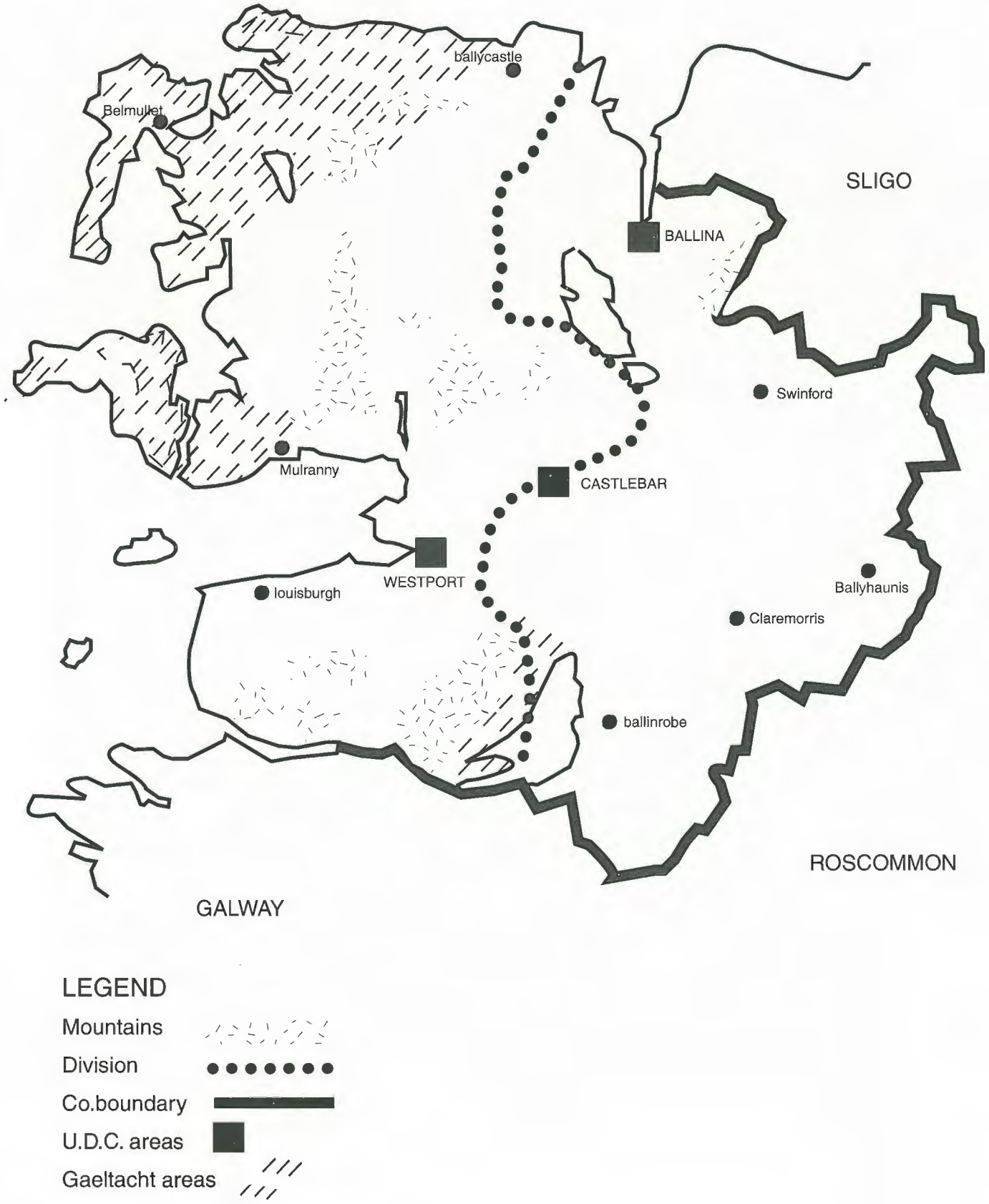
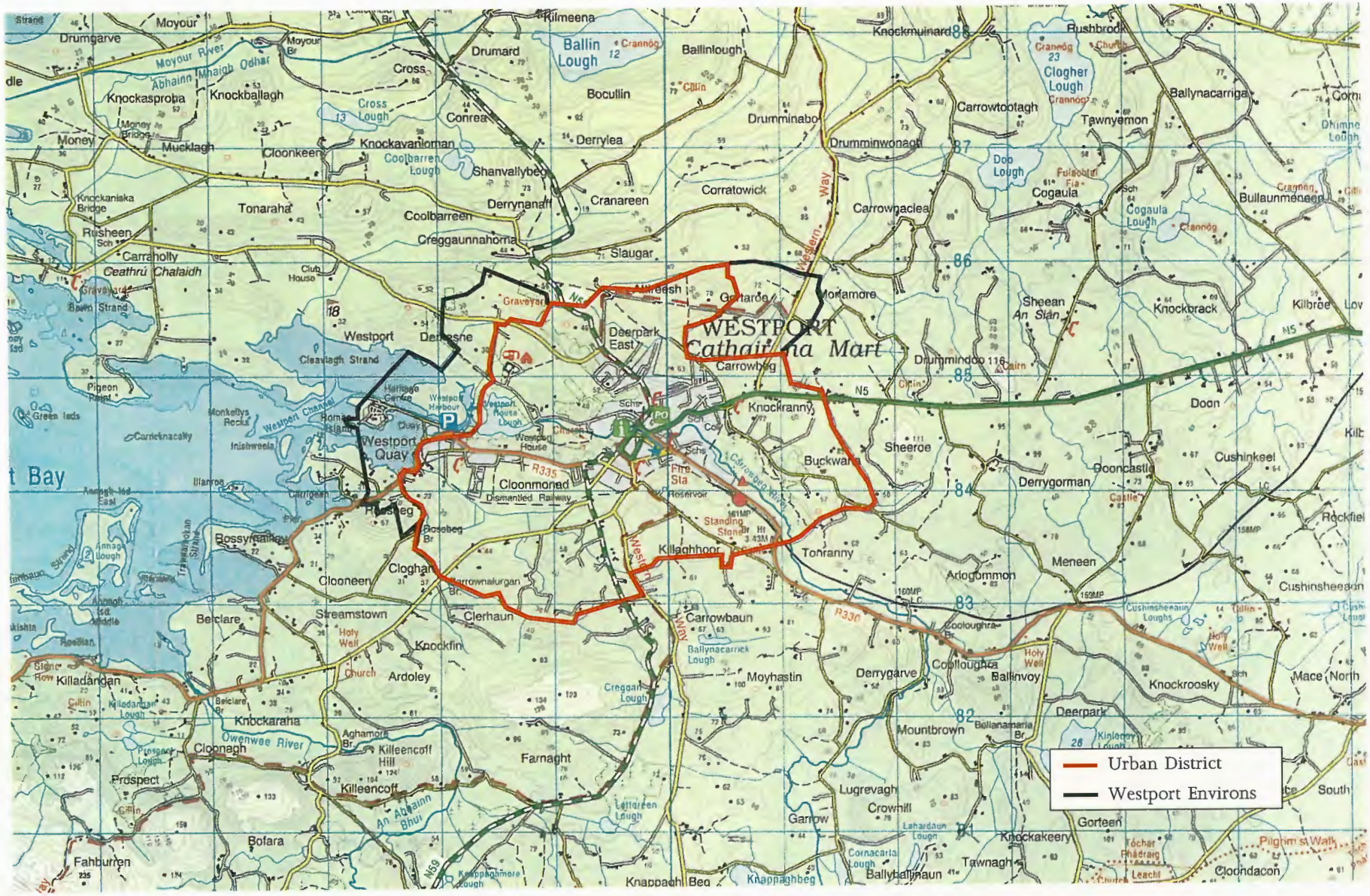


Fig 1.2 1992 County Mayo Development Plan Context



Source: Ordinance Survey

Fig 1.3 Westport Environs

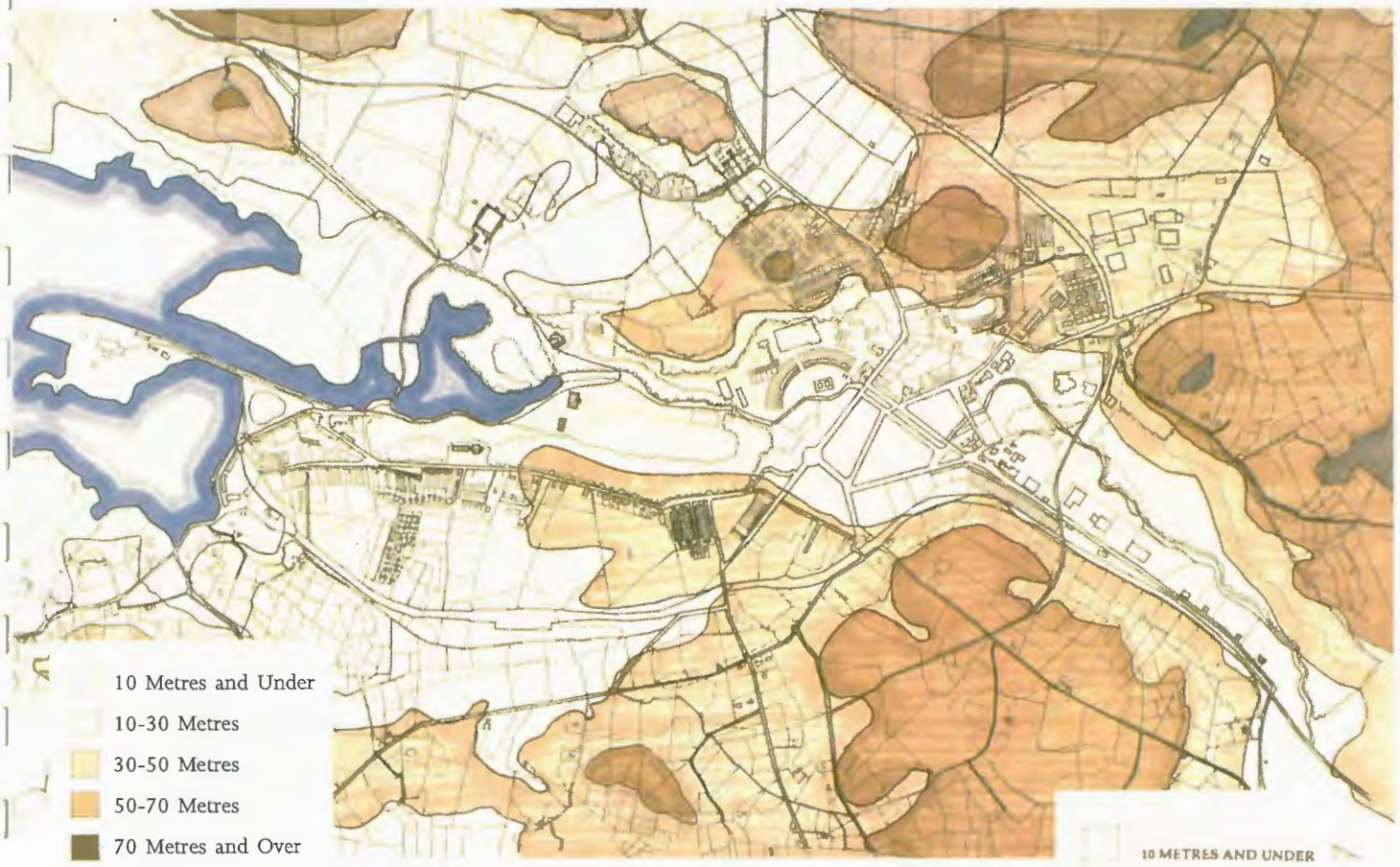


Fig. 1.4 Topography Map

Fig. 1.5 Slope Regime

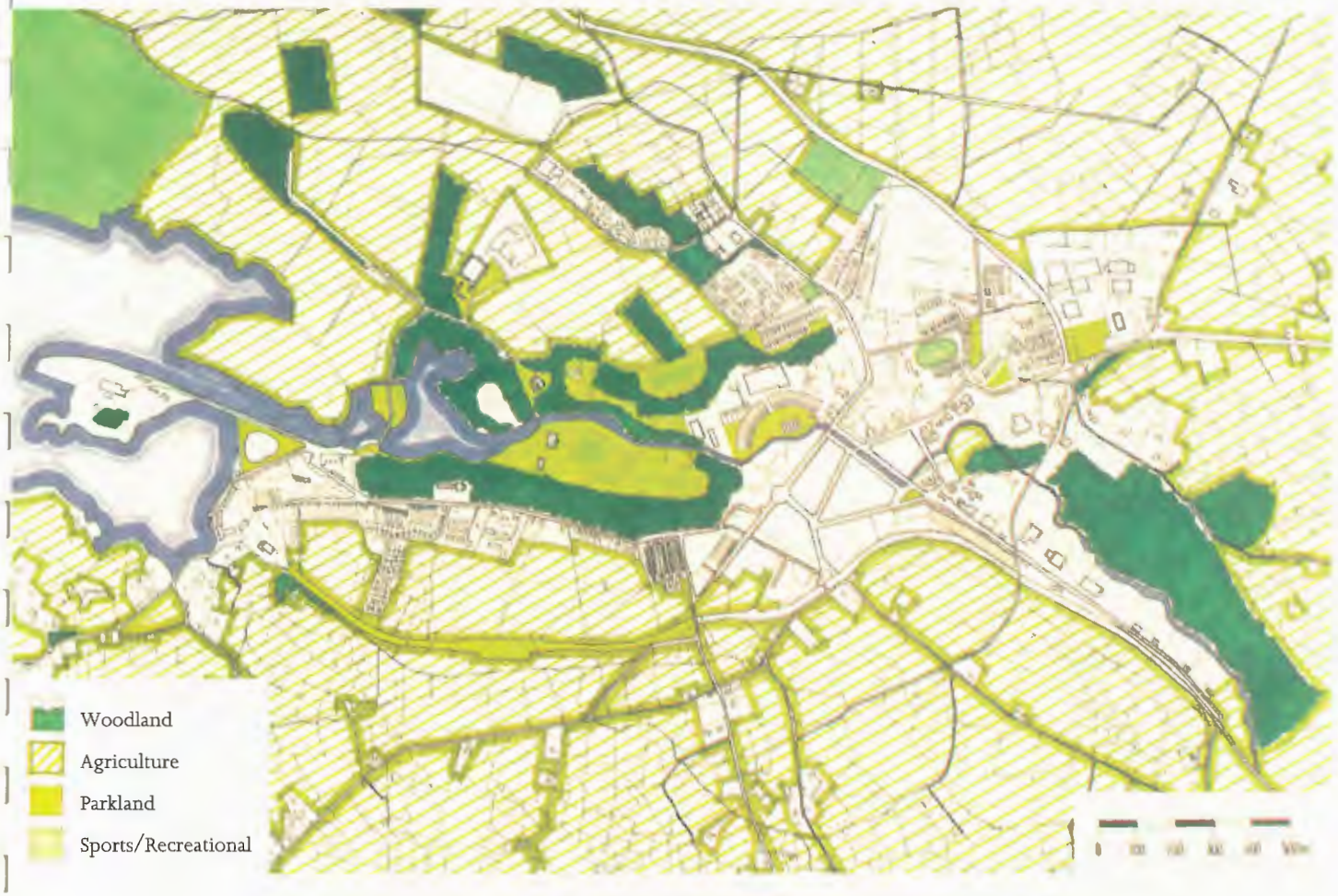


Fig. 1.6 Vegetation Map

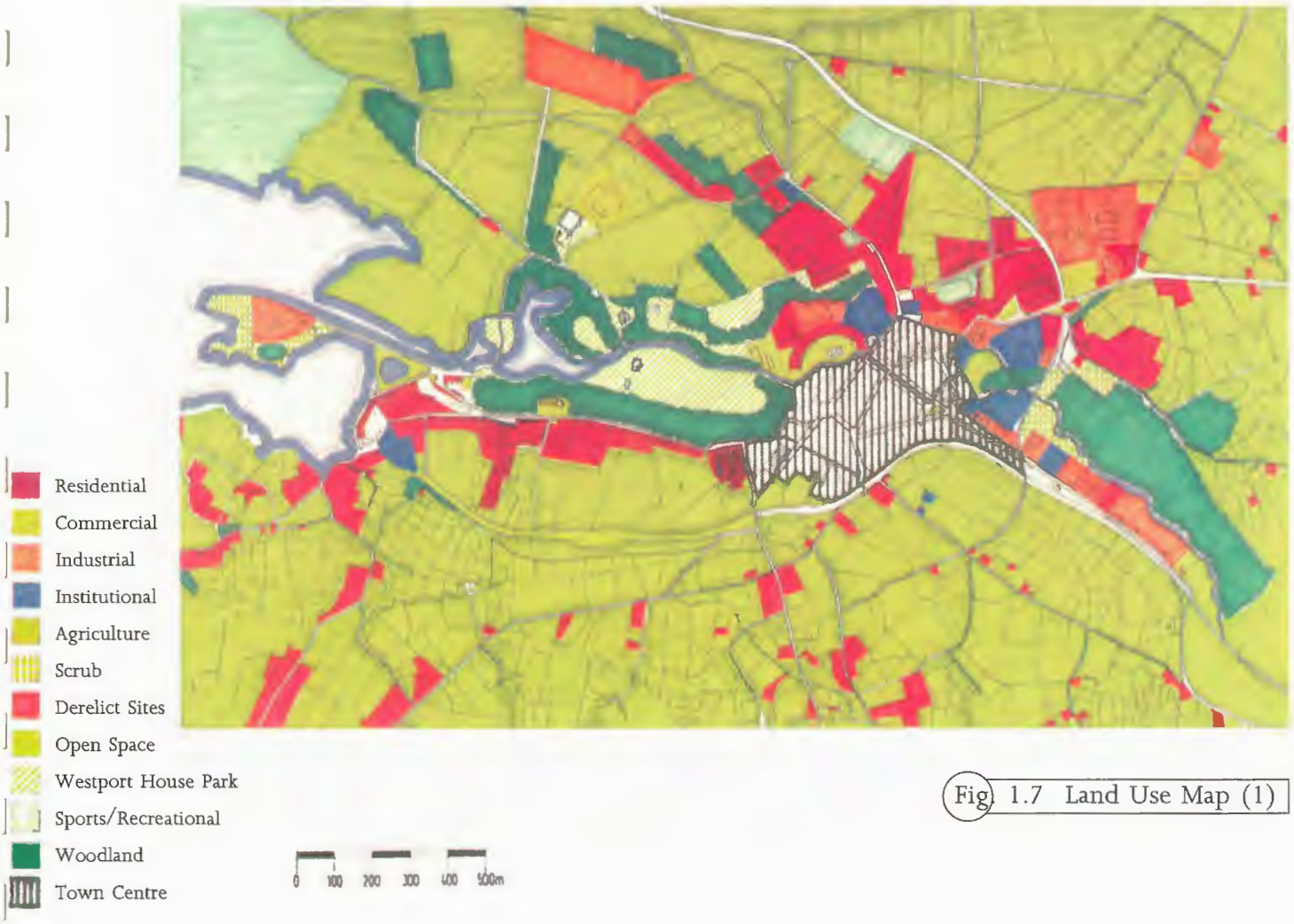


Fig. 1.7 Land Use Map (1)

Fig. 1.8 Visual Analysis

Fig. 1.9 Circulation Map

Monument No	Townland	Classification
1	Westport Demesne	Enclosure
2	Westport Demesne	Graveyard
3	Westport Demesne	Enclosure
4	Westport Demesne	Enclosure Pit Enclosure Pit Pit
5	Deerpark East	Enclosure
6	Westport Demesne	Potential Site - Name
7	Westport Demesne	Souterrain Possible
8	Westport Demesne	Castle Mansion Architectural Fragment Settlement
9	Westport Demesne	Enclosure
10	Westport Demesne	Enclosure
11	Westport Demesne	Enclosure
12	Deerpart East	Enclosure
13	Carrowbeg	Graveyard
14	Drummindo	Ringfort (Rath/Castle)
15	Drummindo	Childrens Burial Ground Enclosure
16	Sheeroe	Enclosure
17	Sheean	Enclosure
18	Sheean	Cairn

Fig 1.10 Sites and Monuments Map

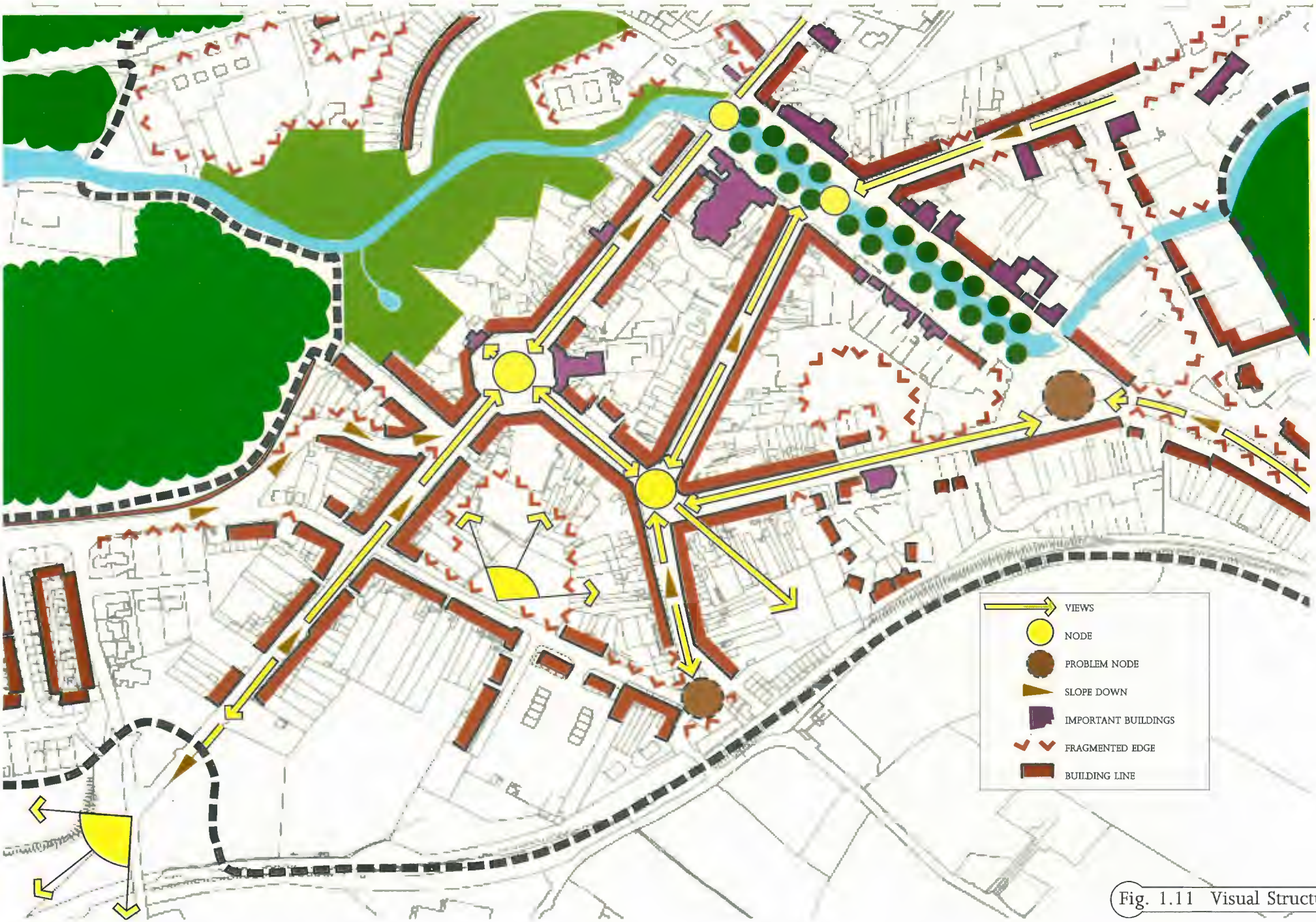


Fig. 1.11 Visual Structure

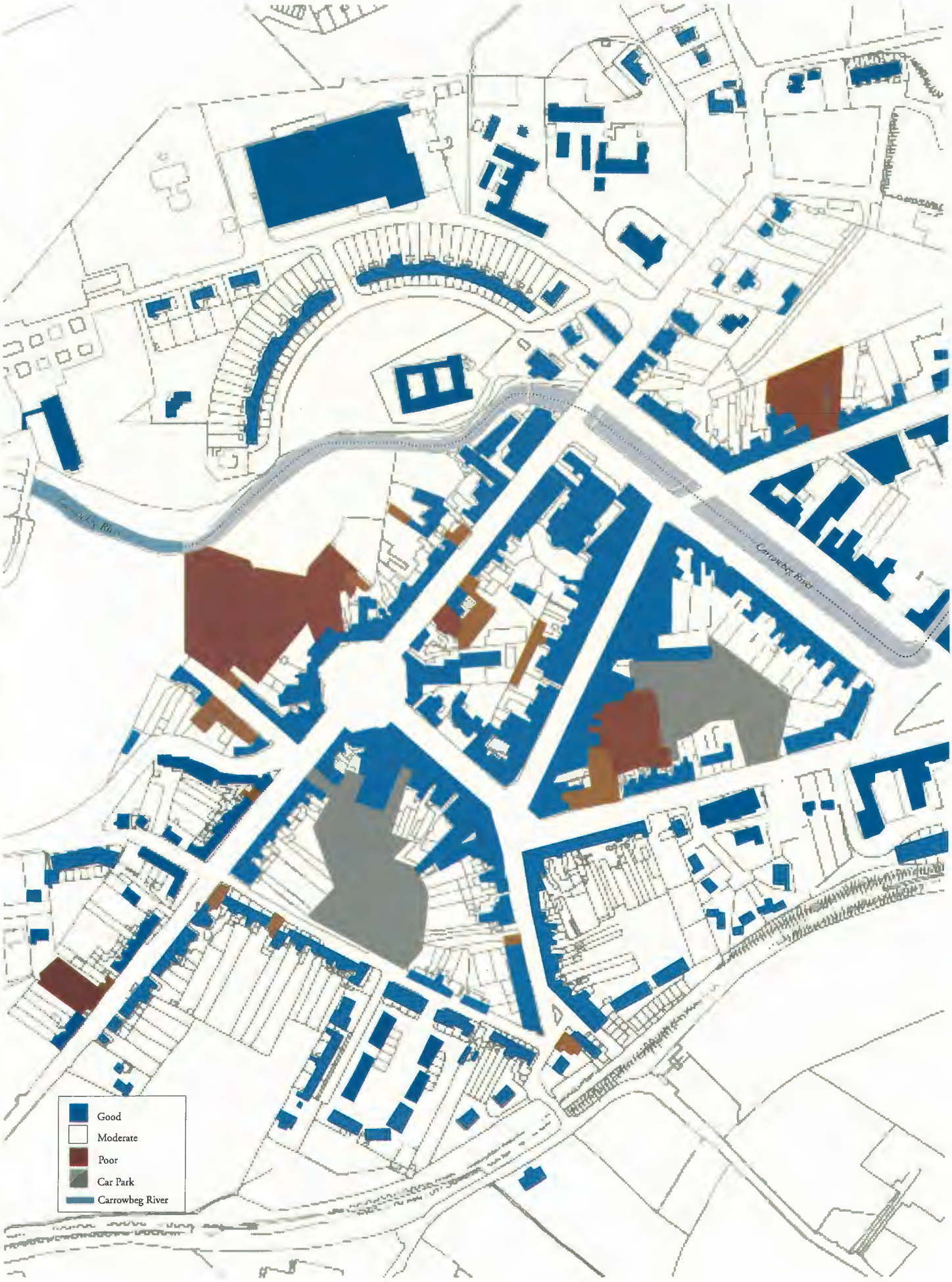


Fig. 1.12 Building Conditions

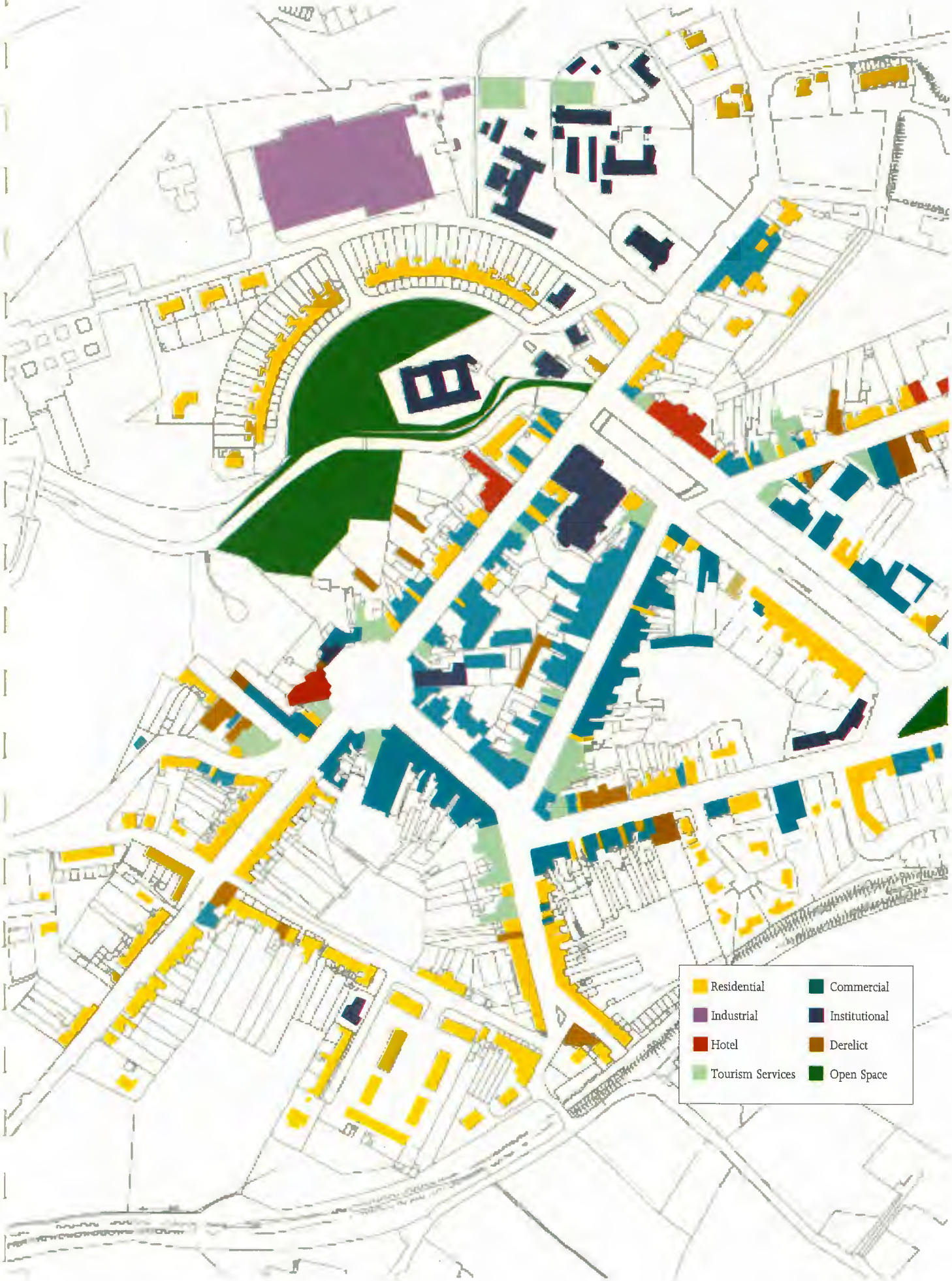


Fig. 1.13 Land Use Map (2)

2.0 Infrastructural Potential

2.0 Infrastructural Potential

The town of Westport is approaching, or perhaps already has a position of criticality in respect of two of the three major infrastructural issues - namely Main Drainage, and Traffic.

Insofar as Main Drainage is concerned, formal plans have already been submitted and approved for EU funding. The Main Drainage Scheme has successfully passed through the problematic CPO stage and work is underway in procuring the site investigations and in preparing the Contract Documents. Thus, although some routine DOE approval stages have yet to occur, it is finally possible to predict with some confidence that this Scheme will be operational by 2000/2001.

The Cloonkeen Water Supply Scheme has recently been implemented, and this solves the water supply problem until about 2002/2003.

In regard to the traffic problems, Mayo County Council have prepared local traffic management improvements (which could only, of their nature, result in relatively minor improvement) and the current Development Plan, 1992, makes provision for various peripheral roads. However the prospect of any major road improvements must be considerably more uncertain than the Scheme for Main Drainage.

In summary therefore although up until recently all three elements were severely problematic, the water supply problem has been solved (at least in the short term), the main drainage problem is very likely to be solved within a few years and to be non-critical thereafter for a considerable period. However the traffic situation remains severely problematic. Thus it is clearly essential that the UDC carefully consider their ability to obtain funding to the resolve water supply problems which will arise in 2002/2003, and increasingly the critical traffic problems

when determining the implications these issues have for a twenty-year horizon town plan. It is clear that, if any significant growth (i.e. further development) is to be accommodated, it is necessary that funding for the various infrastructural improvements become available within the short to medium-term future. It is useful to examine each issue in some detail in order to evaluate the implications that the nature and timing of the available solutions have for the overall extent of new development . It is also necessary to attempt to establish the implications for the short-term policy in regard to development control (prior to the implementation of the improvement schemes).

2.1 MAIN DRAINAGE

The existing Drainage system is generally combined within the town itself and much of the outlying sporadic development utilises septic tanks. The system is deficient in some important respects and has been studied in detail by Patrick J.Tobin & Co. Ltd. who have produced an overall improvement scheme which has been described in their Report dated April 1991. They also subsequently produced an EIS in respect of this "Main Drainage and Waste Water Disposal Scheme" in February 1993. Much of the data quoted in this report is derived from their Report and EIS.

2.1.1 EXISTING SYSTEM

The existing system serving Westport Town discharges untreated sewage through two outfalls to Cleavlagh Bay adjacent to Westport House. A simplified version of the system is presented in Fig. 2.1. Fig 2.1 also illustrates the planned Phase 1 and Phase 2 extensions to the piped system. It is perhaps worth noting some features of the Main Drainage, namely:

The overall system is subdivided into a pumped catchment area (around Westport Quay) and a gravity catchment area in the town itself. This distinction is fairly artificial in that a number of other pump stations also exist (eg. at Ballinrobe Road, Streamstown, Rosbeg, Roman Island, at the Cattle Mart and at the Club Atlantic Hostel). However the only public pumping station is at Westport Quay and this explains the designation of this catchment area as "pumped".

The planned Phase 1 and 2 extensions to the system cater for extensive areas outside what is recommended in this Report as the limit of urbanisation (refer Fig 5.4). The public health benefit available as a result of disconnecting septic tanks is clear - particularly in the Rosbeg Area where septic tank overflows are probably contributing significantly to marine pollution - but it is necessary for the UDC to develop a definite strategy to avoid "opening up" these areas for further development. If this is not a realistic expectation then it seems necessary to reconsider some of the extensions - particularly to the south and west.
The current plans do not provide for serving some of the lands in Deerpark East - which are deemed suitable for low density housing development in Fig 5.4. However a preliminary evaluation indicates that there are no real obstacles to extending the drainage system to allow this area to be served.

The elements making up the existing system are listed below in order to illustrate its general nature.

- The 900mm diameter "Northern" trunk sewer commences at the Castlebar Road/North Mall intersection and follows a line north of the Carrowbeg River to the outfall at Cleavlagh Bay. Four main branches connect into this trunk sewer, namely the Castlebar Road/Newport Road Sewer, the Carrowbeg/Castlebar Street/North Mall sewer, the Altamont Street/South Mall sewer and the separated foul sewerage from the Golf Links Road.
- The second "Southern" trunk sewer is 375mm dia. and commences at the James St./South Mall junction. It travels along to the south of the Carrowbeg River,

before crossing the river, some 100 metres west of Hotel Westport, to its outfall at Cleavlagh Bay. Three main branches connect into this sewer, namely the Johns Row/High St./Shop St./James St./South Mall sewer, the Quay Road/Quay St. sewer and the Crescent/Feathers Factory sewer.

- Almost the entire system is combined and three "stormwater" overflows are incorporated.
- A report on the physical condition of the sewerage system notes significant obstructions (e.g. tree root penetrations reducing nominal capacity by perhaps 20%), and leakage through joints and cracks (perhaps 15-20% of DWF).

A tabulation of calculated vs. required sewer capacities indicates widespread and significant deficiencies.

The effects of the disposal of untreated sewage in Cleavlagh Bay were assessed in a marine survey forming part of the aforementioned EIS. This survey indicated that water quality in Cleavlagh Bay was severely compromised - being categorised as unsuitable for bathing and in contravention of various other EU Standards. The water quality in Westport Bay/Clew Bay was also detrimentally effected, but not to a critical extent.

2.1.2 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The "Main Drainage & Waste Water Disposal Scheme" developed by Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd. seeks to address all the deficiencies in the existing system including, but not limited to, the following:

- Improvement of the piped system (by building new sewers and repairing damaged sewers)
- extension of drainage catchment (to facilitate development of zoned lands and to allow disconnection of certain septic tanks).
- improvement of water quality in receiving waters (by separation of foul and storm waters, by modification of storm overflows and, most importantly, by provision of secondary treatment).

At this stage the Scheme has passed through the potentially problematic CPO process, and has proceeded to the point of preparation of Contract Documents. Thus the risk of extended delay to the implementation of this Scheme with the associated risk of loss of EU funding is now reduced to a level where it probably should not be allowed to constrain the extent of ongoing development, other than ensuring that the capacity of the scheme is not exceeded.

2.1.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION PLAN

The Main Drainage scheme has been designed on the basis of a future population of 5140 which is similar to the design population for the Water Supply Scheme and can comfortably deal with the currently anticipated population growth. This future "design population" is not predicted for a particular horizon and various other fairly arbitrary growth rates have been applied to Tourism, Commercial and Industrial effluents. However as the design DWF is almost twice the measured 1990 figure, the design capacity makes adequate provision for any development envisaged by this Report. It is also perhaps worth noting that the basis for design assumes a summer to winter DWF ratio of about 1.22 - which is similar to the equivalent water consumption ratio.

Thus the scheme, when implemented, can comfortably cater for the level of development envisaged in this Action Plan. The related issues which require further consideration are:

- What are the implications of a possible delay in implementation ?
- Is there a danger that - in extending the overall catchment area of the system - further undesirable development will occur?

The current best estimate of the implementation timing is a start, on site, in mid-1998 with a likely completion in mid-2000. However this prediction is based on maintaining normal progress in the administrative procedures. A disrupted procedure might result in a further delay of 12 or even 24 months. The uncertainty relating to Cohesion Funding after 1999 means that such a delay could even put at risk the availability of funding.

Thus, it is necessary to decide on a policy in the meantime towards development proposals. It would clearly be imprudent and inappropriate, and contrary to good planning if substantial developments were to be permitted merely in the hope that the main drainage scheme will ultimately be funded. However, now that the CPO hurdle has been successfully crossed, it does now seem that Westport UDC can confidently rely on a start by the end of 1998 at worst.

Finally, although it would be inappropriate to make any modifications - at this stage - to the Main Drainage Scheme, it would seem useful to reconsider some of the detailed proposals to extend the overall Drainage Catchment against the background of this Report. The purpose of this review would be twofold, namely:

- to seek to establish that, in dealing with septic tank discharge pollution, the UDC is not facilitating further undesirable development.
- to examine the possibility of phasing some of the system improvements to encourage development in the zoned lands identified in this Report as "preferred for early development".

2.1.4 FLOOD RISK

There is a history of flooding in the Mall and the most recent significant floods occurred in October 1989 and February 1990. The surface water in the Carrowbeg River, which was diverted during the early phases of the development of Westport Demesne to run up the centre of the Mall, has sometimes been wrongly identified as the cause of this flooding - which appears to relate more directly to groundwater emergence or to underground channels.

The various previous related reports suggest that the level of the Carrowbeg River, through the Mall, has not been sufficiently high to explain the observed flooding of streets and buildings. The floodwaters obviously derive both from general surface run-off in the river catchment area and also from the subsurface flows through the karstic limestone - which tend to emerge at the interface with the basement schists in the Mall area. In both the October 1989 and February 1990 floods, the observed flow of flood water outside the Railway Hotel was into rather than out of the river.

Thus, the key cause of flooding appears to be the subsurface flows through solution channels - which are very difficult to predict (e.g. October 1989 rainfall was probably twice that of February 1990 but floods were quite similar). However the system conveying flood waters is probably very complex and cannot be quantitatively analysed with the level of information currently available. For instance it may be that the upstream river channel itself is the primary source of the subsurface flows through solution "channels" and that the critical peak rainfall intensities on October 27th and February 3rd were much more similar than the comparable 24 hour rainfalls - for which the only available data exists.

In their April 1991 Report, Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd. examined and rejected the possibility of an alternative flood relief channel - on the grounds that it might simply feed the critical sub-channels. They have however incorporated in their Main Drainage Scheme a provision to divert stormwater to an outfall downstream of the Crescent. They describe this as a flood alleviation rather than a flood protection measure. They also conclude that the October 1989 flood represented of order a 70/80 year return period. Finally, they suggested that relocation of the weirs in the Carrowbeg river be considered.

The intention of this Report, in reviewing the flood risk, is to attempt to identify the implications for ongoing planning. It appears that the Mall area is subject to a significant flood risk, and notwithstanding the encouraging assessment of a 70/80 year return period for the 1989 flood, it is quite likely that another damaging flood may occur within the next 10 or 20 years. However, because of the complex nature of the subsurface flows, it is difficult to envisage an economic and comprehensive flood protection solution. The alleviating measures incorporated

in the Main Drainage Scheme are to be welcomed. The area most susceptible to flooding is already almost fully developed, but UDC development control should seek to ensure that adequate floor levels are maintained for any new buildings or extensions.

In summary, therefore, as economic flood protection solutions are probably not available, the flood risk can only be moderated and accepted, but new developments should take cognisance of the flood risk. It would also be beneficial if any improved understanding could be gained of the location and extent of underground channels - as this might have some significant implications for the ongoing location of development - and also might permit more logical/effective alleviation measures to be identified.

2.2 WATER SUPPLY

The current supply for Westport consists of two parts. The first and major element is the traditional supply from Moher Lough (some 5 miles south of Westport), supplied by gravity to the treatment works at Knappagh and thence to the balancing reservoir at Cahernamart. The capacity of this Water Supply System requires to be examined under four different headings, namely:

- available supply at Moher Lough
- capacity of the supply main to Knappagh
- capacity of treatment works at Knappagh
- capacity of distribution system

The second and smaller element is the recently installed link to Cloonkeen which can, if required, supply about 480,000 gallons/day.

As the assessment of the capacity of the Moher Lough system is more complex, it is useful to consider its constituent parts.

MOHER LOUGH SUPPLY CAPACITY

The present scheme is designed to provide a sustainable yield of 600,000 gallons/day (2727m3 /d) and the associated abstraction order is in this quantity. However the recent actual abstraction rate - to meet peak summer demand - has sometimes been of order 770,000 gallons/day (3500m3/d). The dry summer of 1995 has illustrated that, at the present impounded level, it would not be prudent to rely on being able to continue to abstract at this higher rate. In fact, abstraction rates in excess of 750,000 gallons/day can only be considered to be reliably available in relatively wet summers (i.e. when significant summer inflows to Moher Lough occur). It is worth noting the first improvement scheme put forward, for consideration by DOE, was based on raising the impounded level in Moher Lough in order to provide a supply of about 1,560,000 gallons/day (7100m3 /d). However, it was ultimately decided that the upper limit of the sustainable yield from this source of supply would be reached in the short to medium term (perhaps 5 to 10 years) and so it was concluded that a better, more flexible and more cost-effective option was to take any new supply from the Lough Mask Scheme.

CAPACITY OF SUPPLY MAIN TO KNAPPAGH

Given that any new supply is independent of this main, and that this main has succeeded in delivering the maximum sustainable yield from Moher Lough, the capacity of the main is non-critical.

CAPACITY OF TREATMENT WORKS AT KNAPPAGH

The capacity of this Treatment Works was uprated, in 1991, to 770,000 gallons/day (3500m3 /d). As any new supply brings treated water from Lough Mask and as the capacity of this works already equals the reliable/sustainable yield from Moher Lough, then it is clear that this is also a non-critical element.

CAPACITY OF DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

The existing distribution system has not been significantly upgraded in the last 20 years. A substantial growth in demand has occurred during this period and some reduction in capacity to deliver water would naturally be associated with the ageing of the distribution system. The increasing demand and reducing capacity have combined in making the system obviously deficient to an extent that approaches criticality. In their Study Report of 1995, Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd. have identified numbers of specific deficiencies which require remedial action if adequate supplies and pressures are to be maintained.

The overall system is illustrated diagrammatically on Fig 2.2 but the primary problems already being encountered with it are as follows:

- Justifiable uncertainty about the ongoing security of supply from Moher Lough if it is necessary to continue to abstract at levels some 30% in excess of the design intent. (Note: in summer 1995 the minimum maintained level was reached).
- Inability of the distribution system to deliver desired fire flows at Allergan, BP Nutrition and Westport Quay (Note: perhaps the minimum acceptable fire flow should be re-estimated and the possibility examined of achieving the reduced minimum acceptable figure even in advance of a major improvement scheme).
- Extent of water loss through leakage of perhaps 16% (Note: Mayo County Council has introduced a leakage control system to reduce losses and, in particular, to help identify more quickly the precise location of bursts when these occur. However - notwithstanding the use of pressure reducing valves - the estimated losses remain greater than acceptable long-term targets).
- Sensitivity of the system to any significant failures.
- Unacceptable low pressures in Buckwaria/Knockranny regions.

However since October 1994, Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd. have been developing solutions to deal with these and other problems identified in their Study of the Westport Water Supply. Most of the data quoted in this report is derived from their Study Report. It has always been the long-term plan to provide for any greatly increased water demand (eg. major new "wet" industry) from Lough Mask via Srah. Thus, three separate options were compared. The first was to raise the impoundment at Moher Lough but, for the reasons stated above, it was decided that this scheme had an inappropriately short design life and did not represent value for money. The second option was the early implementation of the link to Srah, but as this would cost about £10m it was decided that it would not be possible to have the scheme operational at a sufficiently early date to solve Westports immediate water supply problems. Accordingly the third option, which is also only a short-term solution and which connects to the Lough Mask system at the Cloonkeen Group Water Scheme was ultimately chosen. This connection is capable of delivering some 480,000 gallons/day (2200m3 /d) and was completed and commissioned in 1997. This proposal also includes for the construction of a break-pressure tank/reservoir at Sheeaune which should assist in solving the low pressure problems at Buckwaria/Knockranny. This additional capacity of 480,000 gallons/day, when added to the sustainable Moher yield of say 600,000 gallons/day should ensure an adequate supply until the year 2002/2003 or so - by which time the Srah link will become necessary. It is perhaps worth noting that the Srah source can deliver an effectively unlimited quantity of water.

2.2.1 CURRENT WATER DEMAND

The overall figures available for consumption are based on meter readings at Knappagh Works and so include a number of group schemes as well as the Westport UDC supply. However the average current demand is of order 660,000 gallons/day (3000m3 /d) in summertime - with peaks up to 770,000 gallons/day - and about 530,000 gallons/day (2400m3 /d) in wintertime (i.e. a summer/winter ratio of 1.25). It is useful to indicate the estimated sub-division of demand which is as follows:

TABLE 2.1: ESTIMATED SUB-DIVISION OF WATER DEMAND

CONSUMER	%
Domestic (Town)	24%
Group Schemes	20%
Industry	23%
Hotels/Restaurants	7%
Others	10%
Leakage	16%

2.2.2 PROJECTED FUTURE DEMAND

The projected future demand - used by Patrick J. Tobin & Co. Ltd. (when comparing the various improvement schemes) is based on a growth in peak demand of about 75%. This in turn is based on an assumed demand growth in the individual elements listed above of Domestic, 40%; Hotels/Restaurants, 60%; Industry, 130%. However these individual growths can only reasonably be considered notional. It is perhaps worth noting that the assumed "design" population is 5140 which compares with a prediction of 4040 for the year 2006 in the 1992 Development Plan. It is also worth noting that the 1992 Development Plan takes deliberate issue with the WRDO prediction (which was made in 1993) of a population of 5100 by the year 2004 and the growth pattern assumed in the Development Plan would predict a population of about 4320 for the Action Plan horizon year of 2016.

2.2.3 TOPOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS

The existing system cannot reasonably serve developments above about 50m OD without using pressure boosters. The planned improvement scheme envisages a new reservoir at Sheeaune which might reasonably be expected to serve developments up to about 75m OD. Fig 2.2 indicates the implications of these topographical limitations.

2.2.4 IMPLICATIONS OF WATER SUPPLY CONSTRAINTS

The water supply system in Westport is currently only just capable of meeting summer peak demands. However the supply problem has been eliminated until 2002/2003 by the implementation of the Cloonkeen Scheme. Nevertheless there is no room for complacency as the situation can relatively quickly return to a quite unacceptable position. It is obviously necessary to give serious consideration to the following:

- what contribution can realistically be expected from leakage control ? (Note: perhaps a target of 10-12%)
- what implications do water supply constraints have for planning in Westport ? (Note: no significant implications if the Srah link is definitely achievable but a very significant constraint if it is not).

2.3 TRAFFIC

The general public perception in Westport is that the traffic problems experienced in summertime are quite unacceptable. The most severe problems are encountered on Bridge Street and Shop Street but congestion sometimes backs-up on Castlebar Street and also extends to James Street/Newport Street, and particularly at the junction with the Mall. Severe problems also occasionally occur on Quay Street. The congestion is linked to car parking difficulties (both illegal parking and circulation while searching for parking) and although there is a clear public consensus on the seriousness of the problem, there is wide divergence on the perceived solutions - with vague support for a "bypass" being frequently mentioned.

A systematic and detailed study of Traffic in Westport was carried out by McCarthy & Partners in 1980. Although the data referred to in this Study is obviously out of date, it is nevertheless useful as it provides important insights into the overall movement system. Firstly it is useful to examine the 1980 data on traffic approaching/leaving Westport. No significant difference was found between the approaching and departing traffic - as would be expected - and the distribution between five of the roads counted was as follows:

TABLE 2.2: TRAFFIC DISTRIBUTION JULY 1980

ROAD NAME	ADT	%
Newport Road (N59)	2,126	21.7
Castlebar Road (N60)	3,467	35.4
Ballinrobe Road (L101)	1,263	12.9
Leenaun Road (N59)	1,743	17.8
Louisburgh Road (R96/R335)	1,194	12.2
Total	**9,793**	**100**

This survey was carried out in July 1980 and the locations of the interview points on the external cordon are indicated diagrammatically in Fig. 2.3. The population in 1980 was estimated at 3474.

An equivalent count in August 1995 provided the following figures:

TABLE 2.3: TRAFFIC DISTRIBUTION AUGUST 1995

ROAD NAME	ADT	%
Newport Road (S29/N59)	3,819	19.9
Castlebar Road (S31/N5)	6,936	36.2
Ballinrobe Road (R89)	2,755	14.4
Leenaun Road (S30/N50)	2,178	11.4
Louisburgh Road (R96/R335)	3,451	18.1
Total	**19,139**	**100**

The distribution of traffic between the different roads can be seen to be quite similar to the 1980 figures but the overall traffic has increased by about 95%. The alterations to percentages on the Leenaun and Louisburgh Roads are somewhat deceptive as they relate to count locations and it is worth noting that their combined percentages remain almost identical. It is also significant that this increase of 95% occurred during a period in which population growth almost certainly did not exceed 15%. An examination of interim counts and counts at other stations shows a fairly steady annual growth of about 5% between 1980 and 1993, with a very much increased growth rate of over 10% for the following two years. This overall pattern of change accords generally with the observed national figures, and the sudden recent increased growth rate matches anecdotal accounts of suddenly-worsening traffic problems. The baseline 5% annual growth can be ascribed to population growth (of say 1% per annum), generally increased prosperity, and tourism growth. The sudden recent increase in traffic growth rates must relate, primarily to exceptional tourism growth though it is likely that population growth since 1993 has been substantially greater than 1%.

The purpose in making the above comparison is to illustrate that much of the detailed information (e.g. origin and destination surveys etc.) contained in the McCarthy Report of 1980 can be used to build up a picture of current traffic. Obviously it is necessary to factor all original figures, by approximately doubling them, and some changes in distribution must be assumed to have resulted from the sudden recent growth in tourism activity. The overall picture described below is derived in part from the original McCarthy Report supplemented by figures obtained from the annual Mayo County Council counts and from some special counts carried out by Mayo County Council as a background to this study.

2.3.1 LOCAL ROAD NETWORK

The traffic approaching/leaving Westport remains at figures which can readily be accommodated on 2-lane rural roads, though some local improvements require to be made. The traffic is unusually well-distributed throughout the day, with only marginal peaks at about 0900 and 1700. Peak hour traffic is less than 9% of the overall 24-hour figures and traffic flows between peaks are of order 6% of the 24-hour figures. The traffic is primarily made up of cars and light commercial vehicles with low HGV counts on all roads, varying between 2% and 5%. The percentage of "through traffic" is also consistently low, averaging about 18%, and confirming the perception of Westport as a terminal town and an important destination in its own right. It is however worth noting that the above figures do not treat traffic to and from Westport Quay as "through traffic".

Thus - even if the total "design" approaching/departing traffic were taken to be 25,000 vehicles per day the potential "bypass" traffic is an absolute maximum of about 4500 vehicles per day. The destination of through traffic is also randomly distributed between the various exit routes generally in proportion to the share of overall traffic carried on that route, and so the potential bypass traffic is reduced proportionally for every uncompleted linkage. Thus, the maximum traffic that could be attracted to a southern bypass is probably in order of 3000 vehicles per day. In these circumstances it appears to be unrealistic to plan in expectation of any new ring road or major bypass as its economic justification would not be adequate.

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in justifying a ring road/bypass, it is clear that unacceptable congestion occurs in summertime in the Town Centre and that something must be done to alleviate this congestion. As the street/ intersection capacities are inherently limited, the only remaining alternative is to create useful and achievable inner relief roads, to serve both as development roads for the areas they pass through, and to cater for any through traffic that might use them.

CASTLEBAR ROAD - NEWPORT ROAD LINK

The first, and most obviously justifiable linkage, is between the Castlebar Road and Newport Road as this traffic currently adds significantly to congestion in the town - most particularly at the North Mall/Newport Street junction but also to a lesser extent on the Bridge Street/Shop Street/James Street circuit. The first option to be considered for this link is the alignment identified in the 1992 Development Plan. A variation on this - which was developed by Mayo County Council in 1996 (and which is accordingly a more up-to-date proposal) is also indicated on Fig 2.3. This second line does seem to be preferable to the Development Plan alignment but neither are likely to be implemented in the short-term future. Thus, it is appropriate to hold a reservation on the 1996 alignment, in the expectation that this can be funded in the medium term - but it is also necessary to seek to establish a line which is more immediately achievable. There is an apparent opportunity to link the Castlebar Road (from a point somewhat to the east of the UDC offices) to the Newport Road adjacent to the cemetery. Three alternative alignments were considered and compared. Two of these caused such severance to the property held by Mr. Kelly that they would probably only be appropriate should this land package come up for redevelopment. The third -

most eastern option - would require lowering of the stone wall opposite to ensure adequate sight distance. On balance the third option is to be preferred and is represented on Fig 2.3.

CASTLEBAR ROAD - WESTPORT QUAY LINK

The second possible linkage is between the Castlebar Road and Westport Quay with intermediate connections to the Ballinrobe Road and Leenaun Road. This is a more difficult and expensive connection, but is absolutely crucial if congestion is to be reduced or even maintained at current levels. Once again the 1992 Development Plan indicates a fairly similar link between the Castlebar Road and the West Road. However, when preparing this Action Plan, it was decided that this link should travel as close as possible to the "outer limit of urbanisation" (refer Fig 5.4) and should connect as directly as possible to Westport Quay. The first difficulty in establishing an appropriate alignment, is in determining the connection to Westport Quay. Once again a number of options were considered - all of which involve some significant disruption/interference with individual property owners - but the alignment indicated on Fig 2.3 represents the best technical solution. Although it involves demolition of one private house, it is the safest, most convenient, and most beneficial solution. The alignment from the Quay to the Leenaun Road naturally follows the old railway alignment. The detailed design of the road, where it uses the rail alignment would incorporate and develop the existing walkway as a resource for the use of residents and tourists. This portion of the road would also serve as a development road for the zoned lands at Cloonmonad. The development of these lands would, in the absence of this new road, place undue pressure and create inappropriate hazard on Quay Street. The second main difficulty along this route is at the junction with the Ballinrobe Road. From an overall planning viewpoint the preferred alignment would join the Leenaun Road with the Ballinrobe Road, again using the railway right of way - but this would necessitate an unorthodox junction with the Ballinrobe Road which would significantly reduce the level of service enjoyed by road users. Another option, which is more straightforward from a roads viewpoint, would cross the Ballinrobe Road at right-angles, climb the hill to the South of the Cahernamart Reservoir and rejoin the railway alignment at the intersection with the Western Road. This option has some negative planning and landscape implications. For the purposes of this Study, it was decided to represent both of these options on Fig 2.3 and to recommend holding both reservations until their relative merits can be fully explored in an EIA process.

If the population of Westport is to be allowed to grow by some 25%, as is being projected, and further industrial and tourist related developments are to proceed, then it is essential that both of these inner relief roads are not just provided for (by holding a reservation), but are implemented within, say, 5 years - if the congestion in the town centre is not to reach proportions which will damage its long term amenity value for residents and for tourists alike.

MEASURE OF SUMMER PEAK TRAFFIC

It is worth noting that Mayo County Council have carried out some winter counts (March 7th, 1996) to establish the extent of summer/winter variation. The summer to winter ratios vary between about 1.33 (for the Castlebar and Ballinrobe Roads) to about 2.0 for the Louisburgh Road which has a stronger dependency on tourism. This compares with the equivalent water consumption ratios of about 1.25, and the larger ratios are probably explained by the significant number of day-trippers who move on to accommodation outside of the Westport Area. This in turn also points to the need for the town to attempt to focus future tourism development on providing for tourists who will stay one or more nights, as the day-trippers place a demand on the roads infrastructure which contribute more to congestion than would be the case for longer-stay visitors.

It is also interesting to note that the typical summer to winter ratios of 1.5 are similar to the ratios between 1995 and 1989 traffic. This appears to illustrate that the tourist-related traffic is very much more disruptive than similar numbers of local vehicles, as nobody was encountered (in the consultation phase) who thought that the traffic problems in winter 1995 are similar to summer 1989. This could be explained by confused movements (because of unclear signage) or by different local patterns (relating more specifically to key tourist venues) but, in any case, it would benefit from more detailed examination.The roads and traffic issues arising within the Urban Core are discussed in Section 2.4 below.

2.4 ROADS AND PARKING : URBAN CORE

The capacity of the Urban Core to accept traffic and parking is obviously limited. Severe congestion was observed in McCarthy & Partners 1980 Study and they identified the problem as primarily one of *"congestion at junctions due to the conflicting requirements of other road users including pedestrians"*. This report also notes that in view of *"the decline in the service offered by existing road facilities and in the environmental quality of the existing Town Centre .... steps must be taken to protect and preserve the character of the Town Centre through better management of traffic and through the development of new routes to cope with development and through traffic"*. This comment remains very relevant and the intervening growth in traffic has obviously made the need for positive action all the more critical.

In May 1991, Westport UDC introduced a one-way traffic system on Bridge Street, Shop Street, James Street and part of the South Mall, thereby implementing a portion of the McCarthy traffic management proposals. The logic behind these changes relate primarily to the reduction of conflicting movements at junctions. In late 1993, Mayo County Council produced a traffic management plan to extend the one-way system, to provide for certain junction improvements and to make better provision for pedestrian movement. Some but not all of these suggested improvements were implemented. The submission, at the time, from Westport Chamber of Commerce and the inputs received during the consultation process for this Study illustrated some significant differences in perception in relation to the appropriate solutions to deal with the congestion. It is worthwhile to examine some of the areas in which consensus or divergence of approach was observed:

- All agreed that provision of off-street car parking - adjacent to the main shopping streets - is a high priority (Note: However it does appear that, even if all potential areas were utilised for parking, it is likely that parking demand could quickly outstrip supply, unless certain changes in attitude are effected).
- Business people in Westport have a very low level of acceptance of any loss of parking spaces due to the introduction of single or double yellow lines, pedestrian crossings and junction improvements (Note: the critical shortage of parking spaces at key periods presumably explains this attitude - but in the interest of the Town as a whole it is necessary to lose some car parking spaces in order to implement overall improvements).
- There is general acceptance of the need for the systematic introduction of clearer, but attractive, signposting.
- There is a very common assumption that a reduction in congestion and an improvement in the level of service enjoyed by road users would occur if some elements of the one-way system were to revert to two-way (Note: this is almost certainly related to a wish to revert to a time when both traffic and congestion were less of a problem rather than a rational comparison of the two options).
- There is a general acceptance that congestion is greatly exacerbated by the double parking on Bridge Street and Shop Street of delivery and private vehicles. However there is no consensus on the means to deal with this problem.
- There is a general acceptance that significant benefits

would accrue if road users were to modify existing behaviours (e.g. parking by shop owners for long periods on Bridge Street, double parking by private motorists even when a convenient option is readily available, etc., etc.) but there is no consensus on how changes in attitude/behaviour can be achieved.

TRAFFIC FLOW PATTERN

Prior to May 1991 the traffic flow pattern in Westport Town Centre was quite unrestricted with all roads operating on a two-way basis and very few turning movements being prohibited at intersections. The May 1991 alterations fundamentally altered the flow patterns. The primary change was to alter Bridge Street, Shop Street and James Street to a one-way circuit, to convert portion of the North Mall (BOI) and portion of the South Mall (Church) into one-way streets and to forbid certain turning movements - particularly at the Middle Bridge. Notwithstanding the extent of adverse comment and the quoted examples of inconvenience to certain trips, it is clear that these modifications to traffic flow patterns have been effective in reducing congestion.

There has been extensive subsequent debate on the benefits to be gained from extending the one-way system as proposed by McCarthy and Partners and/or by Mayo County Council. The main options which have been considered are:

- Completion of the original proposed one-way system on North and South Malls (Note: The only real associated benefit relates to prohibiting Westward traffic on the North Mall (Railway Hotel) as this will ease congestion at the junction with Newport Street. However this change can only reasonably be made after the Castlebar Road to Newport Road link has been completed)
- Conversion of John's Row into a one-way east to west Road (Note: The only apparent logic for this suggestion relates to the existing width constraints. It does not appear to be justified from a traffic point of view and it would be preferable to attempt to widen John's Row and/or to make alternative provision for residents parking)
- Conversion of Peter Street into a one-way street to assist in simplifying turning movements at the unorthodox and substandard junction at the Super-Valu Car Park entrance (Note: This conversion would result in some inappropriate re-routing and so does not appear to be justified. Any problems being experienced at the Super-Valu entrance should be addressed in the junction treatment itself).

Thus, in summary, the only minor alteration proposed to the traffic flow pattern is at the North Mall (Railway Hotel) and this can only happen after the Castlebar Road to Newport Road link has been completed.

CAPACITY OF EXISTING STREETS

Although Mayo County Council have carried out annual counts on an external cordon to Westport, no systematic counts have been undertaken within the Town itself. In March 1996 Mayo County Council carried out counts within the Town (on 7.3.96) in order to provide some up-to-date basis to assess the capacity of existing streets. A summary of these counts and their estimated extrapolation to summer peaks are given below:

Location	7-hour (Vehicles)	Peak Hour (Vehicles)	Estimated Summer Peak Hour (Vehicles)
Castlebar Street (at UDC Office)	3450	660	800-1000
Bridge Street	3600	590	800-1000
James Street (before Mall)	3840	610	800-1000

Thus, the summer peak hour flows on this one way circuit are already somewhat in excess of what is normally considered to be the practical capacity of a two-lane street (i.e. about 750 to 850 pcu's/hr). Fortunately the nature of the system is such that intersections do not significantly reduce the basic lane capacity other than the extent to which interruption of traffic flows caused by pedestrians crossing the streets has a detrimental effect. Thus, the real capacity of these two-lane streets may be closer to 1200 pcu's/day.

The estimated summer peak-hour flows are easily reconciled with the McCarthy & Partners predictions. They suggested likely flows in 1980 on each of the above streets - if the one-way system were introduced - of about 350 to 450 pcu's/hour. It has already been noted that 1996 traffic counts are about double the 1980 counts. This would suggest 1996 peak - hour counts, on this circuit, of about 700 - 900 pcu's/hr.

It is worth noting that the 1980 counts on a few of the other streets (eg. Peter Street, Newport Street and Quay Street) were also at a similar level and so are also presumably now at, or near, capacity if they are operating as two-lane streets.

Thus, it can readily be concluded that, since quite a few streets are already very close to their practical capacity, delays due to congestion will greatly increase in the near future unless some alleviating action is taken. Given the level of traffic during summer peak hours, it is clear that any double parking - by delivery or private vehicles - will almost immediately cause serious congestion. In fact, given that traffic flows throughout the day are typically 75% of the peak flows, it is clear that double parking at any time in the Summer could be severely problematic. The only realistic options available to alleviate congestion are as follows:

- Prevent double parking in key areas at peak hours (by constraining delivery hours and by enforcing parking bye-laws).
- Convert existing two-lane streets into three-lane streets (by eliminating parking where necessary and by emphasising street marking).
- Discourage all unnecessary traffic from Urban Core area (by constructing two proposed link roads, by providing peripheral car parking on main entry routes and by charging for parking in central areas).

The key decision to be made is whether an attempt is going to be made to try to deal with ever-increasing traffic through the central streets - by widening the effective carriageway (i.e. two to three lanes) - or whether it is more appropriate to accept that traffic will be constrained in order to preserve the environmental quality of the existing Town Centre. The latter approach forms the basis for this Action Plan and so parking layouts have been proposed which provide only a 6 metre wide carriageway. A street such as Shop Street, which could fairly readily accommodate three-lanes has been restricted to two-lanes (to match Bridge Street) with the result that it has been possible to provide additional on-street car parking. This position acknowledges that it is not possible or appropriate for the UDC to seek to cater for ever increasing traffic volumes through the central streets.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

For the reasons quoted above, the general policy adopted in this Action Plan is to maintain a 6-metre carriageway through all of the main streets. It is also appropriate, in the interests of safety, to bring kerb lines at junctions/intersections out to this carriageway edge, and then set the kerbs back to allow car parking as soon as a safe distance from the intersection has been reached. It is also important that clearly defined pedestrian crossings be established along the main lines of movement - as both pedestrian and traffic counts indicate that it would be foolhardy to continue to allow the current fairly random

crossing patterns to continue. It is worth noting that over 1000 people cross the Southern half of Bridge Street in peak hours and this inevitably involves a significant degree of risk.

A number of the key junctions in the urban core were also examined in order to establish whether improvements in capacity or safety could be achieved by re-arranging the junctions. The conclusions reached are discussed, in turn, below:

(a) **The Octagon:** Consideration was given to the benefits associated with an alteration of traffic flow and parking arrangements at the Octagon. Some urban design merit was seen in operating the Octagon as a "circus" or roundabout and in extending out the paved area in front of the Market House/Wyatt Theatre. However, from a traffic viewpoint the existing flows operate without any merging conflict, and if vehicles going from Shop Street to James Street were forced around the monument, they would come into unnecessary conflict with traffic arriving from Peter Street. Whether the traffic arriving from Peter Street travels to the right (as existing) or left of the monument is not significant from a roads viewpoint. This analysis is represented diagrammatically on Fig 2.4.

(b) **The Clocktower:** The junction at the Clocktower currently deals in a largely satisfactory manner with the main flow from Bridge Street to Shop Street but many of the minor flows (eg. Bridge Street to High Street, High Street to Mill Street) cross the junction in a random and quite unsatisfactory manner. There is also merit in widening the footpath to the Western edge of this junction (to create a usable area and to deflect traffic travelling from High Street to Shop Street). This, in turn, leads to the need to remove/relocate the Clocktower itself. The existing and proposed junction treatments are presented in Fig 2.5.

(c) **James Street/Newport Street/South & North Malls:** This junction was also examined in some detail to establish whether it can usefully be altered. It seems that the approach to the South Mall intersection should have three clearly marked lanes - one of which should connect to the South Mall and two lanes to Newport Street . (This will probably require some change to parking arrangements in James Street and does require a relocation of the traffic island). The Newport Street/North Mall junction is currently problematic because of the number of movement conflicts which occur. The current peak Summer traffic volumes at this junction would probably meet "warrant criteria" for the provision of traffic lights but it nevertheless does not seem appropriate to provide them. Firstly, the one-way traffic flow pattern in Westport is such that no other traffic lights have been warranted or provided, and so this junction would remain the only traffic-lit junction in Westport for the foreseeable future. In general, a single set of lights in a town should be avoided. Secondly, the junction works satisfactorily without lights for most of the year, and so the provision of lights would probably reduce the overall level of service enjoyed by road users. The only real solution at this point is to eliminate some of the conflicts. If the Castlebar Road to Newport Road link were implemented then the North mall (Railway Hotel) could become one-way towards the Middle Bridge and this junction would then operate freely. Once again the existing and proposed arrangements are indicated on Fig2.6.

(d) **Junction at Super-Valu Entrance:** This junction has five different "legs" namely, Peter Street, Quay Street, Church Street, Peter Street and the Super-Valu entrance. It is a wholly unorthodox junction involving extreme slopes, located on a curve and with limited sight distance. The option of locating a mini-roundabout, to clarify movements, was considered but does not seem appropriate as it introduces new conflicts and has severe geometrical/slope complications. Two other options were considered and are represented in Fig 2.7. The more obvious solution seeks to create a more orthodox junction (Option 2) and would logically forbid the movement between the Super-Valu car park and Peter Street (South).

The second and preferred option (Option 1) simply seeks to emphasise that the "main road" is Peter Street - Quay Street and that all intersecting movements must give way. This option would continue to allow the current unorthodox movements between the car park and Peter Street (South) - without interference with the main flows on Peter Street Quay Street. It is proposed that a very strong emphasis be given to the carriageway edge (perhaps with a dished stone channel) and also to the secondary nature of the approach roads. This option will maintain a grossly substandard junction but it appears that the other options could reduce the junction capacity and might even add to the hazard. The kerb lines at the Super-Valu entrance should seek to ensure that sight lines are protected.

(e) **John's Row:** The Peter Street/John's Row junction is also substandard. The primary problem relates to the approach width on John's Row. This can be resolved either by demolishing the house to the North of the junction or by taking the gardens of the houses to the South of the junction and construction a two-level pathway with interconnecting steps. Both options are presented in Fig 2.8

In addition to the above some consideration was given to the traffic circulation around the Fairgreen and this has informed the modifications already undertaken. A review of the junction at Distillery Road/Altamont Street indicated that, although the arrangements are again unorthodox, there are no obvious ways to improve its overall performance.

PARKING

The 1980 McCarthy & Partners Study counted 739 existing spaces in the Town Centre, at that time, and calculated a demand for an additional 74 spaces giving a total of 814 spaces. The 1992 Development Plan indicated that at the time the equivalent number of spaces available was 840 but this list seems to ignore the fact that spaces had been lost by yellow line restrictions. For comparison purposes the 1980, 1992 and 1996 numbers of available parking spaces are presented below:

LOCATION	1980	1992	1996
North/South Mall	165	165	155
Bridge Street	69	69	65
Shop Street	30	30	28
The Octagon	54	54	45
Peter Street	53	103	153
James Street	65	65	85
Newport Street	58	58	70
High St/Monument Street	52	52	52
Mill Street (Kerbside)	74	74	74
Mill Street (Car Park)	-	100	140
Castlebar Street	80	80	76
Fair Green	30	30	20
Totals	730	840	963

A further significant addition to town centre parking capacity was made in 1997. Nevertheless is clear that during a period in which traffic flows have doubled (from 1980 to 1996) the available parking spaces have increased by about 32%. The options for further provision of parking spaces in the Urban Core include all backland areas - but even if multi-storey car parking is to be provided it seems unlikely that it will be possible to provide more than about 1300 spaces. The existing unconstrained demand for parking must be of this order and this demand will presumably continue to grow. Accordingly the overall policy towards provision of parking spaces must logically be similar to the policy on the capacity of street to allow traffic to pass (i.e. rather than seeking to continue to meet an ever-increasing demand, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is a natural limit to parking in the Urban Core and that, as this limit is less than demand, it is necessary to

try to suppress demand). Nevertheless it is worth noting that the overall net effect of the street and junction proposals contained in this Report is to increase the number of available parking spaces. The most obvious means of suppressing demand is to introduce parking charges. The appropriate means is probably by the use of disks which would also allow varying seasonal approaches. The charge rate will have to be carefully considered if a viable multi-storey car park is to be facilitated. A rate of at least £0.60/hr, in summertime, is necessary if a serious expansion of Urban Core parking is to be economically justified. The option of providing free car parking, some distance from the Centre, must also be carefully considered. It is worth noting that, even in 1980, some 56% of spaces were occupied for less than 30 minutes and the percentages occupied for less than 1 hour, 2 hours and 4 hours were 73%, 87% and 93% respectively. On the assumption that parking patterns have changed little in the intervening years (which is supported by other comparable studies), it appears that little can be gained by further restricting parking from 2 hours to 1 hour. On the basis of all of the above, the inescapable conclusion is that the UDC should introduce parking charges, and must implement a systematic enforcement procedure in parallel with their efforts to provide more car parking spaces.

2.5 WASTE DISPOSAL

The disposal of solid waste is not a matter of immediate concern to Westport UDC. Waste is collected by Westport UDC and disposed of in a Mayo County Council landfill site. The land-fill site currently being used (between Newport and Castlebar) still has a reasonable life remaining and so there is no reason to believe that this issue represents a constraint on ongoing development. It is also worth noting that Mayo County Council has prepared a Waste Management Strategy - in accordance with statutory obligations - and there is no reason to believe that this issue will, in the foreseeable future, represent a real constraint on development.

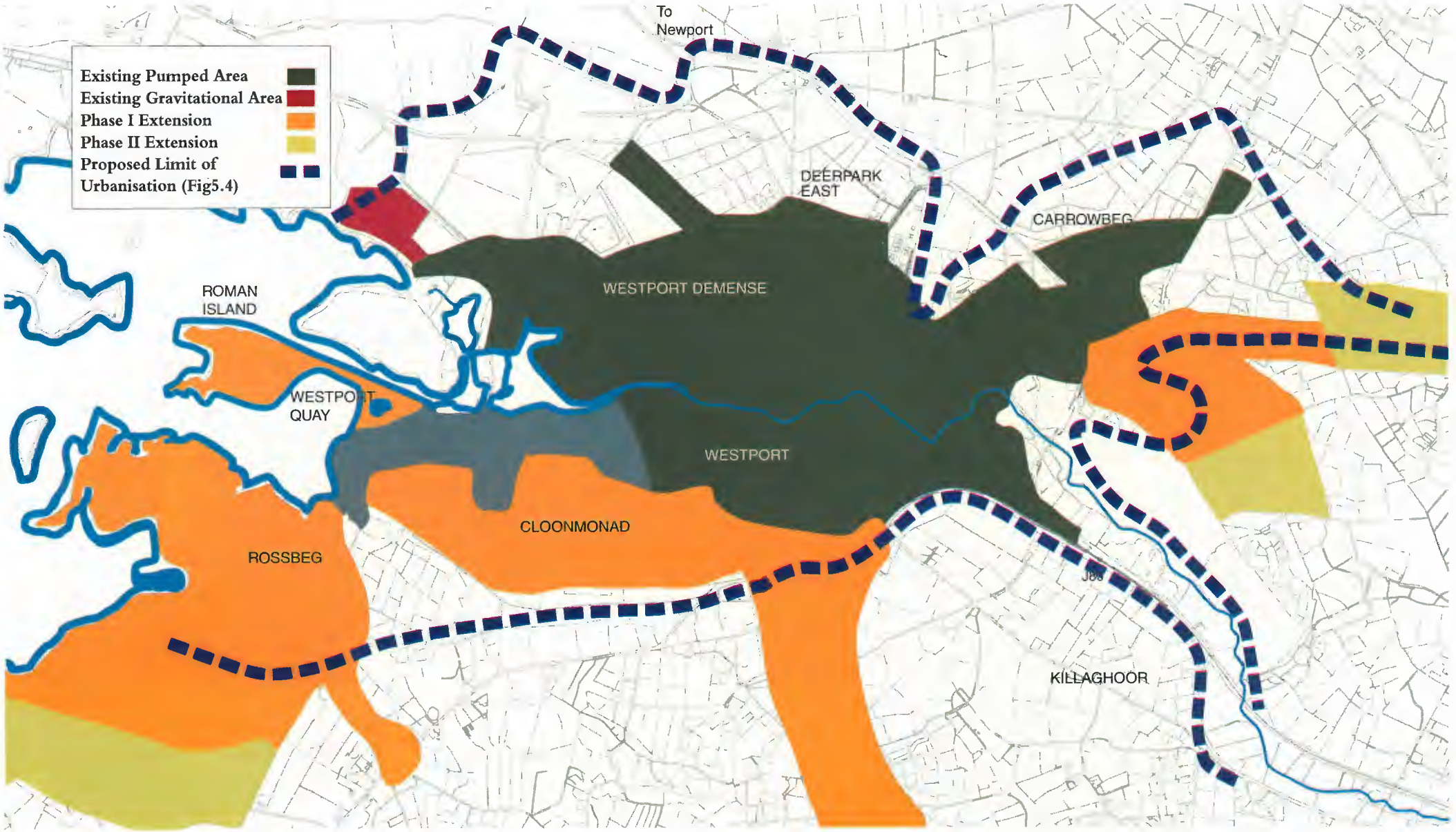


Fig 2.1 Drainage Catchment

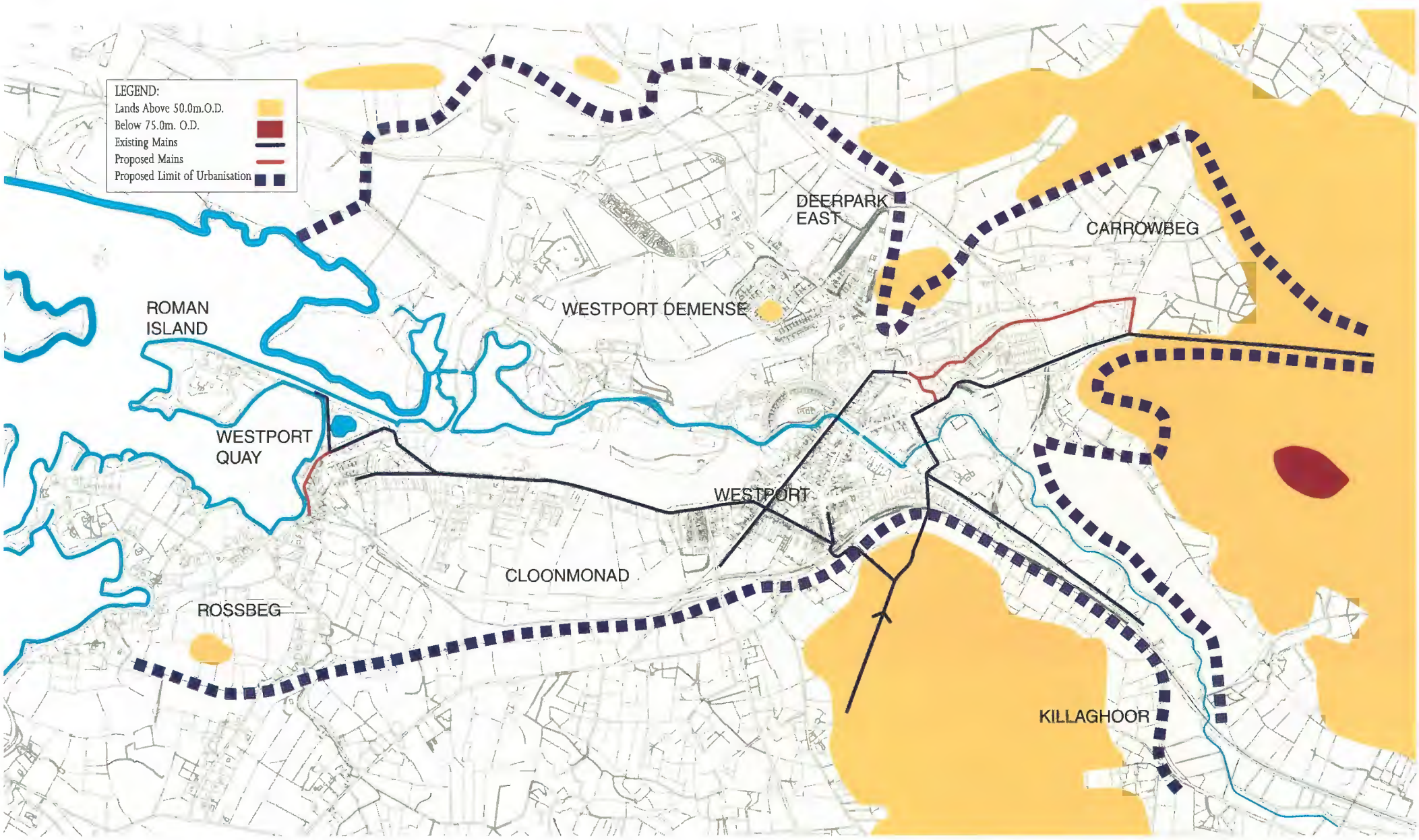


Fig. 2.2 Water Supply: Primary Network

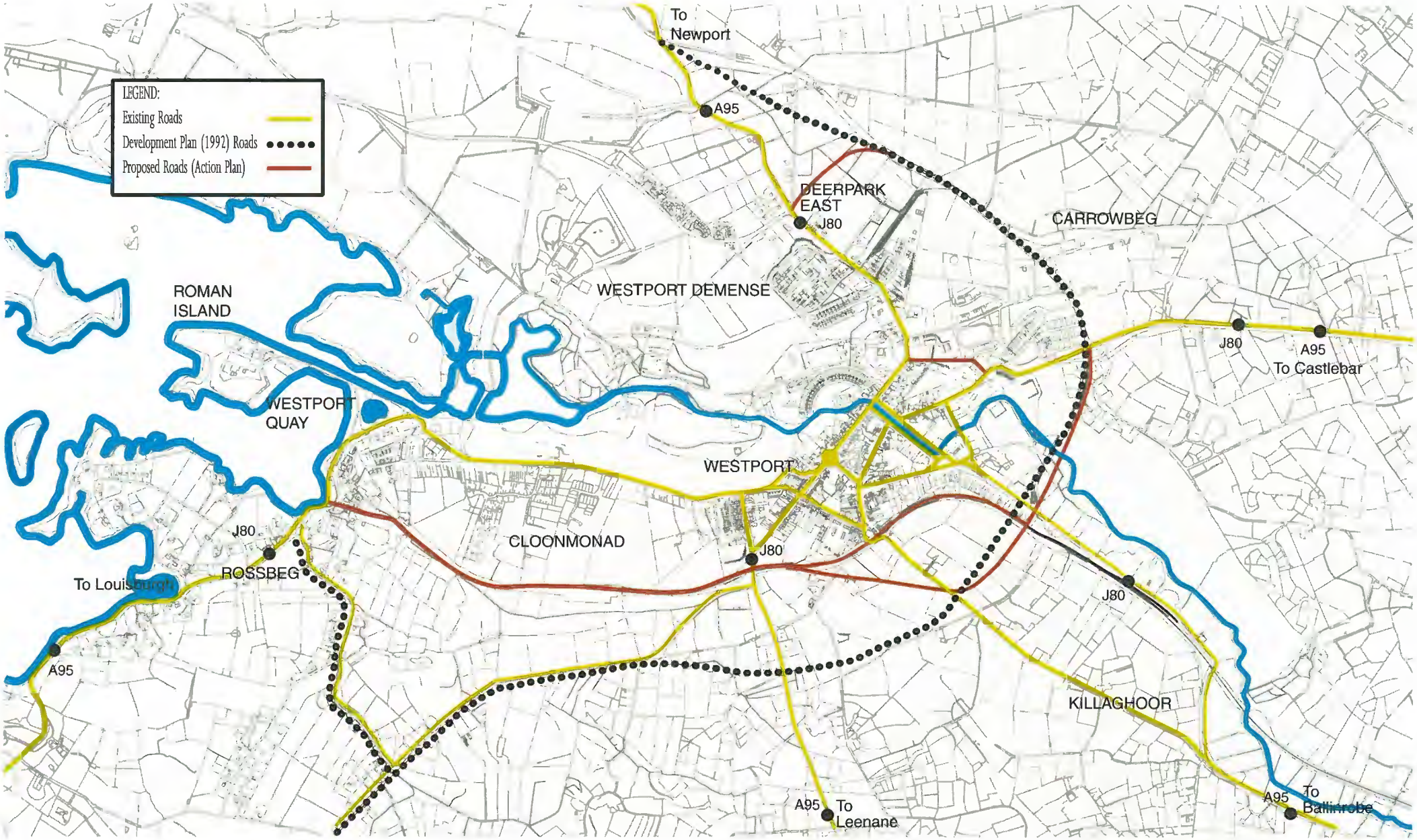
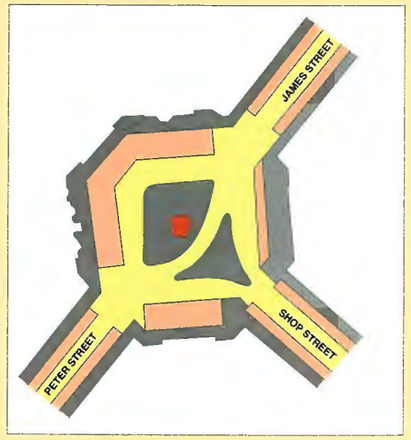
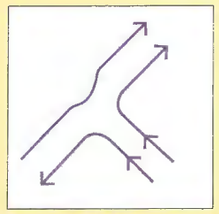


Fig 2.3 Roads: Primary Network

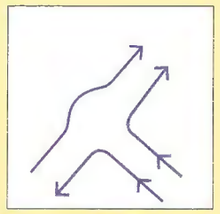
OCTAGON



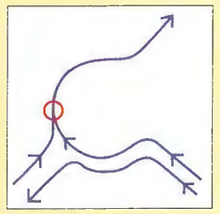
EXISTING ARRANGEMENT



EXISTING

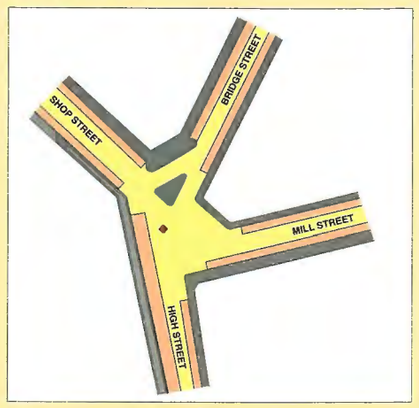


OPTION 1

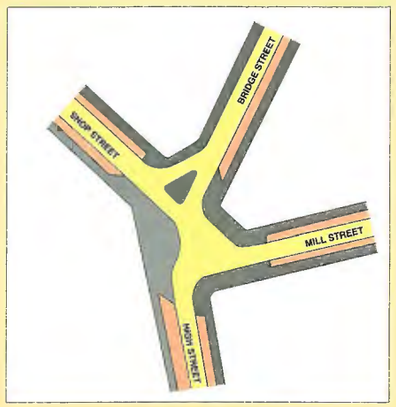


OPTION 2

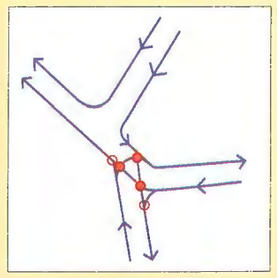
CLOCKTOWER



EXISTING ARRANGEMENT

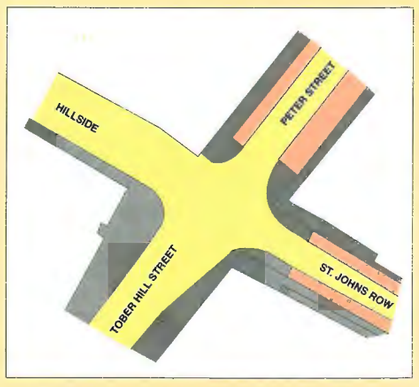


PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT

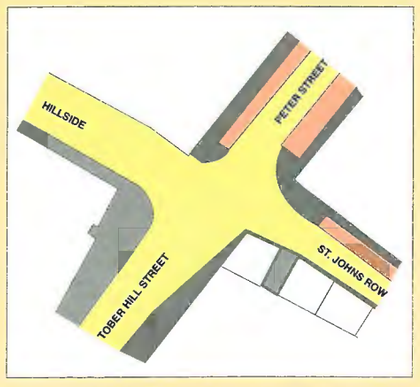


TRAFFIC FLOW

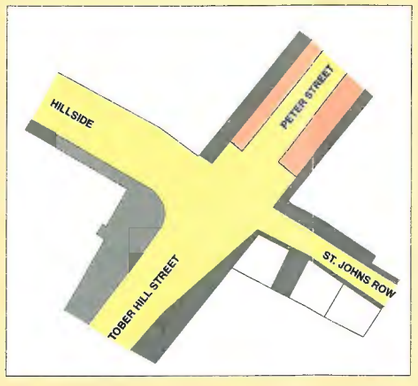
JOHN'S ROW



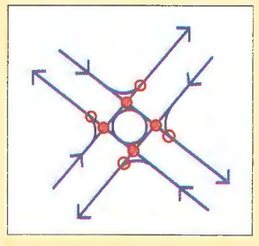
PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
(Option 1)



PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
(Option 2)

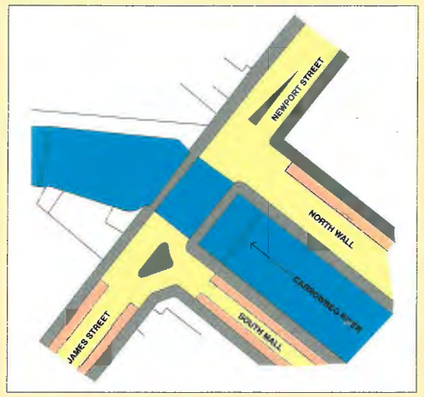


EXISTING ARRANGEMENT

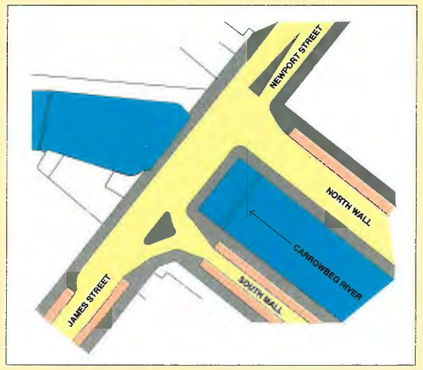


TRAFFIC FLOW

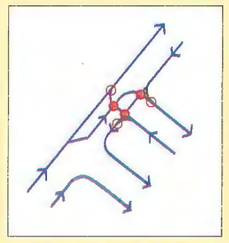
JAMES ST. / NEWPORT ST.



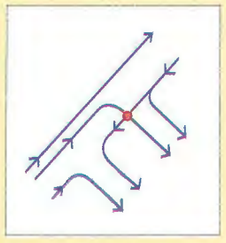
EXISTING ARRANGEMENT



PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
(Islands Altered)

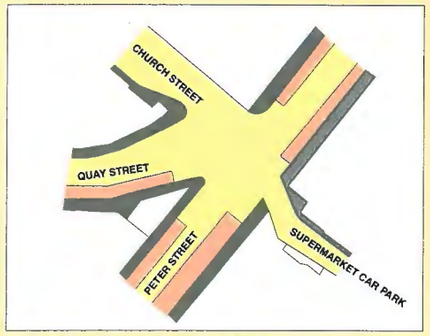


EXISTING TRAFFIC FLOW

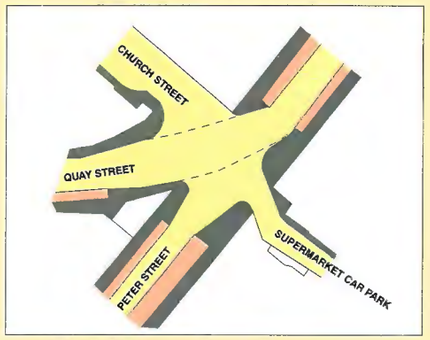


PROPOSED TRAFFIC FLOW
(after Castlebar Rd. / Newport Rd.
Link completed)

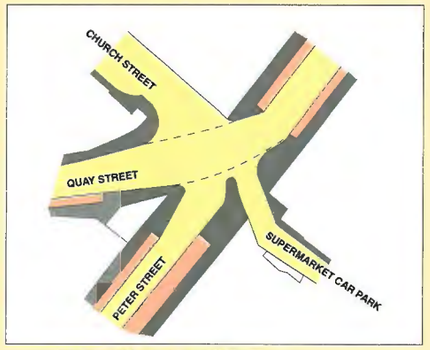
QUAY ST. / PETER ST.



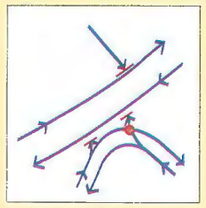
EXISTING ARRANGEMENT



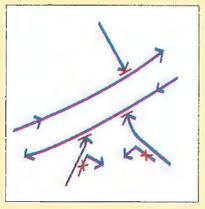
PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
(Option 1)



PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT
(Option 2)



TRAFFIC FLOW
Option 1



TRAFFIC FLOW
Option 2

Fig. 2.4 Traffic Management

3.0 Tourism Potential

3.0 Tourism Potential

3.1 GENERAL REVIEW - TOURISM RELATED STUDIES

The following studies were considered in the context of evaluating the potential of Westport for tourism related developments.

- Developing For Growth - A Framework Development Plan For Irish Tourism, 1989
- Operational Programme For Tourism, 1989/1993
- Operational Programme For Tourism, 1994/1999
- Operational Programme For Urban And Rural Development, 1994/1999
- A Tourism Plan For Mayo, 1991

3.1.1 OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR TOURISM

The current Operational Programme for Tourism, 1994/1999 is of particular significance in the context of tourism development in Westport as evidenced by the objectives considered under (a)-(c) below.

(a) Heritage Towns / Regional Tourism Centres

The 1994/1999 Operational Programme states:

'Heritage Towns

5.2.0 Under the Operational Programme for Tourism, 1989 - 1993, Bord Failte and Shannon Development have also successfully developed some fifteen heritage towns as tourist centres. The investment has come from public and private sector interests and it has assisted in presenting the architectural, historical or mercantile heritage of the town in a manner of interest to foreign visitors. Some further eighteen designated towns are scheduled for ERDF support, and it is planned to give priority in the current Programme to those heritage town developments which will best meet the objectives of the Programme to attract oversees visitors and generate extra jobs.'

In the context of the Operational Programme for Tourism, Westport is considered as a Heritage Town. In the 1992 Framework Development Plan for Irish Tourism Westport was included as a "Regional Centre". The only other such centres along the Western Coastline are Sligo, Tralee and Kenmare. (Fig. 3.1)

(b) Mayo National Park

Paragraph 4.2.9 of the Operational Programme refers to the proposed Mayo National Park as "an indicatative land-based project with potential for further tourism development", Westport being located at the interface of the Connemara and Mayo coastal drive touring routes, is strategically located in relation to the proposed National Park facility planned for the Nephin Beg / Owenduff area.

(c) National Monuments And Historic Properties

Westport House is one of Irelands stately houses which is open to the public.. Designed by Richard Cassels and finished by James Wyatt, it is a significant tourist attraction which has potential for further development. Paragraph 4.25 of the Operational Programme states that a substantial proportion of the budget of £27 million (33 m ECU) will be devoted to "enhancing existing projects of international tourism value".

3.1.2 OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sub Programme 3, Urban and Village Renewal is relevant to the development and conservation of urban areas. Measure 2 (urban improvement) and Measure 4 (urban conservation) are of particular significance to Westport.

3.1.3 A TOURISM PLAN FOR COUNTY MAYO

This study was completed in 1991 and was mainly directed to formulating a promotional strategy for County Mayo. The study estimated that there were a total of 493,000 visitors to Mayo in 1990, generating tourism revenue for the County of £65.0 million. The unique tourism feature of County Mayo was considered to be its "provision of perhaps the only remaining environmentally and ecologically unspoiled yet accessible area in Western Europe".

The key product objective recommended was that the status of "World Heritage Site" be sought for the north west and south west of Mayo. The study envisaged that Mayo's tourism revenue could be doubled from its 1990 level of £65 million to £131 million by 1996, and that the number of jobs could be doubled from 2,500 to 5,000 by 1996.

While specific recommendations were not outlined for Westport or other towns, it is clear that Westport has, and will continue to play, a major role in the tourism development in County Mayo. The map of key development attractions in Mayo, as included in the tourism study, classified Westport as a "heritage town" and was the only such designation in the County.

3.1.4 PILOT RELIEF SCHEME FOR CERTAIN RESORT AREAS

Westport is included as one of 15 resort areas which were designated by the Irish Government as a Pilot Relief Scheme in 1995. Achill and Mulranny are the only other such designated areas in County Mayo. These resort areas were designated under the Finance Act, 1995 for a period of 3 years i.e. until 1 July 1998.

Eligible works which may benefit under the Pilot Scheme include:

- All Bord Failte registered and approved visitor accommodation.
- Any tourism building or structure as may be approved for the purposes of the relief by the Minister for Tourism and Trade, in consultation with the Minister for Finance.

Incentives available include:

- Capital allowances
- Double rent allowances
- Residential accommodation relief

The Westport Pilot Relief Area is defined as including most of the UDC area, together with a number of adjoining townlands.

The following non-accommodation tourism facilities which are eligible under the Pilot Scheme are of particular relevance to Westport:

- Leisure / Sports Facilities
- Marina Mooring and Breakwater Facilities
- Craft Exhibition and Demonstration Centres
- Car Parks
- Existing Heritage Buildings with Public Access (Improvement to Westport House is of particular significance in this context)

3.2 TOURISM RESOURCES

In a tourism context, the principal resource of Westport is its urban design quality as a planned Georgian Town and the related resource of Westport House and Demesne.

3.2.1 WESTPORT TOWN TOURISM RESOURCE / ACCOMMODATION BASE

The quality of buildings and land-use mix of Westport is attractive. The physical fabric and socio-economic base of the town has benefited from its emergence as a significant tourism and services centre over the past 10 years, in particular.

The heritage value of Westport is recognised by both its inhabitants and visitors, and this recognition should ensure that the future development in the town will be compatible with the protection and enhancement of this heritage.

The accommodation base of Westport is critical to its tourism role. The 1989 Bord Failte Framework Plan included Westport as one of 11 "Regional Tourism Centres with growth potential". A total of 235 bedrooms were recorded for Westport at that time.

The number of hotel bedrooms in Westport by 1997 was projected at 435 by Patrick J Tobin, Consulting Engineers, in evidence presented to the Westport Main Drainage Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry in May 1996. There were an estimated 228 registered and unregistered guest houses.

Holiday homes and second homes provide a further form of visitor accommodation which is significant in Westport. It is estimated that there were in 1996 some 150 houses in Westport which are used primarily as holiday / second homes. These are located mainly in Westport Quay, the town centre area, and in other parts of Westport. In land use planning terms, it is appropriate that significant groupings of holiday homes should be developed as integrated and self-contained residential units within the overall urban structure of Westport.

The determination of applications for housing which may involve use as holiday/second homes is one which needs to take into account the following planning considerations.

(i) The extent to which the location, design and social / physical infrastructure for such developments relates to the existing urban structure and socio-economic composition.

(ii) The balance between providing for planned clusters of holiday homes for that use alone, and the need to allow flexibility in the use of individual houses or small groupings of houses for use by visitors / tourists without requiring a planning permission for a change of use to do so.

(iii) In determining individual planning applications for housing developments, consideration should be given to the inclusion of a condition(s) directed at either prohibiting, or permitting, the use of houses as holiday homes, depending on the individual circumstances of each application.

3.3 WESTPORT HOUSE AND DEMESNE

Westport House and Demesne, as a heritage property which is open for public use, is a tourism resource of national significance. The use of Westport house as a tourism resource is a major benefit to Westport and the tourism industry generally.

The use of Westport Houses and Demesne as a tourism resource is currently based on the provision of camping and caravaning accommodation and other facilities. Such facilities need to be developed in a manner which ensures that the historical integrity and character of the estate is protected.

The future development of Westport House and Demesne and its hinterland is considered as one of a number of areas for which detailed Action Plans have been prepared as in Section 6.0 below.

3.4 WATER BASED TOURISM

The Carrowbeg River, as it passes through Westport, is solely a visual amenity and has no real potential for any other water based activity. Immediately downstream of the Town a riverside walk extends its use in this regard. The Carrowbeg then enters the Westport House Lough on which a range of tourism-related activities occur, but these are currently restricted to visitors to the Demesne and are of a relatively minor scale. The river then passes into Cleavlagh Bay which has some considerable potential for water base tourism. To the north of the Roman Island Quay the potential relates almost entirely to ferries to the Clew Bay Island and to other minor commercial services (e.g. fishing boats and charter boats). To the south of Roman Island (i.e. in the bay continued between Roman Island, Rossbeg and Westport Quay) there is an area of high amenity with established tourism facilities and with substantial potential for generating other water based tourism facilities. The proposal to create an impoundment in this area, to eliminate unsightly mud flats at low water, and to maintain a usable water body, has obvious logic and benefit.

Fig 3.1 Tourism Centre Development Strategy: Bord Failte

4.0 Other Development Potential

4.0 Other Development Potential

Other Development potential i.e. other than tourism-related development is considered under the following headings:

- Residential Development
- Industrial Development
- Commercial Development

Figure 4.1 shows the location of the principal; planning applications lodged since 1990.

4.1 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is estimated that there were a total of 1,346 private houses in the Westport UDC area at the end of 1995. This estimate is based on the Services Charges List compiled by the Urban District Council, and takes into account the most recent housing developments in the town. (Fig. 4.2).

It is estimated that there are currently in the region of 100 rented UDC houses in Westport. The current number of houses, used primarily as holiday homes and second homes, is estimated at 150.

Assuming that the resident population were ultimately to increase to approximately 5,000 by 2006, the net additional new housing requirement for a 1,000 population increase would be in the region of 333 assuming an average occupancy of 3 persons per housing unit. Additional housing units would be constructed or renovated in the context of replacement of obsolescent housing.

Existing and proposed residential development land, as allocated in Chapter 5.0 below, has a capacity to accommodate an estimated population of some 6,000. This includes local housing and tourism generated / holiday home housing.

Additional population capacity would be accommodated in the form of redevelopment / rehabilitation of existing buildings and vacant sites, particularly within the town centre and Westport Quay.

The existing and proposed residential development land has adequate capacity to accommodate the projected population over the next 5-10 years.

4.2 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Westport, as well as being an important tourism / services centre, also functions as an important industrial centre. It is estimated that there are presently approximately 1000 jobs in manufacturing industry in Westport. The main locations for industrial land are as follows:

- Ballinrobe Road
- Carrowbeg (IDA Estate)
- Golf Course Road (County Council Estate)
- Roman Island

The major area for industrial development in the future is in the zoned lands at Carrowbeg. This is the ideal location from an access point of view. The second potential area for industrial development is in the land owned by Mayo County Council on the Newport Road. This land should ideally be used for small units which do not generate significant heavy traffic, at least until a Castlebar Road - Newport Road link is constructed.

4.3 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The main focus of commercial development is located in the Town Centre area. A local commercial focal point has developed at Westport Quay.
The current net retail space in Westport is estimated at 30,000 sq m (322,800 sq ft). Planning permission was granted in 1992 for a retail development at the existing Northern Feather Factory. The planning application submitted to Westport UDC was for a 2,200 sq m supermarket, 1550 sq m of shops, coffee bar, and 320 sq m of offices. The planning permission, ultimately granted by An Bord Pleanala, involved a reduction in the permitted floorspace. The An Bord Pleanala permission was not implemented, and has now expired.

There are no available sites in Westport Town Centre capable of accommodating large scale shopping centres, involving extensive anchor store floorspace and car parking. For this reason, and in order to protect the traditional urban design character of Westport, it is considered appropriate that medium / small scale shopping centre developments be encouraged within the zoned town centre area. These would preferably be in the form of mixed-use developments, involving residential, offices and other uses. Potential sites for such developments are indicated in the Town Centre Action Area Plan.

Medium scale shopping developments are defined as being within the 2000-3000 sq metre range. Such developments would require in excess of 1 acre to accommodate the scale of buildings, car parking facilities, user and other operational and planning requirements.

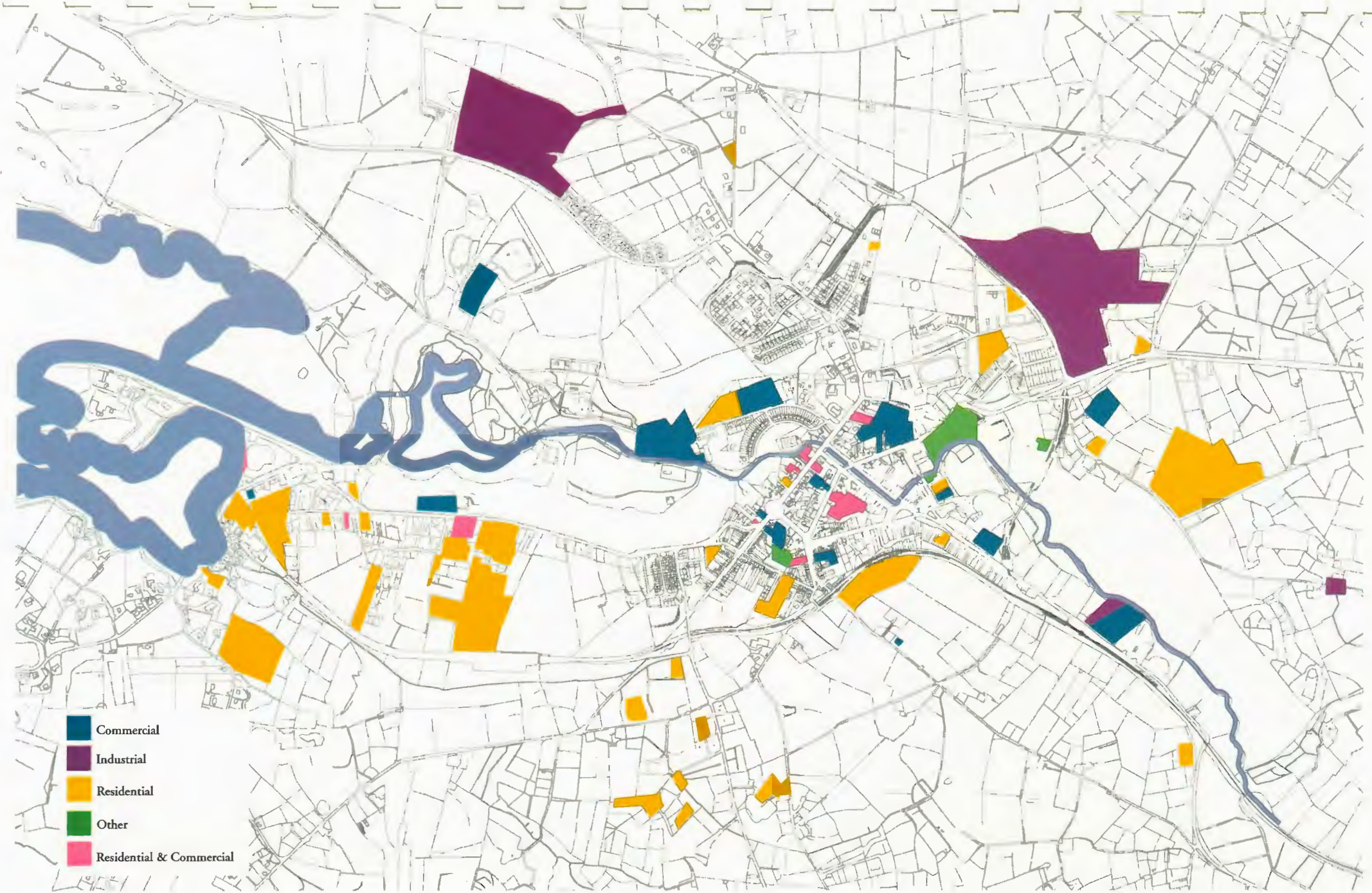


Fig 4.1 Planning Applications Lodged Since 1990

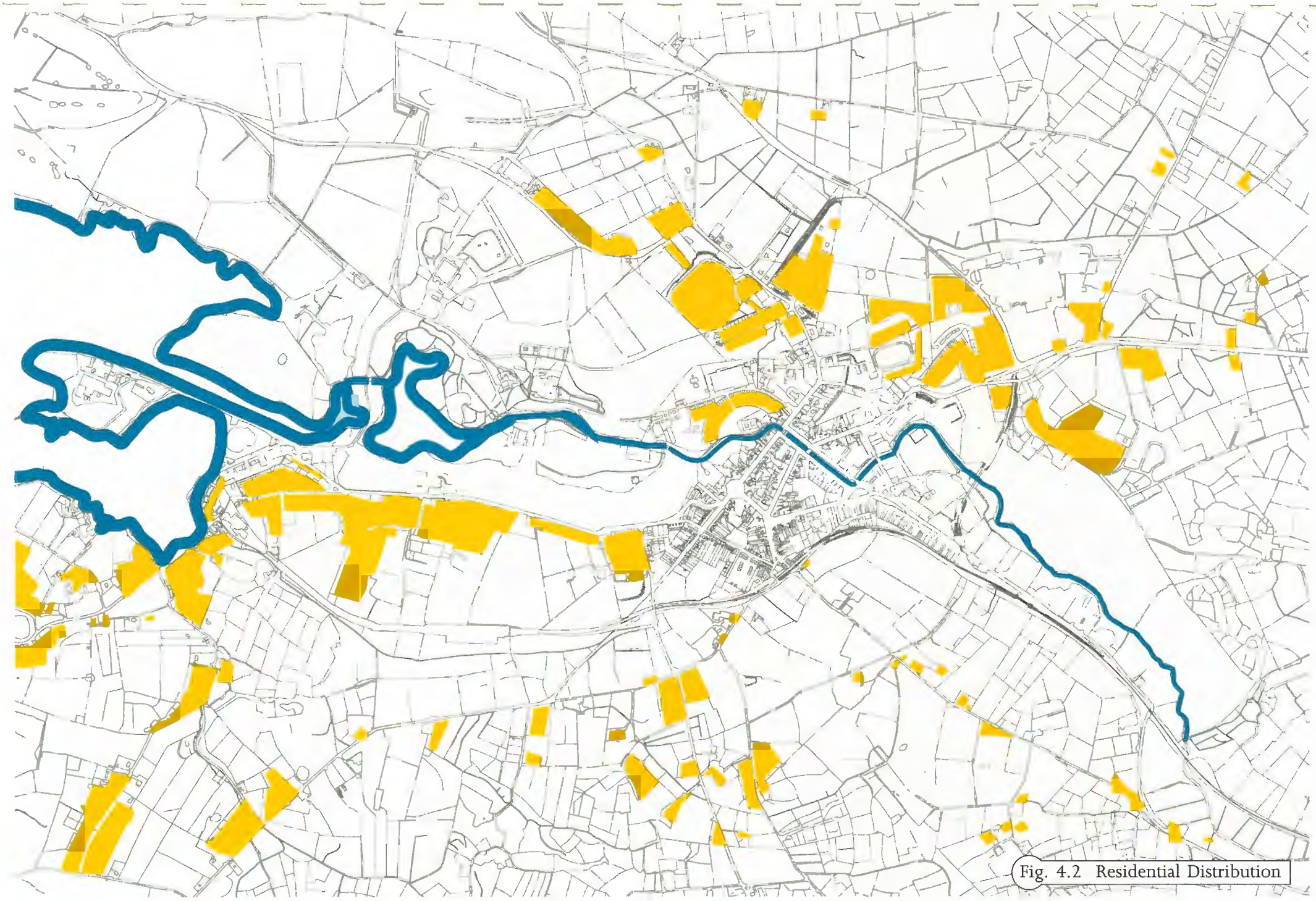


Fig. 4.2 Residential Distribution

5.0 Integrated Action Plan Strategy

5.0 Integrated Action Plan Strategy

5.1 STUDY AREA IN CONTEXT OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The role of Westport in a national context has been considered in a number of previous Chapters. Its role as a Heritage Town and Regional Tourism Centre is of particular significance as expressed in the Operational Programmes for Tourism 1989-1993 and 1994-1999. The proposed development of the Mayo National Park will also enhance Westport's role as a tourism centre.

The Pilot Relief Scheme for Resort Areas will be in operation until 1 July 1998, and is likely to generate additional accommodation and other facilities in Westport. The continued expansion of infrastructural, industrial and commercial development is important in terms of providing a balanced and sustainable local economy.

5.2 WESTPORT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1992

The current statutory Development Plan for Westport is that adopted by the Urban District Council on 4 March 1992. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 incorporate coloured versions of Map No. 17(Land Use Strategy), and the corresponding Town Centre Insert Map . Figure 5.3 incorporates a coloured version of Map No. 18 (Objectives) of the 1992 Development Plan with the appropriate objectives from the Written Statement summarised where referenced by a number.

It is envisaged that the recommendations and strategy of the Westport 2000 Study will be taken into account in the review of the 1992 Development Plan. The nature and extent of the detailed design proposals as incorporated in the Westport 2000 Study are, however, considered to be too detailed for formal adoption as a Development Plan. It is recommended that the basic land-use strategy and recommendations be considered for adoption in the context of the formal review of the 1992 Development Plan.

5.3 MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1992

The Mayo County Development Plan 1992 provides a wider context for the planning and development of Westport.

The various objectives of the 1992 County Development Plan relating to infrastructure, settlement, tourism and natural resources etc. have been taken into account in the formulation of the Westport 2000 Study.

Mayo County Council is the Planning Authority for the area outside of the Westport UDC boundary. It is envisaged that the recommendations and strategy of the Westport 2000 Study will be taken into account in the review of the 1992 County Mayo Development Plan. It would be appropriate to prepare a Statutory Development Plan for the environs of Westport in association with the Development Plan review for the UDC area.

5.4 SOCIO ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The principal socio-economic objectives and strategy of this Action Plan are as follows:

- To improve the overall quality of Westport as a place to live, work or recreate, for both residents and visitors.
- To encourage employment-generating activities, and in particular tourism and industrial employment.
- To protect and enhance the architectural character and, in particular, the central area and heritage of Westport.

While this Action Plan is based on an evaluation of socio-economic needs and resources of the area, the strategy is ultimately reflected in the form of a physical and site-specific plan. Where appropriate or possible, specific projects have been identified for specific sites, in order to facilitate a tangible means of considering and promoting the overall social and economic objectives of the Plan. In the above context, specific socio-economic objectives include the following:

- To provide an appropriate balance between the needs of the resident population and those of the tourist/visitor population, in terms of the provision of commercial and community facilities.
- To provide, where appropriate, purpose built holiday home developments in order to minimise the effect of such uses on housing areas for the resident population.
- To provide an appropriate balance in the provision of sites for holiday homes, and the provision of housing for the local population. The planning strategy assumes a future 6,000 population allocation for the resident population.

5.5 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO PHYSICAL PLANNING STRATEGY

The development on the conceptual planning strategy evolved from a number of factors, as follows:-

- the detailed physical analysis of town core and hinterland.
- the extensive consultation process with local interest groups
- local authority policy
- the changing socio-economic forces in the area

A synthesis of the above factors led to the identification of a number of key issues, which required to be dealt with, as follows:

- consolidation of urban core
- integration of Westport demesne with hinterland
- conservation and protection of amenities
- physical connection to, and development of, Clew Bay
- control of peripheral development

- tourism and leisure expansion
- industrial expansion
- rationalisation of the movement network, both vehicular and pedestrian.

The underlying objective of the conceptual plan is the consolidation and protection of the existing high amenity resource (Fig. 5.4).

Central to the success of the proposed strategy are the following main elements:

- the concentration of development within the natural topographic enclosures to the north and south of the town.
- the development of strong linkages between town core, historic demesne and inner bay, as a tourism-based axis.
- the re-ordering of vehicular movement through the creation of new road connections from the Castlebar Road to the Newport and Louisburgh Roads, respectively.
- the expansion of the main commercial core towards the Castlebar Road.
- the regeneration and intensification of the urban core through the development of backlands, traffic calming measures, and environmental improvements.
- the conservation/regeneration of the demesne landscape and other woodland areas.
- the consolidation and expansion of industry adjacent to the existing industrial nucleus on the Castlebar Road as the main location for industrial expansion.
- the creation of a pedestrian "greenway" system, of parks and walks, independent of the road network.
- the development of Westport Quay as a water-based leisure and tourism facility for the area.
- the development of consolidated residential precincts at Cloonmonad to the south and Deerpark East, to the north, and Rosbeg.

Thus, the development of the conceptual approach is centred upon the creation of two axes; a tourism/leisure-based axis, running east-west from the urban core, through the historic demesne to an intensified facility at Westport Quay on the one hand, and a community-based axis on a roughly north to south orientation straddling the leisure axis. It is to be hoped that the juxtaposition of land-uses will create a dynamic framework from which a wide variety of complimentary land uses will emerge.

5.6 PHYSICAL PLANNING STRATEGY

The principal planning strategy which results from the conceptual approach outlined above, illustrates a mix of existing and potential land-uses, all held within a strong overall planning framework. It should be noted that the physical planning strategy outlined herewith takes, as its point of departure, the preservation of the physical amenity of the area, both natural and historical, as a community and tourism resource (Fig. 5.5).

The main components of the physical planning strategy are as follows:

- the regeneration and expansion of the town centre as outlined in detail in Section 6.2 of this report.
- the creation of a tourism axis, with the town centre as it's focus at the east end, and the expanded activity of Westport Quay at its western end, together with the ordering of tourism development within the Westport demesne and surrounds, as the linking element. Each of these areas is described more fully in Sections 6.3 and 6.5 respectively, of this study.
- the development of the prime residential focus for the town at Cloonmonad, south of Quay Street. This area is dealt with in detail in Section 6.4 of the report.
- the development of low-density residential precincts at Rosbeg and Deerpark East, respectively. The small-scale, introverted nature of both areas will allow for the judicious insertion of low-density housing on certain sites. It is considered that both areas, while being visually compartmented can accommodate certain types of residential development. In the case of Rossbeg, in particular, it is essential that the essence of this attractive small-scaled landscape is preserved. This can only be accomplished through a thorough examination of each residential proposal that arises, in relation to the opportunities and constraints

of each site being considered. This strategy could be expanded to encompass some areas to the south of the town, currently in agricultural use.

- the re-ordering of vehicular movement in two important ways - firstly, the creation of a strong connection between the Castlebar Road and Westport Quay via the old railway line, which would act as a parkway and relief road; secondly, the creation of a short inner relief road connecting the Castlebar Road with the Newport Road, via a route located just north-east of the present UDC offices, thus relieving congestion along the Mall.
- allowance for the expansion of industry on lands adjacent to the Allergen complex on the Castlebar road, as the prime location for future industry in the Westport area.
- the creation of a linked pedestrian/greenway system connecting all active and passive recreational facilities in the hinterland, including Westport Demesne and the various woodland walks in the area. The proposed parkway with segregated pedestrian and cycle-paths proposed for the old railway line south of Cloonmonad would be the first significant component of the system.
- The boundary to development from Deerpark East through Carrowbeg and around to the Ballinrobe Road is currently logically set at the 50m OD contour - as this is the limit to which a water supply can be delivered. The entire urban area drains towards the Carrowbeg River and so the provision of drainage does not impose any physical planning limitations. Insofar as roads access is concerned, the primary physical problem which arises is that the Town has grown along the southern and northern edges of the Demesne but all associated traffic has to pass through the Town Centre Streets - which are not suitable for this purpose. This leads inevitably to the conclusion that there is a need to link the Castlebar Road to Westport Quay and to the Newport Road. Given the existing street slopes and the frequently unorthodox junction geometry it should also be accepted that lower than normal standards should be deemed acceptable for these links.

It is important to note that the physical planning strategy proposed herewith is designed to cater for a population of approximately 6,000 persons, depending on how density levels are set. The implementation and phasing of the strategy is totally dependant on the provision of the appropriate levels of infrastructure and the timescale for their implementation (cf Section 2.0 Infrastructural Potential).

Thus, the strategy proposed seeks to marry the twin demands of the development of Westport as a tourist destination with the preservation of it's integrity as a viable and thriving community - both demands being predicated upon the requirement to, at all costs, preserve the character and amenity of both its natural and historic environments.

5.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As outlined under 5.3 above, the zoning and other objectives of the 1992 Westport Development Plan have been taken into account in the Westport 2000 Study. The principal implications for future reviews arising from the Westport 2000 Study are as follows:

- A more specific land-use planning strategy and development control policy for the central area/historic core.
- A more integrated approach to the development of housing in the undeveloped suburban areas.
- The incorporation of the objective for a public walkway along the old railway line with the provision of a new distributor road connecting the central area with Westport Quay.

5.8 DETAILED ACTION AND PROPOSALS

During the development of the physical planning strategy for Westport and it's environs, it became clear, through consultations with the Local Authority and other interest groups, that it would be necessary to flesh out the strategy in relation to a number of key areas.

The basis for selecting areas for more detailed study related to their importance within the overall planning strategy as a whole, as well as to their relevance in socio-economic terms.

The four areas selected to be the subject of more detailed study, are chosen on the basis that they form a diverse and indicative range of environmental and planning problems, as an elaboration of the overall strategy - in other words, as an indication of how a particular area might develop within the overall planning framework.

The four areas chosen for elaboration and which are illustrated in Section 6.0 of this report are as follows:

(a) Urban Core: The detailed nature of the urban design/traffic calming proposals for the existing town centre, necessitate a detailed examination and exposition of design proposals. As this action area contains the most explicit design proposals (as opposed to move broad brush planning considerations in other action areas) it is considered that it was necessary to provide extensive illustrative material to clearly indicate the nature of the changes proposed.

(b) West Westport: The absence of a coherent master planning strategy for the demesne and it's surrounds has lead to an ad-hoc approach to the development of this area. It is considered necessary to provide an outline master planning framework to control the development of this critical area, or at least to provide a tool for Local Authority assessment of future proposals for this invaluable cultural asset and its hinterland.

(c) Cloonmonad: The prime residential precinct, in terms of size, zoning and location, is considered to be a strategic link in the expansion of the town towards Westport Quay and Clew bay. The exposed visual nature of the area, particularly in terms of long distance views into the precinct, renders it extremely vulnerable to low-grade residential impositions. Conversely, the potential for its utilisation as a catalyst to achieve better physical connections between the town and Westport Quay, together with it's potential to provide significant active and passive recreation for the town, require the illustration of this potential.

(d) Westport Quay: The role of this satellite community in terms of it's position as a balance and a foil to the urban core of Westport cannot be over-estimated. Given its current level of under-development in tourism terms, the potential for the creation of a significant water-based centre is enormous. However, its potential role as the opposite pole to the urban core, with the possibility of the reinforcement of the connecting movement network feeding secondary land-uses, makes its examination at a detailed level essential.

It is important to note that the level of detail illustrated in each case is intended to indicate the potential of each area selected.

Fig. 5.1 UDC Development Plan (Hinterland)

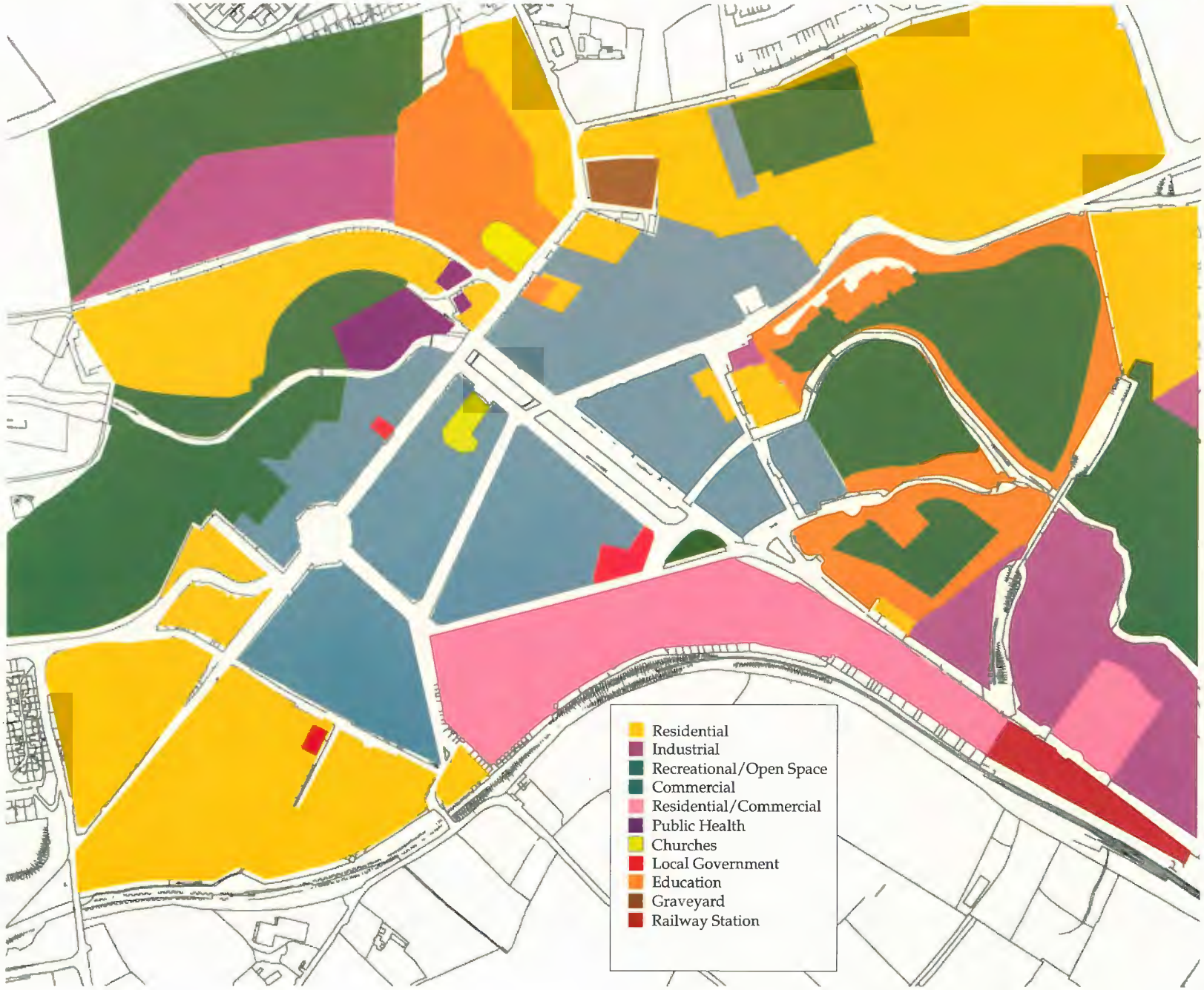


Fig. 5.2 UDC Development Plan (Town Centre)

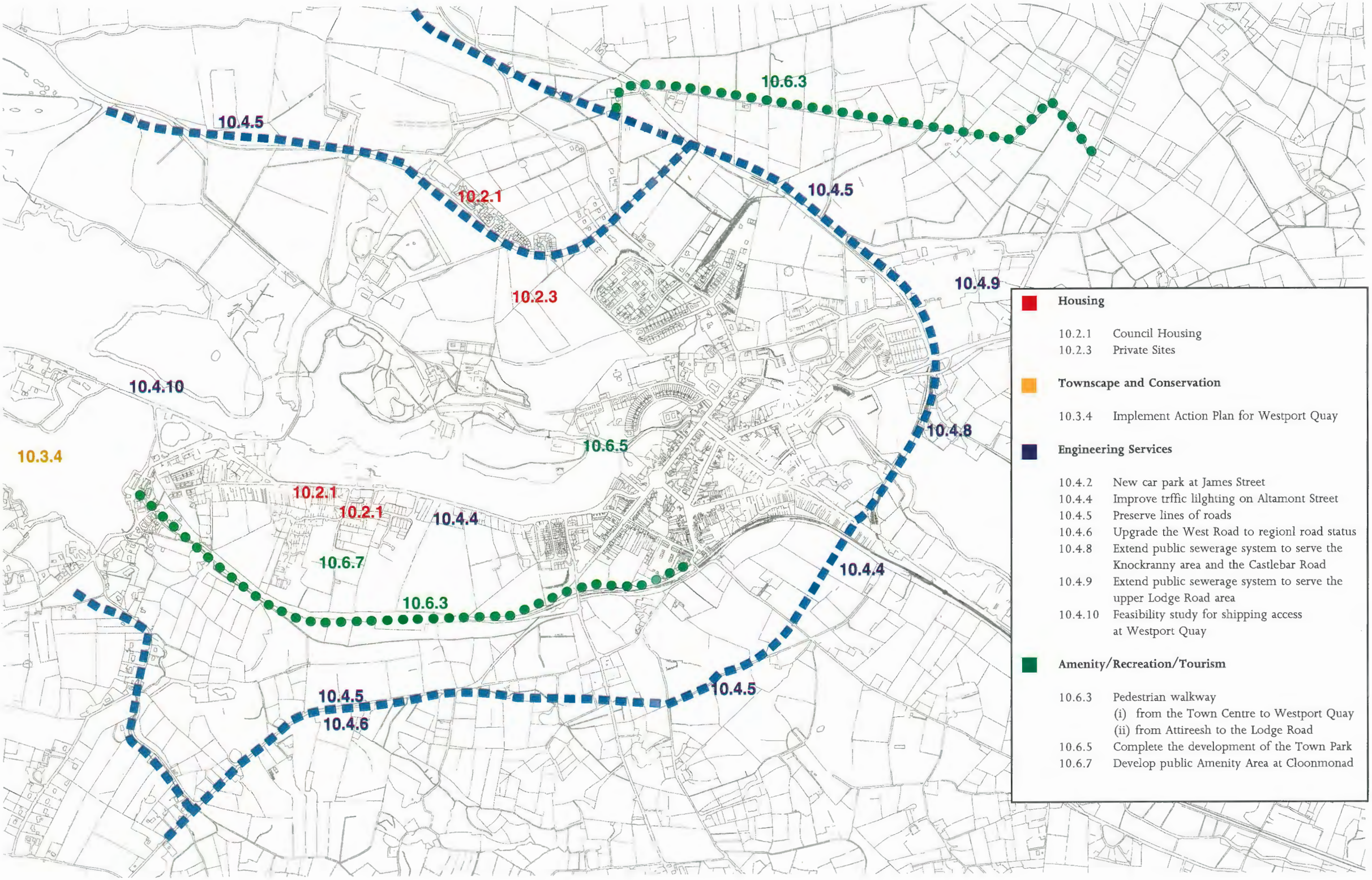


Fig. 5.3 1992 Development Plan - Locationally Specific Objectives

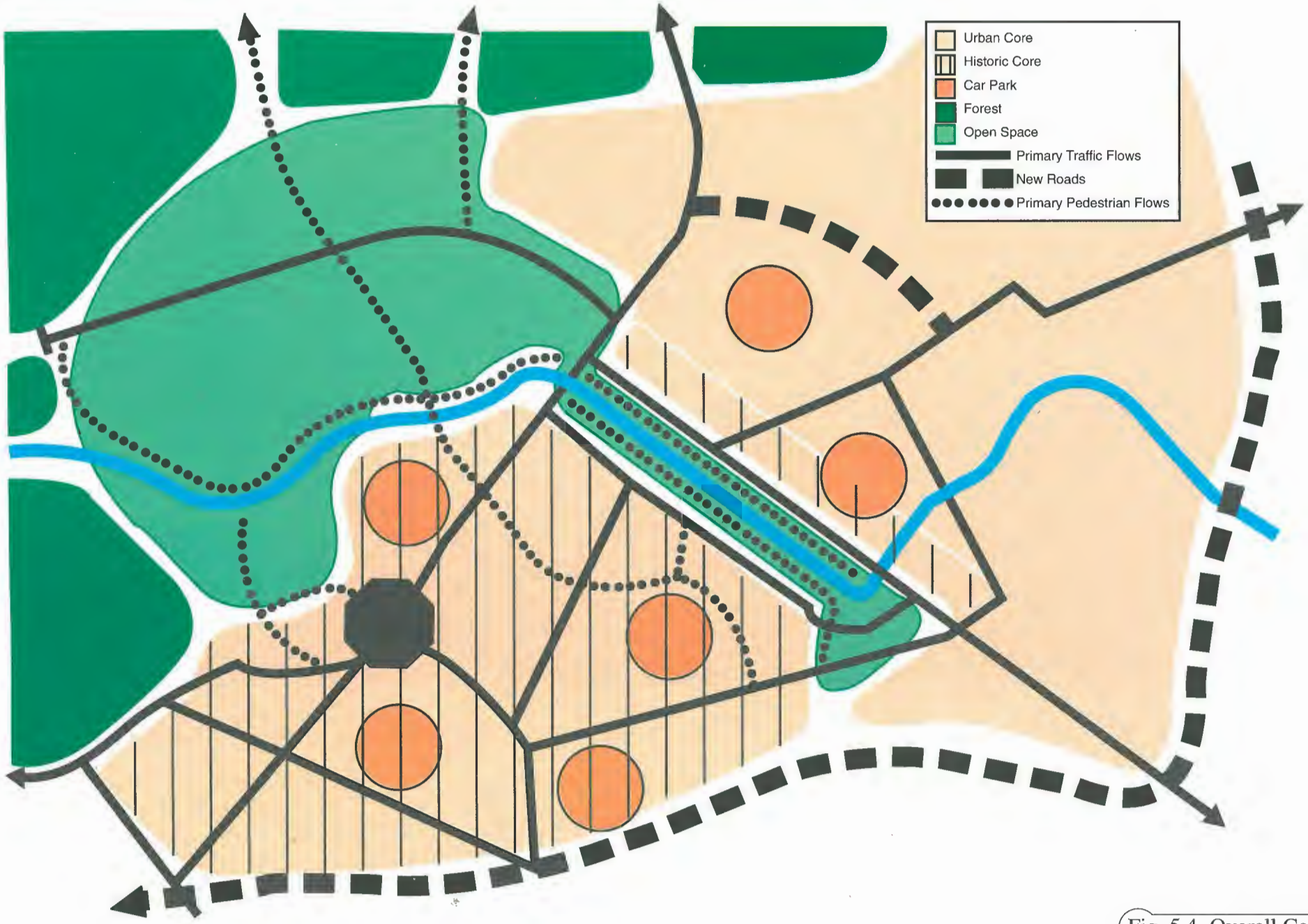


Fig. 5.4 Overall Concept

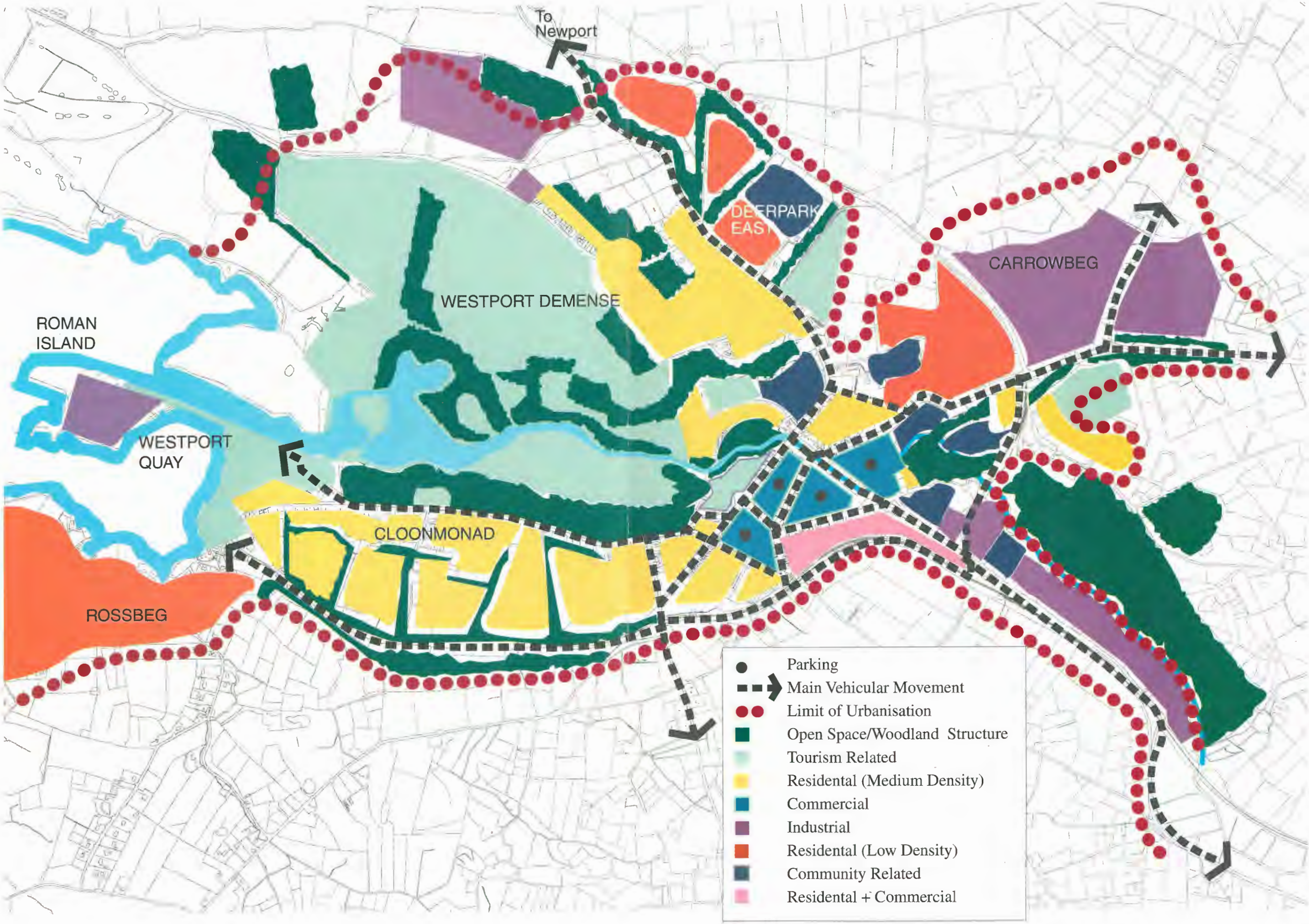


Fig 5.5 Integrated Strategy Plan

6.0 Detailed Action Plans

6.0 Detailed Action Plans

6.1 OVERALL ACTION PLAN CONTEXT

The four detailed action plans outlined in Section 5.8 - Detailed Action Plan Proposals - indicated the need for a more thorough explanation of the implications of the overall planning strategy for these key areas.

The inter-relationship of the four areas with the overall master plan structure is critical in two respects:

- in relation to the necessity for achieving a strong physical connection between the urban core and the Atlantic Ocean.
- in relation to controlling the environmental quality of new development in an area that is already rapidly developing.

The need for the creation of a strong movement system - both pedestrian and vehicular - between all four components forms one of the central proposals of the integrated planning strategy. The strengthening and "greening" of links between the town centre and Westport Quay will have spin-off effects for the Cloonmonad residential precinct in that there would now be two improved road connections skirting the area, providing much improved access to the housing. Similarly, the proposal for a central pedestrian spine through the area will remove pedestrianised traffic from the surrounding roads.

Westport Demesne, however, is a more introverted environment, being contained within the traditional curtilage of high stone boundary walls. Therefore, integration with the proposed surrounding land uses will be more subtle, of necessity, but extremely important. The perceived role of the

demesne at the moment, as a barrier between the town centre and Westport Quay, must be broken down, and physical connections require to be made through the estate, to Clew Bay, while maintaining the essence of the demesne.

It should be noted that the intention of the detailed action area plan is to give an indication of scale, density and environmental quality, in each case, and is not to be considered as a definitive physical planning solution for each area.

6.2 URBAN CORE

6.2.1 OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL STRATEGY

To consolidate the urban core it is necessary to:

- Maintain the visual boundary of the urban core and strengthen the visual separation between it and the town's environs.
- Conserve the historic core and underpin the essential elements of its visual and physical structures.
- Provide for the expansion of all central area uses within the urban core.
- Balance the accommodation within the urban core between commercial, tourism, retail, residential and open space uses.
- Maximise the potential of the backlands.
- Confirm the positive aspects of the land use pattern and alleviate, where possible, negative trends.
- Improve the movement patterns across the town, and make pedestrian movement more convenient by developing lanes and shortcuts.
- Accommodate traffic management and calming, and road improvement measures.
- Provide for 'greening' of the streets.
- Improve the open space network.

The approach to satisfying these objectives is illustrated in (Figures 6.1 & 6.2).

6.2.2 CONSERVATION

The urban core is already defined by the topography and should continue to be visually separated from suburban extensions of the town. The historic core - essentially the 18th century town, including the Mall, Mill Street, Bridge Street, Step Street, Peter Street and James Street - should be designated as a conservation area and given special attention as a co-ordinated piece of urban design:

- There is a tendency in some recent developments to increase the scale of individual buildings beyond that of the already established architectural context. This tendency should be firmly resisted and the scale of all new work should be carefully matched to the existing context: all listed buildings should be carefully conserved: the refurbishment of existing buildings should be encouraged; and new developments should be carefully designed to fit within the scale, materials and architectural framework of the existing town.
- In the conservation area, planning applications should include full surveys of existing buildings where the current building layout, construction and architectural details are fully recorded. Applications should also clearly illustrate the interventions being made, differentiating between new work and old.
- Over-development can result in loss of necessary amenity. This is particularly so in the central area and sites should be carefully planned to maximise the amenity both in the public and private realms.

6.2.3 HOUSING

Urban housing, for short and long rental, and for family occupation, should play an increasingly important role in the central area. Significant residential development in the centre of Westport will provide a better downtown environment by balancing the activities of commerce with those of a resident population.

Opportunities for housing occur frequently in the central area where small infill schemes in streets could accommodate housing in the upper floors. However, there are three specific opportunities for major housing development with the urban core:

- Along the banks of the Carrowbeg River, to either side of Distillery Road.
- Development of street and courtyard housing on backlands made accessible by the linking of the Castlebar and Newport Roads.
- Housing of high amenity could be created on the extensive footprints of retail developments proposed on both sides of Castlebar Street.

These sites, fully developed, could provide in excess of one hundred high density, residential units, catering for both the holiday and permanent housing markets.

6.2.4 INFRASTRUCTURE

The primary elements of infrastructure which will affect the shape of the central area are the new link road between the Newport Road and Castlebar Road, and the link across from the Castlebar Road to Rosbeg.

- The Newport Road to Castelbar Road link is conceived as a development road, opening up the backlands in the triangle behind the North Mall, and providing a visual break between the central area proper and the more loosely planned housing on the rising ground above the Castlebar Road.
- The link from the Castlebar Road to Rosbeg will form a boundary to the southern edge of the urban core. Between the Castlebar Road and Altamont Street the road edge will be unavailable for development of any kind. Much of the land owned by the schools should be permanently kept open, as a green horizon to the town.
- Between Altamont Street and the Leenaune Road the new carriageway will run below the grade of the existing development and provide a natural stop to the town. The carriageway will incorporate a walkway and cycleway, and be heavily landscaped. Beyond the Ballinrobe Road, the carriageway will pass out of the urban core and will be treated as development road, opening up the south face of Cloonmonad for landscape dominated, residential development.

6.2.5 OPEN SPACE

The public open spaces of Westport include the Fair Green, the Mall, the open spaces between the river and James Street, St Mary's Crescent and the North Wood. These spaces are not visually tied together, and some are highly developed while others are little more than filled ground.

The overall concept is for all these separate elements to be linked together as a series of contrasting spaces, each of quite different character and each developed to it fullest potential.

- The Fair Green is re-shaped to provide a vest pocket park and a terminus to the Mall, enlivened by sculpture and appropriate planting.
- The Mall is repaved, planted and furnished to maximise its boulevard quality, and to provide suitable spaces for movement-promenading and informal sitting.
- The link between the Mall and the river to the north is improved by removing the plethora of inappropriate furniture - the kiosk, the signage poles and the incidental planters - and creating a suitable opening from the bridge to the riverside spaces beyond.
- The backlands behind the Octagon are opened up by providing access from Quay Street, Church Street and through the Wyatt Theatre.

- The proposed leisure centre behind James Street, and the associated riverside walks and bridge connections to St Mary's Crescent, provide a major amenity and tourist attraction.
- The open spaces on the north of the Carrowbeg River are improved by the refurbishment of St Mary's Crescent, the demolition and repositioning of the public toilets, and the re-shaping and paving of the areas around the library and the clinic.
- The North Wood is linked to the pedestrian movement system by the improvement of the pathways leading from St Mary's Crescent to either side of the Northern Feathers factory.

Within this linked system of open spaces, the Northern Feathers factory emerges as a non-conforming use. Should this site become available it would offer a major opportunity for further development of tourism and leisure uses within a strengthened open space system.

The purpose of the improvements to the open space network is to generate a necklace of open spaces and amenity uses which would form a major plank in the product portfolio for the marketing of Westport as a tourism destination.

However, Westport House and Demesne are potentially the most important tourist product in the town and the lack of any immediate access to them is a major impediment to realising their value as visitor attractions.

The recent development of Westport has tended to isolate the demesne, and to put barriers between it and the town. It is physically difficult to enter the demesne from the town and there is no obvious visual linkage between the two. To reverse the situation, the northern section of the town, including the paths and open spaces, needs to be reshaped to provide easy and obvious access to the east gateway to the demesne.

To improve vehicular access and to provide a street focused on Westport House, it is proposed to make substantial adjustments to the access to St Mary's Crescent and Hotel Westport, creating a new tree lined link from the junction at Newport Street to the gates of the demesne. This will involve the amalgamation of footpaths, the improvement of boundaries on both sides of the street, and new paving and tree lines both in public and private property.

6.2.6 GREENING & PAVING OF THE STREETS

Currently within the urban core, at busy times, the pedestrian is somewhat squeezed. Pavements are generally narrow and vehicular traffic dominates the scene. There are few trees except to either side of the Mall. The redesign of the streets is taken up in detail later in Section 7.0 but the same basic principles are suggested:

- Throughout the town pavements are extended to provide a minimum width of 2.5m with consistent paving and street furniture, and incorporating tree lines on one or both sides of each street. This is accommodated without loss of on-street carparking.
- It is recognised that the town core does not have sufficient parking for peak periods and it is proposed that all new developments should incorporate significant car parking to the rear of properties.

6.2.7 ACTION AREA 1

This action area approximates to the historic core and includes the streets suggested for designation as a conservation area. It also includes the prime commercial and retail areas of the town.(Figs. 6.3 & 6.4).
The major urban design initiatives suggested here are:

- Treatment of the whole area as a single entity and the development of improved access, parallel to the Mall, stretching from Mill Street to the riverside.
- The opening up of new laneways and pedestrian courts through the backlands of the existing streets to improve pedestrian movement from Bridge Street outwards to Mill Street and James Street, allowing these to flourish with high value, commercial, tourism and shopping uses.

- Insertion of a three or four storey car park on a site at Mill Street, on land principally owned by the UDC, and the development of a pedestrian street and shopping court, opening out to both Mill Street and Bridge Street. The ground floor of this car park could be reserved as a large shop unit, providing up to 3,000sq.m of retail area.
- Redevelopment of backlands between Bridge Street and James Street with two retail courts.
- The development of a small park, accessed through courts of tourist based shops, centering on arts and crafts, with a new centre for the arts, music and drama located in the Wyatt Theatre. This building, with a re-developed ground floor, could act as an entrance to the craft court and parkland spaces behind. The adjoining location of the new leisure centre, with associated parking, would bring this whole backland area into a new focus.
- Development of surface carparks in backland areas south of Mill Street and east of James' Street.

6.2.8 ACTION AREA 2

This is the triangular area stretching from the Fair Green to the Castlebar Road and beyond to the Newport Road. It falls into three sub-areas (Fig. 6.5 & 6.6).

- The garage at the Fair Green and the property stretching northwards to the Carrowbeg, present an opportunity for redevelopment of commercial and retail buildings facing to the Fair Green, and of dense housing to the rear, taking advantage of the amenity afforded by the river.
- On the east and west sides of Castlebar Street there are significant opportunities for the development of commercial and shopping areas, on relatively deep sites, with the scope for parking at the rear. Such developments would fully enclose a street and provide opportunities for residential development either in the upper storeys of narrow structures or around raised courts.
- The proposal to provide a new road linking Castlebar Street to Newport Street opens up a significant opportunity for street and courtyard housing to the north-east, and hotel and commercial development towards the south-west.

6.2.9 ACTION AREA 3

This area encompasses the early and mid twentieth century extension of the town, north of the Carrowbeg River.(Fig. 6.7 & 6.8) Proposals here are directed at improving the environment throughout the area, tying it into the pedestrian movement systems of the rest of the town, strengthening the linkages between the principal open spaces, and providing attractive and immediate access to Westport House.

- The area is currently linked to the pedestrian system of the southern part of the town by a visually confused pathway system, entered at Newport Street. This access could be improved by emphasising the access from the river bridge, and raising the environmental quality of the environs of the library and clinic through reorganisation of the parking, pavements and planting.
- The linkages back to the town are improved by the addition of two pedestrian bridges connecting to the south bank, opening access to the Peter Street/Newport Street axis and to the town beyond.
- The grassed areas south of the Hotel Westport and St Mary's Crescent are landscaped to provide parkland open space, through which access is gained to the gateway to the demesne and North Wood beyond. The existing link to the North Wood is tenuous, and in these proposals an extra pathway is added and the existing path is considerably widened, repaved and replanted.
- The Northern Feathers factory is a nonconforming land use in the area.It represents a major opportunity for intervention in this part of the town and could be reused, if the occasion arises, for a major amenity or tourism development. Any proposals for the site should provide better access to the North Wood, particularly on the west side.
- The access road to this area has narrow footpaths, a harsh appearance and blank boundaries to the crescent of houses on the south side. The junction with Newport Street and the space in front of the Hotel Westport car park is visually confused, and does not provide a suitable focus on the demesne. The proposals are to address this by environmental improvements for the length of the corridor, combining the two footpaths to make one wider, newly paved surface, improving the enclosure of Newport Villas and the junction with the Newport Road, and comprehensive planting to both sides of the carriageway in both public and private property. Separation of the carriageway from the hotel car park and the redesign of the end of the corridor as a refurbished entrance to Westport House complete the proposal.

6.3 WEST WESTPORT DETAIL PLAN

This section of Westport stretches from Kennedy's wood on the Newport Road to Quay Street in the south, and from the town park in the east, to Westport Quay in the west.(Fig.6.9)

The area is dominated by Westport House and demesne. The twin parallel access roads - Golf Course Road to the north and Quay Street to the south define the major east/west vehicular movement in the area. There is a private road connecting the two routes, through Westport demesne, running in a north to south direction.

Pedestrian access from the town to the demesne is permitted at the moment, terminating in Westport Quay to the west, but all vehicular traffic must access the demesne and it's various activities from the western end of the estate.
The Westport West area can be divided into a series of discrete landscape compartments, as follows:

- the hilly, primarily agricultural land to the north of Golf Course Road, with industrial and residential uses towards the junction with the Newport Road.
- the northern portion of Westport House demesne, containing some woodland and agricultural land, with tourist uses interspersed with low-lying poor quality pasture land towards the east.
- the southern part of the demesne consisting of the setting for Westport House itself, and it's associated landscape; i.e. the historic core of the demesne.
- Westport Quay, located in the south-west corner of the area - also as part of the historic landscape of Westport.

At the present point in time the demesne effectively turns it's back on the historic core of Westport, with the tenuous connection of a pedestrian link connecting into town backlands as the only point of contact.

The potential of this landscape is very much framed and directed by the physical characteristics of it's form. Thus, the man-made features of tree plantings, openland and lake, together with the array of historic buildings, limit the potential of this part of the area in a significant way in terms of it's ability to accommodate change. The character and integrity of this historic landscape must be retained, and any existing or proposed land-use that threatens it's integrity cannot be entertained.

In other, similar situations the continued viability of cultural landscapes has been preserved by the judicious insertion of an appropriate land-use - eg. a resort hotel or similar intervention, when the landscape is seen as a vital component of an overall ambience. It would appear, that at the present point in time, given the obvious deterioration in the landscape of the demesne, that the current range of activities are not adequately funding the renewal of the historic landscape.

The northern section of the estate, by contrast, is capable of accommodating a wide range of activities. The cluster of existing tourist-related activities centred around the courtyard building could be expanded to encompass that whole section of the demesne between Golf Course Road and the existing facilities. Further west along the south side of the same road, it is proposed that the tourist-related land-uses could be inserted. This location is particularly suitable for a hotel site, for example.

Immediately to the south of this area it is proposed that the existing landscape is preserved as a buffer against the historic core of the demesne, while the normal agricultural paddocks further to the west have been earmarked to accommodate a proposed sewage treatment works for the town on portion of the lands.

The landscape to the north of Golf Course Road should be preserved as an agricultural landscape, with the exception of the consolidation of the existing industrial estate towards the Newport Road.

It is essential that the integrity of Westport House and demesne is preserved, and that the rapid deterioration of this vulnerable cultural asset is halted as quickly as possible. Secondly, it is equally important that ways are found to accomplish a significant level of integration between Westport House and the town of Westport at large, in order to ensure the regeneration and survival of both as an unique historic set-piece in a still-intact natural landscape of great beauty.

6.4 CLOONMONAD DETAIL PLAN

The land bank at Cloonmonad is the largest single tranche of land zoned for residential development in the Development Plan document. It is also, in terms of its orientation, slope angle and location, the most suitable area to accommodate residential development within the UD boundaries.

An efficient development of these lands, however, would be extremely difficult at the present point in time, given the inevitable increase in turning movements onto the overcrowded Quay Street.

The master plan proposed for Cloonmonad (Fig. 6.10 & 6.11) is based on the construction of a "green" route along the alignment of the old railway line to the south of the area. This route would consist of a carriageway for vehicles, with segregated pedestrian path and cycleway.

The construction of this road allows for the development of a Radburn-type planning solution - i.e. segregated vehicular and pedestrian access, with vehicles penetrating into the housing groups from the site edges, while pedestrians would use a natural spine parkway, connecting to playgrounds, playing fields, etc. and totally segregated from vehicles. This pattern allows for the orderly development of the Cloonmonad precinct on an incremental basis - each developer confined to an individual plot within an overall framework. A secondary, but important element in the creation of visual cohesion in the area, is the provision of belts of diverse native woodland planting. This would have two purposes:

- to provide shelter from the prevailing winds and thus achieve comfort conditions in external recreational spaces.
- to visually compartmentalise the precinct, thus breaking down the scale of the development in the landscape.

The layout shown in the upper Fig. 6.10 is indicative of a high level of relatively dense development. The configuration shown represents a total of approximately four hundred housing units - more than sufficient to satisfy the projected housing demand for Westport until the year 2005.

It is clear that a full development of the Cloonmonad precinct at a blanket density of six houses to the acre is undesirable for environmental reasons. It is also unlikely that housing demand in the Westport area will be directed towards one particular housing type and density. Thus, the provision in the Integrated Plan Structure for a limited amount of residential development in Deerpark East to the north, and Rosbeg to the west, at densities of between one house to the acre and one house per two acres, will ensure that a variety of residential enclaves will be provided. In addition, and to a limited extent, there will be provision in the plan for certain types of residential provision within the urban core itself, and in other appropriate areas outside the limit of development line.

A more likely configuration in the lower (Fig. 6.10) indicates a much lower level of residential development with larger areas of open space and significant woodland belts, as a garden city type of configuration. This would allow the development of a more balanced residential community at Cloonmonad, allowing significant tracts of land to remain as openland, a greater provision of open space, and a more extensive network of recreational facilities. This lower density development would also significantly reduce the impact of the Cloonmonad enclave in the larger landscape, particularly in terms of mitigating long distance views into the area from the south.

The central pedestrian spine, which runs east-west could be expanded into a necklace of small community parks ultimately connecting to Westport Quay, and supplementing the pedestrian walkway and cyclepath associated with the relief road to the south of the precinct.

6.5 WESTPORT QUAY DETAIL PLAN

The potential for the development of Westport Quay as a focus for water-based recreation is enormous. This study area is seen as a foil and counter attraction to the tourist and recreational facilities offered by the town centre, and would serve to expand the tourism base towards active water-sports and therefore, additional tourism (Fig. 6.12).

Central to the development of the area would be the impoundment of the water-body to the south of Roman Island, which has already been mooted by others. This would provide an ideal base for wind-surfing, water-skiing, dingy sailing etc. The proposal to provide a suitable marina is to be welcomed, together with its concomitant land-based uses - concessionary, boat house, chandlers, etc.

The development of the old warehousing at the centre of Westport Quay is proceeding apace, with a mixture of tourist-related uses proposed for existing derelict sites. However, the intensification of uses in this area will require additional space for parking and private recreation in the immediate area. It is felt that a reversion to the former fair-green type space, by partially filling in the pond, would greatly assist the development of other land-uses, and provide a more appropriate and intensively used amenity to the area.

The residential development of Westport Quay should be directed primarilly towards tourism, with the development of a residential tourist enclave on Roman Island, adjacent to the factory. It is proposed that more dense, village-style cluster development would be appropriate for this type of tourism.

The facilities to be provided at Westport Quay include for the following specific elements:

- provision of a two-storey marina building with associated waterfront development and berthage.
- provision of a boat repair yard and slipway.
- provision for two jetties with mooring for approximately twenty-eight small craft
- provision for slipways, associated parking and security building

The facilities associated with the renewal of the green space are as follows:

- provision of a decorative water feature with associated landscaping
- provision of stepped informal performance space/picnic/sitting area
- provision of perimeter car park and screening
- traffic calming to main Louisburgh Road.

It is also proposed that a three-storey, tourist-related development be permitted within the footprint of the existing derelict silo buildings adjacent to the Trauw plant.

An important environmental aspect of the development proposed above is it's reliance on the provision of sewage treatment, with a consequent improvement in water quality. It is felt that it is not practicable to construct the proposed impoundment until water quality is improved in the future.

It should be noted that a certain amount of roosting and feeding areas for bird life would be lost through the development of this water-related development. However, the scale and extent of alternative roosting areas available in the inner Clew Bay area would go some way to mitigating the loss through impoundment. The relatively undeveloped nature of Clew Bay, given it's highly indented coastline and island clusters, provides acres of remote and safe havens for wildbirds.

Fig. 6.1 Overall Proposal Drawing

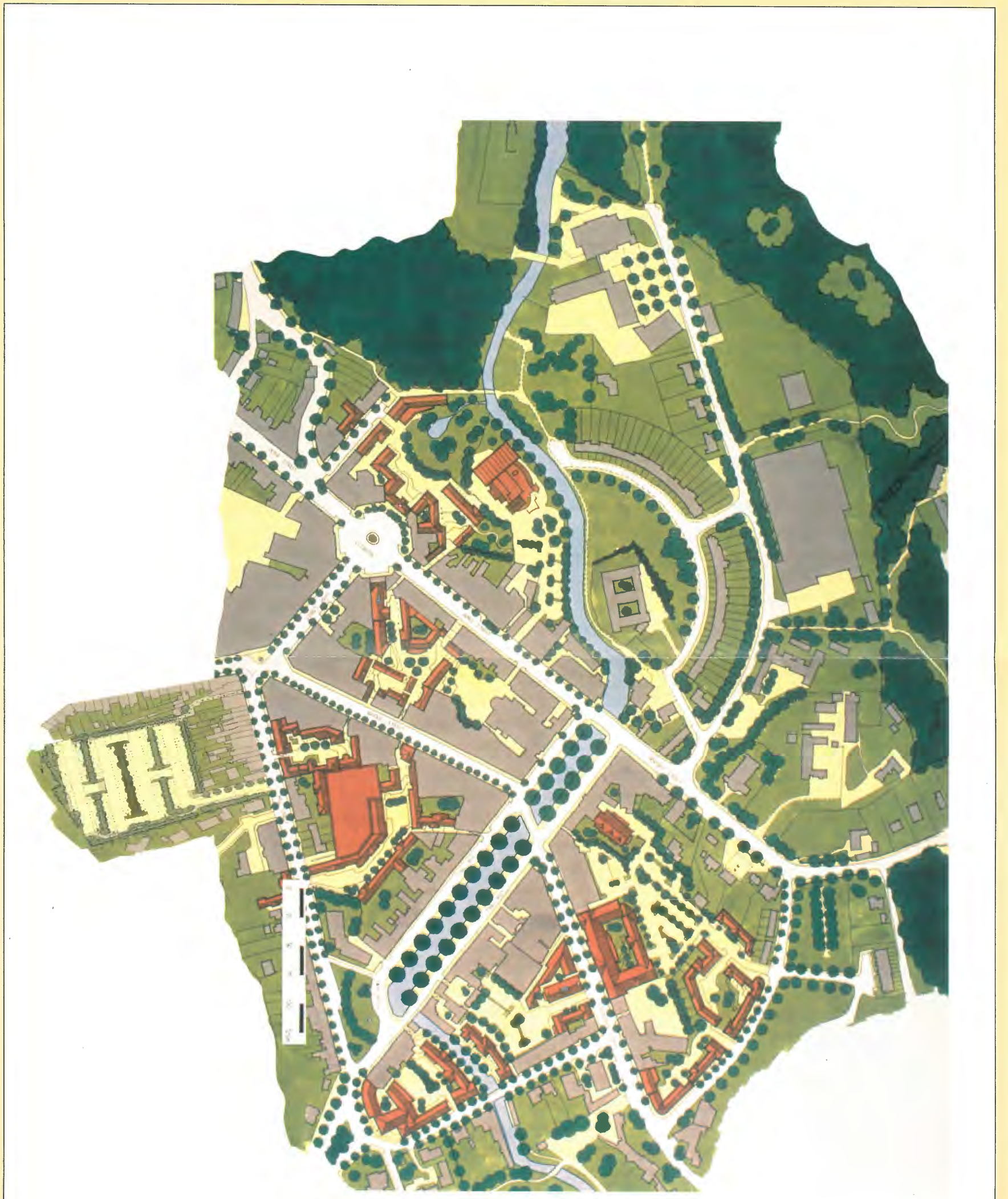
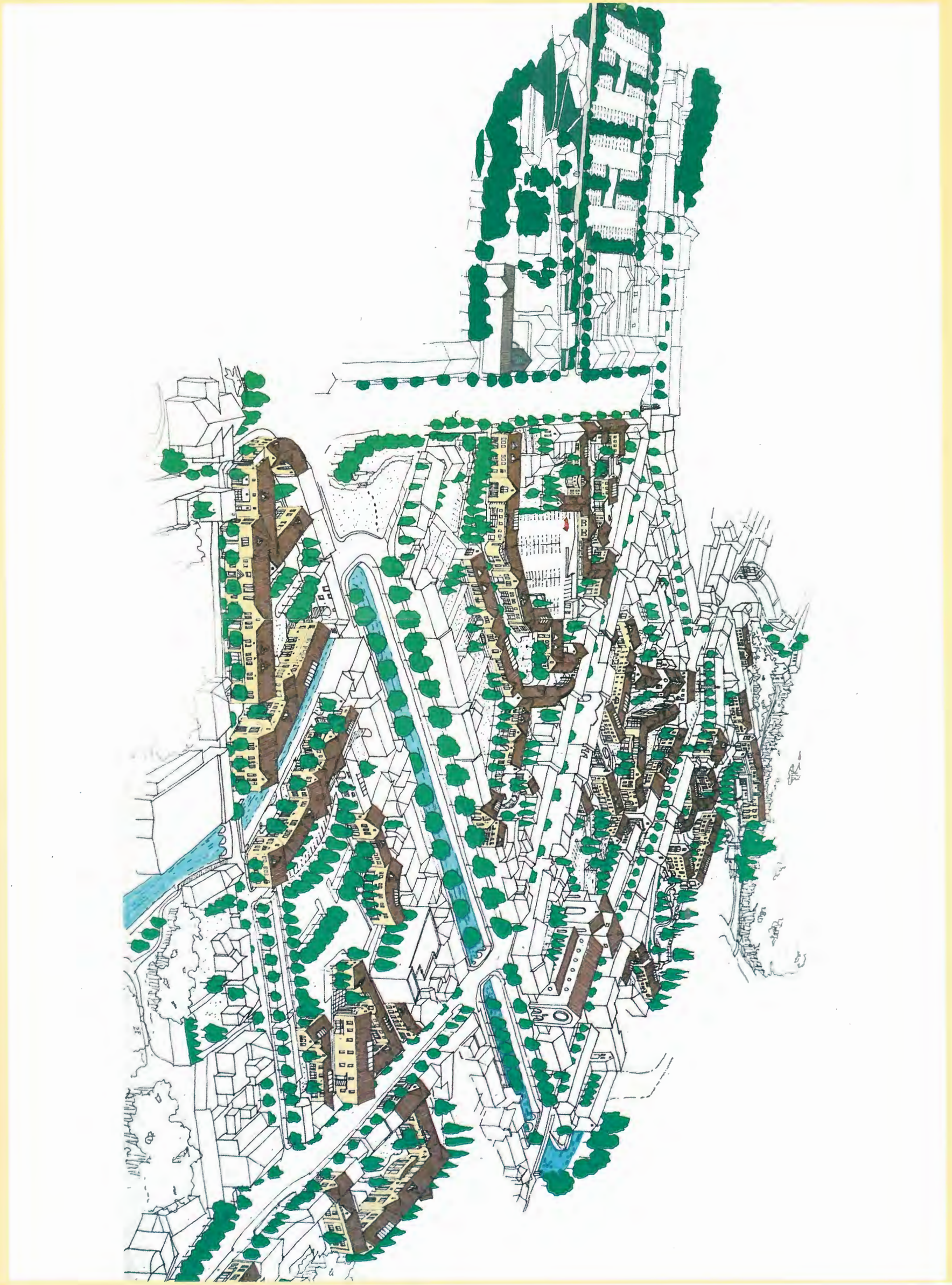


Fig. 6.2 Overall Perspective of Action Plan



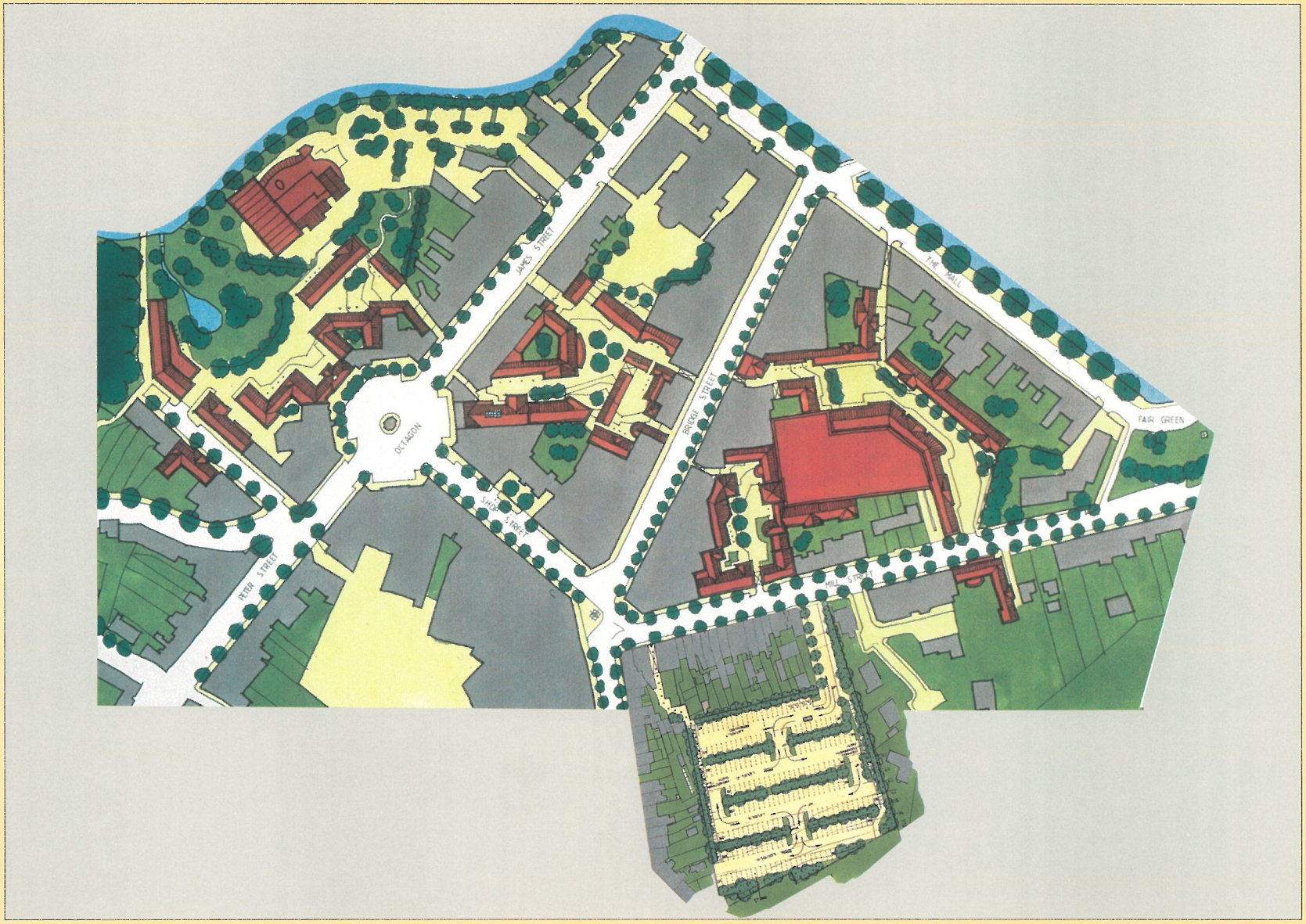


Fig. 6.3 Detail Action Plan (1)

Fig 6.4 Perspective Sketch (2): Detail Action Plan (1)

Fig 6.5 Detail Action Plan (2)

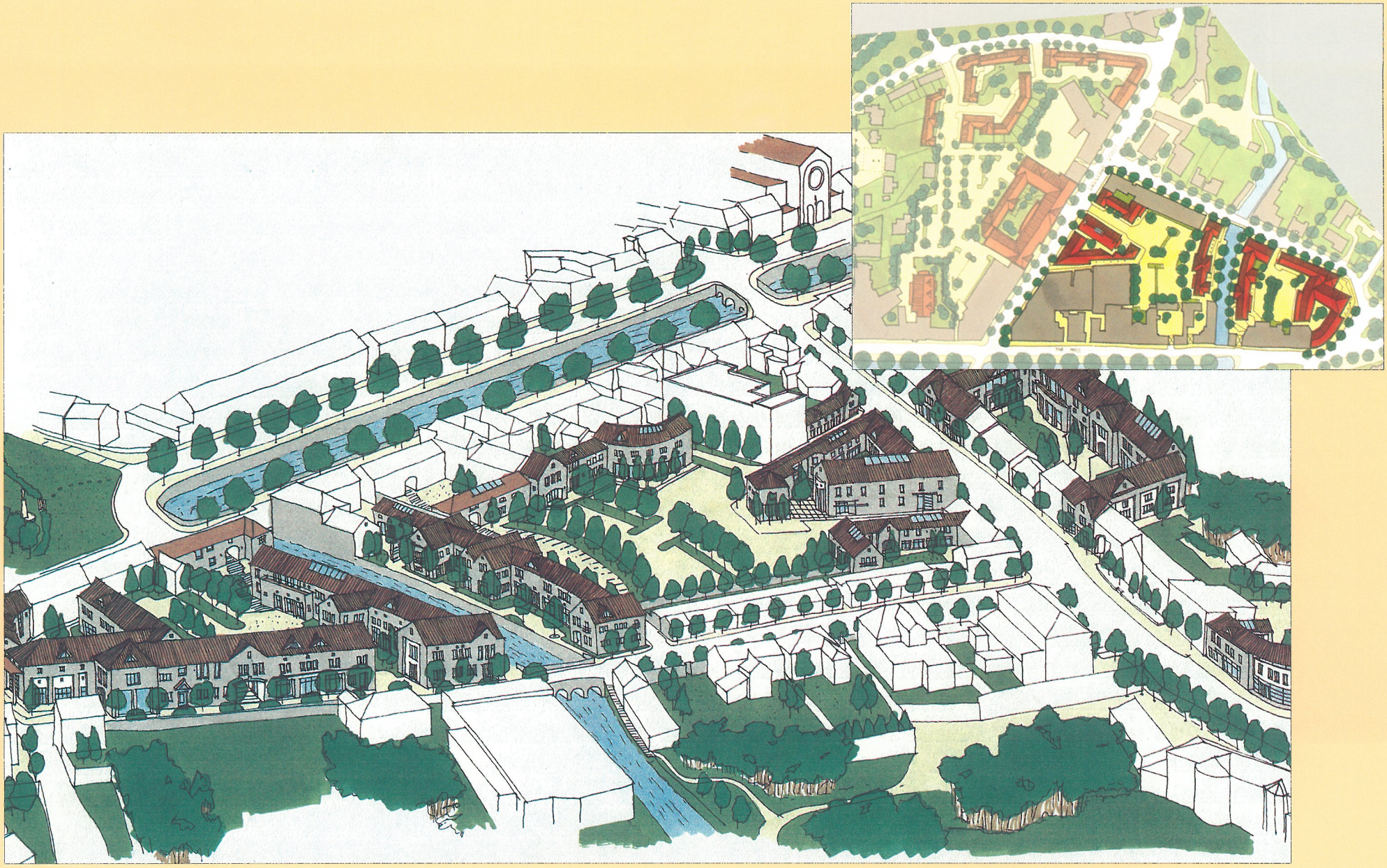


Fig 6.6 Perspective Sketch (1): Detail Action Plan (2)

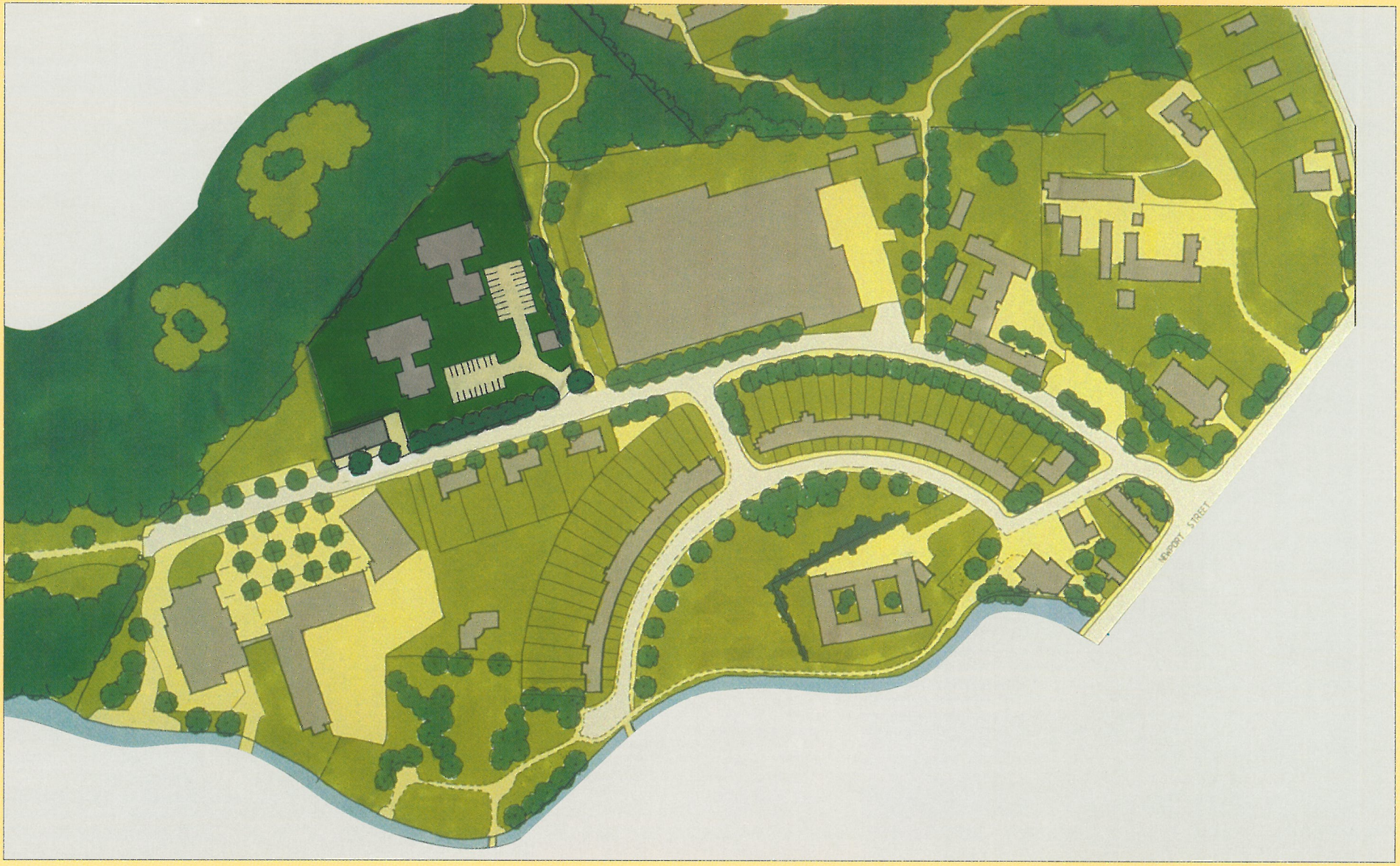


Fig 6.7 Detail Action Plan (3)

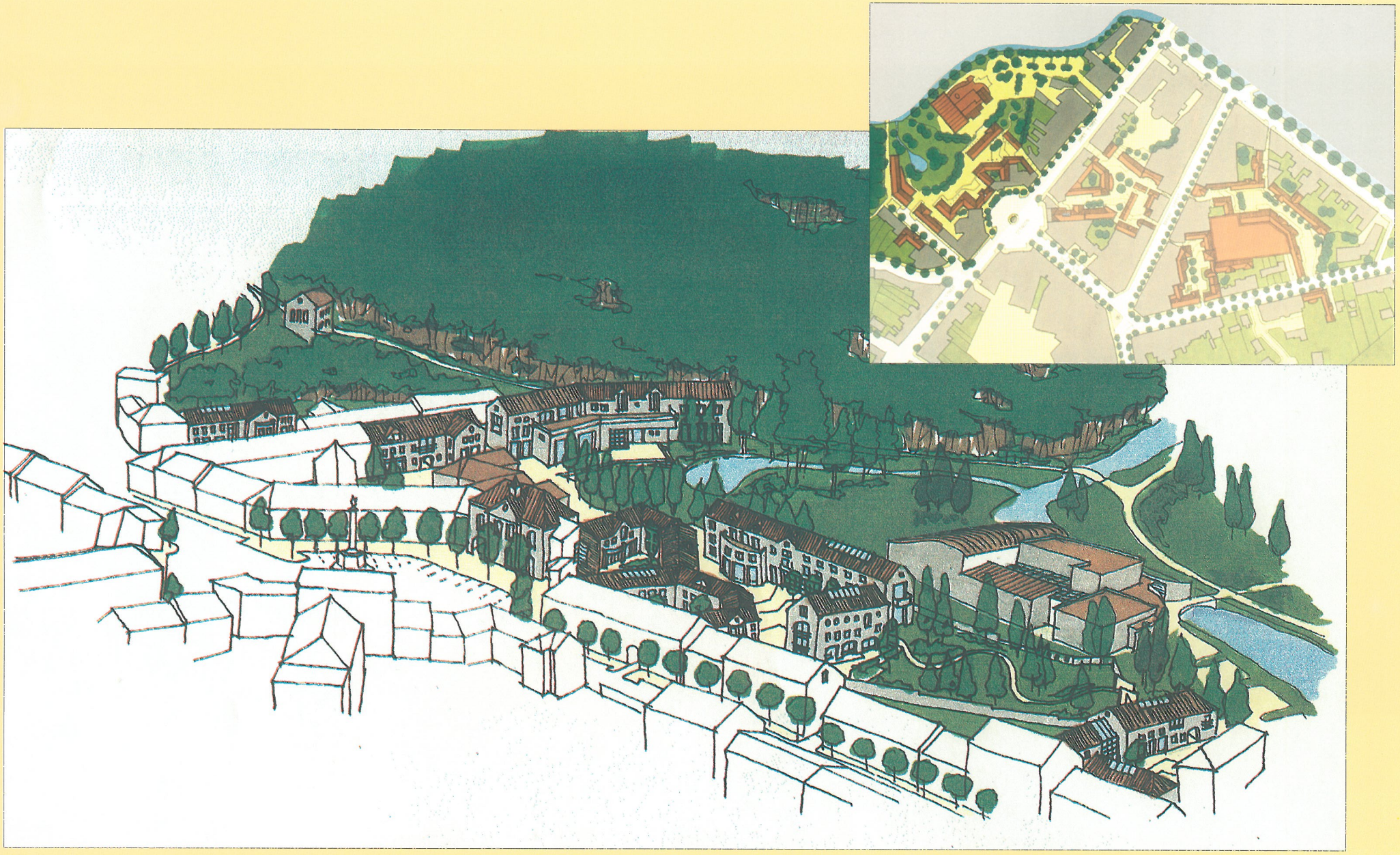


Fig 6.8 Perspective Sketch (1): Detail Action Plan (3)

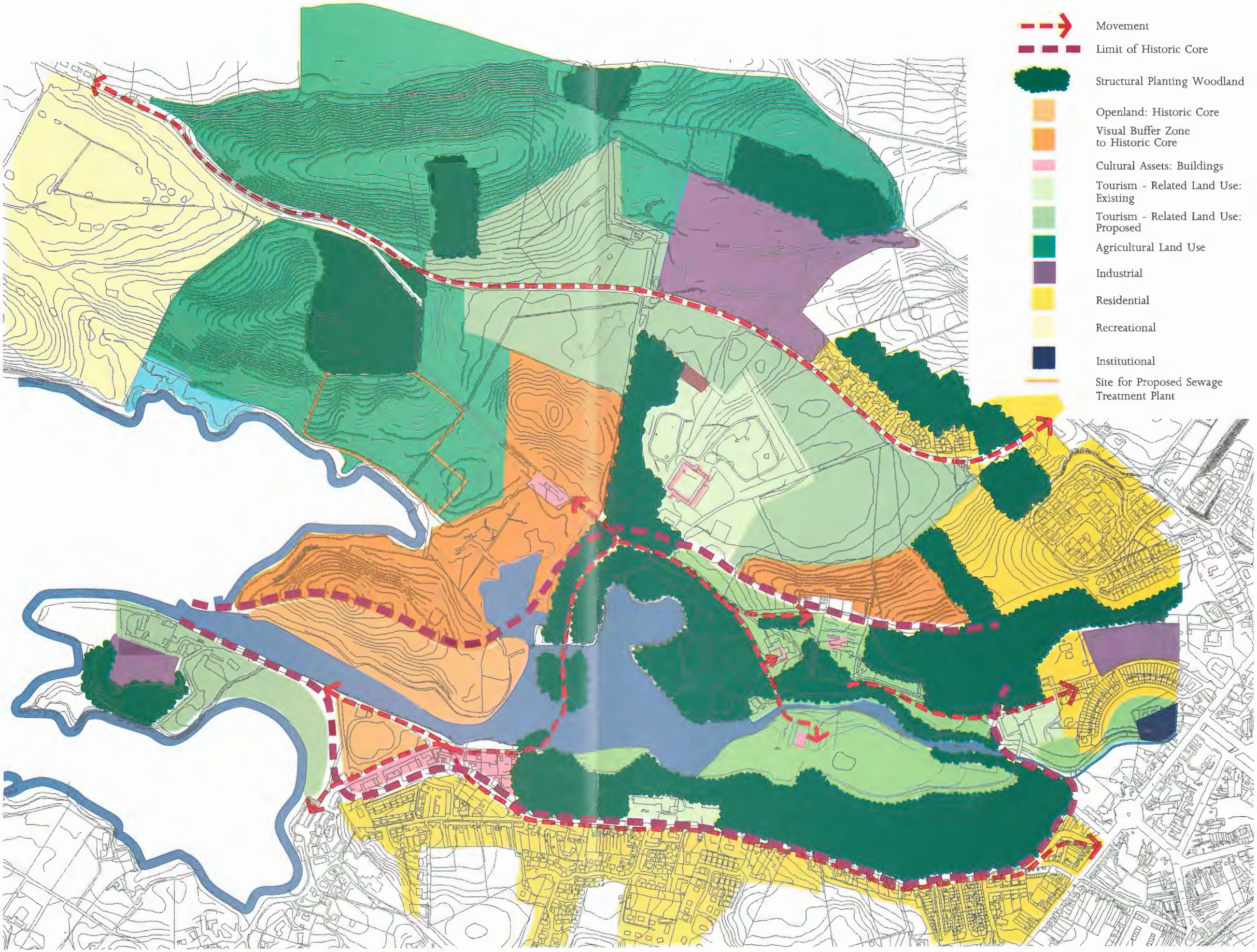


Fig 6.9 West Westport Detail Plan

Fig 6.10 Housing Precinct at Cloonmonad: Alternative Layouts

Fig 6.11 Perspective View of Cloonmonad

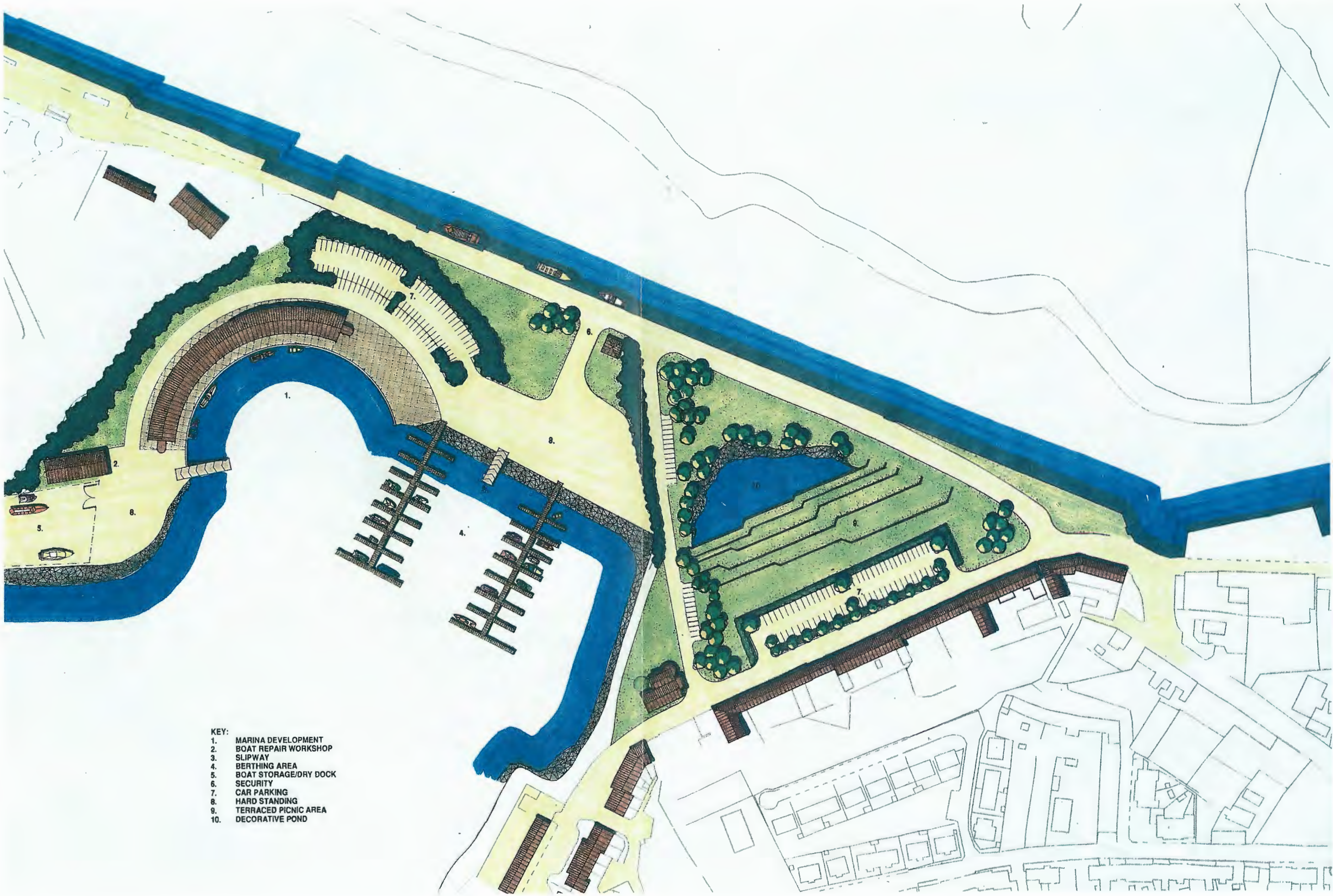


Fig 6.12 Westport Quay Detail Plan

7.0 Design Guidelines: Streets and Signage

7.0. Design Guidelines: Streets and Signage

7.1 STREET DESIGN

7.1.1 THERE IS A NEED TO TREAT THE STREETS OF THE HISTORIC CORE AS A SINGLE DESIGN ENTITY.THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THIS IS TO:

- Unify street design across the core.
- Provide for wider footpaths.
- Provide opportunities for systematic street tree planting.
- Maintain car parking capacity.

7.1.2 A NUMBER OF DESIGN PRINCIPLES ARE PROPOSED:

- All footpaths are widened to 2.5m.
- Parking is provided parallel to the footpath, or angled for easy access in one way streets, in standardised bay sizes.
- Large slab paving, preferably in natural stone, is applied to all footpaths.
- Footpaths are edged in a broad, pre-cast concrete kerb, radiused at corners.
- Continuous tree lines are incorporated in one or both sides of each street.
- A drainage channel of pre-cast setts runs parallel to footpaths, incorporating road gullies and tree bases, and combining easily with road crossings in the same material.
- Bollards are provided to protect trees, to segregate pedestrian and vehicular traffic street lights shared surfaces, and to mark pedestrian crossings.
- Starlights are incorporated on the faces of buildings wherever possible, with co-ordinated lanterns on columns where necessary.
- The street names are clearly identified on co-ordinated plaques, fixed to building elevations at all major crossings.
- Where appropriate, railings are provided to allow bicycles to be securely locked in place.

7.2 SIGNAGE

7.2.1 HIERARCHY

Signage is an endemic problem in the countryside and towns. It is outside the scope of this report to consider the issue in depth but an overall approach is suggested for tackling the problem.

- An overall system of signage should be established, to cater for the information needs of the public; individual signs, except on individual commercial premises, should not be allowed.
- All signs should be covered by planning permission or by a licence from the local authority.
- All signage proposals should be carefully evaluated and only those truly necessary allowed.

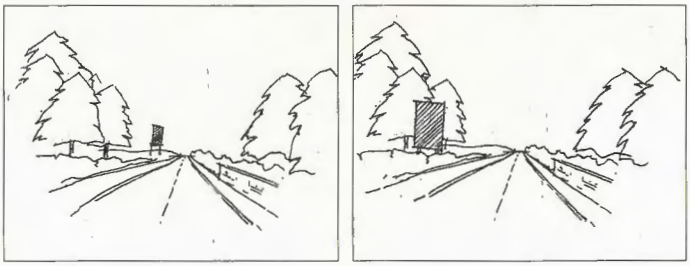
In outlining an approach it is necessary to adopt a hierarchy for the display of public information:

- ***Approach Roads***
- Directional traffic signs
- Tourist destination signs
- Tourism facility signs, e.g. guesthouse or hotel

- **Town Centre**
- Directional traffic signs
- Traffic warning signs
- Street names
- Tourist information signs

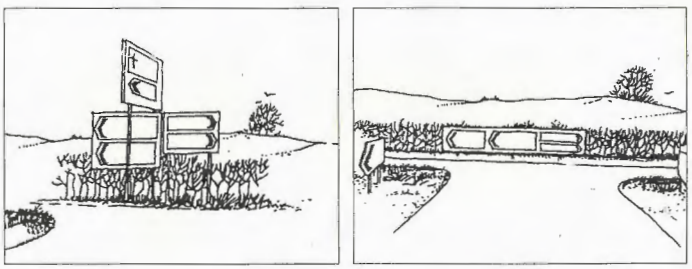
7.2.2 APPROACH ROADS

Placement of large national road signs should be carefully considered. Where possible these should be sited against a background of trees or hills; where necessary, the site should be landscaped to provide the background over time.



(Fig. 7.1)

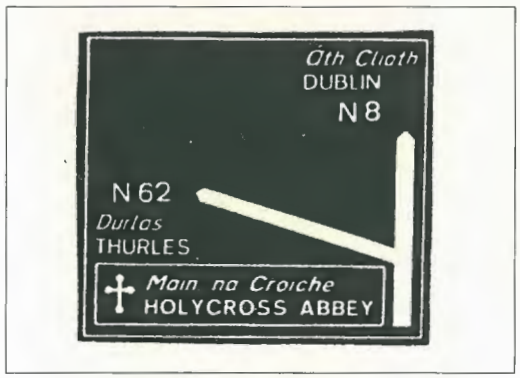
Clusters of finger post signs should be arranged to minimise obstruction in the landscape. A horizontal arrangement of signs is preferable to a complicated obtrusive one. (Fig. 7.2)



(Fig. 7.2)

Tourist information signs on approach roads should be located to minimise obstruction to views, landscape, and other signage. The basic sign designs should conform to the normal design rules for traffic signs and feature white legend, borders, arrows and chevrons on a brown background. The shade of brown recommended is 411 BS 381C "Middle Brown". The standard range of symbols should be used. On all purpose roads tourist attractions

should be treated as local destinations. To avoid sign clutter, the white on brown advance direction signs should, wherever possible, be combined with the standard advance direction signs. (Fig. 7.3).

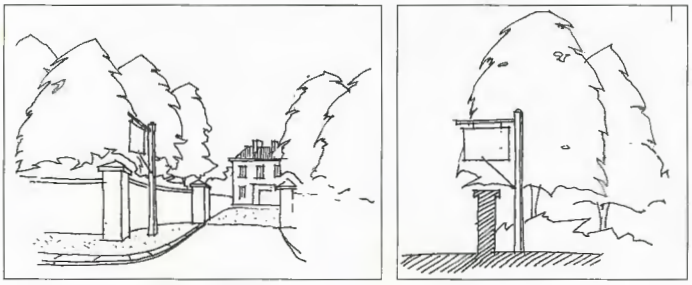


(Fig. 7.3)

Direction signs to Bord Fáilte registered or approved accommodation should conform to the Bord Fáilte regulatory signs. (Fig.7.4)

(Fig. 7.4)

Signs for hotels and bed & breakfast establishments in the countryside on private property close to the town, should be based upon a common idiom and a hanging sign of appropriate size, is suggested. (Fig. 7.5)



(Fig. 7.5)

Street names to suburban housing estates should be mounted on boards set into slotted posts. These boards should be standardised and additional information added where appropriate, to guide visitors to a particular street or road. Individual establishments should not be identified. Fig. 7.6

(Fig. 7.6)

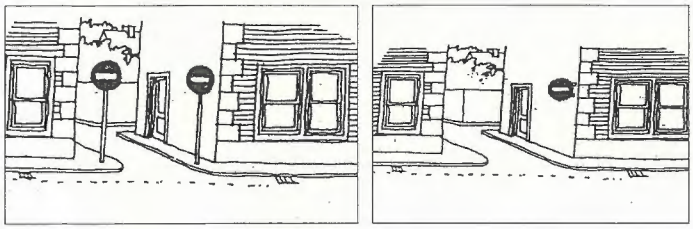
7.2.3 TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE

Some key guidelines should be followed in placing directional traffic signs in the town.

- Traffic signs should be kept to a minimum.
- They should be simple, direct and clearly visible to the motorist.
- Massing of confusing small signs should be avoided; where necessary information should be gathered onto single plates.
- Placement of signs should be carefully considered to avoid obstructing a view or a building detail. A sign sited against a house silhouette is preferable to a sign without background. (Fig. 7.7)

(Fig. 7.7)

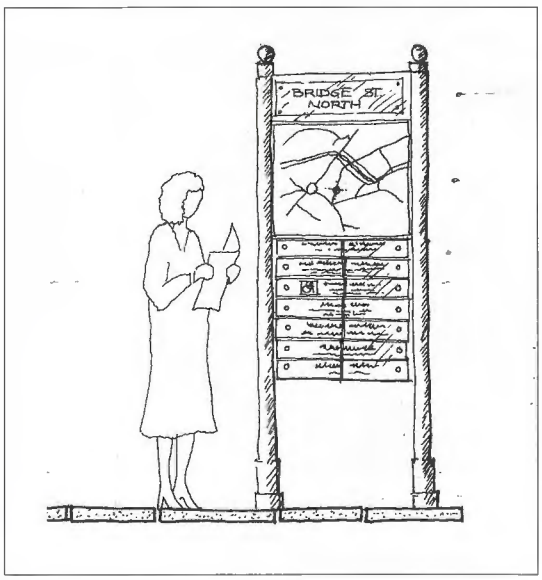
Obstructions to pavements should be minimised. Street names and traffic warning signs should be mounted on buildings where possible. (Fig. 7.8)



(Fig. 7.8)

To provide for comprehensive tourist information, including the location of hotels, guest-houses, leisure facilities and places of entertainment, it is proposed to provide combined maps and tourist information boards at all strategic road crossings in the historic core. This would comprise:

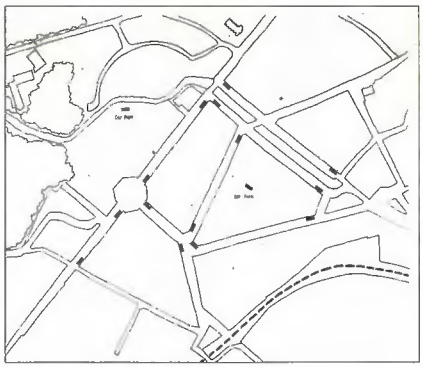
- A town orientation map locating major car parks, the train station, bus stops, tourist information centres, leisure facilities, landmarks, exhibits, Westport Demesne and Westport Quay.
- Information boards with locations of hotels, guest-houses, and places of public interest, entertainment and recreation, that are available on that particular street.



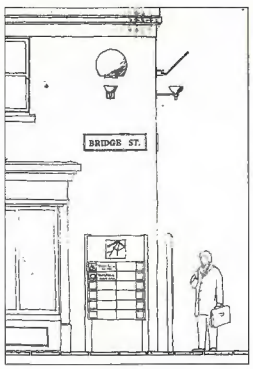
(Fig. 7.9)

These information boards should be designed for both a casual glance and a prolonged study, and presentation techniques should be simple and direct.

The information signs should be provided at important junctions near transport facilities, car parks, focal points and where there are a high concentration of people on foot. Where possible they should be placed against a background of buildings. (Fig. 7.9 & 7.10)



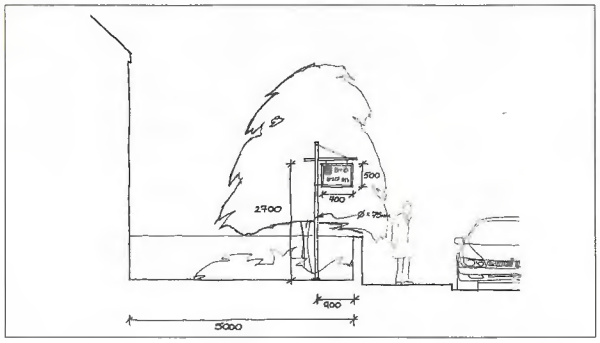
(Fig. 7.10)



(Fig. 7.11)

Signage to suburban guest-houses should follow the idiom of similar ones in the country, and follow the same siting guidelines. (Fig. 7.12) Such signs should share a lettering and background colour - cream, on dark olive green is suggested.

Signage for guest-houses without gardens should follow the same colour regime and be fixed to a boundary or building wall. The signs should only carry the name of the business and a small logo and minimal decorative motifs.



(Fig. 7.12)

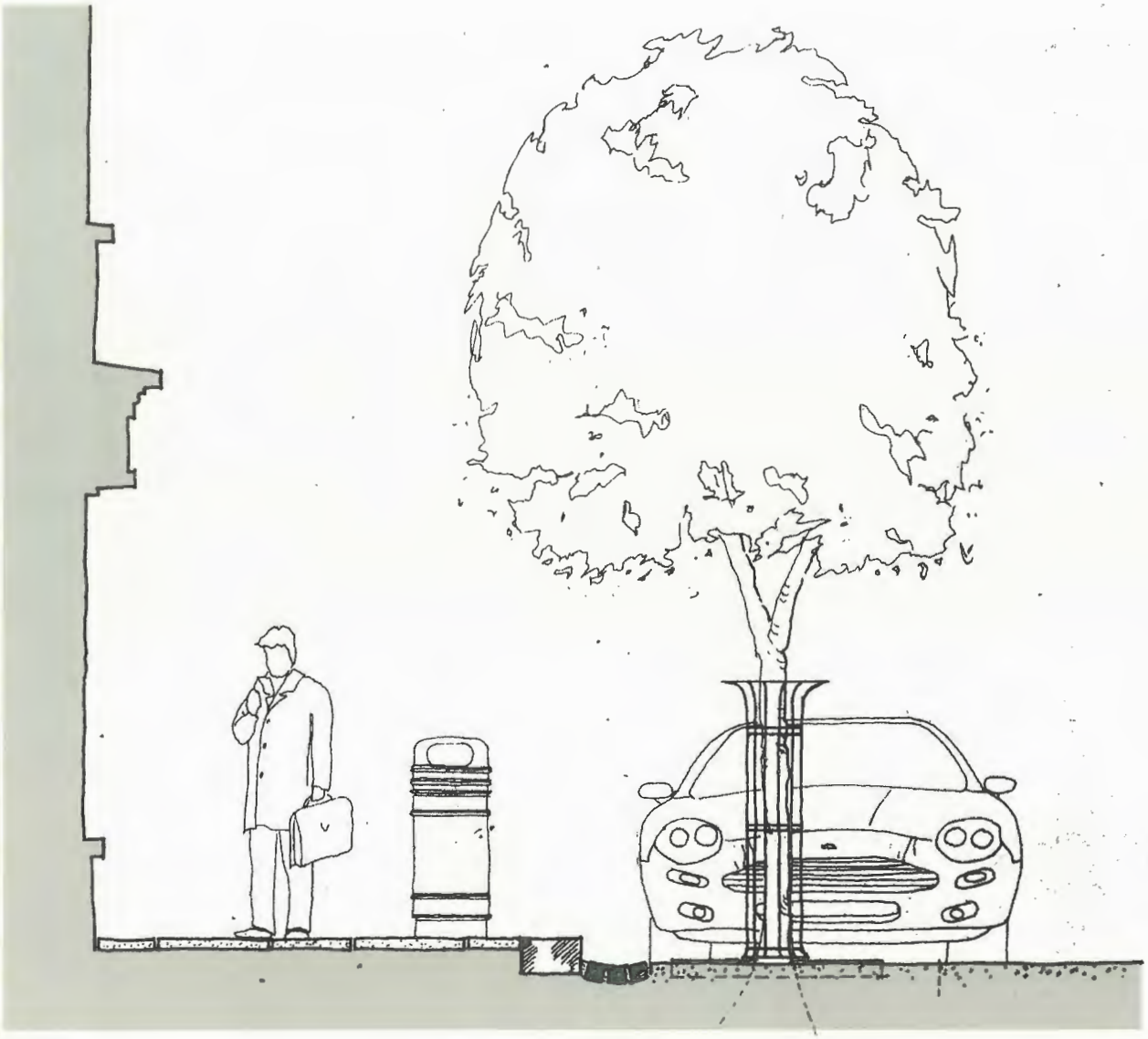
Fig. 7.1 Detail Plan: Bridge St / Shop St Junction

Fig. 7.2 Perspective Sketch of James Street

Fig. 7.3 Perspective Sketch of Shop Street

Fig. 7.4 Perspective Sketch of Mill Street

Fig. 7.5 Perspective Sketch of Bridge Street



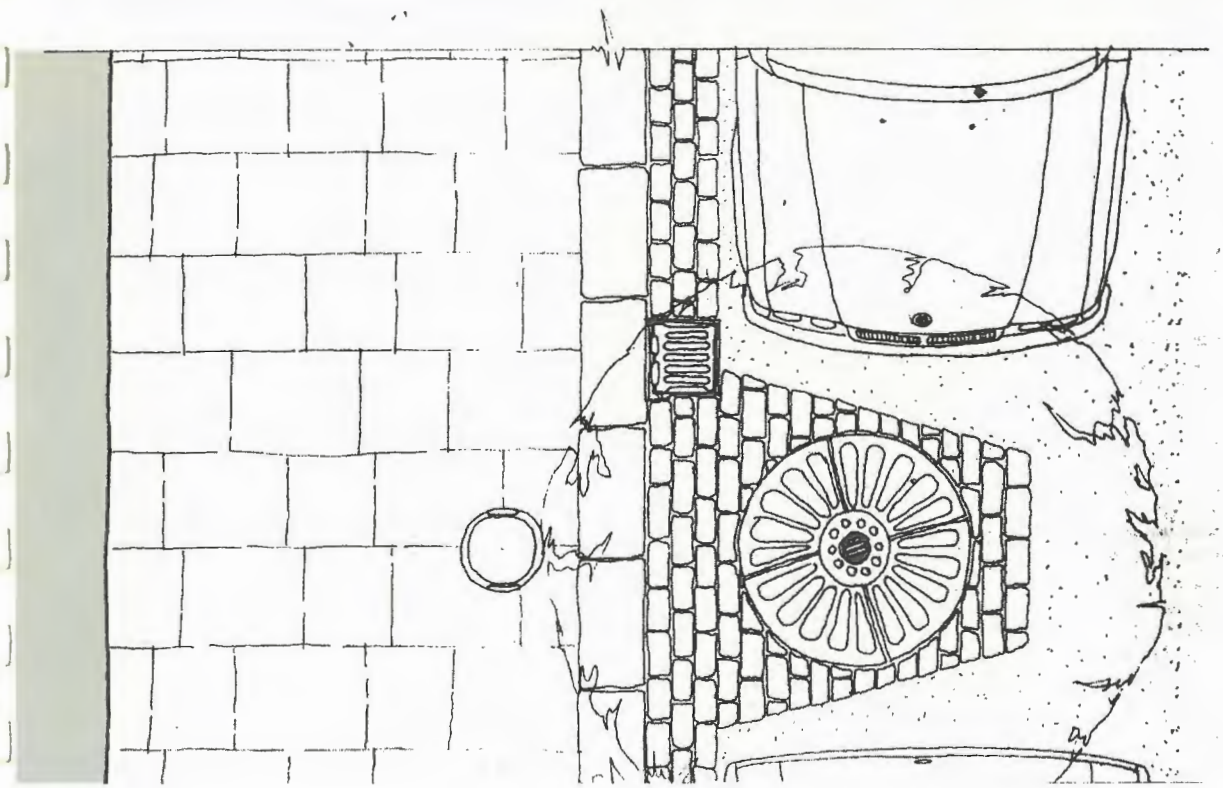


Fig. 7.6 Pavement Detail Plan (1)

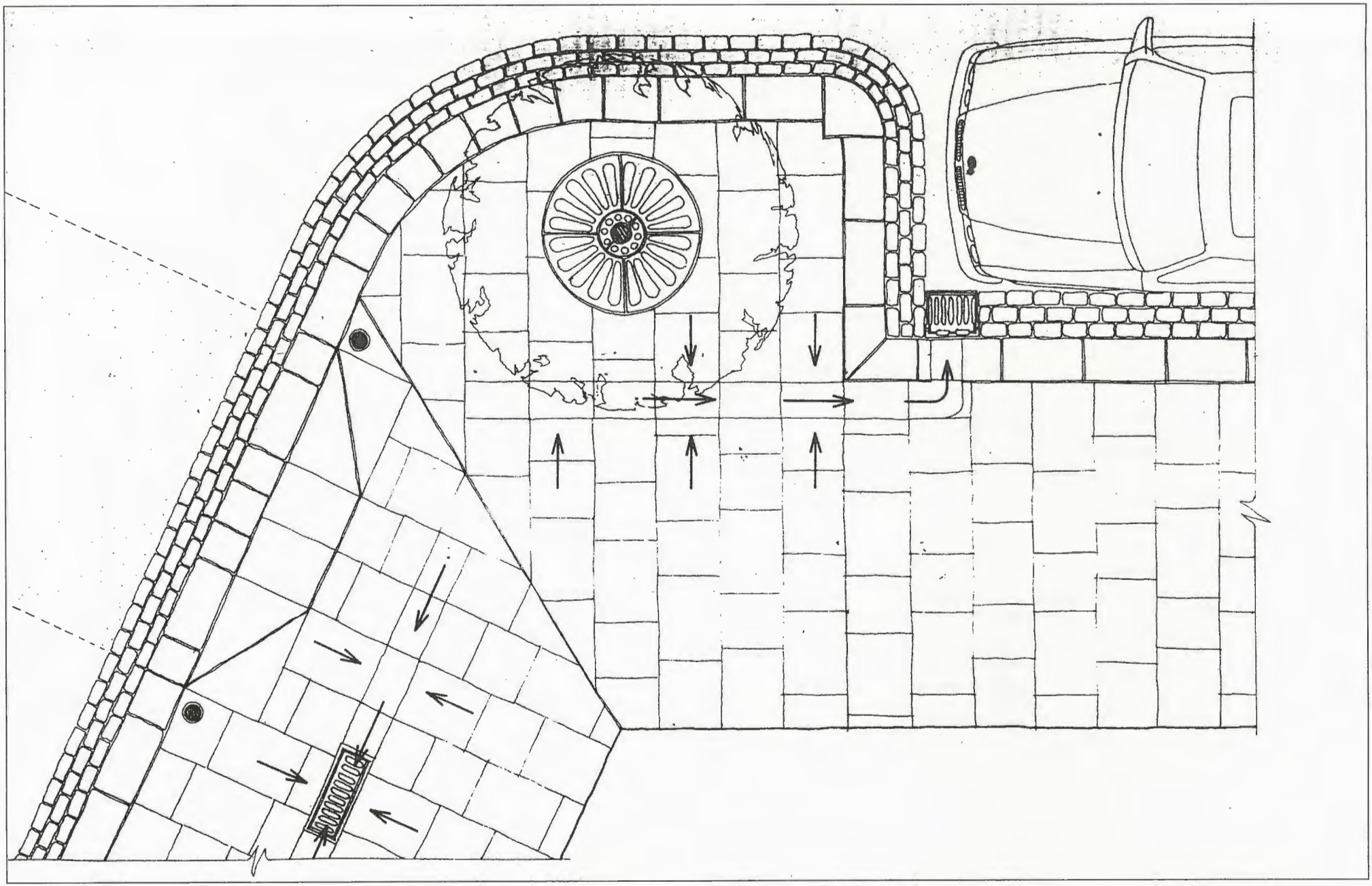


Fig. 7.7 Pavement Detail Plan (2)

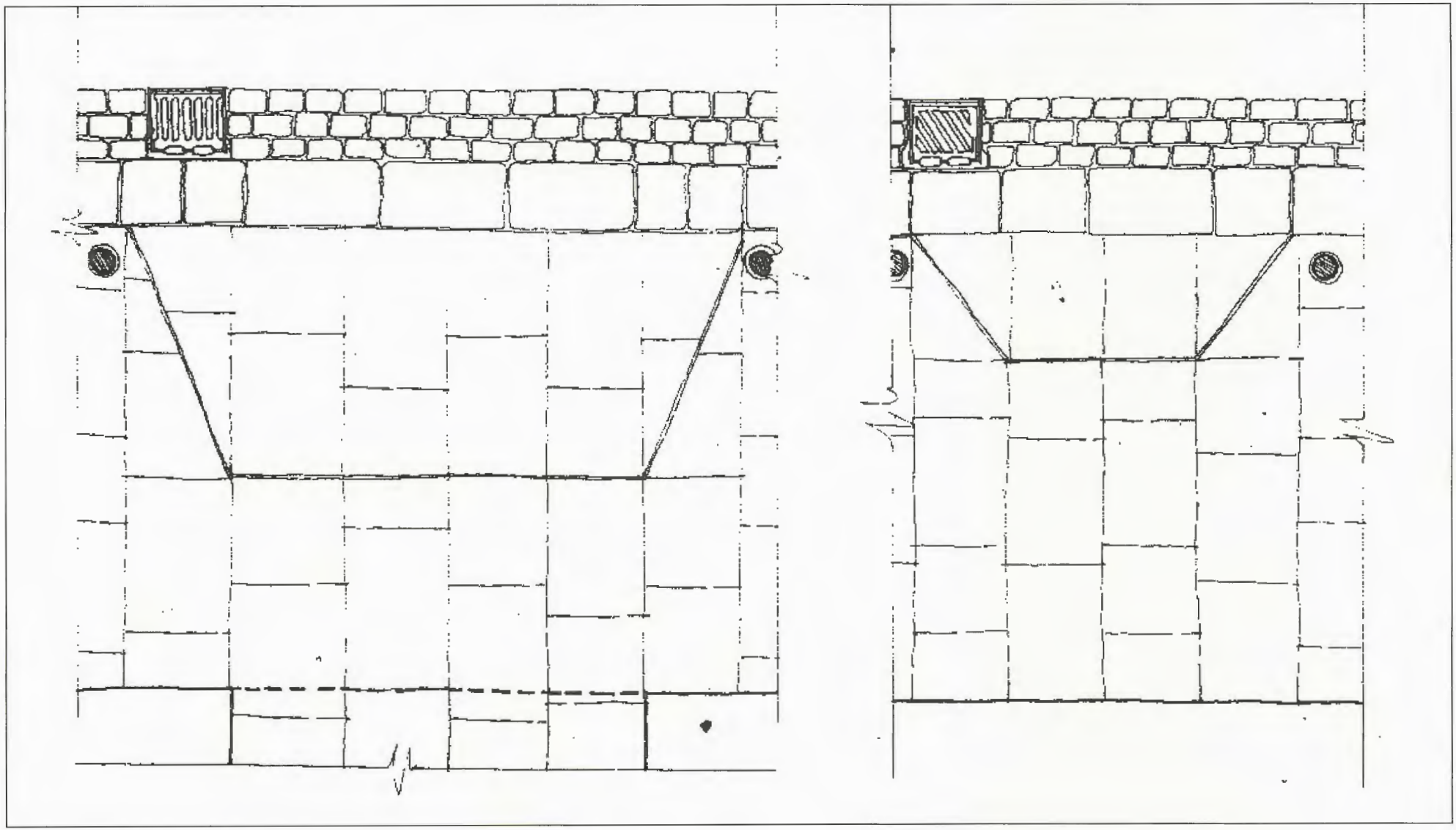


Fig. 7.8 Pavement Access-Detail Plan

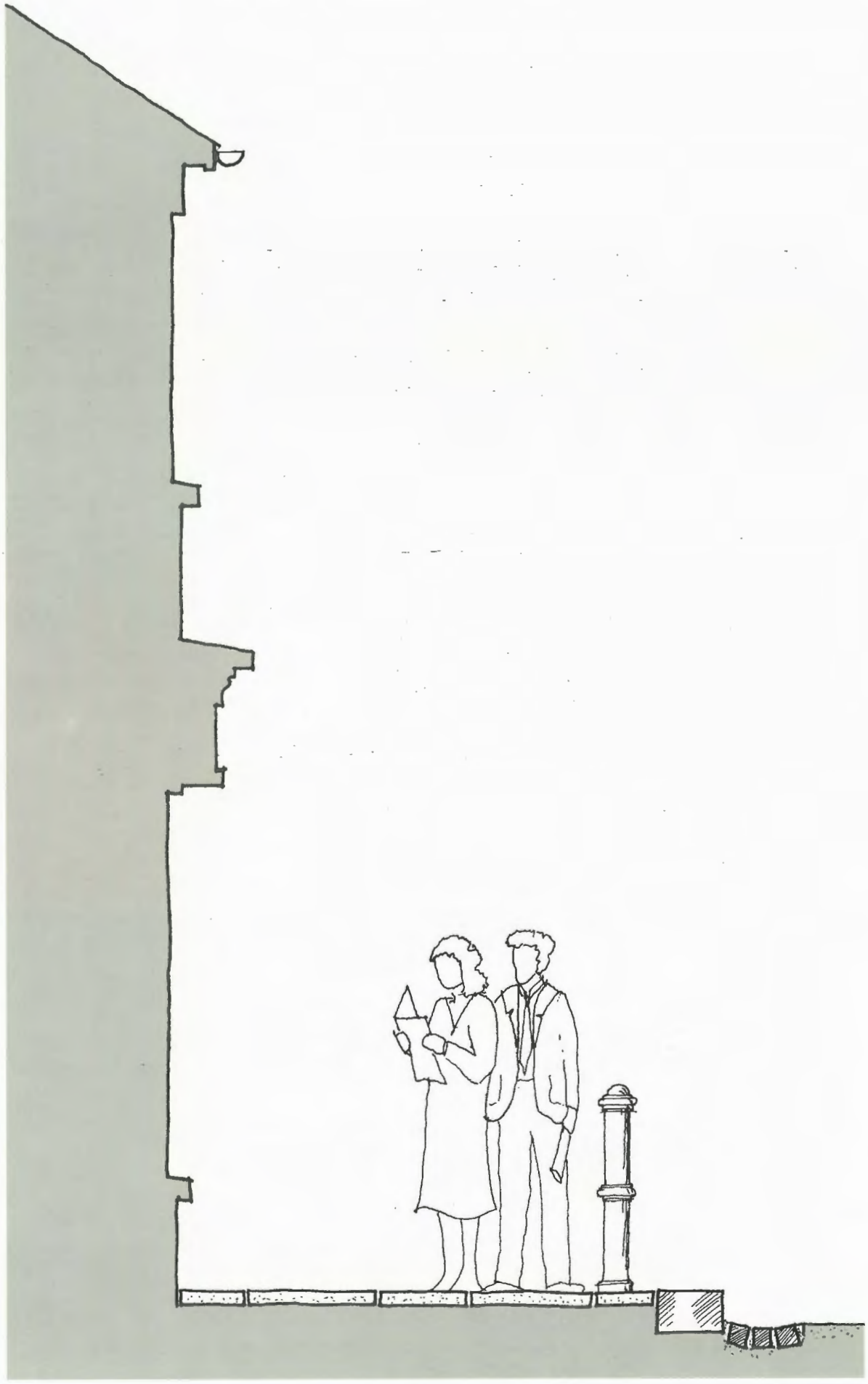
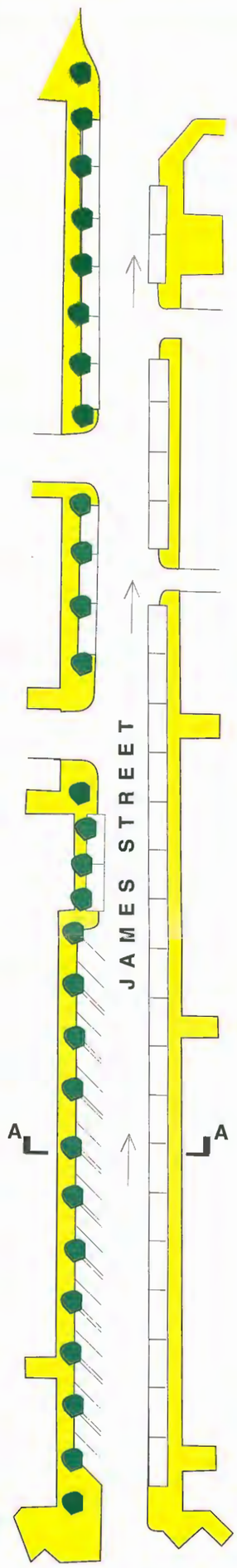
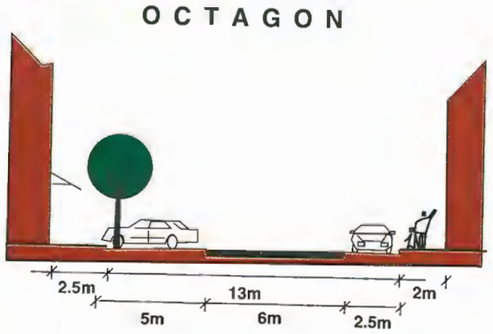


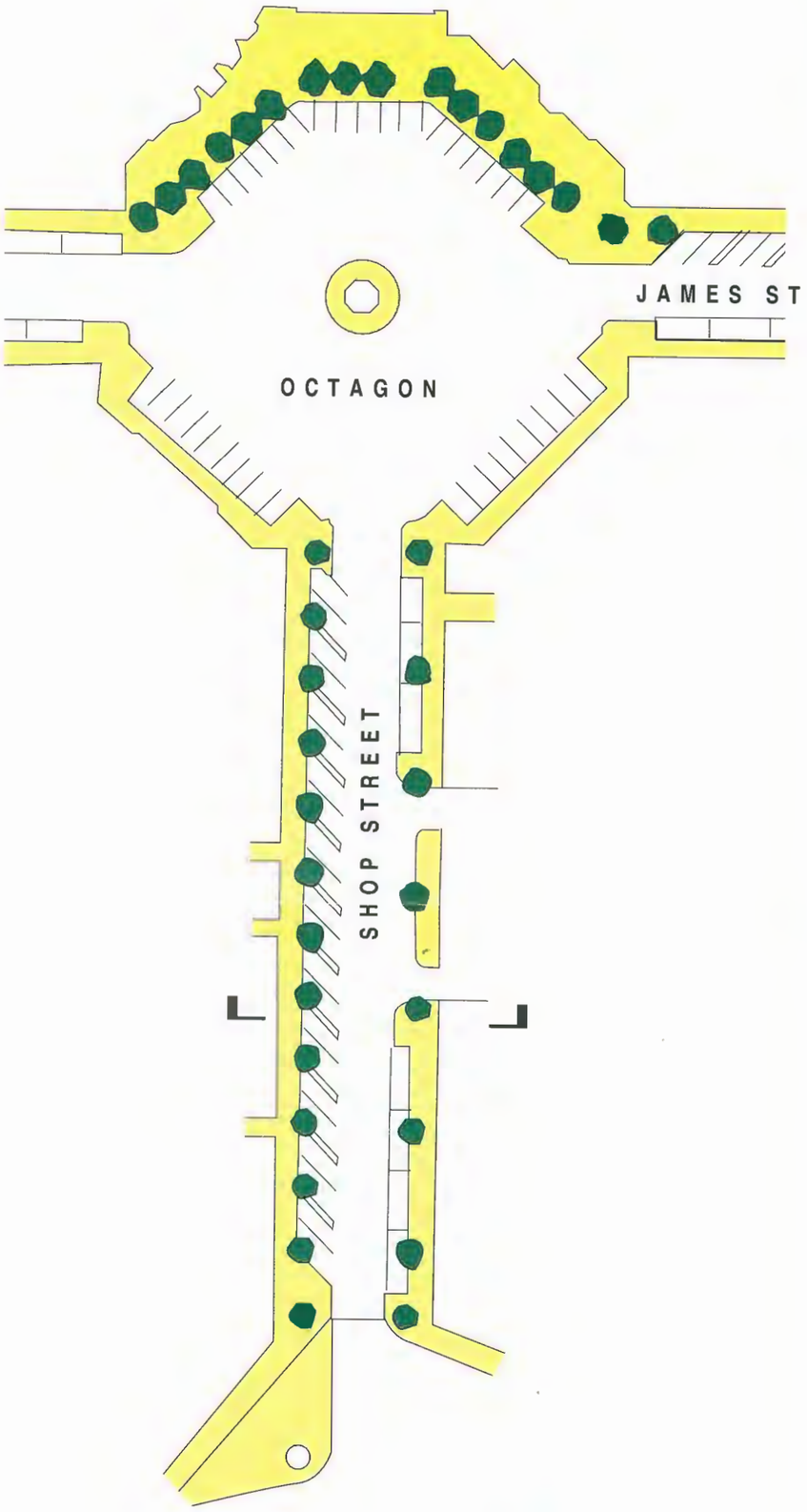
Fig. 7.9 Pavement Section (1)

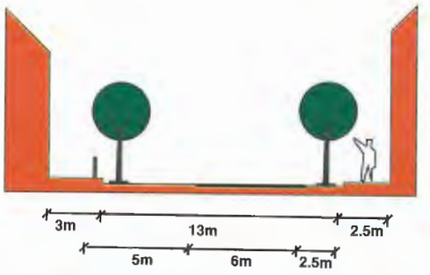
Fig. 7.10 Street Plans and Sections





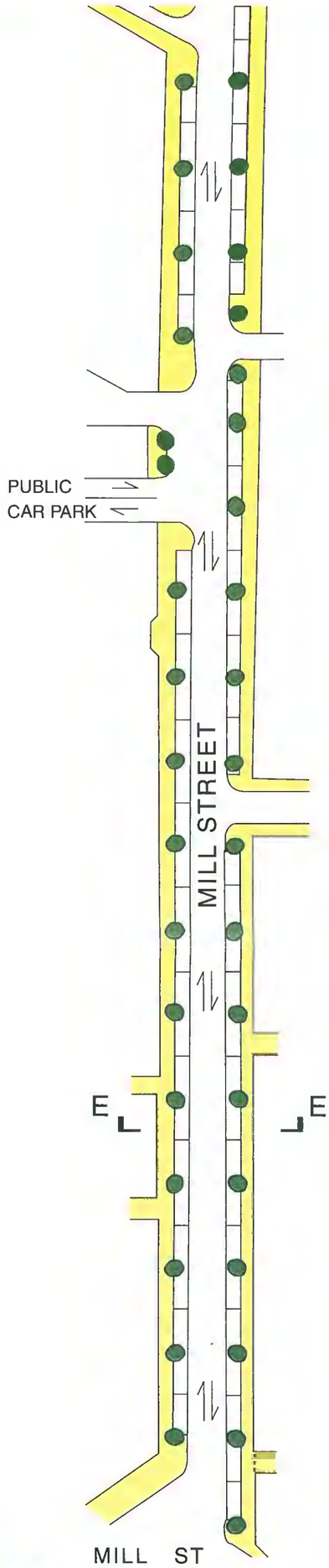
SECTION AA JAMES ST

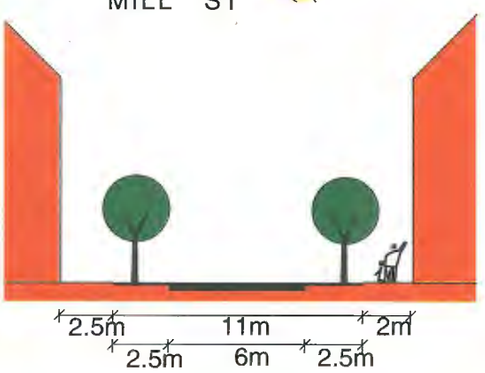




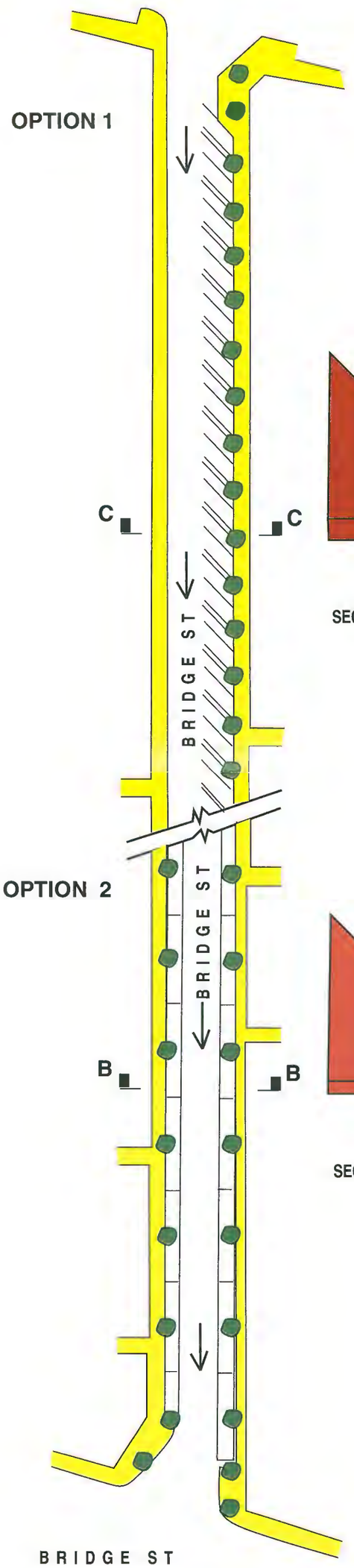
SECTION DD SHOP ST

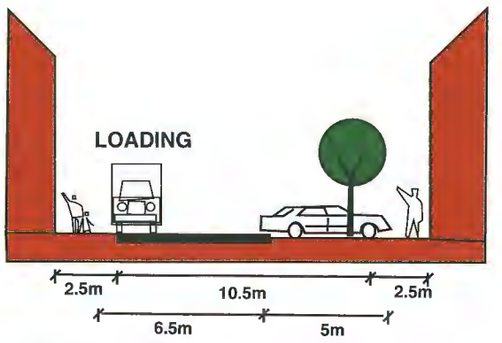
Fig. 7.11 Street Plans and Sections



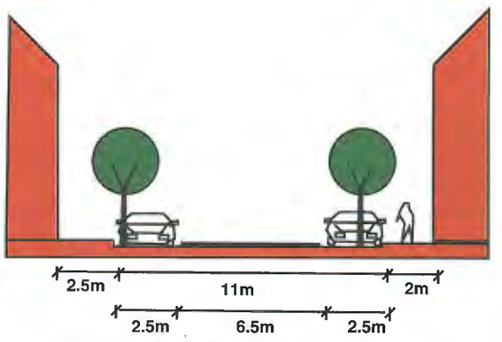


SECTION EE MILL ST





SECTION CC BRIDGE ST



SECTION BB BRIDGE ST