





Public Realm Design Statement Part 8 Planning Application

Kingscourt

Town Centre Regeneration Scheme

Prepared for **Cavan County Council**

December 2022



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Brief

Cavan County Council has appointed a selected design team to develop a Town Centre Regeneration Scheme for Kingscourt. The following works should be included in the proposal:

- Redesign of the Market Square to reduce car parking and increase civic space
- Redesign of Main Street between Market Square and the Kells Road Roundabout, to include the reduction of car parking and to allow for increased civic space in the town
- Identification of suitable buildings and sites for the provision of new public buildings and provision of new off street carparking in the town centre
- Refurbishment of suitable buildings to provide a public Library and a public Remote Working Hub, to include an open plan office space with hot desks and meeting room and a ground floor open plan, multifunctional space for use by the both the community and local business and act as a catalyst for regeneration of neighbouring town centre buildings by their private sector owners
- · Clearance of suitable site to provide a new off-street carpark in the town centre and adjacent amenity area
- · Undergrounding of all overhead utilities through the town core
- Proposals for the addressing of vacancy and dereliction within the town core including a façade painting scheme
- Proposals for the opening-up of Back-Lands for future development in the town core for potential housing and commercial use

Design Objectives

The Revitalisation of Kingscourt is at the heart of this project. Vacancy, dereliction, underutilisation of land, reduction of retail presence and poor visual appearance of the public realm will need to be addressed in the proposals to revitalise and regenerate Kingscourt's town centre. The design team has developed a design strategy that envisages to achieve the following:

- Increased footfall on Main Street and Market Square
- Focal point for improved economic and social activities in the town centre
- Sufficient valuable space for new businesses in the core
- Strengthened existing economic and social activity in the town centre
- Opening-up and connecting available back-lands for development and active land use
- An inclusive and well-connected public realm for all ages and abilities
- A robust and permeable walking / cycling network to promote sustainable transport
- More trees, planting and seating for a greener streetscape
- Overall improved economic performance and visual appearance of the public realm
- · A safe and comfortable town centre that attracts locals and visitors alike to trade and mingle and reflects the town's history, character and heritage

Design Team

The following design team has been greatly supported by the Planning and Roads Departments in Cavan County Council:

- TOBIN Consulting Engineers for Civil and Structural Engineering, Quantity Surveying and Archaeological services
- Niall Smith Architects for services as Architect and Conservation Architect
- Cunnane Stratton Reynolds for Urban Design, Public Realm / Landscape Design and **Environmental Planning services**





Historic Background

The development of Kingscourt in county Cavan dates back to the times of Cabra Castle nearby. Kingscourt is a typical market town from the late 18th century and laid out as a planned town characterised by a dominant Main Street, a broad street that historically served as a market street for the locals and surrounding lands.

With an approximate width of 32m width Main Street is an extraordinarily wide street, with only a few other examples in Ireland matching this scale. The street's width and the location of a central market square have been an ideal setting for the trading of products and services in the past.



Historical map - 6 inch colour - 1829-41



Original market building at western edge of square (demolished)



Eucharistic Congress at Market Square 1932



Historic photo of Main Street - early 20th century





Planning and Design Background

Cavan County Council commissioned various town regeneration reports in the past:

Kingscourt Town Improvement Study (1996)

This report was prepared by Shaffrey Associates and commissioned by Kingscourt Community Council. The purpose of the report was to provide a design framework to guide future developments and improvements. The study potentially looked at 14 specific focus areas. The areas Main Street, Market Square and Back Areas - Main Street, West are directly related to our current brief.

Masterplan for M5 Lands identified by Kingscourt LAP & Surroundings Development Area (2010)

This masterplan covers a wider area and enables a comprehensive analysis of the area bounded by Main Street, Rocks Road, Hall Street and Chapel Lane. Hence a more robust and inclusive study was undertaken which generated insights for an integrated approach.

County Cavan Town and Village Revitalisation Plan – Kingscourt (2018)

These plans have been developed in recognition of the importance of supporting and developing the physical and social fabric of several towns in County Cavan, to make them more attractive places to live and to work. These ambitious plans will function as blueprints for local urban regeneration over the next ten to fifteen years.

Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028

This planning guidance clearly notes in its objectives the delivery of off-street parking to reduce car dominance, in accordance with the above-mentioned Revitalisation Plan 2018.

Based on the findings from the 2018 Revitalisation Plan the Council selected a design team and formed a Steering Group to develop proposals for the town centre regeneration of Main Street and Market Square. Thereafter, the analyses and draft proposals were presented in a public consultation format to provide information and allow stakeholders the opportunity to raise questions and make observations or suggestions. This report summarises the design process and subsequent proposal for planning approval.

MAIN STREET





Town centre site layout (LAP Masterplan 2010)







Site Analysis - Challenges

Main Street is an elegantly laid out wide street, enclosed by terraces of civic buildings, shops and houses extending from a local hill to the south at St Ernan's Church and Red Hall northwards to Market Square in the centre of the town and culminating at Ernan's Hill further north.

Today, this wide historic street is dominated by cars and other vehicles. Poor quality footpaths and the absence of green and very few opportunities to sit, meet and engage define the study area. The street and town square appear to underperform to service pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, businesses, residents and visitors with a safe and comfortable environment, for all to use at ease creating added value for the town and visitor. Large commercial vehicles are common, servicing local business' but creating an uncomfortable environment with functional and hard spaces and an absence of greenery, ornament, delight and safe places to linger.

Lots of Road and very little Street! Who and what is the Town Centre for?

Parking – how many and where?

Does excessive parking on Main Street prohibit improvement of the quality on Main Street and Market Square?

Loading bays - how many and where?

Could businesses be served with loading bays, in suitable locations, and at suitable times?

Bus stop – where? Could a bus stop be integrated near Market Square?

Walking – cycling? Could safe footpaths, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings be provided in the study area?

Accessibility for all user groups?

Could the street and square be made accessible for all ages and abilities?

Speed limit?

Would Main Street, and in particular Market Square be safer with a 30km/h speed limit?

Vacancies and need of repair?

Could an improved Main Street and Market Square encourage private investment in vacant and neglected properties?

Gradient and traffic on Market Square?

Could the sloping terrain be integrated into an attractive square design and add opportunities for events etc.?

Greenery, ornament, delight, identity?

In reorganising Main Street and Market Square can we enhance the town centre as a place to linger and enjoy - greening for ornament, sense of nature and people? Can we reflect local identity in materials, planting and sculptural elements?



Existing site plan with identified study area





Site Analysis - Challenges



Car-dominated space



Unsightly overhead services



Market Square functions predominantly as a car park



Limited access due to level changes and narrow steps



Dual carriageway arrangement with poor median design

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2. Context



Unkept public realm materials



Site Analysis - Opportunities

Main Street with its remarkably generous width and Market Square with its unique slope have great potential to perform as very successful public spaces. High quality street design and green can attract locals and visitors for all different types of social and economic activities. Robust materials and sufficient space for larger vehicles can be used to accommodate all kind of uses that are needed in Kingscourt's busy town centre whilst facilitating the development of a vibrant and distinctive small town.

Realising the Public Realm and Regeneration Strategy requires:

- Off-street back-lands car-park to accommodate most of the town centre parking requirements
- Redistribute street space Reorganise the Main Street and Market Square to enhance pedestrian / civic space with quality paving, greening and seating whilst accommodating essential vehicular movement and convenience parking / servicing
- Public buildings functions on Market Square new Library and on Main Street – new Community Hub

The opportunities include:

Sufficient on-street parking and surplus back-land parking

Reduce parking on Main Street and Market Square to accommodate other use while using back-lands

Loading bays where and when they are needed

Loading bays in back-land and for temporary use on Main Street at agreed and suitable times

Bus stop on Main Street

The bus stop is essential public transport and should be near the back-land parking to facilitate Park & Ride

Safe, comfortable and green footpaths and cycle lane

The wide street can accommodate wide footpaths with seating and planting without compromising the carriageway

Universal Access for all user groups and all locations

Safe and comfortable access for all ages and abilities to park, walk, shop, meet, sit and use all facilities / amenities

Vehicular speed control via design

30km/h for Main Street and Market Square is a recommended safety and quality improvement

Encourage private investment in vacant buildings

Vacant buildings benefit directly from street regeneration and are made more attractive for reuse. Public investment stimulates local confidence and private investment

Market Square slopes down from Rocks Road

Sloped Market Square opens opportunities for terraced seating and stage events

Parking Management

The realisation of the town's potential requires one simple initial big move - the freeing up of the opportunities presented by the wide Main Street, reducing on-street parking and vehicles whilst still servicing local business and balancing pedestrian and civic space, normal activity with the practical requirements of road-users.



Existing parking on Main Street and Market Square vs. limited footpaths

PUBLIC REALM AIM

Main Street and Market Square should be redesigned to cater for a balanced need of road and parking needs, in consideration with needs for pedestrians, cyclists, locals and visitors of all ages and abilities. This redesign should integrate car parking / loading and delivery into an attractive and safe public realm for all.



Market Square as a quality Public Space for local events and activities

2. Context



Site Analysis – Opportunities

Design Approaches



Sufficient on-street parking and surplus back-land parking



Universal Access for all user groups and all locations



Loading bays where and when they are needed



Bus stop on Main Street



Safe, comfortable and green footpaths and cycle lane



Vehicular speed control by design



Encourage private investment in vacant buildings





Market Square as the heart of the town

Successful Streets Principles

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Urban Transformation, Bosselmann



Options Studies – Main Street

A large range of possible options to redistribute the street space on Main Street and Market Square was tested by the design team.

The key objective of this exercise has been to open up the potentials of the town centre and to re-prioritise and balance how the public realm could be used better to enhance the civic and economic performance of the town.

Main Street Rearrangement

Option 1 – Central Median / Linear Park in the centre

Option 2 - Road broadly to the centre and infinite variation of parking/bicycle lane arrangements Option 3 - Road broadly to one side or

extended public realm to one side, and

arrangements around it

Public Space

Bicycle Lane

Road alignment

Parking

Option

infinite variation of parking / bicycle lane



Options 1/2/3 to test realignment of Main Street near Market Square



Single cycle lane either side of street



Landscaped central median



Parallel parking with single cycle lanes





Dual cycle lane one side of street



Landscaped central median with cycle lane



Green verges with single cycle lanes



Options Studies for Main Street

Following discussion with the client it was agreed to progress the regeneration of Main Street with a realigned carriageway, the removal of the central median, perpendicular parking on the west side, parallel parking on the East side, maintaining essential, convenience access and activity in the street and a two-way cycle lane.

It was concluded that this spatial arrangement would best accommodate the various outlined objectives, such as efficient vehicular circulation and parking, improved walking and cycling, enhanced economic and social activity and attractive greening and seating.



Main Street Rearrangement

The Preferred Option

Preferred option with planters, verges, parking both sides and dual cycle lane (Section and Plan, not to scale)







Options Studies for Market Square

For Market Square various options were considered, with the objective to return the space to its original purpose as a square for public activities such as markets, events and gatherings - a civic focal point for the town. The main considerations are the provision of a larger continuous and well accessible area while accommodating vehicular traffic traversing from Rocks Road.

The existing sloping topography places a challenge for universal access., general use and vehicular movements. Planters, seating and shelter could be used to accommodate level changes and gradients.

Car parking is reduced to accessible parking in close proximity to the pharmacy.

Market Square Redesign



Straight traffic alignment





Preferred Option







Straight traffic artist sketch impression





Defining the extent of the square with material combinations

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Spatial arrangement study



4. Proposed Strategy and Design

An Integrated Masterplan

The project team has developed a general design strategy for Main Street and Market Square which addresses each of the criteria from the client's brief individually while generating a coherent vision for the regeneration of Kingscourt's town centre.

The design proposal focusses on a defined area of the town centre that stretches from north of Market Square along Main Street towards the round-about crossing with Hall Street / Carrickmacross Road. The identified back land area to the west of Main Street has been included in the design to accommodate the proposed off-street parking and pedestrian linkage to Rocks Road. This site, west of Main Street will generate space for a landscaped parking area for 126 cars.

This new facility helps unlock the potential of the Main Street and Market Square whilst maintaining and improving vehicular access through an overall redistribution of street space balancing enhanced pedestrian and general public activities while space for vehicular circulation and parking has been reduced but maintained.

This approach has been applied to Market Square to create a shared space environment with a generous civic character, and it has been applied to Main Street to create safe and comfortable footpaths with attractive seating and planting areas between stretches of parallel and perpendicular on-street car parking. The new backlands car-park will be accessed from Main Street with a vehicular and pedestrian link to Rocks Road to increase desirable permeability and distribution of footfall.

The central bus stop will be reinstated for improved public transport provision. Accessible car parking has been proposed on Market Square to facilitate access to the pharmacy. Loading and delivery bays have been integrated into the rearranged street layout for Main Street. A dual cycle lane is proposed along the east side of Main Street, with the potential to extend and link to existing greenways and cycling in the vicinity. New trees will be planted either side of Main Street greening the central area, framing buildings and crating locally intimate sitting spaces and defining the wide streetscape and mitigating traffic presence.

The enhanced environment will increase footfall, economic and social activity and encourage active frontages on Main Street and Market Square and investment into vacant and derelict premises. Public investment will lead the way with the development of the former NIB building at Market Square into a public library and the development of the former BOI building on the east of Main Street into a public remote working hub. With these positive transformations comes increased passive surveillance and with it an improved public realm that feels safer, cleaner and more attractive, for every age and ability.

The design proposal comprises high quality materials and finishes for surfacing, seating, planters and lighting. Existing underground services will be rearranged and optimised to accommodate the new street layout and planting. During this process, all overhead services will be re-organised and placed underground. The reduction of street clutter and any unnecessary features, signage etc. is a critical element of the proposed design.

The protection of Kingscourt's heritage and character as a historic market town is at the heart of the design proposal. This objective has been considered in the general approach and will be applied in the detail design process, selection of materials and finishes. Detailed proposals for the new library and community hub can be seen in the Design report and drawings produced by Niall Smith Architects.

*Please refer to submitted technical drawings for scaled, annotated information



General Site Layout including Main Street, Market Square and entrance to landscaped car parking (not to scale)

Note: Rendered Masterplan of Main Street and Market Square –issued for illustrative purposes. For Further Detail please see Planning Drawings. All materials and finishes shown are subject to further detailed design.





4. Proposed Strategy and Design

Main Street

Main Street is the dominant economic and social artery of the town and deserves a revitalisation into a lively street that is safe and comfortable for all road users, particularly pedestrians who shop and socialise here.

The illustrated layout proposal for Main Street shows the envisaged redistribution of streetscape - footpaths are generous and invite for use with seating, planters and trees while car parking is re-organised and relocated to a nearby landscaped parking zone to be less dominant. Essential vehicular use and access will be retained with a clear carriageway and designated loading / delivery bays which can co-function as car parking / street food stands. The existing bus stop will be upgraded to improve public transport to and from Kingscourt.

*Please refer to submitted technical drawings for scaled, annotated information

"In a town the street acts as a slowing moving public space where familiar faces meet." **Orla Murphy, The Heritage Council**



Artist's sketch impression of Main Street



General arrangement of Main Street section (not to scale)

Note: Rendered Masterplan of Main Street and Market Square –issued for illustrative purposes. For Further Detail please see Planning Drawings. All materials and finishes shown are subject to further detailed design.





4. Proposed Strategy and Design

Market Square

Market Square is the historic civic heart of the town - at this location, business, civic and public activities came together in Kingscourt's past.

In order to reinstate the importance of the square for the town, a general redesign is proposed which will replace the dominance of vehicular circulation and parking with a new public space and quality public realm.

The square has a generous rectangular dimension, defined by the enclosing buildings, of approx. (33 x 58)m extending across the width of Main Street. The expanse of this space is a quality which will be enhanced by a shared space design where an overall material treatment stretches to all surrounding building edges. The segregation of carriageway and footpath are minimal and only applied where required for safety. Vehicular traffic from Rocks Road will be accommodated in a deflected street arrangement traversing the square to connect with Main Street.

The significant topography with a level drop of almost 2.00m from Rocks Road to the east side of Main Street will be integrated into a cascading hard and soft landscaping. Planters, seating and wide steps are used to manage level changes in a playful way to invite people to mingle, meet and rest while a generous section of the square will be kept open to allow various civic activities, all year round to the new public library frontage.

Paramount for this design proposal is universal access to all premises fronting on the square and to facilitate safe and comfortable pedestrian movement in all directions. Accessible parking is proposed near the pharmacy and will be integrated into the overall design.

*Please refer to submitted technical drawings for scaled, annotated information



Artist's sketch impression of Market Square



"If you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic.

If you plan for people and places, you get people and places." **Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces**



General arrangement of Market Square section (not to scale)



Back-Land Parking

The most critical and key move to enable the regeneration of Main Street and Market Square is the provision of back-land parking - parking near all economic and social activities in the town that is off-street, hence freeing up street space for use other than vehicular traffic.

A suitable back-land site has been identified by the client which can be easily accessed from a central Main Street location and can be linked to Rocks Road, for vehicular and pedestrian access.

The back-land car park will accommodate 126 car parking spaces and will include accessible parking, EV charging stations and loading bays.

The edges of the car park will be characterised by generous planting for screening and sustainable drainage to minimise hard landscaping. High quality lighting and surface materials will make the car park an integrated element of the regeneration scheme and will facilitate permeability and future back-land development in this location.

*Please refer to submitted technical drawings for scaled, annotated information



Back-land parking arrangement with access via Rocks Road (not to scale)



Detail Design

Finishes and materials will be identified and selected in the detail design process following the Part 8 planning application. In accordance with Cavan County Council the design team suggests a general pre-selection of finishes and materials to consider for both, Main Street and Market Square. All detail design will be in full accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

For Main Street, the proposed design envisages a clearly defined asphalt carriageway, one lane each direction. Bays for perpendicular parking to the west and bays for parallel parking to the east align the carriageway with regularly interspersed tree pits for mature street trees. A planting / seating parklet zone is proposed on the west side while a dual cycle lane is proposed on the east side of the street. Framing these are generous footpaths with level access points to all premises where possible. Parking bays, seating and planter zones, parklets and footpaths will be paved with the same material while flag stone sizes might vary.

For Market Square, the proposed design is based on the objective to create a generous square with a single surface material approach covering all areas including the Main Street section it fronts onto. This rectangle of approx. 33m x 58m will be framed by a single line of darker paving stones to define its extent crossing Main Street and Rocks Road. This paved rectangle will be applied as a raised table against the asphalted carriageway and hence will reduced vehicular speed by design (level and material change). A large section of the square will be kept level and free of planters and seating to accommodate various activities associated with the proposed public library in the former NIB building (please see Niall Smith Architects' separate design proposal as part of this application).

Other areas of the square will be characterised by a composition of planters and seating which help to structure the area and to manage the significant level change from Rocks Road in the West dropping towards Main Street in the East. A small format paving stone will be selected for a smooth surface treatment with level changes in all directions.

It is intended to apply an overarching design language with a defined material and colour palette for both, Main Street and Market Square in order to create coherence and consistency across the public realm. We envisage to prescribe the proposed design, in variation, as a flexible design code for future public realm works in the town centre.













Detail sketches for level management with planters, steps and seating

Market Square section illustrating level management with stepped planting, seating and civic space *Please refer to submitted technical drawings for scaled, annotated information



Main Street section with stepped planters and seating

Main Street section with parklet and seating





Regenerated Streets



Peter Street, Westport



Dublin Gate Street, Athlone



Main Street, Mallow

Successful Squares



Tober Square, Tubbercurry



Asna Square, Clonakilty



Piazza del Liberty, Milan





Chatenay-Malabry, Paris

"If everything we design is great for an 8-year old and for an 80-year old, then it will be great for all people." 8-80 Cities





Tree Planting Strategies

Part A : Large Trees - large specimen individual or grouped trees as informal landmarks and place makers in squares and street corners. Typically, Quercus (Oak), Tilia (Lime / Linden) or Platanus (Plane)



Tree group to centre of town square stepped seating, Turmstraße, Monheim am Rhein, Germany





The Village Tree, seat walls and simple paved space, Asna Square, Clonakilty

Part B : Pollarded or Medium sized Tree Rows - trees rows along streets integrating parking spaces and creating urban green whilst limiting shading / shadowing. Tree maintained by skilled pruning to size and shape. Typically, Acer Spp. (Field Maple, Sycamore), Tilia (Lime / Linden) or Platanus (Plane), Aesculus (Horse Chestnut)



Pollarded trees as architecture Salzburg, Austria



Street Trees, greening and seating

Greening, Biodiversity and Ornament: Hedges, Flowers, Sustainable Drainage Systems



Hedges structuring the street, managing movement, greening and decorating Perennial and native plants, grasses and shrubs softening decorating and assisting biodiversity – pollinator friendly planting



Native shrubs / small trees as ornament - Guelder Rose, Hawthorn and Spindle

Pollarded trees - creating outdoor rooms

Pollarded street trees and parking – Gmunden, Austria



Hard surfaces draining in to soft areas in streets and hardstandings – reducing flooding and reproducing natural surface water drainage systems. Soft areas used for mixed native and ornamental planting







DETAIL AREA Scale 1:100@A1





Typical diagram of a SUDs Tree pit



KEY PLAN Scale 1:1250@A1

LEGEND

Surface water movement SUDs Tree Pit ----Controlled Pipe from Tree Pit to Mains Percolation to ground Water Flow System



- Permeable surface + Build-up 1
- Channel to divert rainwater (if required) 2. Inlet/gully grate for water ingress and 3.
- gaseous exchange
- Aeration well with slit trap
- Tree grille or gravel 5.
- Concrete frame to direct roots to 6 substrate
- 7 Top soil area
- 8. Separate geo-textile
- Aeration layer, this is 200mm layer of 9. 20-40mm clean stone. Water from the
- inlet is also distributed through this layer. 10. Structural soil; 20-40mm crushed rock
- with soil installed in 200mm layers.

SUDS STRATEGY

Currently all surface water on Main Street and Market Square runs straight to the collector Drainage pipe in the centre of the road. This is then conveyed to outfalls with all surface water drains and ultimately to river or other water channels. In extreme events the sudden inflow of volumes of water can cause downstream flooding.

The SUDS drainage strategy seeks to capture surface water in specially constructed tree pits with a 30% by volume void or capacity which will "hold" water pending its controlled and slow release to the main drains thus avoiding a sudden influx of water to the system.

Much of the water in the tree pits will simply percolate away or be used by the trees, restoring natural water systems beneath the public realm.





Seating - Parklets - Levels - Surfaces



SEATING : Robust, sculptural materials assisting with level management and creating planting opportunities

Seats as walls, planters, timber seats – integrated with levels and landscape structure



PARKLETS : Build-out areas between parking to sit, dine, meet, watch the world

LEVELS : Terracing to manage sloped terrain / steps, ramps and seating



SURFACES : Robust simple materials and patterns - Flagstone footpaths / Setts for square and demarcation lines / pigmented tarmac, ground concrete







Overview – SuDS / Street Furniture / Precedents



Bio retention tree pits - Stockholm



Permeable parking bays.



Bio retention planting areas.



Rain gardens.



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Street Furnishings & Finishes. Stainless steel Sheffield bike stands. Dealing with level change.



Timber topped seating elements.



Planters with seats.



Natural stone pavers.



Precedents & Examples.



Paving patterns.



Dealing with level change.



Natural stone paving patterns.



Integrated tree planting.



Integrated planting.



Integrated tree planting.



Useable plaza.





Adaptable plaza space.



Planters with seats.





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