PUBLIC REALM PLAN
for
the historic walled town of fethard
prepared for
south tipperary county council
the heritage council / irish walled town network
by
the paul hogarth company
and erm ireland limited

3 JUNE 2008
Amended March 2009
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1 INTRODUCTION 2

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4

3 BACKGROUND TO THE WALLED TOWN 5

3.1 Introduction 5
3.2 Location 5
3.3 Geography 5
3.4 History of the Walled Town 6
3.5 Policy Context 6
3.6 Ongoing Initiatives 8

4 ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS 9

4.1 Introduction 9
4.2 Regional Context 9
4.3 Land & Building Uses 11
4.4 Open Space 12
4.5 Built Form & Fabric 13
4.6 Significant Features 14
4.7 Access and Circulation 15
4.8 Views & Landmarks 16
4.9 Public Consultation 17

5 THE PUBLIC REALM PLAN CONCEPT AND DESIGN TEMPLATE 20

5.1 Vision 20
5.2 Aims 20
5.3 Objectives 20
5.4 Concept Plan and Design Template 22

6 ECONOMIC AND TOURISM STRATEGY 24

6.1 Economic & Tourism Strategy 24
6.2 Redevelopment of Infill and Visually Poor Sites 25
6.3 Frontage Programme 25
6.4 Promotion and Branding of the Town 25
6.5 Development of Equine Related Activities 26
6.6 Provision of Accommodation 26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Proposals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Context Map</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Building Use Plan</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Plan</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built form plan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Features Plan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and Circulation Plan</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views and Landmarks</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Plan</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sketch Plan of Potential Concept for Northern Expansion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed public realm plan</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Realm Plan</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axonometric Sketch of Proposals</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative Wall Walk Route and Buffer Zone</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northgate Gateway Sketch Plan</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madam's Bridge Gateway Sketch Plan</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watergate Gateway Sketch Plan</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrack Street - Typical section</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrack Street - Detailed Plan</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Street Gate - Detailed Plan</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocklow Road - Perspective elevation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Street - Typical Section</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Park Plan</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Streetscape Sketch Plan 1/3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Streetscape Sketch Plan 2/3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Streetscape Sketch Plan 3/3</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Street - Streetscape Sketch Plan</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street - Typical Section</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street Streetscape Sketch Plan 3/3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Street - Streetscape Sketch Plan</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street - Typical Section</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Lane Regeneration Proposals</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Lane as a Tourist Destination</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting Strategy</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of Neighbourhood Public Spaces</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sketch of Potential Tourism Gateway</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Hall Sketch</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Interpretative Walks</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The historic Walled Town of Fethard is a special place. It has one of the finest medieval town walls in existence in Ireland, if not Europe. It is a treasure trove of historical features, with several castles and churches, all located within a short walking distance of one another. It provides the commercial hub for an established rural economy, which is recognised as the best in the world for the breeding and rearing of race horses.

Remarkably, for a town of such abundant qualities, the Walled Town of Fethard remains to many a hidden gem. Visitor numbers are lower than would otherwise be expected, while tourism infrastructure is limited. The town is also often difficult to find on the tourist map of Ireland.

Like many modern Irish towns and villages today, Fethard is also a place of transformation. New areas of land have been identified for new housing and neighbourhood development, in what will represent the most substantial physical change the town will have seen since its planned creation by the Normans in the 13th Century.

Whilst prosperity and growth are to be welcomed and encouraged, real dangers exist that the physical qualities of the Walled Town of Fethard will be compromised, thus reducing its potential to be a leading visitor destination.

This Public Realm Plan for the Walled Town of Fethard seeks to provide a strategic framework by which the town can maximise the benefits of its many assets, without losing those special qualities that give it character and charm. The Public Realm (the publicly accessible network of streets and spaces) links together and provides the setting for all the town’s attractions. It therefore plays a critical role in defining the character of the town and its coordinated improvement could have considerable impact.

Such improvements will not only be of value to visitors, but also to local people, who stand to benefit from improved public spaces and amenity, as well as the economic opportunities associated with an enhanced tourism based economy.

The Public Realm Plan was commissioned in the summer of 2007 by South Tipperary County Council and the Heritage Council, through its Irish Walled Town Network initiative. It was prepared over a 6 month period by Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, The Paul Hogarth Company and Environmental Consultants, ERM Ireland Ltd.

This non-statutory plan is designed to act as guidance for all those involved with development of Fethard, including central government officials, local council planners, private developers and other interested parties. It maps out the strategic direction of public realm improvements needed in the town, setting the context for further consultation, detailed design and formal approvals as necessary. The varied nature of each project means that some have potential to be delivered over the short term, whilst others that are more complex and even aspirational in nature, will take longer to come to fruition. However, as demonstrated by the plan, Fethard has immense potential to be greatly enhanced through investment in its public realm.
Summary of Potential Improvements Proposed By the Public Realm Plan for the Historic Walled Town of Fethard
The Public Realm Plan for the Walled Town of Fethard was commissioned in the summer of 2007 by South Tipperary County Council and The Heritage Council as part of the town’s membership of Irish Walled Town Network (IWTN).

Through a process of research and consultation, the appointed consultants found that whilst Fethard has a considerable wealth of historic features, including the magnificent town walls, the potential to attract visitors to the town has yet to be fully realised. In addition, development pressure on the Town has lead to an urgent requirement to safeguard the physical elements of the town that combine to give the Walled Town of Fethard its unique and fascinating character.

Accordingly, The Public Realm Plan for the Walled Town of Fethard proposes 15 specific initiatives of varied scale and remit. Individually each project can help to improve the quality of the town’s publicly accessible environment. Combined, they can bring about a significant transformation with long term social and economic benefits for the town and its people.

The 15 specific initiatives proposed are identified on the adjoining drawing, and are as follows:

1. Wall Walk and Conservation - Designation of a walking route around the Town Walls, to be accompanied by conservation and interpretation of the structures themselves.
2. Walled Town Gateways - A series of environmental improvement projects to accentuate the location of the town’s historic gateways and mark the transition into the walled town.
3. Approach Road Improvements - A series of environmental improvements to greatly improve the arrival experience into Fethard.
4. River Park Extension - Proposals to improve and enlarge the town’s principal green open space as a riverside amenity for local people and visitors, as well as a setting for the Town Walls.
5. Streetscape Improvements - A series of streetscape projects to upgrade the quality of materials and design of the town streets and squares.
6. Chapel Lane Regeneration - Proposals for the transformation of this historic medieval laneway to play a central role in the tourism offer of the town.
7. Lighting Strategy - Proposals to improve the quality of Fethard’s night-time environment, thus increasing safety and maximising the impact of its historic landmarks.
8. Neighbourhood Open Space Strategy - A strategic look at all the town’s small open spaces to define their future role, design and management.
9. Frontage Programme - A coordinated initiative to improve shop and house fronts along the Main Street and Burke Street, collectively improving the visual quality of the area.
10. Historic Features - Site specific proposals to help support and develop the town’s main attractions.
11. New Tourism Gateway - Comprehensive proposals to provide centralised parking facilities for visitors to the town.
12. Tholsel - proposals to sensitively turn this historically important building into the hub of future tourist activity in the town.
13. Interpretation & Orientation Strategy - Measures to improve the visitor experience through orientation between its attractions and interpretation of their significance.
14. Rural Strategic Linkages Project - A series of measures to strengthen the physical relationship of the town with its environs for the benefit of locals and visitors alike.
15. Equestrian Visitor Centre - A visitor attraction to tell the story of the area’s rich equestrian heritage and economy.
3 BACKGROUND TO THE HISTORIC WALLED TOWN OF FETHARD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to “set the scene” against which the Public Realm Plan for the Walled Town of Fethard has been developed. An understanding of the town’s geographic and historical context, along with prevalent policies and ongoing initiatives provides a base from which the subsequent analysis findings and proposals are made.

3.2 Location

The historic Walled Town of Fethard is located in the centre of County South Tipperary in the province of Munster, Ireland. It sits within a cluster of historic local centres including: Clonmel (14km), Cashel (17km), Cahir (21km), Thurles (29km) and Carrick-on-Suir (29km), and between the four major regional centres of Waterford (54km), Kilkenny (57km), Limerick (76km) and Cork (110km).

3.3 Geography

The town is situated on the banks of the Clashawley River, a tributary of the River Anner that in turn flows into the River Suir. It is surrounded by extensive agricultural land forming part of the Golden Vale of Munster, famed for the fertility of its soil.

The town rests at the foot of the striking conical mountain of Slievenamon (721m) that offers dramatic views over Tipperary and the neighbouring counties.

Fethard derives its name from the Irish Fiodh Ard meaning High Wood. It is likely that this area was once ancient woodland as there are remnants of Grove Wood, a stand of native woodland south of the town.

The town itself is situated on a low hill, with an undulating Main Street acting as the spine of the town. Relatively gentle gradients make Fethard a good place to walk on foot.
3.4 History of the Walled Town

The Walled Town of Fethard first came to prominence with the arrival of the Normans to Ireland in the late 12th Century. It is reported that the town was founded by William de Braose, who was installed by King John in 1201 as chief tenant of the Barony of Middlethird. Fethard was systematically laid out as a Norman Settlement with a market place, a conveniently located church and graveyard and a regular street pattern. Much of this early 13th Century urban fabric and Norman town planning is still visible in the town today.

Fethard was endowed with a Charter of Borough status and prospered as a market town in the 13th Century as its extensive building activity dated to this period indicates. There is evidence of goods such as honey, cereals, cloth, silk, sea-fish, coal, timber, nails and salt, to name a few, being sold in the town.

The first signs of town enclosure in Fethard occurred at the end of the 13th Century. The town walls were, as with all medieval settlements, paid for through a succession of ‘Murage Taxes’, a levy or tax on goods coming into the town. It is thought that the early form of enclosure was with ditches and/or fences. The stone walls evident today were built in the 14th and 15th Century, as were many of the walls, towers, castles and fortified houses.

Fethard received a Royal Charter from Edward VI in 1552-3 and another from King James in 1607. This allowed the town the freedom to pursue its own affairs without interference from the Crown. The town survived the armies of Lord Inchiquin and Oliver Cromwell relatively unscathed in the 17th Century.

However, Fethard suffered decline in the 18th Century, coinciding with the end of the Everard’s involvement with the town. The family’s mansion on the north east corner of market place (where the current Garda Station is now located) was sold in 1702. It was later demolished and a new mansion built in its place by Thomas Barton, the Bordeaux wine merchant. This building was then converted into a cavalry barracks in 1805 and later burnt down during the Civil War of 1922.

Fethard continued to be a moderately successful small market town throughout the 19th Century. This period saw the emergence of mills in the town and a connection to Clonmel in 1879, by the Great Southern and Western Railway. 19th Century industrialisation also brought about localised erosion of the town’s medieval form with all but one of the town’s Northgate demolished by the end of the Century.

A degree of geographic isolation perpetuated by the closure of the railway and a lack of road investment, saw limited growth of the town through much of the 20th Century. Consequently, at a time when many towns in Ireland lost much of their historic fabric through redevelopment, Fethard managed to retain nearly all of its medieval walls and many of its castles, churches and other important buildings.

The 20th Century also saw Fethard’s reputation as a centre of excellence for horse breeding and training emerge, with the town now closely associated with the highly successful Coolmore Stud and Evarard’s Grange Racing Stables. Such prosperity, underpinned by a strong national economy, has helped to bring about significant development in the town from the 1990’s to the present day. The renewed construction of housing and associated infrastructure is now steadily transforming the town.

3.5 Strategic Policy Context

Fethard, and the surrounding area, has considerable potential which, if fully taken advantage of, will provide the local community with economic and cultural opportunities into the foreseeable future. In light of this, South Tipperary County Council, the Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland and local interest groups have determined the need for a Public Realm Plan. The Plan will act as a key document that will help guide planning for the town and will facilitate the development of its potential in a sustainable manner. The preparation of the Public Realm Plan reflects the commitment of the Heritage Council, South Tipperary County Council and its partners, in association with the local community, to ensuring that the historic town of Fethard is developed and promoted as a tourism icon and as an active living community.

There are already in place a number of important policy and planning proposals
of the government, the local authority and others. These are currently having, and will continue to have an impact on the town. It is essential that the current national, regional and local planning framework for the future development of the town is fully understood and implemented. The Public Realm Plan needs to complement these so that any national and local resources that are available can be used as much as possible to deliver real benefits to the community as quickly as possible.

Therefore, the relevant plans, guidance and policy documents have been considered during the development of the Fethard Public Realm Plan as follows.

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020 is a 20 year spatial strategy providing a framework to guide policies, programmes and investment across the State and includes guidance on rural settlements. It provides the principal planning framework for the National Development Plan 2007-2013. As such it underpins any State and Local Authority financing of, among others, development projects in transport, tourism and urban regeneration. It is critical therefore that the Public Realm Plan fully complements the National Spatial Strategy and any of its associated Plans and Programmes. Fethard can be described as a changing, culturally distinct area in the south-east. The NSS states that these ‘culturally distinct’ areas require; enhanced accessibility, strengthening of existing settlements, and; conservation of their cultural identity.

The Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland 1997 provides the framework for the achievement of sustainable development at a local level. The Strategy recognises the need to protect built heritage in Ireland. It emphasises that the Country’s natural heritage is everyone’s heritage, and its protection and conservation depend on action by, and the behaviour of, communities and individuals, as well as Government, public authorities, and economic actors.

The South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 reflect the objectives of the NSS as they relate to the South-East. In the Guidelines Fethard is identified as an urban centre supporting Clonmel, the County Town, and Cashel as a district town. Fethard, as well as other towns and villages across the country, is experiencing an era of falling agricultural and industrial employment and therefore faces challenges to its on-going development.

The current South Tipperary County Development Plan 2003 (under review) and the Fethard Local Area Plan (LAP) 2005, further embed national and regional policy into the County Council’s plans for the area. Fethard is recognised as a town with an historic fabric of national significance and the Council ‘will have regard to such factors when considering all planning related matters’ (LAP 2005). There is a need to strike a balance between conservation and development with sustainability at the forefront. Fethard has a rich and varied history and what remains within its relatively intact Town Walls is proof of this. However, the urban centre of Fethard is witnessing a continuous decline in population. The most recent 2006 census figures show a population decline, in the Electoral Division (ED) of Fethard, of 6.5% from 2002 to 2006 with a total of just 788 persons now living in the historic town itself. In contrast, figures for Peparndstown, an ED immediately north of the historic town, has seen an increase in population of 7.5% during the same period. While this growth is welcomed, the overall pattern of growth and decline is unsustainable in the long-term. Growth in the core areas of the town is required so as to create a balanced physical and social environment, and an economically viable town.

The settlement strategy as outlined in the County Development Plan reflects the challenges Fethard faces in maintaining and attracting people to live and invest in the town. The County Development Plan states that ‘Fethard will remain a rural settlement with strong links with the equine industry, and will be further developed as both a residential centre and a historic town’. The overall policies and objectives of the Fethard LAP are supported in the Public Realm Plan and are dealt with in greater detail in the concept analysis and recommendations.

South Tipperary County Development Board (CDB) aims to achieve greater public and community service co-ordination and integration at county level and, by extension, into the towns of the County. Under the Economic investment priorities of the Board (2005-2008) Fethard is earmarked for investment in the development of a business park site between Killenaule Road and Moy Class Road. The Public Realm Plan endorses these investment proposals as they will have long-term direct positive impact on the vitality of the town. The relevant agencies and organisations on the Board have set an overall shared vision for the economic, social and cultural development of the County and have agreed to implement a series of actions to do so. This process is seen as one of the key areas where public realm initiatives can be achieved.

The South Tipperary Corporate Plan sets out the core values and corporate objectives of South Tipperary County Council. The Plan highlights and reinforces the delivery of national and local policy, including the National Development Plan. It has a customer and citizen focus and addresses issues of social inclusion and sustainable development and how the Council will address these through its service planning and delivery.

The Corporate Plan is relevant to the Fethard Public Realm Plan as it includes delivery of County Council services to include: housing; road transport and safety; water supply and sewage; development incentives and controls; environmental protection; agricultural; education; health and welfare; recreation and amenity; and community enterprise, to name but a few. All of these services directly influence the quality public realm for Fethard. Having in place an on-going programme that supports the provision of infrastructure in the town and its environs will be significant for the town. It will help the town to have the necessary capacity for growth, including the continued redevelopment of key parts of the town. The corporate commitment of the County Council is paramount to delivering the Public Realm Plan.

The Irish Walled Towns Network Draft Action Plan 2006-2008 ratified the International Walled Towns Friendship Circle’s Piran Declaration 2003. It states that ‘Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable “Timestones of History”’. The heritage aspect of the Public Realm Plan will be implemented in accordance with this Declaration, as well as with the ICOMOS’s Bruges Resolutions. The Bruges Resolutions have specific relevance to historic towns where distinctive qualities and value are deemed as being worthy of retention and enhancement’ and provides guidance to be addressed.
3.6 Ongoing Initiatives

A number of development and regeneration initiatives are ongoing within the town and are therefore required to be taken into consideration by this Plan.

A separate Conservation and Management Plan for the Town Walls, undertaken by Oxford Archaeology, was also commissioned alongside the Public Realm Plan. It was also funded by The Heritage Council with South Tipperary County Council through the Irish Walled Town Network. The programme for the Conservation and Management Plan was designed to undertake a detailed evaluation of the physical structure of the walls and to identify policies by which they can be conserved and managed into the future. It is therefore essential that the public realm proposals contained within this Public Realm Plan are read in conjunction with those put forward within the Conservation and Management Plan.

At the time of preparation of this Public Realm Plan phased environmental street improvements were being implemented by the County Council on Main Street. These improvements included improved parking, provision of new light columns and concrete paving. This work is bringing about welcome and positive change to the quality of pedestrian environment in this area.

Also at the time of writing, new housing developments were in progress at:
- Congress Terrace, Kerry Street
- Abbeyview Housing Development, Abbey Street
- Strylea, Upper Green Street
- New housing on the Killenaule Road
- New Housing on Cashel Road

Substantial new housing and neighbourhood is also envisaged between Killenaule and Rocklow Roads to the north of the town, as part of a masterplan for the area.

Residential development is also planned at Chapel Lane (County Council) and new youth facilities at Church Hall by Madam’s Bridge.

These developments must be informed by the Public Realm Plan and the principles of sustainable development.
4 ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

A threefold process of desktop research, site appraisal and consultation was used by the consultant team to gather data necessary to inform the Public Realm Plan. In addition information and advice was supplied to the team by the project steering group through regular meetings and correspondence during the course of their appointment. For the Plan to meaningfully propose how the Public Realm of Fethard can be improved, it was essential that an accurate picture of the towns strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities be formed. This chapter summarises the findings of this process. It is ordered thematically and illustrated using survey plans made of the town.

4.2 Regional Context

The regional positioning of Fethard is a critical aspect of its economic sustainability, as well as its future growth as a tourism destination.

As noted in the introduction, Fethard is located close to the three regional centres of Limerick, Waterford and Cork, meaning that significant populations and associated opportunities are within an hour and a half drive of the town.

In addition, the town sits within a cluster of large historic towns including Cashel, Clonmel, Cahir, Thurles Carrick-on-Suir and Kilkenny, providing important social and economic links to the town of Fethard and its people.

It is therefore vitally important that Fethard maximises the benefit of having such a central location for both its economy and for tourism.

The quality of transport links, particularly to the newly upgraded N8 Dublin Cork corridor, must be improved where possible to facilitate movement between the town and its neighbours. The quality of signage identifying Fethard on this corridor is also of particular importance.

For the visitor, many if not all of the nearby clustering towns also have interesting historical features. To attract visitors, therefore, The Walled Town of Fethard needs to carve out its distinctive niche within these centres, with the walls being its most unique asset. The community of Fethard must therefore work together with its neighbours to establish a strong hub of historic towns that can attract tourists.
4.3 Land & Building Uses

The mapping of Fethard’s ground floor building and land uses highlights the important commercial core in the centre of the town. A mix of predominantly retail and residential properties is interspersed with licensed premises. This helps to sustain a lively main street throughout the day.

However, several vacant and derelict properties provide visible evidence of commercial decline in the centre of Fethard, emphasising that the Public Realm must underpin the economic vitality of the town centre.

For a town rich in historical attractions, there is a lack of hospitality provision for visitors. It is notable that only one bed and breakfast facility offers accommodation, while only a handful of establishments regularly serve food. This issue must be addressed with urgency should the Walled Town of Fethard fulfill its potential as a tourism destination.

Mapping of land uses also reveals the extent of residential property outside of the town core, particularly to the North. This and the prospect of increased house building, points to the need for good pedestrian and cycle linkages between these areas and the rest of the town.
4.4 Open Space

As a compact medieval town, open space in Fethard is relatively limited within the confines of the Town Wall. Since the 13th Century, the market square has been the primary open space which to this day performs a market role, as well as the more modern day requirement of car parking. Central to the success of the Market Square is the completeness of its original form, with the only weak point being at its North East, where the barrack building was replaced with houses and the Garda station. These were designed with little regard for the urban form of the Square. The square itself has been recently upgraded to significantly improve the organisation of parking and the quality of walking areas. Whilst this is to be commended, a long term objective for this space should be to further improve the quality of the materials used, and to increase the ability of the area to accommodate a greater range of events.

The river park that follows the Clashawley River through the town is located beyond the walls to the south. It consists of grass areas and trees, seating and bridges across the river. The park is a fantastic asset for Fethard for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides a notably attractive setting to the southern stretch of the Town Walls, providing what is arguably the finest view of a walled town in the country. Secondly, the park is a valuable open space for residents and visitors, which can accommodate passive recreation and events, particularly in the summer. Thirdly, the park provides a good natural habitat for wildlife and is often found to be alive with abundant birdlife in and around the water.

This plays an important role in sustaining biodiversity in the area, whilst also adding interest to those who use the park.

Successful parks must be and feel as safe as possible. Increasingly, antisocial behaviour and access by vehicles has become a problem for the river park and must be addressed through the delivery of the Public Realm Plan. It is likely that a combination of physical measures, such as improved lighting and the introduction of bollards, will need to be accompanied by positive management of the park, with the Council working closely with the people of the town and relevant landowners.

Elsewhere in the town, a number of open spaces exist in association with residential areas to the north. Some of these provide good amenity for local residents, whilst others have a less clearly defined function and quality. Potential exists to greater improve these spaces by defining their roles and design and improving connection between them.
4.5 Built Form & Fabric

The town has a compact historic urban form in its central area, with the medieval layout of market space and narrow streets clearly visible. This delightful medieval form, most notable on Main Street, Burke Street and Chapel Lane is a critical component of the town’s overall character and charm. Their protection, afforded in part by the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as set out in the County Development Plan, must be strictly enforced to ensure that redevelopment in the central area does not compromise this quality. Any new buildings set within the historic built fabric must be very carefully designed and planned to ensure appropriate scale, form, architectural detailing and use of materials.

Beyond the Town Walls the urban form of Fethard adopts a looser character typical of 20th century development, quite different to that of the central core. This is particularly evident in housing areas to the north and along the main approach roads to the town. Lower density housing tends to leave more open spaces, which unless well designed and maintained, can reduce the overall environmental quality of the area.

Importantly, lessons should be learned from the urban form of the existing town when planning and designing new urban extensions. By emulating the scale and massing of some of Fethard’s most attractive streets, new development can make a positive contribution to the overall character of the town. The development of areas that future generations may wish to conserve should not be an unrealistic aspiration.
4.6 Significant Features

Fethard has a wealth of social, cultural, and most importantly, historic features. The main historic features, which are also the town’s main attractions to draw visitors, include the Town Walls, Town Hall, Holy Trinity Church, Sheela-na-gig carvings, and the Augustinian Abbey. The main cultural features are Abymill Theatre, Fethard Ballroom, ICA Hall, Fr Tirry Centre, the GAA sports ground, and the Fethard Folk Farm and Transport Museum. These cultural assets are important to the town’s population for the cultural and leisure activities that they provide, and they are also important in that they draw visitors from far and wide. A prime example is the Fethard Ballroom, which hosts the Tipperariana Book Fair, one of the largest book fairs in Ireland. The town also has many natural features that make an important contribution to the town’s character and the quality of life for its population as well as enhancing the visitor experience. A key natural feature is the Clashawley River which provides such an important setting for the town and its walls.

There is potential for the significant features in Fethard to be enhanced so that they can play a greater role in the town’s social and cultural life as well as its tourism aspirations, particularly in the summer months.

Strengthening the role played by the many assets existing within the town will be fundamental to the future of the Walled Town of Fethard. To this extent, the magnificent Town Walls and the Tholsel building are vitally important to the town, with few, if any comparable examples within the country. This therefore highlights the need for the public realm to play a role in improving the setting and physical access to these features.
4.7 Access and Circulation

Vehicular circulation with Fethard is an important consideration due to its central location in the surrounding road network, its role as a commercial centre with a wide rural catchment area and the level of commuter traffic to nearby towns such as Clonmel. As with many rural towns, Fethard can be a busy place, which is partly reflective of commercial activity in the town. However, congestion can be a problem on key areas, particularly on the lower sections of Main Street and at the corner of Barrack Street and Green Street which can be partly attributed to on-street car parking.

In general parking is well provided for on the Main Street and it is recognised as being important for local retailers. However, in places the impact of parking on the quality of the pedestrian environment and the setting of historic buildings is an issue that requires addressing.

Pedestrian circulation is crucially important in a compact town such as Fethard. The quality of the walking environment is generally good, with recent streetscape work greatly improving conditions. However, in some outlying areas, footpaths are either of a low quality or are missing altogether. The result is an unsafe walking environment in some parts of the town and an increased likelihood of car usage for short trips within the town.
4.8 Views & Landmarks

There are many important views and landmarks in, around, and towards the town. The most important views are those to and from the southern section of the town walls along the banks of the Clashawley River and neighbouring agricultural land south of the valley. There are important views of the walls from the main approach to the town at Madam’s Bridge and North Gate on the Rocklow Road, while the northern approach to the town, at Barrack Street lacks this visual definition of the walls. Fethard’s farmland plays a crucial role in maintaining unspoilt views from Kilknockan Hill in the northeast to Market Hill in the southwest and as far as Slievenamon in the distance. The conical dome of Slievenamon provides and important backdrop to the town. There are important landmarks within the town that play a key role in its character. These include the Town Walls, Town Hall, both churches, Northgate, Mural Tower, Edmond Castle, Court Castle, Madam’s Castle, Augustinian Abbey, and Abymill Theatre. The iconic tower at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland is visible from many parts of the town and beyond.

Further details of protected views are available in the South Tipperary County Development Plan.

It is vital to the conservation and enhancement of Fethard’s unique character that its views and landmarks are maintained, and where possible, enhanced.
4.9 Public Consultation

A community consultation event was held in Fethard on the 30th October 2007 to enable residents of the town to participate in the development of the Public Realm Plan. A presentation of the initial analysis findings was followed by an open discussion of those issues that residents and other stakeholders felt should be addressed by the plan. Additional consultation meetings were also held by the consultant team with residents of the town, as well as with members of the project steering group.

Key issues identified were as follows:

- Acknowledgement of the potential of the towns visitor attractions
- A need for increased visitor facilities including places to stay
- Concern over antisocial behaviour in the park and Holy Trinity Church
- Concern about localised traffic congestion on Main Street and Barrack Street
- Discussion of the potential impact of new development, including traffic circulation and pressure on services and amenities.

A full account of the Community Consultation process can be found in the Appendix of this document.
Holy Trinity Church and Town Walls in Winter © J. Kenny