SWORDS CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPLAN

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



A PLAN FOR A NEW CULTURAL HEART

reddy architecture+urbanism

FOREWORD

BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAUL REID

I am very happy to present to the elected members and citizens of Fingal this Swords Castle Cultural Quarter Masterplan.

Successful towns use their cultural heritage to strengthen, amongst other things, their urban identity. An identity built on cultural heritage is not only considered to be a key factor in attracting potential residents and enterprise but it is also seen as a tool for branding and marketing a town as a destination for visitors as well as a place for citizens to enjoy. Throughout Europe, cultural heritage is steadily gaining importance as a vital asset in developing and strengthening a distinctive identity to attract visitors, engage citizens and promote enterprise. In Ireland this can be seen in places such as Westport, Kilkenny and Youghal. We hope that this study will have a similar impact on Swords- our County town.

Cultural heritage is more and more being regarded as the key to unlocking the potential of having a distinct identity of place. The aspiration of this project is to identify a distinct urban identity for Swords through its cultural area that will be the bedrock for a realisable plan to take it forward and bring about its potential as a distinctive and beautiful county town that all its citizens can be proud of.

Over the last six months Fingal County Council has worked with Reddy Architecture and Urbanism to draw together the strands that go to make up this plan. The most important strand of the work was the engagement with and participation of the public and many groups in Swords.

The role of residents associations, community development organisations, business groups, community councils, local development groups, tidy towns committees, sports clubs and arts groups have a real relevance to Fingal County Council. We have seen in this project the benefits of participative, consultative community based planning in leading us together to a sustainable result.

We believe that public participation leads to better decisions and outcomes. Outcomes that better meet the needs of more people and decisions that can be implemented more quickly and last longer. It is important that this validity and public support is encapsulated in the projects that will grow out of this masterplan. We have made sincere efforts in the making of the plan to make sure that local knowledge and aspirations are an important part of the making process.

The potential projects identified in the plan will I am sure have a positive effect on the fabric of Swords- its streets, buildings and places but also will have a positive effect on our citizens well-being and quality of life for them and their communities.

Paul Reid
Chief Executive
Fingal County Council

Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall
Fingal County Council



Paul Reid Chief Executive Fingal County Council

Executive Summary

BY REDDY ARCHITECTURE + URBANISM

Fingal County Council's Strategic Vision for Swords is to create a sustainable new city. With a population of circa 40,000, Swords is an "emerging city" and the seventh largest urban area in the country, and the second largest in County Dublin.

Since the mid-1990s Swords has seen improvements in shop fronts, public buildings and footpaths and the restoration of Swords Castle but in that period has also faced severe challenges to its further development as a successful county town. Fingal County Council identified the requirement for an Architectural Masterplan for Swords Castle and Lands as the next logical step in the vision for the emerging urban development of Swords.

Following an extensive and involved consultation process between Fingal Co Council and the people of Swords, a clear indication of the needs and opinions of the residents, retailers and other stakeholders coalesced in a series of issues and challenges. In conjunction with the Architects Department of Fingal County Council, Reddy Architecture and Urbanism have prepared this masterplan for Swords Castle and Lands as the canvas upon which the future of the town will be expressed.

This master-plan for the Swords Castle Lands is a road map for further improvements and opportunities for strategic physical improvements

It is a guide for the people of Swords and Fingal County Council to take advantage of existing natural resources of their lands, infrastructure and heritage to create outstanding and sustainable civic and cultural spaces. It is a vision statement for the people of Swords.

reddy architecture+urbanism

SWORDS CASTLE MASTERPLAN
PUBLICATION DATE: April 2015

Acknowledgements

Fingal County Council would like to acknowledge and thank all who participated in the preparation of this plan. The cross departmental input and assistance of Fingal County Council officers and staff is also gratefully acknowledged.

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Should your name not have been included in the above list Fingal County Council wishes to express its gratitude to you for your contribution with the development of this Masterplan for Swords Castle and Lands.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 - ABOUT THE MASTERPLAN
1.2 - CONSULTATION PROCESS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

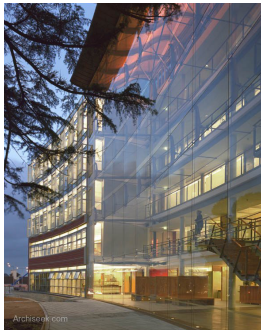
Swords has an important and significant heritage town centre with many civic and cultural landmarks including, the castle, the courthouse, the civic offices and the river valley park.

1.1 ABOUT THE MASTERPLAN

This plan seeks to energise the layout potential of the existing town centre - focusing on the castle environs as a new cultural hub. This area can instill and foster a sense of place and civic pride and also act as a counterpoint to the shopping and business areas of the town- the study area is outlined in red on the adjacent map.



Swords Castle



Fingal County Hall



Swords Castle Masterplan outlined/shaded in red

1.0 INTRODUCTION

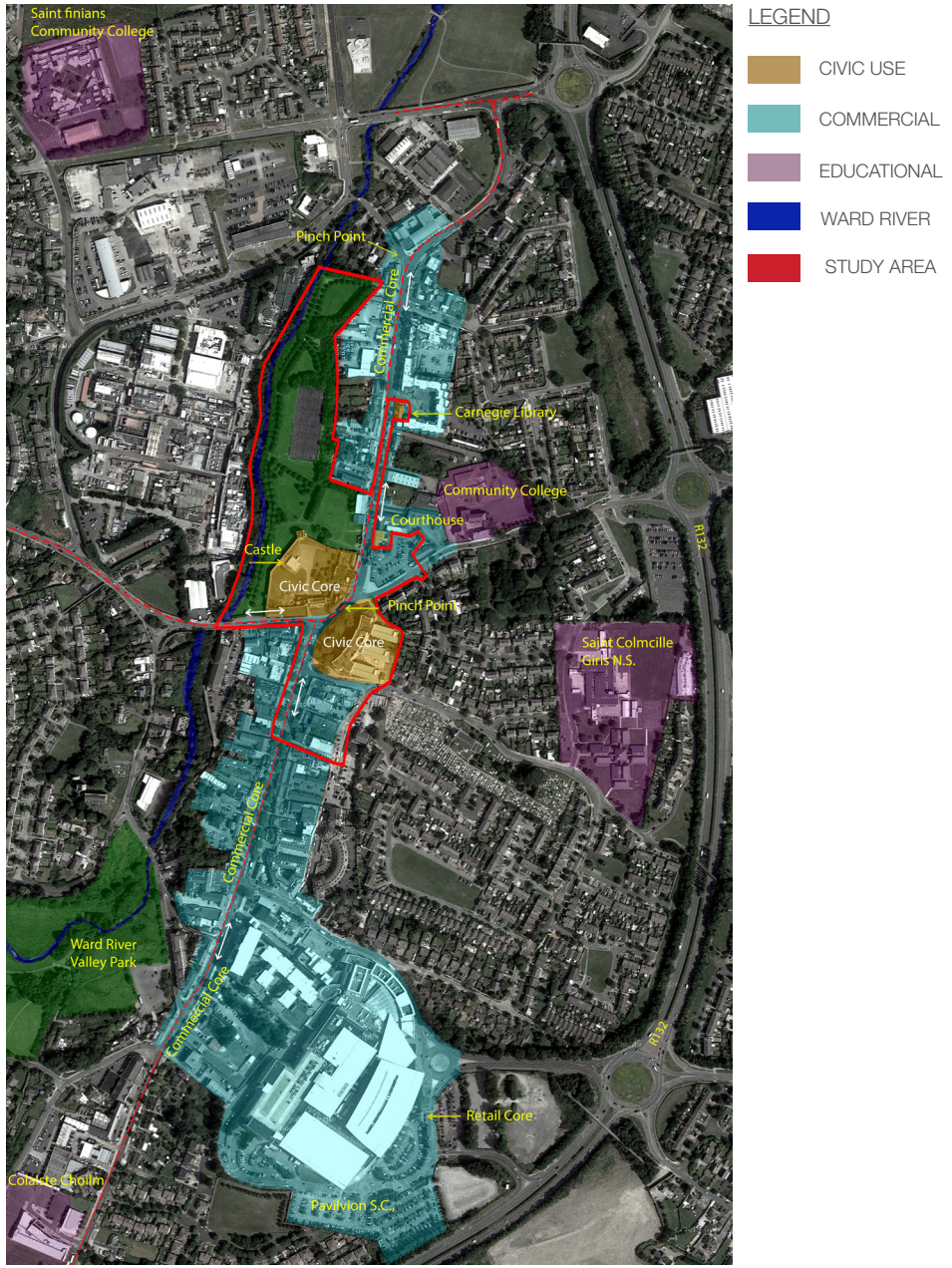
The Swords Castle lands and town centre are a place of cultural significance - the recent castle excavations indicate a past rich in heritage and value. The Swords Castle focussed Masterplan respects the long-term strategic objectives of Fingal County Council as they relate to Swords, but more critically recognise the requirement to seek out a new direction for this part of Swords and to facilitate the delivery of a new social and cultural destination centred around Swords Castle and linking back to the retail heart of the town. The "Pavilions" commercial development has created a centre of gravity which requires counterbalancing and a re-imagining of the town centre of Swords.

1.2 CONSULTATION

Consultation with Swords community and Swords environs stakeholders was the genesis for many of the principles and ideas of this plan. The engagement informed and centralised the challenges and opportunities facing the people of Swords, allowing a shared vision which road mapped this plan's evolution and guided its conclusions.

We heard through the consultation process:

- Strong community spirit and pride in Swords
- Issues with traffic and pedestrian movement
- Poor use of park due to concerns with safety
- Poor links / access to the castle
- Pavilions has a "*draw*" affecting town center business
- Lack of a "*hub*" or place for the people
- Community needs - hall, performance, multi- purpose space
- Under use/connections to river



Swords town uses

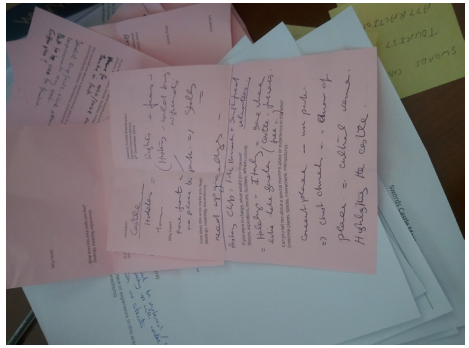
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2.1 CONSULTATION

Public consultations were advertised on the Fingal County Council Facebook page. This process began with 'Swords Street Conversations' on Monday 8th December 2014. The people of Swords were invited visa Facebook to come to the area outside County Hall in the town, have a conversation and fill out a short questionnaire. This information was analysed and revealed many issues of concern, visions, insights and opportunities facing the Swords people.



Swords Street Conversations



Swords Street Conversations



Swords Street Conversations



Swords Street Conversations



Fingal County Council
December 5 · Edited

SWORDS CASTLE - "HAVE YOUR SAY"

Council staff will be outside Swords Castle and County Hall next Monday the 8th of December from 10am to 1pm. We want to ask you questions, hold a conversation with you and to listen to and record what you have to say about your castle and the areas around it.

- Tell us what you like about your castle.
- What changes would you make to improve the castle and the surrounding areas?
- How would you like to see the Castle within the town in the future?
- Who might use it? – visitors - citizens - the business community?
- Who do you see as the future stakeholders?
- Do you see it as an important part of your town?
- Tell us about other castles – ones you visited – at home and abroad.
- How do you see the areas around the castle developing.
- Tell us about your history with Swords Castle.
- How might you like to imagine your children answering the question in the future?

We will also be taking lots of photos – with your permission of course.

All the information we gather will help us develop a Masterplan for Swords Castle and the surrounding areas. Please come along and talk to us.

Now all we need is a dry day 🙂 — in Swords. (5 photos)

Like · Comment · Share 29 Shares

52 people like this.

Extract from FCC Facebook Page

1.2.2 CONSULTATION

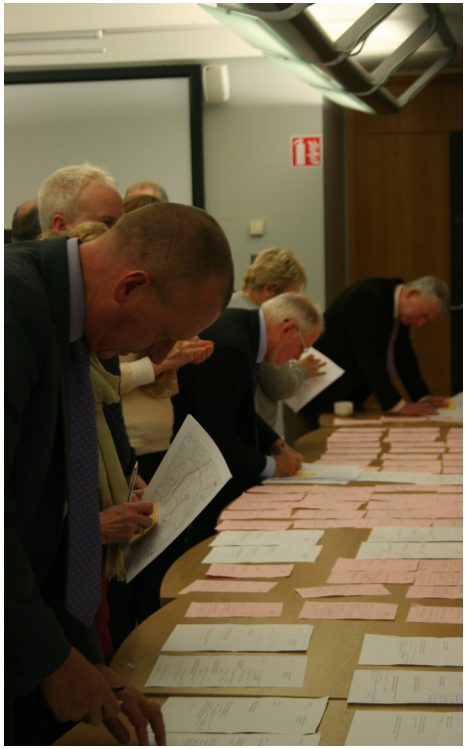
A follow on consultation meeting with stakeholders took place in Fingal County Hall on Monday 15th December 2014 from 5:30 to 7pm. The information gathered from the street conversation was used to start the dialogue between the stakeholders. The group looked for commonalities across the data collected and used them to develop potential actions for the study area. This meeting was attended by a number of stakeholders i.e interested landowners, members of the public and Swords business leaders.



Swords Stakeholder Meeting



Swords Stakeholder Meeting



Swords Stakeholder Meeting



Extract from FCC Facebook Page

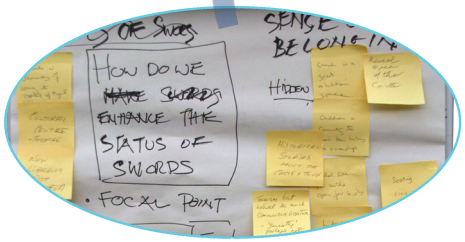
1.2.3 CONSULTATION

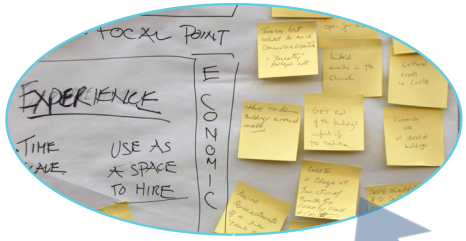
Both the ‘Swords Street Conversations‘ and ‘Stakeholders meetings’ were the source of many observations, suggestions and concerns facing the people of Swords. This information, feeding into this Masterplan creates an overall vision to allow the town and people of Swords to take back ownership of Swords Castle.

What we heard from the people of Swords:

- Make the Castle a focal point of Swords
- A reason to go to Swords Castle
- Open Swords Castle to the public
- Create public events in the Castle
- Remove the old derelict buildings at the Castle
- Signage for the Park and Castle
- Landscaping to the Castle and Park
- Light the Castle, entrance route and church
- Use Swords Castle as a generator of tourism
- Security, safety, passive surveillance to the park
- Create passive interest in the Castle events
- Brian Boru event was fantastic











1.2.4 CONSULTATION

An Artists Workshop was held in order to create an opportunity for artist groups and those involved in the creative industries to discuss their visions and concerns for Swords. The information gathered to date and a video of potential proposals started the discussion on how to develop ways in which new buildings could be used to create passive interest and bring permeability to the street edge. These spaces would perform a community function which would attract both members of the public and tourists to the Castle environs.

What we heard from the Artists Workshop:

- Multi-disciplinary spaces in proposed buildings to North St.
- Workshop Room - free or low cost classes for teenagers for art - Parent & Baby classes - space for elderly
- Private studio spaces - Sound proof studios below ground
- Visual artists studio
- Sculpture garden walk - Definite outdoor area for live music - Raised mounds as amphitheatres large and small, Street art
- Heritage - Tourism - Art, all co-existing
- Private artist spaces behind public spaces-gallery, theatre
- Craft Shop - Farmers Market - Centre for Ethnic Groups
- Small indoor performing arts space -drama -dance -hybrid visual performance
- Park yoga -Cycle routes -Walking trail -Public seating -Summer festival -Live performances to see castle come alive - Outdoor film - Little wins
- Move library closer to Swords Castle







Swords Artists Workshop

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Process Map



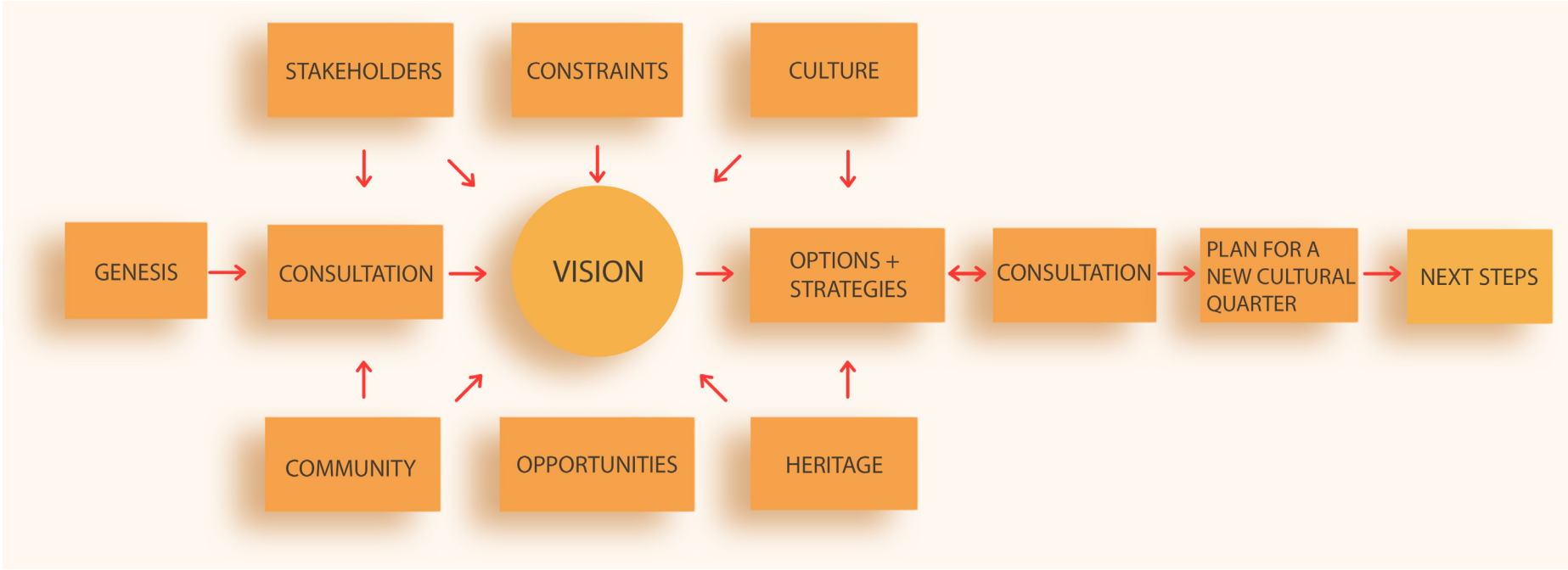
Collaborative Design



Collaborative Consultation



Collaborative Discussion



MASTERPLAN EVOLUTION PROCESS

1.2.5 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Traffic and car parking in the main street dominate the town centre and public realm
- There are safety issues associated with crossing at the junction of Main Street with North Street and Bridge Street
- Street Furniture, bins, seating, trees etc, are inconsistent and of poor quality for a county town
- Main Street lacks civic quality
- Public Realm outside the Castle is poorly defined, with a lack of coherence and car dominated
- Lack of connectivity between the Castle Building, its history and the residents of Swords
- The Park is a “hidden gem“ in the town, tennis courts should be kept but are hidden.
- There is no social space associated with the Castle and the Park
- Lack of a meaningful town centre space, with “speakers corner“ or “Hub“ type space, an active, flexible use space for multi-function use
- There is a lack of connection between the River and the park
- The castle fails to declare its presence in the Town and its potential for promoting the town is not realised. There is also a lack of public access.
- The buildings on North Street in front of the Castle offer no active frontage or engagement with the Street or the Castle, they are mostly unused.
- The site opposite the castle and Fingal County Council (Currently car parking) is under utilized and a missed opportunity for a civic/public building to compliment the Castle / FCC Offices
- Too many empty shop units in town centre



Pedestrian Crossing - Bridge Street





Public Realm- Lack of meaningful town centre space



Castle Park - Boulevard



Swords Castle

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overall Design Strategy

Stage 1

- Events at the Castle
- Passive Interest
- Focal point



Swords Street Conversations:

We established visions, concerns, ambitions and opportunities from the people of Swords

Stage 2



Stakeholders Meeting No.1:

Landowners, members of the public and business leaders came together to discuss their visions and concerns creating discussion groups. Incorporate and discuss all views to inform the overall vision for the Masterplan.

- Generate Tourism
- Civic Spaces
- Community Use
- Public Plaza
- Reveal the Castle

Stage 3



Stakeholders Meeting No.2:

Further discussion between business leaders and members of the public. Group discussions solidifying the overall vision of the Masterplan.

- Move Playground Closer
- Coach Parking - Park
- Way Finding
- Interpretive Centre
- External Performances
- Revitalise River Walk
- Interact River with Park
- Pedestrian Link for Footfall of Pavilions SC to Castle

Stage 4



Presentation to the Councillors

The Masterplan was presented and discussed briefly at the Councillor Meeting showing 3D Views and a 3D walkthrough demonstrating the main concepts of the Masterplan

- Positive for Existing Community
- Phased Delivery is Important
- Uniting Councillors - Positivity
- Concerts - Public Events
- Consider Water Feature Safety
- Coach and Car Parking

Stage 5



Meeting with Artists

This workshop created a great opportunity for artist groups to discuss their visions and concerns for Swords

- Multi-disciplinary spaces
- Private studio spaces
- Visual artist studio
- Performing arts space
- Workshop room

Stage 6



Final Swords Castle Cultural Quarter Masterplan presented to Fingal County Council members

2.0 SWORDS TODAY

2.1 - SWORDS - WORKING PLACES
2.2 - SWORDS - LIVING PLACES
2.3 - SWORDS - LEARNING PLACES
2.4 - SWORDS - SPECIAL PLACES

2.0 SWORDS TODAY

Swords today with its working places-retail, civic and industrial along with Heritage places and its network of streets, is the foundation and platform upon which cultural opportunities will be forged.

2.1 SWORDS - WORKING PLACES

RETAIL

Main St, North St., adjoining streets & The Pavilions

CIVIC

Swords Fingal County Council Offices & Courthouse

INDUSTRY/OFFICES

Balheary industrial park, BMS Campus and Barrysparks office park



Pavilion Shopping Center



Fingal Civic Offices



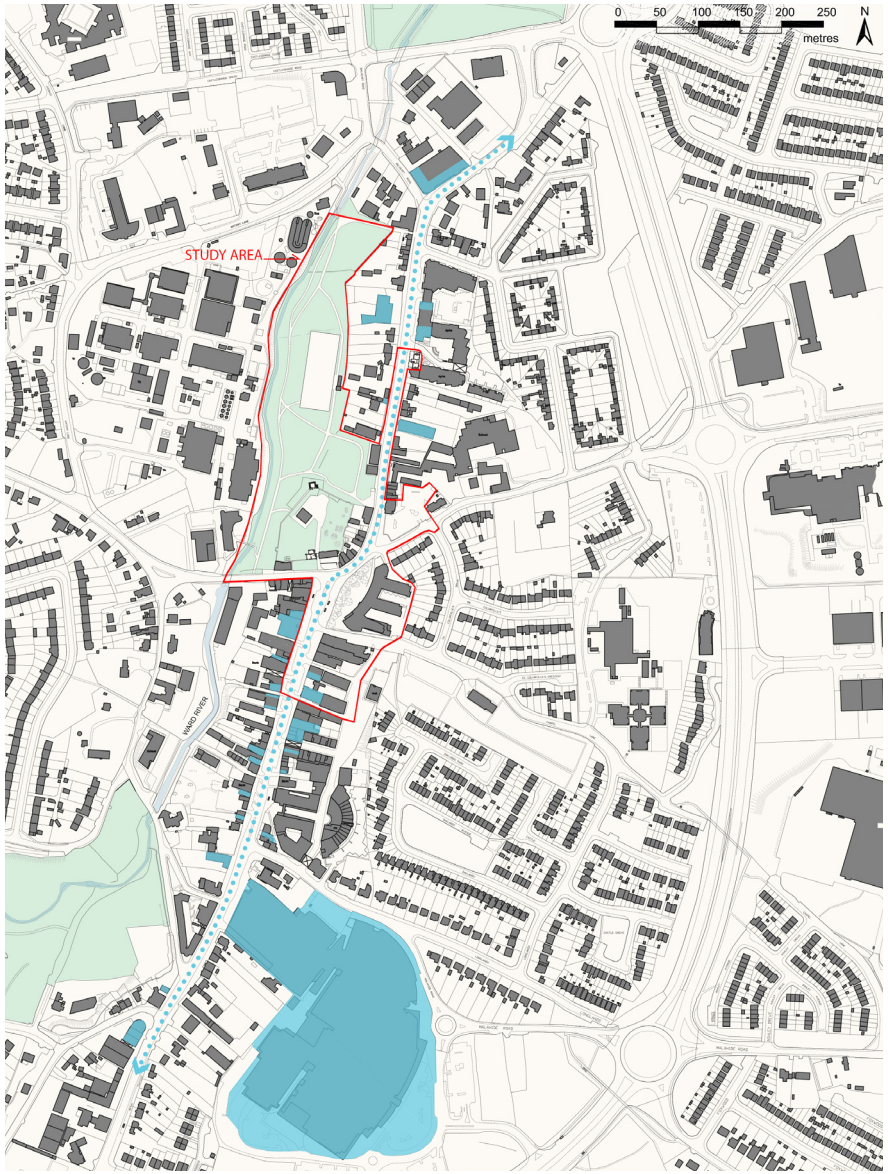
Swords Business Park



Swords working places

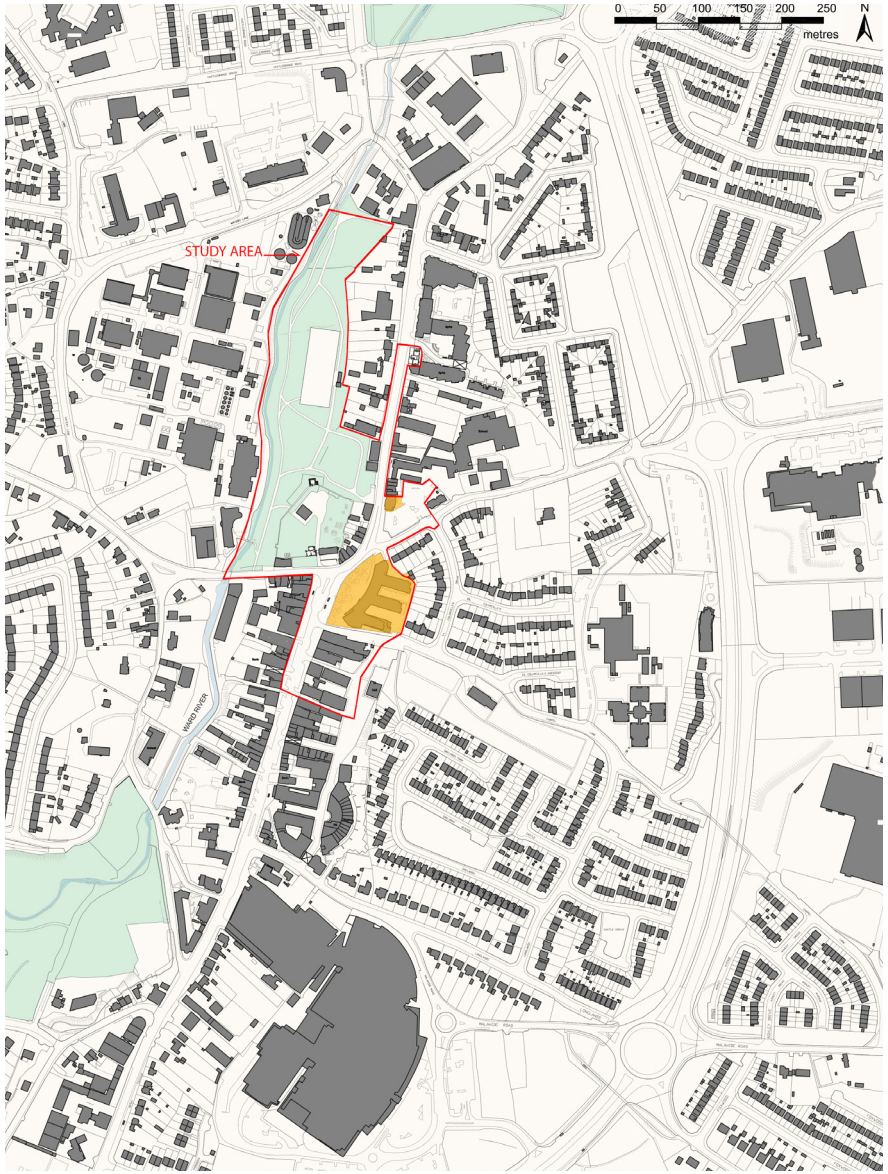
RETAIL

Main Street, North Street & Pavilions Shopping Center



CIVIC

Swords Fingal County Council Offices & Courthouse





Siemens - Swords



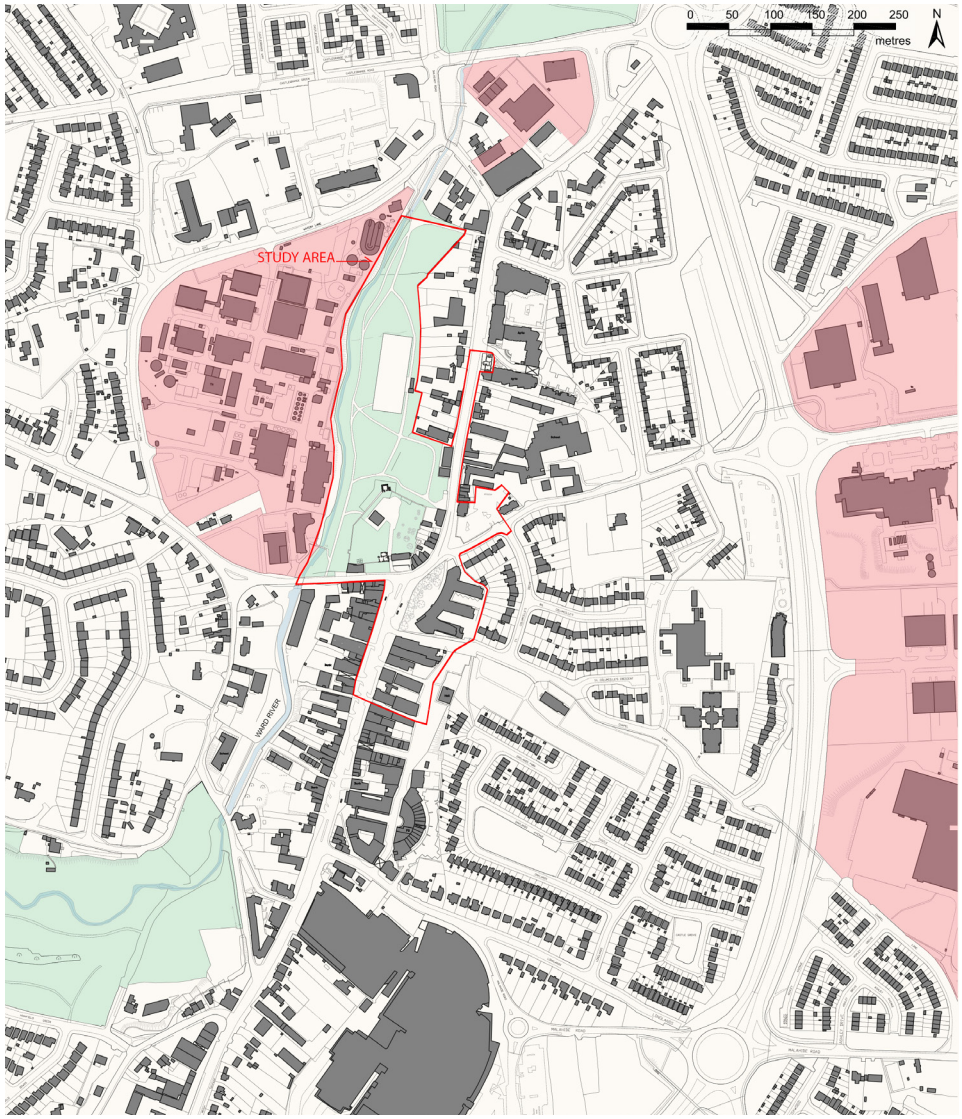
Bristol Myers Squib - Swords



Balheary Industrial Park - Swords

INDUSTRY

Industrial Parks; Balheary Industrial Park
BMS Campus
Barrysparks offics park



Swords Castle and Lands, Architectural Masterplan 2015

2.2 SWORDS LIVING PLACES

Swords is the county town for Fingal with a strong central and proximate located core. The core community which comprises the Swords town people are drawn from areas both within and external to the town boundary.



Homes For The Community



Swords Public Amenities

LIVING PLACES

Residential Areas



SWORDS LIVING PLACES

2.3 SWORDS - LEARNING PLACES

EDUCATION

- COMMUNITY COLLEGES
- PRIMARY SCHOOLS
- SECONDARY SCHOOLS

St Finians Community College
1000 Students (600 current + 400 proposed extension)

Fingal Community College
544 Students

Saint Colmcilles NS
392 Students (Boys NS)

Colaiste Choilm CBS



SWORDS LEARNING PLACES



St Finians Community College

2.3 SWORDS - LEARNING PLACES

SCHOOLS

- St Finians Community College
- Fingal Community College
- Saint Colmcilles NS
- Colaiste Choilm CBS



Colaiste Choilm CBS

St Finians Community College

10 minute walk to Swords Castle

Fingal Community College

2 minute walk to Swords Castle

Saint Colmcilles NS

4 minute walk to Swords Castle

Colaiste Choilm CBS

9 minute walk to Swords Castle



SWORDS LEARNING PLACES

2.4 SWORDS SPECIAL PLACES

① - CASTLE

② - PARK

③ - COURTHOUSE

④ - LIBRARY

⑤ - MAIN STREET

⑥ - WARD RIVER

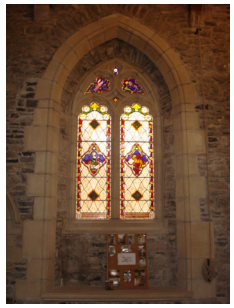
⑦ - WARD RIVER VALLEY PARK

⑧ - ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH

⑨ - ST COLMCILLE'S CHURCH



Swords Main St



Swords Castle



Protected Library



SWORDS SPECIAL PLACES

2.4 SWORDS SPECIAL PLACES - HISTORICAL

1.- ST. COLMCILLE'S WELL

2.- ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH

3.- THE OLD VICARAGE

4.- BRIDGE STREET

5.- SWORDS CASTLE

6.- COUNTY HALL (AND SITE OF SWORDS HOUSE)

7.- ST COLMCILLE'S CHURCH

8.- MAIN STREET

9.- OLD BOROUGH SCHOOL



SWORDS HISTORIC PLACES

3.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SWORDS

3.1 - ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS
3.2 - THE CASTLE AND ENVIRONS
3.3 - MASTERPLAN CHALLENGES
3.4 - THE CASTLE AND STREETS
3.5 - THE MAIN STREET
3.6 - THE PUBLIC PARK AND CAR PARKING
3.7 - THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3.1 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

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- The site opposite the castle and Fingal County Council (Currently car parking) is under utilized and a missed opportunity for a civic/public building to compliment the Castle / Fingal County Council County Hall



Castle Park - Pedestrian Bridge



Public Realm- Lack of meaningful town centre space

It became obvious that there were several recurring themes in relation to the Swords Castle Lands that are associated with the lack of connection between the various strands of public buildings, quality of public realm and pedestrian experience. These issues regarding the Swords Castle Lands can be summarised in the following series of challenges.



Castle Park - Boulevard



Swords Castle

THE CASTLE AND ENVIRONS

The Castle and its immediate lands hold a special place centrally located in the town but generally bypassed and inaccessible. The Castle acts as an almost invisible backdrop to its adjoining streets, park and day to day town life – A sleeping giant in the heart of the town.



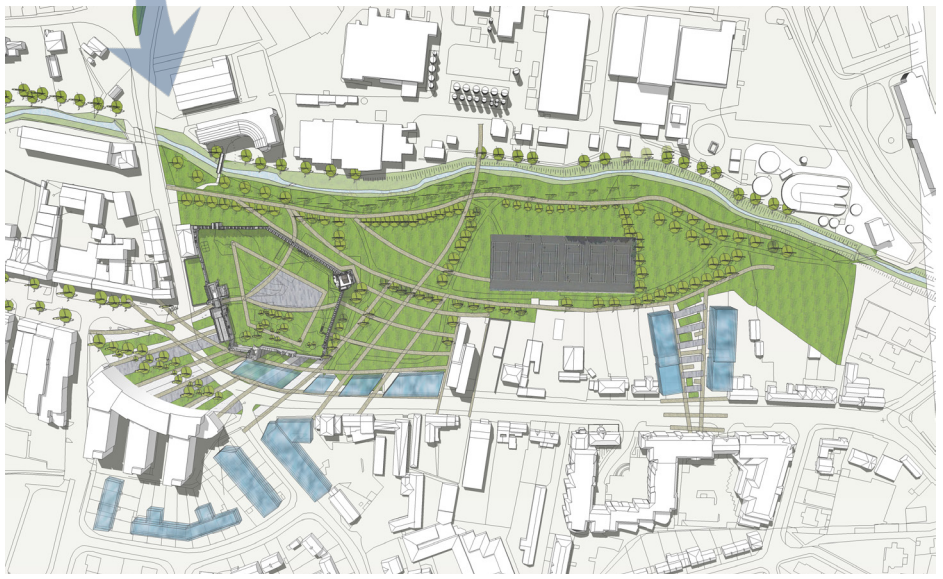
Swords Brian Boru Day - Castle Backdrop



Swords Castle



EXISTING



PROPOSED

3.3 MASTERPLAN CHALLENGES

THE CASTLE:

- An under utilized civic resource, with enormous heritage value and significance
- A potential focus and branding “icon“ opportunity for the town and its businesses, tourism and local historical identity

THE STREETS:

- The poor quality of the experience of Main Street including finishes, pedestrian spaces, landscaping, materials and interface with its buildings
- Effects of the car on the street in terms of movement, safety, noise, parking and restriction on connectivity
- A varied and mixed assortment of smaller spaces and immediate pavement spaces for buildings with no real singular civic space or vision for a town centre focal point
- No coherent traffic movement plan for Swords, resulting in a busy Main Street and dangerous junctions, lack of pedestrian crossings, unpleasant footpaths and public space



View From Main Street Looking North To Swords Castle



View From Main Street - Looking North



View From Bridge Street - Looking North

3.3 MASTERPLAN CHALLENGES

NORTH STREET STREETSCAPE:

- Series of buildings infront of the Castle that developed organically as street edges now fail to provide a high standard visually due to vacancy
- Traffic and lack of pedestrian footfall tends to isolate these buildings from the rest of the adjoining streets.

THE PARK:

- An amenity located at the 'heart' of the town that is under utilized due to its hidden and limited access.
- An open space which does not feature a sufficient sign post, draw or attraction within its grounds
- A feeling of lack of safety due to absence of passive supervision

CAR PARKING:

- Lack of sustainable car parking solution for the town centre resulting in a proliferation of unauthorised car parking on the side streets.
- The layout of the echelon car parking on the Main Street adds to congestion.



Castle Park



Castle Park - Playground



Derelict Buildings on North Street



Derelict Buildings on North Street



Car Parking on Main Street

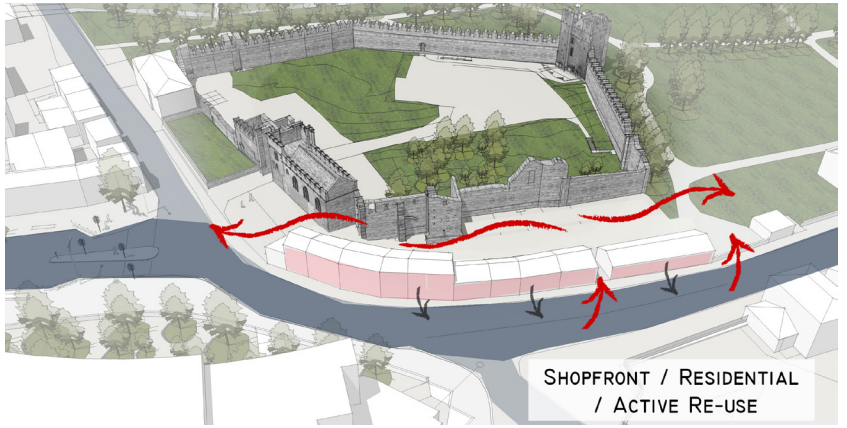
3.4 THE CASTLE AND STREETS

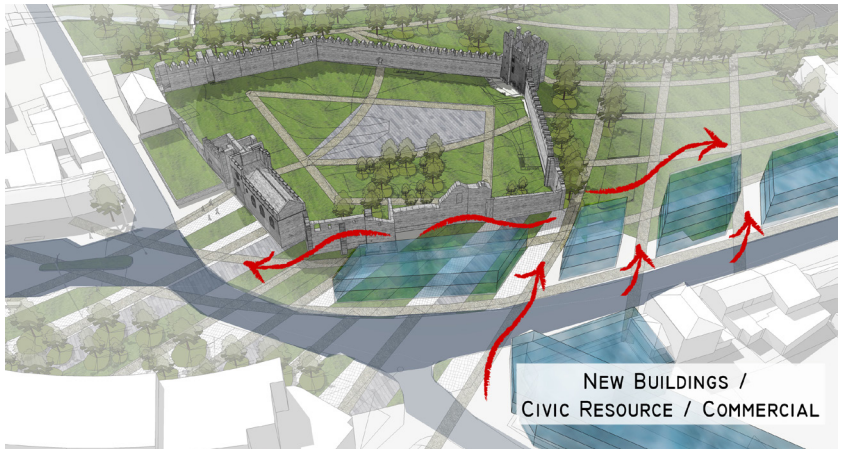
CHALLENGES:

- An under utilized civic resource, with enormous heritage value and significance
- A potential to improve it as a backdrop and branding “icon“ opportunity for the town and its business, tourism and local historical identity and local community use.
- Series of buildings in front of the Castle and opposite Main Street fail to provide any attraction/draw due to dereliction/own door use. The most southerly of them tend to block the view of the Castle

SOLUTIONS:

- Reinvent the buildings located on North Street which back onto the Castle, removing the rear yards and utilizing the original building footprints as dual aspect building forms which could house suitable retail/cultural/ civic use at ground and residential use above
- Introduce high quality public realm finishes into the square environs, the spaces now created between the Castle and the building opposite and the Castle and the park, to create hard-standing areas and appropriate interventions; seating, lighting, play areas, performance spaces and usable public realm
- Ground floor Uses would benefit from extensive glazing allowing for visual connections through the buildings, to the Castle walls and parklands beyond. Residential use above would allow passive overlooking of the park and castle lands after working hours
- Ensure new buildings reinforce North Street’s ‘Urban Edge’ and create openings between the buildings to open up vistas into the castle and parkland, and encourage pedestrian access through to the park







Swords Castle



Public Realm - Derry -
High Quality Finishes

3.5 THE MAIN STREET

CHALLENGES:

- Quality of finishes, materials, pedestrian space, landscaping/trees, lighting and signage
- A varied and mixed assortment of smaller spaces and immediate pavement spaces for buildings with no real singular civic space, focal point or vision for a town centre heart



Public Realm - Derry



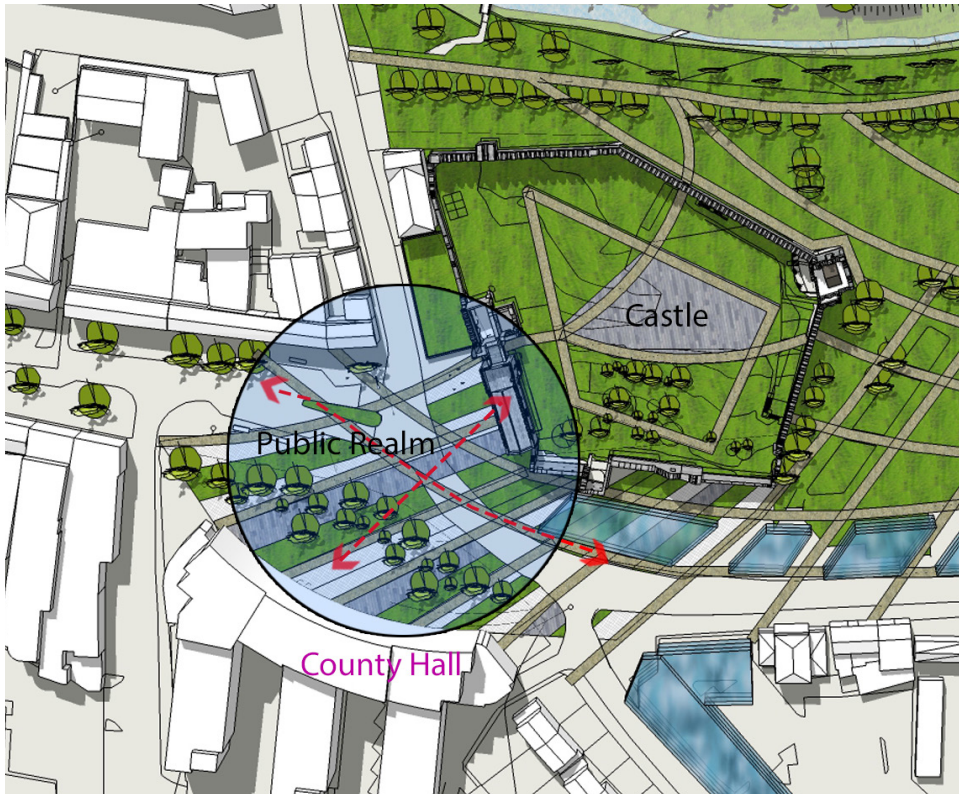
Public Realm - Newry



Public Realm - Dundalk

SOLUTIONS:

- Upgrade the Public Realm finishes to the Main Street, North Street, Bridge Street and the areas immediately in the vicinity of the Castle
- Include the landscaping, public space and large mature trees in front of the Fingal County Council Offices to bring a level of coherence to the civic space
- This will link the civic spaces in front of the Castle and the County Hall by removing the boundary fencing and gates, unifying the space. Provide raised planters around the existing trees to deal with the change in level, thereby creating seating opportunities



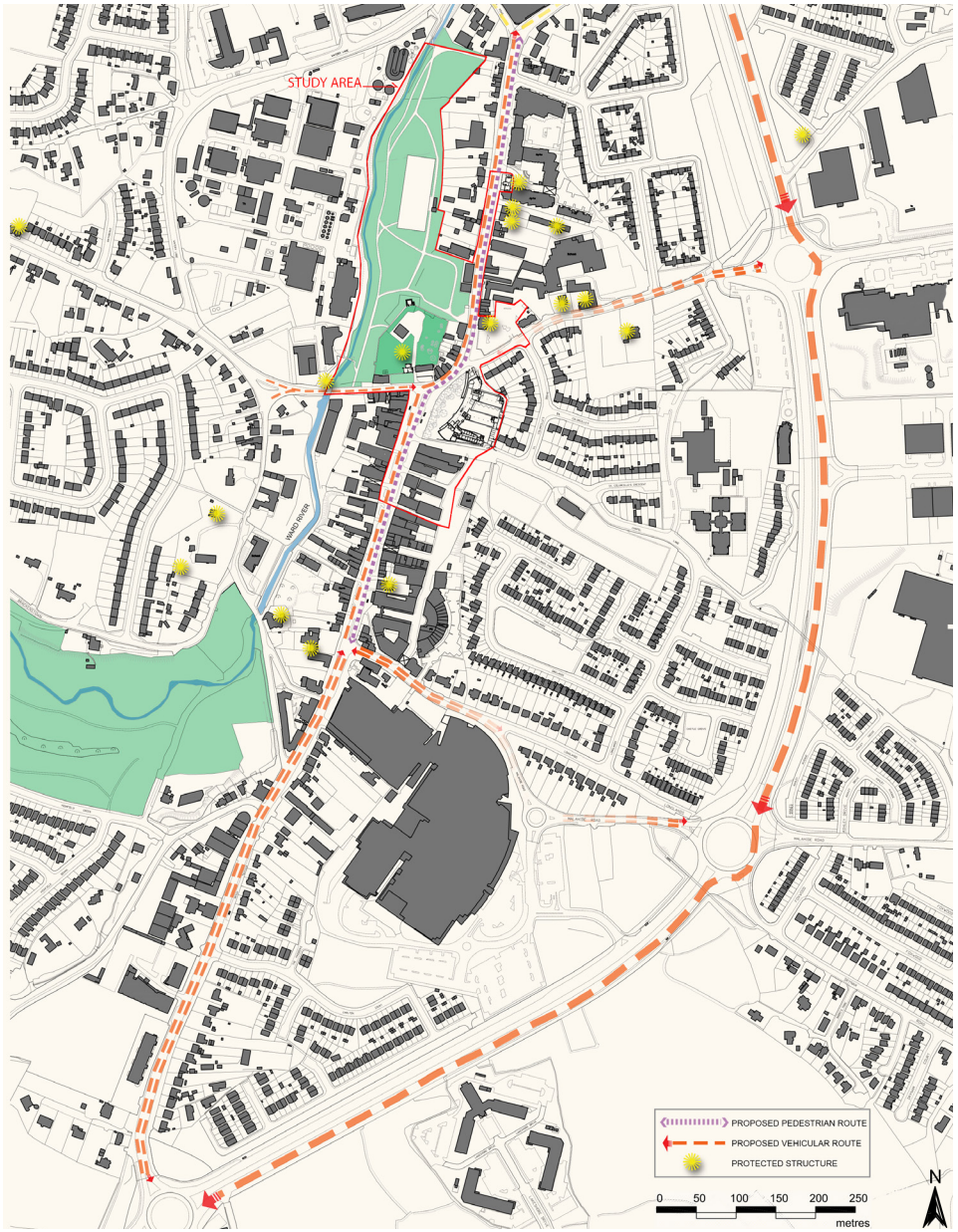
3.5 THE MAIN STREET

CHALLENGES:

- Effects of the car on the street in terms of movement, safety, noise, parking and restriction on connectivity
- No coherent traffic movement plan for Swords, resulting in a busy main street and dangerous junctions, pedestrian crossing points, unpleasant footpaths and public space

SOLUTIONS:

- Introduce traffic calming measures and convert Main Street to one way traffic creating more space for the pedestrian to enjoy the experience of the street
- Re-orientate car parking on the street, with a shared surface strategy for the now increased public realm and potential reduced road widths. This proposal will require further specific consultation with all stakeholders.



Potential traffic calming and one way system

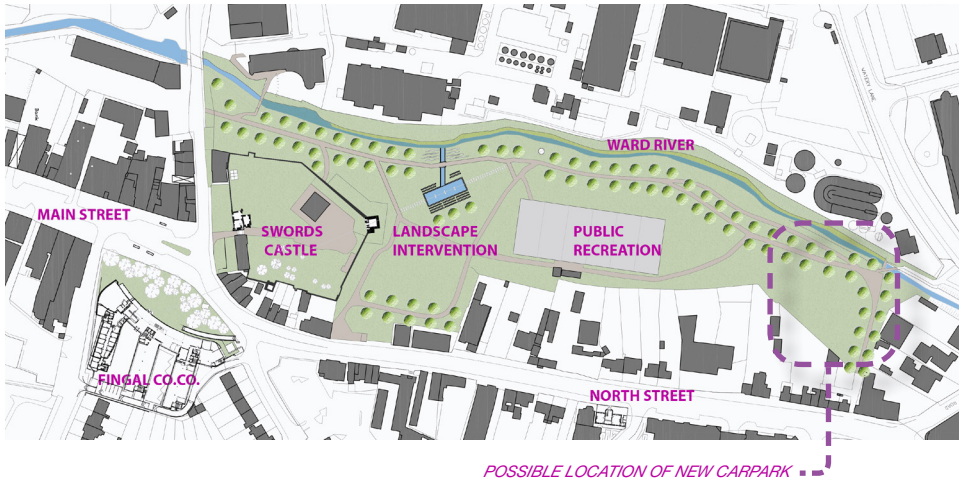
3.6 THE PUBLIC PARK & CAR PARKING

CHALLENGES:

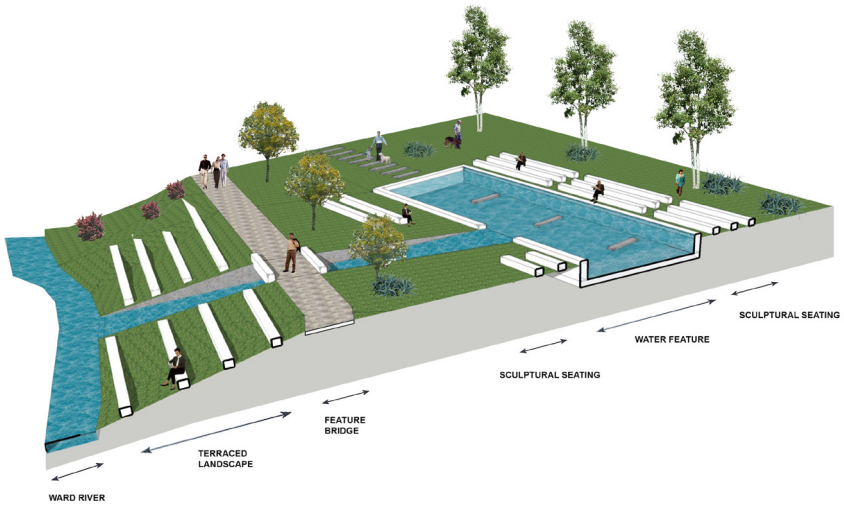
- An amenity located at the 'heart' of the town that is under utilized due to its lack of visual connection to the town and limited access points
- An open space which does not feature as a sufficient attraction for the general public to visit
- Lack of a sustainable car parking solution for the town centre resulting in a proliferation of unauthorised car parking on the streets.

SOLUTIONS:

- Promote the park with the Castle in a reinvention of the public realm, with suitable hard-standing seating areas, landscaped pathways and a water feature
- The relocation or addition of another playground for selected age groups with visual connection to the buildings on North Street could animate the area around the castle for parents and children
- Promote and invest in suitable and sustainable uses for the ground floors of the reinvented buildings on North Street to include cafe, break out spaces with casual/easy seating, multi- use space which can cater for markets, civic uses, artist studios, exhibition spaces, local group spaces for hire, spaces to exhibit the history of Swords and its people etc, with an external "spill out" space with the castle as a backdrop
- Re-introduce the river into the park with terracing works to the river bank, creating a sustainable riverside walk that can extend through the town, allowing seating and active use by all age groups and as a leisure amenity
- Provide a hard-standing area for car parking at the end of the park to allow visitors "park and stride" through the park into the town, thus ensuring footfall and continuous access for the public to the park

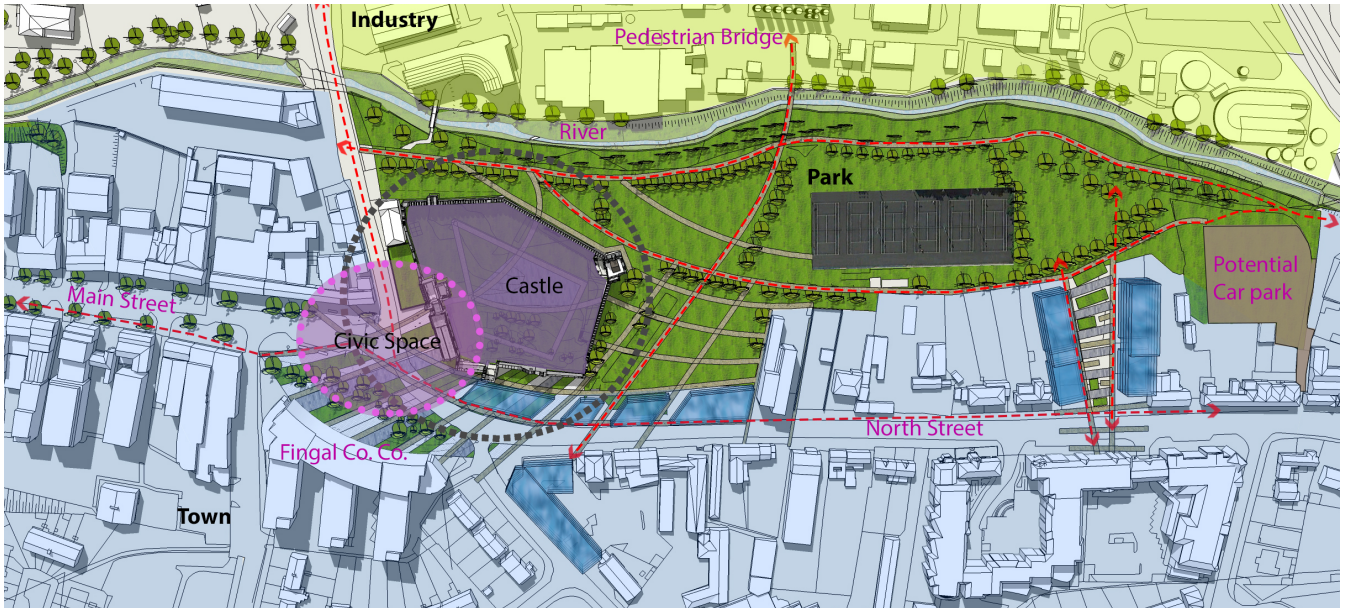


Castle Park - Proposed Landscape Design



Castle Park - Proposed Water Intervention to link to river and animate park

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

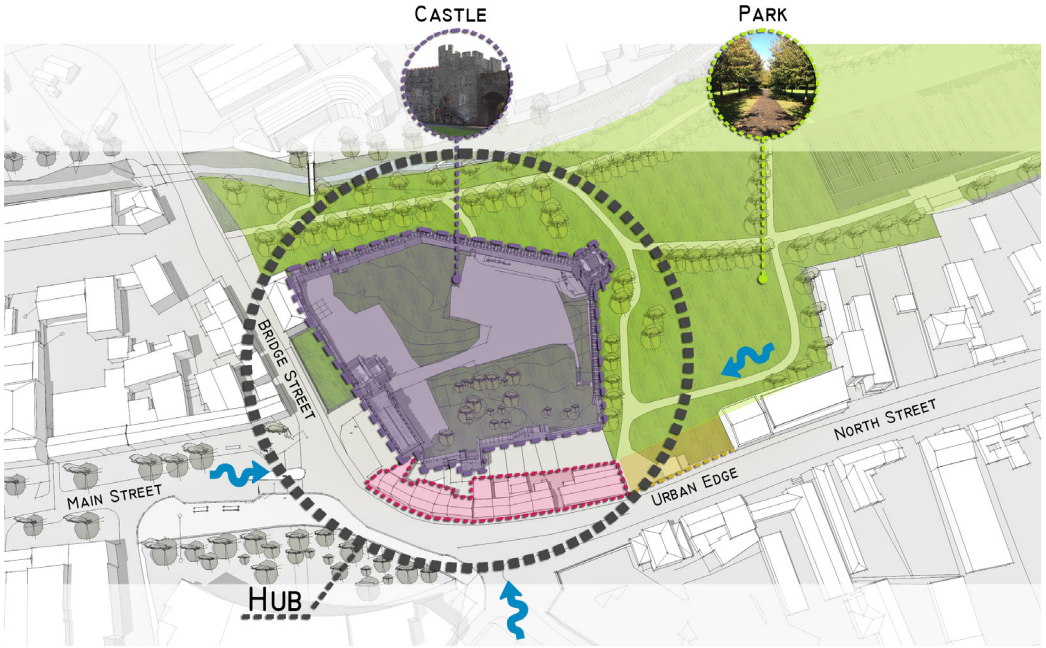


Public Realm - Cultural Quarter

Due to its central and highly accessible location, it was considered appropriate to locate a "hub" of cultural/commercial uses in this locaton which could pay host to events, exhibits, café, meeting places and perhaps performance space. It was also noted that upper floors would be ideal for residential use to provide a new vibrancy and activity to the area. The language developed here will act as a catalyst for future architectural interventions.

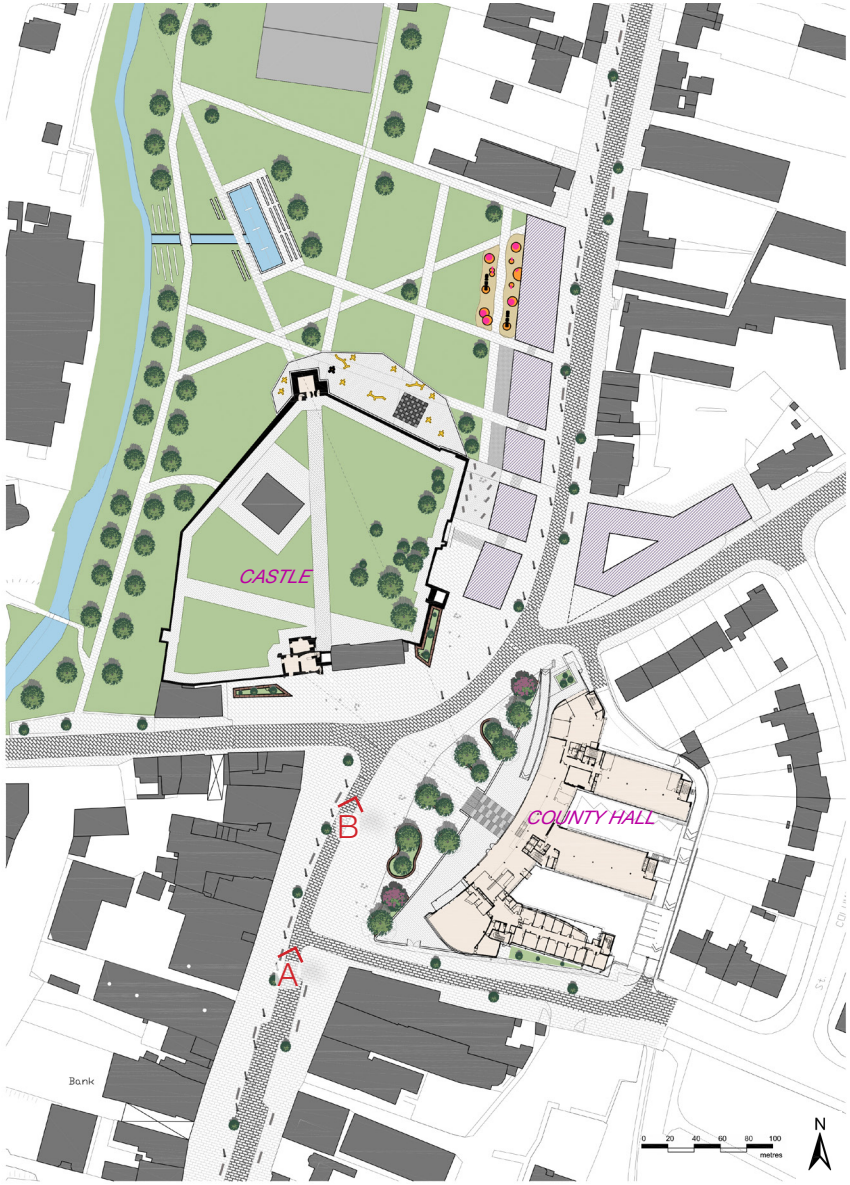
Opportunities to re-use urban edge as uses which provide community gain - "hub"

A review of the castle environs in the project analysis quickly established an opportunity to improve the castle's immediate relationship to the 2 storey buildings on the North Street Urban edge. The derelict buildings present little commercial benefit and are an impediment to both visual and physical access to the castle walls from the South. The buildings also occupy a strategic location, which has good frontage to the street and the civic structures of the Courthouse and the Fingal County Council Offices. It is considered important to protect the strong urban edge of the streetscape and retain the form and immediate footprint of the structures but to re energize the site with a viable use which relates to its context and the emerging civic space at the centre of the town.

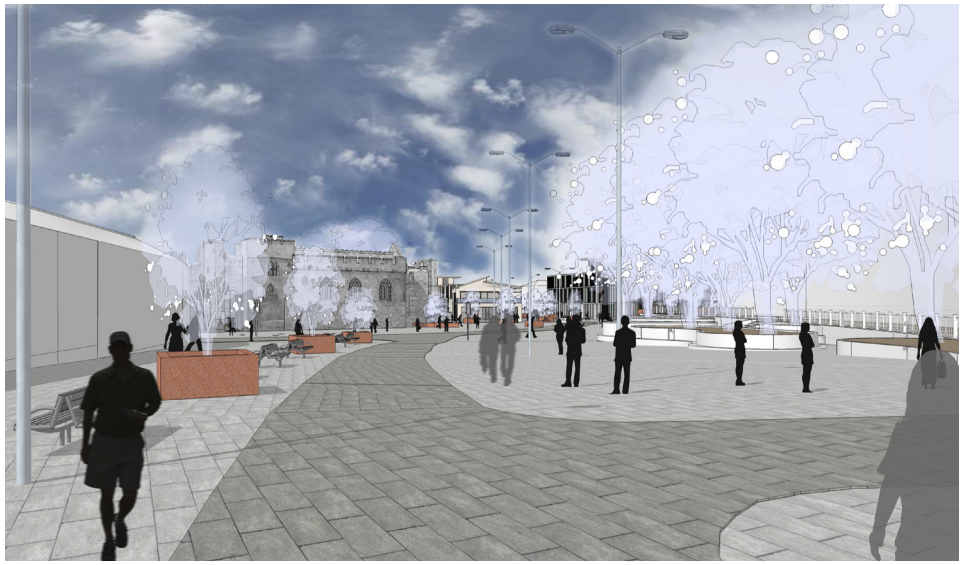


3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3D Views



Public Realm - Design of Public Spaces



View A_Castle Plaza

Introduce traffic calming and introduce one-way traffic to Main Street improving the spatial quality for the pedestrian



View B_Castle Plaza

Upgrade the public realm finishes to the Main Street, North Street, Bridge Street and the areas immediately in the vicinity of the Castle.

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

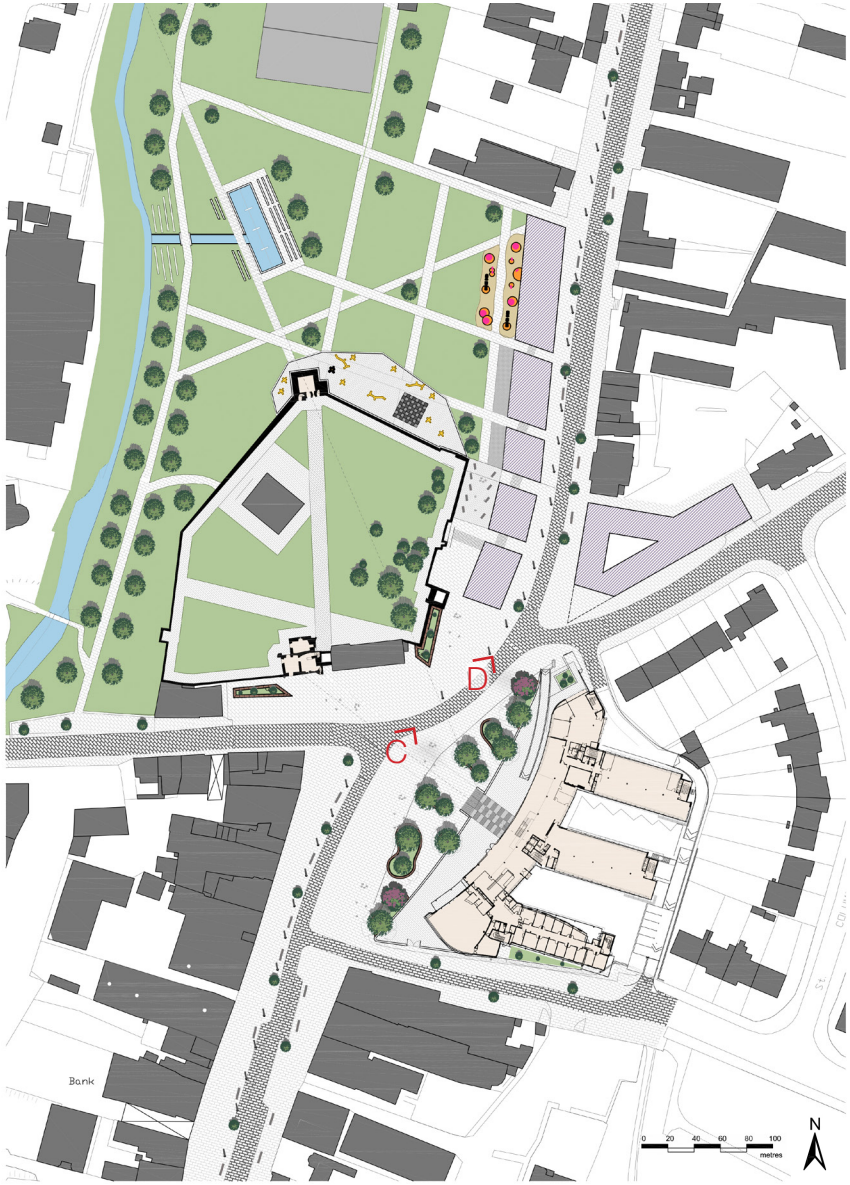
Castle Quarter



Aerial View From SE

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

Castle Quarter



Public Realm - Design of Public Spaces



View C_Proposed Castle Plaza

Include the landscaping, public space and large mature trees in front of the Fingal County Council Offices to bring a higher level of coherence to the space.

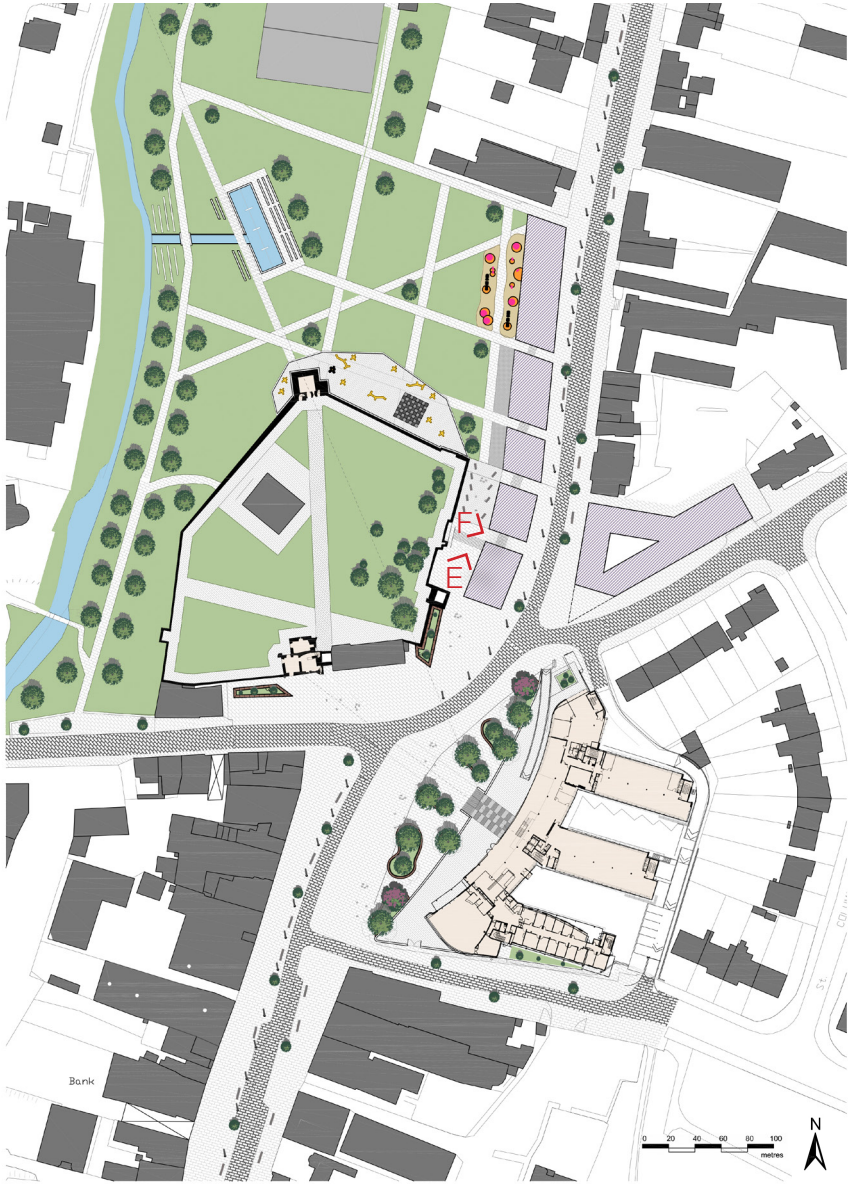


View D_New Civic Building

Linking of the main civic spaces about the Castle by removing FCC boundary fencing and gates, unifying the space and providing raised planters around the trees.

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3D Views



Public Realm - Design of Public Spaces



View E_New Pedestrian Route to Castle Park

Reinvent the buildings located on North Street which back onto the Castle, removing the rear yards utilizing the original building forms which could house suitable retail/ cultural use at ground and residential use above.

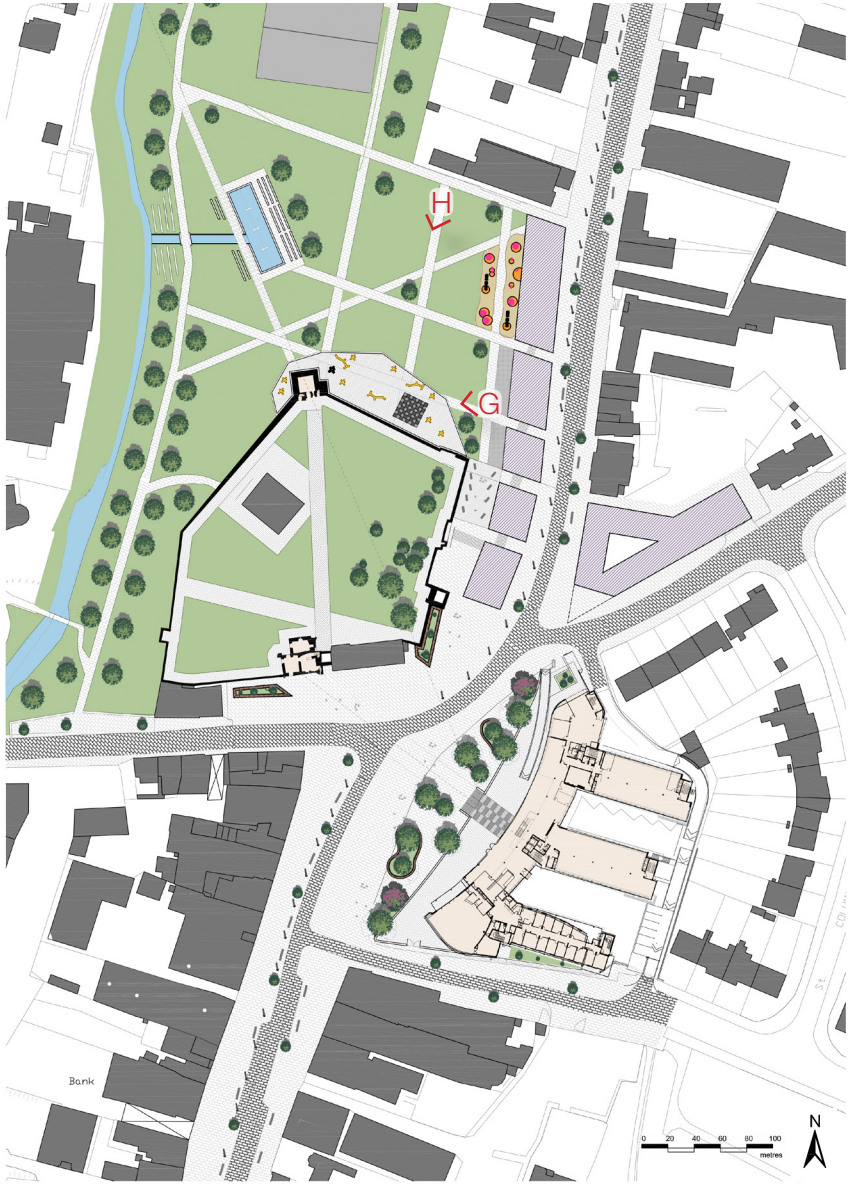


View F_New Pedestrian Links

Ensure the buildings reinforce's the North Street urban edge, and creates openings between the buildings to open vistas into the castle and parkland, and pedestrian access through to the park

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3D Views



Public Realm - Design of Public Spaces



View G_External Performance Space

Promote the park and its grounds with the Castle in a reinvention of the public realm, with suitable hard-standing, seating areas and landscaped pathways.

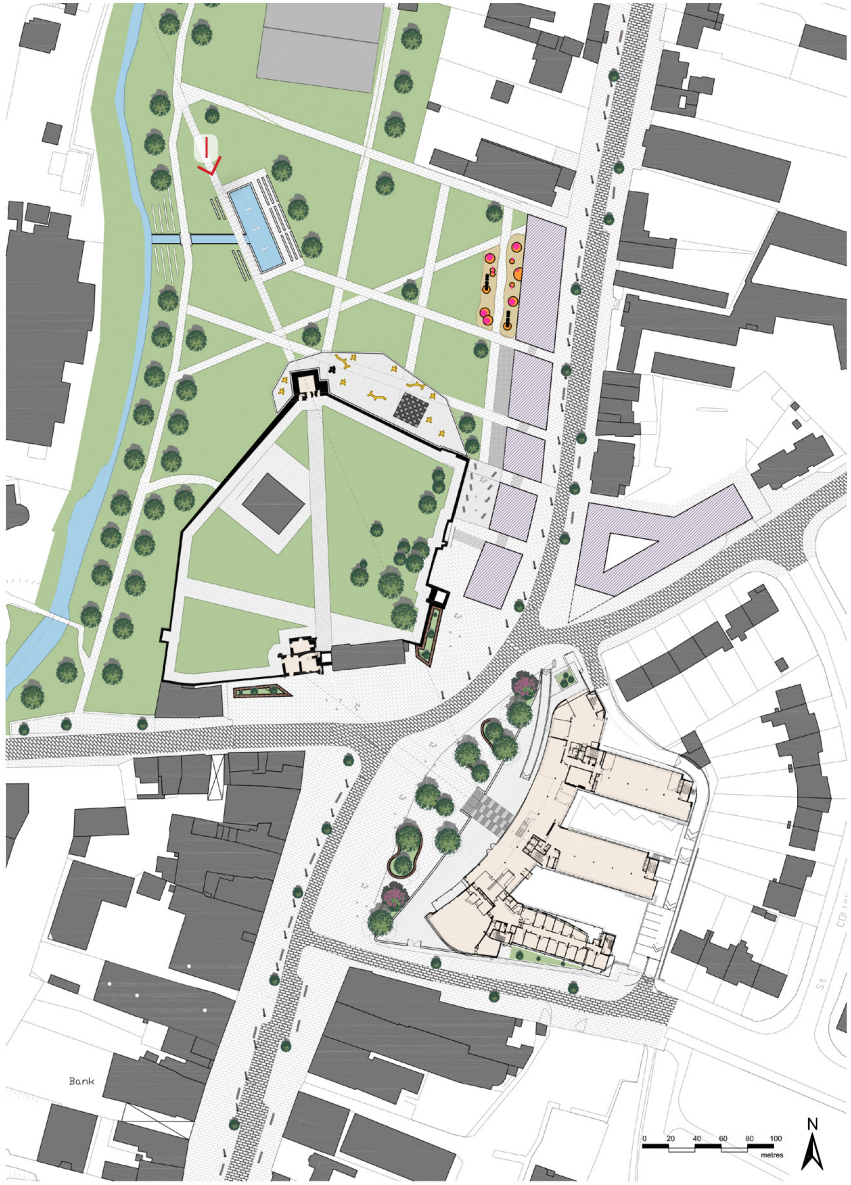


View H_Public Events with Castle Backdrop

This reinvention allows the hardstandings in the park to be used for public events.

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3D Views



Public Realm - Design of Public Spaces



View I_Castle Park Landscape Interventions

The river is re-introduced into the park with terracing works to the river bank, creating a sustainable riverside walk. A water feature enhances the amenity value of the existing river creating a feature with the castle as a backdrop.



Aerial View of Castle Park from North

3.7 THE CASTLE CULTURAL QUARTER

3D Views



Aerial View From SW

4.0 NEXT STEPS

4.1 - PHASING PRIORITIES
4.2 - CURRENT INITIATIVES
4.3 - FUTURE INITIATIVES
4.4 - CONCLUSION

4.1 PHASING PRIORITIES

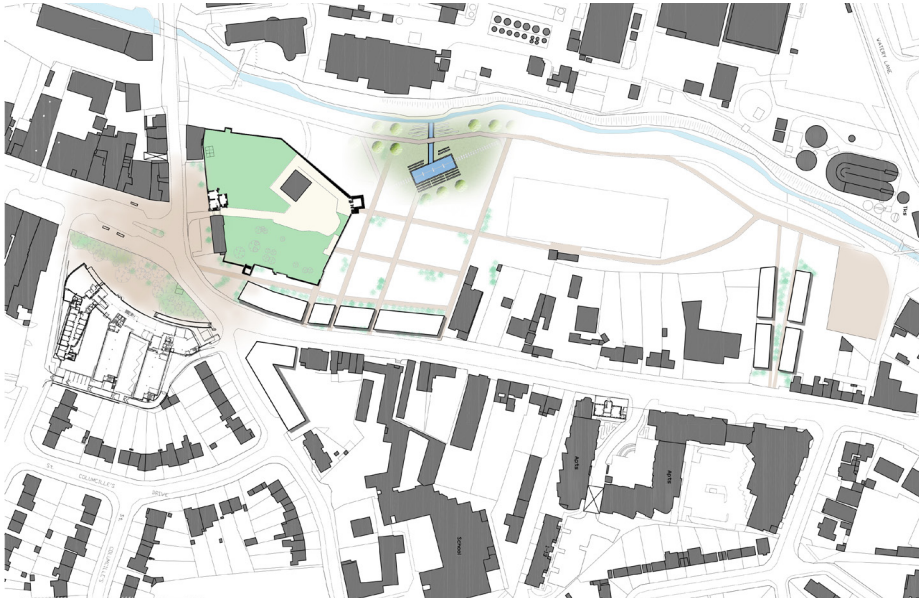
Phasing of Development:



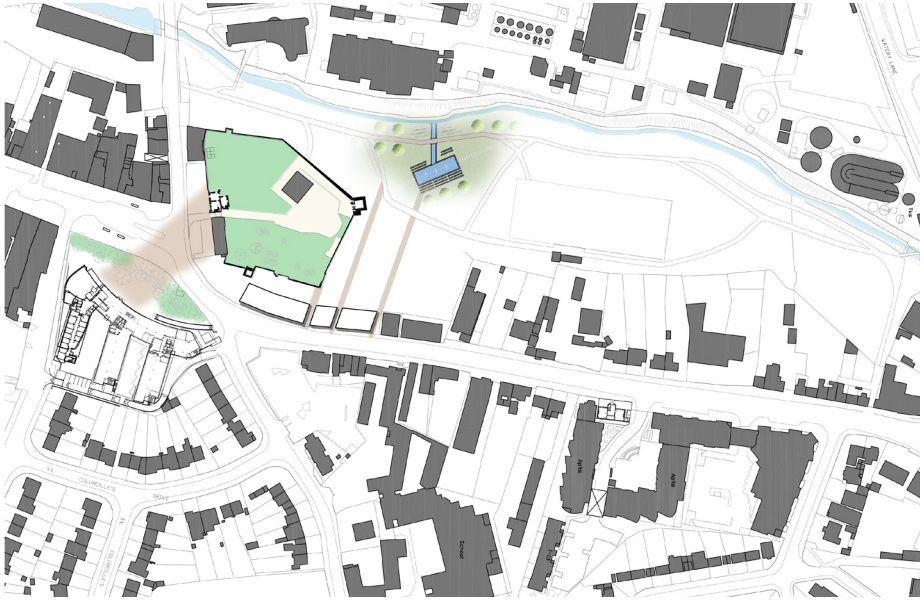
Existing Condition_2015



Phase 01_Removal of derelict buildings to Street edge



Phase 03_Architectural Intervention 01- Potential Car Park



Phase 02_Architectural Intervention 01

4.2 CURRENT INITIATIVES

The Conservation Plan for Swords Castle has been published - this document identifies policies and actions to take the castle onwards into the future ensuring its conservation and accessibility to the public.

A number of projects have been continued / initiated as a result

- The stabilisation of the gatehouse has been completed and post excavation work is continuing.
- A safety audit has been carried out in order to identify works that can be undertaken in the short term to allow the public to safely access the castle in advance of any major projects. These works were carried out and allowed the Castle to be opened on St. Patricks Day. There was a great interest and it will now be possible to open the Castle more frequently.
- New interpretation panels have been designed for the Castle and incorporate content from the Conservation Plan.
- The conservation plan team had a number of geophysical surveys carried out as part of their work. These surveys identified some sub surface anomalies in the central area that are worthy of excavation and models for further excavation are being explored at the moment. It is planned that whatever excavation work takes place there will be public interaction with the process.
- A design team has been procured in order to start design work associated with the reconstruction of the vault over the main entrance in the meantime the crash deck will remain in place.
- A programme of ivy removal will start shortly in the east range walls of the castle. When this is complete the walls will be surveyed and a programme of consolidation devised.



Swords Castle_Gate House



Swords Castle_Enclosing Walls

4.3 FUTURE INITIATIVES

There is a huge opportunity for the people of Swords to now progress the process of future improvement projects for the town. This document has established a framework for the development of future initiatives for the Swords Castle Lands. The masterplan provides a road map for these opportunities which can be implemented on a phased basis. It is not intended to limit the potential or possibilities beyond those stated in the masterplan and indeed it is meant as an interpretation of the potential projects only. It is hoped that it will act as a stimulus for more projects and greater future initiatives by the people of Swords. Some of the sub projects are listed below.

This Masterplan will act as a catalyst for a variety of sub-projects :

- New major central public realm and civic space outside the castle
- A new library building with ancillary public uses to sit alongside the Fingal County Council offices at the civic heart of the town
- Meaningful landscape interventions in the park and the town
- Creation of a Hub or Cultural Quarter on North Street / Main Street

4.4 CONCLUSION

This Masterplan has set out the context, analysis and considerations leading to the development of concepts and sub projects which have been imagined and ingrained in a set of design parameter drawings.

These have been developed to ensure that a robust framework is established for the realisation of the design and construction of the new developments for Swords Castle Cultural Quarter.

Whilst the indicative Masterplan represents just one interpretation of the Masterplan parameter requirements, it corresponds fully to the aspirations identified in the consultation process and represents a clearly set out road map for the development of projects in the future. They are aimed at communicating and responding to the high ambitions of the groups consulted and setting a benchmark for future detailed design.

It is expected that the progression into detailed design processes will provide the opportunity for Fingal County Council to continue in its tradition of achieving the highest level of quality in design and construction and realise high standards of urban design making a new place for Swords based on its cultural life and the goals of its community.

5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 - CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION
5.2 - HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
5.3 - URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS
5.4 - PRECEDENTS

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Fingal County Council commissioned an architectural Masterplan for lands adjoining Swords Castle in the centre of Swords, Co. Dublin.

Preamble

This document presents Fingal County Council's Masterplan for the regeneration of Swords Castle and its environs.

The project is focused on Swords Castle and its environs addressing the issue of regenerating the medieval centre, as the cultural and symbolic centre of Swords which is currently in a dilapidated state. The initiative is multi-layered and includes issues such as identifying cultural uses for the castle, identifying opportunities for new cultural buildings and environmental improvement.

Approach

The Council have promoted an interactive approach to identifying the constraints and opportunities of the study area. In working with Fingal County Council officer's, local knowledge has been brought together with a fresh perspective offered by the consultant team. We joined and participated in consultation with local citizens of Swords designed and arranged by Fingal County Council.

A long term sustainable phased project has been identified as desirable for this area of Swords. Several potential elements have been identified;

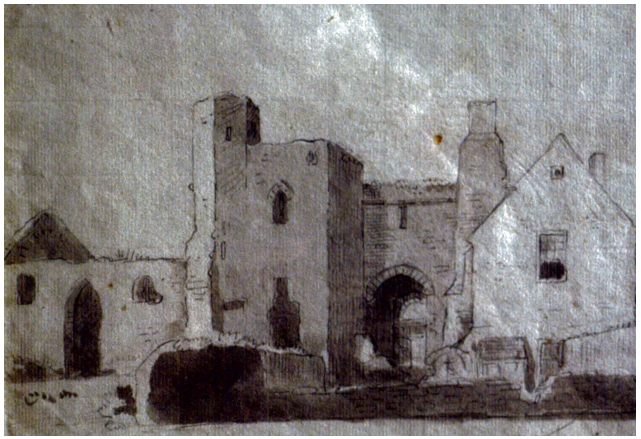
1. Environmental improvements to the public realm in the area to reinforce the identity of the area as a place within the town of Swords.
2. Works to Swords Castle as identified in its recently completed Conservation Plan.
3. The initiation and continuance of cultural events within and around the castle.
4. Development of space within the area to encourage the development of the area as a place for artistic endeavour
5. To develop the Castle, Park and Environs for Cultural Tourism activities.
6. To explore the area as a location for Swords Public Library and Civic Theatre.

The following chapters introduce the background to the study, outlines the objectives and examines the study area within the following context;

- Historical context
- Economic context
- Commercial context
- Social context
- Physical context
- Cultural / tourist context

The subsequent chapters address the key issues of the study and include the development of new approaches, programmes for action, and implementation strategies involving partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors in Swords.

Swords is the administrative capital of Fingal County Council. It has been identified as an Metropolitan Consolidation Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.



Pen & Wash drawing of Swords Castle 1790_Francis Grose
Antiquities of Ireland

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Issues

The Architectural Masterplan for the Historic Centre of Swords is undertaken within the structure of a clearly defined policy framework and philosophy set out in the Fingal County Council Development Plan. Account has been taken of the Green Paper on the Urban Environment to which the European Commission brief for the Action Plan makes reference.

The following fundamental issues are recognised:

- The need to adopt a holistic view of the study area and promote a balanced approach to land-use, urban transport, environmental and local community issues;
- The "essence" of the European city both in terms of role performance of the Historic Centre at city, district, local area, street and building scales. This is of particular importance to urban quality and standards in Swords relative to other European centres;
- Reduction of dependence on the car by promoting public transport, cyclist and pedestrian activity in the city. Urban density is also a means of reducing car use;
- Creating liveable cities by reintroduction of residential development in the Environs of Swords Castle.
- Developing mixed uses in order to create diverse sustainable environments which are attractive to the urban dweller and promote local economic activity;
- Enabling mechanisms involving partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors in initiating, developing, implementing and managing urban regeneration projects;
- The development of the heritage potential of the Swords Castle in attracting tourism activity and creation of jobs.

3D Views of Existing Castle and Environs



View from South West



View from South



View from East



Birds Eye - View from South West

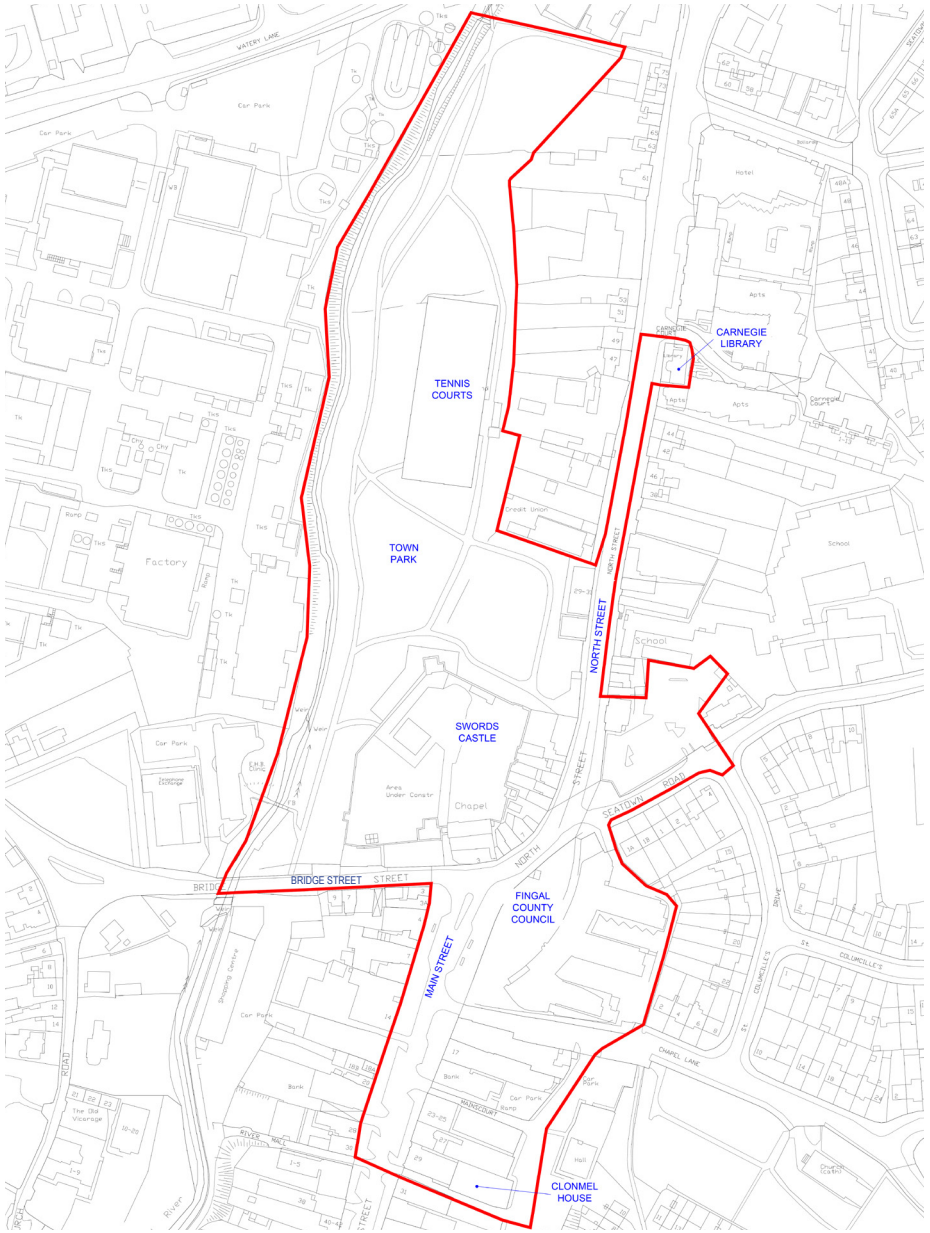
5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Fingal County Council has recognised the potential value of the “placemaking” within Swords town and seeks to provide a civic/cultural place for;

- Visitors: to provide them with an interesting, engaging and enjoyable discovery of this towns historic significance and contemporary appeal
- Citizens: to provide an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the heritage of their area and to facilitate the provision of civic/ cultural facilities.
- Business community: to provide opportunities to benefit from this initiative through participation and collaboration processes.
- Stakeholders: to provide a shared agenda for achieving respective objectives.

The new Castle Quarter Masterplan in view of the above will seek to;

- Reinforce the Castle as both a backdrop to and focus for the town
- Redefine the towns relationship with the Castle and the Town park



FCC_Swords Castle Masterplan Area

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Workshops

A series of workshop consultations were run by Fingal County Council on specialist topic areas with key stakeholders invited to participate and put forward their perceptions of the problems and potentials of the study area. The topics include:

- Conservation and heritage development;
- Retail and business development;
- Tourism and cultural development;

Public Consultation

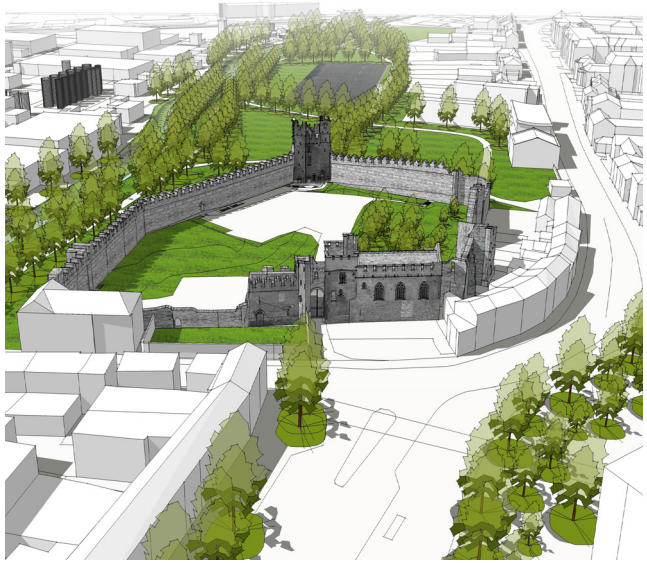
In addition to the workshops, key people and organisations have been consulted on a wide range of issues. These include:

- Elected members of Fingal County Council;
- Community Groups;
- Tourism interests;
- Arts and Cultural interests;
- Business leaders and associations;
- Members of the public via street conversations
- Tidy Towns
- Historical Society
- Local Artists
- Fingal County Council Staff

The urban analysis and the consultation process also highlighted the town centre's major assets, such as its heritage, streets and landmark buildings. Surprisingly, many of these are, as yet, untapped or not fully exploited.



Swords Artists Workshop



Aerial 3D Image_Existing Swords Castle From South

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Background

Swords has direct links to the national road network (M1 and M50) and is located on the Dublin Belfast economic corridor which is identified as a key national transport corridor in the National Spatial strategy. Swords is located north and adjacent to Dublin Airport. Swords lies at the confluence of the Ward and Broadmeadow Rivers at the head of the Malahide (Broadmeadow) Estuary which is a special protection area (SPA) and a special area of conservation (SAC). In the long term, it is envisaged that Swords will grow significantly up to a population of 100,000.

Fingal County Council's long term development strategy for Swords is contained in 'Your Swords-An Emerging City Strategic Vision 2035' published in 2009 and contains the vision to"develop Swords as an Emerging Green City", to promote and facilitate the sustainable development of Swords as a vibrant consolidated major town with a thriving economy, an integrated public transport network, an attractive and highly accessible built environment, with the highest standards of housing, employment services, recreational amenities and community facilities".

While the delivery of Metro North has been postponed, the Strategic Vision for Swords as a long term objective remains applicable, with interim high capacity public transport solutions such as BRT being promoted in the short-term to allow the County Town develop sustainably.

A Master Plan for Swords was also approved by the County Council in 2009 in which the vision for the town centre encompasses the following aspirations for the town; "*A thriving town centre, quality of Life, A Cultural Destination, An Attractive Public realm and a Sustainable Town centre*". While the aspirations of this Masterplan are retained, a short to medium term pragmatic response to the immediate needs of the community is required. This updated and 'Swords Castle' focussed Masterplan should respect the long-term strategic objectives of the Council as they relate to Swords, but more critically will be required to facilitate the delivery of a new social and cultural destination centred around Swords Castle and linking back to the retail heart of the town.

A key aspect of the opportunity presented by the cultural offer of any town is the growing importance of the relationship between towns / cities and culture. Successful towns/cities use their cultural heritage to strengthen, amongst other things, their urban identity. An identity built on cultural heritage is not only considered to be a key factor in attracting potential residents and enterprise but it is also seen as a tool for branding and marketing the town/city as a destination for visitors. Throughout Europe, cultural heritage is steadily gaining importance as a vital asset in developing and strengthening a distinctive identity to attract visitors, engage citizens and promote enterprise. Cultural heritage is more and more being regarded as the key to unlocking the potential of having a distinct urban identity.



Swords Castle & Park

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Description of Swords

Swords is unofficially the largest town in the Republic of Ireland and is administrated by Fingal County Council. The Greater Fingal Area has a population of approximately 42,738 .

Swords is a major regional centre for commerce, industry, culture and education. It is also an important entry point for visitors to the region, serviced by the M1 which is the main link road which connects Dublin to Dundalk and on to Belfast.



Swords In Context

Planning Policy and Framework

• North-East Corridor
Emphasis on Manual Employment and Tourism: This initiative involves a policy of remedial economic interventions, located in a corridor extending southwards from Blarney, through the north side of the city and eastwards to Little Island, Cobh and Middleton. The development of tourist attractions is an important element in this initiative.

• Urban Density/Transport
This initiative is designed to minimise congestion and adverse environmental effects which might otherwise occur if the decline in city population and the growth scattered rural housing were allowed to continue unchecked.

This is to be achieved by improving transport choice in the city, extending transport choice from suburbs and outlying towns by improving bus services, and containing decentralising tendencies by renewal near the City Centre and consolidation at the edge of the city.

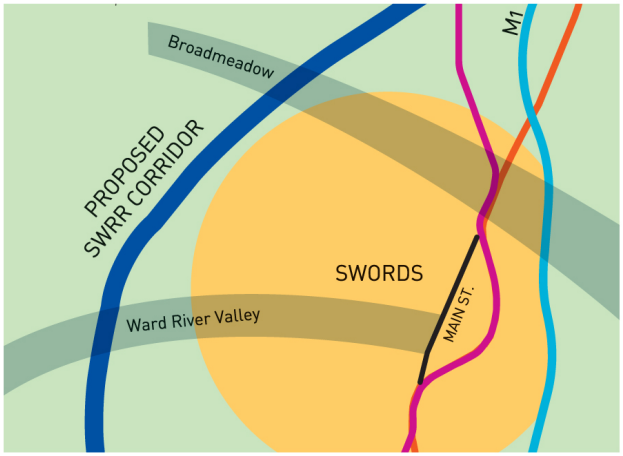
• The importance of Swords Main Street
The review also stressed the importance of an interesting and lively town centre and the need to reverse the current decline in Town Centre employment and population. The achievement of these objectives also implies the maintenance and enhancement of its physical fabric and historic character.

In order to continue this trend, and to reverse the fall in the Main Street employment and population, the Development Plan set out the following objectives:
Maintaining and developing policies to help existing uses in the Main Street, while at the same time adjusting them to take account of recent shifts in development practice;

Encouraging innovation in types of development and new types of economic activity, making use of the Main Street and tourist attractions to help such activity;

Taking additional measures to ensure the vacant property comes on to the market in worthwhile quantities at realistic prices, and to discourage the practice of holding vacant property as an investment asset rather than for use or development.

Swords Western Ring Road (SWRR) – This new road is proposed to act as a by-pass of Swords at a strategic level, providing a more direct and efficient route from the M1 to the proposed Dublin Airport Box (new road network). The SWRR will also serve the proposed strategic park and ride, minimizing the amount of traffic utilizing limited carrying capacity on the existing and proposed local road network in Swords.



Swords Western Ring Road

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Location

The lands are defined as the area at the junction of Main Street/North Street and Bridge Street where there are town civic uses including Fingal County Hall, home of Fingal County Council, The Court House, The Carnegie Library, Fingal County Council Archives and Swords Castle. It includes the surrounding roads; Main Street, Chapel Lane, North Street, Bridge Street and Seatown Road. The Town Park which runs the full length of North Street behind the western building line is also within the study area.

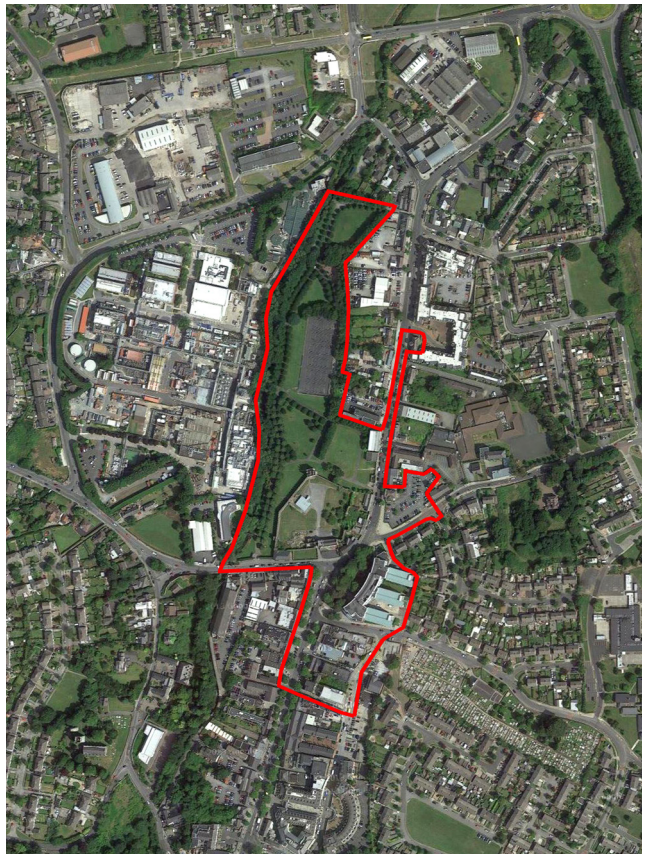
Land Ownership / Area Boundary

The site comprises core streets at the north end of Main Street. The ownership of the study area is mixed public and private. The study area boundary is shown on the aerial image of Swords and map below.

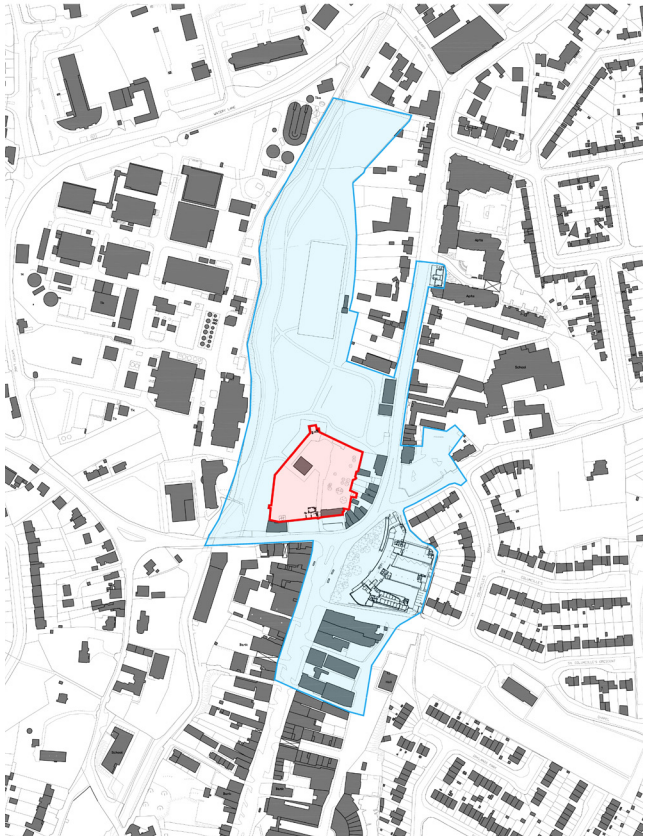
Red : Swords Castle
Blue: Swords Castle Masterplan Study Area

Spatial Context

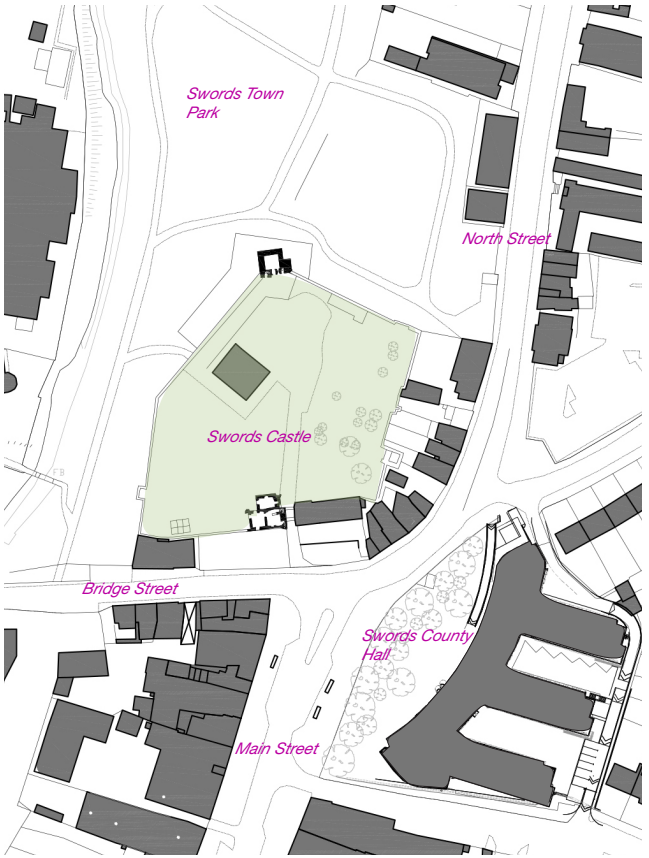
The Castle lands are located at the northern end of Swords Main Street. With the exception of Swords Castle the context is that of the two storey Irish provincial town. Swords Town Park provides a backdrop to the lands. The lands form a node point for Swords town.



Aerial Image_Swords



Study Area_Swords Castle & Environs



Spatial Context_Swords Castle & Environs

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Access

Primary vehicular access to the study area is via Swords Main Street, North Street, Bridge Street and Seatown Road.

A number of traffic and transportation reports and studies have been prepared for Swords by Fingal County Council. There may be opportunities to influence and adjust current movement and parking patterns where there is a positive gain to the public realm and civic/ cultural quarter.



Swords Town Center_Traffic Routes



Swords Town Center Strategy_An Emerging City Strategic Vision

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Zoning and Planning Objectives

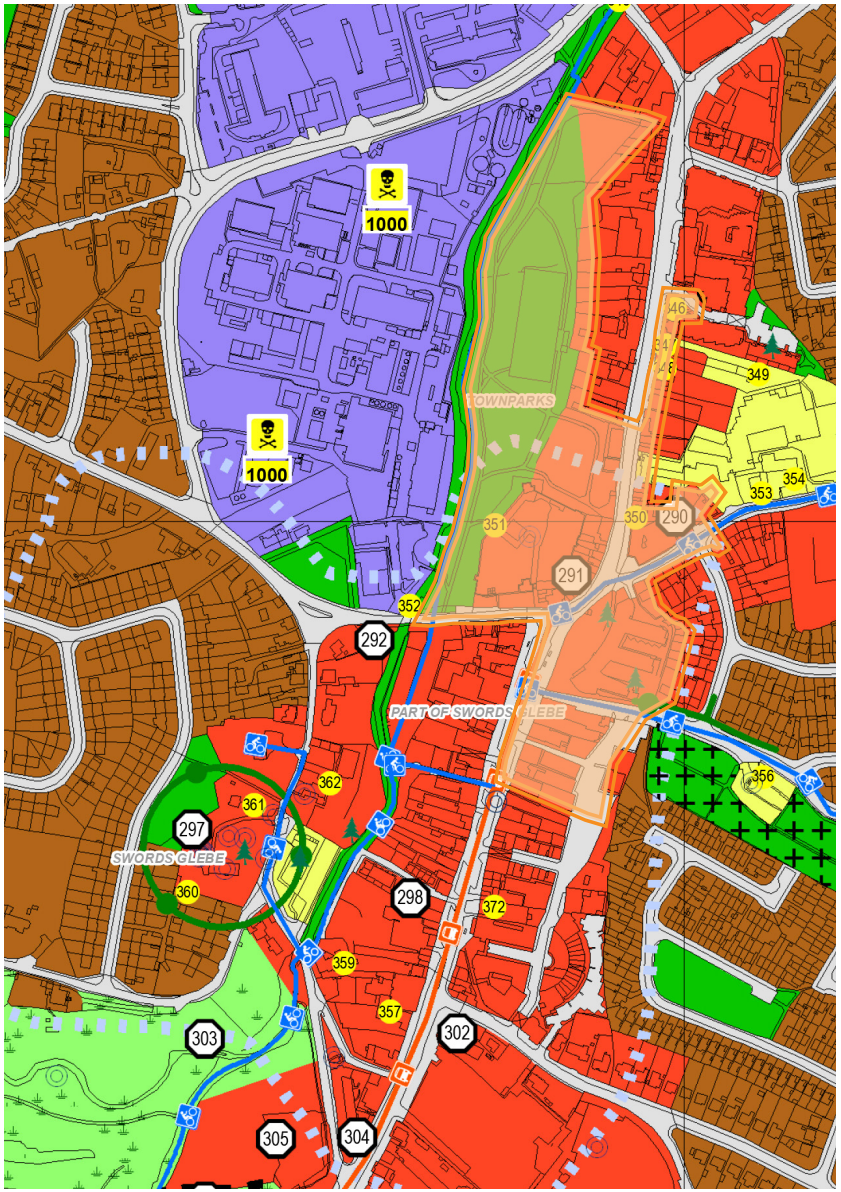
The lands within the Master Plan area are zoned MC – i.e. Major Town Centre and OS –Open Space (de facto Town Parks)

MC zoning comprises the following objective and vision. "Objective: Protect, provide for an/or improve major town centre facilities.

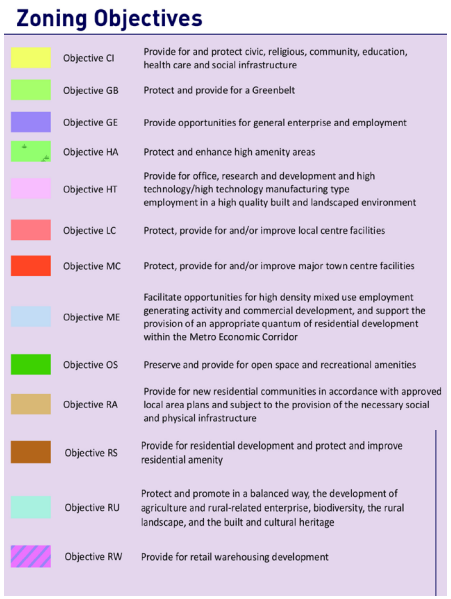
Vision: Consolidate the existing Major Towns in the County, (Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan). The aim is to further develop these centres by densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses, and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment which will enhance the quality of life of resident, visitor and workers alike. The zone will strengthen retail provision in accordance with the County Retail Strategy, emphasise urban conservation, ensure priority for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists while minimising the impact of private car based traffic and enhance and develop the existing urban fabric. In order to deliver this vision and to provide a framework for sustainable development, master plans will be prepared for each centre in accordance with the Urban Fingal Chapter objectives."

There are also 2no. relevant local objectives 290 and 291, which read:
'Promote the redevelopment of this prominent key corner site adjacent to Swords Castle and County Hall, for civic uses in a manner which will enhance the character and range of the uses in the town core' and 'Promote the development of a Civic Quarter in Swords'.

A review of the County's retail strategy will be undertaken as part of the preparatory work relating to the County Development Plan review which formally commences in March 2015. Where appropriate recommendations to influence the scope of this review may be considered.



Fingal Development Plan_Development Area



Swords Castle development area highlighted in Orange

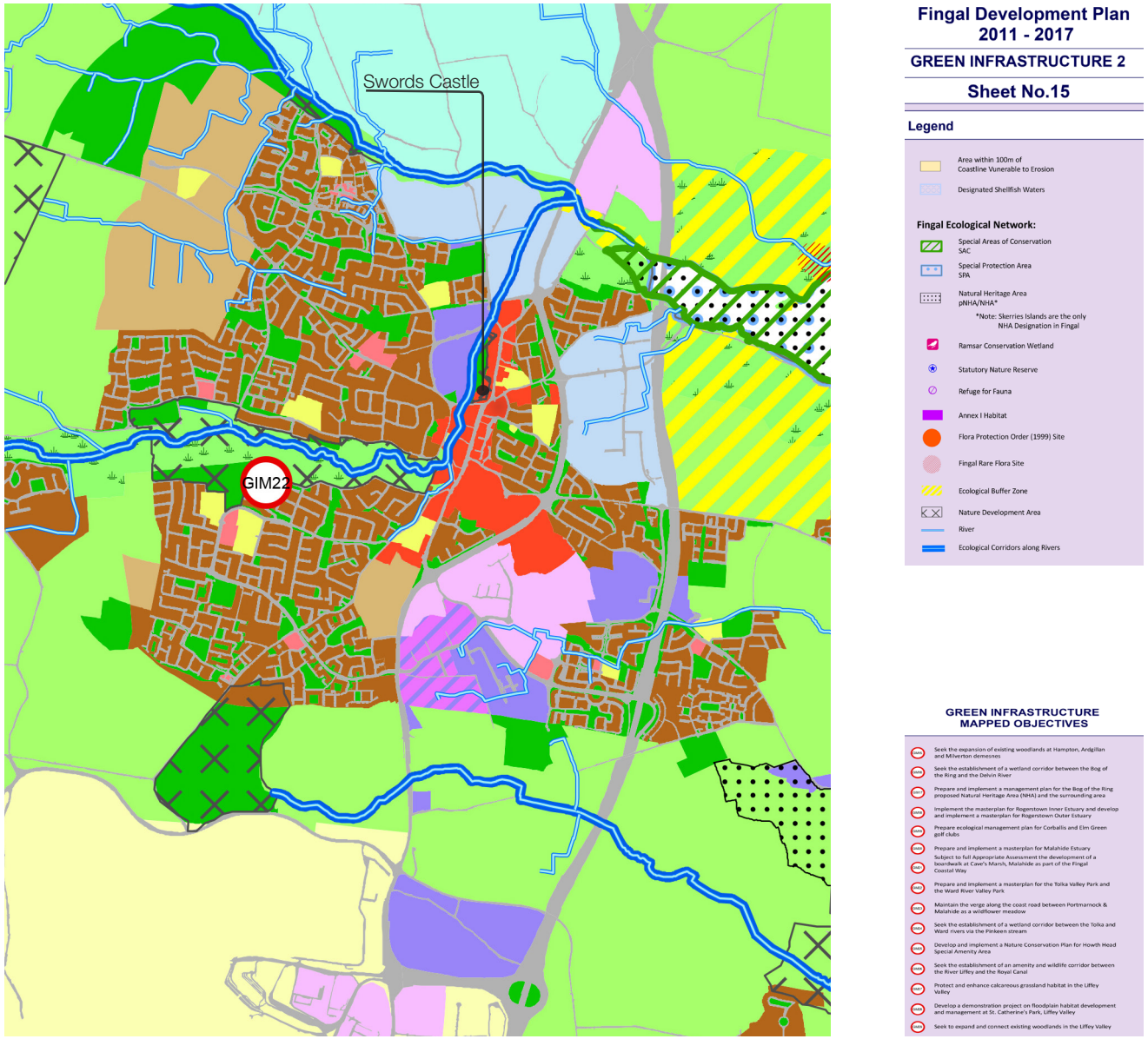
5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Zoning and Planning Objectives

Swords Town, Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure means the interconnected networks of land and water all around us that sustain environmental quality and enrich our lives. It provides space for biodiversity and the natural systems which regulate temperature, reduce storm flows, provide us with clean water and air, and a multitude of other benefits. These benefits include high-quality accessible parks and open spaces which provide health benefits for all including space for children to play, a meeting place for people and can also provide for the provision of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes.

Key elements of green infrastructure for Swords are the Ward River Valley Park, the Ward River which flows through the town, and the Town Park. The development of the Cultural Quarter provides opportunities to enhance the links from the existing Town Park to the Ward River Valley Park via the Ward River town walk.



Fingal Development Plan_Green Infrastructure

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Existing Swords Strategic Vision Masterplan

'Your Swords An Emerging City - Strategic Vision 2035' points out key nodes of attraction in Swords town centre. These three proposed key nodes were intended to ensure the vibrancy and activity of Swords Main Street is developed into the future. It was intended that these nodes would build on the existing character areas of the Town through the strengthening and development of links between the Main Street, the Pavilions Shopping Centre site and the Crowcastle / Barrysparks site.

The town center nodes were described as the Civic Quarter, the Cultural Quarter and the Metro Quarter. There were two ancillary nodes identified, these being Balheary Park and the proposed Leisure Node within the south-eastern extent of the Crowcastle / Barrysparks land.

The Town Center nodes are described in 'Your Swords' as follows:

1. Civic Quarter
It was proposed to build on the evolving civic core uses at the junction of Main Street / North Street where the existing grouping of civic uses include the Council offices, the Courthouse, and the Castle, which was the historic governing centre of the Town. This area at the junction of Main Street / North Street was intended to be designated as a Civic Quarter, where it was intended to build on the existing location of specialised uses in this area, thereby strengthening the attraction of the northern end of Main Street. As part of the enhancement of this area, a public realm strategy will be developed and implemented in front of the Swords Castle at the junction of Main Street / North Street.



Swords Town Center

2. Cultural Quarter
Swords is at present poorly represented in terms of its cultural attractiveness. To this end, a Cultural Quarter was proposed at the southern end of Main Street / Dublin Road. The Cultural Quarter was intended to serve as the terminus of Main Street to the south and the Civic Quarter would complement this at the northern end.

The Cultural Quarter will include culturally focussed uses, such as a town library, theatre, galleries and arts centre. It was envisaged that the library and theatre would be of a scale similar to that provided at Blanchardstown. This area will accommodate a direct pedestrian connection through the Pavilions site to the Metro Quarter and links into the Ward River Valley Park. A public square was intended to be the central focus and setting to the cultural buildings and the scale of the public space would be capable of supporting outdoor performance, outdoor dining, performance art, promenade as well as meeting/seating spaces.

3. Metro Quarter
It was intended that Swords town Centre would be served by a Metro North stop located centrally on the R132 in proximity to the Pavilions Shopping Centre and Crowcastle/Barrysparks site. This was to be the primary stop which would serve the town of Swords and therefore would have a number of important functions and roles.

The Swords Metro North stop was described as being distinguishable from other stops by the following elements:

- A high quality well designed public realm plaza above the Metro line;
- An accessible public transport interchange point for buses, taxis and cyclists over the R132;
- An integrated movement network, which accommodates vehicular movements routes east and west under the R132
- High-quality and architecturally significant Town Centre developments east and west of the stop, which will be fully integrated with the stop.



Swords Town Center Strategy_An Emerging City Strategic Vision

National Transport Authority_BRT Route

'National Transport Authority- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)' has emerged as a high quality, cost efficient and effective public transport system. The system aims to create links between strategic transport nodes with the aim of creating a public transport network which rivals the amenity characteristics, service and performance quality of modern light rail-based public transportation systems but at a lower cost.

The BRT transport system for Dublin City and surrounding areas is named 'Swiftway'. The three corridors proposed to be developed as routes are:

- City Centre Network
- Blanchardstown to UCD
- Clongriffin to Tallaght
- Swords to City Centre

The advantages provided by the BRT system, such as flexibility, reliability and cost, combined with the higher capacities achieved on existing bus corridors means that the system becomes an attractive alternative to car transport going into the future.

Swiftway
Bus Rapid Transit



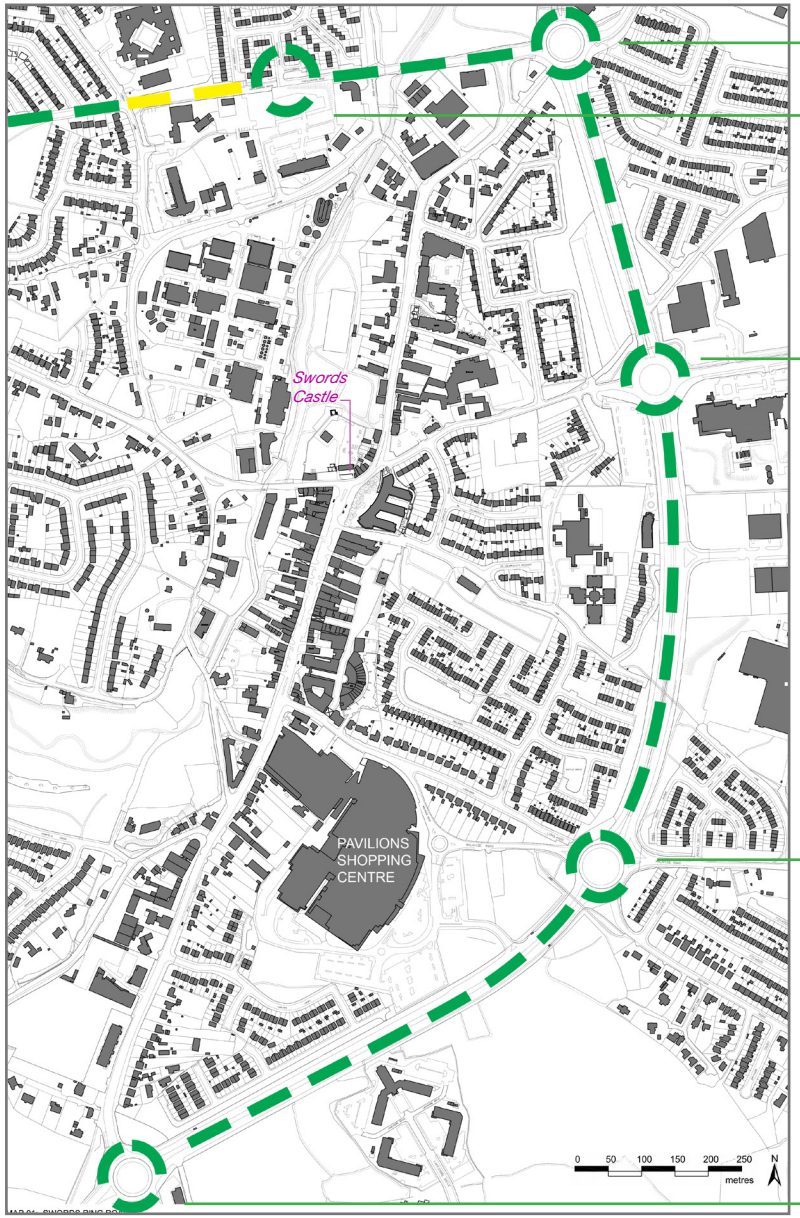
Swords - City Centre_Emerging Preferred Route
Swords North to Dublin Airport

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

National Transport Authority_BRT Route

The Swiftway connections in Swords become an important consideration when planning for the future pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular routes within the town. Swords must build on the benefits of the proposed Swiftway stops and use them to the advantage of the town and its community as a whole, creating a thriving civic, retail and cultural centre.





Estury

Castlegrange

Swords North

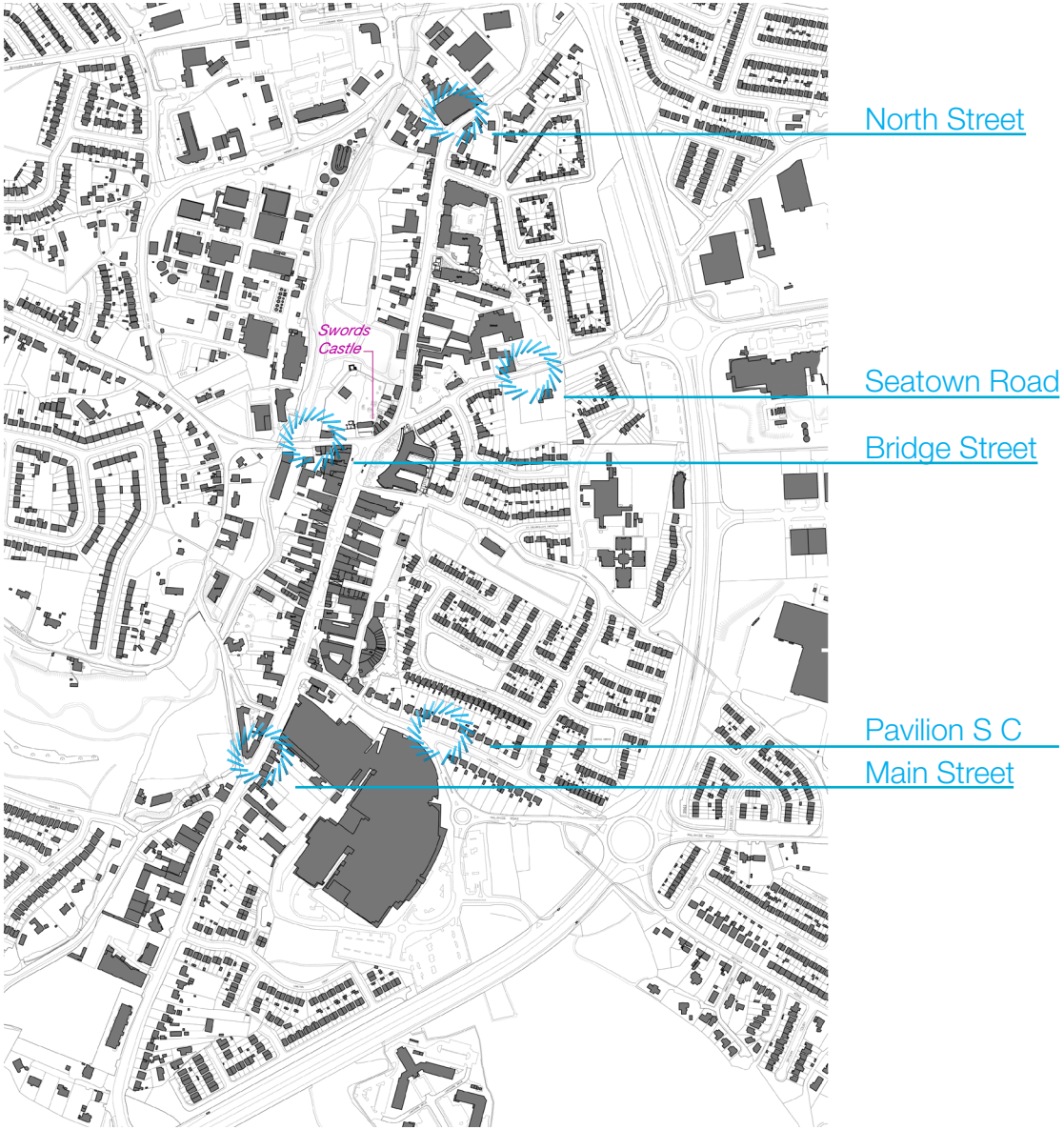
Swords Central

Pinnockhill

5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Gateways to Swords

Gateways are an important consideration in relation to entry to any town. Perceptions are developed by visitors of the public realm through their own interpretations of the entry route. How gateways lead pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles into their destination spaces are an important consideration when designing movements strategies at both macro and micro levels.

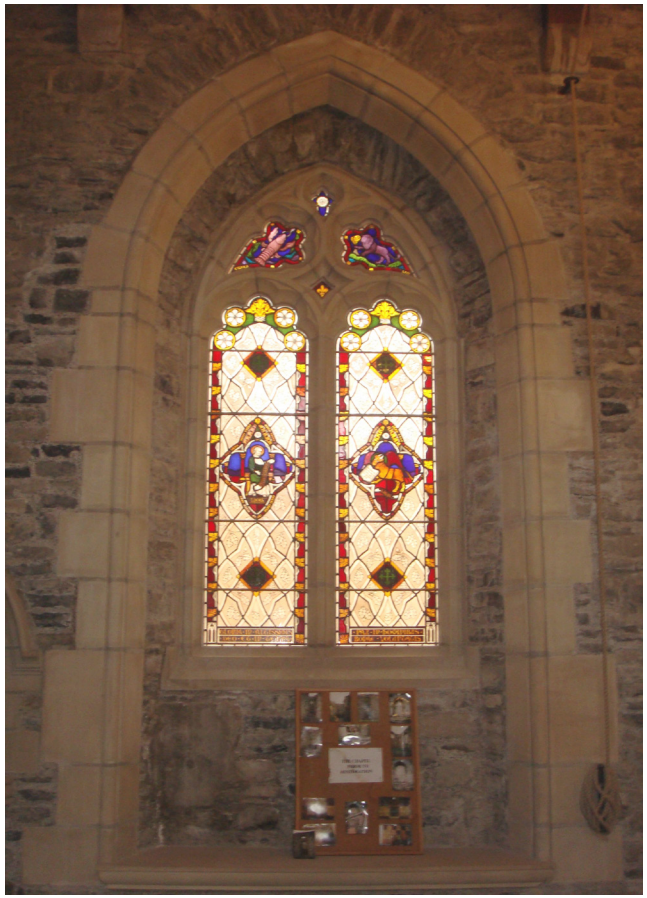


5.1 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Historic Centre Action Plan Objectives

Fingal County Council's proposal for a study of the problems and potential of the Swords Castle Conservation of European Cities Programme supported by the European Commission. The purpose of the study is to develop in detail, in consultation with local interests, proposals in the Town Centre Development Plan, identify sources of funding and set out an implementation programme. The study objectives are to:

- Restore rundown historic parts of the Town and respect the architectural and historic fabric in any solutions adopted;
- Develop mixed functions/land uses;
- Produce solutions for resolving problems related to the environmental impact of traffic and improve public transport;
- Reintegrate the Castle area into the social, economic and commercial life of the Town and County.
- Develop actions for incorporation into the Community Support Fund framework;
- Bring together other "actors" in the city.



Chapel - Swords Castle

Desktop Studies

A large body of source material is available on the study area and its context covering a broad range of subjects including:

- Archaeology and historical development of Swords
- Planning and transport policies;
- Special area studies;
- Retail demand studies;
- Tourism reports.

Site Surveys and Mapping

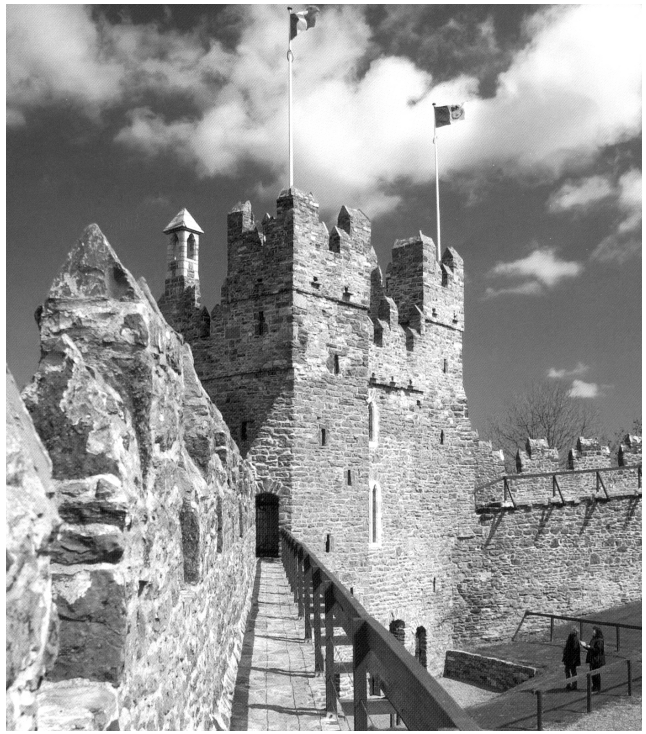
A series of surveys and mapping exercises of the study area have been undertaken which include:

- Photographic survey;
- Land-use and building occupancy surveys;
- Site familiarisation visits by the consultant team;
- Mapping of study area to identify land ownership's, planning applications, green structure, etc;

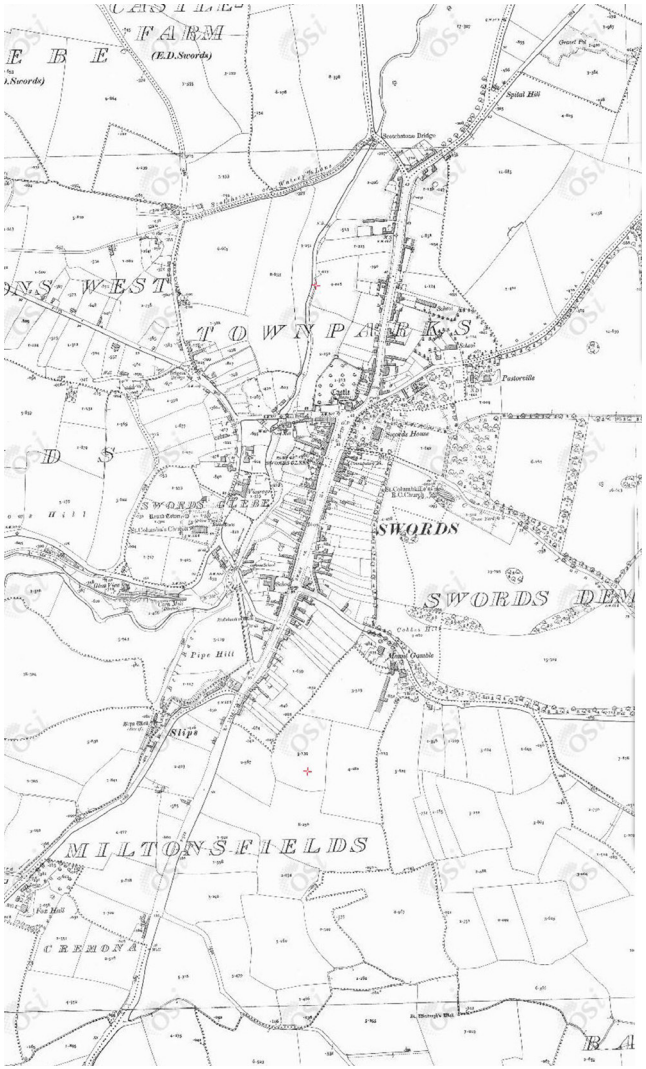
5.2 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Swords Castle

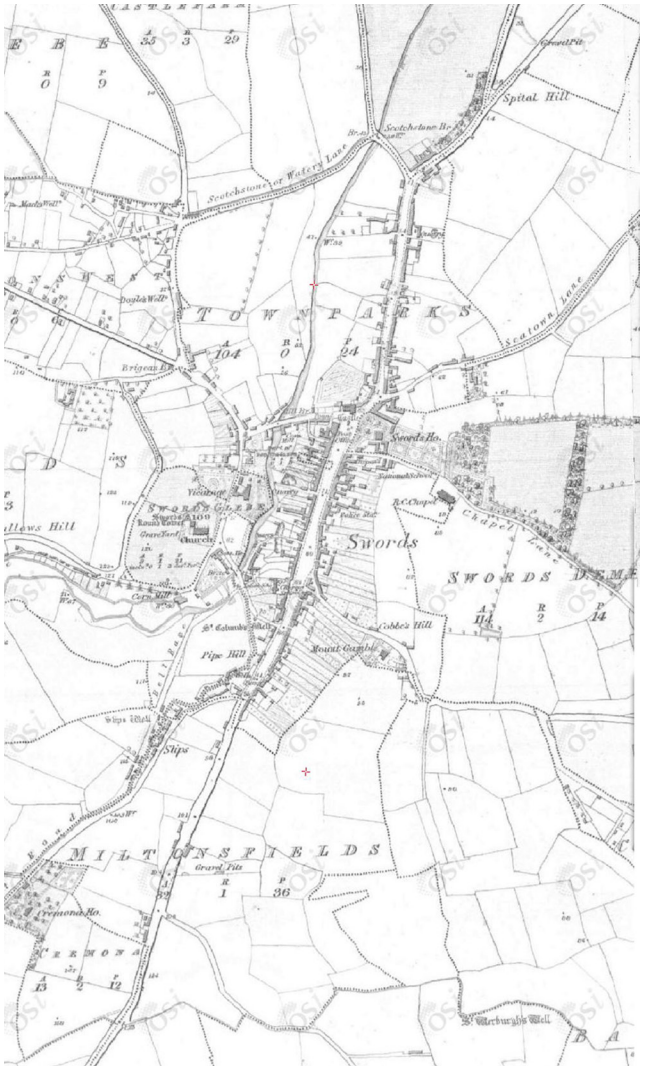
Swords Castle was one of the medieval palaces of the archbishops of Dublin and dates from the time of Archbishop John Comyn in the 12th century. It is the best upstanding example of a medieval palace in Ireland. The castle was never strong in the military sense, but is unusual in that the perimeter wall of 305 metres is for larger than normal for an Irish Castle.



Swords Castle - 2014



Swords Ordnance Survey Ireland_ circa.1897-1913



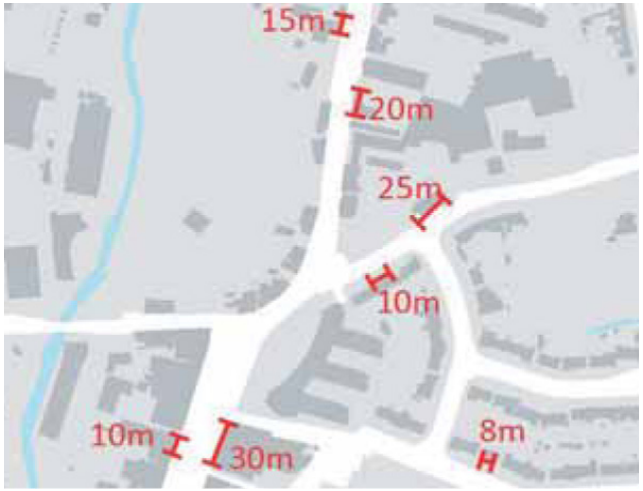
Swords Ordnance Survey Ireland_ circa.1929-1941

5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Urban Grain

The historic narrow frontage approach on the western edge of Main Street establishes a building line of linked dwellings and continuous building frontage. Building widths range on average from 8-10m. On the eastern side of Main Street there has been a loss of grain over the years where plots have been amalgamated. This has detracted from the overall character of the street. As such, the building widths are much wider with an average dimension of 15-20m.

New development can address the established grain through facade design with variations in the facade composition to echo the historical grain pattern.



Urban Grain Diagram



Main Street Burgage Plots_First Edition OS Map c.1837



Historic Swords_ Main Street by Robert French 1847-1917



Historic Swords_ Swords Castle

Protected Structures

In order to achieve the vision for Swords as a vibrant multi-functional centre, it is important to take stock of the existing qualities of Main Street, in particular its historic influences.

New buildings and public realm improvements should complement the existing protected structures, historic streetscape and high quality architecture.

Views should be protected at the following locations:

1. Views of Swords Castle from Main Street and Dublin Street

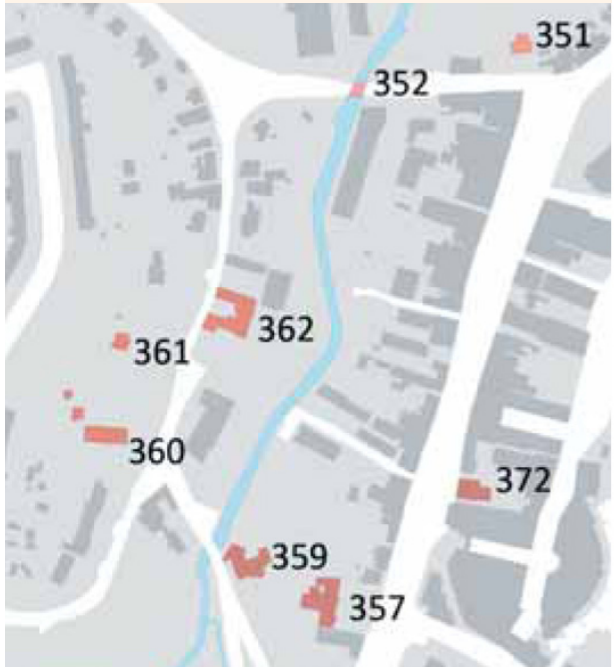
2. Views to the historic core of Swords at St. Columba's Church and round tower from Main Street and Well Road

3. Views to the spire of St. Columcille's Roman Catholic Church from New Street/Forster Way.



Views to be Protected

351	Swords Castle
352	Mill Bridge
357	Old Borough School
359	The Old School House Restaurant
360	St Columba's Church (C of I)
362	Old Vicarage
372	National Irish Bank



Protected Structures



Historic Swords_ Main Street by Robert French 1847-1917



Historic Swords_ Main Street by Robert French 1841-1917

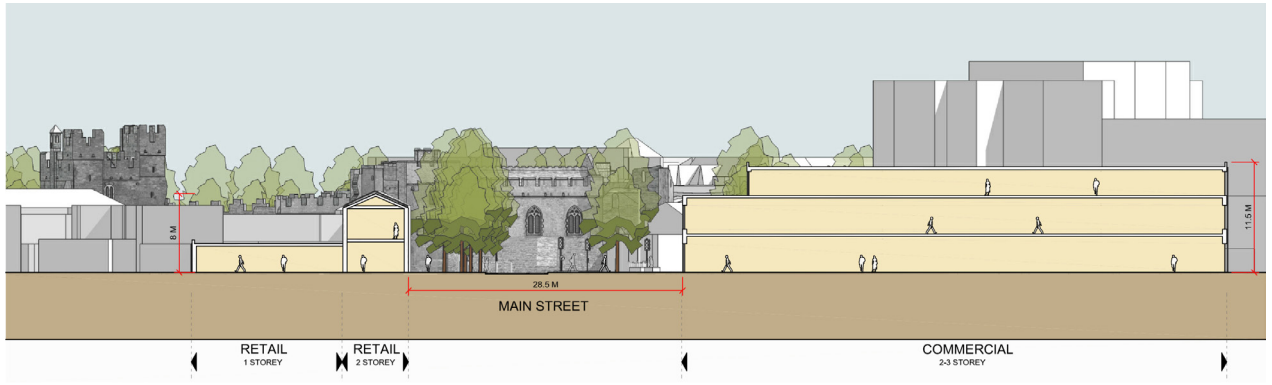
5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Typical Swords Urban Form Diagrams

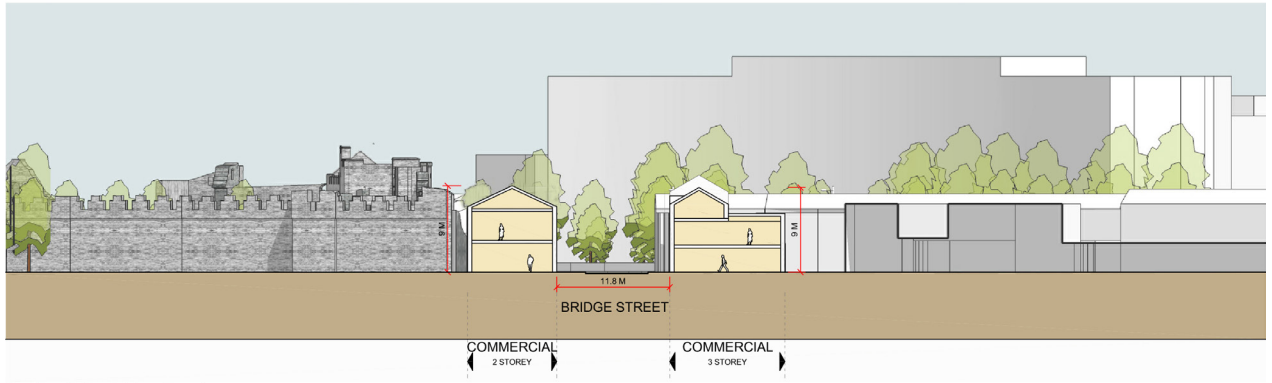
The nature of the existing urban streets can be observed in the diagrammatic sections to the right. Proportions of building height and street width will be an important consideration for any future architectural designs going forward. These designs will create new edges to the urban streets and must maintain existing proportions in an effort to prevent conflict of scale and massing issues with the existing historic fabric.



Key Plan Indicating Location of Street Sections



Section A A - Main Street



Section B B - Bridge Street



Section C C - Castle / Civic Offices

5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Swords The Challenge



Bridge Street, Swords

The aim for this report for the study area is to:

- To provide a vibrant civic/cultural centre to redefine the existing built heritage of the town
- To provide interconnected paths providing a choice of walking and cycling routes that lead through the town and engage with existing gateways and access points which traditionally have been either closed or unavailable for security reasons
- Limit the extent of road space, connectivity, and encourage slower traffic speeds. Promote higher pedestrian amenity, encourage cars to park in selected areas – and thus promote pedestrian movement through the town
- To provide a series of usable amenity spaces to improve the connectivity between the town, its users and the inherent characteristics such as the park, river, castle and protected structures
- To investigate potential development sites within the context of the master plan and examine how these may inform the future development of the town

5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Self-Contained

So what pressures do towns face at the beginning of the 21st Century?

Towns in the past were self-contained. They provided services for their population and to the surrounding rural area who were unable to travel elsewhere for these services thus creating a captive market.

Independence

In the past every town was different. The shops and businesses were owned locally and were unique to the town. Every shop in this market square, with the possible exception of the Bank would have been an independent business. Towns also had their own town councils, local newspapers, sports clubs, institutes, and churches.



High Street, Kilkenny



Aerial Photograph, Swords

5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Distinctive

Swords Main Street is remarkably still quite distinct because of its historic evolution and that legacy, its wide Main Street, and now because it is a county town of a relatively new county. It needs to resist the trend of many towns in the UK and Europe where every high street looks the same and is dominated by the same handful of multiple retails with standard shop fronts and identikit products.



Main Street, Swords



Bridge Street, Swords



Main Street, Swords

5.3 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

Local Employment

Swords has the advantage that it has kept a significant number of enterprises and industries within the town. This is an advantage which should be retained and nurtured going into the future. Employment is offered by this range of retail, civic, industrial and business enterprises which keeps Swords thriving. The needs of these business need to be considered carefully so the ongoing economic growth of the town can be facilitated.



Main Street, Swords



Aerial Photograph, Swords Industrial Area



Bristol Myers Squib - Swords



Balheary Industrial Park - Swords

The Ward River Valley Park

The Ward River Valley Park is an under utilized recreational resource with significant potential. It is located immediately adjacent to the Town Centre but they are poorly linked both visually and physically. It provides for few facilities [pathways and a playground] to attract people in. There is a need to:

1. Integrate the Park with the Town Centre

2. To develop additional recreational facilities and amenities [e.g playgrounds, seating areas, environmental areas etc]

3. To engage with the existing Castle and define a new public space at the transition points between Park and Castle

4. To define an area within the Park that utilises the Castle as a backdrop to public outdoor events

Providing for improved physical [pedestrian and cycle] and visual connections between the Town and the Park together with additional recreational facilities will attract people to the Park on a regular basis, increase the numbers using the Park and will thereby improve the effective level of informal supervision adding to people's sense of safety.



The Ward River Valley Park

ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS - Astley Castle

Precedent 01_Old and New

- Sensitive restoration to existing historic building
- Public open space within Castle grounds to support public events / functions



Astley Castle - Warickshire UK



Astley Castle - Warickshire UK



Astley Castle - Warickshire UK

ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS - Trim Castle

Precedent 02_Heritage Centre

- Pedestrian route through the Castle showing architecture and history via guided tours
- Castle provides a unique identity to the town - a well recognised landmark associated with the town
- Castle acts as a backdrop to the town
- Private / Public functions / events can be facilitated - thus extending the role of the Castle within the town



Trim Castle - County Meath



Trim Castle - County Meath



Trim Castle - County Meath

ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS - King Johns Castle

Precedent 03_Heritage Centre

- Interactive learning centre for public visitors
- Castle as a backdrop to the town - this gives a unique character and identity to the town



King Johns Castle Limerick - Castle as an Icon



King Johns Castle Limerick - Heritage Centre



King Johns Castle Limerick - Heritage Centre

ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS - Pombal Castle

Precedent 04_Tourism Attraction

- Modern addition to existing Castle to promote awareness of the Castle and history of the surrounding areas.
- Architectural Interventions are used to reconnect the castle to surrounding landscape areas and existing river
- Landscape scheme to the Castle re-establishes and improves the public's experience of the Castle



Pombal Castle - Portugal



Pombal Castle - Portugal



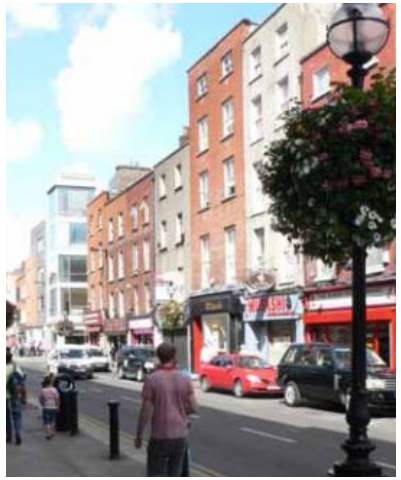
Pombal Castle - Portugal

5.4 PRECEDENTS

URBAN INTERVENTIONS IN THE HISTORIC STREET

Precedent 01_No. 16 Capel Street, Dublin

- Located in one of the most historically significant streets in Dublin, dating back to the late seventeenth century.
- Basement and ground floor retail with four upper floors left considerably vacant and derelict
- All original internal walls and decoration detail were lost over time through renovations and the construction of a rear early twentieth century extension.
- New works involved reuse of the upper floors into loft-style apartments and works at ground floor and basement to provide a retail unit allowed the re-use of the building to provide for all the requirements of contemporary retail and residential units.



No. 16 Capel Street by O'Brien Beary Architects



Exemplar o "living over the shop" conservation initiative by DCC

5.4 PRECEDENTS

URBAN INTERVENTIONS IN THE HISTORIC STREET

Precedent 02_Mixed Use Development, Castle Street, Dublin

- Situated close to Dublin Castle and opposite Christchurch Cathedral in the heart of Dublin city.
- This corner site was previously occupied by a derelict 1960's concrete-framed building which was out of context whith its surroundings.
- The new building was designed to integrate with the various surrounding architectural languages of its neighbouring buildings and Christchurch Cathedral whicle retaining the existing structure.
- Ground to second floor provides retail use with a penthouse apartment at third and fourth floor levels.
- Through the design of the facade and careful selection of materials the building integrates with its surroundings in a sympathetic way.





Mixed Use Development - Castle Street by De Blacam & Meagher Architects