

# LIMERICK CENTRE



## An Integrated Area Plan

# Integrated Area Plan for Limerick

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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of the Integrated Area Programme (IAP) is to give effect to the Goals of the city development plan which are to promote the Economic and Community development in Limerick. Through the implementation of this initiative, the Corporation hopes to see the creation of more than 1000 new jobs in retailing and tourism in the city centre, the redevelopment of derelict and deprived inner-city areas and the conservation of historic buildings.

The Corporation regards the IAP process as a means of consolidating the various promotional, renewal conservation and community development actions in which it has been engaged over the past twenty years. It is the view of the Corporation that the IAP will enable the maximum community gain to be derived from the wide range of infrastructural and tourism development projects in which it is currently engaged, including the Main Drainage, the Northern Relief Road, the Castle Lane Project, the Kings Island Major Initiative, and many others in which it has an associative role with voluntary and private agencies.

Both as part of its development Plan Review process and directly in relation to the IAP, the Corporation has consulted widely with organizations and individuals on the need for tax designation as an adjunct to urban renewal. As a result of its consultations it has received more than 70 submissions with projects covering over 130 acres, more than 80 acres of which, the Corporation is happy to recommend.

The proposed IAP intends to assist the management of land use change around the centre of the city encouraging a smooth transition from obsolescence and dereliction to modern viable economically sustainable uses. The IAP area is subdivided into eight sub-areas each with a key project intended as a focus to animate the development of that sub-area.

Overall, the Corporation proposes, in partnership with community interests, to leverage a direct gain to the deprived suburban communities in terms of funds and facilities so that in addition to the indirect benefits of general economic improvement, local benefits may also be derived.

Although the timescale over which these initiatives are expected to run is short (initially eighteen months), the Corporation is confident that much will be achieved and those projects which have not been accepted on this occasion will be retained for future attention.

## **Introduction**

Limerick is the capital of the mid-west region and performs an important role in the economy and social life of that region. It is the principal business and employment centre and the focus of cultural activity. Its physical setting at the lowest bridging point on the majestic Shannon demands that its importance in the economic sphere be reflected in quality of its built environment. This, together with the need to ensure that the benefits of economic progress are spread over all its citizens, is the principal reason why Limerick Corporation has chosen to focus its integrated area plan (IAP) on the centre of Limerick. The principal objectives which the Corporation wishes to achieve with this Integrated Area plan may be summarized thus;

- To further the objectives of the development Plan
- To encourage employment growth
- To combat the adverse effects of increasing suburbanization
- To assist conservation of historic buildings
- To provide support for marginalized communities.

## **Background**

Limerick city centre contains the vast majority of buildings listed for protection and preservation in the Development Plan. This includes some fine examples of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings as well as important buildings from medieval times. This heritage is a major tourism asset, but heritage cannot be protected indefinitely unless some inducement is given to the owners to retain, conserve and refurbish their properties.

The principal justification for the selection of the area to be covered by this IAP is that the process of land use change in the area of central Limerick (the zone in transition ) should be actively managed to achieve the global objectives of the Development Plan. In Limerick the process of land use transition was extended over a long period of time. Although previous designations helped to ensure the transition of some of the worst of the resulting dereliction at Charlottes Quay and in

the Docks Area, nonetheless extensive areas still remain.

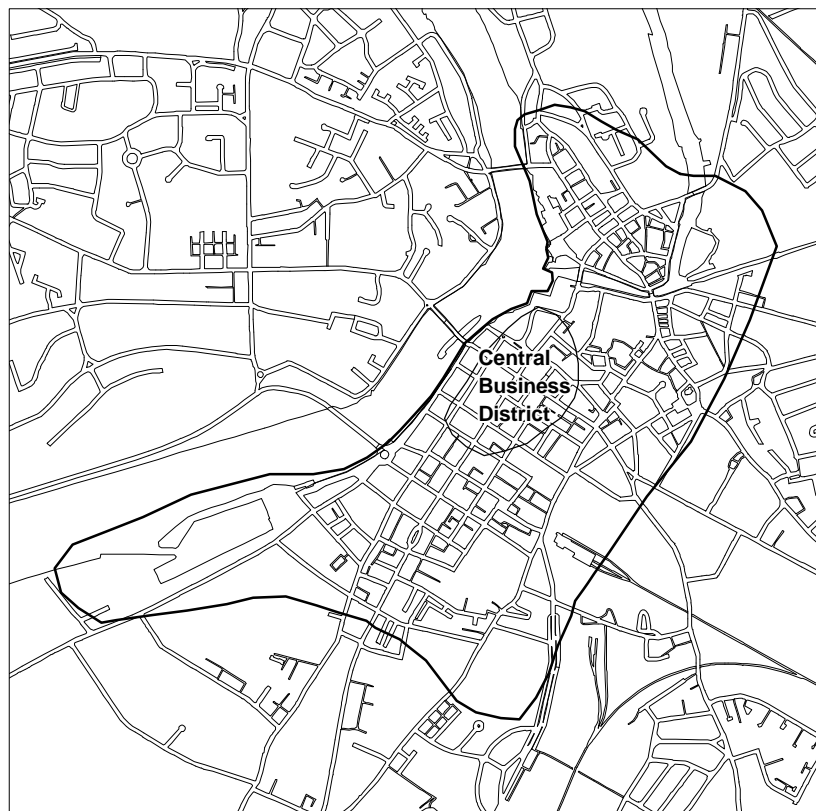
The city centre is the largest single employment and business centre in the Mid West Region with more than 10,000 jobs in retailing and office uses. Further, because of its accessibility through public transport the city centre is an important source of employment for people living in the deprived suburban communities such as Moyross and Southill. According to Corporation surveys most of the residents of these areas rely on the city centre for shopping because of its accessibility through public transport. At present, developers are currently proposing more than one million square feet of commercial development on suburban sites. It is the view of the Corporation that the future of the city centre must be secured by promoting its continued development, since appeals for restriction on suburban developments appear to fall on deaf ears.

The principal administrative advantage of selecting this approach is that the area is genuinely comprehensive of many objectives stated in the city development plan and implementation will lead directly to the achievement of many of these objectives. The Corporation has received a number of requests from owners of obsolete and derelict property who are willing to put their properties forward for re-development and most of these requests can be accommodated to some degree within it. From its studies and consultations the Corporation is of the view that there is a need to increase the retail floorspace of the city centre by about 20% - 30% and that such an increase would give rise to an increase of employment of almost 1200. It is the policy of the Corporation to encourage this re-development.

The Corporation is seeking an opportunity to more effectively combine Social and Economic policies together with the promotion of business. It is hoped that this approach can be formally integrated through the Local Distinctiveness (LODIS) programme if support can be obtained from the EU. In the past, the pace of this process of change was passively permitted to be dictated by market forces. This left large areas of land lying obsolete and derelict close to the centre for many years and sometimes decades.

The selection of this area also has a sound theoretical underpinnings in urban morphology. Around all central urban areas there is an area called the zone in transition by some geographers. In this zone former uses such as offensive trades or warehousing based on obsolete transportation modes become progressively economically non-viable and gradually over a period of years the lands and buildings will be transformed to new uses. The fundamental purpose of this initiative is to identify those sites and buildings in transition and put in place a series of proposals to ensure that the transition from one former viable use to another contemporary use is as short as possible and does not result in unsightly obsolescence and dereliction for an extended period of time.

#### **MAP OF PROPOSED AREA**



**Map 1**

The above map shows the extent of the proposed IAP together with the location of the central business district.

## **The Development Plan 1992 & Review 1998**

Being mindful of the need to synchronise its efforts for maximum benefit, the Corporation has already proposed extensive changes to its Development Plan 1992 in the Review of 1998 to accommodate the setting up of the IAP and the implementation of the consequent objectives. In its review, the Corporation has incorporated proposals to assist sustainable development, especially;

*Zoning of Land and particularly land use policies to address;*

*population decentralisation,  
Suburbanization,  
dereliction in central areas,  
reduction in the quality of life.*

And the review of the plan also addresses the issues of ;

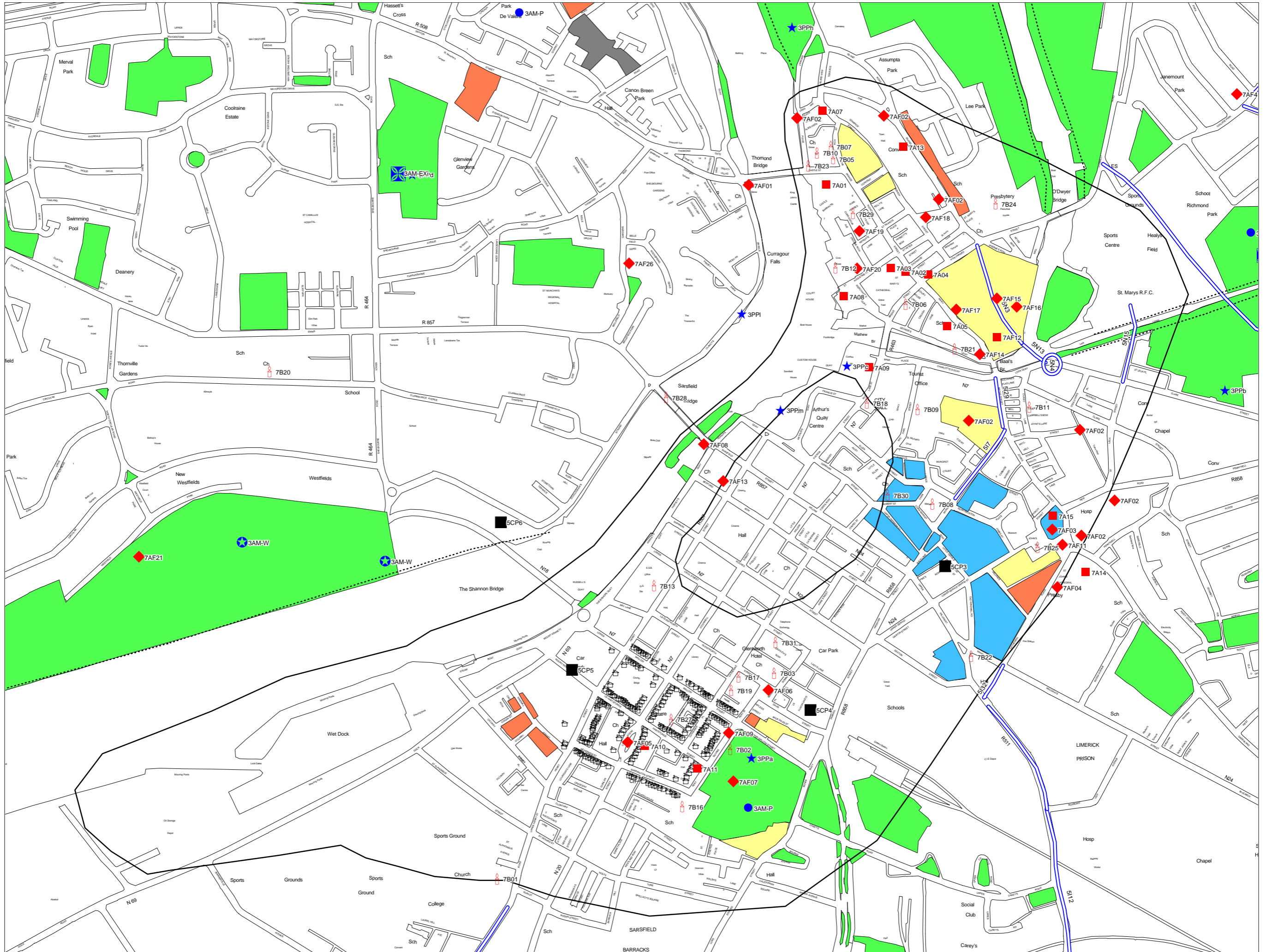
*Renewal of Obsolete areas incorporating Urban Renewal programmes to halt decline in the physical fabric and to protect and enhance urban heritage and architecture.*

The Corporation has further adopted as its Primary Goal in the Development Plan 1992 and the Review of 1998

### *THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*

It has also adopted amongst the subsidiary or consequent Goals:

*Promotion of Commercial and trading development of the city centre.*



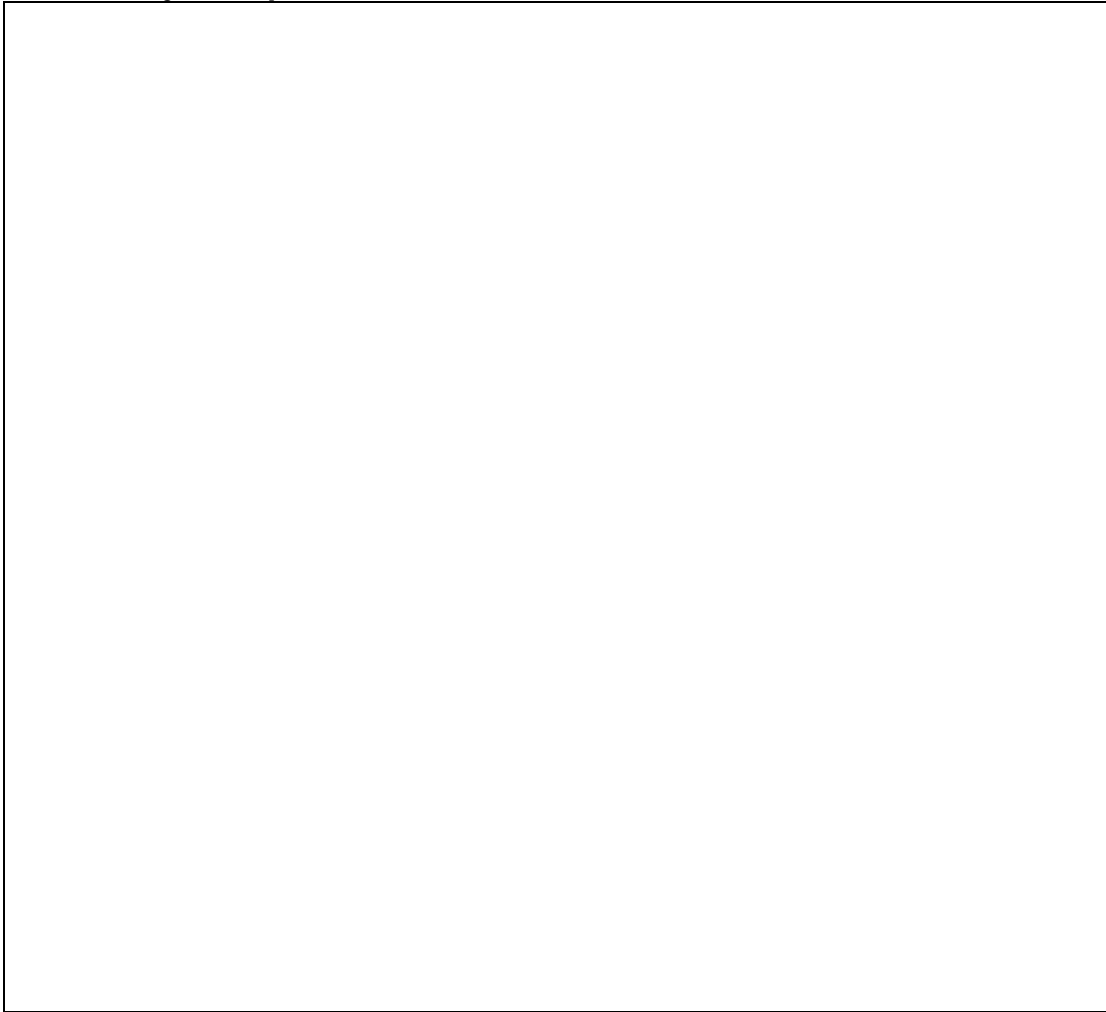
## **Synergy with other Developments and Proposals**

The Corporation has for a long time been involved in the conservation and development of the City Centre. Its first major effort in recent times (1975) was the refurbishment of John's Square and subsequently in association with Shannon Development and private enterprise, the redevelopment of the Granary building at Michael St. in 1981.

The creation of an integrated area plan for this area will considerably advance the overall planning objectives for the city centre. From land-use surveys and other contacts the Corporation has identified many businesses, some with unsuitable uses, who wish to move or have already moved to the suburbs and wish to seek the redevelopment of their lands. It is the belief of the Corporation that the process of re-development should be encouraged and assisted from the point of view that it removes uses involving heavy goods vehicle traffic to the suburbs and eliminates some offensive trades such as milling and fellmongery from central sites.

The Corporation is also engaged in major refurbishment, renewal and tourism projects in the city centre. These include the development of the Castle Lane Tourism complex in association with Shannon Development; the development of a hotel and leisure centre at Healy's Field; the improvement of the Abbey River Navigation together with the Office of Public Works; the refurbishment of the Watergate Flats complex. In addition the Civic trust has begun a demonstration project in the refurbishment of one of the more than 100 Georgian buildings listed for protection at the Crescent. The Chamber of Commerce has proposed a radical pedestrianization project for the City centre which deserves serious consideration. All of these proposals are integrated in this plan.

### MAP 3: Major Proposals



In its development Plan review 1998, the Corporation has adopted a hierarchy of priorities to guide the selection of areas for which tax designation will be sought.

#### **(1) Unfinished Areas**

*These are areas which were designated, some of which are in the ownership of the Corporation but whose development is not yet complete. Those which are already designated should be maintained and those which are not designated should be proposed for inclusion in the next round.*

## **(2) Obsolete Areas**

*These are areas which are or are likely to become obsolete. Intervention now may prevent the worst effects of dereliction becoming evident over the next few years. However, detailed examination may be necessary in order to determine which of the areas would provide the best opportunity for intervention.*

## **(3) Urban Design**

*These are sites whose prominent location and current status and appearance would render renewal desirable from an Urban Design point of view.*

## **(4) Conservation Areas**

*These are sites of Architectural and historic importance and it is desirable that a support mechanism be sought to prevent obsolescence and decay. Tax incentives are one method which might be considered for this purpose.*

## **(5) Opportunistic Areas**

*Inevitably there are a few sites on which developers will promise action if only designated status were available. Some such sites (such as Cruises St.) have in the past been very effectively developed. However, a thorough examination of the credibility of any such project is necessary before supporting an application for designation.*

In the review of its sub-areas and sites presented below, the Corporation will indicate the priority which it accords to each of the sites which it will propose for Tax designation.

## **The Consultation Process**

In preparing this Plan, the Corporation has consulted widely with the public, with statutory bodies with elected councillors and with interested persons and organizations.

### **1 Review of Development Plan**

Prior to the adoption of the Draft Development Plan the Corporation held numerous consultations and proposed a hierarchy of priorities to guide the designation of sites. As part of the Review process, area meetings were held in each ward at which the priorities were presented. The city council adopted the Draft Plan for public display on Feb 24th. 1998 incorporating the priorities as described.

### **2 Briefings for Councillors**

The Urban Renewal committee of the city council and the Planning Committee were briefed on the proposed order of priorities for designation and the extent of the area proposed. Both committees and the city council endorsed the proposed methodology.

### **3 Public Presentations**

Detailed presentations were made to PAUL Partnership, the Territorial Employment Pact, the Community Development Project (CDP) on the Corporations ideas for the IAP. These bodies have endorsed the Corporations proposals. Presentations were also made to the Construction Industry Federation and the CIOB so that these organizations could in turn inform their members of the Corporations intentions.

### **4 Invited Submissions**

All public bodies including Shannon Development, Gardai, PAUL, MWHB, Shannon Ports Authority, Bord Gais and the Chamber of Commerce were contacted and asked for their views on the basis of a broad outline of the Corporations proposals. Those bodies who responded were favourable to the Corporations proposals and promised full co-operation at implementation stage.

The Chamber of Commerce has advocated a radical pedestrianization proposal for the centre of Limerick which will be carefully evaluated in the context of this IAP.

## **5 Newspaper Advertisements**

Advertisements were placed in Local Papers for a period of 2 weeks in early February and submissions were sought from interested parties. More than 70 submissions were received covering an area of 146 acres. Most sites proposed were within the area selected by the Corporation as the focus of the IAP.

## **6 Discussions with Individuals & Bodies**

Prior to publication of advertisements, a number of discussions were held with interested individuals and their professional representatives and these resulted in a number of submissions. The Shannon Ports Authority which has extensive land holdings in the area made a detailed submission in respect of the Harbour area.

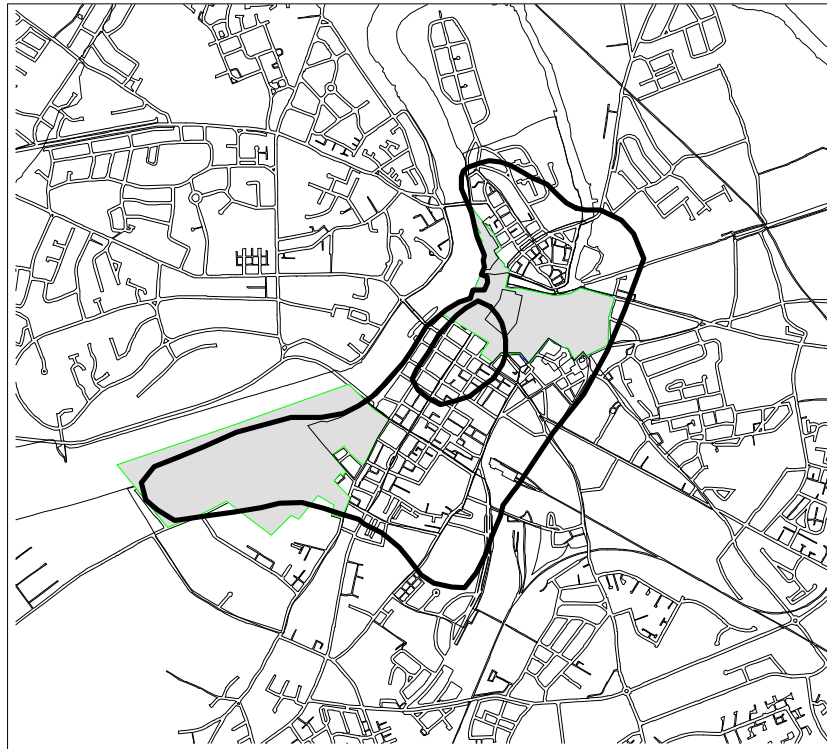
## **1. Detailed Description Of The Area**

The zone in transition surrounds the Central Business district and given the small size of Limerick these cannot easily be displayed as separate entities. The area straddles a number of wards and it is equally unreasonable to attempt to apportion statistics by parts of wards. For this reason data for entire wards are presented. The accompanying map shows the proposed IAP area, shaped like a doughnut - the area in the centre is the Central Business district as defined by the Central Statistics office in the Census of Services 1988.

Parts of the area have already featured in previous Tax-Designated Areas. In 1986 just 39 acres were designated. However in 1988, more than 80 acres were designated and in 1994 this total fell to about 70 acres. Some sites have been completely renewed but many sites remain to be developed.

The population of the area is about 7900 persons and the total area is just under 500 acres. However, the sites which will be proposed to receive designation are quite small relative to this overall area. Most of the statistical wards comprising this area score high on the Combat Poverty Index of Disadvantage indicating that the area itself is appropriate for intervention under this heading, in addition to the indirect impact that development here will have on deprived suburban districts.

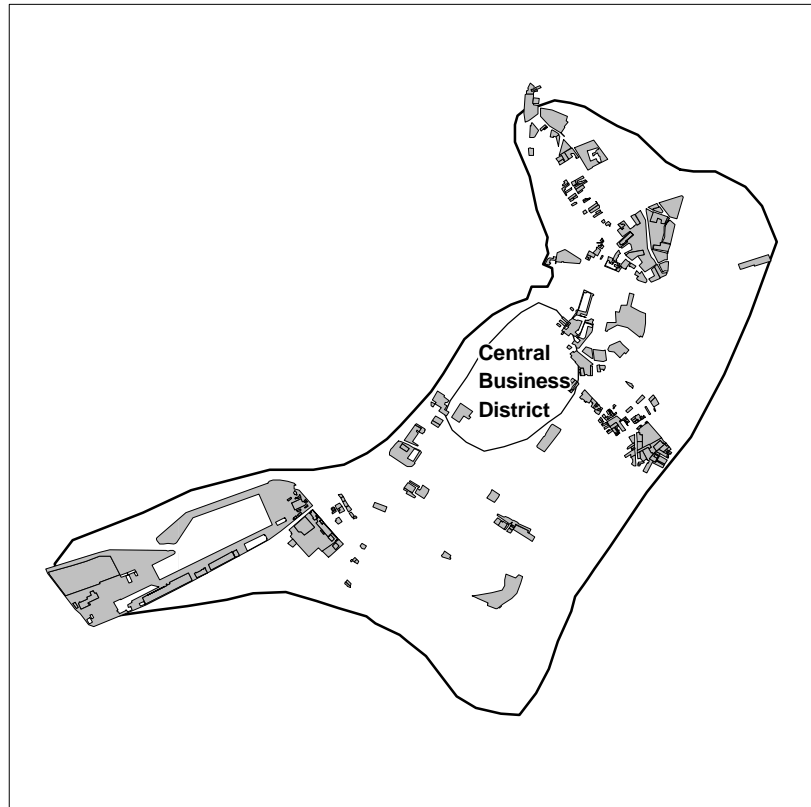
**MAP 4: PREVIOUS TAX DESIGNATED AREAS (1986 - 1997)**



The above map shows the extent of previous designations in 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1994.

Land use surveys conducted by the Corporation show that this area contains a significant proportion of empty sites and buildings in poor condition.

**MAP 5: VACANT, OBSOLETE SITES & BUILDINGS IN POOR CONDITION**



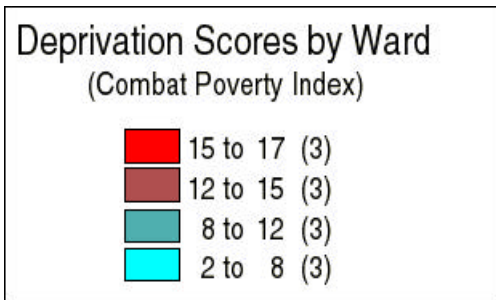
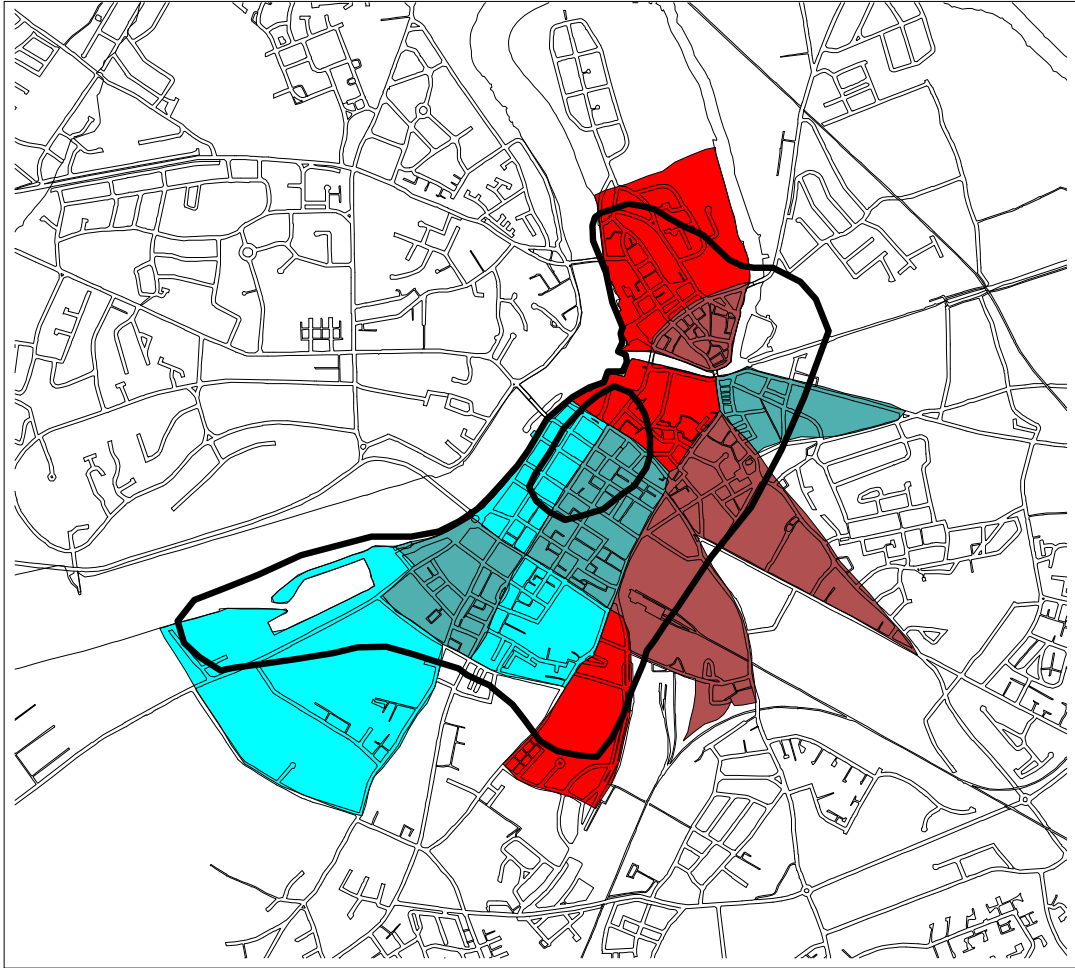
The above map show the distribution of sites which are vacant or obsolete and buildings in poor condition. Some sites are in use as surface car-parks in an unsatisfactory condition.

## **1.1 Socio-Economic Background**

This area extends over 12 statistical wards and as noted above comprises over 7000 in population. A ranking of all statistical divisions of the country has been produced by Combat Poverty and is used by government as a basis for determining social and economic deprivation. Two indices have been derived by this study, each ranging in value from 1 to 10. A high score denotes increasing deprivation and the scores are combined for ease of use giving a scale of 1 to 20. These indices are derived from factors such as high rates of youth and/or long-term unemployment, below-average levels of educational attainment and training, low average household income levels.

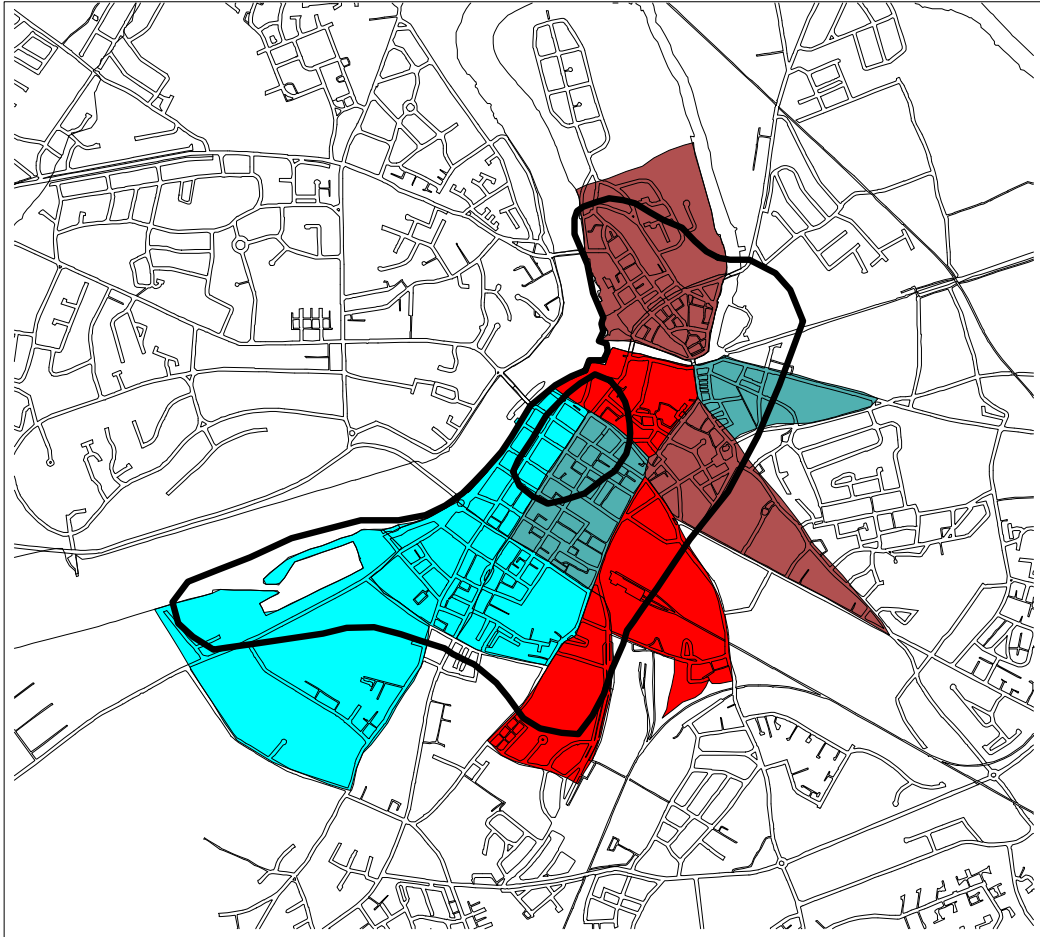
Of these twelve wards, five score ten or over and two score 15 or over. This score indicates that the area comprises some of the most deprived wards in Limerick. The unemployment rate was above the city average in eight of the twelve wards and was 43% in one ward. The maps below show the distribution of scores.

**MAP 6: DEPRIVATION INDEX SCORE**



The above map shows the score of each of the twelve city centre wards on the deprivation index devised by Combat Poverty and used as an adjunct to government policy.

**MAP 7: MAP OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**



**Percent Unemployed in 1991**  
Census of Population



The above map shows the percentage unemployment in each ward.

Prior to finalising its selection of this area the Corporation consulted with PAUL the local Partnership Company, and agreed that the proposed area should be recommended on the basis of the following arguments;

- (1) It includes part of Kings Island, wherein the Corporation is funding extensive remedial works and which is one of the community areas affiliated to PAUL. It also includes the Watergate area where refurbishment of apartments is in

progress. The capacity of the Corporation to devote additional revenue to necessary environmental works elsewhere is thus severely curtailed and thus selection of suburban sites would be unlikely to achieve the concentration of resources necessary.

(2) By promoting the further development of the Zone in Transition, the Corporation is securing the employment prospects of the city as a whole, and since the City centre represents the most accessible location for the community areas, the designation is helping directly to ;

(a) ensure accessibility to employment of a type that will benefit the education and skills level available in the community areas (Low skilled employment in retailing & services).

(b) ensure access to the broadest range of shopping for the community areas who depend on public transport and who do not frequent suburban shopping centres due to difficulty of access according to Corporation surveys.

(3) Due to the fact that the principal benefits on offer are Tax Exemptions and not grants or other finance, designation of suburban sites in Corporation areas would not be likely to achieve successful business startups given the nature of probable developments in Carparks, Retailing, Apartments, Hotels etc which are suitable for inner city locations.

(4) The City Centre will come under increasing pressure from suburban centres in which more than one million square feet of additional space is currently planned. Unless the City Centre can attract new facilities the balance of employment may well shift in favour of the suburban centres with consequent adverse effects on those communities which depend on the City Centre for employment and services.

## **1.2 Urban Design Issues**

Since the first Development Plan was adopted by the Corporation in 1967, there have been a number of consistent threads running through the Corporations policies in relation to urban design and conservation in the city centre. In essence, all of the development plans identified the importance of the Shannon and especially the area around the Curragower falls as the critical organising concept central to the design of the city centre. Compared with the Lee and the Liffey, the Shannon is the largest river in the country and is relatively unpolluted. It is important therefore that spaces and buildings be sited so as to take advantage of views out over the river to the hills beyond. The redevelopment of the medieval city and the protection of the Georgian character of the eighteenth century city have also been important in previous development plans.

The first key objective of previous plans is the designation of that part of the river front overlooking the Curragower falls as an area of special development control, to be developed for civic and cultural purposes. By creating an area of Special Development Control, and by emphasising the importance of Civic and Cultural facilities within it, the previous development plans sought to give practical effect to this urban design concept. The guiding principle has been that the city should have a focus at its centre and the centre should reflect, in the architecture of its buildings and the architectural treatment of its spaces, the importance of the city together with a concern for the human scale and an appreciation of the potential of the site. This concept has to a large extent been realised with the construction of the Civic Offices, the refurbishment of the Castle and Alms houses, the construction of Arthurs Quay Centre & Arthurs Quay park and the development of the Hunt Museum in the Custom House.

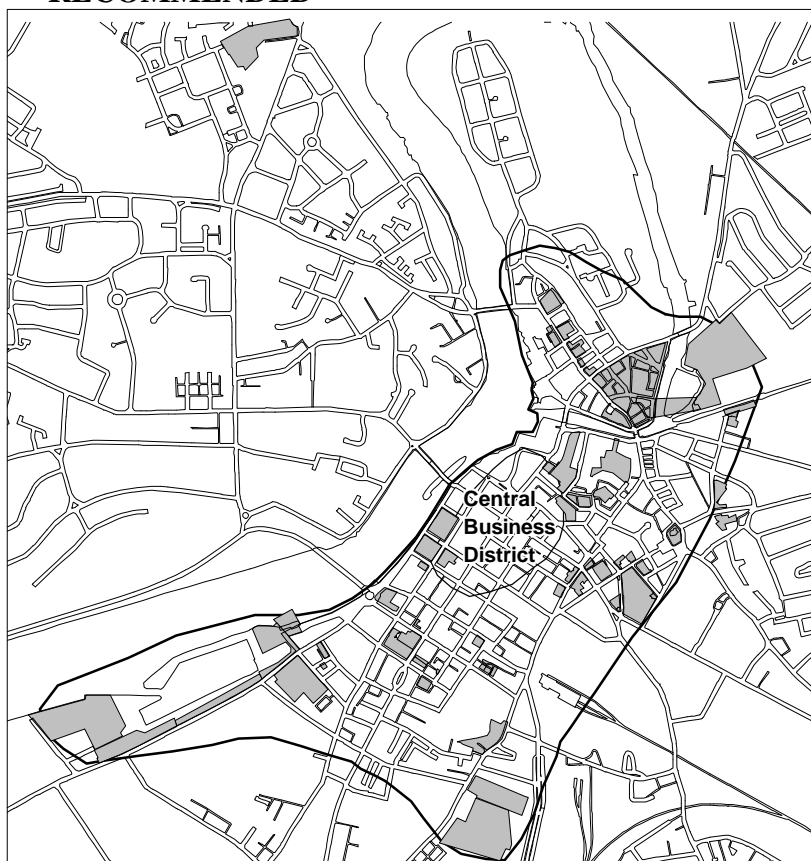
All of these developments, important as they are in their own right, gain immeasurably from being linked together along the riverside from Arthurs Quay park, through the development of Custom House park, by bridge to the Potato Market and Merchants Quay and thence through the civic centre site by the Curragower falls to the Castle.

Recent designations encouraged the redevelopment of vacant and underused warehousing in the docks area for residential and commercial use and this has brought much needed life back into the city centre area. However, there yet remains an area of the quays, particularly Bishops Quay and Howley's Quay, where the form and standard of buildings is less than desirable. Some of the buildings are vacant and derelict. There are also some relatively modern buildings which are quite out of character in terms of materials, and elevation with the remainder of the riverfront. In order to complete the design vision for city centre and especially for the area overlooking the river, it is essential that some of these buildings be replaced and upgraded. It is the view of the Corporation that this can only be done if an incentive is given to the owners of these buildings to redevelop or remodel.

### 1.3 The Applications & Sub-Areas

As a result of its consultation programme, more than 70 applications have been received from companies and individuals proposing sites for redevelopment. The total area proposed to the Corporation is in excess of 130 acres. The Corporation has examined these sites together with its own lands and has evaluated the general feasibility of development on these sites. As a result of its examination some of these sites have been amalgamated due to their proximity to one another and some (such as the Docks area) have had to be split because designation is not appropriate for the entire area. All told, however the Corporation is of the view that tax designation should be offered to 63 sites covering 86.5 acres.

**MAP 8: SITES FOR WHICH TAX DESIGNATION IS BEING RECOMMENDED**



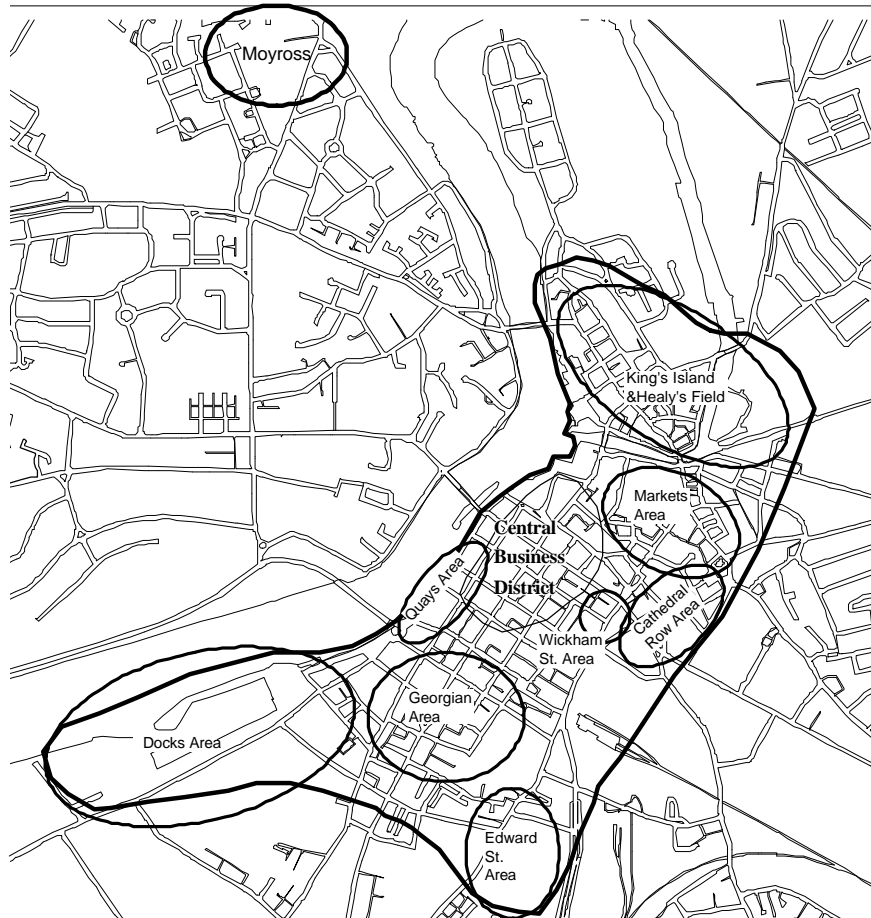
#### 1.3.0 The Sub-Areas

The proposed IAP contains a number of sub-areas within which it is proposed to designate specific sites which will be recommended for financial and tax

incentives.

Within these sub-areas the Corporation has identified vacant and derelict sites and buildings, many of which have been in this condition for very long periods of time. Resulting from the ongoing process of public consultation and from a survey of land Use and Building Condition in the area , the Corporation has received expressions of interest in respect of a number of sites which together with its own lands total more than 130 acres. As a direct result of a consultation process initiated during the preparation of the IAP more than 70 applications have been received from companies and individuals proposing sites for designation and redevelopment. Within each sub-area the Corporation identifies one key project or site, the development of which it considers crucial to the successful re-development of that sub-area.

**MAP 9: PROPOSED SUB-AREAS**



The following is a brief summary of the relative importance of each sub-area identified on the above map;

<b>King's Island and Healys Field</b>	An <b>obsolete area</b> with many listed buildings and sites, being redeveloped in conjunction with other state agencies including the NRA and OPW. It contains a key joint venture project for leisure and tourism development.
<b>Markets Area</b>	An <b>obsolete area</b> , with many sites remaining undeveloped and <b>unfinished</b> after previous designations. There is interest in major retailing as a key project off Michael St.
<b>Cathedral Row Area</b>	An <b>obsolete area</b> with many empty sites and buildings recently vacated. A smooth and swift transit to modern uses is considered essential to avoid dereliction. The key site is the former Roches Feeds site.
<b>Wickham St Area</b>	One of the few remaining business streets with owner-occupiers. Intervention could prevent obsolescence and decay as a pilot project.
<b>Georgian Area</b>	An important <b>conservation area</b> with a demonstration project in place by the Civic Trust. Support is needed to ensure that more than 120 listed buildings are kept in viable use and maintained. The key project is the successful retention of the block containing the Co.Council offices.
<b>Quays Area</b>	The development plan has expressed the <b>urban design</b> philosophy of addressing strong and significant buildings to the river and support is necessary since market forces alone have failed. The key project is the redevelopment of the former Bedford Garage site.
<b>Edward Street</b>	Part of this area is declared to be <b>obsolete</b> in the city Development Plan. The larger part of the area offers an opportunity to create an employment centre adjacent to one of the most deprived areas in the city.
<b>The Docks Area</b>	In the process of redevelopment but <b>unfinished</b> and contains some difficult sites contaminated by previous industrial uses. It is desirable that the redevelopment of this area be supported. The key project is the redevelopment of the former Gas Co. site.
<b>Moyross</b>	This site is distant from the city centre but in an area of considerable socio-economic disadvantage. Development offers employment creation and provision of retailing services.

### **1.3.1 Kings Island & Healys Field**

This area covers two wards, John's A & B, both scoring high on the deprivation index. In 1991 the unemployment rate amongst the residents was 31% and 28% respectively. The area is principally the old medieval city of Limerick and the Corporation has extensive land holdings in this area. The island is the focus of the Corporation's Urban and Village Renewal Scheme. The Corporation has already prepared integrated Action plans for the redevelopment of the area for residential, commercial and recreational uses, and proposes joint ventures with private enterprise. Proposals also include the improvement of the Shannon Navigation in conjunction with the Office of Public Works and the Main Drainage scheme for the City. A new inner relief road runs through the area and together with the new bridge is scheduled to complete construction in 1999. Completion of this important infrastructure will determine the timing of site development in the area. A copy of the Kings Island Plan is available as an appendix to this document.

There has been a considerable effort necessary to ensure that the archaeology of the area is either excavated or protected by re-design. The cost of this process renders the required sale price of the land uneconomic unless there is another benefit available to prospective developers by way of Tax exemption. By way of example, the Corporation spent more than a quarter of a million pounds on Archaeology between 1986 and 1992 and continues to employ an archaeologist at its own expense without government subvention.

In addition there are a few small businesses in the area which are an invaluable asset to the community and these should also be offered similar inducement to remain viable.

On the adjoining Healy's Field, The Corporation has sought joint venture proposals to replace a sports centre destroyed by fire some ten years ago. Despite intensive efforts and a proposed investment of almost half a million

pounds by the Corporation itself, a viable project has yet to be developed. It is the view of the Corporation that the project cannot be advanced unless Tax exemption is allowed for the development.

The principal socio-economic objectives and strategy of the King's Island Action Plan are to improve the overall environmental quality of the island, to encourage employment-generating activities, to promote tourist-related developments, and to facilitate greater integration between residential, tourism, commercial and other activities on the island for the establishment of training and work programmes in the tourism and leisure industry.

The proposed range of activities for the lands at Healy's Field represents a precise and calculated response, in physical terms, to the above-stated objectives. The range and scale of the proposed tourist-related land-uses will function as a generator of significant employment opportunities for a wide range of skills, together with the opportunity for the development of new skills through on-the-job training schemes. In tandem with this economic initiative, the provision of a series of significant natural amenities will help to raise the overall environmental quality of the general area and improve the quality of life for residents of both Kings Island and Healy's Field. The combination of these developments creates the ideal opportunity.

- **Abbey Area (50,51 & 55)**

The Corporation has divided its holdings in the Abbey area into a number of different packages for sale and development. The uses proposed are small industry workshops (in association with Shannon Development), some social housing to accommodate those displaced by the construction of the Northern Ring and sites for public sale designated as residential or Hotel use. The primary urban design philosophy guiding this redevelopment will be the creation of a strong urban character with two- and three-storey buildings hard against the new road emphasizing this character.

- **Nicolas Street (57,58,59,60,61 & 62)**

The "Main Street" of Medieval Limerick. Under the King's Island Plan, the

street will be pedestrianized. Some private developments have already replaced insensitive warehousing. The Corporation wishes to encourage the sensitive redevelopment of the street for Residential & Commercial uses related to Tourism.


### **Barringtons Hospital (12, 13 & 42)**

Barrington's Hospital is a listed building and although it ceased to be a public hospital a number of years ago it has found extensive use as a private medical clinic. Two houses adjoining which had been owned by the hospital are now vacant and derelict. Because the building is listed for preservation, and because it occupies a visually important site overlooking the Abbey river on the approach to Limerick, it is the view of the Corporation that Tax designation should be afforded to it to retain it in viable use.

- **Healys Field (35)**

The Corporation had developed the Healys field area as a sports centre, but the building itself was destroyed by vandalism more than ten years ago. Despite the best efforts of the Corporation during the past five years, it has been impossible to find an economically viable joint venture arrangement to replace the prior use. It is the Corporations view, on the best financial advice available, that Tax designation is essential in order to assemble a sufficiently broad-based project which will meet the criteria of employment opportunity and provision of leisure services.

Photographs



# MAP 10: KING'S ISLAND & HEALY'S FIELD



### **1.3.2 The Markets Area**

This area is part of one of the largest areas of obsolescence in the city. It is located in the Custom House Ward, which has the highest rate of unemployment of the IAP at 43%. The main residential area is the Watergate Flats, built by Limerick Corporation in the 1960's and now undergoing renovation. Although extensive re-development has taken place, led by the Corporation's actions in acquiring obsolete and derelict property in the 1960's, nevertheless a number of large sites still remain. The area comprises the Custom House ward which has the highest unemployment rate in the IAP. As part of its commitment to an integrated programme, the Corporation is refurbishing the Watergate Flats. The total cost of this refurbishment will be in excess of £8 Million. This refurbishment programme complements the private re-developments ongoing in the area. The area has also been the focus of a number of important conservation projects including the Milk Market and the Hunt Museum. The Markets area also adjoins the King's Island area and is therefore positioned to benefit from the tourism and leisure projects being developed there.

- **Gleeson / Lannigan Sites (5,6,7 & 21)**

These sites consist of derelict lands and buildings in poor condition which occupy a strategic central location in this sub-area. Despite having been designated for almost all previous designations, no development has taken place.

- **Bogue's Yard / Michael Street (4)**

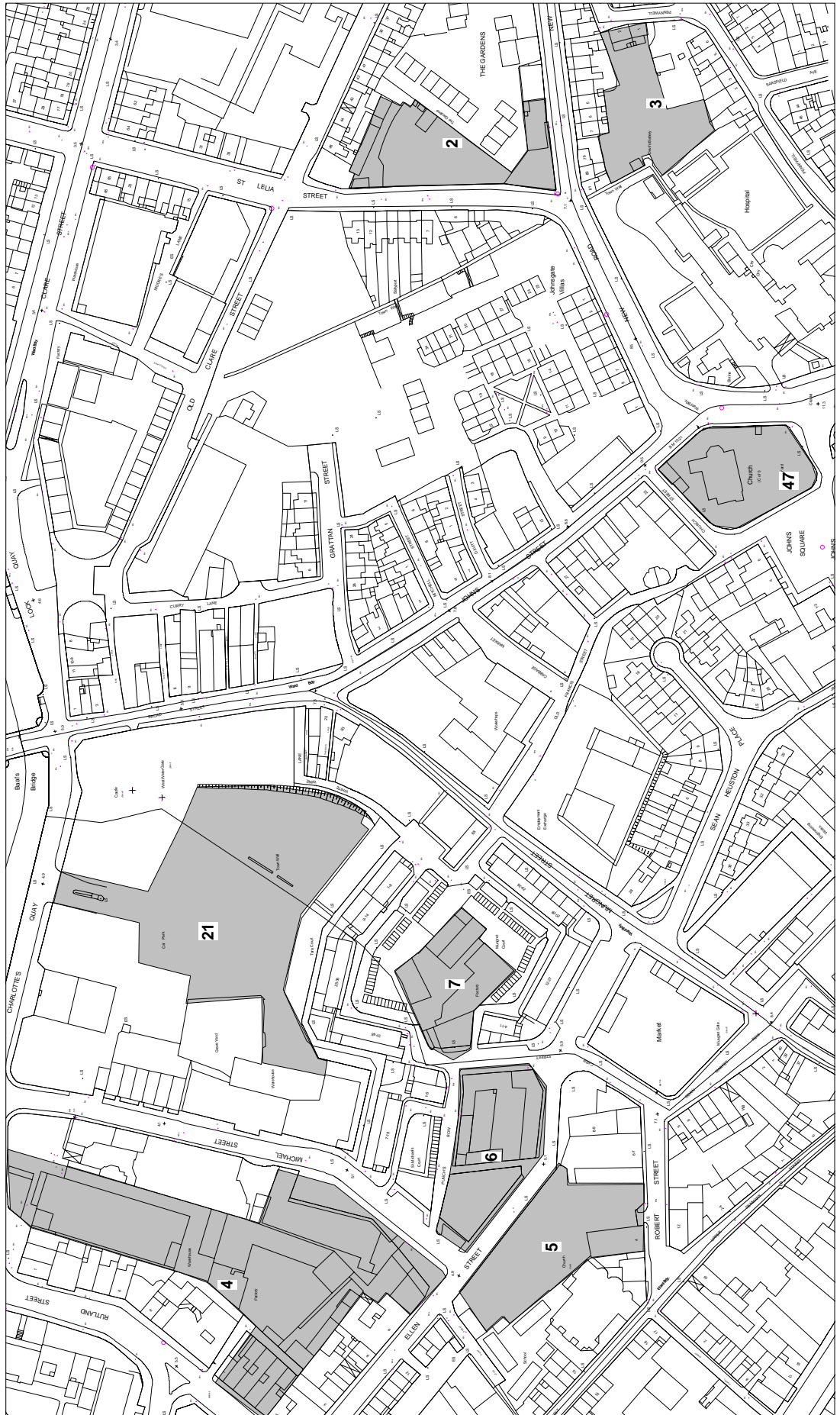
This site consists of a large empty yard together with buildings in poor condition off Michael Street. Some refurbishment took place on the Rutland St and Ellen St. edges of this block under previous designations, but this central area did not benefit. The application for designation promises a significant addition to Limerick's retail attractiveness and the Corporation regards this as a unique opportunity.

- **Johns Church (47)**

This square together with the church and graveyard are listed in Development Plan for protection. The buildings date from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the graveyard contains the tombs of many persons prominent in the history of Limerick. The church has lain unused since the Seventies when it was donated to the Corporation by the Representative Church Body. Despite its best efforts, the Corporation has been unable to find a suitable use. Designation is therefore sought to assist in the conservation of the buildings and the re-use of the church for cultural purposes.



# MAP 11: MARKETS AREA



### **1.3.3 Cathedral Row**

This area contains the single largest block of property designated as Obsolete in the city development plan. The area forms part of the Market ward with a score of 12 and an unemployment rate of 22% in 1991. The Corporation has ensured through its contacts that almost all of the relevant owners have put forward their sites for development. Some redevelopment in the fifties and sixties resulted in steel-clad buildings, little better than warehouses and quite out of character with the predominating stone and brick. It is highly desirable that these areas be offered the possibility of renewal. The area was the focus of an animal feed milling industry and also a skin and hide merchant. Neither industry would be considered desirable for a city centre site. The milling businesses have recently moved to more suitable premises in the Dock Road industrial estate and the properties are now ripe for re-development. Other properties are in use as retail premises selling second-hand furniture. The area includes John's Square, an interesting group of stone built town houses dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These are stone-fronted Queen Anne style houses designed by Davis Ducart in 1751 and Restored in the 1970's for European Architectural Heritage Year, 1975. Together with John's Church and graveyard, all are listed for preservation in the City Development Plan. The church which is in the ownership of the Corporation is deteriorating and a viable use must be found soon if it is not to degenerate into complete dereliction.

- **Roches Feeds / Skin & Hide / Car Park / Kilroy's (9 & 49)**


This block offers a unique opportunity for comprehensive re-development being almost 3.5 acres in extent although in a number of ownerships. The area is designated as obsolete in the city development plan and Designation is therefore sought for this reason.

- **Pikes Row (11)**

The Corporation acquired this site, located in an Obsolete area a number of years ago in order to eliminate dereliction and provide Car-parking which was essential to support the development of the city

centre. The adjoining developments on Cornmarket Row will now meet the need for car-parking far more effectively. Together with adjoining properties in poor condition and derelict, this site now needs to be re-developed.

Photographs



# MAP 12: Wickham St, Cathedral Row & High Street



### **1.3.4 The Quays**

Using the river as a key element in the urban design vision implies the necessity to ensure the development of buildings of scale and quality along the river-front. The Quays, having lost their primary economic function almost one hundred years ago have not been satisfactorily redeveloped since. Some progress has been made adjoining the existing docks area but two high-profile sites remain at Bishop's quay and Howley's quay. Although these buildings have found temporary uses and have been available for sale with planning permission for at least ten years, no development has taken place. It is the view of the Corporation that no development of these sites will take place unless designated status is granted. The Munchin house development presents a poor image to the river-front and it would considerably enhance the appearance of the area if the building could be renovated. The area currently has fewer than 200 persons resident.

- **Bedford Motors (16)**

This area consists of a number of vacant and semi-derelict buildings formerly used as motor-repair workshops. The site presents a poor appearance to the river and to Henry Street and from the point of view of improving the aspect of the city to the river, the Corporation believes that support ought to be given in the form of Tax allowances in order to achieve a building of satisfactory height and scale here.

- **Spaight's (15)**

This is a vacant one-storey shopping complex which is now virtually empty. It occupies a critical site on the quay front and from an urban design point of view, the Corporation is of the view that every encouragement ought to be given to encourage the development of a building of satisfactory height and scale here.

- **Carlton Cinema & Others (17)**

This building together with adjoining former motor-workshops and yards

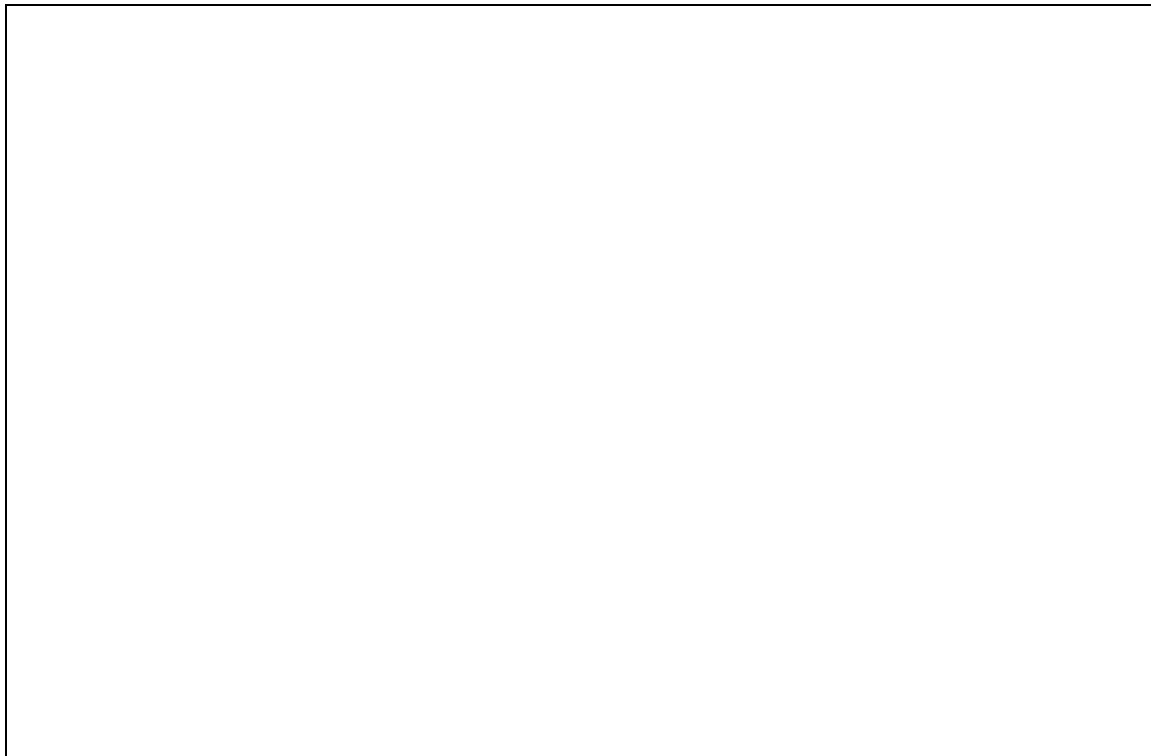
occupies a critical location on Henry street and all of the properties are now in extremely poor condition. It is the view of the Corporation that the buildings will not be satisfactorily re-developed unless an incentive in the form of tax allowances are given.

- **Corner of Henry St (39)**

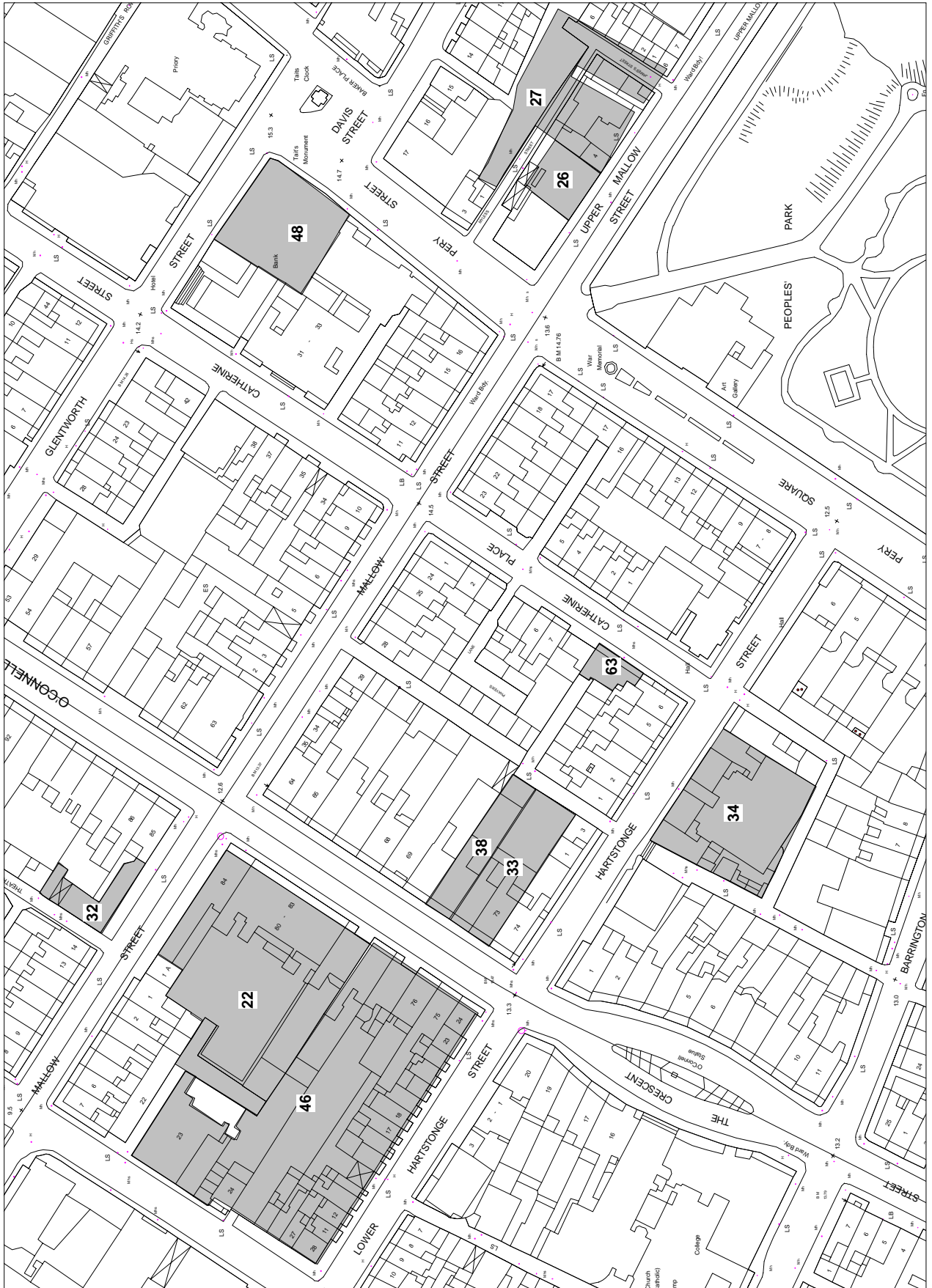
This is a vacant corner site on Henry street and as such it's redevelopment is critical from the Urban Design point of view to strengthen the corners of the gridded street pattern.

- **Munchin's House (16)**

Erected during the Sixties, this building has weathered badly and presents a poor appearance to the Shannon Bridge which is the main gateway to the city centre from the West. As such it does little to encourage tourism or complement the developments such as Jury's Inn achieved by the Corporation on the other side of Mallow Street. It is the view of the Corporation that an incentive should be offered to the owners to re-model the building so as to achieve a better appearance to the Quays.



# MAP 13: GEORGIAN AREA



### **1.3.5 Georgian Area**

The general guiding principle for this area is the conservation of a unique Georgian architectural heritage and its enhancement through demonstration projects and cultural projects. Limerick contains some of the best examples of Georgian architecture outside of Dublin in an area running from Mallow Street to Hartstonge St and from the Peoples Park to Henry Street. The Corporation has listed for protection in this area, over 120 buildings in its development plan and in addition the group of buildings known as The Crescent is unique in the British Isles and is listed separately for preservation. A few small areas which have been designated as obsolete or derelict at Edward St and Myles St. and the Corporation proposes to acquire some of these areas itself for redevelopment and to assist private enterprise in obtaining clear title so as to ensure development. In 1997, the Corporation carried out an inventory of the buildings with a view to identifying the scale of need. It is the view of the Corporation that the vast majority of the buildings are urgently in need of attention. The initiative by the Civic Trust in acquiring and renovating a building at Pery Square is a commendable demonstration project which will illustrate the considerable potential dormant in this area.

For its part, the Corporation is carrying out extensive renovations to the City Art Gallery located at the Peoples Park. The Gallery itself was formerly the Carnegie Library, built in 1906, and designed by Sheridan. Refurbishment works are also proposed for the Tait Clock, in nearby Baker Place, (designed by Corbett, 1867).

The largest single occupier of the Georgian area is the Limerick Co.Council occupying numbers 79 to 84 O'Connell St. The first of these buildings (No.82) was originally purchased in 1901 as headquarters for the County administration as successor to the Grand Juries. The Corporation notes with regret the intention of the County Council to place on the market, its premises at 79 to 84 O'Connell St., in the heart of the Georgian area. However, it is the view of the Corporation that the appropriate response is to encourage the

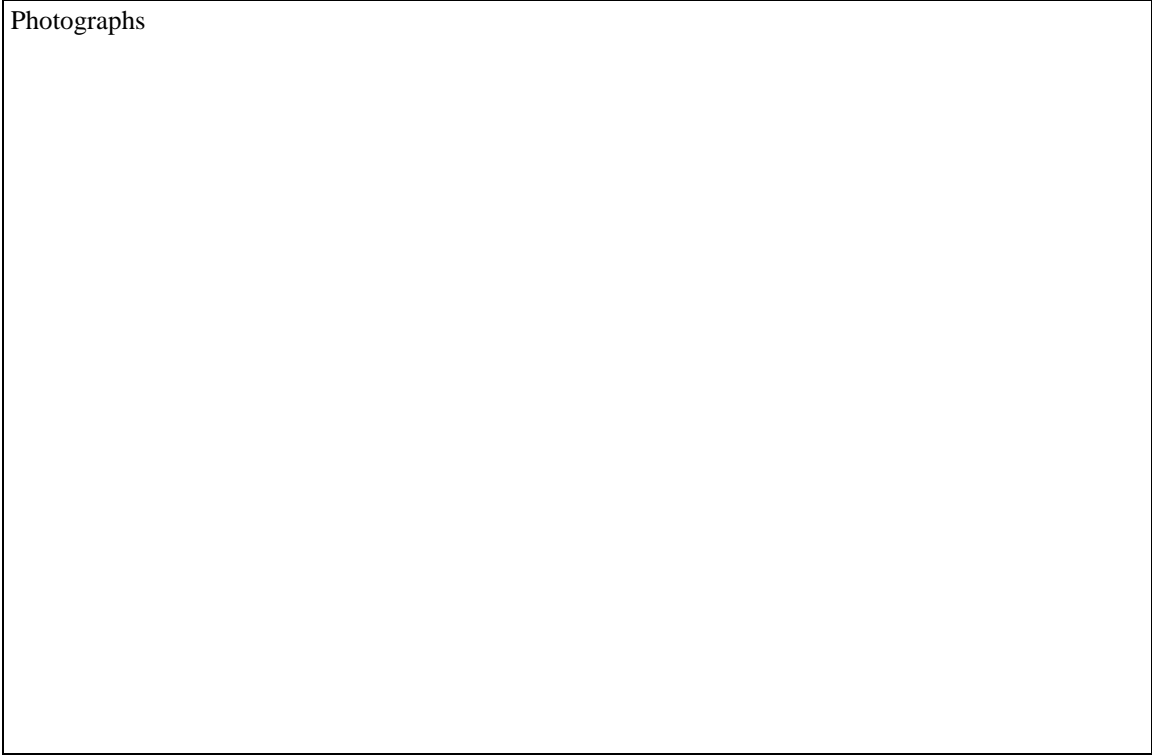
speedy re-occupation of the premises by a suitable use as soon as possible. For these reasons, it is considered essential that Tax designation be afforded to these properties.

- **Existing Listed Buildings**

The Corporation has carried out an inventory of Georgian buildings, listed in the development Plan for protection and located in this general area. According to this inventory, many of the buildings are becoming decayed and have the potential to fall into disrepair and dereliction. It is the view of the Corporation that private owners ought to be given the maximum assistance and incentive to maintain and indeed refurbish these buildings which are an integral part of the unique heritage and tourist attraction of Limerick. The Corporation therefore seeks tax designation for the conservation of these buildings. Except where otherwise specified, The Corporation requests that “Residential” allowance would apply to all buildings in the Georgian area as defined in the Development Plan & Review Page 107 i.e

“...the area which lies within a line drawn from Henry Street through Mallow Street to Dery Square to Barrington Street to Henry Street to join the commencement of the line including both sides of the streets on the perimeter, this area continues to retain something of its special Georgian character”

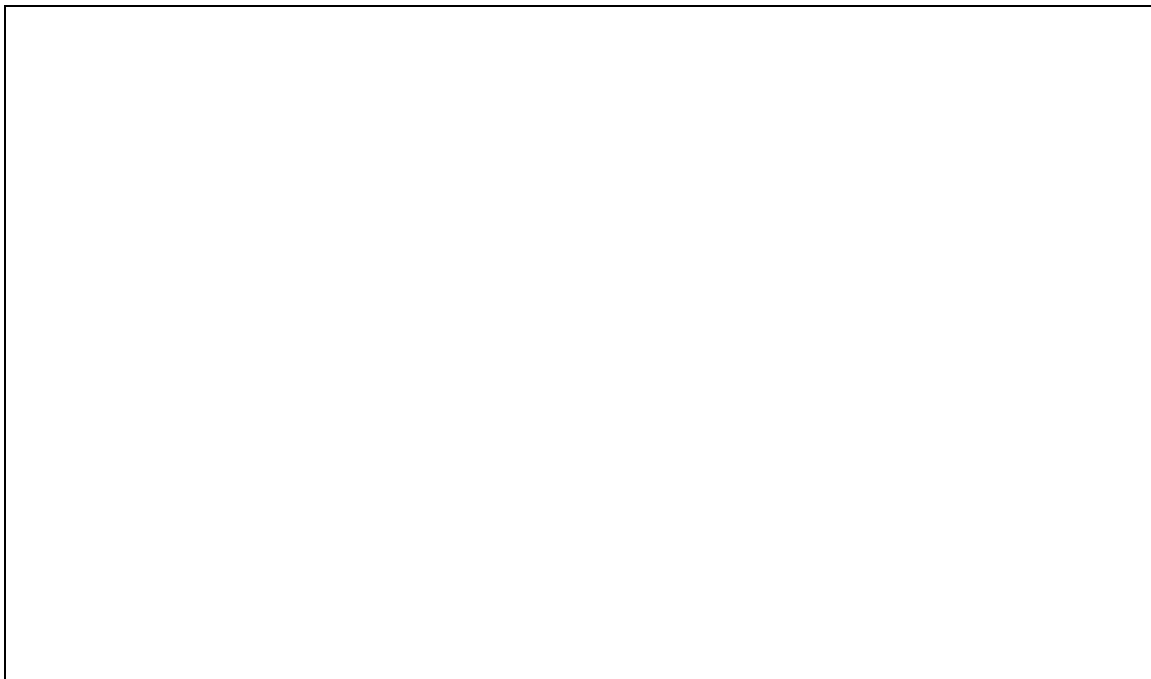
Photographs



- **Block Containing County Council Offices (22 & 46)**

Despite the exhortations of Government in the national plan for sustainable development, the County Council appears set to contribute to the trend to suburbanization by seeking to develop new offices for itself in the suburbs. If such a large cluster of historic buildings are to be vacated, the Corporation believes that it is imperative that the transition to a new use be encourage and facilitated in order to achieve conservation of the block.

It is fundamental to Limerick Corporation's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The *physical survivals* of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, thorough formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished *local* scene and sustaining the sense of *local* distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our City. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure and recreation. For further details, **(see appendix attached)**.



- **Myles St. (26 & 27)**

This area has been designated in the Corporation's development plans as Obsolete for a very long time. The Corporation therefore intends to use its powers of compulsory acquisition to assist the re-development of this block. Because of its obsolete designation the Corporation is of the view that tax designated status ought to be afforded to this site.



# MAP 14: QUAYS AREA



### **1.3.6 Edward St.**

This area comprises the sites of a number of former industries which have since departed. The area is part of some of the the Prospect A ward which with a score of 17 is one of the most deprived wards in Limerick. The unemployment rate here was 37% in 1991. The Corporation owns some lands here together with Telecom and private individuals.


- **Edward St. (25)**

The area of land involved here is just over 1.2 acres and has been derelict for a very long time and is designated as Obsolete in the City Development Plan. It adjoins land on which designation has been requested.

- **Telecom (24)**

- **Shannon Foundry (37)**

Photographs



# MAP 15: EDWARD STREET AREA



### **1.3.7 The Docks Area**

Although the docks area is still in operation as a transportation node, the long term-viability of the docks themselves must be questionable. Also, the BGE site adjoining the docks is now obsolete and should be considered for development. The area is part of Dock A ward which had a score of 10 and an unemployment rate of 20% in 1991.

- **The Docks (52,53,54 & 64)**

Part of the Harbour Board's property that remained within the second round designated area was Steamboat Quay the development of this site has considerably enhanced the City's appearance on two of the major approach routes, those from the South and South West along Dock Road and from Galway/Shannon Airport across the new Mallow Street Bridge. The current development along the designated area of Steamboat Quay has created approximately 300 new jobs in the area and has increased the resident population by creating approximately 500 residential units in an area where there previously were none

The Board has spent a considerable amount of money in improving the Docklands environment in the past two years and further improvements are planned. However considerable additional improvements to the Board's properties could take place if the designated area could be extended. The Board's policy is to work towards a sustainable environment in which a working dock can exist in harmony alongside commercial or residential developments as well as acting as a focal point of interest demonstrating the commercial heart of the City.

To date a small part of the Docklands area has benefited from designation and if this is to continue, further additional designation is needed so as to maintain the interest of investors and developers in the area.

- **The Bord Gas Site. (19)**

With the introduction of Natural Gas, the company's lands including the gas holder have become redundant. However the lands are contaminated with the chemical residue of previous gas manufacture and extensive cleanup operations will be required before development. It is the view of the company and also of the corporation that tax designation is essential to encourage development.

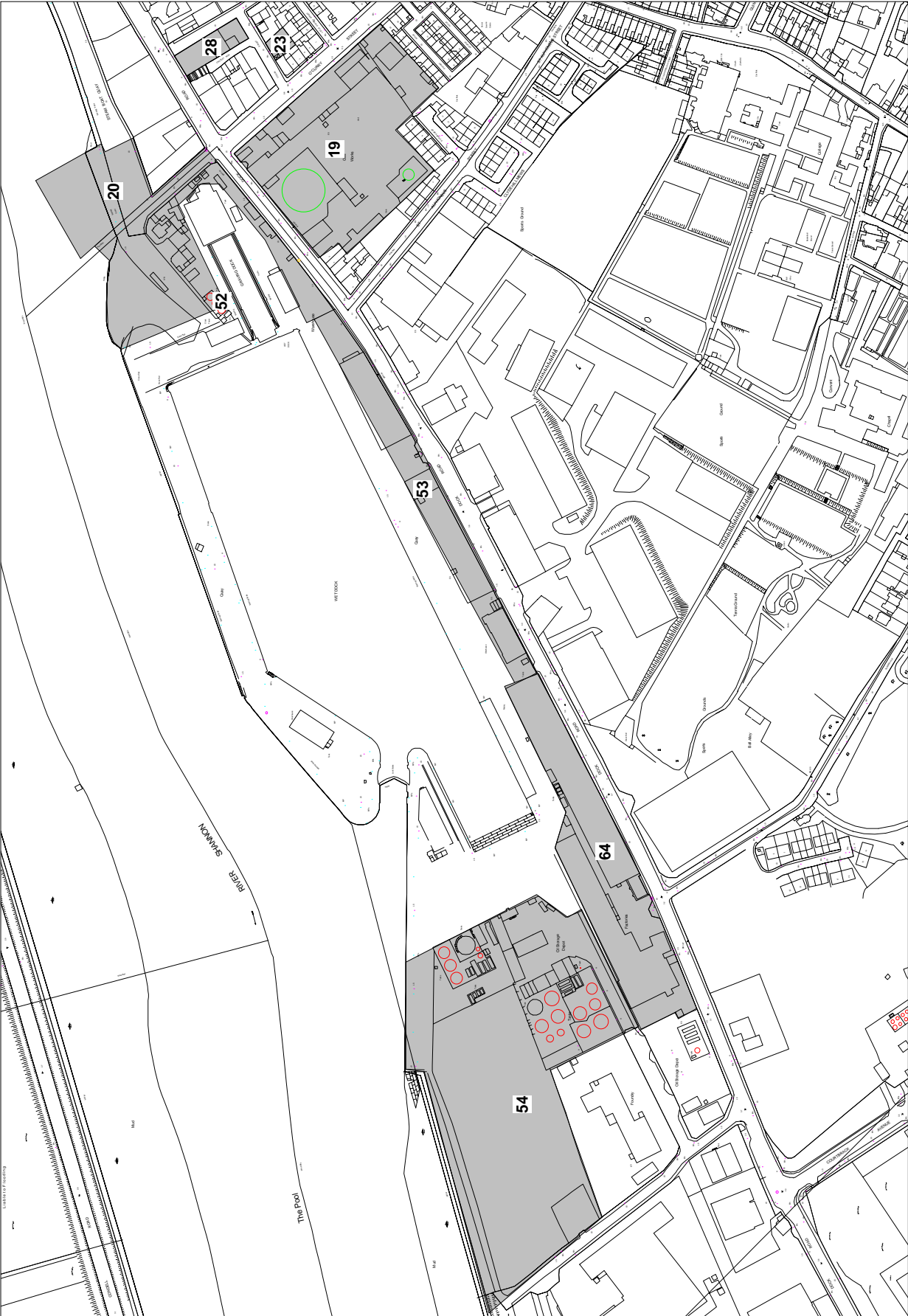
- **Other Sites (23 & 28)**

A number of small sites formerly designated as obsolete in the development plan remain to be developed.

Photographs



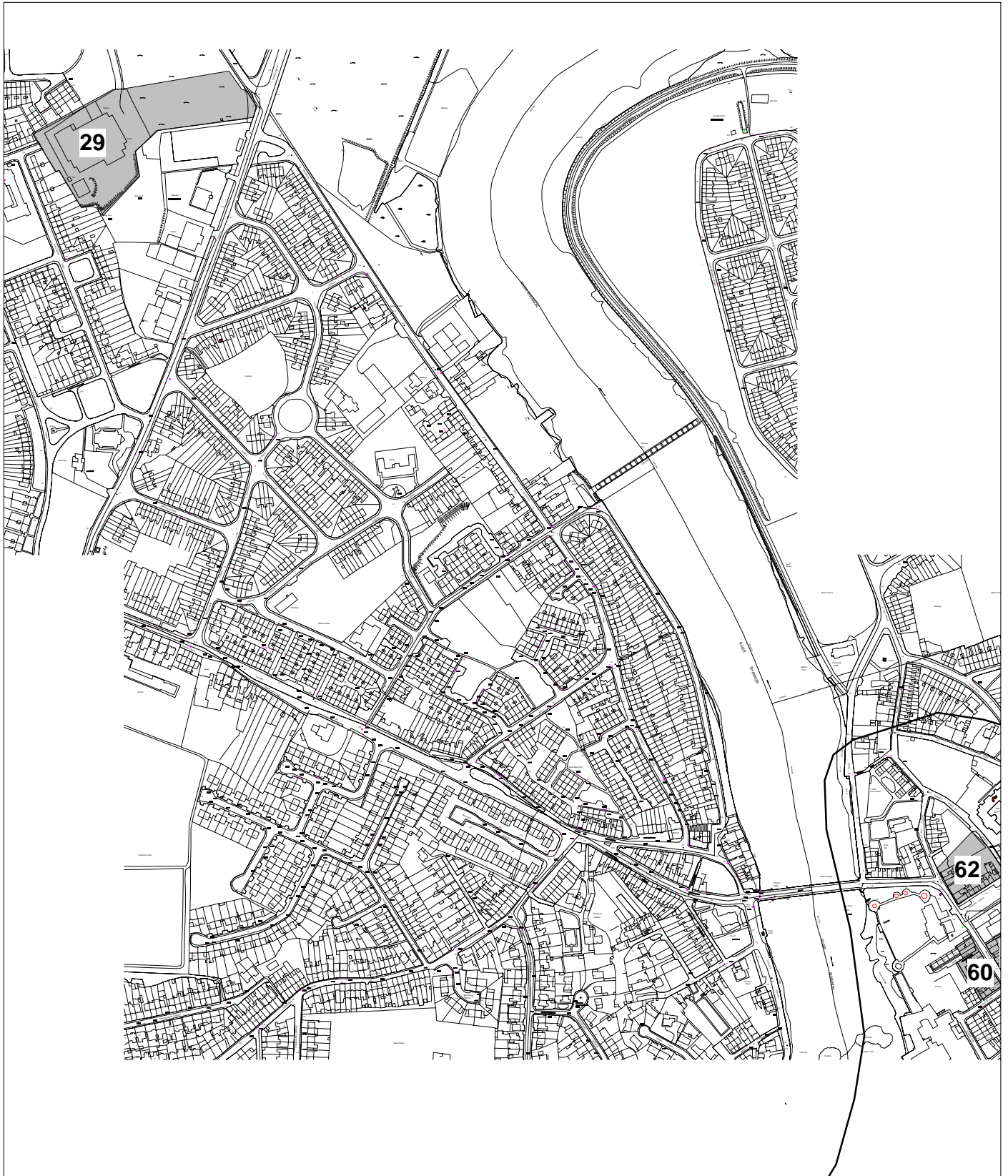
# MAP 16: DOCKS AREA



### **1.3.8 Moyross (29)**

Moyross is one of the most deprived suburban districts in Limerick. Although the Corporation has chosen to focus its integrated areaPlan on the city centre and has been supported in this by the local Partnership, nevertheless, interest has been shown by one developer who has sites both in the city centre and Moyross in carrying out a retail and industrial workshop development in the Moyross area. This is the only application of this type that has been received. It is therefore the view of the Corporation that designation ought to be extended to this one site in Moyross although it is outside the area for which the IAP has been prepared. For reasons of the provision of shopping and employment opportunity in a deprived area the Corporation therefore seeks tax designation for the site shown below.

# MAP 14: MOYROSS



### **3. Implementation & Community Gain**

#### **3.0 Partnership Issues**

In order to promote community development and cohesion, this being an objective of the Development Plan, it will be necessary that such owners / developers take seriously their responsibilities in relation to social partnership. To this end the Corporation proposes that certification of compliance with the objectives of the IAP will be granted only to developments on the following conditions:

In its Development Plan the Corporation has expressed the general goal of promoting both economic and community development and has expressed the subsidiary goal of giving assistance to communities in providing community facilities and services. It is the view of the Corporation that the most marginalised and deprived communities in the city should benefit from the growth of business in the city centre. Such community areas shall include but shall not be limited to those participating in the PAUL initiative. The Corporation is aware that the capacity of some communities to deliver services is constrained by an absence of buildings and facilities and it shall therefore be an objective of the Integrated Area Programme that developments benefiting from tax exemptions therein shall contribute to the development of facilities in the deprived areas. Such contribution may be made in cash or by way of developments or works sited in such community areas.

In the event that a development shall take place in an area benefiting from Tax Exemption as part of the Integrated Area Programme, the beneficiary of the exemption shall contribute a percentage of the development cost as may be assessed by the Corporation to a fund to be used for the development of facilities in the community areas.

In lieu of a cash contribution as outlined above, if the beneficiary of a Tax Exemption shall demonstrate that he has carried out works or carried out a development in one of the community areas which is deemed to be to the benefit of that community, the above charge may be waived.

Works or developments qualifying as being deemed to be of benefit shall include but shall not be limited to the following.

- Provision of Retailing outlets
- Provision of Community Centres
- Equipment of Community Centres or schools
- The carrying out of works of an amenity nature

Provided that all such works or developments shall be approved by persons or groups designated by the Corporation to certify that such works are of significant benefit to the community concerned.

### **Employment and Training**

In order to maximise the gain to the local communities, the Integrated Area Plan will seek to improve access to jobs through a combined strategy aimed at developing closer links with employers, and providing improved training and educational programmes through PAUL. Existing and potential employment opportunities in the study area have already been identified in the retail and catering sectors, the hotel industry, and in other tourism-related activities. It is anticipated that additional opportunities will arise as the area becomes a magnet for new economic activity. The following steps will be implemented:

- the identification of local / sectoral employment opportunities and the correlation of these opportunities with relevant training courses
- the identification of employers within the business community willing to become active partners in the development of training programmes and in trainee placement schemes
- the identification of interested participants from the local community in training programmes

### **3.1 Managing Development of the City Centre**

It is the view of the Corporation that the process of Land Use change in the City Centre should be actively managed by the exercise by the Corporation of its powers under the planning acts and through the appointment of a City Centre Manager with wide ranging responsibilities to co-ordinate promotion and control of city centre business including the establishment of new business. An essential ingredient of this pro-active management is to ensure that property owners who have put forward sites for designation are encouraged to participate in development packages which can be marketed in the best interests of the city.

#### **3.1.1 Environmental Enhancement**

It is the view of the Corporation that Limerick city centre should strive to distinguish itself and establish a special character. This process is called establishing local distinctiveness. The key elements of local distinctiveness will include: -

- Lighting
- a palette of materials and street surface treatment
- colour of buildings
- a suite of special street furniture
- public art
- signs and marking
- traffic management hardware
- shop-fronts and window displays
- retaining the local shop
- the role of city centre management in local distinctiveness
- customer care training for shop staff
- local street traditions

- street activity and street life

### **3.1.2 Facilitating Business**

This will include access to and throughout the city centre, including the provision of adequate off-street car-parking to accommodate the demands of retailing and business.

### **3.1.3 Publicity**

Ensuring that those who brief the media concerning Limerick carry a consistent message about the city whatever the particular item of business that happens to be discussed.

## **3.2 Publicising the Available Sites**

The Corporation proposes to maintain a register of, and to publicise the availability of land for development within the Borough so as to encourage the further development of the commercial life of the city in accordance with the general goal of the Development Plan

## **3.3 Maintaining Liaison with Developers**

The Corporation, through its development officer will maintain liaison with the development community to ensure the achievement of its goal of encouraging the development of the city centre.

## **3.4 Maintaining Liaison with the Social Partners**

Through its partnership with PAUL and the city enterprise board the Corporation intends to further the Development Plan Goals of encouraging the Economic and Community development of the City.

### **3.5 Specific Complementary Works**

Complementary works are being carried out by the Corporation on the following areas.

#### **Kings Island - King's Island Action Area Plan**

Social housing,  
Inner relief road and bridge,  
Environmental works under Urban and Village renewal.  
Abbey River Navigation Improvements  
Castle Lane Development

#### **Watergate Flats**

Refurbishment of the flats  
Street improvements to the Milk Market Area

#### **Quays Area**

Improvement of the Shannon navigation in association with the main drainage

#### **Georgian Area**

Civic Trust Building  
Repair of Tait's Clock  
Extension of the Art gallery

### **3.6 Proposals by Other Bodies**

The Corporation has received proposals from the Chamber of Commerce for extensive re-design of the streets in the city centre. While this proposal requires considerable assessment from the point of view of its impact of traffic flows, the Corporation will evaluate this proposal in the context of the IAP with a view to its adoption either in whole or in part. A copy of the proposal is attached.

# **APPENDIX 1**

# Table of Sites, Areas, Priorities & Designation Sought

Identification Number	Site Area (In Acres)	Priority Ranking	Type of Designation Sought
1	0.375	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
2	0.635	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
3	0.532	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
4	2.363	Unfinished	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
5	0.805	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
6	0.722	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
7	0.509	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
8	0.384	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
9	3.564	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
10	0.168	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
11	0.588	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial
12	0.427	Conservation	Commercial & Industrial
13	0.116	Conservation	Commercial & Industrial
14	0.297	CC Traders	Commercial & Residential
15	1.485	Urban Design	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
16	1.095	Urban Design	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
17	0.550	Urban Design	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
18	0.815	Urban Design	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
19	3.872	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
20	1.161	Unfinished	Commercial & Industrial & Hotel
21	2.126	Unfinished	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
22	0.721	Georgian	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
23	0.078	Unfinished	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
24	3.109	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
25	1.839	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
26	0.074	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
27	0.338	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
28	0.262	Unfinished	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
29	4.814	Social	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
30	0.533	CC Traders	Commercial & Residential
31	0.257	CC Traders	Commercial & Residential
32	0.070	Georgian	Commercial & Residential
33	0.176	Georgian	Commercial & Residential
34	0.355	Georgian	Commercial & Residential
35	10.282	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
36	0.271	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
37	7.515	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
38	0.106	Georgian	Commercial & Residential
39	0.142	Urban Design	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
40	0.186	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
41	0.025	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
42	0.808	Conservation	Commercial & Residential
43	0.037	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
44	0.168	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
45	0.027	Obsolete	Commercial & Residential
46	1.068	Georgian	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
47	0.581	Conservation	Commercial & Industrial
48	0.254	Georgian	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
49	0.077	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential

CONTINUED.....

<b>Identification Number</b>	<b>Site Area (In Acres)</b>	<b>Priority Ranking</b>	<b>Type of Designation Sought</b>
50	0.843	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Hotel
51	8.720	Unfinished & Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
52	2.547	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
53	1.754	Opportunity / Conservation	Commercial & Industrial
54	8.444	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
55	1.691	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
56	0.549	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
57	0.477	Opportunity	Commercial & Residential
58	0.514	Opportunity	Commercial & Residential
59	0.101	Opportunity	Commercial & Residential
60	0.496	Opportunity	Commercial & Residential
61	0.173	Opportunity	Commercial & Residential
62	0.912	Obsolete	Commercial & Industrial & Residential
63	0.036	Georgian	Commercial & Residential
64	2.937	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial
65	2.5	Opportunity	Commercial & Industrial

# **APPENDIX 2**

**City Development Plan Review 1998**

**The Kings Island Plan**

**Inventory of buildings in the Georgian Area**

**Healy's Field Leisure Development**

**Typical Site Brief**

**(Chamber of Commerce Pedestrianization Proposal.)**