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NEWPORT HISTORY AND CHARACTER (BY LOTTS ARCHITECTURAL AND URBANISM LTD)



IMPORTANT NOTE

ALL ILLUSTRATIONS IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE FOR THE PURPOSE OF GIVING A GENERAL IMPRESSION ONLY. DETAILS WITHIN THE DRAWING SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS BEING FINAL. ALL SUGGESTED PUBLIC REALM AND BUILDING DESIGN WOULD BE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY PLANNING APPROVALS AND OTHER COMPLIANCES.

SECTION 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Newport is a truly unique place. Its superb and dramatic natural setting, its river, bridges, church and fine Main street make a visit to Newport unforgettable. It is different from all other Irish towns. As Newport continues to evolve it is important to ensure that this unique character is preserved and enhanced, and that new development and future growth is suitable and harmonious with this character.

This Town Design Statement sets out to present a vision making the most of Newport's many strengths, addressing its weaknesses and ensuring that its future growth is of the highest and most suitable quality.

This document presents a plan of action to create a sustainable and vibrant town where;

- people want to live, visit, work, invest in and do business.
- safety allows people choose to walk and cycle rather than drive.
- the natural and built heritage is appreciated, preserved and enjoyed fully.
- its reputation as one of the most beautiful small towns in Ireland draws visitors from afar.

The purpose of a Design Statement is not about whether development should be carried out, but **how**.

The aim is to ensure that future development and change will have regard to the unique attributes of Newport and its historical context and contribute positively to the future of the village. It sets out a vision that can provide guidance to all groups involved when considering changes/improvements to the village.

Such groups include: Statutory bodies, and public authorities, Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers and engineers, Local community groups, householders and businesses.

Why is this Town Statement important to Newport?

Recent years have seen great changes in society, and these changes are affecting rural towns all over Ireland;

Negative trends

- Online shopping and large superstores in large towns are causing small local shops to close.
- Edge of town retail and other development that is both unsightly and takes activity from the centre.
- Migration to cities and large towns where there are greater employment opportunities.
- People choosing to live in the countryside rather than in towns.

Positive trends

- Dramatic increase in tourism figures due to the relatively recent Great Western Greenway and Wild Atlantic Way routes.
- New possibilities for working online locally or in a co-working space.
- People choosing to leave city life.

To survive Newport needs to assert itself and become an attractive place to invest and live in.

How was this Design Statement developed?

This statement evolved over a 4-year period and is informed and guided by the outcomes of public consultation events, schools' workshops, walkabouts and ongoing meetings of a multi representative steering group. The steering group included Mayo County Council, NADDCO, Newport business and tourism representatives, and Community Futures. A broader range of bodies were also consulted such as National Parks and Wildlife and the National Road Design Office. All suggestions and observations made were taken on board and considered, and from this a S.W.O.T analysis was undertaken identifying Newport's 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats'. These have informed all the recommendations made. Newport's Unique Selling Points (U.S.P) and resulting potential were also identified and highlighted.

STRENGTHS

- **Location:** Newport is the largest urban centre close to Wild Nephin National Park, proposed 'Dark Skies' Observatory and Planetarium. It is central to the Great Western Greenway, Euro Velo cycling route, the Western Way and Bangor Trail walking routes and important freshwater fisheries. It is close to key commercial and employment towns of Castlebar and Westport,
- **Setting:** Superb natural setting overlooking river, on the Shores of Clew bay.
- **Growing population:** people want to live and work in Newport
- **Built Heritage:** Newport house, fine Main Street buildings, Railway Viaduct and associated heritage; Unique Celtic revival style' Catholic Church.
- **Unique activities:** Newport is the centre for Astronomy in Connaught and hosts Mayo Dark Sky Festival the biggest such festival in the country.
- **Potential:** Eco and Activity based Tourism potential is currently under exploited such as long-range walking and cycling holidays.

WEAKNESSES

- **Commercial Vitality;** Significant decline in local retail activity. Older shops may not be re-let.
- **Tourism;** Under exploited potential, lack of prominent Tourist office.
- **Safety:** Vehicular movement is prioritised over that of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled persons. No road crossings, narrow footpaths, and wide roadways causing high traffic speeds. Narrow width of Georges Street impedes pedestrian and cyclist movement
- **Greenway Route:** No off-road route through town, cyclists are on road. No bike set down, maintenance or similar facilities.
- **Public Realm:** No public spaces in which to sit, socialise, enjoy. Large areas of tarmac. Consequent lack of Street vitality.
- **Built Environment:** Declining quality of shopfronts and signage. Dereliction, decay, loss and inappropriate alteration of older built heritage. Absence of architectural design consideration in last 60 years.
- **Natural Environment:** need for new sewerage treatment plant.
- **Employment;** Lack of suitable modern office space, enterprise, digital facilities, industry. Risk of being a commuter town.
- **Car parking:** Need for off-street long-term parking to leave short term shopper parking available in commercial centre.
- **First Impressions:** The N59 Mulranny roadside town entrance gives a poor first impression.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Tourism:** Newport as 'Gateway' to Wild Nephin National park, Outdoor Pursuits based town.
- **Reuse of shops:** Supply the needs of hikers, fishermen, cyclists, tourists etc.
- **Reuse of Derelict buildings and sites:** Enterprise/co-working/start up centres, tourism activities. Living and working above shops.
- **Heritage Buildings:** restore, reuse, enhance, celebrate, community use e.g. public library, youth centre, water sports base etc.
- **Public realm and street vitality;** reduce road widths, widen footpaths, create attractive public spaces.
- **Safety;** pedestrian crossings and traffic calming methods, alternative off road cycle routes.
- **Greenway Improvements;** To create a safe off-road cycle /pedestrian route through the town.
- **Natural Assets:** to maximise enjoyment of these- walks, water sports hub, public realm.

THREATS

- **Retail;** Edge of town retail, large retailers in nearby larger towns, online shopping, age profile of shop owners.
- **Road Safety:** The Georges Street safety blackspot is difficult to solve.
- **Built Heritage:** Challenges of heating, maintenance, refurbishments, insulation and reuse compared to total rebuilding.

NEWPORTS 'UNIQUE SELLING POINT' AND POTENTIAL

Newport has a Unique Selling Point.

It is the largest urban area adjacent to the new Wild Nephin National Park and therefore has the potential to be the 'Gateway Town' and 'Base Camp' for;

- Wild Nephin National Park
- Dark Skies Planetarium and Observatory.
- Bangor Trail and Western Way long distance trails,
- Great Western Greenway cycle route,
- Euro Velo
- Blueway sea-based activities and sailing.
- Salmon, Trout and Sea Fishing

Newport could be labelled as the 'Gateway to Wild Nephin' or even - 'Your Gateway to the Stars'

A prominent One Stop Shop for these experiences; information, maps, videos/multimedia, shuttle bus, tour guides, observatory tickets etc. located centrally would be key, along with tourism accommodation and long term off street carparking for hikers, cyclists, and shuttlebus users.

This potential is currently untapped!



Newport has the potential to become;

- the key urban 'Gateway' to the Wild Nephin Park and all the tourism assets of north Mayo
- a thriving and beautiful town to visit and in which to live, work, and do business.

In order to achieve this Newport needs to;

- Enhance its public realm and general physical appearance.
- Solve road, cycle and pedestrian safety issues. Prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over motor traffic.
- Create new uses for older buildings and shops thus tackling dereliction and protecting built heritage.
- Create start up space for employment and creativity.
- Sensitively protect, enhance, and celebrate its built and natural heritage.
- Sensitively exploit this built and natural heritage.
- Adapt for increased tourism numbers and traffic.

This Document describes how this Vision can be achieved.

2. APPROACHING NEWPORT - FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First Impressions are important to potential investors, residents and tourists alike. Attractive, well maintained approach roads tell us a lot about a community. Poor quality or unmaintained buildings, unsuitable boundary walls and fences, untidy road or grass edges, and excessive signage all give a poor impression. Fortunately, a lot of the issues raised during the community consultations are solvable. Painting, attractive screen planting, hedging, trees, wildflower beds etc will be hugely beneficial. It is recommended that Newport, as Gateway to the Wild Nephin, gets these first impressions right. It will make all the difference.

MULRANNY APPROACH (N59 / WILD ATLANTIC WAY SOUTHBOUND)

This Wild Atlantic Way town entrance from north Mayo does not currently give a good first impression. Fortunately, with vision and team effort the following problems can be rectified;

- Haphazard, and discordant building types and development generally.
- Poorly defined road edges and poor road surfaces.
- Excess and unsightly signage.
- Haphazard fencing, concrete block walls, and other unsuitable boundary treatments and edges.
- Lack of green areas, trees and hedges.
- Poorly maintained, and in some cases derelict looking buildings
- Neglected landscaping generally





The following improvement works would make this a most attractive town entrance;

- **Roads;** narrowing of the roads and road junction improvements in line with the latest national road design guidelines will create areas for screen planting, hedges and wider footpaths.
- **Terrace of Houses;** This terrace has potential to look very attractive. Repainting of walls, windows and doors in a carefully chosen co-ordinated colour scheme. Planting of box hedging or similar between the footpath and the buildings.
- **Petrol station and forecourt;** Substantial screen planting, reduction of and alterations to existing excess signage and possibly a new appropriately designed canopy.
- **Car sales business;** Careful screen planting with a line of trees or a linear box hedging could look attractive to both customers and passers alike. New carefully chosen fencing and subtle signage combined with attractive planting would enhance the appearance of this busy commercial premises.
- **MUGA and adjacent sites.** - The MUGA is very popular and greatly used. However, the high-level green fencing detracts from the appearance of this important town entrance. A realignment of the Glenhest Road junction could create a green area for tree planting. This could eventually screen the MUGA fencing.

- **Signage:** All excess private, community and public signage should be removed. A limited amount of carefully designed signage could be more effective and possibly even enhancing to the setting. See signage design guidelines.
- **Junction with Quay Road North: This** neglected area of haphazard buildings, excessive signage, scattered items and materials, gas tanks, poor surfaces etc again give a poor impression. Subject to more detailed investigation this site may have potential as an attractive green area, or for terraced buildings in keeping with the traditional architecture of the town.



WESTPORT APPROACH

This approach is generally tidy and attractively landscaped, however... it has potential to be even better!

Recommended Improvement Works.

- **Derelict Petrol station;** Preferably remove damaged canopy and excess signage. Provide suitable screen planting to soften the effect and allow the general area to blend into natural setting.
- **Road:** Introduction of cycle lanes. This not only makes cycling safer but slows car movement.
- **View towards town centre over river;** While the river and bridges look spectacular, improvements to the highly visible buildings of Castlebar Street would be of huge benefit to the visual amenity.
- **Medlicott Street:** This presents a 'sea of tarmacadam'. This street could be transformed into a wonderful public space.
- **Signage;** there should be only one 'Welcome to Newport' sign. Tennis Club sign should be reduced in size and colour.
- **Overhead Wiring;** this should be undergrounded, and all poles removed,
- **Derelict warehouse Building:** This derelict building should be replaced or remodelled to more suitable and aesthetic form. As a temporary measure all signage should be removed and the building could be painted.

CASTLEBAR APPROACH.

This is a stunningly beautiful approach into Newport with its scenic riverside drive, magnificent viaduct and bridges and the beautifully built stone walls and the gates of Newport house. It's an impressive arrival.

Unfortunately, there some detractors from this beauty **but again they are readily solvable:**

- **Private Signage-** large signage boards along the approach road, old warehouse building, the river and at the Garden centre, and Bike Hire greatly detract from the wonderful riverside approach. These should be removed. **See signage policy.**
- **Road edges:** the setback areas between the public road and the front boundary walls are generally unfinished, suffer potholes and ponding and appear untidy.
- **Walking Amenity;** there are no footpaths along the riverside.
- **Public Road Signage;** The positioning of directional signage against the historic stone walls detracts from Newport House, its gates, and the main Street generally.

Recommended Improvement Works.

- **Footpath;** Provide footpath all along the river side of the road all the way to the bridge.
- **Road edges:** Replace maintenance stone and broken tarmacadam with grass lawns and trees along the north side of the road. Kerb tidily.
- **Signage;** remove all existing commercial signage. Implement new signage policy of agreed carefully coordinated signage sympathetic to the natural setting. Review design and positioning of road signage in line with current NRA/TII road signage guidelines and in the context of the historic setting.

3. TOWN CENTRE- NEWPORTS PUBLIC REALM

Newport presents very achievable potential for the improvement of its main streets. Such improvement works will be able to not only solve road safety, wheelchair, bike, and pedestrian mobility issues, but also add a vitality to the streetscape that could attract new business into the town. The payback on such an investment would be huge in terms of economic sustainability, tourism, and aesthetic attractiveness. It would have the knock-on effect of shops being let, buildings being restored and reoccupied, and people wanting to live and work in, and visit Newport.

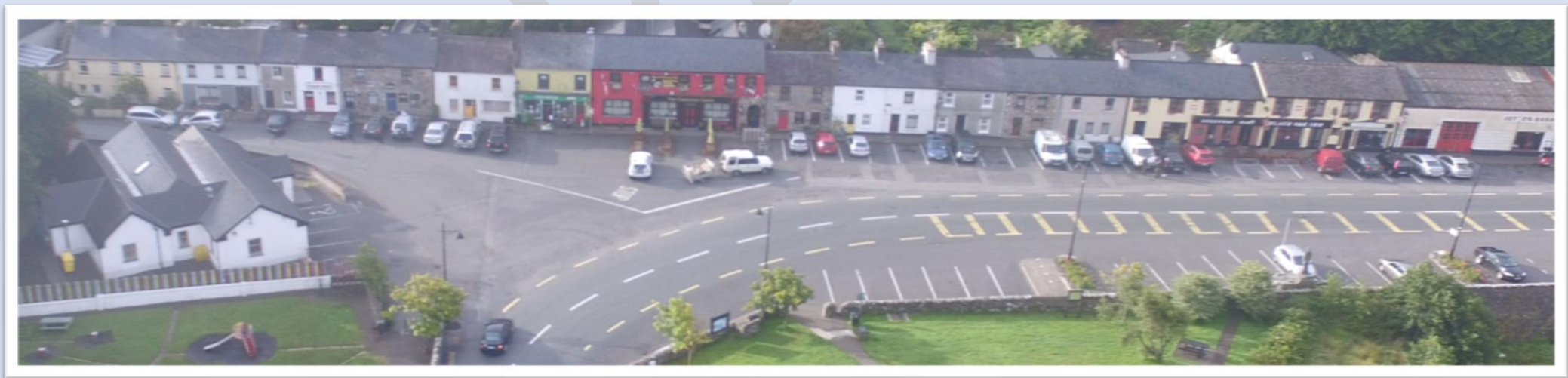
This chapter presents a street by street audit of Issues and Solutions.

Each section should be read in conjunction with the illustrated photographs and drawings.

MEDLICOTT STREET

Issues

- **Public realm:** Very narrow footpath along terraced buildings with a vast area of tarmacadam providing ample space for random car parking and the N59. Picnic tables sit among parked cars.
- **Architecture:** Consistent attractive traditional 2 storey rural Irish streetscape, the character of which should be preserved and enhanced in character.
- **Car Parking:** Significant capacity underutilised and full during limited holiday season. Disorganised and haphazard in appearance, inefficient in layout.
- **Safety:** Pedestrian crossings and traffic calming badly needed. Wide road promotes high speeds. Greenway cycle route currently on road, no designated cycle lanes.
- **Bridge:** Lack of width between bridge walls and protruding lamp posts result in narrow footpath



Solutions

- **Road:** Reduce road width to 7 metres, provide pedestrian crossings which will also have traffic calming effect.
- **Public realm and car parking;** Road width reduction will create space for paved pedestrian areas, organised car parking, a defined cycle route, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and aesthetic improvement. This could increase commercial activity at this side of town making it a destination.
- **Pedestrian and Cycle movement;** Provide road crossings and designated off road cycle lane on Medicott street
- **The Bridge:** Consult with Local Authority to investigate possible reduction of road width to facilitate increase in footpath width. Reposition lamp standards onto the bridge walls. Possibly widen area of footpath further by relocation of the stone wall back into Canon Killeen park. Create link into Canon Killeen Park.



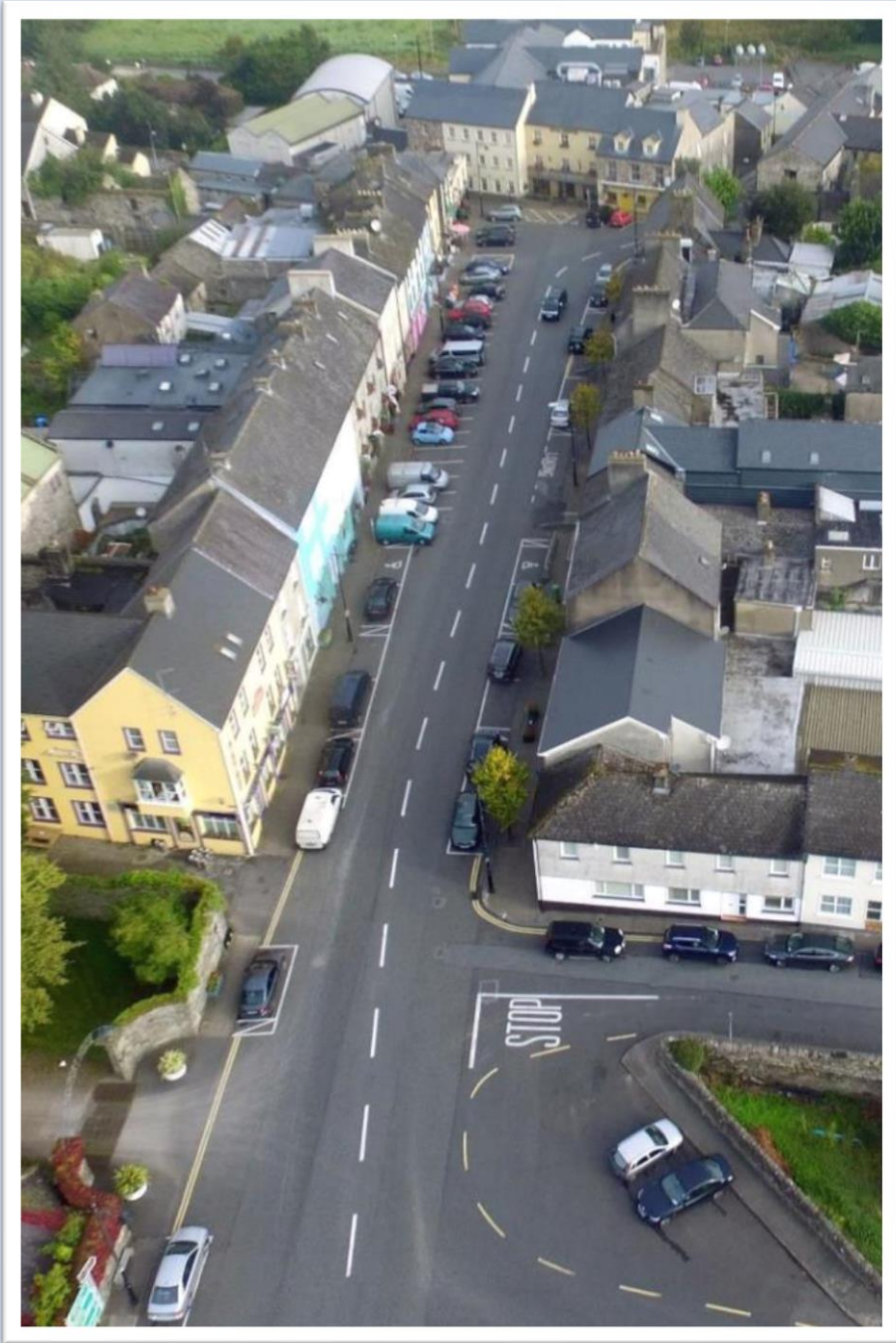
MAIN STREET

Issues

- **Public Realm:** East side has a wider footpath at elevated level edged with original limestone kerbs and steps. West and north sides have narrow footpaths in need of upgrade. There are no amenity areas to allow for external cafes or seating. The existing concrete brick type paving is not in character with the original streetscape. Lack of soft landscaping i.e. greenspace.
- **Accessibility:** No compliant accessible parking spaces. Ramped access to upper footpath is not ideal.
- **Traffic Issues:** Heavy traffic, HGVs, noise, wide road encourages double parking. No pedestrian crossings.
- **Road:** Excessive road width encourages this double and haphazard car parking.
- **Car parking:** Line marking defines car parking to maximum capacity. Car parking is prioritised over quality pedestrian areas. All day parking by car sharers, greenway cyclists and shopkeepers, reduces availability of spaces for shoppers. Alternative off street parking could address this problem.
- **Safety:** No pedestrian crossings. No room for defined cycle lanes. Poor sight lines and fast-moving traffic from Georges Street entrance to Main Street.
- **Buildings:** Under maintained buildings give an impression of dereliction.

Solutions

- **Traffic and Safety:**
 - If possible: an alternative HGV route avoiding Main Street.
 - An alternative off road cycle route through town with visible links onto Main Street. A designated cycle lane on Main Street is not possible.
 - Pedestrian crossings
 - If possible; reduced road width to reduce traffic speed.
- **Public Realm**
 - Widen footpaths on the west side.
 - Pedestrian crossings, this will also have a traffic calming effect.
 - A 'shared surface' paved public realm area at the north end of Main Street. This could allow cafes or people to spill out in summer months and if necessary, accommodate car parking off season.
 - Pedestrian links to residential areas, greenway, car parks etc.
- **Buildings:**
 - Painting and maintenance of all buildings. This will greatly improve the visual effect and attract investment into the town. See Chapter 6.
 - Redevelopment of the derelict corner site at Barrack Hill.
- **Car parking:**
 - Additional back land Car Parking Relocate car parking.



GEORGES STREET NORTH

The problems listed below make this street unsafe and contribute to the derelict appearance. However, these issues are solvable.

Issues

- **Road:** Narrow with poor visibility due to bend.
- **Footpaths:** Narrow and in poor condition. Footpath on one side only.
- **Traffic:** Heavy, noisy fast-moving traffic, notably HGVs.
- **Car parking:** Limited car parking area impinges on traffic movement. Cars parked at current bike hire building cause traffic safety issues.
- **Safety:** Generally unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Buildings:** Derelict and vacant and under maintained buildings, and excess signage greatly diminish the appearance of the street.
- **Appearance generally:** Untidy and unsightly, notably around the current bike hire building where discarded goods, materials and untidy boundary treatments have a very negative impact on the area.
- **Drainage:** Flooding problems near culvert.

Solutions

- **Safety:** Divert Pedestrian and cycle movement to an alternative off road route.
- **Traffic:** If possible, divert HGVs and Castlebar bound through traffic to an alternative route.
- **Footpaths:** Realignment of road could allow the widening of the existing footpath and the creation of organised parking spaces. Trees and hedges would add to the amenity.
- **Architecture:** The improvements described above would make the terrace of buildings not only more accessible but a more attractive place to restore, live in or do business. See Design guidelines for repair and restoration.



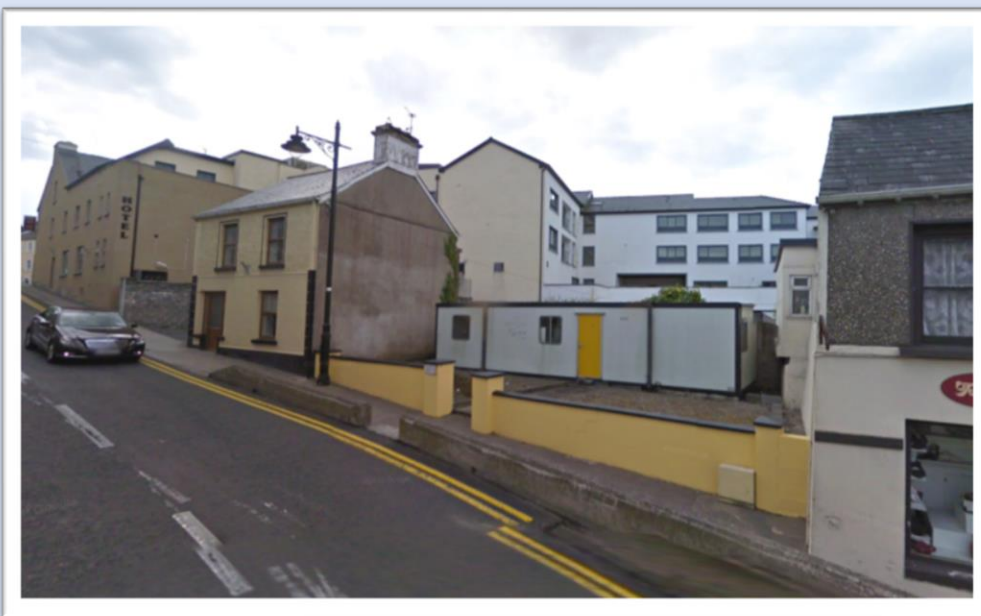


GEORGES STREET SOUTH

This unavoidably narrow street is part of the N59 National route. The consequent heavy traffic creates problems that are difficult to solve and contributes to dereliction. However, some important issues can be addressed.

Issues

- **Road and Footpaths:** the distance between opposite buildings leaves this street too narrow to allow safe footpaths widths.
- **Traffic:** Heavy, noisy fast-moving traffic, notably HGVs.
- **Car parking:** Car parking is not possible.
- **Safety:** This is a safety blackspot for pedestrians and cyclists alike. It is currently the only pedestrian and cycle route between Main Street, the school and Mulranny road. It forms part of the Greenway route.
- **Buildings and Streetscape:**
 - Many buildings are unmaintained, and of poor quality.
 - Noise, traffic, and lack of access make investment in these buildings less likely
 - Gaps in Streetscape suffer from dumping and lack of upkeep. Prefabricated building is unsuitable to the location.
 - Signage; detracting gable and banner signage.



Solutions

- **Safety:** Divert Pedestrian and cycle movement to new off-road route.
- **Traffic:** If possible, divert HGVs and Castlebar bound through traffic to an alternative route.
- **Car Parking:** Not possible.
- **Buildings:** Painting in attractive colours would improve appearances and possibly attract tenants or investors.
- **Noise:** Secondary inner glazing would solve noise issues. Locate living rooms on upper floor and bedrooms to rear.
- **Access:** Access from rear of these buildings should be examined.
- **Vacant Sites:**
 - Well-designed infill development would complete and enhance the streets.
 - Alternatively, small landscaped parks or gardens in these spaces would greatly enhance and soften the streetscape and facilitate areas of wider footpaths.
 - Prefabricated building should be removed.

Note: One house has been renovated and reconfigured. A first floor living area and rear bedrooms solve issues listed above creating wonderful exemplary small-town house. This demonstrates the potential of properties in such settings.



CASTLEBAR STREET

This is a visually prominent street. As the visitor enters Newport from the Westport side this street forms the backdrop to the river, the viaduct and the main bridge. Unfortunately, some buildings detract from the setting.

This is the street that harbours the most untapped potential in Newport. With careful design solutions, its sunny disposition and magnificent views, Castlebar Street could be the most desirable place to live in Newport.

Issues

- **Road and car parking:** quiet two-way road blocked often by disorganised car parking on both sides.
- **Footpaths:** inaccessible by parked cars causing pedestrians to walk on the road.
- **Buildings:** Many buildings here are sadly out of keeping with and detracting from the traditional townscape. A facelift here would be the most aesthetically beneficial enhancement of the town possible. The southerly aspect, closeness to shops, and magnificent views over the river make this an area well worth investing in as this street has the potential to be the most desirable place to live in Newport.



Solutions

Foot paths and Public Realm;

This area could enjoy its sunny disposition and stunning views so much more.

2 possible ways to make this happen could be investigated;

1. Widen footpaths on both sides of road, provide parking on building side only, pave road as a shared surface area. Plant trees at intervals. As above.



2. Widen Footpaths, delineate parallel car parking and plant tree bays on houses side only. On opposite side replace sheds at lower level with larger flat roofed buildings. Using this flat roof create public paved south facing platform sit out area as per the attached drawings. Highest design standards, in keeping with the setting, and respecting the historic stone walls will be essential. As below.



Architecture:

All buildings along this stretch of Castlebar Street would benefit greatly from the following works;

- Windows changed to vertical proportioning to be in keeping with the traditional architecture.
- Flat Roofs replaced with natural slated traditional pitched roofs. Attic accommodation could be created.
- Unpainted rough dash render replaced with smooth plaster finish painted in attractive colours.
- A terrace of new buildings could be 3 storeys in height if its length is significant.
- Owners could take advantage of SEAI grants available to upgrade the energy performance of these buildings and with this the appearance of these buildings.

CASTLEBAR ROAD AREA

This very prominent area accommodates shed type buildings with industrial corrugated roofs. Again, there is potential for great improvements which would benefit not only the owners but the entire town. Beautiful historic stone walls are a feature here.

Issues

- **Footpaths:** No footpath on riverside to allow pedestrians enjoyment of the river's edge. No trees.
- **Car Parking:** car parking on riverside blocks enjoyment of views. No car parking on the opposite side where it would be safer and more useful.
- **Buildings and Signage:** An excess of plastic signage is detracting from the setting. The location would benefit from improved building types.

Solutions

- **Footpaths and car parking:** There is room for footpaths on both sides of the road. Car parking should be relocated to the side of the sheds and a wider footpath placed along the river side to allow enjoyment of the amenity.
- **Architecture:** As described for Castlebar Street above, 2 alternative designs are suggested:
 - Altering existing buildings; Reroof existing sheds with traditional double pitched natural slated roofs. Alter fenestration to achieve vertical proportioning. Replace signage with individual letters creating only necessary signage.
 - Replacing existing buildings; replace and extend floor areas extensively with flat roof structure as proposed for Castlebar Street above and illustrated.

CHURCH LANE

This short narrow back lane has great character and potential. It is effectively a back lane to Newport House connecting to the old Protestant church, now a house. The lane has many wonderful old existing features such as stone walls, and fine stone arches, wrought iron gates and gate posts. It is therefore important to preserve all existing stone and ironwork on or adjacent to the lane. Any building built should incorporate and celebrate these features.

The courtyard at the rear of Newport house could be developed as a crafts village or similar and form an excellent connection between the house and the town.

Issues

- **Heritage:** There is a high risk that these wonderful stone features, which are direct references to ways of life in Newport's past, will be lost.
- **Streetscape;** As a 'back lane' the area suffers from poor maintenance, discarded goods etc.

Solutions

- Community members have suggested the potential of this lane as a local 'craft village', making and selling goods and services
- Any new development should set out to retain and exploit these beautiful features.



THE FORMER RAILWAY STATION AREA

DESCRIPTION

This once beautiful and bustling railway station area is now a quiet back land area. Architecturally this area hosts a mix of disjointed buildings with little reference to heritage, or consideration of public realm. It is an important area for long term car parking for shop keepers etc. The disused vacant site north of the metal road bridge is derelict in appearance.

Comment:

As the Greenway is the reuse of an old railway line it is important to celebrate the old railway station, goods shed, line and their general history. While some of these buildings still stand the context is lost. The railway lines, platforms, shelters, signal boxes etc are gone. There is great potential to re-establish this railway character and with this add cultural, historical and aesthetic interest to this off-road alternative greenway route.

The following actions are suggested to celebrate and preserve the Great Western Railway.:

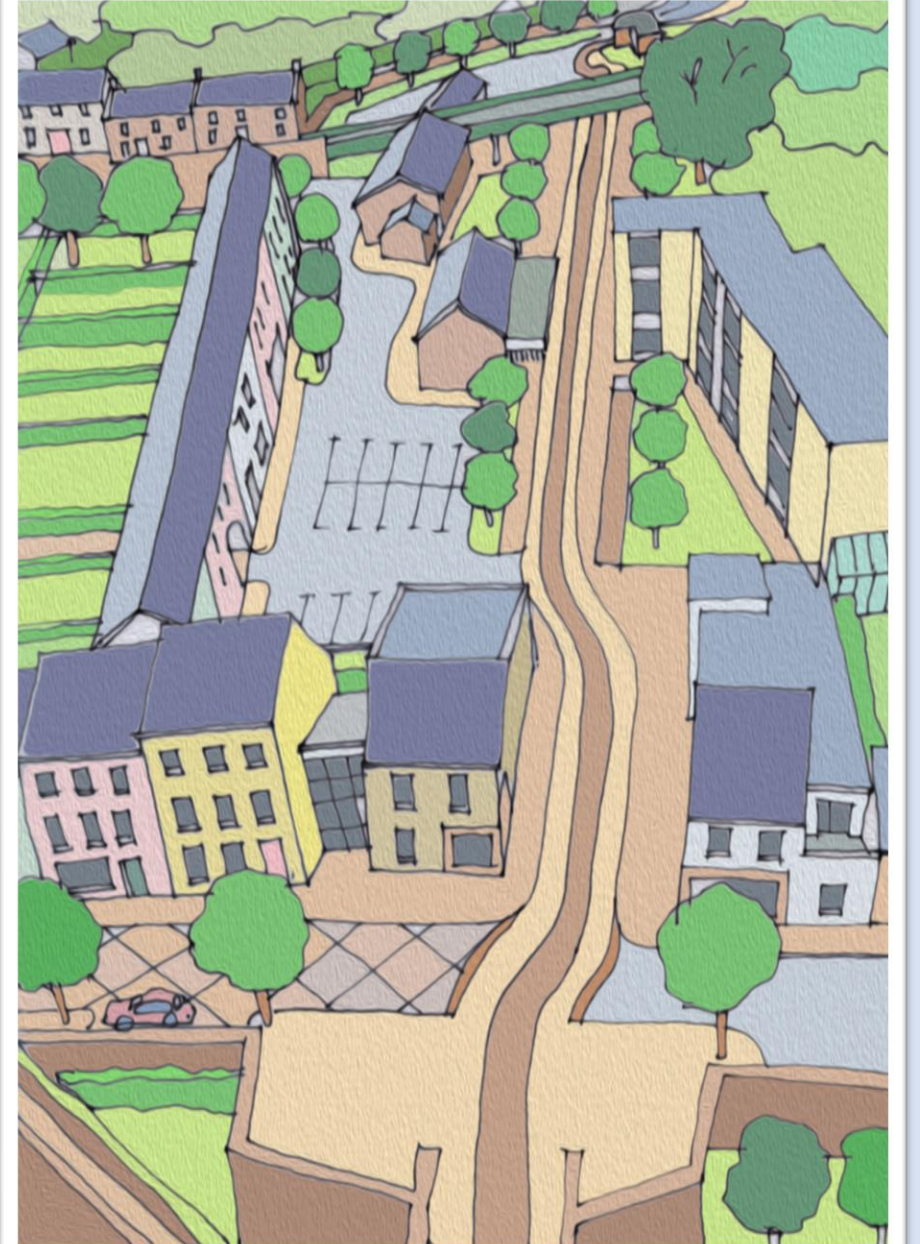
- Reinstatement of the canopy on the railway station building, now used as an office.
- Restoration and commitment to preservation of stone embankment /retaining walls on both sides, steel viaduct etc.
- Restoration, reestablishment of other stone railway buildings lost or partially lost.
- Delineation, through paving patterns, of the old railway tracks, platforms, signal buildings, shelters etc.
- History Information board and possible art piece commemorating events.

Other recommended Works

- Establishment of a building line for future development of this area between Main Street and the west stone embankment wall.
- Strong pedestrian links to the Main street.
- Provision of off-street car parking and bike servicing cyclist's hub for Greenway users.

The derelict site just north of the metal road bridge could facilitate the following;

- Greenway car Park and Hub as described above.
- Off road Pedestrian and cycle route from main Street and Greenway through to the Mulranny road.



4. THE WATERS EDGE - NEWPORTS GREATEST ASSET

QUAY ROAD LOOP AREA AND NORTH RIVERSIDE



The very beautiful Quay road enjoys light traffic, magnificent views and a natural estuary setting. It provides a short loop walk that would be the envy of any town. However, of course it has potential to be so much more while retaining its original good points.

Issues

- Footpath is again on the roadside rather than the riverside. Cars park along the riverside and block the views.
- Boats and other large items are left discarded in the water and on the quays. These are not only unsightly but also take away amenity space that could be otherwise enjoyed by all.
- Vehicles park and turn on the grass making the grass area difficult to walk on.
- Quay Road North is very unkempt as one approach Georges Street.
- Unsightly Water sports container and signage.
- Unused buildings in quay area.

Suggested improvements:

- Quay Road South near Main Street; Relocate car parking to beside Newport House walls. Provide new widened footpath on the river side opposite. This would open views to all and enhance enjoyment of the loop walk.
- Grass Area; If feasible provide a footpath closer to the water's edge but such that protective railings are not required.
- Provide kerbing to project grass edges and prevent cars turning and parking on grass.

- Resurface roadway such that it appears as a shared surface for cyclists, pedestrians and cars alike. Provide speed control measures.
- Remove decaying water sports container and signage.
- If possible, restore and reuse buildings near quay for water related activities i.e. fishing, canoeing etc.
- Extend the loop walk upstream along Castlebar Road and through Grace O Malley park into town.
- Management of Newport harbour to improve presentation.
- Quay Road North; completion of unfinished housing estate, hotel car park and all lands north of the road need to be significantly tidied up.



WATERSPORTS AND FISHING HUB.

Water sports enjoyed in Newport include sailing, canoeing (Splash), sea fishing, freshwater fishing and swimming.

Community consultations raised the idea of a quayside water sports hub and a building has been suggested. This building could be used for equipment storage and a small social hub. The building, a registered protected structure, is around 200 years old and this use could secure its future preservation as an important historic building in the town. The adjacent dockside and slipways could be adapted and enhanced in a sensitive way to facilitate access to the water.

GRACE KELLY PARK AND LOOP WALK

This lovely town park is currently underutilised, overgrown and, for some, may not feel like a safe place to enter as it has only one single entrance/exit.

Suggested improvement works;

- Create and execute a plan of maintenance, restoration, clearance and planting etc.
- Access and egress; Create more entry/exit points. Enhance main entrance.
- Extend the walking route such that it can be entered from the town centre as indicated on map.
- This extended walk should include the suggested hilltop viewing and star gazing point and if possible, connect to the suggested walled garden.
- Create clearances in vegetation to open to external views and visibility.
- Commission and erect a statue of the princess and actress Grace Kelly.



CANON KILLEEN PARK

Suggested Works;

- Provide efficient drainage system to prevent soggy lawns.
- A 'Bandstand' and/or a statue of Grace Kelly have been suggested. Care is needed with design.
- Develop unique landscape garden based in immediate estuary conditions. It is recommended that the services of a qualified landscape architect be employed in this environmentally sensitive location.

5.GETTING AROUND BY FOOT AND BICYCLE



Newport needs to address important national issues;

- Climate Change; we need to drive less so as to reduce carbon emissions
- Health; we need to exercise more
- Safety: we need to make Newport safer to walk and cycle in.
- Economic; less traffic would make Newport a more attractive place to visit, live and work in, and in which to do business.
- Social: less traffic would create a cleaner, quieter and more pleasant environment in which to sit, socialise, drink coffee etc outdoors.

Newport needs to

- take cyclists off the road ie create off road cycle routes for commuter cyclists as well as tourists,
- widen existing and create new footpaths
- encourage reduced car usage and calm down traffic movement.
- expand on its looped walks.
- encourage people to live in the town rather than miles outside it

Community Consultations highlighted the following significant safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists;

- **The Bridge:** The footpaths are too narrow; the traffic is too fast.
- **Georges street:** this is a safety black spot for both cyclists and pedestrians.
- **Pedestrian crossings** and traffic calming measures are urgently needed.

WALKING

Improving Pedestrian Movement.

- Section 3 of this document suggests significant footpath improvements in the town centre

Enhancing and Expanding Walking Routes:

Refer to Map for existing and proposed new walking routes;

- Quay Loop taking in Princess Grace Park, west viewing point, Chapel Lane and Main Street.
- Railway loop taking in viaduct and railway station, east viewing point, RC Church, riverside and main bridge.
- Woods walk- east of Medlicott street. This project would require very careful environmental consideration in the SAC

These are looped where possible and designed to take in and enjoy Newport's heritage and assets to the maximum.



CYCLING

A Great Western Greenway alternative off road route is proposed and includes the following;

- Designated cycle paths on Medlicott Street.
- Access onto the viaduct, and route from there to Mulranny Road via the old railway route.
- Clearly indicated connections onto Main Street, Castlebar Street, Barrack Hill and laneways in between.

This solves many issues raised during the community consultations

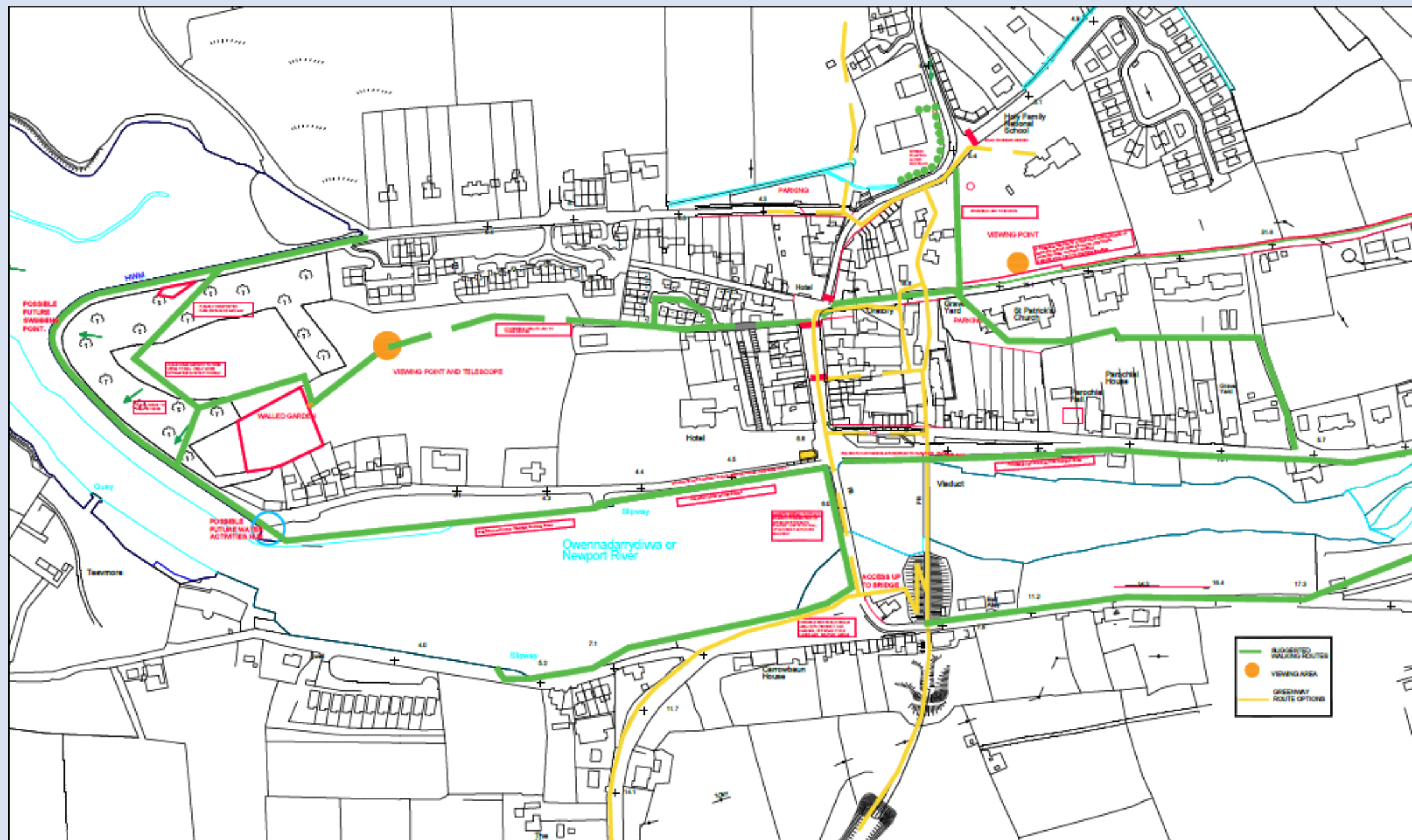
- The Georges Street safety blackspot is avoided entirely.
- Safe cycle and pedestrian access to school is provided.

Greenway Facilities

Newport is seen as a central town along the Great Western Greenway.

There is a need for a 'Cyclists Hub' i.e. a centrally located designated area of cyclist's facilities in one central location.;

- **Car parking:** Greenway cyclists need to park their car for the entire day. They should not be parking on the Main Street, as these spaces are needed by shoppers.
- **Bike hire & Servicing:** Ideally this should be in or near the cyclist's car park, and close to the cyclist's hub.
- **Other Facilities',** Changing and Shower Area should be in or near the cyclist's car park.
- **Tourist Office and Refreshments;** The site should be close to these town centre facilities.



MAP OF SUGGESTED CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTES SUGGESTED BY COMMUNITY

Note: all subject to the required relevant access and statutory permissions etc.

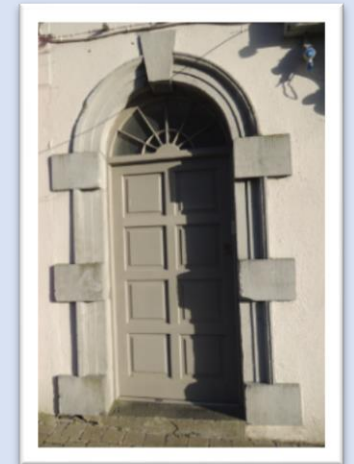
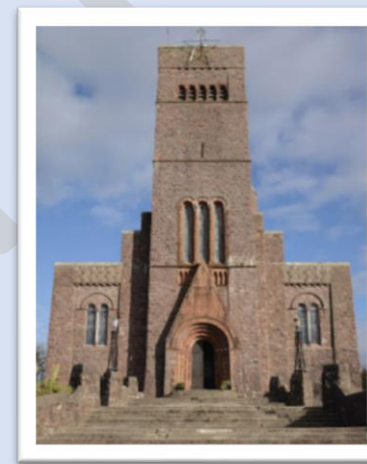
6. BUILT HERITAGE – PAST AND FUTURE

Rural Towns all over Ireland are suffering from the effects of large superstores in bigger towns, online shopping and migration to larger centres of employment. Newport needs to identify how it can attract new activity and investment, keep people working, living and shopping in Newport, and retain and enhance its vitality. As stated before, a beautiful town, is always more attractive to investment, especially a town that has pride of place, that looks after itself.

Key to this is looking after the built environment.

- Protecting, celebrating and enhancing existing heritage- this gives a sense of place and establishment.
- Maintaining all buildings and the public realm to LOOK REALLY GOOD!
- Ensuring that all new buildings and their associated signage are designed to the highest and most suitable aesthetic quality possible.

People want to live, work in and visit attractive places. Attractive towns attract investment, promote pride of place, tourists, achieve high tidy town scores etc.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILT HERITAGE.

Our built heritage gives us so much;

- a sense of establishment and history that defines us.
- a beauty that only time can give a building or structure.
- a local vernacular style unique to the locality.

Once this is lost it cannot be replaced.

Tourists, potential residents and even investors seek out beauty and heritage, they seek out what is unique to an area, different from what they are used to.

It is essential that we value, learn from, protect and enhance our heritage.

It is also essential that we continue to create new high-quality heritage for generations to come.

Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

The designation of Newport Town Centre as an ACA would;

- Not prevent new development, but simply ensure that new development will be suitable and enhancing to the existing heritage.
- Prevent the unfortunate mistakes of the past being repeated.
- Ensure that important details like signage etc are right and suitable to the area.

In Europe the listing of a building or town as being special and worthy of preservation is high praise indeed. It is used to promote it as a place to visit and celebrate. Newport could promote and embrace its status as an Architectural Conservation Area.

Information on Architectural Conservation Areas can be obtained through the Buildings of Ireland.ie website, or by contacting the Mayo County Council Architectural Conservation Officer

NEWPORTS BUILDINGS TODAY

NEWPORTS TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS



The Quay Road and Main Street enjoy the beauty of original traditional Irish and undamaged vernacular buildings. These contain some or all the following key elements:

- Timber vertically proportioned sliding sash windows subdivided centrally only.
- Flush eaves and half round cast iron gutters and down pipes.
- Limestone Sills and Chimneys.
- Timber painted doors of simple design.
- Smooth or rough rendered facades.
- Natural Slate roofs of a 35-45-degree pitch.
- Raised Plaster or original timber shopfronts.
- Proportions based on the 'Golden Section'

NEWPORTS ALTERED TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS.

Newport has many traditional buildings that have lost some of their original character through;

- Replacement of original timber sash windows with PVC or Aluminium.
- Replacement of original centrally subdivided windows with others subdivided non centrally.
- Replacement of original doors with PVC or aluminium, often overly elaborate in style.
- Removal of the original plaster render from the façade
- Addition of embellishments such as false shutters, diagonally patterned glass etc.
- Poor quality rear extensions.

The good news is that these buildings can, in time, be altered back to their original design and consequently greatly enhance Newport's original streetscape. See the 'Design Guidelines' below.

NEWPORTS POST 1950 BUILDINGS.



The last fifty years has seen a change away from the traditional 'golden section' proportions and terraced building type to more standalone buildings of individual styles. The following features have appeared:

- Horizontally proportioned windows, most often in white PVC, and aluminium.
- 'Georgian' style subdivisions inside the double glazing
- Projecting or overhanging eaves
- Flat roofs.
- Concrete tiled or artificial slated roofs at a much lower pitch to those surrounding.
- Standalone buildings in the originally terraced streetscapes
- Full gables or hipped roofs facing the street where no gables existed in the village streets before.

As a result, there is an architectural disharmony in some of Newport's most important and prominent streetscapes and buildings. However, as demonstrated this situation can be easily rectified.

It is important that all new buildings are designed to be not only beautiful but in harmony with the older traditional buildings.

This does not preclude high quality contemporary architectural design.

IMPROVING NEWPORTS BUILDINGS

UPGRADING EXISTING BUILDINGS

Climate change and the need to reduce our carbon emissions necessitates the upgrade of buildings throughout the country. External wall insulation, roof insulation, and the installation of new windows and doors present opportunities to greatly improve the appearance of less suitable buildings.

The following is recommended;

- Wall Insulation: Replace dry or wet dash finishes with smooth plaster painted.
- Window replacement: Revert to vertical 'Golden Section' proportions as per the illustrations attached
- Window replacement: Retain and restore original sliding sash windows where possible and install secondary windows inside the windows. This has the huge benefit of reducing traffic noise as well as heat loss.
- Door replacement: Avoid PVC elaborate door designs, try to match the traditional vertically sheeted or panelled doors. See illustrations.
- Roof Insulation: Replace flat roofs with pitched slated roofs that fit in correctly with the traditional streetscapes.
- Solar panels: Avoid facing solar panels into the street frontages.



MAINTAINING EXISTING BUILDINGS

Derelict or even slightly derelict looking properties portray a negative image of Newport.

Which of these 2 streets would an investor invest in?



The consequences of not maintaining a property are to;

- Devalue both it and adjacent properties,
- Detract investors from investing in the location
- Risk much greater repair costs at a later stage
- Run the risk of being added to the Derelict Properties Register and the financial consequences of that.
- Let down the locality in general.
- In many cases risk the loss of our national built heritage.

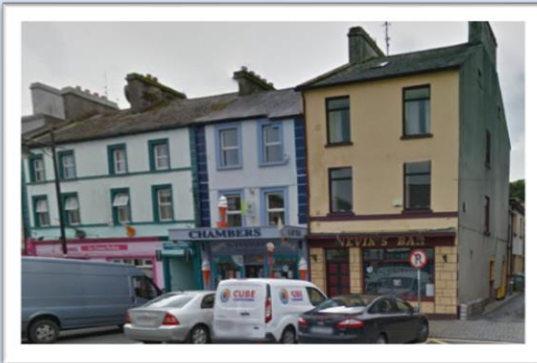
Regular property maintenance not only makes sense and saves money, it is a civic duty we have to our town and neighbours.

The following ongoing maintenance works are essential to all buildings;

- Regular painting in attractive colours that work well with adjacent colours.
- Repair and cleaning of gutters, down pipes and roofs: to prevent damage, staining, and the necessity of frequent repainting.
- Washing away of Algae staining, mosses etc.
- Cleaning of windows and window frames.

Look at the benefits of cheerful colour schemes, good building maintenance and limited signage!

FIX LEAKING GUTTERS, DOWN PIPES, BROKEN SILLS, FLASHINGS ETC TO PREVENT STAINING AND PAINT LOSS. DECLUTTER SHOPFRONTS OF EXCESS SIGNAGE, REDUNDANT WIRING LOGOS ETC
REPAINT FREQUENTLY AND MAINTAIN TO ENSURE GOOD APPEARANCE
ENSURE HARMONY OF ATTRACTIVE COMPATIBLE COLOURS ON STREETSCAPE
ALWAYS PAINT GABLES AND IDEALLY PAINT CHIMNEYS
SIGNAGE AND SHOPFRONTS SHOULD BE SIMPLE IE NOT OVER ELABORATE



DESIGNING NEW BUILDINGS FOR NEWPORT

The importance and investment value of high-quality architectural design cannot be underestimated.

It is FUTURE HERITAGE; it is investment in Newport's economic future.

Good architectural design will;

- Enhance, rather than detract from, its setting
- Sit in harmony with its surrounding architecture, not stand out from it.
- Provide the most efficient and enjoyable use of space.
- Be more comfortable, useable, adaptable, and commercially viable

- Have a better resale value.

Careful consideration should be given to your choice of Architect, who should be fully trained in building design and sympathetic to the traditional and unique setting.

Newport's new buildings should;

- Respect and continue, in a modern context, the older traditional vernacular architecture of the town in terms of scale, form, proportioning, finishes and building form.
- Continue the original terraced street format into new sites
- Strengthen Newport's existing identity by being beautiful and harmonious with their setting.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TYPES

Retail and Industrial Warehousing:

Newport needs to avoid;

- Edge of town linear sprawl of warehousing, petrol stations and similar.
- Excess signage and advertising.
- Retail warehousing that depletes business from the town centre



or

Instead;

- Such warehousing should only be permitted where existing buildings or town centre sites cannot accommodate it.
- Such warehousing should be clustered together in a well-designed industrial park located away from the approach roads.
- This industrial park should have one well-designed entrance sign only.
- Design guidelines and a landscaping plan should be prepared to ensure this development is attractive and in harmony with the natural setting.

Housing

Avoid

- Standard semi-detached type housing estates that are out of character with Newport.
- Poorly landscaped and finished housing estates that detracts from the traditional setting.

Instead

- Invest in good design, it pays back in multiples in terms of enjoyment, low maintenance, and resale value. Employ an architect.
- Design, preferably terraced houses in keeping with the existing streetscape. This does not stop these houses from being large, comfortable, bright and warm. In fact, terraced houses are warmer, cheaper to build and more energy efficient than detached houses.
- Design the houses following the basic design guidelines in this document. Use traditional slate and smooth plaster finish, and 'golden section' proportioning.
- Create quality new urban play areas and parks overlooked and enclosed by these beautiful terraces of houses.
- Restore and adapt disused or vacant upper floors above shops that are so centrally located. This saves our heritage and gives life back to town centre.

Offices

Avoid

- Out or Edge of Town new office development.
- Unsuitable office block design

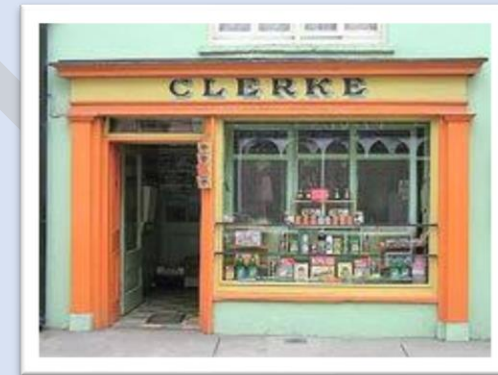
Instead

- Keep the town centre alive, try to reuse existing town centre buildings or derelict sites
- Provide offices in Town centre accessible by foot or bicycle.

- Design to be future proof and multi-purpose.
- Follow the design guidelines in this document.

SHOPFRONTS

IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY SHOPFRONTS



The function of shopfront fundamentally is to draw the customer into the shop

A good shopfront will;

- Become part of our future heritage,
- Greatly enhance a streetscape and attract shoppers to it.
- Inform what products are for sale in the shop
- Imply both quality and value for money.

This is done by;

- Good design, materials, finish and signage
- Allowing a view into the shop or alternatively showing products for sale in the window.

Traditional shopfronts and signs were originally hand crafted and painted by artisan craftsmen. They are an important part of our heritage and identity.

Unfortunately, recent advances in mass production technology have caused a rash of bad signage all over the country. Modern signs are generally oversized, overly brash, and give too much unnecessary, and often illegible, information. Once one business puts up an oversized sign, or shopfront, surrounding businesses feel the need to follow suit in competition for fear of being overshadowed. Irish towns are suffering badly from this trend.

However, if all signs in a street remain small or traditionally sized, no such competition is necessary and yet the signage message is equally effective.

HOW TO IMPROVE EXISTING TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONTS;

- Declutter the shopfront and building façade of excess light fittings, flags, projecting signs, wiring etc to achieve a simple clarity of façade.
- Remove all unnecessary signage from the building or the inside face of the windows.
- Allow for a view into the shop itself or arrange an attractive display of goods for sale.
- Replace PVC /aluminium Fenestration with Timber painted.
- Replace flat aluminium, plastic signage boards placed on facade or fascia with individual letters mounted or hand painted onto the fascia directly.
- Replace projecting light fittings with concealed lighting tube located behind the cornice.
- Paint in an attractive colour in keeping with surrounding buildings.
- See Mayo County Council Signage design guidelines.



DESIGNING NEW SHOPFRONTS.

The attached diagram outlines the essential elements of a traditional Irish shopfront;

- The Fascia or signboard contains the Signage lettering.
- The Cornice above the fascia protects the fascia from the rain but can also conceal lighting tubes for illumination of the signage fascia.
- The Console also frames the fascia and together with the pilasters below it provides bookends to the shopfronts.
- The Window is normally plain glass, but in older shopfronts this can be divided into smaller panes by narrow mullions. Sadly, more recently some shops have taken to completely covering the windows with large loud advertising posters to the detriment of village and town streetscapes everywhere. It is important to avoid this.

- Fascia lettering looks best either hand painted or made of individually made letters surface fixed onto the fascia.

Again, a recent trend has been to get a printed pvc or aluminium sheet sign with the lettering applied on in advance. Often then this sheet does not fit inside the fascia and the plastic of aluminium sheen is totally out of context. This should be avoided at all costs.

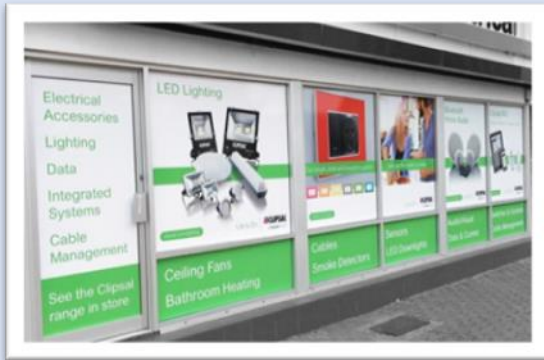
This traditional shopfront formula is highly successful in that it;

- encloses the limited area for signage,
- limits the shopfront and signage area proportional to the overall building.
- may be easily translated into contemporary design.



Avoid:

- The application of advertising posters on the inside face of the glass.
- Advertising or other signage outside or above the shopfront area.
- Having more than one projecting sign.
- Banners applied anywhere onto the façade.
- Projecting overhanging shopfront light fittings, a simple florescent tube contained behind the cornice would be much better



SIGNAGE

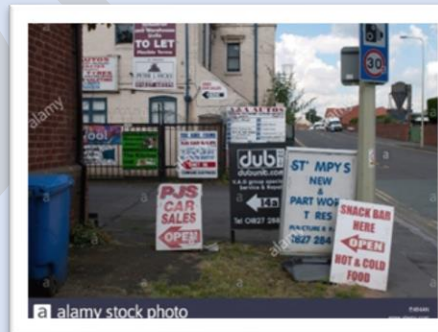
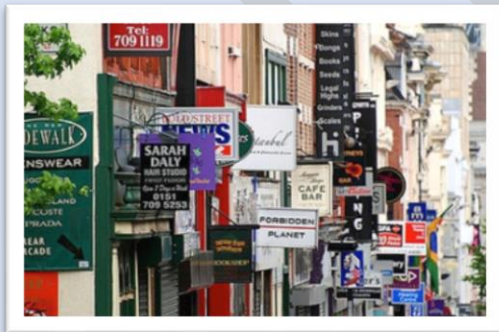
Excess signage has recently become a serious problem in Co Mayo and elsewhere. Cheap, oversized, poorly designed plastic signs are seriously damaging our countryside and towns alike. Newport unfortunately is no exception. The N59 is suffering badly and from oversized plastic bike hire, fast food and other tourism related signage. These signs damage the very asset the advertisers claim they want you to enjoy, our beautiful countryside.

Issues;

- If one company puts up a large sign, competing companies feel they must do the same or risk being overlooked.
- Such competition gives a poor impression.
- If there is too much signage the message of the signage gets lost in the clutter.
- Poor quality signage implies a poor-quality product.

A town with high quality shopfronts and limited but well-designed signage portrays itself as a quality destination and reaps the rewards both economically and in terms of 'pride of place'. There is an opportunity for Newport to portray itself as a similar 'quality destination'.

A decluttering of unnecessary, poorly designed, brash and plastic signage would make a tremendous difference to Newport.



Avoid: excess signage.

ESTABLISHING A SIGNAGE POLICY.

Design Recommendations;

- Prepare a quantitative and qualitative audit of existing signage. Evaluate all signage e.g. is it unnecessary? visually damaging? suitable? out of date ?etc.
- Prepare a signage plan which includes;
 - diagrammatic map near the tourist information office advertising all businesses.
 - co-ordinated fingerpost directional signage system.
 - the removal of all redundant and unsightly signage
- Projecting signs should be limited in number size and colour palette and be of a suitable design and consistently high quality.
- Footpath 'sandwich panels' should be disallowed for safety reasons as they push pedestrians onto the busy roads. Also, as they are unsightly.
- Follow all recommendations of MCC s Signage design guidelines.

A graphic designer, sensitive to the historic and natural settings should be commissioned to design an overall signage system for the town. The aim of the signage approach should be to effectively give all information in the most visually unobtrusive manner possible.



7. UPGRADING BUILDINGS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Like every town in Ireland Newport needs to play its role in

- Reducing its carbon emissions, and pollution generally. This includes light pollution.
- Improving the environment generally for biodiversity air and quality of life for all.

Climate Change is the biggest issue facing mankind and the works required to mitigate it.

If done *without* adequate consideration of the Newport heritage, these works could adversely affect the visual appearance of the town, its buildings and its general historic character.

Such works might include;

- New solar panels on town roofscapes
- External insulation over old plastered walls, causing the loss of old plaster mouldings and the general aged character.
- New windows and doors replacing original sliding sash windows and hardwood doors.
- Changes to building details: Eaves details, sills, window surrounds, stonework, plaster mouldings.
- Planting in parks, gardens and public spaces
- Construction works processes causing pollution.
- Installation of LED lighting.

However, *with* adequate consideration, this damage can be avoided.

Solar Panels;

- It is recommended that solar panels are not placed on roofs facing onto Medlicott Street, Main Street, Quay Road South or Castlebar Street.
- Panels are best placed onto slopes facing to the rear of properties where possible.

External Insulation:

The insulation of older buildings is risky business, it is strongly recommended that;

- Expert architectural advice is sought before applying external insulation.
- All properties on the terrace agree to get the insulation at the same time.

Consideration must be given to;

- Alternatives to external insulation if the loss of building character is too great.
- Whether the width of the footpath will be narrowed by the application of such insulation
- The visual effect of the insulation on windows, doors, sills, plaster and stone detailing etc.
- The essential reinstatement of existing building details that give the street character and a sense of history
- Risk of rising damp being trapped behind such insulation
- External Insulation presents the opportunity to improve a façade where;
- Wet or dry dash finish is replaced with smooth plaster.

New Windows and Doors;

- Original Sliding sash single glazed windows should be retained where possible or required. In this case secondary glazing inside the window has huge advantages, in both heat loss and noise reduction.
- Window replacement presents an opportunity to reinstate the traditional vertically proportioned windows originally designed for an older building. It is possible to purchase sliding sash windows with slim mullions that will both have a high insulating value and improve the streetscape.
- Window replacement presents an opportunity to improve a building buy improving the windows proportions.
- Over-elaborate white PVC doors with stained glass or Georgian fanlights or similar would look out of place these should be avoided.
- It is possible to purchase excellent timber or timber effect doors with a traditional or authentic look.
- The Westport Belmullet Municipal District Architect able to advise on suitable styles.

Heating and Ventilation Plant

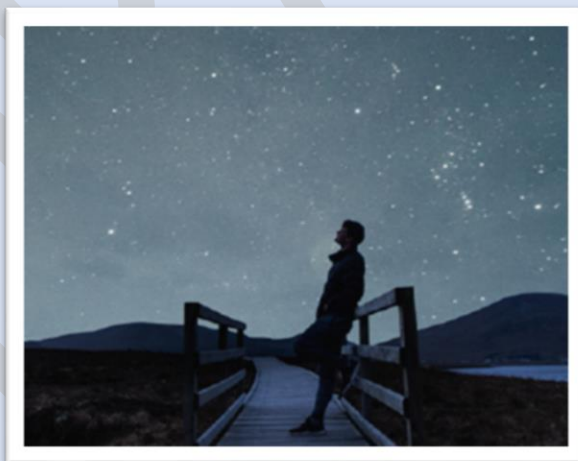
- This should always be located to the rear of buildings and never to the front.

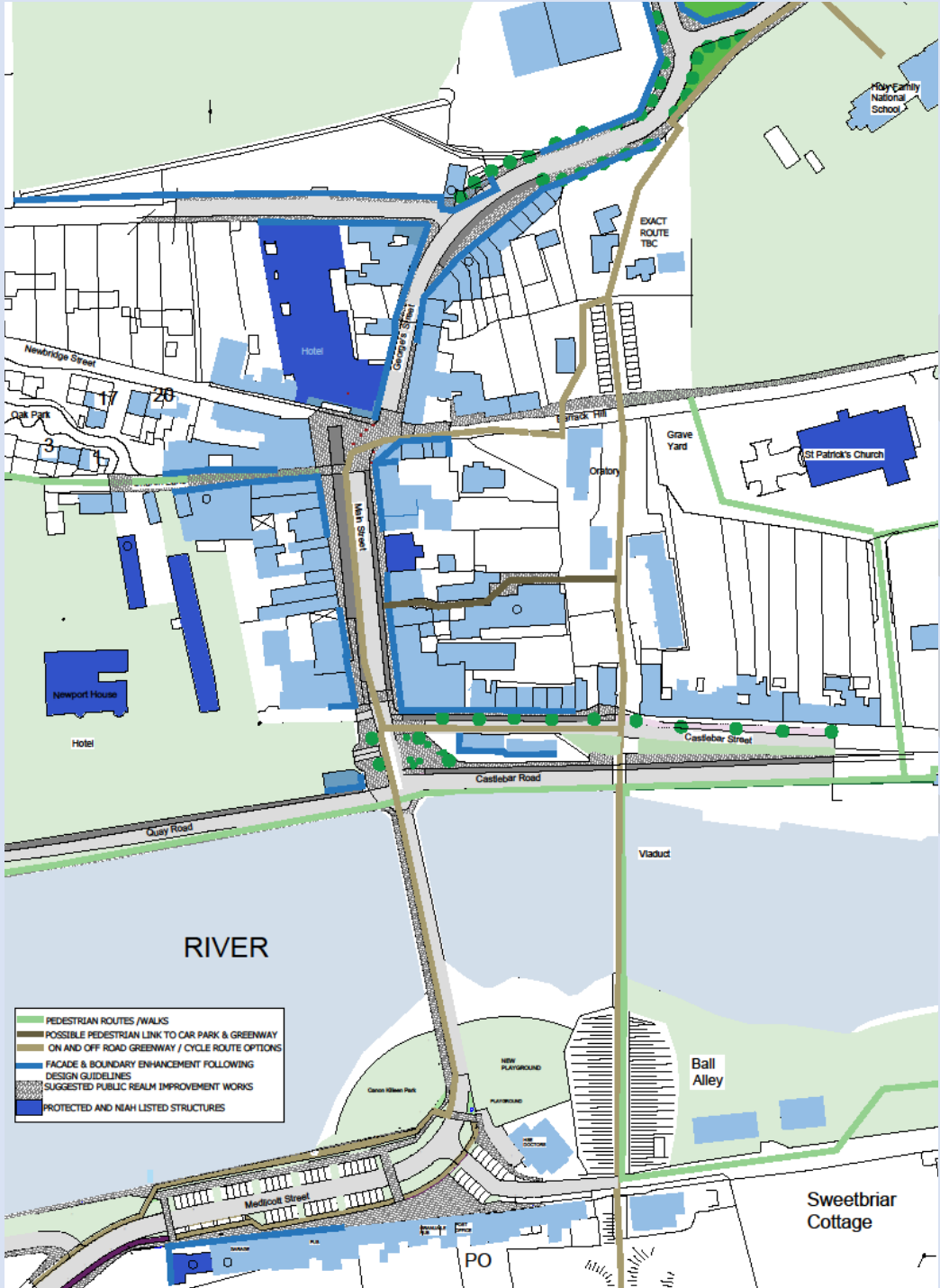
Porches and Draft Lobbies

- These will need planning permission and will not be considered on Main Street, Castlebar Street, Georges Street or Medicott Street.

External Lighting

- As Newport is a designated Dark Skies town public and external private lighting ideally should be replaced in keeping with the recommendations of Dark Skies best practice guidelines.





8. MAP- NEWPORT SUGGESTED WORKS

9. T.D.S. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020

Newport Community Futures Action Plan 2011-2016

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Architectural Heritage Protection - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Dublin, 2004).

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government - Conservation Advice Series: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/heritage/built-heritage/architectural-heritage-advisory-service/advice-for-owners/>

Newport Co Mayo Draft Character Study (2018) (Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd)

END OF SECTION 1

SECTION 2

NEWPORT CHARACTER STUDY

This study, compiled by Lotts Architecture was commissioned by Mayo County Council, Heritage Office in partnership with the Heritage Council.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location & extent of Newport Character Study

This report is intended to include a comprehensive analysis of Newport and its setting, comprising an identification of its unique character and recommendations as to how development can take place without detracting from the character of the town.

The objectives of the report are:

- (i) To evaluate the character and special interest of Newport and to provide guidance to the planning authority for development management within Newport.
- (ii) To provide a detailed written description of the character of Newport

The historical development and evolution of the town is examined, and a comprehensive study of its built heritage is carried out. In addition to the buildings and street structure within the town, the study includes the town infrastructure, river setting, quay walls, public realm, open space, street furniture and signage. Significant views and vistas within the town are taken into account, as is the landscaped demesne of Newport House, and its setting on the river.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication, Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Dublin, 2004), is a key resource and guide for this study.

2.0 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

2.1 Setting

Newport, Co Mayo, in the province of Connaught, is located along the NE shore of Clew Bay, on the road from Castlebar and Westport to Achill island. The Owennadarrydivva or Newport River passes through the town, flowing from Lough Beltra out into Clew Bay. Once the primary port in Mayo, the town provides a sheltered inlet and harbour at its centre. The dramatic topography of the town offers ever-varying views and vistas, and the jagged coastline to the mouth of the river overlooks Clew Bay and its multiple islands.



Fig. 2 Aerial view of Newport & Great Western Greenway (road from Newport to Achill)
 Burrishoole Abbey, dating from c.1469, is located north of the town along the coast road between Mallaranny and Newport. Rockfleet or Carraigahowley Castle, a sixteenth century tower house associated with Gráinne ní Mháille or Grace O'Malley, is also located along this coastal route.
 The county has a diverse geology, the area around Newport being predominantly limestone and sandstone interspersed with areas of bog, and Silurian rocks to the east.

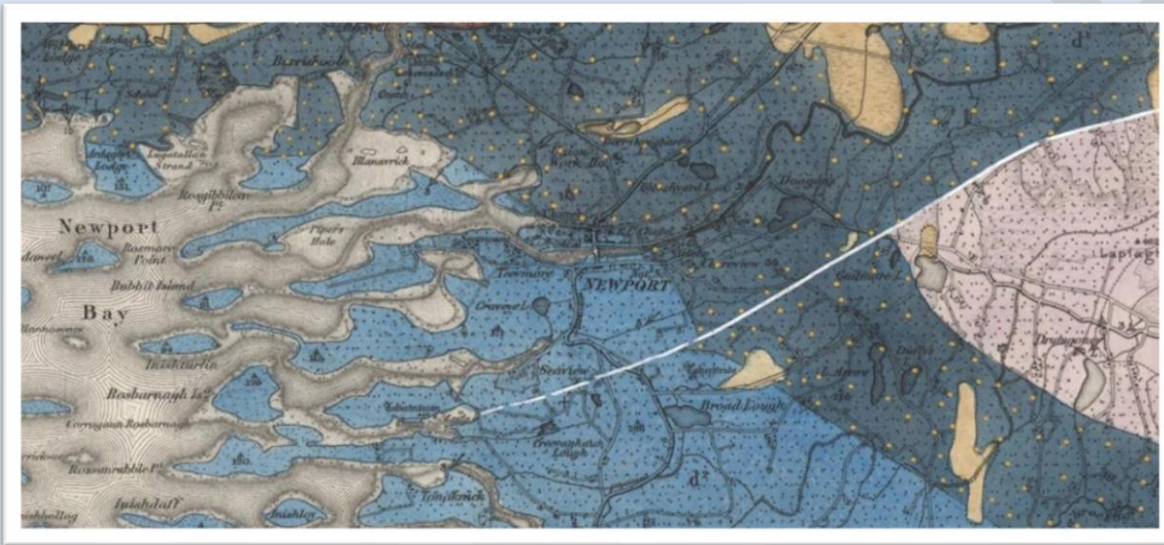


Fig. 3 Extract from Geological Survey map of 1870 showing Newport (Blue indicates limestone, dark blue yellow dots indicate sandstone, beige indicates peat/alluvium and mauve indicates Silurian rocks)

2.2 Early Development and Seventeenth Century

Irish baronies were generally laid out during the Anglo-Norman and English conquests of Ireland. Co Mayo was divided into nine Baronies – Erris, Tirawley, Burrishoole, Carra, Gallen, Murrisk, Kilmaine, Clanmorriss and Costello (refer to Fig. 4). Newport is located in the barony of Burrishoole, its name derived from an anglicisation of

Borough of Umhall (Quinn, 1993). The barony of Burrishoole, and settlements within, are documented in the 1656-8 Down Survey map (refer to Fig. 5). Samuel Lewis outlines the early history of Burrishoole, in his 1837 writings: 'This place, from a bull of Pope Innocent VIII, dated February 9th 1486, appears to have been distinguished as the seat of a monastery for friars of the Dominican order, founded by Richard de Bourke, Lord Mac William Oughter, head of the Turlough family, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.' In the early seventeenth century, Thomas Medlycott acquired the Burrishoole estate, comprising c.70,000 acres, from Charles Butler, Earl of Arran and grandson of the first Duke of Ormonde (Landed estates database, 2011). Medlycott was Chief Commissioner of Revenue in Ireland.



Fig. 4 The Baronies of Mayo, after Almquist (Mullowney, 2002)

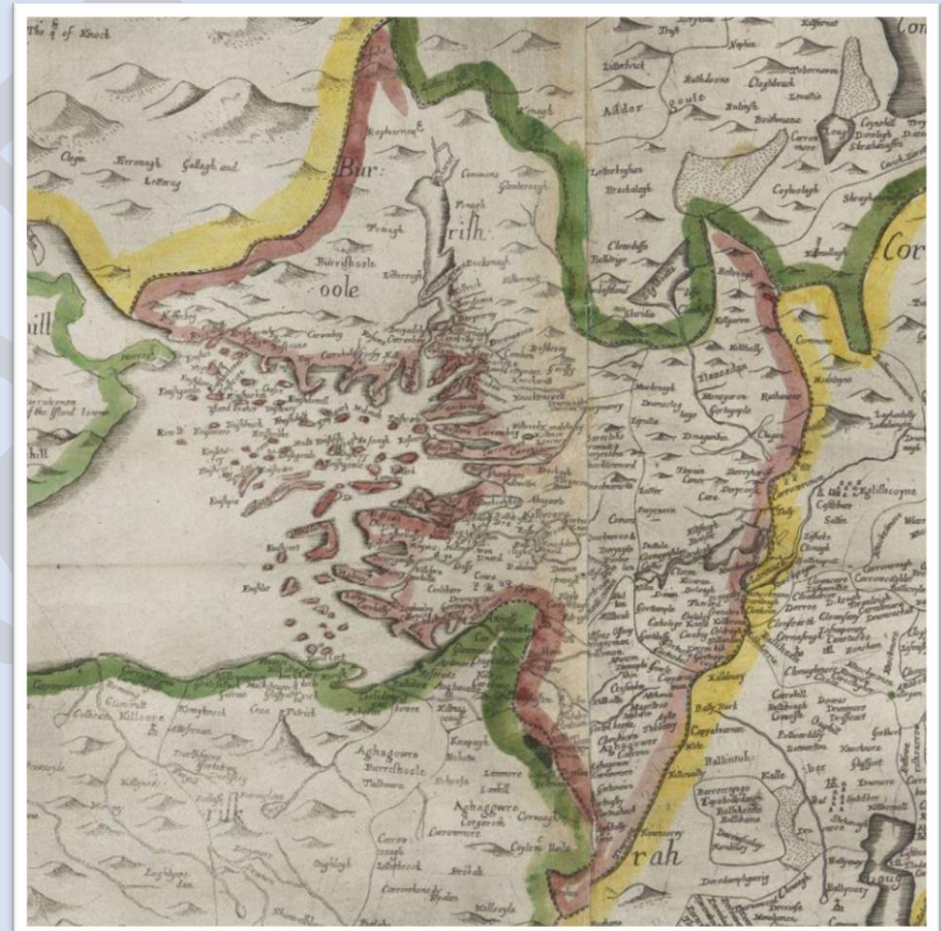


Fig. 5 Barony of Burrishoole, Down Survey map (1656-58)

2.3 Eighteenth Century



Fig. 6 Ballyvaughan in the barony of Burrishoole, Extract from 'A new map of Ireland', Hermann Moll, 1714

Newport, or Newport-Pratt, dates from 1719, when Captain Pratt established a colony of linen weavers under Quaker management at what was historically known as Ballyvaughan, or Baile Uí Fhiacháin, on lands leased from the Medlycotts (Carroll, 1976). The settlement was located near the mouth of the Newport River, which ran through the Burrishoole estate from Lough Beltra and was plentiful with salmon (Slater, 1881). The Medlycotts' land agent James Moore ran the Burrishoole estate from 1720 until his death in 1765, and was responsible for laying out the quay. The Quaker community, most of whom came from Ulster, settled in Newport for several decades, and the linen industry thrived.

'By the 1750s the industry had grown to a sizeable one, with markets spread throughout the county and exports leaving principally from Newport and Sligo.'

The economy in Ireland improved after the early part of the century. A ban on live cattle exports was lifted in 1759 and this helped promote cattle fairs and linen markets also promoted economic life in the markets of small towns. These economic improvements would also have benefited Newport.

However, it was documented that the Quaker community in Newport felt isolated, and had departed from the town by 1740 in order to relocate in Roscommon, close to other communities of Friends. Furthermore, the establishment of a 'premium' linen hall in Castlebar in 1790 led to the decline of linen markets in Newport, Westport and Ballina (Mullowney, 2002).

The O'Donels of Ulster, came from Donegal and settled in Ballycroy, Co Mayo in the seventeenth century. In 1760, they arrived in Newport and in 1785 Sir Neal O'Donel purchased the lease of the Burrishoole estate from the Medlycotts for the sum of £33,589 (Mullowney, 2002). At this time the O'Donels were the primary landowners in the barony of Burrishoole. Mullowney speculates on Sir Neal's Spanish connections.

'Sir Neal was already a large landholder in the parish of Burrishoole prior to the purchase from the Medicotts. It has been suggested that he may have made his money smuggling wine and tobacco from Spain. It is interesting to speculate that if this is true his contacts in Spain may have been his distant cousins, descendants of the exiled Red Hugh.' (Mullowney, 2002).

In 1780 a Baronetcy was conferred on Sir Neal O'Donel, who built Newport House towards the end of the eighteenth century. Described by Bence-Jones as a '2 storey house of different periods of Georgian', Newport House is situated to the west of the town centre, north of the harbour, and commands views over the Newport River to the south.

'Its finest room is the staircase-hall, whose arches and plaster-work date from the 1830s.' (De Breffni & Ffolliott, 1975)



Fig. 7 Newport House, 1858 - Edward King Tenison, Kilronan Album (NLI)

The seven-bay two-storey house which has an entrance on Main Street, was originally accessed from the riverside and has landscaped gardens extending to the west. The O'Donels held the salmon fishing rights on the Newport River, and the occupants of Newport House retain these rights. The late 6th century Cathach manuscript, or battle book of the O'Donnells, which they used to bring to battle was held in Newport House (Somerville-Large, 1995) until Sir Richard O'Donel deposited it in the Royal Irish Academy in 1843.

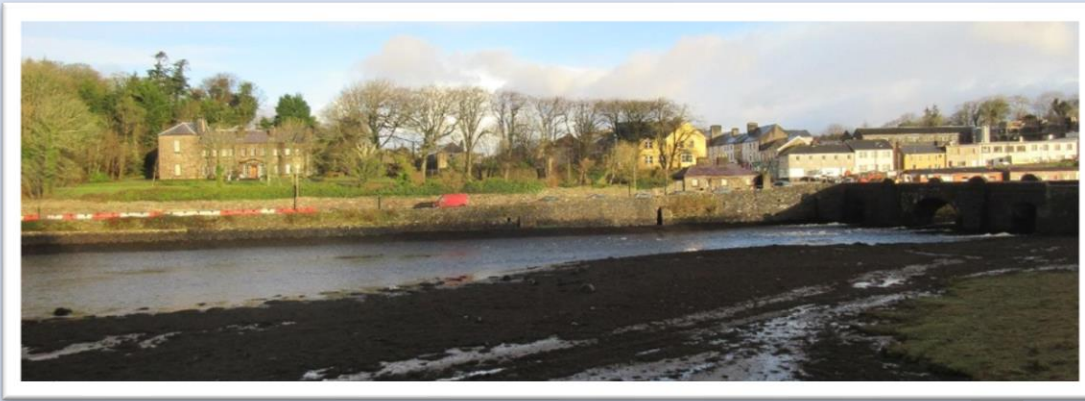


Fig. 8 Newport House, Newport River & town centre

Although the town predates Newport House and demesne, Newport can be loosely classified as an estate village. Kevin Whelan describes the typical arrangement of estate villages found throughout the country as having:

- A big house
- A landscaped demesne with gate lodges and other structures
- A clear connection between demesne and estate village
- The village having estate housing, a market square (Diamond) and other structures for administrative and economic purposes
- A Church of Ireland church, usually in an important location
- And at a later date, a Catholic church (if at all), usually not in the heart of the arrangement

2.4 Nineteenth Century

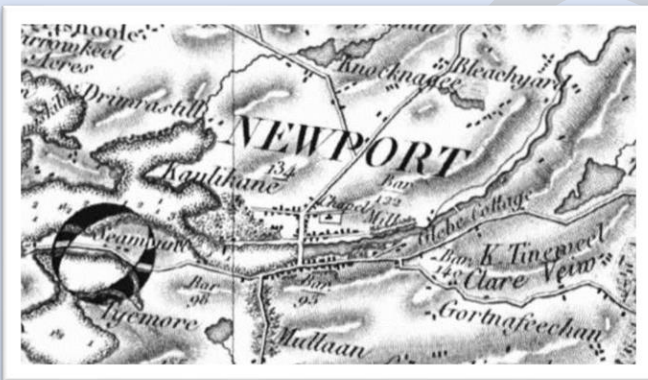


Fig. 9 Newport, Bald map 1809-1816

The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of considerable growth and development in Co Mayo, with many new roads, bridges and towns emerging.

'In Mayo, in the decade prior to 1845, over 320 km of new road and 150 new bridges had been constructed, while maintained or improved roads increased ten-fold. Settlement spread in their wake from the previously more accessible coast into the interior. Once roads opened up the bogs and hills, settlers quickly followed.' (Aalen, Whelan, Stout, 2011)

These developments brought about a surge in population. In his Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, Lewis records 1235 inhabitants in Newport and 11,761 inhabitants in the barony of Burrishoole, in 1837. He describes the land use in the local region at that time.

'The lands are chiefly under tillage; and many of the islands in Clew bay, which are within the parish, afford good pasturage for sheep. There is a large tract of mountain and bog, about two-thirds of which are reclaimable. Salt-works were formerly carried on here.' (Lewis, 1837)

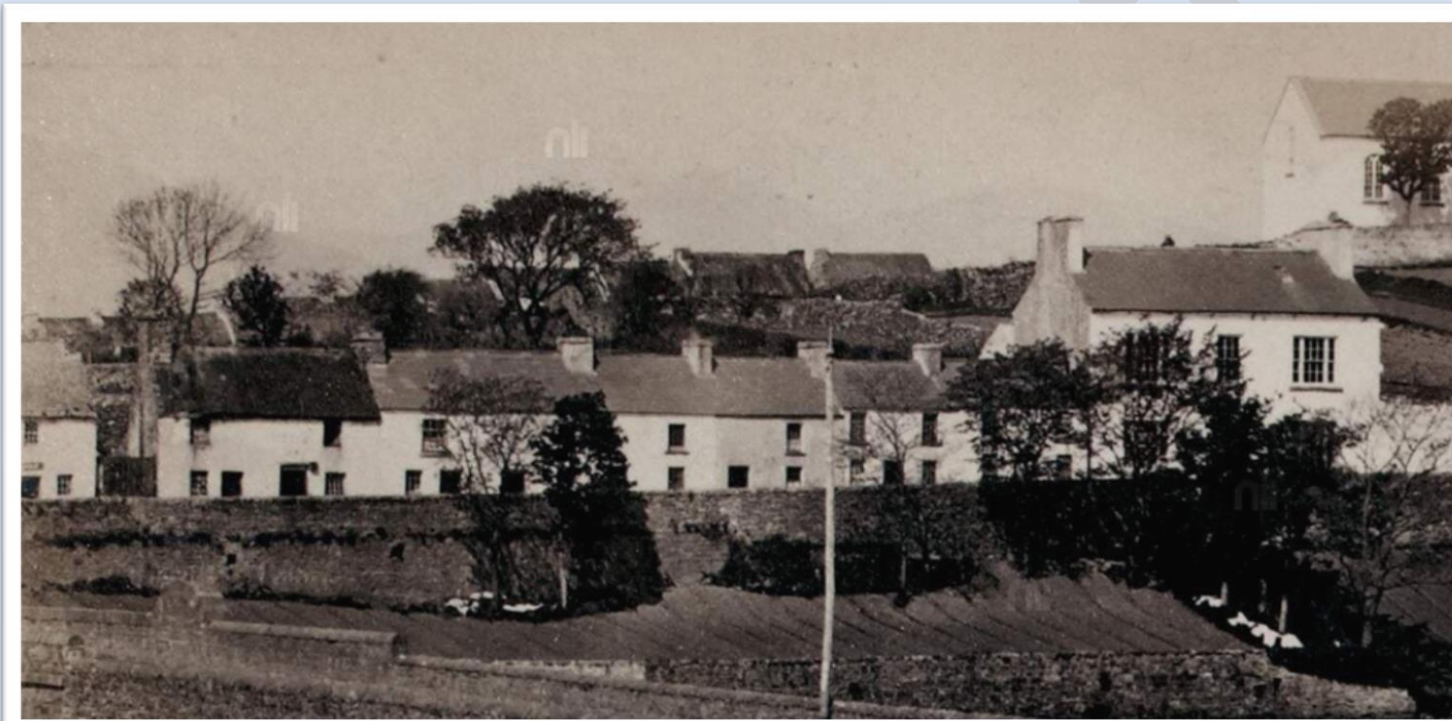


Fig. 10 Newport, 1880, Thomas Wynne (NLI) – Detail of houses

He writes that Newport comprises about 230 houses, 'some of which are well built and of neat appearance', laid out on one principal street and several other streets. The primary industry at this time was the export of grain, though much of this trade had been transferred to Westport at this time.



Fig. 11 Ordnance Survey map 1838, Newport town and environs

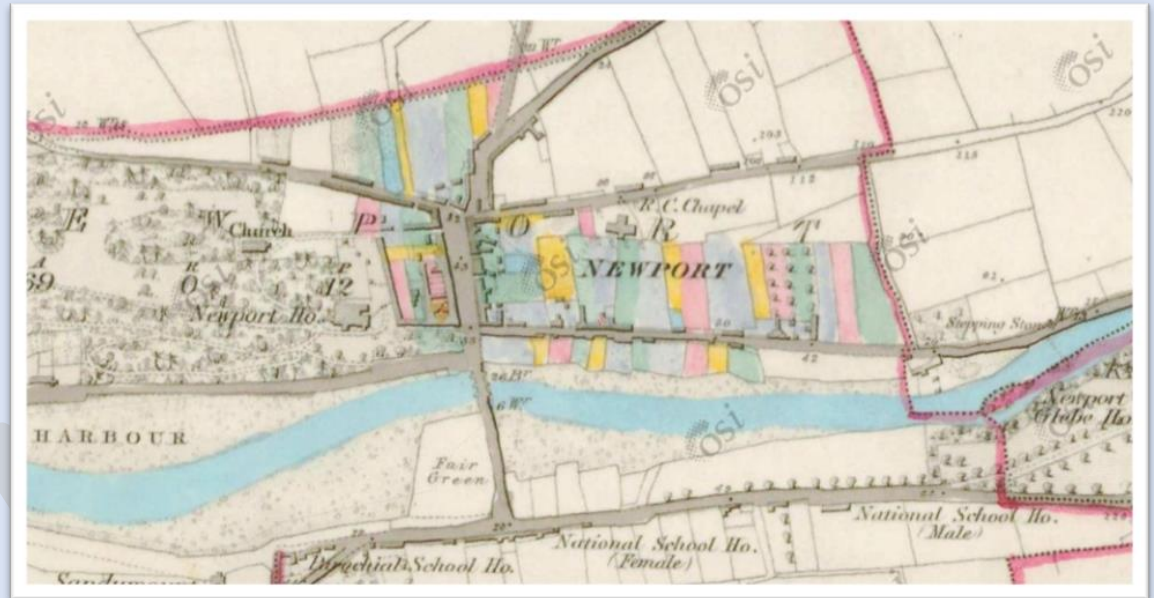


Fig. 12 Ordnance Survey map 1838, Newport town centre

The OS map from 1838 gives detailed information on the layout of the town at that time, though the streets are unnamed:

- The main street of the town runs north south, with secondary streets extending east and west, parallel to the river.
- Main Street is connected to Carrowbaun to the south via a bridge across the Newport River. A road to the northeast leads to Mallaranny and Achill. The section of the road immediately north of Main Street has a strong built edge.
- The building line along the west side of Main Street is unbroken, with the exception of the laneway leading to the church. The majority of buildings on the west of Main Street sit on long narrow plots.
- There are breaks either side of the central building along the east side, perhaps signifying carriageways. The land to the rear of these plots remains undeveloped.
- Newport House sits on landscaped grounds to the west of the main street, with an entrance evident on the southern boundary along the quay road. A line of stable buildings forms the eastern boundary, while the estate lands extend west to the river shore. A walled garden is depicted along the western boundary. A path leads from the house to the church grounds along the northern boundary.
- Intermittent terraces of small-scale structures are dotted along the upper roads to the east and west of Main Street. A Roman Catholic chapel is located on the upper road to the east.
- The lower road to the east extends along the river, creating a route to Castlebar. There are several structures located along this road. 'Stepping stones' are indicated along this route to the east, leading over the river to the lands of Knockaveely Glebe.
- The lower road to the west follows the southern boundary of Newport House demesne to the harbour, and some quay buildings.

- The Parochial School House, and the male and female National School Houses are marked on the street parallel to the river in Carrowbaun, which is built up to the south. A 'Fair Green' is indicated on the shore west of the bridge.

James Hack Tuke, an English Quaker, toured Connaught in 1847 and published a report on his findings the following year.

'At the time of Tuke's visit to Newport, nearly 1,000 workers mainly women, were engaged by Sir Richard O'Donel, in harvesting the crops, the women earned 4d a day and the men 8d. He commented that this was a miserable wage but the workers were cheerful and industrious.'

In her travel writings, Asenath Nicholson documents the hospitality she received in Newport, and the emphasis on education she witnessed there.

'A kind of romantic charm seems flung about Newport. Sir Richard O'Donel and his lady have established schools on liberal principles. The lady herself teaches two or three days in a week, and Sir Richard has an admirably well fitted school-room, where he teaches a Sabbath-school himself.' (Nicholson, 1847)

Nicholson also writes extensively about the harrowing living conditions across Ireland during and following the famine years.

'The famine wiped out one million people in a few short years, while another two million emigrated within two decades. The population loss was intense west of the Shannon, with counties Cork, Clare, Galway and Mayo severely impacted.' (Aalen, Whelan, Stout, 2011)



Fig. 13 Griffith Valuation Map 1848-1864

The Griffith Valuation involved a survey of property ownership in Ireland between 1848 and 1864. The survey information was used to determine the level of tax each person should pay to support the disadvantaged within their poor law union. As can be seen from the Griffith Valuation records, the O'Donels were still one of the primary landowners in the area in the mid-nineteenth century, and in 1876 Richard O'Donel and his son George were reported to own more than 7500 acres in Co Mayo. Slater's Directory of Ireland, 1881, includes descriptions of the town of Newport in addition to commercial listings.

'The town, though small, has a very neat and clean appearance. The houses in the principal street are uniformly lofty, and substantially built, and its shops are well stored with all local requisites. There is an hotel and posting house.' (Slater's Directory of Ireland, 1881)

Having prospered for decades, the port of Newport was eclipsed by that of Westport towards the end of the nineteenth century and this is noted in Slater's Directory.

'The imports, since the removal of the custom-house to Westport, have become inconsiderable.' (Slater's Directory of Ireland, 1881)

A number of significant infrastructural developments materialised in Newport as the nineteenth century came to a close. An impressive seven-arch railway viaduct was built across the Newport River in 1892, as part of the extension of the Mayo branch of the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) line. Constructed in red sandstone and cut-limestone at a cost of £7000, the viaduct measures 92 metres in length. It was officially opened in 1894 when the nearby tunnel was completed, and operated until 1937.

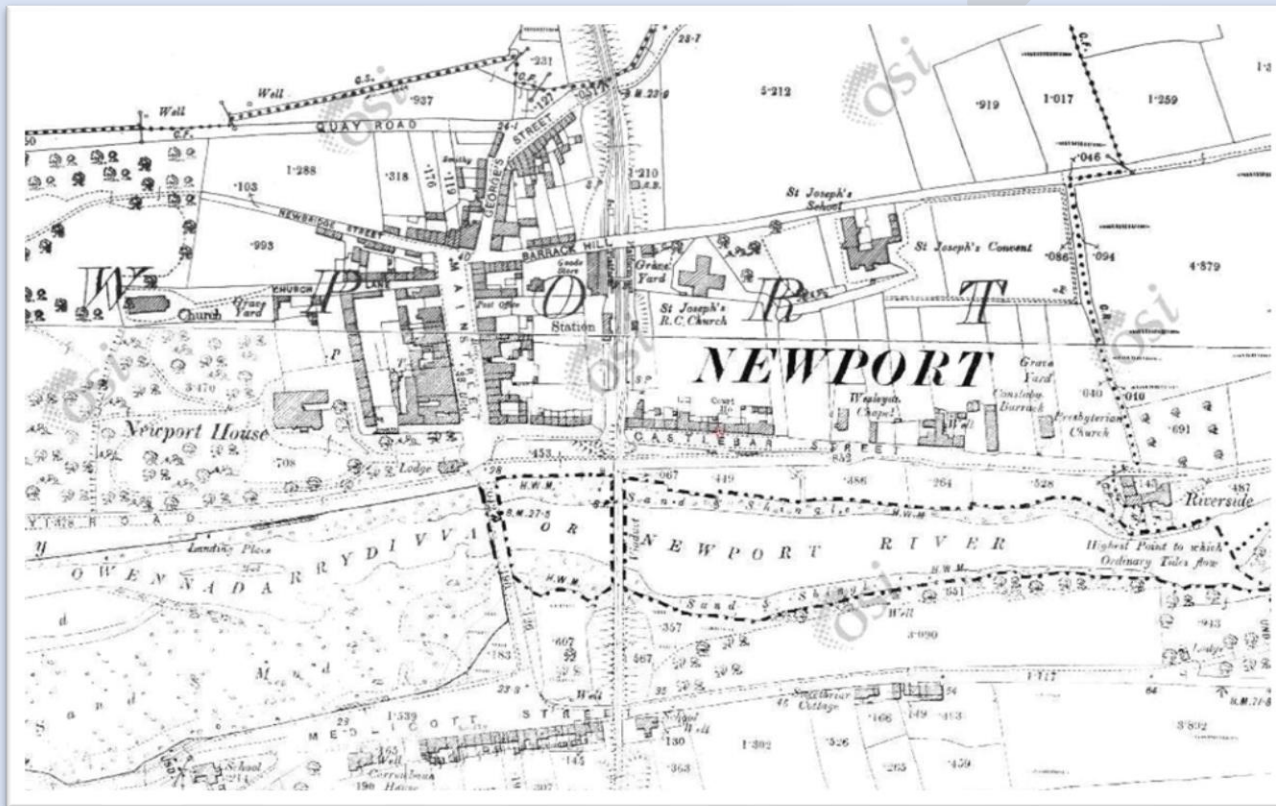


Fig. 14 Newport, Ordnance Survey map 1897

The 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows important developments that took place in the last part of the century:

- The form of the town centre remains relatively unchanged, with streets and prominent buildings named.
- The MGWR railway line cuts through the town, running north south to the east of Main Street. The railway station, platforms, goods store and railway tunnel to the south are all indicated.
- Two hotels are noted on Main Street, suggesting a tourist industry, possibly associated with the introduction of the railway.
- A gate lodge near the river bank to the south of Main Street marks the entrance to Newport House and demesne.
- There are four churches in the town. The RC church on Barrack Hill is named as St Joseph's, and St Joseph's Convent and School are located on adjacent lands to the east. In addition to the church north of Newport House, there is a Wesleyan Chapel and a Presbyterian Church. Both are located along Castlebar Street, west of the town. With the exception of the Wesleyan Chapel, all the churches have graveyards associated with them.
- The courthouse and barracks are also situated on Castlebar Street.
- Further west along the river are mill buildings – 'Corn & Tuck Mill (Disused)' and 'Newport Corn & Saw mills'.

A photograph dating from c.1890 shows the construction of the Newport railway viaduct, complete with formwork and scaffolding (refer to Fig. 15).



Fig. 15 Newport viaduct under construction, c.1890 (www.askaboutireland.ie)

Newport features in several of Robert French's photographs, which date from 1880-1900 and form part of the Lawrence Collection held in the National Library of Ireland. The geographical setting of the town on the river, with its backdrop of mountains, is captured in many of French's images. The railway viaduct and tunnel are complete, and many of the associated railway buildings are documented (refer to Fig. 18). Newport House is visible, concealed within a heavily landscaped setting along the river to the west of Main Street.

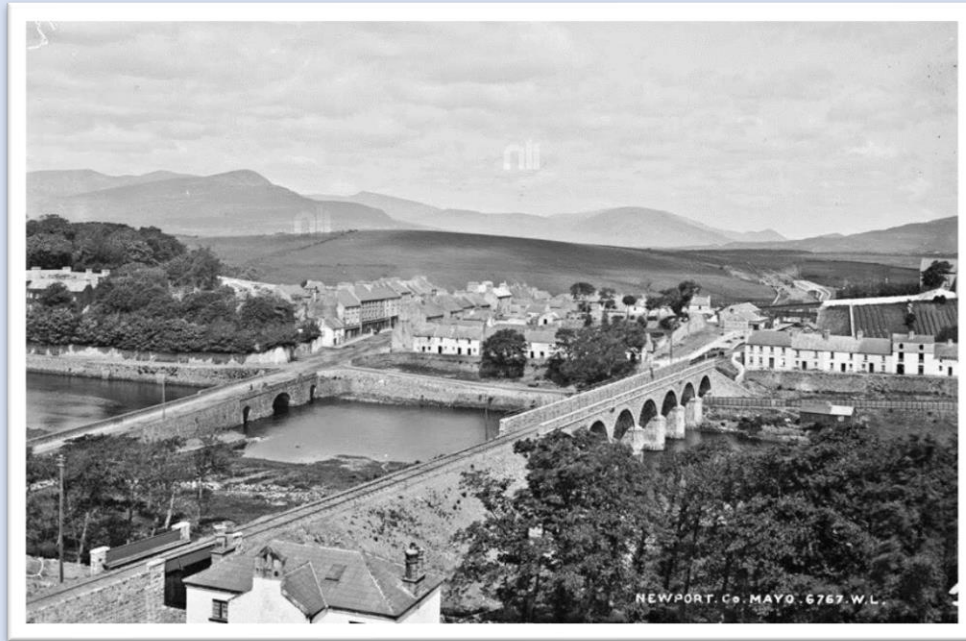


Fig. 16 Newport, Co Mayo, 1880-1900, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

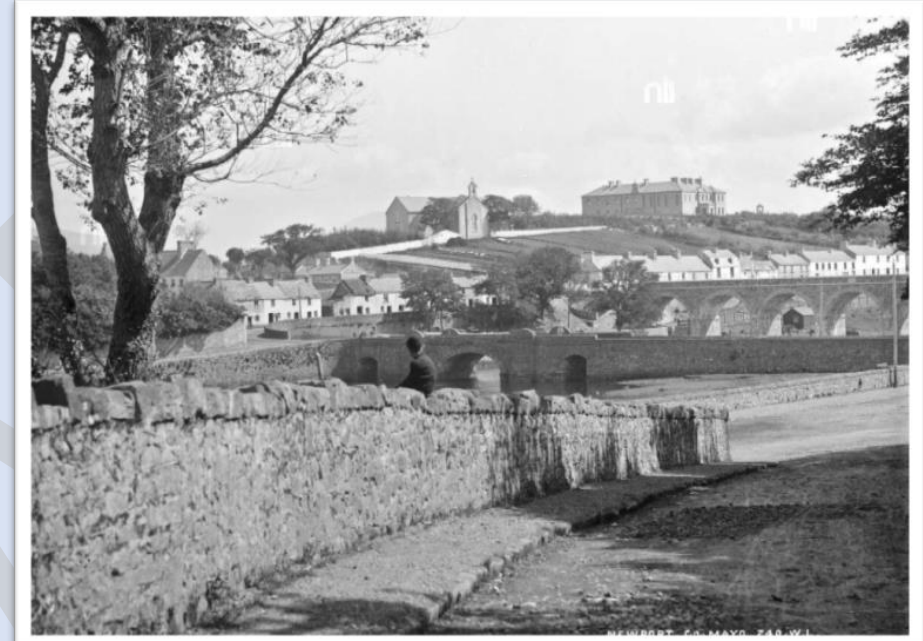


Fig. 17 Newport, Co Mayo, 1880-1900, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

St Joseph's RC church (no longer extant) and St Joseph's School and Convent feature prominently on high ground to the east of the town in a view from Medicott Street. The fine stonework of the local walls and quay walls is evident in these images (refer to Fig. 17).



Fig. 18 Railway Station & Tunnel, Newport, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

2.5 Twentieth Century

The early twentieth century saw additions to but no significant change to the form and appearance of Newport town. The 1911 census, carried out in April 1911, records a population of 540 in the town. The areas listed are Barrackhill, Carrowbaun, Castlebar Street, Chapel Street, Church Lane, Georges Street, Knockaveely Glebe, Main Street, Medicott Street, Newbridge Street, Newport and Sandymount.

‘There were six thatched houses in George’s Street, including a shop and a public house. There were three thatched houses in Newbridge Street and one each in Chapel Street and Church Lane.

Forty two houses in the town had stables and kept horses and three houses had a coach house. Nineteen houses kept cows and seventeen kept pigs. Fifteen houses kept poultry and twenty five had a house to store turf.’ (Mullowney)

St Joseph’s Church on Barrack Hill was demolished in the early twentieth century, and in 1914, a new RC church was constructed, on the site of the earlier church. St Patrick’s Church was designed by RM Butler (1872-1943), and features the celebrated ‘Last Judgement’ work by renowned stained glass artist Harry Clarke (1889-1931). This window, and other later windows in the church by the Clarke Studios are detailed in the Mayo County Council publication, Stained glass windows of Mayo by Harry Clarke & the Clarke Studios.

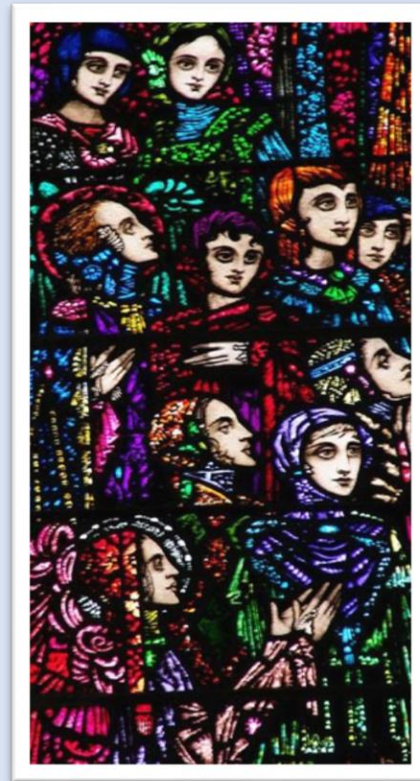


Fig. 19 St Patrick's RC Church, RM Butler, 1914

Fig. 20 Detail from 'The Last Judgement' (1931) by Harry Clarke (1889-1931)

Fig. 21 St Patrick's RC Church, RM Butler, 1914 (Interior)

Like many parts of the country, Mayo suffered from low economic activity for much of the twentieth century, and in 1937 the railway was closed. The train station buildings are now in use as a chapel and office, and the fine historic railway infrastructure and connections to the town remain. The viaduct serves as a pedestrian route across the river, and the railway tunnel remains intact.



Fig. 22 Main Street, Newport, undated (Dúchas Archive)

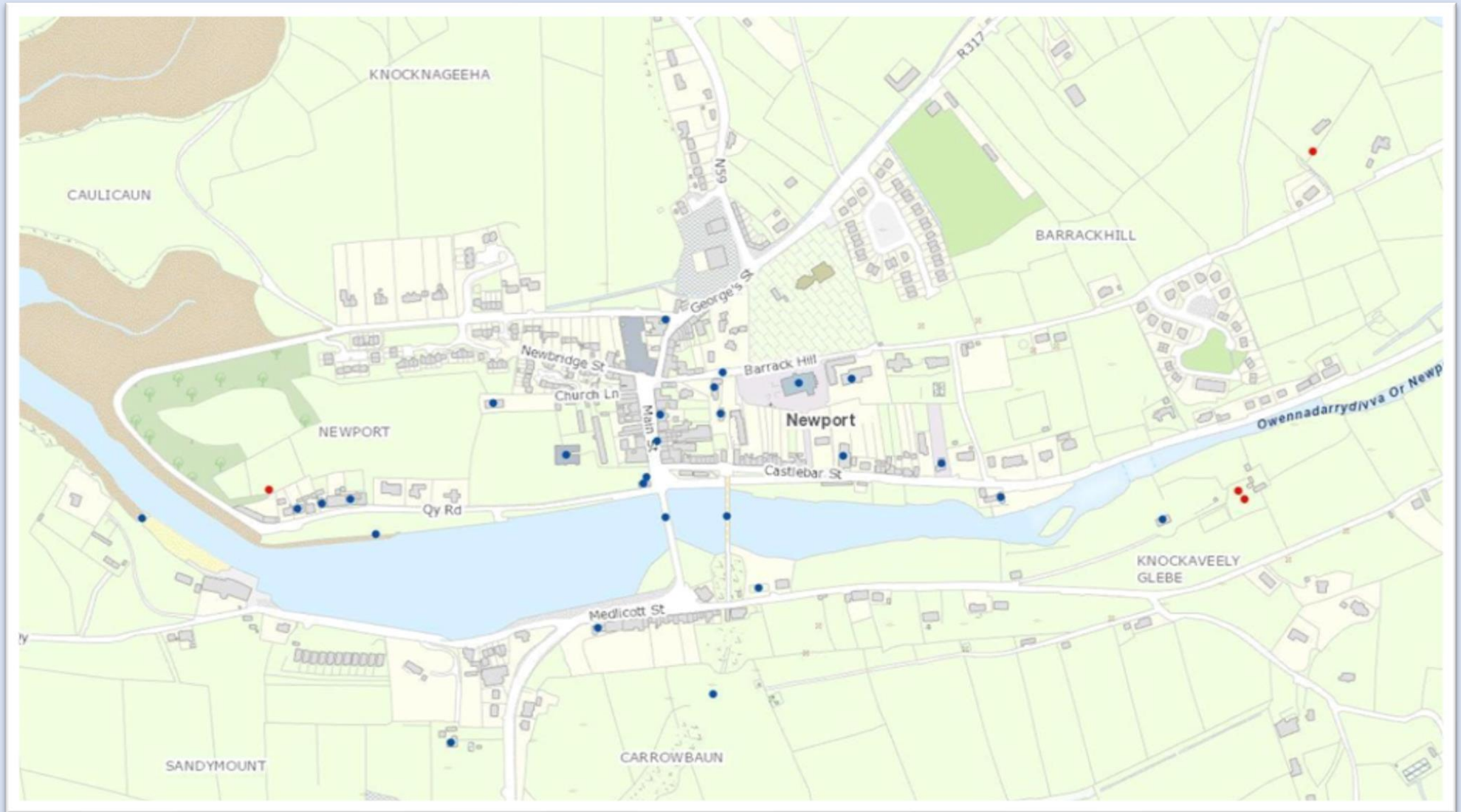
Later twentieth century developments in the town include housing along Newbridge Street and Quay Road, to the north of Newport House demesne; housing, commercial developments and national school along Mulranny Road and Barrack Hill north; housing along Castlebar Road; and housing to the east of the town in Sandymount.



Fig. 23 Commercial developments and housing, Mulranny Road, 2018

3.0 STATUTORY PROTECTION AND PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Many individual structures within the historic town of Newport are protected in their own right by statutory designations.



3.1 Protected Structures within the Newport town study area

The Record of Protected Structures lists the following 10 protected structures	The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage lists the following structures in Newport in addition to those on the Record of Protected Structures:	A further 11 protected structures are located in the 'Newport and Mulranny area':
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0110 Anglers Rest • 0109 Carrowbaun House • 0115 Derrydeva House • 0114 Former Presbyterian Church • 0112 Former Rail Bridge • 0171 Milcum House • 0172 Newport House • 0004 Newport RCC • 0111 Newport Road Bridge • 0113 Oratory & Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31208002 Quay • 31208003 Quay House • 31208005 Harbour House • 31208006 Convent • 31208011 House & shop (McGreal) • 31208012 De Bille House • 31208013 Post box • 31208015 Newport Railway Station (Office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0117 Ardagh Lodge • 0116 Burrishoole Bridge • 0120 Clew Bay House Hotel • 0218 Glenanean Bridge, Mulranny • 0121 Great Southern Hotel • 0224 Raigh Pier, • 0119 Rockfleet Lodge • 0118 Rossyvera • 0124 Srahmore Lodge • 0122 St. Patrick's RCC • 0123 Treanlaur Lodge

These structures including their interiors, their attendant grounds or curtilage, and any structures within that curtilage are protected under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

3.2 Recorded Monuments

The following archaeological sites and monuments in or near Newport town are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and are protected under the National Monuments Acts of 1930 to 2004:

MA067-037002 – Hut site MA067-040 – Enclosure MA067-041 – Earthwork

MA068-009001 – Ringfort - cashel MA068-010 - Monumental structure MA068-011 – Monumental structure MA068-012 – Crannog

MA068-013 – Enclosure MA068-014001 – Church

MA068-014002 – Graveyard MA068-016001 – Church

MA068-017 – Ritual site – holy well MA068-018 – Souterrain

MA068-027 – Earthwork MA068-029 – Castle

3.3 Special areas of Conservation (SACs)

There are two Special Areas of Conservation in the town, listed as part of the Natura 2000 network:

- Newport River SAC - Site Code: 002144
- Clew Bay Complex SAC - Site Code: 001482

3.4 Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020

The objectives in the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020 with regard to architectural and built heritage are:

AH-01 It is an objective of the Council to protect buildings and structures included in the

Record of Protected Structures (RPS) which forms part of this Plan (Volume 4).

AH-02 It is an objective of the Council to review the Record of Protected Structures including taking into consideration ministerial recommendations arising from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and add structures of special interest as appropriate, including industrial, maritime or vernacular heritage.

AH-03 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure and/or its setting is sensitively designed and sited and is appropriate in terms of the proposed materials, scale, density and layout, impact on historic features and junction with the Protected Structure and would not detract from the special interest, character and setting of the Protected Structure.

AH-04 It is an objective of the Council to promote and improve the understanding of the architectural heritage of Mayo.

AH-05 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that any new development or alteration to a building within or adjoining an Architectural Conservation Area positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of the proposed materials, scale, density and layout, proportions, plot ratio and building lines.

AH-06 It is the objective of the Council to identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and to define

them as Architectural Conservation Areas and to undertake an assessment to inform the potential ACA designation for the following areas:

- a. Ballinrobe
- b. Killala
- c. Pontoon
- d. Dugort

AH-07 It is an objective of the Council to protect the character of an Architectural Conservation Area and to prohibit the demolition of a structure that positively enhances the character of an Architectural Conservation Area, except in very exceptional circumstances. Where demolition is granted an assessment of the impact of the replacement structure on the character of the Architectural Conservation Area will be required.

AH-08 It is an objective of the Council to require that proposals for development within historic gardens, demesnes and estates include an appraisal of the designed landscape prior to the initial design of any development, so that this evaluation informs the design and respects the built heritage and horticultural elements of the site.

AH-09 It is an objective of the Council to protect buildings and features of industrial and maritime heritage.

AH-10 It is an objective of the Council to promote the sympathetic maintenance and re-use of vernacular built heritage and to encourage the retention of original fabric such as windows, doors, renders, pub/shop-fronts, roof coverings and interiors etc.

AH-11 It is an objective of the Council to promote the sympathetic maintenance of traditional features and other built heritage such as stone walls and other elements such as post-boxes, water pumps, paving etc.

AH-12 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of Protected Structures and historic buildings do not damage the historic fabric.

AH-13 It is an objective of the Council to promote a high quality built environment by encouraging excellence in design (both rural and urban); and innovative design and site layout solutions that address concerns of environmental sustainability, with regard to matters such as energy efficiency, use of materials etc.

(Excerpt from Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020).

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING BUILT ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Categories of Special Interest

In assessing the town under these headings, the categories of special interest which define the character of a place are considered. Under the heading 'Identifying the character of an area', the following categories are listed in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication, Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Dublin, 2004):

- Architectural interest

Many buildings were consciously designed to contribute visually to the character of their setting, beyond the boundaries of the curtilage on which they were built. They respond to the street, road or landscape in which they are situated.

- Historical interest

The plan of plots, boundaries and streets in towns and cities contain a record of past urban life, frequently inscribed in structures that have endured through time. The historic urban townscape is vital to the setting of prominent civic structures such as courthouses, cathedrals, museums or railway stations.

- Archaeological interest

The retention of archaeological deposits in situ, with targeted excavation and conservation projects, is recognised as an important strategy for securing more knowledge about the past.

- Artistic interest

The consistent use of crafted materials, such as paving or walling in local styles or materials, can contribute to the special artistic interest of an area

- Cultural interest

Public spaces may facilitate particular forms of behaviour. These include the spaces formed to facilitate markets, fairs, outdoor theatre or communal celebrations.

- Scientific interest

Geophysical or astronomical alignments in a landscape may be the intentional work of past designers.

- Technical interest

An industrial-heritage landscape related to mine-working, chemical extraction or milling can be of special technical interest.

- Social interest

Special social interest may be found in town parks and communal greens laid out with trees, benches and water fountains, and often sited especially to improve the surroundings of urban dwellers.

4.2 Defining Characteristics

This section provides a description of Newport town under the following headings: layout, socio-economic functions, building types and materials, quality and treatment of open spaces.

4.2.1 Layout

The core of the town centres around Main Street and Newport House. Main Street extends the length of the town centre, running north-south and connecting to Medicott Street and Carrowbaun via the bridge. The viaduct and former railway rail form a secondary axis west of the town centre. Newport River widens to form a sheltered harbour and quayside immediately south of the town. Historically, the landscaped demesne of Newport House occupied all the lands along the river to the west of the town centre. Some of these lands have been developed for housing in recent decades. Cross streets extend from Main Street east and west of the town centre.

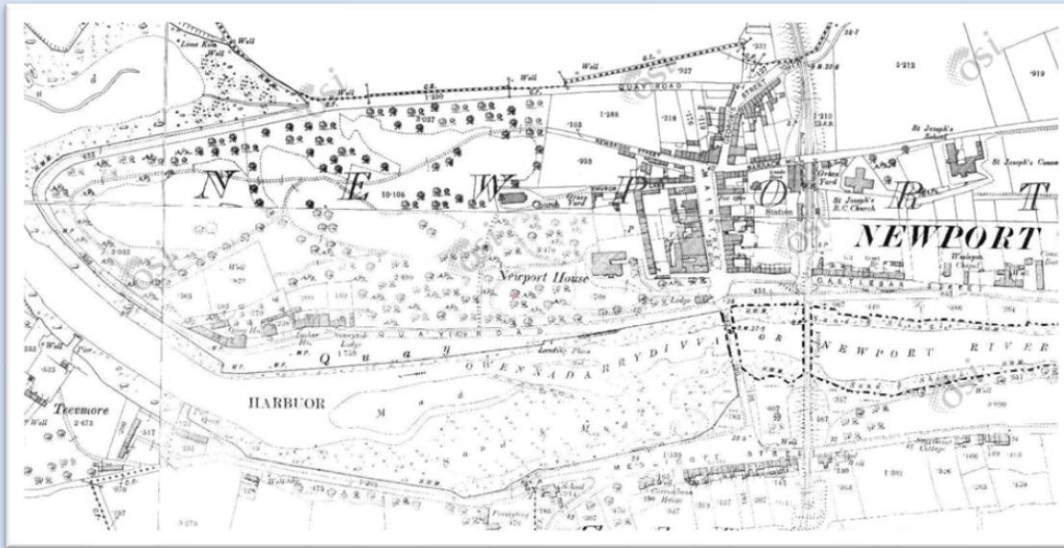


Fig. 24 Ordnance Survey map 1838, Newport



Fig. 25 Google maps, Newport, 2018

Newport's landscape setting contributes significantly to its character. The landscaped demesne of Newport House has a strong presence in the town and on the river setting. The town centre is relatively compact and the topographical setting and surrounding countryside is of high visual quality. The river and its quays and banks greatly enhance the townscape, and provide valuable amenity areas within the town.

4.2.2 Socio-economic Functions



Fig. 26 Sheep Fair at Newport, undated (www.askaboutireland.ie)

In addition to its origins as a centre of milling, Newport was historically a local market venue for agricultural produce, a function it has since lost. It contains some shops and services including cafés, restaurants, bars and hotels, all contributing to the vitality of the town. Historically Newport had a number of schools, north and south of the river, and these are indicated on early maps.

Newport is now largely a tourist destination both for the town itself and in association with the Great Western Greenway. It continues to be well presented and has several landscaped areas of high ecological value. The success of the Great Western Greenway has resulted in a significant increase in tourists on foot and bicycle in recent years.

4.2.3 Building Types and Materials

The majority of the buildings in Newport were constructed between the late eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. Roofs are typically single pitch with slate. Chimney stacks are an important feature of the town roofscape. The majority of dwellings retain their stacks and this lends a strong rhythm to the roof profiles. Most of the stacks are rendered and some retain historic clay chimney pots.

Newport House is an imposing seven-bay two-storey late-eighteenth century country house, with single-bay full-height bows to end bays, rendered masonry walls, pitched slate roofs and cut-limestone coping to parapets and gables. The window openings feature cut- limestone sills and timber windows.

A photograph of Deverell's shop and hotel, located on Main Street, allows insight into the fabric of the town buildings and streetscape at the turn of the twentieth century (refer to Fig. 27). The houses on Main Street are typically rendered masonry with pitched slate roofs and rendered chimney stacks. Most houses feature sliding sash timber

windows, and timber doors. Window sills are granite and limestone, occasionally painted. Main Street features a number of decorative timber shopfronts, with moulded fascias and pilasters such as those evident on Deverell's. The footpaths and steps along Main Street are cut limestone.

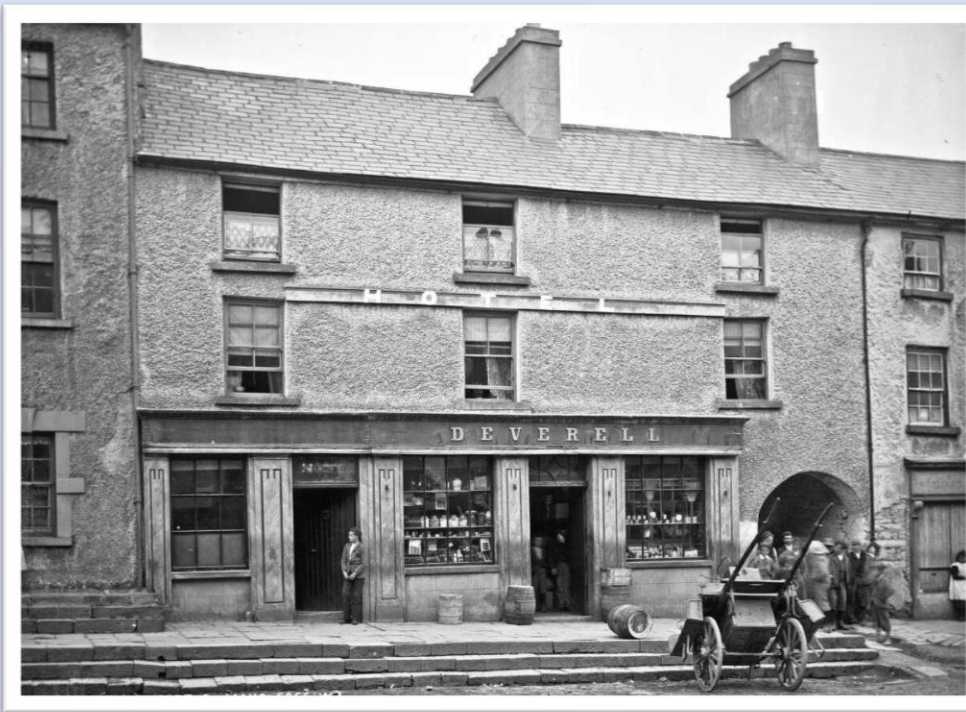


Fig. 27 Deverell's Shop, Newport, Co. Mayo, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)



Fig. 28 De Bille House and Hairs & Sirs (formerly Deverell's), Main Street, Newport, 2018

In addition to the rendered facades, stone elevations are also present in the town. Several elevations have coursed and random squared stonework either with flat or rock-faced finish. Cut-stone dressings to openings with pronounced dressed lintels and relieving arches are evident on structures on Main Street, George's Street, Medicott Street and around the boundary of Newport House.

Some traditional shopfronts remain, notably McGreal's on George's Street, and De Bille House on Main Street.



Fig. 29 Mc Greal, George's Street and De Bille House, Main Street, Newport, 2018

Stone boundary walls have a strong presence in Newport and give much material expression to its character. They are to be found at a number of locations throughout the town and are punctuated in locations by gated openings and railings. Some sections have impressive Scotch copings as is evident in the Lawrence photographic collection (refer to Fig. 30).

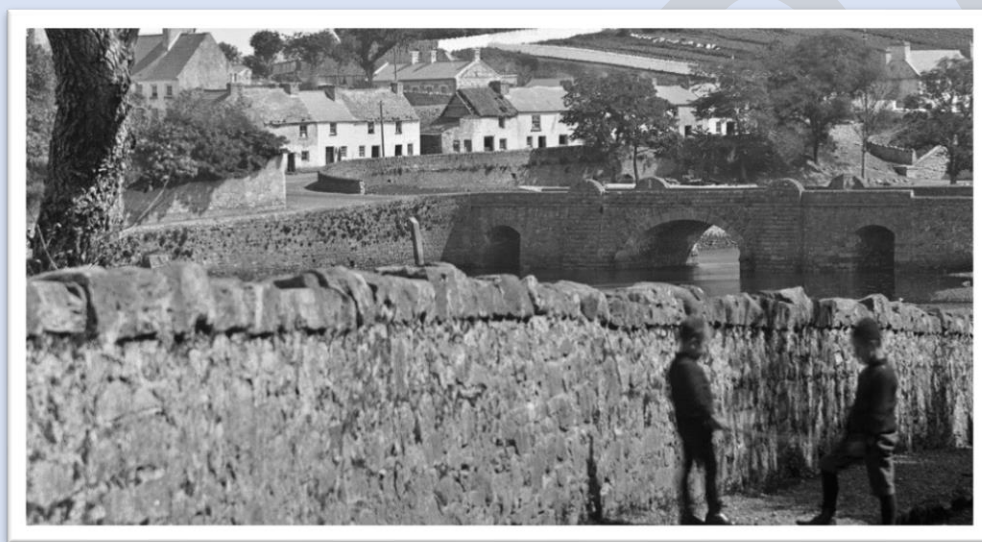


Fig. 30 Newport, Co. Mayo, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

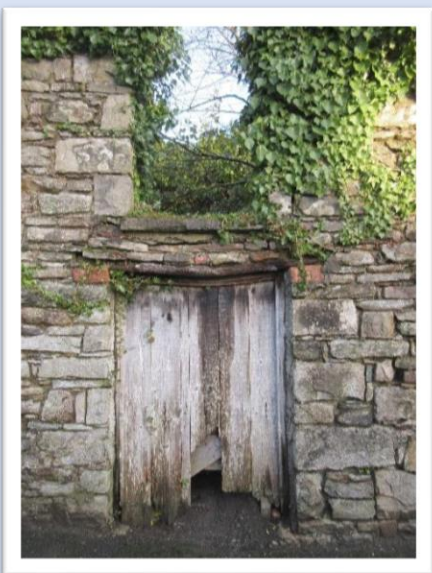


Fig. 31 Church Lane, Newport, 2018



Fig. 32 Limestone steps, Main Street, Newport, 2018

4.2.4 Quality and Treatment of Open Space

An important aspect of the character of Newport town is its river context and its soft landscape setting. The major landscape influences on the character are:

- The presence of the Newport River, with its quays and river banks.
- The dramatic topography of the town.
- The surrounding countryside of rolling topography that can be viewed from within the town that comprises fields enclosed by trees and hedges, the landscaped grounds of Newport House, the river and quays, and the mountain ranges to the north.
- Trees and planting on private land, and in the town.

The landscaped spaces along the river quays and banks provided amenity spaces for the people of Newport, and were occasionally used for cultivation (refer to Fig. 42).

The lack of cars and traffic evident in early photographs allowed Main Street to function as a market space, and gathering place in the town (refer to Fig. 26). The stone footpath and steps that historically extended along the east length of Main Street, contribute significantly to the character of the town. These would have been fabricated from local stone, and display a level of local craftsmanship that is worthy of note (refer to Fig. 32).

The landscaped demesne of Newport House formed a part of the town centre, and much of the land was, and remains, accessible to the public.

The area around the train station and associated buildings would have historically been a gathering point, connected to the town centre.

5.0 CONSERVATION ISSUES

In order to assess conservation issues within the town, Newport will be examined under five broad headings:

1. Main Street & Newport House
2. Medicott Street & south riverside
3. Newport River – Quay Road & riverside
4. Railway & street layout
5. Built fabric

5.1 Main Street & Newport House

The designed landscape of Newport House demesne is an essential part of the fabric of Newport. Views of Newport House and the town are portrayed in early paintings and photographs of the town.



Fig. 33 Newport House & town centre, 2018 / House, Newport, Syers, 1845 (NLI)



Fig. 34 A former entrance to Newport House demesne, Newbridge Street, 2018

The gate lodge and formal entrance is on Main Street, and the stone wall perimeter boundary of the lands is still very present in the town. The legibility of these stone boundary walls has been diminished in recent years, and this is further degraded by the overgrown landscape and poor condition of the ground surfaces.

Early photographs of Main Street depict a broad sloped street, against a backdrop of rolling hills. The bare expanse of the street evokes the qualities of a market square. A stepped roofscape with chimneystacks establishes the scale and grain of the streetscape. A stone footpath with a continuous stepped kerb extends the full length of the east side of the street. There is a strong physical and visual connection between the town centre and the riverside.



Fig. 35 Newport, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

Today, this defined street edge and sense of open space is somewhat diluted. An increase in traffic flow and requirement for parking have resulted in a lack of amenity space along the main street.



Fig. 36 Main Street, Newport, 2018

The footpath and stone stepped kerb which were a defining characteristic of Main Street in early photographs have been removed in sections to allow for the insertion of ramps.



Fig. 37 Ramps, Main Street, Newport

The stone footpaths have been largely replaced, with only fragments remaining. However, there are several sections of original stone stepped kerb remaining intact. Recent interventions are in concrete and tarmac. Ramps have been inserted at various points along the east side of the street, to allow wheelchair access. The materials selected, and placement of these ramps detract from the character of the street.



Fig. 38 Post box and bench / Carriageway, Main Street, Newport, 2018

The selection of replacement paving materials, such as concrete paviors and tarmac, is not in keeping with the character of the town. Benches and planters, have been placed along the footpaths on Main Street, but a coherent approach to treatment of the public realm is lacking. Several properties on Main Street have been replaced in recent decades, including the Newport Hotel which terminates the northern vista to Main Street. These replacement buildings alter the scale and grain of the original street. Historic windows have been replaced to the upper levels on several buildings along Main Street. The roofscape along Main Street has been greatly altered. A few properties maintain their traditional natural slate roofs, though several properties now have artificial slate or tile roofs. Some chimneys have been removed. Contemporary rooflights and dormer windows have been added to a number of properties. Very few traditional shopfronts remain on Main Street. Some shopfronts exhibit poor quality or temporary signage. Some contemporary shopfronts extend beyond the boundary of the original houses, disrupting the historic rhythm and scale of the street frontage.



Fig. 39 Main Street, Newport, 2018

5.2 Medicott Street & south riverside

Medlicott Street, south of the river in the townland of Carrowbaun, is shown on early maps of the town. On the 1838 OS map, development is shown on one side of the street allowing the three schools and various houses to address the Fair Green and riverside.

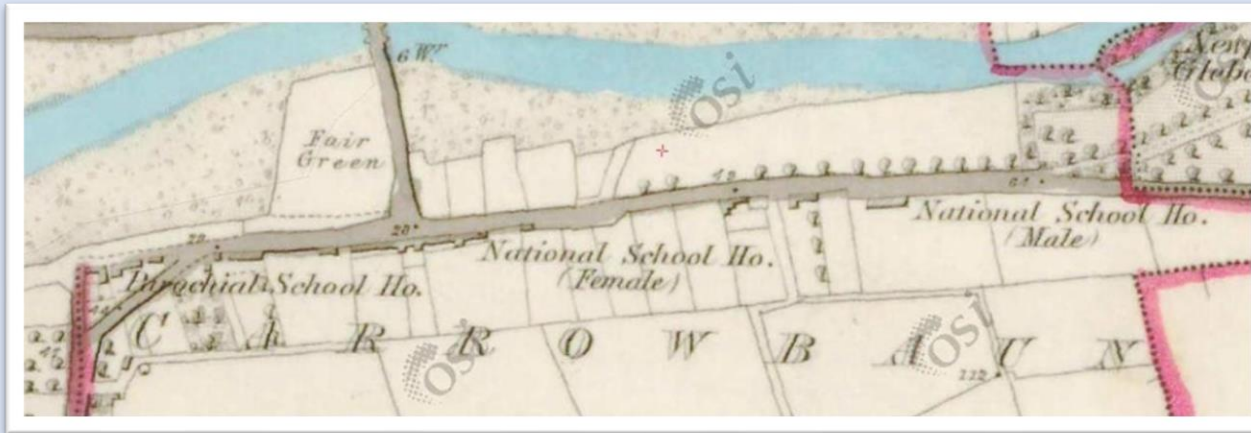


Fig. 40 Ordnance Survey map 1838, Newport town and environs

The three-arched limestone bridge connecting Main Street to Medlicott Street dates from the mid-nineteenth century. Today Medlicott Street has been widened, and parking spaces have been laid out along the river park. The expanse of this tarmac road and carpark severs the connection between the houses on Medlicott Street, and the river edge and park. This results in dead space along the river to the south, and detracts from views and vistas within the town.

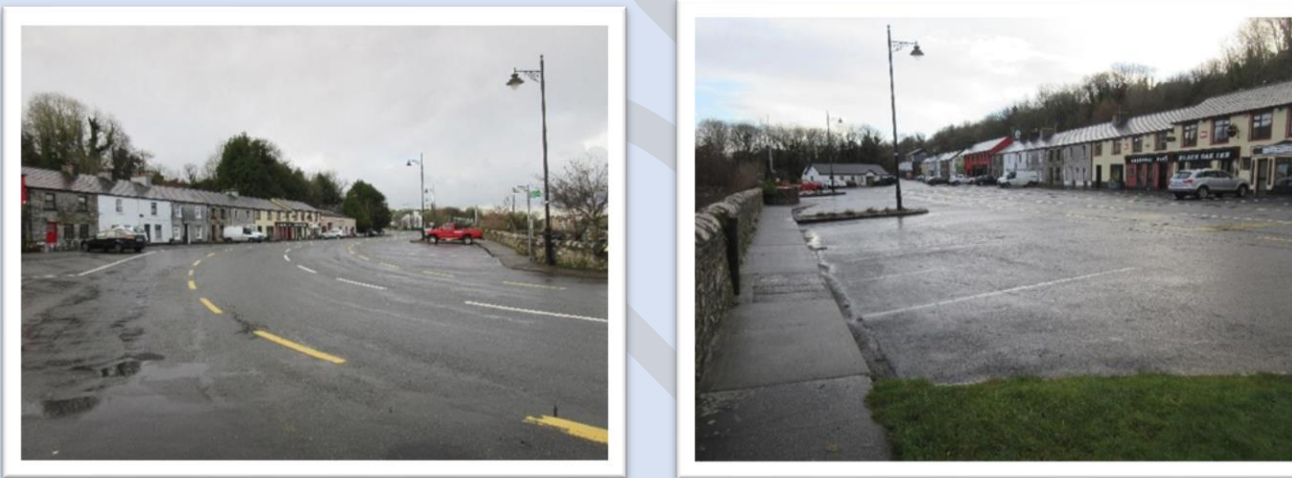


Fig. 41 Medlicott Street, Newport, 2018

Access to the railway viaduct from Medlicott Street is currently through a playground area and landscaped grounds which are not accessible in the evening.

5.3 Newport River – Quay Road & riverside

Newport was established on the Owennadarrydivva or Newport River, and this connection between the town centre and river edge is of great significance. The Newport River and Clew Bay are important sites for nature conservation in a European context. Both are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (refer to Section 3.3) The quays and landscaped river paths feature in several early photos of the town. In Thomas Wynne's 1880 view from Medlicott Street (refer to Fig. 42), the north river bank immediately east of the bridge is shown to be cultivated, descending to the river from a stone retaining wall along Castlebar Street. This landscaped area served as an amenity and resource for the town centre.

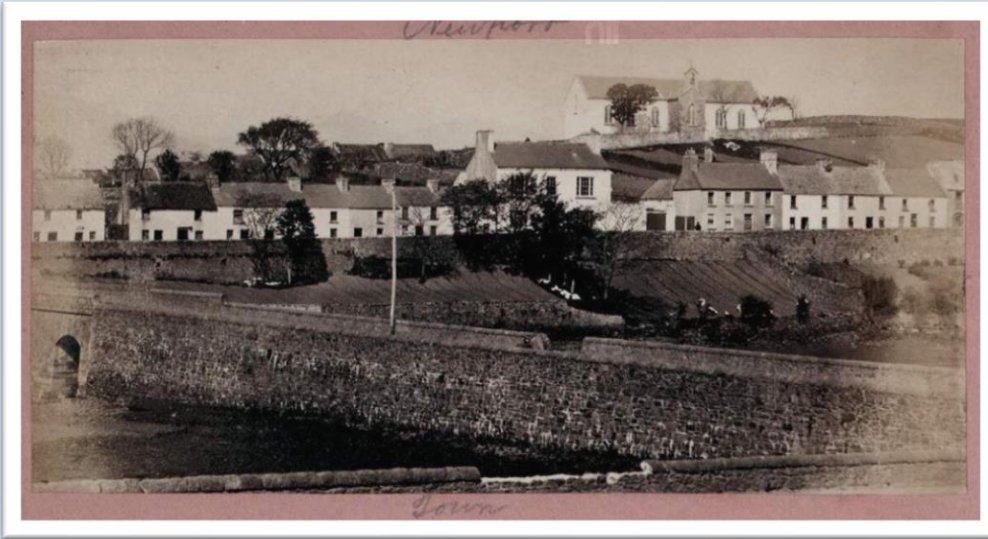


Fig. 42 Newport, 1880, Thomas Wynne (NLI)

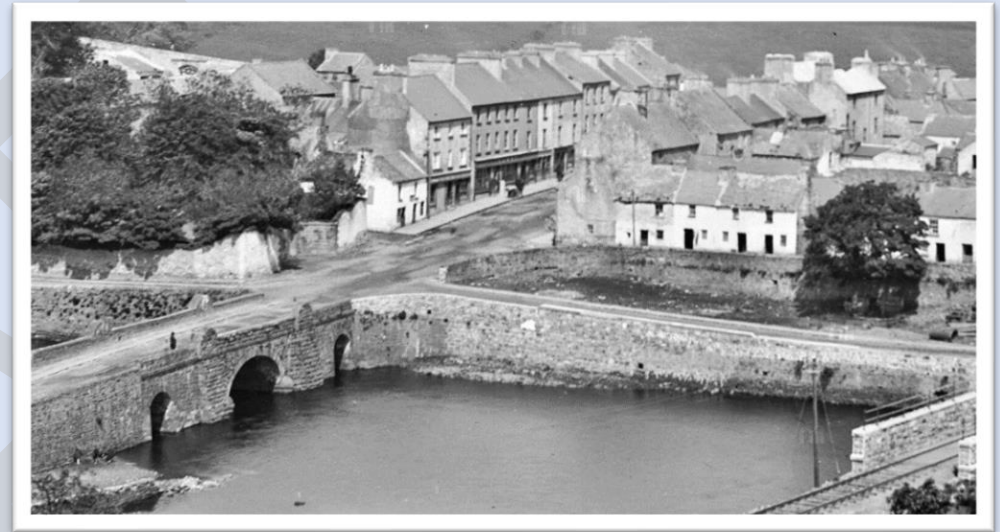


Fig. 43 Newport, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

In a later image, the quayside has been formalised, and a quay wall and lower river road introduced (refer to Fig. 43). The land below the retaining wall remains a landscaped open space, connected to the river edge.

This landscaped space was built over in the twentieth century, severing the connection to the water and detracting from the character of the river edge (refer to Fig. 44). The historic stone retaining wall along Castlebar Street, as depicted in early photographs, remains intact.



Fig. 44 Castlebar Street, Newport, 2018

Newport Quay is located along Quay Road which follows the southern boundary of Newport House. Early photos show a well-built stone quay walls and a landscaped river edge, with a number of buildings related to the harbour located along the road.



Fig. 45 Quay Road, Newport, 1865-1914, Robert French Photographer (NLI Lawrence Collection)

Today, some historic buildings remain on Quay Road, and the boundary wall of the demesne is largely intact. Quay Road caters for pedestrians but the concrete and tarmac surfaces are poor quality, and not in keeping with the character of the historic setting.

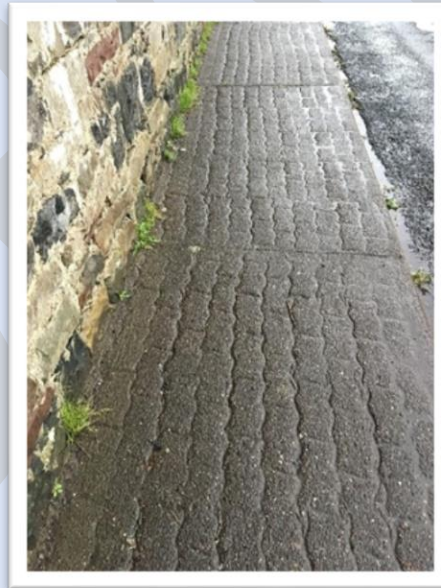


Fig. 46 Quay Road, Newport, 2018

5.4 Railway & street layout

The introduction of a railway network to Newport town, towards the end of the nineteenth century, redefined the structure of the town at this time. The railway buildings and viaduct formed an integral part of the townscape, and contributed to the character of the town. A coherent connection between the train station complex and Main Street has been lost, though a physical connection remains. Similarly, access to the viaduct from the southern river bank is limited. On cessation of the rail service in 1937, the railway tunnel was closed.

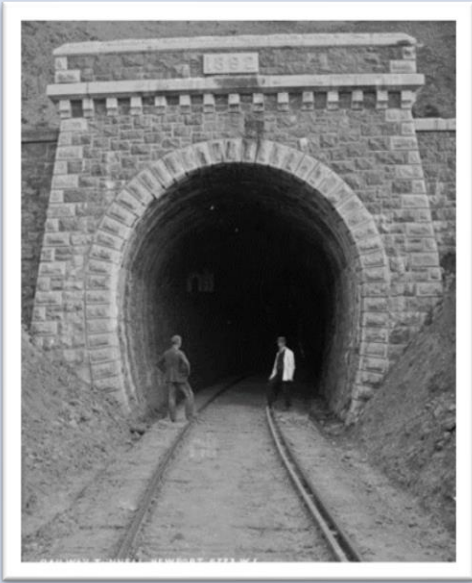


Fig. 47 Newport tunnel c.1900 (NLI Lawrence collection) / Former Newport railway station, 2018

Increased vehicular traffic in recent decades has resulted in congestion along Main Street and George's Street, and an increased demand for parking in the town. Due to its width and heavy traffic patterns, the junction of George's Street and Mulranny Road to the north of the town centre is not navigable for pedestrians. The nearby housing, school and playground are disconnected from the town centre as a result.



Fig. 48 Junction of George's Street & Mulranny Road

The introduction of the Great Western Greenway has introduced increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the town, and currently this traffic is directed along Medicott Street, Main Street and George's Street.

Despite their proximity to the town centre, the more recent housing and apartment developments to the east and west of Main Street remain disconnected from the town. Landscaping and works to the public realm could enhance the integration of these areas within the town centre.



Fig. 49 Housing along Newbridge Street / Apartment development adjacent to former railway station, Newport, 2018

5.5 Built fabric

Though many buildings in Newport retain their original form and composition, traditional materials have been replaced in several buildings in the town. Historic renders have been replaced with modern cement and pebble-dash renders; timber windows, doors and shopfronts have been replaced with aluminium or uPVC windows; natural slate roofs have been replaced with artificial slate roofs; and cast-iron rainwater goods replaced with aluminium or uPVC gutters and downpipes. Footpaths are lacking or substandard in several streets within the town, most notably on George's Street. With the exception of Main Street, poor provision is made for public lighting in the town. Landscaping is primarily confined to Newport House and the river edge.



Fig. 50 Footpaths, George's Street, Newport, 2018

Vacancy and dereliction is an issue in the town centre, particularly along George's Street.

Vacant plots lie empty along the main route through the town, with some plots accommodating open parking lots.



Fig. 51 Vacant site, George's Street, Newport, 2018



Fig. 52 Apartments & parking lot, Quay Road, Newport, 2018



Fig. 53 Derelict historic house, junction of Main Street & Barrack Hill, Newport, 2018

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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Newport Co Mayo Draft Character Study (2018) (Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd)

END OF SECTION 2