

Gort Inse Guaire Wayfinding Strategy

October 2024



Gort Inse Guaire Wayfinding Strategy

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1 Introduction

Executive Summary

Planning & Policy Context

What is Wayfinding

Wayfinding General Principles

Introduction

Executive Statement

Signage and Wayfinding within Gort is seen as an essential part in the regeneration of the Town Centre. This has been recognised as part of the Town Centre First Plan and identified through the various studies and engagement sessions as a must have to help legibility and orientation.

The existing heritage and the desire to explore the town sits at the foundation of the proposed scheme. With the addition of the two new off street car parks the signage on arrival into the town centre will be paramount, as will the ease of moving around the town by foot.

The proposals seek to be appropriate to Gort and where possible minimise the need for a sign a coordinated approach to both vehicles and pedestrians. A simple palette of forms offer the opportunity to provide identity, information and direction. These can be installed in a phased approach as and when funding becomes available.

This document outlines a comprehensive wayfinding strategy for Gort, focusing on creating a cohesive signage

system throughout the town. The strategy aims to improve navigation for residents and visitors by providing clear, consistent, and informative signage. Key objectives include enhancing the town's identity, promoting local landmarks, supporting tourism, and facilitating pedestrian and vehicular movement.

The strategy aims to enhance visitor experiences while fostering a sense of place and belonging among residents. The integration of wayfinding solutions will contribute to a more navigable, welcoming, and culturally rich environment.

Key Components:

Signage Types:

- Information signs
 - Directional signs
 - Interpretative signs for cultural and historical landmarks
- #### Design Guidelines:
- Uniform colour schemes and fonts to ensure visual consistency.
 - Materials and designs that respect the town's heritage and aesthetics.

Placement Strategy:

- Signs positioned at strategic points such as entryways, tourist spots, and transportation hubs.
- A balance between vehicular and pedestrian signage to cater to different users.

Tourism Promotion:

- Highlighting cultural, historical, and natural sites in Gort.
 - Encouraging walking tours and providing routes for visitors.
- #### Community Involvement:
- Collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure the signage reflects Gort's heritage and values.

Introduction

Planning & Policy Context

Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

Signage and related structures other than for the purpose highway signs and right of way signs are classed as adverts. The control of adverts is specified in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). In these regulations, Part 2 Schedule 2 specifies which form and class of adverts are exempt from planning permission. Further to this, there are tighter controls over the installation and display of adverts in Architectural Conservation Areas to preserve the character and amenity of these areas.

As development by the County Council the majority of the proposed signs will not require planning permission. The design of the signs has been informed by the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and particular regard has been paid to the character of the Gort ACA (Architectural Conservation Area).

Department of Transport – Traffic Signs Manual (2021)

The Traffic Signs Manual provides details of the traffic signs which may be used on roads in Ireland, including

their layout and symbols, the circumstances in which each sign may be used and the rules for positioning them. The manual relates to 'traffic signs' including, upright signs on posts, road markings, traffic signals, temporary signs, gantry signs, Variable Message Signs, and associated items such as hazard marker posts and bollards.

The Traffic Signs Manual is not directly applicable to the wayfinding strategy as it relates only to traffic signs, rather than pedestrian signs, however, it provides general guidance for the style and form of signage.

Key principles include the location of a sign, with regard to its relationship with other signs and its surroundings in general. Consideration should be given to whether the new and existing signs are needed, or whether one or more signs can be eliminated. Also, the message on the new sign should not be conflicted with the messages on the other signs along with not obstructing earlier signs. This principle seeks to avoid clutter of signs and other street furniture as far as possible and is reflected within the content of this wayfinding strategy. A related principle is avoiding screening heritage buildings, shopfronts and general streetscapes, where possible.

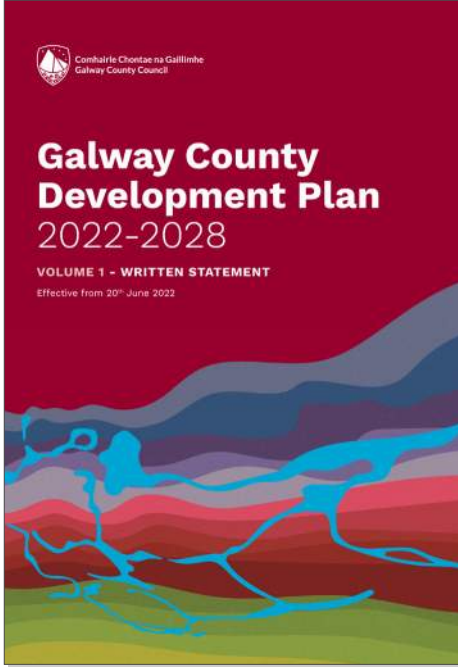
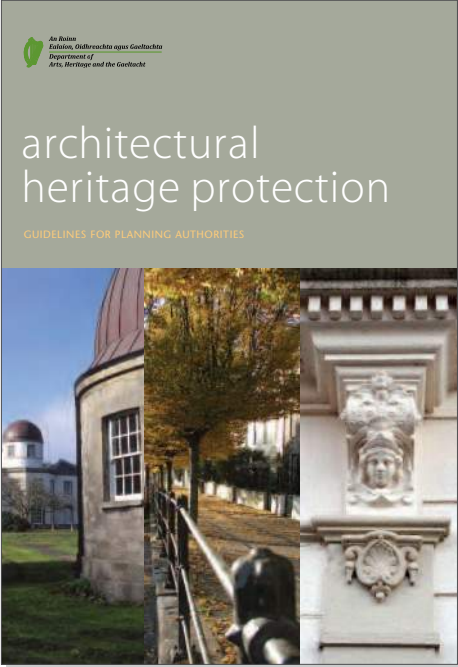
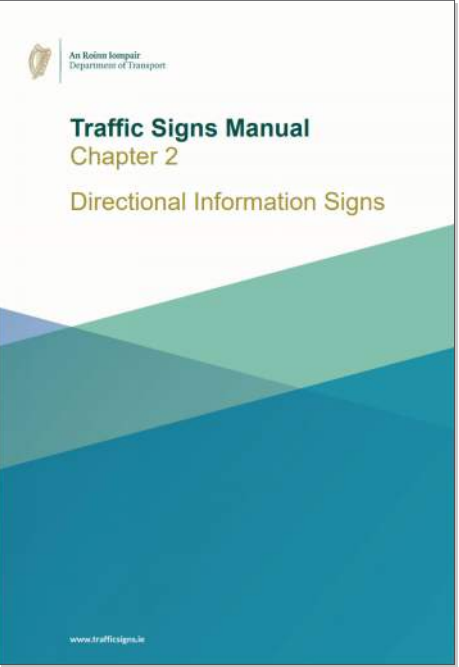
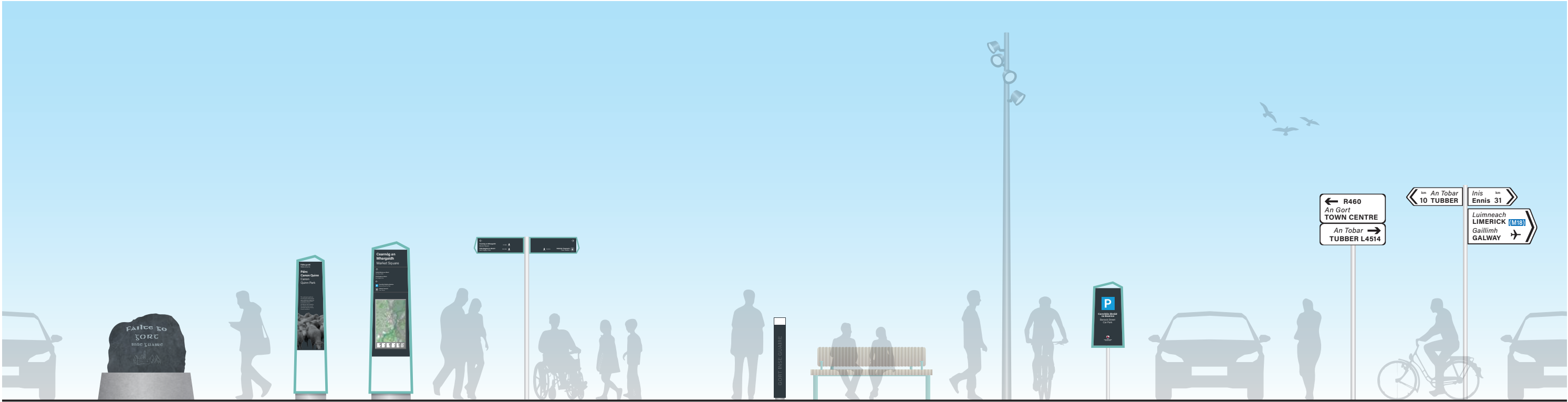
Another key principle included within the manual relates to the design of signs and their effectiveness dependent upon the visibility to users, the background to the sign, the orientation, height, and its placement in relation to the edge of the carriageway and other features of the road cross-section. These principles have been carefully considered and included within the ensuing wayfinding strategy.

Department of the Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht – Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)

This document includes guidelines for planning authorities related to the protection of architectural heritage. This includes consideration of the role of signs and their interaction with architectural heritage, including signage on shops or informational signage. The guidance recommends careful consideration around the introduction and retention of signage in areas with architectural heritage. It is emphasised that old lettering and shop signs of particular interest or quality should be retained where possible. New signage should be sensitively designed to avoid detracting from heritage, whilst the removal of existing signage must be evaluated, as the removal may exacerbate existing problems.

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

The County Development Plan includes some requirements in relation to signage, in particular DM Standard 32: Controls for Signage Along Public Roads. This includes confining advertisements to inside the boundaries of towns and villages. Part C requires no signage to be permitted where it may constitute a hazard or obstacle for pedestrians or road users or where the location of such signage may obscure sight distances at junctions or cause undue or necessary distraction to road users. Also, signs should not impair the setting of any archaeological or historic site or any proposed or protected building or structures within an ACA. Part D states that the system for fingerpost signs will operate on the basis of any future policy document prepared by Galway County Council in relation to finger post signs, however, at the time of writing, no such policy document has been published.



Introduction

The Approach to Wayfinding in Gort

The wayfinding strategy for Gort will help locals and visitors on their journey, allow them to reach a desired destination, highlight quickest routes and confirm places of interest, such as public spaces, heritage buildings, Canon Quinn Park, the River Trail or the Train Station. Wayfinding is the tool we use to successfully interpret and navigate through an area or space. It is made up not just of signs, but also built forms, routes, the natural environment and of course human behaviour.

A major part of the wayfinding presence in Gort will be a well-thought out signage system, made up of the following principles:

Consistency: signage in Gort should follow a consistent format. Although a variety of sign shapes and sizes will be used, they should all follow the same rules when it comes to colour palette, typography, layout and messaging, to ensure a continuous visual language instantly recognisable from a distance.

Clarity: users need information at certain points along a journey in order to effectively make decisions. This information can aid orientation, list services, give directions or confirm a location, and must always be communicated clearly and concisely, with only the relevant amount of info displayed and all visual clutter removed.

Repetition: signs should be positioned at regular intervals in the town centre, each displaying a consistent repeated message. This gives the user confidence they are heading in the right direction and the ability to predict reassurance ahead.

Accessibility: one of the fundamentals of successful signage is a system that works for all users. Typical signage may be enough for the majority of people, but visitors with physical impairments or other health issues must be considered, incorporating Braille, tactile trails, audio assistance, step-free routes and the use of technology.



Introduction

The Approach to Wayfinding in Gort

The wayfinding strategy in Gort will work in harmony with the existing and future town's settings. It seeks to achieve the following objectives:

Create a sense of arrival: clearly announcing visitors' arrival to Gort or places of interest in the town centre is crucial, this will be done by defining the threshold of spaces with appropriate signage.

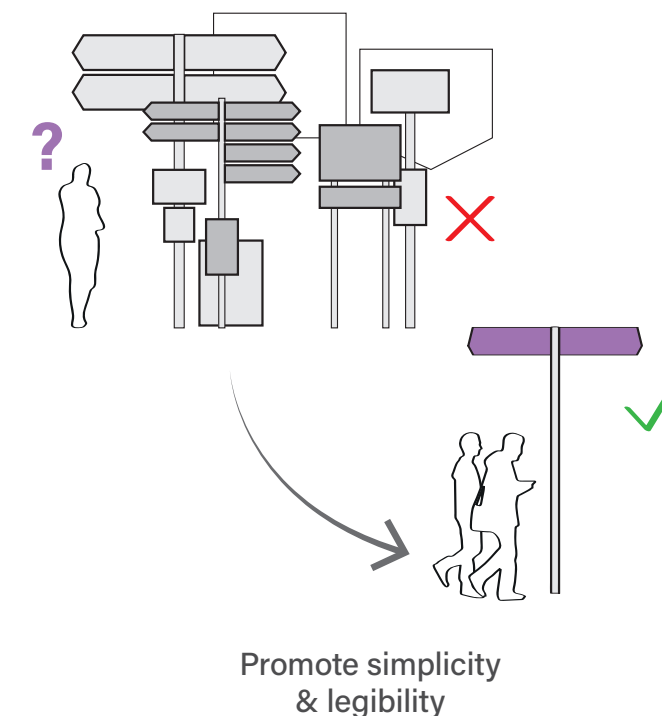
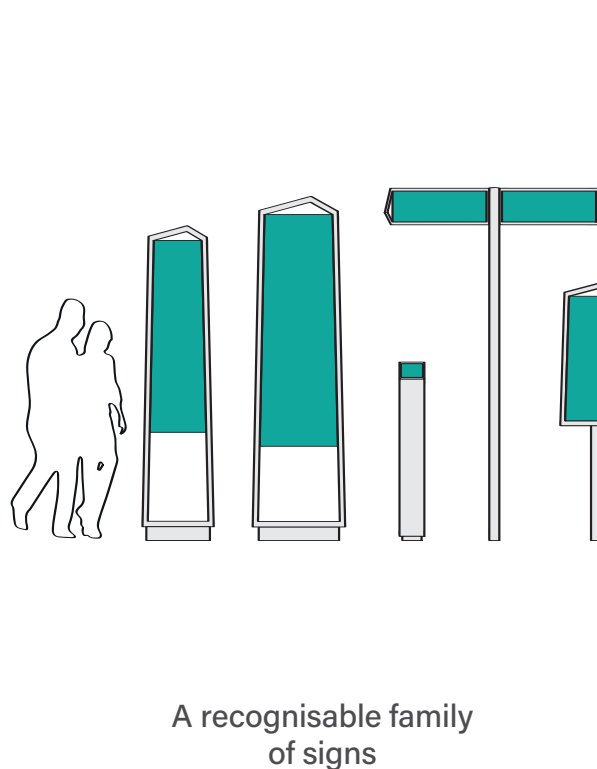
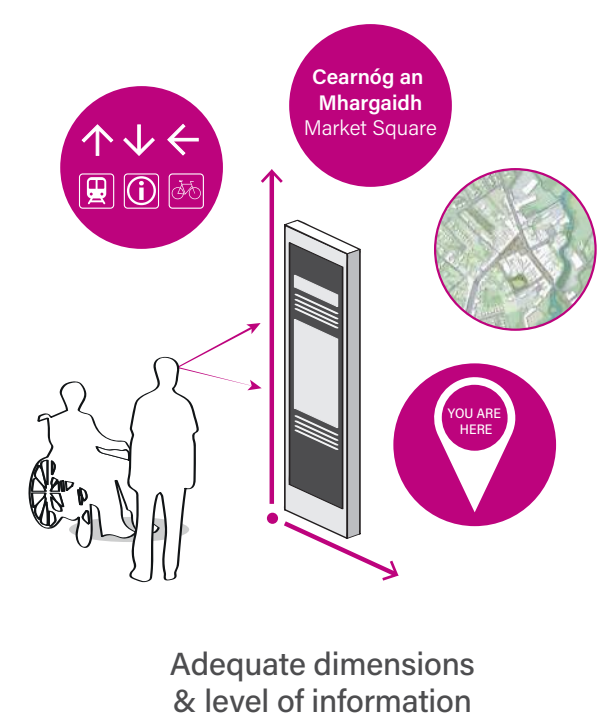
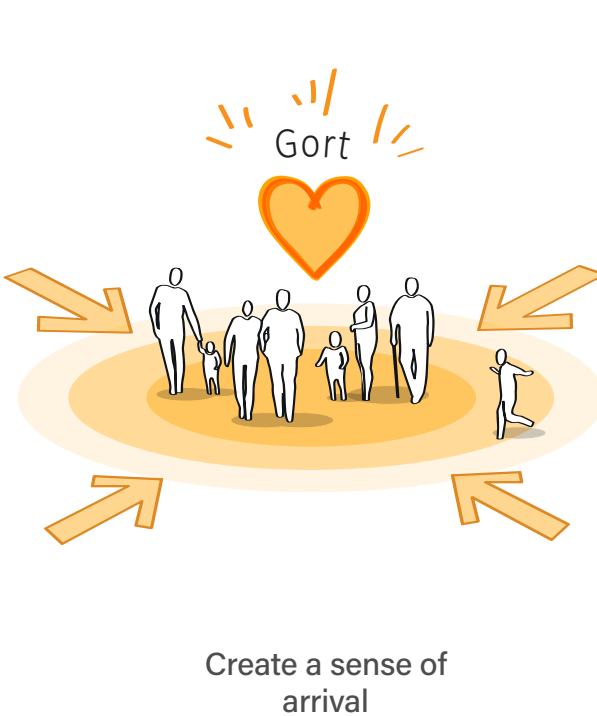
Adequate dimensions and level of information: the signage system will be designed in compliance with the industry best standard in terms of dimensioning, typeface legibility and colour scheme to ensure the information is clear and legible for all. The strategy will aim at providing the adequate level of information to be delivered at appropriate locations and using the best suited support.

Promote simplicity: by removing as much unnecessary information as possible, a clear, concise message is conveyed to the user, helping them on their journey. The amount of signs will be kept to what is necessary to provide good orientation. Repeat and overlapping signs will be removed.

Positively highlight routes: The wayfinding strategy will celebrate and promote existing pedestrian trails such as the River trail or the Town Trail, by renewing their visibility and fostering interest. The strategy seeks to encourage discovery and dwelling in the town centre, for locals and visitors alike.

A recognisable family of signs: A family of easily recognisable, distinctive yet elegant signs will be created to help people navigate the town centre and deliver key information in a unified and consistent manner.

Good sign location: Signs will be located at key points across the town centre e.g. arrival to town, key spaces, junctions, along routes with high footfall, etc. The signs precise location and orientation will be carefully considered to ensure good visibility for all users and avoid clutter.



2 Gort Today

Strengths to Celebrate

Weaknesses of Existing Signage

Gort's Materiality

Wayfinding Objectives for Gort

Town Centre Workshop

Gort Today

Strengths to Celebrate

Gort is a historical and characterful town, with many architectural specificities, listed heritage and natural assets. The town centre is rich in bright facade colours, well kept shop fronts and a wide array of historical signs pertaining to businesses or heritage monuments that enrich the streetscape and create a sense of place. The wayfinding strategy takes inspiration from these aspects and builds upon them to make the town centre easier to read and navigate, whilst creating a graphic identity that is anchored in Gort's character. Furthermore, the wayfinding strategy will focus on enhancing these existing strengths.



Colourful building facades on Barrack Street bring a memorable and joyful touch to the streetscape



Gort River Walk: key natural 3km looped trail along the Cannahowna / Gort River, accessible from the town centre



Burke's Shop: One example of well kept and colourful shop front on Bridge Street, part of Gort's Heritage Trail



Colourful facade of Hennesllys Bar with mural on Loughrea Road



The Old Pump on Market Square



Colourful mural artwork off the beaten track



The Old Forge: one example of remarkable heritage with dedicated plaques and contrasting, bright colour



Michael Kennedy Ceramics Studio: significant artist studio off the beaten track on Bolands Lane



Arrival stones "Fáilte go Gort Inse Guaire" celebrating the arrival to Gort in a memorable way

Gort Today

Weaknesses of Existing Signage

The existing signage within Gort town centre is mostly composed of:

- Standard highway vehicular signs to direct motorists;
- Brown standard highway vehicular signs indicating other features e.g. Gort River Walk;
- Advertisement signs;
- Temporary signs for local events;
- Gort River Walk timber and board signs.

This forms a range of different styles of street signage which are unsympathetic to their context. The content of the signs needs to do more to facilitate wayfinding and provide clear and inviting orientation. Currently, a significant amount of signs are inappropriately positioned with overlapping signs and a lack of hierarchy in the information delivered. The accumulative effect of the diverse types, colours and positioning of the street signs creates clutter. This results in a disordered environment which detracts from Gort's character.

The wayfinding strategy aims at replacing the existing signage to achieve a clear and clutter free streetscape that complements the town's architectural context.



Lack of appropriate hierarchy in signage, poor maintenance, visibility and legibility



Underwhelming sign for Gort River Walk, not entirely consistent with other signs, lack of town wide graphic identity



Superposed roads signs with 'Lidl' signs resulting in clutter and poor legibility for both



Lack of clarity and hierarchy resulting in clutter: mural, commemorative plaque and advertisement too close together



Underwhelming standard road sign, not consistent with welcome stones at other entrances



Repeat signs with no consistent graphic identity



Abundance of signs with no overall graphic identity, resulting in clutter



Poor quality, tilted and not well maintained advertisement sign, superposed with another sign. Poor legibility and clutter

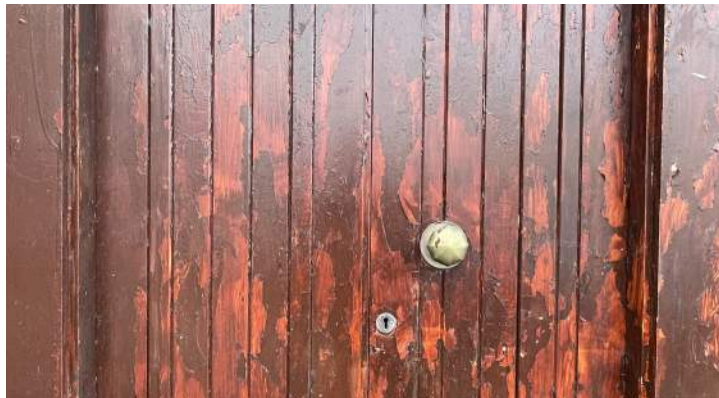


Large amount of temporary signs, some in poor state, out of date or ripped

Gort Today

Gort's Materiality

Gort is a historical town with a significant built and architectural heritage. The materiality that can be observed on the streets reflect that: natural stone walls and monuments, metalwork, local agricultural and industrial heritage make up for a rich materials palette on the streetscape. The colour palette, rich in shades of grey deriving from the stonework, is highlighted by the metal and timber work.



Gort Today

Wayfinding Objectives for Gort

The objectives for the wayfinding strategy are as follows:

1) Celebrate natural and public spaces in Gort

Gort town centre counts a number of key open spaces and destinations, such as Canon Quinn Park and the River Walk that are valuable assets. These will be regenerated through the public realm enhancement plan. The wayfinding strategy aims at strengthening the sense of arrival and placemaking in these spaces.

2) Unlock local heritage

The existing town trail highlights a significant amount of local listed buildings, structures and monuments. Specific signage, tailored to the type of heritage, will help give visibility and clarity to the trail and transform it into a significant destination in Gort.

3) Remove clutter to enhance streetscape

The strategy aims at providing a comprehensive family of signs that will replace the damaged or repeat signs in town, along with a sign location plan. This will give clarity and enhance quality and legibility of the public realm as a whole.

4) Introduce a consistent town-wide family of signs

A specific sign will be designed to fit each of the identified needs in town, from pedestrian signage to heritage and parking. However, all signs will display a consistent graphic identity, shape, typeface and design to promote unity throughout the wayfinding strategy and become part of Gort's identity.

5) Improve legibility to promote walking and discovery

Good signage can do a lot for Gort, including help promoting sustainable movement by giving valuable information on walking and cycling times and distances and encourage the discovery of hidden gems off the beaten track.

6) Anchor the design in Gort's materiality and identity

Gort has a distinctive materials and colour palette, coupled with a rich built heritage. The wayfinding strategy will build upon this identity using colours and shape specific to Gort.



1
Celebrate natural & public spaces in Gort



2
Unlock local heritage



3
Remove clutter to enhance streetscape



4
Introduce a consistent town-wide family of signs



5
Improve legibility to promote walking and discovery



6
Anchor the design in Gort's materiality & Identity

Gort Today

Town Centre Workshop

On Wednesday 8th February 2023, BDP hosted a workshop with the Galway County Council, Town Centre First team, local business owners and residents interested in the redevelopment of the town. It was a chance for BDP to hear local voices and understand what they believed was needed for the regeneration of Gort town centre.

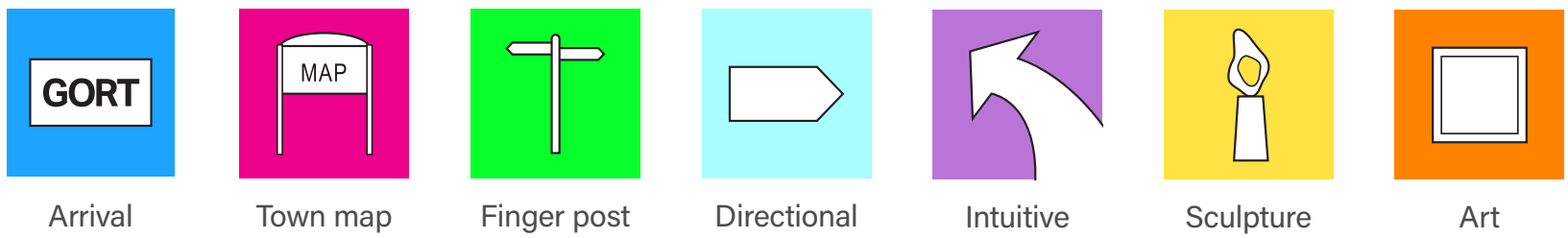
The topics discussed included the regeneration of the main square, new wayfinding and placemaking, and transport infrastructure.

For the Wayfinding section, an exercise was carried out to discover what enhancements are needed to elevate the town. Each table was provided with a map of Gort and several coloured tiles to be placed at whichever location they felt needed an intervention. The markers each represented a different element (see squares, above right).

We also asked the attendees two questions:

- a) Are there any problem areas? What could be improved?
- b) What are Gort's gems? What should we celebrate?

The conclusions of each table have been amalgamated and a final plan is on the following page. This is the combined conclusion of where these residents feel the town could use new signage, placemaking or artistic enhancement.

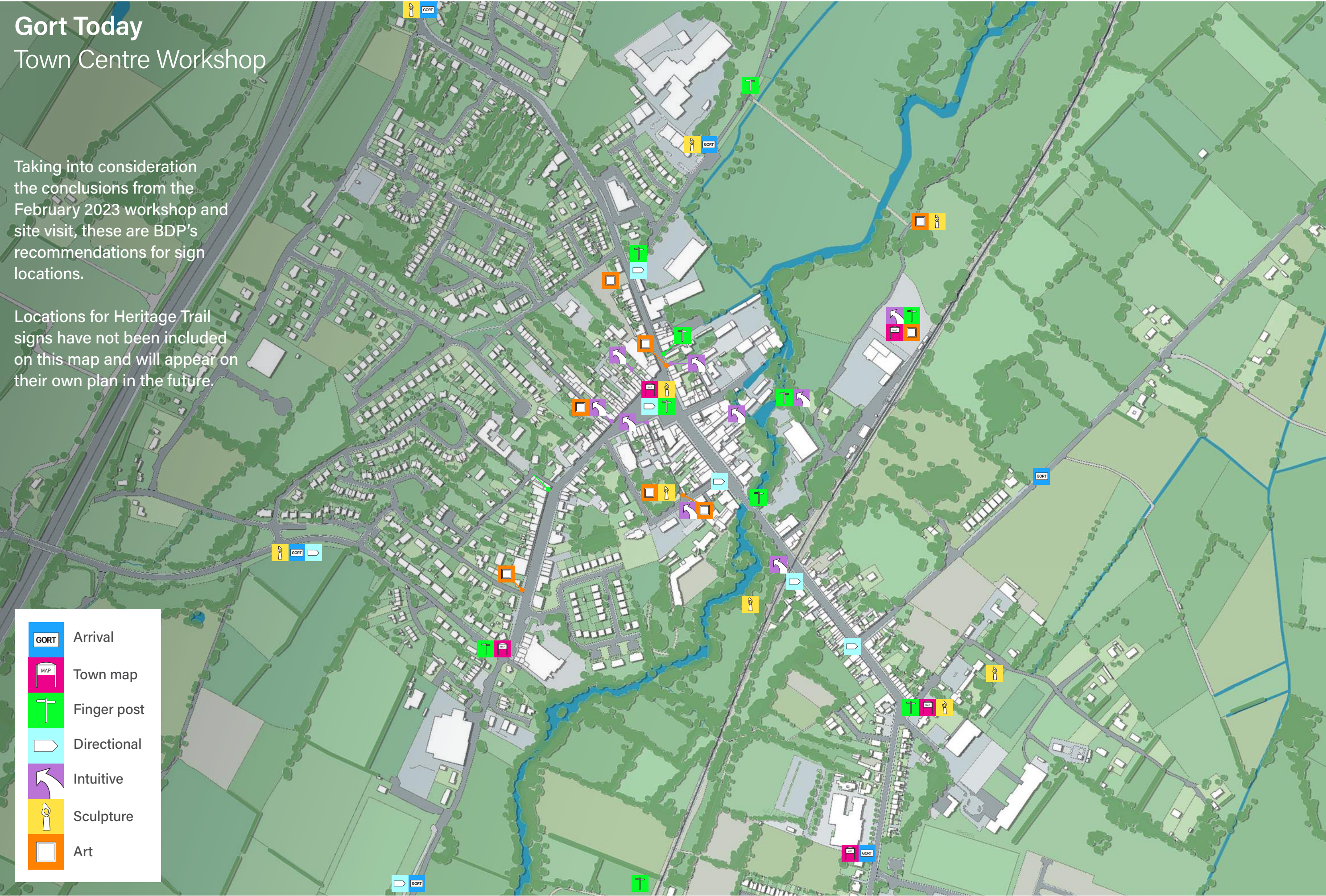
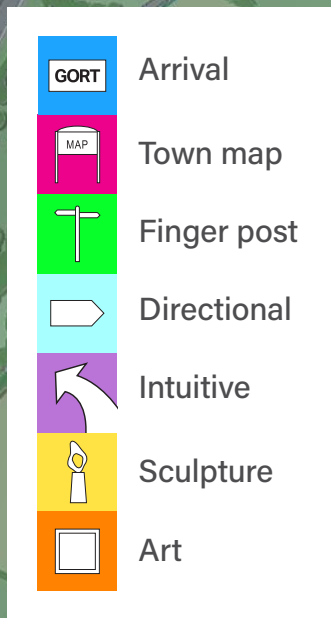


Gort Today

Town Centre Workshop

Taking into consideration the conclusions from the February 2023 workshop and site visit, these are BDP's recommendations for sign locations.

Locations for Heritage Trail signs have not been included on this map and will appear on their own plan in the future.



3 Concept Design & Family of Forms

Signage Inspiration

Colour Palette

Typeface & Pictograms

Design Evolution

Town-wide Sign Family

Proposed Signs

Signs Location Plan

Concept Design & Family of Forms

Signage Inspiration

A predominant part of Gort’s history is it’s deep connection with Lady Isabella Gregory and poet & writer WB Yeats. The nearby Coole Park estate, once owned by the family of Lady Gregory, includes Thoor Ballylee, a 15th century tower house. Yeats purchased and restored the tower and lived there with his family. Thoor Ballylee was described by the playwright Seamus Heaney as ‘The most important public building in Ireland.’

The grandiose shape and size of Thoor Ballylee lends itself perfectly to the inspiration of a signage concept, especially the way the building - when viewed at a certain angle - creates a off-centre peak on its roof. A signage totem in this shape would stand out in a busy market square or high street, and be visible from a distance.

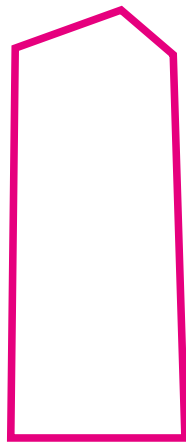
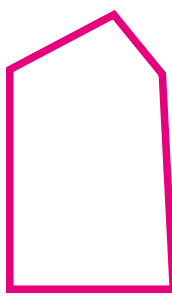
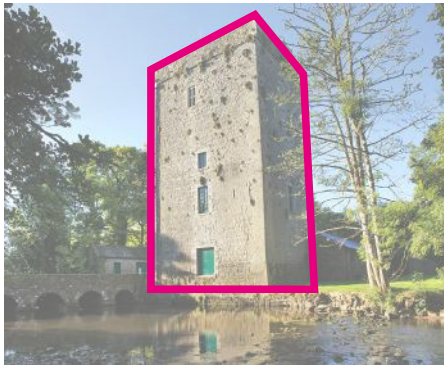
As one of the main visitor attractions in the area, as well as being the home of one of Ireland’s leading literary figures, the tower and the heritage in and around Gort can be celebrated with a presence around the town.



Images of Thoor Ballylee



Concept evolution of the signs shape

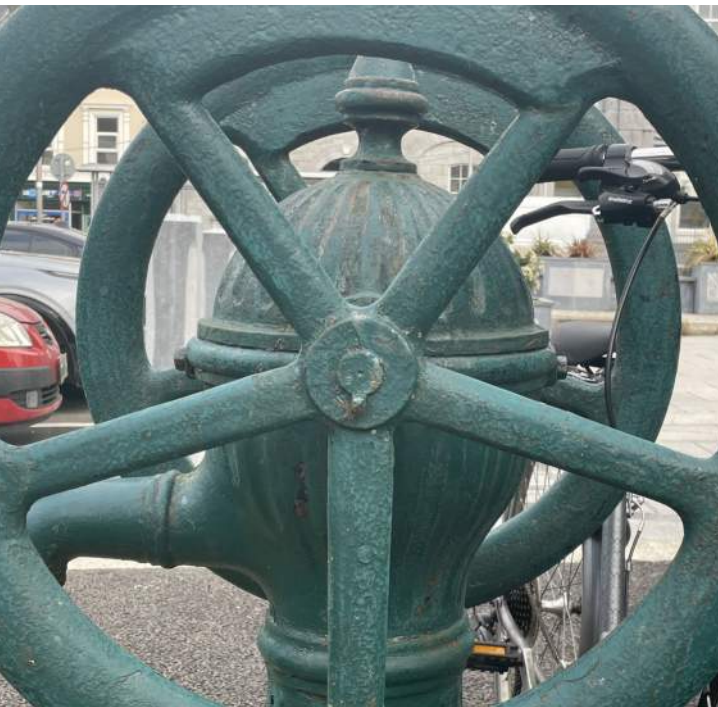


Concept Design & Family of Forms

Colour Palette

Simplicity is key. Whilst the many bright shop fronts, colourful doors and contrasting façades in Gort are inspiring and make up a key component of the public realm, the signage colour palette is anchored in heritage and traditional stone and metalwork that are at the heart of Gort’s identity.

The selected colours are timeless and will seamlessly blend in the public realm, without distracting from the primary focus: Gort itself.



Selected colourway

Concept Design & Family of Forms
Typeface & Pictograms

The typeface selected for the sign system is Acumin Variable, chosen for its versatility and simplicity. It comes in an array of weights and the two proposed for usage for the Gort sign system are Semibold and Light. These two weights are the perfect differentiation in this instance, where dual-language signage will be used.

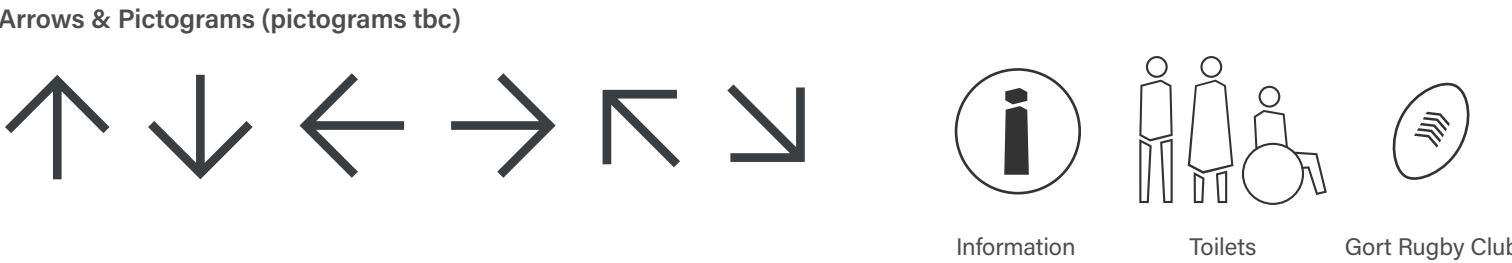
A suite of pictograms will accompany the Acumin Variable typeface and will have a design connection with the sign style. The pictograms shown below follow the sign concepts and will continue to be developed as necessary for the town.

Acumin Variable Semibold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTU**V**WXY**Z**
abcdefghijklm**no**pqrstuv**w**xyz !?**:**/**@**"£***=**+&#(**)**%

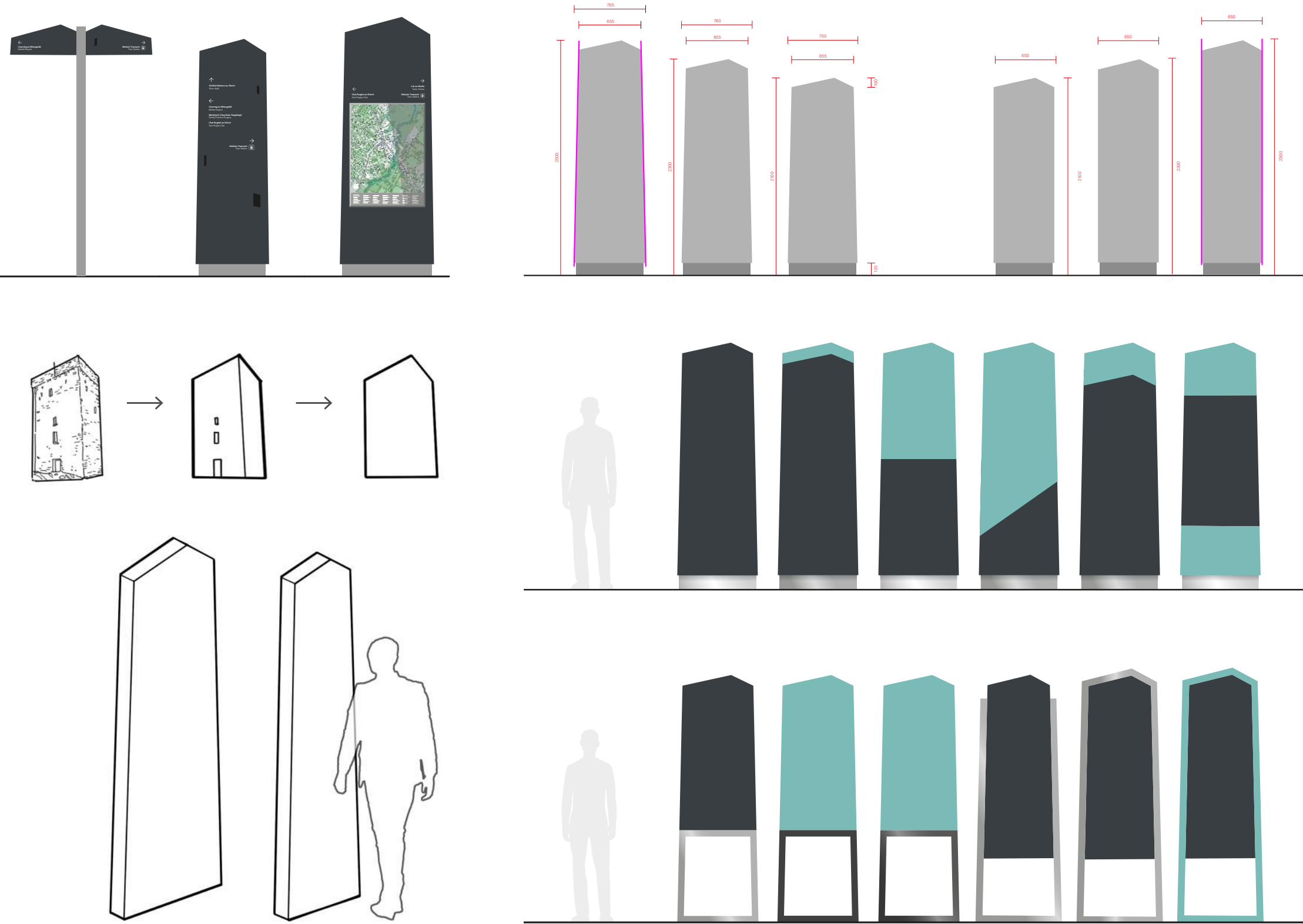
Acumin Variable Light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**OP**QRSTU**V**WXY**Z**
abcdefghijklm**no**pqrstuv**w**xyz !?**:**/**@**"£***=**+&#(**)**%



Concept Design & Family of Forms
Design Evolution

Originally inspired by the distinctive shape of Thoor Ballylee, the design of the family of signs for Gort has been taken through a comprehensive design process to test the precise shape, height, width and colour scheme for each of the signage elements. The retained final design is simple yet memorable.



Concept Design & Family of Forms

Town-wide Sign Family

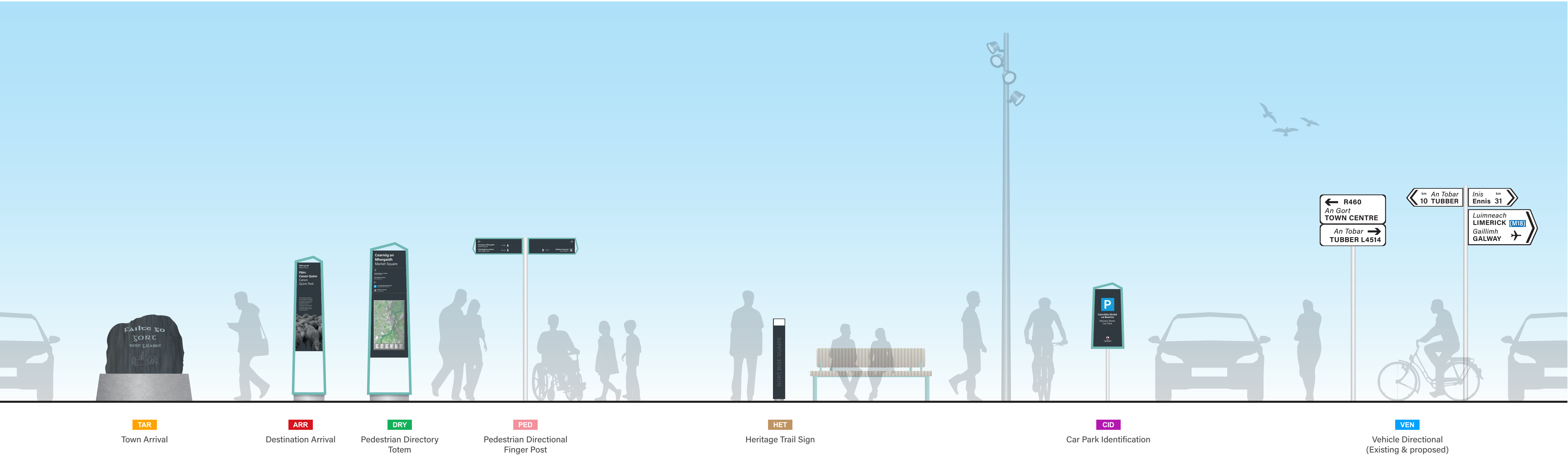
The design of a range of signs is developed as a family of forms which complement the street furniture and public realm. This approach allows different forms and sizes of signs to be developed so that they accommodate information and directions. The family of signs for Gort includes 7 different types of signs. Each of them have a defined purpose and will be located at specific points throughout the town centre; some are traffic signs and others aim at providing directional information (facilities and services location, distances, etc.) to pedestrians and cyclists.

The signs created for Gort have a simple yet distinctive design: they will be recognisable from a distance, help people navigate the town centre and subtly enhance the streetscape without generating new clutter nor distracting visitors from the public realm, architecture or heritage.

The 7 proposed signs are as follows:

- TAR: Town Arrival signs
- ARR: Destination Arrival
- DRY: Pedestrian Directory Totem
- PED: Pedestrian Directional Finger Post
- HET: Heritage Trail Sign
- CID: Car Park Identification
- VEN: Existing (retained in place or relocated) and new Vehicle Directional highway signs

The adjacent elevation illustrates the various signs in context with other street furniture as developed in the town centre enhancement plan. The content, dimension and location of the signs are detailed further on.



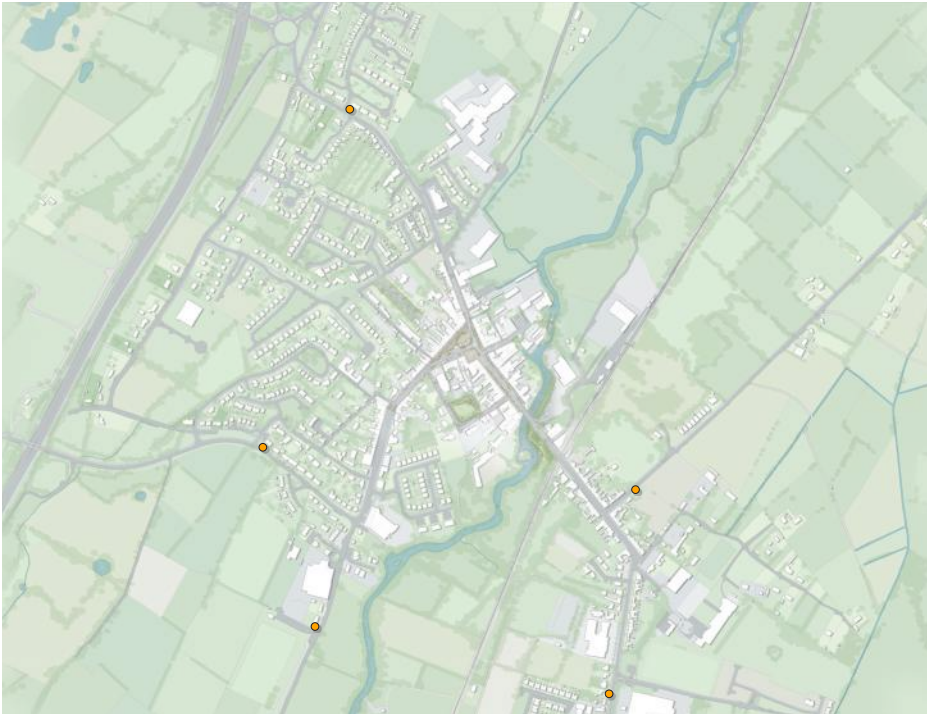
Proposed Signs
1. Town Arrival Sign

TAR

Function
To identify the town to visitors when they arrive in Gort.

Location
On all main vehicular routes as visitors cross the town boundary.

Content
Town name, welcome message, sponsors/ funding partners.



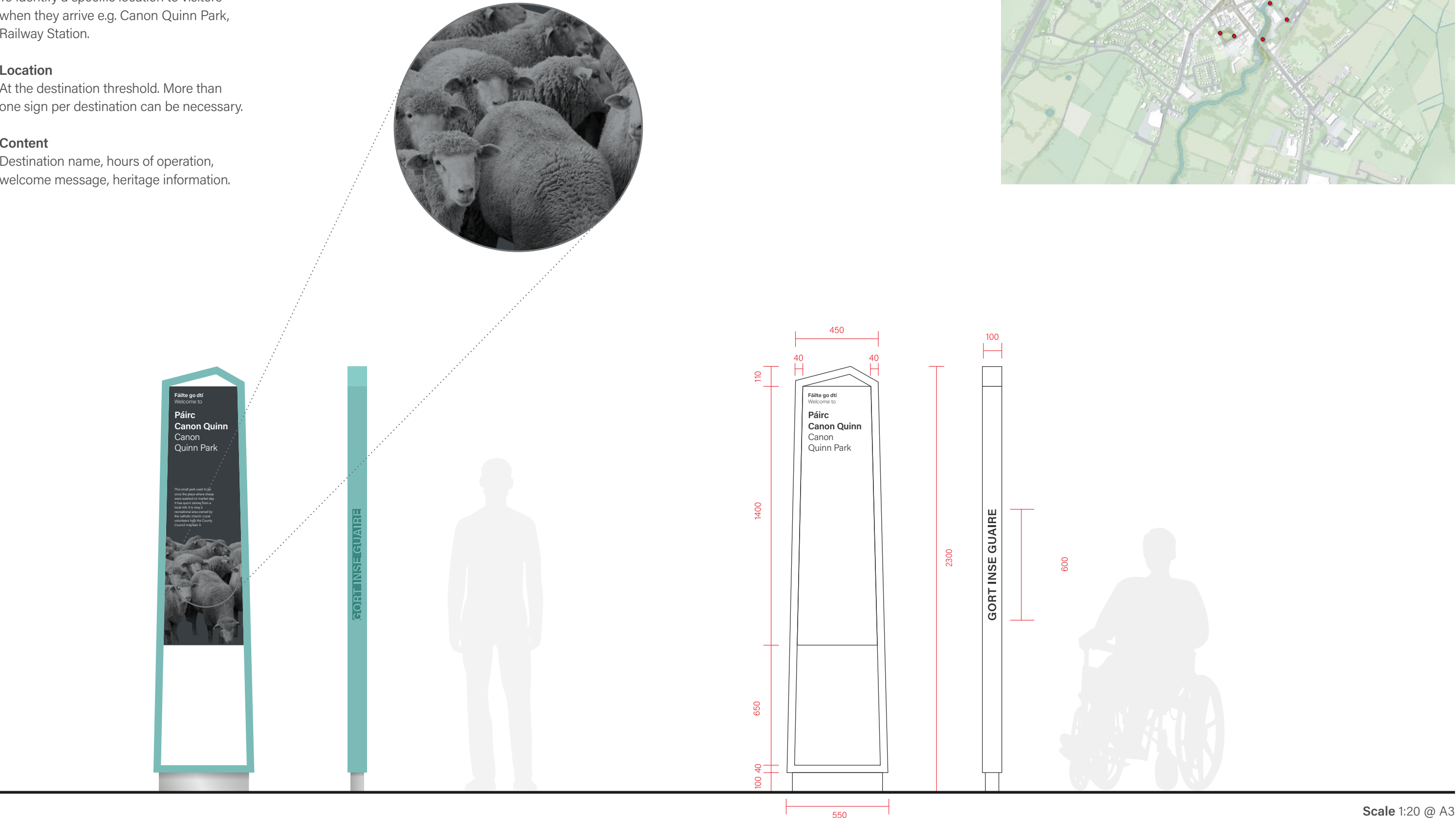
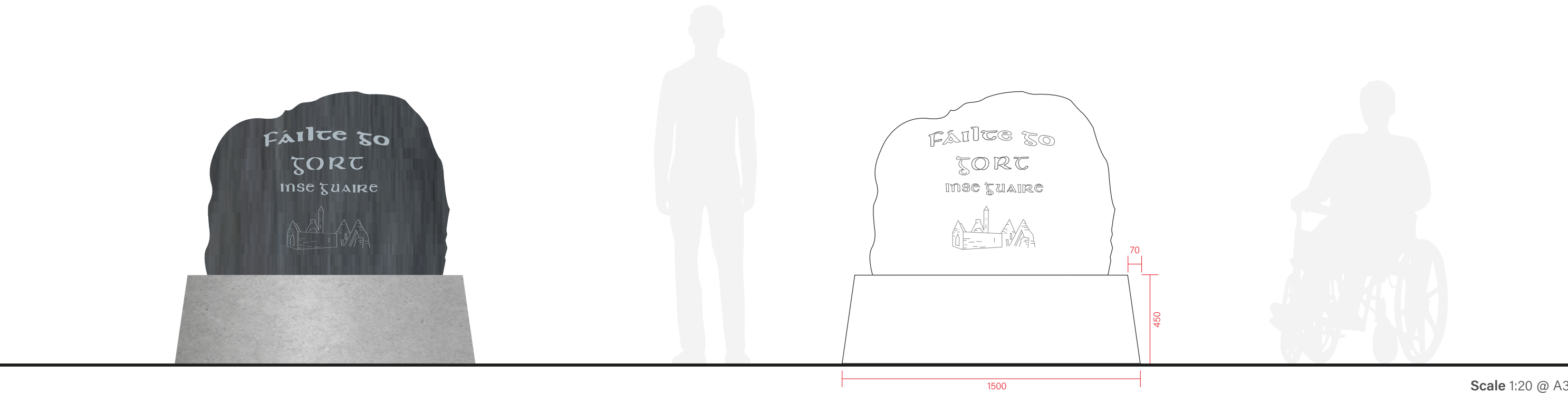
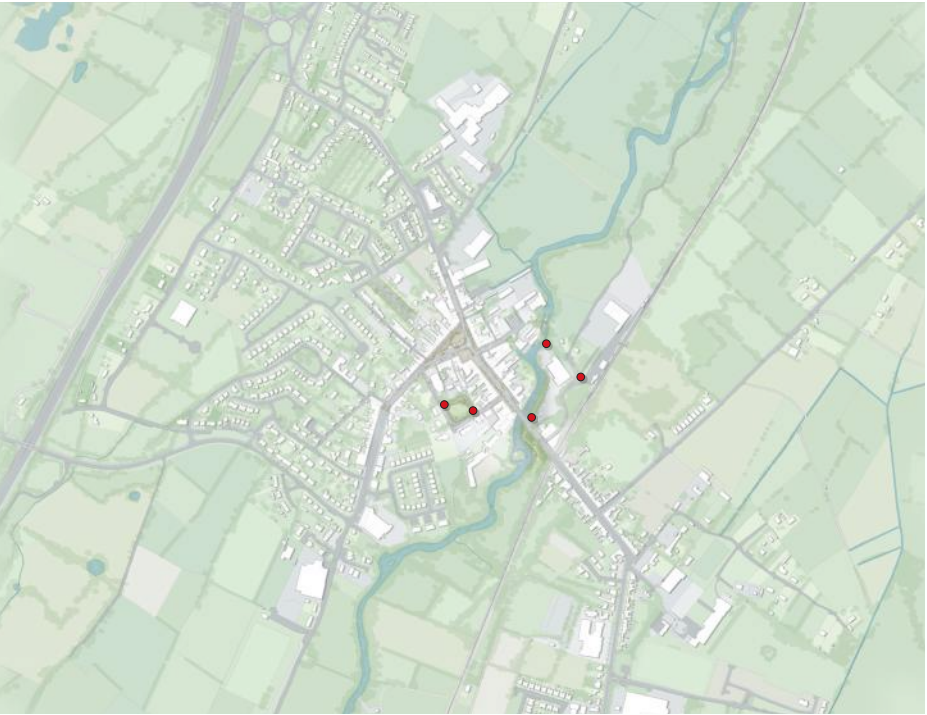
Proposed Signs
2. Destination Arrival Sign

ARR

Function
To identify a specific location to visitors when they arrive e.g. Canon Quinn Park, Railway Station.

Location
At the destination threshold. More than one sign per destination can be necessary.

Content
Destination name, hours of operation, welcome message, heritage information.



Proposed Signs

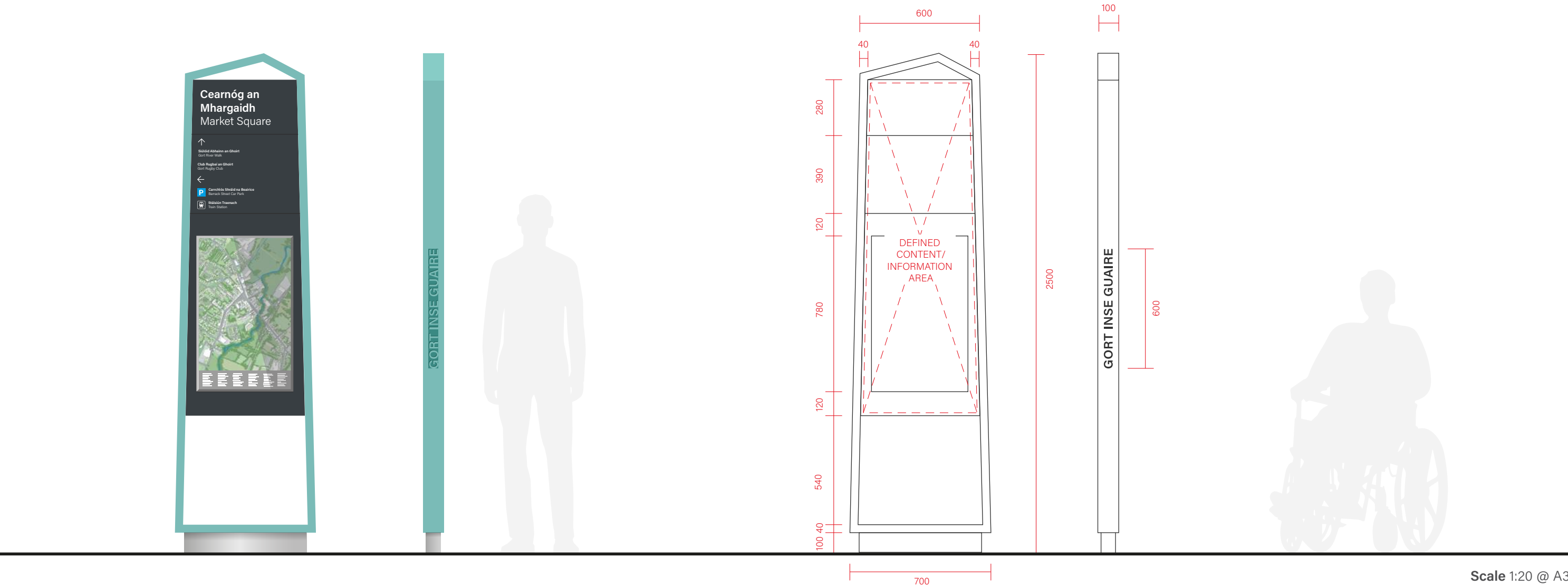
3. Pedestrian Directory Totem

DRY

Function
Totem signs provide orientation and context at significant junctions. Contextual map on the sign board pinpoints your location within the wider context of the area and identifies local services and facilities. Directional arrows provide orientation.

Location
At strategic points throughout the town, especially at the centre of main routes and at major decision-making junctions that experience high footfall.

Content
Site plans and indexes of zones, buildings and facilities, walking distances to key destinations.



Proposed Signs

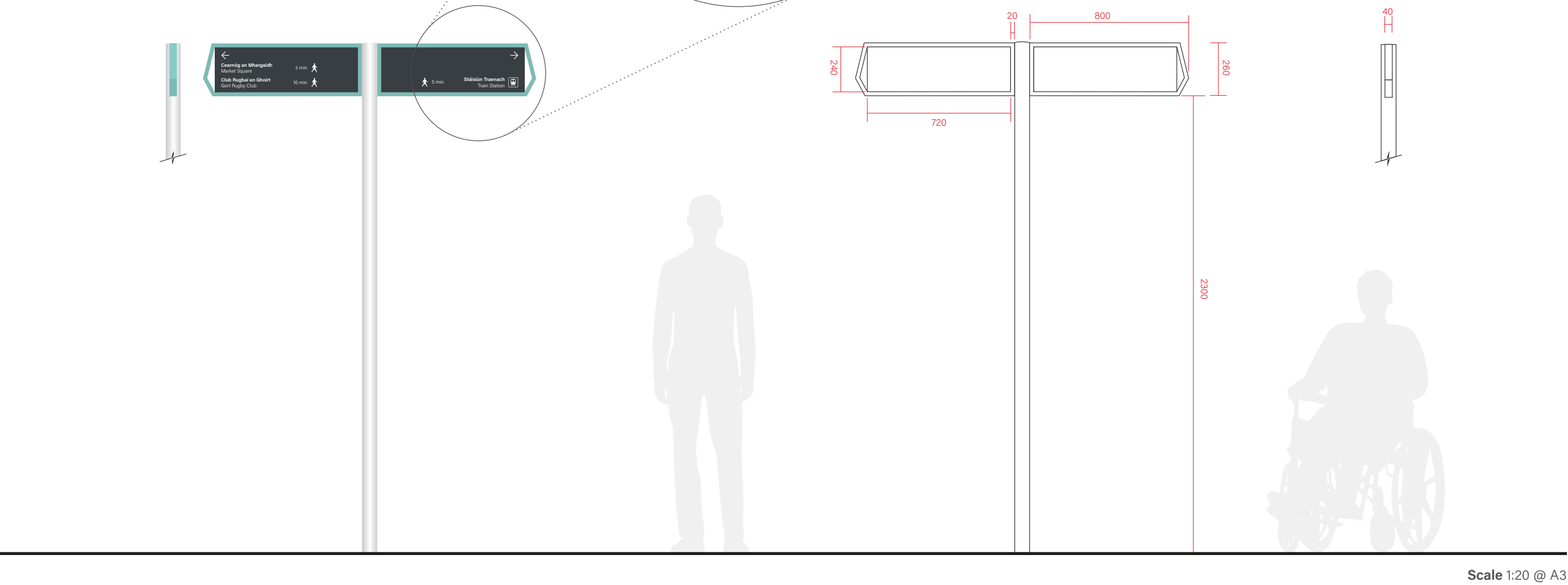
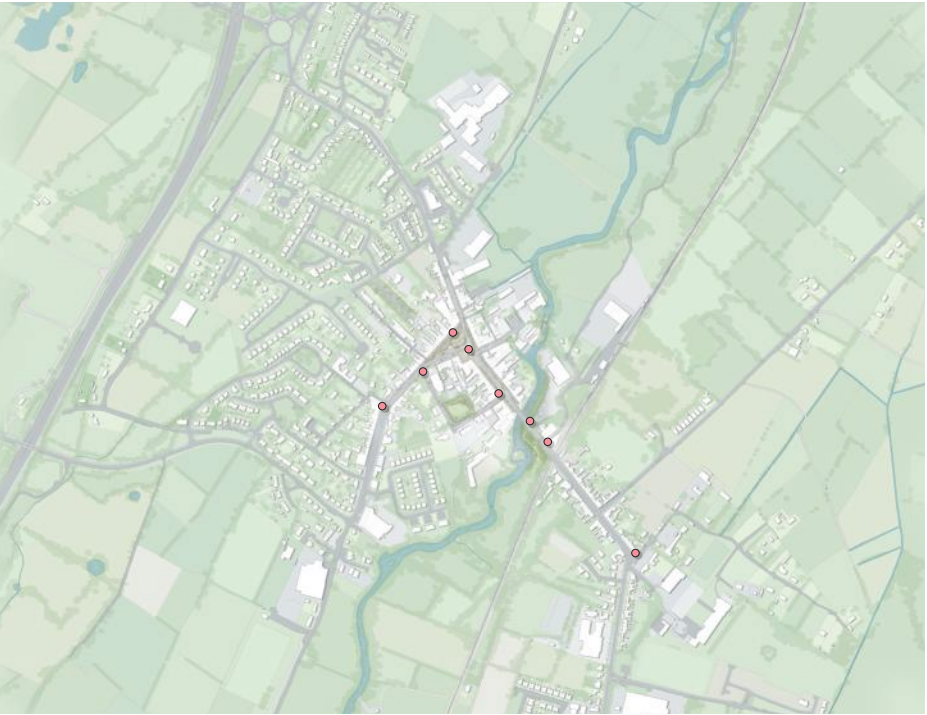
4. Pedestrian Directional Finger Post

PED

Function
To direct users throughout a journey to their destination. Finger posts provide directional information to surrounding destinations and facilities, and identify any significant routes within the immediate vicinity.

Location
At regular points along main pedestrian routes, and at decision-making junctions.

Content
Arrows, directional information and walking distances to primary destinations such as the names of main buildings and spaces, as well as secondary locations like facilities, services and car parks



Proposed Signs

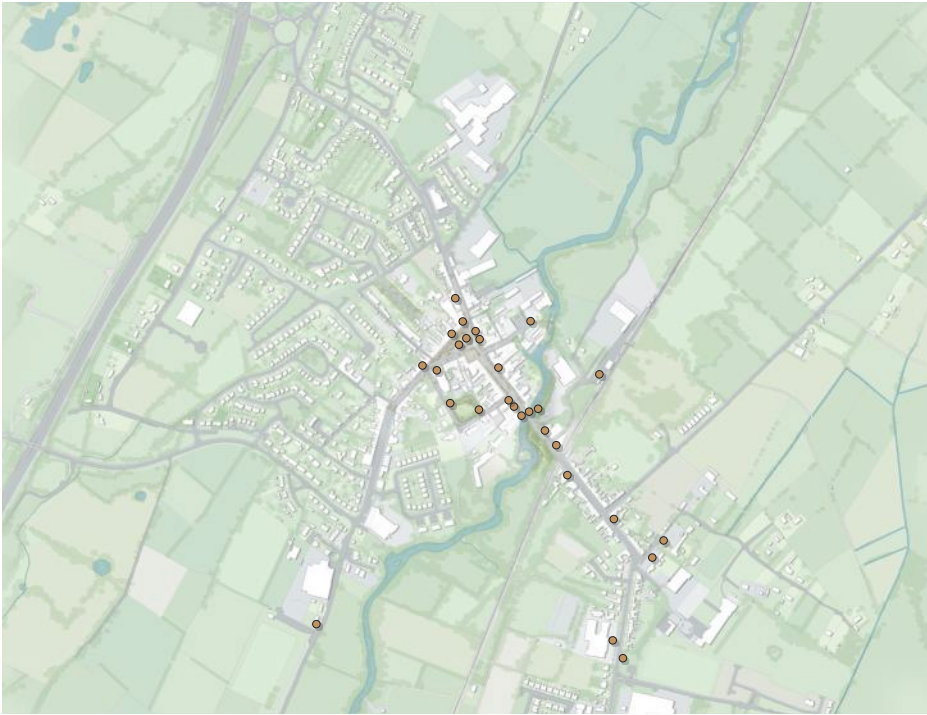
5. Heritage Trail Sign

HET

Function
To inform visitors using the Gort Heritage Trail of historical information relating to each location on the trail.

Location
At every location on the trail, either wall-mounted, as a plaque inserted in the paving or on a small plinth adjacent to the site. This will depend on the nature of the heritage and is recommended as to not interfere with the monuments or listed buildings.

Content
Name of location and a QR code to access online information about the significance of the site.



Proposed Signs

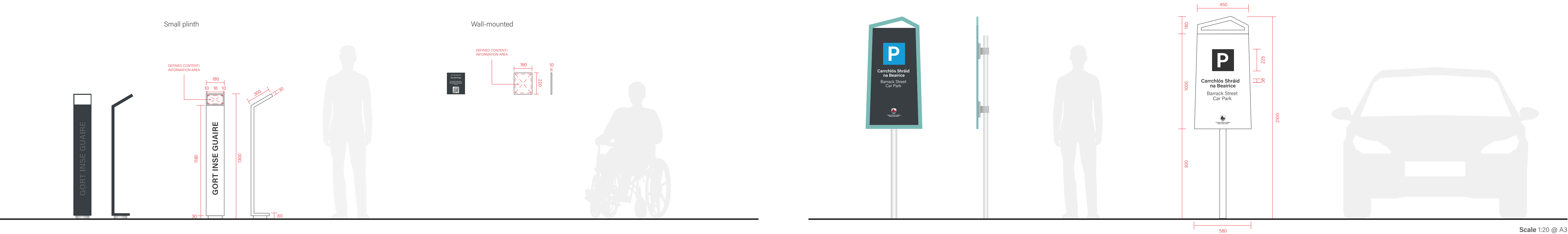
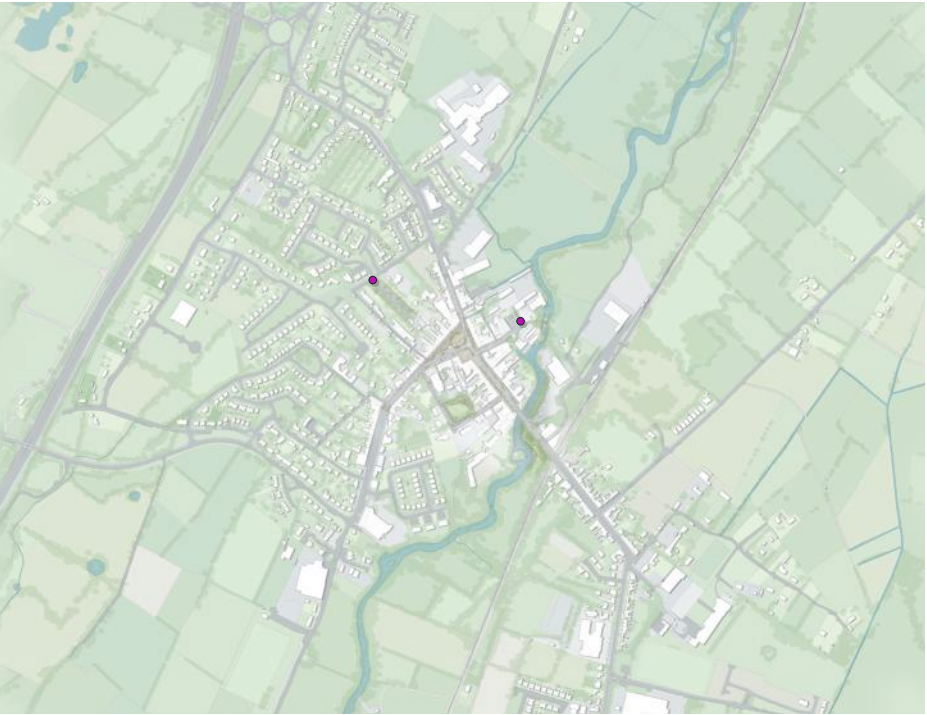
6. Car Park Identification

CID

Function
To alert motorists upon arrival at the chosen car park.

Location
At the main entrance(s) of the car park, on or as close to threshold as possible .

Content
Any of the following: car park name; opening times; hourly tariff (where applicable); entrance/exit height restriction; council affiliation, operator name and contact details



Proposed Signs

7. Vehicle Directional

VEN

Function

To inform motorists of directional information in order to get to their required destination.

Location

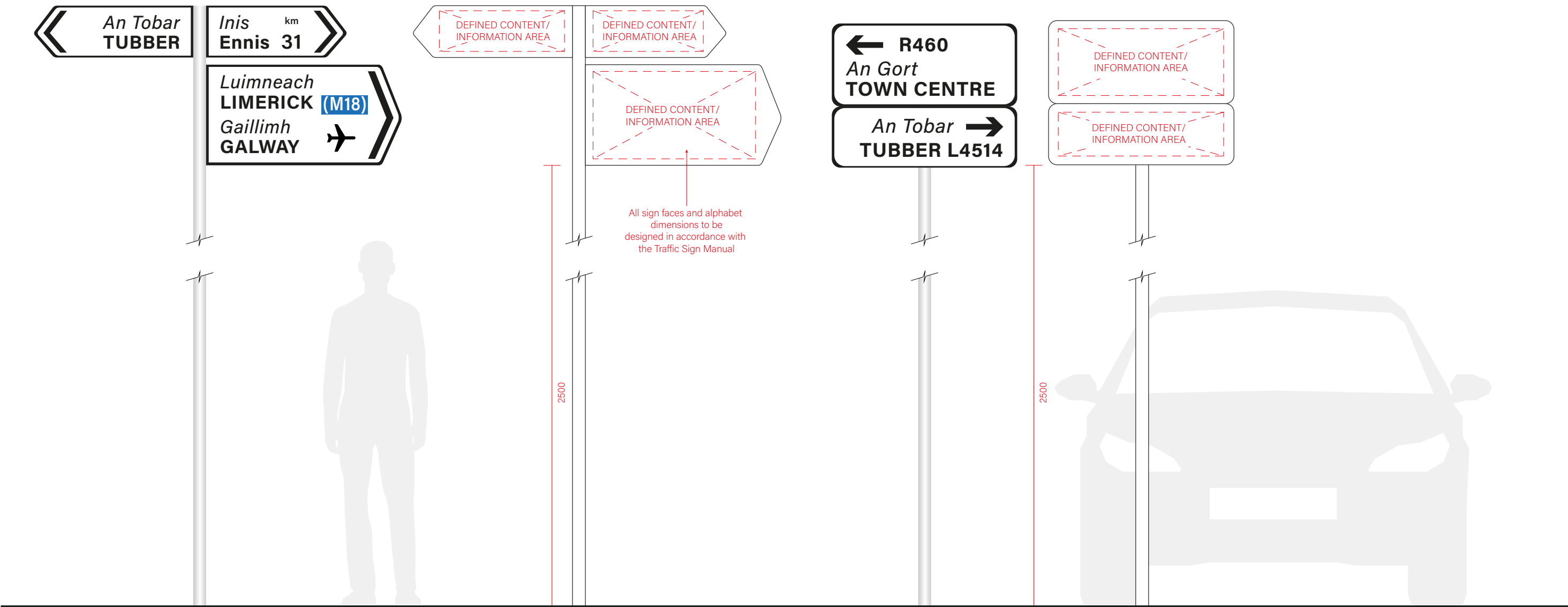
At strategic points on main roads, especially traffic junctions and other decision-making interchanges.

Content

Place names; road numbers; distances in the local standard unit of length; pictograms (for parking, transport hubs, petrol stations, specific locations).

Design standard

All vehicle directional signs are to be designed in compliance with the current [Traffic Signs Manual](#) of the Department of Transport, specifically *Chapter 1 Information and Sign Location* and *Chapter 2 Directional Information Signs*. This provides essential national guidance on typeface size, sign positioning, mounting and more.



Proposed Signs

Signs location plan



4 Proposed Sign - Heritage Trail

Heritage Context

Heritage Signs

Heritage Strategy

Proposed Signs - Heritage Trail

Heritage Context

Heritage Context

Gort is a historic market town with a rich architectural heritage. The town centre counts many significant heritage features including ecclesiastical, monastic and religious buildings and structures.

The adjacent map shows the proposed enhanced heritage trail presented in the Town Centre First Plan.

Gort Heritage Interest Points

- 01

Weigh House
- 02

Sullivans Hotel
- 03

Claddagh Optical
- 04

Gallery Cafe
- 05

Bolands Ln - Harvest Studio
- 06

Bolands Ln - Ceramics Studio
- 07

Gort Resource Centre
- 08

Town Hall
- 09

Catholic Church
- 10

Library & Cemetary
- 11

Orchard House
- 12

Canon Quinn Park
- 13

Glynns Hotel
- 14

Bank of Ireland
- 15

Convent (Bridge House)
- 16

Gort River & River Walk
- 17

Former Police House
- 18

The Lady Gregory Hotel
- 19

Children's Playground
- 20

South Galway Education Centre
- 21

The Old Fever Hospital
- 22

The Old Forge
- 23

Burke's Shop
- 24

Railway Station
- 25

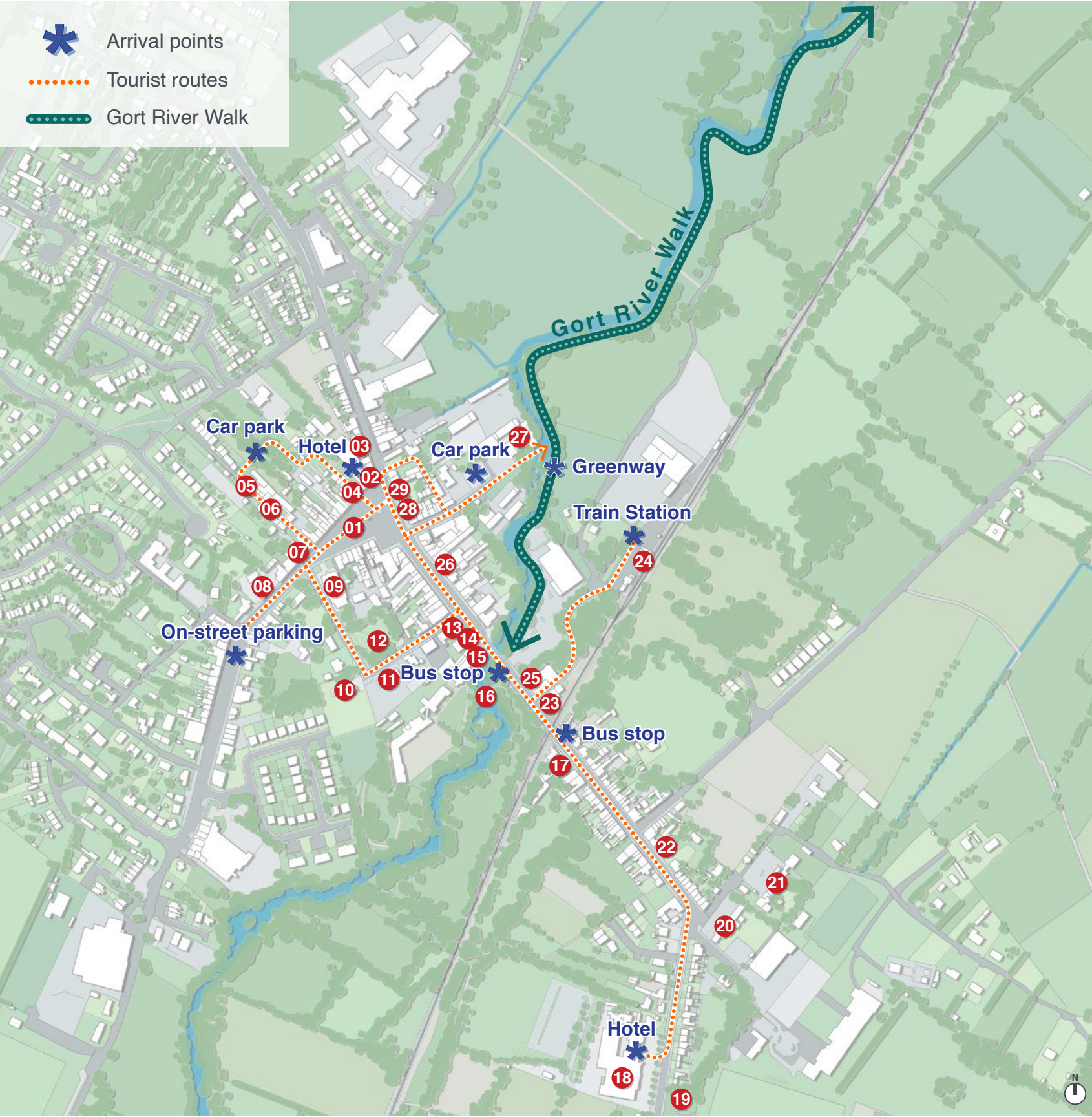
The Bridgewell
- 26

Keane's Shop
- 27

Old Military Barracks
- 28

AIB
- 29

The Courthouse



Proposed Signs - Heritage Trail

Heritage Context

Heritage in Gort is very varied and includes a wide range of structures, monuments, buildings and other elements.



010 Library & Cemetary



022 The Old Forge



001 Weigh House



006 Bolands Ln - Ceramics Studio



Christ the King Statue



Pump on Market Square



008 Town Hall



015 Convent (Bridge House)



023 Burke's Shop



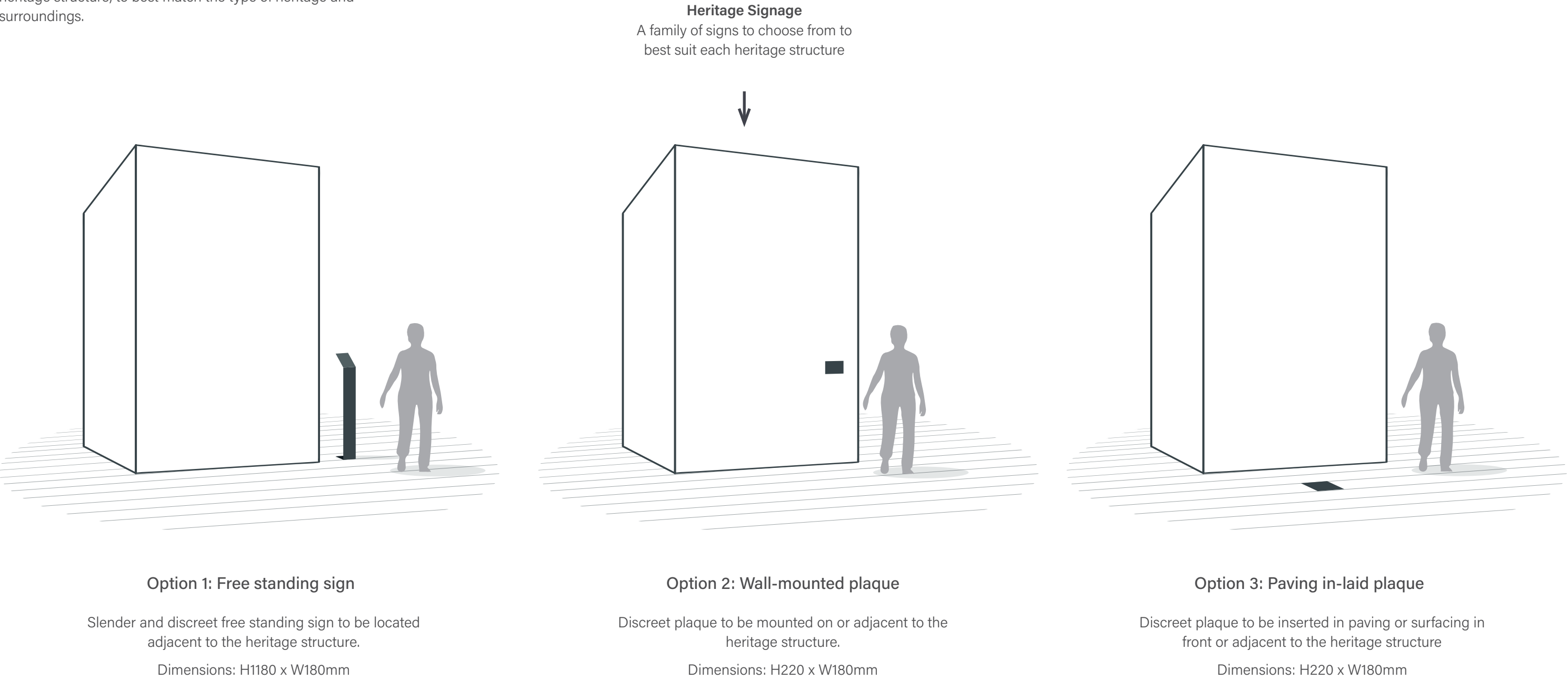
016 Gort River & River Walk

Proposed Signs - Heritage Trail

Heritage Strategy

The wayfinding strategy includes 3 signs for heritage: a slender free-standing sign (1), a wall-mounted plaque (2) and paving in-laid plaque (3). Each option offers the same level of interpretation with the name of heritage structure, a brief information text and a QR code.

The 3 options are discreet and designed to provide subtle interpretation that doesn't distract from the heritage itself. The most suitable type of signage can be chosen for each heritage structure, to best match the type of heritage and surroundings.



Proposed Signs - Heritage Trail

Heritage Signs



5 Complementary Initiatives

Shop front Enhancement
Art and Intuitive Wayfinding

Complementary Initiatives

Shop Front Enhancement

Gort is a busy market town with a wealth of local shops and businesses. These are essential to the local economy and growth, as well as to the sense of pride and identity of Gort. The outside appearance of shop fronts and street facades has a great impact on the streetscape, its attractiveness and general quality. Many shops in Gort are well maintained and inviting, displaying brightly coloured facades and making good use of their forecourt space. Some businesses, such as Keane's Shop or Burke's Shop, are listed on the existing Town Trail as local heritage destinations. All these set a valuable example for what the overall quality and appearance of shop front could be across Gort.

Town Centre First Plan

The Town Centre First Plan for Gort recognises the need to develop a Building Frontage Improvement Scheme for the town. It states in **Section 4.3 Theme 06 - Vibrant Local Economy, under proposal 2**: "Gort has an historic network of streets with some well-preserved traditional shop fronts which creates an attractive setting in the town centre and supports local businesses. The community engagement revealed that local people were keen to add more colour and interest to the core town routes and preserve and maintain the historic character of the streets. The proposal is to promote a Streetscape Enhancement Scheme for local building owners/occupiers:

- Encourage residents and shop owners to engage with the good practice design guide and use the principles to restore their building according to the established principles;
- Empower residents to be able to access funds or schemes to be able to carry out restoration and improvement projects;
- Introduce a thoughtfully designed lighting scheme to sensitively highlight the qualities and colours of the building frontages, whilst respecting the historic character of the town routes;
- Provide street furniture across the historic core and adjoining streets to further enhance the experience of

spending time within the town;

- Create a Frontage Design Guide to help give guidance for how improvements to frontages should be implemented.

The benefits would be:

- Restoration of traditional painted frontages;
- High quality material palette;
- Improved identity and aesthetic of the town;
- Increased spill out space for local businesses;
- Improved and increased community spaces;
- Phased design approach which allows for future phases;
- Sensitive lighting to encourage the night time economy, particularly in winter.

GCC Street Enhancement Measure

As a distinct initiative, Galway County Council created a Street Enhancement Measure as part of Our Rural Future, the Government's five-year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland. This will be funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development and will support: "activity such as painting (including murals), signage replacement, shopfront improvement, lighting, and canopies".

GCC Shopfront Design Guide

Furthermore, Galway County Council Regeneration Team is in the process of preparing a Shopfront Design Guide to "assist owners and others with an interest on the design or renovation of commercial shopfronts." This guidance will look at both traditional and contemporary shopfront's good design principles.



Complementary Initiatives

Art and Intuitive Wayfinding

The Town Centre First plan for Gort recognises the need to promote and integrate the arts in the town centre.

It states in **Section 4.3 Theme 02 - Revitalising culture and the arts under proposal 2 Arts & Creativity on the Town Centre**: "There are currently a number of art installations as murals on blank walls within the town centre. The ambition is to build upon this to enhance the identity and character of the town. The proposal is to identify and incorporate public art into the fabric of the town to inspire creativity and reinforce the unique identity of the town, and establish dedicated exhibition spaces such as a gallery within the town. Potential locations for murals and art/sculpture will complement what exists today, and the Convent Church would be an ideal space for a gallery.

- Assessment of existing murals/installation/sculptures;
- Identify other complementary locations for new public art in the town centre;
- Ensure the process is collaborative and engaging the community and in consideration of Gort's heritage;
- Identify space for a gallery to showcase local artists and their creativity;
- Identify a gallery and workshop space, for showcasing artists and skill sharing that also includes workshop spaces for community hands-on engagement.

The benefits would be:

- Provides a focal point for the town centre;
- Creates a sense of local identity;
- Community/local ownership;
- Opportunities for local artists and creative businesses;
- Attract visitors and new users to the town;
- A more pleasant experience of the town will increase visits and time spent in town.

The adjacent plan suggest positions of existing and potential art within the town centre. These can be in the form of different forms, sculptures and murals.



