



# Design Statement

# Ardee 2040 Regeneration Vision

## Ardee, Co. Louth

April 2025

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**The Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project is a process to realise a Regeneration Vision for the town which promotes regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in Ardee.**



# 1 Introduction

The Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project is a process to realise a Regeneration Vision for Ardee, which builds on the ambition and vision of the town to realise its full potential and transform Ardee from a traditional manufacturing centre to a 21st century prosperous and thriving local, multifunctional, innovative centre in an integrated and sustainable way.

The purpose of the Vision is to develop a number of projects that will support regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in Ardee Town. Working in partnership with the wider community, the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project is about designing the town as an attractive and thriving place, creating projects that can be further progressed toward funding opportunities when they arise.

The project has been commissioned by Louth County Council, led by the Regeneration and Development Team and is funded by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), a flagship initiative of Project Ireland 2040 and match funded by Louth County Council. It is intended that this investment will be a catalyst for the economic rejuvenation of the town centre in the short to medium term, and will serve as a basis for the continued sustainable redevelopment of Ardee in the longer term. These proposals are not only design-driven, they propose practical means to ensuring the design ends by repurposing 'backland' sites for the wider benefit of the community by delivering community parks and amenity facilities.

## The Need for a Vision

Towns are constantly reassessing themselves, searching for new ways to address local and regional challenges and to continue to be thriving, attractive and prosperous centres. In-line with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy, there is a need to provide Ardee with the strategic direction required to ensure it grows and performs as a Local Service Centre.

The proposals for the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project have been developed with the following key objectives at the forefront:

- Ensuring inclusivity for all members of the community; the very young, the youth, the old, the mobility impaired, socially disadvantaged, the pedestrian and cyclist.
- Developing proposals which meet the design principles of national & international best practices.
- Encouraging an environment which leads to daytime and night-time activities.
- Improving connectivity and legibility for all members of the community and for visitors/tourists to the town.
- Creating quality gateways, public spaces, recreational areas, sporting areas and public realm.
- Capitalising and respecting the rich heritage of the town centre.
- Operating / employing sustainable development principles through minimising energy consumption and maximising the use of renewable energy technology.

## The collaborative process

Key to the success of the Ardee 2040 Regeneration Project was a rigorous and integrated approach to engaging with the community, key stakeholders and Elected Members. Working collaboratively, the Design Team placed enormous importance on effective communication and co-ordination with all parties involved throughout the project. This approach informed a holistic analysis of the entire project involving the integrated multi-disciplinary design team, Client and all stakeholders.

Importantly, the design process has not been undertaken in a linear fashion, but instead as an iterative process whereby proposals were rigorously tested and refined in response to design and technical reviews, and with input from stakeholder engagement. This methodology will ensure that the proposals brought forward as part of the Vision are viable and deliverable.

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## 2 Ardee Town

Ardee is the third largest town in County Louth. The town itself is located on the River Dee, which runs through the southern end of the town and straddles the N2 Dublin to Derry National Primary Route, which runs south to north, and the N52 Dundalk to Kells National Secondary Route which runs from the west into the town, joins the N2 and then at its northern end leaves the town in a north easterly direction.

Ardee is an important local service centre in mid-Louth providing a range of services and employment to an extensive catchment that extends into parts of Meath and Monaghan. The connectivity and accessibility that the town provides, due to its location along the national road network, makes it an attractive location for growth and investment.

Strategically located on the intersection of the N2 national primary Dublin – Derry Route and the N52 national secondary Ardee – Nenagh route, with direct access provided by the N33 to the M1 and national motorway network, Ardee is well placed to continue to develop as a medium-sized town, with urban strengthening, to serve the needs of the local community and drive development within the locality.







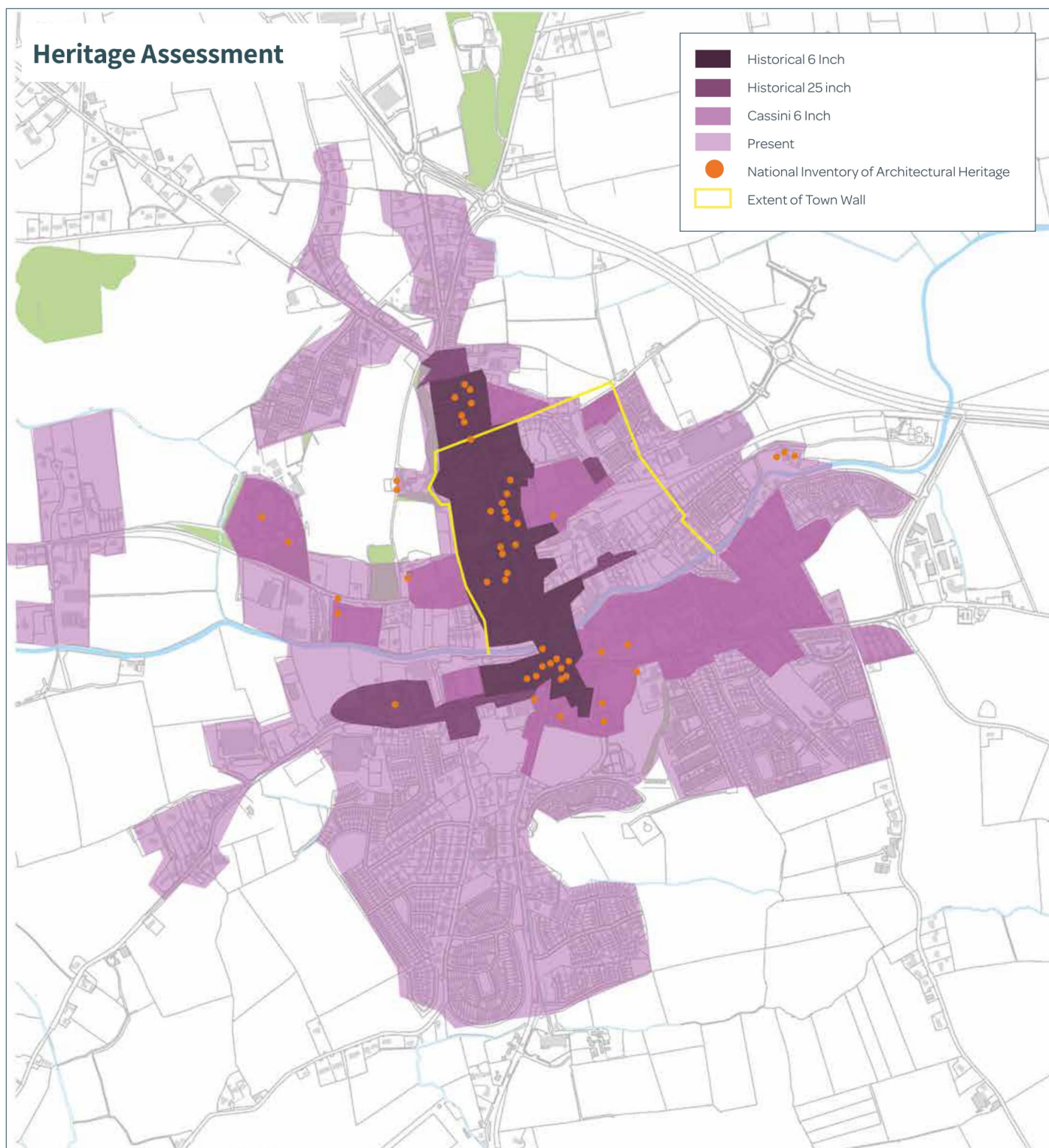
Photograph of the River Dee and an Existing Pedestrian Crossing Bridge



Photograph of the River Dee and the Existing Riverside Walk



## Heritage Assessment



## Historic Evolution of Ardee

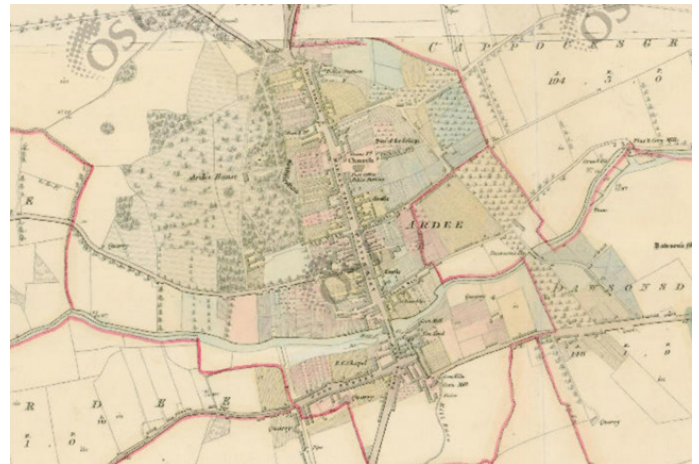
Ardee is one of Ireland's oldest walled towns, having been established soon after the Norman Invasion of 1185. On the south side of the River Dee, in the vicinity of the Bridge St. bridge, stood the Augustinian Hospital of St. John the Baptist, founded at the beginning of the 13th century. In 1274, a Carmelite Monastery was established in the town by Ralph de Pippard, then the local lord.

Given its exposed location along the late medieval Pale boundary, the town was protected by walls with several entrance gates. During one of the many incursions, the town was attacked and largely destroyed by Edward Bruce.

The current town of Ardee retains its late medieval footprint as illustrated in a map of the town from the 18th century. Although the historic town walls have almost totally disappeared, the town's main street has survived as the most important element of the town's urban form. The historic pattern of streets, lanes, building plots and principal structures is still evident in the modern town. It is critical that any proposals for improvements to Ardee's townscape include proposals to protect and reinforce the surviving historic urban form.

Many significant Historic Structures and Monuments remain in and around the historic core of Ardee, roughly grouped into the following periods of interest:

- Ancient Sites and Structures Dating from the 13th to 17th century including the basic footprint of the town's ancient walled enclosure and entrance gates, the location and alignment of which can still be seen in the alignment of streets and some property boundaries and Ardee Castle which consists of a late medieval tower house, adapted during the 19th century to serve as the town's courthouse.
- Georgian Buildings in and around the Historic Core include: Ardee House, the home of John William Ruxton, which was built around 1780; St. Mary's Church, dating from around 1810 stands on John's Street.
- Victorian Buildings in and around the Historic Core include: a former workhouse on Johns Street; an attractive late 19th century train station on the east side of the town; and to the south of the walled town area stands the Victorian former Convent of Mercy.



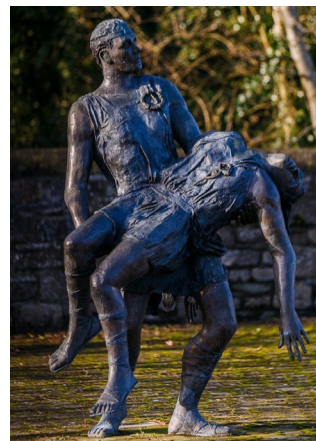
Extract from the Ordnance Survey Historic 6 inch Map (1829 and 1842)



Photograph of Ardee Castle on Main Street



Photograph of Ardee Main Street



Photograph of the Cú Chulainn statue on Bridge Street



Photograph of Ardee Main Street





## Urban Form

Ardee has retained its late medieval footprint. Although the historic town walls have almost totally disappeared, the town's Main Street has survived as the most important element of the town's historic urban form.

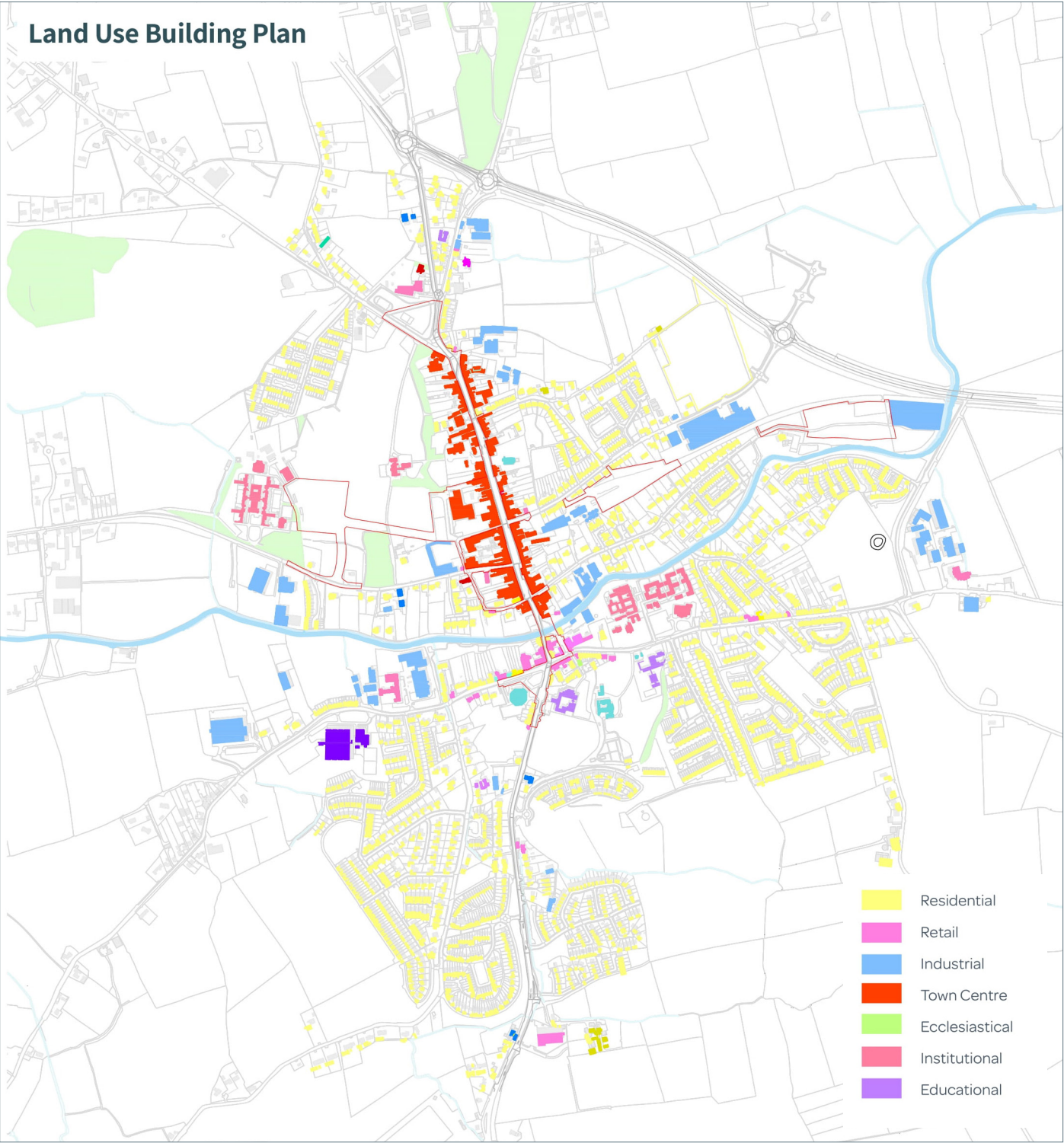
Running through the core of the historic town is a long Main Street, with sections named as Bridge Street, Castle Street, Market Street and Irish Street. Main Street forms a strong spine through the core of the historic town and provides a linear form to the townscape.

Residential development wraps around to the north, east and south of the linear core of the town whilst industrial and commercial uses have developed along the arterial routes into the town centre from the west and east. The building height in Ardee is predominantly single and two storeys, with some taller buildings located centrally along the Main Street.

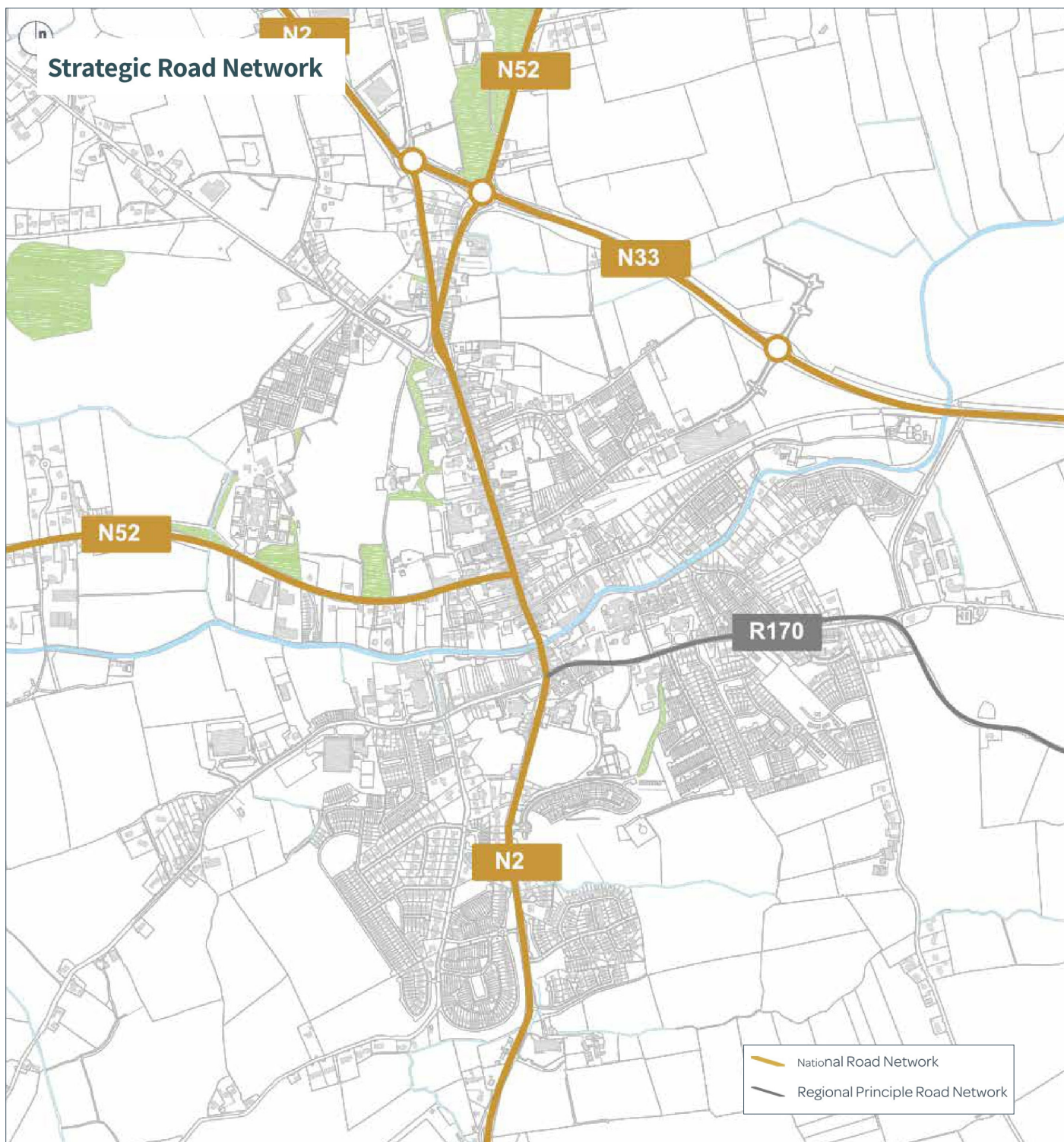
The lands surrounding St. Josephs Hospital to the west of Main Street have remained undeveloped and have the potential to offer a natural environment on the doorstep of the town centre for residents and visitors to the town.

The historic pattern of streets, lanes, building plots and principal structures is still very much in evidence in the modern town. It is critical that any proposals to strengthen the townscape of Ardee include measures to protect and reinforce the surviving historic urban form.

Land Use Building Plan









## Movement

Ardee is located in a strategic location, just 1 hour from both Dublin and Belfast via the M1 motorway. Further to this, the National Roads N52, N2 and N33 traverse in close proximity to the town and results in a busy, vibrant town centre.

Although Ardee doesn't have a dedicated bus station, it does benefit from a number of bus stops located on the N33 to the north and along the N2 (Main Street).

Historically, Ardee was served by the rail network, with the train station being located to the south of Sean O'Carroll Street in the east of the town. The rail service in Ardee ended in 1975 however the remains of the route of the track, the railway platform and railway station building are still evident today.

Ardee Main Street is linear in form and therefore many pedestrian routes tend to follow this orientation and run in a south to north direction. The town benefits from a dedicated pedestrian / cycle route in the east which runs along the route of the former rail track. This walk links to the town centre via Tierney Street.



Photograph of Ardee Main Street

## Pedestrian / Cyclist Connectivity







## Landscape

Ardee benefits from a diverse and historic landscape which has influenced how the modern town has developed.

To the west of Main Street is a mature woodland and agricultural grazing land surrounding St. Joseph's Hospital. This provides a valuable landscape break in close proximity to the centre of the town. Beyond this to the north west is Ardee Golf Club.

The River Dee traverses the town in a west to east direction. A biodiverse rich riparian corridor with mature trees exists along the banks of the river.

To the east of the town are areas of under-utilised grassland. The Ardee 2040 Regeneration Vision seeks to deliver improvements and interventions which will help to realise the full potential of these spaces.





### 3 Shaping the Vision

#### Project Potential

With a population of c. 5,478 people and located a 1 hour drive from Dublin and Belfast, Ardee has the potential to increase its importance as a key local service centre in the east midlands.

Further to this, Ardee has one of the oldest medieval fortifications in Ireland and is situated on the banks of the scenic River Dee, making it an ideal location to promote a pedestrian friendly, landscape orientated heritage town.

The Ardee 2040 Regeneration Vision has taken into account, and will build upon, the following current projects:

- **Ardee Educate Together School:** As part of this project a section of road from the N52 to the school site will be constructed to service the school. This road will allow for the potential to extend the road to Ash Walk, connecting the school campus with the town centre.
- **The N52 bypass:** the completion of the N52 Ardee Bypass to the northwest of the town will assist in reducing traffic and HGV movement through the town, thus reducing congestion levels allowing for some ease of access around the town and hence reducing the reliance on the private car. The bypass is a key consideration of the Vision and will shape how Ardee develops in the future.
- **Redevelopment of Ardee Castle:** funding was received to redevelop the castle under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund for renovation of Ireland's largest fortified medieval tower house and to bring it back into use. This is an important tourism project for both the County and Ardee, as it has the potential to significantly increase visitor numbers to the area.

The combination of all of the above opportunities, in addition to those envisaged under the Ardee 2040 Vision, provides the prospect to re-orient and rebalance the town, allowing people living on the south and east of the town to traverse the town to access new education and health services on the west, via an open plaza and looped walkways and cycle paths.

#### Placemaking Principles

The purpose of the Ardee 2040 Vision is to support regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in Ardee Town. The type of infrastructure to be implemented as part of this project will include new and better-quality streets, public spaces/realms/plazas and associated services, junction upgrades, cycleways, walkways and sports recreational areas.

To ensure the Vision is realised, key themes for the future development of Ardee were identified at the outset of the project, such as:

- Ensuring inclusivity for all members of the community; the very young, the youth, the old, the mobility impaired, socially disadvantaged, the pedestrian and cyclist.
- Developing schemes which meet the design principles of national & international best practices.
- Promoting an environment which leads to daytime and nighttime activities.
- Improving connectivity and legibility for all members of the community and for visitors/tourists to the town.
- Creating quality gateways, public spaces, recreational areas, sporting areas and public realm.
- Capitalising and respecting the rich heritage of this town centre.
- Operating / employing sustainable development principles through minimising energy consumption and maximising the use of renewable energy technology.





View towards Ardee Castle



Aerial view of Ardee Castle and Main Street

## Character Areas

The project placemaking principles will be delivered through the redevelopment of key opportunity areas in Ardee, these being:

### Character Area 1 – Main Street (including Ash Walk)

The Main Street Character Area extends from the N2 / N52 roundabout in the north of Ardee southwards along Main Street as far as the junction of the N2 and R170 roads. It includes a portion of Golf Links Road to the north west of Main Street and the public road/ existing footpath and public realm areas within Ash Walk, as depicted by the purple lines in the diagram to the right.

### Character Area 2 – Old Railway Lands

The Old Railway Lands Character Area is located on an area of unmaintained grassland to the south of Sean O'Carroll Street and north of dwellings fronting onto Tierney Street. The extent and location of this Character Area is illustrated by the orange coloured area in the diagram to the right.

### Character Area 3 – Amenity Lands

The Amenity Lands Character Area is located on an area of unmaintained grassland to the east of the town, directly to the west of Ardee Wastewater Treatment Works, and north of the River Dee. The extent and location of this Character Area is identified by the yellow coloured area in the diagram to the right.

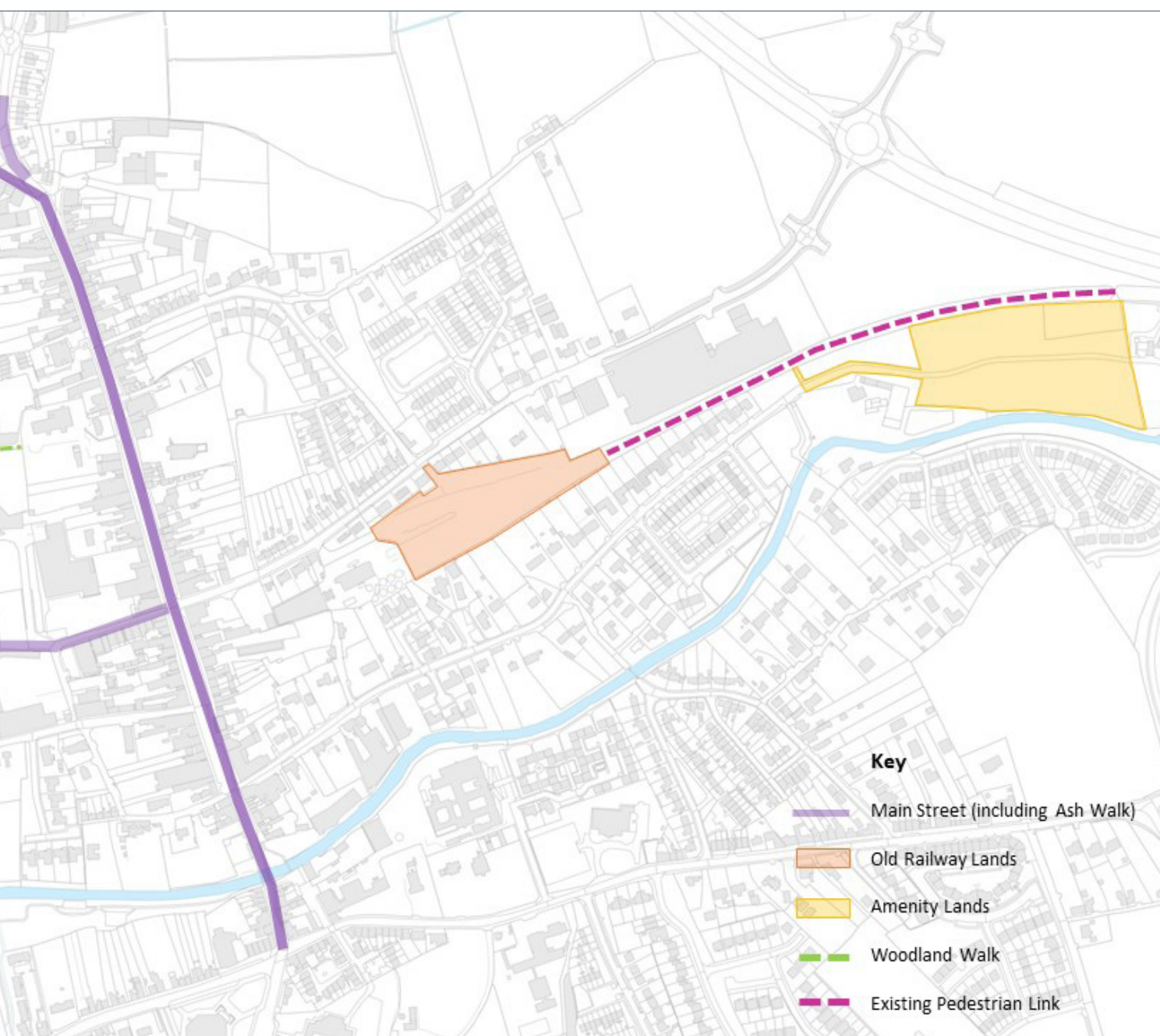
### Character Area 4 – Woodland Walk

The Woodland Walk Character Area travels in a north to south direction through the existing HSE land in the west of the town linking Ash Walk to Golf Links Road. The extent and location of this Character Area is denoted by the green hatched line in the diagram to the right.

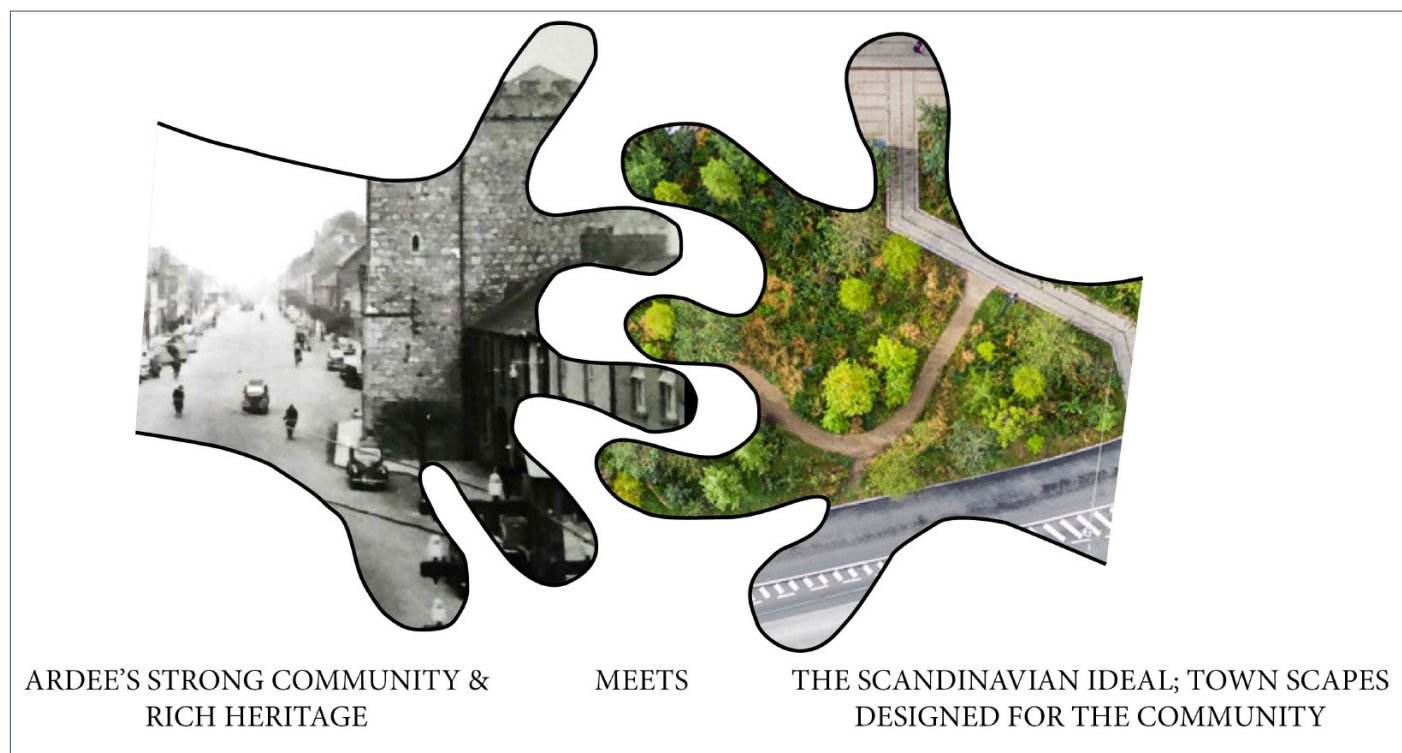
## Ardee 2040 Regeneration Vision - Character Areas







## 4 Ardee 2040 Vision



### Character Area 1 – Main Street / Ash Walk

Ardee Main Street extends to approximately 1km and is the central spine of the town, incorporating the commercial core of Ardee and provides linkages to the main transport routes to the north (N2 and N33) and south (N52).

Whilst the Main Street is a functional area, it is currently dominated by tarmac and paving with limited landscape or amenity spaces, creating a monotonous town centre experience with limited spaces available for people to meet and socialise.

The Ardee 2040 Vision proposes to create breaks and pauses as you travel along Main Street, creating a sequence of themes, experiences and identities.

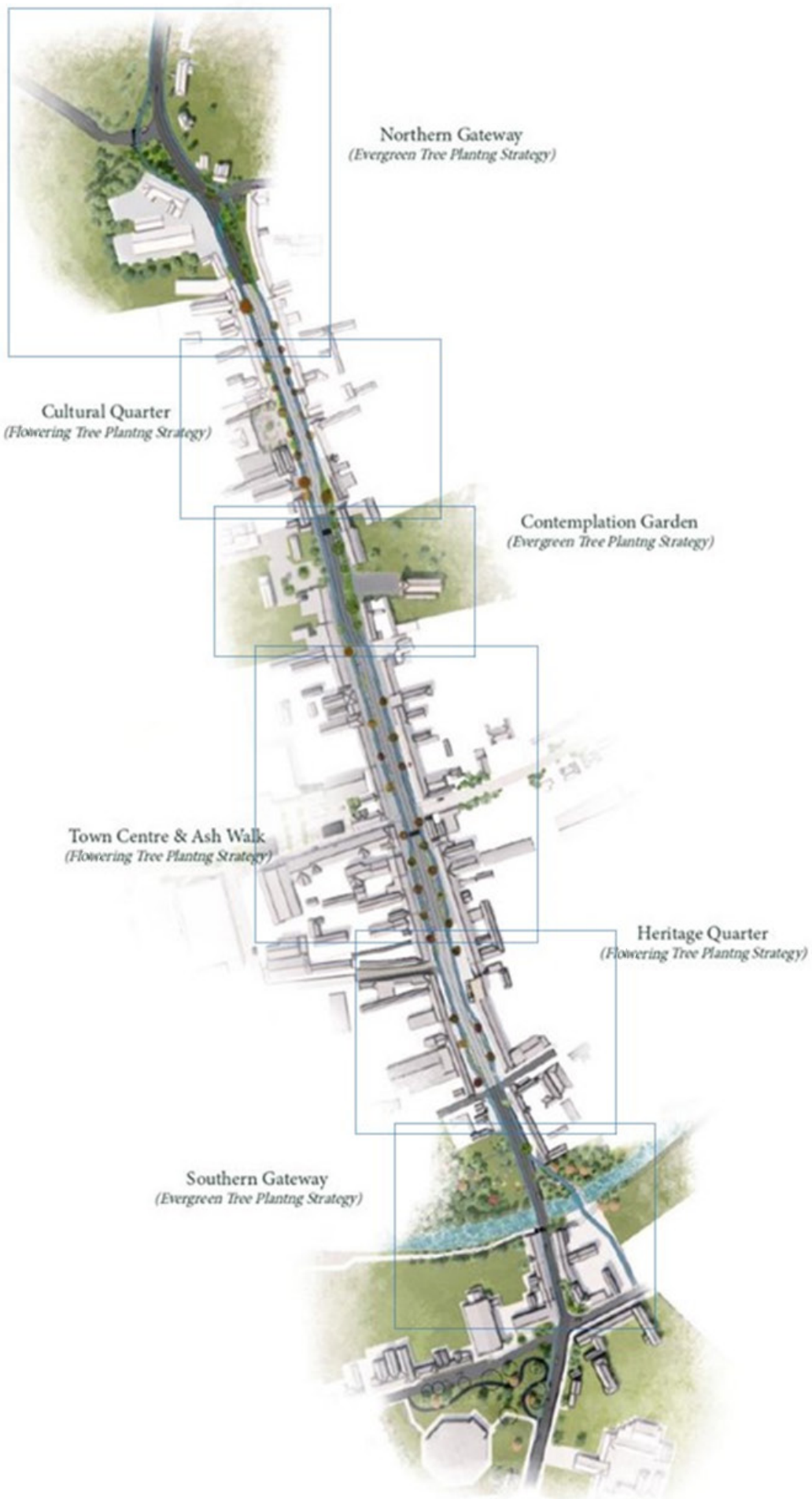
It is proposed to create 6 'Sub Areas' with a unique theme within the Main Street Character Area, which together, will create a distinctive townscape. Each 'Sub Area' is to be perceived as an individual public space with its own identity, reflecting its location within the surrounding heritage and streetscape of the town.

The 6 themed 'Sub Areas' for Main Street is listed below and their extent is illustrated in the diagram overleaf:

- Northern Gateway
- Cultural Quarter
- Contemplation Garden
- Town Centre & Ash Walk
- Heritage Quarter
- Southern Gateway

Each Sub Area can spread out and integrate into the surrounding neighbourhoods and Character Areas in order to create a sense of community and belonging, whilst over time decreasing the linear feel to the town centre.





## North Green Gateway

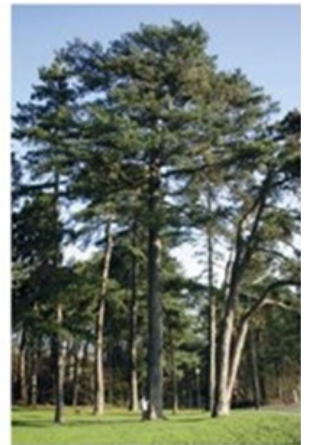
The Green Gateway increases the amount of landscape in this area by linking the existing park to Irish Street via connected landscape areas. The northern entry to Ardee will frame the High Street and become a green pocket of recreation throughout all seasons.



Illustrative Interpretation of Concept Layout of Green Gateway



Flowering Tree Planting



Evergreen Tree Planting



New Pavement Strategy - Variation of light and darker stone sets



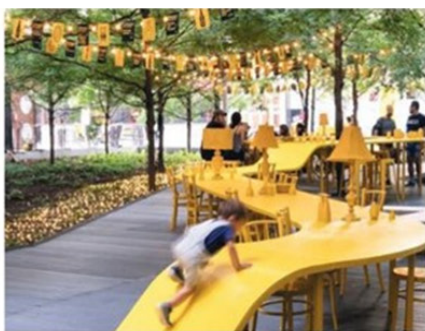


## Cultural Quarter

The next area will create a new Cultural Quarter with the Ardee Library as its centre piece. This will be a hardscaped area with lighter stone sets, as a contrast to the Northern Gateway, and will include cultural installations/street furniture that will create external communal areas that will encourage people to gather and socialise in the centre of the town.



Flowering Tree Planting



Cultural Installations / Urban Furnitures for the community

## Contemplation Garden

The next quarter includes a place for reflection and contemplation. A break in the urban experience, an ever-green pause, creating a spiritual link to the church and its visitors and guests. The stone set will turn dark again, a clear change from the lighter sets at the Cultural Quarter, and together with the evergreen vegetation, will create a rather unique sense of place.



Darker Stone Sets



Coloured Bike Lane



Illustrative Interpretation of Concept Layout for Cultural Quarter



Illustrative Interpretation of Concept Layout for Contemplation Garden





Ardee Cultural Quarter – creating a new landmark at Library Square







## Town Centre & Ash Walk

The Town Centre is a tribute to Ardee's nature and flora, heritage and culture. A Town Square (widening of pedestrian footpath) for events, markets and festivities or just a place for enjoyment or a Sunday stroll. The Town Centre, in terms of character, connects to Ash Walk, the new River Greenway and the Old Railway greenway.



Flowering Tree Planting



Widening of the pedestrian path enables for community activities



Lighter Stone Sets



Coloured Bike Lane



Illustrative Interpretation of Concept Layout for Town Centre & Ash Walk



Illustration of future streetscape



## Heritage Quarter

We imagine a more formal approach to the Heritage Quarter, which visually illustrates Ardee's rich history and heritage through graphics, textures and tonalities. It's a calming urban experience that finally will support the much-needed attention that Ardee Castle deserves.



View towards Ardee Castle



Flowering Tree Planting



Pavement details to celebrate Ardee Castle

## Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway – resurfacing works will mark the entry into the Southern Gateway at Bridge Street, which will provide an improved public realm for pedestrians and access to the existing riverside walk and park and new proposed development / future River Greenway proposal to the south of the river.



Evergreen Tree Planting



Where the Town Centre connects with River Greenway



Darker Stone Sets



Coloured Bike Lane

## Landscape Strategy

The tree planting strategy for the Main Street of Ardee is proposed to follow two distinct principles:

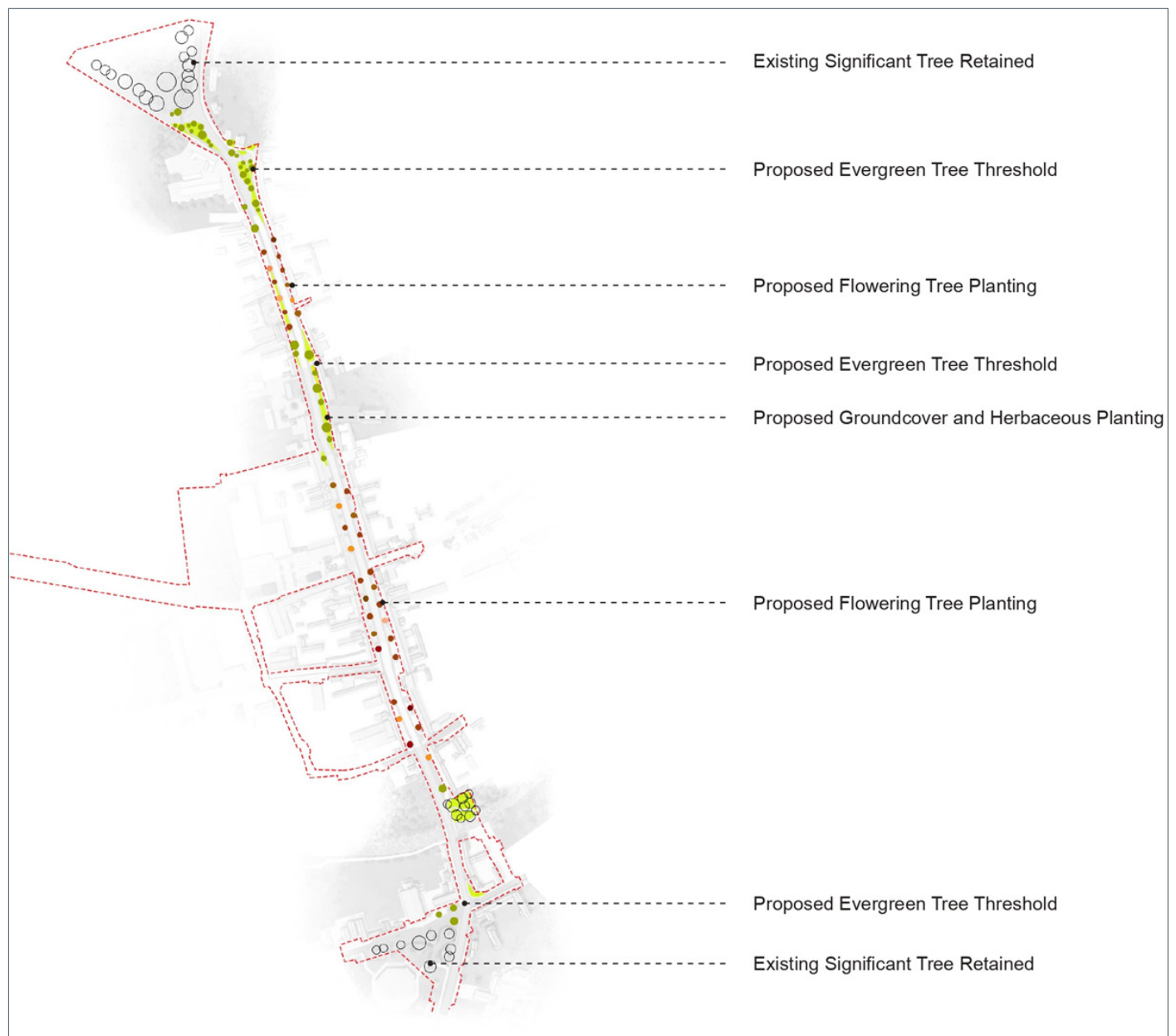
- evergreen species located at the northern and southern green gateway zones and the central contemplation space.
- flowering, deciduous species located along the street edges forming an attractive urban streetscape with seasonal interest.

This strategy reflects the various character zones of the street, making a physical and visual distinction for the user as they move along the Main Street. Additionally, the location of densely planted areas at each gateway provides a green threshold at key entry points to the town.

In response to the local context there is scope to be flexible with groundcover planting typologies using the principles above.

The proposed tree species are selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species). While particular species have been recommended as part of this strategy, other species with similar characteristics can also be considered. Native species should be used where appropriate thereby increasing the biodiversity value. Proposed tree sizes should range from semi-mature specimen trees to multi-stemmed tree planting. Typical species proposed are:

- *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine)
- *Pinus nigra* (Austrian pine)
- *Betula pubescens* (Downy birch)
- *Prunus avium* (Wild cherry)
- *Amelanchier lamarkii* (Snowy Mespilus).



Overview of Tree Planting Strategy





Conceptual visualisation of the proposed streetscape including new soft and hard landscaping interventions soft and hard landscaping interventions.

# Tree Planting Typology 1

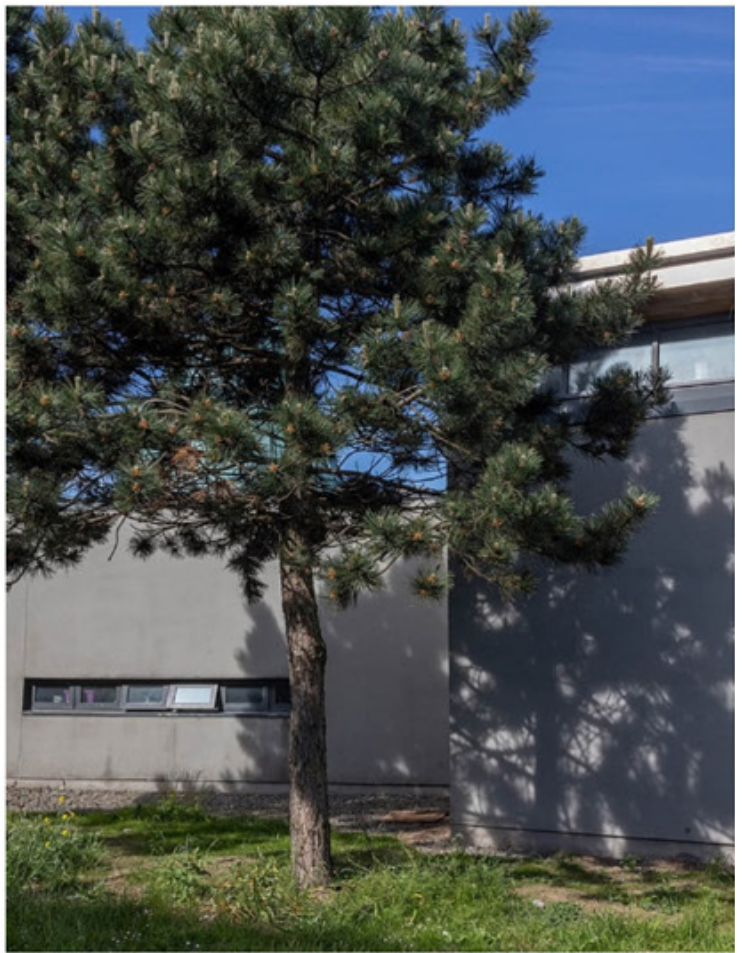
## - Evergreen Tree Species

*Pinus sylvestris*

*Pinus nigra*







# Tree Planting Typology 2

## - Flowering Tree Species

*Amelanchier canadensis*

*Prunus avium* 'Plena'

*Betula pubescens*







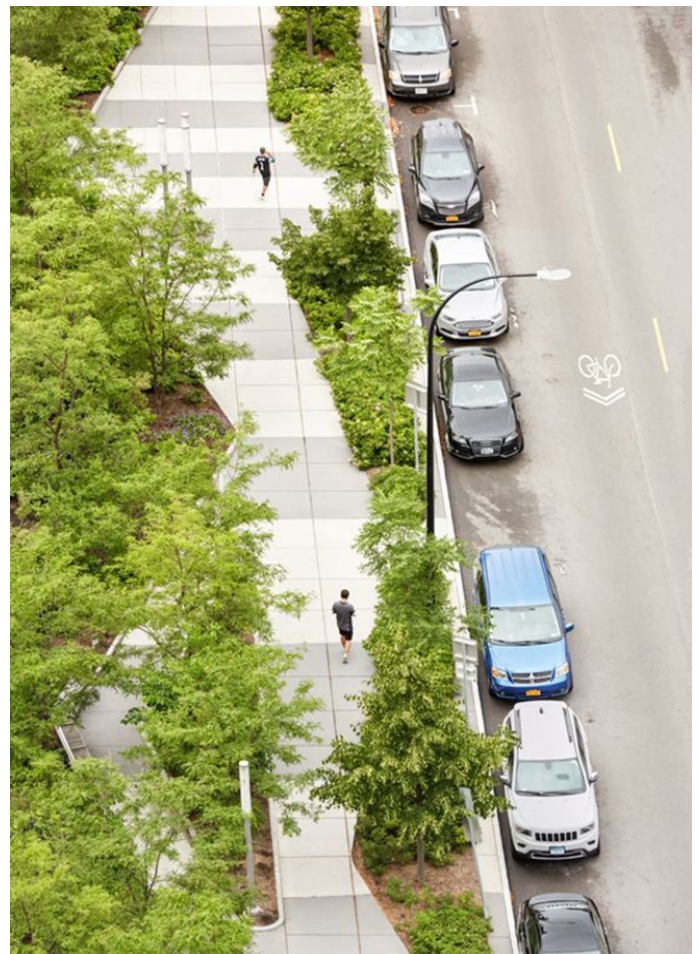


## Materials and Street Furniture

### Paving

It is proposed that the existing paving is replaced with a high-quality paving, including stone slabs and bonded gravel of various tone and colour, which reflects the character of prominent historical buildings along Main Street including Ardee Castle, Hatches Castle and St. Marys Church. It is our intention to select a durable material palette using local stone where possible.

The choice of materials can contribute to the project's sustainable credentials and be a strong element of its identity. Choosing a local stone, if it is available economically, is an obvious starting point, but several types of surface will generally be required, including asphalted carriageways for vehicles. The extent and nature of the finishes will need to be carefully balanced against budgetary limits.

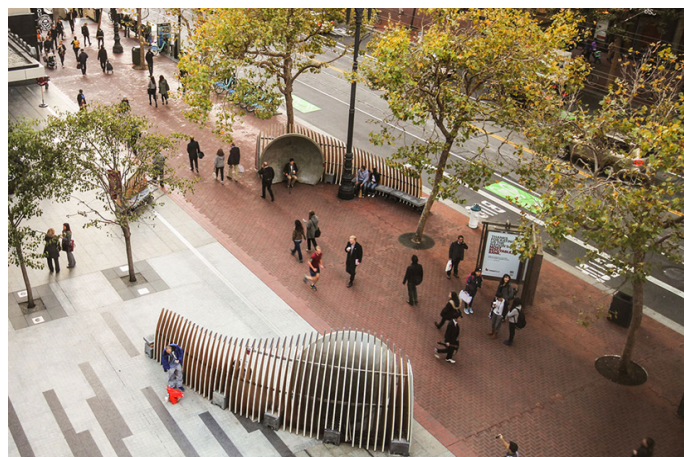




## Street Furniture

We believe that bespoke street furniture is the ideal way to give people a sense of place where they can gather and rest. Also, it helps in attracting tourists by improving the overall aesthetic appeal of a space.

The adjacent images provide details of the character and functionality that the proposed street furniture along Main Street will deliver. A variety of public seating areas are located at key positions along Main Street to provide a place for the community to sit and socialise or provide a place to rest. Cycle stands will also be located along Main Street to encourage the use of bicycles.





## Character Area 2 – The Old Railway Lands

The Old Railway Lands are located in a strategic position in Ardee and will create an attractive parkland link from the Amenity Lands to the centre of Ardee via the existing railway footpath and O'Carroll Street. The proposals for the development of the Old Railway Lands provides for a lively and active public open space with accessible routes which will help to enhance and improve the existing connectivity between different areas of Ardee and create a space where residents and visitors can gather.

### Landscape Appraisal

#### General

The subject site is located on relatively flat ground east of the centre of Ardee, south of O'Carroll Street and north of Tierney Street, at the rear of residential properties and adjacent to commercial units. The centre of Ardee is approximately 300 metres from the site and the River Dee runs east-west approximately 180 metres to the south of the site. The remains of historical railway structures such as platform edges are located in the centre of the subject site. The site is open with scattered tree planting and managed grass comprising the majority of the site. Picnic benches and litter bins are located beside an existing footpath which runs east-west through the site. A second footpath, running south-west to north-east, provides access from O'Carroll Street through commercial premises to the west.



View from the east, with remnant railway platform, seating and recent tree planting.



Redline boundary over satellite image of the railway lands site.

The site is accessed through a gated entrance from O'Carroll Street in the north; from the east as a continuation of the Railway Walk; and, from a pedestrian lane in the south, connecting Tierney Street to the site.





View from the centre of site looking east, showing existing trees.

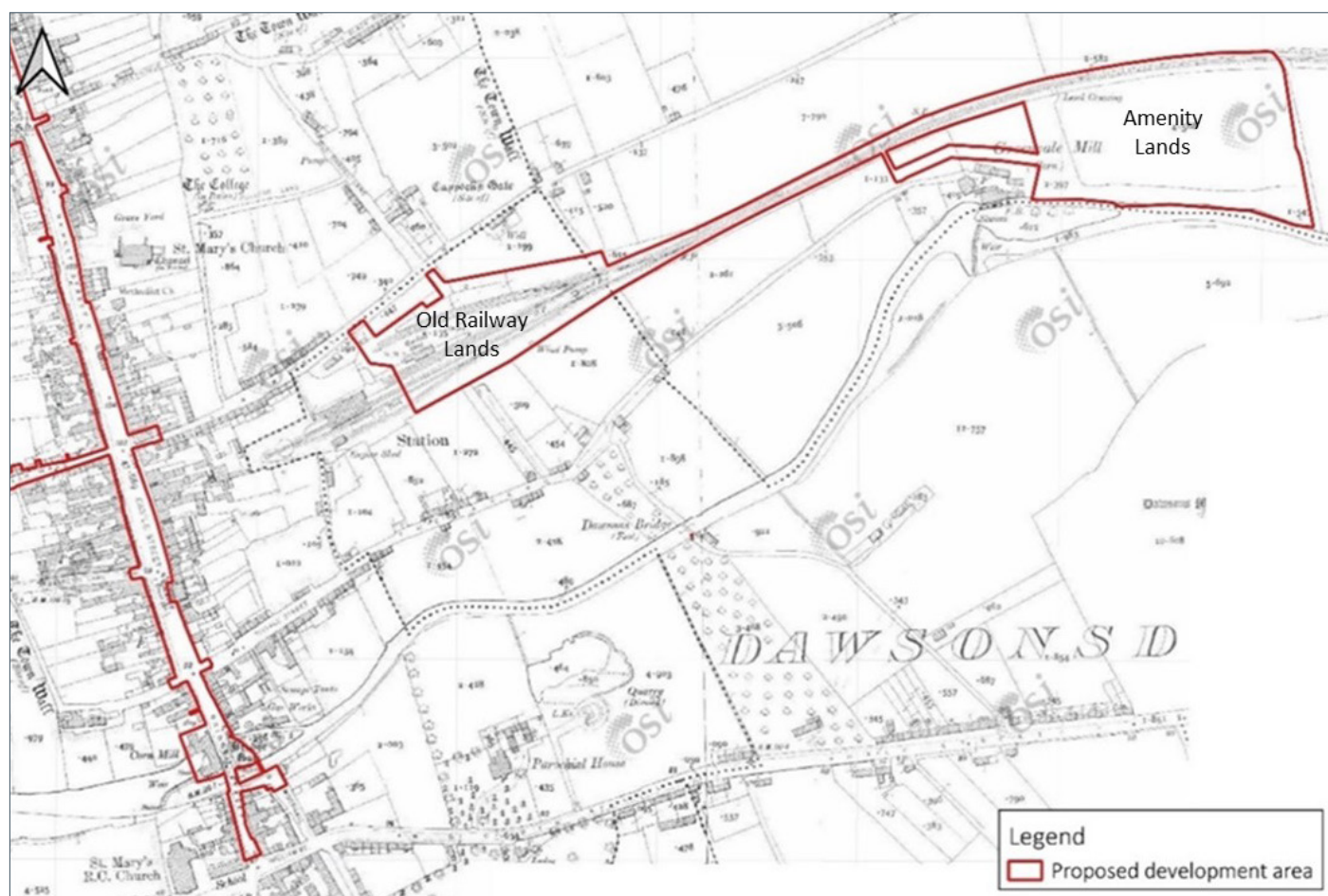


View from the east of site looking west, showing tree planting on left and industrial buildings associated with the historical railway station in the long distance.

## History

Ardee Railway Station historically acted as the termination point of a rail spur from the Dublin - Belfast line (Great Northern Railway). Rail infrastructure, platforms, sidings and rail-related buildings occupied much of the site during the stations operational period which ended in the 1970s. Today remnants of some of these structures create clear lines in the landscape and the removal of the buildings and some of the infrastructure has left an open space in the town's built fabric.

The old railway station building, Protected Structure NIAH No. 13823060, exists to the west of the site and is in private ownership. Local rail history is depicted in murals and information panels which line two of the pedestrian access paths into the lands (northern path from O'Carroll Street and southern path from Tierney Street). In the east of the site, the location of the old town wall runs in a north-south alignment, however no above ground remnants of the wall remain.



Map of rail lines and buildings, Ardee Railway Station, 25 inch map, Geohive. Location of historical Ardee town wall crossing the site is shown in blue.

## Existing Boundaries

The site boundary varies slightly in character and material, and is composed predominantly of the rear walls and fences of private residential properties. The southern boundary is made up of concrete block walls of varying height and condition, and timber fencing in varying condition. Trees and ornamental garden shrubbery have grown through and above the walls and fencing. The western boundary is comprised of steel palisade fencing and separates the site from the commercial premises to the west. Overhead wires are visible above the fencing in the same alignment. The northern boundary is comprised of a mix of timber fencing in varying condition, and concrete block walls of varying height exist for the western portion of this boundary. The eastern part of the northern boundary is a stone wall in good condition approximately 2m in height. The eastern boundary is comprised of: a concrete block wall which is only partially visible due to trees and shrubbery growing to the front; and, open access available from the Railway Walk.



Painted concrete block wall at southern boundary.



Timber fencing and vegetation at southern boundary.



Concrete block wall with opportunistic trees and shrubbery in front at eastern boundary.



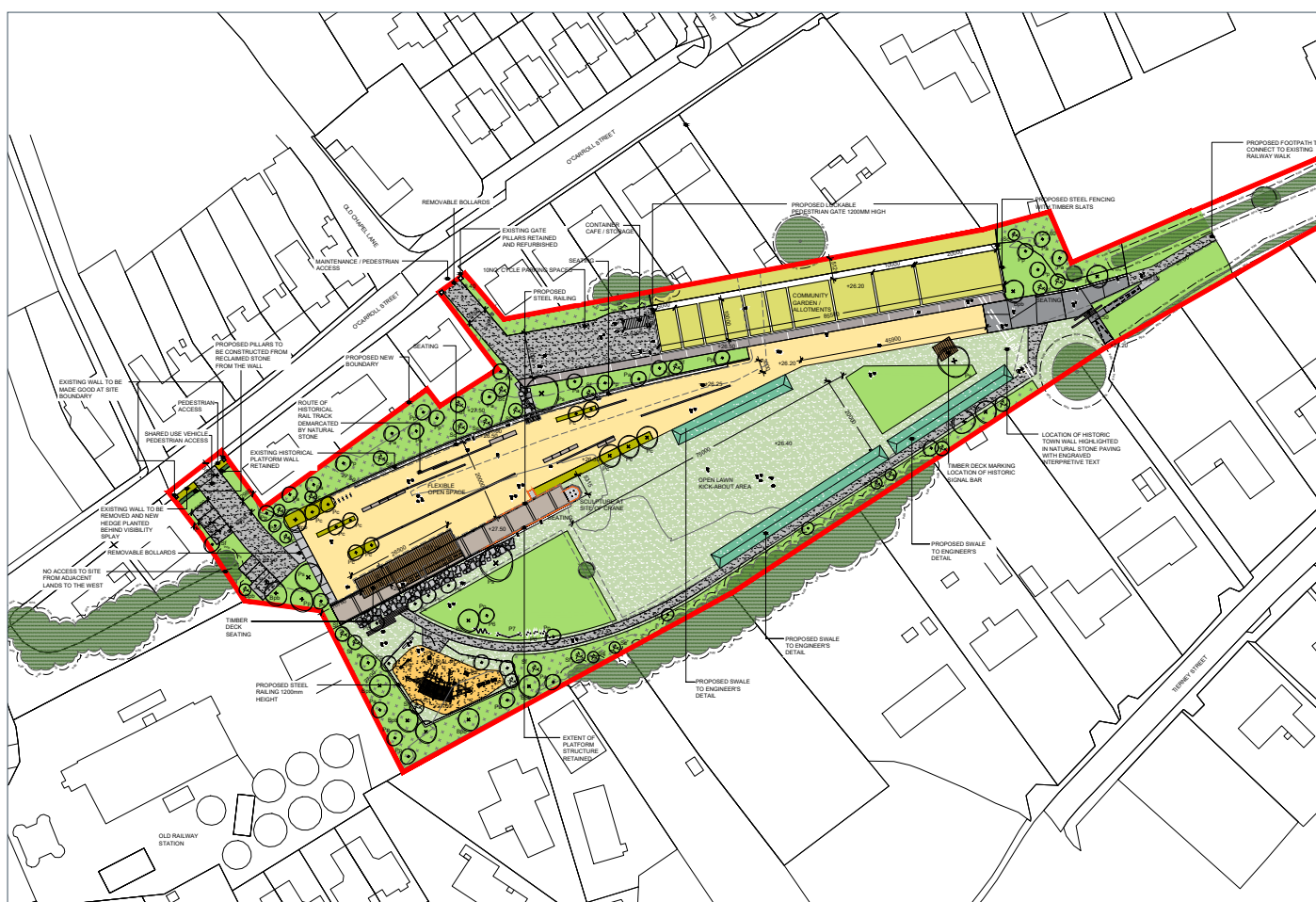
Stone wall at northern boundary.



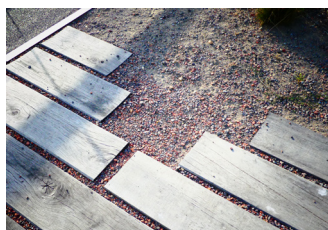
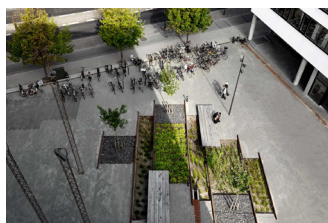
## Landscape Strategy

The following principles and elements underlie the landscape strategy for this space:

- Universal access from O'Carroll Street in the north to Tierney Street in the south and the Railway Walk in the east.
- Remnant railway infrastructure should inform the spatial layout of the sub-spaces within the lands.
- Innovative and creative play area for children.
- Facilitate events in a flexible space.
- Interpretive and interactive elements.
- Allotment gardens to encourage gardening, community interaction, and develop a GYO (Grow Your Own) ethos.
- Seating and picnic areas designed for all age groups and abilities.
- Use of planting to define areas and spaces with increased quantum of native plant species.
- Celebrate the presence of Ardee's old town wall.
- Entrance thresholds denoted using thoughtful design and curated materials.
- Retention of existing ground levels.



Extract from Proposed Site Layout Plan

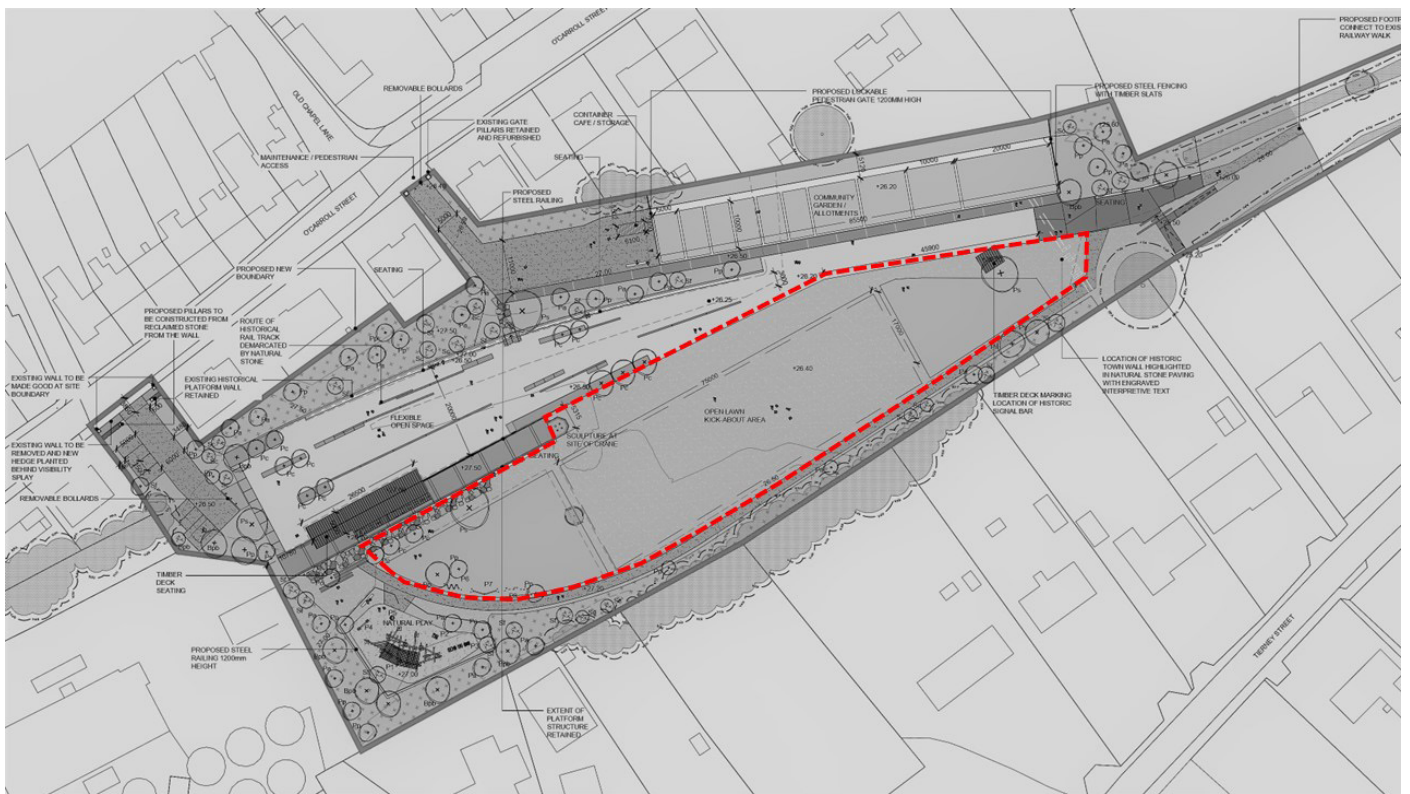


A key part of the design is to provide a flexible open space, which creates connectivity in an east to west direction within the park. This space will use a variety of materials and changes in ground level to create areas where people can sit and relax, meet with friends or supervise their children in other parts of the park.









## Open Lawn

An open lawn is proposed at the centre of the proposals. Its position is determined by the existing rail infrastructure, existing boundaries, proposed pedestrian routes, and passive viewing opportunities from surrounding residential properties and passing pedestrians. Furthermore, the central location will help to improve activation levels and ensure that the space is used to its maximum potential. A formal footpath is proposed to the north of the open lawn following the railway infrastructure, with a number of seating opportunities, taking advantage of the south facing aspect. The flexible space encourages both passive and active forms of recreation.







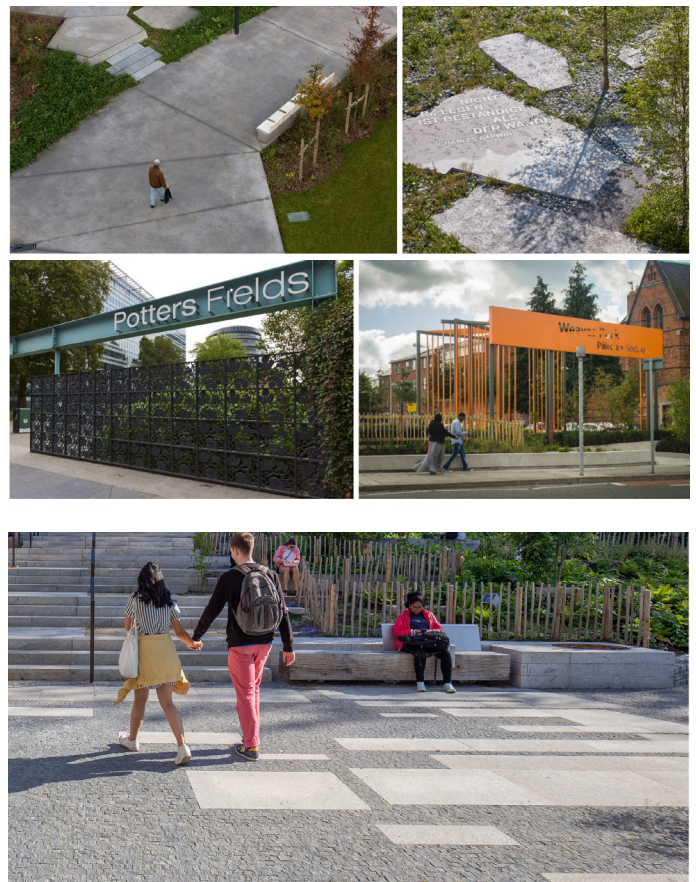
## Thresholds

As shown in the precedent images, how the thresholds and accesses to the space are presented to the public will play an important role in encouraging people to enter and use the space.

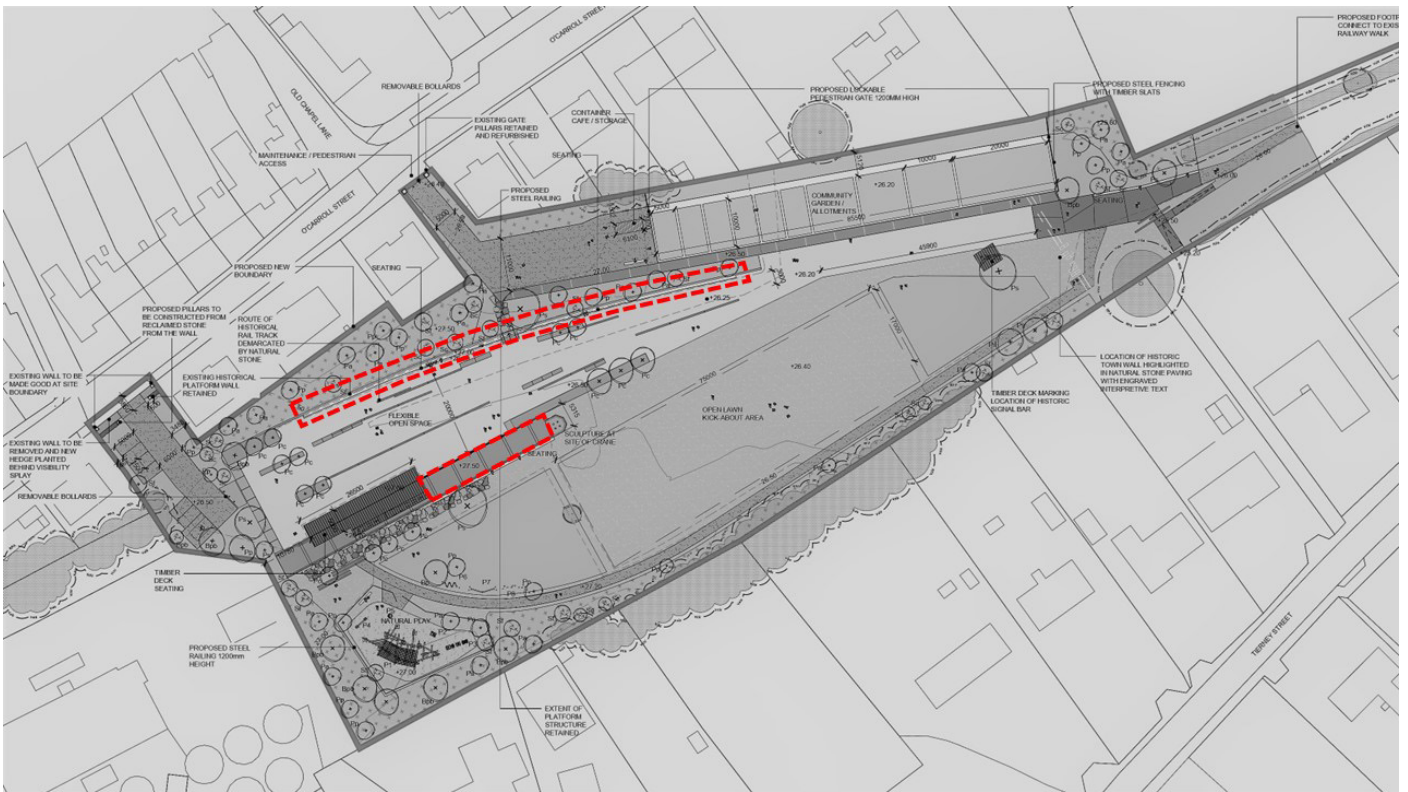
The entrances into the Railway Lands are proposed to be retained and enhanced to engage passing foot- and cycle-traffic:

- O'Carroll Street, at the north-west boundary. An historical access point for cattle and other goods into the rail yards, this opening is proposed to be an invitation to enter into the Railway Lands with a large and colourful structure which has the potential to initiate a way marking strategy for the park and within the context of connectivity in the wider town.
- Railway Walk, at the eastern boundary. Providing access to a well-used walking facility this opening is proposed to be enhanced with native planting which is an extension of the existing hedgerow species at Railway Walk and is proposed to improve biodiversity value along this ecological corridor.
- Tierney Street laneway, at east of southern boundary. Enhanced access from the existing laneway to the new path system proposed for Railway lands will create an opportunity for universal access to Railway lands.

The creation of improved entrances into the Railway lands from O'Carroll Street, Railway Walk and Tierney Street lane will act as markers in the streetscape and wider area that Railway lands is a destination and a valuable hub for connecting various parts of Ardee as well as creating positive linkages through the town and from the town to a natural amenity, the Railway Walk.





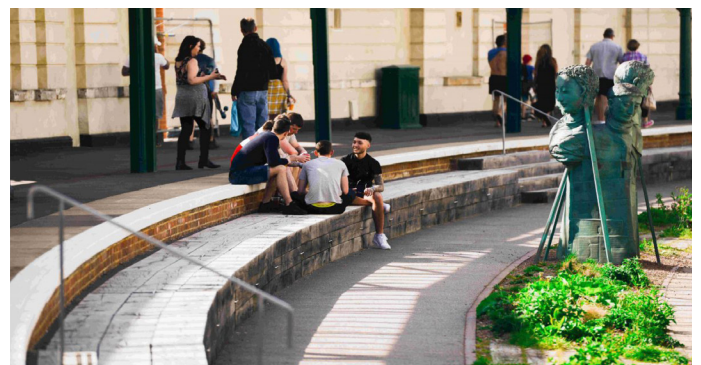


St. Audoen's, Dublin (by DFLA)

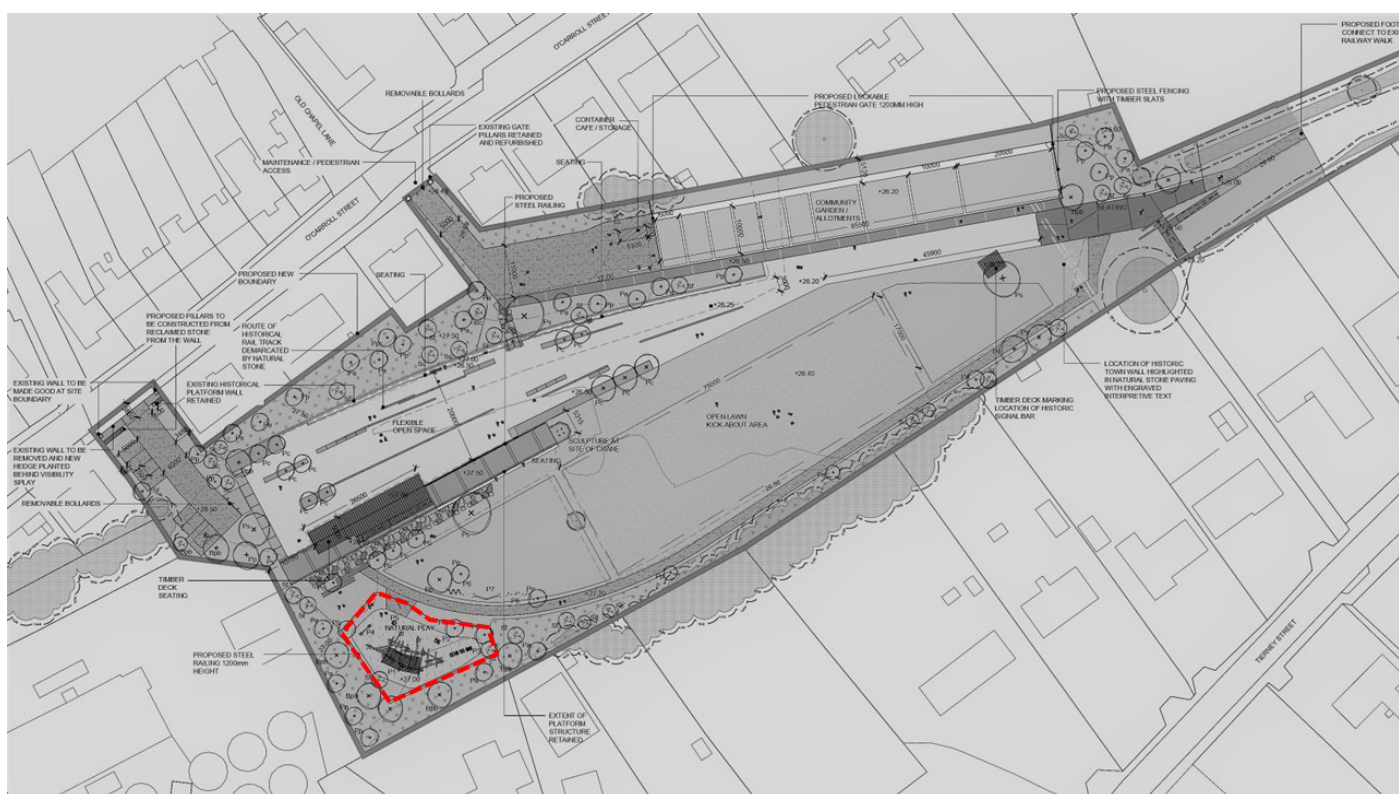


## Seating / Reuse of Existing Structures

The history of the site will be remembered through the reuse of part of the former railway platform, which still exists on the site, as a raised seating area / stage. The proposed seating and fixtures in this area is designed to be sensitive and respectful of the history of the space and will include the use of re-purposed railway sleepers.







## Play

Play opportunities have been integrated into the proposals for Railway Lands. The proposals include the use of natural play elements which will be robust and easily maintainable. The proposed location for destination play is positioned in the south-west zone of the lands with additional open space in the meadow for children to be able to run freely and explore the lands in a secure setting while being passively monitored. A number of small play elements are spread across the green area close to the play zone, using natural materials to create climbing and balancing play complementary to the natural materials on the site.

Play equipment includes climbing structures, trails of timber logs and balancing equipment. The proposed play equipment will be designed and manufactured in accordance with standards EN 1176 and EN 1177. Impact absorbing surface for specific fall heights from play equipment is proposed to mimic bark and is located where it is required in the play zone. A full schedule of all play equipment is outlined as part of drawing 2001 (Lo.06-DR-2001 Rev E), prepared by DFLA and included with the planning application pack.





## Old Town Wall

In the wider context of the town, the medieval town wall formed an important defensive fixture in the landscape and went on to influence some of the town's built form. As no remains of the town wall of Ardee exist above ground on the site, it is proposed to mark the location of the wall with high quality ground material. This aids in the recognition and appreciation of the historical importance of the town wall and forms a point of interest in the park. The inclusion of engraved text or a mapping graphic attracts and holds the attention of visitors.



## Planting

A significant amount of tree planting is proposed in specific areas within the Railway Lands to form green canopies along the northern boundary and south-west boundary. The management of the lawn areas, with carefully selected areas left unmown during summer months as a meadow, will create sub-spaces that will have seasonal effect. The eastern zone with access to the Railway Walk will be enhanced with native species and will be protected and managed to maximise biodiversity and prevent disturbance of existing vegetation. Drawing 2001 Landscape Plan, prepared by DFLA includes a schedule of proposed planting and managed long grass and tree planting as well as existing trees to be retained.

## Tree planting

A total of 95 new individual trees are proposed in order to compensate for the removal of the existing trees on site. They will also improve the species mix on site. The proposed tree species are selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species). Proposed tree sizes range from semi-mature (30-35cm girth) specimen trees to multi-stemmed tree planting. Typical species proposed are illustrated in the images to the right.





## Groundcover and Bulb Planting

Low planting is utilised to make and reinforce sub-spaces within the larger landscape spaces, for visual screening, visual interest, ecological purposes and to guide or direct people's movement. The low planting is conceived as subtle layering of greens within the open spaces.



## Hard Landscaping

The selection of paving and other landscape materials is determined by proposed function, longevity and durability. The extent of materials and the locations where a transition is made from one material to another are determined by drainage and other sustainability issues. Paving materials where practical are proposed to be constructed in a way which is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, in order to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces. Primary vehicular, pedestrian and cycle circulation are proposed as a durable, limited range of neutral materials with robust construction. Secondary pedestrian routes and private spaces are proposed to be of 'flexible' construction and in some cases a mix of paving and lawn.

Engraved paving details illustrating the island's heritage is proposed throughout the design. A range of paving details and finishes are proposed across the development. The integration of interpretive and interactive elements in the paving will further aid understanding of the site's rich history and heritage



## Retention of Existing Trees

Trees within the site include groups and single specimens and are composed of a mix of species. Single specimens includes *Salix* sp. (Willow); *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Sycamore); *Crataegus crusgalli* (Cockspur thorn); *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn); *Betula* sp. (Birch); and *x. Cupressocyparis leylandii* (Leylandii) and all have a Category C designation (described as 'Moderate Value and Conservation' in Tree Assessment Report). Six groupings exist on the site, with two of these being mostly outside the site boundary and are linear in nature as they border the railway walk (G700 and G704 on Tree Constraints Plan). G700 is located to the north of the railway walk, at the east of the site. This tree grouping is comprised of: *Aesculus hippocastanum* (Horse chestnut); *Betula* sp. (Birch); *Salix* sp. (Willow); *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan) and *Prunus laurocerasus* (Laurel). G704 is located to the south of the railway walk and is comprised of *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Cupressocyparis leylandii* (Leylandii) and *Sambucus nigra* (Elder). Other groupings within the site consist of: G688, *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn) and *Sambucus nigra* (Elder), located in the east of the site surrounded by cleared ground; G692, *Betula* sp. (Birch), located centrally in the site, to the east of an historical rail platform, and in a dense group; and, G693, listed as mixed species.

Refer to 2100 Landscape Plan prepared by DFLA and included as part of the planning application for existing planting material and proposed tree planting.





## Character Area 3 – The Amenity Lands

The Amenity Lands site is currently an underutilised grassland area to the east of the town. Through consultation with the local community, sports groups and the wider public a vision for this space has been created which will establish a new sports hub in the town, delivering a mixture of formal and informal facilities and recreational activities that will link seamlessly to the town centre via the existing railway walk and Old Railway Lands park.

The proposals for the development of the Amenity Lands integrate the proposed development with the surrounding context and generate a newly accessible public open space with recreation facilities along the River Dee. The following principles and elements underpin the landscape strategy for this space:

- Facilitate an integrated access from Tierney Street to the Railway Walk.
- Installation of a grass athletics running track with additional athletics spaces such as long jump.
- Innovative and creative play/rest areas for all ages.
- Installation of grass bowling green with universal access to pavilion building.
- Facilitate river access for walkers and cyclists.
- Comfortable and high-quality seating and viewing areas.
- Possibilities for education and observation of wildlife.
- Use of planting to define areas and spaces.
- Increased quantum of native plant species creating ecological connectivity between river and Railway Walk.
- Flood resistant materials.
- Multi-use pavilion building with universal access.
- Generous cycle parking, SuDS friendly car-parking.

### General

The subject site is located on gently sloping ground north of the River Dee and west of the N33. It is predominantly comprised of open grass land with an access road leading from Tierney Street in the west of the site to a waste water treatment facility to the east of the site.

An area to the north-east of the site is currently fenced off and appears to be used for storage of material such as pipes, gravel, and stone. The site slopes gently from the north-west to the south-east.

The site is accessed from the west through a gate at Tierney Street. This is the only vehicle access point into the site. A number of informal pedestrian access points exist from the Railway Walk to the north, and present as breaks in the hedge line with desire lines running from these breaks into the open grassland. Further pedestrian access is available from Tierney Street in the west.



View from the west, Tierney Street entrance, with access road to waste water treatment facility and trees edging River Dee to right of image



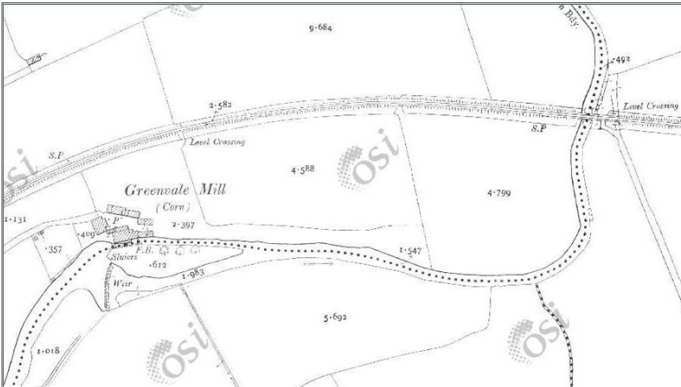
View from the centre of site looking north to storage compound



View from inside the site, looking north through break in hedge line towards Railway Walk, desire line in centre of image

### History

Historically, activity on the site appears to be mostly agricultural as seen from the field pattern in the map below. The waste water treatment facility appears to have introduced an access road through the site. Today, remnants of the field boundaries no longer exist in the landscape, except for the hedgerow associated with the Railway Walk to the north.



25 inch map of site showing River Dee, field pattern north of river, and railway line

### Existing Boundaries

The site boundaries vary in character. The southern boundary comprises The River Dee and a line of evergreen trees which form the boundary of a private residence to the south-west. The western boundary comprises of the Tierney Street entrance which is gated and fenced with small trees growing along the fence line. The northern boundary comprises partly of a wire fence running through open space at the side of the access road from Tierney Street, and partly of the densely vegetated hedgerow alignment associated with the Railway Walk. The eastern boundary comprises of steel fencing and steel gates associated with the waste water treatment facility.



Photograph of the gate and access road into the site from Tierney Street looking east



Photograph of the vegetation associated with the edge of the River Dee (southern boundary of site)



## Pavilion Building

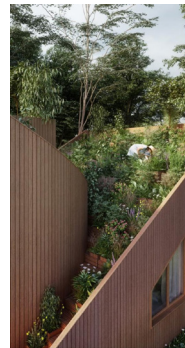
### Inspiration

The Pavilion Building will be the centre piece of the Amenity Lands vision. Taking inspiration from its agricultural location, we propose to use the traditionally rural form of a barn and its simplistic pitched gable end as a starting point.

Simplification of the basic form allows for a contemporary interpretation of the barn vernacular. Removing mass from the form enables a covered external space to be created within the volume. Using timber frame construction methods and sustainable materials for cladding and insulation, enables a fast and cost-effective construction method while ensuring minimal impact on the planet.

### Accommodation

- Central multi-functional space, with possibility to divide into two separate spaces. This could be used for various community activities and should be flexible.
- Separate changing, shower and toilet facilities for the Bowling Club and Athletics Club users
- Kitchenette facility, accessible to both clubs.
- A central office space, accessible to both clubs.
- 2 no. wheelchair accessible toilets, accessed from outside in a clearly visible location.
- Storage space, accessible from outside.



Proposed Floor Plan

## Volume

Beginning with a contemporary interpretation of a barn, we have introduced a curve at the point where the volumes meet along the roof ridge line, creating a continuous building that is orientated in two directions.

The changing orientation enables a view towards both the proposed running track and bowling green. The building includes a recessed south facing terrace, providing shelter for users of both the bowling green and the track when required, within the same building volume.

## Materiality

Timber cladding helps to blend the building into its natural surroundings and offers a sense of warmth and tactility for those using the facilities in and around the clubhouse. We propose a living roof, with local wildflowers and grasses that can change with the seasons, a landmark on the landscape and within the local community.



Early Concept Visualisation of the Pavilion Building









Early Concept Visualisation of the Pavilion Building

## Athletics Track

Viewing areas for the running track are proposed parallel to the sprint track and using level changes to create seating and steps. Space exists to the side of the sprint track for additional athletic events such as long jump. The running track surrounds an area of open lawn which has the flexibility to be used as a kick-around space or for other open air events with easy access to the pavilion. Proposed tree groupings within the centre of the track offer biodiversity value and vertical interest.



## Bowling Green

Viewing for the bowling green is afforded from the pavilion building located in the centre of the site between the running track and the bowling green. Seating is proposed to the east of the bowling green in elevated open space within hard landscaping, creating easy access for the mobility impaired. Access from the pavilion to the bowling green is by way of a gently sloped route as well as steps, providing access for all. An evergreen hedge as well as steel railing is proposed for the boundary of the bowling green to provide wind, visual and security protection. Parking is proposed to be located close to the pavilion building and the bowling green to create easy access for users.





## Pavilion / Plaza

The pavilion building is proposed to act as a management hub for the recreation amenities and includes catering facilities, toilets/ changing rooms and sports equipment storage space. The building is proposed to be designed in such a way as to blend in to the landscape. Refer to drawings provided by Arrow Architects included as part of the planning application for details of the building.

A plaza area to the north-east of the pavilion is proposed to accommodate incidental outdoor events and is a flexible area between the running track, parking facilities to the north, and the pavilion. The plaza is at an elevated level thereby providing viewing opportunities for the running track as well as longer range views of the river and beyond.



Image showing examples of plaza spaces associated with sports pavilion

## Parking

Parking is proposed to be in keeping with the open and green atmosphere of the site. Parking spaces are predominantly comprised of permeable material and incorporate SuDS features where possible. The overflow parking areas to the north-west and east are proposed to be comprised of reinforced grass, with the north-west zone being flexible in order to accommodate larger vehicles if required. The parking areas north of the pavilion building are proposed to be comprised of permeable paving and host 9no. Electric vehicle charging points as per the standards set out in the Louth County Development Plan (2021-2027) as well as accessible parking spaces located close to the pavilion building for easy access.

## Proposed Boundaries

Refer to Drawing 2003 Proposed Site Boundaries prepared by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects, included in this submission.

The existing boundaries are generally proposed for retention and enhanced with planting. The boundary created by the access road coming in from the west (Tierney Street) is proposed to be replaced with a timber post and rail fence which will continue north to the Railway Walk boundary.

Existing entrances into the site from the Railway Walk in the north are proposed to be enhanced with hard landscape surfacing to provide safe access for all.

## Planting

A significant band of tree planting is proposed along the eastern and western boundaries to form a dense green canopy. The management of lawn areas, with carefully selected areas left unmown during summer months will create sub-spaces that will have seasonal effect. The introduction of SuDS features such as swales is proposed along the north of the access road and south-east of the running track.

Drawing 2002 Landscape Plan, prepared by DFLA includes a schedule of proposed planting and illustrates the location and extent of mown grass, managed meadow and tree planting as well as existing trees to be removed and replaced.

## Tree planting

A total of 108 new individual trees are proposed in order to compensate for the removal of some of the existing trees on site. They will also improve the species mix on site. The proposed tree species are selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species). Proposed tree sizes range from semi-mature (30-35cm girth) specimen trees to multi-stemmed tree planting. Typical species proposed are illustrated on the following pages:

## Groundcover and Bulb Planting

Low planting is utilised to make and reinforce sub-spaces within the larger landscape spaces, for visual screening, visual interest, ecological purposes and to guide or direct people's movement. The low planting is conceived as subtle layering of greens within the open spaces.

## Hard Landscape Materials and Finishes

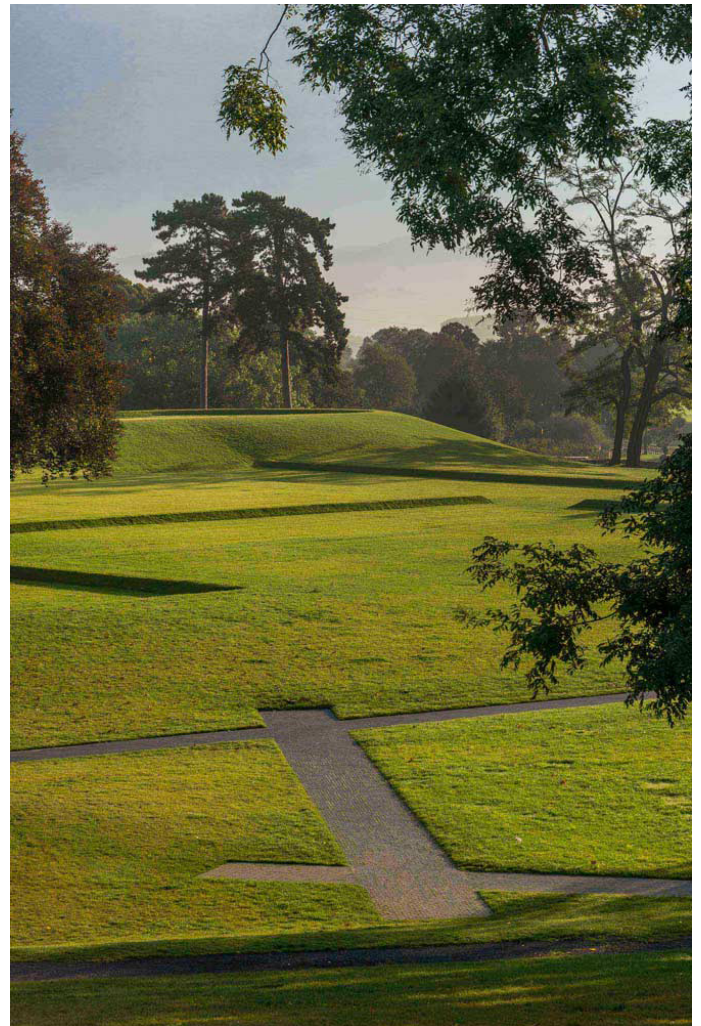
The selection of paving and other landscape materials is determined by proposed function, longevity and durability. The extent of materials and the locations where a transition is made from one material to another are determined by drainage and other sustainability issues. Paving materials where practical are proposed to be constructed in a way which is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, in order to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces. Primary vehicular, pedestrian and cycle circulation are proposed as a durable, limited range of neutral materials with robust construction. Secondary pedestrian routes are proposed to be of 'flexible' construction, particularly in areas which are within the 1 in 100 year flood zone. A range of paving details and finishes are proposed across the site.





## Wild Open Space

There are a number of open lawn and meadow areas proposed for the site. Locations are determined by recreation facilities, proposed pedestrian routes around the site, views and flooding history. Furthermore, the locations ensure that the spaces are activated and used to their maximum potential. The landscape elements are arranged in such a way as to utilise as much of the space as possible. A soft meandering footpath is proposed to the north through the meadow, an area which can benefit from future proposals due to its open nature. A hard path is proposed to the south of the site allowing access to the river edge and creating a link back to the Railway Walk along the eastern boundary of the site. A number of seating nodes and passive activity spaces are proposed along the southern route to take advantage of the river view and south facing aspect.









## Character Area 4 – Woodland Walk

### Our Vision

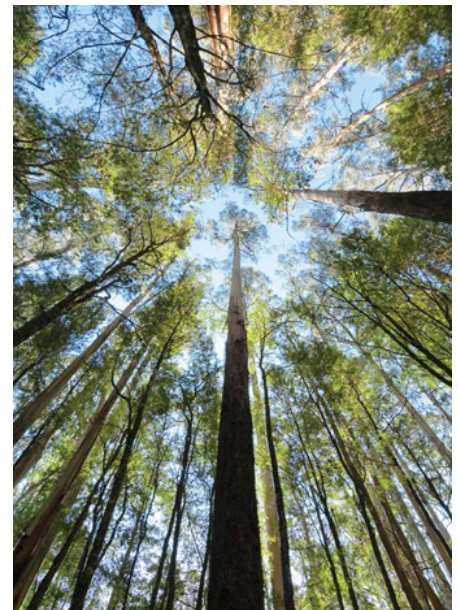
The overall objective in this Character Area is to develop a walking facility through Ardee Town with a north to south orientation through the HSE lands, linking the Fairgreen to the Ash Walk Area.

The wooded area surrounding St. Joseph's Hospital, to the west of Main Street, is a valuable natural environment in the town. Our vision is to increase accessibility to this space by proposing a woodland walk along the existing informal trail which traverses through the trees, as shown in the adjacent photographs, which will assist with improving physical and mental health and provides access to this natural environment. The woodland walk will begin in the north, linking seamlessly to the proposed public realm works at Fairgreen. The route will continue through the HSE lands and connect to a new road which will extend westwards from Ash Walk.

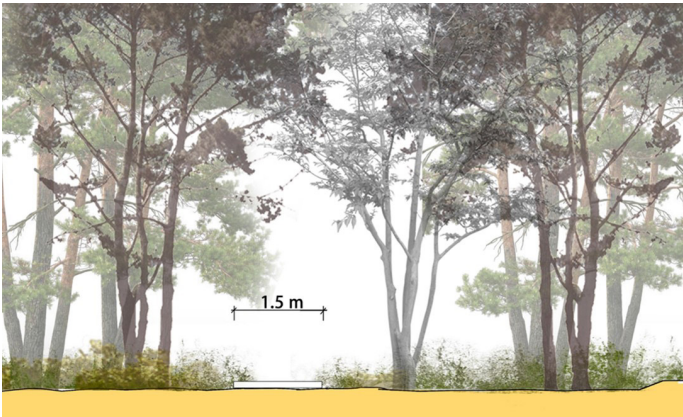
Given the untouched character of the existing trail, our proposal will represent a minimal intervention using a cellular confinement system specifically designed for tree root protection. The system creates a stable, load bearing surface for traffic or footfall whilst eliminating damage to roots through compaction and desiccation of the soil. This approach will ensure that the existing trees are not impacted by the proposed development.



**Exposure to forests strengthens our immune system, reduces blood pressure, increases energy, boosts our mood and helps us regain and maintain our focus in ways that treeless environments don't**







Proposed Woodland Walk Route

Indicative Section showing how the proposed route will have a minimal impact on existing trees.



## 5. Conclusion

The Ardee 2040 Regeneration Vision comprises a series of development proposals designed to revitalise Ardee and the surrounding area, generate positive effects for local expenditure, enhance footfall levels and the vitality of the town in line with the objectives of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 - 2027. High quality materials and finishes have been proposed throughout the four character areas to improve the public realm within the town and deliver much needed community facilities.

In summary, positive economic effects of the public realm works would be beneficial to the vitality and viability of Ardee town centre in the long term. The community infrastructure proposed will be an asset to the town which will encourage a healthy and active lifestyle and provide valuable recreational amenities for the wider community.

This Design Statement provides an overview of the proposals and should be read in conjunction with the wider planning application drawings package and technical reports/documents, which together, provide a detailed overview and assessment of the proposed development.

**Ardee 2040  
Regeneration Vision  
sets out an ambitious  
strategy for the future  
redevelopment of  
the town. The value  
of the Vision will rest  
on its ability to deliver  
positive change.**







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