



Conservation Research Analysis

John Street Grain Store Public Realm Project, New Ross, Co. Wexford

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

December 2025

Dr Jason Bolton

jasonbolton.wordpress.com

jboltonconservation@gmail.com

Contents

1.	Introduction and Purpose of the Report	2
1.1	Methodology and Limitations of Inspection	2
2.	Legislative Framework	2
3.	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Record	4
4.	Architectural and Historical Context	6
4.1	Historical Cartography & Illustrations	7
4.2	William Howlett & the John Street Grain Store	11
5.	The Public Realm Project	12
5.1	New Tiered Staircase	12
5.2	The Coal Yard	13
5.3	Corrugated Iron Roofed Structure	16
5.4	Site of No.1 Bridge Street	20
5.5	Wing Walls of New Ross Bridge (Old)	21
6.	Appraisal of the Impact of the Proposed Development	26
6.1	Nature of the Proposed Development	26
6.2	Alterations at Bridge Street	27
6.3	Existing Riverside Masonry Walls	28
6.4	New Tiered Staircase & Landscaping of Plaza	30
6.5	Discussion and Conclusions	33

Client: Wexford County Council

Authorship: Dr Jason Bolton

MA MIAI DipArchaeology DipConstructionLaw AdvDipPlanning&EnvironmentalLaw PhD

IMPORTANT

This report is for the private and confidential use of the Clients for whom it was prepared together with their professional advisors as appropriate. It should not be reproduced in whole or in part, or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written permission of the author. Please note: All recommendations are based on the plans and drawings supplied. Should any alteration[s] occur, further assessment would be required.

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report was undertaken at the request of Wexford County Council. The purpose of the report is to evaluate the potential impact of proposed improvements to the public realm space on the special architectural heritage interest of the grounds associated with the Grain Stores on John Street, New Ross, County Wexford which is a Protected Structure (Ref. No.NR0143 'Nolan and Cooney, 8 John Street, New Ross, NIAH Ref No.15605016).

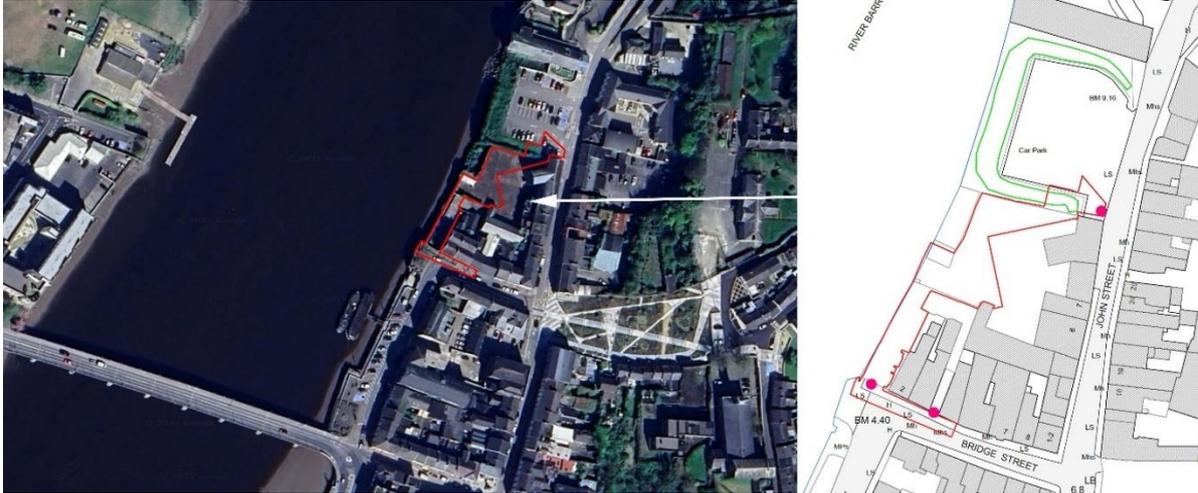


Fig.1: GoogleMaps view of New Ross showing the location and of the Grain Store public realm project.

1.1 Methodology and Limitations of Inspection: This report is limited to an assessment of the existing structures and site where the public realm works are to be undertaken. The works do not directly impact the two buildings on John Street, New Ross forming The Grain Store (a Protected Structure), but are contained the coal yard which served the rear of the grain store. This site was inspected by the report author in September and November 2025 comprising visual assessment and recording of the site and environs together with a digital photographic record of representative features. The assessment of historical significance followed NIAH guidelines, together with standard survey methodologies for historic places and relevant published and publicly available work as referenced in the main body of the report, while also considering the requirements of current architectural heritage protection planning guidelines¹.

2. Legislative Framework

The public realm works lie adjacent to three Protected Structures listed on the 2022-2028 Wexford County Development Plan (Fig.2 & Table 1):

- The John Street Grain Store is a Protected Structure (Ref. No.NR0143);
- No.2 Bridge Street (Protected Structure No.NR0001) ;
- New Ross Bridge (Old) and the Quay Wall (Protected Structure NR0086).

These three buildings were also appraised as of 'Regional' architectural heritage interest by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2005 (NIAH, see Section 3). The proposed public realm improvements lie outside of, but **adjacent to**, the northern end of the **New Ross Architectural Conservation Area**² (ACA) (see Fig.3). The public

¹ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2004, 2011, last updated 5 October 2022) Architectural Heritage Protection: guidelines for planning authorities – guidance on Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Dublin. Stationery Office.

² An architectural conservation area (ACA) is defined as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of a development plan to preserve. It should be noted that ACA designation is distinct from designation as a

realm project redline boundary also lies within the historic town and zone of archaeological potential of New Ross³. Each of the three Protected Structures were rated by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as of 'regional' architectural heritage significance due to their categories of special architectural heritage interest (see Section 3).

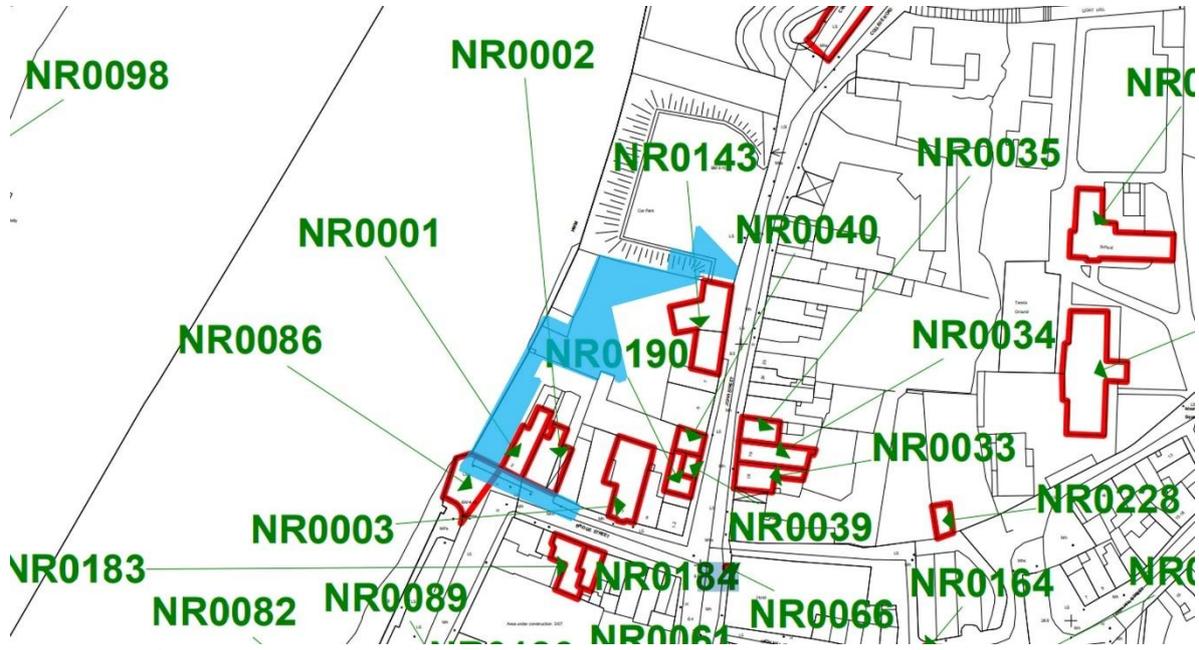


Fig.2: Extract from the 2022-2028 Wexford County Development Plan showing the Grain Store (Protected Structure No. NR0143) and other Protected Structures in the immediate area. See Table 1.

RPS No.	NIAH No.	Name	No.	Street
NR0001	15605009	K.R.M. Rogers/K.J. Rogers	2	Bridge Street
NR0002	15605010		3	Bridge Street
NR0003	N/A		7	Bridge Street
NR0033	15605029	Cleary	18	John Street
NR0034	15605028	Maurice G. Quirke/Ursula M. Quirke	19	John Street
NR0035	15605027	Harney	20	John Street
NR0039	15605014	Barrowside Glass/ Wexford Injury Clinic	4	John Street
NR0040	15605015	J. Gladney	5	John Street
NR0086	15605007	New Ross Bridge (Old) & Quay Wall		North Quay
NR0143	15605015	Nolan and Cooney	8	John Street
NR0183	15605011	John Murphy		Bridge Street
NR0184	15605012			Bridge Street
NR0190	15605013		3	John Street

Table 1: Protected Structures in John Street & Bridge Street area, New Ross (see Fig.2). The proposed public realm works lie adjacent to three Protected Structures (highlighted in green).

protected structure, although protected structures may be located within an ACA area. Protected structures are subject to separate procedures and requirements under the 2000 Planning and Development Act (as amended).

³ Archaeological matters are considered in the accompanying Archaeological Impact Assessment.

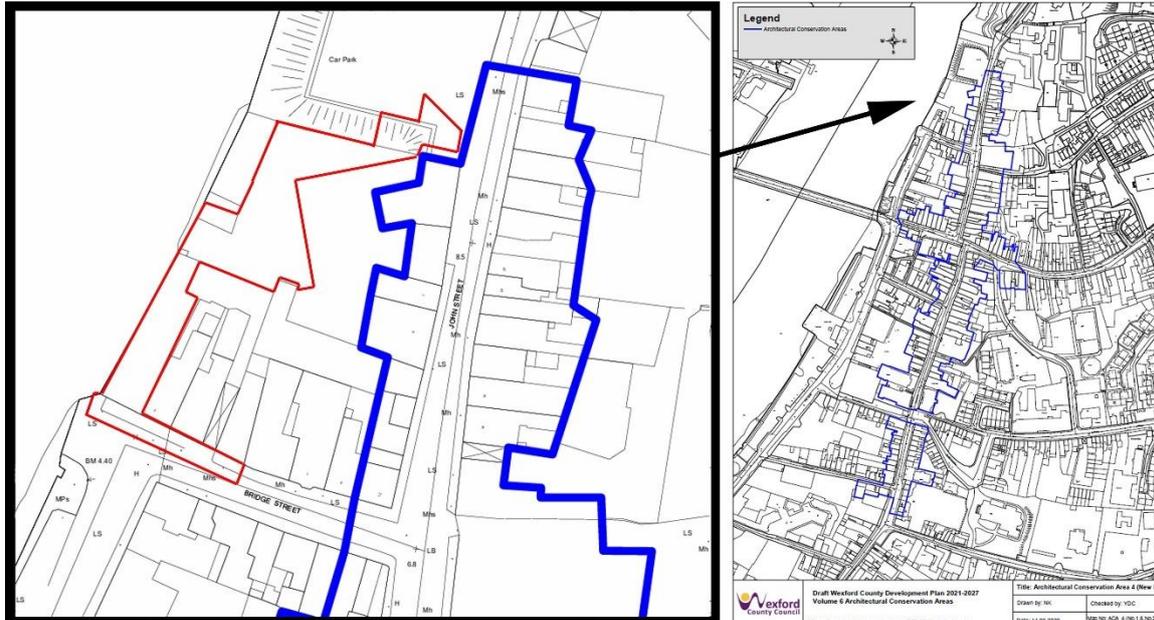


Fig.3: New Ross Architectural Conservation Area with the proposed development site (RED) and Grain Store (GREEN).

3. National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Record: The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999 placed the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) on a statutory basis to identify, record and evaluate the Architectural Heritage of Ireland. The NIAH recorded 303 buildings and structures in New Ross in 2005 which were considered of special architectural heritage value. The NIAH survey included a range of buildings and structures in the John Street and Bridge Street area. Three of these (the John Street Grain Store, No.2 Bridge Street and the old bridge and quay, see Table 1) are within the area of the proposed public realm improvement works. All three structures were rated by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as of 'regional' architectural heritage significance due to their categories of special interest (see Tables 2-4).

John Street, New Ross, Wexford (NIAH Ref. 15605016)	
Rating - Regional	Categories of Special Interest - Architectural, Technical
<p>Description - Attached eight-bay three-storey over double basement grain store or warehouse, extant 1840, on a T-shaped plan; single-bay (two-bay deep) five-storey central return (west) on a cranked plan. For sale, 2005. Pitched slate roof on a T-shaped plan centred on pitched slate roof on a cranked plan (west), clay ridge tiles, coping to gables, and cast-iron rainwater goods on eaves retaining cast-iron octagonal or ogee hoppers and downpipes. Part creeper- or ivy-covered coursed rubble stone wall to front (east) elevation with red brick flush quoins to corners; rendered surface (side elevations); part creeper- or ivy-covered coursed rubble stone walls (west) with hammered limestone flush quoins to corners. Pair of square-headed door openings in camber- or segmental-headed recesses with rendered red brick voussoirs framing timber boarded double doors. Square-headed window openings in camber- or segmental-headed recesses (upper floors) with red brick block-and-start surrounds framing timber boarded fittings behind cast-iron bars. Street fronted with concrete footpath to front.</p> <p>Appraisal - A grain store or warehouse representing an important component of the industrial heritage of New Ross with the architectural value of the composition confirmed by such attributes as the elongated plan form; the construction in unrefined local fieldstone offset by red brick dressings producing a pleasing two-tone palette; the uniform or near-uniform proportions of the openings on each floor; and the high pitched roofline. A prolonged period of neglect notwithstanding, the elementary form and massing survive intact together with substantial quantities of the original fabric, both to the exterior and to the interior, including a partial slate hung surface finish, thus upholding the character or integrity of a grain store or warehouse making a pleasing, if increasingly forlorn visual statement in John Street. NOTE: A weathered name plate remembers the steam mills operated by William Howlett (d. 1892), 'Corn Flour Seed and Artificial Manure Merchant' (Bassett 1885, 206).</p>	

Table 2: NIAH description and appraisal of the Grain Store on John Street, New Ross, 21 June 2005.

North Quay, New Ross, Wexford (NIAH Ref. 15605007)	
Rating -	Regional Categories of Special Interest - Architectural, Scientific
<p style="color: red;">Description - Remains of five-span road bridge over river, designed 1867; built 1867-9; opened 1869; replaced 1967, including: Part repointed benchmark-inscribed granite ashlar abutments between cut-granite piers on moulded cushion courses on granite ashlar bases having stringcourses below shallow pyramidal capping with cast-iron balustraded parapets having cut-granite "saddleback" coping. Set on quayside.</p> <p style="color: red;">Appraisal - The remains of a bridge erected to a design by James Barry Farrell (1810-93), Peter Burtchaell (1820-94) and Samuel Ussher Roberts (1821-1900) replacing a Lemuel Cox (1736-1806)-designed timber bridge (1796) partly destroyed by ice floes (Dublin Builder 8th June 1867, 407; Irish Builder 15th September 1868, 231): meanwhile, a benchmark remains of additional interest for the connections with cartography and the preparation of maps by the Ordnance Survey (established 1824).</p>	

Table 3: NIAH description and appraisal of the North Quay, New Ross, 21 June 2005.

2 Bridge Street, New Ross, Wexford (NIAH Ref. 15605009)	
Rating -	Regional Categories of Special Interest - Architectural
<p style="color: red;">Description - Attached two-bay three-storey double-pile house, c.1825, originally terraced. Refenestrated, c.1925. Now in use as offices. Pitched double-pile (M-profile) slate roof with clay ridge tiles, red brick Running bond chimney stacks having capping supporting terracotta pots, coping, and iron rainwater goods on rendered eaves having iron ties. Ivy-clad rendered walls with cut-stone stringcourse to first floor, and artificial slate hanging to side (west) elevation having buttresses. Square-headed window openings with cut-stone sills, replacement two-over-two (ground floor) and one-over-one (remainder) timber sash windows, c.1925. Elliptical-headed door opening with cut-granite threshold having cast-iron bootscraper, cut-limestone octagonal padstones supporting engaged columns, carved cornice, and timber panelled door having overlight (leading to square-headed internal door opening with glazed timber panelled door having sidelights on panelled risers). Interior with timber panelled reveals or shutters to window openings. Street fronted with limestone flagged footpath to front</p> <p style="color: red;">Appraisal - A well composed house of the middle size representing an important element of the early nineteenth-century domestic built heritage of New Ross. Exhibiting a refined, if understated architectural aesthetic, the design value of the house is expressed by qualities including the vertical emphasis of the massing, the slightly staggered arrangement of the openings diminishing in scale on each floor producing an elegant graduated effect, the reserved ornamentation limited primarily to a Classically-detailed doorcase displaying good craftsmanship, and so on. Having been well maintained, the house continues to present an early aspect with most of the historic fabric surviving in place, both to the exterior and to the interior, thereby upholding the positive impression made in a prominent position at the meeting of two streets with particular emphasis on the vista from North Quay to the south.</p>	

Table 4: NIAH description and appraisal of 2 Bridge Street, New Ross, 21 June 2005.



Fig.4: Left-to-right - the remains of the north side of the wing wall (arrowed) of the old New Ross bridge (demolished c.1968); the vacant lot where the hotel stood (see Figs.8-9) which will provide access in the new public realm space; and No.2 Bridge Street, forming the western surviving member of a terrace built c.1825.

4. Architectural and Historical Context

New Ross was settled on the eastern bank of the River Barrow between 1190 and c.1207 and acted as a thriving walled port town in the thirteenth century, but gradually declining in the later medieval period. The town was described 'desolate of inhabitants' in the sixteenth century, and suffered sieges during the Confederate Wars of the seventeenth century which included the destruction of the bridge in 1643⁴. The earliest maps are schematics from the seventeenth century depicting a D-shaped walled town enclosure with streets running parallel to the river, linked by cross-streets. However, there is little detail and the general impression is of a town in decline. The dissolution of the monasteries⁵ had an impact on New Ross with the closure of numerous religious houses including a Franciscan friary, St. Saviours Priory, and the conversion of the site of St. Michael's chapel to a cavalry barracks. From the seventeenth century onwards, much of the town was held by a few landowning families including the Tottenham's who had purchased much of New Ross from the Earl of Anglesey.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the medieval town was gradually overlain by the modern town. Lacking a bridge, New Ross appears to have limited trading opportunities and development was slow and haphazard. A free school was endowed in 1713 on an ecclesiastical site north-west of John Street. Linda Doran has noted:

*"During the eighteenth century a shambles and a meat market were located in the northern half of the town. The tholsel ... was located on the site of the earlier market cross. The present building was erected in 1749 and extensively refurbished in 1806. It served as a town hall, a market house and, from time to time, a court house"*⁶.

The town wall was identifiable in the 1780s⁷, but much had been pulled down by the first edition Ordnance Survey mapping c.1840. Philip Luckombe described New Ross in the 1780s:

"This place is one of the stable ports for exporting wools; but it looks as if it had but a very little trade; and though it is called New Ross, its countenance has the marks of venerable age ... The quay is but small; but, as well as the custom-house, large enough for its trade. Some of the buildings are like those of Chester, with shops ascended by steps, which renders them close and dark ... The ruins of the walls of Ross are still remaining".

The fortunes of the town were to rise in the nineteenth century after construction of a new wooden bridge in 1796 once again crossing the Barrow to Rosbercon in Kilkenny; but not before significant damage during the 1798 Rebellion:

*"New Ross's history is intimately linked to the 1798 Rebellion as the site of one of its bloodiest and most notorious battles. Fought on June 5th 1798 between a large force of Society of United Irishmen rebels and government forces garrisoning the town, it was a thwarted attempt by the rebels to spread the rebellion beyond Wexford. Though the rebels succeeded in driving the defending Crown forces across the bridge and repulsed a counter attack, ill-discipline and poor leadership led ultimately to failure. It resulted in c.3000 rebels and 230 garrison members being killed, wounded or going missing, just as vast tracts of the town were destroyed by fire"*⁸.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, New Ross appears to have been in poor condition. Bartlett's drawing of 1830 (Fig.5) shows mill or grain storage buildings adjacent to the quays indicating economic activity, and was described by topographer Samuel Lewis, in his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* published in 1837:

⁴ The early history of New Ross is considered in the accompanying *Archaeological Impact Assessment*.

⁵ Immediately after the 1534 Act of Supremacy placed Henry VIII as the head of the Church in England, an audit of religious houses (*Valor Ecclesiasticus* or church valuation) across England, Wales and Ireland in 1535 assessed the value of church properties and their annual revenues. In 1536, religious houses valued at less than £200p.a. were forced to close, the head cleric offered a pension, and all other residents forced to leave. The 1539 Act for the Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries effectively closed all monastic houses in England, Wales and Ireland, though the process a protracted one. Ireland had c.400 religious houses across urban and rural areas, and while a minority were protected by local patrons, most religious houses passed to Crown and private hands.

⁶ Doran, L. (2007) *New Ross c.1200 to c.1900 Seven hundred years in the making*. Dublin. Royal Irish Academy. P.13.

⁷ Luckombe, P. (1780) *A tour through Ireland*. London. PP.39-40

⁸ Coon P.7

'Ross (New), an inland port, borough and market-town ... The town is beautifully situated on the side of a hill declining so precipitously to the Ross river (formed by the Nore and Barrow, which unite about one mile to the north of it) as to render the communication between the upper and lower parts extremely inconvenient. Some of the principle streets run nearly parallel with the river, and are intersected by others at right angles; minor streets and lanes diverge from these in several directions: the total number of houses, in 1831, was 1040. The general appearance of the town for some years did not indicate an increase in prosperity; a circumstance attributed to the difficulty of obtaining land on leases of sufficient duration to encourage building; but within the last two years there has been a visible improvement, several new houses having been built...

...There are three extensive breweries in the town, and a distillery in Rossbercon ... Ross was an independent port until about twelve years since, when it was made a branch port to Waterford; but, though independent, it was closed against all foreign produce from 1786 to 1832, when the port was re-opened ...The principal trade is in grain, flour, live stock, bacon, and butter ...There is transit trade to Waterford; and Kilkenny coal is brought to Ross in barges, where it is shipped to other parts. There is a boat-building establishment in the town".

Grain stores were:

"Essentially buildings for the temporary storage of goods, warehouses range from the banaisic architecture of granaries attached to large-scale food industries, to the monumental palazzo-style warehouses built in Belfast during the textile boom and the impeccably functional grain silos of the early twentieth century. They belong to the larger order of commercial system which included linen halls, market buildings and department stores, all symbols of a progressive mercantile power"⁹.

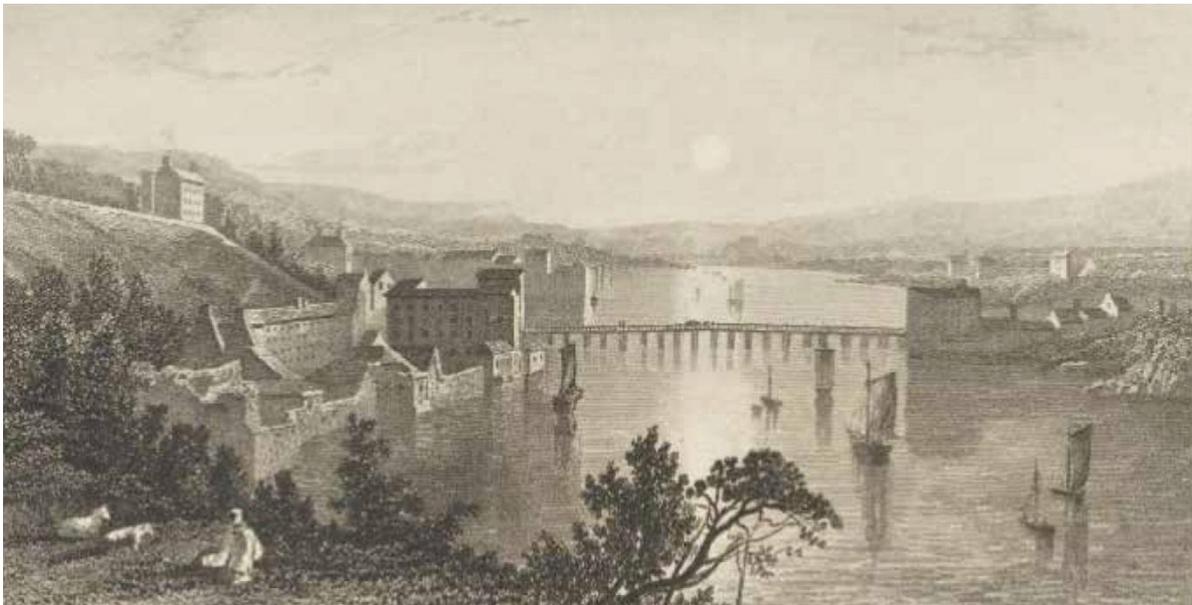


Fig.5: New Ross by W.H.Bartlett c.1830 showing riverfront walls, wooden bridge and multi-storey mill buildings.

4.1 Historical Cartography & Illustrations: The topographer Samuel Lewis painted a picture of a town overcoming a long period of decline, with much of its trade restricted until 1832. Nineteenth century maps¹⁰ show a growing confidence in building new houses, and new granary buildings associated with developing trade. The 1827 Tottenham Estate Map (Fig.6) shows much of the town laid out in empty plots functioning as gardens or simply waste land. The first edition Ordnance Survey map c.1840 (Fig.7) shows terraces along Bridge Street and along the west side of John Street, with a passageway between two buildings at the position of the Grain Store. The more detailed town plan of New Ross which formed part of the mid-nineteenth century Griffith's valuation shows the Grain Store site as two separate building (each numbered '19'), with a rear extension to the southern building, with a courtyard to rear and passageway to Bridge Street to the south¹¹. The 1881 25-inch Ordnance

⁹ Hurley, L. & Montague, J. (2014) "Warehouses" in Loeber, R. et al [eds] *Art and Architecture of Ireland Vol.IV Architecture 1600-2000*. Dublin, New Haven, London. Yale University Press. Pp.261-263

¹⁰ Earlier maps are considered in the accompanying *Archaeological Impact Assessment*.

¹¹ Also labelled '19' indicating it was in the same ownership.

Survey map shows the site developed, with a large grain store overlooking a coal yard with lime kilns built again the north wall, and with crane in a separate enclosure beside the river, and with a passage to a watergate and a separate passage to Bridge Street (Fig.9). Historic photographs held by the National Library of Ireland (Figs.10-11) show the west (river-facing) elevation of the Grain Store appearing very similar to how it appears today.



Fig.6: 1827 Tottenham Estate rent-map of New Ross showing the John Street site with buildings on John Street and Bridge Street, overlooking an open courtyard and river wall. The map shows quite a number of plots in use as gardens or waste land, with relatively dense settlement in the built-up areas.



Fig.7: First edition Ordnance Survey map c.1840 showing the layout of the site, with terraced buildings with a passage on John Street, an open courtyard lined by walls and other buildings between the site and the River Barrow; and with a passageway to Bridge Street.

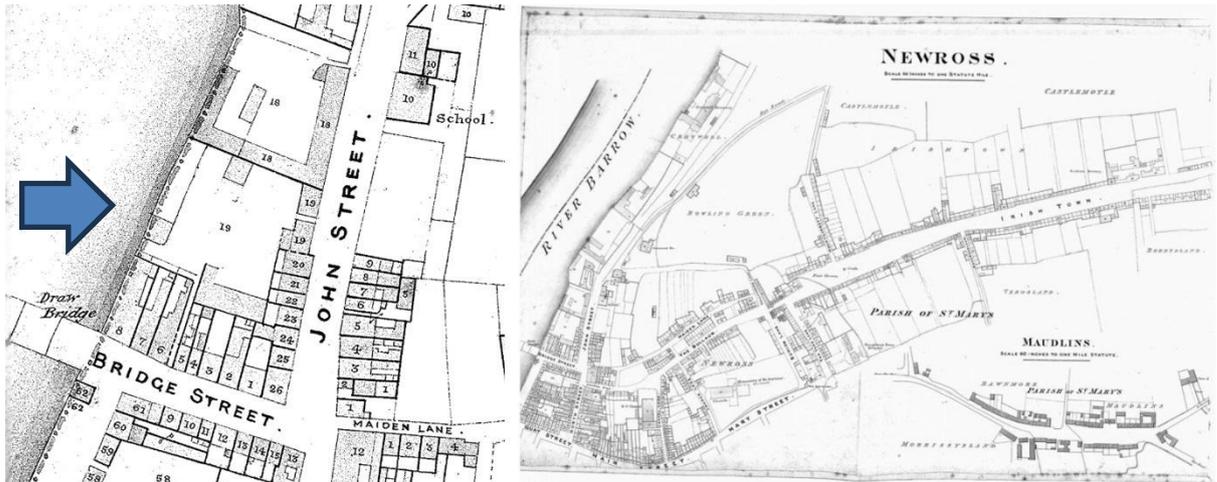


Fig.8: Mid-nineteenth century Griffith's Valuation (c.1854) map of New Ross showing the layout of the site; with two narrow buildings on John Street, overlooking an enclosed courtyard, a loading bay beside the river and the lime kilns.



Fig.9: 1881 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map showing redevelopment with a new large grain store with off-set return to rear.



Fig.10: Photograph of New Ross by Robert French, c.1936 showing the Grain Store. Source: National Library of Ireland.



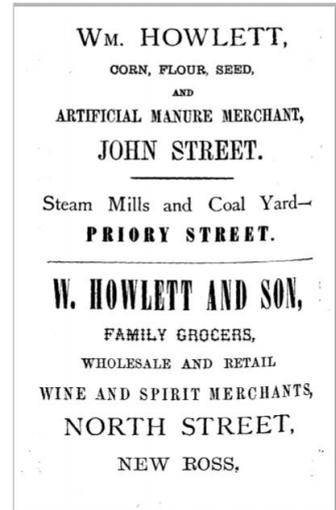
Fig.11: Photograph of the Grain Store by A.H. Poole c.1906. Source: National Library of Ireland. The photo shows the grain store, the riverside loading area separated from the coal yard by a high masonry wall with sliding timber doors, and a roofed building with a riverside window, and masonry wall with watergate to the right (south).

Comparison of historic photos of the site from 1906, 1936 & 1951 (Figs.10-12) show the gradual dilapidation: with the render falling off the side of the (now-lost) hotel wall, the collapse of the lime kilns, and the rough working conditions seen across the space. Note that the curving wing walls at the bridge (demolished c.1968) are in situ, as are the granite steps and the iron railings.



Fig.12: 1951 aerial photograph (see Fig.11) showing the three-storey hotel with outbuildings to rear which extended along the riverfront and which were later demolished. The bridge (demolished c.1968), balustraded wing walls and granite steps can be seen on Bridge Street.

4.2 William Howlett & the John Street Grain Store: The Howlett family were key figures in the brewing industry of New Ross. The 1837-8 Schools collection of the Irish Folklore Commission notes that “*The Howlett family were the princes of the commercial life of New Ross about 90 or 100 years ago. They owned fleets of sailing boats and exported the products of the brewery, and imported raw material*”¹². The NIAH refer to William Howlett on a weathered name plate (Table 2) and Slater’s directory of New Ross in 1894 records “HOWLETT, Wm., corn mcht., John st”. Slater’s 1881 directory noted William Howlett as both at ‘Agent for Manure’ and a ‘Corn Merchant’. The vast majority of quicklime burnt in Ireland in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century was intended as a fertilizer (or ‘manure’) to improve soil fertility. Lime was central to writings on land improvement, with Dease (1783)¹³ considering it more important than any other work (such as draining, ditching or ploughing) in tillage operations on barren land; and lime usage mentioned regularly in the Ordnance Survey Memoirs. George Wilkinson noted that lime for New Ross was supplied from “*Granny and Dunkit above Waterford, and from Kilmacow*” priced at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ d per barrel for dark lime, $\frac{1}{6}$ d – $\frac{1}{8}$ d per barrel for white lime¹⁴.



The John Street Grain Store appears to have been built sometime c.1864-1881, replacing two earlier buildings on the site. The grain store was operated by William Howlett, a corn merchant, who also burnt lime as agricultural manure in the courtyard (Fig.9). The Grain Store formed part of a commercial property dedicated to bulk commodities, and the link to the quayside and the River Barrow (Figs.11-12) was essential for the functioning of the building. The rear elevation of the building appears little changed since the opening decade of the twentieth century, and the grain store and associated site appears to have maintained its overall character as a working element of New Ross’s industrial heritage.



Fig.13: General view of the façade and north gable of the John Street Grain Store (left), and a view of the off-set return and the overgrown area where the proposed tiered stairs are to be constructed.

The John Street Grain Store consists of an attached pair of matching gable-ended eight-bay three-storey over basement building with an off-set four-storey return to rear. The building is built of random rubble consisting of locally obtained slates, siltstones and greywackes¹⁵. The John Street façade shows door and window openings in a hand-made clamp-fired brick, with granite used for window cills and the lower jambs and cills of the two doors. The replacement slate roof is served by cast iron rainwater goods, and the north gable has a street-level

¹² <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5009220/4999234/5123345>

¹³ Dease, M. (1783) *Observations on Linen manufacture, Particularly Bleaching ... to which is added Notes on Agricultural Knowledge*. Dublin.

¹⁴ Wilkinson, G. (1845) *Practical Geology and Ancient Architecture of Ireland*. Dublin. P.193

¹⁵ The bedrock below the site lies at the interface between the green to grey slate and siltstone of the Ballylane Formation, and the green, red-purple and buff slate and siltstone and greywackes from the Oaklands Formation which was historically quarried on the east side of John Street.

lean-to section, with the upper and lower sections of the gable rendered and painted with wall murals (Fig.13). The fabric and design of the grain store is utilitarian, comprised of random rubble masonry using stone types from local quarry faces, bedded in a lime-based mortar with no indications that the building was ever finished with a lime-based rendering mortar. The walls are punctuated by handmade clamp-fired brick forming door and window openings, with granite restricted to cills, and the lowermost jambs of the two street-level doors. The rear elevation of the same character, though has a series of projecting rough corbels which illustrate the past routing of chutes. The courtyard level has a fine granite ashlar doorway (Fig.24), with a simpler doorway in the west gable of the return.



Fig.13: The rear (west) elevation of the five-storey Grain Store (three floors at John Street level & two basement levels) consists of random rubble masonry walls punctuated by camber- and segmental-headed brick windows, with granite used for the quoins of the return and for the arched doorway, with the overgrown area where the proposed tiered stairs are to be constructed in shadow (left). The north elevation of the off-set return (Fig.12) shows projecting rough corbels arranged in a diagonal pattern which routed the grain chutes.

5. The Public Realm Project

The proposed improvements to the public realm are located in the former coal yard to the rear of the John Street Grain Stores, the vacant plot extending along the riverside at the site of the now-lost hotel at No.1 Bridge Street (Figs.8-12), and extending along part of the western end of Bridge Street (Figs.1,3). Much of the area is already open space. However, there are a number of structures within the public realm project area which will be impacted by the proposed improvement works. These include the quay at the site of New Ross Bridge (old), the vacant plot at the site of No.1 Bridge Street, a corrugated iron-roofed structure at the western edge of the coal yard, the coal yard and its boundary masonry walls, and the north-east corner of the site where the new tiered staircase is to be located.

5.1 New Tiered Staircase: A new tiered staircase is proposed to link the former coal yard with John Street, and to be positioned at the junction of the John Street Grain Store rising above an overgrown masonry wall at the edge of the grain store to meet the John Street car park. Historical cartography and the 1951 aerial photograph (Fig.12) indicates that the masonry walls in this area were part of a now-reduced building. The area is currently fenced off from the car park and is overgrown, with vegetation extending down the face of the masonry walls (Figs.14-15). The masonry walls are visible but obscured. However, without significant cutting, it is unclear how many openings or wall features may survive along the face of the wall. The walls consist of roughly coursed rubble masonry of the local slate and siltstone, with at least one brick-arched opening, and appears very similar to the masonry seen at the rear of the John Street Grain Store and the exposed masonry walls which contain the public realm project area.

The proposed tiered staircase, as shown on the drawings by ODKM Architects, is to rise into the corner where the John Street Grain Store (see Section 4.2) meets the car park area (Figs.13, 15).



Fig.14: The north wall of the site consists of a rubble masonry wall, formerly part of a reduced building (Fig.12). The area is obscured by well-developed mature vegetation.



Fig.15: Proposed location of the tiered steps at the south-east corner of the site rising to John Street.

5.2 The Coal Yard: The Coal Yard space consists of a concreted ground surface bounded by the John Street Grain Stores and the rear of existing buildings along John Street on the east side; masonry walls on the north and west sides; open space and the rear of existing structures to the south. However, the redline boundary indicates that the **proposed improvements to the public realm in the Coal Yard are confined mainly to the western half of the yard** (see Planning-P-001 drawing), and with the exception of the new tiered staircase (see Section 5) are positioned away from the John Street Grain Store and the buildings on Bridge Street (Fig.3). The existing ground surface consists of concrete (Figs.16-17), and appears to post-date the removal of the nineteenth century lime kilns marked on nineteenth century maps (Figs.7-9) which survived until at least 1951

(Fig.12). The rubble masonry walls of local slate and siltstone of the surrounding structures are an important contributor to the character of the Coal Yard area. The west wall (Figs.16-18) which separates the Coal Yard from the former riverside loading dock (Fig.12) has been altered with the insertion of a concrete blockwork doorway (Fig.18) into the former brick-arched opening with internal double-doors known from historic photographs.



Fig.16: View looking west from the site of the proposed tiered stairs towards the masonry boundary wall enclosing the former riverside loading area (outside the redline boundary of the proposed work).



Fig.17: View looking north-west showing the concreted ground surface with the rubble masonry wall separating the coal yard space from the former loading area (see Section 2.4) which is outside the red line boundary of the proposed public realm works.



Fig.18: Detail of the concrete doorway in the western rubble masonry wall, with the brick arch surviving above.



Fig.19: View looking south showing the rear of the buildings on Bridge Street and existing entrance into the Coal Yard (see Fig.26), and the concrete surface common across the open space.

5.3 Corrugated Iron Roofed Structure: This space consists of a corrugated iron roof structure, a riverside wall on the west separating the space from the River Barrow, and a masonry wall on the south side.

The 1951 aerial photograph (Figs.12,20) shows a lean-to structure in place in this location. The roof, south wall and part of the east wall appear to have been removed, and the footprint reduced: new concrete blockwork piers were introduced on the south side to support a new corrugated iron roof structure, and a concrete buttress was added to support the exposed wall-end of the east wall of the reduced lean-to building. The 'scar' of the removed portion of this building is visible in the surviving riverside wall.

The section of riverside wall with a watergate seen in 1906 (Fig.11) was blocked-up by 1951 (Figs.12,20) but remains readable in the existing wall. The south wall consists of a rubble masonry wall with a modern oil tank (to be removed) and a section of concrete blockwork at the northern end of the site of No.1 Bridge Street (see Section 5.4).

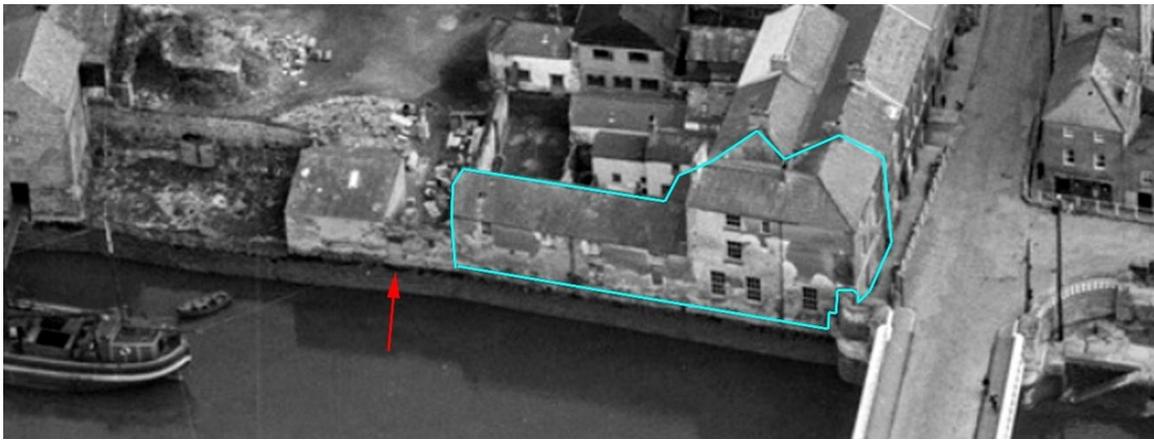


Fig.20: Detail of the 1951 aerial photo showing the surviving wall with a blocked-up watergate (arrowed, see Fig.28) between a lean-to building and the now-removed hotel at No.1 Bridge Street (outlined in blue, see Section 5.4).



Fig.21: View of the existing corrugated iron structure with the coal yard and John Street grain stores to the west. Note the concrete buttress at the corner. The wall fragment on the left (arrowed) marks the southern end of the former lean-to building (see Fig.20)



Fig.22: The former lean-to building was reduced and altered, with concrete blockwork piers introduced to support the corrugated iron roof structure on a smaller footprint than the original building. A mass concrete buttress was added at the south-east corner to act as the terminus of the reduced masonry wall.



Fig.23: The white arrow indicates the original south wall of the lean-to building (see Fig.20).



Fig.24: The interior of the corrugated iron roof building retains rubble masonry walls on three sides.



Fig.25: View of the wall fragment from the reduced lean-to (see Figs.20, 23).



Fig.26: Left-to-Right: The vacant lot of the site of No.1 Bridge Street; The rubble masonry wall forming the south wall facing the corrugated iron roofed structure (see Figs.23,27) and the existing entrance into the Coal Yard. The rubble wall (arrowed) is to be reduced in height to 1100mm to match that of the flood walls and to increase visibility of the site. The north face of this wall is visible in Fig.27 overleaf.



Fig.27: The oil tank (blue arrow) is to be removed, with concrete blockwork at the site of No.1 Bridge St.



Fig.28: The west wall contains a blocked-up watergate (see Fig.20).



Fig.29: Blocked-up openings on the riverside wall.

5.4 Site of No.1 Bridge Street: The former hotel (Figs.7-9,20) was entirely removed in the past, and the area largely consists of a twentieth century concrete ground surface (Figs.26), with a cement-rendered concrete wall on the riverside (west), a concrete blockwork wall at the north end (Figs.27), and a concrete blockwork wall at the south end (Fig.) adjacent to the wing walls of New Ross Bridge (Old) (see Section 5.5). **The area retains no features of architectural heritage interest.**



Fig.30: The riverside walls appear to be concrete replacing the former hotel buildings, with overgrown masonry appearing at the corrugated iron roofed structure (see Section 3.3).



Fig.31: South end of the vacant plot consisting of a concrete blockwork wall, with rendered riverside wall (see Figs.33,38).



Fig.32: The north end of the vacant plot has a concreted surface, relatively modern cement-rendered concrete river walls, and concrete blockwork separating the site from the former Coal Yard (see Figs.27-28).



Fig.33: Concrete blockwork at the site of No.1 Bridge Street (proposed as new entrance to the public realm space) See Figs.20 & 34 also. The concrete steps and metal railings in the foreground can be seen in the 1951 aerial photograph. Commemorative plaques of former bridges were erected on the blockwork wall.

5.5 Wing Walls of New Ross Bridge (Old): The bridge was demolished c.1968¹⁶, and metal railings were set along the river front to span the gap where the road once passed. The curving wing walls were retained but altered and incorporated into the streetscape, with a new machine-cut brick terminus at both north and sides; and with a gap cut into the curving south wing wall and a set of concrete steps provided giving access to the lower quay levels to the south. The metal railings separating the road from the pedestrian areas and the quays were retained, as were the granite steps which rose to the level of the bridge on front of the now-lost No.1 Bridge Street (see Section 5.4). These elements are visible on the 1951 aerial photograph (Fig.34). The area is currently laid out as a public pedestrian area with modern rectangular sets, a bench, small trees, signage,

¹⁶ A commemorative plaque on a brick pier at the site notes the death of Patrick Doyle who lost his life during those works. See Fig.33.

bollards and other modern street furniture (Fig.38). The granite steps, northern and southern wing walls of the bridge, and the metal railings along the paths¹⁷ are surviving historic street furniture.

Granite Steps: The **granite steps** are in situ, but have settled to the south resulting in opening of joints and cracking of some stones. The granite wall and metal railings are in situ. The pathway leading to the granite steps are rectangular concrete slabs and the road surface is macadamed.

Bridge Wing Wall: The **northern wing wall is damaged and in very poor condition**. Local subsidence has disturbed the moulded granite plinth and the curving coping stones have lost bond with the c.1960s brick pier (inserted as a new terminus when the bridge was demolished)¹⁸. The roadside metal railings are set onto a low granite plinth. The **southern wing wall was significantly altered c.1968** to accommodate changes in ground level following the demolition of the bridge.

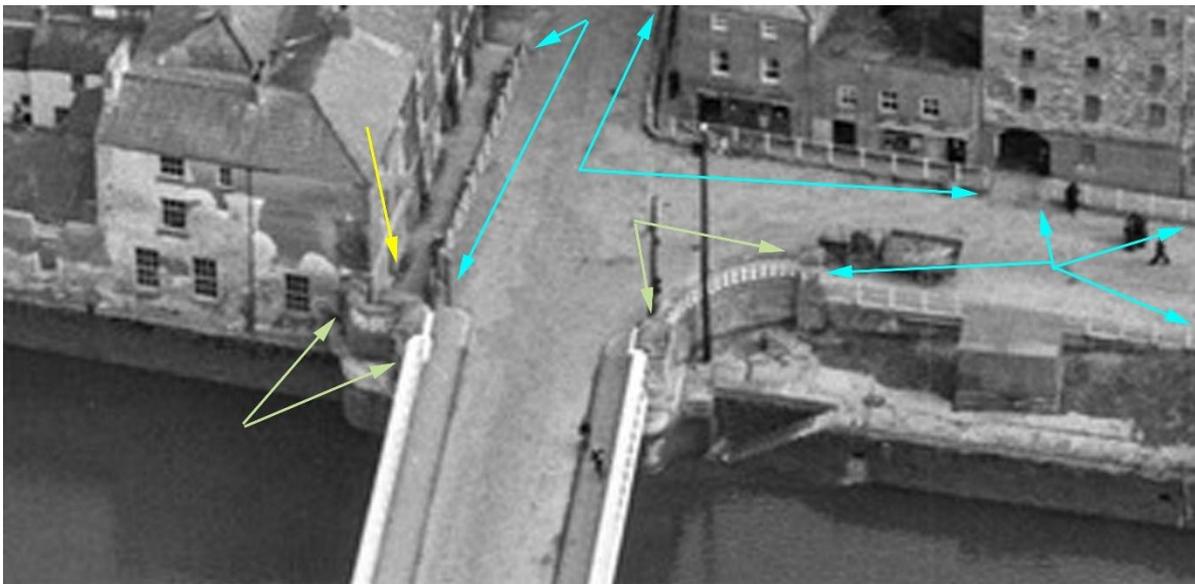


Fig.34: 1951 aerial photograph showing the granite steps (yellow arrow), the wing walls with granite coping stones (green arrows) and metal railings (blue arrows) framing the public realm area.



Fig.35: Current view of the site of the bridge which was removed c.1968.

¹⁷ These survive in three areas of the road, including in front of Nos.1-4 Bridge Street at the granite steps.

¹⁸ The level of disturbance will require take-down-and-rebuild to prevent collapse of the wing wall.



Fig.36: Settlement affecting wing wall and granite steps.



Fig.37: View of metal railings and granite plinth with concrete slab paving leading to the granite steps.

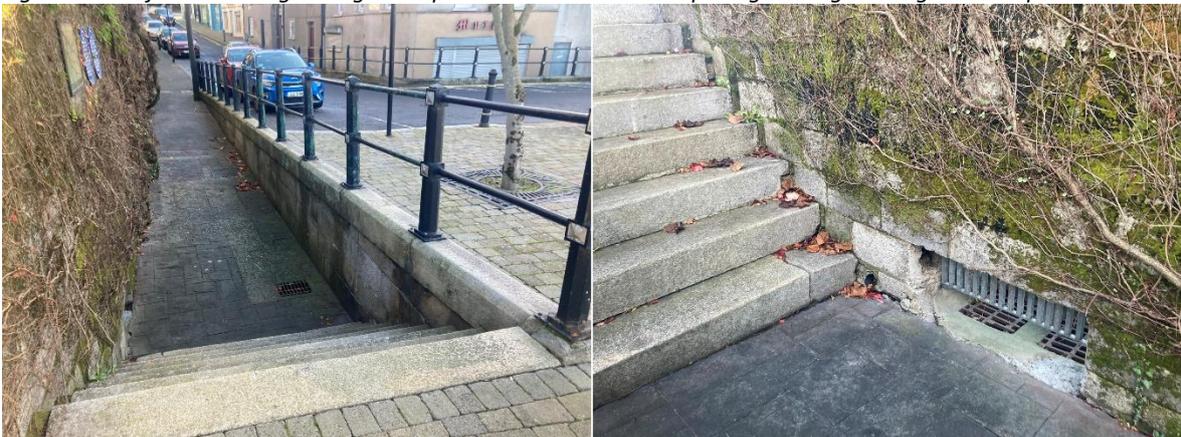


Fig.38: View of the granite steps and walkway fronting Nos.1-4 Bridge Street.



Fig.39: View of the granite steps and walkway fronting the vacant lot of No.1 Bridge Street (see Fig.31).



Fig.40: Part of the southern curving wing wall was retained (in yellow) while the rest was dismantled and reused to form a lower railing and entrance to a new set of concrete steps accessing the lower quay to the south.



Fig.41: The southern curving wing wall was altered with the addition of concrete steps and lowering of part of the balustrade.



Fig.42: Altered southern curving wing wall.



Fig.43: The metal railings are also in situ on the corner of Bridge Street and the along the quay – outside the redline boundary of the public realm improvement works.

6. Appraisal of the Impact of the Proposed Development

6.1 Nature of the Proposed Development: The proposed development is described in detail in the Description of Works (see Table 5) and accompanying drawings prepared by ODKM Architects, but can be summarised as public realm improvement works to provide public access route from Bridge Street to John Street through a new public plaza, and comprises three zones of alteration within the redline boundary of the site:

- a) **Bridge Street:** Relocation of existing steps on Bridge Street; replacement of existing railings separating footpath and parking bays with new guarding/balustrade with integrated seating; Partial demolition of section of the existing concrete blockwork wall to provide new access route into proposed plaza. This area gives access to the adjacent vacant site (formerly No.1 Bridge Street, see Fig.35) and provides a new sloping access ramp with intermediate landings; new feature wall with integrated seating and planting; new planting and landscaping between river and existing concrete flood wall.
- b) **Existing Riverside Masonry Walls:** Lowering existing stone masonry walls at the riverside and south boundary to 1100mm above ground level; removal of existing corrugated iron roofed structure & oil tank.
- c) **New Tiered Staircase & Landscaping of Plaza: Demolition of Ground Finishes** construction of new tiered steps rising from new plaza to John Street in north-east corner of the site including reduction of part of the existing stone masonry wall; repointing and repair of existing stone masonry walls; new ground surfaces and landscaping. The new stairs is immediately adjacent to the Grain Store (Protected Structure Ref. No.NR0143)

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocating existing steps on Bridge Street to the east • Removal of existing railings separating footpath and parking bays along Bridge Street and replacement with new solid guarding, planting and seating • Removal of section of parking bays along Bridge Street to facilitate footpath widening to improve pedestrian connectivity • Partial demolition of section of the wall between Bridge Street (abutting No.2 Bridge Street) to facilitate new connecting gently sloped pedestrian access route to new Plaza area in current yard. The new access route to be provided with solid guarding and walls with planting and seating • Removal of existing concrete base alongside proposed new gently sloped pedestrian access route to provide soft landscaping at water edge • Removal of roof and section of walls surrounding Open Storage • Lowering stone wall between the yard area and the river and between proposed plaza and rear of properties on Bridge Street to 1100mm above ground level • Removal of all redundant above ground and below ground services • Demolition of Ground finishes (Part tarmac, part concrete) to the yard area to facilitate new public Plaza including hardscaping, soft landscaping and seating • New tiered external stairs and landscaping from John Street to the Plaza level (on top of part of previously approved extension to The Grain Store, John’s Street) • Demolition of palisade fencing to the side of the building between John Street and Public car park and removal of 3 No. carparking spaces in John Street Carpark to improve pedestrian connectivity • Repointing & cleaning of all existing and retained stone walls • Associated planting and landscaping works • Signage and wayfinding • External lighting • All associated site works and services

Table 5: Description of Works: Improvements to Public Realm to Bridge Street and lands to the rear and side of The Grain Store, John’s Street, New Ross, Wexford (A PROTECTED STRUCTURE – RPS No. NR0143 – NIAH No. 15605016)

6.2 Alterations at Bridge Street: The proposed works comprise the removal of the existing railings and granite plinth and replacement with a new guarding with integrated seating; removal of the existing granite steps and construction of new granite steps; demolition of a section of concrete blockwork wall, and new landscaping including extension of the public pavement into the existing parking bays. The works will also include creation of a new public access route into the proposed new plaza comprising a new sloping ramp with intermediate landings set inside the existing concrete floor wall, the construction of a new site boundary wall with integrated seating and planting, and new planting between the concrete flood wall and the river.

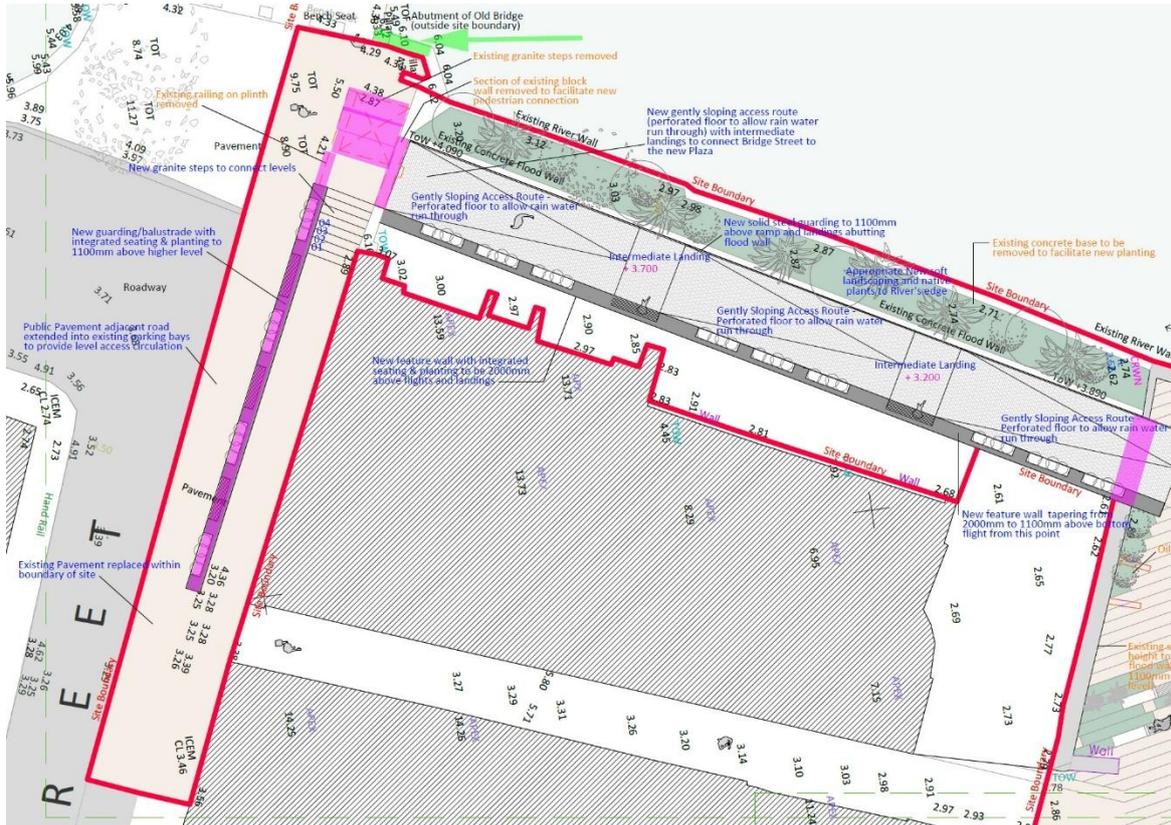


Fig.44: Extract from the ODKM Architects drawings highlighting areas of demolition (in purple) – the granite steps, railing and granite plinth, and blockwork walls at the north and south ends of the vacant riverside plot.

The proposed works significantly improve the streetscape and allow greater public access and enjoyment of the riverside quays of New Ross. The existing plaza in front of Old Ross Bridge is relatively isolated, and despite vistas over the Barrow, planting and information boards, there is little sense of character or place and the fragments of curving wing wall from the old bridge are isolated remnants. The loss of the granite steps could be mitigated by salvaging intact steps (Figs.36,38-39) and considering their feasibility for re-use in the new steps. The metal railings to be removed have matching railings at the opposite corner (Fig.43) and adjacent to the southern curving wing wall (Fig.41). The existing blockwork walls (Figs.32-33) do not retain any special architectural heritage values. The new works comprise the retention of the existing concrete flood wall, but with new soft landscaping and planting at the rivers edge, which improves the public realm and also allows inspection and maintenance of the riverside quay walls. The new sloping access ramp (perforated to allow rainwater run-through) and new boundary wall with integrated seating are modern in design, and set in front of the existing cement-rendered boundary walls of the adjoining properties. The access route replaces a poor quality twentieth century vacant lot with concrete finishes throughout, with a new sloping ramp of modern design, and if carried out to a high degree of craftsmanship and high quality materials, would not detract from the setting. An appraisal of impact of the different elements is contained in Table 6 below.

Proposed Work	Impact
Remove existing granite steps & Construction of new granite steps in to connect to new access route at upper level.	The existing steps and railings originally provided pedestrian access to the bridge (which was demolished c.1968). The steps have suffered from settlement. Proposed Mitigation: The existing steps should be assessed for potential salvage and re-use in the proposed new steps.
Remove Section of Existing Blockwork Wall	The wall is composed of a plain concrete blockwork wall which is of no architectural heritage interest and does not contribute to the streetscape. There are a number of information plaques mounted on the walls. Consideration should be given to re-mounting these within the new public realm works, or to provide alternative new signage on the significance of the bridge site.
Abutment of Old Bridge (outside of site boundary)	The north curving wing wall is outside the redline boundary of the development. However, this riverside wall has been dislodged and is at risk of collapse and in need of immediate repair (Fig.35). As this wall forms the boundary of the site, immediate repair should be included in the proposed works. The wall fragment should be carefully recorded, and then taken down and rebuilt in the same location.
Remove existing metal railing on plinth & replace with new balustrade with integrated seating.	The replacement of the existing metal railings and granite plinth with new integrated seating and planting, c.1100mm above current level as part of a scheme to extend the public pavement into the existing parking bays significant alters the space. The existing concrete ground slabs are not of architectural heritage interest. The metal railings and granite plinth have matching railings on the opposite corner and a section stands beside the southern curving wing wall, and clearly form part of a past public realm scheme. The metal railings are of good quality Proposed Mitigation: The existing metal railings and plinth could be salvaged and considered for re-use elsewhere in New Ross.

Table 6: Proposed works at Bridge Street.

6.3 Existing Riverside Masonry Walls: The proposed works comprise the demolition of the existing corrugated iron roofed structure and oil tank (Section 5.3) and the reduction of existing masonry walls to a height of c.1100mm above existing ground level (Fig.45).

The existing corrugated iron roofed structure is a twentieth century intervention to a reduced lean-to building¹⁹ which formerly stood at the site until at least 1951 (Fig.20). The existing structure is a mid- to late-twentieth century storage structure and its loss would not detract from the character of the Protected Structure. The oil tank is supported by concrete blockwork and was a functional intervention to the area, and is also of no special architectural heritage interest.

The reduction of the existing riverside masonry walls has a negative impact as it removes historic fabric. Some mitigation is provided by the vistas over the River Barrow which reinforces the historic connection of the space with the river, and the opportunity to carry out necessary repairs and remove past poor quality interventions to the wall. However, the crane loading bay is outside the redline boundary of the proposed works, and the sense of space in this working area will be lost. This area should be carefully recorded prior to commencement.

¹⁹ *The south wall & roof of the lean-to structure was removed, and the existing structure built on a smaller footprint.*

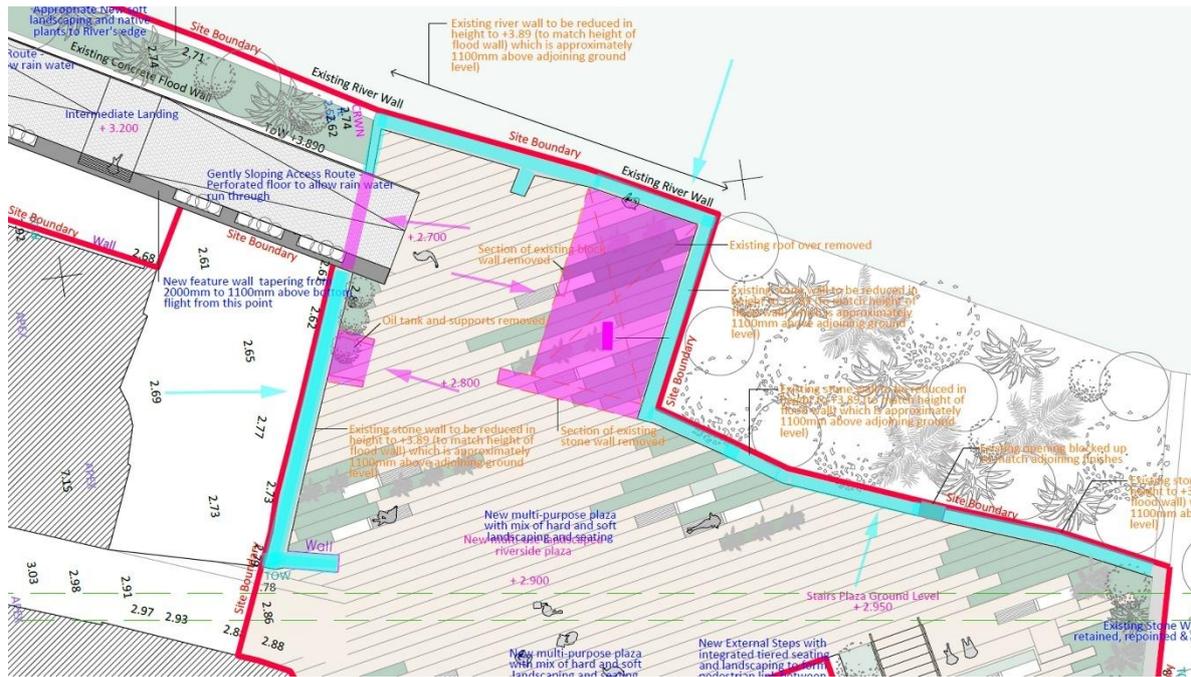


Fig.45: Proposed alterations to the riverside masonry walls (highlighted in blue) and demolition of structures in this area (highlighted in purple).

Proposed Work	Impact
Existing River Masonry Wall & Existing Stone wall separating coal yard from the former loading bay to be reduced to c.1100mm above current ground level, & existing concrete doorway to be blocked up.	<p>The proposed works have a negative impact as they remove historic fabric. The proposal to remove the concrete doorway and repair the wall with rubble masonry effectively erases a historic brick-arched opening (see Figs.18, 35), and the treatment of the crane loading bay is not addressed in the proposed works.</p> <p>Proposed Mitigation: The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive.</p> <p>A specification should be developed detailing the finish of the wall-top (to prevent water ingress to preserve the wall - either with a new stone coping, or a durable NHL haunching), the mortar to be used for repointing, for rebuilding and for any haunching²⁰).</p> <p>The stone from the upper parts of the wall should be carefully dismantled by hand and stored on pallets on site to allow sorting and re-use for repairs to all historic masonry walls within the project.</p> <p>The landscaping and treatment of the former crane loading bay (which will be visible from the plaza but outside the redline boundary) should be detailed as this area impacts the character of the former coal yard.</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of works, the quay walls (which should not be impacted by the proposed works) should be inspected from the waterside, and assessed for any necessary repairs.</p>

²⁰ This should be based on analysis of the original masonry mortars of the walls. The analysis of those mortars should accompany the record report of the walls to be deposited with Wexford Library and the Irish Architectural Archive.

<p>Existing Corrugated Iron Roofed Stone & Oil Tank to be removed</p>	<p>The existing corrugated roofed structure is a twentieth century intervention to a reduced lean-to building which formerly stood at the site until at least 1951 (Fig.20), and its loss would not detract from the character of the Protected Structure.</p> <p>The oil tank is supported by concrete blockwork and was a functional intervention to the area (Figs.21-22), and is also of no special architectural heritage interest, and its loss would not detract from the character of the Protected Structure.</p>
---	--

Table 7: Alterations at and adjacent to the existing riverside masonry walls of the former Coal Yard.

6.4 New Tiered Staircase & Landscaping of Plaza: The new stairs is immediately adjacent to the Grain Store (Protected Structure Ref. No.NR0143), rising from the new plaza to the John Street car park at the gable end of the Grain Store (Figs.46-47,49). The proposed new stairs are to be partly constructed on the single-storey element of the Grain Store extension (previously approved under Ref. No. LAC2401, but not yet constructed) and will not disturb or alter the masonry of the rear of the Grain Store. **The new staircase will obscure views of the lower part of the rear and off-set return of the Grain Store** (Fig.48). However, this is ‘back-of-house’, and this **should not detract from the character of the Protected Structure**. The main features of the rear of the Grain Store are the granite entrance on the south side, pattern of brick openings, and the chute corbels, none of which will be altered as part of the proposed development. Externally, the appearance of the building will remain largely unchanged when viewed from John Street. **The new pedestrian access to the plaza removes three existing car parking bays and should increase public views and appreciation of the Grain Store** (Fig.46) and is a conservation gain for the site.



Fig.46: General view of the façade and north gable of the John Street Grain Store (left), and a view of the off-set return and the overgrown area where the proposed tiered stairs are to be constructed.



Fig.47: Extract from the ODKM Architects drawings showing the proposed new pedestrian entrance on John Street.



Fig.48: The blocked-up windows and rubble masonry walls of part of the rear of the Grain Store will be obscured by the proposed new tiered staircase.

The construction of the tiered staircase also necessitates the reduction of existing stone masonry walls forming the north wall of the former Coal Yard. Historic aerial photograph (Fig.12) shows this to form part of a large, but now reduced, roofed structure. The masonry is largely concealed behind mature vegetation but some window openings are visible (Fig.15). It is likely that removal of the vegetation will reveal additional detail, which should be recorded prior to the commencement of works.



Fig.49: Extract from the ODKM Architects drawings showing the proposed new tiered staircase.

Proposed Work	Impact
Construction of New Tiered Staircase	<p>The top Section of Existing Masonry Wall in the North-East corner of the site to be reduced to facilitate the construction of the new tiered stairs. This masonry formed part of an early building and is currently obscured by mature vegetation. The repair of the wall should be considered a conservation gain.</p> <p>Proposed Mitigation: The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive.</p> <p>The stone from the upper parts of the wall should be carefully dismantled by hand and stored on pallets on site to allow sorting and re-use for repairs to all historic masonry walls within the project.</p>
New External Steps adjacent to proposed new external tiered steps	<p>This flight to steps is to provide access into the previously approved extension to the Grain Store (Ref.: LAC2401) which has not yet been constructed. These steps will effectively form part of the new tiered staircase and enter a new structure, and should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>
Existing stone wall forming the north wall of the Coal Yard to be retained, repointed and cleaned	<p>The wall formerly formed part of an earlier building (Fig.12) and may contain windows or other architectural features. The condition of the wall, and especially the wall-top, is unclear. The repair of the wall should be considered a conservation gain.</p> <p>Proposed Mitigation: The existing walls should be carefully recorded prior to the commencement of works, and a copy of that record together with a text interpretation of significance should be deposited in the form of a report (preservation by record) in the local studies section of Wexford Library Service and with the Irish Architectural Archive</p> <p>A specification should be developed detailing the finish of the wall-top (to prevent water ingress to preserve the wall - either with a new stone coping, or a durable NHL haunching), the mortar to be used for repointing, for rebuilding and for any haunching²¹).</p>
Section of existing palisade fence to be removed and new railings inserted ²²	<p>This is a modern fence bordering the car park, and its alteration with new railings of high quality and craftsmanship should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>
New multi-purpose plaza ground surface (hard & soft landscaping with seating.	<p>This replaces a twentieth century concreted ground surface. The replacement of one relatively modern surface with another modern surface of good design should have no impact on the character of the Protected Structure.</p>

Table 8: Alterations associated with the new tiered staircase in the north-east corner of the site.

²¹ This should be based on analysis of the original masonry mortars of the walls. The analysis of those mortars should accompany the record report of the walls to be deposited with Wexford Library and the Irish Architectural Archive.

²² New 1100mm high railings inserted to tie into existing 2m palisade fence.

6.5 Discussion & Conclusion: The proposed development, as set out on the drawings and site notice prepared by ODKM Architects, intends to carry out improvements to the public realm of the grounds and environs of the John Street Grain Store, a Protected Structure (Ref. No. NR0143). The overall aim of the proposed development is to repurpose a mid-nineteenth century coal yard site servicing a grain warehouse into a modern public plaza while retaining its character and special architectural heritage values. To enable this, the works have focused on providing public access through the site from Bridge Street to the John Street car park while retaining the circuit of historic masonry walls. This has necessitated a number of compromises, including the reduction in height of those masonry walls to provide views over the River Barrow, increase visibility of the Grain Store structure itself and to create the character of a new modern plaza. Proposed mitigation for this has included careful recording of the upper parts of those walls to be reduced, and deposition of a record of those works and the site (following the principle of 'preservation by record') with the Library Service of Wexford County Council and the National Library Service, and also with the Irish Architectural Archive.

The proposed works provide public access into the new plaza through the vacant lot which was the site of the now-lost hotel building at No.1 Bridge Street of which no trace remains. The works here include a new site boundary wall on the west side between the new access ramp and the adjacent building No.2 Bridge Street (Protected Structure No.NR0001) acting as a buffer between the two sites. This work is set back from the boundary of No.2 Bridge Street, and does not interfere with the boundary of that property, and should have no impact on that Protected Structure.

The public realm works at Bridge Street extend to the river edge and the northern curving wing wall of New Ross Bridge (old) and the quay wall (Protected Structure No. NR0086). While this is outside the redline boundary of the proposed development, the curving wing wall is in very poor condition and requires immediate repair (Fig.36). As mitigation for the proposed public realm improvement works, immediate take-down-and-rebuild repair works to the northern curving wing wall is recommended (see Section 6.2).

In summary, the proposed development offers considerable conservation gain for the Grain Store by providing for a new public plaza and public access to the site, and allows necessary repairs and ongoing maintenance to the existing historic masonry walls which enclose the former Coal Yard of the Protected Structure. The proposed works should not have a significant detrimental impact on the and special architectural heritage values and character of the Protected Structure. The change to public plaza use by Wexford County Council should be of particular benefit for the future long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Protected Structure.

Dr Jason Bolton

MA MIAI DipArchaeology DipConstructionLaw AdvDipPlanning&EnvironmentalLaw PhD