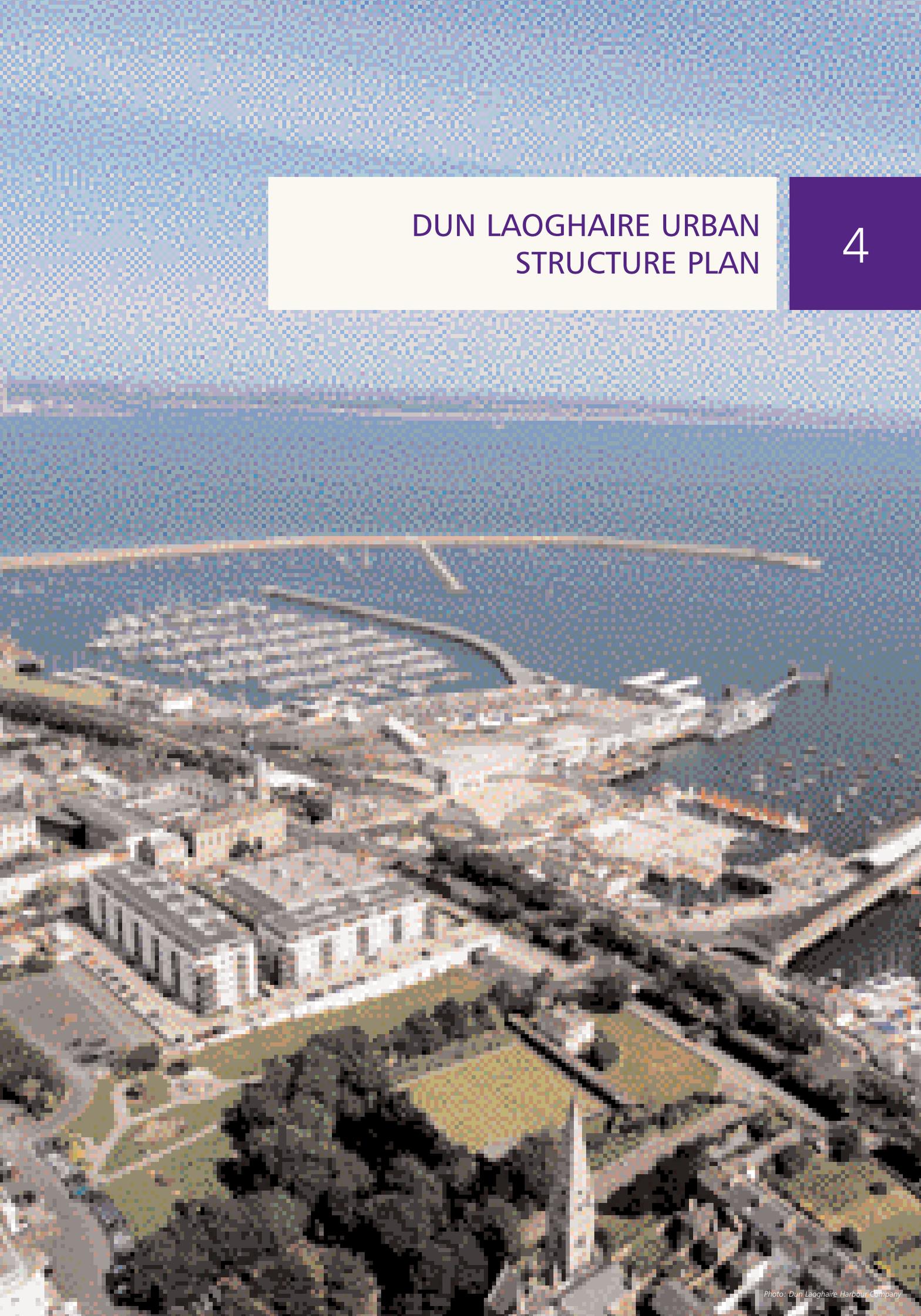


# DUN LAOGHAIRE URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN

4



# 4

## DUN LAOGHAIRE URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN

### 4.1 Introduction

This section sets out a Structure Plan, the aim of which is to provide a clear and coherent vision to guide the future development of Dun Laoghaire Town Centre where currently significant areas of urban land are under-utilised and under developed.

The town centre is in need of investment in commercial, retail, residential development and in the creation and improvement of public spaces. This plan envisages future investment in the physical environment being plan lead to enable the realisation of a coherent and vibrant town centre.

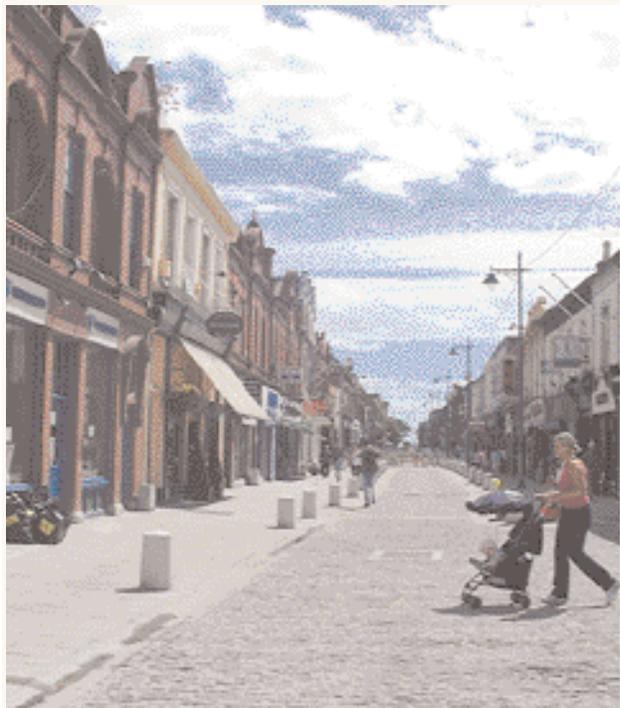
The context of this plan extends from the coastline between the East and West Piers to the laneways that run parallel with George's Street. It extends the length of George's Street from Park Road to Clarence Street taking in the retail and commercial core of Dun Laoghaire Town Centre.

### 4.2 Plan Structure

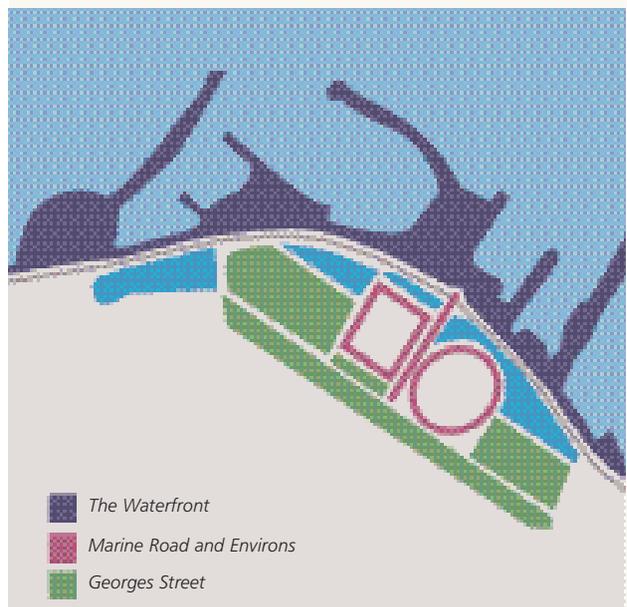
The Plan is structured as follows:

- (1) An appraisal of the existing built environment and public realm in the town centre that identifies weaknesses that need to be addressed and opportunities to be developed. The appraisal of the Town Centre describes three distinct areas of the town. These are illustrated in the diagram to the right. Appraisals Map Diagram 1 identifies the points raised in the appraisal.
- (2) An Urban Structure Plan that sets out themes for new development and broad guidance so that each development will relate to an overall and coherent vision for the Town Centre. The Indicative Urban Structure Plan for Dun Laoghaire Town Centre is illustrated in Diagram 2.

Georges Street, Dun Laoghaire



Map showing location of appraisal areas



Dun Laoghaire's primary amenity - the waterfront



## DUN LAOGHAIRE URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN

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### 4.3 Appraisal

#### 4.3.1 Area 1 : The Waterfront

This zone includes the harbour and properties fronting Crofton Road and Queen's Road. The DART which is in open cut and Crofton/Queen's Road, constitute a physical divide between the harbour and the town. There are three existing main access points across the DART line, one at the East Pier, one at the intersection of Marine Road and Crofton Road and one at Harbour Terrace. These last two primarily cater for vehicular traffic. This physical separation undermines the benefits to the town of its coastal setting and constitutes a barrier between the town centre and the town's primary amenity – the waterfront.

The area is well located in terms of public transport with the ferry port, the DART station and bus routes servicing this area.

Properties fronting onto both Crofton Road and Queen's Road are in a prime location and have a pivotal role in providing future opportunities to re-unify the town with its waterfront. Significant frontages to Crofton Road include County Hall with its main access onto Marine Road, the Harbour Master Yard and the surface carpark to St Michael's Hospital. The Harbour Master Yard and the carpark are under-utilised blocks of urban land with uses that are inappropriate for a town centre location. The key location of these sites offer major potential for redevelopment.

Beyond the surface car park to the rear of St Michael's Hospital is Charlemont Terrace which are Protected Structures, largely in office use.

Between this terrace and Clarence Street, the street is characterised by a mix of modern residential and commercial blocks interspersed with period houses largely in office use.

Beyond the DART line, the harbour is at a significantly lower level than Crofton Road. With its historical development as a working port, there is little concession to its enjoyment as a public recreational resource. This is evident in the limited

pedestrian movement between the two piers and limited connections to the town centre. With the addition of the marina pier, access has improved - however the waterfront remains dominated by private yacht clubs and semi-state bodies.

The role of Dun Laoghaire harbour is changing from a commercial port to a maritime recreational and passenger ferry port. This change is evident in the level of vacant land related to traditional harbour associated uses.

The gateways to the harbour - the Dun Laoghaire Baths to the east and the area known as 'the Gut' to the west - are not alone opportunities yet to be explored, but are existing scars on the landscape.

Charlemont Terrace



#### 4.3.2 Area 2: Marine Road and Environs

Marine Road is the main axis running north south in the town centre. The street falls gently from George's Street to the ferry terminal and DART Station and as such is a gateway from the harbour to the town centre.

The redevelopment of the Pavilion site illustrates the retail and cultural potential latent in the town centre and has brought significant activity to this area.

Marine Road lacks qualities normally associated with major civic streets. It lacks enclosure due to underdeveloped land, scale due to poor facades and civic quality in the widths of its paths and quality of public furniture. With its north facing aspect it is highly exposed. These problems are exacerbated by difficult access into the shopping centre carpark. Pedestrian movement across Queen's Road to the harbour is difficult and reinforces the separation between the town centre and the harbour.

Positive aspects include the terrace of Victorian houses adjoining County Hall and St. Michael's Church spire – the latter represents an important focal point both in the town and when viewed from the piers and sea. The open spaces around St Michael's Church are exposed and undefined and are unsatisfactory and underused as civic spaces. As such they impact negatively in the potential for Marine Road to attain its potential as an urban boulevard connecting the town centre to the sea.

In this context, the future development of the former garage site and its interaction with the entrance to the Royal Marine is important. The Royal Marine Hotel epitomizes the historical wealth of Dun Laoghaire in its architectural quality.

The Royal Marine building should constitute a landmark in the town. Its current setting is poor with limited visibility from the adjoining streets. Whereas originally a grand hotel approached along Gresham Terrace it is now approached along the rear of the shopping centre car park on one side, a surface carpark to the other and unsympathetic extensions to the hotel itself. As a major landmark building, it is appropriate that the sequence

of entry to the hotel is reconsidered in any proposed redevelopment.

Opposite the entrance to the Royal Marine Hotel is Eblana Avenue, connecting to Sussex Street. Considering their location in the town centre and their proximity to George's Street, these streets and their terraces are underutilized and constitute a backwater. With pedestrian movement in the area restricted by the adjoining convent and hospital grounds, there is evident dereliction.

Strategically located between George's Street and Crofton Road, the area is surrounded by large tracts of under-utilised institutional land. There is enormous potential for this area to be redeveloped, becoming a hub for new pedestrian routes within the town centre.

#### 4.3.3 Area 3 : George's Street

George's Street, the main retail street, runs parallel to the coast. Its narrow plot widths, building height, and rich architectural detailing form a unique part of Dun Laoghaire's heritage and creates a tangible sense of place. There is however, a conflict between the large retail spaces currently sought by the market and the narrow, individually owned buildings. As plot widths of retail units fronting onto George's Street are limited, where it is proposed to combine two or more retail units, the existing plot width shall be respected in the design and detail of the frontage proposed. Given the difficulty in attracting large retail outlets to George's Street, it is crucial that development opportunities are facilitated on backland sites. To link this development to the retail core, pedestrian access and permeability need to be maximised. It is also critical that continuous street frontages are created to enclose the public realm, ensuring maximum passive surveillance. A coherent relationship between the continuous street frontage and planned public spaces is required.

Bloomfield Shopping Centre is an important commercial anchor on the west end of George's Street, but is separated from the main street by a poorly defined space. Located at the entrance to the retail core of the main street there is an opportunity to create an important public space in this location

in conjunction with the entrance to St Michael's Hospital.

The Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre with its frontage to George's Street Upper and Marine Road is of poor architectural quality. Its monolithic form and repetitive brick elevations relate poorly to the scale of the town. Its blank facades internalise activity and draw vitality and life from the street to internal malls, most especially at the corner. Because of its pivotal position at the centre of the town, any successful regeneration of the town centre will need to readdress these issues.

The laneways to the south of George's Street are currently underdeveloped and in poor repair. Where first and second levels exist these are generally limited to storage. The potential for redevelopment along these laneways represents a significant development opportunity.

#### 4.4 Urban Structure Plan

The provision of a structure for the town centre is based on creating a hierarchy of major and minor routes and public spaces within the plan area. These routes will provide the rationale for the location of major new development, together with appropriate land uses. They will also focus on reinforcing the connection between the town centre and the sea.

##### Primary Routes

#### 4.4.1 George's Street and Marine Road

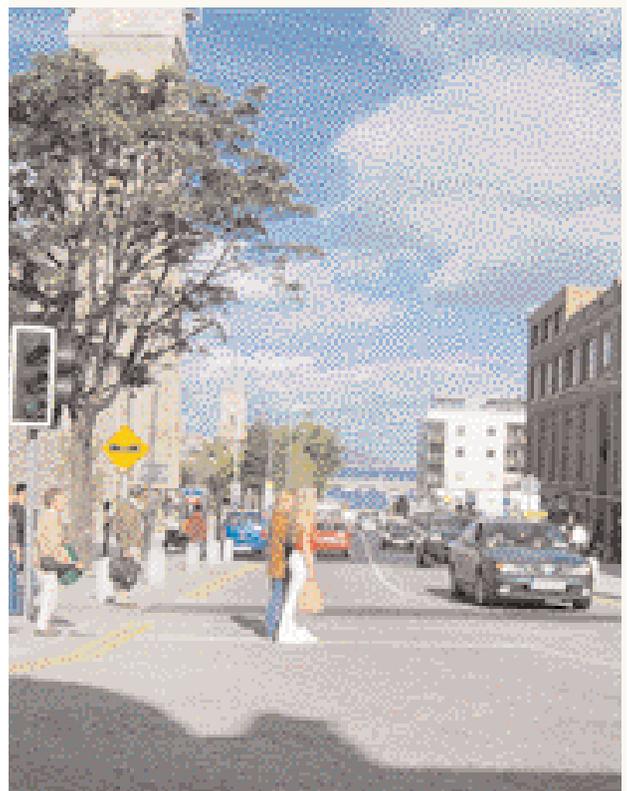
As part of the strategy to improve the linkages between the harbour and the town centre, it is essential to upgrade the streetscape of Marine Road. It is proposed that similar road and paving materials as George's Street will be laid, to provide a boulevard sweeping down to the civic space adjoining the ferry terminal. Upgraded lighting and the rationalising of parking will underpin this proposal.

New proposals that would restore direct public access to the waterfront from the civic space would be highly desirable. To reinforce the link between the town centre and the sea along a renewed Marine Road it is proposed to create a series

of new, well defined public spaces. These include the Pavilion Plaza and the square at the junction with Eblana Avenue, adjoining the Senior College and St. Michael's Church. It is also desirable that the church space fronting George's Street Lower is developed as a major civic space. A new 'bookend' signature building containing uses that would animate the space, both during the day and at night, may be appropriate.

There are now significant opportunities to develop a coherent streetscape along Marine Road. Opportunities exist for the redevelopment of the shopping centre frontage, the space over the ramps to the car park and the premises formerly used as a petrol station. It is important that development along the street is coordinated with any proposals within the curtilage of the Royal Marine Hotel and that a view of the Mariner's Church from Marine Road is maintained.

Marine Road viewed from Georges Street



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## DUN LAOGHAIRE URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN

It is considered important to bring more life to the street at ground floor level. The opening up of retail units / restaurants / cafes / bars onto Marine Road both at the Shopping Centre and the former petrol station is considered to be an essential element to any redevelopment.

- The main entrance to Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre should become a focal point in the centre of the town, given its prominent location at the intersection of Marine Road and George's Street. A redesigned entrance should permit the easy flow of people into the centre and back out to the street. The frontage to Marine Road should be redeveloped to recreate an appropriate streetscape and to create frontage that engages with and enlivens the street.
- Development of the corner sites at the junction of Eblana Avenue and Marine Road and at the entrance to the Royal Marine Hotel and Marine Road should strive to reinforce and remake the fragmented streetscape. They should serve as gateways into the town centre when viewed from the harbour and as focal points along secondary routes.
- Bloomfield Shopping Centre is isolated from George's Street by a narrow strip currently serving as a surface car park. Numbers 35-37 George's Street undermines its connection to the main retail street. These units form an island the rear of which face the shopping centre and are underdeveloped given their proximity to the centre. There is an opportunity here to create an inviting urban and civic space through the redevelopment of these units. The frontage of this development would reflect it's setting as an island building in a civic space.
- The laneways to the south of George's Street offer an opportunity to provide modern residential accommodation over shops, thereby bringing life and vitality to an area currently lacking identity or direction. (Specific Local Objective 10, Map 3 County Development Plan).

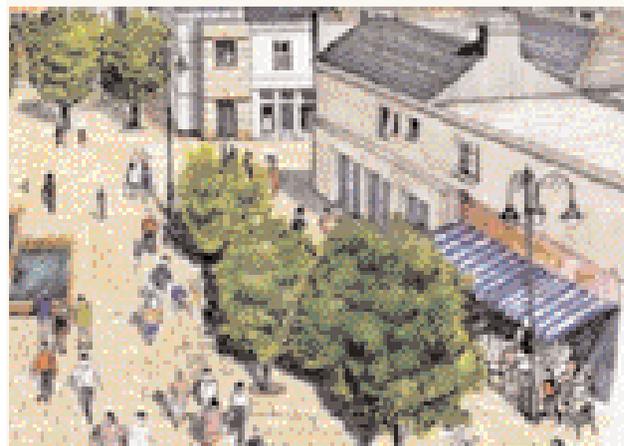
*Entrance to Royal Marine Hotel*



*Disused Space to base of Church Tower Marine Road*



*View of potential new civic space outside Bloomfields*



### Secondary Routes

#### 4.4.2 Sussex Street, Eblana Avenue and The Royal Marine Hotel.

The Urban Structure Plan identifies a network of secondary routes to the west of Marine Road.

The extension of Sussex Street to allow pedestrian movement through to Crofton Road will create an important new link with the town centre. It will also allow direct access between the town centre and the DART and bus stop, increasing the possible mix of uses that may be provided along this route and any future east west routes through the hospital and convent lands.

- Development in this area should create a network of new streets and public spaces to create an attractive living and working environment. These streets and squares should create a series of secondary routes between George's Street, Crofton Road and Royal Marine Road and provide a framework for the subdivision of the block. Development in this area should have a tight urban grain, variety in its architectural language and unit sizes that will encourage and promote a mix of uses.
- As a major landmark building, it is appropriate to recreate an entrance to the Royal Marine Hotel that is elegant and of a civic scale. A new street that exploits the vista of the Mariner's Church and invites pedestrian movement to the hotel and adjoining parks with their views over the harbour would be unique to Dun Laoghaire.
- This street will draw people into Moran Park and recreate the ambience of the former Gresham Terrace moving towards the hotel. From Moran Park, the attractions to the north will be the new library and cultural building (Specific Local Objective 6, Map 3 County Development Plan) and the Carlisle Pier (Specific Local Objective 5, Map 3 County Development Plan). To the south, a laneway with commercial frontage will lead one back up onto George's Street.
- The development of the Carlisle Pier in accordance with the specific local objective for this valuable site will create an

attraction that will be critical in improving connections between the town centre and the coast.

- The laneways to the rear of George's Street are currently an underutilized resource. These laneways have the potential to provide commercial spaces at ground floor level with residential accommodation overhead. This mix of uses and scale of development will give security to these lanes by increasing surveillance and will strengthen the retail and commercial heart of the town centre (Specific Local Objective 10, Map 3 County Development Plan).

The development of the commercial potential of George's Place along with opportunities to link this area directly to George's Street Lower and the commercial core of the town centre will be encouraged (Specific Local Objective 4, Map 3 County Development Plan).

To the east of the town centre, the streets north of George's Street have a residential character that is part of the unique quality of Dun Laoghaire town centre. This character and ambience is protected by Specific Local Objective 7 Map 3, County Development Plan. South of George's Street Upper is an area that is transitional from major town centre zoning to residential in respect to its use and form. The use of the area is primarily office use that respects the historical residential plot size and building. This buffer provides office employment, which is an important element of any town centre (see Specific Local Objective 9, Map 3 County Development Plan)

*Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre Rear Elevation along entrance to Royal Marine Hotel*



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Back land and dereliction and underused urban land off Sussex Street



### 4.4.3 Public Spaces

An important aspect of this plan is the identification of opportunities to create public spaces and the improvement of existing spaces.

The area to the front of Bloomfield Shopping Centre has the potential to be an important civic space. Taking advantage of the commercial frontages that open on to it and the variety of existing uses, this location has the potential to attract visitors late into the evening. With the redevelopment of numbers 35-37 George's Street, as described above, this space, together with the forecourt of the hospital, has the potential to be improved and given a new identity as a gateway to Dun Laoghaire. Such a scheme would also involve new paving, street furniture and lighting, together with the rationalisation of car parking.

- The area between Crofton Road and the Harbour Master Building should be developed so as to encourage visitors to Dun Laoghaire by rail and bus to enter and explore the town. As a pedestrian route leading up to George's Street, this area has the potential to become an attractive civic space drawing people into the town centre. As such, it should be designed to incorporate a variety of uses at ground floor and have a scale and variety of detail that relates it to existing development in the town centre.

The design of this space and the surrounding buildings should reflect the contours of the site. They should be of the highest design quality given their role as a gateway to the town centre and their proximity to an important protected structure. The link between the DART station and the town centre could be greatly enhanced by the extension of this public space to the station building and a possible future link with the ferry terminal building.

- The existing public space at the corner of George's Street Lower and Marine Road is currently underused and of poor design. With its excellent orientation and central location it is desirable that it is developed as a major civic space. A new 'bookend' signature building containing uses that would animate the space both during the day and at night

may be appropriate.

- Historically, Marine Road terminated at the water's edge off the Victoria wharf. This simple and direct relationship between the town centre and the sea was lost with the redevelopment of the ferry terminal. Although the civic space as developed is attractive, it is isolated from both the town centre and the water's edge. It is also underused.

It is desirable that this space is redeveloped to its full potential. As a space it needs surrounding uses that will animate it both by day and by night. The wall and lower car park that blocks the view out to the sea and direct access off the water needs to be redesigned. Its relationship with Marine Road also needs to be redesigned with the primary aim of encouraging pedestrian/ cyclist movement down from the town centre. Such movement is currently difficult due to the roundabout.

### 4.4.4 Landmark Buildings

This plan will encourage development that is consistent with good urban design principles. New development should strive to be contextual. New development should seek to re-establish streetscapes, to be appropriately scaled and to be rich in materials and details consistent with the existing typology of the town centre. It is appropriate however, to provide landmark buildings at strategic points throughout the town centre. These will generally be located at gateways to the centre, to close vistas and to mark important corners or new civic spaces.

An exceptional landmark building is sought for the Carlisle Pier



George's Street



Narrow Frontages along George's Street



Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre.



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### 4.4.5 The Waterfront

The Waterfront stretches from the Dun Laoghaire Baths to the area known as 'the Gut'.

'The Gut' is considered to be a key site in this area and a gateway site on the approach to Dun Laoghaire. The redevelopment of 'the Gut' is a Specific Local Objective (No. 9) identified on Map 3 of the County Development Plan. There is potential in 'the Gut' to provide for uses that would enliven this area of the waterfront. The redevelopment of this site should provide public access to the coast and uses that benefit from and add to the mix of activities in this area.

Dun Laoghaire harbour historically was an important freight port, but this has changed in recent times. The port is now primarily used as a passenger ferry port and for recreational sailing. The objective of this plan is to protect the harbour for harbour related uses but not to confine permitted uses in the harbour to a degree that exclusively attracts those with an interest in active maritime recreation.

There is a need to attract uses to the harbour that cater for a broader spectrum of the population of Dun Laoghaire. Uses that benefit from their coastal setting and that provide surveillance, vitality and a mix of uses within the harbour shall be encouraged.

Specific Local Objective 5 on Map 3 of the County Development Plan addresses the Carlisle Pier. The objective includes the vision for an exceptional landmark building of international, architectural quality that regenerates and enlivens the waterfront.

The Harbour Development Plan to be prepared by the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company will be pivotal in realising the potential of the harbour. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council will offer assistance and input into the preparation of this plan.

At the far side of the harbour the Baths site lies vacant and crumbling. The potential to develop a landmark building at this location, a gateway to the major town centre of Dun Laoghaire, is being actively promoted. The future use of this

site is to include uses that reflect the historic recreational link between this area and the waterfront (Specific Local Objective 8, Map 3 County Development Plan).

The development of a coastal walk / cycle path is an objective of the County Development Plan (Chapter 9) - the achievement of this in a manner that facilitates movement between the waterfront and development along the waterfront is an objective of this Urban Structure Plan.

Along the waterfront and linking with the core of the town centre, a co-ordinated landscaping scheme in terms of design, pattern and materials, using a consistent design language is required.

### 4.4.6 The Metals, the DART line, Crofton Road and Queen's Road

The Metals, the DART line, Crofton Road and Queen's Road have been identified as elements that divide the harbour and the town centre. The potential to reverse this situation and create links between the town centre and the harbour at strategic points needs to be addressed when considering future development in this area.

The bridging over of the DART line at strategic points would remove the physical divide between the harbour and the town. This also opens up opportunities to create civic spaces linked with the Metals, animated with appropriate uses, including a Dun Laoghaire food and producers and craft market, as a tourist development project.

### 4.4.7 Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:-

1. Upgrade Dun Laoghaire town centre by the implementation of the vision for the town's future development as set out in the Urban Structure Plan.
2. Enhance the range of uses along the waterfront and to encourage activities which create increased attraction for the general public.
3. Improve physical linkages and accessibility between the town centre and waterfront.

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Underused alleyways to South of George's Street



4. Encourage and provide for increased pedestrian permeability between George's Street and Crofton Road.
5. Identify and encourage development of key sites at present under-utilised e.g. Carlisle Pier, Harbour Master Yard, hospital grounds, George's Place, Royal Marine grounds.
6. Encourage development of landmark buildings of architectural quality and appropriate to context.
7. Provide a network of attractive urban spaces.
8. Improve and enhance existing visual amenity and streetscape within the plan area.
9. Plan and implement a coherent landscaping scheme along the waterfront and along Marine Road and environs.
10. Seek to ensure a balanced development of the town centre through the development control process and to require appropriate uses at ground floor level and at corner sites which contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre.
11. Upgrade the road leading from the Coal Quay Bridge to 'the Gut' and to explore the possibility of providing pedestrian access by way of a cantilevered board walk.
12. To implement a street tree planting and soft landscaping programme with the Urban Structure Plan area.

In addition to the objectives listed above, Map 3 of the County Development Plan identifies specific local objectives relevant to the Urban Structure Plan. These are:

2. To encourage the redevelopment of 'the Gut' adjacent to the West Pier.
4. To seek the renewal of the obsolete area at George's Place, the Fire Station and adjacent area.
5. To encourage the redevelopment of the Carlisle Pier with an exceptional landmark building of international architectural quality that regenerates and enlivens the waterfront. The landmark building must incorporate uses that will bring significant cultural, social, recreational and economic benefits to the Nation and to Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown. The landmark building must include a major public cultural attraction of National importance. The landmark building must provide for significant public accessibility and permeability, with walkways, viewing areas and public spaces throughout. The landmark

- building should integrate with the immediate built environment and should provide improved accessibility between the development and Dun Laoghaire major town centre. The architectural character of the landmark building should be such that the image it portrays would be a reflection of its use and unique maritime setting and become a symbol of both the Nation and Dun Laoghaire.
6. To provide for a library and cultural centre at Moran Park.
7. Dun Laoghaire: To allow for office development, excluding that to which the public has frequent access, providing it respects the character and form of the existing built fabric, specifically the existing streetscape and/or the envelope of the building including railing and forecourt area, and that not less than one third of the gross floor area of each building be retained in residential use, and to encourage the retention of residential uses by seeking to enhance amenities and by refusing all non-compatible uses.
8. To redevelop the Dun Laoghaire Baths site. Any redevelopment of the Dun Laoghaire Baths site shall incorporate a public swimming pool of not less than 25 metres.
9. Dun Laoghaire: To allow for office development and group medical practices, providing such developments respect the character and form of the existing built fabric, specifically the existing streetscape and/or the envelope of the building including railing and forecourt area.
10. To promote and encourage development, within the major town centre zoning, along the laneways to the south of George's Street.

### Dun Laoghaire

When considering development proposals in Dun Laoghaire, the Council will have regard to the visual impact such development will have on the surrounding area when viewed from the East and West Piers of the Harbour.



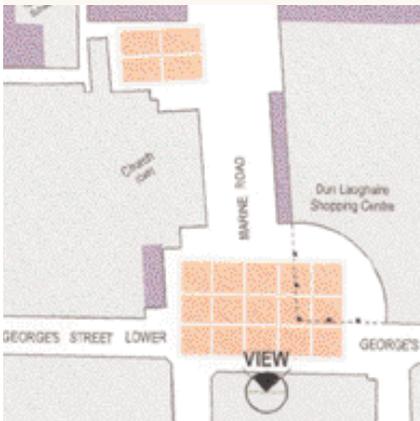
## DUN LAOGHAIRE URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN

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### 4.5 Opportunity: St Michael's Square

An opportunity exists to enhance the public realm by remodelling the Marine Road / George's Street Corner of the Shopping Centre, opening it up to the square and exploring the possibility of adding a skin of apartments along Marine Road.

The north east corner of the square could be better defined by the provision of a bookend building against the gable of the EBS office. This new building, ideally a café or restaurant, should generate activity and take advantage of the ideal aspect.



Location Map



Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre



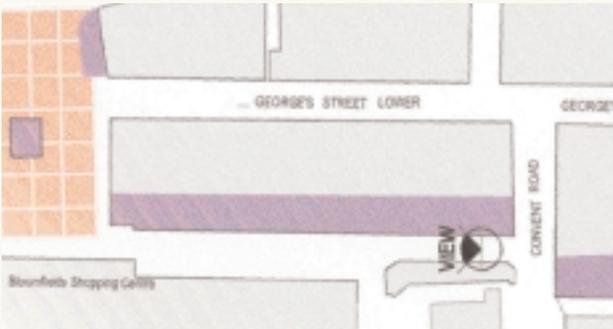
Gable end of EBS building



**4.6 Opportunity: Back Lane Development**

The backlands to the south of George’s Street between the Bloomfield Shopping Centre and Northumberland Avenue constitute a potentially valuable resource, currently underutilised. Fig. 1 indicates how such backlands might be developed, in this case incorporating retail use on the ground floor with apartments over. These apartments would have a southerly aspect and would provide a high level of surveillance of the laneway below.

*Location Map*



*Fig 1. Impression of laneway after north side has been redeveloped*



*View of existing laneway looking towards IMC complex*



**4.7 Opportunity: New street leading to the Royal Marine Hotel**

The Royal Marine building should constitute a landmark in the town. Its current setting is poor with limited visibility from the adjoining streets. Whereas originally a grand hotel approached along Gresham Terrace, it is now approached along the rear of the shopping centre car park on one side, a surface carpark to the other and unsympathetic extensions to the hotel itself. As a major landmark building, it is appropriate to recreate an entrance to the Royal Marine Hotel that is elegant and of a civic scale. A new street that exploits the vista of the Mariner's Church and invites pedestrian movement to the hotel and adjoining parks with their views over the harbour would be unique to Dun Laoghaire. This street will draw people into Moran Park and recreate the ambience of the former Gresham Terrace moving towards the hotel.

*Impression of new street that exploits the vista of the Mariner's church and invites pedestrian movement to the hotel and adjoining hotels*



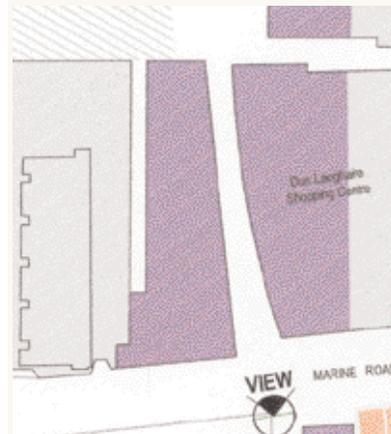
*View of garage adjoining the entrance to the hotel*



*View of the entrance to the Royal Marine from Marine Road*



*Location Map*



**4.8 Opportunity: Moran Park Cultural Centre**

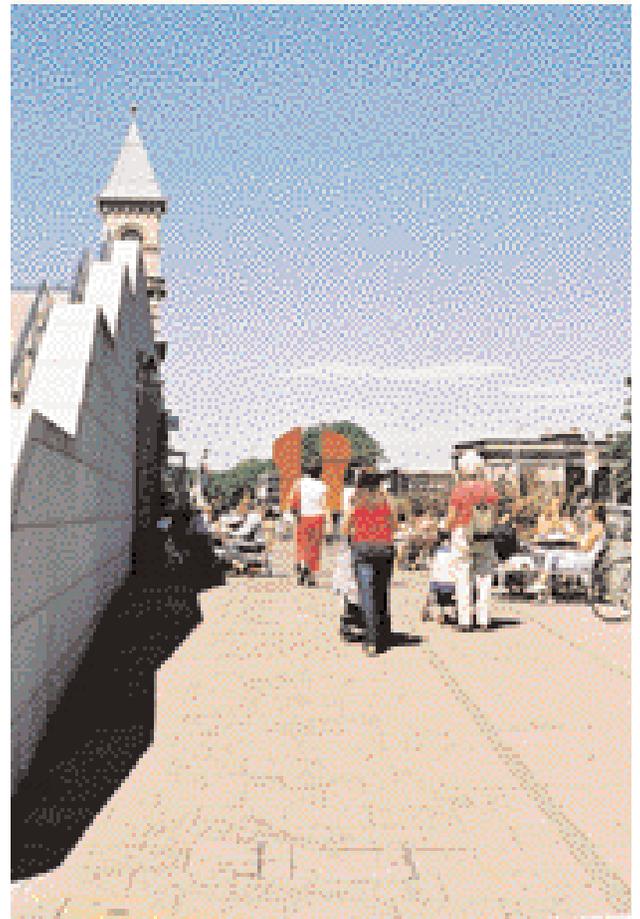
Currently Moran Park is dysfunctional, untidy and unsafe. It urgently requires improved access and increased surveillance. It represents an ideal location in the town centre to fuse the activities of a library and cultural centre with the enjoyment of a park in a town centre location.

Approached from the Metals with a dramatic vista of the Mariner's Church, the building would be set overlooking the park and the Royal Marine Gardens.

*View of Mariner's Church from the Metals*



*Impression of new cultural centre from the Metals with steps leading to the Mariner's Church*



*Location Map*

