

# South Circular Road to Bishop's Quay Cycle Scheme

## Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment



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### Disclaimer

The results and conclusions contained in this document are based on information available at the time it was prepared and written. Every effort was made to collect all relevant data, but the author accepts no responsibility for omissions or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available subsequently to the completion of this document.

Executive summary	(3)
1.0. Introduction	(4)
1.1. Aim and scope of the report	(4)
1.2. Client	(4)
1.3. Copyright	(4)
1.4. Methodology	(4)
2.0. Site, situation	(4)
3.0. Statutory protection & development aspirations	(5)
3.1. ACAs	(5)
3.2. Protected structures	(7)
3.3. Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022–28	(7)
4.0. Brief history, description & characterisation of the ACAs	(8)
4.1. History	(8)
4.2. Description & characterisation of the ACAs	(16)
5.0. Description of the proposed scheme	(19)
6.0. Impact assessment	(22)
6.1. Terms	(22)
6.2. Impact assessment	(23)
7.0. Suggested mitigations	(24)
8.0. Detailed design	(25)
Figures	(27)

## Executive summary

The proposed cycleway scheme passes through two ACAs and past more than 60 protected structures defined in Limerick City and County Council Development Plan 2022–2028.

This report concludes that while the proposals for a two-way cycle lane, variable single- and double-carriageway and widened pavements will have an overall positive impact on ACA 1 and 2 and on the setting of the protected structures, there are also significant potential negative impacts.

The possible deficit of residential on-street parking will potentially impact on the character of ACA 2 by incentivising modifications to existing boundary walls, railings and gates, and replacing gardens with car parking spaces. This development could mitigate against future residential development and investment, which has the potential to further erode the character of the ACAs.

There is an opportunity with the proposed scheme to plant trees to enrich the urban context of ACA 1, the suburban context of ACA 2 and the setting of the protected structures. Planting city trees will be instrumental in realising the aims of NTA and LCCC to encourage cycling and walking in the city.

There is an opportunity with the proposed scheme to redesign the present lighting scheme in a manner which balances traffic needs with the character of ACAs 1 and 2 and the setting of the protected structures.

There is an opportunity the proposed scheme to bury the overhead cables to contribute to the realisation of the character of the ACAs and the setting of the protected structures.

There is an opportunity with the proposed scheme to employ materials and design road markings and signage that balance traffic needs with the character of the ACAs.

It is strongly recommended to:

- Address the issue of residential parking and ensure that all current permit holders and foreseeable trends in regard to need are addressed, especially in ACA 2.
- Include as much planting, especially trees which have such a beneficial effect on a townscape, in the final landscape design.
- To address the lighting design, and investigate a new scheme more suited to the ACAs, protected structures and the new users.
- To address the issue of overhead cables and investigate the use of underground cables at what is an opportune time for such an investment.
- At detailed design stage to balance the requirements of the road scheme with the residential character of South Circular Road and Henry Street to realise LCCC's objective to protect existing residential development and the NTA's objective to promote sustainable development.

## **1.0. Introduction**

### **1.1. Aim and scope of the report**

Dr Judith Hill, Architectural Historian, was asked to prepare this Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment by Punch Consulting Engineers for Part 8 submission by Limerick City and County Council.

### **1.2. Client**

Limerick City and County Council

### **1.3. Copyright**

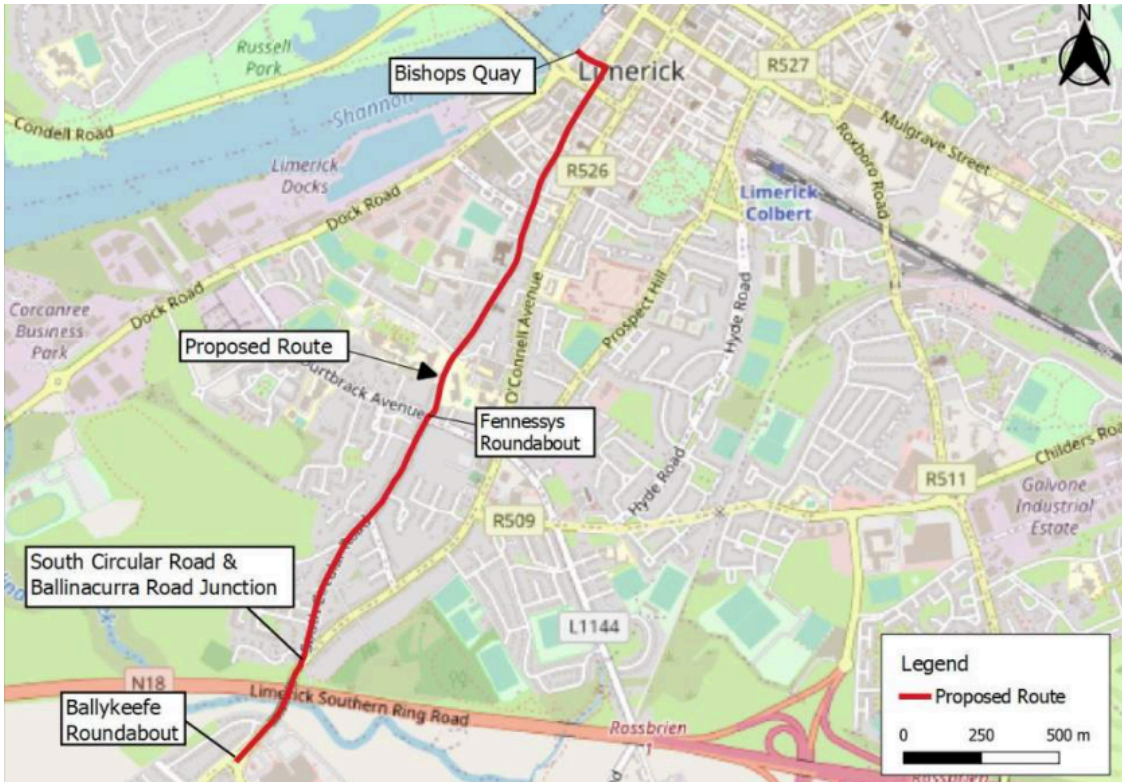
The use of any written material or original drawings and photographs in this report in published or unpublished work should be acknowledged and the author's name referenced.

### **1.4. Methodology**

The existing road and its immediate environs within ACAs 1 & 2 were visited and photographed by Dr Hill on 15 August 2022. A map, document, online and secondary source study was carried out, and Local Authority and NIAH records were consulted. The proposed scheme was discussed with Punch Consulting Engineers, the Senior Executive Engineer with Limerick City and County Council and the landscape designer in Limerick City and County Council. The report is written with reference to Department of the Environment's *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2011).

## **2.0. Site, situation**

The proposed cycle scheme runs from the Ballykeefe roundabout on the Ballinacurra Road in south west Limerick to Bishops Quay at the end of Mill Lane beside the river in the centre of the city. (map 1) It follows South Circular Road and Henry Street until it turns down Mill Lane. This is currently a major route into the centre of Limerick from the Cork Road and south-west Limerick.

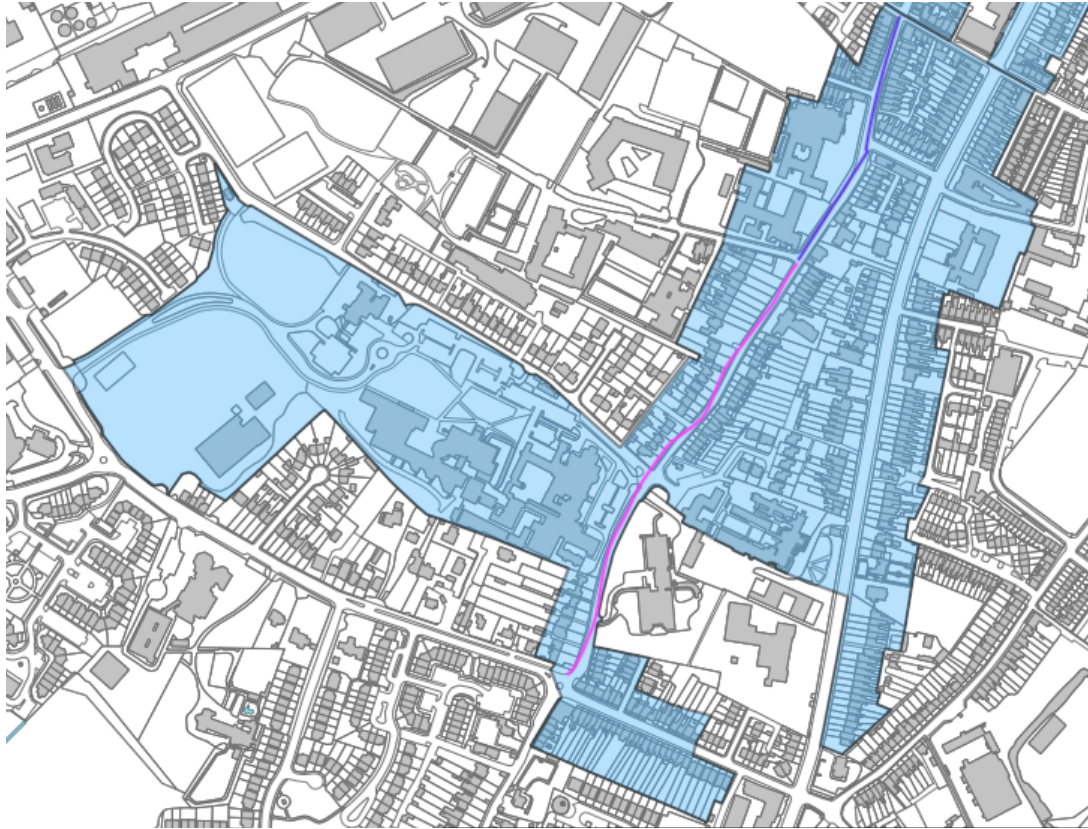


map 1 Fig 1-1 from Punch Consulting Engineers, 'South Circular Road to Bishop's Quay Cycle Scheme, Options report', (July 2022).

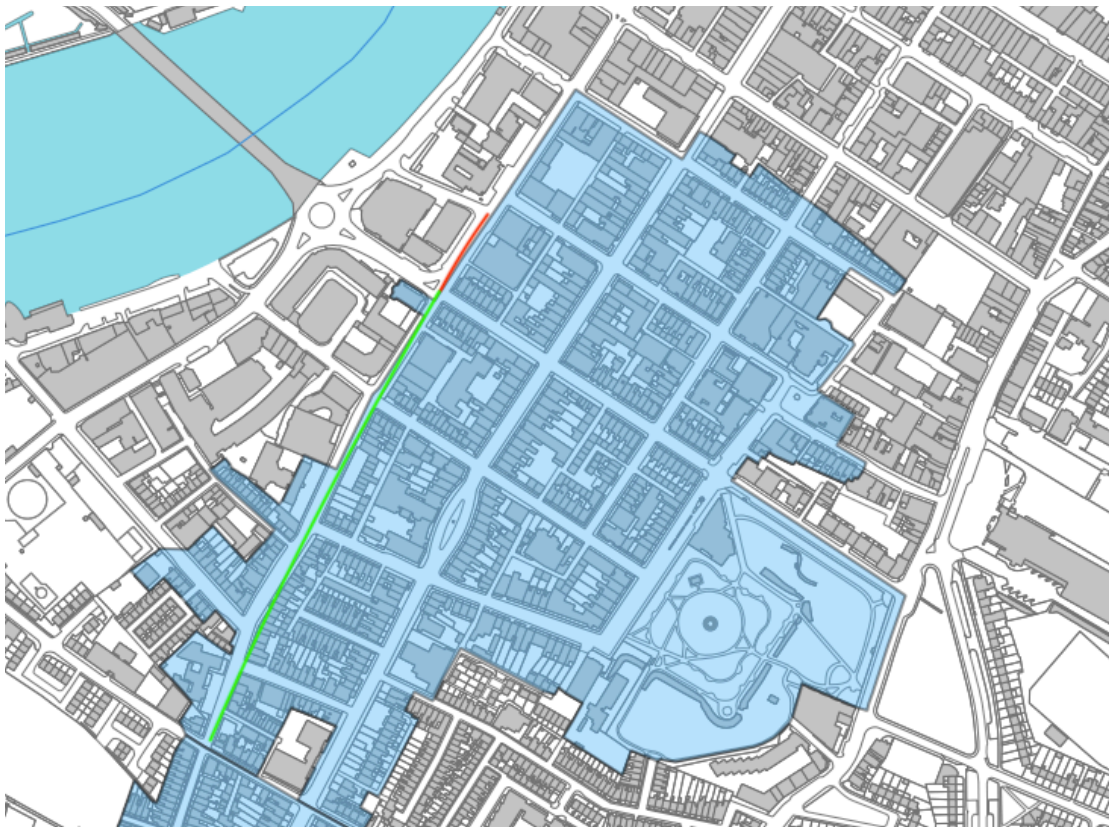
### 3.0. Statutory protection & development aspirations

#### 3.1. ACAs

From Fennessy's roundabout to the junction with Glentworth Street, the route runs through ACAs 1 and 2 as defined in Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022–2028. Sections 3 & 4 in the proposed scheme are in ACA 2 and sections 5 & 6 in the proposed scheme are in ACA 1. (maps 2 & 3)



map 2 ACA 2. Proposed cycleway section 4 in dark blue and proposed cycleway section 3 in pink. At this point the proposed route is on South Circular Road.



map 3 ACA 1. Proposed cycleway section 5 in green and proposed cycleway section 6 in red. At this point the proposed route is on Henry Street.

In ACA 1, Henry Street defines the western edge of the ACA, which is focused on part of Newtown Pery. In ACA 2, South Circular Road is the focus of the ACA.

### 3.2. Protected structures

There are 61 protected structures addressing the road along the proposed cycleway scheme. All except one (The Cottage on SCR) are situated within the ACAs. The protected structures include large institutional complexes such as Mary Immaculate College, and the Redemptorists Church and Monastery (ACA 1), smaller former institutions such as the former Villers Arms Houses, former Presbyterian Church, and former St Vincent de Paul School (ACA 2), and residential buildings; Georgian terraces in ACA 1 and terraces dating from the 1840s to early twentieth century in ACA 2.

### 3.3. Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022–28

A number of objectives in the development plan pertain to the proposed scheme.

#### ACAs

##### Objective EH O53

- (a) To protect the character and special interest of an area designated an ACA
- (e) Seek the retention of all features that contribute to the character of an ACA, including boundary walls, railings, soft landscaping, traditional paving and street furniture.
- (f) Seek to safeguard the Georgian heritage of Limerick.

#### Protected structures

##### Objective EH O50

- (b) Ensure that any development proposal to protected Structures, their curtilage and setting, shall have regard to the *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)*.

#### Public realm and place-making

##### Objective CGR O2

- (a) Ensure that all developments are designed to the highest quality with respect to the principle of place-making, universal design and public realm.

Section 3.3.1. defines place-making principles which include:

Providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists and opportunities for improved health and well-being,

Section 3.3.1.2. defines public realm principles which include:

Aiming at a simple, uncluttered and consistent design approach

#### The protection of existing residential amenity

##### Objective HO O3

It is the objective of the Council to ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities, the established character of the area and the need to provide for sustainable new development.

## 4.0. Brief history, description & characterisation of the ACAs

### 4.1. History

#### Late 18<sup>th</sup> century:

Henry Street (not labelled) is shown on the proposed grid designed for Edmund Sexton Pery and drawn by Christopher Collis in 1769. (map 4)

This street had not been built by 1786 (map, C.J. Sauthier, 1786). (map 5) There is a hint that the street was being formed in from of the two Pery houses.

#### Early 19<sup>th</sup> century:

By 1827 much of the Newtown Pery grid has been realised to Hartstonge Street. (map 6) Beyond that, the 'Circular road' (now South Circular Road) continued parallel to 'Military Walk' (later O'Connell Avenue) until Quin Street and the New Barracks where the roads both terminated. The linking roads – later Clontarf Place, St Gerard St and Quin St – are all shown, as well as Windmill Street – accessing the windmill – and Frederick Street (now O'Curry Street) – accessing a gas works labelled 'the gas house'. This map shows no terraces, but some of the Georgian terraces on Henry Street may have been built by this time.



map 4. Christopher Colles, 1769, Proposed grid for Newtown Pery.



map 5. C.J. Sauthier, 1786, Newtown Pery





map 6. George McKern, 1827, Limerick

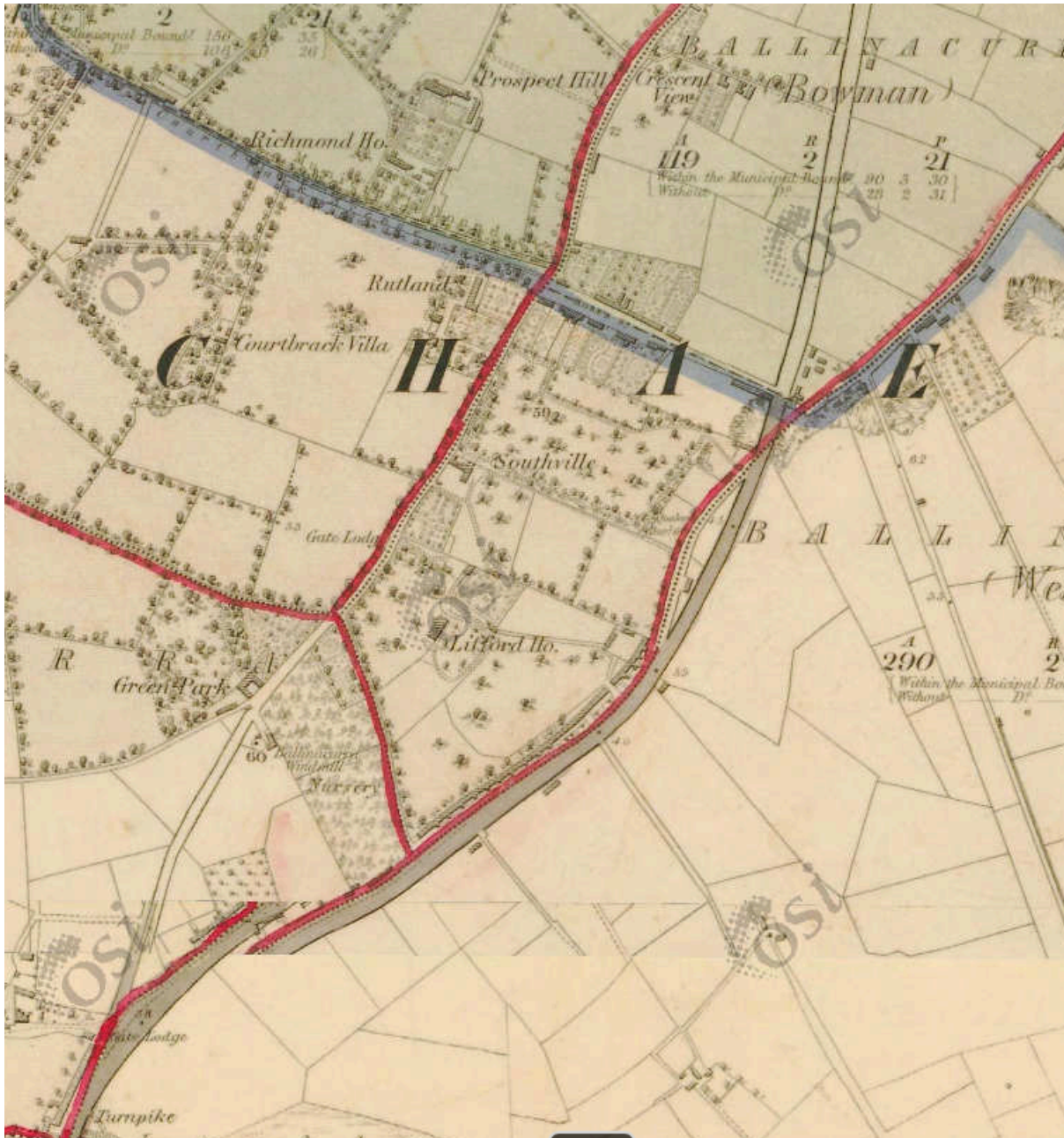
By 1839 both what would become O’Connell Avenue and South Circular Road have been extended to join at Ballinacurra House. (maps 7–9) Newtown Pery terraces extend to Newenham Street, and terraces are shown on Henry Street to O’Curry Street of which nos 83–89 (fig 3) remain on the west side opposite 54–6 (figs 4, 5) on the east, with terraces at the junctions with Mallow Street (east side, north and south), Hartstonge St (east side, north and south) and Newenham Street (east side, north). (fig 6) Other buildings such as the Mendacity Institute have now gone. What is now South Circular Road ran through fields with patches of development. This includes Victoria Terrace (three storey and two storey) (fig 25) and Clare View (a two-storey gable-ended house), (fig 23) and to the south a large area containing ten, mainly Quaker-owned, estates with roads developed for access – Laurel Hill Avenue, Summerville Avenue and Ashbourne Avenue as well as Green Park. Judging by the map evidence, these estates were built in the late 1820s and 1830s.



map 7. 1st ed. OS map, surveyed 1839 Limerick



map 8. 1st ed. OS map, surveyed 1839 Henry Street and South Circular Road from Mill Lane to future Sommerville Avenue.



map 9. 1st ed. OS map, surveyed 1839 South Circular Rd from future Summerville Ave to junction with future O'Connell Avenue

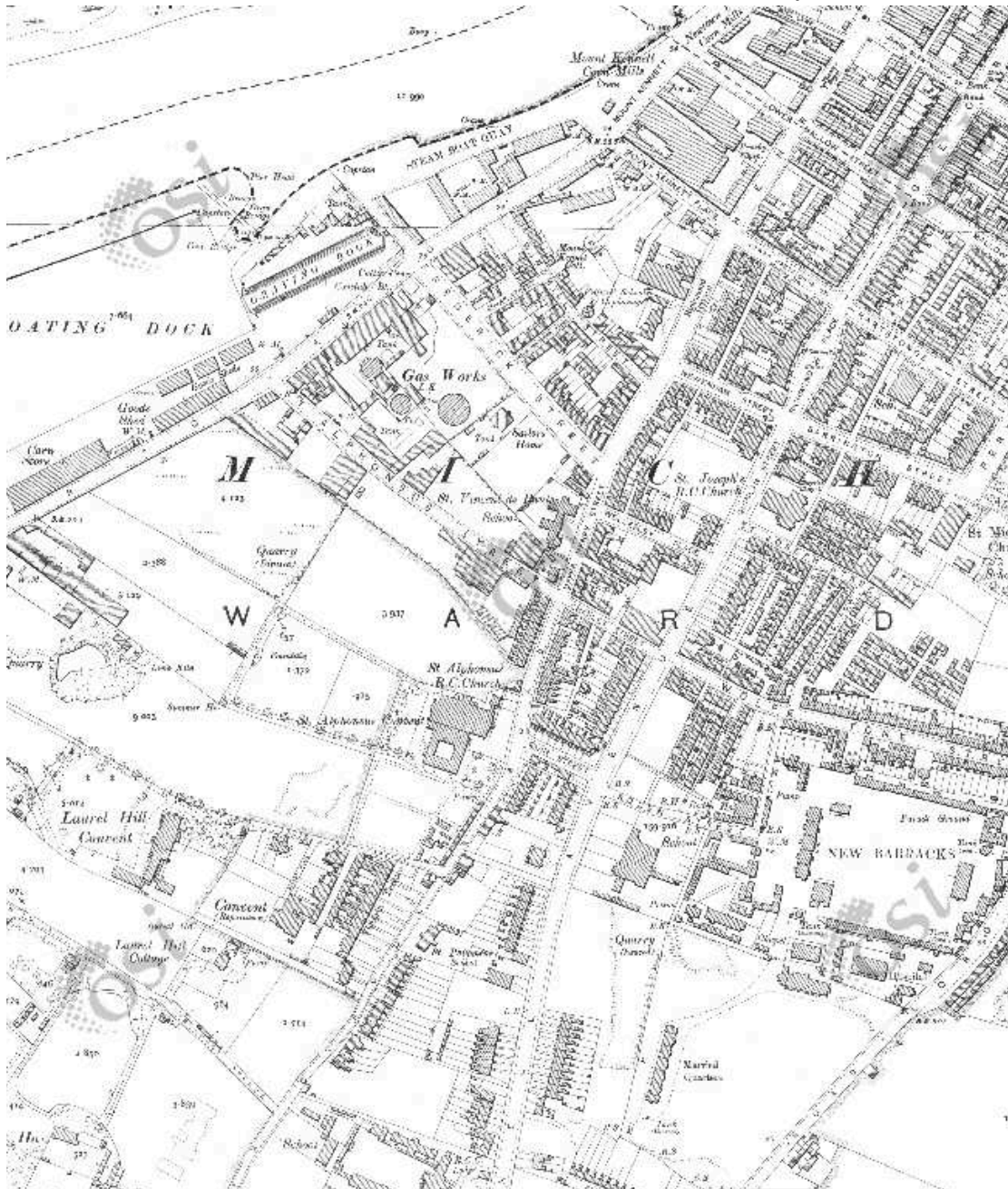
### Mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century:

This period saw the building of a number of terraces on South Circular Road and adjacent streets, notably Sarsfield Terrace (brick, two storey), Mount Prospect Terrace (rendered, two storey over basement), (fig 20) Summerville Terrace (rendered, one storey over basement), (fig 22) Laurel Villas (brick, two storey with attic), (fig 23) Shannon Terrace (rendered, two storey) (fig 26) and Harbour View Terrace (brick, two storey) all on the east, and Clare View Terrace (brick, two storey) on the west opposite Harbour View Terrace. (figs 28, 29) (maps 10 & 11) As this list demonstrates, they were built in a variety of materials and to different designs. Most were broadly classical, while Laurel Villas with its gables on projecting bays and limestone bands had a Gothic inflection. The terraces had

front gardens of varying sizes bounded by dwarf walls topped by cast iron railings of different designs.

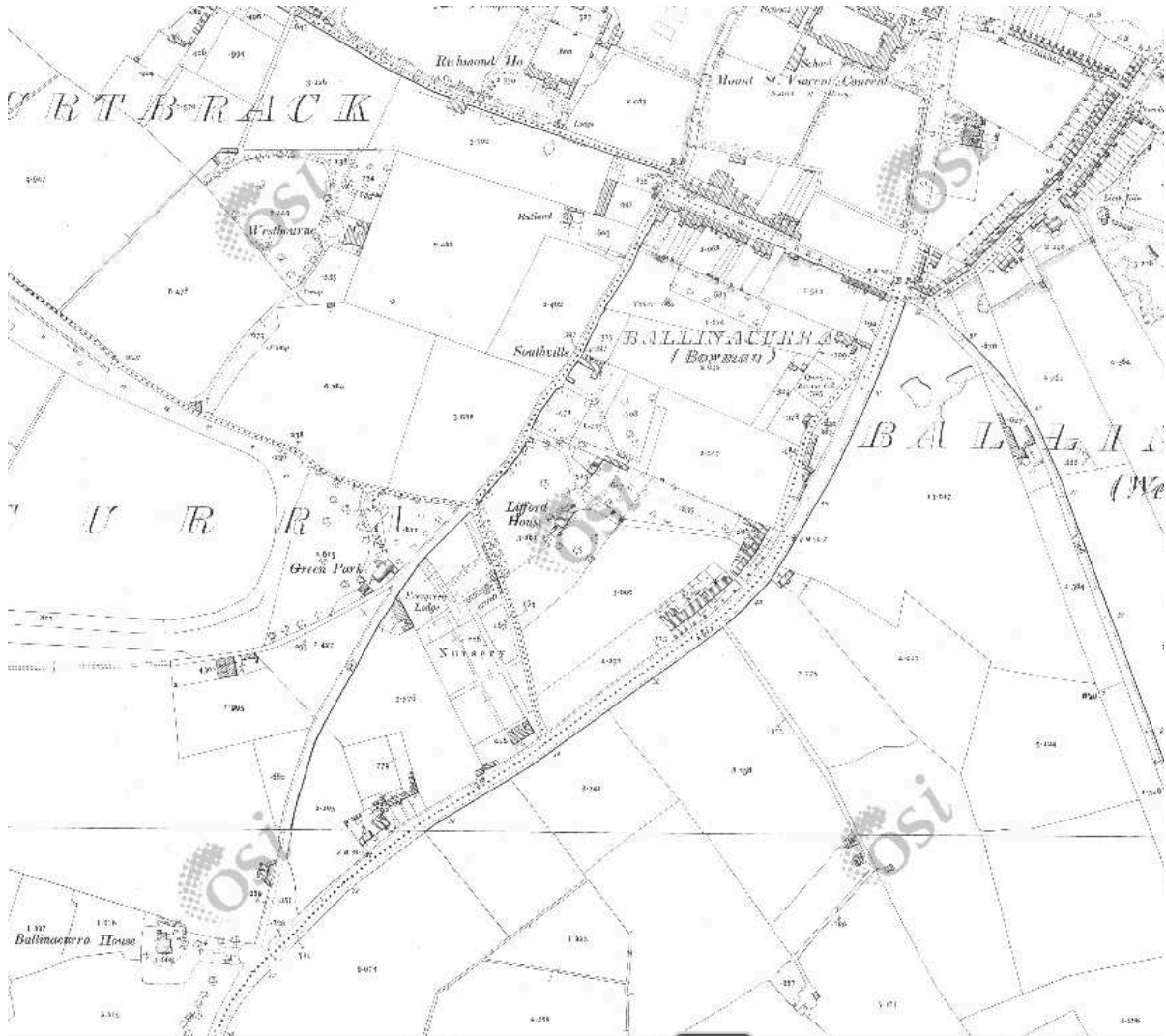
A number of institutions were also built in this period: The Sisters of Mercy School to the rear of Mount St Vincent, the Redemptorist Monastery (1856–8) and Church (1858–62; tower 1875–8), (fig 27) St Philomena’s School (now Elevate) (five bay single storey, rendered) (fig 23) opposite Victoria Terrace; and in Henry Street, Richmond Terrace (rendered, three storey) (fig 9) and St Vincent de Paul School (later Social Services Centre (brick, two-storey), (fig 13) Villiers School (later the Shannon Arms, now apartments) (cut stone, two storey). (fig 8) These buildings had larger front gardens, dwarf walls and railings.

The land bordering South Circular Road to the south of New Street remained largely untouched by the later nineteenth-century development, though a few houses were built to address the road while the race course was built at Green park.



map 10. 2nd ed. OS map, surveyed 1900 Henry Street and South Circular Rd from Mill

Lane to Summerville Avenue.



map 11. 2nd ed. OS map, surveyed 1900 South Circular Rd from Summerville Ave to junction with future O'Connell Avenue

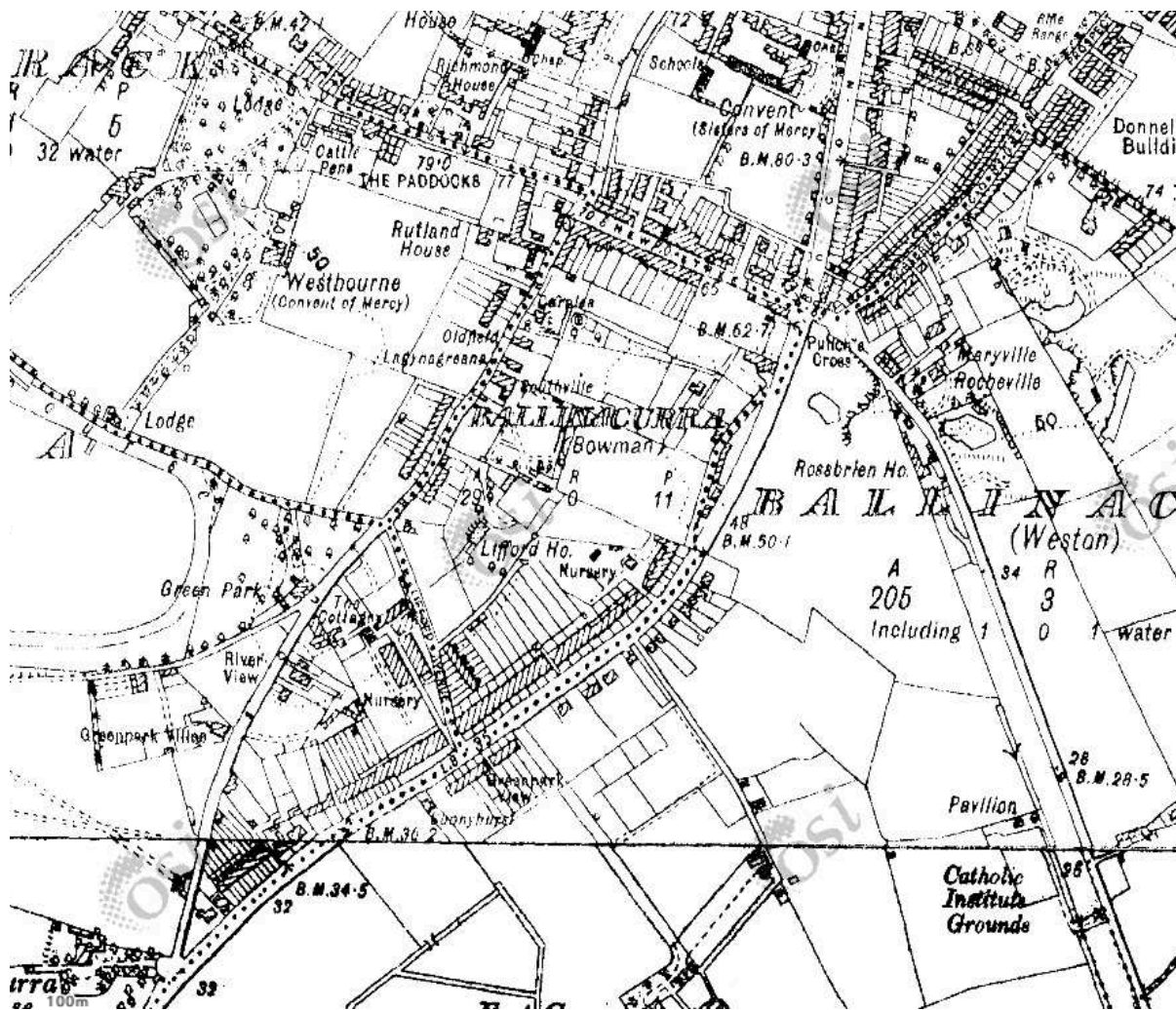
### Early 20th century:

There was considerable building in the south part of South Circular Road and O'Connell Avenue in this period, so that by 1938 very few fields remained. (maps 12 & 13) Mary Immaculate College on SCR and the Presbyterian Church at the junction of Henry St and Lower Mallow Street were completed in the early 1900s. (figs 19, 7) St Clement's College was built within the grounds of the Redemptorist Monastery in 1934. Within the ACA a number of early twentieth-century housing schemes were constructed south of the college, including Ashbourne Villas, 1913 (terrace, brick and pebble dash, two storey with projecting gables) at the New Street end and the terraces opposite (larger but similar to Ashbourne Villas), (figs 14, 15) two-storey semi-detached houses between Summerville Avenue and Victoria Terrace. (fig 21) Some of these developments had high front walls: in the ACA this includes Mary Immaculate College (the wall has subsequently been lowered), St Clement's College (the wall was replaced with a manufactured stone clad wall about eight feet high about 15 years ago), the terrace and houses south of Mary I.

A cattle mart was established at the top of Ashbourne Avenue, which was replaced by a housing development about 25 years ago.



map 12. Last ed. OS map, surveyed 1938 Henry Street and South Circular Rd from Mill Lane to Summerville Avenue



map 13. Last ed. OS map, surveyed 1938 South Circular Rd from Summerville Ave to junction with future O'Connell Avenue

### Mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century

There was little change in this period in ACA 2, apart from the building of Scoil Mháthair Dé on land to the east and south of Mary Immaculate College, (fig 16) alterations to the entrance and walls of the college, loss of boundary walls to some houses, and works to the roads: high street lights designed for traffic rather than for a residential area, proliferations of road signs and road markings, and installation of a bike rack opposite the Redemptorists. Work at the Redemptorists included the demolition of St Clements School and the landscaping of the car park which features a number of lime trees.

There has been significant change in ACA 1 especially to the north. A five-storey office block adjacent to Mill Lane was built in the 1970s. (fig 7) In the 1990s a number of large-scale mixed-use schemes, mostly retail or commercial on the ground floor with apartments above, were realised: a nine-storey block on the corner with Lower Mallow Street to the west; a seven-storey block to the east behind Mallow Street; four- and six-storey blocks on either side of Mount Kennett Place. (figs 2, 6, 7)

## 4.2. Description & characterisation of the ACAs

### ACA I Henry Street: St Gerard Street to Hartstonge St.

#### Overall character:

Mixed residential and commercial, interspersed with 19<sup>th</sup>-century institutions, most converted to new uses, the whole area having a predominantly urban character.

#### Scale:

The scale of development increases towards the north, from the two- storey Social Services Centre and three-storey Georgian terraces (fig 1) and infill (three storeys plus dormers) near the junction with St Gerard Street in the south, to four- and six-storey commercial/apartment blocks constructed in the 1990s near the junction with Mount Kennett Place and the nine-storey mixed-use Riverpoint block at Mallow Street and the five-storey 1970's block at Mill Lane. (figs 2, 7)

#### Design:

There is a great variety of design due to different building types, periods and scales of buildings. There are a number of Georgian terraces, many of which are protected structures, which differ from those in the main part of Newtown Pery, being three- storey, rendered and without basements. (see nos 83–89 and 54–60). (figs 3, 4, 5) These, and the Georgian terraces from Newenham Street to Hartstonge Street, which resemble those in the rest of Newtown Pery (brick four storeys over basements,), give coherence to the street, especially on the east side, establish an urban residential character and relate historically and topologically to the Georgian new town. (fig 6)

Elsewhere, there are modern apartment/commercial blocks; an infill opposite O'Curry Street, and the 1990s developments at Mount Kennett Place and Mallow Street on both sides of Henry Street. (fig 7) There is an five-storey office block on the corner of Henry Street and Mill Lane. (fig 7) The former Shannon Arms stands out as a cut stone building of quality and character set back from the street in an area which is now unfortunately a car park. (fig 8) The Presbyterian Church also stands out for its quality and scale. Richmond Terrace is an alms house with a well-cultivated garden and a strong sense of cohesion. (fig 7) There are single-and two-storey structures interspersed among the terraces at the south end of Henry Street.

#### Road shape:

Henry Street continues the gentle curves of South Circular Road until Newenham Street where it joins the rectilinear pattern of the Newtown Pery grid.

#### Uses:

There is a strong residential presence along this part of Henry Street and in the hinterland of the street. From St Gerard Street to Newenham Street accommodation is found in Georgian terraces, Richmond Terrace alms houses, and modern infill blocks, including the conversion of the Shannon Arms. (fig 9) The Redemptorist church tower creates a striking focal point for this area, as though it were a presiding parish church. (fig 10) There are retail and office units, garage and a creche on the ground floors of some of



these buildings. (fig 3) There are also small-scale office concerns and vacant properties. (figs 4, 5, 11)

#### Trees:

Most buildings address the street directly or have basements, areas and railings. The exceptions are Adelaide terrace, Richmond Terrace, and the former Shannon Arms which have gardens and trees in front of the buildings. (figs 12, 9, 8) The Social Services Centre has a car park in front of the building behind a dwarf wall and railings and three evergreen oak trees in the car park. (fig 13) With the exception of three plane trees in front of a commercial development near Mallow Street there are no publicly-planted trees in Henry Street.

#### Protected structures:

The street forms the setting for 34 protected structures, including the terraces mentioned above, Presbyterian Church, former Shannon Arms (former Villiers School), Social Services Centre (former St Vincent de Paul School).

#### Existing compromises

##### Road design:

The ACA is degraded by the road design, which is traffic-centred with tall industrial-style street lights, excessive road sign and road markings. The presence of overhead wires also significantly detracts from the character of the ACA. The lack of public planting compromises the character of the ACA along its entire length, creating a character which favours the commercial over the residential. (figs 1–13)

##### Parking:

Because of the presence of local businesses, proximity to the centre of Limerick, and the substantial width of the street, on-street parking has been encouraged and is well used by visitors to the area and residents. The excessive amount of car parking mitigates against the character of the ACA. There are a number of multi-storey car parks associated with recent housing/commercial developments: notably, adjacent to Mallow Street, behind the former Shannon Arms and at Mount Kennett. (figs 1–13)

#### **ACA 2\_South Circular Road: New Street to Clontarf Place.**

##### Overall character:

Predominantly residential interspersed with 19<sup>th</sup>-century institutions of various sizes, most of which retain their original use, the whole area having a predominantly suburban character.

##### Design:

The street is lined with short terraces, semi-detached and occasional detached houses of various styles. Heights vary slightly, there is a mix of materials – brick, stone, render – while chimney shapes and varieties of roof designs – hips, gables – provide an uneven skyline. (figs 14–29)

Coherence is found in scale and boundary design: predominantly dwarf walls and cast iron railings and gates.(figs 14–29)

#### Road shape:

South Circular Road is serpentine in form with gentle curves, and this contributes greatly to the coherence of the street, and to creating a predominately suburban rather than urban character. (figs 14,16, 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 28)

#### Institutions:

Institutions vary in scale, style and materials, with the Redemptorists Church and Monastery dominating due to the height of the church tower, and the open car park in front of the buildings which give them a strong presence on the street. (figs 24, 27) Mary Immaculate College, is also a strong presence, but its large four-storey block facing SCR is partially hidden behind mature trees. (figs 15, 17, 18, 19)

#### Trees:

There are no trees on the public road. However, trees are a strong presence on much of the street, especially at Mary Immaculate College and in the stretch from Summerville Avenue to Laurel Hill Avenue due to trees growing in the larger private gardens in this part of SCR. (figs, 16, 17, 19, 24) Elsewhere, the residential character of the street is determined by the scale and use of the buildings and the smaller-scale planting in smaller front gardens. (figs 21, 26, 28)

#### Protected structures:

The street forms the setting for 19 protected structures, including the Redemptorist Church and Monastery, the main block of Mary Immaculate College, Elevate chapel, Laurel Villas, Victoria Terrace, 2 Laurel Hill Avenue, Clare View, 9 St Alphonsus terrace (Quin St). (fig 29, 27, 26, 25, 23)

### **Existing compromises**

#### Road design:

The ACA is degraded by the road design, which is traffic-centred with tall industrial-style street lights, excessive road sign and road markings. The presence of overhead wires also significantly detracts from the character of the ACA. The lack of public planting compromises the character of the ACA at the far south and north ends where front gardens are smaller and trees and do not sustain mature trees. (figs 14–29)

#### Parking:

The ACA is host to a number of institutions which attract large numbers of visitors at certain times of the day and year. Mary Immaculate College students park here during term time. The parents of students attending the four schools (and the nearby Model School on O'Connell Avenue) park during setting down and picking up of their children. Members of the congregation of the two churches park in the street. Some residents have no or

limited back access to their properties and rely on on-street parking. The number of parked cars significantly detracts from the character of the ACA. (figs 14–29)

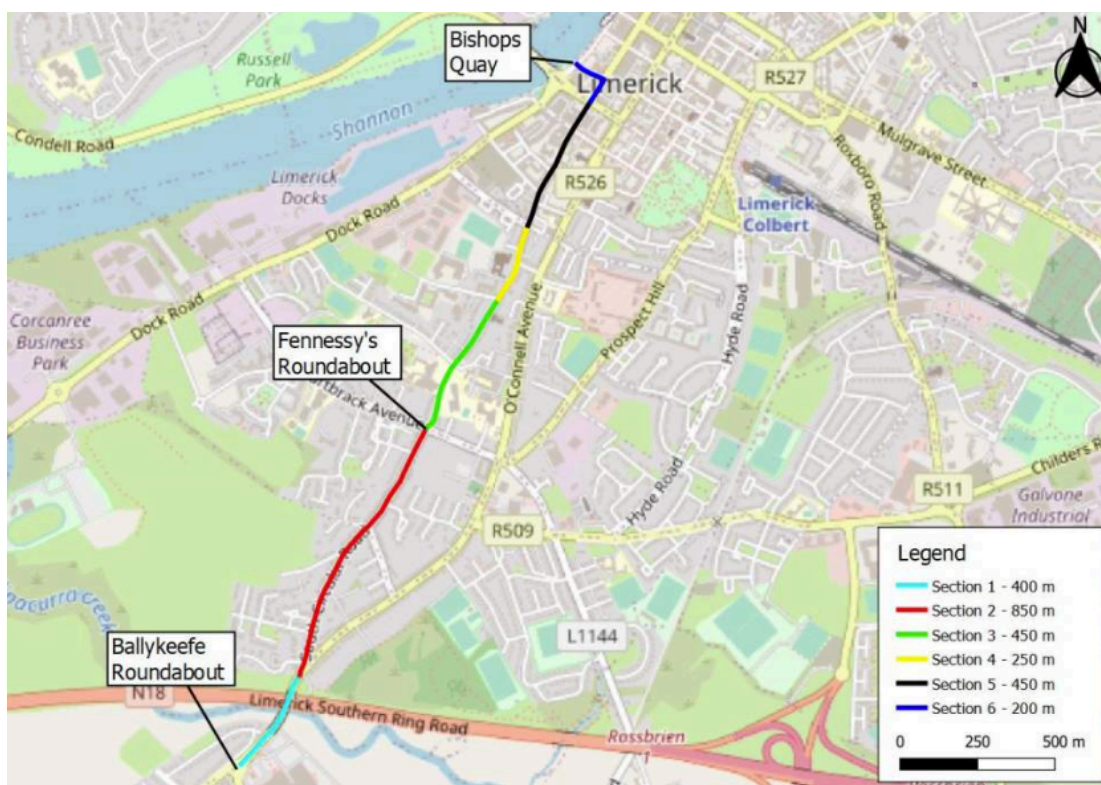
Destruction of dwarf walls railings, and gates:

There is a trend in recent years for residents to convert front gardens to car parking spaces and in the process demolishing dwarf walls railings and gates. This destroys the boundary to the street and the design coherence of the area. (figs 22, 26)

## 5.0. Description of the proposed scheme

The project is funded by NTA Active Travel Scheme and administered by Limerick City and County Council. The road design has been carried out by Punch Consulting Engineers and the landscape design by Limerick City and County Council.

It is intended to link south-west Limerick city and the city centre with a route which gives greater priority to cyclists and pedestrians than is currently the case where vehicular traffic and its requirements predominate in terms of traffic speeds, physical occupation of the public space (both moving and parked cars), lighting design, signage and the design of the physical domain. The scheme stretches from the Ballykeefe roundabout to Bishops and Quay and is divided into six sections. (maps 1 & 14) Sections 3, 4, 5 and part of 6 of the cycle scheme fall within the ACA. (maps 2 & 3)

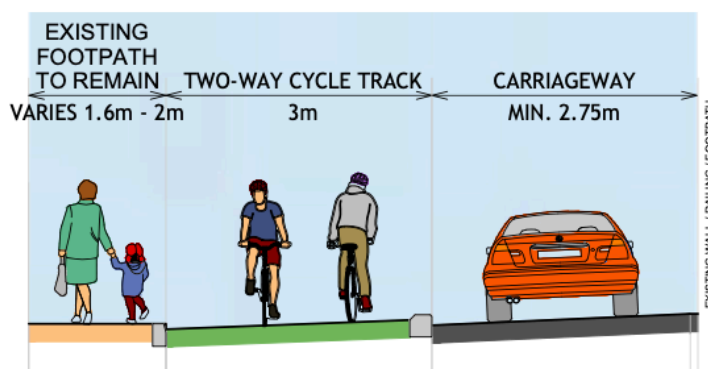


map 14. Fig 2-1 from Punch Consulting Engineers, 'South Circular Road to Bishop's Quay Cycle Scheme, Options report' (July 2022)

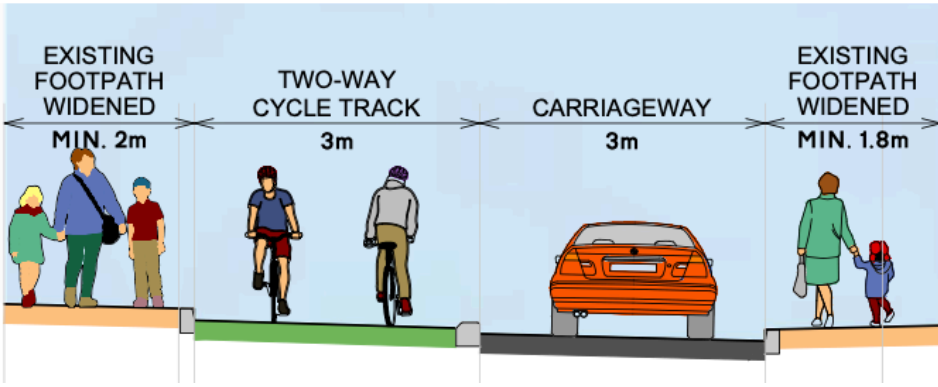
It is proposed to install a two-lane cycleway along the west side of the street along the entire route. Within ACA 2 (South Circular Road), it is proposed to retain the single line of traffic to the east side of the street, and within ACA 1 (Henry Street), it is proposed to retain the two lines of traffic travelling in both directions to the east side of the street flanked in places by car parking spaces. (drawings 1–3) The pavements at either side will be widened. Opportunities for on-street parking will be reduced, with very little in South Circular Road and more parking on Henry Street, on one side of the road or the other, except north of Mallow Street in association with the garda station. Some on-street parking has been provided on side streets for residents, especially in ACA 2, but there is still a deficit of spaces compared with the present provision. The parking drawings identify properties with and without back entrances, but this is not sufficient to calculate how many residential parking spaces are needed as some rear entrances are exceptionally narrow and difficult to negotiate, and rear gardens are too small to accommodate a car and garden amenity.

The landscape proposals centre on the junctions, with some proposals for the route. (drawings 4–6) At the Mary Immaculate College junction a shared raised table is proposed with a shared space at the entrance. Landscape proposals to alter the entrance walls are still pending approval by the college. Opportunities for landscaping have been defined at the Fennessy’s roundabout and for a shared surface at Mallow Street junction. There are proposals for some trees at some of these junctions and along the route. The landscape design is yet to be finalised.

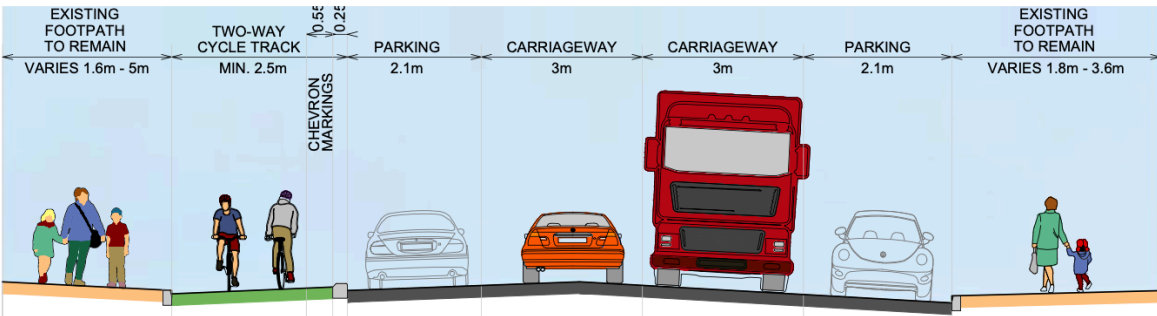
There are as yet no proposals to alter the street lighting or overhead wires.



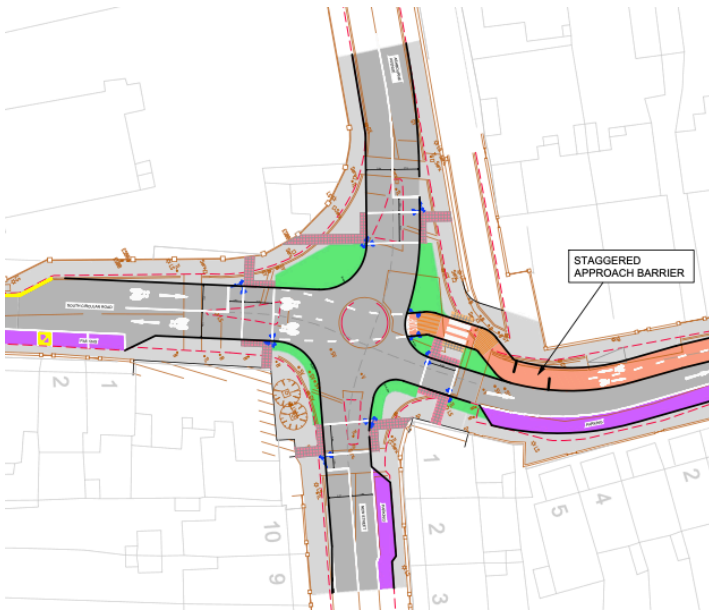
drawing 1 Typical cross section SCR between Fennessy’s roundabout and Laurel Hill Avenue (Punch Consulting Engineers)



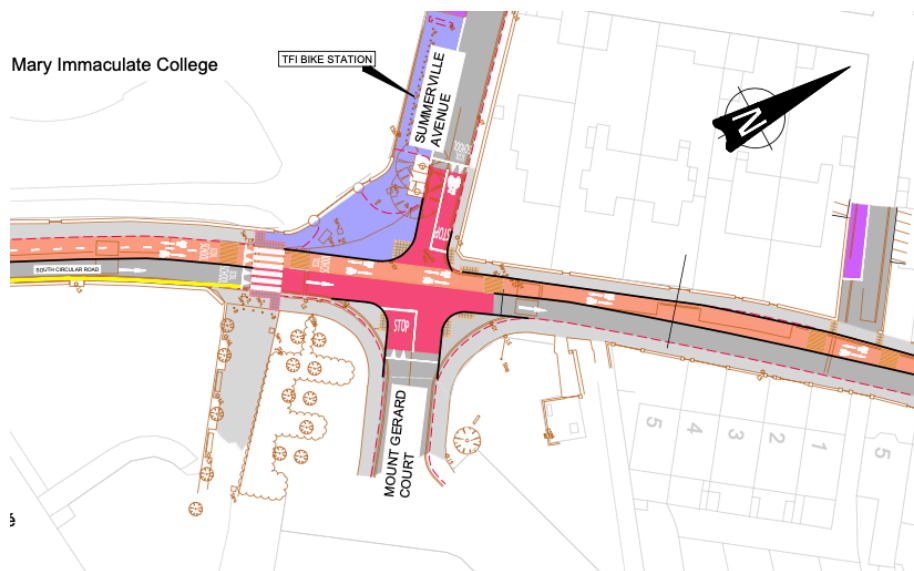
drawing 2 Typical cross section SCR between Laurel Hill Avenue and Henry Street (Punch Consulting Engineers)



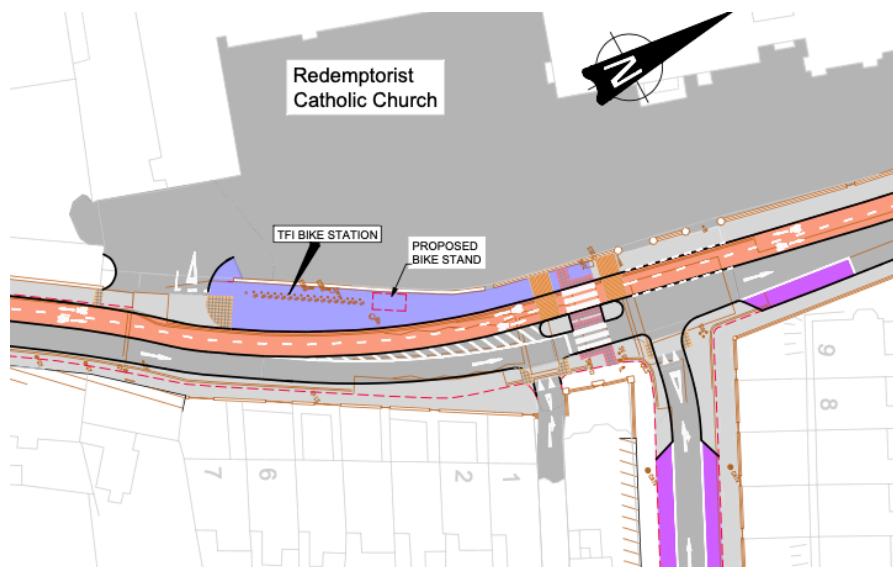
drawing 3 Typical cross section Henry Street (Punch Consulting Engineers)



drawing 4 Plan at junction of SCR, New Street, and Ashbourne Avenue (Fennessy's roundabout) (Punch Consulting Engineers)



drawing 5 Plan at junction of SCR and Summerville Avenue at Mary Immaculate College Entrance (Punch Consulting Engineers)



drawing 6 Plan at Redemptorists and Quin Street (Punch Consulting Engineers)

## 6.0. Impact assessment

### 6.1. Terms

The Environmental Protection Agency, *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (2002), Glossary 5 defines impacts in terms of, among other things, significance.<sup>1</sup> They were largely intended to apply to the natural environment. The definition here are followed by notes in brackets which applies the EPA definitions to buildings with reference to conservation principles outlined in section 7 in *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2004). An additional impact – positive impact – has been added.

<sup>1</sup> *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements* (Dublin, 2002), p. 53. Dr Judith Hill, 'South Circular Road to Bishops Quay Cycle Scheme: Architectural; Heritage Impact Assessment', Aug. 2022

*Imperceptible impact:* An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences. (The special interest of the building is not affected.)

*Slight impact:* An impact which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities. (Changes to a few elements of the building which does not affect the overall character of the building or its setting.)

*Moderate impact:* An impact that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. (Changes which affect the overall character of the building or its setting, but not negatively.)

*Significant impact:* An impact which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity, alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. (Changes which alter the overall character of the building and detract from its special interest. Changes which alter the character of the setting.)

*Profound impact:* An impact which obliterates sensitive characteristics. (Demolition or such radical change that the building is unrecognizable and/or the setting is destroyed.)

*Positive impact:* An impact that improves on former alterations that took away from the special character of the building.

## 6.2. Impact assessment

The proposal to redesign the streetscape of South Circular Road and Henry street in parts of ACA 1 and 2 will have a significant impact on the ACAs and on the settings of the protected structures.

Positive:

There will be a significantly positive impact, reducing the presence of traffic, calming speeds by reducing the carriageway width, enhancing pedestrian and cycle traffic. This shift in balance towards slower and quieter modes of travel will have a positive impact by prioritising people over traffic and enhancing the suburban residential character of ACA 2 and the urban residential character of ACA 1.

Negative:

(1) The failure to make adequate provision for residential car parking spaces in ACA 2 will have a potentially significant negative impact on the character of the ACA by incentivising residents to convert front gardens to parking spaces. This will involve the demolition of dwarf walls, railings and gates and reduce the design coherence of the ACA. It may also incentivise further erosion of rear garden walls to accommodate cars in back gardens. Such actions will also involve loss of natural amenity as plants are replaced by tarmac and thus an erosion of the character of ACA 2.

This has the potential to conflict with Limerick City and County Council's Objective EH O53 in the current Development Plan

(a) To protect the character and special interest of an area designated an ACA.  
(e) Seek the retention of all features that contribute to the character of an ACA, including boundary walls, railings, soft landscaping, traditional paving and street furniture.

(2) As it stands, the proposals do not substantially make up the deficit of trees in ACA 2 or ACA 1. The lack of trees in parts of ACA 2 and ACA 1 significantly detracts

from the residential amenity and the residential character that is an intrinsic part of both areas.

The presence of trees would improve the setting of the 61 protected structures whose residential or institutional character are amenable to a green setting.

An increase in street trees would contribute to the realisation of Limerick City and County Council's objective to take account of the setting of protected structures (Objective EH O50).

Tree planting would contribute to LCCC's public realm and place-making Objective CGR O2: to

(a) 'Ensure that all developments are designed to the highest quality with respect to the principle of place-making, universal design and public realm'.

Section 3.3.1. in the development plan defines place-making principles which include: 'Providing priority for pedestrians and cyclists and opportunities for improved health and well-being'.

It is well-known that the presence of trees has a beneficial effect on health and well-being.

The NTA Active Travel Scheme aims to make 'walking and cycling attractive, safe and accessible to everyone'.<sup>2</sup> Both walking and cycling in this busy and built-up area will be made safer, more enjoyable and thus accessible if it takes place in the vicinity of trees which have a sheltering and calming effect.

### (3) Street lighting

There is currently no proposal in the scheme to alter the design of street lighting within the scheme. The current street lighting was designed to serve a larger volume of traffic than will be using the road when the current proposals go ahead. The height of the poles and the design of the lights are far better suited to traffic needs than to the needs of residents, workers, pedestrians and cyclists. As stated above, the current lighting constitutes a significantly negative presence in both ACAs, detracting from the scale of the built environment, and the character of the ACAs. It also detracts from the setting of the protected structures.

With the implementation of the proposals there is an opportunity to invest in lighting design that is: more appropriate to the proposed road uses, and the residential characters of both South Circular Road and Henry Street; that will complement and enhance the ACAs; and which will realise the aim of both LCCC and the NTA to provide a sustainable environment.

### (4) Overhead wires.

There is currently no proposal in the scheme to convert overhead wires into underground cables. The presence of overhead wires is detrimental to the character of both ACA 1 and 2, and to the setting of the protected structures. It is in marked contrast to areas in the city where cables have been buried.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/> accessed 17.08.22.



With the implementation of the proposals there is an opportunity to invest in burying the cables where appropriate to enhance the ACAs and the setting of the protected structures, and to realise LCCC's aims to 'Ensure that all developments are designed to the highest quality with respect to the principle of place-making ... and public realm'.

### **7.0. Suggested mitigations**

(1) Investigate alternative parking facilities for residential permit holders in both the ACAs and in the area to the south of ACA 2 where there is a concentration of houses and not always sufficient parking on the properties. These parking facilities should be within a reasonable distance of the properties.

This is in the interests of current residents, to enhance the residential amenity of the area and to protect the character of the ACAs.

(2) There are many opportunities for planting trees in the proposed scheme even taking into account constrictions arising from existing services and proposed pavement widths. There should be trees in as many locations as possible to create micro-places at junctions, viewing points, at locations where roads widen, or to line streets.

This is in the interests of enhancing the character of the ACAs and the setting of the protected structures. It is also in the interest the residents of the ACAs, and those using South Circular Road and Henry Street as cyclists, pedestrians or drivers of vehicles for whom the resultant place-making will be beneficial. As Limerick is a city which is conspicuously devoid of trees, generous planting in this location near the river and close to the centre of town, would constitute a significant gain for the whole city centre.

(3) Implement a cost-benefit analysis for replacing the existing street lighting with an improved system that is more suited to the character of the ACAs and the street users of the proposed scheme. With major works to be carried out on the existing surfaces, there is an opportunity to replace existing fixtures.

This is in the interests of the character and quality of the ACAs, the setting of the many protected structures and in the interests of the new road users.

(4) Implement a cost-benefit analysis for replacing overhead wires with buried cables. This is in the interests of the character and quality of the ACAs and the setting of the many protected structures.

### **8.0. Detailed design**

It is important for a positive impact on the ACAs and settings of the protected structures that the design of road markings, siting and number of traffic signs, and the colour, quality and character of the materials to be used for the carriageway, cycleway, pavements, kerbs and any other structures such as bollards will take account of the predominantly residential character of the ACAs.

Development Plan Objective HO O3 on the protection of existing residential amenity states:

Dr Judith Hill, 'South Circular Road to Bishops Quay Cycle Scheme: Architectural; Heritage Impact Assessment', Aug. 2022

'It is the objective of the Council to ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities, the established character of the area and the need to provide for sustainable new development.'

This is a case where the needs of a traffic scheme should be balanced against those of the ACAs which harbour significantly sized residential communities. The road should be treated as one which traverses this residential section of the city, rather than as an artery into the city, a mistake that was made in the past, and has been perpetuated in recent changes to the streetscape. Treating the road as an intrinsic part of the existing city fabric will realise LCCC's aim to protect existing residential amenity and the NTA aim to create sustainable development. If the residential aspect of South Circular Road and Henry St is protected, it will be a catalyst for the spread of residential amenity within the city centre.

## Figures



fig 1 Upper Henry Street with Social services Centre on left and nos 66–69 Henry Street on right.



fig 2 Henry Street at junction with Hartstonge Street showing mix of Georgian terraces and 1990s developments.



fig 3 83–89 Henry Street, to junction with Windmill Street. Note single storey garage (orange). The three-storey building next to it has a creche on the ground floor.



fig 4 54–60 Henry Street



fig 5 54–56 Henry Street, protected structures.



fig 6 29–32 Henry St (three- and four-storey Georgian terraces) with a new building at the end. Richmond Terrace (part) in foreground.



fig 7 Presbyterian Church with part of the Riverpoint development at Mallow street in the background, beyond which is a five-storey block from the 1970s adjacent to Mill Lane. (Judith Hill, March 2015)



fig 8 The former Shannon Arms (built at Villiers School).



fig 9 Richmond Terrace alms houses.



fig 10 Upper Henry Street with the Redemptorist's church as a focal point.



fig 11 Upper Henry Street at St Gerard Street junction showing two-storey remnant and vacant site.



fig 12 Adelaide Terrace, adjacent to Richmond Terrace.





fig 13 Social Services Centre (former St Vincent de Paul School)



fig 14 Ashbourne Villas at junction with New Street.



fig 15 Terrace opposite Ashbourne Villas.



fig 16 Scoil Mháthair Dé.



fig 17 Mary Immaculate College wall to left and boundary of Scoil Mháthair Dé to right.



fig 18 Terraces on east side beyond MIC.



fig 19 MIC entrance



Fig 20 Terraces to east beyond MIC: 20<sup>th</sup>-century terrace; Shannoon Terrace; Mount Prospect Terrace.



fig 21 20<sup>th</sup>-century semi detached houses near MIC.



fig 22 Mount Prospect Terrace, Summerville Terrace.



fig 23. Laurel Villas and Clare View in the distance. The walls of Victoria Terrace to the left.



fig 24 Victoria Terrace walls and gardens



fig 25 End of Victoria terrace.



fig 26 Shannon terrace.



fig 27 Redemptorist's Church and part of monastery with 9 Alphonsus Terrace (Quin Street) in background.



fig 28 Harbour View Terrace and Clare View Terrace.





fig 29 Harbour View Terrace and Clare View Terrace with Redemptorist Church as a focus.