



**Part 8 Report**

## **Limerick Wayfinding & Orientation Signage**

**Design, Planning & Architectural Heritage Report**

**Prepared by Limerick City & County Council**

**Date: August 2023**

## 1.0 Introduction

In accordance with Part XI of the (Planning and Development) Acts 2000 (as amended) and Part 8, Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Limerick City & County Council proposes to carry out the following development within the metropolitan area of Limerick City.

The proposed development consists of the removal of 45 existing pedestrian wayfinding & information signs and the installation of 70 new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signs comprising 18 Map Totems, 19 Route Markers and 33 Finger Posts and all associated site works.

The report that follows outlines the physical, planning and historic context within which the scheme now presented for Part 8 planning approval has been prepared, as well as a description of the development proposed and the principal design and statutory objectives underpinning the design.

## 2.0 Site Description

### 2.1 Areas of Proposed Works

With 70 individual locations spread across the metropolitan area of Limerick City, the overall site boundary encompasses an area measuring approximately 115.195 hectares.



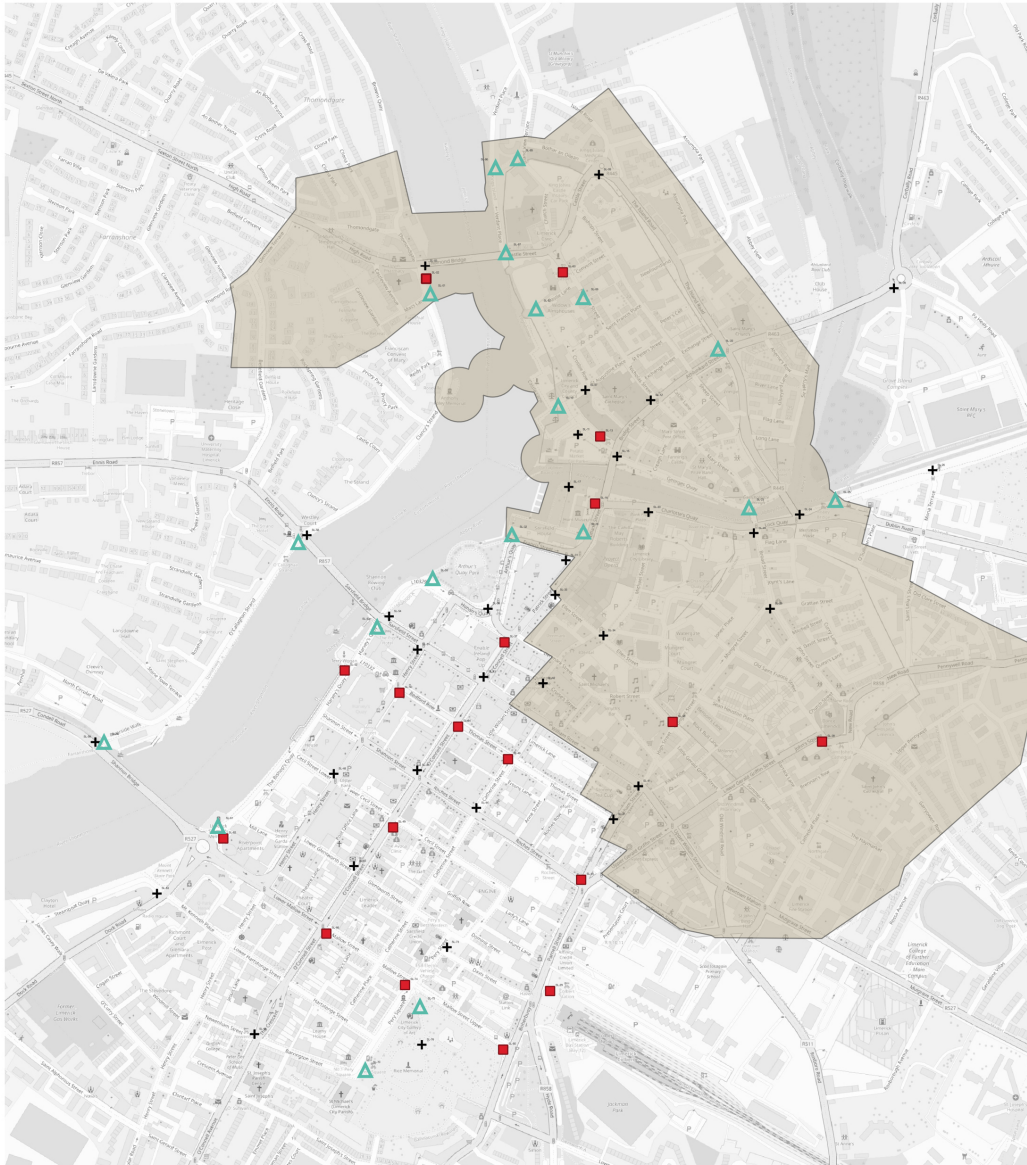
*Satellite view with the overall site boundary highlighted in red and the individual sign locations indicated*

The site extends from north most points at Island View Terrace and Corbally Roundabout, east most points at Park Canal, John’s Square and Colbert Station, south most points at People’s Park and Steamboat Quay and west most points along the Shannon Bridge, Sarsfield Bridge and Thomond Bridge.

The specific site context of each of the 70 signs differs individually however all signs are proposed to be installed into existing pavements, hard paved areas and a few grass verges which are all identified as being within public ownership of Limerick City and County Council.

## 2.2 Built Heritage

Given the number of proposed signs and their dispersal across the city centre, the built heritage context of the project is expansive and varies across the individual locations. The signs are to be located through the archaeologically sensitive medieval core of the city, incorporating Englishtown & Irishtown, and close to a range of Protected Structures in the Georgian Quarter.



Limerick city centre map illustrating the locations of proposed signage and the Zone of Notification

### Legend

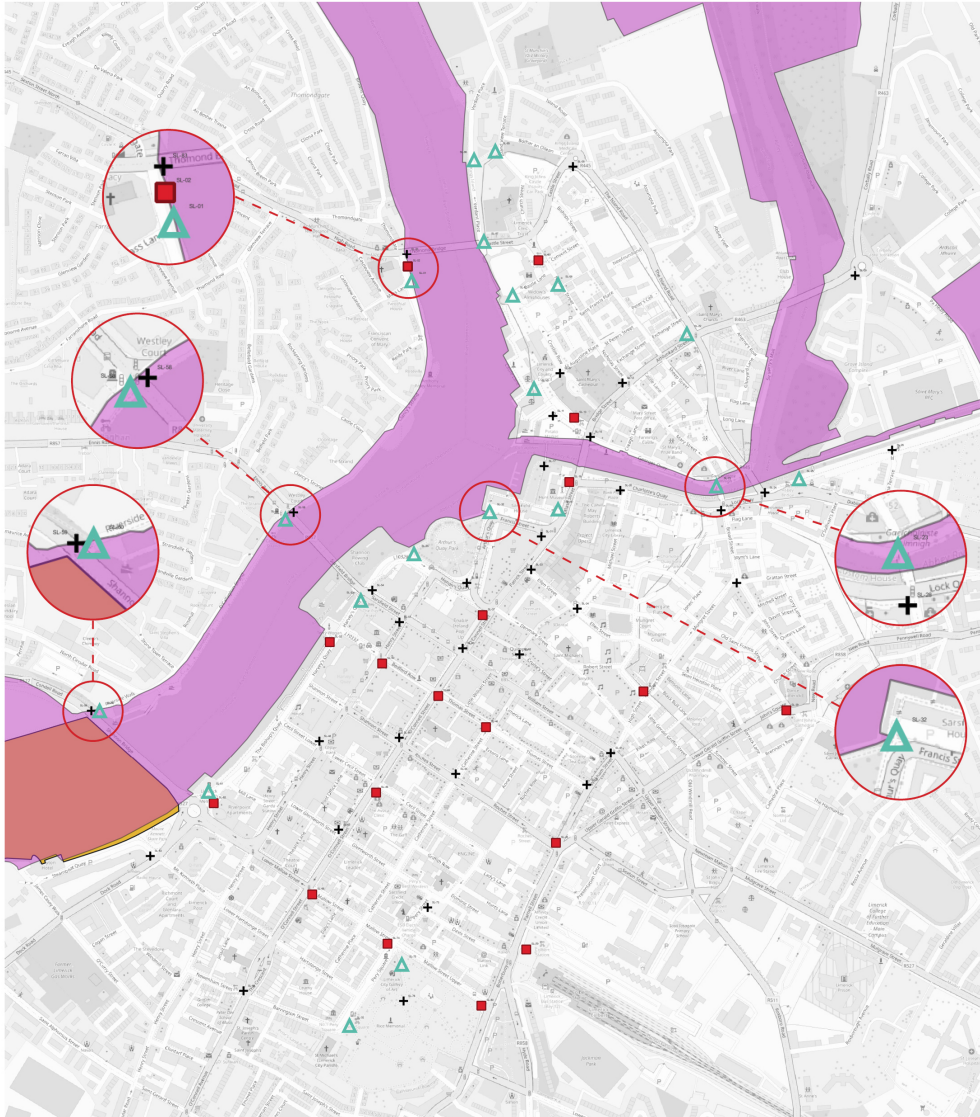
- Zone of Notification (Section 12)
- Map Monolith
- + Fingerpost
- Route Marker

It is noted that 35 of the proposed signs are located within a Zone of Notification and 15 of these signs are replacements of existing signs.



## 2.2 Environmental Context

Similarly to the built context, the environmental context of the project is expansive and varies across the individual locations. It is noted however that all 70 locations are proposed in heavily modified urban areas and are sited in pavements, paved areas or small localised grass verges.



Limerick city centre map illustrating the locations of proposed signage and designated areas (SAC/SPA)

### Legend

- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protected Area
- Map Monolith
- Fingerpost
- Route Marker

The section of the River Shannon which sits within the development area is designated as part of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation. It is noted that 9 of the proposed signs are located on the perimeter of the SAC C and 5 of these signs replace existing signs.

## 3.0 Planning context

The following strategies, policies, guidelines and plans identify the importance of enhanced urban amenities and heritage and increased sustainable mobility and are therefore relevant to the Part VIII proposal:

- **Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework**
- **Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028**
- **Limerick 2030**

### 3.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework recognises that creating an environment where existing amenities and heritage are enhanced and in which sustainable mobility and walking are encouraged will be key enablers to achieve sustainable urban development and the rejuvenation of city centres. The following overarching objectives in relation to urban development, culture, tourism and mobility are noted;

#### **National Strategic Outcome 7:**

Enhanced Amenities and heritage-Amenities and Heritage:

Attractive places include a combination of factors, including vitality and diversity of uses, ease of access to amenities and services supported by integrated transport systems and green modes of movement such as pedestrian and cycling facilities. Appealing places are also defined by their character, heritage and sense of community. This includes attractive buildings and street layouts, civic spaces and parks and regeneration of older areas and making places feel safe through active use and design.

#### **National Policy Objective 4**

Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.

#### **National Policy Objective 6**

Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.

#### **National Policy Objective 7**

Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on: .....The four Cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford;..... Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities;

#### **National Policy Objective 27**

Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

### **National Policy Objective 49**

Support the coordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland.

## **3.2 Limerick Development Plan 2022 - 2028**

The Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 includes specific policies and objectives supporting the proposed new pedestrian wayfinding and orientation signage within the city centre. The following are considered most pertinent to the proposal:

### **Objective CGR O2**

#### **Place-making, Universal Design and Public Realm**

It is an objective of the Council to: a) Ensure that all developments are designed to the highest quality with respect to the principles of placemaking, universal design and public realm including the guidance set out under the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (2009) and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) the Whole of Government National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022 and the 2020 DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid 19 Pandemic Response.

### **5.7.2 Revitalising City Centre Retail**

The Retail Strategy has identified a number of key actions and recommendations to facilitate improvements to sustain the vitality and viability of the City Centre as follows:

..... 5. Promote access to Limerick’s historic core through improved signage/street maps to make visitors aware of the core’s presence and location.

### **5.9.1 Urban Tourism: City Centre and Suburbs (in Limerick)**

During the lifespan of the Plan, Limerick will increase the range of day and evening experience options for visitors by working collaboratively to deliver an improved visitor environment. Ongoing public realm improvement works in the City Centre and a new Wayfinding Orientation and Signage Plan will enhance the visitor experience, by introducing and orientating visitors through the City, delivering new and coherent visitor experiences..... The development of the City as a coherent visitor destination through a Wayfinding, Orientation and Signage Plan.

### **7.5.4 Walking and Cycling**

The Council will support the delivery of a programme of public realm improvements, designed to create attractive places that encourage economic and social activity, improve conditions for pedestrians and make walking a safer, healthier, quicker, more direct and more attractive form of travel. The Council will promote walking through improvements to pedestrian routes, streets and public spaces, by giving greater priority to pedestrians in the use of road space and increasing permeability where possible. Improvements will include appropriate traffic management measures and improvements to signage and wayfinding.

### 3.3 Limerick 2030

Limerick 2030 sets out an economic and spatial plan for Limerick which, while asserting the importance of a unified signage language, identifies a number of key sites within the city centre and recommends the enhancement of pedestrian wayfinding signage in these locations. The following excerpts are considered most pertinent in relation to the Part VIII proposal:

#### **Accessibility/Connectivity/Legibility - 5.19**

Despite the Georgian legacy of a grid system of wide longitudinal streets and narrower cross streets intertwined by smaller alleys much of Limerick City Centre is not as easily navigable as it should be. This is largely a reflection of the attempts to accommodate the car, especially through the implementation of a one way system, the dominance of over-sized vehicular signage, a lack of orientating spaces, a number of inappropriate planning decisions and very poor pedestrian signage.

#### **Accessibility/Connectivity/Legibility - 5.21**

.... the City Centre lacks spaces..... which enable orientation. The overall problem is exacerbated by limited pedestrian and tourist signage in the City Centre.

#### **Infrastructure / Public Realm Enhancement - 6.78**

(The Spatial Plan) also links to the wider public realm and signage strategy to assist permeability, pedestrian movement and way finding.

#### **Infrastructure / Public Realm Enhancement - 6.85**

.. there is a need to develop a standardised pedestrian and vehicular signing system, including interpretative signage, a standardised lighting system and a standardised bollard and seating system.

#### **King's Island - 6.88**

New investment will upgrade City Hall and complete the Riverwalk, while streetscape upgrades and new pedestrian signage will strengthen connections across the Canal and fully integrate King's Island into the rest of the City Centre.

Nicholas Street/Mary Street - Addition of new pedestrian signage to guide visitors to and through King's Island.

Adjacent Projects -

Pedestrian and visitor signage from Patrick Street and the Hunt Museum;

#### **The Opera Site - 6.91**

Pedestrian and visitor signage from Patrick Street and the Hunt Museum.

#### **Arthur's Quay - 6.96**

Signage and materials should identify the water's edge as part of the continuous Riverwalk linking bridges across the Shannon and the two sides of the Shannon River;

Hunt Museum - ..... It would be strengthened by better access from the River Shannon, investment in the garden and Waterfront to the rear and highlighting this destination in clear pedestrian signage and interpretive displays along the Riverwalk;



### **Irish Town – 6.99**

Extend streetscape treatment and visitor signage along Ellen Street and Denmark Street from Patrick Street to create stronger footfall into Irish Town;

Improve the walking quality of streets throughout Irish Town with ..... a targeted approach to pedestrian signage and visitor guides and interpretation.

### **The Georgian Quarter- 6.105**

Improve the walking quality of streets throughout the Georgian Quarter with on-going street refurbishment will include maintenance and cleaning, de-cluttering, limiting large directional signage and a targeted approach to pedestrian signage and visitor guides and interpretation.

## **3.4 Assessment**

The removal of the existing varied and outdated pedestrian orientation and wayfinding signage throughout the city centre and the installation of a new unified signage family will facilitate clearer and easier pedestrian navigation throughout the city centre. This shall enhance the tourism offer of the city and encourage sustainable mobility within the city centre, both of which are considered to be in accordance with the frameworks, development and spatial plans outlined above.



## 4.2 Existing Signage

A total of 45 existing pedestrian and tourist wayfinding and orientation signs have been identified across the city centre. This Part 8 application proposes the removal of these signs.

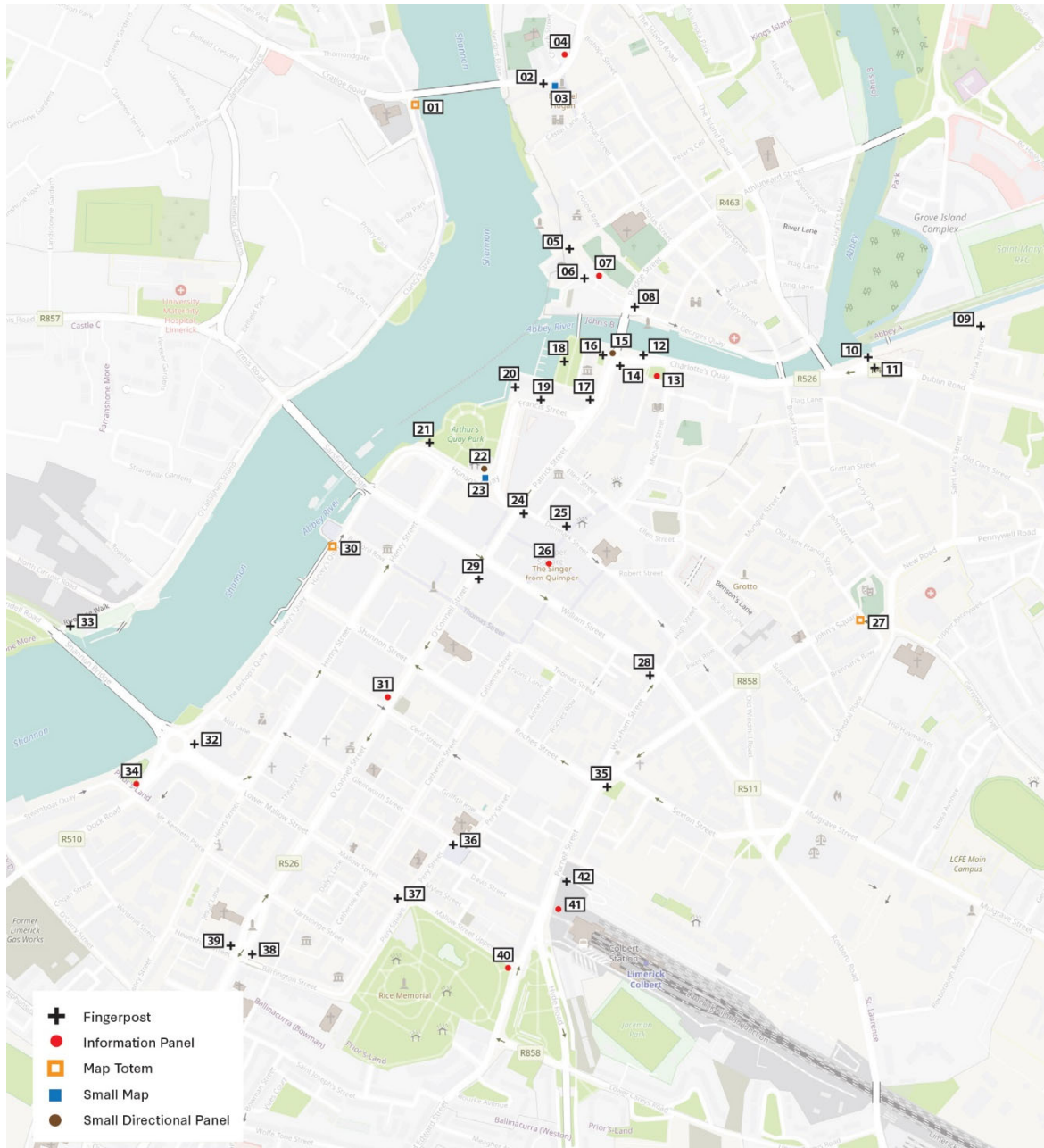


Image illustrating the locations and types of existing signs within the city centre to be removed.

The current wayfinding is a mixture of designs including a number of traditional cast iron finger posts and more modern stainless steel & aluminium fingerposts. The existing fingerposts offer little flexibility and in many cases they have been tampered with and now point in the wrong directions. A few map totems feature in the centre of the city with ‘you-are-here’ maps and Interpretation information relating to the surrounding area is on the reverse side. There are a number of glass case style tourist information panels on posts around the city. These feature basic wayfinding and activity information using a range of differently styled graphics and flyers, some of which is outdated.

### 4.3 Proposed Signage Family

The proposed design of the wayfinding signage family has been developed to bring together a range of factors and principles:

- Deliver great authentic places where people feel they can identify with where they are and have a sense ownership and pride in the place
- Present and communicate the identity of the place, with signs acting as a series of branded navigation touch-points experienced by users, expressing the cities’ values and vision as well as giving direction.
- Create a design language which provides a sense of cohesion across the city’s varied historic built environment, character areas and urban and natural landscapes.
- Draw upon the visual characteristics of the Limerick Brand to enhance and unify the visitor experience within the city.



Image illustrating the character and materiality of Limerick City and the Limerick Brand guidelines which inspired the design

Three sign types are proposed to provide a range of information and orientation types to lead visitors from arrival, planning a route, reinforcing the journey and arriving at the destination. A consistent design language is shared across the signage family incorporating consistency in form, materiality and colour.

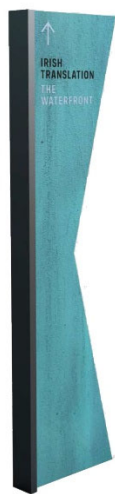
Incorporating a copper verdigris finish which references the copper roofs of the historic city and the green of the limerick crest, and a sculptural dynamic form drawn from the Limerick brand, the three sign types are described below:

#### Route Marker

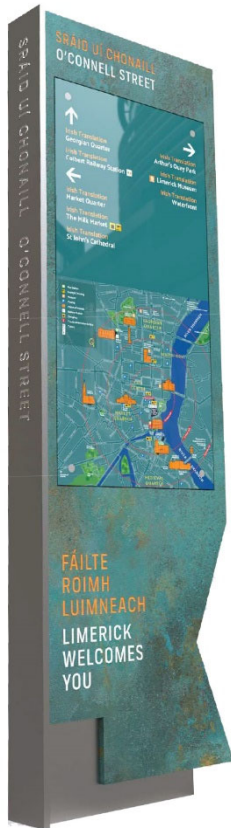
The Route Marker is a low level directional sign which directs pedestrians and cyclists on a specific journey.

4 routes are identified in this proposal:

- Waterfront Walk – a route along both banks of the Shannon around the 3 bridges
- Peoples Park – a route through the landscape of the park from its three entrances
- Old city walls – a route along the historic walls of the city along Island road to Verdant Place
- UL Green Way – a route from the city to the start of the greenway along the canal







### Map Totem

The Map Totems are free-standing, double-sided wayfinding icons which featuring a variety of information in both English and Irish:

- Directional information to Limericks key visitor attractions
- An orientation 'you are here' map illustrating the city layout and location of attractions in relation to the specific sign position
- Interpretation information on the surrounding area

The primary information areas are a toughened glass panel with reverse applied vinyl print featuring the directional, mapping and orientation information.

The signs have been designed to allow of the ease of removal of the glass panel and replacement of the vinyl print in order to allow the sign information be easily updated overtime as the city changes.



### Finger Post

The tall multi directional finger post signs can point in 8 directions and contain a maximum of 5 double sided directional blades in any one direction.

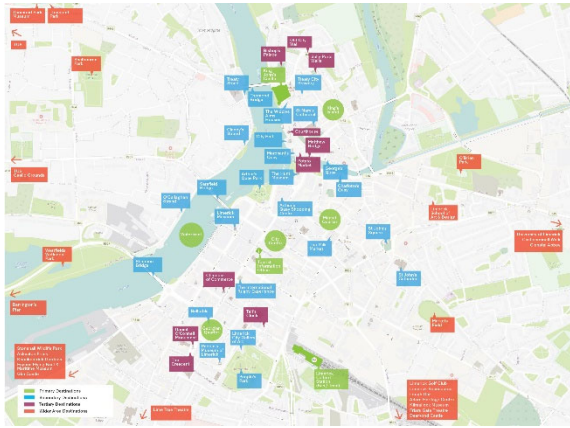
Directional information in both Irish and English to key visitor attractions is provided on both sides of the blades including walking time.

The signage system has been designed to allow for the removal and replacement of the directional blades to allow for the information to be updated over time.

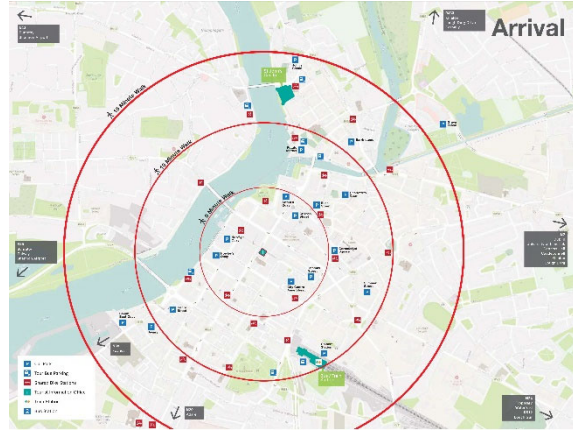
The directional blades will be locked in place to prevent tampering.

## 4.4 Wayfinding Signage Locations

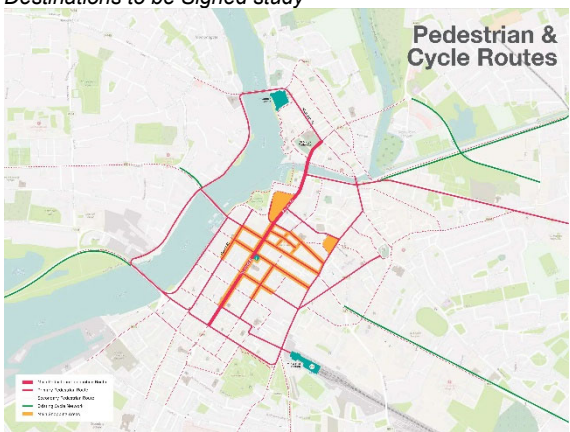
To identify the most appropriate location for visitor wayfinding and orientation signs within the city centre a number of studies were undertaken which identified the destinations to be signed, the key points of arrival within the city, the primary and secondary pedestrian routes and ‘decision points’ wherein pedestrians make a choice which direction to move in at a junction.



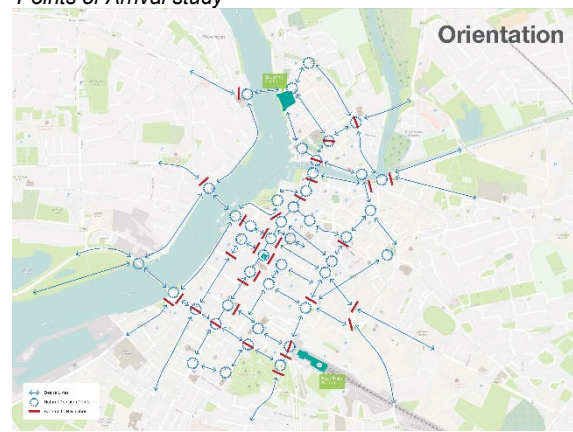
Destinations to be Signed study



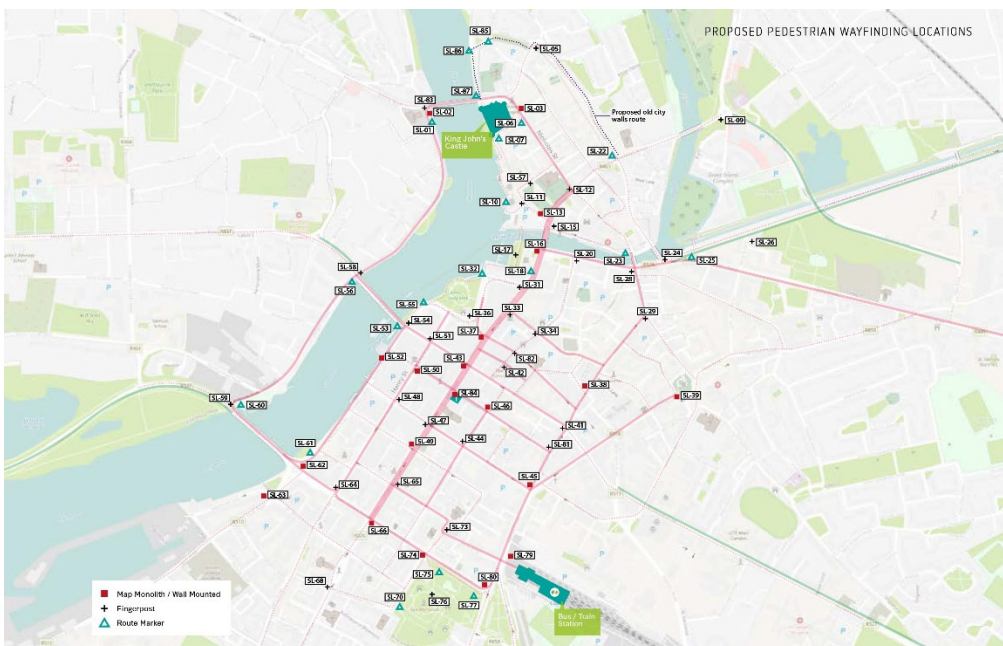
Points of Arrival study



Pedestrian & Cycle Routes study



Orientation & Decision Point study



Proposed Signage Locations

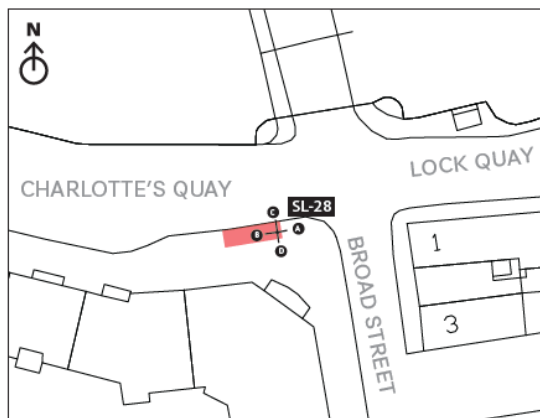
## 4.5 Signage Positioning

Given the proliferation of underground services beneath the pavements in the city centre it is not possible to confirm the exact locations of all proposed signs until the final foundation sizes are determined and a full suite of ground scanning can be carried out at each location and adequate space can be identified. In the instance of locations where existing signs are being replaced there can be some confidence that new foundations can be achieved however in instances where existing signs are being replaced by larger signs (i.e. current fingerpost to new map totem), the same issue is encountered.

Ground scanning on 18 of the proposed locations deemed to be the highest risk (mostly map totems and some route markers) was completed in May 2023 in order to verify these positions prior to submission of this Part 8 application.

To allow the Part 8 application to progress, it is proposed that some flexibility be granted in the identified location of the signs as illustrated. The drawings include 2 types of location:

- Preferred Location: The desired location of the sign, identified on plan with the relevant sign symbol and illustrated on the 3D
- Proposed Location: Should the preferred location be unfeasible on site, the areas identified in red on the plans and 3Ds shall be investigated for alternative possible positions.



Plan Showing Preferred & Proposed Signage Locations



3D Showing Preferred & Proposed Signage Locations

## 4.6 Pedestrian & Cycle Movement

The ultimate sign placement shall be in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets guidelines and not pose any obstruction to pedestrian or cyclist mobility.

Signs shall be placed where possible close to the building line, close to the footpath edge or in line with existing street furniture in order to maintain clear lines of passage for pedestrians.

In instances where existing signs are in inappropriate locations on the pavement, the new sign shall be relocated to a more appropriate location where feasible.

## 4.7 Final Position

Following the execution of full ground scanning works by the appointed contractor and the final sign location confirmed, the updated / confirmed location including dimensions shall be submitted to Limerick City & Council Planning for approval prior to commencement of the sign installation.



## 5.0 Heritage Assessment

### 5.1 Outline Archaeological & Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment.

A Part 8 Archaeological Report has been completed by the Local Authority Archaeologist and is included with this application. The report concludes that the works shall be subject to licenced archaeological monitoring.

Limerick city centre represents an area of high archaeological potential, and previous investigations in these parts of the city have uncovered archaeology. As such, there is the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the proposed development area and such remains, if present, could be adversely impacted by any ground-disturbance activities.

Within the overall project area, there are a variety of archaeological sites and monuments listed on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), some of which are Recorded Monuments protected under the National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014. In addition to this, there are a number of architectural heritage sites recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within the site area including multiple Protected Structures.

It is noted however that the signs are proposed in heavily modified urban areas, the majority of which have been previously subject to a variety of ground works including footpaths and paving. Further to this, the scale of the works involved for the installation for each individual sign is limited and as such direct impacts are not anticipated.

While direct impacts are not anticipated, due care shall be taken during construction to ensure that architectural heritage assets are not accidentally damaged during onsite works, by ensuring the onsite team is fully informed of their location, status and extent. Adequate protective measures shall be put in place, where necessary, such as temporary barriers.

### 5.2 Archaeological Monitoring

It is acknowledged that the signage installation works shall be archaeologically monitored. This shall be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist under a licence issued by the National Monuments Service (NMS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The licence application shall be accompanied by a detailed Method Statement that outlines how the wayfinding signs will be installed, the extent of ground disturbance works and the duration of works, once the detailed designs are finalised.

### 5.3 Outline Visual Impact Assessment

With 70 individual locations spread across the metropolitan area of Limerick City, the built context of each sign is unique to its position. The signs have been designed to respond to the challenge of a varied city context ranging from historic to contemporary. Predominantly achieved through a palate of natural material finishes including aged copper and stainless steel, the proposed signs shall blend into their environment and be read as an extension of the existing suite of street furniture.

As 45 existing signs are being removed there is a net increase of only 25 new signs, all of which are considered part of and a continuation of the existing assemblage of street signage and as such will not contribute much, if any, to any visual effects. A 3D visual of each individual sign verifying this forms part of this application, please refer to document: *LCC-PL01-D1-Proposed Signage Schedule*



## 6.0 Environmental Assessment

### 6.1 Outline Environmental Assessment

It is noted that while the scale of works involved for each sign is very limited, there are a large number of signs and as such suitable considerations of any potential ecological or biodiversity effects have been taken into account and where feasible, mitigated through the overall design of the proposal. It is considered that the proposal will have little, if any, ecological or more general biodiversity effects given the following:

- In all cases the signs are being located in already heavily modified habitats, predominantly city streets, where there is little to no natural habitat which has not already been affected by the development, noise and light of an active urban environment.
- In locations where the signs are being proposed in green areas (most notably the People's Park) it is noted again that these areas are heavily modified, subject to urban use and directly adjacent to well trafficked paths and walkways.
- It is not proposed to remove any trees or plant life other than some small areas of manicured grass lawns which offer little ecological value.
- The signs are not illuminated and emit no light so it is considered there will be no effects on nocturnal wildlife. Further to this, all locations are in areas with extensive street lighting.
- The signs are not automated and have no moving parts which still further reduces any potential for wildlife disturbance.
- An outline CEMP has been prepared to ensure the works are carried out in accordance with best practice to avoid the potential for pollution or disturbance of existing habitats, particularly in the sites located in proximity to the sensitive Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation.

### 6.2 AA Screening

LCCC has completed an Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report. The report concludes that the proposed development would not cause significant impacts. Copies of the reports are included in this planning package.

### 6.3 EIAR Screening

LCCC has completed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAR) screening report. The report concludes that the proposed development would not cause significant impacts. Copies of the reports are included in this planning package.

### 6.4 Outline CEMP

An outline CEMP has been prepared and included in this planning package which sets out the best practice guidelines for the appropriate work measures and precautions to be taken to avoid potential for pollution, disturbance of habitats and loss of biodiversity.

These include Water Pollution Control Measures, Invasive Species Controls, Noise and Vibration, Air and Dust, Storage of Fuels, Oils and Lubricants, Traffic Management, Access and Egress, Seasonal Constraints, Environmental Emergency Response Procedures, Monitoring and Procedures to Review Inspections and Non-Compliance

## 7.0 Statutory Matters

### 7.1 Pre-Planning Consultations

Pre-Planning Consultations with LCCCs planning department have taken place on

- 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Comments and recommendations received have been incorporated into the proposal now presented for Part 8 approval.

The following additional consultations and workshops have taken place with comments and recommendations received incorporated into the proposal where appropriate.

- Internal LCCC consultation and workshop was conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022
- Consultation with representatives of Limerick Regeneration on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- Consultation with representatives of LCCC's Roads & Operations & Maintenance Services departments on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- Presentation and Workshop with the Elected Members of Limerick City & County Council on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- Presentation to the Limerick Wild Atlantic Way Gateway City Group on 09<sup>th</sup> February 2023

### 7.2 Road Safety Audit

As per TII Publications Road Safety Audit Guidelines, new signs are categorised in Audit Stage 1&2 and require road safety audits at the following times:

'Completion of detailed design, for small schemes where only one design stage audit is appropriate'

As such, a full road safety audit has not been carried out prior to this Part 8 application, however it is noted that a table desktop review of the proposed locations has been carried out and no locations have been identified as posing any risk to motorists or cyclists on the roads

Following identification of the final sign locations, a road safety audit will be carried out on all signs and submitted to Limerick City and County Council Planning for approval prior to commencement of sign installation.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Limerick City and County Council are undertaking a process of continuous improvement works to the public realm within the metropolitan area of Limerick City Centre. It is expected that the works will improve the quality of the built environment within the city centre making it a more attractive place to in which to live, work and visit.

Overall, the purpose of this report and its accompanying documents is to demonstrate the proposals suitability and conformity to the planning policy that is in place, while also highlighting how the design has been produced and the construction of the proposal shall be carried out with the highest concern for the built and archaeological heritage of the city, and environmental considerations.

The removal of the existing varied and outdated pedestrian orientation and wayfinding signage throughout the city centre and the installation of a new unified signage family aims to promote and enhance the tourism offer of the city and encourage sustainable mobility within the city centre. The proposals set out are considered to be in agreement with the development plans and objectives set out by Limerick City and County Council.