

## Chapter 7 Town Centre, Renewal and Retail

### 7.0 Aim

To sensitively and sustainably enhance the historic town centre through the provision of high quality public realm. To ensure that the retail hierarchy is commensurate with the settlement strategy in order to facilitate a competitive and healthy retail environment and to support the future vitality and viability of Tullamore town centre. These aims will improve the attractiveness and functionality of Tullamore as a place in which to live, work and visit.

### 7.1 Strategy – Town Centre, Renewal & Retail

#### 7.1.1 Town Centre:

The Town Centre has defined boundaries illustrated in map 7.1. It is the strategy of the Council to facilitate the development of Tullamore Town Centre in line with the designation of the town as part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. The Council recognises the role that the Town Centre has to play in contributing to the achievement of a successful Midlands Linked Gateway within County Offaly and the wider Midlands Region. The Council will seek to facilitate a high standard of development within the Town Centre and in particular, will encourage the appropriate development (including retail use) of existing brown field sites within the Town Centre boundary. Development proposals relating to the Town Centre shall demonstrate the following where appropriate:

- Demonstrate a substantial contribution to achieving the image of a successful Midland Linked Gateway.
- Exceptional design quality.
- Reuse of buildings, linkages and small spaces where appropriate.
- Respect and enhance, where appropriate, the surrounding built and natural environment.
- Promotion of the public realm, where appropriate, with priority given to pedestrian and cyclist use.

The Town Centre as illustrated in map 7.2 is subdivided into four major elements:

- Area 1:** Original town centre based on historic core of the town.  
**Area 2:** The peripheral areas on the north-western and south-eastern flanks which have developed in a sporadic manner with a mixture of uses over the past 30 years.  
**Area 3:** The western zone around the railway station, school adjoining the town park.  
**Area 4:** Harbour area.

It is envisaged that the Town Centre will evolve into a balanced, flexible, vibrant and vital district offering a wide a range of services and opportunities as possible. At a strategic level the Councils will seek:

- Improvement of services including quantity, quality and variety.
- Enhancement of critical mass.
- Implementation of the outcomes of a Transportation Study in respect of convenient, effective access and safe movement, including all modes of transport from pedestrian access, cycles, motor vehicles to buses and trains.
- Instigate an urban design led environmental enhancement based on “pedestrian priority within the public realm”. This will improve the sense of place within the town and encourage more people to visit and use the town centre (promoted through Public Realm Study).

#### 7.1.1.1 Area 1 – Historical Core

This area shown red on Map 7.1 is the current Town Centre and is essentially the 1912 town concentrated around the squares along with the associated main streets. It is envisaged that much of the public realm in this area will be calmed and returned to pedestrian priority with non essential vehicular traffic being discouraged (Public Realm Study).

The built environment will respect the style, scale and context of the historic pattern. Encouragement will be given to re-use small spaces and linkages with the fabric for niche markets, businesses and services. Significant deviation from this will only be countenanced on grounds of exceptional design quality where it can be shown that it can be assimilated into the fabric in an acceptable manner and that no alternative proposal could be developed which would see the re-use, refurbishment or renewal of the existing fabric for the benefit and enhancement of the historic nature of the area and town.

The Record of Protected Structures is available to view (refer to Chapter 12). It would be expected that other buildings, which are not recorded on the Protected Structure list, but which make a significant contribution towards the streetscape, townscape or character of the area for any particular reason, would be identified by the Council or by applicants and treated accordingly. Proposals thereafter put forward for the re-development of these sites/areas should serve to enhance such buildings and areas by conserving the historical built environment.

#### 7.1.1.2 Area 2 – Peripheral areas outside of historical core.

This area is shown green on Map 7.2 and is the adjoining area to the historical core that accommodated much of the town centre growth which took place in the 1960's and the 1970's. It comprises, in the main, piecemeal and incremental mixed use development. Consolidation of this area should be encouraged and this area should be viewed as a prime location for more modern and less traditional uses and buildings. Notwithstanding this, established residential areas within the area will be protected from encroachment from commercial developments. The control of design may be less stringent within this area in order to maintain a broad a range of uses in the vicinity of the town centre. Priority will be given to high density development on site of appropriate size, character and location. Land assembly may be required to holistically look at particular areas. The Council will become involved if necessary to facilitate strategic land assembly cases.

#### 7.1.1.3 Area 3 – Western Area

This area shown as purple on map 7.2 centres around the railway station and contains a number of uses which do not sit particularly well with one another e.g. Railway station, industry, schools, unofficial traveller's site, major distributor route and private housing. These uses create a number of issues relating to conflict in movement, safety and environmental quality. This area is the western arrival point to the town centre and it is important to promote development that will give a positive first impression of the town centre.

Within Chapters 5 and 8 of this plan, this area has been identified as an integrated transportation interchange with train station, bus station and car parking as part of the 'Railway Node' of the western masterplan area (see Chapter 5).

Development of this area will also include offices, education and an element of residential. It will be relatively high density and create a striking arrival point within the town. This will extend the town centre from the Railway Station to the Canal.

#### 7.1.1.4 Area 4- Harbour Area

This area shown as yellow on map 7.2 is located to the north of the Town Centre defined boundary and is bound to the north by the Grand Canal. The principle lands uses within this area comprise waterways, educational, religious, commercial, industrial and residential.

Opportunities exists within this area to:

- Revitalise the Grand Canal Harbour as a public accessibly local amenity feature and tourist destination and to integrate it physically and visually to the town.
- Provide an attractive new residential environment, resulting in a significant increase in the population of the area.
- Improved public vehicular and pedestrian access.

- Enhance the visual amenity of the area including the settings of Protected Structures.
- Provide a civic and urban design character which would give strong form and identity.

### 7.1.2 Residential Areas and the Town Centre.

Within the Town Centre defined boundaries there is a strong residential base. These residential areas and streets close to the centre of town such as Henry Street/O'Carroll Street and O'Moore Street (to O'Moore Hall to north and Spollenstown Road Junction to south) will be maintained and undue encroachment of commercial uses into established residential areas such as these **will not** be encouraged. Additionally, the defined town centre boundary is influenced by the established housing areas abounding it. These housing areas will also be protected by policies in order to maintain their residential amenity and stop 'commercial leakage' from the Town Centre.

It is considered desirable to protect the residential amenities of existing properties, respect the character of these residential areas and to foster and protect a sense of community. Further, this will provide for a consolidation of commercial areas within the Town Centre.

### 7.1.3 Renewal:

#### 7.1.3.1 Derelict Sites

The Derelict Sites Act 1990 requires that owners or occupiers of any land take all reasonable steps to ensure that the land and any structure within, does not become, or continue to be, a derelict site. A derelict site is any land, which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree, from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land.

The Councils continue to be concerned that there are a number of derelict sites which are in need of re-development in Tullamore. The Councils are undertaking a survey of derelict sites in the town as is required under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990. Appropriate action is being considered to remove dereliction. Where appropriate the Councils will secure and encourage the renewal of obsolete and derelict areas within and close to the town centre which utilises undeveloped backlands.

#### 7.1.3.2 At a National Level...

National strategies and policies that influence urban regeneration include central governments urban renewal schemes, National Spatial Strategy, National Anti-poverty Strategy, the social partnership agreements and the National Development Plan.

Over the period of the Tullamore Town and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government/Department of Finance included measures that sought to address the issue of regeneration and renewal including the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme (2000-2006). This was a grant-aided scheme which sought to improve the physical environment of towns and villages and assist in enhancing and making these settlements more attractive to live and work in. While projects have been undertaken within Tullamore that have contributed to its enhancement, funding has ceased for urban renewal schemes. In this regard, the encouragement of renewal within the Town Centre area (as well as other areas) is being increasingly encouraged and promoted by the Planning Authority. To this end, the Planning Authority will encourage, promote and guide regeneration and renewal wherever possible with individuals, state bodies, and private bodies.

#### 7.1.3.3 The Role of the Planning Authority

The role of the Planning Authority in relation to regeneration and renewal is primarily established through the formulation of policies and objectives and their subsequent implementation through the development management process.

The Councils acknowledge that a collaborative approach between central government, the local authority, private sector and voluntary associations is necessary to successfully achieve the revitalisation and renewal of areas within the town which are in need of regeneration. Section 7.2 below, for example, looks at a number of opportunity sites within the

Town Centre and gives guidance on their future development.

#### 7.1.4 Retail:

##### 7.1.4.1 Retail Planning Guidelines

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) published "Retail Planning: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2000" which was subsequently updated in 2005 with amendments, particularly relating to retail warehouses. These guidelines advise Local Authorities on preparing development plans and assessing applications for retail developments and guide retailers and developers in formulating development proposals. The guidelines state that the matters to be included in all future Development Plans are as follows:

- Confirmation of the retail hierarchy, the role of centres and the size of the main town centres,
- Definition in the Development plan of the boundaries of the core shopping area of town centres.
- A broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floor space.
- Strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development
- Policies and action initiatives to encourage the improvement of town centres: and
- Identification of criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

New retail development will also be encouraged at local neighbourhood outlets (which will also serve areas that are a distance from town or village centres). The Council will have regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines 2005 and the Offaly County Retail Strategy when assessing retail applications.

##### 7.1.4.2 Retail Strategy

###### Context and retail hierarchy:

The 'Retail Planning: Guidelines for Planning Authorities specify "Development plans should provide an indication of the general scale and form of retail development that is required in the future." The guidelines also identify a town centre based approach and the sequential approach as the basis for decisions on the location of new retail development and emphasise the need for new development to be appropriately serviced and accessible by different modes of transport. This Retail Strategy for County Offaly acknowledges the implications of these provisions. It identifies future floor space requirements to 2015. The retail hierarchy identified is consistent with the Settlement Strategy identified in the County Offaly Development Plan 2009-2015 and places Tullamore Town Centre in the primary tier.

###### Retail strategy principles:

With particular reference to Tullamore, the overall Strategy reinforces the provisions of the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 and the County Offaly Development Plan, outlining an approach which:

Reinforces and extends the high order functioning of Tullamore as a linked gateway, enabling it to: effectively reduce retail expenditure exported from the County to other centres: and further develop its retail influence in the Midlands consistent with its linked Gateway designation.

To further the strengthening and consolidation of Tullamore, the town is considered the preferred location for retail development. The bulk of retail floor space in the future will be directed to Tullamore (in the first instance) and the main existing centres in the retail hierarchy but Tullamore as a Linked Gateway Town and County Town will be the main focus of retail development activity. It is acknowledged that the role and function of established centres such as Tullamore should be consolidated by encouraging the improvement of retail facilities and supporting services appropriate to the scale of the centre. This will include:

- A positive approach to planning applications which reinforce retail roles and functions;
- In principle, support for town and other centre improvement initiatives (including for example, public realm and business development initiatives); and
- Support for the resolution of traffic and transport related issues which will require to be considered simultaneously.

#### Comparison and convenience retail floor space requirements:

Tullamore, as a Linked Gateway Town, needs to retain the capacity to cater for major retail development and such development should be directed to Tullamore town in the first instance. Its role, as one of the Midlands Linked Gateway Towns, can be strengthened through securing major retail development which will in turn benefit the county and the wider region. Retail development will be encouraged in Tullamore, particularly those developments passing the Sequential Test. This will assist in the town's ongoing regeneration and development, simultaneously enhancing its overall status and competitiveness as Offaly County's key shopping centre and destination. This aims to extend the quality of existing facilities while enabling it to retain trade and compete in the face of additional provision in neighbouring counties. Concentration of major comparison retailing provision in Tullamore will assist the development and expansion of the town's regional retail function.

#### A sequential approach to retail development:

The preferred location for retail development is within the existing town centre of Tullamore. In those instances where development cannot be accommodated in the defined town centre, edge-of-centre locations may require to be identified. Only when these options are exhausted should out-of centre locations be considered providing there is no significant adverse impact on the existing centre.

The provisions of paragraphs 55 to 65 of the Retail Planning Guidelines outline the main principles for assessing new retail proposals. These should be referred to, to inform site selection, the scale and form of development, access and servicing arrangements, linkages and support for the maintenance and development of a competitive retail sector in Tullamore.

## 7.2 Potential Opportunity Sites

Map 7.3 identifies 9 potential re-development sites within the defined boundaries of the town centre which would contribute greatly to the renewal, enhancement and regeneration of the Town Centre. These sites also provide the greatest potential for development and consolidation on a sequential basis within the Town Centre without unnecessary expansion into outlying areas. These areas have been identified for various reasons such as dereliction, low density, presence of structures of architectural merit, under utilisation of areas and former industrial areas not readily adaptable for new uses. The key characteristic with each of these sites is their location within the centre of Tullamore. The areas have not been identified definitively and can be added to, within reason, to provide for logical site boundaries or the inclusion of key sites.

It is acknowledged that some/all of the sites may be owned by different parties but for the success of these particular areas **Site Assembly** is a fundamental requirement in order that comprehensive and coherent development is achieved rather than an ad hoc or a piecemeal approach to re-development. The Council will therefore encourage and facilitate this course of action.

To help realise the full potential for the development of these particular areas, any proposal put forward should include a reasoned urban design statement taking cognisance of the guidance given below. This guidance is not designed to be overly prescriptive but projects put forward in these sites will be assessed against underlying criteria developed to co-ordinate a consistent approach to each of their development.

**Site assembly:** A detailed masterplan shall be prepared for each individual area. This can be undertaken in consultation with the Planning Authority prior to the submission of a planning application. Developers and landowners will be required to co-ordinate and work together in order to achieve an integrated approach to development.

**Landuse:** Re-development proposals will accord with the zoning provisions of the plan.

**Urban Design:** All layouts shall be of high quality and shall:

- Take cognisance of the existing urban grain and structure.

- Ensure efficient and attractive design of street block and plot.
- Use maximum natural light in orientation and acknowledge prevailing wind direction.
- Incorporate appropriate height, scale, massing and density relating to:
  - Scale of adjoining buildings where appropriate.
  - Relate to plot ratio and site coverage standards where appropriate.
- Protect views and vistas.
- Protect adjoining amenity to an appropriate level.
- Reinforce local distinctiveness by inclusion of features in design, materials etc.
- Respect the integrity and setting of Protected Structures, recorded sites and monuments.
- Provide legibility within the public realm – create a hierarchy of routes – use landmark elements.
- Facilitate a defined and positive sense of place.
- Incorporate hard and soft landscaping.
- Provide for natural surveillance of public areas.
- Provide for adaptability and flexibility in design so that places can respond easily to changing property needs.
- Promote mixed use and diversity.
- Utilise where possible, energy conscious and eco-friendly design and building methods.

#### Residential development:

- Residential development will be required to demonstrate a high quality of design and shall comprise a mix of residential unit sizes and types which accommodate a range of living requirements for all age groups.
- Higher densities will be encouraged within town centre areas, however, due regard must be given to the protection of adjoining residential areas and in particular the prevailing density, scale, height and residential amenities.
- Residential development proposed shall adhere to the provisions and guidance given in Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG, 2008).

#### Movement and access:

- Encourage 'access for all', specifically for people with disabilities, designated walkways and cycleways.
- Provide for a clear hierarchy of roads for vehicular movement.
- Allow for adequate provision for the requirement of cyclists.
- Ensure pedestrian movements are catered for through the provision of footpaths and walkways.
- Provide for shared vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist spaces.
- Pedestrian priority areas.
- Movement and access should also be informed by the Tullamore Transportation Study and Public Realm Study when available.

#### Built and Cultural Heritage:

- All new development proximate to protected structures shall be sensitively designed in sympathy and respect of the protected structures.
- Promote the retention, reuse, refurbishment and maintenance of existing built heritage to new, vibrant and adaptable uses.

#### Natural Heritage:

- Identify high amenity or designated landscapes within the site.
- Identify formal buffer zones to enhance and yet incorporate natural heritage areas.

#### Floodplains:

- Identify flood plain areas with the site
- Identify measures to enhance the amenity value of floodplain areas and incorporate.

### 7.3 Public Realm

The Council endeavour to undertake a Public Realm Plan of Tullamore Town. The plan will indicate in broad terms the role of the Public Realm and will seek to establish as a minimum:

- Appraisal of the existing urban form.
- Shared vision for Tullamore's public realm.
- Formulation of a strategic plan for implementation of individual projects and priorities

The study area will be definitively outlined in the plan itself but will include the town centre as well as approach roads to the town and the major links to the bypass.

### 7.4 Town Centre Design Criteria

#### 7.4.1 Urban Design

The quality of the places we live in, work in and visit has an impact on all aspects of our lives. How they are designed will influence the day to day quality and experiences of our lives. Good urban design is essential to deliver a built environment which is sustainable and creates social and environmental well-being as well as economic value.

It is worth noting that the development or re-development of any site within Tullamore offers an exceptional opportunity to define, improve or enhance the built environment for a substantial period of time. For this reason, quality urban design will be encouraged and promoted at all times by the Council. Urban design provides for the basic premise of the:

- Creation of a high quality environment with a clearly defined urban structure.
- Reinforcement of local identity and sense of place.
- Resolution of conflict between pedestrian and traffic.
- Stimulation of commercial investment and sustainable economic development through the creation of revitalisation of an attractive and viable urban environment.
- Make centre memorable and encourage locals to stay and others to visit.



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Shared surface – pedestrians and cars

For residential developments, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG 2008) provide a framework for the best advice in urban design and illustrates how design principles can be translated into practice for the creation of sustainable communities. Developers should therefore have due regard of the advice and guidance contained in these guidelines. This will result in proposed sustainable developments of sufficiently high design quality.



**7.4.2 Architectural Design**



Achieving a high standard of architectural quality must be the main aim of any development. A new development must consider and respond to its context and particular regard must be had to any Protected Structures within the vicinity of the site, other buildings and their amenity spaces, overall streetscape and townscape.



townscape.

**7.4.3 Urban Grain**

The establishment of clear urban grain of blocks and plots is essential to creating mixed use and singular use spaces of quality and interest. The functional requirements for many new uses such as large shopping centres and office blocks tend to work against the historic and established grain. The key determinant in achieving variety and life on streets will be to strike a reasonable balance between a range of development site sizes and provide for adequate permeability through the urban fabric – thus creating streetscapes.



**An example of a new development designed with the historic grain**

**7.4.4 Urban Scale**

The identification of a clear set of rules to guide development is critical in creating successful places. The scale of buildings should reflect the nature of importance of the routes they front. Increase in scale can reinforce the civic qualities of a space and provide points of interest and identity. This brings added legibility to the urban fabric making it an attractive place to visit/use. In other instances, a reduced scale would protect the amenity of streets and back gardens and yards to ensure optimum climatic and light conditions.

Tullamore has a particular scale arising from the height of the existing buildings and street widths. Within that scale however, there are considerable variations, mainly related to the height to width ratios of various urban spaces.

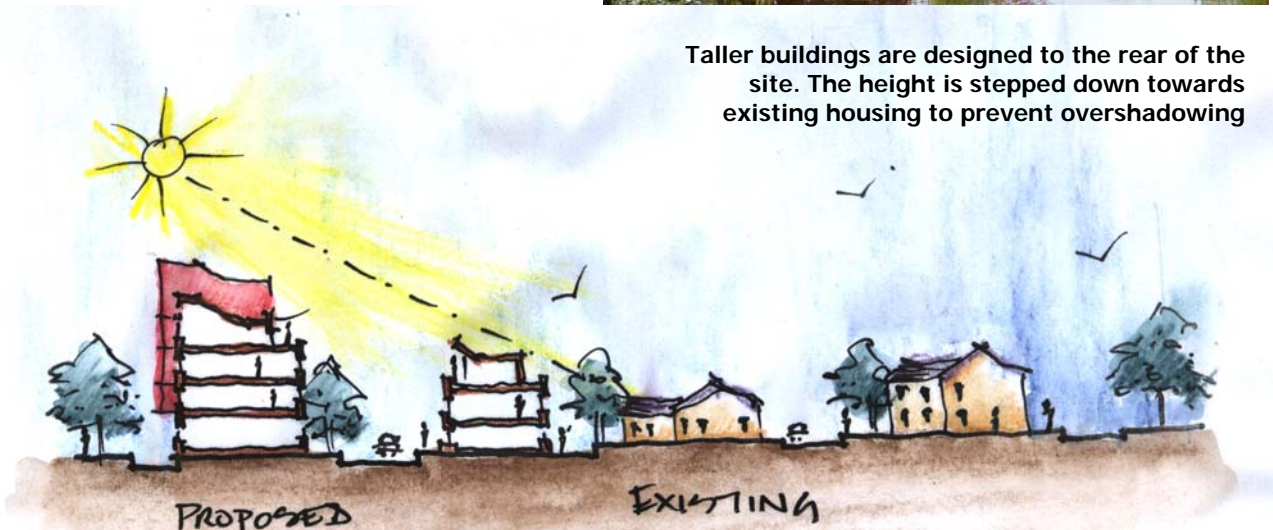


The robust nature of the Town Centre's structure offers some opportunity sites where the scale of buildings can be raised. However, this cannot be to an extent that would impact on the visual quality of the town. At present, higher buildings are located on key vistas or locations where they contribute to the overall character of the area. Height in Tullamore is generally a signature of a civic building.

Tullamore town enjoys good sunlighting and it is important that this characteristic is maximised in new development areas and sites. When considering an appropriate height to width ratio, the principle of allowing sunlight penetration at the Spring and Autumn Solstice at midday on pavements running in an east/west direction on the northern side of the street will be a key determinant of an appropriate scale for that particular street as well as visual impacts.



**Taller buildings are designed to the rear of the site. The height is stepped down towards existing housing to prevent overshadowing**





#### 7.4.5 New Landmark/Gateway/Tall buildings

Tullamore Town largely comprises two or three storey buildings. This general height is punctuated by several public buildings such as the Church of the Assumption, St. Catherine's Church, Hophill and Market house, all of which are of civic importance.

A landmark or gateway building can be defined as any building that may be higher in context, one that may shape the town's skyline, one that is of exceptional architectural quality or one that provides a strong visual introduction to a particular environment.

Well sited and designed landmark and gateway buildings can be seen to bring various advantages to an urban area. Such buildings can define a town's image, symbolise its success and assist in legibility. However, their impacts can easily outweigh their positive attributes and for this reason any proposals for a landmark/gateway building will be vigorously and strategically assessed (as a minimum) in terms of the following:



- Its detailed design, quality and function.
- The local environment.
- Contribution to the appearance and activity of the streetscape.
- The detailed design and function of the building at ground elevation and its relevance of scale with its immediate environment (contribution to 'sense of place').
- Compatibility of ground floor uses of landmark buildings with the activity of the street and immediate vicinity.
- Impact on permeability in the local area.
- Provision of internal/external areas such as cafes and thoroughfares.
- Impact on protected structures and their settings.
- Impact on features of interest such as waterways or public spaces.
- Microclimate impacts.
- Overshadowing.
- Proximity to transport links or nodes.
- Parking provision.
- Flexibility of the structure to adapt to changing future needs

It is important in Tullamore that any proposal for a higher building should recognise any other dominant landmarks such as the Spire of the Church of the Assumption, St. Catherine's Church, Hophill and no new building other than new similarly important civic or cultural buildings should dilute or compromise the established landmarks.

A number of locations within the Town Centre have been identified for landmark/gateway buildings and building of increased height. These are illustrated on map 7.4. Where height is proposed to be introduced to an area or a site, the ratio of scale to width becomes an important consideration in achieving an appropriate elegance. In this regard it is suggested that a slenderness ratio of not less than 4:1 be applied for such buildings or 2:1 where the building displays a disaggregate three dimensional form (stepped approach).

#### 7.4.6 Roofscape:



Tullamore is characterised by coherent heights and it is envisaged that the new areas would be developed on a similar basis. However, the existing townscape is also characterised by individual elements such as chimneys and slight variations on individual storey heights, which contribute to providing an enlivened roovescape. Designers are encouraged to incorporate elements at roof level which lend interest to the roovescape provided that they do not intrude inappropriately or disproportionately on the skyline.

#### 7.4.7 Corner elements:

Corner elements of buildings are critical in providing a sense of identity and legibility and should be celebrated by featuring a special treatment such as creating a corner feature at high level or by slightly increasing the height.



#### 7.4.8 Materials:

Tullamore is characterised by considerable use of painted render as

the main wall finish. It is anticipated that this will be repeated in much of the new development. Tullamore is also characterised by the use of high quality materials such as stone as part of its prominent buildings. Again, it is anticipated that stone should be used in articulating key buildings with new development areas. All materials should be durable to avoid long term maintenance problems and designers should specify sustainable materials as far as possible.

Material finishes need not be solely restricted to render and stone and should include modern materials such as glass and steel which to ensure that buildings are of their time and date.





#### 7.4.9 Shopfronts:

For **Traditional Shop Fronts**, minor alterations and repair of shop fronts listed for protection should be in sympathy with traditional design and characteristics and materials used in the building. The removal of features or alterations to existing shop fronts where they are considered to be of historical, architectural or strong visual interest is not acceptable to the Planning Authority (refer to Chapter 4).

For **new shop fronts** the design of new shopfronts should relate to the architectural characteristics of the building of which the shop front forms part. New shop front design must respect the scale and proportion of the streetscape, by maintaining the existing grain of development along the street and respect the appropriate plot width. Long horizontal facades should be broken by elevational modelling and vertical proportioning. The use of fascia, pilasters and stall risers are a means to achieving this. The use of the public footpath for security stanchions or roller shutter fittings is not acceptable.

The **night time appearance** of a building and in particular its shop front must be considered. Lighting assists the building and its principle use to function after dark. Lighting to the shop front should be external only and provided by means of directional spotlighting. Spotlighting from inside the building will also be encouraged where it does not cause glare. Internally lit or backlit signage will not be encouraged.

## 7.5 Policy

### Town Centre

**TTEP 07-01** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and promote development within Tullamore Town Centre that contributes positively to achieving the image of a successful Midland Gateway by exceptional design quality, enhancement of the built and natural environment and the promotion of the public realm.

**TTEP 07-02** It is the councils' policy to seek to protect and enhance the character and environment of the traditional Town Centre streetscapes and will encourage the redevelopment of derelict, underutilised sites such as those identified in Map 7.2 within the Town Centre.

**TTEP 07-03** It is the Councils' Policy that any new developments within the Town Centre will be required to respect the heritage and architectural character and in particular should:

- Respect the character of the streetscape in terms of design detail, including proposed materials
- Conform with scale, massing, layout, height and urban grain of the streetscape insofar as possible to ensure continuity of street frontage and definition of public and private space.
- Observe historic building lines, avoiding unnecessary set backs or protrusions.
- Respect and not restrict important views/vistas or landmarks within the townscape and seek to provide new views/vistas in the development of individual sites/areas.
- Enhance pedestrian movement within the Town Centre.

**TTEP 07-04** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the Town Centre buildings (including facades and signage).

### Retail

**TTEP 07-05** It is the Councils' policy to promote Tullamore, part of the Midlands Linked Gateway, as the main retail centre in the County and to ensure that the retail quality and range is of a standard that contributes to the retail economy within the County, the Midland Gateway and Region as a whole.

**TTEP 07-06** It is the Councils' policy to implement the Retail Hierarchy as set out in the Offaly Retail Strategy. The Councils will seek to locate retail development in the retail core areas of Tullamore, subject to normal planning and land-use considerations.

**TTEP 07-07** It is the Councils' policy to resist the loss of retail units to non-retail use at pedestrian level, particularly in the primary shopping frontages of the town centre.

**TTEP 07-08** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail uses with due cognisance to the sequential approach to retail development.

**TTEP 07-09** It is the Councils' policy to encourage retail development, including new forms of shopping which relates to the regeneration of the existing town centres. Proposals, which would undermine the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, as a whole will not be permitted.

### Renewal

**TTEP 07-10** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate the physical renewal and revitalisation of areas and the enhancement of amenities and promotion of sustainable development in Tullamore. It is the Councils' policy to seek the redevelopment and/or renewal of derelict sites throughout the town, which are listed in the Council's Derelict Sites Register.

**TTEP 07-11** It is the Councils' policy to promote and encourage the re-utilisation of suitable redundant or obsolete structures, ensuring that the improvement and screening of neglected sites and the renewal, repair and/or maintenance of structures is in line with the Councils powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

**TTEP 07-12** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate backland development, where this development strengthens the commercial or residential functions of the town centre or areas close to the centre, provided that such development is done in a coordinated fashion and does not adversely affect the intrinsic character of the town centre.

**TTEP 07-13** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and assist active participation by government bodies, heritage groups, community associations, and local people, where appropriate, in the conservation and restoration of landmark buildings and structures (both of local and or regional/national importance). This may include the aiding and funding of conservation and restoration works.

**TTEP 07-14** It is the Councils' policy to seek to encourage the redevelopment of derelict or vacant buildings as an alternative to new build on new undeveloped sites.

### Public Realm

**TTEP 07-15** It is the Councils' policy to progressively implement the policies and objectives of the Tullamore Public Realm Study.

**TTEP 07-16** It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the town centre including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescaping.

### Opportunity Sites

**TTEP 07-17** It is the Councils' Policy to require that any proposal brought forward for the sites identified on Map 7.2 will include a comprehensive urban design plan showing the rationale behind the proposal and how it will interact within its context and the wider Town Centre area.

**TTEP 07-18** It is the Councils' policy to require landowners to co-operate and co-ordinate an holistic approach to the development of lands (in differing ownerships) with the aim of site assembly and the renewal and regeneration of larger sites within the Town Centre.

### Signage and shop fronts

**TTEP 07-19** It is the Councils' policy to encourage the repairing and retaining of historic shop fronts or historic features in a shop front.

**TTEP 07-20** It is the Council's policy to encourage externally lit or illuminated signs on shop fronts and to resist internally illuminated or neon type signs

### Landmark/Gateway/Tall buildings

**TTEP 07-21** It is the Councils' policy to encourage landmark/gateway/tall buildings at appropriate locations within the Town Centre, subject to normal planning considerations and where the structures display exceptional design quality.

## 7.6 Objectives

**TTEO 07-01** It is an objective of the Councils to consolidate the existing retail and commercial function of the town centre area.

**TTEO 07-02** It is an objective of the Councils to encourage the sequential approach to retail development within Tullamore and to avoid impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre.

**TTEO 07-03** It is an objective of the Councils to facilitate, where appropriate, the development and renewal of sites and areas of Tullamore which are in need of regeneration and in particular to guide the holistic development of larger assembled sites. The Councils will facilitate and promote sensitive and in context re-development of underused or derelict town centre areas.

**TTEO 07-04** It is an objective of the Councils to exercise the Councils' powers under the **Derelict Sites Act 1990**, to identify areas of dereliction, which are suitable for redevelopment, in accordance with the Councils' Derelict Sites Register.

**TTEO 07-05** It is an objective of the Councils to remove unauthorised advertising/signage where possible and to encourage new signage which is appropriate to the streetscape and it not internally illuminated.

**TTEO 07-06** It is the Councils objective to carry out a Public Realm Study for Tullamore.