

2.0 Village Design Strategy

This section of the plan sets out a strategy for maximising the potential of Blackrock Village, building upon the positive characteristics of the village core to deliver a high quality urban environment around which new development can evolve. The following are the key objectives of the strategy:

Objectives

- To enhance Blackrock Harbour to make it an attractive focal point for the area by the improvement of the harbour itself, and the creation of a new pedestrian Harbour Square with new development along its edges;
- To create a new Blackrock Park on the former Ursuline Convent grounds to serve Blackrock Village;
- To implement a new public walkway connecting the harbour to Blackrock Castle, as part of the wider Banks of the Lee project.

The Framework Plan opposite provides an overview of the strategy, and illustrates the key elements of the strategy necessary to generate the revitalisation of the Village core in a manner sympathetic to its urban qualities. This strategy considers the planning and urban design issues under the following headings:

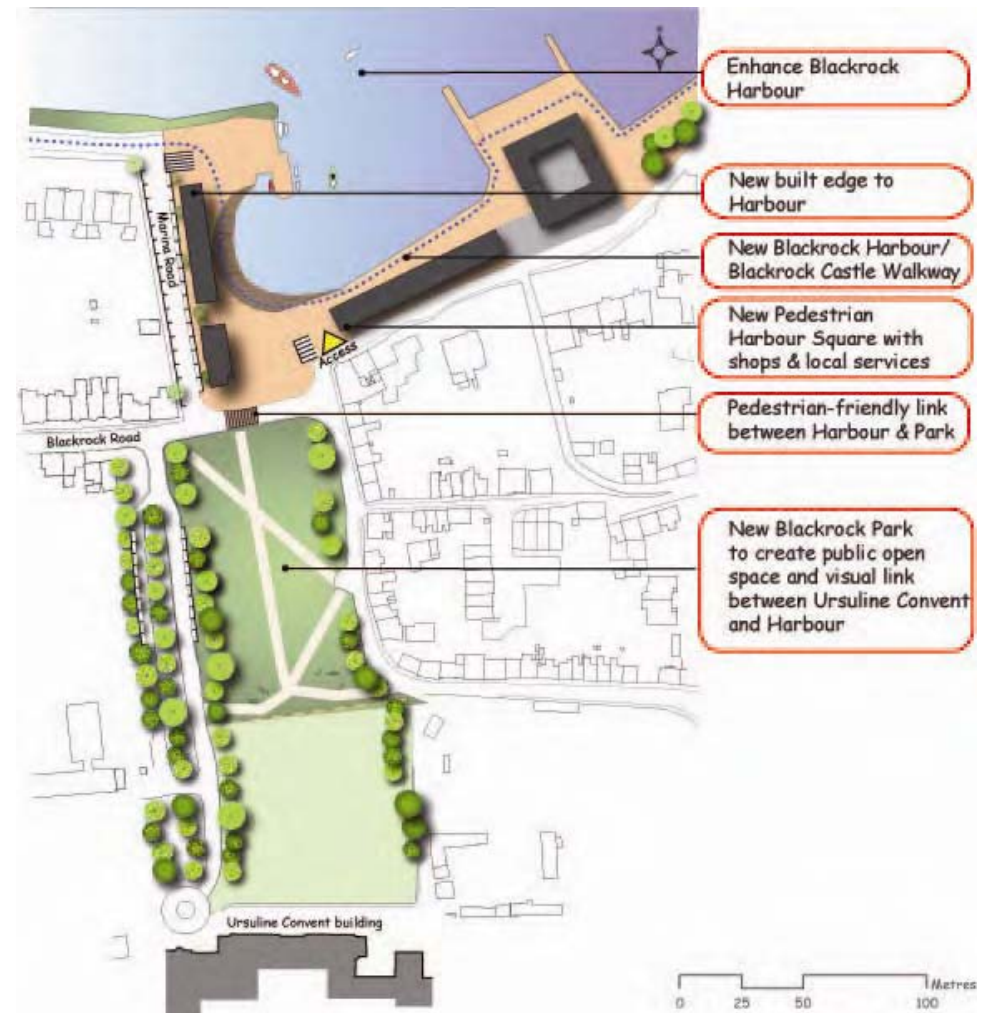
Public realm strategy - The creation of a number of good public spaces that provide the physical structure for development and improvement. This will include a series of linked primary spaces (Blackrock Harbour and Park) and secondary spaces (Blackrock Castle/Harbour Walkway, The Marina) all linked and highly accessible;

Access and Movement Strategy - An improved access and movement strategy to link the village with the wider area; and

Development Strategy - The development of a new village core integrated into the existing built fabric, taking into account the existing character of the village, landscape / natural heritage issues and the setting and views of Blackrock Castle.

The village design strategy is supplemented by an implementation strategy (see Section 3) that establishes how Cork City Council will proactively seek to deliver a programme of key actions within its remit along with objectives for the redevelopment of the sites in private ownership.

Figure 1: Framework Plan



2.1 Public Realm Strategy

This strategy identifies a series of linked spaces which will form the structure for the new village core. These will maximise accessibility to high quality areas of active and passive open space for residents and visitors to the village. The design strategy for these spaces includes maximising both physical and visual linkages between the harbour, the village and the historic parkland of the former Ursuline Convent building. A new signage scheme should supplement this with reference to key sites/buildings of interest in the area. New street-lighting in the village and Marina will be of huge benefit to the area, as it is currently very poorly lit. Section 3 details how projects will be delivered.

The Harbour

Blackrock Harbour is the focus of the area's redevelopment and it is thus, of critical importance to the village centre. Figure 2 illustrates the key proposals for the harbour.

A key aspect of the improvement of the area is making the actual harbour attractive and usable by recreational / other boats. It is proposed to dredge the harbour to remove silt / other matter. In addition, if it is feasible then the harbour floor will be excavated to provide additional depth. It may also be possible to introduce pontoons within or close to the harbour. This work will need to be supplemented by repair and possible stabilisation of the harbour walls and slipways (see *Section 3: Implementation Strategy*). The relocation of the Grotto is also proposed to allow improved vehicular access to the slipways. It is proposed to relocate the Grotto to new Blackrock Park, as this will be prominent, publicly accessible, high-status and managed and convenient.

A series of public realm improvements are required around the harbour including the provision of a boardwalk facility along the realigned Harbour, removal and re-housing of the public toilets within the village centre, and the creation of a hard landscaped new pedestrian square. These interventions will formalise the space as a social focus for the village, ensure the successful function of the harbour, rationalize parking and create a high-quality environment for the public to enjoy. It is also proposed that consideration be given to a work of public art within harbour square that provides a monument to the fishing and hurling heritage of the village.

Marina Road (north-south access west of Harbour Square) must be widened to provide a 15 metre corridor, with 6m for carriageways, 5m for footpaths (2x2.5m), and 4 metres (2 x 2m) for car parking spaces on both sides of Marina Road. Areas of hard landscaping around the Harbour provide excellent opportunities to provide formal and informal seating areas. The design and locations of these will respond to the aspect and micro-climate of the space.

Within the harbour area there is currently a Civic Amenity site serving the village. The upgrading of the harbour and relocation of car parking will require that this be relocated. Two options are being considered:

- Adventure Playground Car Park; and
- Underground within Harbour Square (this is the preferred one as it is convenient and accessible for the largest group of people).

Options for new public toilets will be considered at the implementation stage. The preferred option will be within an extended Community Centre in the park.

Figure 2: The Harbour



Blackrock Park

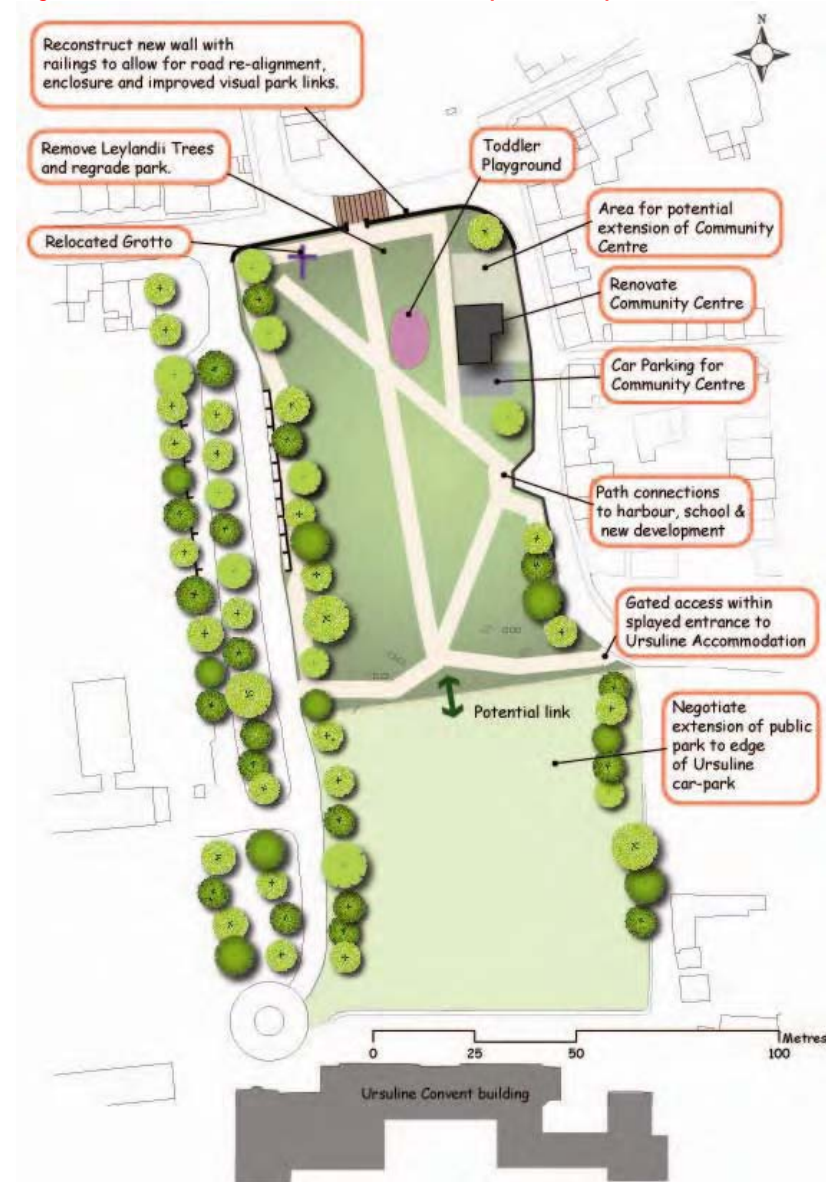
Blackrock Park will be developed as a neighbourhood park to provide for the amenity needs of the surrounding residential areas. It will be implemented in the short-term (2007-2008) following a simple design to facilitate passive recreation. It will be a busy public space and a place for people to congregate, particularly

The Masterplan for the space is illustrated in Figure 3 (opposite), and includes:

- Renovation and extension of the Community Centre so that it becomes an active use in the park, to include a relocated Citizen's Information Centre;
- The removal and reconstruction of the northern section of wall and reconstruction of new wall incorporating gate and railings in the redesign.
- Relocation of grotto from Marina Road to the park to a location that is visible from Blackrock Road following agreement with local parishioners as to the appropriate positioning;
- Create gated entrances to the park on Convent Road from existing access point and corner close to Ursuline Home;
- A toddler playground to provide for the needs of the local community;
- An open central area capable of accommodating informal active recreation;
- Removal of leylandii trees in order to create a strong landscape structure comprising a linear green trees space defined by trees at its edges, allowing views between the village and harbour, and also enhancing the setting of the former Ursuline Convent building, a protected structure.
- A series of paths is proposed to ensure good connectivity within the site and between the site and surrounding area;
- Negotiate extension of public Blackrock Park to the Ursuline building, subject to management agreement, in order to create a larger and more usable park;
- A raised pedestrian crossing will allow for strong links to be created between the park and the harbour. This will create a continuous public realm spine from the Harbour and River to the northern parkland of the Convent grounds and will reinforce a sense of arrival to the village core;
- Consideration will be given to introducing "windows" into the boundary wall onto Convent Road to allow a degree of supervision
- A bus shelter should be integrated into the reconfigured boundary wall to Blackrock Road.

It is envisaged that the Masterplan for the park will be achieved in the short term as it will act as a key catalyst in the Village's regeneration. Section 3 outlines the proposed timescales for the detailed design and implementation of the park. The removal of the Leylandii trees, regrading of the land and relocation of the Citizen's Information Centre on a temporary basis in the short term, will allow the masterplan to be implemented.

Figure 3: **Blackrock Park - Landscape Masterplan**



Community Centre Building

The Community Centre is currently housed in an existing single storey former school building to the north-east of the Park. Cork City Council is developing a proposal, in partnership with the Blackrock Community Association and other key stakeholders, to renovate the existing attractive building and extend it to include the following functions:

- Blackrock Community Centre Hall;
- Blackrock Citizen's Information Centre Office;
- Blackrock Meals on Wheels;

In addition, essential operational car parking will be provided within the park accessed from the existing current gates up to the maximum parking standards set out in the City Plan 2004 (1 space per 50 sqm). Cork City Council is also exploring the potential of integrating the following into an extended building:

- Blackrock Scout Hall;
- Publicly accessible toilets; and
- A café to provide a focus for the park and those using it.

Alternatively, a new-build linear community centre could be constructed at the edge of the space along the line of the boundary wall. This would have the added advantage of reducing the extent of encroachment of built structures into the park. It would also improve the setting to the Ursuline Building and give the opportunity to provide a positive frontage onto Convent Road.

The redevelopment and funding of the Community Centre building will be led by the City Council in partnership with the other key stakeholders and relevant funding partners.

Blackrock Castle/Harbour Walkway

A new public amenity walk will be developed linking The Marina to Blackrock Castle via Blackrock Harbour. This is an objective in the *Cork City Development Plan 2004* and is a corporate priority. The design of the public walkway must accommodate all potential users, including the disabled.

A Feasibility Study on the walkway design is due to be completed in February 2007. Land adjoining the River is lined with an important tree belt which can contribute to the attractiveness of the leisure route. The design of the amenity walk should therefore follow the attractive River's edge along the entire route and should ensure its alignment, gradient and surfacing ensures accessibility to all users, including the disabled. Two main design options are being considered:

- A **combination footpath** with boardwalk / on-level footpath where land is high enough above the water level. (Figure 4, opposite, illustrates that at high tide most of the walkway is below the water line);

Figure 4: **Blackrock Castle / Harbour Walkway**



- A rock armour structure similar to that used on the Mahon walkway beyond Blackrock Castle. This will visually be more of a dominant structure.

The walkway should be 5m wide to allow for heavy pedestrian / cycle flow and also to give the perception of safety / private space to encourage usage. Development over the foreshore will be subject to Foreshore Licence.

The needs of the Cork and District Draft Net Fishermens Association at Castle Cove will be addressed as part of the Blackrock Castle / Walkway project. The group have requested storage structures and a pontoon.

The City Council will seek to acquire the land required to deliver the walkway. Land acquisition procedures or Compulsory Purchase Orders will, where necessary, be undertaken. See also section on Boat Club site (below) and *Section 3: Implementation Strategy*.



Dan Flynn, fisherman



The Mahon walkway



The Marina

The Marina is an important Riverside Amenity Corridor acting as a visual amenity for residents of the northern ridges and as a venue for passive recreation for the inhabitants of the eastern City. It forms part of the City’s orbital amenity route linking the City Centre, Blackrock and Mahon Peninsula. The Marina has an intrinsic, quiet, aesthetic value which should be reinforced in the design and use of materials in the new space (i.e. Harbour Square).

It is an objective of the *City Plan 2004* to create a sub-regional park to serve the south east of the City and the Docklands, which will extend from Kennedy Park, via a “green ribbon” along the length of Monahan Road linking the Atlantic Pond and terminating just west of Church Avenue on the Marina (see Figure 5, opposite). The overall treatment of Marina Park / The Marina will be addressed through the *South Docks Local Area Plan*, due to be completed in 2007.

The City Council proposed to develop the *Marina Nature Park* on an area of land close to Church Lane (see Figure 6, opposite) in the City Council’s ownership. This will include an adventure playground, the first of its kind in the city, to provide a fun playground for children in the area. The park will also include:

- A landscape design that produces an attractive and usable park with areas for all to enjoy, including wildflower planting areas, seating, etc.;
- An improvement to the setting of Dundanion Castle, a protected structure in ruins (PS492), and may present opportunities to refurbish and re-use this building of historical and architectural interest;
- Designation of the old railway as a “wildlife corridor” between The Marina and Rochestown Road, and supplementing this with ecological planting within the park;
- A direct pedestrian link between the Marina and the Walkway on the Old Passage Railway line; and
- Car parking within the park and on the southern side of The Marina between Church Avenue and the proposed Adventure Playground to increase the amenity value of the route.



View from The Marina towards Blackrock Castle

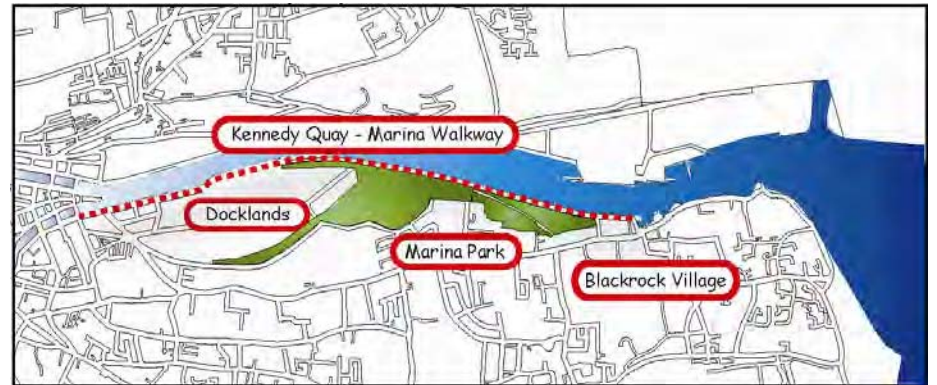


City Park



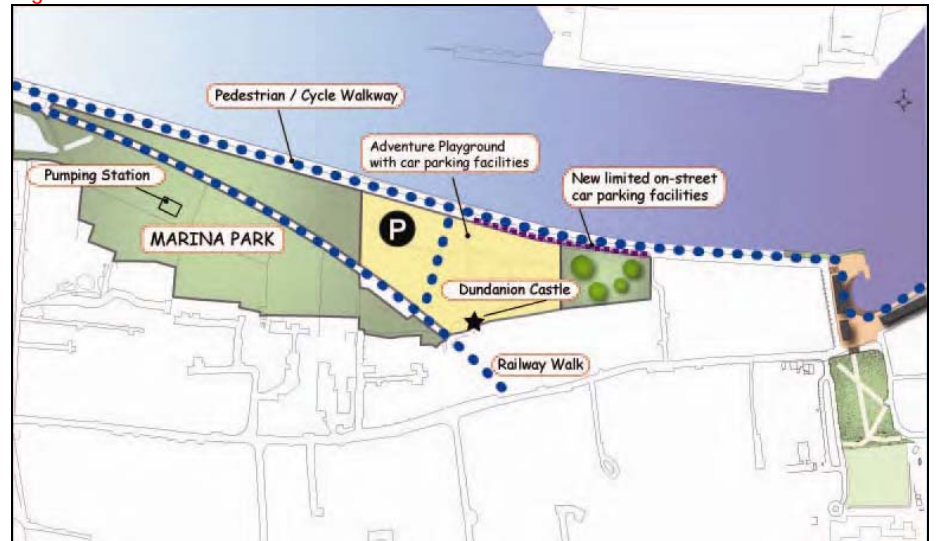
Adventure Playground

Figure 5: Marina Park



This diagram illustrates the likely extent of the proposed Marina Park to be developed as part of the Docklands Strategy.

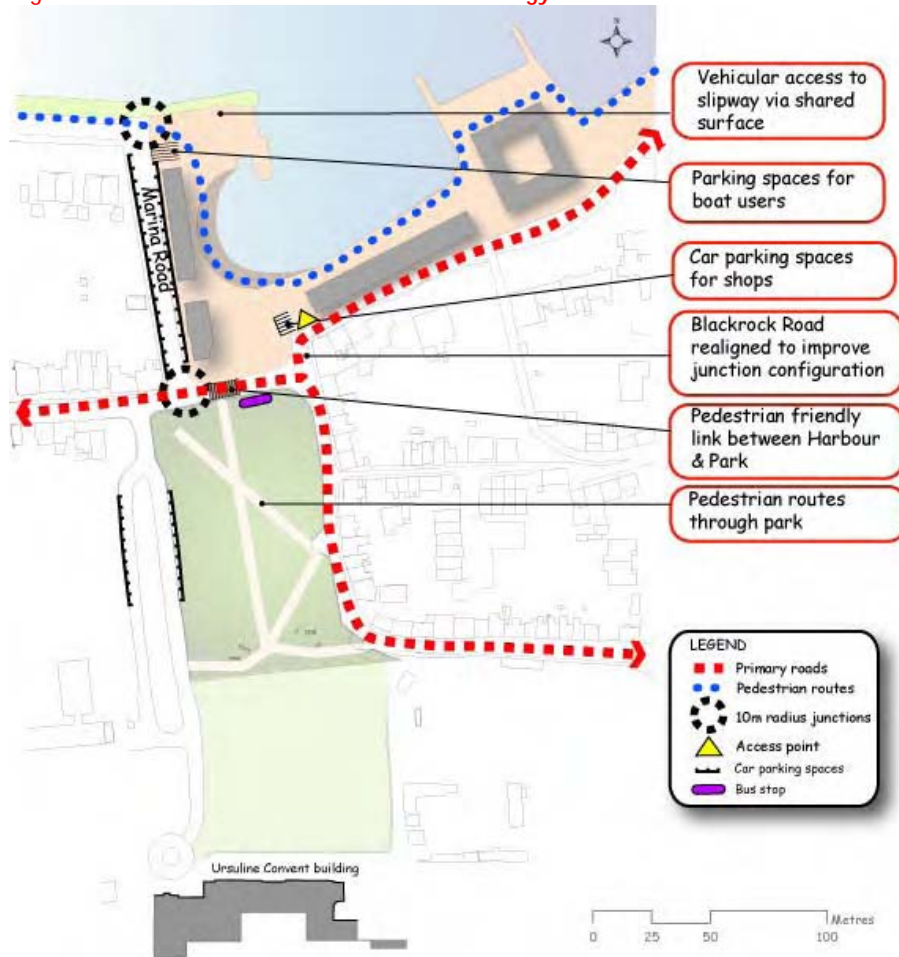
Figure 6: Marina Adventure Park



2.2 Access & Movement Strategy

Blackrock Village is a compact neighbourhood centre served by two principal roads (Blackrock Road and Castle Road) which converge at the north-eastern tip of the former convent lands, and a series of secondary routes which link the Marina Walk and the Ursuline School. Figure 7 outlines the main access and movement objectives central to the village's successful reconfiguration.

Figure 7: Access and Movement Strategy



Key proposals are listed below in order of the preferred hierarchy of movement / transportation:

Pedestrians & Cyclists

- A new public amenity walk will be developed linking The Marina to Blackrock Castle via Blackrock Harbour, as mentioned in the Public Realm Strategy. The design of the public walkway must accommodate all potential users, including the disabled. Cork City Council will seek to acquire lands for this purpose and will undertake Compulsory Purchase Order proceedings where necessary;
- To provide pedestrian access to, and through, the new Blackrock Park via gated entrances on Blackrock Road and Convent Road. This will serve the needs of the local community and students at the Ursuline School;
- Improved access will be created between the Harbour and Blackrock Park by the provision of a raised table in the short term;
- Links southwards to the Old Passage West Railway Line amenity walk will be made through the proposed Adventure Playground on The Marina;
- Cycle parking facilities to be located in Blackrock Harbour Square and at Adventure Playground.



Public Transport

- The No.2 bus route will continue to serve the area from the centre of the village in the location of the existing bus stop on Blackrock Road;
- A bus shelter should be provided for bus passengers to enjoy and to encourage patronage of the bus service. This should be incorporated into the reconfigured boundary wall to Blackrock Park;
- CASP envisaged a green route to serve the south-east of the City which would pass through this area. The area is likely to come under increased pressure from traffic congestion generated by the new residential and other developments in Blackrock/Mahon and Docklands over the next few years. Route options for the green route need to be explored, and include routes along the Marina and the Old Passage West Railway Line;
- A River Bus Feasibility Study is currently being undertaken by a private business with a view to establishing whether a service is feasible and viable.

Traffic management

- The Marina will continue to function as a local road only, providing access to the Marina Nature / Adventure Park and the amenity route. Cork City Council will review the upgrading of the amenity function of the route and will take action to minimise through traffic on the Marina before traffic levels increase in the area as a result of the development of the Ursuline lands. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by the implementation of traffic control measures in the short-medium term to minimise through-traffic at this location. Whilst the objective of closing The Marina to through-traffic remains, it is proposed that traffic management on The Marina would fall within the scope of the *South Docks Local Area Plan*, due to be published in 2007;
- Traffic calming will be introduced on Church Lane. This is likely to be funded from development contributions relating to the development of the Ursuline Convent site, as there is a direct link between the need for the traffic calming and the development;
- Traffic calming is proposed for Castle Road.

Private Vehicles

- The provision of car parking in sufficient quantities and in the right locations is critical to the future success of the village centre, in order to provide for businesses, customers, residents and visitors. Public car parking provision in the village centre will be between 45-55 spaces. Table 1 (opposite) shows the quantity and location of car parking provision proposed;

- To reconfigure the Blackrock Road adjoining the convent lands to improve movement for vehicles in the village (including buses), improving the safety of the following junctions:
 - Convent Road, Castle Road and Blackrock Road;
 - Blackrock Road / Marina Road.
- Continued access to the harbour is necessary to facilitate water-based activity including provision of spaces for trailers and boats. Boat-related vehicles are given an area for parking in the layout close to the slipways;

Table 1: Public Car Parking Facilities to serve Blackrock Village

Locations	Numbers of car parking spaces proposed
Centre of Village	
Marina Road (Harbour)	20-30 (depending upon whether Scout Hall / lagoon redeveloped)
Harbour square (east)	5 short stay spaces
Blackrock Park (Ursuline grounds) on laneway / western side of access road	20
Sub Total	45-55
Walkway related car parking	
Blackrock Castle car park	40 (1,000m from centre of village)
Marina Adventure playground / park	30 no. spaces (500m from centre of village)
The Marina (bet. Church Ave & Adventure Playground)	20 no. parallel spaces
Sub-Total	90 spaces
TOTAL	135-145

2.3 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

The overarching aim of this is to promote the development and improvement of the centre of Blackrock Village through the development of key sites to enable the centre of the village to be a focal point for the village in terms of activity and community. New development will consolidate and redefine the centre with new buildings and new uses framing an improved harbour and providing for the local needs of the area.

Blackrock Village has largely retained its traditional, simple urban scale and form. It possesses a high quality setting focused around the traditional harbour, with expansive vistas along the banks of the River Lee. The area is framed by both formal and informal planting and possesses a diversity of natural assets that can contribute to the area's character and appeal.

Two preferred development zones were identified in the *Blackrock Village and Harbour Study*:

- The Western side of the Harbour (see 2.3.1 / Figure 8, below);
- The Cork Boat Club site (see 2.3.2 / Figure 9, below).

Strategic context: Zoning and Development Objectives

Both sites are within an area zoned as a "neighbourhood centre" in the *City Plan 2004*. Neighbourhood centres are generally characterised by a mixture of uses including for example a convenience store, a limited range of comparison shops, retail offices (e.g. bank), community facilities serving the catchment residential market, and residential uses.

The zoning objective for Blackrock is strategic in that it seeks the development of new development to provide and expand the very limited range of local commercial and community services that exist in the village centre. Critically Blackrock currently lacks a convenience store at all within walking distance of many houses (the last store closed when it was bought by a private developer). Planning applications will be required to provide a housing mix and proposals to meet Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as part of any proposed residential development.

The following are supplementary corporate objectives relating to land use that the City Council would like to see achieved through the redevelopment of the two sites in the centre of the village:

- An expansion of local services, subject to compliance with relevant City Council policies;

- A local convenience store must be provided in the village centre of at least 200 nsm. The preferred location for this is on the western side of the harbour fronting onto Blackrock Road;
- The City Council will seek to resist the development of an off-licence on the site. This relates to public concern that the proximity of the proposed Neighbourhood Centre to extensive public spaces could cause social problems with people drinking outdoors;
- The development of a café / restaurant overlooking the harbour is considered desirable, given the prospect over the natural and built environment from this location; and
- Upper floor residential uses above ground floor commercial uses.

Character of development

Blackrock is an established suburb to the south-east of the City Centre. It evolved in the 19th century around a traditional fishing village on the southern banks of the River Lee and has accommodated an imposing Convent Building adjacent to the village core since the early 18th century. The village nucleus still retains its simple street pattern and modest fine grained urban form.



Excerpt from OS Map 1869 showing: Extent of Ursuline Convent and grounds and shoreline / harbour before realignment.

The village contains a significant number of protected structures of local, regional and national importance. The urban structure, however, is quite disjointed and does not integrate the three principal elements of the settlement; (1) Blackrock Harbour/River Lee; (2) the village core and (3) the Ursuline Convent and lands. The photograph opposite illustrates the former relationship between the Ursuline School and the harbour. The village has a strong character and may be a candidate for designation as an Architectural Conservation Area (Area of Special Character) in the future. Placenames relating to new development should reflect the history / heritage of the village.

The core of the village around Convent Road / Rope Walk and Blackrock Road has an organic character typified by predominantly one / two / 2.5 storeys three bay terraced workers terraced fronting onto narrow village streets. Interspersed among these buildings are many nineteenth century single storey cottages and two-bay cottages and houses. Most were developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, although there are many older buildings.

Outside of this core are and interspersed among them on Blackrock Road are middle class housing of terraced, semi-detached and detached type, particularly on Blackrock Road, Marine Road and Castle Road. These are varied in period and type and reflect the attractive location and aspect of the village fronting onto the River Lee. Detailing on buildings is traditional, reflecting the age of the built fabric, with undulating eaves / roof lines, chimneys and sash windows.

The cluster of buildings at the corner of Castle Road and Convent Road, including the Pier Head Bar, fronting onto the harbour and the centre of the village, are 3-storey late nineteenth century commercial buildings. The photographs opposite illustrate some of the characteristic features of the area.

The following development guidance is considered appropriate:

- Given the strong character of the village an appropriate scale for the commercial core of the village around the harbour is 3 storeys (4m + 3m + 3m = 10m parapet / eaves height) maximum. It is also considered essential to maintain the public views of the river from Castle Road;
- Building heights of 4 storeys will be considered appropriate exceptionally in one specific location to provide a focal point for the redevelopment of the Cork Boat Club site. The appropriate location for this taller element is considered to be west of Factory Lane but not fronting onto Harbour Square, allowing the view to Tivoli Ridge from the lane itself to be maintained;
- Buildings elevations should be designed to reflect the urban grain / plot structure of the village, with a vertical fenestration;
- External facades are largely finished in smooth render with a variety of architectural detailing introduced to an otherwise simple traditional form.

- Traditional built fabric elements, including strong boundary features, should be reinterpreted and incorporated into the design of new structures.



View of Ursuline School in 1975



Rope Walk



Convent Road (east)



Blackrock Road (south)



Edwardian bay



Georgian door



Neo-Tudor Marina House



Poor quality "centre"

Western Side of Harbour

It is considered appropriate to redevelop the lands on the western side of the harbour (see Figure 8, opposite). This development should serve a dual function of reinforcing the village core through an appropriate mixture of uses plus creating a strong edge to reinforce the urban structure and views to and along the River. In the absence of a convenience retail store in this area, the provision of a local shop (up to 200 sq.m net) selling convenience goods would be encouraged at this location to serve the needs of the locality.

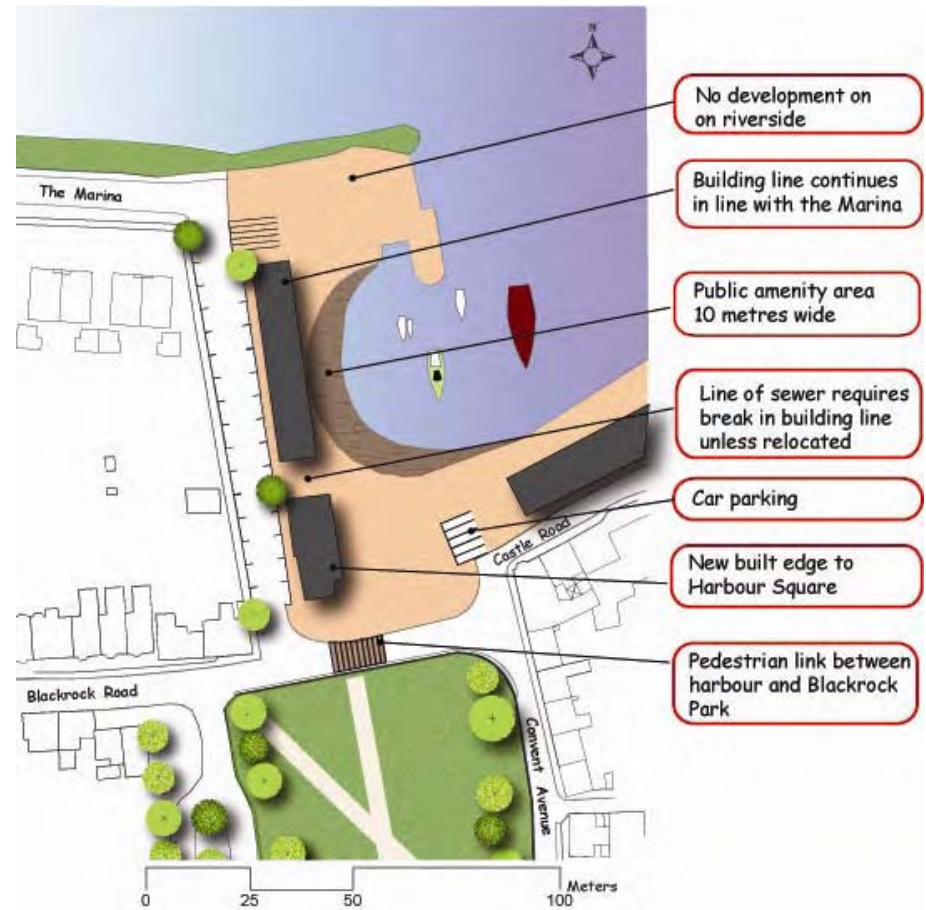
The development of a dual aspect building along the edge of the harbour should create a strong edge and ensure passive supervision of both Marina Road (west of Harbour) and the proposed Harbour Square. Ground floor commercial uses will enliven the space, such as bars, restaurants and local services and would be a suitable location to re-house the Citizens' Advice Bureau. The northern limits of this building line should not protrude beyond the established building line to the east in order to protect views from The Marina eastwards along the riverbanks to the Castle and also to ensure ease of movement around the harbour. Building heights should not exceed 3 storeys with a 4m minimum floor to ceiling height at ground floor.

Development Objectives

- Create a new urban space around the harbour, through hard landscaping and provide a boardwalk along the curve of the harbour to supplement the available space to create a total minimum width of 10m
- Views eastwards to Blackrock Castle must be protected and retained given its civic landmark status and national significance
- Extend development north of the Scout Hall - this will require removal/relocation of public toilets
- Proposals for new mixed-use development are appropriate at this location
- Building heights shall be up to 3 storeys (4m + 3m + 3m = 10m) in order to respect the built form of the village. Feature buildings with higher ridge heights may be considered at select locations (e.g. corner buildings)
- Remove grotto & relocate to an appropriate location in the vicinity of the village
- Western building line on The Marina Road shall be set back by 3 metres to allow for 13 metre public space (see public realm strategy).

Appendix One illustrates the location of water and drainage services on the site. Relocation of services will be at the developers' own expense. Otherwise, a 6m way leave (3m either side of pipe) must be provided when considering development footprints at these locations.

Figure 8: Western side of Harbour Development Strategy



The Boat Club site

The location of new development on land between the foreshore and Castle Road presents a challenge in integrating proposals into the existing landscape and townscape. Cork City Council values the contribution that the Cork Boat Club makes to the social and cultural fabric of the city and Blackrock Village.

The attractive Riverside location of the boat club may, however, provide opportunities for complete redevelopment, introducing alternative building configurations and uses at this location. This would enable better options for the Public walkway design and circulation on site. Proposals will accordingly require sensitive scale and massing of the built form. There are three basic development options for the site:

1. Retain Boat club building and develop western area;
2. Redevelop whole site incorporating new Boat Club building;
3. Redevelop whole site and relocate Boat club to other riverside location

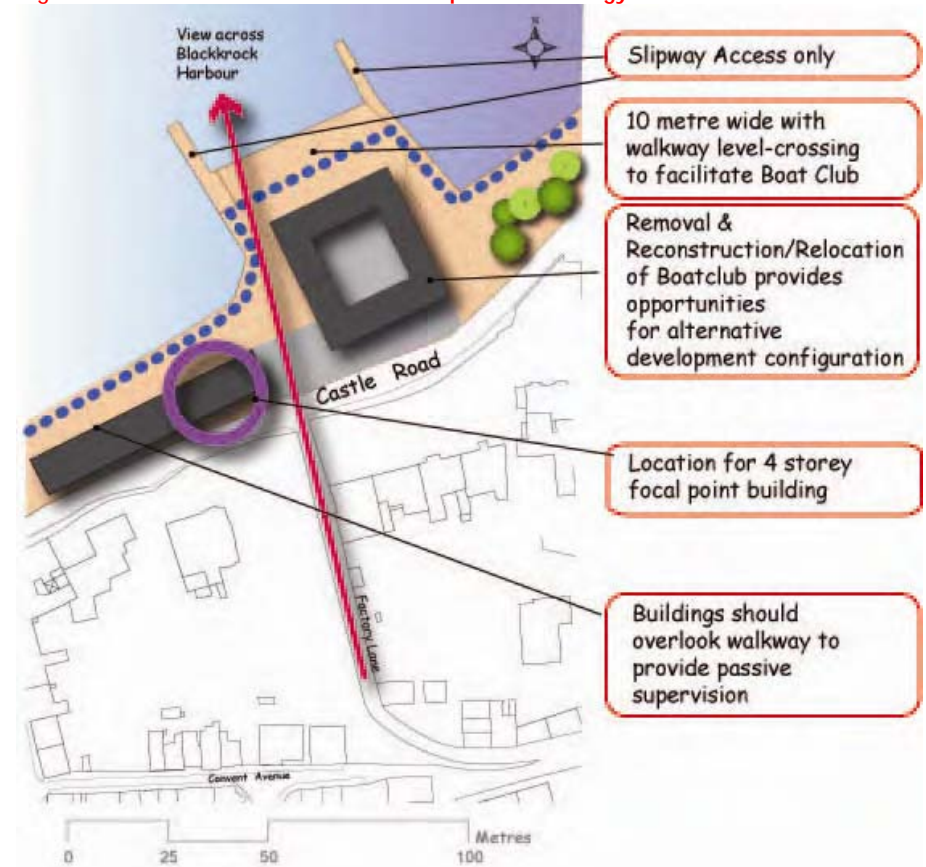
Development Objectives

- Delivery of public walkway along the waterfront;
- Retention of existing harbour area and extent, which will be upgraded to form an attractive feature for the village centre;
- Building of exceptional quality should front onto Harbour Square with live ground floor uses;
- Residential development is suitable at this location with an option for ground floor commercial uses at the western end of the site.
- Residential uses must provide a mix of unit types, including family accommodation and will be subject to compliance with Part V of the *Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002*, where appropriate;
- Parking serving private development should be provided at basement level
- Buildings should be traditional character in the narrow area between Harbour Square and the current Boat Club building to reflect the qualities of the existing village;
- Buildings should define the public walkway of 10 metres depth. Indicative building footprints are illustrated in Figure 9.

Access into the site from the existing entrance off Castle Road is considered hazardous due to the narrow road and poor sightlines available. It is preferable that the site would be accessed further west along Castle Road as indicated on the 'Access & Movement' diagram.

Building heights will be similarly restricted to a maximum of 3 storeys, apart from in the location identified on Figure 9, opposite Factory Lane. The eastern limit of this taller element will be to frame the view from factory Lane. This will ensure that development responds appropriately to the existing townscape

Figure 9: Boat Club Site Development Strategy



and the retention of public views of the River Lee from Castle Road. An attractive stone wall and planting currently provide an appealing edge to the village and these positive qualities should be sympathetically incorporated into any proposed scheme at this location. The linear form of the western most building footprint, shown above, will mirror the strong edge currently provided by the attractive stone wall at Castle Road.

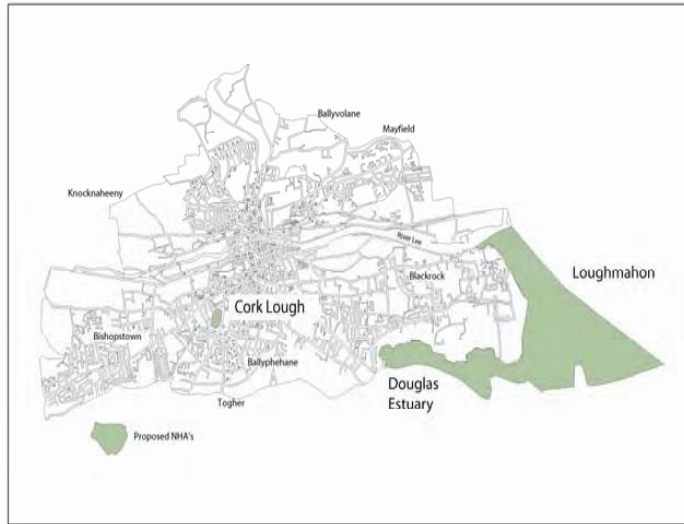
The delivery of the public walkway eastwards along the Riverside is also a critical factor here. It is a civic objective that the route be located adjacent to the Water's edge. Its provision to the rear of existing or proposed buildings will not be an acceptable alternative.

In the event that the whole site is redeveloped and the boat club is re-housed on site then the site should be developed to allow direct Boat Club access to the water and also provide the public walkway along the water's edge. The Cork Boat Club has concerns about this proposal. However, the City Council are willing to assist the boat club in the following ways:

- To help the club and its activities to co-exist with the walkway in a way that is feasible and safe for the public and the boat club alike. A "level crossing" arrangement would seem to meet the requirements of both parties;
- Consideration of creative solutions to co-existence at the walkway implementation stage (e.g. provision of wider or new slipways, boat layout areas, railings to secure boats, etc.); and
- Facilitating the boat club to move to an alternative location, if appropriate.

In the event that the existing boat-club building is retained a 5m boardwalk between the building and the river could be provided to increase the walkway width to 10 metres, in order to enable slipway access and to ensure continuity of the amenity route eastwards. Proposed development should overlook the route where possible to ensure passive supervision.

Figure 11: Natural Heritage Designations



(Fig 8.1 from City Plan 2004)

Lands East of the Boat Club

It is considered that this site has very limited development potential. While Cork City Council envisages the revitalisation of the Harbour as an essential element of the Village's future success, it is critical to raise awareness of the natural heritage value it also provides. Just east of The Boat club, the River Lee is subject to both Special Protection Area (S.P.A.) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (pN.H.A.) designations (see Figure 11, opposite). The former designation is attributed to the presence of significant salt marshes, reed beds and inter-tidal mudflats which support a range of Wild Birds including ornithological species of European and national significance. Development proposals must therefore ensure the conservation value of these designations are protected and maintained. Similarly, the pN.H.A. designation places responsibilities for the protection of the nature conservation value of the site. These are critical issues and subject to the nature and scale of development, may require a sub-threshold Environmental Impact Assessment.

Land here also supports significant tree coverage which provides an attractive river corridor and forms the visual setting to Blackrock Castle as viewed from the Marina. It is essential that the amenity value of the setting of Blackrock Castle is maintained and hence, development potential will be particularly restricted in this area. A survey of the significance of existing tree coverage will be necessary as part of any proposed scheme and consideration will be given to applying Tree Preservation Orders to species within this important visual corridor.

The image overleaf (Figure 12) outlines the approximate visual envelop of Blackrock Castle and its mature setting as viewed from The Marina. Controls will be employed to ensure the amenity value of this vista is protected from incongruous development. Development proposals will be explained by Visual Impact Assessments featuring the views shown as a minimum.



Views of Blackrock Castle including area east of Boat Club building, illustrating special character



Figure 12: Blackrock Castle Viewing Corridor



Panoramic (below) showing the view of the tree-lined route between Blackrock Castle and Harbour

