



Hawthorne
Consulting™

Department for Communities (DfC)
Duncairn Gardens, Belfast
Development Study

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Contents

	Page
1.0 Introduction and Background	4
2.0 Site Area Context and Analysis	6
2.1 The Study Area	7
2.2 Early Engagement with Local Stakeholders	8
2.3 History of the Area	10
2.4 The Area Today	12
2.5 Focus Areas: In need of regeneration & investment	16
2.6 Planning Context	19
2.7 Strategic Policy Context & Other Relevant Documents	20
2.8 SWOT Analysis	22
3.0 Developing Ideas and Stakeholder Engagement	23
3.1 Public Engagement on Draft Proposal	24
4.0 Regeneration Proposals	25
4.1 Duncairn Gardens	26
4.2 Adam Street/Upper Canning Street	28
4.3 Surrounding Communities	32
5.0 Conclusions and Action Plan	34
Appendix A: Consultation Boards	37
Appendix B: Surveys	38

1.0 Introduction & Background

INTRODUCTION

The Department for Communities (DfC) has commissioned a consultancy team (Hawthorne Consulting & Carlin Planning Limited) to undertake a Development Study for the Duncairn Gardens area of north Belfast.

The Duncairn Gardens area of north Belfast is in need of physical, social and economic regeneration. The wider study area includes the Tiger's Bay and New Lodge communities located at either side of Duncairn Gardens. Within the study area there are also key 'Focus Areas' that are in need of more targeted intervention, for example Adam Street / Upper Canning Street.

The purpose of the study was to explore and identify the key strengths, challenges and opportunities to improve the area through close engagement with local stakeholders (including local residents, businesses and community/elected representatives).

OBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT STUDY

The following key objectives were identified at the outset and refined through early engagement with local stakeholders.

1. To undertake open, transparent and meaningful engagement with local stakeholders, to fully understand their needs and concerns.
2. To identify how the area can be regenerated over the short, medium and long term with a key focus on improving connectivity, addressing vacancy & dereliction and improving liveability.
3. To seek to achieve consensus and buy-in to the key projects, through wider public and resident engagement.
4. To build capacity within the local community through the Development Study process.

APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To enable the Development Study to consider the range and complexity of challenges facing the area and also to help refine the scope of the study, engagement with local representatives commenced from the beginning of the process.

This engagement then continued throughout the process, whereby ideas could be developed and refined. Some stakeholders identified areas that they felt needed a targeted co-design process. Once the draft proposals were developed, a wider process of public engagement was undertaken.

Continued two-way engagement was encouraged throughout the process, in an open and inclusive manner. Our team sought to keep stakeholders and community representatives informed throughout the different stages of the process. To do this, our Engagement Strategy was based on the following key principles:

- **Inform** – To provide the public and key stakeholders with balanced and objective information to help them understand the opportunities; options; alternatives; risks and solutions.
- **Consult** – To obtain key stakeholder and public feedback on options and decisions.
- **Involve** – To work directly with key stakeholders and the public throughout the process to ensure that the public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate** – To partner with key stakeholders and the public on each aspect of the planning and decision-making process, including the development of the alternatives and identification of the preferred solution to move the Development Study forward.
- **Empower** – To provide a platform for key stakeholders to help deliver positive change.

2.0 Study Area Context & Analysis

2.1 The Study Area

Duncairn Gardens is an inner city area located to the north of Belfast City Centre and to the west of Belfast Port (Figure 1). It acts as a link between the Antrim Road and York Road. The area has good accessibility to the M2 Motorway and Westlink.

The focus of the study is on Duncairn Gardens however the wider study area also includes the Tiger's Bay and New Lodge communities. The wider study area (Figure 2) has been influenced by a number of factors:

1. The catchment of Duncairn Gardens considering 5 minute (400m) and 10 minute (800m) walking distances (Figure 3).
2. Physical boundaries such as the New Lodge Road to the south, the Limestone Road to the north, the Antrim Road to the west and North Queen Street to the east.
3. Historical development of the area—looking as far back as the early 1800s .



Figure 3: 400m and 800m Radius

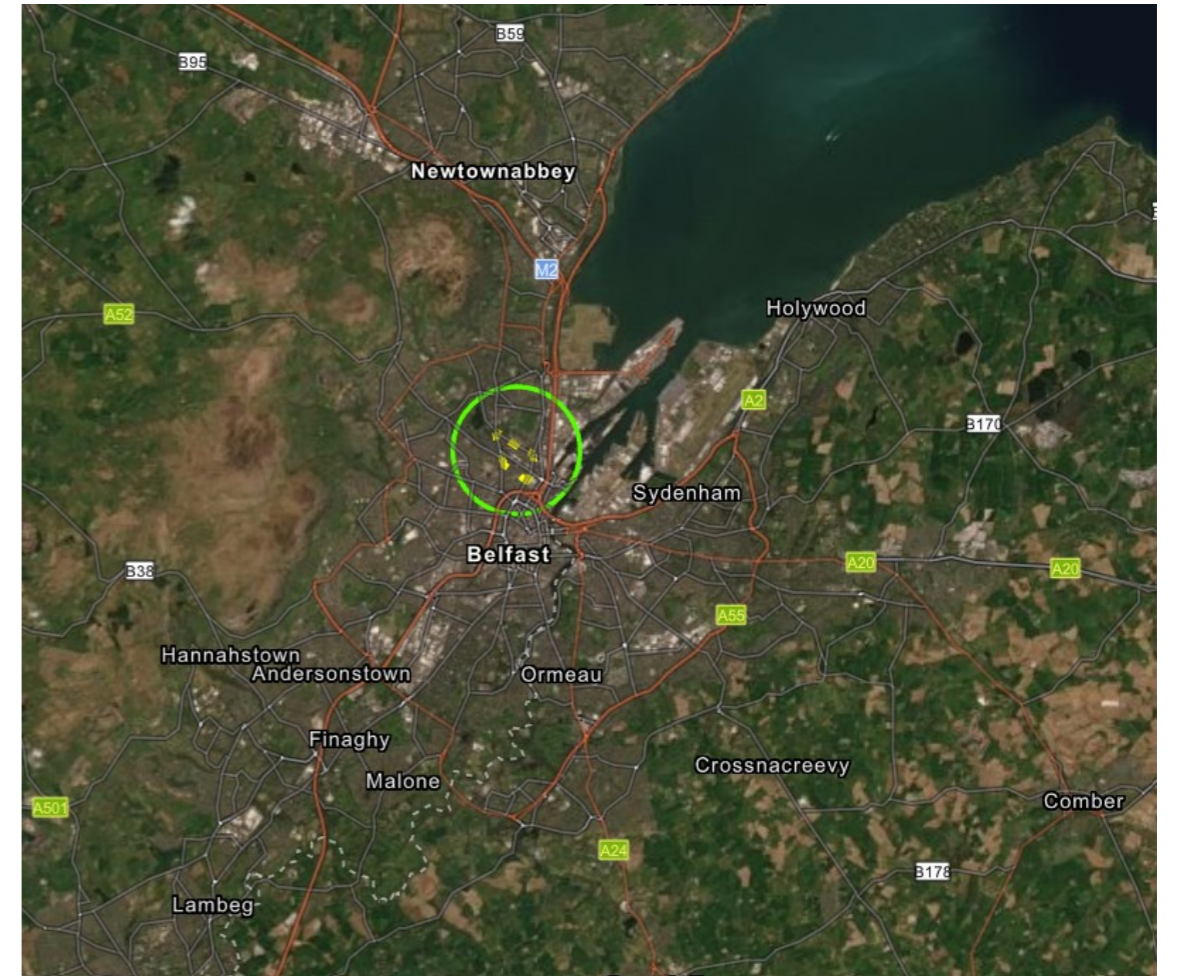


Figure 1: Location of the study area in the context of Belfast



Figure 2: Wider Study Area

2.2 Early Engagement with Local Stakeholders

The Terms of Reference for the Development Study emphasised the need for robust, open and transparent engagement with local communities and other key stakeholders.

Conversations with key stakeholders commenced right from the outset of the study and continued throughout. Early meetings with local community stakeholders helped to establish the key objectives of the study and identify key strengths, challenges and opportunities. It also assisted with the identification of other stakeholders who could help inform the study.

The methods of engagement included face to face meetings, Microsoft teams/zooms, design workshops and 'walkarounds' of the study area.

Views were also gathered from a range of business owners / landowners and government departments and agencies.

Groups and organisations that helped develop the study included the following:

- Tigers Bay Community Representatives
- Duncairn Community Partnership
- Inner North Belfast Partnership Board
- New Lodge Community Empowerment Partnership (CEP)
- Locally elected representatives
- Department of Justice (DoJ)
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- InvestNI

Ideas and proposals were developed iteratively throughout the process which helped embed openness and transparency. Below is a snapshot of the key issues and opportunities that emerged through these conversations.

ADAM STREET & UPPER CANNING STREET

Given the history and context of the study area, the Adam Street & Upper Canning Street site emerged as a crucial focus area that grasped the attention of all stakeholders. There was a clear recognition that the site needs to be regenerated as early as possible. For many stakeholders, this

was considered to be the most important aspect of the Development Study.

The Tigers Bay representatives, in particular, emphasised the historical impact of depopulation and the replacement of vacant housing land with business uses. There was a strong view that the Adam Street / Upper Canning Street site should provide homes for the local community. It was stressed that the community also supported the creation of local jobs, however the provision of homes on the site would help rebuild the relationship between Tigers Bay and Duncairn Gardens. Large vacant spaces such as the TeleTech site strengthened the view that 'more factories' will provide little benefit for local people. Through the conversations, previous ideas for the site emerged, including sketches that envisioned a residential and health care hub that would see the comprehensive redevelopment of Adam Street and the vacant site on the opposite side of Duncairn Gardens.

The principle of housing on Adam Street was discussed with all community organisations taking part in the study from an early stage. In order to help visualise housing on the site, the consultancy team produced conceptual sketches, which considered the existing site boundary but also an option with a small area of the TeleTech site included. Throughout the conversations, the principle of housing did not meet any significant resistance from other stakeholders, however a small number of stakeholders raised concerns regarding the 'need' for more housing and whether this would gain support from the NIHE. Some stakeholders also questioned if the site could provide a quality residential environment given its location between two largely employment generating sites. One stakeholder noted a previous process that had sought employment uses on the site and also the fact that the land is located within an employment land use zoning. Therefore, their clear preference was for the provision of employment / business uses.

Given the community aspiration for social housing, the NIHE were also consulted in order to understand what the housing need might be. It was confirmed that a more detailed Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) would be required to establish if housing on the Adam Street site could be supported.

The importance of retaining a strong pedestrian connection through the Adam Street site to connect Tigers Bay with Duncairn Gardens was highlighted by community representatives. This is considered to be an important link that enables local residents to access the pharmacy and local transport connections. A pedestrian survey undertaken in 2022 indicated that the pedestrian route through Adam Street was not widely used, however the link is clearly important for some local residents. It was also recognised that the survey took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be a true reflection of the actual footfall. There is also a vehicular connection to the NCBC which we understand might be a 'right of way', therefore would need to be retained. One stakeholder, from a security perspective, felt that closing the access road for both pedestrians and vehicles at Adam Street would be beneficial.

From the perspective of 'Designing out Crime', it was recognised that the site as it stands is irregular in shape and that it would be crucial to avoid the creation of 'alleyways' and the appearance of a back land development. The second option (i.e. including a small piece of the TeleTech site) was preferred as it would provide a better housing layout.

Several stakeholders noted the potential to include different land uses (commercial, retail or employment use) on the frontage of Duncairn Gardens to soften the transition between employment and residential use.

LONG TERM INVESTMENT:

Vacant Buildings including TeleTech

There was a strong and consistent message around underinvestment in the area, which is manifested through decline and vacancy. All stakeholders supported the re-use of vacant and derelict buildings along Duncairn Gardens. Considerable discussions took place around the former TeleTech building which has been vacant for some time.

It became clear through discussion with InvestNI that the TeleTech site is considered to be surplus land which will be put up for sale in due course.

The first step is to offer this site to other public sector departments and agencies (at the current market value) and should that be unsuccessful the site will be offered for private sale.

The site clearly presents an opportunity, with some stakeholders envisioning how it could become a skills and training academy that could attract a wide range of partners from across north Belfast. Generally it was considered that, due to the scale of the development, a concept of this nature may require intervention by central or local government.

CREATING A SAFER AND MORE WELCOMING NEIGHBOURHOOD

All groups agreed that the area would benefit from aesthetic improvements and reimagining. Duncairn Gardens is dominated by hard boundaries, with long walls and inward facing development.

Previous work on the Halliday's Road interface was highlighted. This involved a joint approach led by the NIHE working with DoJ and local community groups. Unfortunately, this project paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, however there is a strong ambition to resume this project.

Conversations with NCBC highlighted their Phase 4 proposals at the junction of Duncairn Gardens and North Queen Street which would create an active frontage at this junction. Developments such as this could lead the way in reorientating development towards Duncairn Gardens.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

New Lodge CEP highlighted a number of aspirations for the area, including the creation of a project called the "Garden Grid". This is based upon European exemplars and would encourage local people (in both paid and voluntary capacity) to help maintain the various green spaces throughout the estate. This was an interesting approach that could be applied across the wider Duncairn Area.

The DCP members highlighted their Action Plan that advocates for a range

of interventions across the Duncairn area, including a project on Hillman Court to reduce and replace the existing boundary wall and to improve the security at the adjoining entries.

2.3 History of the Area

Duncairn Gardens and the wider area has changed considerably over time. The earliest historical records highlight that there may have been an ancient fort situated in the area.

The names of the streets and roads reflect the type of residencies that were situated within the area. The New Lodge Road was used to distinguish the area from the Old Lodge Road, the site of the original lodge in the 18th Century. The streetscape continued to develop as the city witnessed an immense growth in industry and population. New roads and streets were constructed, the upper section of the New Lodge Road became Cliftonville Road, Duncairn Street became the Antrim Road.

As the area developed during the Industrial Revolution, several large residencies emerged within the area, which were situated in or within close proximity to the Duncairn Estate, such as Trainfield, Mount Collyer, Brookville, and Easton. Most of the mansions in the area however did not last long. The last surviving grand residence in the area was Trainfield House, which had succumbed to its final fate during the Belfast Blitz in 1941.

The namesake, Duncairn Gardens, signifies that the road is situated on the previous site of the gardens that were located within the Duncairn Estate. The gardens were historically considered amongst the greatest examples of model Georgian and early Victorian environments in the British Isles. The contemporary Duncairn Gardens was laid out in the 1880's, as the mansion was cleared to create a number of streets (Figure 5) to house the expanding population of Belfast. Due to its rapid emergence as a leading centre of industry, Belfast gained city status in 1888.

The area in particular has a rich history of charity. The first outreach project of the Belfast Central Mission having been established on Duncairn Gardens in the Methodist Church, long destroyed in the Belfast Blitz. Duncairn Gardens is also in close proximity to Clifton House, established by the Belfast Charitable Society in 1774 as a Poor House to improve and empower the lives of the more disadvantaged in society. This philanthropy continues to be a core pinnacle of the area today with several charitable agencies still operating in the area e.g., NICVA, Community NI

The area had continued to grow considerably by the early 20th

century. Belfast Corporation's Tram network operated through Duncairn Gardens on its way to the city centre, connecting local residents and passengers to the wider city and their places of work and leisure. Duncairn Gardens was also serviced by a range of amenities in the last century, such as the Duncairn Picture Theatre (Figure 6). Today, much of the local amenities and services would be located nearby in the Cityside Retail Park.

The latter half of the 20th century saw the communities in and around Duncairn Gardens decline with the beginning of the Troubles and the loss of traditional industry in the city e.g., shipbuilding. Much of the population decline in the area is particularly apparent in the Duncairn Ward, during arguably the most intense period of the conflict. Between the census undertaken in 1971 and 1981, the population declined from 30,998 to 4,059 (Figure 7). It was not until the 2011 census that the population of the area began to steadily rise again. This is likely to have risen further in the 2021 census.

Due to the recent history of the area, some of the oldest peace walls in the city are located in the Duncairn Gardens area, separating the predominantly Catholic, Nationalist, Republican (CNR) New Lodge with the predominantly Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist (PUL) Tiger's Bay community.

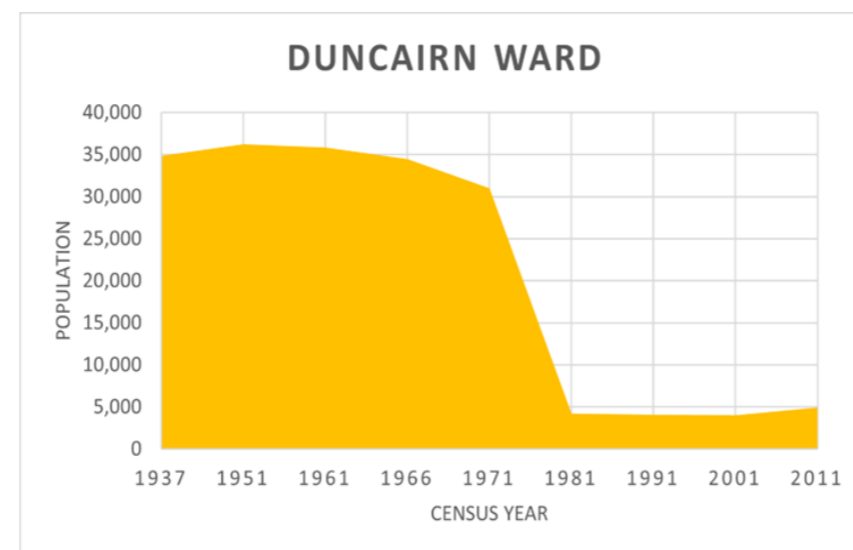


Figure 7: Population of Duncairn Ward



Figure 4: North Queen Street, Mid 20th Century



Figure 5: Duncairn Gardens, Pre-War



Figure 6: Duncairn Picture Theatre, Duncairn Gardens



Figure 8: Historical Map (c. 1830) (Source: DfC)



Figure 9: Historical Map (c. 1860) (Source: DfC)



Figure 10: Historical Map (c. 1900) (Source: DfC)



Figure 11: Historical Map (c. 1957—1986) (Source: DfC)

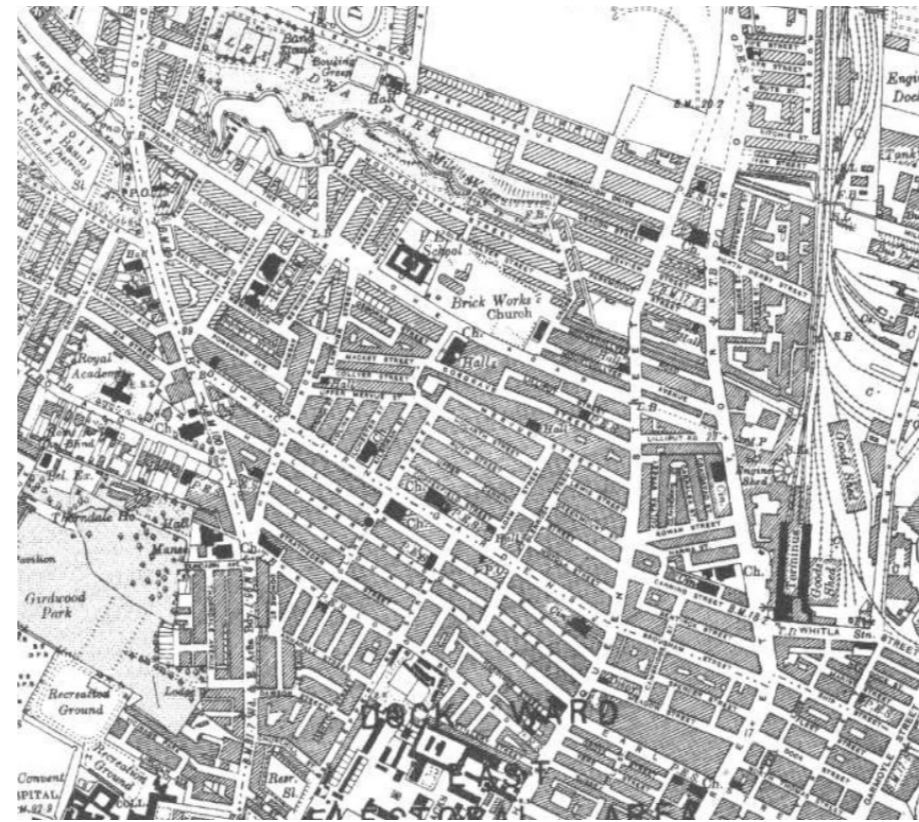


Figure 12: Historical Map (c. 1919—1963) (Source: DfC)

DfC's Historic Environment Division (HED) Map Viewer allows us to look back at the study area towards the early 18th Century through to the present day.

From the early 18th Century the study area is well defined. Urban expansion from Belfast City Centre continued throughout the late 1800s and 19th Century.

2.4 The Area Today

DUNCAIRN GARDENS

In recent years, there has been considerable change within the area. The lower section of Duncairn Gardens has been redeveloped for employment use. The North City Business Centre (NCBC) was established in 1993, locating on both sides of Duncairn Gardens (Figure 14). The former Gallagher's Tobacco Factory is now Cityside Retail Park.

The quality of the urban form and streetscape on Duncairn Gardens varies. The upper section of Duncairn Gardens has retained greater commercial vibrancy (Figure 18) with much of the historical Victorian architecture fronting onto the road still in existence (Figure 17). The lower section of Duncairn Gardens has lost much of its architectural character due to multiple factors e.g., Belfast Blitz, The Troubles and redevelopment. The combination of tall walls, fencing and the lack of residential housing has left this section of Duncairn Gardens with a lot of inactive frontage. Vacancy and dereliction is more prevalent at the lower end of Duncairn Gardens. The road benefits from a stretch of mature trees (Figure 13) running from the Antrim Road junction to North Queen Street. Duncairn Gardens also has on-street parking available on both sides of the road. The road continues to provide services and amenities for residents of both Tiger's Bay and the New Lodge e.g., pharmacies, doctor surgery and various community organisations in both communities such as Groundwork NI, Probation Board and Play Resource.

TIGERS BAY

Much of the housing in Tiger's Bay is more contemporary in nature e.g., constructed between the 1980's and the 2010's. There are specific areas in the neighbourhood that would need greater intervention to avoid further decline e.g., Adam Street / Upper Canning Street. Tiger's Bay has a community centre operated by Belfast City Council and a community garden (Figure 15) situated in land that was formerly in residential use.

NEW LODGE

The New Lodge is a more recent addition to the city, situated in what was the Victoria Barracks. The neighbourhood has both older and newer residential dwellings, as well as seven 1960's tower blocks (Figure 16). Several recent housing schemes have been developed in the area, such as the Upper Long Streets redevelopment project. Several streets have however retained their original terrace housing e.g., Upper Meadow Street, Hillman Street, Spamount Street and Stratheden Street. The New Lodge also hosts several community and youth centres e.g., Ashton Centre and New Lodge Youth Centre.

The New Lodge and Tigers Bay have been historically separated by a peace line. This barrier remains in place and runs along Duncairn Gardens. There are multiple connection points between the New Lodge and Duncairn Gardens with the gates being closed in the evenings.



Figure 16: New Lodge Flats



Figure 13: Mature Trees on Duncairn Gardens



Figure 14: North City Business Centre



Figure 15: Tigers Bay community garden

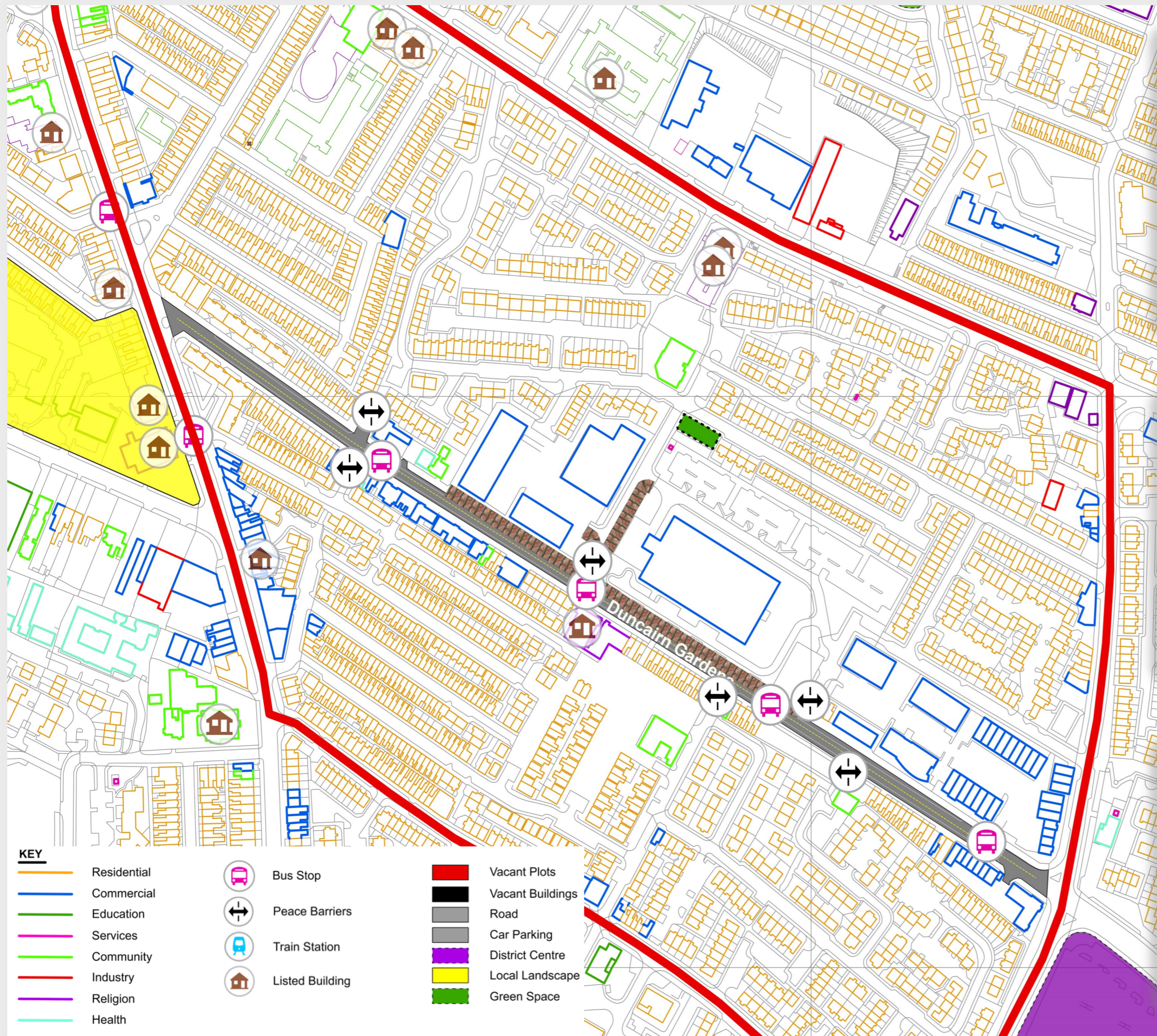


Figure 17: Residential Dwellings at Duncairn Gardens



Figure 18: Upper Section - Duncairn Gardens/Antrim



Figure 19: Duncairn Medical Centre

BUILT HERITAGE

There are no designated listed buildings along Duncairn Gardens, however the Macrory Memorial Presbyterian Church (Figure 20), was formerly a listed building, due in part to the building being a replica of a 19th century church that was destroyed during the Belfast Blitz.

NATURAL HERITAGE

The main natural heritage feature is the mature tree line along Duncairn Gardens.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

One of the greatest strengths of the study area is its accessibility to a wide range of services. This is confirmed by its high ranking in the 'access to services' domain of deprivation. The area is also well connected to the M1 and M2 motorways, giving it good accessibility to the wider region.

Key Services:

Within 5 minute walk (400m)

- Duncairn Medical Centre (Figure 19)
- Employment
- Commercial and Retail (Cityside Retail Park and Antrim Road)

Within 10 minute walk (800m)

- Belfast City Centre Boundary
- Yorkgate (York Street) Train Station
- Alexandra Park and the Waterworks

Public Transport:

Translink Metro Bus Route 1D: City Centre - New Mossley, travelling directly through Duncairn Gardens

INVESTMENT

There has been limited investment in the Duncairn area over recent years. The main inward investment has been in the residential sector with several schemes being developed. This has made a very positive contribution to the housing stock.

There has been no investment in the public realm or environmental quality of the area.

VACANCY, DERELICTION AND PUBLIC REALM

There are a number of vacant plots and derelict buildings along the lower end of Duncairn Gardens (Figure 21). Historically these would have been terraced residential properties. Some of these sites have previously sought or received planning permission for residential development. One large site has the foundations in place in order to secure the planning permission.

The public realm along Duncairn Gardens and Edlingham Street is inconsistent. There is a mixture of tarmac and concrete surfaces (Figure 22). Some areas are very poorly maintained with weeds growing through the pavement. Overall, this gives rise to a sense of decline and deprivation in some areas.

Vacancy, dereliction and quality of the environment can be associated to some extent with the legacy of the conflict. There are peace lines (Figure 23) located at both sides of the road, separating the New Lodge and Tiger's Bay. The peace gates connect both communities on to Duncairn Gardens. Whilst providing protection for each respective community, they have also contributed to a lack of cohesive design or active frontage.

Vacancy along the Duncairn Gardens is currently estimated to be around 7%, with the vast majority of that being buildings.



Figure 20: Macrory Memorial Presbyterian Church



Figure 21: Dereliction/Vacancy on Duncairn Gardens



Figure 22: Edlingham Street



Figure 23: Larger Peace Gate on Duncairn Gardens



Figure 24: Vacant Land along Peace Line

MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017 (NIMDM 2017) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland. There are 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Northern Ireland with '1' being the most deprived and '890' being the least deprived. New Lodge 3 and Waterworks 1 are the most directly relevant SOAs for the Study Area. The other SOAs listed in the table below are located around the study area.

The inner city of North Belfast has consistently ranked amongst the most economically and socially deprived areas in Northern Ireland. Of the six SOAs outlined within the table, all fall within the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. This trend is also apparent when considering specific indicators. All six SOAs are within the top 20% most deprived in terms of health, income and crime.

The one indicator where the trend appears to be positive, is access to services, due to close proximity to Belfast City Centre and retail outlets, such as City Side. There are also good public transport links along the Antrim Road.

SOA	Rank	Income	Employment	Health / Disability	Skills/ training	Services	Living Environment	Crime/ Disorder
Duncairn 2	53	44	78	89	56	760	360	43
Duncairn 1	49	47	106	73	35	515	121	135
New Lodge 3	32	162	37	18	1	881	107	65
Waterworks 1	15	89	18	8	26	767	46	35
Waterworks 3	56	133	50	72	123	884	7	5
New Lodge 2	7	63	1	3	49	889	192	51



Figure 25: Super Output Areas (SOAs)

2.5 Focus Areas: In need of regeneration & investment

FOCUS AREA 1: DUNCAIRN GARDENS

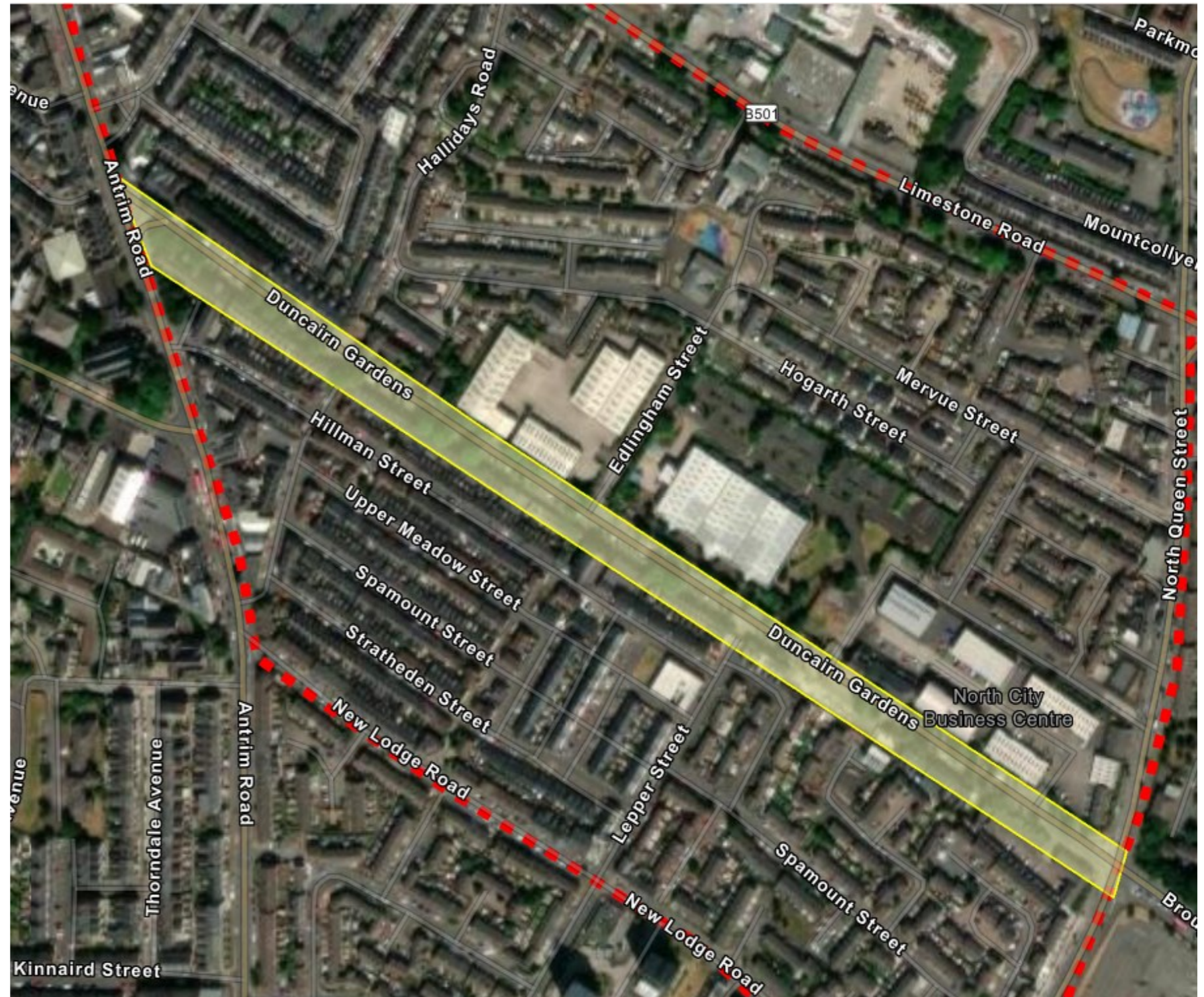
Duncairn Gardens and associated frontages have been identified as a Focus Area for the purposes of the development study.

Historically Duncairn Gardens was as a very prosperous and dynamic part of north Belfast. Its location close to the docklands attracted workers from this thriving industrial area to live as it was a convenient and vibrant location at the time.

It continues to offer key services and facilities to both communities at either side. It benefits from a healthy mix of land uses including employment, industrial, commercial, retail and community all sitting alongside mixed residential properties.

Duncairn Gardens does not have the offering it had historically, prior to WWII, however it has significant potential to be rejuvenated to provide the much needed shared and safe space for all communities to thrive.

These key themes were used as the basis for the Regeneration Principles identified for the regeneration proposals set out at Section 4.



FOCUS AREA 2: TELETECH / INVEST NI SITE

Early engagement with local stakeholders highlighted the importance of the TeleTech building. The building has been vacant for a period of time and InvestNI consider the site to be surplus land and will be sold in due course.

The existing property (Figure 26—28) comprises a footprint of 4,596sqm and sits within a plot of 2.1ha, including a substantial car park. The main access is off its western boundary at Edlingham Street with a secondary access point off Adam Street to the east.

TeleTech (TTEC) previously operated from the site and employed up to 200 people at this location. While the business vacated the building it continues to operate in Northern Ireland with employees working remotely.

Conversations with local stakeholders indicated an aspiration to bring the property back into community and social use, creating potential training centres and employment for local communities. It is recognised that bringing this property back in to use would have a considerable knock on impact on the surrounding area, including Focus Area 1 and 2.



Figure 26: Inside Telettech Building



Figure 27: Entrance to Telettech Site



Figure 28: Telettech/Invest NI Site

FOCUS AREA 3: ADAM STREET / UPPER CANNING STREET

The Adam Street / Upper Canning Street site (Figure 29—30) is a prime example of a Focus Area in need of targeted regeneration. It has been vacant now for a number of years and there is a risk that the area will continue to decline unless important issues are addressed, and solutions found. By proactively addressing the issues there is an opportunity to positively regenerate the area for the benefit of local communities.

The site is relatively modest in size at 0.25ha. The road through the site was formerly adopted by DfI Roads, however this was recently abandoned, with responsibility reverting back to Invest NI as owner. The site also provides an important pedestrian connection between Duncairn Gardens and Tigers Bay.

In planning policy terms, the site sits within an 'Existing Employment Zoning' as indicated in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. The site is bound to the north by the TeleTech building to the south by North City Business Centre. The site has frontage onto Duncairn Gardens which is currently in the form of a red brick wall and gates.

DfC have made attempts to redevelop part of the site in the past, however these were unsuccessful.

As set out in Section 2.2, local stakeholders fully support the regeneration of the site, with a strong preference towards the provision of social / affordable housing. The existing size and shape of the site would be quite challenging for housing led regeneration, therefore the possible expansion of the site has been explored. Given the land use zoning, early engagement with Belfast City Council's Planning Service will also be important to confirm support for housing on the site.

The NIHE have confirmed that they are minded to support up to 12 homes at this location. As with any new development, the NIHE would want to work closely with the relevant Housing Association and the community to ensure the homes are sustainable housing choices.

Proposals for Adam Street / Upper Canning Street are set out at Section 4.2.



Figure 29: DfC Site / Adam Street



Figure 30: Adam Street Bonfire Material

2.6 Planning Context

This section provides a brief overview of the planning policy context that will impact upon the future development and regeneration of Duncairn Gardens and the wider area.

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (SPPS)

The SPPS (Figure 31) is the overarching planning policy consideration. It requires local planning authorities to make efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure, including support for town centre and regeneration priorities in order to achieve sustainable communities where people want to live, work and play now and into the future. Identifying previously developed land within settlements can assist with the return to productive use of vacant or underused land.

Specifically with regard to economic development, the SPPS seeks to promote mixed use development and improve integration between transport and economic development and other land-uses, including housing and seeks to ensure a high standard of quality and design for economic development.

The SPPS recognises in its Core Principles that when plan-making and decision-taking, planning authorities must balance and integrate a variety of complex social, economic, environmental and other matters that are in the long term public interest. This is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development.

BELFAST URBAN AREA PLAN (BUAP)

The BUAP remains the extant development plan for the area and the associated maps would pre-date the existing layout of the areas surrounding Duncairn Gardens. The Plan identifies land to the north-east of Duncairn Gardens as sitting within a Housing Renewal Area and land to the south-west of Duncairn Gardens as sitting within a Housing Action Area, which encourage the provision of new housing within the urban area to stimulate urban renewal and meet the local housing demand.

DRAFT BELFAST METROPOLITAN AREA PLAN (dBMAP)

Whilst its adoption was quashed in May 2017, the dBMAP 2015 (Figure 32) is still an important material planning consideration.

The study area is subject to several zonings within the draft plan, including:

- ⇒ Existing Employment
- ⇒ Residential
- ⇒ Area of Townscape Character (Alexandra Park)
- ⇒ Retail/Commercial
- ⇒ Commercial Node/ Area of Parking Restraint

EMERGING BELFAST LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY)

The emerging Local Development Plan (Figure 33) has now been subject to independent examination by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) with a direction issued to adopt the plan with certain modifications. The modifications were subject to consultation until the 8th July 2022.

The study area is subject to the following zonings within the draft plan:

- ⇒ Employment
- ⇒ HMO Policy Area
- ⇒ Area of Townscape Character (Alexandra Park)
- ⇒ Area of Parking Restraint

Employment Zoning

The most significant zoning within the study area is that associated with the existing employment zoning. The zoning of existing sites identified will protect land for employment uses against other competing uses such as housing, and in doing so will facilitate opportunities for regeneration and employment growth. The protection of such zoning is reiterated within the Strategic Planning Policy Framework (SPPS) and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning and Economic Development.

Area of Townscape Character

Part of the study area to the north-west is located within the Alexandra Park ATC. Development proposals in ATCs will be assessed in accordance with PPS6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Characters.

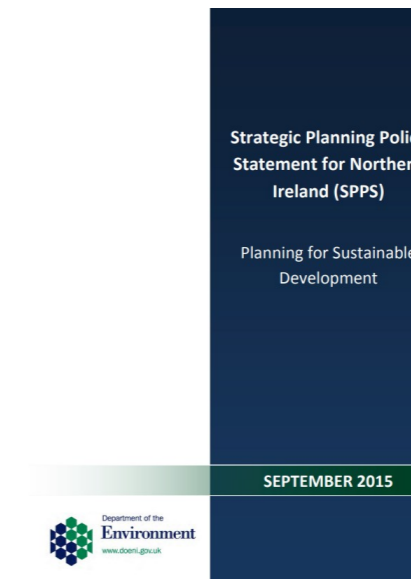


Figure 31: Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

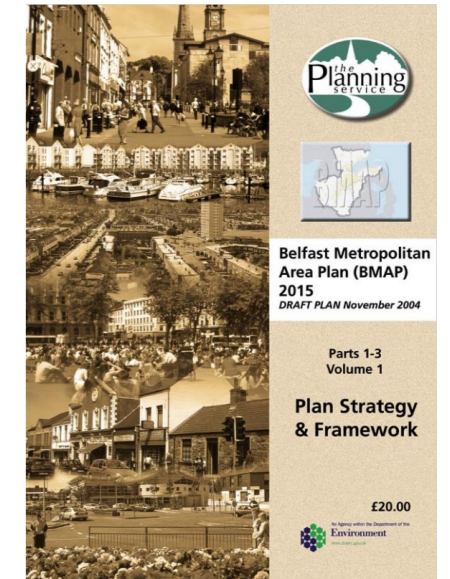


Figure 32: Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP)



Figure 33: Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP)

2.7 Strategic Policy Context & Other Relevant Documents

This section reviews key plans and strategies that may influence regeneration and investment in the Duncairn Gardens area.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The Programme for Government (PfG) is the strategic document of the Northern Ireland Executive. It sets out the most up-to-date strategic objectives and priority areas and sets out the Executives approach to government. Strategic outcomes relevant to this site include:

1. Our children and young people have the best start in life
2. We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment
3. We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect
4. We all enjoy long, healthy active lives
5. Everyone can reach their potential
6. Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon-neutral
7. Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other
8. We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives
9. People want to live, work and visit here

THE BELFAST AGENDA

The Belfast Agenda (Figure 34) sets four bold ambitions for the growth of the city, as follows, all of which are considered relevant:

1. Our economy supports 46,000 additional jobs
2. Our city is home to an additional 66,000 people
3. There will be 33% reduction in life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods
4. Every young person leaving school has a destination that fulfils their potential.

BELFAST CITY CENTRE REGENERATION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

While the Study Area is located outside Belfast City Centre, there is clear fragmentation between the city centre and surrounding communities. Section 3.7 of the Strategy (Figure 35) seeks to ‘Connect to the City Around’ stating;

Too much of the city centre turns its back on the communities that surround it. Redevelopment and public realm works should ensure a more welcoming design. The improvements envisaged for the CastleCourt Shopping Centre must also incorporate features to soften its relationship

to the west; the completion of the South Link of the Inner Ring Road should act as a connector, not a separator, of communities to the south.

BELFAST: OUR RECOVERY

‘Belfast: Our Recovery’ sets out the areas the Council considers require attention in the short term to drive city recovery during this pandemic phase, as well as building the foundations for sustained recovery. The document provides 6 pillars to support communities and the economy to recover by building on Belfast’s strengths and assets as a city and a wider city region:

- Our city - safe, vibrant, connected spaces and places
- Our services
- Our communities
- Our economy
- Our environment
- Our digital innovation
- Supporting recovery in the longer term

DRAFT MASTERPLAN FOR DUNCAIRN GARDENS AS A SHARED SPACE

The Draft Masterplan for Duncairn Gardens as a Shared Space was undertaken by Cunnane Stratton Renolds on behalf of the Inner North Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership back in 2009-2012.

The Study Area subject to the masterplan extended along Duncairn Gardens and included the immediate land uses which front onto/bound Duncairn Gardens.

The Masterplan was subject to considerable stakeholder engagement and includes several projects and actions:

1. Mixed use Development (Adam Street, Duncairn Gardens)
2. New residential development (Adjoining Dowds on Duncairn Gardens)
3. New residential (122 and 126 Duncairn Gardens)
4. Refurbishment Actions to include;
 - Museum, arts and cultural centre at Former Presbyterian Church, Duncairn Gardens
 - Coffee shop, tourist drop off, training and education centre and community meeting rooms at Former Macrory Hall, Duncairn Gardens
 - Niche Retail or Restaurant, 210 Duncairn Gardens

5. Landscape/Environmental Enhancement Actions;
 - Pedestrian Lighting
 - Replacement Tree Planting
 - Reduction in security walls
 - Adam Street Environmental Enhancement
6. Movement Actions;
 - Pedestrian Crossing, Duncairn Gardens
7. Reuse Actions;
 - Reuse of vacant units for residential
 - Reuse of vacant units for retail
8. Other Actions;
 - Tourist Bus Stop
 - Creation of Street Market
 - Longer Term Development Opportunity at Teletech

Several of these projects and actions remain relevant today and are good ideas that could help regenerate the various buildings/plots on Duncairn Gardens.

HEALTHY NORTH BELFAST

The Healthy North Belfast report sets out its mission statement to improve “the health and wellbeing of everyone in North Belfast and to close the gap in inequalities”. North Belfast is consistently ranked highly for poor health, deprivation, poverty, higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of academic attainment and antisocial behaviour. Much work has been undertaken in recent years through various stakeholders and partnerships. The high levels of deprivation, segregation and sectarian related violence is well documented within the wider area.

The report highlights that whilst there are many assets and in the wider area, there are large sections of North Belfast that are blighted by urban decline. It identifies Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods as one of its five key transformative proposals and one of the most relevant to Duncairn Gardens, highlighting the ability of improvements to the physical fabric to bolster the strength of communities. The vision of this document sets out its aspiration of creating a “vibrant and shared view of a regenerated North Belfast and its connection to the whole city.”

Action plans were established within the report to identify and help resolve different socioeconomic and environment issues. Several actions identified the issues that are particularly prevalent in Duncairn Gardens. These include increased investment in public realm and the development of a public realm enhancement programme. In terms of housing, the document identifies the establishment of a housing task force and the development and implementation of a 10 year to reduce housing need as actionable plans. The Healthy North Belfast report also establishes actionable tasks relating to lifelong learning and skill adaptation, mental health awareness and promoting health and wellbeing through physical activity.



Figure 34: The Belfast Agenda

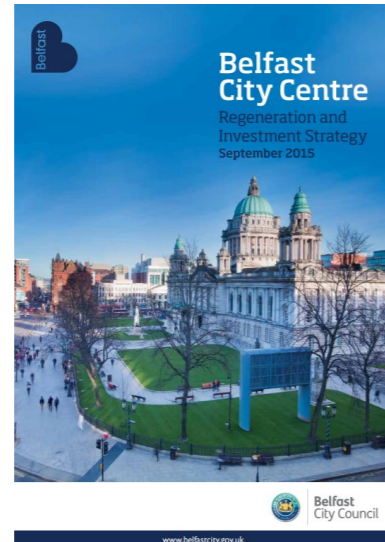


Figure 35: Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy

2.8 SWOT Analysis

The table below presents a summary of the strengths, opportunities and threats identified through the research in the earlier sections.

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
◆ Established mixed use area with large residential catchment.	◆ Physically and politically divided communities.	◆ Opportunity to develop and re-use vacant land and buildings.
◆ Character of the area enhanced by mature tree lined streets along Duncairn Gardens.	◆ High rates of vacancy and pockets of dereliction.	◆ To deliver social and economic benefits through regeneration.
◆ Convenient access to key services and facilities including District Centre (Cityside Retail Park), City Centre and local employment (North City Business Centre).	◆ Poor environmental quality in the area, lacking design cohesion and therefore enhancing the perception of the area being an unwelcoming place.	◆ Opportunity to positively regenerate the Adam Street site and turn this into an asset for local communities.
◆ Access to employment opportunities.	◆ Anti social behaviour—spurred by the prevalence of vacant and underutilised sites.	◆ To enhance the public realm to make the area visually more attractive—this in turn will enhance pride and satisfaction within the local communities.
◆ Existence of strong community structures —although varying within the study area.	◆ Limited availability of quality open spaces.	◆ To review the provision of local amenities and community facilities within the area and seek to fill gaps where relevant.
◆ Rich history and character within the area, much of which has been retained despite dereliction and redevelopment.	◆ Key site along Duncairn Gardens has been commenced but not completed—difficult to force these developments to be completed.	◆ To provide shared facilities and build community cohesion.
◆ Good mix of land uses in the area, including several community uses.	◆ Anecdotal evidences suggests that very limited amount of local people are employed in the local businesses.	◆ Reduce anti-social behaviour through the positive regeneration of vacant and derelict sites.
◆ Strong desire within the local area to see change.	◆ Area performs poorly in terms of multiple deprivation with all SOAs falling within the 20% most deprived. Crime and health deprivation are particularly concerning.	◆ To generate positive social and economic benefits from the future use of the TeleTech building.
◆ In close proximity to the new Ulster University Campus.	◆ Lack of funding to deliver change.	◆ To help address social housing need and strengthen communities that have been impacted by the legacy of The Troubles.
◆ Sustainable and highly accessible location within walking distance to many key services.	◆ Current planning policy may not fully align with community aspirations for some sites.	
◆ Good public transport provision.	◆ Lack of housing provision within local communities is a concern for families wanting to remain in the area.	

3.0

Developing Ideas and Stakeholder Engagement



3.1 Public Engagement on Draft Proposals

The discussions with the various stakeholders enabled the creation of key principles and projects that could form the basis for regeneration. These ideas were put together as a series of exhibition boards that would form the basis of wider public consultation.

DfC launched the 6 week public consultation on 9 November 2022 to 20 December 2022. It was published on DfC's website and included the consultation materials that can be seen at Appendix A. Several public events were organised and facilitated over the six week period (Example shown in Figure 36 in Duncairn Community Centre). These public events focused on capturing the views of local residents and businesses in the area.

Four public events were as follows:

- Monday, 14th November at **New Lodge Youth Centre**
- Thursday, 17th November at **Duncairn Community Centre**
- Thursday, 24th November at **NICVA**
- Thursday, 8th December at **Duncairn Community Centre**

In order to capture feedback during the public consultation a survey was developed (see Appendix B). The questionnaire sought to measure the level of support for the regeneration / urban design principles identified for each focus area. Where people were not in support of a principle or project the questionnaire encourage the suggestion of alternatives (for e.g. alternative land uses).

Following initial engagement and the sensitivities surrounding the Adam Street/Upper Canning Street site it was considered that a second, more focused survey was undertaken to establish the views of Tigers Bay residents. Feedback on the second survey was obtained through 'door to door' engagement, local representatives, public participation at the consultation events and through word of mouth from those who had been in attendance.

The response and feedback from the collated surveys were positive, with a general consensus that the wider Duncairn Gardens area would benefit from regeneration and would be of benefit to both communities in Tiger's Bay and the New Lodge.

The findings can be summarised as follows:

1. The vast majority of respondents believed that Adam Street should be redeveloped to provide a high-quality mixed use social housing development;
2. The majority of key stakeholders and local representatives support the objectives and principles of the Development Study and would like to see significant investment in the area in the coming years;
3. All consultees supported the Duncairn Gardens Regeneration Principles with no opposition. In particular the following regeneration principles along Duncairn Gardens and within the surrounding communities are seen as a priority:
 - Need for improved street lighting to create a safe and resilient environment.
 - Addressing vacancy and dereliction along Duncairn Gardens.
 - Softening hard barriers, in particular the peace infrastructure
 - Visual improvements with particular reference on hard surfacing within the area.
 - The need for additional play facilities for children and open space for adults.
 - Expansion of existing community facilities and initiatives throughout both communities to develop skills, training and work experience opportunities.
 - Effective reuse of derelict buildings to provide a use which would provide social and economic benefits for the local community.

The overwhelming majority of those who took part in the consultation process support the urban design principles identified for Adam Street/upper Canning Street which was seen as an opportunity to address anti-social behaviour and to deliver a high quality mixed use residential environment, to include the creation of a new active frontage along Duncairn Gardens.



Figure 36: Public Event at Duncairn Community Centre

4.0 Regeneration Proposals

4.1 Duncairn Gardens

Engagement with local stakeholders helped to identify four key Regeneration Principles for Duncairn Gardens. These include reimagining barriers, improving the environment to create a safe and resilient place, breathing new life into vacant and derelict buildings, which will all help to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities.

1. REIMAGING BARRIERS

Work is taking place across Belfast to reduce barriers and reimage peace infrastructure.

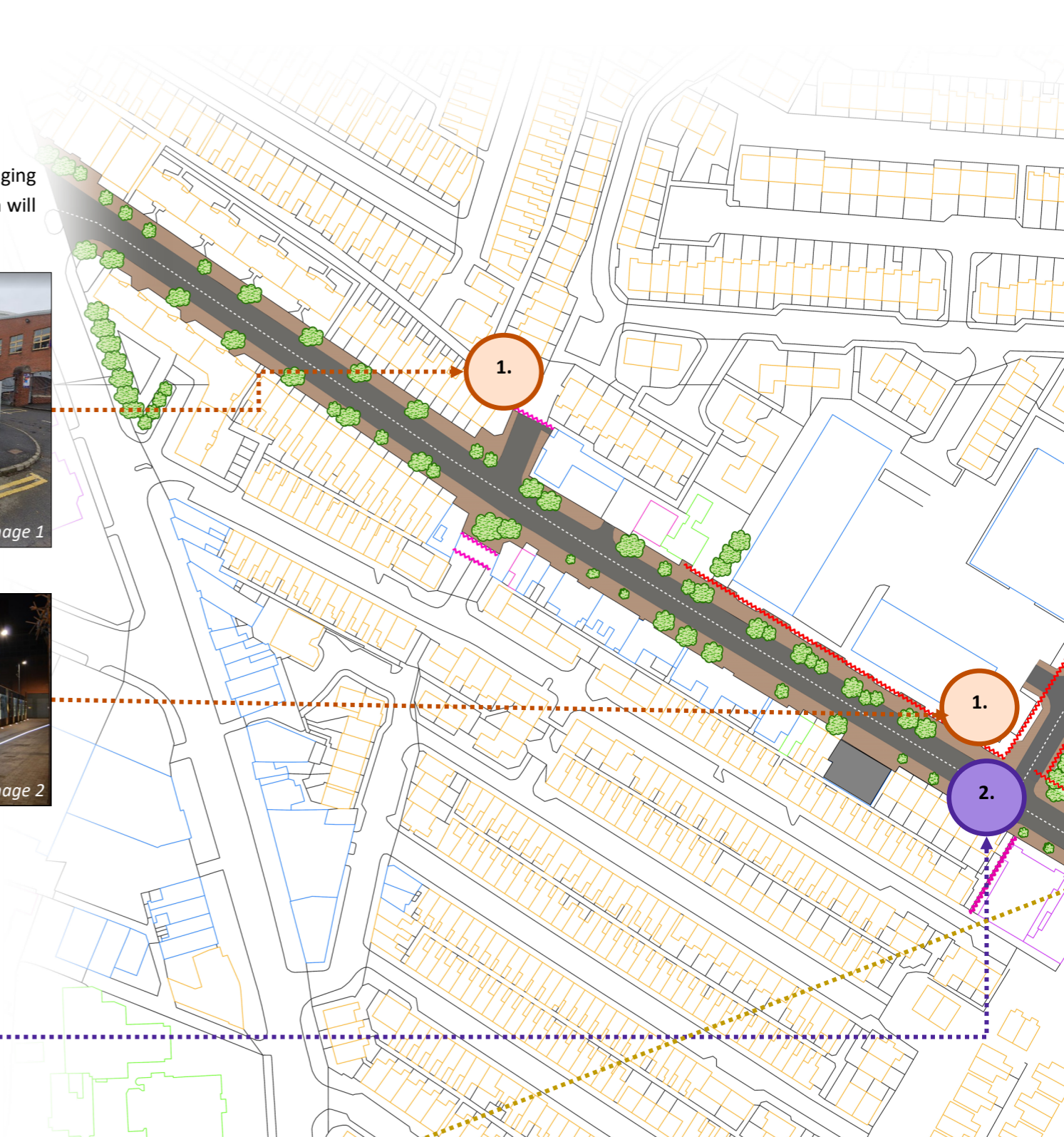
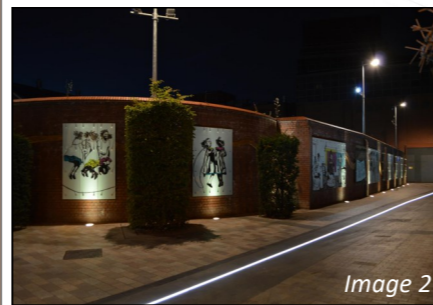
The peace infrastructure along Duncairn Gardens is amongst the most clearly visible reminders of the past that will be found in Belfast, however it still provides an important function for the safety and security of those communities that live on both sides. Some excellent work has been undertaken in the past to reimage some of these barriers and it would be great to see these ideas progress, through co-design with local people. We believe that the process of working together to reimage these barriers and then see the work come to fruition will greatly assist with building social cohesion.

North City Business Centre have planning permission to recreate a dual frontage along Duncairn Gardens and North Queen Street. This is a really positive proposal that will also begin to recreate the frontage onto Duncairn Gardens.

Alongside the formal peace infrastructure, the legacy of the past is also found in the way the area has evolved over time. The large commercial and business uses found along Duncairn Gardens were a result of vacant land that remained following the population decline of the 1970's. These uses have provided important employment opportunities over recent decades, however they have also added to the barriers that we see today. Long stretches of walls, such as that alongside the TeleTech building could be reimagined with community artwork, greened to create a 'living wall' or completely removed and replaced with railings, that would make the TeleTech building a much more inviting place to work.

Image 1: North Howard Street interface recently saw the replacement of its solid security gates with 'see through' gates.

Image 2: Bank Square, Belfast



2. CREATING A SAFE AND RESILIENT PLACE

Duncairn Gardens would benefit greatly from improvements to the public realm. A number of small projects would have a positive cumulative impact. The beautiful tree lined avenue could be brought back to life and complemented with artwork, hanging baskets, planters, street furniture and lighting. This would also complement the 'reimagining barriers' work.

When speaking to local people, it is clear that many feel that there has been a chronic underinvestment in this part of Belfast. Maybe this is a result of the area being an interface between two opposing communities. Evidence suggests that the services and amenities along Duncairn Gardens are used by people from both Tigers Bay and the New Lodge, therefore projects to improve the attractiveness of the area would benefit everyone, making the area feel much more healthy, safe and welcoming.

Image 3: Example of ornamental street lighting



3. BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO VACANT AND DERELICT BUILDINGS

There are a number of vacant and derelict buildings along Duncairn Gardens. The most notable being the former TeleTech building, a large warehouse style building with over 200 car parking spaces. The site is located within an employment zoning in both the existing and emerging development plan. The building presents a major opportunity to create jobs for local people. Early engagement has indicated that InvestNI consider the site to be surplus and will dispose of it at the right time. The site will be offered, for sale, to other public bodies in the first instance. Given the strategic importance of this building to the economic development and regeneration of the area, it is important for the future owner to examine how this building can deliver social and economic benefits for local communities.

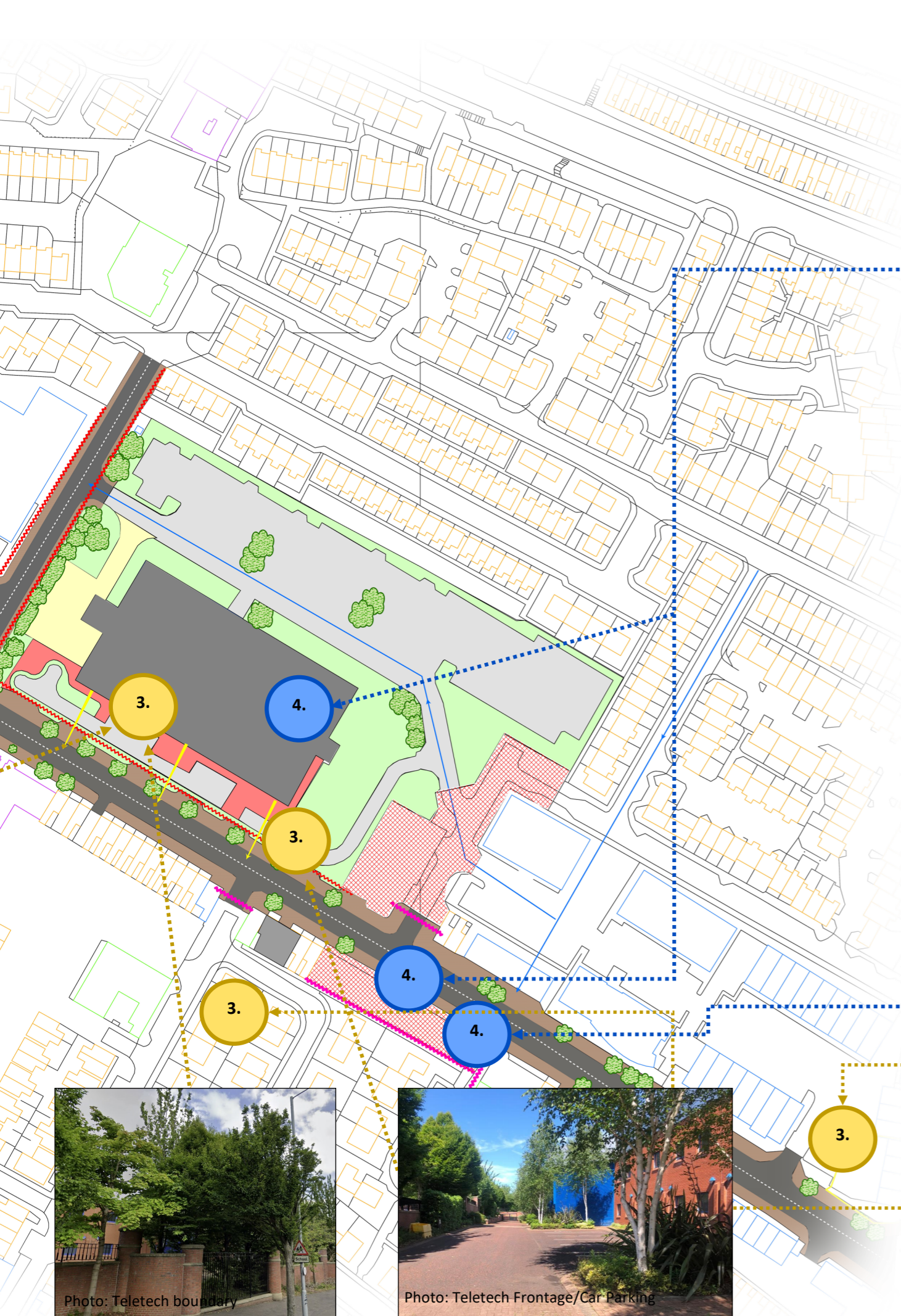
There are also several other vacant and derelict buildings that could provide vital services and facilities to improve the liveability of the area. For example, imagine that the TeleTech once again accommodates hundreds of workers on a daily basis, the wall is removed, and the site opens onto Duncairn Gardens – this footfall could be the catalyst for a variety of new businesses (shops, cafes etc).

4. IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING

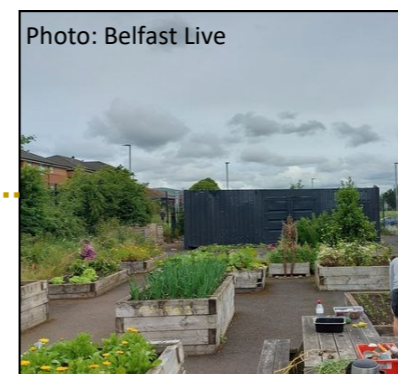
Many aspects of our built and social environment affect our health and wellbeing. Research confirms that the satisfaction people get from their local area, helps to build social cohesion and inclusion that in turn impacts upon physical and mental health and wellbeing. Changes to the built environment will not create dramatic changes over night, but over time they can have significant results. We believe that the projects highlighted under 'Reimagining Barriers' and 'Creating a Safe and Resilient Place' could greatly contribute to the health and wellbeing of surrounding communities.

The promotion and encouragement of active modes of travel (walking and cycling) should be a core consideration of all projects. There is a real opportunity to build on the areas greatest strength, its location and access to services and facilities, including Cityside Retail Park, the City Centre and Alexandra Park. Better cycle infrastructure is essential, including cycle lanes, cycle parking and pedestrian and cycle crossing points.

The Belfast Healthy Cities initiative sets out an excellent framework that seeks to promote Belfast as a healthy, equitable and sustainable city through Community Prosperity, Greening the City and Healthy Transport.



Early engagement with local stakeholders has also established an aspiration to utilise vacant land to deliver enhanced facilities in the area, including health care services.



4.2 Adam Street/Upper Canning Street

Throughout the engagement process aspirations from the local community and stakeholders alike have shown overwhelming support for a high quality residential led mixed use development at this vacant plot.

There have been numerous attempts to deliver employment space on this site in the past, however none of these schemes have materialised.

The Housing Executive confirmed support for up to 12 units, housing mix to be confirmed.

Engagement with InvestNI is ongoing, however a small extension to the Adam Street site would result in a much better and more viable site for housing. This would help achieve a quality residential environment that will be crucial when the scheme progresses to the planning stage. The difference between developing the site within the existing boundaries and the potential when extending the site is illustrated on the sketches overleaf (note these are only indicative).

As indicated, there has been overwhelming support for the regeneration of the Adam Street site.

The land use zoning for the site is an important consideration that should be discussed with BCC Planning Service as early as possible.

Key Urban Design Principles

1. The creation of a quality residential led mixed use development

The existing site is constrained in size and its configuration makes it difficult to develop. Certainly, for a residential led regeneration scheme, it will be challenging to see how a quality residential environment could be achieved when confined to the existing site boundaries.

However, an opportunity exists to merge the site with part of the TeleTech site in order to create a viable opportunity for mixed use development.

2. Recreating Adam Street

Historically, Adam Street extended through to Duncairn Gardens, however the historic street pattern was largely lost during the 1970's and 1980's when the population of the area declined. The partial recreation of Adam Street has cultural and historic significance for the Tigers Bay community.

3. The creation of active frontages

There is currently a variety of frontages onto Duncairn Gardens, including commercial and residential. This mix of frontages generates footfall and brings vitality to the street. The North City Business Centre brings vibrancy to the lower end of Duncairn Gardens, which contrasts with the frontage of the TeleTech site. There is an opportunity to provide active frontage on the Adam Street site, to provide space for local services and facilities at street level.

Active frontages create and generate activity as well as making an area safer through informal surveillance.

6. A liveable neighbourhood

Duncairn Gardens and the surrounding wards perform poorly in terms of multiple areas of deprivation. The area does perform strongly in terms of accessibility to key services and amenities. The redevelopment of this site has potential to bolster those areas that perform strongly and make a valuable contribution to those measures that perform poorly, particularly by creating a quality living environment, reducing crime / disorder and improving social cohesion.

Engagement with the PSNI design team throughout the development of any scheme for the site will ensure compliance with the Secured by Design Standard.

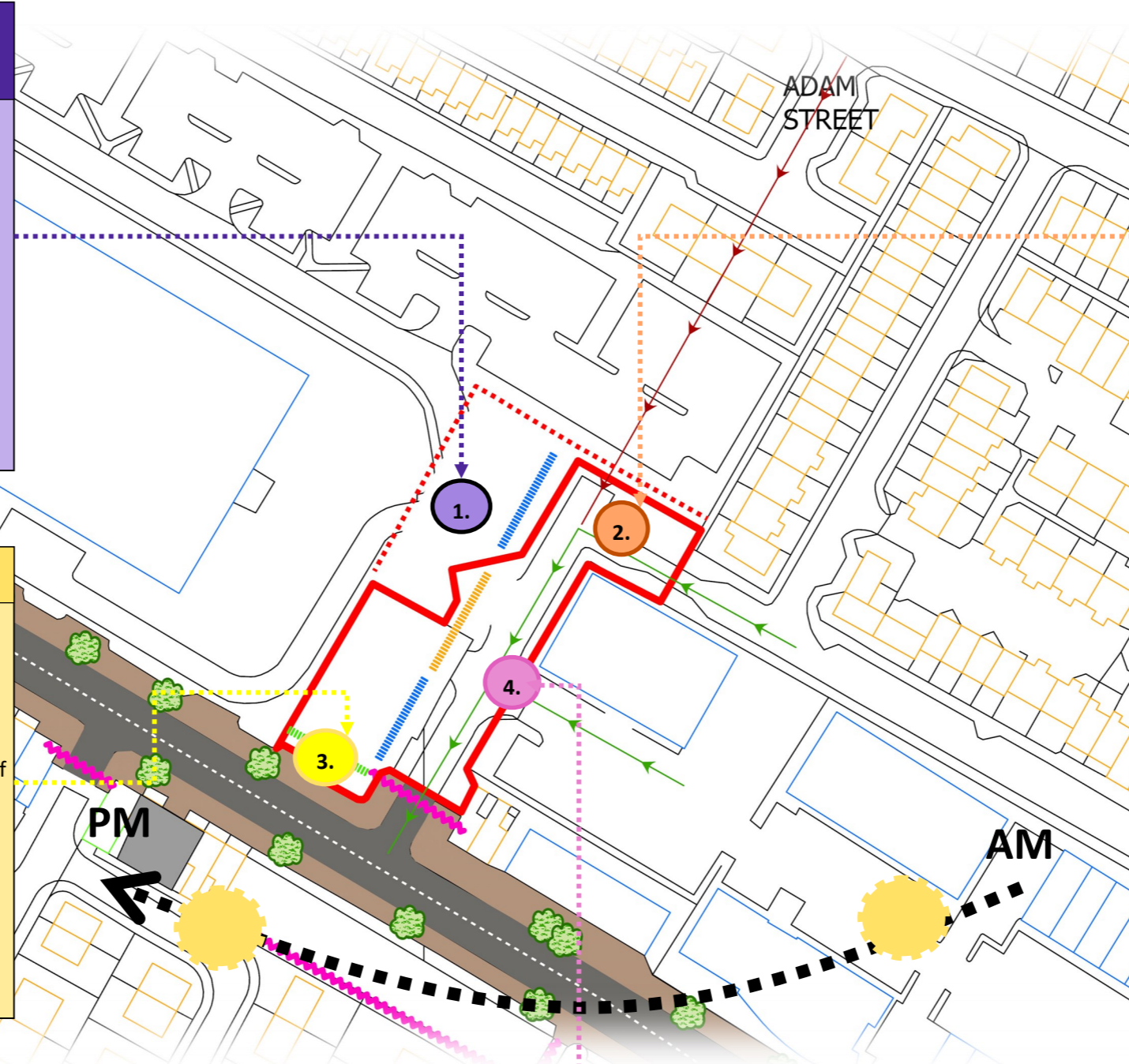
4. Accessible and Connected

Existing pedestrian and vehicular connections exist through the site. A right of way connects residents from Upper Canning Street to Duncairn Gardens and an emergency access exists from North City Business Centre through the Adam Street site. It is important to retain these connections through the site and further encourage active travel.

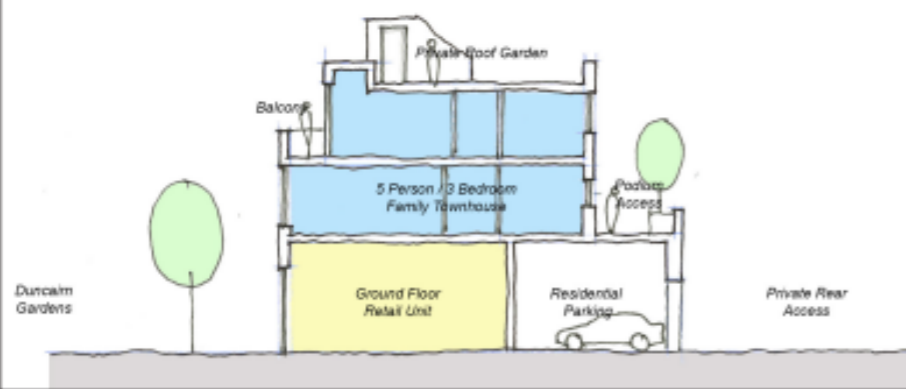
5. Healthy & Green Environment

Future development should promote active travel and incorporate cycle parking. While some level of car parking will be required, this should be kept to a minimum given the accessibility to local services and facilities.

Within higher density urban areas it is crucial to make the scheme as green as possible with quality public and private amenity spaces and landscaping. Extending the site provides the opportunity to create a better quality living environment with more green space.



Proposed Section through Duncairn Gardens Block



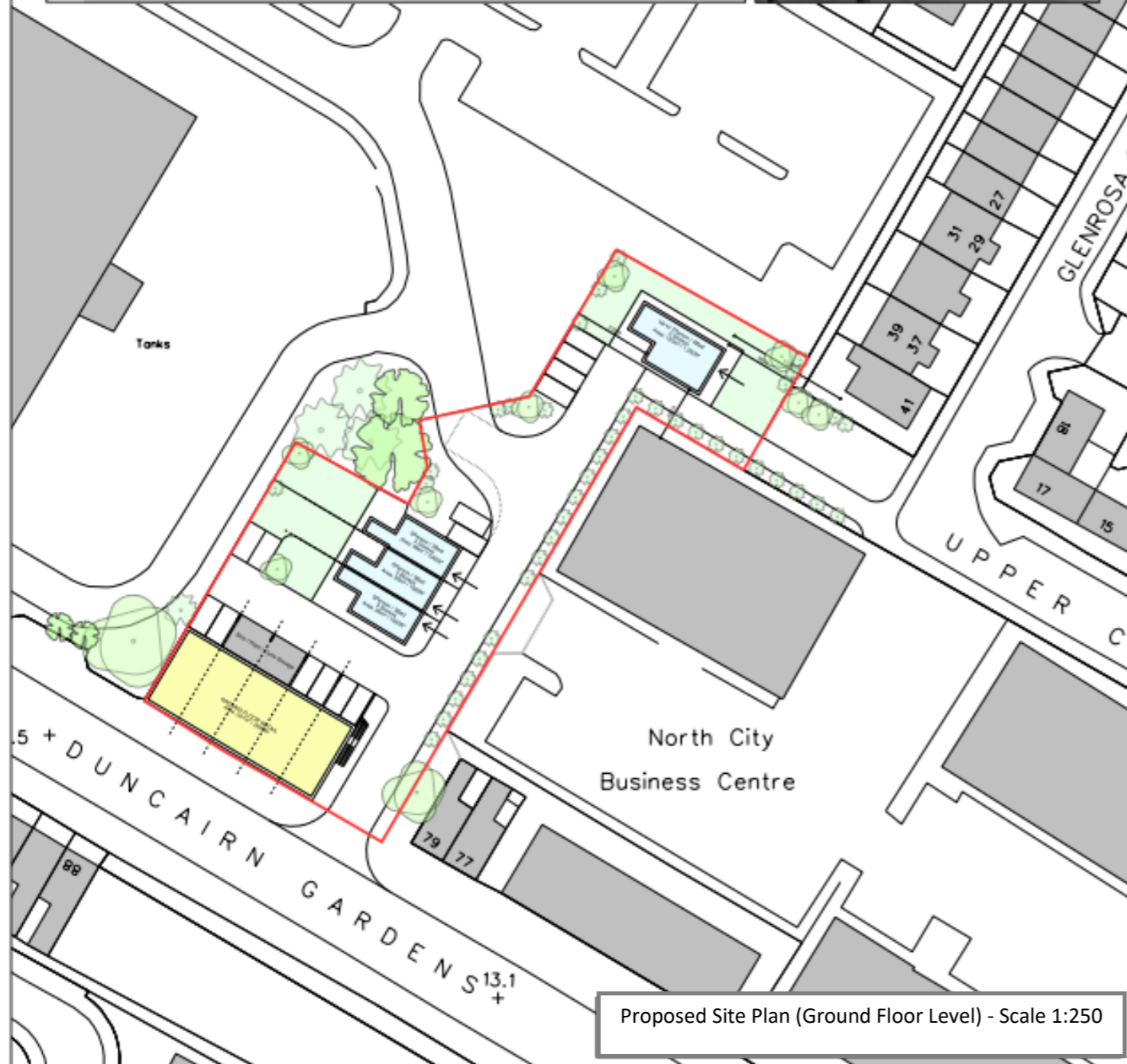
Precedent Image: Family dwellings above retail.



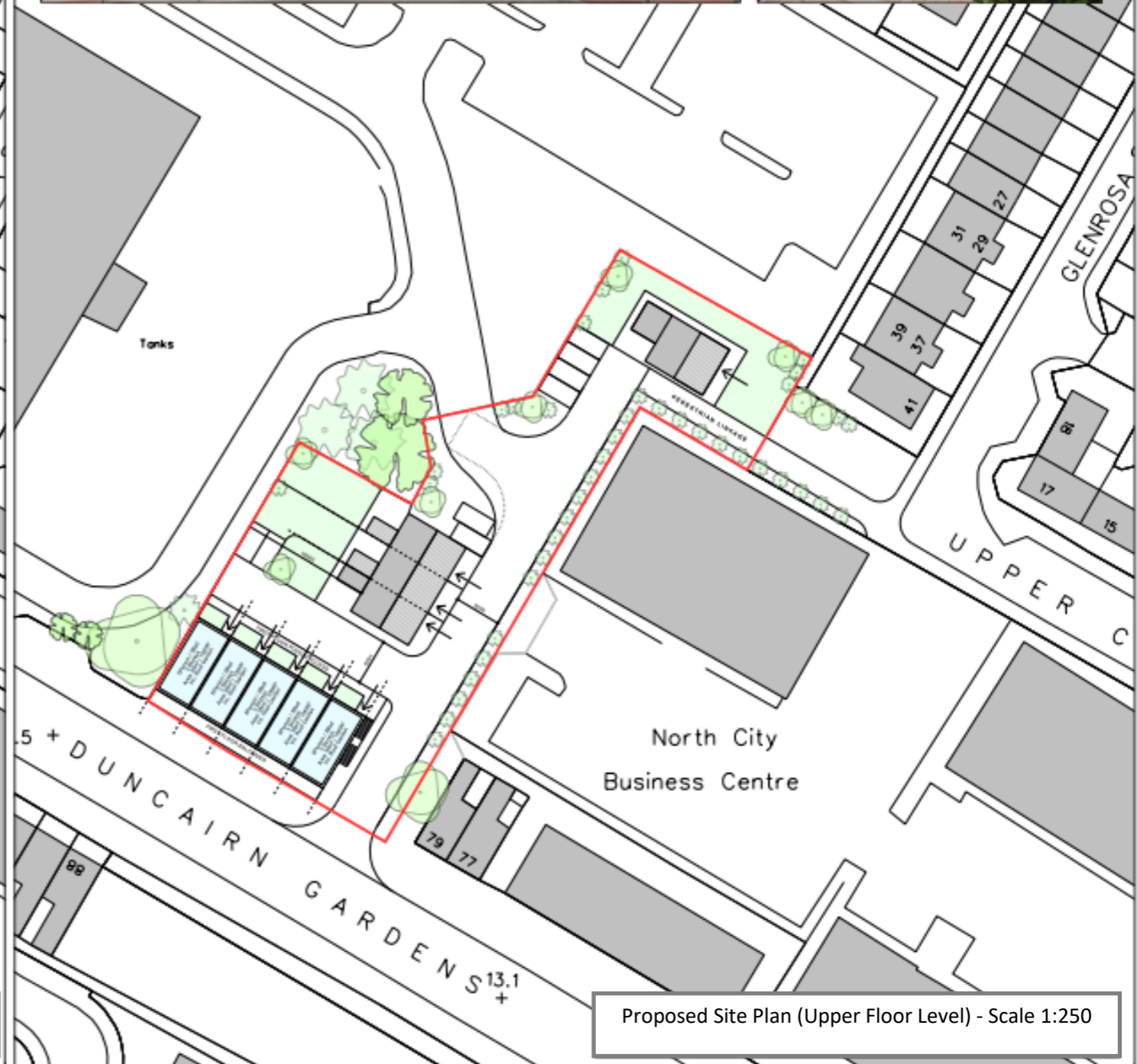
Precedent Image: Family dwellings above retail.



Precedent Image: Domestic scale roof garden.



Proposed Site Plan (Ground Floor Level) - Scale 1:250



Proposed Site Plan (Upper Floor Level) - Scale 1:250

CAPACITY OF THE SITE:

This site is designated for employment use in both existing and emerging Local Development Plans. There is a presumption against any other land use, other than employment generating uses on sites zoned for employment, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) however encourages sustainable mixed use development in sustainable locations and particularly on existing brownfield urban locations.

Early engagement has confirmed very strong political and community support for a housing led regeneration scheme. A capacity study has been undertaken to understand how many units may be accommodated. This clearly illustrates that the larger site has greater potential to accommodate a quality residential led mixed use scheme.



Proposed Site Plan (Ground Floor Level) - Scale 1:250



Proposed Site Plan (Upper Floor Level) - Scale 1:250

4.3 Surrounding Communities

Conversations with local stakeholders has highlighted a number of key developments and other interventions taking place within the Study Area.

These include:

- Upper Long Street Redevelopment Project. This includes the redevelopment of land to the south-west of Duncairn Gardens to provide social housing.
- North City Business Centre's aspirations for expansion.
- Other housing developments within the area.
- Community led projects such as the Garden Grid project aimed at identifying how wasteland can be used more effectively for community benefit.

These projects have the potential to help regenerate the area. Given the scale of the proposed Long Street's redevelopment project, this may cause some disruption in the short to medium term. Further detail on these projects can be found overleaf.

Duncairn Gardens is bound by the communities of Tigers Bay and New Lodge. Over recent years, both areas have seen, and continue to see positive intervention often led by the communities.

Some of the most positive progress includes redevelopment zones which result in the replacement of very high density and poor quality housing with high quality housing that meets today's standards. We are also aware of community initiatives promoting education, skills development and training through horticulture and greening the environment.

Ongoing discussions around the peace infrastructure is also underway.

Long Street Redevelopment Zone

"A £37 million social housing project will create 123 new homes in the New Lodge area of North Belfast.

The scheme will see an area redeveloped between Hillman Street and Stratheden Street – known locally as the 'Long Streets' – with dilapidated properties removed to make way for new and high quality homes." -(BelfastMedia)

The announcement followed the completion of the first 5 phases of development by Newington Housing Association.



Garden Grid

During 2020 community / resident organisations worked with Ashton to identify problematic wasted sites and co-design solutions. The evolved strategy aims to bring these sites into use and link them into a 'grid' or 'net' of spaces under a common land management organisation to form a social enterprise Plant Nursery or "Garden Grid".

This is an exciting project being implemented through the New Lodge area. There is potential to develop a similar initiative in Tigers Bay.



KEY

	Residential		Community Centres
	Commercial		Garden Grid Scheme
	Education		Road
	Services		Car Parking
	Community		Upper Long Streets
	Industry		Housing Schemes
	Religion		Green Space
	Health		Planning Application



Housing Redevelopment

Apex Housing Association have completed the development of 20 lifetime homes in Tigers Bay in 2020/21. The houses are modern, functional and attractive; and with public transport links, community and shopping facilities all on the doorstep, the location of Hogarth Street is ideal.



North City Business Centre

North City Business Centre gained planning approval in 2018 for the redevelopment of an existing 2 storey employment building to be replaced with a 2-4 storey building in the same use. The proposals include for the removal of the 3 metre railing, recreating an active frontage at the junction of Duncairn Gardens and North Queen Street.

5.0 Conclusions and Action Plan

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this Development Study was to explore the strengths, challenges and opportunities for the positive regeneration of the Duncairn area. The Adam Street and Upper Canning Street site was an obvious challenge that required open and transparent engagement with a range of local stakeholders. We believe that the Development Study sets out the best approach to take forward the site and address the ongoing issues. Hopefully, when progress is made on this site, energy can then be redirected to the wealth of other opportunities that exist, to help transform the Duncairn area into a healthy and more liveable neighbourhood.

We believe that the TeleTech site is a significant opportunity to deliver social and economic benefits for local people. To realise this and ensure that it's not a lost opportunity, we believe that the public sector and other government departments, including InvestNI as the owner of the site, should convene a strategic workshop to investigate how the TeleTech building can be utilised to maximise social and economic benefits for local people. Some great ideas emerged during our engagement with local stakeholders, including the potential to use the space to deliver education, skills and training across a variety of sectors.

The regeneration of the Adam Street site and positive reuse of the TeleTech site could act as the catalyst for further change. This could provide the encouragement needed for local entrepreneurs to bring vacant and derelict buildings back into use. DfC in partnership with Belfast City Council could support this with a range of environmental improvements to make the area feel more safe and welcoming. All of these positive interventions can have significant impact upon the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Work on reimagining the peace infrastructure at Halliday's Road is really positive and has the potential to transform people's lives. It would be great to see this work progress in the short term. This could be complemented by softening the borders around the TeleTech site and encouraging future development to once again front onto Duncairn Gardens.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan overleaf seeks to identify the key next steps to progress the regeneration of the area. Many actions will require ongoing partnership working between a range of stakeholders.

Focus Area	Action	Delivery: Potential Key Partners	Timescales Short: 0—3 Years Medium: 3—5 Years Long: 5+ Years
Adam Street/Upper Canning Street	Residential Led Regeneration Project: Progress the redevelopment of Adam Street in line with the broad principles set out in this report. Key stages will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and promote the regeneration site Early engagement with BCC Planning Service Land assembly Appoint Developer Design & Planning Construction 	DfC, other landowners and NIHE .	Short
Duncairn Gardens & Teletch Building	Small scale environmental improvements: Develop a programme of environmental improvements that may include improved lighting, artwork, softening barriers and aesthetic improvements to buildings.	DfC in conjunction with local stakeholders.	Short
	Vacancy and Dereliction: a) Develop a Vacancy & Dereliction Plan – to work with local community groups and organisations to develop a register of vacant and derelict buildings and seek to identify possible future uses. b) Encourage local entrepreneurs to utilise vacant buildings for start up businesses (for e.g., café, hairdressers shops etc).	DfC in conjunction with landowners and local stakeholders.	Short
	TeleTech: a) Convene a strategic workshop to investigate how the TeleTech building can be utilised to maximise social and economic benefits for local people. Attended by all key stakeholders and to be completed in advance of the D1 process so that the opportunity is not missed. b) Remove or soften (for e.g. change to railings) the boundary wall on the frontage of Duncairn Gardens. This could be integrated into a wider ‘Public Art Project’ along Duncairn Gardens	DfC and key partners to liaise with Invest NI.	Short
	Halliday’s Road Interface Project: Progress this project through a process of local stakeholder engagement.	NIHE / DoJ and local stakeholders.	Short
	Improving active travel infrastructure: a) Encourage dedicated cycle lanes and bike parking facilities throughout the area. b) Ongoing engagement in key strategic projects such as the York Street Interchange.	Elected / community representatives in conjunction with Central and Local Government.	Short - Medium
	Green infrastructure: Promote the development of community gardens and greening of the environment with tree planting / hanging baskets etc.	Elected representatives in conjunction with Central and Local Government.	Short
Surrounding Communities	Street Lighting: Review and improve street lighting throughout the Duncairn area.	DfC to engage with Dfl.	Short
	Upper Long Streets Redevelopment: Ensure that local people (including those directly affected) are kept well informed through the early stages of land assembly and planning. Ensure social and economic benefits are maximised for local people throughout the process.	NIHE and Local elected representatives.	Short – Long
	Garden Grids: Support local community groups to set up and deliver the Garden Grid project. If successful, seek to develop similar initiatives in other areas.	Local Community Groups with support from Central and Local Government.	Short
	Play Facilities: Review existing play facilities across the Duncairn Area to identify gaps in the provision and quality. This includes children’s play parks and multi-use games areas for older children.	Local elected representatives in conjunction with Central and Local Government.	Short

Appendix A: Consultation Boards


DUNCAIRN GARDENS DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Board 1

INTRODUCTION

The Department for Communities (DC) has commissioned Carlin Planning Limited to undertake a Development Study for the Duncairn Gardens area of North Belfast. This part of North Belfast is in need of physical, social and economic regeneration. The wider study area includes the Tiger's Bay and New Lodge communities extending to the Limestone Road and New Lodge Road. The Development Study will seek to identify the key issues and opportunities and then put together a report that will recommend social, economic and environmental regeneration for the area.

To date the team have been analysing the area and speaking to local stakeholders. We will be building on this over the next 6 weeks as we seek input from all those living and working in the area.



HISTORY OF THE AREA

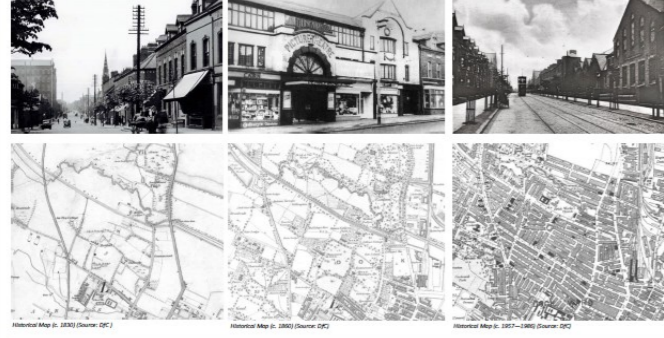
Duncairn Gardens and the wider area has changed considerably over time. The earliest historical records highlight that there may have been an ancient fort situated in the area. The names of the streets and roads reflect the type of residences that were present at the time. The New Lodge Road was used to distinguish the area from the Old Lodge Road, the site of the original lodge in the 18th Century. The streetscape continued to develop as the city witnessed an immense growth in industry and population. New roads and streets were constructed. The Upper Section of the New Lodge Road became Cliftonville Road, Duncairn Street became Cliftonville Road, Duncairn Street became Cliftonville Road.

As the area developed during the Industrial Revolution, several large residences emerged within the area, which were situated in or within close proximity to the Duncairn Estate, such as Traifreigh, Mount Calvey, Brookville and Easton. Most of the mansions in the area however did not last long. The last surviving grand residence in the area was Traifreigh House, which had succumbed to its fire fate during the Belfast Blitz in 1941. The namesake, Duncairn Gardens, signifies that the road is situated on the previous site of the gardens that were located within the Duncairn Estate. The gardens were historically considered amongst the greatest examples of model Georgian and early Victorian environments in the British Isles. The contemporary Duncairn Gardens was laid out in the 1830's, as the mansion was cleared to create a number of streets to house the expanding population of Belfast, which due to its rapid emergence as a leading centre of industry gained its city status in 1838.

The area in particular has a rich history of charity. The first outreach project of the Belfast Central Mission having been established on Duncairn in the Methodist Church, long destroyed in the Belfast Blitz. Duncairn Gardens is also in close proximity to Clifton House, established by the Belfast Charitable Society in 1774 as a Poor House to improve and empower the lives of the more disadvantaged in society. This philanthropy continues to be a core pillar of the area today with several charitable organisations located in the area.

Population Decline

The latter half of the 20th Century saw the communities in and around Duncairn Gardens decline with the beginning of the Troubles and the loss of traditional industry in the city as a whole. Much of the population decline in the area is particularly apparent in the Duncairn Ward, during arguably the most intense period of the conflict. Between the census undertaken in 1971 and 1981, the population declined from 30,998 to 4,059. Much of the population decline, particularly in the Duncairn Ward stems from the most intense years of the Troubles. It was not until the 2011 census that the population of the area began to rise steadily again to 4,901.



SUBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT STUDY

To identify how the area can be regenerated over the short, medium and long term and to explore solutions and opportunities to address the following:

Connectivity


- How can the area become more accessible and connected, providing everyone with access to the many services and facilities available along Duncairn Gardens?

Vacant Buildings & Land

- There are many vacant and derelict buildings, particularly along Duncairn Gardens. How can these buildings be reused to create services and facilities for local communities?
- The recently vacated, Invest NI site (known as the TelTech Building) is likely to be deemed surplus and disposed of in due course. How can this site contribute to the regeneration of the area?
- How can the Adam Street site be transformed into a safe and accessible space that creates community benefit?

Placemaking

- How can the physical appearance of the wider area be improved to become more welcoming, safe and attractive for local residents and businesses?



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DUNCAIRN GARDENS: Creating a thriving hub for the local community

Board 3

1. REMAINING BARRIERS

Work is taking place across Belfast to reduce barriers and reimagine public infrastructure. The peace infrastructure along Duncairn Gardens is amongst the most clearly visible reminders of the past that will be found in Belfast. However, it still provides an important function for the safety of the community. The aim is to reimagine some of these barriers and to work to ensure that these are safe, secure and accessible for all. We believe that the process of working together to reimagine these barriers and then use the work done to further help to build a sense of community.

North City Business Centre has planning permission to redevelop a vacant building along Duncairn Gardens and North Queen Street. This is a multi-phased project that will also bring to regenerate the Strangely Street area. The project will also bring to regenerate the Strangely Street area. The project will also bring to regenerate the Strangely Street area.



2. CREATING A SAFE & RESILIENT PLACE

Duncairn Gardens would benefit greatly from improvements to the public realm. This investment in the public realm could help to improve the safety of the area and to create a more welcoming and vibrant environment. The aim is to create a safe and resilient place for all to enjoy.

3. BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO VACANT BUILDINGS & PLOTS

There are a number of vacant and derelict buildings along Duncairn Gardens. The most notable being the former TelTech building, a large multi-story building with over 200 car parking spaces. The aim is to breathe new life into these buildings and plots, creating a thriving hub for the local community.



REGENERATION PRINCIPLES

- Reimagining Barriers
- Creating a safe and resilient environment
- Breathing new life into vacant buildings
- Improving health and wellbeing

4. IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING

Many aspects of our built and social environment affect our health and wellbeing. Research confirms that the satisfaction people get from their local area, helps to build social cohesion and inclusion that in turn improves physical and mental health and wellbeing. Changes to the built environment will not create dramatic changes overnight, but over time they can have significant results. We believe that the projects highlighted under 'Reimagining Barriers' and 'Park and Pedestrian Place' could greatly contribute to the health and wellbeing of our community.

The promotion and encouragement of active modes of travel (walking and cycling) should be a core consideration of all projects. There is a real opportunity to build on the area's greatest strengths, its location and access to services and facilities, including City Side Park, the City Centre and Alexandra Park. Better cycle infrastructure is essential, including cycle lanes, cycle parking and pedestrian and cycle crossing points.

The Belfast Healthy Cities Initiative sets out an excellent framework that seeks to promote Belfast as a healthy, equitable and sustainable city through Community Prosperity, Creating the City and Healthy Partners.



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NEIGHBOURHOOD ANALYSIS

Board 2

STRENGTHS

- Established mixed use residential area with large residential buildings.
- Change of use area strengthened by nature line along Duncairn Gardens.
- Good access to bus services and facilities including District Centre and City Centre.
- Access to employment opportunities (North City Business Centre).
- Evidence of strong community structures – although varying within the study area.
- Rich history and with some beautiful historic buildings being retained.
- Good range and mix of uses, including community use.
- There is an appetite for change in the area.
- Proximity to the new Leisure University Campus.

WEAKNESSES

- Physically and politically divided communities.
- High vacancy rates and pockets of dereliction.
- Poor quality of the environment in places. Lacks outdoor and softscape and enhances the perception of the area being an undesirable place.
- Anti-social behaviour – caused by the availability of vacant and underutilised sites.
- Limited availability of quality open spaces.
- Key site along Duncairn Gardens has been commenced but not completed – difficult to force these developments to be completed.
- Acoustic evidence suggests that very limited amount of local people are employed in the local businesses, including TelTech when it was in operation.
- Area performs poorly in terms of multiple deprivation, falling within the 20% most deprived. Crime and health deprivation are particularly concerning.



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ADAM STREET: Making productive use of abandoned land

Board 4

1. The creation of a quality residential use development

The existing site is contained in use and is currently underutilised. Currently, there is a residential led regeneration scheme. It will be challenging to ensure a high quality residential development could be achieved within the existing site boundaries.

2. Reconnecting Adam Street

Historically, Adam Street extended through to Duncairn Gardens. However the historic street pattern was largely lost during the 1970's and 1980's when the population of the area declined. The partial reconstruction of Adam Street has cultural and historic significance for the Tiger's Bay community.

3. The creation of active footpaths

There is currently a variety of footpaths across Duncairn Gardens, including commercial and residential footpaths. At the heart of Duncairn there is a strong commercial presence due to the North City Business Centre. This should be extended to the footpath of Adam Street, providing space for local services and facilities at street level.

4. Accessible & Connected

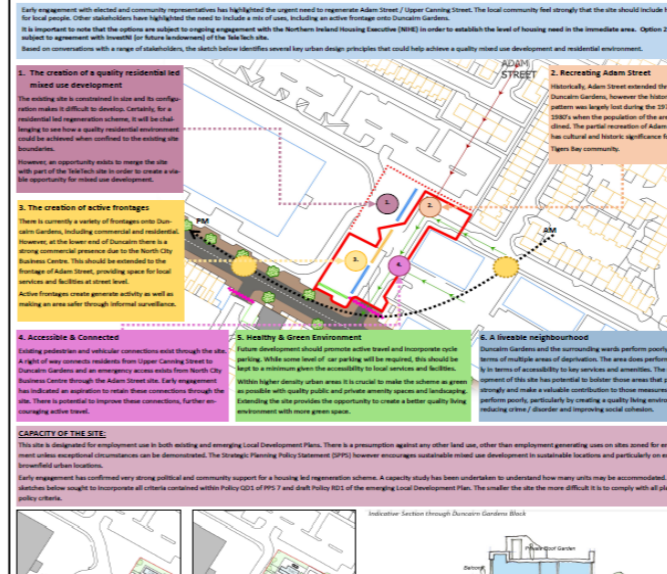
Building pedestrian and public connections across the site, while some level of car parking will be required, this should be used to improve the accessibility to local services and facilities. The site should be designed to be accessible to all, including those with reduced mobility. The site should be designed to be accessible to all, including those with reduced mobility.

5. Healthy & Green Environment

Active development should promote active travel and incorporate active travel. While some level of car parking will be required, this should be used to improve the accessibility to local services and facilities. The site should be designed to be accessible to all, including those with reduced mobility.

6. A diverse neighbourhood

Duncairn Gardens and the surrounding north perform poorly in terms of multiple areas of deprivation. The area does perform strongly in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities. The site should be designed to be accessible to all, including those with reduced mobility.



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SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES: Current & Future Regeneration

Board 4

Duncairn Gardens is bound by the communities of Tiger's Bay and New Lodge. Over recent years, both areas have seen, and continue to see positive regeneration efforts for the community. The area is also aware of community initiatives promoting education, skills development and training through horticulture and growing the environment. Ongoing discussion around the peace infrastructure is also underway.

1. Reimagining Barriers

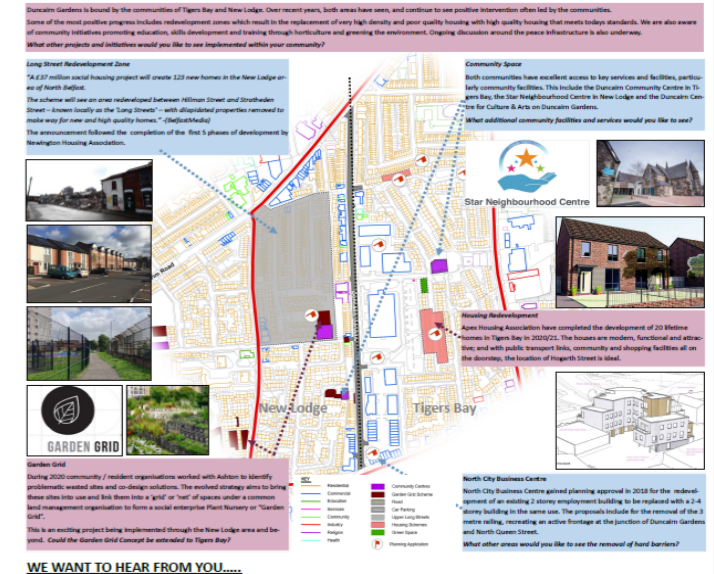
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Appendix B: Surveys

DUNCAIRN AREA DEVELOPMENT STUDY – COMMUNITY SURVEY

Name: _____

Postcode: _____

1. What part of the study area is most relevant to you?

	Tick the relevant answer
Duncairn Gardens	
Tigers Bay	
New Lodge	
Other	

2. What are the key strengths of Duncairn Gardens and surrounding area?

3. What are the key weaknesses of Duncairn Gardens and surrounding area?

4. Do you agree that Duncairn Gardens and surrounding area is in need of investment and regeneration?

No Yes

5. Do you agree with the Regeneration Principles identified for Duncairn Gardens (Board 3)?

	Yes	No	Comment
1. Reimagining Barriers			
2. Creating a safe and resilient place			
3. Breathing new life into vacant buildings / plots			
4. Improving Health and Wellbeing			

6. If you agree with the regeneration principles, what principles would you like to see prioritised and why? If you do not agree, please explain why.

7. Do you agree with the Key Urban Design Principles (Board 4) for the Adam Street/Upper Canning Street site?

	Yes	No	Comment
1. The creation of a quality residential led mixed use development			
2. Recreating Adam Street			
3. The creation of active frontages			
4. Accessible and connected			
5. Healthy and Green Environment			
6. A liveable neighbourhood			

8. Which option for Adam Street do you feel presents the best approach to future development?

	Yes	No	Comment
Option 1: Existing Site boundaries			
Option 2: Including small portion of TeleTech site			
Other (Please Specify)			

9. If you do not agree with the above options for the Adam Street site please specify what your preferred use of the site might be.

10. Are there any other projects / initiatives that could assist the regeneration of the area?

11. Any other comments:

Thank you for contributing to your community!

DUNCAIRN AREA DEVELOPMENT STUDY – RESIDENTS SURVEY TIGERS BAY

Date / Time: Monday 28th November @ 9.30am – 12.30pm

Address: _____

1. Do you feel that the Adam Street site should be redeveloped?

No Yes

2. If yes, what is your preferred land use?

Housing:	
Employment:	
Other (please state):	

3. If no, what are your main concerns?

4. Any other comments:

Thank you for contributing to your community!

