



Greystones, County Wicklow is regarded by many as a success story. The attractive sea-side town has long been a desirable place to live and a popular destination for day-trippers. It has some of the lowest commercial vacancy rates in Ireland and was crowned “the world’s most liveable community” at the 2006 Livcomm awards.

Yet on closer inspection Greystones has in fact many challenges to overcome. The town’s popularity and housing demand means that its fast paced development threatens its affordability and historic character. Greystones is also buckling under the pressure of heavy traffic, like so many Irish towns but hindered by the constraints of coastal geography. This in turn compromises the experience of those on foot and cycle and undermines its sustainability as a place in which to spend time.

On being appointed to prepare this Public Realm Plan, The Paul Hogarth Company was able to highlight the critical role streets and other public spaces can play in helping address these complex issues.

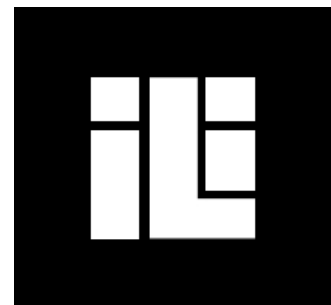
The Greystones Public Realm Plan was commissioned by Greystones 2020 and Wicklow County Council. It is a community led initiative, driven by a steering group of residents, business owners, council officials and elected members. Accordingly, The Paul Hogarth Company ensured that local voices were central to shaping the plan, facilitating a highly collaborative methodology, featured by the Irish Times in November 2019.

The public realm plan sets in a place a confident vision for the future of Greystones and identifies a series of thematic objectives for its streets and spaces. These include:

- Implementing a new boardwalk lined with multi-use beach huts (once commonplace in Greystones) to improve South Beach as a destination and form a strong pedestrian spine towards an extended town centre.
- Re-imagining La Touche Road Car Park (arguably one of the most picturesque in Ireland) as a public space through incremental interventions.
- Transforming Church Road (the commercial heart of the town) to readdress the balance between cars and people, while creating more space for cycling and outdoor seating.

The Greystones Public Realm Plan is now being used to secure regeneration funding, inform planning policy and most recently, to guide the town’s response to Covid-19 restrictions.

This project demonstrates the vital role to be played by Landscape Architects, working with the public, clients and colleagues in Urban Design and Planning, to transform our town centres and set them on a sustainable path for the future.



IRISH LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE
INSTITIÚID TÍRDHREACHA NA hÉIREANN

GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

the

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WHAT IS PUBLIC REALM?

“The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to see, use and enjoy, including streets, squares and parks”

Definition of term sourced from Cowan, R (2005) 'The Dictionary of Urbanism', Tisbury: Streetwise Press.

GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

A. CONNECTIVITY

Greystones is a highly connected destination by national standards. It benefits from good road and rail infrastructure, including a DART connection to Dublin and W11 motorway.

At a regional level Greystones is conveniently positioned between the towns of Bray and Wicklow and nestled at the base of Sugar Loaf Mountain with coastal views over the Irish Sea, making it a very attractive location.

At the local level, the amount of space dedicated to private vehicles has substantially increased in recent decades. The prioritisation of vehicles has resulted in persistent traffic congestion and a poor pedestrian experience that at times can feel very onerous. Poor quality and narrow paving, as well as piecemeal cycling infrastructure, further exacerbate these problems. This is having an increasingly negative impact, particularly upon those with mobility issues, children and vulnerable adults, resulting in individuals choosing to drive shorter distances than travel on foot or by cycle.

The study noted the experience of local school students. Their experience of engagement with the surrounding environment exemplifies the nature of the current traffic environment, which is particularly hazardous at peak flow times.



GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

VISION STATEMENT

“Greystones is a destination that is synonymous with healthy and happy living. It is the coastal town that has something for everyone, enabling you to find that perfect balance of live, work and play”.

This vision statement has been drawn from the established work of Greystones 2020 to encapsulate the unique and intrinsic character of place. It will be vital that all future development seeks to fulfil this aspiration for the town.

GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

AIMS

INVESTING IN QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

CREATING SPACES FOR COMMUNITY AND VISITORS

SAFEGUARDING CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

SUPPORTING GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT



GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

Public Realm Phase 1

Previous streetscape enhancements around the train station have made a massive contribution to improving perceptions of the town.

However, particular pinch points have not aged well and so it is recommended that a review of Phase 1 is carried out to examine any technical issues which could be resolved, such as the location of bus stops.

Subsequent improvements based upon this review should be to a high standard and complement the existing public realm. This is likely to include an upgrade of street furniture and a replacement of damaged paving.

GREYSTONES PUBLIC REALM PLAN

B3. Sea Access

Accessing and enjoying the sea is a core part of life in Greystones. From childhood memories of jumping in the water, to local businesses organising early morning swims, the biggest natural asset of Greystones is undoubtedly its access to the Irish Sea.

Enabling safe access for swimming other activities will ensure this tradition can continue to be enjoyed by all ages. With the introduction of supporting facilities and amenities, there will be capacity to use the sea all year round with health and safety being of paramount importance.

This will include an improved lifeguard view point and facilities.

The reinstatement of beach huts along South Beach promenade which, amongst other uses, may offer changing facilities.

To enable greater sea access, a reinstated board-walk should be considered for South Beach. This would allow those with reduced mobility to access the sea and enhance the inclusivity of the coastal asset.

Project Locations

Public Realm Plan Projects

A. Streetscapes

- A1. Church Road
- A2. Trafalgar Road
- A3. The Lanes
- A4. Wayfinding Strategy *

B. Seascapes

- B1. Cliff Road and Marine Road
- B2. South Beach Promenade
- B3. Sea Access *
- B4. Harbour and Marina

C. Heritage and Community

- C1. La Touche Road Car Park
- C2. Town Events Strategy *
- C3. St Crispin's & New Park
- C4. Heritage Trail *

D. Green Growth

- D1. Coastal Path
- D2. Greenways
- D3. Green Space Programme *
- D4. 'Greystones' Innovation *

E. Town Gateways

- E1. Destination Arrival Points*
- E2. Car Parking Strategy *
- E3. Station Enhancements

* - Multiple Locations