

## **Planning and Design Report**

to accompany a Part 8 Planning Application for

### **Covered Public Space and Historic Well Covering Roscommon Market Square**



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On behalf of

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## 1.0 Introduction

This project is the final element of the 2018 Roscommon Town Main Street and Market Square Public Realm Project funded under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and Roscommon County Council. The current phase of the project (Main Street and Market Square Public Realm) is practically complete and creates a vibrant space in which people are happy and comfortable to live, meet, eat and work. The square traditionally functioned as the central market and assembly space. The new public realm works allow for a functionally diverse, connected and people friendly sequence of town centre spaces which frame and celebrate the architecture that surrounds them.

The project elements that are the subject of this application are the final parts of the overall 2018 project. The aspiration is that together the two phases of work will create a town centre that existing and future residents can take pride in and to which visitors will be drawn. The aims of this project are fully aligned with the Town Centre first ethos and the ongoing URDF 2020 Putting the Spokes Back into the Hub project.

## 2.0 Location/Site

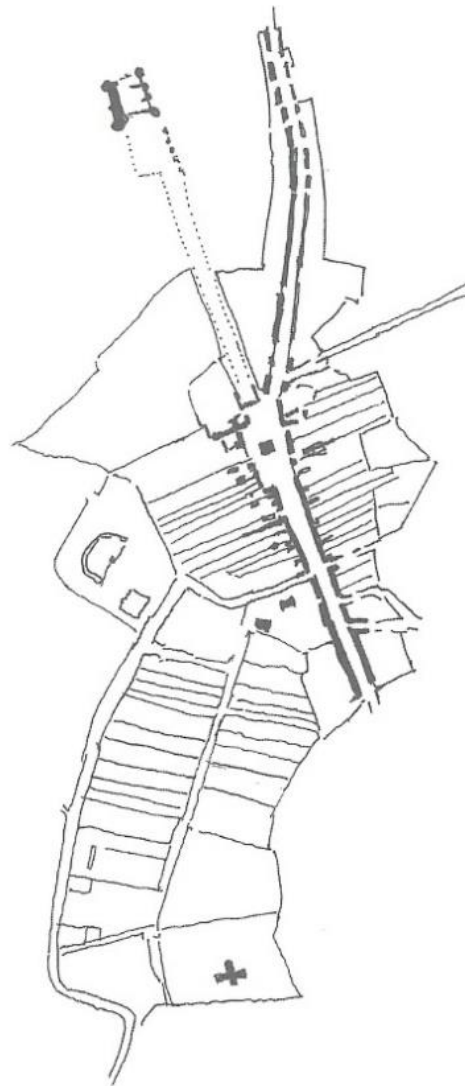
Roscommon County Council, Regeneration Team and its project partners wish to bring people and a diversity of urban functions together in the central places which, for most of their existence, have been places of public interaction and commerce. The scope of this project is to design and construct a covered civic space to the area north of the Bank of Ireland (formerly Harrison Hall) and to also design a covering for the historic well within the area to the south of the Bank of Ireland building.



Fig. 1: Location Plan with the Bank of Ireland building in the centre of Roscommon Town Market Square

### 3.0 Historical Context

Roscommon Town developed over the centuries as a compact, vibrant and high density town with a tight urban grain. The diagram below illustrates the strong axial relationship between the Castle, Gaol and former Courthouse in the centre of Market Square.



*Fig. 2: Valerie Mulvin 'Approximate Formalities'*

From the mid-20th century, the settlement pattern of Roscommon Town was transformed, however, into a much more spatially expansive and low density urban agglomeration. Very few family homes were built in the town centre in the second half of the 20th century due to the popularity of the suburban lifestyle, and consequently footfall quickly diminished in the town centre. These urban interventions are designed to draw people back into the centre of the town.





Fig. 3: Historic Map 1829-1841



Fig. 4: Historic Map 1897-1913



Fig. 5: Historic Map 1897-1913



Fig. 6: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Historic Photograph showing Hayden Monument and Bank of Ireland building

## 4.0 Project Requirements

The design of the Covered Civic Space takes consideration of the following criteria:

- The architectural significance of the buildings within the Market Square, most notably the Old Gaol, the Bank of Ireland building, the County Museum, the Post Office, former Presbyterian Church.
- The historical context of the town while also bringing a contemporary artistic innovation to the design.
- The accommodation of outdoor events, e.g. markets, performances, festivals, major town celebrations.
- The creation of a focal point to attract families during our largely inclement weather outside of peak summer months
- The creation of a destination within the town and broader area.
- Minimal impact on the newly laid granite paving.

The design of the Cover to the Historic Well also takes consideration of the above criteria in addition to the following:

- Enhancement of the existing vista looking northwards from Main Street.
- Consistency with the proposed Covered Civic Space in terms of concept and materials.
- The celebration of the historic 19<sup>th</sup> century well uncovered during the recent construction works.



*Fig. 7: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Historic Photograph showing Hayden Monument and Bank of Ireland building*

## 5.0 Planning + Policy Context

The design of the project refers to local regional and National Planning policy documentation including, inter alia, Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2014-2020, Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the North and West Region, and the National Planning Framework.

### Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2014-2020

- Maintain and upkeep the historic fabric of the town.
- Stem the leaking of expenditure to adjacent dominant town centres such as Athlone and Sligo.
- Consolidate the existing retail core of the town through the reuse of vacant and derelict structures and redevelopment of specific opportunity sites.
- Address residential vacancy in the town
- Maximising the use of public space for activities such as Farmers' Markets.
- Promote Roscommon town as the focus of new retail development.

### Roscommon Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

- Support towns to accentuate their strengths and exploit opportunities and work with our network of villages to ensure vibrant and cohesive development.

### Roscommon Town Team Action Plan 2018

- Develop covered space for Farmers' Market.
- Seek funding to develop existing and new events and festivals within the town.

### Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Core Strategy and the County Development Plan 2022-2028 will reinforce the role of Roscommon Town as the primary settlement centre within the county.

The strategic objectives of the Plan in relation to Roscommon Town as they relate to this application are:



- To ensure that the growth planned for the town up to 2030 and beyond occurs in a sustainable and sequential manner, while prioritising a low carbon, compact, consolidated and connected urban centre
- To develop Roscommon as a vibrant and culturally rich town supported by an inclusive sustainable residential community
- To create a distinct sense of place and community in which people continue to choose to live, work, do business and visit.
- To deliver and facilitate the regeneration of core areas with a radically improved public realm and rejuvenated town centre whilst having regard to and optimising the heritage assets of the town.

## 6.0 Project Aspirations

- **An Assembly Space for the County**

It is intended that the Market Square become the central assembly and reception space for County Roscommon – a place to eat, meet and greet.

- **A Functionally Diverse Place**

The Market Square was originally laid out as the defining market places of the 'market town'. Their primary functions were to stage markets and fairs. With the advent of the car and the hollowing out of the town centre, these spaces which defined the market town lost their urban significance. The design concept focuses on reinventing it as a functionally diverse place and broadening out its functions to make it more relevant to the 21st Century economy. It is envisaged as a quality public urban amenity space for existing and new town centre residents. It will be used as a meeting place, a place to sit or enjoy and an orientation point for exploring the town on foot. It will also be a dynamic space with activities of interest e.g. a market place, a performance space, a sequence of spill out spaces which make business premises feel larger whilst drawing visitors in. It will support the 2020 URDF project by creating a greater reason for people to come in from the periphery through the linkages to the town centre.

- **A Place for Staging Festivals + Events**

The design concept envisages Roscommon Town becoming synonymous with a calendar of events resulting from the provision of new performance, exhibition and assembly spaces.

- **A Place for the People**

The concept envisages the Market Square becoming a people friendly space in which they are encouraged to eat, meet and greet. This focal point in the centre of Market Square shall use high quality contemporary materials and detailing. This focal point, which should be of a scale consistent with and complementary to the adjacent built environment in and around the square, will serve to change the dynamics of the Market Square creating a more intimate and sheltered space.

The project seeks to increase the attractiveness of Roscommon town as a place to live, visit, work and invest.

## **7.0 Covered Civic Space Design Approach**

A dynamic and unique covered space is proposed incorporating seating and a folded roof structure.

### **Massing and scale**

The massing and height of the proposed structure is appropriate in scale to the neighbouring two-storey pitched roof buildings. This is demonstrated in the cross sections, site model and sketch perspectives. The height of the new structure at its highest point will be 6.8m tying in with the eaves height of the Bank of Ireland building.



*Fig. 8: Site Sections showing proposed Covered Civic Space*



*Fig. 9: Site Model*

## Materials

The materials proposed are polished concrete, timber and copper sheeting.



*Fig. 10: Timber roof structure*



*Fig. 11: Copper sheeting*



*Fig. 12: Copper cupola*



*Fig. 13: Concrete benches*



*Fig. 14: Concrete screen*



*Fig. 15: Limestone to Bank of Ireland*

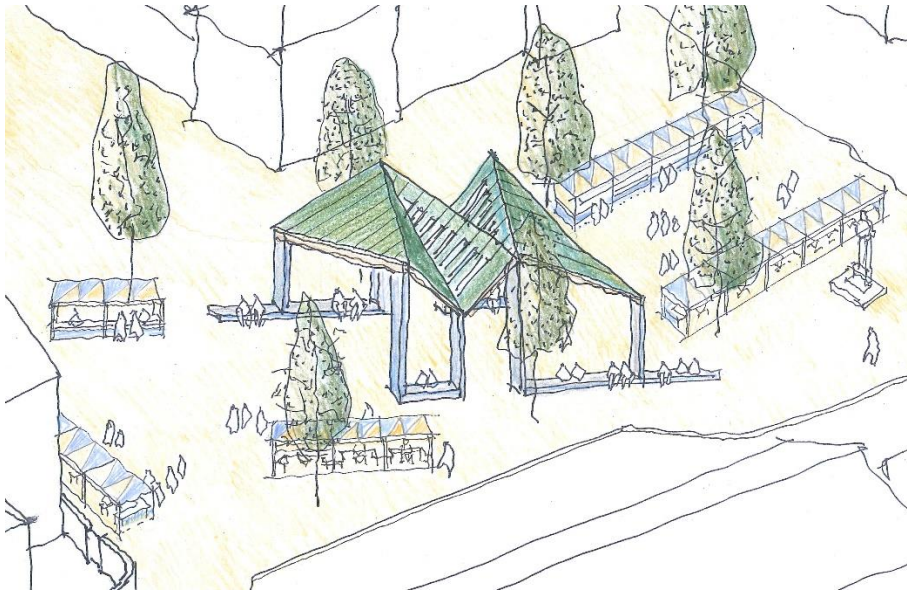
It is proposed to form the benches and pier supports in a polished concrete with limestone aggregate. This will be visually compatible with the blue/grey tones of the Bank of Ireland building.

The roof structure will be made of timber. Glazed rooflights will be incorporated bringing south light into the centre of the space.

It is proposed to cover the roof with a copper sheeting that will in time patinate, resonating with the green copper cupola to the Bank of Ireland building.

## Market Stalls

It is envisaged that Market Stalls for the Farmers' Market and Christmas Markets will be accommodated in the spaces on either side of the new covered space. Customers of the markets will have the opportunity to make a purchase and retreat to the covered space to enjoy a cup of coffee and sandwich or to socialise.



*Fig. 15: Sketch view showing market stall arrangement*

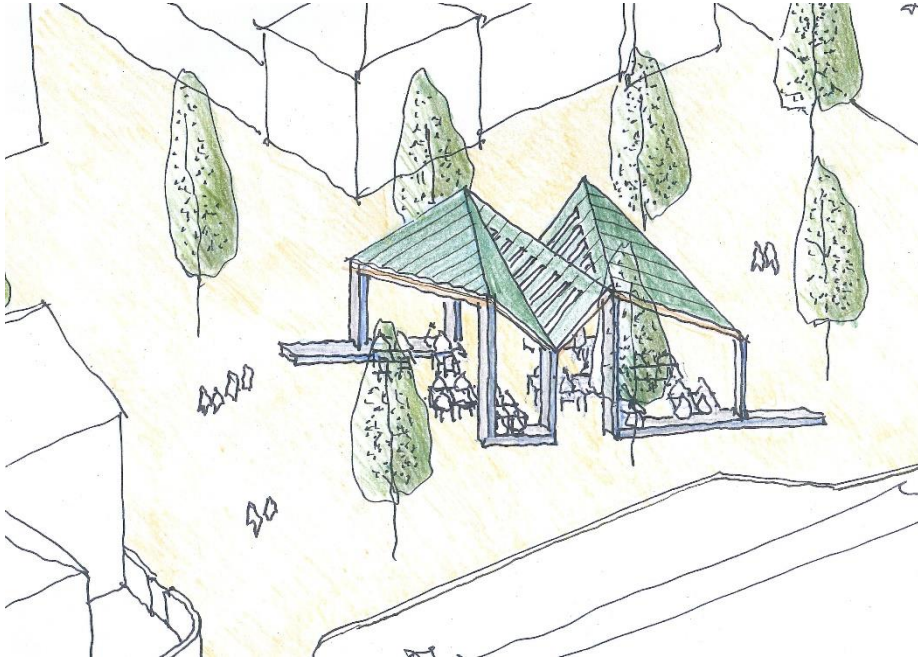


*Fig. 16: Plan showing market stall arrangement*



## Covered Dining

Approximately 40 diners could be accommodated under the covered space. Tables and loose chairs would supplement the seating provided by the benches.



*Fig. 17: Sketch view showing covered dining arrangement*



*Fig. 18: Plan showing covered dining arrangement*

## Events

It is envisaged that events could take place on either side of the covered space. The Gig Rig that has been located behind the Bank of Ireland building over the last number of years could continue to be accommodated. People attending events in the square could gather in the covered area and sit on the benches.



*Fig. 19: Sketch view showing events arrangement*



*Fig. 20: Plan showing events arrangement*

## Drainage

No change is proposed to the existing drainage provision. The drainage for the new roof covering will connect to existing outlet points installed within the Square.

## Parking

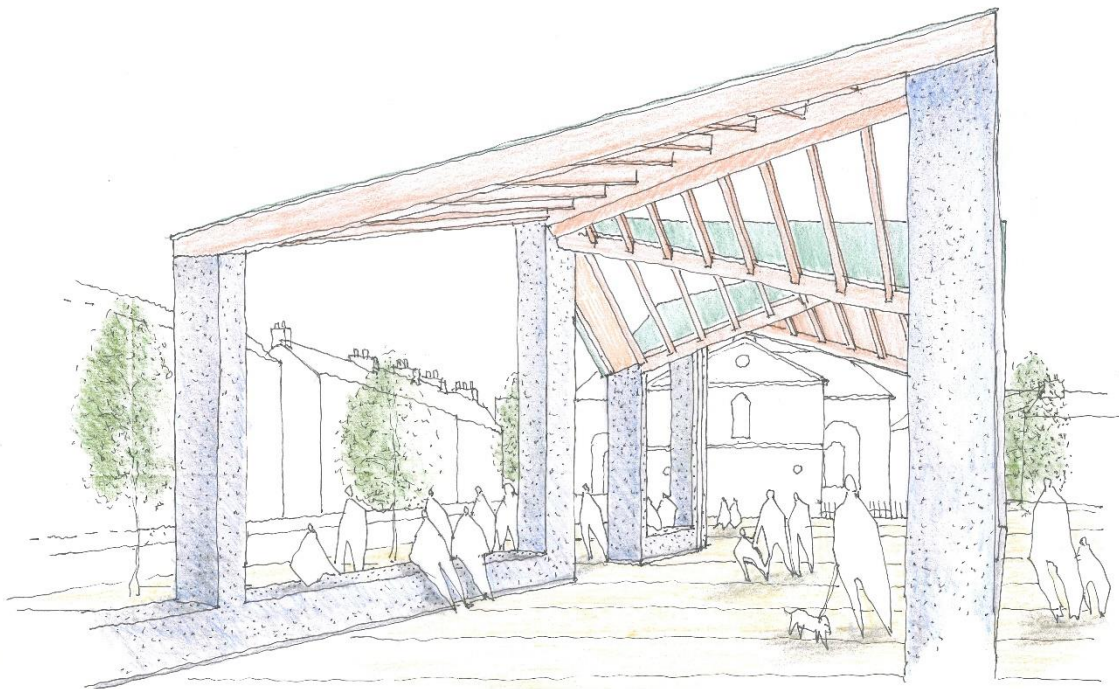
No change is proposed to the existing carparking provision.

## Access

No change is proposed to the existing access arrangement.

## Solar study

As illustrated by the solar study prepared by Michael Mescal (attached) there will be no significant additional impact on the adjoining buildings in terms of shadowing due to the location of the canopy structure to the north of the Bank of Ireland building.



*Fig. 21: Sketch view showing covered civic space*



*Fig. 22: Christmas events at Market Square 2021*

## 8.0 Cover to Historic Well Design Approach

A historic well with a depth of approximately 14m was uncovered during the Phase 1 paving works between the Bank of Ireland building and Hayden Monument. It is proposed to make a feature of this well in the South Square.



*Fig. 23: Photo showing well uncovered during Phase 1 works*



- It is proposed to artificially light the well throughout its 14m depth.
- A periscope viewing area will allow members of the public to engage with this feature.



*Fig. 24: Lighting of well throughout its depth*



*Fig. 25: Periscope principle*

- A tactile bronze scale model of the Market Square will be cast and displayed on a polished concrete plinth to the rear of the periscope viewing structure, between the well and the Bank of Ireland entrance.



*Fig. 25: Tactile bronze scale model of Market Square*





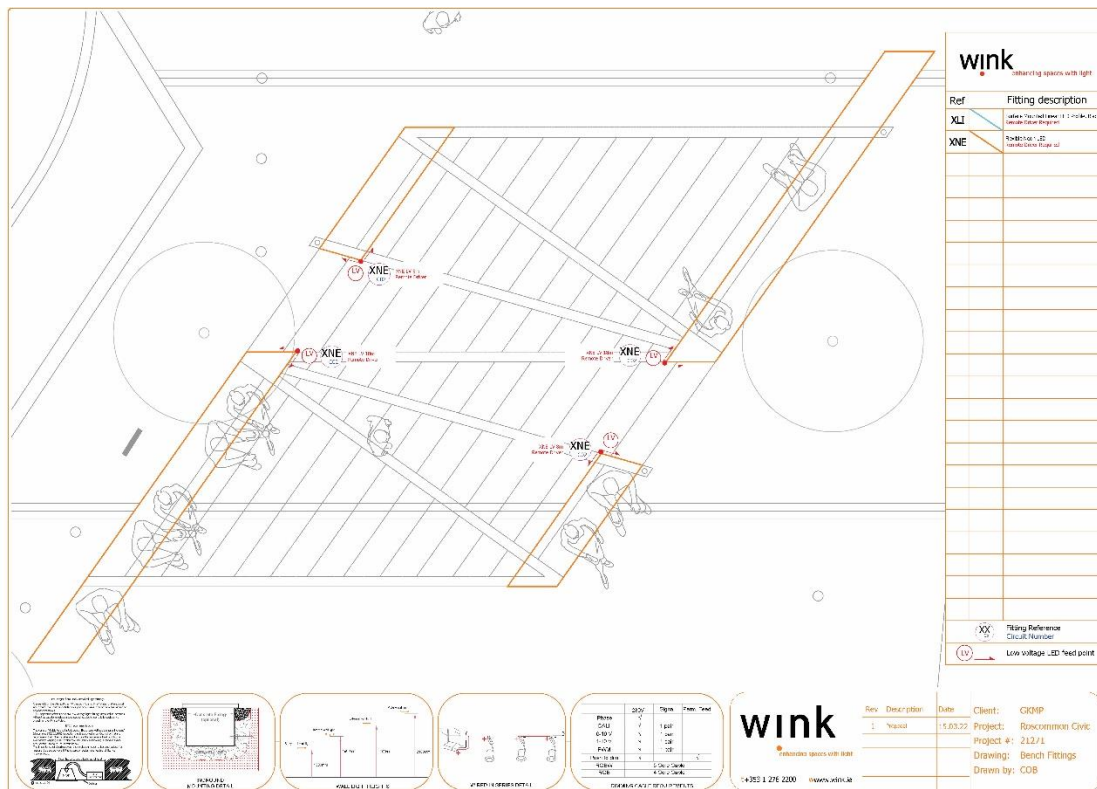
*Fig. 26: Sketch view of Cover to Historic Well*

## 9.0 Lighting

It is proposed to light the base of the concrete benches and support columns to the Covered Civic Space to give the illusion of a floating structure at night.

Lighting within the covered space will be supplemented by linear LED fittings fitted to the underside of the timber beams.

A Lighting Consultant forms part of the team and has carried out an assessment of the existing light levels generated by the new light columns installed as part of the Phase 1 works.



*Fig. 27: Uplighting of benches at Place Pey Berland, Bordeaux*

## 10.0 Archaeology

Reference has been made to an archaeological report prepared on behalf of Roscommon County Council by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. in December 2019 to study the impact on the archaeological and historical resource of the Phase 1 urban realm improvement scheme that includes Market Square and Main Street.

Ground disturbances will be required in order to install foundations for the covered civic space. It is recommended in the report that *'all excavations that exceed the existing road/pavement construction materials be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation in-situ or by record. Any further mitigation will require approval from the National Monuments Service of the DoCHG.'*

Some remedial works may be required to the walls to the well. The artificial lighting of the well is to be fitted above the level of the ground in order to minimise impact and for ease of maintenance.

## 11.0 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report was prepared by Roscommon County Council in April 2022 for the proposed works:

### **Conclusion of Screening Assessment:**

*'Following an assessment of the proposed development and any potential relationships with European Sites, it is concluded that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, there would be no likely significant effects on any European Sites. Accordingly, there is no requirement for Appropriate Assessment.'*

## 12.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report was prepared by Roscommon County Council in April 2022 for the proposed works:

### **Conclusion of Screening Assessment:**

*'it is concluded that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out for the proposed Public Realm Improvement Works at Market Square and Main Street and therefore there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to be prepared.'*

A Micro Climatic Analysis Report for the proposed Covered Civic Space has been prepared by Michael Mescal and is attached.

## Appendix 1 Buildings of Architectural Significance

### Bank of Ireland

The Square, Roscommon

1740-1760



#### Description (NIAH)

*Detached cruciform two-storey former court house, built 1750, now in use as bank. Hipped slate roof to main block and pitched to entrance and rear blocks. Cast-iron rainwater goods. Cut stone chimneystacks to rear block. Random coursed dressed limestone walls with ashlar quoins, moulded cut stone cornice. Rendered side elevations to main block. Front entrance block with pedimented ashlar façade with paired pilasters, surmounted by stepped square-profile ashlar cupola with domical-vaulted copper-clad roof and with louvers flanked by Ionic pilasters. Back wall of rear block has pediment topped by stone ball finial and has round panel to tympanum, moulded string course with a moulded bracket below. Tooled block-and-start round-headed window surrounds throughout with timber sash windows with tooled stone sills. Windows in back wall of main block are set into two-storey round-headed recesses. Square-headed window over main entrance and oculi in back wall of rear block. Timber panelled entrance door in square-headed opening with moulded cut stone surround and entablature. Round-headed doorway in west side of entrance block. Cast-iron railings surround site with ashlar gate piers to south and west.*

## Appraisal (NIAH)

*Originally built as a rectangular-plan court house in the mid-eighteenth century, this building, having become derelict, was bought by the Parish Priest, Fr. John Madden, in 1829, at the time of Roman Catholic Emancipation. Converted into a Roman Catholic Church, the front and rear additions were erected in 1844. The authority of the building is obvious from its location in the centre of the market square, opposite the former prison. The finely-executed stone of the façade is embellished by the pediments and carved stone dressings such as the Ionic pilasters to the cupola. The building still serves the local community as a bank.*

## Hayden Monument

The Square, Roscommon

1895–1905



## Description (NIAH)

*Freestanding limestone monument, erected c.1900, in memory of Luke Patrick Hayden MP, former Chairman of the Board of Town Commissioners. Comprised of stepped cut limestone base, tapering pedestal with inscription to south face, supporting ashlar squared-profile tapered obelisk.*

## Appraisal (NIAH)

*Erected by the friends and admirers of Luke Patrick Hayden M.P., this monument, which is prominently located within the square at the heart of Roscommon town, is of historical significance to the area. The finely executed obelisk-like design of this landmark is of artistic significance.*



## Roscommon County Gaol

The Square, Roscommon

1730–1750



### Description (NIAH)

*Detached seven-bay four-storey former prison, built c.1740, with advanced end bays. Now in use as outlet centre with living apartments to third floor. Modern extension to rear and modern three-storey roofed walkway linking main building to modern cylindrical four-storey stone-clad stairwell tower. Internally, jail has been largely renovated, although front block has been retained. Tiled roof is concealed by castellated parapet wall with stepped rendered chimneystacks. Random coursed limestone walls with tooled quoins and window surrounds to front elevation. String courses above second and third storeys. Niches and loops-like windows to towers. Stone and rendered walls to rear and side elevations. Label mouldings to windows of three central bays. Segmental- and pointed-segmental-arched door openings to centre and end bays. Hood moulding to central entrance, leading to arcade of shops. Replacement timber sash windows. Cast-iron gates to main entrance. Structure is street-fronted and situated in a prominent position at the northern end of Market Square.*

### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This former prison, built by the Roscommon landlord, The Earl of Essex, is reminiscent of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century fortified houses as seen at Portumna and Rathfarnham. The impressive stone edifice is locally attributed to Richard Cassels... Having served as a jail for less than a century, it subsequently became a lunatic asylum, then a refuge for smallpox sufferers, a market house and later a private house. Stone Court Centre was opened in 1999.*

## Roscommon Post Office

The Square, Roscommon

1890-1930



### Description (NIAH)

*Detached five-bay two-storey post office, built in 1911, with projecting end bays and single-storey sorting office return to south and flat-roofed extension to west. Hipped slated roof to main block with oversailing eaves, sprocketed to end bays. Pitched roof to sorting office with eaves brackets. Red brick chimneystacks and cast-iron rainwater goods. Red brick walls with rendered walls to south and west. Limestone ashlar string course and to part of plinth course. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Tripartite windows to end bays. Red brick flat-arched openings to ground floor windows, one with a segmental head and with limestone keystones to windows of entrance bay. Timber panelled doors with overlights. Main entrance has a lugged-and-knead cut limestone doorcase with a triple-keystone and with "POST OFFICE" inscribed to transom. Letterbox with cut stone surround and metal harp/ÉIRE emblem to façade. Post office is bounded to the street by cast-iron railings on a red brick plinth.*

### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This post office is a colourful addition to the townscape. The warm red hue of the façade contrasts with the predominantly limestone or rendered buildings on the square. Its early twentieth-century design and detailing is articulated by the ashlar limestone dressings and other decorative features such as the tooled stone post box. The building was designed by the architect Harold G Leask (1882-1964) of the Office of Public Works, a noted architectural historian.*

## Doctor John Harrison Memorial Hall

The Square, Roscommon

1860 – 1870



### Description (NIAH)

*Detached three-bay single-cell gable-fronted former Presbyterian church with extension to rear, built in 1863, now in use as a museum. Pitched slate roof with rendered chimneystack and cast-iron rainwater goods. Ashlar front elevation with open bed pediment supported by quoin pilasters with channelled rustication. Roughcast-rendered side walls. Round-headed window openings with stone sills and timber paned windows. Chamfered cut stone openings to windows and door of front elevations. 'Star of David' window set in raised oculus above front door. Timber panelled double door. Building is set back from road with lawns to front, behind cast-iron gates with chamfered cut stone piers and cast-iron railings surmounting cut stone plinth.*

### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This former Presbyterian church, whose construction was funded by a Michael Sherra, is one of a number of buildings of high architectural quality, set around the square. The charming edifice and adjacent manse form a striking group, which displays highly-skilled stonework. The 'Star of David' window, which represents The Trinity, is particularly notable, while the cast-iron railings and gates complete the setting of this architecturally-significant building.*

## Roscommon Presbyterian Church

The Square, Roscommon

1840-1880



### Description (NIAH)

*Detached three-bay two-storey former Presbyterian manse, built c.1860, now in use as a guest house and restaurant, with projecting bay to north and modern three-storey extension to rear. Hipped slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles and ridge cresting and rendered chimneystacks with terracotta pots. Coursed dressed limestone walls to front elevation with rendered walls to other elevations. Square-headed timber sash windows with cut stone surrounds and tooled stone sills. uPVC windows to rear extension. Timber panelled door with stained glass overlight and cut stone surround accessed by limestone step and threshold. Building is set back from road and is bounded by cast-iron railings on limestone plinth. Tooled limestone gate piers with cast-iron gate.*

### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This pleasing design and detailing of this former Presbyterian manse make it a notable and positive addition to the streetscape. The cut stone façade, finely-tooled stone dressings and attractive cast-iron gates show that this house was constructed to complement the adjacent church, now in use as a museum.*

### James J. Harlow (Pair of houses)

The Square, Roscommon

1780-1820



#### Description (NIAH)

*Pair of terraced three-bay three-storey houses, built c. 1800, with shopfronts to ground floor and central integral carriage arch with single-storey return. Pitched slate and tiled roofs with rendered chimneystacks and cast-iron rainwater goods. Ruled-and-lined render to walls with continuous stone sill course to first floor windows and limestone plinths. Timber pilastered shopfronts with timber fascias and cornices. Round-headed openings with replacement timber doors and spider web fanlights. Timber and glazed doors to shopfronts with overlights. Segmental-headed integral carriage arch with timber battened double doors. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Terrace is street-fronted with southern house bounded by plinth wall surmounted by cast-iron railings.*

#### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This pair of classically-proportioned houses, situated on Main Street, occupies an important position in the heart of Roscommon town. The houses retain twelve-over-eight, six-over-six and six-over-three sash windows as well as timber pilastered shopfronts, which add character and charm to the buildings. The central integral carriage arch with its heavy battened doors is indicative of houses of this age. The intact nature of these structures makes them notable features within this streetscape.*



## House

The Square, Roscommon

1790-1810



### Description (NIAH)

*Terraced three-bay three-storey house, built c.1800, with 1850s shopfront to ground floor and three-storey return to rear. Pitched slated roof with rendered chimneystack and stucco cornice to eaves. Ruled-and-lined rendered walls with stucco quoins and window surrounds. Timber sash windows with stone sills and with window guard to ground floor. Round-headed block-and-start doorcase with keystone, trancom and gothic style fanlight and with timber panelled door. Timber shopfront to south bay with timber panelled double doors and display window. Building is street-fronted.*

### Appraisal (NIAH)

*This terraced house, facing onto the square, is in keeping with the architectural tone of the area. It is a handsome building and retains many features of note. The delicately-designed fanlight is a particularly attractive element and is complimented by the block-and-start doorway. The timber shopfront, with slim pilasters and double doors with bolection-moulded panels is a fine example of Victorian design. The house is part of an architecturally-impressive terrace with a prominent street-front location.*