

Quay Area Neighbourhood Action Area Plan 2004-2009



The view from Crocketstown looking south along the tidal River Moy



Prepared for Ballina Town Council – December 2004

Quay Area Neighbourhood Action Area Plan 2004-2009

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View over Moy estuary from
Crocketstown

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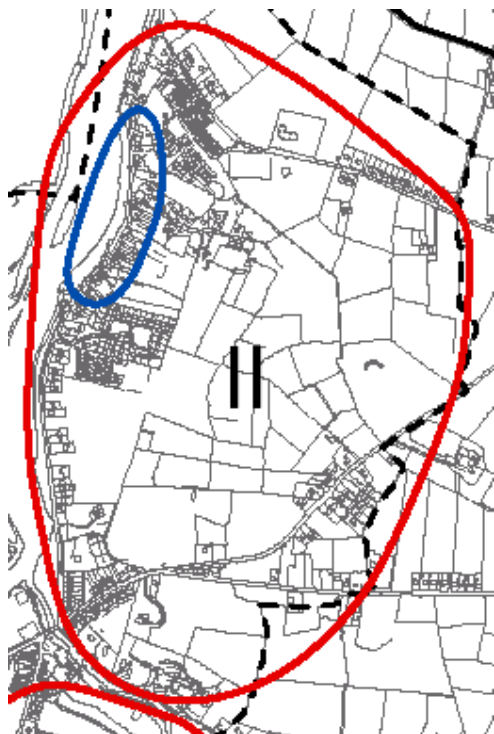
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ballina and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009 was adopted by Ballina Town Council and by Mayo County Council on 25th June 2003. The plan noted that some of the new housing areas in Ballina are in discreet locations, sometimes physically separated from each other and in some cases quite distant from the town centre. They are often poorly provided with local services and, whilst most services will be provided in the town centre, it is appropriate that basic services such as local shopping, open space etc should be available locally.



Neighbourhood Areas Map from Ballina & Environs Development Plan, 2003-2009

The plan therefore identified five such neighbourhoods for which Action Area Plans would be compiled (see Section 2.1.1.3 and objective RD4 of the Ballina and Environs Development Plan 2003-2009). The second of these was described as the Sligo/Enniscrone Road Areas. It is approximately defined by the Sligo, Enniscrone and Creggs Roads, which define a rough triangle. This Action Area Plan has been prepared in fulfillment of that objective and will be effective for the remaining period of the Ballina Plan (i.e. 2004-2009). The location of the area is identified on the accompanying Map No. 1.1 and is referred to in this document as "The Quay" area.

Its boundaries depart from the aforementioned roads in two respects. On the western side, it includes the strip between the Enniscrone Road and the Moy so that the river rather than the road defines this boundary. To the east, the extreme corner of the lands between the Sligo and Creggs road (IDA lands) has been excluded. These lands are outside the town boundary and are therefore also beyond the remit of Ballina Town Council. In any case, these lands are likely to be developed independently.



The Ice House

The Quay Area was identified as requiring an Action Area Plan for a number of reasons. The Town Plan had this to say: *"This is the most clearly defined of the neighbourhoods. It is separated from the rest of the town by the Bunree River across which there is but one narrow bridge. It is also the most distant from the services available in the town centre. Here there are significant new housing developments and much residentially zoned land. The Quay lends itself as a suitable location to provide a neighbourhood centre as it is centrally located and has some existing commercial activity. This area requires the provision of a public park, centrally located within the new housing areas."*

This Action Area Plan is therefore intended to achieve a number of objectives:

1. It will identify, and provide an outline for, the creation of a neighbourhood centre at Crocketstown.
2. It will provide an overall scheme for the as yet undeveloped residentially zoned lands to ensure a good standard of design and layout.
3. It will provide for the development of a new park within these lands.
4. It will provide for appropriate traffic and pedestrian circulation within the area. This will seek to provide safe and convenient movement, particularly pedestrian movement, between the existing and proposed housing areas and the proposed park and proposed neighbourhood centre at Crocketstown.



Crocketstown –
approaching the proposed neighbourhood centre.

In this document, the overall area of the plan (as defined on map no. 3.2) is referred to as the Quay Area. The central area where the proposed neighbourhood centre is to be located and incorporating the river frontage down as far as the Ice House, is referred to as Crocketstown.

This Action Area Plan was prepared by Ballina Town Council to act as guidance for direction of future development in the study area.

Ballina & Environs Development Plan 2003 - 2009



Ballina Town Council
Mayo County Council

Ballina Town Plan



Existing retail/commercial at Crocketstown

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Ballina & Environs Development Plan

2.1.1 Objectives

Objectives contained in the Ballina Development Plan that will need to be addressed in development of the area are as follows:

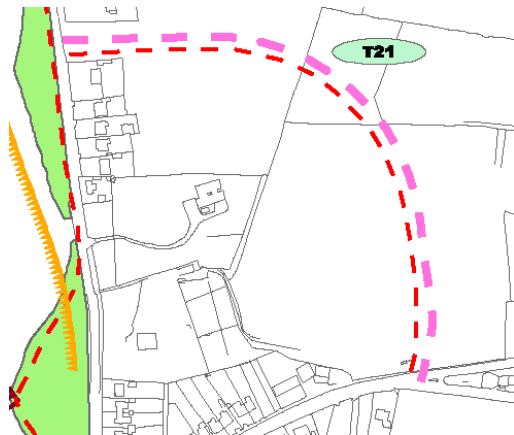
Residential Development:

RD 4 To prepare Action Area Plans for each of the five identified residential neighbourhoods identified by the Ballina & Environs Development Plan.

RD5 To identify a location for a new public park in the residential neighbourhood bounded by the Sligo Road, Enniscrone Road and Creggs Road and to attach conditions to residential planning permissions in this area requiring the payment of financial contributions towards the acquisition and development of such a park.

Retail/Commercial Development:

RC3 Facilitate local shopping facilities (particularly convenience goods) in the residential neighbourhoods identified in Section 2.1 (*Residential Developments*) and in locations identified by the Plan (includes for neighbourhood centre in Quay Area).



Relief Road indicated in the Ballina Town Plan

Transportation:

- T14** Establish cycle lanes on all major traffic routes leading into town.
- T21** Develop Relief roads as indicated by the Plan and indicated by Map No. 2.1 of this Action Area Plan (Quay Area Objectives).

Heritage:

- HT1** Prepare conservation plans for ... Crocketstown conservation areas. These plans should seek to:
- Understand the significance of the area.
 - To find the issues which propose a threat to the significance of the area.
 - Advance appropriate policies.
- HT4** To commence a programme of placing utilities underground within the architectural conservation areas
- HT6** Ensure that new development in the vicinity of the river front satisfactorily addresses the river in terms of design and contributes to the attractiveness and vitality of the river side areas in terms of use mix.



Terrace of houses at Crocketstown



The Ballina / Enniscrone Road, looking north from Crocketstown

Recreation Areas and Leisure Facilities:

- RL 6** To develop a pedestrian walkway through the town along the River Moy...
- RL 7** To provide a pedestrian bridge over the Bunree River at the Town Park.
- RL 12** To improve the appearance of the approach roads to the town.



Angling on the River Moy is a valuable tourism resource

Tourism:

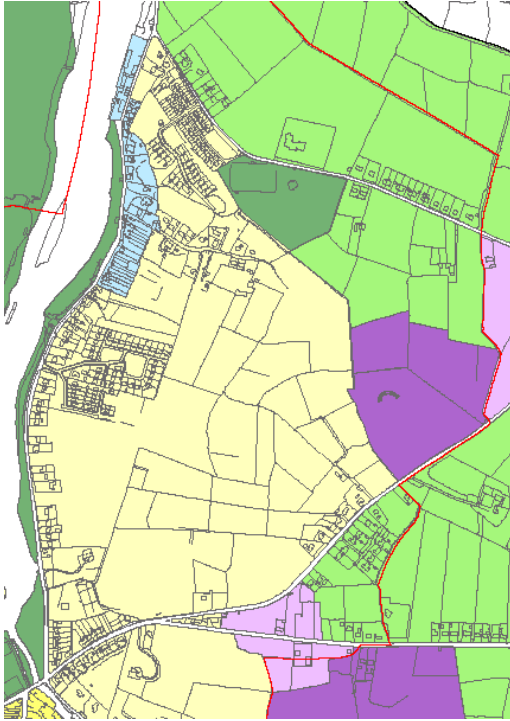
- To protect and develop the Moy Fishery and to facilitate its development as an angling, amenity and tourist resource.
- To encourage the development of tourist related products at The Quay/Crocketstown.

Water & Sewage

- WS6** Install the connection of Crocketstown/Quay area under River Moy through Belleek Woods to town treatment works at Belleek.

2.1.2 Land Use Zoning

There are 6 land use zonings for the Quay Area contained in the Ballina & Environs Development Plan 2003 – 2009. These are as follows:



Zoning Map from Ballina & Environs Development Plan, 2003-2009

R2 – Residential (Low Density)

“To provide for low to medium residential densities”

C2 – Commercial (Edge of Centre)

“To provide for commercial, office and mixed land uses”

RL – Recreation/Leisure

“To provide for recreational amenity, open space and leisure facilities”

I – Industrial

“To provide for industry and employment”

IC – Industrial/Commercial

“To provide for industry, employment and retail warehouse/warehouse/bulk goods outlets”

A – Agricultural

“To preserve rural character and provide for agricultural development”

2.2 Conservation/Environmental Parameters



Crocketstown viewed from the east bank of the river



Aerial view showing recent residential development on central lands of study area

2.2.1 Natural Heritage:

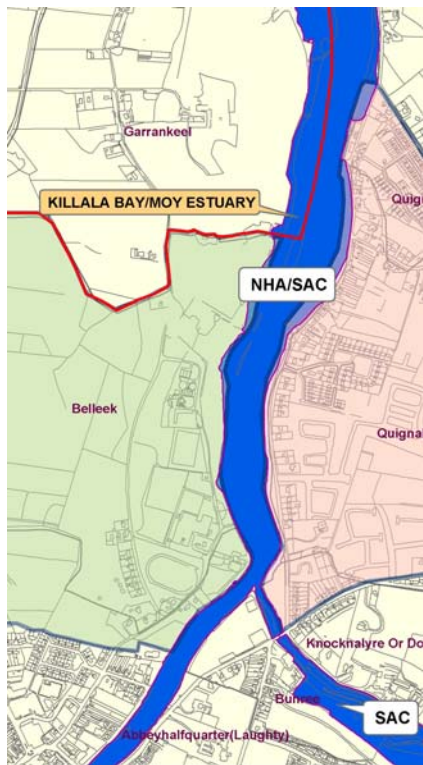
The landscape of the Quay area plays an important role in defining the characteristics of the Quay study area. The strongest landscape feature is the River Moy, which is tidal at this location, where it meets Killala Bay. The wooded foreshore of the opposite bank of the river at Belleek is also a defining feature of the landscape when viewed from the Quayside in particular.

The topography of the study area is important both in terms of defining the existing development pattern and future development in the Quay area. This topography is illustrated by Map No. 2.3. The higher ground shown to the centre of the study area is as yet largely undeveloped, where traditionally development has occurred along the lower riverside land between the Bunree Bridge and Crocketstown. In recent times, due to increased demand for housing in the area, a significant amount of the more centrally located and previously undeveloped land in the study area has been developed for residential purposes, in line with the land use zoning.

The higher residential ground above 20m is as yet largely undeveloped and these lands afford stunning views of the surrounding landscape, including Killala Bay, the River Moy, Ballina town, Belleek estate and Nephin Mountain. It is important to make the most of these views for the future amenity value of the study area and consequently this Action Area Plan proposes a location for a new park on these elevated residential lands. Any future residential development in this area should pay regard to the amenity value of these views.

There are other elevated, non-residential lands along the Sligo Road to the east of the study area, although they command less expansive views of the surrounding landscape and due to their current zoning as IC (to provide for industry, employment and retail warehouse/warehouse/bulk goods outlets) and A (to preserve rural character and provide for agricultural development) they are less likely to be central to the future development of the Quay area neighbourhood. It is however important that any development on these lands will be well integrated into the landscape and will not conflict with the visual amenity of the area.

A number of strong hedgerows exist on the lands and those considered worthy of protection have been indicated on the Proposals Map No. 3.2.



Killala Bay / Moy Estuary SAC

Environmental designations applicable to this study area include a National Heritage Area (NHA), containing habitats or species of national importance. Also included in this study area are two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are areas of interest containing habitats or species of European significance. This latter environmental designation is particularly important and was established under the habitats directive at EU level by EC Directive 92/43/EEC.

These are:

- The Moy Estuary NHA/SAC
These designations apply to the Moy estuary along the entire length of the River Moy frontage in the study area.
- The Moy catchment SAC
This designation applies to the Bunree River, which is a tributary of the River Moy itself and flows under the Bunree bridge and enters the main river estuary at the most southern part of the study area.

Any development proposals for such areas, or likely to impact on such areas, will be subject to assessment of implications.



Creteboom



Icehouse



Bunree Bridge

2.2.2 Built Heritage

There are three structures specifically listed on the Record of Protected Structures, which are in this study area. These are as follow:

1. Creteboom
2. Bunree Bridge
3. Icehouse

These structures contribute strongly to the built character of the town, with the Bunree Bridge signaling the entrance to the study area when approached from the town centre. The Icehouse comes into view on the approach to Crocketstown, as the full view of the Moy estuary and Crocketstown appears. Finally the Creteboom provides an indication of times past for Ballina, when it was an important port, and provides a sense of historical heritage to the study area. These protected structures are identified by the Quay Area Objectives Map No. 2.1 and their conservation status must be respected by any proposed developments in their immediate vicinity.

The Architectural Conservation Area designation on the Crocketstown area itself is intended by the Ballina town plan to conserve the architectural integrity of the historical core of the study area. This designation will assist and strengthen the shape and form of future development of Crocketstown as the neighbourhood centre of the study area.

2.3 Developable Land Survey and Demography

A survey of overall land areas was carried out with the primary purpose of establishing the remaining amount of developable residential land in the study area. The results of this survey were then used to estimate the present population of the study area and forecast the likely population capacity of the study area. The results of this survey are shown by tables 2.1 and 2.2 (below).

These tables demonstrate that the Quay Area neighbourhood has an existing population of approximately 2,794 with capacity to accommodate an additional population of approximately 2,122.

This forecast population growth increases the necessity for preparation of this Action Area Plan, to achieve well structured and planned growth.

Zoning Objectives	Area (ha)
A - Agricultural	13.56
C2 - Commercial (Edge of Centre)	4.59
IC - Industrial/Commercial	11.87
R2 - Residential (Low Density)	87.15
RL - Recreation & Leisure	9.67
Quay Area - TOTAL	126.83

Table 2.1 Quay Area Lands by Zoning Objective

Zoning Objectives	Area (ha)	Developed (ha)	Undeveloped	Population	Pop. Prediction p. Undeveloped
R2 - Residential (Low Density)	87.15	49.53	37.62	2,095	1,591

Table 2.2 Quay Area Neighbourhood Population Estimate / Projection

2.4 Infrastructure

Infrastructure provision for the study area, both existing and planned, will be sufficient to accommodate the future population growth of the area.

Roads will be developed in line with the objectives of the Ballina Development Plan (as indicated by Proposals Map No. 3.2) and in line with the requirements of the neighbourhood to achieve good traffic circulation.

3 Proposals

3.1 Crocketstown Neighbourhood Centre

3.1.1 Role of Crocketstown

In local parlance, 'The Quay' and 'Crocketstown' are usually interchangeable terms. 'The Quay Area' as mentioned above, will be used to refer to the entire study area; 'Crocketstown' will refer to the area from the Icehouse north as far as the Moy Partnership and Sea Rescue sites; 'Proposed Village Centre' will refer to the Moy Partnership and Sea Rescue sites and 'The Periphery' will refer to the area surrounding the Proposed New Village Centre, between it and the study boundary.



Moy Partnership waterside buildings



The Quay side

Crocketstown is a very attractive location with some existing basic services – two pubs (one with a restaurant) and a local shop. There is also some employment in the Moy Partnership premises along the river front. The architectural, historical and amenity attributes of Crocketstown mean that this is the natural Village centre for the neighbourhood and this Action Area Plan aims to consolidate and strengthen this role to the mutual benefit of the neighbourhood, Ballina town and visitors to the town. This will require the provision of a new village centre. It is proposed that this will be located within the riverside site of Moy Partnership and the adjoining lands of the Sea Rescue facility. Improved circulation – particularly improved connections between the Proposed Village Centre and the existing and proposed residential developments - will be important as such connections are not good at present. Parking will also need to be addressed because this is limited at present.

In addition, proposals are well advanced for the development of a marina at this location. It is envisaged that the marina and neighbourhood centre will complement each other, each bringing business and activity to the other.

In general mixed commercial and residential uses will be encouraged at this location

3.1.2 DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The distinct character of the Quay Area relates to that central part of its development, the area around the small harbour often referred to locally as Crocketstown. This area is visually inscribed by the River Moy to the west, the Icehouse to the south, the Creteboom to the north and the ribbon of buildings facing onto the river to the east (P1 - P4).



A sharp slope to the east of the Quay area forms a strong border

Crocketstown has something of the feel of a coastal fishing village and its special character relates to a number of factors:

- The River Moy is particularly attractive in the Quay area: gently widening and curving as it flows north toward the sea.
- The character of the Moy in the immediate area is further defined by its tidal nature; its rise and fall creates visual interest, particularly along the river edge.
- A collection of small boats moored in the river maintains a sense of the Quay being a working harbour.
- The undisturbed, mature green belt on the western side of the Moy forms a distinctive boarder to the west.
- There is no one predominant style or type of building within Crocketstown – they range from a terrace of late 19th century dwellings to the south to a loose grouping of houses on larger 'green' sites close to the site of the Proposed Village Centre. Despite the lack of architectural uniformity, however, the generally small scale of building gives Crocketstown a sense of architectural consistency.
- The sharp sloping of the landscape behind the buildings located within Crocketstown forms a strong boarder to the east of the village.



Generic, suburban type development, showing poor landscaping and little sense of place

The area referred to above as The Periphery encircles Crocketstown on all sides, stretching as far as the boundaries of the defined study area. Until quite recently this area had a rural character forming a natural separation between the Quay and the outer areas of Ballina; however, due to the fact that a large tract of this area has been zoned residential, increasing amounts of development have occurred so that, for the most part, the hinterland serving Crocketstown is taking on a typical suburban appearance.

3.1.3 CROCKETSTOWN

3.1.3.1 Issues to be Addressed:

Some of the elements that define the character of Crocketstown have been described above. However, as a 'village centre' to the greater Quay area, Crocketstown is failing in a number of aspects. These are principally as follows:

3.1.3.2 Lack of focus/village centre:

After what is quite a dramatic and very attractive approach along the Enniscrone Road, visitors to the Quay arrive at a pleasant area formed by the gates to Moy Harbour Development Partnership and the adjacent slip way. However, with the exception of two bars and a small shop, there are no other facilities or amenities in place to generate the sense of having arrived at an urban centre. Therefore, while Crocketstown can be said to have overall sense of character, it is currently lacking the type of focused development that is normally associated with village settlement.

3.1.3.3 Pedestrian Activity:

While much new residential development is taking place in the study area a comparatively short distance away, very little provision is being made for the residents of these areas to reach Crocketstown by foot. Therefore, the only viable course for residents is a circuitous route by car. This characteristic – the absence of pedestrian activity coupled with the sense that all visitors arrive by car – is detrimental to the ambience of Crocketstown.

3.1.3.4 Lack of Architectural Distinctiveness - Moy Partnership Buildings:



Moy Harbour buildings

The Moy Partnership Development comprises some renovated stone buildings as well as a new structure housing small commercial enterprises located in an enclave, separated from the rest of the village by a stone pillared gate. In general terms, the type of development that has taken place so far (while attractive in places) is very small scale and lacking the kind of impact and intensity required to make it a village hub for the wider area. Furthermore the structures within the enclave have no architectural treatment onto the Enniscrone Road, which increases the sense of separation from the rest of Crocketstown. With the exception of a small seating area, landscaping within the Harbour enclave is not designed to attract and maintain visitors.

3.1.3.5 'Sea Rescue' Buildings:



Sea Rescue Buildings

A number of quite large (by comparison to those around them) industrial/maritime buildings are located in another fenced enclosure directly north of the Moy Partnership enclosure, bounded by the river to the west and the Enniscrone Road to the east. While there is some activity taking place within these buildings, typically the site is not intensively used. The buildings are unattractive and, located as they are on a site with much potential, are detrimental to the overall character of Crocketstown. It is expected that these will be demolished.

3.1.4 Proposals for future Development of Crocketstown

3.1.4.1 Proposed Village Centre

The Retail Planning Guidelines define a Local/Neighbourhood Centre as follows:

“Small groups of shops, typically comprising a newsagent, small supermarket / general grocery store, sub-post office and other small shops of a local nature serving a small, localised catchment population.”

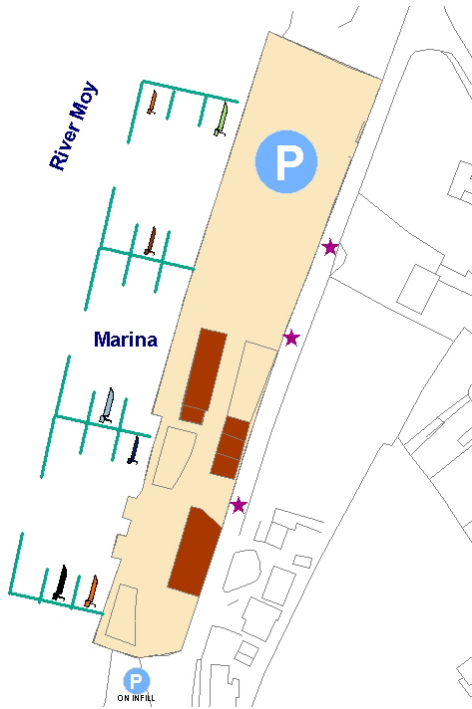
In this instance, it is envisaged that the proposed new Neighbourhood Centre will offer more than just retail services, with strong natural amenity attributes and complimentary tourism facilities such as restaurants and bars. In order to create a village centre for the Central District of the study area, it is proposed that substantial, coordinated development should take place on the ‘Moy Partnership’ and ‘Sea Rescue’ sites.

The overall concept comprises four elements.

1. The southern part of the lands will be developed for commercial purposes, thereby extending the existing facilities (shop and pubs) at Crocketstown northwards and extending onto the riverside of the road. This would approximately correspond to the curtilage of Moy Resources. The design and layout of this area would make use of the best of the existing buildings on site and open the riverfront up to public access. Development along the river front should make the best of the attractiveness of the location involving uses such as coffee shops.



Larger buildings on the Sea Rescue site



Proposed Village Centre and Marina

2. A marina would be developed along the river frontage of this site. It is envisaged that neighbourhood centre and marina will generate a significant level of interaction each with the other with users of one also making use of the other.
3. Lands further to the north, roughly corresponding to the Sea Rescue site, would be developed for car parking to serve both marina and neighbourhood centre. It is expected that the existing buildings on this site would be demolished.
4. An additional area of car parking would be created at the southern end of these lands by way of infill of a small area at the river's edge. Such parking would be more conveniently located to serve the existing commercial outlets as well, perhaps, as any commercial activity in the Ice House.

3.1.4.2 Pedestrian Routes

A pedestrian access already exists connecting Rathmeel Lawns and the Crocket Bar. This route (currently no more than a lane) is in poor condition and does not encourage casual strolling. This route will be investigated with a view to making it safe and more suitable as a pedestrian route to and from Crocketstown and the proposed new Village Centre. Improvements will of course be subject to property rights

In considering future development in Crocketstown and the Quay Area generally, more pedestrian routes should be created to ensure greater use of the Proposed Village Centre without an over reliance on cars. The development of a series of pedestrian routes from the peripheral lands – the residential lands on the higher ground to the east leading down to the Proposed Village Centre and to the waterfront would be a major addition to the amenities of the area, would improve interconnectivity between housing and both the village centre and the riverside amenities. They would be analogous to the “Slips” in Kilkenny city that lead downhill from the main street to the Nore.

The area will also benefit from the provision of improved pedestrian and cycle routes along the sea front from Bunree out as far as the proposed neighbourhood centre, subject to constraints such as road width etc.

3.1.4.3 Tourism & Boating/Marina

A marina will be developed along the river front at the proposed neighbourhood centre.



The Harbour area looking north towards the creteboom

Tourism facilities will be provided in the Proposed Village Centre. These will include facilities discussed above, including café/restaurant/bar facilities along the waterfront and retail facilities as well as information on the valuable natural heritage of the River Moy.

The provision of a marina will be a major addition to the tourism and leisure facilities of the town and the North Mayo area. It will bring life and vitality into this important and attractive location.

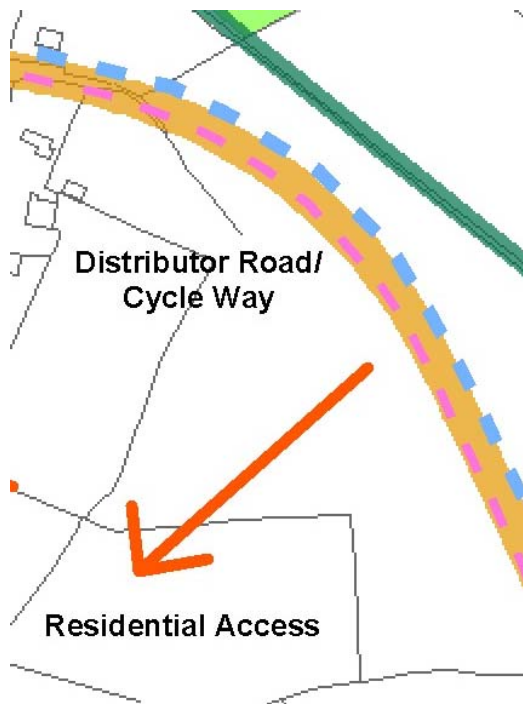
In the long term, it is preferable that any major re-development of the Ice House will incorporate two main principles:

- 1) The protection of a building listed by the Record of protected Structures.
- 2) An element of publicly accessible development, which will contribute to tourism facilities in the area as well as allow greater numbers to appreciate this protected structure.



The slipway at Crocketstown

It is considered that the Ice House and its surrounding lands will be appropriate for some form/combination of commercial, residential and recreational development. It is further considered that where such a development proposal is not compatible with the Recreation/Leisure zoning of this property, but is considered appropriate by the Council, then a material contravention of the Ballina Plan should be considered.



3.2 Circulation and Transport

3.2.1 Access Points

There are a number of existing housing estates within the area. In addition, several more have been granted permission and are at present under construction. These have their own individual access points off the Sligo (N59) and Enniscrone Roads, as well as one off the Creggs Road. The only co-ordinated road provision is a through route that connects from the Sligo Road to the Enniscrone roads through the Quignalecka and Riverside estates (Distributor Road no. 1). Most of this road is already built. The Council own the land for the remaining section and this will be completed as part of this plan.



Enniscrone Road into Crocketstown with buildings on Sea
Rescue site backing onto the road

The Town Development Plan (See Objectives Map No. 2.1, Objective T21) provides for a second through route (Distributor Road no. 2). This and the above noted Distributor Road no. 1 are both indicated on the Quay Area Proposals Map No. 3.2. The second distributor route also leads from the Sligo Road through to the Enniscrone road. The remaining undeveloped residentially zoned lands on either side of this proposed road will take access from it rather than from more individual access points off the Sligo and Enniscrone Roads. It shall also provide access to the industrial/commercial lands (IC). The development of the lands affected shall only be permitted on the basis of provision for this road and on the basis of access off this road.

The Sligo road is a busy road that has not been improved at this point. It is poorly aligned, both vertically and horizontally. It is of substandard width and lacks hard shoulders, footpaths, public lighting etc. The creation of this new access point will therefore need to go hand-in-hand with improvements to the road. The Council in consultation with the NRA will investigate an extension to the speed limit.

3.2.2 Pedestrian Routes

A network of pedestrian routes is required throughout the residentially zoned area of the plan. The purpose of these routes is:

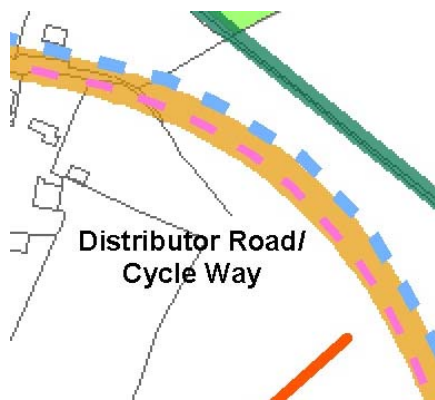
- To provide convenient and safe pedestrian access from the new and existing housing developments to the proposed new park (see section 3.5.1 below).
- To provide convenient and safe pedestrian access from the new and existing housing developments to the river front and pedestrian and cycle routes along the Moy river bank.
- To provide convenient and safe pedestrian access from the new and existing housing developments to the proposed village centre at Crocketstown.

These routes are shown on the Proposals Map No. 3.2 attached. It is expected that the careful integration of housing schemes with these proposals will maximize the amenities of the future housing developments and create in this area a highly desirable residential location making the best possible use of the proposed park, of the amenity of the Moy River and of the proposed commercial centre at Crocketstown.

It is also the Council's intention to investigate the possibility of providing a connection between the amenity facility of Belleek and the proposed new Village Centre at Crocketstown. Any subsequent proposal for such a bridge will be located to join up with identified pedestrian desire lines, which will connect with the proposed Neighbourhood Centre for the Killala Road study area and residential estates for the Quay Area Neighbourhood. This proposed bridge has very important interconnectivity, amenity and tourism potential for both the Killala Road and Quay Area Neighbourhoods.

3.2.3 Proposed New Distributor Roads

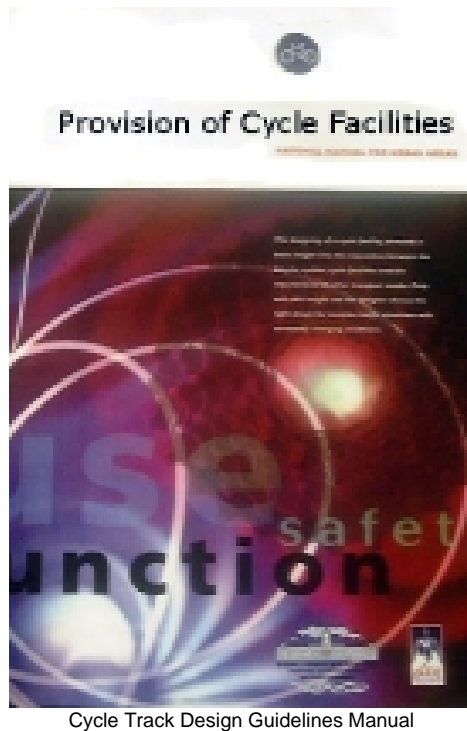
The proposed new distributor road will link the Sligo Road to Crocketstown, through as yet undeveloped lands in the north of the study area.



At its western end, this route makes use of an existing substandard roadway leading down to the riverfront at Crocketstown. There is scope for considerable improvement to this road both within the existing roadside bounds as well as with the acquisition of adjoining lands to provide for a suitable standard. It is expected however, that it will take some time before a full standard can be achieved along all of this section. It will therefore be necessary to provide some traffic calming along this section especially as it is envisaged that this route will also have a pedestrian and cycling function.

3.2.4 Cycle Lanes

As noted above, cycle lanes are proposed on either side of the new distributor road. There is no need to make provision within individual housing schemes.



Cycle Track Design Guidelines Manual

The other locations where cycle lanes will be developed are along the Sligo and Enniscrone Roads. The Sligo Road is a very busy national route and one of the principle entrances to the town. With the development of these lands, it will also provide access to much of the residential and industrial developments within the Action Area and also on the adjoining IDA lands. Improvements to this road will be required and these will include the provision of a cycle lane out to the town boundary.

Design of cycle lanes should have regard to the Cycle Track Design Guidelines Manual "Provision of Cycle Facilities" (Department of the Environment and Local Government & Dublin Transportation Office, 1997).

The Enniscrone Road is of great amenity value as it follows the banks of the Moy and views of the river and woods opposite are available along most of its length. It also connects to the Proposed Village Centre at Crocketstown. For both of these reasons a cycle route will be a valuable addition along this road. Where available width does not permit the provision of a separate cycle route, traffic calming measures will be investigated in order to make the road cycle friendly.

3.2.5 Traffic Calming

The new residential areas shall be designed around the cul de sac principle without through traffic. Layouts shall avoid long straight roads that encourage speed.



Traffic calming measures will be investigated along the Enniscrone road as far as the Proposed Village Centre. This route, as well as serving a through vehicular function, also serves as an important amenity and it is envisaged that this will be enhanced with the development of improved pedestrian facilities and the provision of a cycle lane.

3.3 Residential

3.3.1 Existing

Recent development in much of the study area has a typical suburban residential character. A number of planning issues have arisen in relation to this ongoing development trend in Ballina and some of these have been mentioned already. There is a lack of interconnectivity between neighbouring housing estates, where each is built successively as a nucleated estate with little or no respect paid to interconnectivity, either for motorists, cyclists or pedestrians. This leads to decreased sustainability of transport patterns, where neighbours have to travel farther to interact, often requiring car transport to travel what should only be a short walk if pedestrian interconnectivity had been addressed at planning stage.



Typical suburban type development in the Quay Area

This gives rise to increasing car dependency, which in turn will encourage residents of the study area to drive into town to avail of better retail facilities for the purposes of everyday shopping. This in turn, undermines the health of Crocketstown as a neighbourhood centre with the ability to provide for the everyday retail needs of the study area population.

Residential design in the study area has also thus far made poor use of the natural and visual amenities of the area. This is now becoming critical, particularly as much of the undeveloped lands to date are located on higher lands with good views. New developments should make the best use of these.

Left over space is often incorporated into the developments as amenity space but much has little amenity value.

3.3.2 Proposals

Planning applications for new residential developments shall incorporate better interconnectivity for pedestrian, cyclist and motorised transport. This will lead to increasing sustainability of transport patterns with less dependency on cars and better connections to the village centre.

With these emerging patterns and the development of a new village centre at the Quay, residents of the study area will be better serviced at a local level and will be less dependent on town for their everyday shopping requirements. This will strengthen the consumer base for the services provided at the new village centre.



View of the cathedral and Nephin from undeveloped lands in the Quay area

In order to better address the natural amenities of the area, future estate design will have increased regard to street, amenity and housing layout so as to create a better future environment for future residents of such housing. The area is blessed with fine views of the town, of Nephin Mountain, the Nephin Beg mountain range, the Moy and Belleek and of other surrounding lands and features. New roads should address such views so that they enhance the new developments rather than being lost from view.

To avoid inefficient use of space, future residential developments will better integrate with adjoining estates in layout and use of open space and interconnectivity. Residential development in the vicinity of the proposed new park will ensure good pedestrian connectivity between the developments and the park, with a view to creation of a network of interconnecting paths that will integrate developments in the study area and provide alternative access routes to the proposed new village centre. Housing developments adjacent undeveloped lands will face the adjoining greenfield lands.

Residential planning applications should provide for a mix of house types, variation in house size and design and a visually interesting environment. They should seek to exploit the best features of their sites, especially the fine views available in this area.

3.4 Commercial/Industrial Lands (IC Zone)

The Action Area includes an area zoned for commercial/industrial uses (IC). This is an entirely Greenfield site. The purpose of this zone is *“To provide for industry, employment and retail warehouse/warehouse/bulk goods outlets”* (Ballina Development plan, Section 2.13.2). The zone is:

- *“To provide for retail and other warehousing.*
- *To provide for manufacturing and office based industry.*
- *To provide for bulk retail development.”* (Section 2.13.6).



Access arrangements have been detailed above. It shall come off the proposed distributor road no. 2 and provision for this road shall be made where it crosses the lands in question. Otherwise, these lands shall largely develop on a self-contained basis, separated from the new residential developments to the west by the proposed new road and by the retention of the existing hedgerow along this boundary (See Section 3.5 below).

Land at the front (roadside) boundary will be required in connection with improvements to the Sligo Road (N59).

Development within this area shall be quite prominent being beside one of the main approach roads into Ballina and also adjoining a residential area. For these reasons, development shall be expected to be of a high architectural standard with new buildings addressing the Sligo Road and with quality hard and soft landscaping, including the provision of a good quality wall or railings along the road frontage.

As permitted in the Development Plan (Section 3.8.4), plot ratio maximum shall be 1.0 and maximum site coverage 80%.



3.5 Open Space and Amenity

3.5.1 Proposed New Park

The Ballina Development Plan (Section 3.1.4) states:

Parks and playing fields will be provided at a rate of one hectare per 1000 population the provision of which is to be funded from the open space element of development contributions.



The view through mature hedgerow on the south of the Quay Area, looking south with Nephin in the background

The study area includes a large block of undeveloped residentially zoned land extending to approximately 37.62ha. It is considered that this block should include one large public park, over and above the normal provision of open space within individual housing estates. The location of this park is shown on Map No. 3.2. The area of this park will be approximately 3ha, which in view of the projected population, is considered adequate for the population of the study area and will provide amenity for the population of Ballina as well as the residents of the neighbourhood and will also serve as an amenity attraction for visitors to the town. This location was selected for the following reasons:

- It is centrally located within the residential area and will therefore be convenient to residents.
- It comprises elevated lands with some superb views of the town, Nephin Mountain, the Moy and Belleek woodlands.
- It has a generally south-westerly aspect and will therefore benefit from sun, particularly evening sun.

The location chosen has the potential to provide the area and the town with an exceptionally valuable, public amenity. Planning applications for lands in this area must provide for this park.

Housing estate design shall provide for the following:

- A good interface between park and housing. In particular, houses shall not back on to the park.
- Adjoining housing developments shall not compromise the views and other natural amenities of the park.
- Estates shall be designed and integrated to provide convenient pedestrian routes linking the park with housing.

In addition to the above park, the normal open space provision, in accordance with Development Plan standards, shall be provided within individual housing estates. In the case of estates adjoining the main park, some reduction in provision of open space within the estate may be allowed.

3.5.2 The Moy Banks

The other major amenity of this area is the Moy. The Enniscrone Road runs along the river's bank with fine views of both the river and of Belleek Woods opposite. The Development Plan includes the following objectives:

- **RL 6** *To develop a pedestrian walkway through the town along the River Moy. It is also an objective to improve existing riverside walks.*
- **RL 7** *To provide a pedestrian bridge over the Bunree River at the Town Park.*



The Bunree River

The proposed bridge over the Bunree has the potential to link to a pedestrian route along the river leading from the town Park to Crocketstown. Such a route is shown on the Proposals Map No. 3.2.



Indicative footbridge to be developed across Bunree River and connecting pedestrian route

The approximate location of the pedestrian bridge, as shown by Proposals Map No. 3.2, is indicative and the precise location will depend on detailed site investigations. A pedestrian route will be provided from the existing town park, over this bridge and across the open space on the northern side of the Bunree river, thence along the river bank extending as far as the proposed village centre at Crocketstown.

New housing developments in the area should also provide for quality pedestrian connections to this pedestrian route along the Moy. A series of interlinking routes are shown in the Action Area Plan proposals. Between them, these connections, both to the park and to the Moy, will ensure that all housing developments in this area has access to these valuable amenities that is direct, safe and attractive.

3.5.3 Preservation of Trees and Hedgerows

This is a minor issue in this Action Area Plan. There are few trees of significance within the residentially zoned area and most of the existing field boundaries consist of dry stone walls or hedges of no great consequence. It is not considered appropriate to demand the retention of these in the development of this area. There are however three hedges of significant value and importance that are to be retained. These are shown on the Proposals Map No. 3.2. They are:



Mature hedgerow in Quay Area

1. The hedgerow that defines the north-east boundary of the residentially zoned lands separating them from the open space and Industrial/Commercial (IC) lands beyond. This is a fine hedgerow in very good condition and will, in particular, provide a buffer between the residential lands and the industrial/commercial (IC) lands.
2. The hedgerow along the southern boundary of the undeveloped residentially zoned lands, beyond which is the new Quignalecka residential estate. This hedge is intact, is again in very good condition and is of significant amenity value.
3. The hedgerow just west and south of Quay Lane is good quality and mature hedgerow of significance warranting protection.

All of the above hedges shall therefore be retained.

3.6 Financial Contributions

In addition to the council's normal financial contribution requirements, special contributions will be levied against residential applications within the area of the Action Plan. These shall contribute towards the road objectives and open space and amenity objectives specified in this plan. These include the following:

- The construction of the proposed new Distributor Road no. 2 leading from the Sligo Road to the Crocketstown Road, including associated cycle ways, footpaths, lighting, landscaping etc.
- The creation of the proposed new park, including purchase of the necessary lands.
- The provision of the proposed cycle ways and pedestrian facilities, including the proposed footbridge over the Bunree River.
- The provision of traffic calming measures along the Enniscrone Road, Quay Lane and other necessary locations.

Financial contributions will be sought from developments within the Industrial/Commercial zone (IC) towards the provision of the proposed Distributor Road no. 2, towards improvements of the Sligo Road and the provision of a cycle lane along the Sligo Road.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The preparation of this Action Area Plan is a requirement of the Ballina Town and Environs Development Plan which in turn is a statutorily binding document issued under the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Action Area Plan therefore comes with the force and authority of the Town Plan and will be obligatory on developers seeking planning permission within this area. All applicants should therefore consider its requirements during the preparation of a new planning application.

It is intended that the proposals contained within this document will help to achieve a high standard of development that maximizes the potential of this area to the benefit of future residents and businesses and of the town as a whole.