

Heritage led Regeneration

Derry City Council Area

May 2010



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Inside the Walled City

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Introduction

Londonderry/Derry is a city whose very name is a matter of political debate. This reflects a complex history where the relative powers of two ‘communities’ have changed and evolved over time. It is a reminder that retaining and celebrating heritage can sometimes be fraught with political difficulty.

However, In recent years the city’s built heritage has come increasingly to the fore as a potential catalyst for its economic and social regeneration. A number of separate initiatives have been instigated which seek to utilise this potential. As a background to the recent visit of the UK Heritage Chief Executives this booklet was prepared to summarise the city’s history and report on the following current initiatives:

- The targeting of the historic walled city as a key tourism draw to Northern Ireland (p13-17)
- The utilisation of heritage as a catalyst to help redevelop an urban site as large as the original walled city (p19)
- The development and improvement of conservation area protections and guidance (p23)
- The targeting of a group of heritage repair schemes to stimulate the wider development of an area (p25).

- The independent development of heritage assets in a way which compliments the wider civic initiatives (p9,p11& p27)
- How the city is seeking to develop this momentum (p29)

Though NIEA Built Heritage has been involved in much of this work contributing £1.5 million towards the repair of historic buildings in the last 12 years and £600k towards the conservation of historic monuments, with a total annual grant aid budget of £3.1 million, we have been relatively small financial players. The Agency has, therefore, put time and effort into contributing to civic discussions and partnerships to ensure that the importance and potential of this resource is well promoted and appreciated.

‘Almost £33 million of public funding has now been spent or earmarked for heritage projects or closely connected works.’



The 'Island' of Derry

Grianan of Ailech

Before looking at the city however its effective predecessor in nearby County Donegal is worthy of mention. The ringfort on top of Greenan Hill is a site of great architectural and archaeological interest. With direct road access it has great tourism potential and is a common excursion for any visitor to the nearby city.

Grianan is a cashel or stone ring fort which overlooks Derry as a reminder of the area's ancient past. Its origins are thought to lie in the Early Iron Age and it was the main centre of power in the area until the twelfth century. Its principal fame lies as the stronghold of the Northern Uí Néill dynasty who occupied the site from the 5th to 12th centuries. They were a major family who aspired to the High Kingship of Ireland on a number of occasions.

This significance was the cause of its eventual destruction when Murtoigh O'Brien of Munster, staking his claim to the High Kingship, instructed his soldiers to each remove a stone from the place when they sacked it in 1101. That date was the effective end of the long history of the Grianan as an occupied site.

The fort is built of dry stone with walls sloping inwards in a batter as they rise. There is one small entrance to a circular enclosure with two passages running inside the thickness of the walls. Inside the ramparts are reached by a series of stepped galleries running around the walls. Outside there are traces of three concentric earthworks which predate the stone fort and a holy well.

In the 1830's the Ordnance Survey recorded the site in detail. At the time the great dry stone walls of the fort were largely collapsed. In the 1870's however an energetic antiquarian Dr Walter Bernard had the fort rebuilt. The walls were raised from 6 to 17 feet. The interior galleries result largely from of this 'restoration'.

Since that period there have been a number of partial collapses in the dry construction but all have been rebuilt. The Office of Public Works undertook the most recent restoration of the monument in 2006-7. This proved controversial as they sought to reconstruct the collapsed parts of the structure from the archaeological evidence rather than to the form familiar to locals in the preceding years.

At the base of Greenan Hill is an interesting modern church dating from 1966 which takes inspiration from the fort. Dun Angus was voted Irish building of the millennium in a popular vote in 2000 it was designed by Laim McCormick a skilled church architect who had offices in the nearby city. The exterior is a circle and the interior an off centre oval which allows for the introduction of ancillary space. A number of art works were specially commissioned for the building.

‘The site is an important reminder that in some cases international as well as local and regional cooperation may be important if we are to realise the full potential of heritage assets.’



View from city



Grianan of Ailech



An oak seedling

History

All the names by which the place has been known, Daire Calgach, Doire Cholmcille, Derrie and Londonderry are linked by the single Irish word, Doire - Derry, referring to an oak-grove. This word appears in many Irish place-names and may, as in the present case, carry implications of the ancient sacred significance of that tree.

Early History

In early history the island of Derry lay at a conjunction of the two main parts of the territory of the Cenél nEógan people in Inishowen, Tirowen, and the Cenél Conaill, whose name is the main element of Tirconnell, later Donegal. These areas converged on the Foyle

On the island, where the city later grew, there was an Early Christian monastery which carried the great prestige of association with Colmcille or Saint Columba, the first Christian saint of Irish birth. The monastery reached its greatest religious and secular importance in the twelfth century and included a major church building (Tempull Mór) that was constructed in 1164, and an Augustinian monastery (Lacey 1990, 39-53).

Plantation

Elizabethan forces, led by Colonel Edward Randolph, first occupied Derry in 1566 and threw up defensive earthworks but quickly withdrew after their powder magazine exploded. In 1600, during the Nine Years War, Sir Henry Docwra, with 4,000 troops occupied the place as part of a pincer movement against the army of Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone. Docwra established two forts, one by the riverside and one up the hill near the site of the present St Augustines' church, together with a small settlement of houses.

In 1607, the Flight of the Earls (the departure abroad of the principal Gaelic chiefs of Ulster) unexpectedly left the Crown with a wide swathe of territory covering two thirds of the province, which came to be used for the Plantation of Ulster with settlers from Britain. This was at the beginning of the age of colonial expansion and it was believed that Protestant settlers would both safeguard the country from foreign invasion and speed its development in the money economy of western Europe.

The London trade guilds, or Companies, undertook to carry out this plantation in the area which became known first as the County of Coleraine and later as the County of Londonderry, and to build two walled towns, one at Coleraine, and the other at Derry. In 1613 'the Honourable the Irish Society' was incorporated for this purpose. The settlement also received a new charter and name, the City of Londonderry.

Walled City

In 1613 the surveyors first 'viewed and trode out the ground' for the line of the walls as they are today. Their construction was largely finished in 1618. The excavation of the earth for the rampart created a ditch on the outer side of the walls, with the exception of the north-western part of the circuit that now overlooks the Bogside, where the hillside was scarped to provide additional defence.

Within the walled area a new settlement was laid out, with four streets leading to a central square called the Diamond. By 1622 there were over one hundred houses in existence in the new streetscape, and a market house had been constructed in the Diamond. A new cathedral was erected between 1628 and 1633 to replace the old St. Augustine's Abbey.



City Walls

'The city walls were the last constructed in Europe and consist of an 8 metre thick earthen rampart faced with a 2 metre deep stone outer face.'

Sieges

The popular fame of Londonderry as a walled city principally derives from its withstanding of the 1689 siege of 105 days, during the 'Glorious Revolution' that resulted in the deposition of James II and the accession of William III and Mary II to the British throne. But it had also acted also as a place of refuge in the years following the outbreak of the Great Rebellion in October 1641 and suffered an even longer siege in 1649, when parliamentary forces under Sir Charles Coote, defended the city against a Royalist army.

Even as late as the 1790s the Corporation was concerned that the walls should be put in a state of defence during the period leading up to the 1798 Rising and a possible French invasion. It was only in the nineteenth century that people began to remark on the walls as a structure of possible civic benefit and 'ornament'.

Industrialisation

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the city expanded beyond the walls becoming a prosperous commercial centre. In the nineteenth century its activity was swelled by major emigration following the 1845 famine. Ship building as well as a large merchant fleet was located in the port. Shirt manufacturing also became a major source of employment, building on strong links to Glasgow. By the peak of the trade in 1925, 18,000 people - mainly women - were employed in 44 factories. Karl Marx used one of the factories (now demolished) as a case study in *Das Capital*.

Twentieth Century

The partition of Ireland in 1922 cut off a significant part of the hinterland of the city and led to an economic decline which was compounded by the Great Depression of the 1930's. The economy was revived during the Second World War when the city, as the most westerly port in the UK, was vital to the Battle of the Atlantic. Second to Liverpool in the command structure there were as many airfields in the wider region as in Kent, to help ensure adequate protection for the convoys. 30,000 service personnel and 125 ships were located in the port at peak periods - a major impact on a city with a population of approximately 60,000.

The Troubles

After the war the economy declined again and population change led to the Unionist controlled city council resorting to increasingly obvious housing and electoral controls to remain in power. In the late 1960's mass unemployment, resentment and inspiration from elsewhere resulted in marches and campaigns for Civil Rights. Politics quickly polarized into the divisions between the two main communities and the old issues behind the partition of Ireland. This led to the 30 years of conflict known as 'The Troubles.' The historic city suffered in the bombing campaigns of the 1970's and the protestant and Unionist population largely left the west bank of the city.

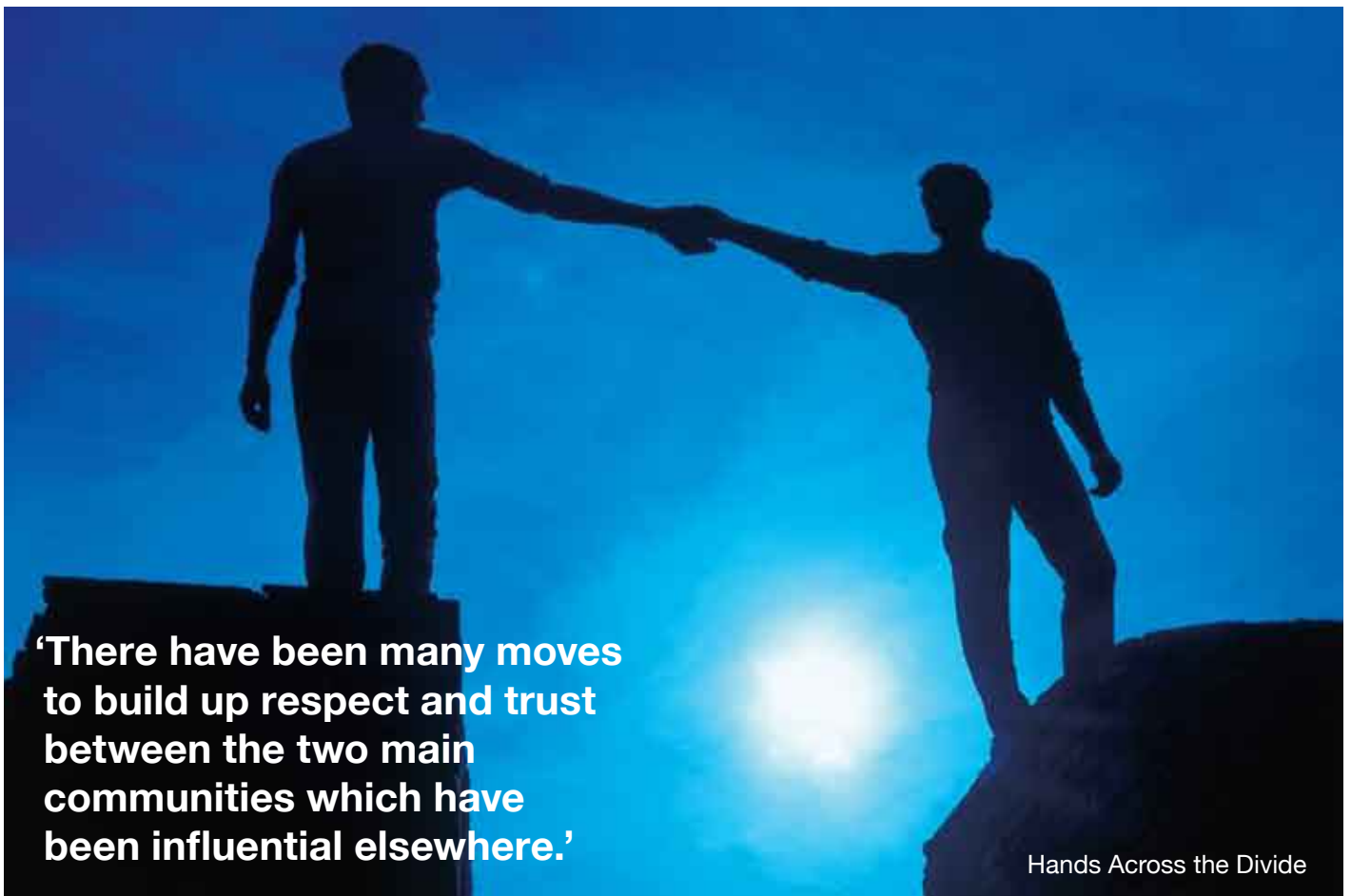


Security watchtower 2006

Today, as elsewhere in Northern Ireland, a significant proportion of the population live in areas that are populated by people of the same religion and general political outlook.

Peace

The reconstituted city council was one of the first in Northern Ireland to experiment with 'power sharing' and there have been many moves to build up mutual respect and trust between the two main communities. These initiatives, which have been influential elsewhere, have been reasonably successful. The creation of a string of museums around the walls allowing different groups to tell their story is just one example.



'There have been many moves to build up respect and trust between the two main communities which have been influential elsewhere.'

Hands Across the Divide

Beech Hill Hotel

The Beech Hill Hotel is a good example of a large merchant's house reused to become an important asset to the city. It is listed Grade B+ (one less than the outstanding grade A).

Formerly the residence of the Skipton and then Nicholson families, it was constructed in 1729 and substantially extended and altered twice in the nineteenth century to assume its current form. It has a very interesting private church over the porte cohere and a fine library (now a reception room/bar) dating from 1851 with heavy doric pilasters and a large frieze displaying life-like ox-heads.

The building is one of a number of eighteenth century properties which line this section of the Faughan Valley, most of which are listed. Though Ashbrook house next door is thought to date from 1680 and is on the site of a building dating back to Plantation times, most of these properties reflect the prosperity of the nearby city during the period which saw significant expansion and remain in private ownership.

The building's unusual gate lodge and gates date from the 1870's remodeling and the gate piers appear to be a direct copy of a design by Alexander 'Greek' Thompson of Glasgow. It is likely that the piers are copied from a drawing published in Blackie's 'Villa and Cottage Architecture' around this time.

The house was bought in 1989 and converted into a hotel by its current owners. A difficulty with the conversion of many listed buildings to hotels is that, if successful, it is hard to resist the economic argument to allow extensions. For country houses, which are often complemented by a designed landscape, this can be difficult to achieve successfully. In this case extensions have been added on two occasions since conversion, however the slope of the site and careful consideration of the design and layout has allowed these to be incorporated without compromising the main character of the building. NIEA has contributed grant aid over the years towards various schemes of repair work. Unfortunately the owner removed most of the sash windows in 2000, without consent, and has been pursued to reinstate these. She was fined £250 for the removal of 21 windows in 2008 on the basis that the real punishment would be the estimated £100,000 price tag of reinstatement. These works have yet to be carried out.

As a relatively small hotel outside walking distance of the city, it has used its architectural and historic assets as a key selling point and complemented this with high quality service and cuisine.

'The building is a good example of how a heritage asset can be used to achieve wider social and economic objectives.'



Beech Hill Hotel



Verbal Arts Centre

Verbal Arts Centre

The Verbal Arts Centre is a former primary school that has been conserved and extended to incorporate its current use. Located at the south west corner of the city walls it is one of a number of cultural institutions which ring the monument.

The building dates from the late nineteenth century and was a replacement for a former Blue Coat School on the site. It is a good example of school design and it deals well with the constraints of a tightly enclosed plot. It had an open playground at ground level opening onto the narrow Stable Lane in front of the building and classrooms above opening onto the walls. It's architecture is exuberant, loosely Elizabethan and is executed in brick. It makes a strong contribution to the character of the surrounding Conservation Area and particularly, that of the walls at a key part of their circuit.

The conversion to an arts venue has been achieved principally by adding elements onto the existing building. A stair case extension in similar style has been added to the east gable, the key classroom spaces have been retained and the playground enclosed by planar glazing in part to allow its former function to be understood. A variety of meeting and performance rooms have been created in the ancillary spaces reflecting the range of activities

planned for the building. A flat for an artist in residence is located at the apex of the building with a balcony overlooking the walls. A strong commitment to the arts has resulted in many purpose designed commissioned works, which are displayed around and fixed to the building, including the library fittings, meeting table and chairs.

In addition to the Verbal Arts Centre other cultural institutions facing the walls include: the Millennium Forum (a large municipal theatre); St Columb's Hall (a large 19th century hall); the Playhouse (a recently restored and extended community theatre and gallery) and the Nerve Centre (a music venue and digital arts organization). Another former primary school at New Gate is used for plays and has been earmarked for cultural use. Collectively these represent a vibrant cultural sector within the Walled City. The Playhouse in particular, has received a number of awards in regard to its positive contribution to the city's regeneration.

The Signature Destination Project

The 'Walled City' was declared one of six 'Signature Tourism Destination Projects' for Northern Ireland in 2003. This initiative of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board focuses money on the designated areas to increase international awareness of discrete destinations. European Union and Government Regeneration funds are being used to support the scheme.

The city walls are the focus of the project. These remain in the ownership of the Honourable the Irish Society (now a charitable trust) but have been maintained by the State since 1955. NIEA has carried out a major conservation scheme as sections of the walls have been re-opened to public access following closure during the Troubles. The Agency has invested around £70,000 annually in this work.

The Signature Projects aims to build upon this investment by improving signage, lighting and associated events. In a complimentary project, 32 cannons have been restored by the City Council and mounted upon historically accurate cradles. The idea is that the walls should become the focus for visitor orientation and be complemented by related historical interpretation and improvement works. A ring of small museums telling different

parts of the city's history have been created in nearby buildings and the project has supported the upgrading or creation of these facilities. Six key historic buildings have also been identified for repair works, each of which will be opened to tourists. New signage has been erected on the monument and across the city centre to orientate visitors and explain more about the history of their surroundings. A 'Business and Cultural Animation Programme' has aimed funding at encouraging businesses associated with tourism and heritage.

A lighting strategy aims to improve the quality of the evening display and security of the monument. NIEA has also received funding to develop a Conservation Plan and Management Plan for the monument (and public).

These plans are now in place. The City Council has also developed wireless coverage of the monument and linked interpretative PDA's. This investment is complemented by (and has encouraged) work to other historic buildings particularly projects that can avail of separate assistance through NIEA's Listed Building Grant Scheme. Also within the walled city the Townscape Heritage Initiative of the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting the conservation of historic buildings and is further adding to the regenerative process. Public improvement works have also been carried out to the streets within the walls and have commenced in the civic square just outside it. Many agencies are involved in this work and efforts are being coordinated by the City Council, plus a regeneration company called 'Ilex' (Latin for oak) created for the city.

'The idea is that the walls should become the focus for visitor orientation and be complemented by related historical interpretation and improvement works.'



Restoration work

Summary of Heritage Investment in Londonderry since 1997

Restoration Work:

City walls conservation: Investment by EHS (now NIEA) since 1997 (including dedicated staff time)	£600,000
Improvement works to the public realm inside the walled city (stone paving, lighting and street furniture) by Department for Social Development 1999 - 2003	£2million
NIEA grant aid for the conservation of 42 listed buildings in the city	£1.5million
Townscape Heritage Initiative investment in the potential conservation of 30 properties in or near the walled city	£1million
DSD Urban Development Grant Aid for the regeneration on 30 listed buildings in the city	£3.5million
Council investment in the conservation of canons	£300,000
Council investment in the conservation of a listed Fire station adjacent to the walls	£750,000

The Signature Destination Project:

Phase 1 2004 -2007 Conservation and Management Plans for the City Walls Visitor Signage and Interpretation Tower Museum Refurbishment Exhibitions at satellite centres	£4.5million
Phase 2 2007- 2010 Lighting project for the city Conservation of 6 listed historic buildings Culture and animation support	£9.1million

The Signature Destination Project:

DSD city centre public realm scheme - Newmarket Street	£9.4million
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Total public sector investment **£32.75million**

All public investment has leveraged significant matching (or greater) private sector investment by owners and communities.



Derry City Walls

The City Walls

The colonial city of Londonderry is a form of seventeenth century ideal town. It has a central market square with bisecting streets and a ring of secondary streets based upon a square.

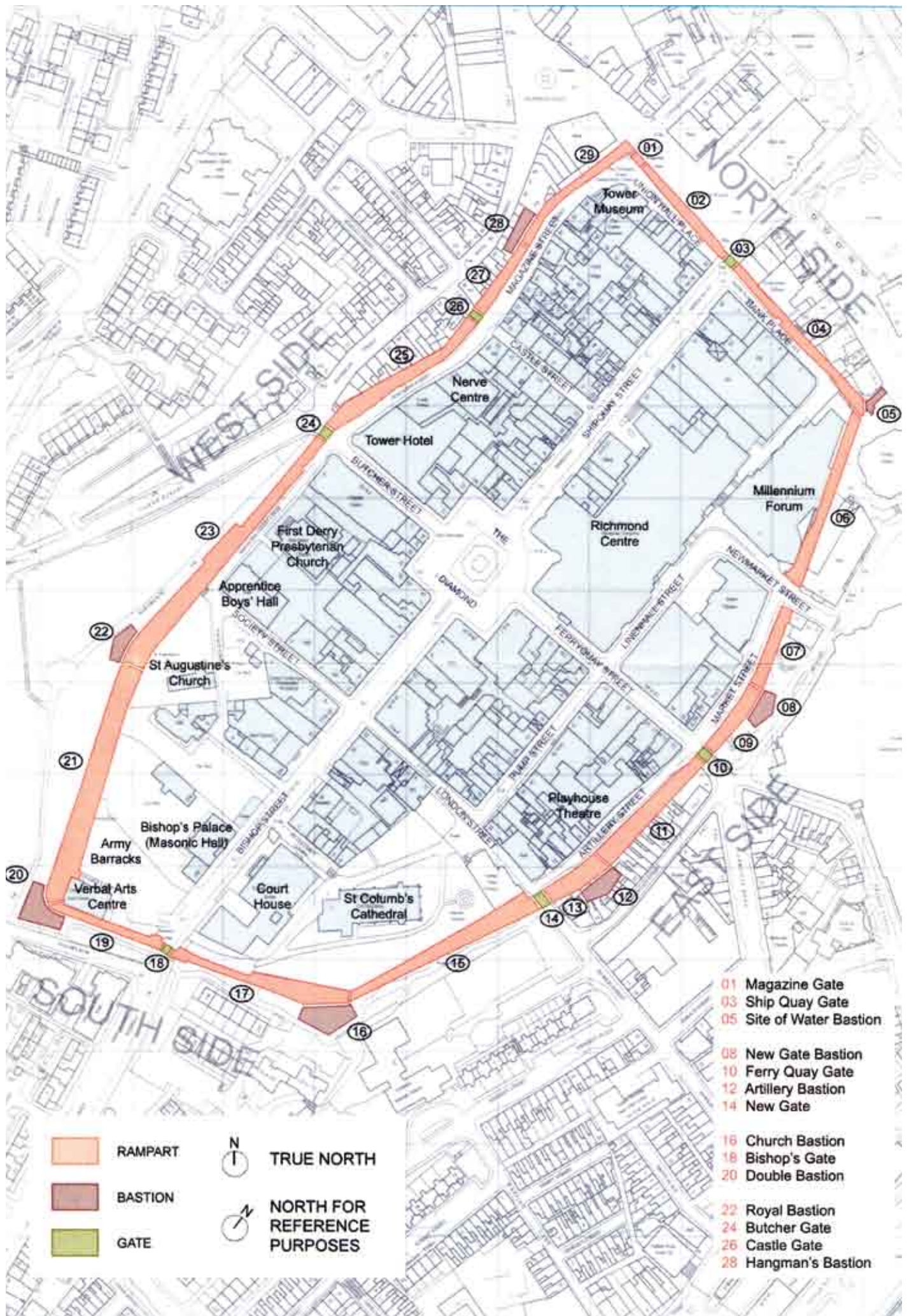
Significantly the market square and not the church is the focus of the plan, though the latter is located on the highest point in the city. This arrangement, no doubt influenced by a Roman Castra, largely survives though one street has been enclosed within a shopping centre. The city is surrounded by wide walls which follow a gentle curve to the east and are more irregular to the west where they were built along the edge of a steep slope. This was scarped to improve defence at the time of construction.

Elsewhere an outer ditch was constructed which has since been filled in. The original gates at the end of each main road have been added to by three others over time and an eighth access point was created in the nineteenth century by raising one road over the top of the monument. All of the gates are replacements mostly dating from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

The walls were the last city walls to be constructed in Europe. They linked the top of the hill at the south of the plan with the river's edge at the north. To deal

with the destructive effects of artillery they followed the orthodoxy of the time and were constructed as low, thick ramparts with angular bastions surrounded by ditches with outer banks. The 'trace italien' as this was known allowed ordnance to be mounted securely, provided wide flanks allowing crossfire both from small arms and cannon to bear down along an external ditch, and eliminated any patches of dead ground which had existed in front of circular or rectangular towers of mediaeval fortifications.

'The city is surrounded by wide walls which follow a gentle curve to the east and are more irregular to the west where they were built along the edge of a steep slope.'



Conservation Plan

In 2005 NIEA, with the City Council and Tourist Board, initiated a Conservation Plan process for the monument as part of the wider Signature Project. Consultants were appointed to carry out detailed research and recording and to draw up the plan. As part of the process a public meeting was held and this very positive event was attended by 75 people. A list of 52 stakeholders were identified and invited to three further meetings where initial drafts were discussed and developed. The completed document was managed by a steering group consisting of representatives of NIEA, The City Council, The Tourist Board, The Honourable the Irish Society, Roads Service and Planning Service. It was formally approved by all of these bodies. The document describes the monument, sets out its history and explains its value. It also identifies threats. From this a series of policies covering a wide range of issues from archaeology, to traffic and security are set out.

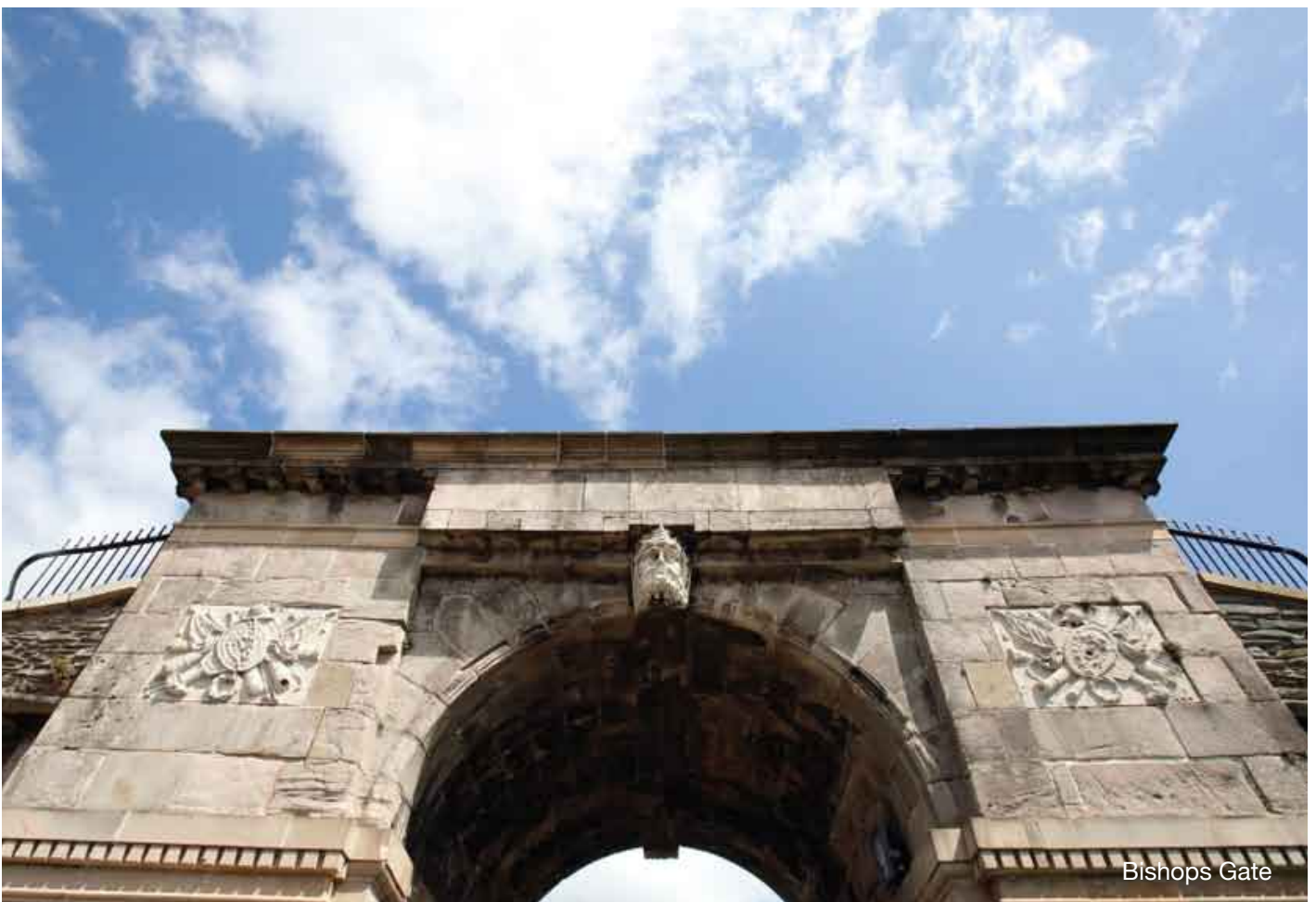
Management Plan

Developed along with the Conservation Plan, a Management Plan was published in 2009. This sets out practical responsibilities for the monument and gives contact details for all involved. It provides advice on events and on repair work as well as expanding upon some of the recommendations of the Conservation Plan.

Management Group

A key recommendation of both documents was that a management group should be established for the monument. The first meeting of this group took place in June 2009 and regular meetings are now planned. Although NIEA maintains the fabric as a monument, the walkway is regarded as a road and Road Service maintain this surface and associated lighting. The City Council perform street cleaning functions, own the cannon and have organised events. The City Centre Management Group have rangers who carry out a warden function. The Police and the Northern Ireland Office have security responsibilities. Although the structure is in state guardianship, the Honourable Irish Society is its owner. Numerous private companies also use the walls as part of their local tours.

‘The first meeting of this group took place in June 2009 and regular meetings are now planned.’



Ebrington

Ebrington Barracks is the focus for a second major scheme in the city which utilises its heritage assets for wider regenerative aims. In 2002 it was announced that this military site would close due to the reduced level of threat.

Under the 'Reinvest and Reform Initiative' it was given to the Northern Ireland Assembly. They set up an urban regeneration company (Named Ilex – Latin for oak) to utilise the development of this and another former military site in the city to help achieve the aim of wider economic and social regeneration.

As a key site on the riverbank opposite the heart of the historic city, which is almost equal in size to the area within the walls, the potential of this area is very great. In 2002 there were no listed buildings or scheduled monuments at the site and it was marked as white land on the Area Plan.

The barracks is situated on rising ground facing west and the fortifications of its 1841 star fort still largely enclose the original complex of white rendered buildings around a parade ground. The walls are visible across the river and there is a clear view from the city walls.

There are many parallels with the city walls: they are also built with projecting bastions and enclose a rigidly symmetrical layout. Like the city walls they are also among the last of their type.

The site is unusual as a barracks in that the parade ground is not enclosed by buildings on all sides. This is because of initial concerns in regard to the siting of the military base on the wrong side of the river. A 'hidden ramp' behind the walls was therefore created to allow for swift transport of soldiers to river level and by ferry across the river - an early manifestation concept of a rapid reaction force.

In the later nineteenth and early twentieth century the site expanded to the south and east and buildings to a standard military type were constructed. It functioned as an army barracks until the Second World War.

Then, with the importance of the city to the Battle of the Atlantic, it was used to house American 'technicians' and in 1942 incorporated into HMS Ferret - the wider naval base in the city. Squid mortars (an improvement over ordinary depth charges) were developed on site and training facilities in anti-submarine warfare were developed here. This role was continued after the war for the training of NATO troops with the site then renamed as HMS Sea Eagle.

In 1972 the barracks reverted to the Army (and its old name) and became the headquarters of 8th Brigade. During the 30 years of 'The Troubles' this was responsible for the military command of a quarter of Northern Ireland. The site was extensively refortified and suffered a number of attacks during that period.

Consideration of Site

Before the army left the Environment and Heritage Service (now NIEA) was invited to consider the site for protection. Initial investigation led to the conclusion that a traditional listing survey and separate scheduling survey would not do the interest of the site justice. Historic interest lay as much in the character of the area as in the merits of individual structures.

As a result NIEA departed from its traditional approach and conducted a holistic investigation backed up by a detailed report, although it refrained from identifying buildings for statutory protection. This identified heritage interest and explained in detail the reasons for this interest.

It identified the most significant buildings, the important buildings and the buildings of least importance. Some structures which detracted from character were also identified (see maps on next page).

The report was backed up by detailed records on buildings of note. Copies of the report were sent to Ilex and to Planning Service (who are responsible for the designation of Conservation Areas). The report emphasised the importance of clear management for future development.

Ilex responded well to the report and was persuaded to include a Conservation Architect as a requirement in commissioning a master planning team. NIEA deliberately held back statutory protection to continue to emphasise the holistic nature of the site to Ilex but also to help them by avoiding undue public attention while the master plan process developed. Planning Service was supportive of the approach taken.

The star fort was scheduled in 2004. 14 buildings were proposed to HBC and Derry City Council for listing in 2005. Ilex confident of its approach to the site only opposed the listing of one building- a store behind the main parade ground building. Ultimately NIEA decided not to list this building.

'Clearly it is a site of great historic interest and one which in addition allows an important part of the story of the city to be told.'



Ebrington Barracks - Summary of Heritage Value 2004



Master plan

The master plan, published in early 2007, uses the heritage interest of the site as a fundamental part of its organisation. It seeks to enhance the key listed buildings and to retain another six non-listed 'important' buildings. It proposes a mixed use development of offices, residential and civic functions with improved connections via a footbridge to the city centre and to an adjacent public park. It also proposes a clear management structure. Since its publication a scheme of demolitions and improvements have been undertaken to prepare the site and restore the historic structures. Floodlighting the repainted buildings has highlighted dramatically the potential of this heritage to the city. Applications have been made to remove plastic windows and restore wooden sashes. Public events have also been held in the main parade ground.

Funding for the footbridge was announced in December 2008 and subsequent plans have developed quickly. Because the railway cannot be moved in the short term, the bridge must now land at a higher level, requiring a breach in the scheduled wall. This is a difficult philosophical and design challenge but is key to the realisation of the site's potential. Discussions are also progressing regarding the landscaping of the parade ground where a careful balance has to be struck between historic character and a sustainable, inviting use.



Ebrington Masterplan



'With a good relationship developed over many years and agreement on the importance of the heritage to the overall approach the site remains on track to become a strong example of how heritage can contribute to regeneration.'

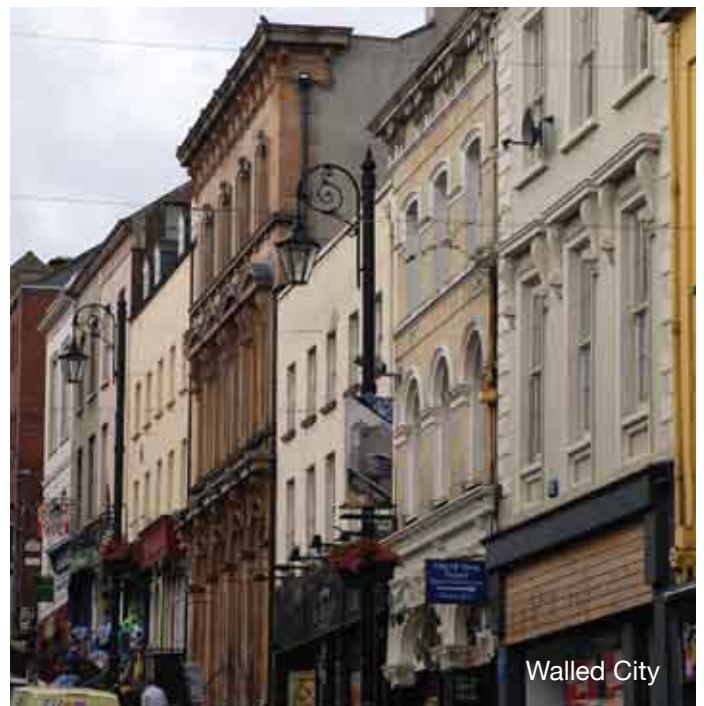
Peace bridge

Conservation Areas

The City has had two Conservation Areas since 1977: the Walled City Conservation Area covers the core of the historic city while the Clarendon Street Conservation Area covers an area of Georgian terraced streets further south.

In 1995 responsibility for the designation and management of Conservation Area's passed from NIEA's predecessor to Planning Service. It will devolve to the local council from 2012. In 2005 Planning Service announced a review of the Conservation Areas in the city and after consultation these were revised with expanded boundaries and a third Area added. The Magee Conservation Area covers the University plus the surrounding Victorian and Edwardian streets to the south of the Clarendon Street Area. All three areas bring significant protection to the character of the historic city.

With Ilex's remit to maximize the regenerative potential of the city, it has funded detailed research to produce high quality Conservation Area booklets. Major baseline studies as well as detailed guidance have been prepared. These examine the local distinctiveness of the Conservation Areas – what it is that makes them of special interest - by assessing in depth their character from a variety of perspectives



such as plan form, landscape and setting, and historic and archaeological background. The problems and pressures that the areas face as well as their capacity for change are also being examined.

When published this year it is likely that these will mark a new departure in the standard of guidance issued for Conservation Areas in Northern Ireland. The work will certainly be a strong aid in ensuring that the character of these areas is fully appreciated. With such a basis, their potential to contribute in a sustainable way to the wider economic and social regeneration of the city will also increase.

‘The work will certainly be a strong aid in ensuring that the character of these areas is fully appreciated by those proposing changes and by the wider community.’



Clarendon Street



Magee Campus, University of Ulster



Northern Counties Hotel



Castle Gate

Townscape Heritage Initiative

In Northern Ireland, unlike elsewhere in the UK, the Townscape Heritage Initiative schemes of the Heritage Lottery Fund are not run by local councils because these bodies do not have a formal heritage remit. Instead local community partnerships bid for the funding. This often results in very enthusiastic and hard working groups and this has been the experience in Londonderry.

The Walled City Partnership is made up of the Foyle Civic Trust, Derry City Council and Planning Service. Since 2005 it has undertaken the restoration of six historic buildings in one quarter of the Walled City Conservation Area. These have also availed of Planning Services' Conservation Area grant aid and where listed from NIEA grant aid.

Concentrating restoration efforts in a small area is intended to realise a wider regenerative effect and the current location was chosen because it has suffered badly in recent years from construction of a new shopping centre which has drawn shoppers away. The impact of the first phase of work improved significantly the character of the area and will be complemented, this year, by new environmental improvements funded by the Department for Social Development.

Efforts in addition to the conservation of buildings to recreate lost shop fronts have also provided an enhancement to the character of the Conservation Area. Such work requires a high attention to detail to be convincing and the new port cochere to the former Northern Counties Hotel certainly passes this test. Recently erected it is a major talking point. This scheme in particular provides a strong vote of confidence to a run down area. The HLF has recently announced funding for a second phase of works.

Urban Development Grant

A significant investor in the built heritage of Londonderry over the last 15 years has been the North West Development Office of the Department of Social Development.

In addition to the investment on the surface of the walls and more recently on the public realm already described, the Department has also been responsible for a major investment in many of the city's historic buildings. This work has been through its Urban Development Grant. The aim of the grant is to help economic, social and environmental regeneration by providing a minimum top up funding. This has helped many schemes proceed which would otherwise have never progressed.

A lot of historic buildings have availed of this support with NIEA closely involved. This has often been through our own grant scheme which has been leveraged by the UDG making schemes viable but also because DSD has never released its grant for listed buildings until NIEA has agreed that the work is of an appropriate standard. This partnership has helped ensure that the quality of conservation work is kept high and that slippage- such as the loss of rear sash windows, or insertion of plastic down pipes- can be put right quickly without recourse to costly and time consuming enforcement action.

The shining example of the major impact of this scheme on the city's heritage has been the reuse and refurbishment of most of its historic shirt factories -which formed such a key part of its historic development. All of these buildings were underused in the early 1990's and faced long term decline. Economic conditions at the time precluded residential conversions of the type carried out in London and Manchester. Rising house prices subsequently helped tip the balance but UDG support was fundamental in all of the schemes eventually carried out. Currently only one factory in the city is on the Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland (BHARNI) register. One major building was lost in 2002 due to redundancy and fires but 8 others have been rescued and converted into office, residential and entertainment functions. Two of these (the Waterside Theatre and the Star Factory) were saved after they also suffered major fires which seriously questioned their future existence. Their refurbishment has provided important benefits to the character and appearance of the city as well as to its economy.

‘Since 1995 when the grant was first introduced £3,753,502 has been invested by DSD through its Urban Development Grant in the conservation of the city’s listed historic buildings.’



Artillery Chambers before development



Artillery Chambers after development



Prehen House

Prehen House

Prehen House accessed from the road to Strabane on the city's outskirts is regarded as one of the best surviving examples of an early Georgian country house in Northern Ireland.

It has, however, been encroached upon by suburban development. Associated with the story of 'half hanged McNaughton' who was involved in a complicated love affair with a former occupant it also has a colorful history of public interest. In the early 1970's it was subdivided into apartments and seemed on the edge of a terminal decline. However a descendant of the original owners purchased the house at the time and carried out an exemplary restoration. In the mid 2000's it again faced an uncertain future and the owner set up a trust with the help of local volunteers to open it to the public. This has been reasonably successful with the house becoming a destination for tour groups and others visiting the city and its surroundings.

NIEA has helped by defending the wider curtilage of the building from development (in a 2005 planning appeal) and by bringing forward a detailed reassessment of the value of the building through its Second Survey. This has resulted in raising of the grade of listing of the main building from B1 to

A (the highest grade) and the listing of a number of outbuildings including a stable range with an early roof that predates the main house. This roof is of a form now rarely found in Ireland. In addition to increasing publicity in regard to the quality of this building, this involvement it will also allow additional NIEA grant aid to be made available for repairs.



Prehen House

Future Developments

The emphasis in recent years on heritage related projects in the city has led to serious discussion regarding the potential of a world heritage bid.

International recognition is seen primarily as a way to build upon the heritage investment to maximize the economic and social potential of the city's history and built fabric. However it is also seen as a way of focusing disparate efforts and encouraging appreciation of the more intangible aspects of the city's history. The City Council with other agencies, such as the University, has been actively developing a paper which seeks to draw out and identify the required '*outstanding universal value*'.

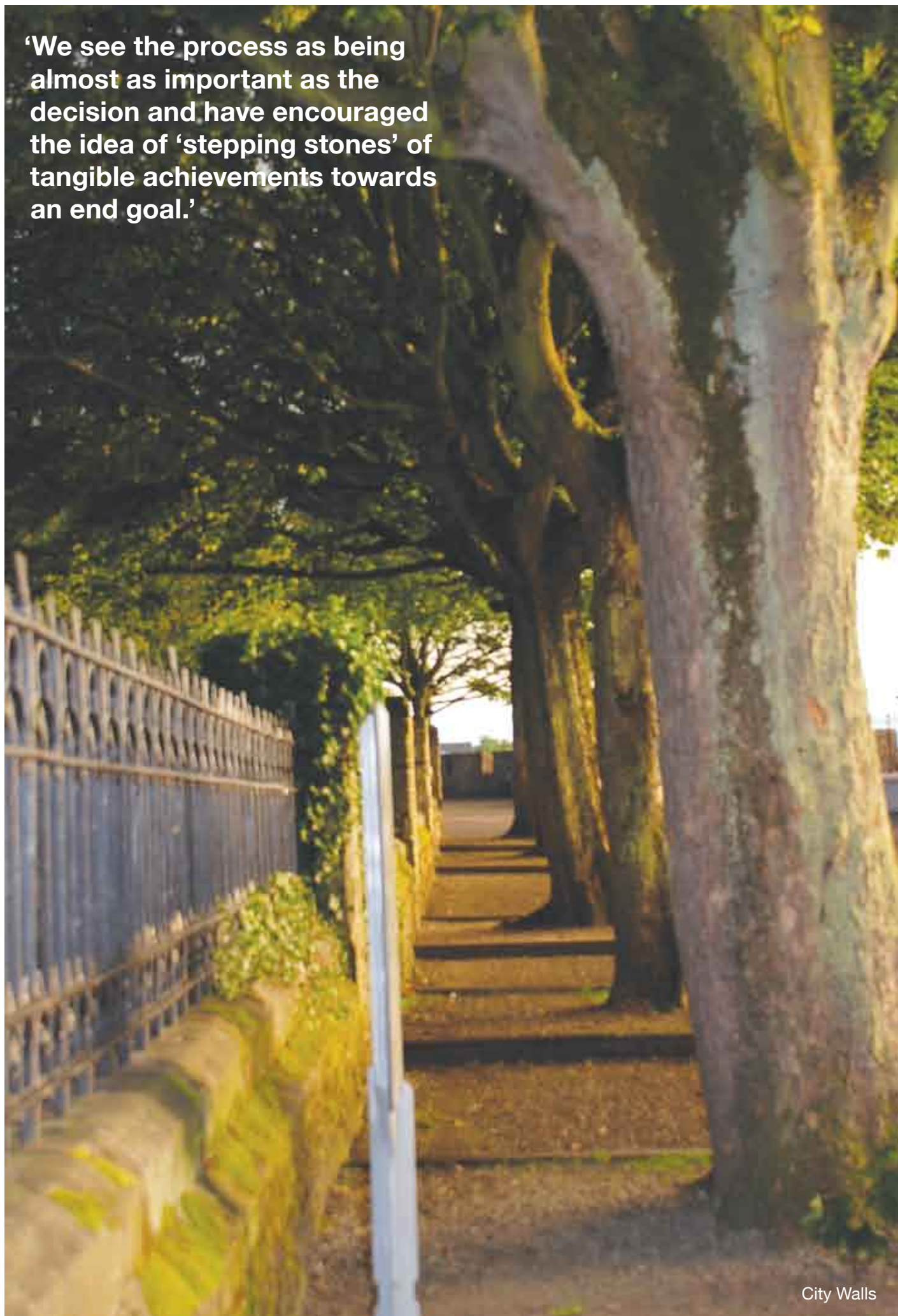
It has been clear to all that this will not be an easy task. There are already many walled cities inscribed throughout Europe and a high number of sites in the UK relative to most other countries. If a bid is to be successful strong international significance has to be highlighted. The story of the city, its colonization - using utopian notions of an ideal plan, the resulting history of conflict and division tangible in its architecture combined with the more recent developments of a peace process based upon respect and diversity (also reflected through new heritage and cultural institutions) may just hold out such a possibility.

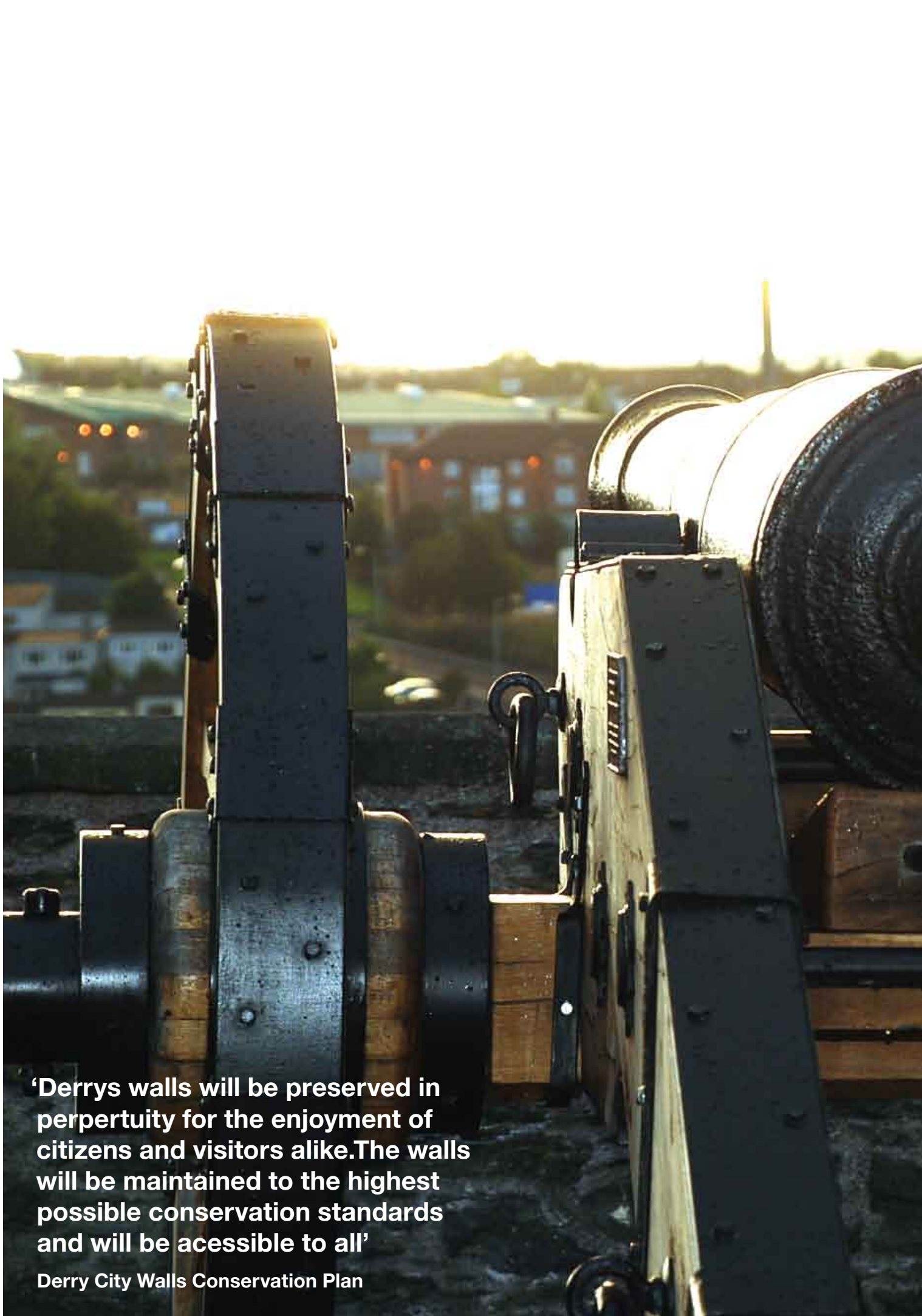
Sites which are the focus of cultural conflict can be found across the world but sites which celebrate this history as an aid to respecting diversity and building peace are less common.

NIEA has participated in these discussions and provided advice however it is for the Council to make a bid that it can be submitted to DCMS. Raising civic discussion and public awareness of the attendant aspects of heritage and history is important. It should lead to further projects which utilise this legacy for the common good .

However, we are very conscious that while a clear heritage aim for the city is useful, expectations of success or otherwise in a very difficult arena have to be carefully managed. In this respect the current consideration of the UK to join the European Heritage Label Scheme holds great attraction (Manchester aimed for the Olympic Games and got the Commonwealth Games). The UK City of Culture bid, focused more directly on regeneration aims, has provided another opening for such efforts.

‘We see the process as being almost as important as the decision and have encouraged the idea of ‘stepping stones’ of tangible achievements towards an end goal.’





‘Derrys walls will be preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors alike. The walls will be maintained to the highest possible conservation standards and will be accessible to all’

Derry City Walls Conservation Plan



Canon on the City Walls



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Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote the natural environment and built heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.



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