



Pre Draft Bray LAP Submission - Report

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Topic

Compact Growth - Housing – Population Growth

Submission

Bray is hemmed-in by the sea, a river, the M50 and Bray Head, which limits potential for expansion and sprawl. Higher density housing is probably the only way forward, but priority must be given to larger, more sustainable (3-bedroom units) in blocks of up to 6 floors. Any such development should be backed up with infrastructure.

Dense housing with ample open space, should allow for sustainable local public transport

Topic

Regeneration of Communities & Places - Healthy Placemaking - Urban Design - Opportunity Sites in Arklow

Submission

"Urban Design Standards": -Bray and Wicklow County desperately needs the Westport equivalent of a town Architect. Wicklow has been bereft of any Architectural influence (unlike other major populated jurisdictions in Ireland) since the days of William Dargan, and has suffered greatly from lack of vision and urban planning foresight as a result. Bray's equivalent in any other European country would have an intrinsic Architectural vision that would be stringently adhered to. There is a definite impression that those in charge, do not have a vision for the future of Bray. It is incredulous that Ireland has 6 schools of Architecture, yet a major tourist county like Wicklow has no Architects Department.

"Unique features of Bray's urban environment": - There has to be a value put on all of Bray's historic fabric. Bray Seafront is a recognised landmark in Ireland, yet there are no stringent regulations to protect it from descending into a wasteland of casinos and amusement arcades. It is a sad fact that in Bray, if buildings or fixtures are not on the RPS, they are deemed dispensable. The old Victorian railings that were an iconic feature of Bray Seafront for a century and a half, were taken out with angle-grinders "for safety & Health reasons", and were never restored (see photo). Similarly, the old St. Paul's lodge was demolished on permission by WCC/BMD to make way for a developer's Car Park (see photo).

Casinos and Gaming Arcades must be stopped: - Wicklow Co. Council (WCC) and Bray Municipal District (BMD) recently granted permission (Planning Reference 18/1188 and 22232) for the demolition of a Victorian terrace (part of a Protected View), and the construction of a gaming arcade exclusively for children. Casinos and Amusement Arcades promote the exploitation of vulnerable persons and should not be considered a Seafront leisure activity. There are currently 5 large Casinos/ Gaming arcades in the area which has now reached saturation. These are sinister artificially-lit concrete boxes, that make no reference to the wonderful Seafront environment outside. There are new Government regulations controlling the promotion of gambling which is a serious problem in Ireland. Casinos and Gaming Arcades must no longer be recognised as a "Seafront Leisure Activity", and the construction of new, or any extension to existing such establishments must be banned in the

Bray Seafront area.

Since the Covid 19 lockdowns (2020-2021) the Seafront became a mecca for outdoor activities. The development plan should therefore re-define "Seafront Leisure Activities" as those pertaining to swimming, sport, and outdoor physical and cultural entertainments.

There are Victorian terraces and buildings on Bray Seafront which WCC/BMD planners deem suitable for demolition (e.g. Marlborough Terrace), that should be protected. All original Seafront building (including fixtures, railings etc.) are part of its heritage and should be repurposed instead of demolition. It is not only common practice that historic buildings are given the "custodian" principle, but the owner has a duty of care to apply minimal intervention, reversibility and use like-for-like materials in any development, to preserve the building for future generations.

One requirement in the current Development Plan states that "The design of new buildings shall draw reference from and complement the historic Victorian style of the Seafront"

The Urban Design Standards on the seafront should discourage mock period or Victorian Architecture (unless it is repair), but should be "state-of-the-art " modern, with a considered approach emulating the spirit of the historic infrastructure of Bray Seafront. The Victorian Architecture and built heritage of Bray Seafront is about opening onto and celebrating the buildings' relationship to the sea, on a human scale. This is done with addressing the streetscape and scaling the buildings to human interaction into terraces with modelled window openings, doorways, steps and railings. More importantly with three-dimensional elements and projections such as angled tripartite bay windows, proportioning of rooms and floors, balconies, recesses, cast iron rainwater management, roofscapes, chimneys etc. The angled bay windows on the terraces of Bray Seafront bear a particular importance as respectively, each of the tripartite facets overlook views to Killiney bay to the north, onto the sea, and Bray Head to the South. This is the original meaning and vision for the terraces of Bray, and this is where "rhythm" resides.

There is no doubt that contemporary Architecture can successfully complement historic surroundings, or even Georgian/Victorian Terraces (e.g., ESB buildings on Fitzwilliam Street, where the damage had already been done). Modern infill can be successful, but only if it is contextual, proportional to its neighbours, and it only replaces long lost buildings.

Enforcement on breaches of planning regulations need to be rigorously pursued. There is a timidity on behalf of WCC/BMD to tackle unauthorised developments, and they will only act upon notice from 3rd parties (in writing). Bray has suffered more than most towns from lack of, or poor planning enforcement. This has given a poor reputation to the town, and is lowering the standard of design and urbanscape. Various pubs have added cheap and shoddy extensions where they apply for retention years later. Thankfully, in the case of extensions to protected structures in recent times, these have been refused.

Unauthorised developments such as extensions, shoddy shopfronts, unauthorised large garish signs (e.g. Quinnsboro Road – photo attached) which detract from other businesses, are left up for years with impunity, when they should be ordered to be taken down immediately, with fines applied. There needs to be a stringent code and size for shopfront signage, that minimises the impact on the streetscape. There needs to be stringent enforcement, too.

The block encompassing Strand Road, Royal Marine Terrace, Royal Marine Park and Martello Tower (excluding the Hibernia Inn) should revert to "Residential" from "Seafront Uses". This had been changed in recent years to accommodate a kayaking business, which has since moved away. All the buildings in this block (except the Hibernia Inn) are solely residential, and the area should be designated as such.

Restoration of two derelict Victorian shelters on Bray Seafront: There is a danger that these, like other fixtures on Bray Seafront, will deteriorate to the extent that they will be taken away "for Safety and Health reasons". These should be fully restored, and could be fitted with seating that would deter inhabitation and overnight users (which is the reason why they are boarded up at present).

"Where do you see potential to enhance the public realm in Bray": - every wide-open space should be planted with trees. There is potential for more tree planting on Bray Seafront. Portions of Bray seafront should be given over to wilding to promote biodiversity.

Transportation Hub: - The Station area is currently undergoing public realm renewal works. However, it appears to be more of an Engineering exercise than an urban Architectural solution. A masterplan for the future of the whole Station area, including Albert Walk is essential. The proposed LUAS terminus has to be defined, and dovetailed-in to the whole Station Gateway/ Transportation Hub The concrete block/plaster walls of the Carlisle Grounds are of a very "agricultural" standard and a serious blotch on the townscape - these should be replaced, including tree-planting (to replace the 6 mature trees they felled to make way for parking). Carparking should be removed from the whole station area. The pedestrian laneway between the Carlisle Grounds and the Railway needs to be lit, made more open and safer.

Lower Dargle Road: A major opportunity was lost when the Superquinn/ SuperValu shopping centre was built. This anti-urban development turned its back on the town, opened up a large carpark onto the main Castle Street (on the site of Bray's only historic building - the Riddlesford 12th century Castle), and amazingly presented blank walls and major ventilation plant to the prominent, sunny south elevation where an elaborate Dargle River boardwalk was built as part of the flood protection scheme. This could have made a major outdoor space. It is unfortunate that WCC / BMD planners cannot influence or control developers of major urban impact schemes such as this, which could have been a major positive public amenity area, and a boon to the north of the town. Going forward, an Architectural agenda must be included in any developmental designation, where a visionary approach is essential.

Good design begets good design, as does good planning - but unfortunately, the opposite is also true. There is an onus on this Development plan and WCC/BMD to promote and create a climate of good design and planning.

Topic

Heritage – Biodiversity- Green infrastructure- Climate Action- Energy

Submission

Protecting and enhancing its natural heritage and biodiversity.: - East Coast walkway - The development of a biodiversity-themed walk Linking Dalkey to Greystones, taking in Bray Seafront and the Cliff Walk. .

The Cliff Walk should be permanently opened and usable on its current route. Permanent Civil Engineering infrastructure needs to be put in place to safeguard against the effects of coastal erosion and rockfall. There is a serious problem in Bray/ WCC where the public are prevented from using amenities where there is an ascertained risk, and no solution is sought. There should be an onus on WCC to not only maintain the public amenities such as sea-bathing, and cliff walk use, but should have a contingency plan in place in order to

maintain public usage.

Bray head's status as a Special Amenity Area implies there should be a strategic plan, with the onus put on WCC to maintain and rejuvenate the Area. Bray Head Area requires a Marshall who would be responsible for the stewarding and maintenance of the area. Recent incidents of vandalism (gorse fires, fly-tipping, graffiti etc.) go on unchecked and are not tackled for months, if at all. The destruction of trees on the north face of Bray Head as a result of recent human-made fires have denuded the woodland, and these have not been replaced. Bray Head needs thousands of trees re-planted, in order to restore the biodiversity that was lost in the destruction caused by malicious fires.

Dargle River: - The north banks of the Dargle River face south, and therefore should be designated for special outdoor public/ commercial activity at ground level opening onto the boardwalks and linking to the Coastal Walk (Dalkey to Greystones). It is a wasted opportunity to designate ground level as solely residential.

Every green space including Bray Seafront, should be planted with more trees

Topic

Infrastructure - Sustainable Movement – Transportation

Submission

The route of the LUAS needs to be finalised: - The Luas extension to Bray is part of the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy, with "medium term" (completion 2035) designation. It is not until the route is established will the adjacent lands be considered for development.

Car Parking: - Most European towns and cities have rejuvenated urban centres incorporating easily accessible underground car parking. These can often be entire plazas with parking underneath. It is imperative for the outside visitor to Bray to know that the town centre is accessible and that there will be a designated safe place to park. The Bray Central shopping centre goes some way towards this, but the realistic opportunity exists in the former Golf Club lands immediately south of the Dargle River, where a new pedestrian bridge can link to the main street.

Although outside the scope of this Plan, the level crossing at the end of Quinnsboro is a major obstacle to access the Seafront. Gates can remain down for up to 12 minutes due to poor gate control operation. This leaves people with disabilities waiting, sometimes in the rain, whilst several trains depart/arrive without any indication of when the gates would lift. This practice is antiquarian, a safety hazard, and needs to be addressed.

A cycleway to Greystones should be considered running alongside the Bray Head Cliff Walk, as the current main road (R761) is too dangerous.

File

Historic Cast Iron Railings.jpg, 1.12MB

St Paul_s Lodge Demolition.jpg, 0.11MB

Shopfront -Quinnsboro Road.jpg, 0.57MB

SMART SHOP
KITCHEN . STATIONERY
ELECTRIC . SWEETS
TOYS . DRINKS . VAPES

SMART
SHOP

EUROSTONE
KITCHEN . STATIONERY
ELECTRIC . SWEETS
TOYS . DRINKS . VAPES

Electric . Bikes . Cars

Garden . Dogs . Bikes . Baby . Luggage . Delivery . Top . Beauty . Tanning . Insurance





