



**DUNGARVAN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION HUB
18-20 O'CONNELL STREET DUNGARVAN**



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 (AS AMENDED), PART XI
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED),
PART 8**

January 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chief Executive's Report forms part of the statutory process as required by Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

This Chief Executive's Report provides for:

- A description of the nature and extent of the proposed development including a plan of the proposed development and map of the area to which it relates (Section 2 and Appendix A).
- An evaluation of whether or not the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area having regard to the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 (Section 2.2).
- The screening determination on why Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required (Section 2.3).
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment. (Section 2.4)
- A list of the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations (Table 2.1).
- A summary of the issues raised and the response of the Chief Executive (Table 2.2).
- A recommendation as to whether or not the proposed development should proceed as proposed, or as varied or modified as recommended in the report or should not proceed, as the case may be (Section 3).

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORKS

The notice of the development under Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and the requirements of Part 8, Article 81 & Article 120(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, for the proposed Dungarvan Digital Transformation Hub Development was advertised in the Dungarvan Leader and the Dungarvan Observer, two local newspapers on Wednesday the 29th of November 2023 and placed on public display until the 8th of January 2024.

Plans and particulars of the proposed development were available for inspection or purchase, at the Customer Care Offices, Civic Offices, Davitt's Quay, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford; and Customer Care Desk, Baileys New Street, Waterford City between the hours of 9.30am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday for the above period (excluding Bank and Public Holidays).

A copy of the plans and particulars were also made available to view online, on Waterford City and County Council's website at :

<http://waterfordcouncil.ie/projects/public-consultations/index.htm>.

Submissions or observations could be made with respect to the development on or before 4pm January 22nd 2024, either in writing or via an online submission form.

Notice was also given to prescribed bodies in accordance with Article 81 of Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

2.1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Dungarvan Digital Transformation Hub DDTH will be located at 18 – 20 O Connell Street in Dungarvan on a site that has been vacant for a number of years, and which has fallen into a state of dereliction. Numbers 18 and 19 will be retained as these are protected structures while a new building will be constructed on the site of No. 20; the amalgamation of the three buildings will unify the site and sensitively respect the context of O Connell Street.

The site extends back as far as the Dungarvan Shopping Centre. The surrounding buildings are retail/commercial with some residential on upper floors

The purpose of the new hub is to provide a center of excellence where in-house knowledge and experience will offer opportunities for learning, innovation and information sharing in a collaborative environment. It will also offer a wide-reaching network of support from technology partners both nationally and internationally and connection to centers of knowledge, research and innovation.

The nature and extent of the proposed works, as described in the public and site notice were as follows:

- Building conservation and refurbishment works to 18 & 19 O'Connell Street for office accommodation on ground, first & second floor.

- Works to the rear of 18 & 19 O'Connell Street to provide for universal access, WCs and ancillary accommodation.
- A new 3-storey infill at No. 20 O'Connell Street with main entrance, reception on ground floor and open plan office space on first and second floor.
- A new single storey structure to the rear of No. 20 O'Connell Street with multipurpose spaces for meeting/conference, working/training, digital demonstration, and exhibition.
- Refurbishment of existing stone outbuildings for office and meeting spaces.
- New rear entrance from public space at Dungarvan Shopping Centre.
- New single storey commercial unit to the rear of the site, located at the entrance from public space at Dungarvan Shopping Centre.
- Hard and soft landscaping to rear courtyards. Provision of plant room spaces associated with mechanical & electrical installation. ESB Substation and electrical switch room to the rear of the site.
- Connection to existing site services.
- Sustainable urban drainage and all ancillary site works.

Appendix A of this Report includes a plan of the proposed development

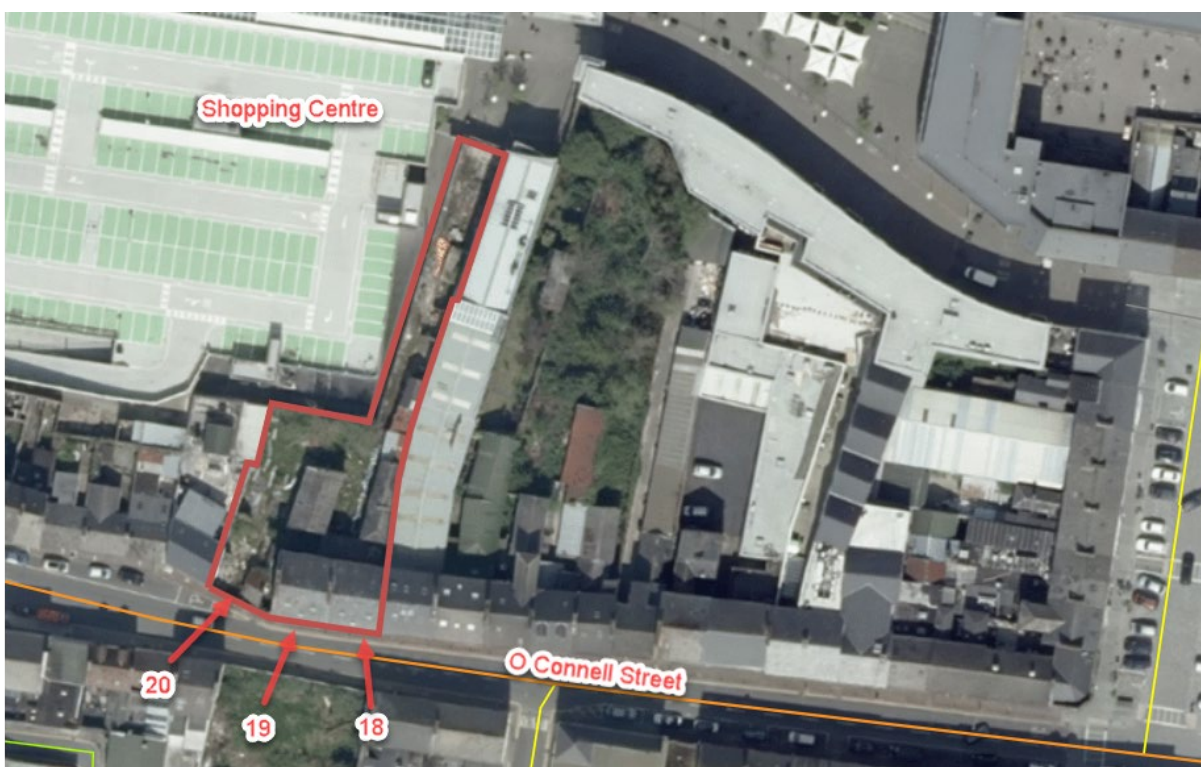


Fig.1: Aerial image of Site Location and Red Line Boundary.

2.2 PLANNING POLICY

Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028

Land Use Zoning

The subject property is located within Dungarvan Town Boundary and is zoned Town Centre (TC) *“To provide for the development and enhancement of town centre core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses”*.

The proposed use is supported under Town Centre Zoning and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Economic Development

The proposal also addresses Economic Development Policy Objectives as identified in WCCC Development Plan 2022 – 2028, Economic Policy Objectives:

ECON 02, STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

To support significant employment growth and development of strategic employment locations as identified within the Waterford MASP, Waterford Airport, Port of Waterford, Dungarvan key town, Tramore and Kilmeaden, having regard to service availability, accessibility by sustainable transport modes, place-making for businesses, and the built environment context.

We will also promote and facilitate employment in all our settlements where investment can be focused on:

- Creating additional and multi-purpose employment opportunities to secure the long-term sustainable social, and environmental development of rural areas.
- Encouraging economic diversification.
- Supporting research, innovation, and enterprise development, including through the support for/ provision of incubation facilities.
- Support the development of a network of digital hubs in order to attract new and start-up business; and
- Facilitate the growth of rural enterprises and sustain a local rural hinterland.

ECON 04, CITY AND TOWN CENTRE FIRST APPROACH

We will support national policy as stated in Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns (DHLG&H/ DRCD) 2022 across Waterford City and County. When considering advancing local authority initiatives, and submitted development proposals, we will adopt a city and town and city centre first approach in a manner consistent with the principles of compact growth and mixed-use development, as committed to in ‘Town Centre First’.

We will support and enable vibrant and viable centres to accommodate a diverse range of commercial, community, heritage, riverside/ marine, amenity and residential uses to ensure they fulfil their role in supporting sustainable communities. Where proposals are not appropriate to, or

cannot be accommodated in a settlement centre, we will adopt a sequential approach to identify the most appropriate location in line with the policies and development management standards of the Development Plan. To this end, the Council will promote, facilitate, and undertake works and initiatives aimed at:

- An integrated and 'whole of local government' approach to packaging relevant funding schemes (e.g., TVRS; Outdoor Recreation; FLAG; CLAR; URDF; RRDF) towards town/village renewal/ rejuvenation plans.
- Encouraging and facilitating increased 'living over shops' and above-the-shop conversions to expand the availability of housing and contribute to greater vitality and vibrancy.
- Enhancements to our streetscapes and public/ urban spaces, including those that support active transport.
- Ensure 'added value' is included in all public works programs, for example in respect of Green Infrastructure/ low carbon elements, and measures which include/ provide for increased social interactions and experiences.
- Promoting a 'Town Centre First Approach' founded on the 'Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Program' as set out in the Guidelines, and utilising a cross departmental approach to address identified issues.
- Supporting a transition from traditional villages to Smart Villages status (EU Action for SMART Villages Initiative), and the revitalisation of rural communities through social and digital innovation, and connectivity.
- Incentivising the regeneration, upgrading and reuse of underused and vacant building stock.

ECON 06, REGENERATION

We will facilitate and participate in regeneration projects so as to revitalise under-utilised business parks and industrial estates and promote the regeneration of obsolete and/or under-utilised buildings and lands that could yield economic benefits and/or social enterprise, with appropriate uses, subject to compliance with the policies and development management standards of the Development Plan

ECON 07, ACTIVE LAND MANAGEMENT

To carry out the functions of the local authority in a co-ordinated manner in order to assist in the proactive targeting of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands and buildings, and general building stock, in pursuing the achievement of the policy objectives of this Development Plan, and in order to facilitate an Active Land Management approach to the sustainable growth and development of Waterford City and County. This will be achieved/ assisted by:

...

- The acquisition by agreement or compulsory purchase, of vacant, derelict or underutilised sites or buildings, in order to address incidents of urban decay and vacancy, ensure revitalisation and conservation of our built heritage; regeneration of underutilised sites/ buildings, and bring about long-term economic and social/ community development and sustainability...

ECON 08, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

To work in conjunction with the Waterford Local Enterprise Office (LEO), LEADER and all relevant stakeholders to support and deliver the further development and expansion of new workspace for SMEs, the creative industries, film industry, artists, and the fashion and craft industries in Waterford, and particularly in new commercial and mixed-use developments, or where underutilised buildings are being brought back into use.

ECON 14, LOCAL WORKPLACES

To engage in local partnerships with stakeholders/ community groups, and social enterprise, together with other funding organisations, to assist in identifying, facilitating and promoting smart working locations and economic enterprise and growth/ regeneration, by encouraging and facilitating the provision (subject to funding availability), of local workspaces, small business units, new Enterprise Centres /Co-working hubs, and/ or grouped 'units' or spaces which can provide a multi-functionality of purpose and use, adding vitality and vibrancy to an area. Social enterprises running repair, reuse and recycling initiatives will also be encouraged where considered appropriate.

Education

The proposal also addresses Education Objectives as identified in WCCC Development Plan 2022 – 2028, Education Policy Objective:

EDU 03, LEARNING CITY/REGION

To support the development of Waterford as a University and Learning City/ Region through the following measures

- Facilitating education facilities and shared learning spaces at appropriate locations across Waterford
- Working with the education and training sectors to develop the skills of Waterford's people to match the needs of existing and future businesses.
- Supporting the provision of outreach educational facilities and centres across public libraries and through other education/ training providers

Built Heritage

Two of the specific sites in this scheme include protected structures. No 18 O' Connell Street Record of Protected Structures (RPS) number **DV740159** which is listed in the current development plan as a protected structure. Also, No. 19 O' Connell Street which is listed as a protected structure under RPS number **DV740078**

National /Regional Policy

Project Ireland 2040

The National Planning Framework identifies infill and regeneration opportunities as a key growth enabler.

-
- National Policy Objective 5 of the NPF states that the development of cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally will be the drivers of national and regional growth, investment, and prosperity.
 - National Policy Objective 11 of the NPF outlines that in meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) highlights a number of key attributes in relation to Dungarvan which include:

- Its strategic Location on the Waterford – Cork N25 transport corridor and access to ports/airports in Waterford and Cork and Belview Port, Smarter Travel legacy, extensive and diverse employment base, role as a Gaeltacht Service Town servicing Gaeltacht na nDéise, a renewable energy hub, tourist centre for Ireland's Ancient East & Waterford Greenway with close proximity to the UNESCO Geocoast and other natural and recreational assets and its role in servicing the healthcare needs of West Waterford with St Joseph's Hospital & Dungarvan District Hospital.

In terms of progressing the future sustainable development of Dungarvan as a Key Town, the RSES contains a specific Regional Policy Objective (RPO 24) in relation to Dungarvan

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

Waterford City and County Council has carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report in accordance with requirements of Article 120(1B)(b)(i) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and has determined that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. Accordingly, it has determined that an EIA is not required in respect of this proposed development. The EIA report and recommendation of the screening were made available with the Part 8 planning application for the duration of the consultation period.

2.4 APROPRIATE ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

An Appropriate Assessment Screening was carried in accordance with Article 250(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and has determined no potential for significant effects on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites – Dungarvan Harbour SPA.

It is concluded that the proposed development, due to the absence of any physical and hydrological connectivity between the project site and the SPA, would not give rise to potential for significant effects individually or in combination with other plans and projects and would not

be likely to have a significant effect on the designated sites in view of the sites conservation objectives.

3.0 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

A total number of two Observations were received within the statutory timeframe, The prescribed bodies who made the submissions are detailed in Table 2.1 below.

| Submission: Date | Name | Address |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. 19.01.2024 | Department of Housing | Submission was submitted by email. |
| 2. 22.01.2024 | Uisce Eireann | Submission was submitted by email. |

Table 2.1 Observations received within the statutory timeframe: 1st December 2023– 22nd January 2024

A summary of the issues raised, and the Chief Executives' response and any recommendations is provided in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2 Summary of Prescribed Bodies Submissions, the Chief Executive's Response, and Recommendations

| Observation Ref. | Name | Summary Of Observation | Chief Executive Response & Recommendation |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| 1 | Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage | <p>Archaeology The proposed development site is located partially within the Zone of Archaeological Potential in Dungarvan. An 'Archaeological Desktop Assessment' prepared by Daniel Noonan Archaeological Consultancy (29th November 2023) was submitted with the Part 8 application. The Department concurs with the recommendation that further archaeological mitigation will be required to ensure the protection of the archaeological heritage.</p> <p>Building Survey - A series of standard recommended conditions are suggested.</p> <p>Archaeological Testing - A series of standard recommended conditions suggested</p> <p>Built Heritage - A series of standard recommended conditions suggested</p> | <p>Noted- It is welcomed that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage considers that the proposed development complies with development management policies and objectives relating to the built heritage set out in Chapter 11 of Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022- 2028 and is therefore in line with proper planning and development.</p> <p>The standard recommended conditions to be attached to the planning permission.</p> <p>Recommendation: Attach standard conditions in relation to Archaeology and Building Survey.</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---------------|--|---|
| | | It is recommended that the proposed shopfront to Number 19 is redesigned. In doing so consideration should be given to better reflecting and enhancing the established character of the architectural conservation area and the protected structure. The proposed new design shall be agreed with the local authority Architectural Conservation Officer | |
| 2 | Uisce Eireann | Uisce Éireann (UÉ) has reviewed the plans and particulars and has no objection in principle to the proposed development and requests that any grant of permission a list of stated conditions to be attached | <p>Noted - observation accepted and an appropriately worded condition shall be attached.</p> <p>Recommendation: Attach Condition regarding connection agreement with Uisce Éireann as per the submission.</p> |

4.0 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of the new hub is to provide a centre of excellence where in-house knowledge and experience will offer opportunities for learning, innovation and information sharing in a collaborative environment. The hub will be located at 18 – 20 O Connell Street in Dungarvan on a site that has been vacant for a number of years, and which has fallen into a state of dereliction. Numbers 18 and 19 will be retained as these are protected structures while a new building will be constructed on the site of No. 20;

The proposed development will support the policies and objectives of the Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 and complies with Government policies, with the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy and the National Planning Framework. It is considered therefore that the development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Submissions received from prescribed bodies include for requirements which can be addressed by way of appropriate conditions. It is noted that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage considered the proposed development to represent a sensitive and balanced approach to the conservation and refurbishment of two protected structures as well as the introduction of new structures into an historic environment.

The project will provide for the following:

- Building conservation and refurbishment works to 18 & 19 O'Connell Street for office accommodation on ground, first & second floor.
- Works to the rear of 18 & 19 O'Connell Street to provide for universal access, WCs and ancillary accommodation.
- A new 3-storey infill at No. 20 O'Connell Street with main entrance, reception on ground floor and open plan office space on first and second floor.
- A new single storey structure to the rear of No. 20 O'Connell Street with multipurpose spaces for meeting/conference, working/training, digital demonstration, and exhibition.
- Refurbishment of existing stone outbuildings for office and meeting spaces.
- New rear entrance from public space at Dungarvan Shopping Centre.
- New single storey commercial unit to the rear of the site, located at the entrance from public space at Dungarvan Shopping Centre.
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- Connection to existing site services.
- Sustainable urban drainage and all ancillary site works.

RECOMMENDATION

1. All works to the protected structures are specified and carried out under the supervision of an accredited conservation architect or similar qualified person to be agreed with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the material functionality and overall structural integrity and longevity of the historic buildings.

2. A record shall be maintained of all works carried out during the course of the project.

Reason: In the interest of maintaining a permanent record of the protected structures.

3. It is recommended that the proposed shopfront to Number 19 is redesigned. In doing so consideration should be given to better reflecting and enhancing the established character of the architectural conservation area and the protected structure. The proposed new design shall be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

- 4.

Reason: In the interest of protecting and of conserving the character of the protected structure and architectural conservation area in accordance with policies and objectives of Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028.

5. The application and location of necessary utilities, such as lighting, CCTV, security and fire alarms as well as vents require careful consideration, so as not to adversely impact on the character of the protected structure.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to protect the character of the protected structures

6. Detailed material specifications for the new buildings and new additions to the protected structures, including new landscaping shall be agreed in advance with the Planning Department.

Reason: In the interest of conserving the character of the protected structure and architectural conservation area

7. New windows shall be appropriately designed to reflect correct historic detailing and proportions. Where double glazed units are considered, slim line double glazing units should be used. Details shall be agreed with the Planning Department.

Reason: In the interest of conserving the character of the protected structure and architectural conservation area.

8. (a) A field-based archaeological impact assessment, including a building survey and archaeological testing (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014), be completed in advance of any site preparation, demolition and/or construction works to

assess the potential impact, if any, on any archaeological remains surviving in the area where development is proposed to take place and to develop an informed archaeological mitigation strategy based on the findings of the building survey and archaeological testing.

(b) The archaeologist shall carry out cartographic research, historical research and shall prepare an annotated photographic record of both internal and external fabric and architectural features, survey plans and elevation drawings, as appropriate, to clearly record the building(s) and/or structures (including boundary structures, outhouses, 'sheds') proposed for demolition/alteration. Existing survey drawings, where available, shall be used by the archaeologist. A description of the structure's overall development, noting evidence of any successive building phases and supporting this analysis with annotated reference to stylistic elements, documentary sources or scientific dating methods, where appropriate. The archaeologist shall identify any earlier architectural features/fabric that may be incorporated into the buildings and structures (including boundary structures) currently standing on site and clearly indicate these on drawings and annotated photographs.

(c) A written statement shall be compiled assessing the impact of the proposed works on the existing structures. Plans and elevations of both the existing and proposed structure(s) shall be provided and analysed in the building survey report, clearly indicating the extent of removal and/or alteration of and intervention with existing fabric and features

(d) The report shall contain a comprehensive assessment of the implications of the development for the character of the structure and the area in which it is located. Recommendations and mitigation measures shall be outlined in accordance with the conclusions of the impact assessment, including details of proposed further recording (if required), details of proposals for the preservation in-situ of fabric/architectural features (such as the brick-built bread oven, bakery equipment) and an outline of proposed conservation works (prepared in liaison with a conservation specialist and structural engineer as appropriate) to be submitted for agreement of the Planning Authority.

(e) The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the site. Test trenches may be excavated at locations specified by the archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014), having consulted the site drawings and determining the extent of proposed associated groundworks. Archaeological testing in the interior of the buildings may be required if groundworks are intended in this area. A detailed archaeological mitigation strategy shall be included in the archaeological testing and impact assessment report. Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report to the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage and the Planning Authority. Where archaeological material/features are shown to be present, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) or monitoring may be required, the planning authority shall consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department with regard to appropriate

mitigation. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of features or other objects of archaeological interest and in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9. Prior to commencement of the development the developer shall enter into a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann and adhere to the standards and conditions set out in that agreement. All development is to be carried out in compliance with Uisce Éireann standards and code of practices.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision of water and wastewater facilities In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.



Paul Johnston
A/Director of Services
Corporate Services, Culture & Planning

30/01/2024





Fig.1: Aerial image of Site Location and Red Line Boundary.

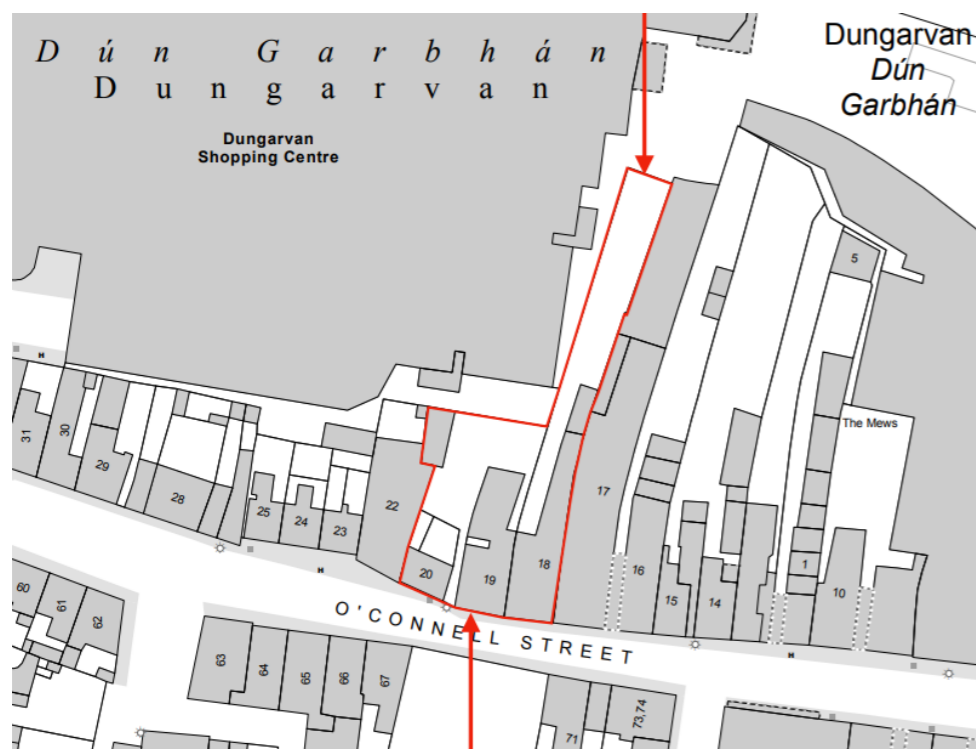


Fig 1.2 – OSI Map of Site Location and Red Line Boundary.