

# Carrickfergus Regeneration Project



This is part of a wider programme of investment that will establish Carrickfergus as a must-visit destination and the Gateway to the Causeway Coastal Route.



These boards set out the full proposals for your review. Your feedback matters: this is your opportunity to shape how your town centre looks and feels for generations to come.

**Top** A CGI image of what the area around the Castle will look like.

**Left** The regeneration of Carrickfergus will help improve the town for locals and visitors alike.

## What this project will deliver:

- Attractive, welcoming public spaces for residents and visitors alike
- Stronger connections between the town centre and its historic landmarks
- Increased footfall and new opportunities for local businesses
- Long-term regeneration of the town centre.

This is a Belfast Region City Deal project, funded by the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council offering a once-in-a-generation investment in Carrickfergus.

# Community Consultation



## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

5 Public Consultation Events



500+ Attendees

## SCHOOLS

1 Primary School

1 Secondary School

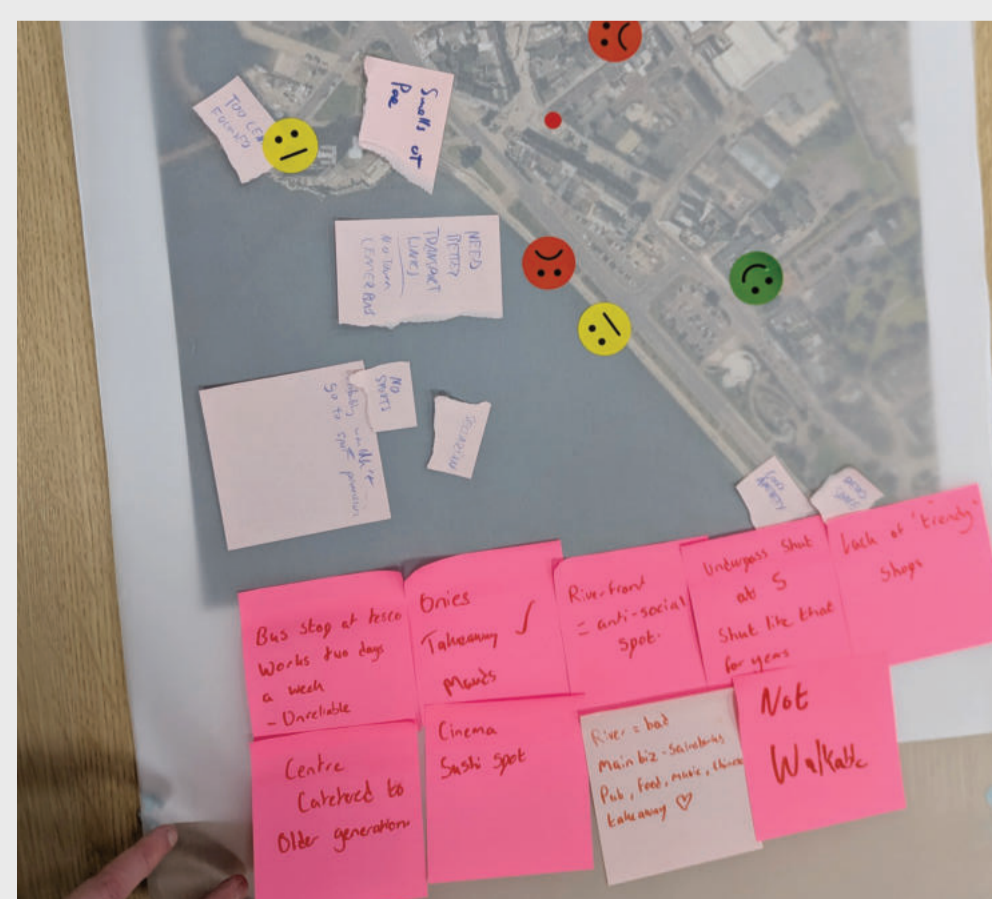
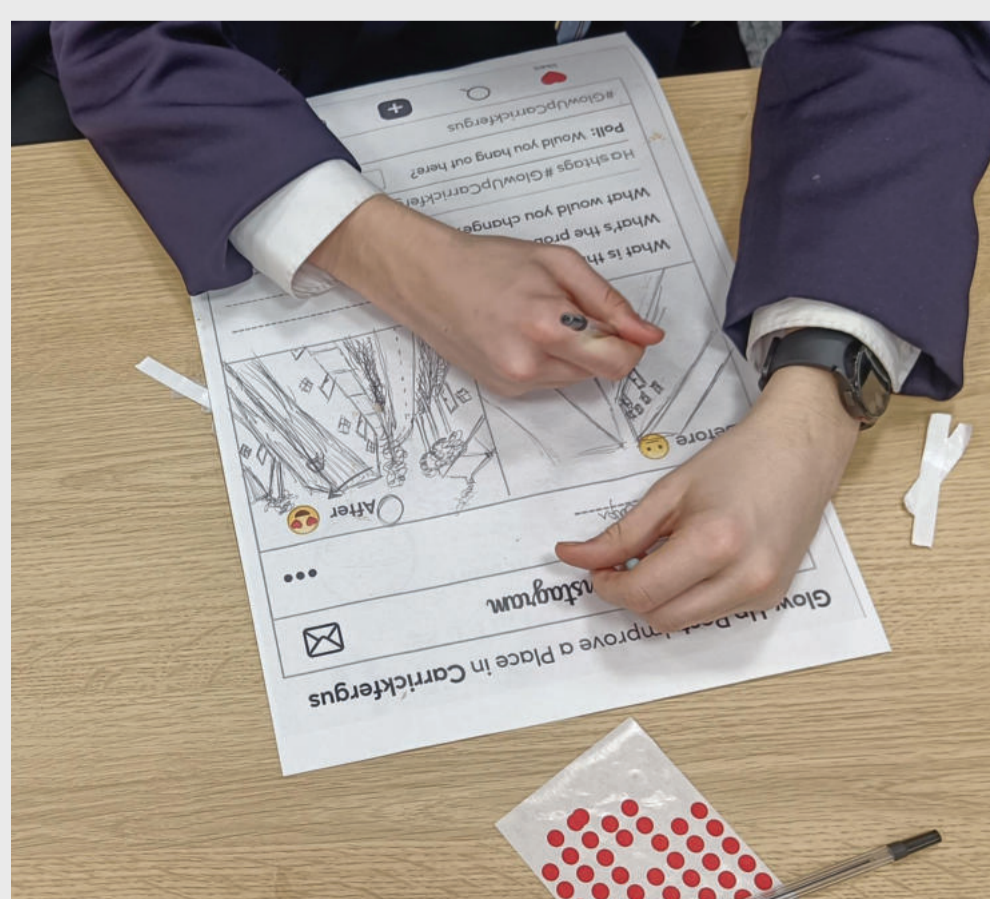
1 Third Level



## COMMUNITY GROUPS



25+ Local Community Groups



Five rounds of engagement have taken place as part of the wider Carrickfergus Belfast Region City Deal programme, ensuring that local voices have directly informed the design at every stage.

Alongside this, we worked with Queen's University Belfast planning students and pupils from Carrickfergus Academy to understand how young people experience the town centre today, its strengths, its shortcomings, and their ambitions for its future.

Above Local people shared ideas and feedback at consultation events, helping to shape the design proposals.

# Precedent Projects



These examples show how other historic towns have used regeneration projects to bring new life to their streets, attract visitors, and create better places for local people.



**Above** Waterfront Place, Dundee, Scotland  
**Below & Right** Bangor, existing and proposal  
**Bottom** Coastal Planting, Newcastle



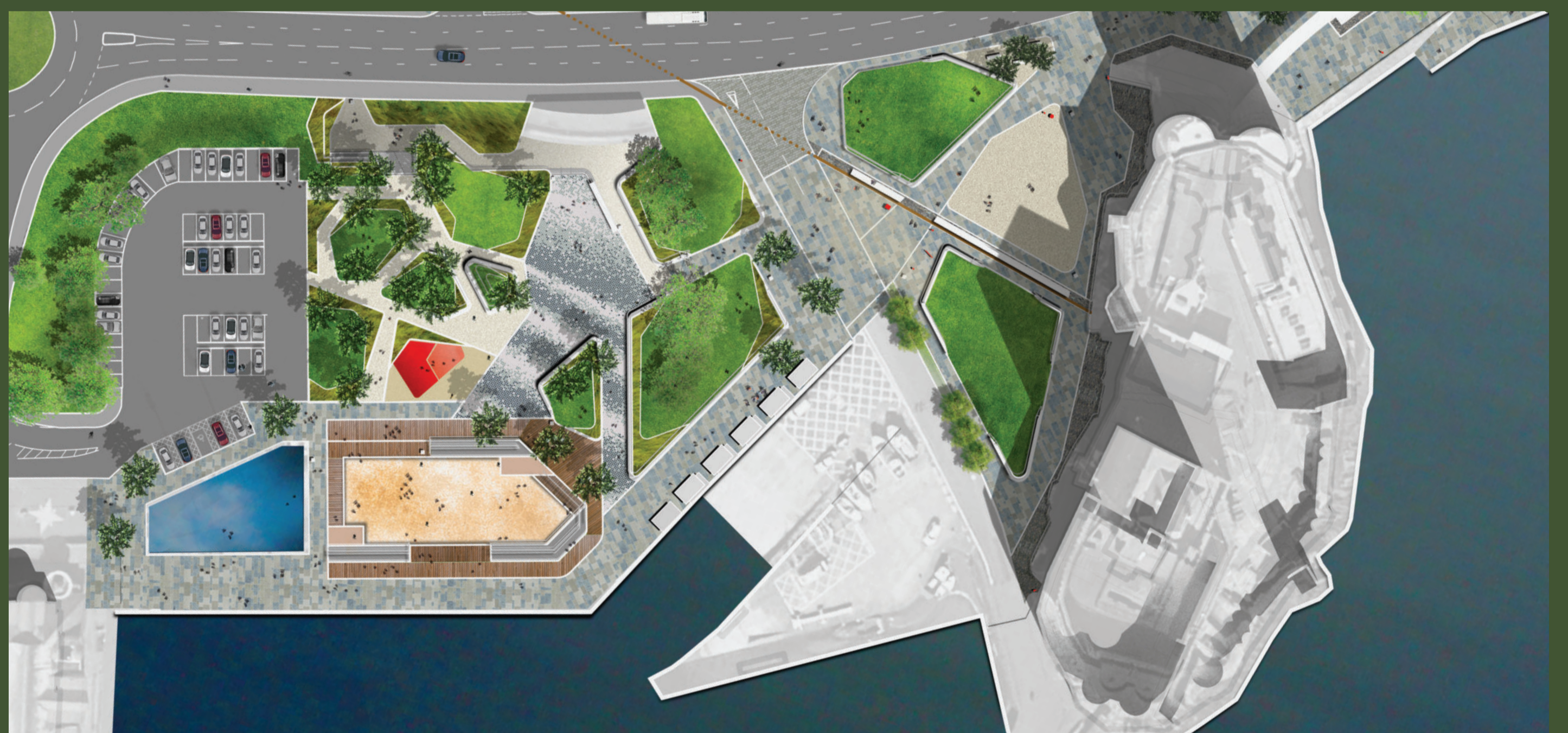
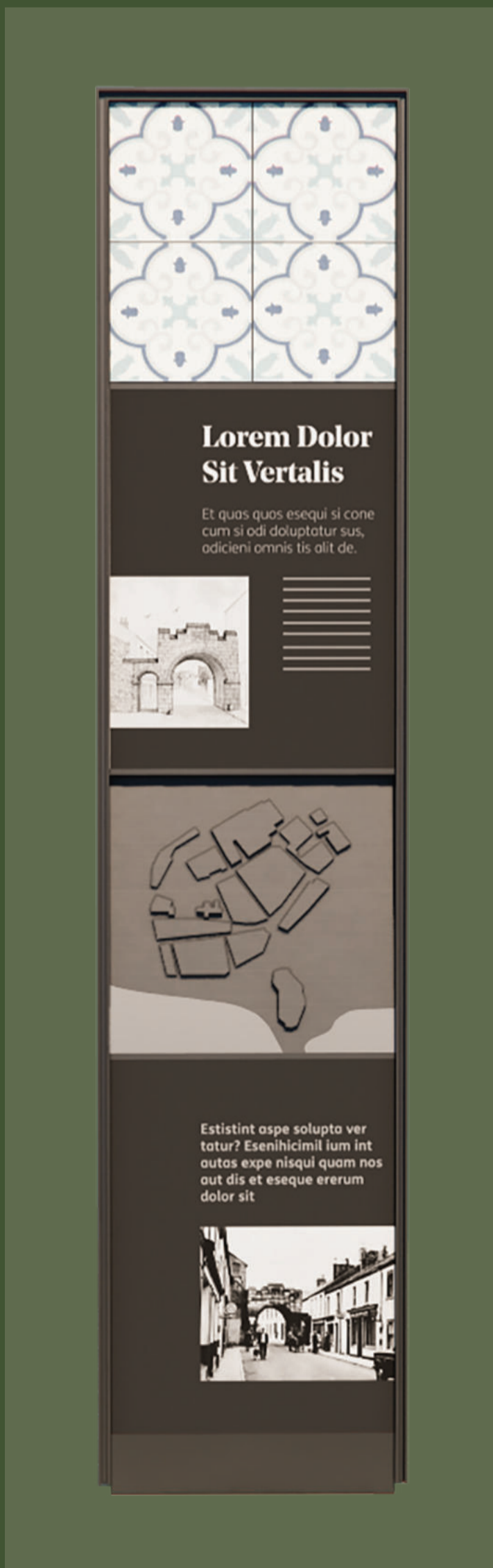
# Castle Park Plans



**Above** A CGI of the new Castle Park, which will create a welcoming space around the Castle and harbour for local people and visitors.

**Below & Right** The images show the proposals for the park, with an urban beach reconnecting the town to its harbour and waterfront.

Plans include a public park and an urban beach. Together these will reconnect Carrickfergus with the water and create a place to walk, relax and enjoy the harbour.





# Irish Gate

**Top** See how the historic town walls will be re-imagined.

**Above** Current View.

A sculptural gateway will mark where Irish Gate once stood, telling the story of Carrickfergus's historic town walls and the generations who passed through this entrance.

Stepped access will be replaced with an inclusive route, so this area can be enjoyed by all.



**Left** New totems will guide your way and share stories of the Walls.

**Above** Inlaid paving will bring lost sections of the town wall to life.

# North Gate Pocket Park



- Town wall walking route
- Train to town centre pedestrian route



The North Gate 'Pocket Park' will be an improved public space and a nice place to stop, with new seating, landscaping and interpretation.

It will open up the area and better connect the town walls.

**Top & Left** A look at the North Gate pocket park design.

**Above** Interpretation, including town models and totems, will help orientate visitors and show the complete experience around the town walls.



# North East Bastion



**Left** Step into the North East Bastion and imagine the town under siege.

**Above** The North East Bastion will become a key experience, bringing this impressive standing section of the walls to life.



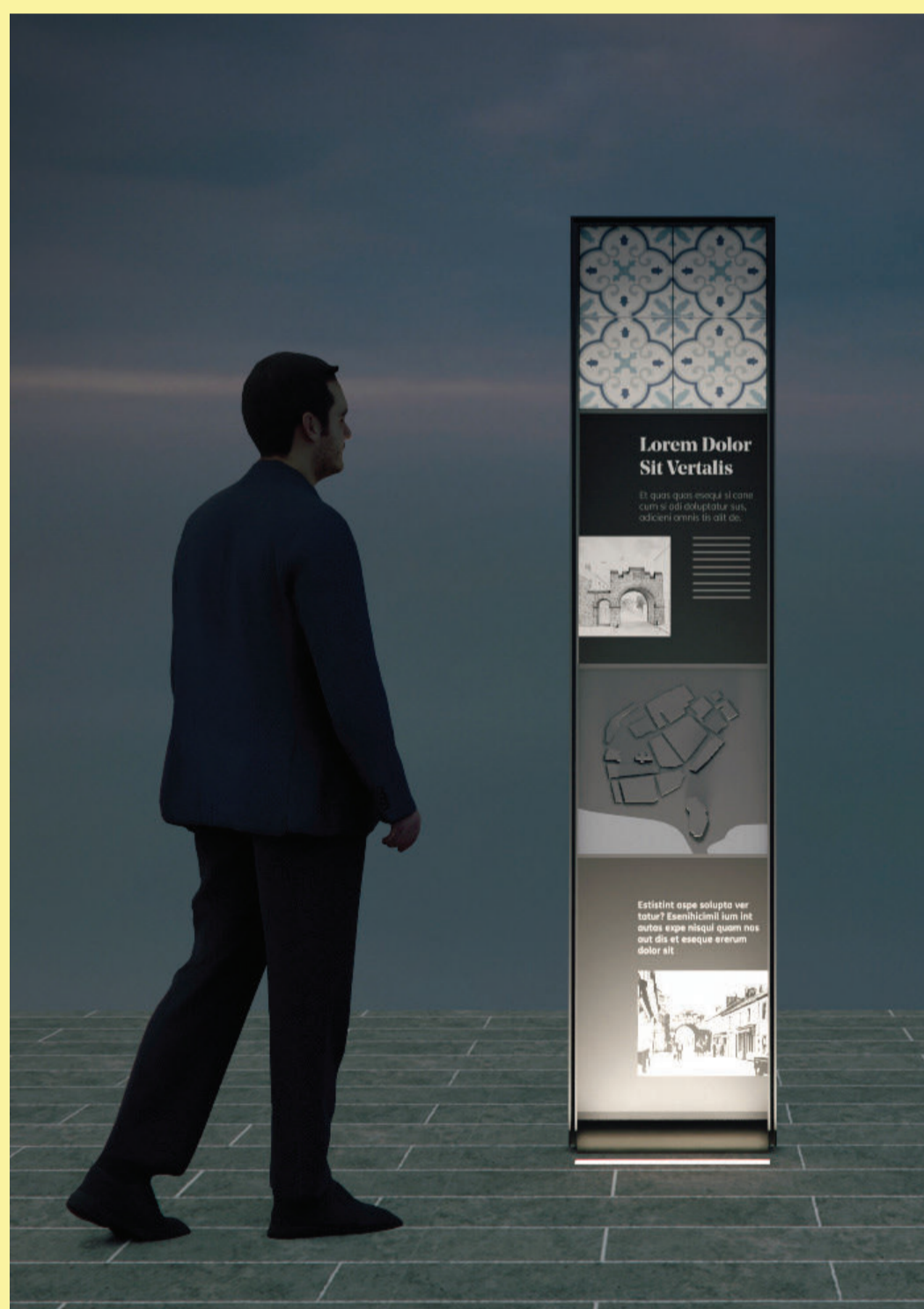
The North East Bastion will be opened up as part of the town wall walk.

New landscaping, interpretation and an immersive outdoor experience will bring one of the best surviving sections of Carrickfergus's historic walls to life.



# Town Lighting Strategy

A new lighting plan will highlight Carrickfergus's historic buildings and streets. Better lighting will also make the town feel safer and more welcoming after dark.



**Above** Lighting proposals will make the town more welcoming and enjoyable after dark, helping improve the night-time economy.

# Journey around the Walls



## Key stories along the route

Walk the oldest surviving upstanding town walls in Ulster. The transformed route will have new interpretation, lighting, and improved access to create a destination that draws visitors beyond the Castle and deeper into the town.

- 1 The Castle and first settlement**

Carrickfergus Castle was built by John de Courcy in the 1100s. A town soon grew around it, protected by early defences.
- 2 The growth of the town defences**

Over time the defences became stronger: changing from earth banks and wooden stakes to the stone walls that still survive today.
- 3 Life inside the walls**

The walls were guarded by soldiers, but they also surrounded a busy town. Markets, homes and workshops filled the streets inside the gates.
- 4 The Siege of 1689**

During the Williamite War, the town came under attack. Cannon fire breached the walls (a gap which was temporary filled by cattle!) and the garrison was forced to surrender.
- 5 A town connected to the sea**

Carrickfergus grew through trade and travel by sea. The town gates linked to the harbour and waterfront.
- 6 Stories from the streets**

Merchants, traders, soldiers and families lived inside the town walls. Their stories shaped the character of Carrickfergus for centuries.



Above Suite of proposed interpretation furniture that will be located around the town walls.

# The Visitor Centre Opportunity for Regeneration



This is the biggest investment in Carrickfergus town centre in living memory. It is a chance to be ambitious and move beyond simply maintaining the status quo.

The project will create more reasons to visit, stay longer and spend time in the Town Centre. It will help bring new life to the town, build confidence for investment, support local businesses and improve spaces and buildings. It also responds to feedback from the community, helping shape a stronger future for Carrickfergus - day and night.

## BUILDING DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION & FOOTFALL

300,000  Visitors to Town

210,000  Visitors to Castle



**Top** Diagram showing connections from the Visitor Centre around the town.

**Above & Right** This is a tourism regeneration project that will benefit visitors and locals alike.

# The Visitor Centre Visitor Offering



## Second Floor

**Open for business:** Events and gallery space. Bookable community space.



**Taking care of staff:**

Professional back-of-house, offices, staff break room, and fully accessible facilities, designed to support operations across the Castle, Visitor Centre, and M&EABC's wider tourism ambitions.



## First Floor

**Destination attraction:** A world-class AV experience alongside tailor made exhibition spaces to provide a genuine tourism draw to Carrickfergus Town.



**Life long learning:** Investing in a learning centre for all ages strengthens the social case, not just the economic one and unlocks potential grants and future funding.



**Sensory Space:** Creating a calm, safe space for those who need it.

## Ground Floor

**Committing to accessibility:** Public WC's with Changing Places facility



**Driving town centre footfall:** Visitor orientation, tourist information and ticketed entry



**Complements rather than competes:**

A curated retail offer with the opportunity to showcase local artists with grab-and-go food and beverage.



**Dual entrance:** From High Street & Marine Highway

# The Visitor Centre Visitor Experience

Inside the Visitor Centre, visitors will discover the wider story of Carrickfergus.



Atrium

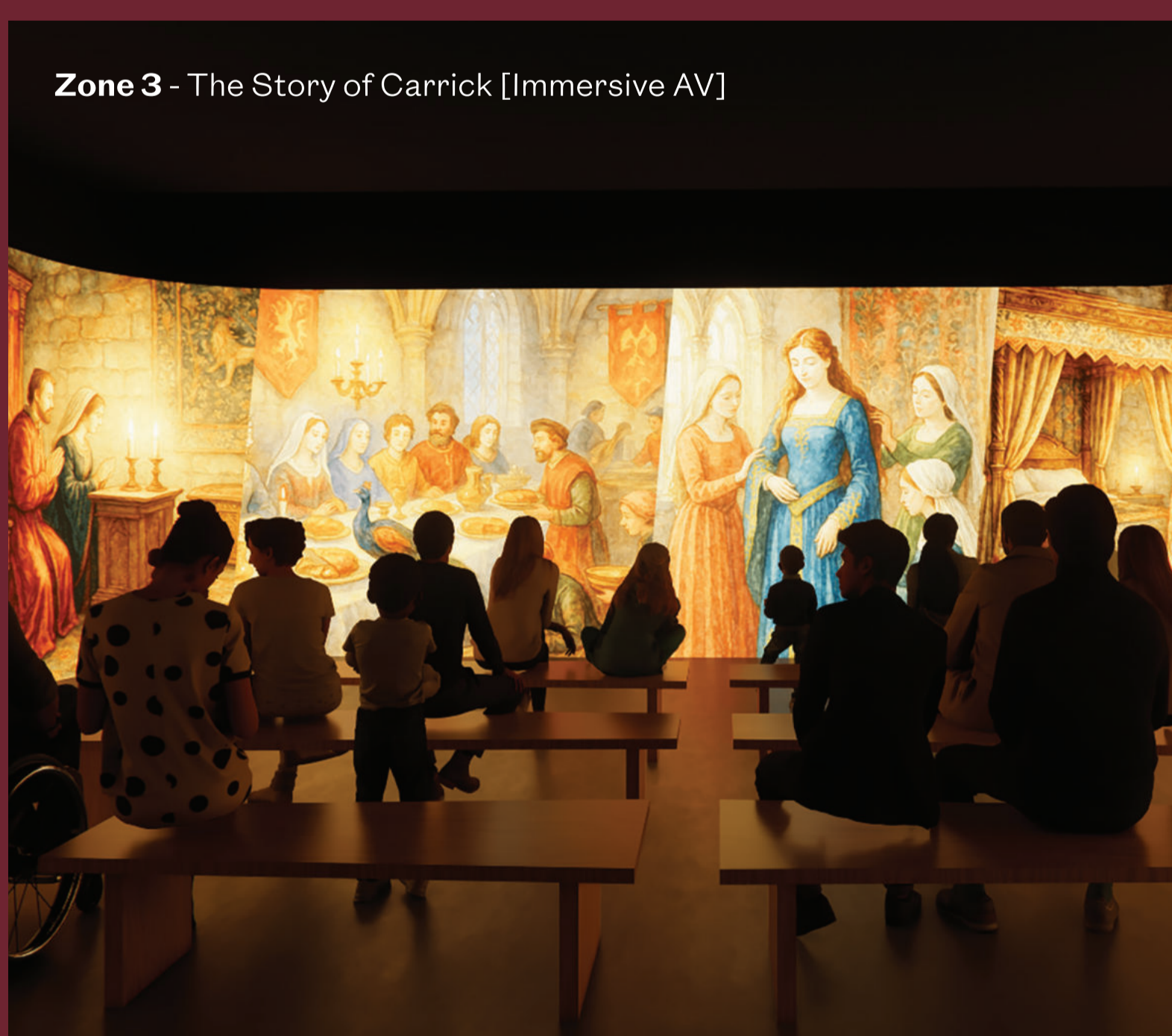
The idea is simple: You may have come for the Castle, but Carrickfergus is much more than the Castle.

Across three connected spaces, the exhibition shows how Carrickfergus grew from a Norman stronghold into a busy town shaped by trade, industry and culture.

It sets the scene for exploring the Castle and the historic town.



Zone 2 - Carrick the Town



Zone 3 - The Story of Carrick [Immersive AV]



Zone 1 - Carrick the Castle

**Above** These indicative CGI images show proposals for the new Visitor Centre experience, which tells the full story of the town and its people.

# The Visitor Centre Community Gallery Space

**Below** The community gallery will showcase and celebrate local people and their stories.



Indicative visual only



The top floor of the Visitor Centre will be a flexible gallery space, that can be used for rotating and temporary exhibitions.

Most of the year, it will be home to a permanent, adaptable exhibition on: the 'Carrick-a-tures' of Carrickfergus - celebrating the people and personalities that give the town its character.

**Above** Example of a temporary gallery space

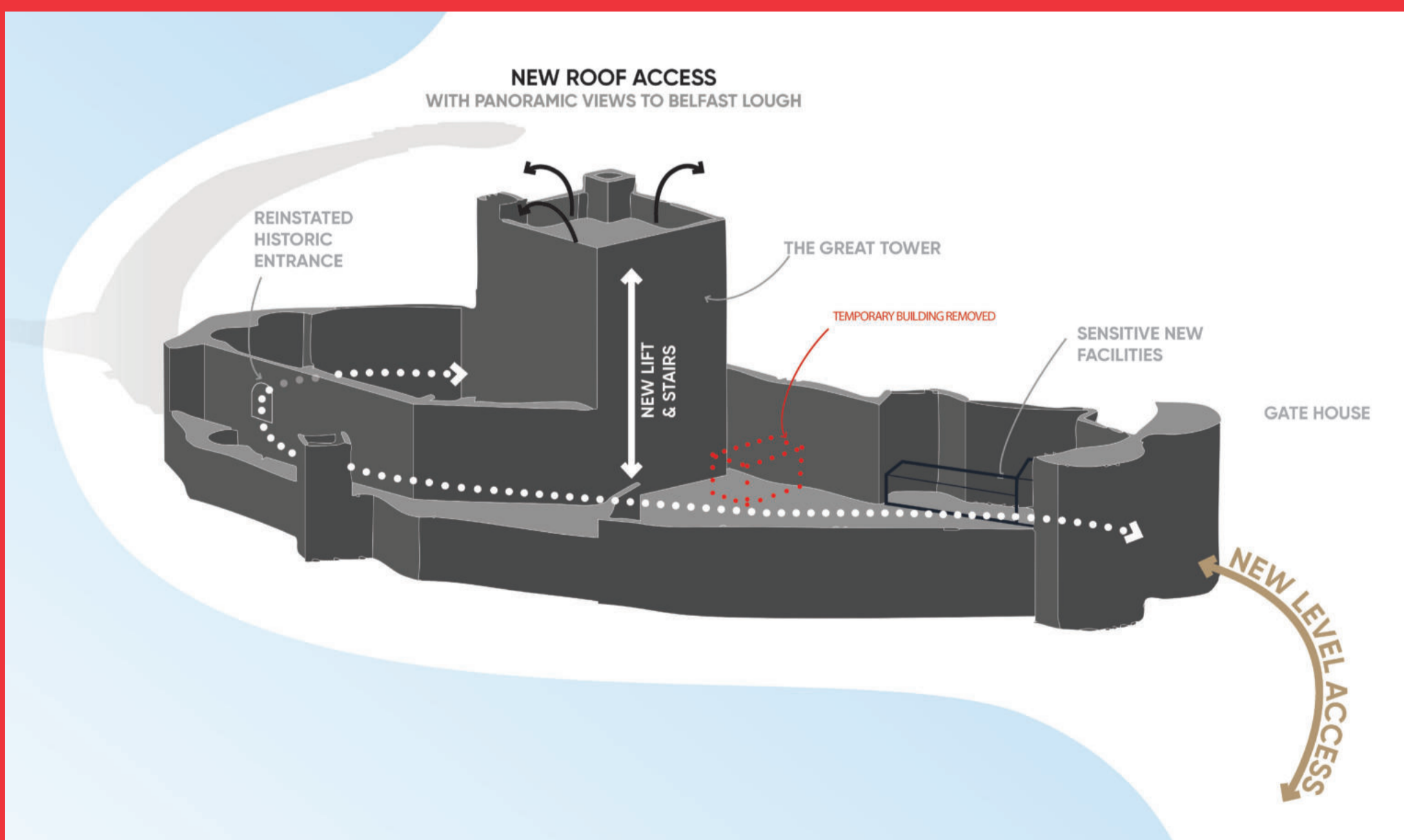
# The Castle Experience

## Castle Access



**Left & Above** A new front ramp will make the Castle accessible for all.

**Below** Diagram highlights improved access opportunities in the castle.



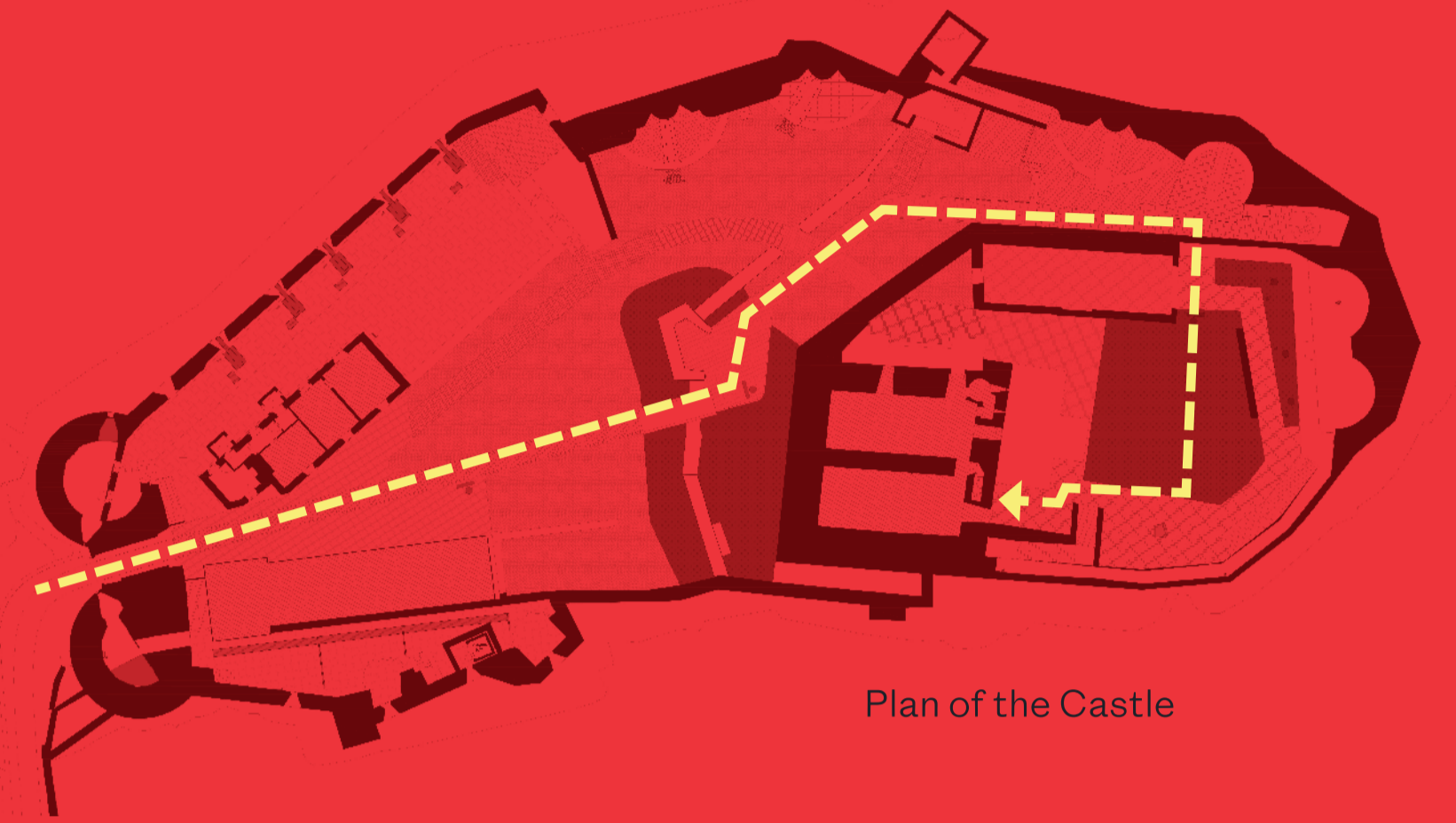
Carrickfergus Castle is set to become a world class visitor destination and central to that ambition is making it accessible to everyone.

We are proposing a gentle landscaped ramp to the main entrance and a new lift inside the keep, giving equal access to all floors for the first time in over 800 years. New facilities within the castle walls will include a Changing Places unit, a sensory room, and modernised accessible toilets, ensuring every visitor can enjoy the castle regardless of mobility or age.



# The Castle Experience Journey through the Castle

The visitor experience begins at the castle entrance, moving through a sequence of defensive spaces: the gatehouse, and the outer, middle & inner wards.



Plan of the Castle

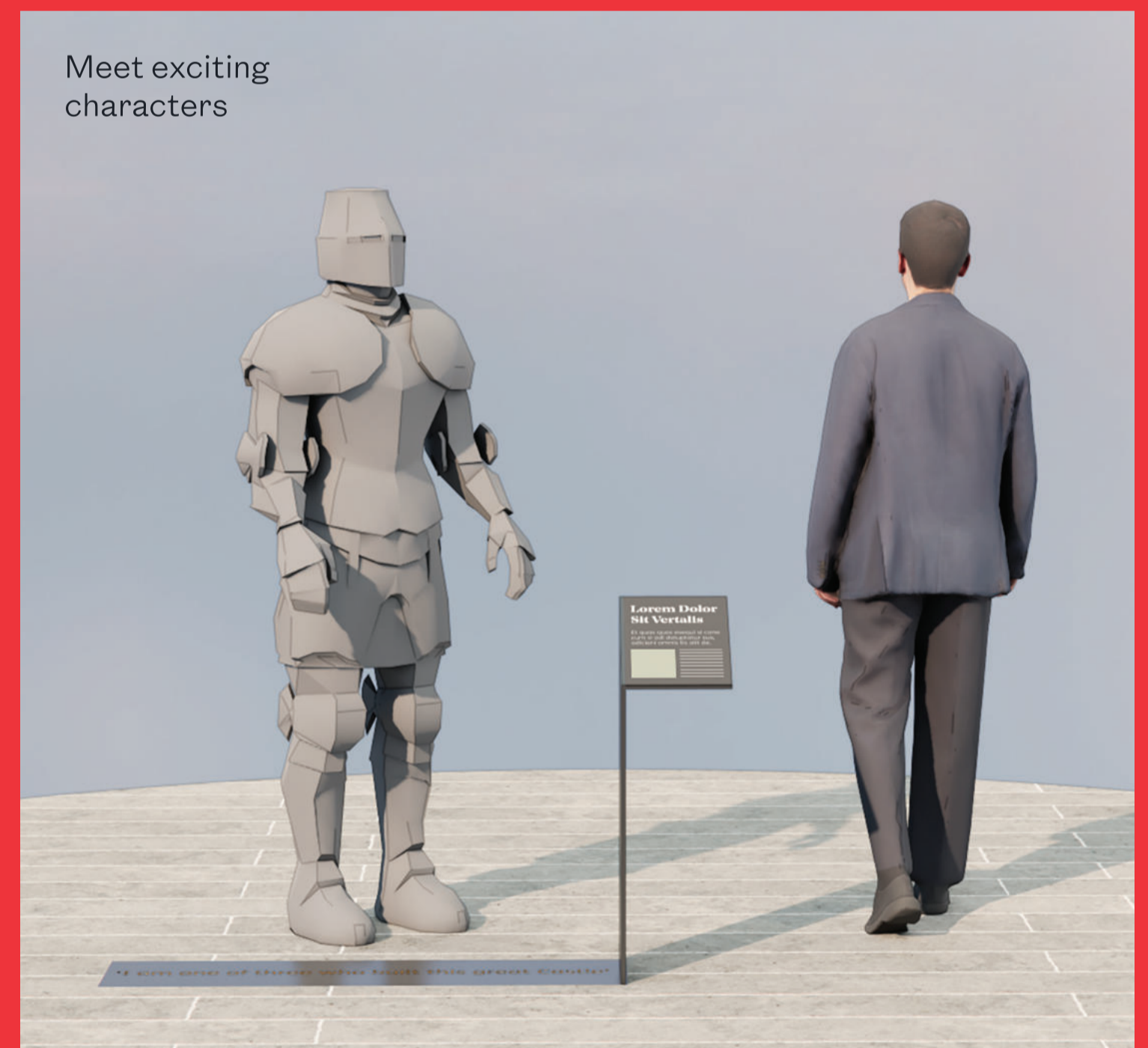
Each area reveals how the castle was designed and developed to protect against attack. Sculptures and light-touch interpretation introduce key figures and explain how the castle evolved over time.

**Left & Below** These indicative CGI images show the proposed elements of the new visitor experience in the castle.

Interpretation of the Great Hall



Meet exciting characters



Proposed exterior signage



# The Castle Experience

## The Great Tower

The Great Tower forms the centre of the visitor experience. As visitors move up through each level, the story of John de Courcy and the growth of his power is revealed.



Plan of the Castle

The spaces become more refined at higher levels, reflecting the social order within the castle. Interpretation, setworks and immersive elements bring daily life to life. The experience ends an immersive experience in the Solar – the private room of the lord and lady.

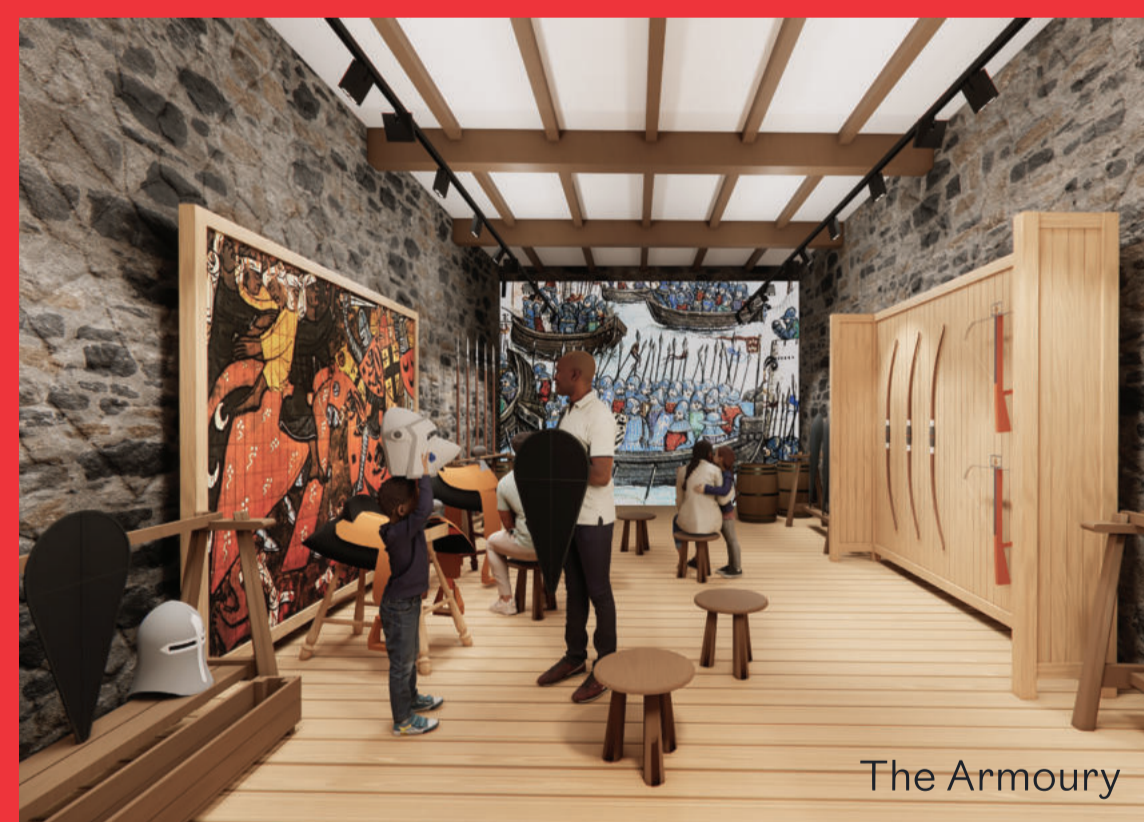
**Left & Below** These indicative CGI images show the proposed elements of the new visitor experience in the castle.



Immersive experience in the Solar



Building an Empire



The Armoury



Meet the Castle Steward



The Basement



The Banquet Hall

# The Castle Experience

## Exploring the Batteries

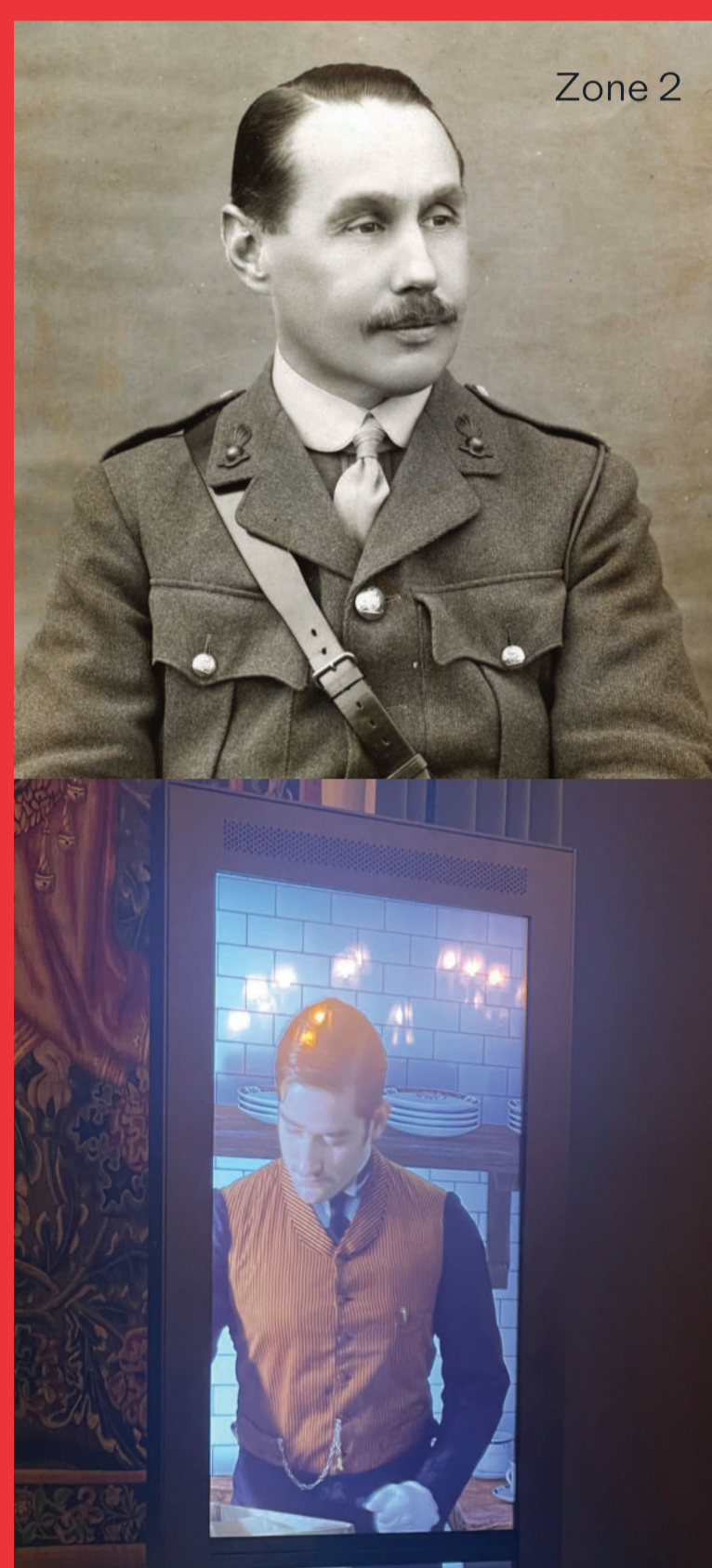
The wider castle grounds highlight how the site evolved following the medieval period. The batteries and guns show its later role as a military base defending the coast.



Plan of the Castle



Zone 2



Zone 2

Visitors can explore the Sea Tower and Postern Gate, as well as the Grand and West Batteries. The Officer's Quarters will tell the story of the castle as a Crown garrison, including as a headquarters for the Antrim Artillery.

**Left & Below** A selection of images that demonstrate the intended look and feel for the Officers Quarters, including setworks and an AV of Sir Captain William Baird.



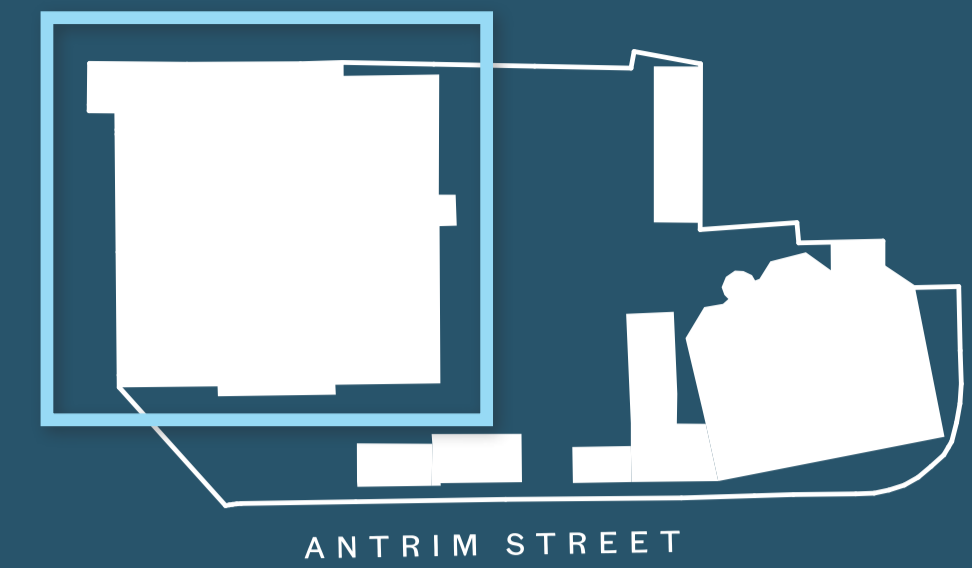
Officer Quarters



Zone 1



# Arts & Culture Venue Civic Centre



**Above** Indicative visuals for the new Civic Centre with interpretation, café and multi-purpose spaces for everyone.



**Below** Existing Museum.

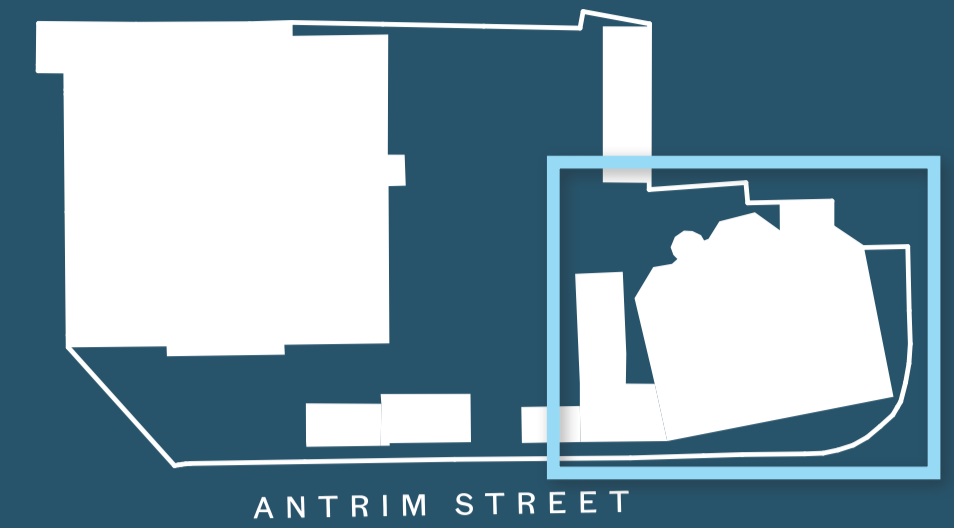


The Civic Centre will be transformed into a flexible space for exhibitions and events, with improved links to the museum.

The history of the site will be told through four chapters, focusing on what a 'day in the life' might have been like in each period. The four chapters explored are:

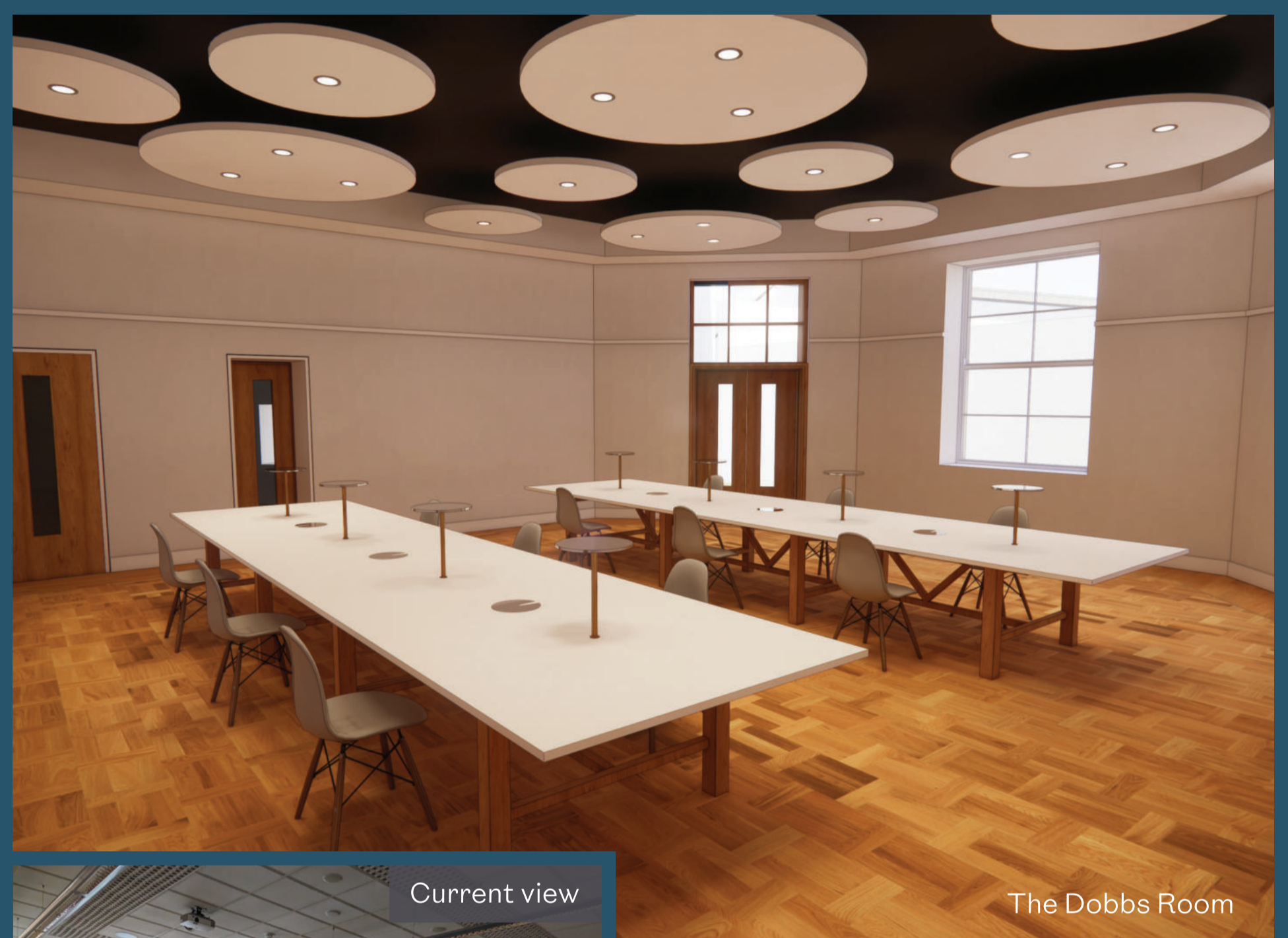
- The Franciscan Friary (1232–16th century)
- Joymount Palace (1614–1724)
- Antrim Courthouse and Gaol (1778–1850s)
- Antrim Artillery Barracks and Ordnance Store (1856–early 20th century)

# Arts & Culture Venue Town Hall



The Town Hall will be improved with better facilities, creating flexible spaces for events, activities and community use.

**Below** These before-and-after visuals of rooms in the Town Hall show how they could be reimagined.



# Arts & Culture Venue Courtyard



Above Indicative CGI visuals of the new courtyard proposal

Transforming the historic courtyard: The site once served as a prison, courthouse, and then a barracks for the Antrim Artillery.

Today, this courtyard is cluttered with bins, pipes and services that detract the quality of environment. The plans will open up this space, introducing a café area that spills out into the courtyard and creating a welcoming setting that people can enjoy for community events. The courtyard will also be a gateway to the new gardens at the North East Bastion.

# The Town Walls Experience

The Town Walls will become a connected heritage experience across Carrickfergus.



Public realm improvements, sculptures and storytelling will help reveal the history of the walls and the town they once protected.

Following the route around the town walls, people will discover how Carrickfergus grew, changed and was defended over centuries.

**Left & Above** Different storytelling techniques will be used to bring the history of the town to life.