

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT & RECOMMENDATION IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH SECTION 179 3(a) OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED)**

**Re: Permission for the following:**

PERMISSION for the creation of 13 x No. apartment units. The proposed development consists of a change of use from single house to apartments and remodeling of the existing four-storey-over-basement Georgian terraced house at No. 33 Thomas Street to provide 5 x No. one bedroom apartments. The material alterations, repairs and renewals proposed to No.33 Thomas Street comprise: demolition of the return to the rear; reinstatement of the front lightwell and railings; removal and alterations to existing internal partitions, doors and joinery; fire upgrading of existing walls and ceilings, installation of mechanical and electrical services, as well as sundry remedial works not impacting on the character or special interest Georgian original (not a Protected Structure). The proposed Development also consists of demolition of the former fire station structure at No. 34 Thomas Street to provide two ranges of residential apartments around an internal courtyard – one facing onto Thomas Street and the other along the rear boundary of the site. Connected by a staircase and passenger lift structure, the proposed new apartment structure is five-storeys tall, comprising retail / commercial, community and storage uses at ground floor level, with apartments at first, second, third and fourth floor levels. The top floor onto Thomas Street is set-back from the street façade to the line of the ridge of No. 33. The proposed apartments comprise 8 x No. two-bedroom units. The proposed development includes the creation of a semi-private courtyard between the Thomas Street and the rear block– to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments. Services and siteworks proposed to facilitate the proposed development include: new water, electricity and comms supplies; new foul sewage and storm water connections to public mains; air-to-water and roof-mounted PV panels for heating and ventilation

**At:** No's 33 & 34 Thomas Street, Limerick

**Reference Number 22/8023**

**1.0 Introduction**

This report has been prepared pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

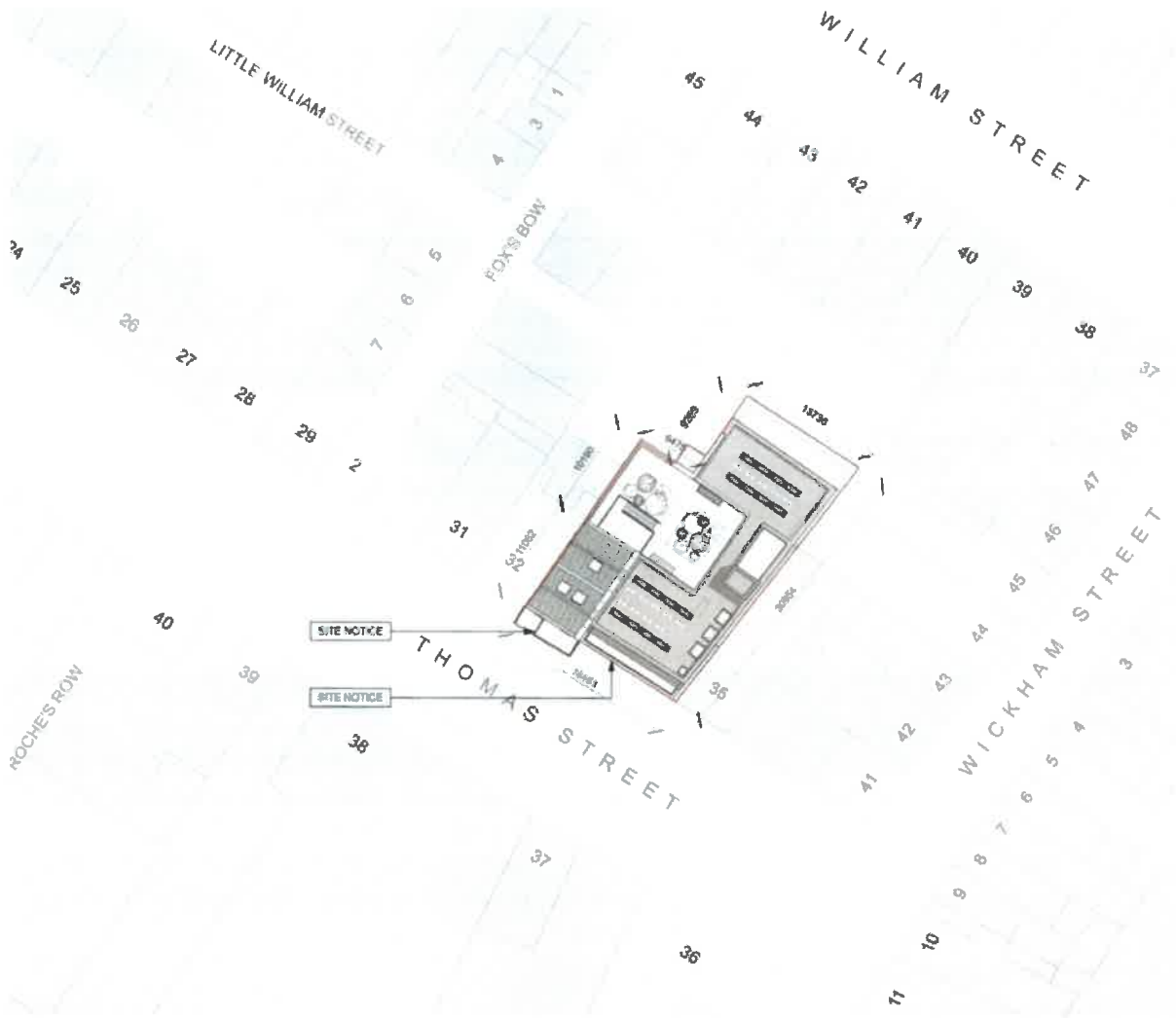
**2.0 Description of the nature and extent of the proposed development**

The proposed development is located at No's 33 & 34 Thomas Street, Limerick. The site has an area of 0.055 hectares. The proposed development provides for the construction of 13 apartment units.

**2.1 Site Location:**

The proposed development is located at No's 33 & 34 Thomas Street, Limerick.





**2.2 Public Consultation:**

The plans and particulars were placed on public display from the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, 2022 up to and including 27<sup>th</sup> of January, 2023. Submissions and observations were invited up to the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023.

### 3.0 Submissions with respect to the proposed development

A total of 2 x No. written submissions/observations were received and are listed below:

No.	Name
1	Leo Dillon
2	Limerick Chamber

#### **SUB (1) Leo Dillon**

##### **Submission Summary:**

Submission in respect of the development proposal noting the following:

1. Concerns raised regarding lack of suitable resident's bike storage.
2. Requested provision of an alternative bike storage design that caters for a number of non-standard cycles and is accessible to all user types.

##### **Chief Executive's Response:**

1. Noted. The bike store included in the Part 8 planning application complies with the requirements of the Development Plan. The number of residents bike parking spaces required in the Development Plan is 13. The number of parking spaces shown at the Part 8 layout is 16 resident's spaces. The layout shown is indicative and alternative arrangements are possible to suit different types of bicycles, while still meeting the required number of bike parking spaces.
2. The contents of submission item are noted.

#### **SUB (2) Limerick Chamber**

##### **Submission Summary:**

Submission in respect of the development proposal noting the following:

1. Welcomes proposal for residential accommodation and commended Limerick City and County Council for same.
2. Recommended that as many of the proposed units as possible be assigned for affordable purchase/rental accommodation.

##### **Chief Executive's Response:**

1. The Place Making and Public Realm Department notes the comments of Limerick Chamber.
2. This scheme seeks to promote Affordable Purchase and Private Tenure, subject to Government funding.

#### **4.0 Habitats Directive Project Screening Assessment**

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been undertaken by Openfield Ecological Services for the proposed development. Their report concluded 'that proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site.' Overall, the executive is satisfied that having regard to the scale of the development on zoned lands in the city centre and the distance of the development from any SAC and SPA, the development as proposed should not exercise a significant effect on the conservation status of any SAC or SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore a Stage 2 NIS is not necessary.

#### **5.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

An EIAR screening report has been undertaken by DK Planning & Architecture for the proposed development. The proposed development is for the construction of 8 dwellings (34 Thomas Street) and change of use of an existing building No. 33 Thomas Street) to 5 dwellings on an urban site. The development does not fall within any of the threshold requirements for a mandatory EIA as specified in Section 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). Having regard to the size of the development, located within a modified environment, the development as proposed does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

#### **6.0 Key Policy Provisions**

##### **Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028:**

The Development Plan sets out the following policies and objectives with respect to acceptable development at the location in question:

The site is located in Limerick city centre, which is Level 1 in the settlement hierarchy. The Development Plan policies and objectives set out the criteria to support compact growth in the city centre.

##### **Core Strategy Policies and Objectives**

###### **Policy CS P1 Core Strategy Implementation**

It is a policy of the Council to implement the Core Strategy for Limerick to ensure consistency with policies at a national and regional level, in particular population targets and distribution.

###### **Policy CS P2 Compact Growth**

It is a policy of the Council to support the compact growth of Limerick City Metropolitan Area, towns and villages by prioritising housing and employment development in locations within and contiguous to existing City and town footprints where it can be served by public transport and walking and cycling networks, to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence, in line with the Core Strategy Table 2.7.

###### **Policy CGR P1 Compact Growth and Revitalisation**

It is a policy of the Council to achieve sustainable intensification and consolidation, in accordance with the Core Strategy, through an emphasis on revitalisation and the delivery of more compact and consolidated growth, integrating land use and transport, with the use of higher densities and mixed use developments at an appropriate scale on

brownfield, infill, backland, statelands and underutilised sites within the existing built footprint of Limerick's City, Towns and Villages.

**Policy CGR P3            Level 1 Growing Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick)  
Mungret and Annacotty**

It is a policy of the Council to strengthen and consolidate Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty as a key driver of social and economic growth in Limerick and become a vibrant living, retailing and working City. In accordance with national and regional policy it is a requirement that at least 50% of all new homes will be located within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement, in order to deliver compact growth and reduce unsustainable urban sprawl.

**Objective CGR 03    Urban Lands and Compact Growth**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Deliver 50% of new homes within the existing built-up footprint of Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty and 30% of new homes within the existing built-up footprint of settlements, in a compact and sustainable manner in accordance with the Core and Housing Strategies of this Plan.
- b) Encourage and facilitate sustainable revitalisation and intensification of brownfield, infill, underutilised and backland urban sites, subject to compliance with all quantitative and qualitative Development Management Standards set out under Chapter 11 of this Plan.
- d) Encourage residential development in the City Centre zone by requiring at least 20% of new development to comprise residential use. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, where residential use is not deemed compatible with the primary use of the site e.g. museums/tourist attractions etc.

**Objective CGR 08    Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty**  
**It is an objective of the Council to:**

- a) Promote development which incorporates a high quality, sustainable and inclusive approach to proposals in the City and Suburbs (in Limerick), Mungret and Annacotty, which is supported by sustainable means of travel and which creates locally distinctive neighbourhoods and positively contributes to the existing built and natural heritage.
- b) Promote residential development in the historic areas of Limerick City, provided development is consistent with the architectural integrity and character of the area.

**Objective CGR 09    Building Heights**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that all new tall buildings in Limerick City are designed in accordance with the character area objectives, tall building recommendations and criteria set out in the Development Management Standards. All such buildings shall be of an exceptional architectural quality and standard of design and finish.
- b) Focus delivery of tall buildings in the City Centre, in particular the areas that have been identified as having potential for increased building height. In particular, tall building clusters will be encouraged at The Quays, Colbert Station Quarter, Cleves Site and The Docklands in accordance with the building classification criteria set out in the Building Height Strategy. There shall be a

general presumption against tall buildings in other areas, except at designated areas and the gateway locations identified in the Tall Buildings at City Level Map below.

- c) Protect the unique intrinsic character, scale and significant views of Limerick City, the skyline and key landmark buildings in the delivery of increased building heights, through the application of the Tall Building Classifications, Recommendations, High Level Principles and Assessment Tools and Criteria set out in the Building Height Strategy.
- d) Ensure applications for tall buildings are supported by the following assessments and any additional assessments required at the discretion of the Planning Authority - Environmental Assessment, Wind Analysis, Sunlight and Daylight Analysis, Verified View Analysis, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Architectural Design Statement, Traffic Impact Assessment including a Mobility Management Plan for non- residential uses, Building Services Strategy.

#### **Objective ECON 01 City Centre**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure retail development complies with the Retail Strategy for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Limerick as set out in Volume 6.
- b) Protect, promote, support and enhance the role of Limerick City Centre as the primary retail centre in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and Mid- West Region, in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region
- c) Enhance the vitality of the City Centre through a mixture of uses, reuse of vacant units, increased residential population and revitalisation. Retail is an integral part of the City's economy complementing its inherent strengths including innovation, enterprise, tourism, culture and services and has an important array of amenities, vibrancy, liveability/quality of life and quality-built environment. Development shall be designed so as to enhance the public realm and creation of a sense of place.

#### **Objective HO 012 The Living Limerick City Centre Initiative**

It is an objective of the Council to support the Living Limerick City Centre Initiative for the delivery of community housing across the City and the extension of similar initiatives to rural towns and villages.

#### **Objective CGR O2 Place-making, Universal Design and Public Realm**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that all developments are designed to the highest quality with respect to the principles of placemaking, universal design and public realm including the guidance set out under the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (2009) and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) the Whole of Government National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2022 and the 2020 DMURS Interim Advice Note – Covid 19 Pandemic Response.
- c) Ensure the construction of the highest quality and innovative designed buildings, in particular on the approaches to Limerick City, along the Riverfront/Quays, on important street corners or junctions, corner sites, the end of vistas and gateways, Town Centres and the edges of public squares or open space.

### **Objective EH O50 Work to Protected Structures**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect structures included on the RPS from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- b) Ensure that any development proposals to Protected Structures, their curtilage and setting, shall have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities published by the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- c) Ensure that all works are carried out under the supervision of a qualified professional with specialised conservation expertise.
- d) Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting Protected Structure and/ or its setting, is sensitively sited and designed and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout and materials.
- e) Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the Protected Structure is retained in any redevelopment and that the relationship between the Protected Structure and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, or views and vistas from within the grounds of the structure are respected.
- f) Respect the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, architectural detail, fixtures and fittings and materials.

### **Chapter 2 Core Strategy**

A minimum net density of 100+ dwelling units per hectare are required at appropriate locations within the city centre.

### **Chapter 11 Development Management Standards**

Car-free developments will be considered for all proposals on a case-by-case basis.

### **Objective TR 06 Delivering Modal Split**

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Promote a modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, carpool and public transport in conjunction with the relevant transport authorities;
- b) Support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling, carpool and public transport more attractive, appealing and accessible for all.



## 7.0 Appraisal

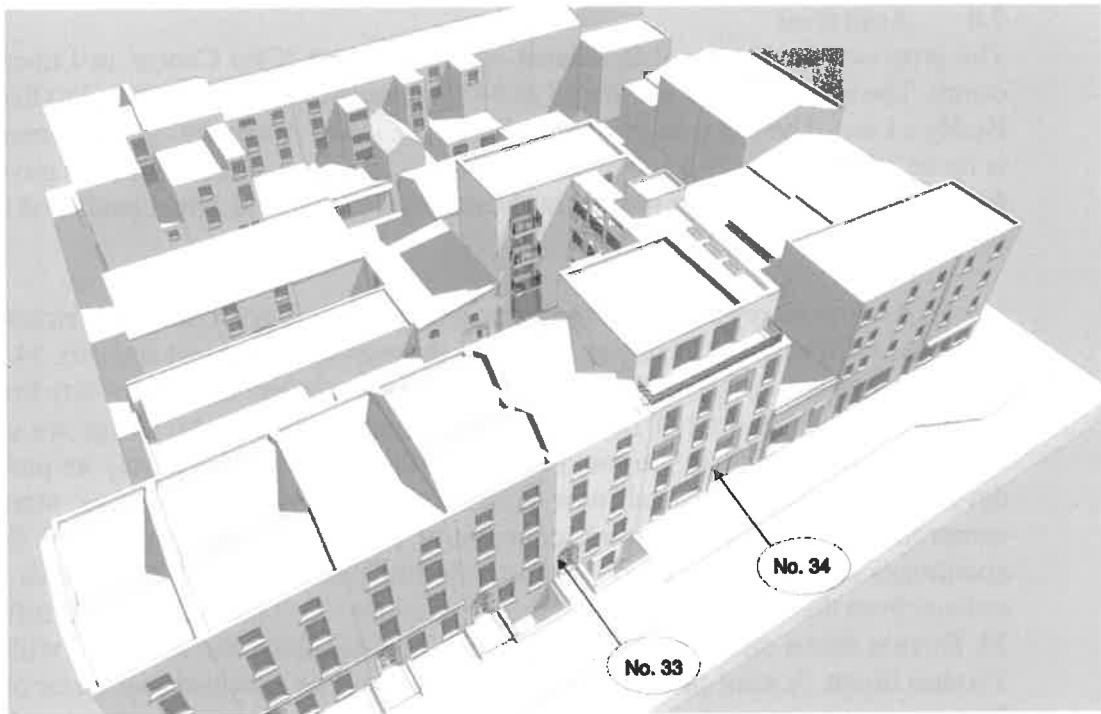
The proposed development is located on lands zoned 'City Centre' in Limerick city centre. The site is located at No's 33 & 34 Thomas Street and is bounded to the rear by Buddy's Lane. The site is in the ownership of the Local Authority. The proposed model is for an affordable (52%) and private sale (48%) housing scheme which is government funded as a demonstration project in the reuse of brownfield urban lands and building stock.

No. 33 is a four storey basement Georgian Building but is not a protected structure. No. 33 is the last of a row of Georgian houses to the west of the subject site. No. 34 Thomas Street is a two storey flat roofed building that was previously used as the city fire station and more recently by Civil Defence as a training base. Both buildings are currently vacant and derelict. It is proposed to demolish No. 34 in its entirety as part of this development. The proposed new apartment building will be five storeys tall comprising retail/commercial, community and storage uses at ground floor and apartments on the first, second, third and fourth. The top floor onto Thomas Street is setback from the street façade to the ridge line of No. 33. This building will infill at No. 34 Thomas Street and graduate to the rear of the site along the boundary with No. 35 Thomas Street. A semi-private central courtyard will be provided to the rear of No. 34 Thomas Street and include for secure bicycle and bin storage for the development. Active frontage proposed in both units on the ground floor which will help revitalise this part of Thomas Street and the wider urban block through active uses.

The proposal will create 13 x No. apartment units (5 x No. one bedroom and 8 x No. two bedroom units). 5 x No. units will be created in No. 33 Thomas Street and 8 x No. units will be created in the new build at No. 34 Thomas Street. The floor areas as proposed are in line with the minimum requirements in this regard. Services and site works proposed to facilitate the development include new water connection, electricity and communication supplies, new foul sewerage connection and storm water, connections to public mains, air to water heat pumps, roof mounted pv panels for heating and ventilation. The proposed development is a high quality design and finishes are considered acceptable. The reuse and repurpose on No. 33 Thomas Street for residential purposes is a positive use of a former Georgian townhouse. The redevelopment of No. 34 will contribute positively to the streetscape at this location and the modern design is considered to positively compliment the row of Georgian townhouses which start at the entrance to Foxes Bow.

A bat survey was carried out and no roosts were detected.

A daylight assessment was undertaken as part of this application and indicates that 82% of the habitable rooms thought out the development will comply with the targets set out in the BRE Guidance documents. A daylight and sunlight assessment was undertaken as part of this application and addresses that the impact of the proposed development on surrounding properties. The report indicates that 100% of the tested windows comply with the BRE Guidance documents.



The façade treatment of No. 34 Thomas Street represents a restrained and carefully modulated elevation that both reflect the rhythm, scale and proportions of the adjoining Georgian terrace, with large openings at points that convey the contemporary use behind. Contemporary materials have been selected for the new build elements. The railings for the recessed balconies to the street façade are glass to further emphasis the large openings. Railings and balconies to the facades facing the courtyard are painted metal. No. 33 Thomas Street is not a protected structure but has been treated as such given the historic significance in terms of the contribution to the streetscape of Thomas Street. The material treatment will be strongly guided by conservation best practice and repair of the existing fabric. Faced with red/brown facing brickwork in a Flemish bond, repairs will be undertaken locally and the entire wall will be repointed in lime mortar to match examples of best practice in Newtown Pery. The rear return will be removed as part of the works. The unit type, mix and sizes accord with the requirements of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028 and SPPR1 as set out in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (Dec 2020).

A detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to include a traffic management plan, which will take account of the site location and access issue, will be prepared before any development is carried out which will include input from the design team, all specialist consultants and Limerick City & County Council. This was confirmed by the Planning, Environment & Place Making Directorate on 06/03/23.

The proposal as set out is considered to be in compliance with Policy CS P1 Core Strategy Implementation, Policy CS P2 Compact Growth, Policy CGR P1 Compact Growth and Revitalisation and Policy CGR P3 Level 1 Growing Limerick City of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Having regard to the foregoing evaluation and the reason and considerations as set out, the Chief Executive is satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the objectives of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022 - 2028 and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Pursuant to Section 179(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the proposed development is recommended to the Elected Members of Limerick City & County Council for their approval.



Dr. Pat Daly

Chief Executive,

Limerick City & County Council

Date: 9.3.2023

