

Building Height Strategy for Limerick City

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ATLANTIC EDGE
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Introduction

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A Building Height Strategy that supports the preservation and enhancement of Limerick's character and informs policies, as well as the development process, by providing clarity on the appropriate scale and massing of buildings in the City.

This Building Height Strategy for Limerick City has been prepared to inform the review of the Limerick City Development Plan, 2010 – 2016 (as extended) and the Limerick County Development Plan, 2010 – 2016 (as extended) and the production of the first Development Plan for Limerick City and County. As part of the new Limerick Development Plan, 2022 - 2028 it will seek to drive general increases in building heights and ensure an appropriate mixture of uses while also considering the quality of development and balancing amenity and environmental considerations.

This Strategy is produced in the context of the ambitious targets for housing and commercial growth for the City, set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) which envisages an additional 56,000 persons in Limerick City and Environs by 2040. In this regard it is a key objective of the NPF that greatly increased levels of residential development is located in urban centres, including Limerick City and that significant increases in building heights and overall density is not only facilitated but actively sought and brought forward by our planning processes and particularly so at Local Authority level[1].

This Strategy is also produced in order to comply with the requirements of the Urban Development & Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018, (Building Heights Guidelines) which acknowledge the critical role increasing prevailing building heights has to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in cities and large towns. The Building Heights Guidelines require the planning process to actively address this and that the Development Plan must include the positive disposition towards appropriate assessment criteria that will enable proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height linked to the achievement of a greater density of development[2].

In compliance with national level planning guidance this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City directs building height to the City Centre, where there is the opportunity to make optimal use of the capacity of sites through the reuse of 'brownfield' land, build up urban infill sites and either reuse or redevelop existing sites and buildings that may not currently be in the optimal usage or format. Focusing height on the City Centre will also ensure that such development is within sustainable mobility corridors and networks thereby optimising investment in terms of improved and more sustainable mobility choices and enhancing opportunities and choices in access to housing, jobs, community and social infrastructure[3]. This Strategy also recognises that, in the context of Limerick City, taller buildings present an important opportunity to improve the overall quality of the urban environment by reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place.

Informed by a detailed policy review and urban analysis this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City seeks to deliver a robust framework for decision-making that will facilitate increases in building height in line with the requirements of the Building Heights Guidelines[4]. This Building Height Strategy for Limerick City provides guidance on the appropriateness or not of increased height buildings in particular settings within the City and identify areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for redevelopment, regeneration and infill development in line with Policy SPPR 1 of the Building Heights Guidelines. It also sets out assessment criteria that will enable proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height and tall buildings and delivers policy that supports building height at the identified specific geographic locations. In line with the Building Heights Guidelines these locations generally have the potential for comprehensive urban development or redevelopment, some of which are currently subject to or in the process of masterplanning exercises, with the opportunity for clusters also identified[5].

The intention is that the policy recommendations and assessment criteria contained in this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City will form part of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022 - 2028 thereby satisfying the requirement of the Building Heights Guidelines.



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Planning Policy Context



Project 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

Published in 2018, the National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to the year 2040. The purpose of the NPF is to enable both rural and urban Ireland to successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland's regions and cities (other than Dublin) whilst also recognising Dublin's ongoing role.

The NPF has a number of National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) one of which is Compact Growth which seeks to carefully manage the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages and to add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. The NPF states that a streamlined and coordinated approach to development is required to activate key strategic development areas and to achieve effective density and consolidation in urban settlements.
The NPF envisages that by 2040 there will be approximately an additional one million people living in Ireland. The NPF identifies Limerick City as the largest urban centre in Ireland's Mid-West Region which has the potential to generate and be the focus of significant employment and housing growth. The NPF targets a population growth of up to 56,000 people for Limerick City and Suburbs by 2040.

The NPF targets a significant proportion of future urban development on infill/brownfield development sites within the built footprint of existing urban areas. The NPF recognises that to achieve this, it requires well-designed, high quality development that can encourage more people, and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages.

Key future growth enablers for Limerick include *inter alia*:

- Implementation of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan to create modern, city centre office accommodation and a series of transformational City Centre public realm projects;
- Complementary further development of the Limerick 2030 Plan to include measures to encourage significant inner urban residential regeneration and development, to include the City's Georgian Quarter;
- Extending the ambition of the Limerick 2030 Plan to include extension of the City Centre towards Limerick Docks; and
- Identifying infill and regeneration opportunities to intensify housing and employment development throughout inner suburban areas.

Section 4.5 of the NPF states that in urban areas, general restrictions on building height and car parking will be replaced by performance criteria appropriate to general location (e.g. public transport corridors & inner suburban sites), that seek well-designed, high quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth.

Performance-Based Design Standards

The NPF states that planning policies and standards need to be flexible, focusing on design-led and performance-based outcomes, rather than specifying absolute requirements in all cases. In particular, the NPF states that general restrictions on building height or universal standards for car parking or garden size may not be applicable in all circumstances in urban areas and should be replaced by performance-based criteria appropriate to general location, e.g. city/town centre, public transport hub, inner suburban, public transport corridor, outer suburban, town, village etc.

National Policy Objective 13
In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected.

Building Resilience in Housing

The NPF identifies that urban sprawl places pressure on both environmental and infrastructure demands and as a result, increased residential densities are required in our urban areas. The NPF states that we need to build inwards and upwards, rather than outwards. In this regard, the infill/brownfield targets set out in NPO's 3a, 3b and 3c necessitate an increase in urban housing output. The NPF highlights that apartments will need to become a more prevalent form of housing if we are to avoid a continuation of the outward expansion of cities and larger urban areas.

National Policy Objective 35
Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.

National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP)

The National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP) sets out the investment priorities that will underpin the implementation of the NPF, through a total investment of approximately €116 billion. This will guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions in Ireland over the next two decades to cater for the expected population increase of over 1 million people by 2040.

The NDP is an ambitious plan which aims to drive Ireland's long-term economic, environmental and social progress over the next decade. The NDP is fully integrated with the NPF approach to spatial planning in Ireland and a fundamental underlying objective of the NDP is to focus on continued investment in public infrastructure that facilitates priorities such as high-speed broadband and public transport in better cities and in better communities.

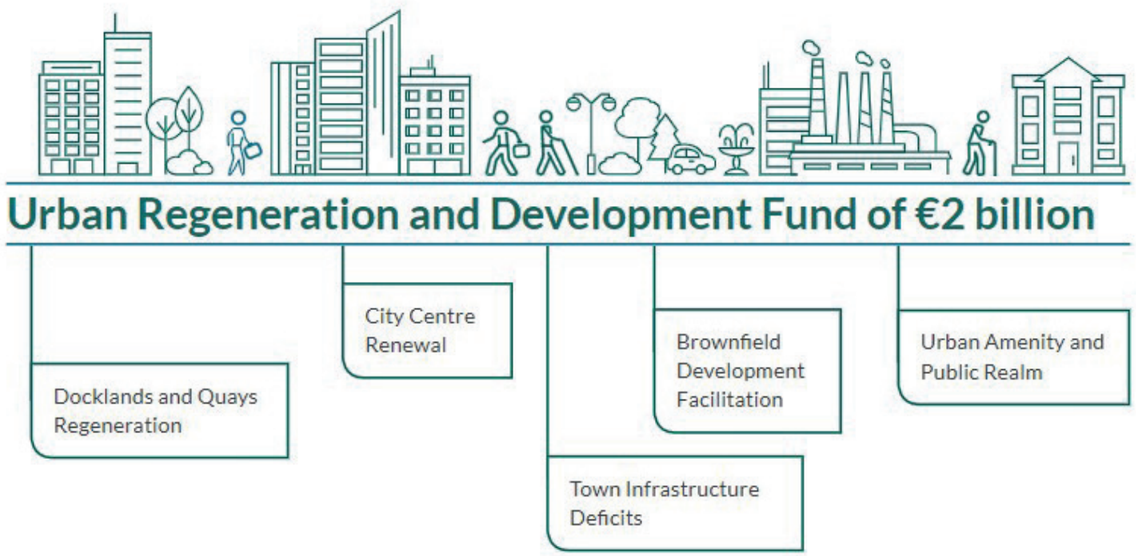


Image Source: NDP[6]

The NDP does not include any specific policy objectives in relation to building heights. However, in line with NPF NSO 1 Compact Growth, the NDP recognises that streamlined and co-ordinated investment in urban, rural and regional infrastructure by public authorities is required to realise the potential of infill development areas within our cities, towns and villages. The NDP will seek to support urban, compact growth through investment in high quality integrated public and sustainable transport systems and supporting amenities.

Additionally, the NDP introduced a Regeneration and Development Fund Initiative with two funds being established, one for urban areas and a second for rural areas. The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) aims to achieve sustainable growth in Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres, by putting in place a centrally managed mechanism to drive collaborative, co-ordinated and complementary packages of investment between Departments, agencies, Local Authorities and other public bodies in pooling their assets and working with local communities and the private sector to transform our cities and towns.

A particular objective of the urban fund will be to support the co-development of the NPF's growth enablers for the five cities and other urban centres. There are a number of examples of urban redevelopment projects that are already in train and that have the potential to benefit from the new Fund, with Limerick 2030 identified as one such example by the NDP.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region sets out regional policy for the growth of the Southern Region for the next 12 years. As outlined in the NPF, the population of the Southern Region is expected to grow by almost 400,000 people over the next 20 years. The RSES aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in the NPF and will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans and Local Enterprise and Community Plans of the ten Local Authorities in the Region.

Metropolitan Strategic Area Plans (MASPs) Limerick-Shannon

The RSES has undertaken Metropolitan Strategic Area Plans (MASPs) for the Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas as well as identifying a number of Key Towns in the Region. The principles of compact growth and unlocking the potential of centrally located sites are key deliverables of the MASPs. Additionally, the MASPs focus on developing underutilised land to boost population and economic outputs of city centre areas. The MASP areas will act as economic drivers for their wider regions and in developing their combined strengths, will create an effective complement for the Southern Region to the economic strength of Dublin.

The RSES and the Limerick-Shannon MASP seek to support the regeneration and continued growth of Limerick City.

The Limerick-Shannon MASP supports the densification of Limerick City and its Suburbs, the assembly of brownfield sites for development and city centre rejuvenation and consolidation. The MASP strongly promotes and supports a Living City and seeks to promote investment to achieve brownfield regeneration of City Centre sites with high quality mixed use sustainable and transformative projects, with exceptional standards in innovation, quality design, exemplary urbanism and place making.

To achieve the vision of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, the MASP has identified several Guiding Principles for its sustainable development including *inter alia*:

- Investment in revitalising and reinvigorating Limerick City for higher density living and high value jobs;
- Developing brownfield and infill lands to achieve a target of at least 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the existing built up area in Limerick City;
- Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects; and
- Re-intensify employment in Limerick City and Shannon and activate strategic employment locations.

The MASP supports the following key infrastructure and transformative projects within Limerick City inter alia:

- City Centre Consolidation and Revitalisation based on Limerick 2030, comprising social, physical and economic regeneration and formation of a higher density Georgian Living City with all essential services and community facilities;
- Densification of development in the City Centre, including identification and assembly of brownfield sites for development;
- Development of key strategic sites including Opera site, Cleeves, Arthurs Quay and continuation of the riverside links;
- Potential for alternative uses in Limerick Docklands;
- Continued expansion and enhancement of the retail offer and experience in the City Centre; and
- Continued investment in the City's regeneration areas.

Urban Development & Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The Building Heights Guidelines set out new and updated national policy on building heights in relation to urban areas, consistent with the strategic policy framework set out in the NPF.

The Building Heights Guidelines form part of a suite of integrated measures intended to shift the current patterns and development trends for cities and towns to form more compact and integrated communities and recognise the need to grow existing towns and cities upwards rather than outwards.

The Building Heights Guidelines recognise that there is significant scope to accommodate anticipated population growth and development needs, whether for housing, employment or other purposes, by building up and consolidating the development of our existing urban areas. Furthermore, it is noted that increasing prevailing building heights will have a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas, particularly our cities and large towns through enhancing both the scale and density of development.

Building Height and the Development Plan

The Building Heights Guidelines state that statutory development plans have tended to set out overly restrictive maximum height limits in certain locations which have had wider implications resulting in the underutilisation of strategic sites in urban areas and the displacement of development to other locations, potentially less suited for such uses. The Building Heights Guidelines state that such displacement presents a lost opportunity in key urban areas of high demand for new accommodation, whether that is for living, working, leisure or other requirements in the built environment.

In this regard, the Building Heights Guidelines state that the preparation of development plans, local area plans and Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Schemes and their implementation in city, metropolitan and wider urban areas must become more proactive and more flexible in securing compact urban growth through a combination of both facilitating increased densities and building heights, while also being mindful of the quality of development and balancing amenity and environmental considerations.

The Building Heights Guidelines state that development plans must include appropriate assessment criteria that will enable the proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height linked to the achievement of a greater density of development in urban areas. In this regard, other key requirements for development plans in terms of building height include *inter alia*:

- Development plans must actively plan for and bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of our developing sustainable mobility corridors and networks;
- Development plans must be more proactive and more flexible in securing compact urban growth through a combination of both facilitating increased densities and building heights, while also being mindful of the quality of development and balancing amenity and environmental considerations;
- Development plans must ensure the appropriate identification and siting of areas suitable for increased densities and height and will need to consider the environmental sensitivities of the receiving environment as appropriate, throughout the planning hierarchy;
- Development plans must determine if increased height buildings are an appropriate typology or not in particular settings – with reference to historic environments;
- Development plans must undertake an examination of the existing character of a place, establish the sensitivities of a place and its capacity for development or change and; define opportunities for new development and inform its design;
- Development plans must ensure that an urban design statement addressing aspects of impact on the historic built environment should be submitted with planning applications along with a specific design statement on the individual insertion or proposal from an architectural perspective; and
- Development plans must identify and provide policy support for specific geographic locations or precincts where increased building height is not only desirable but a fundamental policy requirement.

The Building Heights Guidelines includes two Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR) in relation to the listed key requirements:

SPPR 1:
In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/city cores, Planning Authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.

SPPR 2:
In driving general increases in building heights, Planning Authorities shall also ensure appropriate mixtures of uses, such as housing and commercial or employment development, are provided for in statutory plan policy. Mechanisms such as block delivery sequencing in statutory plans could be utilised to link the provision of new office, commercial, appropriate retail provision and residential accommodation, thereby enabling urban redevelopment to proceed in a way that comprehensively meets contemporary economic and social needs, such as for housing, offices, social and community infrastructure, including leisure facilities.

Building Height and the Development Management process

Section 3 of the Building Heights Guidelines outline 'Development Management Criteria' which a Planning Authority will consider in assessing development proposals for buildings taller than prevailing building height in urban areas. These are as follows:

1 **The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.**

2 **Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.**

3 **The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.**

4 **On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.**

5 **The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.**

6 **The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being in line with the requirements of "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (2009).**

7 **The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.**

8 **The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.**

9 **Appropriate and reasonable regard should be taken of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision outlined in guides like the Building Research Establishment's 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'.**

10 **Where a proposal may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the daylight provisions above, this must be clearly identified and a rationale for any alternative, compensatory design solutions must be set out, in respect of which the Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála should apply their discretion, having regard to local factors including specific site constraints and the balancing of that assessment against the desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution.**

11 **The form, massing and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.**

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2020

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, originally published in 2018 and updated in December 2020, provides national guidance to Planning Authorities setting out standards for apartment development and contains several specific requirements with which compliance is mandatory for development comprising apartments.

A key aim of the Apartment Guidelines is to ensure that apartment living is an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures resulting in greater delivery of apartments in Ireland's cities and towns. It outlines the importance of 'building inwards and upwards rather than outwards' due to on-going population growth (particularly in Ireland's cities), a long-term move towards smaller average household size, an ageing and more diverse population with greater labour mobility and a higher proportion of households in the rented sector.

It reaffirms the move away from rigidly applied blanket planning standards signalled by the NPF, including building height and building separation distances and highlights that such blanket restrictions, that may be specified in development plans, should be replaced by performance criteria, appropriate to location.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages)

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas was published in 2009 and provides general principles/design standards relating to the creation of new sustainable neighbourhoods. The aim is to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over the use of cars, and to provide residents with a quality of life in terms of amenity, safety and convenience.

The Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines state that a key design aim in delivering sustainable communities is to reduce, as far as possible, the need to travel, particularly by private car, by facilitating mixed-use development and by promoting the efficient use of land and of investment in public transport. Planning Authorities should promote high quality design in their policy documents and in their development management process.

In relation to building heights, the Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines state that as a general rule, where taller buildings are acceptable in principle, building heights should generally taper down towards the boundaries of a site within an established residential area.

In general, increased densities should be encouraged on residentially zoned lands and particularly in the following locations:

- City and town centres;
- 'Brownfield' sites (within city or town centres);
- Public transport corridors;
- Inner suburban/infill;
- Institutional lands; and
- Outer Suburban / 'Greenfield' sites.

Limerick 2030 – An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick

The Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick sets out a framework for public sector action and private sector investment in the County until 2030. The Plan addresses the economic, social and physical features of the City and County as a whole and seeks to position Limerick to best take advantage of economic opportunities in order to build a stronger local economy through the creation of employment and the attraction of investment. The Plan also places focus on revitalising and redeveloping Limerick City Centre.

The ambition of the Plan is to create a City Centre that will attract new inward business investment and encourage the formation of new local businesses by providing high quality, flexible spaces to meet accommodation requirements and ensuring the necessary business support structures are in place. The Plan places a focus on specific projects and programmes including new development and redevelopment projects.

The Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC was established to plan and develop key strategic sites in Limerick City and County that will act as anchors for enterprise and investment development across Limerick.

As part of its Spatial Planning Strategy, the Plan identifies certain goals it seeks to achieve in the form of seven transformational projects; enhancing the City's retail offer; new business offer; expanding residential opportunity; and investment in public realm /infrastructure. The Plan does not outline any specific policy considerations in terms of urban design or building height.

Within the City Centre the Plan identifies the following development zones:

- King's Island;
- The Opera Site;
- Arthur's Quay;
- Cruises Street;
- Irish Town;
- The Georgian Quarter;
- Limerick Quays;
- Eastern Gateway; and
- Cleeves Site.

Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) will be instrumental in the regeneration and transformation of Limerick City and the wider Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.

The NPF envisages that the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area will become the growth engine of the Mid-West Region with projected growth of at least 50% during the period up to 2040. This projected population, employment and education growth brings with it opportunities for development but will also result in a significant increase in the demand for travel.

The Strategy states that in order to support the compact growth aspiration of the NPF, Limerick City Centre will become the focus for significant regeneration opportunities at brownfield locations that include the Opera Site, the Georgian Quarter, the former Cleeves Site, the Land Development Agency (LDA) identified state-owned landbank south of Colbert Station, Kings Island, UL City Campus at old Dunnes Stores site, docklands development and Arthur's Quay re-development.

The Strategy requires that planning policy frameworks and implementation measures target higher densities and mixed-use developments in areas where opportunities exist for sustainable transport provision and in a manner that better aligns the provision of transport with demand. The Strategy will provide the opportunity to integrate new mixed-use development at appropriate densities with high capacity public transport infrastructure and more attractive walking and cycling networks and public realm improvements.

The full benefits of the significant investment that will be delivered under LSMATS cannot be achieved solely through the provision of infrastructure and must be combined with the implementation of measures that support the best use of that infrastructure.

The following strategy development priorities for the distribution of land-use are identified by the LSMATS:

- To deliver consolidated development in a manner that can avail of existing transport infrastructure and services, and nearby amenities and facilities, in line with the principles of Transit Oriented Development (TOD);
- To increase densities in future residential and employment developments;
- Prioritise mixed-use development which reduces the need to travel;
- All new development areas will be fully permeable for pedestrians and cyclists and opportunities to improve permeability for these modes in existing developed areas will be sought; and
- The layout of new developments will prioritise walking and cycling and enable the efficient provision of public transport services.

Limerick Development Plan - 2022 - 2028

The Limerick Development Plan, 2022 – 2028 (the Plan) is the first to be prepared for Limerick City and County and will replace both the Limerick City Development Plan, 2010 – 2016 (as extended) and the Limerick County Development, 2010 – 2016 (as extended). The Plan is underpinned by a strategic vision intended to guide the sustainable future growth of Limerick as follows:

Limerick – A Green City Region on the Waterfront

By 2030, Limerick will become a green city region on the Shannon Estuary connected through people and places. This will be achieved through engagement, innovation, and resilient urban development and self-sustaining rural communities.

The Key Ambitions for the Plan are as follows:

A Green Region

Limerick will develop as an environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy - a pioneer in sustainable growth. This will be underpinned by the promotion of active mobility along green and blue networks, creating an attractive and distinctive place to live, work and visit.

A River City

Limerick will provide room for people to enjoy the river. The animation of the waterfront will increase public access and create new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Resilient, Connected and Inclusive Communities

The future development of Limerick will make it easier to live sustainably and be well prepared for the future, increasing opportunities for movement and connectivity between communities.

A Sustainable, Innovative and Competitive Economy

The Limerick region will be an inclusive, self-sustaining economy built on growth and innovation and which maximises its competitive advantages. This will enhance local enterprises, attract international investment in a manner which guarantees quality of life.

The Vision and Key Ambitions are underpinned by ten interlinked strategic objectives that are realised through the chapters of the Plan as follows:

1. Grow Limerick's economy and create opportunity through maximising the potential for development through the promotion and enhancement of the competitive advantages of Limerick, including its strategic location, connectivity and accessibility to international markets, a skilled workforce and a high quality of life;

2. Transition to an environmentally sustainable carbon neutral economy;

3. Ensure new residential development is of the highest quality, enabling life cycle choices and physical, community, recreation and amenity infrastructure are provided in tandem to create sustainable, healthy, inclusive and resilient communities;

4. Protect the unique character of Limerick and support and facilitate revitalisation and consolidation of the City, towns and villages through public realm and place making initiatives and addressing vacancy and dereliction to create compact attractive, vibrant and safe environments in which to live, work, visit and invest. Ensure the highest quality of public realm and urban design principles are applied to all new developments including the construction of landmark buildings in appropriate locations;

5. Create a competitive environment in which to do business and promote, support and enable sustainable and economic development, enterprise and employment generation in areas which are accessible by public and sustainable modes of transport, while enabling settlements and rural areas to become self-sustaining through innovation and diversification of the rural economy;

6. Reduce car dependency and promote and facilitate sustainable modes of transport that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, while providing an appropriate level of road infrastructure, road capacity and traffic management to support existing and future development and enhance connectivity;

7. Protect, enhance and ensure the sustainable use of Limerick's key infrastructure including water supplies and wastewater treatment facilities, energy supply including renewables, broadband and transportation;

8. Protect, enhance and connect areas of natural heritage, green infrastructure and open space for the benefits of quality of life, biodiversity, protected species and habitats, while having the potential to facilitate climate change adaptation and flood risk measures;

9. Protect, conserve and enhance the built and cultural heritage of Limerick, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation and ensuring good quality urban design principles are applied to all new developments. The principle that well planned and integrated development enhances the sustainability, attractiveness and quality of an area should be at the centre of any proposal; and

10. Support growth in the tourism sector in Limerick and capture key opportunities to grow the sector based around four key drivers - Waterways, Activities, Heritage, Arts and Culture, in an urban and a rural environment.

Shannon Foynes Port Company - Vision 2041

The Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) Vision 2041 was published in 2013 and sets out a masterplan to promote and support the provision of port infrastructure and services in the Shannon Estuary over a 30-year period. Recognised internationally and nationally as one of the three core ports on the island of Ireland, SFPC's location provides for a highly accessible port with good road connectivity and rail access which shall be available in the short term.

The Vision is to position Shannon Foynes Port as a key economic driver by enhancing and leveraging its asset base to accommodate offshore and onshore investment within and adjacent to its harbour. SFPC will champion the improvement of connecting road and rail infrastructure, so that customers can be offered improved, competitive and efficient services and will focus on the provision of services and infrastructure in a manner providing sufficient return on capital whilst safeguarding the sensitive environmental context within which it operates

A Port Development Strategy is included in the SFPC Vision 2041 and is based on the following three principles;

- Active management of Limerick Docks;
- Significant expansion at the Port of Foynes; and
- Promotion of large-scale port related industry on the Shannon Estuary.

In relation to the Limerick Docks, the SFPC includes the following objectives:

- Maintain and expand existing cargo throughput;
- Actively promote Ted Russell Dock and its extensive berthing facilities to attract new port related business;
- Provide for new warehousing as demand arises;
- Promote non-core assets for alternative port / non port related activities; and
- Integrate Limerick Docks into the city through enhanced connectivity and visual improvements.

The SFPC Vision 2041 outlines that the Limerick Docks is presently operating as a viable port and commercial entity which continues to be a core contributor to SFPC's profitability. It is anticipated that Limerick Docks will continue to maintain its existing cargo throughput with potential for significant projected new business and the facility will be actively managed in this regard.

Whilst the Port Estate comprises 75.1 hectares, existing port operations only utilise circa 11 hectares (Ted Russell Dock). Whilst a significant area of land is in third party ownership and is utilised for non-port related activities, some 15.12 hectares of land, in the ownership of SFPC, has been identified as surplus to current operational requirements. In this regard, four sites within Limerick Docks have been identified as 'non-core' assets and are available for alternative use. These shown in Table 2.1 below.

To facilitate an understanding of the potential of each asset, a contextual appraisal of each property is provided in Vision 2041 which examines zoning and amenity designations, access opportunities, service provision and potential uses that are compatible with existing planning policy and guidance. There is a need to bring effective commercial use to these non-performing assets, to generate a commercial return for SFPC. Whilst the non-core assets could accommodate similar type uses to those already existing within the wider Port Estate, SFPC are cognisant of the proximity of the land to Limerick City Centre and the potential of the lands to contribute to the future economic development of the city.

Whilst the SFPC Vision 2041 encourages the individual sale of each of these four properties, it also promotes the alternative and collective consideration of the properties. In full support of the Shannon Energy Valley concept, the SFPC Vision considers that there is potential for Limerick Docks and its non-core assets to be promoted as a Marine Energy Park, serving three distinct but mutually interdependent functions:

- As a research cluster to advance research, strengthen the region's economy and develop technology;
- To deliver ground-breaking renewable energy and energy efficiency projects with thriving local supply chains; and
- To provide a prototype demonstrator sites, promoting renewable energy and educating the public.

Furthermore, the SFPC Vision identifies that within the active management of Limerick Docks, there is a significant opportunity to better integrate the port facilities into the urban area of Limerick City. The Limerick Docks are within easy walking distance from Limerick City which would allow the lands to immediately benefit from the existing public transport facilities within the city centre. The SFPC Vision also recognises that access to planned high-quality public transport facilities, including green routes, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposals and park and ride sites will also benefit any redevelopment proposals within the Docklands, resulting in sustainable development with aggressive modal share targets.

In relation to integrating with the urban fabric of Limerick City, the SFPC Vision 2041 recognises that the Limerick Docks are isolated with high stone walls, locked gates and warehousing creating a barrier between port activity and the City. In this regard, the SFPC Vision states that the visual presentation of Limerick Docks could be enhanced by way of landscape treatments and three locations are proposed in which the SFPC will concentrate enhancement works whilst also undertaking general maintenance and improvement works to the operational area of the Port. The three locations are as follows:

- The main vehicular entrance;
- Junction of the R510 and James Casey Walk; and
- Protected Entrance Gates at Steamboat Quay.

Limerick Dock Site	Size	Development Potential (SFPC Vision 2041)
Corcanree Business Park	11.73ha	Most suited to light industrial / commercial use reflective of existing surrounding uses. Potential direct access to Ted Russell Docks via Site 2 The Wishbone
The Wishbone	3.12ha	This land offers enormous potential to enhance and connect existing land banks within the Port Estate.
Bannatyne Mills	Floor area of 3,129sqm	The building has enormous development potential and could be used for multiple purposes, with potential commercial/civic use on the ground floor and office/residential use overhead. Alternatively, the building could be utilised as a 'flagship' office for an FDI company looking to locate in a regenerating area in proximity to the city centre.
Sailors House	432sqm building on a site of 0.17 hectares	The building has enormous development potential and could be used for multiple purposes, including office / commercial use either in single use or subdivided into multiple uses such as serviced office suites.

Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy

Published in 2018, the Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy was prepared to underpin the Shannon Foynes Port Company Vision 2041. The objective of the Framework Strategy is to facilitate a viable working port at Ted Russell Dock, better transport and access to the operational port and a commercial return on the non-core assets which are surplus to port operational requirements.

The Framework Strategy identifies that the Limerick Docklands represent a key expansion area for Limerick City. The Port lands comprise 2.15 kilometres along the waterfront, with the River Shannon to the north and the Dock Road (N69) to the south. The Framework Strategy outlines that the future development potential of Limerick Docklands must be balanced with the operation of the Ted Russell Dock as a viable working port in a city under transformation.

The vision underpinning the Framework Strategy seeks to:

"Use a focused approach, to reconnect Limerick Docklands with the city and the motorway, to maintain the working docks and to effectively redevelop lands and buildings which are no longer central to the core operations of Ted Russell Dock, with a focus on the development of a Limerick Docklands Economic Park"

It is anticipated that the Limerick Docks will continue to maintain its existing cargo through-put with potential for significant projected new business. Whilst the Port Estate at Limerick comprises 45.5 hectares, existing port operations only utilise circa 14.7 hectares (the Ted Russell Dock). Therefore, approx. 30.8 hectares of land, in the ownership of SFPC, has been identified as surplus to current port operation requirements. In this regard, as well as maintaining the Ted Russell Dock as a viable working port, the Framework Strategy promotes the regeneration and reuse of existing vacant buildings and land on the periphery of the Port, providing a range of commercial opportunities to strengthen the overall offer of Limerick City.

The Framework Strategy identifies 10 no. development objectives, and these will be delivered through a number of key interventions.

The Framework Strategy includes a series of Strategic Objectives and they include *inter alia*:

SO1. Ted Russell Dock: To support a growing, thriving Port.

1. *To facilitate the delivery of the adopted SFPC Vision 2041Masterplan and provision of a modernised and consolidated port. To support and promote the important role of the port within the local and wider economy.*
2. *Improve road connectivity from the motorway to Atlas Avenue junction as well as the improvement and upgrade of Dock Rd/Atlas Avenue junction.*

SO3. Sustainable Development: To promote reuse of vacant buildings and non-core sites.
To promote the reuse of existing vacant building and brownfield sites and to ensure that all new developments use energy and water as efficiently as possible and to incorporate innovative approaches to open space and biodiversity.

SO4. Sustainable Connections: To improve connections and maintain linkages with the city.
To ensure adequate provision of car parking in proximity to employment floorspace, to assist in the reprioritisation of the Dock Road from a vehicle dominated artery to one with enhanced pedestrian and cycle provision and to maintain and enhance connectivity in particular between Ted Russell Dock and greenfield land in Corcanree.

SO7. Identity: To promote high design quality and improve townscape.
To promote developments of high design quality that maximise the waterfront setting and complement the identity of Limerick Docklands as an Economic Park. To respect local character and form and enhance key gateways, including the port's historic assets and protected structures.

A number of interventions have been identified for the Docklands with the express purpose of enhancing port operations within Ted Russell Dock and realising non-core assets with the Docklands.

Intervention 3 - Bannatyne Mills & Ranks Silo
Development Potential:
- Bannatyne Mill is a 5 storey over vaulted ground floor limestone building with a floor area of 3,129sqm, while the Ranks Silo is a multi-storey reinforced windowless concrete structure with a floor area of 2,928sqm; and
- It would be desirable to facilitate marine related industrial uses within the building, through high tech, educational, business and other light industrial / manufacturing uses could also be considered.

Intervention 4 – Heritage Cluster
Development Potential:
- The eastern end of the port, adjoining James Casey Walk and in proximity to the city centre, contains many of the original port buildings and features constructed in the nineteenth century. Rich in cultural and architectural heritage it contains many fine buildings and features which are protected structures. An opportunity is identified to reconnect this area of the port with the City;
- The Harbour Masters Office is currently an administrative office for SFPC and this use will continue into the future notwithstanding the relocation of the weighbridge and associated administrative functions; and
- SFPC commits to making Ted Russell Dock more aesthetic and socially integrated by building on its existing public access strategy. SFPC will consider initiatives to effectively integrate the port into the City and create societal links such as hosting maritime events. Consideration will also be given to building on the concept of Ted Russell Dock as a 'Venue' for ad hoc music concerts or cultural activities.

Intervention 5 – Corcanree Business Park
Development Potential:
- SFPC owns a significant landbank within Corcanree Business Park, removed from the operational port and surplus to current and future needs of the port. This landbank proximate to the city centre could potentially accommodate industrial type development either related to port operations or separate to it;
- There are two parcels of land comprising a greenfield and brownfield site with both landbanks being suitable for immediate development/occupation with appropriate industry/maritime related uses; and
- Identified as being of significance to these landbanks is the potential to provide for a direct, internal connection to the operational port, should the need arise in the future, with a v-shape (wishbone) shaped strip of land having the potential to accommodate an access road, or alternatively a walkway/cycle path.

Intervention 6 – Limerick Docklands Economic Park
Development Potential:
- A focus of this Framework Strategy is to promote the Docklands as an Economic Park with a focus on technology and marine energy uses and testing; and
- The locational qualities of Limerick Docks proximate to the city centre but with immediate access to the national road network are attractive qualities to potential investors and are recognised in promoting the concept of a Limerick Docklands Economic Park.

University of Limerick - Strategic Plan 2019-2024

The University of Limerick's (UL) Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 sets out the ambitions for the University in the future and includes a vision to be "a community of scholars with a global reputation for excellence, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and engagement". The UL Strategic Plan states that UL wants to create a destination of excellence in education, research and innovation that will attract the highest-calibre staff and the best students from all sections of society, both in Ireland and abroad, and ensure that Limerick and the Mid-West are recognised as great places to live and work.

The UL Strategic Plan includes 5 Key Goals:

1. Transforming Education;
2. Research Excellence;
3. Internationalisation;
4. City and Region; and
5. Operating Model

In relation to Goal 4: City and Region, the UL Strategic Plan states that they will support the implementation of 'Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework' and 'Limerick 2030', in order to support the development of a stronger Limerick and Mid-West region. The UL Strategic Plan states that "this will contribute to the city and region being regarded as a preferred location to visit, work, study and live, making UL more attractive for prospective students, staff and industry partners".

In this regard, the UL Strategic Plan includes an Objective to: Ensure the UL Limerick City Campus contributes in a major way to the rejuvenation of Limerick city. The associated action for this objective is the: Establishment of the UL Limerick City Campus at the junction of Sarsfield Bridge and Honan's Quay as part of the rejuvenation of Limerick city.

UL City Centre Campus - Former Dunne's Site

The University of Limerick is committed to establishing a vibrant collaborative campus in the heart of Limerick City, which is shared by students, partners and the public, that delivers outputs and outcomes, which will have a social and economic impact locally and globally. This development will be a huge catalyst for the growth and recovery of the City Centre.

The future campus expansion will be on the old Dunnes Stores site, which is on the banks of the River Shannon in the centre of the city adjacent to Sarsfield Bridge.

Limerick Institute of Technology Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) Strategic Plan 2018-2022 seeks to strengthen their role as an economic generator and to support their ambitions to become a Technological University. The Strategic Plan sets out the Institute's redefined mission, vision, educational philosophy and values for the next five years. LIT's vision to 2022 is to be a leading provider of higher education that is student centred, research informed, industry relevant and accessible for all.

The Strategic Plan recognises the strength of the Mid-West region as identified in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and that LIT, through its higher education and applied research offering, engagement and relevance to industry, ensures a key role in the attraction and retention of investment and employment opportunities in the region. The Strategic Plan identifies five strategic priorities and five enablers, which will support the Institute in achieving its strategic vision.

Five strategic priorities:

1. Grow student numbers and diversify our student population;
2. Provide high quality teaching and active learning that reflects the needs of industry;
3. Increase LIT's Research Development and Innovation (RDI) capacity in areas that have a clear economic and social impact for the region;
4. Deepen stakeholder engagement and increase our impact on the region; and
5. Deliver on LIT's campus development plan to enhance the student experience

Five strategic enablers:

1. Staff Engagement;
2. Culture & Communication;
3. Strategic Resource Management & Investment;
4. Informed Decision Making Processes; and
5. Brand, Identify & Influencers.

Strategic Priority No. 5: Deliver on LIT's campus development plan to enhance the student experience:

In order to achieve this priority, LIT will:

- Continue to expand physical campus space and capacity;
- Develop a campus environment that delivers an appropriate balance of dynamic and flexible spaces for our educational communities;
- Create an accessible and suitably equipped physical and virtual environment that facilitates individual and group learning and optimises the use of facilities for the benefit of students and the region; and
- Utilise the Mid-West Limerick city-region principles to ensure that the LIT campuses located outside of Limerick City continue to be developed (as per Campus 2030 Plan).

LIT Campus 2030 Masterplan

The Limerick Institute of Technology's €200m "Campus 2030 Masterplan" was developed in response to unprecedented growth across LIT discipline areas such as Art and Design, Engineering and Humanities. LIT's Campus Masterplan also reflects the expansion in LIT's Enterprise Centres and the applied research capabilities, which were not part of the original masterplans when the campuses were developed during the late 1990s.

The Campus Masterplan will be a significant stimulus for the Limerick and Mid-West region's economy. The investment will see an additional 50,000sq metres of new facilities as well as extensive refurbishment of existing facilities. It will be invested across LIT's four existing campuses – its Moylish Park headquarters; LSAD (Clare Street, Limerick); its LIT Tipperary campus in Thurles and Clonmel – as well as a brand new 7,000sq metre new campus at Coonagh, Limerick.

O'Connell Street Upgrade Works

The O'Connell Street Revitalisation Project covers the area between the junctions with Denmark Street/Arthur's Quay and Cecil Street/Lower Cecil Street. The overarching aim of the project is for the street to be primarily pedestrian priority, while being flexible in use.

The Revitalisation Project will include:

- Wider footpaths and additional pedestrian areas to facilitate people gathering, on-street trading, and 'spill out zones' from shops and cafés on the street;
- Provision of street furniture on O'Connell Street including seating areas, trees, planting, bicycle stands, and lighting, as well as features such as sculptures, pedestrian plazas and water installations;
- Introduction of a shared surface, where the footpath and the carriageway will be at the same level;
- Introduction of a bus lane and reduction in the width of traffic lanes;
- Raised table junctions to slow down traffic; and
- Relocation of parking and loading spaces from O'Connell Street to adjacent side streets.

Limerick 2030 Cleeves Site Masterplan

The master-planning process for the Cleeves Riverside Quarter project has commenced following the appointment of the Design, Planning and Project Management Teams by Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC. The riverside site will play a key role in the wider transformation of the city and region, representing a unique opportunity to develop a high-quality mixed-use development of scale that will transform the high-potential site synonymous with the Limerick City Centre skyline for its red-brick chimney stack tower. The total cost of the project is estimated at between €250 - €300 million and delivery will take approximately seven years.

The next stage of the programme will involve the preparation of a Stage 1 Master Plan for the development, to be completed by June 2021. The Master Planning process will include public consultations to ensure local community and wider public engagement on the future of the site. Following the completion of the Stage 1 Master Plan, the Project Team will move onto formal design stages for the project.

Arthur's Quay

The Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre is planned to undergo future redevelopment. A Project Delivery Team has been established consisting of Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC and Tiernan Properties (owner of Arthur's Quay).

The Indicative Project Proposal of the c. 4 acres site will be a high-quality mixed-use scheme consisting of a:

- New flagship retailer department store;
- New retail and food & beverage units;
- A reconfigured retail experience in Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre;
- A state-of-the-art multiplex cinema;
- LEED Gold office space;
- Car space multi-storey carpark;
- The refurbishment of the successfully trading Tesco supermarket; and
- Residential units arranged around a central courtyard circa 200 to 250 units being provided over 4 floors

Limerick Opera Site

The Limerick Opera Site project will be a landmark commercial development and one that will represent Limerick's position as a leading destination for inward investment at both a regional and national level.

Located within the core of Limerick City Centre, the brownfield site occupies a major city block bound by Bank Place, Ellen Street, Michael Street, Rutland Street and Patrick Street. The site is located at the northern end of Limerick's Georgian Quarter and its perimeter is composed of largely intact Georgian terraces along Ellen Street, Patrick Street and Rutland Street. There are a number of existing buildings on the site with varying levels of heritage value. The general surrounding environment is characterised by mixed-use development including retail, offices, leisure, institutional and community facilities, as well as some residential properties.

A key element of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan is to achieve the comprehensive redevelopment of the Opera Site which was identified as one of critical importance in the City. The Opera Site was recognised as having the potential to make a major contribution in strengthening the City Centre, being one of the main City Centre transformational projects. The Limerick 2030 Plan envisaged a business-led, mixed-use solution for the Opera Site including significant office development and a range of supplementary uses.

The Limerick 2030 Plan also outlined the need to deliver a new public square with connections to all edges of the urban block back to the wider context of Limerick City. The Limerick 2030 Plan set out a range of provisions for the future development of the Opera Site including floorspace parameters, open space area, land uses, public space and permeability, conservation and active travel.

An application for the redevelopment of the Opera Site was made by Limerick City and County Council in March 2019 and An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development in February 2020. The proposed scheme comprises of a mixed-use development including residential, office, retail, café/restaurant, apart-hotel and civic/cultural uses. A new public square/plaza will also be provided to the centre of the site. The building heights permitted range from 3 no. storeys to 15 no. storeys.

The permitted development includes the following elements:

- 4-6 no. storey building comprising Office over Retail, Restaurant/Café/Bar at ground floor;
- 3-5 no. storey building comprising Apart-Hotel & Residential use above Retail at basement and ground floor;
- 3-4 no. storey building comprising Restaurant/Café/Bar;
- 4-5 no. storey building comprising New City Library (Town Hall) on all floors including a Café/Restaurant at basement level and Retail in basement with Library over and Office use;
- 4 no. storey building comprising Retail at basement & ground floor with Residential over;
- 11-15 no. storey building comprising Landmark Office building with Retail, Café/Bar/Restaurant/Office at ground floor;
- 4 no. storey building (retained) comprising Restaurant/Café/Licenced Premises uses on ground floor & Office over; and
- New Public Square/Plaza in Centre of the Site.

Urban Analysis

3

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Introduction

The purpose of this Section is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the urban structure of Limerick City, through urban analysis, that will inform the categorisation of areas within Limerick City that are suitable, have potential, need careful consideration and are unsuitable for tall buildings.

Undertaking an analysis of the urban characteristics of Limerick will provide the basis for developing tall building guidance for the City. The analysis process will identify significant views and local landmarks that must be retained and identify the features and characteristics of the natural and built environment that characterise the City. It will also assist in understanding where preservation of the skyline may be required in order to preserve the character of parts of the City.

This approach is in line with the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018 that recommends undertaking an assessment of the existing character and setting of a place to assist in establishing the sensitivities of a place and its capacity for development or change and define opportunities for new development and inform its design[7].

This Section undertakes a detailed urban analysis by examining the layers that characterise the urban form of Limerick City.

The urban analysis process is broadly based on the 'layered' methodology, utilised in similar studies that have been undertaken in the UK. The approach adopted:

- Identifies the key characteristics and sensitivities of Limerick City;
- Plots the themes, including *inter alia* significant views and local landmarks, topography, centres and public transport network;
- Provides a combined understanding of the layers which assists in the identification of the different existing character areas within Limerick City and provides a greater understanding of building height throughout the City and areas with tall building potential;
- Provides the basis for a tall building classification / hierarchy that accounts for the identified character areas and which is based on existing context height; and
- Utilises the areas identified through this process as the basis for the further assessment of building height potential at a more localised level.

Unlike the 'layered' methodology it does not overlay the layers so as to provide a definite map of areas that are seen to be able to support, or not appropriate for, the development of tall buildings. Instead it takes the information gathered on each layer into consideration when applying a more contextual approach to the development of tall buildings in Limerick City. This will provide greater flexibility in assessing areas of tall buildings potential in Limerick City.

Urban Analysis

The urban analysis layers identified have been informed by the Building Heights Guidelines, the project brief, the Inception Meeting, local knowledge, and precedent studies. The order of the layers is not prioritised or ranked as their purpose is to cumulatively provide a comprehensive understanding of the City's urban structure.

Historical Development

The first layer of the urban analysis examines the historical development of Limerick City and how it has shaped the urban structure and form of the City as it is today. It also provides an initial indication of areas that may be sensitive to tall buildings due to their historical and/or architectural character.

Conservation Areas and Protected Structures

Limerick is a city rich in history that includes a Georgian Core. In total Limerick City has four designated Conservation Areas, all of which have specific characteristics and in turn have particular sensitivities in relation to tall buildings. This layer identifies each Conservation Area and notes those that may be inappropriate or those that may provide some areas of potential for sensitively sited and scaled taller development.

Significant Views and Local Landmarks

This layer of the analysis process assesses previously established special views of strategic significance to Limerick City and identifies significant view cones in line with these.

Commercial Centres and Campuses

This layer of the analysis identifies commercial centres within the City, including District, Neighbourhood and Local Centres. These centres, specifically District Centres, are important as they provide a foci for intensification and the potential to meet contemporary economic and social needs, in line with the ethos of SPPR 2 of the Building Heights Guidelines.

It also identifies the main campuses within the City, including health and education campuses, as by their nature these can often accommodate and have their own plans for, the provision of tall buildings.

Topography and Landscape Character Areas

This layer identifies Limerick City's unique topographical conditions, identifying areas where elevation and visual prominence may impact the provision of tall buildings.

Transport Infrastructure

As the Building Heights Guidelines favour increased building heights in areas with good public transport accessibility, this layer identifies the existing transport infrastructure serving Limerick City. It also addresses any new proposals or upgrades to this infrastructure. The aim is to establish the accessibility of Limerick City and in turn the areas that may be able to facilitate, in a sustainable manner, an increase in densities through tall buildings.

Areas of Importance

This layer identifies the areas that are important in the context of defining the urban character of Limerick City. This includes the public open space and amenity areas, important heritage buildings and local and cultural landmarks which cumulatively form part of the unique urban character of the City.

Key Growth Areas

While many of these sites have already been identified and their future development addressed in detail in Limerick 2030, this layer of analysis combines these areas with the established growth areas of the City to deliver a holistic picture in terms of existing areas of height within the City and potential future locations. The analysis provides an indication of the extent to which the City has the capacity to change, grow and develop over time.

The Skyline and Tall Building Activity

This layer sets out the location of existing tall buildings and plots any locations where there are extant planning permissions for tall buildings. It also identifies live and recent planning applications for tall buildings within the City.

Open Space

This layer identifies existing open spaces as they are a resource within the City. While tall buildings can impact visually on existing open space, access to open space and open space provision are also key issues when determining if a site is suitable for the intensification associated with tall buildings.

Opportunity Sites

A number of opportunity sites have been identified, the development / redevelopment of which may provide opportunity for increased building heights.

Limerick 2030 Plan

This layer examines Limerick 2030 as it identifies a number of strategic sites within Limerick City Centre that have the ability to deliver transformational projects.

Regeneration Areas

This layer identifies the 4 regeneration areas within the City and identified the principles relating to each area, with their development guided by the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan. The development of these areas may present the opportunity for the inclusion of taller buildings within the local context.



Historical Development

Since its establishment around 922 AD by the Vikings, Limerick's importance as a settlement as well as its physical extent has grown substantially. The stages of the development of the City are still legible today in the urban form and character of the City, derived from the combination of its plan and built fabric.

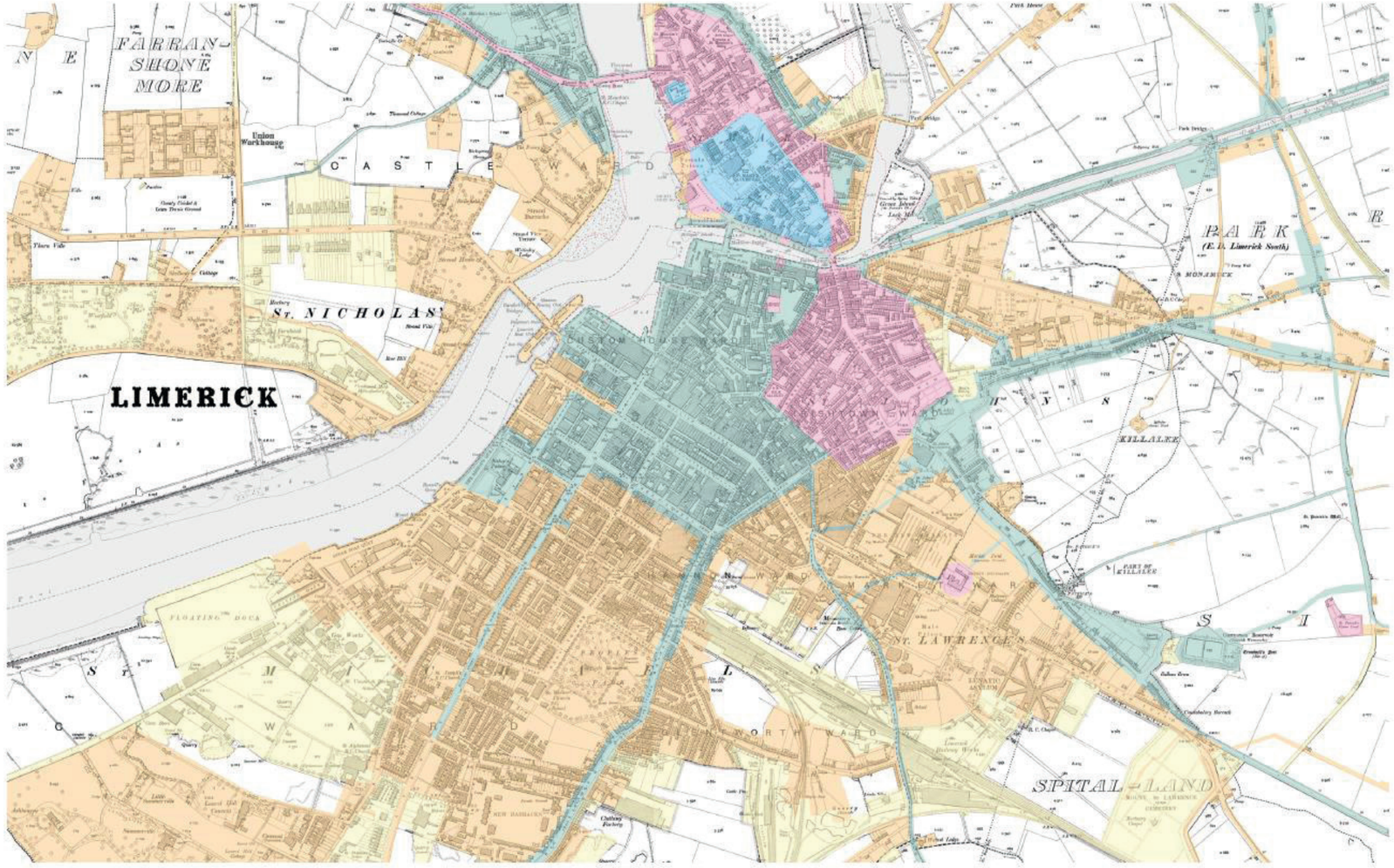
The Norman occupation of Limerick from 1195 heralded the development of a large-scale medieval town and gave the City some of its key local landmarks, including the walls of Limerick, King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. The medieval town consisted of two main districts, divided by the river; Englishtown, on King's Island, and Irishtown, located to the southeast on the mainland. The original layout of Medieval Limerick survives in the historic core of the City, with the city walls, the shadow of which remains today, influencing the streetscape and street pattern.

The seventeenth century was a violent and destructive one for the City, which endured four sieges in 1642, 1651, 1690 and 1691 as part of the civil wars. However, from the later part of the Century, the City gradually developed from the docks on the River Shannon. By the 1760s the City was under pressure to expand, resulting in the walls of Limerick being taken down. Local landlord and MP Edmund Sexton Pery decided to build a new city on his land to the south of medieval Limerick. In 1769 Christopher Colles produced a plan for this new city based on a grid like formation. The new brick city called Newtown Pery, forms the current economic centre of the City. It has a notably different character to the other areas of the historic city in that it is a planned development dominated by 18th century (Georgian) buildings. Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of 1837 called it '*one of the handsomest modern towns in Ireland*'[8].

The nineteenth century was a period of great change and economic expansion for Limerick with the City's industrial role strengthened by the development of the rail service and the docks. Important structures associated with this industrial past include Bannantyne's Mill on Dock Road, The Granary and Plassey Mill, located on the banks of the Shannon to the north of the City. Many of these industrial buildings are of significant architectural and social interest, and contribute greatly to the City's character as do the lanes of small single and two-storey houses provided to home industrial workers.

The nineteenth century also saw the delivery of many services to the City as well as the construction of many fine churches and schools, including Mary Immaculate College and Limerick School of Ornamental Art (LIT).

The past half century has witnessed a further change in Limerick as it has become a modern city. As with most modern cities, since the 1970s, many of the traditional industries have been replaced by multi-national companies leaving large brownfield sites within the City. This shift has also been supported by the University of Limerick, a world class educational facility, established in 1972, which has itself influenced the growth of the City by locating its substantial campus in the eastern environs of the City.



Map 3.1: Growth of Limerick City to 1900, based on the Irish Historic Town Atlas

Conservation Areas and Protected Structures

Limerick City contains four Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) as follows:

- ACA 1A South City Centre & Newtown Pery;
- ACA 1B South Circular Road;
- ACA 1C O'Connell Avenue;
- ACA 2 John's Square;
- ACA 3 Ballinacurra Road; and
- ACA 4 Ennis /Shelbourne Road

The City contains a rich diversity of heritage in its conservation areas from its Georgian Core centered on the South City Centre and Newtown Pery, and historic urban spaces such as John's Square where architecturally significant buildings and monuments sit side by side. The conservation areas also protect areas of late nineteenth and early twentieth century vernacular terrace dwellings as well as examples of variations to the late Victorian, and Edwardian typologies on the Ennis/Shelbourne Road. Key landmark and institutional buildings that contribute to the character and legibility of the City are also protected by the conservation area designations including Saint Alphonsus Ligouri Redemptorist Church and Monastery, the Mary Immaculate College site and the Mount Saint Vincent Covent site within the South Circular Road and New Street ACA.

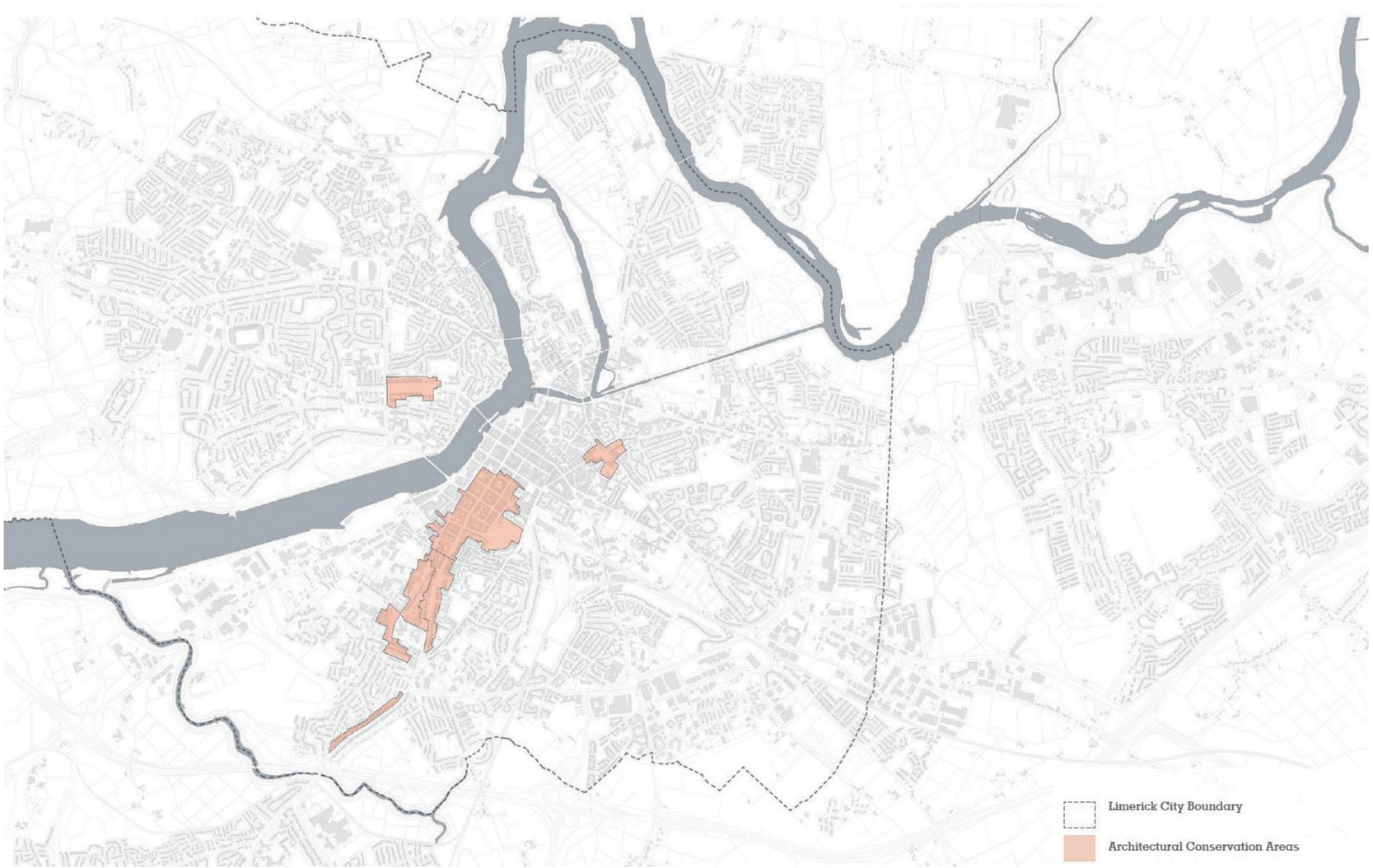
The purpose of the ACA designation is to protect the special characteristics and distinctive features of these areas from inappropriate actions. While each individual area will have particular sensitivities in relation to tall buildings, they should not be viewed as areas of total exclusion. Dependant on the nature of the specific conservation area, some may be considered as inappropriate while some areas may have potential for sensitively sited and scaled taller development.

The conservation areas within the heart of the City, specifically the South City Centre and Newtown Pery ACA, that represent the core business area and accommodated high densities of up to six storey Georgian terraces consisting of a range of uses, including retail, commercial and residential on upper floors, may have some potential to accommodate taller buildings on a site specific basis. Any such development would have to integrate with the surrounding townscape, including the fixed proportions and ordered harmonious symmetry of the Georgian Core's streets.

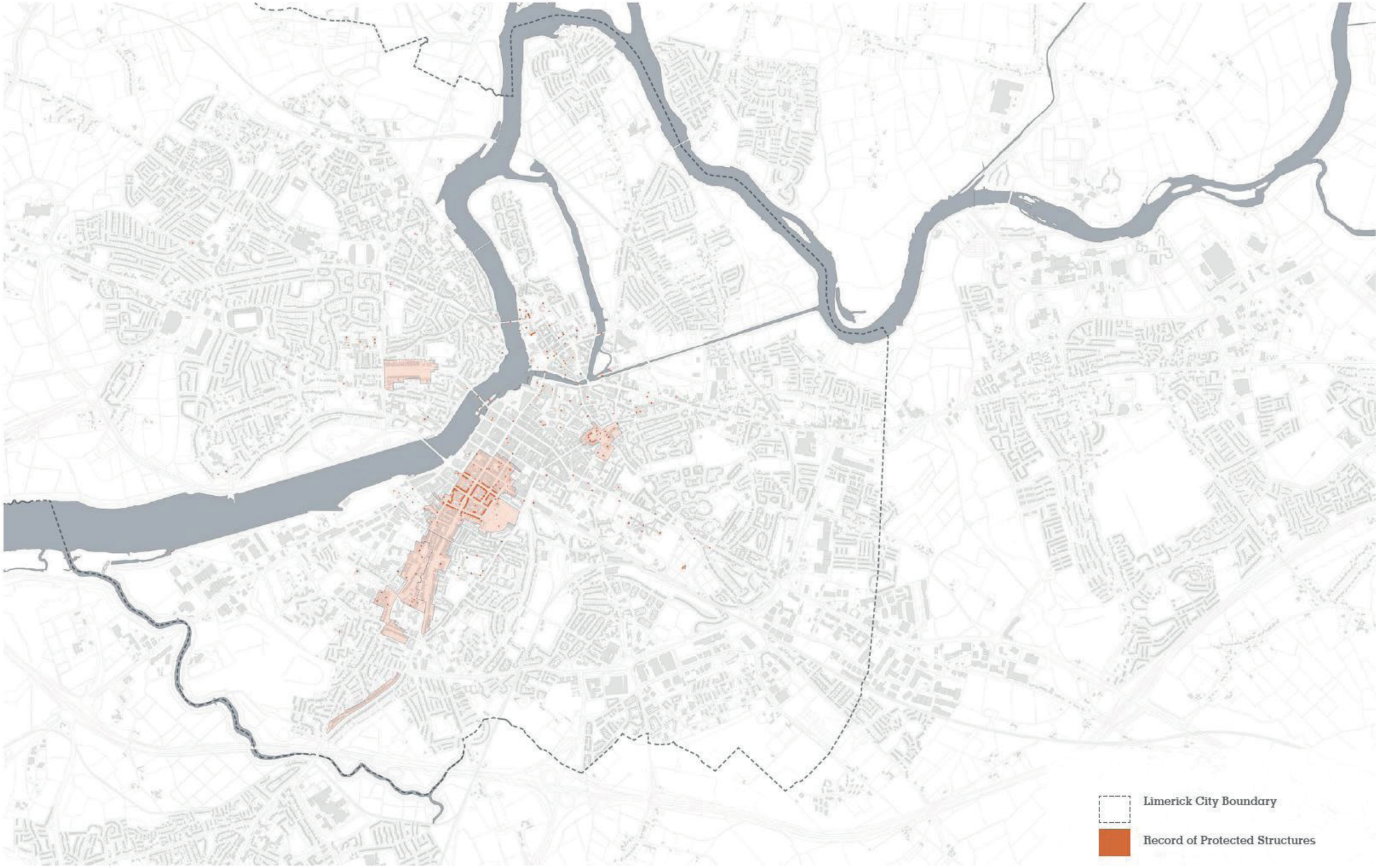
The conservation areas removed from the city centre and whose architectural character is presented by the numerous rows of late nineteenth-century early twentieth century terrace houses are considered to be less suitable parts of the City for tall buildings.

A large portion of Limerick City's Protected Structures are located within the Medieval Town and the 18th Century Georgian extension to the City. Included in these are remains from medieval Limerick such as the City walls and King John's Castle, as well as a number of landmark buildings, such as churches, cathedrals and educational facilities. These buildings and their settings make a significant contribution to the character and legibility of the City.

The setting of a Protected Structure is also an essential part of the buildings character, especially where the curtilage has been designed to complement the buildings character or function. The setting of these buildings and the visual impact on same needs to be considered when examining the potential for taller development in the City.



Map 3.2: Conservation Areas



Map 3.3: Protected Structures

Significant Views and Landmarks

The City skyline is a combination of elements; the general scale of buildings, streets and spaces from area to area, major landmarks on the skyline, individual higher buildings, higher building groups and landscape elements. While there is an established relationship between strategic views and tall building development within a city, this correlation has generally been viewed negatively. However, the sensitive addition of tall buildings in certain circumstances may add visual interest to the skyline, provide legibility as a recognisable way finding device within the urban form or serve to consolidate clusters of existing high-rise development and unify the skyline.

Limerick City in the larger sense is appreciated by most people along important viewpoints such as the River Shannon or panoramic views from vantage points both inside and outside the City. These can be of strategic significance and prospects of special amenity value, appreciated by large numbers of people. They can also be views appreciated within a local context that are important to the character and legibility of areas within the City.

Due to the topography of Limerick City, its quality townscapes, riverscapes and landscapes, as well as its visual landmarks, there are many views of significance within the City.

The amenity views indicate the outer visual border of the City, the main character areas, and principle elements of the City skyline. These views are of strategic significance to Limerick City. The types of views experienced have been categorised into three types which combine the view and the viewing place to achieve a view experience. The theoretical view types relating to Limerick City are:

Linear Views of Landmark Buildings, the City Walls & City Skyline

Linear Views occur when a single landmark building (e.g. King John's Castle) is the main point of focus within the view path. Views tend to be framed within relatively narrow viewing corridors.

River Prospects

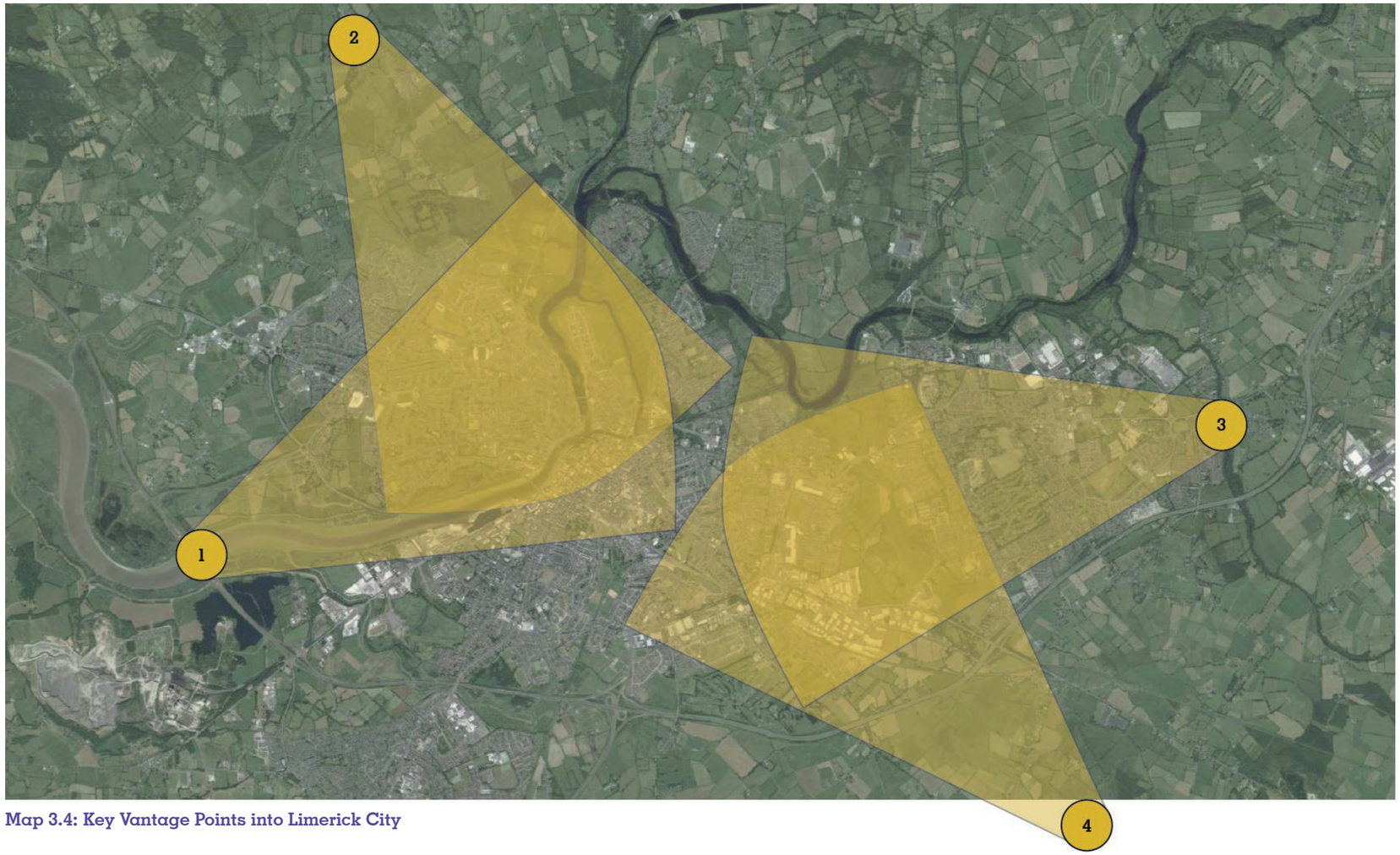
River Prospects are usually, though not exclusively, experienced while crossing a bridge. River Prospects in this instance refer to the ability to see landmark building(s) from bridges.

While many bridge crossings allow opportunities to pause to appreciate views, views can also be enjoyed in motion as a viewer moves across a bridge.

Approach Road Views

Approach Road prospects often give the visitor the vital 'first impressions' of a city. In the case of Limerick City such prospects give the viewer an instant appreciation of the topography and character of the City.

Development should seek to avoid obstructing strategic views or compromise the quality or setting of these views. Local views should be identified on a case-by-case basis, with a presumption against proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to those of significance and their settings. On approach roads, new developments should take due cognisance of the qualities of the view and clearly demonstrate how they will preserve and enhance their visual appearance and amenity.



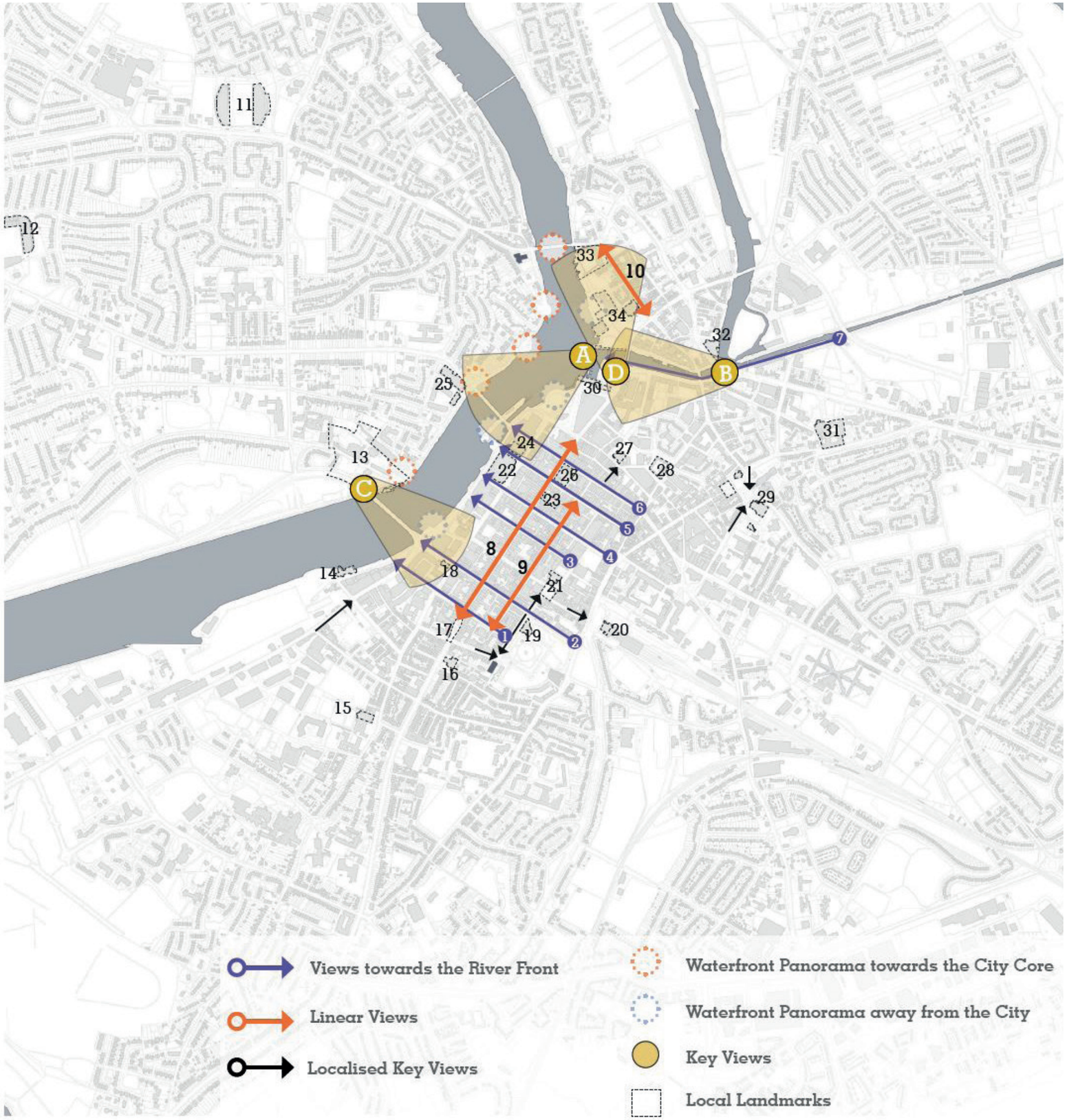
Map 3.4: Key Vantage Points into Limerick City

1. Shannon Estuary Loch Luimnigh Estuary
Low lying valley views into Limerick City.
10m-20m in elevation.

2. Woodcock Hill Bog, Co. Clare - Nature preserve
Up to 310m in elevation.

3. Annacotty Áth na Choite, Co. Limerick
Up to 50m in elevation.

4. Ballyneety, Baile an Fhaoitigh, Co. Limerick
Up to 110m in elevation.



Map 3.5: Key Views & Landmarks

STREETS

1 Upper & Lower Hartstonge St
2 Mallow Street
3 Cecil Street
4 Roches St
5 Thomas St & Bedford Row
6 Williams St
7 Charlottes Quay
8a O'Connell Street
8b O'Connell Street
9a Cathrine Street
9b Cathrine Street
10 Nicholas St

LOCAL LANDMARKS

11 Thomond Park
12 Gaelic Grounds
13 Cleeves
14 Clayton Hotel
15 Redemptorist Catholic Church
16 St. Josephs Catholic Church
17 The Crescent - O'Connell Monumnet
18 Former Presbyterian Church
19 Limerick City Gallery of Art
20 Colbert Station
21 Baker Place - Tait Memorial Clock
22 Dunnes Stores / Apartment Block
23 St. Augustine's Catholic Church
24 Limerick Museum
25 Limerick Strand Hotel
26 Brown Thomas
27 St. Michael's Catholic Church
28 The Milk Market
29 a. St. John's Square
b. St. John's Church
c. St. John's Cathedral
d. St. John's Presbytery
30 Sarsfield House
31 LSAD - Limerick School of Art & Design
32 Absolute Hotel Limerick
33 King John's Castle
34 a. Limerick City Court
b. Limerick City County Council
c. St. Mary's Cathedral



A Image looking South Along the River Shannon



B Image entering from East on Dublin Road, along the city canal



C Image entering from West



D Image looking North West Along the River Shannon

Figure 3.1: Key Views

Commercial Centres & Campuses

This section identifies the retail/commercial centres within Limerick City and its environs as set out in the Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028. These centres are important as they provide a foci for intensification but as identified by the Building Heights Guidelines such commercial areas do not always contribute to appropriate mixed use neighbourhoods[9]. Suitable development would strengthen and enliven these designated centres.

Outside of the City Centre, district and local/ neighbourhood centres, are the focus of the existing commercial and retail development.

District Centres

District Centres form the second tier in the Limerick Metropolitan Retail Hierarchy. As shown opposite there are six District Centres within Limerick City, a Level 1 District Centre at Dooradoyle (Crescent Shopping Centre) and five Level 2 Centres at Caherdavin, Castletroy, Parkway, Roxboro and Moyross. These Centres are characterised by a mix of convenience and comparison shopping and also provide a focus for other uses, including *inter alia* retail warehousing; retail office; commercial leisure, and services.

These areas, in commercial terms, are considered to have the most potential for taller buildings outside the City Centre.

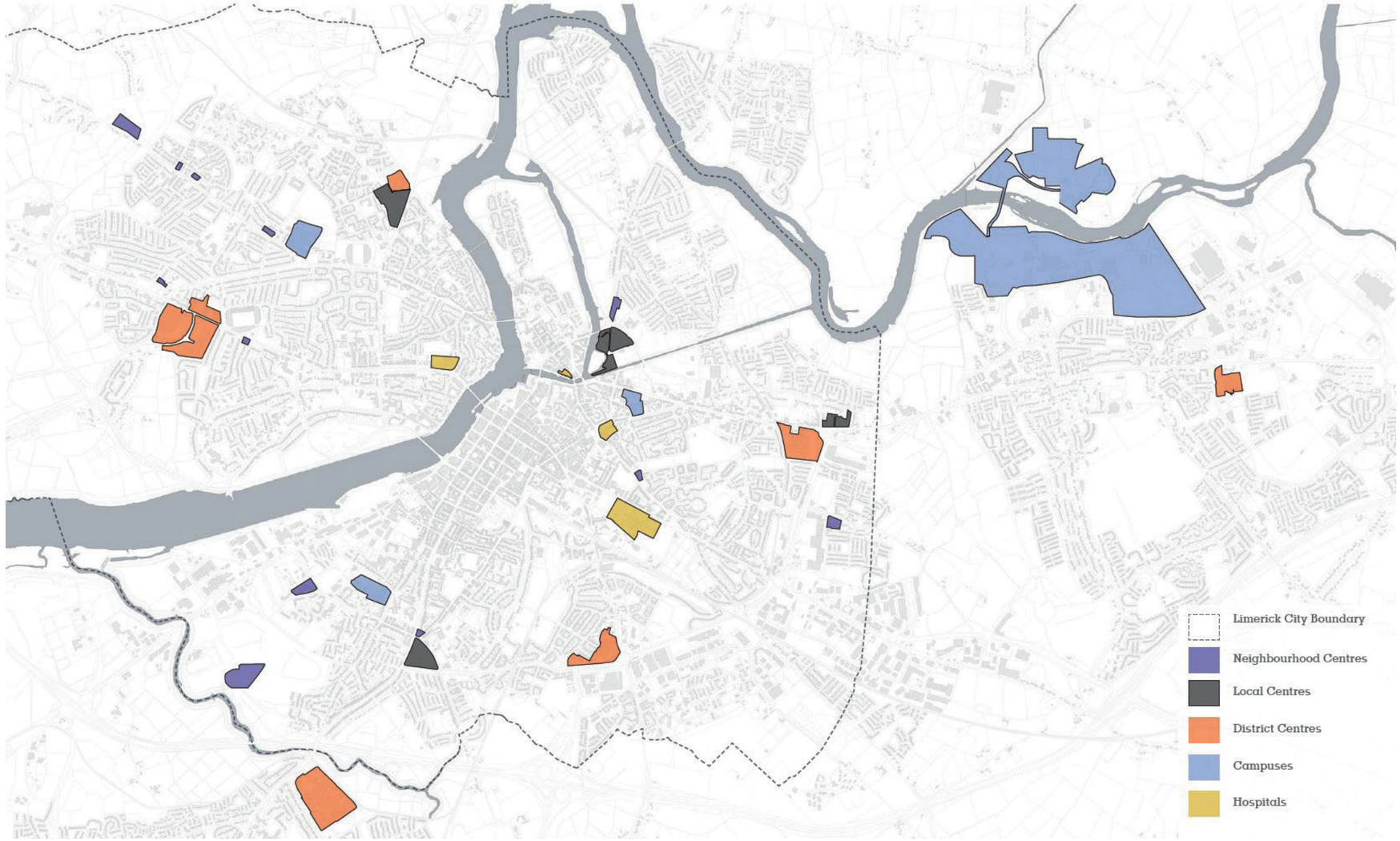
Local/Neighbourhood Centres

The next Tier of the hierarchy are Local/ Neighbourhood Centres, the primary purpose of which is to fulfill a local shopping function. Some of these centres need to be enhanced significantly in terms of their retail offering, mix of uses, public realm, and overall viability and vitality. They range from established centres to sites for future centres e.g. local centres at Mungret and Cork Road.

These centres are considered to generally have limited capacity for tall buildings given their scale and location in low rise residential settings.

Campuses

Limerick City and environs contains a number of large campuses that may present opportunities for taller buildings due to their scale. A total of 4 such campuses have been identified which currently accommodate a range of uses including educational, health and recreational. The campuses identified as having potential for taller buildings due to their scale are shown below.



Map 3.6: Commercial Centres and Campuses

Topography and Landscape Character Areas

A major determinant of the character of Limerick City is its distinctive natural topography. This topography is a product of the City's location at the head of the River Shannon estuary, with water being the key feature that has shaped the form of the City. This is evident in the alignment of much of the City's public open spaces, sports grounds and agricultural lands, with the extensive flood zones of the River Shannon.

The River Shannon is a key feature within the City and is perhaps the most visually sensitive in terms of topography and tall development. The banks of the River are visible as a strong landscape element, marking the entrance to the City Centre and allowing for significant views across the City.

The City Centre itself is relatively flat and low-lying, with the topography gently sloping upwards to the south east, with a slightly greater slope to the north towards Cratloe. Topography changes dramatically to the east of the City with the Slievefelim mountain range. These higher areas are perhaps the most visually sensitive in terms of topography but in many cases the views towards the City are severely restricted, if present at all, due to the natural landscape.

In a relatively flat city like Limerick, where longer outward views are not possible, the scale and form of the immediate surroundings become increasingly important. It also increases the importance of how the building relates to the scale of surrounding development and the general streetscape character.

With regard to landscape character, Limerick City is made up of smaller areas with different characteristics. These areas can generally be grouped as follows:

Urban area

The historic city centre and older established inner urban areas with a traditional urban grain, continuous and enclosed streets and spaces.

Suburban area

The area developed in the twentieth century outwards from the traditional core, the majority of which is very modern in the context of Limerick's historical development. It represents the largest part of the built up area of the City extending in all directions from the Centre. Development in this area is typically low-density, low-rise and discontinuous in terms of streetscape. Suburban areas include large campuses, business and institutional lands, education complexes and the villages enveloped by development.

Landscape area

Somewhat uniquely, this includes substantial areas of open space that not only define the edge of the City but extend into the Centre.

The River

The River Shannon and its course through the City.

These character areas sit side by side and combine throughout the City. It is their relationship that gives Limerick its distinctive character.



Map 3.7: Topography

Transport Infrastructure

The Building Heights Guidelines requires that development plans actively plan for and bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of our developing sustainable mobility corridors and networks[10]. In addition the Building Heights Guidelines states that taller buildings can assist in reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place within a city or town centre, such as indicating the main centres of activity, important street junctions, public spaces and transport interchanges[11].

The aim of this layer of the analysis process is to identify the transport infrastructure serving Limerick City. This is a critical layer of analysis in identifying areas for tall buildings in Limerick City.

Public Transport

In line with the Building Heights Guidelines, proposals for tall development should be integrated with the public transport network. Limerick City and its Metropolitan Area is currently served by a number of InterCity rail service and city, regional and Expressway bus/coach services. While public transport currently accounts for a low percentage of trips, the Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (Draft LSMATS) seeks to significantly improve the sustainable transport network and facilitate a modal shift toward sustainable modes, land use and transport planning, policy and investment.

The Draft LSMATS provides for the following improvements to the public transport network serving Limerick:

BusConnects - BusConnects Limerick will provide a reliable, high-frequency public transport service to improve connectivity of Limerick City and suburbs. It will comprise of a more comprehensive network, bus priority and new fleet, serving all key destinations and providing interchange with the rail network and proposed Park and Ride services[12].

Rail - The existing rail network provides access to Limerick City Centre at Colbert Station from Dublin, Ennis and Nenagh. The Draft LSMATS proposes to maximise opportunities offered by the existing rail network to enhance regional connectivity, with the examination of a dual-track between Limerick Colbert and Limerick Junction stations proposed. It also seeks to investigate the potential for a new station to support the proposed Park and Ride at Ballysimon.

A complete redevelopment of Colbert rail and bus station to provide a more attractive, secure and comfortable experience for passengers is proposed to support the masterplanning process recently undertaken by the Land Development Agency and Limerick City and County Council to develop over 100 acres of State-owned land around Colbert Station as a Transit Orientated Development (TOD)[13].

Walking and Cycling

According to the Draft LSMATS across the whole day for all trip purposes walking accounts for 29%. The Draft Strategy proposes a significantly enhanced walking network, supported by a number of measures including wayfinding, permeability, Safe Routes to School and urban design and placemaking. A key outcome of the Draft Strategy would be an increase in linked-trips with public transport, cycling and other forms of micro-mobility[14].

With regard to cycling, Limerick has untapped potential given its flat topography, compact design and the fact that a journey from the City Centre to the urban edge can be undertaken in less than 30-mins. The Limerick Metropolitan Cycle Network Study forms the basis of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area cycle network with additional proposals aligning with BusConnects, LNDR and Park and Rides. The Draft LSMATS notes that the identification of Primary, Secondary, Inter-Urban, Feeder and Greenway Routes, and Quiet Ways are required to develop a comprehensive cycle network across the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area[15].

Roads and Streets

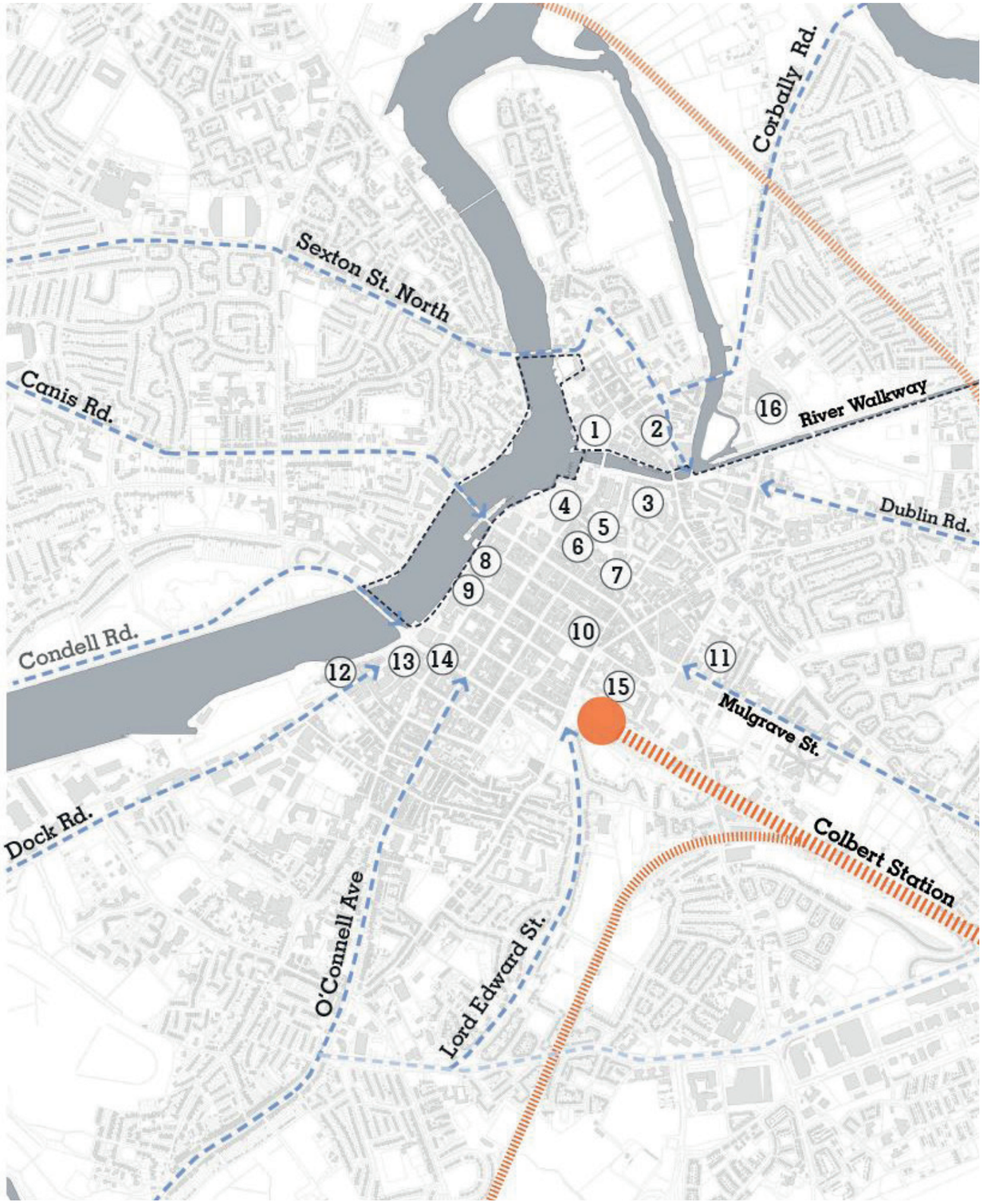
The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area has a well-developed network of National, Regional and Local roads and streets. The Draft Strategy seeks to deliver on strategic development priorities for the distribution of a more compact settlement pattern based on ensuring effective integration between transport and land-use. Some objectives relating to roads and streets include *inter alia*:

- M7/N18 Limerick City By-pass;
- A multi-modal Limerick Northern Distributor Road;
- Junction improvements to provide bus and active travel priority; and
- Park and ride and parking management.

The Draft Strategy also identifies indicative locations for Park and Rides at:

- M7: Newport Roundabout;
- M20/N21: Raheen;
- N18: Ennis Road; and
- N24: Ballysimon (rail and bus).

Mobility hubs in regeneration areas or central areas where low-car, high-density housing is planned are also encouraged, such as the LDA Colbert Quarter lands[16].



Map 3.8: Transport Routes ad Parking

1 The Potato Market

86 Spaces

2 Barringtons

230 Spaces

3 Euro Car Park (Charlotte Quay)

428 Spaces

4 Arthurs Quay

570 Spaces

5 Ellen Street

100 Spaces (surface)

6 Cruises Street

350 Spaces

7 Cornmarket Square

425 Spaces

8 Q-Park Harvey's Quay

675 Spaces

9 Howley's Quay

350 Spaces

10 City Centre, Anne St.

485 Spaces

11 Summer Street

429 Spaces

12 Steamboat Quay

261 Spaces

13 Aviary

280 Spaces

14 Q-Park Henry Street

290 Spaces

15 Colbert Station

180 Spaces (surface)

16 Grove Island

300 Spaces

Total

5439 Spaces

River Walkway

Rail Line

Roads into City Centre

Car Parks

Cycle Facilities

City Bus Service

Bike Share Station Locations

Map 3.9: Exerts from the LSMATS - Cycle Facilities, City Bus Service and Bike Share Locations

Open Space

The open space framework of Limerick is a unique feature of the City, defined to a large extent by the flood plain of the River Shannon. This layer of analysis identifies the designated open space areas which, although generally areas of exclusion for development, provide potential in terms of intensification of areas surrounding them.

The following hierarchy of open space applies to Limerick City:

Strategic Corridors & Networks

Cycling and walking routes, rights of way, green, blue and brown routes, corridors and networks.

Regional Open Space / Parks

Sites which individually or cumulatively, as part of an overall strategy, create an amenity of regional importance. This generally involves projects of wider potential value to the City – Economic Development focus/catalyst, image building as well as recreation and amenity e.g. The Shannon corridor including Westfields (166.76 ha), through to the University of Limerick Campus.

Citywide Open Space / Parks

Sites which create an amenity of Citywide importance. This could include parts of regional spaces and/or larger playing fields/sports stadia and golf courses, e.g. Groody Valley Park (unextended - 47.52ha), Rathbane Public Golf Course (58ha), Baggot Estate (taking account of the southern cross route 73.7ha). This could also include the newly acquired amenity areas of Coonagh West.

District Open Space/Parks

Parks/open spaces of around 8ha in size with the potential to provide a range of facilities/ activities to a neighbourhood including *inter alia*:

- Kennedy Park;
- Shelbourne Park;
- O'Briens Park;
- South of Dublin Road, Newtown, Castletroy; and
- The People's Park, Boherbuoy

Local Open Space / Parks

Spaces, varying in size, usually associated with local housing which provide informal and formal local recreational potential.

In addition, there are other types of open/green spaces within the City that define its unique character and act as amenity and spaces:

Wetlands

Limerick City contains extensive areas of wetlands within the built up area of the City. The wetlands are remnants of the original floodplain of this part of the River Shannon and many of them provide a remarkable natural amenity for the City.

Major areas of wetlands within Limerick City include *inter alia* Westfields, NCR; Park Canal; Lucas Lough/Shannon Fields (Athlunkard); Monabraher/Longpavement; Kings Island (St Mary's Park); Corbally and Ballinacurra Creek - Baggot Estate

Regard is to be had to the management and protection of these when considering all land use and land filling proposals.

Sport & Recreation

These spaces enhance the overall attractiveness of the urban environment and provide places for active and passive recreation. With increasing pressure for development and higher densities in urban areas, new spaces and facilities should be designed to the highest standards so that their potential usage is maximised.



Map 3.10: Open Space

Opportunity Sites

In addition to the Limerick 2030 sites, a number of opportunity sites have been identified following a review of the previous, current and future planning framework.

Mungret Masterplan

The Limerick 2030 DAC commissioned the preparation of a Masterplan for 59.6 ha of residential zoned land including 27.1 ha owned by Limerick City and County Council. The Masterplan will deliver much needed housing for Limerick seeking to create a vibrant neighbourhood that accommodates and facilitates a variety of uses and that nurtures a strong sense of community and relates well to its surroundings, with Mungret Village and with the adjacent neighbourhoods at Dooradoyle and Raheen.

This Opportunity Area has the potential to deliver approximately 1,950 dwelling units with the first phase delivering approximately 250 dwelling units. All dwellings will be located within 100m of a pocket park and 400m of a small park, with a Neighbourhood Park of 11 ha including a fully equipped inclusive playground and walking track already completed. Two new primary school campuses have been constructed on the lands, while a third campus for a new secondary school is seeking planning permission. Public realm improvements along the R859 as well as additional cycle facilities have been delivered.

The established Vision for Mungret is expressed through ten masterplan objectives:

1. Deliver an exemplar new neighbourhood with a clear identity and character that responds to the natural and historic environment and provides a great place to live;
2. Deliver a green neighbourhood that encourages healthy lifestyles, offering easy and safe access to amenities and opportunity for play, recreation and learning;
3. Create a strong and legible structure that leads people to a mixed-use centre at Mungret College, integrates the site with the wider area and strengthens existing centres;
4. Grow the existing community hub at Mungret College so that it forms a heart for the new neighbourhood and is accessible to all residents;
5. Protect and celebrate the site's historic assets including the College, Mungret Abbey and medieval ringforts;
6. Embrace the wider landscape and create a green framework across the site that retains the site's green assets and enhances biodiversity;
7. Create a walkable and cycle friendly neighbourhood that provides easy access to schools and amenities through a safe and attractive network of streets and paths;
8. Create a legible network of streets defined by new buildings and laid out as part of a clear hierarchy;
9. Incorporate bus routes through the heart of the neighbourhood reducing the need to travel by car; and
10. Provide a mix of high quality homes that give the opportunity to up or downsize within the neighbourhood.

Groody Valley

A portion of land in the north-eastern corner of the Groody Valley area at the junction of the R445 and the Groody Road is identified as suitable for residential development. Development of this brownfield site would complement the amenity use of the Groody Valley Green Wedge and facilitate creation of a landmark building with the highest quality public realm on the approach to the City from Castletroy. The site has potential to provide student accommodation given the proximity to the University. Connectivity to the Groody Valley Green Wedge should be central to any development proposals.

Parkway Valley Site

The former Horizon Mall brownfield site of 16.04ha is located adjacent to the Parkway Retail Park in the townland of Singland. The vision for development of these lands will be focused on the creation of a high quality environment in terms of design and layout, a mixture of functions, tenure types, unit sizes and the provision of a broad range of on-site facilities for employees.

Employment creation is a principal use for this site, with a range of other uses open for consideration, ancillary to the primary use as an employment zone. Due to the sites strategic location along the R445 Dublin Road, it is recognised that there is potential for increased building heights and that a masterplan which indicates building heights to include landmark buildings should be provided in any planning application made on this site.

Towlerton

The Towlerton opportunity site is located in a highly visible location on one of the main approaches to Limerick. The lands are bound by the Groody River Valley, the Bloodmill Road, the link road between the Groody Road and the N24 and agricultural lands.

This opportunity site will secure a comprehensive, high quality mixed-use development, which is architecturally distinctive, but respects and makes a positive contribution to the wider locality. The site shall be development in accordance with an agreed masterplan, which shall illustrate a permeable network of mixed-use developments with clear hierarchies of public and private open spaces, ensuring a legibility of design and place making to create a vibrant and pleasant new neighbourhood. High quality contemporary design will be encouraged to give a distinct identity, with a high quality architecturally designed land mark building along the southern section of the site. Any building proposed should respect the established building height in the vicinity and complement the building finishes.

The Bays, Moyross

This opportunity site of 1.85ha is located adjoining The Bays in the Moyross regeneration area. The principle use relates to employment creation and the provision of a broad range of employment opportunities. The vision for development of these lands will be focused on job creation in a high quality environment in terms of design and layout. A convenience retail element may be considered for this site, as ancillary to the primary use as an employment zone. Residential use is not permitted.

Ellen Street

There is the potential opportunity for development of a large brownfield site located on Ellen Street, which is currently utilised as a surface car park. The brownfield site is located in a prime city centre location, opposite the Opera Site.

Development of this underutilised site would contribute to the overall revitalisation of this area of the City, which has suffered from dereliction and decline over recent years. Development of this site would facilitate improvements to the visual amenities of Ellen Street, which is a key tourist route linking O'Connell Street to the Milk Market.

Thomond Park

The Thomond Park Stadium and surrounding lands are identified as having the potential to accommodate a mixed-use development such as a multi-functional event centre and hotel creating opportunities for employment creation in this area of the City. The development of the lands also presents the opportunity to enhance the character of the area through urban design and place making, incorporating buildings of landmark design, having cognisance to the Thomond Park Stadium.



Map 3.11: Opportunity Sites

Limerick 2030 - Sites

Limerick 2030: An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick was completed in 2014. An interim review and update of the Plan is currently being undertaken. Limerick 2030 identifies a number of strategic sites within Limerick City Centre that have the ability to deliver transformational projects. These sites individually and collectively hold significant potential, with clear guidance on their holistic development provided through Limerick 2030.

Development Zones

Within the City Centre the Plan identifies the following development zones:

King's Island

King's Island will be seen as a definable City Centre District with more visitors, more employment, and new places to live and featuring a more accessible Waterfront and better public spaces to visit, and relax in. Development identified for this area includes housing and retail on Nicholas Street, housing on Castle Street and research & treatment on the Medi Park Site.

The Opera Site

The Opera Site will be revived through a new, more intensive collection of activities focused on commercial, civic and public sector offices, an Innovation Hub, higher education facilities and supplementary retail/leisure uses. It is also an opportunity site for the location of higher education facilities components.

Planning permission has been granted for Project Opera, with works commenced on the development which will be a LEED Gold and nZEB standard Campus, consisting primarily of commercial offices supported by a range of retail and non-retail services, an Apart Hotel and new City Library in the historic Georgian Town Hall. The development will extend to over 555,000 sq. ft. of accommodation with building heights ranging from 3 no. storeys to 15 no. storeys and will deliver over 5,800 sq.m of public realm and high-quality streetscapes.

Arthur's Quay

Arthur's Quay encompasses the Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre, the surrounding highways, Arthur's Quay Park and Sarsfield House, as well as the tourist information office and visitor centre. Arthur's Quay will be transformed through major redevelopment of the existing Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre to provide a new shopping development on this Site and including sites to the rear, including part of Arthur's Quay Park, plus a major renovation and expansion of Waterfront open spaces and public realm. A new City Square will be created connecting across O'Connell Street to Cruises Street with the Sarsfield House Site transformed into a new Waterfront open space.

Cruises Street

Cruises Street will be transformed by a combination of renovation and redevelopment, allowing a wider range of shop types to meet market requirements, including the new City Square fronting O'Connell Street ringed by shops and restaurants/cafés.

Irish Town

Irish Town lies to the south of the Abbey River and Charlotte's Quay. It is notable for the retention of its organic street grid, a series of smaller scale and independent development blocks between the Medieval Quarter and the Georgian Quarter that are a legacy of its history as a Medieval settlement. There are a number of potential development sites and stalled development projects within Irish Town and it is seen as a longer term regeneration project. The evolution of Irish Town will take the form of a holistic regeneration programme following delivery of the Opera Site, Arthur's Quay and Cruises Street. The Plan envisages a mixed use future, building upon existing uses – residential, market, small business, leisure and culture.

Limerick Quays

Limerick Quays will be defined as the principal visitor and entertainment zone in the City Centre, accommodating a new visitor destination, walking, as well as eating and drinking in bars and restaurants that will activate the quays overlooking the River.

A new, signature building will be designed to international standards reflecting the prominence of this location within Limerick, with the Bishop's Quay Site becoming a high quality, mixed-use development. Minimum heights will be set by historic buildings on Henry Street while any taller components will be placed to respond to the surrounding context while allowing views through the Site.

The Plan promotes the former Dunnes Stores site for cultural/civic use given its Waterfront prominence, and suggested it as the potential site for the new Limerick Cultural Centre. This site is to be the University of Limerick City Campus, to include two linked buildings comprising a university teaching building and a student accommodation residence.

Eastern Gateway

Colbert Station is an important gateway/entrance point for Limerick City, which at present does not serve the City well. The plan envisages a comprehensive renovation to address these issues and create an appealing front door to Limerick. An enhanced Station building with new landscaped Plaza at the front of the station that links into a new Bus Station to the north side of the Rail Station with a linked access between the two. The land to the south of the Station fronting Boherbuoy across the traffic island and including the football pitch and poor quality shopping/housing have potential, subject to comprehensive renovation/redevelopment, for mixed use/business led development and could be the location of the new Urban Science and Technology Park subject to further feasibility.

The Land Development Agency (LDA) are currently managing the preparation of the Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework Strategy 2021 – 2041. The Colbert Quarter site has the capacity for the development of new homes for 6,300 people, employment, education, health, transport and leisure facilities, with a connected public realm and high quality architectural design to characterise and punctuate the area. Opportunity exists to enhance the new identity of the area by providing for buildings of height which act as place-markers and location finding identifiers.

Cleeves Site

The former 'Cleeves' Site at Stonetown Terrace sits at a highly visible gateway position. According to the Plan this location will require a long term strategy to address this large development site and recommends that this site be considered for an Urban Science and Technology Park at the edge of the City Centre. A Masterplan is currently being prepared for these lands. It is envisaged the site will comprise a large scale mixed-use residential and office, education and cultural/visitor attraction. The development will include conservation and adaptive re-use of a number of protected structures and other historic buildings. The site will provide public spaces and improved connectivity via a pedestrian bridge constructed across the River Shannon. It is recognised that there is potential for greater height and density, while creating a landmark city gateway.

The Docks Area to the immediate west of Steamboat Quay is also envisaged as a longer term opportunity with potential for mixed-use residential development. It was identified as an alternative site for a science and technology park instead of the 'Cleeves' Site.

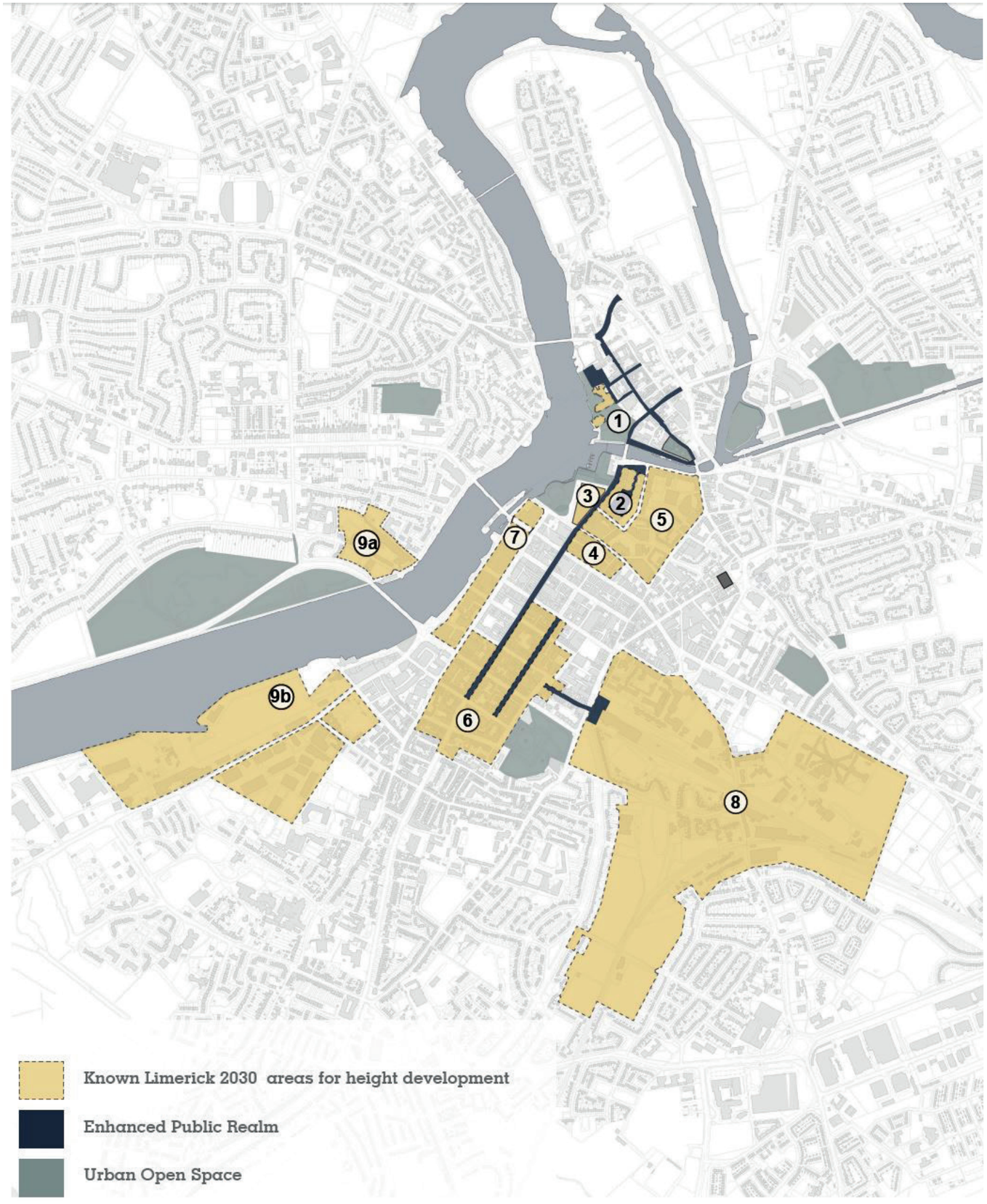
The Georgian Quarter

The Georgian Quarter will experience on-going renovation of its building stock with a substantial increase in the number of residents and level of business activity to create a bustling and vibrant mixed use residential and business district.

Transformational Projects

The Plan also identifies 7 no. specific 'transformational projects' which it defines as follows:

1. A 'World Class' Waterfront – a renaissance of Limerick's entire Waterfront. This project comprises three elements – the Riverside Infrastructural Works, Cleeves Riverside Quarter and the University of Limerick City Campus;
2. The 'Limerick Cultural Centre' – an iconic destination building on the Waterfront;
3. 'Great streets' – a transformation of the City's three main streets – O'Connell Street, Catherine Street and Henry Street;
4. A new City Square/Plaza – to define the focal point or 'heart' of the City Centre;
5. A City Centre higher education campus - the creation of a multi-versity combining facilities from Limerick Institute of Technology, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College in the heart of the City Centre;
6. Renewal of the Georgian Quarter – a concentrated programme to restore the Georgian part of the City to its former glory; and
7. Colbert Station renewal – a new public transport interchange and enhanced station environment.



Map 3.12: Limerick 2030 Sites



1 King's Island



2 The Opera Site

Landmark commercial development.(Ongoing) 15 Floors at Bank Place



3 Arthur's Quay Park & Shopping Centre



4 Cruises Street



5 Irish Town



6 The Georgian Quarter



7 Limerick Quays

Riverpoint is a two-tower mixed-use building complex at 58.52 meters.



8 Eastern Gateway



9a Cleeves Site



9b Limerick Docklands

Regeneration Areas

Limerick City has 4 no. regeneration areas at:

- Moyross;
- St. Mary's Park/King's Island;
- Ballinacurra Weston; and
- Southill

The development of these areas is guided by the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP). This Plan contains physical, economic and social framework strategies for each of the regeneration areas.

The vision of the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan is to create:

"Safe and sustainable communities of opportunity where people of all ages enjoy a good quality-of-life, a decent home and a sense of pride about their place. Well-serviced and attractive neighbourhoods will be physically connected and fully integrated with the social, economic and cultural life of Limerick."

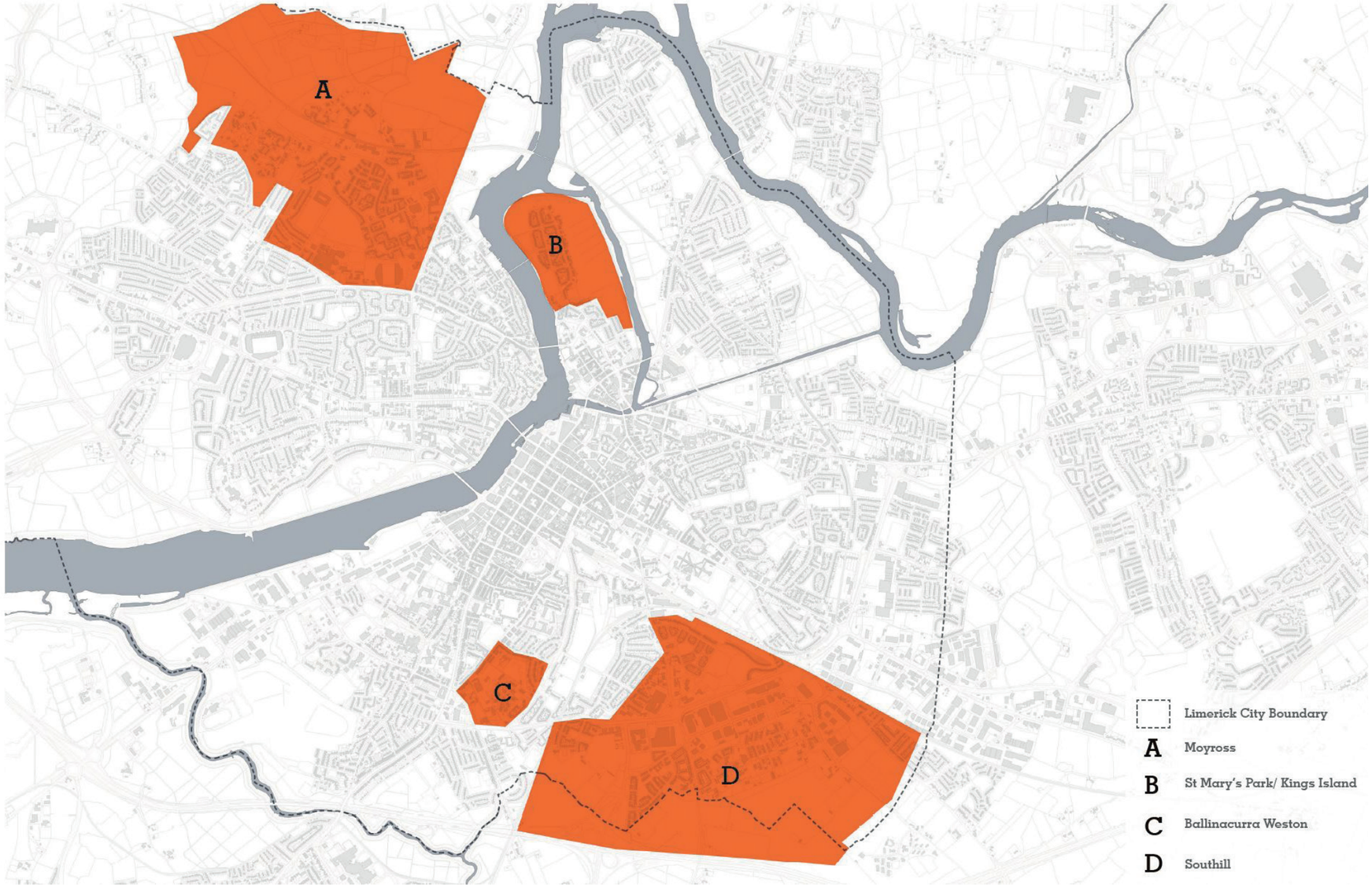
The aim of the LRIFP is two-fold:

- To improve the quality of life and wellbeing of communities in the regeneration areas by responding comprehensively to the problems (physical, social, community safety and economic) that exist, addressing the identified needs of people and adopting a sustainable development approach; and
- To promote the social and economic inclusion of the regeneration areas into the mainstream life of the City, reducing the gaps between the regeneration areas and the average for the City as a whole. This will be achieved by opening access to training, education and work opportunities, harnessing and promoting existing resources and making early interventions.

The specific objectives of the strategy and associated interventions in the Plan are structured around three pillars: social, physical and economic.

Key objectives for the four regeneration areas include recognising sites for development/ redevelopment, promoting the development of strategic sites and the re-use of underutilised sites. While all proposed development will be assessed in the context of the impact on the local area and on the City as a whole, the development of these areas may present the opportunity for the inclusion of taller buildings within the local context. In this regard the development of strategic sites within Southill may present the opportunity for the construction of landmark/ gateway buildings, subject to urban design and built form parameters.

The regeneration programme includes the delivery of some 593 new homes within a 10 minute walk of primary schools and community hubs, and the upgrading of 1,504 homes, across the areas of Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and St Mary's Park in Limerick City.



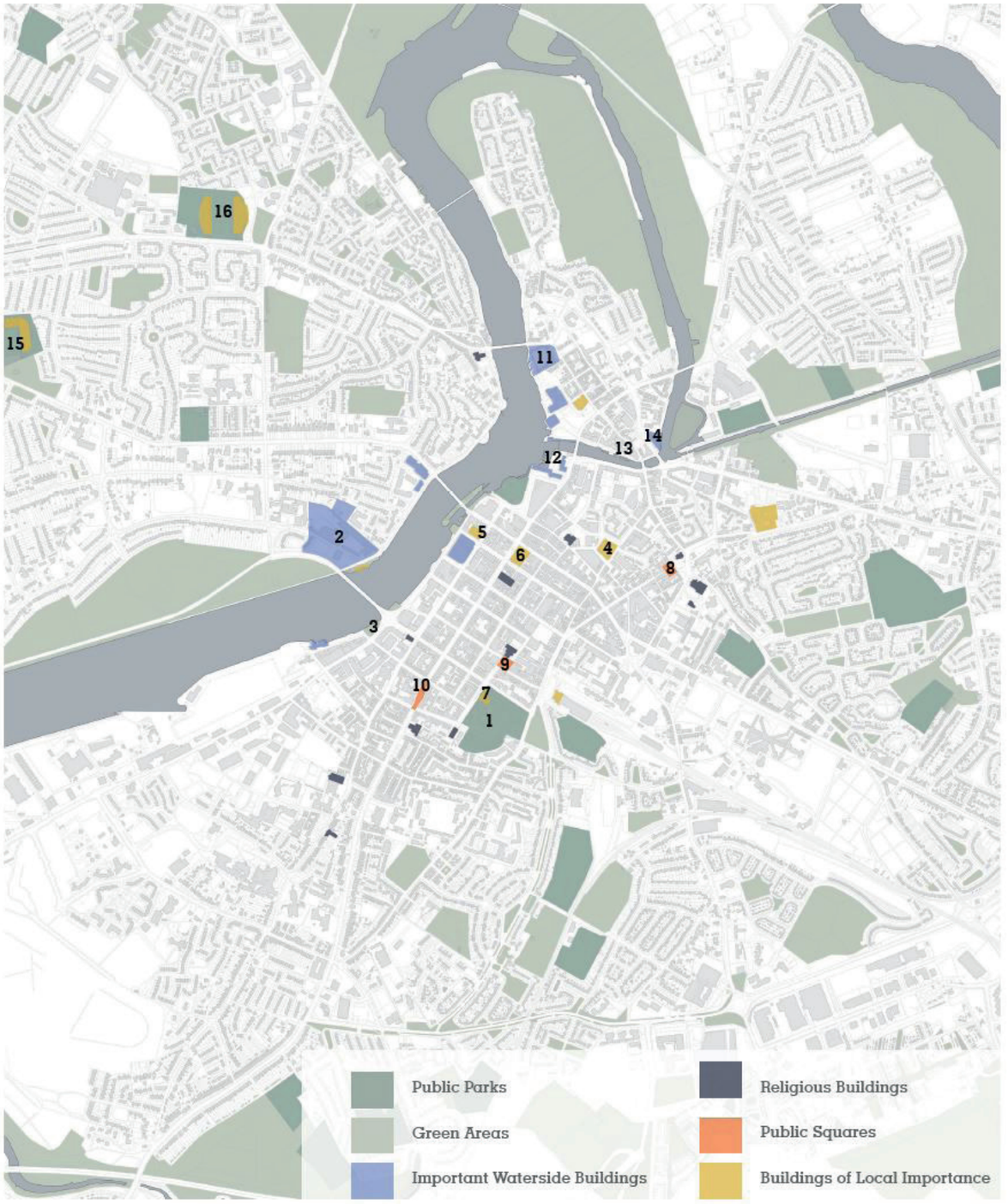
Map 3.13: Regeneration Areas

Areas of Importance

The urban character of Limerick City is not just defined by its buildings but is a combination of elements including public open space and amenity areas, important heritage buildings and local and cultural landmarks. These elements influence both how we experience the City and how we interact with it. In many instances they are also key attractors to the City e.g. Thomond Park or to specific locations within it e.g. the People's Park or Brown Thomas.

Many of these elements are addressed in the analysis of other layers including *inter alia* the People's Park under the 'Open Space' layer and King John's Castle under the 'Significant Views and Landmarks' layer. However, as these elements cumulatively form part of the unique urban character of the City, and are an important asset for existing and future residents, they are identified here in the context of their function and contribution to urban structure of the City.

1. People's Park
2. Cleeves Site
3. Limerick Skatepark
4. Milk Market
5. Limerick Museum
6. Brown Thomas
7. Limerick City Gallery of Art
8. John's Square
9. Baker Place
10. The Crescent
11. King John's Castle
12. The Hunt Museum
13. Barringtons Hospital Limerick
14. Absolute Hotel Limerick
15. Gaelic Grounds
16. Thomond Park



Map 3.14: Regeneration Areas

Key Growth Areas

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the urban structure of Limerick City, the urban analysis must also identify and understand the emerging areas and places with a changing character. These areas have the ability and capacity to deliver compact growth in line with national and regional policy and represent key growth areas for the City. Many of these areas have already been identified and their future development addressed in detail in Limerick 2030, including Colbert Station, the Opera Site, the Quays, Cleeves site and the Docklands.

This layer of analysis combines these areas with the established growth areas of the City to deliver a holistic picture in terms of existing areas of height within the City and potential future locations.

Within the key City Centre growth areas, three different categories are utilised to identify existing areas of, and opportunities for, height as follows:

- Known areas for height development;
- Inner city area possible height variation from context; and
- The Quay area possible height variation from context.

This analysis provides an indication of the extent to which the City has the capacity to change, grow and develop over time.



1 Limerick Colbert Station Quarter



2 Limerick City Docks

3 Old Gas Works Site



4 Cleeves Condensed Milk Factory



5 Limerick Strand Hotel



6 The Quay

Riverpoint is a two-tower mixed-use building complex at 58.52 meters.



6a Potato Market Merchants Quay



6b Sarsfield House, Francis Street



6c Arthur's Quay Park & Shopping Centre



6d Former Dunnes Stores Site

Purchased by the University of Limerick.



7 The Georgian Quarter



8 The Limerick Opera Site

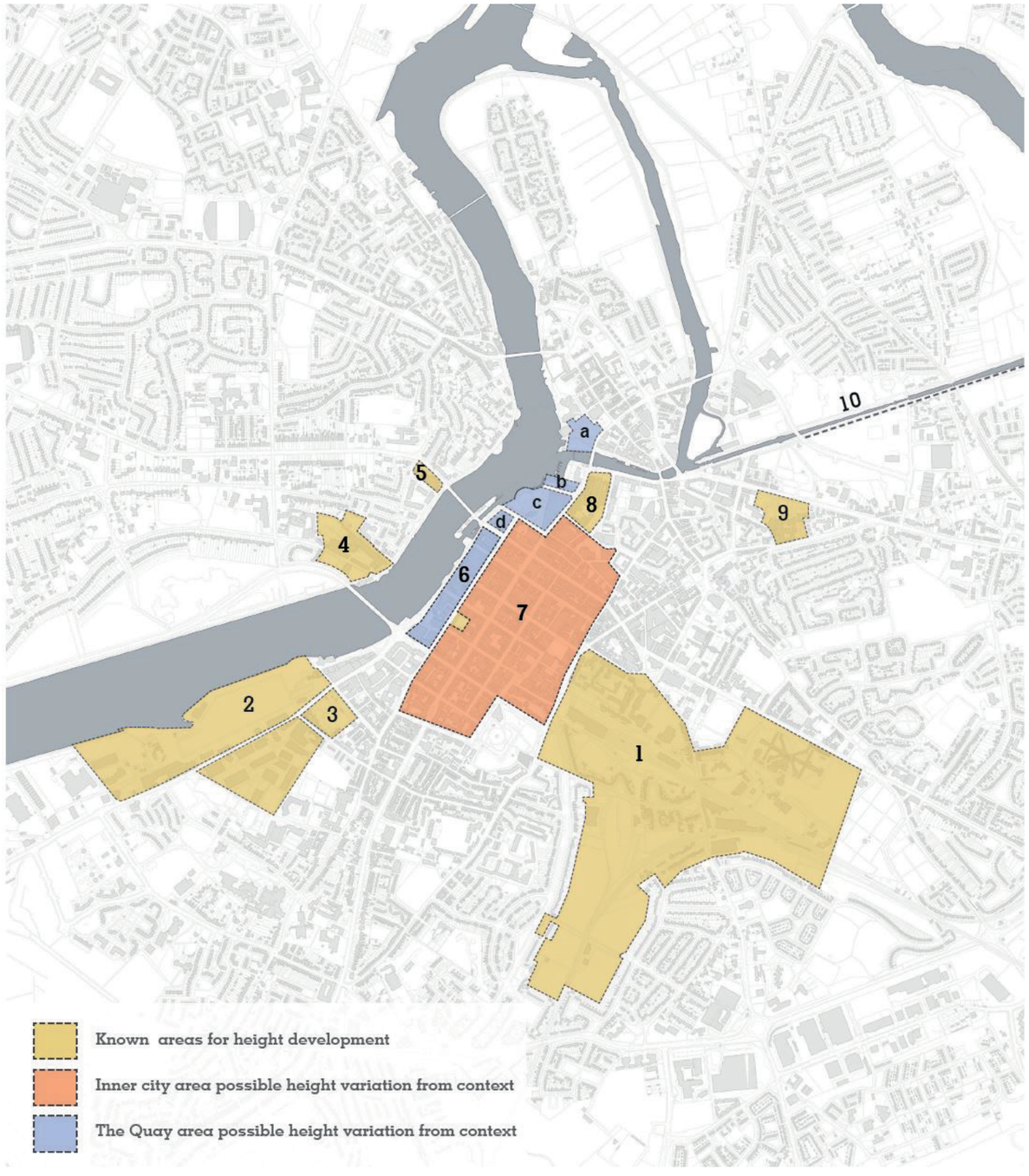
Landmark commercial development.(Ongoing) 15 Floors at Bank Place.



9 Limerick School of Art and Design

10 City Canal Front

Walking route from the University into the City Centre.



Map 3.15: Key Growth Areas

The Skyline and Tall Building Activity

This layer outlines the areas within Limerick City where tall buildings already exist. It also identifies where there are tall buildings proposals currently being delivered and where there are extant permissions for tall building developments. The associated map helps define the current and emerging pattern of tall buildings in the City Centre.

While some of the limited existing tall buildings are attributable to the buoyant property market of the Celtic Tiger, the requirement of the NPF for the compact growth of our cities will require the delivery of high densities and taller developments.

The Skyline

The skyline of Limerick City currently consists of a number of elements such as landmark buildings, individual higher buildings/structures, historical areas, streets and spaces and landscape elements. Notwithstanding the relatively flat topography of the City Centre and the resultant limitations on distant views, as high buildings exceed the general scale of buildings in the City, their impact on the skyline must be considered.

Limerick City has its own unique scale of building, strongly influenced by its Georgian heritage, which results in a largely consistent skyline. This can be referred to as the "general/common building height" of the City. This general building height varies across the wider City and within the character areas of the City Centre.

Existing Landmark/High Buildings

Limerick currently has a limited number of buildings which could be described as landmark buildings, due to their height relative to the City skyline. Many of these buildings are historical in nature, with the height reflecting their important role. For example the church towers and spires in the City Centre such as St. Mary's Cathedral and St. John's Cathedral have been Limerick's iconic buildings and reflect the importance of religion. The industrial heritage of the City is reflected in structures such as the Ranks Silo, at 10 storeys, in the docks or the Cleeves chimney on the northern banks of the River Shannon. Such local landmarks provide height and legibility to the City streetscape.

New additions are limited and concentrated along the southern banks of the River Shannon, specifically the River Point and the Clarion Hotel developments of 18 and 17 storeys respectively. These taller buildings are located at important nodal river crossing points, as focal points and city landmarks. These strategic landmarks also contribute to the creation of Limerick's distinctive skyline, which can be appreciated from the northern banks of the River Shannon. Other buildings such as the Strand Hotel on the north banks of the Shannon and the Absolute Hotel at Sir Harry's Mall, both at 8 storeys, appear tall in their context.

Many of the newer developments in the City Centre area have been located on the western side of O'Connell Street, including on Henry Street and along the riverside edges. Buildings here tend to range from 7 to 9 storeys in height, such as the Savoy Complex at 9 storeys, and often have the upper floors set back. This context height seeks to generally respects the older city core which ranges in height from 4-6 storeys.

Areas with changing or emerging character may present the opportunity for high buildings having regard to the area's wider image and function. One such area, the Quays, is identified as a strategic site by Limerick 2030, which promotes a new, signature building. As the Quays is an area with a changing character, is a gateway to the City and as it already contains existing taller building developments it may provide opportunities to create more dramatic and sustainable clusters of tall buildings. The Colbert Quarter and the Cleeves site are also areas with a changing or emerging character, both of which are subject to a masterplanning process.

Permitted, Extant and Live Applications for Tall Buildings

For the purposes of identifying permitted and extant 'tall buildings' within Limerick, we have taken 6 storeys plus as a cut off point within the City Centre and 5 storeys plus outside the City Centre.

City Centre

One of the key permitted developments, with works recently commenced on site, is the Opera site (Board Ref. 304028-19). The site was identified by Limerick 2030, as an appropriate opportunity to position a tall building to be a discernible landmark on the northern approach to the City Centre. The recent permission grants a new 14 storey (+plant) building and will introduce a new tall building at the northern end of the City Centre in an area which is currently low-rise' pronounced by the bell tower of St. Mary's Cathedral.

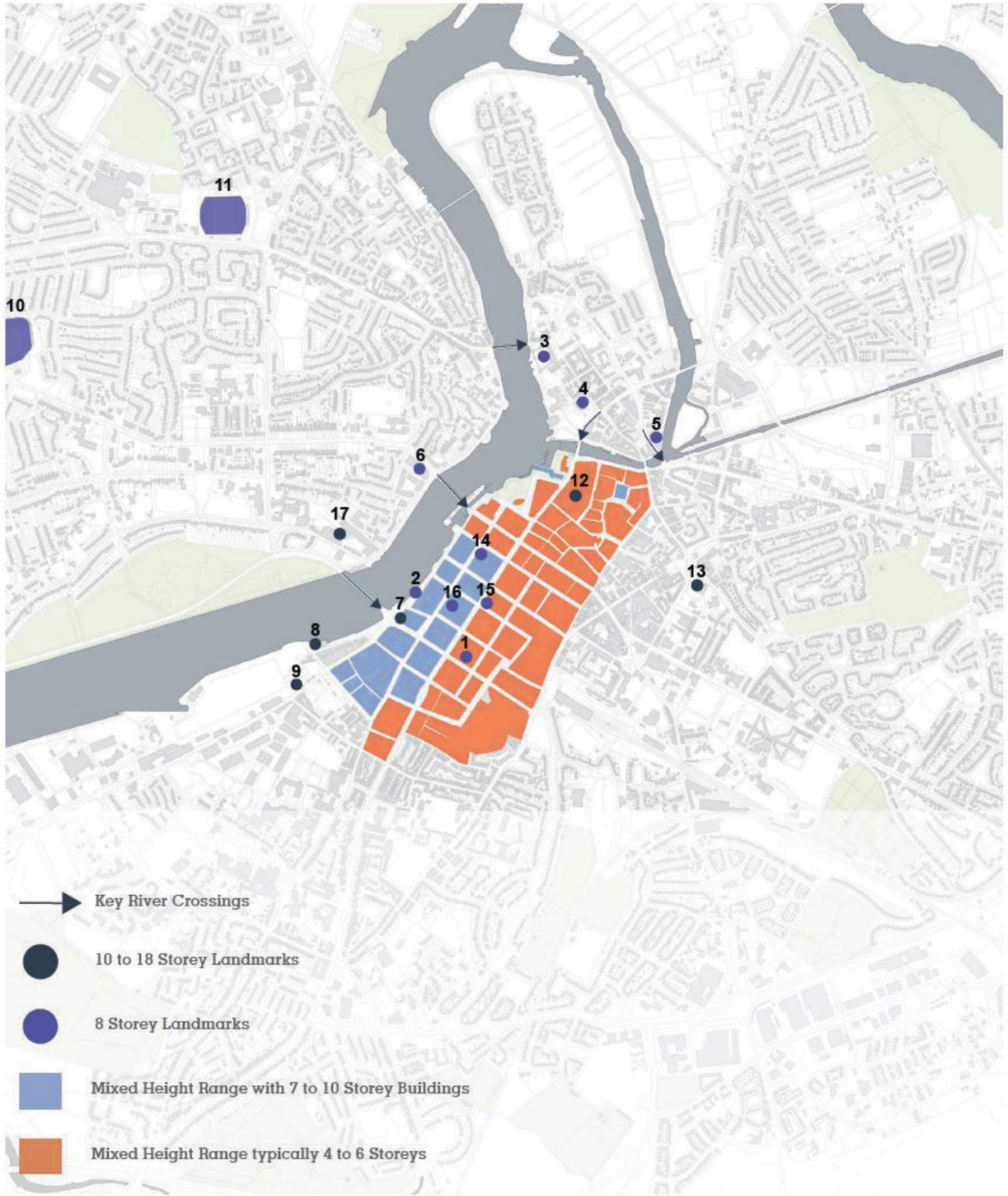
Permission was granted in 2017 for a tall building of 15 storeys at Bishop's Quay, another key area recognised by Limerick 2030 (Reg. Ref. 16/800, Board Ref. 247888) . However, permission was subsequently sought and granted in 2020 for a reduction to 7 storeys, with the applicant citing financial risk for the reduction (Reg. Ref. 19/1060). A subsequent application, permitted in late 2020, revised the height to 9 storeys, stating that the previous permitted reduction to 7 storeys would not be implemented (Reg. Ref. 20/1050). Permissions have also been granted on O'Connell Street for an 'International Rugby Experience' building of 7 storeys (Reg. Ref. 17/1180, Board Ref. 301154) and on Catherine Street for a 6 storey apartment, retail and office development (Reg. Ref. 20/222).

Within the Docklands, an area recognised as presenting a longer term opportunity for the City Centre by Limerick 2030, permission was granted in 2020 for the conservation, restoration and change of use of Bannatyne Mill (a Protected Structure) from a grain store to commercial office use (Reg. Ref. 19/1012).

Outside of the City Centre

There has been a number of permissions of note outside the City Centre including *inter alia*:

- On Canal Bank a strategic housing development (SHD) application for an 8-12 storey mixed- use development of 18 houses, 363 apartments, 189 student bedspaces and childcare facility was refused by the Board in May 2020 on environmental grounds (Board Ref. 306541). An application with the same development description has been determined by the Board to have a 'reasonable Application basis' in terms of SHD in December 2020 (Board Ref. 307956);
- Permission was granted in Singland on the Dublin Road for a mixed-use residential, commercial and community development up to 14 storeys (Reg. Ref. 20/25). It is currently on appeal to the Board (Board Ref. 308027);
- At Punches Cross a SHD application for a mixed-use, up to 6 storey, development of 30 apartments, 326 student bedspaces and childcare facility was refused by the Board in September 2019 on environmental grounds (Board Ref. 304705). An application for the same development description has been determined by the Bord to have a 'reasonable Application basis' in terms of SHD in June 2020 (Board Ref. 306772);
- In Annacotty a SHD application for an up to 5 storey 137 residential unit development was refused by the Board in September 2020 on environmental grounds (Board Ref. 307014). An application for the same development description has been lodged with the Board in October 2020 (Board Ref. 308513) and is currently at consultation stage;
- In Newcastle, Castletroy a SHD application for 200 residential units in 2-4 storeys was granted by the Board in November 2020 (Board Ref. 307631);
- In Dooradoyle a SHD application for a 332 no. residential unit development and creche up to 5 storey was determined to require further consideration by the Board (Board Ref. 307185);
- At Hassett's Cross permission was granted by Limerick City and County Council (Reg. Ref. 19/710) and subsequently by the Board (Board Ref. 308109) for a 6 storey building comprising of 31 student apartment units and medical centre;
- At Knockhill, Ennis Road permission was granted by Limerick City and County Council (Reg. Ref. 19/970) and subsequently by the Board (Board Ref. 307386) for a residential development of 92 units up to 6 storeys;
- Limerick Institute of Technology were granted permission for a 5 storey applied science and information technology building (Reg. Ref. 19/1287); and
- A number of planning permissions have been granted for residential developments in Newtown, Castletroy ranging in height up to 6 storeys (Reg. Refs. 19/547, 18/1104, 20/256).



Map 3.16: Tall Building Activity



1 Catherine Street Development (proposed)



2 Bishops Quay (proposed)



3 King John's Castle



4 St Mary's Cathedral- 37m



5 Absolute Hotel- 8 Storeys



6 The Strand Hotel- 8 Storeys



7 18 Storeys- Riverpoint



8 17 Storeys- Clarion Hotel



9 10 Stories- Ranks Silo



10 Gaelic Grounds



11 Thomand Park



12 Opera Site- 15 Storeys



13 St. Johns Cathedral 81 m



14 Savoy Complex- 9 Storeys



15 International Rugby Experience- 7 Storeys



16 Gardens International- 5 Storeys



17 Cleeves Chimney

Summary

As outlined in the Introduction,the purpose of this Section is to utilise urban analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the urban structure of Limerick City. The information gathered and the understanding attained forms the basis of the Building Height Strategy for the City contained in Section 5 and will inform the categorisation of areas within Limerick City in terms of their suitability for taller buildings, Section 6 of this Strategy.

The urban analysis process identifies the key characteristics and sensitivities of Limerick City, areas identified for growth and building height across the City. Based on this combined understanding of the layers assessed, it is evident that the morphology of Limerick has resulted in the City having a unique urban structure. Within this urban structure the distinct layers of historical development are legible in areas throughout the urban conurbation, which in combination define the character of the City.

The preceding analysis has shown that it is not appropriate to address location for height within Limerick in a uniform way at the City scale. Instead the dividing of the City Centre into 'Character Areas' is considered a more suitable approach as its allows for the unique historical context, urban and built form, characteristics, sensitivities, significant views and landmarks and existing context height across the City to be considered. The Character Areas identified are focused on the City Centre, as per the City Centre first approach, in line with national and regional policy promoting compact urban growth.

The identification of Character Areas will allow for building height to be assessed in the context of the unique character and attributes of the different areas that make up the City. It facilitates a more considered and responsive approach to building height that respects and reinforces the various existing context heights and heritage assets of the City Centre.

As the Building Height Strategy forms the basis of the Tall Building Recommendation, the use of Character Areas ensures that tall building recommendations and categorisations respond to the varying characteristics and sensitivities of the different areas that make up the urban structure of Limerick City. It also allows for the fact that several of the areas have a changing or emerging character, which will be a key determinant in their appropriateness for tall buildings, a very different proposition to the opportunities in more historic parts of the City Centre.

In addition, the analysis of Commercial Centres and Campuses, Transport Infrastructure, Opportunity Sites and Open Spaces directly informed, and were central to, the process of establishing gateway locations to the City.

In Section 5, a detailed analysis has been undertaken of the morphology of the City, focusing on the unique Character Areas. These Character Areas then form the basis for a contextual approach to the Building Height and Tall Buildings Strategies which will guide the locating of future tall buildings within the City as well as provide the tools to assess the appropriateness of such proposals from their local context to the City level.



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International Policy & Practice Review

4

Introduction

This Section identifies and analyses six cities that demonstrate a variety of approaches to strategic and place-based tall building strategy. These cities, while each unique and only in part a precedent for Limerick, nonetheless provide a broad scan of best international policy and practice, including lessons learnt in terms of dealing with the development of tall buildings in historic cities. The following analysis identifies key themes that could be applied to Limerick City.

London

London, a city obviously of much greater scale than Limerick, nonetheless provides examples good and bad for appropriate best practice. The Greater London Authority's (GLA) London Plan does provide some overall direction for the location and design of tall buildings. From a planning approval perspective, all London Borough development involving buildings over 30m in height are 'called in' for review by the GLA. In April 2018, London had some 510 tall buildings advancing through the planning approval process, presenting a significant challenge for an urban area that, outside of the City and docklands, has largely seen itself as low-to-medium rise. Early experience with individual high-rise buildings, such as Centrepoint, has led to three themes that characterise the 'macro strategy' for tall buildings.

First, the **identification of 'Opportunity Areas'** in the GLA London Plan that indicate where intensive regeneration is to be directed. Typically these are former industrial, railway or docklands sites which have sufficient scale that they can permit tall buildings while minimising any impacts on adjoining areas.

Second, the **direction of taller buildings to larger sites results in groupings of such buildings**, rather than individual towers. Such groupings offer a more attractive cityscape and also permit mitigation of wind and other impacts. Good examples of such groupings can be found along the Battersea riverfront, at Kings Cross and at Canary Wharf.

Finally, at the London Plan scale, particular attention is paid to **the protection of views**. Long distance views of St Paul's from Greenwich, Primrose Hill and Richmond Park have for example been protected from encroachment by tall buildings.

London: Borough of Islington

Many London boroughs now have quite detailed planning policy frameworks giving direction for tall buildings. One of the most recent and sophisticated is that prepared for Islington. Islington's height policies are based on a careful spatial analysis of the Borough itself, identifying its centres, corridors, open spaces and conservation areas. It also tries to identify what the purpose of such buildings is and their contribution to the Borough. Specific policies are identified to minimise impact through a 'place-based' urban design approach that focuses on minimising local impacts and enhancing landmark quality and building quality.

The proposed policy concludes with 8 principles that provide a useful framework for any city approaching a comprehensive tall building strategy:

- To promote and enhance the existing townscape;
- To promote compact development;
- To determine the location of tall buildings;
- To enhance legibility;
- To be proportionate to the role and importance of a place;
- To form clusters where appropriate;
- To deliver added value; and
- To promote high-quality design.

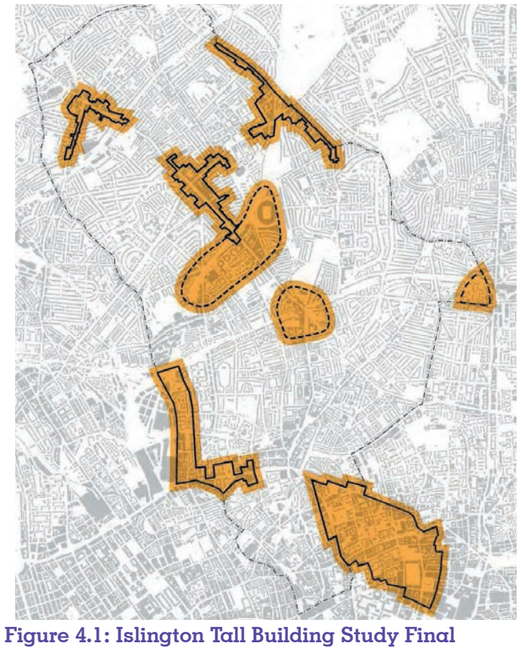


Figure 4.1: Islington Tall Building Study Final Report: Plan indicating Strategic Search areas to be considered as part of the more detailed Local Search

These principles were then translated into spatial form through a careful 'place-based' search analysis which identified the parts of the Borough where tall buildings could be considered. That plan search resulted in relatively constrained areas that were suitable.

A Local Search and Sieve Analysis, looked at each of the areas in detail and assessed them against the following:

- Hypothetical Tall Building Opportunities;
- Planning and Public Transport;
- Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Protected Views;
- Character Areas; and
- Potential Role of Tall Buildings.

Based on this a sifting conclusion of inappropriate or potentially appropriate for a Tall Building was made with a justification provided for same. The Study then tested tall building views within each identified area.

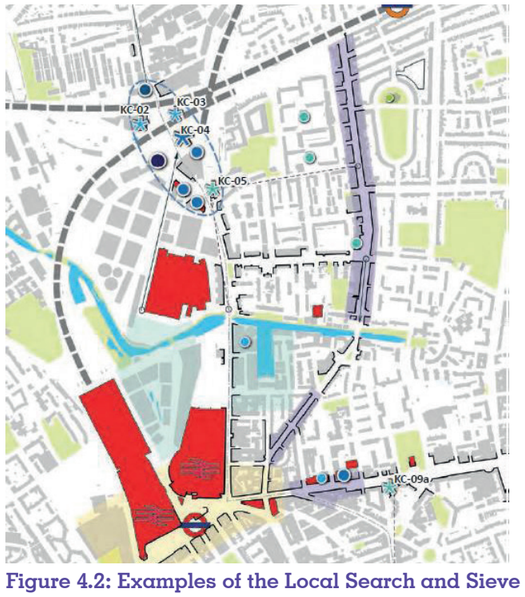


Figure 4.2: Examples of the Local Search and Sieve Analysis - Kings Cross

The final part of the Study examined tall building cost drivers identifying the main drivers of construction cost and setting out typical ranges for different uses in London along with theoretical modeling to demonstrate the relationship between cost of differing heights and complexity of building.

Manchester

Manchester is another English city traditionally of mid-rise scale in the centre that has been experiencing a very rapid increase in the number of tall building developments and applications. They too have adapted a 'place-based' definition of tall buildings, as ***"buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods and/or which change the skyline".***

Proposals for tall buildings are supported where they are of excellent design quality, are in appropriate locations, contribute positively to sustainability and to place making including by shaping a unique, attractive and immediately identifiable Manchester City skyline, and where the development would bring significant regeneration benefits.

As a result, City policy strongly directs tall buildings to City Centre sites and non-City Centre sites immediately adjacent to the Inner Relief Route to reflect the City Centre's pre-eminent regional centre role. The City Centre should accommodate the very large majority of the City's tall buildings, including the very tallest buildings, and those that could justifiably be described as being of 'iconic' design of international/national/regional importance.

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, tall buildings are directed to the City Centre. Such buildings are to be a part of a cluster unless it is of an exceptional iconic design of regional/national/international significance that satisfactorily addresses all other development policy criteria.

Manchester's policies emphasise that tall building proposals will be assessed in terms of their positive contribution to the urban form, including skyline, of the City Centre and may play a signposting role by, for example, identifying a locality or public facility within the City Centre.

Interestingly, Manchester has also acted to restrict 'speculative' planning applications and rescind those that have been undeveloped.

Their tall building policy sits within a broader planning framework promoting intensification around public transport stations and corridors which establishes minimum densities for such strategically significant sites.

Location (use highest density that applies when a site falls within more than 1 location)	Minimum net residential density (dwellings per hectare)		
	Within the location	Within 400 metres	Within 800 metres
Designated Centres			
City Centre	200	120	70
Designated town centres	120	70	50
Other designated centres	70	50	35
Public Transport Stops			
Main rail stations and Metrolink stops in the City Centre	N/A	200	120
Other rail stations and Metrolink stops in large designated centres	N/A	120	70
Other rail stations with a frequent service and all other Metrolink stops	N/A	70	50
Leigh Guided Busway stops	N/A	50	35
Areas within GMAL 6 and above	50	35	35
All other locations: minimum net residential density of 35 dwellings per hectare			

Figure 4.3: Manchester Minimum Density and Transit Chart

Bristol

Bristol has prepared a highly detailed Supplementary Planning Document to guide the processing of development applications as part of a much broader City strategy of promoting 'urban living' in higher density, city centre communities and in other appropriate areas outside the City Centre. The specific strategies for tall buildings are set within that broader policy context.

It sets a broad range of acceptable density, from 100 – 200 units per hectare, based on the success of such projects in the City. However, it clearly indicates that the actual density should be design-led.

The policy is laid out as a series of questions that should be asked of any new project: Does the scheme deliver a comfortable micro-climate for its occupants, neighbours and passers by for example, and then provides detailed guidance in how to assess the answer.

Those questions are asked at a number of different scales – the City, the Neighbourhood, the Block or Street, the internal and external layouts and other aspects of the proposed development. Questions are asked regarding the 'visual quality', the 'functional quality' and the 'environmental quality' of a proposed building, and guidance given as to how to achieve a positive answer. Matters such as wind, sunlight/daylight and visual impact are similarly structured.

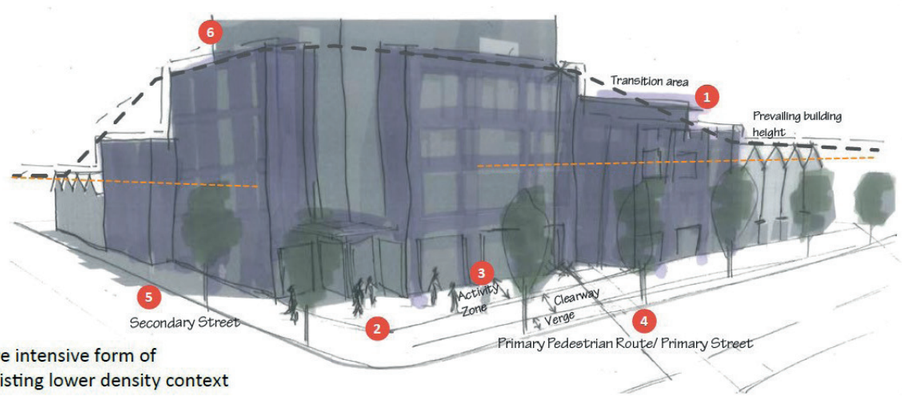


Fig 6: Introducing a more intensive form of development into an existing lower density context

1. Transition area between existing prevailing building height and increased scale of new development
2. Generous public realm around main entrance to the building, proportionate to the intensity of use
3. Set back building line to accommodate spill out space and active uses, on sunny side of street.
4. Scale of base building related to street width and function
5. Loading bay and servicing areas in shaded area of secondary street
6. Taller element set back from street.

Figure 4.4: Bristol Urban Living SPD: Making successful places at higher densities: Introducing a more intensive form of development into an existing lower density context

Amsterdam

Amsterdam has created the Structural Vision for 2040 which is an economically strong and sustainable policy document that encourages greater housing density. It outlines the City's vision to grow in all directions, including into the surrounding green belt and through density and transformation of already built-up areas, resulting in an additional 70,000 homes by 2040.

The Structural Vision and 'Setting Course for 2025' identify where development in Amsterdam will take place. The fringes of pre-war Amsterdam, known as 'the 'Ring Zone' and along the banks of the River IJ have been chosen as areas of opportunity and intensification. In the Ring Zone the main development will be at the Zuidas, where most tall buildings currently exist. In addition to offices, thousands of homes and a number of amenities will be built.

There is an emphasis on regional public transit in order to facilitate and accommodate growth in the City and metropolitan area. Expansions to both local and regional public transit network will mean further connections for train, bus, tram, metro and ferry.

The City has created strategies to address the impact of increased housing density in the City which will place additional pressure on infrastructure and public spaces, like streets, squares, parks and quaysides. At the same time Amsterdam recognises that the City has outgrown its borders. The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (AMA) outlines its regional challenges in the 'Development Scenario for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area in 2040'.

Amsterdam defines **high-rise** as buildings from 30 meters in height or twice the height in their immediate vicinity. **Medium-rise** buildings are from 22.50 to 30 meters in height or 25% higher than their immediate surroundings. In the canal area, protected by UNESCO heritage status only medium-rise buildings are permitted. Surrounding this area is a 2 km radius, which allows high rises based on an application and approval process.

Height and density are expanding along the a10 motorway, where a **zone of buildings of up to 60 meters** has developed over time, with the tallest buildings focused around chosen junctions. Zuidas and Teleport are the most prominent. You can experience these buildings from the a10 and in the immediate vicinity. In the street scene of the central area, this height is lost in the silhouette. Further development of high-rise buildings between 30 and 60 meters, and preferably even higher at important junctions are encouraged in this zone. However, an exception is made at the a10 in Noord, directly opposite Waterland, along which high-rise buildings are not desirable.



Figure 4.5: Amsterdam Structural Vision for 2040 - High-rise buildings and roll-out of central area

Stockholm

In Stockholm, according to the Planning and Building Act, a City Plan is to provide guidance and support in making decisions on the use of land and water areas and how the built environment is to be developed and protected. Stockholm's current City Plan provides guidance and long-term objectives for the City's development until the year 2040.

The Stockholm City Plan has four goals as follows:

1. To have a growing City, one which is attractive to both people and businesses allowing for opportunities of urban development while maintaining housing and public services for all;
2. A cohesive City where all residents are able to move throughout the city and interact with destinations and other people with ease;
3. To create well designed public spaces in all districts in the City in order to allow participation and engagement from all residents; and
4. To be a City that is climate-smart and resilient through efficient land use and transportation planning practices, increasing mobility and access while limiting the consumption of resources.

To reach these goals while also prioritising housing, Stockholm has also developed an expansion strategy that outlines the priorities for the City. More density and height is to be created in the centre of the City in order to benefit from the existing resources available in the region. The area surrounding the City Centre will also see greater density and height in order to sustainably facilitate the City's growth outwards.

Development is encouraged across the City but to meet density goals and ensure development is happening at a sustainable rate, four focus areas are identified which are, Kista-Järva, Skärholmen, Farsta and Hagsätra-Rågsved. This will also be done through long-term urban development projects which will allow a more holistic approach, so as not to impede more extensive city planning initiatives in the future.

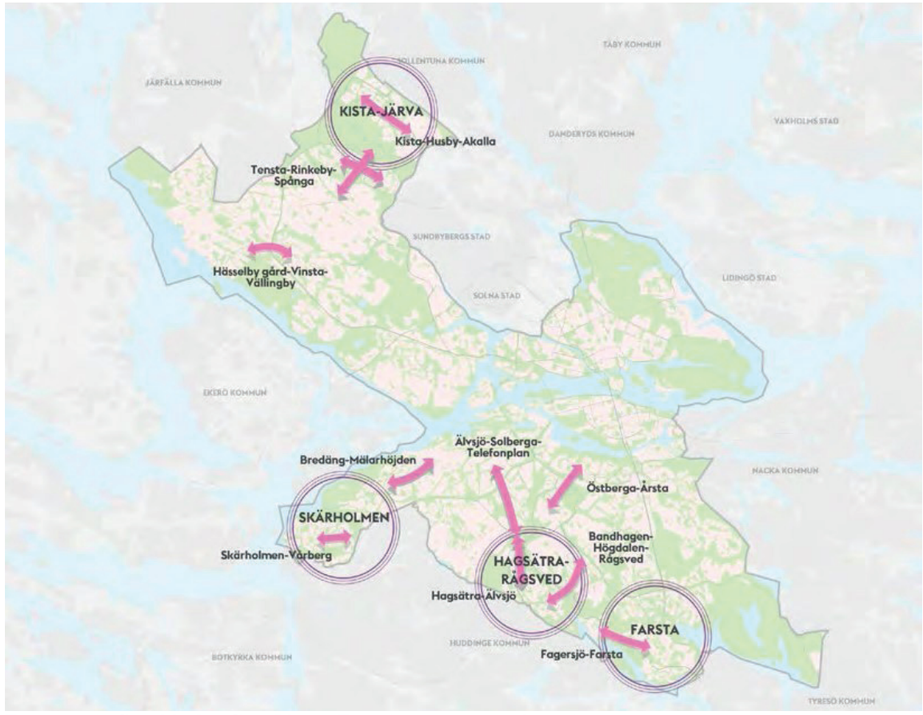


Figure 4.6: Stockholm City Plan - Four focus areas plus 10 strategic connections.

Toronto

Toronto has been experiencing one of the strongest waves of high-rise construction of any city in North America, with over 130 buildings over 20 storeys now under construction. The size, rate of growth and urban form of the City make it highly atypical of most European cities, yet there are some useful lessons in its urban design and planning management that do have wider application.

A strong overall official plan clearly identifies where taller buildings can and cannot be built, avoiding the problem of taller buildings being inappropriately located. A set of quite strict 'tall building guidelines' govern the essential design of such structures. One important guideline is the limitation of the maximum floor plate of residential buildings to 750 sq m, which reduces the visual bulk of such buildings. Urban design guidelines distinguish between the street level, mid-section and top of buildings, with expectations established for each such building element. Careful attention is paid to wind and shadow impacts, with quantitative rules on maximum acceptable impacts.

One design management tool that has proven particularly robust in the resolution of disputes between developers and their immediate neighbours is the use of a 45 degree angular plane 'tent' guidance. The angular plane springs from the closest low-rise house form or main street structure and provides a height envelope within which tall buildings can be located. This technique has a quality of 'reasonableness' that can diffuse a local argument about 'too tall' or 'not tall enough'.

Guidelines for the quality of the living environment in tall buildings are provided in an accompanying policy document, 'Growing Up', which recognises that for many families, high-density, high-rise living is the new normal. Guidance is provided both for the internal design of units – ensuring a place for the pram, for example – and for the associated outdoor spaces.

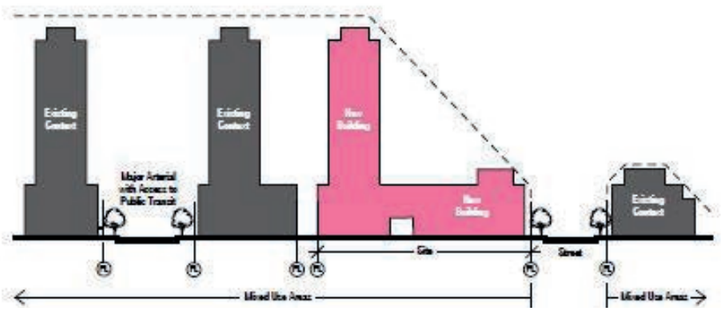


Figure 4: A conceptual illustration of an angular plane and direct relationship in base building height and form to support tall building transition down to a lower-scale area.

Figure 4.7: City of Toronto - Tall Building Guidelines

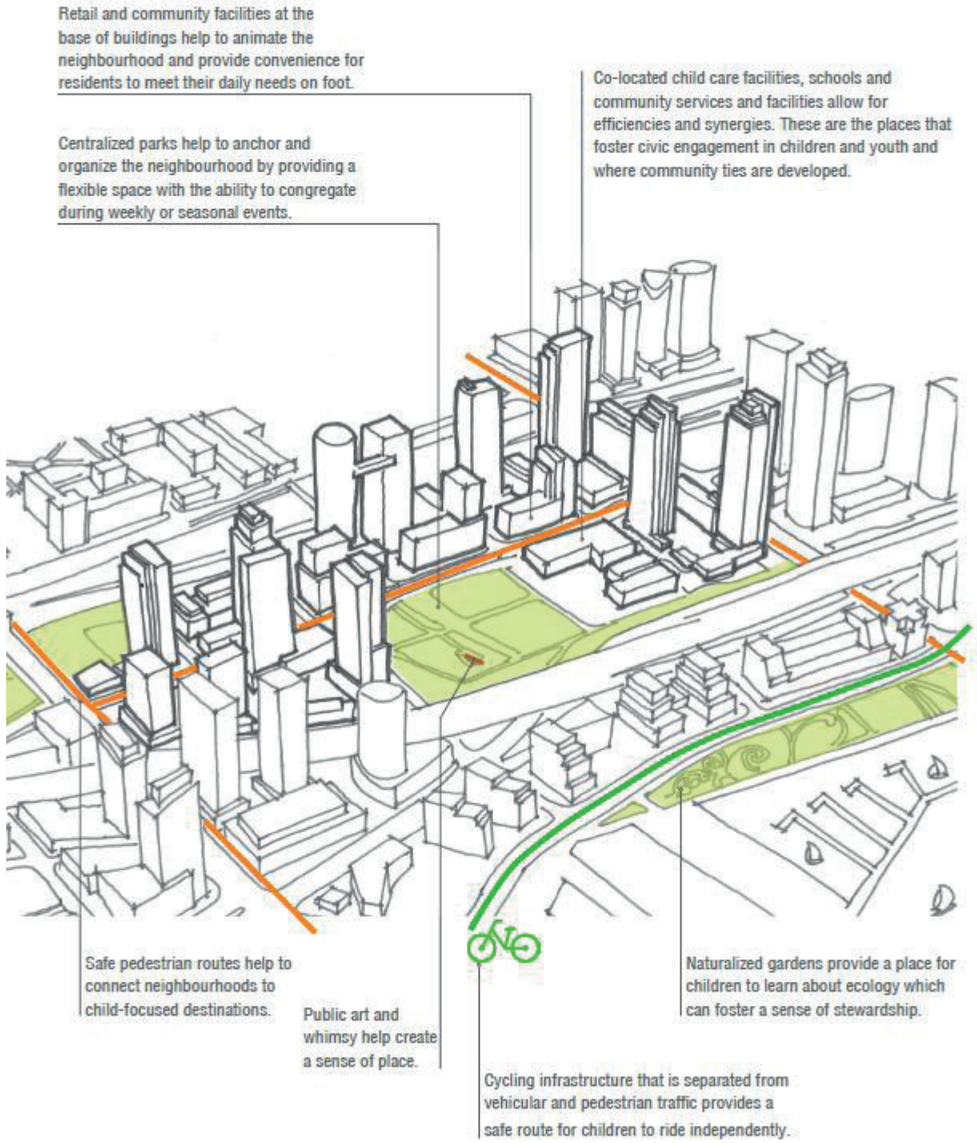


Figure 4.8: City of Toronto - Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities

Explaining the Approach

5

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Introduction

The purpose of this Section is to establish the basis of, and approach to, the Building Height Strategy provided in Section 6 of this Strategy.

As the Building Height Strategy must respond to the unique characteristics and sensitivities of Limerick City, understanding how the City has developed, its urban structure and the areas that characterise the City Centre is key.

The urban structure at a city wide strategic level is identified in the first instance as this will directly inform the approach to building height guidance outside of the City Centre. Following this, and in line with the City Centre first approach, the City Centre is examined in terms of its different characteristics, with eight distinct Character Areas identified. As the impact of high buildings will vary based on the unique character of each area, understanding their attributes, assets and sensitivities is essential to delivering building height guidance.

Building height and tall buildings in the context of Limerick City are also considered and explained. In relation to the latter, four distinct tall building classifications for Limerick City are identified. These are provided to assist in understanding the types of tall buildings, their perception in their context and their potential impact on the skyline of Limerick City. As the tall building classifications are primarily context based, these can be applied across the Character Areas as well as at the wider city scale in providing building height guidance.

Finally, the approach to providing tall building recommendations is set out. This has been informed by the preceding review of international best practice as well as the uniqueness of Limerick as a City. The outcome is the provision of a 'Recommended Height' at the Character Area level in combination with 'Modifiers' that provide for permitted deviations from the recommended height and ensure a degree of flexibility.

These tools together will guide building height by providing an indication of appropriate heights while still allowing for a degree of flexibility to adapt to local circumstances through the application of performance based criteria, in line with NPO 13 of the NPF and the Building Heights Guidelines.

Urban Structure

Understanding the morphology of Limerick City allows for the identification and plotting of the key characteristics and sensitivities of Limerick City. This provides a greater understanding of building height and allows for the identification of the urban structure at a City wide strategic level.

In order to understand the morphology of Limerick City the historical development of the City was reviewed, regard was had to the Development Plan, existing building heights within the City were considered and the information gathered as part of the urban analysis was assessed. Based on the morphology of the City its current urban structure was identified and categorised into 6 distinct areas as set out below.

These areas have been identified, and are utilised, in the context of this Strategy. They do not relate, and have a different purpose, to the land use zoning objectives set out in the Limerick Development Plan.

Inner City Core Area

This area covers the southern part of King's Island, the medieval heart, the Georgian Quarter, the southern quays and includes some of Limerick's main central city streets and its commercial and cultural heart. It encompasses the Georgian grid street pattern as well as areas of inconsistent patterns such as those around the Milk Market.

The predominant building height in the Inner City Core is low to medium rise, generally 4-6 storeys, with the area west of O'Connell Street accommodating higher buildings of between 7 to 10 storeys. The notable exceptions are the modern developments along the riverfront close to the Docklands, where 2 tall buildings, the 59m high Riverpoint building and the Clayton Hotel at 57m have become new landmarks of the southern city skyline.

Other tall structures within this area are church towers, specifically St. Mary's Cathedral as well as a lattice structure telecommunication tower.

Rest of Inner City Area

This area adjoins the Inner City Core, covering the City Centre as it transitions to the surrounding suburban areas. It includes the northern part of King's Island (a designated regeneration area), the docklands, Colbert Quarter, areas adjoining the Georgian Core, as well as an area on the western/ northern banks of the River Shannon.

The predominant building height in the Rest of Inner City Area is low rise, generally 2-4 storeys, with a general reduction in height from the City Centre towards the suburbs. Notable exceptions are the 10 storeys Ranks Silo in the docklands and the modern Strand Hotel on the northern quays and the Absolute Hotel at Sir Harry's Mall, both of which are 8 storeys but appear tall in their context. Other tall structures within this area are church spires and towers, specifically St. John's Cathedral, as well as the former industrial chimney on the Cleeves Site.

The transitional nature of this area is reflected in the wide mix of uses it accommodates including *inter alia* commercial, institutional, industrial and residential. As a result, the Rest of Inner City Area is where large urban landbanks are concentrated such as those of the docklands, Colbert Quarter and the Cleeves Site.

Surrounding Suburban Area

This area covers the suburban area immediately adjoining the Rest of Inner City Area to the north, south and east. It encompasses substantial parts of the areas of Garryowen / Singland, Edward Street / Jansboro, South Circular Road / Ballinacurra and Southhill (a designated regeneration area).

This area is predominantly low rise, 1-3 storeys, and substantially residential in character. The higher end of the height range, i.e. 3 storeys, is generally located in the inner urban parts, such as Wolfe Tone Street and O'Connell Avenue, where densities are also greater.

Given its substantial size, the Surrounding Suburban Area also accommodates a range of other uses including a number of state bodies such as *inter alia* Limerick Prison and St. Joseph's Hospital, recreational facilities such as the Peoples Park, business and retail parks and educational institutions. It also includes the former Limerick Race Course, a substantial undeveloped landbank to the south west of the City Centre.

The Dublin Road and Childer's Road interchange at the Parkway Roundabout acts as a gateway to the City from the east. The Castletroy Travelodge Hotel on the Dublin Road at 9 storeys, appears tall in its context and acts as a landmark building on this main entrance to the City. The 'Horizon Mall' development, with a max height of 14 storeys, on the opposite side of the Dublin Road (currently with An Bord Pleanála, Board Ref. 308027) would reinforce this area as a gateway.

On the N24 Waterford Road entrance to the City the Northern Trust building at 7 storeys distinguishes this area as a gateway, while the Maldron Hotel, at 4 storeys, performs a similar function on the M20, Cork and Kerry roads. Other gateways to the City Centre via the Surrounding Suburban Area are not as clearly distinguished. There is potential to strengthen the entrance from the N69 entrance as a gateway to the wider City.

Southern Environs

This area covers the urban area to the south west of the City Centre, on the southern side of the by-pass including Dooradoyle, Mungret, Ballycummin and Raheen.

As a suburban area it is predominantly low rise, 1-3 storeys and substantially residential in character. The notable exceptions to the general height of the area are University Hospital Limerick on St. Nessan's Road and the Limerick City and County Council Offices, a landmark building on the Dooradoyle Road.

The area also accommodates a range of other uses including the Crescent Shopping Centre, educational institutions, recreational facilities such as Garryowen Rugby Football Club and the substantial Raheen Business Park. Lands at Mungret Loughmore, c. 290 ha, are subject to a Masterplan for their development.

The location of the M20 motorway to the east of the Southern Environs means that it is not a direct access route to the City Centre, instead being a destination in itself for work, shopping and healthcare provision.

Thomond Park Gateway

This area covers the majority of the urban area to the west of the River Shannon and includes substantial parts of the areas of Thomondgate and the Ennis Road, as well as Caherdavin and Moyross (a regeneration area).

This area is predominantly low rise, generally 2 storeys, and substantially residential in character, containing one of the oldest parts of the City. A notable exception to the low rise nature of the area and a major landmark in the skyline of this part of the City is Thomond Park Stadium.

The area also contains the Limerick Institute of Technology, the Maternity Hospital, the Gaelic Grounds, the Jetland Shopping Centre and the Coonagh Cross Shopping Centre all of which are low rise, in keeping with their surroundings.

This part of the City is the gateway from the west, and provides the first impression of the City for many visitors coming from Shannon Airport and those exploring the Wild Atlantic Way. At present Thomond Park acts as a gateway building in this area, marking the entrance to the wider city, while the Strand Hotel at Sarsfield Bridge marks the entrance to the City Centre from the Ennis Road.

The Condell Road entrance from the by-pass, across Shannon Bridge, is the third entrance point from the west. While the Cleeves chimney structure and adjacent vacant industrial buildings are a prominent landmark here there is further scope to reinforce this area as a gateway to the City.

Castletroy/University Gateway

The Castletroy/University Gateway is located to the east of the City Centre and covers the urban areas of Castletroy, Annacotty and Monaleen as well as the University of Limerick.

This area is predominantly low rise, 1-3 storeys, and substantially residential in character. The higher end of the height range is generally located in the newer residential areas including *inter alia* Bloomfield as well as in purpose built student accommodation such as Brookfield Hall which is up to 4 storeys.

The area also accommodates a range of other uses including *inter alia* the Castletroy Shopping Centre, the Castletroy Park Hotel, recreational facilities such as the Castletroy Golf Club, educational institutions and business parks.

Of note, and a substantial character area within the Castletroy/University Gateway and the wider City, is the University of Limerick campus. The campus is expansive at over 130 hectares and is located both north and south of the River Shannon in counties Clare and Limerick respectively. It is largely self contained and is substantially enclosed, meaning that existing buildings within it have a limited visual impact on or interaction with the surrounding area. Its presence has attracted technology companies to the area, with the National Technology Park located to the east.

Changing or Emerging Areas

Within the 6 urban structure areas, categorised in this Section, there are a number of locations that have a changing or emerging character which may provide the opportunity for locating tall buildings. These locations are identified below as they are an important resource for the City's future development, providing opportunities for new high quality urban environments.

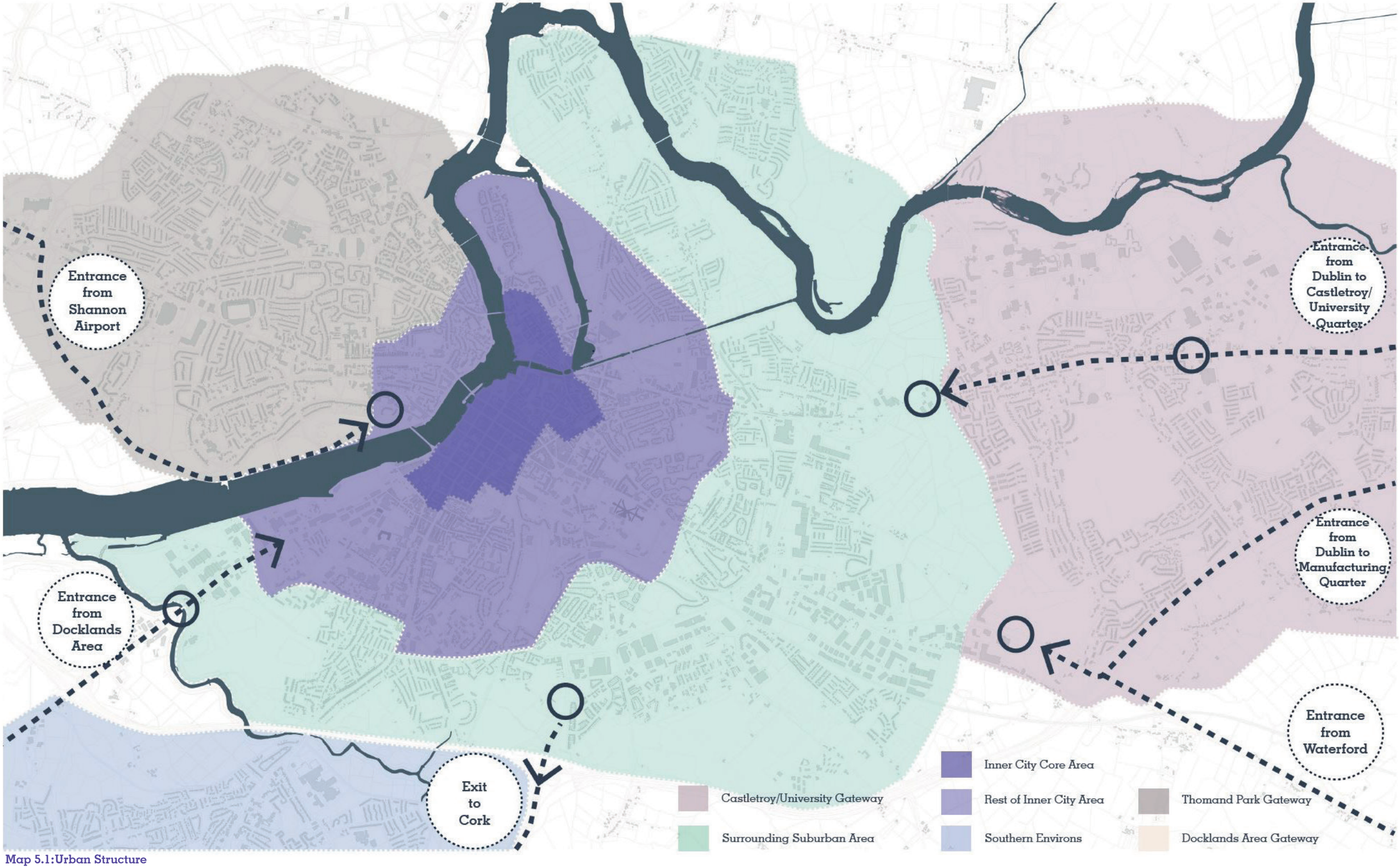
- The South Quays (extending from the Clayton Hotel to the Court House);
- The North Quays (extending from the Thomond Bridge to Condell Road);
- The Docks (still operational); and
- Colbert Quarter (given the masterplanning process being undertaken by the LDA and the Council).

With the exception of the South Quays, all of the changing/emerging areas are within the Rest of Inner City Area.

The changing/emerging areas already accommodate some of the tallest buildings in the City and/or have been identified as strategic sites for future development. They are also areas that have changing land use types, often containing industrial/warehouse uses that are being displaced by higher value uses. In addition, these areas have adequate and appropriate surrounding land uses to allow for a transition between new taller buildings and the traditional building forms within the City.

Conservation Areas

Limerick City contains four Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), all of which will have their own particular sensitivities in relation to tall buildings. These areas are not however, viewed as areas of total exclusion. Dependent on the nature of the conservation area, some may have limited potential for sensitively sited and scaled taller buildings. The Character Areas within the City Centre have been informed by the designated ACAs.



Map 5.1:Urban Structure

Character Areas

Within the identified urban structure there are areas with different characteristics, or character areas. This Strategy focuses on the unique character areas within the City Centre as the appropriate location for increased height. This City Centre first approach is in line with national and regional policy promoting compact urban growth.

As the impact of high buildings will vary depending on the character area, an understanding of the key character areas within the City Centre is essential when considering the contribution or impact of high buildings and to identify where it is considered the existing character would not be adversely affected by intensification.

English Town

Located within the Inner City Core Area, across the Abbey River, the English Town Character Area encompasses the southern part of King's Island, the medieval heart of the City. While little of the original medieval structures remain this area is distinctive due to its network of narrow streets, generally low buildings, 2 storeys, and the materiality of its historic buildings, including *inter alia* King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral.

These buildings of importance are emphasised by their solid stone construction and their height, notably the spire of St. Mary's Cathedral which is a striking feature on the south-eastern part of the Island. English Town remains the location of important civic buildings with Limerick City and County Council Offices and the Circuit Court located to the south of King John's Castle on the banks of the River Shannon.

While these buildings, due to their distinctiveness and height in their context, act as focal points within English Town and on approach to the City Centre from the west, they are not as prominent in the rest of the City Centre.

Irish Town

Irish Town is located within the Inner City Core Area on the south bank of the Abbey River, opposite English Town. Its character is derived from its historical development including an array of historic buildings including John's Square, its historic Milk Market, residential and modern office developments and carparks. Heights vary significantly within the area from traditional 2/3 storey residential and commercial units up to a 7 storey car park.

The street pattern is irregular, with no clear visual connections to the City Centre commercial area. The existing building mixture is a combination of building typologies, with a rich history of industry still visible in the remnants of old mills and granaries. The area also takes in part of St. John's Hospital, with the adjacent St. John's Cathedral and its tall spire, one of Limerick's landmarks in the city skyline.

Newtown Pery

Located within the Inner City Core Area, known as Limerick's Georgian core, Newtown Pery begins as you cross over Matthew's Bridge from English Town. After a noticeable kink in the layout of the street a clear long distance view extends south into the City Centre. As you approach the City Centre a shift in scale is noticeable, perhaps reinforced by the linearity of the Street.

The area is the commercial and cultural heart of the City and is characterised by 18th and 19th Century Georgian architecture, which is interrupted by buildings of the 20th century. These buildings often replaced original buildings as the City expanded. The mixed urban grain is characterised by a regular grid pattern, which becomes fully evident from Sarsfield Street continuing south, southwest.

Terraced houses and often enclosed block structures with similar building heights, generally 3-4 storeys over basement for Georgian houses and 3 to 5 floors for more recent buildings, define the Georgian Quarter. Heights of buildings from the 20th century and other more modern developments are generally orientated on the heights of the concerted Georgian architecture.

Transition Area

Located within the Inner City Core Area, the Transition Character Area is at a key position between King's Island, to the north of the Abbey River, and the entrance to the Georgian Quarter south of the Abbey River. It is a main entrance to the City, forming a gateway between the medieval heart and the commercial heart of Limerick.

The buildings in this area were developed between the time period of Irish Town and Newtown Pery, producing a distinct characteristic. Many of the buildings, particularly those located within the Opera Development Site, previously served as areas of production and storage due to their proximity to the historical significance Customs House. The area retains a mixed variety of functions including offices, residential, car parking, commercial and storage. Past uses remain visible in the remnants of old stone storehouses and in particular the iconic Granary building.

The area has a range of heights from the 4 storey over basement early Georgian townhouses on Rutland Street, to single level outhouses, sheds and warehouses and 2-3 storey buildings located in the Opera site, to the 4-5 storey Granary building, one of the first multi-storey warehouses to be erected in the City in order to store grain. Permission has also been granted, with works recently commenced on site, for a substantial part of the Transition Area at the Opera site (Board Ref. 304028-19). The recent permission grants a new 14 storey (+plant) building and will introduce a new tall building at the northern end of the City Centre.

The Quays

Located within the Inner City Core Area, the Quays Character Area is concentrated on the urban blocks fronting the River Shannon from Mouth Kenneth Place to the south to the Potato Market to the north. It includes the lands between Bishops Quay, Howley's Quay and Harvey's Quay to the west and Henry Street to the east, including the western section of the blocks fronting Henry Street. It also encompasses the former Dunnes Stores site on Honan's Quay, the Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre, Sarsfield House and the Potato Market at Merchant's Quay.

The area has a mix of primarily residential and commercial development including hotels, retail, offices, car parks, eateries and public houses. Buildings in this area are more modern being delivered in the 20th and 21st Century and are notably taller, ranging between 6 to 10 storeys. Few historic buildings remain including *inter alia* the Limerick Museum and Hibernian House on Henry Street.

Recent developments along the banks of the River Shannon have altered the City skyline towards the docklands and sought to deliver a new river side front. Most notable are the Riverpoint Building and the Clayton Hotel, which at 59m and 57m respectively, have become new City landmarks.

Docklands Area

The Docklands Character Area is located within the Rest of the Inner City Area and includes the Ted Russell Dock, a viable working port, on the southern bank of the River Shannon as well as lands to the south of the Dock Road. The historic use of the area as a port is visible in the old mills and stone structures along the Dock Road. The Docks area, west of Steamboat Quay, is recognised as having a longer term opportunity by Limerick 2030.

The docklands and port area, extending from James Casey Walk to Atlas Avenue, is generally characterised by low-rise warehouses and storage buildings. The area also contains a limited number of taller buildings, most notably the Ranks Silo at 10 storeys which acts as a local landmark, as well as the 6 storey Bannatyne Mills building, which has secured planning for office use to accommodate 250 workers.

The lands to the south of the Dock Road are more varied in their uses with a mixture of light industrial, residential and commercial uses including the Docklands Business Park and the now remediated Gasworks Site. The building typologies represent the areas proximity to the Docks with low-rise commercial warehouses and storage buildings in combination with more modern 2-4 storey residential developments.

Part of this Character Area is subject to the Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy, which extends to 45.5 hectares of land between James Casey Walk and the Ballynaclogh River and includes the three areas of the Ted Russell Dock, Wishbone and Corcanree to the west. At a more strategic level, the Limerick Docks is addressed as a Character Area in the Shannon Foynes Port Company Vision 2041.

The Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy notes that of this 45.5 hectares, existing port operations only utilises circa 14.7 hectares, the Ted Russell Dock which is within the Character Area. The remaining 30.8 hectares of land, in the ownership of Shannon Foynes Port Company, which is surplus to current port operation requirements is located outside the Docklands Character Area. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region states that there is potential for alternative uses in the Limerick Docklands.

Colbert Quarter

Colbert Station is located at the south-eastern fringe of the Gregorian City extension, in the Rest of the Inner City Area. At c. 69 hectares, it represents a substantial changing/emerging area within the City. It is currently disconnected from the surrounding area, particularly it's northern, eastern and southern suburbs due to the dominance of the rail tracks. Limerick 2030 refers to the area as the 'Eastern Gateway' noting that at present it does not serve the City well and envisages its comprehensive renovation as one of seven transformational projects within the City.

Given its substantial size, the area is in multiple ownership including Limerick City and County Council, CIÉ, the Department of Education and the HSE. This is represented in the range of uses which currently characterise it including Colbert Station as a transportation hub for the City, St. Joseph's Hospital, and the educational campus on Sexton Street. The area is generally low rise, 2-3 storeys, including the 2 storey dwellings on Upper and Lower Carey's Road.

Under the management of the LDA, a Framework Plan is currently being prepared for the development of the Colbert Quarter.

Cleeves Site

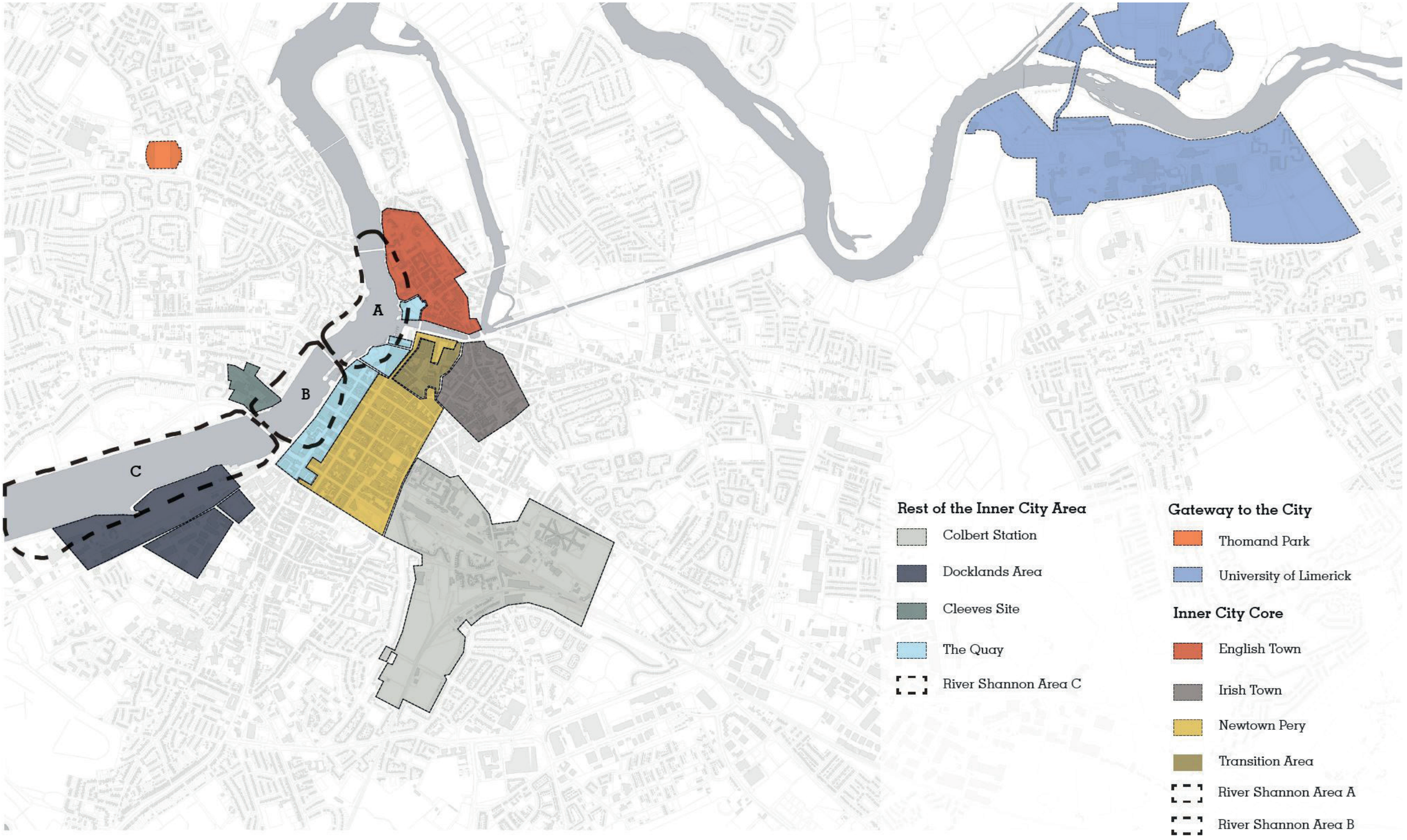
The former Cleeves factory site is situated on the northern bank of the River Shannon, within the Rest of the Inner City Area. The site straddles both sides of the North Circular Road/O'Callaghan Strand and is located at the Shannon Bridge, a gateway to the City from the west.

The Cleeves Site Character Area comprises a number of distinct parts including the Flaxmill Site (considered the 'main' Cleeves Site) which includes 2 Protected Structures and other significant historic buildings, the Shipyard Site which is directly across the road from the Flaxmill Site and the Stonetown Terrace Site which is adjacent to the Flaxmill Site but with access from Stonetown Terrace.

The site has been in industrial use since its construction in the mid-nineteenth century as visible in the original stone industrial buildings as well as its iconic chimney structure, which dominates the skyline on the northern banks of the Shannon. With the exception of the chimney structure, the site is characterised by generally low-rise industrial and warehouse buildings, ranging in height from 1 to 4 storeys.

The potential of the Cleeves site is recognised by Limerick 2030, with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region also identifying it as a key strategic site. A Masterplan is currently being prepared for the Cleeves Riverside Quarter which covers a larger 10 acre area and includes the adjacent Salesian's Secondary School as well as St. Michael's Rowing Club on the bank of the Shannon.





Map 5.2: Character Areas

Building Height in the Context of Limerick City

Building Composition

Building height is generally expressed either in terms of the number of floors or in metres. In most circumstances a definition of height in storeys is sufficient and allows for the simple understanding, of building height. Metric height can be relative to the ground and will thus depend on the place of measurement as topography can vary. This form of measurement is useful when comparing heights or defining scale.

For the purposes of this Strategy the number of storeys is primarily used, however, the metric height of the building is referred to where relevant, based on relative measurement above ground. It is acknowledged that the building composition is a direct reflection of the storeys thus there can be a height difference between equal storey buildings. This is, however, generally minimal and does not adversely affect the consistency, character or scale of the streetscpae, with some limited exceptions such as *inter alia* multi-storey car parks and cultural facilities. Metric height is used to provide an understanding of the building height, irrespective of use. It is also useful when dealing with historic buildings which often contain rooms of different height on different floors of the building.

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities states that consideration should be given to increasing the minimum apartment floor-to-ceiling height to 2.7 metres or to 3.0 metres on the ground floor of multi-storey buildings[17]. For the purposes of this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City the metric height is calculated by multiplying the number of floors by 3 metres and adding an additional metre to allow for higher ground floor-to-floor height or roof structures. The 3 metre floor-to-floor height reflects the floor-to-ceiling guidance, allowing for an additional 300cm for services, slab etc.

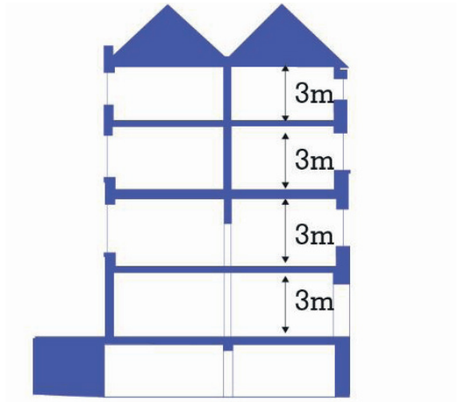


Figure 5.1: Floor to Ceiling Height Residential

The equivalent commercial floor-to-floor height used in this Strategy is 4m, this is industry standard, as acknowledged by the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines[18]. Both the commercial and residential figures are provided where relevant.

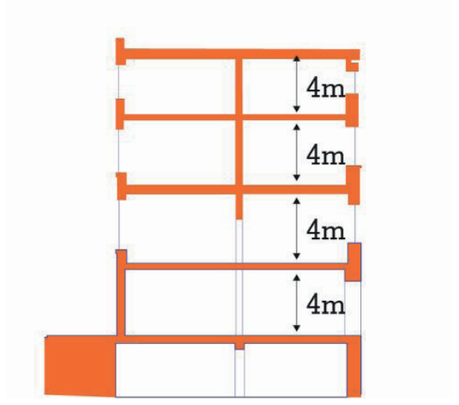


Figure 5.2: Floor to Ceiling Height Commercial

Shoulder Height

The term 'shoulder height' is often used when addressing building height. It refers to the sheer height of a building at the back of the footpath/ walkway up to the eaves or parapet height. Many buildings in Limerick City have an additional storey above this height as a set-back or within inhabited roofspaces.

The provision of set-backs can contribute to a lively roofscape, often without a significant impact on perceived building height from the street. Consideration, however, still needs to be given to the number or form of additional set-backs in order to avoid impacts on views, character or visual coherency of an area.

Explaining Tall Building Classification

The term 'tall building' is a relative term for which there cannot be an exact definition. A tall building can generally be defined as a building that is significantly taller than the surrounding and established building heights in an area. While this is a very broad definition it highlights the central role that the existing height of the area plays in the perceived tallness of a building.

Tall buildings should thus be considered and assessed in relation to the height of the area in which they are situated. Taking into account the unique morphology, character and urban structure of Limerick City, a number of distinct tall buildings height classifications can be considered for the City. The below tall building classifications are identified for Limerick City and are defined in the following page:

- Taller Building;
- Landmark Building;
- Gateway Building; and
- City Landmark.

While it will generally be possible to place a proposed building into one of the defined classification, it is recognised that there may be an overlap moving from one classification to another. In this regard a building may be viewed as being part of two categories, e.g. where a gateway building is also a landmark building.

The tall building classifications are provided to assist in understanding the types of tall buildings, their perception in their context and their potential impact on the skyline of Limerick City. The classifications are also used in the guidance provided by this Strategy in relation to suitable locations for tall buildings at the City Scale, Map 6.8.

In addition to visual impact other contextual factors may also influence how a taller building is perceived in its context. Such factors including *inter alia* local topography, other proximate tall buildings, viewpoints towards the building or variation in scale, height or form of surrounding buildings. However, it is not viable to consider every possible factor as part of this Strategy, with such a detailed assessment more appropriate at a Masterplan or planning application level.

Tall Building Classifications

Taller Building

A taller building establishes a high point at a local level and is significant only at this level. Such buildings are of limited visibility, being most notable where they are located within a consistent surrounding context height.

Taller buildings are defined by the surrounding context height. Generally buildings at the upper-end of the 'Recommended Height' for each Character Area, contained in the following Section, would constitute a taller building.

Landmark Building

Landmark buildings are of local significance and have a height presence within their context, but are still legible as an integral part of this context. While a landmark building stands out in terms of its visual impact, its impact on the overall skyline of the City is local.

As landmark buildings are defined by the surrounding context height, what constitutes a landmark building will vary across the City. The delivery of a landmark building would rely on the application of the 'Modifiers' to the 'Recommended Heights' for each Character Area, as set out in the following Section.

Gateway Building

In contrast to a landmark building the significance of a gateway building extends beyond the local. Such buildings are often located at gateways e.g. at a major transport junction or at an entrance to the City Centre, identifying visually the importance of the location in the wider context.

The nature of gateway buildings is that they are outstanding and therefore, contrast to their surroundings and the existing context height. A gateway building by its nature is highly visible and impacts the skyline on a wide, but not City wide, scale.

What height constitutes a Gateway Building will vary depending on location. For example a building of 8 storeys could act as a Gateway Building in a suburban context while the Riverpoint development at 18 storeys could be defined as a gateway building in the City Centre.

City Landmark

A city landmark is a building of significance at the City scale. It can either stand alone as a landmark in sharp contrast to the surrounding context height or can act as a high point in a cluster of other tall buildings that in turn help integrate its height.

Limerick currently does not have a building of a city landmark scale that is highly visible across the wider City and that significantly impacts the City skyline.

As the height of a city landmark does not relate to the surrounding context height and given that only three locations have been identified as appropriate for such a building, it is considered appropriate to provide an indication of the height of such a building. In this regard a height range of 20-25 storeys (commercial) is considered to represent a City Landmark building in the context of Limerick. This height range is provided for guidance purposes and does not preclude buildings in excess of 25 storeys.



Tall Building Recommendations

Introduction

This Strategy is rooted in the principles of compact urban growth, good urban design and heritage conservation. Its purpose is to provide guidance on the general building height appropriate for new development in Limerick City and within this to guide the locating of tall buildings within the City.

In determining how best to address this issue, a review of international best practice to strategic and place-based tall building strategy was undertaken. The approach of UK studies, specifically large cities such as London, where ratios to context height were used to draft tall building classifications were found to be inconsistent and inappropriate for a City of the scale and structure of Limerick. Other cities adopted a more responsive and flexible approach through the application of height guidance based on prevailing building height which was deemed to be a more appropriate basis for providing guidance for Limerick City.

In this regard it is noted that cities with a strong, defined historic pattern of development and height often applied height guidance based on the prevailing building height across large parts of the City. The largely consistent urban form and height in these historic cities facilitates this approach. However, while Limerick has historic quarters, as reflected in the Character Areas, its development has been more *ad hoc* resulting in a less structured and programmed urban form and prevailing building height.

The building height guidance provided in this Strategy seeks to reflect and respond to the uniqueness of Limerick as a City by providing for modifiers to the prevailing building height at the Character Area level. In conjunction with this, it recognises that within these areas there are variations in the context height at the local/street/intervention area level that must be allowed for. This approach delivers general guidance on building height within Limerick City while still allowing for the application of performance based criteria to the provision of height at the site level in line with NPO 13 of the NPF and the Building Heights Guidelines.

Recommendations are made in relation to building height for each Character Area. The concepts of recommended heights in conjunction with modifiers are used as a tool to guide and govern building height by providing an indication of appropriate heights while still providing for a degree of flexibility to adapt to local circumstances through the application of performance based criteria.

The purpose of this analysis is to provide clear guidance on building height that in turn informs the locating of tall buildings in the context of Limerick City and is a point of reference for this Strategy. While it is a useful tool in understanding building height and locating tall buildings it does not replace the need for a case by case site specific contextual assessment and the establishment of an appropriate height in response to context and in line with policy guidance and requirements.

Recommended Height

Recommended height provides guidance on the height to which new buildings should generally be built and is established in relation to the prevailing height in the first instance. Where appropriate and required the recommended height will further respond to the context height.

In parts of the City, primarily the structured urban form of the Georgian area, the recommended height will define the shoulder height of a new building. In such instances, and where appropriate, the recommendation will also address the issue of additional set back storeys.

The recommended 'tall building heights' for each Character Area are directly informed by the 'Building Height Strategy' for the area.

Modifiers

Modifiers are an important tool to provide for permitted deviations from the recommended height and ensure a degree of flexibility. Such flexibility is required to allow developments to respond to local circumstances, such as the potential to accommodate additional height to deliver better legibility or a sense of enclosure. Modifiers can act to decrease or increase height and are important to ensure that provision is made, and the appropriate guidance in place, to facilitate the delivery of 'taller buildings' where they are stated as permissible and/or required.

The recommendations for each Character Area indicate where modifiers may be appropriate. The use of modifiers is, however, at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Tall Building Recommendation

Each Character Area is addressed in Section 6 in terms of the 'recommended height' and any associated 'modifiers'. These draw on the 'Building Height Strategy' that provide detailed building height guidance for each Area.

Having regard to this guidance and with reference to the 'Tall Building Classifications', Section 6 addresses the placing of tall buildings within the City, providing guidance for each Character Area. At this level the recommendations set out where tall buildings, as contained in the 'Tall Building Classifications', are suitable and specifically:

- Where some or all of the classifications are considered appropriate; and
- Where a specific scale of building should be provided.

In relation to the delivery of 'city landmark' buildings, these have been identified in the context of the long term nature of this Building Height Strategy and the timelines involved in the delivery of such buildings. Consideration has also been given to the scale of Limerick City and the potential demand for and viability of such buildings in this context. In this regard it is considered that the delivery of one such building every 5-6 years would be appropriate and should be achievable given the identified sites and their current status.

The recommendations on tall buildings should be read in conjunction with Maps 6.8 and 6.9 as these identify suitable locations for tall buildings, as per the 'Tall Building Classifications', at the Character Area level and the City Level respectively. Given the localised nature of the 'Taller Building' category it is not appropriate or viable to seek to identify these on a map. Where a 'Taller Building' is considered appropriate in the context of a Character Area this is addressed in the text relating to the Character Area.

Outside of the City Centre building height will primarily be a tool in the delivery of density in order to achieve compact growth in line with national policy requirements. It will largely be limited to buildings in the 'taller building' category, where deemed appropriate on a case by case basis. However, as indicated on the Urban Structure map, Map 5.1, there are a limited number of areas outside of the City Centre where buildings of height may be practical, viable and/or required. The 'Tall Buildings - City Scale' map, Map 6.8, identified these and utilises the Tall Building Classifications to indicate where 'landmark and gateway' buildings are permissible.

Building Height - Policies and Guidance

6

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Policy and Guidance at the City Wide Level

Introduction

In accordance with national and regional planning policy and guidance, the urban structure of Limerick City is the base for determining opportunities for the development of higher buildings within the City.

As outlined in the preceding sections, Limerick City has a unique urban structure owed to its morphology over time. Within this structure there is a distinct City Centre, including the Inner City Core Area and the Rest of the Inner City Area, as shown on Map 5.1. This area includes both the historic City and the economic expansion of the City on foot of the rail service and the docks. As the traditional commercial focus of the City, development radiated from the City Centre creating an adjacent suburban area.

Outside of the City Centre area, the City grew organically within its landscape, along arterial routes and main roads and encompassing smaller adjacent settlements. The resultant morphology is a City Centre surrounded by an Outer City Area consisting of three distinct development areas/ parcels of urban development i.e. the Southern Environs at Dooradoyle, the Thomond Area and the Castletroy/University Area, see Map 5.1. This pattern of development is heavily influenced by the natural landscape, specifically the River Shannon as a natural boundary, its tributaries and its expansive floodplain. More recently the road network, and the addition of the Limerick By-Pass, has further defined these three distinct parcels of urban development in the Outer City Area.

A City Centre Focus

Taller buildings should be focused on and located within the City Centre area, specifically the Inner City Core Area and the Rest of the Inner City Area, as shown on Map 5.1. This approach is in keeping with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development, the overall aim to protect the vitality and viability of the City Centre and the requirement to consolidate the development of our existing urban areas, deliver compact urban growth and increase proximity of new homes and employment in line with the National Planning Framework.

The decision to focus building height in the City Centre is also in keeping with and informed by the guidance of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines, 2018 and Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1 contained therein that identifies town/city cores as a particular location for building height and density. It also accords with the detailed guidance of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines in the following ways:

- Ensure the optimal use of the capacity of sites in urban locations where transport, employment, services or retail development can achieve a requisite level of intensity for sustainability[19] i.e. Limerick City Centre;
- Reuse of 'brownfield' land, building up urban infill sites and either reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings that may not be in the optimal usage or format[20]. Examples of such sites can be found on the southern quays, as well as the Cleeves Site and Colbert Quarter;
- Ensure that investment in existing public transport infrastructure and improvements planned under the Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy is optimised and that the future population of Limerick City has access to sustainable mobility choices. The Colbert Quarter site is considered fundamental in this regard as a key public transport interchange; and
- Utilise building height as a placemaking tool to improve the quality of the urban environment and assist in reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place within Limerick City[21]. This process has already begun along the southern quays where taller buildings act as landmarks of the southern city skyline.

The Outer City Area

The Outer City Area, that includes the Southern Environs, the Thomond Gateway and the Castletroy/ University Gateway, see Map 5.1, is generally not considered to be an appropriate location for taller buildings.

Taller buildings may, however, be appropriate at designated District Centres and at recognised 'Gateways' as significant urban places, on a case by case basis. An example of the latter is the 'Horizon Mall' development, currently with An Bord Pleanála, which would in conjunction with the existing Castletroy Travelodge Hotel reinforce the Dublin Road Gateway. Gateways may also be readily identified by distinctively designed buildings, landscape features and public art.

Substantial land banks within the existing built-up suburban area should be informed by a Masterplan and comply with SPPR 4 of the Building Heights Guidelines. In this regard a greater mix of building heights and typologies is supported i.e. typically a mix of town-houses (2-3 storeys), duplexes (3-4 storeys) and apartments (4 storeys upwards) alongside existing larger buildings, trees and parkland, river/ sea frontage or along wider streets. The appropriate height should be assessed and addressed as part of the masterplanning process on a case by case basis and should consider *inter alia* accessibility, public transport provision, access to amenity, recreational and community facilities, the existing character of the area and wayfinding.

Taller buildings on the UL Campus may be appropriate in terms of important academic and development objectives. Decisions about such intensification should be considered in the context of the overall Campus Masterplan that can address in detail the relevant issues including *inter alia* building location, height and design and integration into the surroundings campus.

Key Considerations

While building height guidance at the City level is directly informed by national and regional guidance it must also be 'unique to Limerick' as a place and major urban settlement. In this regard particular consideration has also been given to the liveable city concept, to transport orientated development (TOD), to the requirement for placemaking, to the public realm, to wayfinding (particularly within the City Centre), to legibility, to identity (integrating with the existing character) and to economic viability,

It is in this context, and in the delivery of building height guidance unique to Limerick, that four primary considerations are identified in the determination of appropriate locations for taller buildings. These are as set out below.

1 **National and regional planning policy sets a clear directive for compact growth through the consolidation and intensification of existing urban areas as opposed to allowing the continued sprawl of urban areas. This directs that taller buildings should typically occur in the existing developed areas of Limerick City.**

2 **Planing policy at a national and regional level, the Building Heights Guidelines and good planning practice promotes more intense development in areas that are well-served by public transport infrastructure and by local amenities and that are typically walkable and bikeable to reduce reliance on the private car and facilitate sustainable mobility.**

3 **Beyond simply accommodating residential or employment uses, taller buildings should have a placemaking function and assist in improving the quality of the urban environment. They should contribute to a sense of place within the City, acting as markers of important locations, as aids to easy wayfinding and as advertisements of places or functions of interest.**

4 **Based on population and employment growth projections, Limerick's market absorption of residential or employment based higher-rise development is realistically limited to one or two of each such buildings per decade. Their delivery, therefore, needs to be undertaken with care and consideration, and with the appropriate guidance and encouragement to locate on appropriate and preferred sites.**

Building Height Policy

Policy Context

The Building Heights Guidelines require that Development Plans become more proactive and more flexible in securing compact urban growth through a combination of both facilitating increased densities and building heights, while also being mindful of the quality of development and balancing amenity and environmental considerations.

Development Plans must now include the positive disposition towards appropriate assessment criteria that will enable proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height linked to the achievement of a greater density of development[23].

"The Building Heights Guidelines also state that it is critically important that the Development Plan identifies and provides policy support for specific geographic locations or precincts where increased building height is not only desirable but a fundamental policy requirement[22]."

The policies seek to guide building height, providing a development management tool that can be referred to in the assessment, or bringing forward, of all development proposals within Limerick City.

Policy

The policies are formulated in the context of providing support for the delivery of increased building height in Limerick City. They are based on and make reference to the Character Area guidance as a means of delivering assessment criteria that will form the basis of the consideration of development proposals for increased building height across Limerick City.

Policy BH1: To acknowledge the critical role that increasing prevailing building heights has to play in addressing the delivery of more compact urban growth and sustainable development in line with the National Planning Framework.

Policy BH2: To focus the delivery of tall buildings on the City Centre (Inner City Core and Rest of Inner City as per Map 6.8: Tall Buildings at City Level below) 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, Cleeves Site and The Docklands in accordance with the building classification criteria set out in the Building Height Strategy. Generally tall buildings outside of the City Centre will also be considered at designated District Centres, at Local Centres, where justified on infill and brownfield sites identified in the Settlement Capacity Audit, at Strategic Employment Locations, at appropriate locations within the Regeneration Areas or in accordance with the locations shown on Map 6.8 below - Tall Buildings at City Level.

Policy BH3: To protect the unique intrinsic character and scale of Limerick City and it's skyline in the delivery of increased building heights.

Policy BH4: To protect and enhance significant views and vistas and the visual presence of key landmark buildings within the City.

Policy BH5: To assess all high building proposals under the Development Management Guidance and in accordance with the detailed Area Objectives set out in this Building Height Strategy.

Policy BH6: To direct high building proposals to the areas in the City Centre that have been identified as having potential for increased building height, subject to comprehensive case by case assessment at planning application stage.

Policy BH7: To apply the area-based guidance for building height across Limerick City as set out in this Building Height Strategy.

Tall Building Policy

In line with the Tall Building Recommendations provided for the Character Areas, the Tall Building Policy guides and supports the locating of tall buildings in Limerick City.

The policies address the key facets of, and should be read in conjunction with, the Tall Building Recommendations.

Policy TB1: Locating Tall Buildings

Tall buildings will be directed to the City Centre in the first instance in line with the 'Tall Building Classifications' shown on Map 6.9 of this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City.

Policy TB2: Tall Buildings outside the City Centre

Limerick City and County Council will aim to protect the character and characteristics of the City by limiting the locating of tall buildings outside the City Centre (inner and outer areas). Generally tall buildings will only be permitted outside of the City Centre at designated District Centres, at Local Centres, where justified on infill and brownfield sites identified in the Settlement Capacity Audit, at Strategic Employment Locations, at appropriate locations within the Regeneration Areas or in accordance with the locations and 'Tall Building Classifications' shown on Map 6.8 of this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City.

Policy TB3: Tall Buildings - Gateway Buildings

The delivery of a 'Gateway Building(s)', as per the 'Tall Building Classifications', should be required at four locations in the City Centre as follows:

- The Quays;
- Colbert Quarter;
- Cleeves Site; and
- The Docklands.

The provision of a 'Gateway Building(s)' at Colbert Quarter, Cleeves Site and the Docklands should be carefully considered and addressed as part of a masterplaning process for these important City Centre Areas.

Policy TB4: Tall Building - City Landmark Buildings

Limerick's Tallest Buildings(s), a 'City Landmark' as per the 'Tall Building Classifications', is considered appropriate at the following locations:

- Colbert Quarter;
- Cleeves Site; and
- The Docklands.

In line with the 'Tall Building Recommendations' the provision of such a building will be encouraged on the Colbert Quarter site as part of its redevelopment in line with a Framework Plan. All such buildings must be of an exceptional architectural quality and standard of design.

Policy TB5: Tall Building Clusters

Tall building clusters of varying height will be promoted in the following locations within the City Centre:

- The Quays;
- Colbert Quarter;
- Cleeves Site; and
- The Docklands.

Such clusters must create a coherent grouping of buildings that positively relate to each other and to their surrounding urban context.

Policy TB6: Assessment of Tall Building

Limerick City and County Council will aim to protect the special character of the City Centre by applying the following provisions of this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City in the assessment of all proposals for tall buildings:

- Utilise the 'Tall Building Classifications' to determine the height of the building in its context;
- Assess the proposal against the 'Tall Building Recommendations';
- Apply the 'Tall Buildings - High Level Principles';
- Utilise the 'Localised Assessment Tool - Tall Buildings'; and
- Apply the list of assessment criteria outlined in Policy TB 7.

Policy TB7: Assessment Criteria for Tall Building

Limerick City and County Council will take account of the following in assessing applications for tall buildings:

- The site context - Including inter alia topography, natural environment, landscape, height, built form, urban grain, scale, streetscape and impact on the skyline;
- Impact on significant buildings, views, landmarks and landscapes - Tall building proposals should address the potential effect on the setting of, and views to and from the following over a wide area:
  - *Protected Structures
  - *Architectural Conservation Areas
  - *Sites on the Record of Monuments and Places
  - *Public Parks and Open Spaces
  - *The River Shannon and other water bodies
  - *Significant views and prospects, specifically those identified on Map 6.10 of this Building Height Strategy for Limerick City;
- The architectural quality of the building -Including inter alia its form, scale, massing, facade materials, proportion, relationship to other structures and the design of the top portion in terms of its potential impact on the skyline;
- The impact on the local environment -Including inter alia overlooking, daylight and sunlight, microclimate, wind, overshadowing, glare, loss of privacy, over-bearance, and the impact on residents due to the use of the building;
- Compliance with best practice in terms of the facilitation of sustainable modes of transport and the delivery of transport orientated development - Specifically the level of public transport provision to the site, the capacity of

the public transport network and the quality of links between the site and public transport;

- The impact on the surrounding context -Including inter alia localised views, the quality and scale of existing streets, spaces and adjacent buildings and the contribution to permeability at both the site level and the wider area;
- The contribution to wayfinding - This includes the building's role as a locational marker from the local, street level, to the wider City wide level;
- Sustainability and environmental performance - Including inter alia design, construction technology, materials, renewable energy initiatives, adaptability, operation and management;
- The contribution to public spaces, amenities and facilities, both internal and external -Including inter alia the provision of a mix of uses, especially at ground floor level, publicly accessible areas and spaces and the integration with and contribution to the public realm; and
- The quality of the built environment - From the perspective of those who will be using the building.

The above list is non-exhaustive. All applications for tall buildings will be rigorously assessed on a case by case basis, with regard had to any other matters deemed appropriate and relevant by the Planning Authority.

Policy TB8: Requirements of Planning Application for Tall Buildings

Due to the potential impacts of tall buildings, all proposals for buildings that are considered tall in their context, and specifically 'Gateway Buildings' and 'City Landmarks' as per the 'Tall Building Classifications' will be subject to the following assessments:

- Environmental Assessment;
- Wind Analysis;
- Sunlight and Daylight Analysis;
- Verified View Analysis;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- An Architectural Design Statement;
- A Traffic Impact Assessment including a Mobility Management Plan for non-residential uses; and
- A Building Services Strategy.

Additional assessments may be sought at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

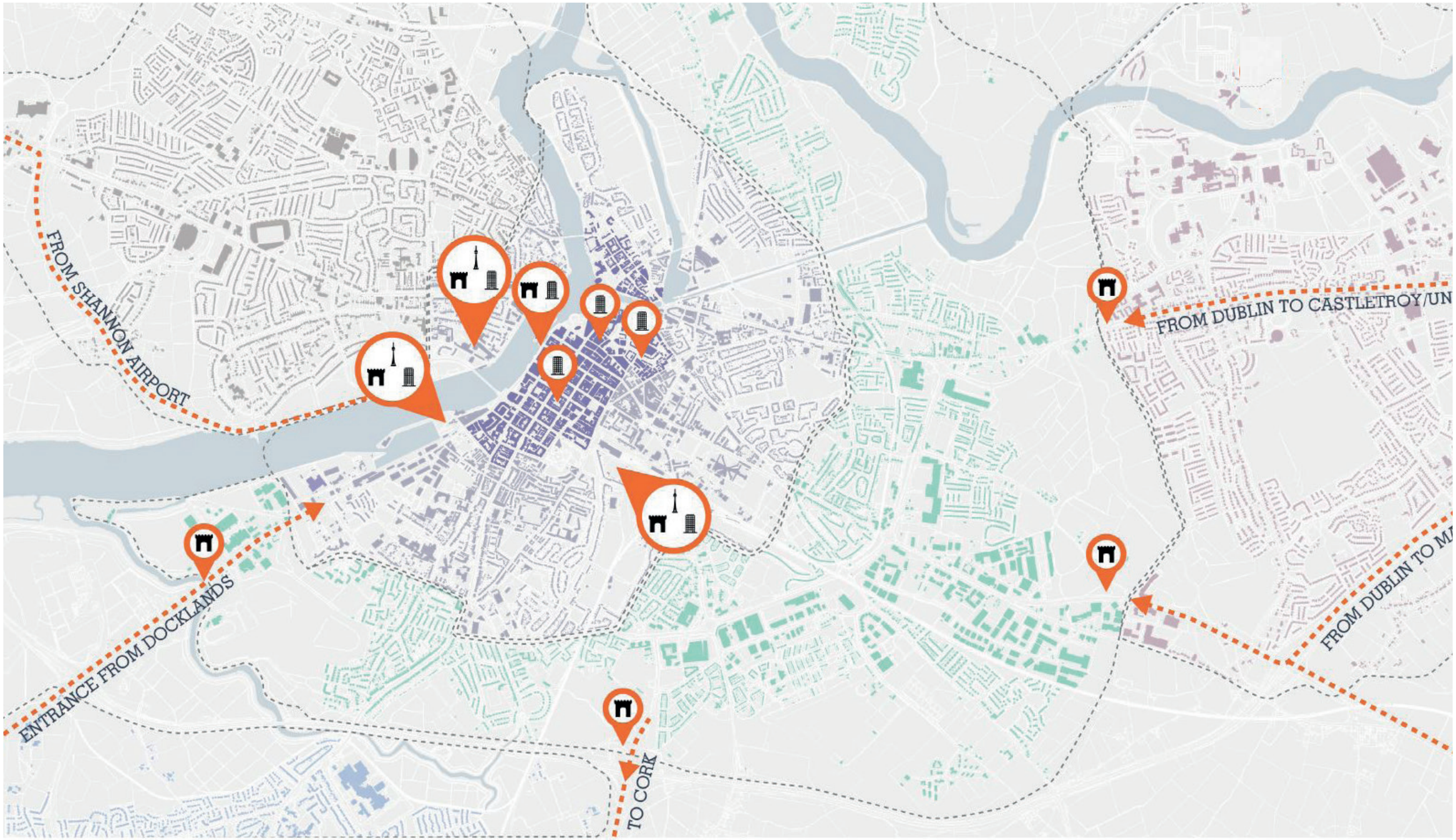
All developments will be subject to assessment in line with statutory and Development Plan requirements.

Policy TB9: Ensuring the Quality of Tall Buildings

Due to the visual impacts of tall buildings, not only on their surrounding context but on the wider City, all tall building proposals, will be required to provide the highest quality materials and material finishes. These are to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the determination of the planning application process.



Tall Buildings at the City Level - Map 6.8



- Inner City Core
- Rest of Inner City
- Surrounding Suburban Areas
- Thomand Park Gateway Area
- Castletroy/University Gateway Area
- Southern Environs

City Landmark

Gateway Building

Landmark Building

Guidance at the City Centre Level

Introduction

The Morphology of Limerick City was assessed and established in Section 5, with the current urban structure categorised into 8 distinct areas. The City Centre, which is the focus for building height is divided between the Inner City Core Area and the Rest of the Inner City Area. High level guidance for these areas is set out below, followed by more detailed guidance at the Character Area level.

Inner City Core Area

The Inner City Core Area covers the historic heart of the City and consists of five main character areas. These areas are defined as English Town, Irish Town, Newtown Pery, the Quays and the area between Newtown Pery and Irish Town, defined as the Transition Area.

Each Character Area has very different street pattern structures and urban form, with heights varying across and within the Inner City Core Area. The qualities and characteristics of the Inner City Core Area have been established and the need to preserve these unique elements of the City's fabric as well as the complex components that contribute to its character, is recognised.

Available development sites in the older Character Areas tend to provide smaller, individual opportunities. A more detailed urban design analysis of their context will provide further guidance on the particular building relationship to the street, the deployment of vertical and horizontal elements and fenestration patterns. In these areas the fundamental guidance for height should be taken from and informed by the area's contextual character.



Map 6.1: The Inner City Core Area

Inner City Core Area Overall Objectives

- New buildings within the Inner City Core should respond closely to the fundamental character and general scale of existing buildings and streetscape; and
- Existing key and local landmark buildings in the Inner City Core should be protected by controlling the building height of adjoining and adjacent buildings as well as preventing development which would undermine the quality of the views to them.

Rest of the Inner City Area

Several larger development opportunity areas exist at and around the edges of the Inner City Area in the Rest of the Inner City Area, which are characterised by larger scale and vacant or lower density use. These include the Character Areas of the Docklands, the Cleeves site and Colbert Quarter.

These three larger opportunities contain extensive vacant lands and engage with the City at one or more important edges. Notwithstanding this, the immediately adjacent existing City provides only partial direction as to the appropriate height and massing of future development.

These large sites will be developed over a considerable time period extending into decades. Overly precise masterplanning in their entirety may therefore, not be appropriate. However, the initial phases should be identified and properly guided, and key sites for taller buildings identified.

Clusters

In the Quays, the Docklands Area, Colbert Quarter and Cleeves Site, where there are larger scale and vacant or lower density sites, guidance should provide for taller buildings within a cluster of varying height. This approach would create a coherent grouping of buildings that relate to each other and to their surrounding urban context in terms of street layout, massing and design.

Guidance at the Character Area Level

Introduction

This Section sets out the building height guidance for Limerick City, that consists of two distinct elements, a Building Height Strategy and a Tall Building Recommendation, where relevant. In addition it also provides assessment tools to assist both the Applicant and Planning Authority in considering proposals for building height and tall buildings within the City.

Building Height Guidance

As set out previously, Limerick City Centre is characterised by a number of individual areas with distinct character, urban form, massing and street relationship. Building height guidance is provided at this Character Area level as follows:

- A Building Height Strategy - Setting out the most appropriate locations for taller buildings and providing guidance for their height and design; and

- A Tall Building Recommendation - Drawing on the 'Building Height Strategy' and utilising 'Recommended Height' and any associated 'Modifiers to the Recommended Height', tall building guidance is provided.

In addition, a Building Height Strategy as well as tall building guidance is provided for the Gateways to the City i.e. the Thomond Gateway and the Castletroy/ University Gateway.

A Building Height Strategy is also provided for the River Shannon, as an area of significant character within Limerick City. Along the River Shannon three distinct areas are identified with guidance provided that responds to the significant differences between these.

Assessment Tools

Assessment tools bespoke to each of the eight Character Areas is provided as set out below.

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines, 2018, provides development management principles to guide the assessment of planning applications. Applying these principles at the Character Area level delivers building height guidance that is unique to Limerick and that is also in accordance with National Guidance.

Each Character Area is addressed against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to the criteria. The associated tables are a development management tool, providing the basis for the assessment of proposals for building height within each Character Area.

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

Developing a plan for identifying local needs and resources can help the Planning Authority, applicants and all stakeholders understand how to integrate tall buildings in an area in the most logical and efficient ways possible.

Similar to a SWOT analysis which is a strategic planning technique used to help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, this Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for each of the Character Areas in order to determine their suitability to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application in each individual area. Additional requirements for each area may include a tall building statement, a design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate tall buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Tall Building Assessment - Significant Views

The final part of the Section identifies what are considered to be significant views in the context of the preceding tall buildings recommendations for the Character Areas. The views, identified for guidance purposes only, provide an indication of locations from which views may potentially be impacted by the delivery of a tall building in line with the preceding tall building recommendations.

The views are categorised as 'general viewpoints' from within and outside the City Centre and 'local views' that are relative to each Character Area. While these can assist in tall building proposals and their assessment, each proposal should be assessed on a case by case basis and will be subject to Policy TB8 which requires Verified View Analysis and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of such proposals.



Newtown Pery

Building Height Strategy

Newtown Pery lies within the Inner City Core Area as defined in Section 5. The distinct qualities of the area are well established and the need to preserve the Georgian fabric, as well as the complex elements which contribute to the character of the built environment of Newtown Pery, is understood.

In the following pages, the nuances which define the character of each street in Newtown Pery will be examined.

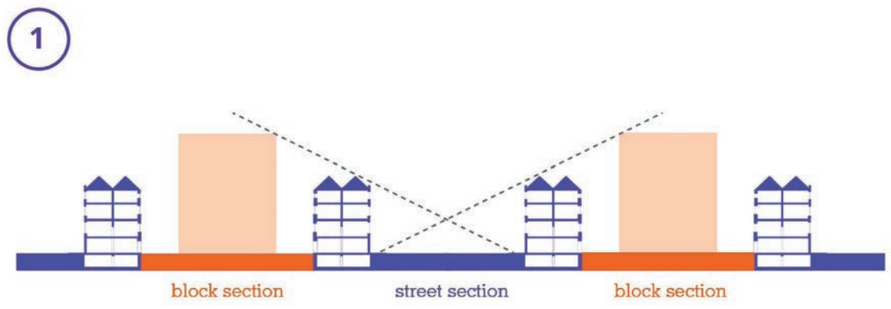
Key & Local Landmarks

Important vertical landmarks that are of key and local significance which should be protected by future development include:

- Tait's Clock;
- People's Park, Rice's Memorial; and
- St. John's Cathedral.

Two Main Categorises of streets within Newtown Pery

1. Cross section of a classically formed street, which has a consistent shoulder height.



2. Longitudinal elevation of streets which have a mixture of low and relatively tall buildings, which is part of the nature of these streets, resulting in the topographic interactive skyline we see today.



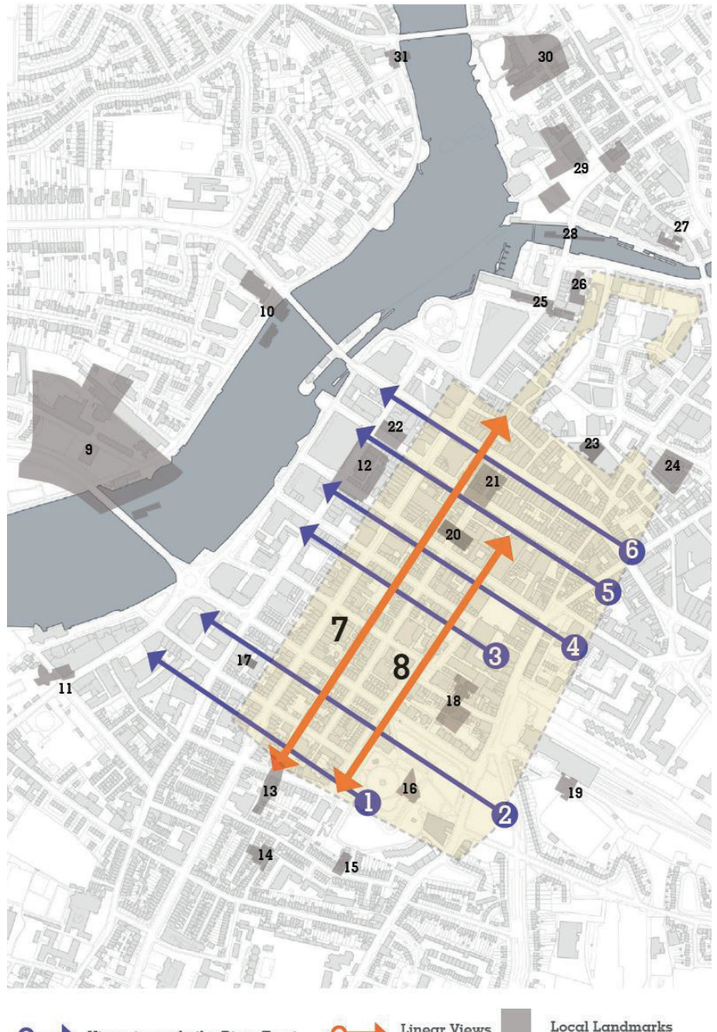
Area Objectives

Every site should be assessed on a site by site basis, however, as a general guideline the objectives for the area are as follows:

Area Objective 1
In areas where there is a classical and reasonably consistent parapet /shoulder height, any new interventions to the front of buildings, on street elevation, should respect this height and within reason, match the parapet /shoulder height of the existing street. It is possible that after the parapet /shoulder height, investigations as to roof profiles and set-backs are possible subject to good design, high quality materials and overall townscape considerations.

There are opportunities for additional height positioned within the city block where this does not negatively impact on the overall streetscape. The above will preserve and conserve the overall fabric of more classical streets.

Area Objective 2
Streets where there is a mix of building heights resulting in the variation of the topography of the skyline can incorporate areas of height which accentuates and improves the existing elevation. These locations may also incorporate areas of height located within the inner block.

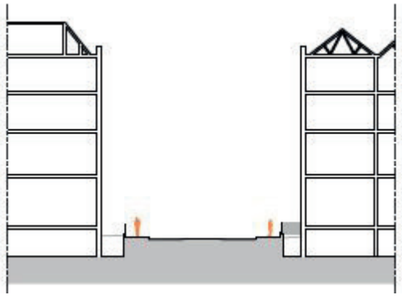


Map 6.2: Newtown Pery - Views

1 Upper & Lower Hartstonge St
2 Mallow Street
3 Cecil Street
4 Roches St
5 Thomas St & Bedford Row
6 Williams St
7 O'Connell Street
8 Cathrine Street
9 Cleeves Site
10 Limerick Strand Hotel
11 Clayton Hotel
12 Dunnes Stores
13 O'Connell Monument
14 St. Joseph's Catholic Church
15 People's Museum
16 Limerick City Gallery of Art
17 Former Presbyterian Church
18 Tait Memorial Clock
19 Colbert Station
20 St. Augustine's Catholic Church
21 Brown Thomas
22 Limerick Museum
23 St. Michael's Catholic Church
24 The Milk Market
25 Sarsfield House
26 The Hunt Museum
27 St. Mary's Prize Band
28 Merchant's Quay
29 a. Limerick City Court
b. Limerick City County Council
c. St. Mary's Cathedral
30 King John's Castle
31 St. Muchin's Church

Harstonge Street

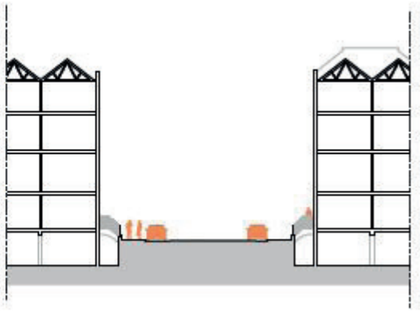




Harstonge Street is a classical street, which has some diversity in its building language. While it is a classical street it has some opportunity sites for height and would sit under the overall Area Objective 1.

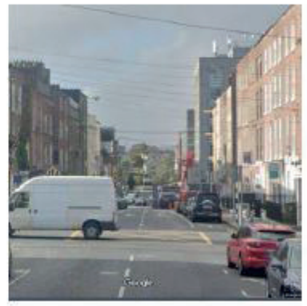
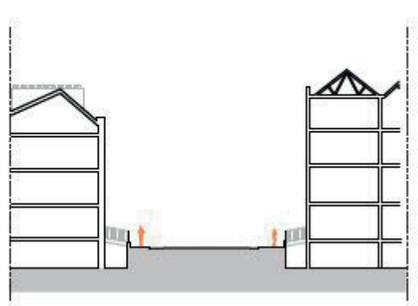
Mallow Street





Mallow Street is a classical street, illustrating a characteristically Georgian fixed parapet height along the roof line of the Street. As you arrive at lower Mallow Street at the base of the Shannon Bridge the Riverpoint building stands at 59m tall, its height justified by the major transport node location. Future development in this area should follow Area Objective 1, in order to maintain the quality and proportions of the existing streetscape.

Cecil Street

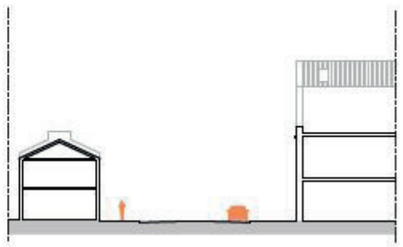
Cecil Street is not as easily defined, the main characteristic of this Street is of classical parapet height, however, there are instances of varying height. The guidance for this area of Newtown Pery would be for new building rooflines to be articulated to reflect the overall classical parapet height of the existing streetscape.

At Lower Cecil Street, particularly when you cross the O'Connell Street axis, a different kind of streetscape can be identified. In this area taller buildings define the corners but within the areas in between street corners the height varies from 1 to 3 storeys along with gaps in the street elevation. In between the defined areas of height located at corners, new buildings should respond closely to the essential character and general scale of 3-4 storey buildings which can be identified in upper Mallow Street.

Where appropriate, an increase in building height to corners and a decrease in building height adjoining or adjacent to key and local landmark buildings may be required.

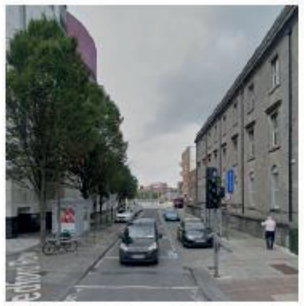
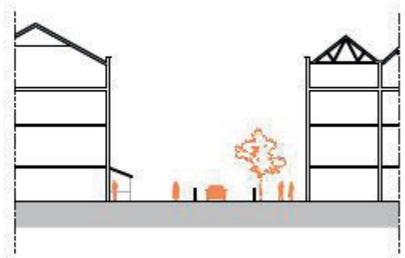
Roches Street





There is a mix of building heights located on Roches Street resulting in the variation of the topography of the skyline. A wide range of building typologies and heights results in a dynamic streetscape that should follow the guidance set out in Area Objective 2.

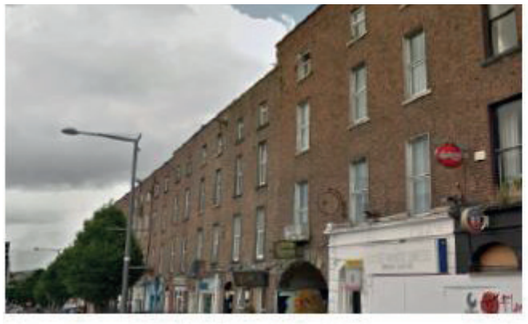
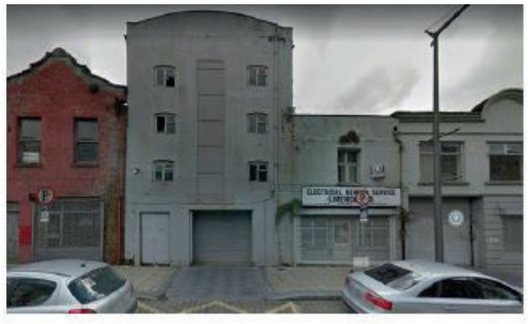
Thomas Street & Bedford Row

There is a mix of building heights located on Thomas Street resulting in a variation of the topography of the skyline. The northern side of the Street is predominantly Georgian, following a classical parapet height, whereas the buildings to the southern side reflect a more mixed topographical nature.

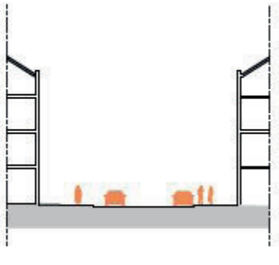
- Areas of the Street which contain a predominantly Georgian style streetscape should be respected and any future development should respond closely to the essential character and scale of the Street, following the guidelines set out in Area Objective 1.

- Areas of the streetscape where a variation of the topography of the skyline is present, the guidelines set out in Area Objective 2 should be followed.

William Street

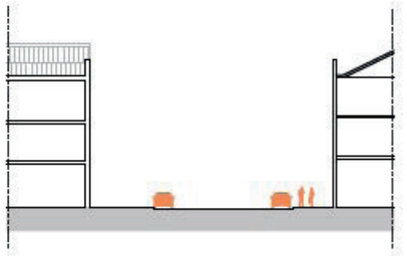




William Street within Newtown Pery follows a classical fixed parapet height of 4/5 storeys. New buildings in this area should follow guidance indicated in Area Objective 1, responding closely to the essential character and scale of the existing streetscape with areas of height focused within the inner blocks so as not to affect the grain of the existing streetscape.

O' Connell Street



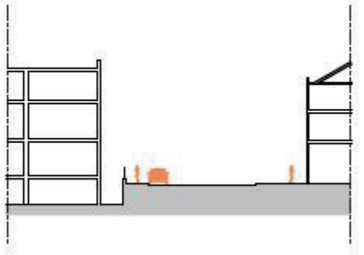


O'Connell Street is the main thoroughfare of Limerick City, running parallel to the River Shannon. Existing key and local landmark buildings along O'Connell Street, such a St. Augustine's church, should be protected by controlling the building height of adjoining and adjacent buildings and preventing development which would undermine the quality of views to them.

Generally O'Connell street follows the classical fixed parapet height of 4/5 storeys. However, there are instances of varying height located at street corners. New buildings should adhere to guidance set out in Area Objective 1.

Catherine's Street





Catherine Street has a mixture of building heights resulting in the variation of the topography of the skyline. A wide range of building typologies and heights results in a dynamic streetscape that should follow the guidance set out in Area Objective 2.

Additional guidance for this area would be to insure that new buildings should respond closely to the essential character and the general scale of existing buildings.

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Distinct Georgian fabric;
- Complex elements which contribute to character;
- Important views and landmarks;
- There are areas with a classical parapet height; and
- There are areas with a mix of building heights.

Recommended Height

- Building or shoulder height along the streets with a classical parapet should respond closely to the essential character and not be less than or exceed the prevailing height of nearby Georgian buildings;
- Additional setback storey(s) behind parapet within the roofscape may be acceptable. For new buildings, rooflines should normally take design cues from nearby Georgian buildings and be articulated to reflect the overall classical parapet height of the existing streetscape;
- Rear extensions and buildings in interior of blocks in such classical streets generally should respect the height of the principal buildings along the street. When building in interior blocks, additional setback storey(s) may be acceptable subject to detailed design considerations; and
- Additional height may be permitted on streets where there is a mix of building heights provided the building responds to the essential character and general scale of existing buildings and/or it accentuates and improves the existing elevation. This also applies to building within the inner block in such areas.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- An increase in building height to corners and a decrease in building height in response to heritage assets and to prevent intrusion in views may be required;
- Increase in height above the Recommended Height may be permitted where the exceptional architectural quality of the building would contribute to the essential character of the area;
- The use of a modifier should be limited to one standout building which would act as a way finding landmark; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- On classical streets, new buildings should take their design cues from nearby Georgian buildings in relation to scale, built form, site coverage, roof detail and form, grain, rhythm and materials.

Tall Building Recommendation

- Through the application of the modifiers, a 'taller or landmark building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', may be appropriate;
- Additional height may be permitted on streets where there is a mix of building heights provided the building responds to the essential character and general scale of existing buildings and/or it accentuates and improves the existing elevation. This also applies to building within the inner block in such areas; and
- The application of the modifiers to provide a 'landmark building' would be limited to one standout building of exceptional architectural quality.



Map 6.3: City Centre Key and Local Landmarks

Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.1 below assesses the Newtown Pery Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in Newtown Pery.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	Building heights should reinforce the distinct character of the area and the reuse of buildings, specifically historic buildings
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	Newtown Pery has a very regular street grid and sense of building scale which should be respected. Any minor additions to typical building scale should be appropriately designed and set back on upper floors
Materials / building fabric well considered	The strong continuity of building materials - stone and stucco ground floors and brick upper storeys - and the characteristic Georgian fenestration patterns should be acknowledged in new development
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	Newtown Pery's street grid and scale set up a strong sense of scale and enclosure that should be augmented, not challenged by new development
Contribution to legibility and cohesive-ness	The very strength and orientation of the current street grid can inhibit wayfinding through the wider City. New development should relate to the adjacent contextual height, although there may be opportunities to utilise building height, if appropriately set-back and designed, to emphasis particular places or buildings within the area
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The commercial and residential functions of the area should be strengthened by increasing its desirability. Developments should contribute to streetscaping and deliver building renovation
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	New development in this area should be designed to emphasis and consolidate the area's existing character

Table 6.1: Guidance on assessing development in the Newtown Pery Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Newtown Pery Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. What justification is there for a tall building in this area, given its distinctive heritage character?
2. How would a tall building contribute to and not detract from the essential character of the area as set out in this Strategy?
3. Is the tall building of exceptional architectural character that it would deliver placemaking benefits?
4. Is the tall building part of the development of a larger opportunity site where such height would not impinge on the overall height markers and landmark buildings or result in an intrusion in views?
5. Does the tall building finish off previously established block structures to make them more legible?
6. Does the tall building take design cues from the character and scale of the streets in the area?
7. Does the tall building constitute a minor additional height of 2 storeys or less or a setback storey within the roofscape?
8. Does the additional height respond to the essential character and general scale of existing buildings where there is a mix of elevations and/or it accentuates and improves the existing elevation?
9. Is the tall building located within the inner block in an area with a mix of elevations?

Additional Reports Required:

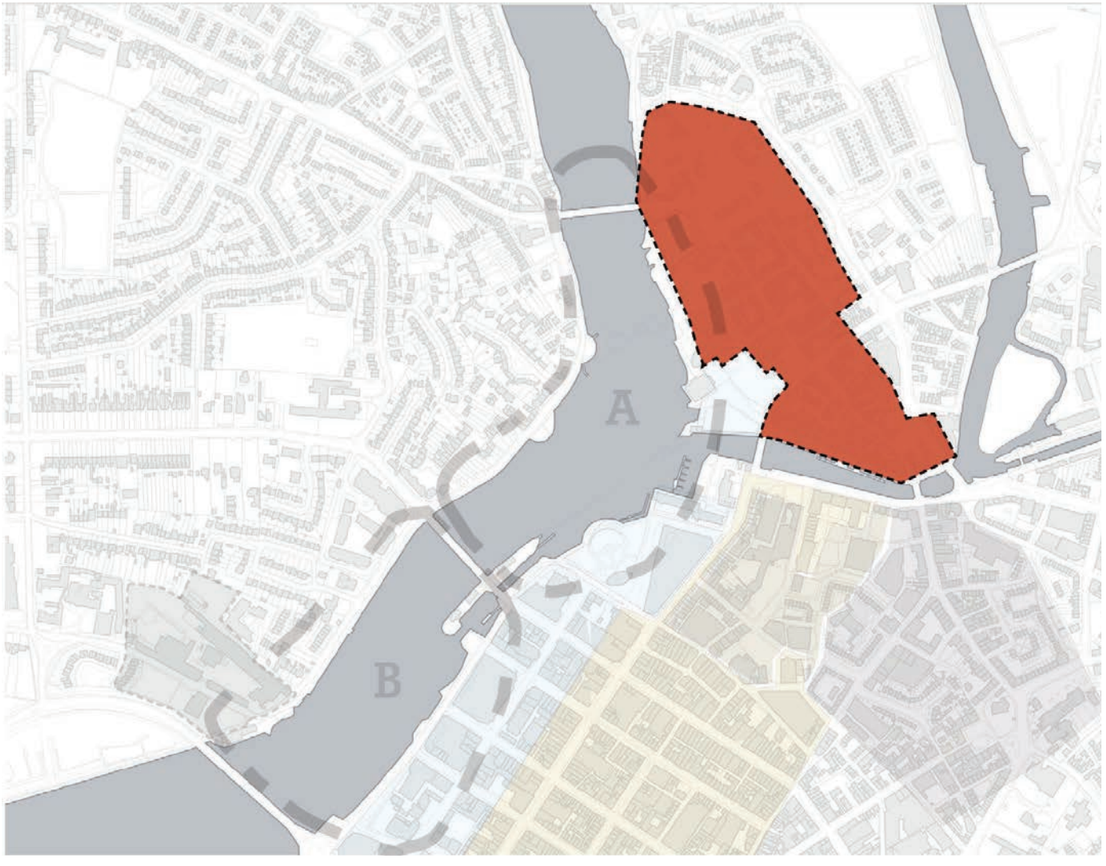
- Heritage Impact Assessment/Conservation Strategy

English Town

Building Height Strategy

The urban grain is very diverse in this area. The nature of the streets of English Town is predominantly no more than 2 storeys, the main features of height being the historical buildings, in particular King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. There are some street corners which rise slightly in height but usually no more than 3/4 storeys.

Unlike other areas of the City there are few gaps within the elevation of the streetscape, with the exception of some smaller opportunity sites dotted throughout the area and a couple of larger opportunity sites which are located at the northern point along Island Road.



Map 6.4: English Town

Key & Local Landmarks

Important vertical landmarks of key and local significance which should be protected by future development include:

- King John's Castle;
- Bishops Palace;
- City Hall; and
- St. Mary's Cathedral.

Area Objectives

1. New buildings within the English Town Character Area must respect the existing grain of the area and respond closely to the essential character and general scale of the streets, in particular where development potential lies within smaller infill sites;

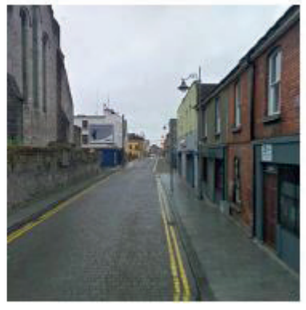
2. Building development must not impinge on the overall height markers, existing key and local landmark buildings in order to prevent development which would obstruct views of them;

3. New buildings should normally be low profile and in the range of 2-4 storeys unless there is a high quality townscape/placemaking argument; and

4. New buildings must also respond with care to the width of the streets in the English Town area which are characteristically more narrow than other parts of the City.

Nicholas Street





Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Diverse urban grain;
- Predominantly no more than 2 storeys, with some street corners of 3/4 storeys;
- Main features of height are the historical buildings;
- Important views and landmarks; and
- Limited gaps within the elevation of the streetscape.

Recommended Height

- Building height should respond closely to the essential character, grain and narrow streets. Generally, local context height +2 storeys is likely to be acceptable; and
- Depending on the site context, additional height above the local context height may be in the form of a setback storey within the roofscape.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- Increase in height above the Recommended Height may be permitted where:

  *The proposal would be of exceptional architectural quality; and
  * The exceptional architectural quality of the building would deliver place making benefits.

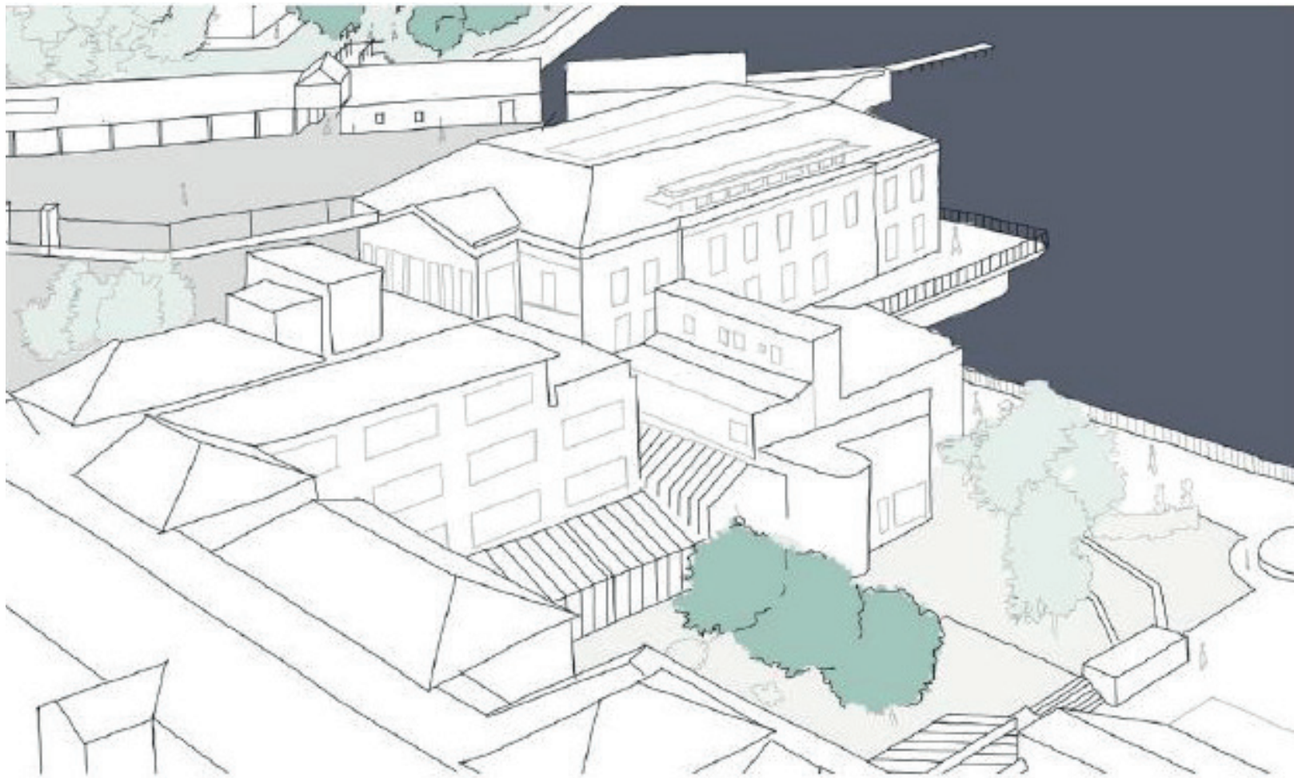
- Increase in height above the Recommended Height may be permitted as part of the development of larger sites and development to corners subject to detailed design considerations and only where such height would not impinge on the overall height markers and landmark buildings or result in an intrusion in views; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- On historic and narrow streets, new buildings should take their design cues from the character and scale of the streets, particularly where development potential lies within smaller infill sites; and
- Any proposed 'taller buildings' should be assessed by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

Through the application of the modifiers, which may allow for increased height in certain limited circumstances, a 'taller building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', may be appropriate.



Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.2 below assesses the English Town Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in English Town.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	Building height should respect the areas character that is strongly established by the medieval King John's Castle and St. Mary's cathedral
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	The narrow streets and irregular grid should be respected, with typical building heights of 2 - 4 storeys
Materials / building fabric well considered	Use of traditional materials - stone, stucco, brick - should be acknowledged
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	The general low scale of the area, with clear prominence of the Castle, its walls, and the Cathedral and the narrow winding street pattern does not encourage larger scale development
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	The areas strong legibility and character provided by historic buildings and street pattern should be respected and reinforced
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The low-scale mix of shopping and residential should be reinforced
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	There is no significant change to the existing building or dwelling typologies required. Positive additions are to be encouraged

Table 6.2: Guidance on assessing development in the English Town Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the English Town Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. What justification is there for a tall building in this area, given its distinctive heritage character?
2. How would a tall building contribute to and not detract from the essential character of the area as set out in this Strategy?
3. Is the tall building of exceptional architectural character that it would deliver placemaking benefits?
4. Is the tall building part of the development of a larger site where such height would not impinge on the overall height markers and landmark buildings or result in an intrusion in views?
5. Does the tall building take design cues from the character and scale of the streets in the area?
6. Does the tall building constitute a minor additional height of 2 storeys or less or a setback story within the roofscape?

Additional Reports Required:

- Heritage Impact Assessment/Conservation Strategy

Irish Town

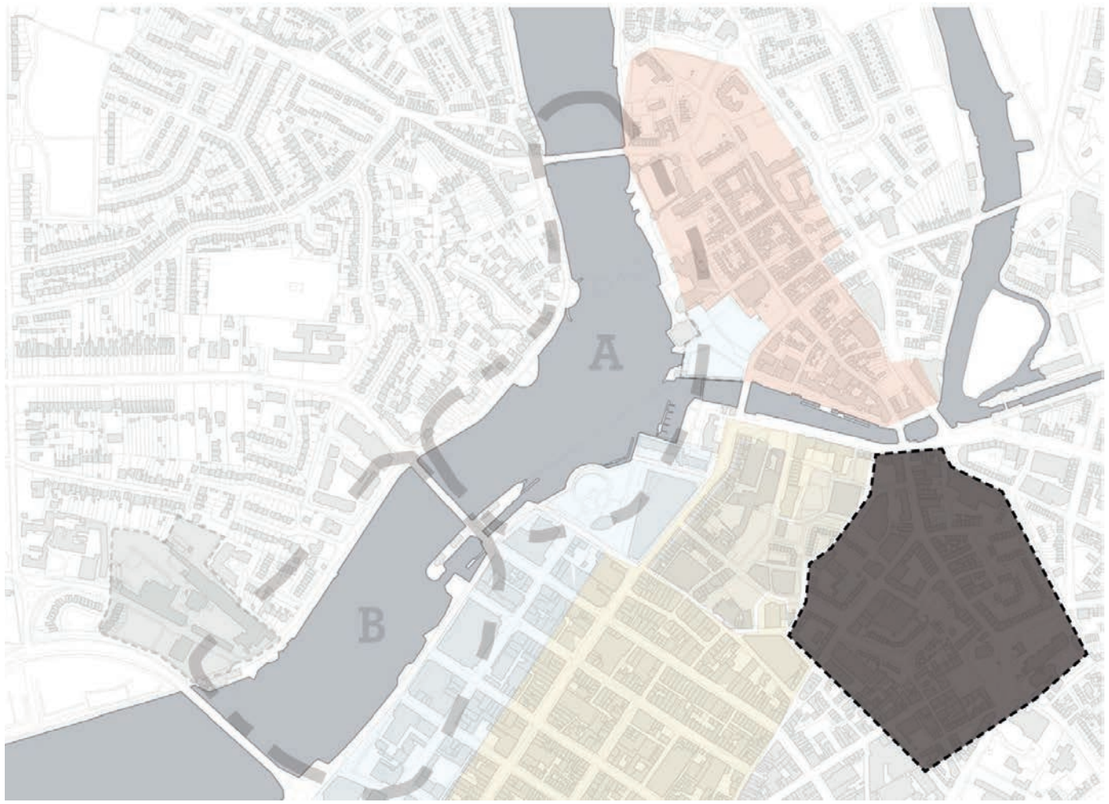
Building Height Strategy

Irish Town is located within the Inner City Core. This area has a medieval style system of streets which, along with a lack of permeability, makes it difficult to navigate and orientate oneself within the area.

The scale of buildings in this area varies from 2/3 storeys up to a 7 storey car park. There are a number of opportunity sites located within the area, which will require a case by case assessment due to the varying height and block structure. It is important when considering development in this area to keep in mind that connectivity is necessary for a city, in providing an easily navigable and functional space for people to live and work.

New buildings or building alterations within this area need to respond carefully to the local area landmarks, namely the Milk Market and St. John's Cathedral.

The Irish Town area has an unfinished nature to it, as development has had so many different approaches, in terms of a mixture of typologies within the street elevation as well as variation in building height. The lack of finished block structures results in the legibility of the area becoming unclear. The block structure is not readable as many of the corner buildings are missing or not a large enough scale to impact on the overall formation of the block. Therefore, there is an opportunity in this area to try establish an overall structure of height that responds closely to the general scale of existing buildings and streets.



Map 6.5: Irish Town

Key & Local Landmarks

Important vertical landmarks of key and local significance which should be protected by future development include:

- The Milk Market;
- St. John's Cathedral;
- St. Michael's Church; and
- John's Square.

Area Objectives

1. Any buildings of height in this area should aim towards finishing off previously established block structures to make them more legible;

2. Any development of additional height, be it structure, art or building should seek to contribute to place making;

3. Due to the mixed nature of the urban fabric within Irish Town, development in this area will have to be thoroughly assessed on a case by case basis;

4. New buildings in Irish Town should respond to the essential character and general scale of existing buildings and streets;

5. Where appropriate an increase in building height to corners and a decrease in building height adjoining or adjacent to key and local landmark buildings will be required; and

6. Assessment of any proposed buildings by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment will be required, notwithstanding contemporary buildings of outstanding quality which could provide new landmarks in and of themselves and should be welcomed from a place making point of view.

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Medieval style system of streets and a lack of permeability;
- Existing mixture of typologies within the street elevation;
- Variation in building height from 2/3 storeys up to 7 storeys; and
- A number of opportunity sites as well as the opportunity to establish an overall structure of height.

Recommended Height

- Building height should respond closely to the essential character and general scale of existing buildings and streets. Generally, local context height +2 storeys is likely to be acceptable; and
- Depending on the site context, additional height above the local context height may be in the form of a setback storey within the roofscape.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- Increase in height above the Recommended Height may be permitted where:

    * It is required to finish off previously established block structures to make them more legible; and
    * The exceptional architectural quality of the building would deliver place making benefits.

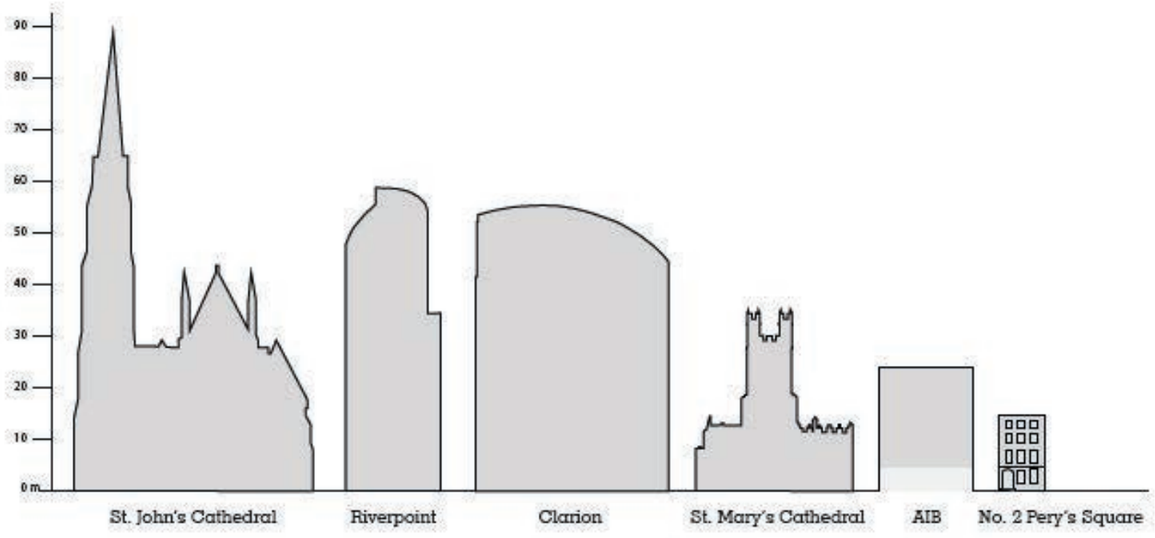
- An increase in building height to corners and a decrease in building height in response to heritage assets, landmark buildings and to prevent intrusion in views may be required; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- On historic and narrow streets, new buildings should take their design cues from the character and scale of the streets, particularly where development potential lies within smaller infill sites; and
- Any proposed 'taller or landmark building' should be assessed by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

Through the application of the modifiers, a 'taller or landmark building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', may be appropriate.



Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.3 below assesses the Irish Town Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in Irish Town.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	Irish Town is an interesting mix of building uses and types, all within a general scale of 2 - 7 storeys that should be augmented with new mixed-use development of a comparable scale
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	The current mix of buildings sets no consistent streetscape character, a confusion that adds to its character and this should be respected
Materials / building fabric well considered	Existing buildings vary greatly in style and materiality, but are typically characterised by more detailed and articulated facades. This should be acknowledged
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	Irish Town has a tight street scale and irregular street pattern that add to the sense of place and this should be respected by proposals
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	Building height within properly located new development could add to the legibility and wayfinding of the area
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	Irish Town has a rich mix of unique destination uses that could be added to by new developments
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	The mix of building typologies is already rich and new uses and activities should be encouraged

Table 6.3: Guidance on assessing development in the Irish Town Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Irish Town Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. What justification is there for a tall building in this area, given its distinctive heritage character?
2. How would a tall building contribute to and not detract from the essential character of the area as set out in this Strategy?
3. Is the tall building of exceptional architectural character that it would deliver placemaking benefits?
4. Is the tall building part of the development of a larger opportunity site where such height would not impinge on the overall height markers and landmark buildings or result in an intrusion in views?
5. Does the tall building finish off previously established block structures to make them more legible?
6. Does the tall building take design cues from the character and scale of the streets in the area?
7. Does the tall building constitute a minor additional height of 2 storeys or less or a setback storey within the roofscape?

Additional Reports Required:

- Heritage Impact Assessment/Conservation Strategy

Opera Site Location

Transition Area

Building Height Strategy

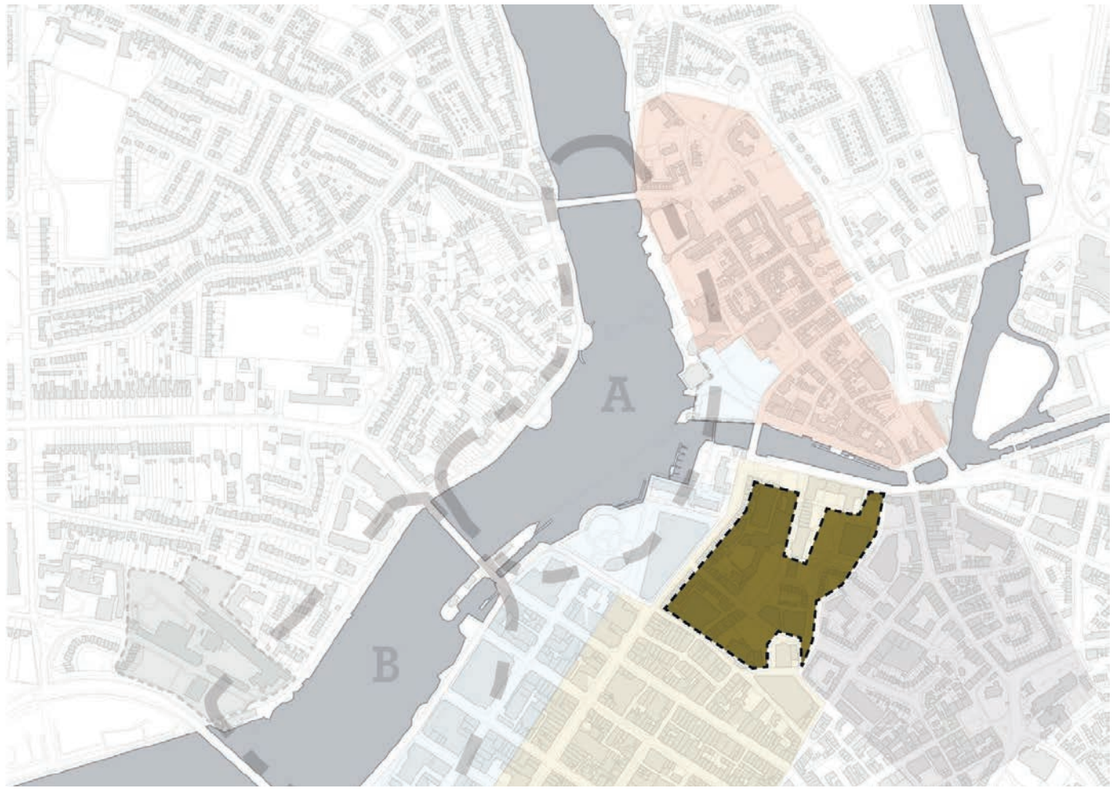
The area south of English Town and west of Irish Town serves as a transitional area between Irish Town and Newtown Pery. This area borders one of the main entrance points to the City and is comprised largely of the Opera site project which has begun construction.

A number of more complex sites exist in the Transition Area, where the context provides no clear direction for height and massing. These sites should be the subject of individual urban design studies to provide a framework for development.

Area Objectives

1. New high buildings in this area should define a new and changing urban form while also responding closely to the general scale of existing buildings; and

2. Continuous high building frontage should be avoided with adequate distances maintained between buildings.



Map 6.6: Transition Area

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Diverse urban grain;
- Existing mixture of typologies within the street elevation;
- Georgian fabric;
- Variation in existing building height from 2/3 storeys up to 5 storeys; and
- Comprises largely of the Opera site project which is currently under construction.

Recommended Height

- Building height should respond closely to the general scale of existing buildings and streets, noting that the permitted tall buildings on the Opera site are considered to be landmark structures and not representative of the 'general scale' of the overall area. Generally local context height +2 storeys is likely to be acceptable; and
- Depending on the site context, additional height above the local context height may be in the form of a setback storey within the roofscape.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- Increase in height above the Recommended Height may be permitted where it would be of exceptional architectural quality and contribute to the definition of a new and changing urban form; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- Proposals should ensure that adequate distances are maintained between buildings; and
- Any proposed 'taller or landmark buildings' should be assessed by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

Through the application of the modifiers, a 'taller or landmark building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', may be appropriate.

Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.4 below assesses the Transition Area Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in the Transition Area.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	Given the lack of urban structure in this area, building height, to an appropriate scale in its context, presents an opportunity to define this neighbourhood
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	The Transition Area is an interesting mix of building types and variety of functions, with a general scale of 2 - 5 storeys that should be augmented with development, generally of a comparable scale
Materials / building fabric well considered	The design of new buildings should acknowledge the character of the built environment and the variety in style and materiality
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	Building height should complement the natural features that already give this area a sense of enclosure, e.g. the Abbey River, and enhance this through the reinstatement of the street edge where required
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	Building height within properly located new development could emphasis particular places and add to the legibility and wayfinding of the area
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	New development in this area should seek to deliver a mix of uses. Developments should also contribute to delivering building renovation and reuse
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	There is already a rich mix of building typologies in this area that should be supported and enhanced by new developments

Table 6.4: Guidance on assessing development in the Transition Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Transition Area Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. What justification is there for a tall building in this area, given its distinctive heritage character?
2. How would a tall building contribute to and not detract from the essential character of the area as set out in this Strategy?
3. Is the tall building of exceptional architectural character that it would deliver placemaking benefits?
4. Is the tall building part of the development of a larger opportunity site where such height would not impinge on the overall height markers and landmark buildings or result in an intrusion in views?
5. Does the tall building finish off previously established block structures to make them more legible?
6. Does the tall building take design cues from the character and scale of the streets in the area?
7. Does the tall building constitute a minor additional height of less than 2 storeys or a setback storey within the roofscape?

Additional Reports Required:

- Heritage Impact Assessment/Conservation Strategy

The Quays

Building Height Strategy

The existing movement strategy of the City results in a waterfront that is isolated from the rest of the City. Currently areas of height are primarily focused to key junctions and crossing points, which should be maintained. Visibility of the waterfront from the inner city commercial centre is poor. Creating a visual connection to the Quays may be required in order to activate the waterfront as a public realm.

A " World Class Waterfront" is part of the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan, which includes a new river walk along the quayside. A fundamental element required, where areas of height are proposed, is accessibility to amenities. The proposed activation of the Quays would act as a starting point in the development of areas of height as more amenities are provided.

Area Objectives

1. Modulation in parapet height along the Quays, that responds to its context, its distinctive position on the River Shannon and acknowledges the importance of this area is required;

2. The development of buildings of height should consider the impact of the overall River Shannon, an assessment of building impact on key views should be conducted by verified views along the River Shannon;

3. Existing landmark buildings should be protected by controlling the height of buildings adjoining and adjacent buildings while also preventing development which would undermine the quality of views to them; and

4. Where appropriate, an increase in building scale at bridges may be required to improve the legibility of entrance points, draw people down to the Quays and to enhance the sense of place.

Building Height: A Focus on The Quays

This area contains several existing taller buildings of up to 18 storeys within a larger run of lower buildings. While these structures may be individually undistinguished they successfully establish the most widely used large-scale visual image of Limerick City.

While additional new taller buildings along the Quays should generally be of similar scale, there is the potential to allow for one possible exception. Several potential development sites exist at the north end of the Quays, at the confluence of rivers and bridges, a location of foundational significance to the City. Taller buildings could be accommodated here, that are uniquely-designed signature buildings, perhaps accommodating a unique cultural, technology or business activity.



Figure 6.1: Malmo Tower, Sweden

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Highly visible 'shopfront' for the City;
- Buildings are more modern being delivered in the 20th and 21st Century;
- Buildings are notably taller generally ranging between 6 to 8 storeys;
- The Riverpoint Building and the Clayton Hotel, at 59m and 57m respectively, have become new City landmarks;
- Areas of height are primarily focused at key junctions and crossing points;
- The waterfront is currently isolated from the rest of the City;
- Visibility of the waterfront from the inner city commercial centre is poor; and
- Limerick 2030 Plan - "World Class Waterfront".

Recommended Height

- Modulation in parapet height along the Quays, that responds to its context, its distinctive position on the River Shannon and acknowledges the importance of this area is required;
- Where appropriate, an increase in building height to bridge intersections may be required to enhance the legibility of entrance points and in order to define a sense of place; and
- The development of buildings of height will be considered in terms of their impact on the River Shannon.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- A decrease in building height may be required to protect existing local and key landmark and heritage buildings; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- An assessment of new building impacts on key views, including to existing buildings of height, should be conducted by verified views along the River Shannon; and
- Any proposed 'taller, landmark and gateway buildings' should be assessed by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

- 'Taller, landmark and gateway buildings' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', are appropriate;
- Height will be encouraged where delivered through excellent design and that achieves a high quality townscape and placemaking;
- Taller buildings within a cluster of varying height that relate to each other and their surrounding urban context in terms of street layout, massing and design are encouraged; and
- This area should deliver a gateway building(s) given its significance as a shopfront to the City.



Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.5 below assesses the Quays Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in the Quays.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	The run of taller buildings along the quayside bank of the Shannon has become one of the signature views of the City. New development should strengthen this through appropriate building heights
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	New development of scale would be appropriate to reinforce the existing viewscape
Materials / building fabric well considered	Attention should be paid to patterns of roofline, fenestration and street-level design to contribute to the wider street and skyscape
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	While the existing scale of up to 18 storeys of quayside buildings is appropriate for new additions, consideration should be given to a taller, or potentially uniquely designed, structure at the northern end of the Quay, to mark this significant location
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	The run of taller buildings along the Shannon provides an important legibility to the City's overall urban structure. Attention should be paid to enhancing views of these buildings from the rest of the City to assist in wayfinding
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The Quays is an important destination for tourists and visitors and can accommodate hotels and other such facilities, as well as providing signature locations for important public buildings
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	Additions to the existing mix of building typologies should consider the opportunity to deliver a cluster of varying height

Table 6.5: Guidance on assessing development in the Quays Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Quays Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. How does a tall building or buildings contribute to the pattern of existing tall buildings along the River?
2. How does a tall building or buildings best help connect the Quays to the adjacent City areas and features?
3. What are the appropriate locations along the Quays for individual and clusters of tall buildings and for landmarks?
4. What are the appropriate heights for new tall buildings along the Quays in relation to those currently present?
5. Where are gateway buildings best locations?
6. How are transitions between tall buildings on the Quays and the adjacent lower-scale of Newtown Pery successfully managed?
7. How well does the building(s) contribute to the wider City skyscape and the presence on the river bank?
8. Does the building(s) appropriately contribute to the River walks and other public areas along the Quays?
9. Does the building(s) create any negative wind, shadow or micro-climatic effects on adjacent open spaces, the enjoyment of the basin and River, or other public amenities?
10. Does the design and use of the street level of the building(s) make a positive contribution to adjacent existing and proposed buildings and public spaces?
11. Is the floor plate and dimension of the building(s) optimal for creating living and/or working space?
12. Do residential tall buildings provide quality living environments for households of all types and sizes?

Colbert Quarter

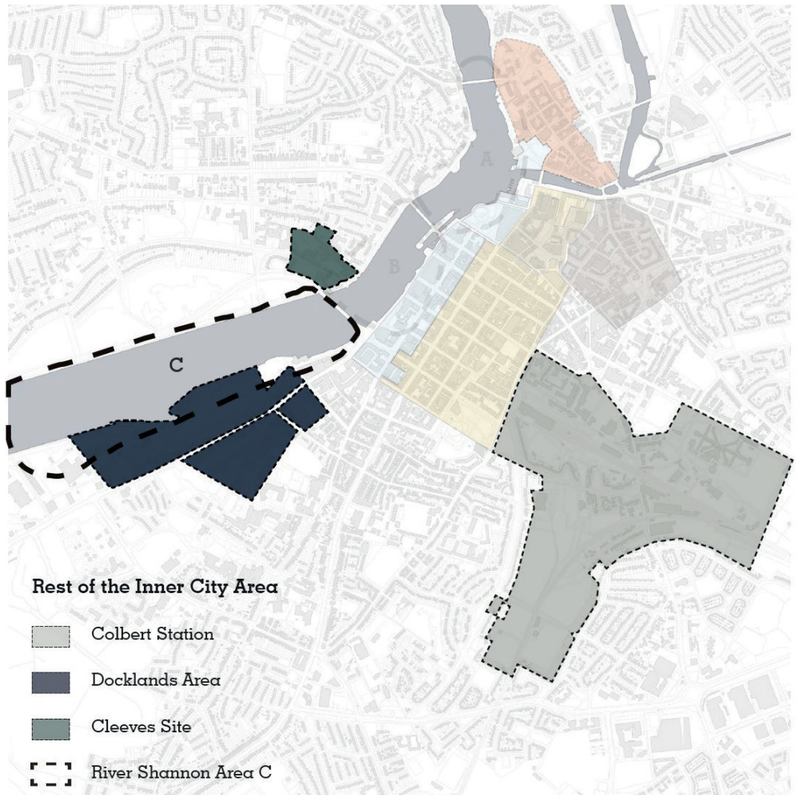
Building Height Strategy

Colbert Station is an important entrance node of the City. Development of a new neighbourhood at the Colbert Quarter must refer to the Limerick 2030 Plan, whereby the main concept is integrated place making, with compact, dense, sustainable urban design. A clear urban structure is required for this area as it is of key strategic importance for the development of the City. A Framework Plan is currently being prepared for these lands.

Area Objectives

1. A strong placemaking piece is required within this area, whether it be art or building in order to enhance the legibility of the area and highlight a sense of place; and

2. Any proposal for this 69 hectare site should include a marker building of height, whereas the rest of the future development should be cognisant of the essential character and general scale of existing buildings and streets.



Map 6.7: The Colbert Quarter Site - Located within the 'Rest of the Inner City Area'

Building Height: A Focus on Colbert Quarter



Figure 6.2: Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, City Quay, Dublin

The station is a location which will be of growing transport significance in Limerick's urban structure. Its location in and connection to the rest of the City Centre is however, not obvious. The station is located on an important but incomplete urban square. A new taller building here, possibly to the north of the station building, would not only help complete the square and potentially provide additional public space, but also become a predominant marker in the cityscape of where the station is located.



Figure 6.3: Porto Nuevo, Milan

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Important entrance node of the City;
- Represents a substantial changing/emerging area within the City (c. 69 hectares);
- The area is generally low rise, 2-3 storeys;
- Currently disconnected from the surrounding area;
- Colbert Station as a transportation hub for the City;
- It is in multiple ownership and accommodates a range of uses;
- North western boundary bounds the Georgian Newtown Pery Character Area; and
- A Framework Plan is currently being prepared for this area on behalf of the LDA.

Recommended Height

- Building height should respond to the essential character and general scale of existing streets and buildings, where present;
- Where the site adjoins existing residential areas, generally local context height +2/3 storeys is likely to be acceptable subject to the Framework Plan; and
- Any proposal for this area should include a marker building of height as part of a Framework Plan process.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- A decrease in building height may be required at certain site boundaries in response to the adjacent context and to protect existing local and key landmark buildings and heritage assets; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- The development of this site should deliver strong placemaking outcomes that enhance the legibility of the area and highlight a sense of place;
- Any proposed 'taller, landmark, gateway or city landmark building' should be assessed by a verified view analysis and a landscape and visual impact assessment; and
- The impact of increased height proximate to boundaries with existing houses should include an assessment of the impact on residential amenity.

Tall Building Recommendation

- Subject to the Framework Plan, 'taller, landmark and gateway buildings' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', are appropriate;
- This site should facilitate a gateway building given its significance and scale;
- The delivery of a 'City Landmark Building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', subject to the Framework Plan, should be encouraged;
- Height/areas of height will be encouraged, in line with the Framework Plan, where delivered through excellent design and that achieves a high quality townscape and placemaking; and
- Taller buildings within a cluster of varying height that relate to each other and their surrounding urban context in terms of street layout, massing and design are encouraged.

Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.6 below assesses the Colbert Quarter Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height at Colbert Quarter.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	The development of the Colbert Quarter lands is a major city-making opportunity that should be used to provide a wide range of building types and heights and cityscape opportunities
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	Other than the strategically located station building, the existing area and context provide little guidance on street layout, massing and character, providing a great new city building opportunity
Materials / building fabric well considered	Limited guidance is provided by the area context, other than the need to complete and enhance the station square
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	A unique opportunity exists, potentially for a site adjacent to the station, to accommodate a taller building visible at the city-scale and that would deliver a sense of scale
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	The station is an important destination in the City and will become the 'front door' of a large new city district on the rail lands. New development should provide that city-scale legibility
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The Colbert Quarter site is large enough to accommodate a wide range of uses. In addition to the residential opportunity, the potential exists to accommodate major educational, cultural or other destination institutions, as well as new shopping activity
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	Contributing to the building/dwelling typologies in this area is not applicable given the nature of the Colbert Quarter Area. However, consideration should be given to providing for taller buildings within a cluster of varying height

Table 6.6: Guidance on assessing development in the Colbert Quarter Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Colbert Quarter Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. How does a tall building or buildings help to connect this large site to the surrounding City?
2. What are the appropriate locations on the site for individual and clusters of tall buildings and for landmarks?
3. Where are Gateway or City Landmark buildings best located?
4. How are transitions between existing adjacent lower density areas successfully managed?
5. How well does the building(s) contribute to the wider City skyscape?
6. How well does the building(s) help to connect Colbert Station and this new City district to the adjacent City Centre?
7. Does the building(s) appropriately contribute to the hierarchy of public areas e.g. plazas, small urban spaces within the site?
8. Does the use of façade materials and fenestration support and contribute to the prominence of the building?
9. Does the building(s) create any negative wind, shadow or micro-climatic effects on adjacent open spaces or other public amenities, particularly the station square and People's Park?
10. Does the building contribute to the quality and experience of adjacent heritage assets, in particular the Colbert Station building and the scale of Parnell Street and other heritage elements of Newtown Pery?
11. Does the design and use of the street level of the building(s) make a positive contribution to adjacent existing and proposed buildings and public spaces?
12. Is the floor plate and dimension of the building(s) optimal for creating living and/or working space?
13. Do residential tall buildings provide quality living environments for households of all types and sizes?

Cleeves Site

Building Height Strategy

The Cleeves site is located at a major crossing point on the River Shannon. It is a significant site for increased height due to this position at an important crossing point at the base of the Shannon Bridge.

Due to its location within the wider City context, on approach to Limerick City from Shannon airport, a building of significant height has the ability to enhance the legibility and sense of place within this area. The site is also large enough to house a coherent cluster of new buildings, given its location and the existing presence of the very prominent chimney stack.

Area Objectives

1. Height should be considered on the impact of the overall River Shannon and height must also be assessed by verified views along the River Shannon;

2. New buildings should have appropriate scaling to the existing houses, with a balance of height and economic use taken into account;

3. The fabric of the area as well as the complex elements that contribute to the character of the site need to be protected;

4. It is recognised that there may be an impact on neighbouring residential buildings as the height is generally lowline in the surrounding area. However, there is a high quality townscape and placemaking argument which can be deemed appropriate for an area of height due to the nature of the site; and

5. The development of this area requires the implementation of a strategic masterplan that allocates areas of height in a careful manner, while responding to existing guidance within the Limerick 2030 Plan.

Building Height: A Focus on the Cleeves Site

This site provides an important marker in the cityscape, announcing the other bank of the River Shannon and the gateway from Shannon Airport and the west.

Redevelopment of this site can accommodate a mix of uses and heights subject to a detailed Masterplan. However, an opportunity exists for a taller building to add coherence to the cityscape by defining the Shannon not as an empty river space but as a contained part of the City's visual experience.



Figure 6.4: Cityscape, Azure Lake, Ontario, Canada



Figure 6.5: Chelsea Harbour, River Thames, London

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Significant gateway site;
- Height ranges from 1-4 storeys with the notable exception of the iconic chimney structure;
- The chimney currently acts as a marker on the skyline on the northern banks of the Shannon;
- Comprises a number of distinct parts and historic buildings;
- A Masterplan is currently being prepared for the site;
- Important views due to location on the Shannon; and
- Limerick 2030 Plan Site.

Recommended Height

- A 'catch-all' recommendation for the height at this site is not applicable;
- Where the site adjoins existing residential areas, e.g. to the north, generally local context height +2 storeys is likely to be acceptable, subject to a Masterplan;
- Height/areas of height within the site should be determined and provided as part of the Masterplanning process, including a marker building of height; and
- Building height should respond to on-site heritage assets.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- This site should facilitate a gateway building given its significant location;
- A decrease in building height may be required at certain site boundaries in response to the adjacent context and to protect existing local and key landmark buildings and heritage assets; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- The fabric of the area as well as the complex elements that contribute to the character of the site need to be protected;
- The impact of increased height proximate to boundaries with existing houses should include an assessment of the impact on residential amenity; and
- Height should be considered on the impact of the overall River Shannon and must also be assessed by verified views along the River Shannon and a visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

- Subject to a Masterplan, 'taller, landmark, gateway and city landmark buildings' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', are appropriate;
- Height/areas of height will be encouraged, in line with the Masterplan, where delivered through excellent design and that achieves a high quality townscape and placemaking;
- Taller buildings within a cluster of varying height that relate to each other and their surrounding urban context in terms of street layout, massing and design are encouraged;
- This site should facilitate a gateway building given its significant location; and
- This site could facilitate a city landmark that isn't a building, such as a significant artpiece.



Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.7 below assesses the Cleeves Site Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height at the Cleeves Site.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	The Cleeves site is the only major development opportunity on the right bank of the Shannon. It should take its essential character as a gateway and vista of and from the City
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	The existing uses and context provide limited guidance, beyond the significant scale and massing of the industrial buildings and chimney
Materials / building fabric well considered	The design of new buildings should acknowledge the industrial heritage of the built environment and traditional materials where appropriate
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	The surrounding context provides little guidance as to scale and height, but the unique locational and prominence of existing site buildings suggest a unique opportunity for a taller building, providing views of and from the City
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	The presence of a taller building in this area could help frame the River and the pattern of taller buildings along the Quays
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The site has considerable and attractive mixed-use potential
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	Contributing to the building/dwelling typologies in this area is not applicable given the nature of the Cleeves site. However, consideration should be given to providing for taller buildings within a cluster of varying height

Table 6.7: Guidance on assessing development in the Cleeves Site Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Cleeves Site Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. How does a tall building or buildings help to connect this large site to the surrounding City?
2. How many tall buildings are appropriate for the site and what is the optimal structure of the building cluster?
3. Where is a gateway building(s) best located?
4. Is a City landmark building appropriate at this location? Where is it best located?
5. How does a tall building maintain the heritage character of the complex and the legibility of the chimney?
6. How are transitions between existing adjacent lower density areas successfully managed?
7. How are transitions between existing heritage buildings successfully managed?
8. How well does the building(s) contribute to the wider City skyscape?
9. How well does the building(s) relate to the riverfront?
10. Does the use of façade materials and fenestration support and contribute to the prominence of the building and heritage character of the complex?
11. Does the building(s) create any negative wind, shadow or micro-climatic effects on adjacent residential areas, open spaces or other public amenities?
12. Does the design and use of the street level of the building(s) make a positive contribution to adjacent existing and proposed buildings and public spaces?
13. Is the floor plate and dimension of the building(s) optimal for creating living and/or working space?
14. Do residential tall buildings provide quality living environments for households of all types and sizes?

The Docklands

Building Height Strategy

The Docklands Area is of key strategic importance for the development of the City, due to its location at one of the major entrance points to the City. A clear urban structure in the form of a docklands area masterplan is required for this area.

The legacy of the industrial and trading character of the waterfront of Limerick City has gradually declined in use and a re-activation of this area is required. Most of the Docklands Area is comprised of low-rise warehouses and storage buildings with the exception of the 10 storey Ranks Silo which is considerably lower than the neighbouring Clayton Hotel.

As highlighted in the Docklands Framework, the uses must reflect urban philosophy, including economic, social and cultural activities. Therefore, it is vitally important that if areas of height are to be situated in this location, careful consideration towards multi-functionality through considerate design must be implemented.

Area Objectives

1. The development of this area requires the implementation of a strategic masterplan that allocates areas of height in a careful manner, which also responds to the Docklands Framework which has already been set in place;

2. New high buildings in the docklands area should define a new and changing urban form; and

3. Existing local and key landmark buildings, such as the Ranks Silo, the Dock Clock and Bannatyne Mill, should be protected by controlling the building height of new adjoining and adjacent buildings.

Building Height: The Docklands

A taller building in the north-west part of the Docklands Area would mark a key point of entry to the City from the west and south and would also act to advertise the presence of the longer-term, larger-scale development of the Docklands. A site here, closest to the existing city fabric, could accommodate a taller building that would be visible at the city-scale.



Figure 6.6: Neutelings riedijk, mas Museum, Antwerp

Tall Building Recommendation

Considerations

- Lands are of key strategic importance;
- Characterised by a mixture of uses and building types;
- Generally low-rise ranging from 1-4 storeys with a limited number of taller buildings, notably the Ranks Silo at 10 storeys which acts as a local landmark;
- Area subject to the Limerick Docklands Framework Strategy & Shannon Foynes Port Company Vision 2041;
- The RSES for the Southern Region states that there is potential for alternative uses in the Docklands; and
- Longer term opportunity as recognised by Limerick 2030.

Recommended Height

- The development of this area and its height should be determined by a strategic masterplan that allocates areas of height in a careful manner, which also responds to the existing Docklands Framework Strategy;
- The Docklands Character Area encompasses lands on both sides of the Dock Road, with the opportunity to increase height in the existing docks. Where the site adjoins existing residential areas, e.g. along St. Alphonsus Street, generally local context height +2 storeys is likely to be acceptable. Development should be subject to a Masterplan; and
- Any proposal for this area should use building height to distinguish the area as part of a Masterplanning process.

Modifiers to Recommended Height

- A decrease in building height may be required at certain site boundaries in response to the adjacent context and to protect existing local and key landmark buildings, such as the Ranks Silo, the Dock Clock and Bannatyne Mill; and
- The use of modifiers is at the discretion of the Council and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Other Design Considerations

- New high buildings in the docklands area should define a new and changing urban form while at the same time protecting the fabric of the area that contributes to its character;
- A Masterplan that sets a clear urban structure is required to accompany any application for the redevelopment of these lands;
- In the delivery of height, consideration of multi-functionality through careful and considerate design must be implemented; and
- Height should be considered on the impact of the overall River Shannon and must also be assessed by verified views along the River Shannon and a visual impact assessment.

Tall Building Recommendation

- Subject to a Masterplan, 'taller, landmark and gateway buildings' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', are appropriate;
- This site should facilitate a gateway building given its significant location;
- This site can be considered appropriate for a 'City Landmark Building' as defined in the 'Tall Building Classifications', subject to a Masterplan;
- Height/areas of height will be encouraged, in line with the Masterplan, where delivered through excellent design, achieves a high quality townscape and delivers placemaking; and
- Taller buildings within a cluster of varying height that relate to each other and their surrounding urban context in terms of street layout, massing and design are encouraged.

Assessment Tools

Development Management Guidance - General Building Height

Table 6.8 below assesses the Docklands Character Area against the development management principles from the Building Heights Guidelines, providing guidance in relation to each criteria. This Table is a development management tool, and should be utilised in the assessment of proposals for building height in the Docklands.

Criteria for consideration from the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018	Assessment Guidance
Makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood	The Docklands area is a major city building opportunity with a large site likely to be developed over a considerable time period. The development presents the opportunity to establish a new city district
Responds to its built environment & streetscape	The Docklands has a strong physical character established by the river and the docks, and some heritage buildings, that should be maintained, even as its use character changes completely
Materials / building fabric well considered	Limited guidance is provided by the area's built context, but the presence of strong water and dock features should be highlighted
Sense of scale and enclosure of public spaces, thoroughfares and waterfronts	A unique opportunity exists for a site closest to the existing city fabric to accommodate a taller building visible at the city-scale
Contribution to legibility and cohesiveness	The Docklands should be developed as an extension of the City, with new building at the interface providing city-scale address
Positively contributes to the mix of uses in the neighbourhood	The Docklands site is large enough to accommodate a wide range of uses. In addition to the residential opportunity, the potential exists to accommodate a major educational, cultural or other destination institution, as well as new employment activity
Contributes to the building/ dwelling typologies in the area	Contributing to the building/dwelling typologies in this area is not applicable given the nature of the Docklands. However, consideration should be given to providing for taller buildings within a cluster of varying height

Table 6.6: Guidance on assessing development in the Docklands Character Area in the context of the Building Heights Guidelines, 2018

Localised Assessment Tool for Tall Buildings

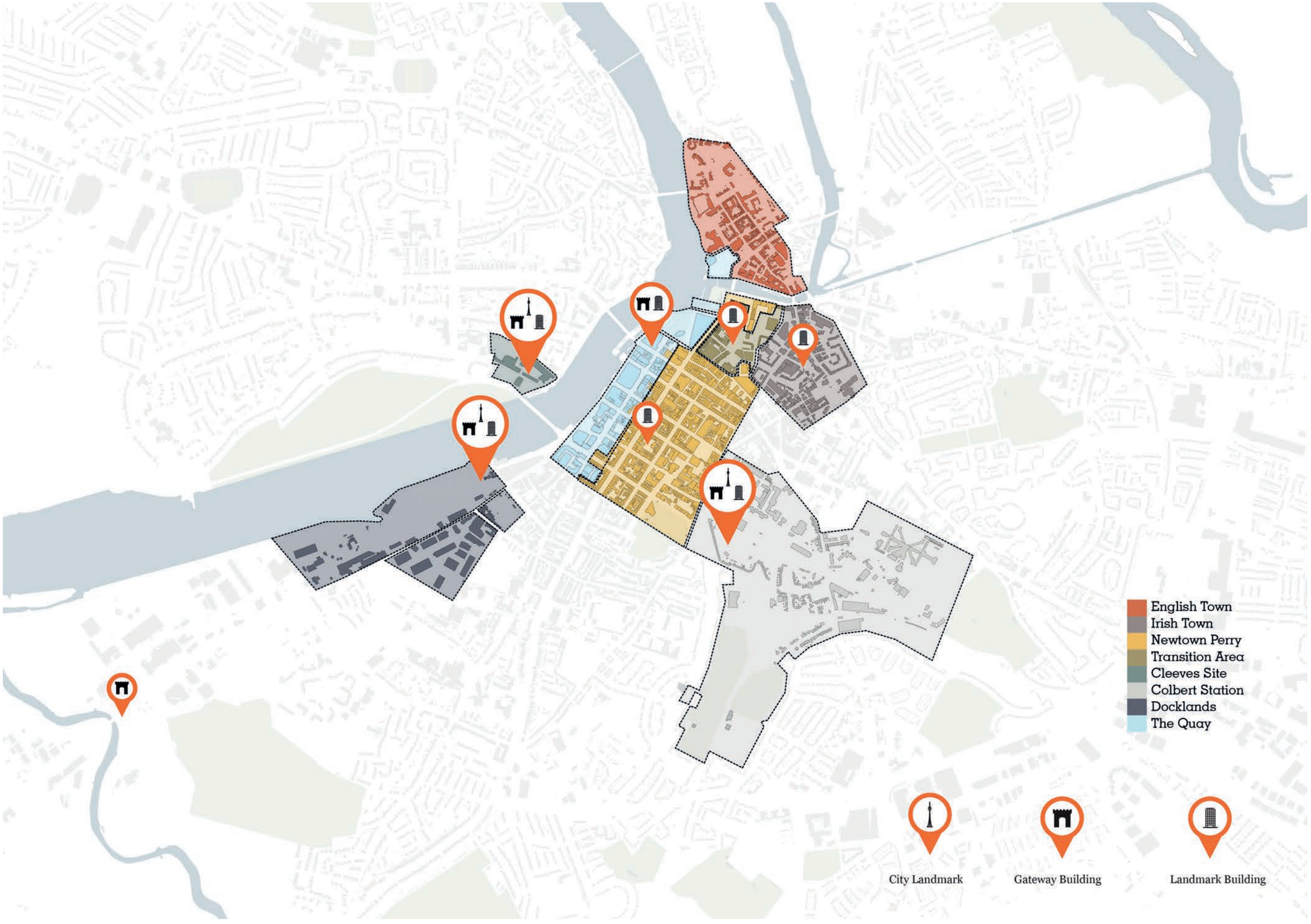
This Localised Assessment Tool provides a set of specifically tailored questions for the Docklands Character Area in order to determine the suitability of the area to accommodate tall buildings.

As such, the tool serves as a guide for the Planning Authority in assessing a tall building proposal in a planning application on each individual site. Additional requirements for each site may include a tall building statement, design statement and impact statement, which will aid in further developing and implementing a plan to properly integrate Tall Buildings within each of the Character Areas.

Questions

1. How does a tall building or buildings help to connect this large site to the surrounding City?
2. What are the appropriate locations on the site for individual and clusters of tall buildings and for landmarks?
3. Where are gateway or City landmark buildings best located?
4. How are transitions between existing adjacent lower density areas successfully managed?
5. How well does the building(s) contribute to the wider City skyscape?
6. How well does the building(s) help to connect this new city district to the adjacent City Centre?
7. Does the building(s) appropriately contribute to the hierarchy of water spaces, the river and public areas e.g. plazas, small urban spaces within the site?
8. Does the building(s) create any negative wind, shadow or micro-climatic effects on adjacent open spaces, the enjoyment of the basin and river, or other public amenities?
9. Does the building contribute to the quality and experience of adjacent heritage assets in the Docklands?
10. Does the design and use of the street level of the building(s) make a positive contribution to adjacent existing and proposed buildings and public spaces?
11. Is the floor plate and dimension of the building(s) optimal for creating living and/or working space?
12. Do residential tall buildings provide quality living environments for households of all types and sizes?

Tall Buildings at the Character Area Level - Map 6.9



Gateways to the City

Building Height Strategy - Thomond Park

Thomand Park is an established high point of the City skyline and is an important place making piece for Limerick. Its significance as a landmark is due to its location on an important City gateway, its solitary presence and height.

Area Objectives

1. Any proposed buildings of height in this gateway area should respect and reinforce the landmark status of Thomond Park; and

2. Any future development of buildings of height in this area should also respond closely to the existing character and general scale of existing buildings and streets.



Building Height Strategy - Castletroy/University of Limerick

The gateway flagpoles at University of Limerick are an established high point within the surrounding environs of Limerick City. Its significance as a gateway is due to its development as a University quarter. The connection between the University and the City Centre has been reignited by the University's intention to locate part of its campus within the former Dunnes Stores site at the base of Sarsfield bridge.

Many sites within the Castletroy area are designated for residential development of good quality design that should adhere to site specific briefs. Form and massing should be emphasised at landmark locations, such as street corners and road junctions, through higher density development.

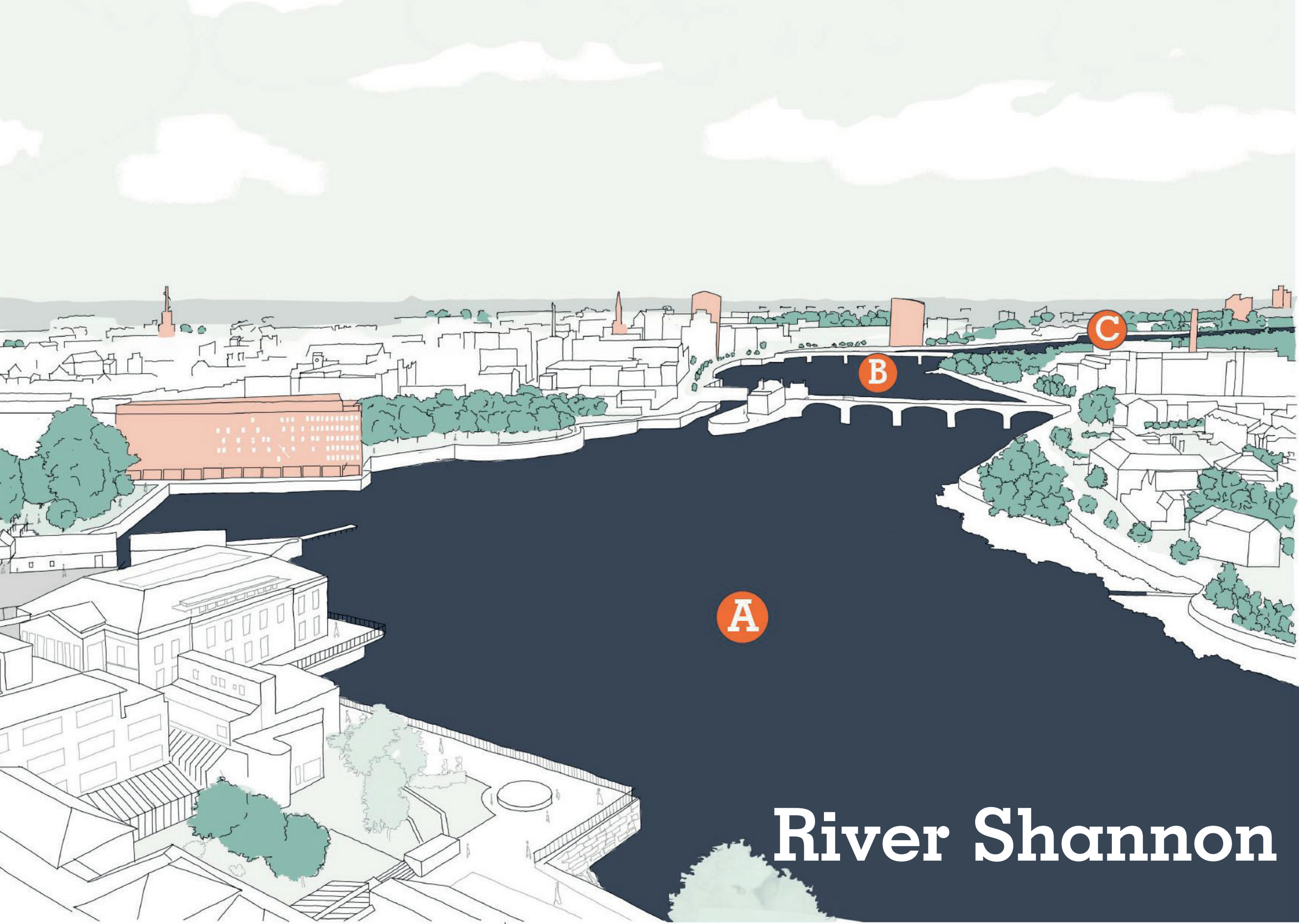
Area Objectives

1. Any proposed buildings of height in this gateway area must be balanced with the need to maintain the status of the University rather than the creation of a high building cluster;

2. Any proposed area of height should be in line with the framework of the planned, coordinated and sustainable development of the Castletroy area; and

3. While adhering to the framework of the planned, coordinated and sustainable development of the area, where appropriate, a modest increase in building height at important intersections/nodes and street corners may be required to enhance legibility and sense of place.

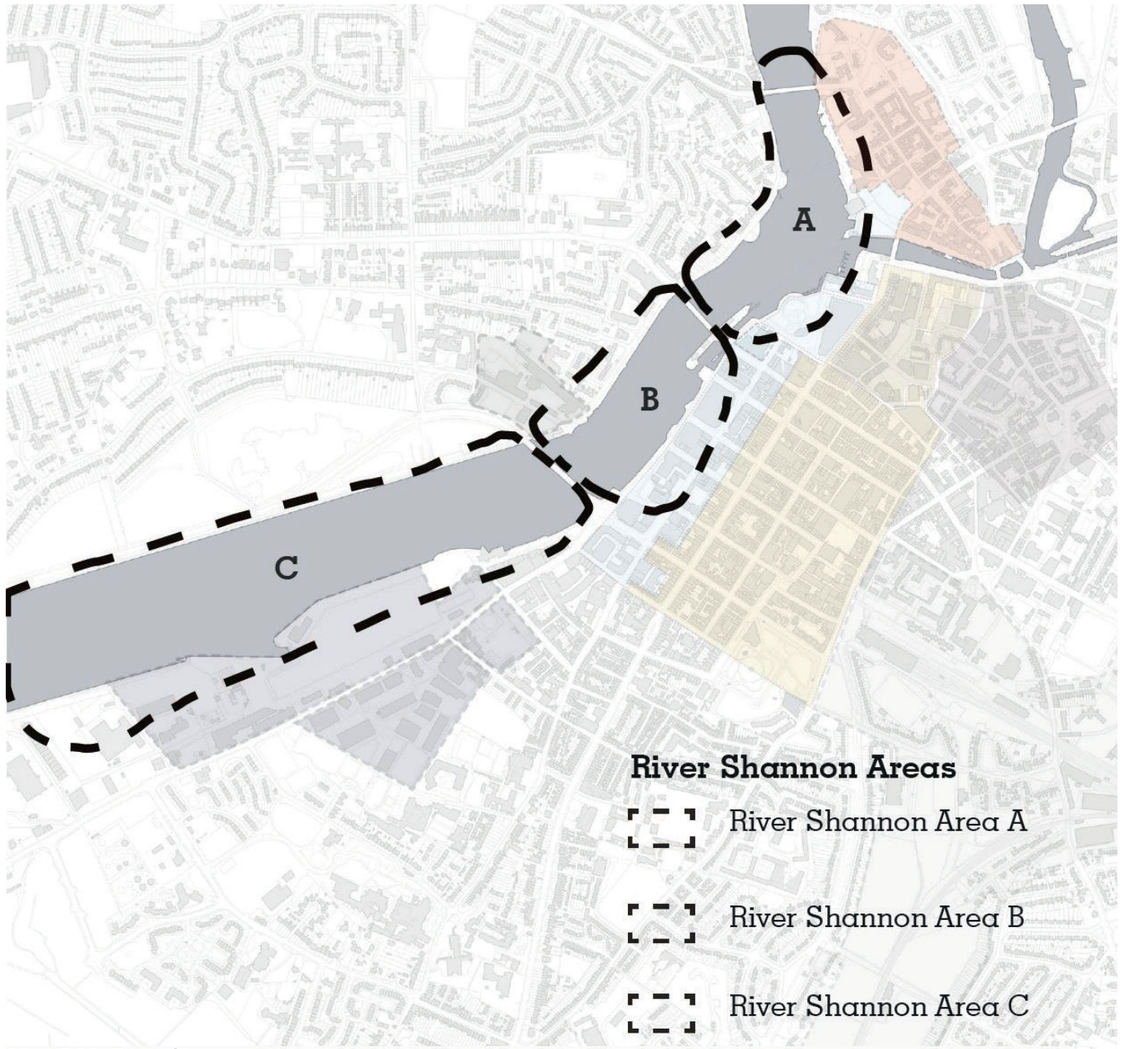



C
B
A
River Shannon

Building Height Strategy

The River Shannon is itself an important area of significant character within Limerick City, which can be identified as urban rooms. The three types of urban rooms which are appointed to each area are historic, urban and nature orientated. Guidance will need to respond to the significant differences between the character areas.

The River Shannon Areas, as identified on Map 5.10, encompass the Character Areas of English Town, the Quays, the Cleeves site and the Docklands. This Section supports and supplements the Character Area guidance provided previously by identifying the different characteristics of the River Shannon and providing additional guidance for development proposals in these areas.



Map 5.10: River Shannon Areas

Proposals for development in the Character Areas along the banks of the River Shannon should refer to the Building Height Strategy, Tall Building Recommendation and Assessment Tools for the area and should also consider the additional guidance provided in relation to the section of the River Shannon within which it is located.

Key & Local Landmarks

Important vertical landmarks of key and local significance which should be protected by future development include:

- King John's Castle;
- St. Mary's Cathedral;
- St. Munchin's Church; and
- Cleeves Chimney.

Overall River Shannon Area Objectives

1. Modulation in parapet height along the Quays, that responds to the character and scale of the River Shannon, having regard to the surrounding context;

2. Existing landmark buildings should be protected by controlling the height of buildings adjoining and adjacent buildings while also preventing development which would undermine the quality of views to them; and

3. Where appropriate, an increase in building scale to bridge intersections may be required to enhance the legibility of entrance points and in order to define a sense of place.



River Shannon Area A

The main characteristic of this space bounded by Thomand and Sarsfield bridge is one of historic significance.

The River's edge in this area largely consists of buildings 2-5 storeys in height with the historical features of the area taking centre stage at the northern end, in particular King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral.

The southern section of this area, from the Local Authority Offices south to Sarsfield Bridge has a more modern character and encompasses the former Dunnes Stores site on Honan's Quay, Arthur's Quay Park, Sarsfield House and the Potato Market at Merchant's Quay.

While it is important to ensure that the impact on views of key and local landmarks to the north are not obstructed, this area contains important development sites for Limerick City. Within this area height should be focused at or adjacent to bridge intersections in order to mark this area as a gateway to the City and enhance legibility between the City Centre and the Quays area.

River Shannon Area B

The River Shannon Area B is an urban room which is bounded by Sarsfield and Shannon Bridges. The characteristic of this space is one of a more urban scale, consisting of more modern developments.

Buildings located at the River's edge at Shannon Area B range between 4 to 14 storeys in height with much of the skyline resting at 8 storeys tall, giving this area a more urban character to it than River Shannon Area A.

Bridge intersections should be a focus for an increase in building scale in order to enhance legibility. In between, modulation in building height should integrate with, and enhance the existing built form and legibility of the area and add visual interest along the river front.

River Shannon Area C

The River Shannon Area C is an area with unique industrial and trading heritage due to the presence of the docklands, while also incorporating breath-taking views along the River.

The parapet height along this area of the river Shannon is much more consistent to that of River Shannon Area B, with buildings ranging in height from 6-8 storeys. The southern section, as it encompasses the Docks, currently contains a limited number of low rise structures along the riverfront.

Similar to Area B bridge intersections should be a focus for an increase in building scale in order to enhance legibility with opportunities for modulation in building height in between. A key function of any future Masterplan for the Docklands should be the relationship with and impact on the River Shannon.



Tall Building Assessment - Significant Views

Important viewpoints are recognised around the City such as the River Shannon and other panoramic views from vantage points both inside and outside the City. Three different view types are identified as follows:

- Linear views of landmark buildings, the City Walks and City skyline;
- River prospects; and
- Approach roads.

Key views and vistas and the visual prominence of important city landscape and townscape features such as areas of woodland, important tree groupings and areas of special architectural or heritage value should be protected. Limerick 2030 identifies key views and landmarks within the City Centre.

In addition, this Strategy identifies what are considered to be significant views in the context of the preceding tall buildings recommendations. The views are identified for guidance purposes only and provide an indication of locations from which views may potentially be impacted by the delivery of a tall building in line with the preceding recommendations. They do not seek to, nor it is possible to, capture all relevant views nor are they proposing that the views identified are protected. Each proposal for tall buildings should be assessed on a case by case basis and will be subject to Policy TB8 which requires Verified View Analysis and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of such proposals.

The views identified for guidance purposes in this Strategy are categorised as follows:

- General viewpoints - From within and outside the City Centre; and
- Local views - That are relative to each Character Area.

The general view points are focused on the approaches to the City and the River Shannon, as these are the points at which wider views, vistas and panoramas across the City are captured. The local views towards the Character Areas focus on the surrounding roads and streets as well as gaps between buildings as such views contribute to the visual quality and character of Limerick City.

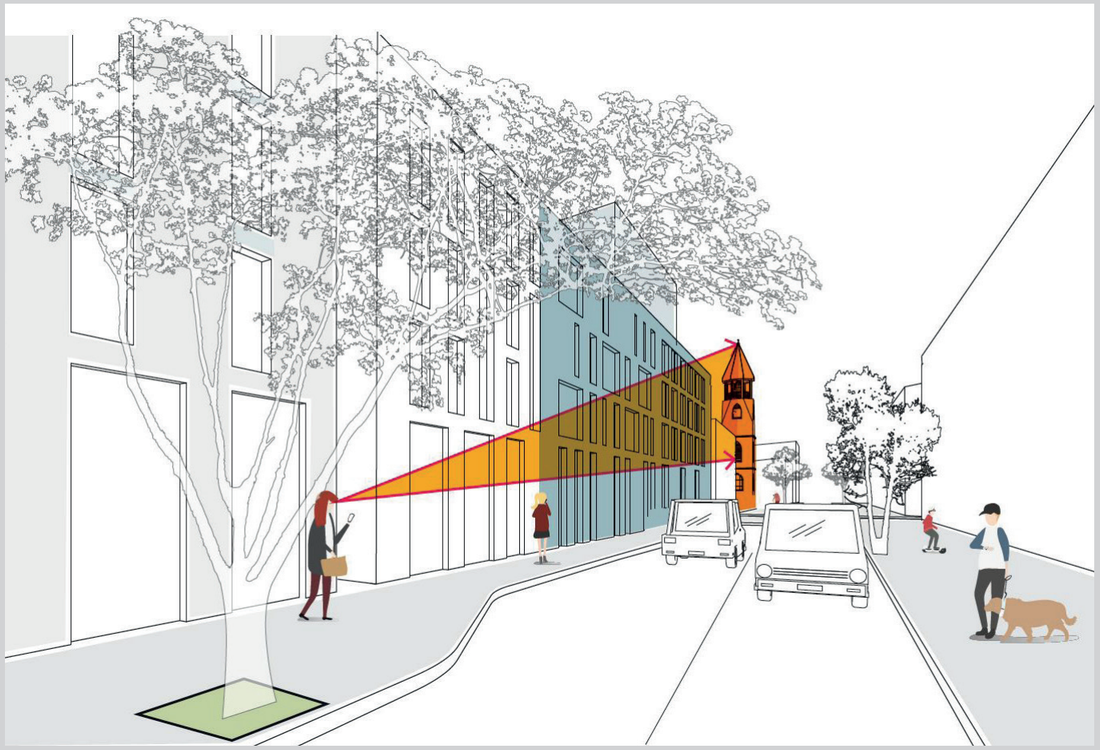
By reason of its strategic level, the list of general and local views is not exhaustive and seeks to identify the main views and vistas within each category solely in the context of the preceding tall buildings recommendations. In order to capture site specific views and vistas, verified view analysis and landscape and visual impact assessments will be an integral part of assessing tall building proposals. Such analysis should demonstrate that the tall building has a positive impact on the character and quality of the City's townscape.

As taller building proposals come forward it would be appropriate for the Planning Authority to undertake a more comprehensive specific visual assessment study of view points and approaches in order to ensure that the important visual experiences of Limerick City are protected.

Significant Views: High Level Principles

In maintaining significant views and river prospects it is important to avoid obtrusive tall structures that detract from them. New developments should not obstruct views of landmarks such as prominent buildings or sites of historical significance.

If a tall building is proposed on a view corridor that contains a landmark, the height of the base should be consistent with the surrounding context. The design of the tall buildings should be carefully considered so as not to compete with the importance of the landmark. As such, generous setback that frames the view rather than obstructs it would be acceptable.



Tall Buildings - Potential Significant Views - Map 6.10



Views
The various views to be taken into consideration for each area identified in the tall building recommendations.

- English Town
- Irish Town
- Quays
- Transition Area
- Cleeves
- Newtown Perry
- Docklands
- Colbert Station

- General View points
- Local English Town Views
- Local Irish Town Views
- Local 'Quay' Views
- Local Transition Area Views
- Local Cleeves Views
- Local Newtown Perry Views
- Local Docklands Views
- Local Colbert Station Views

0 500m 1km

Building Height Principles and Potential Impacts

7

High Level Principles - Tall Buildings

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Applying the High Level Principles

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Overview of Potential Impacts - Tall Buildings

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High Level Principles - Tall Buildings

Introduction

Following on from the previous Section which provides guidance on building height across the City and on the locating of tall buildings, this Section seeks to establish high level principles that should guide the height, placement and design of tall buildings in Limerick. These principles are advanced at the general level and are then applied and varied to a range of prototypical sites in Limerick.

The principles have been formulated in response to the essential questions regarding the permission of tall buildings in a city environment, which are:

- Why are tall buildings appropriate?
- Where are they best located?
- How should they best fit into and improve their immediate urban environment?
- How tall should they be?
- How should they best contribute to the cityscape?

Why are tall buildings appropriate?

Tall buildings can be appropriate additions to a city's urban structure and design for a number of reasons. Such buildings can respond to particular economic requirements for higher building form, they can meet particular residential demands, they can bring energy and vitality to revive an area with new residents and jobs, they can act as signifiers of the importance of a particular place or city and they can be of themselves objects of beauty. There can be clear advantages and benefits from tall buildings but there can also be negative impacts to be assessed and mitigated. Most importantly, the number of tall buildings in a city of Limerick's size is likely to be limited. City policy should therefore, consciously direct such buildings to locations where their positive contributions can be maximized and limit their presence in other parts of the urban area.

Where are tall buildings best located?

Tall buildings will be appropriate only for very limited parts of Limerick's urban area. Previous sections have identified the city's distinctive character areas, identifying those in which that character is dependent upon a distinctive building scale. Tall buildings that would represent a significant intrusion on that scale are therefore, not appropriate, other than as minor additions to predominant heights.

Tall buildings should therefore, be directed to areas already containing taller buildings, or to large sites where significant redevelopment is likely, or in highly specific locations where tall buildings can contribute to the local, district or city skyscape.

How should they best fit into and improve their immediate urban environment?

Tall buildings can have positive impacts on their immediate urban environment in a number of ways. They represent significant investment and confidence in the location and can add significantly to pedestrian, shopping and other activity levels in the surrounding area. Attention should be paid to patterns of pedestrian flow that maximise that contribution. Similarly, the relationship of the ground floor of tall buildings with the adjacent public realm is critical. Negative impacts from traffic and from parking ramps and loading bays should be minimised. The treatment of the ground floor should be inviting, and building façades should respect the character of adjacent buildings and contribute to the wider streetscape. Special attention must be given to the quality and durability of the public realm as higher density development increases pressure on the need for exterior space.

How tall should they be?

Three considerations should determine the appropriate height of tall buildings. First is the minimization of any negative shadow and wind impacts, as noted above. Second is the presence and height of taller buildings already within the Character Area. And third is the significance of any new taller building in the immediate and wider cityscape. The 'Tall Building Classification' introduced earlier should be employed to establish a guide for new building height.

- New tall buildings in areas already containing taller buildings should generally reflect that existing scale;
- Tall buildings or buildings of distinctive form are appropriate where they can act as landmarks and wayfinders to guide people through the City. Significant height may not be required for that function;
- In areas where significant new development activity is anticipated, taller buildings can act as gateways between the existing City and this new urban district, marking the point of connection. Heights in locations away from adjacent residential areas should be established in the context of a wider development masterplan; and
- In very few, uniquely located sites, a taller building can act as a landmark for the entire City, sending a message to the wider world. The height of such buildings would relate to the distinctive architecture of such unique opportunities.

How should they best contribute to the cityscape?

Several factors determine how best tall buildings can contribute to the surrounding cityscape, as follows:

The promotion of high-quality design

While the quality of tall building design is often thought to be subjective, a useful checklist can be employed to analyse any new proposal. In terms of the overall concept, are the street-level, mid-section and roof of the building well considered. Looking at each such building section separately allows consideration of the appropriate applicable factors.

A building should relate well at the street level to its immediate urban environment. In the mid-section attention should be paid to the coherent use of building materials, fenestration, balcony design, and to the pattern of horizontal and vertical elements. At the top of the building, good design can improve its skyline attractiveness through careful placement of mechanical elements and top floor detailing.

Consideration should be given to the use of external design review panels to consider any building proposals of over a certain height. Such panels have been shown in other cities to be effective in the promotion of a culture of good design.

Protection of the existing urban context

The primary means for protecting the existing urban context against any negative impacts of tall buildings is to direct such buildings away from Character areas in which their presence would conflict by restricting overall heights and permitting only low impact minor additions to predominant heights through setbacks.

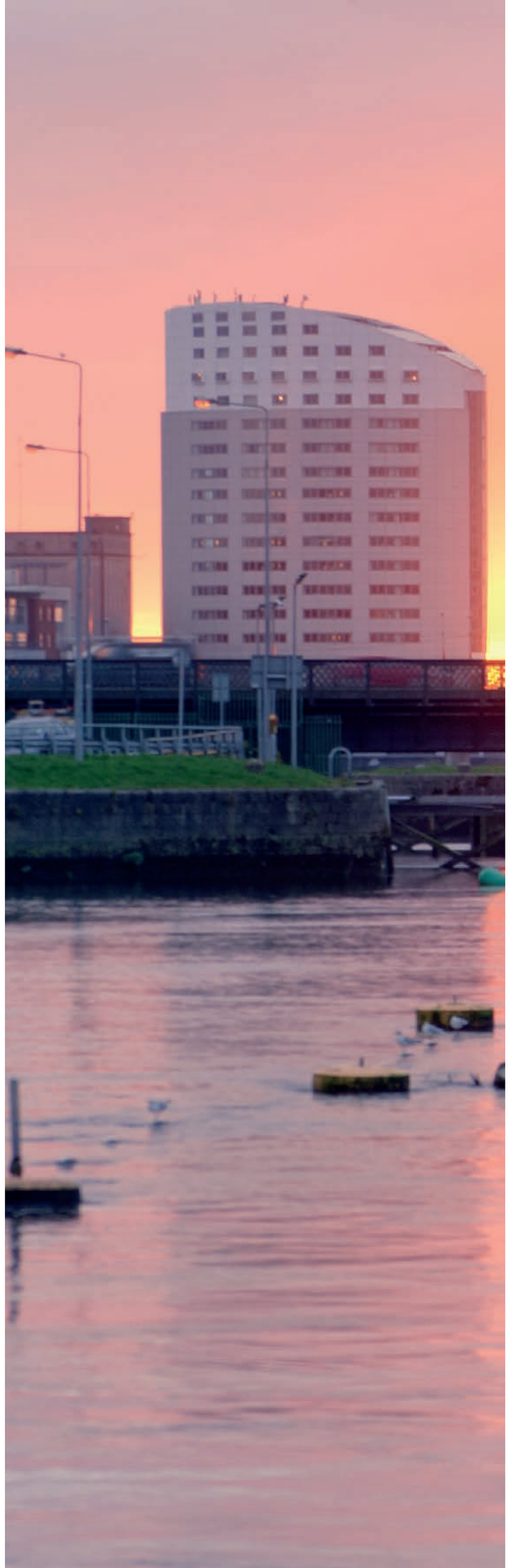
In areas where taller buildings are permitted, adjacent areas, particularly of lower-scale family housing, can be effectively protected through use of shadow analysis and angular plane-based height limits. Angular plane height limits are typically determined by defining a 45-degree angular plane, originating from the roof-line of adjacent low-scale buildings, that defines the maximum permitted height of new development. Such a technique can be effective at finding a reasonable resolution between new and existing development interests.

The clustering of new buildings

Generally taller buildings make the best addition to a cityscape where they are grouped in clusters. While gateway and landmark opportunities may represent individual cases where isolated individual tall buildings are appropriate, the overall cityscape often benefits from the identification on the skyline of a grouping of buildings of similar or stepped scale that identify a particular part of the city. Such clusters are most possible in the masterplanning of larger new development sites.

Increased building heights around public transport nodes and centres of activity

Good city planning promotes intensification around public transport nodes and other centres of activity, to reduce car usage and to advertise the advantages of living, working, shopping and enjoying life close to public transport. Sites with such benefits should be prioritised for taller building development. Indeed, consideration should be given to minimum levels of development intensity that should be achieved to take advantage of public and private investments in these locations. Such taller buildings can also play a wayfinding role as landmarks and gateways, orienting the city towards these places of importance.



Tall Buildings - High Level Principles

- **Tall buildings should be scaled to contribute to their immediate existing and future urban context and to the scale and character of adjacent buildings.**
- **Potential tall building sites should be assessed for their contribution to the wider cityscape, as potential landmarks, gateways or city landmarks.**
- **The design of tall buildings should be considered at three scales: the ground floor and street relationship; the building shaft design; and the roof and skyline character.**
- **With respect to the ground floor and street relationship, tall buildings should contribute to the character and activity of the immediate street environment and minimise negative impacts of parking and servicing entrances.**
- **With respect to the roof and skyline character, attention should be paid to the relationship to adjacent buildings and to the contribution to the wider city skyline.**
- **With respect to the building shaft design, attention should be paid to the vertical and horizontal patterns of cladding and fenestration, and the use of materials in relation to contextual buildings and wider city impact. Floorplate size, building step backs from ground floor and street portion of the building, and separation distances between tall buildings should be carefully analysed to ensure a harmonious integration.**
- **Shadow impacts on adjacent streets, open spaces and residential buildings should be reasonably minimized.**
- **Wind impacts on adjacent streets, open spaces and residential amenity spaces should be reasonably minimized.**

Applying the High Level Principles

Introduction

Different locations will call for different typologies of tall-buildings. Taking the high level principles outlined previously, this Section demonstrates how these could be applied to three different typical development scenarios in Limerick City.

The first scenario relates to a single site, the second to a block level/larger site and the last to larger sites located at the Limerick waterfront, at the Quays.

The following is a checklist of what would be expected in support and review of any application in these scenarios.

Development of a single/small site

What is a single or small site?

A single site would be one that takes up a smaller portion of overall frontage along a stable and established block, where little of the context is expected to see significant or major change in the future. This type of site can be corner or mid-block.

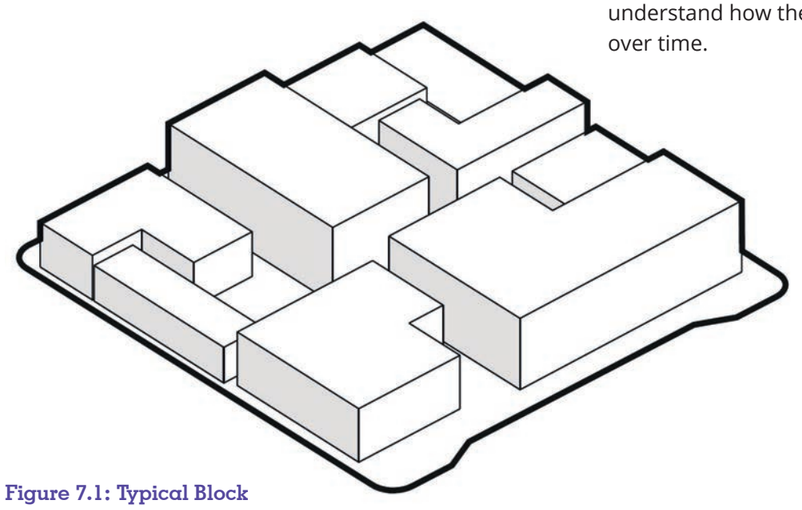


Figure 7.1: Typical Block

Analysis at the site level, block level and surrounding context

A proposal will need to evaluate the existing context of the site, the block, as well as its surrounding context based on the below.

At the site level the analysis will include:

- Site dimensions and shape;
- Adjacent building heights;
- Evaluation of existing heritage structure where applicable;
- Topographic change;
- Adjacent uses including lower residential form;
- Existing mature trees; and
- Adjacent streetscape.

At the block level the analysis will include:

- Overall block street wall consistency;
- Overall height distribution on the block;
- Relationship to heritage structure(s) on the block;
- Land uses including sensitive use within the block; and
- A review of sites within the blocks that are expected to change and to remain unchanged. A conceptual block concept should be done to understand how the overall block may evolve over time.

At the surrounding context and city structure level analysis will include:

- Height consistency across and near the site;
- Identification of landmarks and key view corridor;
- Relationship with nearby heritage structure;
- Identification of the site character area within the City (as per Section 5 of this Strategy);
- Adjacent street hierarchy, function and streetscape character;
- Public and private open space;
- Sensitive land uses; and
- A review of surrounding sites that are expected to change overtime.

Height Strategy directions for single or small site

The following are height strategy directions for single or small sites. The key directions address various elements of a project as set out below.

Fit Transition and Scale:

- New buildings on these sites should be approached as infill development and should fit harmoniously within their existing context.

Building placement, public realm and entrances:

- Buildings should be placed to complete the street wall and generally match the setbacks of adjacent buildings;
- For corner sites that are large enough and where areas of additional heights are requested, a building setback should be considered on one of the frontages to create an opportunity for additional public realm, wider footpaths and streetscape additions such as tree planting;
- The building's main entrance should be visible, well defined, front on the primary street and be accessible from the adjacent public footpath; and
- Corner buildings may locate the primary entrance at the corner or have more than one entrance.

Given the low rise character of Limerick City, in a corner infill site, provided that appropriate setbacks are in place to maintain the view corridors, 2 additional storeys can be added on top of the base buildings as per the 'Tall Building Recommendations'.

Any additional storeys above the base buildings should consider future additions on top of the adjoining existing buildings. As such, it is recommended that a generous setback be applied to the sides (2-3 m).

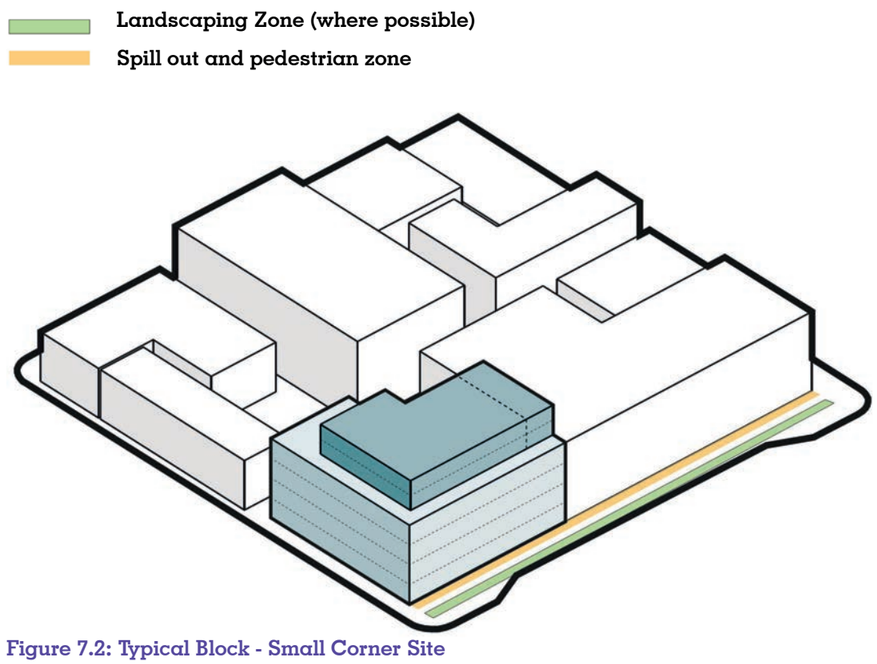


Figure 7.2: Typical Block - Small Corner Site

Base Building Scale and Height:

- Height should respect the established street elevations;
- Where a mix of building heights exist, the height should be determined based on the predominant roofline of the street and surrounding context;
- Areas of height, which accentuate and improve the existing elevation can be considered;
- Additional areas of height above the established street wall, generally up to 2 storeys as per the 'Tall Building Recommendations', should be setback from the main street wall height parapet line by approximately 2m to 3m and not detract from the overall character of the street;
- Corner sites can be considered for additional height, in line with the 'Tall Building Recommendations' for the Area, to help improve local wayfinding; and
- View impact assessment may be required for additional areas of height.

Prominent Sites and Views from the Public Realm:

- Request for areas of additional height need to maintain or improve views toward prominent sites from the public realm;
- Area of additional height should be evaluated to ensure that the view to a prominent site is appropriately framed and enhanced; and
- A view impact assessment may be required to accompany requests for additional areas of height.

Site Servicing, Access and Parking:

- Site Servicing and Parking should be accessed from existing interior block lane and be as discreet as possible; and
- Servicing area and parking should not be visible from a public street.

Ground Floor Height and Street Animation:

- First floor height should relate to adjacent building ground floors. A minimum of 4.5m is generally recommended; and
- On the High Street, the ground floor should be highly transparent and accessible directly from the public walkways.

In a condition where an infill is occurring between two existing buildings, the base of the new building should be consistent with the existing adjacent heights. Additional storeys can be added, provided that any additional storeys respect a setback of at least 2.5-3 metres above the base building.

Any additional storeys on top of the base should not exceed 2 storeys in areas where the height of the existing buildings is low, in line with the 'Tall Building Recommendations'.

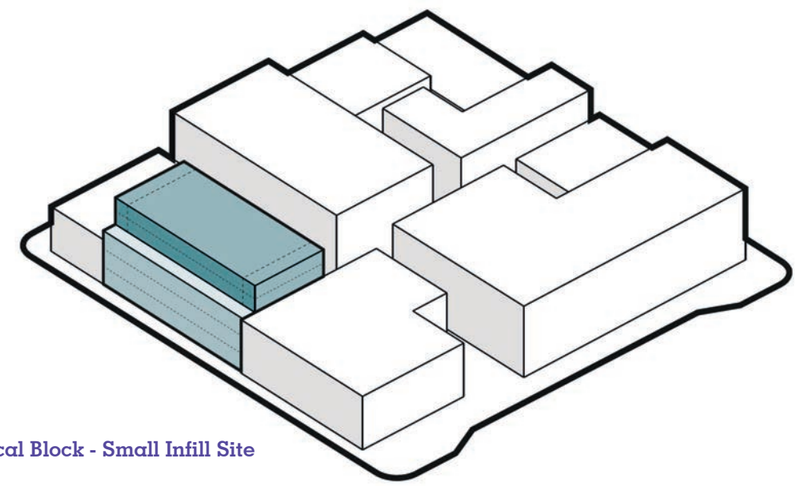


Figure 7.3: Typical Block - Small Infill Site

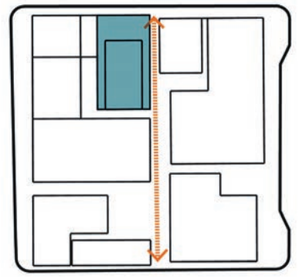
Façade Articulation and Transparency:

- The facade of a small site development should be articulated with high-quality materials, design elements that fit with neighbouring buildings and contribute to a pedestrian scale.

In a deeper plot, a taller building can be accommodated provided a 45 degree angle is applied to the front and sides of the building to ensure that the visual corridors remain unobstructed.

Streetscape and Landscape Design:

- Requests for areas of additional height needs to maintain, improve or complete the adjacent public streetscape where applicable.



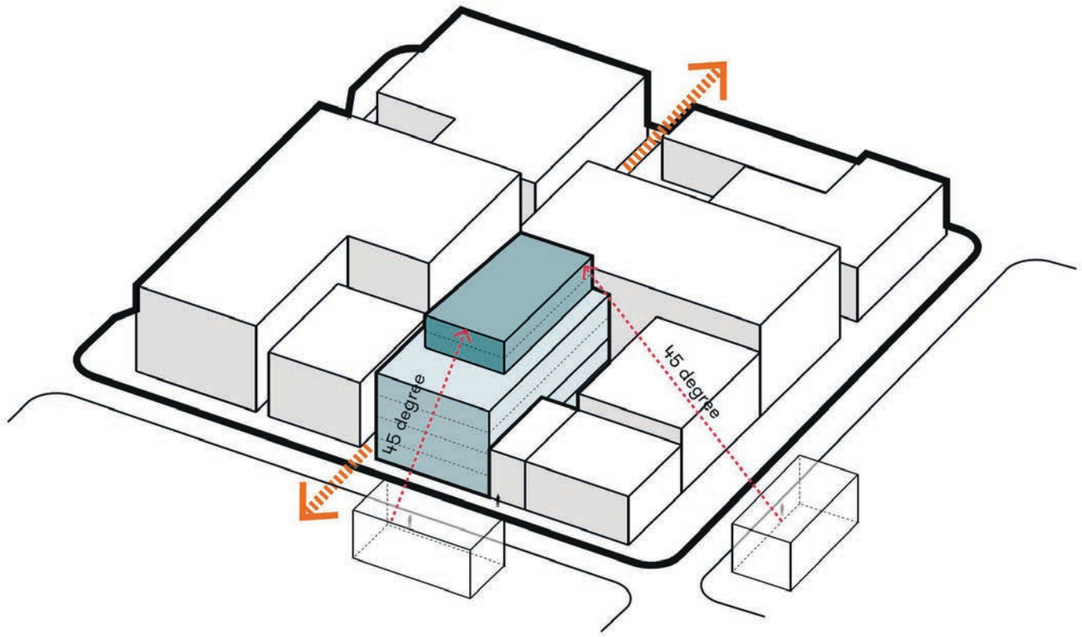


Figure 7.4: Deep Plot Infill

Public Realm Enhancement

Architectural elements such as step backs at corners can help emphasize entrances to taller buildings and improve the public realm by offering a spill out zone that can animate the street.

A setback can also provide a space of interaction between the building's interior such as cafés and the adjacent public realm.

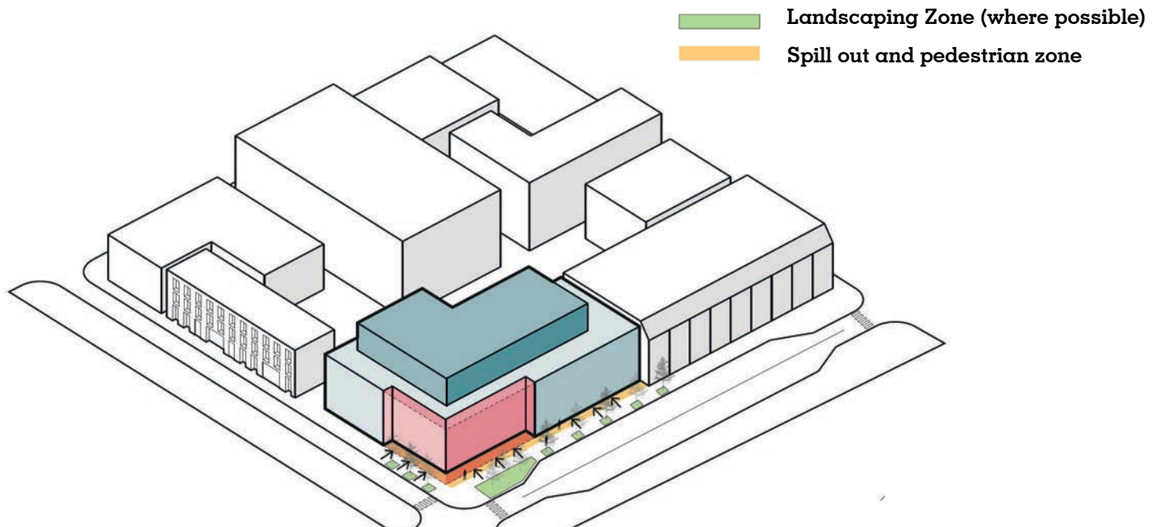


Figure 7.5: Typical Block -Public Realm

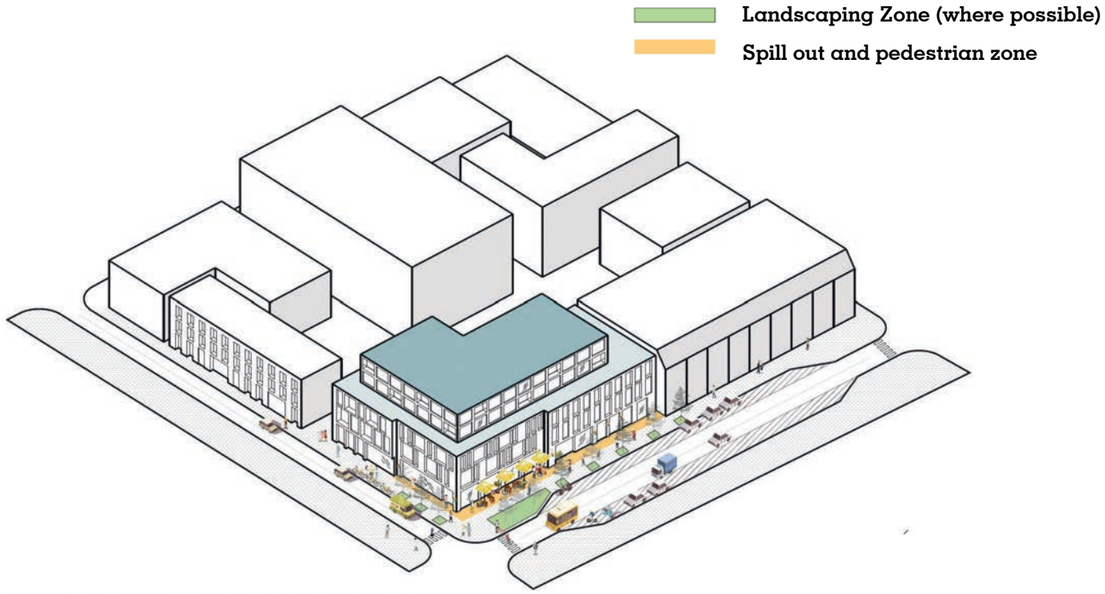


Figure 7.6: Typical Block -Public Realm Enhancements

Development of a Centre Block

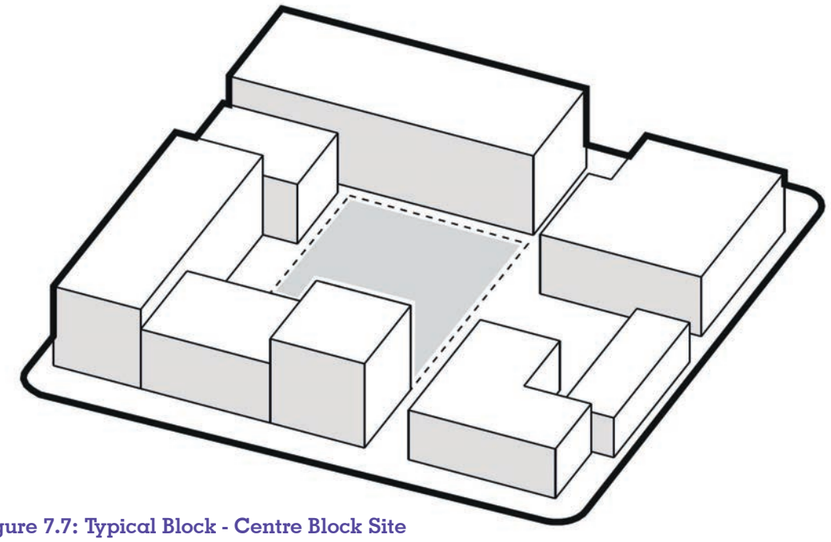


Figure 7.7: Typical Block - Centre Block Site

Where there is the opportunity to develop within a block, maintain a consistent base building that matches the adjacent buildings. This condition would permit additional storeys above the base building, as the shadow and view impact are normally minimal due to their central location.

In a site like this, a laneway should be introduced to connect the building base to the street. An entrance can be given to this typology by connecting the building to an existing building that fronts a street.

A setback can also provide a space of interaction between the building's interior such as cafés and the adjacent public realm.

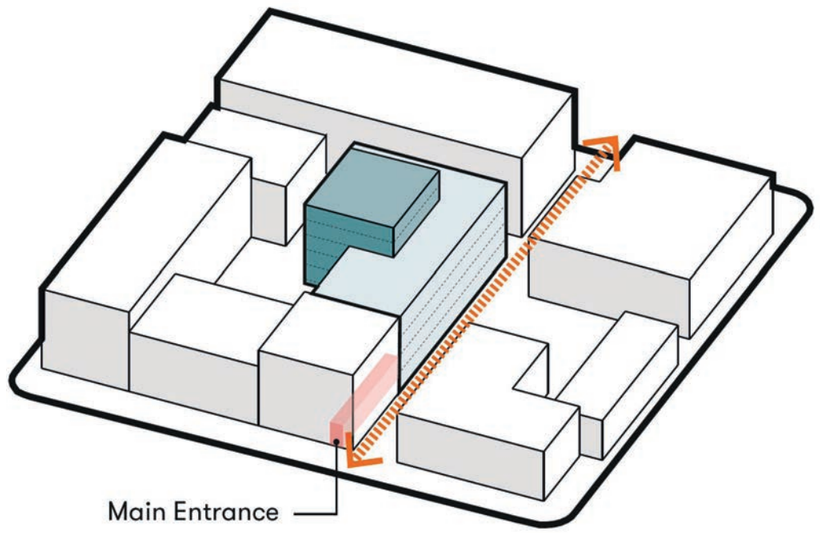


Figure 7.8: Typical Block - Centre Block Infill Site

Development of a block/large site

The redevelopment of a large site or a block offers a unique opportunity to significantly improve the cityscape and public realm. Along with additional areas of height, the extent of such redevelopment creates opportunities for *inter alia* public realm improvements such as new park space, wider footpaths, streetscape, tree planting and mid-block connections.

What is a block/large site?

A block site is a redevelopment generally consisting of an entire or majority of a block. A large site will see the redevelopment of a number of development parcels that make up a large portion of the block or the majority of its main frontages.

Analysis at the site level, block level and surrounding context

Considerations for areas of height for block and large sites must demonstrate how the proposed development fits into and reinforces the existing neighbourhood context. Such development types typically require a masterplan and will include analysis at the site level, block level and surrounding context. A proposal will need to evaluate the existing context of the site, the block as well as its surrounding context.

At the site/block level the analysis will include:

- Site dimensions and shape;
- Topographic change;
- Overall block street wall consistency;
- Overall height distribution on a block where applicable;
- Land uses including sensitive use within the block;
- Sites within the blocks that are expected to change and sites that are expected to remain unchanged;
- Relationship with heritage structure(s) on the block;
- Existing mature tree coverage;
- Adjacent streetscape; and
- A conceptual block concept should be done to understand how the rest of the block may evolve overtime.

At the surrounding context and city structure level analysis will include:

- Height consistency across and near the site;
- Location of landmarks and key view corridor;
- Relationship with nearby heritage structure;
- Identification of the site Character Area within the City, as per Section 5 of this Strategy;
- Street Hierarchy, function and character;
- Public and private open space;
- Adjacent street hierarchy, function and streetscape character;
- Sensitive land uses; and
- A review of surrounding sites that are expected to change overtime.

Height Strategy directions for a block or a large site

The following are height strategy directions for a block or a large site. The key directions address various elements of a projects as set out below.

Fit Transition and Scale:

- New buildings and areas for additional height will need to demonstrate how the proposed development fits into and reinforces the existing neighbourhood context by:
  * Maintaining good street proportion
  * Creating appropriate transition when adjacent to lower scale residential and heritage structures with the use of setbacks, step backs and angular plane.

Building placement, public realm and entrances:

- Buildings should be located to complete the street wall where appropriate and generally match the setbacks of adjacent buildings to create a consistent street edge;
- Opportunity for additional public realm such as wider footpaths, enhanced streetscape, tree planting and public plaza/park should be explored as part of the redevelopment of a block or large site. This could be achieved by setting the building back along a key frontage or at an intersection. Sun/shadow exposure, street function and hierarchy, land use and views, etc. should be properly analysed to determine the best location for public realm improvements;
- Opportunity for mid-block connections, including pedestrian and vehicular, should be considered, especially for a long block and where a natural extension of such connections would complete a street grid;
- The building's main entrance will be visible, well defined, front on the primary street and be accessible from the adjacent public walkway;
- Along a high street, main lobbies and retail entrances should be street level; and
- Corner buildings may locate the primary entrance at the corner or have more than one entrance.

Prominent Sites and Views from the Public Realm:

- Request for areas of additional height needs to maintain or improve views toward prominent sites from the public realm;
- Area of additional height should be evaluated to ensure that the view to a prominent site is appropriately framed and enhanced;
- Reduction in height, setback, step backs and angular plane may be required; and
- View impact assessment will be required for request for additional areas height where views of prominent sites from the public realm may be impacted.

Base Building Scale and Height, building Orientation and Top:

- Height should respect the established street elevations where appropriate;
- Where a mix of building heights exist, the height should be determined based on the predominant roofline of the street and surrounding context;
- Areas of height, which accentuate and improve the existing elevation can be considered. Additional areas of height above the established street wall, generally up to 2 storeys as per the 'Tall Building Recommendations', should be setback from the main street wall height parapet line by approximately 2 to 3m and/or not detract from the overall character of the street;
- Corner sites can be considered for additional height, utilising the 'Modifiers', to help improve local wayfinding;
- Areas of height located internal to the site can be considered based on visual impact from the public realm/street and impact on adjacent property; and
- A view impact assessment may be required for additional areas heights.

Where one length of a block can be redeveloped, it should provide a continuous urban wall and embrace a facade variation to create visual interest for pedestrians. Architectural elements on the façade should relate to the surrounding context to maintain a visual connection.

In this case, it is possible to provide a taller building on top of the base building, provided there is generous setback facing the street and adjacent buildings.

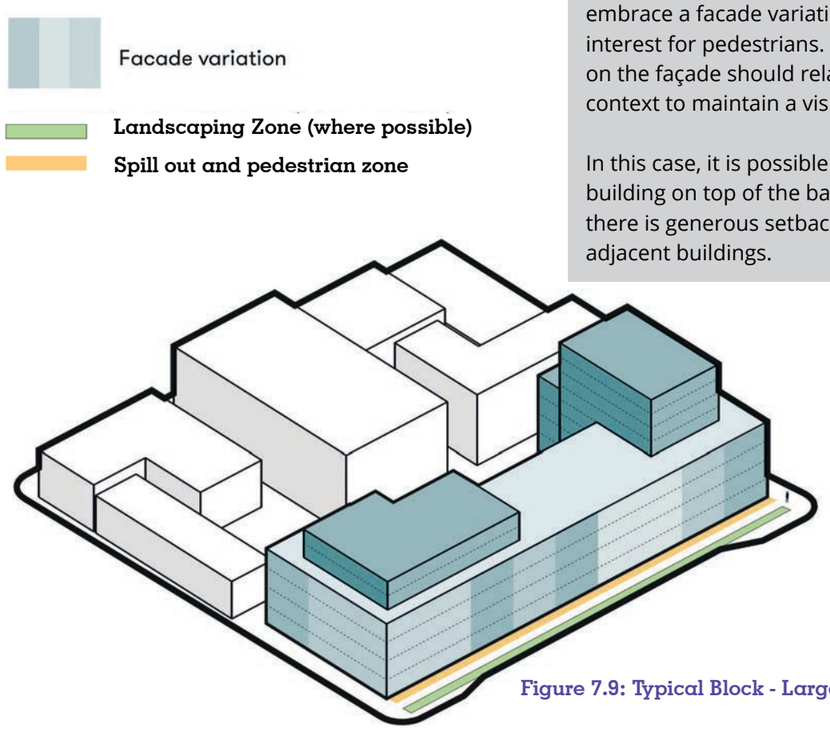


Figure 7.9: Typical Block - Large Redevelopment

Landmark Building

The height of a Landmark Building will relate to the existing context height and should use a setback and a 45-degree angular plane, from the opposite side of the adjacent street to determine its placement.

The floorplate of a Landmark building should be a maximum of 750 sqm for residential building and its orientation should limit shadow and privacy impacts on the public ream and adjacent properties. The maximum floorplate for offices may be increased subject to an impact analysis.

The top of new landmark buildings should be designed to make an appropriate contribution to the quality and character of the cityscape. In relation to façade articulation and transparency, a landmark building integrated in a block or large-scale development should avoid blank walls and should have similar high-quality design and materials as the rest of the development.

Site Servicing, Access and Parking:

- Site servicing and parking should be accessed from an interior block lane (where possible). Where an interior block lane does not exist or is not possible, the access should be located on the frontage that has the least impact on the existing context. Servicing and parking access should not be from a high street, facing a public park, landmarks or other important buildings; and
- Servicing and parking should not be visible from the street.

Ground Floor Height and Street Animation:

- First floor height should relate to adjacent building ground floors. A minimum of 4.5m is generally recommended;
- On the High Street, the ground floor should be highly transparent and accessible directly from the public walkway; and
- Ground floor residential uses are encouraged to have individual street entrances to animate the street. The ground floor of these units should be slightly raised from the ground level by approximatively 0.9m.

Façade Articulation and Transparency:

- Façades of block or large site redevelopments need to be carefully articulated and respect the character of their context. The façades of such developments should be articulated with high-quality materials and design elements that fit with neighbouring buildings and contribute to a pedestrian scale.

Streetscape and Landscape Design:

- Request for areas of additional height of a block or large site need to improve and enhance the adjacent public streetscape where applicable.

When there is an opportunity to redevelop a large site, connectivity to the surrounding blocks should be prioritised. Breaking a large site into finer grain blocks improves site porosity, allows for diverse built from and creates more destinations in the City.

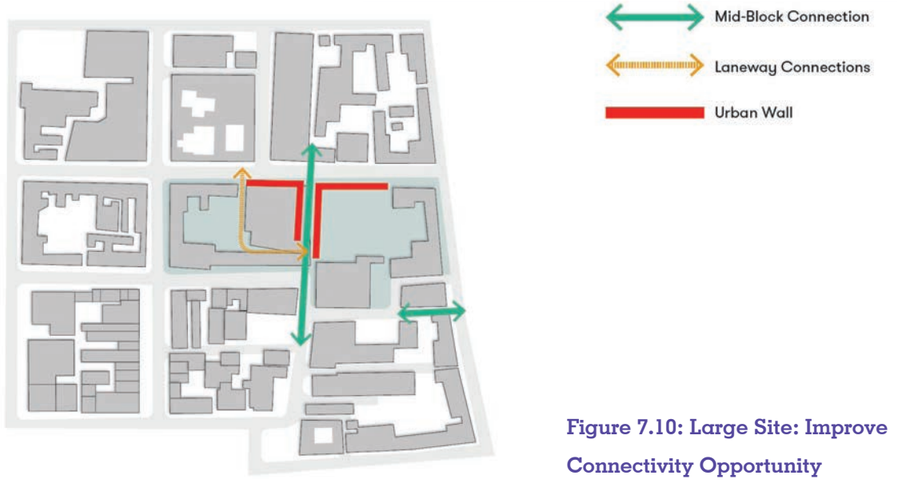


Figure 7.10: Large Site: Improve Connectivity Opportunity

Development at the Quays/ Waterfront

Development of the Quays and other areas along the Shannon River represent a unique opportunity to continue the transformation of Limerick as a "World Class Waterfront" as envisioned in the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan. Development of these sites must be delivered through excellence in design, improved connectivity between the River and the City, contribute to the animation of the water's edge and deliver a high-quality townscape. The architecture of tall buildings along the waterfront should reflect a modern, contemporary image.

Analysis as part of a masterplan at the site level, block level and waterfront context

Considerations for areas of height for development at the Quays/Waterfront should be done as part of a masterplan process. The masterplan process will consider new internal streets, mid-block connections, parks and other public realm improvements. A proposal will need to evaluate the existing context of the site, the block, the relationship to the River as well as its surrounding context.

At the site/block level the analysis will include:

- Site dimensions and shape;
- Topographic change;
- Overall block street wall consistency;
- Overall height distribution on a block where applicable;
- Land uses including sensitive use within the block;
- Should consider sites within the blocks that are expected to change and sites that are expected to remain unchanged;
- Relationship with heritage structure(s) on the block;
- Existing mature tree coverage;
- Adjacent streetscape and relationship with the waterfront promenade; and
- A conceptual block concept should be done to understand how the rest of the block may evolve overtime.

At the surrounding context and city structure level analysis will include:

- Height consistency across and near the site
- Location of landmarks and key view corridor(s);
- Relationship with nearby heritage structures;
- Relationship with existing tall buildings;
- Identification of the site Character Area within the City, as per Section 5 of this Strategy;
- Street Hierarchy, function and character;
- Public and private open space;
- Adjacent street hierarchy, function and streetscape character;
- Sensitive land uses; and
- A review of surrounding sites that are expected to change overtime.

Height Strategy directions for waterfront/quay sites

The following are height strategy directions for waterfront/Quay sites. The key directions address various elements of a projects as set out below.

Fit Transition and Scale:

- New buildings and areas for additional height will need to demonstrate how the proposed development fits into and reinforces the existing waterfront but also ensure an appropriate fit with the 'City side' of the development. Appropriate transition to adjacent lower scale residential and heritage structures with the use of setbacks, step backs and angular plane might be required.

Building placement, public realm and entrances:

- Building will be located to create a strong street wall along all public streets;
- Along the riverside a consistent building edge should be created. A setback from the properties' edge, approximatively 6m from the street curbs to the front façade may be required to enhance the public realm and provide sufficient space for a generous pedestrian walkway and spillage space for cafés, terraces;

- Opportunity for additional public realm such as public plazas/parks should be explored as part of the redevelopment of large sites along the quay and waterfront. This could be achieved by setting the building back at a junction. Sun/shadow exposure, views to the River, etc. should be properly analysed to determine the best location for such improvements;
- Opportunity for mid-block connections, including pedestrian and vehicular, should be considered, especially for a long block, to improve access to the River;
- The building's main entrance should be located on the river side, be highly visible, well defined, and be accessible from the adjacent public walkway;
- Corner buildings may locate the primary entrance at the corner, toward a prominent junction; and
- For deep site with frontage facing the River as well as the 'City side', both should be recognised as important and include entrances and ground related use.

Along the waterfront, taller buildings are not limited to setbacks as there is limited risk of shadow impact on any surrounding buildings.

Taller buildings along the waterfront can adopt characteristics of a landmark due to their increased height. Similarly base buildings can also increase; however, it should be noted that bases of buildings should remain consistent along the water edge. In Limerick many of the existing bases range between 6 and 10 storeys.

Any new tall building should consider the relationship to the existing tall buildings along the waterfront, including the overall effect of multiple tall structures. In order to reduce the overall effect of tall structures on the surrounding content, it is recommended to cluster these where there is a pattern of tall buildings.

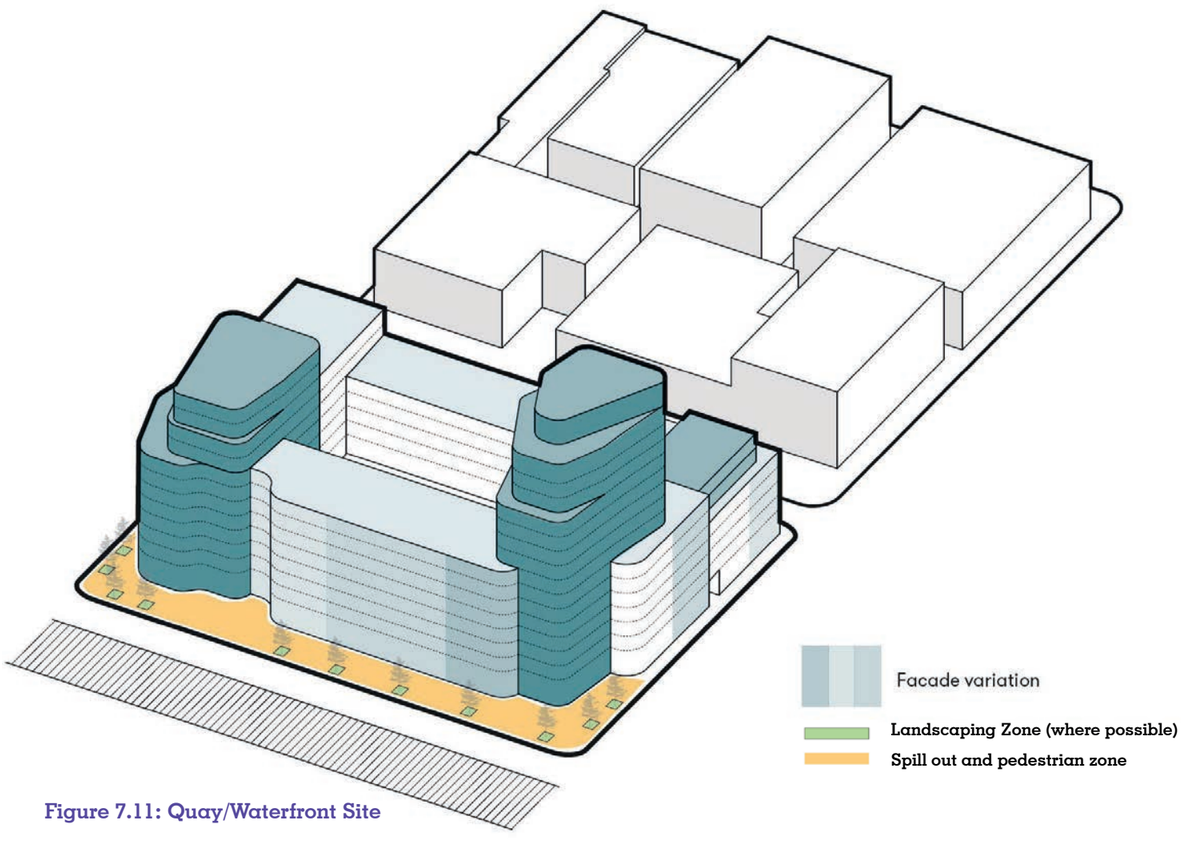


Figure 7.11: Quay/Waterfront Site

Base Building Scale and Height, Orientation and Top

- Buildings along the Quays and waterfront will range in height from taller, to landmark to gateway buildings as per the 'Tall Building Classifications';
- The elevation should create a consistent street wall height that responds closely to the essential character and scale of both the River Shannon and existing buildings;
- For sites with a second frontage along the city side, height should respect the established street elevations where appropriate and fit with the surrounding context;
- Along the River frontage, an increase in building height, scaled up toward the bridge intersections may be appropriate to enhance the legibility of entrance points and in order to define a sense of place;
- Location of new taller, landmark and gateway buildings should be analysed with their relation to existing landmark buildings such as the Riverpoint Building and the Clayton Hotel, to reinforce the composition of the cluster;
- Buildings should have direct frontage toward the River. The floorplate of a new taller, landmark or gateway building should be oriented with its shorter side fronting the River to limit visual barriers toward the River. Tall building location and orientation should also be analysed to minimise shadow impacts on surrounding property, parks and the river promenade;
- The top of new taller, landmark and gateway buildings should be designed to make an appropriate contribution to the quality and character of the cityscape; and
- For taller, landmark and gateway buildings, roof mechanical equipment and other communication equipment should be screened architecturally and integrated into the design and massing of the building.

Prominent Sites and Views from the Public Realm:

- Existing landmark buildings should be protected by controlling the height of adjoining and adjacent buildings to maintain the quality of views to them; and
- The development of buildings of height will need to consider the impact of the overall River Shannon. An assessment of building impact on key views should be conducted by verified views along the River Shannon.

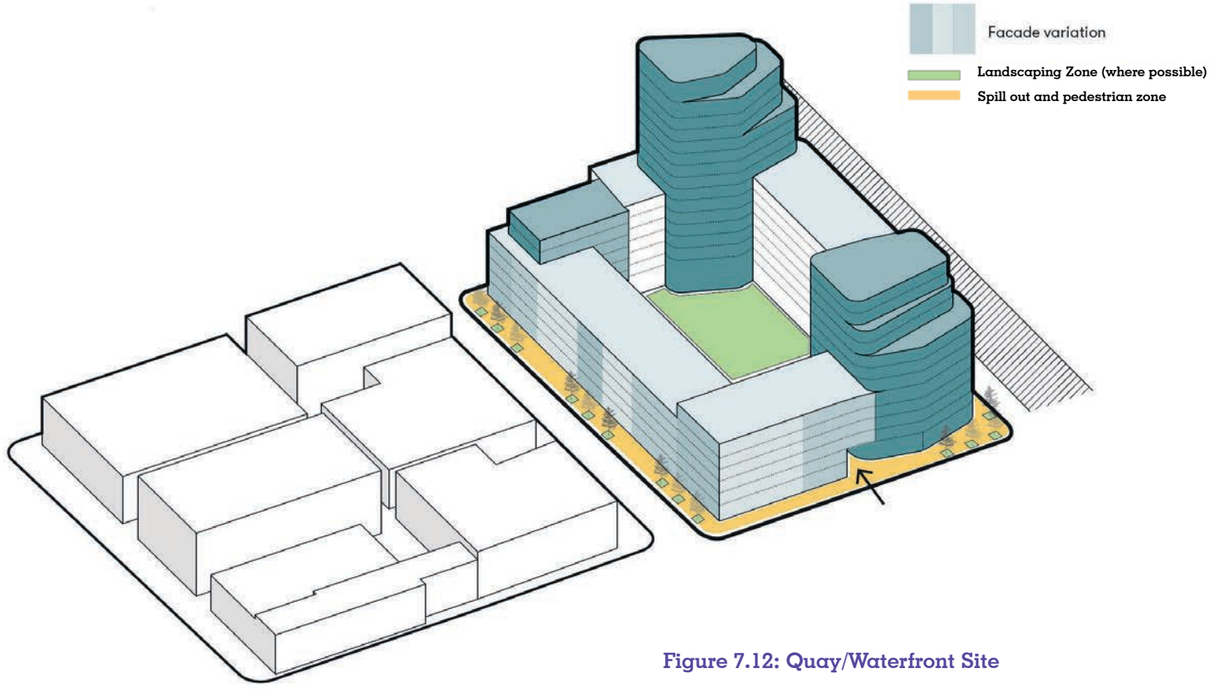


Figure 7.12: Quay/Waterfront Site

Site Servicing, Access and Parking:

- Like block and large sites, servicing and parking should be accessed from an interior block lane where possible. Where an interior block lane does not exist or is not possible, or where the parking is located above the ground in the interior of the block, the access should be located on the frontage that has the least impact. Servicing and parking access should not be located on the frontage facing the River or facing a public park, landmarks or other important buildings;
- Parking and servicing should not be visible from the street; and
- Where possible servicing and parking access should be combined.

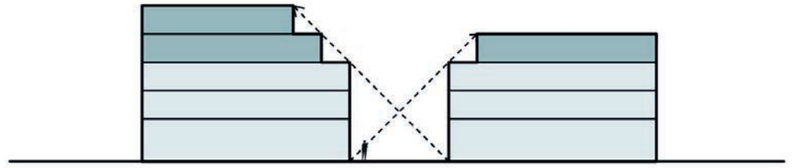
Ground Floor Height and Street Animation:

- The first-floor height should relate to adjacent building ground floors. A minimum of 4.5m is generally recommended;
- The building ground floor facing the River should be highly transparent and accessible directly from the public walkway. It should contribute to the overall animation of the waterfront with active use such as restaurants, cafés, shops, etc.;
- Corner sites should have active uses at the ground level wrapping the corners where appropriate; and
- For sites with frontage on the city side, the ground floor of the street should be treated to fit, complement and enhance the exiting context and street character.

Streetscape and Landscape Design:

- The streetscape and landscape design should enhance the existing streetscape in place including the waterfront promenade.

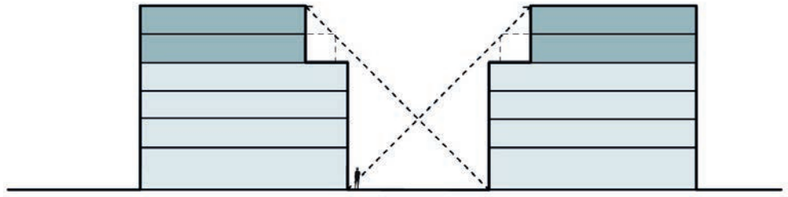
High Level Principles - Streets





Narrow Street

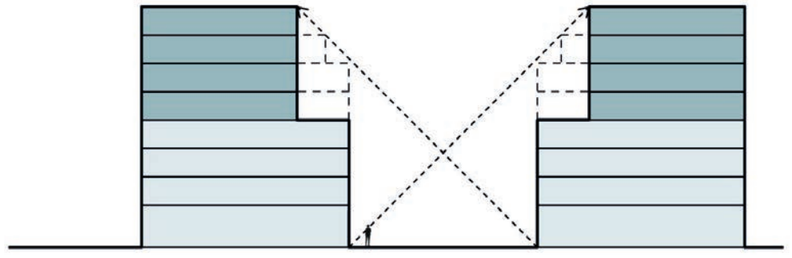
Narrow streets can accommodate a base of 3 storeys without severe shadow impact on the public realm.





Typical Street

The width of typical roads in Limerick can accommodate a base of 4 storeys with additional storeys above the base with setbacks.

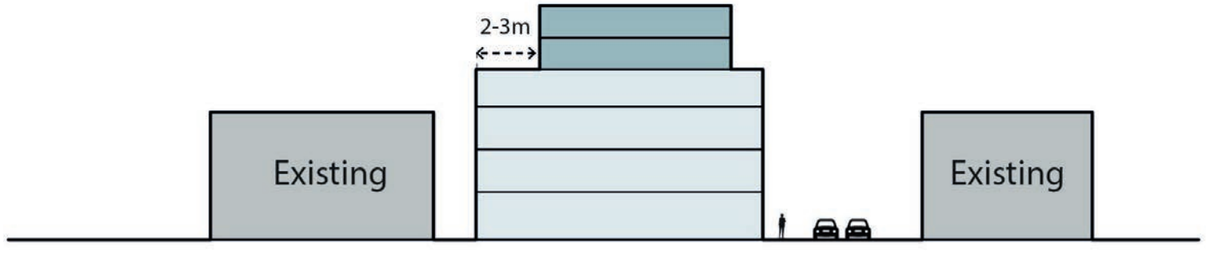




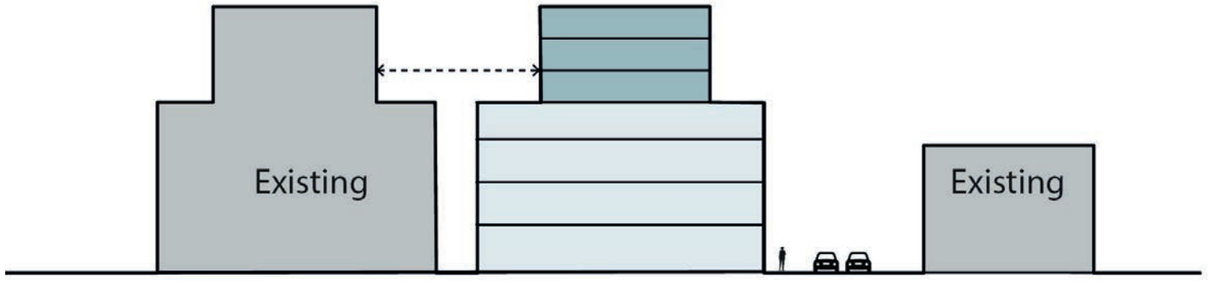
Wide Street

As the width of the road increases, there is an opportunity to increase the height of the base, or add additional storeys above the base with setbacks that respect the 45 degree angular plane. In this situation a building can be up to 8 storeys while maintaining the quality of the public realm.

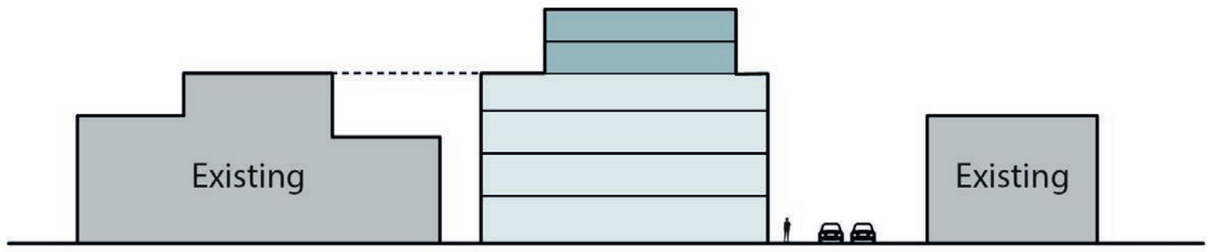
High Level Principles - Set-Backs



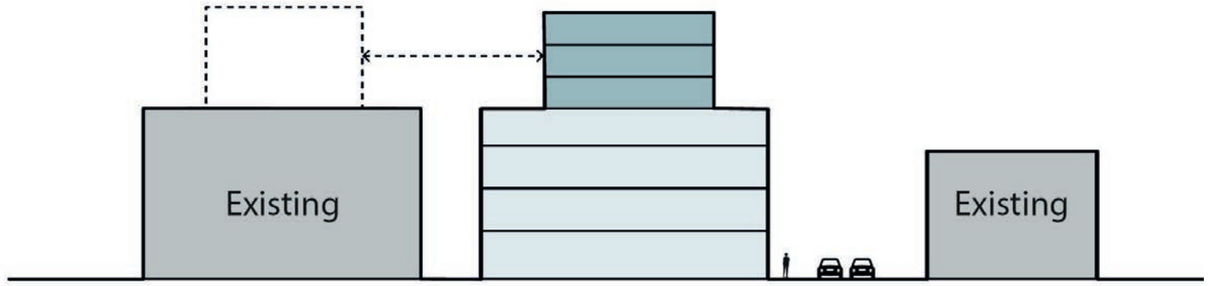
If the base of the new building is higher than the adjacent buildings, any additional storeys above the base should respect a minimum setback of 2-3 metres



If a tall building is proposed adjacent to an existing tall building, a generous setback should be provided between the volumes above the base in order to ensure privacy, provide adequate sunlight and maintain view connections.



On a site with multiple existing buildings of various heights, a new buildings can have a base that matches the tallest building on site. Any additional storeys above the base should respect a minimum setback of 3 metres.



If a new tall building is proposed on a site, any additional storeys above the base should consider future tall buildings. As such, it is recommended to maintain a generous setback from the adjacent buildings to reduce any future negative impacts.

Overview of Potential Impacts - Tall Buildings

Introduction

Due to the inherent low rise and largely consistent height characteristics of Limerick, the introduction of tall buildings will undoubtedly impact the local context, due to their massing and height. Tall buildings are desirable in the right places, but do not belong everywhere. When appropriately located, designed, and "well-planned," tall buildings can enhance the public realm, complement neighbouring buildings, and contribute to a sustainable future.

Understanding the local context of the area where tall buildings will be located is important in determining the correct design response needed to minimise negative impacts. Any change needs to be sensitively managed and all tall building proposals will need careful assessment of their potential impact on the local environmental, social, economic and placemaking contexts.

Tall Buildings – Environmental Impact

Tall buildings if poorly planned can potentially have negative environmental impacts on their own site and on adjacent areas. Experience shows that such impacts can be eliminated or mitigated by good site planning and architectural design. To identify such potential impacts and suggest appropriate design changes and mitigation, the following analysis should be undertaken in association with the review of tall building proposals.

Wind and Shadow Impacts

The primary environmental impacts of tall buildings are those caused by the taller building mass creating increased winds and shadows on adjacent properties, streets and open spaces. With respect to winds, many cities have developed standards for measuring acceptable impacts which provide the framework for a standardised assessment. Alternatively first principle methods in conjunction with more detailed assessment including the use of Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulations in conjunction with reference to relevant guidance such as TV Lawson's "*The evaluation of the windiness of a building complex before construction*", could be utilised.

Particular attention should be paid to any impacts on active outdoor spaces both public and private. In buildings of over a certain height, wind tunnel testing should be required to assess both impacts and mitigation. Adverse wind conditions, particularly wind shear effects, can frequently be readily mitigated through adjustments to building design and landscape treatments.

Many cities have also adopted consistent standards for evaluating the acceptability of incremental shadow impacts on adjacent buildings and public and private open spaces. Consistent and reasonable application of these standards is important, as mitigation typically requires reductions in height and/or re-arrangement of buildings on site. Standards should also be developed to manage the spatial relationships between adjacent tall buildings on a site and those buildings and their immediate neighbours to manage issues of privacy and view. Standards for appropriate building separation have been developed in many jurisdictions, as well as for acceptable levels of overlooking.

Alternatively guidance documents such as the BRE Report *'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice',* the Institution of Lighting Professionals *'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light',* IS EN 12464-2 and other relevant guidance documents could be referenced in evaluating the acceptability of incremental shadow impacts on adjacent buildings and public and private open spaces.

Natural Heritage Impact Study

Tall buildings should also be assessed in terms of their impact on the natural heritage on site and adjacent to the development. Such impacts typically relate to the potential loss of on-site habitat and shadow and wind impacts on adjacent areas of significance. Appropriate arborist and tree preservation reports should be undertaken as part of a comprehensive natural heritage impact study.

Hydrogeological studies would determine any impact of the development on area water features and drainage and suggest mitigation measures. A landscape plan would of course also be required as part of the planning application package for the site itself.

Tall buildings can also have positive environmental impacts in terms of creating ecological opportunities for urban wildlife. Birds have adapted particularly well to the urban environment created by tall buildings with the peregrine falcon thriving in cities across the UK, using such buildings in a similar manner as their traditional cliff-side habitat. Tall building thus have a role to play in enhancing urban ecology and this should be considered and promoted in bringing proposals for tall buildings forward in Limerick City.

Tall Buildings – Social Impact

To ensure new tall buildings maximise their positive impact on the social environment and surrounding community, a Community Services and Facilities Study should be prepared in association with any new tall building proposal.

That study should review whether the new population added from the tall building can be adequately accommodated in the area in terms of educational, health and community facilities and what if any augmentation to community services and facilities will be required. It should also identify situations in which the addition of significant new population will be of benefit to such services and facilities.

As tall buildings are a relatively new addition to the urban environment of Limerick City there may also be concerns regarding public and personal safety. Such concerns generally relate to the public realm surrounding such buildings and/or the spaces created within and between tall buildings. The design and use of tall buildings determine how they address the public realm and should be given careful consideration in bringing tall building proposals forward. The Architectural Design Statement submitted with all applications should address how the public realm surrounding the building has been considered as part of the design process to ensure the delivery of a safe, usable, enjoyable and inviting space.

Tall Buildings – Mobility and Traffic Impact

The addition of a significant new residential or working population within an existing area of the city will add to the mobility activity of the adjacent area in terms of walking, cycling, transport and car and lorry activity. Concerns may be raised regarding 'crowding' on adjacent streets or increased traffic activity in the area. While such concerns may not be objectively sustainable, they can be strongly held by existing residents. Indeed, increased pedestrian activity can bring benefits both to local businesses and to the overall sense of security in the area. Increased usage can be advantageous to transport service providers. Attention must be paid to the location and impact of parking, loading and servicing requirements for a tall building and any potential negative impacts of access ramps and doors on adjacent streets and pavements requiring mitigation.

Traffic and servicing impact statements should be required of tall buildings and adequate provision made for loading and servicing.

Tall Buildings – Economic Impact

Tall buildings are a response to a perceived market demand for new living and/or working space in that particular building configuration, inherently representing an act of confidence in the local economy and markets. They are typically more expensive to construct than low-rise development forms, again inherently creating greater economic activity and impact.

The addition of new office employment space should be assessed to determine its impact on existing office provision in Limerick to ensure a net addition to this class of employment space. The addition of new residential units in a concentrated and intense form typically has beneficial impacts on adjacent shopping and café/restaurant activity and can add to the 24-hr life of the city centre.

Tall Buildings – Placemaking Impact

Tall buildings can have significant placemaking impacts both in their immediate area and in the wider city.

In the 'immediate area', assessment should be based on a consideration of the following matters:

- At the street level, the relationship of the tall building to adjacent buildings in terms on the location and design of building entrances, use of materials, activities at the street level, street landscaping and furniture, signage and related matters; and
- At the mid-section, the relation to adjacent building cornice and roof lines, materials and fenestration.

At the city-scale, the 'Tall Building Classifications' identifies 'tall buildings', 'landmark buildings', 'gateway buildings' and 'city landmarks'. That classification system should be applied in the evaluation of tall building proposals, as slightly different visual and placemaking impact criteria should apply to each tall building type. The principles for those criteria are set out below:

- Tall buildings should be typically seen as part of a cluster of buildings, new or existing, to provide a sense of district intensification. Such buildings also have an important wayfinding role in the City context;
- Landmark buildings should be designed to provide guidance to the structure and legibility of the city from the street level;
- Gateway buildings should be designed to mark important entrance points to the City or to the City Centre or a distinct city district; and
- City landmark buildings have a special function to mark and advertise the City as a whole.

Tall Buildings – Heritage Impact

Limerick City has a long and rich history as a settlement from its establishment around 922 AD by the Vikings, to its development as a medieval Norman Town, to its planned Georgian expansion. This history is reflected in the morphology, built environment and character of the City as it stands today.

Limerick City currently has four designated Conservation Areas, covering 6 parts of the City. It has a large number of Protected Structures, 437 in the City Centre area, many of which are concentrated in and around the Georgian Quarter. There are also 138 recorded sites and monuments in the City.

All of these heritage assets contribute to the character, economy and pride of place and are irreplaceable features, which need careful protection. Any change to the built environment thus needs to be carefully considered and sensitively managed.

Due to their massing, scale and height, tall buildings are likely to have a greater impact on the built and natural heritage than other types of buildings. Tall buildings can impact the setting of a Protected Structure, detracting from its significance and may in some cases be inconsistent with the character of a Conservation Area. In a Georgian area such as Newtown Pery, where consistency in height and design are predominant features of the Conservation Area, a tall building has the potential to disrupt the urban pattern, scale, character, roofscape and building line.

Proposals for tall buildings will need to be assessed in terms of their impact on designated Conservation Areas and Protected Structures. Conservation Areas and other historically significant parts of the City have not been excluded from having the potential to accommodate increased height. However, such an increase will require careful consideration and detailed analysis and should be brought forward in line with the detailed guidance for such areas set out in this Strategy.

Tall Buildings – Impact on Strategic Views

Due to their massing, scale and height, tall buildings can impact on and detract from strategic views and prospects. As Limerick City has a relatively flat topography, elevated views are limited. The River Shannon, as the entrance to the City from the west and as a space that allows for wider views of the City Centre, is especially sensitive because of the panoramic views it offers.

The impact of tall buildings on a particular view can be established through a visual impact assessment and by the use of verified views. While a tall building may impact a view, the nature of this impact can range from positive, to neutral or to harmful and therefore, needs to be examined.

It is recognised that there are important viewpoints around the City such as the River Shannon and other panoramic views from vantage points both inside and outside the City, with three different view types identified i.e. linear views of landmark buildings, the City Walks and City skyline; river prospects; and approach road views.

The impact of a tall building proposal on such views will need to be considered to avoid any negative visual impact or the situation where a tall building competes with an existing local landmarks, for example King John's Castle.

Endnotes

1 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 5
2 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7
3 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7
4 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,pg.8
5 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,pg.8
6 National Development Plan 2018-2027, Government of Ireland, pg. 37
7 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 8
8 https://www.limerick.ie/discover/visiting/experience-limerick/our-history
9 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 10
10 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7
11 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 8
12 Draft LSMATS Public Consultation Document, 2020, NTA, TII et al, pg. 23
13 Draft LSMATS Public Consultation Document, 2020, NTA, TII et al, pg. 23
14 Draft LSMATS Public Consultation Document, 2020, NTA, TII et al, page 17
15 Draft LSMATS Public Consultation Document, 2020, NTA, TII et al, pg. 17
16 Draft LSMATS Public Consultation Document, 2020, NTA, TII et al, pg. 29
17 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, March 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 2018, pg. 16
18 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, March 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 2018, pg. 17
19 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7
20 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7
21 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 8
22 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 9
23 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018, Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, pg. 7

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