

Parkgate Street: A Focus
for Heuston Northern Quarter
Expert opinion in support
of planning submission
to An Bord Pleanala

John Worthington & Lora Nicolaou

For Ruirside Developments Limited: Hickey's Parkgate Street, Dublin 8

November 2019

1 Introduction: Purpose and Scope

Ruirside Developments Limited and their appointed architects, Reddy Architecture are preparing a planning application for Hickey's Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 for submission to An Bord Pleanala. Professor John Worthington and Dr Lora Nicolaou have been appointed to provide an expert opinion to accompany a Planning Application to be made under the new fast track Strategic Housing Development Regulations, which involve negotiation with the Dublin City Planning Department followed by a direct application to An Bord Pleanala. This independent experts report:

- Assesses the reasons for the previous application by the site owners being refused permission by An Bord Pleanala in 2006 (Stephen Little & Associates) in the context of changing Dublin and the City Development Plan 2016-2022. (Section 2)
- Focuses on the impact of tall buildings in understanding, viewing and navigating the city, with specific reference to the Wellington monument and the role of the Parkgate Street site in the emergence of the Heuston Station district as a central Dublin destination. (Section 3)
- Identifies the themes and criteria to be addressed in preparing a place making brief for the Parkgate Street site and immediate surroundings in the context of the Heuston Station District. (Section 4 & 5)
- Assesses the scheme submitted (Section 6) against the place making criteria proposed in Section 5 and draws conclusions for Ruirside Developments Limited and Dublin City Council Planning (Section 7)

Summary of involvement with the design process from Oct. 2018 to Nov. 2019

22 October 2018. Tony Reddy (Chairman Reddy Architecture + Urbanism) on behalf of Ruirside Developments Limited invited John Worthington (Founding Partner DEGW) to Dublin to review preliminary proposals for the Parkgate Street site in the context of DEGW report Managing Intensification and Change: A Strategy for Dublin Building Height, Dublin Corporation September 2000. Identified how the impact of building massing and height was only one aspect of assessing the impact of a significant development on way finding and place making in the wider urban landscape.

14-15 Nov. 2018 John Worthington and Lora Nicolaou met with Ruirside Developments Limited and Reddy Architecture+Urbanism in London and Dublin

17 Nov. 2018 Outline for Independent Experts report on the Parkgate Street proposals submitted to Ruirside Developments Limited.

19 Dec. 2018, Draft report for sections 1-5 submitted covering:

- Context: Dublin's Growth and Change 2000 and Beyond
- City Legibility
- Heuston: The role of Tall Buildings and Distinctive Places in the Modern City
- Place Making Brief for 42a Parkgate Street in the Context of Heuston Interchange 29 June and 15 Aug. 2019: final drafts issued for a review November 2019: Final report issued

The draft report provided guidance to the design team, as detailed planning development progressed working closely with Dublin City Council Planners.

- Stephen Little Associates High Level Planning Appraisal for Ruiside Developments Limited (12 April 2018)
- Reddy Architecture, design development reports with particular reference to the study of view corridors, massing and height.
- Dublin City Development Plan 2016 - 2022

Previous experience of John Worthington, Founding Partner of DEGW; chair of the Dublin City Urbanism Panel (2000 - 2010) and Dr Lora Nicolaou Director of Urban Strategy DEGW (1998 - 2009). Both experts were joint authors of *Managing Intensification and Change: A Strategy for Dublin Building Height*, DEGW report for Dublin Corporation September 2000.

2. Dublin's Growth and Change 2000 and Beyond

2.1 Triggers for Growth

Dublin at the turn of the millennium (2000) was one of the fastest growing city regions of Europe with a population of 1.5 million, accounting for over 40% of the population of the Republic. The growth was fuelled by inward migration estimated at 700 per week, consisting of those from other parts of Ireland, returning emigrants and young Europeans. Gross National Product (GNP) was an average of 6.5% per annum the highest in Europe. Ireland was a young country, enterprising, innovative and open to change. Dublin compared to other European cities was maturing and learning. The preface to *'Managing Intensification and Change'* (DEGW 2000) stated that "Dublin has underdeveloped service and transportation infrastructures, and a conservative planning and property regime. Planning follows the Anglo-Saxon model of being reactive and discretionary which inevitably creates barriers to the availability of development sites. The property industry fuelled by the shortage of easily developable land is focussed on land value rather than adding value through quality and service".

Since the application for development of Parkgate Street in 2006 the city has seen continuous change. An emerging younger sector of the population, many from countries with an urban tradition of inner-city apartment living has resulted in Central Dublin intensifying in land use and diversifying in functions. 2008 saw the credit crisis and a collapse of the financial markets and property

sectors. In 2005 Ireland's GDP per annum growth rate was 6%, leading the Netherlands 2% and Portugal 5%. By 2008 with the credit crisis Ireland was negative till 2010 when the other two countries came down to the same level. By 2014 Ireland had outstripped the others to show an 8% annual GDP and be 6th on the European innovation scoreboard.

In 2010 whilst still battling a financial and real estate crisis, the production, creative and service companies were sound. Planning leadership was emerging from the Creative Dublin Alliance a network led by the City manager to champion collaborative action and cooperation between members drawn from the most senior levels in local government, industry, education, state agencies and civil society.

The growth of the city eastwards had begun in the decade before and by 2010 the Docklands Strategic Development Zone was providing a robust development framework. Supporting this the City Planning Department was acting as enabler: responding to successes, integrating into the existing urban fabric and building local community capacity. The building design professions, with work at home at a standstill, looked abroad for commissions. Practices such as Grafton Architects, raised the international exposure and respect for Irish Design.

The Luas line, still at a design stage in 2000, today is successfully running North South and East West, linking the two main terminus stations of Connolly and Heuston, and integrating with other modes of transport. Active travel, walking and cycling are being positively supported by providing dedicated routes and safe, navigable urban realm.

The historic centre has intensified by back filling, increasing the typical building height of 4-6 floors to 5-7 floors whilst retaining the traditional grain and character. At the start of the Millennium Dublin's central area was more dispersed and of a lower density than its European counterparts. City centre functions were dispersed to museums and culture at Heuston in the west and Financial services at docklands to the East. In comparison with other European cities Dublin's intensity of land use (4,750 persons per Km² is low compared with Copenhagen (5,400p.p. Km²) and Amsterdam (9,130p.p. Km²)

2.2 Implications for Heuston

The change in the city during the last 10 years is remarkable. The economy has grown to pre-2006 levels, with a restructuring of the financial and property sectors. Lessons have been learnt, though not all applied. The left-over parts of the city, conservation areas with a sense of abandonment, are beginning to become active parts of the city. A younger and diverse clientele is stimulating new uses, at least at ground floor adding to a sense of a dynamic, multi-cultural Dublin.

The new "Eastern Dublin" in the docklands is now a fully active part of the city. The active involvement in 2010 of the city planning department provided vision and leadership in the role of enabler to support collaborative development engaging public, private sectors and civil society. Heuston in the DEGW 2000 report was identified as a well-connected cultural quarter focussed on heritage and the arts. Can lessons be learnt from "Eastern Dublin" as growth moves West?

3. City Legibility

3.1 Understanding the city

Cities as they have grown and changed, become increasingly difficult to understand and navigate. Urban designers in the second half of the twentieth century recognised the need for symbols and distinctive places of higher intensity to help navigate the city. By the turn of the century European urban planners and conservationists were focusing on the impact of tall buildings on the skyline and intensity of use (High Rise Rotterdam: A Strategy for Intensification and Innovation, DEGW, City of Rotterdam 1998). Whilst Rotterdam celebrated high buildings and innovative thinking, Dublin (DEGW 2000) was concerned to discuss building height in the context of managing intensification and change. However, both Cities whilst starting from very different aspirations, were recognising the underlying objective to understand better how to intensify land use whilst also creating distinctive places which express the culture of the city and are enjoyable to visit and stay.

Kevin Lynch (1914-84) a leading urban design theorist argues that to create city legibility, we need easily recognisable and understood:

- Paths – streets, rail lines, canals, promenades
- Nodes -peaks of density, such as major commercial centres and transport terminals
- Special districts – clusters of symbiotic uses, associated with memorable activities or associations

In our modern urban landscapes, these elements have often become blurred. What makes today's cities often such unsatisfying places is:

- Visual Confusion – the environment presenting a confusing set of messages, with no coherent sense of structure. For instance, buildings out of place with local character.
- Lack of "visual identity" there being no sense of character. Soulless places often lack diversity of experience and a variety of expression.
- Rigidity of Urban form an over concern for planned order and conformity, rather than the acceptance of creative conflict and the stimulus of ambiguity. The modern juxtaposed with the past can provide excitement and stimulation.

3.2 Visualizing the City

How we visualize the city, is a combination of how we view it – mass, shape, texture – a function of the eye; and how we perceive its character and quality, a function of the mind.

As the scale of the city enlarges, and we become more mobile, how we view it is more concerned with moving around and through it, than the static "trophy" postcard view. A building can act both as an icon, through its form and visual impact, and have symbolic value in the way that its form reminds us of past events and situations.

New mixed-use building typologies are emerging which symbolize new semi-public urban places, with a blurring of work, leisure, culture, learning and living. A pointer to a different approach to urban land use.

3.3 Viewing the City, viewing experience.

DEGW's Study for the Greater London Authority London's Skyline, Views and High Buildings, SDS Technical Report August 2002) led by Lora Nicolaou, argued that views of the city and the impact of proposed buildings on the ongoing development of the city, should be assessed according to the place of viewing and the experience of viewing. Viewing places can be:

- Panoramic- distant views from outside the central city
- Prospects– Broad or contained views from within the built form of the city. Contained prospect from a square or park. Broad prospects from river walks or bridge crossings. Prospects reveal the relationships between particular urban elements and their wider urban context.
- Townscape– In the immediate vicinity of the building in question, providing glimpses or partial views. The viewing may be static (studied) or sequential (glimpses as we move through space).

Views disclose the city's structure and allow the viewer to be located in time and space, revealing aspects of the city's identity, and therefore, values. There is no one way a view is valued. The value of the view will depend on the compositional quality, cultural expectations, the meaning of the view to the specific viewer, and its historical significance.

Cultural and Historic values play an important function in our viewing experience. These values are formed as much by expectations and memories, as accuracy of historical fact.

Heuston, since the coming of rail has been part of central Dublin, though often perceived by visitors as fringe. This perception of 'distance' and the lack of relevant city centre amenity is rapidly changing. Luas and improved public transport connectivity, the shift of important city centre functions to the west (TU Dublin Grange Gorman campus) and the growing importance of the station as an arrival point for commuters and travellers from the suburbs and regions, have helped to place Heuston on the map. The establishment of cultural neighbourhoods as stepping stones and tourist destinations between the traditional centre and the station (Smithfield, Guinness, Collin's barracks) are similarly changing the city's geography.

A key ingredient, enjoyed now by much of central Dublin though absent around the station, is a sense of quality of place which encourages passers-by to linger and stay. The opportunity now exists for new traditional streetscapes and the design of open spaces where the harsh climatic conditions are moderated to allow intermediate spaces to form and foster intense activity to create a distinctive Heuston city centre character. New traditional style streetscapes are beginning to emerge.

A key consideration at Heuston will be the moderation of exposure to harsh climatic conditions through the design of open spaces, public and private, including the constructions of the 'in between' spaces which can allow pockets of outdoor intense activity to develop and celebrate Heuston's emerging distinctive city centre character.

4 Heuston: Tall Buildings & Distinctive Places in the Modern City

4.1 Distinctive places

The common understanding of landmarks is that there are city features that differentiate themselves from the rest of the built fabric, expressed in distinct images and designs. This physical presence acts as a long-distance navigational aid along with other physical features such as: the river, topography and historic structures, such as the Wellington monument. Most contemporary tall buildings however often fail to accommodate public life with any social or cultural significance in a way 'large footprint' buildings can. On the other hand, cities are continuously forming 'new landmark locations' through urban renewal processes, driven by the needs and attitudes of an increasingly demanding and diverse clientele. These new nodal points within a networked city form 'distinctive places' - well serviced, culturally meaningful, places of exchange.

While tall buildings signify a contemporary and dynamic city the new generation 'public places' begin to characterise the city and their districts, in a variety of ways. They generate their own economies and social context and are characterised at the same time by a distinct 'image' and brand reflecting the district they represent in the wider city. (i.e. King's Cross/St Pancras vs the new skyscrapers in the City of London).

The scale of development opportunities at Heuston coupled with the vitality associated with stations as transport nodes, calls for a 'distinctive place' more than an iconic one in the conventional sense. Such distinct places derive their meaningful identity from the vitality of place; the management and mix of supportive services and the diversity of users i.e. communities of residents, workers and visitors.

Dublin has been successful in generating places of meaningful identity during the last two decades or more, not only in the established conservation areas (which are more easily adopted as destinations because of their special character) but in new urban places made possible by the recent economic boom. Places such as Theatre Square at Grand Canal Docks, or the Digital Hub and Smithfield, feel unexpectedly mature as places (of greater or lesser intensity) after not much more than a decade of life.

The challenge at Heuston as a follow-up phase of Dublin's expansion westwards is to rethink the context and content of a new generation of 'places'. New demands are already evident with the digital Hub, which does not only herald a new type of location but the opportunity to become relevant and meaningful to contemporary lifestyles. Can we learn and develop from what we have recently completed?

4.2 What makes the Heuston District special

Dublin has adopted successfully and developed further the notion of the character areas introduced by the 'Managing Intensification and Change'

guidance document (DEGW 2000). In DEGW's 2000 report the Heuston area was identified as the arts and culture district partly because of the establishment of large-scale cultural amenities in primarily converted historic buildings, but also because of the opportunities presented by the 'empty space' both buildings and public land which characterised the area. Amongst Dublin's central districts a number of natural and man-made features make Heuston unique in terms of distinctiveness of character and the opportunities/challenges associated with renewal. The uniqueness of place derives from several spatial and environmental descriptors:

- The topography and its relationship to the river being framed not only by the river 'wall' but the topography on both sides, the scale of which is intensified by the change of grain in the city fabric from the 'coarse' industrial morphology within the river valley to the smaller scale residential skyline at higher grounds. Most public open spaces are associated with the "openness" of the river corridor exposed to the elements during most part of the year.
Can external spaces conceived as places to stop, linger, reflect or exchange be designed with protected and sheltered settings within the public realm, as found in most northern European cities?
- The station and station square is a primary nodal point, central to the emerging structure of the city plan as an arrival /departure point with city wide significance (Figure 1A). Despite the potential of its location, the station square and station buildings, function primarily as a transport interchange with little contribution to defining a distinctive place.

Can the station area become both a multi-functional arrival/ departure point and a vibrant, responsive place to dwell and exchange?

- The Liffey naturally defining and dividing the Heuston Gateway into North and South quarters, each with their distinctive character and neighbourhoods. The nature of uses associated with the riverbanks at Collins Barracks and the Guinness lands westwards, historically, did not create the need for frequent interaction across the river.

Will the contemporary land use pattern associated with renewal sites beyond Heuston Station, challenge the north-south disconnect and stimulate new integrating infrastructure plans for the area?

- The large grain and irregularity in the morphology characterizes the distinctiveness of the area, in contrast to Dublin docklands where the morphology of streets and blocks have shaped the character from open flat lands. This large grain of the Heuston district, particularly at the lower planes along the river presents a townscape comprising of a continuous mosaic of large-scale landmarks. Each different in its configuration and architecture, important not only in

their physical presence, but as places of collective memory and significant historic value. The conventional understanding of 'landmarks' or 'non-thematic buildings' distinctively rising out of a thematic collection of conventional buildings does not apply.

Could these large-scale distinctive sites, such as Hickey's, drive future renewal with strategic single interventions as the catalyst?

A unique place such as Heuston Gateway demands and deserves a special attention not only in its planning, design and architecture but the way 'place making' is managed as a collaborative process between the public and private sectors cooperating with civil society

4.3 Heuston Gateway Regeneration strategy: implications for Parkgate Street

The suggested planning framework in 2007 (Dublin City Council: Heuston gateway regeneration strategy) is still valid with no structural changes which call for major revisions. The plan recognises the Hickey's site as one of 7 major development opportunities in an area with potential for major regeneration. It is recognised as primarily residential with commercial and central area amenity uses and services appropriate to a site with proximity to the station environs. Whilst the planning prescription is unchanged, the perceptions of appropriateness of height and configuration in the context of development capacity is part of a constant debate with shifting political and planning positions (ref. Urban Development and Building Heights; Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018)

Conservation issues refer to a future need for evaluation and consideration of existing structures, in a way that a new place can retain memories of its industrial past in a sensitive and constructive manner. Special emphasis is placed on the consideration of the relationship of new architecture and the existing river wall. References are also made in relation to the adjacent residential conservation area facing the northern edge of the site.

The Strategic View framework suggested by the Heuston Gateway strategy in 2007 places restriction on the Hickey site because of potential interference of new buildings with the strategic views toward the Phoenix Park Monument mainly from the South Quay. In the 2000 DEGW report the site is identified as an 'end point' of important eye level prospect river view with implications on the scale and bulk of a new development. The two conditions, seemingly in conflict, need to be considered in parallel with the design of the river wall and station square frontage with reference to both restrictions an integral part of the design.

During the last 20 years Dublin has wisely resisted the 'pepper-potting' of tall buildings across its skyline with a firm planning framework and well managed guidelines. Installations such as the Millennium Spire have been successful in signposting locations and acting as significant landmark places.

The DEGW 2000 report makes the point that single tall buildings have primarily a landmark value with a limited impact on city intensification despite the obvious impact on added capacity for the plot including its real estate value.

The tall building in the Heuston station area context should be assessed on its city wide role in sign posting and its contribution to the massing and capacity of the Hickey site in contributing to the amenity and character of the wider station area as the focus for a distinctive emerging central Dublin location.

In these terms new taller buildings need to generate static urban places as part of their planning and design, fitted out with a significant public amenity content appropriate to a new central city destination. Buildings and urban spaces with greater social significance can fulfil in a more meaningful way the role of a city landmark.

Large scale buildings or clusters with intensification of buildings volumes are very much part of the architectural vocabulary of the local townscape (see previous section). The Heuston area morphology, within the river corridor, has the capacity to absorb more than the 8-story building height which is generally considered (by planning regulation and practice) as a maximum in relation to European morphologies (reference DDDA residential densities). The scale of both existing buildings and structure as well as the topographical elements are robust enough in order to consider higher and large-scale building volumes as a positive design objective. However, this recognition of the opportunities afforded by large scale plots should recognise the need to match increased height by climatic/ environmental and aspect considerations for residential units within the site, and adjacent finer grained development.

4.4 What makes Heuston special: Opportunities missed

The distinctiveness of Heuston Station Gateway reflects the character of its natural setting (topography and the river) as well and the nature of the built form (heritage, large grain plan form and ownerships). Both hold the potential to support the creation of an equally unique place for the future. The significance of a major transport interchange, the collection of so many historic destination and civic functions, the robustness of the industrial past, the scale of new opportunities in single ownerships, make Heuston unique in the context of Dublin centre.

The urban regeneration process has already begun confidently with development such as the Courts at the gateway to Phoenix Park to the North and the Digital Hub and Eircom HQ developments to the South are beginning to attract enterprises relevant to the 'New Economy'. These developments have generated confidence in the market and with the dramatic improvement of local public transport (LUAS and airport bus) helped to bridge the perceived distance between Heuston and Dublin Centre.

4.5 Landmark places

Missed opportunities or latent potential, relate mainly to the lack of landmark places, mixed use, covered and open, public and semi- public, vibrant and distinctive spaces. The station square has been designed solely as a transport interchange not an active urban square, the scale of the station building only large enough to accommodate necessary transportation related functions, Open

spaces associated with some of the historic buildings such as Collins Barracks and the hospital ground south of the station have capacity to intensify public use and outdoor active life. The design of the river banks are not yet places in their own right. All these opportunities are still open to re-consideration in the future within a collaborative process of regeneration between the City acting as master developer/enabler and the owners of large sites creating landmark places, stimulated by the demand of new residents and visitors.

The realisation of this latent potential at the scale present at Heuston, requires a holistic approach to development management and a collective discussion on opportunities for place making.

5 A Place Making Brief for 42a Parkgate Street in the Context of the Heuston Interchange

5.1 A strategic site: Creating identity, changing perceptions

The scale of the site, its landmark location and innovative with thoughtful design can clearly create an identity for the new development and in parallel contribute to how Heuston is perceived, prompting enhanced wealth and value.

The location of the site as a backdrop to long prospect views from both sides of the river and the station's forecourt exposes the length of the site along the river and the station to both long and short prospect views, providing the opportunity to present the iconic qualities for both the site and the station building. The composition of the river wall and the corner turning toward Chesterfield avenue needs to relate to a coherent architectural narrative which on the one hand retains references to its industrial past as well as signify a new place at Heuston.

A key design challenge will be for the elevation and massing to express the civic significance of the south elevation, from the panoramic viewing point exiting the station across the river whilst respecting the neighbourhood character and scale of the traditional terraces across Parkgate Street Street to the north. Whilst new development should not reproduce the actual scale of the existing terraced housing opposite, it can simulate notions of rhythm, materiality and use as a way of contributing toward the locality with a continuous active street frontage providing uses and access to the semi-public activities within. This succession of textures from the solid but porous river wall to the more articulated fine grain street elevation poses a key challenge to design.

Looking at the wider context of Parkgate Street in relation to Heuston Station the bridge plays pivotal role. The pairing of the two building volumes facing each other and the current lack of space for amenities on the station concourse, calls for a "perceptual" and "physical" continuation of the Heuston station forecourt across the bridge to the Parkgate Street development site and environs. The continuation potentially resulting in a significant new shared amenities destination.

Clearly at Heuston there is public space available (Figure 1) on both sides of the river which is currently poorly used and uncoordinated. The Parkgate Street development over the long term has the opportunity to stimulate a comprehensive vision for the area coordinated by the City.

However the simple provision of space may not create a place people wish to visit and stay, so capturing the full value for the city, neighbourhood, investor and residents has not been captured. Successful urban destinations are invariably linked to public and semi public spaces, that facilitate indoor functions to spill out into the open, a sense of security sheltered from the elements and a welcoming space for spontaneous exchange.

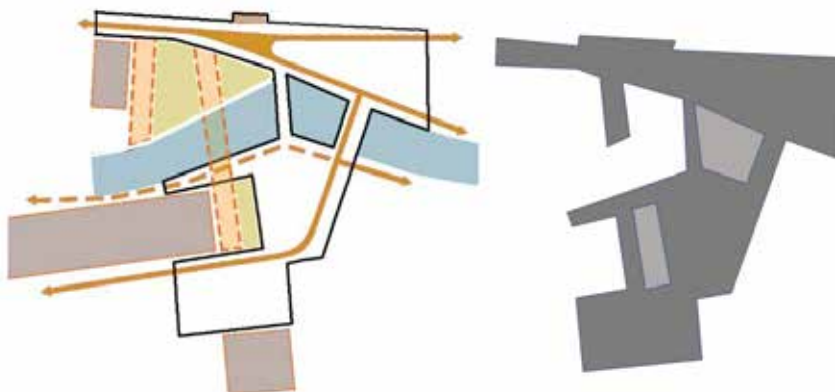


Figure 1 public and semi - public realm, movement and allocation of uses

Potential public and semi-public realm at Heuston Interchange – the consideration of the 'voids' can be considered in future reorganisation of space around Heuston station by defining the type of movement for pedestrian only, pedestrian propriety, vehicle and vehicle priority realms.

5.2 Massing and Bulk in the context of Strategic Views

Heuston's robust industrial character, the scale of the adjacent topographical features and the free-standing aspect of Parkgate Street, implies increased capacity compared to the fine grain of the city centre and Docklands. The conventional 6-8 storied residential blocks defined by streets on analysis may be inappropriate for large grained, single plot blocks.

A key consideration in deciding the massing of Parkgate Street development is its compliance with the Dublin statutory views framework. The simple passive 'visibility' of The Monument across building volumes will not support the integrity of either the Panoramic or the Townscape views, equally important to our experience and perception of environmental quality. The design should 'actively' participate (with its compositional qualities) in the formulation of new positive townscape within which The Monument can be perceived from public spaces and different viewing distances. Furthermore the three dimensional configuration of this very significant nodal city block should balance equally its contribution toward Panoramic and Townscape perceptual images. In cases such as London with a long experience in the management of its Strategic Views, when panoramic views are considered 'literally', have often negative townscape implications. The conflict of a linear geometry across a large expanse of the city's built fabric, forces three dimensional inconsistencies in the distribution of built volumes along streets and squares often to the detriment of local townscapes. (ref. SDS19 London Tall Buildings). The viewing of an urban landmark through a changing urban landscape of forms and textures is an equally valid way to experience the 'non thematic' culturally significant structures of the city.

The scale and massing of development should not only be considered in relation to outside views towards the site, but the sense of space and scale from within the development itself and outwards toward the open river views and street life beyond. The site on a curve of the river Liffey provides a unique opportunity for the buildings and associated open spaces to enjoy long river prospect in both directions.

The configuration, of public and semi-public open space its three-dimensional enclosure and environmental character should drive design decisions as an autonomous component of a composition with its own demands, organisation and functional programme. The various open space typologies provided will require different degrees of enclosure, overlooking, accessibility, sense of privacy, level of fit out and landscape treatment

5.3 Functions and mix; residential capacity

High density housing will be a driver for change. Increased population will inevitably change the nature of both local amenity and vitality of public space. An active riverside and public street frontage are minimal attributes towards shaping a dynamic and successful locality.

A key opportunity will be missed if the viability of a 'destination use' is not carefully considered. City centre uses relevant to a variety of user groups (local resident and working population, visitors, long and short distance travellers, student populations etc) can form part of a broader user brief ensuring that Parkgate Street development has neighbourhood regeneration impact with district wide significance.

The coordination of the synergies and interface between owned private space, semi private (invited) semi-public and public open space provide a variety of functional setting appropriate for a well serviced new destination experience.

Consideration should be given to the fact that building shells have a longer life span than activities and associated functions which are continuously updated as they mature. The “fit out” of the interior and outdoor spaces responding to the uplift in value afforded by the changing quality of the neighbourhood and shifting clientele.

Climatic design and environmental comfort are key parameters driving the scale and configuration of outdoor and indoor semi public and private spaces.

5.4 Identity, narrative and meaning

The retention of historic listed structures within and along the periphery of the site, through skilful design can assist in the construction of the narrative that associate the history to the future identity of Parkgate Street. Although none of the retained structures has major significance as pieces of architecture, the retention of fragments of heritage are important in imbedding the memory of the place across time. Such retentions can also help construct ‘notions’ on which contemporary concept design can draw from as a response to the historic significance of the site and enrich and ‘ground’ it owns architectural vocabulary. Because of the scale and nature of the remaining industrial heritage, it can only be integrated into the scale of the ‘new architecture’ rather than forming distinct stand-alone components in the overall plan. The new design needs to adopt an explicit strategy toward the integration of the old and the new (Figure 2). The retained historic fragments can be integrated as active parts of a new cityscape, transformed and reactivated whilst continuing to carry through time their associated memories.

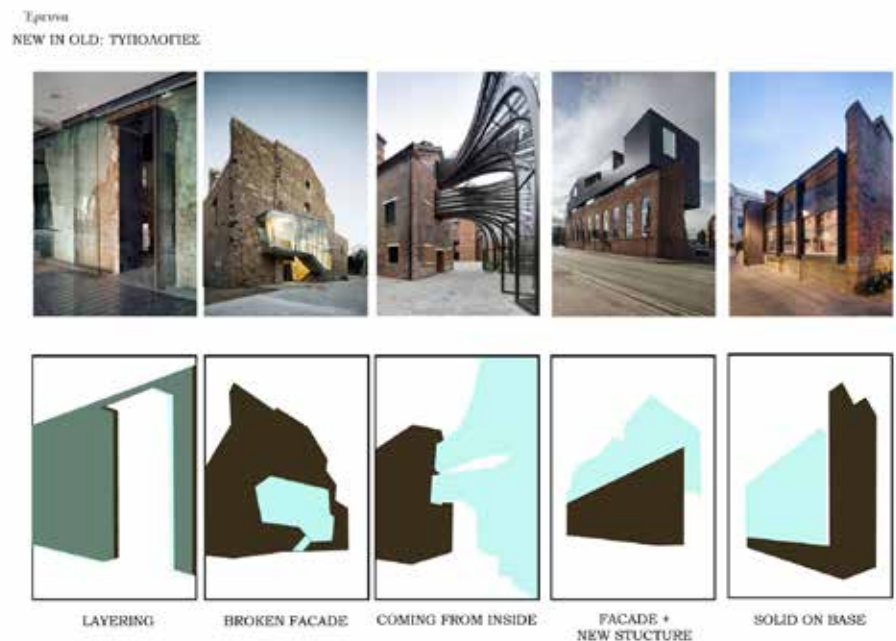


Figure 2 integration of the old and the new.

Source: Vanvakaris, Frederick Uni, 2017-18

The architectural narrative can be associated with several notions such as the continuation of the river wall, the fine grain of its texture, the irregularity of openings and the tentative relationship between the inside and outside. Further to physical representational references notions such as the sense of spaciousness and expanse of the industrial space within the main warehouse can also become a source of inspiration for new mixes of use and managed ground-scape.

The identity and meaning of development on such a significant scale cannot only relate to the past. Future aspirations for a new place for Dublin City and one of the regeneration catalysts for the Heuston area, also needs to be expressed through a vision of a new experience of urban living and innovative design.

5.5 Resilience – adapting to change, increasing value

The ability to adapt and change defines the character of a regeneration area. Whilst developments take a final shape as a composition of built space, the areas around and within them are in constant flux. Space, public or private, open or covered needs the ability to continuously transform through remodelling - adjusting the interface between built and open space, and choice of tenure and management. How the place is perceived (it's brand) changes to capture the added value of the investment over time. The added value resulting from the ability to innovate, through attracting new uses, the presentation of fresh settings and the services provided to continuously improve the experience, within the long-lasting built form. Inevitably the generation of added value both economic and social will rely heavily on partnerships between various stakeholders, private and public, in collaboration with civil society (the not for profit sector).

Large scale investment at Heuston can stimulate the opportunity to implement the Heuston Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA 7), with the planning authority taking an active role in community and stakeholder initiatives.

Heuston Gateway is clearly relevant to an area much wider than its physical boundaries. Intelligent design, built in flexibility to development and property management frameworks combined with capitalising on collaborative processes can unlock the catalytic potential of the landmark sites

6. The Proposal Assessed

6.1 Objectives and context

Parkgate Street is a significant project for Dublin; it aims at creating an identity, a new place at Heuston and validates today, Dublin City Council's 'Heuston Gateway Regeneration and Development Framework Plan 2003'. As a large development project, it has the opportunity to impact on an area well beyond its site boundary with a significant contribution through it's mix of functions and open space network, creating a positive neighbourhood context and conveying a sense of environmental quality. A crucial attribute of any regeneration plan.

The objective of this assessment is to critically describe the various attributes of the project; as the home for a new mix of functions and tenants, its physical contribution/impact on its immediate and wider context and its potential to create a distinctive place. The assessment focuses on Parkgate Street's impact on its urban context, it does not aim to critique architectural aesthetic.

The environmental context considered is complex and challenging. The scheme will have a significant presence along the open aspects of the river corridor acting as a distinctive marker from Heuston Station Square and the termination of a number of panoramic views along the river corridor to the corner of the old Hickey site. The urban character of Parkgate Street, the impact on the statutory view towards the Monument and the integration of on-site archaeology are some of the conditions the new development attempts to 'negotiate' at different levels. These levels vary from the contribution to panoramic and prospect views to local glimpses through, around and within the site of various new and existing townscapes.

This design assessment discusses aspects of place making, contextualisation and organisational design with reference to three themes which form the content of the following three sections;

1. the morphology and townscape presence (urban form and structure) (6.1),
2. the character of place (urban narrative) (6.2) and
3. its response to change in a contemporary city centre (adaptability) (6.3).

6.2 Urban form and Structure – impact on the urban setting

The selective, informed and differentiated approach to 'conservation' of new development in relation to the local morphological context is not only appropriate but necessary. The new design needs to ensure that as a new large addition to the building fabric in this location can address the contemporary servicing needs appropriate to the continuously shifting tenures of a regeneration area.

In terms of its three-dimensional presence, the new development, despite its robust scale, conveys an appropriate 'intend' toward a contextual, 'thematic' approach in the organisation of its plan and architecture, in contrast to several neighboring iconic historic landmarks (Heuston Station, Collins Barracks, the RHK (Royal Hospital Kilmainham), Dr Steeven's Hospital etc) or even contemporary and by design 'non thematic' buildings such as the Dublin Courts. Both its north and south presence add continuities and rhythm now absent in this critical corner of the station environs, which in turn will enhance and consolidate the sense of urbanity and townscape quality.

The large-scale urban form proposed at Parkgate Street is assessed against the following principles: Massing and urban presence reflecting townscape character; scale which is reflected in the hierarchy of space - open, covered and enclosed, with a diversity of activities; figure-ground and ground-scape which facilitate permeability, wayfinding and clarity of route, all contributing toward the visual integration.

The massing, which conveys the urban presence of the design, successfully

addresses several critical conditions through the configuration of its plan and section:

- The organization of the ground floor plan simulates a perimeter residential block of a city with a perforated building line to the river and continuous frontage along Parkgate Street Street with its mix of building use, the disaggregation of which moderates the scale and allows for a differentiated configuration of the corner termination of prospect views and its presence within Heuston Stations Square. The massing, scale and grain of the built volumes transfers qualities of a diverse but coherent townscape outside and within the scheme.
- This articulation of the plan allows the opportunity for larger and more accessible light and airy, semi-public and private open spaces within the site, compensating for the height of the surrounding blocks. The massing and plan configuration also allow for the differentiated and distinct design of frontages providing a rhythm to complement a set of varied townscape views. The view from the east and Heuston square present a more robust scale with a vertical punctuation appropriate to its landmark conditions were the north elevations is articulated around the rhythm of a residential street. Differentiated massing and volume configurations in section allows for an appropriately varied skyline despite the regularity of the plan and the repetitive functions within. The vertical configuration acts at three different levels, a continuous and parallel podium at street level, the regular parapet at level 7 and the setback skyline. The design therefore supports successfully the articulation of the massing, breaking down the massing of the buildings when experienced from various distances - the podium from street level, the parapet while walking within nearby streets and open spaces and the third level of a skyline adds texture and quality to the prospect views. The horizontal level is characterized similarly to the articulation of the elevations, the same hierarchy of spaces from open, covered, enclosed realm etc. creates a variety of setting for activity at appropriate scales, with a diversity of views within and toward the outside providing a collage of functions and variety of materials.
- The simple large grain figure-ground enclosed by the set of diverse surfaces of the ground-scape, in turn reflects the potential use of internal space and has the potential of facilitating comfort and diversity of use, which with the potential for vibrancy will be a constructive addition to the public realm at Heuston. Further-more the intention of the scheme to maximize accessibility within and through the plan is obvious and considered carefully. This is expressed through the visual integration of inside and outside space, the different types of permeability through the two major open spaces (public and semi-public) and the connection of the river walk through the scheme to Heuston Square and bridge. Way finding is facilitated in a number of ways: The clarity of the entry points at the tower and river wall; The difference in character at entry to the courtyard and piazza entrances; The positioning of openings along the wall and establishment of viewing platforms at different levels to facilitate the otherwise problematic interface between open spaces and the river.

6.3 The Urban Narrative: what kind of place?

While built space and its economics make projects possible, other derivative design factors support an 'urban narrative' which in turn construct the making of a place. Such factors derive from the plan configuration as well as land use, which acquires over time its own development dynamics through the 'taking over' of space by informed interest groups and the various stakeholder. An important aspect impacting on the successful adoption and adaptation of space by users is an open and welcoming management structure, accessibility and the connectivity of open space to surrounding networks (physical, virtual and notional). The notion of place relies also on the nature of the space, its ownership, management and use. Place can be: Public, Private and Space owned by an organisation whilst accessible to the wider community, which in turn may be "semi-public" (railway station concourse or shopping centre) or "semi-private" (hotel foyer or coffee shop).

A final condition which characterises urban narratives is the iconography of space which conveys both literal and notional conditions embedded in the design of place.

The potential of 42a Parkgate Street to become a vibrant and meaningful place is assessed against the following design approaches:

- The articulation of the plan. With a limited amount of open space, not uncommon for high density schemes, the project successfully manages to generate a sequence of different outdoor spaces that can support a variety of settings. These settings might vary in ownership from: Semi-private, for instance the residence garden that can be seen into but not entered by the public to; Semi-public (the piazza which can host a variety of settings) and public space (river walkways and sidewalks at the perimeter of the site)
- The publicly accessible river walkway, the forecourt and associated amenities, clearly provide additional options for engagement which contributes actively to the network of new service network of the area, new and old inhabitants. The capacity for an adaptable mix of uses potentially extends within three lower floors of interconnected internal and external spaces with the potential for adaptation and change as the area develops over time, clearly supported by the configuration of the plan, the presence of the mezzanines and the positioning of the structural elements, vertical services and circulation. Furthermore, the articulation of block volumes allows flexibility to transfer capacity and functions from the one element to the other either during design development or as demographic and real estate values change.
- The interface between indoor and open spaces which is expressed in the continuous frontage of openings to public and semi-public space enhancing the possibility for interior and exterior spaces to merge. The well serviced open space supported by a diversity of uses and through traffic, has the opportunity of generating a place with a distinct identity not only at Parkgate Street but the wider Heuston area. From Heuston station the positioning of a sheltered public piazza opposite the station forecourt and ticket hall suggests a potential integration between the two.

- Connectivity of place achieved through the compatibility and synergy between different uses in a given location. High density housing is in itself a generator of activity, increasing footfall and so the viability of the commercial services and amenity provided. The housing mix and tenure types reflects a new clientele for West Dublin (young urban professionals, students, a transient high value work force and the adventurous tourist). The appropriate uses, for the semi and public open spaces and its management has yet to be developed as the character of the neighborhood emerges.
- Contextualization of identity through design, this does not refer to the architectural design as a stylistic expression but more the place making brief for the development including the cultural integration of 42a Parkgate Street in its context.
 - o The massing of building volumes and the articulation of the plan has carefully considered the impact of the massing and scale including the skyline on the Panoramic views toward the Monument. The important prospect and panoramic views from the east are enhanced to some extent (despite being obscured to an extent) by being framed and defined in a given perspective, compared with the to the imprecise nature of the current view. Viewed and experienced at eye level and within local landscapes the vertical continuous walling of the Parkgate Street Street frontage will reveal The Monument more gradually but contextualising and enhancing the verticality of the monument and the viewing experience. Empirical studies have showed that the condition of the 'foreground' seems to impact more in the viewing experience than the middle of the background of a given view (ref. SDS 19, Tall Buildings Strategy for London, GLA, 2002).
 - o The second aspect key in adding a sense of uniqueness to the place is the retention and integration in the design of the existing heritage. It conveys a sense of maturity, a uniqueness a historic background to an otherwise bland new place. The opening-up of large open spaces towards the station, the focus of Heuston north and south of the Liffey and the perforating of the river frontage facilitates the meaningful and aesthetically confident incorporation of the site's heritage components into the design. The management of the retained heritage wall, tower and warehouse structure is a difficult challenge which has successfully been addressed by the design of the southern river frontage. The approach to the integration of the historic walling as well as the sense of spaciousness, a strong characteristic of the existing main Hickeys warehouse/workshop, begins to construct 'identity narratives' drawn from it's heritage, to the otherwise contemporary architectural vocabulary.

The city viewed at eye level ("Ground-scape") in many ways has greater impact in the way the city is perceived than the "skyline". The collage of visual experiences moving through the city makes distinctive places which over time are given identity and value through personalization and insightful management.

6.4 Resilience and Adaptability: Capturing the long-term value

In the past, place character and identity developed organically over time guided by gradual growth and socio-cultural norms. Today the scale and sophistication of contemporary investment can lead to the generation of 'instant places' with an entirely new identity, often supported by the reinterpretations of retained fragments of urban history (i.e. King's Cross, London) with increased real estate value and the appropriate referencing to existing more mature places. The social value and long-term sustainability and economic viability of places relies on the ability of spaces to evolve in order to accommodate often different programmes of uses without the need for the constant redevelopment of built space with disruption and the un-sustainable implications of ineffective use of resources and energy consumption.

The design and space attributes at Parkgate Street hold the potential for the generation of a new place for Dublin with long term sustainability and resilience reflected in the choice of built form characteristics working in synergy with the appropriate functions and management. The characteristics which can allow adaptations and change, so providing the ability for transformation, relates at all scales and levels of design:

- Site level the reorganization of accessibility and fit out of open space,
- Shell in commercial buildings typically a 75 year life providing the structural frame, roof, floors and vertical services.
- Skin (cladding) with a 25-year life cycle,
- Services 15 years and adaptable, depending on the floor to floor height to be changed to suit the needs of different functions,
- Scenery 7 years the interior fit out which reflects the identity and values of the organisation
- Settings rearranged day by day to suit the particular activity or user. Several design attributes are valuable in retaining the sense of a distinctive place with a high level of adaptability to respond to changing demands. Such as :
- The willingness to innovate both operationally and spatially
In central Dublin the shortage of affordable homes is stimulating the willingness to innovate. 42a Parkgate Street adjacent to a mixed modal transport hub, with its high-density housing provision combined with the specific tenure model (rented accommodation) responds directly to Dublin's emerging demands adding in parallel to the diversity of housing tenures in the new Heuston Quarter. The variety of unit sizes, the high quality and highly service apartments can clearly support the relatively new and demanding .COM economy.
- The allowance for variable and short term uses. Heuston north of the Liffey is an area of change. Changing as the centre of Dublin expands and public transport improves. 42a Parkgate Street is a potential catalyst for change. The structuring of the ground plan into distinct but overlapping blocks allows for the development to be constructed in parts and by so doing raise awareness of the area and reach out to the surrounding community. Before, during and after construction the management of the programme should aim to use the configuration of the site to build awareness of the address as part of a new city neighborhood, with pop-up units and throughways. As time progresses

the clarity and typological simplicity of the plan with its interlocking blocks and the continuity of space highlight clearly the potential for spaces to retain their relevance in the future through the ease of changing use and upgrading space - shifting boundaries across uses within a clean generic floor plan. The development through incremental change becomes a slice of the city.

The scale of the development and investment is such that can stimulate significant change at Heuston and capture the opportunity to implement the Heuston Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA 7).

7. Conclusions: Overall Assessment

7.1 Looking Ahead

Greater Dublin continues to grow (Section 2). Central Dublin is thriving. Growth east to the docks is now established and land use in the historic centre is intensifying through infill and conversion. The new TU Dublin Grange Gorman campus to the north and the innovation cluster at the Liberties in the south has generated a westward move with the Liffey as its spine. Heuston, with the public and private sectors working together with civil society is well positioned to become a distinctive quarter of Central Dublin. The process of the city and developer working together at the early stage of design, reflected by this report, provides a positive pointer for the future.

7.2 Urban Marker and Distinctive Place

Visualising the city is a combination of how we view, perceive and experience it (section 3). The Parkgate Street development with its strategically positioned tower and mixed-use podium of settings provides both a city-wide marker and a high density collection of interconnected blocks that provide the framework to nurture a diverse, accessible and distinctive place (section 4). The overall composition of separate but interlocking buildings, presents the character and vitality of a high density city neighbourhood.

The ground floor has been considered so the relationship between interior and exterior space can adapt to reflect the changing character of the surrounding neighbourhoods and the emerging tenancy profiles. Movement around and through the block has been considered to recognise the interface between: Public realm, which is owned and managed by the City; Semi-public space, owned and managed by the land owner and accessible to the public; Semi-private, space which is accessible by the public by invitation. The degree of accessibility reflecting the expectations of the mix of tenants it is wished to attract and the strength of community engagement.

7.3 Transit Hub and Gateway to the West

The focus of the Heuston District north and south of the river is the station. 42a Parkgate Street both visually and functionally is part of the ensemble,

connecting to the hinterland and cultural sites behind, and adding to the amenity of the station. Major city termini are recognised today as more than places to pass through. The station and its environs is becoming a destination and significant place within the urban landscape (King's Cross, St Pancras, or Antwerp). Heuston station area has the opportunity to become a place to stop and dwell, meet, exchange, reflect, learn and enjoy. A place of interchange between different scales and modes of travel. For Irish Rail Heuston could become an exemplar for Transport Orientated Development (TOD)

The Parkgate Street proposals reflect the potential longer-term connections to the comprehensive development of the railway lands behind the station, and the early stage role it can play as a pilot for the development to follow.

7.4 Working Together

Capturing value in the rental market relies on creating a place people wish to come to and stay. Creating that place is equally about the neighbourhood, which provides identity and the building as an address and real estate asset. Shaping the neighbourhood is a collaborative endeavour between the city and state ensuring the provision of long term infrastructure; business designing the buildings and management structures to establish a framework to foster long term value; and the tenants and wider community actively engaging in the process of change to ensure they have the services and amenities they require located in a neighbourhood to which they can contribute and enjoy. The design dialogue between the City, Ruirside Developments Limited and their design team has seeded a process of collaboration. The outcome is a robust ground-plan that provides a framework for adaptation over time and a built form that reflects the distinctive morphology of this quarter of Central Dublin.

Professor John Worthington and Dr Lora Nicolaou
On behalf of Ruirside Developments Limited

Short CVs

JOHN WORTHINGTON MBE

AA Dip (Hons), M Arch (Penn), Hon DSc (Rdg), Hon AoU, Hon FRIBA, Hon FRIAI, FRSA

A practitioner and academic, John, studied at the Architectural Association London (1960-64) and subsequently on a Harkness Fellowship at the Universities of Pennsylvania and UC Berkeley (1965-67). From 1993-97 he was Professor of Architecture and Director of the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York.

A founding Partner of DEGW, an international strategic design and consulting practice, John, for over 35 years has acted in Ireland as a strategic consultant for private corporations (ESB, Irish Life), Urban Developments (Cherrywood Business Park) and Public Bodies (OPW, IDA headquarters). In 2000 with Lora Nicolaou he was responsible for Managing Intensification and Change: A Strategy for Dublin Building Height (2000) and subsequently chaired the city of Dublin Urbanism Advisory Panel (2001-11). In 2005 he undertook a review for the Higher Education Authority and RIAI on the Future of Architectural Higher Education in Ireland.

Since 2006, John, has been an independent consultant and collaborative urbanist. He was Director of the Academy of Urbanism and Commissioner of the Independent Transport Commission leading the review of the spatial impact of High Speed Rail. For services to Urbanism and Transport, John in 2016, was awarded an MBE

LORA NICOLAOU PHD

Dip. Arch, MSc Arch, MA UD, PhD, ARB ((UK), MRTPI (UK), TEE (Gr), ETEK (Cy)
LMN Design, Architecture/Urbanism and Frederick University, Cyprus

Lora Nicolaou is an architect, with postgraduate studies in urban design and is qualified as a town planner in the UK and Cyprus with extensive experience both in practice and academia. She was the Director of Urban Strategies at DEGW (1998-2009) a design and consultancy practice in London. In parallel she held the positions of the Head of Research for the Urban Renaissance Institute (URI) at the University of Greenwich, UK (2004-2010). Lora also taught at Oxford Brookes University (Joint Centre for Urban Design, 1989-2000) and a visit profession at the University of Cyprus (2011).

She currently holds a position as a Visiting Academic at Frederick University, Cyprus where she co-founded a new research unit, UPDU (Urban Planning and Development Unit) and has established her own design studio, LMN Design, specialized in strategic briefing, masterplanning and research consultancy. Her interest is the interpretation of user's needs & preferences in a way that can intelligently inform design and integrated development strategies.

As a Director of Urban Strategies at DEGW, an international strategic design and consulting practice, Lora had worked in the late 90s and early 2000s closely with J Worthington, on a number of strategic briefing and masterplanning projects in Dublin for both public and private sector clients, often in a genuinely collaborative environment exploring the new 'norms' in urban planning in Dublin during a period of very high development pressure. Project include among others the Cherrywood Science and Technology Park and District Centre Masterplans (Dunloe Ewart PLC and British Land) Barrow street masterplan (Treasury Holdings), South Wharf Development Framework (DCC) Poolbeg Peninsular Strategic Development Framework and Pollberg Implementation Plan (DCC)., Sward 20/20 vision (Bovale Development Ltd), a building brief and outline masterplan for Government Office of Public Works (Eircom Ireland and OPW), Urban transformations in East Dublin (DCC and Treasury Holdings and the Dublin Building Height Strategy: managing intensification and change 2000 (Dublin Corporation)