

TALL BUILDING STATEMENT

CASTLEFORBES BUSINESS PARK

STRATEGIC HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT
GLENVEAGH LIVING LTD
NOVEMBER 2020

URBAN
INITIATIVES
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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This report has been prepared by Urban Initiatives Studio, urban design and planning consultants, on behalf of Glenveagh Living Ltd, owners of the lands at Castleforbes Business Park, Sheriff Street Upper, North Dock, Dublin 1.

This report provides the Tall Buildings Statement in support of the Strategic Housing Development on Castleforbes Business Park in Dublin's Docklands. It provides a rationale and justification of the 1no. tall building and 3no. mid-rise buildings of the proposal.

1.2 Overview and Findings

The proposed development plans to transform the underused light industrial site into a new urban quarter and activity hub that will be a natural extension of the North Docks area with its own distinct character. The development will define the northern entrance into the Docklands from East Wall and contribute to the regeneration of the wider area.

The tallest element of the proposed development measures 63.2m, meaning it is classified as a tall building by the definition in the Dublin City Development Plan (defined as buildings over 50m in height). The Castleforbes Business Park site is located in the Docklands Strategic Development and regeneration Area (SDRA 6) and the proposed development would create a scale of development fitting for this highly central and sustainable location.

The proposed tall building is not seen in isolation but is a coherent part of the city's urban form. This study defines it as a "local landmark", which marks a place of local significance. It acts as a landmark for the new public space and community facility proposed as part of the scheme and the northern entrance to the Docklands from the East Wall neighbourhood. The proposed landmark building does not compete with more prominent landmarks such as Capital Dock or the consented Exo Building

and will be a meaningful and proportionate addition to Dublin's skyline,

At the local level, the proposed tall building will greatly enhance legibility and wayfinding, as it is aligned along the emerging new walking route from North Wall Quay to Castleforbes. This will close the vista looking north and provide a clear sense of a destination. Furthermore, from East Wall and Sheriff Street Upper, the tall building will assist in wayfinding towards the crossing of the railway line on East road.

The proposed tall building is supported by 3no. mid-rise buildings. These buildings step down in height away from the local landmark, creating a clear and legible cluster, alongside the consented Marshall Yards development to the north. Together they help to achieve an urban density appropriate for this highly accessible locations, and contribute to the distinctive character of the proposed development.

The proposed landmark building and cluster of midrise buildings is found to cause no adverse effects on the city image, key views, heritage assets or historic townscape, and their impact on nearby residences are minimised by site layout and design

Overall the tall building statement finds that the approach to height and design of the proposed tall building is well considered and fully justified.

1.3 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Site Description: Explanation of site location and proposal description.

Chapter 3 Tall Buildings Context: Review of policies relevant to tall buildings and an analysis of current and emerging tall buildings in Dublin.

Chapter 4 Tall Buildings Theoretical Approach: Outlines the theoretical framework that underpins the justification of the tall building proposal.

Chapter 5 Strategic Tall Building Justification: Provides the strategic justification for a tall building on the Castleforbes site.

Chapter 6 Local Landmark Justification: Justifies the legibility and placemaking role of the proposed local landmark.

Chapter 7 Determining the Appropriate Height: Applies the theoretical approach from Chapter 4 to Dublin City and demonstrates that the proposed height for the tall building is equivalent to a local landmark in its context and therefore justified.

Chapter 8 Contextual landmark design: This section reviews the design of the tall building and how well it manages to support its role as a local landmark.

Chapter 9 Supporting Mid-Rise Buildings: Provides the rationale and design approach for the proposed 3no. mid-rise buildings.

Chapter 10 Townscape and Visual Impact
Demonstrates the impact the proposal would have on townscape and views.

Chapter 11 Summary and Conclusion

1.4 Urban Initiatives Studio Expertise

Our Experience in Dublin

Urban Initiatives Studio have a long history of working in Dublin City, and in particular the Docklands. We worked with the Dublin Docklands Development Authority on the Grand Canal and Custom House Docks Urban Design Frameworks, which established the Vision and strong spatial plan and urban development principles that characterise the Docklands today, and that are intrinsically linked with its success.

This involved the identification of architectural and public realm design guidelines to guide development and promote a high quality waterfront location. Our strategy has guided location and setting of Daniel Libeskind's theatre in the Dublin Grand Canal Dock area and Kevin Roche's Conference Centre on the north side, both now linked by Calatrava's bridge.



Figure 1.1: Grand Canal and Custom House Docks Urban Design Framework

Tall Buildings Strategies

Urban Initiatives Studio is also an expert in providing strategic tall building's advice to Local Authorities in the UK and Ireland. We have a long track record of preparing tall buildings strategies often in places that experience significant pressures for tall buildings in sensitive townscape and heritage contexts.

This includes the City of Bath (World Heritage Site), Torbay, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown (Dublin), the City of Belfast, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the City of Westminster, the London Borough of Islington, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (including Canary Wharf), Brentford / the Golden Mile in Hounslow next to Kew Gardens WHS, and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. We are currently preparing a tall buildings strategy for Liverpool City in the context of its World Heritage Designation, and advising Derby on their approach to tall buildings.



Belfast



Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown



Liverpool



City of Westminster



LB Islington



LB Tower Hamlets



Bath



RB Kensington and Chelsea

Figure 1.2: A selection of our Building Height and Tall Building Strategies

2 Site Description

2.1 Site Location

Castleforbes Business Park is a light industrial site located on the northern edge of the Docklands, bounded by East Road and Sherriff Street Upper. It is located 400m north of North Wall Quay and 400m east of Docklands rail station.

It is bounded to the north by a rail line, is adjacent to the East Wall residential neighbourhood to the north and forms a northern edge of the North Lotts SDZ PLanning Scheme area. A rail yard adjoins the site to the north-east.



Figure 2.1: Castleforbes Business Park aerial view

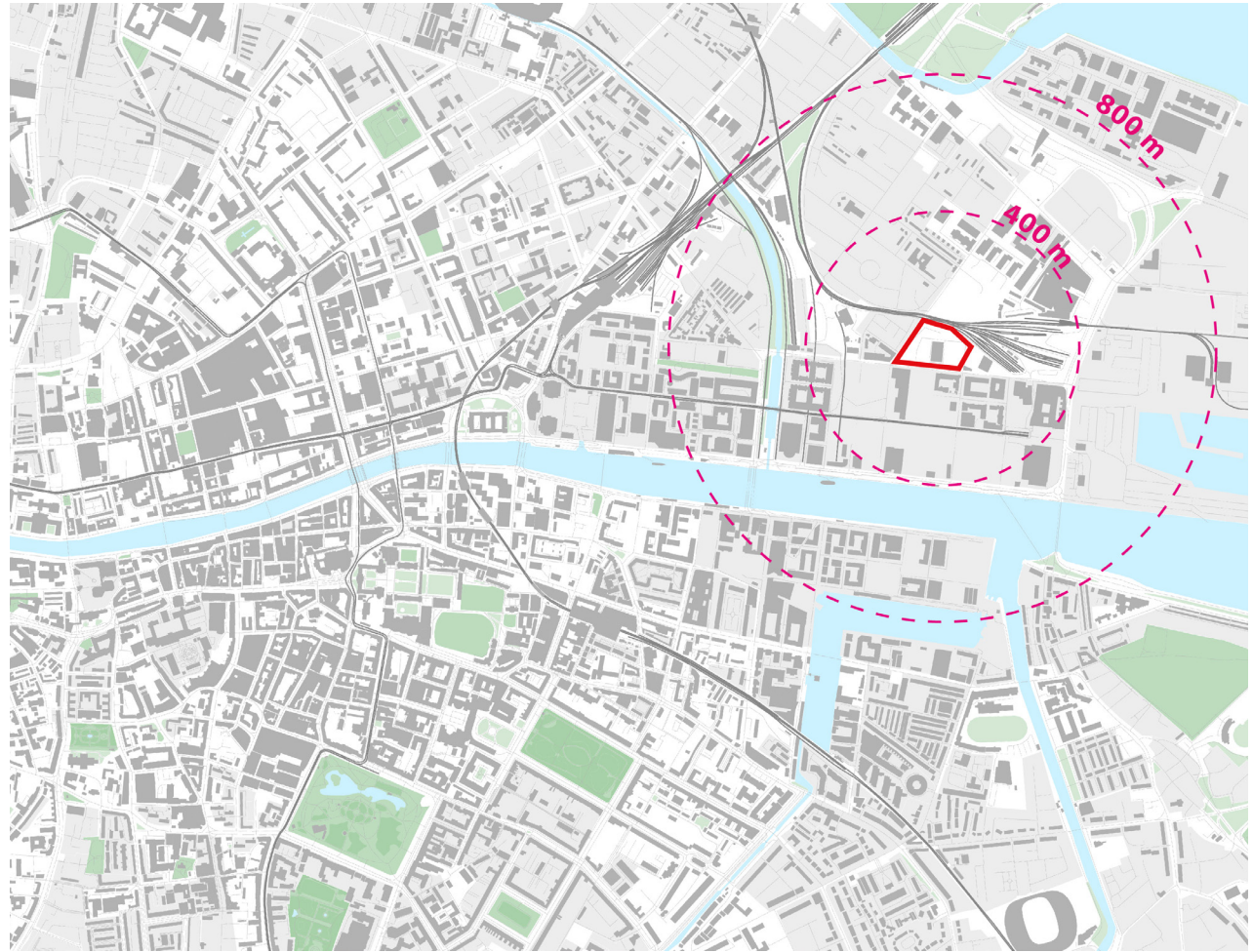


Figure 2.2: Site location

2.2 Proposal

Waiting on official scheme description from planners.

The site adjoining to the east has planning permission for a hotel and office (ref: 3433/19). A planning application for a hotel has been granted permission (ref: 2143/20) for the corner site of Castleforbes Business Park. This is therefore considered separately to the main site, which is the subject of this report (see Figure 2.3).

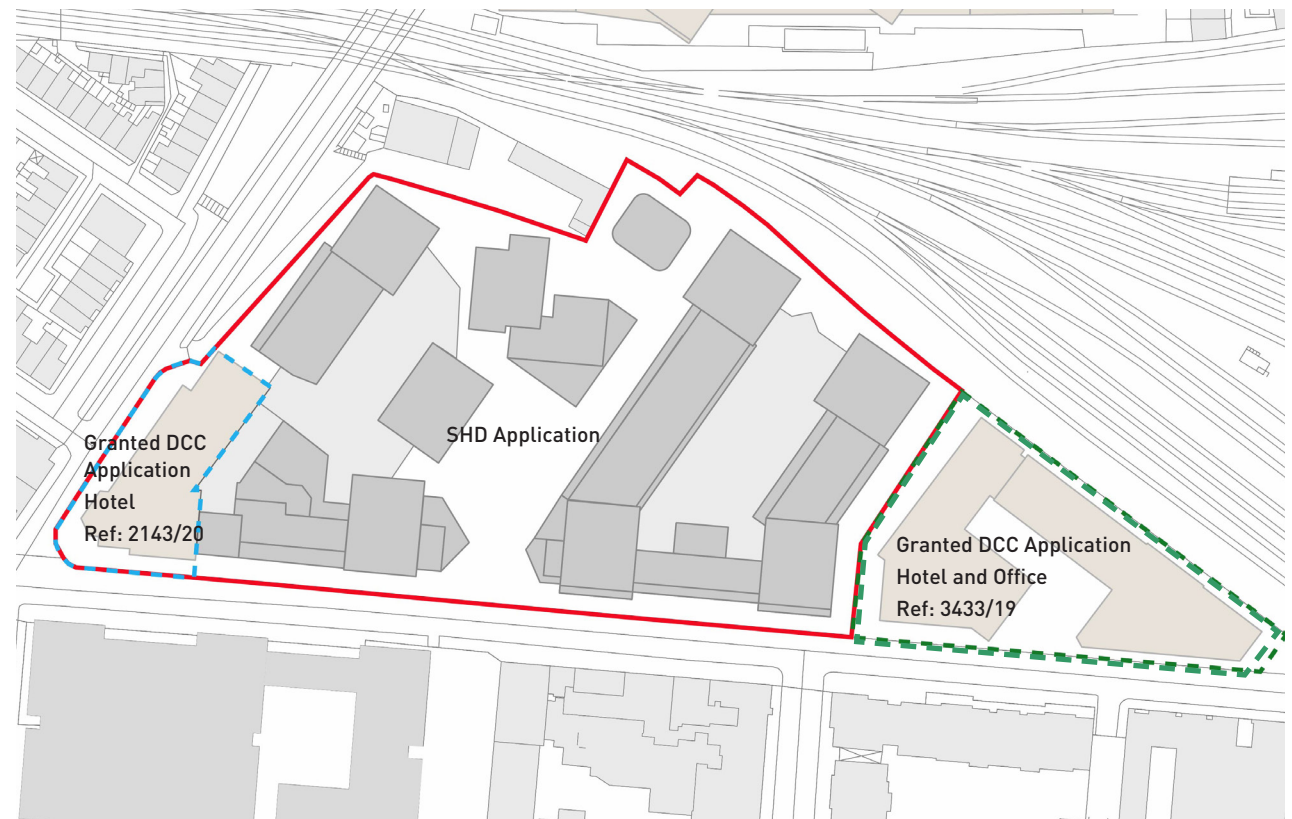


Figure 2.3: Proposed development with other relevant planning applications

3 Tall Buildings Context

3.1 Policy Context

Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines (2018)

This national guidance states that to deliver housing numbers, thriving city and town centres, and limit our impact on the environment, we must build upward rather than outward. The development of brownfield land and a general increase in density is needed, compared to what has been considered appropriate in the past.

Achieving higher density does not automatically imply tall buildings, but they can play a role in higher density development while achieving other benefits to placemaking, character and distinctiveness. This draft guidance states that local authorities should move away from restrictive approaches to building height and density, to “making 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.”

To facilitate this, the guidance provides development management criteria that local authorities must use when determining planning applications for tall buildings. If a development proposal complies with the criteria, then a local authority should approve it even if specific objectives of the local development plan would prohibit it.

Dublin City Development Plan

The Dublin City Development Plan defines Tall Buildings as those over 50m. It states that Dublin is generally a low rise city and there are limited opportunities for high rise development. The main sensitivity around tall buildings is their potential negative impact on the city’s historic core, Architectural Conservation Areas and heritage assets such as Trinity College, Dublin Castle, historic squares and canals, as well as the intrinsically low-rise character of the wider city. These aspects are protected under policy SC16.

However, the development plan acknowledges that tall buildings can play a positive role as landmarks, as positive contributions to the skyline and in increasing density.

The Development Plan identifies four general areas for future tall buildings (Figure 3.1); the Docklands, Heuston (an emerging new quarter near Heuston rail station), Connolly (a redevelopment site beside Connolly rail station) and George’s Quay (the location of the Tara Station tower). Of these four locations, only the Docklands is not associated with a major rail hub, although the area is well served by public transport and is the potential location of a future Dart Underground Station. In the Docklands, tall buildings play more of a role in placemaking and achieving sustainable densities, with recent or emerging tall buildings marking key locations such

as Grand Canal Dock and the 3Arena/entrance to Dublin Port (Exo Building).

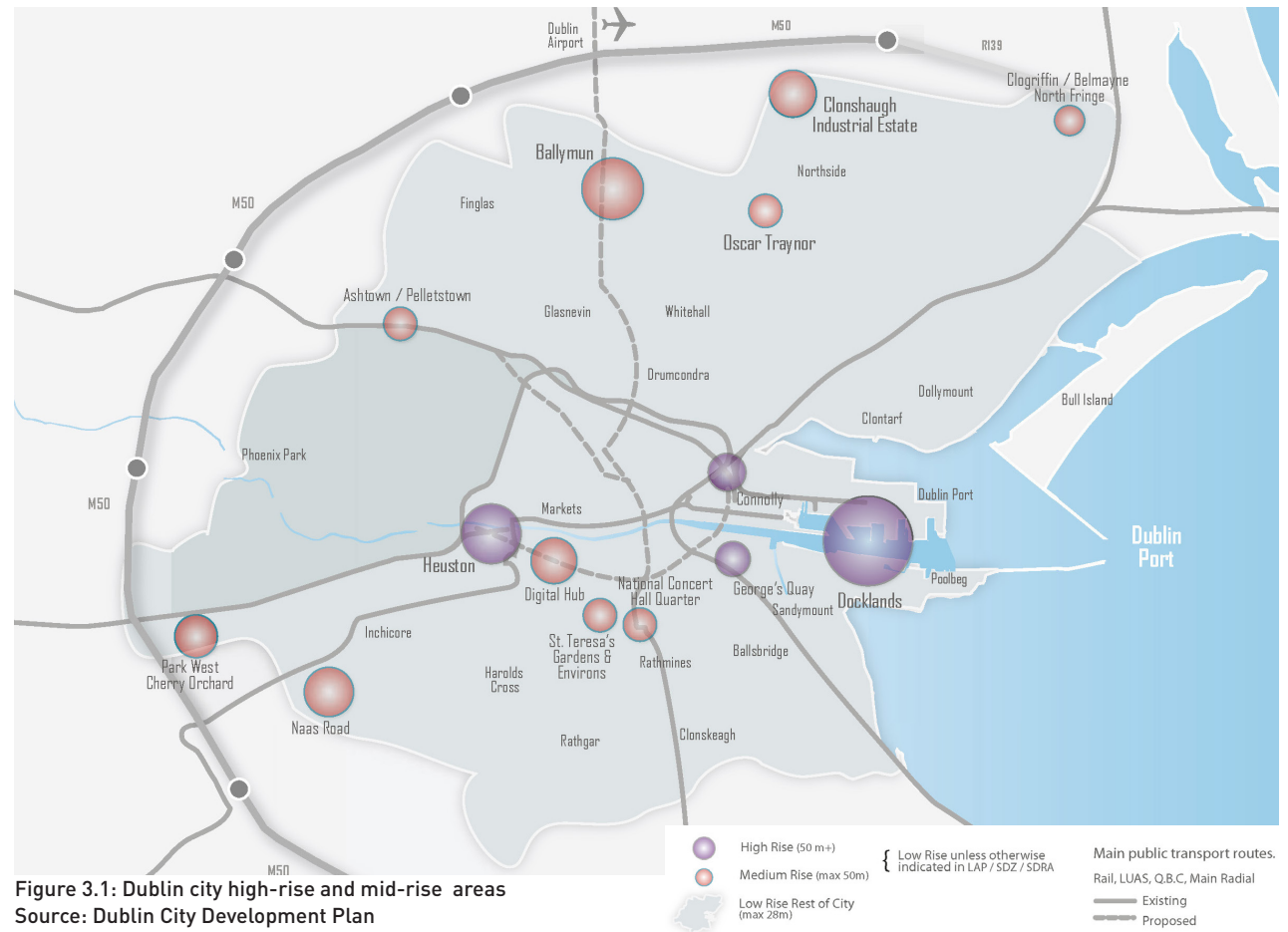
The conservation and celebration of the city’s built heritage and character is a key principle of the city Development Plan. The unique character of Dublin city consists of its geographic features such as the River Liffey, landscape features such as its parks and gardens and architectural heritage, which includes its buildings, streets and urban structure. *“New development will be required to respect the unique character of the city by taking account of the intrinsic value of the built heritage, landscape and natural environment.”* The further enhancement of the city’s character is ensured under policy SC2.

The Development Plan acknowledges the unique character of the Docklands and seeks to improve connectivity between the Docklands and the city centre under policy SC8.

Separate to Architectural Conservation Areas are Conservation Areas that are delineated through land use zoning: Z2 Residential Conservation Areas, and Z8 Georgian Conservation Areas. Parts of the residential area to the north and west of the Castleforbes site are zoned a Z2 Residential Conservation Areas, which are groupings of buildings and open spaces with an attractive quality of architectural design and scale.

“The general objective for such areas is to protect them from unsuitable new developments or works that would have a negative impact on the amenity or architectural quality of the area.”

Georgian Conservation Areas (Z8) covers the city’s “Georgian Core” north and south of the river. These are located some distance from the Castleforbes site, but the effect of the proposed development on views into and out of these areas must be considered.



3.2 Tall Buildings in Dublin

History

The urban form of Dublin has historically been a generally low-rise city of terraces and urban blocks punctuated by occasional taller elements. The earliest examples of tall architectural elements are church and cathedral spires, such as St Andrews Church and Abbey Church, both of which still occupy commanding positions in the inner city. In the 18th Century, the Custom House was constructed and, despite being lower than many existing churches at 40m, enjoys iconic landmark status because of its prime position on the River Liffey.

The architectural movements of the 20th Century have left their mark on the skyline in the form of Liberty Hall, O'Connell Bridge House, Central Bank, and the more comprehensively developed One George's Quay Plaza. These modern designs sit at odds with the historical context, acting as definitive landmarks through their singularity and contrast.

The turn of the new millennium brought the Spire, a monument to contemporary Dublin sitting at the crossroads of O'Connell Street, Henry Street and North Earl Street. Although it is an art piece rather than a building, the Spire is the tallest structure in the city at 120m, and fulfils a key role in wayfinding and city image. At this point in time, the tall buildings in Dublin were generally clustered around

O'Connell Street, College Green and Custom House Quay, marking this area as the gravitational centre of Dublin City.

Since the early 2000's, new tall buildings have been emerging as part of the regeneration of the Dublin Docklands. A new cluster has developed at Grand Canal Dock, with Alto Vetro, Millennium Tower and Google Docks all rising above 50m (shown in Figure 3.2 on page 13).

The most recent addition to the Docklands skyline is Capital Dock, a 79m residential tower book-ending the eastern edge of the south docks. The Docklands regeneration has created a new focus and skyline east of the historic city centre, which continues to grow.

Emerging Tall Buildings

The Docklands has been the focus of tall building development in Dublin over the last 2 decades. The recently approved Boland's Quay development (comprising three towers) will solidify Grand Canal Dock as the city's high-rise neighbourhood. The Exo Building, when completed, will be 73m and the first significantly tall building in the north docks, providing a counterweight to the 79m Capital Dock building in the south docks, and signposting the interface between the docks and Dublin Port. Alongside a 75m tower proposed in the proposed

amended SDZ Planning Scheme (not yet approved), these buildings are forming a "Docklands Cluster", which is highlighted in Figure 3.2 on page 13.

A 15 storey tall building has been granted permission at Marshall Yards, just north of the Castleforbes site. This development, although outside the Docklands masterplan area, could be seen as an extension of the Docklands urban form.

The North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Amendment to the SDZ planning scheme (not yet approved) beside the 75m scheme across the Liffey from Capital Dock (mentioned above) also proposes a lower 45m building at the corner of New Wapping Street and North Wall Quay. The amendment further proposes a dozen 10-12 storey buildings on corner sites in the North Lotts to accent the mid-rise block structure. Clearly the Docklands is in the process of intensifying further and incorporating taller buildings to deliver a diverse mixed use quarter.

Two additional tall buildings clusters are emerging in the city. The approved Tara Street Hotel (88m) and College Square (82.5m) developments will add substantial height at George's Quay. In addition to the existing Liberty Hall, Custom House and George's Quay Plaza tall elements, this will result in a distinctive tall building cluster ("City Centre Cluster"). The comprehensive redevelopment of land at Connolly Station is planned with a cluster of 5 towers, forming the Connolly Quarter.

Proposed East Road Cluster

The proposed development at the Castleforbes site together with the approved taller buildings at Marshall's Yard establish a new "East Road Cluster" of larger and taller buildings at the edge of the North Docks area and the East Wall Neighbourhood. The cluster emphasises the gateway and interface of these very different areas with a fitting character of its own. Whilst the development appears tall locally, especially in the context of East Wall, only one building on the Castleforbes site falls firmly within the definition of a tall building by the City Development Plan. Overall this cluster is of a lesser scale than any of the other three existing and emerging tall building clusters in Dublin.

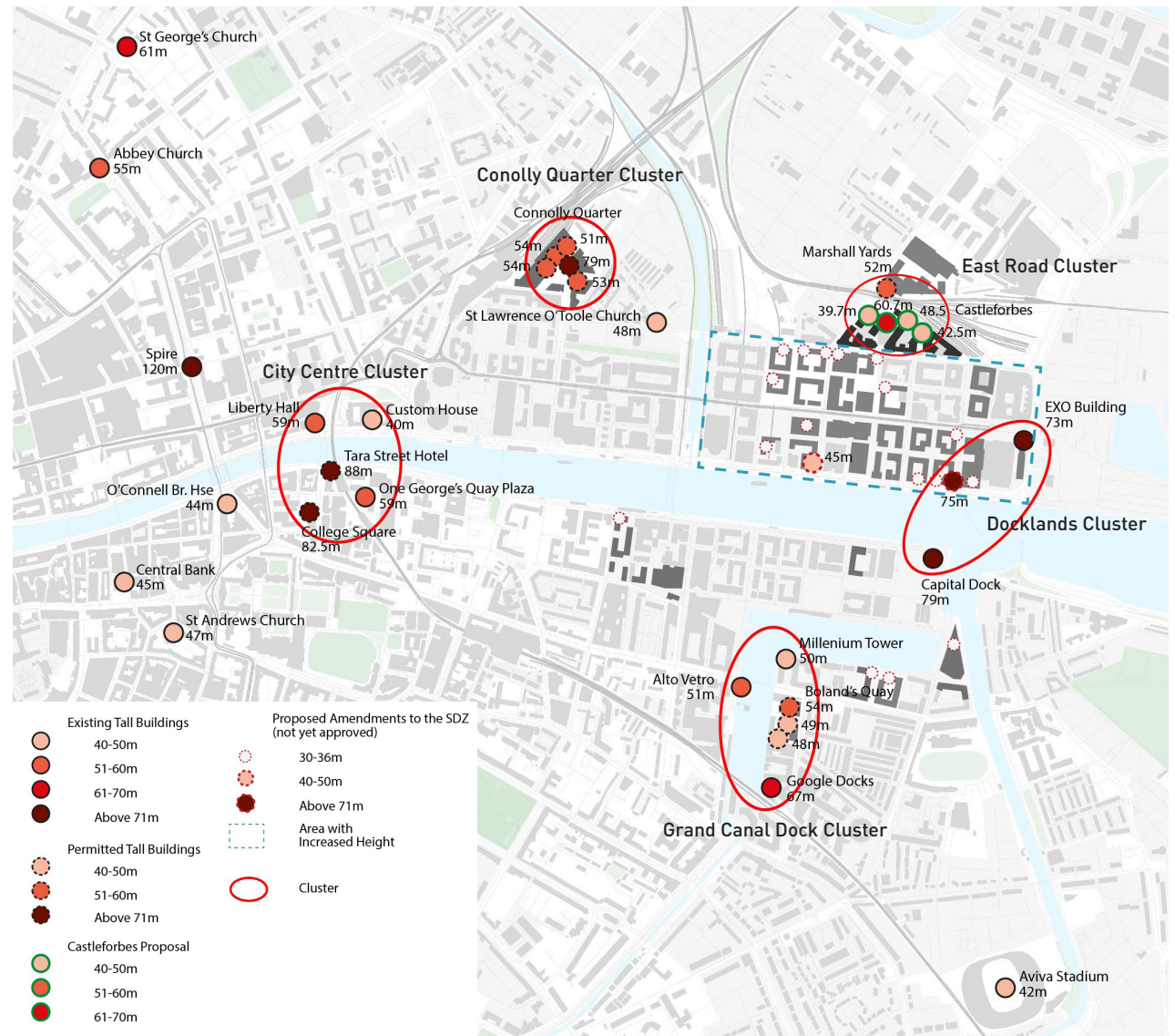


Figure 3.2: Existing, planned and proposed large and tall building locations and clusters

4 Tall Buildings Theoretical Approach

4.1 Prevailing height versus tall buildings

When discussing the height of development it is useful to make a clear distinction between the 'general building height', that is the prevailing height in an area, and 'tall buildings', which covers exceptional buildings that are taller and outstanding.

The prevailing height of buildings affects many aspects of urban areas including their density, character, street enclosure and quality of the public realm, and the social environment. Increasing the general height of an area by a few storeys, as recommended by national policy, can deliver a sizable uplift in the overall density and capacity of an area, increase activity levels and vitality and result in a more compact urban form. Such an increase in density will need to be supported by sufficient transport and other infrastructures as well as the provision of quality open spaces and amenities.

Tall buildings are the exceptions to the prevailing height. They are significantly taller than the prevailing height in an area, break the skyline and are visually prominent.

While tall buildings have a role to play in increasing densities locally, they also are important in contributing to the character and identity of places, enhancing legibility and articulating the skyline,



Figure 1.1: A 10 storey building is perceived as tall in a 2-storey context while in an urban 5-6 storeys context is only considered a local highpoint

acting as catalysts for regeneration, offering diversity of accommodation and contributing to vitality and place making.

4.2 Tall buildings definition

A 'tall building' is a relative term. A ten-storey building might be a (very) tall building in a predominantly two-storey suburban area, yet would be considered only as a local high point in an urban five to six storey context. Thus, tall buildings must be considered in relation to their local context (Figure 1.1).

The taller a building the greater is its presence and impact, both locally as well as on the skyline. The ratio of the height of a tall building to the prevailing contextual height is a useful indicator of the extent of its 'tallness' in its specific context.

The prevailing height of an area together with its coherence or variation in building height, are the reference parameters against which the height of a tall building is perceived in the urban environment.

The height differential between a tall building and its context can be measured. We call this the context height ratio (CHR). The CHR provides a simple expression of the 'tallness' and level of impact that a tall building will have within their context as well as on the skyline. The CHR allows a relative categorisation of tall buildings in reference to whatever their context is, rather than providing heights in absolute terms, which is often impracticable and crude. As such it provides a contextual tall building definition that can be applied across areas of very different height characteristics.

In respect of the CHR four different height classifications can be identified:

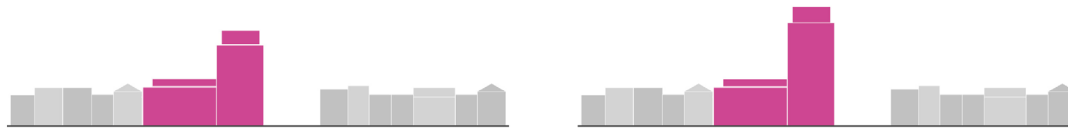
- Large/higher building (CHR <2);
- Local Landmark (CHR 2 to 3);
- District Landmark (CHR 3 to 5); and
- Metropolitan Landmark (CHR >5).

Given that the visibility and impact of a tall building increases with its height, this impact has to be proportionate and meaningful. This is a fundamental tall building premise that should guide tall building work. The height of a taller building should generally correspond to the hierarchy of places, and be proportionate to the relative importance of the place of function marked by the building in the context of the wider settlement.

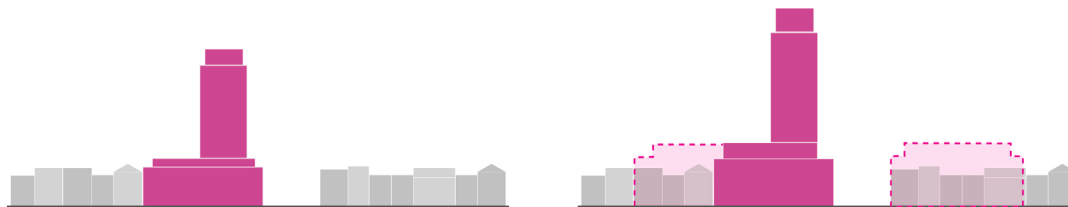
This implies that Local Landmark buildings should mark places of a local importance, District Landmarks mark places or functions that are of district wide importance, and Metropolitan Landmarks should express significance for an entire city or Metropolitan area.

By the very nature of this hierarchy there will only be a few places in Dublin where buildings of District wide importance may be appropriate, while the city is unlikely to sustain more than a small number of Metropolitan Landmarks.

**TALL BUILDING - Local Landmark
(above 2x to 3x wider context height)**



**TALL BUILDING - District Landmark
(above 3x to 5x wider context height)**



**VERY TALL BUILDING - Metropolitan Landmark
(above 5x wider context height)**

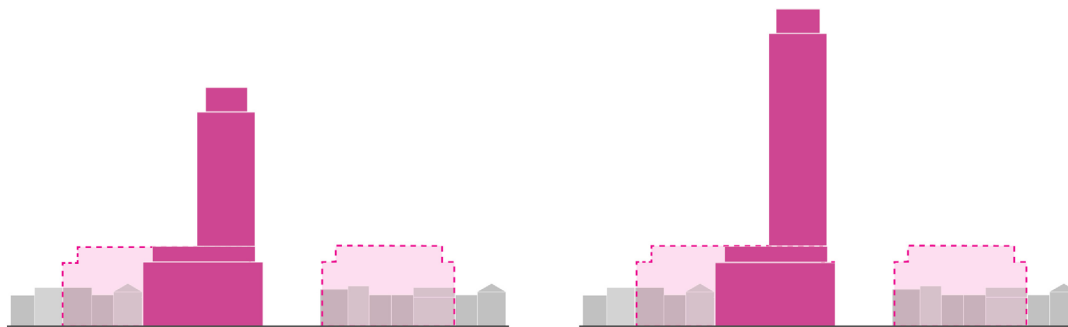


Figure 1.2: Tall buildings hierarchy concept

4.3 The 'pros' and 'cons' of tall buildings

Tall buildings are controversial typologies that divide opinions. Some people love them while others are highly sceptical. Objectively, tall buildings can have beneficial and adverse impacts, which are summarised below.

Potential beneficial impacts of Tall Buildings

Tall buildings can:

- Help to increase density to make best use of infrastructure, especially on constrained sites;
- Perform a landmark role and enhance legibility;
- Enhance the skyline and views to positively contribute to the image of a place;
- Support regeneration as a catalyst and by instilling investor confidence;
- Support viability of economically challenging schemes and deliver associated planning requirements, such as affordable housing; and
- Deliver additional regeneration and public benefits, such as:
 - New public spaces and enhanced public realm;
 - Public viewing points;
 - Desirable uses or facilities; and
 - Cross-subsidisation of other benefits, such as the revitalisation of heritage assets.

Potential adverse impacts of Tall Buildings:

Tall buildings can:

- Cause harm to heritage assets and their setting;
- Impact on the character of sensitive townscapes and landscapes;
- Intrude and detract from views;
- If poorly managed fragment the skyline and weaken the city image;
- Cause adverse microclimatic and environmental impacts from wind funnelling, overshadowing, sun reflection and light pollution;
- Undermine residential amenity and privacy of existing and new residents (impacting on overlooking, day and sun lighting, quality of private and communal amenity spaces etc.);
- Affect the definition, animation and quality of surrounding streets and spaces; and
- Detract from the quality of an area through poor quality design and lack of integration.

4.4 The need for proactive management of tall buildings

Tall buildings by virtue of their scale and height can bring significant change to a place's skyline, its townscape and character. A tall building, in the right location and of high quality, can be transformative and have a lasting positive impact on the character and identity of a place. However, if it is in the wrong location or of poor quality, it can become an eyesore, be resented by the community and detract from a place's character and identity.

In deciding the appropriateness of a tall building the beneficial and adverse impacts both individually and cumulatively will need to be carefully considered and balanced. On a strategic scale this needs to consider the characteristics and sensitivities of the place, together with wider development and planning objectives, as well as development interest and deliverability. On a local and building scale the visual and environmental impact will need to be examined together with an appropriate design response to the streets and spaces and the surrounding urban fabric.

The lack of coordination of tall buildings locations can result in the scattering of towers on the skyline, leading to fragmentation and a poor image. Proactive management of tall buildings therefore will need to ensure that permitted tall buildings are meaningful and proportionate to their context, review the cumulative impact of tall buildings on the skyline and views, and where appropriate group tall buildings into confined cluster locations where they can become distinct skyline features and mark important places of special character.

4.5 Tall Buildings Principles

Based on our work on tall building strategies we have identified a number of principles that tall building proposals should meet in order to be acceptable. The principles are:

- 1) **To be based on a robust townscape justification, helping to:**
 - Enhance legibility, or
 - Support place making and generating a distinct character.
- 2) **The height of a tall building to be proportionate to the function / role of the place in the wider context.**
- 3) **To be located in areas well served by public transport.**
- 4) **To be in an area with a land use mix and character that can support and assimilate the tall building.**
- 5) **To deliver wider regeneration benefits.**
- 6) **To avoid adverse impacts on city image, heritage assets, strategic and local views and the residential amenity of neighbours.**
- 7) **To be of high quality architectural and urban design.**

The seven principles were used to guide the design approach in respect of the tall buildings element, and they are used in this document to justify the tall building's approach of the proposed scheme.

5 Strategic Tall Building Justification

5.1 Strategic Development and Regeneration Area

Castleforbes is located in the Docklands Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA 6), which covers the Docklands Area, and includes the Docklands Strategic Development Zone (SDZ), which is adjoining Castleforbes directly to the south. The key aim of SDRA 6 is the physical, economic and social regeneration of the Docklands area, with an emphasis on integration with existing communities and social development. It is crucial that development contributes to the unique character of the Docklands, nearby historic assets and surrounding communities. The Development Plan places emphasis on the need to grow the residential population of the Docklands.

Relevance to Proposed Tall Building

The site is situated in the Docklands Strategic Development and Regeneration Area, which seeks the physical, economic and social regeneration of the Docklands area and housing growth. A tall building on the Castleforbes site can help to support urban intensification and deliver wider regeneration benefits.

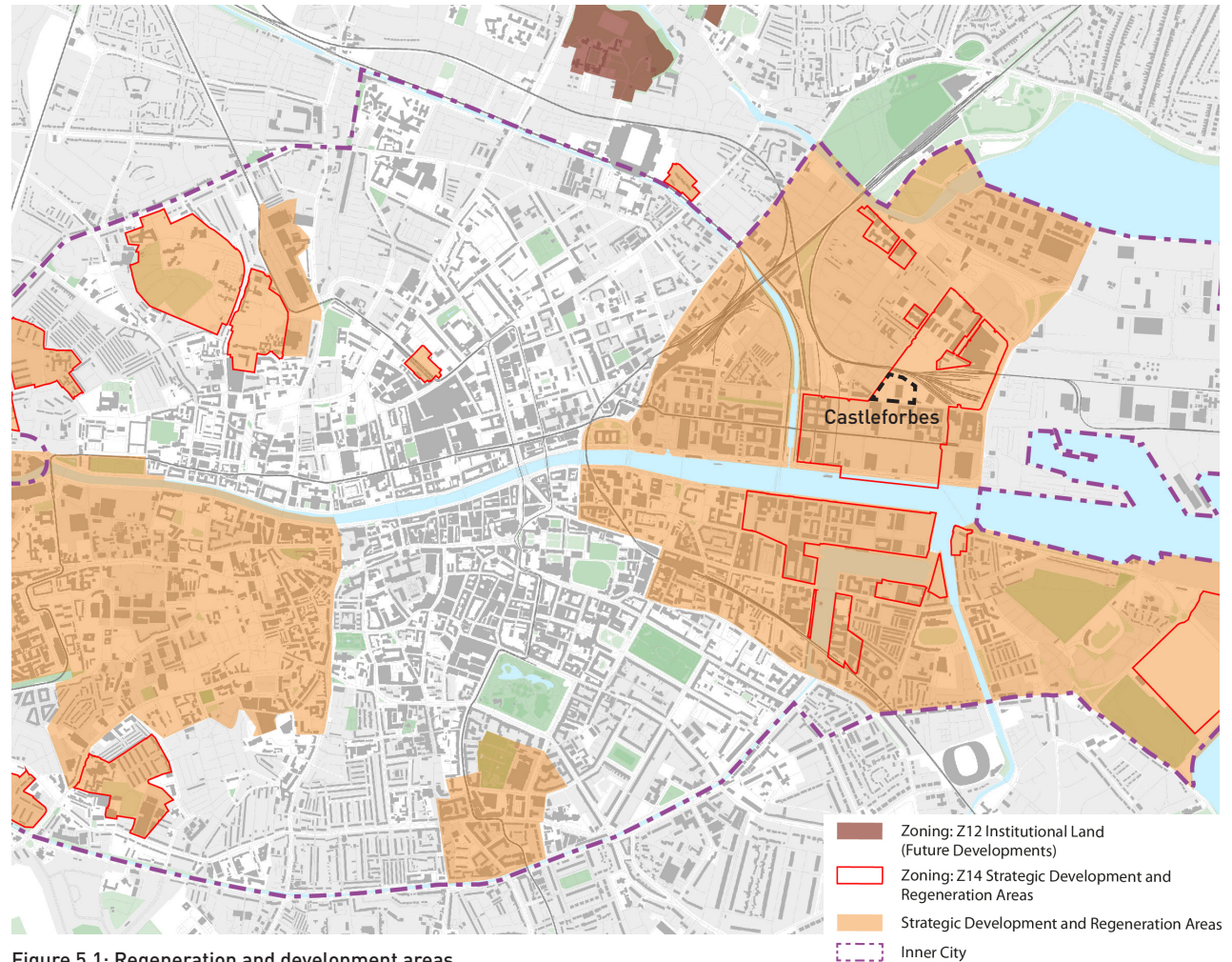


Figure 5.1: Regeneration and development areas

5.2 Zoning

Castleforbes Business Park is currently in light industrial use but is zoned as Z14 Strategic Development and Regeneration Areas (SDRA). This zone has a large number of “Permissible Uses”, including residential, offices, light industry, education, cultural/recreational, with the predominant uses expected to be residential and enterprise/employment space.

The site is at the interface of the residential East Wall area to the north and the mixed use North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Strategic Development Zone, which directly adjoins the site to the south. A few minutes walk south east of Castleforbes is a District Centre, supported by the 3 Arena.

Relevance to Proposed Tall Building

The Castleforbes site is part of the North Docks area, an emerging intense mixed use area that accommodates higher and tall buildings. As such there is a local precedent for taller buildings. The Castleforbes site will act as a natural extension of the Strategic Development Zone and so should reflect it’s dense, urban character, which can assimilate tall buildings.

To the west and north of the Castleforbes site is the residential East Wall neighbourhood. Development will have to consider an appropriate response to this low-rise context.

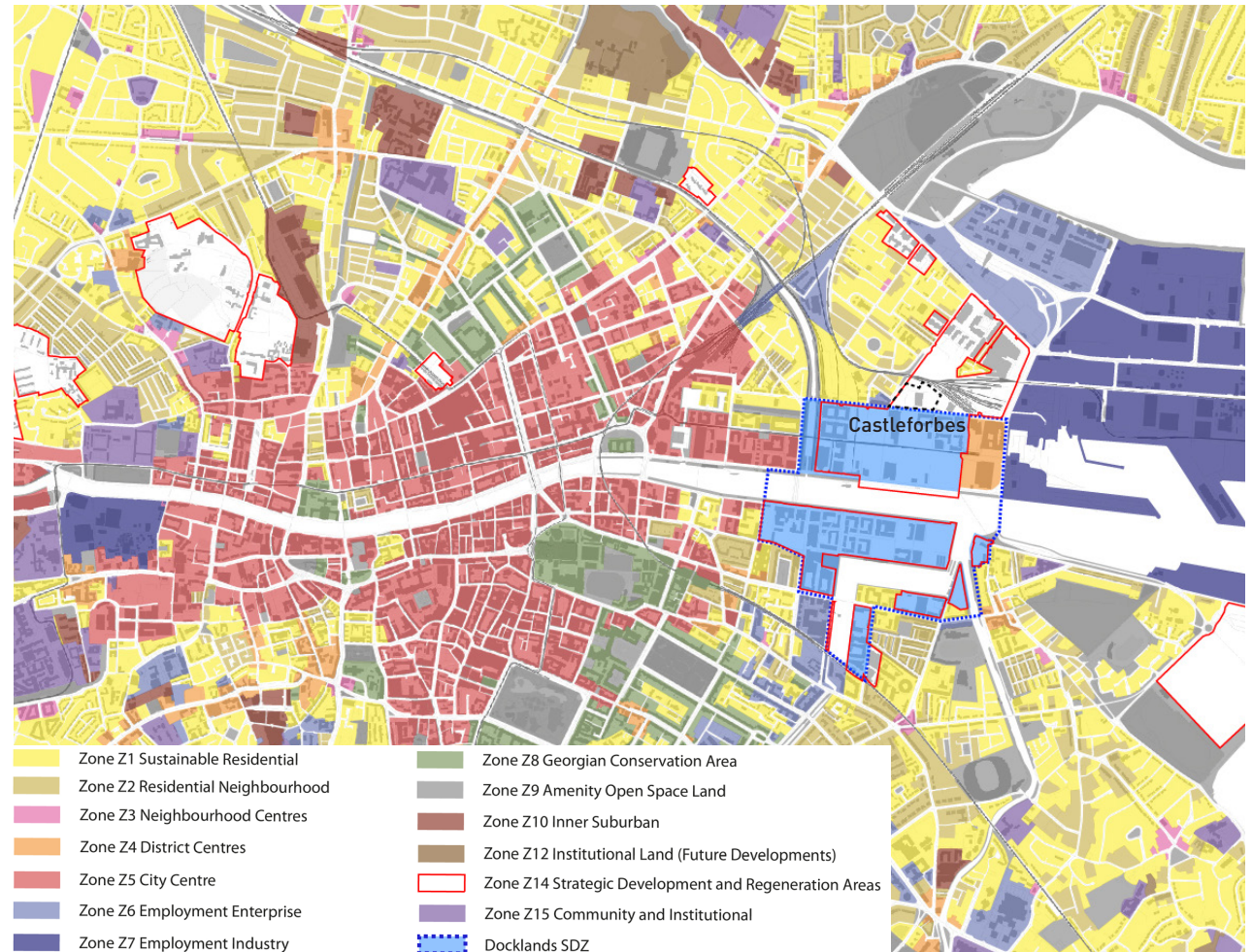


Figure 5.2: Dublin City Development Plan Zoning

5.3 Public Transport Accessibility

Castleforbes Business Park is located in an area of high public transport accessibility. It is less than 400m (10 minutes walk) from Spencer Dock Luas red line stop, which connects the site to Connolly Station, Heuston Station and to interchange with the Luas green line, connecting to South Dublin. The site's good connections with both major rail stations links it to the country's major cities and towns.

The Castleforbes site is 400m from the Docklands rail station, which runs a limited service to the M3 Parkway park-and-ride, which is used mainly by commuters into the Docklands. Finally, the site is located on Dublin Bus route 53a, which provides a limited weekday connection to Talbot Street.

Relevance to Proposed Tall Building

The Castleforbes site is in a highly accessible location, and can be reached by most parts of the city by public transport. Furthermore it is in walking distance to the major employment hub in the docklands, but also to the city centre. It is therefore a prime site for higher density sustainable development.

The higher residential density provided by the proposed tall building is therefore well justified from a sustainable transport perspective.

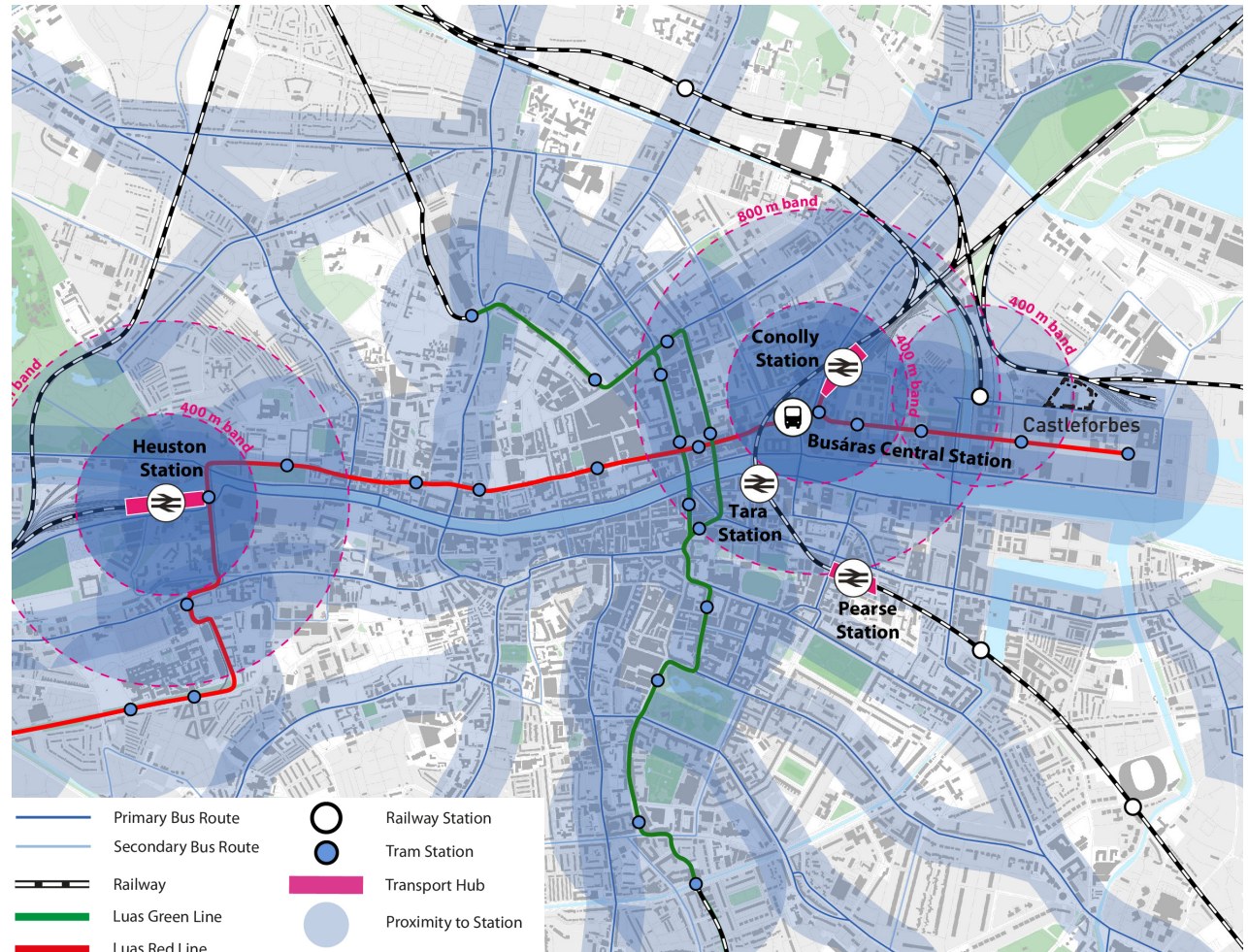


Figure 5.3: Public transport accessibility

5.4 History and Heritage

Historic City Centre

The historic city of Dublin is centred on Dublin Castle and the old walled city. The medieval city grew outwards from there. The Georgian core from St Stephen's Green in the south to Mountjoy Square in the north remains an important part of Dublin's urban form. Key historical buildings within the historic core are the Custom House, Trinity College and Four Courts.

Castelforbes Business Park is located well outside Dublin's historic core, being approximately 1km east of the "Pre 1860" city. It is therefore unlikely that any development here would impact the historic townscape. This is verified in the view assessment (see Section 10 of this report) that finds that there is limited visibility of the proposal from the river corridor and that this impact is negligible.

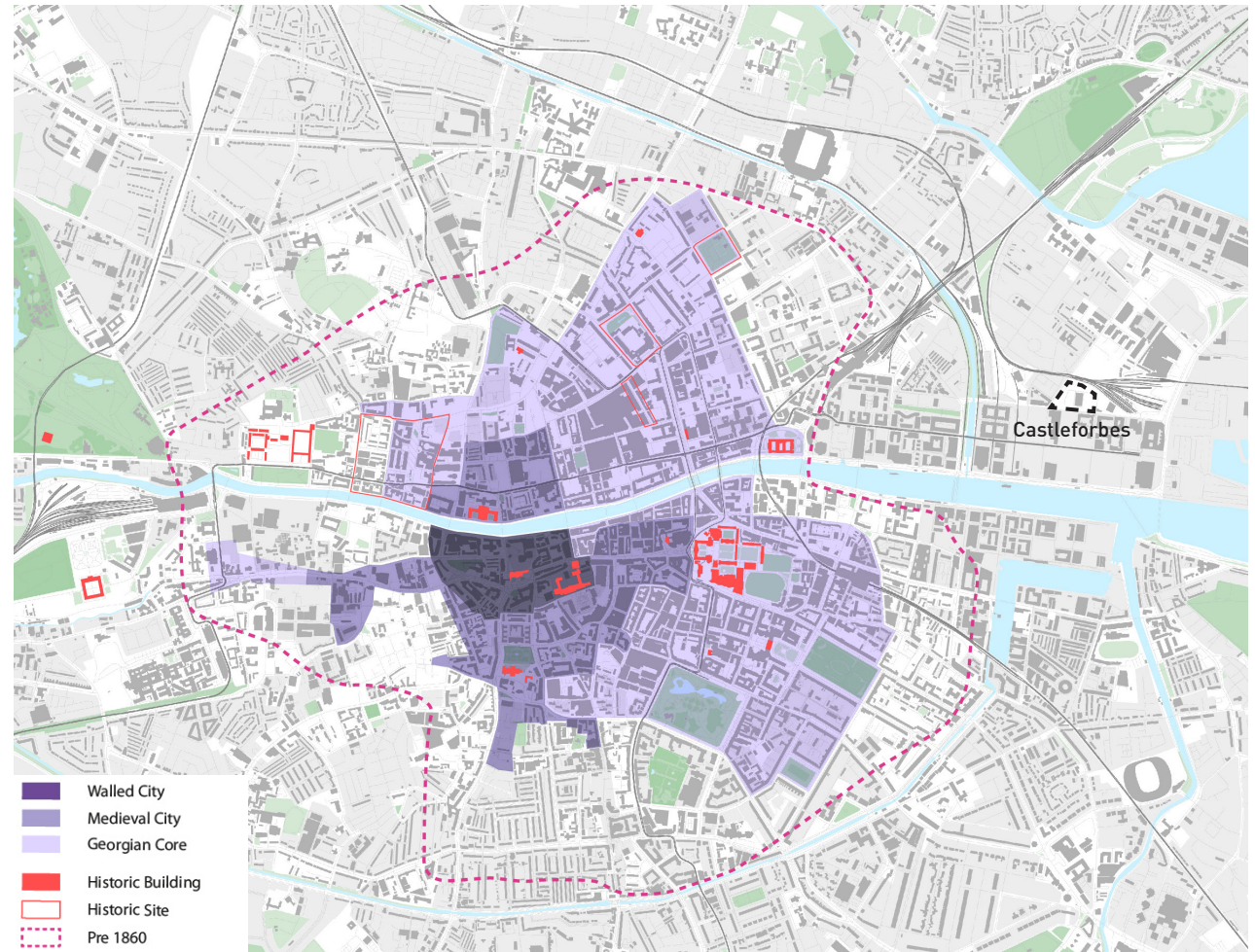


Figure 5.4: Dublin's historic core

Heritage Sensitivities

There are no Architectural Conservation Areas in the immediate vicinity of the Castleforbes Site. Similarly, there are no Protected Structures adjacent to the site. The closest Protected Structure to the site are historic buildings located along North Wall Quay a minimum of 300m to the south of Castleforbes.*

Relevance to the Proposed Tall Building

The proposed development is located well away from the most historically sensitive areas of Dublin, the Georgian Core and Medieval City. The Docklands is outside the Pre-1860 city area and contains few Protected Structures.

Therefore a tall building on this site is unlikely to affect the city's important heritage assets or historic townscape.

* Protected structures were identified from the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2020

** This map represents information from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as GIS information of protected structures within Dublin City was unavailable to this study. Note, that the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage survey of Dublin City is not complete and so some buildings in the south east of the city are not represented in Figure 5.5.

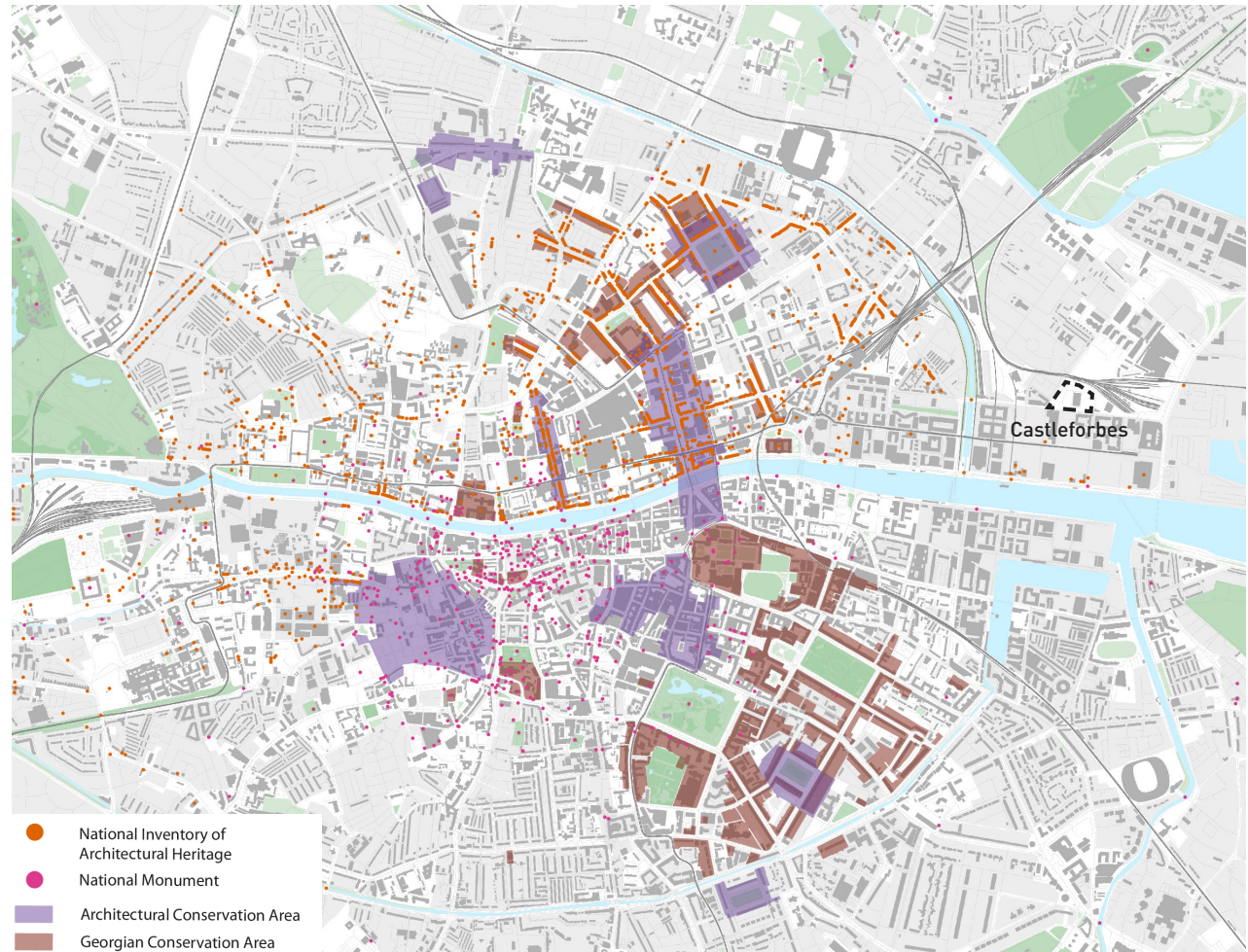


Figure 5.5: Heritage designations and assets**

5.5 Key Views

City Views

The City Development Plan identifies a number of key views in the city, which are concerned with views along the river Liffey and towards landmark historic buildings. The locations of the viewpoints are indicative and reference a general area rather than an exact viewing location. The key views are located away from the Castleforbes site.

Relevance to the Proposed Tall Building

The key views are largely focused on the historic city centre and River Liffey. The few views that look east towards Castleforbes, are some distance away and so unlikely to be affected by a tall building here.

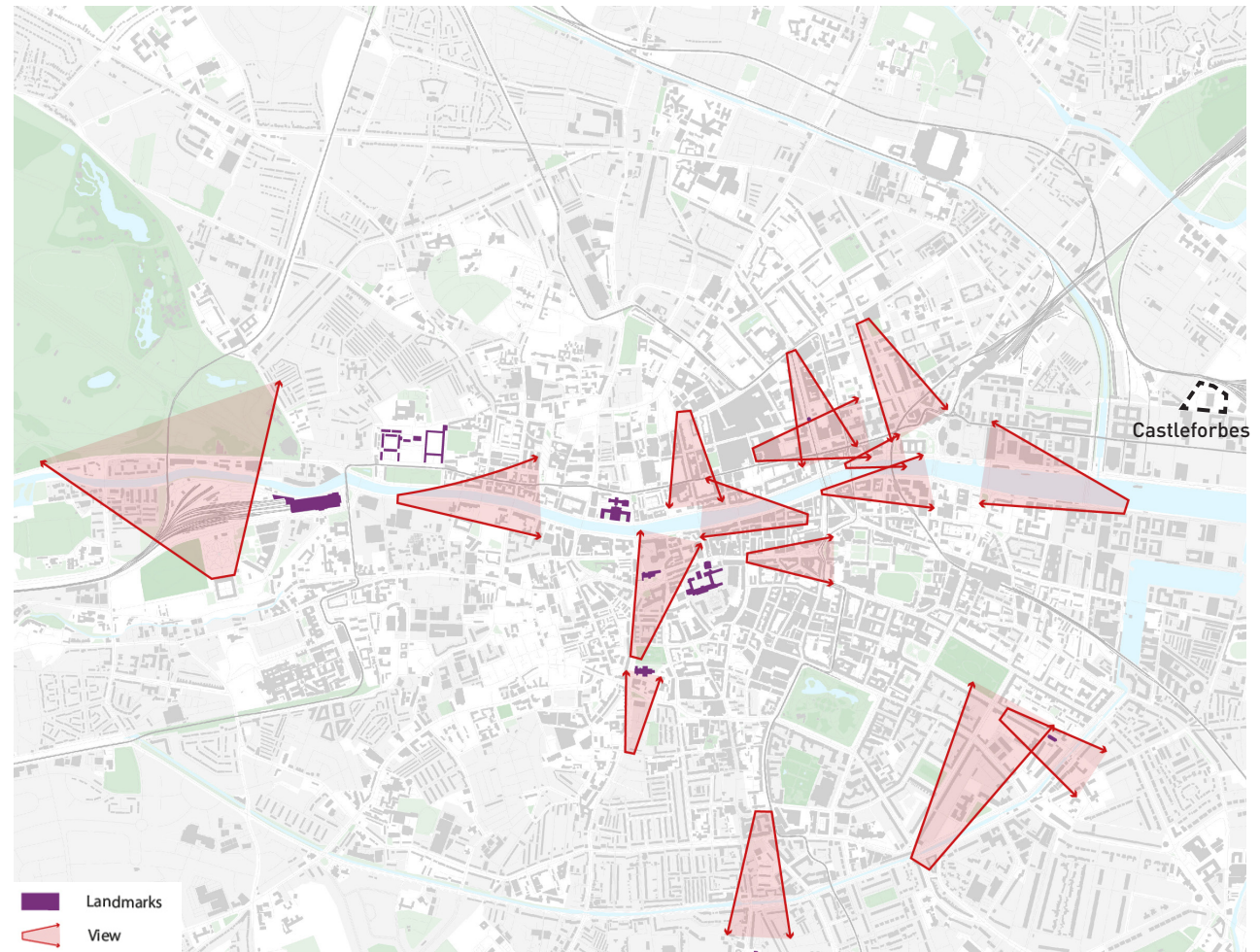


Figure 5.6: City Development Plan Key Views

Docklands Views

The North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ identifies a number of views that shaped the layout of the masterplan. Some of these are views of historic buildings, but most of them are townscape views and views of modern landmark buildings, such as Alto Vero and the Aviva Stadium. Development at Castleforbes must be mindful of these views.

Relevance to the Proposed Tall Building

The site of the proposed development is not in the path or the backdrop of any identified views and so is unlikely to affect them. In fact, the location of the tall building will have a beneficial affect in closing a new view from North Wall Quay. This is demonstrated in Section 6 of this report.

Other views where the proposed tall building could have an impact have been tested and the development is found to have no significant impact. This is demonstrated in Section 10 of this report and the LVIA that accompanies this planning application.

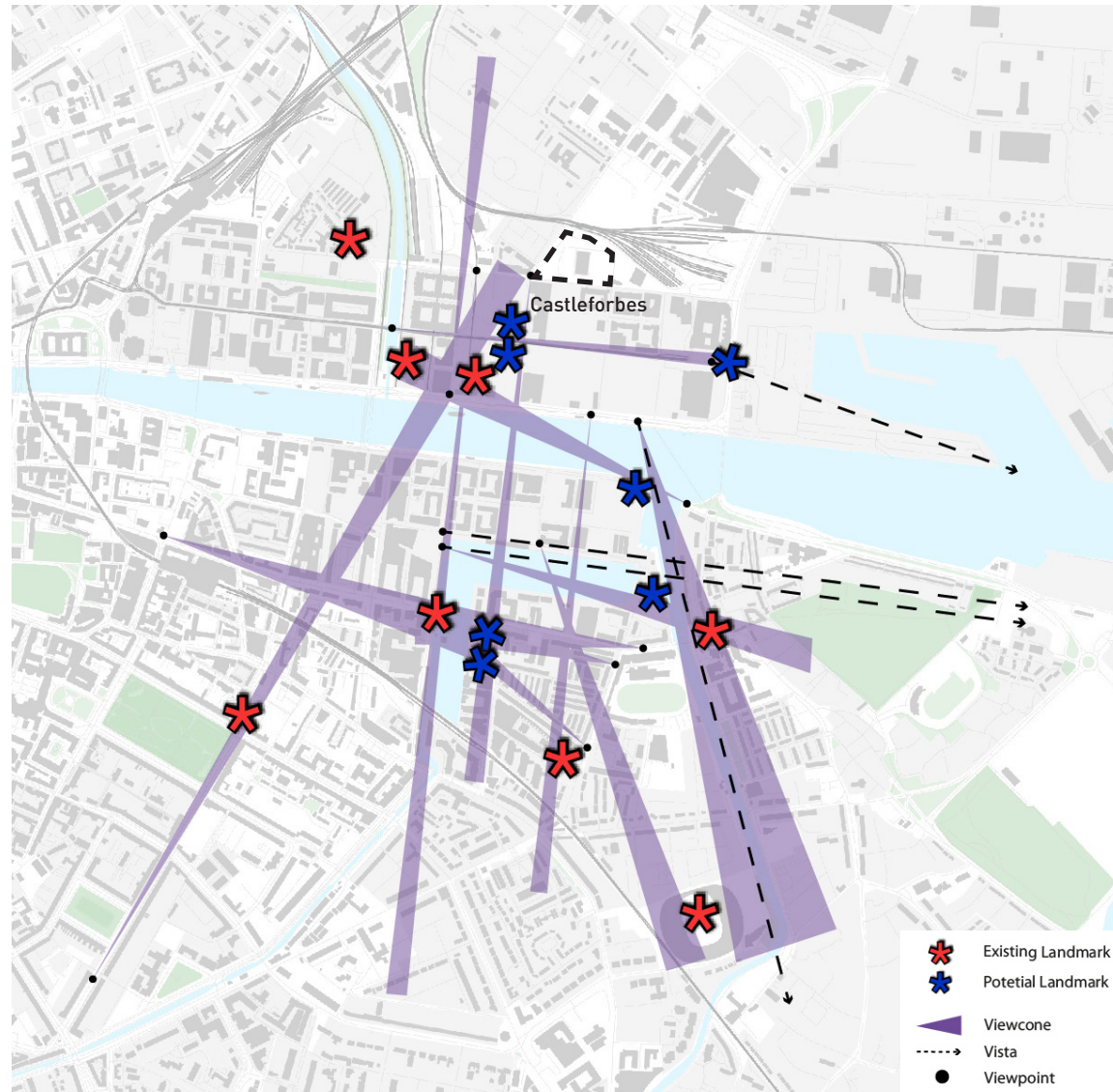


Figure 5.7: Docklands views

5.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed the strategic development context within Dublin and assessed if a tall building on the Castleforbes site could be justified. Its findings are summarised below:

1. The site is situated in the Docklands Strategic Development and Regeneration Area, which seeks the physical, economic and social regeneration of the Docklands area and housing growth. A tall building on the Castleforbes site can help to support urban intensification and deliver wider regeneration benefits.
2. The Castleforbes site is part of the North Docks area, an emerging intense mixed use area, which comprises mid-rise and tall buildings as part of its place making approach. As such there is a local precedent of taller and tall buildings.
3. The Castleforbes development will be a natural extension to the mixed-use character of the North Docks area and as such will provide an urban character that can assimilate tall buildings.
4. The site is adjacent to the residential East Wall neighbourhood and the development will need to consider an appropriate response to this lower rise area.
5. The site is highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, principally via the Luas red line but also the Docklands rail station and local bus services. As such taller development on the Castleforbes site will help to intensify land that benefits from existing public transport infrastructure and support sustainable land-use planning objectives.
6. The site is located away from the city's most sensitive historic areas and there are no Architectural Conservation Areas or Protected Structures heritage assets nearby. As such it is unlikely that a tall building on the Castleforbes site will have a significant impact on the city's heritage assets.
7. Due to its location the site is situated outside of the focus of the majority of the sensitive views within the city centre, and therefore a tall building will not have an impact on these views. Other views where the proposed tall building could have an impact have been tested and the development is found to have no significant impact (see Section 11).

Based on the above this study finds that from a city-wide strategic perspective the principle of a tall building on the Castleforbes site can be supported.

The following sections provide the local townscape and heights justifications, a discussion of the quality of the development and its impact on views.

6 Local Landmark Justification

6.1 Introduction

The proposed development at Castleforbes Business Park contains one tall building (as per the policy definition in the Development Plan) of 18 storeys, and three mid-rise towers of 15, 13 and 12 storeys. The three mid-rise elements function as a cluster, creating a transition in scale as they build up height towards the local landmark.

This section of the report focuses on the tall building only. It provides an urban design analysis of the local context and the proposed scheme and demonstrated that the proposal for a local landmark building at the Castleforbes site is justified. The mid-rise buildings are discussed in Section 8 of this report.










Figure 6.1: Render of proposed tall building from Sheriff Street Upper

6.2 Local Context

Castleforbes Business Park is located at the interface of the North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Strategic Development Zone, the East Wall residential area and light industrial uses currently on site and on neighbouring sites. The railway line to the north of the site forms an urban edge with the East Wall area to the north. Recent and planned development on the north side of Sherriff Street (despite being technically outside the SDZ) bring forward intense mixed-use development and effectively expand the Docklands area up to the railway lands. The railway acts as a barrier to north-south movement, which makes East Road a strategic link as the entrance to the Docklands from the north. The Castleforbes site is located on a key intersection of East Road and Sherriff Street Upper.

The Docklands area is composed of a rigid urban grid that offers few breakout spaces for residents and workers to relax, eat lunch and socialise. The area is street-based and lacks a pedestrian focus, where people can be separated from traffic. Given its density of office and residential development, there is a real shortage of public space, especially to the north, away from the river.

The site is within 10 minutes walk of The Point district centre and live music venue and Sean O’Casey community centre in East Wall. There are good walking connections to the river Liffey, with an additional pedestrian link from Sherriff Street Upper directly south to the quay currently being delivered.

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Docklands |  | Tramline |
|  | Industrial Port Area |  | Tram Station |
|  | Residential / Mixed use |  | Tall Building |
|  | Open Space |  | Proposed Tall Building |
|  | Proposed Open Space |  | Activity Node |
|  | Transport Hub |  | 400m Band |
|  | Key Destination | | |
|  | Primary Route | | |
|  | Secondary Route | | |
|  | Railway | | |

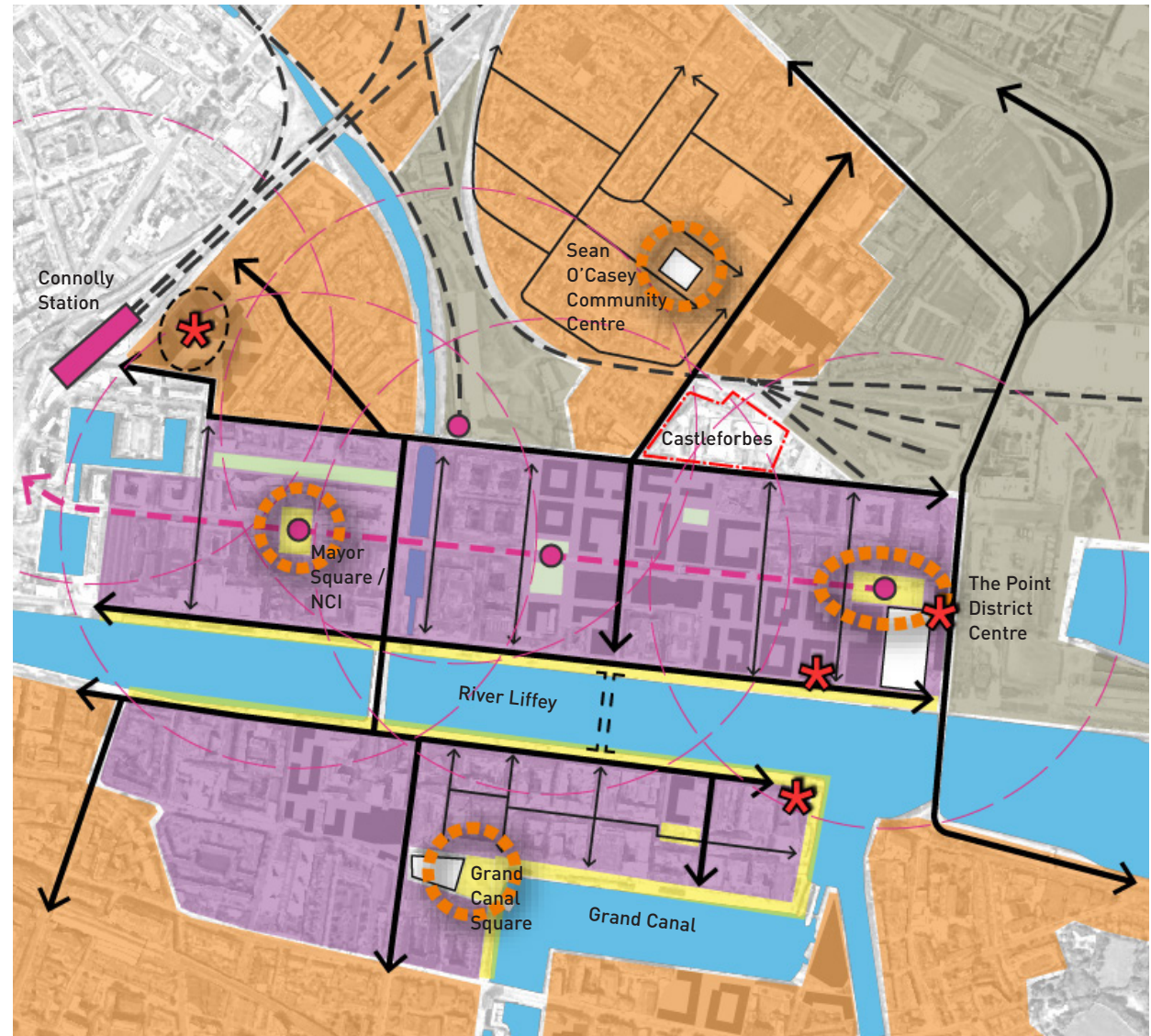


Figure 6.2: Local context of Castleforbes site

6.3 Strategic north-south walking link

A collection of leisure and community spaces is emerging within the North Docks and East Wall areas. Three public spaces are established in the North Docks, the quays of the Liffey, The Point square and Central Square at Spencer Dock Luas stop. Further to the north is Sean O'Casey Community Centre, an important hub for East Wall, which currently feels disconnected from the Docklands. A new public space is also planned as part of the East Road development. A small neighbourhood green space is in the process of being delivered just south of the Castleforbes site on a new north-south pedestrian route, as set out in the North Lotts and Grand Canal Docks SDZ masterplan.

The proposed development integrates with and connects the local network of routes and spaces by delivering a new public open space at the northern end of said pedestrian route. The space will act as a connector piece between the East Wall neighbourhood and the Docklands area. As a stop-over place it will shorten the perceived distance from East Wall and the Sean O'Casey Community Centre to the river.

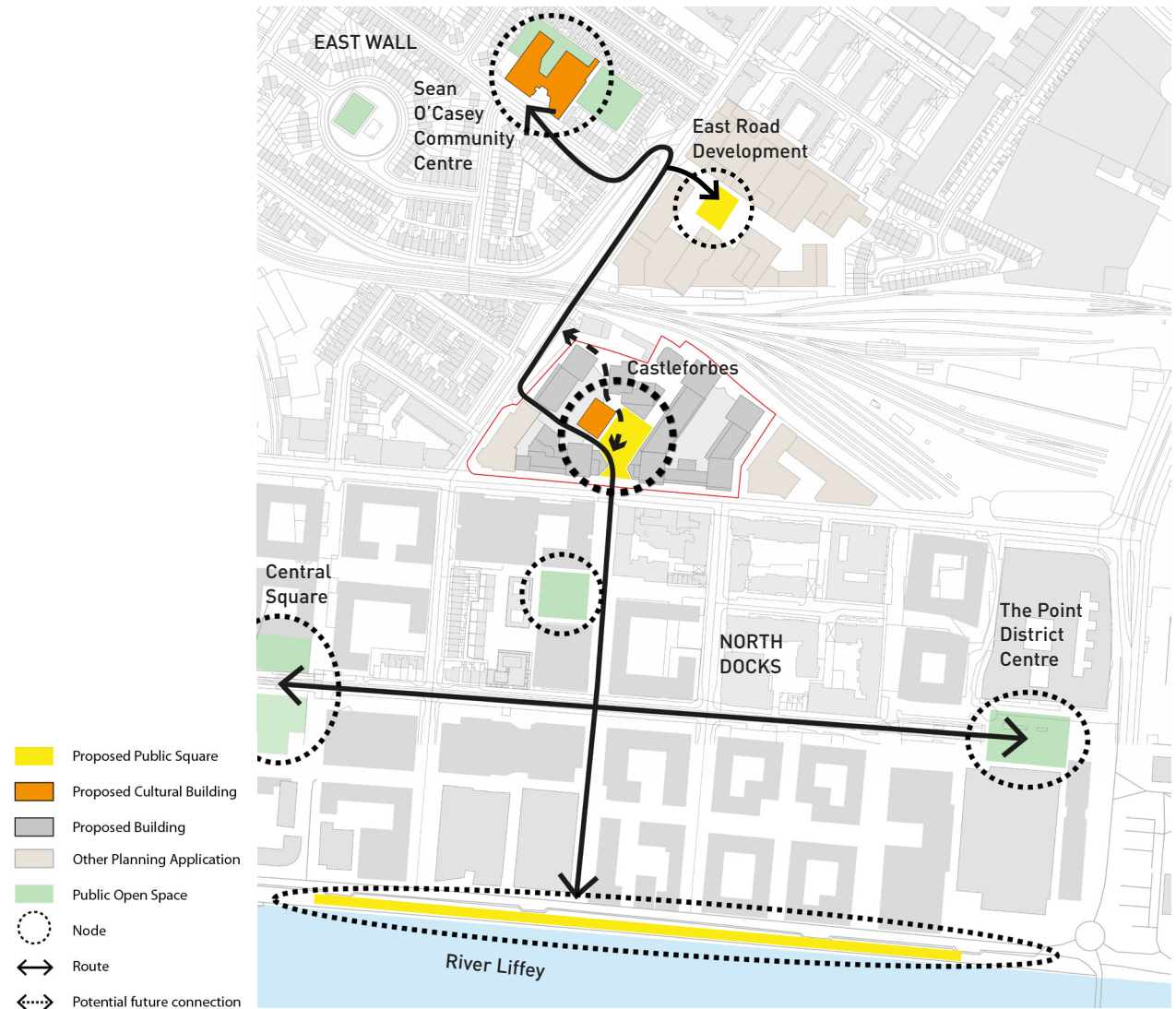


Figure 6.3: Local landmark justification - north-south walking route

6.4 Marking a place of local significance

The development on the Castelforbes site proposes a mixed-use scheme that responds to the North Docks urban context. It delivers 702 new homes, a community /cultural facility, active ground floor uses, live-work units and a nursery. The development is adjoined by two permitted hotel schemes and one office development by the same developer.

The centrepiece of the proposed development at the Castelforbes site is a new public open space for the north docks and East Wall areas. The layout of the proposed development has been carefully calibrated to align the entrance to the public space on Sheriff Street Upper with the planned pedestrian route connecting the Castelforbes site directly to the river Liffey. The space will feature public realm design of the highest quality and be supported by a flagship cultural centre, retail, café and restaurant units. These uses will act as destinations and help animate the space.

Overall the development will create an important new community hub for the North Docks area as much as the East Wall neighbourhood. This will be a place of local significance and as such the provision of a local landmark building can be justified.

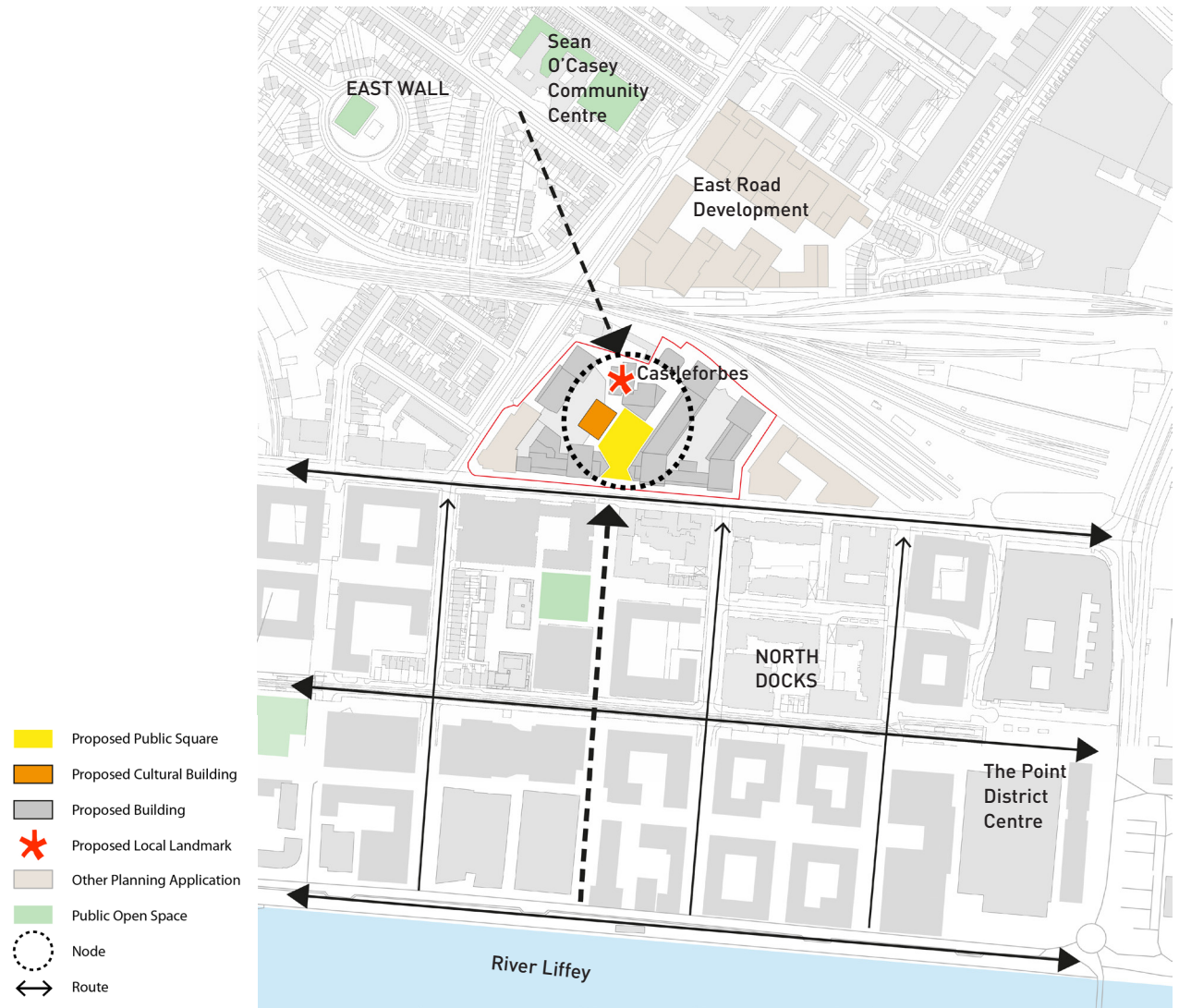


Figure 6.4: Local landmark justification - Marking a place of local significance

6.5 Enhancing local legibility

Within the regular grid of the North Docks (once the area is fully built out), streets have little differentiation from each other, which makes finding your way more challenging. The proposed local landmark building sits perfectly aligned with the axis of the planned new walking route from the river Liffey. It will add distinctiveness and a sense of importance to this walking route within the North Docks area. People passing through the Docklands in an east-west direction along the Quayside, the LUAS, Sheriff Street or other local streets, will glimpse the tower as the focal building in this route. This will provide a sense of direction and enhance the overall legibility of the area. The landmark building when approached from the south also acts as an important wayfinder to the proposed new public space and community hub.

The same applies in respect of approaches from East Wall. The proposal for the Castleforbes site facilitates the future installation of a direct connection from East Road Bridge towards the public space. This requires the opening up of a set of existing stairs at the bridge embankment, which are in the ownership of Dublin city council. The expectation is that the missing part of this link is opened up by the city when the Castleforbes development is complete. As this route is naturally less direct, the proposed tower will have an important role in emphasising this route so as to

help wayfinding and mark the new public space. The proposed public space and local hub will become an important new facility available to East Wall residents. As such in views from the East Wall neighbourhood the proposed landmark will have a meaningful signal function.

It is likely that at some point in the future, the railway lands to the north of the proposed development will be redeveloped as a residential/mixed use scheme. Where the land narrows directly north of Castleforbes, is the perfect location for a new park. If this comes forward, the local landmark at Castleforbes will also help to guide people to this important new open space, further strengthening its landmark function.

The above demonstrates that the proposed landmark building will enhance local legibility and distinctiveness, and as a landmark it is meaningful in the context of both the North Docks and East Wall areas. It will mark a place of local significance and therefore a Local Landmark building is deemed appropriate for this site.



Figure 6.5: Focal view of the proposed landmark from North Wall Quay along the planned pedestrian route



Figure 6.6: Render of proposed tall building from East Wall



Figure 6.7: Local landmark justification - Legibility

7 Determining the Appropriate Height

7.1 Introduction

The preceding section has established that a local landmark is appropriate at the Castleforbes site. This section establishes that the proposed height for the tallest building of 18 storeys (63.2m) is an appropriate height for this building in this context.

Firstly this section provides an overview of contextual heights for tall buildings in Dublin. Then it reviews existing and planned tall buildings in Dublin in respect of their scale and role in Dublin, validating the conceptual framework with the city's tall building context. Lastly it reviews the specific height context for the Castleforbes site and demonstrates that the height of the proposed tall building on the Castleforbes site is equivalent to a local landmark and therefore justified.

7.2 Context Heights of Dublin City

The context heights of Dublin City have been mapped in Figure 7.1. Our assessment of the general building heights in the city confirms the statement in the Dublin City Development Plan that Dublin is a low-rise city.

The historic city centre, which include the Georgian areas of Dublin and the buildings fronting the Liffey, display a consistent context height of 4 storeys (varying between 3-5 storeys). The context height generally decreases towards the residential

neighbourhoods on the periphery. These are generally 2 storeys in height, with a variance between 1-4 storeys in most of the outer city.

To the east of the city historic core is an area that could be called the "Intensified City Centre". This includes George's Quay and the financial services cluster, where the building height generally moves up, displaying a context height of 6 storeys. The tallest area in the city is the Docklands, with a context height of 7 storeys.

The Castleforbes site is located at the confluence of the low-rise East Wall area (2 storeys context height), the mid-rise Docklands (7 storeys context height) and the permitted East Road development (6 storey context height).

Using the tall building classification presented in Section 4, Table 7.1 below sets out the height ranges of Local, District and Metropolitan Landmarks in Dublin's main city centre context height areas.

Table 7.1: Tall buildings classifications for Dublin

Classification	Context Height Ratio	Historic City Centre	Intensified City Centre	Docklands
Context height (CH)		5 storeys (18m)	6 storeys (21m)	7 storeys (24m)
Higher Building (not a tall building)	up to 2x CH	up to 8 storeys (up to 36m)	up to 12 storeys (up to 42m)	up to 14 storeys (up to 48m)
Local Landmark	2 to 3x CH	8 to 12 storeys (37m - 54m)	12 to 18 storeys (43m - 63m)	14 to 21 storeys (49m - 72m)
District Landmark	3 to 5x CH	12 to 20 storeys (55m - 90m)	18 to 30 storeys (64m to 105m)	21 to 35 storeys (73m to 120m)
Metropolitan Landmark	above 5x CH	Above 20 storeys (above 91m)	Above 30 storeys (Above 106m)	Above 35 storeys (Above 121m)

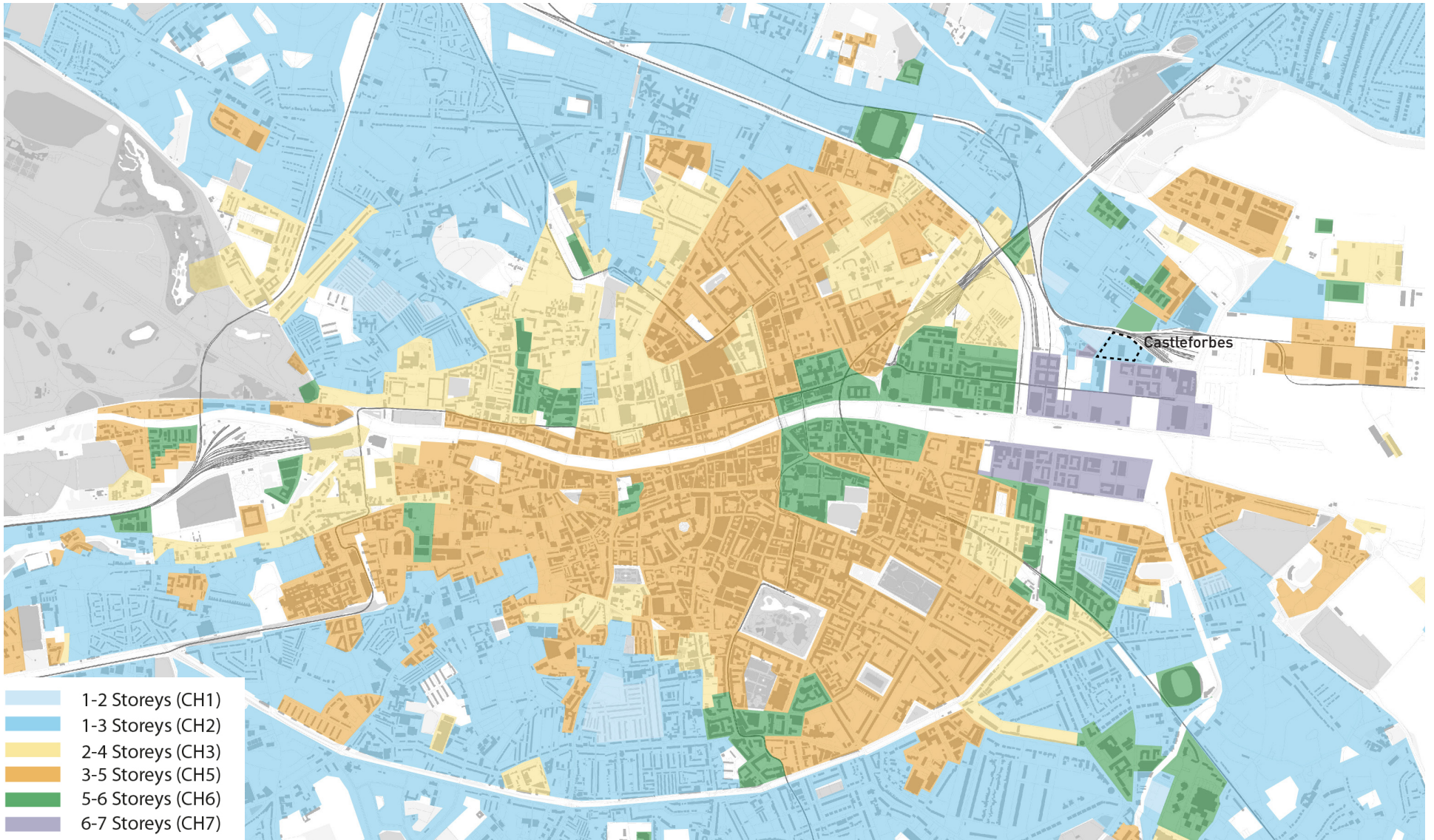


Figure 7.1: Context Heights of Dublin city

7.3 Tall Buildings in Dublin Categorised

Table 7.2 reviews a selection of existing and proposed tall buildings in the city in relation to their relevant context height. The review aims to ascertain if the conceptual framework and its paradigm of proportionality of height to significance of a place can be verified in Dublin.

Presently the tallest structure in Dublin city centre is The Spire. Within its context height of 5 storeys (18m) its height of 120m is 6.6x the context height. While not a tall building as such, its height falls within the Metropolitan Landmark category. It is situated literally in the heart of the city centre and acts as a landmark and symbol for the entire city.

The review identifies five other existing or planned tall buildings of District Landmark height. These include Capital Dock and Google Docks (completed) and the Exo Building, Tara Street Hotel/College Square and the Connolly Quarter cluster (approved). In each case the height of the proposed building is between 3 and 5 times the context height. Each building appears justified as it will mark a special location within the city that is of district wide importance, such as a major rail station, a strategic business hub or the gateway into the Docklands from the sea (both in the north and south docks).

Two buildings of Local Landmark height have been identified by this (limited) review. These are the Millennium Tower and the approved Marshall Yard tower. Both fall into the bracket of 2 to 3 times the applicable context height. Their role is primarily a local one, marking the corner of the Grand Canal Docks basin and emphasising the gateway into the East Wall area on East Road Bridge respectively.

Albeit limited in scope this review finds that the heights of existing and planned tall buildings in Dublin are proportionate to their role in the hierarchy of places in the city. As such it verifies our conceptual tall building framework and supports the case for its application on the Castleforbes site.

Table 7.2: Selection of existing and planned tall buildings in Dublin

Name	Height	Context Height	Context Height Ratio	Landmark Classification	Rationale
Spire	120m	5 storeys (18m)	6.6	Metropolitan	City Symbol
Tara Street Hotel (permitted)	88m	6 storeys (21m)	4.2	District	Major Station
Connolly Quarter (permitted)	79m	6 storeys (21m)	3.7	District	Major Station
Capital Dock	79m	7 storeys (24m)	3.3	District	Gateway from Sea
Exo Building (under construction)	73m	7 storeys (24m)	3.0	District/Local	3 Arena/District Centre
Google Docks	67m	6 storeys (21m)	3.2	District	Station/Business Hub
Marshall Yard (permitted)	52m	5 storeys (18m)	2.9	Local	Local Gateway
Millennium Tower	50m	6 storeys (21m)	2.4	Local	Grand Canal Dock Corner

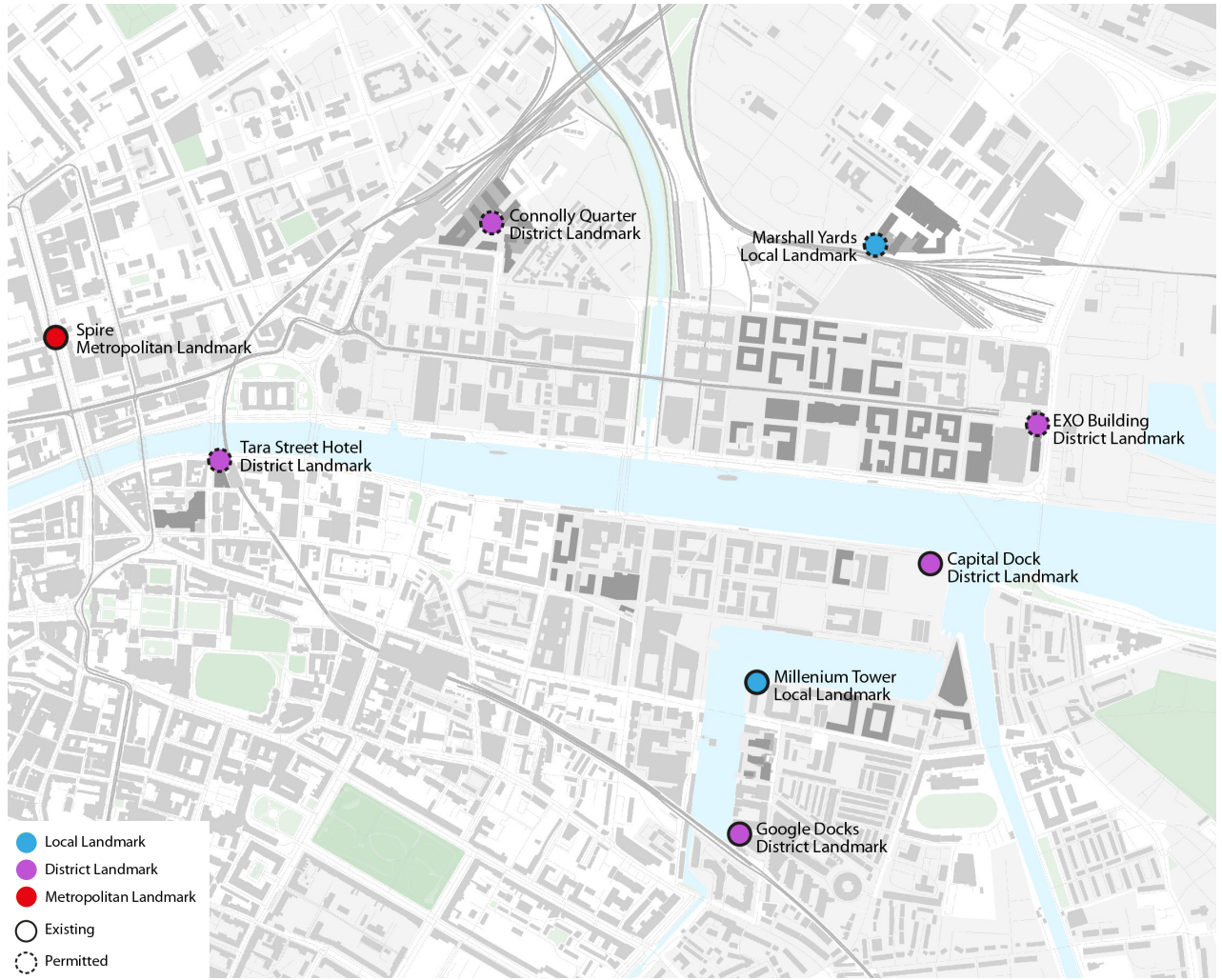


Figure 7.2: Selection of tall buildings classified as landmarks

7.4 A Local Landmark at Castleforbes

The Castleforbes Business Park site currently sits at the interface of the 2 storey East Wall area and the Docklands, which has a context height of 7 storeys. The planned context height on the Marshall Yard to the north is 6 storeys. With the construction of the permitted hotels, the office development directly adjoining the site to the east, and City Block 3 to the south, the context height on and around the site will rise to the same scale as the Docklands (CH 7). Given that heights drop slightly on the Marshall Yard and in the context of the adjacent lower height in the East Wall (CH 2) area the context height for the Castleforbes site is assumed one storey lower at 6 storeys.

In Section 7 this study established that the provision of a local landmark on the Castleforbes site is appropriate. A local landmark in a 6 storey context height area of the Castleforbes site would be 12-18 storeys (42-63m). The proposed landmark building in the Castleforbes Height is 18 storeys with a height of 63.2m. As such the building sits at the upper end of the local landmark height range.

From the above it can be concluded that the height of the proposed tallest building on the Castleforbes site is proportionate to its role and purpose within its context, and as such fully justified.

7.5 Supporting a clear hierarchy of heights

In a legible city there should be a clear hierarchy of heights on the skyline that corresponds to place's importance. This means that a local landmark should be clearly sub-ordinate to a district landmark when seen on the skyline. The proposed local landmark on the Castleforbes site is 60.7m tall. In many views including the approach from the sea the buildings will be seen in the context of two or potentially three other nearby district landmarks. These are the Exo building at 73m, the completed Capital Dock at 79m, and a potential third district landmark at North Wall Avenue (approx. 75m – as proposed by the Amendments to the SDZ Planning Scheme Amendment).

As Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4 demonstrate, the proposed local landmark on the Castleforbes site will be clearly sub-ordinate to the planned district landmarks and does not detract from their prominence and commanding role on the skyline.

As such the proposed landmark building will support the hierarchical order of the skyline and reinforce the legibility of places.

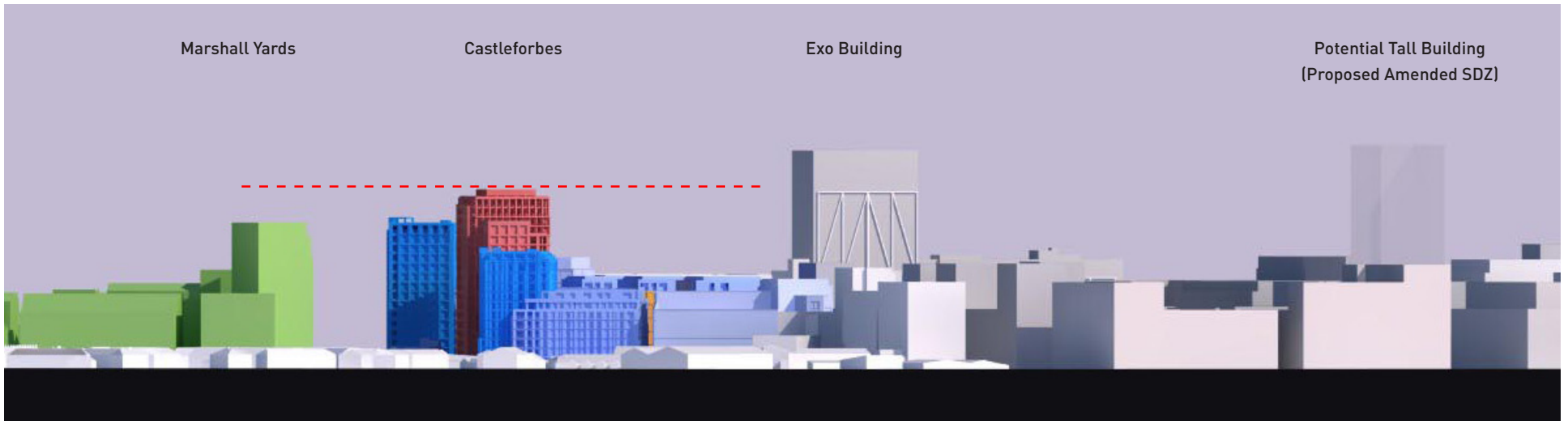


Figure 7.3: 3d model showing the proposed development fitting into a clear hierarchy of heights



Figure 7.4: 3d model within Google Earth - view from mouth of the Liffey showing hierarchy of heights.

8 Contextual Landmark Design

8.1 Introduction

The previous sections have established that from a strategic perspective a tall building on the Castelforbes site can be found acceptable, that there is a strong justification for a local landmark on this site in the location proposed, and that the height of the proposed tall building is proportionate to its role and purpose. This section reviews the design of the tall building and how well it manages to support its role as a local landmark.

8.2 Design Principles

Alignment

The layout of the proposed development is aligned to East Road; it shifts at an angle away from the north-south grid of the north docks. However, the local landmark tall building remains on the north-south alignment. This further enhances its prominence and differentiates it from the three proposed mid-rise buildings.

Orientation

The purpose of the tower alignment is not purely aesthetic, however. With this orientation, the tower directly addresses the public square and established a strong visual relationship between the building and the space. As an ensemble this adds meaning to the landmark and strengthens its legibility role. The tower is positioned as such that it faces directly down the new north-south route to the quays. In views northwards along this route, the local landmark creates a focal point and clear sense of destination.

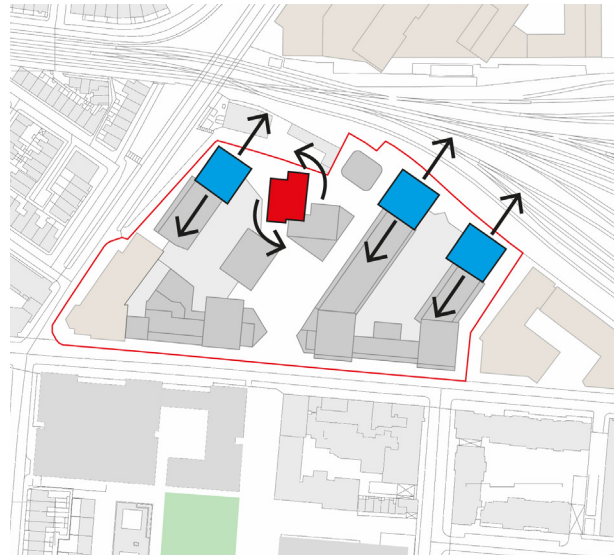


Figure 7.5: Alignment

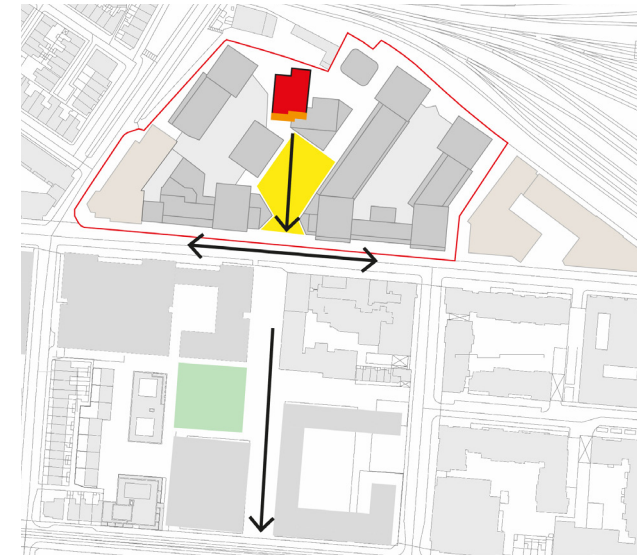


Figure 7.6: Orientation

Visually Bridging the Railways

The rear face of the proposed tower is aligned with the approved tall building at Marshall Yards on the opposite side of the railway tracks. This establishes a clear visual connection and relationship between the two developments. Visually this will bridge across the railway line and strengthen the connection between the East Wall area and the Docklands.

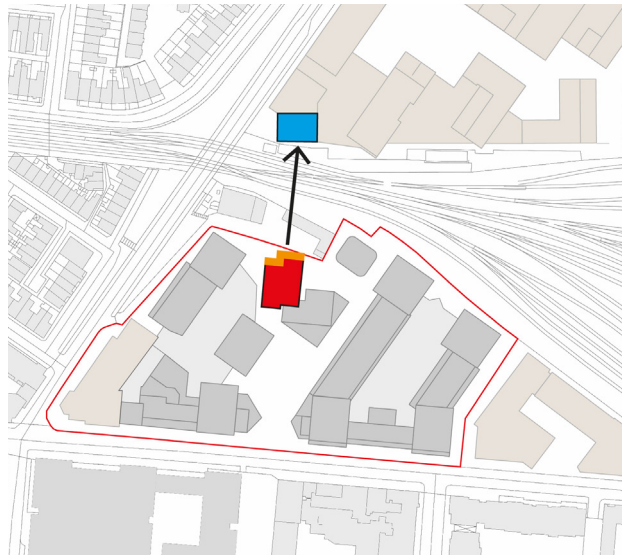


Figure 7.7: Visual connection over the rail line

Distinctive Design

The local landmark distinguishes itself from the other taller elements of the proposal through its distinctive form and architecture. Its massing is articulated and responds to different aspects of the scheme, stepping the volume of the building back as the tower rises upwards, culminating in a slender north-south façade that addresses with an iconic silhouette the square. The colour and detailing further differentiates the landmark building from other buildings in the scheme and truly make the tower an outstanding landmark not just in height but also by its appearance and architecture. It draws the eye, while still ensuring that it appears cohesive with the overall scheme by relating well to the lower elements proposed.

8.3 Conclusion

The above demonstrates that the scheme layout and design of the proposed building enhances the prominence and distinctiveness of the proposed landmark building and as such maximises on its legibility credentials. It further responds skilfully to the local context and contributes to place making. From this it can be concluded that the proposed central tower will be successful as a landmark building in its immediate and wider context.



Figure 7.8: Distinctive design of the local landmark, seen from the square

9 Supporting Mid-Rise Buildings

9.1 Introduction

The previous sections focused on the 18 storey local landmark building at the Castleforbes site. This section provides a justification for the three mid-rise buildings proposed on the Castleforbes site.

The buildings are 12, 13 and 15 storeys and their height ranges from 39.7m to 48.5m. Albeit locally appearing tall, technically they are not considered as tall buildings by the Dublin Development Plan. Within the prevailing context height of 6 storeys their height positions them at the lower end of the local landmark scale (2-2.5x context height). As such they are clearly sub-ordinate to the tallest building and do not undermine its prominence and role as local landmark.

The justification of the three mid-rise buildings rests on three pillars:

- They help to intensify development in a sustainable urban location.
- They enhance the skyline by forming a cluster.
- They contribute to a distinct character fitting to the dockland's northern edge.

These are discussed below in more detail.

9.2 Intensify Development

The inclusion of the three mid-rise buildings in the proposal allows for an increase in overall density while keeping the general height of the scheme to around 6 storeys, in line with the urban scale of the Docklands. Increasing density in central locations well served by public transport is supported by national and city policies.

The mid-rise buildings are purposefully located on the northern edge of the site where their impact on neighbouring buildings is limited. Shadows will be cast predominantly over the rail line (Figure 9.1). Any risk of an overbearing effect or harsh change in scale is mitigated by the location of the buildings away from existing local residents and the stepping down in height towards East Road.

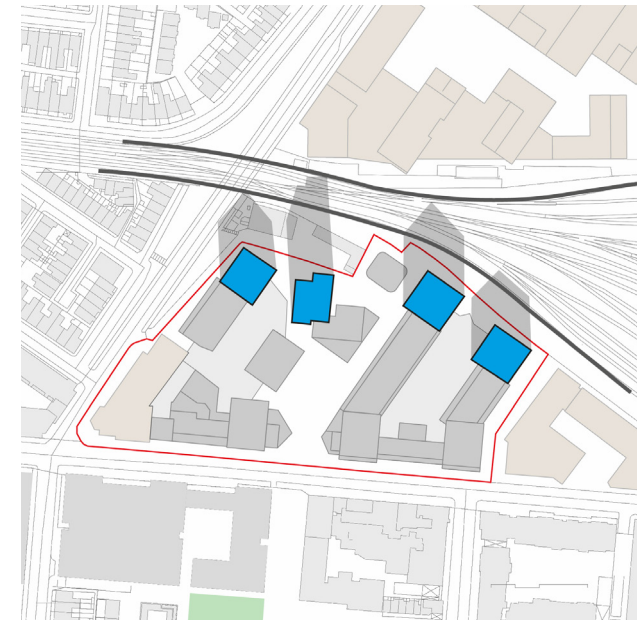


Figure 9.1: Shadows will generally be cast on the rail line, not on existing properties

9.3 A Coordinated Cluster

The three proposed mid-rise buildings, along with the two taller elements of the consented Marshall Yards scheme to the north, form a cluster of taller buildings around the proposed local landmark tower. The building heights have been carefully modulated to visually step up from the lower context to the local landmark in the centre, creating a clear hierarchy of heights.

On the skyline, this reinforces the presence of the local landmark tower and signify it as part of a wider neighbourhood, rather than being a standalone tall building. Concentrating the buildings in a confined area and stepping up to the centre forms a cone-shaped cluster that has a positive aesthetic effect on the skyline. The cluster will be associated with the interface of the Docklands and East Wall area and as such marks a meaningful place in the geography of the city.

The cluster also further integrates the Castleforbes proposal with Marshall Yards to the north, as these two schemes knit together the currently distinct East Wall and Docklands areas and visually help to bridge the railway barrier. Stepping the heights up to the tallest element also gives greater prominence to the public square as a central location and destination.

A careful balance has been struck in the design of the cluster; the buildings are spaced out so as to allow for adequate daylight and privacy but are confined to a small enough area to be clearly identified as a group of taller buildings. The cluster permits sky views in-between the towers and thereby preventing the impression of a 'wall of development' and avoiding excessive overshadowing or canyon effect.

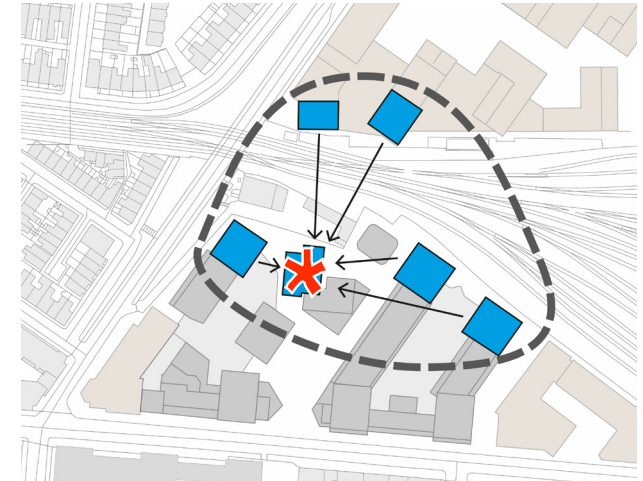


Figure 9.2: A cluster supporting a central focal building

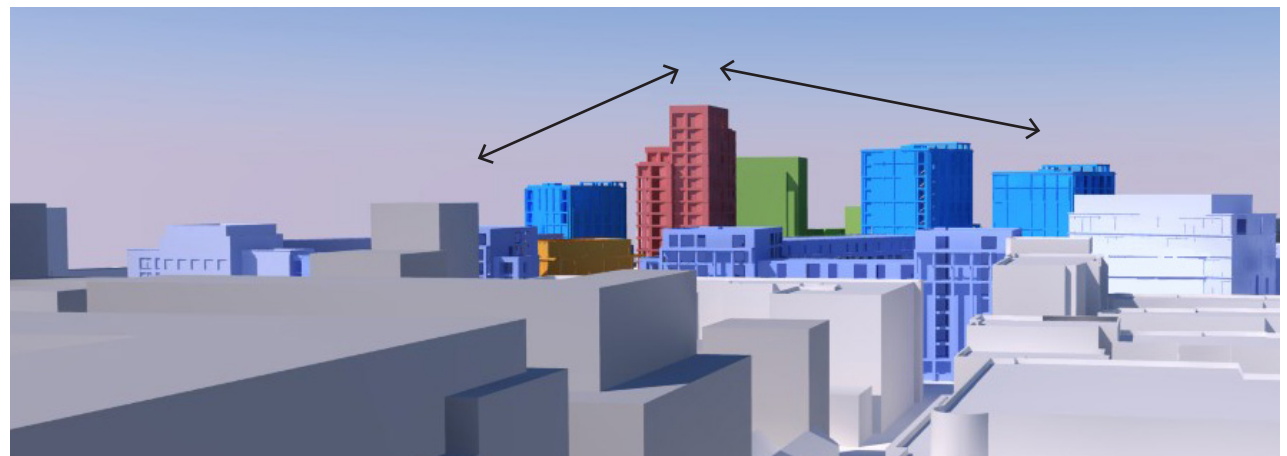


Figure 9.3: Cluster height decreasing towards the edge

9.4 Contributing to a distinct character

With its pedestrianised spaces and angular urban form the proposed development differentiates itself from the regular street based character of the Docklands, and creates a distinct character of its own. This character is reinforced by its playful approach to height that offers variation within the scheme and steps up via the mid-rise buildings to the central landmark. With its approach to height, the scheme creates a strong sense of place that is fitting for its location at the interface between the urban docklands and the residential East Wall



Figure 9.4: Distinct townscape supporting a potential future park

neighbourhood. The proposed mid-rise buildings are a key element of that.

It is likely that the railway lands to the north of the site will be redeveloped in the future, with the narrow space between Castleforbes and Marshall Yards being the ideal spot for a new park. If this happens, the new park will be instantly animated and overlooked by the mid-rise buildings and tower. They will provide a sense of enclosure and an attractive townscape setting for the open space.

9.5 Conclusion

Based on the above it can be concluded that the proposed mid-rise buildings are an acceptable and fitting response to the local context. They support place making, contribute to a coordinated skyline and enhanced legibility, and help deliver the city's sustainable development objectives. With a playful approach to height they offer variation and differentiate the quarter from the regular grid of the Docklands, and as such contribute to a strong sense of place at the interface with the East Wall neighbourhood.



Figure 9.5: Aerial view of 3d model - Proposed development with adjoining permitted schemes



10 Townscape and Visual Impact

10.1 Introduction

The Landscape (Townscape) and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposal by Brady Shipman Martin that accompanies this application assesses the impact of the proposal on local character and views. Below is a summary of the findings of this study.

10.2 Townscape Assessment

The townscape assessment looks at three different scales of effects of the proposed development and concludes under each as follows:

City Scale:

“At the wider city scale, the form and massing of the development, within a substantially low rise development to the east and west of the Site, is such that the taller elements of the proposed Project will be readily visible on the Docklands skyline. At distances of c.1-3km from the River Liffey, North Strand, Clontarf and Strand Road, the taller elements will introduce new skyline elements giving rise to landscape effects ranging from **moderate / slight to slight / not significant**. These effects will be **positive** as the new skyline feature will not detract from the existing skyline, and will aid legibility from the wider city by presenting the East Wall landmark. From the major open spaces within the Georgian Core, by virtue of distance and built and landscape enclosure, there will be no landscape effect.”

District Scale:

“At the closer Docklands scale, from areas along Sheriff Street Upper, East Wall Road, Castleforbes Street, and Royal Canal, the proposed Project will provide a substantial new urban landmark within an urban context that is continuing to evolve. The

presence of the new buildings will become part of the composition of established and partially established streetscapes, and will provide a landmark focal point on key streets. The proposed Project will connect the North Lotts area to the existing and emerging East Road area, and together with its landmark taller building along the railway, will clearly signal a new contemporary urban quarter taking the place of the underutilised light industrial lands at the north Docklands. Landscape effects will range from **moderate to moderate / slight**, and will typically be **positive** as the buildings provide legibility, order and regeneration within an evolving and regenerating context, and the quality of the architectural design, form and detailing is becoming apparent with proximity to the Site.”

Local Scale:

“At the local scale, from the adjoining established residential streets and developments at East Wall and at Merchant’s Square, the new taller buildings will give rise to substantial change with certain streetscapes, where the proposed Project will further intensify the appearance of the emerging new contemporary urban quarter as a modern extension of the traditional low rise residential streetscapes. ... the City and Docklands context of the East Wall residential area is already evident, with many streetscapes including larger modern high density commercial and residential development just beyond the immediate

streetscape. Landscape effects will range from **significant / moderate to moderate / slight**. Effects are likely to be perceived **initially as negative** by virtue of the change and the larger scale, however these will become more acceptable over time as the buildings are occupied and the development provides a new destination and facilities to the locality.” (Sec. 13.5.2.1.)

Summary

This assessment finds that on a city scale the proposed development will have only a moderate to not significant impact on existing townscapes due to its limited visual presence and positive effect.

At district scale the proposed development forms part of the evolving urban context of the North Lotts area and provides a contemporary new quarter that regenerates underutilised lands and has a positive effect on the existing townscape.

At the local scale, specifically in the context of the lower residential areas of East Wall the proposed development will present as a substantial change within certain streetscapes, which initially may be seen as negative.

However this effect is mitigated by

- the proposed development being a natural extension to the emerging character of the Docklands that is already evident in the area and that will manifest itself more coherently as

other planned and permitted development are completed,

- the position and stepping down of height that minimises the contrast between the proposed development and nearby low rise housing, and
- the future function and place qualities of the proposed development that will become a local destination and facility and hence be seen as a positive and meaningful addition to the local townscape.

As such it can be concluded that the long term effects of the proposed development on the local, district and city townscape will be wholly positive.

10.3 Visual Impact

The same study assesses the visual impact of the proposed development within 37 views from around the site and across the city. Its findings are as follows:

City views

“At the wider city scale, visual effects will range from slight / not significant to not significant / imperceptible, and will generally be positive or neutral depending on the extent to which the proposed Project provides a visible landmark that signals the East Wall locality within the City and Docklands context. From the major open spaces within the Georgian Core, by virtue of distance and built and landscape enclosure, there will be no visual effect.”

Docklands views

“At the closer docklands scale, the new buildings will be visible along particular streetscape and from vantage points overlooking undeveloped lands. Visual effects will range from moderate to moderate / slight, and will generally be positive as the proposed Project completes the streetscape of Sherriff Street Upper and provides a landmark and focal point at this locality in the context of the wider Docklands redevelopment.”

Short range views

At the local scale, from the adjoining established residential streets and developments at East Wall and at Merchant's Square, the new taller buildings will be visible along residential streets and adjoining residential developments, and from closer vantage points, will be more pronounced.

As noted above, many of the residential streets and developments within the East Wall locality already experience views of increasing numbers of larger new commercial and residential developments just beyond the immediate streetscape. The addition of the proposed Project will be consistent with that trend, and together with previously permitted developments in the locality, is intended to provide a landmark and focal point for the East Wall locality as well as connectivity between the East Wall area and the North Lotts and River Liffey.

Visual effects will typically range from significant / moderate to moderate / slight. Visual effects are likely to be perceived initially as negative, however these will become more acceptable over time as the buildings are occupied, the neighbourhood is strengthened, and the value of the new public spaces and facilities to the existing community are realised."

From the above can be concluded that the visual impact of the proposal is deemed acceptable.

10.4 Selected Views

A number of key views have been included on the next pages in this document to illustrate the findings of the visual assessment and to verify other aspects of the Tall Buildings Statement. For full detail of view assessments see the The Landscape (Townscape) and Visual Impact Assessment by Brady Shipman Martin.

View 23 from Capel Street Bridge (Figure 10.1 and 10.2)

In this view the river corridor is mostly defined by historic building frontages, and the modern buildings form a cluster in the distance including parts of the IFSC at over 1.1km distance. It will be possible to get a glimpse distant view of the uppermost part of the landmark element between the IPSF and O'Connell Bridge House. As the distance from Capel Street Bridge to the landmark building is over twice that to the IFSC, the landmark building will appear in perspective at a level on the skyline that is consistent with the closer IFSC buildings. It will not be prominent or impact adversely on the river corridor or its setting, but will serve to aid urban legibility of the wider city.

This is the only identified sensitive view from within the historic city centre where the proposal is visible. Its visual impact is considered imperceptible/slight, and neutral/positive. This demonstrates that the development has a negligible impact on Dublin's historic city centre.

View 25 from Bath Road along River Dodder (Figure 10.3 and 10.4)

The River Dodder leads directly to the River Liffey, and tall development within the Docklands is visible in the vista along the river corridor. This view is framed by the Capital Dock and Exo Building towers, and includes the distinctive spire of St. Patrick's Church at Ringsend. Each tall building is associated with a special place in the docklands, which can be clearly identified in this view due to the distinctiveness of their landmarks. This provides a clear sense of orientation and enhances the legibility of the city.

The tallest building of the proposed development would appear in centre of this view. The proposed tower with its colour scheme and form is distinctive and will become an easily recognisable marker for the proposed new centre and cultural destination on the Castleforbes site. With its lower height it is clearly subordinate to the Exo building and to Capital Dock and does not detract from their roles as district landmarks for the north and south docklands respectively.

The view demonstrates how the proposal naturally integrates within the skyline of the Docklands, is proportional to the place it represents and helps to enhance the legibility of the city from this prominent spot near the Aviva Stadium. As such it validates the approach to height and design of the local landmark of the proposed development in the strategic context of Dublin.



Figure 10.1: View 23 from Capel Street Bridge - existing situation



Figure 10.2: View 23 from Capel Street Bridge - proposed development / cumulative



Figure 10.3: View 25 from Bath Road along River Dodder - existing situation



Figure 10.4: View 25 from Bath Road along River Dodder - proposed development / cumulative



Figure 10.7: View 35 from Clontarf Road across the Tolka Estuary - existing situation



Figure 10.8: View 35 from Clontarf Road across the Tolka Estuary - proposed development / cumulative



Figure 10.5: View 02 from Sheriff Street Upper West - existing situation



Figure 10.6: View 02 from Sheriff Street Upper West - proposed development / cumulative



Figure 10.9: View 20 from North Wall Quay - existing situation



Figure 10.10: View 20 from North Wall Quay - proposed development

View 35 from Clontarf Road across the Tolka Estuary (Figure 10.5 and 10.6)

This view is southwards across the Tolka Estuary to Dublin Port and the East Point Business Park. At present the view offers few recognisable landmarks (apart from the top of the Capital Dock building) that provide a sense of orientation. The tallest building of the proposed development will become visible within the view. With its slender and distinctive form and colour selection it will become a successful local landmark for the new place at the Castleforbes site, without over-dominating the view.

As such the proposed development will enhance the skyline when seen from North City, provide a sense of orientation and aid legibility. Again, this validates the height and design approach of the proposed tall building.

View 02 from Sheriff Street Upper West (Figure 10.7 and 10.8)

This view shows the existing streetscape with new development along the southern side of the street, and vacancy and underutilisation along much of the northern side. The proposed project represents high quality urban regeneration that will continue the redefinition of this part of the north Docklands as a new urban quarter. The view illustrates the considered relationship of the proposal with the permitted development on East Wall, the visual emphasis afforded to the new local destination at the Castleforbes site and how heights are stepping down and respond appropriately to the lower rise East Wall Area.

This validates that the proposed development will bring a regenerative impact to the area, aid legibility and respond appropriately to its context.

View 20 from North Wall Quay (Figure 10.9 and 10.10)

This view shows the southern part of the pedestrian route from the Quays to the Castleforbes site, framed by existing and new buildings. The proposed tall building is deliberately aligned with the axis of this view and provides a strong visual focus and sign-post of the new local hub. With its slenderness, orientation and design the proposed tower is highly distinctive, creates visual interest and aids legibility in the North Lotts.

This illustrates the great care that has been taken at different design scales to ensure the proposed development delivers a positive impact on regeneration, place making and legibility well beyond its site boundaries.



Figure 10.11: View 7 from St Mary's Road - existing situation



Figure 10.12: View 7 from St Mary's Road - proposed development / cumulative



Figure 10.13: View 12 from Church Street - existing situation



Figure 10.14: View 12 from Church Street - proposed development / cumulative

View 7 from St Mary's Road (Figure 10.11 and 10.12)

This view from the East Wall area shows two storey terraces, detached and semi detached houses typical for this neighbourhood. It is an attractive environment with a strong sense of community.

The area includes St. Joseph's Church and the Seán O'Casey Community Centre buildings that are taller and distinctive community structures that contribute to the identity of the area and are visible from the network of streets. While the East Wall is generally low rise in itself, it is also noted that there are numerous locations within East Wall that currently afford views of taller structures in the wider urban context, including St. Laurence O'Toole Church and modern developments at Spencer Dock, North Lotts, East Wall Road, Sheriff Street and East Road itself. As such, there is an established sense of the City and Docklands as part of the wider landscape, by virtue of the visual relationship to that wider context.

The proposed development will give rise to a substantial change in the landscape and visual context, however, such change will be outside the immediate low rise residential area, and will be consistent with other nearby modern developments. When seen together with the permitted cumulative developments at East Road the proposed development will intensify the sense of regeneration and redevelopment, and will reinforce the establishment of a new and contemporary identity at the East Road and Sherriff Street Upper area.

The proposed local landmark clearly establishes a visual dialogue with the permitted East Road tower

which provides a sense of direction and reinforces the central role of the landmark as beacon of the new local hub.

As such this view illustrates how the design and height of the tall buildings is coordinated with its surrounding and permitted context, and consistent with the wider emerging urban character in the North Docks.

View 12 from Church Street (Figure 10.13 and 10.14)

This view from Church Street is typical for the one and two storey houses that characterise this small extension of the East Wall neighbourhood south of the railway line. This low rise enclave is situated to the back of Sheriff Street Upper and its larger buildings that mirror the wider scale of the Docklands. There are numerous locations within this area that afford views of taller structures in the Docklands. As such the visual presence and sense of urban scale form part of the established setting of this area.

The proposed development will continue the trend of urbanisation around this area. It fits in with the permitted hotel development on East Road and extends its urban street scale northwards. Its height is carefully stepped up from East Road to provide an effective transition in scale and to minimise the visual impact of the tallest building. As such it avoids an overbearing or dominating effect on residents of this area.

The view illustrates how the proposed development with its height and location of the tall building manages to minimise its visual impact on the adjacent lower rise neighbourhood.

10.5 Conclusion

Based on the Landscape (Townscape) and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposal by Brady Shipman Martin it can be concluded that the long term effects of the proposed development on the local, district and city townscape will be wholly positive.

Similarly the view analysis does not find a significantly adverse effect of City and Docklands views. In local views from the East Wall area the proposed development presents a significant change and is likely to be perceived as a negative effect at first, but "these will become more acceptable over time as the buildings are occupied, the neighbourhood is strengthened, and the value of the new public spaces and facilities to the existing community are realised."

A selection of views are included to illustrate how the location, height and design of the proposal manages to minimise visual impacts on nearby low rise areas and deliver a positive impact on regeneration, place making and legibility well beyond its site boundaries. They further validate the approach to height and design of the proposed tall building in illustrating how it can become a meaningful local landmark that is proportional and integrates well and enhances Dublin's skyline.



11 Summary and Conclusion

This report provides a robust justification for the proposed tall building and 3 mid-rise buildings on the Castleforbes site. The justification is centred around the following key points:

- Alongside the consented Marshall Yards development to the north of the railway line, the proposed development will form a new cluster of mid-rise and tall buildings. This cluster will celebrate the northern entrance into the Docklands from East Wall and contribute to the regeneration of the wider area. Furthermore, it will appear clearly subservient to the other established and emerging tall buildings and clusters in Dublin City.
- At a height of 63.2m, and in relation to the surrounding context height, it is demonstrated that the proposed tall building would be considered a “local landmark”. This is proportionate to its role within the wider city and reflective of its role in local legibility.
- The proposed development is located within the Docklands Strategic Development and Regeneration Area (SDRA 6) and is directly adjoining the Docklands Strategic Development Zone. The proposed development acts as an extension of the North Docks and creates a character and mix of uses that can support a tall building.
- The Castleforbes site is very well served by walking and cycling routes and public transport, in particular the Luas red line, which links it to much of Dublin City and beyond. This accessibility supports the sustainable densities provided by the proposed tall and mid-rise buildings.
- The proposed tall building enhances legibility by acting as a landmark for the new public space and community facility delivered as part of the scheme. It also enhances local wayfinding by sign posting the northern entrance to the Docklands and interface with the East Wall area. This new public space facilitates a more direct walking route from North Wall Quay, through Castleforbes, to Sean O’Casey Community Centre in East Wall.
- The landmark tall building has been designed carefully to align with the entrance to the site from Sheriff Street Upper, to address the proposed public space and enhance legibility from the south. It also interfaces visually with the consented Marshall Yards development across the railway line and is visually distinctive from the rest of the proposed development. The proposed development is of high quality urban and architectural design, which is fitting for its role as a prominent local landmark and new destination.
- The proposed mid-rise buildings help to achieve an urban density appropriate for this highly accessible location. With their playful approach to height they offer variation and differentiate the quarter from the regular grid of the Docklands, and as such contribute to a strong sense of place at the interface with the East Wall neighbourhood. The mid-rise buildings step down from the central tall building, creating a coordinated cluster.
- The proposed tall building will have no negative affects on the city image, key views, heritage assets or historic townscape, and impact on nearby residences are minimised by site layout and design. The proposed tall building will actually play a positive role in wayfinding and legibility for the local area.

In conclusion, the tall building statement finds that the approach to height and design of the proposed tall building is well considered and fully justified, and therefor should be permitted.

