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12 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the landscape and visual impact of the development proposed on Sites 3, 4, and 5 of the Dublin Central Project on the surrounding urban area and was prepared by ARC Architectural Consultants Limited.

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12.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY • ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as follows: -

“Landscape” means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors;

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) discusses how the existence of a proposed development might change how a surrounding area might be ‘perceived by people’ visually.

The preparation of this landscape and visual impact assessment has had regard to the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft of August 2017)* prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency. It is noted that the EPA Guidelines, in categorising the extent of environmental impact, uses the term ‘effects’ in place of ‘impacts’. This LVIA follows the Guidelines and uses the term ‘effects’. Though the terms are interchangeable, the word ‘effect’ has a less negative connotation than the word ‘impact’.

The EPA Guidelines are statutory guidelines prepared under the provisions of the EPA Act 1992 (as amended). The purpose of a visual impact assessment is, taken together with the full range of other documents lodged as part of a planning application, to assist in informing the decision making process.

Assessment of visual effects, has three main parts: -

1. Analysis the likely extent of visibility of a proposed development.
2. Description of the visual sensitivity of the receiving environment and its consequent capacity to absorb development.
3. Assessment of the objective extent of change in the visual character of the receiving environment likely to arise from the existence of the proposed development, and of the likely response of observers to that change.

The EPA Guidelines require that visual impact assessment be carried out in a manner that is systematic, impartial, and objective and independent. It is not the purpose of assessment to promote or advocate for the development. It is an important principle of impact analysis that the analysis should be capable of being repeated independently, and that repeated analysis should lead to the same conclusion. To facilitate this, the steps taken in the analysis of impacts should be clearly set out in an assessment report.

12.2.1 Visibility

The first task of a visual impact assessment is to assess the likely extent and nature of visibility of the proposed development. This includes determining from what locations the Proposed Development is likely to be visible and from what locations it will not be. It includes determining, where visible, how major or minor an element the Proposed Development will be in any view. The primary determining factors when assessing extent of visual impact are: -

- i. Whether a development will be visible or not.
- ii. where visible how much of any view a development will occupy.
- iii. whether or not a proposed development is the focus of a view.

Each of these factors affect the visual prominence of a proposed development.

The extent of visibility of a proposed development in any view tends to be directly related to the distance of the viewpoint from the development. However, intervening obstacles such as buildings or structures, trees and planting, and topography, can modify the extent of visibility of the proposed development. Where streets or urban spaces are aligned towards the site of a proposed development, and where the buildings or trees at the end of these alignments are relatively modest in height, there is a potential for taller developments to be visible above any lower intervening buildings or other obstacles. This potential increases with the length of the open foreground but reduces when the viewpoint is closer to any intervening obstacles. It follows, that for taller structures (e.g. taller than the prevailing height of the surrounding built environment or landscape elements) to be openly visible, they must be seen across an open foreground or at the end of a long vista or alignment. From viewpoints within dense urban, or even suburban, environments, very modest buildings in the foreground can conceal even very large or tall structures from view. The Spire in O'Connell Street, which is 120 metres high, is imposing when viewed from O'Connell Street or O'Connell Bridge, or from Talbot Street or Henry Street. Outside these axes, the visibility of the Spire is dramatically reduced, and, despite its great height it is not visible at all from the great majority of the city.

A survey of the potential visibility of Proposed Development on the subject site was initially carried out by ARC Consultants on various dates in 2006 and 2007. In the first instance, mapping analysis was carried out to identify locations from which views of the Proposed Development were likely. In the summer and autumn of 2020, a new survey was carried out of the potential visibility of proposed buildings in the Dublin Central Project, having regard to the location and proposed height of proposed buildings within the Dublin Central site. This survey identified 28 view locations for assessment, locations from which there may be a potential for proposed buildings that form part of the Dublin Central Project to be visible. Photographs looking in the direction of the Dublin Central site were taken from each of these 28 locations. These photographs were taken on several different dates in the summer, autumn and early winter of 2020. These photographs were taken on high resolution digital cameras using lenses equivalent to a 24mm lens on a 35 mm camera.

Wide-angle lenses were used to provide sufficient context in the view. Photographs with a narrow field of view may exclude relevant context. Wide-angle views, capable of providing sufficient context are particularly important when the viewpoint is close to proposed development. Photographs and photomontages based on wide angle photography are printed at A3 size, so that the angle of vision covered by the print, when held at reading distance, is approximately the same as would be covered by the same extent of the real scene, when viewed from the camera location. This is an accepted convention where photomontages are used to illustrate assessment of landscape and visual effects.

It should be noted that digital images are now commonly viewed on digital devices, and that these devices have a wide range of screen sizes. The size of screen on which an image is viewed and the extent to which the viewer zooms into or out of the image can affect how the content of the image is perceived. Photomontages used to illustrate assessment of landscape and visual effects are helpful in indicating the extent to which a proposed development may be visible from a particular location, and where visible the form and materials of the Proposed Development (See Appendix 12.1). It should be noted that in the context of assessment of landscape and visual effects photomontages are intended to be representative of what might be seen from different directions and are not intended to be exhaustive.

12.2.2 Characteristics of the Receiving Environment • Sensitivity and Visual Capacity

As has been discussed above, the visibility of proposed development is mediated by the physical geometry of the receiving environment, including the pattern and form of the existing built environment. These are among the factors that determine the visual capacity of a receiving environment to absorb development. Among other characteristics are the visual character and uniformity of the receiving environment and its historical or cultural value.

An intact and uniform Georgian square, which is a coherent and integrated visual setting, would usually be regarded as visually sensitive with a consequent low capacity to absorb new development that might dilute the existing visual character. The same might be true of certain suburban

environments. On the other hand, a centre city environment or dockland settings where there are structures of a diverse character and a wide range of scales are settings that are usually less sensitive and are likely to have a high visual capacity to absorb development. Locations that have a statutory designation as an architectural conservation area or locations where there are protected structures, usually have an increased visual sensitivity leading to a reduced visual capacity to absorb development. Other designations, such as special amenity area orders, designated views and prospects and designated high amenity zones, may also limit this absorption capacity. Capacity to absorb development, therefore, has a direct bearing on the extent of likely visual effects.

In areas that are very uniform in character the introduction of larger structures may change the visual character of the area. In established urban areas the introduction of new large structures as part of a process of densification has the potential to give rise to substantial visual effects. The extent of this change will depend on the extent of difference in visual character between the new development and the existing surrounding visual environment. The extent of change is likely to be the main factor in determining the extent of visual effects.

12.2.3 Extent and Nature of Visual Effects

The categorising of the extent potential of visual effects in this LVIA utilises the terminology set out in the Table 3.3: Descriptions of Effects contained in the Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The extent of visual effects will depend on the extent to which the existence of a proposed development changes the visual character of a receiving environment. The extent of change likely to result from the existence of a proposed development is usually a matter of objective fact, related to characteristics such as bulk, height, form, colour materials proportion, etc.

The extent of visual effects also depends on the interplay between the visual sensitivity and uniformity of the receiving environment and the extent to which the design of the Proposed Development responds to the form and pattern of the receiving environment. Responding well to the receiving environment should not imply deference or mimicry. Often a degree of contrast is a more visually appropriate response than adopting the style, form, materials or architectural detail of the receiving built environment, which can sometimes result in pastiche. These matters may be described in objective terms, but they are also susceptible to subjective judgement on the part of observers.

The perceived character of the visual effects: positive, negative or neutral, may depend on how well a development is received by the public, and on the perceived contribution of the development to the built environment. The character of visual effects, and even the duration of visual effects, is very dependent on the attitude of the viewer. If a viewer is opposed to a new building for reasons other than visual, that viewer is likely to see the building in a negative light, no matter how beautiful the building might be.

12.2.4 Definition of Effects on the Visual Environment

The assessment of visual effects on landscape and on the built environment had regard to the Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft of August 2017) prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency. The terminology for categorising the significance of visual effects referred to below is taken from Table 3.3: Descriptions of Effects contained in the Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. Some commentary is also given below on what these definitions might imply in the case of landscape and visual effects. The definitions from the EPA document are in italics.

- ***Imperceptible:*** *An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.* The definition implies that the development would be visible, capable of detection by the eye, but not noticeable to the casual observer. If the development were not visible, there could be no impact.

- **Not Significant:** An effect which causes noticeable² changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences (the footnote '2' to the word 'noticeable' is: 'for the purposes of planning consent procedures'). The definition implies that the development would be visible, capable of detection and of being noticed by an observer who is actively looking for the development with the purpose of assessing the extent of its visibility and visual effects.
- **Slight:** An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities. For this definition to apply, a development would be both visible and noticeable, and would also bring about a change in the visual character of the environment. However, apart from the development itself, the visual sensitivity of the surrounding environment would remain unchanged.
- **Moderate:** An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends. In this case, a development must bring about a change in the visual character of the environment; and this change must be consistent with a pattern of change that is already occurring, is likely to occur, or is envisaged by policy.
- **Significant:** An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. The definition implies that the existence of the development would change an important characteristic of the visual environment in a manner that is not 'consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends'. Whether an effect might or might not be significant can depend on the response of individual observers, since what one person might regard as a sensitive aspect of the visual environment, another might not.
- **Very Significant:** An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment. The definition implies that the existence of the development would substantially change most of the visual characteristics of the environment in a manner that is not 'consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends'.
- **Profound:** An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. In visual terms, profound effects are only likely to occur on a development site, in that it is only on the site that all previous visually sensitive characteristics could be obliterated. Outside the site, some visual characteristic of the original environment is likely to remain.

The definitions of effects listed above deal largely with the extent of effects; which is usually proportional to the extent to which that development is visible. The extent of effects will also, in part, depend on the sensitivity of the spaces from which the development is seen. This proportionality may be modified by the extent to which a development is regarded as culturally or socially acceptable. Though buildings are intended to be permanent, and will be permanently visible, the extent of visual effects associated with a building often diminishes with time as further development in the area takes place.

12.2.5 Digital Modelling and Rendering

Models of the Proposed Development were constructed using 3D Studio Max. Models were made both by ARC Consultants and by members of the design team. The models made by ARC Consultants were based on survey information and on design drawings provided by the design team. Surveyed reference points on existing buildings in the city were attached to the 3D models. The model used for photomontages included appropriate detail of the proposed buildings as shown on design drawings. Renderings were made on computer from each camera position using the field of view of each photograph, and with the sun position correct for the date and time that each photograph was taken. The renders were inserted into the relevant view and were scaled and positioned using the field of vision of each photograph and the surveyed reference points in each view. ARC would expect the dimensional accuracy of the scaling and positioning of the image of the Proposed Development within each view to be better than $\pm 1\%$.

12.2.6 Statutory Provisions

Part of the site of the proposed Dublin Central Project falls within the O'Connell Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), which was adopted in July 2001. In the Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022, Section 11.1.5.4 *Architectural Conservation Areas and Conservation Areas* states: -

"The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), section 81(1), requires that a development plan shall include an objective to: -

Preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that –

- a) *is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or*
- b) *contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, if the planning authority is of the opinion that its inclusion is necessary for the preservation of the character of the place, area, group of structures or townscape concerned and any such place, area, group of structures or townscape shall be known as and is in this Act referred to as an "architectural conservation area."*

Architectural Conservation Areas and Conservation Areas have been designated in recognition of their special interest or unique historic and architectural character and important contribution to the heritage of the city. Designated Conservation Areas include extensive groupings of buildings or streetscapes and associated open spaces and include (parts of) the medieval/walled city, the Georgian Core (in recognition of Dublin's international importance as a Georgian city), the 19th and 20th century city and the city quays, rivers and canals. The special interest/value of Conservation Areas lies in the historic and architectural interest and the design and scale of these areas. Therefore, all of these areas require special care in terms of development proposals and works by the private and public sector alike, which affect structures both protected and non-protected in these areas.

Dublin City Council will thus seek to ensure that development proposals within all Architectural Conservation Areas and Conservation Areas complement the character of the area, including the setting of protected structures, and comply with development standards."

The policy to ensure the conservation and protection of the areas of special historic and architectural interest is as follows: -

CHC4: It is the Policy of Dublin City Council: -

"To protect the special interest and character of all Dublin's Conservation Areas. Development within or affecting a conservation area must contribute positively to its character and distinctiveness, and take opportunities to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting, wherever possible. Enhancement opportunities may include: -

1. *Replacement or improvement of any building, feature or element which detracts from the character of the area or its setting.*
2. *Re-instatement of missing architectural detail or other important features*
3. *Improvement of open spaces and the wider public realm, and re-instatement of historic routes and characteristic plot patterns.*
4. *Contemporary architecture of exceptional design quality, which is in harmony with the Conservation Area.*

The repair and retention of shop- and pub-fronts of architectural interest. Development will not: -

1. *Harm buildings, spaces, original street patterns or other features which contribute positively to the special interest of the Conservation Area*
2. *Involve the loss of traditional, historic or important building forms, features, and detailing including roof-scapes, shop-fronts, doors, windows and other decorative detail*
3. *Introduce design details and materials, such as uPVC, aluminium and inappropriately designed or dimensioned timber windows and doors*
4. *Harm the setting of a Conservation Area*
5. *Constitute a visually obtrusive or dominant form."*

12.2.6.1 O’Connell Street Architectural Conservation Area

The extent of the O’Connell Street Architectural Conservation Area in the written statement is defined as follows: -

“to the north of the river the area is centred on O’Connell Street, extending to Marlborough Street to the east, Moore Street to the west, Parnell Street to the north and the River Liffey to the south. To the south of the river, the area is centred on Westmoreland Street and D’Olier Street, extending to College Street to the south, Hawkins Street to the east and to rear of buildings fronting onto Westmoreland Street to the west.”

In relation to proposed new development the ACA written statement states: -

“Where new development is proposed, it will be necessary to find and establish a pattern of development that responds in a sensitive manner to the streetscape – a fine grain solution – that contributes to a harmonious whole and maintains the rhythm of the streets. To secure an appropriate solution, new development should comply with the following general guidelines: -

- *New developments should respect the established scale of the existing built fabric - including height, massing, proportions and plot width. Proposals for large scale or ‘mega-structural’ developments will not be favourably considered and any such proposals should be broken down into smaller, more comprehensible and human scale developments. This can be achieved in part through the provision of multiple uses and access points at ground floor level.*
- *All new buildings should be designed to the highest standard in a modern architectural idiom. Pastiche will be discouraged and will only be allowed or required in exceptional circumstances.*
- *Materials used should be of a high quality and be durable to avoid long term maintenance problems. They should include stone, brick, render, steel, glass and timber.*
- *An appropriate and balanced mix of uses will be required in all new developments and large scale single use developments will not be permitted. Public oriented uses including shops, cafes, restaurants and bars will be required at ground floor level to create more lively, dynamic and successful places.*
- *The ground floor of all buildings should be clearly articulated to establish a clear identity for each building and use. In general, a higher floor to ceiling dimension should be provided at ground floor level.*
- *The incorporation of new pedestrian routes and public spaces into new developments will be required where appropriate to enhance and reinforce the existing urban framework. A number of sites have been identified where opportunities for such interventions may be explored including site clusters nos. 4 and 7.*
- *Access requirements for people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young should be incorporated into the design of shops, public and other buildings.*
- *Plant and tank rooms should be provided within the roof space or within the envelope of the building and should not break the plane of the roof.”*

12.2.6.2 The Height Guidelines

It is the stated purpose of the *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, December 2018 (The Height Guidelines) to seek increased building heights, over and above the norm, in urban areas throughout Ireland. In this regard, the following quotation from Part 1 of the Height Guidelines is relevant to consideration of visual effects: -

“1.4. However, in recent years, local authorities, through their statutory development and local area plan processes, have begun to set generic maximum height limits across their functional areas. Frequently, such limits have resulted from local-level concerns, like maintaining the character of an existing built-up area, for example. However, such limits, if inflexibly or unreasonably applied, can undermine wider national policy objectives to provide more compact forms of urban development as outlined in the National Planning Framework and instead continue an unsustainable pattern of development whereby many of our cities and towns continue to grow outwards rather than consolidating and strengthening the existing built-up area. Such blanket limitations can also hinder innovation in urban design and architecture leading to poor planning outcomes. (emphasis added)”

In this quotation the Guidelines indicate that ‘maintaining the character of an existing built-up area’ by the inflexible imposition of maximum height limits is an unreasonable constraint and argues for development that would allow for change and development in urban design and character. The Guidelines are calling for quite radical change in the character of Ireland’s urban areas to promote sustainable development. Such changes in character will inevitably result in very substantial visual effects. These resulting visual effects will be regarded as positive by some but as negative by many others, particularly those who live or work in established urban or suburban areas and who value the existing character of these areas.

In assessing the potential visual effect of development of increased height as called for by the Height Guidelines, it is very likely that the assessment will find that there will be negative visual impacts as well as positive. In some cases the negative may outweigh the positive. However, the purpose of the Guidelines is to seek densification and consolidation of existing urban areas, and this will lead to substantial planning gains, even where visual impacts may be regarded as negative by many.

Section 3.2 of the Height Guidelines sets out development management criteria, 17 in all. Specific Planning Policy Requirement, SPPR 3 then states that: -

“It is a specific planning policy requirement that where: -

- (A) 1. *an applicant for planning permission sets out how a development proposal complies with the criteria above; and*
2. *the assessment of the planning authority concurs, taking account of the wider strategic and national policy parameters set out in the National Planning Framework and these guidelines.*
- then the planning authority may approve such development, even where specific objectives of the relevant development plan or local area plan may indicate otherwise.”*

The first 8 criteria listed at Section 3.2 under the heading Development Management Criteria are as follows: -

“3.2 In the event of making a planning application, the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála, that the proposed development satisfies the following criteria: -

At the scale of the relevant city/town

- *The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.*
- *Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.*
- *On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.*

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

- *The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.*
- *The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.*
- *The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being in line with the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management –Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2009).*
- *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.*

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

Where the relevant planning authority or An Bord Pleanála considers that such criteria are appropriately incorporated into development proposals, the relevant authority shall apply the following Strategic Planning Policy Requirement under Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)."

Of the 8 criteria quoted above, only 6 involve issues that might be considered to relate to visual effects. These are the second and third criteria under the heading 'At the scale of the relevant city / town' and the first to fourth criteria under the heading 'At the scale of district / neighbourhood / street' In none of these criteria are visual effects the primary criterion.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments are prepared having regard to the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft of August 2017)*, published by the Environmental Protection Agency. The function of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as set out in this statutory guidance does not include the requirement to demonstrate compliance with the Height Guidelines or any other guideline made under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), such as the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines. Nevertheless, information contained in an assessment of visual effects may prove of assistance to an applicant who is required under SPPR 3 to demonstrate compliance criteria under Section 3.2 of the Height Guidelines which relate to visual impact. Moreover, as will be seen below, one of the criteria specifically requires a 'landscape and visual assessment'.

Before addressing the landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development in detail, the following section examines the relationship between the criteria under Section 3.2 and the landscape and visual impact assessment which the applicant for permission is required under section 3.2 to include in its application. The text of each of the criteria is provided in italics below.

At the scale of the relevant city/town

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

This criterion covers a range of factors, some of which may have a visual component. Some may not. Development is unlikely to meet the particular criterion quoted above on visual grounds alone. The reality is that new developments are almost always intended by the designers to integrate into and enhance the character of the area in which they are to be located, both in terms of function and appearance. It is also true that the whole thrust of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities is that new development should integrate into and enhance the character of an area through the provision of increased density, thereby consolidating the area, and through providing sufficient new development to sustain the area and its character into the future. Observers may not always perceive a completed development as successfully integrating into the character of the area, either in terms of its function or visual character.

A landscape and visual assessment seeks to carry out objective analysis of how a proposed development integrates and or enhances the character of the area in which it is to be located, in the first instance by describing and evaluating in objective terms the existing character and sensitivities of the area. An evaluation of the character of the urban or rural landscape of the area would include a reference to existing key landmarks and protected views and prospects. A LVIA would, in the normal course, provide an objective description of the features of the Proposed Development in terms of materials, colour, fenestration pattern, height, scale etc. The methodology used in this chapter, as described in Section 12.2 and as applied in Section 12.5 uses this approach. This would be supported by an Architects' Design Statement outlining how and in what way the Proposed Development seeks to respond to its surroundings.

The extent and manner in which a new development integrates into or enhances the character an area, including the public realm, is heavily dependent on how visible the new development might be and from where; and where visible whether it is a large or small element in the view. The relative prominence of a development is a factor in determining the extent to which it integrates into or enhances the character of its surroundings. If a development is to enhance the public realm it is usually by contributing to publicly available amenities, public space, or increased permeability.

There are occasions where new development may seek to integrate by providing a visual counterpoint to other key features in its surroundings, a contrast. A new landmark building might be an example. In such an instance the new development might still integrate into the character of an area by creating a new character, where the existing and the new merge to create a new integrated and enhanced character. This is particularly likely to happen in locations with a high potential to absorb multiple new developments. For a new building to be considered a landmark does not necessarily imply a tall building. A building may be a landmark simply because it is distinctive or has a special function.

A landscape and visual impact assessment seeks to take a full range of issues into account and to provide a Planning Authority / An Bord Pleanála with an independent, systematic, objective and impartial assessment of the potential impacts of development, including the full range of the character of impacts, large and small, positive and negative, so that it cannot be argued that the Planning Authority or the Board, in making a determination was not in possession of the full facts.

The above criterion makes reference to ‘*cultural context*’. That has a wide range of possible meanings. If it were to relate to architectural or archaeological heritage. These matters could be addressed in appropriate architectural heritage or archaeological assessments.

At the scale of the relevant city/town

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

How a development meets this criterion would usually be set out in the architect’s design statement. Town planning, urban design, traffic and other reports might also provide input. The criterion calls for ‘*a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces*’. In a large development there are likely to be proposed new streets or spaces within the development. A visual impact assessment might assess the visual effects of a large urban proposal of the surrounding urban character, but it would not be usual for impact assessment to discuss the internal character of a proposal or the impact of a proposal on itself.

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

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

The response of a development to the natural environment would be primarily an ecological issue. In responding to the built environment, a development must, in the first instance, provide uses and a quantum of development appropriate to its context and appropriate to the ‘urban neighbourhood and streetscape’. A visual impact assessment would assess the extent to which the proposed development is visible and discuss the visual sensitivity and capacity to absorb development of the surrounding context. A visual impact assessment would also discuss how a proposed development responds visually to the surrounding context in terms of scale, form, colour etc. However, how a development fulfils its purpose or meets perceived needs of the locality are the main determinants of how a development responds to its surroundings and are more important factors than visual character. The consideration of issues of visual sensitivity and visual capacity form part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects as set out in Section 12.5 of this chapter.

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

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

The intended meaning here is not quite clear. In relation to buildings, the word ‘monolithic’ is usually taken to mean made of a single material. In this regard, some traditional or historic stone buildings, or even brick buildings, might be described as monolithic, though they might be very fine buildings; and some of Ireland’s finest townscapes consist of ‘long, uninterrupted walls of building’ in the form of Georgian or Victorian terraces. It is also the case that some of Ireland’s best 20th century public housing is in the form of ‘long, uninterrupted walls of building’, as is the case throughout Europe. Surely, these are not the type of building that this criterion seeks to avoid.

The criterion literally says that ‘slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered’ should be avoided. Surely this must mean the opposite of what it says; and that what is sought is that slab blocks with materials / building fabric poorly considered should be avoided. What the criterion appears to be intending is that dull plain blocks of building without articulation in terms of form, height, material or colour should be avoided. It would seem to suggest that some variation in building height, either within a development or between a new development and its surroundings would be positive, as would variations in materials and form. Whatever the intended meaning, the criterion centres directly on the building form and materials of the Proposed Development as matters of fact. The criterion does not touch on the possible response of observers.

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

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

This criterion covers a lot of ground and puts urban design and flood management together. Urban design is about how people inhabit, use and move through the public realm in urban contexts. New developments can make contributions to urban design in numerous ways, but fundamentally by improving the amenity of the public realm, making a more pleasant place to be in and use. A successful public realm should be visually attractive, but utility, amenity, comfort and safety will necessarily be the main factors determining the quality of any public space. The contribution a development might make to legibility in an urban context is probably the main visual contribution to urban design.

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

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

This criterion suggests that the development, or elements of it should make a contribution to defining urban space or be identifiable as a marker within the urban realm. This implies additional height over that of the surrounding urban context but does not necessarily demand it. It is noted that the Building Height Guidelines as a whole are seeking additional height over the status quo. However, distinctive new development well located in an urban context, might define how urban spaces are read and so improve legibility and way finding, without necessarily being taller than its neighbours.

The assessment of visual effects can contribute to the discussion of visual aspects around the criteria set out under Section 3.2 of the Height Guidelines, but it is important to stress that none of the 17 criteria can be satisfied on visual grounds alone

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12.3 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

The site of the Dublin Central Masterplan is bounded by O’Connell Street to the east, Henry Street to the south, Moore Street to the west and Parnell Street and Square to the north. O’Connell Street is traditionally regarded as the main street of Ireland, and Nelson’s Pillar, which stood at the midpoint of the street, was seen as the centre of Dublin. Though the site of the Proposed Development may be at the core of the city, it lies in an area that has seen dramatic changes over the years, and which is the subject of much new development, recently completed, under construction, approved or lodged for approval.

12.3.1 O’Connell Street

The first paragraph in the introduction to the O’Connell Street Integrated Area Plan 1998 reads as follows: -

“For most Irish people, O’Connell Street is the heart of Dublin City. Its scale, symmetry, history, elements of architectural grandeur, and central location endow it with a sense of place and civic importance, which has embedded itself deeply in the psyche of the people. Being a wide, north-south street, it has excellent orientation and is always full of light. If one were to travel inwards from the outer limits of the city and experience the layers of the city built up over time, on reaching O’Connell Street one would have to declare, “This is it! This is the centre.”

O’Connell Street was begun in the 1740’s and completed in 1800. Luke Gardiner, the eighteenth-century entrepreneur, was involved in the development of Sackville Street, named after Lionel Cranfield Sackville, first Duke of Dorset and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Gardiner’s Mall. Gardiner also developed Rutland Square, now Parnell Square, in the 1740s and 1750s. An engraving by the Dublin artist Oliver Grace shows of Sackville Street in 1749. The caption to the engraving gives the dimensions of the street as: -

“In length 1050 feet, in Breadth 150, in the midst is the Mall in length 800 feet in Breadth 50...”

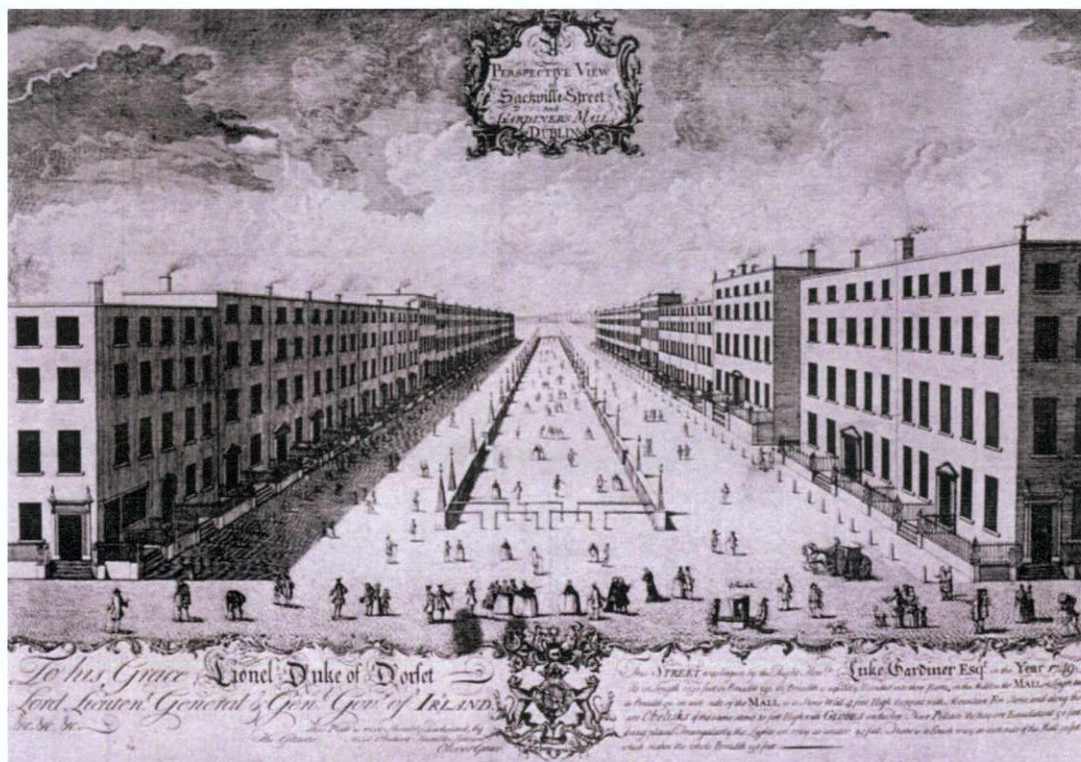


Figure 12.1: Grace’s View of Sackville Street and Gardiners’ Mall, 1749.

The Mall got its name from the game of Pall Mall, a ball game popular at the time, and the purpose of the mall was for playing Pall Mall. Before Sackville Street was set out, there had been an earlier narrower street, Drogheda Street, that ran along the east side of what is now O'Connell Street. Neither Drogheda Street, nor the original Sackville Street reached to the River Liffey. Sackville Street was finally extended to its current length, and brought to the river in 1800, by the efforts of the Wide Streets Commissioners. Nelson's Pillar was built in 1808, and the General Post Office was completed in 1818. Upper and Lower Sackville Street were officially renamed as Upper and Lower O'Connell Street in 1924, not long after the foundation of the Irish State.



Figure 12.2: John Rocque's Map of 1756. Sackville Street and Gardiners' Mall are well separated from the River.

John Rocque's Map of 1756, above, shows the narrow Drogheda Street, aligned with the east side of the present O'Connell Street, running south from Henry Street to Great Abbey Street. Even Drogheda Street didn't reach the river. Henry Street, Moore Street and Drogheda Street were named after Henry Moore, Earl of Drogheda, whose house was the large house on the east side of Sackville Street shown on Grace's illustration. It was the larger house shown on the corner of Sackville Street and Stable Lane on Rocque's map above. A large part of the site of the Dublin Central Project is shown on the map as a brick field.

The fact that the General Post Office was built on Sackville Street was more by accident than design. Warburton Whitelaw and Walsh's *History of the City of Dublin*, published in 1818, the same year as the GPO was completed. This book contains, as well as historical accounts of the City lengthy descriptions of the present state of Dublin as it was in 1818. The account of the development of the GPO is as follows: -

"The total revenues of the Post office for the year 1800 were £85,000. The gross receipts for the year 1816 were £250,000., from which deducting £150,000. for expenses, left a net profit of £100,000. in favour of the establishment. The great increase of business requiring a great increase of room, the Post-office has been removed at different times to more convenient situations. It was originally established on the north side of Dame-street, near Anglesea-street, which, after its removal, was still called the "Post-office yard." From thence it was transferred to the south side of College-green, where sundry efforts were made to enlarge the too narrow limits of the increasing office, without removing it from the convenience of a central situation. At length finding it impracticable to transact the business there much longer, a more spacious site, and one no less convenient was chosen whereupon to erect a new post-office. It was an open space of ground on the west side of Sackville-street. A long litigation had prevented it from being built on before, and an arrear of 20 years rent had accumulated. This was purchased by the Post-masters-General, and the first stone of the new edifice laid by his Excellency Lord Whitworth on the 12th August 1815. This extensive and magnificent building has proceeded with a degree of rapidity unexampled in this country. It is 223 feet in front, 150 feet in depth, and its height is 50 feet to the top of the cornice, consisting of 3 stories from the surface. In the centre is a very grand portico 80 feet in length, consisting of a pediment supported by six pillars of the Ionic order 4 feet 4 inches in diameter, which is considerably larger than that of any other in the metropolis. The pediment is surmounted by three beautiful statues executed by the younger Smith. That in the centre represents Hibernia, resting on her spear and harped shield; on the right is Mercury, a nude figure with his caduceus and purse; that on the left is emblematic of Fidelity, with her finger on her lips and a key in the other hand. The tympanum of the pediment is ornamented with the Royal arms in high relief; an handsome balustrade surmounts the cornice all round the top, and gives an elegant finish to the whole. The bold and superb portico projects from the body of the building so as to range with the street, and to admit the flagged foot-way under it. The portico itself is of Portland stone, but the main structure is of mountain granite. The expense of this grand and useful edifice will not, it is said, amount to more than £50,000., to be defrayed from the net revenue of the post-office."



Figure 12.3: View of Sackville Street with the GOP and Nelson's Pillar by Brocas c. 1820.

Nelson's Pillar was completed in 1808, ten years before the GPO. For generations of Dubliners the 'Pillar' was the centre of the city. When horse drawn trams began operating in Dublin in the 1870s the city centre terminus was the 'Pillar'. Later the 'Pillar' was the terminus indicated on CIE busses.

But if the account of Nelson's Pillar in Warburton Whitelaw and Walsh's History of the City of Dublin is anything to go by, the 'Pillar' was not popular when first erected: -

"The testimonials of national gratitude and admiration to the memory of this favourite naval hero are already numerous in the British dominions. That erected by public subscription in Dublin is perhaps the greatest of any of them. It is situated in the centre of Sackville-street, opposite Mary-street and Earl-street, and is composed of a pedestal, column, and capital of the Tuscan order, on the summit of which a colossal statue of Lord Nelson stands

The design of this triumphal column was given by William Wilkins, Esq. architect, fellow of Caius College, Cambridge. It is of most ponderous proportions, which is not relieved by the least decoration. Its vast unsightly pedestal is nothing better than a quarry of cut stone, and the clumsy shaft is divested of either base, or what can properly be called a capital. Yet with all this baldness and deformity, it might have had a good effect when viewed at a distance, or placed anywhere else'; but it not only obtrudes its blemishes on every passenger, but actually spoils and blocks up our finest street, and literally darkens the two other streets opposite to it, which, though spacious enough, look like lanes. These were objections to its site at first, but they are now become still stronger, since the building of the new Post-office close to it, for, by contrast, it in a great measure destroys the effect of one of the largest and finest porticos in Europe."

Nelson's Pillar was blown up in the middle of the night in 1966. In following years there were numerous proposals for a replacement and eventually there was a competition. The winning design was a stainless-steel needle 120 metres high. Now accepted, it stands there almost unnoticed. Like the Pillar before it, the Spire was not universally accepted. Christine Casey writing in 2005 in her book: *The Buildings of Ireland: Dublin*, describes the Spire as follows: -

"At the Henry Street junction stands the SPIRE, a stainless-steel needle 120 metres (393 ft) high, of 2001-3 by Ian Ritchie, with clearly visible joints and nasty mirror-patterned base."

After the construction of Nelson's Pillar and the General Post Office, it might have been expected the Sackville Street would have remained a street of Georgian houses with these two iconic structures at its centre. But this was not to be. Arthur Gibney, writing in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Spire says the following of the development of O'Connell Street in the 19th Century: -

"By the end of the century many of its original houses were replaced by Victorian hotels such as Gresham's, the Metropole and the Imperial, commercial institutions such as the Standard Life Insurance Company and the Scottish Provincial Insurance Company and large retail outlets such as Findlater's, Cley's and Gilbey's, the wine merchants. The pressure to expand commercially during the Victorian and Edwardian era resulted in a considerable disruption of the continuous eighteenth-century skyline....The former Dublin Bread Company premises, built in 1901, had a steel structure, which supported a turreted tower and roof, which exceeded 8 storeys in height."



Figure 12.4: View of Sackville Street from the O'Connell Bridge c. 1905.



Figure 12.5: View of Sackville Street from the Carlisle Bridge. The lack of tram tracks suggests that this image dates from the 1860s. The imperial Hotel is seen opposite the GPO and the Metropole Hotel is seen just south of the GPO. The Metropole was heavily remodelled later in the 19th century.



Figure 12.6: View of Sackville Street from the O'Connell Bridge c1910. The huge form of the Dublin Bread Company dominates the street.



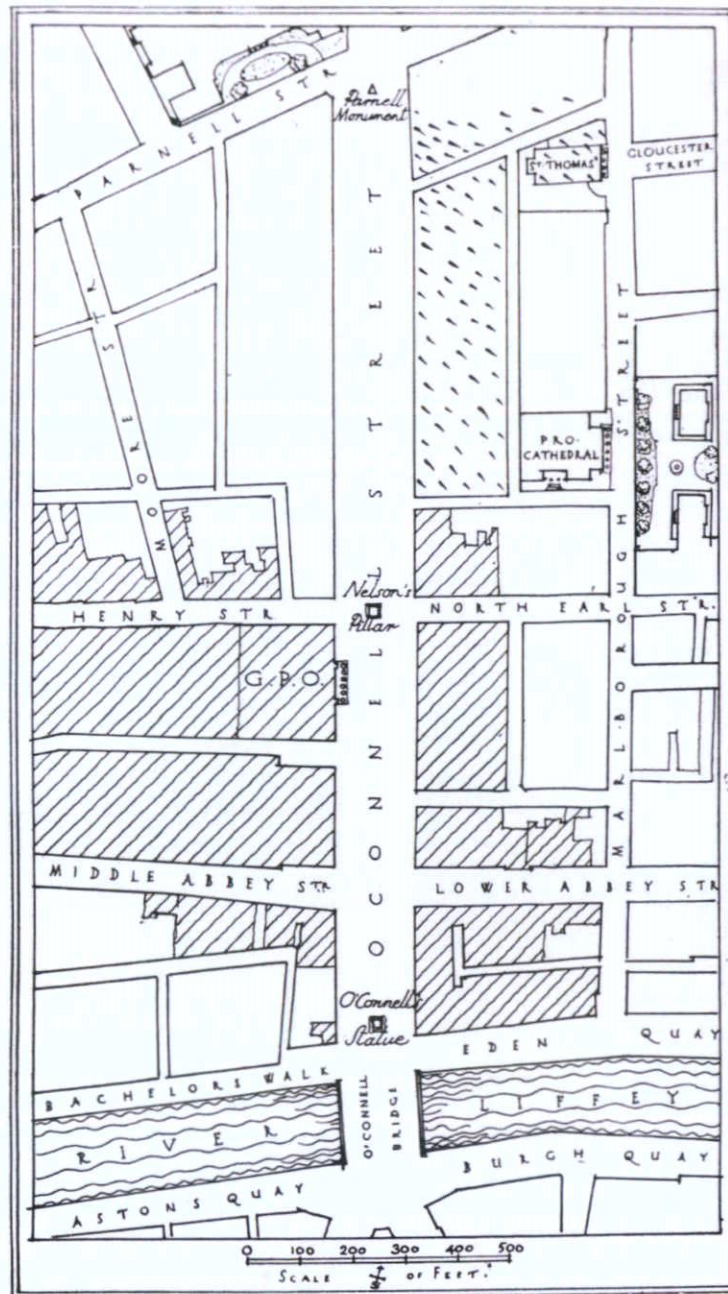
Figure 12.7: View of the north end of Sackville Street c. 1900. The Gresham Hotel is seen to the left.



Figure 12.8: Post Card view of the centre of Sackville Street c. 1900. The GPO has long glazed rooflights above the cornice and balustrade. The Royal Coat of Arms is seen in the tympanum.

During the insurrection of Easter 1916 the central area of Dublin around the GPO was shelled by a British Gunboat, the Helga. The shelling started fires which were left to burn unchecked, since firefighters could not enter the city while fighting continued. Much of the south end of O'Connell Street and of surrounding streets was destroyed. The smouldering carcass of the GPO remained standing.

In December 1916, the *Dublin Reconstruction (Emergency Provisions) Act 1916* was passed by the British Parliament and rebuilding began, particularly around the south end of O'Connell Street. Reconstruction was largely funded by the British Government. However, the War of Independence and the Civil War intervened and the Civil War in particular resulted in extensive further destruction in the Dublin. At one point the two sides fired on each other from within buildings on Upper O'Connell Street, with Republican forces on the eastern side. Shelling of the eastern side of the street and subsequent fires reduced most of the area between Cathedral Street and Parnell Street to ruins. Cathal Brugha was wounded in the fighting and died of his wounds.



The damaged areas in the neighbourhood of O'Connell Street. The hatched portions were destroyed in 1916 and the dotted portions in 1922. The destruction of St. Thomas' Church and the frontage in O'Connell Street will allow Gloucester Street, to be carried through.

Figure 12.9: Diagram from the Abercrombie plan of Dublin 1922 showing the pattern of destruction in 1916 and 1922. Gloucester Street was carried through as the present Cathal Brugha Street.



Figure 12.10: Irish Army Air Corps photograph published in the Dublin Civic Survey 1925 showing an area on the east side of Upper O'Connell Street from Cathedral Street to Findlater Place entirely cleared of buildings. Some reconstruction can be seen around the south end of O'Connell Street, but the GPO is still an empty shell.

On the 10th of July 1924 the Oireachtas of Saorstát Éireann passed the *Dublin Reconstruction (Emergency Provisions) Act 1924*. The Act gave compulsory purchase powers to the Corporation so that overly narrow sites could be combined and 'for the purpose of street improvements'. The Act also gave considerable powers to the City Architect, who at the time was Horace T. O'Rourke, to direct the style, character and materials to be used in new or restored façades. Section 3(2) of the Act states: -

"(2) If it appears to the city architect, having regard to the nature and situation of the site of the proposed new building, or of the building proposed to be restored or altered, or the external design of any buildings erected or in the course of erection in the neighbourhood of that site, that the character of the proposed new building, restoration, or alteration is such as would be injurious to the amenity of the street which the front of the proposed new building or the building proposed to be restored or altered faces, whether on account of the proposed external design, the proposed line of frontage, or the materials proposed to be used in the external walls facing that street or in any portion of the building which will be visible from that street, he may require such reasonable alterations to be made as respects the design, line of frontage, and materials as he thinks proper, and may require the plans, sections and elevations to be amended accordingly. The front of a building at the corner of two streets shall be deemed to face each street for the purposes of this section."

Section 3(3) of the Act adds: -

"(3) A requirement of the city architect under this section shall not have effect unless notice thereof in writing is delivered or sent by post to the building owner within one month after the day on which the plans, sections, and elevations are delivered as aforesaid, or within fourteen days after the day on which the further particulars (if any) are furnished as aforesaid, whichever period expires later."

The clear intention was that O'Connell Street and the surrounding streets would be restored, and restored quickly. The application of the 1916 and 1924 Reconstruction Acts resulted in a far more uniform appearance than had been the case before the destruction of 1916.

Christine Casey comments:

“Rebuilding was rapid and diverse in expression, unified only by restrictions on height, a prescribed cornice level and by a predominantly classical vocabulary. Reconstruction was carried out for the most part in reinforced concrete, use of which was by then well established in Ireland.”

The GPO was restored, but not as it had been before. It grew, both in height and in extent. Francis Johnston’s classical façade and portico survived the destruction of 1916, but the rest is, in effect a utilitarian office building. The Shell Guide to Ireland, 1962 says of the GPO: -

“Destroyed by gunfire, it was rebuilt in 1929 by uninspired architects of the Office of Public Works.”

The image of the GPO below from the 1950 shows a roof much higher than the original. Warburton Whitelaw and Walsh writing in the year the GPO was completed said it was 3 storeys in height and: ‘223 feet in front, 150 feet in depth’. That is 68 metres facing onto O’Connell Street and 46 metres going back down Henry Street and Princes Street. Apart from the first two bays, the GPO buildings on Henry Street are 5 storeys in height including the mansard and they extend 100 metres along Henry Street and 115 metres down Princes Street. Historic maps confirm that the original plot size of the GPO was about half what it is at present.



Figure 12.11: O’Connell Street early 1950s.

After its restoration, the O’Connell Street again became the hub of the city, filled with new shops, hotels and cinemas. The cinemas included the Ambassador - in the 18th century Rotundo Assembly Rooms, the Savoy, the Carlton, the Metropole, and the Capitol, at the side of the Metropole. ‘The Pillar’ now became the terminus for busses not trams; the destination being an actual place and not a nebulous nowhere named ‘An Lár’. The street bustled with activity. Buses and taxis huddled about the base of the Pillar. Moving neon signs glowed high on buildings. The flash bulbs of the many street photographers popped as they snapped passers by, hurriedly handing out a ticket in the hope of an order.

The new landscaping and paving of O’Connell Street arising from the O’Connell Street Integrated Area Plan 1998, has brought about some revitalisation of the street, but also changed its character considerably, creating a quite different sense of spatial enclosure. The 18th century Sackville Street was very different from the Victorian street. After most of that was destroyed, the new street of the 20th Century was different again. The recent reworking of the space within the street is yet one more reinvention.

12.3.2 Parnell Square



Figure 12.12: The Lying-in Hospital and the Assembly Rooms. Frontispiece from Volume 2 of Warburton Whitelaw and Walsh’s *History of the City of Dublin* 1818.

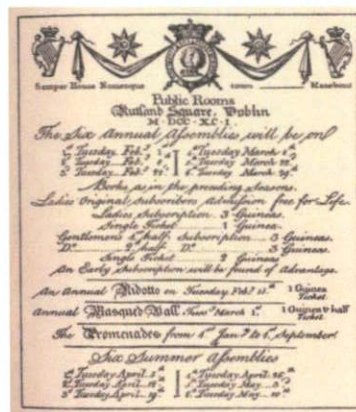


Figure 12.13: A contemporary illustration of patrons in the Rotundo Gardens, and an advertisement for the Assembly Rooms listing events for the 1791 season and the very considerable charges for entry.

Christine Casey in: *The Buildings of Ireland: Dublin*, describes the establishment of Rutland Square (now Parnell Square) and of the Rotunda Hospital, the Assembly Rooms and the Rotundo Gardens in the centre of the Square as follows: -

“Remove from the mind’s eye the ungainly cluster of C20 buildings and gardens that occupy its centre and replace them with a large central bowling green, lantern-lined walks, obelisks, a coffee room, and terracing rising towards a loggia and orchestra in the centre of the N side. The New Gardens were the brain-child of the young Dr Bartholomew Mosse, whose life’s ambition was the construction of a lying-in hospital for the poor of Dublin. In 1748 Mosse leased a four-acre rectangle, its S end facing Great Britain Street (now Parnell Street), its S E angle adjoining the N W corner of Sackville Street.... The New Gardens, designed by Robert Stevenson, were first illuminated in 1749. Subscriptions and entrance fees were used to fund the construction of a large Palladian hospital building across the S edge of the site. The success of the gardens resulted in the development of the surrounding lands. In 1753 Luke Gardiner began to set out plots on the E side, then known as Cavendish Street, later as Cavendish Row, Dr Mosse lived at No. 9.”

The gardens were eventually closed as a result of a campaign by the Society for the Discountenancing of Vice.

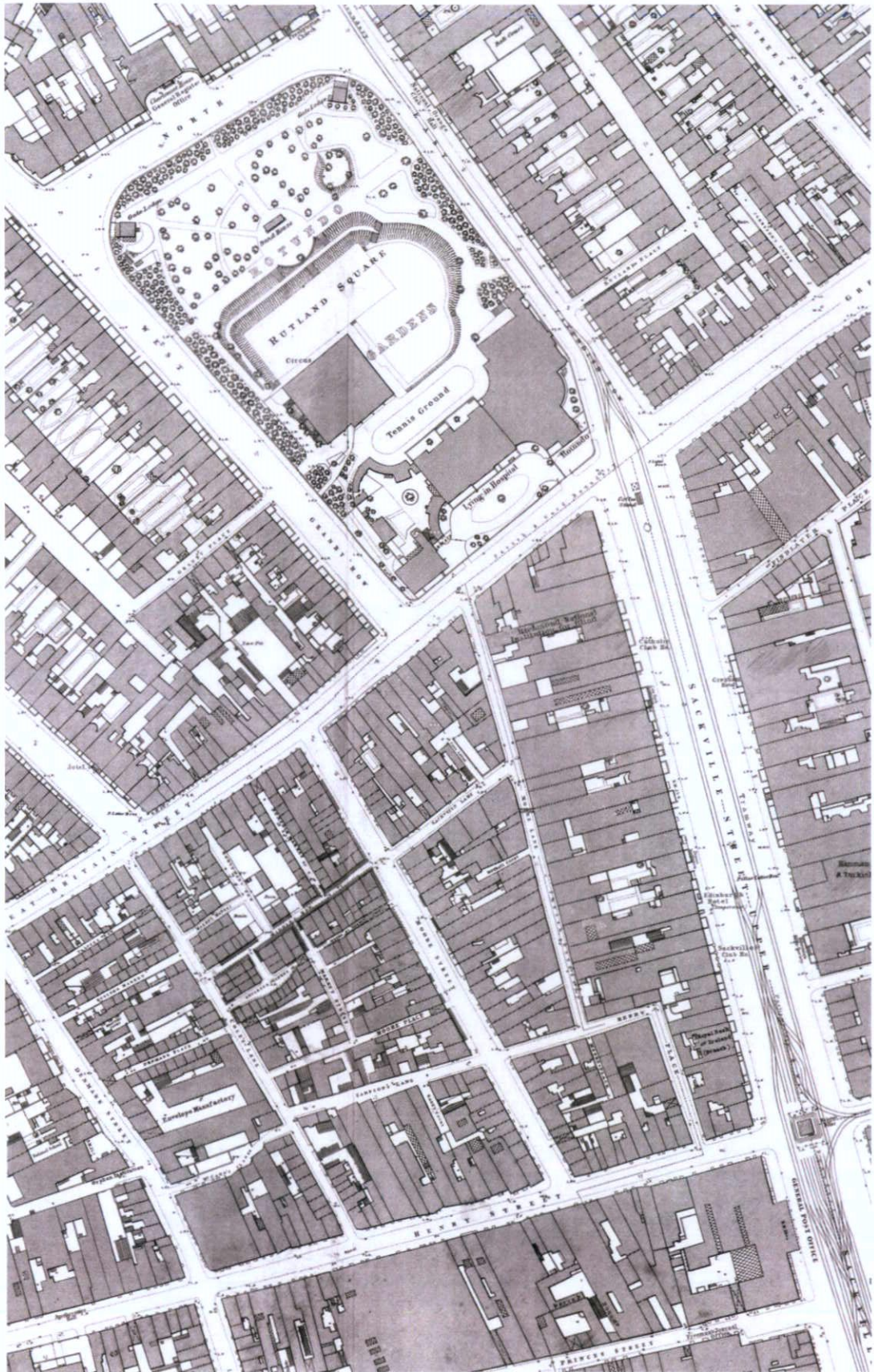


Figure 12.14: Extract from an Ordnance map of 1891. The Lying-in Hospital and the Rotundo Gardens are shown at the top of the map. Towards the bottom left-hand side of the map a densely packed area of markets is shown, bounded by Moore Street, Henry Street, Denmark Street and Great Britain Street (now Parnell St). The dark coloured striped areas on the map represent areas that are outdoor but covered.

12.3.3 Parnell Street, Moore Street and the Markets

The 18th and 19th century maps of Parnell Street, formerly Great Britain Street, show the street lined with small buildings. Back gardens shown on Rocque's map are gone on the 1847 Ordnance map. On Rocque's map, Moore Street is shown as incomplete, with only a few buildings on its east side. By 1847, it is lined with small buildings and is at the centre of a cramped and crowded urban network. The 1847 map, and the later 1891 edition illustrated above, both show a dense network of streets, lanes and back courts, occupying the area south from Parnell Street to Henry Street and west of Moore Street as far as Denmark Street, containing probably hundreds of buildings. There was Coles Lane, Samson's Lane, McCann's Lane, Horseman's Row, Taaffe's Row and Riddle's Row; Rotundo Market, Anglesea Market, Mason's Market and Norfolk Market, Moore Street Market (which was off Moore Street); and many more. By the mid 20th century, this area had been almost entirely cleared, and what was left was an open area of untended ground on which there was an ad hoc open air market, a shanty town of sheds and huts, selling second hand clothes, shoes, furniture and household goods. This dishevelled market should not be confused with street trading along Moore Street, which was a separate and far more thriving enterprise. In the 1970s, the ILAC Centre was built over the site of the market and of the complex urban fabric that was there before; one building where well more than 100 had stood.

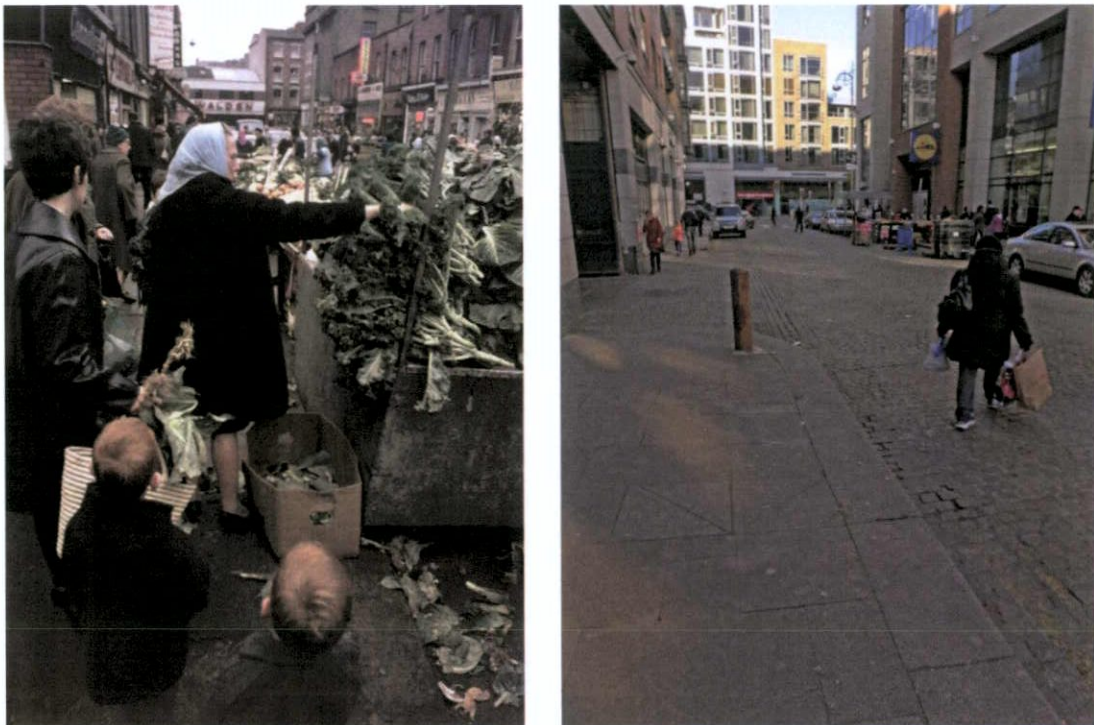


Figure 12.15: Two views near the north end of Moore Street taken from the same place and with the same lens. The view on the left is from October 1969, that on the right from October 2012. (Images Bill Hastings)

Warburton Whitelaw and Walsh describe the markets area west of Moore Street as they were in 1818: -

“Rotunda market, or as it is now more generally called Norfolk market, from a bust of the Duke of Norfolk erected at one entrance, was originally a few mean and dirty stalls in Cole’s-lane. As it was situated, however, in the extensive and opulent parishes of Mary’s, Thomas, and George, and was the only market to supply the whole north-east side of the Liffey, it soon increased in size and consequence. It now has extended from Cole’s-lane to Denmark-street on one side, and to Moore-street and Great Britain-street, through which it is approached on the other, and become the rival of Ormond market, to which, however, it is yet much inferior. It is not flagged, the passages are confined and dirty, and though equal in extent, is by no means so in variety. The number of stalls occupied is 79.”

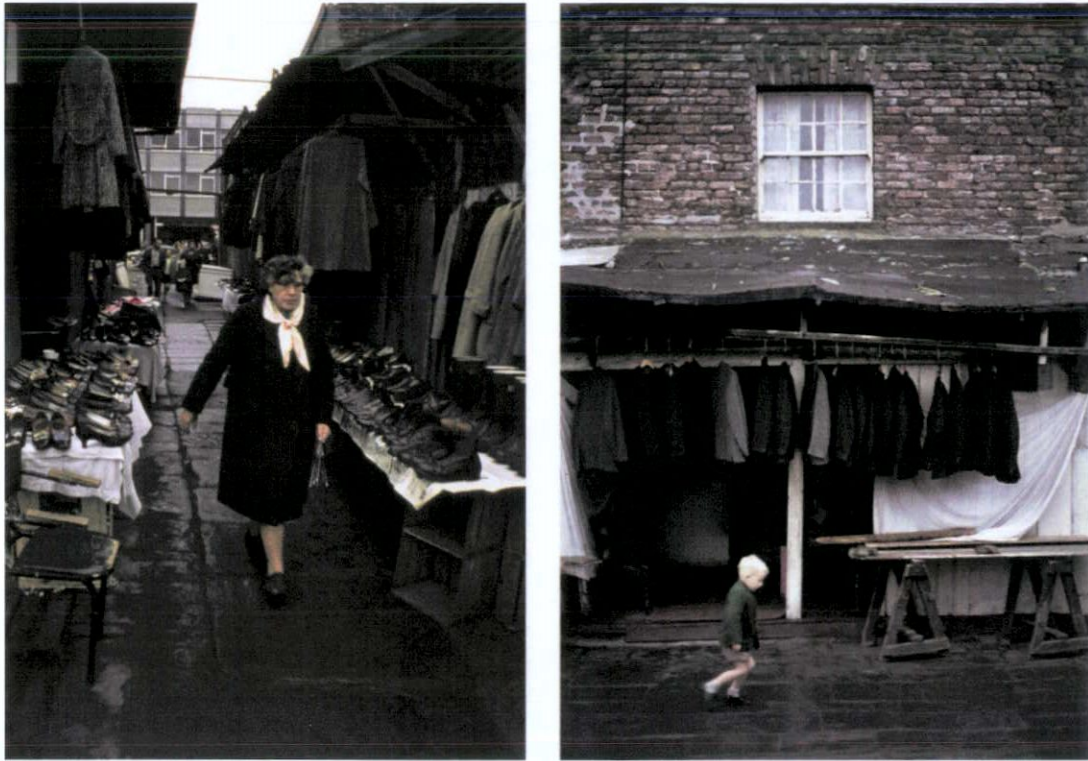


Figure 12.16: Two images of Moore Street Market taken in October 1969. The view on the left looks north towards Moore Street. The modern building seen at the end of this view is No 22 Moore Street, which is still there and is included in Site 4. (Images Bill Hastings)



Figure 12.17: Extract from an Ordnance map of 1891 showing part of the markets area west of Moore Street. The two photographs above were taken in a narrow market alley called Moore Street market which is circled in red on the map above.

12.3.4 Henry Street

Henry Street is probably Ireland's busiest shopping street. Though it was largely spared the cavalry charges and shelling of 1916, it was not unscathed. The section between Moore Street and O'Connell Street was almost entirely destroyed. The changes in Henry Street have been more the result of commerce than national emergence. Rocque's map of 1756 shows Henry Street lined with small houses, each with its own back garden. The 1847 Ordnance map of the area also shows these many small houses, though most have lost their gardens. That map identifies 23 separate buildings on the south side of Henry Street between Moore Street and Liffey Street, and 20 on the north side. Henry Street is now the home of large department stores and shopping complexes; and the domestic scale it enjoyed in the 18th and 19th centuries is long gone.

12.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

12.4.1 Dublin Central Masterplan

The Dublin Central Project is a large mixed use project on a site comprises circa 2.17 Ha (c. 5.36 acres) and is bounded by Parnell Street, O'Rahilly Parade, O'Connell Street Upper, Henry Street, Moore Street, Henry Place and Moore Lane in Dublin 1. There have been previous planning applications and grants of permission for the subject site. A permission granted under DCC Reg. Ref. 2479/08, ABP Ref. PL29N.232347, for a mixed use retail, commemorative centre & residential development was extended under DCC Reg. Ref. 2479/08x1 until the 6 May 2022.

There is extensive ongoing development in the area of Dublin surrounding the subject site, and in addition to the extant permission on the Dublin Central Project site, there are a number of recent permissions that are of particular relevance to the emerging character of the area. There have been a number of large developments along Parnell Street in recent years and the south side of Parnell Street west of Moore Lane reads as a continuous wall of 6/7 storey development. The most recent addition to this wall is a proposed 9 storey hotel now under construction on the corner of the west side of Moore Lane and the south side of Parnell Street DCC Reg. Ref. 4352/18; ABP Ref. 303553-19 as amended by DCC Reg. Ref. 3393/19; ABP Ref. 305470-19. The parapet of this building is at 34.850 metres OD and the overall height is at 36.700 metres OD.

Other schemes approved but not yet under construction include the Parnell Square Cultural Quarter, a large and striking public building behind a terrace of restored Georgian houses on the north side of Parnell Square, the parapet of the public building being at 38.000 metres OD. On Middle Abbey Street / Williams Lane there is approval for the elevated Arnotts car park to be replaced with an hotel with an upper roof level of 33.750 metres OD. A little along the street a very large mixed use commercial and residential development above the Jervis Centre has recently been approved, with a parapet level of 45.900 metres OD and the top of the plant at 47.800 metres OD. Approved developments at Clery's and a hotel on Earl Place behind Clery's rise to 32.250 metres OD and 35.3 metres OD respectively.

A Masterplan has been prepared for the entirety of the Dublin Central Project. This Masterplan envisages that the project will be divided into 6 separate sites, with 4 separate firms of architects each preparing designs for one or more of the 6 sites. Site 1 is the most northerly site and has frontage on Parnell Street, Upper O'Connell Street and Moore Lane. Sites 2AB and 2C are located between Upper O'Connell Street and Moore Lane with site 2AB being the most southerly and Site 2C the most northerly. Site 3 is located on the east corner of Henry Street and Moore Street, and runs north and east as far as Henry Place. Site 4 is located between Moore Street and Moore Lane and is divided into two parts with one part located each side of the National Monument. Site 5 is has frontage on Moore Street, O'Rahilly Parade and Moore Lane.

The Masterplan envisages the upgrading of Moore Lane and Henry Place and the creation of new public streets / lanes and new public spaces, so as to provide increased permeability from O'Connell Street to Moore Street and via a new lane directly from Henry Street north to Moore Lane. Mixed use developments are envisaged on all 6 sites with retail, cultural or café / restaurant uses at ground floor level. A mixture of uses is proposed for the upper levels on Site 1, including an hotel. Office use is proposed for most of the upper levels on Sites 2AB and 2C. The principal uses proposed for the upper

levels on Site 3 are residential and an hotel. Development on Site 4 rises only to 3 storeys and the proposed upper floor use are mainly residential. The upper floor use proposed for Site 5 is office.

The Masterplan envisages and number of taller buildings. The Masterplan indicates 3 buildings rising to above 35.000 metres OD and one building rising to over 40.000 metres OD. The three building proposed in the Masterplan at over 35.000 metres OD are an office building at Site 2A, an hotel at the back of Site 3 and an office building at Site 5. The building proposed at over 40.000 metres OD is an office building at Site 2C. Design work for buildings on Sites 1, 2AB and 2C is still in progress.

Sites 1, 2AB, and 2C are all on the eastern side of the overall site, between O'Connell Street and Moore Lane. An underground station for Metrolink is proposed to be located beneath these sites, and discussions in relation to the underground station box with Transport Infrastructure Ireland are ongoing, and nearing completion. Once final details of access and servicing of the Metrolink station have been finalised, it will be possible to proceed with a planning application/applications for Sites 1, 2AB, and 2C.

The current application relates to Sites 3, 4 and 5, sites on the Moore Street, western, side of the overall site. This assessment of landscape and visual effects covers the proposed developments on these three sites. A full assessment of the landscape and visual effects of development proposed on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C will accompany the planning application/applications for these sites, and it will not be possible to undertake a full assessment of the landscape and visual effects of development on these 3 sites until the design of the buildings proposed on these sites is finalised. However, this chapter does include a preliminary overview of the potential landscape and visual effects likely to be associated with proposed development on these 3 sites.

The Masterplan is still being refined and discussions with the planning authority are ongoing. The Masterplan is not part of the current application. Therefore, although this assessment has had regard to the Masterplan as a useful and informative background document, this assessment does not include a full assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Masterplan. The Masterplan envisages a new high quality public realm including the development of new streets, lanes and public spaces and the upgrading of Moore Lane and Henry Place. Parts of the proposed new public realm fall within the three sites being assessed in this chapter – Sites 3, 4 and 5. So does the upgrading of one side of Moore Lane and Henry place.

It is not really meaningful to carry out a landscape and visual assessment of half a public space. It would be like digging half a hole and not a whole hole. So this chapter includes a preliminary overview of the potential landscape and visual effects likely to be associated with the Masterplan, and of the ambition of the Masterplan in relation to public realm and permeability in particular.

12.4.2 Proposed Development – Site 3, 4 & 5

The overall site of the Dublin Central Project occupies part of the block bounded by Parnell Street, O'Rahilly Parade, O'Connell Street Upper, Henry Street, Moore Street, Henry Place and Moore Lane. The site has continuous street frontage on the west side of Upper O'Connell Street from No. 39 to No. 61. The site has street frontage from No. 36 to No. 41 Henry Street. The site occupies almost all of the street frontage on the east side of Moore Street, except for the National Monument at Nos 14 to 17 Moore street. The site has street frontage at Nos 70 and 71 Parnell Street. No 70 Parnell Street is Conway's public house which occupies the corner of Parnell Street and the east side of Moore Lane.

The site of the Dublin Central Project has street frontage along the entire eastern side of Moore Lane, on all of Henry Place except for the east side of No. 34 Henry Street, and on all of the west side of Moore Lane from Henry Place to O'Rahilly Parade, except for the rear of the National Monument at Nos. 9 and 10 Moore Lane.

12.4.2.1 Proposed Development of Site 3

Development on Site 3 is comprised of 2 main blocks, one each side of a new pedestrian lane which continues the line of Moore Lane south to Henry Street. No. 38 Henry Street is proposed to be demolished to provide for the junction of the new lane with Henry Street. East of the new lane, Block A will retain and upgrade Nos. 36 and 37 Henry Street, behind which an hotel rising to 9 storeys is proposed. West of the lane, Block B is proposed as 1 to 6 storeys in height, with the taller parts of the block at the Henry Street end. As part of the development of Block B, it is proposed to retain the facades of Nos. 39 and 40 Henry Street, Nos. 8 and 9 Moore Street and No 10 Henry Place. The main material for the newer parts of Blocks A and B is brick.

12.4.2.2 Proposed Development of Site 4

Proposed development on Site 4 include a number of small new buildings rising from 1 to 3 storeys in height, and the retention and restoration of Nos. 10, 20 and 21 Moore Street and Nos. 6 to 8 Moore Lane. The retention of the façade of No. 5 Moore Lane is also proposed. At the north end of Site 4, a large public plaza is proposed between Moore Street and Moore Street. A strip at the north side of this public plaza falls within Site 5. Proposed development in Site 4 includes the demolition of Nos. 18 and 19 Moore Street, and the provision in that location of a large arched opening between Moore Street and the new public plaza. A very shallow strip of building at the south side of this arch is proposed to provide service spaces for the National Monument. The materials for new development on Site 4 include brick, metal claddings and reclaimed materials laid in strata.

12.4.2.3 Proposed Development of Site 5

Proposed development on Site 5 consists of an office building of 3 to 6 storey's in height with a café / restaurant on the ground floor. Although the office building is proposed as a single building, it is proposed to step down the 4 and 3 storeys on Moore Street, where it will read as three separate buildings with red brick facades, the main 6 storey element of the office building set back from Moore Street. The main material proposed for buildings on Site 5 is brick, but the south façade of the office building facing onto the new public plaza is proposed as vertical stone fins. The top floor of the office building is proposed to be set back and to be clad in blue tiles. A strip at the north side of the public plaza falls within Site 5.

12.5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS & VISUAL EFFECTS

12.5.1 Dublin Central Masterplan

The Masterplan is still being refined and discussions with the Planning Authority are ongoing. The Masterplan is not part of the current application. Therefore, although this assessment has had regard to the Masterplan as a useful and informative background document, this assessment does not include a full assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Masterplan.

The Proposed Development is intended, as indicated by the Masterplan for the Dublin Central Project, to provide a range of publicly accessible facilities including new public streets and spaces. There is a clear intention to provide a new and vibrant public realm. There is usually a positive public reaction to new public spaces and new publicly accessible facilities. A positive reaction by the public to what is being provided will tend to influence positively public reaction to the landscape and visual character of the development.

The site of the Dublin Central Project has been underutilised and semi derelict for some years, and there is a considerable potential for the Dublin Central Project to bring new life to the area. The ambition of the Masterplan to provide a new high quality public realm including the development of new streets, lanes and public spaces and the upgrading of Moore Lane and Henry Place will be widely welcomed and are likely to give rise to very positive landscape and visual effects. The existence of a Metrolink station below the eastern side of the Dublin Central Project will also bring new life and intensity to the area. Although the new station entrances are not likely to have a major visual

presence, their existence and the pedestrian traffic associated with them will have an important positive impact on the landscape and visual character of the surrounding urban area.

Some members of the public are likely to regard landscape and visual effects associated with the Dublin Central Project as significantly positive, others significantly negative. The strong character of what is proposed is unlikely to evoke neutral response. Because of the extent of new public facilities and space proposed and because of the quality and innovative nature of the design, it is thought that the public reaction to the visual character of what is proposed is likely to be positive, on balance. The visual effects of the proposed new development will be permanent, but the extent of these visual effects is likely to reduce over time, and as other developments in the surrounding area are built

12.5.2 Proposed Development – Site 3, 4 & 5

12.5.2.1 Potential Visibility of the Proposed Development

ARC Consultants have carried out an analysis of the potential visibility from the surrounding urban area of proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5. As part of this analysis, ARC carried out modelling analysis of the potential visibility of buildings on these sites from 22 view locations in the surrounding area. From 7 of the locations analysed ARC found that there was no potential for buildings on Sites 3, 4 and 5 to be visible. These included locations at Parnell Square, Cavendish Row, O'Connell Street North, Cathal Brugha Street, Sean Mc Dermott Street, and Parnell Street West. Sites 3, 4 and 5 are on Moore Street, with Site 3 turning the corner onto Henry Street. Proposed development on these sites is, therefore, openly visible along Moore Street and from parts of Henry Street and Parnell Street near Moore Street. Along the Mary Street - Henry Street – North Earl Street – Talbot Street axis visibility of the proposed development is confined to development on Site 3 and reduces with distance. On the O'Connell Street axis any visibility of development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is confined to glimpses of the top of the 9 storey hotel on Site 3. There is likely to be a greater degree of visibility of this hotel building, seen above buildings on O'Connell Street, looking west up from Cathedral Street.

12.5.2.2 Sensitivity and Visual Capacity of the Surrounding Urban Environment

As has been noted above, the character of the surrounding urban area has changed repeatedly in the past, and is subject to continuous ongoing change. More than two thirds of the buildings in O'Connell Street were lost as a result of the insurrection in 1916 and the later Civil War. Almost all of the original buildings on Site 3 were also lost during that period. A significant number of the buildings on the O'Connell Street frontage of the site of the Dublin Central Project date from later in the 20th century.

As also noted above, some recent approved development in the area is very large in scale, including developments on O'Connell Street, Parnell Square, Parnell Street, Henry Street and Abbey Street. The scale and height of the approved development at the Jervis Centre, some 230 metres from the Dublin Central site, is much greater and much taller than anything proposed as part of the Dublin Central Project. The developments along Parnell Street West, taken together, are far greater in extent than the whole of the Dublin Central Project.

The existence of very large and extensive developments and approvals in the area indicates that the area has a high capacity to absorb development.

O'Connell Street is both a Conservation Area and an Architectural Conservation Area. There is a National Monument at Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street. Both O'Connell Street and Moore Street are historically significant, which suggests high visual sensitivity. But this historical significance has not prevented large scale development on these streets.

In the imagination of Dubliners, Moore Street is a market, and market activity is the overwhelming visual experience of the street. If you were to ask Dubliners to describe the buildings that make the walls of the street and so contain the market, most could not. It is the activity in the space that matters, not the space itself. Given this context, the visual sensitivity of Moore Street to changes in the buildings that line its east side is much less than might be the case for other streets in the centre of our Capital City.

Four houses in the centre of the east side of Moore Street are listed, since 2007 as a National Monument and, as it says in the official Scope Note: -

"Numbers 14 -17 Moore Street are subject to a preservation order made under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 (PO no. 1/2007)"

The existence of an National Monument in their midst probably doesn't register much in the day-to-day visual consciousness of the Moore Street stall holders or their customers. But the Monument does have a visual presence. The Scope Note says:

"The buildings at nos. 14 -17 Moore Street date from the mid-eighteenth century. The façades of all four buildings were rebuilt in the 19th century and they survive as a distinct and recognisable group in the streetscape."

Any development, therefore, that might change the setting of Numbers 14 to 17 Moore Street has the potential to give rise to landscape and visual effects as might be perceived by some observers, but not by all.

The four buildings of Number 14 to 17 Moore Street all have gabled façades, each different from the other. It would appear from the fact that the ridge of the roofs of these houses runs perpendicular to the street, that these house were built as gabled houses, popularly known as 'Dutch Billys', and that some other buildings along the east side of Moore Street probably had the same form.

It is unlikely, however, that many people using or visiting Moore Street take the time to wonder what Moore Street must have been like in the late 18th century when these houses were first built or how the buildings that lined the east side of the street have changed over time. As has been mentioned above, Moore Street was at the centre of a thriving markets area that survived from the late 18th century until the Ilac Centre was built over most of the market areas west of Moore Street at the end of the 1970's

The map reproduced above from the Abercrombie Plan of 1922 showing areas destroyed in 1916 (Figure 12.9) indicates that, in the fighting, buildings were lost all along the north side of Henry Street, west from Henry Place to Moore Street and for a considerable distance beyond, and that the destruction extended along the east side of Moore Street from Henry Street almost as far as Henry Place. The destroyed areas were rebuilt by the fledgeling Irish State in the 1920s in a somewhat exuberant late neoclassical style. On Henry Street, Moore Street and parts of other streets this resulted in façades of terracotta coloured red bricks articulated with light coloured Portland stone or limestone quoins and cornices and white painted windows, oriel or bay windows in many cases. These buildings make an important contribution to the urban a character of their surroundings, though some are looking the worst for ware, particularly those on Moore Street. The association of these buildings with how the new Nation chose to rebuild the ruined core of its Capital City following the insurrection of 1916 makes these buildings more sensitive to change than their architectural contribution alone might imply.

That having been said, few observers are likely to regard O'Connell Street, Henry Street or Moore Street as a museum dedicated to past struggles, and it is the current uses and facilities that these streets provide that is, and is likely to remain into the future, the main focus of public interest.

12.5.2.3 Potential Landscape and Visual Effects of the Proposed Development

The extent of potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development Sites 3, 4 and 5 on the built environment from locations in the surrounding area is tabled below. The development is unlikely to be visible at all from large sections of the city. The locations tabled below are representative of location from which mapping analysis suggested that the development might be visible. This table of the extent of potential landscape and visual effects does not address the issue of the character of effects, whether positive, negative or neutral. As is noted above, for each observer the character of effects is likely to depend, in large measure, on the extent to which they regard the development as socially or culturally acceptable.

Since development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 has been found by modelling analysis not to be visible from 7 representative locations tabled below, these locations being at Parnell Square, Cavendish Row,

O'Connell Street North, Cathal Brugha Street, Sean Mc Dermott Street, and Parnell Street West, the potential landscape and visual effects at these locations arising from the existence of proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is none. Along the Mary Street - Henry Street - North Earl Street - Talbot Street axis the potential landscape and visual effects are likely to range from 'imperceptible' to 'slight', becoming 'significant' on Henry Street close to the junction with Moore Street. On the Parnell Square - Cavendish Row - O'Connell Street axis the potential landscape and visual effects arising from proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is likely to range from none to 'imperceptible', becoming 'slight' to 'moderate' at locations near the Spire and the GPO. From Parnell Square North West there is a potential for part of the plant area on the roof of the office building on Site 5 to be visible over the top of the Jury's Inn on Parnell Street, giving rise to 'imperceptible' to 'slight' landscape and visual effects. Upper floors of the hotel building on Site 3 are likely to be seen above buildings on O'Connell Street, from a view location on Marlborough Street at looking west up Cathedral Street and from locations on Cathedral Street itself, giving rise to potential 'moderate' landscape and visual effects.

The greatest changes likely to arise from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5, and consequently the greatest potential for landscape and visual effects, will be on Moore Street and on the corner of Moore Street and Henry Street.

On Site 3, the 1920s buildings on the corner of Moore Street and Henry Street and along Moore Street as far as Number 8 are proposed to be replaced with new taller buildings accommodating residential use above retail. The main material for the façades of these new buildings is proposed as red brick of a colour referring to, but distinct from, the brick of the existing 1920s façades. The façades of the new corner building are proposed as having stone details in red sandstone on the upper levels. It is likely that the loss of the 1920s building will be perceived by some observers as having a negative landscape and visual effect on the character of the street, more because of the loss of a familiar feature than because of their historical significance.

On Moore Street the upper two floors of the 7 existing 1920s building read as a continuous horizontal façade. The existing buildings are 3 storeys, while the proposed buildings are 6 storeys, with the top two floor set back. So instead of a what reads as one long horizontal façade, what is proposed is a series of 5 vertical façades in red brick each the width of typical plot widths for large Georgian houses, and each with punched openings similar to the Georgian pattern. The separateness of these 5 façades is emphasised by vertical setbacks of brickwork between them and by the fact that the 5 façades vary in height. The 4th floor openings in these red brick façades are to be unglazed and serve as the front of an open terrace behind them. The Georgian pattern of these 5 façades belies the fact that behind them is a single 21st century building, not several 18th century ones. The proposed changes in scale, colour and material brought about on Henry Street and Moore Street by the existence of the proposed development on Site 3 are likely to give rise to 'moderate to significant' landscape and visual effects as perceived by observers; that is if those observers take the time to look up from the bustle of the street.

On Sites 4 and 5 the façades of new buildings along Moore Street are proposed to be in a variety of red bricks of colours similar to the various red bricks of facades of the 4 houses of the National Monument. The overall affect is likely to be regarded by observers as warm and familiar. New buildings on the street are proposed as having raised gables similar to those of the houses of the National Monument. Three new façades immediately south of the National Monument are proposed as having these gables. These three new façades are also proposed as being similar in width to the 4 facades of the National Monument and are proposed as having a similar fenestration pattern to the National Monument houses. There is a potential for the existence of new façades of the 2020s very similar in size, pattern and brick to the National Monument and right beside the National Monument to dilute the reading of the National Monument as something special in the street and in the City.

The building proposed immediately to the north of the National Monument incorporates a giant almost three storey high brick arch leading to a public plaza between Moore Street and Moore Lane, which will eventually form part of a new route from O'Connell Street to Moore Street. The sweeping curves of the sides of this arch, and of the underside of the top of the arch, are proposed as faced with brickwork, which will give the arch a very distinctive, almost fantastic character. North of the arch, Numbers 20 and 21 Moore street are to be restored. Between these houses and O'Rahilly Parade

three more gabled brick façades are proposed, one 3 bay and 3 storey and two 2 bay and 4 storey. Behind these 3 buildings a strikingly modern 6 storey office building is proposed as part of the development on Site 5, this building facing south onto the new public plaza and backing onto O’Rahilly Parade. The reaction of observers to the public plaza and to buildings facing onto it is likely to be positive. The reaction of observers to what is proposed on Moore Street on Sites 4 and 5 is also likely to be positive, tempered by some puzzlement about the historicist nature of some of the proposed façades.

Overall the landscape and visual effects likely to arise from the existence of the development proposed on sites 4 and 5 are assessed as being ‘moderate’ in extent and generally positive in character. Since the visibility of development on Sites 4 and 5 will be almost entirely confined to Moore Street, Henry Place, Moore Lane, the proposed new public plaza, O’Rahilly Parade, and very localised parts of Henry Street and Parnell Street, it is likely that the landscape and visual effects that arise will also be confined to these locations.

12.5.3 Sites 1, 2AB and 2C

ARC’s modelling analysis has not included modelling analysis of the visibility of potential development on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C. Such analysis will be carried out when planning applications for these sites is being made. However, since all 3 sites have frontage on O’Connell Street, it is certain that development on these sites will be openly visible from O’Connell Street, and the opening of the new east-west street from O’Connell Street to Moore Lane as envisaged in the Masterplan will also be visible. Parts of the development on these sites is also likely to be visible from the north, from Parnell Square west and from Parnell Street. The potential for development on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C to be visible from other locations is a matter for future analysis.

Since, at the time of writing this chapter, the design of proposed buildings on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C has not yet been finalised, it is only possible to provide a preliminary overview of the potential landscape and visual effects that might arise from development on these sites. From Parnell Square and Parnell Street the potential landscape and visual effects are likely to range from none to ‘moderate’, depending on the viewpoint. From the Cavendish Row - O’Connell Street axis the Landscape and visual effects are likely to range from ‘slight’ to ‘moderate’, although there is a potential for ‘significant’ impacts to arise in the vicinity of the GPO. Along the Mary Street - Henry Street - North Earl Street - Talbot Street axis the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the existence of buildings on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C is likely to be none, since there is little potential for development on these sites to be visible from this axis. From the eastern end of Parnell Street and from some locations on Marlborough Street, Cathal Brugha Street and Sean McDermott Street there is a potential for development on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C, where visible, to give rise landscape and visual effects ranging from ‘imperceptible’ to ‘moderate’. There is little potential for development on Sites 1, 2AB, or 2C to be visible from the wider City and so there is little potential for landscape and visual effects to arise.

12.5.3.1 Construction Stage

The extent of visual impact of the development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 during the construction phase is likely to be similar to that for the operational phase, as tabled above. The character of visual impacts during the construction phase is likely to be wholly negative at first, becoming neutral to positive as work proceeds and the new buildings and structures become apparent.

12.5.3.2 Operational Stage

This table of landscape and visual effects below refers to the operational phase of the development on Sites 3, 4 and 5, when construction is complete and the buildings are in use.

Viewpoint	Distance	Extent of Effects
A. O'Connell Street at Cathal Brugha Street	40m	None
B. Cathal Brugha Street near O'Connell Street	60m	None
C. O'Connell Street at the Spire • Looking North	80m	Slight to Moderate
C1. O'Connell Street at the Spire • Looking West	80m	Moderate
D. O'Connell Street at the GPO	120m	Slight to Moderate
E. O'Connell Street at Abbey Street	200m	None to Imperceptible
F. O'Connell Bridge	360m	Imperceptible
G. Cavendish Row	120m	None
H. Parnell Square East	210m	None
I. Parnell Square North	270m	None
J. Parnell Square North West	280m	Imperceptible to Slight
K. Parnell Street at Moore Street	75m	Moderate
L. Moore Street near Parnell Street	30m	Moderate
M. Henry Street at Moore Street	10m	Moderate to Significant
N. Henry Street south of Moore Street	50m	Moderate to Significant
O. Henry Street at Liffey Street	200m	Slight
P. Mary Street	400m	None to Imperceptible
Q. Parnell Street at Dominick Street	130m	None
R. Sean McDermott Street at Gardiner Street	400m	None
S. Centre of Cathedral Street	90m	Moderate
S1. Cathedral Street at O'Connell Street	50m	Moderate to Significant
T. Marlborough Street at North Earl Street	240m	Slight to Moderate

Table 12.1: Table of Landscape and Visual Effects.

It should be noted in relation to the table above that development on Sites 4 and 5 is unlikely to be visible from O'Connell Street or locations to the east of O'Connell Street. Therefore, landscape and visual effects from these locations, as tabled above, relate to the existence of development on Site 3 alone.

12.5.3.3 View by View Description of Potential Landscape and Visual Effects

In the views described below, when the Proposed Development is concealed behind intervening obstacles the hidden location of the development is represented: in the case of Site 3 by a red line, in the case of Site 4 by a pink line, and in the case of Site 5 by a green line.

View A. O'Connell Street at Cathal Brugha Street: This view looks south west from the eastern pavement of O'Connell Street at the north side of the junction of Cathal Brugha Street and O'Connell Street. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View B. Cathal Brugha Street near O'Connell Street: This view looks west from within Cathal Brugha Street out onto O'Connell Street. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. Site 3 would be off to the left of this view. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View C. O'Connell Street at the Spire • Looking North: This view looks north west from the eastern side of O'Connell Street just south of the Spire. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The top of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 will be visible over the top of the parapets of buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street just north of the Spire. The proposed development will be a minor element in the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact and the limited extent to which development on Site 3 will be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'slight' to 'moderate'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View C1. O'Connell Street at the Spire • Looking West: This view looks west from O'Connell Street into Henry Street from just south of the Spire. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. Buildings that form part of the proposed development on Site 3, including retained and restored buildings and retained and restored façades, will be visible along part of the north side of Henry Street between Henry Place and Moore Street. Upper levels of the proposed development will be visible above the retained buildings and façades, and the proposed building on the corner of Henry Street and Moore Street is proposed as two storeys taller than the existing buildings along that part of Henry Street. The proposed development will be notable element in the view, though not particularly prominent or the focus of the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact and the limited extent to which development on Site 3 will be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'moderate'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View D. O'Connell Street at the GPO: This view looks north west from the eastern side of O'Connell Street opposite the GPO. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by the GPO and by other existing buildings on the corner of O'Connell Street and Henry Street and their hidden location is represented by coloured outlines. The top of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 will be visible over the top of the parapet of the GPO and the roofs of buildings on the corner of O'Connell Street and Henry Street. The proposed development will be a minor element in the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact and the limited extent to which development on Site 3 will be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'slight' to 'moderate'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View E. O'Connell Street at Abbey Street: This view looks north west from the eastern pavement of O'Connell Street on the south side of the junction of Lower Abbey Street with O'Connell Street. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by the GPO and by other existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. From this location, the very top of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 may be just discernible over the top of the parapet of the GPO. If visible at all, the proposed development will be an extremely small element in the view. Given the very limited extent to which development on Site 3 may be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as none to 'imperceptible'.

The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View F. O'Connell Bridge: This view looks north west from a traffic island on the south side of Burgh Quay at its junction with O'Connell Bridge and D'Olier Street. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. From this location, the very top of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 will be just visible in the middle distance over the top of the parapet of buildings south of the GPO. Where visible, the proposed development will be a very small element in the view. Given the very limited extent to which development on Site 3 is visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'imperceptible'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View G. Cavendish Row: This view looks south from the eastern pavement of Cavendish Row across the street from the Gate Theatre. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street and by the Rotunda and the hidden location of developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View H. Parnell Square East: This view looks south from the eastern pavement of Parness Square East. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by the Gate Theatre and the Rotunda Hospital and the hidden location of developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View I. Parnell Square North: This view looks south from near the east end of Parness Square North. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by buildings at the Rotunda Hospital and the hidden location of developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View J. Parnell Square North West: This view looks south from west end of Parness Square North. The proposed developments on Sites 3 and 4 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by buildings on Parnell Square West and Parnell Street and the hidden location of developments on Sites 3 and 4 is represented by coloured outlines. Part of the Top of the plant enclosure on the roof of the office building on Site 5 will be visible in the middle distance above the roof of Jury's Inn on Parnell Street. In the view and immediately to the east of Jury's Inn a proposed 9 storey hotel is now under construction on the corner of the west side of Moore Lane and the south side of Parnell Street - DCC Reg. Ref. 4352/18; ABP Ref. 303553-19 as amended by DCC Reg. Ref. 3393/19; ABP Ref. 305470-19. When completed, this hotel will be fully two storeys taller than Jury's Inn and some 1.35 metres taller than the top of the plant enclosure on the Site 5 office building. This new hotel will, therefore be quite prominent in the view. The visible part of the proposed development on Site 5 will be a very minor element in the view. Given the limited extent to which development on Site 5 will be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 5 is assessed as 'imperceptible' to 'slight'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3 and 4 are assessed as none.

View K. Parnell Street at Moore Street: This view looks south into Moore Street from the central reservation of Parnell Street. Parts of the proposed development on sites 3, 4 and 5 will be openly visible in the centre of the view. Other parts of developments on these three sites will not be visible being concealed by the Jury's Hotel building to the left in the view and the hidden location of unseen parts of development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The visible parts of the proposed development will be clearly noticeable elements in the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming

part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is assessed as 'moderate'.

View L. Moore Street near Parnell Street: This view looks south east along Moore Street from the west side of Moore Street a little to the north of O'Rahilly Parade. Proposed development on sites 3, 4 and 5 will be openly visible in the centre of the view. The proposed developments will be major elements in the view and form the focus of the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is assessed as 'moderate'.

View M. Henry Street at Moore Street: This view looks north east along Moore Street from the south side of Henry Street opposite the end of Moore Street. Proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will be the dominant elements in the view, and the proposed development on Site 3 will dramatically change the character of the south end of Moore Street and the character of part of Henry Street. The considerable increase in height of buildings at the south east corner of Moore Street and Henry Street will result in a significant change in the urban character of the immediate area. This change in character is likely to be regarded as significant and negative by some observers. On the other hand, many may regard the introduction of new residential development in the area as very positive. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is assessed as 'moderate' to 'significant'.

View N. Henry Street south of Moore Street: This view looks north east along Henry Street from the south side of Henry Street some 50 metres west of the junction of Henry Street and Moore Street. The considerable increase in height of buildings at the south east corner of Moore Street and Henry Street as part of the development on Site 3 will result in a significant change in the urban character of the immediate area. It is noted in this regard that all the buildings on the north side of Henry Street between Henry Place and Moore Street, and continuing for some 50 metres west of Moore Street are 4 storey 20th century buildings of a consistent pattern of design using red brick and stone. The introduction of new substantially higher buildings as part of the proposed development on Site 3 will break this pattern. This change in character and loss of the early 20th century pattern is likely to be regarded as significant and negative by some observers. On the other hand, many may regard the introduction of new residential development in the area as very positive. It is also noted that the north side of the GPO buildings extend for 100 metres along the south side of Henry Street across the street from the proposed development on Site 3 and that the GPO buildings on Henry Street are substantially the same height as the Site 3 residential development. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'moderate' to 'significant'. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, and so the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View O. Henry Street at Liffey Street: This view looks east along Henry Street from the centre of the junction of Henry Street and Liffey Street. The considerable increase in height of buildings at the south east corner of Moore Street and Henry Street as part of the development on Site 3 will result in a small but noticeable change in the urban character of Henry Street as seen from this location. The proposed development on Site 3 is a minor element in the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact, and the limited visibility of the proposed development on Site 3, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed 'slight'. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be

visible from this location, and so the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View P. Mary Street: This view looks east along Mary Street and into Henry Street from the south pavement of Mary Street beside the former Saint Mary's Church. Proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will be almost entirely concealed from view by intervening buildings on Henry Street and Mary Street. It is just possible that the very top of the south west corner of the proposed development on Site 3 may be visible from this view location. If visible at all, the proposed development will be an extremely small element in the view. Given the very limited potential visibility of proposed development on Site 3, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 are assessed as none to 'imperceptible'. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible at all from this location, and so the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View Q. Parnell Street at Dominick Street: This view looks east from the central reservation of Parnell Street at the junction with Dominick Street. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being for the most part off to the right of the view and the building on Site 5 being concealed by existing buildings on the south side of Parnell Street. The hidden location of developments on Site 5 is represented by a coloured outline. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View R. Sean McDermott Street at Gardiner Street: This view looks west from the north eastern corner of the junction of Gardiner Street and Sean McDermott Street. The proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on the south side of Sean McDermott Street west of the junction and the hidden location of developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 3, 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View S. Centre of Cathedral Street: This view looks west up Cathedral Street towards O'Connell Street from the centre of Cathedral Street just north of the Pro Cathedral. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5, and most of the development on Site 3 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on Cathedral Street and on the west side of O'Connell Street and the hidden location of these developments is represented by coloured outlines. The top floors of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 will be visible over the top of the parapets of buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street. The proposed development will be a clearly obvious element in the view, and is likely to be the focus of the view west along Cathedral Street. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact and the extent to which development on Site 3 is likely to be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'moderate'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View S1. Cathedral Street at O'Connell Street: This view looks west across O'Connell Street from the junction of Cathedral Street with O'Connell Street. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5, and most of the development on Site 3 will not be visible from this location, being concealed by existing buildings on Cathedral Street and on the west side of O'Connell Street, and the hidden location of developments on Sites 4 and 5 is represented by coloured outlines. From this view location, the top floors of the proposed hotel building that forms part of the proposed development on Site 3 will be visible over the top of the parapets of buildings on the west side of O'Connell Street. The proposed development will be a clearly obvious and prominent element in the view. From the east side of O'Connell Street for some distance east and west of Cathedral Street the extent of visibility of the proposed development will be similar in extent to what is seen in this view. The design, materials and fenestration pattern of the proposed hotel give it a modern expression quite different from traditional character of the facades on the west side of O'Connell Street above and behind which the top of the

hotel is visible. It is of course appropriate that a new building 21st century building should have a different character to that of the 18th and 19th century building on O'Connell Street. Some observers are likely to regard the landscape and visual effects of the existence of the proposed development as seen from this location as 'significant'. However, having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given this fact and the extent to which development on Site 3 is likely to be visible in this view, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 is assessed as 'moderate' to 'significant'. The potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

View T. Marlborough Street at North Earl Street: This view looks west along North Earl Street from the east side of Marlborough Street. Proposed development on Sites 3, 4 and 5 will be almost entirely concealed from view by intervening buildings on Henry Street and North Earl Street. The top of the south end of proposed development on Site 3 will be visible from this view location. The proposed development will be a minor element in the view. Having regard to the character and extent of recent existing and approved development in the area, proposed development forming part of the Dublin Central Project must be considered to be consistent with existing and emerging trends. Given the extent of potential visibility of proposed development on Site 3, the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed development on Site 3 are assessed as none to 'slight' to 'moderate'. The proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 will not be visible at all from this location, and so the potential landscape and visual effects likely to arise at this view location from the existence of proposed developments on Sites 4 and 5 are assessed as none.

12.5.3.4 Do-Nothing Impact

In the 'do-nothing' scenario, no development will take place, and the present, partly obsolescent character of the site will remain.

12.6 MITIGATION MEASURES (AMELIORATIVE, REMEDIAL OR REDUCTIVE MEASURES)

12.6.1 Dublin Central Masterplan

Not applicable as the Masterplan is still being refined and discussions with the Planning Authority are on-going. Notwithstanding this, as the Masterplan presents an integrated design for a new city quarter, no remedial or reductive measures are likely to be applicable.

12.6.2 Proposed Development – Site 3, 4 & 5

12.6.2.1 Construction Stage

No mitigation measures have been proposed with respect to effects from the construction of the Proposed Development.

12.6.2.2 Operational Stage

Since the Proposed Development is an integrated design for a new city quarter, no remedial or reductive measures are applicable. In these circumstances, during the construction or operational phases scope for mitigation measures, which would preserve a sustainable level of density, is limited. However, developments already planned, approved or under construction near the site or elsewhere in the city will reduce the potential visibility of the Proposed Development, and thereby mitigate the extent of its visual impact.

12.7 RESIDUAL IMPACT

12.7.1 Dublin Central Masterplan

Not applicable as the Masterplan is still being refined and discussions with the Planning Authority are on-going. Notwithstanding this, as the Masterplan presents an integrated design for a new city quarter, no remedial or reductive measures are likely to be applicable.

12.7.2 Proposed Development – Site 3, 4 & 5

Since remedial and reductive measures do not apply, residual impacts will, initially, be as tabulated for potential impacts, above. Reduction in the visibility of the Proposed Development, resulting from the construction of other development, will gradually reduce its visibility and thereby its impacts, whether positive, negative or neutral in character.

12.7.2.1 Worst Case Impact

The effects considered above represent the 'worst case' scenario

12.8 MONITORING

Monitoring is not applicable to this chapter.

12.9 REINSTATEMENT

Reinstatement is not applicable to this chapter.

12.10 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

No difficulties were encountered in the preparation of this chapter.

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