

- 11.26 The site is occupied by a three storey red brick building in derelict condition fronting City Quay and Moss Street, with a large yard to the side and rear. The yard is currently used for parking and is enclosed by a concrete wall. Along Gloucester Street South a tall metal coal yard screen protrudes above the wall. Overall, the site contributes to a poor streetscape quality along its frontage to City Quay, Moss Street and Gloucester Street South.
- 11.27 Historic maps show that prior to the existing building's construction the site was divided into a number of smaller plots occupied by small terraced buildings and open yards. Like most of the surrounding area this fine grained townscape was replaced over the course of the 20th century with larger developments on consolidated plots.



Photo 11.1 The existing built frontage to Moss Street and City Quay



Photo 11.2 The frontage to City Quay and the Liffey, with the Custom House across the river

- 11.28 An architectural heritage impact assessment report by Cathal Crimmins Architect and Historic Building Consultant (submitted as part of this planning application) states that the north façade of the building (the City Quay frontage) is likely to date from c. 1900. The remainder of the building's fabric appears to have been constructed in the first half of the 20th century, although a report by IAC Archaeologist (Chapter 12) states that some of the interior walls may date from the late 17th or early 18th century.
- 11.29 Records indicate that the site was used as a coal yard through much of the 20th century before Dublin Port moved to the east, to the mouth of the Liffey. This left the site and surrounding area, once at the centre of trade and commerce in Dublin (on the docks, opposite the Custom House and close to the city centre), unused.
- 11.30 After a period of disuse the site was repurposed as an arts centre in 1988, as part of a programme to revitalise the former dockland area. The City Arts Centre occupied the site, which it owned, until 2003 when it sold the site and moved to different premises. The site has remained unused since that time and the building is now derelict.



Photo 11.3 The existing site frontage to Gloucester St. South

11.4.2 Adjacent Lands/Development

- 11.31 Adjacent to the east of the site is City Quay National School, which is accessed from Gloucester Street South. Beyond the school is the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (a protected structure). The small 19th century church is set back from City Quay so that it has limited presence in the built frontage to the quay, but its spire is a notable feature in views from across the Liffey (see Photo 11.4). Fronting City Quay to the east of the site is a small commercial premises (currently occupied by a Covid test centre), and the church's parochial house (also a protected structure). To the east of this group of diverse, relatively small scale buildings is the recently built Grant Thornton building fronting City Quay and Prince's Street, completing the city block.
- 11.32 To the south of the site across Gloucester Street South a new eight storey hotel is under construction (Reg. Ref. 2711/17, ABP PL29S.249425). This development is changing the character and quality of Moss Street as a city street. However the street will remain sub-optimal as long as the site remains in its current condition.

- 11.33 To the west of the site across Moss Street is the George's Quay office campus, a complex of four late 20th century office buildings including George's Quay Plaza, the tallest element of which is 12 storeys.
- 11.34 To the north of the site across the Liffey is the IFSC and to the north west (135m from the site), the Custom House. The neoclassical building, completed in 1791 by the architect James Gandon, is one of the city's most important and valued architectural features.
- 11.35 The Custom House and the Liffey are two of the defining elements of the receiving environment. Both are highly valued and sensitive elements of the townscape, requiring particular consideration in the planning and design of new development in their vicinity.



Photo 11.4 *The existing site building facing Talbot Bridge and the Liffey, with the George's Quay office campus to the right, and two commercial premises, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and Grant Thornton.*



Photo 11.5 The view north across Talbot Bridge from the site, showing the Custom House to the left, IFSC to the right and Busáras in the distance in the centre of the view

11.4.3 Site's Strategic Location – Drivers for Development

City Centre Location

11.36 The site's central location puts it within minutes' walk of:

- O'Connell Street, Grafton Street and the city's retail core on both sides of the Liffey;
- Various city centre office districts including all of the Docklands area, the IFSC, George's Quay, the future 'Connolly Quarter/Dublin Arch' and 'Dublin Central' developments, and streets such as Dawson Street, Molesworth Street, etc.;
- Trinity College and the future Grand Canal Innovation District;
- The Convention Centre, 3 Arena, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, Abbey Theatre and a range of other venues;
- Numerous hotels.

Access to Public Transport

11.37 In the context of the Dublin Metropolitan Area the site is located in the centre of the 'city centre', and at the junction of all modes of public transport. It is:

- 200m from Tara St. station, giving access to the DART and future Metro Link;
- Less than 500m from both Connolly Station and Pearse Station, giving further access to DART and Intercity Rail services;
- Less than 1km from Docklands Station, giving access to additional Intercity Rail routes;
- Less than 500m from both the red and green Luas lines;
- 250m from Busaras and close to numerous bus stops for Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and various private services.

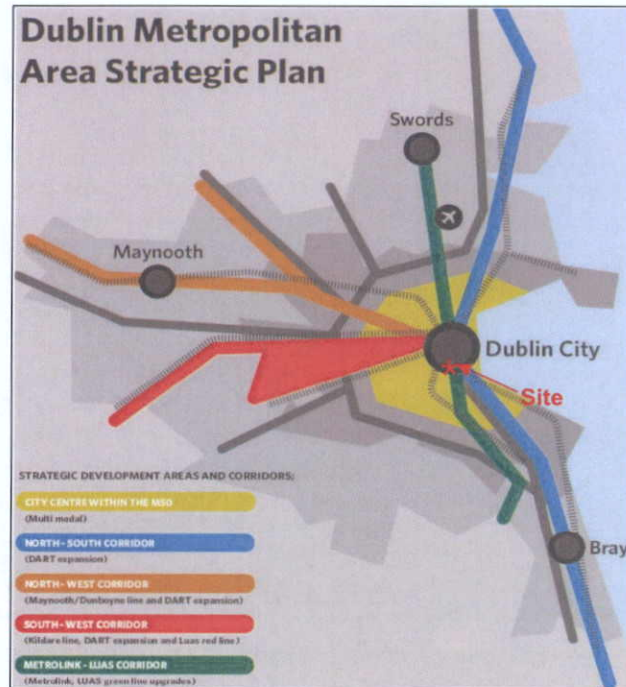


Figure 11.3a Site location in the context of the Dublin Metropolitan Area (diagram sourced from the Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028)

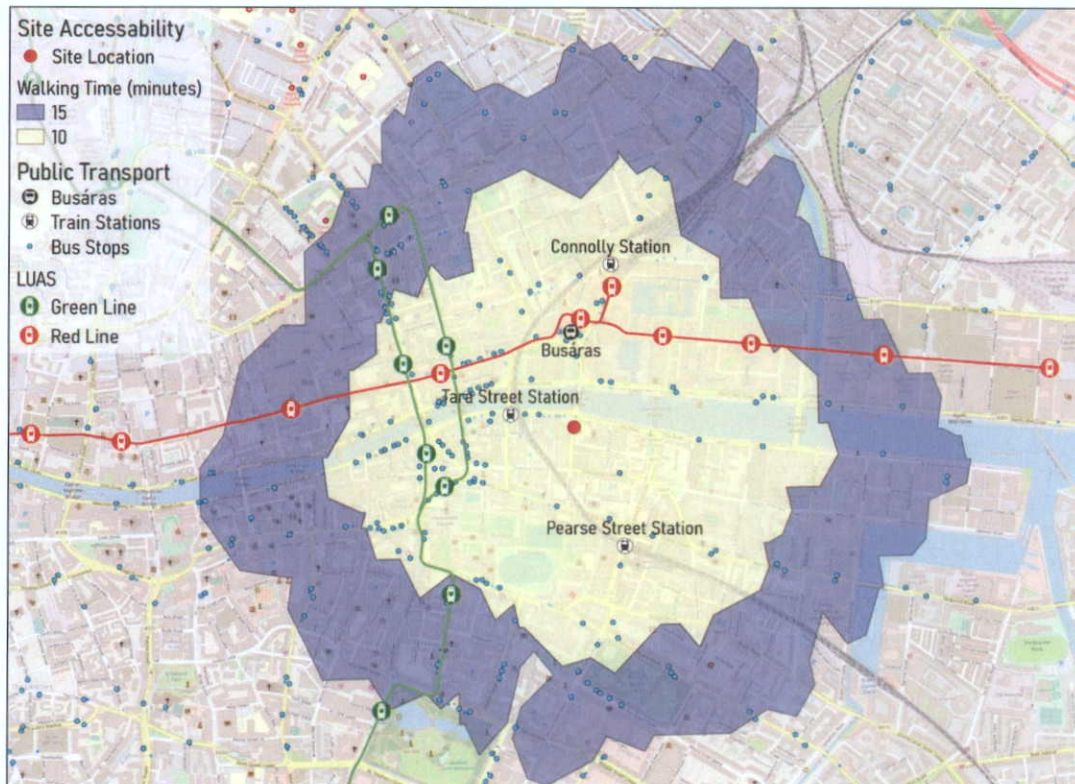


Figure 11.3b 'Walktime' map for the site, prepared by KPMG Ireland, showing Tara St., Connolly and Pearse St. Stations, the LUAS Red and Green lines, Busáras and the city's largest concentration of on-street bus stops all well within 10 minutes walk of the site. Also within the 10 minute walk zone are O'Connell Street, Henry Street, Grafton Street, Trinity College, the IFSC, Merrion Square and a large part of the Docklands north and south of the Liffey

- 11.38 **Considered at a national level the site could not be more favourably located in terms of centrality to the metropolitan core and access to public transport.** Public transport is the principal driver of urban densification and compact growth policy demands that lands such as the site be used to their maximum potential subject to other environmental considerations.

Position in the Road Network

- 11.39 The site occupies a strategic position in the road network, where Talbot Memorial Bridge lands at the junction of George's Quay and City Quay. This is both:

- An arrival point in the city centre for traffic from the north travelling along (a) Gardiner Street, (b) Amiens Street (including from Connolly Station) and (c) North Wall Quay (from Dublin Port and the Port Tunnel), and
- A point of dispersal, offering routes east and west along the quays towards (a) the historic city centre, (b) the Docklands, or (c) directly ahead towards Trinity College.

- 11.40 The importance of the bridge is however not reflected or emphasised by the surrounding built form. Whereas many of Dublin's bridges – old and new – are 'places' in the townscape, contributing to character and featuring in people's mental map of the city, Talbot Memorial Bridge is not. This is due to a number of factors, including the bridge design, the width of the river at this point, the width of the quays, the lack of response in the surrounding built form, and the lack of active/anchor land uses around the bridge.

11.4.4 Townscape Character – Key Characteristics

Location in Transition Zone Between the Old City Centre and the Docklands

- 11.41 The site is located in a zone of transition between the old city centre to the west and the Docklands area to the east. The transition takes place (roughly) across Tara Street on the south side of the Liffey, and Amiens Street on the north side. The division is reinforced by the Loopline Bridge, which forms a vertical barrier in the townscape (and in the Liffey River corridor). The variation character across this transition can be seen in the following aspects of the townscape:

- To the west the urban grain (the pattern of streets, blocks and plots) is generally fine and somewhat organic, whereas to the east in the former docklands the urban grain is coarse and orthogonal.
- To the west the buildings are generally older, terraced and smaller (in footprint and height). This area incorporates the medieval city and the Georgian quarters, and a high proportion of the buildings date from the 18th to the early 20th century. To the east, the buildings in the Docklands are mostly modern (dating from the latter part of the 20th century and the 21st century), generally larger, and detached. The architecture and materials also vary, with a high proportion of stone and brick in the older buildings to the west, and a high proportion of metal and glazing to the east. (There are of course anomalies in both areas.)
- To the west in the old city there is a more complex mix of land use, with a high proportion of retail, entertainment and cultural uses typical of a city centre. To the east the dominant land use is office, although there is also sizeable proportion of residential use. In places, such as Grand Canal Dock, there is a vibrant, city centre-like mix of uses.



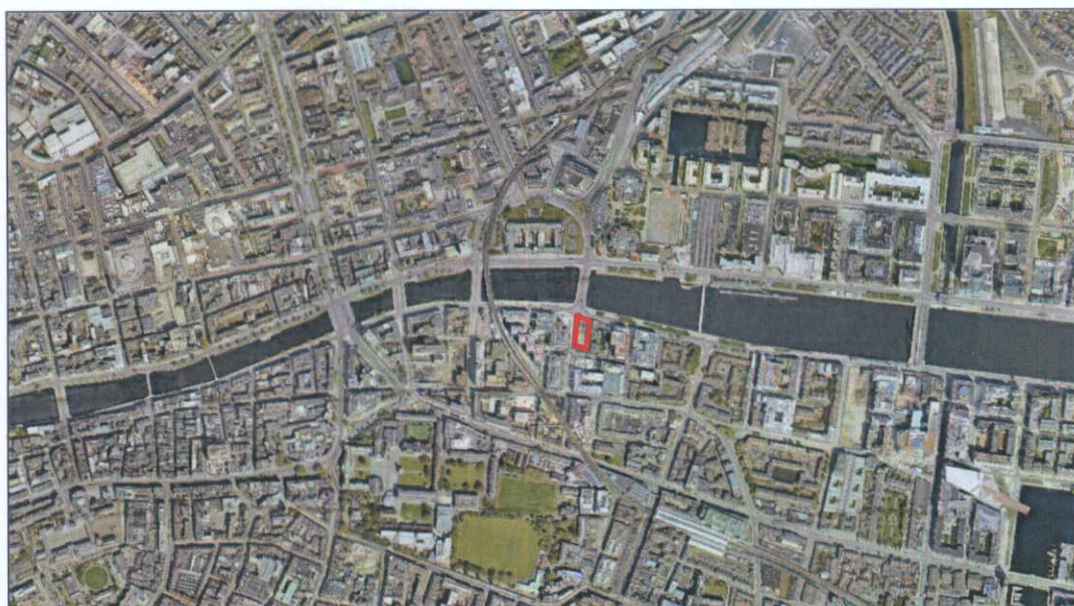


Figure 11.4 (a, b, c) 1797 map, mid 19th century map and recent aerial photo showing the site location in the transitional area between the 'old city centre' to the west and the Docklands to the east. Note also the change in character in the Liffey corridor, with the river widening and straightening to the east

- Owing to the above factors, to the west the city centre is busy, in terms of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and general urban activity, but also 'visually busy' due to the activity in the streets and spaces, the shopfronts and signage, the complexity of built form, etc. In contrast, to the east the townscape of the Docklands area is less intense, in activity and visual terms – apart from notable pockets such as the highly successful Grand Canal Dock/Square area.

Pivotal Position Along the Liffey River Corridor

11.42 The differences in townscape character to east and west of the transition zone are reinforced by a change in character in the Liffey River corridor, which occurs in the area of the site (roughly from Butt Bridge to Talbot Memorial Bridge).

- To the west of Butt Bridge and the Loopline the river is relatively narrow. For example at O'Connell Bridge it is less than 50m in width. To the east it widens considerably, so that in front of the site it is 75m wide and further east it widens to well over 100m.
- To the west of Butt Bridge the river's alignment is sinuous, while to the east it straightens as it widens through the Docklands to open into the port.
- These two factors combine - along with the differences in built form/scale, architecture and land use (discussed above) – to create very different character areas along/within the Liffey corridor. To the west in the old city centre there is an enclosure and intimacy to the river corridor. To the east, including the stretch of river in front of the site, it is more open/exposed and less 'contained' by the city. In this area the river defines the townscape, whereas in the old city it is just a part of it.
- This is noticeable in views along the river, in which the contemporary buildings (mostly eight storeys) in the Docklands can appear under-scaled for their 'contemporary city centre river corridor' context (see Photo 11.4).



Photo 11.4 A view east along the Liffey corridor, showing the small scale of the buildings relative to the river

Underperforming Townscape and Public Realm in the Site Environs – An Impediment to Connectivity Between the Old City Centre and the Docklands

- 11.43 George's Quay and City Quay on the south side of the river, and Custom House Quay on the north side, are collectively an underperforming part of the city centre (and Liffey corridor) townscape and public realm. **This area acts as an impediment to the desired coming together of the old city centre and the Docklands.**
- 11.44 This is due to a combination of factors including the effect of the Loopline, the inconsistent built frontage (the IFSC on the north side in particular), the lack of activity-generating uses and entrances in the buildings fronting the quays, the public realm design and the openness of the river corridor, which makes it less definable and attractive as a place. **There are few reasons for people to be on the Liffey quays between the Loopline Bridge and Sean O'Casey Bridge, except to observe the Custom House or while being on route to somewhere else.**
- 11.45 **It is a notable that, despite its distinctive buildings such as the Custom House, IFSC and George's Quay Plaza, and the presence of Talbot Memorial Bridge, this area lacks place-identity.**
- 11.46 (Many/most other bridges in the city are 'places' themselves, e.g. O'Connell Bridge, Sean O'Casey Bridge, Samuel Beckett Bridge, Ha'penny Bridge, Grattan Bridge, James Joyce Bridge; even the unsightly East Link. Talbot Bridge does not have this status in the townscape despite its central location, its position beside the Custom House, its proximity to Trinity College and the IFSC, etc. Its minimalist design may have been intended to avoid cluttering the environs of the Custom House; however, since there is also a lack of response to the bridge in the surrounding built form (apart from a recent modification to the '1GQ' building), the area lacks the cohesion that a bridge can generate.)

11.4.5 Townscape Character Areas of Which the Site is a Part

11.47 The site can be considered and perceived as a part of several distinct but overlapping townscape character areas. Its redevelopment would have an effect on the character of each of these areas:

- The Custom House area;
- The George's Quay area, as part of the wider Docklands;
- Emerging cluster of high density around Tara and Connolly Stations;
- The Liffey River corridor;
- Dublin City Centre as a whole.

The Custom House Area

11.48 The Custom House lies to the north west of the site, diagonally across the Liffey (approximately 135m from the site). The neoclassical building is one of the city's most important and valued architectural features. It is rectangular in plan, of very large footprint, with a frontage of 120m to Custom House Quay and the Liffey. A domed cupola rises above the long, low, four-fronted building. It occupies a crescent shaped plot defined by Beresford Place, which arcs around the west, north and east sides of the building. Two key thoroughfares entering the city centre from the north converge on Beresford Place where their traffic is channeled around the Custom House and over Talbot Bridge to arrive on the south side of the Liffey in front of the subject site..

11.49 The Custom House can be considered the central feature of its own character area in the townscape. **While the building itself is of national heritage significance, its surrounding area is characterised by an eclectic mix of built form and architecture** (see Figure 11.5):

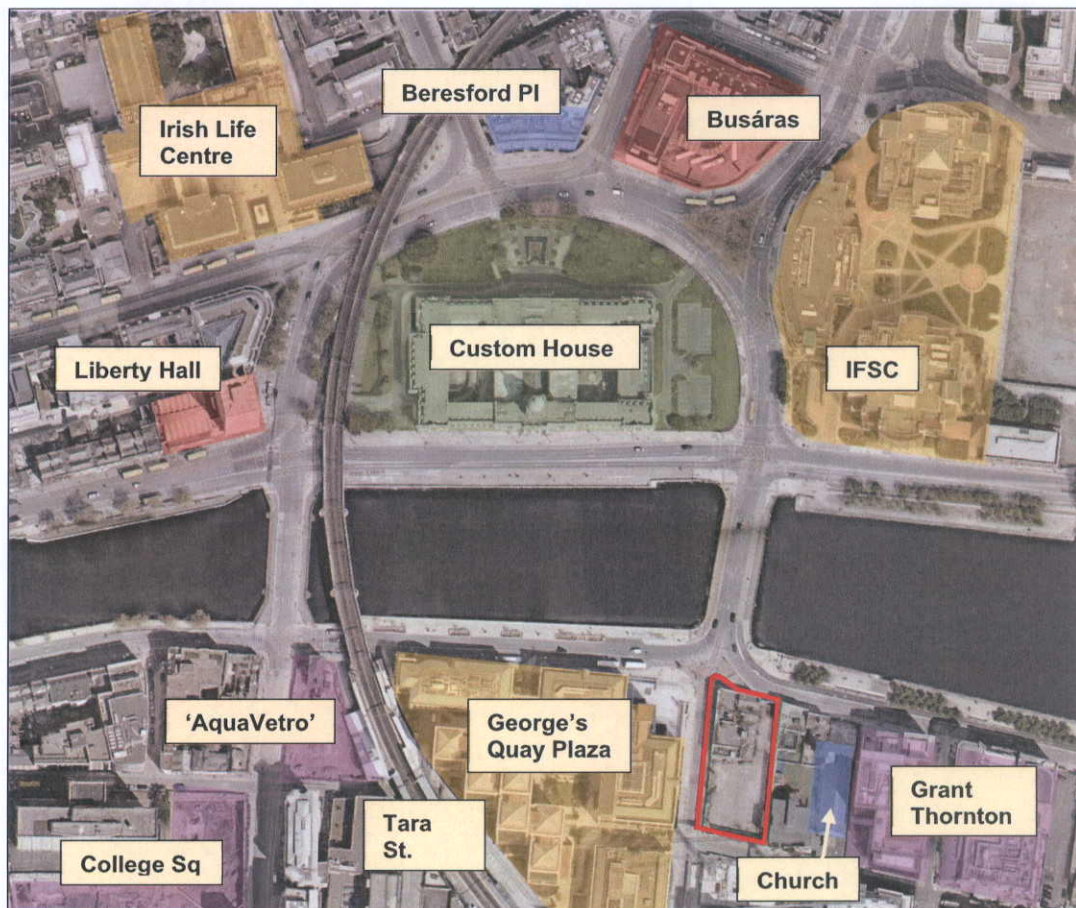


Figure 11.5 The Custom House character area, showing the diversity of built form and architecture. Each building can be considered a strong expression of its function and era of development. This diversity creates capacity for change.

- Directly to the north across **Beresford Place** is a remaining part of a crescent of houses that was developed at the same time as the Custom House. Later developments, including the Loopline railway, Busáras, and the Irish Life Centre, caused other parts of the crescent to be removed.
- The **Loopline Bridge** passes to the west side of the Custom House, only 20m from the building at its nearest point. The long, elevated metal structure, completed in 1891, forms a visual and physical barrier in the townscape between the Custom House and the old city centre, and is a key element of the Custom House character area.
- **Busáras**, Dublin's Central Bus Station, was designed in the 1940s and completed in 1953. In the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), it is described as being "*the building that announced the arrival of International Modernism in Ireland*". Like the Loopline Bridge it caused controversy at the time of its construction (for its location, scale and architecture), but it came to be appreciated for its unique design and ornate decoration. The building features a distinctive wave-like cantilevered canopy over the public concourse, facing Talbot Bridge and the site across the river.
- To the west beyond the Loopline and Beresford Place, also fronting the Liffey, is **Liberty Hall**. Completed in 1965, the 17 storey tower was the first tall building in Dublin and is described in the NIAH as "*an embodiment of the functional aesthetic of the International Style, with its simple slender form, transparency of structure, and sparse ornament*". Its lack of decoration is in stark contrast to

the style of Busáras, as are its vertical scale and materials palette with respect to the Custom House. Like the Loopline Bridge, Liberty Hall features in all views of the Custom House from south, east and west along the Liffey.

- To the east of Beresford Place/Memorial Road, directly across the Liffey from the site, is the **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**, developed in the late 20th century. This was one of the early projects that initiated the regeneration of the Docklands. The trio of low, stone and green glass-clad buildings at the western end of the IFSC was considered to have set a new standard in office building design at the time.



Photo 11.5 A view north west across the Liffey showing the broad, low form of the Custom House with its prominent domed cupola, the tall, slender Liberty Hall, and the blocky form of the IFSC



Photo 11.6 A view of the Custom House facing Georges Quay across the Liffey

- Directly across the Liffey from the Custom House is the George's Quay office campus, comprised of three low (5-6 storey) buildings forming a skirt around the distinctive **George's Quay Plaza**. Completed in 2002, this is a complex of seven connected slender towers up to 13 storeys in height, topped by pyramidal

- roof structures. At the time it was the second 'tall' (and second tallest) building in Dublin after Liberty Hall.
- To the west of George's Quay and Tara Street Station, is the site of the permitted 23 storey '**AquaVetro**' building (**Tara Street tower**), a hotel and office building which was granted planning permission in 2020. This was to a large extent a plan-led project, the site having been identified for a tall building (up to 22 storeys) in the George's Quay Local Area Plan 2012. The site was identified for (a) its potential to serve as a landmark identifying Tara Street Station as a key public transport node, (b) to act as a visual counterpoint and to form a gateway in tandem with Liberty Hall, "*marking the transition between the traditional city core and the docklands*", and (c) to act as a termination of long distance views at a pivotal point in the Liffey River corridor.
 - Diagonally across Tara Street from the AquaVetro, is the site of the permitted **College Square development**, which includes a residential tower of 21 storeys. Due to its height and close relationship with the AquaVetro building, College Square will form part of the evolving Custom House character area.
 - Just to the east of the site (beyond a commercial premises, the parochial house and the school), is the **Immaculate Heart of Mary Church**, protected structure. This is a small church built in 1863 (with the spire added in 1890), which became known for a time as the 'Dockers' church' as it served the seamen and dock workers of City Quay. It is set well back from the quays and features most strongly in views from across the river.
 - To the east of the church is the **Grant Thornton** building. This is a recently developed HQ office building with a distinctive, high quality bronze finned and glass façade. Like many of the buildings on the quays in the Docklands it is limited to eight storeys in height and has a flat-topped, boxy form.



Photo 11.7 A view west along City Quay with the Grant Thornton building in the foreground (hiding the neighbouring church), a part of the George's Quay Plaza complex, and Liberty Hall and the Custom House



Photo 11.8 *Photomontage showing the permitted scenario, with the IFSC, Custom House and Liberty Hall on the north side of the Liffey, and a cluster of contemporary buildings of various form, scale and architecture on the south side*

- 11.50 **The Custom House is recognised and valued as one of Dublin’s most important buildings. However, it should also be recognised that it exists in a townscape characterised by diversity of built form, scale and architecture, which has undergone constant change since the Custom House was built.** Its original prominence was undermined by the Loophline Bridge and since then its context has altered to the point where the building retains its own integrity but the strongest characteristic of the area is its diversity and juxtapositions.
- 11.51 **Many of the developments in the area can be considered forerunners and strong architectural expressions of their type and time,** for example the Custom House itself, Busáras, Liberty Hall, IFSC, George’s Quay Plaza, AquaVetro and College Square (the latter two buildings being the first two 21st century, city centre tall buildings).
- 11.52 This is due to the location (a) at the centre of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, (b) adjacent to the historic city centre, (c) at the intersection of all transport networks, and (d) in an area characterised by diversity and change in the built environment. The subject site benefits from these same geographic advantages.
- 11.53 At the time of its construction the Custom House caused the hub of trade/commerce in Dublin to shift east along the Liffey from the city centre towards the emerging Docklands.
- 11.54 It is notable that the continuation of this shift remains the policy of Dublin City Council, as expressed by the following statement from the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022: *“The strategy of extending the inner city eastwards and westwards, towards the Docklands and Heuston respectively, is now complemented with a strategy for the quality consolidation of the inner city, protecting heritage while promoting diversity”* (DCDP 2016, p.32).

The George's Quay Area as Part of the Wider Docklands

11.55 Figure 11.6a below shows that in the early to mid-19th century the George's Quay area was very much a part of the city centre, with an urban grain not dissimilar to the centre to the west. When the port was relocated to the east however (with the construction of deep water berths at North Wall and later Alexandra Basin), the area fell into disuse. It was neither close enough to the commercial core of the city nor the new port remain viable/vibrant.

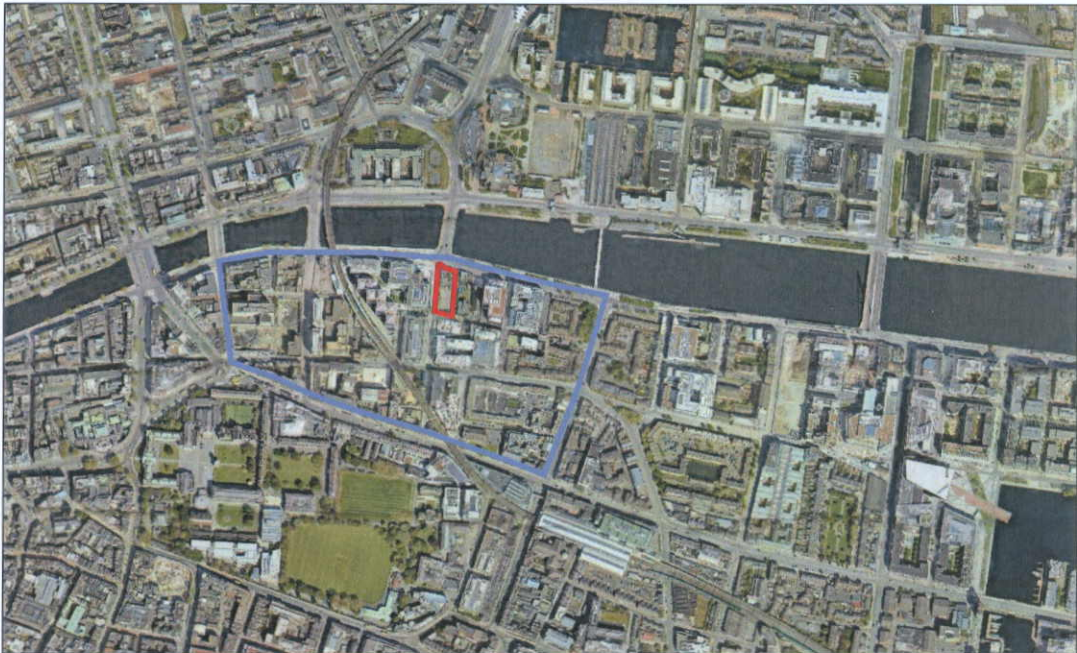
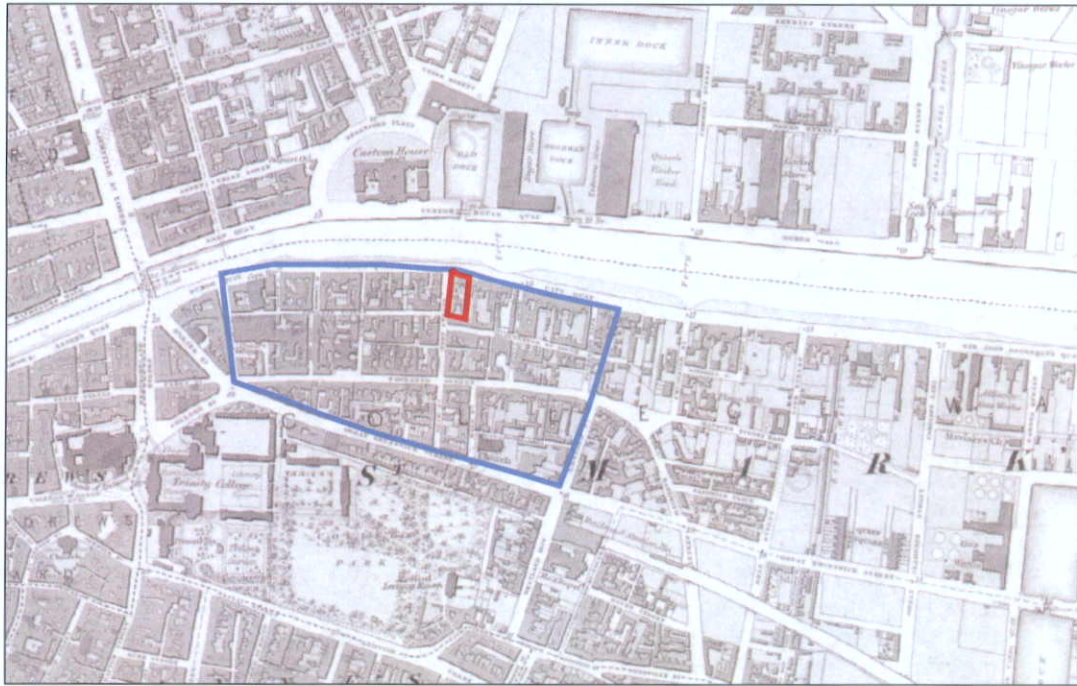


Figure 11.6 (a and b) OS 6 inch map and recent aerial photo showing the George's Quay area as a transition zone between 'old city centre' and the Docklands

11.56 As a result of this disuse the area was extensively redeveloped through mid- to late 20th century, with many of the historic small plots consolidated to form larger sites for residential and office schemes – including developments as diverse as the George’s Quay office campus and Peterson’s and Dowling’s Courts (estates of red brick terraced townhouses). Only the historic built frontage to Pearse Street, facing Trinity College, remained largely intact. The area thus has a character of its own, very different to the historic city centre to the west, and also different from the more recently regenerated Docklands areas to the east.

11.57 The George’s Quay area was recognised as a definable character area within the wider Docklands when the LAP was adopted for the area in 2012. In the introduction to the LAP DCC stated:

“The George’s Quay area of the City, (i) with its role as a location of headquarter and Government departments, (ii) adjoining Trinity College and its associated innovation centres and (iii) located at the bridging point between the City centre and Docklands, means that this area is of significant economic importance to both the City, the Region and the State. The LAP area has capacity to facilitate significant new employment centres as it can provide locations for high quality new office, mixed use and innovation space in the heart of the City centre, attracting new economic activity and headquarter facilities. Its location at one of the most accessible locations in the City, served by a wide range of high quality public transport, and its juxtaposition with residential uses both within the LAP and in adjoining areas in Docklands and also (amongst others) the Georgian city, Ballsbridge and Ringsend areas, makes it a highly sustainable location for economic activity... There are excellent opportunities presented by the current vacant and under-utilised sites within the area for the LAP to create a distinctive economic and residential cluster, within the context of valued historic and riverside settings...”

11.58 Considerable development has since taken place and been permitted in the George’s Quay area on foot of the LAP. Most significant among these are the Grant Thornton development to the east of the site on City Quay, the hotel across Gloucester Street South from the site, and the ‘AquaVetro’ building and College Square permissions to the west. These developments, along with George’s Quay Plaza, will result in a cluster of high density, contemporary buildings in the western part of the George’s Quay area (see Photo 11.8 above). The City Quay Site identified in the LAP included two separate development sites either side of the school, church and presbytery at the centre of the block. The first site is the subject site, and the second site was to the east, now occupied by the Grant Thornton building.

11.59 **This ‘Tara Street Station cluster’ will be one of several concentrations of density/height in the wider Docklands area:**

- The principal concentration is around Grand Canal Dock. Here, the less constrained architectural expression combined with a generous and high quality public realm and a vibrant mix of uses has created a very successful contemporary city centre quarter.
- At the Docklands interface with Dublin Port, a pair of tall buildings, Capital Dock and the Exo - one on each side of the Liffey – form a gateway between the port and the city.
- To the north west around Connolly Station, the Dublin Arch permitted development will comprise a dense cluster of mid-rise buildings, with a 16 storey landmark building at its centre facing an internal square.

Emerging Cluster of High Density Around Tara and Connolly Stations

- 11.60 Due to the area's central location, access to public transport, relatively limited cultural heritage constraints (compared to the medieval and Georgian parts of the city) and historic land use factors, the area around Connolly, Pearse Street and Tara Street stations has for some time been identified in forward planning as having potential for high intensity/tall building development.
- 11.61 This can be traced back to the document *Managing Intensification and Change – A Strategy for Dublin Building Height*, prepared by the consultancy firm DEGW for Dublin City Council in 2000. Based on a city-wide townscape character analysis that document identified areas with potential for individual high buildings and high building clusters. The site environs was identified as a “potential new character area with considerable character change in the medium to long term” (DEGW 2000, Section 8.3).
- 11.62 The DEGW document identified the potential for a landmark tall building in approximately the site location based on it being the ‘termination point of long views along the river corridor’ (see Figure 11.6a). It also identified the potential for high intensity clusters centred on Connolly Station and Pearse Street Station (Figure 11.7b). The site is half way between the two stations. Additionally, **it is only 150m from Tara Street Station, which has since been identified as the connecting hub for DART, Irish Rail and the MetroLink, elevating its status in the public transport hierarchy.**

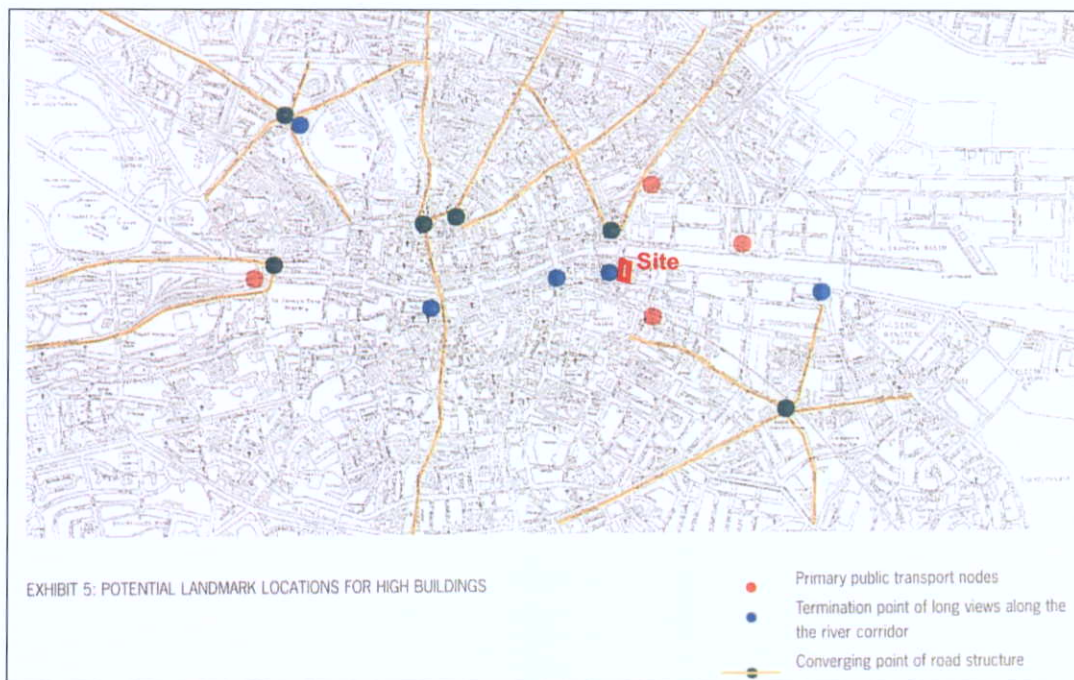


Figure 11.7a Excerpt from *Managing Intensification and Change – A Strategy for Dublin Building Height, 2000*, showing opportunities identified at that time for tall buildings

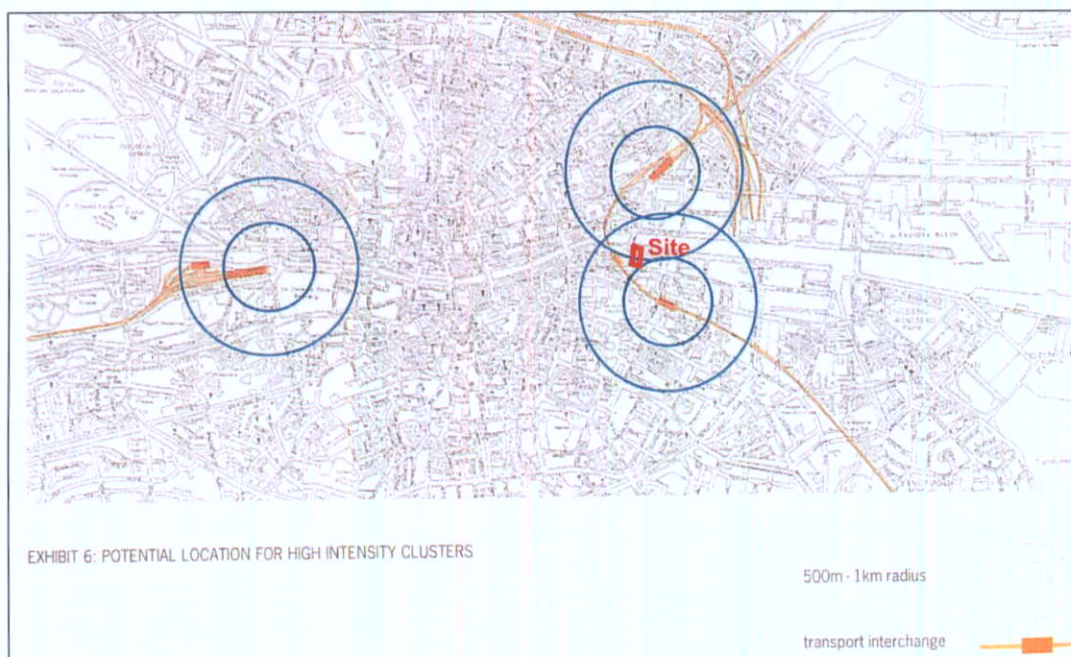


Figure 11.7b Excerpt from *Managing Intensification and Change – A Strategy for Dublin Building Height, 2000*, showing opportunities identified at that time high intensity clusters

- 11.63 DCC policy has to a large extent been informed by the *Managing Intensification and Change Strategy* (along with the objective to retain the “intrinsic quality of Dublin as a low-rise city”). The one significant diversion has been the shift in emphasis from Pearse Street Station to Tara Street Station (which is closer to the site than Pearse Street Station).
- 11.64 One of the key outcomes of the strategy thus far has been the series of planning permissions for tall buildings and tall building clusters around Tara Street and Connolly Stations. In combination with Liberty Hall (Dublin’s first tall building) and to some extent George’s Quay Plaza these permitted developments will form an appreciable zone of density/ height in the transitional area between the old/historic city centre and the Docklands, in or close to the Liffey corridor.

The Liffey River Corridor

- 11.65 The Liffey is one of the main arranging elements of Dublin’s urban structure. The river is the centre of a distinct linear character area, and, as a corridor of movement and activity, an area from which to see and access the surrounding city.
- 11.66 The townscape character changes dramatically along its length, from Poolbeg and the Port in the east, through the Docklands, the old city centre and the Guinness Brewery area to Heuston Station and Kilmainham, Islandbridge and Chapelizod. Despite these variations, any significant development which takes place on or near the river (particularly between the East Link Bridge and Heuston) has some effect on the wider Liffey corridor.
- 11.67 As a result of recent developments and permissions – and reflecting the long-standing height strategy for the city discussed above – there is now an emerging pattern of three zones/ clusters of high density contemporary development in the Liffey corridor. These are (1) the Docklands-Port gateway, (2) the Tara Street and Connolly Stations zone

between the old city centre and the Docklands, and (3) the Parkgate landmark and Heuston South Quarter.



Figure 11.8 The emerging pattern of three zones/clusters of contemporary, high density/high rise development in the Liffey River corridor

Dublin City as a Whole

- 11.68 The analysis of George's Quay, the Docklands and the Liffey corridor above focuses on the issue of tall buildings. The George's Quay LAP allows for the site's redevelopment to a height of up to 10 storeys. Therefore, the appropriateness of development on the site per se (in terms of townscape and visual impact) is not in question. The height of the proposal is the key consideration.
- 11.69 Similar challenges (of change in townscape character and views resulting from densification) are being faced across the metropolitan area - in the city centre (including the Docklands), former industrial areas and other brownfield sites, institutional lands, the urban neighbourhood centres and satellite urban cores – wherever the infrastructure and services, particularly public transport, are available to support the intensified land use. This has been driven by the National Planning Framework and the Building Height Guidelines, which are seeking to alter the land use pattern in response to the climate change and biodiversity crises – to make optimal use of land and resources.
- 11.70 Figure 11.8 above shows some of the developments and decisions of the last number of years reflecting the changed planning paradigm. In addition to the developments already discussed, taller buildings (for their context) have been permitted at Grand Canal Dock, Castleforbes (18 storeys), on Poolbeg, at Grand Canal Harbour (13 storeys) beside the future Guinness Quarter, and O'Devaney Gardens (14 storeys). Taller buildings (than their context) have also been permitted outside of the city centre, so that **in the coming years throughout the city there will be a general increase in height and a shift in character towards a denser urban condition. It is logical**

that the greatest concentration of density and height should be in the city centre in the areas best served by public transport.

11.71 In the same way (and for the same reasons) that people have come to accept seeing wind turbines on windy upland areas or solar farms on sunny slopes, i.e. accepted energy infrastructure as a necessary and not inappropriate element of the landscape, it can be expected that people will become accustomed to seeing taller buildings in urban areas - and the tallest buildings in city centres and close to transport interchanges.

11.4.6 Relevant National Policy: Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework (2018)

The Role of Dublin as Ireland's Capital

11.72 In the Overview of the NPF Strategy, the NPF states the following objectives for Dublin:

- *“Supporting the future growth and success of Dublin as Ireland’s leading global city of scale, by better managing Dublin’s growth to ensure that more of it can be accommodated within and close to the city.*
- *Enabling significant population and jobs growth in the Dublin metropolitan area, together with better management of the trend towards overspill into surrounding counties.*
- *Addressing infrastructural bottlenecks, improving citizens’ quality of life and increasing housing supply in the right locations.*

11.73 National Policy Objective 5 of the NPF states: *“Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.”*

Regarding the Economy/Prosperity, the NPF states: *“... place-making... is also critical to economic prosperity as globalisation continues to have a concentrating effect. Employment trends indicate that increasingly, city regions are the focal point for internationally mobile investment. High value added services are attracted primarily to urban areas, and cities are competing with other cities internationally...”*

“This means that many sectors, but in particular those related to the information economy and knowledge development, tend to be very place specific. High skilled individuals are attracted together, as firms ‘agglomerate’ in the larger, denser, skilled labour markets found in urban areas.

“In addition to scale and density, this is dependent on the attractiveness of places to highly skilled potential employees as well as having a steady stream of local talent and innovation associated with third level research institutions. International connectivity is also important, where short travel times to an airport with a good choice of destinations is a critical factor.”

11.74 **The above objectives are important and of particular relevance to the site:**

- **If Dublin is to ‘compete internationally’ as a ‘global city of scale’, then office buildings of scale and distinction must be provided to the market.**
- **The closer that such a building is to the city centre, to any sectoral agglomerations (e.g. finance, tech/innovation, etc.) and to transport links,**

the more valuable the development will be – to prospective occupants and to the city and national economy.

- **The site, being located at the centre of a triangle formed by the city centre, the Docklands and Trinity College – only minutes' walk from each of them – and 150m from the future MetroLink station at Tara Street (providing a rail connection to the airport), must be considered a land/development asset of national importance.**

11.75 **This understanding of the site has implications for the consideration of any development proposal (including its townscape and visual effects) since a development of commensurate stature and distinction is a logical response to the unique opportunity the site presents.**

Compact Growth

11.76 Compact growth is one of the main principles of the NPF. It explicitly encourages higher density - and, therefore, taller - development in urban areas where supporting infrastructure and services are available.

11.77 The NPF states: *"All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services... Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority."*

11.78 National Policy Objective 11 of the NPF states that: *"In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities... subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth."*

11.4.7 Relevant National Policy – Building Height Guidelines

The Government's Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines state: *"Implementation of the National Planning Framework requires increased density, scale and height of development in our town and city cores...*

"to meet the needs of a growing population without growing our urban areas outwards requires more focus in planning policy and implementation terms on reusing previously developed 'brownfield' land, building up urban infill sites... and either reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings that may not be in the optimal usage or format taking into account contemporary and future requirements..."

11.79 In Section 3.2 of the Guidelines 'development management criteria' are set out to guide the evaluation of development proposals for buildings taller than the prevailing heights in the area:

"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 [e.g. 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...*
- *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.*

11.4.8 Relevant Regional Policy – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region, 2019-2031 (RSES)

- 11.80 The RSES sets out the socio-economic function of Dublin City and Suburbs as follows: *“International business core with strong diversified economic base with access to international markets. High density retail and service hub with high quality arts, culture and leisure offer”*.
- 11.81 The RSES sets out the Settlement Strategy for Dublin City and Suburbs as follows *“Support the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites to provide high density and people intensive uses within the existing built up area and ensure that the development of future development areas is co-ordinated with the delivery of... public transport infrastructure.”*
- 11.82 The RSES identifies five Strategic Development Corridors (see Figure 11.3 above) for the Metropolitan Area, as follows:
- *City Centre within the M50 (Multi modal)*
 - *North – South Corridor (DART expansion)*
 - *North - West Corridor (Maynooth/Dunboyne line and DART expansion)*
 - *South - West Corridor (Kildare line, DART expansion and Luas red line)*
 - *Metrolink - LUAS Corridor (Metrolink, LUAS green line upgrades)*
- 11.83 The RSES states: *“The criteria for identifying the corridors involved a selection of strategic development opportunities identified by local authorities and included an*

evidence-based analysis of their current and future development capacity and their potential to deliver agreed strategic outcomes such as; compact development; placemaking; accessibility to high quality public transport corridors; potential for economic development and employment creation and to support a reduced carbon footprint through greater energy efficiency and the creation of energy districts.” The site is located at the intersection of the Strategic Development Corridors.

11.84 The RSES sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) grouped under three Key Principles. The following RSOs are relevant:

Healthy Placemaking

1. Sustainable Settlement Patterns (Better manage the sustainable and compact growth of Dublin as a city of international scale...)
2. Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration (Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint...)
4. Healthy Communities (Protect and enhance the quality of our built and natural environment to support active lifestyles...)
5. Creative Places (Enhance, integrate and protect our arts, culture and heritage assets to promote creative places and heritage led regeneration...)

Climate Action

6. Integrated Transport and Land Use (Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning.)
8. Build Climate Resilience
9. Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy

Economic Opportunity

12. A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise and Innovation (To build a resilient economic base and promote innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems that support smart specialisation, cluster development and sustained economic growth.)
14. Global City Region (Promote Dublin as a global city region and protect and enhance international connectivity, including ports and airports and promote the Region as a gateway to Ireland.)
15. Enhanced Strategic Connectivity (Protect and enhance international connectivity and regional accessibility to support economic development...)

11.4.9 Relevant Local Policy – Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

Zoning

11.85 The land use zoning objective for the site under the current Dublin City Development Plan (DCDP) is Z5 (City Centre): “To consolidate and facilitate the development of the

central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity”.

- 11.86 *“The primary purpose of this use zone [City Centre] is to sustain life within the centre of the city through intensive mixed-use development. The strategy is to provide a dynamic mix of uses which interact with each other, help create a sense of community, and which sustain the vitality of the inner city both by day and night.”*
- 11.87 Policy CEE5 states: *“...cities are crucibles of innovation and that the city centre Z5 zoned area and inner city area including the Docklands are the crucial metropolitan and national resource for innovation, promoting the proximity and diversity of uses that foster innovation”, and “high-quality and dense development drives productivity and innovation in a city.””*

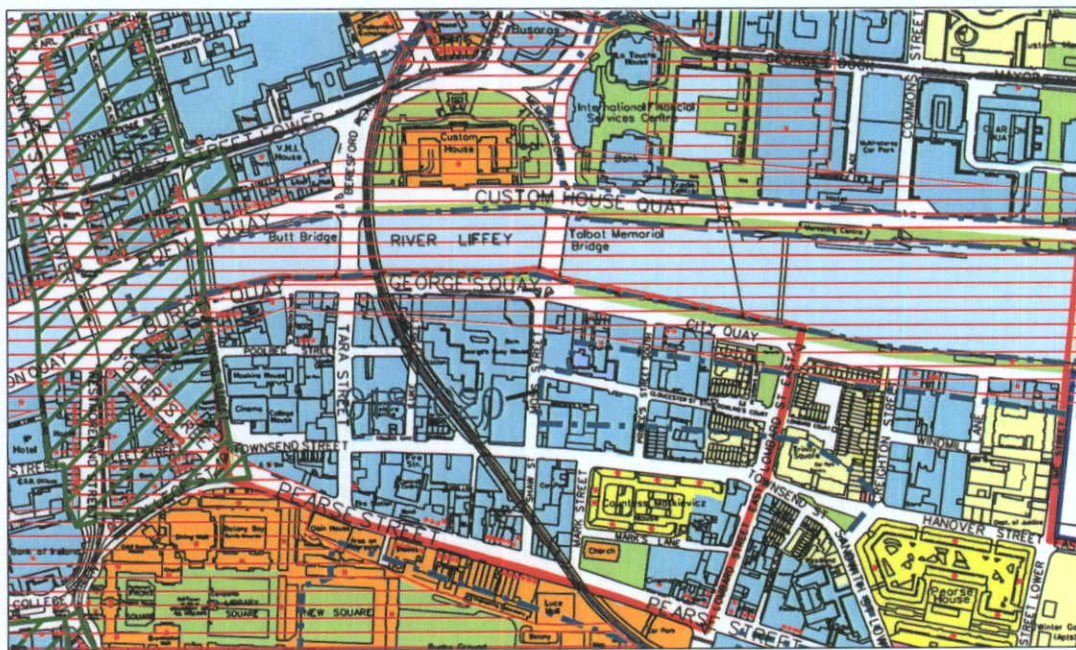


Figure 11.9 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 land use zoning map

Shaping the City – Urban Form and Structure

- 11.88 In Section 2.3.2 the DCDP states: *“It is a central aim of the core strategy to consolidate and enhance the inner city in order to augment its crucial role at the heart of the capital city and the city region. The inner city of Dublin is the most connected destination in the country and at international level, and supports a dynamic range of economic, educational and cultural clusters, together with a growing residential population. It is a central part of the core strategy to enhance the links between the existing and emerging clusters in the city as depicted on the core strategy map...”*

“The strategy of extending the inner city eastwards and westwards, towards the Docklands and Heuston respectively, is now complemented with a strategy for the quality consolidation of the inner city, protecting heritage while promoting diversity.”

- 11.89 **The following DCDP statement regarding the Docklands is particularly relevant:** *“The challenge here is to ensure that the character of the Docklands is retained and is enhanced, and that good connectivity between the city centre and the Docklands is*

achieved such that the Docklands is seen as being an integral part of the city centre, rather than as a separate entity.

- 11.90 **The above statement indicates that DCC recognises there is a disconnect between the old city centre and the Docklands, currently. The site, being located in the transitional area between the centre and the Docklands, has the potential to contribute to overcoming that division.**

Urban Density

- 11.91 In Section 4.5.3 of the DCDP (Making a more Compact Sustainable City) it is stated: *“This plan will continue to physically consolidate the city and to optimise the efficient use of urban land. This will minimize wastage of scarce urban land, reduce urban sprawl and provide for a compact city with attractive mixed-use neighbourhoods, a variety of housing types and tenure, and adaptable housing, where people of all ages will choose to live as a matter of choice...”*

“Higher densities will be promoted in the city centre, within KDCs, SDRAs and within the catchment of high capacity public transport. The density standards set out in this plan will promote the development of high quality, sustainable densities and the consolidation of urban form...”

- 11.92 Regarding Integrated Land-use and Transportation, Objective MTO1 states: *“To encourage intensification and mixed-use development along existing and planned public transport corridors and at transport nodes where sufficient public transport capacity and accessibility exists to meet the sustainable transport requirements of the development, having regard to conservation policies... and the need to make best use of urban land.”*
- 11.93 Policy SC13 further states: *“To promote sustainable densities, particularly in public transport corridors, which will enhance the urban form and spatial structure of the city, which are appropriate to their context... These sustainable densities will include due consideration for the protection of surrounding residents, households and communities”*

Building Height

- 11.94 In relation to building height, Section 4.5.4.1 of the DCDP states: *“The City Council remains committed to the need to protect conservation areas, architectural conservation areas and the historic core of the city...”*

“However, taller buildings can also play an important visual role and can make a positive contribution to the skyline of a city. Dublin City Council recognises the merit of taller buildings, including landmark buildings, in a very limited number of locations at a scale appropriate for Dublin. Accordingly, the spatial approach to taller buildings in the city is in essence to protect the vast majority of the city as a low-rise city, including established residential areas and conservation areas within the historic core, while also recognising the potential and the need for taller buildings to deliver the core strategy...”

“Clustering of taller buildings of the type needed to promote significant densities of commercial and residential space are likely to be achieved in a limited number of areas only. Taller buildings (over 50m) are acceptable at locations such as at major public transport hubs, and some SDRAs...”

"In all cases, proposals for taller buildings must respect their context and address the assessment criteria set out in the development standards section, to ensure that taller buildings achieve high standards in relation to design, sustainability, amenity, impacts on the receiving environment, and the protection or framing of important views."

11.95 Policy SC17 states: *"To protect and enhance the skyline of the inner city, and to ensure that all proposals for mid-rise and taller buildings make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city... In particular, all new proposals must demonstrate sensitivity to the historic city centre, the River Liffey and quays, Trinity College, the cathedrals, Dublin Castle, the historic squares and the city canals, and to established residential areas, open recreation areas and civic spaces of local and citywide importance."*

11.96 Section 16.7.2, which sets out DCC's 'assessment criteria for higher buildings', is also of relevance:

- *"Relationship to context, including topography, built form, and skyline having regard to the need to protect important views, landmarks, prospects and vistas*
- *Effect on the historic environment at a city-wide and local level*
- *Relationship to transport infrastructure, particularly public transport provision*
- *Architectural excellence of a building which is of slender proportions, whereby a slenderness ratio of 3:1 or more should be aimed for*
- *Contribution to public spaces and facilities, including the mix of uses*
- *Effect on the local environment, including micro-climate and general amenity considerations*
- *Contribution to permeability and legibility of the site and wider area*
- *Sufficient accompanying material to enable a proper assessment, including urban design study/masterplan, a 360 degree view analysis, shadow impact assessment, wind impact analysis, details of signage, branding and lighting, and relative height studies*
- *Adoption of best practice guidance related to the sustainable design and construction of tall buildings*
- *Evaluation of providing a similar level of density in an alternative urban form."*

Architecture

11.97 Policy SC25 sets out the Council's intention to: *"... promote development which incorporates exemplary standards of high-quality, sustainable and inclusive urban design, urban form and architecture befitting the city's environment and heritage and its diverse range of locally distinctive neighbourhoods, such that they positively contribute to the city's built and natural environments. This relates to the design quality of general development across the city, with the aim of achieving excellence in the ordinary, and which includes the creation of new landmarks and public spaces where appropriate."*

11.98 Section 16.2.1 states: *"In the appropriate context, imaginative contemporary architecture is encouraged, provided that it respects Dublin's heritage and local distinctiveness and enriches its city environment. Through its design, use of materials and finishes, development will make a positive contribution to the townscape and urban realm."*

11.99 Another relevant statement in the DCDP is in regard to the 'Approach to the Inner City' (Section 4.5.1.1), which states: *"A positive feature of the identity of the inner city is the strength of the sense of place which exists in different clusters. The development plan*

seeks to strengthen place-making in the city in order to consolidate and enhance the city centre, at the heart of the city region”.

Public Realm

- 11.100 Among the principles for achieving a sustainable and resilient city is the following: “Urban Form – Creating a connected and legible city based on active streets and quality public spaces with a distinctive sense of place. Place making is particularly important in the strategic development and regeneration areas (SDRAs).”

Protected Structures and Conservation Areas

- 11.101 Policy CHC1 states: “... seek the preservation of the built heritage of the city that makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the city.”
- 11.102 Policy CHC4 further states that: “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:

- “Replacement or improvement of any building, feature or element which detracts from the character of the area or its setting
- *Re-instatement of missing architectural detail or other important features*
- *Improvement of open spaces and the wider public realm, and re-instatement of historic routes and characteristic plot patterns*
- 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:

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

- 11.103 **Thus, while the policy on Conservation Areas (CA) and Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) is generally to preserve the existing character, the policy allows for new buildings of contemporary architecture if: (a) the development takes account of and responds to its sensitive setting; and (b) the building is of exceptional design quality and in harmony with its setting.**

- 11.104 The subject site falls into the Liffey River CA and is across the river from the Custom House. A key question for this assessment is whether the proposed development would ‘cause harm’ to either of these features/areas or their setting. It must be recognised that the policy is necessarily general in nature. Change does not

necessarily constitute harm, and the avoidance of ‘visually obtrusive’ development altogether is not sustainable: As identified above, the Liffey traverses the city centre, providing unobstructed views of many different buildings and character areas. It is designated a CA for its entire length. That designation is clearly not intended to prevent all visually obtrusive development from taking place. This is evidenced by many modern buildings and permissions for buildings in the Liffey corridor, which may be prominent (even obtrusive), but which have not necessarily done harm.

Key Views and Prospects

- 11.105 There are several protected views and prospects identified for protection in the site’s receiving environment (see Figure 11.10 below). **These include views east and west along the Liffey (specifically views towards the Custom House), and the view south along Gardiner Street towards the Custom House. Any development on the site (including development in line with the George’s Quay LAP parameters for the site) would feature in these views.**

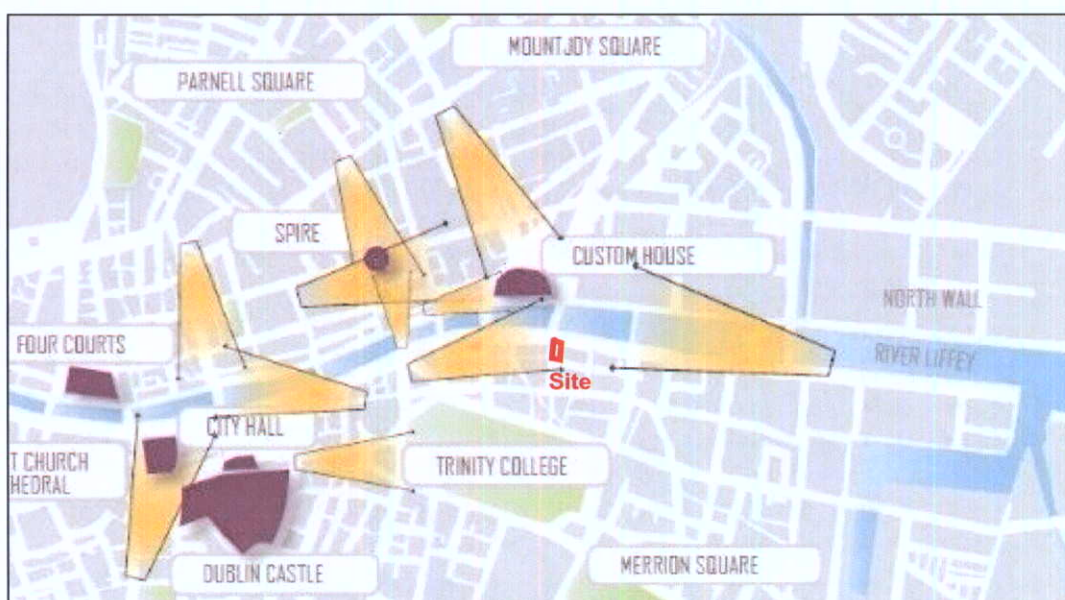


Figure 11.10 Excerpt from DCDP Fig. 4: Key Views and Prospects (Indicative)

- 11.106 Additionally, in Section 16.7.1 (regarding Building Height in a Sustainable City), the DCDP states: *“There is a recognised need to protect conservation areas and the architectural character of existing buildings, streets and spaces of artistic, civic or historic importance. In particular, any new proposal must be sensitive to the historic city centre, the river Liffey and quays, Trinity College, Dublin Castle, the historic squares and the canals...”*

“It is important to protect and enhance the skyline of the inner city and to ensure that any proposals for high buildings make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city, and create opportunities for place-making and identity.”

11.4.10 George's Quay Local Area Plan, 2012

LAP Objectives for 'City Quay Site'

11.107 Refer to paragraph 11.59 above for the overall vision for the George's Quay area, as stated in the LAP, which is relevant to this assessment.

11.108 The LAP identified three key development sites for which it provided detailed guidance. These included the Tara Street Station site (where the AquaVetro building is now permitted), the Hawkins House site (where the College Square development, including a tall residential tower, is now permitted), and the 'City Quay Site'.

11.109 The City Quay Site identified in the LAP included two separate development sites either side of the school, church and presbytery at the centre of the block. The first site is the subject site, and the second site was to the east, now occupied by the Grant Thornton building.

11.110 Regarding the future development of these sites the LAP states: *"Future development of these City Quay sites should, through good design and mix of uses seek to facilitate vibrancy by creating an attractive, interesting and safe environment with active street frontages. Integral to the success of the site will be the incorporation of leisure uses, public open space, commercial offices, community amenities such as art gallery/studio and health care and local retail, including café or similar uses...*

"Integral to strengthening the existing community qualities of the area is the retention and improvement to the setting of the existing church, presbytery, crèche and school. In this regard, the design of future development should seek to sensitively integrate the school alongside other uses...

"The central location of the sites along the River Liffey should be supported by the creation of activities that engage with the public and the public realm. Accordingly consideration should be given to accessible amenities facing the river, such as a gallery/café or other activities that may be frequented by the public; and also that major access points address this elevation...

"The elevation facing the river needs a strong design focus, with proposed headquarter type entrances well designed to achieve a significant, inviting, high standard finish and engaging with the street."

11.111 The specific guidance for the subject site, illustrated in Figures 30 and 31 of the LAP (see Figures 11.11 a-c below), can be summarised as follows:

- A volume of up to seven storeys (with the 7th storey set back from the shoulder) fronting City Quay.
- This lower, river-front volume should extend back into the site as far as the front elevation of the nearby church, which is set well back from City Quay.
- Behind this line the height could increase to nine storeys of commercial use, or 10 storeys of residential use (with a commercial ground floor).
- The site frontage to City Quay, Moss Street and Gloucester Street South should be active frontage.
- The site should include a 'new arts/community resource space'.
- Development should allow for upgrading and improving of the footpath, with the building set back to allow for greening of the street.

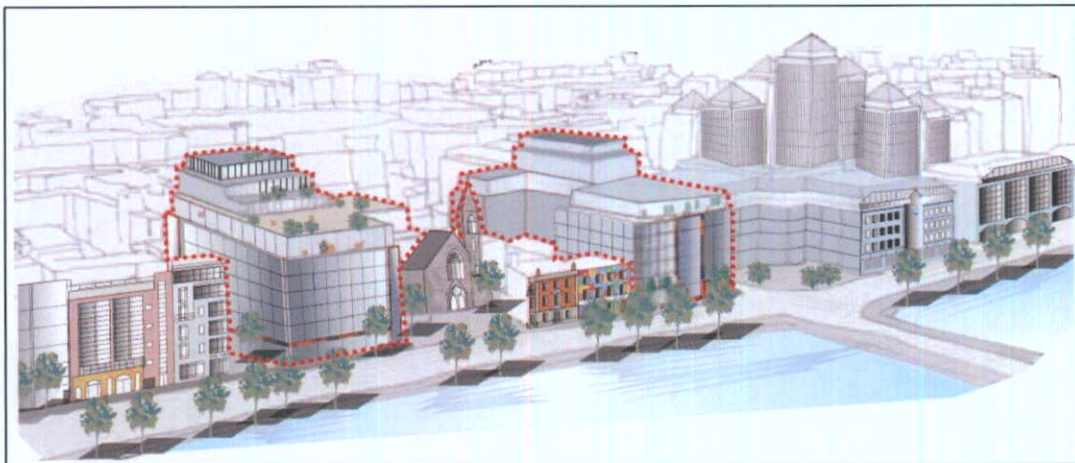
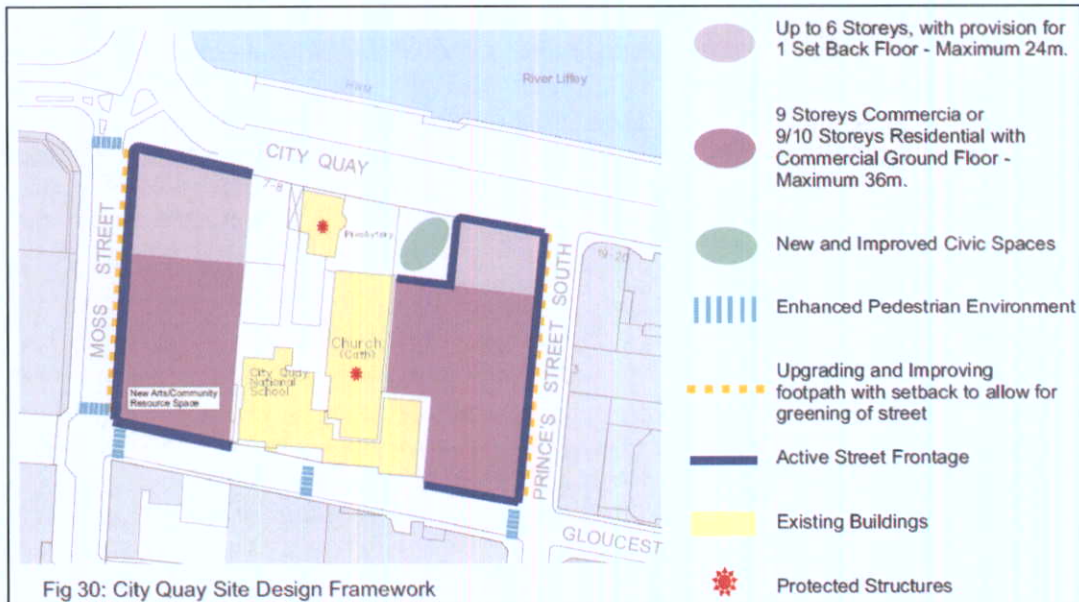


Figure 11.11 (a, b, c) Figures from the George's Quay LAP illustrating the guidance for the City Quay Site

11.112 It is noted that the proposed development does not fall within the LAP specific guidance regarding height. However, with reference to the Paras 11.68 to 11.111 above, the National Planning Framework and the Building Height Guidelines recommend densification of development, and DCC has responded by permitting taller buildings within designated locations of Dublin accordingly, including the transitional area between the old/historic city centre and the Docklands, in or close to the Liffey corridor.

11.113 Additionally, the LAP states: “Any future design of the site requires due regard to creating a safe and user friendly public realm around the site and should include:

- The implementation of cycle ways along Moss Street.
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing points, in particular at the corners of Moss Street and City Quay and Moss Street and Gloucester Street.
- Traffic calming measures, particularly along Gloucester Street and in the vicinity of the church and school.
- Improved public lighting schemes.

Views

11.114 The LAP states: “Views from and within the LAP area are important both from an developments will be sought in any future major redevelopments of historic perspective in respecting existing traditional vistas and also play a significant role in orienting people within the City, and in making places interesting through opening up new or unexpected views...”

“There are two major views identified in the City Development Plan which impact on the LAP, identified in Figure 4 of the Development Plan. These look up and down the river, from O’Connell Bridge eastwards, taking in the Custom House; and at the new Beckett Bridge looking westwards, taking in the Custom House as a centrepiece. The role of the Custom House, framed by green space, street, bridges and river is a central framing element in the urban design approach of the LAP...”

“Significant future development within these views will need to undertake a visual assessment of their impact on the overall setting of the City Quays and the Custom House.”

11.4.11 Townscape and Visual Sensitivity of the Receiving Environment

11.115 The following townscape and policy factors suggest a high sensitivity to change:

- The site is a riverside site in Dublin city centre, across the Liffey from the Custom House – a protected structure and one of the city’s most valued architectural heritage features. Any development on the site would affect the setting of the Custom House, and be visible in views of and from the Custom House.
- The Liffey Corridor is covered by Conservation Area designation, which extends to cover the Custom House (and Beresford Place and Busáras to the north). The CA designation also extends onto the site itself, specifically covering the front portion of the site (see Figure 11.9).
- There are two protected structures a short distance to the east of the site, namely the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and the adjacent parochial house. Any development on the site would affect their setting, and be visible in views of and from these buildings. Between the site and these protected structures is a school, located immediately adjacent to the site. The school is also a sensitive receptor of change.
- Any development on the site would feature in views east and west along the Liffey corridor. These views are protected in the City Development Plan.
- Any development (except for a very low development) on the site would also feature in views from Gardiner Street across the Liffey to the north west. This is also a protected view, in which the cupola of the Custom House already features at the end of the street (although off-centre from the axis of the street).

- Any tall development on the site would feature in certain views from Trinity College. The Development Plan requires that new tall development must be sensitive to Trinity College (and to the historic city centre, the Liffey and quays, Dublin Castle, the historic squares and the canals). The Development Plan states: *“It is important to protect and enhance the skyline of the inner city and to ensure that any proposals for high buildings make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city, and create opportunities for place-making and identity.”*

11.116 In considering the sensitivity of the receiving environment, following the evidence cited within the preceding sections (e.g., paras 11.68 to 11.111 above), it must also be recognised that there are (a) characteristics of the area that indicate there is capacity for change, and (b) significant drivers for change. These include:

Townscape Characteristics

- The site occupies a pivotal position in the Liffey corridor, just east of the point where the river changes from a narrower, sinuous channel contained by older, terraced buildings (in the old city to the west), to a wide, straight-sided channel lined by large, detached buildings (in the Docklands to the east). The site falls into the latter character area, but is also close the pivot (which is one of the reasons that the Tara Street site was selected for a high building).
- The site is also located in a zone of transition in townscape character, between the old city centre to the west and the Docklands to the east. It is an established principle in urban design that edges/transitions - the coming together of two types - can and should be encouraged to generate activity.
- Currently, there is an acknowledged disconnection between the old city centre and the Docklands area. This is due to a combination of factors including the effect of the Loopline Bridge, and the inconsistent built frontage, lack of activity-generating uses and entrances, the public realm design and the openness of the river corridor east of the Loopline, which makes it less definable and attractive as a place. There are few reasons for people to be on the Liffey quays between the Loopline Bridge and Sean O’Casey Bridge. Despite its distinctive buildings (see bullet below) and the presence of Talbot Bridge, this area lacks place-identity and is something of a dead zone in the public realm. This area, of which the site is a key element, acts as an impediment to the desired integration of the old city centre and the Docklands.
- Within the transitional area between the old city and the Docklands is the Custom House, which is the centrepiece of a distinct local character area of which the site is a part. The Custom House is one of Dublin’s most important historic buildings, but it exists in a townscape characterised by diversity of built form, scale and architecture (and a lack of cohesion) – an area which has undergone constant change since the Custom House was built. Many of the buildings were forerunners and strong architectural expressions of their type and time (e.g. the Custom House itself, Busáras, Liberty Hall, IFSC, George’s Quay Plaza, AquaVetro and College Square). This is due to the strategic location (a) at the centre of Dublin, (b) adjacent to the historic city centre and commercial core, (c) at the intersection of all transport networks, and (d) in an area characterised by diversity. Such lack of uniformity in building typology, form, scale, architecture and materials creates capacity for further diversity.
- There is a long history (for Dublin) of tall buildings in the site’s vicinity – for the reasons identified above. Liberty Hall was the first tall building in the city. George’s Quay Plaza, although not particularly tall, was the second. The AquaVetro and College Square permissions have firmly established height as

a characteristic of the zone of transition between the old city and the Docklands. These buildings all are/will be visible from east and west along the Liffey, and from Trinity College, and in a range of views of the Custom House.

- Currently, the three tallest buildings/permissions (Liberty Hall, AquaVetro, College Square) lie to the west of the Loopline (the definable barrier between the old city and Docklands). There is an argument to be made that expanding this cluster of tall buildings east to straddle that divide, complementing George's Quay Plaza, would help to overcome the disconnection between the city and Docklands.
- This effect (the visible expansion of a definable, transitional character area across the current divide) would be reinforced if the new development also contained a use or uses that could draw people from the old city towards the Docklands along the quays.
- The site is located at a strategic junction in the road network, where traffic from north of the Liffey is channelled over Talbot Bridge to arrive at the southern city centre. Here, directly in front of the site, traffic is diverted to the historic city centre, Trinity College, or the Docklands. Talbot Bridge, and the junction of the bridge with George's Quay, City Quay and Moss Street, together are a significant component of the road, pedestrian and cycle networks. However, this is not reflected in the surrounding built form. The junction lacks definition and place-identity.
- The site (and any future development on the site) is a feature of several views of strategic importance, including views along the Liffey, and from Gardiner Street to the north and Kildare Street to the south. Its axial position in these views creates potential for gains in legibility, clearly identifying a 'place' in the city. (That place, significantly, is east of the Loopline). While the site's focal-point position in these views is a sensitivity, it must be recognised that it is equally an opportunity. There are few sites that present the potential for focal-point visibility from important streets on both the north side and south side of the Liffey (as the site does, with respect to Gardiner Street and Kildare Street).
- As a result of the policy of compact growth, in the coming years there will be a general increase in height and changes in townscape character and views throughout the city, towards a denser urban condition. It is logical that the greatest concentration of density and height should be in the city centre in the areas best served by public transport.

Policy Drivers

- The National Planning Framework states the following objective for Dublin: *"Supporting the future growth and success of Dublin as Ireland's leading global city of scale, by better managing Dublin's growth to ensure that more of it can be accommodated within and close to the city"*.
- If Dublin is to compete internationally as a global city of scale, then office buildings of scale and distinction must be provided to the market. The closer that such a building is to the city centre, to any sectoral agglomerations (e.g. finance, tech/innovation, etc.) and to transport links, the more valuable the development will be – to prospective occupants and to the city and national economy.
- The site, being located at the centre of a triangle formed by the city centre, the Docklands and Trinity College – only minutes' walk from each of them – and 150m from the future MetroLink station at Tara Street (providing a rail connection to the airport), must be considered a land/development asset of national importance. This understanding of the site has implications for the consideration of any development proposal (including its townscape and visual

effects) since a development of commensurate stature and distinction is a logical response to the unique opportunity the site presents.

- The Dublin City Development Plan 2016 states: *“The strategy of extending the inner city eastwards and westwards, towards the Docklands and Heuston respectively, is now complemented with a strategy for the quality consolidation of the inner city, protecting heritage while promoting diversity.”* The site has the potential to deliver on all the objectives contained in this statement. i.e. expansion of the inner city to the east, quality consolidation of the inner city, diversity, and protecting heritage – the latter by responding positively to it.
- Regarding density, the Development Plan states:
 - *“Higher densities will be promoted in the city centre... and within the catchment of high capacity public transport...”*
 - *“To encourage intensification and mixed-use development along existing and planned public transport corridors and at transport nodes where sufficient public transport capacity and accessibility exists to meet the sustainable transport requirements of the development, having regard to conservation policies... and the need to make best use of urban land.”*
 - *“To promote sustainable densities, particularly in public transport corridors, which will enhance the urban form and spatial structure of the city, which are appropriate to their context...”*
- While the Development Plan states that DCC remains committed to the need to *“protect conservation areas, architectural conservation areas and the historic core of the city”*, it also notes: *“taller buildings can also play an important visual role and can make a positive contribution to the skyline of a city. Dublin City Council recognises the merit of taller buildings, including landmark buildings, in a very limited number of locations at a scale appropriate for Dublin.*

11.117 In conclusion, there are elements and aspects of the site’s receiving environment that are of high sensitivity to change. These include the Liffey corridor, the Custom House and key views such as the views from Gardiner Street, Kildare Street and Trinity College. However, there are numerous townscape characteristics that indicate there is capacity – indeed a requirement – for significant change on the site. There are also numerous policy drivers for significant change.

11.118 Therefore, for the purpose of this assessment, the townscape sensitivity of the receiving environment can be classified ‘medium’ (definition: *Areas where the townscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong, or has evidence of alteration, degradation or erosion of elements and characteristics. The townscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate townscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change. Refer to Table 11.1).*

11.5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

11.5.1 Demolition and Remediation Phase

11.119 The demolition of the existing structures on the site would cause a temporary negative visual impact of moderate significance in the immediate environs of the site. Elements/areas of the receiving environment are sensitive (e.g. the Liffey corridor, Custom House, the school and church adjacent to the east of the site, and demolition is an inherently unsightly process. However, the duration of the impact would be limited. Hence the moderate classification of the visual effect. The significance of the effects would reduce with increasing distance from the site.

11.5.2 Construction Phase

11.120 During construction, the site and immediate environs would be heavily disturbed by construction activities (including the movement of vehicles to and from the site) and the incremental growth of the building. Certain elements, areas and views in the receiving environment are of high sensitivity (e.g. views along the Liffey corridor, views of the Custom House including the protected view along Gardiner Street, views from Trinity College, the school and church adjacent to the site). Construction is an inherently unsightly process and therefore the visual effects would be negative, although temporary. The significance of the effects would reduce with increasing distance from the site.

11.121 It should be noted that construction is a constant and necessary process in the urban environment. Therefore, while unsightly, it is generally accepted/tolerated by visual receptors in the knowledge that it is temporary.

11.5.3 Operational Phase

11.122 To assess the potential impacts of the proposal, 52 no. representative viewpoints were selected for detailed assessment informed by verified photomontages (see Figure 11.12 below). The viewpoint selection sought to address the most affected and/or sensitive areas of the receiving environment, including:

- **The immediate/surrounding public realm:**
 - Talbot Memorial Bridge (VP1)
 - George's Quay (VP2)
 - City Quay (VP 3, 4)
 - Moss Street alongside site (VP5)
 - Moss Street approaching site from the south (VP6, 7)
 - Gloucester Street South beside school and church (VP8)
 - Gloucester Street South approaching site from the east (VP9)
 - Lombard St. (VP 10)
 - Sandwith Street Lower (VP11)
- **Trinity College:**
 - Parliament Square – A, B, C (VP12, 13, 14)
 - Library Square (VP15)
 - Berkely Library entrance (VP16)
 - Fellows' Square (VP17)
 - Path beside Rugby Ground (VP18)
 - Path beside Fitzgerald Building (VP19)
 - Moyne Institute entrance (VP20)

- The Pavilion (VP21)
- Nassau Street (VP22)
- **Kildare Street, Stephen's Green and Merrion Square:**
 - Kildare Street at Molesworth Street junction (VP23)
 - Kildare Street at St. Stephen's Green (VP24)
 - Merrion Square (VP25)
- **Dame Street and College Street:**
 - Dame Street at Church Lane junction (VP26)
 - College Street (VP27)
- **Liffey River in the city centre west of the Loophline Bridge:**
 - Grattan Bridge (VP28)
 - Ha'penny Bridge (VP29)
 - O'Connell Street beside O'Connell Bridge (VP30)
 - Junction of Marlborough Street and Eden Quay beside Rosie Hackett Bridge (VP31)
- **Custom House environs:**
 - Custom House Quay near Loophline Bridge (VP32, 32b)
 - Custom House front steps and Custom House Quay (VP33, 33b)
 - Beresford Place and Memorial Road approaching Talbot Bridge (VP34, 34b)
 - Beresford Place beside Gardiner Street junction (VP35, 35b)
 - Irish Life Centre (VP36)
- **Gardiner Street:**
 - Gardiner Street near corner of Mountjoy Square (VP37)
 - Gardiner Street middle stretch (VP38, 38b)
 - Gardiner Street lower stretch approaching the Loophline Bridge (VP39)
 - Gardiner Street junction with Beresford Place (VP40)
- **Amiens Street:**
 - Amiens Street beside Busaras and the IFSC (VP41)
 - Amiens Street at Talbot Street junction opposite Connolly Station (VP42)
 - Amiens Street at junction of Portland Row and Seville Place (VP43)
- **IFSC:**
 - George's Dock (VP44)
- **Liffey River in the Docklands east of City Quay:**
 - Sean O'Casey Bridge (VP45)
 - Samuel Beckett Bridge (VP46)
 - East Link Bridge (VP47)

11.123 The effects on these views are individually assessed below. The assessment should be read in conjunction with the book of verified photomontages provided under separate cover submitted as part of this planning application. For the methodology and explanation of the terms used in the assessment refer to Section 11.2.3 above. Where relevant the potential cumulative effects with the permitted Aquavetro and College Square buildings are also discussed.

Figure 11.12a Viewpoint locations for Visual Effects Assessment – Local



Figure 11.12b Viewpoint locations for Visual Effects Assessment – Trinity College and South of the Liffey



Figure 11.12c Viewpoint locations for Visual Effects Assessment – Custom House Area and North of the Liffey (incl Gardiner St. and Amiens St.)

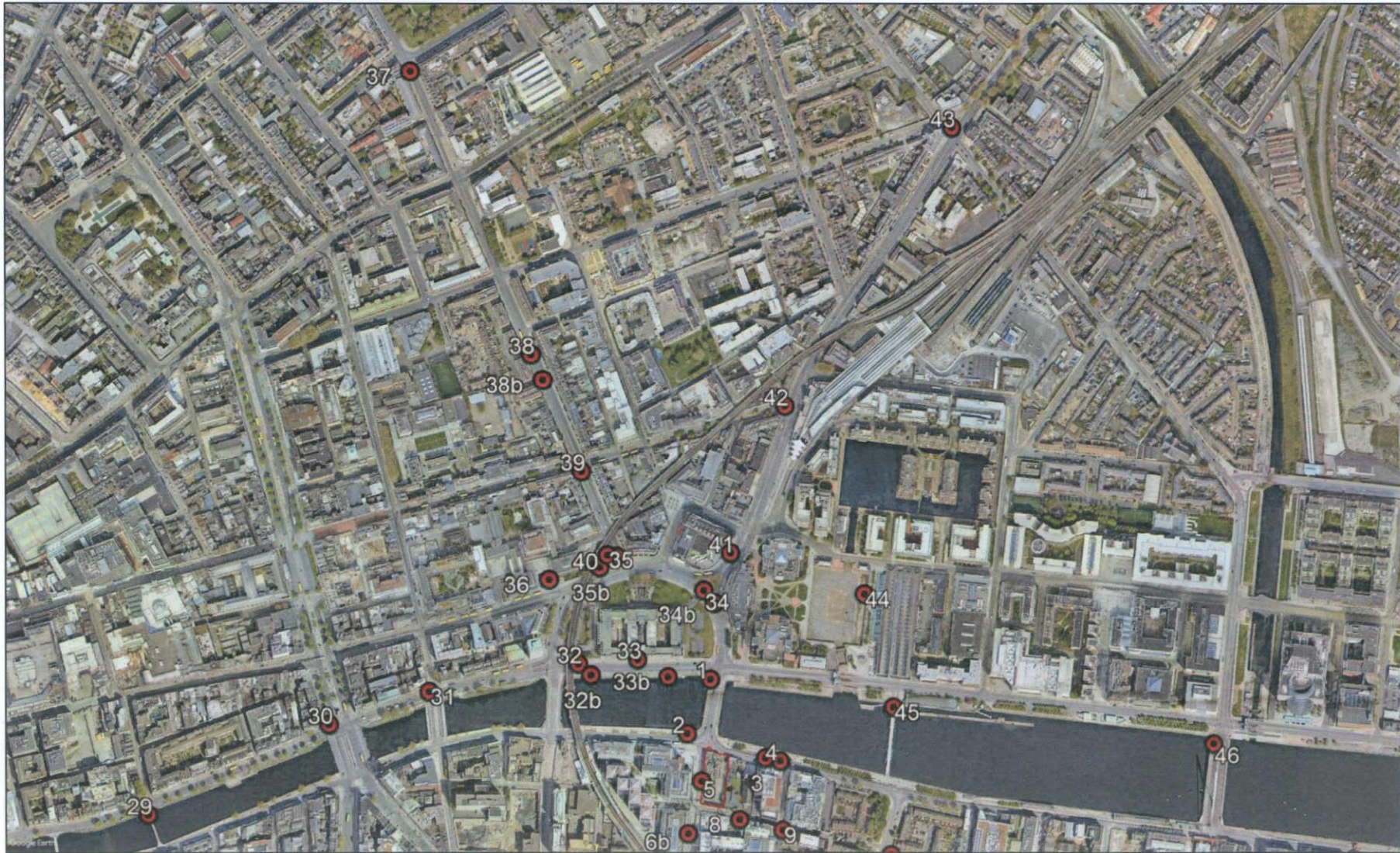
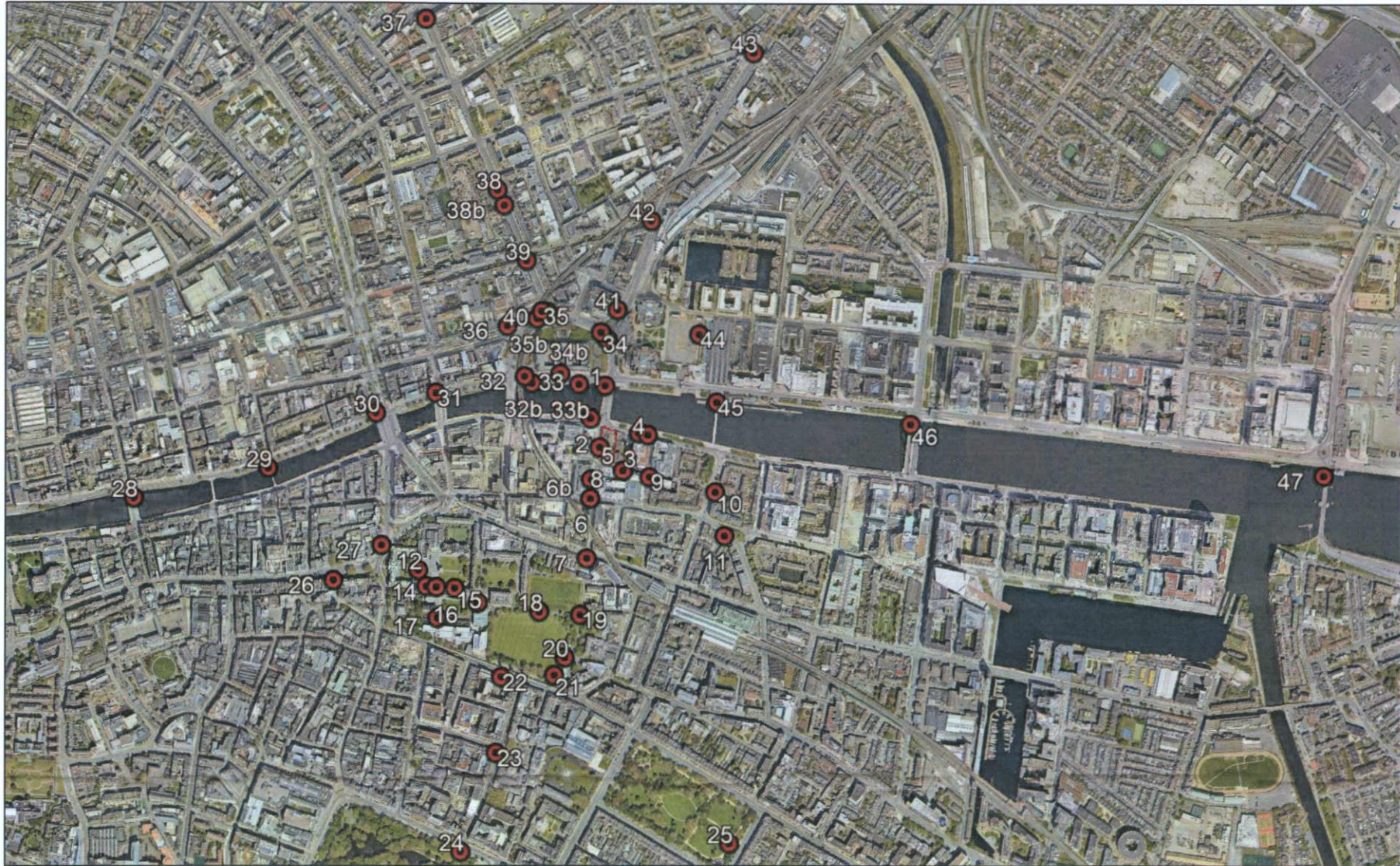


Figure 11.12d Viewpoint locations for Visual Effects Assessment – All Views



Viewpoint 1 – Talbot Memorial Bridge

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.124 This view along the wide, low bridge is experienced by the large volume of traffic arriving in the city centre along Gardiner Street and Amiens Street, having passed around the back of the Custom House to arrive at the Liffey.

- On the far side of the bridge the site occupies a prominent, 'focal-point' position at this arrival point in the city centre. The new hotel rises behind it.
- To the left are the commercial premises, parochial house and the church, bookended by the large, low form of the Grant Thornton building.
- To the right of Moss Street is the dense complex of George's Quay office campus buildings, rising in height towards the centre.
- Overall, the built form is characterised by complexity and diversity.
- A small sliver of the Dublin Mountains is discernible in the distance along Moss Street beyond the elevated railway crossing.

11.125 In its current condition the site detracts from the view, not only due to its dereliction but also (more so) due to its lack of response to the importance of the place, i.e. on the axis of one of the city centre bridges, a gateway between the north and south sides of the city, and between the old city and the Docklands. The site's position in the townscape warrants a building of commensurate status.

11.126 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium-High.** This is a key view across the Liffey at an arrival point in the city centre. The sensitivity must be considered high although there is also considerable capacity for change, with several large, contemporary buildings visible.

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

11.127 **Magnitude of change: High.** The six storey podium block would sit comfortably among the 5-8 storey modern office buildings to east and west along the riverfront. This element of the building forms an appreciable composition with Grant Thornton to the east, containing the cluster of older, smaller buildings in the centre of the block. The elegant, sculpted form of the tower rises from the podium block (behind the front elevation of the nearby church), angled to face the Custom House, with a series of terraces forming a stepped transition between the podium and the tower. The narrow, wave-fronted elevation facing the Custom House and the angled roofline are both appreciable from this angle, adding to the refinement and visual interest of the composition.

Significance and Quality of Effects

11.128 **Significant positive.** The building would be a prominent addition to the townscape, becoming the focal point of this view and a landmark in the Liffey corridor, at this arrival point in the city centre. The location warrants a landmark building. The photomontage shows that the proposal is a considered but appropriately bold/ambitious response to the opportunity presented by the site. The church would not be diminished by the building; such juxtaposition are inevitable and desirable in the context of a regenerating docklands area. Most importantly, the building itself is of appreciably high quality in design and materials, and would elevate the status and quality of the place and the surrounding townscape.

Viewpoint 2 – George’s Quay

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.129 This view is experienced by the relatively small number of people moving east along the quays from the old city into the Docklands. Notable characteristics of the view include:
- the diversity and complexity of the built form along the quays;
 - the particularly poor quality of the streetscape/public realm (which is dominated by provision for road traffic, and cluttered with signage and barriers, etc.);
 - the relative lack of active uses in the riverfront buildings – for a city centre streetscape (there is a café and a currently vacant restaurant in the Grant Thornton building);
 - The wide blue-green space in front of the riverfront buildings, which creates capacity for height.
- 11.130 Another notable aspect of the view is the long distance between the viewpoint location and Capital Dock in the distance. Capital Dock is 1.3km from the site, and 1.5km from Tara Street. This is a long stretch of contemporary Docklands riverside townscape without a building of vertical scale to identify a place or give visual interest to the skyline.
- 11.131 As in all of the local views, the site in its current condition detracts from the quality of the townscape, due to its dereliction and its lack of response to the importance of its place (i.e. overlooking one of the city centre bridges, at a gateway between the north and south, and between the old city and the Docklands).
- 11.132 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.** Considering its location the quality of this view is poor and it would benefit from significant change/intervention.

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.133 **Magnitude of change: High.** The six storey podium block would take its place comfortably in the riverside built frontage, combining with Grant Thornton to contain the two small, older buildings at the centre of their block. Beside the junction in the foreground is the set-back, angled entrance to the building – facing the junction and the Custom House across the river - with the arts centre in the ground floor. Seen from this angle the tower bisects the podium block so that it meets and rises from the street (as opposed to projecting from the podium, separated from the public realm). It thus expresses its full height, maximising the slenderness ratio. The setback of the tower from the riverfront building line, and the sculpted form of the tower, combine to ensure that despite the building’s height there would be no sense of excessive enclosure experienced along the quay.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.134 **Significant positive.** The building would transform the townscape at this gateway junction overlooking the Liffey and one of the city centre bridges. More important than the addition of a building of high design and material quality would be the addition of the arts centre to this key location on the quays. It would add visual interest to the built frontage and generate footfall. This would contribute to overcoming the challenge of bringing the old city and the Docklands together. The development could be a catalyst for improvements to the public realm, to fully realise the potential of the place.

Viewpoints 3 & 4 – City Quay East of Site

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.135 **Viewpoint 3** focuses on the cluster of the church and parochial house (both protected structures) and the neighbouring commercial building and school at the centre of the block between Moss Street and Prince's Street. The Grant Thornton building is in the foreground, and the site is ahead along the quay at the landing of Talbot Bridge. Apart from the clutter of signage and street furniture in front of the site there is limited indication of the junction. The pyramidal roofs of George's Quay Plaza rise above the roofline of the foreground buildings. In the future both the AquaVetro and College Square towers will also be visible. The Custom House is out of frame to the right. In the distance the Loopline Bridge can be seen crossing over the river, and the lower floors of Liberty Hall are visible beneath the canopy of the foreground trees.
- 11.136 **Viewpoint 4** is a short distance further east along the quays. It shows how the setback of the church from the quay takes it out of view and out of the riverfront elevation, from only a short distance to the east or west. This view reveals the full width of the river corridor, and the separation distance between the site and the Custom House.
- 11.137 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.** This is a view of and within the Liffey corridor CA, with several protected structures visible. There is nonetheless capacity for change, with several large, contemporary buildings visible.

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.138 **Magnitude of change: High.** The six storey podium block would be a prominent addition to the riverfront elevation, its dark cladding contrasting with and forming a backdrop to the red brick and white render of the neighbouring buildings (the contrast allowing them to retain their legibility). The step up in height to six storeys would clearly mark the 'place' of Talbot Bridge landing on City Quay. The sculpted glass tower rising above the podium block, back from the river, would lend a further level of significance to the place. This is appropriate for a gateway location of city-wide significance. The selection of materials would also ensure that – in close-up views (Viewpoint 3) – the church would remain prominent and legible despite being seen against the backdrop of the new tower. As in View 2, the setback of the tower from the riverfront building line, in combination with the open space of the river corridor, would ensure there is no sense of excessive enclosure along City Quay.
- 11.139 The development would screen the George's Quay Plaza buildings and (in a future scenario) AquaVetro and College Square from view.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.140 **Significant positive.** The development would transform City Quay, reinforcing its contemporary Docklands character, and marking the site location as one of significance in the urban structure. This is appropriate for the gateway location (a key river crossing and gateway between the old city centre and the Docklands). Although the small scale of the church and parochial house would be emphasised by the tower, this is not inappropriate. It would be unsustainable for these buildings to dictate the scale of development in this location. The resulting juxtaposition would lend character and visual interest to the short stretch of City Quay in which both the church and the new development are visible.

Viewpoint 5 – Moss Street Alongside Site

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.141 The existing three storey building on the site, and the wall enclosing a parking area in the former coal yard to the rear, are in the foreground to the right. The building is in poor condition and detracts from the Moss St. streetscape. To the left of the 1GQ office building. This building has no entrances onto Moss St. so there are no entrances on either side of the street between the Gloucester St. South junction and the quays. Overall, there is a poor interface (lack of intervisibility and no entrances) between the buildings fronting this stretch of the street, and it lacks activity/animation. Talbot Bridge can be seen in the middle distance, and beyond the river are the Custom House, Busáras and IFSC House, illustrating the mixed architectural character of the area.
- 11.142 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.** With the site approaching derelict condition and a modern office building across the road there is capacity for change in the foreground. The Liffey forms a broad buffer between the foreground and the Custom House, and additionally the protected structure is visibly surrounded by buildings of diverse character.

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.143 **Magnitude of change: High.** The proposed building would be set back somewhat from the existing building line, widening the footpath on the east side of Moss St. The dilapidated existing building would be replaced by a new building of contemporary character and a high quality of finish, with the glazing at ground floor providing for intervisibility between the building and the street. The main entrance to the arts centre and offices ahead at the corner facing the quays, and an entrance to the gym (on Moss St. just behind the viewer) would activate the street. The tower would rise its full height of 24 storeys above this viewpoint, creating a high degree of lateral enclosure locally, but the view ahead over Talbot Bridge of the Custom House, Busáras and the IFSC would be unaffected.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.144 **Moderate positive.** The replacement of a building approaching dereliction with a new building of high design and material quality, housing an arts centre and gym in the ground floors, with entrances to these uses from Moss St. and intervisibility between the street and the building, would transform Moss St. in character and quality. The scale of the building would generate a high degree of lateral enclosure but the position adjacent to the river counterbalances this. (This is recognised in the field of urban design, and in the Building Height Guidelines, that adjacency to a wide thoroughfare, a river or coastline creates capacity for height.) Overall, the status and visual interest of Moss St., as a city centre street, and its junction with Talbot Bridge as a 'place', would be raised to a new level by this proposed landmark building. There would be no reduction in visual amenity, nor any harm to any valued cultural heritage feature.

Viewpoints 6, 7 – Moss Street to South of the Site

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.145 The views from Moss St. are important as they represent one of the main pedestrian routes north from Trinity College, towards Talbot Bridge and the Liffey, and Tara St. and Connolly train stations, etc.

- 11.146 **View 6** shows a rejuvenated Moss St. streetscape with the recently completed hotel on the right side of the street and George's Quay House, a late 20th/ early 21st century office building, to the left. Steps in the building line and height, and variations in façade treatment and materials articulate the hotel building. The development has elevated Moss St. to a quality more in line with its status in the urban structure (i.e. an important north-south link across the Liffey, and a route to and from Trinity College). Ahead along the street there is a noticeable gap in the built form over the site, and this highlights the lack of response to the importance of the junction of Moss St., Talbot Bridge and the quays.
- 11.147 **View 7** is from Pearse St., looking north along Shaw St. and Moss St. towards the Liffey. Framing the junction in the foreground are two low red brick buildings (O'Neill's to the left a protected structure) forming an historic front to the street opposite Trinity College (the campus is behind the viewer). An elevated railway bridge crosses the street leading to the Tara St. station. Further along Shaw St. and Moss St. are several modern buildings forming a strong but notably stepped/jagged building line, and stepping up in height towards the Liffey. The existing building on the site beside Talbot Bridge can just be discerned. In the distance beyond the river the vista is closed by Busáras.
- 11.148 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.** These are views along a typical, diverse city centre street characterised by development from various eras. There is no particular sensitivity to change. On the contrary, the street could benefit from change which reflects its status in the movement pattern and the overall townscape.

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

- 11.149 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.** The development would, by its nature as a tall building, draw attention.
- **In View 6** the podium block would take its place comfortably in the Moss St. elevation, like the other buildings on the street stepping out slightly to continue the stepped/jagged building line. The tower can be seen rising well above the seven storey shoulder.
 - **In View 7** the extra distance from the site provides the perspective to reveal the building's full height. Seen from this angle the tower is slender and the sculpted sides and angled roof add to its distinctiveness and elegance.
- 11.150 View 7 in particular is a good illustration of how the city can accommodate change – even dramatic change – without compromising existing character and visual amenity. In the 21st century city centre – particularly at the interface between the old city and the Docklands - diverse development typologies and character areas can coexist to their mutual benefit.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.151 **Moderate-Significant positive.** The development would introduce a contemporary building of strong identity to the views. Seen from close-up the design and material quality and the active uses in the ground floor would enhance the streetscape. Seen from further away the tower would add a distinctive new architectural feature to the townscape, indicating a place of importance and thereby improving legibility.

Viewpoints 8, 9 – Gloucester Street South, to East of the Site

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.152 These views show the mixed character and quality of the George's Quay area in the Docklands to the east of the site (refer to paragraphs 11.55-11.59 above).
- 11.153 In **View 8** the church (a protected structure) is partly screened by an unsightly wall with windows heavily defended against burglary. The school is next in the street elevation and beyond that is the tall coal yard screen above the site boundary wall. The 1GQ and George's Quay Plaza buildings close the vista, adding to the diversity of building typologies, scale and architecture. **View 9** from half a block to the east highlights the evolving character of the area, with the Grant Thornton building to the right and another modern office building in the foreground to the left.
- 11.154 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Low-Medium.** These are views along a typical Docklands area street characterised by development of diverse typologies from various eras. Some of the older development is unsightly. There is no particular sensitivity to change, and any development of quality could elevate the overall quality of the townscape/view.

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

- 11.155 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.**
- In **View 8** the podium block would be a bold addition to the street elevation, its textured, dark grey brick façade drawing the eye, with the glazed tower rising behind it. To the right above the school boundary a proposed green wall system can be seen in the façade, to prevent overlooking of the school yard.
 - In **View 9** the conformity of the podium block with the scale of the Grant Thornton building in the foreground is revealed. This view exposes the pronounced juxtaposition of development typology and scale between the proposed building and the neighbouring school.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.156 **Moderate, mixed (positive and neutral).** The development would introduce a contemporary building of strong identity to the views. Seen from close-up the design and material quality would be most appreciable, and this would enhance the streetscape/views, counterbalancing some of the existing detractors. From greater distance the contrast in scale between the development and the neighbouring buildings to the east would be jarring.
- 11.157 When considering this impact, it must be recognised that in the evolving city centre Docklands quarter it is the smaller, older buildings that can be considered anomalies. They would appear diminutive adjacent to any development that seeks to make sustainable use of the site. While a stark juxtaposition, this does not necessarily constitute a negative visual effect.

Cumulative Effects - Magnitude of Change

- 11.158 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.** In both views the permitted AquaVetro building would protrude above the pyramidal roof of the George's Square Plaza building in the distance.

Cumulative Effects - Significance and Quality

- 11.159 **Moderate, mixed (positive and neutral).** The extent of visibility of the AquaVetro building in both views is limited, and there would be no significant accumulation of visual effects (in combination with the proposed development). However, being of a similar order of scale to the proposed building, the AquaVetro would provide favourable context for the development, by reinforcing the emerging high density Docklands character.

Viewpoints 10, 11 – Lombard Street and Sandwith Street Lower

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.160 These views represent a mostly residential part of the George's Quay and Docklands area to the east of the site. The residential buildings are mostly late 20th century red brick townhouses and small apartment blocks of up to five storeys. The streets are wide and, unusually for the former Docklands area, there are a number of maturing trees in the views.
- 11.161 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.** Representing residential streets/areas, these viewpoints are of some sensitivity, although their position in the heart of the Docklands, alongside an urban thoroughfare (Lombard St.), must be considered.

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

- 11.162 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.** In both views the proposed tower would protrude well above the foreground roofline of the residential area, and above a second, mid-distant roofline of the taller commercial buildings in the western part of the George's Quay LAP area. Importantly, the building would clearly stand outside of the lower density residential neighbourhood. It would draw the eye but the sculpted form and refined design and materials would soften its presence in the views.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.163 **Moderate, positive.** The site is sufficiently far removed from the lower density residential neighbourhood in the eastern part of the George's Quay LAP area that, while a prominent addition to the views, it would not dominate or otherwise harm the neighbourhood. Its distinctly contemporary typology, vertical scale and architecture would contribute to its prominence, but these characteristics would also emphasise its separateness from the foreground townscape. The building would appear as a landmark building in a separate, high density character area within the Docklands, adding visual interest and improving legibility – with no reduction in visual amenity. It is such compositions that set the Docklands apart from other areas.
- 11.164 The classification of the visual effect as positive may be debatable. In coming to this conclusion, the author has considered the location and design of the development, its effect on the composition of the views, and also relevant policy. For example, Policy CEE5 of the Development Plan states: *"...cities are crucibles of innovation and... the city centre Z5 zoned area and inner city area including the Docklands are the crucial metropolitan and national resource for innovation, promoting the proximity and diversity of uses that foster innovation", and "high-quality and dense development drives productivity and innovation in a city."*

11.165 If development is to take place in the city in accordance with the above policy, and with the national policy for Dublin to ‘compete internationally’ as a ‘global city of scale’ with good international connectivity, and if meaningful density is to be delivered in response to the climate change crisis, then visual and townscape effects such as these identified above can be considered positive.

11.166

Viewpoints 12, 13, 14 – Trinity College, Parliament Square

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.167 Three views are provided for Parliament Square, each representing a point of entry to the square on a key pedestrian route. The viewpoints are as far back in the space as possible for maximum perspective and to minimise the screening effect of the buildings enclosing the square.

11.168 The ornately decorated Campanile is the centerpiece of the square and a key element of all the views. Around this the square is enclosed by a range of monumental buildings, including the mid-18th century Dining Hall, the Graduates Memorial Building (G.M.B.) completed in 1905, and to the right (under the scaffolding cover) the Rubrics, dating from the turn of the 18th century. Parliament Square, like the rest of Trinity College, is enclosed from the surrounding city. This enclosure, combined with the architecture, use and history of the campus, generates a special character and atmosphere, which is heightened by its city centre location.

11.169 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.** Section 16.7.1 of the Development Plan states (regarding Building Height in a Sustainable City): *“In particular, any new proposal must be sensitive to the historic city centre, the river Liffey and quays, Trinity College, Dublin Castle, the historic squares and the canals... It is important to protect and enhance the skyline of the inner city and to ensure that any proposals for high buildings make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city, and create opportunities for place-making and identity.”*

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

11.170 **Magnitude of change: Medium.** The extent of visibility of the development would vary depending on the receptor’s position in Parliament Square:

- **In View 12**, entering the square from the main campus entrance on College Green, approaching the Campanile, the building **would not be visible**. It would be hidden behind the G.M.B.
- **In View 13**, entering the square from the Provost’s Garden beside the Reading Room, the building **would be visible** to the right of the Campanile:
 - It would protrude sufficiently above the foreground buildings that its distinctive form would be appreciable – specifically its vertical proportions, sculpted sides, and the angled roofline;
 - By being clearly identifiable as a separate building, well in the background, and of distinct typology, architecture and materials, it would avoid distorting the roofline of the historic buildings in the foreground. (When the extent of protrusion is minimal, so that the new building behind the foreground buildings can’t be clearly identified as a separate building, and the separation distance can’t be appreciated, it can have a more significant, negative visual effect, in that the

foreground roofline can become distorted and lose its legibility. This would not be the case in View 13.)

- **In View 14**, entering the square from the direction of Fellows' Square, the building **would be visible** well to the right of the Campanile, protruding above the roofline of the Rubrics building. The same commentary for View 13 applies to View 14.

11.171 Importantly, the site is sufficiently far removed from Trinity College that, while the building would feature on the skyline (and due to its height and design it would draw some attention), it would not loom above or crowd the Trinity College campus. It would simply appear as a building in a separate, contemporary part of the city centre – without affecting the integrity of the College campus in the foreground.

Significance and Quality of Effects

11.172 **Significant positive.** The development would introduce a contemporary tall building of strong identity and design quality to the views. Where the building is visible in key views (e.g. Viewpoints 13 and 14), the extent of its protrusion would be sufficient that (a) it would be identifiable as a separate building well removed from Trinity College, (b) it would avoid distorting/reducing the legibility of the Trinity College roofline in the foreground, and (c) its design quality would be appreciable; it would add a building of distinction to the city centre skyline. The character of Parliament Square (and Trinity College generally) is so strong that it can withstand such change in the surrounding city centre without losing its own integrity and charm.

Cumulative Effects - Magnitude of Change

11.173 In all three views, one or both of the permitted AquaVetro building and College Square will be visible when they are built:

- The two tall buildings will stand close together and in some views (e.g. View 13) they will merge/overlap, forming a broader mass of built form.
- In some views (e.g. View 13) the lower volume of College Square will also be visible.
- These developments will have the effect of establishing a contemporary, high density character area in the environs of Trinity College, relatively close by (as may be expected in a 21st century city centre) but not looming over or crowding the historic campus.

11.174 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.** The proposed development would be visible in the same area (in roughly the same direction and approximately the same distance from Trinity College) as the AquaVetro and College Square buildings. Since it would not be the first tall building in the views, but rather one of three, the magnitude of change resulting from the development would be lower, but in combination it would be medium-high. Breaking down the consideration of cumulative effects:

- If only one building, either AquaVetro or College Square, were currently permitted, that building could be considered a 'landmark' tall building, and the introduction of the proposed development may be considered to undermine that building's landmark status, or to herald the emergence of a cluster.
- Given that there are two buildings permitted (uncomfortably close together in some views from Trinity College), the possible desire to maintain a single, landmark tall building no longer applies. A 'cluster' (albeit of only two buildings) is already permitted.

- The question then is whether a third tall building could positively complement that pair, by for example (a) strengthening the cluster so as to form a character area or quarter, (b) creating a better balanced composition of form/massing in the cluster (refer to Viewpoint 13), or (c) diminishing the relative prominence of the other two buildings by adding a third building (a more diverse cluster has greater 'tolerance' for peoples' varying aesthetic/architectural preferences than a smaller cluster). All three of these factors apply in the case of the proposed development.

Cumulative Effects - Significance and Quality

11.175 **Significant positive.** In summary, the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development would be reduced when seen in combination with AquaVetro and College Square. However, its visual effects would remain significant and positive - although for a wider range of reasons. It would turn a tightly spaced pair of tall buildings into a more balanced, visually pleasing cluster (refer to Viewpoint 13 in particular). This would read as a more meaningful/substantial character area or quarter of contemporary high density development in the city centre. The design quality of the building is such that it would improve the appearance of the cluster (as well as adding visual interest through diversity). Overall, the development would 'enhance the skyline of the inner city' and 'make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city'.

Viewpoint 15 – Trinity College, Library Square

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.176 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.**

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

11.177 **Magnitude of change: None.** The building would be well below the roofline of the Rubrics from this angle.

Significance and Quality of Effects

11.178 **No effect.**

Cumulative Effects

11.179 The cumulative photomontage shows that both the AquaVetro and College Square tower would be clearly visible from this vantage point. The proposed development would not be visible, therefore no cumulative visual effect would arise.

Viewpoint 16 – Trinity College, Berkely Library Entrance

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.180 The small square in front of the Berkely Library provides a slightly elevated vantage point, with the view north framed by the Rubrics to the left and Trinity Museum to the right, overlooking New Square. On the far side of New Square is the broad, low façade of the Hall of Residence. Due to the elevation of the viewpoint, a number of modern buildings in and outside of the campus can be seen protruding above the Hall of Residence roofline, including the distinctive pyramidal tops of George's Square Plaza. Also of note are the roof of the Samuel Beckett Theatre to the right, an unsightly rooftop

plant screen (to the right of George's Quay Plaza in the view), and to the left the distinctive form of the new Printing House Square building on the campus.

- 11.181 It is worth noting how the George's Quay Plaza roof design makes the building identifiable. This gives context to its visibility/visual impact. Knowing what it is, and therefore where it is, allows it to be understood as a separate building, in the distance. Its effect is more acceptable to the eye than the rooftop plant screen.
- 11.182 It is also noteworthy, that while the numerous historic buildings lend the campus a particular character, Trinity College has not avoided the introduction of contemporary architecture to the campus itself. Some of the finest buildings are modern, as is the case in the surrounding city.
- 11.183 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium-High.** While the Development Plan states that taller buildings in the city must be sensitive to Trinity College, in this view there is already a degree of visibility of the surrounding city, which contributes to a higher capacity for change (than Views 12-15).

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

- 11.184 **Magnitude of change: High.** The building would be a large, prominent and distinctive addition to the view. From this angle its height, sculpted form and roofline would be clearly revealed, and the juxtaposition - of typology, scale and architecture – would create a tension in the view. Importantly, the site is sufficiently far removed from Trinity College that, while the building would draw attention, it would not loom over or crowd the Trinity College campus. It would appear as a building in a separate, contemporary part of the city centre – without affecting the integrity of the Trinity campus in the foreground.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.185 **Significant positive.** The development would introduce a contemporary tall building of strong identity and design quality to the view. The extent of its protrusion would be sufficient that (a) it would be identifiable as a separate building well removed from Trinity College, (b) it would avoid distorting/reducing the legibility of the Trinity College roofline in the foreground, and (c) its design quality would be appreciable; it would add a building of distinction to the city centre skyline. The character of Trinity College is such that it can withstand change, both within and external to the campus, without losing its integrity and charm.

Cumulative Effects - Magnitude of Change

- 11.186 The permitted AquaVetro building and College Square developments will be visible from this position. College Square in particular will be prominent, with both the tower and a large the broad podium volume exposed to view. These developments will have the effect of establishing a contemporary, high density character area in the environs of Trinity College, relatively close by (as may be expected in a 21st century city centre) but not looming over or crowding the historic campus.
- 11.187 **Magnitude of change: Medium.** The proposed development would be visible in the same area (in roughly the same direction and approximately the same distance from Trinity College) as the College Square and AquaVetro buildings. Since it would not be the first tall building in the views, but rather one of three, the magnitude of change resulting from the development would be lower, but in combination the magnitude

would be high. The same consideration that apply to Viewpoints 13 and 14 apply to this view, i.e.:

- If only one building, either AquaVetro or College Square, were currently permitted, that building could be considered a 'landmark' tall building, and the introduction of the proposed development may be considered to undermine that building's landmark status, or to herald the emergence of a cluster.
- Given that there are two buildings already permitted, the possible desire to maintain a single, landmark tall building no longer applies. A 'cluster' (albeit of only two buildings) is already permitted.
- The question then is whether a third tall building could positively complement that pair, by (a) strengthening the cluster so as to form a distinct character area or quarter, (b) creating a better balanced composition of form/massing in the cluster, or (c) diminishing the relative prominence of the other two buildings by adding a third building (a more diverse cluster has greater 'tolerance' for peoples' varying aesthetic/architectural preferences than a smaller cluster). All three of these factors apply in the case of the proposed development.

Cumulative Effects - Significance and Quality

11.188 **Significant positive.** In summary, the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development would be reduced when seen in combination with AquaVetro and College Square. However, its visual effects would remain significant and positive - although for a wider range of reasons. It would turn a tightly spaced pair of tall buildings into a more balanced, visually pleasing cluster. This would read as a more substantial character area or quarter of contemporary high density development in a particular part of the city centre. (Knowing that this cluster is concentrated around and identifies the hub of public transport in the city centre would add to the acceptability of the change.) The design quality of the building is such that it would improve the appearance of the cluster (as well as adding visual interest through diversity). Overall, the development would 'enhance the skyline of the inner city' and 'make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city'.

Viewpoint 17 – Trinity College, Fellows' Square

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.189 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.**

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

11.190 **Magnitude of change: None.** The building would be well below the roofline of the Old Library from this angle.

Significance and Quality of Effects

11.191 **No effect.**

Cumulative Effects

11.192 n/a.

Viewpoints 18, 19, 20, 21 – Trinity College, Central Open Spaces

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.193 Viewpoints 18 and 19 represent key routes of movement across the centre of the campus. Viewpoints 20 and 21 near the far southern corner of the campus were selected as they provide maximum perspective, and some elevation. All of these views are very different to those from the more enclosed western part of the campus. The views are characterised by open space and a lack of built enclosure in the foreground. This allows views over the complex roofscape of the range of diverse (old and modern), mostly low buildings inside the northern perimeter of the campus.
- 11.194 A variety of buildings external to the campus are visible over the foreground roofline, and these views illustrate the point that greater protrusion and greater deviation from the foreground character can be preferable. For example, in the existing View 18, it is difficult to differentiate between the buildings that form part of the campus and those that are external. They merge together into a complex composition of form and materials, reducing the legibility of the valued historic buildings in the foreground. The exception is George's Quay Plaza, which protrudes sufficiently and is sufficiently recognizable to be read/understood as being separate from the Trinity College landscape/environs, just a taller building in another part of the city centre.
- 11.195 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium-High.** While the sensitivity of Trinity College is high, it should be noted that there is considerable diversity of form, architecture and materials in these views, which creates capacity to accommodate change. Also, the buildings around the perimeter of the central open space are low. With the perspective afforded by the breadth of the open space, the view north in particular encompasses a vast area of the city centre. If tall development were precluded from this area in order to preserve views as they are, a large part of the city centre – and the area best served by public transport - would be precluded from development of sustainable density.

Proposed Views and Magnitude of Change

- 11.196 **Magnitude of change: Medium-High.** The extent of visibility of the development would vary depending on the receptor's position:
- **In View 18**, on the main east-west path between the rugby and cricket pitches, the building would be a prominent addition to the view. Although filtered by the campus trees in the foreground, the building's height, and its sculpted form, would be clearly revealed due to its protrusion well above the low buildings enclosing the campus.
 - **In View 19**, on the main north-south axis (which is aligned with Moss Street), the building would also protrude substantially above the flat roof of the somewhat unsightly Simon Perry building, just to the left of the contemporary Trinity Business School, a recent addition to the campus. The diversity of form and architecture in this composition means that the building fits comfortably into the view despite its evident scale.
 - **In View 20**, from the Pavilion terrace (selected as it is a popular gathering place from which the campus is observed), the building would be obscured by the campus trees in the foreground.
 - **In View 21**, from the top of the steps at the entrance to the Moyne Institute, the building would be exposed to view, its typology, scale and architecture in stark contrast to the campus in the foreground. While the juxtaposition would be pronounced, there would also be a balance in the composition – between the

very low density, low rise historic campus occupying the large proportion of the view, and its counterpoint on the skyline in the middle distance.

- 11.197 In these views from the central open space of the campus, in which the height of the building is revealed, the building's north-south alignment is fortuitous in that it presents its narrow south elevation to the viewer. As a result it has a slender form in all the views.
- 11.198 Importantly, the site is sufficiently far removed from Trinity College that, while the building would feature prominently on the skyline, it would not loom over or crowd the Trinity College campus. It would simply appear as a building in a separate, contemporary part of the city centre – without affecting the integrity of the Trinity campus in the foreground.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.199 **Significant positive.** The development would introduce a contemporary tall building of strong identity and design quality to the views – a building of distinction on the evolving city skyline. It would cause no distortion or reduction of legibility of the much lower, historic buildings of Trinity College in the foreground, and it is sufficiently removed from the campus to avoid any sense of overbearing. The character of the Trinity College campus is strong, and the photomontages show that the campus can accommodate the change. While the juxtaposition would be pronounced, there would be a balance in the composition – between the very low density, low rise historic campus occupying the large proportion of the view, and its counterpoint on the skyline.

Cumulative Effects - Magnitude of Change

- 11.200 In all four views, one or both of the permitted AquaVetro and College Square tall buildings will be visible when they are built:
- The two buildings will stand relatively close together, and in most views the broad lower volume of College Square will also be visible above the roofline of the Trinity buildings.
 - The two developments will thus form a substantial concentration of massing, contemporary architecture and materials in the views, counterbalancing the character of the Trinity College campus in the foreground.
 - It is notable in these views that there is a significant difference in character between the AquaVetro and College Square buildings. The former is a more slender tower of interlocking cubic forms, with a flush glazed finish. The latter is tall but broad, with a chamfered corner facing Trinity College, and a dark coloured, expressed frame in the façade.
 - In View 21 the substantial massing of George's Quay Plaza is also appreciable, and it has a third, distinct architectural treatment.
 - These developments will have the effect of establishing a contemporary, high density cluster or character area in the environs of Trinity College, close by but not crowding the historic campus.
 - (It can be argued that the most impactful element of these developments is the lower volume of College Square (refer to View 21.)
- 11.201 **Magnitude of change: High.** The proposed development would be visible in the same area (in roughly the same direction and approximately the same distance from Trinity College) as the AquaVetro and College Square buildings. Since it would not be the first tall building in the views, but rather one adding to an established cluster, the magnitude

of change resulting from the development would be lower, but in combination the change would be high. The same considerations discussed for Viewpoints 12-14 apply to these views, i.e.:

- If only one building, either AquaVetro or College Square, were currently permitted, that building could be considered a 'landmark' tall building, and the introduction of the proposed development may be considered to undermine that building's landmark status, or to herald the emergence of a cluster.
- Given that there are two buildings permitted (alongside the lower but also substantial George's Quay Plaza), the possible objective of maintaining a single, landmark tall building does not apply. A 'cluster' is already permitted.
- The question then is whether a third tall building could complement the existing cluster, by for example (a) strengthening/reinforcing it so as to form a character area or quarter, (b) creating a better balanced composition of form/massing in the cluster, or (c) diminishing the relative prominence of the other buildings by adding another (a more diverse cluster has greater 'tolerance' for peoples' varying aesthetic/architectural preferences than a smaller cluster). All three of these factors apply in the case of the proposed development.

Cumulative Effects - Significance and Quality

11.202 **Significant positive.** In summary, the magnitude of change resulting from the proposed development would be reduced when seen in combination with AquaVetro and College Square. However, the visual effects would remain significant and positive - although for a wider range of reasons. It would turn an emerging cluster of contemporary tall buildings into a larger, more balanced and visually diverse cluster. This would read as a more meaningful/substantial character area or quarter, changing the character of the city centre as a whole. The design quality of the building is such that it would improve the cluster overall (as well as adding visual interest through diversity). Overall, the development would 'enhance the skyline of the inner city' and 'make a positive contribution to the urban character of the city'.

Viewpoint 22 – Nassau Street beside Trinity College

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

11.203 Nassau Street is elevated above the grounds of Trinity College, and affords views down over the central open space from the street. The dense belt of tall trees inside the campus boundary however screens or densely filters the view of the cityscape beyond the campus, even in winter.

11.204 **Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.**

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

11.205 **Magnitude of change: Low-Medium.** The building would be heavily filtered by the tree canopies, or visible through occasional gaps between the trees, in the distance well beyond the Trinity College campus.

Significance and Quality of Effects

11.206 **Slight-Moderate positive.** When visible/discernible, the effects would be similar to the effects on the Trinity College open space views (e.g. Viewpoint 18). Although the effect would be more muted (due to the screening/filtering effect of the trees), the

development would introduce a contemporary tall building of strong identity and design quality to the views – a building of distinction on the evolving city skyline. It would cause no distortion or reduction of legibility of the much lower, historic buildings of Trinity College in the foreground, and it is sufficiently removed from the campus to avoid any sense of overbearing. While the juxtaposition would be pronounced, there would be a balance in the composition – between the very low density, low rise historic campus in occupying the foreground, and its counterpoint on the skyline.

Cumulative Effects

- 11.207 **Moderate positive.** When visible/discernible, the magnitude of change resulting from the development would be reduced (being seen in combination with AquaVetro and College Square), but in combination it would be higher. The effects would remain positive. It would turn an emerging cluster of contemporary tall buildings into a larger, more balanced and diverse cluster. This would read as a more meaningful/substantial character area or quarter, changing the character of the city centre as a whole. The design quality of the building is such that it would improve the cluster overall (as well as adding visual interest through diversity).

Viewpoints 23 and 24 – Kildare Street

Existing Views and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.208 Kildare Street is so aligned that it frames a view north over the central open space of Trinity College directly towards the site. Two viewpoints are provided for Kildare Street. View 23 is from the junction with Molesworth Street opposite the entrance to the Dáil. View 24 is from St. Stephen's Green North, along the length of Kildare Street. This view also represents St. Stephen's Green itself, which as one of the city's Georgian squares is a sensitive receptor.
- 11.209 The view from mid-way along the street (Viewpoint 23), has the appearance of a pristine Georgian streetscape. Although there are several modern buildings on the west side of the street, these have been designed to fit seamlessly into the Georgian street elevation. The tall trees at the end of the street (rooted in the grounds of Trinity College several meters below the level of Nassau Street) form a screen and terminate the vista. In combination the buildings/architecture and the trees form a distinct, enclosed pocket of townscape character, with a high level of cultural historic value and visual interest and amenity.
- 11.210 There are more modern interventions visible in View 24 from St. Stephen's Green North, and the view composition is more complex and less contained overall. This creates capacity for change.
- 11.211 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.** Kildare Street and St. Stephen's Green have a high level of cultural historic and visual amenity value, and should be considered highly sensitive to change. However, it should be noted that (similar to the Trinity College campus), Kildare Street is very clearly delineated/contained as a character area. If change takes place within or at the edge of that area (e.g. the modern brick building in the foreground to the left in View 24), then it affects the character and amenity of the street/area. In contrast, if change were to take place outside of the area, due to the street's 'visual containment' such development would be clearly seen as being external. Particularly if that development were of different character, it would not affect the integrity of the streetscape.

- 11.212 The site's 'focal-point position' in views from Kildare Street is both a sensitivity and an opportunity. The placement of a tall building on the site could generate a meaningful landmark, if the site location warranted such a marker. (The fact that the site occupies a similar focal-point position with respect to Gardiner Street on the north side of the city amplifies its potential landmark value.)

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.213 **Magnitude of change: Medium.** In both views the building would be a prominent addition - a tall slender building in the distance, projecting above the Trinity College campus trees, redefining the skyline. Its slender, sculpted form and distinctive roof profile would be emphasised by its position as the distant focal point of the view. While the building would be prominent, the photomontages show that the integrity of the Kildare Street streetscape would not be compromised. The street would retain its character and amenity value.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.214 **Significant positive.** The introduction of a tall building in a focal-point position in views from Kildare Street (and from its junction with St. Stephen's Green North) would constitute a significant visual impact. However, the photomontages show that due to (a) the strong delineation/enclosure of the Kildare Street character area, (b) the distance of the site from Kildare Street, and (c) the development's dramatically different character (its verticality, sculpted form, contemporary materials), it would read as being completely separate from the foreground character area. It would appear as a prominent but distant feature, adding to the visual interest of the composition without harming the historic street in the foreground.
- 11.215 The slenderness (as seen from this angle), distinctive form and roof profile, and the high quality façade are critical attributes of the building in these views. They ensure that the building itself is attractive and recognisable, as required for the building to function – positively – as a landmark.
- 11.216 Opportunities to deliver positive change with such widespread but focused effect are few in the densely built up urban environment. The fact that the development would function as a landmark in views from the north (Gardiner Street), south (Kildare Street) and east and west (along the Liffey) is significant. In these views the building would identify (a) a key crossing of the Liffey, linking the north and south sides of the city; (b) the gateway/transition between the old city to the west and the Docklands to the east, where the historic eastern expansion of the commercial core originally took place (with the construction of the Custom House); (d) the area in the city best served by public transport). If sites were being sought to make a meaningful improvement to the city's legibility, few if any sites could deliver the same potential.

Cumulative Effects

- 11.217 n/a.

Viewpoint 25 – Merrion Square

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.218 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.**

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.219 **Magnitude of change: Negligible.** The top south east corner of the building would protrude marginally above the roofline of the Georgian terrace fronting Merrion Square. The building materials ensure that the legibility of the foreground roofline would be unaffected. The change would be barely noticeable.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.220 **Not significant neutral.**

Cumulative Effects

- 11.221 n/a.

Viewpoint 26 – College Green

Existing View and Viewpoint Sensitivity

- 11.222 At its eastern end Dame Street widens around a central island to form a broad space enclosed by the Bank of Ireland (former Parliament House) to the north, Trinity's West Front to the east, and a terrace of Victorian banks and commercial buildings (now mostly in retail use) on the south side. The mature trees in the central island restrict the visibility of the surrounding townscape in the summer. In winter the trees form less of a screen. The streetscape itself is somewhat cluttered and dominated by provision for road traffic. However the buildings surrounding College Green are all protected structures and covered by Conservation Area designation.

- 11.223 **Viewpoint sensitivity: High.**

Proposed View and Magnitude of Change

- 11.224 **Magnitude of change: Low-Medium.** In summer the building would be largely screened from view (as shown in the photomontage). In winter, although filtered through the tree canopies, the building would be visible protruding above the roofline of Trinity College West Front.

Significance and Quality of Effects

- 11.225 **Slight-Moderate positive.** The site is sufficiently far removed from College Green that, when visible/discernible, it would not loom over or crowd the protected structures and streetscape in the foreground. Additionally, while its distinctly contemporary typology, vertical scale and architecture would contribute to its prominence, these characteristics would also emphasise its separateness from the historic foreground composition. It would simply appear as a building in a separate, contemporary part of the city centre – without affecting the integrity of College Green.

Cumulative Effects

- 11.226 **Moderate positive.** The magnitude of change resulting from the development would be reduced (being seen in combination with College Square and the AquaVetro building, but in combination the magnitude of change would be medium-high. The visual effects would remain positive. It would turn an emerging cluster of contemporary tall buildings into a larger, more balanced and diverse cluster. This would read as a