

# Townscape and Visual Appraisal

## **Proposed Redevelopment of the Queen's Old Castle, 84- 89 Grand Parade, Cork City**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This report discusses the potential townscape and visual impacts of the proposed redevelopment of the Queen's Old Castle on Grand Parade and St Augustine's Street in Cork city centre.

The site incorporates the remaining elements of the former Queen's Old Castle Department Store, one of the city's most recognisable commercial buildings, located at the junction of two of its main streets, Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street. The proposal thus has the potential to affect an important historic building and an important part of the city's public realm. This report considers the significance of the potential effects on the townscape and views/visual amenity in the affected area.

**Plate 1: A view of the existing Queen's Old Castle building from Daunt Square at the junction of Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street**



The description of the proposed development is as follows:

*Permission is sought for the conservation, refurbishment, alteration and change of use of the existing structure at 'The Queens Old Castle', 84-89 Grand Parade, Cork City including the partial demolition of original and non-original fabric and the construction of a mixed-use office and retail development with primary access from Grand Parade with service/ancillary access from Saint Augustine Street. The proposed development consists of the construction of a part 3, part 4, part 6 and part 7 storey office block comprising 104,711ft<sup>2</sup> GFA [9,728m<sup>2</sup>] (including retained area) as well as enclosed roof top plant at 7th floor level. The retail element comprises a total of 1,318.6ft<sup>2</sup> [122.5m<sup>2</sup>] GFA of comparison retail space fronting onto Grand Parade. The proposed office space will be designed to be suitable for a single user or multiple users with subdivisions. The proposed development will also include roof terraces, rooflights, fire escapes, drainage, ancillary services, plant, bin storage, 66 no. internal cycle parking spaces, staff changing facilities and 1 no. ESB sub station and all associated site development works.*

## 1.1 Methodology

The townscape and visual appraisal was carried out with reference to the Landscape Institute *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 2013 (GLVIA), the Institute's Information Note *Townscape Character Assessment* 2017, and the EPA draft *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* 2017. The assessment methodology including explanation of the criteria and terms used is provided in Appendix 1. The appraisal was carried out by Richard Butler MILI MIPI of Model Works Ltd.

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*”. The word ‘townscape’ is used to describe the landscape in urban areas.

The GLVIA requires that the effects on views and visual amenity be assessed separately from the effects on the townscape, although the two topics are linked. Townscape results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our environment. Different combinations and spatial distribution of these elements create variations in townscape character. Townscape impact assessment is concerned with the effects of a proposed development on the character and value of the townscape as an environmental, cultural and economic resource. Visual impact assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area's visual amenity.

The report includes the following sections:

- **Chapter 2 – Receiving Environment:** The site and the receiving environment are described with a focus on those elements, characteristics and areas that would be affected by the proposed development.
- **Chapter 3 – Relevant Policy:** The city and national level policy of relevance to the assessment is identified. The assessment of townscape and visual impacts must take account of statutory plans, objectives and guidance as the townscape is in part a product of this policy. The Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (CDP) outlines the vision for the receiving environment, and the proposal must be considered against that planned scenario - which may be to maintain a particular character or condition, or to change the character or certain elements or aspects of the area. National policy and guidance is also relevant as it informs both the nature of development proposals and the considerations of the planning authorities.
- **Chapter 4 – Proposed Development.** The proposed development is briefly described with a focus on (a) those aspects which have the potential to affect the townscape character and views, and (b) the considerations and mitigation measures taken in the design process.
- **Chapter 5 – Townscape Effects Assessment.** The potential townscape effects are assessed in accordance with the GLVIA methodology. The townscape sensitivity and the magnitude of potential townscape change are classified taking account of the key characteristics of the area (e.g. topography, urban grain, land use mix, plot/building typologies and architecture, perceptual factors). The sensitivity and magnitude of change classifications are combined to arrive at an assessment of significance of the potential townscape effects.
- **Chapter 6 – Visual Effects Assessment:** The potential effects on 26 no. viewpoints in the receiving environment are individually assessed informed by verified photomontages of the proposed development. The viewpoints represent views/visual receptors in the immediate environs of the site, the surrounding streets, and more distant views across the city including a number of protected views identified in the CDP.
- **Chapter 7 – Conclusions:** A conclusion is drawn as to the appropriateness of the proposed development as an intervention in the townscape, taking account of its visibility and visual effects.



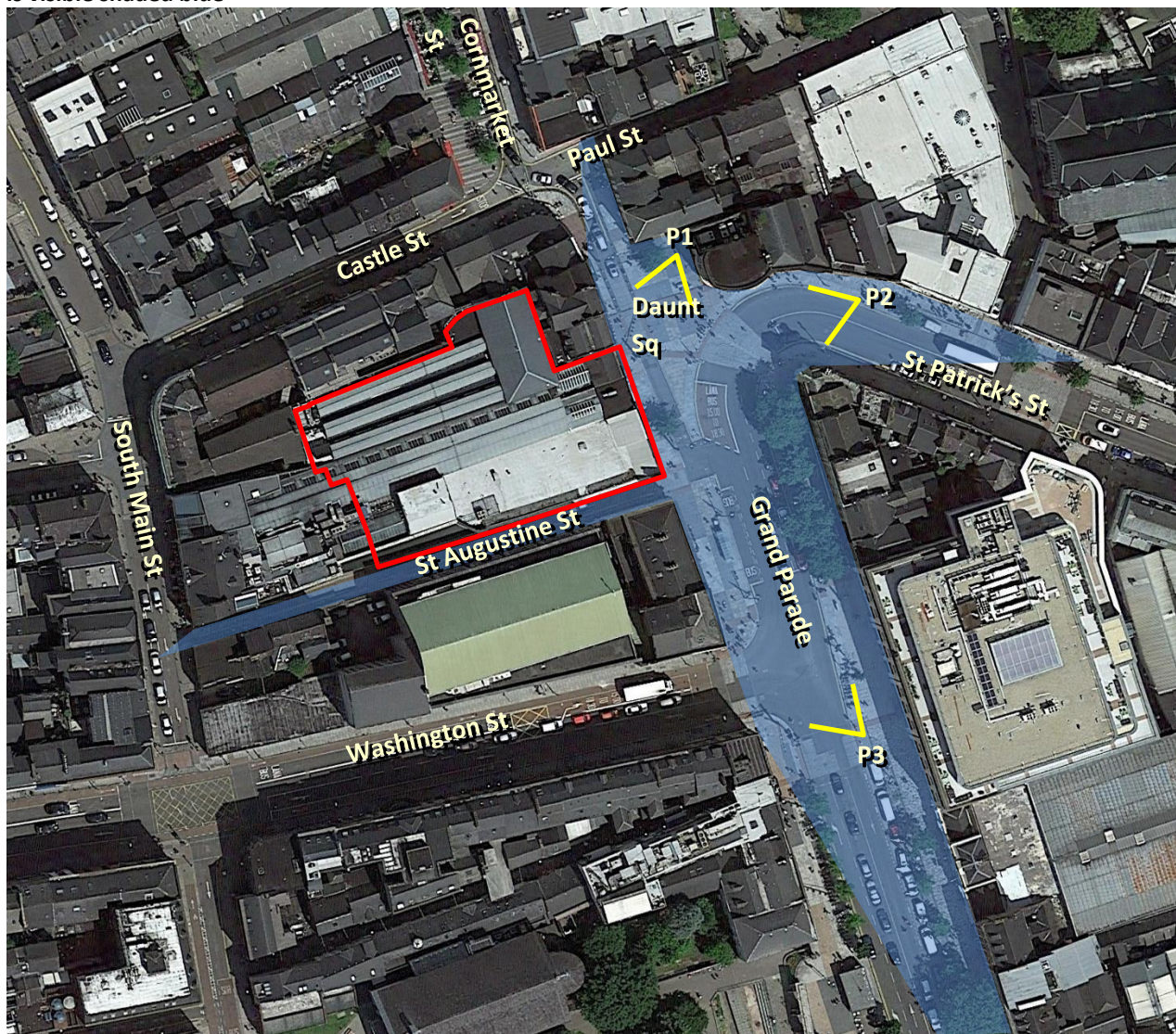
## 2.0 The Receiving Environment

### 2.1 The Site

The site is a 0.232 ha land parcel occupied by the former Queen's Old Castle Department Store. The department store was built in c. 1835 on the site of the former County Courthouse (built in 1806). It is thought that the department store façade may incorporate the portico of the courthouse. The façade is described as follows in the *Conservation & Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment Report* (accompanying the planning application) by JCA Architects: *"...a centrally placed pedimented Greek Doric engaged portico, balustraded parapet and segmental-arched openings to the first floor containing round-headed fixed windows"*.

The building's main frontage is to Grand Parade to the east, facing the junction with St Patrick's Street. The highly decorative and distinctive east façade, described above, is a significant presence along stretches of both streets, and in Daunt Square, the plaza space links their junction to Paul Street, Castle Street and Cornmarket Street. Due to the existing building's presence in the street elevation visible from this part of the public realm, it is this area in which the most significant visual impact is most likely to be experienced (since an existing important architectural feature would be altered and a new building introduced, whereas seen from other locations the change would simply involve the introduction of a new building).

**Figure 1: The proposed development's immediate receiving environment, with the area in which the existing building is visible shaded blue**





The site also has a long frontage to St Augustine Street, a narrow lane which passes to the south between the site and St Augustine's Church. The building's frontage to the lane is blank, with no windows or entrances other than service entrances. The character/condition of the site's south façade, including the associated lack of passive surveillance, reduce the quality of St Augustine Street as an element of the public realm and pedestrian circulation network. To the north and west the site backs onto numerous small commercial premises fronting Castle Street and South Main Street respectively.

**Plate 2: A view of the site from the western end of St Patrick's Street, with the entrance to St Augustine Street visible to the left of the building**



**Plate 3: A view of the site from Grand Parade opposite the junction with Washington Street, with St Augustine's Church visible to the left**

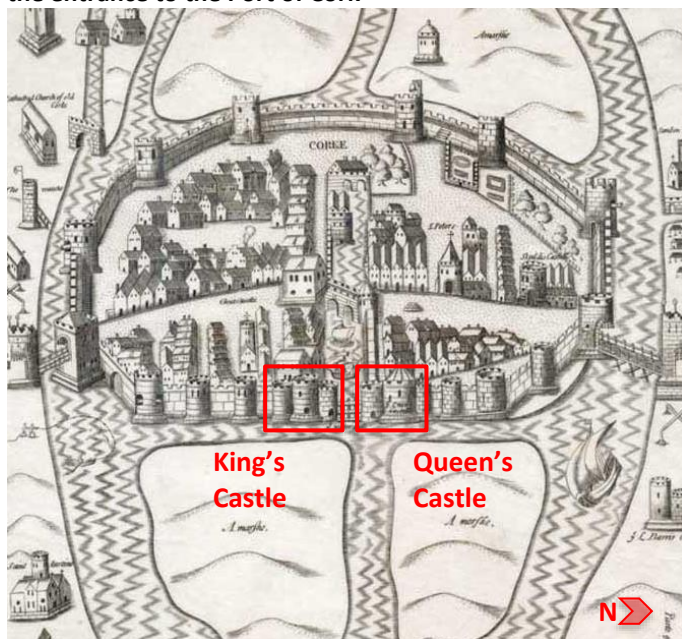


The current building has undergone many changes since its construction, most notably the addition of a fourth bay in the main/east façade, which undermined the symmetry and proportions of the original design. There have also been many internal alterations, including the conversion of the department store into a mall-type shopping centre in 1980. It was later converted into two large retail units, which is the site's current format.

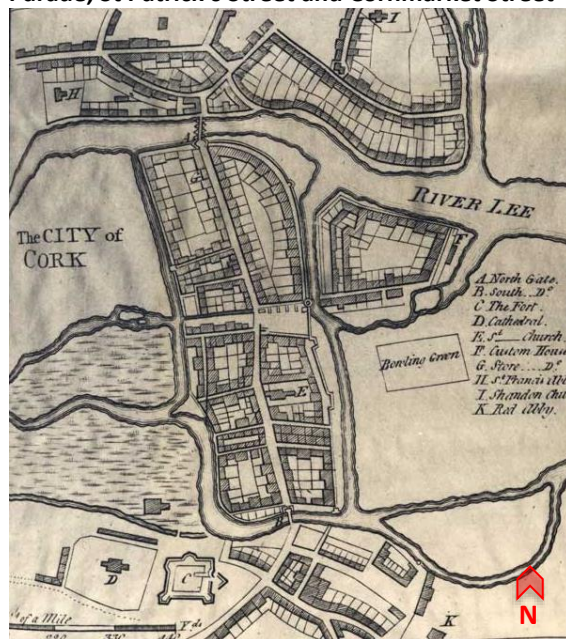
## 2.2 Historic Evolution of the Site and Environs

The site is known to have been developed and redeveloped since the medieval period of Cork's history. The Pacata Hibernia map (Figure 2) from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century shows two towers in the city wall, which together formed the 'Watergate' of the original Port of Cork. The southern tower was known as King's Castle and this was located (partly) on the subject site. The northern tower was known as Queen's Castle. The port extended to the west from the Watergate, and the modern Castle Street was the north quay of the port.

**Figure 2: The Pacata Hibernia map showing King's Castle and Queen's Castle in the city wall, forming the 'Watergate' at the entrance to the Port of Cork**



**Figure 3: 1690 map showing the alignment of the three river channels giving access to the Watergate, which were later built-over, becoming Grand Parade, St Patrick's Street and Cornmarket Street**



For a period in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the King's Castle served as the City gaol, before being demolished in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century to allow construction of a courthouse on the site. The first courthouse was replaced by a new County Courthouse in 1806 but this building was not in use for long; the present City and County Courthouse on Great George's Street (the present Washington Street) replaced it in 1835.

At this time the site came into private ownership, and construction began on the original Queen's Castle Department Store, designed by Henry Hill, in the early 1840s. It is thought that the department store façade incorporated the portico of the 1806 courthouse (see Figures 4 and 5 below). Queen's Castle remained in use as a department store for over 100 years, surviving the burning of Cork in 1920.

Between 1978 and 1980 the building was converted into a shopping centre, with a mall linking Grand Parade through the site to South Main Street. This redevelopment included the addition of the fourth bay, with the demolition of an adjoining taller building (visible in Figure 5) at the corner of St Augustine Street. The fourth bay destroyed the symmetry of the façade, and also introduced what is easily recognised as a superficial addition when seen from the side, despite the accuracy of the reproduction of the bay. A further redevelopment took place in the late 1990s when the shopping centre was converted into two large retail units.



Figure 4: A drawing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century courthouse



Figure 5: 1920s photograph showing the department store with what appears to be the retained court-house portico in the facade



## 2.3 Surrounding Townscape Character

Townscape character is the product of a number of elements/factors, including (a) topography, (b) urban grain (the pattern of streets and blocks), (c) the land use mix, (d) plot and building typologies, their era, scale and architecture, (e) green infrastructure, and (f) perceptual factors, which may be influenced by an area's condition, the level of street activity, etc. The higher the magnitude of change that a development would cause to one or more of these factors, the greater the significance of its townscape effects is likely to be. The receiving environment is described below with an emphasis on those elements/factors which would potentially be changed by the proposed development.

- **Topography:** The topography of Cork is one of the defining aspects of the townscape, the city having developed originally on a number of islands in the River Lee before expanding onto the ridges to the north and south of the river, then east and west along the valley. The city centre, which is clearly defined by the channels of the river, is thus low-lying and flat, while the inner suburbs to the north and south are characterised by their gradient and elevation above the city island.
- **Urban grain and movement patterns:** The topography was unusually influential in the evolution of the city's urban grain. On the city island, in the vicinity of the site, the medieval Port of Cork was accessed by three river channels which led to the Rivergate (of which the King's Castle, on the site, was a part – see Figures 2 and 3). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century these channels were culverted, with roads built along their alignment. These roads were Grand Parade (extending to the south from the site), St Patrick's Street (to the east) and Cornmarket Street (to the north) – all now important parts of the public realm of the city:
  - Grand Parade was designed as a showpiece for the thriving port city. It is 30-50m wide and featured an ornate fountain at its southern end, a public park beside Christ Church (now the Triskel Arts Centre) and a covered Victorian food market (the 'English Market'). The street is straight and wide and for this reason the site is visible from some distance to the south along Grand Parade.
  - St Patrick's Street has a very distinctive arced alignment following that of the former river channel. Due to the curve of the street it is also very wide in places. However, the curve limits the distance from which the site can be seen from the east (see Figure 1 above).
  - Cornmarket Street extends to the north of the site but the site does not have frontage to the street (as it does to Grand Parade and Patrick Street). A row of buildings fronting Castle Street stands between Cornmarket Street and the site. Nonetheless, from a distance to the north along the market street, any development of substantial height on the site would be prominent.

On the hillsides, particularly to the north of the city island, there is a notable east-west emphasis in the urban grain, with the principle roads following the contours of the ridges. Certain north-south aligned



streets (for example Widderling's Lane, St Patrick's Hill and, in Shandon, streets such as Fair Street) afford framed views over the city island. There are also buildings and open spaces on the ridges which are located to function as landmarks, and in turn provide views over the city.

**Plate 3: A view along St Patrick's Street towards the site, showing how the curve in the street blocks the view. Note also the contemporary vertical extension to the Capitol building**



**Plate 4: A view from St Patrick's Hill showing the complex, highly textured city centre townscape**



- **Land use mix:** The city island is the retail core of Cork and the site is zoned 'City Centre Retail Area' for which the objective is *"To provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of retailing, in particular higher order comparison retailing, as well as a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area... other uses such as residential, hotel, office and cultural and leisure facilities etc which compliment the retail function of the CCRA and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted"*.
- **Plot and building typologies and architecture:** Due to the history of the city there is a very wide representation of development periods (from medieval to contemporary), and diversity of plot and building typologies, architecture and materials. Such diversity creates capacity to accommodate change



A notable phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been the redevelopment of city centre sites alongside or incorporating retained historic buildings. These developments typically involve increased building height (in the form of vertical extensions or adjoining taller volumes) to achieve sustainable density in the city centre. This approach is effectively dictated by a combination of urban regeneration and compact growth policy on the one hand, and conservation policy on the other. Among the examples of this in the vicinity of the site are the Cornmarket Centre, the Capitol across the road from the site between Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street, Opera Lane off St Patrick's Street, and the Counting House development currently under construction.

A street scene in Dublin, Ireland, featuring a white bus with a large advertisement for 'You won't want to sleep in.' and a double-decker bus. The background includes a large stone building with a tall arched window and a modern glass-fronted building. Pedestrians are visible on the sidewalk.

A photograph of the University of Birmingham Library, showing a historic timber-framed building with a clock tower and a modern glass extension. The building features a mix of traditional architecture and contemporary design. The foreground shows a construction site with a metal fence and some debris.

- **Perceptual factors:** The 2014 Cork City Centre Strategy stated *“Grand Parade and the western end of St. Patrick’s Street have become blighted in part due to stalled projects. This has contributed to increased vacancy. There needs to be a focused review on how these stalled projects, or indeed others, can help to breathe fresh life into this very important part of the City Centre”*. Although the area has since improved considerably with the completion of projects such as the Capitol redevelopment, there are buildings and parts of the public realm which are not of a standard that reflects the ambition for the city centre. This includes the Queen’s Old Castle building in its current condition, and St Augustine Street. The recently announced ‘Grand Parade Quarter’ project will see significant improvements to the site’s receiving environment, including the redevelopment of Bishop Lucey Park and streetscape improvements to South Main Street.

## 3.0 Relevant Policy

### 3.1 Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

#### 3.1.1 Strategic Goals

Goal 5 for the city is as follows: *“MAINTAIN AND CAPITALISE ON CORK’S UNIQUE FORM AND CHARACTER: Cork City’s unique character derives from the combination of plan, topography, built fabric and the setting provided by the River Lee valley. The dramatic east west ridges create the visual setting for the city. The goal of the Plan is to protect and capitalise on the unique character of the city, both the character derived from the natural environment and the man-made character created by the built form, while providing opportunities for new development. New development will be required to respect and reflect the dramatic topography as well as the landscape and ecology of the city. It must also respect the built heritage of the city, in particular areas of significant historic character such as the City Centre, the historic north-south spine and the historic villages in the suburbs”*.

#### 3.1.2 City Centre Policy and Site Zoning

The Core Principles for the city centre stated in the CDP (Para 13.8) include the following: *“Maintaining and developing a City Centre of high quality... It is important to respect and enhance the city’s built and natural heritage and use its distinctive character to inform development schemes of high architectural and urban design quality which are locally distinctive and secure environmental improvements, across the City Centre”*.

Regarding office space in the city centre, the CDP states: *“There is significant potential both in the City Centre and the adjoining Docklands areas to meet the need for large floor plate offices, medium sized businesses and also attractive low rent space with character for start up and grow-on businesses. This Plan proposes the City Centre and the adjoining Docklands areas as the prime office locations in the city. However, it is recognised that if Cork City is to benefit from the global trends there needs to be a significant expansion and improvement in the range and quality of office product available”*.

The site’s City Centre Retail Area zoning objective is *“To provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of retailing, in particular higher order comparison retailing, as well as a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area”*. The CDP further notes that *“other uses such as residential, hotel, office and cultural and leisure facilities etc which compliment the retail function of the CCRA and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted”*.

The policy objectives quoted above are important in that they indicate there is an acceptance in principle of large floor plate office buildings in the city centre. Such development will unavoidably lead to character change in the historic city centre townscape, arising principally from the introduction of contemporary buildings of scale.



### 3.1.3 Landscape Policy and Protected Views

In Chapter 10 of the CDP it is stated: *“Landscape shapes our image of a place, give us a sense of place, an identity and can be a source of pride and inspiration and so influence our well-being and quality of life. All aspects of our natural, built and cultural heritage come together in the landscapes we experience. Landscape is a finite resource but is constantly changing through natural processes and through human activity. It is in our interest to ensure that the city’s landscape assets are protected...”*

*“Cork City as a focus for economic development and population growth is under constant pressure of development. The challenge for Cork City Council is to manage the city’s landscape in a manner that facilitates economic growth and development while protecting and enhancing the city’s key landscape assets and resources”.*

The site falls into the ‘Historic Urban Core’ (CDP Figure 10.1), which is identified as one of the Key Landscape Assets of the city. CDP Objective 10.2 states: *“To preserve Cork’s unique and distinctive landscape character through the appropriate management and enhancement of Key Landscape Assets”.*

An important part of protecting the city landscape is *“To preserve and enhance Cork’s views and prospects of special amenity value”* (CDP Objective 10.1 Landscape Strategic Objectives). The CDP identifies five types of views which may require protection, and in Volume 3 of the CDP the protected views and prospects are individually listed. In Volume 2 (Maps 12-18) the views are mapped.

The selection of viewpoints for the visual effects assessment in Section 6 of this report took account of the CDP (and pre-planning consultation with Cork City Council) and addresses the following protected views and prospects specifically:

- **Linear Views of Landmark Buildings.** The linear view identified as potentially being affected by the proposed development, and assessed in Section 6, include:
  - LT 20, the view from Elizabeth Fort towards Farranferris Ridge (Viewpoint 16)
  - OC 5, the view from Friar Road towards St Nicholas Church (Viewpoint 17)
  - GC 1, the view from the Douglas Road towards the Church of the Ascension, Gurranabraher (Viewpoint 18)
  - SFC 2, the view from Widderling’s Lane towards St Finbarr’s Cathedral (Viewpoint 21)
  - SAT 7, the view from Sullivan’s Quay towards Saint Anne’s Church (Viewpoint 9 - the view is taken from a position on the north quay and on the eastern side of Grand Parade to maximise the potential visibility of the proposed development, but it also represents the protected view SAT 7)
- **Panoramic Views.** The Panoramic Assessment Points assessed in this report include:
  - Saint Anne’s Church (Viewpoint 22)
  - Bell’s Field (Viewpoint 24)
  - Elizabeth Fort (Viewpoint 16)
  - Sunday’s Well Road (Viewpoint 25)
- **River Prospects.** A number of views from and along the River Lee quays are assessed, including:
  - Grand Parade at South Mall near Nano Nagle Bridge (Viewpoint 9)
  - St Patrick’s Quay near St Patrick’s Bridge (Viewpoint 19)
  - Pope’s Quay (Viewpoint 20)
  - Lancaster Quay near St Finbarr’s Bridge (Viewpoint 15)

The viewpoints assessed in Section 6 below are considered adequate for Cork City Council to form a thorough understanding of the proposed development’s potential effects on the protected views and prospects, and on the townscape character and visual amenity of the city as a whole.

## 3.2 National Planning Framework

Compact growth is one of the main principles and intended outcomes of the NPF. This encourages higher density - and therefore taller - development in urban areas where supporting infrastructure and services, particularly public transport, are available. In order to achieve compact growth the NPF sets the following objectives:

- *“Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including ‘infill’, ‘brownfield’ and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport.”*

National Policy Objective 11 states: *“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.”*

## 3.3 Urban Development & Building Height Guidelines (2018, updated 2020)

The Guidelines state: *“Reflecting the National Planning Framework strategic outcomes in relation to compact urban growth, the Government considers that there is significant scope to accommodate anticipated population growth and development needs, whether for housing, employment or other purposes, by building up and consolidating the development of our existing urban areas...”*

*“A key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that greatly increased levels of residential development in our urban centres and significant increases in the building heights and overall density of development is not only facilitated but actively sought out and brought forward by our planning processes and particularly so at local authority and An Bord Pleanála levels.”*

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

### ***At the scale of district/neighbourhood/street:***

- *The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.*
- *The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.*

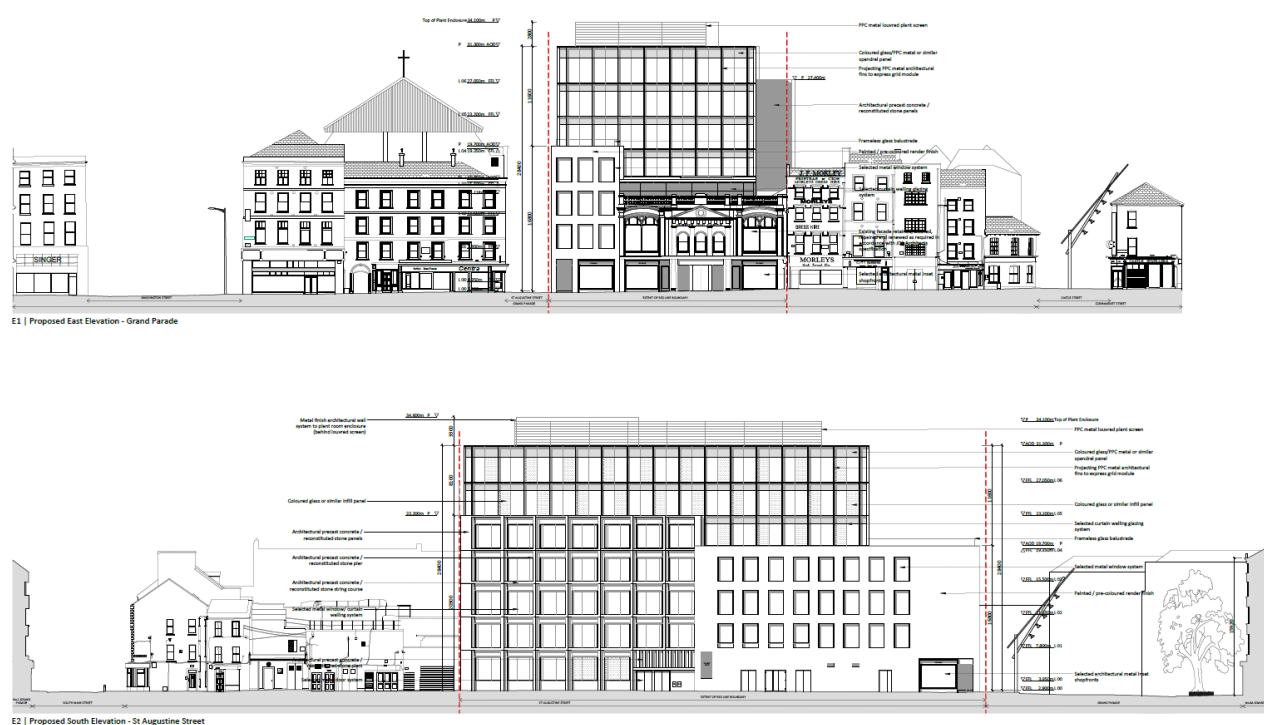
- *The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares... thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure...*
- *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of 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."*

## 4.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development, including the design considerations and key decisions made in the design process, are described in detail in the *Architectural & Urban Design Statement* by the architect O'Mahony Pike.

The proposed building has three main volumes. These are (1) the retained Queen's Old Castle building fronting Grand Parade/Daunt Square, (2) a four storey volume at the corner of Grand Parade and St Augustine Street, and (3) a seven storey volume at the centre of the city block and fronting St Augustine Street.

**Figure 6a & 6b: The east and south elevations of the proposed development**



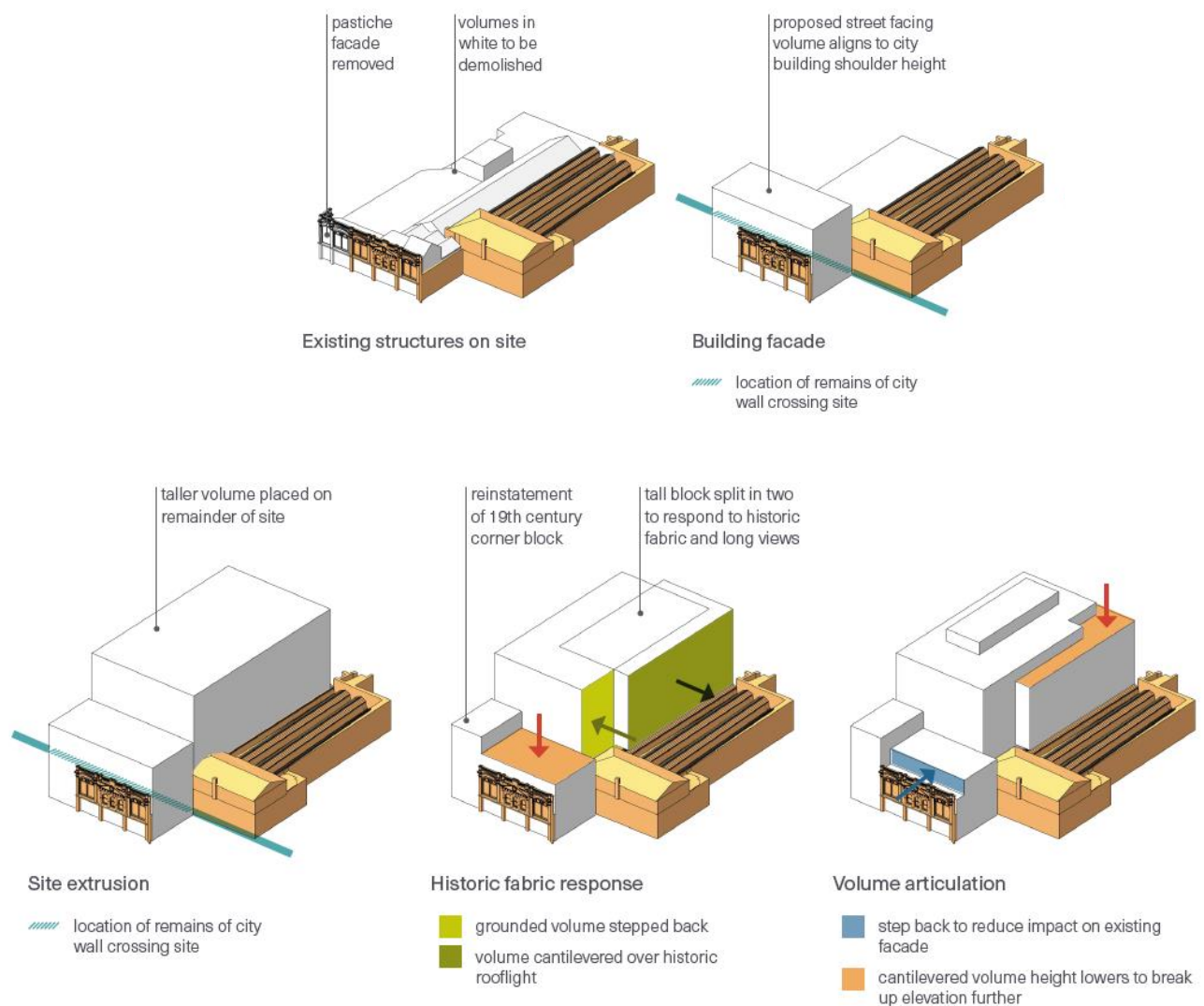
- (1) The frontage of the Queen's Old Castle building would be returned to a design and condition closer to its original form, with the removal of the late 20th century fourth bay. The retained frontage (and interior) would be refurbished for its proposed retail function at ground floor and office use in the first floor. A three storey volume is proposed set back from the retained frontage, protruding from the main central volume. The setback and height of the three storey volume are intended to allow the original Queen's Old Castle façade to read as the principal built frontage to the street.
- (2) In place of the fourth bay, a new four storey volume would be added to the site at the corner of Grand Parade and St Augustine Street. In its scale, form and proportions this volume references the building that historically stood at this corner, and complements the historic buildings on the other side of the Queen's Old Castle façade. The simplicity of the form, façade design and materials (dark coloured render) are



intended to contrast with - and thus emphasise - the decorative character of the refurbished Queen's Old Castle façade. The height of the corner volume is in keeping with the general height of buildings along Grand Parade.

- (3) A seven storey volume is proposed at the centre of the city block and fronting St Augustine Street. The key decisions taken in the design process were (a) the deep setback of this volume from the Grand Parade frontage – to the depth of the neighbouring commercial premises fronting Grand Parade/Daunt Square, and (b) the disaggregation of the main volume into two interlocking blocks, stepping down from seven to six storeys on its north and west sides, to articulate the form. Variations in the façade design and materials of the two interlocking blocks are intended to emphasise the articulation and reduce the perception of massing. One of the blocks (the lower, six storey block) is proposed to be clad in reconstituted stone. The taller block has a metal frame with inset glazed curtain walling.

**Figure 7: Diagram illustrating key decisions taken in the design process**



The photomontages overleaf show the proposed development from key vantage points in the surrounding public realm.

Figure 8: The proposed development seen from the western end of St Patrick's Street



Figure 9: The proposed development seen from Daunt Square

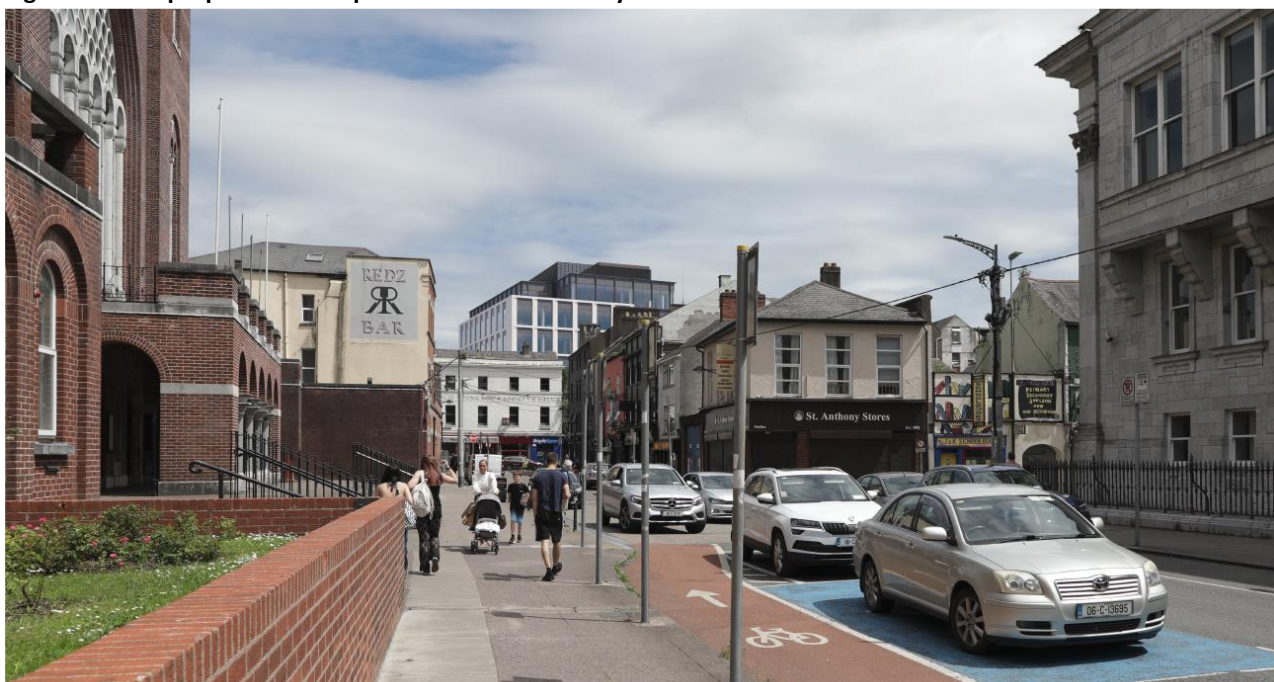




Figure 10: The proposed development seen from Cornmarket Street



Figure 11: The proposed development seen from Liberty Street



## 5.0 Assessment of Townscape Effects

### 5.1 Townscape Sensitivity

The townscape sensitivity of the receiving environment can be classified high (definition: “Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The landscape character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principle management objective for the area is the conservation of existing character – refer to Appendix 1).



The sensitivity classification takes account of the following factors:

- The Queen's Old Castle building is an historic building, some 180 years old. Although insensitively modified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it remains a distinctive, highly recognisable feature of the city centre townscape.
- The building is prominently located at the junction of two main streets in the city centre, Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street. There are other streets that are so aligned as to frame views towards the site, so that any development of substantial height will be visible along these streets (e.g. Cornmarket Street, Liberty Street, Washington Street). The site is thus an important part of the built environment and views in the city centre public realm.
- The site is included in the North Main Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The CDP's Statement of Character for the ACA describes the area as follows: *"In addition to its architectural significance, it is an area of the greatest historic and archaeological significance within the city's boundaries, and is therefore of civic importance for Cork..."*

The value and sensitivity of the site context are clear, and any lower than a high townscape sensitivity classification would be inappropriate.

However, there are also factors that indicate that there is *some* capacity for change (of high architectural and urban design quality) both on the site itself and in the local/city centre area. These include:

- The insensitive modifications to the Queen's Old Castle building (internal and external – particularly the addition of the fourth bay to the main façade), which reduced the integrity of the building as an historic architectural feature of the townscape. It would benefit from restoration of the façade to a design closer to the original form, i.e. the removal of the fourth bay.
- The overall condition of the building is poor.
- The character/condition of the building's south façade, fronting St Augustine Street, including the associated lack of passive surveillance, reduces the quality of the street as an element of the public realm and pedestrian circulation network. The redevelopment of the site could be transformative to St Augustine Street.
- There are several examples of successful modern development in the city centre, including buildings of contemporary urban scale and architectural character alongside, adjoining or incorporating retained historic buildings. This approach is effectively dictated by a combination of compact growth and conservation policy
- Cork City Council is supportive of appropriate change in the area:
  - The Cork City Centre Strategy identified that *"Grand Parade and the western end of St Patrick's Street have become blighted in part due to stalled projects"*. The Strategy stated *"There needs to be a focussed review on how these stalled projects, or indeed others, can help breathe fresh life into this very important part of the City Centre"*. The Strategy defined the 'core principle' for the city centre as *"more people working in, living in, shopping in, spending leisure time in, and visiting the city centre"*, and identified *"development of modern business workplaces"* as an objective.
- Cork City Council is supportive of appropriate change in the area:
  - The Cork City Centre Strategy identified that *"Grand Parade and the western end of St Patrick's Street have become blighted in part due to stalled projects"*. The Strategy stated *"There needs to be a focussed review on how these stalled projects, or indeed others, can help breathe fresh life into this very important part of the City Centre"*. The Strategy defined the 'core principle' for the city centre as *"more people working in, living in, shopping in, spending leisure time in, and visiting the city centre"*, and identified *"development of modern business workplaces"* as an objective.

- The Core Principles for the city centre stated in the CDP (Para 13.8) include the following: *“Maintaining and developing a City Centre of high quality... It is important to respect and enhance the city’s built and natural heritage and use its distinctive character to inform development schemes of high architectural and urban design quality which are locally distinctive and secure environmental improvements, across the City Centre”.*
- The site’s City Centre Retail Area zoning objective is *“To provide for the protection, upgrading and expansion of retailing, in particular higher order comparison retailing, as well as a range of other supporting uses in the City Centre retail area”.* The CDP further notes that *“other uses such as residential, hotel, office and cultural and leisure facilities etc which compliment the retail function of the CCRA and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted”.*
- The national policy of compact growth, expressed in the National Planning Framework, encourages the redevelopment of underutilised brownfield urban sites and the achievement of high density including through increased building height, even in architecturally sensitive areas:
  - In order to achieve compact growth the NPF sets the following objective: *“Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including ‘infill’, ‘brownfield’ and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport”.*
  - National Policy Objective 11 states *“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.”*
  - The Building Height Guidelines states: *“A key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that greatly increased levels of residential development in our urban centres and significant increases in the building heights and overall density of development is not only facilitated but actively sought out and brought forward by our planning processes and particularly so at local authority and An Bord Pleanála levels.”*
  - The Building Height Guidelines provides ‘development management criteria’ to guide the evaluation of development proposals for buildings taller than the prevailing heights in an area. The proposal is considered against these criteria in Table 1 below.

In summary, the townscape context of the site is highly valued and of high sensitivity to change. However, (a) the site and its immediate environs would benefit from change of high architectural and urban design quality, and (b) policy from national to city level encourages development of the nature proposed.

## 5.2 Magnitude of Townscape Change

Townscape character is the product of a number of elements/factors, including (a) topography, (b) urban grain (the pattern of streets and blocks) and movement patterns, (c) the land use mix, (d) plot and building typologies, their era, scale and architecture, (e) green infrastructure, and (f) perceptual factors, which may be influenced by an area’s condition, the level of street activity, etc. The higher the magnitude of change that a development would cause to one or more of these factors, the greater the significance of its townscape effects is likely to be.

- **Topography:** The proposed development would have no effect on the topography of the area.
- **Urban grain and movement patterns:** The development would have no effect on the urban grain; it involves the modification of an existing plot/building. It would (due to the active frontage and increase in passive surveillance) generate and encourage pedestrian movement along St Augustine Street. The development would thus have a positive effect on pedestrian movement patterns in the locality.

- **Land use mix:** The development would retain a retail land use element on the site, with two small units fronting Grand Parade (with one also turning the corner to front St Augustine Street). The retail use on the site would be reduced in scale, but it would deliver the ‘higher order comparison retailing’ sought by the City Centre Retail Area zoning objective. A large, new office use would be introduced to the site in addition to the upgrading (in quality terms) of the retail use. The office use is in keeping with (a) the Core Principle of the Cork City Centre Strategy and (b) the City Centre Retail Area zoning objective which encourages complementary uses to retail – including offices – to promote vibrancy in the city centre. The development would thus have a positive effect on the land use mix in the locality.
- **Plot and building typologies and architecture:** The proposed redevelopment would result in a plot/building comprised of three distinct parts (externally, i.e. affecting the townscape and views), (1) the Queen’s Old Castle building, (2) a new four storey building at the corner of Grand Parade and St Augustine Street, and (3) a new seven storey building rising at the centre of the block.
  - (1) The frontage of Queen’s Old Castle would be returned to a design and condition closer to its original form, with (a) the removal of the late 20th century fourth bay, and (b) sensitive refurbishment. The condition of an important historic building in the Grand Parade and St Patrick’s Street street elevations would be improved.
  - (2) In place of the fourth bay, a new four storey volume of distinct architectural character and materials would be introduced at the corner of Grand Parade and St Augustine Street. In its scale, form and proportions this volume references the building that historically stood at this corner and complements the historic buildings on the other flank of the Queen’s Old Castle façade. The simplicity of the form, façade design and materials would emphasise the decorative character of the Queen’s Old Castle façade.
  - (3) A large new building of contemporary urban scale and architectural character, and appreciable material quality, would be introduced to the site, rising at the centre of the block, above the lower buildings at the perimeter fronting Daunt Square/Grand Parade, Castle Street and South Main Street. The photomontages show that key design decisions ((a) the deep setback of this volume from the Grand Parade frontage, and (b) the disaggregation of the volume into two interlocking blocks of different materials) would succeed in avoiding the perception of dominance of the surrounding historic buildings – including the Queen’s Old Castle frontage which would remain the principal frontage of the site to Daunt Square and St Patrick’s Street.

There are several successful precedents for developments of similar approach, i.e. contemporary developments of scale alongside or incorporating retained historic buildings, in the city centre. The proposal can be considered an exemplar of this development typology and would have a positive effect on the townscape character.

- **Perceptual factors:** The condition of the existing building on the site is poor and this contributes to the perception of ‘blight’ around the junction of Grand Parade and St Patrick’s Street (as identified in the Cork City Centre Strategy). The nature of the existing retail occupant, and the vacancy of the other retail unit are additional contributing factors. The proposed development would improve the perception of the site and its immediate environs by (a) restoring and renewing the Queen’s Old Castle façade, (b) introducing new occupants to the two new, smaller retail units, (c) introducing new contemporary buildings/forms of design and material quality, and (d) generating street activity and improving passive surveillance of the public realm including St Augustine Street.

In summary, the magnitude of townscape change which would result from the proposed development is medium (definition: “Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the townscape”).



### 5.3 Significance of Townscape Effects

Measuring the magnitude of change against the sensitivity of the receiving environment, the significance of the townscape effects is predicted to be significant, and, informed by the analysis above, the effects are predicted to be positive.

Since the proposal includes a building taller than the prevailing height in the area, it is additionally assessed against the 'development management criteria' of the Building Height Guidelines in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Assessment of Compliance with Building Height Guidelines Criteria**

Building Height Guidelines Criteria	Assessment
<b>At the scale of the relevant city/ town:</b>	
<i>The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.</i>	The site is well served by a number of transportation hubs including Kent Rail and Parnell Place Bus stations to the East. The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) proposal to make St. Patrick's Street a key interchange for four bus routes, alongside the proposed LRT route passing the site, will further improve the site's connectivity.
<p><i>Development proposals incorporating increased building height, <u>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.</u></i></p> <p><i>Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.</i></p>	<p>It is significant that the Building Height Guidelines envisage/allow for taller developments taking place in 'architecturally sensitive areas' in certain circumstances. The receiving environment is such an area. However, its city centre location demands that the opportunity provided by the large brownfield site be optimally used for sustainable development.</p> <p>The proposed development would integrate into/ enhance the character of the public realm by (a) retaining and enhancing a landmark building/ facade in an important part of the public realm, and (b) introducing a new building of appreciable design and material quality that visibly responds to the sensitivity of the context.</p> <p>The positioning of the tall (6/7 storey) volume at the centre of the city block, well back from the existing/historic built frontage to Daunt Square/Grand Parade, South Main Street and Castle Street, would protect the views along these streets (and others, such as Cornmarket Street and Liberty Street) from excessive intrusion or any perception of dominance of the surrounding smaller historic buildings.</p> <p>The potential visual effects on a number of protected views and prospects have been assessed (see Section 3.1.3 above and Section 6 below) and in no case would the proposed development negatively affect any of these views.</p> <p>This Townscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken by an experienced landscape architect and member of the Irish Landscape Institute.</p>
<i>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.</i>	<p>The proposed combination of forms/volumes of various scale and proportions, façade design and materials – incorporating the refurbished Queen's Old Castle façade - would create an attractive and visually interesting architectural composition (see Figures 8 and 9 above).</p> <p>The development would have a positive 'place-making' effect on a key part of the city centre public realm.</p> <p>It would also contribute to an improvement in the pedestrian movement pattern by introducing active frontage and passive surveillance to St Augustine Street.</p>

<b>At the scale of district/neighbourhood/street:</b>	
<p><i>The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape...</i></p> <p><i>The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered...</i></p>	<p>The proposed development responds appreciably to the existing built form on the site and the immediate environs (see Figure 7 above).</p> <p>The photomontages (see Figures 8-11 above and the full set of 26 no. views in Appendix 2 under separate cover) show that the building would make a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.</p> <p>The articulation of the building's form – to avoid a monolithic appearance or the perception of dominance - is a key aspect of the proposed design. The variations in façade design and materials between the component volumes have the dual effect of (a) reinforcing the articulation of the building, and (b) contributing to the visual interest of the building itself and the street elevations.</p>
<p><i>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...</i></p> <p><i>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...</i></p> <p><i>The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood."</i></p>	<p>The site is located at the junction of Grand Parade – the widest street in the city – and St Patrick's Street – also a wide street and the principal retail street of the city centre. The junction of the two key thoroughfares warrants – and (due to their width) can comfortably accommodate a taller building on the site.</p> <p>The setback of the proposed seven storey volume from the street-front contributes to the ease with which the development could be accommodated.</p> <p>One of the Strategic Goals of the CDP is to 'provide opportunities for new development' in the city centre, and the CDP recognises that there is 'significant potential' for the development of large floor plate office buildings in the city centre. It is considered (as stated in the CDP) that schemes of suitably high architectural and urban design quality can capitalise on the unique historic character, secure environmental improvements, complement the retail function and 'promote vibrancy' in the city centre. There are already several examples of the development typology that combines conservation of historic buildings/elements with buildings of contemporary urban scale and architecture. The proposed development would contribute further to the emergence of this successful building typology in the city.</p>

The assessment of the proposed development against the Building Height Guidelines criteria confirms that, while the development would result in significant townscape impacts, due to its responsiveness to the context and its design and material quality, its effects on townscape character would be positive.

## 6.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

26 no. viewpoints were selected for visual effects assessment informed by verified photomontages (the viewpoint locations are shown on Figures 12a and 12b below). The viewpoints were selected to represent the main elements/areas and groups of visual receptors in the receiving environment and the potentially affected protected views. The viewpoints are also intended to provide photomontages from all directions, a range of distances from the site, and a range of elevations.

The viewpoints are as follows:

- **Views from St Patrick's Street** to the east:
  - Viewpoint 1: West end of St Patrick's Street approaching the site
  - Viewpoint 1b: Daunt Square, junction of Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street

- Viewpoint 2: St Patrick's Street pedestrian crossing near St Peter and Paul Place
- Viewpoint 3: St Patrick's Street central section
- Viewpoint 4: St Patrick's Street eastern plaza
- **Views from Cornmarket Street to the north:**
  - Viewpoint 5: Cornmarket Street market place
  - Viewpoint 6: Southern end of Cornmarket Street approaching the site
- **Views from Grand Parade to the south:**
  - Viewpoint 7: Grand Parade opposite Washington Street junction
  - Viewpoint 8: Grand Parade pedestrian crossing near Oliver Plunkett Street
  - Viewpoint 9: Grand Parade beside River Lee (this view is taken from a position on the north quay and on the eastern side of Grand Parade to maximise the potential visibility of the proposed development, but it also represents the protected view SAT 7, the view from Sullivan's Quay towards Saint Anne's Church)
- **Views from Liberty Street and Sheares Street to the west:**
  - Viewpoint 10: Liberty Street at St Francis Church
  - Viewpoint 11: Sheares Street/N22 western approach to the city centre
- Viewpoint 12: **North Main Street**
- **Views from Washington Street to the west:**
  - Viewpoint 13: Junction of Washington Street and South Main Street
  - Viewpoint 14: Washington Street view of Cork Courthouse
  - Viewpoint 15: Lancaster Quay near St Finbarr's Bridge
- Viewpoint 16: Elizabeth Fort (this view represents protected view LT 20, the view from Elizabeth Fort towards Farranferris Ridge as shown on Map 14, Volume 2 of the CDP, and the Elizabeth Fort 'panoramic assessment point')
- Viewpoint 17: Friar Street (this view represents protected view OC 5, the view from Friar Road towards St Nicholas Church)
- Viewpoint 18: Douglas Road bridge over South Link Road (this view represents protected view GC 1, the view from the Douglas Road towards the Church of the Ascension, Gurranabraher)
- **Views from the north quays of the River Lee:**
  - Viewpoint 19: St Patrick's Quay near St Patrick's Bridge
  - Viewpoint 20: Pope's Quay
- Viewpoint 21: Widderling's Lane (this view represents protected view SFC 2, the view from Widderling's Lane towards St Finbarr's Cathedral)
- Views from elevated positions on northern ridges:
  - Viewpoint 22: St Anne's Church bell tower 'panoramic assessment point', Shandon
  - Viewpoint 23: Fair Street, Shandon
  - Viewpoint 24: Bell's Field 'panoramic assessment point'
  - Viewpoint 25: Sunday's Well Road

The visual effects on the viewpoints are individually assessed in Table 1 below. For the methodology, terms and criteria used in the assessment refer to Appendix 1.

**The assessments should be read in conjunction with the baseline photographs and verified photomontages provided in A3 format in Appendix 2 under separate cover.**



Figure 12a: Viewpoints for visual effects assessment – Local views

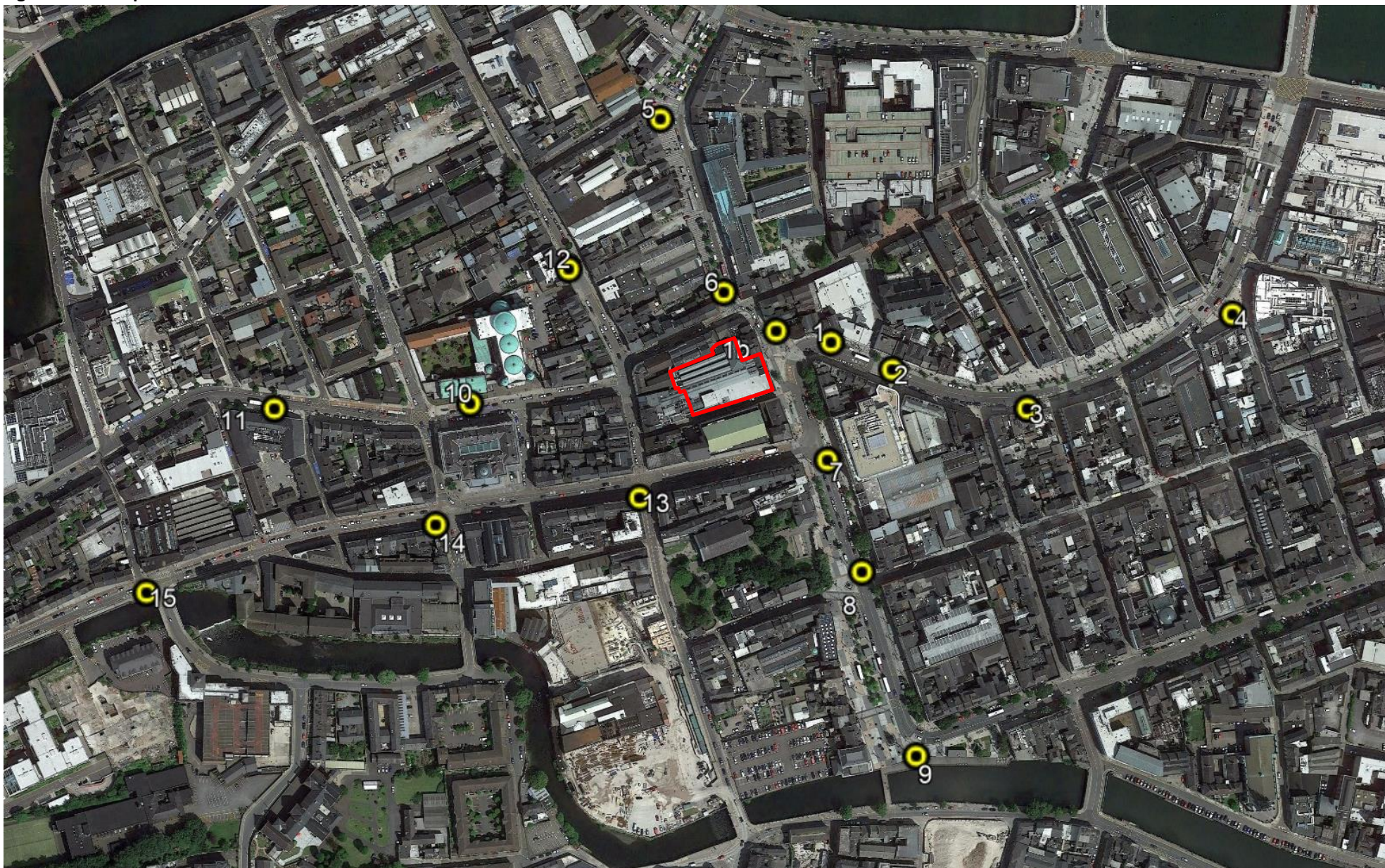
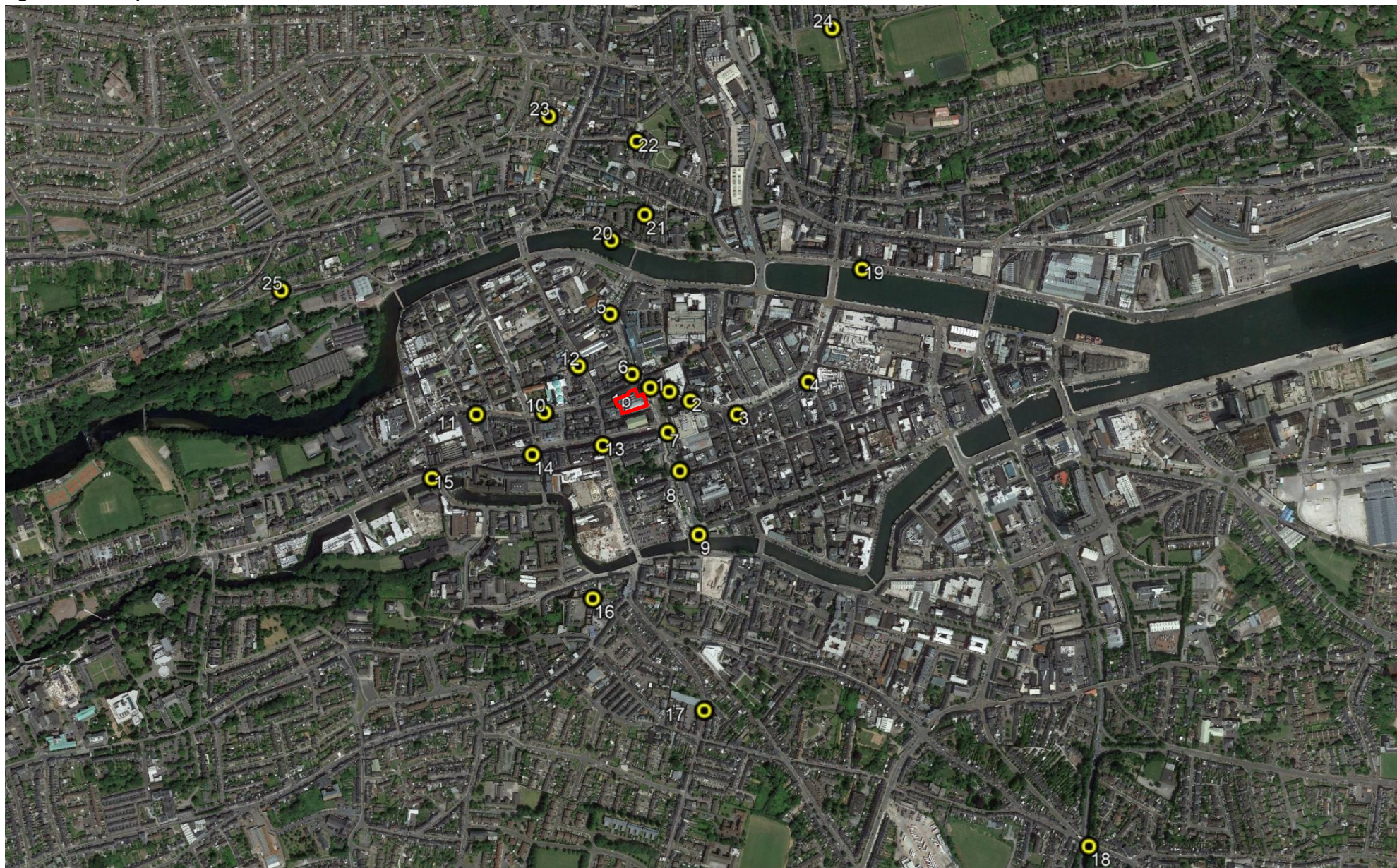




Figure 12b: Viewpoints for visual effects assessment – Distant views





**Table 2: Assessment of Visual Effects**

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
01	West end of St Patrick's Street approaching the site	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As St Patrick's Street approaches the junction with Grand Parade it is enclosed to the right by the elegant, bowed front of the Woodford Bourne &amp; Co. building (now occupied by McDonald's), and to the left by the angular, red brick form of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century St Patrick's Buildings. These 4 storey buildings frame the view of Queen's Old Castle beyond the junction, flanked by taller Victorian buildings to the right, and St Augustine's Church to the left.</li> <li>The Queen's Old Castle building is in sub optimal condition (appearing cluttered with signage on one side and vacant on the other). More importantly, the late 20<sup>th</sup> century lateral extension (the 4<sup>th</sup> bay, to the left) destroys the symmetry and proportions of the building.</li> <li>Overall the street elevation appears unbalanced. A notable characteristic of the view is the diversity of scale, proportions, architecture and materials in the building stock. Such diversity generates capacity to accommodate change.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The removal of the 4th bay will return the Queen's Old Castle façade to its original, visibly correct proportions and symmetry. The decluttering and refurbishment of the façade, and the occupancy of the ground floor units by retailers suited to the high status development will contribute to a perception of quality – on the site and affecting the environs.</li> <li>The 4 storey volume at the corner of St Augustine Street is appreciably complementary to the Morleys building on the other side of the Queen's Old Castle façade. This volume fits comfortably into the generally 4 storey street elevation. Its vertical, orthogonal form and dark colour emphasise the unique qualities of the Queen's Old Castle façade.</li> <li>The 7 storey volume is sufficiently set back from the street frontage, and sufficiently different in architecture and materials to read as a separate building to Queen's Old Castle. The setback from the street, and the step visible in the north façade are both successful in avoiding the appearance of the larger modern building engulfing the smaller historic building.</li> <li>The design achieves a well balanced and pleasing composition of forms and materials, retaining the primacy of the Queen's Old Castle building on the site while also introducing a contemporary building of scale and appreciable quality on the site – achieving compact growth and urban rejuvenation. The composition, character and quality of the view would be improved.</li> </ul>	High	Very Significant positive



No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
01b	Daunt Square, junction of Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view from Daunt Square shows the site's position at the top of Grand Parade, facing St Patrick Street across the junction. Currently the Queen's Old Castle building is cluttered by signage and insensitive light fixtures, and one of the two retail units vacant. The 4<sup>th</sup> bay destroys the symmetry and proportions of the building.</li> <li>As in View 01, a notable characteristic of the view along Grand Parade is the diversity of scale, proportions, architecture and materials in the buildings. For example, the refurbished and vertically extended Capitol building (the vertical extension a contemporary, glazed structure) is visible to the left of the street (out of the frame of view). This diversity generates capacity to accommodate change.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The removal of the 4th bay will return the Queen's Old Castle façade to its original, visibly correct proportions and symmetry. The decluttering and refurbishment of the façade, and the occupancy of the ground floor units by retailers suited to the high status development will contribute to a perception of quality – on the site and affecting the environs.</li> <li>The 4 storey volume at the corner of St Augustine Street is complementary to the Morleys building on the near side of the Queen's Old Castle façade. This volume fits comfortably into the generally 4 storey street elevation. Its vertical, orthogonal form and dark colour emphasise the unique qualities of the Queen's Old Castle façade.</li> <li>The view reveals the depth of the setback of the 7 storey volume, which reads as a separate building to Queen's Old Castle. There is no sense of the larger new building engulfing or dominating the historic building, nor any other building in the view.</li> <li>The design achieves a well balanced and pleasing composition of forms and materials, retaining the primacy of the Queen's Old Castle building on the site while also introducing a contemporary building of scale and appreciable quality on the site – achieving compact growth and urban rejuvenation. The composition, character and quality of the view would be improved.</li> </ul>	High	Very Significant positive
02	St Patrick's St crossing near St Peter and Paul Place	High	<p>Viewpoints 02, 03 and 04 were selected to examine whether the 7 storey height of the proposed development would cause the building to protrude above the roofline of the St Patrick's Street buildings.</p> <p>The views show that the arced alignment of St Patrick's Street and the visual enclosure generated by the street-front buildings would combine to hide the proposed development from view at all three viewpoints.</p>	None	No effect
03	St Patrick's Street central section	High	See commentary for Viewpoint 02 above.	None	No effect

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
04	St Patrick's Street eastern plaza	High	See commentary for Viewpoint 02 above.	None	No effect
05	Cornmarket Street market place	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cornmarket Street lies to the north of the site. It is one of the streets built over a channel of the River Lee, which provided access to the Watergate (adjacent to the site) and the original medieval port of Cork. The dogleg in the street's alignment and its widening towards the north both reflect the shape of the original river channel (see Figure 3).</li> <li>The street is so aligned that it directs views towards the site, framed by buildings of various scale and design, including terraces of small, narrow fronted Georgian buildings, the broad, low stone Corn Store and St Peter's buildings (in the middle distance to the right), and most prominent, the Cornmarket Centre (left). The Centre is an example of a modern development incorporating elements of an earlier building (Musgrave Buildings), the contrasting forms and materials creating a unique building which adds to the strong character and visual interest of the street.</li> <li>At the northern end of the street are the low buildings facing Cornmarket Street across Castle Street. The buildings beside the site, fronting Grand Parade, rise above the Castle Street roofline, and behind them is the green roof of St Augustine's Church, which lies beyond the site.</li> <li>The townscape in view is characterised by diversity in architecture and an attractive urban clutter.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building will be a prominent addition to the view, framed by the buildings of Cornmarket Street and rising above the low Castle Street roofline in the distance. The deep setback of the 7 storey volume from Grand Parade is evident in this view. It allows the integrity/legibility of the Grand Parade buildings to be retained (this would be more evident from closer-up). It also maintains a gap of sky space in the far street elevation, avoiding excessive enclosure and retaining the spatial connection between Cornmarket Street and Grand Parade.</li> <li>The 7 storey volume itself is divided into two slightly offset cubic forms, each of different material (one stone clad, one glazed), with a plant screen on the rooftop set back from the parapet. These adjustments in form and materials combined with the façade design articulate the facade and reduce the perception of massing.</li> <li>The building would be a significant presence in the townscape/views experienced along Cornmarket Street, but its considered form and high quality design and materials ensure that it would be a positive presence, not inappropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century city centre townscape. It would add to the attractive urban complexity of the area.</li> </ul>	Medium	Significant positive

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
06	Cornmarket St, southern end, approaching the site	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Towards the southern end of Cornmarket Street there is a complex view across the Castle Street junction, with Daunt Square to the left connecting to Grand Parade. The streetscape is attractively cluttered (with signage, street furniture and trees), and busy. The buildings are diverse in form, scale, architecture and materials (note the modern, glazed vertical extension to the Capitol along Grand Parade in the middle distance to the left). Also prominent is the gable wall and intricate roofline of the buildings facing Daunt Square/Grand Parade beside the site.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building will be a significant addition to the view, rising above the complex composition of historic built form around the perimeter of the city block, fronting Castle Street and Daunt Square.</li> <li>The deep setback of the 7 storey volume from the Daunt Square/ Grand Parade frontage is successful in retaining the integrity and legibility of the neighbouring buildings fronting Daunt Square; their roofline is intact.</li> <li>Although heavily filtered by the tree in the foreground, the steps and setbacks in the building's form, emphasised by variations in materials, are appreciable. They reduce the perception of massing and ensure that the building is attractive/visually interesting in its own right.</li> <li>The Capitol building creates favourable precedent for the proposed building, and this view shows that there would be 'dialogue' between the two high quality contemporary buildings - without compromising the historic buildings or the streetscape. The development would make a positive contribution to the composition, character and quality of the view.</li> </ul>	Medium	Significant positive
07	Grand Parade opposite Washington Street junction	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view is taken from Grand Parade in front of the redeveloped Capitol building. To the left is Washington Street with the broad, high stone flank of St Augustine's Church prominent beside the substantial, cubic form of the corner building.</li> <li>To the right along the wide (30m) Grand Parade the street elevation is complex and varied, with the Queen's Old Castle building given some prominence by its colour and the high level of decoration in the façade. It is notable that the modern light standards are scaled in response to the width and status of the street. Also of note in the views is the distant ridgeline to the north of the city island, visible through the gap at the end of the street.</li> <li>As in other views in this vicinity (e.g. Viewpoints 01, 01b, 05, 06, 13), there is variety in the scale, proportions, architecture and materials of the buildings, and this diversity generates capacity to accommodate change.</li> </ul>	High	Significant positive



No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The removal of the 4th bay will return the Queen's Old Castle façade to its original proportions and symmetry. Combined with the new 4 storey volume at the corner of St Augustine Street – similarly positioned and scaled to a building that was removed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when the site was converted into a shopping centre – this will reduce the prominence of the Queen's Old Castle façade in the street elevation.</li> <li>The 4 storey volume fits comfortably into the generally 4 storey street elevation along the frontage of the very wide street. Its simple form, modest scale and dark colour are intended to avoid the development competing with or undermining the historic buildings on the street.</li> <li>The setback of the 7 storey volume from the street-front, combined with the variation in façade design and materials from the 4 storey volume and the Queen's Old Castle building, allows it to read as a separate building at the centre of the city block. The buildings in the foreground to the left create favourable precedent for its scale and proportions.</li> <li>A new building of appreciable design and material quality would be introduced to the townscape, delivering compact growth and rejuvenation of the city centre (and visual interest) without compromising any valued feature or characteristic of the area. <u>This assessment takes account of the reduced prominence of the Queen's Old Castle frontage. Its existing presence in the view is generated largely by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century 4<sup>th</sup> bay at the near corner. This scenario does not reflect the original design and its retention should not be prioritised above sensitive, sustainable regeneration of the city centre.</u></li> </ul>		
08	Grand Parade pedestrian crossing near Oliver Plunkett Street	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view is taken from Grand Parade one block (c. 85m) to the south of Viewpoint 07, at a pedestrian crossing opposite Bishop Lucey Park. At greater distance and a more acute angle the Queen's Old Castle building is a minor presence in the complex view.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dark coloured 4 storey volume fits comfortably into the street elevation alongside the retained original Queen's Old Castle façade, which remains visible.</li> <li>The setback of the 7 storey volume from the street-front, combined with the variation in façade design and materials from the 4 storey volume, allows it to read as a separate building at the centre of the city block. Its protrusion above the already stepped roofline on the west side of the street is minor, and it would be a minor and benign addition to the complex city centre view.</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral
09	Grand Parade beside River Lee	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view is taken from the southern end of Grand Parade, at the junction with South Mall, near Nano Nagle Bridge. In the foreground to the left is the 1906 national monument to the rebellions. The very wide</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<p>street (c. 50m at the southern end) is enclosed by buildings of mostly 4-5 storeys, which frame the view north towards the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Queen's Old Castle building is hidden from view by the distant street trees and the light coloured 4 storey building at the corner of Washington Street (this building should not be confused with the Queen's Old Castle frontage, which can't be seen). Above the distant roofline and set back from the street-front, the light green roof of St Augustine's Church can be seen.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 7 storey volume (including a set-back plant screen on the roof) would be visible in the distance, protruding above the roofline on the west side of the street, set back from the street-front facades, behind the green roof of the church.</li> <li>In the complex view the change to the composition of the view would be minor and there would be no change to the character or quality of the view (i.e. no effect on visual amenity).</li> </ul>		
10	Liberty Street at St Francis Church	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view is taken from Liberty Street at the front of St Francis Church. The large, red brick form of the church is in the foreground to the left and to the right is the rear façade of Cork courthouse. These large buildings frame the view east towards the site. A building on South Main Street closes the vista in the distance and in the middle distance is a fine grained complex of buildings of 2-4 storeys. As in many of the city centre views there is diversity in the form, scale, architecture and materials of the buildings, which creates capacity to accommodate change.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 7 storey building would protrude above the complex roofline in the middle distance. The angle of view is favourable as it reveals the articulated form and variations in materials to good effect. From this angle the reconstituted stone clad volume is to the fore, and the taller metal and glass volume secondary.</li> <li>Therefore, although clearly of contemporary urban typology, scale and design, contrasting with the other buildings in view, the building is an attractive architectural feature in its own right. The development would add to the composition, character and quality of the view, causing no harm to any valued feature or characteristic of the townscape.</li> </ul>	Medium	Significant positive

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
11	Sheares Street/N22 western approach to the city centre	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The view is taken from Sheares Street (the N22 approach to the city centre) just east of where it curves and the alignment affords a view towards the site.</li> <li>The street is lined by buildings from various eras and of diverse scale, architecture and materials. Due to its height and distinctive roofline St Francis Church is prominent in the middle distance, with the courthouse across the road. The light green roof of St Augustine's Church can be seen in the distance above a complex townscape of smaller buildings.</li> <li>The character and quality of this view are not as strong as in the views closer to the city centre discussed above.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The building would protrude above the distant complex of smaller buildings, to the side of St Francis Church. It is given prominence by its position on the axis of the street and the framing of the street-front buildings, but the articulated form and variations in materials succeed in reducing the perception of scale, limiting its visual presence despite its relative height.</li> <li>Due to its clearly contemporary typology, scale and architecture the development would cause a slight shift in the character of the view, towards a more contemporary city centre condition. This is not inappropriate. It would also add visual interest, and seen in combination with the church and courthouse it would improve legibility by announcing the road's arrival in the city centre.</li> </ul>	Low-Medium	<b>Slight positive</b>
12	North Main Street	High	<p>This viewpoint was selected to examine whether the development would be visible from North Main Street (a street dating from the city's medieval structure, and the spine of an Architectural Conservation Area), since the alignment of the street suggested a view may be afforded.</p> <p>Due to the setback of the site from Main Street and the visual enclosure generated by the North Main Street buildings the proposed development would not be visible.</p>	None	<b>No effect</b>
13	Junction of Washington Street and South Main Street	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the left is the view north along South Main Street. The street elevation is a complex composition of mostly narrow fronted, 3-4 storey buildings of historic/architectural value.</li> <li>To the right (out of the frame of view) is the view along Washington Street, with the redeveloped Capitol buildings closing the vista on the far side of Grand Parade (one block away). The scale of the buildings along Washington Street is larger, up to 7 storeys, including St Augustine's church (just out of view to the right).</li> </ul>	Medium	<b>Significant positive</b>




No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across the junction a single storey building at the corner creates a gap in the street elevation, allowing a view over the complex, low roofscape into the centre of the city block where the site lies beyond St Augustine Street (the narrow lane between the church and the site).</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building will be a significant addition to the view, rising above the foreground roofline but, importantly, well removed from the street-front buildings on both South Main Street and Washington Street. The particular character of both streets would thus be maintained.</li> <li>The articulated form and stepped roofline of the building, emphasised by the variations in façade materials, succeeds in reducing the perception of massing so that the building would not dominate the surrounding buildings or streetscapes. A new building of appreciable design and material quality would be introduced to the townscape, delivering compact growth and rejuvenation of the city centre (and visual interest) without compromising any valued feature or characteristic of the area.</li> </ul>		
14	Washington Street view of Cork Courthouse	High	<p>This viewpoint was selected to investigate the effect of the proposed development on a key view of the Cork Courthouse, an important civic building in the city centre townscape. The view is taken from the junction of Washington Street and Courthouse Street/Hanover Place.</p> <p>A notable feature of the view is the contemporary glazed vertical extension of the Capitol building at the end of Washington Street beyond its junction with Grand Parade.</p> <p>The proposed development would not be visible.</p>	None	No effect
15	Lancaster Quay near St Finbarr's Bridge	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This view was tested to assess whether the longer perspective (compared to that of View 14) would expose the proposed development to view.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building protrudes marginally above roofline of the courthouse in the distance. Due to their contrasting forms and materials/colours the courthouse will remain legible, and in the complex, evolving townscape this would amount to a minor and not inappropriate change.</li> </ul>	Negligible	Not significant, neutral
16	Elizabeth Fort	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This viewpoint represents <u>protected view LT 20</u>, the view from Elizabeth Fort towards Farranferris Ridge and the <u>Elizabeth Fort 'panoramic assessment point'</u> (as shown on Map 14, Volume 2 of the CDP). In the panoramic view there is considerable capacity for change; hence the medium sensitivity classification.</li> <li>The north east point of the fort wall provides a panoramic view over the city island, with the ridgelines of Farranferris and Military Hill forming an undulating horizon on the far side of the city.</li> </ul>	Negligible-Low	Not significant, neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The townscape in view is vast and complex. Among the most prominent buildings are the many church spires and the tall Elysian building to the east and County Hall to the west. Several large, modern buildings (characterised by metal cladding and glazing at their upper levels) can be seen rising above the historic, fine grained townscape of the city island.</li> <li>Most prominent is the Counting House development currently under construction in the foreground. This is an example of an historic building (the Counting House) being incorporated into a larger (7 storey) contemporary development. Behind this, the roofline of the 8 storey Lee Point student accommodation development is visible. In front of the Counting House, beside the river, is the site of the future Cork Events Centre.</li> <li>In the middle distance, to the right side of the Counting House, the light green roof of St Augustine's church can be seen, which identifies the site location.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building protrudes above roofline of St Augustine's Church in the middle distance. It breaks the distant horizon line but is not the first building to do so, and in the panoramic, complex and evolving view this would amount to a negligible to low magnitude of change.</li> </ul>		
17	Friar Street	High	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This viewpoint represents protected view OC 5, the view from Friar Road towards St Nicholas Church. As Friar Road curves down the hill it briefly provides a view of St Nicholas church spire against a backdrop of the city centre, with the ridgeline of Farranferris in the distance.</li> <li>In the middle distance, beyond and to the right of St Nicholas Church, the light green roof of St Augustine's church can be seen, which identifies the site location.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building protrudes marginally above roofline of St Augustine's Church, to the side of the spire of St Nicholas Church. Seen against the backdrop of the distant built-up hillside, this would amount to a negligible magnitude of change.</li> </ul>	Negligible	<b>Not significant, neutral</b>
18	Douglas Road bridge over South Link Road	High	<p>The protected view GC 1, from the Douglas Road towards the Church of the Ascension, Gurrabraher, was identified by Cork City Council as a view of interest during pre-planning consultation.</p> <p>Both the Douglas Road and Gurrabraher are elevated, while the site is in the valley of the River Lee, which means it is below the line of sight towards the church. The proposed development would not be visible.</p>	None	<b>No effect</b>
19	St Patrick's Quay near St	High	<p>This viewpoint was selected (a) in recognition of the value and sensitivity of the views along the River Lee corridor, and (b) to investigate whether a taller building (than the norm) on the City Island would protrude above the roofline of the island when seen from across the river.</p>	None	<b>No effect</b>

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
	Patrick's Bridge		The proposed development would not be visible.		
20	Pope's Quay	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For a short stretch of Pope's Quay a view towards the site is afforded by the alignment of Cornmarket Street on the far side of the river.</li> <li>The riverside location affords a panoramic view of the city island across the river, including historic and modern buildings of various scale and form. Most prominent (just out of view to the right of the photograph) is the unsightly North Main Street shopping centre and car park, a likely future development site of large scale. Also prominent to the left of the view is Lavitts Quay, a modern development which rises to 7 storeys. Directly across the river (in the line of sight towards the site) is the Kirl's Quay Test Site, a new outdoor community space. (It can be assumed that this will remain as 'space', as opposed to being developed and blocking the view towards the site, for the foreseeable future.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would be glimpsed between the riverside trees, in the distance, rising above the roofscape of Cornmarket Street. In the panoramic view of the complex city island townscape the building would take its place comfortably and would have limited effect on the composition, character or quality of the view.</li> </ul>	Low	Not significant, neutral
21	Widderling's Lane	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The viewpoint represents protected view SFC 2, the view from Widderling's Lane towards St Finbarr's Cathedral. It should be noted that the site is not in the line of sight from Widderling's Lane to St Finbarr's Cathedral. The cathedral lies to the south west and the site is more directly south (see map below). In the very narrow, restricted views afforded by Widderling's Lane, development on the site could not affect the visibility of the cathedral. Given that the protected feature of the view from widderling's Lane (the cathedral) does not appear in this view, the sensitivity is classified medium.</li> <li>The view is taken from the top of the lane – to maximise visibility of the site. From further down the lane the site is not visible.</li> <li>The narrow, steeply sloping lane provides a narrow view across the city island, in which a diverse mix of buildings is visible. Among the most prominent are the light rendered and copper-roofed Cornmarket Centre, and in the distance the Lee Point student accommodation blocks. The light green roof of St Augustine's church identifies the site location in the view.</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral



No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			 <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would protrude above the roofscape of the city island, behind the Cornmarket Centre. It would screen the roof of St Augustine's Church and some of the distant landscape from view, breaking the skyline. It would add to the complex and evolving townscape in view, changing the composition and character (not inappropriately, towards a more urban/city centre condition) and causing no reduction in visual amenity.</li> <li>It should be noted that the viewpoint location at the top of the lane was selected to maximise visibility of the site, i.e. to show the 'worst case scenario'. This view would be glimpsed only very briefly on passing by or entering the top of Widderling's Lane. As the viewer descends the lane the magnitude of change would rapidly reduce, and at no point would the development affect the visibility of St Finbarr's Cathedral.</li> </ul>		

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
22	St Anne's Church bell tower, Shandon	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This viewpoint represents the <u>St Anne's Church bell tower 'panoramic assessment point', Shandon.</u></li> <li>A vast area of the city is visible from the very elevated vantage point, which reveals a variety of character areas evolving across the city. In the panoramic view there is considerable capacity for change (without causing significant character change or reduction in visual amenity); hence the medium sensitivity classification.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would be visible near the centre of the city island, in a wide cluster of diverse modern buildings including the Cornmarket Centre, the Capitol building and Lee Point. It would screen the roof of St Augustine's Church but this is not a significant loss. The building itself is an attractive composition of form and materials, with a strong individual character, and it would take its place comfortably in the evolving cityscape.</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral
23	Fair Street, Shandon	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewpoint 22 represents a 'panoramic assessment point' in Shandon, but the elevation of the bell tower provides an unusually wide panorama of the city. The view from Fair Street represents a more regularly experienced view by residents of the area.</li> <li>In the foreground the terraced houses of Fair Street enclose the street and frame the view south over the city. In the middle distance is the townscape of Shandon above the River Lee, and beyond that is the complex roofscape of the low-lying city island. The distant green hillside above Grange forms the horizon. The view composition and character are diverse.</li> <li>Among the identifiable buildings in the city centre area are St Francis Church, the Lee Point development, the light green roof of St Augustine's Church (indicating the site location), and the spires of several other churches – including the spire of St Nicholas directly behind the site. In the complex composition there is capacity for change.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would protrude above the middle distant roofline and add to the complex townscape of the city centre. It would screen the roof of St Augustine's Church (this is not a significant loss) and partly screen St Nicholas church (although the distant spire would remain clearly visible above the building).</li> <li>Due to the building's typology and scale there would be a slight shift in character in the distant townscape (towards a more contemporary urban, city-centre condition). This change is not inappropriate, and there would be no reduction in visual amenity.</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
24	Bell's Field	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not unlike the view from St Anne's bell tower (which is prominent to the right of the view), Bell's field (identified in the CDP as a 'panoramic assessment point') provides a panoramic view over a vast urban area. A wide variety of building types, scales, architecture and materials are discernible in the complex townscape.</li> <li>In such a view there is considerable capacity for change, as long as any new development does not screen or otherwise negatively affect a valued feature in the view.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would be visible but – due to the elevation of the viewpoint which counteracts the building's height - not prominent in the complex, highly textured townscape. There would be no significant change to the composition, character or quality of the view.</li> </ul>	Low	Slight, neutral
25	Sunday's Well Road	Medium	<p><u>Existing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunday's Well Road affords views over the western part of the city centre and along the River Lee corridor to the east. The built-up hillside of Shandon is visible to the left (including Bruce College on St Patrick's Hill) and to the right is the complex townscape of the city centre. Among the recognisable buildings are St Finbarr's Cathedral, the spire of St Nicholas, St Francis Church and the Elysium tower in the distance. As in the other elevated views over the city centre the diversity of building types, scale, architecture and materials creates capacity to accommodate change.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed building would be barely discernible protruding above the roofline of St Francis Church and in front of the Elysium tower. There would be no significant change to the composition, character or quality of the view.</li> </ul>	Negligible	Not significant, neutral

## 7.0 Conclusions

The potential visual effects are summarised in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Summary of visual effects assessment**

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
01	West end of St Patrick's Street approaching the site	High	High	Very significant positive
01b	Daunt Square, junction of Grand Parade and St Patrick's Street	High	High	Very significant positive
02	St Patrick's St crossing near St Peter and Paul Place	High	None	No effect
03	St Patrick's Street central section	High	None	No effect
04	St Patrick's Street eastern plaza	High	None	No effect
05	Cornmarket Street market place	High	Medium	Significant, positive
06	Cornmarket St, southern end, approaching the site	High	Medium	Significant, positive
07	Grand Parade opposite Washington Street junction	High	High	Significant, positive
08	Grand Parade pedestrian crossing near Oliver Plunkett Street	High	Low	Slight, neutral
09	Grand Parade beside River Lee	High	Low	Slight, neutral
10	Liberty Street at St Francis Church	High	Medium	Significant, positive
11	Sheares Street/N22 western approach to the city centre	Medium	Low-Medium	Slight, positive
12	North Main Street	High	None	No effect
13	Junction of Washington Street and South Main Street	High	Medium	Significant, positive
14	Washington Street view of Cork Courthouse	High	None	No effect
15	Lancaster Quay near St Finbarr's Bridge	Medium	Negligible	Not significant, neutral
16	Elizabeth Fort	Medium	Negligible-Low	Not significant, neutral
17	Friar Street	High	Negligible	Not significant, neutral
18	Douglas Road bridge over South Link Road	High	None	No effect
19	St Patrick's Quay near St Patrick's Bridge	High	None	No effect
20	Pope's Quay	Medium	Low	Not significant, neutral
21	Widderling's Lane	Medium	Low	Slight, neutral
22	St Anne's Church bell tower, Shandon	Medium	Low	Slight, neutral
23	Fair Street, Shandon	Medium	Low	Slight, neutral
24	Bell's Field	Medium	Low	Slight, neutral
25	Sunday's Well Road	Medium	Negligible	Not significant, neutral

The key findings of the visual effects assessment are as follows:

- In close-up views from St Patrick's Street, Daunt Square and Grand Parade, the visual effects would be significant to very significant and positive. In these views the removal of the insensitive late 20<sup>th</sup> century fourth bay of the Queen's Old Castle frontage would return the façade to its original proportions and symmetry, and the retained façade would be enhanced by its refurbishment and the ground floor retail units' occupation by higher order comparison retailing. The new four storey volume at the corner of



Grand Parade and St Augustine Street would fit comfortably into the street elevation and its design would emphasise the unique qualities of the Queen's Old Castle façade. The depth of setback of the seven storey volume, and the gradation of height down to the street, would avoid any sense of dominance of the smaller, street-front buildings. In summary, the design achieves a well balanced and pleasing composition of massing, forms and materials, retaining the primacy of the Queen's Old Castle building on the site and in the street elevation, while also introducing a contemporary building of appreciable quality to the site – delivering compact growth and urban rejuvenation.

- In certain middle distant views, for example from Cornmarket Street, Liberty Street and the junction of Washington Street and South Main Street, the development would have significant positive visual effects. In these views the streetscapes/street elevations would not be altered, but a prominent new building would be introduced to the townscape. Again, the setback of the seven storey volume from the streets (Daunt Square/Grand Parade, Castle Street and South Main Street) is important, in that any impression of dominance of the historic street-front buildings would be avoided. The considered, modulated form and attractive façade design of the building would ensure that, while prominent, it would be a positive visual presence, adding visual interest and quality to the 21<sup>st</sup> century city centre townscape with no compromise of any valued features or characteristics.
- In distant views from elevated locations – including several protected views – the building would be visible and would contribute to an ongoing shift in character on the city island, towards a more contemporary urban condition. In no case would the building appear inappropriately located or over-scaled. There are already several examples of the development typology that combines conservation of historic buildings/elements with buildings of contemporary urban scale and architecture. The development would contribute to this positive trend in the city centre.

In conclusion, the appraisal has found that the proposed development would protect and capitalise on the unique character of the site and receiving environment while introducing a scheme of high architectural and urban design quality, delivering compact growth and environmental improvement. The townscape effects and the effects on certain views in the receiving environment would be significant, but these effects would be uniformly positive. There would be no significant effects on any protected views or prospects.

# APPENDIX 1 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The TVIA methodology is informed by the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition 2013 (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA) and the EPA draft *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2017.

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*”. This expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It recognises landscape as a resource in its own right, providing a complex range of cultural, environmental and economic benefits to individuals and society.

The word ‘townscape’ is used to describe the landscape in urban areas. The GLVIA defines townscape as “*the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationships between them, the different types of urban spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open space*”.

## 1.0 Key Principles of the GLVIA

### 1.1 Use of the Term ‘Effect’ vs ‘Impact’

The GLVIA requires that the terms ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ be clearly distinguished and consistently used. ‘Impact’ is defined as the action being taken, e.g. the introduction to the landscape of buildings, infrastructure or landscaping. ‘Effect’ is defined as the change resulting from those actions, e.g. change in landscape character or in the composition of views.

### 1.2 Assessment of Both ‘Landscape’ and ‘Visual’ Effects

The GLVIA prescribes that effects on views and visual amenity should be assessed separately from the effects on landscape/townscape, although the two topics are inherently linked.

‘Landscape/townscape’ results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations and spatial distribution of these elements create variations in landscape/townscape character. ‘Landscape/townscape character assessment’ is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape/townscape and by which to understand the effects of development on the landscape/townscape as a resource.

Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area’s visual amenity.

## 2.0 Townscape Effects Assessment

Assessment of potential landscape/townscape effects involves (a) classifying the sensitivity of the receiving environment, and (b) identifying and classifying the magnitude of landscape/townscape change which would result from the development. These factors are combined to arrive at a classification of significance of the landscape/townscape effects.

## 2.1 Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape/townscape is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and the distribution of visual receptors, and the value placed on the landscape/townscape. The nature and scale of the development in question is also taken into account, as are any trends of change, and relevant policy. Five categories are used to classify sensitivity (Table 1).

**Table 1 Categories of Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity**

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape exhibits very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The landscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change in the form of development is very low. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national or international value and the principle management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The landscape character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principle management objective for the area is the conservation of existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape 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 landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or could make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principle management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The landscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes include derelict industrial lands or extraction sites, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principle management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

## 2.2 Magnitude of Landscape/Townscape Change

Magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape/ townscape with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change (Table 2).

**Table 2 Categories of Landscape/Townscape Change**

<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<b>Description</b>
Very High	Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the landscape.
High	Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Medium	Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Low	Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.
Negligible	Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the landscape character.

### 2.3 Significance of Landscape/Townscape Effects

To classify the significance of effects the magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the landscape/townscape using Table 3 and Figure 1 as a guide. The significance classification matrix (Table 3) is derived from the EPA's Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2017 (specifically Figure 3.5 of the Guidelines – see Figure 1 below). In addition to this guidance the assessor uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable.

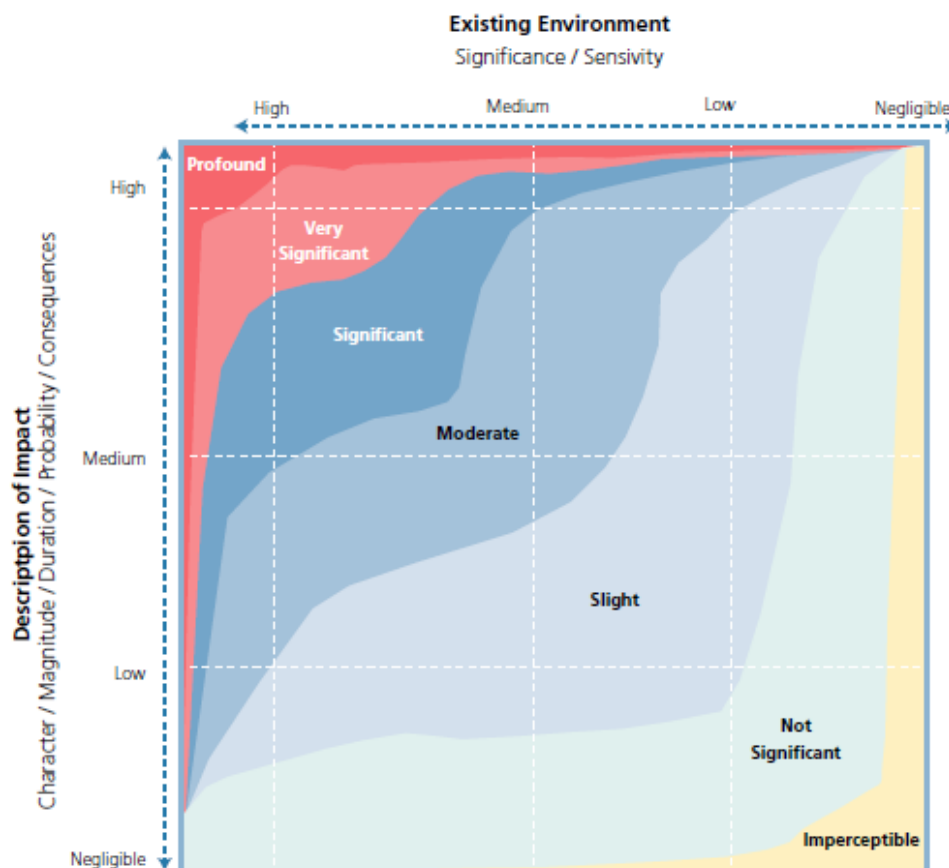
There are seven classifications of significance, namely: (1) imperceptible, (2) not significant, (3) slight, (4) moderate, (5) significant, (6) very significant, (7) profound.



**Table 3** Guide to Classification of Significance of Landscape/Townscape and Visual Effects

		<i>Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource/View</i>				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
<i>Magnitude of Change</i>	Very High	<i>Profound</i>	<i>Profound to Very Significant</i>	<i>Very Significant to Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>
	High	<i>Profound to Very Significant</i>	<i>Very Significant</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate to Slight</i>	<i>Slight to Not Significant</i>
	Medium	<i>Very Significant to Significant</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Not Significant</i>
	Low	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate to Slight</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>
	Negligible	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Slight to Not Significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>

**Figure 1:** ‘Chart showing typical classifications of the significance of impacts’ (Source: Figure 3.5 of the EPA’s Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2017)



The impact significance classifications are taken from the EPA Draft Guidelines, which define the classifications as follows (Table 4):

**Table 4 EPA definitions of environmental impact classifications**

Significance Classification	Description
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

### 3.0 Visual Effects Assessment

Assessment of visual effects involves identifying a number of key/representative viewpoints in the site's receiving environment, and for each of these: (a) classifying the viewpoint sensitivity, and (b) classifying the magnitude of change which would result in the view. These factors are combined to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects on each viewpoint.

#### 3.1 Sensitivity of the Viewpoint/Visual Receptor

Viewpoint sensitivity is a function of two main considerations:

- **Susceptibility of the visual receptor to change.** This depends on the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location. Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage or other attractions and places of community congregation where the setting contributes to the experience. Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation or sports where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping where the setting does not influence their experience.
- **Value attached to the view.** This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

Five categories are used to classify viewpoint sensitivity (Table 5).

**Table 5 Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity**

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Iconic viewpoints (views towards or from a landscape feature or area) that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of national value. The composition, character and quality of the view are such that its capacity for change in the form of development is very low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change.
High	Viewpoints that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of value, or viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features focused on the landscape). The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity for accommodating change in the form of development may or may not be low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	Views that may not have features or characteristics that are of particular value, but have no major detracting elements, and which thus provide some visual amenity. These views may have capacity for appropriate change and the principle management objective is to facilitate change to the composition that does not detract from visual amenity, or which enhances it.
Low	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, and where the composition and character are such that there is capacity for change. This category also includes views experienced by people involved in activities with no particular focus on the landscape. For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that does not detract from visual amenity, or enhances it.
Negligible	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, or in which the composition may be unsightly (e.g. in derelict landscapes). For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that repairs, restores or enhances visual amenity.

### 3.2 Magnitude of Change to the View

Classification of the magnitude of change takes into account the size or scale of the intrusion of development into the view (relative to the other elements and features in the composition, i.e. its relative visual dominance), the degree to which it contrasts or integrates with the other elements and the general character of the view, and the way in which the change will be experienced (e.g. in full view, partial or peripheral view, or in glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, as well as the duration and reversibility of the visual effects. Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change to a view (Table 6).

**Table 6 Categories of Visual Change**

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very High	Full or extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features or characteristics, or introduction of elements that are completely out of character in the context, to the extent that the development becomes dominant in the composition and defines the character of the view and the visual amenity.
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and/or the visual amenity.

Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

### 3.3 Significance of Visual Effects

To classify the significance of visual effects, the magnitude of change to the view is measured against the sensitivity of the viewpoint, using the guidance in Table 3 and Figure 1 above.

## 4.0 Quality of Effects

In addition to predicting the significance of the effects on the landscape and views, EIA methodology requires that the quality of the effects be classified as positive/beneficial, neutral, or negative/adverse.

For landscape effects to a degree, but particularly for visual effects, this is an inherently subjective exercise since landscape and views are perceived and therefore subject to variations in the attitude and values of the receptor. One person's attitude to a development may differ from another person's, and thus their response to the effects of a development on a landscape or view may vary. Additionally, there might be policy encouraging a particular development in an area, in which case the policy is effectively prescribing landscape change. If a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be considered positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed. The classification of quality of landscape and visual effects should seek to take these variables into account and provide a reasonable and robust assessment.



