

Buidling Heights Report

on behalf of Bellmount Developments Ltd

Victoria Cross Road

August 2022



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Document Control Sheet

Client	Bellmount Developments						
Project Title	Student Accommodation at Victoria Cross						
Document Title	Buidling Heights Report						
Document Comprises	<table><tr><td>Volumes</td><td>One</td></tr><tr><td>Pages</td><td>54</td></tr><tr><td>Appendicies</td><td>N/A</td></tr></table>	Volumes	One	Pages	54	Appendicies	N/A
Volumes	One						
Pages	54						
Appendicies	N/A						
Prepared by	Gemma Glenn						
Checked by	Cora Savage						
Document Information	<table><tr><td>Revision</td><td>A</td></tr><tr><td>Status</td><td>Final</td></tr><tr><td>Issue Date</td><td>02 08 2022</td></tr></table>	Revision	A	Status	Final	Issue Date	02 08 2022
Revision	A						
Status	Final						
Issue Date	02 08 2022						

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Introduction

1 Introduction

This Building Height Report has been produced by McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants in conjunction with Butler Cammoranesi Architects, JODA, Malone O'Regan Environmental, MHL, Passive Dynamics, and B-Fluid on behalf of Bellmount Development Ltd. to accompany the planning application for the construction of the construction of 78 no. student apartments consisting of 206 no. bed spaces (ranging in size from single bed studios to 8 bed apartments), with common facilities, a reception area, management offices, storage, and all associated ancillary development works including plant and equipment, bin storage, landscaping, pedestrian access, and bicycle parking. The proposed development will consist of one block, six storeys tall.

The purpose of this report is to put the proposed scheme into context regarding both its physical surroundings and all associated planning policy. The proposed massing was based on detailed analysis and has evolved with detailed consideration of the wider urban setting and specific site conditions. Implications an impact have been tested and evaluated with various assessments also included in this report.



Image 1: Artists Impression - View inc. as-permitted developemnts at Victoria Cross, Source; Planning and Design Statement

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Planning Policy



2 Planning Policy

2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF)

The first of the National Strategic Outcomes in the NPF is Compact growth, which highlights its significance given by the government for multiple reasons. The sprawling growth of recent decades and the resulting disjuncture of jobs, services and homes led to a car dependency. The NPF highlights the rethinking of development strategies and sets compact and sustainable towns and cities. This is communicated in page 2 of the NPF stating that:

“Reflecting the National Planning Framework strategic outcomes in relation to compact 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. For example, if much of the future development in and around existing urban areas, where two-storey development is currently the norm, was four-storey form as the default objective, it would be possible to provide substantially more population within existing built-up areas where there is more infrastructure already in place, rather than in greenfield locations which would need services.”

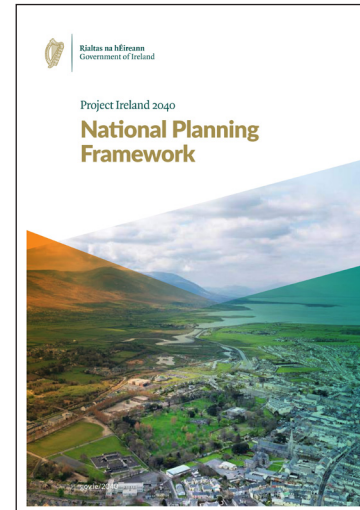


Image 2: National Planning Framework, 2018

(Urban Development and Building Heights, page 2)

The NPF also states:

“Historically, low-density housing development has been a feature of Ireland’s housing landscape in cities, towns, and villages, and the countryside. To avoid urban sprawl and the pressure that it puts on both the environment and infrastructure demands, increased residential densities are required in our urban areas. Well designed

and located higher density housing will assist;

- *Fast growing urban areas to achieve much needed scale;*
- *Medium-sized urban areas to find a route to quality in a new competitive framework*
- *All urban areas to increase vibrancy and vitality;*
- *Increased efficiency and sustainability in the use of energy and public infrastructure. (NPF, page 93)*

Building objectives are further expanded upon in the NPF:

"The infill/brownfield targets set out in this Framework will necessitate a significant and sustained increased in urban housing output and apartment type development in particular, if we are to avoid a continuation of the outward expansion of cities and larger urban areas"

Policy Objective 35 notes the mix of housing densities and designs within the NPF:

"Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights."



Image 3: Artists Impression - View inc. as-permitted developemnts at Victoria Cross, Source; Planning and Design Statement

2 Planning Policy

2.2 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region

The RSES supports the National Policy Objectives that are applicable to sustainable high density development. The RSES states that:

“Sustainable residential densities: increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site based regeneration and increased building heights in appropriate location.”

The RSES also recognises the importance of providing adequate connectivity to future growth through sustainable means of transportation such as public transportation. This is communicated in the report:

“Functional relationships between places and the movement of people between places a key to placemaking, emphasising sustainable transport, public realm and integration of multi-modal travel chains”

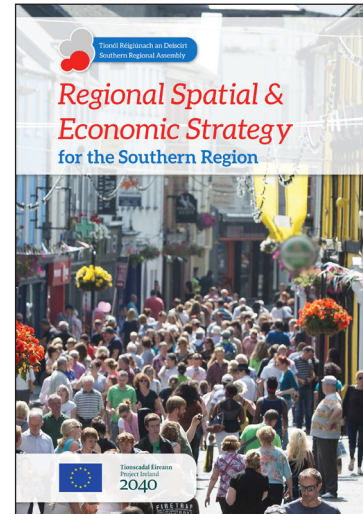


Image 4; Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, 2020

“The application of sustainable higher densities, taking account of the need variability and flexibility of local circumstances through an evidence-based approach.”

A significant Principle of the RSES for the proposed development is the principle of integrated transport and land use:

“Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects under the development of CMATS including an enhanced public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure, light rail corridor, suburban rail corridor, and strategic bus network corridors, all interconnecting with the city centre and connecting with strategic employment locations in the metropolitan area.”

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2.3 Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (CMATS)

CMATS aims to deliver an accessible, integrated transport network that enables the sustainable growth of the Cork Metropolitan Area as a dynamic, connected, and internationally competitive European city region as envisaged by the National Planning Framework 2040:

“This Strategy is confronting a historical legacy which saw significant levels of growth and migration of land uses to suburban and peri-urban fringe locations, typically at lower densities and unconnected to existing and planned public transport services.

Guided by the principles of the NPF, the following strategy development priorities for the distribution of land-use have been identified for the CMA:

Ensure effective integration between transport and land- use through the delivery of Public Transport Orientated Development (PTOD). PTOD is consolidated development that provides higher density, a balanced



Image 5: Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040, 2020

mixed of land uses and compact settlements that reduce trip distances and are of a magnitude that supports the viability of high-capacity public transport;

The application of this principle in Cork will result in a high intensity, mix of uses being directed to locations at existing or planned stations along the suburban and light rail lines and along the high frequency bus corridors;

Higher densities contribute to a more compact urban footprint that brings more people closer to destination and public transport services with easy walking and cycling distance; Deliver consolidated development that can avail of existing transport infrastructure, nearby amenities and facilities in the short term to deliver a critical mass of growth

2 Planning Policy

in population and employment which can support the transition and sequencing of investment to higher capacity public transport infrastructure and services;”



Image 6: Cork Metropolitan Area- Transport Strategy 2040
Light Rail Route Aignment, page 71

As shown above, light rail development is prioritised in CMATS in order to enhance the public transport system beyond city boundaries. The strategy proposes considerations towards an east to west corridor in Cork, from Mahon to Cork City Centre, and then to Ballincollig.

CMATS further prioritises compact growth in the strategy, as the provision of an LRT system with further increase

population growth, employment, and education facilities as aimed by the NPF 2040. According to CMATS, the LRT aims to:

“Unlock strategic development areas in its catchment area;

- *Maximise the development potential of windfall sites;*
- *Provide greater certainty for future planning and development, to pursue higher densities required to meet NPF population and employment targets for Cork City;*
- *Underpin the planned expansion of UCC, CIT, and CUH.*
- *Enable car-free and minimal vehicular-oriented development within its catchment in line with recent changes to government policy outlined in the NPF and Sustainable Apartment guidelines; Reduce reliance on the N40 in particular, for short trips within the Metropolitan Area.”*

2 Planning Policy

2.4 Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

The Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021 is currently in effect until the Draft Development Plan 2022 – 2028 is officiated into planning policy. The Cork City Development Plan 2015 provides specific guidance on building heights and densities for future growth in the city boundary.

2.4.1 Development Management

Part B of Section 16 ‘Development Management’ of the CCDP 2015 sets comprehensive measures and condition for ‘Urban Design’ from which ‘Building Height’ is only one element, that needs to be considered and assessed in conjunction with numerous equally important ones.

“The achievement of good urban design is about how we plan for and create sustainable places that successfully embody the values of society and best practice in town planning, architecture, landscape architecture and engineering.

Factors such as density, height, traffic generation, parking

provision, accessibility, safety, design criteria, open space provision etc. are important in establishing whether or not a development proposal conforms to the proper planning and sustainable development of an area.” (Volume 1, page 235)

2.4.2 Design & Layout

The CCDP 2015 notes that the design and layout of a proposed scheme must take into account for building form and density. The Plan states that:

“Creating a distinctive sense of place taking into account site history and setting is important. The analysis of any proposal shall assess the visual characteristics of the building form(s) and related elements, such as: aspect and orientation; proportion; the balance of solid to void; the shapes and details of roofs, chimneys, windows and doors and the materials used. Details of walls, gates, street furniture, paving and planting will also be noted. Roof forms should harmonise with and not clash with the city’s traditional pitched roof forms. Layouts of buildings and spaces must be designed to ensure that areas are permeable, pleasant, legible and safe.” (Volume 1, page 235)

2 Planning Policy

A widely used density measure for residential developments is units/per hectare. As this measure does not include any information about the unit size itself, neither the building mass nor the number of people which can be accommodated within the development.

The CCDP therefore states, that for the assessment of higher density proposals the following safeguards will be relevant:

- *Presence or capacity of public transportation system (Chapter 5);*
- *Vision for urban form;*
 - *Appropriate response to context*
- *Acceptable building heights (Paras. 16.25 - 16.38)*
 - *Conservation (ACA/ RPS and setting) (Chapter 9)*
- *Amenity considerations;*
 - *Overlooking, overshadowing, daylight, sunlight, etc.*
 - *Provision of adequate external space (16.18 - 16.20 and 16.64 - 16.69)*
 - *Provision of adequate internal space (16.52 - 16.53)*
- *Parking (Part G);*
- *Provision of ancillary facilities;*
 - *Paragraph 16.40 - 16.42 for residential density.*

The CCDP sets for Suburban Key Development Areas (such as the respective site) a Plot Ratio of 1.0-1.75; but states also that plot ratio only provides a useful indicator when considering the capacity of a development site. The measure does not favour the density of infill developments that are serviced by existing streets already. It is therefore stated:

"Plot ratio is secondary to other built form and planning considerations and should not be used to justify a particular built form as qualitative standards (such as scale, building height, enclosure ratio, space provision and quality, street widths, etc.) will be overriding considerations. A key assessment of proposals is their context and fitting in with the existing pattern of development. In some cases, higher plot ratios may be permitted e.g.:

- *Adjoining major public transport terminals and nodes along rapid transit corridors where an appropriate mix of commercial and residential is proposed;*
- *To maintain townscape and building elevation profiles." (Volume 1, page 236)*

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2.4.3 Building Height

CCDP identifies the following building height categories:

- *Low-rise buildings (1-3 storeys in height);*
- *Medium-rise buildings (less than 32metres in height, 4-9 stories approximately). Buildings which are taller than the general building height in any area will be considered “taller” even where they are less than 10 storeys;*
- *Tall buildings (32metres or higher, the approximate equivalent of a 10-storey building with a commercial ground floor and residential in the remaining floors).*
- *Building height should be in proportion to the space between buildings and, where appropriate, be set back from the road edge or the existing building line to allow wider footpaths and space for landscaping, to reduce overlooking or overshadowing of adjoining buildings and to avoid creating a canyon effect between buildings.*

A widely used density measure for residential developments is units/per hectare. As this measure does not include any information about the unit size itself, neither the building mass nor the number of people

which can be accommodated within the development. Building Heights in Suburban Areas are generally described as low-rise buildings (i.e. 1-3 storeys).

“Buildings of between 3-5 storeys will be considered appropriate in principle in major development areas and larger development sites, subject to normal planning considerations. In exceptional circumstances local landmark buildings may be considered with a height of up to 20-23 metres (approximately 6-7 storey equivalent). Building heights greater than this will only be considered where specifically identified in a local area plan.”

2.4.4 Tall Buildings

The CCDP recognises that tall buildings can play a visual role as landmark buildings and can make a positive contribution to the skyline of the city. But the City Council has only identified the Docklands and South Mahon as areas with the potential to accommodate ‘high buildings’.

“Tall buildings will normally be appropriate where they are accessible to a high-quality public transport system which is in operation or proposed and programmed for implementation. Significant intensification will only be

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considered appropriate where public mass transit is either in operation or where its delivery is programmed.” (Volume 1, page 241)

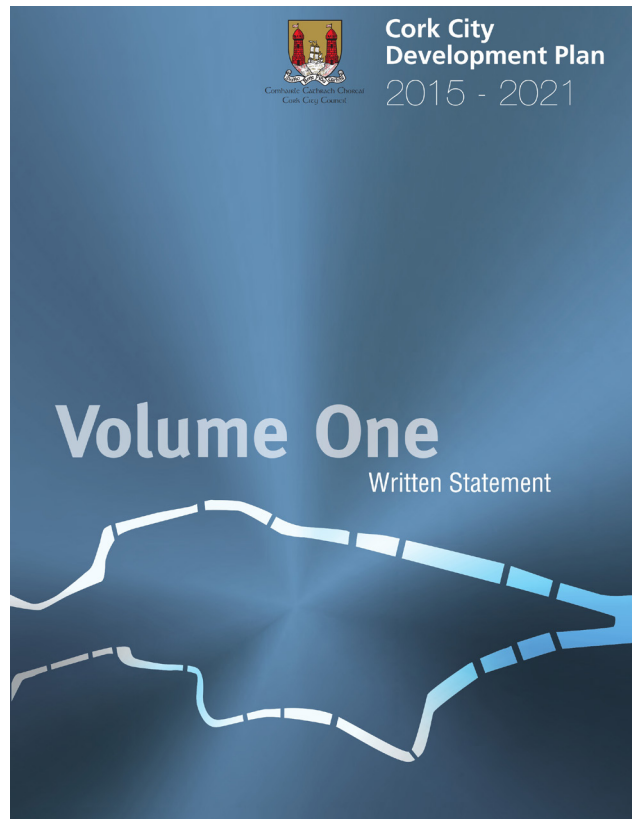


Image 7: Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021

2.5 Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028

2.5.1 Student Accommodation

The residential zoning and objectives within the Cork City Development Plan 2015 are consistent with all objectives pertaining to the subject site in the new Draft Development Plan. However, the Draft Plan sets out new requirements for student accommodation. Objective 2.22 identifies that student accommodation is favourable as mixed-use schemes and states:

“In planning for future population growth, Cork City Council will assess important factors such as changing average household size, tenure, type and mix (including student accommodation) and existing occupancy and vacancy rates within an area.”

Objective 3.8 states that:

“Cork City Council will seek to ensure that student housing demand is met by Purpose-Built Student Accommodation as far as possible, provided that:

a) Student accommodation is provided in locations accessible to higher-level education campuses by

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walking, cycling, or public transport, and ideally in the City Centre, City Docks, urban centres and mixed-use redevelopment schemes of brownfield sites;

b) At the neighbourhood level, the development contributes to a mixed and inclusive neighbourhood;

c) The scheme is of a high quality and meets the needs of students.”

The Development Plan also sets out indicative purpose-built student accommodation targets up until the year 2028. The

Provider	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
UCC	125	250	250	250	250	250	125	1500
MTU	115	230	230	230	230	230	115	1400
Private	50	100	100	100	100	100	50	600
Total	290	580	580	580	580	580	290	3500

Image 8; Table 3.5 in Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Plan provides a chart of these targets and their providers shown below:

These targets are known as the Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) supply that allows for more integrated and mixed-use student accommodation. Under the new PBSA

scheme, Part V requirements do not apply, however, the City Council notes that a specific scheme will be made for student housing developments in the future. The type of accommodation preferred is communicated under objective 3.38 stating that:

“The Housing Strategy/HNDA sets out that student accommodation is likely to provide accommodation for the majority of the 1-person household market forecasted for Cork City) forecast at 580 of the 711 units per annum). The design of student accommodation is very similar to “Co-Living” property products with small studios and shared and communal spaces.”

The 2022 Development Plan proposes changes to car parking ratios with a move towards a significant reduction in the maximum provision of car parking permissible.

Based on the National Strategy, the projected demand for PBSA in 2024 equates to 7,391 bed spaces. According to the Strategy, the projected supply by 2024 equates to 5,490. When accounting for student accommodation developments already approved, there would be an estimated shortfall of approximately 1,000 of purpose-built student bed spaces in 2024. Therefore, there is still an existing gap between the supply and demand of student beds in Cork City even if all extant permissions are constructed before 2024. It is

2 Planning Policy

important to note that prior to proceeding with the application, an updated review of planning register is required to achieve the exact projected number of beds needed to meet the bedspace targets.

2.5.2 Building Height

The Draft Development Plan introduces a new strategy to manage height and density within the city. The Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Strategy is used to further inform development height depending on the specific location of a subject site. The height standards for new development are best presented in the table (right). As outlined in Section 2.6, the Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study states that the Victoria Cross area is an exception to the height guidelines in the plan, as the area has experienced high density development that goes up to 10 storey developments.

The strategy identifies the subject site to be located within the 'Inner-Suburbs: Southwest Corridor' (no. 6) classification. It is important to note that this chart identifies the densities for residential dwelling units but the height standards for the no. 6 classification is applicable for all development types

in the area. When the requirements in the Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study are applied, the Victoria Cross Exception presents higher height densities that are in keeping with existing and newly permitted development heights of up to 10 storeys. See section 2.6 for more information on the Victoria Cross Exception.

Density and Building Heights Strategy	Density					Heights			
	FAR		Dwellings Per Hectare			No. of Storeys			
	Prevailing	Target	Prevailing	Target* Lower	Upper	Prevailing Lower	Upper	Target Lower	Upper
City	2.5 - 7	4+	10 - 25	100	N/A	2	5	4	8**
City Centre	2.5 - 7	4+	10 - 25	100	N/A	2	5	4	6
North Docks	0.5 - 1	3+	0 - 40	100	N/A	2	3	4	7
South Docks	0.5 - 1.5	4+	0 - 10	100	N/A	2	4	5	10**
Fringe / Corridor / Centre	1.0 - 3.5	2.5 - 4+	25 - 100+	50	150	2	6	4	7
City Fringe / Corridor	1.5 - 3.5	2.5 - 4.5	25 - 100	50	150	3	6	5	7
Mahon	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Blackpool	0.5 - 3.0	1 - 4	0 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Wilton	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 25	50	120	2	4	3	5
Inner Urban Suburbs	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	10 - 40	45	100	2	4	3	5
1. The Urban North	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	50	100	2	3	3	4
2. Tivoli	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 3.5	0 - 10	50	100	2	4	3	5
3. Ballintemple & Blackrock	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	40	80	2	4	3	5
4. Douglas	0.2 - 2.5	0.5 - 3.5	5 - 20	50	100	2	3	3	4
5. South Link Road Corridor	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	15 - 40	50	100	2	3	3	4
6. South West Corridor	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	20 - 40	50	100	2	3	3	4
7. North West	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	40	80	2	2.5	2	4
8. North Blackpool	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	40	100	2	4	3	5
9. Central Ballincollig	0.5 - 3.0	0.7 - 3.5	10 - 25	50	100	2	4	3	5
10. Blarney	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	25	50	1	2	2	3
11. Stoneview	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	40	80	1	2	2	3
Outer Suburbs	0 - 1.5	0.2 - 1.5	0 - 25	35	60	2	3	2	4

Image 9; Table 11.2 in Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028

2.5.3 Height Requirements for Purpose - Built Student Accommodation

The Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Strategy further identifies the height requirements for student accommodation. These requirements are shown in Policy Objective 11.6 that states:

a) the proposed use is consistent with the land use zoning objective

b) the proposed development provides adequate external communal spaces for the needs of the development, with a purpose-built student bed space being considered equivalent to a mainstream studio for the purposes of this calculation;

c) The quantum of bed spaces does not undermine the ability of Cork City to achieve its HNDA targets;



Image 10; Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 -2028

d) the quantum of purpose-built student accommodation development does not result in a neighbourhood with a disproportionate proportion of residents being students in order to ensure residential amenity and a balanced community.



Image 11; Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 -2028

2.6 Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study

The Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study presents the ideological approach to larger scale development that is supported by the height and design policies outlined in the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The study notes specific development height approaches for the Victoria Cross area, that is subsequently called 'The Victoria Cross Exception'. The study notes that:

"Whilst this part of Victoria Cross falls within this 'out suburbs' category in terms of the density and building height strategy, it has emerged as a focus for high density student accommodation given its proximity to the University College Cork Campus.

Therefore, given high density student accommodation in this location would support sustainable lifestyles and, most particularly, active travel, this northern part of Victoria Cross is considered a specific exception. High density student housing developments at densities appropriate in the highest two categories of this strategy would be considered appropriate here." - UDBHTS, pg. 139

As revealed in the UDBHTS, the proposed development presents the appropriate height that is in alignment with the Victoria Cross exception.

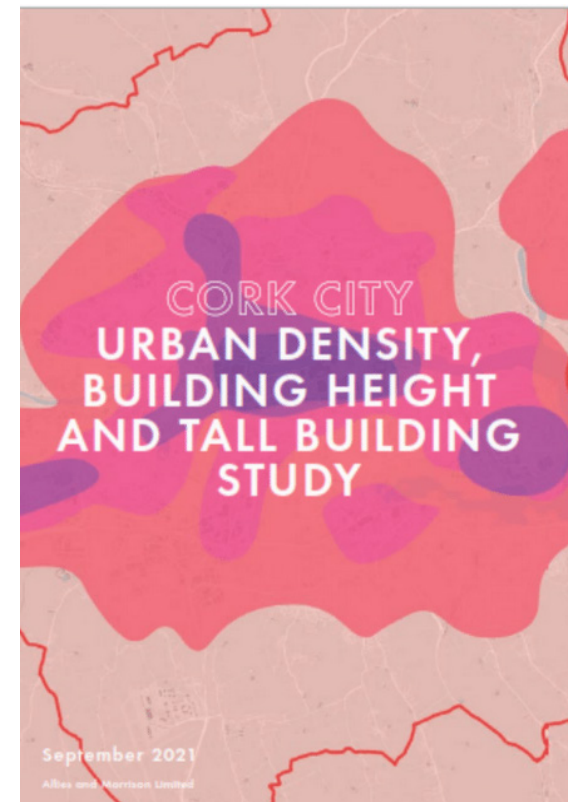


Image 12; Cork City Urban Density Building Height and Tall Building Study, 2020

2.7 Urban Development & Building Heights, Planning Guidelines, 2018

The Urban Development & Building Heights, Planning Guidelines 2018 align with existing planning guidelines and policies supporting sustainable and compact development. It is recognised that local authorities set generic maximum height limits across their functional areas. Such limits, if inflexibly or unreasonably applied, can undermine wider national policy objectives to provide more compact forms of urban development as outlined in the NPF:

“These guidelines therefore set out national planning policy that:

- *Expand on the requirements of the National Planning Framework; and*
- *Applies those requirements in setting out relevant planning criteria for considering increased building height in various locations but principally (a) urban and city-centre locations and (b) suburban and wider town locations.”*

The government has committed substantial investment in public transport as a key tenet of Project Ireland 2040.

“In order to optimise the effectiveness of this investment in terms of improved and more sustainable mobility choices and enhanced opportunities and choices in access to housing, jobs, community and social infrastructure, development plans must actively plan for and bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of our developing sustainable mobility corridors and networks.

Furthermore, while taller buildings will bring much needed additional housing and economic development to well-located urban areas, they can also assist in reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place within a city or town centre, such as indicating the main centres of activity, important street junctions, public spaces and transport interchanges.

Locations with the potential for comprehensive urban development or redevelopment (e.g. brownfield former industrial districts, etc) should be identified where, for example, a cluster of higher buildings can be accommodated as a new neighbourhood or urban district or precinct.”

Chapter 3.0 'Building Height and the Development Management processes highlights that there is a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/ city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility and sets out comprehensive criteria for development proposals which have been used as the general structure of this report. Therefore Chapter 4 'Proposal' of this report is structured accordingly to demonstrate that the proposal satisfies the criteria:

- a. at the scale of the relevant city/ town
- b. at the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street
- c. at the scale of the site/ building
- d. Specific Assessments

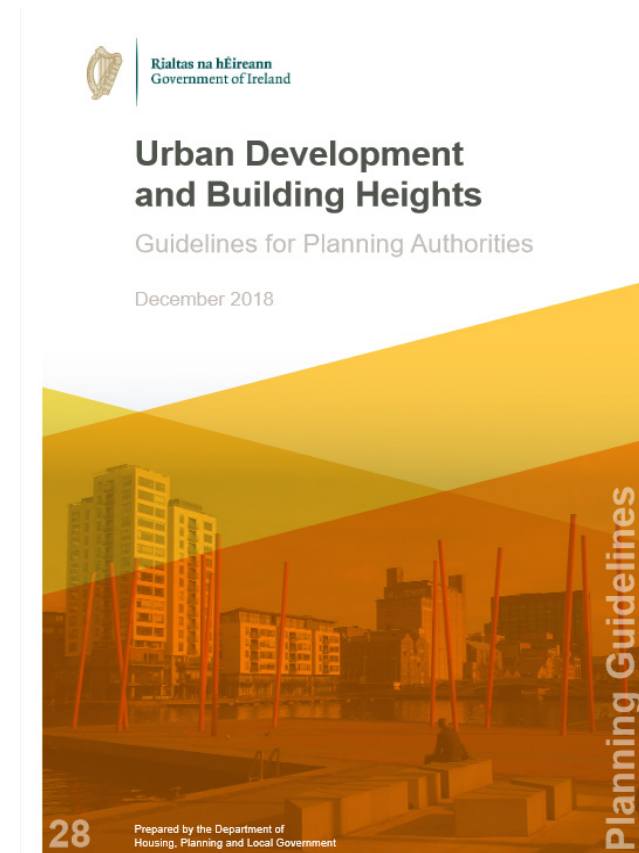


Image 13; Urban Development & Building Heights, Planning Guidelines, 2018

2.8 The National Student Accommodation Strategy 2017

The National Student Accommodation Strategy sets out objectives and growth targets on a national scale for all student accommodation in Ireland. The strategy identifies that there is currently an undersupply of PBSA and highlights the importance of meeting these targets. The strategy identifies that “the shortages of available accommodation are higher in Dublin, Cork, Galway, and Limerick”. In regards to student accommodation in Cork, the Strategy states that:

“Given the growth in recent years there is a demand for specific residential accommodation to cater for this need. The Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021 also details that all permissions for student housing shall have a condition attached requiring planning permission for change of use from student accommodation to other type of accommodation. Future applications for this type of change of use will be resisted except where it is demonstrated that over provision of student accommodation exists in the city.”

The Draft Cork Development Plan 2022 states that they aim to provide 580 new student accommodation bedspaces in the city for 2024. When compared to the National Strategy, a supply

of 5,490 (students) target for 2024. This reveals that there is space for more student accommodation developments in order to meet the targets displayed in the National Strategy.

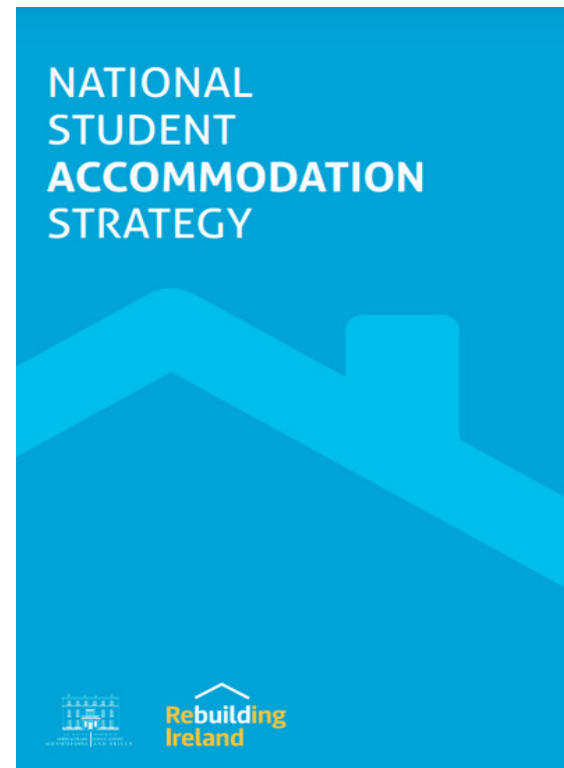


Image 14; National Student Accommodation Strategy, 2020

2.9 Summary

The Development Plan 2022 - 2028 presents future student accommodation development projections for the next 6 six years that accompany density and height objectives to accommodate high scale development in the city. Supported by the National Student Accommodation Strategy 2017 and accompanied by the Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study, the proposed development supports the need for future student accommodation and fits within the pattern of development in the Victoria Cross neighbourhood, as noted in 'The Victoria Cross Exception'.

The recent Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) is of particular significance for the proposed development

as it provides an insight into where higher densities (and therefore taller) development is likely to be prioritised in coming years, in line with public transport investment. CMATS does not provide details on the densities or units to be delivered on particular sites, but it does presume that areas supported by high quality public transport (and in particular the proposed light rail corridor) will be of higher density, in line with the National Planning Framework and national guidance on Urban Development and Building Height. Therefore, it can be argued that development in locations of high public transport accessibility should have a general increase in height beyond what has traditionally been delivered in Cork, particularly in suburban locations.



3

Height Analysis



3 Height Analysis

The Height Analysis reflects on the constraints and opportunities of the site surroundings in regards of building heights and density and provides background information for the wider context of Cork City. This report points out constraints and opportunities associated with building heights in the wider context of the city, on the physical conditions of the city, its history with tall buildings, recently permitted tall buildings and the strategy for Cork's future. It also refers to the specifics of the surroundings

of Victoria Cross and the development site itself and illustrates the design rationale behind the scheme.

3.1 Rationale of the Analysis

The Building Height analysis is informed by the existing topography of the subject site as well as Cork City as a whole as shown in the Cork City Landscape Study below:

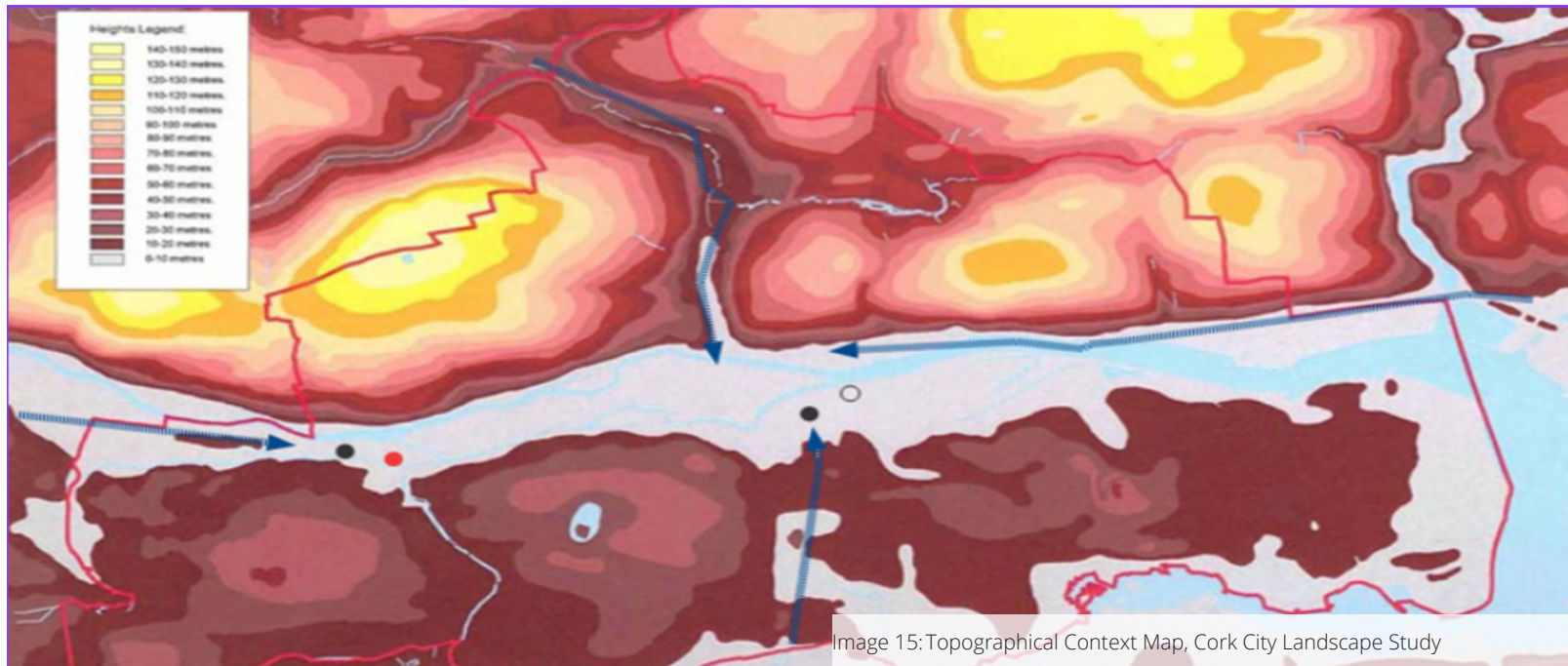


Image 15: Topographical Context Map, Cork City Landscape Study

3 Height Analysis

3.2 Building Heights in Cork City

3.2.1 Topographical Analysis

The Cork City Landscape study notes that:

“Cork City is unique in its geographical context on the southern seaboard. The extremetopography combined with the influence of the rivers, estuary and harbour in the landscape that make it so special. The estuary that begins at the eastern edge of the city forms an open setting when entering the city from east. The riverine character is dominated primarily by the River Lee which runs from west to east and enters the harbour north of Blackrock. The riverine character of the Lee defines the northern and southern edges of the city landscape. On the north-side, the highest point lies between the 140-150m OD contours; to the south, the highest points depicted on this map lie between the 70 - 80m OD.” (Cork City Landscape Study, 2008)



Image 16: Google Image, Cork City Eastern Approach Vantage Point

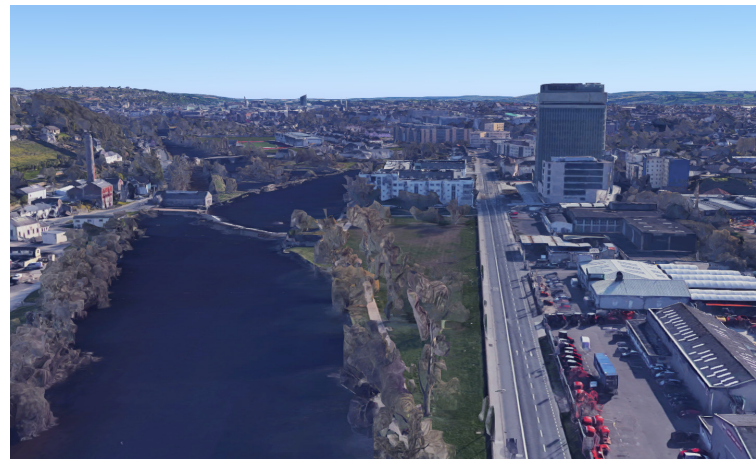


Image 17: Google Image, Cork City Western Approach Vantage Point

3 Height Analysis

3.2.2 Building Heights in context of the City

The built environment of Cork City is shaped by a widely homogenic domestic building mass that follows the topographical conditions. Elevated and taller elements were dominantly sacral buildings with church towers and spires pictured as landmarks.

The City Centre Island exhibits a strong 4 storey context height with buildings here generally in range of 3-5 storeys. In places along the North and South Channel in the city centre buildings

also raise to 5-6 storeys. The inner urban area steps down in places to 3 storeys and the wider suburbs are consistently 2 storeys in height. When contrasting these building heights on page 21, the City's density is higher within the city centre and also at Victoria Cross, suggesting that the pattern of development has adopted higher building heights in the area and at the subject site. Please refer to map on page 21 for more information. down in places to 3 storeys and the wider suburbs are consistently 2 storeys in height.



Image 18: photos.com, Cork skyline



3 Height Analysis

3.2.3 Building Heights of Existing Buildings

Historically, Cork's most significant access point was the approach on the waterway from the east. The inverted natural harbour provided access for ships to the City Centre Island. With the industrialisation the south docks prospered, and

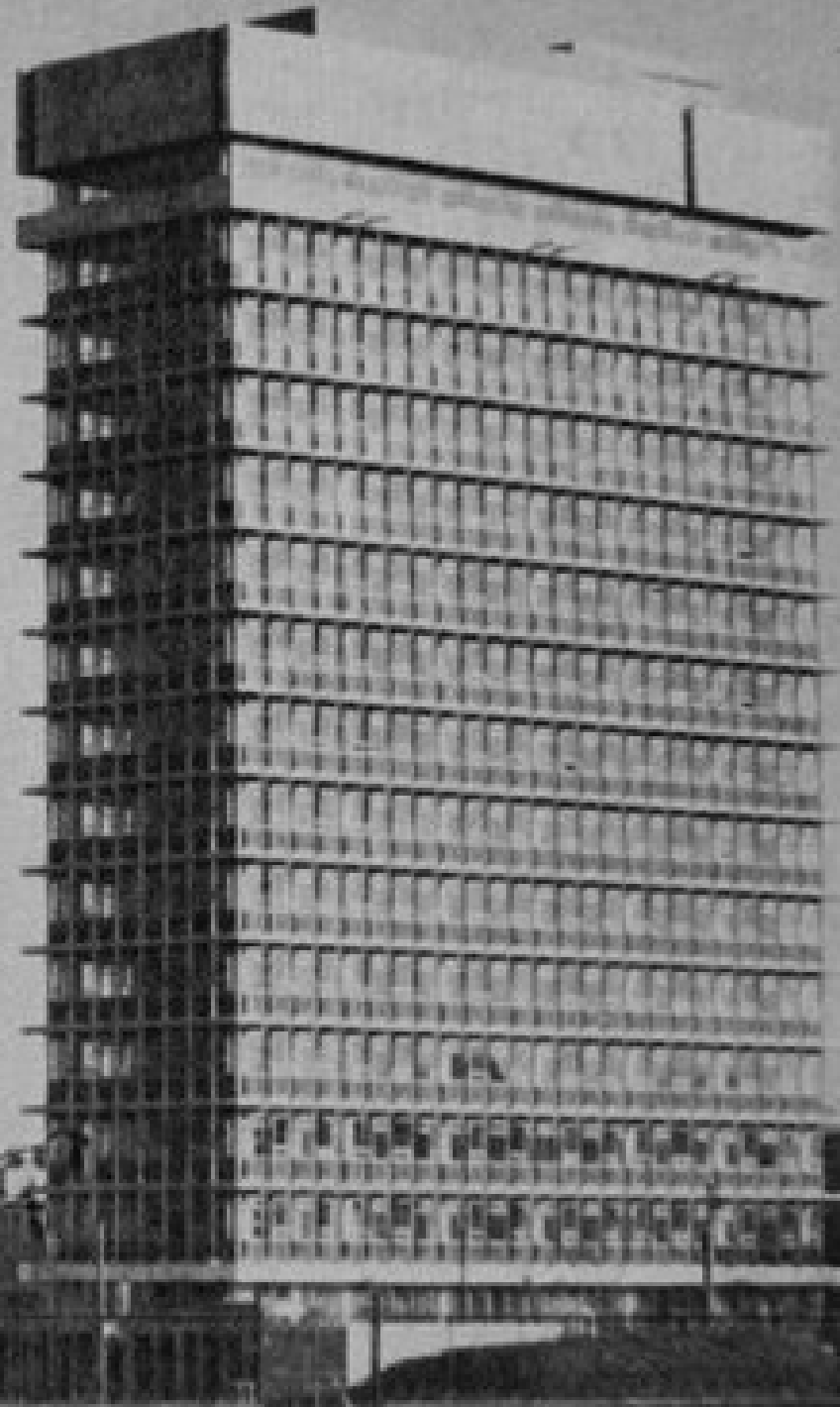
industrial buildings formed the eastern entrance into the city. R&H Hall is a remaining landmark building from the industrialisation of Cork Harbour which was built between 1940-1950 and dominated the surroundings for the second half of



Image 20: R&H Hall, geograph.ie

The construction of Cork County Hall introduced a new contemporary architectural approach to the city, as its construction in 1968 marked the beginning of high-rise development in Cork. Its clean shape in combination with the unusual 3km long straight stretch of Carrigrohane Road create a unique city entrance. The 17-storey building at a height of 67m was for five decades the tallest building in Ireland until it was superseded by the Elysian with 68m in 2008.

CORK COUNTY HALL





THE ELYSIAN

The Elysian Tower is part of a mixed-use development at Eglinton Street including 211 apartments. It marks the southern access to the city centre and is located to the junction of Eglinton Street, Old Station Road and the South Link Road. Its landmark status is highlighted by the alignment of the N27 which wraps around the development. It is currently landmarked as the tallest building in Ireland.

3 Height Analysis

3.2.4 Building Heights of Recently Permitted Developments

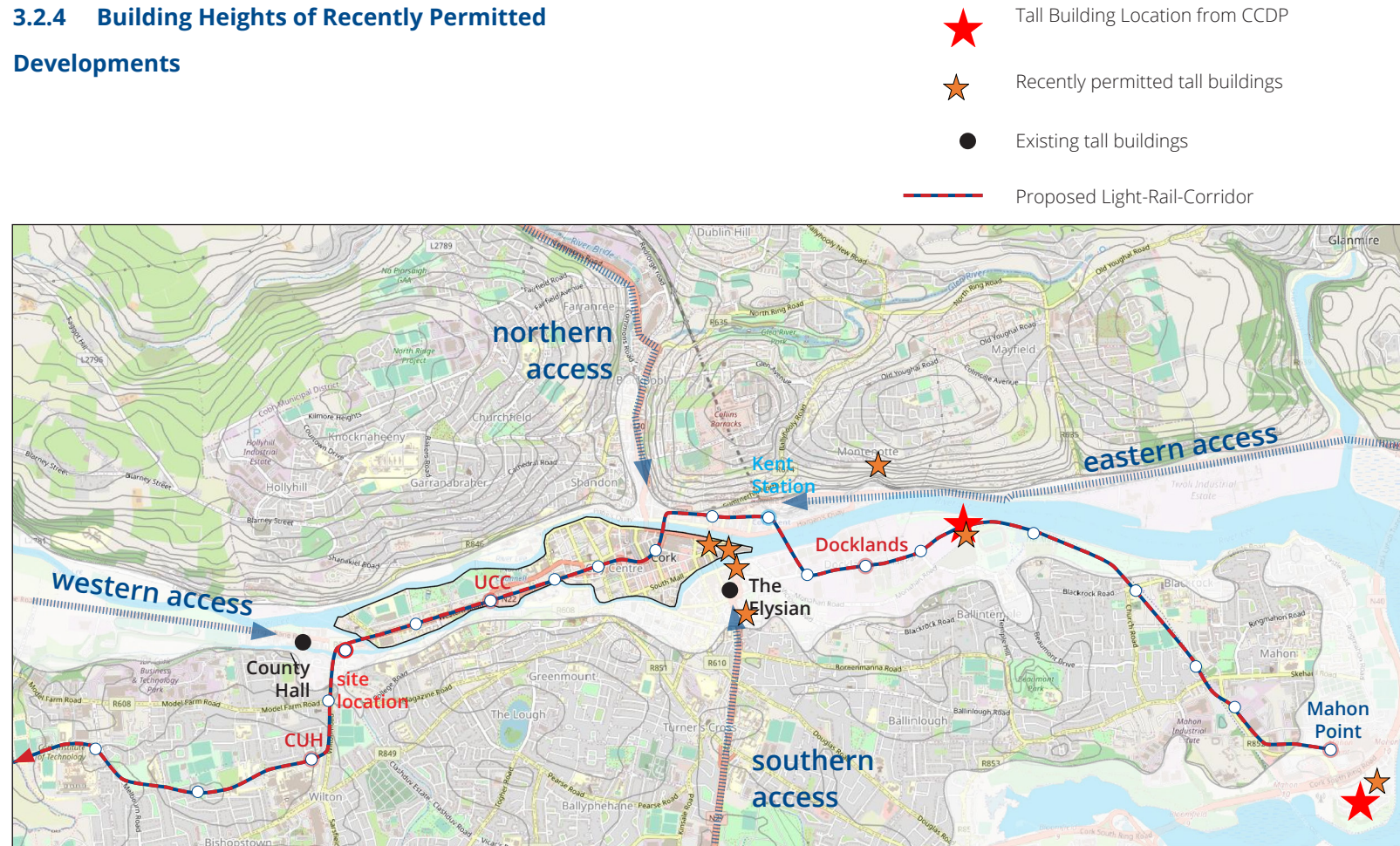
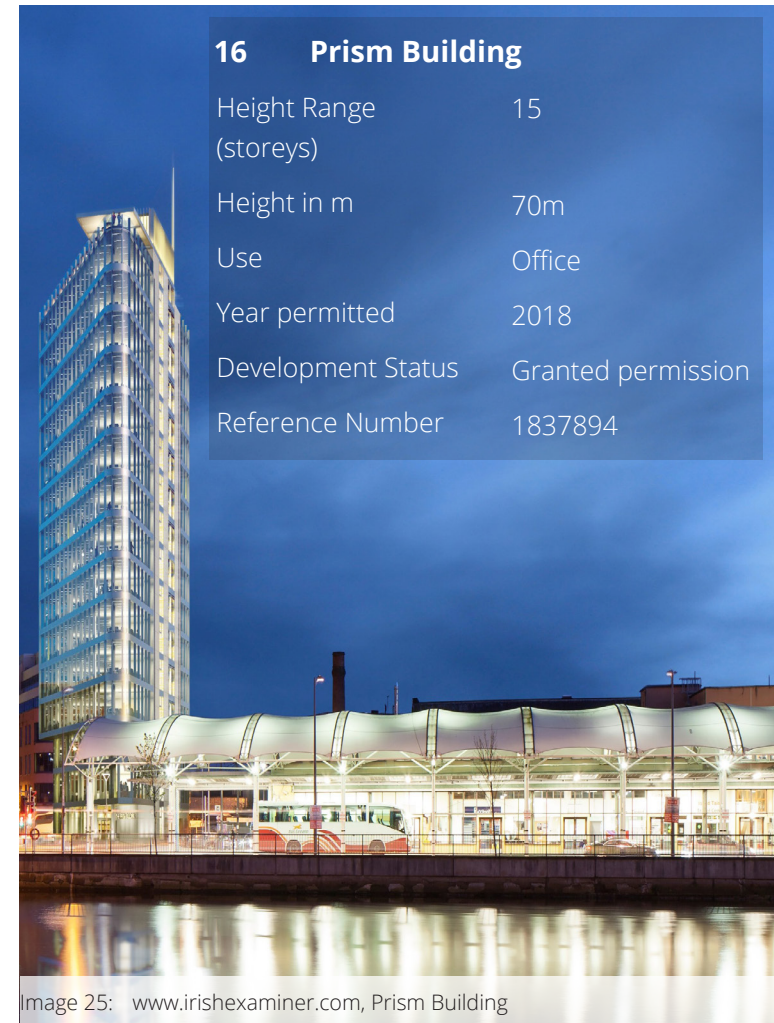
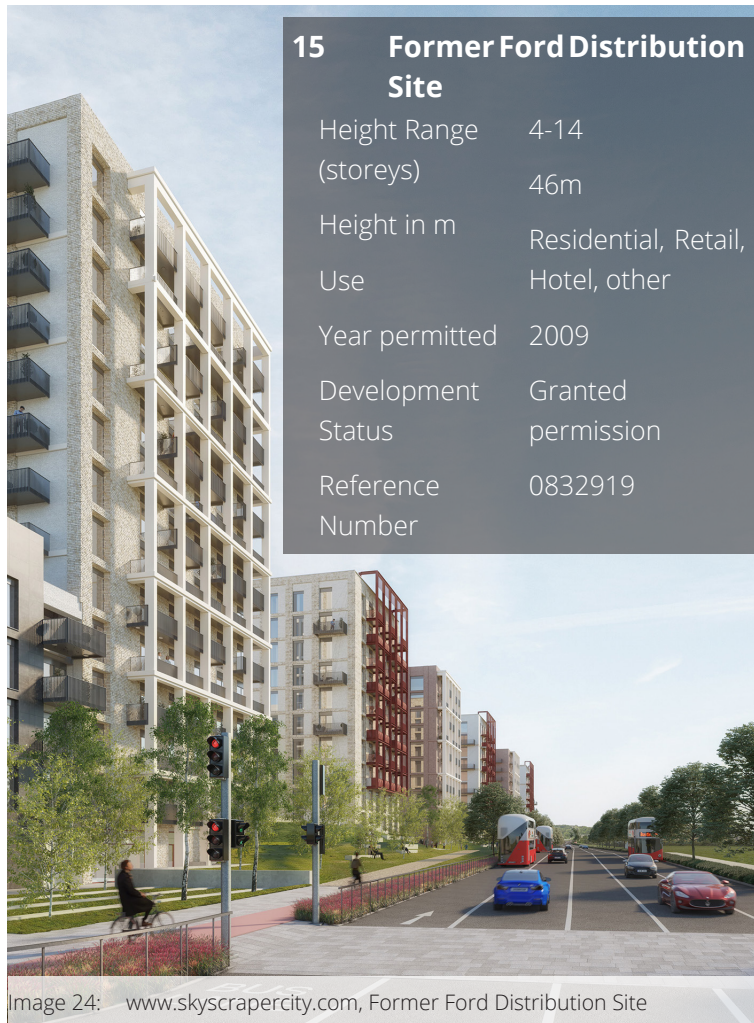
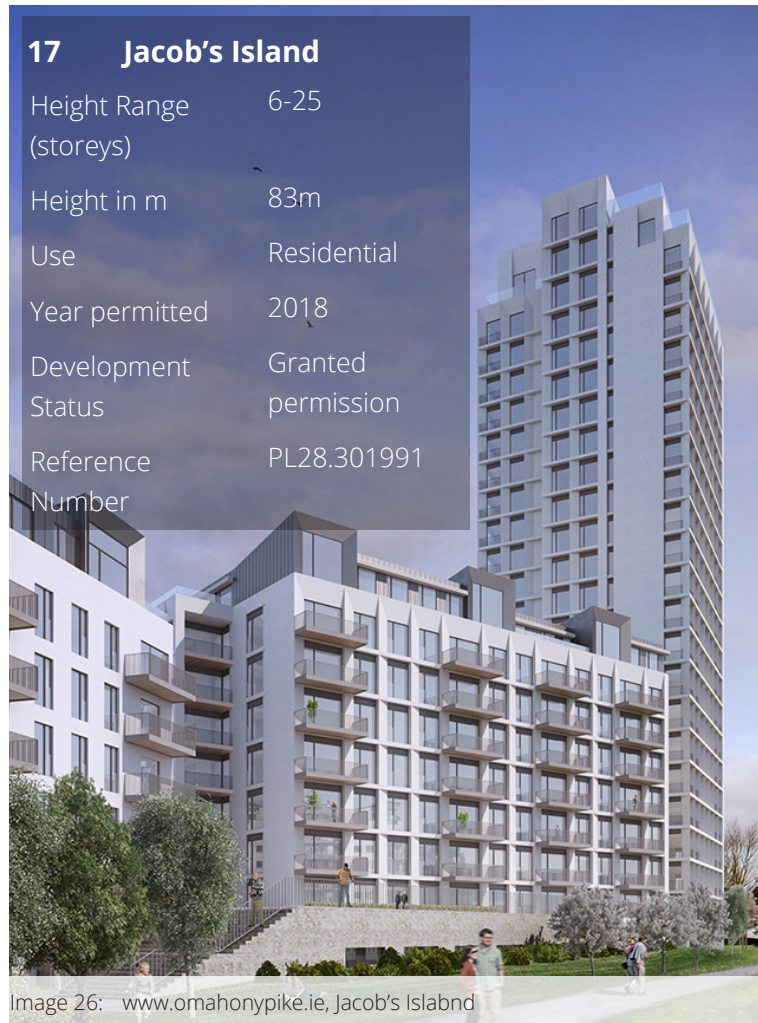


Image 23: Context Map Cork City, Building Heights

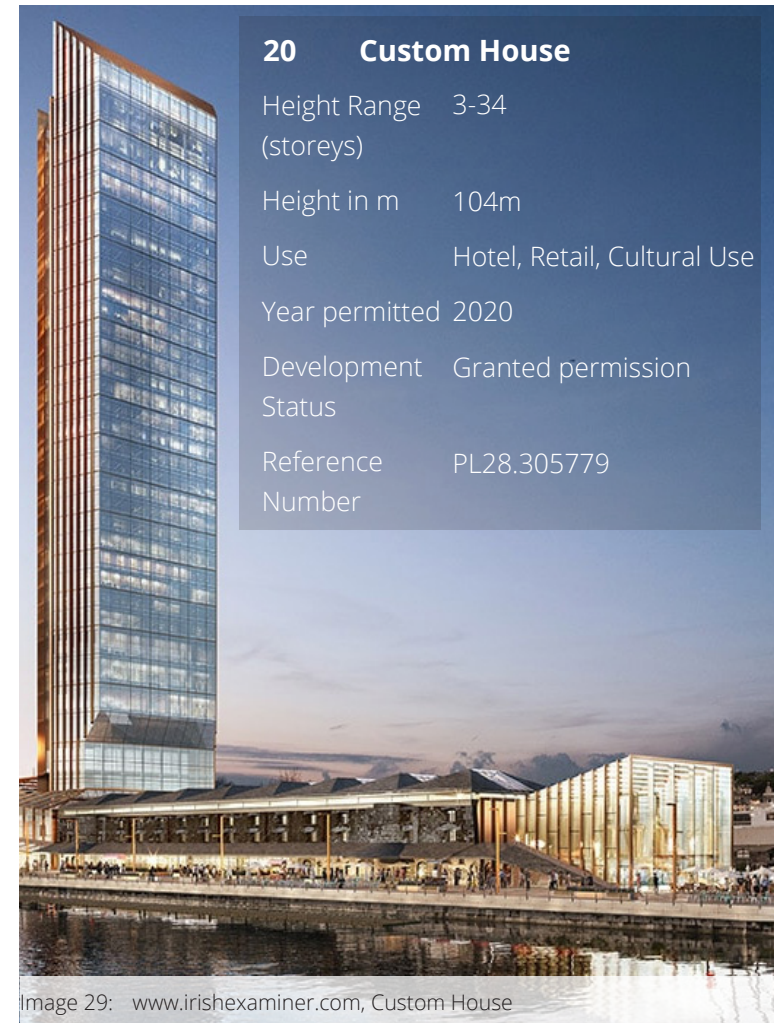
3 Height Analysis



3 Height Analysis



3 Height Analysis



3.3 Surrounding Building



3 Height Analysis

3.3.1 Tall Buildings (1st category)

Within the vicinity of the development site the 17-storey tower of County Hall is the tallest and most prominent building not only because of its height, but also the location at the end of the “Straight Road” shaping the western access into the city. It is a textbook example for a landmark building because of its characteristically clean architectural expression and visibility from multiple locations of the city.

Therefore, County Hall can be stated as a “primary” tall building embossed in the skyline of Cork City.

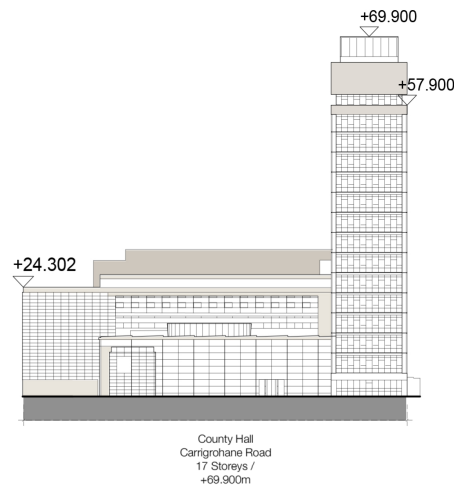


Image 30: Building Height Study Drawing by Butler Cammoranes Architects

3.3.1 Tall Buildings (2nd category)

The examples of Victoria Mills Student Accommodation (existing), Crow's Nest (under construction) and the Bottle Factory (planning permission) show the establishment of taller buildings of a secondary category, not competing with County Hall, but transforming the area around Victoria Cross from a former suburb to an urban quarter with a change in its urban fabric and more sustainable land use and densities.

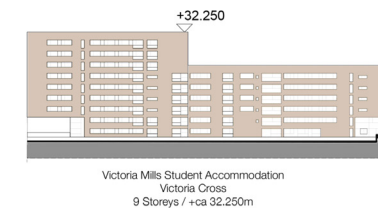


Image 31: Building Height Study Drawing by Butler Cammoranes Architects

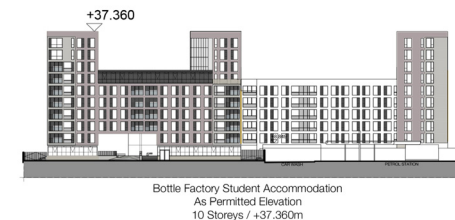


Image 32: Building Height Study Drawing by Butler Cammoranes Architects

4



Proposed Scheme

4.1 Assessment Methodology

In this report, the proposed development will be assessed based on 7 underlying criteria:



Access to frequent and connected public transportation, cycle, and pedestrian routes.



Impact on the existing the character, topography, culture, views and landmarks in the site's surrounding area.



Impact on the existing the character, topography, culture, views and landmarks in the site's surrounding area.



Response to the overall natural and built environment as well as neighbourhoods in close proximity to



Appropriate and effective use of building materials and architectural design through height, scale, and light.



Consideration for the existing environment, flooding, and protected species in the surrounding area.



Contribute to the existing student neighbourhood that provides access to educational facilities in the area such as CIT and UCC.

VICTORIA CROSS

The proposed development consists of the construction of 78 no. student apartments consisting of 206 no. bed spaces (ranging in size from single bed studios to 8 bed apartments), with common facilities, a reception area, management offices, storage, and all associated ancillary development works including plant and equipment, bin storage, landscaping, pedestrian access, and bicycle parking. The proposed development is presented in a singular block at 6 storeys in height.

4.2 Context

The proposed site is located towards the northern end of Victoria Cross road, approximately 900m to the west of University College Cork and 2.1 km from Cork City Centre. The total site area comprises of 0.29 hectares and has a flat topography. The site is currently occupied as a car showroom unit which is not in use. Permission for the development of these lands for residential use was previously granted under Ref. No. 06/31044.



Image 34: Context Map, Planning and Design Statement

4 Concept

4.3 At the Scale of the City

The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service, good links to other modes of public transport. Victoria Cross Road is presently served by the 201, 205, 208, 209, 233 bus routes.

The proposed site is also within easy walking and cycling distance to UCC, CIT, and the city centre.

As highlighted within the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040, the proposed inclusion of a light rail corridor between Mahon and Ballincollig that would in turn connect the city centre with key employment hubs, educational institutions, and substantial residential catchment areas. The proposed site is located in immediate proximity to the proposed corridor, further increasing access for students living in the area.

The proposed development comprises of a distinctive height volume of 6 storeys which has the potential to cause moderate landscape change. The location of this site is within a significant transport corridor into Cork City and the height of the proposed development will integrate and contribute to the existing permissions and buildings in the

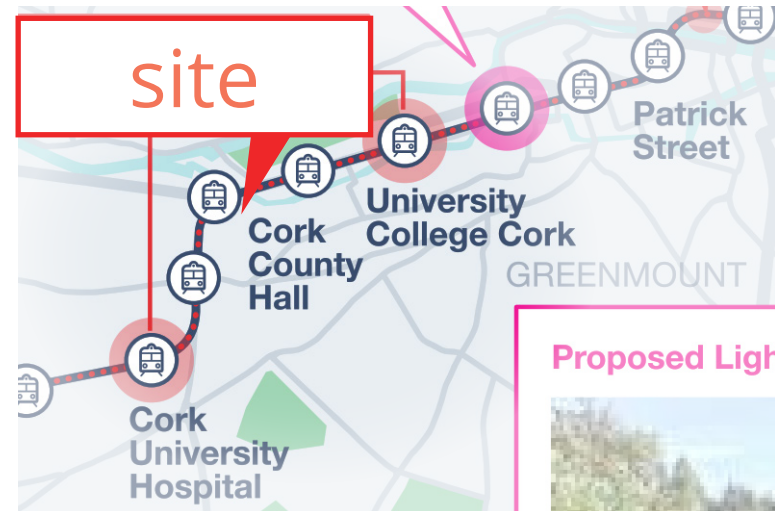


Image 35: Proposed Railway Line, CMATS



Image 36: Proposed light rail line photomontage, CMATS

4 Concept

Gateway to Cork City at Victoria Cross.

Within the sites surroundings there are 4 no. of protected views noted in the existing development plan. These include:

Our Lady's Hospital Lee Road (Local Landmark Building)

Church of The Descent of the Holy Spirit, Dennehy's Cross (Local Landmark Building)

Saint Kevin's Hospital (Strategic Landmark Building)

Lee Fields & Thomas Davis Street Mardyke (Viewing Location of linear views of special amenity value)

County Hall (Strategic Landmark Building)

It is noted that this development is proposed at a location already undergoing significant change. This evolving character includes an increase in height to the immediate west due to the completion of the Crow's Nest scheme. When viewed cumulatively these elements will serve as a gateway to the city from the western approach. These place making elements will strengthen the evolving gateway to the city at this threshold, having a largely positive impact on protected views previously noted in the Cork City Development Plan.

From the east, the proposed development will not impact views of County Hall. The development will appear in harmony with the vertical rhythm of the Victoria Cross Therapy Rooms, Farranlea Hall, HSE Medical Building,

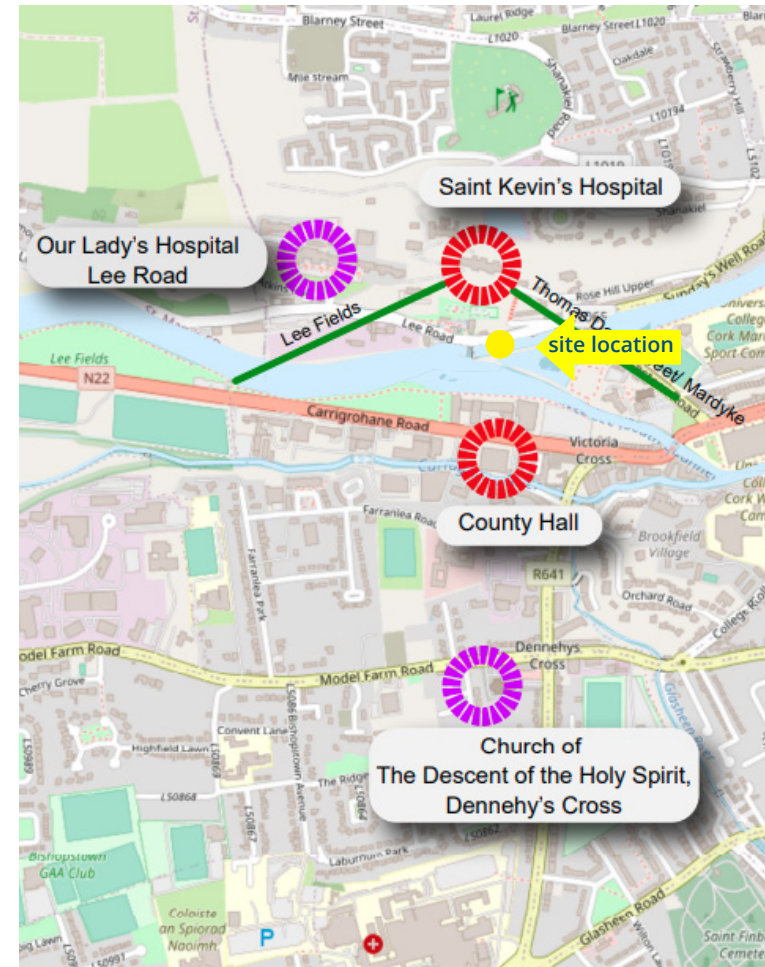


Image 37: MAP 18 - Views and Prospects: South West, CCDD 2022

4 Concept

Orchard Gardens Apartment Buildings, as well as UCC's University Hall Student Accommodation. The development itself will sit in alignment with the existing buildings of that size.

Protected views of County Hall also exist, however, the evolving nature of the Victoria Cross area suggest that the views towards the Shanakiel Ridge from the subject site will be substantially reduced without proposed development upon the completion of the Crow's Nest Accommodation. This presents a medium to low change once the proposed development is implemented.

In addition to the analysis of the protected views noted in the development plan, further viewpoints were examined in order to determine the impact on existing transport

corridors, residential amenities in the area, as well as a wider cultural context.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment presented with proposed development concluded that this application will not result in a significant change to the process of evolution already well underway in the Gateway. In summary, the broader context around Victoria Cross, has the capacity to absorb the proposed alterations of this scale in landscape and visual terms.

The principal local changes to the site will include an improvement in the public realm of the immediate area with streetscape improvements, the introduction of defined plot edges, bicycle parking, granite aggregate paving flags, and new conical street tree planting.



Image 38: Site at Victoria Cross, Planning and Design Statement

4 Concept

The proposed development:

- Establishes the urban edge by building to the road frontages that encompass the site to re-establish the primacy of the street;
- Contributes and enhances the public realm outside the building and along Victoria Cross Rd;
- Improves local movement networks and provides for the implementation of bicycle lanes, the Bus Connects infrastructure upgrades, the future LRT line, and provides routes along the proposed structure with the potential to link to surrounding uses;
- Provides amenity space within the development for residents to use and locals to experience;
- Enhances active underutilised embankment area and facilitate future linkages;
- Provide a building which may act as a catalyst for positive change both physically and in terms of how the area is perceived.

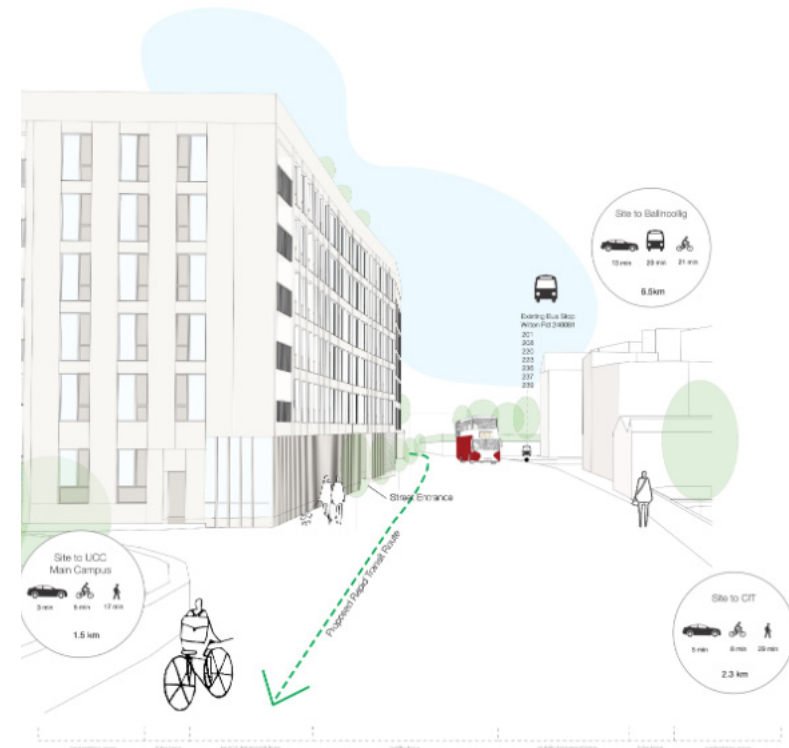


Image 39: Sketch View - BTR / LTR High Capacity Transport Corridor, Planning and Design Statement

4 Concept

4.4 At the Scale of the Neighbourhood

The proposed development:

- Establishes a strong urban edge to Victoria Cross Road;
- Enhances the provision of an active and attractive building design and an overall environment conducive to student living with on-site car set-down, bicycle storage, refuse storage, and facilities management;
- Provides amenity space in the form of a pedestrian pathway accompanied by enhanced landscaping;
- Provides active links to the public realm, providing for future physical permeability along the Curhaeen River and adjoining student accommodation sites as well as to the nearby third level institutes;
- Reuses an existing brownfield urban site that contributes to the student relationship with the surrounding area and promotes regeneration and sustainable development.
- Considers built form, issues of connectivity, inclusivity, variety, efficiency, distinctiveness, effective layouts, treatment of the public realm, future adaptability, privacy and amenity, bicycle parking, and design through

best practice principles.

The overall form and mass of the proposed development is mediated through the northern point of the proposed development. Generous openings at the ground floor level serve to break the overall form and permit access and views to the shared courtyard garden area. A diverse range of generously scaled openings and façade treatments create a sense of openness, energy, and relative transparency.

Materials are selected with natural tactile qualities and tones that will weather gracefully and provide visual interest. The roof top garden on the 6th floor encompasses 275m² of the development within a larger expanse of a green roof. This will be secured with a 1.5m high glass balustrade to the outer edge and surfaced in a mix concrete pavers.

In contrast to the surrounding buildings, the proposed development sits at 6 storeys within the site and provides consistent height throughout the site as well as the streetscape. The buildings recently permitted by City Council, the permissions currently being constructed, as well as the existing buildings present a height at the same scale as the proposed scheme or are significantly higher. The existing scale of the Victoria Cross neighbourhood as a whole reflect the objectives outlined in the 'Victoria Cross Exception' in The

4 Concept

Cork City Urban Density, Building Height, and Tall Building Study.

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 and the site's surrounding context.

The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and building/dwelling typologies in the neighbourhood. In accordance with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 2 of the UDBH Guidelines, the site favours residential development rather than mixed-use scheme due to the site's close proximity to local services and amenities. As the proposed development relates to student accommodation, a variety of facilities

are provided for students in the area including a rooftop garden.

The setting of the site in its urban context provides various categories of spaces which the proposed design respects and enhances. The street scape of Victoria Cross is currently overwhelmed with high traffic volumes and do not provide safe space allocation for cyclists and pedestrians.

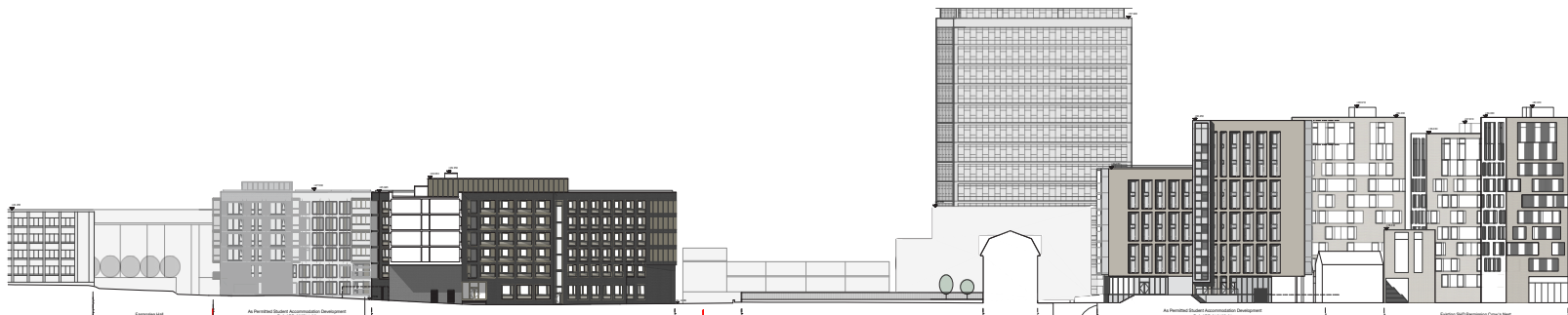


Image 40: Development Contextual Elevation, Planning and Design Statement

4.5 At the Scale of the Site

The form, massing, and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation, and views as well as minimise overshadowing and loss of light. In accordance with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 3 of the UDBH Guidelines, the development has been designed to ensure there are no undue impacts on residential amenity of neighbouring residents.

The proposed scale and design of the development has full regard to the long planning history of the site, is consistent with the permitted and evolving sale of development of the area and will be consistent with the objectives and strategies stated in the relevant planning policies.

The form, massing, and height of the proposed development is mediated through an individual block that is 6 storeys in height, and allows sufficient space within the proposed scheme as well.

The architectural design on the ground floor breaks up the pattern of the upper floors, bringing a distinctive entry point that is visually accessible to students and their parents. The

diverse range of generously scaled openings and façade treatments create a sense of openness, energy, and relative transparency.

The proposal aims to bring modulation of form while ensuring that the impact of any potential overbearing is appropriately mitigated.

A shadow study has been undertaken to illustrate the anticipated lighting conditions at key times and dates including the equinox and solstices. The proposed development is designed to maximise overshadowing and loss of light to all habitable rooms. Further, the Sunlight and Daylight Report highlights the access to adequate natural daylight ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light to all habitable rooms without compensatory measures.

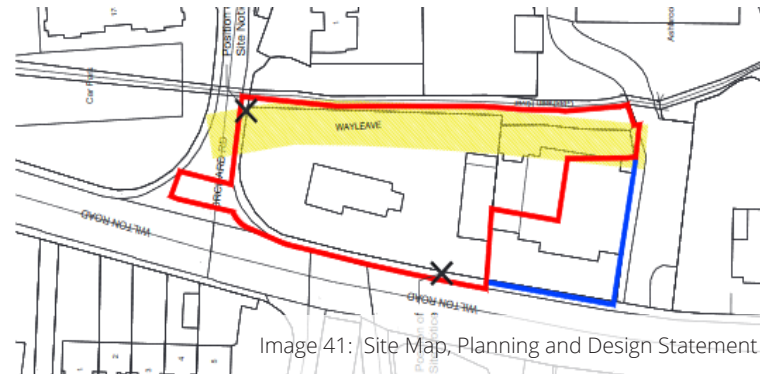


Image 41: Site Map, Planning and Design Statement...

4.6 Specific Assessments

To support proposals at all aspects of development, specific assessments may be required and these may include:

A landscape and Townscape Visual Impact Assessment is provided to ensure that the proposed development provides visual analysis of both the height and scale of the proposal to ensure minimal negative impact on the proposal occurs. The assessment accompanies this Building Height Report and further expands the proposed development's relationship with the visual impact to the north of the site.

An Ecological Impact Assessment has been conducted to identify prominent flora and fauna, and their habitats, in the surrounding area. In locations that are in proximity to sensitive bird and bat habitats, proposed developments need to consider the potential interaction of the building location, building materials, and artificial lighting that may impact flight lines. Further, this assessment is analysed in the perspective of the proposed development in order to ensure that the design and scale does not impact the existing habitats and species in the area throughout the construction phase and after the proposed development's completion.



Image 42: Elevation of design, Planning and Design Statement

5

Conclusion



5 Conclusion

This Building Height Report identifies the scale, design, height and impact of the proposed development in addition to its positive impact on the public realm and the surrounding area. The proposed development brings student accommodation within the hub of a neighbourhood frequented by students from both University College Cork and Munster

Technological University while blending in within the existing buildings in the area. The proposed development is in alignment with associated planning policies and environmental assessments.

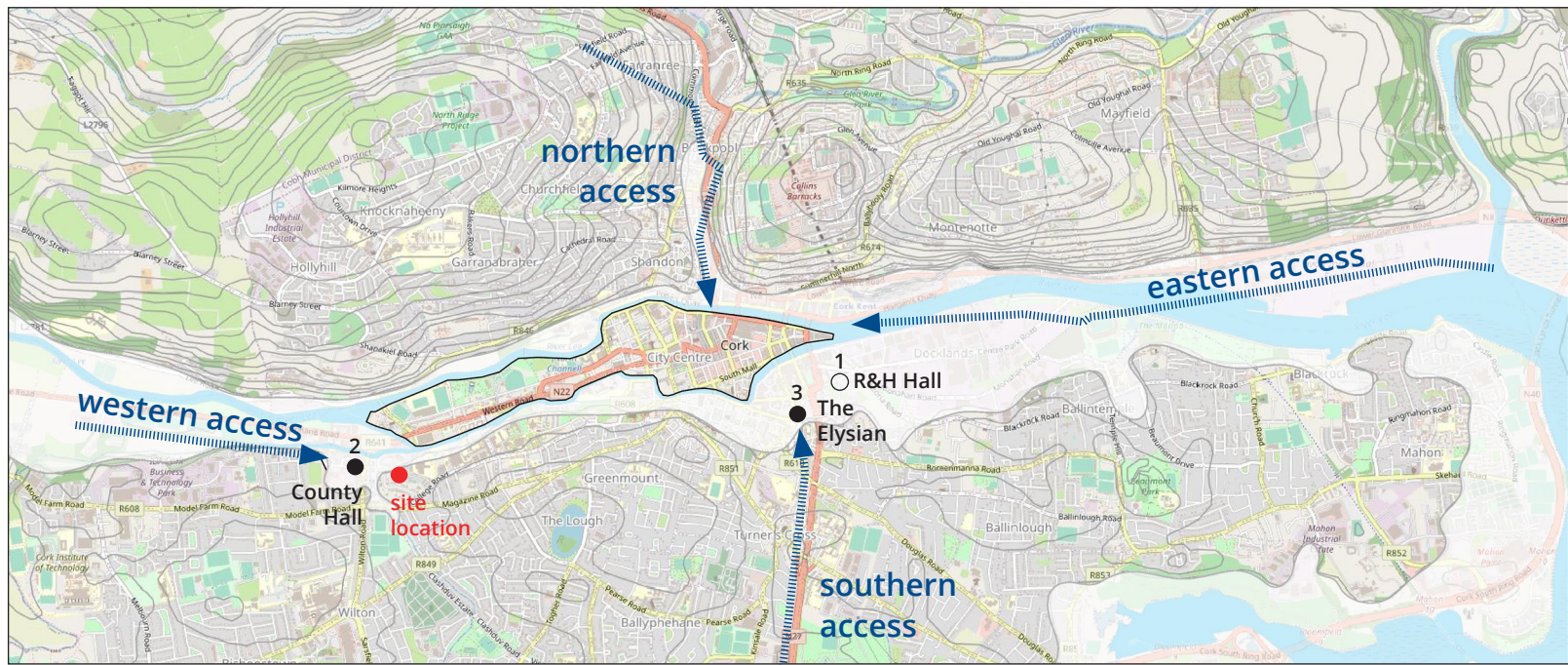


Image 43: Context Map Cork City, Building Heights

6

Appendix



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- 20 R & H Hall
- 21 County Hall: 'Cork County Hall 1968', archiseek.com
- 22 The Elysian: 'The Elysian', wilsonarchitecture.ie
- 24 Former Ford Site: Photomontage by Model Works
- 25 The Prism Building: 'The Prism', theprismbuilding.ie
- 26 Railway Gardens: 'Railway Gardens', methialarchitects.ie
- 27 Jacob's Island: 'Southside: Jacob's Island Neighbourhood Centre: SHDs including up to 25fls', skyscrapercity.com
- 28 Albert Quay: 'Albert Quay Built to Rent SHD', skyscrapercenter.com
- 29 Customs House: 'Set to be the tallest building in Ireland, permission granted for landmark tower in the heart of Cork City, henryjlyons.com
- 30 Crow's Nest: 'Crow's Nest Student Accommodation', ucc.ie
- 31 Wilton Road: Photomontage by Butler/Cammoranesi Architects

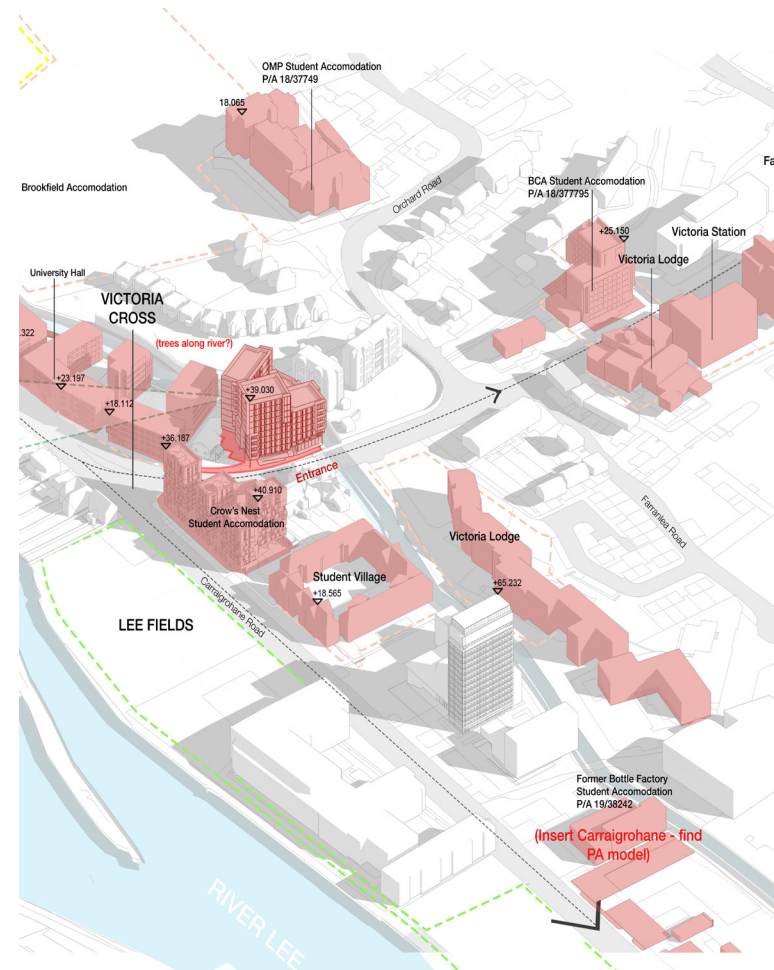
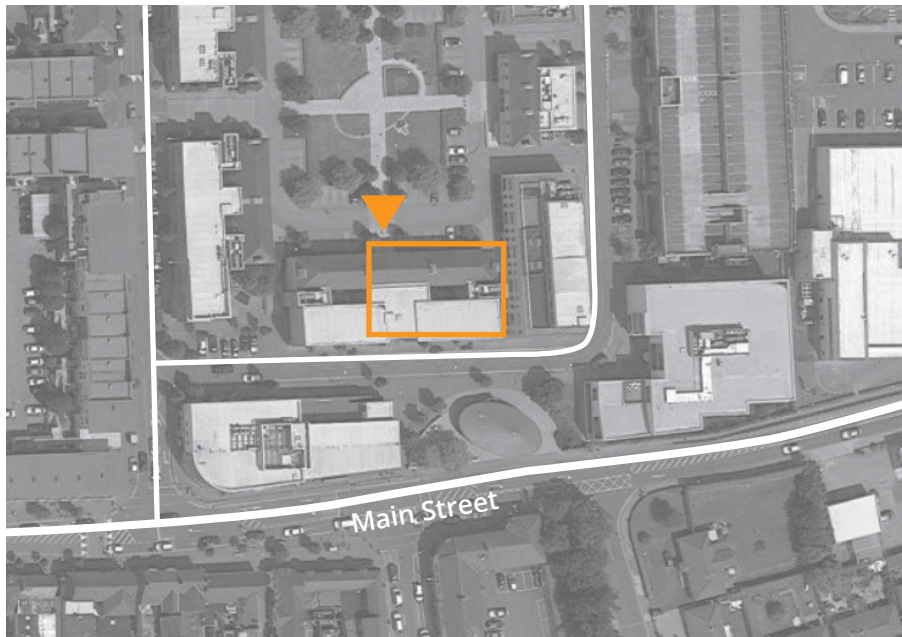


Image 44: Site Context model, Planning and Design Statement



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