Townscape and Visual Appraisal
Including Verified Photomontages

Proposed Increase in Height of Permitted Development at 35-36 Abbey Street Upper and Abbey Cottages, Dublin 1

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.MODEL WORKS

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1.0 Introduction

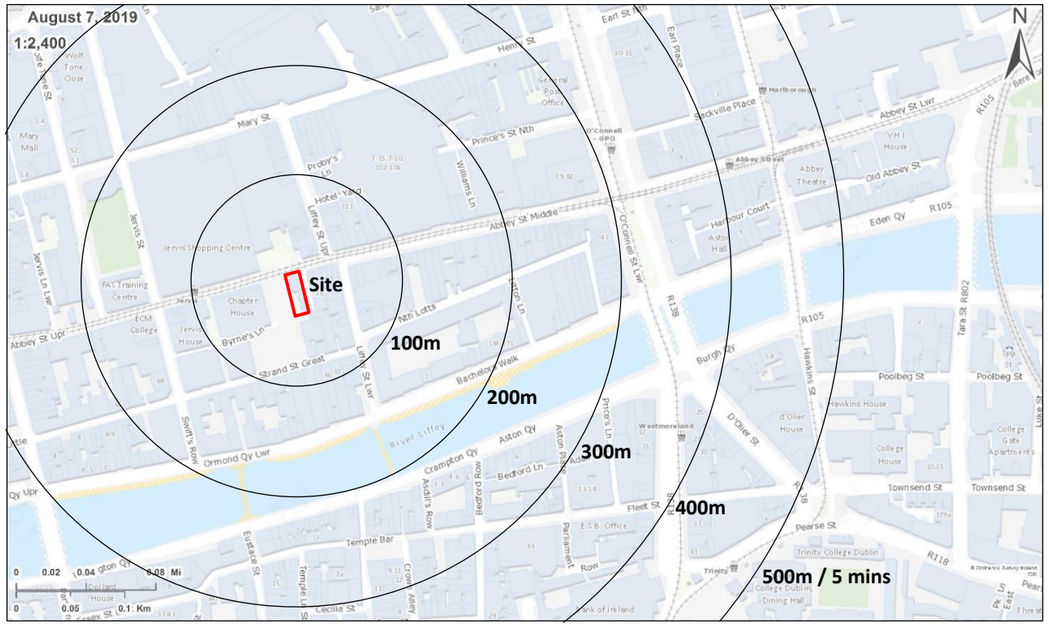
This report discusses the potential townscape and visual effects of a proposal to increase the height of a permitted building (DCC Reg. Ref. 2971/17 / ABP Ref. PL29N.249037, DCC Reg Ref. 2954/18, DCC Reg. Ref. 2928/19 and DCC Reg. Ref. 3804/19 / ABP Ref. PL29N.305853) at 35-36 Abbey Street Upper and Abbey Cottages, from part 9 No. and part 11 No. storeys to part 9 No. and part 13 No. storeys. This would increase the total number of rooms from 151 No. to 184 No.

The assessment was carried out with reference to the Landscape Institute *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition 2013 and the EPA draft *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2017. The methodology including explanation of the criteria and terms used in the assessment is provided in Appendix 2.

2.0 The Site and Receiving Environment

The site is located in Dublin city centre at the junction of Upper Abbey Street and Abbey Cottages, less than 300m from O'Connell Street and 150m from the Liffey River (see Figure 1). This places the site within walking distance of the city centre visitor attractions, business and retail centres. The Luas red line (Jervis stop 75m from site) and Dublin Bike scheme (Wolftone Square station 150m from site) give further access throughout the city including to the main public transport hubs of Connolly Station, Busáras and Heuston Station. The site is thus located within the city core, with excellent access to public transport.

Figure 1 Site location



The existing permission recognises these locational advantages, and also the high capacity of the townscape context to accommodate change. This capacity results from historic factors as well as recent planning decisions affecting the area (see Section 2.2 below).

2.1 Townscape and Architectural Character

Among the streets of Dublin city centre, Abbey Street – and Upper Abbey Street in particular - has undergone some of the most profound change through modern development. Extensive areas north and south of the street, originally occupied by small, narrow, Georgian era plots and buildings (see Figure 2a), were consolidated and redeveloped in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Figure 2a & b OS 25 Inch map and aerial photograph showing areas (shaded yellow) along Abbey Street where the historic urban grain and architecture has been replaced by modern development.

This has resulted in an area with a coarse urban grain and diverse architectural character, with a predominance of large, modern buildings (Figure 2b). These include the Jervis and Arnotts shopping centres, office buildings

such as Chapter House and the Garda Ombudsman's office; apartment developments and mixed use schemes (e.g. Millennium Walkway). Upper Abbey Street can now be identified as a distinct townscape character area and this is reinforced by the street's function as a public transport corridor.

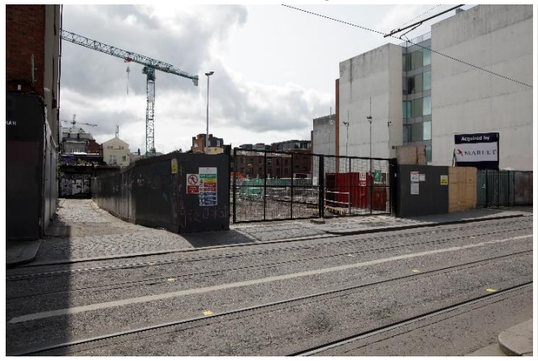
Photos 1 & 2 A view east from the Capel Street junction showing the Garda Ombudsman's office and the Jervis Street Centre in the distance, and the view towards the site from the Jervis Luas stop

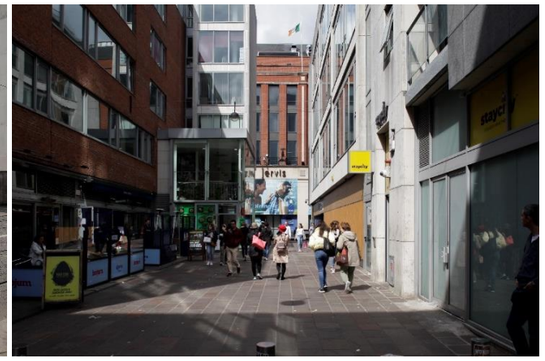
Photos 3 & 4 Views of the streetscape in the immediate vicinity of the site, also showing the range of architecture in the area

Some of the late 20th century development on the street lacked design refinement and material quality, and many of the remaining historic buildings are in poor condition. As a result the streetscape is of limited visual amenity, although some individual buildings/schemes - old and new (e.g. Millennium Walkway) – can be considered assets to the area.

The photographs provided illustrate the mixed/indistinct character of the Abbey Street townscape in the vicinity of the site. There are wide variations in plot and building typology, scale (footprint and height), architecture and materials. The street lacks buildings (especially modern buildings) of architectural merit and there are no particularly valued views. Long stretches of building frontage can be considered 'dead frontage' (e.g. Jervis Centre), with limited active interface with the street and few entrances.

Photos 5 & 6 A view of the subject site and Abbey Cottages which runs along its east side, and a view along Millennium Walkway





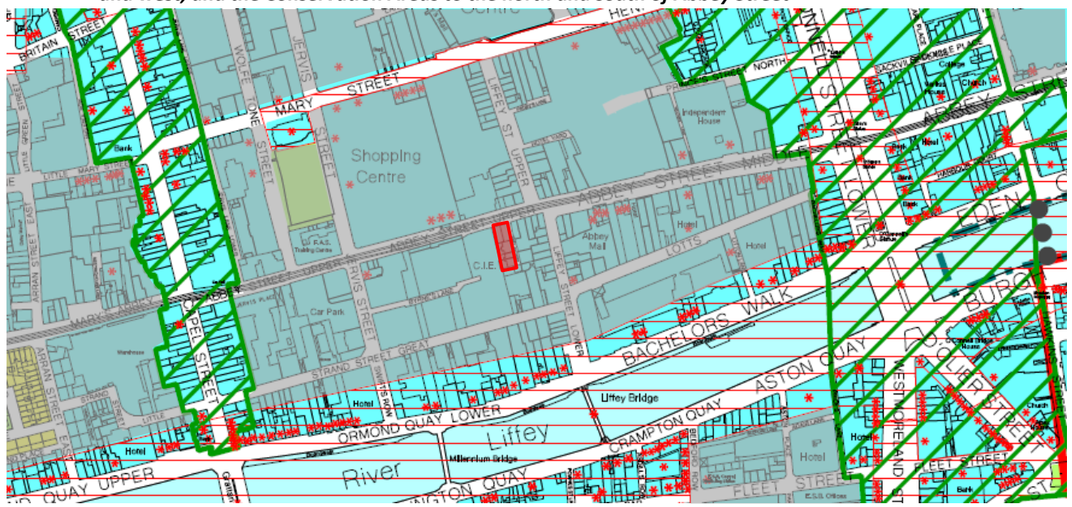
Photos 7 & 8 Views west along Middle Abbey Street towards the site

Abbey Cottages is an important – and changing – element of the townscape. Currently, it is a blind alley (see Photo 5 above) terminating at an electricity substation. However, the extant permissions for the subject site and the neighbouring Marlet site will create a new pedestrian link between Abbey Street and Great Strand Street, along Abbey Cottages and through the Marlet scheme. This would incorporate Abbey Cottages into the pedestrian network of the city centre, and change the status of the site due to its position at the junction/ entrance to Abbey Cottages.

The mixed/indistinct character and limited visual amenity of Middle and Upper Abbey Street is notable for its variance from the norm in the city centre. The precinct is 'boxed in' on all four sides by more valued streetscapes characterised by a greater degree of uniformity in development era, building typology, height and architectural quality compared to Abbey Street. These streets are subject to conservation designations as shown in Figure 3 below:

- East: O'Connell Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) including numerous protected structures;
- West: Capel Street ACA, also featuring a large number of protected structures;
- South Liffey River Conservation Area (CA), with many of the buildings along Ormond Quay and Bachelors Walk protected structures;
- North: Mary Street/Henry Street CA.

Figure 3 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 Land use zoning map Architectural Conservation Areas to the east and west, and the Conservation Areas to the north and south of Abbey Street



While not precluding taller development from designated conservation areas, the *Building Height Guidelines* do note that 'historic environments can be sensitive to large scale and tall buildings' (Section 2.8). The city centre - the area best served by public transport in the country - is rich in architectural heritage and is therefore generally sensitive to taller development.

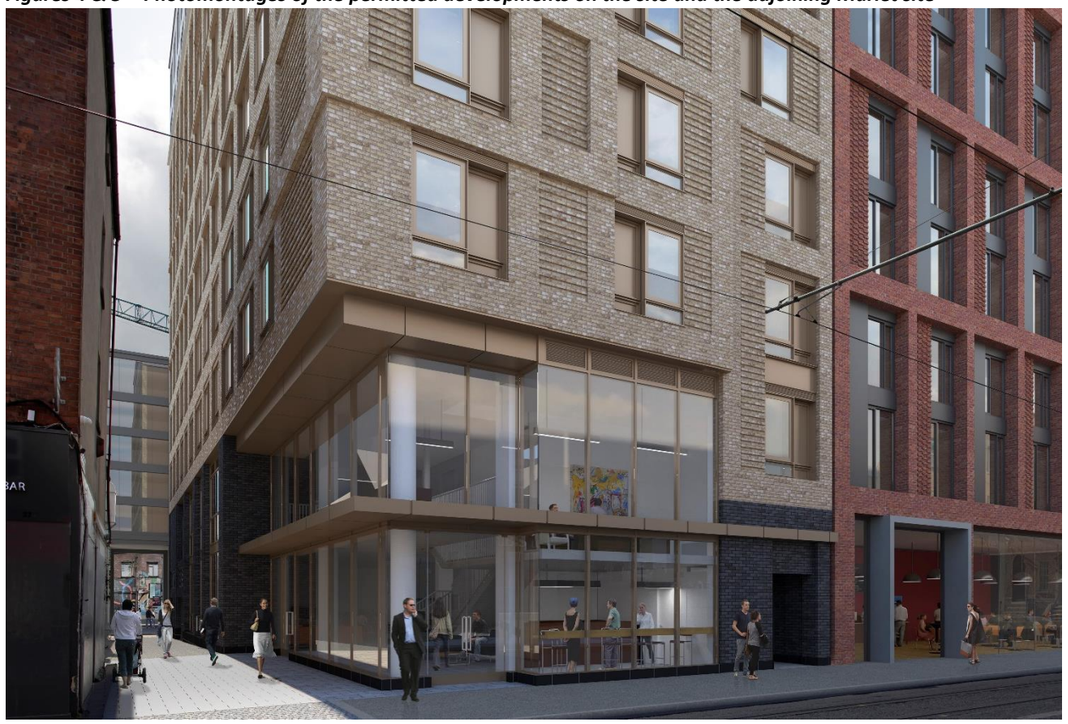
Abbey Street, with its relative lack of architectural heritage (and other) sensitivities, thus presents a valuable opportunity for compact growth, being less constrained by conservation objectives than much of the historic core of Dublin.

2.2 Changing Townscape Character

Several recent planning decisions will have the effect of dramatically changing the site's immediate environs when implemented, and strengthening its eclectic character. These include:

- **Permitted development on the subject site (Reg. Ref. 3804/19 / ABP Ref. 308583-19)**. The permitted development is an 11 storey building. The ground and first floor frontages to Abbey Street and Abbey Cottages are predominantly glazed, with bronze powder coater aluminium detailing to enhance the streetscape interface. Up to the nine storey shoulder the building is clad in mottled buff brick, with panels of patterned brick and bronze powder coated aluminium to match the window casements and spandrels. The top two floors are set back from the Abbey Street frontage and clad in light coloured brushed aluminium. This treatment lightens the appearance of the building and reduces the presence of the upper floors.
- **Permitted development on the neighbouring site (Reg. Ref. 3232/19 / ABP Ref. 305280-19)**. This is a large site with a double frontage – to Abbey Street to the north and Great Strand Street to the south, as well as potential access from Abbey Cottages to the east and Byrnes Lane to the west. The permitted development includes an 11 storey building fronting Abbey Street, adjoining the subject site. The proposals for the two sites were prepared with cooperation between the respective applicants and architects, ensure an harmonious street elevation, matching building height and set-backs, and complementary materials (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figures 4 & 5 Photomontages of the permitted developments on the site and the adjoining Marlet site

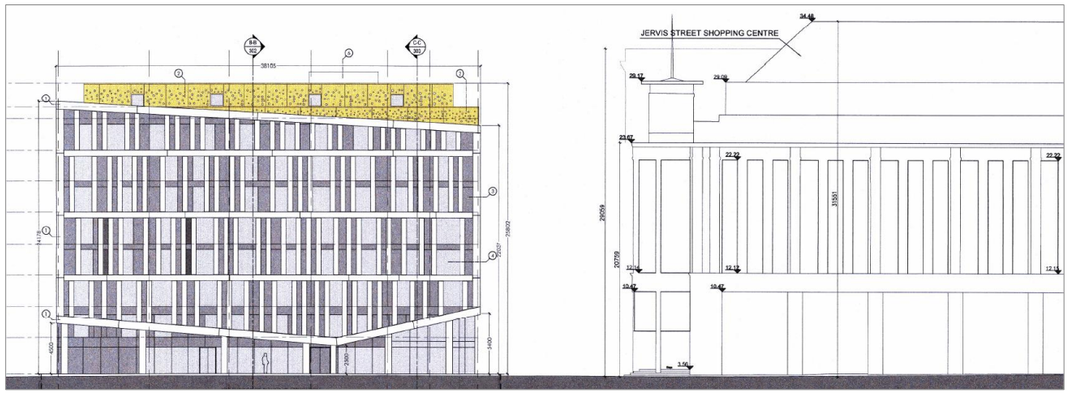


- Permitted extension of the Jervis Centre (Reg. Ref. 2479/20). Diagonally across Abbey Street from the Marlet site, a substantial redevelopment of the Jervis Centre is permitted. This includes a large, glazed vertical extension over the centre, and remodelling of all three facades including the Abbey Street frontage.
- Permitted hotel development on the north side of Abbey Street between Jervis Street and Wolf Tone Street (Twilfit House, Reg. Ref 2479/20 – see Figure 8).
- Dublin City Council's streetscape enhancement scheme for Liffey Street (the full length of the street between the quays and Henry Street.

The images above and right show that the townscape of Middle and Upper Abbey Street, already characterised by diversity in building typology, scale and architecture, is about to undergo a further change with the introduction of several buildings of singular architectural character (and in the case of the Jervis Centre, substantial scale). These developments all seek to maximise the land use yield from the respective sites in recognition of the street's unusual combination of (a) highly accessible city centre location, and (b) relative lack of sensitivity. These developments will reinforce the eclectic character of the area and elevate the overall quality of the townscape – by improving the building stock and the public realm/ streetscape.

Figures 6 & 7 Photomontages of the permitted Jervis Centre redevelopment as seen from a nearby rooftop car park, and from Middle Abbey Street

Figure 8 Elevation of the permitted hotel building on the Twilfit site at the corner of Abbey Street and Jervis Street



A notable feature of the permitted buildings, including the permission for the subject site, is the use of composite forms to achieve height/density without the appearance of excessive massing. The tops of the buildings are set back from the building line and designed to read as features distinct from the main body of the building. Their design is typically intended to both give the vertical projections a 'light' appearance, and to add visual interest to the buildings themselves and the wider townscape.

3.0 Relevant Policy

3.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

3.1.1 Zoning

The site is zoned Z5: *"To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity".*

"The primary purpose of this use zone is to sustain life within the centre of the city through <u>intensive mixed-use development</u>. The strategy is to provide a dynamic mix of uses which interact with each other, help create a sense of community, and which sustain the vitality of the inner city both by day and night".

Section 2.3.11: *"the zoning provisions ensure adequate land to meet the population targets and economic role of the city as the national gateway; <u>intensification along public transport corridors</u> and a mixed-use approach to zonings (Z4, <u>Z5</u>, Z6, Z10, Z14) <u>to underpin a compact and sustainable city</u>."*

Section 6.5.4: *"<u>The speedy re-development of extensive vacant/under-utilised sites, especially in the city centre zoned area, is critical to sustainable development</u>. Putting in place a critical mass of investment and development in the short-term is essential to break the negative cycle of underdevelopment and to overcome the barriers to progress that have existed".*

3.1.2 Urban Form and Architecture

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

Respecting and Enhancing Character and Context (Section 16.2.1.1): *"The city's townscape is characterised by streets, buildings and spaces which have evolved over centuries, with established human scale and high quality of materials, craftsmanship and detail generally. The City Council will seek to ensure that the design of new development respects and enhances these and other elements that contribute positively to the cityscape and urban realm, the settings of protected structures, areas of special interest and important views and that such design incorporates high quality detail, materials and craftsmanship. Design must also recognise the diversity of the city environment and respond to the distinctiveness of Dublin as a capital city, a diverse residential community and a centre of business and commerce.*

"In assessing new development, consideration will be given to how the design has responded to the existing context and its relationship to the established pattern, form(s), density and scale of surrounding townscape, taking account of existing rhythms, proportion, symmetries, solid to void relationships, degree of uniformity and the composition of elevations, roofs and building lines. The design should be carried through to the detail, through use of attractive and durable materials and high standards of craftsmanship…. The suitability of the proposed design to its intended landuse and the wider land-use character of the area will also be considered, along with its relationship with and contribution to the public realm."

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

3.1.3 Urban Density

Integrated Land-use and Transportation, Objective MTO1*: "To encourage intensification and mixed-use development along existing and planned public transport corridors and at transport nodes where sufficient public transport capacity and accessibility exists to meet the sustainable transport requirements of the development, having regard to conservation policies set out elsewhere in this plan and the need to make best use of urban land."*

Section 5.5.2, Policy QH8: *"To promote the sustainable development of vacant or under-utilised infill sites and to favourably consider higher density proposals which respect the design of the surrounding development and the character of the area".*

3.1.4 Building Height

The site area is categorised as inner city low-rise in Section 16.7.2 of the Development Plan. These areas have a building height limit of 28m. This limit excludes plant, flues and lift overruns 'as long as they are set back and properly screened and do not significantly add to the shadowing or otherwise of natural light beyond that of the main structure'. This Development Plan policy has been superseded by national policy (the NPF and Building Height Guidelines). See Section 3.2 below.

3.1.5 Key Views and Prospects

The are no identified key views or prospects potentially affected by the proposed development. However in 16.7.1 the Development Plan states:

> *"There is a recognised need to protect conservation areas and the architectural character of existing buildings, streets and spaces of artistic, civic or historic importance. In particular, any new proposal must be sensitive to the historic city centre, the river Liffey and quays, Trinity College, Dublin Castle, the historic squares and the canals."*

Abbey Street is not a conservation area and cannot be considered a street of particular artistic, civic or historic importance. This relative lack of sensitivity is a key characteristic of the site environs and one of the drivers behind the proposed development.

3.2 National Policy

3.2.1 National Planning Framework

One of the main principles and intended outcomes of the NPF is compact urban growth. The compact growth objective encourages higher density - and therefore taller - development in urban areas where supporting infrastructure and services are available.

> NPF National Policy Objective 11: *"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, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth."*
>
> Performance-Based Design Standards: *"To enable brownfield development, planning policies and standards need to be flexible, focusing on design led and performance-based outcomes…"*
>
> *"general restrictions on building height or universal standards for car parking or garden size may not be applicable in all circumstances in urban areas and should be replaced by performance-based criteria appropriate to general location, e.g. city/town centre, public transport hub, inner suburban, public transport corridor, outer suburban, town, village etc."*

The dual concept of 'design-led and performance-based outcomes' is important in considering the subject proposal. This encourages the planning authorities to not focus solely on the height of a building as measured in storeys or meters, but rather to consider the visual effects of its height. This recognises that there are situations – perhaps resulting from a site's position in the townscape and/or the nature of the surrounding

development - where height will not be a determining factor in a building's visual impact. There are situations where a height increase – on its own or in combination with other design adjustments - could improve a building as an architectural feature in its own right or could lead to positive urban design outcomes, for example the strengthening of townscape character or improved legibility.

3.2.2 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Section 1.2 of the Guidelines states:

> *"A key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that… 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…"*

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 and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure...*
> - *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.*
> - *The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood."*

4.0 Proposed Development

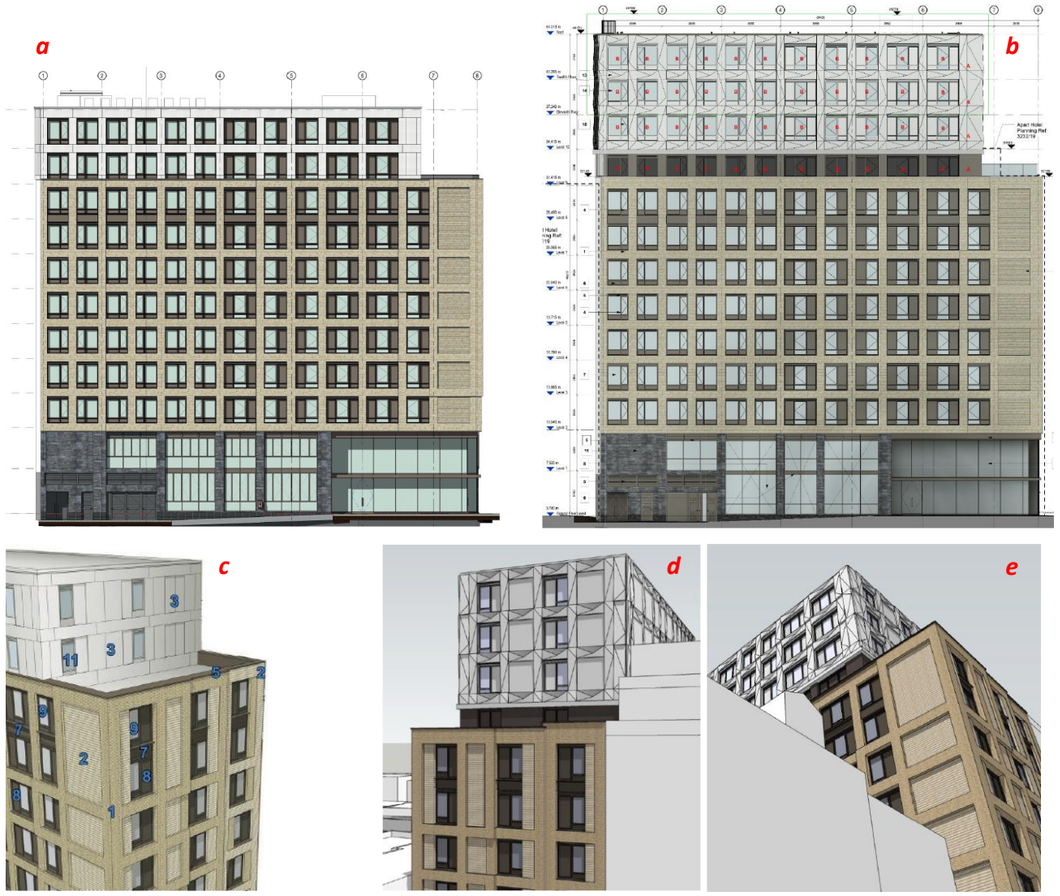
The proposed development will principally consist of modifications to the previously permitted development (DCC Reg. Ref. 2971/17 / ABP Ref. PL29N.249037, DCC Reg Ref. 2954/18, DCC Reg. Ref. 2928/19 and DCC Reg. Ref. 3804/19 / ABP Ref. PL29N.305853) resulting in the addition of an eleventh and twelfth floor, each with 16 No. rooms, a gross floor area of 380.5 sq m and set back from the building line; the removal of 3 No. bedrooms at ninth floor level to facilitate a lounge area (60.5 sq m); the provision of a 51 sq m external terrace at ninth floor level with an east facing aspect; the relocation of the domestic hot water heat pump (permitted under DCC Reg. Ref. 3804/19 / ABP Ref. PL29N.305853) from to roof level; and all associated elevational changes and site development works above and below ground.

The proposed development will result in a part 9 No. to part 13 No. storey building, with an increase in the total number of rooms from 151 No. to 184 No. rooms and an increase in the gross floor area from 5,355 sq m (permitted under DCC Reg. Ref. 3804/19 / ABP Ref. PL29N.305853) to 6,116 sq m.

The main changes to the building with regard to potential townscape and visual impacts are at the upper level, above the nine storey shoulder of the main body of the building. They can be summarised as follows:

- The vertical projection above the shoulder, currently a two-storey simple cubic form resting on the nine storey body, would be vertically extended to four storeys.
- The bottom floor of this vertical projection would be slightly recessed and clad in bronze powder coated aluminium (matching the metal detailing of the main body). This slightly recessed and darker coloured floor would form a shadow gap, making the three upper floors read as a distinct volume set atop the main body of the building.
- The cladding of the three top floors would be changed from flush brushed aluminium panels, to a tessellated pattern of faceted panels with a mica silicate content. The faceted surface would give the upper volume a three dimensional quality which changes with the movement of the sun, and the mica silicate content provides a richness of finish (and durability and reduced maintenance requirement).
- Minor adjustments are proposed to the fenestration and brick patterning beneath the ninth storey shoulder.

Figures 8 a-e Graphics comparing the permitted building (a & c) to the proposed building (b, d, e)



5.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

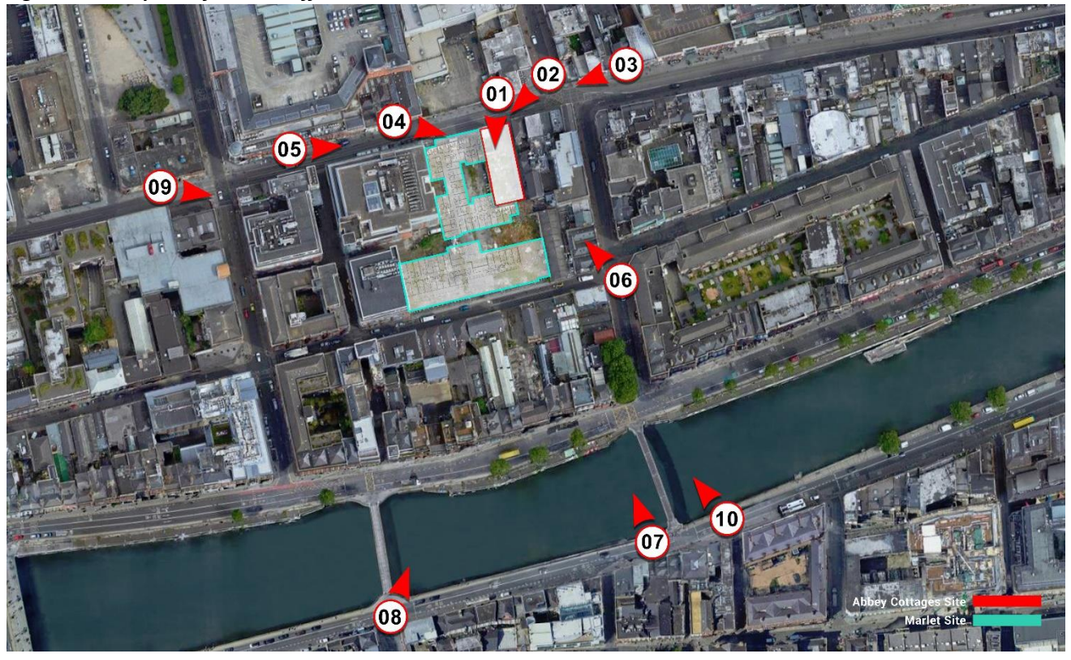
Considered at the 'landscape scale', i.e. the scale at which landscape/townscape character is perceived, the proposal is a relatively minor change to the development. The land use, the plot/building typology, the building line and the interface with the street, and the building's overall appearance would all be largely unchanged. The townscape character would be affected only insofar as the height increase and upper level design changes would change the visibility/ prominence and appearance of the building.

Therefore this assessment focusses on the visual effects of the proposed development, and this allows for a conclusion to be drawn as to the effects on townscape in the Conclusion in Section 6.

10 no. viewpoints were selected for the assessment of visual effects informed by verified photomontages. The viewpoints (see map below) include:

- A view from in front of the site along Abbey Cottages (Viewpoint 1);
- Views from east of the site along Abbey Street (Viewpoints 2, 3);
- Views from west of the site along Abbey Street (Viewpoint 4, 5, 9);
- A view from Liffey Street Lower (Viewpoint 6);
- Three views from the quays on the south side of the Liffey (Viewpoints 7, 10 and 8).

Figure 9 Viewpoints for visual effects assessment



The viewpoints are individually assessed below. The photomontages are included with the assessments below, and also in larger format (A3) in Appendix 1.

For the methodology, criteria and terminology used in the assessments refer to Appendix 2.

Viewpoint 1: Upper Abbey Street at Abbey Cottages Junction

Permitted View

- The view shows the double height glazed curtain walling wrapping around the corner of Abbey Street and Abbey Cottages, with bronze coloured metal casings, frames, canopy and spandrel. The development will dramatically improve the building-streetscape interface and activate the streetscape around the site.
- The colour of the brick and metal differentiates the building from the adjoining Marlet building but the facades are otherwise complementary.
- A key element of the development is the connection of Abbey Cottages to Strand Street through the Marlet scheme. This improved pedestrian permeability is a key urban design benefit of the two developments in combination.
- Seen from close up, the top two floors of the building are barely discernible along the Abbey Cottages frontage, and – due to the deep set back - are hidden behind the nine storey shoulder fronting Abbey Street.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. Upper Abbey Street between Liffey Street and Jervis Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture.

Proposed View

- The increase in height and change in façade treatment of the upper volume would be discernible, but would make no significant change to the composition, character or quality of the view.
- The magnitude of change would be negligible.

Significance of Visual Effects

- Measuring the magnitude of change against the viewpoint sensitivity, the significance of the visual effects is predicted to be 'imperceptible' and neutral. There would be no improvement or disimprovement in the appearance of the building itself or the townscape in view.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Viewpoint 2: Abbey Street at Liffey Street Junction

Permitted View

- The view shows the transformational effect of the two permitted developments on the south side of Upper Abbey Street. This change will be reinforced by the larger and more architecturally complex Jervis centre redevelopment across the street.
- The two developments in view borrow aspects from the context – e.g. the building line, vertical to horizontal proportions, uniformity between neighbouring buildings, rhythm and symmetry of fenestration, brick as the predominant material, and patterned brick for detailing – and achieve an admirable degree of integration despite the shift to a contemporary urban scale.

  This design response to context is encouraged by the DCDP (Section 16.2.1.1 Respecting and Enhancing Character and Context): *"In assessing new development, consideration will be given to how the design has responded to the existing context and its relationship to the established pattern, form(s), density and scale of surrounding townscape, taking account of existing rhythms, proportion, symmetries, solid to void relationships, degree of uniformity and the composition of elevations, roofs and building lines. The design should be carried through to the detail, through use of attractive and durable materials and high standards of craftsmanship…."*
- However, it is notable that the top two floors above the shoulder are designed to recede from view – being set back and lighter in colour. This design approach was a response to building height restrictions. And it can be seen in modern buildings throughout the city, where architects sought to achieve density without the appearance of density. The height of the building is intentionally downplayed, and as a result it is somewhat apologetic in form and design at the upper levels.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. Upper Abbey Street between Liffey Street and Jervis Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture. This generates further capacity for change.

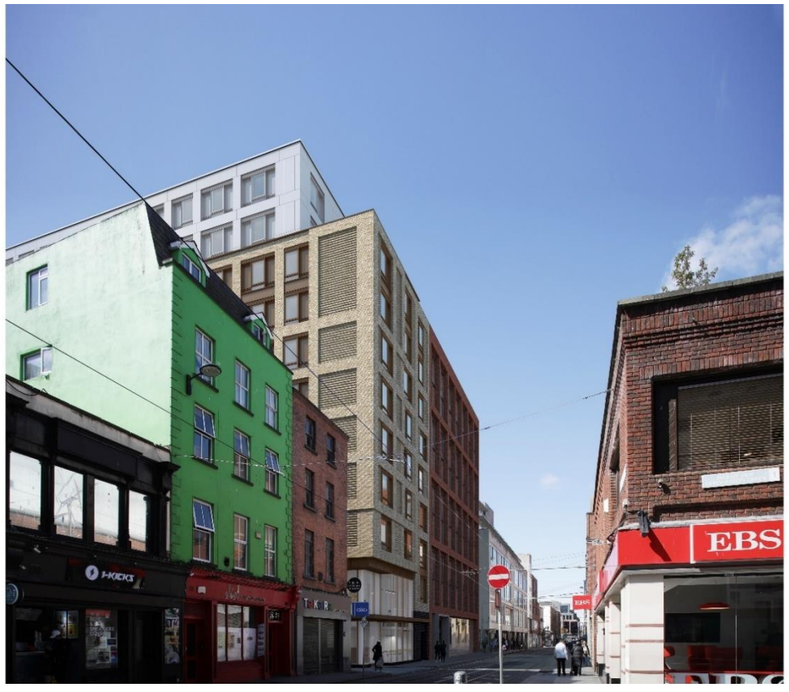
Proposed View

- The proposal is of a different order of height to the permitted building - a distinctly mid-rise building. (The height would not be out of character on the street, being similar to the permitted Jervis Centre.)
- All the positive qualities of the permitted building would be retained, including the elements borrowed from the context (the building line, proportions, rhythm and symmetry, brick and other high quality materials) and the complementary relationship (through uniformity) with the Marlet scheme.
- The one arguably negative (or plain) element of the permitted building, the squat form of the projection above the shoulder, would be replaced by a new volume with a distinct form and attractive faceted cladding – seeking not to recede from view but to add a feature of architectural and visual interest to the building. While starkly different in height to the small buildings in the foreground, the new vertical projection is also comparable to these buildings in its proportions and rhythm.
- The magnitude of change (from the permitted baseline) would be medium.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects is predicted to be 'moderate' and positive. As a composition of form and materials the building itself would be improved. While more prominent, in a townscape characterised by substantial diversity in building typology, scale and architecture this is not inappropriate. It would also improve the legibility of Abbey Cottages as a pedestrian street/link.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)



Proposed View

Viewpoint 3: Middle Abbey Street Near Arnotts

Permitted View

- In this view, due to the step in the alignment of Abbey Street at the Liffey Street junction, the permitted building will be prominent in the view, framed by the buildings of Middle Abbey Street, with the longer east elevation exposed to the viewer.
- The main body of the building is of appreciable design and material quality. The combination of brick, patterned brick and metal articulates the façade, successfully reducing the perception of massing. The upper volume, set back from the building line and light in colour, recedes from view as intended.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. This recognises that Upper Abbey Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture (refer to Figure 7 above for a view of the permitted Jervis centre redevelopment from a position across the street from this viewpoint).

Proposed View

- The proposal would increase the prominence of the building, with a longer section of the upper volume revealed over the foreground roofline.
- The nine storey main body of the building would remain a defining element in the evolving streetscape, and the larger, remodelled upper volume would introduce a distinct new architectural feature to the building and the wider townscape.
- The metal-clad level beneath the faceted façade would add visual interest and material quality to the upper volume. However it would combine with the main body of the building in this view to dominate the composition.
- The magnitude of change (from the permitted baseline) would be medium.

Significance of Visual Effects

- Measuring the magnitude of change against the viewpoint sensitivity, the significance of the visual effects is predicted to be 'moderate' and neutral. The dominance of the streetscape view by the building (an unavoidable result of its position beyond the kink in the street's alignment) would be counter-balanced by the appreciable improvements to the upper volume of the building.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 4: Upper Abbey Street Opposite Chapter House

Permitted View

- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. Upper Abbey Street between Liffey Street and Jervis Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture. This generates a capacity for further change.

Proposed View

- The upper volume would protrude very marginally above the shoulder of the building. It would be barely discernible and would make no change to the character or quality of the view.
- The magnitude of change would be negligible.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects would be 'imperceptible' and neutral.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 5: Upper Abbey Street at Jervis Luas Stop

Permitted View

- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. Upper Abbey Street between Liffey Street and Jervis Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture. This generates a capacity for further change.

Proposed View

- The upper volume would protrude very marginally above the shoulder of the building. In the complex and evolving streetscape it would be barely discernible and would make no change to the character or quality of the view.
- The magnitude of change would be negligible.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects would be 'imperceptible' and neutral.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 9: Upper Abbey Street west of Jervis Street Junction

This viewpoint from further west along Upper Abbey Street was included in the assessment to explore whether greater distance from the site would expose more of the building to view.

Permitted View

- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. Upper Abbey Street between Liffey Street and Jervis Street is undergoing profound change, including the development of large-footprint and tall buildings which will result in a pocket of unusual diversity in building form, scale and architecture. This generates a capacity for further change.

Proposed View

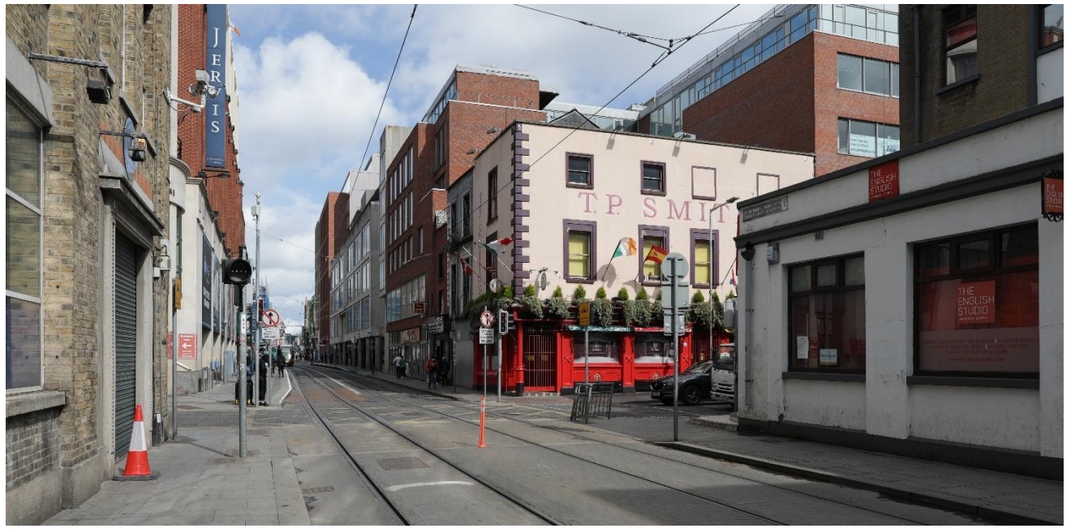
- The corner of the upper volume would protrude very marginally above the roofline of the Marlet building. In the complex and evolving streetscape it would be barely discernible and would make no change to the character or quality of the view.
- The magnitude of change would be negligible.

Significance of Visual Effects

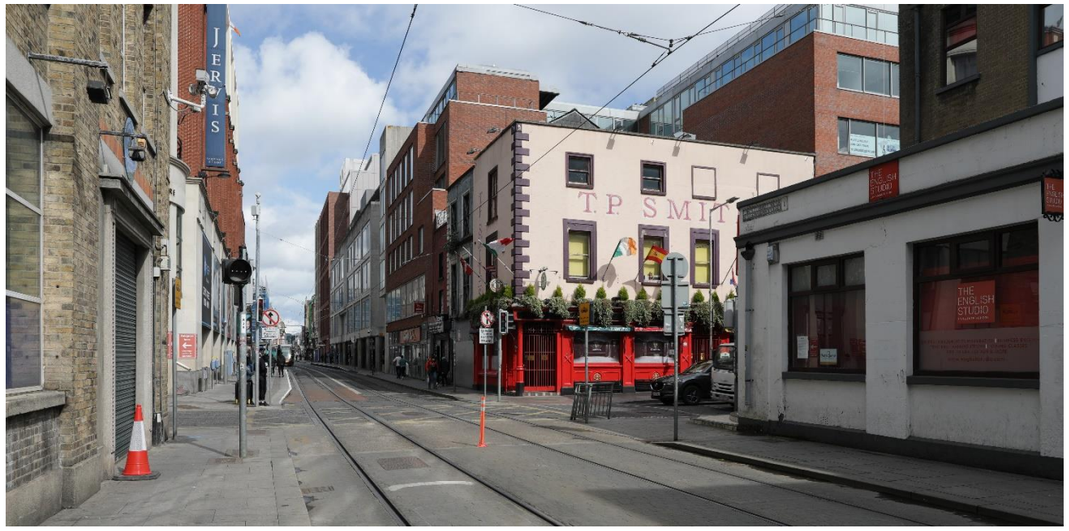
- The significance of the visual effects would be 'imperceptible' and neutral.

The three views from Upper Abbey Street to the west of the site (Viewpoints 4, 5 and 9) show that the proposed development would have no material effect on views or visual amenity to the west. This is an important finding with respect to the NPF, which encourages planning authorities to seek opportunities to achieve greater density in city centres, where the particular conditions allow this to be accommodated.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)



Proposed View



Viewpoint 6: Liffey Street Lower at Great Strand Street Junction

Permitted View

- This view is an example of the diversity of buildings in the site environs. The most notable is the building on the corner site across the junction, with its distinctive multi-ridged roof. (The small brown brick building to the right of the junction, 'The Lotts' bar, is a protected structure.)
- The permitted Marlet development and the adjoining subject building are visible behind and to the left of the corner building across the junction, their composite form protruding well above the crown-like foreground roofline. They contribute to a view composition which is visually interesting in its complexity, but not of particularly high amenity value.
- It is notable that the elements of the two permitted developments which are visible are largely designed to minimise their visual presence (the Marlet scheme in particular) to avoid dominating the smaller, older buildings. This is successful to an extent, although (a) it limits the architectural expression in the new buildings, and (b) the older street-front buildings are clearly strong enough in character to withstand change in their environs.
- The least successful element of the permitted developments is the plain grey curtain-walled volume of the Marlet building that adjoins the subject building. This has a utilitarian appearance which detracts from the overall composition. It is not clearly distinct from the subject building and therefore it undermines the more refined and articulated façade of the subject building.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium. The townscape and the view composition are complex and there is capacity for change.

Proposed View

- A relatively inconspicuous element of the composition would be changed just sufficiently to make it a feature of the view. The slightly recessed metal-clad level above the brick shoulder, the additional height and the attractive, faceted cladding of the upper volume would improve the appearance of the subject building. It would also negate the detracting effect of the adjoining Marlet building (the grey curtain wall-clad volume).
- The magnitude of change would be medium.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects is predicted to be 'moderate' and positive. The appearance of the building itself would be improved and the overall composition of built form would be more visually interesting and of higher design and material quality. There would be no negative effects (such as dominance or screening) on the smaller, older buildings in the foreground.

It is significant that two of the viewpoints most exposed and therefore most affected by the proposed change, namely Viewpoints 2 and 6, would experience a positive visual change.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 7: Wellington Quay west of Ha'penny Bridge

Permitted View

- Fronting Ormond Quay on the far side of the Liffey is a row of mostly Georgian buildings of four and five storeys, with the later Edwardian building No. 40 (the Winding Stair) prominent and a number of modern insertions also visible. Many of the buildings are protected structures. The variety in the architecture contributes to the visual interest and high amenity value of the view - along with the distinctive bridge, the open space of the river and quays, and the trees across the river.
- The permitted Marlet building will protrude marginally above the roofline of the Winding Stair, with a small part of the subject building discernible to the right. They have limited visual presence and no significant effect on the character or quality of the view.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high.

Proposed View

- The taller upper volume of the building would protrude above the roofline of the river-front buildings. It would form part of an emerging belt of taller, contemporary development set back from the Liffey (along Great Strand Street and Abbey Street).
- While conspicuous due to its light coloured, faceted cladding, this treatment would also ensure that the protrusion would not affect the legibility or otherwise detract from the protected structures fronting Ormond Quay.
- In the panoramic view afforded from the quay the magnitude of change (from the permitted baseline) would be low.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects would be 'moderate' and neutral. The introduction of a building of contemporary urban scale and architectural character to the evolving city centre landscape is not inappropriate, and it would have no negative effect (e.g. screening, dominance or reduced legibility) on any of the elements that generate the amenity in the view.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 10: Wellington Quay east of Ha'penny Bridge

Permitted View

- From this angle more of the permitted development on the subject site and the Marlet site is exposed to view. This reveals the dual character of the townscape across the river, with a strip of predominantly historic buildings fronting Ormond Quay and a belt of contemporary development further back from the Liffey along Great Strand Street and Abbey Street.
- It is notable that these developments will not detract from the visual amenity of the Liffey corridor; they clearly form a distinct character area (being physically removed from the quays and of contemporary architecture) and are not unexpected elements of the city centre townscape.
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high.

Proposed View

- Although some distance from the viewer the proposed changes to the building would be appreciable – not only the increased height but also the conceptual change to the upper volume. The deliberately inconspicuous upper floors (as permitted) would be replaced by a clearly defined vertical projection intended to add visual interest and design and material quality to the building.
- The metal-clad level above the brick shoulder, the additional height and the attractive, faceted cladding would improve the appearance of the building, adding a new architectural feature to the townscape.
- In the panoramic view afforded from the quay the magnitude of change (from the permitted baseline) would be low.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects would be 'moderate' and positive. The appearance of the building itself would be improved and the development would reinforce the evolving townscape character, with no detriment to the protected structures fronting Ormond Quay or the Liffey corridor overall.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

Viewpoint 8: Wellington Quay near Millennium Bridge

Permitted View

- In the view across Millennium Bridge, a short distance to the west of Ha'penny Bridge, there is a greater proportion of modern development fronting the opposite quay. The photomontage also shows that both the Marlet development and the Jervis centre will protrude above the complex roofline of the quayside buildings.
- These differences generate a slightly different character in the view, and there is a higher capacity for change (than Viewpoint 7 in particular).
- The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium.

Proposed View

- The top of the building would protrude above the roofline of the Marlet scheme, well back from the quayside buildings.
- The magnitude of change would be low.

Significance of Visual Effects

- The significance of the visual effects would be 'slight' and neutral. In the panoramic view featuring numerous modern buildings and a particularly complex skyline the protrusion of the building would cause no significant change to the character or amenity value of the view.

Permitted View (refer to Appendix 1 for larger format prints)

Proposed View

6.0 Conclusion

The visual effects assessment is summarised in the table below.

No	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
1	Upper Abbey Street at Abbey Cottages Junction	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible, Neutral
2	Abbey Street at Liffey Street Upper Junction	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Positive
3	Middle Abbey Street Near Arnotts	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Neutral
4	Upper Abbey Street Opposite Chapter House	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible, Neutral
5	Upper Abbey Street at Jervis Luas Stop	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible, Neutral
9	Upper Abbey Street west of Jervis Street Junction	Medium	Negligible	Imperceptible, Neutral
6	Liffey Street Lower at Great Strand Street Junction	Medium	Medium	Moderate, Positive
7	Wellington Quay west of Ha'penny Bridge	High	Low	Moderate, Neutral
10	Wellington Quay east of Ha'penny Bridge	High	Low	Moderate, Positive
8	Wellington Quay near Millennium Bridge	Medium	Low	Slight, Neutral

The key findings of the assessment include the following:

- In views from the streetscape in the immediate vicinity of the development (e.g. Viewpoints 1 and 4), the changes to the building above the ninth floor shoulder would be barely discernible and would have no significant effect on the townscape character or visual amenity.
- In views from the west along Upper Abbey Street (Viewpoints 4, 5 and 9) the proposed development would have no significant effect on townscape character or views/ visual amenity. The set back vertical extension would be largely hidden from view by the adjoining Marlet building. This is an important finding – that a substantial portion of the receiving environment would experience no material change.
- In views from the east along Abbey Street (e.g. Viewpoint 2) and south east along Liffey Street Lower (Viewpoint 6), the proposed building would be more prominent but the building would be improved. In the permitted building the two floors above the shoulder are designed to recede from view. The height of the building is intentionally downplayed and as a result it is somewhat apologetic in form and design at the upper levels. This design approach can be seen in modern buildings throughout the city, where architects sought to achieve density without the appearance of density. In the proposed development this element/characteristic of the building would be replaced by a new upper volume with a distinct form and attractive faceted cladding – seeking not to recede from view but to add a feature of architectural and visual interest to the building. In both Views 2 and 6 (and Viewpoint 10 on the south quays of the Liffey east of Ha'penny Bridge) the improvement in the building would be appreciable, and in a townscape already characterised by diversity in building typology and form, scale, architecture and materials it would only add to the area's visual interest and strengthen its character.
- In views from the south quays of the Liffey (a Conservation Area) the taller building would protrude higher above the roofline of the quayside buildings, many of which are protected structures. At over 150m distance (from Wellington Quay to the site) the building would have limited visual presence but it would nonetheless be a notable change to the composition of the views – an effect of moderate significance. The effect on townscape character and visual amenity would generally be neutral since it would reinforce the established pattern of (mostly) historic quayside buildings with a strip of larger scale, contemporary development to the rear. In some views (e.g. Viewpoint 10), where the building is more exposed, the appearance of the building itself would be improved, and there would be no detriment to the protected structures fronting Ormond Quay or the Liffey corridor overall.

In summary, the proposed development would see:

1) the best aspects of the permitted building retained - including (a) the elements borrowed from the context (the building line, proportions, rhythm and symmetry, brick and other high quality materials), and (b) the complementary relationship with the Marlet scheme;
2) the deliberately plain upper volume of the building (as permitted) replaced with a larger volume of distinct form with an attractive, faceted cladding – intentionally transforming the upper volume into an architectural feature of the building and the wider townscape;

The building would be more prominent as a result – particularly in more distant views from Middle Abbey Street to the east (e.g. Viewpoint 3), but overall the effect on townscape character would be neutral or positive. This takes into account that the townscape of Middle and Upper Abbey Street, already characterised by diversity in building typology, scale and architecture, is about to undergo a further change with the introduction of several buildings of singular architectural character (and in the case of the Jervis Centre, substantial scale). These developments all seek to maximise the land use yield from the respective sites in recognition of the street's unusual combination of (a) highly accessible city centre location, and (b) relative lack of sensitivity. These developments will reinforce the eclectic character of the area and elevate the overall quality of the townscape – by improving the building stock and the public realm/ streetscape.

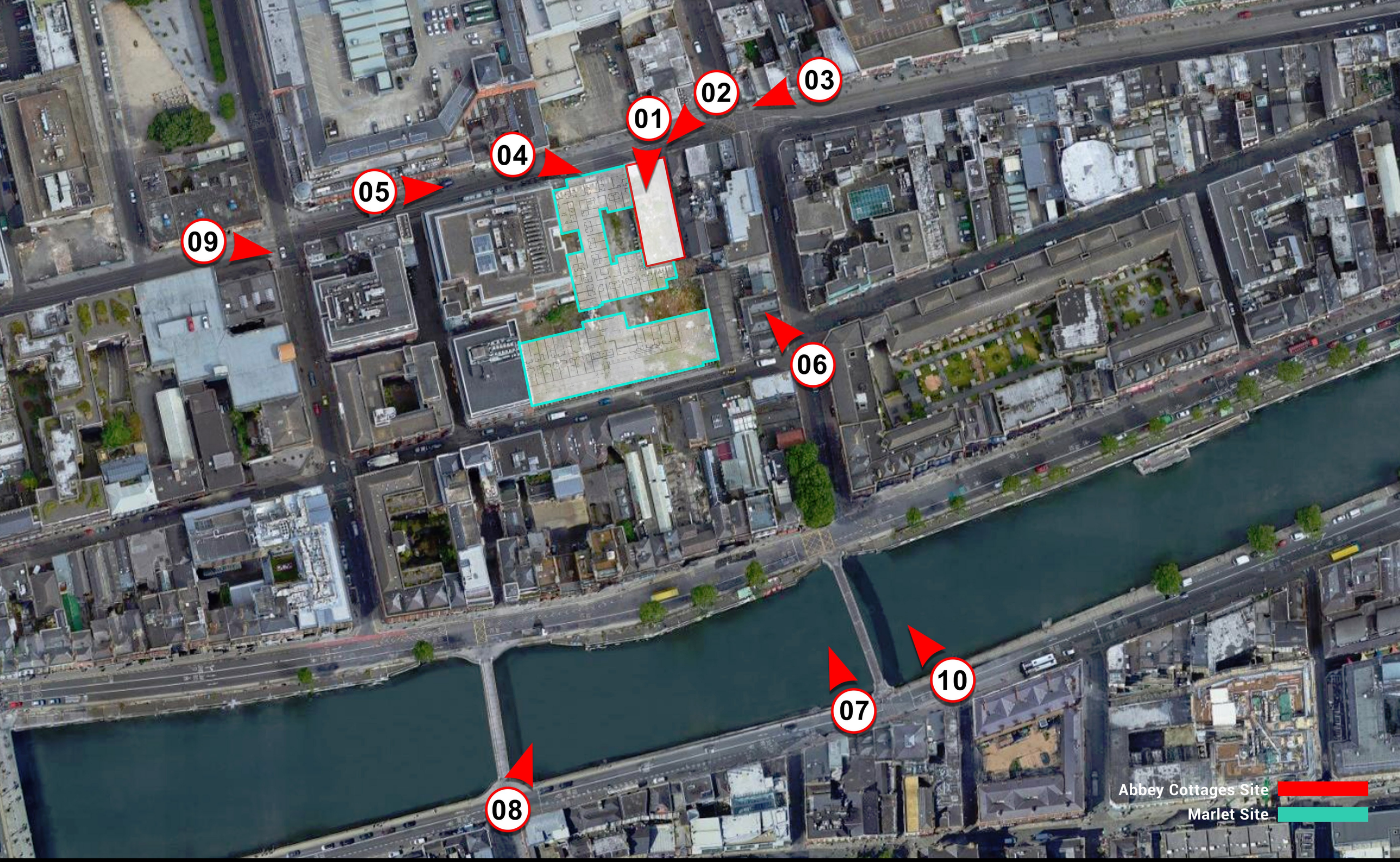
Appendix 1 - Verified Photomontages

Proposed Increase in Height of Permitted Development at 35-36 Abbey Street Upper and Abbey Cottages, Dublin 1

Prepared by Model Works Ltd for Abbey Cottages Ltd

June 2021

.MODEL WORKS



MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

viewpoint: **View Location Map**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 13:23
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street at Abbey Cottages Junction
E 315648.778 N 234457.156

viewpoint: **View 01 Existing**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 13:23
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street at Abbey Cottages Junction
E 315648.778 N 234457.156

viewpoint: **View 01** **Permitted**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 13:23
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street at Abbey Cottages Junction
E 315648.778 N 234457.156

viewpoint: **View 01 Proposed**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

.MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:28
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Abbey Street at Liffey Street Upper Junction
E 315673.898 N 234464.504

viewpoint: **View 02 Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:*	07-05-2021 11:28 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Abbey Street at Liffey Street Upper Junction E 315673.898 N 234464.504	*viewpoint:* **View 02 Permitted** *issued:* 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

.MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:*	07-05-2021 11:28 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Abbey Street at Liffey Street Upper Junction E 315673.898 N 234464.504	*viewpoint:* **View 02 Proposed** *issued:* 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:28
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Middle Abbey Street
Near Arnotts
E 315745.709 N 234478.029

viewpoint: **View 03 Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:*	07-05-2021 11:28 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Middle Abbey Street Near Arnotts E 315745.709 N 234478.029	*viewpoint:* **View 03 Permitted** *issued:* 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:*	07-05-2021 11:28 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Middle Abbey Street Near Arnotts E 315745.709 N 234478.029	*viewpoint:* **View 03 Proposed** *issued:* 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 16:12
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
Opposite Chapter House
E 315600.615 N 234443.027

viewpoint: **View 04 Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 16:12
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
Opposite Chapter House
E 315600.615 N 234443.027

viewpoint: **View 04 Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 16:12
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
Opposite Chapter House
E 315600.615 N 234443.027

viewpoint: **View 04 Proposed**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 12:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
at Jervis Luas Stop
E 315555.013 N 234429.770

viewpoint: **View 05 Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 12:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
at Jervis Luas Stop
E 315555.013 N 234429.770

viewpoint: **View 05 Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 12:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
at Jervis Luas Stop
E 315555.013 N 234429.770

viewpoint: **View 05 Proposed**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS	*project:* Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:* 07-05-2021 11:04 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:* Liffey Street Lower at Grand Strand Street Junction E 315708.976 N 234366.633	*viewpoint:* **View 06** **Existing** *issued:* 15-06-2021			

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:04
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Liffey Street Lower at Grand Strand Street Junction
E 315708.976 N 234366.633

viewpoint: **View 06** **Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

.MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Abbey Street Hostel	*photography:*	07-05-2021 11:04 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Liffey Street Lower at Grand Strand Street Junction E 315708.976 N 234366.633	*viewpoint:* **View 06 Proposed** *issued:* 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:44
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315724.855 N 234243.364

viewpoint: **View 07 Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:44
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315724.855 N 234243.364

viewpoint: **View 07** **Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:44
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315724.855 N 234243.364

viewpoint: **View 07 Proposed**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:50
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Millenium Bridge
E 315600.004 N 234205.474

viewpoint: **View 08** **Existing**

issued: 20-02-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:50
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Millenium Bridge
E 315600.004 N 234205.474

viewpoint: **View 08** **Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:50
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Millenium Bridge
E 315600.004 N 234205.474

viewpoint: **View 08** **Proposed**

issued: 23-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 15:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
outside the Jervis Centre
E 315492.484 N 234411.941

viewpoint: **View 09** **Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 15:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
outside the Jervis Centre
E 315492.484 N 234411.941

viewpoint: **View 09** **Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 04-05-2021 15:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Upper Abbey Street
outside the Jervis Centre
E 315492.484 N 234411.941

viewpoint: **View 09** **Proposed**

issued: 24-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:40
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315755.734 N 234263.647

viewpoint: **View 10** **Existing**

issued: 15-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens) | Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:40
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315755.734 N 234263.647

viewpoint: **View 10** **Permitted**

issued: 22-06-2021

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Abbey Street Hostel

photography: 07-05-2021 11:40
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Wellinton Quay near
Ha'penny Bridge
E 315755.734 N 234263.647

viewpoint: **View 10** **Proposed**

issued: 24-06-2021

APPENDIX 2 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 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 Categories of Landscape/Townscape Change

Magnitude of Change	Description
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 the guide in Table 3. The matrix (Table 3) is only a guide. The assessor also 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

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

The EPA draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2017 describes the significance classifications as follows:

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 one 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).

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 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 guide in Table 3 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.