

CHAPTER 6

# Built Environment and Urban Design

*Aim:* To promote a high quality built environment through measures to protect the archaeological and built heritage and to promote high quality urban design.

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## Introduction

- 6.1** The City Council places a high value on the City's built heritage, whilst promoting new development to allow the City to adapt to accommodate necessary change, with new development reflecting the identity of Cork.
- 6.2** This chapter combines policies relating to the design and development of proposals affecting the built environment and new urban environments. This includes policies relating to archaeology, the conservation of the built environment and urban design.

### Objectives

- **Promote the sustainable development of the built environment, reinforcing the strong and distinctive character of Cork.**
- **Promote new development that respects the past but allows for necessary change.**
- **Ensure that elements of archaeological, architectural and other cultural significance are identified, retained and interpreted wherever possible and the knowledge placed in the public domain.**
- **Promote the retention and enhancement of buildings and other elements of architectural or other significance.**
- **Ensure that all new development in the City is of a high standard.**
- **Reinforce the urban character of the City Centre and inner city areas, reinforce the character of the suburbs and ensure that major new developments create their own identity.**
- **Consolidate the City Centre reinforcing gateways and linkages.**
- **Create a new urban district in Docklands, extending the existing City Centre.**
- **Improve and encourage access to and understanding of the architectural heritage of the City.**

**6.3** Cork City's unique character derives from the combination of its plan, topography, built fabric and its location at a point where the River Lee divides to form a number of waterways. Medieval Cork developed on islands in the River Lee and its original layout survives in the historic core of the City. Medieval Cork was a walled city and the shadow of the wall remains today, influencing the street-scapes and street pattern.

**6.4** The medieval street layout is largely retained in the modern street plan of the central core. The walled enclosure of medieval Cork extending from South Gate Bridge to North Gate Bridge was bisected by the long spine of the main street - today's South and North Main Streets. Many lane-ways and alleys led off the street at right angles. A large number of laneways still exist. Others are incorporated into the layout of later buildings, e.g. giving access to backyards usually at either side of a pair of houses. The size of property units is generally retained as in medieval times.

**6.5** Historically Cork extended from the medieval walled City in a number of directions. The roads from the south and north were developed contemporaneously with the walled town (indeed the area around St Fin Barre's Cathedral predates it). From the later Seventeenth Century, the City gradually reclaimed the river marshes to the west and east. The newly reclaimed areas were separated by river channels which were used by the expanding shipping trade. As the trade grew, and as ships grew larger, the port activities moved downriver to the east and many of the river channels were covered over, becoming the wider streets and urban spaces: St Patrick's Street, Grand Parade, South Mall, Cornmarket Street, Emmet Place etc. In the early 19th Century Washington Street was created, cutting through the densely built up former medieval city, to connect the newly developed City Centre with the western suburbs. At the same time, the villas and country houses on the hills to the north and south were giving way to the blocks of terraced Georgian-style houses, many associated with the military barracks and navy.



The mills, warehouses, distilleries and breweries and other industrial buildings which survive in many parts of Cork bear witness to the great economic expansion of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Many of these buildings, as well as being of industrial archaeological importance, are also of significant architectural and social interest, and contribute greatly to the City's character. The lanes of small single and two-storey houses provided homes for the industrial workers.

**6.6**

## Archaeology

### Understanding modern Cork by reference to the past

Cork is one of the oldest cities in Ireland, yet on first impressions one sees a modern bustling port city. There are few surviving ancient monuments in Cork and most of the buildings are of 18th–20th Century date. Without an appreciation of the past, modern Cork could be viewed as an unfavourable location for a city with restrictive obstacles to access, transport, drainage and developmental potential. Only through an understanding of the past obtained from the study of archaeology, history and cartography can the factors which have influenced the shape of the City be appreciated.

**6.7**

In the absence of standing buildings from the earlier periods of Cork's existence, buried archaeological remains take on increased significance. Most of these remains are fragile and vulnerable in the face of current construction methods.

**6.8**

#### **The Value of Archaeological Knowledge**

*The acquisition and dissemination of knowledge is a core principle of the policy for archaeological heritage. To this end all appropriate archaeological excavations should be undertaken to the highest possible standard and where possible the information made publicly available.*

**POLICY BE 1**

### Preservation of archaeological remains in-situ

Archaeology in its various forms ranging from fragmentary buried remains to the fabric and contents of modern domestic and industrial buildings is a vital component of the culture, conservation and redevelopment in the City. The in-situ preservation of undisturbed archaeological material was a core principle of the 1994 *Historic Centre Action Plan* which sought to reconcile much needed urban renewal, economic, employment and social objectives with conservation and restoration of the built heritage, as well as preservation of the historically influenced character of the City and its buried archaeological strata. A presumption in favour of the retention of the existing built environment is the best way of protecting the buried archaeological strata.

**6.9**

#### **Preservation of Archaeological Remains in-situ**

*In the interests of sustainability, impacts on the buried archaeological environment should be avoided where possible, in accordance with national policy. For this reason developments that do not compromise the in-situ record of the past will be encouraged. This is most effectively achieved by the refurbishment of existing buildings, in situations where it is possible to retain the greater part of existing structures without the need for new foundations.*

**POLICY BE 2**

### Archaeological Excavations

The buried archaeology of Cork embraces every era of Cork's development from the 7th century monastery to the 17th century city. Remains from the medieval period are particularly rich. Archaeological remains lie within a metre of the modern surface, particularly in the North and South Main Street areas and these strata survive to a depth of 3m to 4m in places. These are the major archaeological assets of the City.

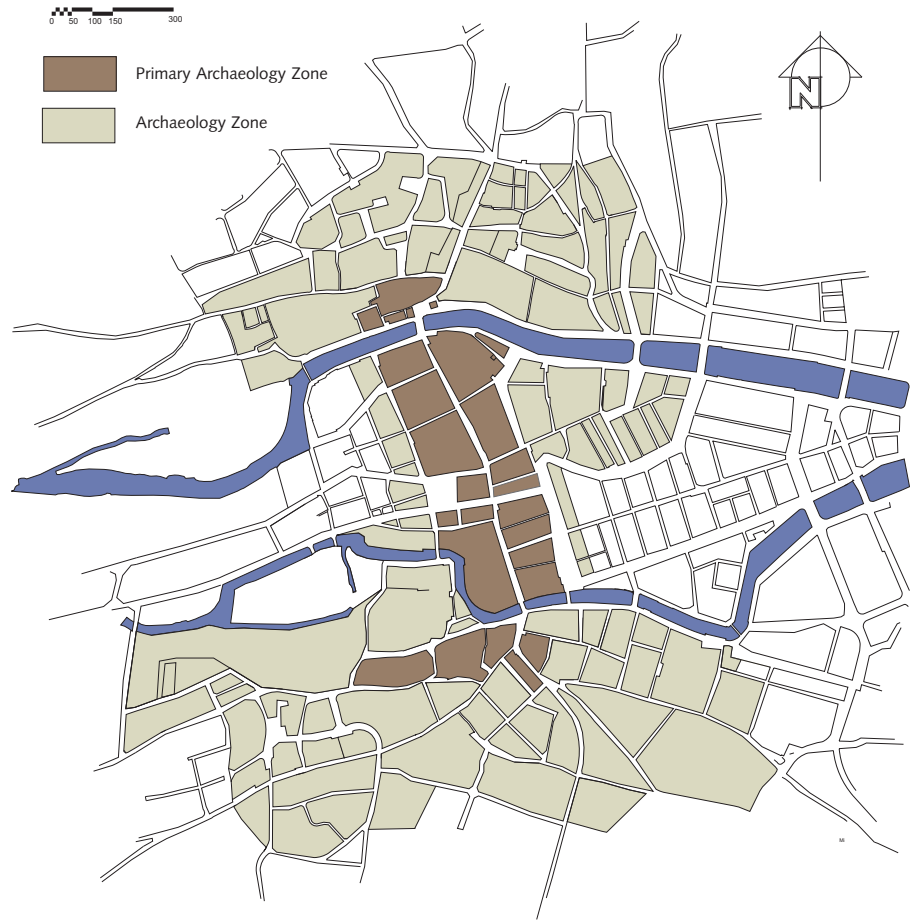
**6.10**

Many archaeological excavations have been carried out in the City Centre over the last decade, particularly in the Urban Renewal Designated Areas, where extensive redevelopment has taken place. The Zone of Archaeological Potential in the City Centre is indicated in Fig 6.1. Procedures required to protect archaeological heritage in the context of development are contained in Chapter 11: paras.11.92 to 11.93. Outside of the Historic Core, numerous sites, especially church sites and burial grounds, are also of primary archaeological significance. In particular many old burial grounds covered areas greater than their contemporary enclosures, consequently human burials occur beneath some of the streets and houses of the City. In these areas, new buildings may not be appropriate, or may require extensive archaeological excavations in order to obtain maximum archaeological information from the site.

**6.11**

FIGURE 6.1

Zone of Archaeological Potential



POLICY BE 3

**Development on Burial Grounds**

*Development may be restricted or conditions requiring substantial excavation may be imposed in and adjacent to former burial grounds.*

Survey of remains of medieval buildings incorporated in later structures

**6.12** Above ground there are only a few surviving medieval and early post medieval structures such as Red Abbey Tower (15th Century), Elizabeth Fort (early 17th Century). Far more numerous are components of medieval buildings, incorporated into the walls of later buildings. Where such material is known the structures are Recorded Monuments or Protected Structures. Elsewhere, the potential for the occurrence of elements of ancient structures within more modern buildings necessitates pre-development architectural survey and vigilance in demolition works.

POLICY BE 4

**Surveys and Monitoring**

*Archaeological surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring will be required for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance, if the application is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological structures or deposits. Other areas of high archaeological potential may exist outside the boundaries of conventionally recognised monuments especially in the former marsh areas and in the inter-tidal zone.*

Industrial archaeology

**6.13** Cork's pre-eminence as an industrial centre in the 18th and 19th centuries has created the most tangible record of historic archaeological remains still surviving in the contemporary city. Today many of the buildings that housed the industries and the associated warehouses, grain-stores, malt-houses, etc. still survive. Many of these buildings have been demolished in recent years, some are derelict or ruinous, some are converted but scarcely recognisable as historic buildings while an exceptional few have been sympathetically converted and refurbished. Associated features, such as millraces, are particularly vulnerable as they may extend for considerable distances from the core building. Intact machinery and fittings rarely survive but structural elements designed to accommodate machinery can be extremely informative.

**Industrial Archaeology**

*All developmental proposals for industrial buildings and sites of industrial archaeological importance must be accompanied by an assessment of the surrounding environment and new development should be designed in sympathy with existing features and structures.*

**POLICY BE 5**

**Record of Monuments and Places**

Archaeological sites are legally protected by the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The *Record of Monuments and Places* is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the *National Monuments Act 1994*, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped. The Record includes all known monuments and sites of archaeological importance dating to before 1700 AD, and some sites which date from after 1700 AD. A Zone of Archaeological Potential is shown around each monument.

**6.14**

**Sites of Established Archaeological Interest**

*It is an objective to safeguard the archaeological value of the sites (and their settings) listed in the Record of Monuments and Places. In assessing proposals for development the City Council will have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.*

**POLICY BE 6**

**Protection of Cork's historic street pattern**

The historic street pattern of Cork is an intrinsic part of the City. In all their surviving forms the laneways are of special significance to the character of the historic core of Cork City. In addition to their historic interest, the laneways also play an important role in making the City Centre more accessible by providing routes through larger City Centre blocks. For example, both Saint Peter's Church Lane and Coleman's Lane play a crucial role in making North Main Street accessible to the Marsh area. It is the policy of Cork City Council to preserve the City's historic street pattern, and in particular to encourage the survival and enhancement of the laneways within any new developments.

**6.15**

**Protection of Cork's Historic Street Pattern**

*The City Council will seek to protect Cork's historic street pattern, and in particular, seek to conserve and enhance the laneways within the historic core of the City Centre.*

**POLICY BE 7**

**Conservation of the Built Heritage**

Much of the attraction of the central parts of Cork lies in its heritage of 18th and 19th Century buildings. Though often not individually very important, these buildings contribute to the City's acknowledged distinctive character. Collectively, if properly used and maintained, they can make a significant impact on the retention and enhancement of that character. In order to maintain their distinctive character it will be important for the City Council, if resources allow, to monitor the condition of historic buildings, maintain a 'Buildings at Risk' register and to take positive action when necessary through the use of appropriate legal measures. It will be important for future generations to be able to appreciate and understand what this character (archaeology/architectural) meant and therefore recording, archiving and dissemination of information will be equally important.

**6.16**

**Encouragement of Refurbishment of Historic Built Environment**

*The City Council will endeavour to devise and implement policies to positively encourage and facilitate the careful refurbishment of the historic built environment for sustainable and economically viable uses.*

**POLICY BE 8**

**Protected Structures**

Listed buildings are now known as Protected Structures, and are listed in the *Record of Protected Structures* (RPS). Owners of such buildings should be reassured that protection does not mean preservation: buildings can and will change over time, but in a way that retains what makes them special.

**6.17**

The *Record of Protected Structures* forms Volume 2 of the Plan. It lists the structures that the City Council considers to be of significant architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical importance or which make an important individual contribution to the distinctive and particular character of the City.

**6.18**

**POLICY BE 9**

**Revision of Record of Protected Structures**

*Cork City Council will, using the provisions of Part IV of the Planning & Development Act 2000, endeavour to revise the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the light of the publication of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and other relevant surveys.*

**Purpose of designation**

- 6.19** The effect of protected structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of the building are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced. Therefore, works which would, in the opinion of the City Council, have a material effect on the character of the structure, require planning permission.

**Section 57 Declarations**

- 6.20** It is important to state that not all alterations or works to a Protected Structure will constitute material alterations. Owners and occupiers and their agents should seek a declaration under Section 57 of the *Planning & Development Act 2000* setting out what categories of works are exempt and what are not in the specific case of each building.

**Demolition of Protected Structures**

- 6.21** Demolition of Protected Structures and proposed Protected Structures will not generally be permitted. Most structures, even those in poor condition, can generally be practically and economically repaired, once an economically viable and sustainable use has been found. Only in very exceptional cases will demolition be justified.
- 6.22** Caution must be exercised when permitting the demolition of part of a Protected Structure, or of structures in its curtilage. Adequate research on the development of the site and of the contribution of the part or of subsidiary curtilage structures must form part of any application for partial demolition, to demonstrate that they do not contribute to the special character of the Protected Structure. Later additions or alterations may often be of as great or greater interest as the principal or original structure. Where a Protected Structure is in a dangerous condition and is a matter of public safety, the Council will have regard to its special character when considering the appropriate action required to make it safe.

**POLICY BE 10**

**Demolition of Protected Structures**

*Where it is not a matter of urgent public safety, a proposal to demolish a Protected Structure requires the strongest justification and will generally be refused. The demolition of a Protected Structure will only be permitted if it can be shown that a greater public interest will be served which outweighs the loss to the architectural heritage. The demolition of a Protected Structure with the retention of its façade will likewise not generally be permitted.*

**POLICY BE 11**

**Fire Damage Affecting Protected Structures**

*Where a Protected Structure has been damaged by fire, the retention of those elements that make it of special interest and which have survived, either in whole or in part, should be retained where this is practicable.*

**POLICY BE 12**

**Recording**

*Where it is proposed to alter or demolish, either partially or totally, a Protected Structure for any reason whatsoever, a full record of the structure and its significant elements should be prepared to best conservation practice. The record required is detailed in Chapter 11: para. 11.89.*

**Curtilage, attendant grounds of Protected Structures**

- 6.23** Curtilage is normally taken to be the parcel of ground immediately associated with the Protected Structure, or in use for the purposes of the structure. Protection extends to the buildings and land lying within the curtilage. While the curtilage sometimes coincides with the present property boundary, it can originally have included lands, features or even buildings now in separate ownership, e.g. the lodge of a former country house, or the garden features located in land subsequently sold off. Such lands are described as being attendant grounds, and the protection extends to them just as if they were still within the curtilage of the Protected Structure.

## Setting

The special character of individual Protected Structures is often greatly enhanced by the harmony produced by its setting within a larger group of buildings and by the spaces created between them. The buildings making up the setting of the Protected Structure may not be of great importance in themselves, but are of importance for their contribution to the context within which the Protected Structure is located. This is even more so when the setting involves a garden or parkland of historic significance.

**6.24**

### Setting of Protected Structures

*Development within the setting of a Protected Structure which is not exempt may sometimes be restricted in order to avoid negative impacts on a Protected Structure. Where the setting involves a garden/parkland of historic significance, development affecting this may be further restricted.*

**POLICY BE 13**

### Changes of Use

*Applications for change of use will normally only be considered where the level of physical intervention required to make the building suitable for its new use does not damage or alter the character of the structure that makes it of special interest.*

**POLICY BE 14**

## Alterations and extensions

When extending or altering a Protected Structure it is important that the changes being proposed do not result in damage to the special character, and that any extensions are architecturally and otherwise appropriate to the existing character of the structure. In general, while new interventions should be harmonious, it is preferable that they be recognisably of their own time. Poor quality pastiche will lessen the significance of the original without adding anything of our time.

**6.25**

## Internal alterations

Alterations and other works to the interior of a Protected Structure require planning permission where the existing character would be materially altered. As stated in para. 6.20 above, a declaration can be sought to clarify what categories of works would and would not materially affect the character of a Protected Structure. Repair and refurbishment works, when carried out in accordance with conservation best practice (e.g. as outlined in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's *Conservation Guideline leaflets*), may not constitute a material change to the character of the structure. However, the manner in which works are carried out can seriously affect the special character, e.g. in the way that historic floorboards are treated when installing services, when repairing defective lath and plaster ceilings, or upgrading existing joinery for increased fire-resistance. These works can be done in a way that involves no material alteration of character, but also, and all too often, can be done in ways that involve great damage to the historic fabric of the building.

**6.26**



### Access to Protected Structures

- 6.27** Design of disabled access to Protected Structures requires great sensitivity. Careful thought is required of designers to ensure that such access is provided in a way that does not compromise the special character of a Protected Structure.

### Enabling Development

- 6.28** Development which would not conflict with general planning objectives for the area in which a Protected Structure is located will be considered on its merits and on the impact such development would have on the character of the Protected Structure, its curtilage or setting.

**POLICY BE 15**

**Enabling Development**

*Cork City Council will consider permitting the following, notwithstanding the zoning of the relevant area:*

- *The restoration of a Protected Structure or other building of architectural or other merit, currently in poor condition, to conservation best practice standard for any purpose compatible with the character of the building;*
- *The conversion of a Protected Structure or other building of architectural or other merit, independent of its current condition, to a tourist-related use in cases where, in the City Council's opinion, the converted building is capable of functioning as an important additional tourist attraction or facility, and the use is compatible with the character of the building;*
- *The provision of tourist accommodation in a Protected Structure or other building of architectural or other merit which supports the broadening of the tourist market by virtue of its location close to tourist attractions or other tourist accommodation, and the use is compatible with the character of the building.*

## Areas of Special Character

### Purpose of designation

- 6.29** Historic areas and buildings of heritage importance can and will change. The City Council recognises that such areas must grow and evolve if they are not to stagnate. The aim should not be solely to preserve areas of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest or which contribute to the setting of important protected structures, but to guide their evolution in a way that protects what is special and distinctive.
- 6.30** Cork's historic areas can now be protected by means of Architectural Conservation Area status under Section 81 of the *Planning & Development Act 2000*. The aim of the Council when conferring such status will be to guide their evolution in ways that protect their special characteristics and distinctive features and will over time add new qualities. This emphasis on a holistic approach to the protection of special character within the designated areas has led to a decision by the City Council to term such areas 'Areas of Special Character'.
- 6.31** The effect of Section 81 designation as Architectural Conservation Areas/Areas of Special Character is that external works materially affecting the character as defined by the Planning Authority will require planning permission. The repair or refurbishment of buildings in a manner which does not materially affect the external character will not require planning permission.
- 6.32** Development control policies for these areas will be formulated to protect and enhance the special character of the area, so that proposed alterations and new development will be in keeping with the special character.
- 6.33** It is important to emphasise that the protection of the existing character is not intended to promote inappropriate pastiche or copying of existing historical architectural styles.

## Criteria and priority for selection of Areas of Special Character

To effectively introduce the provisions of Architectural Conservation Area Status requires a significant input of resources on the part of the Local Authority. The Local Authority will adopt Architectural Conservation Areas/Areas of Special Character as resources allow, and in consultation with local residents, property owners and local business interests. **6.34**

The following criteria will apply when deciding suitability for designation as Architectural Conservation Areas/Area of Special Character: **6.35**

- The area proposed must have a distinctive character of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical special interest, or must contribute significantly to the setting of an important protected structure.
- There must be evidence of the usefulness of designation for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The following scheme of priorities will be used when assessing suitability for designation of areas: **6.36**

- The area being considered will be assessed against other potential areas using the criteria set out under the terms of Section 81, *Planning & Development Act 2000*, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines and the criteria set out in para. 6.35.
- There should be such local support for the initiative to be effective in promoting the sustainable evolution of the area.
- Sufficient resources must be available to successfully survey the areas selected, formulate the appropriate development policies and have them successfully implemented.

Three areas have been selected initially in order to pilot the methodology: The Wellington Road/St Luke's area, the Grattan Hill/O'Mahony's Avenue area and the North Main Street area of the historic centre. The areas have been selected as pilot areas because they raise relevant issues that allow for the testing of the legislative designation and will contribute valuable experience in how best to operate it. **6.37**

As resources allow, and in the light of the experience of operation in the initial pilot areas, the City Council will designate new Architectural Conservation Areas/Areas of Special Character in accordance with the above policies. Such areas could include historic city and suburban areas, such as parts of Sunday's Well, Western Road, College Road, Blackrock Village, Victoria Road, Blackpool Village, the South Parish, UCC area, the Shandon/North Mall/Pope's Quay area etc. as well as historic designed landscapes such as the Mardyke and the Marina. **6.38**

### Adoption of Areas of Special Character

*Three Areas of Special Character/Architectural Conservation Areas are adopted in this Plan:*

- *The Wellington Road/St Luke's area.*
- *The North Main Street of the historic centre.*
- *The Grattan Hill/Mahony's Avenue area.*

**POLICY BE 16**

### Demolition in an Area of Special Character

*Demolition of structures and parts of structures will in principle only be permitted in an Area of Special Character where the structure, or parts of a structure, are considered not to contribute to the special or distinctive character, or where the replacement structure would significantly enhance the special character more than the retention of the original structure.*

**POLICY BE 17**

### Recording

*Where a structure or part of a structure which is considered to contribute to the special character, is to be demolished, it should first be recorded prior to demolition, and where appropriate, should be monitored during demolition.*

**POLICY BE 18**

### Generic Policies

- 6.39** Development objectives may include recommendations in relation to all or some of the following, depending on the particular Area of Special Character:
- Identification of views and prospects to be maintained with consequent building lines and height restrictions and other development constraints affecting new development and alteration or extension of existing structures.
  - Formulation of acceptable standards of maintenance and repair works, whether deemed exempt or requiring planning permission.
  - Acceptable materials and finishes for new development.
  - Policies affecting building attachments such as satellite dishes, advertising and general signage, hoardings, awnings, canopies, flagpoles, banners, masts and pylons, floodlighting and other external works.
  - Waste management (e.g. wheelie bin locations external to a structure).
  - Policies for private and public car-parking.
  - Inter-relation between Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character protection and other forms of protection (e.g. tree preservation orders) and development promotion schemes (e.g. tax designation schemes such as IAPs, LOTS).
  - Standards of documentation required in planning applications.
  - Permitted uses and the degree to which intensification of existing uses and changes of use will be permitted.
  - Design guidelines for specific areas where these are considered necessary.
  - The protection of amenity and open space associated with buildings and groups of buildings.

### Trees and landscapes

**6.40** Much of the character of Cork’s historic areas is comprised of bands of trees interspersed and forming the setting to significant historic buildings and groups of buildings. This visual effect is enhanced by the hilly topography of the City. Distant views are particularly important to and from the northside of the River Lee, towards and out of such areas as Sunday’s Well, Shandon, St Patrick’s Hill, St Luke’s Cross, Montenotte, Tivoli, but also the views towards the planted areas on the southside such as the Mardyke and the Marina. The ridges on the southside such as at UCC and Blackrock/Ballintemple, are lower and less prominent but still contain important building groups within attractive planted settings.

**6.41** The City Council will protect such planting by means of Ridge Protection Policies, Tree Preservation Orders and, where appropriate, by means of Areas of Special Character where the planting forms an integral part of the historic or other special character of the area (such as is the case in the arrangement of terraced houses with long front gardens along Wellington Road, the rear south-facing gardens of the south side of Sunday’s Well Road, and the remaining designed landscape of the Mardyke and the Marina).



### Wellington Road/St Luke’s Area of Special Character (ASC)

**6.42** This area is adopted as an Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character (ASC) under Section 81 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as part of this Plan (see Fig. 9.2: City Centre Development Objectives).

**Boundary of Area**

The area chosen is centred on the streets running west-to-east, i.e. St Patrick’s Place, Sydney Place, Wellington Road and St Luke’s Place. It is bounded on the west by the rear boundaries of (but not including) the properties on St Patrick’s Hill, on the east and south by Summerhill North (excluding the buildings on the south side of the road), on the north by the rear property boundaries and rear lanes of the terraces of Wellington Road, and by the rear of the St Patrick’s Hospital site. The area proposed also takes in the terraces to the north of St Luke’s Cross along the lower part of Ballyhooley Road, and the bottom of Gardiner’s Hill, including Adelaide Place, as well as St Luke’s Church and the south-facing terraces immediately to the south, Clarence & Victoria Terraces. **6.43**

**Statement of Character**

The character of the area varies as you move from St Patrick’s Place, Sydney Place along Wellington Road and up to St Luke’s Cross. The first section from St Patrick’s Place, Sydney Place and the lower part of Wellington Road as far as York Street is more City Centre in character, with a mixture of uses including offices, warehouses, schools, and apartments, aimed at city-wide users. Physically, it is older, with large Georgian terraced houses entered directly from the street along the northside, and with a mixture of smaller, generally later buildings facing the street along the southside. **6.44**

The middle section of the area along Wellington Road is mainly domestic in character. The area is made up principally of Georgian and Victorian houses, some in single-family occupancy, some sub-divided into self-contained units. Most of the houses are grouped together in formally designed terraces or in pairs. The terraces are designed to face south, although the principal access is generally, but not always, from the street side irrespective of whether the house is on the north or south side. Many of the buildings are designed to look out over and be seen from a distance from the City Centre and the southside of the river. **6.45**

The section to the east end of the area, around St Luke’s Cross, is made up of terraced buildings containing shops, public houses, a post office and other local services in terraces of individual buildings with access directly to the street. Adjacent to the Cross on the east side, there are further blocks of grouped south-facing formally designed terraces, designed to be seen from and to look out over the immediate area and the harbour to the south. **6.46**

The buildings which make up the most of the area are built of brick or stone, usually rendered in lime or old cement. Where houses retain original elevational features, they have timber sliding sash windows, roofs of natural stone slate and cast-iron rain water goods. Many houses have architecturally-composed boundary walls with doorways or gates, cast-iron railings and external steps with metal handrails. The area contains significant lengths of footpaths, with stone steps, cast-iron railings and stretches of stone-kerbing. There are mature trees along the footpath on Wellington Road. **6.47**

**Issues**

The area is undergoing change. Houses in multiple occupancy are being refurbished and returned to single-family use and into larger self-contained units. New houses are being built on former mews lanes and at the rear of large terraced houses **6.48**

Car parking for users of local services and residents is at odds with the parking by City Centre commuters who park in the area and walk into the City Centre. **6.49**

**General Policies**

Planning permission is required for changes materially affecting external materials and features listed in the statement of character above (see paras. 6.44–6.47 above). **6.50**

The repair/refurbishment of buildings in a manner which does not materially affect their external character does not require planning permission on account of the designation as an Area of Special Character. **6.51**

The removal or alteration of traditional railings, stone-kerbing, steps and other features, and any areas of cobbling, external boundary walls, trees, whether privately owned or in the public domain, will require planning permission, where the works involved would materially affect the character described above. **6.52**

Further policies dealing with issues raised in para. 6.39 will be developed in consultation with the local residents, the business community and other relevant parties, both private and public. **6.53**



### North Main Street Area of Special Character (ASC)

**6.54** This area is adopted as an Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character (ASC) under Section 81 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as part of this Plan (see Fig. 9.2: City Centre Development Objectives).

#### Boundary of Area

**6.55** The area chosen is centred around North Main Street and part of South Main Street. It is bounded on the east by the rear of (but not including) the properties on Grand Parade, Cornmarket Street, on the west by Grattan Street, on the south by Hanover Street, and on the north by part of Bachelors and Kyrl's Quays.

#### Statement of Character

**6.56** It is the area of the greatest historic and archaeological significance within the City's boundaries, and is therefore of civic importance to Cork.

**6.57** It is the site of the original medieval city with the present day street and lane layout reflecting the early medieval burgrave plots. The buildings are mainly of 18th and 19th century origin, built after the narrow medieval main street was widened. Beneath the current street and building fabric there is a rich archaeological repository of the City's medieval past. The remains of the City Wall is a recorded monument as is the entire below-ground archaeological zone.

**6.58** North Main Street extends from Griffith Bridge (the former North Gate Bridge) in the north, which carries the road from Shandon to the river-island, to Castle Square in the south via the river-island. The road makes its way across the former river-island with a slight curve and a noticeable widening towards its southern end, characteristics typical of the medieval period. The road crosses a now culverted channel to the present day South Main Street and terminates at the former Castle Square. The buildings on the western sides of Grand Parade, Cornmarket Street, Henry Street and Cross Street are built approximately along the line of the former City Wall. These streets correspond with the river channels which formerly surrounded the walled medieval city and provided both access for trading and protection from attack.

**6.59** Along North and South Main Streets, the buildings are mostly narrow-fronted with long plots, and with a laneway running between each pair of buildings. Many of the laneways are now incorporated into buildings as hallways or private accesses. Building heights are mainly between 3 and 4 storeys, with commercial premises on the ground floors. Buildings on the secondary streets are similar, but with a mix of commercial premises and domestic houses. Because of the narrow-frontages, many businesses in North and South Main Street and the larger side streets extend across a number of buildings and plots.

**6.60** External finishes are mainly painted plaster over brick and rubble stone walls, timber sliding sash windows, stone slated pitched roofs with cast-iron rainwater goods.

**6.61** A number of larger scale buildings are located at the northern end of North Main Street which provide leisure and shopping facilities in modern complexes.

**6.62** There are a number of institutional buildings within the area. Notable examples include the mid-20th century Franciscan and Augustinian Churches, the Catholic Young Men's Hall, and the 18th century former Church of Ireland Parish Church, St Peter's (Cork Vision Centre) which are set-back from the street front, behind cast-iron railings.

**Issues**

The area has suffered from the continuing decline of its traditional economic and social role, uplifted somewhat by the *Historic Centre Action Plan* (1994) and the *Urban Pilot Project* (1994–97). That initiative needs to be followed up with a sustained effort on the part of the City Council, local residents, business people, property owners and the general community who use the area. **6.63**

The lack of integration with the modern commercial city district to the east means that demand for ground floor retail space is weak. As a result many properties are under-used and some are poorly maintained. **6.64**

Narrow frontages and the small-scale of buildings make some modern uses difficult to accommodate. **6.65**

**General Policies**

Planning permission is required for changes materially affecting external materials and features listed in the statement of character above (see paras. 6.56–6.62). **6.66**

The repair or refurbishment of buildings in a manner that does not materially affect their external appearance does not require planning permission on account of the designation as an Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character. **6.67**

Because of the archaeological importance of the area, the policy of the City Council is to retain standing buildings in-situ, as the best way of preserving existing archaeological deposits. **6.68**

The retention of existing buildings is considered the best way of retaining the traditional historic burgage plot and laneway pattern. Where sites have been cleared and are to be redeveloped, appropriate archaeological excavation should be undertaken first and new development should be designed to reflect the historic street patterns and harmonise with adjacent traditional structures. **6.69**

The City Council will make use of nationwide schemes, such as the *Living Over the Shop Scheme*, to promote development in a way that protects the character of the historic area. **6.70**

**Area of Special Planning Control**

As part of the Historic City Centre, the area is of great civic importance to the City of Cork. The under-use, lack of investment and decay are symptoms of the decline affecting the area. The issues which need to be addressed are not primarily related to building conservation per se, and require a wider planning and local community based response. The Architectural Conservation Area (Area of Special Planning Control) provisions of Section 88 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* will be used in consultation with the stakeholders to formulate policies to redress the decline and promote the sustainable economic and social regeneration of the area in order for it to regain and hold its special role at the heart of the City which has expanded and grown up around it. **6.71**

**Grattan Hill, Lincoln Place, Hackett's Terrace & Mahony's Avenue Area of Special Character (ASC)**

This area is adopted as an Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character under Section 81 of the *Planning & Development Act 2000*, as part of this Plan (see Fig. 9.2: City Centre Development Objectives). **6.72**

**Boundary of Area**

The area is located to the south of Middle Glanmire Road and to the north of the former railway corridor behind the Lower Glanmire Road. It is bounded on the west by the boundaries of St Luke's Church, Victoria Terrace, and Clarence Terrace, Lodge and Court; on the north and east by the large gardens of the houses entered off Middle Glanmmire Road. The only one of these houses set in their own grounds, Westboro, extends from Middle Glanmire Road to Mahony's Avenue, and is therefore included within the boundary of the area. **6.73**

**Statement of Character**

The area comprises three distinct sections: Mahony's Avenue, Hackett's Terrace, entered between a gap in the houses of the lower part of Mahony's Avenue, and Grattan's Hill/Wellington Terrace/Lincoln Place and Riverview Terrace. The area within the boundary is overwhelmingly residential in character, one commercial user and a primary school being the only exceptions. The buildings which make up most of **6.74**

the area are built of brick or stone, usually rendered in lime or old cement. Where houses retain original elevational features, they have timber sliding sash windows, roofs of natural stone slate and cast-iron rain water goods. Many houses have architecturally-composed boundary walls with doorways or gates, cast-iron railings and external steps with metal handrails.

**6.75** Mahony's Avenue is the principal through-way in the area, off which the Grattan Hill and Hackett's Terrace are accessed. It is a single-sided street with grouped terraces of mainly 2-storey, 2-bay houses set behind walls and railings on the south-west side of the street. On the opposite, north-east side is the stone-boundary wall of the gardens of Westboro House, a Protected Structure with extensive gardens containing mature trees and shrubs. At the upper end of the Avenue are structures originally associated with St Luke's Church: the Church of Ireland primary school and the former rectory.



**6.76** Hackett's Terrace is entered from the lower end of Mahony's Avenue. Entered via a narrow entrance between the houses, it opens out on the south side of the homogenous terrace of south-facing 2-bay, 2-storey houses. The houses are in single-occupancy residential use.

**6.77** The area comprising Grattan Hill, Wellington Terrace, Lincoln Place and Riverview Terrace is located on the east side of Mahony's Avenue and just to the north of the former railway corridor. It comprises principally 2- and 3-storey late-Georgian and Victorian terraced houses, some in single-family occupancy, some sub-divided into self-contained units. The blocks of houses are designed to face south, although the principal access is generally, but not always, from the street side irrespective of whether the house is on the north or south side. Many of the buildings are designed to look out over and be seen from a distance from the City Centre and the south side of the river. The late-Georgian houses were built in the grounds of an older 18th century house which was itself divided into two houses, (now Nos.1 & 2 Lincoln Place).

**6.78** The area contains significant lengths of footpaths, with stone steps, cast-iron railings and stretches of stone-kerbing.

**Issues**

**6.79** The area is undergoing change. Houses in multiple occupancy are being refurbished and returned to single-family use and into larger self-contained units. Others in multiple occupancy, are being upgraded, but some are not maintained in a manner appropriate to their architectural character.

**6.80** Car parking for residents is limited because of the narrowness of the streets. Mahony's Avenue is used as a route from Lower Glanmire Road up to St Luke's Cross and into the City Centre by many commuters impacting seriously on the amenity of local residents

**General Policies**

**6.81** Planning permission is required for changes materially affecting external materials and features listed in the statement of character above.

**6.82** The repair or refurbishment of buildings in a manner which does not materially affect its external character does not require planning permission on account of the designation as an Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character.

**6.83** The removal or alteration of traditional railings, stone-kerbing, steps and other features, and any areas of cobbling, external boundary walls, trees, whether privately owned or in the public domain, will require planning permission, where the works involved would materially affect the character described above.

**6.84** Further policies dealing with issues raised in para. 6.39 will be developed in consultation with the local residents, the business community and other relevant parties, both private and public.

## Street and Village Improvement Areas

The objective is to protect and improve the character of urban villages and distinctive local streetscapes.

**6.85**

Neighbourhood centres are identified in Chapter 10: Suburban Areas and provide local shopping and service functions. Many of them have a distinctive character that will be protected and enhanced through the following policy:

**6.86**

### Neighbourhood Centres of Historic Character

- *To promote such areas as urban villages, for example St Luke's, Blackpool and Blackrock which have a distinctive 'sense of place' and to enhance community awareness of their history.*
- *To consolidate the local business functions of these areas and promote their role as neighbourhood centres.*
- *To protect the physical and architectural character of these areas.*
- *To seek to promote both public and private investment in the areas so as to achieve a high standard of refurbishment of existing buildings.*

**POLICY BE 19**

In order to achieve these policies, the City Council will:

**6.87**

- Endeavour to protect and enhance the existing distinctive architectural character of these areas, discouraging insensitive alterations, and promoting new development sympathetic to their character where appropriate.
- Promote the creation of a stronger "sense of place" with an emphasis being placed on their history, notable buildings and amenity areas etc.
- Consider the development and use of special signage to mark the boundaries of the villages to strengthen the sense of place.
- Protect and improve the public realm e.g. retaining existing historic street furniture, developing amenity areas.
- Implement traffic calming measures within these areas to reduce the impact of traffic on residential amenity and enhance their attraction as local centres.

The development of Local Areas Plans and designation of Architectural Conservation Area/Area of Special Character status will be used to support the objectives for these villages where appropriate.

**6.88**

A number of older residential areas in the city suburbs have been identified as having street frontages and groups of buildings of architectural interest. It will be an objective of the City Council to protect the character, use and amenities of these groups of buildings and streets.

**6.89**

### Street Improvement Areas

- *Protect residential uses: planning permission will not generally be granted for the conversion of buildings currently in residential use, or last used as such, to other uses.*
- *Maintain the architectural character of these areas: insensitive alterations which would detract from their character will be discouraged.*
- *Reduce the impact of traffic on residential amenities.*

**POLICY BE 20**

## Urban Design

Urban design considers the relationships of buildings to one another and to the spaces around them.

**6.90**

This section identifies a series of principles that define how development proposals should be designed based upon an understanding of the way that successful places work, rather than the pursuance of a rigid formula or set of design standards. The section provides the basis for assessing all planning applications on urban design grounds and is based upon international best practice.

Seven key urban design principles are identified. These are developed into criteria-based policies to be taken into account when assessing development proposals.

**6.91**

The key urban design principles are:

- To promote sustainable development through the design of places that contain a mixture of uses, are adaptable through time, energy efficient, viable and able to respond to local needs.
- To promote places that are locally distinctive having regard to their setting and context.
- To promote places that are safe and secure.
- To promote places that allow for ease of movement, permeability and integration.
- To promote places that have a clear identity and are easy to navigate.
- To promote public spaces that are successful, have vitality and are both attractive and accessible to all.
- To promote the visual qualities of buildings in the City, the spaces they create, and the overall quality of people's surroundings.

**6.92** Development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design. The City Council's requirements for Planning Design Statements to accompany planning applications and in certain instances, to accompany pre-application submissions, are outlined in Chapter 11: para. 11.3.

**6.93** Where the City Council has prepared Local Area Plans, urban design strategies and/or site specific development briefs, these should be taken into account when designing development proposals. As identified in Chapter 1, the Council will develop a series of Local Area Plans/Action Plans to supplement this Plan, each of which will contain urban design guidance.

#### Local setting and context

**6.94** Any proposed development must consider both its site and its surroundings and respond to them in a positive way. In considering development proposals for sites within Cork City, note must be taken of the general characteristics of the City, its form and history. Generally, new development should follow the established pattern of development in the area, usually perimeter blocks with buildings fronting onto the streets. While the Docklands Development will form an extension of the City Centre, Docklands will also be developed as a new urban quarter with its own character. Outside of the City Centre there are a large number of distinctive former village centres that have been enveloped by progressive city expansions. The character of these areas should be respected in any new developments. In addition, major new developments on greenfield sites will need to create their own identity.

**6.95** At the scale of infill development, individual buildings will need to respond to the height, scale, proportions and detailing of adjacent buildings in the street (see Chapter 11: Development Control Standards).

**6.96** Cork City has a distinctive character that combines topography, buildings, streets and spaces. The principle distinctive topographical features are the dramatic east west ridges that define the visual setting of the City. New development should respect and reflect this dramatic topography. Landscape, ecology, trees and open spaces should also be taken into consideration as they are also distinctive elements of character.

**6.97** Views of the City, and its visual elements, are obtained from strategic viewing corridors, such as the river or City approaches. There are a number of vantage points offering extensive and long-ranging panoramas across the City. The City skyline is formed by a combination of elements – the general scale of buildings, streets and spaces from area to area, major landmarks on the skyline, other individual higher buildings, higher building groups and landscape elements. The preservation of a hierarchy of buildings that break the skyline ensures that the City is legible, with buildings indicating their place in the hierarchy and displaying their function.

**6.98** The City Council will seek to protect the views of the ridges and slopes and key local landmark buildings. New development should not obscure views of landmark buildings by inappropriate height and massing. Figure 6.2 identifies the key landmark buildings within the central area of the City, the views of which should be protected, in particular St Anne's, Shandon, the North Cathedral and St Fin Barre's Cathedral. Outside of the City Centre there are numerous landmark buildings (e.g. Callanans Tower, and St Luke's Church). Local Area Plans will identify other key landmark buildings, local landmark buildings, views and prospects which should be protected.

**Local Distinctiveness**

Development should respond to the locally distinctive character of a site. Proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of an area will not be permitted. In determining planning applications account will be taken of the following:

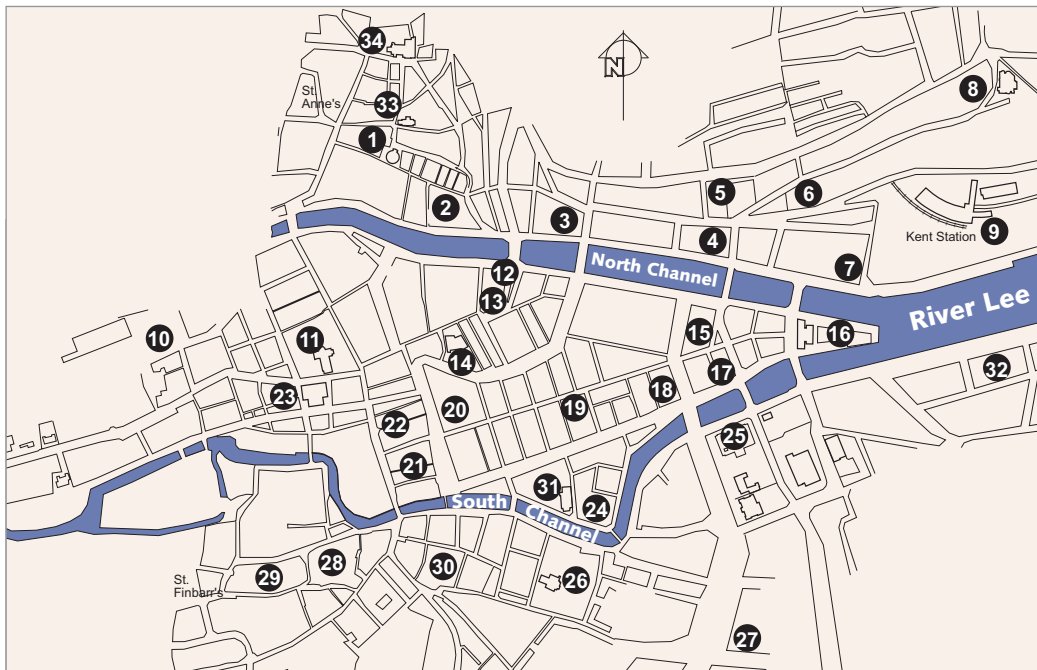
- Landform, natural features and landscape setting.
- The pattern of buildings, plots, blocks, streets and spaces.
- Locally important open spaces and gardens.
- The palette of local traditional buildings materials, styles and detailing.
- The scale and proportion of existing buildings, building lines, massing and height of buildings in relation to the street.
- Relationship to topography, building heights, views, vistas and landmarks.

**POLICY BE 21**

**City Views and City Prospects**

Proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to the visual impact of landmark buildings, historic buildings, key views or key vistas will not be permitted.

**POLICY BE 22**



**FIGURE 6.2**

Landmark Buildings (City Centre)

Local Landmark Buildings			
1. Firkin Crane House	9. Kent Station	17. Cork Savings Bank	26. St. Finbarr's South
2. St Mary's Church	10. Mercy Hospital	18. Commercial Building	27. South Infirmary
3. Commercial Building	11. St. Francis Church	19. G.P.O.	28. Elizabeth Fort
4. Commercial Building	12. Opera House	20. English Market	29. St. Finbarre's Cathedral
5. Presbyterian Church	13. Crawford Gallery	21. Cork City Library	30. St. Nicholas Church
6. St Patrick's Church	14. Ss Peter and Paul's Church	22. Cork Archive Institute	31. Holy Trinity Church
7. Commercial Building	15. Bus Station	23. Court House	32. Kennedy Quay Silos
8. St Luke's Church	16. Custom House and Bonded Warehouses	24. College of Commerce	33. Shandon
		25. City Hall	34. St Mary's Pro-Cathedral

**Tall buildings**

Tall buildings can serve visual roles as landmark buildings and can make a positive contribution towards the skyline of a city. However, they also focus floorspace in one building rather than spreading investment more widely. The City Council has identified the following as areas with potential to accommodate high buildings: Docklands; County Hall Gateway; and the Blackpool Gateway. Chapter 9 identifies appropriate sites for tall buildings in the South Docklands. If proposals are considered to have a significant environmental impact then the Council will request that a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment be submitted for consideration with planning applications. There are large areas of the City where tall buildings should be avoided due to the potential conflicts with the character, grain, and the amenity enjoyed by users of adjacent sites. In particular, high buildings should be avoided in the historic areas of the City.

**6.99**

**POLICY BE 23**

**Tall Buildings**

*In assessing planning applications account will be taken of the following:*

- *The impact of the building on the local environment, including amenity considerations such as overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy, glare and micro climate.*
- *The impact on the scale and quality of existing streets, spaces and adjacent buildings.*
- *The impact on Protected Structures, Areas of Special Character and the impact on the architectural character and setting of existing buildings, streets and spaces of civic and historic importance.*
- *The visual impact of the building, (including the design, shape, slenderness ratio, proportions and materials) on the city skyline, roofscape, important landmarks of city-wide and local importance, views and vistas.*
- *The degree to which the building would be sustainable in terms of its design, materials, construction methods, management and operation and its proximity to strategic public transport and mix of uses.*
- *The impact of the building on street activity and the use of ground and lower floors.*
- *The effect of the building on telecommunications and air navigation.*
- *The economic, market or functional requirements for such a building type.*

**Building layout – vitality and safety**

**6.100**

New developments should arrange buildings so that they provide continuity and enclosure onto the public realm, creating a coherent urban fabric that encourages both safety and vitality. New developments should also be designed to create active frontages that contribute towards the creation of streets with vitality. Design should seek to minimise the risks of criminal activity, trespass and vandalism through appropriate layout, boundary features and means of enclosure.

**POLICY BE 24**

**Building Layout – Vitality and Safety**

*The design and layout of buildings in new developments should contribute towards creating safe and vital environments by:*

- *Providing perimeter blocks with secure private gardens or courtyards within blocks.*
- *Buildings fronting onto and defining the street with continuous enclosure, avoiding the backs of buildings fronting onto any public space. Consideration should be given to the creation of an appropriate hierarchy of public spaces, including the adoption of appropriate ratios between street width and building height.*
- *All buildings providing a positive, attractive and continuous built frontage incorporating frequent entrances and windows.*
- *Providing a clear demarcation between public and private space.*

**Street layout – integration/ease of movement**

**6.101**

Streets provide the network for people to move within the City, as well as being public spaces fronted onto by buildings, and the arena for public activities. Streets should generally link with other streets at both ends and routes should be as short and direct as possible to encourage people to walk to local and public transport services. The character of any proposal should be based upon the creation of positive public spaces with roads incorporated, rather than the design being generated by road design considerations. Play streets should be considered as one way of incorporating play facilities in major residential developments.



**Street Layout**

*The design and layout of streets in new development should ensure that:*

- *The development has an urban structure of connected spaces and routes in order to provide short and direct routes for ease of movement for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.*
- *New developments integrate with existing routes and are well connected to the wider area, with non-vehicular routes generally fronted onto by buildings to provide visual surveillance.*
- *Streets are designed as public spaces with vehicles passing along them rather than allowing roads to define the character of places.*
- *Streets are designed to encourage low traffic speeds, safe pedestrian and cycle movements, and incorporate public transport.*

**POLICY BE 25****Identity and legibility**

New development can be designed to reinforce the identity of existing places or to create a strong identity in new urban districts by the location, design and function of buildings and by the creation of new spaces between them. People can be assisted to understand their environment by ensuring that there is an appropriate hierarchy of buildings that emphasises the relative importance of different public places. This will include the ability to appreciate what uses and activities are carried out in certain places and ensuring that buildings are designed to express their purpose and importance.

**6.102**

Developments should enhance existing views and vistas and create new ones in order to help people to find their way around. The width of streets and scale of buildings will assist in emphasising the importance of the route, as will the articulation of corners by buildings and the public realm, and the location of active ground floor uses. Landmark buildings provide orientation and should occupy strategic locations such as corners, road junctions and the termination of vistas. The alignment of streets and spaces will also provide a valuable aid to navigation in the City due to the views of the north and south ridges.

**6.103****Identity and Legibility**

*All major new development should be designed to have a distinctive identity and to improve legibility of the area by:*

- *Using the width of streets and the height of buildings to emphasise the importance of the public realm, whether this is a street or an incidental place.*
- *Emphasising the importance of different junctions, according to their significance in the public space hierarchy.*
- *Utilising corner sites to provide buildings that address both frontages successfully.*
- *Emphasising and incorporating key views of prominent features.*
- *Ensuring that new buildings are designed to express their purpose and importance.*
- *The use of soft and hard landscaping.*

**POLICY BE 26****Density**

The density of development has a significant impact on urban form, and strongly affects public transport services, local services and the mixture of uses which are viable. Chapter 5: Social Issues and Housing provides the broad policy context for higher density residential developments in the City.

**6.104**

The use of broad density dwellings per hectare indicators combined with plot ratios provides a reasonably accurate means of indicating the preferred character of built form. For appropriate plot ratio density standards see Chapter 11: paras. 11.17–11.18. Generally, residential densities of greater than 50 dwellings per hectare (net) will be appropriate in the City as the majority of housing land will be:

**6.105**

- Previously developed land within or adjacent to the City Centre/Docklands.
- Major developments incorporating provision of public transport measures (e.g. Mahon Point).
- Redevelopment of existing housing areas close to public transport corridors.
- Infill suburban sites close to neighbourhood centres and/or close to existing and proposed public transport routes.

- 6.106** Significantly, higher densities than these can be achieved in the City Centre and Docklands, subject to a high quality of design. Increases in density are only acceptable where quality of life is enhanced by high quality developments incorporating adequately sized dwellings (see Chapter 11: paras. 11.31–11.35), private open space (see Chapter 11: Table 11.2) and a high quality public realm.
- 6.107** Developments which are less accessible to public transport should generally be at densities of at least 35 dwellings per hectare, apart from in exceptional circumstances. For example, lower densities may be appropriate in Areas of Special Character where part of the character of the area is defined as being that of lower density development, or where particular spaces or large gardens are identified as being important to the character or appearance of an area, or in certain historic streets or villages in the suburbs. In addition, where gardens and related streets form the setting to protected structures intensification may not be appropriate. See Chapter 11: para. 11.40 for references to institutional lands.
- 6.108** Other factors have to be applied alongside dwellings per hectare and plot ratios in order to give a more qualitative definition to the built form. These will include: public open space provision, private open space provision, car parking standards and access to quality public transport, visitor parking provision and estate road design standards. The Council is in the process of preparing the *Cork Residential Design Guidelines* which will provide additional guidance on design issues relating to density.

**POLICY BE 27**

**Density**

*When considering appropriate residential densities for development sites the City Council will have regard to:*

- *The nature of the site and the character of its surroundings.*
- *The extent to which the location of a site implies a particular density (i.e. City Centre, inner urban, or suburban).*
- *Existing topography, landscape and other site features.*
- *Infrastructure capacity including social, community and educational facilities.*
- *Building height and mass of adjacent buildings and area characteristics.*
- *Compliance with qualitative and quantitative criteria set out in Chapter 11: paras. 11.17-11.18.*

**Adaptability and mixed uses**

- 6.109** Chapter 1 outlines the City Council's commitment to promoting mixed use developments, within the constraints of the zoning objectives in the Plan. Mixed use areas have a wide variety of benefits, including human interest, the continuing viability of existing commercial centres, a reduction in the need to travel, providing new uses for redundant buildings, and improving the quality of residential neighbourhoods by introducing a local centre focus for activity. Mixed uses are best located in the City Centre/Docklands, District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres, where it will be possible to achieve a fine-grain of uses vertically and horizontally.
- 6.110** Buildings and public spaces should be designed to be adaptable to new uses, for reasons of sustainability and continuity. A perimeter block structure (with blocks at a variety of sizes) will enable areas to contain a mixture of uses and be adaptive to new uses. Although all areas should contain a mix of dwelling types to allow people the choice of remaining in an area as their housing requirements change, 10% of all new dwellings should be designed as lifetime homes. This will give people the choice of adapting their homes to new requirements as an alternative to moving house.

**POLICY BE 28**

**Adaptability**

*Where appropriate new development should consider the possible re-use of existing buildings. Proposals for new development should ensure that buildings are designed to be durable and built to be flexible enough to accommodate changes of use in the future. Buildings should:*

- *Provide opportunities to adapt to the changing needs of their occupants; and*
- *Have flexible floor-plan layouts that allow for the greatest variety of possible future uses to be accommodated.*

**Mixed Uses**

- *Mixed-use developments will be encouraged within the City Centre/Docklands, District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres.*
- *Major housing developments should incorporate an appropriate mixture of local services.*

**POLICY BE 29**

### High quality contemporary building design

Good quality building design makes a significant contribution towards visual and cultural identity. The primary objective is to create buildings that are robust, flexible and of a high visual quality, capable of a long life and of accommodating changes of use. Individual expression and a variety of architectural styles are encouraged. Design statements will be required for all significant new developments (see Chapter 11: para. 11.3).

**6.111**

The City Council aims to encourage high quality contemporary and innovative architecture that respects its context and sense of place. Local building traditions and features can be successfully interpreted in contemporary designs without inhibiting creative expression. In certain circumstances designs that contrast dramatically with adjoining buildings may be highly desirable.

**6.112**

**High Quality Building Design**

*In order to ensure that buildings are designed to a high standard, the design process should include consideration of the mass, scale, proportions, rhythm, order, unity, expression, as well as the site, context and public realm. Planning permission will not be granted for poor quality or inappropriate design. High quality contemporary building design will be encouraged, whether interpretations of traditional styles or not, where the existing surroundings have been considered effectively.*

**POLICY BE 30**

### Energy efficient design

Chapter 7: Environmental Management outlines the City Council's policies in relation to broad energy issues and to the energy efficiency of new developments. The most energy efficient developments generally involve re-use of existing buildings. Developments on brown-field sites where buildings are demolished should involve recycling of materials on site wherever possible, to avoid energy consumption relating to transportation.

**6.113**

Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain, by appropriate grading, orientation of the site and buildings and spacing between buildings.

**6.114**

**Energy Efficient Design**

*Development proposals will be expected to make full use of energy conservation techniques, including:*

- *Minimising energy consumption by means of building design.*
- *Minimising energy loss through the careful siting, orientation, layout, and form of buildings to maximise the benefits of passive solar gain, the efficient use of natural light, solar energy and heat recycling.*
- *Ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green architectural elements are appropriate to the particular context of the proposal.*
- *The use of soft landscaping to provide an appropriate balance between winter heat loss through exposure and summer shading.*
- *Ensuring that residential development has access to some private or semi-private outdoor space for recreation and clothes drying.*

**POLICY BE 31**

### Design of the public realm

The public realm consists of streets, quaysides, amenity spaces, pedestrian routes, cycleways and public spaces. Well-designed streets can help everyone to move around more easily and safely, particularly those with mobility impairment. Creating pleasant outdoor spaces where people can meet contributes to the vitality of the City. Within the City all streets and public areas should be designed to the highest

**6.115**

standards. Applications for major developments will need to be supplemented by a public realm code that identifies in full the strategy and design for the public realm associated with the development. *The Public Realm in the City Centre* (Cork City Council, 1996) provides guidance on the design of City Centre public realm. The Council will update this document during the Plan period (see Chapter 9: paras. 9.78 and 9.79), and will also develop a city-wide public realm document. It is also an objective to protect historic elements of significance in the public realm, for example, stone setts, kerbs, drainage channels, flagstones and elements of street furniture.

**POLICY BE 32**

**Design of the Public Realm**

*Development proposals that impact on, or extend, the public realm should:*

- *Be designed to be accessible and safe to all users of the environment.*
- *Be designed to minimise conflicts with traffic, and incorporate pedestrian and cyclist priorities and improve linkages.*
- *Retain and enhance existing features of landscape, ecological or archaeological value.*
- *Provide a hard and soft landscape scheme that is appropriate for the use and location.*
- *Create a visually attractive and stimulating environment that incorporates elements of contemporary public art as an integral part of the design where opportunities exist*
- *Cater for the requirements of public transport.*
- *Provide active ground floor uses where appropriate.*
- *Provide for the protection of historic elements of significance in the public realm.*

**Public Art**

**6.116** The City Council already has a successful track record in implementing the *Per Cent for Art* Scheme relating to infrastructure and housing projects. Public art has widespread benefits, including:

- The enhancement of the quality of the built environment.
- The humanisation of the public realm.
- The creation of a locally distinctive character and a local identity.
- The addition of economic value to places and therefore contributing towards the enhancement of viability and regeneration.
- The employment of local artists and the promotion of artistic activity.
- Bringing works of art to a wider population group.
- Contributing towards Cork’s reputation as a City of Culture.

**6.117** The City Council will encourage all major developments incorporating the creation or enhancement of the public realm to incorporate public art. The Council will encourage other major projects in the City Centre to make a financial contribution towards developing off-site public art projects. It is recognised that the implementation of the policy is subject to negotiation with the private sector, although it can also be applied to local authority schemes.

**6.118** The City Council will develop guidance to assist developers in commissioning works of public art. Public art should be seen as an integral component of the design of the public realm, and is best conceptualised at a very early stage in the process of design. The redevelopment of the Docklands area provides a major opportunity for the provision of public art.

**POLICY BE 33**

**Public Art**

*Major developments will be encouraged to incorporate contemporary public art within the public realm. Such art works should form an integral part of the design of the development scheme.*