

REFERENCE
PL1822

PROJECT

GREAT GEORGE STREET

DOCUMENT

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

CLIENT

**GREAT GEORGE STREET
DEVELOPMENTS**

STATUS

PLANNING

DATE

25/09/18

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development during the construction and operational phases with respect to Townscape and Visual Amenity. This Chapter also describes; the methods used to assess the effects, the baseline conditions currently existing at the Site and surrounding area, the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects, and the likely residual effects after these measures have been adopted. This report has been prepared by Planit-IE LTD.
- 1.2 The report summarises the relevant legislation, policy and guidance; describes the methods used to assess the effects; describes the baseline conditions currently existing at the site and surrounding area and presents an assessment of the likely significant effects having regard to mitigation which is embedded into the scheme design.

2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation

- 1.3 The European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) (Ref 1.1) provides a foundation for closer co-operation on landscape issues across Europe and was ratified in the UK on the 21 November 2006 and became binding on 1 March 2007. The convention identifies the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop and promote landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the evolution and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies.
- 1.4 The ELC 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*'. It recognises that landscape has important cultural, ecological, environmental and social dimensions and is a key element of achieving sustainable development. In this context, the use of the word 'landscape' is more appropriately termed 'townscape' though the constituent factors remain consistent.

Policy

National Planning Policy

- 1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 1.2) was published on the 24th July 2018. The revised Framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It contains a number of criteria in relation to 'Achieving Well Designed Places' (Section 12) and 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' (Section 16).
- 1.6 Key aspects of the NPPF relevant to consideration of townscape and visual impact assessment are the paragraphs below:

"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development". Sustainable development includes contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
- 1.7 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with the requirements of good design. The overarching statement can be found at paragraph 124, which states:

"The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."
- 1.8 Paragraph 127 (Section 12):

" Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)".

1.9 Paragraph 130 (Section 12):

" Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents". In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Local Planning Policy – Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (Ref 1.3)

1.10 Planning applications are currently decided upon primarily by using the policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), a statutory document which is one of the documents that sits within the Local Plan. The UDP will gradually be replaced when the Liverpool Local Plan is adopted and until this time the UDP policies will still be used to determine planning applications.

1.11 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is a statutory document that plays a major role in shaping the future of the city. It shows what every piece of land in the city can be used for. It was adopted in November 2002. A number of policies contained within the UDP relate to landscape/townscape character and views, and these are set out below.

Policy HD5: Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

1.12 Planning permission will only be granted for development affecting the setting of a listed building, which preserves the setting and important views of the building. This will include, where appropriate:

- i. control over the design and siting of new development;
- ii. control over the use of adjacent land; and
- iii. the preservation of trees and landscape features.

Policy HD18: General Design Requirements

1.13 When assessing proposals for new development, the City Council will require applications to comply with the following criteria, where appropriate, to ensure a high quality of design:

- the scale, density and massing of the proposed development relate well to its locality;
- the development includes characteristics of local distinctiveness in terms of design, layout and materials;
- the building lines and layout of the development relate to those of the locality;
- external boundary and surface treatment are included as part of the development and is of a design and materials which relate well to its surroundings;
- all plant machinery and equipment are provided within the building envelope or at roof level as an integral part of the design;
- the development pays special attention to views into and out of any adjoining green space, or area of Green Belt;
- the development has regard to and does not detract from the city's skyline, roofscape and local views within the city;
- the satisfactory development or redevelopment of adjoining land is not prejudiced;
- there is no severe loss of amenity or privacy to adjacent residents;
- in the case of temporary buildings, the development is of a suitable design and not in a prominent location;
- adequate arrangements are made for the storage and collection of refuse within the curtilage of the site and the provision of litter bins where appropriate;
- the exterior of the development incorporates materials to discourage graffiti; and
- adequate arrangements are made for pedestrian and vehicular access and for car parking.

Policy HD23: General Design Requirements

1.14 All new development proposals should make proper provision for the planting and successful growth of new trees and landscaping, including any replacement planting provided as compensation for the loss of any trees due to development and in particular should:

- provide high quality landscaping and boundary treatment including the submission of such details as part of any full planning application; and
- promote nature conservation through the use of native species and the creation of wildlife habitats where appropriate.

Local Planning Policy – Liverpool Local Plan: Submission Draft (Ref 1.4)

1.15 Liverpool City Council has submitted the Submission Draft Liverpool Local Plan for independent examination. The document sets out a Vision for Liverpool, which is set out below:

- By 2033 Liverpool will be a sustainable, vibrant and distinctive global city at the heart of the City Region. Development opportunities will have been maximised to create an economically prosperous city with sustainable communities and an outstanding and high quality natural and built environment.
- Liverpool will be a city with a growing competitive and robust economy, attractive to new investment and business.
- Liverpool's residential neighbourhoods will be thriving and attractive places to live and the City's population will have increased. The City's housing offer will have been transformed with high quality and well-designed, low carbon housing within a range of values and a more diverse housing offer to meet residents' needs and aspirations.
- New development will have taken place in a manner that mitigates against and adapts to the cause and impacts of climate change. It will have taken account of flood risk, be energy efficient and of high design quality, championing outstanding new architecture, making efficient use of resources and facilitating waste prevention. It will respect and where appropriate reinforce local character and the relationships between buildings and spaces.
- There will be a strong relationship between the City's built environment (including its cultural and architectural heritage), its green infrastructure and economic renewal and the development of vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities. Its heritage assets will have been conserved, biodiversity enhanced, and nature reserves, parks and gardens and other open spaces will have been identified, protected, improved and made more accessible for future generations.

Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Document (Ref 1.5)

- *‘The overarching aim of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide guidance for protecting and enhancing the outstanding universal value (OUV) of Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site, whilst encouraging investment and development which secures a healthy economy and supports regeneration.’*
- The site lies within the World Heritage Site buffer zone, this Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) identifies and assesses the potential impact of the development upon selected Strategic and City viewpoints that are located within WHS. The potential impact upon these views and mitigation to reduce the impact upon the views is taken into consideration within the assessment.
- The SPD has been produced to provide detailed guidance for new development, regeneration and conservation in the WHS and its Buffer Zone. It is intended to supplement the existing "saved" UDP, and will deal with the management of the site, acting as a guide to future development in and around the site and embodying the principles in the existing WHS Management Plan.

- In addition to policies and guidance relating to the WHS as a whole, the SPD document includes two paragraphs specifically highlighting the importance of high-rise buildings in the Buffer Zone.
- Paragraphs 4.6.15 and 4.6.16 of the SPD state:

“The City Council does however recognise the potential benefits of high-rise and medium-rise buildings and the need to enable their development in Liverpool city centre to support its continuing economic regeneration. The City Council therefore promotes the principle of the development of tall buildings in certain parts of the Buffer Zone.....the City Council has identified a location for one dominant cluster of high-rise buildings in the Buffer Zone (1 - The extension of the Commercial District).

The principal opportunity for high-rise buildings is in and around the existing cluster of tall buildings in the Commercial District (identified approximately on Figure 1.11 of Appendix 1.3), partly as this would strengthen the legibility of the city by signposting the location where most business exchange takes place. Tall buildings in this location firmly indicate that this area is the economic driver for the city and the city region. This cluster also provides a visual and activity focus for the commercial heart of the city and marks the northern edge of, and gateway to, the city centre core. It also emphasises the subtle, but important, change in topography, which rises up from the river. The proposed Tall Buildings Cluster at the Commercial District should be centred on the King Edward Street/Old Hall Street/Tithebarn Street/Pall Mall/Leeds Street area, but will not be rigidly limited to these streets.”

3. Assessment Methodology

- 1.16 A Townscape and Visual Assessment (TVIA) was carried out in September 2018 by Planit-IE Ltd, a registered practice of the Landscape Institute with considerable experience in landscape and visual assessment. The Assessment was carried out in accordance with the “*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*” (Ref 1.6), hereafter referred to as ‘the Guidelines’.
- 1.17 An assessment of the value of the receptor and its susceptibility to change enables the overall sensitivity of receptors to be determined. This forms the baseline from which the Proposed Development can be appraised. The nature and extent of effects (magnitude) likely to result from the Proposed Development have been assessed. The assessment utilizes the methodology set out below in **Table 1.1 – 1.8**. The methodology is collated into a tabulated format where possible to provide structure for a consistent and methodical approach. Criteria and justifications are recorded in **Appendix 1.1 and 1.2** for transparency. The overall assessment of significance has regard to paragraph 5.56, page 92 (significance of landscape effects) and paragraph 6.44, page 116 (significance of visual effects) of the Guidelines.
- 1.18 Heritage matters are intrinsically linked to townscape and visual considerations and, although they are dealt with in a separate report they are considered here as key components of the City fabric.
- 1.19 In order to provide the most comprehensive, rounded and objective view of the Townscape and Visual Impacts of the Proposed Development, assessed effects have been agreed following round-table review by a team of individual assessors within Planit-IE, consisting of Chartered Landscape Architects and Urban Design professionals.

The Study Area

- 1.20 The assessment considers the Proposed Development against the site as it currently stands. At present, the site consists of open ground, with hoardings which identify it as a future development site.
- 1.21 The study area is shown in **Figure 1 of Appendix 1.3** and extends to approximately 500m radius from the Proposed Development Site (PDS). This encompasses the PDS itself as well as the immediate surrounding context, extending to incorporate key infrastructure, heritage assets and features which relate to the PDS.

Baseline Surveys

Desk Based Studies

- 1.22 Desk based studies were carried out to collate and map baseline townscape information and carry out a review of policy and guidance to inform the assessment. Potential viewpoints were initially identified by inserting a basic massing model into Google Earth Pro to identify key locations where the proposed built form may be visible.

Field Surveys

- 1.23 Informed by the desk-based studies, scoping incorporated the study area as well as locations in the wider area from which the site would potentially be visible. An initial series of 17 viewpoints were identified for the purposes of the assessment. Viewpoints were excluded where there was likely to be no significant impact beyond that which was already identified within the selected views.
- 1.24 Photographs for the selected viewpoints were taken by a professional photographer between the 25th of July and the 4th August 2018, in accordance with Landscape Institute's Advice Note 01/11, *"Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment"* (Ref. 1.7). The Guidance recommends a fixed 50mm Focal Length (FL). This is considered the benchmark for landscape photography and should normally be used. The Guidance Note was produced in March 2011 and is currently in the process of being updated by the Landscape Institute. The Landscape and Visual Assessment is also in accordance with the new Technical Guidance Note, currently available as a consultation draft *"Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment"* (Ref 1.7).
- 1.25 The visualisations were produced by Virtual Planit, a professional visualization studio with extensive experience in the production of photomontages, in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/17 *"Visual Representation of Development Proposals"* (Ref. 1.8).

Consultation

- 1.26 The principal viewpoints were identified through a process of desktop study and on-site survey, and then agreed with LCC planning officers on 19th July 2018. As a result of this process, an additional 2 viewpoints were incorporated into the assessment, bringing the total up to 19 viewpoints.
- 1.27 It was agreed through consultation with the Council (17th July 2018) that there was no requirement to do a cumulative assessment of impacts.
- 1.28 Earlier on the development process (22nd May 2018) the team met with Historic England to discuss the design. Historic England confirmed that they would be happy with the development's scale if it stayed within the parameters of the outline consent (150/1998) and would have no objection if it does not cause to the dominance of the Anglican Cathedral.

Significance Criteria

Townscape: Sensitivity of Receptor

- 1.29 As stated in the GLVIA Guidelines (Ref 1.5), sensitivity of townscape receptors is determined by: *"...combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the [townscape]."* Townscapes may be valued at community, local, national level or above. Existing townscape designations have been taken as the starting point for this assessment, as shown in **Table 1.1** below. However, the value attached to undesignated townscapes also needs to be assessed and this is considered in **Table 1.2**.
- 1.30 **Table 1.1** sets out the relative importance of generic townscape designations and descriptions.

Table 1.1: Value of Designated Townscapes

Value	Description
High	Sites, features or areas of national or international importance with settings of high quality such as World Heritage Site, AONB, National Parks, Grade I and Grade II* Listed buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens.
Medium	Sites, features or areas of local or regional importance with intact character such as Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, local nature site, long distance recreational routes. Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and local designations that exhibit wider geographic, cultural or townscape significance.
Low	Areas or features of local importance such as Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), Public Right of Way (PROW) and locally listed buildings.

- 1.31 Whilst the assessment of value is partly based on planning designations, other criteria used to assess townscape value in more detail, including that of undesignated townscape, are set out in **Table 1.2** below. The criteria are taken from the Planning Practice Guidance.

Table 1.2: Criteria for Assessing the Value of Non-Designated Townscapes

Attribute	Criteria
Functional	A building or place should be fit for purpose, designed and delivered in a way that delivers the intended function and achieves value for money in terms of lifetime costs.
Mix of uses	Mix of uses to ensure easy access to facilities and encourage a healthier environment, reducing the need to travel.
Well-designed public space	Functional and attractive hard and soft landscape elements, well orientated and designed routes, inclusion of facilities such as seats and play equipment and public art.
Buildings designed to be adaptable.	Flexibility to be able to respond to a range of future needs – how easily buildings change be adapted for change of use, places that are easy and practical to manage with good access, natural surveillance and hard wearing materials that are easy to repair.
Distinctive character	Consideration of: the local pattern of street blocks and plots; building forms; details and materials; style and vernacular.
Attractive spaces	Consideration of elements within them all, microclimates and views should all be considered. This is also affected by the way a townscape is perceived using the senses and the effect of transient elements such as the presence of human activity and resulting tranquillity or vibrancy.
Promotes ease of movement	All users should be able to move safely, conveniently and efficiently to and within a place, appropriate number of legible routes to and through it, good connections with each other and other destinations.

- 1.32 An overall assessment of value has been made for each townscape receptor (refer to **Appendix 1.1**), based on an overview of the assessments made using each of the above criteria, in terms of high, medium and low value.
- 1.33 Susceptibility of townscape receptors to change has been assessed using the criteria identified in **Table 1.3**, with reference to the baseline conditions.

Table 1.3: Townscape Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Little ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.
Medium	Some ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.
Low	Substantial ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue harm.

1.34 The assessment of receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility (Table 1.3 above) of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor (Table 1.1 and 1.2 above). Where value and susceptibility to change correlate, the resulting sensitivity is normally self-evident. In situations where they deviate, professional judgement is required. These judgements are clearly recorded within **Appendix 1.1**.

Townscape: Magnitude of Effect

1.35 The magnitude of a townscape effect is assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced by that effect, its duration and degree of reversibility and the impact these are likely to have on the baseline character of the townscape element.

1.36 The magnitude of change in the townscape takes into consideration the following factors:

- the extent/proportion of townscape elements lost or added; streetscapes, townscapes, buildings;
- the contribution of that element to townscape character and the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and
- whether the effect is likely to change the key characteristics of the townscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

1.37 The criteria used to assess magnitude of townscape effects are described in **Table 1.4**, below:

Table 1.4: Townscape Effects - Magnitude

Category	Criteria
Major adverse townscape effect	The proposals will result in a total change in the key characteristics of townscape character; will introduce elements totally uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving townscape; and/or will result in a substantial or total loss, alteration or addition of key elements/features/characteristics.
Moderate adverse townscape effect	The proposals will result in a partial change in the key characteristics of townscape character; will introduce elements partially uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving townscape; and/or will result in partial loss, alteration or addition of key elements/features/characteristics.
Minor adverse townscape effect	The proposals will result in a small change in the key characteristics of townscape character; will introduce elements that are not uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving townscape; and/or will result in a minor loss, alteration or addition of elements/features/characteristics.

Negligible adverse townscape effect	The proposals will result in a just discernible change to townscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
Negligible townscape benefit	The proposals will result in a just discernible improvement to the townscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
Minor townscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a degree of fit with the townscape character/elements/features/characteristics and go some way towards improving the condition or character of the townscape.
Moderate townscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a good fit with the townscape character/elements/features/characteristics, or would noticeably improve the condition or character of the townscape.
Major townscape benefit	The proposals will totally accord with the townscape character/elements/features/characteristics, or would restore, recreate or permanently benefit the condition or character of the townscape.
No Change	The proposals will not cause any change to the townscape character/elements/features/characteristics.

Visual Sensitivity of Receptor

1.38 When determining visual sensitivity, factors to consider are the type of view and the likely numbers of viewers (the visual receptors). The type of view and the number of viewers are described in the following terms:

- glimpsed (i.e. in passing)/filtered/oblique/framed/open views; and
- few/moderate/many viewers.

1.39 The value attached to views has regard to a number of factors, including:

- recognition through planning designations or heritage assets; and
- the popularity of the viewpoint, its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, on tourist maps and the facilities provided for its enjoyment.

1.40 The assessment of the value of views is summarised in **Table 1.5** below, in terms of High, Medium and Low value. These criteria are provided for guidance only and are not intended to be absolute.

Table 1.5: Value Attached to Views

Value	Criteria
High	Views from townscapes/viewpoints of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience, or with important cultural associations.
Medium	Views from townscapes/viewpoints of regional/district importance or moderately popular visitor attractions where the view forms part of the experience, or with local cultural associations.

Low	Views from townscapes/viewpoints with limited designations, not particularly popular as a viewpoint and with minimal or no cultural associations.
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1.41 The susceptibility of different types of visual receptor to changes in views is mainly a result of:

- The occupation or activity of the viewer at a given location; and
- The extent to which a person's attention or interest may therefore be focussed on a view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

1.42 The susceptibility of a visual receptor to change is specific to the Proposed Development. However, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment offers the generic guidance identified in **Table 1.6** as a starting point for the assessment.

Table 1.6: Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Type of Receptor
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of public space, including users of public rights of way, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the townscape and on particular views; • Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; • Communities where views contribute to the townscape setting enjoyed by residents; and • Travellers on scenic routes.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is moderately important to the quality of the journey; and • Users of public space, where the view is a part of the wider experience of the place.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People at their place of work, where the setting is not important to the quality of working life; • Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is fleeting and incidental to the journey; and • People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, or users of a public space, which does not involve appreciation of views.

1.43 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Ref 1.5) qualifies the above examples as follows:

'This division is not black and white and in reality, there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focussed on views and visual amenity.' (para. 6.35).

1.44 The assessment of receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor. Where value and susceptibility to change correlate, the resulting sensitivity is normally self-evident. In situations where they deviate, professional judgement is required. These judgements are clearly recorded within **Appendix 1.2**.

Visual: Magnitude of Effect

- 1.45 The magnitude of a visual effect is assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced by that effect, its duration and degree of reversibility and the effect these are likely to have on the baseline character of the view.
- 1.46 The magnitude of change in the view relates to the degree of contrast or integration likely to result from the Proposed Development and is influenced by the relative time over which a view is experienced and whether it is a full, partial or glimpsed view.
- 1.47 The criteria identified in **Table 1.7** are used to assess the magnitude of visual effects, based on the degree of change to the view or composition.

Table 1.7: Visual Effects - Magnitude

Category	Criteria
Major adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting from the loss or addition of substantial features in the view and will substantially alter the appreciation of the view.
Moderate adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which would have some effect on the composition, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the appreciation of the view.
Minor adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a perceptible change or contrast to the view, but which would not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
Negligible adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view, which would not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
No change	The proposals will cause no change to the view.

DURATION / REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT

- 1.48 Effects may be experienced over a range of timescales. For this assessment, the following timescales are considered appropriate:

- Short-term: 0-5 years.
- Medium-term: 5-15 years.
- Long-term: 15 years onwards.

- 1.49 Effects may be temporary, permanent or reversible over time. For example, visual effects arising from construction activities may be limited solely to the construction period and therefore only temporary and entirely reversible. The assessment therefore considers the practicality of effects being reversed.

SIZE AND SCALE OF EFFECTS

- 1.50 The size and/or scale of effects relates to the scale of physical changes in the townscape and the scale of the visible change in views, such as the loss or addition of features. This is broadly rated along the following scale:

- No Change – change will not be perceptible.

- Negligible – change will be just discernible.
- Minor – a small change will be perceptible.
- Moderate – change will be clearly noticeable.
- Major – total change will occur.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT OF EFFECTS

1.51 The geographical extent of effects relates to:

- the area over which townscape effects are likely to be experienced, i.e. this could be at the site level, the immediate locality, across a neighbourhood or across a series of neighbourhoods (city-wide); and
- the area over which the changes are likely to be visible, i.e. viewpoint within the site, viewpoint within the immediate locality, viewpoint across/ through a neighbourhood or a vista or vantage point across neighbourhoods or the city skyline (city-wide).

NATURE OF EFFECTS

1.52 The nature of effects may be positive or negative (beneficial or adverse) or neutral. Neutral effects recognise that there will be a change to the receptors, however this change is in keeping with the existing characteristics of the receptor.

1.53 Effects may also be direct or indirect. Direct effects are those which result directly from a development itself, whereas indirect effects may arise as a consequential change resulting from development.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT

1.54 The scale shown in **Table 1.8** is used to guide the assessment of the significance of both townscape and visual effects, from a combination of the assessment of receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects.

1.55 Whilst there would be a degree of professional judgement involved in determining the significance of townscape and visual effects, they can broadly be determined by the interaction of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The resulting significance of effect matrix is set out below:

Table 1.8: Assessment of Townscape or Visual Significance

		Magnitude of Effect				
		Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Minor Effect	Negligible Effect	Neutral/No Change
Sensitivity of Receptor	High	Significant	Moderately Significant	Moderately Significant	Minor Significance	Not Significant
	Medium	Moderately Significant	Moderately Significant	Minor Significance	Not Significant	Not Significant

Low	Moderately Significant	Minor Significance	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
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1.56 The matrix has regard to the Guidelines paragraph 5.56, page 92 (significance of landscape effects) and paragraph 6.44, page 116 (significance of visual effects). This matrix will be used as a guide to determine significance, along with professional judgement.

1.57 For the purposes of this Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, effects of **moderately significant** and above are considered to be significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

MITIGATION METHODOLOGY

1.58 The design proposals have been formulated through an iterative process incorporating environmental assessment and consultation with the aim of avoiding the occurrence of likely significant adverse environmental effects in the first instance and, where this is not possible, defining appropriate mitigation measures to reduce adverse effects to non significant levels. This process has allowed Site constraints and opportunities to directly influence the evolution of the Proposed Development. As a result, a number of mitigation measures form part of the detailed design. This is known as embedded mitigation.

1.59 The identification of additional mitigation measures is focused on ensuring the management and maintenance of the scheme limits any further adverse townscape and visual effects.

Residual Impact Methodology

1.60 Any residual impact following mitigation, at both construction and operational phases, is identified and recorded within the assessment tables in **Appendix 1.1 and 1.2**.

4. Baseline Conditions

1.61 Full details of the baseline townscape and visual conditions are set out in **Appendix 1.1 and 1.2** respectively, and are illustrated within the Figures (**Appendix 1.3**). The following provides an introduction and overview.

Site Location

1.62 The location of the site is shown in **Figure 1.1** of **Appendix 1.3**. The site is located in the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The Buffer Zone is an area which provides a visual setting for the WHS which includes some historically significant features and major landmarks and where development could potentially have an adverse impact upon that setting.

1.63 The site lies within close proximity to the Rodney Street Conservation Area containing the Anglican Cathedral to the east, and the Duke Street Conservation Area to the north.

1.64 The Grade II listed former North and South Wales Bank (now the Wedding House) is located adjacent to the site boundary to the south. The former bank once formed part of a densely developed area, and overlooked Great George Place. The context around the building has now been lost through demolition of buildings and encroachment from highways infrastructure, and the former bank is now the Wedding House.

Historical Development

1.65 The site and surrounding area historically consisted of a tight urban grain, formed by a mix of predominantly small dwellings, shops and pubs of small scale and massing. The tight grain was occasionally broken to create 'breathing space' with the addition of small urban squares and

gardens. This was typical of the site and surrounding context. The context around the site to the west has now changed significantly, with small scale dwellings set within private plots.

1.66 Great George Place formed a key public square to the south of the site, and formed a setting for the Wedding House. As the surrounding area has been demolished and road infrastructure has increased in size, the square has been lost.

Townscape Receptors

1.67 The list below highlights the townscape receptors assessed in relation to the Proposed Development. Refer to **Appendix 1.1** for the baseline description of townscape receptors and the assessment of sensitivity for each receptor:

- Heritage Designations.
- Townscape Character.
- Urban Grain.
- Land Use.
- Building Heights.
- Topography and Site Levels.
- Movement and Linkages.
- Environmental Designations and Public Open Space.
- Site Character.

Visual Receptors

1.68 **Figures 1 and 2** of **Appendix 1.4** illustrates the locations of the 19 identified principal viewpoints, listed below:

- Viewpoint 1: World Heritage Site general view/panorama - view to Liverpool City Centre from Wallasey Town Hall.
- Viewpoint 2: World Heritage Site general view/panorama - view to Liverpool City Centre from Woodside Ferry
- Viewpoint 3: World Heritage Site Defined Vista - West Quay of Wapping Dock to Anglican Cathedral.
- Viewpoint 4: View south down Great George Street (Grade II listed former Congregational Chapel).
- Viewpoint 5: View north from junction of St James Street and Parliament Street with Great George Street. Grade II listed 'Wedding House'.
- Viewpoint 6: World Heritage Site Defined Vista - View north-west across the city from the Anglican Cathedral.
- Viewpoint 7: Liverpool Museum
- Viewpoint 8: St Thomas Memorial Garden
- Viewpoint 9: Junction of Sefton Street, Parliament Street and Chaloner Street.
- Viewpoint 10: Junction of Jamaica Street and Jordan Street.
- Viewpoint 11: Great George Square.
- Viewpoint 12: Albert Dock in the corner of Salthouse Quays.

- Viewpoint 13: St James' Church.
- Viewpoint 14: Junction of Jamaica Street and New Bird Street.
- Viewpoint 15: View south west from Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.
- Viewpoint 16: Albert Dock.
- Viewpoint 17: World Heritage Site Defined Vista - Liverpool City Centre from the top of Holt Hill.
- Viewpoint 18: View to Liverpool City Centre from Rock Ferry Pier
- Viewpoint 19: View to Liverpool City Centre from Wirral Circular Trail at New Ferry

1.69 Refer to **Appendix 1.2** for the description of baseline views and sensitivity assessment and **Appendix 1.4** for baseline photography.

5. Assessment of Effects

1.70 The predicted potential effects of the Proposed Development, taking into account the embedded mitigation, are outlined in **Appendix 1.1** (Townscape receptors) and **Appendix 1.2** (Visual receptors). The potential effects have been considered at both construction and operational stages for the Proposed Development. The assessment is supplemented by **Appendix 1.3** (Townscape and Visual Figures) and **Appendix 1.4** (Baseline Photography and Photomontages).

1.71 The report assesses the predicted impact of the Proposed Development based on the design principles and Overall General Arrangement Plan (PL1822-VW-002) which will be submitted as part of the application.

Limitations and Assumptions

1.72 The methodology described above provides a robust and transparent process for assessment of townscape and visual effects. Production of verified photomontage views as described in **Appendix 1.4**, provides a high level of detail and technical accuracy. The TVIA process is based on the GLVIA guidelines, and the assessment has been presented in a tabular format in **Appendices 1.1 and 1.2**. The assessment is carried out by a team of assessors to provide scrutiny where professional judgement is relied upon.

1.73 Verified views have been produced to provide a high level of confidence in the assessment of effects caused by the Proposed Development. A photography method statement is provided in **Appendix 1.4**.

1.74 Certain assumptions have had to be made regarding construction in order to provide a basis for the assessment. This represents a realistic 'worst case' assessment as the aforementioned detail often forms a means of mitigating against potential effects.

1.75 Acknowledging the limitations and assumptions, predicted effects are assessed against the criteria set out below in order to attribute a level of confidence to the assessment:

- High – The predicted effect is either certain, or very likely to occur, based on reliable information or previous experience
- Medium – The predicted effect and its level are best estimates, based on on-site and desktop study
- Low – The predicted effect and its level are best estimates, based on given knowledge and experience. More information may be needed to improve the level of confidence.

Embedded Mitigation

- 1.76 As detailed above, a number of design features are ‘embedded’ into the Proposed Development and contribute to the avoidance of likely significant effects / minimisation of effects. The assessment identifies where there is potential to reduce, avoid or offset any effects further at the detailed design stage of the Proposed Development.
- 1.77 Forms of ‘embedded mitigation’ are described in **Appendix 1.1 and 1.2** to establish the potential effects resulting from the Proposed Development. Construction and operational effects are considered separately.

Assessment of Construction Phase Effects

- 1.78 Measures to control construction effects will be considered within the design programme and incorporated into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The measures relevant to townscape and visual impact are set out in **Table 1.9**.

Table 1.9: Summary of Potential Embedded Construction Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measures	Effects
Restricted hours of operation	Reduce the townscape and visual effects of construction during unsociable hours.
Traffic management in place including off peak deliveries and construction traffic routed to utilise strategic highway connections where possible	Reduce/ limit townscape and visual effects of construction vehicles on local routes.
Hoarding to a height of 3m surrounding the three exposed sides of the site	Reduce potential townscape and visual effects at street level.
Safe pedestrian routes maintained around the site.	Maintain permeability of the immediate area during construction.
Exit managed to ensure road and pavement areas to be kept clear of debris, mud and materials, including wheel and body wash facilities	Reduce/limit the effects of construction vehicles on local routes
Phased construction	Limit / restrict the duration of effects at different stages of the construction
Reuse of materials on site where possible to help avoid unnecessary construction vehicles movement.	Reduce/limit the effects of construction vehicles on local routes

Assessment of Operational Phase Effects

- 1.79 The design proposals have been formulated through a lengthy iterative process incorporating environmental assessment and consultation. This process has allowed site constraints and opportunities to directly influence the evolution of the design proposals.

Embedded and Additional Mitigation

- 1.80 The assessment of townscape and visual effects has been based on a basic block model of the Proposed Development. Therefore the assessment does not take into consideration the potentially beneficial effects that could be created through sensitive architectural detailing and high quality materials, i.e 'embedded mitigation'. However, the assessment does indicate where a sensitive approach to building detailing and materials could be beneficial, and potentially reduce the predicted effects.
- 1.81 Additional mitigation measures are described below, and are focussed on ensuring that the management and maintenance of the scheme limits any further adverse townscape and visual effects.

Construction

- 1.82 The implementation of the Construction Environment Management Plan referred to in Chapter 2 will deliver good site management, maintenance and housekeeping to ensure that the temporary deterioration to townscape character and visual amenity will be kept to a practical minimum. Despite these better practice measures, there would still remain inevitable adverse effects during construction works.

Completed development

- 1.83 A management plan may be employed to provide further mitigation and maintenance once the site is operational. This forms part of the planning application submission.

Residual Effects

- 1.84 The residual impact assessment assumes that the additional mitigation described above section has been implemented. The predicted residual townscape and visual effects are detailed in **Appendix 1.1** and **Appendix 1.2** and are summarised within **Table 1.10** below.

6. Summary

- 1.85 This report has assessed the townscape and visual impacts of the proposed development. The assessment has been carried out with reference to the Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition.
- 1.86 A three-stage assessment process has been adopted. Firstly, the nature of receptors (sensitivity) have been assessed, and secondly, the nature of the effects (magnitude) likely to result from the Proposed Development have been assessed. From this the overall significance of the identified effects on receptors have been assessed.
- 1.87 The proposals have been formulated through a lengthy iterative process involving environmental assessment and consultation. This process has allowed site constraints and opportunities to directly influence development proposals. As a result, mitigation measures form part of the detailed design and are embedded within it.
- 1.88 The assessment of townscape and visual effects has been based on a basic block model of the Proposed Development. Therefore the assessment does not take into consideration the potentially beneficial effects that could be created through sensitive architectural detailing and high quality materials. However, the assessment does indicate where a sensitive approach to building detailing and materials could be beneficial, and potentially reduce the predicted effects.

Significant effects

- 1.89 The results of the townscape and visual assessment are set out in full within **Appendices 1.1 and 1.2**. A summary of the construction, operational and cumulative phase townscape and visual effects that are predicted to be **significant** are set out in **Table 1.10** below. For the purposes of this Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, **moderately significant effects** and **significant effects** are considered to be significant in the meaning of EIA Regulations (2011).

- 1.90 The Proposed Development is predicted to have a beneficial effect on **all** the townscape receptors at the operational stage considered as part of this assessment. Of the 9 receptors considered, a majority of 5 are predicted to result in '**moderately significant**' beneficial effects. The historic demolition of a previous tight urban grain on the site, clearly defined land use, and loss of key routes and spaces has negatively impacted on the site and immediately surrounding context, including the Grade II listed Wedding House. Reinstatement of a clear range of uses, a legible network of high quality streets and spaces which are well overlooked and activated at street level will positively enhance the site, signpost regeneration at what is a key node, and positively enhance the immediate context by providing new linkages and destinations. The Proposed Development also proposes works to Great George Street to facilitate movement and access, and the reinstatement of Great George's Place to the south. Historic images show Great George's Place as a vibrant public square, which provided a setting for the Wedding House. As road infrastructure has intensified, the square has been lost and the context of the Wedding House has been severely degraded. Reinstatement of a public square in this location references the historic fabric of the City, and along with works to Great George Street will serve to reduce the overall dominance of vehicular movement.
- 1.91 Of the 19 viewpoints considered within the assessment, the majority will result in either a minor or negligible change that is considered to be '**neutral**' (a total of 7 views), or will result in '**no change**' (a total of 3 views) at the operational stage. An assessment of 'neutral' recognises that there will be a change to the receptors, however this change is in keeping with the existing characteristics of the receptor. A total of 5 out of the 19 viewpoints considered have been predicted to result in adverse effects that are '**moderately significant**' at the operational stage. There are no viewpoints that have been assessed as resulting in '**significant**' adverse effects, despite the frequently high sensitivity of the visual receptors. As noted above, the assessment is based on a block model with minimal architectural detailing, and represents a 'worst case' scenario in accordance with the Guidelines. There are potentially opportunities to minimise any adverse effects through sensitive architectural detailing and materials choice.

Table 1.10: Significant Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Phase	Magnitude + Direction of Change	Significance
View 5: View north from junction of St James Street and Parliament Street with Great George Street.	Medium	Construction	Major adverse	Moderately significant
		Operation	Major/moderate adverse	Moderately significant
View 6: View north-west across the city from the Anglican Cathedral.	High	Construction	Minor adverse	Moderately significant
9: Junction of Sefton Street, Parliament Street and Chaloner Street.	Medium	Construction	Moderate adverse	Moderately significant
		Operation	Moderate adverse	Moderately significant
10: Junction of Jamaica Street and Jordan Street.	Medium	Construction	Moderate adverse	Moderately significant

Receptor	Sensitivity	Phase	Magnitude + Direction of Change	Significance
		Operation	Moderate adverse	Moderately significant
11. Great George Square	Medium	Construction	Major adverse	Moderately significant
		Operation	Major/moderate adverse	Moderately significant
13. St James' Church	Medium	Construction	Major adverse	Moderately significant
		Operation	Major/moderate adverse	Moderately significant
14. Junction of Jamaica Street and New Bird Street	Medium	Construction	Major adverse	Moderately significant
		Operation	Major/moderate adverse	Moderately significant
17. World Heritage Site Defined Vista - Liverpool City Centre from the top of Holt Hill.	High	Construction	Minor adverse	Moderately significant
Land Use	Low	Operation	Major beneficial	Moderately significant
Site Character	Low	Operation	Major beneficial	Moderately significant

References

- 1.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC, October 2000).
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, March 2012, Updated July 2018.
- 1.3 Liverpool Unitary Development Plan, Liverpool City Council, November 2002.
- 1.4 Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 Submission Draft, Liverpool City Council, May 2018.
- 1.5 Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site SPD, Liverpool City Council, October 2009.
- 1.6 Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, April 2013.
- 1.7 Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Landscape Institute's Advice Note 01/11, March 2011.
- 1.8 Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Technical Guidance Note. Public Consultation Draft June 2018.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Townscape Baseline, Sensitivity and Effects

Appendix 1.2: Visual Baseline, Sensitivity and Effects

Appendix 1.3: Baseline Photography and Photomontages

Appendix 1.4: Townscape and Visual Figures

- **Figure 1.1:** Site Location
- **Figure 1.2:** Historical Development
- **Figure 1.3:** Heritage Designations
- **Figure 1.4:** Townscape Character Areas
- **Figure 1.5:** Urban Grain
- **Figure 1.6:** Land Use
- **Figure 1.7:** Building Heights
- **Figure 1.8:** Topography & Site Levels
- **Figure 1.9:** Movement & Linkages
- **Figure 1.10:** Environmental Designations and Public Open Space
- **Figure 1.11:** Site Analysis
- **Figure 1.12:** Proposed Masterplan