

3.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

3.1 ROPEWALKS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

The Ropewalks's architecture tells its own story about the area's glory days. Forty per cent of the world's trade was passing through the city's docks during the 18th and 19th centuries. Due to the topography of the land in the area at the time, long, straight lanes were built branching off Hanover Street.

In comparison to the grand houses built along Hanover Street, the thinner roads that branched off and upwards across the agricultural land to the east were dotted with structures designed for farming, and smaller dwellings. The blend of trades in the area at the time comprised of numerous merchants and artisans, as well as dock workers and traders.

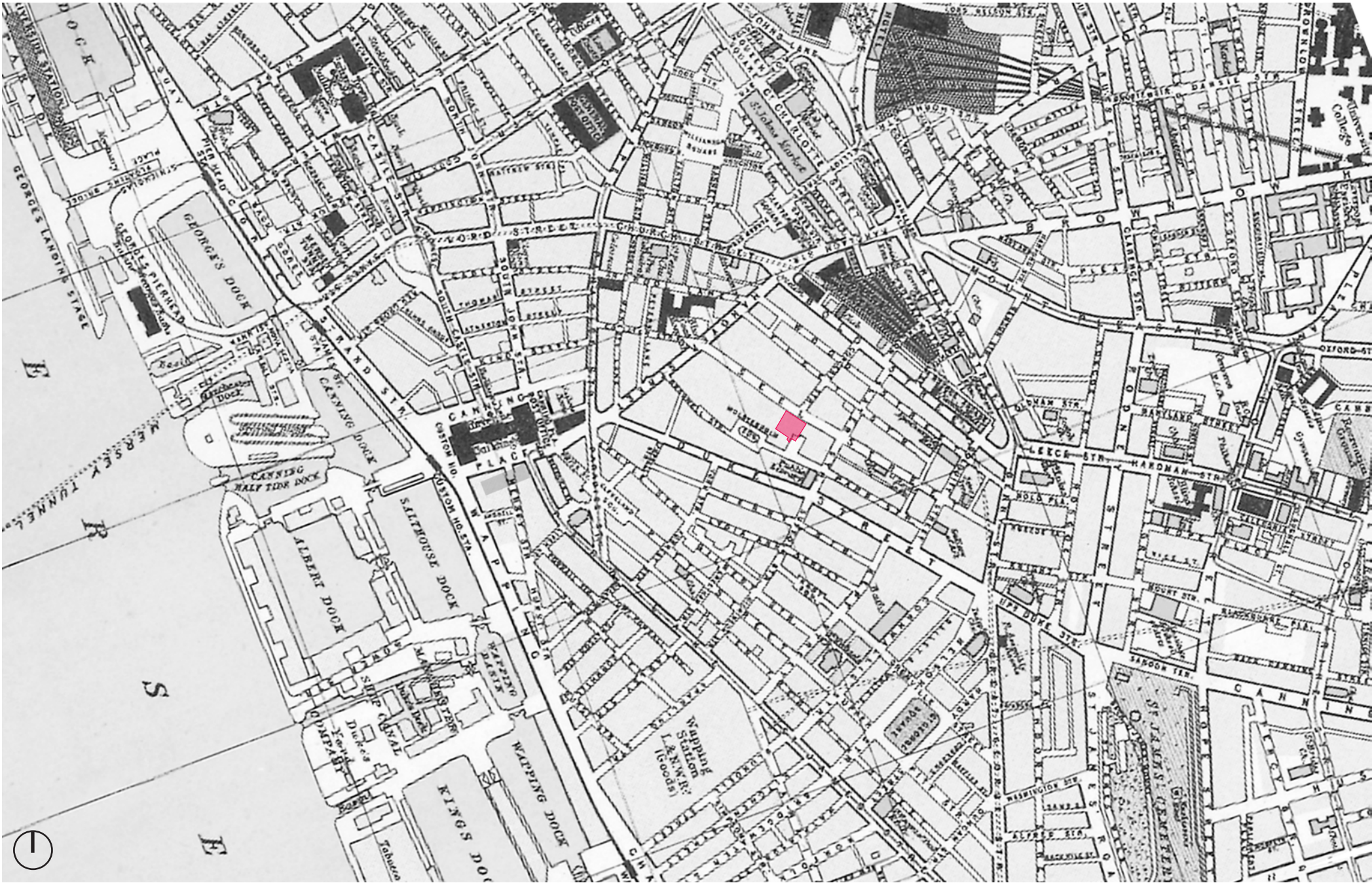
Over time, the skillset of the area evolved into a community of ropemakers, whose jobs were made easier by the long, straight streets that all converged onto Hanover Street and the nearby docklands.

Originally, trading goods were stored in the merchant's houses, but as the docklands prospered, the amount of goods increased dramatically, so adjoining warehouses were erected. With the amount of warehouses increasing in the area, open land began to vanish, and the whole RopeWalks area became incredibly built-up. However, some plots of land were incorporated into public squares, including Wolstenholme and Cleveland Squares.

As the docks' prosperity grew, merchants moved into more substantial dwellings further up the hill into the Canning Street area. The vacant dwellings in the RopeWalks were converted into shops and over-crowded, unsanitary housing courts.

During the decline of the docklands, the requirement for warehouses also declined. The warehouses were no longer maintained, and many fell into disrepair. By the early 1990's, the whole area was at an all-time low.

Since then, the area has undergone serious revitalisation, stimulated by private investment (shops on Bold Street, night-time economy around Concert Square and, increasingly, residential developments, etc.)



Plan of Liverpool – Royal Atlas of England and Wales (1898)

Map taken from historic-liverpool.co.uk



Key:
 Site (approximate location)

3.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

3.1 ROPEWALKS THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

With the opening of the world's first commercial wet dock in 1715, the story of Liverpool began. From this point, the lowest in Liverpool, the emerging city expanded outwards, forming straight roads which all converged on the new docklands.

These long streets were perfect for rope-making, and, in addition to warehousing and chandleries, the area became a centre for the manufacture of ropes for shipping. This over-riding typology is what gave the area of the Ropewalks its name.

As the city grew rapidly, the former merchants housing in Ropewalks became less popular and housing courts were built in the area for workers. By the 1830's the merchant class started to move to the top of the sandstone ridge in the newly laid-out Canning area of the city.

In 1850, the height of the dockland's production and exporting, Liverpool had 1,834 registered ships carrying 514,635 tons-worth of cargo. However, a century later, the production of goods and importing rate of products had declined, and by 1972, the South Docks had become silted and abandoned.

No longer required to manufacture rope for the merchants, the warehouses which flanked the Ropewalks' road network fell into sharp decline.

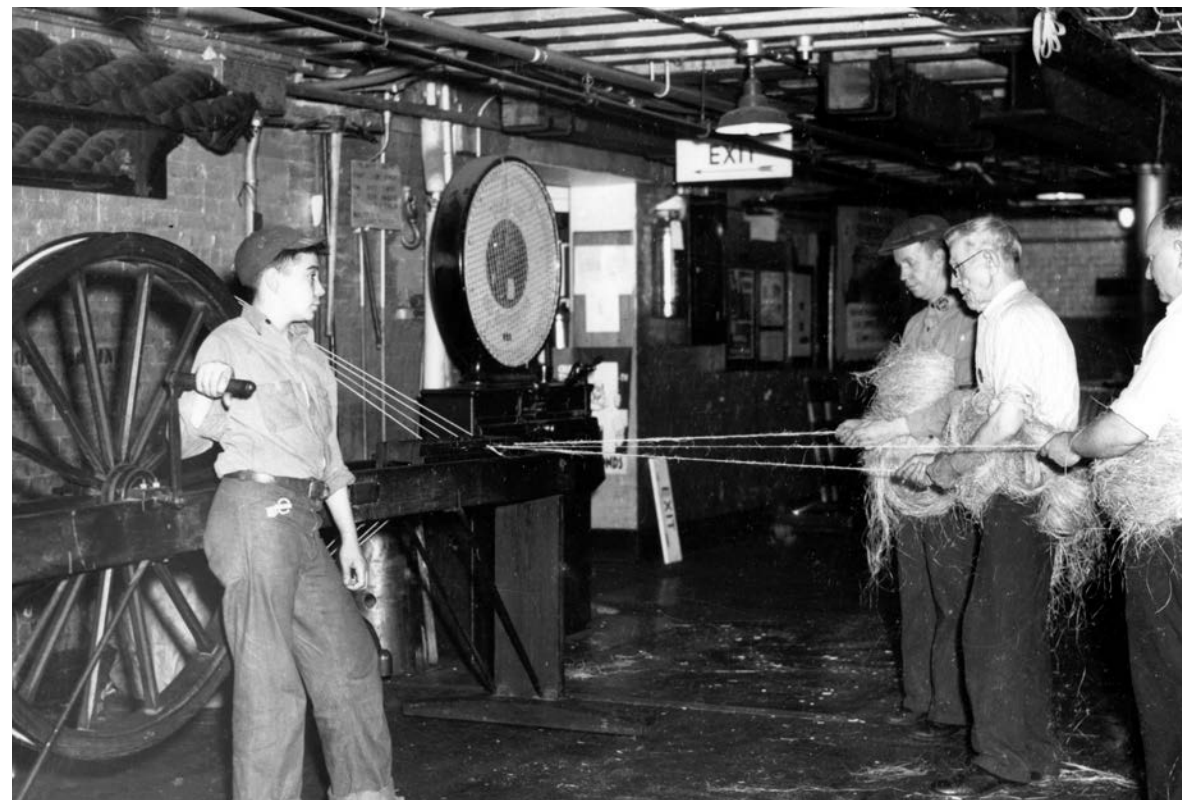
Over the past decade, the area of the Ropewalks has been transformed, with numerous developments created around a revitalised network of streets and public spaces.

Upper:

Interior view of ropery warehouse

Lower:

Workers creating rope on industrial binding machinery



FCH

Design intelligence, commercial flair.

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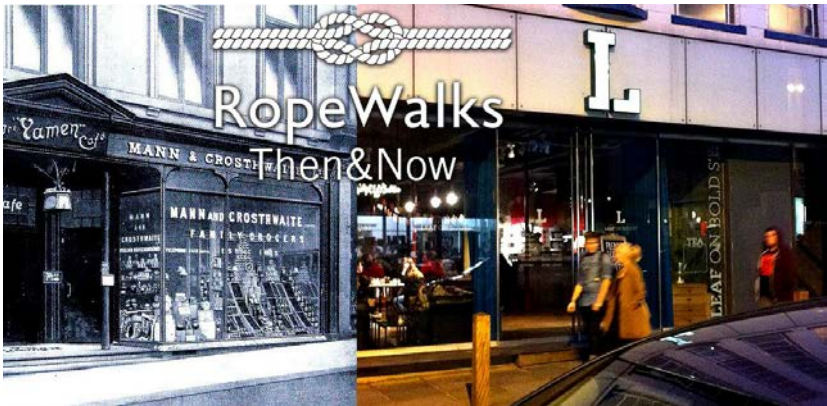
The adjacent images illustrate the change in typology and aesthetics of the Ropewalks' buildings between the height of the docklands and the present day.



Then: Christians fruit market and warehouses
Now: Ropewalks Square



Then: The Palatine club, Bold Street
Now: The Palatine Club



Then: The Yamen cafe
Now: Leaf cafe



Then: Boots chemist
Now: Ryan vintage clothing



Then: War damage, Bold Street
Now: Rebuilt buildings containing shops and cafes



Then: No. 75, Duke Street - mixture of retail spaces
Now: No. 75, Duke Street - renovation into high-end apartments underway

4.0 SITE CONTEXT

4.1 MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIONS

4.1.1 Vehicular Routes

The Liverpool City Centre Movement Strategy (CCMS) (Merseytravel, Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Vision 2000) is a component of the Local Transport Plan and the Strategic Regeneration Framework. It was put in place to implement improvements to the roads and public spaces, with improved rail and bus facilities.

The diagram to the right shows the overall concept for the City Centre South, much of which has already been implemented. The proposed Merseytram (shown in red and purple), is currently on hold, but remains part of the Liverpool Local Transport Plan.

The proposal site, strategically positioned between Hanover Street and Duke Street, will benefit from any improvements involving transport links and walking routes to the city centre. In close proximity to 'key bus corridors', the site will have better connections to the city centre and edge-of-city sites will become more integrated.

Less than a 10 minute walk from the site (2 minute drive) Strand Street is a vital part of the orbital route, allowing traffic to be distributed around the city centre rather than through it.

Key

High Quality Public Transport Route
- to include priority measures & high quality information, station and interchange upgrades

Merseytram Route

Merseytram possible extensions

key bus corridors

Strategic Road Network

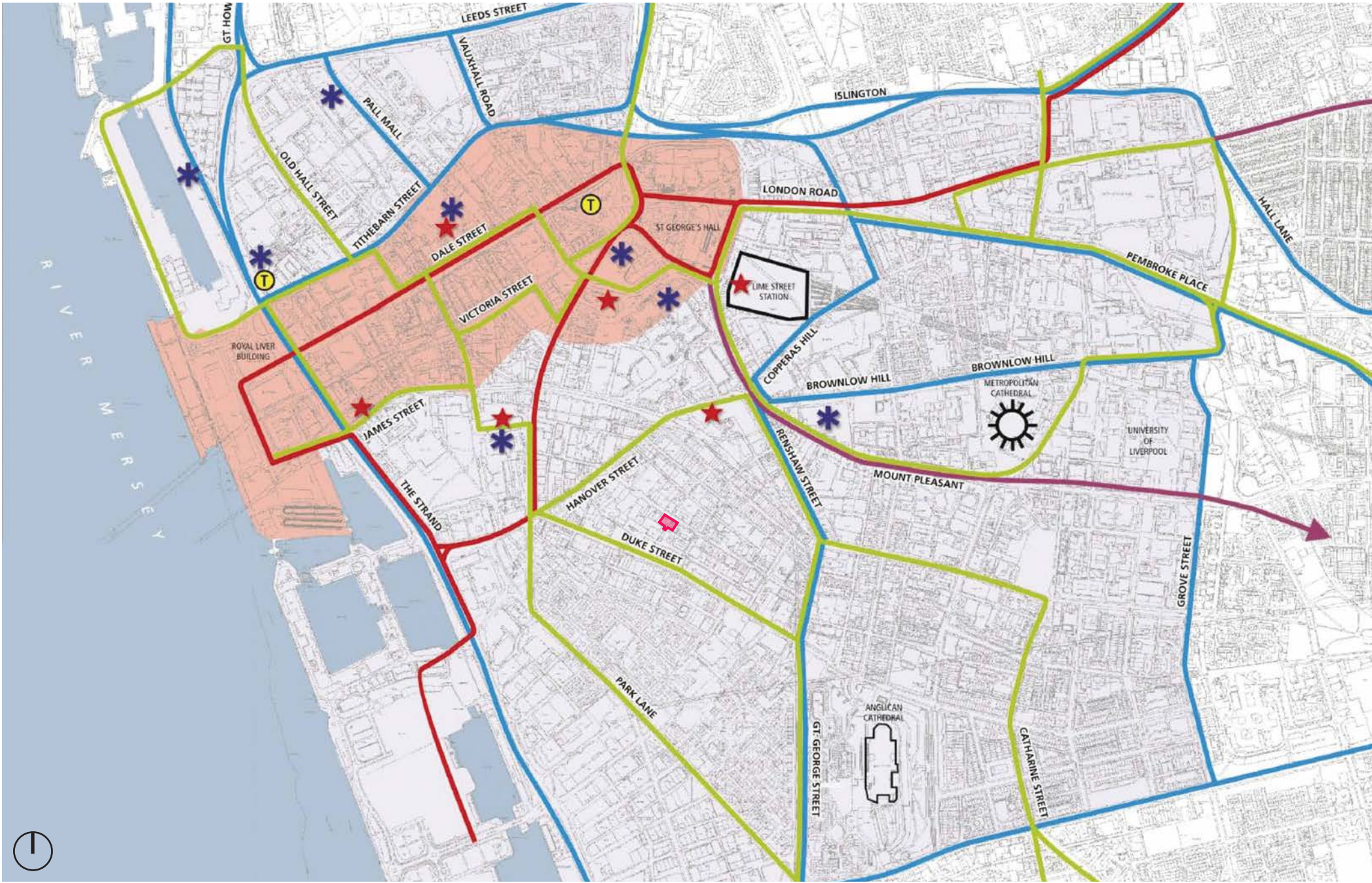
First pedestrian priority area

Pedestrian priority areas

Bus/Rail Stations

Multi-storey car parks

Tunnel entrance/exits



The Liverpool City Centre Movement Strategy (2000)

Map taken from historic-liverpool.co.uk



4.0 SITE CONTEXT

4.1 MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIONS

4.1.2 Local Transport Infrastructure

The adjacent diagram shows the immediate context of the proposal and its context within the transport infrastructure.

The proposal has a convenient position within the transport system, and any improvements will make it even more accessible through improved public transport and safer pedestrian walking routes.

The site is positioned on Seel Street, which leads to Hanover Street that provides a direct vehicular route from the Waterfront up to Liverpool's Central and Lime Street Railway Stations, as well as minimising the walking time from the proposed site to key transport links in the immediate vicinity.

The Merseyrail network runs through all major underground stations in the City, offering users the ability to journey across the entire north-west area with ease. Liverpool One Bus Station is a 10 minute walk away.

Key:

Proposal Site

Mainline Train Station

Planned Merseytram Route

Primary Road Routes / Destinations

Key Bus Routes

Bus Station

Merseyrail Station



4.0 SITE CONTEXT

4.2 LOCAL BUILDING USES

The diagram to the right indicates the range of building uses in and around the area of the defined site. As can be interpreted from the aerial plan, there is a high percentage of vacant structures in the area, positioned adjacent to flat, open patches of brownfield sites.

The appearance of these structures contrasts sharply with the numerous 8-10 storey apartment blocks which dot the surrounding landscape. However, there is a variety of residential structures, ranging from the large apartment blocks aforementioned, down to two storey terraced housing.

The proposal has focused on maximising the potential of the site, whilst supporting the economic development and leisure opportunities within Liverpool City Centre.

An apartment hotel scheme is proposed which responds to the demand and need for good quality accommodation in central Liverpool. Ground floor uses will help complement the emerging community in the wider Ropewalks area. The proposed scheme will provide jobs and investment for the area.

- Key:
- Residential
 - Hotels
 - Retail & Food Outlets
 - Vacant Buildings/Warehouses
 - Educational/Social Aid Services
 - Empty Brownfield Sites
 - Site boundary

