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**CHINA TOWN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

**New Chinatown, Liverpool**

**Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

**July 2015**

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**DATE ISSUED:** July 2015  
**JOB NUMBER:** ST14813  
**REPORT NUMBER:** 001

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## 1 TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wardell Armstrong LLP have been commissioned by China Town Development Company Ltd to undertake a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposals for the mixed-use development of land on the west of Great George Street, Liverpool. The site comprises 1.84ha of previously developed land which has been cleared of residential development throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century.

1.1.2 The site was subject in March 2010 to a planning consent for the construction of mixed use development by Urban Splash comprising three phases of residential and commercial uses rising to a maximum height of 15 storeys at its southern extent (ref: 07F/1680). This permission has lapsed.

1.1.3 The current application comprises a hybrid application (detailed and outline) over three phases as follows:-

**Phase 1** is subject to a detailed application and promotes the erection of a 6 storey mixed use building comprising 6 townhouses (Class C3), 117 apartments (Class C3), private gardens / terraces, Class D2 public 'event lab' (157 sqm GEA), 259 sqm of mixed commercial space in 7 units within any combination of Use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 or D2, 72 car parking spaces at lower ground level accessed via Hardy Street, cycle parking, plant and bin stores, means of enclosure, and hard and soft landscaping.'

**Phases 2 and 3** are subject to an outline application, with all matters reserved with the exceptions of landscaping and access. These two phases promote the erection of 9 buildings (siting, massing and height fixed) comprising 675 apartments, and 10,361 sqm (111,528 sqft) of mixed commercial space within any combination of Use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1 (132 bedroom hotel with ancillary restaurant and gymnasium), D1 or D2, alterations to railway ventilation shaft (involving reduction in walls and re-capping), private open space / public realm / gardens / terraces, 891

subterranean car parking spaces accessed via both St. James Street and Upper Pitt Street, cycle parking, plant and bin stores, means of enclosure, and hard and soft landscaping.

1.1.4 The Townscape Assessment provides an appraisal of extant townscape characteristics and appearance of the application site and assesses the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the townscape of the application area and its immediate vicinity within Liverpool city centre.

1.1.5 The Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development aims to identify and assess the significance of the likely visual impacts of the proposed development upon the site itself and the surrounding area.

1.1.6 The Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Impact Assessment and alongside the Design and Access Statement.

## **1.2 Site location and description**

### *Site location*

1.2.1 The application site is approximately 1.84ha in size and is located on a westwards sloping site to the south of the Liverpool commercial centre to the immediate south of the Ropewalks district. The site lies to the west of Great George Street a key gateway into the city centre, with the southern section of the site being positioned prominently at the junction of Great George Street and Upper Parliament Street. To the east of the application area is the Anglican Cathedral a key landmark building in views of Liverpool. The whole of the site lies within the buffer zone of the Liverpool Mercantile and Maritime World Heritage Site.

1.2.2 The site is currently a mix of unmanaged land, which was formerly used for residential purposes, and which has been successively cleared over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **1.3 The proposed scheme**

1.3.1 Details of the proposed scheme are presented within the Design and Access Statement produced by Blok Architecture and which details the design evolution and approach, materials, scale and massing, layout, circulation and public realm

proposals. This Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement.

## **1.4 Policy and Guidance**

- 1.4.1 Policy and Guidance is provided within the Planning Statement (Roman Summer 2015)

## **1.5 Methodology**

- 1.5.1 The following section will set out a methodological approach for assessing the predicted impacts upon the townscape. It will identify and define the key elements of the environment resource and the character of the townscape and predicted impacts of the proposed development, both direct and indirect are identified.
- 1.5.2 This section assesses the proposed development against defined criteria in order to identify the significance of the identified impacts. Mitigation measures have been included in the development of the site design. Residual impacts following the implementation of the mitigation measures and cumulative impacts of the scheme and developments in the immediate vicinity are also discussed.

## **1.6 Definitions and Terms of Reference**

- 1.6.1 Townscape character is the product of its built form, which may be the result of intentional historical development or the result of unplanned development over centuries. Townscape can be characterised by a series of contemporary buildings constructed as a single planned campaign and designed as a single entity or it can be the result of the unplanned organic growth of an area and be characterised by buildings or structures of markedly different styles, dates, building materials and scales.
- 1.6.2 Townscape can therefore be defined by the presence, or the absence of, heritage assets or interrelations between old and new. Spaces between buildings, the way they interact with one another and how they are perceived or experienced are as important to defining townscape character as structures.
- 1.6.3 It is recognised that impacts upon Townscape character are a cumulative effect of impacts.



## **1.7 Assessment Methodology**

1.7.1 The methodological approach to this assessment follows two key pieces of townscape assessment guidance:

- Transport Analysis Guidance TAG Unit 3.3.8 Townscape (DETR 2004)
- Guidance on Tall Buildings (Historic England and CABE 2007)

1.7.2 Both these assessment techniques are used to inform policy making and to evaluate planning applications. The Transport Analysis Guidance addresses townscape impact appraisal and intends to build upon the baseline data. The Guidance on Tall Buildings methodology sets out to appraise and evaluate proposals specifically for tall buildings and uses a strict criteria for evaluation. The two assessment techniques are complementary when analysing and appraising mixed-use urban proposals such as the New Chinatown development.

## **1.8 Transport Analysis Guidance TAG Unit 3.3.8 Townscape (DETR 2004)**

1.8.1 This is a four staged approach which involves

1. A description of the urban character
2. Appraisal of the townscape capital
3. An appraisal of the impacts of the proposed scheme and
4. An assessment based on a seven point scale

1.8.2 In order to identify urban character TAG considers the following key elements;

- Features -a summary of the attributes which most strongly define a townscape.
- Layout – the way that the buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other; the pattern of the arrangement and area of buildings and their plots in a settlement.
- Density and Mix – the amount of floorspace of buildings relative to an area and the range of uses.
- Scale – the size of buildings and structures in an area in relation to their surroundings.
- Appearance – local distinctiveness through the use of specific materials or architectural detailing.
- Human interaction – the involvement which people have with the urban environment.

- Cultural – the contribution that historic structures lend to the urban environment. (These are dealt with within the Heritage Impact Assessment).
- 1.8.3 Through the study of these key attributes of townscape, the character of the urban environment is identified. From this the value of the townscape is appraised in terms of its importance to the general public, specific stakeholders or interest groups and the role it plays in the lives of residents and visitors.
- 1.8.4 Following this stage, the proposed development impacts upon the urban environment are identified through a description of the scheme proposals and the degrees of change and impact are evaluated.
- 1.8.5 An individual assessment of the effects upon key attributes is made and overall assessment is based on a seven point scale of impacts. This represents a cumulative summary of all the impacts assessed in Stage 3. The seven point scale of impacts is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Townscape Impacts	
Scale	Description
Large beneficial (positive) effect	<p>The proposals provide an opportunity to enhance the townscape because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They enhance the layout, mix, scale, appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>• They enable the restoration of the characteristic features of the townscape, partially lost or diminished as a result of changes resulting from inappropriate development;</li> <li>• They enable the sense of place and scale to be restored through well designed mitigation measures, that is, characteristic features are enhanced through the use of local materials to fit the proposal into the townscape;</li> <li>• They enhance the character of the townscape through beneficial and sensitive design in a townscape which is not of any formally recognised quality;</li> <li>• They facilitate government objectives to regenerate degraded urban areas</li> </ul>
Moderate beneficial (positive) effect	<p>The proposals provide an opportunity to enhance the townscape because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They fit very well with the layout, mix, scale, appearance human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>• There is the potential, through mitigation, to enable the restoration of characteristic features, partially lost or diminished as a result of changes resulting from inappropriate development;</li> </ul>

Table 1 Townscape Impacts	
Scale	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will enable a sense of place and scale to be restored through well-designed mitigation measures, that is, characteristic features are enhanced through the use of local materials to fit the proposal into the townscape;</li> <li>• They enable some sense of quality to be restored or enhanced through beneficial and sensitive design in a townscape which is not of any recognised quality</li> <li>• They further government objectives to regenerate degraded urban areas</li> </ul>
Slight beneficial (positive) effect	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit well with the layout, mix scale appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>• Incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they will blend in well with the surrounding townscape;</li> <li>• Will enable some sense of place and scale to be restored through well-designed mitigation measures;</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance existing townscape existing townscape character in an area which is not designated for the quality of its townscape, nor vulnerable to change;</li> <li>• Avoid conflict with government policy of enhancing urban environments.</li> </ul>
Neutral effect	<p>The proposals are well designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complement the layout, mix scale appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>• Incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with surrounding townscape features and elements</li> <li>• Avoid being visually intrusive nor have adverse effect on the current level of tranquillity (where these exist) of the townscape;</li> <li>• Maintain existing townscape character in an area which is not designated townscape, that is, neither national or local high quality nor is vulnerable to change;</li> <li>• Avoid conflict with government policy towards enhancing urban environments.</li> </ul>
Slight adverse (negative) effect	<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not quite fit layout, mix scale appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>• Although not very visually intrusive, will impact on certain views into and across the area;</li> <li>• Cannot be completely mitigated for because of the nature of the proposal itself or the character of the townscape;</li> <li>• Affect an area of recognised townscape quality;</li> </ul>

Table 1 Townscape Impacts	
Scale	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict with local authority policies for enhancing urban environments.</li> </ul>
Moderate adverse (negative) effect	<p>The proposals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of scale or at odds with the layout, mix, scale, appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>Are visually intrusive and will adversely affect the townscape;</li> <li>Not possible to fully mitigate for, that is, mitigation will not prevent the scheme from scarring the townscape in the longer term, as some features of interest will be partly destroyed or their setting reduced or removed;</li> <li>Will have an adverse impact on a townscape of recognised quality or vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>In conflict with local and national policies to enhance the urban environment.</li> </ul>
Large adverse (negative) effect	<p>The proposals would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are at considerable variance to the layout, mix, scale, appearance, human interaction and cultural aspects of the townscape;</li> <li>Are visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views of the area;</li> <li>Are likely to degrade, diminish or even destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting;</li> <li>Will be substantially damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable townscape, causing it to change and be considerably diminished in quality</li> <li>Cannot be adequately mitigated for;</li> <li>Are in serious conflict with government policy for the enhancement of the urban environment.</li> </ul>

## 1.9 Guidance on Tall Buildings (Historic England and CABE 2007)

1.9.1 The criteria for evaluation are used to evaluate proposed buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbours and/ or which significantly change the skyline. The relevant criteria to the application of New Chinatown are:

1. The relationship to context, including natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, important views, prospects and panoramas, and the effect on the skyline
2. The effect on the historic environment and World Heritage Sites
3. The architectural quality of the building
4. The credibility of the design
5. The contribution to public space and facilities

6. The contribution made to the permeability of a site
7. The provision of a well-designed environment

1.9.2 Tall buildings must demonstrate they are proposed in the right location and are of exceptional architectural quality.

## **1.10 Current Baseline Condition**

### *Existing Townscape Features*

1.10.1 The historical development of the application site and its immediate surroundings are detailed within the Heritage Impact Assessment. Briefly, in 1765, when John Eyes produced his map of Liverpool, the area of the proposed development site was shown as fields, although Park Lane had been laid out, annotated as 'Road to Toxteth Park'. By the end of the 18th century considerable development had taken place between Wapping Quay and Park Lane/St James's Street, and between Park Lane and Duke Street. Great George Street had been laid out, with streets to its east side such as Rathbone Street, and a large stone quarry was in existence further east, now the site of St James's Cemetery adjacent to the Anglican Cathedral. In c.1795, the proposed development site is shown as an area of undeveloped land

1.10.2 Great George Street was not built upon until after 1803; Great George Square and the streets intersecting it, were laid out in 1802 but there were no houses erected on or in its vicinity.

1.10.3 By the first decade of the 19th century the area of previously undeveloped land which was bounded by Great George Street to the east, Duke Street to the north and St James Street to the south, had been laid out with regularly-spaced streets, including an area labelled 'George Square'. The proposed application site formed part of this area of apparent residential development, with streets such as Duncan Street, Upper Pitt Street and Grenville Street labelled, although at this date Hardy Street was known as St Vincent Street.

## **1.11 Layout**

1.11.1 The existing site is a derelict gap site predominantly made up of areas of rough ground and grass. There is a row of mid to late 20th century flats fronting Upper Pitt Street that are now unoccupied. An existing building operating as 'The Lighting Shop' fronts St James Street and the Grade II listed Wedding House, a former Bank, is

located on the node of Great George Place but is not within the application site. The lack of built form within the site boundary creates a void within the existing townscape pattern.

1.11.2 The layout of the buildings, routes and open spaces to the west of the site boundary is geometrical and to some extents repetitive. The dense framework of the development of the wider area, particularly to the west within the Baltic Triangle offers good permeability through a hierarchy of connecting routes and open spaces.

1.11.3 The layout to the east of the site boundary is in comparison more modular and development in this area is arranged in clusters rather than active frontage streets. The distinct lack of presence and active frontage to Great George Street allows the proposed development site to bleed into its surroundings rather than having a defined edge.

## **1.12 Density and Mix**

1.12.1 The remaining built form within the site boundary is sparse and disparate. Due to the majority of the site being cleared ready for development, the current conditions do not offer a framework of density and mix that can be compared to the surrounding urban pattern.

1.12.2 There is a mix of built form surrounding the site including:

- The commercial development to the south side of St James Street with large industrial units and large car parking expanses
- Tight built form of modern terraced 1 or 2 storey housing fronting onto Cookson Street, Hardy Street and Grenville Street South intermixed with survival of early 19th century housing and institutional buildings

## **1.13 Scale**

1.13.1 The few remaining buildings within the site offer some structure and presence to the otherwise derelict site. The Wedding House which is located to the immediate south of the application site is of three storeys plus attic storey. In the north, the modern mixed use unit on Sankey Street is of five stories. Buildings to the west on Upper Pitt Street, Cookson Street and Hardy Street are of a mix of single storey bungalows and three storeys flats.

1.13.2 The dominant Anglican Cathedral to the east of the site does not relate to the proposed development site due to the lack of massing and built form within the site boundary. The Anglican Cathedral is very dominant in many local and wider views and vistas and is a key feature on the city's skyline.

#### **1.14 Appearance**

1.14.1 The structures which remain on site are of low architectural merit and are in poor condition, with the exception of The Lighting Centre at 121 St James Street which is of 1930s date and has Art Deco styling. The condition of the structures on site give a sense of dereliction to the wider area.

1.14.2 The surrounding residential units are red brick construction and, on Duncan Street, with red brick boundary walls. The vent structure within the site is a flat roof concrete structure that since being boarded up has been subject to vandalism.

1.14.3 The Wedding House is situated at the southern end of the application area in a highly prominent location at the junction of Great George Street and Upper Parliament Street. It is constructed in stone in a Gothic Revival style with a unique front elevation comprising four bays under a pointed gable. The Wedding House, a former Bank, was formerly located within a terrace of contemporary properties. Whilst in good condition, the removal of the adjacent structures has vastly altered its appearance, removing its original context resulting in the isolation of the structure in an area of derelict undeveloped land.

1.14.4 The overall appearance of the site is of an abandoned pre-development site that although offers good permeability requires a framework of built form in keeping with the local urban pattern.

#### **1.15 Human Interaction**

1.15.1 The abandoned site does not appear to be well used by pedestrian movement. The majority of the plot is fenced off with a low timber fence restricting access to the areas of rough ground. The poor quality public realm facing Great George Street consists of empty planters and a stark wide footway. The site does not currently offer any destination and is simply a gap-site that is passed.

## **1.16 Cultural Heritage**

1.16.1 The Heritage Impact Assessment discusses the heritage assets within and adjacent to the site and the effects of the development upon them in detail.

## **1.17 Summary**

1.17.1 The proposed development site sits amongst a diverse and disparate townscape that is fragmented in layout and lacks harmony and visual unity. Although the site is adjacent to some architecturally outstanding buildings, namely the Anglican Cathedral and The Wedding House (3-4 Great George Place), there is no strong urban context and therefore they appear isolated and disproportionate. The site offers great potential to re-introduce strong geometric urban form of significant scale and massing to help anchor the site in its location.

## **1.18 Proposed Development Impact Assessment**

1.18.1 A detailed description of the design philosophy of the development proposals is presented within the Design and Access Statement. The assessment of the impacts upon Townscape characteristics of the application site and its vicinity has been undertaken following a review of the proposals, site and view analysis and discussions with the Design Team.

## **1.19 Impacts on layout**

1.19.1 Successful urban spaces and streets are normally defined by buildings with roads and green networks clearly visible on figure ground plans as the framework that holds the spaces together. The application area is currently poorly defined by buildings, routes and open spaces. The lack of structure makes the spaces feel desolate and unwelcoming. The re-introduction of built form with a dense layout would make a positive contribution to the local townscape character.

1.19.2 The expanse of open space within the current site and the lack of form or character within the space, in that it is featureless, leads to a lack of identity. The introduction of built form within the application area will restore an active frontage to the Great George Street and also wrap around frontages on Hardy Street and St James Street.

1.19.3 This restoration of street frontage will frame the internal layout of the scheme, reintroducing the urban grain into the application site. The existing surrounding



area has a diverse mix of coarse grained areas defined by the industrial and commercial units interspersed with fine-grained areas of the remnants of 1960s flats. These elements of the wider townscape are arrayed on a regular grid network of streets of regular, small blocks, arranged diagonally to Great George Street.

1.19.4 The proposals will introduce a coarse-grain urban fabric comprising the three large buildings that define the edge of the Great George Street, which are separated by openings within the Great George Street frontage to link with the existing network of streets. The regularity of the four residential cube apartment blocks facing Cookson Street, also follow this pattern. The proposal successfully enhances the existing network of streets and desire lines through the site and offers good permeability between the Baltic Triangle district to the west and the creative quarter to the east.

1.19.5 The layout of the proposed development is considered to sit well with the existing townscape and the distribution of built form across the site in the proposed arrangement will result in a large beneficial impact in that the layout of the application site is enhanced, in that it is fully reinstated.

## **1.20 Impacts on density and mix**

1.20.1 The development, which comprises nine structures of varying size and all relatively large, will result in a large amount of the site as being dedicated open spaces and public realm. This is achieved through the concentration of large structures on the Great George Street frontage and the use of tall elements in the south. The density of the development to the west, closer to the existing built form is less concentrated, most notably on Cookson Street, where the regular and widely spaced distribution of the four cube residential blocks responds to the adjacent dwellings. The network of open spaces should introduce a much needed level of vitality and animation to the site.

1.20.2 The proposed range of uses throughout the site, comprising residential, retail, commercial, hotel and other uses such as dentists, doctors and other uses will offer a hub of activity for the New Chinatown area. The provision of small units within the large blocks as live/work type units, occupation by small, independent businesses will help to ensure that the diversity of uses will be achieved.

1.20.3 The proposed density will contrast the neighbouring areas to the west and east of the application area. This density will however have a positive effect on the area

through the introduction of new and diverse range of uses. Due to the total absence of any density or mix on the application site, and due to the careful design of the density of built form and provision of open space and public realm on the western side of the application, this allows the transition from the west to be made progressively as opposed to being a sudden and distinctive change.

- 1.20.4 The reintroduction of density and mix to the application area is considered to be a large beneficial effect of the proposed development.

### **1.21 Impacts on scale**

- 1.21.1 The scale of the development, which rises in height from north to south from seven storeys to a maximum of 21 storeys is a considerable change and represents a scale of development which is not present in the surrounding area.

- 1.21.2 Phase 1 of the proposed development comprises seven storeys and allows the transition of built form to escalate from the existing built development on Hardy Street southwards. The positioning of the tower element at the southern side of the development responds to the skyline views of the Anglican Cathedral from the city centre and Albert Dock and from views of the Cathedral back to the city.

- 1.21.3 The gradual increase in scale to the south culminates in Phase 3, with the residential tower of 21 storeys and hotel of 15 storeys. The tall elements of the scheme are at a key gateway into the city of Liverpool and this drives an architectural response to ensure positive place-making and providing an emblematic entrance to the city and to the development. The scale of the tower is taller than the previously consented scheme, which was a maximum of 15 storeys; however the tower is located southwards of the previous scheme, in order to respond to the views of the Cathedral.

- 1.21.4 The scale of the tower element of the development is much larger than its immediate neighbours, in particularly The Wedding House (Grade II). In heritage terms, the primacy of the listed building is not acknowledged, although the residential tower is separated from the listed building by the main entrance to the development, the modern development still visually dominates the listed building. In architectural terms, the development places the historic building at the centre of the development, enhancing its prominence (it is currently the sole remnant of a

terrace which is now isolated within unmanaged land). The architectural set piece of old and new provides a striking statement and entrance to the development.

1.21.5 The scale of the development at the south of the application site is unquestionably greater than anything in the immediate area. This response has been driven to provide an architectural response to the position of this part of the development site being on a key gateway of the city. Elsewhere, the scale of the development, both where it fronts Great George Street or where it interacts with Cookson Street, St James street and Hardy Street is dictated by the surrounding built form and therefore overall it is considered that the scale of the development 'fits very well' with the existing townscape which is considered to be a moderate beneficial impact.

## **1.22 Impacts on appearance**

1.22.1 The lack of built form, the poor quality of the built form that is present, the quality of and amenity value of the open space, the lack of defined edges and the level of neglect apparent at the application site have a significant negative effect upon the appearance of the site, especially as it is located at a key gateway into the city. The absence of locally distinctive architectural style or materials does not engender a sense of place.

1.22.2 The development proposals, which as discussed above propose a landmark gateway entrance of two tall structures flanking an historic building will considerably enhance the appearance of the application site. The architectural treatment of the elevations, most notably in Phase 1 where offsetting modular units provides a textured facade will provide a distinctive and unique architectural style in the area. The architectural design will serve to distinguish the site from the surrounding and will allow it to be read as a new and modern architectural development.

1.22.3 The details of the materials for the structural elements of the development will further this distinctiveness as these are likely to be red zinc cladding (or similar) and coated brick. This material is entirely modern and contrasts with the red brick and local sandstone of the older buildings in the area and also with those from the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

1.22.4 The visual distinction of the appearance of the built elements of the development will contrast with the materiality of the public realm which will utilise the approved

design palette for the Ropewalks area. This will serve to gradually transition pedestrians from the surrounding area into the development.

- 1.22.5 As a consequence of the development proposals, and as a result of the design architectural and public realm, the development will have a large beneficial impact upon the appearance of the development site and its immediate surroundings.

### **1.23 Impacts on human interaction**

- 1.23.1 Human interaction is the way that people interact with the urban environment. The presence and scale of pedestrian activity is vital to the success of a mixed use development. The current deserted site is unwelcoming and creates a vulnerability to pedestrians due to the lack of activity and vitality. Such a lack of vitality compromises perceptions of personal security and can deter those on foot, reinforcing the perceived vulnerability and security issues.

- 1.23.2 The provision of shops, cafes, Chinese markets and seating within the commercial zones of the proposed development will attract pedestrian activity helping to animate the area.

- 1.23.3 Active frontage is a term that relates to the extent that buildings animate and make users feel safe in the surrounding streets with windows, lighting and pedestrian activity. The development proposals address the current distinct lack of active frontage in providing Chinese markets, food courts with outdoor seating areas and well-lit leisure and hospitality services. Rooftop amenity space will animate the area and the inclusion of private and semi-private green spaces is a welcome attraction.

- 1.23.4 Improved transport links along St James Street are welcome and the provision of underground secure car parking ensures areas of open space are pedestrian focused.

- 1.23.5 In terms of impacts on human interaction, the development proposals enhance the levels and quality of human interaction with the site to a large beneficial extent.

### **1.24 Impacts on cultural heritage assets**

- 1.24.1 This is dealt with within the Heritage Impact Assessment

## **1.25 Conclusion**

- 1.25.1 Whilst the proposed development will result in a significant change to the application site and the immediate surroundings, the current condition of the site, and its townscape qualities, are so detracting from the quality and usability of the townscape that the development proposals will result in an adverse impact upon one single receptor, and that relates to the scale of development adjacent to The Wedding House (Grade II listed). With regards to the remaining heritage and non-heritage assets, the development is considered to be in keeping with the surrounding scale of the townscape.
- 1.25.2 In terms of other Townscape characteristics, the proposed development will have a considerable, beneficial effect upon the townscape of the area.
- 1.25.3 When concluding the impacts of urban developments it is essential that the cumulative impact is considered. Consented and committed developments in the wider area indicate that this area of Liverpool is to be the subject of change through urban regeneration schemes. The development of tall buildings along Park Lane, considered within the Visual Impact Assessment below and the Heritage Impact Assessment as well as schemes within the Baltic Triangle indicate that a mass of development is proposed for the area. The design proposals for the current application demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to interact with the wider area whilst acting as a gateway to the city.
- 1.25.4 The development of the site is an important step in the city's regeneration and will help to improve public perception and pride. The development offers a unique and varied choice of living and working accommodation that can act as a catalyst to growth within the area.
- 1.25.5 The cultural design approach aims to animate this underutilised area of the city and create strong links between the Baltic Triangle and the wider city. The dominant architecture will punctuate the space and define strong edges and active frontages.
- 1.25.6 The reintroduction of high quality architecture and built form will help to re-invigorate the area instilling a sense of place and a new identity.

## **1.26 References**

- Liverpool City Centre Strategic Investment Framework 2012

- LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE Public Realm Implementation Framework 2004
- The Strategic Regeneration Framework for Liverpool – Liverpool Vision
- Liverpool Unitary Development Plan
- Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site – Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Baltic Triangle Planning Framework
- Liverpool University Urban Design Framework
- Supporting documents
- National Character Area profile: 58: Merseyside Conurbation
- New Chinatown Design and Access Statement – Blok Architecture
- Transport Analysis Guidance TAG Unit 3.3.8 Townscape (DETR 2004)
- Guidance on Tall Buildings (Historic England and CABI 2007)

## **2 VISUAL ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The visual assessment of the proposed mixed use development at New Chinatown in Liverpool aims to identify and assess the significance of the likely visual impacts of the proposed development upon both the site itself and the surrounding area.
- 2.1.2 Visual effects relate closely to landscape/townscape effects, but concern changes in views. Visual assessment concerns people's perception and response to changes in visual amenity. Effects may result from new townscape elements that cause visual intrusion or new features that obstruct views across the townscape.
- 2.1.3 Visual effects can be positive or negative at New Chinatown.

### **2.2 Methodology**

#### ***General***

- 2.2.1 The methodology for this assessment follows the recommendations and guidance set out in the following reports:
- Department of Transport in "Manual of Environmental Assessment" Volume II (June 1993) and as amended; and
  - Guidelines for the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Impacts, Second Edition, edited by The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2002).

#### ***Visual assessment***

- 2.2.2 The visual assessment has been carried out by means of a site and desk survey and analysis of the study area. Photographs were taken in July 2015 from representative viewpoints, as illustrated on the Photographic Viewpoint location plans (Figure 101). The viewpoints were agreed in discussion with Liverpool City Council and Historic England. The photographs were taken with a Nikon D800 with Sigma 30mm lens. Viewpoints 1 to 16, Figures 102 to 120 illustrate the site in the context of the surrounding townscape. Each viewpoint Figure includes the following:

- a description of the location (receptor) and the approximate height AOD at the viewpoint;
- the distance from the application boundary closest to the viewpoint;
- a location map of the viewpoint;
- a description of the existing view, those during construction of the development and on completion;
- descriptions of magnitude of impact and viewpoint sensitivity;
- mitigation measures;
- status of effects (temporary, permanent, reversible, irreversible); and
- a summary of the significance of the potential impact (adverse or beneficial).

2.2.3 The visual assessment considers the site and its surroundings, focusing on a radius of approximately 5km.

2.2.4 Views have been assessed from an average height of approximately 1.8m above ground level. A consideration of the combination of the character and quality of the view, the sensitivity of visual receptors and the magnitude of the change, determines the level of significance of the predicted impact. In visual assessment the magnitude is determined by the distance from the viewer, the extent of change in the field of vision, the proportion or number of viewers affected and the duration of activity apparent from each viewpoint, or a sequence of points that may have transient views for instance along a road. Greater weight is given to the visual impacts upon public viewpoints than upon private properties.

### ***Thresholds and criteria***

2.2.5 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (paragraph 7.42) state that “No [quantitative] formal guidance exists for the assessment of significance for landscape and visual effects and the assessor must clearly define the criteria used in the assessment for each project, using his or her skill based on professional judgement.” Sensitivity and magnitude of both landscape/ townscape and visual effects are assessed on a scale of ‘negligible low-medium-high’, and the criteria used are explained and defined in tables in the text.



### *Viewpoint sensitivity*

2.2.6 The visual impact assessment identifies and assesses the impact of the proposals upon visual receptors. Visual receptors include the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers as well as the visual amenity of people affected. The types of viewers, the numbers, the duration of the view and the importance of the view or views of and from valued area define the sensitivity of a visual receptor.

2.2.7 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment state (paragraph. 7.31) that “The sensitivity of visual receptors and views will be dependent on:

- the location and context of the viewpoint;
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor; and
- the importance of the view.”

2.2.8 From this and in this urban context the scale of viewpoint sensitivity outlined in Table 2 has been used.

Table 2: Criteria for the assessment of viewpoint sensitivity	
Level	Typical criteria
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users of outdoor recreational facilities whose attention is focused on the townscape</li> <li>• Communities where the development results in changes in the setting or valued views enjoyed by the community</li> <li>• Occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the development</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation whose attention maybe focused away from the townscape</li> <li>• People travelling through or past the development in cars, on trains or other transport routes</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People at their place of work, or engaged in similar activities, whose attention maybe focused away from the change in view</li> </ul>

### *Magnitude*

2.2.9 Table 3 explains how criteria are applied to arrive at an assessment of magnitude and is derived from the GLVIA, Second Edition.

Table 3: Criteria for the assessment of magnitude	
Level	Typical criteria
High	Total loss of or major alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements considered to be totally

Table 3: Criteria for the assessment of magnitude	
Level	Typical criteria
	uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape
Low	Minor loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that may not necessarily be considered to be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape
Negligible	Very minor loss of or alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the baseline, i.e. pre-development landscape or view and/ or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape- approximating the 'no change' situation

2.2.10 Magnitude is influenced by the effects of distance, (which can control how a development is perceived), but the number of buildings seen is also important. Whether the whole of a building is visible or just parts are seen influences the degree of change. The extent to which the development occupies the skyline is also a factor affecting its prominence. Magnitude can vary greatly in differing weather conditions. Direction of light at different times of day also alters magnitude of change in a view at some viewpoint positions, so whether it is seen against the background of the sky or the townscape can make a difference. The EIA has to take into account a worst case scenario and the time duration it is experienced.

#### *Value, quality, condition and capacity*

2.2.11 Value is concerned with the relative value attached to different landscapes and townscapes. Landscapes/ townscapes can be valued by different people for different reasons connected to its perceptual aspects such as tranquillity, scenic beauty, cultural associations or conservation interests. This consensus can be recognised at a local or national scale. Table 4 explains how criteria are applied to arrive at an assessment of value in this assessment. It is derived from GLVIA, Second Edition.

Table 4: Criteria for the assessment of townscape value			
Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples
Very high	High importance, very attractive and rare No or very limited potential for substitution Exceptional townscape quality	International or national	World Heritage Site, Archaeological Important Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, sites of national importance recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) or National Monuments

			Record (NMR) and Listed Buildings.
High	High importance, very attractive or attractive and in part rare Limited potential for substitution High or good townscape quality	National, regional or district	Archaeological Important Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Tree Preservation Orders and sites of national, regional or county importance recorded on the SMR or NMR.
Medium	Typical and commonplace or in part unusual Limited potential for substitution Ordinary townscape quality	Regional, district or local	Generally undesignated but value expressed through literature and cultural associations or through demonstrable use. May contain Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders and sites of county or local importance recorded on the SMR.
Low	Low importance and rarity Monotonous, degraded or damaged Poor townscape quality	District or local	Certain individual townscape elements or features may be worthy of conservation and townscape either identified or would benefit from restoration or enhancement.

2.2.12 The EIA regulations do not specifically require study of whether a development complies or otherwise with planning policy. Planning policy is important and relevant to visual assessment when it is a recognition or reflection of the value placed upon a particular landscape or its attributes by society. Thus inscriptions like the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile World Heritage Site have relevance since they identify a consensus about this aforesaid value. Reference to planning policy can therefore assist the assessor in identifying sensitive receptors.

2.2.13 Landscape/ townscape quality or condition is, 'based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape/ townscape and about its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.' Countryside Agency & SNH (2002).

2.2.14 Landscape/ townscape capacity is linked to sensitivity and is generally defined as the amount of change of a particular type that a landscape/ townscape can accept without adverse effects upon its character, or change of character type. A landscape/ townscape that has high sensitivity may not necessarily have a low capacity to accommodate a particular development. Study of landscape/ townscape capacity involves consideration of visibility and values alongside sensitivity.

### *Significance*

2.2.15 Overall, impacts may be adverse, neutral or beneficial, and are assigned a level on the scale: Imperceptible-Slight-Moderate-Substantial-Severe, taking into account mitigation measures, and at different stages of the project lifecycle. Intermediate levels, such as slight to moderate, may also apply. Table 5 assigns criteria to each level, as applied in this assessment.

Table 5: Criteria for determining significance	
Level	Typical criteria
Imperceptible	The degree of change is so small as to have little or no effect
Slight	The proposals have some, but only a limited effect within the mainly local context
Moderate	The proposals have a noticeable effect within the context of the wider area
Substantial	The proposals have a large effect within the context of the wider area
Severe	The proposals are wholly out of character with the existing situation, both locally and on the wider scale

2.2.16 Additional information regarding the threshold criteria applicable to visual impact assessment is given in Appendix 6.0 of the GLVIA, Second Edition.

2.2.17 In EIA terms impacts that are moderate/substantial or greater are generally considered to be significant. Effects may be locally significant or may extend over a wide area. Whilst significant adverse effects may be identified in connection with a proposed development, this does not imply necessarily that the development taken as a whole would be unacceptable in environmental terms.

### ***Selection of viewpoints***

2.2.18 Viewpoints are chosen to study the potential visual effects of the scheme. The principal criterion is that they must be representative of the range of views and viewer types, i.e. receptors, likely to experience significant impacts. Specific points may also be chosen because they are important existing viewpoints in the townscape and from these the visual effects may not be significant.

2.2.19 View types included:

- areas of high value such as the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City World Heritage Site and Conservation Areas;
- viewpoints that may have wide panoramic views or by contrast focused views;
- viewpoints at different distances;
- viewpoints at different elevations;

- viewpoints from different aspects;
- viewpoints from which there would only be partial views of the buildings, and;
- sequential views for instance along the River Mersey.

#### 2.2.20 Viewer types included:

- views from residences, roads or recreational points where visitors may experience the townscape,
- viewpoints where viewers would be likely to be stationary or moving through the townscape.

2.2.21 Fourteen key views of the site were identified in discussions with Historic England and Liverpool City Council agreeing that the main issue to be addressed in these viewpoints is visual obstruction rather than intrusion.

2.2.22 A number of landmarks, key views, vistas and panoramas were identified by Entec on behalf of the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in November 2002 called: Strategic views along the River Mersey (June 2003). These views have been incorporated within the Supplementary Planning Guide for the World Heritage Site (2009).

2.2.23 The remaining viewpoints were identified in further discussions with Historic England and the Liverpool City Council and through the site visit.

2.2.24 It needs to be recognised that viewpoints have been selected to demonstrate views from areas which do not have significant adverse effects, but the overall significance of the scheme on the study area as a whole cannot just be measured by counting numbers of viewpoints.

#### ***Verified views***

2.2.25 The specific viewpoints were chosen because they were considered to be representative of an important/ sensitive viewpoint and some were specifically requested by one of the consultees. For each verified view the photograph of the existing situation is included. In accordance with best practice the verified views have been produced from un-cropped images and they illustrate a 90-degree lateral field of vision.

2.2.26 Fourteen verified views have been produced, following consultation with Liverpool City Council and Historic England. The locations of these are shown on Figure 101.

- Verified view 1 – Liverpool Museum
- Verified view 2 – Albert Dock
- Verified view 3 – Junction of Upper Duke Street & Great George Street
- Verified view 4 – Parliament Street looking down Great George Street
- Verified view 5 – North end of Park Lane looking to site
- Verified view 6 (6a) – Wapping Dock (SPD View)
- Verified view 6b – Kinetic view at Keel Wharf
- Verified view 7 – Anglican Cathedral (SPD View)
- Verified view 8 – Woodside Ferry Terminal (SPD Distant View)
- Verified view 9 – Wallasey Town Hall (SPD Distant View)
- Verified view 13 – Junction of Parliament Street and Sefton Street (Distant View)
- Verified view 14 – St James Mount
- Verified view 15a,15b and 15c – Kinetic view along Greenland Street, Jordan Street and Kitchen Street
- Verified view 16 – Grenville Street South to site

2.2.27 This report assesses the wider effect of the whole development upon the individual receptors identified for study.

### ***Summary of potential effects of aspects of the development***

2.2.28 Table 6 summarises the potential effects of elements of the scheme together with the potential consequences of the scheme.

<b>Table 6: Summary of potential effects of aspects of the development</b>	
Aspect of the development	Potential change
Construction phase	
Construction vehicle movement	Townscape physical attributes/elements and pattern not affected
	Perceptual characteristics: increase in activity for short time, temporary increase in amount of visual clutter
Cranes	townscape physical attributes/elements not changed but

	temporary effect on skyline patterns
	Perceptual characteristics: cranes are tall and potentially prominent
Construction of buildings	Townscape physical attributes: introduction of new elements, loss of existing buildings
	Perceptual characteristics: increase in activity for short time, temporary increase in amount of visual clutter
Construction of infrastructure and outdoor spaces	Townscape physical attributes: introduction of new elements, loss of existing site furniture, car parking, etc.
	Perceptual characteristics: increase in activity for short time, temporary increase in amount of visual clutter
Storage areas including compound with stockpiles of materials	Physical attributes/elements: new incongruous elements obvious but contained
	Perceptual characteristics: potential effect upon urban character
Completion	
The buildings	Physical characteristics: introduction of new large scale buildings of contrasting materials to surrounding buildings making a new strong pattern
	Perceptual characteristics: potential effect upon scale and massing of built development in the area
Outdoor spaces	Physical characteristics: introduction of new, high quality spaces linking to existing spaces improving the pattern
	Perceptual characteristics: potential positive effect upon urban character of the area, sense of continuity along the waterfront.

## 2.3 Baseline conditions

### *A New Vision for Liverpool Chinatown*

2.3.1 This brief was produced by Blok Architecture and the vision is outlined in the Design and Access Statement as:

*“A high quality truly mixed use scheme that will compromise a tower grounded by commercial units, various different sized commercial spaces, a Chinese market place and a broad range of city centre living accommodation accompanied by leisure and hospitality facilities amongst landscaped roof gardens found at ground and roof levels.”*

*“By delivering a high quality architectural response, the mixed use complex will positively add to the local area, contributing to all aspects of wellbeing and the expansion of the urban fringe of Liverpool City Centre.”*

*“With a cultural design approach, the development aims to enhance the local area by bridging the gap between Great George Street and the Baltic Triangle Regeneration Zone on the edge of an established industrial area of the city. This will not only animate the surrounding streets but provide a sense of place, a new destination and a new identity.”*

2.3.2 The 14 key views of the site which were identified in discussions with Historic England and the Local Planning Authority are summarised here. These are considered to be important in protecting and enhancing the character of the Conservation Areas and the World Heritage Site and its Buffer Zone. These views informed the location, scale and massing of development on the site. The 14 key views together with the objective that should be attained are:

- Key View 1 (viewpoint 1, verified view 1) - The view east / south east from Liverpool Museum towards the Anglican Cathedral. The views over Albert Dock and towards the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained.
- Key View 2 (viewpoint 2, verified view 2) - The view south east from Albert Quay towards the Anglican Cathedral. Again the views over Albert Dock and towards the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained.
- Key View 3 (viewpoint 3, verified view 3) - The view south along Great George Street. The views should not detrimentally affect the Anglican Cathedral or surrounding important buildings.
- Key View 4 (viewpoint 4, verified view 4) - The view north from the junction of St James Street and Parliament Street. The views of the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained.
- Key View 5 (viewpoint 5, verified view 5) - The south east from the northern end of Park Lane. The views of the Anglican Cathedral and any other important buildings should be maintained.
- Key View 6 (viewpoint 6a, verified view 6) - The view east from Wapping Dock towards the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained, along with no detrimental alterations to views from the Dock. This



view has been selected as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) View (**View J**).

- Key View 7 (viewpoint 6b, kinetic verified view 7) - The view east from Keel Dock towards the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained, along with no detrimental alterations to views from the Dock. This view has been selected as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) View.
- Key View 8 (viewpoint 7, verified view 8) - The view west from the Anglican Cathedral. Developments should not detrimentally effect the view of the townscape from the Cathedral. This view has been selected as a Supplementary Planning Document Distant View (**View V**).
- Key View 9 (viewpoint 8, verified view 9) - The view east from Woodside Ferry Terminal over the River Mersey towards the central area of Liverpool. The important buildings along Liverpool's skyline including the Anglican Cathedral should remain visible. This view has been selected as a Supplementary Planning Document Distant View (**View 3**).
- Key View 10 (viewpoint 9, verified view 10) – The view south east over the River Mersey from Wallasey Town Hall towards the central area of Liverpool. The important buildings along Liverpool's skyline including the Anglican Cathedral should remain visible. This view has been selected as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) View (**View 2**).
- Key View 11 (viewpoint 13, verified view 11) – The view north / north east along Parliament Street and towards the Anglican Cathedral. The views of the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained.
- Key View 12 (viewpoint 14, verified view 12) – The view north west towards the Wirral and views across the River Mersey from higher ground at St James Mount adjacent to the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the local horizon should be maintained.
- Key View 13 (viewpoint 15a, 15b & 15c, verified view 13) – A series of kinetic views along Greenland Street, Jordan Street and Kitchen Street looking toward the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the Cathedral should not be detrimentally affected.

- Key View 14 (viewpoint 16, verified view 14) – View looking south east down Grenville Street South in the direction of the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the Anglican Cathedral should be maintained.

2.3.3 These locations are shown on Figure 101.

***Strategic views along the River Mersey (June 2003)***

2.3.4 Entec was commissioned by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in November 2002 to carry out the study: Strategic views along the River Mersey (June 2003). The purpose of which was to identify views along the River Mersey/ Manchester Ship Canal corridors that are worthy of preservation and, were feasible, enhancement. The study also considered the implications of incorporating such view designations into the planning system with regard to future development proposals.

2.3.5 The research was considered as part of the partial review of the North West's Regional Planning Guidance (RPG13) in August 2004. This then went to public examination in November and December 2004, the results of which were published in the Report of the Panel who recommended that the policies and supporting text relating to the strategic views be deleted from the partial review. Despite this, this study was useful in identifying important views along the River Mersey, some of which include the New Chinatown site.

2.3.6 The relevant views identified from the western side of the River Mersey were:

- the view from Wallasey Town Hall (viewpoint 9);
- the view from Woodside Ferry Terminal (viewpoint 8);

2.3.7 The relevant views identified from the eastern side of the River Mersey were:

- the view from the northern end of the Albert Dock (viewpoint 2);
- the view from Pier Head at Liverpool Museum (viewpoint 1);

2.3.8 Strategic views are defined by the study as views that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- They contain clear views of natural or built elements that are readily recognisable by local people or visitors, or have a significant role in defining the surrounding area's visual attractiveness, context and/or sense of place.

- They contain the very good examples of a landscape or townscape type that is can only be experienced in the region in the context of the Mersey or the Manchester Ship Canal.
- The viewpoints from which strategic views are available are publicly accessible and are presently or potentially popular.

2.3.9 The relevant key landmarks identified by the study were:

- Liverpool Anglican Cathedral;
- The Royal Liver Building/ Cunard Building/ Port of Liverpool Building (the Pier Head group);
- Albert Docks; and
- Wallasey Town Hall.

## **2.4 Potential visual impacts**

2.4.1 Following a desk based study, a series of field investigations has verified the main areas (visual receptors) from which the site can be seen within an approximate 5km radius of the site. The process of selecting viewpoints is already explained.

2.4.2 The photographs and text on viewpoints 1 – 16 and the verified views illustrate the visual effects upon sensitive and representative receptors. These provide an assessment of sensitivity of the viewpoint, magnitude of the effect and thus significance overall upon the viewpoint.

### ***Potential visual impacts during construction***

2.4.3 Table 5 identifies the possible source of construction impacts. For the viewpoints chosen for study all the impacts are assumed to be adverse during construction phase and for those viewpoints close to the site effects would be significantly adverse due to the disruption. However, these effects would only be temporary and would become beneficial on completion of the development. This is illustrated on the photographic viewpoint drawings.

### ***Potential visual impacts on completion of the development***

2.4.4 For 18 of the 19 viewpoints chosen for study all the impacts are assumed to be adverse however viewpoint 12 which is on the site boundary has beneficial effects.

- Substantial adverse impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoints 4
- Moderate beneficial impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoints 3, 13, 15a, 15b and 16.
- Slight to moderate adverse impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoints 6b
- Slight adverse impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoints 5, 6a, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 15c.
- Slight to Imperceptible impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoint 1 and 2
- Slight beneficial impacts are predicted on completion for viewpoint 12.

2.4.5 The impacts at each viewpoint are detailed on the photographic viewpoint drawings and summarised in the following paragraphs.

#### *Viewpoint 1 – Liverpool Museum*

2.4.6 This view looks south east across the north end of Albert Dock from the public space outside Liverpool Museum. The Mann Island development, Liverpool Tate Gallery and various buildings related to Albert Dock are seen in the view. The Anglican Cathedral can be seen in middle distance over closer buildings. The development would only be glimpsed slightly from this viewpoint with the tower being the only visible element.

2.4.7 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is from an open public area where the majority of viewers would be spending time in the space. It is within the World Heritage Site and the Castle Street Conservation Area and looks towards the Albert Dock Conservation Area. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to the dominance of some of the surrounding buildings and the slight view to the development. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as imperceptible to slight adverse because the view would only slightly alter with views of the development screened by existing buildings. Views of the Anglican Cathedral would remain.

#### *Viewpoint 2 –Albert Dock*

2.4.8 This view looks south east across Albert Dock from the corner of Salthouse Dock. A number of dock related features are visible throughout the view. Modern high rise

buildings are frequently viewed throughout the view. The Anglican Cathedral is seen in the middle distance. The development would be screened by existing buildings and planned development.

- 2.4.9 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a popular area for both visitors and residents whose focus is very much directed towards the listed buildings and the waterfront. It is also within the World Heritage site and the Castle Street Conservation Area and looks towards the Albert Dock Conservation area. The magnitude of the effects is however, considered to be low due to views of the development being screened upon completion with views of the tower being slightly more open. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight as views would not detrimentally effect the features at Albert Dock with views of the Anglican Cathedral also remaining.

*Viewpoint 3 – Junction of Great George Street and Upper Duke Street*

- 2.4.10 This view looks south along Great George Street which runs along the eastern edge of the site boundary. A number of different building types are seen in this view with the Chinatown Arch being a prominent feature. The eastern side of the development will be visible with the tower becoming a prominent feature in the view.
- 2.4.11 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a busy junction with drivers receiving a direct and open views along the route of the development. It is also within the World Heritage site. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to the open views of the eastern side of the development. The stepped arrangement of the new development will reduce the mass. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as moderate adverse due to open views of the eastern side of the development in particular the tower.

*Viewpoint 4 – Junction of St James Street and Parliament Street with Great George Street*

- 2.4.12 This view looks north across the junction of Great George Street and St James Street. From this view, the development would be partially viewed between existing buildings, in particular The Wedding House in the centre of the view, and vegetation. The proposed tower is located at the south end of the development site therefore would be a prominent addition to the view. The Anglican Cathedral is seen to the right of the view over the tops of existing roadside trees.

2.4.13 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a highly busy junction with road users in all directions having views of the development. It is also within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be high due to the open and direct views of the development and particularly the tower. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as substantial adverse due to open views from this point of the tower altering the view.

*Viewpoint 5 – North end of Park Lane at junction with Paradise Street*

2.4.14 This view is taken from the north end of Park Lane looking in a south east direction. The Anglican Cathedral can be glimpsed through existing vegetation. The majority of the view is dominated by buildings of varying function. There would be partial views of the development through existing vegetation and for users of Park Lane.

2.4.15 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to the screening of views of the development from existing vegetation resulting in partial views. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse.

*Viewpoint 6a– Wapping Dock (SPD view J)*

2.4.16 This view is taken from Wapping Dock looking in an east direction and is the first of two kinetic views. The majority of the view looking east is dominated by a large warehouse building. The Anglican Cathedral can be seen to the right of this building. The dock itself is also a dominant feature in this view. The majority of the development would be glimpsed between existing built form and vegetation with the tower being the most visible to the east of the Anglican Cathedral in this view.

2.4.17 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is within the World Heritage site. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to the tower being visible from this important location, however the distance from the development of the view has been considered. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse due to only the tower being visible which would not detrimentally effect the setting of this area. Views of the Anglican Cathedral are also maintained.

2.4.18 This view has also been selected as a SPD view

*Viewpoint 6b – Keel Wharf to the south of Wapping Dock*

2.4.19 This is the second of the kinetic views at Wapping Dock, just south of the first view at Keel Wharf. This view is looking east towards the Anglican Cathedral. Views of the development would be partial through existing built form and vegetation. The development's tower would be visible becoming a prominent addition to the view.

2.4.20 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a popular location (near the Liverpool Echo Arena) and also within the World Heritage site. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to visibility of the tower. The views of the Anglican Cathedral will be maintained. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight to moderate adverse with views of the development's tower becoming a prominent addition to the view.

*Viewpoint 7 – In the grounds of the Anglican Cathedral directly in front of the Cathedral (SPD View V)*

2.4.21 This view looks west and is one of the closer viewpoints to the development and is taken from the grounds of the Anglican Cathedral in front of the Cathedral. The majority of the development is screened due to existing vegetation and built form intervening combined with the landform falling away from a level of 40mAOD to 25mAOD at site level. The tower of the development will be glimpsed above existing vegetation from this view.

2.4.22 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a tourist location and also within the World Heritage site. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to visibility of the tower from the Anglican Cathedral upon completion, however, these views would have little impact at ground level of the Cathedral. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse due to the amount of screening provided from existing built form and vegetation with only glimpsed views of the tower being seen.

This view has also been selected as a SPD view

*Viewpoint 8 – Woodside Ferry Terminal (Distant View 3)*

2.4.23 This view looks north over the River Mersey from the western bank of the river towards Liverpool centre. The horizon features many tall buildings including buildings of great importance for the city for example the three graces (The Royal Liver Building, Cunard Building and Port of Liverpool Building). Views of the

development would be distant with only the development's tower considered distinctly visible on the horizon.

- 2.4.24 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a popular area for both visitors and residents. This view has been selected after considering the Strategic views along the River Mersey study (June 2003) written by ENTEC on behalf of North West Regional Assembly (NWRA). The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to the development glimpsed distantly and becoming part of the of Liverpool's skyline. There would be no detrimental effect on views of the skyline from this view. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse.

*Viewpoint 9 – Wallasey Town Hall (Distant View 2)*

- 2.4.25 This view is taken from Wallasey Town Hall from the western bank of the River Mersey and looks in an easterly direction across the river towards Liverpool centre. The horizon features many tall buildings and structures considered of great value for the city. Views of the development would be distant with only the development's tower distinctly visible on the horizon.

- 2.4.26 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is taken from an important historic building. This view has been selected after considering the Strategic views along the River Mersey study (June 2003) written by ENTEC on behalf of North West Regional Assembly (NWRA). The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to the distance of the development from the view and the screening provided by intervening built form. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse due to the distance of the location of the view to the development and there being no detrimental impact upon the view.

*Viewpoint 10 – Albert Dock adjacent to the Liverpool Tate Gallery*

- 2.4.27 This view looks east from Albert Dock in the direction of the Anglican Cathedral over existing built form. The majority of the development will be screened by foreground buildings with glimpsed views of the development's tower seen above the existing built form.
- 2.4.28 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is a popular area for both visitors and residents and is also within the World Heritage site and the Albert Dock Conservation Area. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to



screening for the majority of the development provided by existing buildings and only glimpsed views of the development seen. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse

*Viewpoint 11 – St James Church Precincts*

2.4.29 This view looks north west from the grounds of St James Church over the St James Street and the junction of Parliament Street and St James Street. The Anglican Cathedral can be seen to the right of the view. Views of the development would be broken by existing built form and vegetation with more open views of the tower at the southern end of the development.

2.4.30 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high due to the location of the view at an important historic building in the city. It is just outside the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to the location of the tower at the southern end of the development, which would be seen over existing vegetation. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse.

*Viewpoint 12 – North east corner of the site*

2.4.31 This view looks from the north east corner across the development site and along Great George Street in a southern direction. A number of residential properties can be seen throughout. Views of the site would be open and direct from this point due to the close proximity of the view to the site.

2.4.32 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is along a busy route to and from the city centre and also adjacent to a number of residential receptors. The view also lies within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be high due to the close proximity of the view to the development allowing for open and direct views of the development. However due to the land at the site currently not in use and classed as brownfield land, a new development would introduce a beneficial change to the area in terms of land use even though there would still be the open views creating a substantial visual change. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight beneficial.

*Viewpoint 13 – Junction of Sefton Street and Parliament Street.*

2.4.33 This view looks north east from Sefton Street towards the Anglican Cathedral which can be seen above a number of industrial buildings. A new 7-8 storey development dominates the right of the view. The development would be seen above existing built form particularly the development's taller storey buildings and the tower. Views of the Anglican Cathedral would become partial from this view once the development's tower is built.

2.4.34 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is medium/ high as it is from a very busy road where the majority of viewers would be moving quickly past the view, but it is within also within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium / high due to the development becoming the prominent features in the view with some screening for lower storey buildings at the development. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as moderate adverse.

*Viewpoint 14 – St James Mount adjacent to Anglican Cathedral*

2.4.35 This view looks north-west from St James Mount located to the south of the Anglican Cathedral which can be glimpsed to the far right of the view. Modern student accommodation is seen to the right of the view also. Vegetation features prominently throughout the view. Views of the development would be seen over existing vegetation and built form. These views would only be of the higher storeys of the development.

2.4.36 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is in the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone and also in close proximity of an important building in the city, the Anglican Cathedral. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to the development being seen above existing vegetation and built form however important views would remain towards Pier Head and the River Mersey. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse.

*Viewpoint 15a – Greenland Street*

2.4.37 This view is the first of three kinetic views from streets in close proximity to the development site. This view looks east along Greenland Street. The Anglican Cathedral can be seen at the end of the street and is a prominent feature in the view. The street is predominantly made up of industrial and commercial premises. The development would be seen partially above existing buildings with more open

views of the development's tower seen. The tower would screen views of the Anglican Cathedral's southern transept.

- 2.4.38 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is located the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to open views of the developments tower only with screening allowing for partial views of the rest of the development only. The visual impact is assessed as moderate adverse due to views of the tower seen and the fact it screens some of the Anglican Cathedral from this point.

*Viewpoint 15b – Jordan Street*

- 2.4.39 This view is the second of the three kinetic views from streets in close proximity to the development site. This view looks east along Jordan Street. Once again the Anglican Cathedral is a prominent feature in the view at the end of the street. The street comprises of modern industrial units which limit views to either side. The development would be seen at the end of the street with views slightly broken by existing built form. The development would partially screen views of the Anglican Cathedral along this street. However, the view would only be screened by lower storey development.

- 2.4.40 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is from within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered medium due to views of the development seen at the end of the street, but with only a slight view of the tower from this point. The visual impact is seen as moderate due to views of the lower storey development being seen at the end of the street and a lesser view of the developments tower.

*Viewpoint 15c – Kitchen Street*

- 2.4.41 This view is the third of the three kinetic views from streets in close proximity to the development site with this view being taken from Kitchen Street looking east. Again, the Anglican Cathedral is seen above existing built form. The immediate foreground is used as car parking and green space with a mixture of residential and taller commercial buildings seen throughout the view. Views of the development from this point would only be partial due to screening from existing built form with the tower only being glimpsed past existing buildings.

2.4.42 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high due to it being located within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be low due to views of the development being partial due to existing built form providing screening. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as slight adverse due to no detrimental effects on the view.

*Viewpoint 16 – Grenville Street South*

2.4.43 This view looks south east over Grenville Street South towards the site which is located in close proximity to this view. Great Georges Square can be seen to the right of the view with residential properties seen throughout the view. Views of the development would be open down Grenville Street South with some of the development being screened by existing trees and some built form. The development's tower would be glimpsed slightly through existing vegetation.

2.4.44 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is high as it is located within the World Heritage Site Buffer Zone and also located near a number of residential receptors. The magnitude of the effects is considered to be medium due to the development being seen at the end of Grenville Street South. The development visible would be lower storey buildings that have been proposed. Therefore the visual impact is assessed as moderate adverse.

## **2.5 Summary**

2.5.1 The conclusion is that no impacts are assessed as significantly adverse on completion of the development since aspects of the views remain in all cases and, because of the characteristics of the townscape, the layout of buildings can be sufficiently coherent so as not to be completely out of character with the view. Impacts in immediate proximity to the site are considered beneficial as the addition of the development will be welcomed on a currently unused brownfield site. The proposed buildings would be of mixed heights with the tower being the most prominent standing at 21 storeys high. Views of the tower would not detrimentally effect views of the Anglican Cathedral which is the closest important feature to the site. The development would significantly reduce the visual clutter creating a coherent site of high quality designed buildings and associated spaces. All car parking would be under the buildings, therefore removing this element of visual clutter from the streetscape.

2.5.2 Impacts would be adverse during the construction of the development, however, these effects would only be temporary.

## **2.6 Cumulative impacts**

2.6.1 The cumulative effects of the proposals at Park Lane, Heaps Mill, Neptune Hurst Street, Simpson Street and Norfolk Street have been considered throughout this report and the New Chinatown proposed development would have no detrimental effect on each of the proposals and vice versa. Even with each development being of a different architectural style, they would be viewed together, particularly from distant views, as separate but welcome additions to the city's skyline.

## **2.7 Mitigation**

2.7.1 The development of the scheme design has taken into account the visual impact of the proposals on the Key Views agreed by Liverpool City Council and Historic England. The final scheme is one of high quality, contemporary design, and sensitive to the surroundings, creating attractive public spaces linking to the surrounding areas. The massing of the development is stepped creating a lesser visual impact from certain views.

## **2.8 Conclusions**

2.8.1 The study has been carried out in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and good practice methodology.

2.8.2 The visual impacts of the proposed development have been assessed by the selection and assessment of a series of representative viewpoints, which were chosen in consultation with Liverpool City Council and Historic England and include the Key Views agreed. It is concluded that visual impacts would be adverse for all but one of the viewpoints taken, however, only viewpoints close to the site would have any substantial effects on surroundings.

2.8.3 All built developments generate visual effects but those carefully designed to take into account visual impacts create developments that fit appropriately into the site and the surroundings. The site is currently empty and slightly derelict and the proposals would replace this with a coherent, high quality designed development.

- 2.8.4 The location, scale and massing of the buildings would be appropriate to the site and the surrounding buildings and the open spaces would be attractive and usable, creating links to the surround areas.

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