

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ON

**PROPOSED PURPOSE-BUILT STUDENT
ACCOMMODATION AT DOMINICK STREET,
LADY'S LANE & HUNTS LANE,
LIMERICK.**

**FOR
LANEHUNT LTD.**

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**JOB REF NO: 2607/122
DATE OF INSPECTION: July 2026**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

This Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Pat McSweeney MSc, MRIAI, RIAI Grade 2 Conservation Architect, to assess the likely impacts on the surrounding architectural heritage arising from a proposed development at Dominick Street (Lady's Lane / Hunts Lane), Limerick City, submitted in support of a planning application for;

The construction of a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) scheme at Dominick Street (Lady's Lane / Hunts Lane), Limerick City. The proposed development will comprise the following: (a) permission to partially demolish the existing Tait Centre building, and (b) permission for the construction of a single multi-storey block ranging in height from six to eight storeys and providing 350 student bedspaces arranged across 51 no. Apartments/ Clusters with shared kitchens and living rooms, with a Gross Internal Floor Area of 9,318 sqm. Communal facilities will include a café, gym, cinema, study rooms, laundry, and indoor and covered outdoor bicycle storage providing 129 no. spaces. A total of 1,228 sqm of amenity space will be provided, comprising 487 sqm of landscaped outdoor courtyards and rooftop terraces and 741 sqm of indoor communal areas. Rooftop photovoltaic solar panels, green roofs, blue roofs, and biodiversity enhancement measures including swift boxes, bat boxes, or other avian or bat roosting features will be incorporated into the development as required. Supporting infrastructure at ground floor level will include plant rooms, refuse storage and collection areas, service zones, and a dedicated ESB substation. The development will be accessed on a pedestrian and cycle priority basis, with zero car parking. Permission is also sought for use of the accommodation, outside of student term time, for short-term letting purposes. All ancillary and associated site development works, including footpaths, drainage, public lighting, water supply, and sustainable urban drainage systems, will be provided.

The following assessment considers the potential impact of the proposed development on the architectural and historic character of the surrounding receiving environment. Particular attention is paid to the nearby Baker Place, where a number of protected structures combine to create a distinctive and historically significant urban streetscape and vista. While the primary focus of this assessment is Baker Place and its associated protected structures, consideration is also given to Colbert Railway Station and its setting, located further south on the opposite side of the subject site. However, notwithstanding the station's architectural significance and its prominence within the wider townscape, the increased distance between the station and the proposed development is such that any resulting impacts are expected to be limited.

2.0 CORE DATA LOCATION & PROTECTION STATUS

There are no protected structures designated within the subject site under the *Limerick Development Plan 2022–2028*, and none of the buildings on the site are included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). While the site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as defined in the Development Plan, it immediately adjoins the Newtown Pery Architectural Conservation Area (ACA 1) designated therein. Furthermore, the site is not situated within an area of archaeological constraint (Recorded Monument / SMR zone), and no recorded National Monuments are located within the site curtilage or its immediate environs.

The nearest protected structures are situated in the nearby the Baker Place / Pery Square area and Colbert Railway Station. The map (Fig. 1), table below (Fig.2) and image (Fig.3) set out in order of prominence the protected structures and structures recorded on the NIAH located within the immediate vicinity of the subject site.

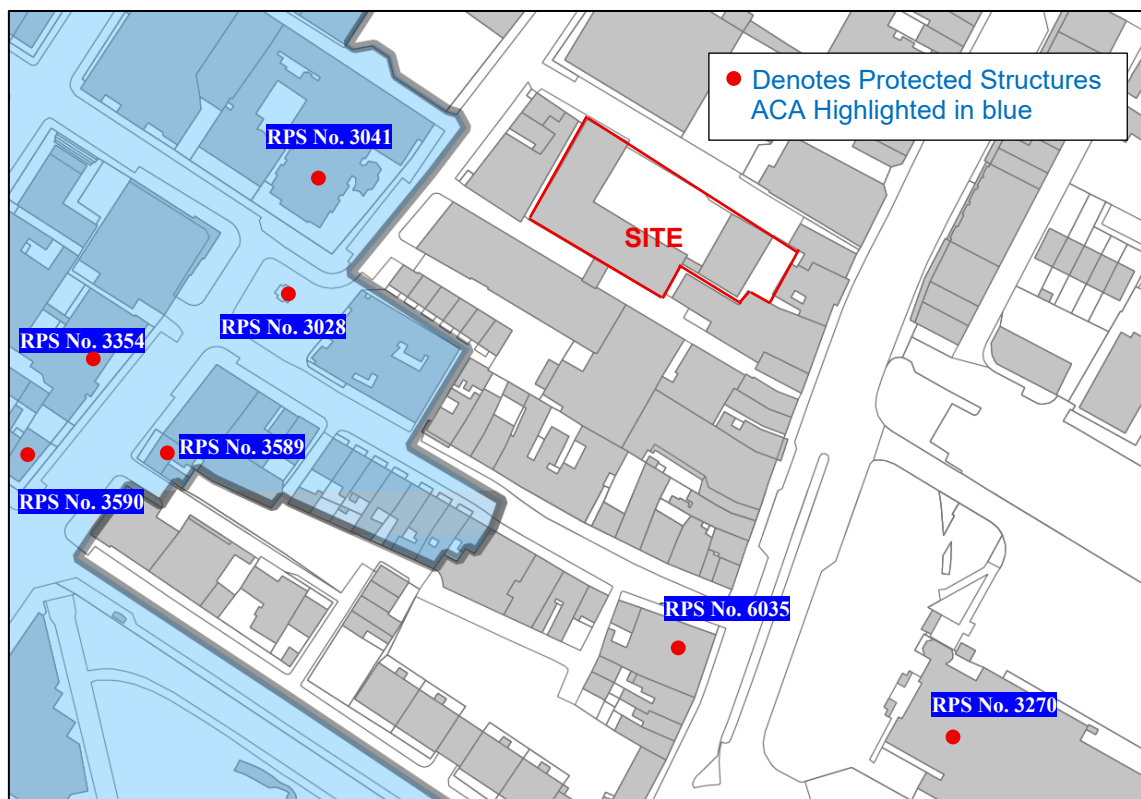


Fig. 1 Location of protected structures in close proximity and adjacent ACA
(Extract of portion of Development's Plan's ACA map)

LIST OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES IN VICINITY OF DEVELOPMENT	
Name Saint Saviour's Roman Catholic Church RPS Description Detached rectangular plan ashlar limestone church, dated 1815, largely reworked to form its current composition, c. 1860- 1870. RPS ref. no. 3041 NIAH ref no. 21518014	
Name Tait Memorial Clock RPS Description Freestanding carved limestone Gothic style clock tower, erected in 1867 RPS ref. no. 3028 NIAH ref no. 21517289	
Name Colbert Railway Station RPS Description Detached seven-bay two-storey over partially concealed basement railway station, opened in 1858 RPS ref. no. 3270 NIAH ref no. 21518019	
Name Former Mid- Western Health Board Building. RPS Description Attached six bay two-storey over basement limestone former Protestant orphan hall, built c. 1865, in a plain Jacobean style, with a square-plan projecting tower to the north. RPS ref. no. 3354 NIAH ref no. 21517304	
Name The Railway Hotel - P. McEnery Public House RPS Description Corner-sited terraced seven-bay three storey hotel, built c. 1800, and incorporating three two-bay three storey terraced buildings, built c. 1840 RPS ref. no. 6035 NIAH ref no. 21518017	
Name Parkview House RPS Description Attached three-bay four-storey over basement red brick former townhouse, built c. 1830. RPS ref. no. 3590 NIAH ref no. 21517303	
Name 3 Pery Street, Myles Street. RPS Description Attached three-bay three-storey over basement gable end brick town house, built c. 1820. RPS ref. no. 3589 NIAH ref no. 21517288	

Fig. 2 List of protected structures in vicinity of development.



Fig. 3 Aerial view of relationship of adjacent protected structures to subject site. (Google Earth)

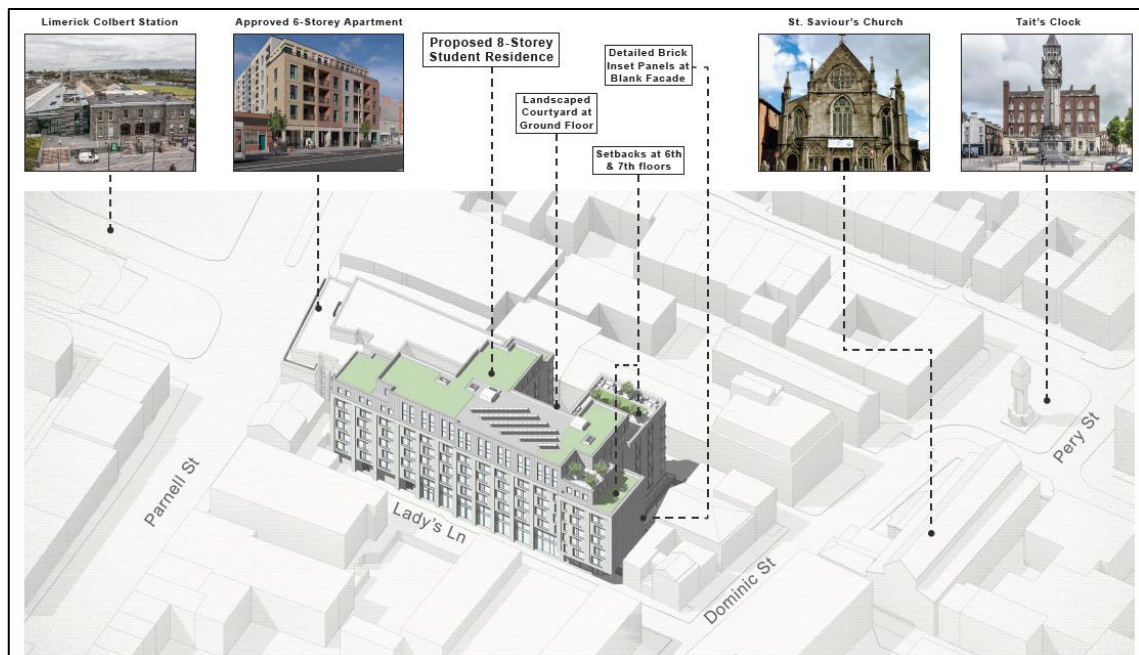


Fig. 4 This diagram highlights the relationship between the proposed development and the most prominent protected structures in its vicinity. (Image from JFA architects design statement)

3.0 THE SITE & ADJACENT BUILDINGS

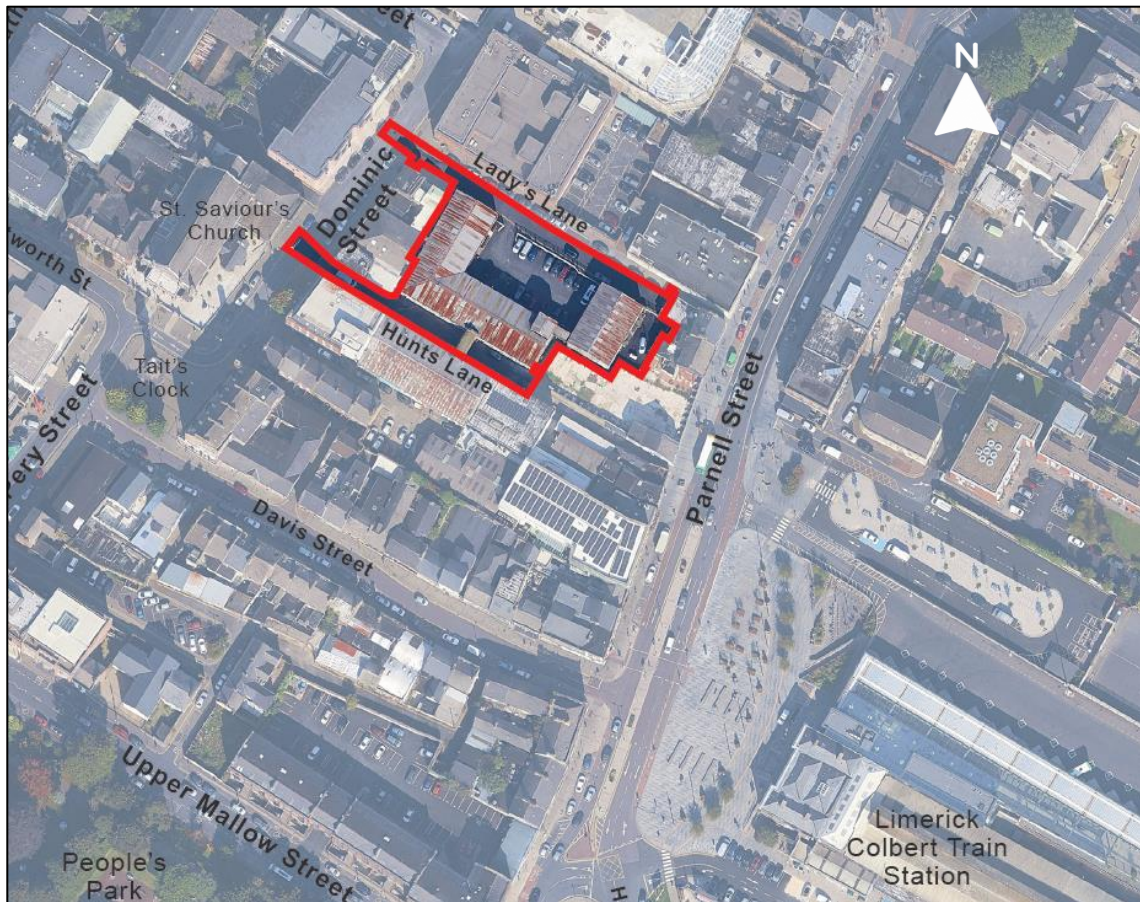


Fig. 5 Aerial view of the subject site.

(Image from JFA architects design statement)

The application site comprises an industrial/commercial property occupying a land parcel situated between established buildings fronting Dominick Street/ Baker Place on its western boundary and commercial premises fronting Parnell Street on its eastern boundary. The site has frontage onto two laneways, namely Lady's Lane to the north and Hunt's Lane to the south.

While the subject site is situated at the periphery of the city's Georgian core, it does not contain any original historic fabric or structures of architectural merit. The existing structures within the application site comprise part brick-faced, part rendered two-storey commercial buildings constructed in the early 1980s. The buildings are arranged in a 'U'-shaped configuration around a central yard and parking area. Their scale, form, appearance, and method of construction are characteristic of commercial and light industrial developments of the early 1980s. As standard utilitarian structures, they are not considered to possess any particular architectural merit or historical, cultural, or heritage significance.

Similarly, the existing adjoining and neighbouring buildings fronting Baker Place and Parnell Street are not considered to be of particular architectural or historical significance. While they contribute to the established urban streetscape and define the character of the surrounding area, they do not possess any special architectural merit, heritage value, or notable historic interest. Indeed, planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of the adjoining site to the east, fronting Parnell Street, with a six-storey development.

The only older structures within the immediate vicinity are the four buildings fronting Baker Place, comprising two two-storey dwelling houses, a two-storey public house premises of relatively modern construction, and a three-storey dwelling house. The original dwelling houses have undergone substantial alteration over the years through a combination of extensions, modifications, roof replacements, the installation of replacement windows and doors, and the application of modern external finishes. As a consequence, much of their original character, architectural detailing, and historic fabric has been lost. Accordingly, these buildings cannot be considered to be of significant architectural or historical merit.



Fig. 6 Existing commercial buildings on the subject site viewed from Lady's Lane.



Fig. 7 Buildings fronting Baker Place

4.0 HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

This section aims to establish an understanding of the historical development and significance of the site, the broader heritage context within which it is situated, and, where relevant, its relationship with nearby protected structures.

The subject site does not contain any protected structures, surviving historic buildings, or structures of cultural significance. Nevertheless, its location on the edge of Limerick's Georgian Newtown Pery area and associated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) means that its historical evolution and relationship to the surrounding urban fabric are important considerations in assessing its context and significance. Having developed outside the principal phase of formal Georgian expansion, in the early nineteenth century, the site contributes to the wider setting of the city's historic Georgian core. Although no historic buildings survive within the site, the structures that formerly occupied it were not considered to be of significant architectural or cultural heritage value. Accordingly, while the site itself is not considered to possess intrinsic heritage significance, its redevelopment has the potential to influence the character and appreciation of the adjoining historic environment.

4.1 Historical documents

A review of historic cartographic sources (see Figs. 9-13) indicates that the site was originally occupied by a series of modest single- and two-storey dwelling houses. These structures were arranged along a network of narrow laneways linking Dominick Street and Parnell Street (formerly Nelson Street), reflecting a more informal, secondary phase of urban development that contrasted with the ordered Georgian layout of Newtown Pery. The site occupies a position between two of these surviving laneways- Lady's Lane and Hunt's Lane- and also incorporates White's Lane, a now extant intermediate laneway historically situated between them.

The scale, layout, and arrangement of these buildings, together with the confined and exceptionally narrow nature of the associated laneways, suggest that they were of relatively low value and were likely occupied by lower-income households, particularly in later years. Consequently, the area would have been characterised by modest living conditions, in contrast to the formal architectural order and higher-status development of the adjoining Newtown Pery area. Contemporary records support this interpretation, indicating that these lanes were consistently associated with low valuation ratings and that some of the most persistent concentrations of poverty in the city were located within the lanes extending off Dominick Street and Nelson Street ⁽¹⁾. Additionally, Census records indicate that these houses were classified as second-class dwellings, typically comprising either two or four front windows, suggesting that they were likely either subdivided units or two-storey houses. Furthermore, trade directories from 1875 and 1879 indicate that occupants included a range of tradespeople, such as coach builders, carpenters, labourers, slaters, masons, and carvers. However, a review of later census records suggests a notable shift, with the majority of occupants increasingly recorded as labourers. This pattern likely reflecting the gradual deterioration in both housing standards and property valuations over time.

Accordingly, the historic development of the site contrasts with the formal architectural character and higher-status urban design associated with the adjoining Newtown Pery area. This distinction provides important context in assessing the evolution of the site and its relationship to the wider historic urban structure of Limerick City.

In common with many of the city's historic laneway areas, these dwelling houses would have declined into dereliction and were subsequently demolished. Historical aerial imagery (see Fig. 16) demonstrates that by the early 1950s, the site had largely been cleared and was given over, at least in part, to commercial warehousing.

The site underwent further redevelopment in circa the late 1970s under Shannon Development, when the present building complex was established as a portion of the Tait Business Centre.

Reference Sources

1. *Public Health and Housing in Limerick City, 1850-1935 A Geographical Analysis*. Unpublished MA Thesis by Ruth Guiry 2013

4.2 Cartographic evidence– chronology of the site

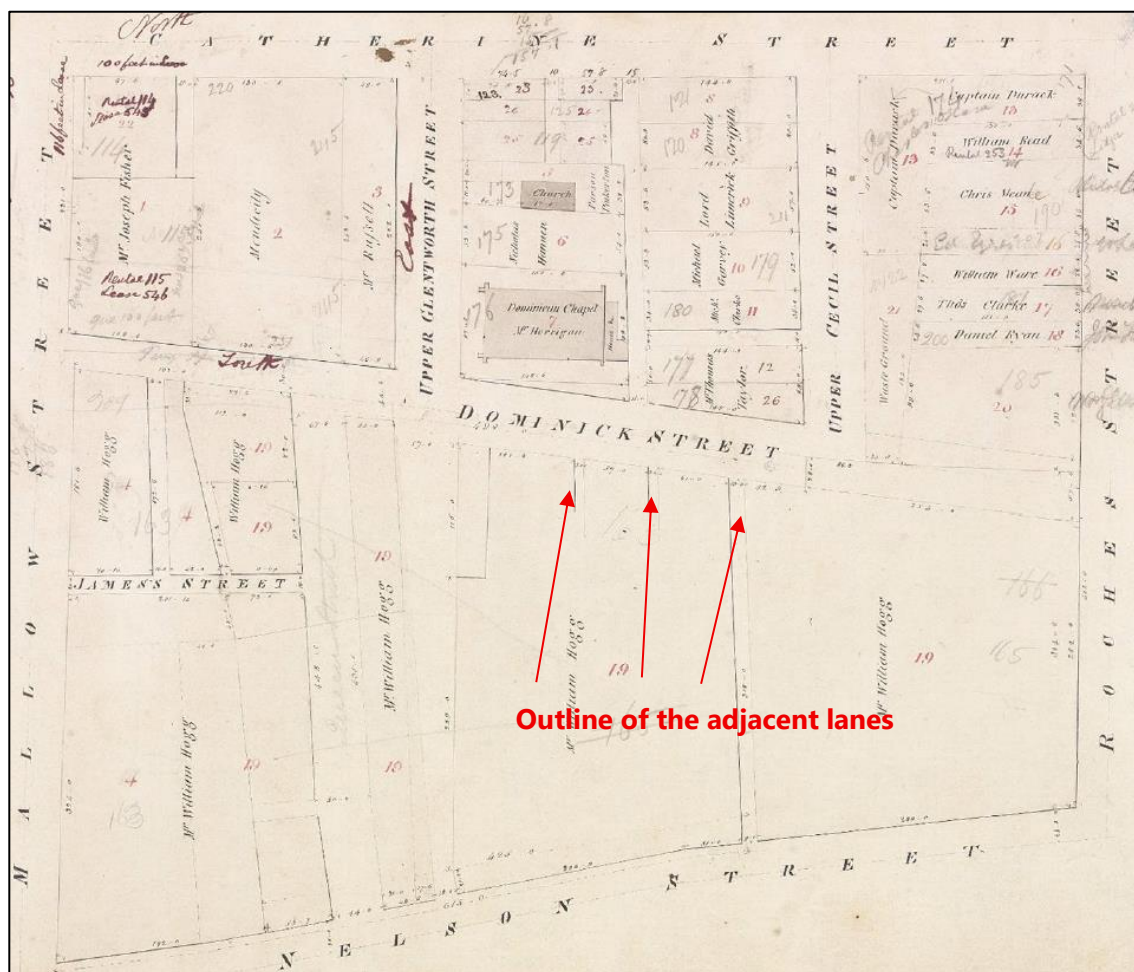


Fig. 8 1823 Coffey map

Although no houses are shown on this map, the outlines of the adjacent lanes are clearly depicted, and the lands were leased by Mr. William Hogg.



Fig. 9 Sale of Limerick map

This map shows a more detailed layout of the housing, indicating that the land was subject to a fee Farm grant dated the 16th May 1851 between William Henry Cecil Tennison, Earl of Limerick and Henry Bowles in conversion of a renewable lease dated 14th. April 1783.

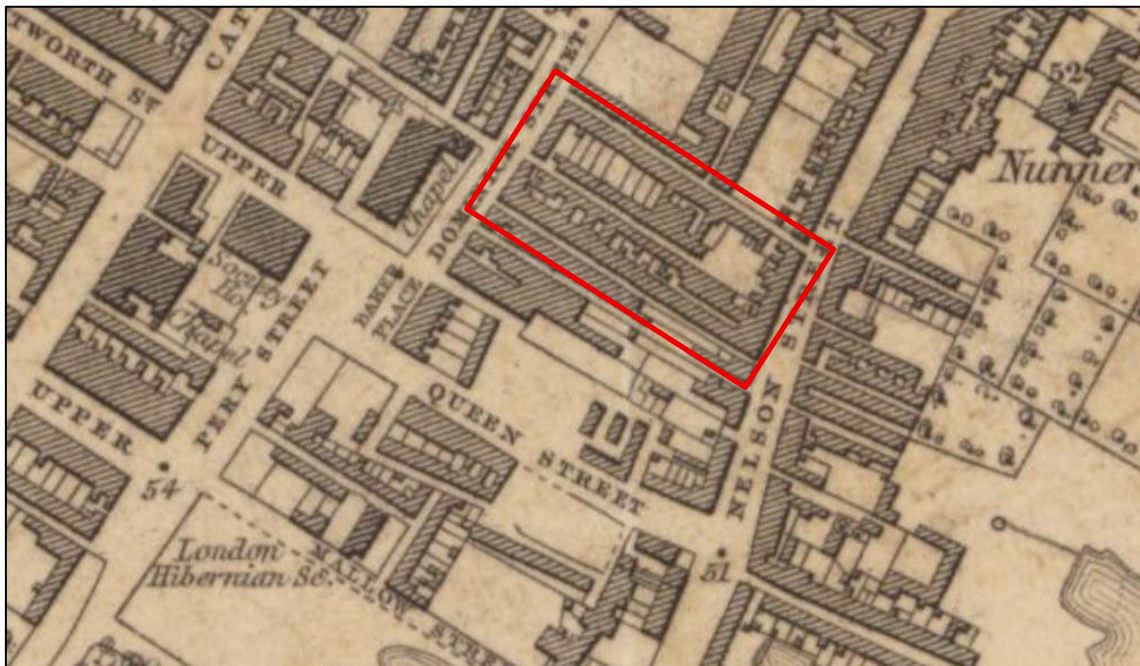


Fig. 10 First edition six-inch OS map (surveyed 1840)

By this period, the subject site, located to the east of the largely completed Georgian New Town, exhibits a clearly discernible pattern of three laneways and terraced housing. Saint Saviour's Church remains evident in its original form, as does the Baker Place terrace; however, neither Tait's Clock nor the railway station had yet been constructed.



Fig. 11 1901 revision of the above first edition map

This map depicts many of the same features evident on the earlier map, although the pattern of laneways is more clearly defined. By this period, both the railway station and Tait's Clock had been constructed.



Fig. 12 25-inch (1888-1913) OS map

Again, this map depicts many of the same features evident on the earlier 25" map above.

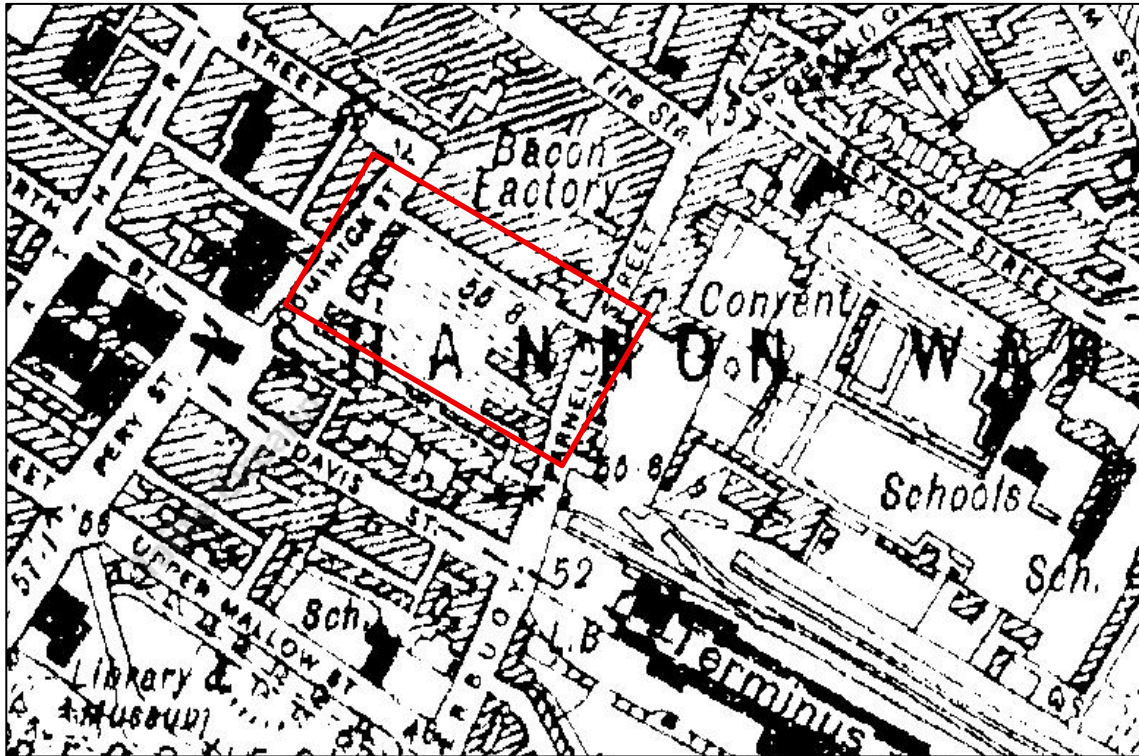


Fig. 13 6-inch last edition (1900-1930s) OS map

By this period, the 1930s, the majority of the terraced dwellings associated with the laneway network had fallen into a state of dereliction, and many had been demolished.

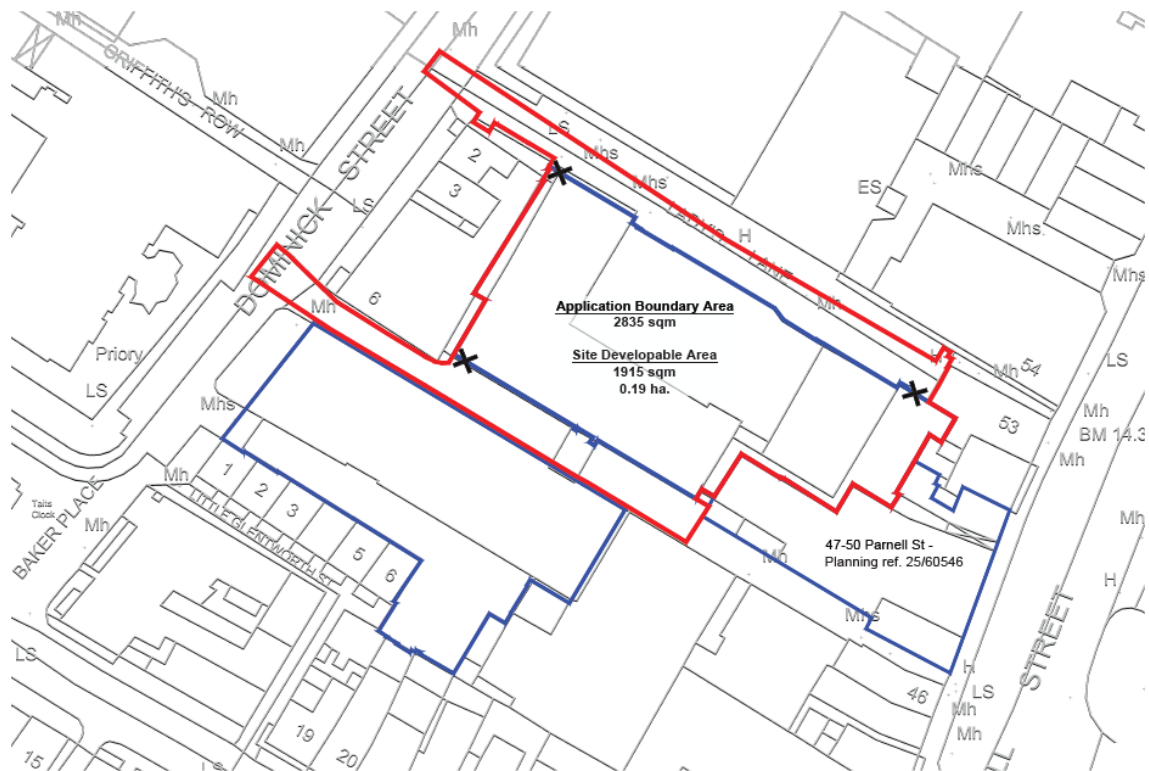


Fig. 14 Current OS map of the site

(Image from JFA architects design statement)

This map with the subject site outlined in red reflects the current layout of the buildings as they exist on the ground.

4.3. Historical photographs



Fig. 15 Image believed to depict Hunt's Lane, c. 1930
(Pinterest image, also published, without attribution, on the cover of the *Old Limerick Journal* (Summer 1981))



Fig. 16 1950s aerial photograph of the site.
(Image NLI- Morgan, Alexander Campbell. [*Limerick City, Co. Limerick*]. 1955)

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT'S SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

5.1 Baker Place

Baker Place, although located at the edge of the associated ACA boundary, lies at the heart of Limerick's Georgian core, in close proximity to Pery Square and the People's Park. At its centre stands the Tait Memorial Clock Tower, an iconic and defining landmark which, when viewed against the elegant backdrop of the Dominican Church (St Saviour's Church), forms one of the city's most notable urban vistas. Also contributing to this vista is the former National Hotel building, located to the east of the clock tower. Originally constructed as a terrace of four Georgian townhouses, the building provides an important architectural backdrop within the streetscape. While I would consider it to be of architectural and historic significance, it is neither a protected structure nor included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).



Fig. 17 Baker Place's most synonymous vista

A brief outline of the significance of three principal structures in Baker Place are outlined below.

5.1.1 Saint Saviour's Roman Catholic Church

Originally built in 1815 to a relatively restrained Neo-Gothic design, the church's façade was substantially remodelled between 1861 and 1870. The introduction of a clerestory and an impressive rose window to the principal façade increased the height of the nave by approximately 20 feet, transforming the building's appearance and giving rise to the impressive architectural composition visible today.

In addition to the main church, the curtilage of this protected structure encompasses a collection of historic buildings associated with the church complex, as well as two later

additions constructed during the twentieth century on the eastern side of the church. These comprise the St Martin de Porres Chapel (the subject building), completed in 1961, and the Terence O'Brien Chapel, completed in 1982.

The site comprises the following principal buildings and structures:

- The main church building including the Terance O'Brien Chapel and the St. Martin De Porres Chapel.
- The Old Priory Building.
- The Sacristy building.
- The Church Hall.
- The Old Priory to Sacristy link.
- The New Priory Building and associated extensions.
- A vault is also located beneath the forecourt in front of the De Porres Chapel, the entrance to which is now covered over. Ten priests and one bishop were interred in this vault between the years of 1886 to 1949.



Fig. 18 Aerial view of the buildings within the curtilage of the church site.

5.1.2 Tait Memorial Clock

The Tait Memorial Clock Tower is a striking freestanding neo-Gothic landmark of carved limestone construction, enriched by alternating columns of green and pink marble. Erected in 1867, the four-faced clock tower was designed by the architect William Edward Corbett and is understood to have been inspired by the design of the Elizabeth Tower ("Big Ben") at the Palace of Westminster in London. It was erected in honour of Sir Peter Tait, the Scottish industrialist whose nearby factory supplied clothing and military uniforms to the British Army during the Crimean War and to Confederate forces during the American Civil War. The structure is a distinctive landmark within Limerick and forms a key component of one of the city's most celebrated historic vistas.



Fig. 19 Tait memorial clock



Fig. 20 Tait memorial clock c 1950s
(Image Limerick City Museum)

5.1.3 Former National Hotel Building

Originally constructed as a terrace of four, two-bay, four-storey-over-basement Georgian townhouses, this handsome building is situated to the east of Tait's Clock and forms an important component of its setting. Acting as a backdrop to the clock tower, it helps frame key views of this prominent landmark and contributes to the character and architectural coherence of the historic vista.



Fig. 21 Former National Hotel building

5.1.4 Other protected structures

Also located in close proximity to Baker Place are three protected structures that contribute to the historic character and architectural significance of this setting. Although these buildings are less directly associated with the principal vista centred on the clock tower and St Saviour's Church, they nevertheless form integral elements of the wider historic townscape and enhance the architectural and cultural significance of the receiving environment. These structures comprise the former Protestant Hall, Parkview House, and No. 3 Pery Street, Myles Street.



Fig. 22 Photograph taken from Pery Street showing the relationship of the other protected structures in the vicinity of Baker Place

5.2 Colbert Railway Station

Limerick Railway Station opened on 28 August 1858, replacing a temporary station located approximately 500 metres to the east, which had operated for a period of ten years. The station was designed by the English architect Sancton Wood (1815–1886), also responsible for a number of significant railway buildings, including the former Kilkenny Station, Heuston Station (formerly Kingsbridge) in Dublin, and stations at Portlaoise (then Maryborough) and Thurles, County Tipperary. Originally named Limerick Station, the station was renamed in 1966 in commemoration of Cornelius Colbert, a native of Limerick and one of the executed leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising.

This railway terminus building, deliberately set back from the street line to enhance its visual prominence and civic presence, is characterised by a restrained classical façade executed in finely carved limestone. The composition is symmetrical, consisting of a seven-bay, two-storey structure over a part basement. The central bays incorporate three arcaded ground-floor entrance openings, accessed via flights of steps and framed by projecting breakfront end bays.

The station is significant not only for its architectural and historical qualities but also for its strong association with the development of Limerick's railway heritage.



Fig. 23 Colbert Station



Fig. 24 Early 20th Century photo of the Limerick Station
(NLI French, Robert, and William Lawrence. Railway Station, Limerick City, Co. Limerick. 1865)

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORK

The *Limerick Development Plan 2022–2028* (as varied) sets out a series of policy objectives to ensure the protection and conservation of the architectural heritage of the. The objectives relevant to this assessment are reproduced below, together with an evaluation of their applicability to the subject site and proposed development.

6.1.0 OBJECTIVE EH O50: Work to protected structures:

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect structures included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- b) Ensure that any development proposals relating to Protected Structures, their curtilage, and setting have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities published by the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- c) Ensure that all works are carried out under the supervision of a qualified professional with specialised conservation expertise.
- d) Ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure and/or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, and is appropriate in terms of scale, mass, height, density, layout, and materials.
- e) Ensure that the form and structural integrity of the Protected Structure are retained in any redevelopment, and that the relationship between the Protected Structure and any adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, or views and vistas from within the grounds of the structure are respected.
- f) Respect the special interest of the interior, including its plan form, hierarchy of spaces, architectural detail, fixtures and fittings, and materials.
- g) Support the reintroduction of traditional features on Protected Structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes, etc.) previously existed.
- h) Ensure that new and adapted uses are compatible with the character and special interest of the Protected Structure.
- i) Protect the curtilage of Protected Structures and refuse planning permission for inappropriate development within the curtilage and attendant grounds that would adversely impact the special character of the Protected Structure.
- j) Protect and retain important elements of built heritage, including historic gardens, stone walls, entrance gates and piers, and any other associated curtilage features.
- k) Ensure that historic landscapes and gardens associated with Protected Structures are protected from inappropriate development.

6.1.1 Assessment

Sub-paragraphs (d) and (e) are considered to be the most relevant objectives in the context of the proposed development. As demonstrated in the assessment above, the proposed building has been carefully designed and appropriately located, having regard to its architectural context. The development is considered acceptable in terms of scale, massing, height, density, layout and materials, and it respects the character and setting of the adjoining protected structures. In addition, as the verified imagery will testify key views and vistas within and from the grounds of the protected structures are preserved. On this basis, the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of these objectives.

6.2.0 OBJECTIVE EH O53: Architectural Conservation Areas.

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Protect the character and special interest of an area, which has been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) as set out in Volume 3.
- b) Ensure that all development proposals within an ACA be appropriate to the character of the area having regard to the Character briefs for each area.

- c) Ensure that any new development or alteration of a building within an ACA or immediately adjoining an ACA, is appropriate in terms of the proposed design, including scale, height, mass, density, building lines and materials.
- d) Seek a high quality, sensitive design for any new development(s) that are complementary and/or sympathetic to their context and scale, whilst simultaneously encouraging contemporary design which is in harmony with the area. Direction can also be taken from using traditional forms that are then expressed in a contemporary manner, rather than a replica of a historic building style.
- e) Seek the retention of all features that contribute to the character of an ACA, including boundary walls, railings, soft landscaping, traditional paving and street furniture.
- f) Seek to safeguard the Georgian heritage of Limerick.

6.2.1 Assessment

Given that the subject site is situated outside but in close proximity to the ACA, it is considered that sub-paragraph (c) is the only applicable objective, as it specifically addresses development immediately adjoining an Architectural Conservation Area. Having regard to the reasoning given in the assessment commentary provided in paragraph 7 we would be of the view that the development is in keeping with this requirement.

6.3.0 OBJECTIVE CGR 09: Building Heights

It is an objective of the Council to:

- a) Ensure that all new tall buildings in Limerick City are designed in accordance with the character area objectives, tall building recommendations, and criteria set out in the Development Management Standards. All such buildings shall be of exceptional architectural quality and standard of design and finish.
- b) Focus the delivery of tall buildings in the City Centre, particularly in areas identified as having potential for increased building height. In particular, tall building clusters will be encouraged at The Quays, Colbert Station Quarter, Cleeves Site, and The Docklands, in accordance with the building classification criteria set out in the Building Height Strategy. There shall be a general presumption against tall buildings in other areas, except at designated areas and gateway locations identified in the Tall Buildings at City Level Map.
- c) Protect the unique intrinsic character, scale, and significant views of Limerick City, including the skyline and key landmark buildings, in the delivery of increased building heights. This shall be achieved through the application of the Tall Building Classifications, Recommendations, High-Level Principles, and Assessment Tools and Criteria set out in the Building Height Strategy.
- d) Ensure that applications for tall buildings are supported by the following assessments, along with any additional assessments required at the discretion of the Planning Authority: Environmental Assessment, Wind Analysis, Sunlight and Daylight Analysis, Verified Views Analysis, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Architectural Design Statement, Traffic Impact Assessment (including a Mobility Management Plan for non-residential uses), and a Building Services Strategy.

6.3.1 Assessment

Although this objective does not stipulate any specific requirements in relation to architectural heritage, the relevant provisions are considered to arise under sub-paragraph (d), which provides for any additional assessments required at the discretion of the Planning Authority. As specifically noted in the attached Building Height Assessment:

“The Localised Assessment Tool for the Newtown Pery Character Area sets out nine questions to guide the assessment of a tall building proposal on an individual site and identifies a Heritage Impact Assessment or Conservation Strategy as an additional required report.”

Accordingly, this Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) has been prepared to satisfy this requirement and to inform the assessment of the proposed development in the context of its potential impact on the architectural heritage significance and character of the area.

7.0 IMPACT ON THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

7.1 GENERALLY

The subject site does not contain, adjoin, or lie within close proximity to any buildings, structures, or features of recognised historical or architectural significance. As such, the proposed development will not have a direct physical impact on any heritage assets or their fabric. The principal consideration relates solely to the potential visual amenity impact of the development on the setting of nearby earlier described features of architectural or historical significance.

The overall visual impact of the proposed development from all vistas has been thoughtfully mitigated through the careful stepping of building heights and massing, both along the Parnell Street frontage and, more importantly, at the most sensitive part of the site facing Baker Place.

The proposed development is considered to represent a positive and well-considered intervention within the local urban environment. By replacing vacant and underutilised commercial buildings of no architectural significance and surface car parking with active residential and commercial uses, the development will introduce greater vitality and activity to the immediate area. Furthermore, it will significantly enhance the adjoining laneways through high-quality public realm improvements that increase their attractiveness, accessibility, and functionality. As a result, the development will not only make a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape but will also enhance and reinforce the appreciation, setting, and character of the nearby protected structures and the adjacent Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

The principle of a tall residential building on the site has been accepted through the grant of planning permission for a comparable six storey development on the adjoining portion of the site fronting Parnell Street. While the current proposal exceeds the height of this approved scheme by two storeys, this additional height is not considered disproportionate in the context of the site's urban setting and established planning history. Furthermore, the assessment undertaken demonstrates that the proposed increase would not result in any significant adverse effects on the surrounding townscape or the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Where the proposed building is visible from nearby protected structures, its impact must be considered in the context of the site's urban setting and evolving urban skyline and the range of other approved tall buildings in the surrounding area, some of which exceed the height of the proposed scheme (see pages 12&13 of the Architect's Design Statement). The likely implications of this evolving townscape are further addressed in the Planner's Building Height Assessment. In light of this broader planning context, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any additional significant adverse effects on the setting, character, or significance of protected structures within the wider urban area.

The question of the scale and height of the proposed development is a broader planning issue than one relating solely to impacts on the cultural heritage resource and is addressed in detail in the accompanying Architect's Design Statement, the Planner's Building Height Assessment and Visual Impact Assessment. The proposed part 8-storey commercial building will be widely visible from a number of locations within the surrounding area. However, its visibility must be considered in the context of the site's urban setting and the ongoing regeneration and redevelopment of this part of the city.

7.2. IMPACT ON THE ADJACENT BAKER PLACE

Through careful design together with its setback location behind the established built form along Baker Place, the proposed development achieves a sensitive and considered transition between the established streetscape and the contemporary higher-density development proposed within the block. By maintaining the visual predominance of the traditional street frontage and introducing additional height and massing in a stepped manner deeper within the site, the scheme respects the character and setting of Baker Place while facilitating sustainable urban consolidation. This graduated approach to scale and massing ensures that the development integrates appropriately with its surroundings, providing a balanced relationship between the adjacent historic urban fabric and the contemporary built form proposed within the interior of the block.

It is recognised that historic environments can be sensitive to large-scale and tall buildings, however, given the graduated massing and physical remove of the proposed development from the architecturally significant Baker Place setting in particular, the scheme's design and arrangement is eminently appropriate for the receiving environment.

The high-quality visual amenity currently experienced by pedestrians along Baker Place will be maintained and, in certain respects, enhanced through the proposed development, particularly as a result of the associated high-quality public realm improvements proposed for the historic Lady's Lane and Hunt's Lane. Beyond the physical enhancements to paving, landscaping, and streetscape elements proposed, the overlooking and passive surveillance provided by the development will foster a greater sense of security within these laneways. This, in turn, will significantly enhance their attractiveness, accessibility, and overall amenity value, encouraging increased pedestrian activity and contributing positively to the vitality of the area.

7.2.1 ASSESSMENT OF BAKER PLACE VERIFIED VIEWS

The verified view from Baker Place below (Fig.26) confirms that, owing to the careful design of the proposed development, including its graduated massing and light-coloured material palette, together with its substantial physical separation from Baker Place, the development will have only a very limited impact on the visual amenity, appearance, and appreciation of Baker Place. This limited visual impact is confined to the development's presence within the peripheral backdrop of the wider townscape, where it remains a subordinate element that does not materially diminish the character, setting, significance, or appreciation of Baker Place.



Fig. 25 Current image



Fig. 26 Verified image showing proposed development

7.3. IMPACT ON COLBERT RAILWAY STATION

Owing to the considerable separation distance between the proposed development and the railway station, together with the fact that the site is located on the opposite side of the roadway, the proposed building would have no direct visual impact on the station's façade, its architectural character, or its immediate setting. Any potential effect is therefore limited to views available from within the station and its environs.

In this regard, the proposed development would not give rise to any significant adverse visual impact. This is particularly the case when regard is had to the established and emerging urban form of the area, including the approved seven-storey extension to the Railway Hotel directly opposite the site, the permitted six-storey development fronting the subject site on Parnell Street, and the continuing evolution of the wider townscape skyline (see pages 12 and 13 of JFA Architects design statement). The proposal would therefore be viewed within an urban context that is already characterised by recent and approved similar or higher-scale development.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the LDA Colbert Quarter Masterplan envisages an element of taller-scale development on lands to the rear of the railway station. This further demonstrates the strategic acceptance of increased building heights within the area and reinforces the conclusion that the proposed development would be consistent with the planned evolution of the urban form, without detracting from the character, setting, or appreciation of the railway station and indeed other protected structures in the area.

7.3.1 ASSESSMENT OF COLBERT STATION'S VERIFIED VIEWS

The verified view from the railway station (Fig. 27) below demonstrates that the proposed development will have a negligible effect on the visual amenity and character of views from Colbert Station. This is again attributable to its graduated building form, light-toned material palette, its significant setback from the station, and in particular, the screening effect of the proposed adjacent six-storey development fronting Parnell Street.

In views from the station, the development is perceived only as a minor component of the wider urban backdrop and does not compete visually with the established townscape. Its presence is largely confined to peripheral views, where it remains visually recessive and subordinate. This is particularly evident when viewed in the context of the nearby seven-storey development located behind the Railway Hotel, against which the proposed development appears secondary in the overall visual composition.



Fig. 27 Verified image showing proposed development from Colbert Station also indicated to the left is the proposed development behind the Railway Hotel.

7.4. IMPACT ON OTHER PROTECTED STRUCTURES FURTHER REMOVED FROM SITE

The potential impact on the remaining three protected structures within the wider Baker Place/ Pery Street setting is considered to be negligible to minimal (see Fig. 22). Given their greater distance from the principal vista, the subject building does not form a prominent element in views from these locations. Furthermore, existing intervening built fabric restricts direct lines of sight, thereby limiting the potential for effects on their setting or heritage significance

Similarly, the protected Railway Hotel on Parnell Street is located at a considerable remove from the proposed development, such that any visual impact on its setting would be negligible. Intervening urban fabric further limits the potential for intervisibility between the two sites. Moreover, permission has already been granted for a seven-storey development immediately to the rear of the Railway Hotel, demonstrating the capacity of its setting to accommodate appropriately designed contemporary development.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development is of a high architectural quality, adopting a contemporary design approach that is both respectful of and responsive to its heritage-sensitive setting. Through its carefully considered scale, stepped massing, material palette, and urban design strategy, the scheme integrates appropriately within its surroundings while preserving the setting and appreciation of nearby protected structures and the adjoining Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). Rather than diminishing the significance of these heritage assets, the development will make a positive contribution to the evolving townscape and support the continued vitality and architectural quality of the area.

The photomontages in particular demonstrate that the site can successfully accommodate the proposed development within the established urban grain and visual framework of the existing built environment. They confirm that the only identifiable impact relates to Baker Place, where the proposed development will constitute a minor visual presence within the wider townscape backdrop; however, this effect has been assessed as minimal. The images further confirm that the buildings have been carefully designed in response to their context, with an appropriate scale, massing, materiality, and architectural expression that will integrate comfortably within the surrounding townscape. As such, the proposal will not adversely affect the character, significance, or appreciation of the area's historic built fabric, protected structures, or ACA.

This assessment has also considered the relevant heritage policies and objectives of the Limerick Development Plan 2022–2028, which were cited above. The findings demonstrate that the proposed development has been informed by, and is fully consistent with, the applicable policy framework and associated heritage objectives.

In conclusion, the impact of the proposed development on nearby protected structures and the adjoining ACA is limited to minor visual effects and is considered negligible in significance. The proposal will result in only slight changes to the visual character of the immediate area while preserving its special architectural, historical, and cultural interest.

Signed:



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