

## 2.0 THE SITE AND ITS IMMEDIATE URBAN CONTEXT

### 2.1 SITE ANALYSIS

The proposed Station development site is a confined city centre block bounded by Tara Street, Georges Quay, Poolbeg Street and the existing Railway. The map on the previous page (Figure 6) indicates the key Zoning and features and operating conditions of the area within which the site is situated. It provides a physical context, including buildings, open spaces, the river, historic areas, major roads, pedestrian priority routes, major shopping and office activity areas etc, within which the Tara Street Station redevelopment proposal has been conceived and to which it responds.

Attention is drawn to:

The confined nature of the site, being one of the smaller city blocks in the central Dublin Area.

The proximity of Trinity College and grounds – extremely significant in terms of its historic context and the integrity of its architectural style and scale.

The historic Custom House building with its dominant dome silhouette, lying immediately across the River Liffey. An historic urban landmark of Dublin.

The River Liffey and the Liffey Quays themselves, progressing into the historic central core of Dublin to the west. For the most part the Quays are flanked by a continuous façade of four to six storey buildings, which have established the urban design identity for the core of Dublin.

The dominant elevated Loop Line railway bridge which spans the Liffey in its approach to the station.

The International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) office complex to the east of the Custom House, also of a six storey scale. The area accommodates some 184,000 m<sup>2</sup> / 1,980,600 sq ft of office floorspace and some 10,700 office workers.

A lack of urban spaces, people places and meeting areas in the immediate area, other than O'Connell Street and the IFSC piazzas at some distance.

Areas experiencing high levels of pedestrian congestion at peak hours on pavements approaching Tara Street Station on Burgh Quay and Georges Quay, including narrow footways on Tara Street combined with a lack of pedestrian permeability in the Streets and areas behind the Quays highlighted in the Draft Georges Quay Plan by Dublin City Council.

Several office buildings in the immediate area or sphere of visibility of the application site, which are considerably higher than the six storeys (24 metres) which is prevalent along Georges Quay. These are :

Hawkins House – Poolbeg Street – 42 metres

Apollo House – Poolbeg Street – 32.5 metres

Irish Times HQ – Tara Street – 32.5 metres

Pricewaterhouse Coopers – 24 metres

Cosgraves Property Group – 59 metres

Ashford House – Tara Street - 29 metres

George's Quay Development 7 towers – Luke-Moss Streets – 62 metres

Liberty Hall – Eden Quay – 59.4 metres

O'Connell Bridge House – Burgh Quay at D'Olier Street – 42 metres

A mixed use residential-industrial area south of Townsend Street, two blocks south of the application site, identified in the Docklands Master Plan 1997 as a 'character area' and is the subject of a DCC Area Study (Pearse Street Area).

The Draft George's Quay Plan issued for public submissions in December 2008..

A residential area to the south of the application site on Luke Street and Townsend Street.

A mixed use area east of Moss Street, two blocks east of the application site, identified in the Docklands Master Plan 2003 as a 'character area' (South Quays Area). See adjacent smaller map.

Proposals to enhance Fleet Street and Townsend street as a 'pedestrian priority' street, providing an enjoyable walking route between the popular Temple Bar area in the Core, and the proposed Grand Canal area in the Docklands to the east. for which there are extensive regeneration plans (refer also to the proposed redevelopment of the Hawkins House site as set out in the Draft Georges Quay Plan by DCC)

The new pedestrian boardwalk alongside the river to encourage pedestrian movement along the river including proposals for:

- Proposed Luas Bridge from Marlborough Street to Hawkins Street
- The Samuel Beckett Bridge from Sir John Rogerson Quay to North Wall Quay (Dublin Docklands Development Authority)
- Seán O’Casey Bridge from Lombard Street to Custom House Quay (Dublin Docklands Development Authority) completed in 2005.

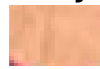



FIGURE 2.1 DISTINCT CHARACTER AREAS

**Figure 7: Extract from Dublin Docklands Area Master Plan 2008: Areas of District Character**

[Source DDDA Masterplan Page 44]

**Key**

-  Pearse Street
-  City Quay

### 3.0 CITY OF DUBLIN – THE POLICY CONTEXT

#### 3.1 CITY QUAY AND WESTLAND ROW AREA ACTION PLAN, DDDA

The DDDA Act 1997 requires the Area Action Plan to identify areas where detailed plans and proposals would be appropriate in the form of an Area Action Plan (AAP). The application site forms part of The City Quay / Westland Row Precinct Area Action Plan.

Murray O’Laoire have been tasked by Dublin City Council with the preparation of the “George’s Quay and Environs Detailed Urban Design Study” which forms part of the proposed publication “Maximising the City’s Potential – A Strategy for Intensification and Height”. This is a draft document issued for public consultations in December 2008. A CIE/IE response to DCC on the Proposals contained within the Draft Georges Quay Plan is contained in Appendix A

The aims of this document are generally supported but the proposed design does not address a number of specific aspirations for the following reasons:

- The aspirations for site permeability contained within the strategy would significantly compromise the operational performance of the station concourse, both in terms of capacity and functionality
- Dual towers as proposed would necessitate dual cores which would greatly compromise the layout and functionality of the Concourse and would provide inefficient lettable office space above.
- A taller building would require external bracing, which would compromise the visual appearance of the building, and a larger structural core that would impact on the practicality of the office floors.
- A taller building would increase the impacts on Custom House and Trinity College,, in particular on visual impact and overshadowing issues.
- A cluster of buildings would make inefficient use of a spatially challenging site.

In essence the purpose of this AAP is to identify key issues relating to land use, transport and urban design and to formulate strategies to address these issues. The AAP may be replaced or updated following the completion of the above publication, however until further notice, the AAP is current and is summarised below.