

4.0 THE STREET CONTEXT

4.1 THE EXISTING SITE

The land parcel, which is the subject of this Planning Application, is 2750 m² (29,600 sq ft) in size, together with the upper level station itself and its track and associated platforms. It is bounded by George's Quay, Tara Street, Poolbeg Street and the elevated railway line and station. The lands and properties have been purchased by CIE/Iarnród Éireann in order to facilitate the expansion of the Station.

Apart from the station approaches, present buildings on the site include Sub Lounge pub, situated below the arches on Poolbeg Street, and Tara House, a three storey 2,000 m² (20,000 sq ft) office building of poor quality which is temporarily occupied by CIE offices on Tara Street. These buildings will be demolished as part of the proposed Works. The main access to the station is presently from George's Quay.

Kennedy's pub on George's Quay, immediately to the west of the present station entrance, is a four storey protected structure, and thus cannot be altered in any way. The structure is not owned by CIE/IE, but will be incorporated into the design of the station and framed within the northern façade of the new project.



Figure 12: The Existing Site



Figure 13: The Site

4.2 TARA STREET STATION

The most striking feature of the site is the bridge carrying the railway across the River Liffey, which provides a clear urban landmark visible from the quayside. The railway is elevated as it passes through the site on a north west / south east orientation. The site is located on a pivotal position on the River Liffey at a curve in the river adjacent to the city centre. The main entrance to the station is via George's Quay, with a secondary access recently opened that is reached via Townsend Street. The secondary access is currently only open during am and pm peak hours.

The pavement on George's Quay is very narrow (4 metres), and a barrier has been erected at the edge of the pavement for pedestrian safety purposes. The pavement is quite inadequate for the number of pedestrians trying to access the main station entrance on George's Quay at present. Due to the fixed location of Kennedy's bar there is no opportunity to widen the pavement or increase the circulation space in this area.

This will also allow development to conform to DCC stated aims (draft George's Quay Plan) of introducing permeability in pedestrian movements in the city behind the Quays. North/South/East/West and towards the proposed diagonal street in Hawkins Street Site linking the station to College Green.

The pavement on Tara Street is also narrow (3.5 metres), however there will be an opportunity to widen the pavement along the alignment of the west wall of Kennedy's pub, which will aid the development of the streetscape and ease pedestrian congestion in this area. It is thus proposed to create the main entrance to the new Tara Street Station from Tara Street itself. This will also allow the development to conform to the stated aim of DCC of introducing permeability in pedestrian movements in the city behind the Quays; North South East West & towards the proposed diagonal street between Tara Street/Poolbeg Street and College green.

Tara Street carries heavy traffic volumes in a northerly direction, approaching the Butt Bridge crossing of the Liffey at George's Quay. Pedestrian crossings at all intersections of Tara Street and the Quays are difficult to achieve; pedestrian congestion is high. The possibility of introducing a controlled mid-block pedestrian crossing across Tara Street from the new station entrance might be explored, linking into the planned improved pedestrian environment of Poolbeg Street, west of Tara Street and in preparation of planned opening up of new permeable pedestrian routes as set out in the Draft George's Quay Plan.

4.3 ADJACENT BUILDINGS

There has been much development activity on the large parcels of land to the east of the site. This includes the 24 metre high, 6 storey Pricewaterhouse Coopers and Ulster Bank buildings on Georges Quay to the east; and One George's Quay Plaza, directly to the East of the development with its seven towers of varying height (maximum 59m), was completed in 2002. These buildings have created a new modern cityscape to which the proposed building responds, and have established a new height benchmark in this part of the city.

To the west of Tara Street, is a block containing a great variety of older buildings, ranging from two to five storeys in height. Land uses also vary, including historic bars, residential and office buildings, and local neighbourhood shops. Although fronting the Quays, it is not an area of immense civic appeal unlike some of the blocks closer to the city centre. In the medium term, there is a strong likelihood that some or all of this block might be redeveloped.

When looking south across the river, the application site is visually dominated by an array of taller, more horizontally massive buildings of poor architectural quality, which are situated to the south of Poolbeg Street. These are typical of the construction style of their day, for example Hawkins House and Apollo House, both of which are likely to be subject of proposals for redevelopment . (Refer to Draft George's Quay Plan by DCC 2008).