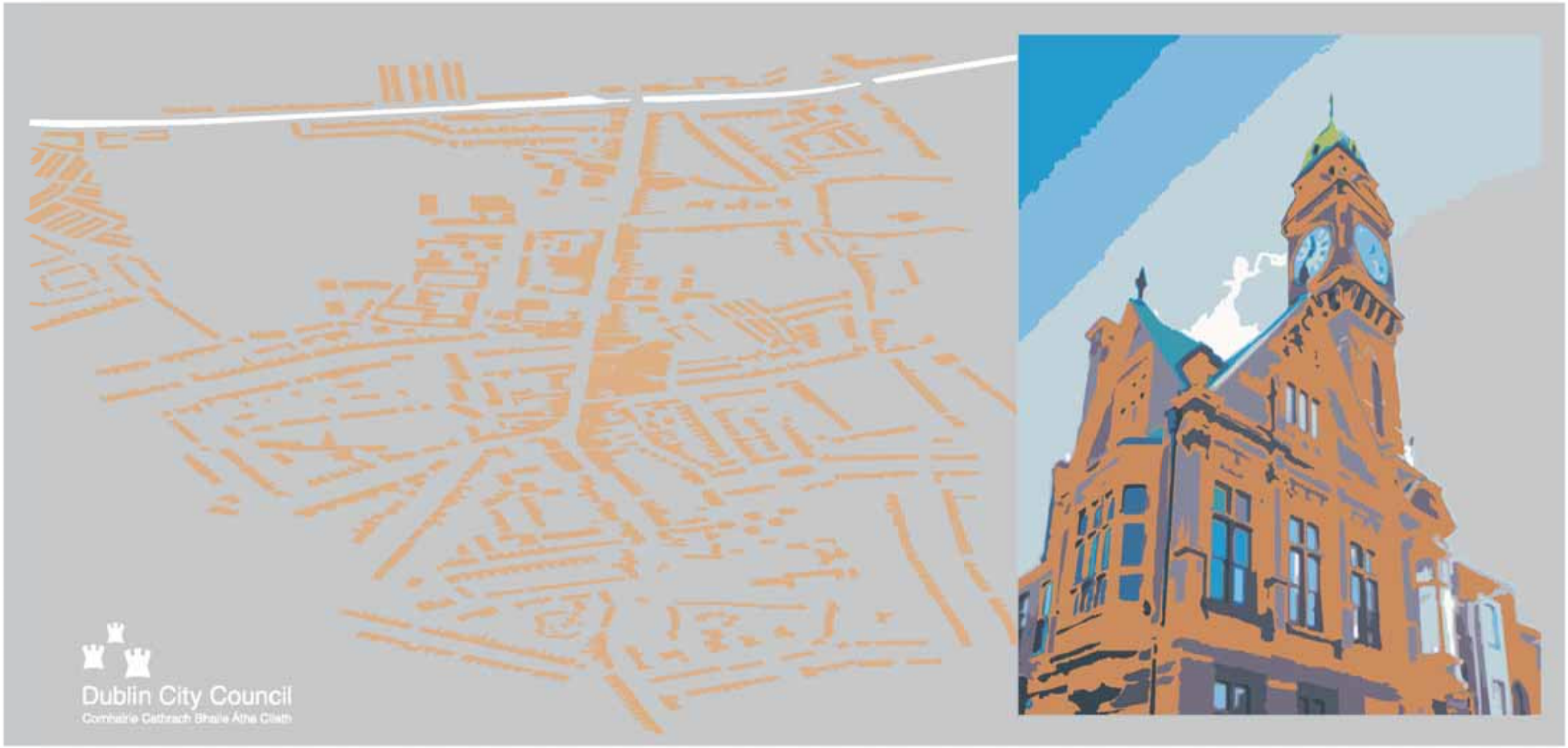
RATHMINES **Local Action Plan**



Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath



The Rathmines Local Action Plan was approved by the South - East Area Committee of Dublin City Council at it's meeting on 12th October 2009, and was adopted by Dublin City Council at it's meeting held on 2nd November 2009.

PLAN TEAM

South East Area Office
Eileen Brady Area Manager
Frank Lamb Assistant Area Manager
The assistance from all the staff of the South East Area Office is appreciated

Planning Department
John O Hara Deputy Planning Officer Strategic Projects
Robert Fennelly Senior Executive Planner Strategic Projects
Fidelma Fahey Executive Planner Strategic Projects
James Cahill Senior Executive Technician
Eileen Hart Senior Executive Planner Development Management
Pauline Riordan Executive Planner Development Management

John Spain & Associates Town Planning Consultants- Retail Study

City Architects Department
Brian Swan Deputy City Architect
Kilian Skay Senior Architect
Gerard Bowe Senior Executive Architect
Claire Farren Executive Architect
Tracy Walsh Assistant Architect

The assistance from all other departments in Dublin City Council is recognised and appreciated.

The City Manager would also like to thank the South East Area Councillors who initiated this process, the contributions from stakeholders referenced in this document, the assistance and participation from all local groups including Rathmines Partnership and Rathmines Initiative and last but not least all the people of Rathmines and the surrounding area who took the time to participate in evening workshops and community meetings.

Dublin City Council

RATHMINES LOCAL ACTION PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Local Action Plan?
1.2 Study Area
1.3 Steps in Preparation of the Rathmines Local Action Plan

2.0 STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Regional Context
2.2 Sustainable Neighbourhoods
2.3 Prime Urban Centre
2.4 Proximity to Other Centres
2.5 Dublin City Development Plan Zoning

3.0 PREVIOUS STUDIES FOR RATHMINES

4.0 VISION FOR THE RATHMINES LOCAL ACTION PLAN

5.0 LOCAL CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Summary of Community Mapping Consultations
5.2 Summary of Key Stakeholder Consultations

6.0 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING RATHMINES AREA

6.1 Historical Evolution
6.2 Existing Land Uses in Rathmines
6.3 Established Height Profiles
6.4 Analysis of Existing Townscape in Rathmines
6.5 Background Information on the Population in Rathmines
6.6 Retail in Rathmines
6.7 Infrastructure and Services
6.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

7.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

7.1 Vision for Sustainable Development
7.2 Vision for the Retail, Commercial and Economic Sector
7.3 Vision for Movement
7.4 Vision for Community and Recreational Amenity
7.5 Vision for Arts and Culture
7.6 Vision for Architecture and Heritage

8.0 OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

9.0 SITE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

9.1 Blackberry Fair
9.2 St Mary's Community Hall/Health Centre Richmond Hill
9.3 Central Civic Zone - Guilstan/ Swan/DIT/Rathmines Square
9.4 Site at St Louis Secondary School
9.5 Tesco Site Rathmines Road Upper

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES
10.1 Military Road
10.2 Wynnefield Road
10.3 Rathmines Avenue
10.4 Church Avenue

11.0 DESIGN CODES
11.1 Guidance on Mews Development
11.2 Guidance on Commercial Frontages
11.3 Guidance on Front Boundary Design

12.0 PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

13.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 2 Rathmines Retail Strategy and Household Survey Report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rathmines represents one of the great urban achievements of Victorian Dublin. The scale of ambition expressed in its public buildings alone indicated a huge aspiration to achieve an urban quality and civic identity for its township. The quality of its hinterland housing is also very unique in character and contributes to the appeal of Rathmines.

Despite sporadic investment and change, the town centre of Rathmines in the last 20 years has not benefited from urban regeneration to the same extent as some other locations in the city.

It is an objective of this proposed Local Action Plan to put in place a series of strategies and initiatives to promote Rathmines in its status as a prime urban centre and encourage its important role as an economic, social and cultural heart for its extensive and diverse hinterland.

1.1 What is a Local Action Plan?

The preparation of a Local Action Plan for Rathmines is an objective of the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011. In accordance with this objective, the South East Area Committee initiated the process of preparation of a Local Action Plan for Rathmines in Summer 2007.

A local action plan must be consistent with the objectives of the development plan. It comprises a written statement and a plan, or plans, indicating the objectives that will guide and encourage appropriate development within Rathmines over the time period of the plan.

When adopted, the local area plan will remain in force for a period of six years. It will form the basis on which planning decisions for future development proposals within the area are made.

The key stages in preparing the Local Action Plan are summarised on page 3.

1.2 Study Area

The plan recognises the inter-relationships between Rathmines and adjoining neighbourhoods including the Harolds Cross area to the west, Rathgar to the south west and Ranelagh to the east. Whilst the plan strategies will focus on the study area, the analysis and consultation has taken into consideration the connections and relationships with adjoining neighbourhoods. Rathmines is an important service centre for a wide residential hinterland area.

The plan boundaries extend to include Grove Road and Canal Road to the north, Tranquilla Park and the junction of Frankfort Avenue and Rathmines Road Upper to the south, Grosvenor Square to the west and Belgrave Square to the east.



1.3 Steps in Preparation of the Rathmines Local Action Plan

Key steps undertaken in making this plan include:

1: Initiation of the process by the South East Area Committee

2: Agreement of a brief following first consultations (open meeting in Nov 2007) and approval of the brief by the South East Area Committee.

3: Initial survey and analysis.

4: Community workshops in May 2008.

5: Continued consultations and analysis of community and stakeholder feedback.

6: Publication of Draft Local Action Plan.

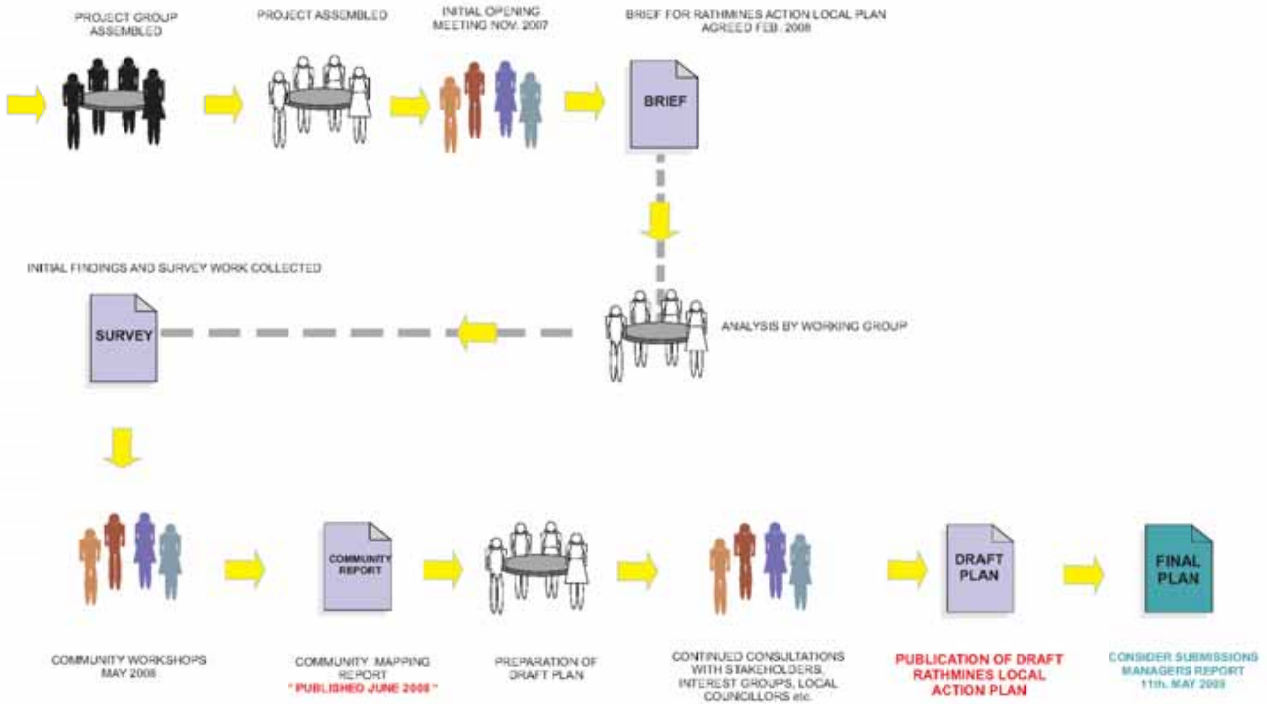
The next steps are:

- Consultations on the Draft Plan.
- A period for written observations on the Draft Plan.
- Consideration of observations and preparation of a Managers Report for the City Council.
- Adoption of the Local Action Plan.

Throughout this plan, six overarching themes for sustainability have influenced the making of policies and recommendations for Rathmines. These themes include:

- Sustainability
- Social
- Economy
- Urban Spatial
- Movement
- Culture

Integrating these themes into proposals for the local area will promote a sustainable high quality neighbourhood.



2.0 STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Regional Context

Rathmines is located within the Outer City in the context of the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011. Eight Prime Urban Centres (including Rathmines) were designated within this area to provide a strategic approach to the suburbs and encourage greater efficiency in landuse and transportation patterns. These locations are nodes for development to provide a wide range of services and have potential for increased residential, commercial and employment opportunities.

The City Council's strategy in relation to consolidation and growth in the suburban centres is in accordance with the spatial planning objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines for Dublin and the Mid East Region 2004-2016. Rathmines is strategically located within the core Metropolitan Area in the regional context. The Metropolitan Area includes Dublin City Centre and its immediate suburbs.

The vision for the Greater Dublin Area under the guidelines is for the city region to excel as an international competitor where all areas located within the Greater Dublin Area collectively contribute to its success and in turn draw their individual strengths from the City–Region. Rathmines has a lot of potential to fulfil a positive role in the development of Dublin, the Metropolitan Area and the Region in turn.

Under the guidelines, developments within the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated with a much enhanced multi modal transport system. For Dublin City, this will require a further increase in overall residential densities, the delivery of well designed urban environments and measures to ensure the priority for public transport. The key objectives for the future development of the Metropolitan Area area to ensure the following:

- Consolidation of the urban centres located within the Metropolitan Area.
- Development of brownfield sites in urban centres throughout the Metropolitan Area, especially those along public transport corridors.
- Delivery of well designed urban environments enhancing the quality of life for residents and workers alike.
- Provision and facilitation of an integrated public transport system and achievement of a greater use of sustainable transport modes through the integration of landuse and transport planning.
- Clear definition of the boundaries of urban centres to ensure a clear division between rural and urban areas.

Other strategic policies to be applied by planning authorities in the Metropolitan Area are as follows:

- Give high priority to the creation of quality design with a particular emphasis on conservation.
- Minimise traffic impact in core in core urban environments.
- Strengthen the provision of retail in the city focusing on speciality and higher order comparison sectors.
- Develop the cultural role of Dublin City Centre including literary, artistic and theatrical fields.
- Economic development and appropriate specialisation drawing on the competitive strengths of the area.
- Examine the capacity for redevelopment of underused and vacant lands.
- Encourage the relocation of inappropriate landuses.
- Prepare urban design plans for renewal areas to facilitate intensification without negatively affecting amenity.
- Promote the location of quality residential and employment uses in close proximity in order to reduce the demand for travel and dependence on private car transport.

This plan takes into consideration the above regional policies.



Fig. 2.1 Regional Context
Taken from RPG 2004-2016

2.2 Sustainable Neighbourhoods

The new Draft Guidelines from the DoEHLG on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2008 advocates that local plans should address four key areas including;

(I) Settlement Hierarchy: Where the town or village fits within the overall settlement hierarchy with an appropriate scale and form to its position.

(ii) Urban Form: Patterns of streets should be analysed especially in terms of how effectively pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles move. Priority should be given to pedestrian and cyclist movements and interventions promoted to achieve this.

(iii) Anticipating Future Needs: Strengthen existing functions of the town or village centre such as the need for additional retail capacity to service a growing population.

(iv) Strengthening Community: Planning for new development needs to take into consideration the needs of the community and phase development in line with the provision of essential social infrastructure.

Planning authorities should promote good urban design in their policy documents. The defining qualities of successful urban places include:

A sense of place, ease of movement, legibility (people friendly streets and spaces), quality of the public realm, variety (a good mix of activities) efficiency in the use of resources including land, adaptability of buildings and spaces and inclusivity (how easily can people access new development).

The guidelines advocate the preparation of design briefs for important, sensitive or large scale development sites.

Under the guidelines, a model for sustainable neighbourhoods is promoted at the district and neighbourhood scale. Sustainable concepts must include tangible issues such as the provision of community infrastructure and services and intangible issues such as peoples perceptions of what constitutes an attractive and safe local environment.

Planning objectives to help achieve sustainable neighbourhoods should include the following themes:

- Provision of community facilities (including the assessment of education requirements, childcare facilities, health care facilities, district level retail services etc).
- Efficient use of resources (recognise the value of scare urban land and use it as efficiently as possible, promote sustainable travel patterns, promote an efficient use of energy).
- Amenity and quality of life issues (provision of public parks and recreational facilities, personal safety)
- Conservation of the built and natural environment (integrate existing landscape features, creative re-use of older buildings, sustainable approaches to urban drainage etc).

The plan has taken into consideration the recommendations for good urban design and sustainable neighbourhoods as outlined under these guidelines.

2.3 Prime Urban Centres

Fig. 2.2 Strategic Development Initiatives



Extract from 2005-2011 Development Plan *Page 6 Fig. 1*

Rathmines is a designated Prime Urban Centre (PUC 6) under the 2005-2011Dublin City Development Plan. It is noteworthy that Rathmines town centre is the principal PUC designation within the south east quarter of the city. Its facilities and functions are important for a wide hinterland area.

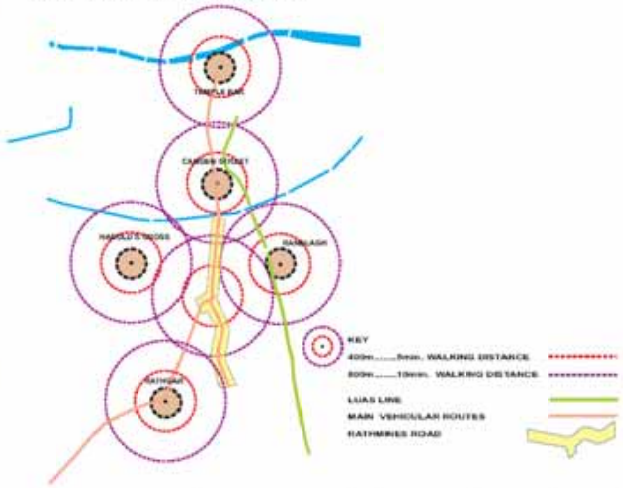
These centres that have or will have in the future, the capacity, by reason of their existing size, accessibility to public transport and/or established urban form, to deliver on a range of requirements, the most important of which are :

- An increased density of development
- A viable retail and commercial core
- A comprehensive range of high quality community and social services.
- A distinctive spatial identity with a high quality physical environment

The 2005-2011 Dublin City Development Plan states that Local Action Plans will be prepared for designated Prime Urban Centres.

2.4 Proximity to Other Centres

Fig. 2.3 Proximity to Local Centres



The context map diagram illustrates the importance of connections and synergies between Rathmines and its adjoining neighbourhoods, the corridor route to the city centre and the Luas line. The walking distance time bands highlight the close proximity of Rathmines to these areas. The plan provides an opportunity to forge strengthened linkages and incentives for movement to and from these character areas. The revitalisation of the town centre in Rathmines will act as a catalyst to encourage such movements and interaction.

2.5 Dublin City Development Plan Zoning

The principal zoning provisions within the study area include the following:

Z1: Residential zoning which includes more modern residential development such as apartments off Observatory Lane. There are distinctive housing areas zoned Z1 including the Gulistan Cottages area.

Z2: Residential conservation zones occupy a significant area in Rathmines and form a distinctive and special character to the street. There is a significant concentration of protected structures. In addition there are streets of distinct character for example Grosvenor Square.

Z3: Neighbourhood facilities including the local shops to the south of the study area on Rathmines Road Upper.

Fig. 2.4 Zoning Map

Extract from 2005-2011 Development Plan



Z4: Mixed use commercial lands zoned Z4 to provide for and improve mixed service facilities. The commercial zone extends from the junction of Richmond Hill in the north to the junction with Rathmines Avenue in the south and occupies a central location with the study area. The commercial area includes significant public buildings such as the Town Hall and Library.

Z9: Lands zoned for open space and recreational amenity incluce public parks like Belgrave Square , Tranquilla Park and a designated open space objective to the rear of the new swimming pool development. Recreation lands in private ownership are also included such as the Leinster Cricket Club, St Mary's College pitch and the open space in Grosvenor Square.

Z15: Institutional lands have a significant presence in Rathmines. The Z15 zoning provides for institutional and community uses. Development proposals on such lands must be accompanied by a masterplan and must make provision for public accessible open space and/or community uses. Significant institutional zonings include Cathal Brugha Barracks, St Mary's College, St Louis Primary and Secondary School and the Church of Ireand College of Education.

3.0 PREVIOUS STUDIES FOR RATHMINES

This plan has acknowledged and referenced the following three previous and important studies for Rathmines.

Rathmines: Development Proposals Towards a Local Area Action Plan 2000

This study was undertaken by the Rathmines Initiative and UCD in 2000 to promote objectives under the then current Development Plan to the local form. The key objectives of this study were stated as:

- Re-establish Rathmines as a place that the community can identify with and be proud of.
- Create an environment to stimulate a conservation programme for the area.
- Soften the impact of traffic congestion.
- Stimulate commercial activity suitable to an urban village.
- Improve leisure facilities i.e parks, football pitches, swimming/gym facilities and public areas.
- Outline ideas for infill residential and major commercial developments.

Conservation proposals under this study were a catalyst for a further inventory and conservation study for Rathmines Road Lower. The project highlighted the potential for reinterpretation of the Town Hall and in particular a focus on the building as a major cultural and civic location with possibilities to restore the historic auditorium.

Traffic and movement were areas of particular focus under this study. The creation of a more people friendly environment was encouraged. Enhanced pedestrian paths, bicycle lanes and bicycle parking would encourage less use of the private car. Measures such as changed road surfaces at key junctions, larger pedestrian islands at key junctions, landscaping and civic art opportunities would improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists moving through Rathmines.

Environmental improvements were promoted for Richmond Hill, the entrance to Grosvenor Square, the setting for the Church of our Lady of Refuge and Grove Park. Tree planting in particular was promoted to enhance the visual quality of streets.

Visual enhancements to the commercial area in Rathmines including high quality shopfront guidelines and improvements to single storey commercial units that are forward of historic terraces were promoted.

The need for open space and recreation was highlighted and suggestions were made for recreation opportunities at St Mary's College playing fields, Tranquilla Park and Church of Ireland Training College.

A number of site specific guidance were formulated to guide possible future development on key site including the Fire Station and Cleansing Depot sites, the Swimming Pool, Blackberry Fair and Cathal Brugha Barracks.

Rathmines Aungier Street Framework Study 2001

This study was carried out in conjunction with the Urban and Village Renewal Programme of grants under the 2000-2006 National Development Plan. The study put forward a number of projects for streetscape enhancements to improve the visual amenity and environment of the corridor route linking Dame Street and Rathmines. Key projects delivered under this Urban and Village Renewal Programme include the civic plaza at Portobello, refurbishment of La Touche Bridge, Portobello and upgraded footpath surfaces and public lighting.

Some examples of projects further recommended under this study included:

- The conservation of terraced buildings along Rathmines Road Lower.
- Opportunities for parking to the rear of properties to allow a reinstatement of front boundaries.
- Junction improvements including an innovative scheme for the Rathmines Road/Rathgar Road junction.
- Promote secondary streets for movement including new connections and mews lane development for activity along these routes.
- Creation of new civic space in the heart of Rathmines as a focal point and amenity for the greater community. The opportunity for linkages from new open space at the Swimming Pool site through to the cleansing depot (an opportunity site) was promoted via potential routes through the Fire Station site, beside the Town Hall and Parker Hill.

Improvements in the public domain under this plan aimed to achieve a catalyst for inward investment with benefits for economic activity, increased tourism, enhanced local amenities and improvement in the quality of life for local residents.

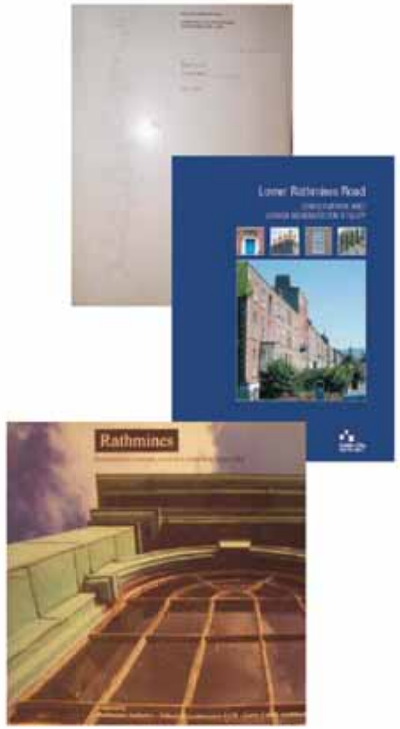
Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study 2005

The purpose of this study was to provide guidance for property owners and the Council for improvements in the condition of Rathmines Road Lower. The terrace dates from the late Georgian period (1830's) and together with the neoclassical Church of Mary Immaculate it forms a significant and striking urban streetscape. Interventions to address the physical degradation of properties and the public domain along the terrace were needed to progress the renewal of Rathmines.

Detailed audits and surveys of individual properties, features unique to the street, front garden boundaries, mews lane conditions, the setting of significant buildings, the condition of the public realm and condition of key sites such as Blackberry Fair were included within the document. Guidance on the following issues were promoted with the benefit of diagrams and best practice examples:

- Directions for correct repair and maintenance of properties.
- Acceptable models of the use of properties.
- Guidelines for appropriate mews developments.
- Design solutions for front garden boundary treatments and the public domain.

This study, in addition to the Rathmines Aungier Street Framework Study 2001, has guided improvements to this area including improvements to the public domain along Rathmines Road Lower. Many of the policies and recommendations of the study are still very relevant for the current character of properties in Rathmines and some proposals are reincorporated within this Local Action Plan.



4.0 VISION FOR RATHMINES LOCAL ACTION PLAN



Images from Local Consultations in Rathmines

The South East Area Committee initiated the process of preparation of a Local Action Plan for Rathmines in 2007.

Identifying the important issues and challenges for Rathmines was the first stage of the plan preparation process. A Brief for the Local Action Plan was prepared in consultation with the Local Community and the South East Area Committee. The Brief was approved in February 2008 and identified the following key issues to be addressed by the Local Action plan:

Landuse: The quality, depth and range of uses falls short of what might be expected. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the commercial uses and the town centre environment. Explore the potential for arts, cultural and community uses within the town centre.

Movement: The linkages between Rathmines and its hinterland should be examined, in particular east to west movement through the town centre. Balance through traffic movement with opportunities for traffic calming and an enhanced pedestrian environment. Promote the enhancement of the walking and cycling environment throughout the study area.

Spatial Legibility: Promote a well ordered town centre which is inviting and rewarding to move through. New developments should connect well to the existing townscape. They should provide opportunities to enrich the diversity and quality of services in Rathmines, create interesting new civic spaces, create positive new identity and open opportunities for connection.

Architecture, Urban Design and Conservation: Rathmines has a significant architectural heritage which contributes to a unique and distinctive character. Promote the renewal and restoration of the architectural character and balance this high quality modern developments where the opportunity arises to provide vitality to the town centre. Design codes for enhanced commercial frontages and proposals for a high quality public domain should be promoted.

Opportunity Sites: Recognise the significant sites where future developments are possible. Put in place appropriate guidance so that investment and development opportunities contribute positively to the revitalisation of the town centre.


Computer generated sketch image of old village


Existing image

Community Facilities: Deliver an integrated range of facilities and amenities for the diverse population profile. There are existing shortfalls in terms of physical space for community facilities within the town centre. There is an opportunity to address this imbalance and integrate the community within the heart of the commercial town centre. Facilities for the youth of the local area and facilities for the elderly are particularly important.

Arts & Culture: The plan should nurture arts and culture within Rathmines. The creation of cultural infrastructure and facilities can be integrated within the town centre. Innovative and adaptable uses of existing and newly proposed buildings and spaces should be considered.

Open Space and Amenities: There is a wide range of different sporting and leisure facilities within Rathmines but to a large extent wider public use of these facilities is limited due to private ownership. The Plan should explore the opportunity to enhance sports and recreation facilities for wider community use and in particular provide recreation facilities for children and young people.

Sustainability: Sustainability principles include movement and connections through public transport, walking and cycling. It includes the provision of a diverse range of services all within walking distance of the town centre. Waste management and recycling facilities already have an important presence in Rathmines and are identified as an important facility. Sustainable design should be encouraged for new developments.

Overall Vision

It is a vision of the Rathmines Local Action Plan to encourage a sustainable regeneration of Rathmines inclusive of a wide range of facilities. The Plan promotes a reinstatement of the unique high quality civic character of the town centre. An enhanced town centre should provide improved access, services and amenities to all sections of the local community and wider residential area who are serviced by Rathmines.

5.0 LOCAL CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Summary of Community Mapping Consultations

A series of public consultation meetings were held in May 2008 for the purpose of progressing the Local Action Plan. It was considered beneficial to go back to the community for these further consultations to both (i) clarify issues already apparent from survey work commenced and (ii) to use local knowledge within Rathmines to clarify location specific issues. To focus these meetings, a Community Mapping Report exercise was conceived.

These meetings were held in a workshop type format with local people from varying backgrounds and interests working in small groups and collectively making suggestions for the plan under eight general themes. The themes were:

- Visual Impression and Experience of Rathmines
- Movement
- Community and Social Facilities for All
- Arts and Cultural
- Retail and Commercial
- Potential Opportunity Sites and their Potential To Contribute To Rathmines
- Open Space, Recreational Amenities and Natural Environment
- Architecture and Conservation

Comments were attached to specific locations where possible. The results of the exercise were published in the Rathmines Community Mapping Report in July 2008.

The images below are taken from the workshops held and include some example mapping diagrams produced in the Community Mapping Report.

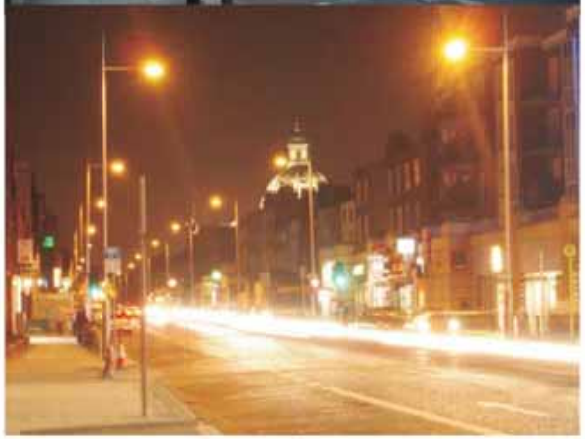
This mapping exercise was considered very successful. Many valuable contributions were made from the local community during these workshops. Analysis of the key themes emerging from the exercise have informed the preparation of this plan. A summary of the key recommendations made by the community at these meetings is provided on page 9.



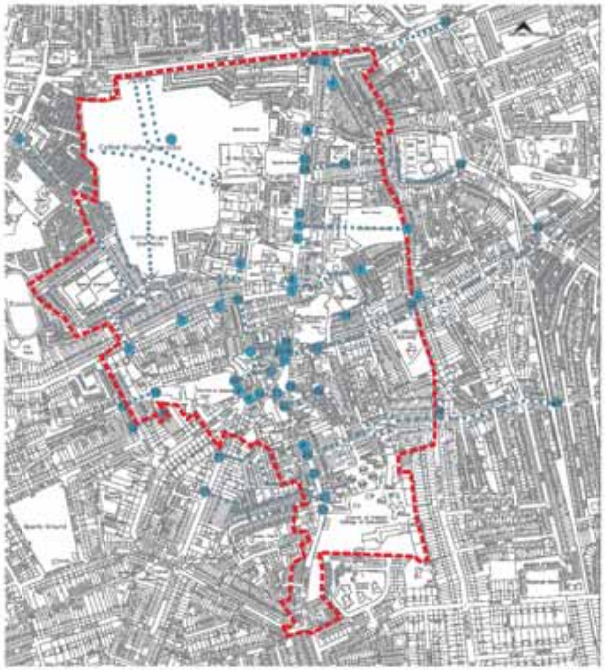
Images from Local Consultations in Rathmines







Example Map from Community Mapping Report





The below are a summary of issues raised by residents at Public Consultation Meetings

Visual Impression and Experience of Rathmines

The Town Hall provides a positive view on approach from Leinster Road. The clock tower is an important landmark viewed from a wide area in Rathmines.

Single storey buildings in front of historic terraces should be removed from Rathmines Road Lower. They are of low quality and visually impact on the street character. It is recognised that activity on the street generated by such businesses can be positive. When in this character however they are unsightly.

Movement Theme

The centre of Rathmines is considered a congested zone with significant through traffic. Developments should avoid generating significant increases in parking which would add to congestion.

Walking routes towards the Luas corridor and Ranelagh are important to connect Rathmines to the public transport facilities of the Luas and also for connections to Ranelagh itself. Routes should be studied and where necessary proposals for footpath upgrades, better lighting etc. should be explored

Community and Social Facilities for All

There is deficiency in indoor accommodation for community activities. Halls in schools/colleges can be rented but are subject to availability.

A centrally located, modern one-stop-shop space is required providing for health, local authority, citizens information, older people, mental health projects, youths café, cultural working groups.

Arts and Cultural Theme

There are a number of public spaces in Rathmines which could be suitable for arts and cultural activities, including market activities, display of art on railings and other cultural uses. Locations include Portobello Square adjoining the canal, Belgrave Square, Church Avenue and the setting of the Holy Trinity Church.

The Town Hall should revert back to a public use. It is a landmark building suitable as a backdrop to an event space. Residents would like to see the Town Hall used as a Concert Hall.

Retail and Commercial Theme

The quantity of retail provision in Rathmines is not an issue for the community. Quantities are actually considered acceptable. It is the quality of retail provision and the spatial distribution which is a greater issue.

If a redevelopment of retail arises in the town centre (eg. Swan Centre and Gulistan sites), a mall type development should be avoided and shopping streets should be created to enhance the centre of Rathmines. This would help to define the town centre more appropriately than a single shopping building.

Potential Opportunity Sites and Their Potential to Contribute to Rathmines

Examples include Gulistan, Swan, Blackberry Fair, Tesco and part of St. Louis Secondary School.

Open Space, Recreational Amenities and Natural Environment Theme

The canal area is important for biodiversity and as a recreational zone. It should be highlighted more for connections with Rathmines.

Belgrave Square is an important part of Rathmines and the landscaping of the square should be improved. The issue of active versus passive uses had different views expressed at the meeting.

Architecture and Conservation

The important landmarks identified in Rathmines are Canal House, the Kodak building, the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, the Town Hall, the Library, the Post Office, the Rathgar/ Rathmines Musical Society building and the Holy Trinity Church.

The terraced housing fronting Rathmines Road Lower is a considerable asset and creates a positive visual impression on entering Rathmines from the canal. Restoration plans should be continued to maintain and improve this important terrace.



5.2 Summary of Key Stakeholder Consultations

In preparing this plan, a series of public consultation workshops and meetings with key stakeholders and interest groups were undertaken. The role of the Rathmines Partnership in assisting the project group with community based meetings is gratefully acknowledged.

The following sections provide a summary of some key points which have emerged from this consultation process.

Security

An Garda Siochana

- Engage with the youth of the local community. Providing recreational facilities is important to reduce potential of anti social behaviour.
- Crowd out crime through effective design codes, for example clear lines of vision and wide areas for pedestrian movement are important.

Health Services

Health Service Executive

- Health facilities have multi functional use for wide community benefit. It is important to provide such facilities in the centre of Rathmines in mixed use settings.
- Opportunities to facilitate a Primary Care Health Facility and Step Down Nursing Unit in the centre of Rathmines should be explored.

Community Services

Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership

- There is a need for community floor space in a central and accessible location in Rathmines.
- There is a diverse range of social, educational and community based services provided in Rathmines through the Partnership. Accommodation is restricted however and community floorspace is under provided for compared with the population and the demand for services.
- It is important to Integrate new opportunities for community floorspace in the centre of Rathmines.
- Facilities for the youth in Rathmines are a key requirement, in particular facilities that enhance sports and active recreation to engage with the youth of the area and prevent long term issues of anti social behaviour due to a lack of amenities and facilities. Private sports facilities and facilities on institutional sites are not always accessible to all. Opportunities to enhance accessible recreational assets close to the town centre should be encouraged.

Rathmines Initiative

- The preparation of a Local Action Plan is welcomed. Previous proactive work to encourage regeneration in Rathmines by groups like Rathmines Initiative should be recognised and utilised in advancing proposals.
- Community engagement and provision of facilities to include all sections of the local community are important.
- The artistic and cultural strengths of the area should be promoted under the plan. In particular a landmark cultural rejuvenation of the town centre using the Town Hall as a catalyst would be very positive.
- The plan provides an opportunity to progress objectives for Rathmines into action. In particular, setting out design guidelines for a number of key opportunity sites is of key importance. High quality standards in architectural design and innovation should be encouraged.
- Guidelines for appropriate development to historical properties, including appropriate mews development, protection of historical fabric etc should be encouraged (similar to Lower Rathmines Road Conservation Study).
- There are signs of positive trends in Rathmines in recent years including the conversion of multiple occupancy historic residential buildings to single family housing. These trends should be supported.
- It is important to encourage a flagship project in the town centre to signal confidence and encourage other sites in public and private ownership to seek redevelopment and enhancement.
- Environmental issues impacting on Rathmines at present include traffic congestion, poor pedestrian environment, congestion and quality of the public domain etc. Improvements in these areas are important.
- The visual amenities of Rathmines are impacted negatively by poor quality standards to shopfront design, commercial signage, boundary conditions and low quality commercial extensions to the front of historic buildings. Improvements to these areas are important.

Educational Services

Department of Education

- Notes potential for population increases (750-950 persons) in the Town Centre from infill opportunity and overall population trends. On Average 12% of a population is at Primary School age 8.5% is at Secondary School age. Of the local schools St Louis Primary and St Clare's Convent (outside study area) have increased enrollment over recent period. St Louis Secondary School indicate a decline at present but this trend is expected to change having regard to the population profile.
- Existing schools are considered to have capacity for the current population. To cater for growth, expanded capacity will be required. Constraints on urban sites like Rathmines are however recognised. Sharing community and sports facilities within the local area can be appropriate.

St Louis Secondary School

- Residential requirements for the Sisters of St Louis have to be met on site.
- Provision of new sports facilities (PE Hall, All Weather Pitch) and improvements to the school are dependent on the school's ability to finance such provision. Funding the education and recreation uses on site is critical for the schools long term viability.
- Part development on the school grounds for residential use will respect Z15 Zoning to provide public open space and community facilities.
- The school emphasised the valuable contribution of their existing facilities to the wider community. Access by arrangement to facilities such as PE Hall, All Weather Pitch, Concert Hall etc will be actively supported.

St Louis Infant and Primary Schools

- Both schools have a wide catchment area and operate at capacity. The school site is significantly restricted in space and ability to extend. Approximately 700 students are enrolled at present.
- Active play facilities for school children are important and are deficient in Rathmines. Cathal Brugha Barracks lands are used. New Swimming Pool facility offers opportunity for school recreation. More play areas close to town centre required.
- Security for the school is a significant issue. Design of new public open space at Williams Park should account for school security.
- Opportunity to widen school entrance where it adjoins the new public park may exist. Signage for school children crossing should be explored. Conflict with traffic, on Louis Lane in particular, is an issue. Safe access routes to school should be explored.

VEC

- 100 year lease of the Town Hall (up to 2030 present lease). Significant investment made in upgrading and improving Town Hall. Education uses carried out over c 12 hours daily during the week (9pm finish for evening classes). Approximately 700 students are enrolled full time. Properties on Leinster Road also in education use (approx 200 students).
- Contribution to community activities recognised and valued. Strong links with Rathmines Partnership, Rathmines Festival etc. Public access to the Town Hall for Art exhibitions have been arranged in the past.
- The college is at capacity and requires more space for enhanced student facilities, for example sports facilities, canteen areas, student library, class room space etc. Opportunity to consolidate VEC education functions in the centre of Rathmines welcomed.
- Opportunities to interact with adjoining development on Gulistan Depot exist. Town Hall auditorium currently subdivided into 5 unsatisfactory class rooms. Replacement education space elsewhere could enable a restoration and public use of this historic space within the Town Hall. A range of flexible community and cultural uses could be explored.
- Arts and culture activities have a positive synergy with education uses, in particular some VEC courses.

Voluntary Groups

Older Persons Network

- Rathmines is a service centre for a wide residential hinterland. It is important that services are town centre located, accessible by Dublin Bus routes and are mixed with other town centre uses.
- Recognise active retirement- the elderly can make a valuable contribution to town centre community uses, arts and culture etc. Incorporating elderly facilities, community and health uses can benefit town centre viability.
- Open space opportunities should cater for elderly recreational facilities, for example public seating.

Youth Group

- There is a deficit in the active recreation facilities that are widely available for the youth of Rathmines. Existing facilities are either in private or institutional ownership. Greater access to existing private/institutional facilities and new open space/recreation opportunities should be explored.
- The new Swimming Pool development is greatly anticipated. Other facilities such as a cinema would provide a valuable amenity for the youth of Rathmines.

Gateway Group

- Similar comments as outlined above.

- The central location of community facilities within the town centre is important. New facilities should be accessible to other town centre functions and public transport.

Business Community

- Strengthen the town centre commercial area. Opportunities for commercial development should focus on the central area and avoid leakage outside this area.
- A positive catalyst such as the new Swimming Pool development should encourage investment and send a good signal to market Rathmines. The plan should encourage other similar projects (regeneration of the Swan S. C. for example).
- Movement and the condition of the public realm are important for visual signals on the attractiveness of the town centre. Encourage wide paving, street enhancement, new civic spaces, improvements to shopfronts etc.
- A strong business voice, Chamber of Commerce or similar would be encouraging and positive for the commercial strength of Rathmines.

Swan Shopping Centre

- The concept of regeneration on the Swan shopping centre and possible linkages to a new town centre character development on the Gulistan site adjoining should be explored. High quality retail provision is needed in Rathmines. High pedestrian footfall through new streets and urban spaces would benefit business. Leisure uses in the town centre are important.

Institutional Lands - Army Barracks

Department of Defence

- The army currently intend to retain a presence in Cathal Brugha Barracks . The security requirements of the lands must be considered if exploring any potential linkages or access through the lands.
- The Department recognise the importance of local community engagement and currently provide access to their facilities for a number of groups. Further access for recreational and community uses can be explored with the Barracks.
- The historical importance and heritage value of the barracks and buildings within the grounds are recognised.

Religious Institutions

Catholic Parish

- The opportunity to develop a Parish Centre for the use of the wider community should be explored. The car park to the rear of St Mary's Community Centre may be a suitable location.
- Support the development of community facilities, youth facilities and in particular recreational facilities etc which is important for the well being of the local population.
- Recognise the needs of the marginalised communities in Rathmines- facilities should integrate all sections of society.
- Recognition that the Church of Our Lady of Refuge is a significant city landmark and an important building within Rathmines. The Church is used for cultural in addition to religious uses.
- Look at demographics and trends in the changing population profile and provide facilities that benefit the future population structure as well as the present.

Church of Ireland

- Recognise the importance of the Church of Ireland College of Education for training and educational facilities. There is a high demand for school places. The grounds have a national training function.
- Discussions with the school on community uses by agreement with the school can be explored.
- Support the development of community facilities, elderly facilities, youth facilities and physical enhancement of Rathmines (footpath improvement , more green spaces etc) for the well being of the local community.
- Recognition that the Holy Trinity Church is an important landmark in Rathmines and is used for community in addition to religious services.

The proactive work of the Rathmines Partnership and Rathmines Initiative over recent years has been a significant benefit to the preparation of this Plan. Their work has made a significant contribution in raising the profile of Rathmines and its needs in a planning context.



6.0 Analysis of Existing Rathmines Area

Having carried out consultations with local residents and stakeholders, as detailed in Section 5, the following section sets out the analysis carried out as part of the preparation of the Plan.

6.1 Historical Evolution

Rathmines is located on what was originally one of the four major routes that led out of the city of Dublin on the south side of the River Liffey. The name 'Rathmines' emerged in the fourteenth century from a corruption of the name 'Rath de Meones' when lands in the area known as 'the rath' came under the ownership of the de Meone family.

The Battle of Rathmines took place during the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland in 1649 in the area when two thousand Royalists, under the Marquis of Ormonde were defeated by Parliamentarians from Dublin.

The building of new routeways such as the Grand Canal and La Touche Bridge in 1791 gave greater access to the area and by the early nineteenth century newly developing suburbs such as Rathmines attracted the wealthier inhabitants of the city seeking to avoid the increasing squalor and high rates.

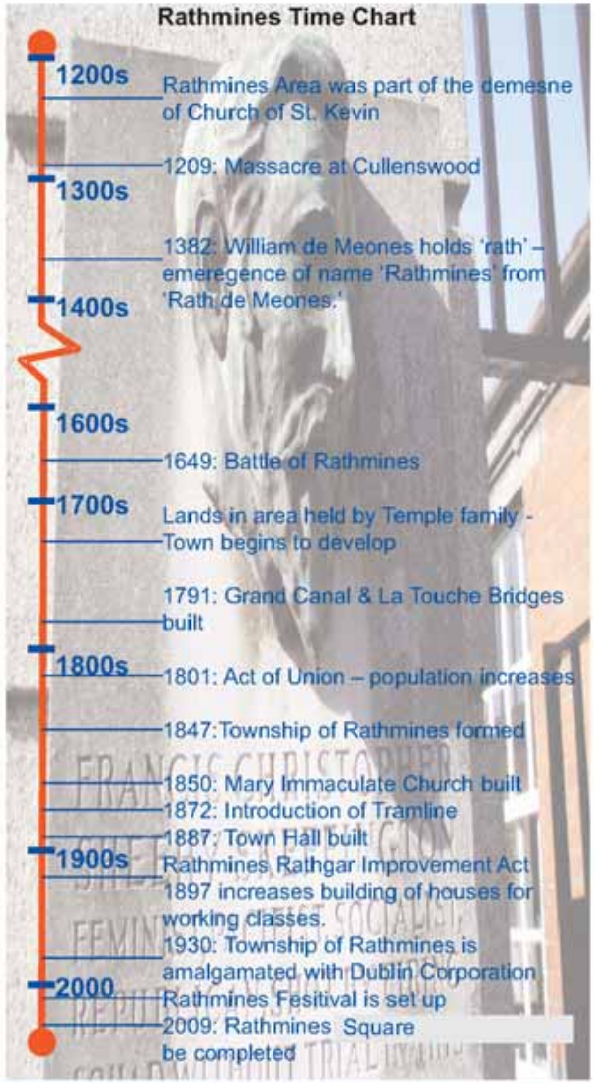
The early 19th Century saw the building of Cathal Brugha Barracks, or Portobello Barracks as it was originally known in 1810. The Barracks was designed as a cavalry barracks and in 1887 additional land was purchased making the total area of the barracks of 36 acres.

The township of Rathmines was created in 1847, experiencing a housing boom in the 1850s and rapidly becoming a popular location for fine speculative housing

In 1854 Patrick Byrne's neoclassical Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners Church was built, its landmark dome replaced in 1920 following a fire.

Sir Thomas Drew's red sandstone Rathmines Town Hall with its distinctive clock tower (1890s) formed the focal point of the commercial centre, social life and the centre of government for the township. In 1902 one of Edison's first moving films was shown and Marconi demonstrated his wireless invention. Appearances at the Town Hall included Percy French, W.B.Yeats, Lennox Robinson and Douglas Hyde.

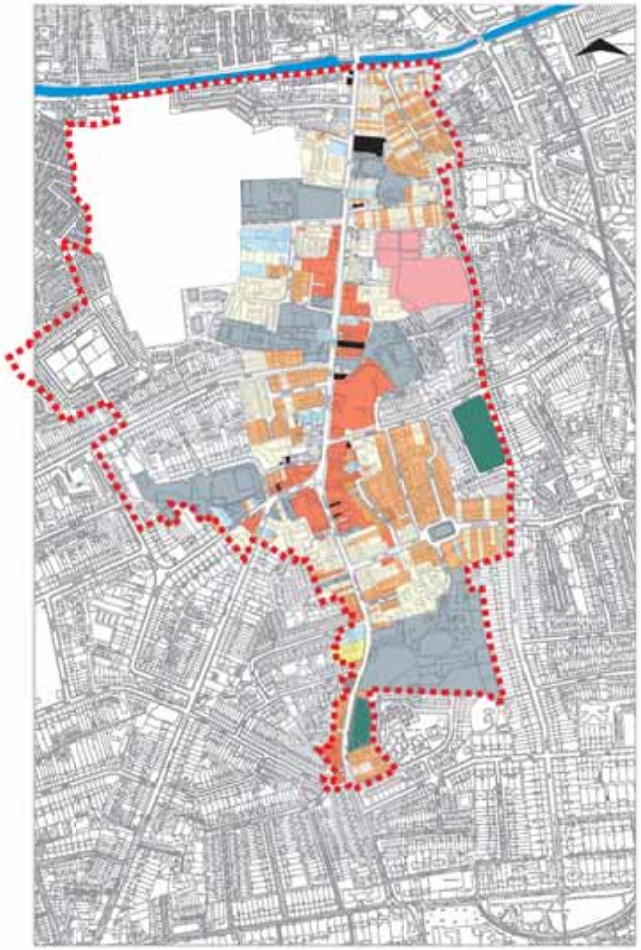
In 1872 the tram arrived making the area even more attractive as a commuter belt. The township opened its own electrical generating station in 1900. Notable twentieth century buildings included the first purpose built cinema – the Princess (1912), the Carnegie Public Library (1913), the Art Deco Kodak building (1930) and the Post Office (1934).



Grateful acknowledgement is made to Deirdre Kelly's 'Four Roads to Dublin: The History of Rathmines, Ranelagh and Leeson Street' (2001) which provides a detailed history of Rathmines and was of considerable assistance in the compilation of this section of the Plan. Her work is important in highlighting the historical and architectural significance of the area.



MAP 6.2 Existing Land-Uses in Rathmines



Key

Retail & Commercial	Public/ Institutional Education
Single Family Residential	Public Open Space
Multi-Family Residential	Private Recreational
Office / Professional	Vacant

6.2 Existing Land-Uses in Rathmines

A survey of the existing landuses within the core area of the town centre was undertaken. The analysis highlights the prominent commercial frontages within the town centre extending from the junction of Rathmines Road Upper and Rathgar Road, along the east side of Rathmines Road Lower between the Rathgar Road junction and Observatory Lane and along the west side of Rathmines Road Lower between the junction of Williams Park and Military Road.

Institutional lands within the town centre create two notable landbanks to the east and west of the main street which behind the Library (the DIT and Rathmines Square sites) and behind the Town Hall (the Gulistan Depot).

The central location of vacant sites including the former Fire Station appears prominent with respect to its central location. The vacant condition of the Blackberry Fair site is also prominent for the northern sections of the study area.

Residential uses demonstrate the integration of the community at close proximity to the town centre and in particular the family residential streets on Leinster Square and around Belgrave Square are notable.

Most of the landuses recorded by the survey are compatible with the landuse objectives of the area. One notable difference is the significant amount of land zoned for Z9 amenity in private use.

6.3 Established Height Profiles

An analysis of established building height profiles in the core part of the study area highlights the predominant two, three and four storey building heights. Along key street frontages, building heights are an integral part of the street character and frame a setting for a terrace or approach towards an important public building. An example of this is the four storey height of late Georgian period properties on Rathmines Raod Lower frame the approach to the Church of Our Lady of Refuge (over five storeys equivalent). The dome on this Church creates one of the tallest structures within Rathmines. Further south, the Town Hall rises above the profile of part three and four storey terraces on Rathmines Road Lower. The contribution of these two historic buildings to skyline character are a unique and distinct feature in the townscape of Rathmines.

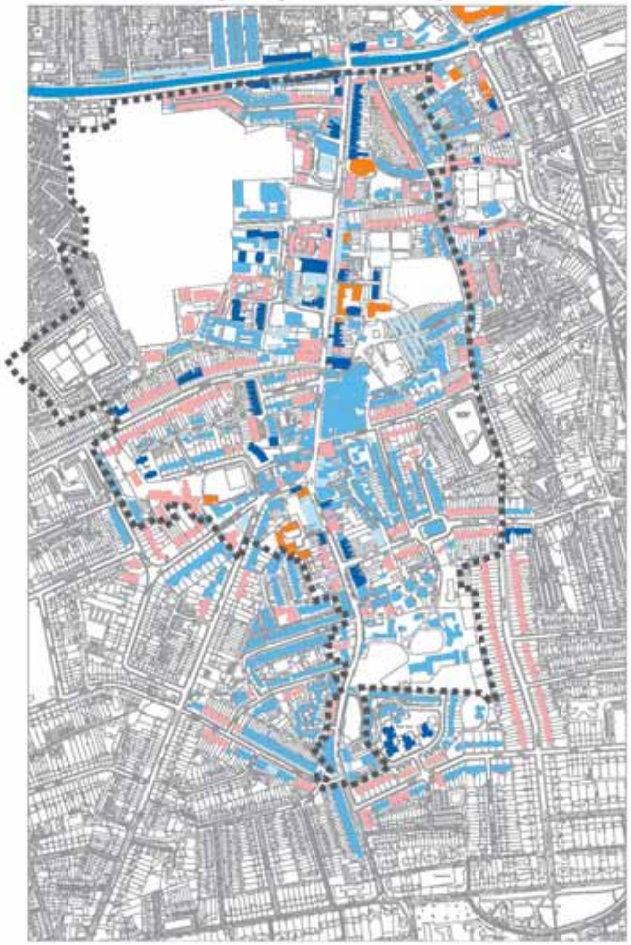
Modern buildings of five storey equivalent avoid disrupting the setting of views towards landmarks such as the Town Hall. The apartments between Parker Hill and Observatory Lane are an example where the five storey blocks are set back to align with the older terrace building lines.

Other locations with higher building profiles include the apartments of Rathmines Avenue and the commercial building on the corner junction of Rathgar Road and Rathmines Road Upper. This particular building is the tallest modern structure within Rathmines with a five storey height profile. The single storey height profiles of Gulistan Cottages distinguishes this residential area as a special character area within Rathmines.

Single storey buildings in key locations are notable including the HSE building directly opposite the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, the single storey commercial buildings located forward of terraced properties on Rathmines Road Lower and the Tesco supermarket building with frontage on Rathmines Road Upper.

The Swan Shopping Centre is located in the centre of Rathmines. The two storey height profile of this building at a key landmark location in the town centre is notable in comparison with the historic pattern of 3 and 4 storeys north of the main commercial centre.

MAP 6.3 Existing Height of Buildings in Rathmines



Heights

Building Heights	Colour Code
5 Storeys (includes 4 Storeys over basement)	
4 Storeys (includes 3 Storeys over basement)	
3 Storeys (includes 2 Storeys over basement)	
2 Storeys (includes 1 Storey over basement)	
1 Storey	

6.4 Analysis of Existing Townscape in Rathmines

An analysis of the existing townscape character of Rathmines highlights the following important characteristics.

Views of significant character are framed by the alignment of existing streets and established building height profiles in the town centre. Views of the Dublin Mountains as an overall backdrop with the dome of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge and the Town Hall provide a distinct vista on approach to Rathmines and when crossing the "threshold" entrance from the Grand Canal.

Key landmark buildings are striking and notable when moving through Rathmines. In particular they make a linear form when highlighted and provide reference points along the key movement corridor of Rathmines Road Lower. The convergence of two key public buildings (the Town Hall and Library) on opposite sides of the main street provides an obvious definition to the town centre. By contrast, the weak edges and lower quality commercial frontages at the Swan Shopping Centre on the Castlewood Avenue and Rathmines Road Lower junction create an underwhelming impression. Height is not necessarily the issue here but rather the poor quality of the environment at an obvious central location.

The uniformity of terraced buildings along key streets, including significant rows of historic buildings, create an indelible character trait for the area. The quality of maintenance and upkeep of properties and in particular front boundaries, the condition of former garden areas, the parking of cars and storage of refuse cumulatively create a strong impact on the quality of the townscape. Boundary conditions have an irregular pattern of good and bad examples along terraces but the difference in the quality and experience of the street is notably improved where an intact row of better maintained premises are encountered. An example would include the visual impact and appreciation of the street along Rathmines Road Lower south of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge (where most of the boundaries and front garden areas are high quality) and north of the same Church (passing the Blackberry Fair site) where poor site conditions erode the quality and experience of the street. Richmond Hill is noted as a street with some positive examples of good boundary conditions but the encroachment of low quality property maintenance is impacting negatively on the street character.

Within the commercial centre, visual clutter, poor standard signage and in some instances the low quality appearance of single storey commercial extensions distract attention from what are otherwise positive character features.

The redevelopment of the Swimming Pool site is under way. The site layout of the proposal, including the adjoining site of Hermen and White, is placed on the analysis map to show the important central location of these sites and their potential to contribute to the quality and character of the town centre area.

The lack of landscaping and trees along the main routes leading towards the town centre is notable by virtue of the recognisable value and contribution of trees, where they do occur, to the quality of the street. Mature trees on the boundary of St Mary's College pitch and Rathmines Road Lower and along the boundary of St Louis Secondary School and Charleville Road are notable.

Opportunities for side street short cut connections are apparent on a visit to the town centre. Such routes provide a network of secondary side streets. If the environmental quality of these streets is enhanced, the promotion of pedestrian and cyclist connections through more traffic calmed environments in the town centre would be encouraged. Some examples include a connection between Richmond Hill and Mountpleasant Square, connections from Mount Drummond Avenue to Leinster Road adjoining the boundary of Cathal Brugha Barracks and connections from Castlewood Avenue to Church Avenue via Church Gardens.

Mews lane developments and studio developments are a feature of the local area. Positive examples occur where such uses provide activity and life along a side street walking route. Other less beneficial developments were observed which have blocked possible connections opportunities. It is important that positive examples are encouraged for regenerating side lane environments and poor precedents including blockages are avoided moving forward.

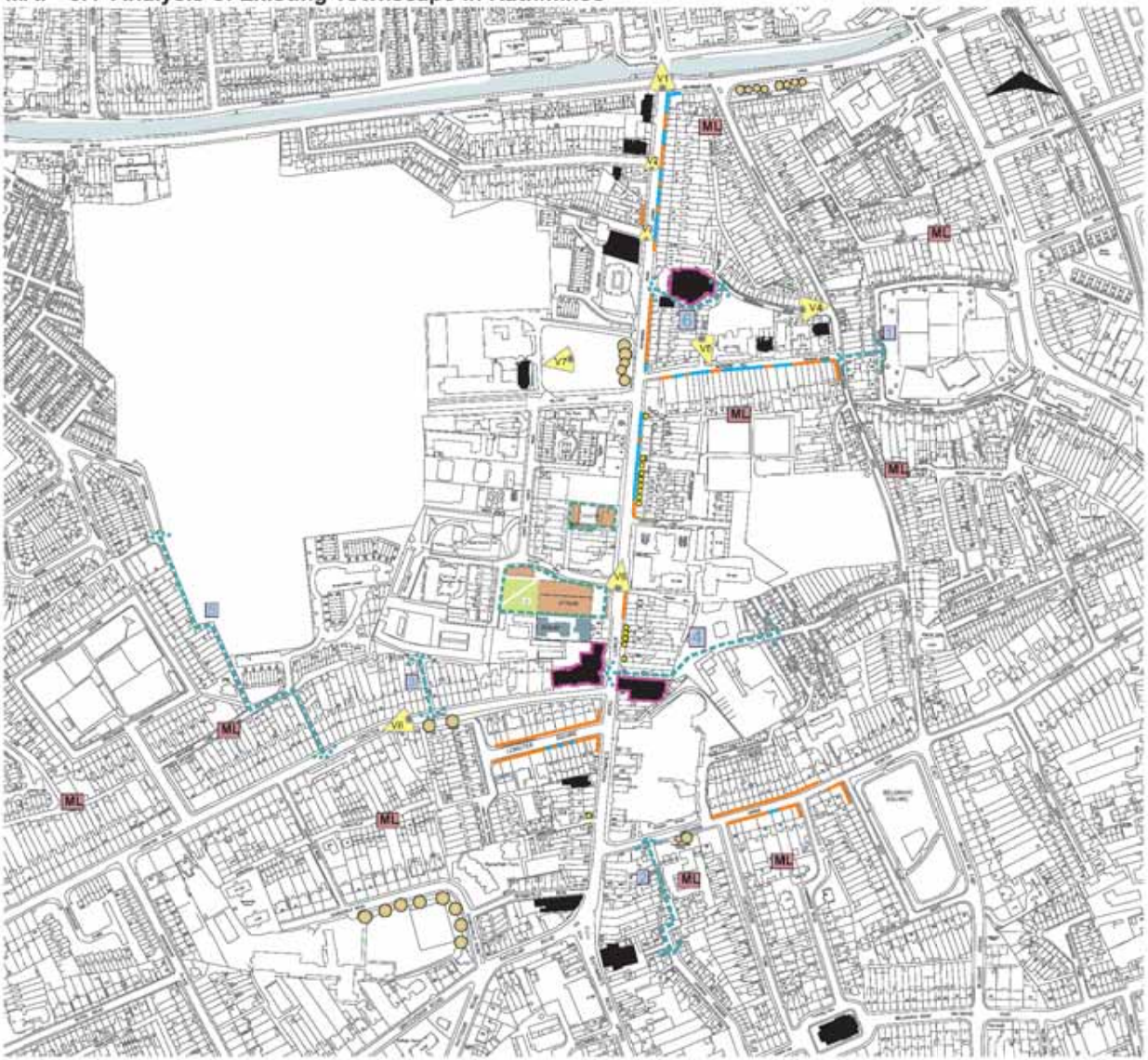
This analysis of the existing townscape of Rathmines has informed the objectives and development strategy in the following sections of the plan.







MAP 6.4 Analysis of Existing Townscape in Rathmines



KEY

LANDMARK BUILDINGS

BUILDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL MERIT

VIEWS

- V1 CHURCH DOME- CAMDEN STREET APPROACH AND LATOUCHE BRIDGE
- V2 TOWN HALL CLOCK TOWER - RATHMINES RD. LOWER
- V3 DUBLIN MOUNTAINS BACKGROUND - RATHMINES RD. LOWER
- V4 CHURCH DOME - BESSBOROUGH PARADE
- V5 CHURCH DOME - RICHMOND HILL
- V6 TOWN HALL CLOCK, TOWER - LEINSTER ROAD
- V7 CHURCH DOME - ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
- V8 TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY

INTACT BOUNDARY FEATURE

POOR BOUNDARY FEATURES

SINGLE STOREY COMMERCIAL INFILL

EXAMPLE OF MATURE TREES

PERMEABLE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE 1

RICHMOND HILL TO MOUNT PLEASANT 1

CASTLE WOOD AVENUE TO CHURCH GARDENS 2

LEINSTER ROAD TO LOUIS LANE 3

RATHMINES ROAD LOWER TO GULISTAN COTTAGES 4

MOUNT DRUMMOND AVENUE TO LEINSTER ROAD 5

RATHMINES ROAD LOWER TO BESSBOROUGH PARADE 6

EXAMPLE OF MEWS LANE LOCATIONS ML

6.5 Background information on the Population in Rathmines

The Plan area currently comprises an estimated 4,150 permanent private households with a resultant population of in the order of 7,300 persons.

Demographic analysis of the Census 2006 results for a wider area including the five Electoral Divisions of Rathmines West A, B, C, D and F has been carried out as part of this Local Action Plan.

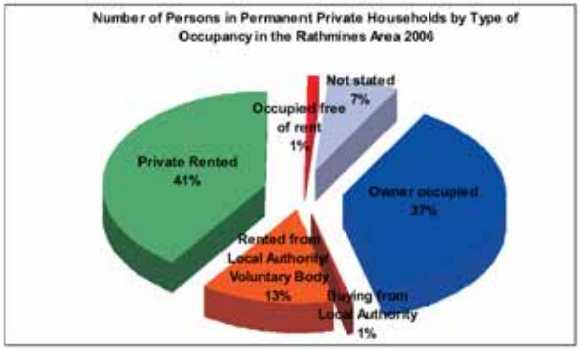
The Census 2006 results clearly illustate that the area is dominated by young workers, aged between 24-44 with the majority living in rented one person flats/apartments and do not own a car.

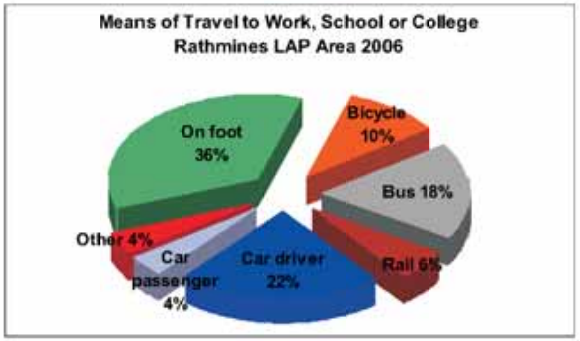
Nearly half (47%) of the population are in the 24-44 year age-group, with 21% aged between 15 and 24, 7% are aged over 65 and 9% are under 15. When these age-groups are compared against those nationally and in the Dublin City area, it is clear that Rathmines has a much higher percentage of the population aged between 15 and 44 and a lower percentage of the population aged under 15 or over 65.

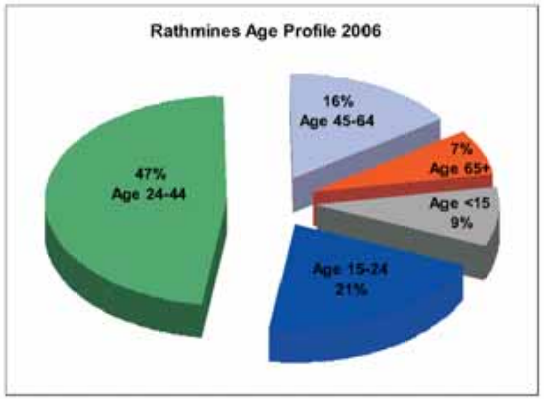
Analysis of the type of households in Rathmines indicates that 48% of households are in flats/apartments, 38% are houses and 10% are in bed-sits. A high percentage (42%) are one person households, 19% comprise a husband and wife/co-habiting couple, 16% comprise 2 or more non-related persons, 11% comprise husband, wife and children and 5% single parent households. Forty-one per cent of the population in Rathmines live in private rented accommodation which is four times the national average. 37% of people live in owner occupied households and 13% are rented from the local authority or a voluntary body. 66% of the population aged over 15 at work, 14% are students, 7% retired, 5% in home duties and 5% unemployed.

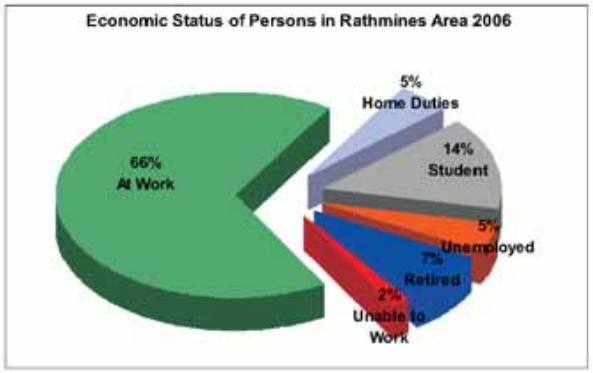
The 2006 Census reveals that there is a low rate of car ownership in the area, where half of households do not own a car. This is reflected in how people commute in the area where 74% of the population use non-car modes to travel to work, school or college. Over a third of the population of Rathmines walk to work, school or college, 18% take the bus and 10% cycle.

The 2006 Census information reveals that over a quarter of the population usually resident in the LAP area are foreign nationals, with 6% from the EU Accession states, 4% Polish, 3% UK Nationals, 1% Lithuanian, 13% from the rest of world, mainly composed of the USA, African and Asian nationalities and 1% not stated.









Population Projections for the Rathmines Area

Population trends in the five Electoral Divisions of Rathmines West A, B, C, D and F since 1996 indicate that Rathmines experienced a higher rate of population growth in the mid-1990s than the rest of Dublin City, perhaps due to the construction of a number of apartment schemes in the area at that time. This rate of population growth then declined after 2002 and there was a 0.5% decline in population between 2002 and 2006 in the Rathmines area, in contrast to over 2% growth in Dublin City. This lower rate of population growth may be attributed to the lack of suitable infill development land, return to family housing and decreasing average household size. These demographic trends indicate that population growth in the Rathmines area is directly related to the provision of new residential development within the area.

This Local Action Plan identifies that there are approximately 4.68 ha of redevelopment opportunity sites within Rathmines. Assuming a residential yield of between 75-100 units per ha, there is capacity for an additional 350 – 470 dwellings or an additional 750 – 1,000 persons within the Plan area.



6.6 Retail in Rathmines

Retail in Rathmines

A Retail Strategy has been prepared as part of the preparation of the Local Action Plan and forms an integral part of the Council's overall vision for the development of Rathmines.

The principle aim of the strategy is to ensure the development of a distinctive high quality retail sector in Rathmines which reinforces its role as a Prime Urban Centre. The strategy aims to better meet local shopping needs in a way that is efficient, equitable and sustainable as set down as a principle objective in the Retail Planning Guidelines.

The approach taken in the formation of the retail strategy included undertaking baseline surveys and research. This included policy analysis, a household consumer survey, a qualitative survey, quantitative analysis and the preparation of policies to promote the development of a distinctive retail identity for the area.

Health Check Assessment

A health check assessment analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the town centre of Rathmines, focused along Lower and Upper Rathmines Road.

The key conclusions of the Health Check Assessment are as follows:

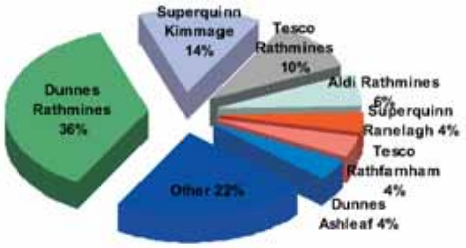
- Despite its role as an established town centre, the retail offer of Rathmines is generally poor and undeveloped and tends disproportionately towards lower end uses.
- There is a distinct lack of higher order retailing and speciality stores and a larger than desirable number of lower order retail and internet cafes which generally detract from the vibrancy of the towns commercial core.
- Rathmines is classified as a Category A level District Centre within the City retail hierarchy. However, the health check analysis highlighted how lower level centres such as Ranelagh, which is classified as a Category C District Centre, has a higher level of boutiques and speciality stores which Rathmines should seek to achieve albeit on a much larger scale.
- Need to improve the quality of the commercial centre of Rathmines.
- While the area is well served in terms of quantum of floorspace, the poor quality of a number of units detract from the visual amenity and overall vitality of the centre.
- Rejuvenation of the existing units and the establishment of a more diverse and specialist range of shops is required.

Household Survey – Key Findings

Food Related Shopping

56% shop within Rathmines however there is still a leakage of 38% to centres outside of the catchment.

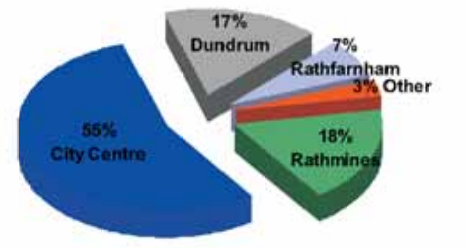
Location Normally Visited for Main Food and Grocery Shopping



Non-Food Goods such as Clothing, Footwear and Household Durables

Combined almost 80% shop for clothes, footwear and household durables outside the catchment.

Retail Location Normally Visited for Non-Food Goods such as Clothing & Footwear



Shopper Opinions on Rathmines as a Retail Centre

Despite identified weaknesses there is a strong and positive attitude towards the Town Centre – some example responses were:

- Lively 22%
- Easy to get to 22%
- Poor Quality and range of shops 15%
- Congested 10%
- Run Down 8%
- Strong Heritage 6%

Suggested Changes and Improvements Required:

- Better parking facilities 16%
- Better variety of shops 16%
- More specialist stores 12%
- More Clothes shops 9%

Floorspace Capacity

- Low Estimates 2014: 5,786 sq.m Convenience (food related) and 7,926 sq.m Comparison (non-food related). 13,712 sq.m total.
- High Estimates 2014: 6,717 sq.m Convenience and 9,128 sq.m Comparison. 15,846 sq.m in total.

Enhance the retail core through:

- Development policy to allow amalgamation of units.
- Public Domain Improvement Works
- Shop Front Design Guidelines
- Business Improvements District Schemes
- Financing Arrangements for Local Improvements

The full Retail Analysis is included under Appendix 2 as a separate attachment to this plan.



6.7 Infrastructure and Services

Roadways

Rathmines Road Lower is a designated Regional Road (the R114) which connects neighbourhoods such as Templeogue, Rathfarnham, Terenure and Rathgar to the city centre via Rathmines. This road is important for connections, in particular bus services, to the city centre from the south. The route connects with the Grand Canal which forms part of the Outer Orbital Route and is important for city wide east to west movement.

The importance of the R114 as a corridor route to and from the city centre generates a high volume of through traffic in the centre of Rathmines.

There are a number of local roads that link Rathmines with surrounding suburbs. These include Castlewood Avenue, Kenilworth Road, Grosvenor Road and Leinster Road. These routes are important for connecting the residential neighbourhoods with the services of the town centre. They intersect with the main north to south spine route of Rathmines Road Lower at different intervals. These connections add to the volumes of traffic accessing this route but their importance is recognised for interconnections between the adjoining neighbourhoods of Harold's Cross to the west and Ranelagh to the east.

Public Transport Access

Due to its location close to the city centre, the range of public transport services available within the area is relatively high. The principal mode of public transport servicing the area is public bus.

There are a number of bus services through Rathmines including the No's 14, 14A, 15, 15b, 18, 65, 65B, 65 X and 83. There is an inbound bus lane on Rathmines Road Lower and a QBC corridor operating along the N81 west of Rathmines.

In addition the majority of the area is within a 10-12 minute walk of the Ranelagh Luas Stop along the Luas Green Line between Sandyford and St. Stephen's Green.

Pedestrian and Cycle Network

The walking and cycling environment in Rathmines is dominated by the high level of traffic using Rathmines Road Lower. Despite this and due to the location of Rathmines within distance of the city centre , there is a high level of walking and cycling in the Rathmines area. Additionally, the Canal corridor and Rathmines Road Lower are part of the city wide Strategic Cycle Network.

There are opportunities to promote greater use of cycling throughout the neighbourhood and in particular examine linkages to public transport facilities such as the Luas. There is also significant potential to encourage the use of side lanes for access and movement through the study area. A physical upgrading of these side lanes could encourage more pedestrian movement between the town centre and residential neighbourhoods. The possibility of using these areas as safe cycling routes should be explored. This would lessen dependency on car related trips and help to ease congestion in the town centre.

There are existing pedestrian crossing facilities within the centre of Rathmines. Consultations under the plan preparation have however highlighted the potential to enhance the pedestrian environment through measures such as expansion of pedestrian crossing opportunities and traffic calming measures to help control speeds and provide priority to pedestrian and cyclist movements.

Car Parking

The majority of the study area is located in a Medium Demand Zone within which residential permit parking is permitted. The area between Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue is located in a High Demand Area with demand for short term commercial parking. There is currently a Pay and Display scheme in operation in the majority of streets in the centre of Rathmines. The two largest commercial car parking areas are associated with the two main retail locations and include the site of Tesco's accessing Rathmines Road Upper and the Swan Shopping Centre accessing Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue. There is capacity within the existing commercial car park at the Swan Shopping Centre.

Electricity, Gas and Telecommunications

The area is fully served with the necessary electricity and gas services to support the expected requirements of proposed developments on the key opportunity sites. A full range of telecommunications infrastructure is available in the area, which is fundamental for both local residents and businesses.

Foul and Surface Drainage

All new development in the area will be required to comply with the Greater Dublin Regional Code Of practice for Drainage works.

All developments in the area will be required to implement Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). This replicates the natural characteristics of rainfall runoff from all sites. SUDS devices include swales, permeable paving, filter drains, storage ponds, constructed wetlands, roof gardens and soak-aways. The discharge from all developments will be restricted to comply with Dublin City Council requirements. A Rathmines Drainage Area Plan is currently under preparation.

Water Supply

In common with much of Dublin, the Rathmines area is served by a water distribution system that is over a century old and in need of renewal. The Dublin Region Watermains Rehabilitation Project is programmed to replace those local watermains most in need of renewal.

It is considered that, in conjunction with this proposed renewal program, the watermain infrastructure is capable of supplying a satisfactory water supply both to existing premises and to likely redevelopment sites. It may however be necessary to carry out specific works to the water infrastructure in the case of some individual sites.

6.8 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Rathmines Local Action Plan does not fall under the mandatory requirements for the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). However, it was deemed necessary to screen the Plan in order to establish the need for SEA. The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 state that if determined necessary the prescribed environmental authorities can be consulted. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources were consulted. A full copy of the SEA Screening Report is contained in Appendix 1.

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive/Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

The proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan is located within a long-established inner suburban area which has been identified as a Prime Urban Centre (PUC), to serve surrounding residential areas under, under the development strategy as set out in the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011. The Local Action Plan area essentially relates to a built-up urban area with development potential limited to a number of in-fill sites.

The Local Action Plan strategy is being prepared on the basis of sensitive in-fill development of the key sites, a public realm enhancement strategy in tandem with a network of open spaces, to enable intensification and efficient use of land to reinforce a compact mixed-use settlement form in accordance with national and regional planning policy, as well as the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011.

The potential population increases arising from re-development of the key in-fill sites is estimated at circa 750-1,000 persons, which would be a relatively modest increase with regard to the existing population of the plan area (circa 7, 300) and with regard also to population forecasts on a regional level for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

There are no areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status within the Plan area. A section of the Grand Canal lies outside the Plan area, along its northern boundary and is protected under National legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), (site number 02104). There are no development proposals for any lands in the immediate vicinity of this designated site.

Overall it is envisaged that the implementation of the Rathmines Local Action Plan will not have any adverse or significant environmental effects on the existing environment as strong policies and objectives are to be put in place for the proper sustainable development of the area.

Following the above screening process, whereby the specific context of the Local Action Plan for Rathmines has been assessed against the environmental significance criteria as contained in Annex II(2) of the SEA Directive, it has been decided that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.



Tranquilla Park

Appropriate Assessment

The Rathmines Local Action Plan has been assessed to ascertain if it is required to be subject to an 'Appropriate Assessment' under the EU Habitats Directive. A full copy of the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report is contained in Appendix 1.

The principal trigger for undertaking an 'Appropriate Assessment' would be if the proposed Local Action Plan was likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. For the purposes of Article 6 assessments, Natura 2000 sites are those identified as Sites of Community Importance under the Habitats Directive (normally called Special Areas of Conservation) or classified as Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC),

There are no Natura 2000 Sites within or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan. The nearest Natura 2000 site is in the order of 4.1 kilometres to the east of the proposed Local Action Plan to Dublin Bay. The Rathmines Local Action Plan area essentially relates to a built-up urban area with development potential limited to a number of in-fill sites. The proposal for sensitive in-fill development on a number of key sites and public realm improvements is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and especially so in terms of mixed-use development and consolidation of the Metropolitan Core. It is considered that implementation of the emerging strategy in the proposec local action plan, is likely to result in predominantly positive local and strategic environmental impacts.

Taking cognisance of the above, the planning authority is of the opinion that there will be no direct, indirect or cumulative impact on any Natura site in the wider vicinity as a result of the implementation of the strategy under the Rathmines Local Action Plan. Accordingly, the planning authority has determined that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is not required for the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan.

This has been notified to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as the relevant consultee body.



7.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

The Area Analysis section of the plan has identified the existing physical character , demographic profile and commercial strength of Rathmines. Consultations and preparation of the plan brief have identified the key issues to be addressed by this plan. This analysis in turn informs the Council on the importance of setting out a series of its overall objectives to deliver improvements and benefits to the local community.

These objectives shall be considered in the assessment of any development proposals within Rathmines over the timeframe of this plan. The objectives are progressed under the preceding Development Strategy and Site Specific Guidance of the plan.

7.1 Vision for Sustainable Development

The overall sustainable development vision for Rathmines seeks to develop the area into a clean, green and healthy environment for residents and visitors to enjoy. New developments which utilise state of the art energy efficiency policies and best practice technologies to reduce resource consumption and promote environmental sustainability will be encouraged.

The following objectives for Sustainable Development are promoted

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote sustainable patterns of development within Rathmines. Proposed developments will be required to make provision for a high standard of quality sustainable design and comply with Building Energy Targets and Energy Efficiency Standards as per Policy Res. 20 and section 15.9.0 of the 2005-20011 Dublin City Development Plan.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the concept of sustainable neighbourhoods through this plan and encourage the efficient use of urban land to provide a diverse range of landuses and services for the community in Rathmines. The opportunity to integrate new residential uses with commercial, employment, community, recreation and arts and cultural uses will promote accessibility and provide opportunities for sustainable modes of travel between different uses within the town centre.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to protect and enhance and the natural heritage and biodiversity of Rathmines. Natural site features such as mature trees shall be protected where possible and incorporated into innovative site designs. Opportunities for new landscaping as part of public realm enhancements , public open space and communal/private open space areas shall include landscaping schemes that provide native species and opportunities for new wildlife habitat.**

7.2 Vision for the Retail/Commercial/Economic Sector

The overall retail/commercial and economic vision for Rathmines seeks to strengthen the functions and services within the town centre. A vibrant town centre with attractive streets and spaces and a wide variety of uses will send a positive signal to potential investors and visitors on the importance of this location.

The town centre should have a higher quality commercial offer that provides for the general needs of the local area and attracts new customers.

All major redevelopment proposals within the town centre should incorporate a wide diversity of complimentary uses which deliver new employment opportunities. The potential for employment generation can be created through a number of uses such as retail, offices, enterprise units, social and community based employment etc.

This plan recognises the important role of Rathmines as a service centre not only for residents but also for the local workforce. Examples of existing employment generators in Rathmines include;

- Public institutions (teachers and staff in education professions including DIT, VEC, Church of Ireland training college, Department of Defence personnel connected with Cathal Brugha Barracks etc)
- Semi state companies (the CSO offices on Williams Parks, An Post on Rathmines Road Upper)
- Enterprise companies (studio and workshop facilities on side streets)
- Professional services (medical, architectural, financial, design, legal services, accountancy etc)
- Retail sectors (established and proposed national/international multiples, local hardware stores, newsagents, bookshops, butchers, grocers, bakers etc).
- Hospitality sectors (restaurants, hotels, public houses, cafes etc).

An important all day local economy is created to service the needs of the local work force. Connections between these activities, for example trips to the local banks, visits to cafes and restaurants at lunch time etc should be supported to strengthen the dynamics of the local based economy.

The following objectives for retail / commercial and economic development are promoted:

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to improve the quality of the town centre in Rathmines to encourage new investment in retail, commercial and enterprise activities. A mixed use strategy for large redevelopment sites creating a variety of local employment opportunities will be encouraged.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to retain existing employment generators in Rathmines and enhance the connections between the local workforce and town centre service facilities.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage the development of flagship and catalyst type development which signals confidence in the location and creates positive perceptions of the vibrancy within Rathmines.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage innovation in the design and mix of uses including potential to integrate with cultural, artistic, community and educational opportunities. Local centres of creativity and excellence in innovation are encouraged to promote investment in the local economy.

It is an object to promote proactive and engaged management of the public domain to fully realise the potential of the area and promote its continued improvement.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage the culture of micro enterprise activities already established in Rathmines including workshops, studios, home based enterprise and artistic activities

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the special heritage value of Rathmines and support Arts and Cultural proposals to encourage visitors and tourists to the town centre.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage a strong representative voice for the business community in Rathmines and in particular support a Chamber of Commerce or similar movement in developing Rathmines.

7.3 Vision for Movement

The movement vision for Rathmires under this plan seeks primarily to balance the strategic importance of the Rathmines Road Lower corridor as a regional through route with a town centre streetscape. The through movement of vehicles should be balanced with the need to create people friendly streets.

Traffic calming measures, precinct improvement schemes, improved cycling facilities and wider pavements will promote an improvement in the balance between passing traffic and the movement of local residents.

East to west movements between Harold's Cross and Rathgar through Rathmines are important for connecting the wider residential hinterland with the town centre. Analysis for this plan has shown the benefits of the central location of Rathmines for people to access services. Incentives to encourage more sustainable travel patterns such as walking, cycling and public transport will help to lessen the reliance on private car journeys for local access. There are several destination points within the town centre which are achieved in one combined journey. This is an asset of Rathmines with respect to local impressions of the town centre.

Greater use of of side street connections, improvements in the quality of mews lanes , opening of new pedestrian connections and traffic calming measures will al promote sustainable travel modes. Perceptions of safety for people travelling along these routes will encourage permeability via sustainable travel modes.

Existing "blockages" to permeable movement have been identified under the plan preparation. New developments should open new connections and should not block the potential for through routes. The longer term potential of institutional lands such as Cathal Brugha Barracks for movement and connections are recognised in particular.

Surveys conducted for this plan have shown that to enhance Rathmines as a retail destination, improvements in town centre car parking is a consideration. The convenience of car parking for activities like a weekly shopping trip is important to attract custom from the wider area and promote the facilities of the town centre to new investors.

Such parking by itself is not likely to contribute to congestion. The car parking facilities in the Swan Shopping Centre are noted as not fully used which is an example of this. Indeed the retail survey results have shown that a significant advantage for local residents is the accessibility of residential areas to the town centre and the option for frequent trips by walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Data collected under the 2006 census and analysed under the plan highlights low levels of car ownership within Rathmines. Nearly 3 / 4's of people within Rathmines commute daily by walking, cycling and using public transport. At a city wide level, Rathmines is recorded as an area with one of the highest usage of bicycles as a means of travel to work.

The objectives of this plan are therefore to promote sustainable walking, cycling and public transportation access to the town centre. The amenity of town centre car parking should compliment the facilities of the town centre as a viable commercial centre and are considered secondary to the primary access and movement choice of walking, cycling and public transport. Car parking facilities in the centre are recognised as having potential for multiple uses through different parts of the day. A thriving town centre with different activities throughout the day and night should regulate the use and movement flows from town centre car parking.

Government incentives to discourage car use within the city overall will significantly benefit the environment of Rathmines.

The following objectives for movement within Rathmines are promoted:

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to prioritise sustainable movement patterns in Rathmines including walking, cycling and use of public transport. Opportunities to improve the public realm and achieve new permeable connections will help to achieve this objective.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote greater use of side street and laneway connections for local access. Improvements including surface conditions, the marking of cycle lanes and lighting conditions along these routes will be assessed.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to examine the potential for public realm improvements along the main urban thoroughfares of Rathmines to include traffic calming, enhanced pedestrian and cyclist priority measures and crossing facilities.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to require all new development proposals to include secure cycle parking facilities.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to liaise with public transport providers to enhance services and connections to public transport services, in particular bus and LUAS services in the local area.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the use of town centre parking facilities for a diverse range of uses at different times of the day and night.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to secure permeable connections through large institutional landbanks in the event of any redevelopment proposals.





7.4 Vision for Community and Recreational Amenity

This plan seeks to achieve significant benefits for the local community in the quality of community facilities available within the town centre and accessibility to recreational facilities.

Community organisations provide a valuable service without significant facilities. The issue of adequate accommodation and a centralised location for a wide variety of community uses is a recurring theme raised during consultations.

This plan encourages the provision of new community facilities as part of a vibrant mix of uses within the town centre. The viability of creating such new spaces is enhanced if the creative use of buildings and synergies with other activities are explored.

There are a number of potential opportunities for enhanced community facilities within the town centre. Some of the key areas of opportunity include:

- The potential for Primary Health Care and Step Down Health Care facilities.
- The potential for improved educational facilities for organisations such as the VEC.
- The potential for enhanced community focus around new facilities such as the swimming pool and recreational centre in Rathmines Square.
- The potential for community interaction with new civic spaces in the town centre.
- The potential for community / parish centre off Richmond Hill.

Key opportunity sites within the town centre should include provision for community uses within a range of mixed use possibilities. Significant opportunities for positioning such facilities include the Gulistan Depot lands and former Fire Station site adjoining. Community uses would bring the community into the centre of redeveloped sites for interaction and should be viewed as an added value to a development proposal.

The role of institutions within the town study area is recognised as a potential source of community gain. Community use of facilities on these sites are accommodated by agreement with the institutions. Concert halls, sports halls, meeting rooms, playing fields etc are currently used anc this role is valued. Where possible, a strengthening of these interactions should be explored.

Active sports facilities for the youth in Rathmines are particularly under provided for. It is important to secure new sports pitches, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, open space and parks for use and enjoyment by the youth in Rathmines.

Facilities for the elderly are important. Interactions with health care facilities, education facilities and arts and culture have huge potential to strengthen the sense of neighbourhood within the town centre and create activity around new public spaces. The convenience of a central location and access by public transport is recognised.

Opportunities for improved residential accommodation and town centre located elderly housing units is supported. Consultations have highlighted the important role of Rathmines as a service centre for a wide catchment of elderly residents. High quality housing schemes in a secure environment would provide opportunities to improve the living conditions of many elderly residents within the community.

Opportunities for smaller scaled pocket parks and civic plazas should be explored within the town centre. A high quality design code for such spaces is supported including the benefits of active frontages, passive supervision, direct routes and direct sight lines into the space.

The following objectives for community and recreation facilities are promoted:

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to incorporate improved community facilities within the town centre of Rathmines. Opportunities to secure enhanced facilities should be explored within significant mixed use developments and regeneration proposals.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage the provision of community facilities within significant new developments as a beneficial element to engage with the existing community.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage continued accessibility by arrangement to institutional facilities by the wider community. Continued and enhanced access to facilities including playing pitches, sports halls, concert halls , meeting rooms etc are promoted and should be explored as potential community gain as part of any development proposals on institutional lands.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to engage in discussions with the Department of Defence to evaluate the feasibility of transferring playing fields at the north of Leinster Road to the ownership of Dublin City Council as a Public Sports Amenity.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to seek provision of enhanced recreational facilities for the youth of Rathmines. Development proposals on institutional lands will be required to audit existing on site facilities for recreational use for the wider community by arrangement and, in accordance with established zoning objectives, make provision for public open space.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the planting of trees and the development of pocket parks and civic spaces within Rathmines. The contribution of smaller areas of open space have significant value in a town centre setting and offer an amenity value and focal point for the community.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote services for the elderly within the centre of Rathmines at locations accessible to public transport.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to continue its work with different agencies in improving the condition of elderly housing in Rathmines. Opportunities to provide high quality elderly housing units within the town centre should be explored.

It is the objective of Dublin City Council to consult with the Leinster Cricket Club to explore the feasability of improving the existing boundary wall along Mount Pleasant Avenue Upper.





7.5 Vision for Arts and Culture

This plan recognises the contribution of Arts and Culture in diversifying the character and quality of the town centre. Opportunities for cultural interaction with new redevelopment proposals and new public spaces can add a creative and unique value to the urban area and promote engagement of the community and visitors with Rathmines.

As highlighted under other themes, arts and cultural uses should be promoted as part of an overall mixed use objective for redevelopment sites within the town centre.

Flexibility in the potential use of new public space or multi purpose buildings could benefit a wide range of arts and cultural opportunities. Public spaces in particular should have flexibility in the potential uses to encourage activity at different times of the day and night (market uses, performance space, public art, casual seating and enjoyment etc). Similarly, buildings that address key streets and public spaces should avoid dead frontages and should have potential for a variety of mixed uses at different times of the day and night for activity within the town centre.

The complimentary role of arts and culture to interact with other uses such as education, enterprise, commercial and community uses is recognised. The benefits of such uses to attract interest in a scheme, inject life into a new public space and to encourage visitors and increased movement to and from new buildings and public spaces should be valued and promoted.

Multi-use cultural infrastructure is needed to promote cultural inclusion of all residents, including young, elderly, transitional and ethnic communities. The value of this provision to strengthen interaction and community values across the wider area is beneficial and should be encouraged

The following arts and culture needs in particular are identified for the local area:

- Studio/workspaces for artists and crafts people
- Multiuse rehearsal type spaces for bands and theatre
- Outdoor event spaces
- Facilities for film screening

A significant opportunity exists under this plan to promote the Town Hall as a significant cultural focal point. This plan highlights the concepts for a civic heart to the town centre of Rathmines with a flow of movement around the town hall including potential regeneration of the Gulistan site and development around Rathmines Square. Working with the established Education uses, it maybe possible to explore a restoration of the Concert Hall as a multi purpose cultural facility.

New civic open space, pedestrian routes and a wide range of mixed use activities around the Town Hall will reinforce the landmark qualities of this public building.

The following objectives for arts and Culture are promoted:

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the development of the Arts within Rathmines. The contribution of arts and cultural uses should be recognised as beneficial for diversity in the town centre. Multi use floor space and connections with other activities will enhance the viability of including Arts and Cultural infrastructure with development proposals.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote active and varied use of key open spaces. Possible opportunities could include market activity, performance and events etc.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure which is inclusive of all sections of the local community including engagement with young people, the elderly, family activities, the transient community and ethnic groups.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage connections between arts and culture and enterprise including the concept of home based economic activity for artistic uses, the development of studio spaces and the development of workshop spaces for arts and crafts.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to reinforce the important civic functions of the town centre and highlight the valuable role and future potential of key buildings including the Library, DIT Music School Building and the Town Hall.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote linkages between the Arts and Education with particular emphasis on the Town Hall and its uses.

It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the development of studio workshop space for arts and crafts, multi-use rehearsal space for bands and theatre, outdoor event spaces and facilities for film screening within Rathmines.



7.6 Vision for Architecture and Heritage

The town centre of Rathmines adjoins residential neighbourhoods of unique character and distinction. The extent of protected structure designations and Z2 residential conservation areas highlights the architectural significance of buildings and streetscapes within the study area.

There are opportunities to promote a high standard and quality of design to new regeneration proposals and recognise the role of quality design in creating distinctive, inviting and rewarding places to visit. Integration of the new and old within the town centre will retain the heritage value of the past but should signal confidence in the future for Rathmines.

The significance of architectural heritage in Rathmines and association with famous past residents opens possibilities for a heritage trail and interaction between heritage themes and civic/cultural venues. Information displays promoting the history of the area could provide a creative use for a key public space. Such initiatives will attract visitors and tourists to the local area which has added benefit for the local economy.

Institutional lands, in particular Cathal Brugha Barracks, have an important historical and architectural legacy. Unique buildings and their settings including the parade ground, old stable houses, the former residence of Michael Collins, St Patrick's Garrison Church etc. Although hidden to an extent within the functioning barracks, heritage and cultural events such as Rathmines Festival create awareness and facilitate access to explore these historical buildings. Such initiatives should be encouraged further with a longer term potential to protect and harness the heritage value of the barracks buildings.

Previous conservation initiatives such as the Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study 2005 show the value in preparing design and conservation guidance for owners of historic properties. Positive interventions to reinstate front garden boundary features, accommodate appropriate parking and refuse storage, provide higher quality shop front design etc are still relevant for many streets in Rathmines. Guidance notes for professionals, site owners and the local authority in assessing proposals are beneficial. The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas in particular could provide an effective mechanism to promote good conservation principles and provide strengthened intervention tools to encourage improvement works.

Architectural objectives for specific areas within Rathmines include the following:

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to build upon past conservation guidance documents and carry out further comprehensive surveys and inventories of the existing historic environment illustrating its layout, historic buildings, urban quality and any other special characteristics. Following this study, the Council will seek to establish Architectural Conservation Areas to protect the special character of 19th century urban development and unique architectural set pieces.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to seek the reinstatement of front garden features, encourage appropriate car parking and refuse storage design and promote the enhancement of the public realm along residential streets to achieve a renewal in the quality and integrity of streets within the study area.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage the restoration of subdivided properties, in particular the historic nineteenth century buildings in Rathmines, into high quality family orientated homes. Where applications are lodged for works to houses in multiple occupancy, Dublin City Council will seek significant improvements to the quality of residential standards on site and encourage the provision of family homes in accordance with quality standards of the 2005-2011 Dublin City Development Plan. To encourage restoration of protected structures in a particular context, some mix of use between basement and the upper floors (owner occupier associated office use for example) may be considered in the appropriate site location context with due regard for Policy H6 of the 2005-2011 Dublin City Development Plan. This policy states that some restrictions may be relaxed if the protected structure is being restored to the highest standard, the special interest, character and setting of the building is protected and the use and development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage harmonious design solutions for smaller infill sites that are complementary to the context of neighbouring buildings and enhance the appearance of the area.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to protect the setting, skyline contribution and prospects of existing landmark buildings and in particular those of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge and the former Town Hall/ Clock Tower. The opportunity to frame views of these and other landmark buildings in proposals for development will be encouraged.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote the Town Hall as a significant focal point in Rathmines. Redevelopment opportunities on adjoining sites, including the Gulistan depot and Swan Shopping Centre, shall respect this setting, the primacy of the clock tower as a vertical landmark and shall explore the potential for new vistas to add special character to new pedestrian routes and civic spaces.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote excellence and innovation in contemporary architecture within Rathmines to contribute to and compliment the past architectural legacy. The council will promote high quality architecture in a modern idiom to complement existing historic buildings. Appropriate height strategies that protect the character and visual balance of existing streets will be sought.**

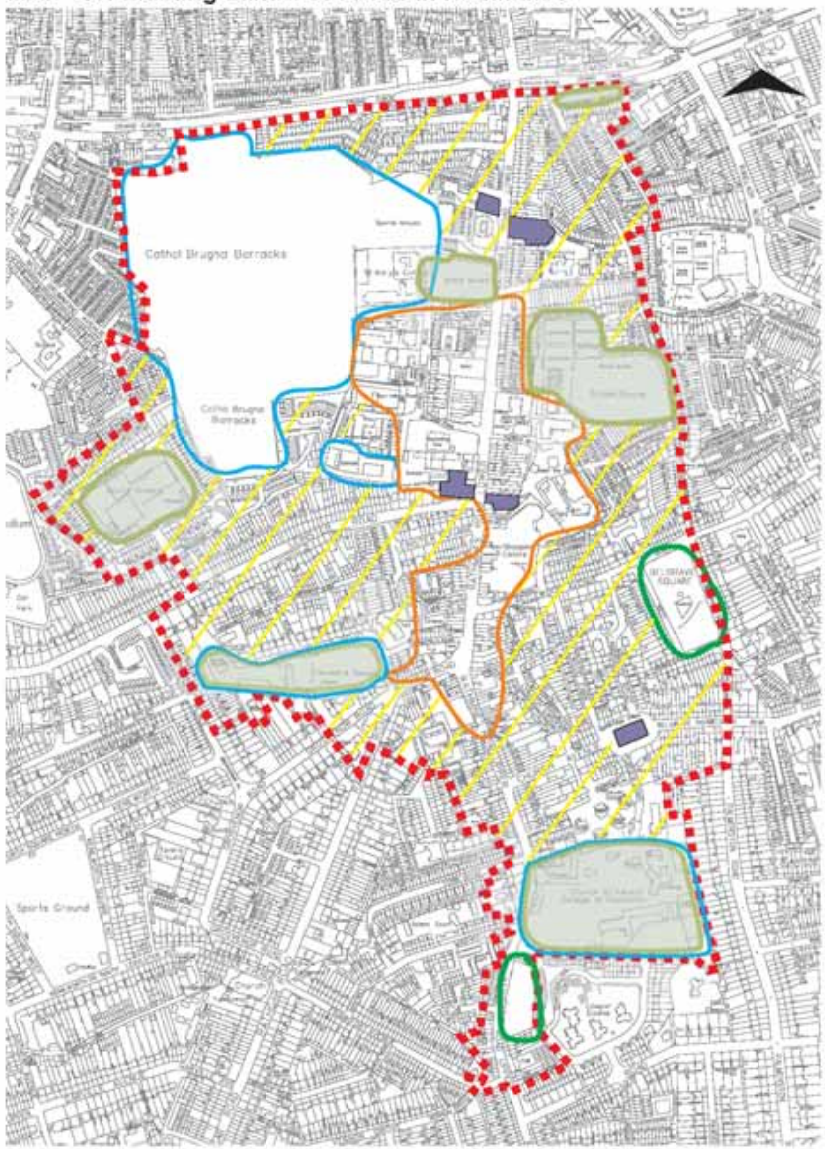
- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to promote awareness of local heritage by exploring the potential for heritage trails throughout the study area, to encourage display and information on the history of the local area and use heritage positively to interact with cultural, artistic and business initiatives. The value of heritage to promote tourism and benefit the local economy is recognised.**

- **It is an objective of Dublin City Council to encourage the sustainable and creative reuse of older buildings within Rathmines. Proposals that include positive interventions and improvements to Z4 zoned commercial terraces including removal of inappropriate commercial signage, removal of front of premises commercial extensions, boundary restorations, building restoration, improvement of backland conditions and pedestrian connections are encouraged.**

8.0 OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The following MAPS 8.1 - 8.6 set out the overall Development Strategy for Rathmines

MAP 8.1 Existing Land Use Areas in Rathmines



Legend

Institutional Lands

Key existing landmark buildings

Commercial Centre

Significant Open Spaces :

Publicly Owned Open Space Areas

Privately Owned Open Space Areas

Residential areas

Existing Land Use Areas- Text for MAP 8.1

When the key land uses are grouped and mapped in a diagram form, a clear understanding of the character areas within Rathmines emerges.

Commercial Centre

In the centre of the study area, commercial lands are located. This central location reinforces the importance of the commercial area as a town centre at the very heart of the plan area. The central location reinforces the importance of the town centre as a location for mix of services and variety of civic, community and cultural uses. Accessibility and linkages to this area are important with key north to south routes (Rathmines Road Lower / Upper) and east to west routes (Leinster Road and Castlewood Avenue) connecting this central area with the adjoining neighbourhood.

Residential Areas

The residential neighbourhoods in Rathmines are within walking distance of the commercial centre and a strong residential base. These streets have a distinguished architectural character. This proximity contributes to the sense of neighbourhood and is a valuable asset for the vitality and strength of the town centre. Consultations have highlighted the affinity local residents have to Rathmines but it is important that the quality and range of services available address the needs of those who interact daily with the town centre.

Institutional Lands

Large institutional lands are located like bookends to the study area with Cathal Brugha Barracks located to the north west and the Church of Ireland College of Education positioned to the south east. The importance of existing schools within the centre of Rathmines including St Louis Senior, Junior and Infant Schools and St Mary's School are recognised. The institutions contribute to the character and activities within Rathmines. The national importance of the locations for training for both the Defence Forces (in the case of the barracks) and for education (in the case of the Col College) have been highlighted. The lands are outside the immediate town centre zone but they do offer longer term potential for interactions which will be highlighted under this plan

Open Space Areas

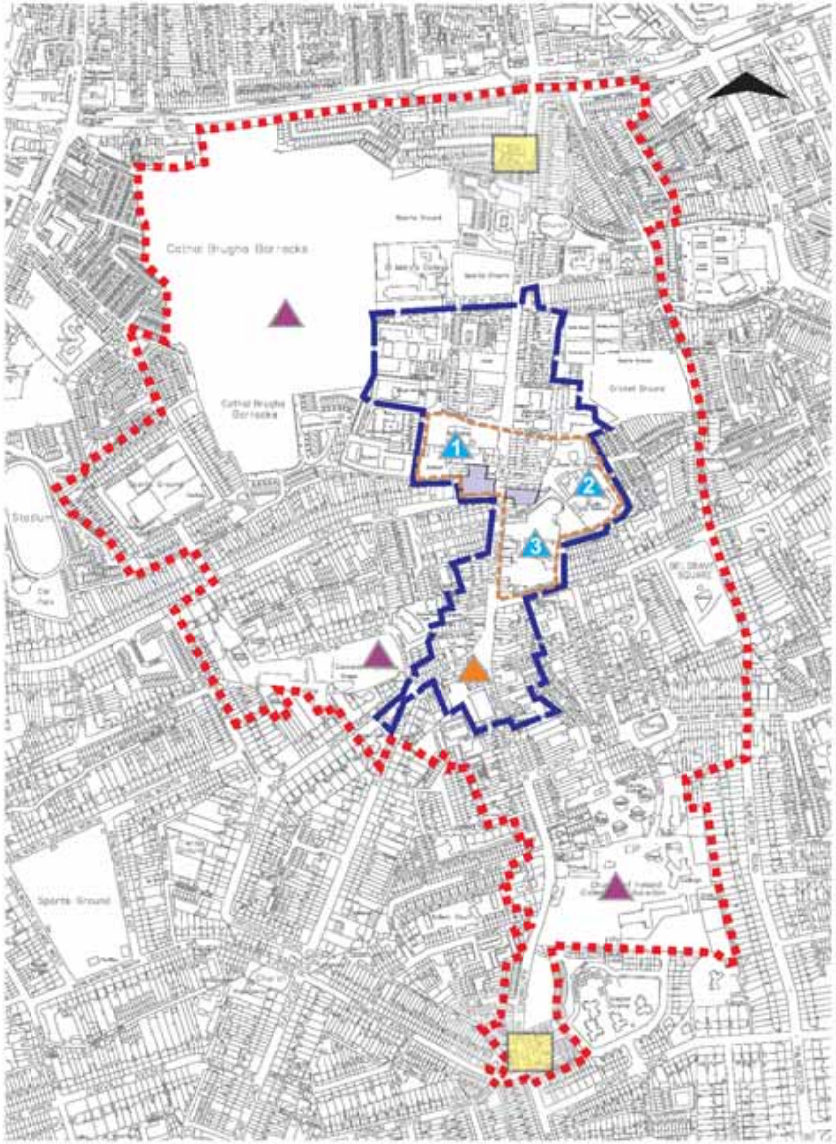
Key open space include Grosvenor Square to the west, Mountpleasant Square and the Leinster Cricket grounds to the north east, St Mary's pitch to the north of the town centre, Belgrave Square to the east and Tranquilla Park to the south. However, the dominant character of these open space areas is their private ownership. True public accessible open space and recreation areas are limited to Belgrave Square to the east and Tranquilla to the very south. The central, north and west areas do not have public parks or recreation areas within close distance of the residential community.

Key Landmark Buildings

A distinguishing feature of the overall area is the regular instance of a key landmark building. Very often an open view towards a landmark instantly connects the street or place to Rathmines. These landmarks are important for legibility and recognition and include the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, the Town Hall and Church of the Holy Trinity on Church Avenue are some examples.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAP 8.2 Development Strategy



Legend

- Prime commercial zone
- Central Civic Zone
- Institutional lands Master Plan required including Public Open Space and Community uses in event of redevelopment
- 1 Swimming pool and DIT Civic
- 2 Gulistan Depot Civic opportunity site
- 3 Swan centre Civic opportunity site
- Town Centre Landmark buildings. Town hall, Library, DIT Music School
- Opportunity for Commercial Development
- Neighbourhood commercial areas

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development Strategy- Text for MAP 8.2

The overall Development Strategy proposed for Rathmines under this plan is comprised of the following elements;

- Prime Commercial Zone
- Central Civic Zone
- Key Opportunity Sites within the Central Civic Zone
- South Commercial/ Civic Zone
- Key Town Centre Landmarks
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Integration with Institutional Lands

The Prime Commercial Zone

The existing Z4 mixed use commercial zoning is retained and promoted for strengthening as the Prime Commercial Zone. The Primary Commercial Zone is a focus area for the plan. Within this area it will be a policy of the Council to:

- Encourage a diverse mix of town centre services. Improving the quantity and quality of the retail offer in particular is a primary objective.
- Encourage a physical enhancement of the condition and character of buildings, shop fronts and boundary treatments.
- Continue the upgrading of the public realm and pedestrian environment.
- Encourage the central positioning of other important services within the town centre including a layering of community, cultural and recreational uses in the centre of Rathmines.

Central Civic Zone

Within the centre of the plan area lies the Prime Commercial Zone and within the centre of this area again lies a distinguishable civic heart to Rathmines. This area is defined by lands to the east and west of Rathmines Road Lower and includes, to the east, commercial terraces including the old Fire Station Site, the Gulistan Depot and the Swan Shopping Centre and to the west side the new Rathmines Square, the private development site of Herman White and the DIT School of Music (lands to the rear of).

Section 9.0 of this plan will outline in more detail the masterplan concepts for this area. The principal objectives for the Council will be to deliver the following:

- New pedestrian east to west movement across Rathmines Road Lower accessing a diverse range of new retail, commercial, community, cultural, recreational and residential uses.
- A looped sequence of movement is envisaged with interactions between new uses and new civic spaces on both sides of the street. For example interactions between the new public plaza at Rathmines Square, a pedestrian connection through the old Fire Station Site and a new dynamic urban space centred within a redeveloped Gulistan Depot site could be achieved.
- The focal points within this civic heart of the study area are the existing landmark buildings of Rathmines Library and the Town Hall. These buildings should have enhanced civic settings and provide opportunities for increased community and cultural activities. These buildings are noted within the overall development strategy to highlight their focal point status.

South Commercial/Civic Zone

Within the Prime Commercial Zone, just south of the civic centre but occupying a key location at the junction Rathmines Road Upper and Rathgar Road is the site occupied by Tesco and the adjoining lands including the Garda Station to the west and Rathmines Avenue to the south. The Post Office, a Protected Structure, is located on the east side of the street has a significant presence.

An improved quality in the character of uses, condition of buildings and quality of the public realm would focus attention on this important nodal point. The location should entice movement to and from the Central Civic Zone. Movement further south towards Tranquilla Park would also be encouraged. East to west connections linking with Rathgar Road and Church Avenue would improve accessibility and connections with adjoining residential neighbourhoods.

Section 9.0 of this plan will outline in more detail the masterplan concepts for this area. The principal objectives for the Council will be to deliver the following:

- Recognise the potential of this location for physical improvements including a higher quality commercial profile. The site of Tesco in particular is important for its frontage to Rathmines Road Upper and its location on a visual axis looking south from Rathmines Road Lower. A more successful architectural presence for a signature building on this site should be explored.
- The public realm and quality of the pedestrian environment adjoining this junction should be upgraded. The area should have a strengthened civic focus highlighting the convergence of the important movement routes and highlighting the important public buildings located in this area including the Post Office.

Neighbourhood Centres

Smaller scaled retail locations outside the prime commercial area have an important function in supplying a convenient service within walking distance of their residential communities. There are two neighbourhood commercial zones within the study area including a location to the north of the prime commercial zone (at the junction with Grove Park and Rathmines Road Lower) and south of the commercial zone (junction with Frankfort Avenue and the junction of Rathmines Road Upper).

- It will be the policy of the Council to protect and retain these local centres considering their respective locations to the north and south of the major commercial zone.

Institutional Lands

The institutional lands within the study area each have important institutional uses that contribute to the character of Rathmines. It is important that the strategies promoted for this plan recognise the sensitivities of existing uses, promote a realistic policy approach and equally identify where the future potential exists for these lands to interact with the town centre and communities adjoining.

For two of the land areas (Cathal Brugha Barracks and the Church of Ireland College of Education), the scale of the sites and possession of undeveloped areas provides a potential resource for community and recreation uses. Consultations have highlighted existing community interactions and the opportunity for a greater role by arrangement with both institutions for recreation and community activities. Sports facilities within Cathal Brugha barracks for example are used by local schools by arrangement.

Zoning of Institutional Lands

The Z15 zoning objectives for these sites will remain. This zoning requires a masterplan approach to the sites if development is sought including provision for 25% of the site for public open space and/or community facilities.

Cathal Brugha Barracks

For Cathal Brugha Barracks, the opportunities to connect the residential streets adjoining the west boundary of the barracks with Rathmines Road Lower would achieve a considerable improvement in access and movement to the centre of Rathmines. However, for the purposes of this plan, the security sensitivities of this nationally important barracks are recognised. Consultations with the Department of Defence have highlighted the need to regulate access and movement through a functioning barracks.

- This plan encourages permeability through the barracks lands as a longer term objective to include both east to west movement and north to south movement.

St Louis Secondary School, Charleville Road

The site of St Louis Secondary School is immediately accessible to the town centre in Rathmines via Wynnfield Road. The site of the school, zoned Z15 for institutional uses, is an important town centre community facility. Existing school facilities such as the concert hall and new sports facilities (PE Hall and all weather pitch) have a value to the wider community in such a central location.

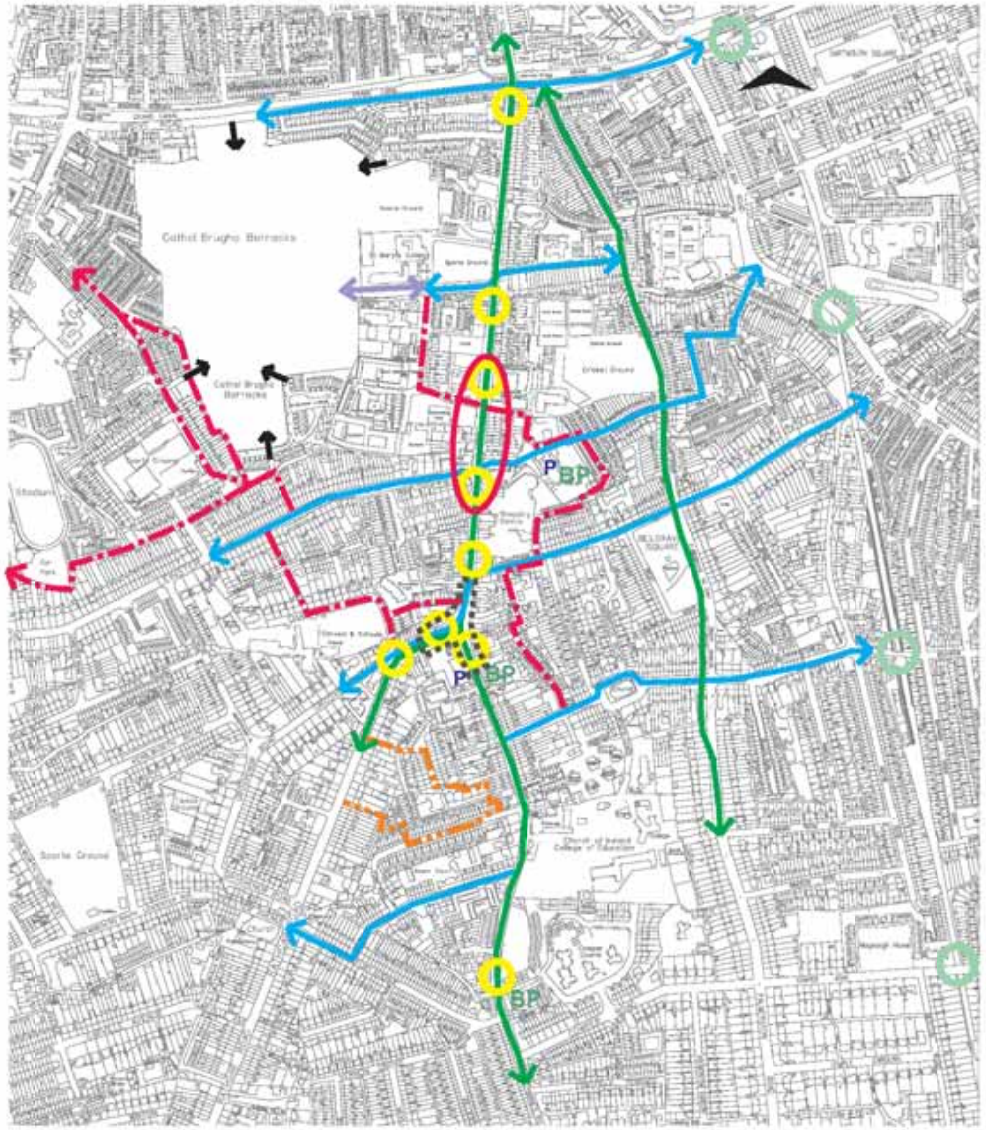
Part of the school grounds adjoining Charleville Road have been identified as an opportunity site under the Brief for the Local Action Plan and during consultations.

- The Z15 site zoning objective will be retained and will apply to any redevelopment of part of the school grounds.
- The plan provides an additional opportunity to focus on the potential contributions of the site to the town centre and wider community as part of the overall vision for Rathmines. Opportunities for public open space and community uses at an accessible location as part of a development should be explored.

Section 9.0 of this plan will outline in more detail site specific guidance for the St Louis site.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAP 8.3 Movement Strategy



Legend

EXISTING

Main North-South Routes

LUAS Stations

Main east-west routes

MOVEMENT STRATEGY

It is proposed to study pedestrian movements in the area of the plan and to improve the provision of pedestrian crossings accordingly to meet current needs

Secondary laneway access to be improved

Town centre pedestrian environment for enhancement

Explore potential for future amenity facilities as part of pedestrian access as part of improved boundary treatment

Design of important landmark junction to be improved

Important permeable pedestrian & cycling routes to be upgraded

P Town centre car parking/ basement potential

Explore potential for future permeable access

BP Town centre bicycle parking facilities to be improved



Movement Strategy- Text for MAP 8.3

The movement strategy for Rathmines is comprised of the following key elements:

North to South Movement

The importance of Rathmines Road Lower as a corridor route to and from the city centre generates a high volume of through traffic in the centre of Rathmines. This road is also the main street of Rathmines with commercial frontages addressing both sides of the street.

- The Plan seeks to enhance the quality of streets, ensuring that the demands of vehicles for movement, access, deliveries and emergencies do not compromise the creation of a town centre which encourages people to walk, cycle and use public transport.
- The Plan provides for a number of measures to highlight the transition through the town centre including enhanced pedestrian crossings, new surface treatments and traffic calming measures.

East to West Movement

Local roads which link Rathmines to the east and west, including Castlewood Avenue, Kenilworth Road, Grosvenor Road and Leinster Road are important for connecting the residential neighbourhoods with the services of the town centre.

- The opportunities for sustainable modes of travel including public bus, walking and cycling to connect with the adjoining neighbourhoods and Luas facilities in Rathgar will be encouraged.

Public Transport Access

- The Plan recognises the opportunities that exist for interaction between different modes of transport and in particular the role of using bus services, walking and cycling to link with the city centre and connect with other public transport corridors.

Pedestrian and Cycle Network

The principal objectives for the Council will be to deliver the following:

- Promote greater use of cycling throughout the neighbourhood and in particular examine linkages to public transport facilities such as the Luas.
- Encourage the use of side lanes for access and movement through the study area. For example the side lanes that adjoin the boundary with Cathal Brugha Barracks are used by local residents as short cut routes to schools and town centre facilities. A physical upgrading of these side lanes could encourage more and pedestrian movement between the town centre and residential neighbourhoods. The potential to use these areas for cycling should be explored.
- Promote a physical improvement in the pedestrian realm in the centre of Rathmines.
- Where possible, opportunities to widen pedestrian footpaths and create new areas of civic space should be explored. Enhanced circulation space for pedestrians would improve the environmental quality of the town centre and create more attractive streetscapes for walking. The public realm should also integrate high quality bicycle parking facilities to encourage and facilitate cyclists accessing town centre facilities.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment through measures such as expansion of pedestrian crossing opportunities and traffic calming measures to help control speeds and provide priority to pedestrian and cyclist movements. There should be co-ordination of street furniture into clusters to avoid cluttering of footpaths.

Car Parking

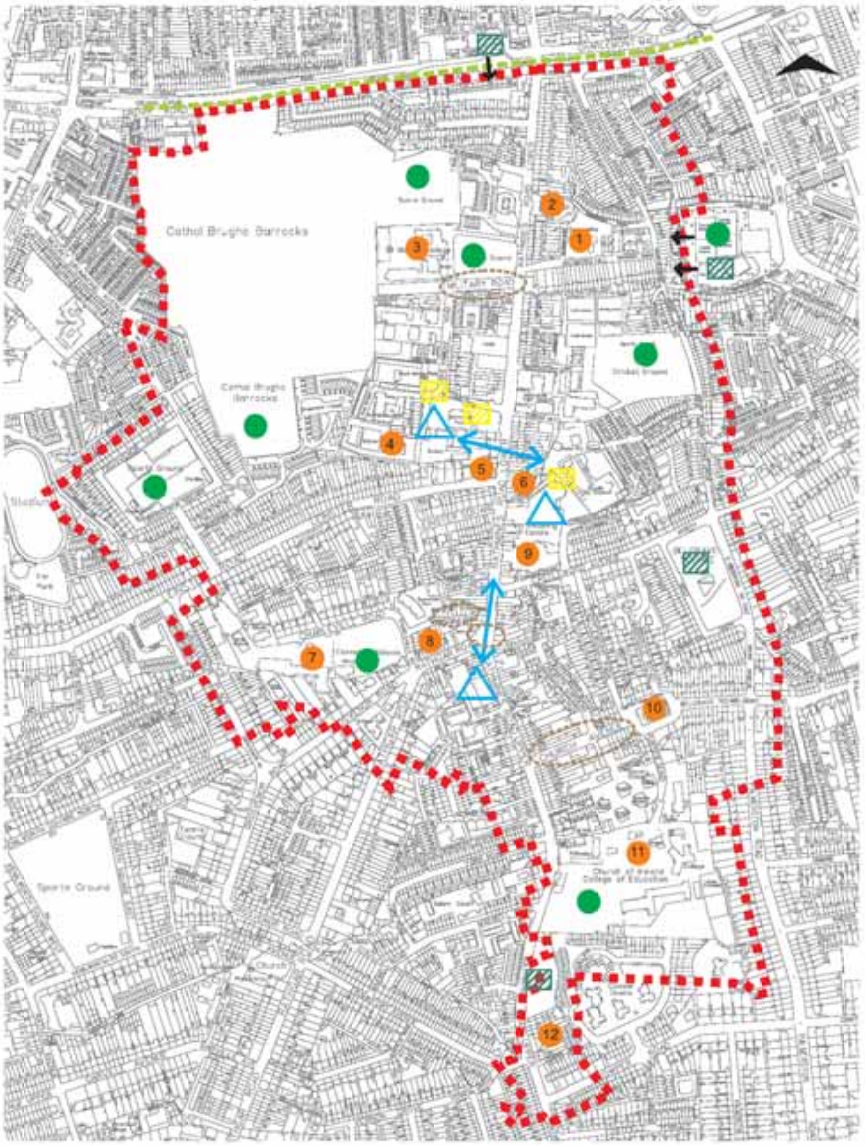
- The plan promotes the provision of adequate car parking to service the retail and mixed use functions of the town centre. The location of car parking must relate to the locations of commercial and mixed use facilities to convenience local residents doing a weekly shop etc. It is important to minimise wherever possible the need to make extraneous car trips and in this regard improving the quality of the town centre for public transport, pedestrian and cycling movements will lessen the reliance of private car access for frequent visits.

Permeable Routes through Institutional Lands

- It is an objective of this plan to promote longer term permeable connections through large institutional land banks and in particular Cathal Brugha Barracks. The sensitivities and requirements of the existing uses are recognised and no uncontrolled movement strategy through a functioning barracks can be promoted.
- In any longer term redevelopment scenario the opportunity to create new north to south and east to west streets for the movement of traffic, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists should be encouraged.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAP 8.4 Community Facilities and Open Space Strategy



Legend

- Explore potential for wider pubic use of private sports/amenity/opm space including indoor & outdoor space.
- Location of Important community facilities
- Existing public parks & open spaces
- Proposed streetscape enhancement areas
- Natural amenities of canal corridor are recognised as important asset for rathmines
- Parks & recreation areas outside the plan boundary but close to rathmines for connection
- New civic town centre open space sites
- Opportunities for new mixed use development inclusive of community, culture, residential, recreation and commercial uses
- Synergies & movement between key activity sites

Location of important community facilities

1. St. Mary's Community Centre, Richmond Hill
2. Church of Our Lady of Refuge, Rathmines Road Lower
3. St. Marys College Rathmines
4. St. Louis Infant and Primary Schools, Williams Park, Rathmines
5. Rathmines Library, Lower Rathmines Road
6. Rathmines College of Further Education, Town Hall, Rathmines
7. St. Louis Secondary School, Charleville Road, Rathmines
8. Rathmines Pembroke Community Partnership, Wynnefield Road, Rathmines
9. Swan Shopping Centre, Rathmines Road Lower
10. Church of the Holy Trinity, Church Avenue
11. Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines Road Upper
12. Rathmines Gospel Hall, Rathmines Road Upper



Community Facilities and Open Space Strategy- Text for MAP 8.4

The community facilities and open space strategy of the plan seeks to strengthen the facilities available to local residents. Existing locations have been identified but the deficit of community meeting space and sporting facilities for wider public use are a primary target for this plan to address.

Existing locations for community activities are mapped and identified under this plan. There is an overlap in many instances between the location of space for community meetings and either an established institution (a school or church building) or a commercial location (use of the Swan Shopping Centre). Flexibility in the use of such locations is positive and the continued multiple usage of these locations to accommodate community groups should be encouraged.

A central theme to this plan is the provision of a broad range of diverse uses within the town centre and in particular the provision of community uses in the heart of Rathmines. Facilities are needed to upgrade the services available to the existing community and also provide an adequate level of services for all sections of the future population.

The overall Development Strategy has made reference to new public spaces and pedestrian connections moving between key sites and buildings such as the Town Hall, the Gulistan Depot, Swan Shopping Centre, Rathmines Square etc. Providing community infrastructure within these locations will encourage greater permeable movement across the town centre and encourage interactions between different uses. It will build upon the advantages of the central location which already includes key public buildings such as the Town Hall and Library. Local residents should benefit from shared trips to a wide range of town centre services. The principal of flexible uses and shared usage of buildings and spaces will encourage longer hours of vitality and community interaction with their town centre.

Opportunities for increased community facilities in the central civic area include:

- Use of the DIT protected buildings if vacated in the medium to longer term and opportunities for these uses to interact with recreation uses and civic space at Rathmines Square
- A redevelopment of the Gulistan Depot site should include community uses as part of a dynamic mix. Community uses, including an integrated community facility which could house the services of organisations such as the Rathmines and Pembroke Community Partnership, could interact with health, educational, retail and cultural spaces. Connections between the use of new buildings and public space at such a central location would reinforce a sense of civic use within the town centre. The rehabilitation of the old Fire Station site and its use for community facilities should also be explored.
- A redevelopment scenario for the Swan Shopping Centre should acknowledge the prime location of this site and opportunity to create. New town centre streets in preference to a shopping mall development. Community uses would add to the dynamic mix and enliven streets and public spaces as part of an overall redevelopment strategy.

The Role of Institutional Lands

The role of institutional lands has been acknowledged under previous sections. This plan encourages greater public use of existing land and facilities within the institutions for community and recreational purposes. Any redevelopment or part redevelopment scenario must make provision for community uses and public parkland under the guidance of a site masterplan in accordance with the Z15 zoning.

New Public Open Space Opportunities

New public open space opportunities include new areas in the town centre such as Rathmines Square which includes a plaza area in character addressing Rathmines Road Lower and a park addressing Williams Park. Opportunities for further dynamic and innovative public spaces exist within a redevelopment of the Gulistan depot.

Part of the site of St Louis Secondary School is identified as an opportunity site. A park accessible from Wynnfield Road would provide a valuable area of open space and recreation immediately adjacent to the busy commercial town centre. Such a location could provide opportunities for public seating, children's play and events. Wider public use of school facilities including a PE hall and all weather pitch would also add benefit to the recreational facilities in the town centre.

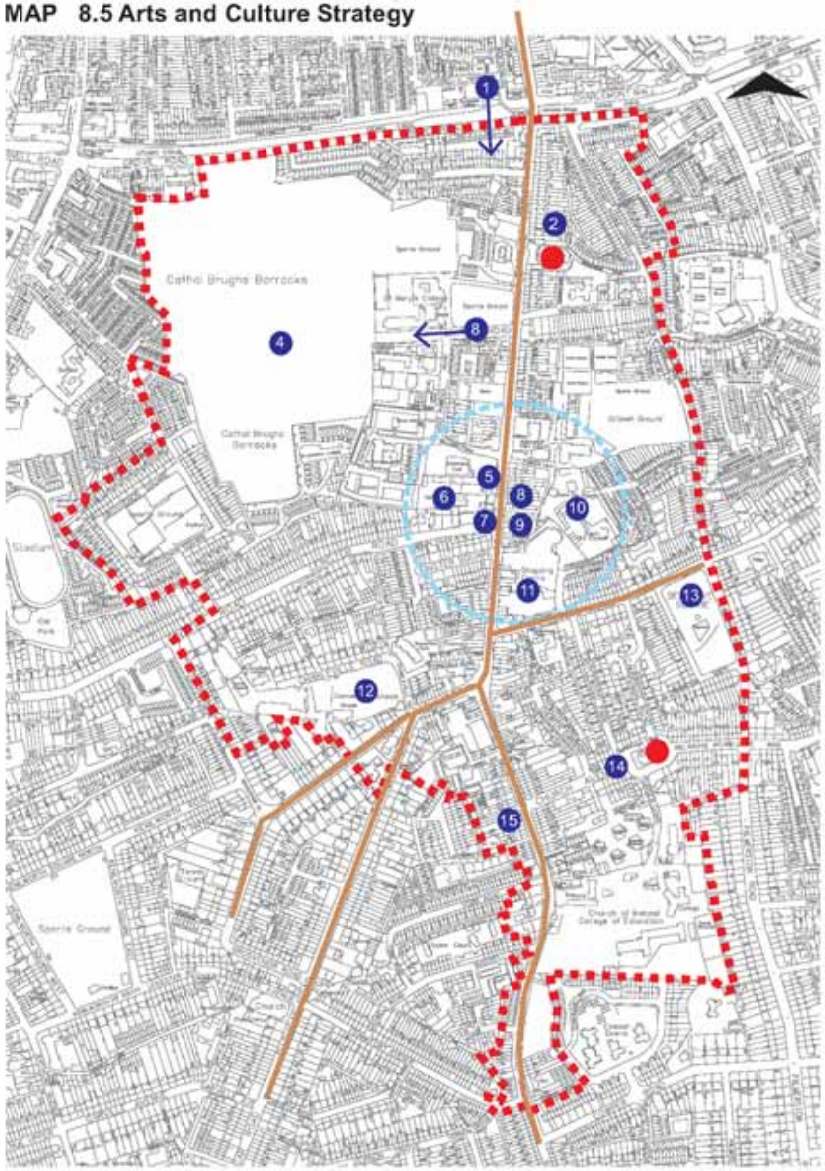
The role of Belgrave Square and Tranquilla Park is important as the only two public parks servicing Rathmines. This plan supports the continued role of these parks as recreational facilities.

Opportunities for wider public use of sports facilities and parks in private ownership are encouraged. Any development proposals for these lands should include an audit of existing users and encourage greater flexibility with respect to other recreational uses and involvement of community organisations. The use of playing fields in Cathal Brugha Barracks and St Mary's Secondary School are an example where this objective could prove effective. Additionally, recreational uses in Grosvenor Square, the Leinster Tennis and Cricket Grounds, Mountpleasant Square and Church of Ireland College of Education could fulfil a wider public benefit.

Recreational amenities beyond the study area including the Grand Canal and Portobello Harbour to the north, Kenilworth Square to the south west and Palmerstown Park to the south can have a potential beneficial role if the routes and connections, in particular pedestrian and cyclist, leading from the study area are highlighted.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAP 8.5 Arts and Culture Strategy



Legend

- Important locations for cultural activities existing & proposed
- Religious buildings with opportunity for events - cultural uses
- Town centre focus for interaction with cultural uses including objective to include workshop & artistic incubation space within mixed use scheme

Important locations for cultural activities existing & proposed

1. Portobello Harbour : Public Plaza
2. Blackberry Fair Site:
3. Military Road: Enhancement of Streetscape for outdoor cultural/ artistic activities.
4. Cathal Brugha Barracks: Site of significant historical importance.
5. New Rathmines Town Centre public plaza
6. DIT buildings
7. Rathmines Library.
8. Site of former Fire Station-
9. The Town Hall
10. The Gulistan Depot Site:
11. The Swan Shopping Centre:
12. St Louis Secondary School: Concert Hall
13. Belgrave Park
14. Church Avenue: Enhancement of the streetscape for outdoor civic uses and cultural activities.
15. The Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society.

Arts and Culture Strategy- Text for MAP 8.5

A wide mix of uses within the centre of Rathmines is a key element in the overall Development Strategy for this plan. The potential contribution of arts and culture would provide a richness and diversity to the functions and character of the town centre. The potential role of Rathmines as a centre for creativity in the arts and cultural arena could encourage interest in other investments and contribute to a catalyst for regeneration.

Arts and cultural uses can also provide alternative and rotating uses within rehabilitated buildings, new buildings and public spaces which would add to the flexible and multiple use of new spaces (both indoor and outdoor). This creates diversity, opportunity for different uses at different times of the day and night and promotes the viability of mixed use schemes. An integrated development combining community, enterprise and commercial opportunities in tandem with new arts and cultural spaces for example could generate investor interest and a flag ship development in character.

Such opportunities compliments the recurring themes of the overall Development Strategy which seeks to reinforce the strength the town centre and create a greater extent of definition to the civic heart of Rathmines. For this reason, arts and culture opportunities are promoted in a similar manner to community and commercial opportunities ie in a consolidated town centre area.

Consultations on the plan to date and identified locations where cultural facilities are accommodated and where there is potential to consider new opportunities. These are identified under the key plan for Figure 8.5. Similar to observations in auditing the location of community facilities, there is an overlap in many instances between the location of space for culture and either an established institution (schools, church buildings, historic buildings in Cathal Brugha barracks) or a commercial location (use of the Swan Shopping Centre and cafes during the Rathmines Festival etc).

Outdoor public spaces such as public parks or places with opportunity for public realm enhancement were also identified as potential locations for events and cultural activities.

The arts and cultural strategy promoted under this plan includes the following:

- Identify the Town Hall as a key focal point in terms of the building and the uses accessible within it. The educational role of the VEC is recognised and valued. The potential for a continued and expanding role for arts and culture to work in harmony with education uses in the town centre is encouraged.

- A new civic space on the Gulistan Depot lands should accommodate multiple uses and interact with the setting and uses of the Town Hall. New education floorspace on this site could create the opportunity to relocate some existing education floorspace from the Town Hall and encourage a refurbishment of the historic Concert Hall as a flexible and multi use cultural space.

- Cultural facilities which would have particular local benefits would include: studio workspaces for artists, rehearsal and recording space for bands, theatre space, outdoor event spaces and facilities for film screening. Opportunity sites should explore the viability and potential to accommodate these and other cultural opportunities.

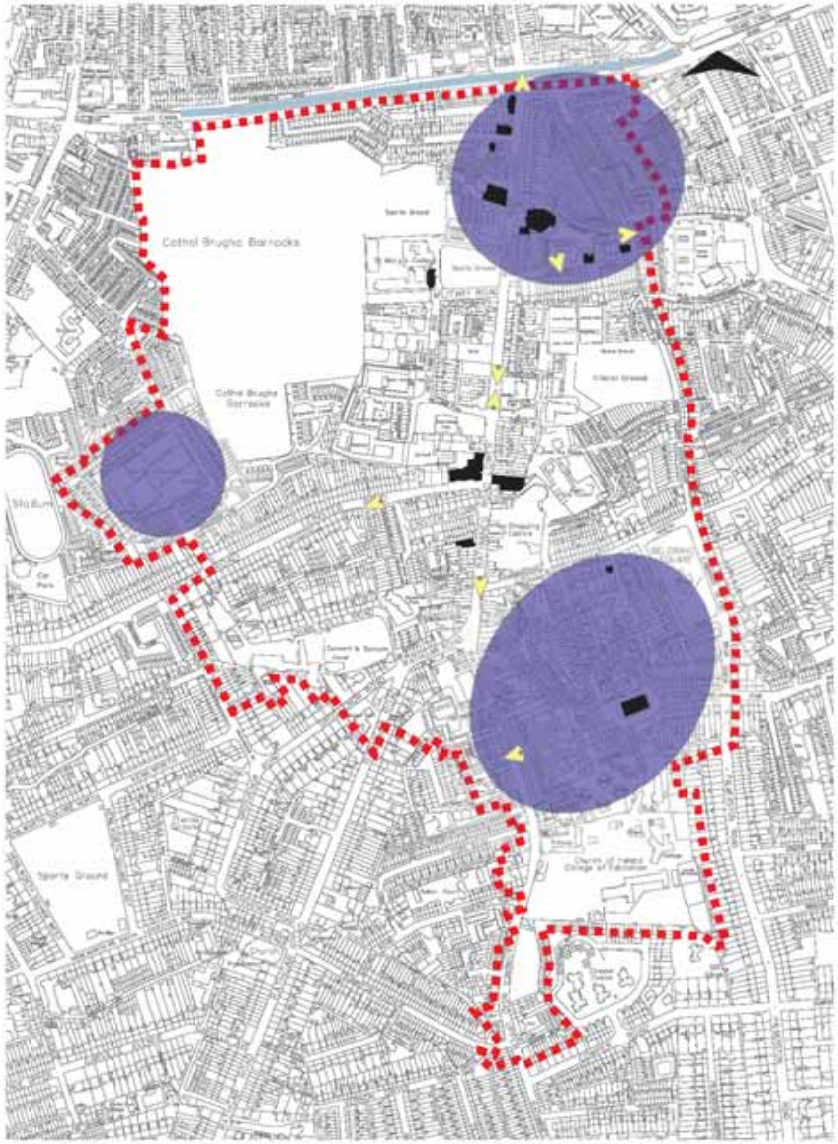
- The following additional cultural facilities would have particular benefit to the local community:

    - A public information site.

    - Potential for programming open space as part of the DIT and Rathmines College of Further Education.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAP 8.6 Architecture and Heritage Strategy



Legend

Key views for protection

Potential ACA areas- approximate boundaries

Landmark buildings

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Architecture and Heritage Strategy- Text for MAP 8.6

The architecture and heritage strategy of the plan seeks to protect the distinct character and heritage value of Rathmines. There are challenges in achieving this including refurbishment and enhancement of privately owned properties. Poor maintenance and inappropriate interventions have eroded the quality of street character in many instances. The Council, when evaluating proposals for development will seek best practice in design proposals.

The Council will consider the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas to heighten awareness and establish strong guidelines for the protection of streets of special character within Rathmines.

Key landmarks within Rathmines, such as the Town Hall, Library, Church of Our Lady of Refuge etc have an historical importance and equally an important community or civic function . The plan seeks an improvement in the setting of all important landmarks. Views and skyline profiles of historic landmarks shall be respected. New developments should have a respectful scale and site layout where they adjoin landmark buildings and promote the setting or framing of such buildings as focal points. A new public space on the site of the Gulistan depot for example should relate to the Town Hall and frame views of the clock tower

There are opportunities for positive infill developments to compliment the historic urban fabric of the town centre. Excellence and innovation in new designs are encouraged to add an additional layer of high quality modern architecture to the town centre.

The architecture and heritage strategy promoted under this plan includes the following:

- Promote the refurbishment of traditional front garden boundary features to include high quality designs to incorporate car parking and refuse storage in a visually acceptable manner. Property boundaries along Rathmines Road Lower and Richmond Hill are particular target streets for boundary improvements.

- Promote the recognition of historic skyline landmarks as key vistas that add character and identity to Rathmines. Views of the Dome of Our Lady of Refuge as viewed from Rathmines Road Lower, Richmond Hill and Bessborough Parade have significant streetscape value and should be considered in the evaluation of any foreground proposals. Views of the Town Hall clock tower as viewed from Rathmines Road Lower and Leinster Road on approach should be protected. Views of the Church of the Holy Trinity on Church Avenue as viewed on approaches from the east and west add considerable character to the street and should similarly be considered.

- Protect and improve the setting of the Town Hall within the town centre whilst encouraging improvements to the town centre with respect to regeneration of sites adjoining, new connection opportunities and improvements in the quality and quantum of mixed use floorspace. The creation of a new civic space on the site of Gulistan Depot that frames views of this landmark building is promoted.

- Highlight awareness of the heritage value and diverse architectural styles of landmark buildings within Rathmines through initiatives such as a heritage trail. The promotion of walking routes through Rathmines as part of a heritage trial and opportunities for information integrated with the public realm will promote visitors to the area, promote linkages between key landmark locations and enhance the experience of the pedestrian discovering Rathmines.

- Integrate opportunities for heritage awareness with other uses including arts and culture, community uses and enterprise uses. Promotion of heritage activities and initiatives within the town centre will add to the diversity of attractions in the town centre.

- Highlight the heritage potential on institutional lands including historic buildings and features on the site of Cathal Brugha Barracks. A long term objective to protect and connect the

- Highlight the heritage value of the Grand Canal and its linkages to Rathmines.

- Explore the feasibility of providing a commemorative feature to recall the achievements of Thomas Grubb, Telescope Maker who had a manufacturing premises in Observatory Lane

Promote an analysis and survey of the architectural quality of buildings and streets in Rathmines for the purposes of designating potential Architectural Conservation Areas. The designation of ACA's will give clear guidance and put in place effective control tools to strengthen the protection of distinctive streetscapes. Potential locations include the terraces of Rathmines Road Lower and setting of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, the area of Grosvenor Square and area around Church Avenue and Belgrave Square.

9.0 SITE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE



Key Opportunity Sites

Area Improvements

Community Briefs

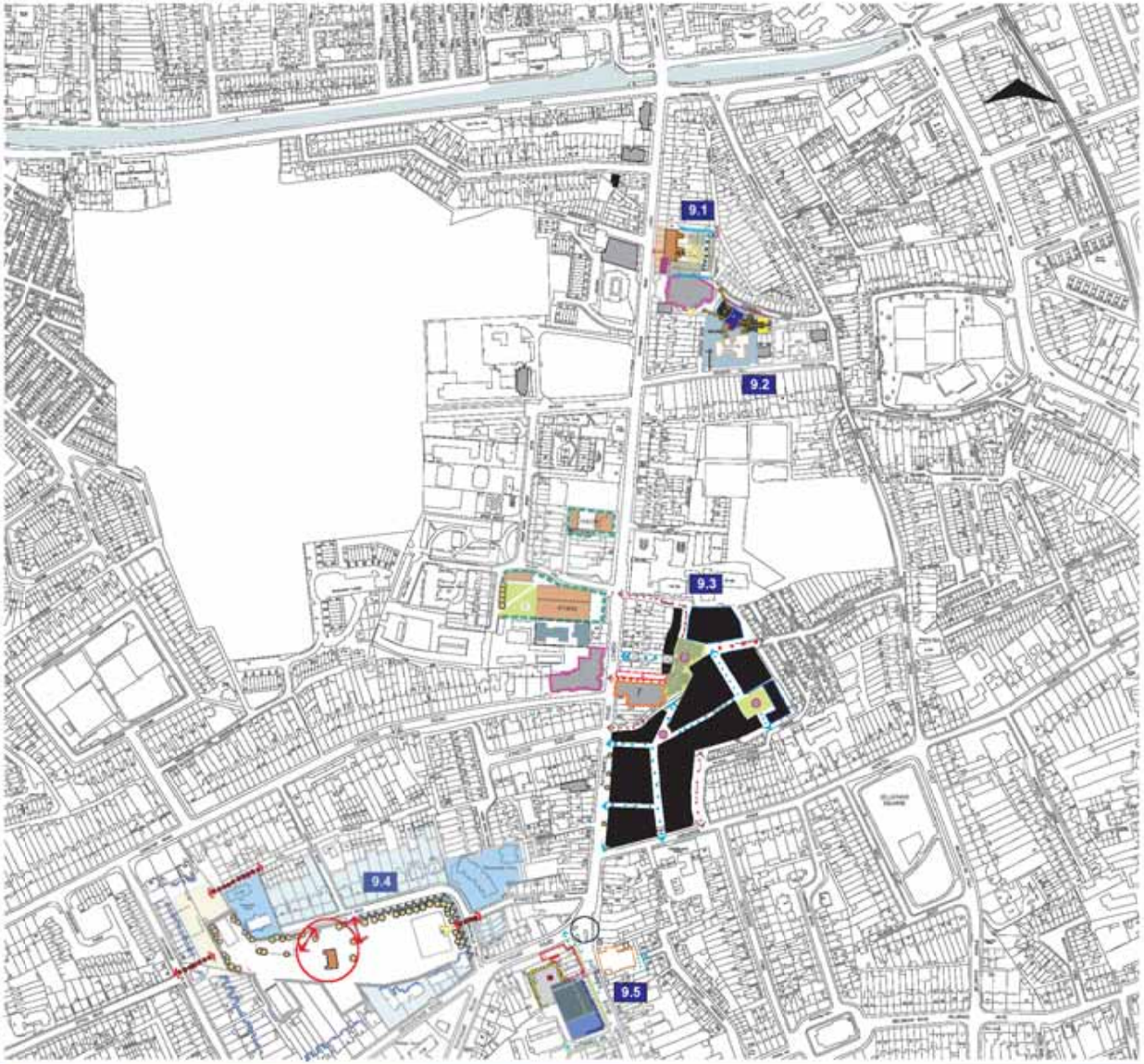
Section 7.0 of this plan has identified overall objectives for Rathmines following consultation and analysis. Section 8.0 of this plan in turn has developed these objectives into series of mapped strategies highlighting key locations of particular importance for a number of themes. This next section of the plan provides a series of site specific guidance aimed to give to give general guidance and direction on the appropriate landuse, urban design and movement strategies for key sites identified by the analysis and during consultation. It is important to note that the site specific guidance give flexible guidance and a more detailed design rationale and, where appropriate, a masterplan would be required for any proposals that emerge for these sites. The development of key sites will be expected however to show due regard for the recommendations made under this section of the plan.

In addition to a number of site specific guidance, area improvements are recommended for four streets within the study area including Military Road, Wynnfield Road, Rathmines Avenue and Church Avenue. Concepts for these improvements are set out under Section 10.0.

The two significant institutional landbanks to the north west and south east of the study area are identified on Fig 9.1 to highlight the strategic opportunities for masterplanning and integration of these sites with the town centre. As set out under Section 7.0 and 8.0 of this plan, the existing zoning designations require a masterplan approach to these areas should they be proposed for redevelopment. As the lands are currently required for institutional use, there are no site brief recommendations proposed. However, the longer term potential for permeable connections, sports and recreation facilities and community interaction with these lands is an important objective of this plan.



MAP 9.0 OVERALL MAP FOR SITE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE



MAP 2 sets out a composite map summarising the recommendations made under each site specific guidance to the urban form and character of Rathmines. Existing key landmark buildings and the outline of developments either under progress or with an established planning approval within the town centre are also included (Rathmines Square, the development on the site of Diamond Motors and the Herman & White site). The following site specific guidance are proposed:

9.1 Blackberry Fair

9.2 St Mary's Community Centre

9.3 Central Civic Zone: Gulistan Site/DIT/Rathmines Square and Swan shopping centre.

9.4 St Louis Secondary School

9.5 Tesco Site

KEY

Landmark buildings

Outline of landmark building

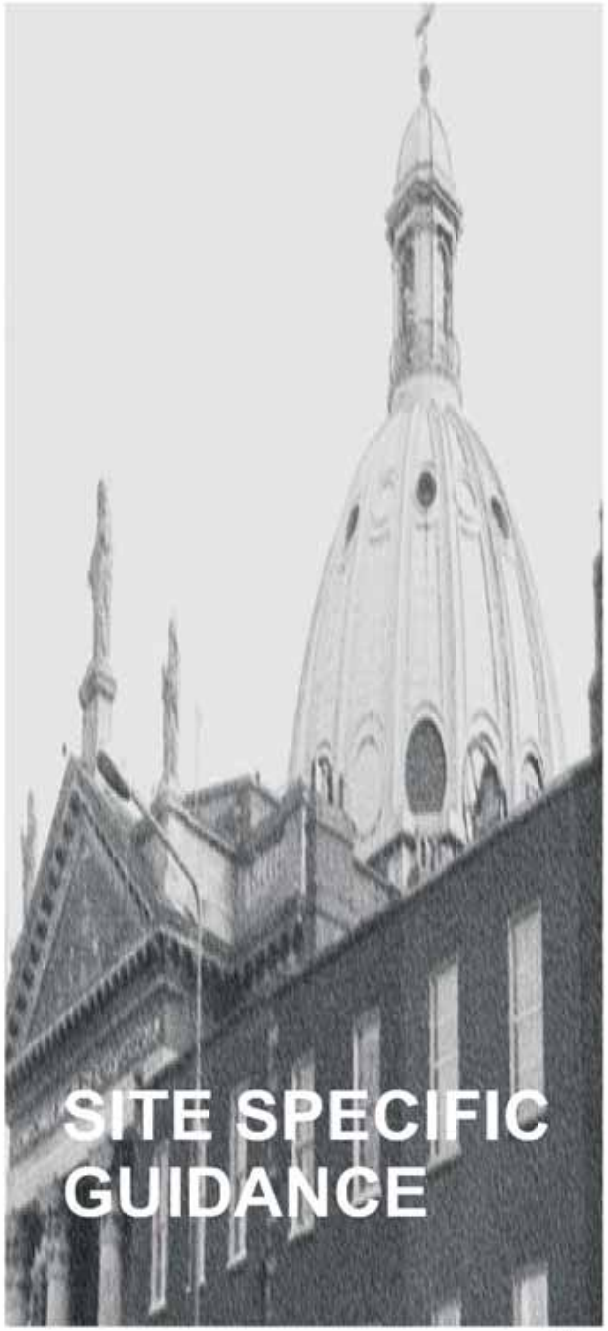
Blackberry Fair 9.1

St. Mary's Community Centre 9.2

Central Civic Zone
Gulistan Site, DIT, Rathmines Square and Swan Centre 9.3

St. Louis Secondary School 9.4

Tesco Site 9.5



SITE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

9.1 BLACKBERRY FAIR

The site of Blackberry Fair is well recognised in Rathmines for its former use as a market area and its prominent location along the important terrace of Rathmines Road Lower and adjoining the neo classical landmark Church of Our Lady of Refuge.

The site is comprised of the properties No 36, 40-43 and rear of No 38 Lower Rathmines Road. The site is characterised by significant terraced properties (protected structures in the case of properties No 36-44)) fronting Lower Rathmines Road, the backland area adjoining the curtilage of these structures and a boundary at the north east corner shared with Fortescue Lane. Two adjoining properties No 46 and 48 are not protected but are contiguous to the site and complete the connection of this row of properties with the Church boundary.

The site is zoned Z2 as a residential conservation area and the location context is particularly sensitive having regard to its proximity to the Church of Our Lady of Refuge, the carriageway entrance off Lower Rathmines Road and the important visual character of the terrace. Developing the site also needs to balance the setting of existing and adjoining residential properties, the restricted area of the backland site and restricted access from the rear of the site onto Fortescue Lane.

The existing poor physical condition of these properties has a negative impact on the quality of the street, particularly as a first visual impression when crossing the canal. There have been proposals and recommendations under previous studies, including the Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study, to restore the architectural quality of this terrace and promote a suitable use for the site. Recent development proposals lodged for planning have however highlighted the constraints and sensitivities in reconciling the issues for this site.

It is important that viable concepts to regenerate the site are progressed and promoted under this plan. Regeneration of this prominent site would send a positive signal on the rejuvenation of Rathmines. A suitable infill development and restoration of the site would be a catalyst for further improvements along the terrace.

The following masterplan objectives are proposed for this site:

- The restoration of the existing protected structures No 36-44 Lower Rathmines Road for residential use and reinstatement of original front boundary treatments shall be incorporated within a strategy for this site.
- Adjoining structures between the site and the Church of our Lady Of Refuge (No's 46 and 48 Lower Rathmines Road) have potential for architectural modification to integrate more successfully with the visual harmony of the terrace. An incorporation of these properties with the Blackberry Fair site could provide connections to the Church site adjoining and in turn achieve pedestrian permeability to Richmond Hill via the site proposed for a new community/parish centre.
- A courtyard type development for the rear curtilage of properties forming the site could be explored enclosing a central courtyard space aligned to frame views of the dome of the Church of Our Lady of Refuge. This space would have a special character and accordingly uses at ground floor could explore the potential for permissible and open for consideration uses under the Z2 zone in addition to residential use. Such uses could include buildings for health related activities, medical and related consultants, home based economic activity, cultural/recreational uses, media and recording related uses etc. Connections between residential units and enterprise activity of an arts and crafts nature may have a particular positive connection with the special character of the site.
- The courtyard layout should respect the amenities and sensitivities of residential sites adjoining. Subject to quality criteria and demonstration of successful integration with adjoining amenities, a courtyard development of sensitive scale could be considered.
- Access to the site is restricted. Traffic generation from the site should not be significant. The central access to the rear of the site should be retained via the carriageway entrance from Lower Rathmines Road with limited use of Fortescue Lane. The intensity and character of uses proposed should reflect the site context and in this regard pedestrian and cyclist permeability through the site should be promoted with car parking generation limited in its extent. Compatible uses proposed on the site such as a link between residential and home based arts and crafts enterprise or an infill elderly residential scheme would generate low demand for car parking.
- It is an objective that no further development will be permitted which would generate any increase in the levels of traffic on Fortescue Lane.





9.1 BLACKBERRY FAIR



KEY - General Guidance

Court type development of appropriate scale. Ensure setting of the Protected Structure, the Church and amenity of the adjoining dwellings is protected

General refurbishment of Protected Structures

To protect the setting of the Protected Structures

Reinstate the integrity of the front gardens including railings to historical detail and plinth wall

Potential access

Potential Pedestrian and Cycle Access

Central amenity space along axis of Church Dome

Sensitive boundaries

Frame view of Church Dome

Possible incorporation of No's 46-48 adjoining terraced properties for Architectural improvement



Extract from Development Plan 2005-2011

St Mary's Community Hall/Health Centre Richmond Hill

The site is accessed from Richmond Road and accommodates St Mary's Community Centre, a building currently occupied by the HSE for important community and health services.

The site is zoned Z1 for residential services and adjoins Z2 residential conservation zones. The site is characterised by the existing building of St Mary's Centre and an adjoining surface car park to the side and rear.

The surface car park shares a boundary with Bessborough Parade to the north and the Church of Our Lady of Refuge to the north west.

Consultations during the plan preparation have highlighted the potential value to the community of a community building or Parish Centre on this site. Such a facility would compliment public uses associated with the Church of Our Lady of Refuge and adjoining parish buildings which have a wider community and cultural role in Rathmines.

The site is considered to have a sensitive context with significant buildings including the Church of Our Lady of Refuge and the terraces of Bessborough Parade close to the boundaries. However, a sensitively scaled and high quality designed scheme which occupies the existing surface car parking yard could compliment and enhance the special character of this location. Car parking facilities could be rationalised at surface level for community uses and the potential for basement level car parking could be explored and offer value to car parking requirements for the uses on site.

The site is zoned for residential use. There may be possibilities to consider an element of sensitively scaled residential infill development to provide a neighbourhood for diversity on the site and to encourage use of new civic space opportunities that a Parish Centre might create. Such residential units could have benefit for elderly residents for example. Pedestrian connections to Bessborough Parade and the Church would create accessibility to new civic spaces or community buildings and encourage permeability between this site and adjoining Church site.
The following masterplan objectives are proposed for this site:

The surface car park to the rear of St Mary's provides an opportunity site for the development of a parish/community centre. This centre would interact with activities and movement from the Church or our Lady of Refuge and St Mary's Community/ Health Centre. The footprint of this building could creatively follow the curved line of Bessborough Parade and enclose a new courtyard character civic space between the centre and the existing St Mary's HSE building.

- The centre would have functions and uses for the wider community in Rathmines. The building design should create a low height modern architectural feature for the site whilst respecting the special character of the setting which includes side elevation views of the Church and the visual amenities for established housing on Bessborough Parade.

- Vehicular access to the site should be retained from Richmond Hill. The feasibility for underground car parking should be considered to make efficient use of the urban land and allow the opportunity for landscaping and civic space at ground level to interact with the existing and proposed community buildings.

- The public realm should create an attractive approach and setting between the parish/community centre and the pedestrian entrance to The Church of Our Lady of Refuge. This space should focus on views of the Church and be a location for community gathering.

- Smaller scale infill residential development could be considered as part of a proposal. Residential units for the elderly may be an appropriate use to interact with the community uses adjoining. The scale and density of residential uses shall respect the sensitive setting.

- Pedestrian permeability and connectivity to encourage interaction between the parish centre/community centre and the wider community should be explored.

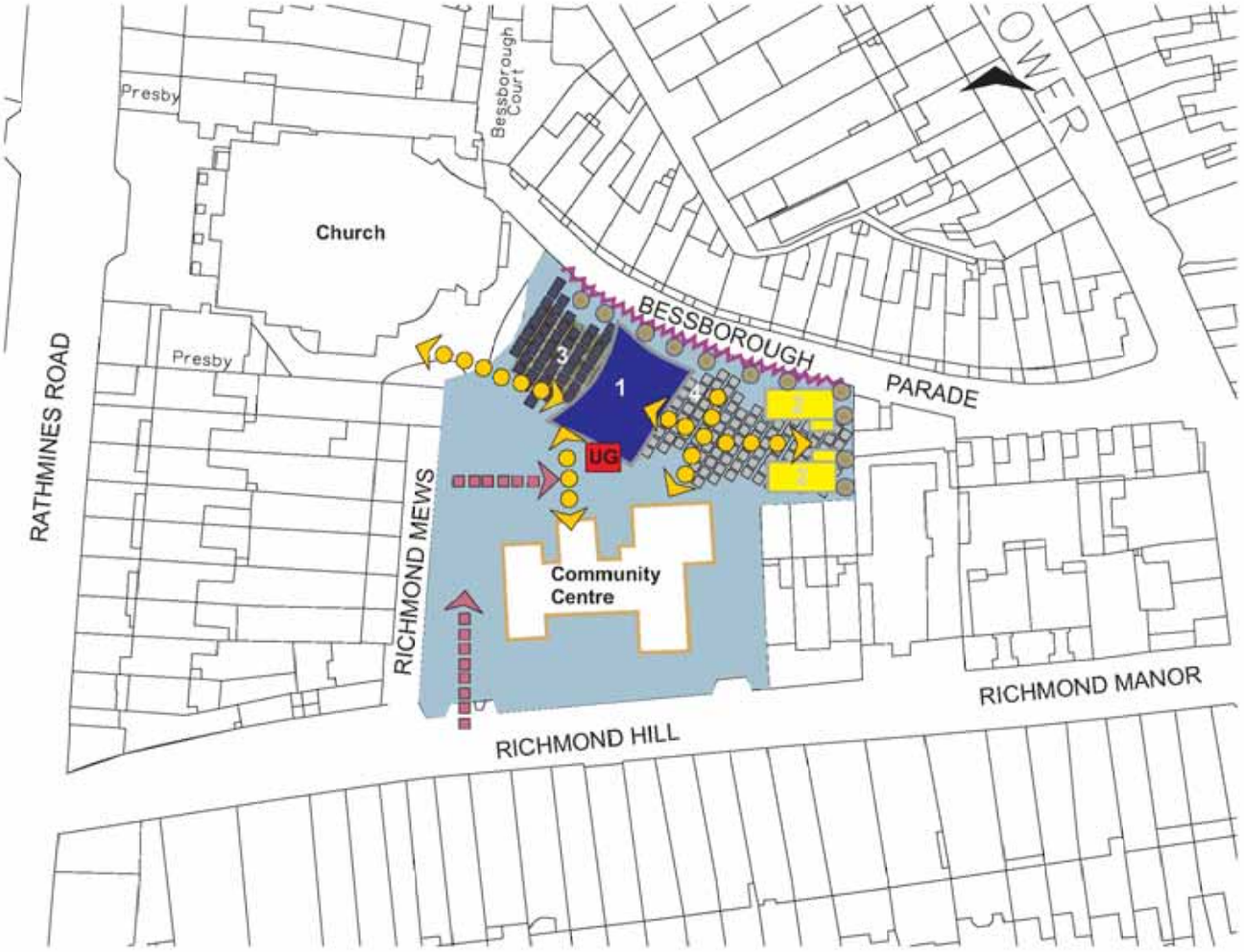
- St. Mary's building is recognised as an important building for the street character of Richmond Hill and its use for community and/or health related activity should be retained.

- The boundary to the north of the site shared with Bessborough Parade is recognised as a sensitive boundary. The special character of Bessborough Parade shall be respected in any strategy for this site.





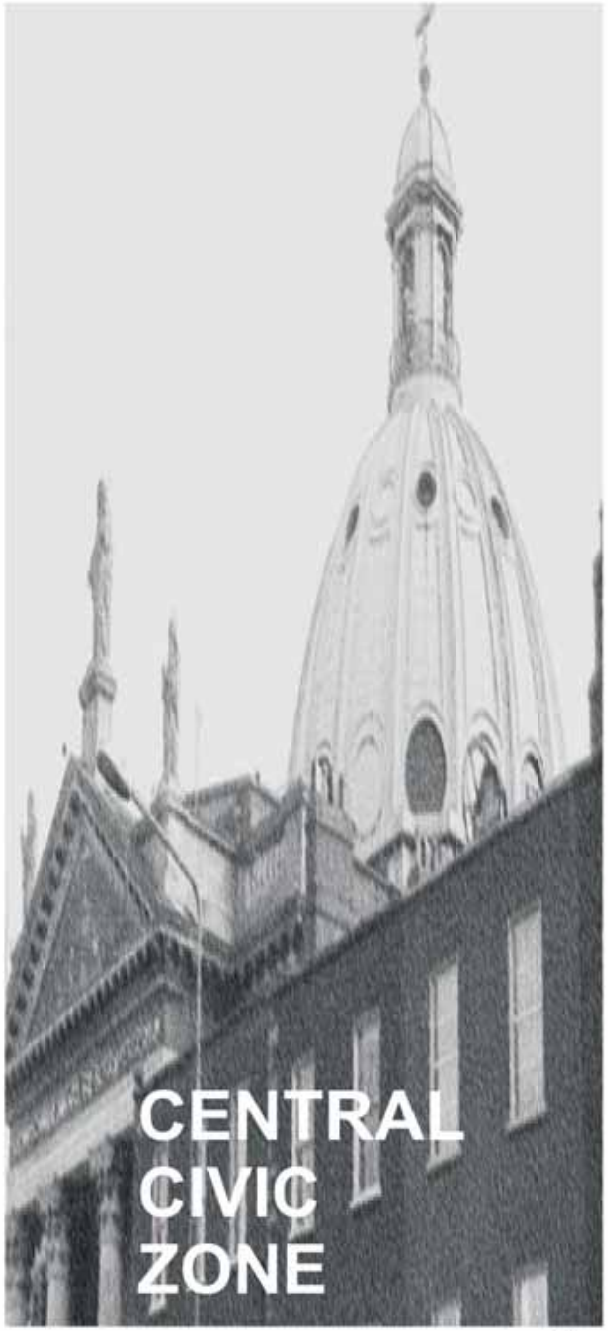
9.2 ST. MARY'S PARISH CENTRE RICHMOND HILL



KEY - General Guidance

- Parish Community Centre
- Appropriate scaled residential infill- elderly housing possibilities
- Key Civic Space
- Courtyard Character area
- Opportunities for Pedestrian Interaction
- Vehicular entrance routes
- Under ground parking possible — UG
- Retain St Mary's building for community use
- Sensitive Boundary
- Crescent shape tree planting along boundary





CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

9.3 CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

Gulistan/ Swan/DIT/Rathmines Square Sites

At the centre of the commercial zone in Rathmines and at the centre of the plan area, three key landbanks provide a significant opportunity to enhance the character and vitality of the town centre. These lands are positioned on both the east and west sides of Rathmines Road Lower and include:
West side of Rathmines Road Lower

(I) The new DCC civic leisure centre and swimming pool development and adjoining new Rathmines Square development
.
(ii) The new public plaza to the front of Rathmines Square

(iii) The new public park proposed to the rear of the civic leisure centre accessed from Williams Park.

(iv) The private site occupied by Herman White which has planning permission for a scheme integrating with Rathmines Square including pedestrian access to the new public park at Williams Park.

(v) The DIT School of Music building (a protected structure) and the rear of that property which has opportunities to integrate with the adjoining public park and commercial developments.

(vi) Rathmines Library which is a significant landmark public building and focus point for the town centre.

East side of Rathmines Road Lower

(I) The commercial zoned terraced buildings which include the former Fire Station building which is currently vacant.

(ii) The lands of the Gulistan Depot and ESB site which extend to adjoin the rear boundaries of properties facing onto Rathmines Road Lower, the rear boundary of the Swan Shopping Centre and terraced cottages accessed from Gulistan Terrace. This site has a pedestrian entrance adjacent to the Town Hall.

(iii) The Town Hall, a key landmark and focal point in Rathmines which is currently in educational use.

(iv) The Swan Shopping Centre which presents an important commercial frontage onto Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue and shares a common boundary with the Gulistan Depot.

These lands are zoned Z4 for district level mixed service facilities. This central area is also part of the Prime Urban Centre designation.

It is important to consider the future development strategy for these lands in the full context of the town centre and in the context of linkages and interactions with adjoining sites. The potential benefits to Rathmines arising from this analysis include:

Movement: A flow of pedestrian movement circulating through new routes in the heart of the town centre.

Enhancement to Public Realm: New areas of high quality interconnected civic spaces which become established as important public spaces within the town centre.

- Increased Activity: A diversity of uses including new commercial, residential, community and cultural opportunities which will enrich the quality and mixed use functions of the town centre.
- A Focus on the Attributes of the Town Centre: New development opportunities will integrate and highlight the existing key landmarks and public buildings in the centre of Rathmines such as the Town Hall, DIT School of Music and Library. New developments will have an appropriate scale and character to reflect and compliment this important civic location context.

A series of design strategies have been formulated to encourage the appropriate development of the civic centre area of Rathmines and focus in particular on:

A: The ESB and Gulistan Depot Lands and interactions with the backlands to the terraced properties on Rathmines Road Lower (inclusive of the Fire Station site)

B: The same area as referred to in A above with a wider context consideration for a complimentary form of development on the Swan Shopping Centre.

C: The rear of the DIT School of Music and interactions with the new public park accessed from Williams Park and adjoining developments (new Swimming Pool, Rathmines Square and the extant permission on the site of Herman White).

The diagrams are for indicative purposes. They show the general parameters under which appropriate layout, landuses, movement and scale are encouraged should a redevelopment opportunity arise. The strategy for this prime area is set out under Mix of Uses, Indicative Height Strategy, Public Realm & Movement and Integration with the Swan Shopping Centre







Mix of Uses

West side of Rathmines Road Lower

Development to the west side of Rathmines Road Lower will include the established uses of the DIT School of Music, the Library, commercial properties on the site of Herman White and the development of Rathmines Square.

Future uses encouraged should interact positively with the public uses such as the Library and capitalise on the immediate proximity to the new leisure centre and new public park areas to the front and rear of Rathmines Square.

Envisaged uses will be :

- Leisure, recreation and community uses (new DCC swimming pool and leisure centre).
- Residential uses (Rathmines Square, Herman White site, opportunity site to the rear of the DIT)
- Community/ Cultural /Institutional uses including education (the existing library , future community/culture/education use within the DIT protected structure)
- Retail/Offices/Commercial (Herman White site and opportunity site to the rear of the DIT).
- Public open space/ recreation/ culture (civic events, market activities, passive and active recreation activities all possible with a flexible use of new civic open space at Williams Park and to the front of Rathmines Square).

It is important to note that St Louis Primary and Infant School is an important community facility accessed from Williams Park adjoining this quarter of the town centre. The development of the new sports and leisure complex, establishment of a new park and creation of new safe pedestrian routes through this quarter to access Williams Park are potentially beneficial. Opportunities to enhance access and the constrained boundaries to the front of the school should be explored to integrate arrival space at the school with new public realm adjoining the new public park and rear of the DIT site. Security for the school and appropriate design and management of public open space close to the school entrance is encouraged.

East side of Rathmines Road Lower

Development on the east side of Rathmines Road Lower will include the commercial zoned terraces and their backlands between Parker Hill and the Town Hall, the old Fire Station site, the Town Hall as a focal point, the Gulistan Depot and ESB site combined and , as a potential significant integrated development, the Swan Shopping Centre and commercial properties between the Town Hall and junction with Castlewood Avenue.

Envisaged uses will be :

- Encourage community interaction and movement through to the Gulistan site by considering mixed community/commercial options for the former Fire Station that may include a restoration if feasible or a sensitively scaled high quality new building that incorporates a pedestrian route through to the Gulistan site. A high quality frontage to this property and appropriate community/commercial mixed use development will be an important catalyst for regeneration on this terrace.

- Consider mixed residential/commercial mews type development at the backlands to terraced properties of Rathmines Road Lower that form an attractive and active street frontage within the Gulistan site.

- Encourage community, retained education and cultural uses for the Town Hall to include possible rear /side public access to interact with new uses and public open space on the Gulistan site. This building is a key focal point for the Town Centre.

- Encourage a mixed community/commercial feature building to the north of a new civic space that could provide:

  - ❑ High quality retail frontage onto a central public space to encourage high footfall.
  - ❑ Provide community uses and in particular health care and medical uses.
  - ❑ Provide flexible floorspace for a multiple of different community / commercial / cultural uses at different parts of the day and night including workshops, studios, arts and crafts galleries, rehearsal space, education and training space, youth cafe/youth centre community based offices, meeting room spaces etc.

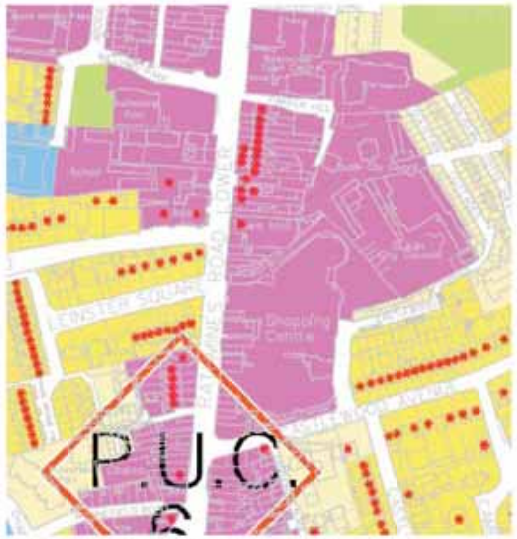
- Encourage mixed commercial and residential uses for blocks to the south side of a new civic space to give active commercial frontages and high quality façade treatment to new pedestrian routes crossing north to south and east to west through the site. Retail units should have sufficient depth to attract high quality convenience retailers to create an extension of high street shopping into the site. Adequate service access is important for a design. Overhead residential accommodation should be considered to balance commercial development with a town centre residential community for after business life and passive supervision of the new public realm.

- Residential uses adjoining the east and south east boundary. Residential uses will be compatible with the established residential uses along Gulistan Cottages and Castlewood Terrace, will act as an appropriate interface between established and new uses and will ercourage residential interaction for community integration between new and established residents. Housing for the elderly as part of this provision close to the town centre and close to important services may be a positive residential use on this site.

- The potential for underground recycling services should be explored. There are good examples in other European cities where the quality of the public realm at ground level is protected and used to its maximum efficient advantage by placing such facilities within a basement level design.

- A low height community building may be considered to interact with the Town Hall and incorporate a new public entrance to the Town Hall and other facilities in connection with that use.

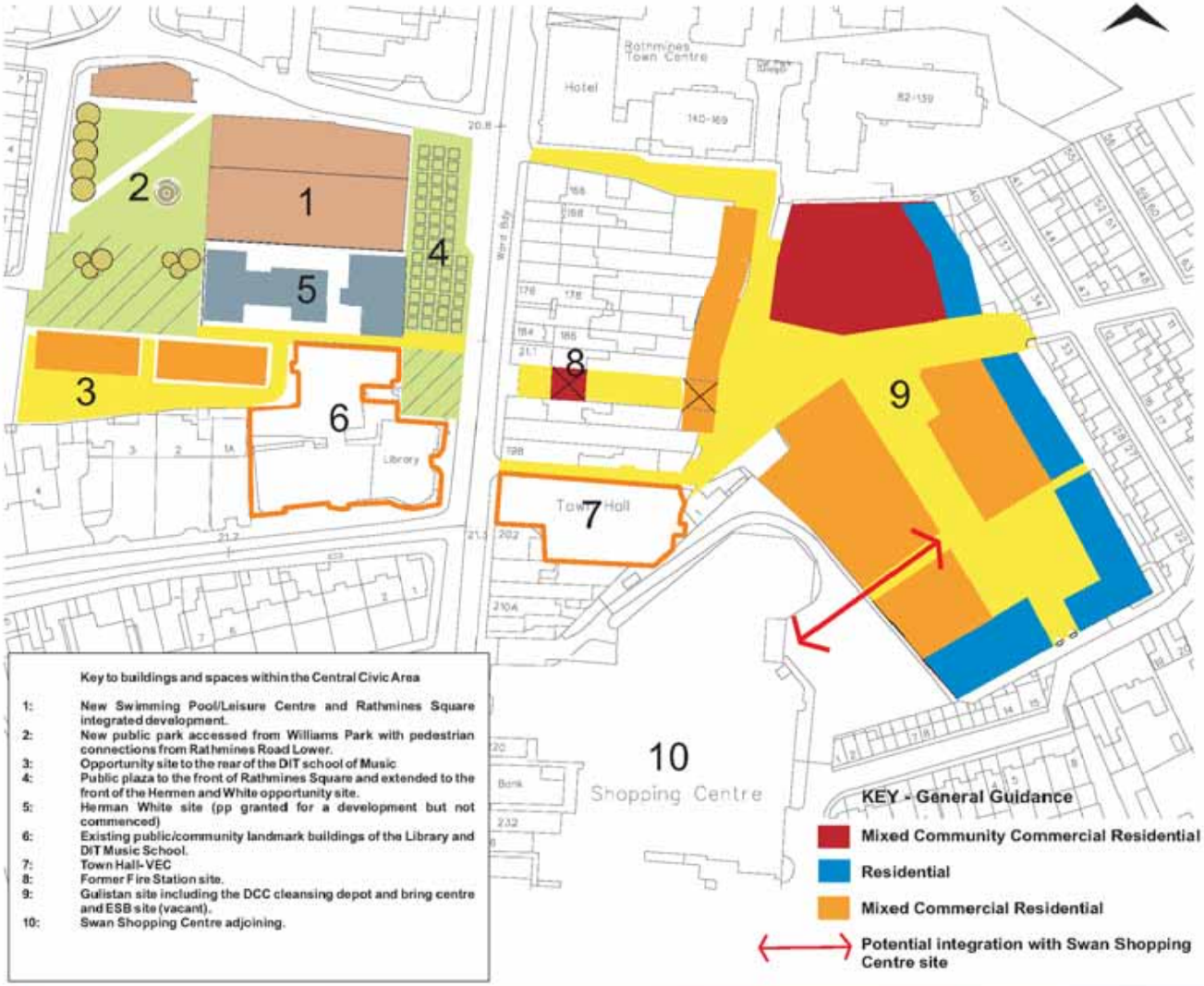
The highest standard in modern architectural design will be required for any new proposals. Incorporation of historic buildings where possible with modern development should be explored. Design method statements detailing the design rationale and appropriate materials will be required for any development within this area.



Extract from Development Plan 2005-2011

9.3 CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

Indicative Site Uses for new proposals



Key to buildings and spaces within the Central Civic Area

1: New Swimming Pool/Leisure Centre and Rathmines Square integrated development.
2: New public park accessed from Williams Park with pedestrian connections from Rathmines Road Lower.
3: Opportunity site to the rear of the DIT school of Music
4: Public plaza to the front of Rathmines Square and extended to the front of the Hermen and White opportunity site.
5: Herman White site (pp granted for a development but not commenced)
6: Existing public/community landmark buildings of the Library and DIT Music School.
7: Town Hall- VEC
8: Former Fire Station site.
9: Gulistan site including the DCC cleansing depot and bring centre and ESB site (vacant).
10: Swan Shopping Centre adjoining.

Summary of Land Use Strategy

West side of Rathmines Road Lower

- Leisure, recreation and community uses (new DCC swimming pool and leisure centre).
- Residential uses (Rathmines Square, Herman White site, opportunity site to the rear of the DIT)
- Community/ Cultural /Institutional uses including education (the existing library, future community/culture/education use within the DIT protected structure)
- Retail/Offices/Commercial (Herman White site and opportunity site to the rear of the DIT).
- Public open space/ recreation/ culture (civic events, market activities, passive and active recreation activities all possible with a flexible use of new civic open space at Williams Park and to the front of Rathmines Square).

East side of Rathmines Road Lower

- Integrated community/cultural /commercial uses (former Fire Station site as a catalyst to regeneration of the adjoining terrace, new mixed use feature building to north of central public space to include potentially high quality commercial, health care, community offices, studio workspace, education and training space etc).
- Integrated education/ community/culture uses (Town Hall as a focal point including restoration of the original auditorium, additional opportunity for new education floorspace within new buildings to rear of Town Hall, opportunity for interaction with education courses and cultural/community tie in).
- Mixed commercial and residential uses (opportunities for appropriately scaled and high quality backland development to the rear of terraced properties fronting Rathmines Road Lower, new buildings to south of the new civic square to include active high quality commercial frontage and high quality overhead residential uses to provide life and supervision of new streets and spaces).
- Residential uses (residential use for an appropriate integration with established residential amenity on the east and south east boundary including possibilities for elderly housing as part of the residential mix).
- Recreation/ Amenity (new public open space for a multitude of uses and events including cultural uses, performances, market activity, seating etc)
- Potential for underground recycling services for the town centre integrated with an underground parking strategy. Innovative design solutions taking the precedent from modern European Cities are encouraged.
- A low height community building may be considered to interact with the Town Hall and incorporate a new public entrance to the Town Hall and other facilities in connection with that use.



Indicative Heights Strategy

The height strategy proposed for key sites within the Central Civic Area recognises the need to consolidate and make efficient use of town centre land. Achieving a high quality mix of uses can be achieved at different floor levels. It is important to develop high quality public realm and civic spaces to attract pedestrian movement through new development sites to the benefit of local business and vitality within the town centre. Buildings of an appropriate scale should frame these new public spaces providing active ground floor frontages and overhead uses including residential.

Balancing the need for sustainable high density use, the height strategy recognises the historic context of adjoining town centre landmarks, protected structures and sensitive boundaries. The Town Hall shall remain the principal town centre landmark and no new building shall compete with it in terms of height profile. A human scale to new streets and spaces should be achieved to make the environment appealing to move through. New views should be framed by the alignment of buildings for legibility and to encourage movement. Sensitive boundaries include the school boundary shared with St Louis Primary School to the west of the DIT site and residential boundaries to the east of the Gulistan site. Abrupt transitions in height should be avoided close to these boundaries while still providing a sufficient quantum and mix of development to regenerate the town centre.

The following indicative heights are proposed:

- 3-4 storeys for mixed use commercial/residential blocks to the rear of the DIT School of Music. An appropriate relationship to the school adjoining to the west, residential properties adjoining to the south and protected structures to the east will be required. It is important that these buildings equally enclose the southern end of a new plaza and create activity and visual interest to frame the park.
- 3-4 storeys for backland development to the rear of terraced properties on Rathmines Road Lower. This height may be achieved to create a successful new street frontage onto the Gulistan site.
- 3-4 storeys for mixed commercial/residential and mixed commercial/community blocks on the Gulistan site where the blocks do not directly address the central civic space or new pedestrian streets.
- 5-6 storeys may be considered to frame main routes and a new civic space in the centre of the Gulistan site. Views of the Town Hall clock tower should be framed by the alignment of new buildings
- Sensitive height transitions of 2-3 storeys are recommended for residential uses that directly adjoin established residential properties to the east (Gulistan Cottages) and south east (Castlewood Terrace) of the site.
- The shoulder height of any new development to the east side of the Central Civic Zone to the rear of the Town Hall site shall respect the existing roof ridgeline level of the main Town Hall buildings. No new building shall include a design element that competes with the landmark profile of the Town Hall Clock Tower

The following height guidelines are indicative but are considered to represent a maximum height guidance. A general shoulder height guidance up to 4 storeys is recommended for this area considering the sensitive context of each site in the Central Civic Zone. This means that a maximum of 4 storeys will apply for the majority of buildings on the site. Only in exceptional circumstances will heights above 4 storeys be considered for a limited 5-6 storeys profile where there is:

(A) Robust demonstration that the following criteria are fully addressed:

(i) No unreasonable adverse impacts on the quality of light for adjoining properties.

(ii) No invasion of privacy or conflict with overlooking a boundary.

(iii) High quality light conditions for new streets and public spaces must be achieved.

(iv) High quality urban design will be required including demonstration of acceptable integration with the character of the adjoining area.

(v) Visual assessments shall be required including, where appropriate, scale model and photomontages to demonstrate a successful integration with the character of the area.

(B) It is fully demonstrated that the general shoulder height for the development proposal does not exceed the existing roof ridgeline level of the main Town Hall buildings and that no element of the design competes with the landmark profile of the Town Hall clock-tower.

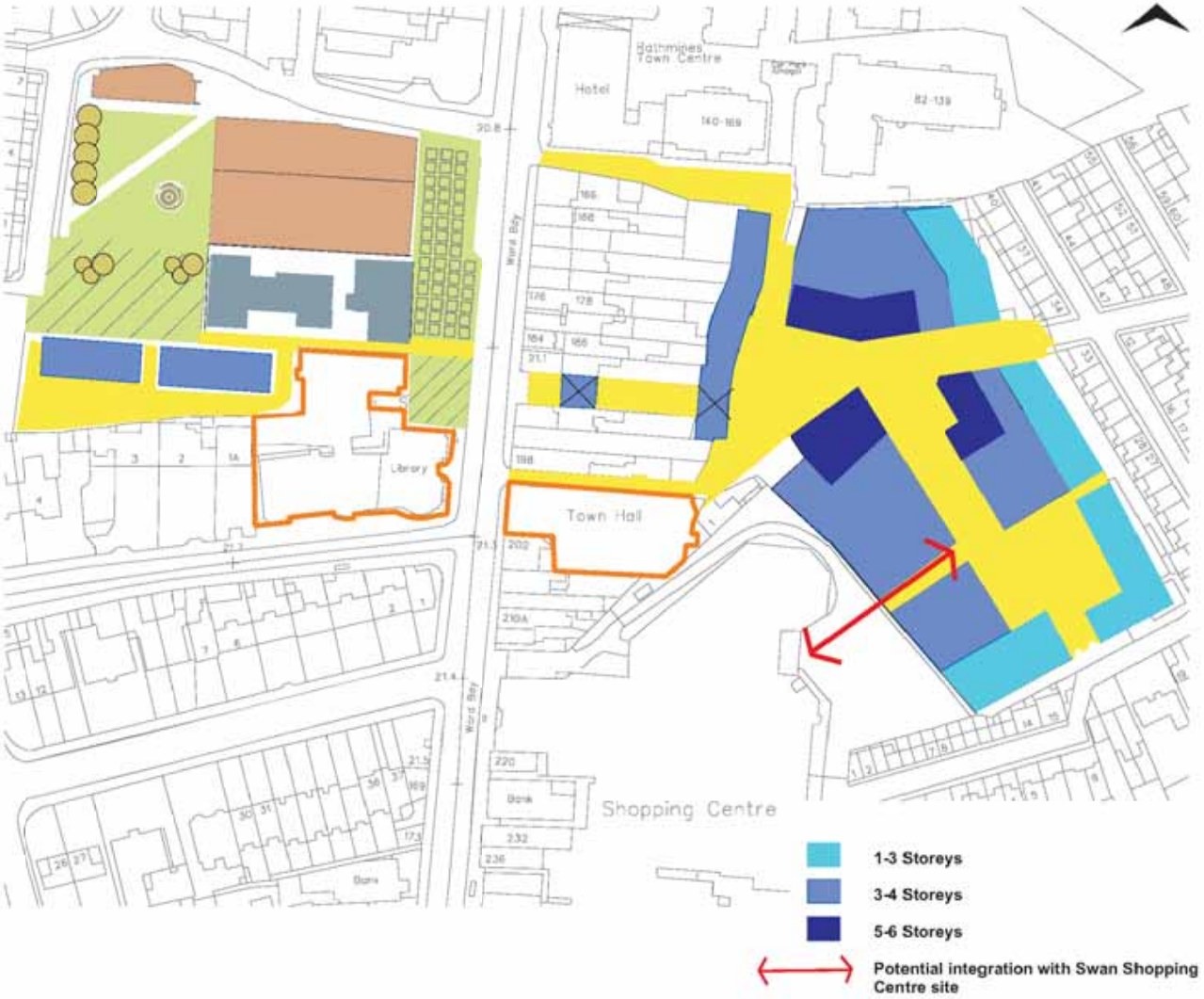
Conservation method statements shall be required for developments on the site of and adjoining the boundaries of Protected Structures.

Transitional Zone Areas Policy of the Dublin City Development Plan

The land use zoning objectives and control standards of the Dublin City Development Plan show the boundaries between zones. While the zoning objectives and development control standards indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use zones. In dealing with development proposals in these contiguous transitional zonal areas, it is necessary to avoid developments which would be detrimental to the amenities of the more environmentally sensitive zone. For instance, in zones abutting residential areas or abutting residential development within predominately mixed use zones, particular attention must be paid to the use, scale, density and design of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of residential properties.

9.3 CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

Indicative Height Strategy for new proposals



Summary of Indicative Height Strategy

- 3-4 storeys for mixed use commercial/residential blocks to the rear of the DIT School of Music. An appropriate relationship to the school adjoining to the west, residential properties adjoining to the south and protected structures to the east will be required. It is important that these buildings equally enclose the southern end of a new plaza and create activity and visual interest to frame the park.
- 3-4 storeys for backland development to the rear of terraced properties on Rathmines Road Lower. This height may be achieved to create a successful new street frontage onto the Gulistan site.
- 3-4 storeys for mixed commercial/residential and mixed commercial/community blocks on the Gulistan site where the blocks do not directly address the central civic space or new pedestrian streets.
- 5-6 storeys may be considered to frame main routes and a new civic space in the centre of the Gulistan site. Views of the Town Hall clock tower should be framed by the alignment of new buildings
- Sensitive height transitions of 2-3 storeys are recommended for residential uses that directly adjoin established residential properties to the east (Gulistan Cottages) and south east (Castlewood Terrace) of the site.

Public Realm and Movement

A high quality public realm strategy is encouraged for the Central Civic Area. The vision seeks to give a rewarding experience for people moving between the different streets and new civic spaces across this urban quarter with the Town Hall, DIT School of Music (Protected Structure part) , Library and the recreational uses in Rathmines Square providing key focal points. New destinations will be created including high quality new buildings, new pedestrian streets and civic spaces and new mixed use developments to draw people into the town centre.

Movement between these areas in conceived as a link between three public space elements (i) the new park at Williams Park, (ii) the new plaza to the front of Rathmines Square (iii) a new plaza proposed in the centre of the Gulistan site.

These open space areas should provide a combination of hard and soft landscaping elements to add a layer of quality to the setting of buildings and streets that frame these spaces. Creative and flexible uses should be considered including opportunities for cultural performance, civic events, markets etc.

In the event of further development integrating with the Swan Shopping Centre adjoining to the south, there is potential to enlarge the central civic space.

A further open space area is proposed at the southern end of the Gulistan site to provide amenities for residential uses. A landscaped courtyard, play ground, seating area etc which is visually connected from the main access points and enhances the residential environment for new residents is proposed.

Pedestrian streets are conceived as new routes to encourage permeable movement east to west and include (i) a new pedestrian street connecting the public park at Williams Park with Rathmines Road Lower (ii) a new pedestrian link through archways on the Fire Station site connecting with the Gulistan site (iii) possibilities for a pedestrian link connecting Castlewood Terrace with the Gulistan, (iv) retain the access beside the Town Hall with a possible study on enhancing this access for a direct line of vision into a new civic square. The property adjoining this lane (marked A on 9.3 C) could be an opportunity site for replacement to give greater width to this access.

Main access points which will require a traffic management strategy with possible one way movements include (i) assessing the potential for a link through Parker Hill (ii) restricted movement through the existing access from Gulistan Terrace having due regard to residential amenity (iii) exploring the potential to enhance the access point beside the Town Hall as noted above (iv) the possibility of a shared access arrangement with the Swan Shopping Centre site through either the Rathmines Road Lower entrance or Castlewood Avenue entrance (marked B on Fig9.3 C)

A basement level car parking strategy is proposed to provide a traffic calmed pedestrian environment across the site, to make efficient use of prime ground level area within the town centre and to create attractive pedestrian streets and public spaces.

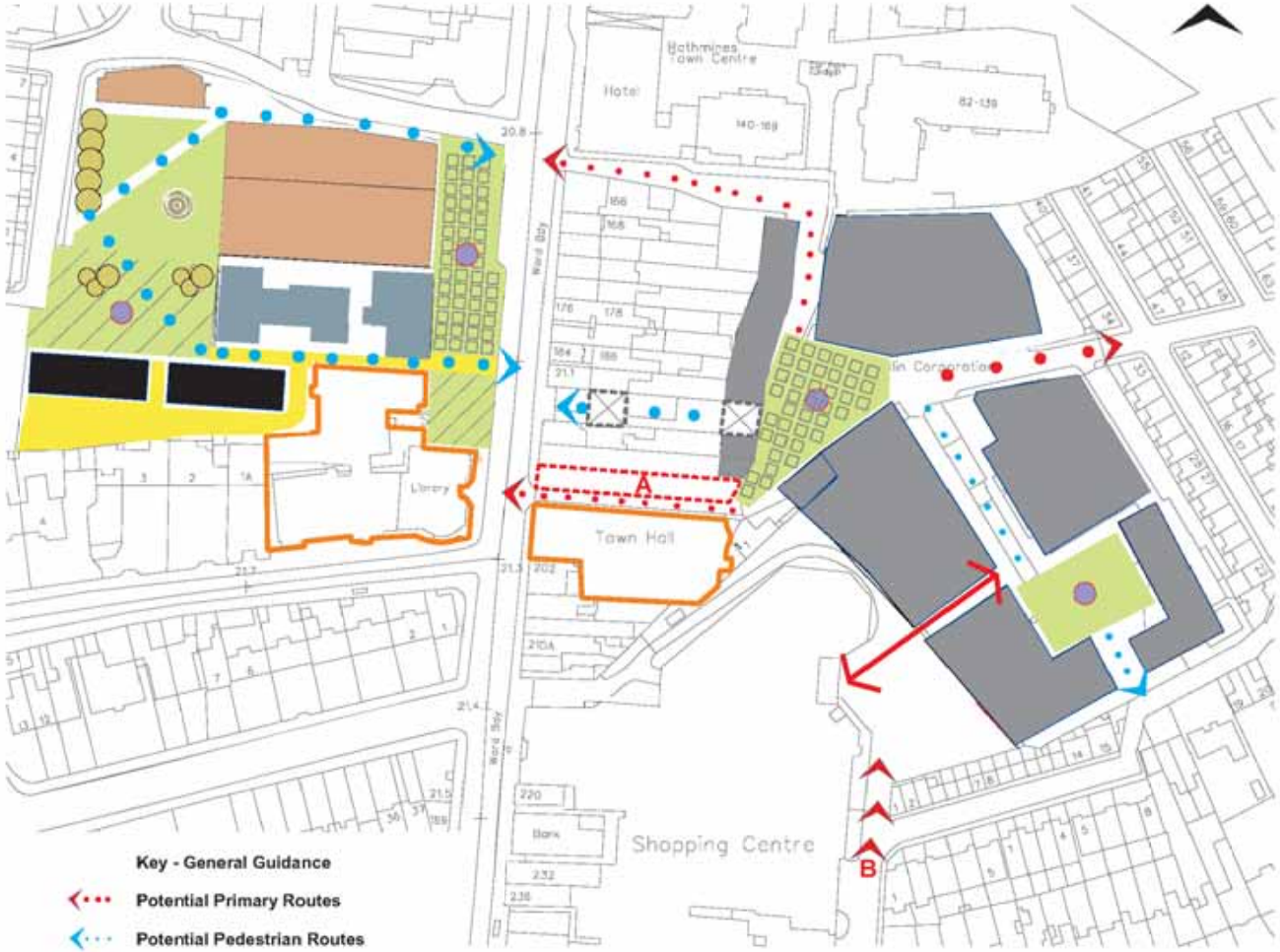






9.3 CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

Indicative Public Realm and movement for new proposals



Summary of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy

Movement between these areas is conceived as a link between three public space elements:

(I) the new park at Williams Park

(ii) the new plaza to the front of Rathmines Square

(iii) a new plaza proposed in the centre of the Gulistan site.

In the event of further development integrating with the Swan Shopping Centre adjoining to the south, there is potential to enlarge the central civic space.

A further open space area is proposed at the southern end of the Gulistan site to provide amenities for a residential uses.

Pedestrian streets are conceived as new routes to encourage permeable movement east to west and include

(i) a new pedestrian street connecting the public park at Williams Park with Rathmines Road Lower

(ii) a new pedestrian link through archways on the Fire Station site connecting with the Gulistan site

(iii) possibilities for a pedestrian link connecting Castlewood Terrace with the Gulistan

(iv) retain the access beside the Town Hall with a possible study on enhancing this access for a direct line of vision into a new civic square. The property adjoining this lane (marked A on Fig 9.3 C) could be an opportunity site to give greater width to this access.

Main access points which will require a traffic management strategy with possible one way movements include

(I) assessing the potential for a link through Parker Hill

(ii) restricted movement through the existing access from Gulistan Terrace having due regard to residential amenity

(iii) exploring the potential to enhance the access point beside the Town Hall as noted above (iv) the possibility of a shared access arrangement with the Swan Shopping Centre site through either the Rathmines Road Lower entrance or Castlewood Avenue entrance (marked B on Fig 9.3 C)

A basement car parking strategy for this area is proposed.



Integration with the Swan Shopping Centre

For a greater extent of integration with the town centre, a possible integration between the Gulistan site and the Swan Shopping Centre would have significant benefit in revitalising the town centre.

The opportunity would exist to link new streets and spaces for wider circulation through the urban block between Parker Hill and Castlewood Avenue. A mixed use town centre development built around streets and spaces as opposed to a retail mall character would create a more attractive environment for shoppers and visitors.

Viable opportunities for investors may be created with modern retail floorspace and high pedestrian footfalls generated by the mix of uses, new connections and new focal points. High quality architectural treatments to buildings aligning streets and spaces would create new landmarks (appropriately scaled) and improve the architectural quality of the town centre.

Access and movement would have a successful integration with the wider street pattern with opportunities to share common entrance points, service zones etc.

The plan sets out an indication only of the urban form that might be achieved. The realisation of this integration may be a longer term objective. Proposals that advance the concept should include an overall site masterplan and take account of:

- The concept of a diverse mixed use town centre and include residential, community, cultural and recreational opportunities within commercial proposals. Active uses through the day and night should be encouraged.

- Have respect to the height strategy concept outlined with respectful integration with the character of the town centre and protection of the setting of the Town Hall as the town centre's focal point landmark.

- Provide exemplary high standards in architectural design with particular emphasis on streetscape facades, animation at street level, the quality of commercial frontages and opportunities to widen the pedestrian footpaths and public realm along Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue.

Encourage movement through the urban block by opening pedestrian streets (which may include wide gallery spaces), create clear and direct movement lines, provide high quality finishes and design to the pedestrian streets, provide a safe and inviting walking environment and integrate open space areas to provide breathing spaces and opportunities for rest, amenity and cultural events with the town centre setting.

- Propose a traffic, servicing and car parking management strategy by making efficient use of underground opportunities, sharing service zones and car parking entrances.

Retain important commercial anchor units within a modern format and attract new high quality retail outlets to strengthen the commercial performance and service the commercial needs of the community within the town centre.

9.3 CENTRAL CIVIC ZONE

Indicative Swan Centre & Guilstan Strategy



Summary of Integration with the Swan Shopping Centre

- The concept of a diverse mixed use town centre and include residential, community, cultural and recreational opportunities within commercial proposals. Active uses through the day and night should be encouraged.
- Have respect to the height strategy concept outlined with respectful integration with the character of the town centre and protection of the setting of the Town Hall as the town centre's focal point landmark.
- Provide exemplary high standards in architectural design with particular emphasis on streetscape facades, animation at street level, the quality of commercial frontages and opportunities to widen the pedestrian footpaths and public realm along Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue.
- Encourage movement through the urban block by opening pedestrian streets (which may include wide gallery spaces), create clear and direct movement lines, provide high quality finishes and design to the pedestrian streets, provide a safe and inviting walking environment and integrate open space areas to provide breathing spaces and opportunities for rest, amenity and cultural events with the town centre setting.
- Propose a traffic, servicing and car parking management strategy by making efficient use of underground opportunities, sharing service zones and car parking entrances.
- Retain important commercial anchor units within a modern format and attract new high quality retail outlets to strengthen the commercial performance and service the commercial needs of the community within the town centre.

Key - General Guidance

Potential Primary Routes

Potential Secondary Routes

Public Spaces

St Louis High School

Consultations as part of the plan preparation have highlighted the important education functions and community work carried out by the Order of the Sisters of St Louis in Rathmines. The existing high school located on Charleville Road accommodates approximately 600 students and employs approximately 60 teachers at present.

The lands of the Order of St Louis total c2.14ha at this location. The school grounds on Charleville Road are zoned Z15 for institutional and community uses.

Retaining the presence of the Order is important for community services in Rathmines. In addition to the educational role provided by the school, the Concert Hall, gym and other school facilities are used for a variety of cultural, sports and community activities by arrangement with the school.

The site is also a residential home for the Order and there is a need for residential and care facilities for Sisters of the Order of St Louis within the site on Charleville Road.

Investment in the educational services of the school in addition to funding new sports facilities and residential units for the Order are a current issue. During the public consultations and at the stakeholder meetings, the potential to develop a portion of the St Louis site emerged as an opportunity. Lands on the eastern part of the school grounds adjoining Charleville Road to the north and the junction of Charleville Road and Wynnfield Road to the west were identified as a potential opportunity site. This site area measures approximately 0.95ha.

Considering the institutional zoning of the site, the identification of this part of the school grounds for development provides an opportunity to consider the potential for new community uses and public open space, in addition to private residential aspects of a development, to contribute to the overall strategy of improving and strengthening the functions and facilities of the town centre. Consultations have highlighted the need for public open space and community space close to the centre of Rathmines.

An appropriate form of development on this site , which is immediately accessible to the town centre via Wynnfield Road, provides an opportunity for strengthened interactions with this site and wider town centre area.

The location of the site is equally recognised as a sensitive location context. Any development opportunity will need to respect established residential amenities for protected properties and the residential conservation area adjoining Charleville Road and Grosvenor Road.

Features of the existing site such as mature trees and stone boundary walls can be incorporated within imaginative design solutions for the site.

The contribution of the existing school to the local community and ability of a development to give viability to the development of new education and sports facilities within the school is recognised by the Council. Development proposals that successfully balance the requirements of the school with the protection of established character and amenity and provision of community facilities may be considered.

The following masterplan objectives are proposed for this site:

- The existing school will continue to play an important role in the wider community including, by arrangement with the school, continued use of existing and new facilities including:

  All weather playing pitch facility
  Sports Hall
  Concert Hall

- Residential uses on site may be considered including residential units for the Order of the Sisters of St Louis and private residential units. The scale of residential buildings shall have an appropriate height which respects the amenities and established character of protected dwellings and the residential conservation area on Charleville Road. Building line set backs and retention of the mature trees where possible on the Charleville Road boundary will be required.

- Z15 zoning objectives requiring 25% open space and/or inclusion of community uses will be applied to this site.

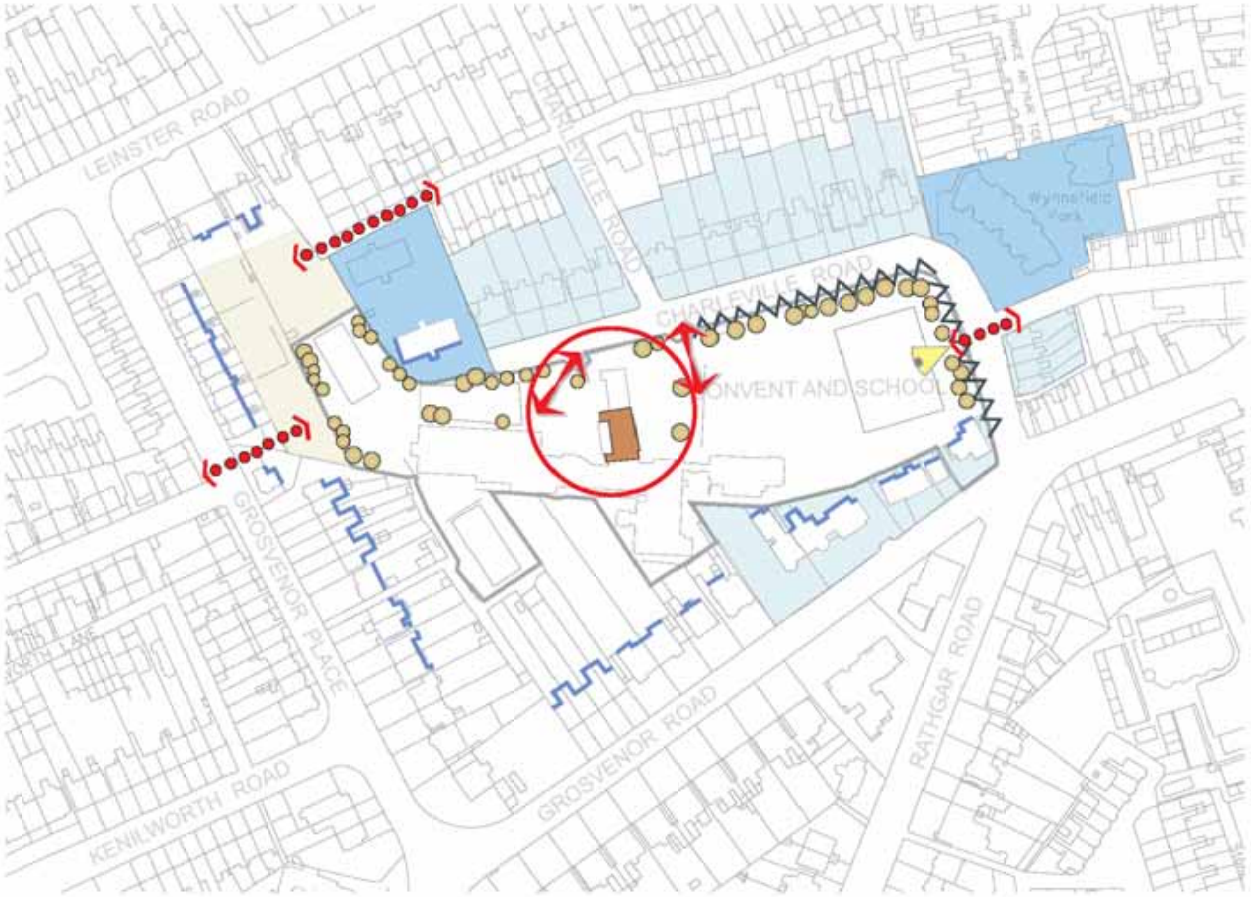
- A planning application for development on the St. Louis site will be required to submit a Traffic Impact Analysis to demonstrate how development of the site minimises traffic generation and manages the car parking demand of both new development and the existing Convent and school.

- Due to issues of flooding in the vicinity of the site, a full Drainage Report and Flood Impact Analysis should be submitted as part of a planning application for development on the site.





9.4 SITE AT ST. LOUIS SECONDARY SCHOOL



CONVENT AND SCHOOL CHARLEVILLE ROAD

Key – General Guidance

Existing Context

- Existing Access Points
- Existing Stone Boundary Wall
- Existing Mature Trees
- Community and Recreational Uses of St. Louis School have wider Public Benefits
- 1 & 2 Storey Context
- 4 Storey Context
- Windows and/or Balconies on Sites adjoining the Boundary
- Additional Lands with Potential for Development

General Guidance

Accessible Public Open Space and /or Community Facilities to be in accordance with the Z15 Development Plan Zoning Objectives

- Future Potential Links
- Visual Permeability through the Site from Wynnefield Road
- Protect the Setting of the Convent Building



Extract from Development Plan 2005-2011

Site of Tesco Rathmines Road Upper

The existing site of Tesco on Rathmines Road Upper is identified as an important shopping location within Rathmines but a site which underperforms in terms of its poor visual presentation to the street and the congested nature of the adjoining pavement.

The site is zoned Z4 for improved mixed service facilities and is included within the Prime Urban Centre designation. The site boundaries are shared with Rathmines Road Upper to the east, private commercial property to the south, the housing estate of Rathmines Avenue and the Garda Station to the west and private commercial and residential properties to the north. The site is characterised by the existing single storey Tesco building on the eastern part of the site addressing Rathmines Road Lower, a surface car park and service zone adjoining the rear façade of the premises. The main vehicular entrance to the site is from Rathmines Road Upper.

The location of the site is close to the landmark junction of Rathgar Road and Rathmines Road Upper. There are some significant buildings close to the site including the Post Office building (a 1930's era Protected Structure). The façade of Tesco is viewed along a straight visual corridor looking south on approach from Rathmines Road Lower.

Despite the advantages of the location, the poor physical environment of the junction and lower quality uses addressing the road on approach to the site weakens the contribution of the location to the town centre's character. There is significant potential to enhance the performance and character of this area as an important location within the town centre. A regeneration of the Tesco site could provide the needed catalyst for investment in smaller properties adjoining this area.

In considering an approach to redeveloping this site, due regard is had for the precedent heights established by commercial buildings on the junction of Rathmines Road Upper and Rathgar Road and also the height of residential apartment blocks in Rathmines Avenue. However, it is important to avoid creating adverse environmental impacts onto the street and have due regard for the character of property on approach to this location from the south. The quality of the street and footpath adjoining the Tesco site would benefit from opportunities for wider circulation space and a more successful integration the taxi rank, bicycle parking and pedestrian movement at the supermarket entrance.

The following masterplan objectives are proposed for this site:

- The site of Tesco is recognised as having potential for regeneration including the replacement of the existing supermarket structure with a high quality, mixed use and architectural landmark building. To improve the interaction of the building with the street, a set back building line is proposed. There is opportunity to explore a double height retail frontage to the street that reincorporates an enhanced supermarket but also includes other commercial uses to create activity at street level. Upper floor levels could have potential for office or residential uses.

- The height of a replacement building has potential to provide approximately 3 to 5 storey's with a step down in height of 3 storeys envisaged for properties adjoining to the south and framing the entrance into Rathmines Avenue. Consideration will be given for a scheme on the properties adjoining to the south to turn the corner onto Rathmines Avenue, remove featureless side gables and provide active frontages to this street.

- The principal of a new building opens the potential to consider an underground car parking strategy for the site. Improvements to the site entrance should explore the segregation of customer parking access with the requirements for service vehicular movement. The car parking entrance should be recessed from the street to avoid undue congestion along the improved pavement area. Servicing requirements should be managed at peak periods.

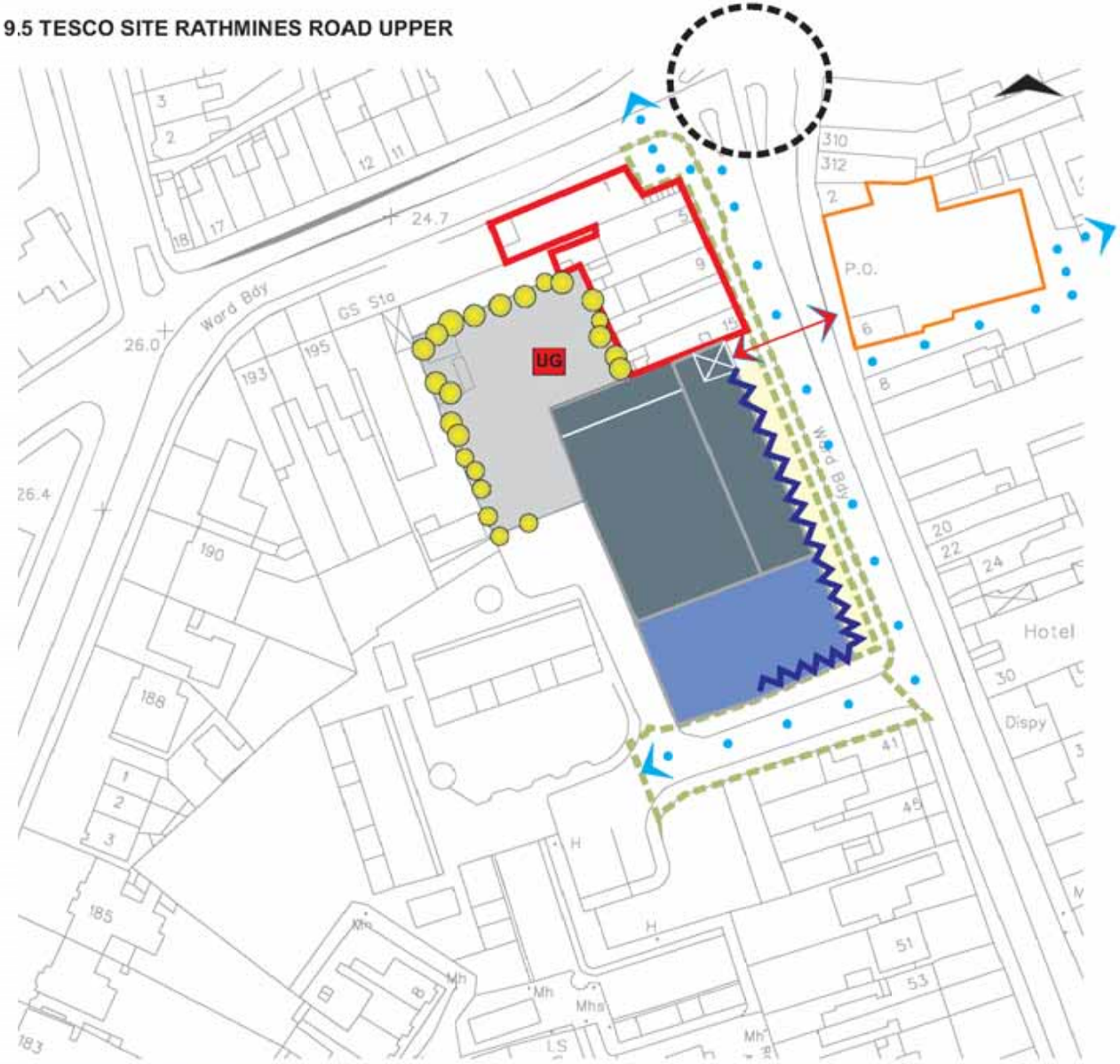
- Recognising the sensitivities of adjoining boundaries, a landscaping strategy for the site should provide a visual upgrade of existing boundaries and screen the open space of adjoining residential apartments on the north boundary. Surface level servicing to the rear of the site should incorporate covered areas of storage to protect the visual outlook from adjoining properties.

- A set back of the new building allows the opportunity for an enhanced and widened public paved area at the entrance to the new building. The design of this space could explore the integration of a taxi rank within a landscaped pavement treatment. High quality bicycle parking facilities, outdoor terraced seating for potential new café uses and a wider circulation area space for pedestrians passing the site can be explored.

- Environmental improvements to the junction of Rathmines Road Upper/Rathgar Road and improvements in the public pavement linking the corner junction to Rathmines Avenue is encouraged to compliment a physical enhancement of this area. Public realm enhancements should encourage a softening of the hard urban edges through a landscaping strategy and recognise the opportunity for creative use and design along the entrance to Rathmines Avenue.



9.5 TESCO SITE RATHMINES ROAD UPPER



Key

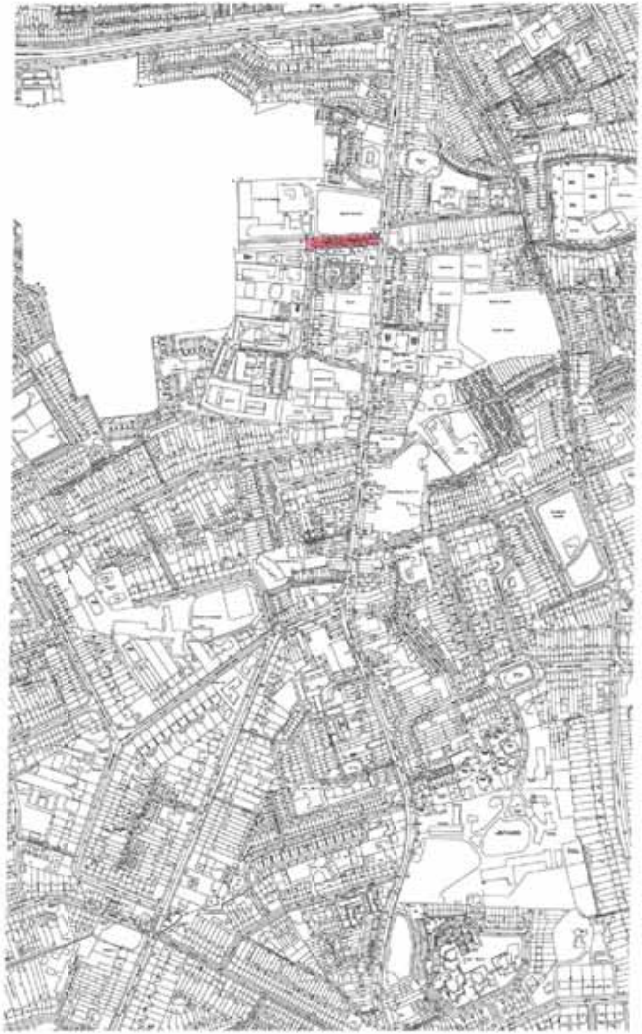
- New building possibly 3 to 5 storey with mixed uses including Ground Floor Supermarket/ Retail/ Café Uses. Office - Residential over head
- 3 Storey street frontage and corner building potential to address Rathmines Avenue and Rathmines Road Upper frontages
- Set back building line to create wide quality Public Realm. Possibility for outdoor seating associated with café uses
- Landscape Strategy to screen service yard area
- Environmental enhancement to footpath area extending from Rathmines Avenue to Rathgar Road / Rathmines Road Upper junction
- Possibility for Civic Enhancement Scheme to key junction
- Access to main Open Space and Service zone
- Adjoining significant mixed use block
- Under ground Car Parking — UG
- Active Frontage



Extract from Development Plan 2005-2011

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

10.1 Military Road



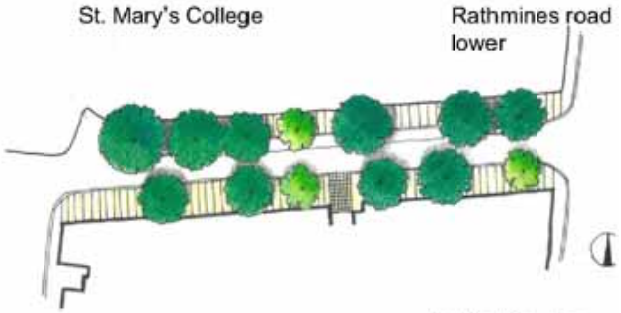
Location map



View towards Rathmines road - After



View towards Rathmines road - Before



Indicative plan

In examining the feasibility of street enhancements, a balance between the streetscape improvements and the needs of resident and business parking will be sought. Limited parking, dual use, good integration of parking design with wider footpaths etc. will be explored.

- Footpaths to be widened along southern end.
- Limited parking to be provided.
- Provision of high quality public lighting.
- Additional trees to be planted.
- Co-ordination of street furniture into clusters to avoid cluttering of footpaths.
- Consult with the Department of Defence regarding any proposed narrowing to the carriage-way of Military Road.



10. 2 Wynnefield Road



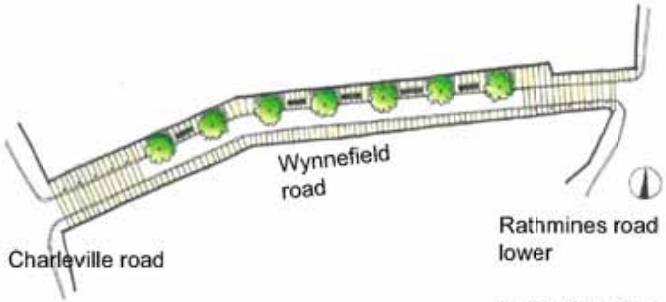
Location map



View towards Rathmines road - After



View towards Rathmines road - Before



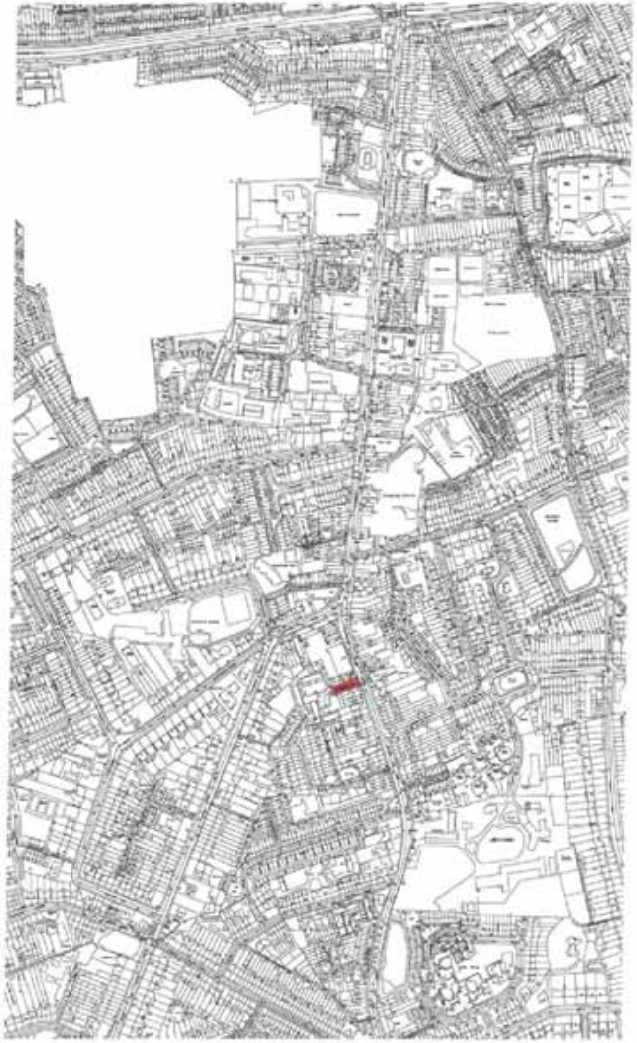
Indicative plan

In examining the feasibility of street enhancements, a balance between the streetscape improvements and the needs of resident and business parking will be sought. Limited parking, dual use, good integration of parking design with wider footpaths etc. will be explored.

- Traffic to be slowed by a change of surface at either end of the street.
- Footpaths to be widened to facilitate pedestrian movement.
- Planting of trees along street.
- Provision of high quality public lighting.
- Co-ordination of street furniture into clusters to avoid cluttering of footpaths.



10. 3 Rathmines Avenue



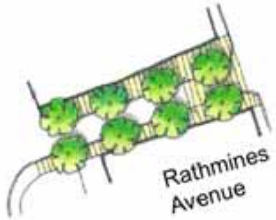
Location map



View towards Rathmines Avenue- After



View towards Rathmines Avenue- Before



Indicative plan

In examining the feasibility of street enhancements, a balance between the streetscape improvements and the needs of resident and business parking will be sought. Limited parking, dual use, good integration of parking design with wider footpaths etc. will be explored.

- Traffic to be slowed by a change of surface at either end of the street.
- Planting of trees on both sides of the street.
- Provision of high quality public lighting.
- Co-ordination of street furniture into clusters to avoid cluttering the footpaths.



10.4 Church Avenue



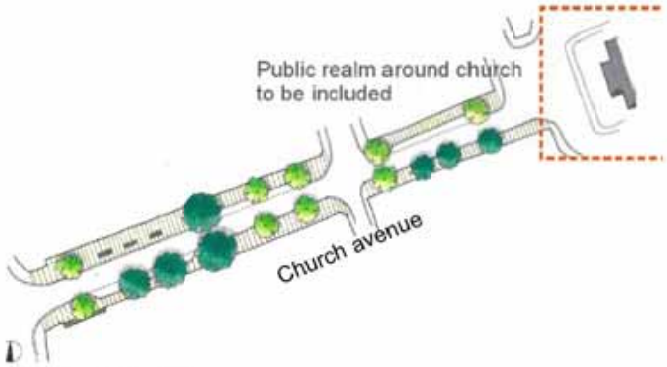
Location map



View towards Church Avenue- After



View towards Church Avenue- Before



Indicative plan

In examining the feasibility of street enhancements, a balance between the streetscape improvements and the needs of resident and business parking will be sought. Limited parking, dual use, good integration of parking design with wider footpaths etc. will be explored.

- Footpaths to be widened.
- Planting of trees to continue line of avenue.
- Provision of high quality public lighting.
- Co-ordination of street furniture into clusters to avoid cluttering of footpaths.





11.0 DESIGN CODES

11.1 Guidance on Mews Development

Mews lane houses are a particular feature of the side streets and rear lanes of Rathmines. Over time, opportunities for the refurbishment of original coach houses and the infill development of modern mews dwellings have given life to these side streets. There are challenges however in creating the appropriate mews lane environment. These include:

- a restricted site size
- respect for existing on site buildings and appropriate incorporation of conservation
- relationship and impact on adjoining and existing properties on site.
- restricted access for off street parking
- restricted width of a laneway
- level changes over the length and width of a site
- daylight considerations to windows of neighbouring properties.
- limited private open space for either the existing or new dwellings
- piecemeal precedents resulting in varying architectural styles and building lines.

The existing 2005-2011 Dublin City Development Plan under section 15.9.19 sets out design guidance for a mews lane property. This policy states mews dwellings should compliment the character of both the mews lane and main building with regard to scale, massing, height, building depth, roof treatments and materials. All parking provision in mews lanes will be in off street garages or forecourts

The Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study 2005 set out guidelines for mews developments with particular focus on encouraging improved quality for mews lane proposals on Fortescue Lane and Richmond Mews. The guidelines are a good example of appropriate guidance within conservation areas. The guidelines advocated include:

- The existing fabric of coach houses should be retained and integrated into any new proposal.
- The form of new mews buildings should respect the historic form of coach houses and the design should respond to the character and scale of the lane.
- A regular pattern to rooflines is encouraged.
- Views from the existing main houses should be considered- an appropriate elevation treatments to the back of the mews dwelling is important.
- The width of a mews dwelling should respect the original plot width.
- Historic boundary wall features should be reinstated.
- External materials should be of good quality in accordance with objectives for residential conservation areas.
- Uses should not generate significant traffic and should conform with Z2 zoning principles.

Open space standards in accordance with the Development Plan must be provided.

- Development of a mews dwelling beyond the footprint of an original coach house is only appropriate where the character of the historic plot and rear garden dimensions are respected.
- Enhanced lighting to the mews street is encouraged. Lighting attached to properties that enhance the lighting conditions of the street should be encouraged. Overhead wires should be ducted and placed underground where possible.
- Parking directly on mews lanes should be prohibited.

The Council will encourage the development of mews lane dwellings where proposals meet the required standards of the Dublin City Development Plan and, for mews lanes of important conservation value, have regard to recommendations as outlined under the Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study.

The consideration of Architectural Conservation Area designation areas within the study area will provide further opportunities for design guidance and support for bets practice design for mews lane developments.

Appropriate mews developments can contribute to the Council's policy of reinforcing/ creating an identifiable network of safe and pedestrian friendly interconnected streets and spaces.

It is important that a piecemeal approach to development is avoided and co-ordination is encouraged for consistency in building lines. The architectural style of mews developments has evolved and several variations on design and appearance are evident within the study area.

Innovative design solutions are encouraged and there is no objection in principle to proposals of a modern design where there are no original coach house features remaining. It is important however that the design and materials integrate successfully with adjoining properties. The layout of the mews proposal should promote active frontages and make a beneficial contribution to the character of the mews lane.

Schemes that are inward focused in character have the potential to contribute poorly to the street. It is important that blank featureless frontages are avoided and new dwellings contribute passive supervision, new landscaping and high quality elevations to the street character. Car parking should not contribute to clutter or congestion for the pedestrian or cyclist accessing the side street. Proposals that block access or restrict the potential for further connections along a mews lane should be discouraged.





11.2 Guidance on Commercial Frontages

Shopfronts are an important part of a street's character. Well designed and well maintained shopfronts and commercial boundaries send a positive signal on the economic vitality of a town centre. For Rathmines, the poor condition of commercial boundaries are having a damaging impact on visitor impressions and perceptions of quality in the commercial profile of the town centre. The retail analysis conducted for this plan has highlighted that a positive visual impression and high visual quality of a town centre are key factors in promoting investor interest and customer interest in a town centre. There are benefits to the local economy and commercial performance of Rathmines in encouraging higher standards in shop front design.

A positive reinstatement of traditional shopfront features, attention to high quality in the detail of modern commercial frontages and better standards of maintenance and repair for properties can achieve local improvements. Cumulatively, the physical appearance of a street can transform itself to a higher visual quality if positive examples are followed.

The City Council supports a range of initiatives including the City Neighbourhoods Competition which encourages local businesses and property owners to engage with the local authority and initiate improvements to properties and sites to enhance the physical character and environment of the local area. Advice and expertise can be given by the local authority and public awareness and prestige that goes with winning awards can be beneficial for businesses, the local economy and environment of the town centre in turn.

To encourage individual owners to improve the quality of shofronts, this plan encourages property owners and designers for proposals to reference Dublin City Council's Shopfront Design Guidelines. The assessment of planning applications for the town centre reference s this important guidance document. The key recommendations within this study area:

- Where alterations are proposed to traditional shopfronts, care must be taken to protect the integrity of the original design features. Traditional elements including cornice, fascia, pilasters and stallriser.

- Proposals for new or replacement shopfronts must consider their architectural context and relationship to the street, the buildings adjoining and the building itself including the upper floor levels. In this regard, a shopfront is not an independent entity. The scale of the shopfront must respect the design and proportions of architectural features of the building itself.

The existing grain and plot width of the street must be respected. Long horizontal facades and disproportionately scaled corporate signage must be avoided. Vertical emphasis must be respected to integrate the proposal with the character of the street.

- Windows and doors are important to encourage direct trading and interaction with the street and visually strengthen the profile of the street. The design of doors and windows should be sympathetic with other features of the building and respect the proportions of these features along the street.

- The display of the company and building number should be the main elements on a fascia display. The form, scale, colour and materials of fascia signage should compliment the overall building design and street character. Individually mounted or hand painted lettering are generally the most appropriate solutions. Discrete lighting incorporated into the lettering or fascia is encouraged. Over sized signage, plastic materials and inappropriate projections from the building façade will be discouraged.
- Artistic features including the use of traditional symbols for crafts and skills may be considered but only where the materials are of high quality and the feature compliments the overall contribution of the shopfront to the street.

- Corporate identity including logos and colour schemes should not override compatibility with adjoining buildings and should not dominate the building itself. Discrete integration of company logos with high quality materials and finishes that compliment the building are more appropriate and have proven successful in many city centre streets.

- Contemporary security measures including shutters can have a damaging impact on the character of a street, particularly after core business hours. A balance is promoted to provide security for the premises but integrate the provision into the shopfront design. Externally fitted roller shutters across a façade shall be discouraged. Placing a shutter with a more open mesh design behind a window display provides a more successful balance. Appropriate internal illumination of window displays are encouraged for night time street contribution.

- Shopfront canopies for shading or outdoor seating should have an open ended design and the canopy box should be integrated flush with the shopfront. No advertising on the canopy is permitted.

Independent ground floor access to upper floor accommodation should be incorporated within the main façade to create diversity and active frontages to the main commercial street.



Dublin City Council Shopfront Design Guidelines

11.3 Guidance on Front Boundary Design.

The condition and maintenance of front garden boundaries along terraced properties in Rathmines have a strong visual impact on the quality of street character. The architectural legacy of residential development in Rathmines has created streetscapes of unique value. The visual contribution of historic wall and railing boundary features and garden landscaping in the context of set back dwellings adds immeasurable quality to the experience of the street.

The integrity of front garden boundaries is not consistent throughout the Rathmines area. There are positive examples of good maintenance and upkeep of boundaries and front garden areas which successfully balance modern day requirements such as bin storage and car parking within the integrity of the property and street as a whole. There are examples however of poor maintenance and inappropriate interventions which have destroyed original features and which detract from the visual amenity of the street.

Factors which have contributed to a deterioration in the quality of gardens and boundaries include:

- Vacancy in the main premises
- Amalgamation of units which has removed original plot width dimensions.
- Car parking provision
- Storage of refuse bins
- Subdivision of historic properties with multiple use of the former front garden area for parking and refuse storage.
- Gradual conversion of terraced properties to commercial use within the commercial zoned area leading to unsympathetic extensions, signage and removal of original features.

The poor physical condition of boundaries can create negative impressions which in turn impacts on the quality of the public realm, investor confidence and visitor interest. It is evident from examples within Rathmines that where streets have either retained original boundaries or undergone recent renovation of boundary and front garden conditions, a greater confidence in the vibrancy and quality of the location is gained. Conversely, poor boundary conditions, evidence of long term dereliction and encroaching poor precedents along a terrace erode the character of the location.

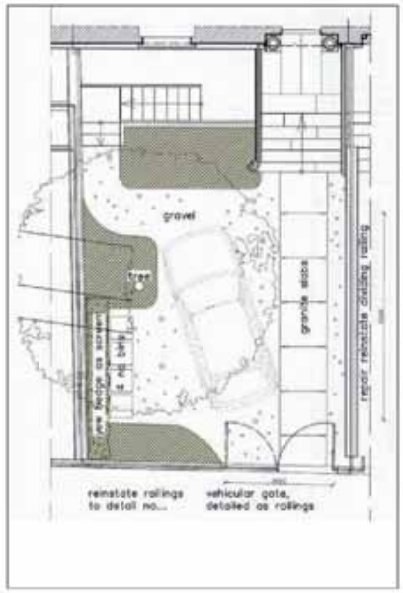
Landscaping within front garden areas also makes an important contribution to visually softening the hard edges of an urban landscape. Streets that included terraced housing with trees planting, lawn areas, flower beds etc add charm and a special atmosphere to a street that contributes to the overall impression of the area. Such features also have an important contribution for sustainable drainage solutions and the biodiversity of the local area.

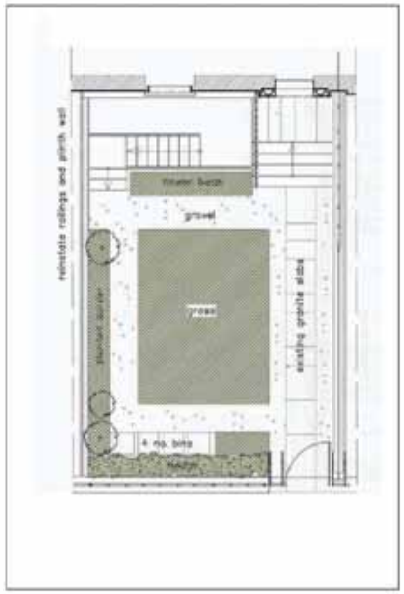
Examples of original and improved boundary conditions are found along sections of Rathmines Road Lower and Castlewood Avenue. However, there are still sections of Rathmines Road Upper and Lower and sections of Richmond Hill that illustrate the issue of boundary maintenance and highlight the need for proactive intervention.

The Council will encourage good quality design solutions in the assessment of planning applications for either residential or commercial properties which presently have poor boundary conditions. The opportunity to reinstate quality boundary treatments will be encouraged and requested as part of any development proposal for such properties. In particular, applications for works to site buildings, development to the rear of properties and developments for off street car parking should include acceptable design solutions for front gardens and boundary conditions.

The Lower Rathmines Road Conservation and Urban Regeneration Study set out detailed design guidance for front garden boundaries including advice on planting, hard surface materials, appropriate positioning for bin storage, appropriate incorporation of car parking and appropriate retention/reinstatement of wall or iron railing boundaries. The effectiveness of the diagrams included in that document are recognised and repeated below. It is important to note that the assessment of proposals that include parking shall have regard to Development Plan policy on car parking and in particular car parking in residential conservation areas.









12.0 PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

The Rathmines Local Action Plan sets out strategic objectives for the Rathmines area as well as site-specific objectives for each of the key redevelopment sites. Dublin City Council will take an inter-departmental and inter-agency approach to coordinate the delivery of key infrastructure in the plan area.

Dublin City Council will appoint a Project Manager and establish a Steering Group to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan. The structure and composition of the Steering Group will be based on the corporate city-wide approach currently being devised by the City Council.

This section of the plan sets out the measures required in order to ensure the full implementation of the Local Action Plan Strategy. These are as follows:

- Phasing
- Planning Applications
- Community Gain
- Public Realm Improvements
- Construction Phase
- Taking in Charge
- Implementation Steering Group
- Monitoring & Reviewing

Phasing

The Action Plan does not prescribe an area wide phasing sequence as a number of the key development sites can proceed independently. However, the plan does promote an integrated strategy for three of the key sites, namely, the Gulistan Site, the Swan Shopping Centre and the Old Fire Station. These three sites have a close inter-relationship due to physical proximity, land ownership patterns and the potential to deliver key community, cultural and recreational facilities and well as key civic open space areas, at a town centre location. These three sites have the potentia lto create a new community focus at the heart of Rathmines.

The Plan identifies area wide improvements to the social infrastructure, parks and public realm that are intended to serve the needs of existing and future residents of Rathmines, and also to support and encourage the economic regeneration of Rathmines Town Centre.

The Planning Authority will, as each key development site comes forward, require a phasing schedule setting out the improvements and / or community infrastructure to be delivered in relation to the amount of floorspace to be provided for each use. Permission for each development phase will be dependent on provision through direct or indirect means of a predetermined amount of works to infrastructure, public realm, community buildings and other improvements.

Planning Applications

The objectives of this Action Plan will be largely achieved through individual development proposals lodged in accordance with Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Dublin City Council will consider each application on its individual merits with particular reference to the achievement of the general and site-specific objectives set out in this action plan. The delivery, operation and costs associated with the provision of new community and social infrastructure shall be the subject of detailed negotiations between the developer, the Planning Authority, statutory agencies and key stakeholders.

Community Gain

It is a fundamental objective of this Action Plan to secure, for the benefit of the local community, the significant provision of new high quality community and social infrastructure as part of the development of the identified key development sites.

It is critically important that the Action Plan delivers a balanced approach to the future development of Rathmines and a 'win-win' outcome for the local community and key landowners. This can be realised by facilitating the achievement of an appropriate quantum of new development to generate an appropriate financial return which will underpin investment in, and support the viability of the key physical, community and social infrastructure needed in Rathmines.

It is considered reasonable that each of the identified key development sites shall contribute to the provision of new community and social infrastructure to serve the plan area.

The Action Plan sets out a series of site-specific objectives for each of the identified key development sites and includes requirements for significant community and social infrastructure provision. The delivery of these area-wide community facilities is central to the overall success of the plan strategy and includes the following:

- New Public Square as a town centre community focal point on Gulistan Site
- New Movement Routes and Civic Open Spaces within the Gulistan / Swan SC / Fire Station Sites
- Multi-purpose community / heath facilities on Gulistan / Swan SC / Fire Station Sites
- Cultural Facilities including the restoration of original auditorium on Town Hall Site
- Integration of mixed uses including potential community uses on the Tesco Site
- New Parish / Community Centre at St. Mary's Community / Health Centre
- New public park at the junction of Wynnfield Road & Charleville Road
- Public Realm Improvement Schemes at Military Road, Wynnfield Road, Rathmines Avenue & Church Avenue.
- Pedestrian Improvements along Rathmines Road Upper / Rathmines Avenue

The contribution of institutions such as schools and Cathal Brugha Barracks to the local community in Rathmines is recognised and valued. In assessing proposals for development on institutional lands, protecting and improving the interaction between the institution and community facilities for wider public use (access to sports facilities, cultural venues, meeting halls etc) will be encouraged.

Construction Phase

Dublin City Council recognises the negative impacts, albeit short term, that large-scale construction projects can have on the local community in terms of traffic generation, dust, noise and other nuisances.

All major planning applications for large scale development will be required to be accompanied by a construction management plan to mitigate against any adverse impacts on the local community.

Taking in Charge

Dublin City Council is committed to the taking in charge of the public areas of all completed developments, including where appropriate new community, social and recreational facilities. The taking in charge of all completed developments will be in accordance with the Policy for the Taking in Charge of Housing Developments (2007) prepared by Dublin City Council.

The overall approach to the taking in charge of completed developments shall be agreed in advance with the relevant stakeholders during the individual site masterplan preparation process.

Monitoring & Reviewing

Dublin City Council is committed to taking a proactive approach in the implementation of the plan, both in a capacity of project co-ordinator in consultation with key stakeholders and as a key landowner.

The Planning Authority shall also undertake to regularly review the site briefs for the key development sites as appropriate to reflect any changed circumstances and altered market conditions in order to ensure that the overall objectives of the action plan are achieved in full.

Appendix 1

SEA Screening Report

Rathmines Local Action Plan

1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to establish whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) should be carried out on the proposed Local Action Plan for Rathmines (non-statutory plan).

The focus of the Local Action Plan is the commercial area of Rathmines defined by Upper and Lower Rathmines Road. The hinterland is represented by a zone to the east and west of the commercial spine defined by Mount Pleasant Avenue Upper to the east and the western boundary of Cathal Brugha Barracks and Grosvenor Square to the west. Please refer to Map 1 attached.

2 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the proposed Local Action Plan is to develop a clear and integrated vision for the area, providing for the managed expansion of the local centre to meet the needs of the local residential community, and yet also nurturing potential synergies between the existing retail, commercial and institutional sectors in order to deliver a quality Prime Urban Centre (PUC) with a vibrant retail core, a comprehensive range of community facilities and a high standard of arts and cultural infrastructure.

In this regard, the Plan will examine the role and character of the various institutions and their lands in the Rathmines area and explore how they can be more fully integrated into the physical and social life of the town. It will also address the challenge of indicating how new developments can be carefully and fully integrated into the life of adjacent areas and communities.

Rathmines represents one of the great urban achievements of Victorian Dublin. The scale of ambition expressed in its public buildings alone indicated a huge aspiration to achieve an urban quality and civic identity for its township in a location that was at the time outside the built urban boundary. The quality of its hinterland housing is also very urban in character, its appeal and adaptability enduring to this day, where individual houses fetch some of the highest prices in the metropolitan area.

Despite sporadic investment and change, the town centre of Rathmines in the last 20 years has not benefited from urban regeneration to the same extent as some other locations in the city. It is not clear why this is the case and it may be due to many factors. It is an objective of the proposed this Local Action Plan to understand why and to put in place a series of strategies and initiatives aimed at ensuring Rathmines lives up to its inspiring past, responds to its status as a prime urban centre and plays an important role as an economic, social and cultural heart for its extensive and diverse hinterland.

3 Background to the Local Action Plan

The Planning Authority's assessment regarding the likely significance of effects on the environment of the Proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan is set out below in Table 2.

Please find attached a map of the study area and also a map indicating the seven key redevelopment sites. The Plan area currently comprises an estimated 4,150 permanent private households with a resultant population of in the order of 7,300 persons. There was a 0.5% decline in population between 2002 and 2006 in the Rathmines area, in contrast to over 2% growth in Dublin City. This lower rate of population growth may be attributed to the lack of suitable infill development land and decreasing average household size.

From our initial analysis there are approximately 4.68 ha of redevelopment opportunity sites within Rathmines. Assuming a residential yield of between 75-100 units per ha, there is capacity for an additional 350 – 470 dwellings or an additional 750 – 1,000 persons. Our analysis is at an early stage of the process. We are providing the above as an initial indication of likely redevelopment areas and population levels.

The potential population increases arising from re-development of the key in-fill sites is estimated at circa 750-1,000 Persons, which would be a relatively modest increase with regard to the existing population of the plan area (circa 7, 300) and with regard also to population forecasts on a regional level for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

4 Policy Context

The proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan is located within a long-established inner suburban area which has been identified as a Prime Urban Centre (PUC), to serve surrouncing residential areas under, under the development strategy as set out in the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011. The Local Action Plan area essentially relates to a built-up urban area with development potential limited to a number of in-fill sites. The Local Action Plan strategy is being prepared on the basis of sensitive in-fill development of the key sites, a public realm enhancement strategy in tandem with a network of open spaces, to enable intensification and efficient use of land to reinforce a compact mixed-use settlement form in accordance with national and regional planning policy, as well as the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011.

Table 1: Potential Dwelling and Population Yield from Key Potential Sites

Site	Area (ha)	Potential No. Dwellings	Potential Population
Gulistan	1.16	87-116	184-245
Swan Centre	1.334	100-133	211-282
Tesco	0.33	25-33	52-70
Blackberry Fair	0.26	20-26	41-55
St. Louis High School	1.0	75-100	158-211
DIT Rathmines	0.3	23-30	48-63
St. Mary's Community Centre	0.3	23-30	48-63
Total	**4.68**	**350-470**	**750-1,000**

Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011

In order to provide a strategic approach to the suburbs and to encourage greater efficiency in land use and transportation patterns, the Development Strategy of the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011 identifies a number of Prime Urban Centres.

Rathmines is designated as a Prime Urban Centre in the Dublin City Development Plan. It is one of 8 such centres located throughout the city, identified by reason of their existing size and/or established urban form and because of their potential and capacity to deliver on a range of requirements, including:

- Increased density of development
- Accessibility by public transport
- A viable retail and commercial core
- A comprehensive range of high quality community and social services
- A distinctive spatial identity with a high quality urban environment

It is an objective of the Development Plan to prepare a Local Action Plan for Rathmines PUC.

The Development Plan states that within these identified Prime Urban Centres, a number of general development principles shall apply including:

- Population: Establish significant residential population bases with diversity in unit types and tenures capable of establishing long term integrated communities.
- Density: Ensure the establishment of high density developments capable of sustaining quality public transport systems and supporting local services and activities. Account should be taken in any such development of any distinct or valuable architectural or historical features which influence the urban form, character and scale of the existing area.
- Commercial/Retail: The creation of a vibrant retail and commercial core with animated streetscapes.
- Community and Social Services: The centres will be encouraged to become the focal point for the integrated delivery of community and social services.
- Employment: Encourage the provision of mixed use developments incorporating retail, office, residential and live work units, and the creation of small start-up units. (The floor area limitations in respect of offices given in the land use zoning objective Z4 shall not apply in the case of identified Prime Urban Centres, and applications involving office development in these areas shall be assessed on their merits taking account of the overall objective to provide for a mixed use environment).
- Built Environment: The creation of high quality, mixed use urban districts with a distinctive spatial identity and coherent urban structure of interconnected streets and child friendly public spaces and urban parks. Development should have regard to the existing urban form, scale and character and be consistent with the built heritage of the area.
- Capacity for Development: Encourage the development/redevelopment of under utilised sites.

5 Evaluation

TABLE 2 – LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

TITLE OF PLAN

Proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan (non-statutory plan)

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Dublin City Council

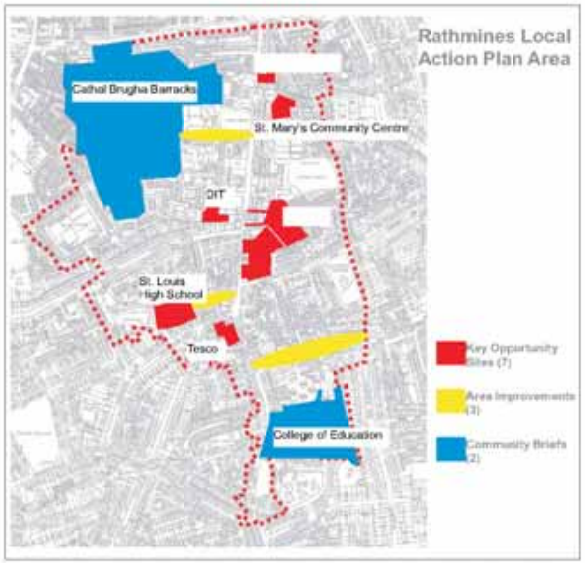
Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular to: 1(a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	NO	The Local Action Plan strategy is being prepared on the basis of sensitive in-fill development of the key sites, a public realm enhancement strategy in tandem with a network of open spaces, to enable intensification and efficient use of land to reinforce a compact mixed-use settlement form in accordance with national and regional planning policy, as well as the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011. The Plan will provide an area specific planning framework at a local level. The Local Action Plan represents a lower tier plan in the planning hierarchy and takes cognisance of the higher order plans.
1(b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans including those in a hierarchy	NO	The strategic issues for the area are determined by the current Dublin City Development Plan. The Local Action Plan will provide objectives for the development of each key redevelopment sites in accordance with the existing Development Plan policy. The detailed design briefs for the redevelopment sites will be guided by the Development Standards of the Dublin City Development Plan at planning application stage.
1(c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	NO	The proposal for sensitive in-fill development on a number of key sites and public realm improvements is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and especially so in terms of mixed-use development and consolidation of the Metropolitan Core. It is considered that implementation of the emerging strategy in the proposed local action plan, is likely to result in predominantly positive local and strategic environmental impacts.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan	NO	No predicted likely direct impact on the conservation function of any designated sites is predicted as a result of the implementation of the development strategy of the local action plan, which accords with the development principles for Prime Urban Centres (PUCs) as set out in Section 14.4.4 of the Dublin City Development Plan. A section of the Grand Canal lies along the northern boundary of the Plan area and is protected under National legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) (site number 02104). It is relevant to note that the Plan does not identify any key site with redevelopment potential/development proposals adjoining the Grand Canal.
1(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. Plans linked to waste-management or	NO	The proposed Local Action Plan would have some relevance at a local scale to the implementation of European Legislation on the environment. A section of the Grand Canal lies along the northern boundary of the Plan area and is protected under National legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) 1, (site number 02104). It is relevant to note that the Plan does not identify any key site with redevelopment potential/development proposals adjoining the Grand Canal.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to: 2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	NO	It is anticipated that the Local Action Plan will guide development in the area over the next six years and may put forward longer-term objectives. The core principles and objectives of the Local Action Plan will aim to minimise any potential adverse impacts arising from the resulting changes. In addition mitigating measures at project-level EIA will also minimise any possible adverse impacts.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	NO	There may be likely cumulative effects however it is envisaged these would largely be positive effects. The local action plan strategy is being prepared on the basis of sensitive in-fill development of the key sites, a public realm enhancement strategy in tandem with a network of open spaces, to enable intensification and efficient use of land to reinforce a compact mixed-use settlement form in accordance with national and regional planning policy, as well as the City Development Plan 2005-2011.
2 (c) the transboundary nature of the effects	NO	The study area for the Local Action Plan is located entirely within the City Council boundary.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment ((e.g. due to accidents)	NO	There are no Seveso Sites within the area and proposals, as part of the Local Action Plan will not result in any foreseen significant risks to human health.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effect YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (Negative and positive)
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	NO	The Plan identifies 7 key development sites which in total equate to circa 4.6ha. The Plan area currently comprises an estimated 4,150 permanent private households with a resultant population of in the order of 7,300 persons. There was a 0.5% decline in population between 2002 and 2006 in the Rathmines area, in contrast to over 2% growth in Dublin City. The potential population increases arising from re-development of the key in-fill sites is estimated at circa 750-1,000 persons, which would be a relatively modest increase with regard to the existing population of the plan area (circa 7, 300) and with regard also to population forecasts on a regional level for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effect YES/NO	Summary of significant environmental effects (Negative and positive)
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	NO	(i) The Local Action Plan area has a rich architectural heritage reflecting its history as a one of the great urban achievements of Victorian Dublin. The quality and legibility of this legacy of public, commercial and domestic buildings was eroded and damaged by an ad hoc evolution of urban strip buildings developed through the 19th and 20th centuries. The Local Action Plan will have full regard to existing development plan architectural conservation policies, including policies for Protected Structures and Conservation Areas. (ii) It is not expected that any environmental quality standards will be exceeded. (iii) It will be an objective of the Local Action Plan to ensure that the future redevelopment of the area and intensification of land use does not undermine the conservation/heritage value of the area.
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status	NO	There are no areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status within the Plan area. A section of the Grand Canal lies outside the Plan area, along its northern boundary and is protected under National legislation by way of its designation as a proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), (site number 02104). There are no development proposals for any lands in the immediate vicinity of this designated site.

6. Determination

The Planning Authority has determined that an SEA is not required for the proposed Variation to the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011.



APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

In Accordance With The Requirements Of

ARTICLE 6(3)

Of The

EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

For A

PROPOSED DRAFT LOCAL ACTION PLAN FOR RATHMINES

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION & TERMS OF REFERENCE

This is an Appropriate Assessment Screening of a proposed Local Action Plan (non-statutory plan) for Rathmines, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The proposed Local Action Plan has been assessed to ascertain if it is required to be subject to an *'Appropriate Assessment'* under the EU Habitats Directive. Based on the *'Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, a *'Screening Matrix'* and a *'Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix'* have been completed.

The principal trigger for undertaking an *'Appropriate Assessment'* would be if the proposed Local Action Plan was likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. For the purposes of Article 6 assessments, Natura 2000 sites are those identified as Sites of Community Importance under the Habitats Directive (normally called Special Areas of Conservation) or classified as Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC),

There are no Natura 2000 Sites in the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan Area. The nearest Natura 2000 site is in the order of 4.1 kilometres to the east of the proposed Local Action Plan to Dublin Bay.

The Natura 2000 sites within the wider vicinity of the area in question and within the Dublin region are as follows:

- North Bull Island SPA (#00406)
- South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA (#004024)
- Howth Head Coast SPA (#004113)
- Irelands Eye SPA (#004117)
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (#004116)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (#000206)
- South Dublin Bay SAC (# 000210)
- Howth Head SAC (#000202)
- Irelands Eye SAC (#002193)
- Glenasmole Valley SAC (#001209)
- Wicklow Montains SAC (#002122)

The proposed plan boundary area lies immediately south of a Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)

- Grand Canal pNHA (#002104)

The NHAs/pNHAs do not form part of the Natura 2000 network. Nevertheless it is considered there would be no direct impact from the proposal due to the fact that there are no key sites with development potential / proposals bounding or in the vicinity of the canal. Although there is a potential for bat habitats along the canal, this is not applicable to the Natura 2000 designation.

The Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government requires that, as a result of European Court of Justice Case 418/04 EC Commission v Ireland, any draft land use plan (development plans, local area plans, regional planning guidelines etc) or amendment / variation to it plan proposed under the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (normally called Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The results of the screening should be recorded and made available to the public.

The Circular does not specify that screening be undertaken in relation to non-statutory local or masterplans. However, it is considered appropriate that a Screening Report for AA be undertaken in respect of the proposed local action plan to ensure a best practice approach and the application of the Precautionary Principle.

Similarly, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report has also been prepared for the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan.

The proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan is located within a long-established inner suburban area which has been identified as a Prime Urban Centre (PUC), to serve surrounding residential areas under, under the development strategy as set out in the City Development Plan 2005-2011. The action plan area essentially relates to a built-up urban area with development potential limited to a number of in-fill sites. The local action plan strategy is being prepared on the basis of sensitive in-fill development of the key sites, a public realm enhancement strategy in tandem with a network of open spaces, to enable intensification and efficient use of land to reinforce a compact mixed-use settlement form in accordance with national and regional planning policy, as well as the City Development Plan 2005-2011.



FIGURE 1 BELOW ILLUSTRATES ALL OF THE DESIGNATED SITE IN THE WIDER VICINITY OF THE RATHMINES AREA.

Accordingly, it is not anticipated that, subject to adherence with development management standards and mitigation measures identified under any necessary project-level Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), that there will be any potential impact on the conservation function of any Natura 2000 site in the wider vicinity of the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan.

To re-iterate, there are no Natura 2000 Sites within or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan. The proposal for sensitive in-fill development on a number of key sites and public realm improvements is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and especially so in terms of mixed-use development and consolidation of the Metropolitan Core. It is considered that implementation of the emerging strategy in the proposed local action plan, is likely to result in predominantly positive local and strategic environmental impacts. This Screening Report and the attached Screening Matrix, therefore focuses on the potential long distance indirect and cumulative impacts of the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, on Natura 2000 sites in the wider vicinity of the plan area.

Taking cognisance of the above, the planning authority is of the opinion that there will be no direct, indirect or cumulative impact on any Natura site in the wider vicinity as a result of the implementation of the strategy under the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan. Accordingly, the planning authority has determined that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is not required for the proposed Rathmines Local Action Plan.

This will be notified to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as the relevant consultee body on the 9th February 2009.

APPENDIX 2 IS A SEPARATE DOCUEMENT