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## Limerick Georgian City Demonstration Project

### Proposed Infill Residential Development

at

**33 & 34 Thomas Street Limerick**

on behalf of

**Limerick City & Council**

**Part 8 Planning Application**

**Design, Planning & Architectural Heritage Report**

**December 2022**

## 1. Design & Planning Report

### Introduction

1.01 In accordance with Part XI of the (Planning and Development) Acts 2000 (as amended) and Part 8, Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Limerick City & County Council proposes to carry out the following development at Nos. 33 & 34 Thomas Street, Limerick, V94 XKK0 and V94 7X26.

1.02 The proposed Development consists of a change of use from existing house to apartments and remodeling of the existing four-storey-over-basement Georgian terraced house at No. 33 Thomas Street to provide 5no. one-bedroom apartments.

1.03 The material alterations, repairs and renewals proposed to No.33 Thomas Street comprise: demolition of the return to the rear; reinstatement of the front lightwell and railings; removal and alterations to existing internal partitions, doors and joinery; fire upgrading of existing walls and ceilings, installation of mechanical and electrical services, PV panels and plant at roof level, as well as sundry remedial works not impacting on the character or special interest of a Georgian building (not a protected structure).

1.04 The proposed Development also consists of demolition of the former fire station structure at No. 34 Thomas Street to provide two ranges of residential apartments around an internal courtyard – one facing onto Thomas Street and the other along the rear boundary of the site. Connected by a staircase and passenger lift structure, the proposed new apartment structure is five storeys tall, comprising retail, commercial, community and storage uses at ground floor level, with apartments at first, second, third and fourth floor levels. The top floor onto Thomas Street is set-back from the street façade to the line of the ridge of No. 33. The proposed apartments comprise 8no. two-bedroom units.

1.05 The proposed development includes the creation of a semi-private courtyard between the Thomas Street and the rear block– to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments.

1.06 Services and siteworks proposed to facilitate the proposed development include: new water, electricity and comms supplies; new foul sewage and storm water connections to public mains; air-to-water and roof-mounted solar panels for heating and ventilation.

1.07 The report that follows outlines the physical, planning, and historic context within which the scheme now presented for Part 8 planning approval has been prepared, as well as a description of the development proposed and the principal

design and statutory objectives underpinning the design.

## 2. Context

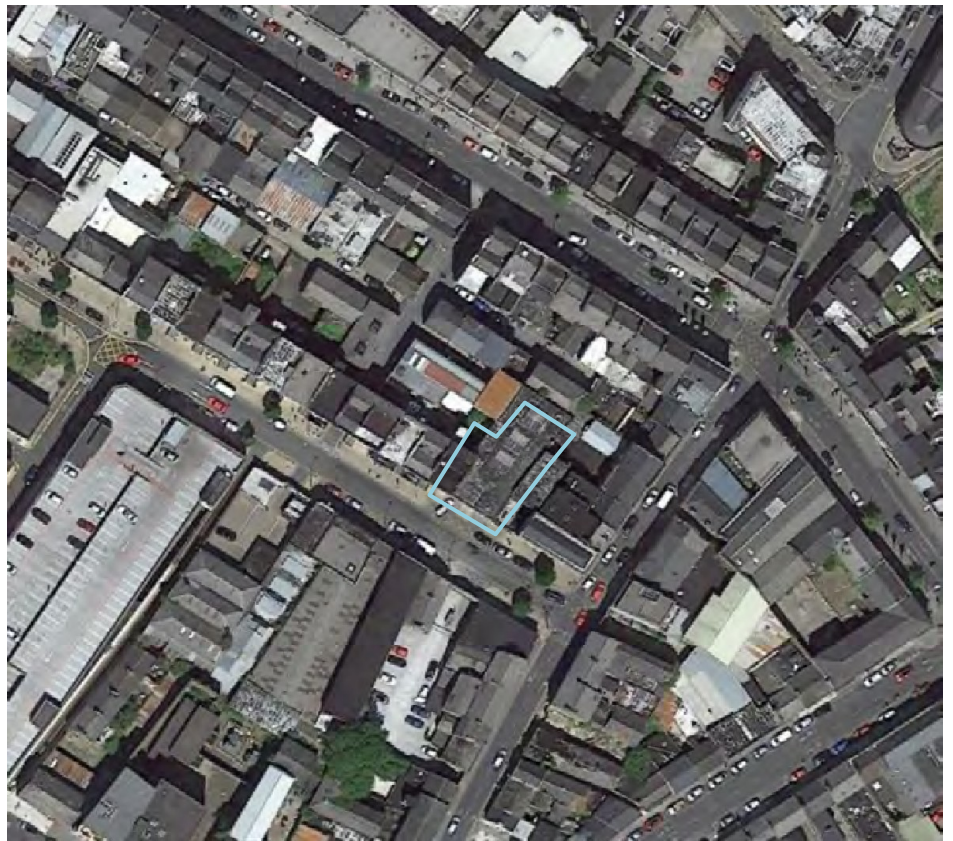
### Site Description

2.01 Located in Limerick's city centre and at the edge of the historic Georgian core, the site measures 0.055 hectares and comprises two properties: No. 33 - a derelict Georgian townhouse and rear yard; No. 34 - the city's former fire station.

2.02 Thomas Street is located at the northern bounds of the city's Georgian core. It links O'Connell Street to the west with Wickham Street to the east. The subject site is located at the south-eastern end of Thomas Street, as the Georgian fabric becomes more disjointed with more varied building styles.

2.03 Thomas Street forms an irregular urban block with William Street to the north, Little Catherine Street to the west and Wickham Street to the east. An arched passageway leads from Thomas Street to Fox's Bow and a number of cul-de-sac laneways within the urban block. The subject site has no frontages onto any of these laneways.

2.04 Although of Georgian origin, and therefore of historic interest, No. 33 is not listed as a protected structure in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, and there are no indications of any intention to have it so designated.



*Satellite view with No. 33 / 34 Thomas Street highlighted*

**No. 33 Thomas Street**

2.05 No. 33 Thomas Street is the last of a row of Georgian houses to the west of the subject site. To the east of the site, No. 35 is a single-storey structure building of no architectural merit. It is currently in use as a brewery and bar. To the rear, the combined site has shared boundaries with buildings facing onto Wickham Street and William's Lane.

2.06 The site is well connected with its city centre location; it is close to multiple public transport options including train and bus routes, as well as Limerick's extensive retail, commercial and amenity offerings.

2.07 Both No. 33 and No. 34 are derelict and vacant, and have been for some time. There is a large antenna / aerial erected on the roof of No. 34 Thomas Street which is accessed by operational and maintenance personnel intermittently. It is proposed to remove this as part of the proposed development.

2.08 The rear of the subject site plot is largely surrounded by buildings and party walls with no public access currently. There are a number of shared rear boundaries.

2.09 No. 33 Thomas Street shares a party wall with the adjacent Georgian building No. 32 Thomas Street. No. 34 Thomas Street shares a boundary with No. 35 Thomas Street – a single storey infill building of similar style to No. 34.

2.10 No. 33 Thomas Street consists of a four-storey-over – basement Georgian townhouse, with a return that extends into the small yard to the rear. It has an attractive red / brown brick façade to the street with a raised parapet on its street elevation. Tying in with the Georgian terrace to the west. It has a double-pitch roof profile, with a central valley.

2.11 Lightwells to the basement – front and rear – were filled in at some time in the past, including the loss of the traditional wrought iron railings that would have guarded the area to the front of the property.

2.12 No. 33 – not a protected structure – is in a dilapidated condition. The timber floors and stairs are supported by structural propping, the gable party wall with No. 34 has a major structural crack and is off-plumb, and the poor condition of the roof has resulted in water ingress which is causing further deterioration of the structure, with wet and dry rot identified throughout.

2.13 No. 33's western rear boundary bounds with No. 32 which has a small external area and is in single-storey commercial / industrial use. The northern boundary of No. 33 – at the rear of the plot – consists of a two-storey brick/stone gable wall, part of a building which opens onto a cul-de-sac lane accessed from Fox's Bow, currently operating as Melody Bar.



**34 Thomas Street**

2.14 No. 34 Thomas Street, is a two-storey twentieth-century building which was originally the city fire station, and more recently used by the Civil Defence. It has large openings on its front elevation, which has an industrial expression that is unsympathetic to the adjacent Georgian terrace.



*Street view Nos. 33 / 34 Thomas Street*



*View from No. 33, looking at the rear boundary and side elevation to No. 34.*

2.05 No. 35 has a rendered façade that has been brightly painted in recent years, with a concrete parapet set in front of a felted roof that is partly sloping and partly flat. Internally the building has a double height central atrium, and it is of no architectural interest.

2.06 Historically, the existing fire station / civil defence building at No. 34 extended over the first-floor of no. 35. Efforts to regularise this arrangement are in hand. No 34 Thomas Street is intended to be demolished in its entirety as part of the proposed development.

2.07 There is existing clerestory glazing along the rear boundary of No. 34 which it is proposed to block up as part of the proposed development. The rear of No. 34 consists of a shared boundary with the commercial building that has its long elevation fronting onto William's Lane.

In summary, the two properties are vacant and derelict and ripe for redevelopment of the type proposed.



*View of side elevation of No. 34 and roof of existing building at No. 35.*

### **3. Planning Context**

#### **National / Local Planning Policy**

3.01 The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets the vision and strategy for the development of Ireland to 2040. It puts forward a major emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements, rather than continual expansion and sprawl. The target is for at least 40% of all new housing to be delivered within the existing built-up area of cities, town and village on infill and/or brown field sites.

3.02 The NPF puts forward policies to enable the four cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford to each grow by at least 50% to 2040 and to enhance

their significant potential to become cities of scale. It envisages a population increase of 50% to 60% for Limerick City and suburbs to c. 140,000 persons by 2040. This will require increasing and diversifying the City's employment base and attracting more people to live in the City, both within the City Centre and in new green field development areas.

3.03 The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Regional Assembly reflects the policies and goals of the NPF and outlines a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan for the Limerick Shannon area.

3.04 Among the policies set out is to support the regeneration and continued investment into Limerick City through initiatives such as Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration and to further enhance Limerick City as a primary economic driver for the Southern Region.

3.05 The *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028* is focused on city-centre first policies in order to encourage urban regeneration. This was reinforced by the adoption by Limerick City and County Council of *Limerick 2030 and Living Limerick City Centre Initiative*. The key objectives is the revitalisation and densification of Limerick city centre including renewal of vacant and underutilised building stock by embedding emerging economic and employment opportunities in derelict buildings.

3.06 Under the *Living Limerick City Centre Initiative* No.58 O'Connell Street is one of two key pathfinding projects in the *Living Georgian City Programme* demonstrating new residential living in the city centre through the careful restoration and upgrading of existing Georgian building stock.

3.07 No. 33/34 Thomas Street is located in an area zoned "City Centre" in the *Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028*. The specific zoning objective is:

*The Georgian Quarter will experience on-going renovation of its building stock with a substantial increase in the number of residents and level of business activity to create a bustling and vibrant mixed use residential and business district. The distinct qualities of the area are well established and there is a need to preserve the Georgian fabric, as well as the complex elements, which contribute to the character of the built environment of Newtown Pery.*

3.08 Within the "City Centre" zoning, Objective ECON 01 outlines the objectives of the Council, namely:

*Enhance the vitality of the City Centre through a mixture of uses, reuse of vacant units, increased residential population and revitalization. Retail is an integral part of the City's economy complementing its inherent strengths including innovation, enterprise, tourism, culture and services and has an important array of amenities, vibrancy, liveability / quality of life and quality-built environment. Development shall be designed so as*

*to enhance the public realm and creation of a sense of place.*

3.09 Retailing is prioritised in this area but not to the exclusion of other land use types. Other uses such as residential, hotel, office and cultural and leisure facilities etc. which complement the retail function of the City Centre retail area and promote vibrancy in the City Centre are also permitted, subject to the policies to promote City Centre retailing.

## **National Planning Guidelines**

3.10 Government guidance has been published in respect of density (*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009*), urban design (*Urban Design Manual - A best practice guide, 2009*), building heights (*Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018*) and apartment design and density (*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*).

3.11 The guidance document *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009*, urges development of residential accommodation at higher densities.

3.12 The *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018*, states that the Government considers that there is significant scope to accommodate anticipated population growth and development needs, by building up and consolidating the development of our existing urban areas.

3.13 The *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*, identify three main urban typologies for which particular considerations are set out in respect of residential development. The first of these typologies is that described as "*Central and/or Accessible Urban Locations*": which locations include those within walking distance (i.e. up to 15 minutes or 1,000- 1,500m), of principal city centres, or significant employment locations, that may include hospitals and third-level institutions. These are stated in the Guidelines to be suitable for small to large-scale and higher density apartment development, depending on location.

3.14 The *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*, sets out a number of requirements for apartment developments including some so-called Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR). In general, there is a relaxation of many of these requirements for development on small sites (less than 0.25ha) and/or in urban regeneration developments.

3.15 In higher density developments, comprising wholly of apartments in more central locations that are well served by public transport, the guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*, advocates a default policy for car-parking provision to be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated in highly accessible areas.

## **Apartment Design Standards**

3.16 In December 2020, the Government published the *Sustainable Urban*



*Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*

3.17 To a considerable extent, the *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020*, supersede certain requirements of local authority development plans.

3.18 The Guidelines emphasise the need for greater provision of apartments nationally and state that it is

3.19 *"critical to ensure that apartment living is an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures.... and that the economic and regulatory conditions are such that apartment development attracts both the investment and the seeking out of this crucial form of housing by households, that will then result in greater delivery of apartments in Ireland's cities and towns and other appropriate locations".*

3.20 The Guidelines identify three overall types of location for the purposes of provision of apartment dwellings:

- Central and/or Accessible Urban Locations
- Intermediate Urban Locations
- Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations

3.21 The site of the Georgian building at No.58 O'Connell Street meets the criteria for the first location type, namely *Central and/or Accessible Urban Locations*. According to the Guidelines, such sites are suitable for small to large-scale and higher density development, depending on location, that may wholly comprise apartments.

3.22 The Guidelines state that the 2016 Census shows that, if the number of 1-2 person dwellings is compared to the number of 1-2 person households, there is a deficit of approximately 150% and that in future a majority of households will comprise one and two-persons.

### **Specific Planning Requirements**

3.23 Specific Planning Policy Requirements within Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines state that planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are to have regard to a number of SPPRs within Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in carrying out their functions, as follows:

3.24 SPPR1: Apartment developments may include up to 50% one-bedroom or studio type units (with no more than 20-25% of the total proposed development as studios) and there shall be no minimum requirement for apartments with three or more bedrooms. Statutory development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but only further to an evidence-based Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), that has been agreed on an area, county, city or metropolitan area basis and incorporated into the relevant development plan(s).

3.25 However, SPPR 2 qualifies these requirements in respect of urban infill sites up to 0.25ha. The site in the current instance is below this area threshold and could come within the scope of SPPR 2. But, in any case, the unit mix proposed accords with SPPR 1.

3.26 SPPR2: For all building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size, or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25 hectares, the following apply:

3.27 Where up to 9 residential units are proposed, notwithstanding SPPR 1, there shall be no restriction on dwelling mix, provided no more than 50% of the development (ie. up to 4 units) comprises studio-type units;

3.28 Where between 10 to 49 residential units are proposed, the flexible dwelling mix provision for the first 9 units may be carried forward and the parameters set out in SPPR 1, shall apply from the 10th residential unit to the 49<sup>th</sup>.

3.29 For schemes of 50 or more units, SPPR 1 shall apply to the entire development.

3.30 SPPR3: Minimum apartment floor areas are as follows;

- Studio apartment (1 person) 37 sq.m.
- 1-bedroom apartment (2 persons) 45 sq.m.
- 2-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 73 sq.m.
- 3-bedroom apartment (5 persons) 90 sq.m.

3.31 Minimum floor areas for apartments are set out at SPPR 3. For one-bedroom units the minimum is 45 sqm and for two-bedroom (four person) units it is 73 sqm. In addition, provision is made for smaller two-bedroom units of 63 sqm, or less, suitable for three persons, provided that these make up no more than 10% of the total number of units in any private residential development.

3.32 However, this limit does not apply in the current case per SPPR 2. (The proposed scheme meets the above criteria in that all one- bedroom units exceed the minimum of 45 sqm, in most cases by a significant amount, and all two-bedroom units exceed 73 sqm.).

3.33 The Guidelines emphasise the need for a good mix of apartment sizes and require that the majority of all apartments in any proposed scheme of 10 or more apartments shall exceed the minimum floor area standard for any combination of the relevant one, two and three-bedroom bedroom unit types, by a minimum of 10%. Subject to design quality, this requirement may be relaxed for smaller, infill schemes on sites up to 0.25ha.

3.34 SPPR4: In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following apply: A minimum of 33% of dual aspect units will be required in more central and accessible urban locations, where it is necessary to achieve a quality design in

response to the subject site characteristics and ensure good street frontage where appropriate.

3.35 In suburban or intermediate locations, it is an objective that there shall generally be a minimum of 50% dual aspect apartments in a single scheme.

3.36 For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 33% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects. (The proposed development complies with this requirement and would, in any case, come within the discretionary application for sites less than 0.25ha.)

3.37 SPPR5. Floor to ceiling heights are required to be as follows: Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m and shall be increased in certain circumstances, particularly where necessary to facilitate a future change of use to a commercial use. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality. (The existing Georgian building at No.33 Thomas Street contains no ground floor apartment. The two new building blocks at no. 34 Thomas Streets contains no ground floor apartments).

3.38 SPPR6. The maximum number of apartments per floor is as follows: A maximum of 12 apartments per floor per core may be provided in apartment schemes. This may be increased for building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, subject to overall design quality and compliance with building regulations. (The proposed development complies but it should be noted again that the site is less than 0.25ha.)

## Planning History

3.39 There is no record on the LCCC website of any recent planning application in respect of No.33/34 Thomas Street.

3.40 Recorded planning permissions on adjoining / adjacent lands as follows:

- Reg. Ref. 19753 refers to permission granted for a change of use from restaurant to microbrewery at No.35 Thomas Street, adjoining the current site to the south-east.
- Reg. Ref. 21659 refers to an application for a change of use of existing bar and restaurant to use as 4no. one-bedroom apartments from ground floor to third floor inclusive, at No.30/31 Thomas Street. No decision has been made on the application to date.
- Reg. Ref. 04770093 refers to permission granted in 2004 for the refurbishment and change of use of existing store building to retail unit at Foxes Bow, to the rear of No.33 Thomas Street.

## 4. Historic Context

### Historic Background

4.01 Limerick city expanded westwards in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when it became a base for British trans-Atlantic trade. The Georgian area of Newtown Pery was developed during this period.

4.02 While the Irishtown was recorded as a distinct location in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century it was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that settlement extended beyond the island on which the original city was founded.

4.03 While much of this expansion is attributable to the New Town devised by the Sexton Pery family, the hands of the state, civic authorities and others were also at work.

4.04 Sequential building campaigns, undertaken by numerous speculative developers and builders, saw Limerick's main thoroughfares constructed from circa 1800 to the 1840's.

4.05 The layout of Pery Square and the townhouses to the west of the People's Park were built as part of the masterplan believed to have been devised by Davis Duckart for the Sexton Pery family and drawn up by Christopher Colles in 1769.

4.06 The grid iron street pattern and the guiding rules on the construction of buildings in the area is a unique example of Georgian planning in Ireland. The plan for the area is credited to city planner Edmund Sexton Pery. The development started in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century and by 1787 much of Newtown Pery was built.

4.07 Colles 'Plan of the city and suburbs of Limerick', of 1769 shows a proposal for the development of the area around Thomas street though the grid plan as built differs slightly to that which was proposed. Sauthier's 1786 Plan of the city of Limerick shows the adjoining Wickham street, William Street and Roches Street but not Thomas Street.

4.08 More precise information was obtained from the records of the sale of the estate of the Earl of Limerick which was sold at auction in June 1907 and included properties in Newtown Pery. The catalogue contains maps and particulars for each of the properties including information on the valuation and original deeds. Those for Number 33 and 34 Thomas Street state that they were sold in a lot containing numbers 6 to 35.

4.09 A free farm grant dated 1851 was made between William Henry Cecil Tennison, Earl of Limerick and Edward Alexander in conversion of a renewable lease, dated 10<sup>th</sup> October 1788, from Edward Lord Viscount Pery to William Hogg. The street is mentioned in the Limerick Chronicle. Limerick on 25.5.1802. The street is shown on McKern's map of 1827 but the individual buildings are not.

4.10 The 1840 Ordnance Survey map shows No. 33 as a house with a return and out-buildings to the rear. No. 34 appears to have been a yard and outbuildings.

4.11 The 1870 Ordnance Survey map shows the house at 33 clearly as having a return and outbuildings to the rear and steps to the front. Number 34 is marked as a timber yard and appears to have contained several outbuildings.



*Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1840-1844 shows No. 34 unbuilt*



*Extract from 1870 OS map showing No. 33 with building to the rear and No. 34 is noted as a timber yard*

4.12 The 1897 Goad fire insurance map shows No. 33 in its present form, with No. 34 as a series of sheds or outbuildings.





two-bedroom units.

5.05 The proposed development includes the creation of a semi-private courtyard between the Thomas Street and the rear block– to provide residential amenity space, as well as bicycle and bin-storage, for the residential apartments.

5.06 Services and siteworks proposed to facilitate the proposed development include: new water, electricity and comms supplies; new foul sewage and storm water connections to public mains; air-to-water and roof-mounted solar panels for heating and ventilation.

5.07 The objective is to develop the site using both the existing built fabric and new building structures, as a high-quality housing scheme, designed in accordance with the Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022-2028, and meeting the DHPLG's Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, 2007 and the DHLGH, Design Standards for New Apartments (2020).

5.08 The proposed project is intended to be a demonstrator project of remodeling and reuse of the existing Georgian fabric of Limerick.

5.09 The proposed development provides for 13 no. residential units with a housing mix as follows:

- 5no. one-bedroom / two-person apartments
- 8no. two-bedroom / three-person apartments

5.10 With an overall site area of 0.055 Ha, the development provides a proposed housing density of 240 units per hectare. With a total of 34 no. bedspaces, the proposed scheme provides for a total of 630 bedspaces per hectare.

### **No. 33 Thomas Street**

5.11 The existing Georgian house at No. 33 Thomas Street is to be conserved and be brought back to residential use by conversion to 5no. one-bedroom apartments as follows.

5.12 The basement unit is accessed from a new staircase in the opened-up area in the rear courtyard and consists of a combined kitchen / dining / living room to the front, with access to the opened-up lightwell area; with a double bedroom to the rear that opens onto the rear courtyard. It has separate toilet and shower compartments, opening off the entrance hall.

5.13 The hall floor apartment, also a one-bedroom unit, is entered from the original entrance hallway. It has a combined kitchen / dining / living room to the front and a double bedroom to the rear – both entered from a protected lobby off the main hall / stairway, which also gives onto the apartment's bathroom.

5.14 The first, second and third floors each contain a one-bedroom apartment, all with identical layouts comprising a combined kitchen / dining / living room to the front and a double bedroom to the rear – both entered from a protected lobby off

the main hall / stairway, which also gives onto the apartment's bathroom.

5.15 At roof level, the double-pitched roof with central valley will be rebuilt as part of the necessary reinstatement works outlined below. 3no. conservation-grade rooflights will be inserted into the central valley to provide light to the habitable rooms in the third-floor apartment while not impacting on the appearance of the original structure.

5.16 The apartments meet with the DHPLG's space standards, insofar as is possible within the constraints of working within an existing Georgian house and accommodating the required plant for the proposed air-to-water heating and ventilation system.

5.17 While storage provision within the units falls below the areas provided in the DHLGH, Sustainable Urban Housing; Design Standards for New Apartments (2020), the storage provision is as close as possible to these standards within the constraints of the existing structure. Separate storage may be accommodated at ground floor level of No. 34 as required.

5.18 The remedial works to the existing structure are those required – 'as much as is necessary and as little as possible,' – to bring the historic structure back into use and to secure its future going forward (see architectural heritage impact statement below).

#### **No. 34 Thomas Street – Front**

5.19 The proposed development consists of the demolition of the existing fire station / civil defence building and its replacement with a new mixed-use development to extend the Georgian terrace towards Wickham Street.

5.20 The proposed development is made up of two elements: a four-storey block, with a set-back fifth floor, fronting onto Thomas Street; and a rear five-storey block running the width of the back of the No. 34 section of the site.

5.21 The front (Thomas Street) block consists of a retail / commercial space at ground floor level, with an entrance hall leading to the rear courtyard and lift and stair core that gives access to the upper floors of both the front and rear blocks.

5.22 Above the street level retail / commercial unit there are 4no. two-bedroom apartments, each with one double and one single bedroom. Each has a private amenity space / balcony looking onto Thomas Street, which is accessed from both the main kitchen / dining / living room and the main bedroom. The single bedroom to the rear has a projecting bay, with a window system designed to eliminate overlooking of the projecting balcony to the rear block.

5.23 With lift and staircase access from street level, these apartments are fully compliant with the building regulations in terms of access and use for persons with disabilities, and room sizes all comply with the DHPLG's space standards.

5.24 Roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, in conjunction with the air-to-water

heating and ventilation system will provide the apartments with an environmentally responsible heating and ventilation system, without impacting on the appearance of the structure from street level.

5.25 The front block has a brick façade to Thomas Street, and an elevation designed as an essay in the reinterpretation of the city’s Georgian elevation in terms of the size, proportion and spacing of the fenestration. Samples of the proposed window system and balcony railings will be provided in due course to compliment the drawings and reference images hereunder.



Proposed elevation to Thomas Street

**No. 34 Thomas Street – Rear**

5.26 Accessed from the shared lift and stairs, the rear of No. 34 Thomas Street consists of 4no. apartments above a ground floor accommodating a 49sq.m. community room as well as (separate) bin and bike storage areas.

5.27 At ground level the accommodation extends to the rear boundary of the site; while on the upper levels it is set back to provide all apartments with natural light and sunshine.

5.28 There is a total of 4no. two-bedroom apartments, each with one double and one single bedroom. Each has a private amenity space / balcony: that at first floor level being above the ground floor community and storage accommodation; with those on the upper floors looking into the central courtyard space.

5.29 With lift and staircase access from street level, these apartments are fully compliant with the building regulations in terms of access and use for persons with disabilities, and room sizes all comply with the DHPLG’s space standards.

5.30 With lift and staircase access from street level, these apartments are fully compliant with the building regulations in terms of access and use for persons with disabilities, and room sizes all comply with the DHPLG’s space standards.

5.31 As with the front block, the roof-mounted photovoltaic panels and air-to-water system will provide the apartments with an environmentally responsible heating and ventilation system, without impacting on the appearance of the structure from ground level.

5.32 The inner courtyard is proposed to be finished to a high level, with both hard and soft landscaping; and its facades are finished in light-coloured clay brickwork, with a view to minimizing future maintenance and maximizing the amount of daylight penetration.

## 6. Architectural Heritage Conservation

### General

6.01 While not a Protected Structure, the Georgian house at No. 33 Thomas Street has been treated with the care that a building of historic significance warrants – not least for its contribution to the townscape of Thomas Street.

6.02 The proposed works and residential use will have a positive impact on the architectural heritage of No. 33. As apartments, its use will in keeping with the original use, although the conversion to apartments creates conservation issues in relation to the breaking up of original spaces, and conservation impacts in relation to fire and building regulations compliances.

6.03 While the remodeling requires significant repairs and interventions to accommodate the proposed apartments, the works proposed have been considered in the context of meeting best practice – as set out in the GHPLG's *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, as well as the Department's advice series publications on various elements of fabric.

6.04 The works to the existing structure are those required – 'as much as is necessary and as little as possible,' – to bring the historic structure back into use and to secure its future going forward.

6.05 Further detailed inspections and opening-up works will be carried out prior to the commencement of works – under the direction of a conservation-accredited architect who will oversee the scheme throughout all work stages.

6.06 The material treatment will be strongly guided by conservation best practice and repair of the existing fabric. Faced with red / brown facing brickwork in a Flemish bond, repairs will be undertaken locally as required, and the entire will be repointed in lime mortar to match examples of best-practice in Newtown Pery.

6.07 The rear return will be removed as part of the works. While the return is most likely an original feature to the rear of No.33 it has been greatly altered over time with a third storey and flat roof added. The return is plastered externally and had a concrete ground floor inserted, there are many signs of water ingress. The return contains toilet facilities and not considered to be an important feature of the architectural heritage of No. 33 Thomas Street.



6.08 There is extensive timber rot throughout No. 33 and specialist advisors have indicated that a large proportion of the timber is not salvageable including the timber stairs from ground to basement, which will be removed and replaced with a replica of the original as part of the works.

6.09 The original stairs from ground floor to third floor will be retained and repaired as part of the works. New timbers will be introduced, where possible to stabilise the stairs, original cornices and joinery features will be retained and repaired where required.

6.10 Likewise, specialists have reported that the existing roof timbers are largely beyond repair, resulting in the entire roof needing to be replaced as part of the works. The roof slating and flashings will be salvaged and reinstated wherever possible.

6.11 All historic sashes, as well as other joinery elements that can be salvaged, will be carefully removed, and stored for reuse on the site as part of the works. Contemporary methods and materials will be used only where historic alternatives do not exist. Salvaged materials from other sources may be reused where appropriate.

6.12 As has been outlined, it is proposed to reinstate the original lightwells / areas to both the front and rear of No. 33. Preliminary investigations indicate that this is possible, and provision has been made in the project costing to undertake these works – thereby restoring an important element of No. 33's contribution to the Georgian street scape.

6.13 Where possible, original rooms have been left intact, and it is proposed that the smaller cellular spaces required – e.g. bathrooms – will have lower ceilings so that the form of the original spaces can be appreciated.

6.14 Original features such as door and frames, cornices, skirtings, rails and other joinery features throughout will be retained and repaired where possible.

6.15 It is intended, where possible, to carry out repairs rather than replace materials and finishes. In relation to new work required, the use of processes that are reversible will be used wherever possible.

## **7. Design Objectives**

### **Design Objectives**

7.01 The objective for the project is to develop a demonstrator project in terms of the remodeling, adaptation and reuse of the Limerick's extensive Georgian fabric.

7.02 The scheme is designed to provide a high-quality and attractive intervention that will reactivate a long-derelict street frontage onto Thomas Street. The revitalisation of this plot within the urban core will hopefully act as a spur for adjoining properties to follow suit.

7.03 Within the context of working within a historic structure (No. 33) and a

tight urban site, the apartments have been designed meet with the DHPLG's space standards, insofar as is possible within the constraints of the site.

7.04 Where building separation distances (as set-out in the LDP 2022-2028) are not achieved, consideration has been given to design for privacy and protection of the residential amenity of the occupants, with projecting bay windows and opaque glazing onto the courtyard facades to protect residents' amenity.

7.05 With four upper floors of residential living on Thomas Street, the levels of passive surveillance of the public realm will be greatly increased, with 'eyes on the street' helping the city become a safer and more welcoming place after hours.

7.06 An active street frontage onto Thomas Street will assist in revitalising the urban block. It is envisaged that the community space to the rear of the site will provide increased footfall during and after normal business hours in the area

7.07 The façade treatment to No. 34 represents a restrained and carefully modulated elevation that both echoes the rhythm, scale and proportions of the adjoining Georgian terrace, but with larger scale openings at selected points to express the contemporary residential use behind.

7.08 Sympathetic and complementary materials have been selected for new build areas based on their harmony with the contextual material palette, aesthetics, durability and suitability of use. Railings to the inset balconies to the street façade are of glass to further emphasise the large openings. Railings and balconies to the facades facing the courtyard are of painted metal, with pressed metal trims.

7.09 In view of the city-centre location, no car parking is proposed for this development. The applicant is engaging with other LCCC city initiatives and private operators such as Go-Car to set up car sharing schemes for the future residents. Secure and enclosed bicycle storage is proposed within the courtyard.

7.10 Refuse Storage has been considered as an integral part of the design, and the refuse store proposed at No. 33 & 34 Thomas Street complies with LDP Waste Storage and Collection Standards (Section 11.3.4 of LDP).



*Reference Image; Jane Sterrt Apartments, New York. Chipperfield Associates.*

7.11 A daylight assessment has been undertaken by Chris Shackleton Consulting. The assessment indicates that 82 per cent of the habitable rooms throughout comply with the targets set-out in the BRE's guidance document BR 209 and BS 8206-2:2008 Lighting for buildings – Part 2: Code of practice for daylighting. The details are attached.

7.12 A daylighting and sunlight assessment was undertaken by Chris Shackleton Consulting in respect of No. 33 and No. 34 Thomas Street in relation to the impact of the proposed development on adjoining properties. When tested with the proposed development in place 100 per cent of the tested windows complied with the requirements stated in the BRE guidance document.

7.13 There are a number of window openings on the site boundary to the rear of No.33 with a brick/stone gable wall that is in poor condition. This adjacent building is currently leased and is operating as a licensed bar; it will not be impacted by the proposed development. Similarly, there is clerestory glazing along the boundary between No. 34 and No. 35 Thomas Street. These will be blocked up as part of the development proposed.

7.14 The proposed development has been designed to be TGD Part L and NZEB compliant. The design proposals incorporate air-source heat pumps for ventilation, water and space heating demands. Don O'Malley and Partners' mechanical and electrical report is included in this package.

7.15 Outline structural designs have been prepared by Punch Consulting Engineers; both for the existing house at No. 33 and the new buildings at No. 34 Thomas Street. Details are included in their Part VIII submission package.

7.16 A pre-connection enquiry to Irish Water, by Punch Consulting Engineers, has confirmed that there is an existing combined sewer on Thomas Street, and that there is adequate capacity to cater for the proposed development. Refer to the report by Punch Consulting Engineers for further details.

7.17 On-site attenuation measures are proposed as part of the works, with an attenuation tank to be installed under the courtyard area. Refer to the report by Punch Consulting Engineers for further details.

7.18 Punch Consulting Engineers' report details the flood risk considerations, and confirms that the site falls within FloodZone C under the Flood Risk Management guidelines, and that Justification is therefore not required.

7.19 Don O'Malley and Partners have investigated the availability of ESB / Eir / Virgin Media / Siro connections to cater for the proposed development. Refer to Don O'Malley's report for further details

7.20 Openfield Ecological Services were engaged to complete an appropriate assessment (AA) screening report, a site inspection / invasive species survey and a full ecological impact assessment. The AA Screening Report concludes that the proposed development would not cause significant impacts. Copies of the reports included in this planning package.

7.21 As part of the site appraisal and design development stages, the following surveys have been undertaken:

- Measured surveys of buildings, boundaries and immediate context.
- Ground investigations to ascertain soil conditions and presence of rock.
- An asbestos survey and timber rot survey of No. 33.
- CCTV survey of existing drainage.

7.22 The current initiative between Bird Watch Ireland and Limerick City & County Council identifies locations for the installation of swift nest boxes and other features into new buildings. All recommendations arising from the Part VIII process will be incorporated into the later design stages in respect of No.33 & 34.

7.23 A bat survey was completed by Malachy Walsh and Partners during the roosting season: it found no evidence of roosting bats on site.

## **8. Statutory Matters.**

### **Pre-planning consultations**

8.01 Pre-planning consultations have taken place in LCCC's one-stop-shop meetings with representatives of LCCC's planning, conservation and building control departments. Comments and recommendations received have been incorporated into the plans now presented for Part 8 approval.

8.02 Michael Slattery Associates have been engaged to provide fire safety and universal access consultancy services. MSA's review of the outline designs has been incorporated into the plans presented for Part 8 approval – to ensure

compliance with Part B and Part M of the building regulations in due course.

8.03 A presentation was made to the elected members on December 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2022. The proposals were well received, with no major impediments to the approval of this Part 8 application identified.

8.04 The applicant has engaged with external stakeholders, including adjoining property owners and occupiers, and current tenants to inform them of the proposals in advance of the application going on public display.

## 9. Conclusions

9.01 A Government-funded nation demonstration project in the reuse of brownfield urban lands and building stock, we submit that the scheme prepared for Part VIII approval is in accordance with national and local policy, including Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

Signed



Paul Keogh FRIAI FRIBA

December 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

## Summary



## **Appendices**

### **1. Project Team**

**Project Team****Applicant.**

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**Chartered Quantity Surveyors**

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Representative: Margaret Flannery

**Civil and Structural Engineers**

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Representative: Kevin Mullery

**Mechanical and Electrical Consulting engineers**

Don O'Malley Consulting  
Engineers, 92 O'Connell Street,  
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Representative: Pat Condon

**Planning Consultant**

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Representative: Karl Kent

**Fire Safety Consultant / Access Consultant**

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