

RETAIL DESIGN MANUAL

A companion document to the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

April 2012



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INTRODUCTION

The principles of sustainable development are at the heart of Ireland's national policy on the built environment. Since the publication of the *National Spatial Strategy* in 2002, policy has focused on objectives to renew, consolidate and strengthen cities, towns and villages; keeping them physically compact and public transport-friendly, and ensuring that future development adds to their vitality and viability as the focus of the social, commercial and civic life of their communities.

Nevertheless, the last decade has seen continuing growth in dispersed forms of development, suburbanisation and urban sprawl - with housing, industry, commerce, hotels, education and shopping located around edges rather than in city and town centres; thus generating an unsustainable demand for road transport, increased congestion, pollution, global warming, and negative impacts on public health due to the correlation between car dependency and unhealthy lifestyles.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012* therefore reiterate national policy objectives to secure the future of city and town centres by prioritising and planning future development in these locations - not least to promote sustainable modes of transport (particularly public transport, cycling and walking) and to encourage multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips without the use of a car.

The Guidelines note the major role that shopping plays in attracting people to cities, towns and villages, emphasising that it is therefore important that these

centres retain retailing as a core function and provide a diversity of shopping choice, and high quality services and amenities, for residents and visitors alike, thereby supporting their ongoing role as the focus of their regions and rural hinterlands.

The *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015* provides the appropriate framework for architectural policy up to 2015 and beyond and is coordinated centrally by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. It places an emphasis on sustainable development of the environment and urban design and incorporates architectural heritage in a holistic integrated manner while encouraging and supporting high quality modern architecture. The policy complements and supports the Government's wider economic strategy within the Programme for Government in areas such as built environment research and qualitative place-making and this best practice manual has been developed in response to Action 21 of the *Government Policy on Architecture*.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012*, and this *Retail Design Manual*, are intended to provide a planning framework for future development of the retail sector in a way which meets the needs of modern shopping formats while contributing to protecting, supporting and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of city and town centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.

BACKGROUND

Throughout history, shopping has been profoundly interlinked with the evolution of urban places, and retailing still forms the backdrop to many of Ireland's city and town centres. However, with radical changes in retail patterns over the last decades, there is increasing concern – not only in Ireland – for the future of urban areas in the face of increased competition from edge-of-centre and out-of-centre shopping destinations, and the ever-increasing proportion of sales now made over the internet and mobile phones.

One of the key messages of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is that a high level of design quality can make an important contribution to the future health of city and town centres. The Guidelines set out key policy objectives to be progressed by planning authorities in planning for the continued development of the retail sector, including – inter alia – ensuring development is plan-led; promoting and securing the vitality of city and town centres through the use of the sequential approach; ensuring an effective range of choice for the consumer; facilitating a shift towards sustainable forms of travel, and delivering quality urban design outcomes.

The last of these policy objectives seeks to ensure that the design of future retail development plays its part in achieving a high-quality built environment generally. The Guidelines therefore recommend that planning authorities promote high standards of design in their forward planning policies, and that they implement these through the development management process.

Achieving a high quality of architecture and urban design in new retail development can be a key ingredient in delivering sustainable development in urban places: generating direct and indirect employment, stimulating investment and economic activity, enhancing social vibrancy and vitality, increasing consumer choice and value, reducing car dependency for everyday trips, and stimulating spin-off development including service functions and housing.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF URBAN DESIGN

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* 2012 encourage planning authorities to include policies to promote quality design in their development plans and local area plans – and to implement these policies through the development management process. Clearly defined design policies in a development plan or local area plan give greater clarity and certainty to developers and their design teams and provide an agenda for pre-application discussion and the subsequent development management process.

This *Retail Design Manual* therefore sets out key principles of urban design which might form the framework for policies to promote quality design in development plans and local area plans. Most are relevant to all aspects of urban design, and while they are drafted specifically for retail development in this manual, they complement key principles set out in previous Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

publications such as *Quality Houses for Sustainable Communities* (2007) and the *Urban Design Manual* (2009).

In many respects, they coincide with principles of best practice articulated by numerous international sources, particularly the UK's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, and the Lord Richard Rogers' Urban Task Force report: *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. They are also timeless to an extent, and originate in the three principles of architectural quality set out over 2,000 years ago by Roman architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio - 'Commodity, Firmness and Delight'.

Under each of the ten principles there are five key questions which relate the principles more specifically to the planning, design and development management of new retail proposals. In the commentary, the questions seek to demonstrate that quality in urban design, planning and architecture is not subjective, but can be assessed against the principles validated by international best practice and, unfortunately in some cases, by lessons learned from mistakes made in the past.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* recommend that planning authorities request applicants to submit design statements for major retail proposals, and for development located in sensitive areas of cities, towns and villages. The principles and questions set out in this *Retail Design Manual* are intended to assist in identifying issues to be considered and addressed in design statements, justifying why the design solution

proposed is considered the most suitable for a particular site and achieving a high-quality development and a sustainable built environment.

PURPOSE OF THE RETAIL DESIGN MANUAL

This *Retail Design Manual* is a further step in providing guidance on design principles within the planning policy guidance framework outlined under Action 21 of the *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015*. It sets out to provide planning authorities, developers and designers with evidence-based quality principles to ensure that future planning for the retail sector is focused on the creation of vibrant, quality places. As stated in the guidelines, design that is inappropriate for its context, or that fails to realise the opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area or a site, should not be accepted.

This manual is not a do-it-yourself guide to designing new retail development. As stated in the Guidelines, design needs to be applied by skilled practitioners, and there is no substitute for engaging the right skills to achieve successful outcomes. The delivery of a high quality development, and successful retail development in particular, requires first and foremost a clear vision and design brief, plus a commitment to an overall quality agenda shared by planning authorities, developers and designers – both public and private.

The appointment of a high-quality, professional design team is a key step in ensuring successful outcomes. In particular, design teams should have the skills and competencies appropriate

to the development. Depending on the scale of the project, the design team will include planners, architects and engineers and as well as landscape, retail, traffic and conservation consultants.

The Guidelines also advise planning authorities, in appropriate situations, to engage architectural and/or design consultants to advise on appropriate plan policies and development management responses for particularly sensitive areas and sites, such as heritage towns, architectural conservation areas and protected structures.

STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

In presenting the principles in the form of questions rather than standards, the manual seeks to establish issues to be considered in their practical implementation, as opposed to setting out overly prescriptive requirements that might inhibit the creativity of skilled designers. The list of questions is not exhaustive, nor is it intended that every development will be capable of eliciting a positive response to each question.

The key questions are each illustrated by examples of good practice. The manual has sought to emphasise the positive rather than criticise failures from the past, but the lessons are clear and it seeks to promote a step-change in the quality of new retail development. Some of the questions raised will be more relevant to large rather than smaller schemes, city and town centres rather than edge-of-centre locations, and gateways and hubs rather than smaller towns and villages.

Each principle is accompanied by a major case study, demonstrating both the application of the principle, and successful responses to other quality factors raised by the questions in the manual. None of the case studies are 100 per cent successful, but most illustrate at least some of the key principles if not all; together, they illustrate what can be achieved when there is a clear vision and an overall commitment to design quality.

SUMMARY

One of the key messages of the Guidelines is that a high quality of design in retail development can make an important contribution to delivering quality in the built environment. They recommend that planning authorities promote high standards of design in their forward planning policies, and in the implementation of these policies through the development management process.

The publication of the *Retail Design Manual*, as a companion to the *Retail Planning Guidelines 2012*, is intended, firstly, to guide planning authorities in formulating appropriate design policies and development management responses in planning for the continued development of the retail sector and, secondly, to provide developers, designers and retailers with evidence-based quality principles to ensure that new retail development plays its part in realising quality outcomes in relation to urban design, and in renewing, consolidating and strengthening city and town centres as attractive, inclusive and durable places for people to live, work, shop or visit.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF URBAN DESIGN

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. DESIGN QUALITY | Design quality contributing to making places that are attractive, inclusive, durable and adaptable places to live, work, shop and visit. |
| 2. SITE + LOCATION | Healthy city and town centres contributing to the proper planning and sustainable development of their locations. |
| 3. CONTEXT + CHARACTER | Regard for the character and the physical, social and economic contexts of the site and its location. |
| 4. VITALITY + VIABILITY | Vitality and viability in city and town centres that are attractive and competitive places to live, work, shop and visit. |
| 5. ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY | City and town centres that are accessible and well-connected, easy to get to and convenient to move about. |
| 6. DENSITY + MIXED USE | Higher density and mixed use development creating compact urban areas and the efficient use of land. |
| 7. PUBLIC REALM | Well-designed and well-used open spaces contributing to a high quality public realm in the location. |
| 8. BUILT FORM | Built form, scale and mass contributing to a high standard of urban design and quality in the built environment. |
| 9. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY | Environmentally responsible use of energy resources to lower fuel consumption and carbon emissions. |
| 10. SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION | Construction materials and technologies that have regard for the environmental impacts of their production, transportation, use and disposal. |

1. DESIGN QUALITY

Principle – Design quality contributing to making places that are attractive, inclusive, durable and adaptable places to live, work, shop and visit.

Key Questions:

- 1.1 How does the proposed development reflect an overall commitment to quality in urban design and architecture?
- 1.2 How does the proposed development reflect national policy objectives to achieve quality design outcomes in new retail development?
- 1.3 How does the proposed development reflect objectives to promote design quality in the development plan and/or local area plan?
- 1.4 How does the proposed development reflect a commitment to design quality in the procurement process adopted?
- 1.5 How does the proposed development demonstrate an evidence-based commitment to quality in urban design and architecture?

DESIGN QUALITY

Question 1.1 How does the proposed development reflect an overall commitment to quality in urban design and architecture?



Over 2000 years ago, the Roman architect Vitruvius defined the three essentials of good building as: commodity, firmness and delight. Two centuries later, we still expect the same things from our buildings: that they be functional and accommodate our needs and activities; that they be durable and provide for our shelter and comfort; that they be beautiful and add to our pleasure and happiness.

Good design is not a question of personal style or taste; it is a synthesis of qualities that are largely objective and measurable: good design is fit for purpose, sustainable, efficient, coherent, flexible, responsive to context, good looking and a clear expression of the requirements of the brief. Quality design plays a key role in contributing to making places that are attractive, inclusive, durable and adaptable places to live, work, life shop and visit.

Good design is a sound investment in terms of return for developers, turnover for traders, and a more attractive environment for shoppers; on the other hand, low design standards and poor construction quality impose long term costs; on their owners, their users and society at large for many years after the development is completed.

A key message of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is that design quality in retail development can make an important contribution to the vitality and viability of city and town centres, and designs which are inappropriate for their contexts, or which fail to realise opportunities for improving the character and quality of their locations should not be accepted.

High quality urban design and architecture in mixed-use retail-led development contributing to the character and quality of the town centre as a retail destination – Athlone Town Centre.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 5](#)

DESIGN QUALITY

Question 1.2 How does the proposed development reflect national policy objectives to achieve quality design outcomes in new retail development?

The *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015* is founded on a recognition of the impact of architecture on the quality of people's daily lives, in expressing the social and cultural values of the nation, and in creating a sustainable built environment.

The Policy commits the State to fostering the demand for quality architecture in the community as a whole; including central and local government, the design and building professions, clients who commission buildings, and the general public. Similarly, the *Retail Planning Guidelines* state that retail development has a key role to play in creating places

that are attractive, inclusive, durable and adaptable to live in, to work in, to shop in, or to pass through.

The Guidelines set out key policy objectives to be progressed by planning authorities in planning for the continued development of the retail sector, including – inter alia – ensuring development is plan-led; promoting and securing the vitality of city and town centres; enabling development to come forward in sustainable locations; facilitating a shift towards sustainable forms of travel; and delivering quality urban design outcomes.

The last of these key policy objectives is that a high level of design quality in retail development can make an important contribution to the future health of city and town centres, and in delivering quality in the built environment generally; the Guidelines advise planning authorities to promote high standards of design, both in their forward planning and their development management processes.



The *Government Policy on Architecture* commits the State to fostering the demand for architectural quality - high quality mixed-use development identified as a key objective in the *Local Area Plan*, Killorglin, Co. Kerry.



Design quality contributing to successful conservation of protected structure historic docks warehouses and adaptation to new retail use – CHQ, Dublin.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 1 & 5](#)

DESIGN QUALITY

Question 1.3 How does the proposed development reflect objectives to promote design quality in the development plan and/or local area plan?



Strategic objectives were included in the development plan to upgrade the town centre public realm as a contribution to stimulating the competitiveness of the local retail sector – Kennedy Road Civic Space, Navan, Co. Meath.

The *Government Policy on Architecture* contains specific objectives to have quality-led provisions incorporated into both statutory and non-statutory plans generated by planning authorities. Similarly, the *Retail Planning Guidelines* encourage planning authorities to promote high standards of design; the objective being to ensure that new retail development meets national policy objectives for the pursuit of quality design and construction, and the promotion of a sustainable built environment.

The Guidelines encourage planning authorities to include policies to promote quality design in their development plans and local area plans – and to implement these policies through the development management process; clearly defined design policies in a development plan or local area plan give greater clarity and certainty to developers and their design teams, and provide an agenda for pre-application discussions and the subsequent development management process.

The key principles of urban design in this *Retail Design Manual* might form the framework for policies to promote quality design in development plans and local area plans. Most are relevant to all aspects of urban design, and while in this manual they are drafted specifically for retail development, they complement principles set out in previous Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government publications such as 'Quality Houses for Sustainable Communities' (2007) and the 'Urban Design Manual' (2009).



Strategic objectives to improve the attractiveness of the town centre urban environment were included in the statutory development plan – John Robert's Square, Waterford City Centre.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 3 & 5](#)

DESIGN QUALITY

Question 1.4 How does the proposed development reflect a commitment to design quality in the procurement process adopted?



The delivery of a high quality built environment, and successful retail developments in particular, requires first and foremost a clear vision and well-defined design brief, plus an overall commitment to a quality agenda that is shared by planning authorities, developers and designers – both public and private.

The appointment of a high quality professional team is a first step in ensuring successful outcomes. In particular, the expertise of the design team should be appropriate to the development proposed. Depending on the scale and complexity of the scheme, the design team can comprise planners, architects, engineers, landscape, traffic and conservation consultants.

The focus on quality should be sustained at every stage of the design and construction phases; successful development outcomes require that the design team is engaged to oversee

the project from start to finish, and not merely to obtain statutory approvals and consents.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* advise planning authorities, in appropriate situations, to engage architectural and/or design consultants to advise on appropriate plan policies and development management responses for particularly sensitive sites, for example in relation to heritage towns, architectural conservation areas and protected structures.

While value for money is critical, failure to allocate the resources required to deliver successful solutions is both shortsighted and more costly overall; evidence indicates that poor design quality, delays to programmes, and latent building defects are more expensive in the long term than the cost of appointing design teams with the competencies and skillsets required to achieve quality outcomes.

Successful use of an international architectural competition to appoint the appropriate design team to secure a high quality public realm in city centre location – Patrick Street, Cork.



Landmark retail-led regeneration demonstrating the value of an overall quality agenda shared by the planning authority, developers and designers – Liverpool One, UK.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 5.2](#)

DESIGN QUALITY

Question 1.5 How does the proposed development demonstrate an evidence-based commitment to quality in urban design and architecture?

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* recommend that planning authorities might include objectives in development plans and local area plans to prepare design and development briefs for particularly important, sensitive or large scale retail developments in city and town centre locations, and to request that design statements be submitted for these schemes as part of the development management process.

Depending on the scale of development proposed, the design brief should include a description of the site and its context, identifying any planning or development constraints and summarising the relevant development plan and/or local area plan objectives and policies. It might also give an indication of the type, design and layout of development that the authority would wish to see on the site.

Similarly, planning authorities might request evidence-based design statements to be submitted as part of development proposals for particular locations and for certain types of development - particularly larger schemes and those in sensitive urban settings. In these situations, design statements will be of value in understanding how the proposed development addresses the specific design brief for the site, how the brief is fulfilled in the design scheme proposed, what is the rationale for the design approach adopted, and why the design proposed is considered the most suitable solution for the site in question.

At a minimum, developers should provide an illustrated report setting out how the development proposed meets with the principles set out in this manual, and how it complies with relevant development plan or local area plan objectives and policies.



Successful example of a joint local authority and private sector vision for the preparation of an agreed development brief and design principles for a major city centre retail-led regeneration – Princesshay, Exeter, UK.



Example of a major development site framework strategy included in a statutory local area plan – Phibsborough/Mountjoy LAP, Dublin.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 5](#)

Case Study 1:

Athlone Town Centre



Until recently, Athlone's primary retail areas were in edge-of-centre locations, with their own off-street parking and poor pedestrian links to the town centre. The traditional retail core lacked an attractive public realm and suffered high vacancy rates as a result of the dominance of the edge-of-centre developments.

Shopping streets in the centre are concentrated to the east of the Shannon and, while there are a number of anchor outlets within the town, the historic streetscape and narrow building plots have traditionally inhibited large-scale redevelopment.

Identified as an opportunity site in the 2003 *Westmeath County Retail Strategy*, an assemblage of infill and backland plots, 'brownfield' uses and semi-derelict

structures covering approximately three hectares was amalgamated by the local authority.

A primary objective for this site was to secure a shift in the retail centre of gravity back to the main shopping streets while strategically linking edge-of-centre development with the town centre. The strategic location of the site within the historic core links it with the new Civic Centre and Library, thereby creating a dramatic new public realm for Athlone.

The scheme is about 'stitching and mending' existing streetscapes, and making new connections and spaces. It also seeks to give appropriate contemporary expression to its core function within the town centre.

The challenge of inserting a large mixed-use development into an historic setting was assisted by the shape, topography and particular features of the site. Exploiting the natural gradient effectively conceals all parking, servicing and delivery

facilities on two subterranean levels, thus eliminating the need for expanses of surface parking and allowing the range of new buildings to extend towards, and integrate with, existing development on all edges. A new order is overlaid on the site, imposing a pattern of streets and lanes, squares and courtyards on backlands that were hitherto excluded from the fabric of the town.

The project accommodates an appropriately diverse mix of uses incorporating retail units, residential units in disaggregated blocks of apartments and townhouses set around squares, courtyards and playgrounds, restaurants and cafés, a crèche and primary healthcare facility, and a 4-star hotel rising to an 11-storey signature tower at its core, heralding the commercial centre of town.

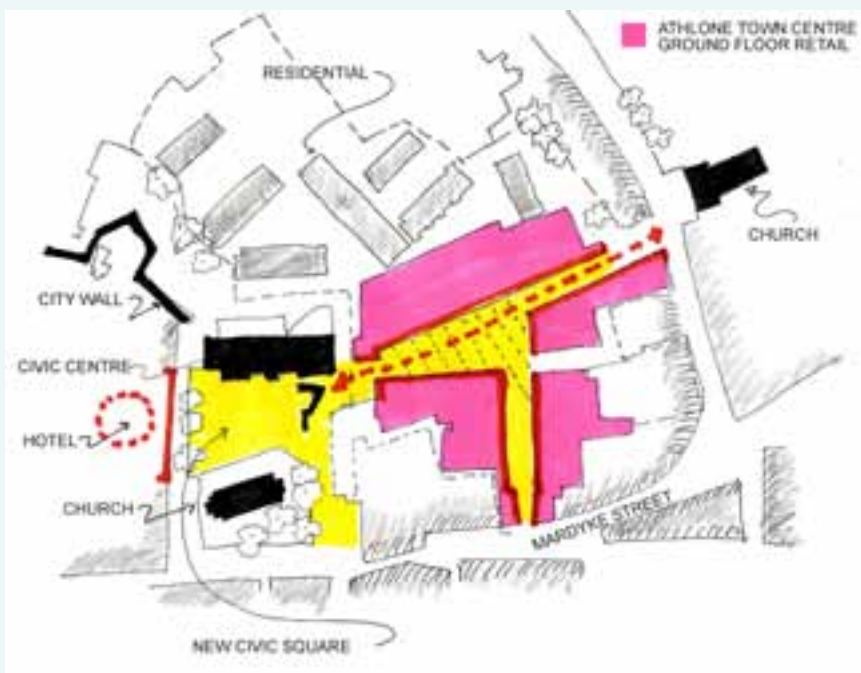
The development has provided significant opportunities for large multiples to enter Athlone, through provision of four major department store anchor units, and has acted as a catalyst for further investment in the town. The development has also enhanced Athlone's role and function in line with its designation as part of the Midlands linked Gateway in the National Spatial Strategy.



The site assembly was identified by the local authority as a possible opportunity site within the 2003 Westmeath County Retail Strategy.



A high quality public realm is created within the centre, and with connectivity to other town centre destinations it adds to the overall character and quality of Athlone as a retail destination.



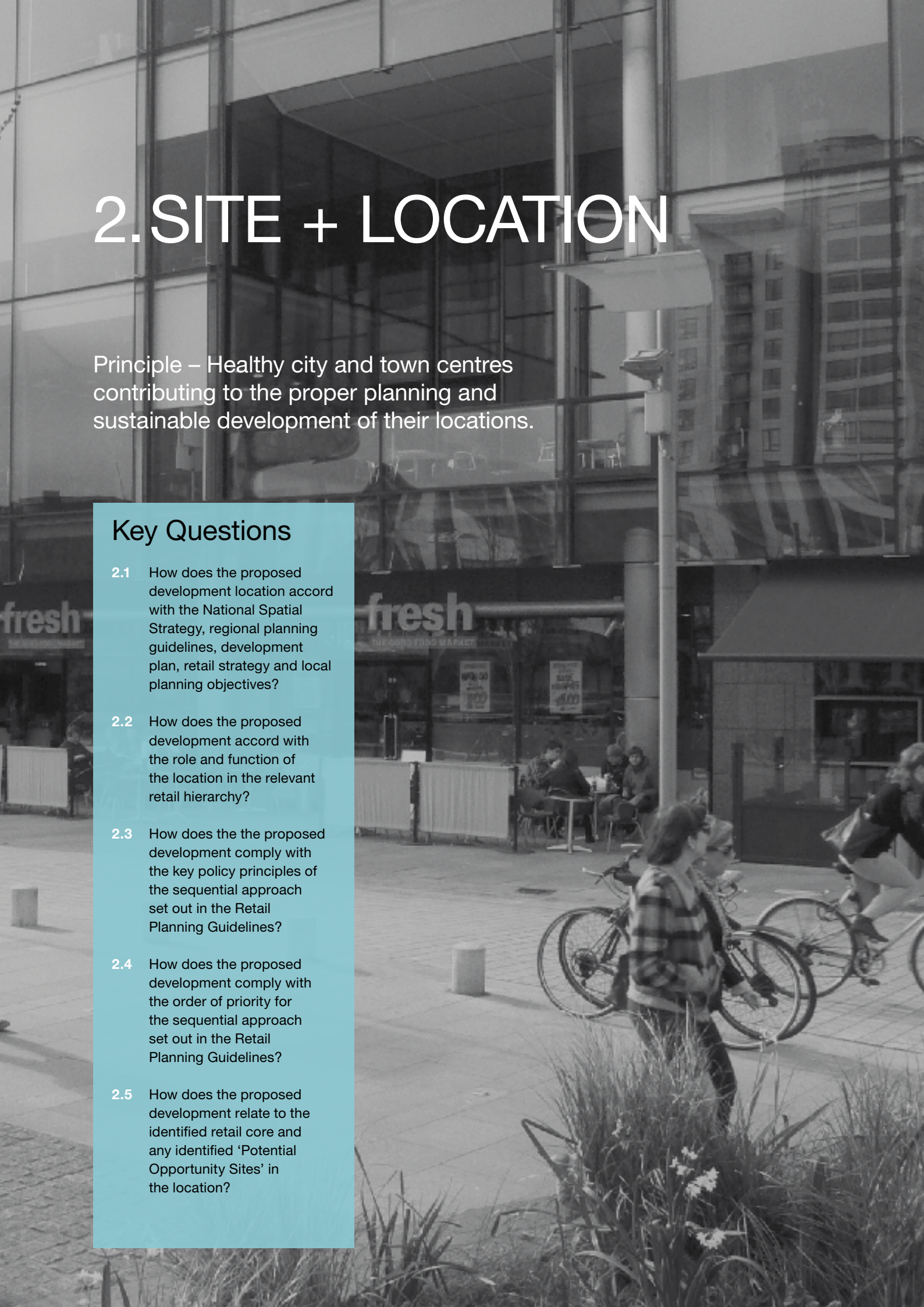
The mixed use scheme ties into the urban fabric creating three new routes through the town centre.

2. SITE + LOCATION

Principle – Healthy city and town centres contributing to the proper planning and sustainable development of their locations.

Key Questions

- 2.1 How does the proposed development location accord with the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, development plan, retail strategy and local planning objectives?
- 2.2 How does the proposed development accord with the role and function of the location in the relevant retail hierarchy?
- 2.3 How does the the proposed development comply with the key policy principles of the sequential approach set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines?
- 2.4 How does the proposed development comply with the order of priority for the sequential approach set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines?
- 2.5 How does the proposed development relate to the identified retail core and any identified 'Potential Opportunity Sites' in the location?



SITE + LOCATION

Question 2.1 How does the proposed development location accord with the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, development plan, retail strategy and local planning objectives?

The 2002 *National Spatial Strategy* sets out a twenty year national planning framework for Ireland. It aims to achieve balanced social, economic and physical development across the State, creating cities, towns and urban areas of sufficient scale and critical mass through a network of Gateways and Hubs. The *Regional Planning Guidelines* set out detailed settlement strategies for each region, and identify settlements where significant growth is planned. City and county development plans are required to be consistent with the NSS and relevant *Regional Planning Guidelines*.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* require that the location, scale, nature and function of future retail development complies with the retail policies and objectives set out in the city or county development plan, and with any relevant retail strategy including joint/multi-authority retail strategies for the location. In larger urban areas, the settlement hierarchy will provide for a number of centres to serve the catchment population: city, town centre and district centres. These centres play an important role in the retail hierarchy. In smaller settlements there will be just one centre.

More detailed planning policies and objectives are set-out in development plans, local area plans, architectural conservation areas, special areas of



control, built and natural heritage designations, and other non-statutory planning documents approved by planning authorities.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* require that the location, scale, nature and function of future retail development complies with the policies and objectives set out in the city or county development plan - Opera lane, Cork.



In larger urban areas, the settlement/retail hierarchy will provide for a number of centres to serve the catchment population: city centre, district centre and neighbourhood centre; *Cork City Development Plan 2009-2015*.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapters 2&3.](#)

SITE + LOCATION

Question 2.2 How does the proposed development accord with the role and function of the location in the relevant retail hierarchy?

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* state that development plans should set out details of the relevant retail hierarchy, the role and size of the main city and town centres, and the broad level of retail development considered appropriate for each in accordance with Chapter 3 of the Guidelines.

In addition, the Guidelines state that the retail hierarchy should reflect the settlement hierarchy of each centre as set out in the relevant regional planning guidelines, and city or county development plan, and that future retail development should be consistent with the role and function of the centre within the settlement hierarchy. They indicate that requirements for district centres within a retail hierarchy should be supported by significant existing or projected future population growth within the immediate catchment area.

Joint and multi-authority retail strategies for larger urban areas should also set out the retail hierarchy for the area. For example, the retail hierarchy for the GDA set out in the 2008-2016 *Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area* is translated and carried forward into the 2010 *Wicklow County Retail Strategy*. Retail strategies should also set out guidance on the nature and scale of retail floorspace that is considered appropriate at each level of the retail hierarchy

The *Dublin City Centre Retail Framework Plan* builds on policies in the *GDA Retail Strategy* to promote Dublin City Centre as the prime shopping, leisure and cultural destination in the State - The Liffey Boardwalk.

Extract from *Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area* illustrating Retail Hierarchy for the GDA

Table E1: Retail Hierarchy for the GDA

Level 1	Metropolitan Centre
	Dublin City Centre
Level 2	Major Town Centres & County Town Centres
	Fingal: Swords, Blanchardstown
	South Dublin: Tallaght, Liffey Valley
	Dun Laoghaire: Dun Laoghaire, Dundrum
	Wicklow: Bray, Wicklow
	Meath: Navan
	Kildare: Naas / Newbridge, Leixlip (including Collinstown*)
Level 3	Town and/or District Centres & Sub-County Town Centres (not definitive list, see text below)
	Dublin City: Finglas, Northside Shopping Centre, Ballyfermot, Rathmines, Crumlin Shopping Centre, Donaghmede Shopping Centre, Omni, Ballymun, Point Village and Poolbeg
	Fingal: Malahide, Balbriggan, Skerries, Charlestown.
	South Dublin: Adamstown, Crumlin (Ashleaf), Clonburris/Balgaddy, Clondalkin, Fortunestown, Kilnamanagh, Lucan, Rathfarnham
	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown: Stillorgan, Blackrock, Cornelscourt, Nutgrove, Cherrywood.
	Wicklow: Greystones, Arklow, Blessington, Baltinglass
	Meath: Dunboyne**, Ashbourne, Dunshaughlin, Kells, Trim, Laytown/Bettystown, Enfield.
	Kildare: Celbridge, Kilcock, and Maynooth, Kilcullen, Athy, Kildare, Monasterevin, Clane.
Level 4	Neighbourhood Centres, Local Centres-Small Towns and Villages
Level 5	Corner Shops/Small Villages
* Leixlip and the Collinstown area will gradually develop along a 20 year time period reaching level 2 status, (see text below in main body of report).	
** Dunboyne will gradually develop over the next 20 years towards level 2 status, (see text below in main body of report).	



SITE + LOCATION

Question 2.3 How does the the proposed development comply with the key policy principles of the sequential approach set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*?



One of the national policy objectives set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is to enhance the vitality and viability of city and town centres, and to protect, support and promote their continued role as focal points for social and business interaction in their communities. The Guidelines state that where a proposed retail development is not in accordance with this objective the planning authority should ensure the proposal is subjected to the sequential approach as set out in the Guidelines. Proposals being considered under the sequential approach must demonstrate that they have addressed the relevant policy principles as set out in Chapter 4 of the Guidelines.

The core shopping areas of town centres should be defined in development plans in accordance with Chapter 3 of the Guidelines. The extent of a core retail area, together with the classification of what constitutes an edge-of-centre site, will vary between larger cities and towns, district and neighbourhood centres, and small towns and villages.

In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge-of-centre, account should be taken of local circumstances. The classification of an edge-of-centre site depends not only on the distance from the core of the town centre, but also the ease and quality of the visual and pedestrian connectivity to the retail core. This is further detailed in the Westport case study.

In smaller towns and villages, edge of centre sites should be closer to the retail core in order to establish the necessary interaction - Roscommon.



Extract from county retail strategy illustrating the core retail area (in red) and an edge-of-centre opportunity site (in yellow) - 2007 *Roscommon County Retail Strategy*.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 4](#)

SITE + LOCATION

Question 2.4 How does the proposed development comply with the order of priority for the sequential approach set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*?



New edge-of-centre retail development – Westport, Co. Mayo.

The preferred location for future retail development is within city and town centres and, following the sequential approach, only where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that there are no sites which are: a) suitable, b) available, and c) viable, should an edge-of-centre location be considered. The following are among the factors likely to be relevant when assessing the suitability of a site for development.

Development plan and/or local area plan designations will determine whether the proposed retail use would be compatible with current zoning objectives and land uses in the vicinity of the site, including compatibility with conservation and heritage objectives.

Physical constraints might include its capacity to accommodate the size of development proposed, plus other limitations such as access, infrastructure,

ground conditions, flood risks, pollution and contamination issues. Potential impacts of the development will include an assessment of any likely negative effects on adjoining buildings and structures, views and prospects, landscape features and conservation, and other similar issues.

A site is considered available when it has been demonstrated that there are no insurmountable legal, ownership or site acquisition issues which would hinder its development within a reasonable time frame. Viability relates to the costs associated with the acquisition and development of a site for the development proposed.

The identification of alternative sequentially preferable sites should be discussed with planning authorities at an early stage in the pre-application planning process. There may be cases where the planning authority is satisfied that there are no possible alternatives to accommodate the proposed development.



The preferred location for retail development in within city and town centres – town centre retail, Westport, Co. Mayo.

SITE + LOCATION

Question 2.5 How does the proposed development relate to the identified retail core and any identified ‘potential opportunity sites’ in the location?

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* note that most city and town centres contain sites which would benefit from regeneration, and they recommend that planning authorities should be proactive in identifying those considered appropriate for future retail development and designating them as ‘potential opportunity sites’ within their development plans, local area plans, retail strategies, framework strategies, masterplans and other non-statutory documents approved by planning authorities.

These ‘potential opportunity sites’ should be located both within core retail areas, and at appropriate other locations that would complement and strengthen the role of the city or town centre in accordance with the retail and settlement hierarchy in the development plan. As stated in the *Guidelines*, sites within the identified core retail area should be the first priority when considering locations for future retail developments.

The *Guidelines* recommend that release of these sites should be actively encouraged and managed by planning authorities, working proactively with landowners, chambers of commerce, retailers and developers to deliver sites



Successful example of town centre retail-led regeneration of opportunity site identified in 2003 *Westmeath County Retail Strategy* – Athlone Town Centre.

and strategic management plans for their core retail areas. Lands in fragmented ownership, or where there are other planning issues, may require planning authorities to make urban design or

infrastructural interventions to bring forward sites that both meet the needs of modern retail formats and maintain the essential character and quality of their location.



Potential opportunity site identified in the 2003 *Westmeath County Retail Strategy* – Athlone Town Centre.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – 3.3 & 4.5](#)

Case Study 2: Westport Integrated Action Plan



Westport is one of the few planned towns in Ireland. Its geometrically composed layout responds to the specific topography of its setting on Clew Bay, making it one of the most attractive and vibrant small towns in Ireland.

The town is an exemplar of best practice in showing how pro-active town management, combined with good planning, aesthetic control, public realm improvements and co-operation between all the town's stakeholders, have boosted the local economy and enhanced Westport's attractiveness as a business and tourist destination, and as a place to live.

The 2000 *Westport Integrated Action Plan* set out policies and key objectives to conserve the historic urban core, providing for the expansion of central area uses, controlling peripheral development and improving the movement patterns in and around the town, thereby enhancing its public realm and physical environment.

The plan acknowledged that there were no available sites within the town centre to accommodate a large-scale retail development but that there were a number of suitable sites to accommodate medium-scale retail development that would be encouraged.



The plan included measures to enhance and improve the movement pattern across the town, making pedestrian movement more convenient by developing lanes and shortcuts and providing for 'greening' of the streets and improving the open space network.

The town has invested in improving the quality of its streets as public spaces through traffic management measures, one-way systems and public realm and environmental improvements.

Since the plan was produced, key strategy moves have improved the retail environment of Westport in terms of accessibility and parking provision. While a by-pass is a long-term objective, the main streets through the urban core are now all one-way, and landscaping and traffic management measures have sought to improve their quality as public spaces as opposed to simply traffic arteries.

Parking has been provided on backland sites within the urban core and these are connected to the main streets by new pedestrian passages flanked by complementary town centre uses including cafés and restaurants.

A number of incentives have been successfully implemented including the *Living Over the Shop* scheme within the urban core to provide a sustainable mix of activity and a balance between retail, commercial, tourism and residential uses.

In the last decade, the town has seen the development of three new supermarkets to complement the town-centre SuperValu, which has been trading in Westport since the 1950s. The new developments have been strategically sited to provide the town with an 'anchor' store (and additional car parking provision) at each of its four 'corners'; the Dunnes, Lidl and Tesco stores are located on the edge of the retail core and would be classified as 'edge-of-centre'

locations. The diversity of shopping choice in Westport generates increased trips to the town from its hinterland and supports a cross-fertilisation between the supermarkets and the healthy, indigenous town centre traders.

Objectives to encourage the continued vitality and viability of the town centre are incorporated in the 2010 *Town Development Plan* and 2008 *Mayo County Retail Strategy*, which clearly defines the core retail area of the town and includes policies and objectives to promote retail development within its core.



Clockwise from top left:

Pedestrian route from backlands car park to retail core.

New mixed-use development including living-over-the-shop apartments in Westport Town Centre.

New retail developments have been strategically located, providing the town with an anchor store at each of its four corners.

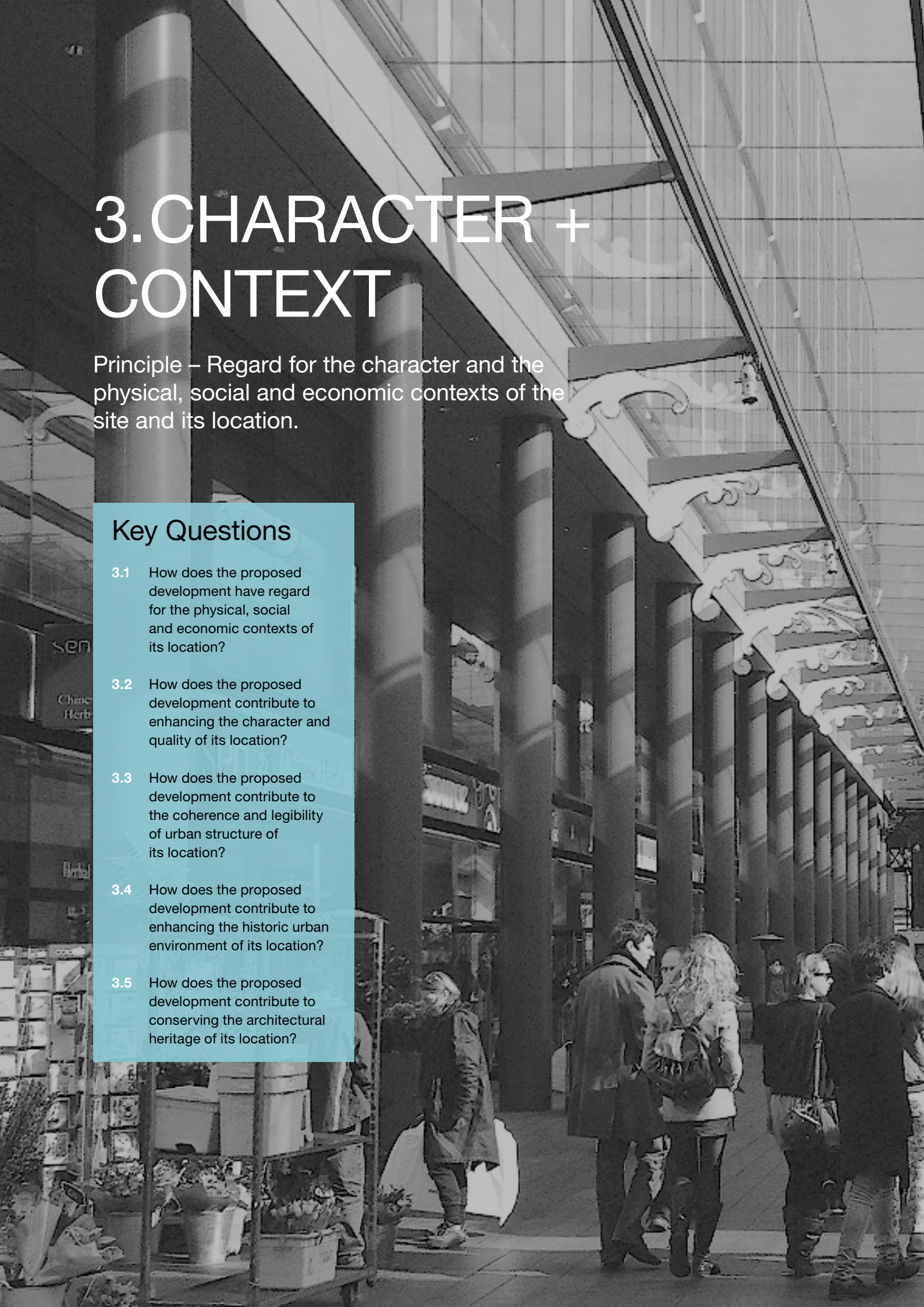


3. CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Principle – Regard for the character and the physical, social and economic contexts of the site and its location.

Key Questions

- 3.1 How does the proposed development have regard for the physical, social and economic contexts of its location?
- 3.2 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the character and quality of its location?
- 3.3 How does the proposed development contribute to the coherence and legibility of urban structure of its location?
- 3.4 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the historic urban environment of its location?
- 3.5 How does the proposed development contribute to conserving the architectural heritage of its location?



CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Question 3.1 How does the proposed development have regard for the physical, social and economic contexts of its location?



Regard for the character and quality of a place, and integrating new development into its setting, are key quality objectives in urban design and architecture. Successful developments recognise the physical, social and economic contexts of their locations, and seek to integrate with the urban structure, movement framework and public realm of the place and any locally distinctive patterns of development.

The specific importance of urban design, placemaking and locational criteria in the making of a sustainable built environment are emphasised in the *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-15*. Similarly, ensuring that new development makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of its location is a key urban design objective identified in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*.

A thorough understanding of the site and its context is the basis for good design solutions, and all development proposals should include an appraisal of the site and its context, to ensure that the development responds to, and preferably enriches, the character and quality of its location.

The extent of site appraisal required will depend on the scale and complexity of the proposed development. On larger schemes it will include not only the site and its immediate surroundings; it can extend to an appraisal of the wider impacts of the proposed development on the morphology and urban structure of the place, on open spaces and the public realm, on views and prospects to and from the site, and on its relationship to patterns of pedestrian, cycle, public transport and traffic movement in and around the site.

New retail development responding to the physical, social and economic context - and making a positive contribution to improving the character and quality of its location - Millennium Mall, Dublin

CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Question 3.2 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the character and quality of its location?



High-quality landmark development contributing to enhancing the specific character and quality of its city centre location – Henry St., Dublin.

New retail development can make an important contribution to the vitality and vibrancy of city and town centres, providing greater shopping choice for the consumer, and increased activity in local retail economies. However, successful outcomes also demand that a high quality of design is employed to enhance the ‘sense of place’ of the location.

While built form, scale and mass should have regard for its urban context, this does not infer that new development has to replicate local building traditions or mimic adjacent structures; on the contrary, new development should express its function in an architecture that is of today, but nevertheless with regard for the topography and morphology of its location.

New retail development should, first and foremost, be of a high design standard and wherever generic building types are proposed, their designs should be adapted to ensure that they contribute positively to the character and quality of the location; developments of poor design quality should not be accepted.

The key to the successful integration of new retail development into city and town centres locations is, first and foremost, regard for the basic tenet of urban design that each and every building is part of a greater whole, and whatever the merits of any individual development, its contribution to improving the overall character and quality of its location is a key consideration, even in areas characterised by poor design quality.



New development contributing positively to the character and quality of its location – Navan, Co. Meath.

CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Question 3.3 How does the proposed development contribute to the coherence and legibility of the urban structure of its location?



The term ‘urban structure’ describes the underlying physical attributes of urban places: the pattern and layout of the streets, routes and open spaces that link areas internally and externally with their local hinterland. The urban structure, and how places are interconnected, determines both the coherence and the legibility of city and town centre locations.

The urban structure provides the framework for the design of the individual buildings and spaces that make up city and town centres. It can be described as fine or coarse; a fine grain urban structure - compact blocks and frequent intersections - generally adds to the attractiveness of urban places and to the convenience with which people can reach and move about them.

In city and town centre locations, the form and mass of new retail development will generally be determined by the existing grain and urban structure of the location; in edge-of-centre situations,

particularly in larger schemes, the design and layout of the development can define a new urban structure for the place.

Whenever possible, new retail development should exploit opportunities to improve the urban grain of the location; providing greater pedestrian permeability both through the development itself, and into the network of routes and destinations of its locality, thereby increasing pedestrian flows and improving the economic performance of shopping destinations.

Landmark retail-led regeneration exploiting opportunities to improve the urban grain; with greater pedestrian permeability adding to pedestrian footfall and the economic performance of the location – Victoria Square, Belfast.

Plan showing shopping development integrated into the urban structure of its city centre location, with routes through the development connected with the network of routes and destinations of its locality – Victoria Square, Belfast.



CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Question 3.4 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the historic urban environment of its location?

Shopping and services form the backbone of many of Ireland's historic city and town centres, underpinning their role as the focus of the social and business life of their communities. As noted in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*, in these locations there will be options for re-use and regeneration to meet the needs of modern retail formats within the existing urban fabric.

However, while the vitality and viability of historic city and town centres will generally be enhanced by development to meet future retailing requirements - including appropriate adaptation and renovation of historic buildings - certain locations will not be suitable for large-scale development, whether in terms of size, parking, traffic and servicing requirements.

In these locations, development should be of an appropriate size and scale, and of a design that minimises any potential for adverse impacts on the character, quality and sense of place of those locations. Whether new build or adaptation, high design standards are essential to integrating new retail functions and forms into historic city and town centre sites.

Where a large floor plate is required to accommodate the needs of a particular retail sector, and the scale and mass of development is greater than adjacent buildings, creative design solutions - and flexibility in the operations of the retailer - can successfully adapt generic design templates to the urban structure, and the character and context, of the historic location.



Regard for context does not infer that new development should mimic its historic neighbours; innovative contemporary architecture is preferable to historic pastiche – South King Street, Dublin.



Options for re-use and regeneration to meet the needs of modern retail formats within the existing urban fabric should retain the character, quality and sense of place of those locations – McDonagh Junction, Kilkenny.

CHARACTER + CONTEXT

Question 3.5 How does the proposed development contribute to conserving the architectural heritage of its location?

Ireland has inherited a built environment of exceptional quality and value – not only the great monuments that express our history and culture; but also the everyday buildings and spaces that are the settings for the civic, commercial and social life of their communities.

The preservation and conservation of these heritage assets is central to national policy on the built environment, and securing the vitality and viability of city and town centres is a national policy objective identified in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*.

Keeping historic buildings in use is the first principle of architectural conservation, and there are many examples in Ireland and abroad of new shopping development in historic buildings enhancing the vitality of city and town centre locations; serving the needs of their local communities while contributing to their attractiveness for visitors and tourists.

The adaptation and sympathetic re-use of historic buildings by way of appropriate interventions, and thus stimulating the overall regeneration of historic urban areas, is preferable to allowing such buildings to fall into disuse while developments are relocated to edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations.

High quality design solutions - with appropriate conservation expertise - can successfully adapt historic structures to new retail functions, thereby retaining the building in use, conserving the elements of its special interest, and enhancing the overall character and quality of the local urban environment.



Eighteenth century townhouse converted to high quality retail development serving the needs of its local community, visitors and tourists – Powerscourt Townhouse, South William Street, Dublin.



Protected structure adapted for new retail use with conservation of street frontage and car parking located to the rear – Westport, Co. Mayo.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 5.2.](#)

Case Study 3: Dunnes Stores, Trimgate Street, Navan



In 1995, Navan Town Council developed a strategic planning study for the Kennedy Road lands, designated by the Government as a tax-relief urban renewal area. This led to a competition for the design of a new civic space for the town. The new civic space was successfully completed in 2009, creating a stone paved civic plaza to be used for open-air markets and civic events, plus a modicum of surface car parking to facilitate existing traders.

Construction of the civic space prompted Dunnes Stores to redevelop its adjoining site as an in-town supermarket, capitalising on the possibility of fronting the new civic space, while also retaining its traditional frontage onto Trimgate Street.

Located in Navan town centre, the old Dunnes Stores was effectively a single-storey building with the exception of a small traditional two-storey shopfront. The site is long and narrow, and connects the traditional retail area of Trimgate Street with the new retail areas of Kennedy Road and the civic space.



Conservation and retention of existing elevation and shopfront on Trimgate Street respecting town centre context of development.

In meeting the requirements of the brief, large areas of the building were required for stock and storage use. The approach was to demolish the rear single-storey portion of the existing store to provide a new three-storey extension. Lifting the stock areas onto the first and second floor levels liberated the majority of the ground floor area as retail floorspace. Connection between the new and existing building elements is maintained with a new access ramp to deal with the level change.

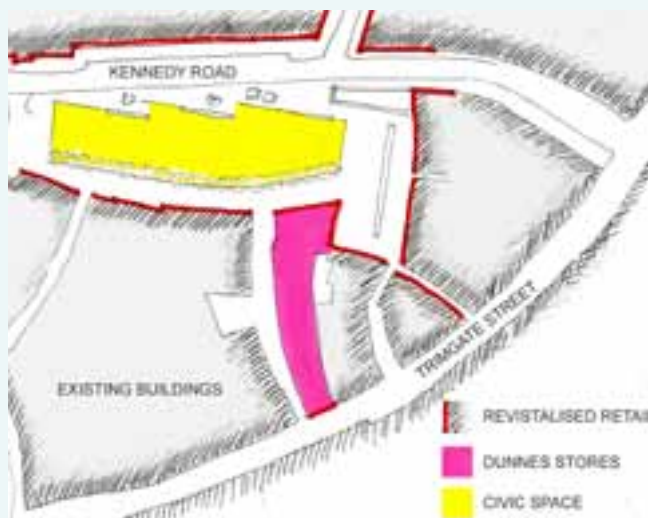
Staff areas have been relocated to the first floor level and positioned along the Kennedy Square elevation with stock and prep areas located to the rear. The second floor level is predominantly a stock area

and roof glazing has been provided to reduce the requirement for artificial lighting at this level.

Service access from the civic space is through a small incoming goods area that has a large lift to take goods directly to the floor required. The service area is designed to have a low impact on the street frontage while delivery times are structured to have a similarly low impact.

A challenge with this type of retail building lies in the fact that wall area is valuable shelving space and, while ensuring that the maximum efficiencies are achieved for retail and stock shelving, it is important that elevations do not become dull and lifeless. The approach

in this case was to pick out and frame particular areas of activity within the building and allow these frames to animate the façade. This is given greater emphasis where some of the framed areas have been cantilevered, which in turn provides for additional useful floor area. These frames become places from which people within the building can view the Civic Space or similarly act in the reverse creating a two-way dialogue between the building and the Civic Space. The corner element of the building is used to provide a balance in scale with the existing corner of the shopping centre directly opposite, creating a focal point to draw the eye into the new Civic Space and allow the building to compete for the attention of passers-by.



Above: The redeveloped town centre supermarket adapts itself to the constraints of the irregular urban site, and connects Trimgate Street with the new Kennedy Place civic centre.

Right: The new Kennedy Place frontage enlivens the pedestrian walkway bounding the new civic space.

4. VITALITY + VIABILITY

Principle – Vitality and viability in city and town centres that are attractive and competitive places to live, work, shop and visit.

Key Questions:

- 4.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the vitality and viability of its urban location?
- 4.2 How does the proposed development add to the quality of retail choice in the shopping offer of its location?
- 4.3 How does the proposed development add to the diversity of attractions other than shopping in its location?
- 4.4 How does the proposed development contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of the urban streetscape in its location?
- 4.5 How does the proposed development contribute to activity at different times of the day and days of the week?

VITALITY + VIABILITY

Question 4.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the vitality and viability of its urban location?



One of the key national policy objectives in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is the promotion of greater vitality and viability in city and town centres, adding to their attractiveness as places to live, work, shop and visit – Eyre Square, Galway.

The *National Spatial Strategy* emphasises the importance of enhancing the physical attractiveness and social liveliness of places – both for people and business. It notes the preferences of people with ‘in-demand’ skills to locate in places that provide distinctive street patterns, conservation of built heritage, contemporary architecture, and a mixture of attractive restaurants, cafes, bars and shops.

Similarly, one of the national policy objectives set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is the promotion of greater vitality and viability in city and town centre locations - vitality refers to how active an urban centre is and viability to its commercial wellbeing. Successful city and town centres combine both, striking a balance between the various factors that make a place both physically and socially attractive, and economically competitive.

Throughout Europe, new retail-led regeneration projects have been a major contributor in enhancing the vitality and viability of city and town centres; serving the needs of their local communities, while also contributing to their attractiveness for visitors and tourists.

The vitality and viability of a city or town centre can be measured by a number of ‘health check indicators’ - the first being its overall social and economic diversity, and not least the quality of its shopping offer. Healthy urban centres combine a wide range of other uses - offices, commercial, leisure, hotels, culture, entertainment, education and housing; thus ensuring activity throughout the day and evening, and on different days of the week.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 2.3 and Annex 2](#)

VITALITY + VIABILITY

Question 4.2 How does the proposed development add to the quality of retail choice in the shopping offer of its location?



Farmers' markets add to the diversity of retail choice, and the vitality and viability of city and town centre locations – Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* recommend that the development management process should assess the likelihood of new retail development having adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of city and town centres as a whole – as opposed to their individual traders; the goal being to promote both retail competition and healthy urban centres.

The Guidelines emphasise the major role shopping plays in attracting people to cities and town centres, and the importance of these centres retaining retailing as a core function, providing diversity of choice and quality in their shopping and service facilities, and supporting their role as the social and economic focus for their communities and rural hinterlands alike.

While new retail development can increase competition and choice in the local shopping offer, one of today's major issues - not only in Ireland - is the number of independent shops closing, and the resulting concern for the future of city and town centres as shopping destinations in the face of competition from edge-of-centre and out-of-centre

development, and the ever-increasing proportion of sales made over the internet and mobile phone.

To contribute to the vitality and viability of city or town centre locations, retail development should be sited: firstly, so that it attracts increased customer

numbers to the place overall; secondly, so that it generates increased footfall along streets and routes in its vicinity; and thirdly, so that it adds to the overall attractiveness of the city or town centre as a shopping destination, enabling it to compete with edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations.



Redevelopment of existing village centre shop units as backlands supermarket development and basement car parking, wrapped by active shop, café and restaurant street frontages – Rathgar, Dublin.

See also:

Retail Design Manual – Principle 2; Site + Location;
Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 2.3 & Annex 2.

VITALITY + VIABILITY

Question 4.3 How does the proposed development add to the diversity of attractions other than shopping in its location?



Shops whose sole purpose was for the sale and purchase of goods are being superseded by places that combine a diversity of retail choice with a range of amenities and attractions in addition to shopping – restaurants, cinemas and an ‘experience’ – Dundrum, Co. Dublin.

In today’s consumer economy, shopping is only one of the factors influencing the vitality and viability of urban centres. Shops whose sole purpose was for the sale and purchase of goods are being superseded by places that combine a diversity of retail choice with a range of other amenities and experiences - and a high quality physical environment.

To be successful, city and town centres should ensure new retail developments, particularly larger schemes, are focused on the overall experience offered to the visitor. Whether within buildings, blocks, streets or whole urban areas, places that provide a diversity of uses, activities and experiences feeding off each other are more attractive and competitive,

not only to shoppers but also residents and business users; thereby enhancing the overall vitality and viability of these locations.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 6; Density + Mixed Use Q3

The most successful places are those that combine shopping with other things to see and do; that are used by different people and at different times of day and night; that are used for different activities. These encourage multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips, longer stays and higher levels of spending overall.

International research increasingly confirms the popular preference for these destinations; people are attracted to places for the opportunities they present to combine shopping with a visit to a café, hairdresser, restaurant, gymnasium or cinema. In some cases the quality of the ancillary attractions are just as important as the shopping on offer.



The overall ‘experience’ offered to shoppers is now an essential consideration in securing the competitiveness of new retail development – Victoria Square, Belfast.

VITALITY + VIABILITY

Question 4.4 How does the proposed development contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of the urban streetscape in its location?



Conservation and adaptation of nineteenth century market hall contributing to the vitality and vibrancy of its urban location – Marche Santa Caterina, Barcelona.

Active ground-floor uses are one of the most important contributors to the vitality and attractiveness of urban places. Well-designed frontages, eye-catching displays and generous entrances are essential to ensuring that retail development makes a positive contribution to city and town centres as competitive shopping destinations.

The basic rule is that ground floor units should, first and foremost, address the street; internalised shopping environments turning their backs to the public realm with blank street elevations have seriously negative impacts on their locations, and on people's perceptions of the safety of public spaces. In mall situations, back-to-back arrangements can provide units addressing both the street and the mall; or larger dual aspect shops can have entrances from both.

In 'big box' situations, negative streetscape impacts can be avoided by wrapping the large floorplates with complementary streetfront units such as hairdressers, cafes, bookshops, and suchlike. This also has commercial

advantages; the smaller traders feed off their adjacency to the anchor stores that, in turn, benefit from the streetscape activity that the specialist shops generate.

Blank façades resulting from inappropriate covering up of windows has a negative impact on the overall quality of the streetscape and should be avoided - shopfronts provide important opportunities to engage with the street and advantage should always be taken of

shop windows to add to the vibrancy and vitality of the streetscape.

Similarly, streetfront cafes are an important part of today's city and town centre environments - and a positive impact on the overall vitality and viability of their economies. They should be positioned in places with an attractive microclimate and free of traffic noise and fumes, and they should not conflict with adjoining uses and activities.



A high quality public realm, active ground floor uses, well-designed frontages, and generous entrances are important contributors to the attractiveness of urban streetscapes – Temple Bar, Dublin.

VITALITY + VIABILITY

Question 4.5 How does the proposed development contribute to activity at different times of the day and days of the week?



The diversity of uses and activities in urban places should seek to ensure that they are busy and well-used at different times of day and night and days of the week, thus contributing not only to their vitality and viability, but also to making places that are safer and more secure for people to live, work, shop and visit.

A recent trend in larger European developments is to combine shopping with complimentary uses that stay open later, thus creating an ‘evening economy’ in their locations. Cinemas, restaurants, housing and leisure centres are the most frequent combinations; the mix can be at the scale of the building, the street or the whole urban block.

Passive surveillance is the cornerstone of safe and secure city and town centres; active upper floors add to the security of the property, and surveillance of public spaces. As long as the various activities do not conflict with each other, mixed-use buildings are among the most successful

ways of making places safer – and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in urban locations.

Living over the shop is the most historically proven means of providing ‘eyes-on-the-street’; CCTV and security personnel are no substitute for public spaces that are active throughout the day and night, and on different days of the week, with frequent pedestrian footfall and lively ground floor uses.



Redevelopment of former telephone exchange as retail, wine bar and restaurant contributes to the vitality of the local streetscape and ensures activity at all times of the day and days of the week - Fallon & Byrne, Dublin.

Mixed- use development with active ground floors and ‘living over the shop’ residential apartments are the historically proven means of providing ‘eyes-on-the-street’ and adding to the vitality of urban areas – Heuston Gate, Kilmainham.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 6; Density + Mixed Use Q3

Case Study 4: Opera Lane, Cork



The 2004 *Cork City Development Plan* identified two key higher-order retail sites within the city centre to address a shortage of available retail space. One of the sites identified was at St. Patrick's Street/ Academy Street.

On what was a largely backlands site, the Opera Lane project is a city centre infill scheme covering two urban blocks. The development is focused on a new pedestrian street – Opera Lane – created by widening and developing the existing Faulkner's Lane. Connecting the previously poorly-connected retail and cultural cores, it links Patrick Street to the Opera House and Crawford Gallery with new double-frontage retail units and apartments overhead.

The 2009-2015 *Cork City Development Plan* strongly encourages high quality mixed-use developments throughout the city centre retail area and, by incorporating apartments, the Opera Lane scheme brings life and activity to the centre of the city. The apartments are arranged around atria on the upper levels of the development with retail storage, staff accommodation and plant forming a buffer level between the retail and residential.

The range of retail units has resulted in a wide mix of tenants - with a number of multiples able to come to the city due to the larger floorplates achieved. As a result, increased footfall has added to the vitality and viability of the city centre.

The design of the Opera Lane scheme – Cork's first new retail and residential street for over two centuries – presented a number of very significant challenges in terms of location, environment and history.

The area where the development is located has historical significance - and has undergone profound physical change over the centuries. Rather than remaining static from architectural or aesthetic perspectives, it had been adapted to meet the changing commercial needs of the city.

The development included the restoration of No.7 Academy Street, built in 1908 by George Crosby - it is one of the few art nouveau buildings in Cork - and also the protected structure at No.11 Emmet Place, an early 18th century Merchants house also known as the Queen Anne building,

built in 1740; works included full restoration of external façade, roof and internal works to stabilise the structure.

The design challenge was not only the appropriate retention of protected structures, but also the preservation and reinforcement of the existing framework of lanes and urban blocks. The concomitant commercial challenge was to ensure that the design of the new retail street met all modern-day expectations both of shoppers and global retail brands.

The project has been a success notwithstanding the formidable baseline challenges: its scale, spatial

range across two city centre blocks and the surrounding sensitivities of the built environment. It is testament to how contemporary architectural design can work sympathetically within demanding aesthetic parameters and still deliver across a range of consumer and commercial criteria.

Opera Lane has reinvigorated the city centre, generated footfall and business and transformed what was previously in large part a semi-derelict area into a thriving shopping precinct and lively social and cultural space, thereby opening up the city centre in a new, easy, accessible way.

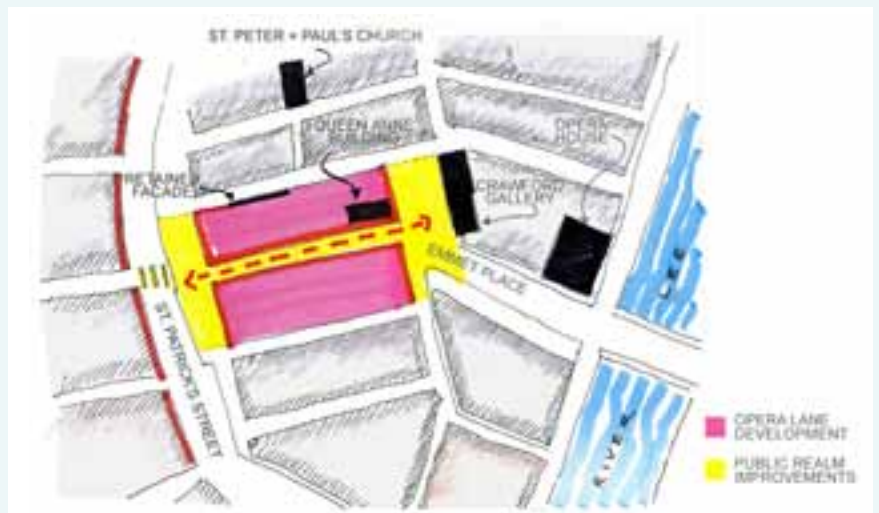
Clockwise from top right:

The existing urban structure is intensified and existing protected structures are conserved and adapted to new uses.

The new street bisects the new urban block with a fine grain urban structure adding to the pedestrian permeability of the city centre generally.

The site comprised a largely backlands site between Patrick Street and Emmett Place.

Aerial view of the site after development.



5. ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Principle: City and town centres that are accessible and well-connected, easy to get to and convenient to move about.

Key Questions

- 5.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the accessibility and connectivity of its urban location?
- 5.2 How does the proposed development encourage sustainable modes of transport, and balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars?
- 5.3 How does the proposed development provide appropriate provision for vehicular access to service both the development and its local urban environment?
- 5.4 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the accessibility and pedestrian permeability of its locality?
- 5.5 How does the proposed development incorporate appropriate levels of car parking to service both the development and its local urban environment?

ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Question 5.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the accessibility and connectivity of its urban location?

Safe and convenient access for all modes of travel is essential to the success of cities and town centres. How places function is greatly influenced by how they are accessed and how they are connected; those that are easy to get to and to move around are generally more competitive and more sustainable - socially, economically and environmentally - and more attractive as places to live, work, shop and visit.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* reiterate national policy objectives to focus future retail development on locations that are more easily accessed by sustainable modes of travel - public transport, walking and cycling; they emphasise that the continued growth of car transport is not sustainable as it will lead to further congestion, further pollution, further global warming and negative impacts on public health.

These policy objectives endorse the Institute of Public Health's report '*Health Impacts of the Built Environment*' and its conclusions that neighbourhoods which are pedestrian orientated - and enable people to perform daily activities without the use of a car - are more likely to promote public health, social networks and community interaction.

The challenge in urban design generally, and retail development in particular, is to strike a balance between providing appropriate levels of vehicular access for customers, emergencies, deliveries and servicing, while also delivering the qualities that make city and town centres attractive and convenient to move about - particularly by public transport, walking and cycling - and thereby advancing national policy objectives to facilitate a shift towards sustainable modes of travel.



Neighbourhoods which are pedestrian orientated and enable people to perform daily activities without the use of a car are more likely to promote public health, social networks and community interaction – Grand Canal Harbour, Dublin.

See also:

Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 2 & 5.

ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Question 5.2 How does the proposed development encourage sustainable modes of transport, and balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars?



Shopping destinations accessible by sustainable modes of transport encourage multi-purpose trips combining shopping, business and leisure – St. Stephen's Green/Grafton Street, Dublin.



Shopping destinations should as accessible, if not more so, by public transport, cycling and walking, as for private cars – *Westport Smarter Travel Initiative*.

One of the fundamental objectives of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is to promote forms of retail development that contribute to the development of compact urban areas with optimum accessibility by sustainable travel modes; the Guidelines state that access to large retailing centres needs to be made as or more attractive to public transport, cycling and walking, as they are by private car.

While good vehicular access is critical to the success and competitiveness of shopping destinations, the quantum of car parking provided in new development should be limited to discourage unnecessary car use; and it should be designed to serve not only the

development itself, but also other uses in its locality, thus encouraging multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips in line with the Government's *Smarter Travel* strategy.

Successful outcomes require that considerations of access and connectivity by sustainable travel modes are prioritised from the outset of the planning and development process, particularly on larger schemes. The siting and orientation of the development within the place's urban structure and movement framework should ensure that customers can get to, and move about, shopping destinations conveniently, and that goods, deliveries and waste are managed

efficiently. Similarly, its connectivity into the street and open space network of the locality should ensure that walking, cycling and public transport use are encouraged - for people of all abilities - and that car use for everyday shopping trips is discouraged.

See also:

Retail Design Manual – Principle 2; Site + Location;
[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 2 & 5.](#)

ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Question 5.3 How does the proposed development provide appropriate provision for vehicular access to service both the development and its local urban environment?



While customer car access is essential for certain types of shopping – and emergency, goods and services delivery a requirement of all – meeting the needs of vehicular traffic, and particularly private cars, should not be to the detriment of the overall character and quality of city and town centres as places to live, work, shop and visit.

The key challenge in urban design is to create an urban structure and a movement framework that appropriately balances access and connectivity considerations with the attractiveness of a place's public realm; an over-emphasis on vehicular traffic results in congestion and a car-dominated environment, whereas over-restrictive access promotes leakage to out-of-centre development or competing centres nearby.

While the total elimination of vehicular access can disadvantage city and town centres commercially – and fully pedestrianised areas can feel empty and sterile – restricted inessential vehicular access, combined with traffic calming, environmental improvements and well-sited short-term parking, generally enhances both the quality and competitiveness of city and town centres as shopping destinations.

In summary, while access, parking and servicing are critical to the safe and effective operation of retail development, successful outcomes balance 'placemaking' with traffic design; combining the needs of vehicles for access, deliveries and emergencies with the qualities that encourage people to live, work and shop in city and town centres – and to choose walking, cycling and public transport for everyday trips, including shopping.

Successful outcomes balance 'placemaking' with traffic design, combining the needs of vehicles for access, deliveries and emergencies with the qualities that encourage people to live, work and shop in city and town centre locations – Chester, UK.



Speed restrictions, traffic calming and quality landscape design contributing to the vitality and attractiveness of the urban environment – Ijburg Amsterdam.

ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Question 5.4 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the accessibility and pedestrian permeability of its locality?



Permeable and well-connected networks of streets and routes are the backbone of successful urban places. In terms of shopping, a permeable urban structure increases footfall from location to location and from shop to shop, thereby contributing to the vitality and viability of both the retail environment and the local economy.

The design of new development should ensure the scheme integrates with the urban structure and movement framework of the place, enabling people to move about directly and with ease, and applying the principles of universal access to ensure that places are usable by people of all abilities. Routes should not only be direct and convenient, they should be attractive as 'places' in their own right; indirect routes, cluttered footpaths, poor materials, bad lighting and traffic-dominated urban areas discourage pedestrians and cyclists, and people with disabilities.

Edge-of-centre schemes should optimise the potential of anchor stores, transport stops, car parking and similar destinations to generate pedestrian routes and footfall both into and through the development. Entrances should connect with pedestrian routes and open spaces in and around the site and, whenever possible, take advantage of opportunities to generate new ones.

An analysis of existing and potential 'desire lines' in the locality will provide the framework for integrating new development into the urban structure of its city or town centre setting; generating routes that are convenient, legible, well lit, safe, free of obstructions and accessible for all - with crossings and junctions that are easy to negotiate, plus traffic calming and speed controls that deliver safer and more attractive urban environments.

Permeable and well-connected networks of streets and routes are the backbone of successful urban places, enabling people to move about conveniently and directly and increasing pedestrian footfall in retail destinations - Waterford City Centre.



New pedestrian bridge enhancing pedestrian connectivity and permeability in Dublin city centre, improving the vitality and viability of the local retail environment - Millennium Bridge, Dublin.

ACCESS + CONNECTIVITY

Question 5.5 How does the proposed development incorporate appropriate levels of car parking to service both the development and its local urban environment?



Well designed local car parking requirement situated underneath landscaped public space, with discretely located vehicular access – Plaza del Sol, Barcelona.

Parking has a major impact on how places function and how they look; the challenge is to strike a balance between providing sufficient car access and parking to underpin their vitality and viability, while ensuring that traffic and parking – particularly surface parking – does not result in a car-dominated environment. The quantum required will be set-out in the development plan, or agreed in pre-planning discussions on the parking strategy for the development.

Parking often provides a ‘gateway’ to urban areas. Particularly in major schemes, it should be sited where it is convenient and serves different users at different times of the day and days of the week. Its location should seek to increase footfall to key destinations nearby, either on existing streets or by creating new ones, for example, from an edge-of-centre development into the existing centre.

Cars are the only practical method of transport for many disabled people and accessible parking is an essential requirement in all retail development; it should be located where it is most convenient to anchor stores and other destinations. Similarly, the promotion of sustainable travel requires that secure bicycle parking is conveniently located in urban areas.

To reduce the land-take for surface parking, parking above or below retail floor space should be the preferred option. Where multi-storey solutions are not feasible, surface parking should be to the rear and not exposed to view from the street frontage, so as not to detract from the quality of the urban environment. Alternatively, surface parking may be broken down into smaller pockets and distributed carefully on and around the development site.



To reduce the land-take for surface parking, multi-storey solutions should be the preferred option, rooftop parking above retail floor space, Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 7; Public Realm Q5

Case Study 5: Dublin City Centre Retail Framework Plan



Dublin City Centre is the prime retail destination in the country and, despite increased competition and major growth in the Greater Dublin Area, it continues to provide the largest retail offer in the State. Dublin City Council's framework plan - *Developing the Retail Core* - sets out a policy framework for maintaining and reinforcing the city's central retail core as Ireland's premier shopping destination.

The unique character and identity of the city's shopping areas has been shaped by the pattern of streets, spaces and buildings inherited from Dublin's historic development, and the city's shopping experience is very heavily concentrated on the main shopping streets or 'spines' of Henry Street and Grafton Street, each of which provides its own distinctive retail offer.

Developing the Retail Core sets out policies and strategies to reinvigorate and expand the city's prime retail areas as a world-class shopping destination, plus

strategies to reinforce linkages between north and south of the River Liffey, to enable the city centre to compete effectively as an entity with edge-of-centre and out-of-centre shopping destinations.

Aspiring to matching the quality standards of Dublin's international competitors, the framework nevertheless calls for the promotion of a uniquely Dublin experience, building on the strong local character of the city's existing network of streets and public spaces, architecture and fabric, and the specific mix and juxtaposition of uses in its centre.

The *Legible Dublin* study outlined a strategic framework of routes to connect the city's main structuring elements, underpinned by three key themes: the walkable city – creating a pedestrian friendly and extended city centre; the reclaimed city – creating a public domain of international standing; and the connected city – creating a way-finding and information system.

Dublin City Council continues to promote initiatives to enhance the retail environment of the city centre, such as the public realm improvements for

Henry Street, new Liffey bridges to link the two main retail cores (and to carry Luas trams), and a Business Improvement District scheme (BID).

Developing the Retail Core also identifies a number of development sites in close proximity to the main shopping streets, particularly to meet the demand for additional floor space for medium to large-scale retail units. These sites are currently underused or occupied by uses that do not add to the vitality of local streetscapes, especially at ground-floor level. Their scale will ensure that redevelopment generates new retail

magnets and destinations and, linked directly to the main shopping streets via short pedestrian loops, these will in turn be revitalised by the arrival of new anchors, thereby expanding the retail offer and the vitality of the city centre's retail core.

The framework notes the particular importance of the city centre's public realm of streets and open spaces, and their importance both in the provision of effective and convenient access for business and customers using the city centre, and in shaping people's perceptions of the attractiveness and

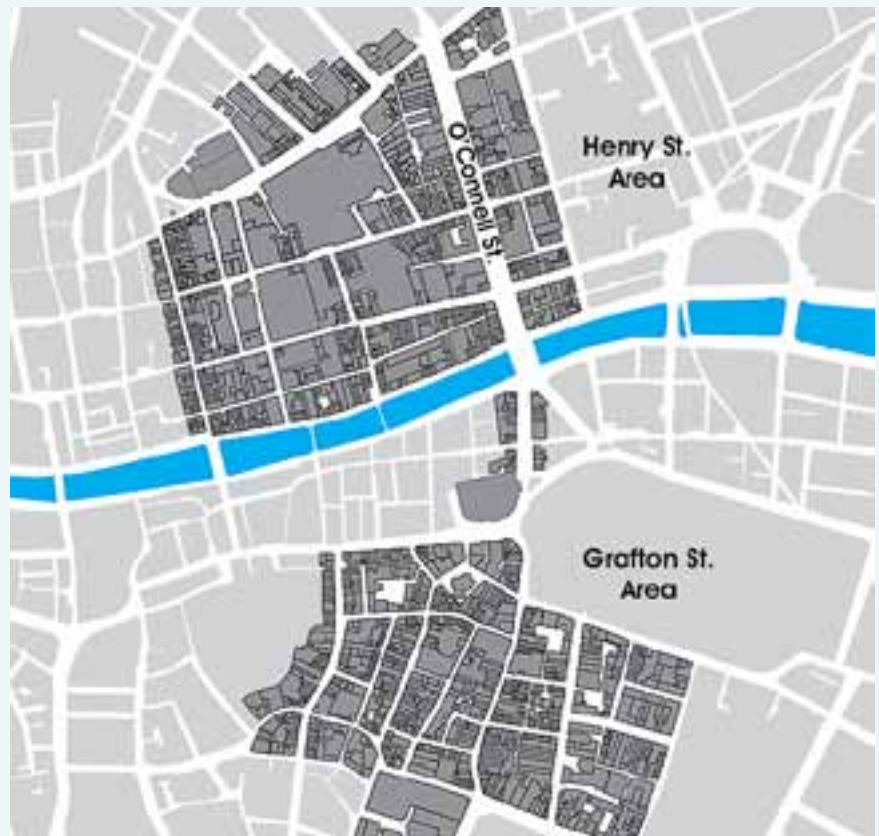
amenity value of the city centre. It sets out key strategic actions to enhance the pedestrian environment through a series of traffic calming and public realm improvements, including reducing vehicular speeds, improving pedestrian priority at key junctions, increasing pavement widths and the number of shared-surface and pedestrian-only streets.

Clockwise from below: Dublin's shopping experience is heavily concentrated on its main shopping streets or spines, Grafton Street and Henry Street – Henry Street.

'Developing the Retail Core' sets out a framework to reinvigorate and expand the city's two prime shopping areas.

Balancing the needs of pedestrians, cars, cyclists and public transport – O'Connell Street.

Creating vibrant new linkages between Dublin's main retail areas – Millennium Bridge.



6.DENSITY + MIXED USE

Principle – Higher density and mixed use development creating compact urban areas and the efficient use of land.

Key Questions:

- 6.1 How does the development proposal contribute to the optimum use of urban land, and the principles of sustainable development?
- 6.2 How does the proposed development contribute to creating compact urban areas and reducing suburban sprawl?
- 6.3 How does the proposed development contribute to the creation of a mixed-use urban environment in its location?
- 6.4 How does the proposed development contribute to increasing urban density and the sustainable development of its location?
- 6.5 How does the proposed development incorporate the appropriate regeneration of underutilised and pre-developed lands and sites?

DENSITY + MIXED USE

Question 6.1 How does the development proposal contribute to the optimum use of urban land and the principles of sustainable development?



Attractive urban areas, mixed-uses and higher densities are central to the responsible use of urban land and the principles of sustainable development – Manzana Fort Pienc, Barcelona.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* reiterate policies to reverse recent trends towards dispersed development and urban sprawl; they emphasise that future population and economic growth - and particularly retail development - should take place predominantly in compact urban areas and locations that support sustainable forms of transport.

The qualities and advantages of compact and sustainable urban areas are today well understood: they are dense

enough to support quality services and amenities; they are small enough to foster community identity; they accommodate a mix of residential, commercial and other uses; they are compact enough to encourage walking and cycling; they facilitate the economic provision of sustainable energy systems; they are attractive and well-designed with a high quality public realm.

In terms of retail development, compact urban areas, mixed-uses and higher densities in appropriate locations are key to other objectives in the Guidelines: greater retail choice and more sustainable travel. Compact urban areas, mixed-uses and higher densities increase the customer base for local shops and services, and reduce the proportion of shopping trips made by car in favour of walking, cycling and public transport.

DENSITY + MIXED USE

Question 6.2 How does the proposed development contribute to creating compact urban areas and reducing suburban sprawl?



The creation of more compact urban areas and reversing trends towards dispersed forms of settlement are key objectives in the pursuit of a sustainable built environment. Therefore, city and town centres are the preferred location for new retail development, and only where it can be demonstrated that there are no sites which are suitable, available and viable should edge-of-centre sites be considered, and only where there are no edge-of-centre sites which are suitable, available and viable should out-of-centre sites be considered.

New retail development – and particularly larger schemes in appropriate locations – can deliver more compact urban form by optimising the capacity of urban lands. An excessive land-take for single-storey floorplates results in subsequent development having to locate further away, extending the distances between the new shopping location and the local centre, thereby discouraging walking and cycling for getting around.

Similarly, large-scale surface car parking is a poor use of zoned lands in urban areas; multi-storey solutions, and parking above or below retail floor space, should be the preferred option unless not feasible due to financial or site constraints. Where permitted in town centre locations, surface car parking should be shown to be capable of being redeveloped in the future for viable town-centre uses.

An increasing trend – particularly in larger schemes – is to develop the space over shopping for other compatible uses such as cinemas, restaurants, leisure uses and housing. These development models increase gross densities, and can contribute to the creation of compact urban form in appropriate city and town centre locations.

Places have greater vitality – and are more vibrant – when they contain a mix of uses and a diversity of activities in close proximity; shopping, offices and apartments in city centre location – Mayor Square, Dublin.



Strategic Development Zone planned to deliver high density mixed use development comprising housing, education, commercial and retail development in quality urban environment – Adamstown Town Centre.

DENSITY + MIXED USE

Question 6.3 How does the proposed development contribute to the creation of a mixed-use urban environment in its location?



Well-designed high density mixed use retail and residential development contributing to the vitality and viability of its city centre environment – Temple Bar, Dublin.

International research increasingly confirms that the most attractive and successful urban places are those that combine a diversity of activities in close proximity; thereby enhancing the vitality and viability of city and town centres, and contributing to their sustainability: well-designed mixed-use developments combine a variety of things to see and do; they are used by different people and at different times of day and night; and are also used for different activities.

Mixed-use locations encourage multi-purpose shopping, business and leisure trips, longer stays and higher levels of spending. The mix of uses can be at the scale of the building, the street, the block, or the whole urban area. In major retail-led development, it can be achieved either horizontally, by incorporating cafes, restaurants, cinemas, libraries, leisure centres, etc. alongside shopping; or it may be achieved vertically by using the space above retail floors for secondary uses such as offices and, particularly, housing.

An appropriate mix of compatible uses is desirable in major retail-led development schemes. Where retail is combined with other uses it is imperative that the scheme is designed, firstly, so that the operations of the shopping element are not disadvantaged functionally and,

secondly, so that the ancillary uses are complementary and not compromised by the retail operations; particularly in terms of the impact of servicing, deliveries, parking and such-like on the comfort and amenities of the other occupiers.



Ground floor foodstore and café in mixed use urban development – Milltown, Dublin.

See Also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 4; Vitality + Viability Q3, Q5

DENSITY + MIXED USE

Question 6.4 How does the proposed development contribute to increasing urban density and the sustainable development of its location?

Well-designed higher density and mixed-use development generally enhances the vitality and viability of city and town centres, and contributes to their sustainability: more productive use of zoned lands; economic provision of infrastructure and services; increased viability of urban transport; reduced land-take for greenfield development; pedestrian and cycle-friendly urban environments.

Therefore, in appropriate urban locations, increasing gross density is central to the responsible use of urban land, counteracting dispersed development, suburbanisation and sprawl, and promoting more sustainable forms of transport.

In the centre of larger urban areas multi-storey development should be the preferred solution for new development, and single-storey floorplates should be discouraged. Wherever mixed-use multi-storey schemes are not viable in these locations, the substructures of single-storey developments should be designed to accommodate future multi-storey development.

Living over the shop is the most historically proven means of increasing urban densities in appropriate locations. As long as the various activities do not conflict with each other, higher density mixed-use buildings are among the most successful ways of making places safer, and reducing anti-social behaviour in urban locations.

Higher densities should not be detrimental to the overall character and quality of the location; nevertheless increasing urban densities ought to be the overall goal in built-up urban areas; particularly where a site is well sited, well served by public transport, and well connected to local residential, commercial, culture, leisure and educational infrastructure.



High density, mixed use development combining upper floor residential apartments above ground floor supermarket, in proximity to neighbourhood culture and leisure uses – Rathmines Town Centre.



Provision of high quality residential amenity in 'living over the shop' apartments in city centre mixed-use development – The Printworks, Temple Bar, Dublin.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 2; Site + Location

DENSITY + MIXED USE

Question 6.5 How does the proposed development incorporate the appropriate regeneration of underutilised and pre-developed lands and sites?



The *Retail Planning Guidelines* note the presence of opportunities to accommodate future retailing requirements on underutilised and pre-developed lands within the built fabric of existing city and town centres. These include industrial, backlands and 'brownfield' sites, and redundant buildings and structures suitable for conversion to retail and similar town-centre uses.

Where appropriate, the development of these sites can have significant knock-on benefits on the revitalisation of adjacent properties, and even entire urban areas; their redevelopment also reduces the pressure for development at edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations.

Backlands sites can create opportunities for higher densities – and possibly greater height – where a larger and perhaps taller structure is located within the core of an urban block, and its greater height is

masked by stepping down its mass from its centre to an edge of lower structures along the streetscape.

Backlands sites can also present opportunities to provide greater permeability in the urban structure; for example, by locating large retail floorspace at the centre of the urban block behind streetfront plots, thus generating pedestrian footfall through the development.

The *Guidelines* recommend that planning authorities adopt a pro-active approach to secure the development of these sites, addressing ownership and other relevant planning issues; edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations should be considered only when there are no suitable and viable sites available within the existing centre.

The development of underutilised backlands sites can have significant knock-on benefits on adjacent properties and the vitality and viability of entire urban centres – Market Cross, Kilkenny.



Regeneration of town centre site generating pedestrian footfall from main street to backlands car park, with positive impacts on the vitality and viability of the urban centre – Westport, Co. Mayo.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 2; Site + Location;

Case Study 6: Quayside Mixed-use Development, Sligo



The northwest's primary retail centre, Sligo, is identified as a Gateway in the *National Spatial Strategy*. Prior to development, this 3.5-acre site, encompassing the old Buttermarket site on Lower Quay Street and The Sligo Champion offices located on Wine Street, was a low density, underutilised site despite its zoning and location within the 'Quay Quarter' immediately adjacent to Sligo's retail core.

The absence of narrow medieval plots and the area's association with the port's development in the early nineteenth century in particular has resulted in early industrial plots that are larger than traditional Irish streetscapes.

Located in the urban core, the Quayside is easily accessible by foot, with bus and rail stations within walking distance. The scheme was designed to be largely external, pedestrian orientated, permeable and accessible 24 hours a day.

The majority of the retail units are deep plan, narrow fronted shops opening onto a new shopping street that leads to the central shopping centre. The narrow frontages contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the new street and the simple shopfronts, with large windows providing natural light and ventilation animate the streetscape at all times of the day and days of the week. The streetscape is uncluttered, with signage and lighting integrated into the overall design; materials used are simple and durable.

Functioning over three levels, and containing a large anchor store and the remaining units, the shopping centre is accessed from this point and links through to Quay Street. A 'tower' acts as a focal point to draw the pedestrian from the Wine Street entrance into the centre of the development.

The large area above the retail accommodation has been utilised to provide a series of courtyards overhead, around which the residential

accommodation is arranged. These courtyards are accessed directly from the new street and central area and are landscaped with durable, low-maintenance materials, lighting and planting. Although introverted in nature, views from the courtyards to local landmarks such as the Cathedral and nearby mountains are maintained.

The incorporation of multi-storey car parking is intended to be shared by the development and the city generally and addresses a shortage of parking in Sligo's centre effectively doubling that previously available. It is accessed from a secondary

street and located beneath the retail, taking advantage of varying levels across the site and avoiding the creation of blank façades. Servicing is also accessed from here, separated from pedestrian activity. The creation of a 'front and back' scenario is prevented by integrating the service entrances into the overall building and locating retail and residential accommodation above.

The residential accommodation overlooks the surrounding streets, providing passive surveillance to areas that were previously deserted outside of business hours. The scheme has had a positive effect in

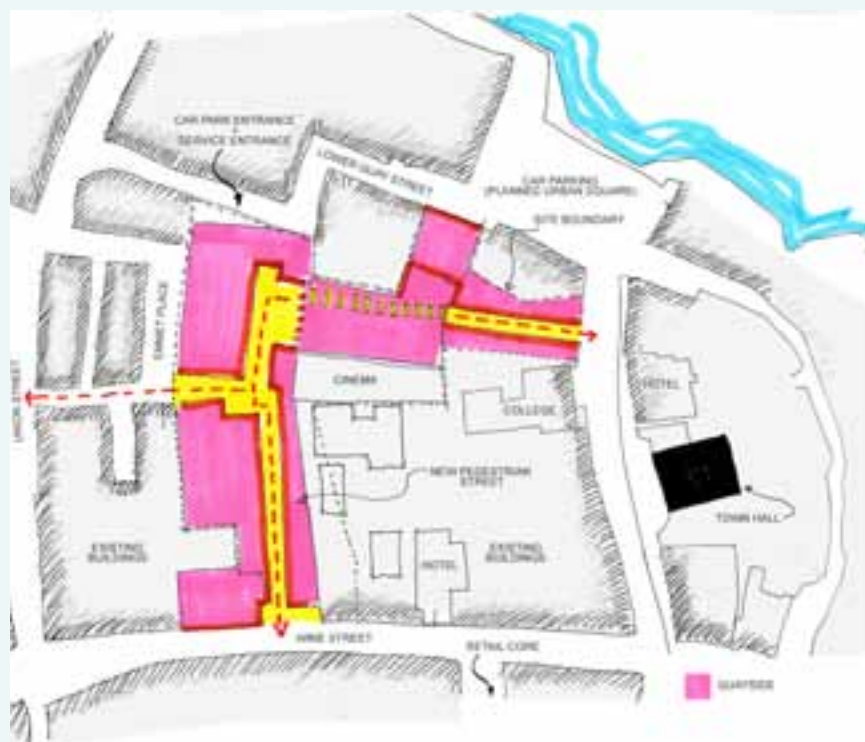
regenerating the core – with the mix of uses complementing those surrounding the development, cafés and retail within the development benefit from adjoining office accommodation, the adjacent cinema increases evening activity in the area and also benefits from the increase in customer base resulting from the adjoining residential accommodation.

The development has been a catalyst for regeneration of this part of Sligo with a Quay Quarter Urban Design Framework forming part of the Sligo & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.

Clockwise from right: The development is stitched into the urban fabric of Sligo, making optimum use of urban land while maintaining ease of access and permeability.

Residential courtyards located above the retail units.

Higher densities can be achieved in appropriate urban locations giving access to sustainable modes of travel and ensuring vitality and viability of city and town centres.



7. PUBLIC REALM

Principle – Well-designed and well-used open spaces contributing to a high quality public realm in the location.

Key Questions

- 7.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the overall character and quality of the public realm in its location?
- 7.2 How does the proposed development contribute to the continuity and enclosure of open spaces in its location?
- 7.3 How does the proposed development incorporate landscape as an integral part of the overall scheme design?
- 7.4 How does the proposed development contribute to the visual quality of the public realm with well-designed shopfronts and signage?
- 7.5 How does the proposed development accommodate car parking in layouts that are well laid out, visually attractive and accessible to all?

PUBLIC REALM

Question 7.1 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the overall character and quality of the public realm in its location?



The character and quality of urban areas is defined not only by the architecture of their buildings, but also by the quality of the streets, squares, parks and other open spaces that comprise the public realm. Cities and towns with well-designed and well-used open spaces are more attractive as places to live, work, shop and visit; and the quality of a place's public realm ranks high among the factors that generate confidence to invest in urban locations.

New retail development, especially larger schemes, should make a positive contribution to improving the quality of existing open spaces on and around the site and, whenever possible, add new ones. The quality of these spaces – plus how actively they are used – enhances the performance of city and town centres as shopping destinations, generating higher capital values, greater rent returns and increased retail sales.

International research indicates that a low quality public realm – in combination with poor management of the urban environment – is one of the primary causes of the decline of town centres, and one of the greatest threats to their survival in the face of competition from out-of-centre locations and on-line shopping.

To remain competitive as shopping destinations, city and town centres must provide high quality – and well-managed – public open spaces; and the elements of their design – materials, planting, lighting, furniture, and public art – should receive as much attention as every other aspect of the development.

City and town centres must provide a high quality public realm if they are to remain competitive as shopping destinations in the face of alternative edge-of-centre, out-of-centre and on-line shopping – O'Connell Street, Dublin.

PUBLIC REALM

Question 7.2 How does the proposed development contribute to the continuity and enclosure of open spaces in its location?



The microclimatic benefits of continuity and enclosure in urban streetscapes can create opportunities for external streets in new retail developments as opposed to air-conditioned malls – Victoria Square, Belfast.

In urban design, the continuity and enclosure of the open spaces that make up the public realm are key elements in determining the attractiveness of these ‘outdoor rooms’ of city and town centres, and by extension their performance as shopping destinations, not only for their local communities but also for visitors and tourists.

Successful outcomes depend, first and foremost, on new development having regard for adjacent building lines and heights and, whenever possible, contributing to the continuity and enclosure of the streetscape in their locations; avoiding discontinuities in the fabric caused by gaps and setbacks to accommodate standard design templates, on-frontage parking and suchlike.

Similarly, edge-of-centre developments should be designed around open spaces that create their own continuity and

enclosure; freestanding blocks randomly placed without regard for each other – or for the quality of spaces between them – are unattractive and discourage pedestrian footfall; also, ill-defined open spaces can generate anti-social behaviour and impact negatively on the attractiveness and people’s perceptions of the safety of places.

Continuity and enclosure in the fabric of open spaces also contributes to the quality of the urban microclimate, providing shelter from prevailing winds, raising ambient temperatures and maximising the benefits of solar gain. These microclimatic, continuity and enclosure considerations can create opportunities for the adoption of street-based design solutions for major retail developments, as opposed to the now increasingly unfashionable internalised malls.



New development should have regard to adjacent building lines and heights and, whenever possible, contribute to the continuity of the streetscape in its location – Westport Quay, Westport.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 4; Vitality + Viability

PUBLIC REALM

Question 7.3 How does the proposed development incorporate landscape as an integral part of the overall scheme design?



Shopping destinations with attractive and well-designed open spaces generate increased retail footfall and encourage people to linger longer – The Pavillions, Dun Laoghaire.

The open spaces associated with retail developments can contain a multitude of planting, lighting, seating, bins, fencing, shelters, poles, lights, bollards and signs; successful outcomes require that the design and specification of these elements is an integral part of the overall vision for the place, with a consistency of approach that adds to the quality of the development, and to the public realm generally.

Paving and surface materials should be durable and of high quality, with low maintenance requirements, and conforming to the principles of universal access. Textures and colours should be sympathetic to the character of the city or town centre, and – whenever possible – indigenous materials are preferable in the interest of local distinctiveness and environmental sustainability.

Street lighting should ensure that open spaces are sufficiently illuminated to be safe – and perceived to be safe – by

pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike. Unnecessary fixtures should be avoided, but architecturally designed fittings can contribute to the overall visual quality of the environment.

Planting and soft landscaping add to the amenity and visual quality - plus the environmental performance - of urban spaces; trees, combined with appropriate ground cover, improve the microclimate around buildings, absorbing carbon dioxide and other airborne pollutants.

In summary, landscape design makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of retail development; a public realm strategy should form part of the proposal for all major schemes, and the details of its design should receive as much attention as every other aspect of a development.



Landscape design makes a positive contribution to the character and quality of retail developments as shopping destinations; and a public realm strategy should form part of the proposal for all major schemes – Sainsburys, Plymouth, UK.

See also:

Retail Design Manual – Principle 9;
Environmental Responsibility Q4, Q5;
– Principle 10; Sustainable Construction Q4

PUBLIC REALM

Question 7.4 How does the proposed development contribute to the visual quality of the public realm with well designed shopfronts and signage?



Retail shopfronts form the backdrop to many of the open spaces that make up the public realm of urban places. They have an importance well beyond their role to advertise the goods available for purchase. In combination with the liveliness of ground floor uses, they are a key element in determining the overall attractiveness, and the 'branding', of city and town centre shopping destinations.

Successful outcomes require that the details that make up the visual environment – shopfronts, fascias, lighting, signage and canopies – contribute to an integrated design concept, avoiding visual clutter and ensuring that a high standard of design adds to the character and quality of the place as a shopping destination.

Retail signage should balance the need of retailers to showcase their retail offer with the need to enhance the overall quality of the urban environment. Signs should be compatible with the building design and not overtly brash, particularly

in historic urban locations. Generic branding and corporate logos should be adapted to the local context, and high quality materials and graphic design should be employed to add to the overall distinctiveness of the development.



Street signage should be limited to what is necessary for legibility and public safety; the objective being to keep clutter to a minimum and avoid confusion for pedestrians and motorists alike. Integrated street design can reduce the need for excessive signage and obstructions such as guard rails and bollards which detract from the quality of the urban environment.

Well-designed retail shopfronts and lively ground floor uses are key elements in determining the overall attractiveness - and the 'branding' - of city and town centre shopping destinations – Spitalfields, London.

Generic branding and corporate logos should be adapted to the local context, with durable materials and high quality graphic design adding to the distinctiveness of the development and its relationship to its local context – Westport, Co. Mayo.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 4; Vitality + Viability

PUBLIC REALM

Question 7.5 How does the proposed development accommodate car parking in layouts that are well laid out, visually attractive and accessible to all?



Surface parking should ideally be located to the rear so as not to impact on the quality of the streetscape, and attractively landscaped with planting and lighting adding to the quality and character of the development – Tesco, Ludlow, UK.

Surface car parking has generally negative impacts on the public realm of urban places. These can be reduced if layouts and landscaping are considered as part of an overall landscaping strategy for the development. Ideally, parking should be accommodated in basement, undercroft or multi-storey solutions, with a minimum of surface and on-street parking. But the visual impact of surface parking can be reduced if it is absorbed into the urban fabric in backlands locations, and linked to the town centre by pedestrian routes with active ground floor uses.

Similarly, the impact of multi-storey car parks can be improved if they incorporate active ground level uses such as shops and cafés. A quantum of well-designed on-street parking with appropriate landscaping can provide an element of traffic calming and add to the vitality of the streetscape.

Where basement or multi-storey solutions are not practicable, surface parking should be sensitively designed and sited out of view so as not to dominate the street frontage or create negative impacts on the public realm generally. Access and egress should be designed to minimise disruptions to the continuity of the streetscape.

Layouts should be logical and easy to navigate, both for motorists and pedestrians, particularly the disabled and the elderly. Surfaces and boundary treatments should be of high quality, avoiding left-over spaces and the exposure of unsightly backs of adjoining structures. Adequate space should be allowed for tree planting, lighting, street furniture and landscaping, treating car parking areas with the same attention as other open spaces in the development.



The impact of surface parking can be reduced if it is absorbed into the urban fabric in backlands locations, and linked to the town centre by attractive pedestrian routes and active ground floor uses - Westport, Co Mayo.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 5; Access + Connectivity Q5;
Principle 9; Environmental Responsibility Q4

Case Study 7: Iveragh Road Town Renewal, Killorglin, Co. Kerry



The 2004 Killorglin LAP encouraged mixed-use development in strategic locations to strengthen commercial and residential uses, create a vibrant living and working environment and provide a local focal point for activity. The Plan acknowledged that the town lacked both formal and informal open spaces – undermining the potential attractiveness of its streetscapes. Existing under-used, vacant and derelict sites were identified and zoned for mixed use to allow for the scale of retailing and service provision necessary for Killorglin to develop as a district town.

The Iveragh Road site was identified in both the LAP and the 1999 Town Renewal Plan as an opportunity site for redevelopment as a civic centre and the creation of a new public space contributing to the physical and social regeneration of Killorglin. The Town Renewal Plan recommended that an urban design strategy be prepared for the site to guide new development. An Area Action Plan was prepared in

2003 giving guidance on the form of any new buildings and public spaces and recommending a mixture of civic, residential and commercial uses for the site.

Conceived as a centre of civic importance, the scheme focuses on the public realm and has a discernable sense of place. Two mixed-use buildings are orientated to create a new public square, filling the

opening between the old fine-grained street fabric and the new three- and four-storey buildings.

The provision of basement-level parking - with some parking provision along the street - frees the space for use by pedestrians as a public square. Trees, planting and water features contribute to the biodiversity and microclimate; canopies provide shade and shelter from

the elements and seating encourages people to linger. The space is well lit, clutter-free and finished with simple, durable materials. The buildings facing onto the square provide active frontages and a diversity of uses at different times of the day and days of the week.

Kerry County Council's Local Area Centre, forming the northern edge of the square, is conceived as a landmark building for Killorglin; it is three storeys high and centered on a glazed double-volume atrium that provides a visual link between the formal public space in front of the building and the informal park/playground to the rear. A community library, tourist office and art café are

accommodated in the generous height of the ground floor. The council's One-stop Shop and offices are located on the first floor and a council chamber with associated facilities are on the second floor, which is set back to create a south-facing terrace overlooking the new town square.

A second building forming the western edge to the square is four storeys high, comprising two lower levels of retail/offices and two upper levels of apartments centered around a semi-private courtyard; in contrast with the new public square, it provides soft-landscaped and informal play and amenity space.

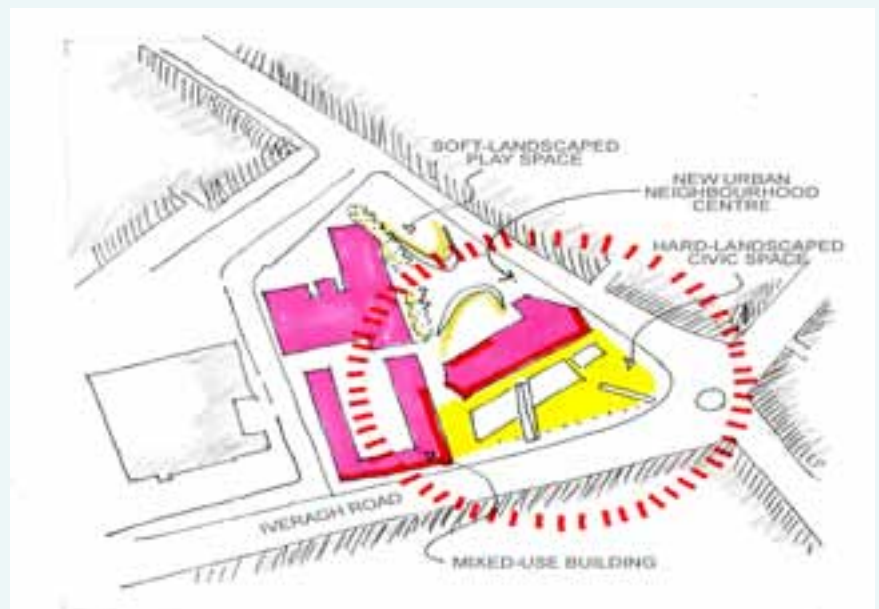
The scheme incorporates many low-energy features, including a geothermal heating system supplied by three wells on the site.

Since completion, the development has expanded and strengthened Killorglin's centre with many new cafés and retail outlets opening around the square. The 2010 Local Area Plan recognises the new public space known as Library Place as a valuable piece of social infrastructure that creates a sense of place in the heart of the town.

Clockwise from right: The buildings define a new public space for the town.

Simple water features, trees and planting enhance the microclimate and canopies provide shelter and shade.

A coherent landscaping strategy incorporating appropriate lighting, seating, trees and planting.

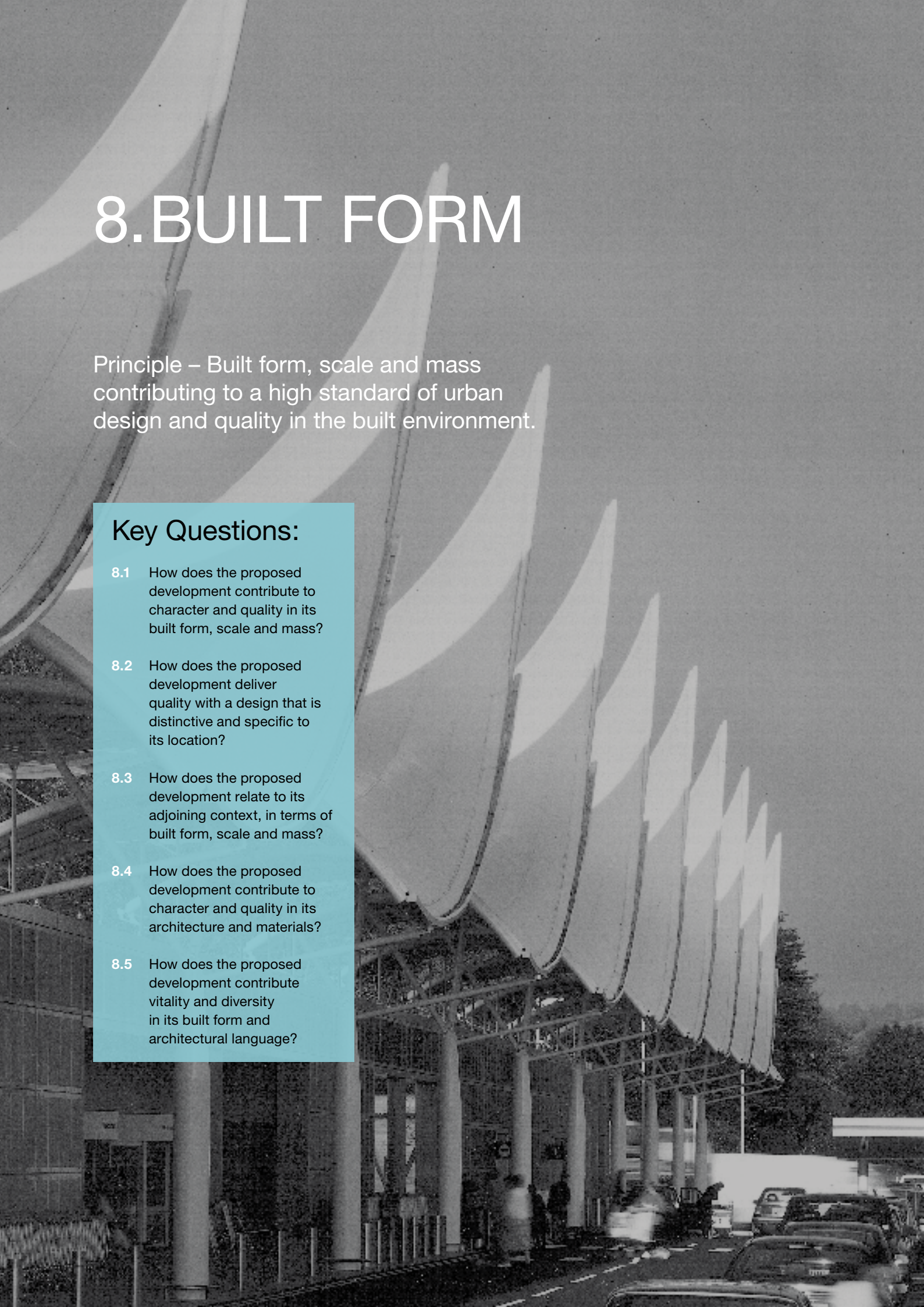


8. BUILT FORM

Principle – Built form, scale and mass contributing to a high standard of urban design and quality in the built environment.

Key Questions:

- 8.1 How does the proposed development contribute to character and quality in its built form, scale and mass?
- 8.2 How does the proposed development deliver quality with a design that is distinctive and specific to its location?
- 8.3 How does the proposed development relate to its adjoining context, in terms of built form, scale and mass?
- 8.4 How does the proposed development contribute to character and quality in its architecture and materials?
- 8.5 How does the proposed development contribute vitality and diversity in its built form and architectural language?



BUILT FORM

Question 8.1 How does the proposed development contribute to character and quality in its built form, scale and mass?



Today there is an increased awareness of the value of design quality in giving shopping destinations an advantage over other competitor locations. Therefore, high standards of design should be the objective of all new development, whether in historic centres or edge-of-centre sites, and particularly where there are opportunities for new development to have a positive impact on areas previously characterised by poor design quality.

While the design of new shopping development will be determined, first and foremost, by the floorspace and service area requirements of the retailer, the form, scale and mass of the development should also have regard for integrating the scheme into its urban context; particularly in situations where the scale of new retail development may be greater than adjoining structures and the urban grain of the location.

Regard for urban context does not infer that new development should replicate local building traditions or mimic adjacent structures; on the contrary, new development should express its function in an architecture that is innovative and of today, but nevertheless an architecture that has regard for the specific topography and morphology of its location.

In summary, the design, form, scale, mass, and materials of new retail development should be a clear expression of the building's function, visually attractive and appropriate to its context: in its relationship to adjoining buildings and structures; in its impact on views and prospects to and from the site; and in its overall contribution to the character and quality of its locality.

Generic supermarket template adapted to place parking and services to the rear with an active street frontage and pedestrian entrance contributing to the character and quality of its town centre location – Kildare Town.

BUILT FORM

Question 8.2 How does the proposed development deliver quality with a design that is distinctive and specific to its location?



The design of new retail development should be specific to its site and location; where appropriate, creating landmarks, gateways or other architectural features that contribute to a sense of place – Sainsbury's Plymouth, UK.

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* emphasise that design quality can contribute to making cities and towns that are more attractive as places to live, work, shop and visit. Therefore, wherever located, new retail development should employ a high standard of design to enhance both the development itself, and its contribution to the character and quality of its location.

In terms of design, the form, scale and mass of the parts should work together to create a well-considered 'whole'. The architecture should be appropriate to the scheme's retail function and – combined with durable and high quality materials and finishes – contribute to the character and quality of both the development itself and the local environment generally.

Generic solutions of poor design quality should not be accepted; where standard floorplate templates which do not

correspond with size and configuration of available sites within a city or town centre, the design should be adapted to integrate with the urban context of the place, rather than being used as justification for relocating to an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location.

Overall, design of new retail development should be specific to its location and the form, scale and mass of the local environment; where appropriate, creating landmarks, gateways and other architectural features. As stated in the Guidelines, designs which are inappropriate for their context, or which fail to realise opportunities for improving the character and quality of their locations, should not be accepted.



High standards of design specific to context and space should be the objective in all new retail development, – The Pavillions, Swords.

See also:

[Retail Planning Guidelines – Chapter 5.](#)

BUILT FORM

Question 8.3 How does the proposed development relate to its adjoining context, in terms of built form, scale and mass?



Well-designed high-density mixed use retail, commercial and residential development can be appropriate in the right locations – Capel Street, Dublin.

While increased density in appropriate urban locations is an overarching policy objective, higher density should not be detrimental to the overall character and quality of urban places. Density is not an end in itself, it is a means to achieve more compact and more sustainable urban development, and the built form, scale and massing of new development should always have regard for the morphology of its location.

However, there will be occasions where a larger floorplate is required to respond to the needs of a particular retail sector. In these situations – and where the proposed development is appropriately located within the structure of the city or town centre – a high standard of design may be capable of successfully accommodating the development into its context, while maintaining the essential character of the local streetscape.

Nevertheless, larger retail structures whose form, scale and mass are incompatible with the scale of the receiving environment – particularly in historic city and town centres – and which

fail to make a positive contribution to the character and quality of their locations should not normally be acceptable.

Where unavoidable conflicts arise, these might be mitigated by an exceptional level of quality in the architecture of the new

intervention; increased densities might be compensated by measures such as public realm enhancements in the proximity of the site, always ensuring a positive overall contribution to the vitality and viability of the location.



Where the mass and density of development exceeds the scale of its local context, successful outcomes can be achieved by attention to the quality of the design – Opera Lane, Cork.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 3; Context + Character

BUILT FORM

Question 8.4 How does the proposed development contribute to character and quality in its architecture and materials?



Well-designed elevations, shopfronts, signage, and active ground floor uses contributing to the vitality and viability of urban places – Henry Street, Dublin.

The architecture of all development should work in the round – with well thought out designs that respond creatively to the challenges of their site and brief. Successful outcomes require that a consistency of approach is carried through from the overall form, scale and mass of the development to the details of the architecture and the materials used.

Façades should be well proportioned and carefully considered in terms of relationships between solid and void, light and shade, public and private, ground and sky. Particular attention to elevational details is required to achieve positive impacts on the quality of the streetscape and adjacent buildings – particularly those of historic and architectural interest.

Buildings addressing public open spaces should maximise opportunities to animate the public realm, with attractive shop fronts and signage, and ground floor uses that encourage activity and retail footfall. There should be a clear distinction between public and private, front and back, service and served.

The architecture should strike a balance between the building's internal operations and its status in the fabric of the city or town centre. Whereas most retail developments are part of the fabric rather than the monuments of their locations, in certain situations it may be appropriate for new schemes to play the role of a local landmark, defining the termination of a vista or a gateway to an urban area.



Form, scale, mass, materials and architectural expression should strike a balance between the building's urban design role and its functional operation – Dunnes, Navan, Co. Meath.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 3; Context + Character

BUILT FORM

Question 8.5 How does the proposed development contribute vitality and diversity in its built form and architectural language?



Major retail-led regeneration using different architects for separate elements resulting in diversity and variety in the urban environment – Liverpool One, UK.

Diversity in the physical environment is increasingly seen as an essential ingredient in the quality of the overall shopping experience - whether in the mix of old and new found in historic urban places, or in the variety of designs and forms now becoming the norm in contemporary developments.

These trends reflect growing concerns that the uniformity and bland corporate architecture of much recent development is detracting from the distinctiveness of shopping destinations everywhere; the desire of retailers to use generic store templates and recognisable 'brand' images is robbing urban places of their distinctiveness and quality. Successful outcomes require that the universal application of standardised design templates needs to be balanced against the benefits of fostering vitality and diversity in retail environments.

Today, in larger developments there is a growing trend for internalised shopping malls giving way to schemes designed around conventional fine grain patterns of streets and open spaces, with smaller blocks of different designs replacing large scale megastructures, and replicating the



organic diversity which characterises the ambience and attractiveness of historic urban places.

Similarly, the employment of different architects for different parts of developments adds to a diversity of built form and architectural expression in larger urban schemes, thereby adding to the attractiveness of the retail offer to customers, and making a positive contribution to the quality and character of the urban location.

Diversity of architectural expression adds to the quality of the shopping environment – Dundrum Town Centre.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 3; Context + Character;
Principle 5; Access + Connectivity

Case Study 8: Tesco, Ludlow



The Tesco supermarket in Ludlow, Shropshire, is a classic example of best practice in bringing vital supermarket retailing into the town in a manner that is sensitive to its social and physical context, and unique sense of place of the historic town centre. The supermarket was a very specific response to the UK government's policy to reverse the tendency towards out-of-centre retailing and encourage supermarkets to locate within towns.

When the town's cattle market closed in the 1980s, the idea that the site would be suitable for a supermarket was put forward and a succession of schemes – four in total – were considered, each failing to obtain planning permission.

While the planning inquiries accepted the site as suitable in principle for a supermarket, each proposal was rejected on the basis of unsuitable designs, which in one case was considered 'unworthy' by the Royal Fine Art Commission on the grounds the roof design 'should

be related to the space beneath and should not consist of a decorative pitch surrounding flat areas'.

In order to advance the scheme, Tesco and the site owners selected two architects to make proposals, and MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard's design was approved. When planning approval was subsequently granted, the permission stated that MJP should be retained as architects for the duration of the project to oversee the scheme throughout the construction stage.

This decision anticipated the conclusion reached by the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) some years later that much supermarket development over the last decades had not been well enough designed, particularly with the repetition of standard 'big box' solutions that bear little relationship to their site or setting. CABE strongly recommended that retail developers ensure that the design team have the skills and competencies required to deliver successful outcomes, and

that they are appointed to oversee the development from start to finish, not just to secure planning approvals.

The essence of the proposal was to accept the rectangular shed and give it a distinct roof form and partly transparent walls, while setting the front of the shed back from the street and placing in front mediating structures which would relate to the scale of the neighbouring town buildings.

The design has achieved a set of well-integrated relationships between the building and the varying conditions

around the site. The building profile echoes the contours of the hills which form Ludlow's backdrop; its high point faces the town centre and it then sweeps downwards to the lower structures at the town edge.

The elevational treatment is critical in relating the large supermarket building to Ludlow. Constructed from hand-made bricks of natural clay, the asymmetrical treatment of the entrance, windows and glazing creates a contemporary composition that complements its context.

The project demonstrates the scope to incorporate modern architecture within an historic town by intelligent analysis of scale. The design is also imaginative in its approach to building massing and use of materials. The internal spatial quality provided by the building shell is a positive approach to the design of foodhalls. The large rectangular footprint of the store provides the sales area needed for modern food retailing. Significantly, this has been achieved without simply enclosing the space in a conventional 'box' with superficial decoration to evoke local heritage.



Clockwise from above: The supermarket incorporates a streetfront café to form a transition space between the town and the supermarket.

The scheme utilised a contemporary language but was built with indigenous brick to complement the historic streetscape.

The site is located at the edge of the historic town centre and forms a 'bookend' in tandem with Ludlow Castle and markets at the other extremity of the town centre.

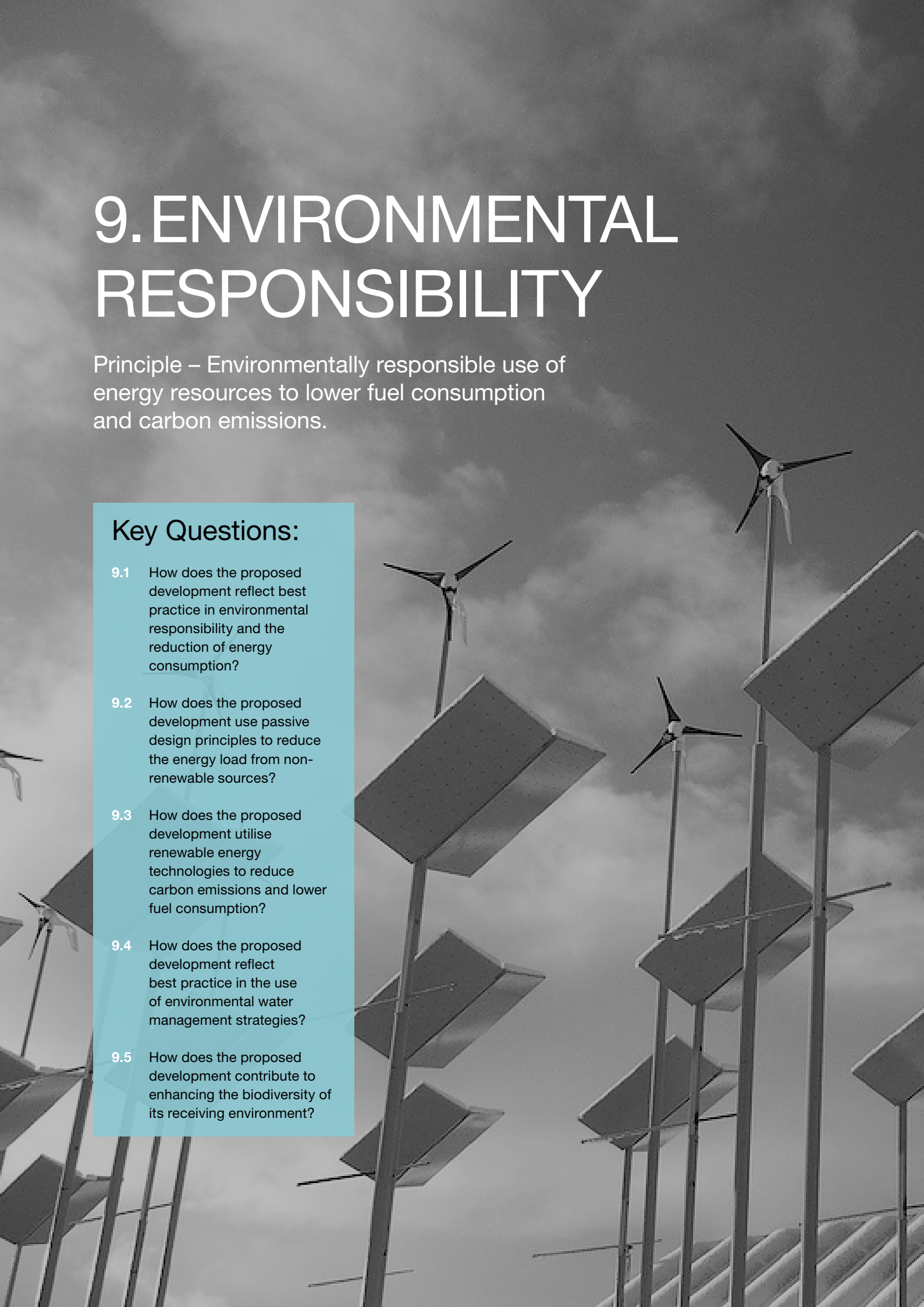


9. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Principle – Environmentally responsible use of energy resources to lower fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

Key Questions:

- 9.1 How does the proposed development reflect best practice in environmental responsibility and the reduction of energy consumption?
- 9.2 How does the proposed development use passive design principles to reduce the energy load from non-renewable sources?
- 9.3 How does the proposed development utilise renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions and lower fuel consumption?
- 9.4 How does the proposed development reflect best practice in the use of environmental water management strategies?
- 9.5 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the biodiversity of its receiving environment?



ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Question 9.1 How does the proposed development reflect best practice in environmental responsibility and the reduction of energy consumption?



Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing mankind today; global energy consumption has doubled in the last 30 years, and the world's supplies of oil and gas are diminishing rapidly - and increasing in cost. Therefore, maximising the use of renewable energy sources, and reducing the consumption of fossil fuels for electricity, heating, water and transport, are central to national policy on the built environment.

With the energy consumption of Irish industry estimated to have grown by 45 per cent in the last decades, new retail development is faced with significant challenges in increasing the use of renewable energy technologies to comply with recent amendments to the building regulations requiring up to 40 per cent reduction in energy consumption and carbon emissions.

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland emphasises that improved practice can deliver significant financial returns; it estimates that the commercial sector could save up to 25 per cent of its costs by investing in economically viable energy saving measures. This is confirmed by recent retail developments where passive design principles have achieved savings up to 50 per cent below conventional solutions.

However, best practice also requires that climate change is addressed in a holistic way, not only in the energy used in building construction and servicing, but also by taking environmental considerations into account in the location and operations of future retail development, particularly in reducing the carbon emissions from customer trips, goods delivery and waste disposal.

Landmark mixed-use retail and commercial regeneration project utilising passive design principles and energy saving strategies to reduce carbon emissions from heating, lighting, ventilation, services and water use – Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Question 9.2 How does the proposed development use passive design principles to reduce the energy load from non-renewable sources?



Consideration of microclimatic issues can enable outdoor pedestrian routes to be an acceptable alternative to enclosed malls – Liverpool One, UK.

The energy load of new retail development can be reduced by the first design decisions taken in relation to site layout, built form, and building services: well-considered site layouts minimise overshadowing of adjacent properties and open spaces; optimising available daylight lowers internal lighting loads; and sunshine add to the attractiveness and comfort of the public realm. The early consideration of these microclimatic issues can enable outdoor pedestrian areas to be an acceptable alternative to enclosed malls in new retail development.

While the optimum orientation for solar gain may not be available on all sites – particularly in city and town centres – the large floorplates and extensive roof areas of larger retail developments can present significant opportunities to maximise natural lighting and passive solar gains. Light levels can be controlled electronically

both supplementing the amount of available natural light and, when required, reducing lighting that interferes with people's comfort or merchandising.

Passive ventilation strategies can reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and air conditioning, particularly in spring and autumn when ambient conditions are most suitable. Roof vents allow warm air to escape and be replaced by cooler air drawn into the building at lower level. Similarly, cooling can be achieved using passive technologies.

In summary, the energy used in retail development is primarily consumed in lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling; reducing energy consumption in these areas is an important first, and most effective, means of achieving best practice in environmental responsibility in new retail development.



Commitment to sustainability in reduced energy use, water conservation, waste recycling, and reduced pollution in the conservation and renovation of historic city centre markets – Spitalfields, London.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Question 9.3 How does the proposed development utilise renewable energy technologies to reduce carbon emissions and lower fuel consumption?



The use of passive design principles has achieved energy savings up to 50 per cent below conventional development solutions - Tesco, Cabra, Dublin.

Increasing the use of renewable energy systems is essential to meeting Ireland's targets for conserving energy, reducing carbon emissions and achieving sustainability in development generally. New retail development presents considerable opportunities to reduce consumption through the use of low energy design principles, especially for water and space heating and cooling.

The typically extensive roof areas of retail development can be utilised for solar thermal and photovoltaic panels to provide hot water for washing, cleaning and heating. PV systems can also be utilised for electricity generation.

The use of biofuel technologies – such as wood-burning or biodiesel boilers – provide low carbon heating from renewable energy sources, particularly in combined heat and power installations for large scale mixed-use developments. CHP schemes utilising

waste heat can increase fuel efficiency to almost double that of conventional electricity generation.

Refrigeration systems in supermarkets typically account for up to 25 per cent of the store's total carbon footprint, and refrigerants are potentially significant greenhouse gas contributors; reducing refrigerant leakage and lowering emissions through system design and the use of natural alternatives can lower emissions significantly.

In summary, while the energy used for building services in retail development is only a fraction of the total emissions from freight deliveries and customer travel to stores, the use of green technologies will significantly improve the environmental performance of the development, with knock-on social and economic benefits.



Use of passive energy strategies to provide natural lighting and natural ventilation in landmark environmentally sustainable supermarket development – Sainsbury's, Greenwich, UK.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Question 9.4 How does the proposed development reflect best practice in the use of environmental water management strategies?



Environmentally responsible water management is a key ingredient in achieving sustainable development, both in lowering the consumption of treated water in buildings, and in reducing the volumes of waste water handled by public treatment systems. Conserving water is not only environmentally responsible, it is also economically sensible, particularly with the proposed introduction of water metering and pricing.

The water demand of new retail development can be reduced; firstly, by the installation of water-efficient plumbing and heating systems thereby reducing the volumes of treated water used for cleaning and cooling; and secondly, through water harvesting and the use of rainwater or grey water in lieu of mains water whenever possible.

Large floorplate retail developments provide particular opportunities to utilise these water conservation measures. Green roofs can store storm water and

slow down the rate of run-off, thus easing pressure on the urban drainage system, while also improving the thermal performance of the building and lowering energy consumption generally.

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) reduce the amount of water run-off to drains and sewers; allowing it to filter into the subsoil through porous surface materials for hard landscaping and parking areas. SUDS systems offer opportunities to combine water management with the provision of green space in urban areas, increasing their amenity and biodiversity.

In summary, new retail development – particularly larger scale schemes – should incorporate measures for responsible water management; reducing the demand for water, recycling rain and grey water and incorporating SUDS systems to reduce water run-off into drains and sewers.

Redevelopment of industrial wasteland to mixed use urban neighbourhood: 100 per cent of energy use is from renewable sources – Malmö, Sweden.



Mixed use retail and commercial development combining public amenity with sustainable water management, including grey water recycling for production, cleaning and cooling purposes – Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 7; Public Realm Q3 & Q5

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Question 9.5 How does the proposed development contribute to enhancing the biodiversity of its receiving environment?



Greener cities are more attractive places to live, work, shop and visit; and quality urban landscaping improves biodiversity and public realm quality - Manzana Fort Pienc, Barcelona.

The National Biodiversity Plan sets out policy actions to integrate biodiversity into all sectors of the economy, including planning and development. Greener cities, towns and villages are more attractive places to live, work and visit, and environmental biodiversity provides communities with a combination of opportunities for amenity and recreation, and a functioning and balanced urban environment.

All new development involves alterations to the biodiversity of its receiving environment. The challenge is to ensure that these impacts are minimised and, whenever possible, that major construction projects take advantage of available opportunities to enhance the quality of the local environment.

Best practice requires that major retail schemes incorporate biodiversity action plans as an integral part of the design, construction and operation of the project. These include: surveying important environmental features of the site and location; considering any potentially negative impact of the

development on the local environment; identifying opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the locality; mitigating actions to reduce any adverse impacts of the development.

The first key objective is that any negative environmental impacts of a proposed development are identified and

reduced through best practice in design, construction and management. The second objective is that new development should aim to enhance biodiversity of the local environment, particularly through the use of landscaping of open spaces, including surface parking areas.



Use of landscape in city centre shopping centre to combine amenity with biodiversity, and improve the quality of the urban environment – Marketcross, Kilkenny.

See also:

Retail Design Manual –
Principle 7; Public Realm Q3

Case Study 9: Princesshay, Exeter



Princesshay is an award-winning mixed-use retail-led regeneration project in Exeter, Devon. Opened in 2007, it is designed around a series of streets and squares that link old and new in the cathedral city's historic centre. It has brought a new energy and focus to the urban core, and is widely acknowledged as a model of best practice in environmental responsibility.

The development, a joint public/private initiative to revitalise the city's cathedral quarter, is an exemplar of best practice in city centre regeneration achieved through a combination of regard for the historic urban character of the place, the use of design-led development processes, and the employment of a sound commercial model; it also sought to respond to the urban agenda emerging from the work of the Urban Task Force.

In 2001, Exeter City Council, working with leading development company Land Securities, commissioned a conservation

area appraisal and an urban design analysis to establish key development principles for the Princesshay area of the city. These principles were used to guide the development process from outline masterplan stage to the detailed design of buildings and open spaces.

The urban design study highlighted the importance of the city's medieval heritage and the importance of capitalising on the potential of the site's physical and visual connections to the cathedral. It also set out proposals for re-establishing historic routes across the site, and strategies to

enhance Exeter's status as a tourist and cultural destination. Today Princesshay feels like a natural part of the continuous fabric of a historic city, rather than a new development inserted into its fabric.

Designed on a street-based (rather than internalised mall) model, the layout of Princesshay integrates with the local urban structure and acts as a pivotal link between various destinations, with pedestrianised lanes and streets integrating the development and promoting connectivity with the rest of the city centre.

By providing an attractive environment with a high quality public realm - including public art, restaurants and cafés around new civic squares - it has generated increased dwell time and repeat visits not only to Princesshay as a shopping location, but also to the city centre as a whole for culture and tourism.

The multi-storey car park is designed to incorporate active retail frontages and a tourist information centre on the ground floor. Its single pedestrian entrance generates pedestrian flows to Princesshay

and other city centre areas, thereby promoting integration into the overall urban structure of the place.

Princesshay was designed through a collaboration between three individual professional teams, thereby generating a pluralism of design approaches. A series of separate buildings by different architects provide diversity in the built form that is acknowledged as adding to the attractiveness of Princesshay as a shopping destination for Exeter residents and visitors alike.

The scheme set out to be an exemplar of best practice in environmental responsibility. The numerous buildings retained on the site have been conserved and renovated to appropriate new uses, and of those that were demolished 80 per cent of the demolition material was recycled and incorporated into the new build, for example, as concrete aggregate. The timber used for new construction was all sustainably sourced, and sophisticated environmental management systems have been put in place; the new retail elements are all rated BREEAM 'very good', and the residential apartments were designed to achieve an Ecohomes 'very good' rating.

Clockwise from right: New routes and squares were created integrating the development with its context.

A mix of uses, with residential above retail ensures activity throughout the day and evening and contributes to the vitality and viability of the city.

New routes and squares were created integrating the development with its context.



10. SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Principle – Construction materials and technologies that have regard for the environmental impacts of their production, transportation, use and disposal.

Key Questions:

- 10.1 How does the proposed development reflect the principles and practice of sustainable construction in its materials and technologies?
- 10.2 How does the proposed development consider the environmental impacts of the materials and components used in its construction?
- 10.3 How does the proposed development consider the environmental impacts of the transportation of building materials and products?
- 10.4 How does the proposed development consider durability and whole-life costs of materials and products used in its construction?
- 10.5 How does the proposed development lend itself to adaptation to accommodate future change of use and activity?



SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Question 10.1 How does the proposed development reflect the principles and practice of sustainable construction in its materials and technologies?



A sustainable built environment delivers value, both for today and for generations to come, and the principles of sustainability are applicable at every level of the development process - from regional and local planning to the design and construction of individual buildings and open spaces.

While the amount of energy used to erect a building – including manufacture, transportation, construction and maintenance – is a fraction of the energy consumed throughout its life by heating, lighting, ventilation and communications systems, approximately 70 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to buildings, and lowering the energy used in construction is therefore essential to the delivery of a sustainable built environment.

The principles of sustainable design and construction are encapsulated in three simple concepts – long life, loose fit and low energy. These can be incorporated into the design of retail development by applying some key strategies: lowering the embodied energy of construction materials, reducing the energy costs of transportation from source to site; designing for long term flexibility and adaptability, and considering durability and whole-life cost issues in specifying materials.

Best practice encourages thinking about environmental issues from the outset; when every aspect of a building's design, construction, use and maintenance can be considered, and choices made on the environmental performance of the building throughout its life, and in its eventual demolition or adaptation for alternative uses.

In Princesshay, 8% of materials from the pre-existing buildings on the site were recycled in the new build – Princesshay, Exeter, UK.

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Question 10.2 How does the proposed development consider the environmental impacts of the materials and components used in its construction?



Environmental responsibility in new retail development should therefore entail a preference for materials with low embodied energy and high recycling potential, and a presumption against less sustainable alternatives – such as PVC – with high embodied energy and no recycling potential. It also entails utilising a whole-life equation when specifying materials and products; balancing the embodied energy used in extraction, processing and transportation against a material's performance over the whole lifespan of the building's occupation, and its eventual end-of-life recycling and/or disposal.

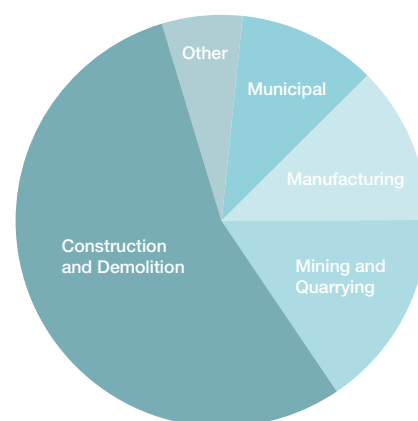
New supermarket development prioritising the use of environmentally responsible construction materials and technologies – Greenwich, UK.

Approximately 50 per cent of material resources taken from nature are used in construction. The EU Construction Products Directive lists the 'sustainable use of natural resources' as an essential requirement of construction. Therefore, environmental responsibility in the extraction and manufacture of materials and products is a key consideration in designing sustainable buildings.

Materials used in construction impact on the environment in a number of ways, including extraction, manufacture, transportation, use and eventual disposal. The embodied energy of construction

products also includes issues such as the environmentally responsible management of water used in their production, and any knock-on effects on the biodiversity of their manufacturing locations.

Natural, and eco-friendly, materials are also generally considered to have advantages in creating healthier and more attractive building environments, thereby contributing to a higher quality of life for their occupants. The whole-life gains in thinking about sustainability are therefore greater than any gains from short-term thinking of lowest capital cost as the ultimate measure of value.



Total waste generation in Ireland in 2006 (Source EPA)

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Question 10.3 How does the proposed development consider the environmental impacts of the transportation of building materials and products?



Indigenous, hand-made local brick lowering the energy used in transportation of materials and integrating development into its local context – Tesco, Ludlow, UK.

Approximately 12 per cent of all energy used in industry is attributable to the transporting of building materials, and up to one third of all road freight is construction-related. The embodied energy used in building construction can therefore be reduced by specifying materials whose transportation costs are factored into the whole-life energy equation of the development.

The energy required for transportation of materials from source to site is a function of distance travelled, mode of transport and the mass of material carried. Best practice in lowering the embodied energy costs of transportation can be advanced, primarily, by sourcing materials and products locally whenever possible and, secondly, by assessing the whole-life energy equation of materials sourced globally.

Lightweight materials may, theoretically, be sourced globally, but heavyweight materials such as stone, brick and aggregates should, ideally, be sourced locally, thereby reducing the energy – and pollution – costs of transportation. A whole-life energy equation will assess any mitigating effects of higher transportation costs against a material's performance over the building's lifespan.

The use of indigenous materials not only lowers embodied energy levels, it can also be beneficial in integrating new development into its local context, enhancing a location's sense of place, and thereby contributing positively to the quality and character of a development generally. The use of locally sourced materials and products is also sustainable in creating local employment in manufacturing and processing, and spin-off activity in local economies.

Use of indigenous limestone finish to relate new development to its receiving context – Lidl, Westport, Co. Mayo.



SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Question 10.4 How does the proposed development consider durability and whole-life costs of materials and products used in its construction?



spans of alternatives should be balanced against the whole life benefits of more robust construction.

Waste reduction dictates that the recycling potential of materials at the end of their life should be a design consideration. Similarly, high quality materials such as stone, brick and slates can add to the character of new development.

While appearance and aesthetics do not strictly impact on a building's sustainability, buildings which are well-designed, with high quality durable materials, and whose aesthetics contribute to people's pleasure and well-being, will be valued over many years of use, and even across generations.

Durable, high quality stone paving achieving value in terms of lifespan and maintenance requirements – Patrick Street, Cork.

The stock of raw materials used in construction is rapidly declining globally, and 50 per cent of all waste production comes from the building sector. Therefore, the third factor regarding the environmentally responsible selection of building materials is their durability, and considerations of lifespan, maintenance, and end-of-life disposal, including their recycling potential.

The use of cheaper products with shorter lifespans – especially fittings, services and other items requiring replacement during the life of a building – should be carefully considered in terms of their durability, maintenance and recycling potential, with the imperative to minimise waste to landfill or incineration at the end of their useful life.

Materials with high initial embodied energy – such as steel, and aluminium – have considerable recycling potential, and concrete is 100 per cent recyclable; crushed concrete can be used instead of aggregate. While these options may be more expensive initially, the lower capital costs and possibly shorter life

Mixed use retail and residential development prioritising the use of sustainable materials and technologies with end-of-life recycling potential – Daintree Building, Dublin.



SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Question 10.5 How does the proposed development lend itself to adaptation to accommodate future change of use and activity?



Former docklands warehouses conserved and adapted as high quality city centre retail destination – CHQ Building, Dublin.

A building is a physical resource that is wasted if demolished; whereas extending its life through renovation and adaptation for new uses retains its value for future generations, and conserves much of the embodied energy used in its construction – even where large elements of the original structure and fabric have to be renovated or replaced.

enough to have a future life beyond their original function. Flexibility and adaptability should be considered from the outset, so that developments are designed to be capable of refurbishment and conversion to other uses, particularly in the light of the implications of today's social and technological change on future shopping trends.

1950s neighbourhood shops upgraded to modern supermarket use, including new street façade – Churchtown, Dublin.

Most cities and town centres contain buildings and structures capable of reuse and adaptation for shopping and similar uses whose functional requirements can be accommodated without any significant loss of the character or special interest of the original, thus contributing to sustainable re-use of otherwise redundant structures and improving the attractiveness of the location's shopping offer.

In terms of new retail development, the ability to change over time is a key quality criterion that should be part of the development management process; the challenge is to design for long-life and loose-fit solutions that are robust



Case Study 10: The Milk Market, Limerick



The Milk Market building is located on the site of the old city wall in an area of Limerick where many markets are shown to have been established since the 1790s. The Georgian building and courtyard itself were constructed in the 1830s. After the Limerick Market Trustees entered examinership in 1898, markets in the area began to fail one by one until only the Milk Market survived – it thrived up to the 1960s but the building fabric fell into neglect and disrepair and eventually ruin, leading to it being abandoned altogether.

In 1988, the LMT emerged from examinership and the process of refurbishment and rejuvenation of the Milk Market began. The Saturday morning farmers' market was successfully re-established following the major restoration of the market buildings in 1993. The courtyard operated as a surface car park during the business

week, generating an income that was to substantially finance the next phase of the project.

In 2007, the LMT engaged in a process to see how the markets could develop and a number of opportunities for both the Milk Market and the city centre as a whole were identified by the design team.

The Milk Market is located where the Georgian grid meets with the medieval street pattern. Its location is at the edge of the retail core, in an area of the city which is run down and demanding of a project that could serve as a catalyst for regeneration of this quarter of the city.

There were a number of significant constraints - the Milk Market buildings are protected structures of which the LMT owned the Market House and four of the eighteen units accommodated within the single-storey buildings framing the courtyard. The remains of the old city wall, a National Monument under the courtyard, had to be considered and could not be interfered with.

The re-working of the Milk Market involved three significant interventions: a single-storey pavilion with roof level access, re-paving the courtyard and a roof cover to protect against the elements. The 24m high tensile structure provided a strong intervention aimed at defining the market location on both the city skyline and approach routes from the city centre. This structure is kept clear of any contact

with the original protected structures, supported by struts in the centre and at the corners.

The project worked to remove all vehicles from the courtyard during trading and permit traffic only during set up and closing. The new circulation is defined by granite cobbles which run between the two main gates serving the courtyard. Granite cobbles are also used to delineate the line of the old city wall. The remaining courtyard surface is finished in a polished concrete using varied aggregate and green glass to offer a quality and durable finish for the market area.

A single-storey pavillion accommodates five permanent food stalls and an overhead exhibition area. The remaining areas of the courtyard were laid out to

accommodate up to 52 trading stalls - an overall increase of 21 from the original market.

Since the interventions, customer numbers have doubled, the market has extended its opening times to include extra days and now incorporates additional crafts and foods, along with music and entertainment. The market also accommodates monthly Art & Craft markets and a Christmas market as well as events and concerts - during which the food traders operate, giving concert goers the opportunity to have the highest quality food at affordable prices.

Clockwise from right:

The market is located at the edge of the city centre and provides a focal point for regeneration of the area.

The modern canopy provides shade and shelter while maintaining an outdoor market atmosphere and respecting the historic structure of the original market buildings.

The abandoned market building prior to refurbishment.

Detail showing relationship of new canopy to historic structure.



IMPLEMENTATION

The core aim of this design manual is to provide planning authorities, planners, designers and developers with the information and backing they need to improve the design quality and sustainability of the retail developments they are involved with and assist their progress through the planning system.

This manual will be useful when developers are selecting a site and briefing their design team; in helping to frame design statements and planning applications; and in helping planning authorities to engage in effective pre-consultation on development proposals and also assess the quality of submitted planning applications. In order for a high quality scheme to be delivered, it is essential that a good design process be followed. Each project will throw up new challenges and opportunities and all partners should be striving to innovate and constantly improve their processes – learning from their own experience and available best practice.

However, some elements of best practice remain consistent for all projects. Most importantly, it is vital that a co-operative relationship be fostered between the planning authority, developer and designer. A professional and open relationship between the main partners can help to ensure a better quality outcome. It is therefore important that early communication be facilitated between the planning authority, developer and the main design professions involved in a scheme. Early engagement is essential in order to facilitate a shared thinking on the vision for the lands. Open dialogue between the main partners

should be maintained throughout the design process – even after planning permission has been granted.

The final quality of the scheme will depend to a large extent on the management and monitoring procedures put in place. Unless a close eye is kept on quality at the implementation stage, there is a real risk that small seemingly unimportant decisions will cumulatively destroy the quality of a project.

The manual hopes to offer clarity to all participants in the planning and development process. The principles contained within the manual are based on the known elements of successful retail developments and it is suggested that they can be used as a framework for key parts of the process – by the developer and his agents when considering the acquisition of a site; briefing the design team; during analysis and pre-planning consultations; and when deciding planning applications.

SITE SELECTION

All developers need to operate within a planning system that rewards design quality and sustainability. Developers should therefore take account of the advice contained within this manual when searching for potential retail sites. But perhaps most importantly, developers need to be confident that a site they buy has a good chance of obtaining planning permission – by reassuring the planning authority that the outcome will be sustainable and of sufficiently high design quality.

Developers are recommended to base their site selection procedures around the principles in this manual. Since

the principles are a distillation of the qualities of sustainable and successful places, testing a potential site against them will help to ensure that the right sites are selected.

Planning authorities should be proactive in identifying opportunity sites within the retail core and other appropriate locations and including these in their development plans, local area plans and retail strategies. The location, scale and nature of any new retail development should be in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the city or county development plan, and the relevant retail strategy.

The key policy principles set out in the guidelines are: first, that the prime shopping areas of city and town centres should be supported in maintaining and expanding their retail offer to serve that population in a sustainable way which will also help to reduce the need to travel; and, second, that the promotion of critical mass in city and town centres through the location of appropriate retail and other complementary uses within and adjoining their prime shopping areas will contribute significantly to the vibrancy and vitality of such centres.

The Guidelines set out the order of priority for the process to be applied in the sequential approach to ensure that the most appropriate location is chosen. The first priority is to seek to locate retail development in the city/town centre; only where it can be demonstrated that there are no sites which are (a) suitable, (b) available and (c) viable should an edge-of-centre site be considered. It is only where it can be demonstrated that there are no

edge-of-centre sites that are suitable, available and viable that an out-of-centre site can be considered.

APPOINTMENT OF DESIGN TEAM

The appointment of a high quality, professional team is a first step in ensuring successful outcomes. In particular, design teams should be appropriate to the proposed development. Depending on the scale and location of a development, the design team will include planners, architects, engineers, landscape and traffic consultants and conservation consultants.

The focus on quality should be sustained throughout the design and construction stages: successful development requires that the design team should be engaged to oversee the project from start to finish, and not merely to obtain statutory approvals and consents.

The Retail Planning Guidelines advise planning authorities, in appropriate situations, to engage architectural/design consultants to advise them on appropriate plan policies and development management responses for particularly sensitive areas and sites such as heritage towns, protected structures etc.

SITE ANALYSIS

The first step for any design team should be to formulate a design response to the development brief. This might entail carrying out a SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to identify potential barriers or paths to progress. It may also be useful to carry out this process visually – by marking opportunities and constraints on a plan of the site and/or wider

neighbourhood. This exercise can be useful in helping to unlock preliminary design solutions and can also be beneficial in using it as a basis for future discussions - both within the design team and with stakeholders and with the planning authority.

After the key elements of the design brief have been logged and visualised, the design team should carry out a more detailed appraisal of the site and surrounding area's character. The most important elements will have been set out in the design brief so the detailed character appraisal should focus on more fine-grained aspects of the physical context. This should include a:

- » survey and logging of existing landscape features including trees, hedges, open water and topography;
- » survey of existing built structures on the site and their location together with their architectural, historical and cultural value and conversion potential;
- » visual and/or photographic survey of local architectural character types, including predominant built forms, architecture and materials;
- » analysis of existing layouts and arrangement of buildings and open space in the surrounding area. This might include a block plan that shows the overall area and location of built form and open ground; and
- » photographic survey of views both into and out of the site – highlighting visual links to prominent landmarks that might be used to create interesting vistas.

Also important are the existing patterns of movement in the local area and the potential for these to be enhanced or benefited by the development. As part of the design development, a detailed movement analysis should be carried out, taking an integrated approach to ensure that the outcomes will be functional in both traffic engineering and design terms.

The movement analysis should look at existing movement patterns and levels of traffic (by all modes) in the areas surrounding the site. The analysis should then consider how these existing traffic levels will be affected by traffic generated by the development itself and natural growth over the next few years. The movement analysis should think about ways in which existing and projected road traffic levels can be reduced by the development of the site – for example by diverting routes through the site rather than around it.

Central to the movement analysis should be a consideration of desire lines that bisect the site and how opportunities generated by the development can be utilised to help make connections between existing and proposed communities and to key amenities and facilities.

PRE-PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

Once the preferred option has been selected, the design team should enter into detailed discussions with the planning authority. The planning authority should have been involved in the consultation carried out at options testing stage, but this consultation

should be more bilateral in nature and focus on working towards the grant of planning permission in a cooperative and constructive way. Such discussions are vitally important to ensure that any barriers to the scheme receiving planning permission are identified and resolved before the detailed aspects of the scheme get fixed. The earlier problems are identified, then the easier it will be for the scheme to be amended without incurring unacceptable costs. Many planners will happily enter into detailed discussions at an earlier stage in the design process, but focusing detailed discussions at this stage will mean that the preferred option represents a firm basis for ongoing discussions. The design team may wish to present the discarded options to the planners in order to demonstrate that the preferred option has come about following a rigorous process of testing.

The material generated for the pre-planning consultation with the planning authority should present the preferred option simply and clearly – setting out the key features in enough detail to make the discussions meaningful but leaving out extraneous detail that may serve to distract away from the core issues. Once the scheme has evolved to take into account areas of concern that were discussed at the pre-planning consultation, a second pre-planning consultation may be required. This will usually only be necessary for large or complex schemes.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

For larger or more complex schemes, design statements are becoming a popular way of helping the analysis and

assisting the process of determining planning applications. By explaining the planning proposal in more detail setting out the design decisions that have been made, a proposal can be more easily appreciated and accepted. For this reason, many forward-thinking developers are voluntarily submitting design statements alongside their planning applications as a matter of course.

At the same time, the planning authority may find that their task of assessing the acceptability of a proposal is made easier when they are in receipt of supporting information that shows that the proposal has been prepared through a rigorous design process that considered and rejected less suitable alternatives. Design statements are advocated in the Guidelines that this manual accompanies. The Guidelines state that they can be especially useful in explaining why an exceptional or different design approach has been taken or to show that a detailed character appraisal has been carried out as part of the design process. A more uniform approach to setting out design statements has significant merit in that it allows those drafting and assessing the statements to be working through a commonly understood process. It is therefore suggested that the principles contained within this manual will be useful in helping to frame the structure of a design statement. By structuring the design statement around responses to questions raised by each of the 10 principles – applicants will be able to clearly demonstrate how their proposal complies with the requirements of the *Retail Planning Guidelines*.

Additionally, planning authorities will find the job of assessing design statements against design policy easier, which will have the effect of further speeding up the time taken to deal with applications.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Applicants should be able to demonstrate that the comments made by the planning authority during initial consultations have been taken into account in the development of the scheme. Where it has not been possible to amend the scheme in response to planning authority comments, applicants should set out in full why such changes could not be incorporated.

A planning application should only be submitted once the necessary testing and consultations have been carried out. A scheme that is submitted for planning too early will find it more difficult to demonstrate that the proposal has taken full account of the site's context. Applicants should make every attempt to identify and resolve potential barriers to the scheme receiving planning permission before the application is submitted – and they should be confident of receiving an approval. Such an approach cannot be taken without full co-operation between the applicant and planning authority. Rather than taking an adversarial stance, both the planning authority and applicants should see themselves as working toward a common objective: the promotion of high quality sustainable development.

The Key Principles approach contained within this manual has been formulated to easily lend itself to the assessment of development proposals. By distilling a range of urban design and sustainability principles and objectives into 10 key principles, the manual has sought

to encourage a more rigorous assessment of these areas at planning stage. In the same way as the 10 principles can be used as a basis for structuring design and access statements, they can also be put to good use in helping to structure pre-planning negotiations between applicants and planning authorities. Basing the pre-planning discussions and design statements around the same 10 principles that will be used as part of the assessment of applications will bring significant benefits. It will promote a consistency of approach that will serve to improve planning processes and, therefore, improve the quality of development outcomes. It will also serve to foster a more collaborative approach between developers, designers and the planning authority with each working towards a common objective of reaching an optimal design solution.

ENSURING QUALITY

It is important that the quality of the development seen at planning stage is not degraded between the award of planning approval and implementation. Unfortunately, exercises in value engineering caused by unforeseen expenditures or market conditions can result in the design quality of many development proposals being watered down. Many planning authorities have developed standard ways of seeking to control design quality through measures such as planning conditions.

APPENDICES



Appendix 1:

Glossary

Accessibility	The ability of people to move around an area and to reach places and facilities, including the elderly, disabled and those with young children.
Active Frontage	The ground level edge of a building or space which offers opportunities for surveillance through front doors, shop fronts or overlooking windows.
Inactive Frontage	The edge of a building or space which offers no opportunity for surveillance.
Legibility	The degree to which a place can be easily navigated and used.
Permeability	The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.
Undercroft	A ground level parking area below a building or its associated outdoor areas. Unlike basement car parks, undercrofts may be naturally ventilated with careful design to avoid inactive frontages.
Urban Structure	The physical attributes of an urban place – the form and mass of its buildings and the layout of its streets and open spaces. The term also describes the pattern of routes and linkages that provide access and connectivity, and define the movement framework of the urban area.

The glossary for the Retail Design Manual does not repeat terms already defined in the Retail Planning Guidelines

Appendix 2:

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Appendix 3: Image Credits

Principles:

Image	Project - Designers
1.1 Paul Keogh	Athlone Town Centre - móla architecture
1.2 Murray O'Laoire Architects	Iveragh Rd Town Renewal, Killorglin, Co. Kerry - Murray O'Laoire Architects
1.2 Michael Collins	CHQ, Dublin - Michael Collins Associates
1.3 Paul Tierney	Dunnes Stores, Navan, Co. Meath - Keenan Lynch Architects
1.3 Bernard Seymour	Robert's Square, Waterford - Bernard Seymour
1.4 Cork City Council	Patrick Street, Cork - Beth Gali
1.4 Paul McMullin	Liverpool One, UK - Various
1.5 Land Securities	Princesshay, Exeter, UK - Chapman Taylor Architects
1.5 Paul Keogh Architects	Phibsborough/Mountjoy LAP - Paul Keogh Architects
2.1 Project Architects	Opera Lane, Cork - Project Architects
2.1 Paul Keogh Architects	Extract from Cork City Development Plan 2009-2015
2.2 Paul Keogh	The Liffey Boardwalk, Dublin - McGarry Ní Eanaigh Architects
2.2 Dublin City Council	Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area
2.3 Paul Keogh	Tesco, Roscommon
2.3 Roscommon County Council	Roscommon County Retail Strategy
2.4 Simon Wall	Lidl, Westport, Co. Mayo
2.4 Paul Keogh	Westport, Co. Mayo
2.5 Paul Keogh	Athlone Town Centre - móla architecture
2.5 móla architecture	Athlone Town Centre - móla architecture
3.1 Paul Keogh	Italian Quarter, Dublin
3.2 Paul Keogh	Debenhams, Henry Street, Dublin - Newenham Mulligan & Associates
3.2 Paul Keogh	Aldi, Navan, Co. Meath
3.3 BDP Architects	Victoria Square, Belfast - BDP Architects
3.3 BDP Architects	Victoria Square, Belfast - BDP Architects
3.4 Paul Keogh	South King Street Centre, Dublin - A&D Weichert & Partners
3.4 Kilkenny County Council	Mac Donagh Junction, Kilkenny - Reddy Associates
3.5 Paul Keogh	Powerscourt Townhouse, Dublin
3.5 Simon Wall	Dunnes Stores, Westport
4.1 Paul Keogh	Eyre Square, Galway - Mitchell & Associates
4.2 Paul Keogh	Meeting House Square, Templebar, Dublin - Group 91
4.2 Paul Keogh	Mixed-use development, Rathgar, Dublin – Spain Courtney Doyle
4.3 Paul Keogh	Dundrum Town Centre, Dublin - BKD Architects
4.3 BDP Architects	Victoria Square, Belfast - BDP Architects
4.4 Paul Keogh	Santa Catarina Market, Barcelona, Spain – Enric Miralles & Benedetta Tagliabue
4.4 Paul Keogh	Templebar, Dublin
4.5 Paul Keogh	Fallon & Byrne, Dublin - De Blacam & Meagher
4.5 Paul Keogh	Mixed use, Heuston Gate, Kilmainham
5.1 Paul Keogh	Grand Canal Harbour, Dublin
5.2 Paul Keogh	St. Stephen's Green/Grafton St, Dublin
5.2 Simon Wall	Westport Travel Smarter Initiative
5.3 Paul Keogh	Chester, UK
5.3 Paul Keogh	Ijburg, Amsterdam
5.4 Paul Keogh	Waterford City Centre
5.4 Paul Keogh	Millennium Bridge, Dublin - Howley Harrington
5.5 Paul Keogh	Plaza del Sol, Barcelona
5.5 Joseph Doyle Architects	Tesco, Cashel, Co. Tipperary - Joseph Doyle Architects

6.1	Paul Keogh	Manzana Fort Pienc, Barcelona, Spain - Josep Llinas
6.2	Paul Keogh	Mixed-Use development, Mayor Square, IFSC, Dublin
6.2	Modelworks	Adamstown Mixed Use, Dublin - Various
6.3	Paul Keogh	Cow's Lane, Templebar, Dublin
6.3	Paul Keogh	Mixed-use development, Milltown, Dublin
6.4	Paul Keogh	Mixed use, Rathmines, Dublin - Fitzgerald Kavanagh & Partners
6.4	Derek Tynan Architects	The Printworks, Templebar, Dublin - Derek Tynan Architects
6.5	Paul Keogh	Marketcross, Kilkenny - Reddy Associates
6.5	Simon Wall	Market Lane, Westport, Co. Mayo - Cox Power Associates
7.1	Paul Keogh	O'Connell St., Dublin
7.2	BDP Architects	Victoria Square, Belfast - BDP Architects
7.2	Paul Keogh	Mixed use, Westport, Co. Mayo
7.3	Bob Hannon	Mixed use, Dun Laoghaire - Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
7.3	Dixon Jones Architects	Sainsbury's Plymouth, UK - Dixon Jones Architects
7.4	Rachael Chidlow	Spitalfields, London, UK
7.4	Paul Keogh	Tesco, Westport, Co. Mayo
7.5	Paul Keogh	Tesco, Ludlow, Shropshire, UK - MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard
7.5	Paul Keogh	Westport, Co. Mayo
8.1	Paul Keogh	Tesco, Kildare Town – Joseph Doyle Architects
8.2	OMS	Pavilions Shopping Centre, Swords, Dublin - OMS
8.2	Dixon Jones Architects	Sainsbury's Plymouth, UK - Dixon Jones Architects
8.3	Paul Keogh	Capel Street, Dublin
8.3	Project Architects	Opera Lane, Cork - Project Architects
8.4	Paul Keogh	Henry Street, Dublin
8.4	Paul Tierney	Dunnes Stores, Navan, Co. Meath - Keenan Lynch Architects
8.5	Paul Keogh	Liverpool One, UK - Various
8.5	Paul Keogh	Dundrum Town Centre, Dublin – BKD Architects
9.1	Paul Keogh	Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany
9.2	Paul McMullin	Liverpool One, UK - Various
9.2	Rachael Chidlow	Spitalfields, London, UK
9.3	Paul Keogh	Tesco Zero Carbon Store, Cabra, Dublin - Joseph Doyle Architects
9.3	Chetwood Associates	Sainsbury's Greenwich, UK - Chetwood Associates
9.4	Paul Keogh	Malmo, Sweden
9.4	Paul Keogh	Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany
9.5	Paul Keogh	Manzana Fort Pienc, Barcelona, Spain - Josep Llinas
9.5	Paul Keogh	Marketcross, Kilkenny - Reddy Associates
10.1	Land Securities	Princesshay, Exeter, UK - Chapman Taylor Architects
10.2	Chetwood Associates	Sainsbury's Greenwich, UK - Chetwood Associates
10.2	Paul Keogh Architects	Total waste generation in 2006 (Source: Environmental Protection Agency)
10.3	Paul Keogh	Tesco, Ludlow, Shropshire, UK - MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard
10.3	Paul Keogh	Lidl, Westport, Co. Mayo
10.4	Cork City Council	Patrick Street, Cork - Beth Gali
10.4	Solearth	The Daintree Building, Camden Street, Dublin - Solearth
10.5	Michael Collins	CHQ, Dublin - Michael Collins Associates
10.5	Paul Keogh	SuperValu, Churchtown, Dublin

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Appendix 4: Case Studies

	Project; Developers; Architects	Images
1	Athlone Town Centre; Gallico Developments Ltd.; móla architecture.	móla architecture/A. Mc Knight Paul Keogh
2	Westport Integrated Area Action Plan; Westport Urban District Council.	Simon Wall Paul Keogh
3	Dunnes Stores, Navan, Co. Meath; Keenan Lynch Architects.	Paul Tierney Paul Keogh
4	Opera Lane, Cork; O'Callaghan Properties; Project Architects.	Project Architects Cork City Council
5	Dublin City Centre Framework Plan; Dublin City Council.	Dublin City Council Paul Keogh
6	Quayside Mixed Use development, Sligo; O'Dowd & Murray; Eugene O'Neill Associates.	Eugene O'Neill Associates
7	Iveragh Rd Town Renewal, Killorglin, Co. Kerry; Laune Properties; Murray O'Laoire Architects.	Murray O'Laoire Architects
8	Tesco, Ludlow, Shropshire, UK; Mac Cormac Jamieson Pritchard.	Paul Keogh Peter Cook
9	Princesshay, Exeter, UK; Land Securities; Chapman Taylor Associates.	Land Securities
10	The Milk Market, Limerick; Limerick Market Trustees; Healy Partners.	Healy Partners

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