



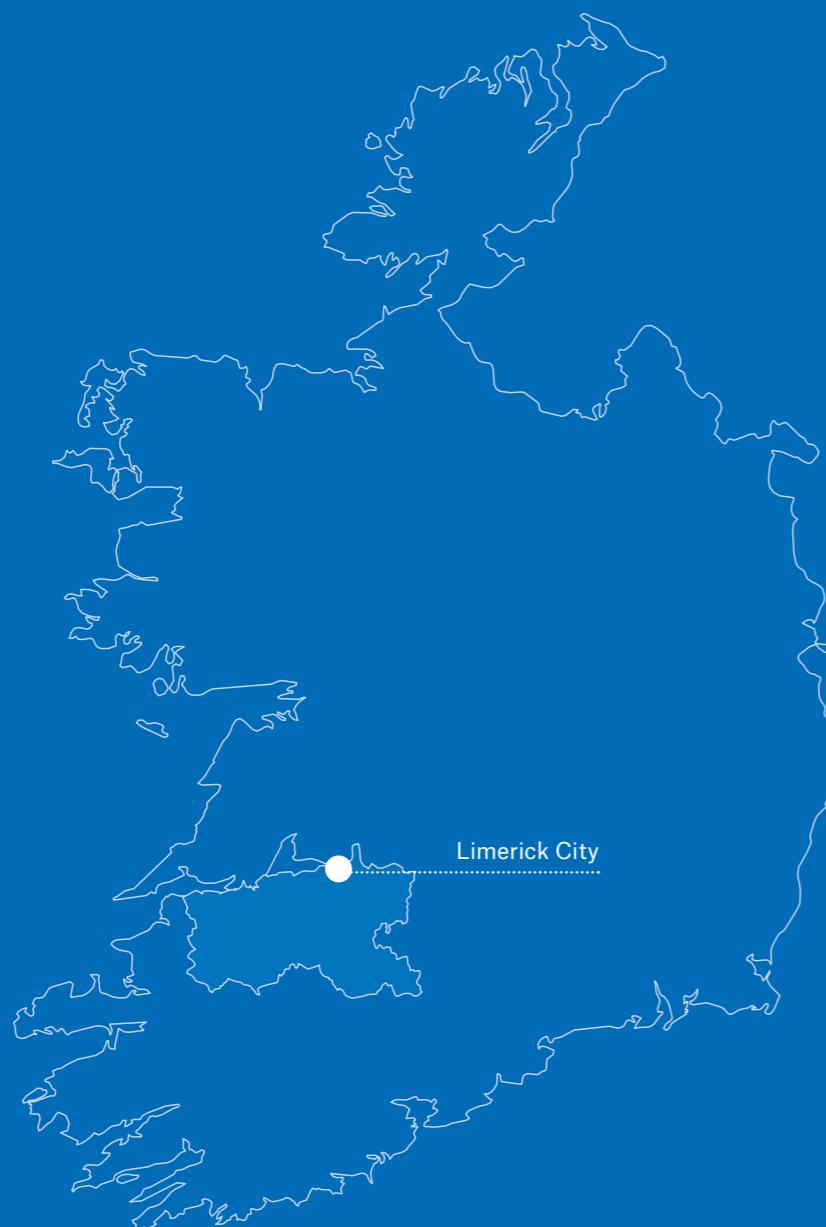
Draft Design Review Report

A Vision for Colbert Station Quarter, Limerick

**RIAI Design Review for Colbert
Station Quarter, Limerick**



This RIAI Design Review has created high-level ideas for the Colbert Station Quarter. It is a non-statutory process that focuses on innovation. It introduces design thinking early on in an urban development process by engaging architectural expertise. A Design Review offers not one but multiple visions and a broad range of ideas. These are non-directional but start an important conversation about the need for quality and sustainability in our urban environment. They empower communities by providing them with a strong overarching vision of what could be achieved.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Statement by the Design Review Chair, David Browne

The Design Review of the Colbert Station Quarter has been a great opportunity to explore the creation of a new city quarter which can be an inspirational model for urban regeneration in Limerick and other Irish cities. The vision for this Design Review has been to create a sustainable, vibrant, liveable city quarter which will welcome all to live, work and enjoy and which will build on Limerick's strengths as a leading Irish city. When realised, this new quarter could play a central part in the future growth of Limerick, benefitting all communities. This could help make Limerick's new and existing urban quarters more vital and attractive for economic investment.

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) is a champion for quality and sustainability in the built environment. The RIAI engage with government, stakeholders and the public and have been successfully running architectural competitions close to 30 years. More recently, under the Government Policy on Architecture, the RIAI has been running Design Reviews for sites of strategic importance, for both public and private clients, including the Diageo Site in Kilkenny, the Military Barracks in Castlebar, the Tivoli Site in Cork, Bantry Harbour and Town, and Sandy Road in Galway city.

What is a Design Review?

Design Reviews are an excellent tool for a client to explore the potential of a project or site and develop wide-ranging ideas through expert architectural advice and fresh thinking. Benefits of this process include:

- Provision of expert impartial advice to clients on the development potential of a site or city quarter.

- A process that is independent and non-directional.
- Benefit of the knowledge of experts who do not have a commercial interest in the site and resultant advice and development ambitions for sites or city quarters which are open and far-reaching.

A Design Review always precedes the work on a Framework Plan or a Master Plan as its purpose is to stimulate thinking and discussion amongst the public and stakeholders on the possible ways in which an area might be developed or redeveloped. Design Reviews could be described as a means of focusing high-level design thinking on a particular neighbourhood or urban quarter with a view to kick starting the imagination with creative ways for these areas to be redeveloped.

A Design Review should help people to focus on what is needed for an area, what needs to be added, what, if anything, should be replaced and what features are of the highest value to those who live and work there. Typically, after presentation to the city or county council, a Design Review will then be published. After publication, feedback from the public and stakeholders will be sought, and the report will be finalised. Work can then proceed on a Framework Plan or a Master Plan, which will follow the normal procedures for this type of exercise, including alignment with current decisions, plans and policies.

As has been the case with other Design Reviews, a panel of five architectural firms was appointed, they were issued with a brief, and each architect created an individual vision for the redevelopment of the Colbert Station Quarter, summaries of these are included within this publication.

Design Review Objectives

An important objective has been to base the Design Review for the Colbert Station Quarter on the concept of integrated place-making with compact, dense, sustainable urban design at its heart. The design panel has shown that immense opportunity exists around Colbert Station to create a mixed-use walkable city quarter designed around small city blocks for a broad-based community complemented by a vibrant and thriving business sector with bars, restaurants, cafes and shops providing street animation throughout the day.

The richness of the Design Review process can be seen in the five different creative and exciting visions crafted by the participating architects, taken from each of their unique perspectives, Shelley McNamara and Grafton Architects, Sean O'Laoire and MOLA Architecture, Piotr Mach, Anne Kiernan and Merritt Bucholz. I would like to take the opportunity to offer my deep thanks to each of the architects, not only for their creative design thinking but also for the enormous amount of time and effort that I know, as a practising architect myself, they have contributed to the work. I have no doubt that they have individually and collectively provided more than excellent value for money.

It is important to be clear on the objectives of the Design Review. As with other RIAI Design Reviews, the primary purpose of the exercise is about Vision. The brief included the concepts and aspirations of the primary stakeholders, LCCC, HSE and CIÉ as well as those of the LDA. In addition, the LDA sought public consultation prior to commencement of the Design Review and included the views of the public in the brief. As part of the briefing session, the architects panel also heard enlightening presentations from the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Cushman and Wakefield, Kieran Ryan and Limerick Chamber along with presentations from LCCC, HSE and CIÉ. Presentations were also made by international urban design experts, Riccardo Marini and Brent Toderian. In their different approaches, the panel have addressed the brief requirements and the public's comments.

Five Different Visions

I expect that the different visions will promote healthy debate about the future development of Colbert Station Quarter and, indeed, of Limerick. I believe that this will be of critical importance in informing a Master Plan or Framework Plan for the future development of the quarter which, I think naturally should follow the work carried out in this Design Review.

Viewing the diverse variety of approaches proposed by the individual architects will, I hope, help the public and stakeholders to form their own opinions on what they believe is right for the future of the Colbert Station Quarter. You may like some ideas and others you may not like. However, it is important to remember that what is being presented is blue sky conceptual thinking and to avoid focusing on the detail of individual schemes.

In summary, the Design Review Panel have provided five excellent visions for compact, dense, sustainable urban redevelopment for the Colbert Station Quarter. It is hoped that these visions will assist in inspiring the thinking of stakeholders and the public in the way they have revealed the potential of key sites in the Colbert Station Quarter for imaginative transformation. The proposals show how it might be possible to shape a distinctive, Limerick centric urban vision with a high quality network of streets, squares and public spaces and small block, mixed use development capturing the value of a unique historic environment, providing a resilient and flexible, biodiverse, low carbon and sustainable city quarter connected to a 21st century transport hub through pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport. This is about putting a vision and structure in place that will serve the city well for the next 100-200 years, just as the vision for Newtown Pery, prepared by Christopher Colles and Davis Ducart for Edmund Sexton Pery in 1769, has served Limerick so well for so long.

Creating a compact, dense, sustainable, and flourishing new urban quarter for Limerick is central to each vision.

1.2 Foreword by Kathryn Meghen, RIAI CEO

The RIAI is delighted to support Limerick City and County Council and the Land Development Agency with a Design Review for Colbert Station Quarter.

Design Reviews are an excellent strategy and platform to introduce design thinking and innovation early on in an urban development process by engaging architectural expertise. Architects are trained problem-solvers and their unique ability to analyse complex issues and develop design solutions is of great benefit to communities such as the residents of Colbert Station Quarter.

It is important to note that a Design Review offers multiple visions and a broad range of ideas. They are non-directional but start an important conversation about the need for quality and sustainability in our urban environment. They empower communities by providing them with a strong overarching vision of what could be achieved.

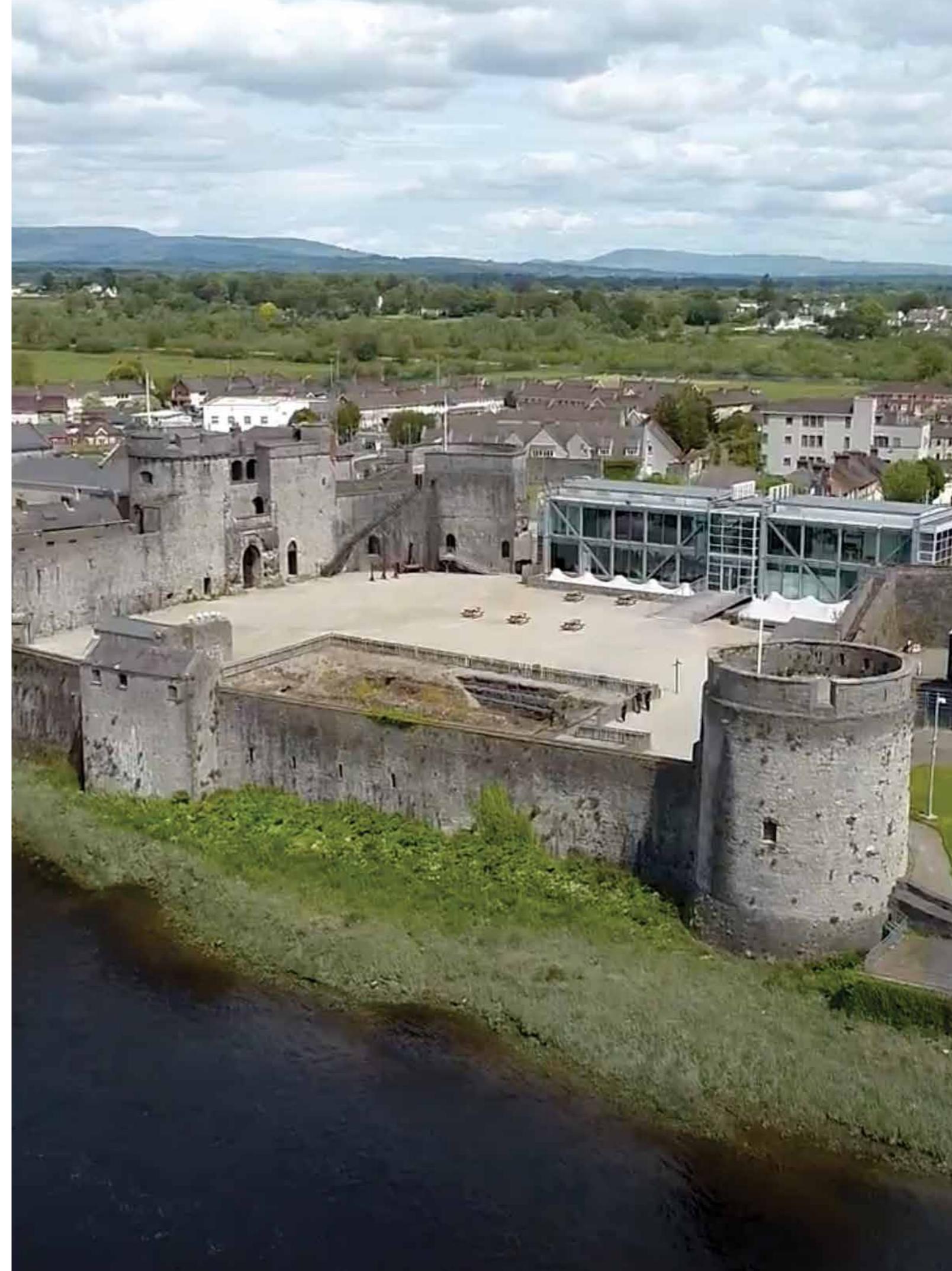
Each architect on the Design Review panel has responded to the same set of parameters in relation to Colbert Station Quarter with a diverse range of possible ideas – resulting in five distinct visions. Common to all is a desire to make a new

vibrant and sustainable urban quarter for living, working, education and leisure that will enrich the city of Limerick.

While each architect has developed a different design vision, the Design Review panel are unified in their belief that Colbert Station Quarter can be an exemplary urban development with a strong emphasis on affordable housing, set in attractive urban spaces and parks and complemented with great opportunities for work, leisure and education. The new quarter is also well-connected to transport and in close proximity to key Limerick amenities, such as the important Georgian area around Pery Square and the River Shannon.

The RIAI understands that the Design Review is one of the early stages in the journey to develop Colbert Station Quarter and we believe that the process will greatly benefit from the architectural input.

We look forward to receiving feedback on this report from the public and stakeholders and wish Limerick City and County Council, the Land Development Agency and the citizens of Limerick the very best of luck with this important project. It has been a pleasure to be involved.



1.3 Foreword by John Moran, Chair of the Land Development Agency

It takes a true sense of community for disparate landowners and users to put aside their own preferences or territory and commit to a higher ambition and search for a new shared vision.

Colbert Station and the surrounding area have been identified by Limerick City and County Council and the LDA as a prime opportunity area for re-development. But, it was the willingness of the primary landowners, CIÉ and the HSE, to join the journey that has given these lands the potential to once more be transformative and support the ongoing growth and 21st century ambition of Limerick with affordable homes at the core.

When parts of cities stagnate, lands once bustling with activity can be neglected and even forgotten, especially if walled away for safety or other reasons. The potential of those lands for positive change can become obscured by a motley collection of subscale uses. Some uses may be valuable but they typically operate below their optimal level.

Our challenge, or perhaps our opportunity, was to find an open and inclusive way to examine what that positive change might look like and so we turned to the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI).

The RIAI Design Review process demonstrates that Colbert Station and the surrounding lands do indeed form a strategically important area offering very significant potential to transform underutilised brownfield areas into a vibrant, affordable and compact mixed-use urban quarter. That new quarter can do much better than today to serve the existing communities in the area and their growing populations. With a transport node at its core, it will attract new residents and quality employers

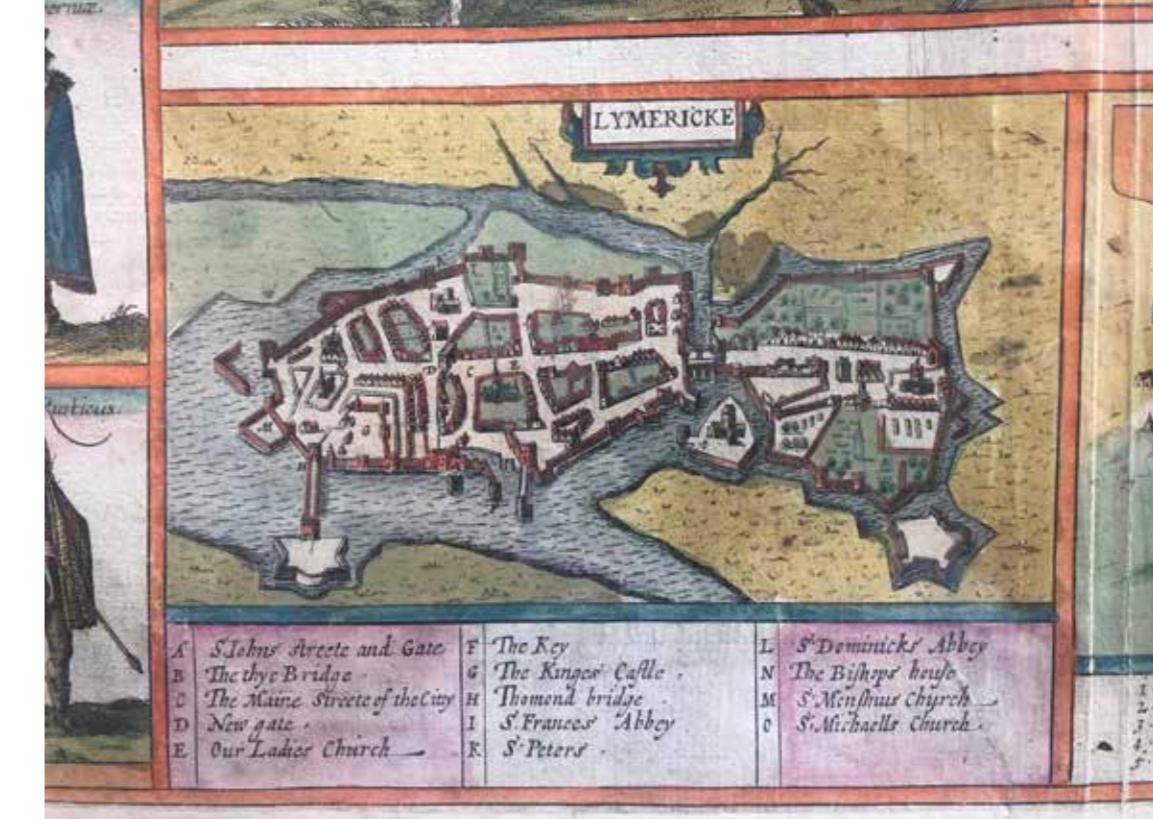
to Limerick by providing attractive live-work propositions for the future and rebalance the traditional transport hierarchy in the city in favour of walking, cycling and public transport.

The aim of this part of the project was to allow exploration of a set of different visions and ideas. It is not a fait accompli.

There is no single right answer. It is structured to inform on-going debate, to allow others to raise concerns and find answers to their questions.

It is also supposed to be high level but shows some detail to demonstrate possibilities to be explored. But none of that detail is set in stone either. The design review and resulting public consultation will provide a focal point for local communities to become involved in what will become an extension of their existing neighbourhoods.

We started the Design Review by seeking and listening to views from the local community and interested people on what they would like to see for the site. These views were shared with the architects to inform their thinking from the start. The responses to the consultation showed a strong demand for making better use of the underutilised areas for affordable housing and facilities to cater for all ages including education, sports and parks. By prioritising liveability, people made it clear they wanted to see more people living and working in the centre of the city, making it a place of vibrancy at all times of the day. I am pleased to see that this Design Review, like others, has yielded thought-provoking, imaginative and high-quality ideas and visions from the five individual architect proposals. These are ambitious and varied.



Ca. 1617 city plan of Limerick in atlas Civitates Orbis Terrarum (Cities of the World) by Braun and Hogenburg, RHH Collection.

They will challenge our thoughts about the context and potential for the future of Colbert. Of course, some ideas may trigger concern that they do not create enough value to justify their cost, but we felt it was important to include those for debate.

There is also much common ground in the ideas presented. It is encouraging that these align so closely to the early public consultation and with the LDA's own objectives around delivering compact urban growth, placemaking, sustainable, high-quality, affordable and inclusive living communities with accessibility and sustainable travel at their centre. That common ground should allow us to move quickly with the other stakeholders to identify individual sites for front-ended projects or to allow useful temporary uses on other sites before their longer-term development.

This is but the beginning. After the public consultation will come the development of a spatial planning framework for the area with Limerick City and County Council. That will mean more consultation, public debate and evidence building to see what works well for Limerick and what does

not. It will help inform consideration of Limerick's next Development Plan objectives. This process can create a blueprint for activating state and other owned sites to transform underutilised areas for the benefit of local communities.

We wish to thank the RIAI, the panel of architects, international experts and our partners in this review, Limerick City and County Council, and other stakeholders, particularly CIÉ and the HSE. They have participated with enthusiasm by sharing ideas and ambition. And of course, the people of Limerick who shared their visions during the first public consultation. All this input has generated lots of good ideas reflected in the final designs.

The potential and vision to be unlocked for this area is on a par with when Edmund Sexton Pery in 1765 employed the Italian architect, Davis Ducart, to design a town plan for what became New Town Pery.

Now we must continue to engage and work together to make sure that our outcome adds just as much value and character to this historic city.

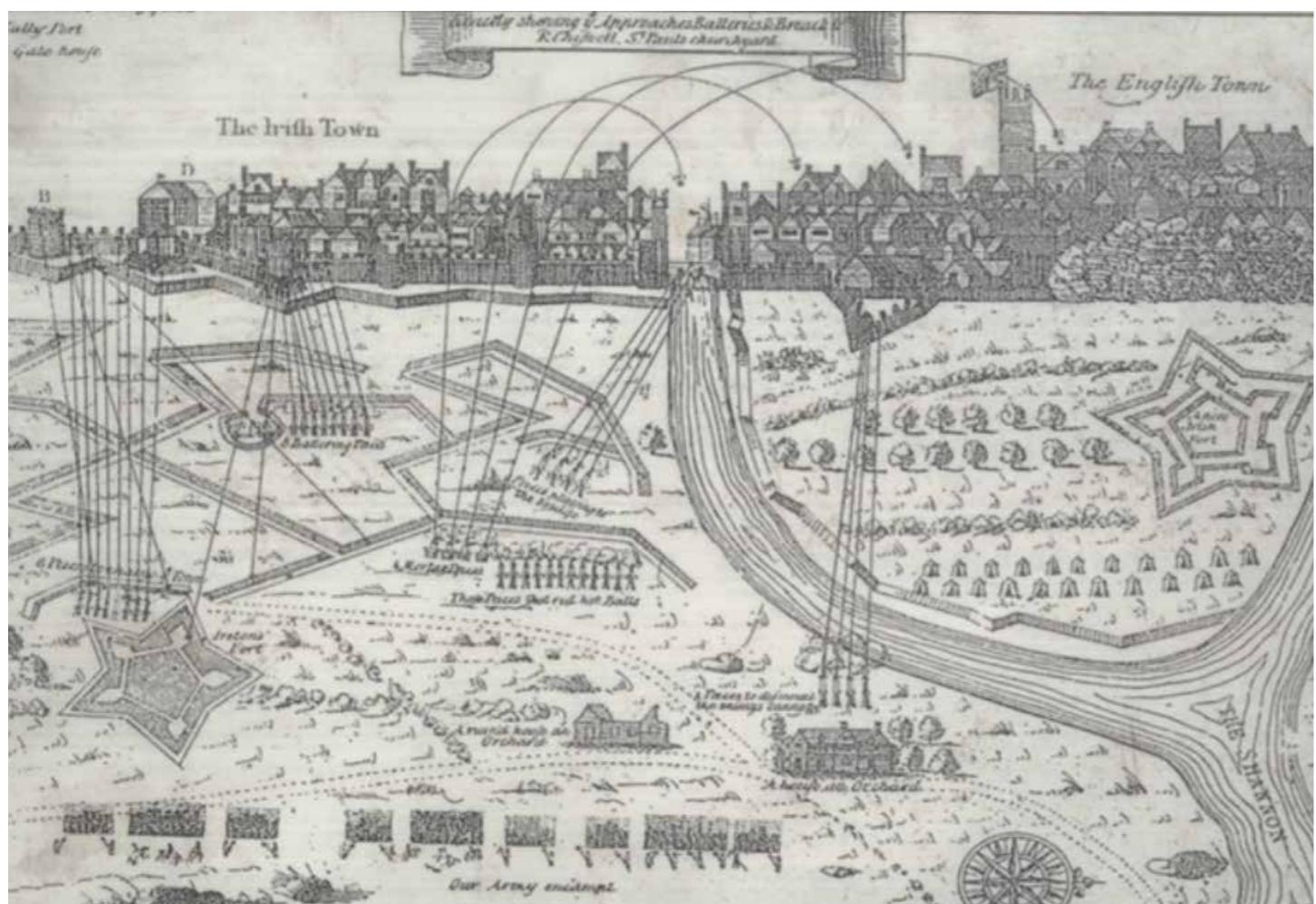
1.4 Foreword by Pat Daly, Chief Executive Limerick City and County Council

The Design Review process offers an exciting opportunity to collectively reimagine and reinvent the Colbert Station Quarter. National and Regional policy supports Limerick in becoming a major economic force in the Irish and European economy and proposes significant population and economic growth to assist in redressing the imbalance of development within Ireland. Limerick city centre will be at the heart of this economic force – an attractive magnet for retail, leisure, residential, commercial, educational and cultural growth.

The amalgamation of Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Regeneration and the Limerick 2030 initiative have all contributed to enhancing Limerick's growth potential. We will continue to benefit from and expand on these initiatives and develop a series of transformational public realm projects that capitalise on our existing strengths and assets and create a sense of place.



Unlocking and enhancing Limerick's natural and built heritage



"Limerick City and County Council now seeks to build on the transformation that Limerick has undergone and take advantage of this opportunity that has the potential to bring a positive and sustainable social, cultural and economic benefit to us."

Working with the Land Development Agency, this collaborative project will unlock a key city centre site that will result in the development of landmark projects that will complement established city functions. It is envisaged that this will be a transformative integrated project, drawing together sustainable mobility, a wide mix of land uses and activities, adaptable urban form, enhanced natural and built heritage that will promote innovation and collaboration and facilitate increased

population and jobs in the city centre. It has the potential to deliver further positive change and will result in reduced vacancy, dereliction and promote re-use of sites and vacant buildings in the City for economic, housing, community, culture, recreation and for other uses.

The challenge is to make the area a more attractive place to live, to enable individuals and communities in the area to avail of emerging opportunities and to secure the Colbert Station Quarter as a location of choice in which to live, work and visit. We look forward to working with the Land Development Agency, the community, stakeholders and agencies to help realise the potential of this central area.

I would like to thank the Land Development Agency and the RIAI for illustrating the potential rejuvenation of the Colbert Station Quarter in this document.

2. Project Context

2.1 Strategic Planning Context of Colbert Lands Proposal

The Colbert Station Quarter Framework is being made at an important time of opportunity for a positive transformation of Limerick city centre to utilise its potential and realise its strategic value in the functioning of the city as a whole. It is proposed that the Framework will be integrated into the first joint Limerick City and County Development Plan (2022-2028) which has recently commenced with the publication of the Capital Issues and Background Papers.

The Development Plan will be prepared in accordance with the policies and objectives of the National Planning Framework (Project 2040) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, which place a focus on significant compact growth and the development of brownfield sites within Limerick. A new Housing Strategy, Retail Strategy, a Building Height Strategy, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Natura Impact Assessment will be prepared to inform the new Development Plan. Other specific plans that will also inform it include, the Limerick Sports and Recreation Facilities Strategy, currently at draft stage and the Climate Change Adaption Strategy, adopted in 2019. <https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2019-05/Draft-Climate-Adaptation-Strategy-2019-2024-Limerick.pdf>

The Development Plan will also build on the success of existing strategies and investment that have already benefited the city or that are committed, including:

The Limerick 2030:

An Economic and Spatial Plan for Limerick, which has identified key strategic sites in Limerick that will act as anchors for enterprise and investment development across Limerick. Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC, the first, local authority wholly-owned special purpose vehicle created in Ireland to deliver a programme of investment, is tasked to plan and develop these key strategic sites. <https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/business-and-economy/limerick-2030/limerick-2030-economic-and-spatial-plan>

The implementation of the Limerick Regeneration:

Implementation Framework Plan 2014, which is committed to the physical, social and economic redevelopment of the regeneration areas. Please refer to pages 16 and 17 of the following adopted plan for context and process: https://www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017-05/limerick_regeneration_framework_implementation_plan_small_version.compressed.pdf

Serviced Site Fund:

Of particular relevance to the Colbert lands is the 16.5 ha Limerick City and County Council owned lands including the 'Guinness' site. The first phase of a three-phase plan for this site has already received a €6 million grant from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under the Serviced Sites initiative, and which LCCC is currently committed to delivering of up to 400 homes by 2023.

Hyde Road Strategy:

A cross-directorate plan with input from An Garda Siochana to tackle vacancy and dereliction along Hyde Road with targeted CPOs and Council acquisitions. Plan is underway with the support and close attention of area Councillors to tackle over 25 properties and return vacant and derelict dwellings to new homes, removing hotspots for anti-social behaviour/dumping and improving the residential amenity of the area and key gateway to the city. Parallel interventions by the Physical Development Directorate to traffic calm Hyde Road to prevent speeding along straight runs.

Social Housing Scheme under construction at Lower Carey's Road: 16 new homes currently under construction by Fitzgibbon contractors for delivery in 2021.

Complementary to projects in transformation sites, there has been considerable attention paid to how to protect, revive and reconfigure the city centre, and in a manner that incorporates best practice in architectural conservation and design, digital communications and sustainable energy use.

These principles inform current on-going programmes which have successfully secured EU funding through the Urban and Regional Development Fund, namely 'Limerick City Xchange', and the 'Georgian Neighbourhood'.

The O'Connell Street revitalisation project will also breathe new life into the area for pedestrians and residents and redefine its role as a 'destination' within Limerick City. A plan to develop a further phase of improvement to Limerick's impressive waterfront, 'the world class waterfront' and which includes the former Cleeves factory site and the UL city campus, is the subject of a current application for URDF funding.

2.2 Public Consultation for the Colbert Station Quarter Design Review

The LDA sought input and views from the public on the aims for the Colbert Station Quarter Design Review as a means of informing and shaping the approach right from the beginning. The public consultation was carried out over a period of six weeks before the Design Review team met, and the views put forward by the public helped shape the overall direction of the review. The consultation was advertised online and in local print media and garnered a significant response from the public.

The public consultation was accompanied by an article in the local paper where questions were posed to the general public as to what they wanted to see at the Colbert Station Quarter development. The article wanted to encourage blue-sky thinking and stimulate conversation on the future potential.

A wide range of submissions were received during the consultation process, and responses were compiled and analysed. If a common theme were to be applied to the submissions from the public, it would be community. Almost all suggestions reinforced the importance of a strong community with a sense of togetherness by linking this new community to other existing communities with healthy travel options.

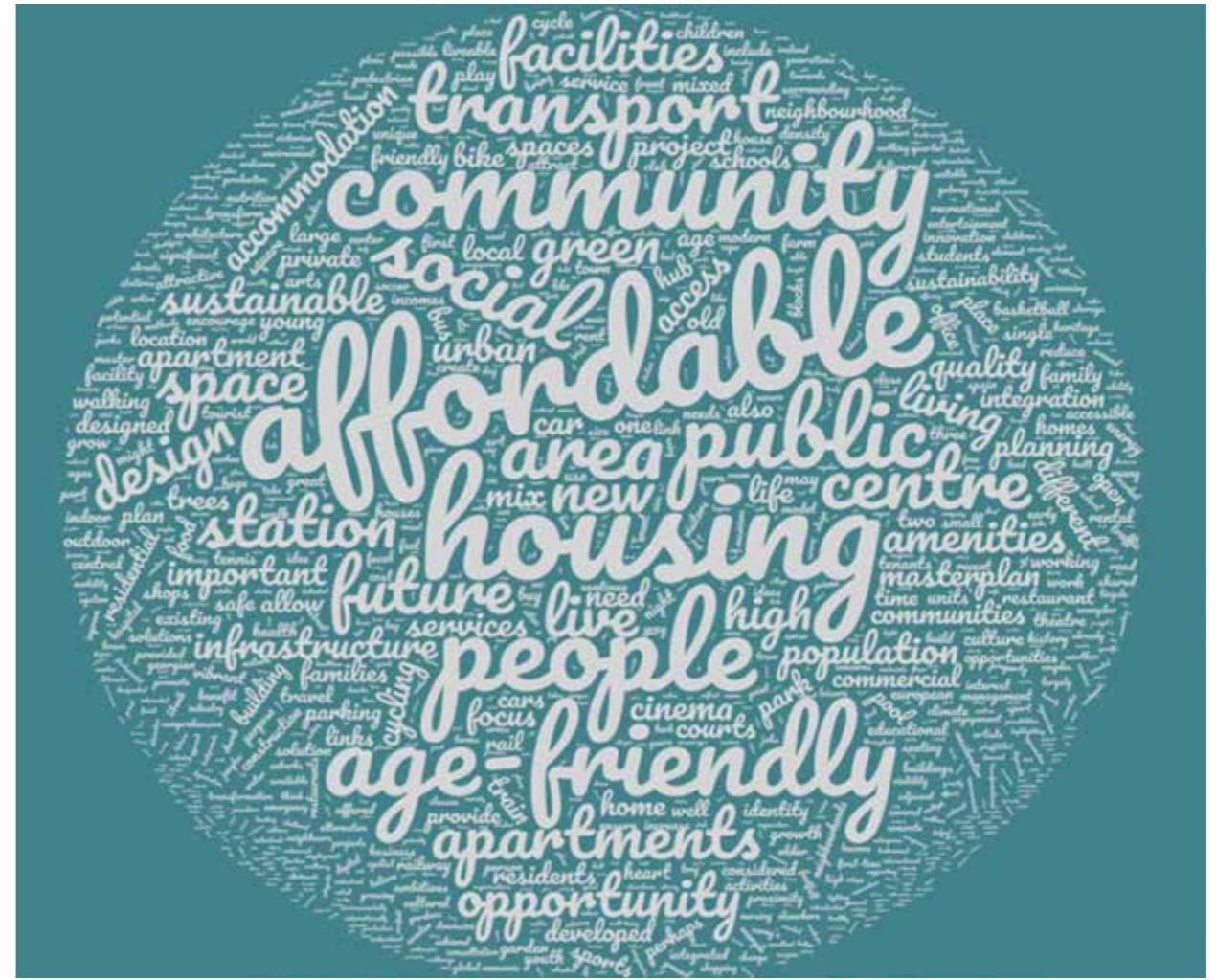
There was significant emphasis on mixed housing and achieving integrated community for people from all walks of life, ages and

incomes. Views expressed an interest in mixed-tenure homes for a broad scope of people from first-time buyers, to downsizers, families and single people. Submissions highlighted the need for all-day footfall and inclusion of retail and premium office space, while also encouraging job creation.

Additional facilities and services were outlined as incredibly important to the success of the new development. People want shared facilities that encourage both work and play. They would like to see facilities for childcare, health, schools, co-working spaces and perhaps even a larger venue for events. Some views expressed the importance of encouraging community participation in the arts and sports. Others highlighted the need to provide safe areas for sports and recreational facilities including well-lit areas at night and a community

garda presence. Many views agreed on the importance of a vibrant and biodiverse area with trees, green space/walkways, wildlife and urban farms and communal gardens to encourage greater community spirit within the new area.

Public opinion was somewhat divided when it came to the provision of space dedicated to cars; some submissions expressed the need for more car space, while other submissions argued for a less car-reliant development and the inclusion of car-free zones and even no cars.



Overall, the public held a consensus that the Colbert Station Quarter must have **public transport linkages** with other parts of Limerick by utilising a transport-orientated development approach. **Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure** was key with the inclusion of bicycle storage in the area. There were also queries regarding a **commuter rail network**, a rail link with Foynes and Shannon and also a high speed rail network connecting to other cities, especially Dublin – allowing workers that live and work in the Colbert Station Quarter **access to quick travel to other cities** when necessary.

Many expressed the need for **green solutions** with a **climate-conscious neighbourhood** and development. Furthermore, people want the new development to be mindful of existing structures and our **architectural heritage**. Overall, most views expressed the need for an **inclusive affordable neighbourhood** with investment in facilities and services to both accommodate the increase in population and to encourage economic growth. All while having greater public transport linkages to other parts of the city and county with a **strong emphasis on cycling and walking** infrastructure.

2.3 Urban Design Principles - Riccardo Marini and Brent Toderian

The RIAI and LDA invited two renowned urban experts - Riccardo Andrea Marini from Glasgow and Brent Toderian from Vancouver to be part of the Design Review process for Colbert Station Quarter. The international experts briefed the Design Review panel at the outset and also attended the presentations. For the purpose of this report they have set out some urban design principles.



Riccardo Marini
Life in between Buildings

Riccardo Andrea Marini, M Arch, Dip Arch, RIBA, FRIAS, MRTPI, is an Italian architect and urban designer based in Glasgow. After working for many years as a senior city officer he worked as a director with Gehl Architects in Copenhagen and founded Marini Urbanismo in 2017. Riccardo believes that people have to be central to the process of creating our future settlements and in our endeavours to rethink our existing ones.

Critical to the creation of a people centric approach is the understanding of the importance of the human scale, this is in terms of the built forms but also critically in terms of the hard and soft landscapes. All spaces should have meaning and a reason for

being. In terms of what has been considered acceptable for the past 60 years we need to understand that small intimate spaces and places is what we find attractive and comforting; whether green or hard there is a tendency to make spaces too big, as with the linking streets their scale should be made as narrow as one can, so they make humans feel happy not vehicles.

1. To assemble or disperse

When thinking of a new place or trying to bring life to an existing one, the aim should be to develop a human centric approach thus countering the reductive and fragmentary approach that is characterised by the modernist planning approach - create opportunities for people to gather in safety by creating a range of diverse spaces and places that are informed and enlivened by grouping a variety of uses that would generate life.

2. To integrate or segregate

There is a need to integrate, the red line approach is a failed one. A good place is created by connecting to the surrounding areas in a meaningful way. Introverted developments generate limited life and impoverish our cities. The streets and spaces that are created need to be as far as possible pedestrian priority without necessarily excluding any mode of movement - active movement should be favoured and facilitated.

3. To invite or to repel

The buildings and their settings need to be invitations to linger and to be active, active ground floors and ensuring that there are eyes on all places and spaces give invitations for human activities. The place that is created needs to endeavour to make it easy for residents and visitors to walk and cycle everywhere. These invitations to be active need to be powerful ones that in reality facilitate active movement.

4. To open up or to close in

The architecture that is evolved needs to understand how to bring life to all the places from the use of open facades that give good visual permeability to commercial or civic activities to residential ground floors having active private spaces that face or open up on to the streets or spaces they define and create. The use of linking spaces by strategically placing people magnets that are inter-visible is part of this opening up of the place.

Some key words that might prove useful when thinking of the places that will be created:

- Evolving (whether formal or informal in nature).
- Diverse (avoiding one-size-fits-all).
- Free (with secure rights and responsibilities).
- Delineated (clearly public in their use).
- Engaging (designing in active uses).
- Meaningful (incorporating notable amenities and features).
- Social (encouraging social engagement).
- Balanced (between traffic and pedestrians).
- Comfortable (feeling safe and relaxing).
- Robust (adaptable and distinct in the face of change)



Brent Toderian
Better Cities

Brent Toderian is an internationally respected practitioner and thought-leader with almost 30 years of experience in advanced urbanism, city planning and urban design. He has advised and collaborated with cities, agencies and best-practice developers around the world. Brent's establishment of TODERIAN UrbanWORKS (TUW) in early 2012 followed six years of significant achievements as Vancouver BC's Chief Planner (2006-2012). Prior to this he was Manager of Centre City Planning + Design, and Chief Subdivision + Neighbourhood Planner in Calgary, Canada (2001-2006).

There are five crises in the context of current city building (and suburb building):

- Climate
- Housing – Affordability
- Public Health
- Infrastructure Cost
- Demographics (cities needing to attract and retain young people)

As Limerick expands its population to double or triple the current size, there will be both challenges and opportunities. How you integrate 200,000 new people in Limerick can be the difference to the success of Limerick.

Climate Crisis

Understanding the connection between the climate crisis and better city-building is critical when dealing with growth. If a city continues to grow in a car dependent way, you'll need to deal with many massive costs and consequences, not the least of which is air pollution. The good news is that air pollution can be solved in the same way that we solve many other big issues while improving our quality of life — by taming the car and reprioritising people in the planning of our streets, communities and cities. We don't need to ban the car, but we DO need to rethink its dominance and the amount of space we've surrendered to it.

Design Quality

There should be consistently high-design quality at every scale of development, because great design creates value. Beauty outperforms ugly, and ugly can be so expensive. Amenities and diversity make density enjoyable. This combats the argument that density is just an exercise in cramming people in.

Density Done Well

Doing urban density better is the bedrock of more successful communities in every way we measure success, and that includes shattering the dominance of the single detached house.

Land use and transportation decisions need to be aligned in a holistic way, given that the best transportation plan is actually a great land-use plan. Tall buildings can combine height and human scale through podiums with much better design — in fact, buildings of EVERY scale need to be designed better to strengthen the street edge and activate and enliven street life. Design an artful mix at 'eye level'. Where density is lower, aim for 'gentle densification', with a variety of ground-oriented building types for different contexts, giving neighbourhoods a chance to evolve and residents a chance to age in place. Create the highest densities, the most urban mixing and the best design in urban centres and around transport stations.

Transport

Designing primarily for the car just makes car traffic worse. Don't balance ways of getting around, PRIORITISE active transport — walking first, then bikes, then public transport, then goods movement and deliveries, and then the private vehicles. You don't necessarily have to ban the car, but you should prioritise it last. Designing a multi modal city works better for everyone, including drivers.

Simple technologies like bikes and wheeled shopping trollies have a better effect when combined with smarter land use. Separated and protected bike lanes are key, especially on high frequency and high speed streets. Successful bike cities think about how to manage bike success with human liveability.

Parking is a critical lever for walking, biking and public transport, and cities shouldn't underestimate the importance of buses. Car sharing is an incredibly powerful lever.

Public Health

Medical and public health professionals have become powerful allies in terms of improving city-building. The public health costs of bad urban design are staggering. Doing density well and designing activity back into public life is critically important for better public health, even before you consider the key observations from the pandemic.

Demographics

Cities that are successful in attracting and retaining millennials have been more successful, and millennials want better designed and more multi-modal cities that aren't car-dependent. Even when they start having families, they'll stay in urban places if you design them for kids and families. Plan for schools and daycare, ensure plenty of homes that can actually fit families, and design your public realm to work well for kids, because that works better for everyone.

The Immediate City

There are a lot of simple, fast ideas that can strengthen a city, but we make those simple ideas too difficult. Examples include food trucks/carts, retail and cafe 'pop-ups', shipping containers, street parking transformation and other urban street activations, public/street art, and more. These act as powerful catalysts to create urban life, fill gaps, and illustrate a better way for our cities and streets.

5 Steps to Better Cities: For any urban issue or challenge, ask yourself honestly where your city is in its learning curve toward doing the right thing, and doing it well.

- **Doing the wrong thing**
- **Doing the wrong thing better**
- **Trying to have your cake and eat it**
- **Doing the right thing badly**
- **Doing the right thing well**

Twelve Urban Quality Criteria by Jan Gehl

Protection	Protection against traffic and accidents. Do groups across age and ability experience traffic safety in the public space? Can one safely bike and walk without fear of being hit by a driver?	Protection against harm by others. Is the public space perceived to be safe both day and night? Are there people and activities at all hours of the day because the area has, for example, both residents and offices? Does the lighting provide safety at night as well as a good atmosphere?	Protection against unpleasant sensory experience. Are there noises, dust, smells, or other pollution? Does the public space function well when it's windy? Is there shelter from strong sun, rain, or minor flooding?
Comfort	Options for mobility. Is this space accessible? Are there physical elements that might limit or enhance personal mobility in the forms of walking, using a wheelchair, or pushing a stroller? Is it evident how to move through the space without having to take an illogical detour?	Options to stand and linger. Does the place have features you can stay and lean on, like a façade that invites one to spend time next to it, a bus stop, a bench, a tree, or a small ledge or niche?	Options for sitting. Are there good primary seating options such as benches or chairs? Or is there only secondary seating such as a stair, seat wall, or the edge of a fountain? Are there adequate non-commercial seating options so that sitting does not require spending money?
Enjoyment	Options for seeing. Are seating options placed so there are interesting things to look at?	Options for talking and listening/hearing. Is it possible to have a conversation here? Is it evident that you have the option to sit together and have a conversation?	Options for play, exercise, and activities. Are there options to be active at multiple times of the day and year?
	Scale. Is the public space and the building that surrounds it at a human scale? If people are at the edges of the space, can we still relate to them as people or are they lost in their surroundings?	Opportunities to enjoy the positive aspects of climate. Are local climatic aspects such as wind and sun taken into account? Are there varied conditions for spending time in public spaces at different times of year? With this in mind, where are the seating options placed? Are they located entirely in the shadows or the sun? And how are they oriented/placed in relation to wind? Are they protected?	Experience of aesthetic qualities and positive sensory experiences. Is the public space beautiful? Is it evident that there is good design both in terms of how things are shaped, as well as their durability?

3. Vision, Challenges and Opportunities

3.1 Vision Statement for the Colbert Station Quarter

"To create a new city quarter which will be an exemplar for potential further urban regeneration in Limerick and other Irish cities. The Design Review should seek to inform an integrated place-making approach that has compact, dense, sustainable urban design at its heart. An opportunity exists to create a mixed-use, walkable city living quarter around small city blocks with a broad-based community complemented by a vibrant and thriving business sector with bars, restaurants, cafes and shops providing street animation throughout the day."



Study Area Map of Indicative State Lands for illustrative purposes only (not legal boundaries)

3.2 Challenges and Opportunities

The Colbert Station area is a large and complex area covering over fifty hectares and wider area of influence. This operates as a key transport hub, and incorporates significant health educational, recreational and community uses. The area comprises large areas of State lands, including Limerick City and County Council, CIÉ, HSE and Department of Education and Department of Justice lands (see plan showing indicative land interests). It will require sensitive consideration and stakeholder engagement to explore how the potential could be unlocked into the future, while respecting operational, residential, and business communities' interests.

Challenges

- Physical and built barriers throughout the quarter (infrastructure/rail line/walls etc).
- The extent of existing buildings and curtilage and current and planned operational requirements for health-related operations.
- Range of active operations across Colbert for example those critical to CIÉ for the functioning as a transport hub and HSE as well as education, recreation and amenities, the prison, and courthouse.
- Fragmented public and private land ownership.
- Impact of development on low-density residential areas abutting the Colbert area.
- Level changes across site.

Opportunities

- Potential to create a new inner-city centre economic cluster of scale with high quality jobs and accommodation to go some way towards the 'Project Ireland 2040' targets for Limerick.
- Opportunity for a reimaging of Limerick city centre (transferable to other Irish urban locations) as a highly desirable place to live, work and play for people both from outside Limerick and those in the region thinking of moving to more sustainable family or age-friendly living.
- Explore potential cultural links, such as with EVA. Limerick's unique artistic heritage could propose conceptual interventions as an innovative way of signalling generational change in this landmark project.
- Potential to enhance connectivity with existing neighbourhoods to develop as a vibrant liveable city quarter with a permeable and connected public realm and environment.

4. Executive Summary

Colbert Development Potential - Common Themes and Transformative Ideas

Colbert Station Quarter presents a transformative opportunity to rejuvenate underutilised lands and create a new gateway for Limerick and a highly connected and vibrant mixed-use city quarter.

Opening up underutilised lands will enable Colbert Station Quarter to connect and evolve in a phased way over time, attracting investment to develop key sites. Colbert Station Quarter offers an unrivalled opportunity to become a sustainable and attractive destination for business and community to thrive, connected with heritage, in a parkland landscape, embracing the city scape and local community.



4.1 Common Themes

While each architect has created a different vision, there are many commonalities between them. These are areas that bear close examination in setting the brief for the next stage of Colbert Station Quarter:



New Gateway for Limerick

A new arrival gateway with compact high-density distinctive buildings enclosing and reinforcing the gateway and sense of arrival to Limerick.



Unlocking and Connecting

Optimising the potential via specific development catalysts which open up, connect with, and maximize underutilised sites.



Transport-Oriented Development

Intensification around the train station, creating a vibrant attractive mixed-use development that provides a new focal point for Limerick.



Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

Embracing the edges and creating integrated exemplar sustainable housing supported by recreational and community amenities in a connected and safe environment that promotes city living for all.



Green Lungs / Network

A network of connected parkland and greenway recreational areas, supporting biodiversity, nature, and ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, climate mitigation and adaptation and promote community cohesion and health & wellbeing.



Phasing and Flexibility

Recognising that rejuvenation will be an organic process that will take place over a long period, providing for flexibility to evolve naturally from the outset. Future flexibility is key to accommodate changes in social, cultural, technological and environmental demands over time.

4.2 Transformative Ideas

Grafton Architects 'Building for the Future'



Colbert Station Quarter presents a major opportunity for Limerick's future, potentially an exemplar for urban development combining the best aspects of urban and rural characters, to nurture its present and future citizens.

Scale of Development Opportunity

For this proposal, Grafton Architects have estimated a potential developable area of circa 20.67 ha (206,710m²) for the Colbert Station Quarter.

Residential Population

A key focus for the new urban quarter would be to develop housing and provide homes for in the region of 9,585 people in 3,195 residential units. The average density is 2.23 and buildings could range in height from 3-9 storeys.

Commercial and Other Uses

In addition, commercial space could be in the region of 86,505 m², which could include workspaces as well as commercial and cultural uses. The proposal contains a significant amount of 'Freespace' for the community - 277,000m² of parkland, sports fields, horticulture, recreation grounds, food production, nature and ecologies.

Potential to Unlock Early-Win Projects in First Phase

These high-level proposals act in the form of 'urban acupuncture' on the existing site, proposing no demolition. Work could begin now, even at a small scale, to build confidence, which will consolidate the bigger more complex ideas. The early phases could include residential with supporting educational, cultural, commercial uses. Residential uses would include provision of social and affordable housing from the start.

A step-by-step approach will build up to the delivery of a visionary and inclusive piece of city, generating excitement and enthusiasm within the community.

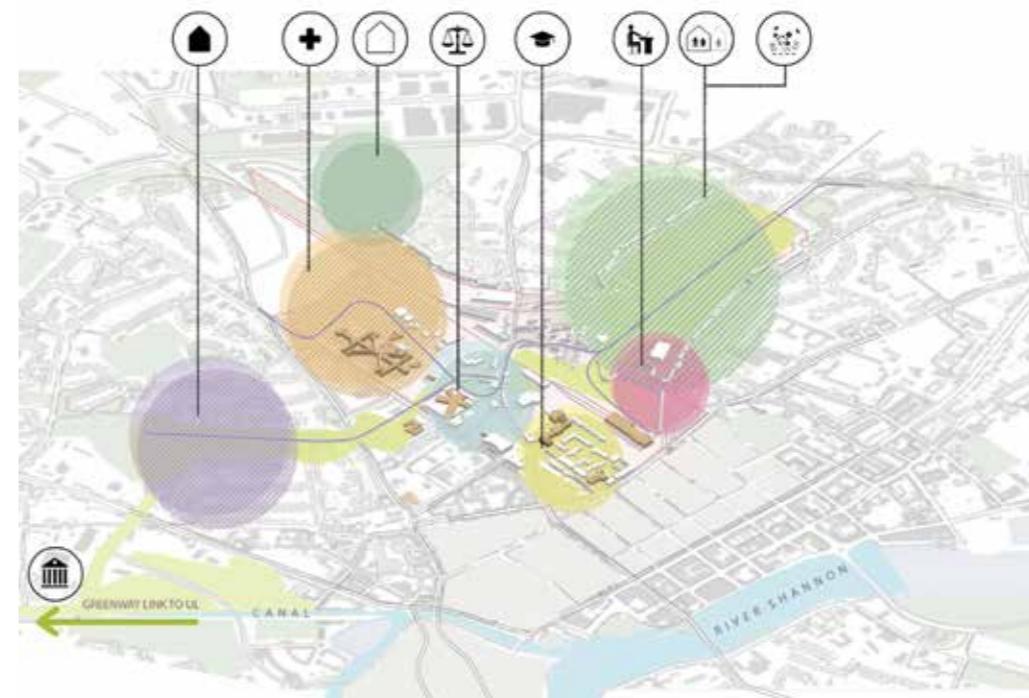
Early phasing, subject to feasibility and stakeholder engagement, could include Colbert Square and the site south of that area as a potential early win. Future phases potentially include School parade and Clé lands off Mulgrave Street, and following this, potential for HSE grounds and the new gateway to the city. Key Urban Commonage areas could be progressed in a phased way subject to feasibility and agreement.



Site Area: 550,000 m², FREESPACE: 277,000 m², BUILT SPACE 438,100 m², Uses: Residential, Education, Health, Sports, Work, Studios, Recreation, Community.

Infrastructure: Bridges, Streets, Squares, Carparking, Parkland, Horticulture.

Sean O'Laoire and MOLA Architecture 'Colbert Station Quarter – An International Exemplar and a Sustainable Urban Design'



The proposed development of the Colbert Station Quarter lands, founded on a clear vision and robust principles, offers Limerick a unique opportunity to consolidate its historic urban core, while mediating and connecting its northern, eastern, and southern suburbs

and the University of Limerick. In so doing, it offers Limerick the challenge to lead and develop a new urban quarter that would be a national and international exemplar of informed and sustainable urban design.

Scale of Development Opportunity

In this proposal, initial estimates are that up to 39.67 ha approx. of the Colbert Station Quarter could be developable, subject to feasibility, stakeholder engagement and relevant agreements. At this early stage, it is assumed that lands which could potentially become available for development include lands to the south of Colbert Station, as well as part of the HSE lands and CIÉ lands west of Coláiste Mhichíl, CBS Sexton Street. For the purposes of this exercise it is assumed that 75% of that area, or 29.75ha, is potentially available.

Residential Population

It is assumed that Colbert Station Quarter would be 80% residential with 20% for other uses. Conservatively, it could host a population of between 6,000-10,000 people. Homes would be 3-6 storeys high, achieving a density between 50 and 80 units/ha. At this stage, capacity figures are indicative. This is a conservative estimate, and potential to increase, with resultant building height increase. This proposal is predicated on generating an optimal residential accommodation brief, based on the principles assumed, to ensure a diverse social and age mix.

Commercial and Other Uses

For the purpose of this Design Review, 20% commercial, employment and other uses is assumed. In gross area terms, this equates to 6ha (approx.) for non-residential uses. The nature of the commercial and employment uses will require further interrogation, but the unique location and context suggest

contemporary 'Tech' and R&D uses, besides a quantum of community and specialist retail space (e.g. food). St. Joseph's Hospital offers itself as a cultural attractor.

Phasing and Potential to Unlock Early-Win Projects

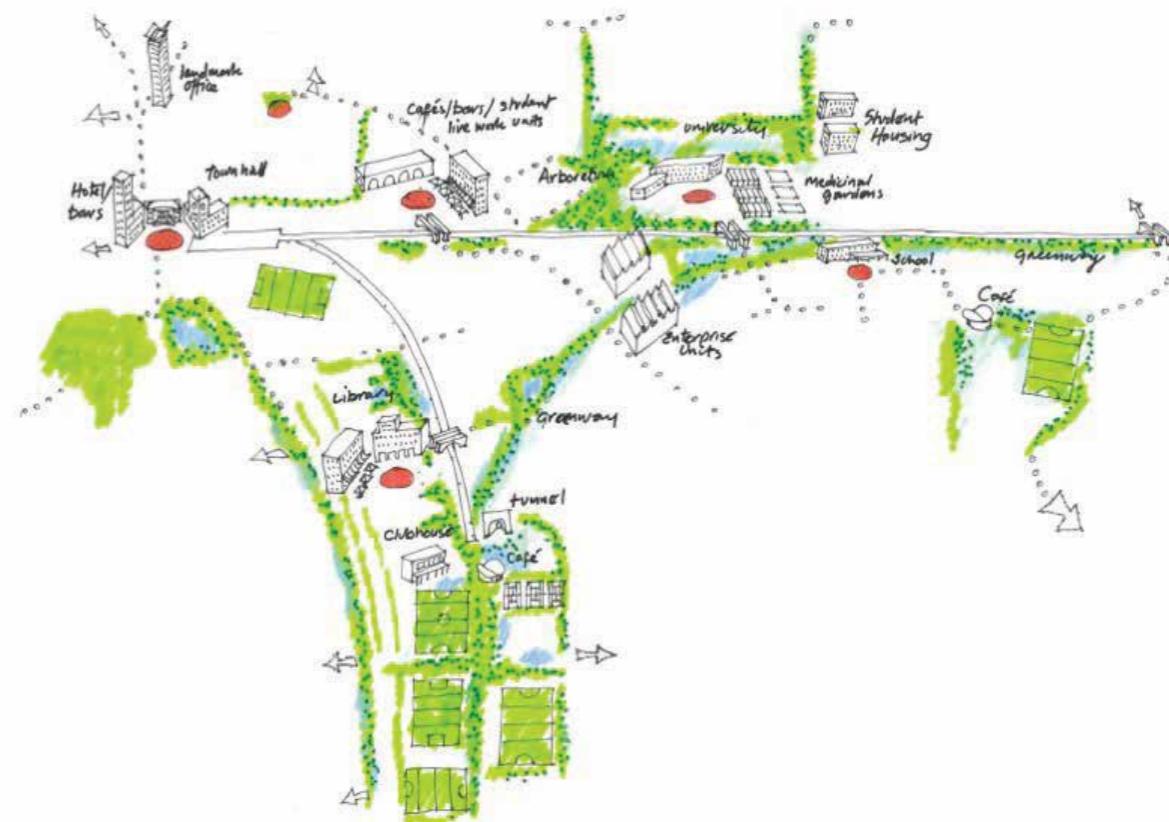
'Start as you mean to continue' is respectfully offered as guidance. This is predicated on clear founding principles, which warrant a commitment to a detailed multi-disciplinary analysis and baseline studies. This first phase will be critical to the integrated evolution of the Colbert Station Quarter. For certainty in respect of future provision, a suburban rail should be prioritised. 'Meanwhile' or 'interim' uses should be actively considered, as should a project pavilion which would inform the public and other parties of the vision for this new urban quarter. There is a unique opportunity for experimentation and testing of prototypes, to further promote the national and international profile of the project.

Prototype food production and site-generated energy projects warrant consideration as first phase projects.

Certainty in respect of funding and availability of lands will determine phasing. History testifies to the risks and consequences of disjointed and disconnected phasing, e.g. residential development lacking community infrastructure and related facilities. Phasing should be addressed in the context of a robust and integrated framework plan, to ensure that elements which are symbiotic and interdependent are realised progressively and in parallel.

Anne Kiernan

'An Unparalleled Opportunity to Reimagine Limerick'



The new Colbert Station Quarter, with its rich mix of character and heritage, presents an unparalleled opportunity to reimagine the centre of Limerick city. This proposal is based on 5 Character Areas:

1. Education Lands
2. South Colbert Station
3. Guinness Lands
4. HSE Lands
5. Railway Lands

This new vision can provide affordable housing in new and existing communities, with a mix of uses including education, leisure, local enterprise and commercial office, hotels, bars and cafes. High quality public realm is common to all of the five identified character areas. Residential

accommodation is a rich variety of higher density accommodation focused on the station, student accommodation, and smaller scaled development interwoven with the existing fabric of the city.

Scale of Development Opportunity

In this proposal, the developable area is estimated to be approximately 28 ha in 6-7 different parcels, approximately as follows:

- 4 ha in 3 parcels to the north of the station
- 12.25 ha at the sports pitches and Guinness lands
- 6.6 ha at the HSE lands
- 3.4 ha to the north of Kennedy Park
- 2 ha south of Colbert Station

Residential Population

Colbert Station Quarter could be home to a population of approximately 5,250 in 1,200 residential units with an additional 1,300 student beds. Heights would vary from 3-9 storeys. Densities would vary from 171/ha to the immediate north east of the station, to 52/ha at locations adjacent to existing low density residential development.

Commercial and Other Uses

The new quarter could accommodate 39,000m² offices, with 24,000m² to the immediate north of the station, and 10,000m² to the south. An additional 5,000m² of office accommodation could be provided at the central square at the heart of the Guinness/Sports lands. It is proposed that this new Quarter could incorporate 11,400m² of enterprise units, provided to the north of the station, with immediate access to the railway line and Roxboro Road.

There could be 7,500m² of civic/community building/uses, provided at Colbert Station Square as well as at the heart of the Guinness/Sports lands including a community building, as well as café to the north of Kennedy Park. A hotel with bars, restaurant, etc. is proposed at the north

side of Colbert Station Square (10,000m²). Significant additional education facilities (30,000m²) could be provided for food science/research on the HSE lands.

Phasing and Potential to Unlock Early-Win Projects

It is considered that potential could be delivered on some lands subject to unlocking access at the suggested locations lands to the north of Kennedy Park, eastern end of the HSE site, and the lands between Carey's Road and the existing rail alignment). Potential early wins could include the CIÉ/Bus Eireann lands to the immediate north and south of the alignment, as well as at the Guinness lands enabling delivery of significant commercial office & enterprise units, as well as significant numbers of residential units of varying scale and densities.

Apart from the CIÉ and Bus Eireann depots, where there is some exploration of potential (it is recognised that this land may never be available for development), all proposals are for land that is currently vacant. Phasing and timing will be influenced by stakeholder consultation, and a participatory approach will be of major benefit in the longer term.

Piotr Mach

'A Liveable and Vibrant Place - The Colbert Station Quarter'



The Colbert Station Quarter has the potential to transform Limerick city into a liveable and vibrant place where people want to live, work and spend time.

Sustainable transport has been prioritised: walking first, then cycling, public transport, deliveries and then private cars. The proposed Limerick Skyline gives a chance to give up driving in favour of cycling and exploring the Colbert Quarter from above. This new area of Limerick with the Central Park, green routes and paths, community gardens, green roof terraces has people and nature at the heart of its creation.

Scale of Development Opportunity

This proposal has looked at an extended area beyond the Colbert Station Area to demonstrate high-level architectural concepts and possibilities at this early stage. On this basis the area incorporates 80ha, which is an area greater than the Colbert Station area.

Residential Population

It is estimated that the extended Colbert Station Quarter could be home to up to 26,000 people in up to 6,000 homes (incl. 3,000 apartments around proposed Central Park) and 2,000 shared accommodation (within proposed two education campuses). The density is proposed at 100 homes/ha.

People's experience has been taken into account to create a human-scale urban design. From the existing low-rise houses at Carey's Road, through the proposed mid-scale affordable houses, to 6-7 storey apartment quarters around the proposed Central Park – this mixed-use development could present an opportunity to create a dense city quarter with a variety of accommodation and activities.

Tall buildings at the ground floor are shaped in a human scale way to strengthen and activate the street edge.

Different amenities and diversity are key. The new neighbourhood will have an overlap of functions throughout the day, so that the area is active from morning to night, engendering an atmosphere of community and protection.

Commercial and Other Uses

The following is a breakdown of potential non-residential missed uses that could be incorporated: Commercial – 6% (80,000m²); Employment – 5% (60,000m²); Educational – 5% (60,000m²); Recreation/Leisure – 5% (60,000m²); Healthcare – 3% (40,000m²); Cultural/Public – 2% (25,000m²).

Phasing and Potential to Unlock Early-Win Projects

There is potential to explore a number of key projects as a potential early win – subject to feasibility and stakeholder engagement and agreement. This could include a pedestrian and cycle way (biodiversity corridor).

Merritt Bucholz 'Cities Thrive on Connectivity'

Scale of Development Opportunity

The developable area set out in our proposal includes the lands around Colbert Station, currently in CIÉ ownership; the lands in the ownership of the HSE and currently partially used by the HSE; and the lands to the south of the station commonly known as Caledonian Park. The most complex issue is the connections between these lands – they are currently connected only by the Roxboro Road (an old artery of the city) which includes a bridge over the train lines. These north-south links and connections need improvement to connect people living within the city better to each other and to other proximate parts of the city.

A Central Park (existing Caledonian Park) could also be created. This would activate Caledonian Park, attract people into the area, and connect with Colbert Station.

Future phases could include, but dependant on feasibility and stakeholder engagement and agreement, underground train line Limerick-Foyes; first apartment blocks with commercial ground floor around Central Park (1,000 homes); recreation area over the Colbert Station; redevelopment of Colbert Plaza and living quarters in front of train station; development of site along railway and Guinness lands and potential to develop a first section of Limerick Skyline to connect train station with HSE land, and open up and rejuvenate underutilised and key parts of the Colbert Station Quarter.



This issue of inner city connectivity is significant in the context of new residential quarters being developed because cities thrive on connections. Improving connectivity between these sites will require significant infrastructural investment, carefully and strategically planned and executed.

Residential Population

The project should be mainly residential plus supporting facilities, for example schools, parks, high quality grocery stores, mobility hubs, and high quality public transportation, all with the primary aim of supporting high density residential use.

Neighbourhoods and communities should be able to be built and created. Density should be similar to Georgian Limerick which provides excellent precedent for Limerick's ultimate density. Heights should be mostly 4 storeys in order that most units will serve as de-facto walk-ups, like most apartments in the EU. All apartments should be accessible via a lift, however each apartment should be very accessible via staircases, which should be imaginatively deployed to increase access and convenience, as well as create spaces where people can meet each other. The total number of lifts should be minimised in order to reduce overall costs and maintenance costs.

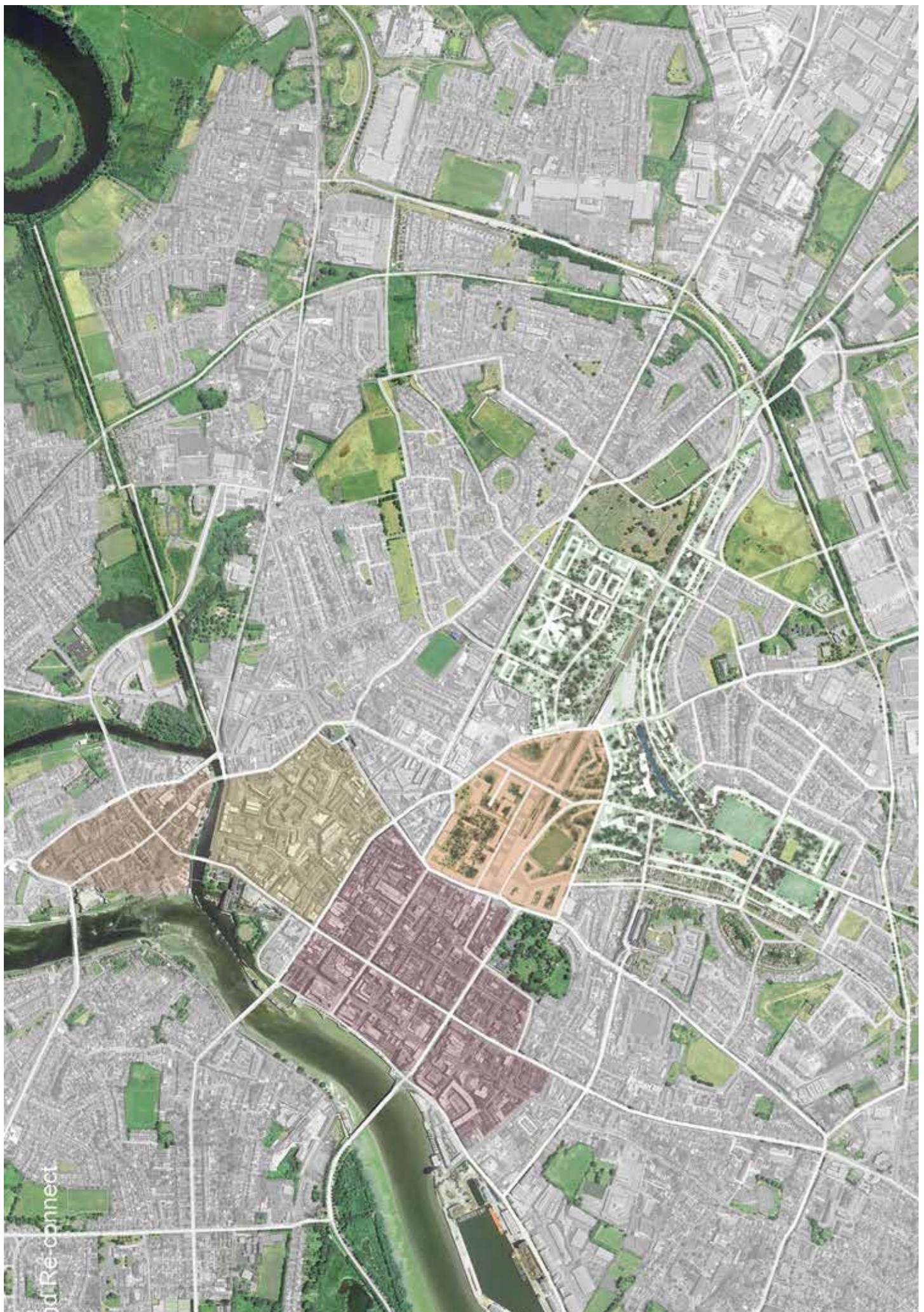
Phasing and Potential to Unlock Early-Win Projects

The HSE-owned lands seem to offer the best possibility for early development as they are in single ownership, they have never been developed upon and have been in their current use for over 200 years. Key to transformation of cities is the transformation of public imagination and how people feel and think about a place.

The Caledonian parklands are an equally good place to start simply because of the concentration of sports facilities to the southern portion of the site. Its connectedness to the south and southwestern part of the city via the 'green-way' of the train lines, and the potential to create a new development around a revitalised public transportation and goods transportation artery.

The communities around Caladonian Park are separated by the park, and the stitching together of these communities would be an important and necessary aspect of developing the park. As a recreational green space within Limerick it could be made much more accessible to the wider city, and in that context it must work much harder, supporting a diversity of users, while adding layers of sport and recreation functionality so that its use-demand intensifies. This will build a more diverse community of users and participants, who take part in a wide range of sports facilities. This broadened and charged sports centre would have significant impact in terms of sparking social innovation and societal change.

The impact on the economy would be immediate with long-term jobs closely linked with the University of Limerick and other third level and second level sports training and education mandates. Recent graduates would be encouraged to live and work in Limerick city centre because of the high level of access to outstanding sports facilities, and this would in turn attract more innovation around sports and in public health.



5. Design Review Proposals

Grafton Architects

Aspirations

This site at the very heart of Limerick city, comprising some 50 ha is complex and challenging. It is largely inaccessible, practically invisible. There are many stakeholders and communities which have/need a voice.

The site presents a major opportunity for Limerick's future, potentially an exemplar for urban development combining the best aspects of urban and rural characters, to nurture its present and future citizens. It presents opportunities to drive an inclusive conversation with all of the stakeholders and citizens whose futures depend on this site.

A City and its Hinterland

We are captivated by the beauty of the surrounding landscape and how this is still present, and felt deep within the city, a unique and vital ingredient that can play a more fundamental role in the imagining of Limerick. For the first time the City and County Development Plans integrate, presenting a real opportunity to strategically combine urban and rural aspects, inspired by the unique natural and cultural qualities of this place.

Cities within a City

We have responded to the rich urban history of Limerick, the manner in which the city grew through the ages, its distinct quarters of individual character: English Town / Irish Town / Newtown Pery.

The Nature of the City

Acknowledging the nature of the city and its hinterland, we have adopted two basic approaches:

1. Consolidation of the urban fabric around Colbert Station creating a new urban quarter: an Open Citadel
2. Re-vitalisation of the expansive green territory adjacent to the railway creating a new landscape of support for the city life: an urban Commonage.

Within these poles, which overlap and connect, we have adopted the following themes:

Intensification of the urban condition around the train station could provide and expand the city's living, working, education, social and cultural environments. Proposing a future where nature and city are more intensively bound together (connected to the Wild Atlantic Way, the Shannon Estuary, the Clare Hills).



Re-vitalisation of recreative and natural landscapes as connectors, embedded in the city, expanding the provision for sport and recreation, creating spaces for improvised and opportunistic uses.

Repair and Reconnect by making visible territories that were previously lost, creating new openings and connections, greenways, cycle and pedestrian pathways. Joining up separate fragments of city, drawing peripheral communities nearer the centre of a living city.

Productive Landscape / Landscape as Connector. Turning wasteland into productive ground - Combining movement/recreation/energy production/food growing.

Proposals

This site is on the 'shoreline' where agricultural land meets the city. The organic historic field pattern merged with the geometric urban block pattern of the built city sharing a similar scale of habitation. This proposal retains this proximity of landscape and city.

A process of "urban acupuncture" led to a strategy of adding and not subtracting. Existing communities and facilities are maintained, new ones added. The outcome

will act as a resource and catalyst for future intensification.

The Open Citadel

This new urban quarter is bounded by Parnell Street, Lower Careys Road, Roxboro Road and Upper William Street, similar in scale to the existing identifiable quarters of Limerick, Englishtown, Irishtown, Newtown Pery. Colbert Station sits in the middle, surrounded by new and existing buildings which intensify and animate this new quarter. It has a new distinctive edge to the East addressing the 'urban commonage'.

Colbert Square

Colbert Square in front of the station, is proposed to be re-imagined as more enclosed and environmentally comfortable, with new urban blocks that reinforce the Parnell Street frontage, stitching into the existing city. Connections between Parnell Street and Hyde Road could be realigned on axis with Upper Mallow Street. The triangular plot to the east of Peoples Park would be built - reinforcing the park edges.

Station Place

It is proposed that a new east-west street which connects Parnell Street with the new urban parkland, is formed by building over the

planned Bus Station. Workspaces or living spaces are elevated to form the Bus Station canopy with light coming from above. New educational buildings form the northern frontage of this new street. Bus access in and out of the bus station from Mulgrave Street would be separated from this new pedestrianised street.

School Parade

It is proposed that a new north-south street and footbridge over the railway lines connects Mulgrave Street to Jackman Park, reinstates the railway bridge over Lower Careys Road and continues on to connect to Caledonian Park and Pearse Stadium. This bridge would provide direct and walkable access from the school to the playing fields and sports facilities, as well as a safe cycle route for students on their way to school.

Railway Row

The new east-west street south of Colbert Station would provide access to new 'Living Edge' housing blocks and to the station carpark. This transforms the south edge of the railway station and forms a 'knuckle' social space at the entry to Jackman Park.

Gateway to The City

The Urban Commonage is addressed by new distinctive buildings which form a

new arrival gateway to the heart of the city. This is a significant architectural and urban element within the tradition of Limerick which is known for historic gateways, said to be seventeen in total. This gateway is formed at the junction of Careys Road and Roxboro Road, where Roxboro Road crosses the railway lines. We are proposing that this bridge be enhanced or supplemented by a second more generous bridge.

Urban Commonage

This new east-west urban park would make a new connection to the heart of the City. A weave of entry points, paths, pedestrian and cycle bridges over the railway and Childers Road, would connect this park with existing and new communities of workers and inhabitants, a new ecosystem that ties into the necklace of green spaces already existing around Limerick. Community allotments, leisure gardens, walks, running tracks and cycle paths, would provide safe places for play, outdoor entertainment and cultural events. This would be a working landscape used to attenuate rainwater, to purify the air, enrich the ecosystem. The Commonage would be occupied and formed by new live-work buildings, by existing and new health institutions, actively enjoying a relationship to these parklands simultaneously providing passive supervision of these civic amenities.



Limerick Greenway

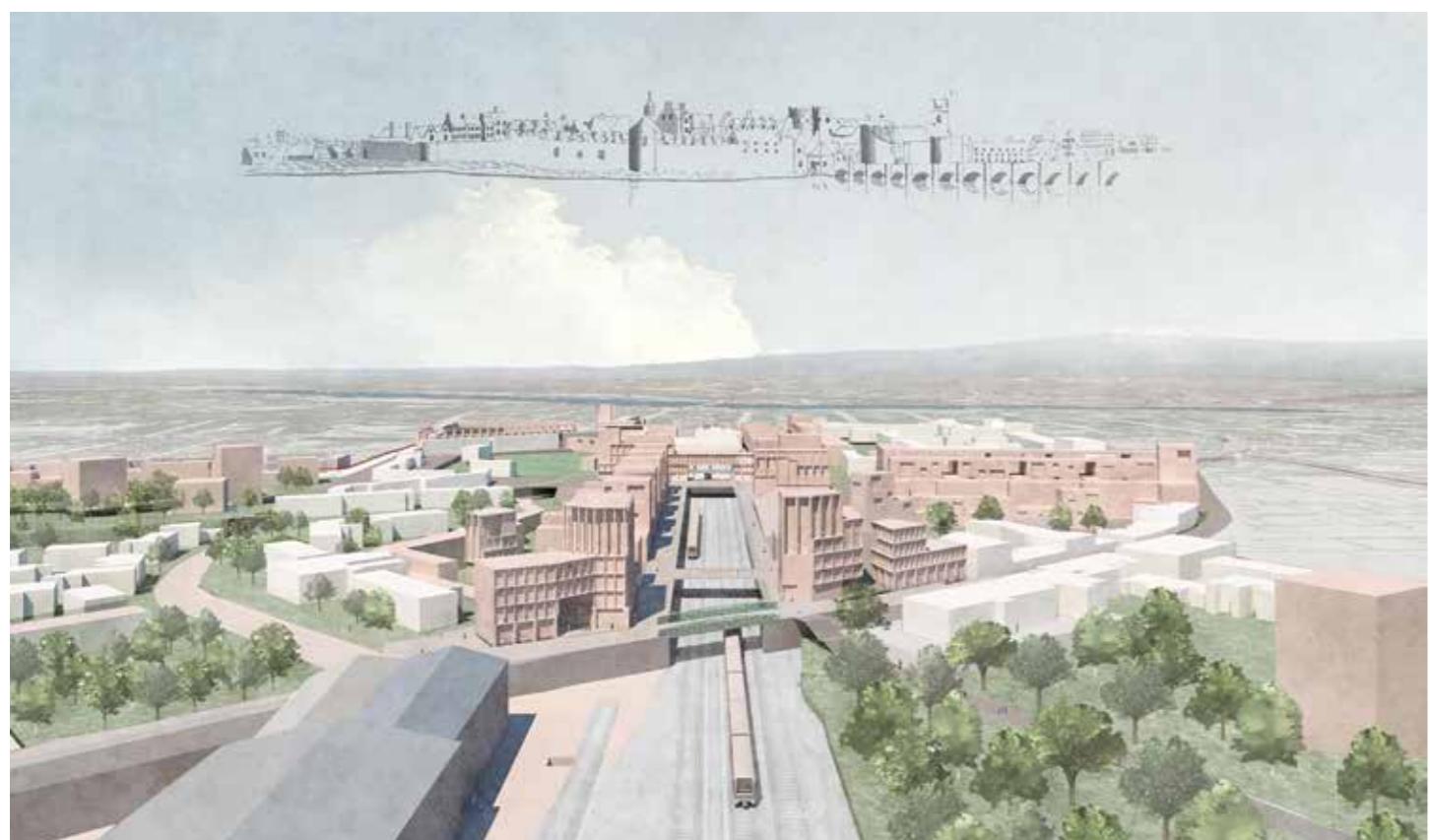
Limerick Greenway

We envisage that the new greenway would transform the disused railway line from Colbert Station to Foynes, a beautifully landscaped strip of ground which further animates and gives access to the sports fields and parks and anticipates the future re-instatement of the line.

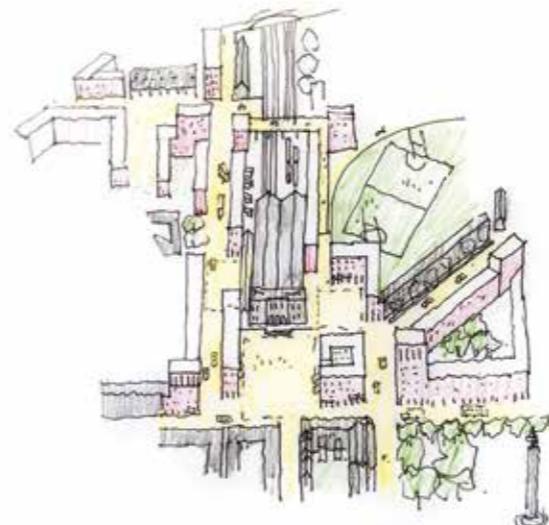
Living Edges and Urban Villas

Thin linear buildings and mews lanes form new edges to playing fields and wasteland.

These buildings preserve the privacy of the existing terraces of houses providing a secure, active, social edge to new sports and parkland spaces, inhabiting with dwelling, working environments, community facilities, men's sheds, halls for gathering, childcare, education facilities linked to the outdoors and the natural environment. By contrast, taller 'urban villas' are located in the bigger landscape where scale and privacy are not an issue.



New Gateway to the City



Intensification

An Open Citadel

New public squares, streets and laneways extending the city centre with a new quarter.

Station Place

Colbert Square

Railway Row

School Parade and bridge to playing fields

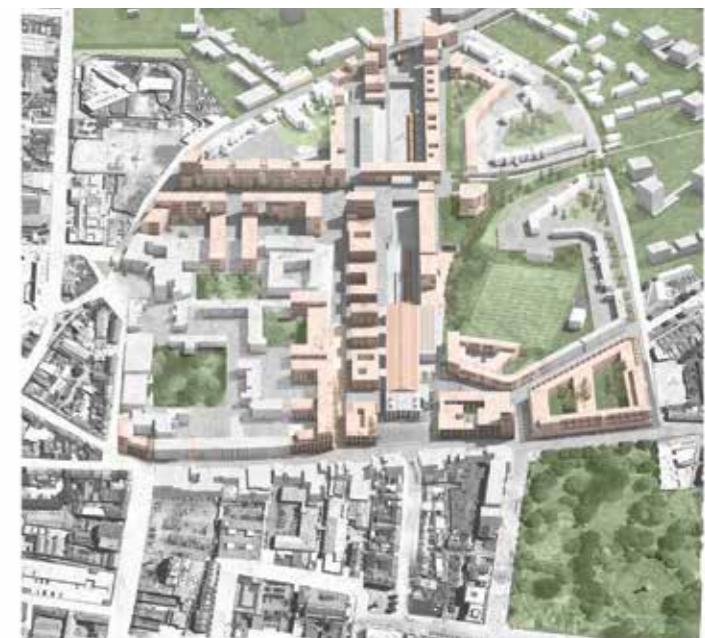
Urban Commonage

Open Spaces and Territories working as: Urban Recreation Grounds/Parks/ Food Production-Allotments/Sport/Ecologies/ Water Swails and Attenuation/Play.

New Gateway to the City
Living Edges

A Mixed-use Framework

The proposal is at once architectural, infrastructural, social and cultural. Within this framework we envisage many possibilities for the mixed delivery of social, affordable and



private housing. Our ambition would be that each of these categories would be intermixed in the Open Citadel on one hand, and in the proposals to reinforce the Urban Commonage.

Adaptability

Thinking of the building for the future, the question of sustainability, and embodied carbon, may demand that certain structures be designed to be adaptable, in a way which allows them to accommodate a range of uses and activities over their lifetime. This we would see as crucial to a living functioning city.

Start Now

The proposals act in the form of acupuncture on the existing site, proposing no demolition. Work could begin now even at a small scale. A step by step approach will build up to the delivery of a visionary new inclusive piece of city generating excitement and enthusiasm within the community.



imagery l-r:

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Sean O'Laoire, MOLA Architecture

1. Introduction and Vision

This is a summary of a “high-level” review, respectfully offered as a contribution to the formulation of a holistic vision and planning framework for Colbert Station Quarter, which would be shared by all stakeholders and the public.

It’s title : “Leading Limerick -Limerick Leading” can be seen to embody an ambition that we believe the planning and development process of the Quarter should have.

A bold integrated, ambitious and co-ordinated strategy could unlock the catalytic potential of the Colbert Station Quarter to progressively release connect and enhance the capacity of the historic city, and its unique natural and cultural assets, to render Limerick a uniquely desirable place to live in, visit, recreate, work, and invest.

The planning philosophy, and the design and development process could underpin Limerick’s strategic socio-economic objectives in a national and international context resonant of it’s brand: Limerick- Atlantic Edge, European Embrace. The process could and should also embody the spirit and intent of the New Limerick Charter (2013) engaging all signatories in the realisation of a vision predicated on a shared ambition that the Quarter could be an exemplar, in the manner in which Freiburg in Germany and Aarhus in Denmark are now bench marks of innovative, egalitarian, and sustainable urban design.

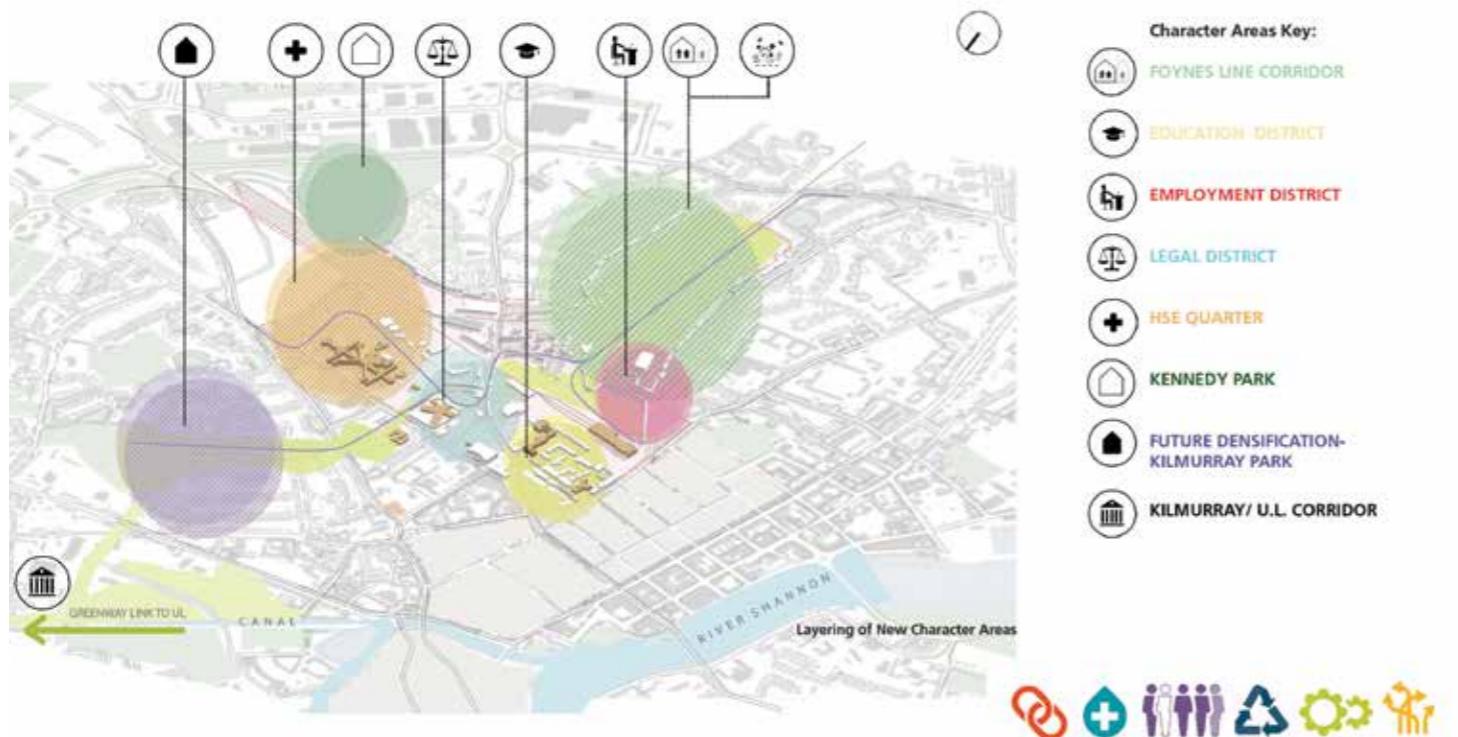
2. Context

Colbert Station was built in 1849, two years after “Black 47” –The peak year of the Great Famine. Preceded by the construction of an asylum, jail, and barracks, it became an element of an institutional precinct on the eastern edge of the Georgian City, in close proximity to Irishtown and other layers of Limericks evolution , which included the horrific settlements of the “underclasses”.

While it enjoys a spatially strategic location as a “Gateway” its environs are severed by tracks, and are somewhat amorphous, lacking structured connectivity to it’s eastern, northern, and southern suburbs.

LCCC is committed to promoting and accommodating a projected population of (min.) 100,000, within the City Boundaries, by 2040. It is also embarked on the planning of a comprehensive Sports and Recreation Framework. It is presumed that any displacement of sports fields will be addressed in this context. Iarnod Eireann has published indicative suburban rail proposals centred on Colbert Station. This offering is predicated on the realisation of such a service, and it is on the assumption that LCCC will seek to optimise land use and promote appropriate residential densities.

Limerick 2030’s mission is also relevant in the “bigger picture”, specifically the Cleeve’s Riverside Quarter.



3. Underpinning the Vision: Framework Principles

Principles:

Unlocking the potential of the specific properties in coherent manner, and **Connecting** Colbert Station Quarter to the historic city core and the Eastern and Southern suburbs is an essential and fundamental strategic objective.

This connectivity and mobility-focused proposal sets out a development framework which would be founded on the following principles:

1. Health
2. Inclusivity
3. Resilience
4. Productivity
5. Adaptability

The following summarises the principles which should underpin the planning and design process:

Healthy City

The Quarter should aspire to be an exemplar and manifestation of a holistic understanding of public health promotion, founded on the quality of the environment, the communal recreational, educational, and cultural infrastructure, shared by multi generational communities.

Inclusive City

The Quarter should embrace and integrate a diversity of classes and age groups, and facilitate the integration of diverse uses, from home working to business enterprises, community care, recreational, and educational facilities. Digital data sharing and "smart" technologies would underpin communality and quality of life.

Resilient City

The Quarter should aspire to be substantially capable of managing its own waste water, waste disposal and recycling and be an exemplar of ecological and bio-diversity best practice. Critically, it should aspire to produce all its own energy, with the capacity to export to the grid.

Productive City

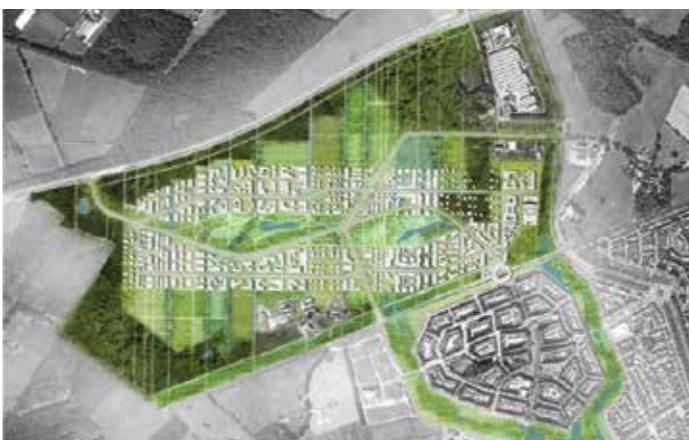
The Quarter should aspire to produce 30% of its food requirements, using hydroponics and communal allotments. Its economy and prosperity will be sustained by embracing innovators, entrepreneurs, and small businesses, and be responsive to the growing numbers of people working from home.

Adaptive City

The Colbert Station Quarter, in its evolution, should be capable of adapting to a diversity of housing typologies, social spaces, and work places, as well as integrating private and public sector investment and involvement.

A Catalyst of Connectivity

A reimagined Colbert Quarter will be the catalyst for creating new connections,



greenways and distinct character areas within the quarter and its linked environs

4. Towards a New Quarter

An Adaptable Grid

The discipline of establishing a grid for this new urban quarter, builds on the legacy of Georgian Limerick and other historical and contemporary precedents. Illustrated here is a framework plan for a new urban quarter, and Brainport Smart District (BSD) in Amsterdam by our colleagues UN Studio.

It rejoices in integrating the principles proposed to underpin a future Colbert Station Quarter and in being a living laboratory.



top row:
1&2. The Brainport Smart District by UN Studios in Amsterdam, illustrates how a grid offers a planning and development framework, hosting and integrating a diversity of mixed uses and architectural expression.

bottom row:
3&4. Dutch Urban Solutions, Brno, further illustrates how such a framework could embody and express the principles underpinning this submission.



Adaptable Urban Blocks

This study, (Dutch Urban Solutions Brno) is offered to further illustrate the rationale of the adaptable grid, which underpins our strategy. The brief for each block would reflect all of the principles cited resulting in urban blocks, which contain diverse residential urban typologies, ensuring social inclusivity in addition to the provision of workplaces, recreation and social infrastructure and capacity for food production.

Experiencing Colbert Station Quarter

- Imaginative exploitation of the grid offers the potential to integrate a diverse range of residential typologies with related private, semiprivate and communal spaces.
- A diversity of uses and residents, within a dominantly residential area, will provide security, animation, focal points and places for informal gathering.

- Colbert Station Quarter could become a destination for discerning food shoppers, while promoting Limerick as a healthy city and as a producer of quality local produce.
- Sustainable landscapes, which will facilitate food production and enhanced biodiversity will also induce communality and seasonal aromatic and sensory experiences.

Short term Actions:

Serious consideration could also be given to the potential of the mental health facility to be adapted for further cultural/future proof/residential/community uses. Equally, consideration should be given to interim land uses, or "meantime uses" such as the Foynes Line Greenway, and perhaps a prototype hydroponics project installation, a photo-voltaic array on the roof of Colbert Station, and food fairs in the goods shed on the Roxboro Road junction. Such relatively low cost initiatives could begin the process if progressively integrating the area into the "Mental Map" of the City.

Phasing:

Inevitably the availability of lands will determine phasing. Phasing should be best considered on the context of an integrated Masterplan, to ensure that the elements which are interdependent are realised in parallel.

Density/Use Mix:

For the purposes of this exercise, we set out here an indicative calculation of development densities for the Quarter.

These assume that there is a dominance of residential development in the conjectural framework illustrated in Fig 1: 80% residential/ 20% other. It also assumes that 25% (min) available lands area is required for open space and infrastructure.

The residential density yields offered here are predicated on the assumption that 50 units/ha would be a minimum density target. We therefore offer calculations based on 50 units/ha and 80 units/ha, which at this stage of the process should inform calculations of development yield.

A Sustainable Urban Quarter

The proposed development of the Colbert Station Quarter lands, founded on a clear vision and robust principles, offers Limerick a unique opportunity to consolidate its historic urban core while mediating and connecting its northern, eastern, and southern suburbs and the University of Limerick. In so doing, it offers Limerick the challenge to lead and develop an urban quarter that would be a national and international exemplar of informed and sustainable urban design.





Summary

This ‘high-level’ design review is respectfully offered as a contribution to public debate and, critically, the formulation of a design and development brief. The founding principles and strategic framework are offered to facilitate this objective. It is not to be interpreted as a ‘masterplan’.

Equally, architectural imagery and reference projects are offered purely to assist in articulating the founding and strategic principles. Assumptions about available development lands are at this stage a ‘guesstimate’, informed by an assumption that a masterplan will be required. This Plan will need to consider the area holistically including issues such as whether suburban rail/tram service will be provided and potential impact on land take for a transport/green corridor.

This ‘high-level’ review offers a contribution to the development of a brief, predicated on clear and robust principles that would underpin the design and development process. The framework offered at this point is provisional as it is premature to establish what quantum of lands will be available, just as it premature to establish when and if a suburban rail/tram service will be provided.

However, the design and development process offer great opportunities for:

- Delivery of affordable housing
- Creating a socially diverse community
- Sharing a quality public realm and community facilities
- Integrating enterprise, employment and retail uses
- Research, innovation and collaboration.

For the purposes of this exercise, it is assumed that it will be 80% residential with 20% for other uses. Conservatively, it could host a population of between 6,000-10,000 people.

The proposed development of the Colbert Station Quarter lands, founded on a clear vision and robust principles, offers Limerick a unique opportunity to consolidate its historic urban core while mediating and connecting its northern, eastern, and southern suburbs and the University of Limerick. In so doing, it offers Limerick the challenge to lead and develop an urban quarter that would be a national and international exemplar of informed and sustainable urban design.



Anne Kiernan FRIAI

Introduction

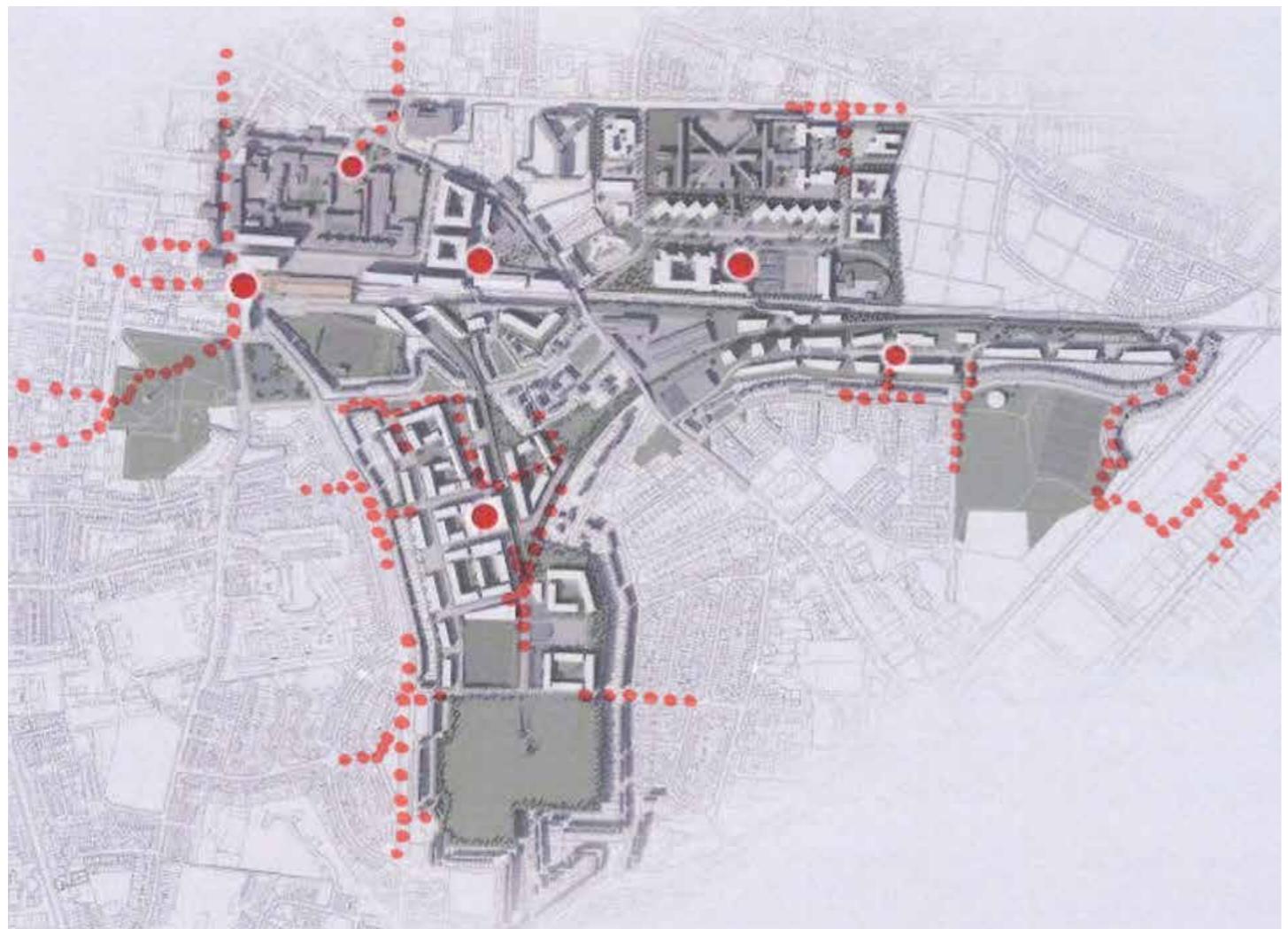
The brief for the Colbert Station Design review refers to a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a new city quarter which will act as an exemplar for urban regeneration in Limerick. Limerick City and County Council, the HSE and CIE have come together to assist the Land Development Agency create this unparalleled opportunity, which aims to create an ambitious vision for sustainable urban development in Limerick.

Key Themes

The key themes, which emerged after the briefing, are inherent in the city and not confined to the designated site. This process offers an opportunity to repair some of the fragmentation from which the city suffers on many levels. The urban structure, while still strong in the Georgian quarter, has elsewhere suffered from very low density planning, over wide roads, dereliction, vacancy and vehicular traffic dominance (the latter issues also

affecting the Georgian core). Changing the culture of the city to provide a pedestrian friendly environment is also a key theme, as is linkage – providing connections, which physically and metaphorically join disconnected and isolated communities. Landscape and biodiversity, essential to sustainability, are also forces for health and healing, part of the process of repair.

Sustainability is woven into all matters – whether we are looking at energy generation or conservation, drainage, life cycle costings, materials specification or the creation of sustainable communities, holistic solutions, which recognise the criticality of the threat to our environment, must now underlie everything we do. Lastly, all thinking about the city is predicated on the superb work carried out by SAUL, which has illuminated multiple aspects of the local context, heritage and character of Limerick. Our aim has been to build on this understanding, to support and create places for communities to live, work and flourish.



Site Analysis

The designated site is ostensibly very large. It contains lands that are vacant or underused, but also existing homes and active uses, a thriving educational quarter with historic roots. There are other institutional uses, and operational and logistical requirements pertaining to the HSE, CIÉ and the education sector, among others. Much of the available land is inaccessible, or severed by the active or protected future railway alignment. The local context – historic buildings, fragments of industrial heritage, history, local

materials, workmanship and community activity – varies dramatically from one part of the site to the next. This has framed the characterisation of the land and fundamentally influenced the response, which changes from one area to another.

Strategic Framework

Adjacent to the station, a need to create enclosure and protection from the prevailing winds, as well as opportunities to intensify use and instigate true transport oriented development was identified. High density, mixed use development in the immediate

vicinity of the station, with bars, cafes, a hotel, and offices proposed, as well as enterprise units providing employment, with offices and apartment living overhead, and a significant student population, all contribute to a create vibrant living city quarter. Landmark buildings, high quality architecture, and pedestrian priority tree lined streets ensure a pleasant environment for all to enjoy. New pedestrian bridges across the railway line would provide connectivity and accessibility for the adjoining lands south and east of the station.

The beautiful parkland site occupied by the HSE offers opportunity to build on the horticulture and food science traditions of

the city by working with the existing third level sector in Limerick to provide teaching space, laboratories, medicinal gardens, an arboretum and student accommodation, while also coexisting and accommodating the needs of the HSE at this important health service site.

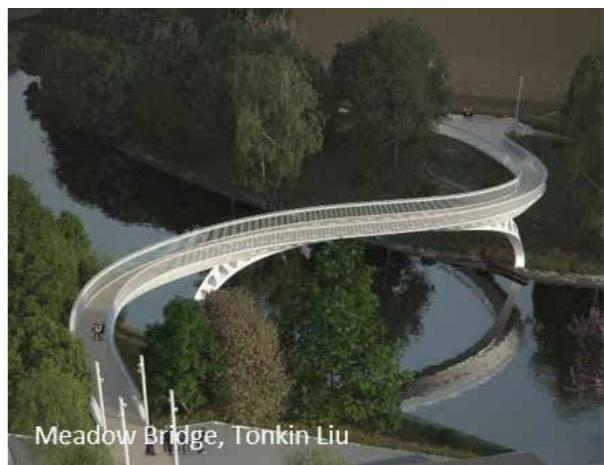
An opportunity for enhancement of the existing environment presents at Hyde Road, where consolidation of the carriageway permits creation of a linear park. Similarly, traffic controls at Parnell Road limiting access to public transport and taxis, enable widening of pedestrian pavements, facilitating ease of movement to and from the vibrant Colbert Square quarter.





The lands south of Carey's Road (including the Guinness lands) offer an opportunity to develop a new quarter, significantly increasing the existing prevailing residential densities to provide a vibrant, sustainable urban environment. This new quarter could be designed around a green parkland route, with a mixed-use urban core providing civic, commercial and retail uses, thus reimagining and enhancing the existing amenity value of this land. The active nature of this important green lung for the city would be retained and existing cross community links enhanced, through physical linkage of the neighbouring communities, the enhancement of the existing soccer pitches, and the provision of additional sports and community garden facilities.

An Unparalleled Opportunity for Limerick
 The proposed Colbert Station Quarter, with its rich mix of character and heritage, presents an unparalleled opportunity to reimagine the centre of Limerick city. This new vision can provide affordable housing in new and existing communities, with a mix of uses including education, leisure, local enterprise and commercial office, hotels, bars and cafes. High quality public realm is common to all of the five identified character areas. Residential accommodation is a rich variety of higher-density accommodation focused on the station, student accommodation, and smaller scaled development interwoven with the existing fabric of the city.



clockwise l-r:
 1. Military Hospital, Antwerp. Adaptive reuse of a 19th century former military hospital for residential and community use. Masterplan by Achtergael Architects. Photo: Alamy.

2. Future pedestrian/cycle bridges should be the subject of architectural competitions, aiming for high quality design outcomes as in the case of Meadow Bridge by Tonkin Liu Architects

3. Landmark buildings provide focal points as well as facilitating orientation and a sense of place, such as Cinnamon Tower apartments, Hamburg, by Bolles+Wilson Architects, Photo: Christian Richters/VIEW.

4. Het Funen in Amsterdam, by Frits van Dongen of de Architecten Cie, is an example of high quality, shared public space, contributing to the development of community in high density living. Photo: Ernst van Raaphorst.



Piotr Mach, eml Architects

My design philosophy for the Colbert Station Quarter might be described in 2 words:

Connect and Grow

The presented vision for the Colbert Quarter discusses the **Connectivity** in three main aspects:

1. Social interactions (connectivity between people)
2. Green living and connectivity with Nature
3. Communication/ Transportation Connections

Social Interactions

The current situation with the Coronavirus pandemic has re-oriented our relationship to the outside world and even to each other. Online communication creates more connections, but unfortunately also a greater distance between people. We will need to focus on rebuilding social interactions in our society when the current situation is over.

The pandemic has also presented opportunities like more flexible working and an appreciation for nature and outdoor activities. It gives a hope that by designing more green areas, human-scaled public realm and attractive streets in Limerick will help to change this city into a liveable place where people want to be and to come together again.

Connectivity with Nature

Today we are facing the real problem of global warming and climate change. Limerick can respond to this in an active way and become one of the cities of the future. This proposal encourages ecological integrity and biodiversity, protection and enhancement of the natural heritage. Urban bladeless wind turbines, solar panels and roof bio cultivation are common on building rooftops, encouraging sustainable energy and small-scale farming.

An eco-city is a healthy city. The human natural environment is different from where and how we are living today. The isolation from the green environment is not natural for us. Increasing the amount of green spaces and planting more trees in Limerick would be a huge improvement, also beneficial for future generations.

Communication / Transport

This is a transport-oriented proposal, where all residential, business, educational, health and leisure spaces are within walkable distance of public transport. Walking, cycling, e-scooter, bus, tram, rail and car-pooling are prioritised. Encouraging residents to walk or cycle not only reduces carbon emissions but also builds a safer environment, bring streets to life, improves the health of people. It is not necessary to completely ban cars, but they have to be prioritised last.

Also in a wider context, one of the ideas is to better connect Limerick areas such as Southill or Garryowen and to connect them through the Colbert site. This could involve bridging over the Limerick to Dublin railway, which is a significant divider cutting through the city centre.

The option to re-open the old Foynes railway line might be considered. To free up the land the potential for underground train lines could be explored. It would also help Limerick to connect with the Wild Atlantic Way and create an additional opportunity for tourists to come and explore the city.

Implementation of these principles could release Limerick's real potential for **Growing**. This is a multicultural city. It gives a huge advantage in terms of how much we might learn from each other by sharing our living and working space, sharing our experience and simply cultivating kindness, empathy and humanity. Limerick has a potential to grow in numbers, but it also has to grow in quality.

Finally, this might have an effect in Limerick transforming into a modern city, where citizens are conscious of the value of their home place, appreciate it and care about shared neighbourhood. As a result, Limerick would become cleaner, safer and just a better place, where people want to spend time.

To reflect these ideas, **5 core design strategies** have been proposed:

1. This could involve bridging over the railway to connect the north and south of the city. Colbert Station Quarter could be the connector between isolated parts of Limerick.
2. A new central area could serve the entire city and visitors.
3. Availability of a wide range of sport facilities and diversity of amenities.
4. Creation of a second city centre.
5. Explore the potential of creating a modern educational campus that could include city-centre schools.



RIAI Design Review for Colbert Station Area Quarter, Limerick



RIAI Design Review for Colbert Station Area Quarter, Limerick

In relation to the points above, the proposed development has the potential to explore:

- A new bicycle and pedestrian bridge, which could be a 'Limerick Skyline'. Soft infrastructure such as this above the railway could work as a connector between the north and south of the city and also as the pedestrian and cycle way from the Colbert Station Plaza up to Kennedy Park (with an option to extend it to the City East Plaza at Ballysimon and further to UL). It could also work as an open public space, where people can meet and enjoy exploring the Colbert Quarter from above. Such a development has the potential to retain some of the existing industrial railway infrastructure, such as gantry crane, where viewing platform and mini exhibition space would be incorporated to help to explore the land from the top.
- There might be potential to partner with the proposed Innovation & Science Campus (currently HSE site) as both educational centres could be connected via proposed Skyline.
- A new sport & recreation area could be developed over the Colbert Station which could be used for a variety of sports such as mini soccer pitches, basketball courts, skate park, outdoor climbing wall. This platform deck with sports facilities might also serve the proposed new Education Campus at Killmallock Road and could connect to the wider Colbert Station Quarter. A bus station, train station and the proposed bicycle garage could be located underneath.

People exploring Wild Atlantic Way would have another reason to visit Limerick.



- A possible remodelling of the Colbert Station Plaza with Bus Eireann moved to the other side of the station. The station forecourt could be softened and enlivened with more green areas, trees, benches and bicycle storage solutions. The re-imagined square could become the starting point of the proposed Limerick Skyline.

A new linear park could be created from Colbert Station Plaza to Baker Place, creating further linkages.

- We propose a mid-scale housing density area – a ‘kiss point’ between the existing and proposed houses. New houses to be a mix of 3-storey affordable duplexes and town houses with an interactive semi-public space between dwellings for the local communities. The space could feature green social areas, playgrounds, picnic tables, crazy golf, outdoor gym etc.
- Consider converting HSE land into an Innovation & Science Campus including innovation centre, business centre and

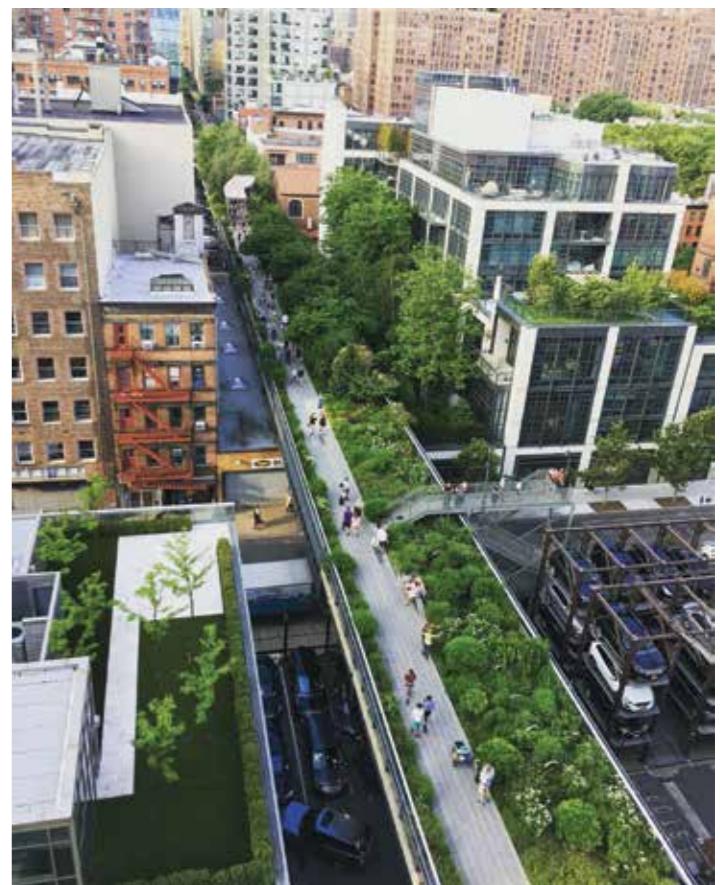
sports facilities, all within an existing mature park. The option to convert the St. Joseph’s hospital into live/work units might also be considered. A new HSE location could be the north-west part of this very attractive site.

This area would offer family sized housing, close to daycare, schools and supports.

- A new Central Park could be created with high-density living quarters around the edge of the park - a new ‘Green Heart’ of Limerick. It could also be considered to convert the old Foynes railway line into a bio-diversity corridor – an attractive pedestrian and bicycle way connecting the Colbert Station with Raheen. The next phases might focus on building 6-7 storey apartments around the park. Internal semi-private courtyards, green roofs, garden terraces and commercial GF units facing the park would create a very attractive living and recreation area in the city centre.



An example of modular housing: Rebel, Amsterdam by architect Studioninedots. Image: MIR, Proloog



The High Line is a 1.45-mile-long elevated linear park in New York City on a former railroad.

The modular character of the apartment quarters would allow to control density and to add more floors, or adapt floors quickly to other functions, when needed.

In summary, Colbert Station Quarter would be designed around the following principles:

- **Affordable homes**
- **Modular character of apartments**
- **Human experience is a key**
- **Streets for people, not only for cars**
- **Density at every scale**
- **Diversity of available amenities**
- **More green areas**
- **New Limerick landmark and connector**





Merritt Bucholz

The radial structure of Limerick city connects the centre to neighborhoods and habitats, it connects the city to villages and towns and, in the extending along those radial lines, accommodates centres of education, employment, and recreation.

At the University of Limerick's school of architecture, SAUL, years of studying the structure of the city has revealed the ways in which the development of the city has not complemented this structure, or through episodic development has not been able to leverage this powerful connecting geometry. Still, the radial geometry persists, traversed laterally by water; by train lines both used (Galway) and not used (Adare); by green spaces, both used and left over, unkempt and orphaned from daily functionality.

There are schools and houses, shops and playing fields, places of worship and places of celebration and community, cemeteries, hospitals, prisons, and racing

circuits. It is the connections between these things that need to be reborn, reinvented and re-purposed to serve a new living community; close to nature, with air and light, and enhancing the essential quality of equality that Limerick City proposes to Ireland. In planning a new city quarter for Limerick Colbert Quarter, these must be built close to the 55,000 homes that already exist; new communities are hopeful additions to existing communities, new communities offer complementary activities and resources to their old neighbours and connect and make new the bonds within the city, but in new and different ways.

Can we radically shift the character areas and establish a new vision for Limerick?

Housing oriented to a new public park system is necessary to place people within nature, and provide them with a vantage point for the future.



In Limerick, there is the opportunity to create a 'Green Ring Park System', capitalising on the latent potential of a park to create access to nature and health to build stronger more connected communities by transforming the existing residual green space, disused infrastructure, and new landscapes into a new public park system, the 'Green Ring'. This park system would create new walkable communities and connected neighbourhoods out of existing places that are already built. A coherent park system will realise the potential of the city's 450 acres of green spaces, and make a permeable natural system, providing opportunities for access, movement and development in areas that are not connected to the road network. This permeable natural system would link the Colbert Quarter to Dooradoyle and

Kings' Island, Thomond Park, and Cleeves Riverside Quarter.

Colbert Quarter New Public Park System

- Two large public parks are created at the HSE lands and area along the sidings to the south of the train stations
- Public forest planted to create and shape public spaces.
- Prototype high-density housing, built simultaneously to leverage large scale development.
- New construction techniques using prefabricated timber construction to build a new architecture of high quality for the future.

- The Roxboro Road is a cross cutting backbone, forming a crucial link. Roxboro Road is complex spatially in section moving up and down, and providing views across Limerick. It is an important pedestrian link as it is used by school children who live in Galvone and Kennedy Park. It is a complex functional route; along it are butcher shops, monuments, shrines, bridges, prisons and houses. It connects places that otherwise have no connection, and is the only overhead crossing of the Limerick Train lines in the city.

- A new link at the junction of the Roxboro road and Lower Carey's Road could extend across the rail yards into the HSE lands.

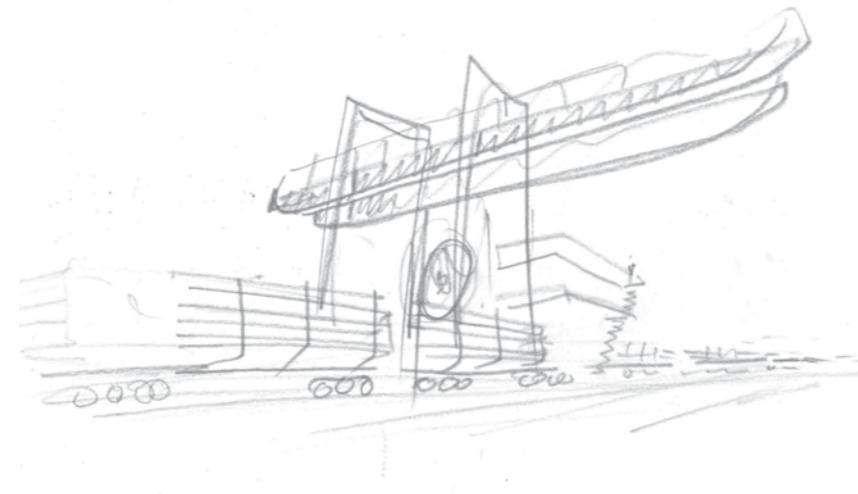
- It is proposed to consider flexible building prototypes for extended communities. These could be 6 to 10 stories and built of prefabricated timber buildings. This would create a climate-aware relaxed environment, embodying a forward-thinking approach to sustainability. Outdoor and indoor space would be connected. Low embodied carbon and locally-sourced materials are proposed such as concrete, timber and limestone. There would be extensive vegetation both on the building and across the site.

The core of the buildings would contain 'green hearts', serving as environmental cores and as a physical representation of the green island and 'environmental lung' for the new urban quarter and centres of activity and life.

- It is proposed that all buildings for all uses would be designed as low-energy demand buildings, climate controlled with minimal use of mechanical ventilation or air conditioning, relying instead on the building's orientation, facade treatment, and structural fabric to produce an environment that is physiologically balanced with human comfort needs, and minimises the use of generated energy.
- Shallow plans with orientation along the north-south axis would facilitate maximum access to east and west light. High ceilings offer optimal conditions for natural ventilation and daylight to penetrate to all spaces.

Breathing Skins

Climate-attuned facades would respond to their relationship to the sun and wind path, mediating between the external and internal environment to create optimal comfort conditions internally.





WOOD CITY
LIMERICK COLBERT QUARTER



Berlin's Hufeisensiedlung (Horseshoe Estate), 1925-33, by architect Bruno Taut represents high-quality housing for a large residential community, designed at a time of economic crisis in Germany. New construction materials and methods were to bring 'light and air, dignity and order' to working-class homes. The design combined a humane functionalism and modernist style with ideals of community and progress. The Hufeisensiedlung was constructed not by private enterprise but by cooperative building guilds.

Tolou circular earthen and timber houses in China are an experimental housing prototype for sustainable communal living. Each house as many as 80 families or 320 people. The homes have been arranged around rights to light, air and ground. Each living space looks both 'in' and 'out'. 'In' represents the community and collectives; 'out' the environment and the city.



Buffalo Park System, New York by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, 1868 and 1896. Great cities are defined and structured by their parks. At Buffalo, New York, Fredrick Law Olmsted created a new park system for the city out of forgotten land, designing parks carved out off and into the existing city. The creation of the park system immediately increased the value of the lands around the park. We need to build our cities around parks and fill these parks with forests in order that human life can be sustained.



Toronto Island, Toronto, Canada
The Toronto Islands – also called the Island, or Toronto Island Park – is located in Lake Ontario, a 13-minute ferry ride from downtown Toronto. Boats to the Island leave from the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal at the foot of Bay Street and Queen's Quay. The Island is actually a group of 15 islands inter-connected by pathways and bridges. You can walk from one end of the Island to the other. Kids and adults of all ages can find something to do or see on the Island. There are beautiful swimming beaches, sports facilities, bike, canoe and kayak rentals, a boating marina, large grassy fields for picnics, a theatre, nature paths as well as a 150 year-old community of 600 people.

Using Design For Manufacture principles we will leverage the global supply chain to build innovative timber buildings in Limerick.

Forestry in the EU relies on rail-based transport, trees are harvested and transported from the forest to the mills via rail, their sizes and quantity at harvest are compatible with rail transport. If the Foynes line were to be recommissioned, it could be used to deliver prefabricated mass timber components for the structure of the buildings, arriving into the port of Foynes, shipped to the site on the freight line, offloaded and erected immediately.

Limerick's access to the port could be leveraged to ensure maximum market access. This would help to achieve the scale of construction required at a lower cost: construction time will be minimized and quality will be maximised.

It is proposed that timber will be sustainably sourced from forests where there is market pressure due to demand and quantum of supply and manufactured

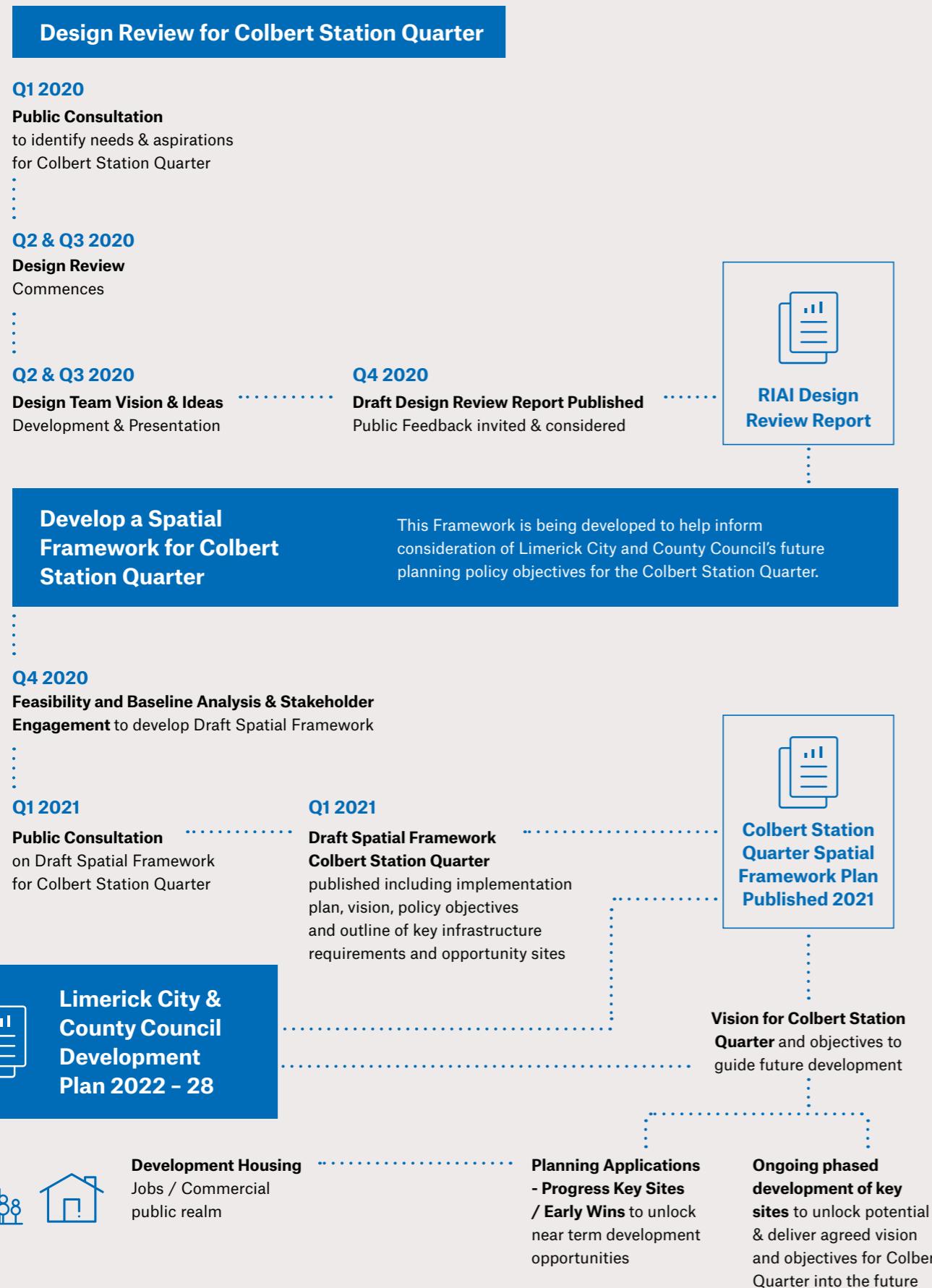
in Limerick by a pop-up factory. It will arrive into the HSE site and be offloaded by the now idle shipping container crane at Colbert Station. While the mass timber structure goes up, the windows, made of timber and fabricated in an Irish joinery shop will be produced and shipped from their factory in the middle of Ireland.

In Colbert Station Quarter south, the site for one of the ring buildings under construction, the crane would make its way around the ring, having collected panels from the train-beds that roll through the site.

The arrival of the prefabricated components would be on a 'just-in-time' basis and immediately lifted into position on the structure. The completed buildings would continue to be served by the rail line, and as the forest grows around and within the ring, and is protected by the community that live in the ring, it will develop into a lush green lung for Limerick, and the building will fold into the park system.

6. Process & Next Steps

6.1. Timeline



6.2 Stakeholder and Community Feedback

Colbert Station is a strategically important area with significant potential to transform underutilised areas over time to become an even more vibrant and vital part of Limerick into the future.

The Design Review process represents an important starting point to explore possible visions and help inform consideration of options to catalyse the potential for this area into the future.

The process began by seeking views from the community on what they would like to see for the site. This helped inform thinking and fed into the emerging ideas generated by the Design Team. It is good to see that the Visions and Ideas that the Team have presented have taken on board issues identified by the community in their submissions, such as importance of amenity and green space, and creating integrated communities.

Defining an agreed vision and objectives to help unlock the transformative potential of this area is an important part of the next phase. Achieving the vision will take time and will require a phased and integrated

approach as part of the development of a Spatial Framework for the area. This will support the evolution and regeneration of the area over time, particularly given the complex and extensive nature of the area with significant operational interests, as well as being a major transport hub, and area where key public services and facilities are provided.

Next steps will involve seeking views from the public on the ideas and visions in this report. Following the consultation, feedback will be considered and inform the final Design Review Report. The final report will be published and will then help to inform the next stage.

This next stage is the development of a Spatial Framework for Colbert. This will be underpinned by socio economic and viability analysis. This Framework will consider needs as well as potential future growth for the area and establish an agreed vision and objectives for the future. This will explore key opportunities through consultation with key stakeholders and will consider phasing and infrastructure to support with unlocking key sites over time.

Design Review Panel - Biographies

Merritt Bucholz

In 2005 Merritt was appointed Professor of Architecture by the University of Limerick to establish the School of Architecture University of Limerick. SAUL has since become recognised for its critical involvement in social and urban planning issues, its ecological design thinking, its focus on building-craft and making skills, and its ability to proactively work within a research faculty of science and engineering.

It has built close and effective ties with the City of Limerick. Merritt together with Karen McEvoy co-founded Bucholz McEvoy Architects when they won an RIAI open competition for the design of a civic office building, Fingal County Hall, in Swords, Co. Dublin. Shaped by this early engagement with civic architecture, Karen and Merritt have been developing an architecture that is technologically sophisticated, inherently low energy, and takes a human-centred approach to design.

Anne Kiernan FRIAI

Anne Kiernan is Chief Architect with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). With a background in masterplanning and residential and commercial building design, Anne has more recently focused on public realm design, integration of transport infrastructure projects and the urban environment. She is a long-time member

of the RIAI Urban Design Committee and is committed to sustainability, urban regeneration, and community engagement. She is a contributor to EU research into the design and operation of urban transport, focusing on integrated transport, interchange and urban development. A member of the DMURS (Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets) project committee and assessor for Academy of Urbanism urban regeneration submissions, Anne is currently collaborating with Grimshaw Architects on Dublin's new Metrolink.

Grafton Architects

Shelley McNamara and Yvonne Farrell co-founded Grafton Architects in 1978, having graduated from University College Dublin in 1974. They are Fellows of the RIAI, International Honorary Fellows of the RIBA, elected members of Aosdána, and the 2020 Pritzker Prize Laureates.

Teaching at the School of Architecture at University College Dublin from 1976 to 2002, they were appointed Adjutant Professors at UCD in 2015. They have been Visiting Professors at EPFL, Lausanne in 2010 – 2011. They held the Kenzo Tange Chair at GSD Harvard in 2010 and the Louis Kahn chair at Yale in the Autumn of 2011. Currently, they are Professors at the Accademia di Architettura, Mendrisio, Switzerland.

In 2018, Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara were the Curators of the Venice Architecture Biennale with their manifesto Freespace. Grafton Architects have participated in numerous exhibitions including: the Sensing Spaces Exhibition in 2014 in the Royal Academy in London; a Pavilion for the 2014 Tercentenary of the City of Barcelona; and 'the Ogham Wall' installation in 2015 in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

The practice has won numerous awards for their work. In 2016, Grafton Architects were honoured by being awarded the inaugural RIBA International Prize for the Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología (UTEC) in Lima, Peru and the 2020 RIBA Royal Gold Medal.

Piotr Mach, eml Architects

Since qualifying as Master of Science, Architecture & Town Planning at the University of Technology in Gliwice, Poland in 2007, Piotr Mach has worked in a number of architectural practices in Ireland.

He joined Limerick firm eml architects in 2014, and has worked on significant projects including Analog Devices International, JLR, ACI Worldwide, Ernst & Young, GSK, Three Ireland, Limerick City & County Council and Tipperary County Council. Piotr became central to the design process on these very successful projects, working from concept design right through to construction stages. He has a particular expertise in design and 3D visualisations.

Achievements include: Finalist Thurles Municipal Offices, 3Arena Bars and GSK

in the "Fit Out Awards", "Irish Construction Excellence Awards" and "LAMA Awards". Finalist in the "Fit Out Awards 2017" in the Category "Young Fit Out Designer of the Year".

Piotr Mach also was awarded "Outstanding Pole in Ireland 2018" by the Polish Promotional Emblem Foundation 'Teraz Polska' whose main objective is to create a positive image of Poles worldwide. Piotr was awarded for his contribution to the integration of new communities (like the Polish community) into their adopted home city of Limerick.

Sean O'Laoire, MOLA Architecture

Seán Ó Laoire is a Consultant Director of MOLA Architecture, having previously been a Founding Director of Murray Ó Laoire Architects (1979 - 2010).

Combining Architecture with a specialism in Urban Design, he has been centrally involved in many prestigious schemes, including King John's Castle Limerick, Dublin Docklands, Titanic Quarter Belfast, and Ceannt Station Galway as well as projects in France, Slovakia and China.

A recipient of the prestigious Triennial RIAI Gold Medal, he is a former President of the RIAI (2007 - 2009) and was a former Senior Lecturer in Urban Design at DIT, in addition to numerous positions in an advisory capacity, most recently being a member of the RIAI Gold Medal adjudication panel and advisor to Uachtaráin na hÉireann on 1916 commemorative art.

