

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Coleg Gwent / WEPCo



August 2026

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1.0

Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Report

This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) has been prepared in support of a reserved matters planning application and for the discharge of a condition for the Coleg Gwent Development in the Newport Knowledge Quarter, which is within Newport City Centre.

The application site is a triangular-shaped, 8489 m2 brownfield site , situated on the site of the former Newport Centre, at the junction of The Kingsway and Usk Way (NP10 1UH). The site is bounded by commercial developments to the north and west, which include: the Kingsway Shopping Centre, Friars Walk Shopping Centre and the Kingsway multistorey car park. There is an adjacent residential area to the south at Emlyn Street, much of which is designated a Conservation Area under the Local Plan,, whilst to the east of the site lies Usk Way (A4042), beyond which, there is the University of South Wales (USW), Newport Campus and the Newport City Footbridge over the River Usk.

The purpose of this appraisal is to identify and assess the development’s physical and visual impact on the urban landscape character and on the receptors assess the connection between the existing townscape and proposed development and identify landscape mitigation.

The scoping area of the report includes a 750m radius circle around the site, considering the 15-minute walk rule. The identified viewpoints are all located within this circle. See Figure 1.



Google Earth Photo showing a bird view of Newport City

1.2 Method Statement

The method for carrying out this assessment follows ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third edition’ published by the Landscape Institute. The assessment has been undertaken by chartered landscape architects using recognised best practice methodologies wherever possible and where these exist.

The detailed methodology is included in Appendix 1.

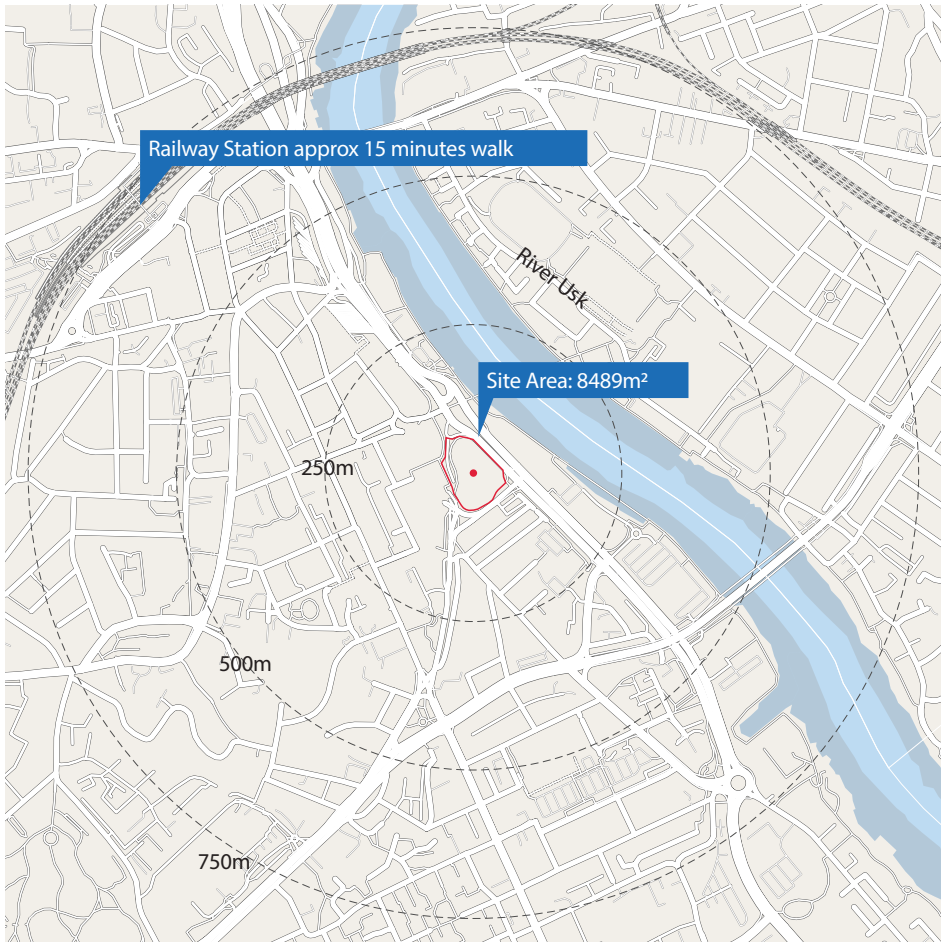


Figure 1 - Site Scale

Site Description

2.1 The Site and its immediate surroundings

The proposal site is the recently cleared location of the previous Newport Leisure Centre, a landmark that for many years served as a focal point for the city's community. The previous development was a substantial 2-storey building.

The site is currently a 8489 m2 brownfield site comprising hardstanding, vacant/derelict land, and modified grassland to the east, with scattered trees on the southeast corner. The site is hoarded in, with no public access.

There are some existing pedestrian crossings towards the site from the Dolman Theatre (Kingsway) on the southwest corner with Emlyn Street and from Usk Way to the southeast. The busiest and most prominent footway runs 50 m to the north of the site between the Kingsway Shopping Centre and Friars Walk Shopping Centre and connects the city to the east of the river to the main retail area via the Newport City Footbridge.

The site has existing vehicular access from Emlyn Street to the south. An existing access is also present from the taxi loop to the north of the site, leading to a dead-end service road adjacent to the Multistorey Car Park. This service road is subject to a stopping up order, lies within the redline boundary and is enclosed by fencing.

The site is bounded by the Friars Walk Shopping Centre and the Kingsway Shopping Centre (approx. 13m tall), and the associated urban realm upgrades to the northwest, the Multistorey Car Park on the west (approx. 26m tall), the Lower Dock Street Conservation Area, which is a residential area with two-storey properties to the south. The recent University of South Wales Newport Campus building sits immediately to the east (approx. 24m tall). Other key buildings in the immediate vicinity are the Riverfront Theatre, the Dolman Theatre, Great Central Hall and the future Leisure Centre as shown on Figure 2.

The site has a noisier and a quieter side. From the east, it is impacted by the noise of the A4042 dual carriage way, Usk Way, while the north and west are pedestrianised and more relaxed. Restaurants and shops form a key part of this surroundings of the site, attracting a steady flow of visitors.

Other important roads are Emlyn Street, adjacent to the conservation area, and Kingsway to the north and south and Commercial Street to the west.

The Newport City Footbridge forms the main connection on the axial route, Millennium Walk, crossing the river and

connecting the city either side of The Usk. The footbridge itself is animated with pedestrians and cyclists making their way between the city's key destinations.

The site lies at an approximate level of 9.0m AOD, and the surface level is quite flat. Visually, it represents a significant void between the surrounding tall buildings.

Figure2 - Site and its immediate surroundings



2.2 15-Minute Walk Context

There are attractive pedestrian and cyclist promenades along both sides of the River Usk. To the west, on the city side, is Kutaisi Walk, a nicely landscaped path, and a public right of way (Route number 411/1/1) on the other side in Victoria, the Millennium Walk is leading from Newport City Footbridge to Rodney Road and the Rugby Club, called Rodney Parade or colloquially as the Cabbage patch. The east side of the river, called Victoria, is predominantly a residential area. The only markedly tall building in Victoria is a commercial property called Clarence House.

There are three bridges within a 15-minute walk: the Newport Bridge, Newport City Footbridge and George Street Bridge.

The Newport Railway Station and Newport Market Bus Station next to Upper Dock Street are also a short walk from the site, to the north of the city centre and west of the river. The Newport Market is between these two, as is the Mercure hotel, which is probably the tallest building in the area.

The historic city Centre, including the St. Woolos Conservation Area, is located on rising ground to the southwest of the retail centre, and contains historic buildings, churches and parks, such as Newport Cathedral.

The Lower Dock Conservation Area is located immediately south of the site (Emlyn Street, Cross Lane, Caroline Street, Lower Dock Street, etc.). This part of the city is predominantly residential with some traditional shops; there are two big food stores and surface car parks in the immediate vicinity of the area (Lidl, Asda). George Street is a major east west highway, bounds the city centre and crosses the river via the George Street Bridge.

The Stage 2 Design Report describes the site as well-connected to active travel and public transport infrastructure, with on-road cycle paths and National Cycle Network (NCN) routes. (See Figure 3).

The site is also well-served by an extensive network of bus routes, providing comprehensive coverage across the city and surrounding areas. The central hub for bus services is the Newport Central Bus Station, located less than 500m from the site to the north.



Figure 3 - Site and its wider context

2.3 Site History

The historic background to the site is fully covered in the Newport Knowledge Quarter Heritage Impact Assessment.

Key extracts pertinent to the development of the townscape would be:

Early Development of Newport

Newport developed at the historically lowest crossing point of the River Usk, with early settlement focused on St Woolos Church and the medieval castle on the western bank of the river. The rapid industrialisation of South Wales during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transformed Newport into one of the principal industrial and maritime centres of Wales.

Canals, Tramroads and Industrial Expansion

By 1811, the Monmouthshire Canal had linked Newport with the South Wales Valleys, and a tramroad had been established from the Sirhowy furnaces through the Pillgwenlly marshes towards the docks. The intertidal marshes between Pillgwenlly and the River Usk were progressively infilled between 1797 and 1805 in association with canal and tramroad construction. Further reclamation followed through the tipping of ballast and excavated material associated with dock construction.

The Newport Dock Bill received Royal Assent in 1835, and the Town Dock opened in 1842 to the designs of John Rennie the Younger. The dock transformed Newport into a major coal-exporting port and fundamentally reshaped the morphology of southern Newport.

The Emlyn Ironworks and Railway Infrastructure

Historic mapping and desk-based assessment indicate that the application site was historically occupied by dense industrial and transport infrastructure. The block interior was dominated by Charles D. Phillips' Emlyn Iron Works, which operated not as a raw-ore smelting foundry, but as a major heavy engineering and machinery hub specializing in manufacturing, repairing, and selling heavy maritime, electrical, and colliery equipment.

The works utilized substantial brick workshops and multi-storey showrooms built directly along the western boundary line of Cross Street/Emlyn Street as documented in Phillips' Machinery Register and late-nineteenth-century trade directories. This created a distinct socio-economic hierarchy between the active engineering yards of the block interior

and the commercial frontages of Lower Dock Street, which primarily housed shipping agents, consular offices, and marine brokers. A dense grid of standard-gauge locomotive lines and coal sidings operated by the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company extended along the present Kingsway alignment, connecting dockland infrastructure and industrial premises. That alignment remains legible in the surrounding urban morphology.

Terraced housing historically lined Emlyn Street and nearby streets, forming part of the dense dockland residential hinterland associated with industrial employment.

Lower Dock Street and the Dockland Quarter

The Lower Dock Street Conservation Area developed as Newport's principal dockland commercial quarter. Contemporary accounts described Dock Street as the location of merchant princes, brokers, colliery proprietors, shipping companies, and miscellaneous traders.

The conservation area appraisal identifies the street as historically containing shipping companies, bonded warehouses, coal exporters, railway offices, ship brokers, chandlers, public houses, and marine-related industries.

The surviving morphology and architecture therefore directly reflect Newport's nineteenth-century industrial and maritime economy.

Twentieth-Century Transformation

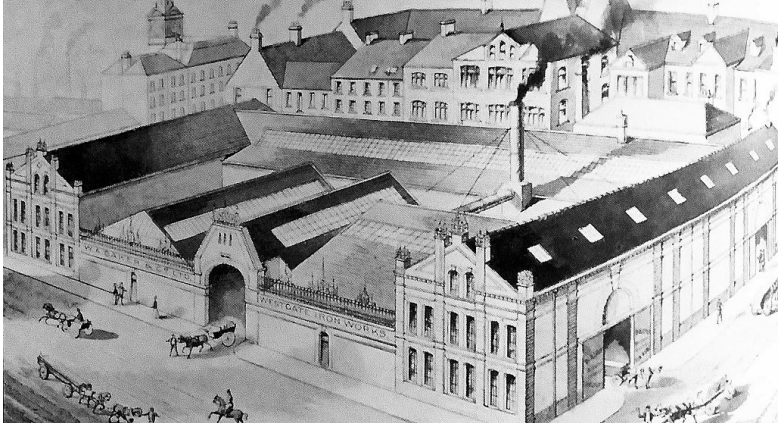
The historical connectivity between the town Centre and the maritime quarter was systematically compromised by two entirely separate phases of mid-to-late twentieth-century development. The initial phase of severance occurred during the 1930s with the municipal construction of Kingsway as an urban bypass. This highway project laid a road corridor directly over the obsolete terminal route of the Monmouthshire Canal, which had already been infilled and replaced by the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company's heavy freight lines during the mid-nineteenth century. This initial infrastructure project introduced the first significant physical barrier to historic east-west pedestrian movement.

This initial infrastructure-led severance was subsequently exacerbated and permanently locked in during the late twentieth century by the development of the Kingsway Centre shopping complex. Unlike the 1930s highway project, which merely

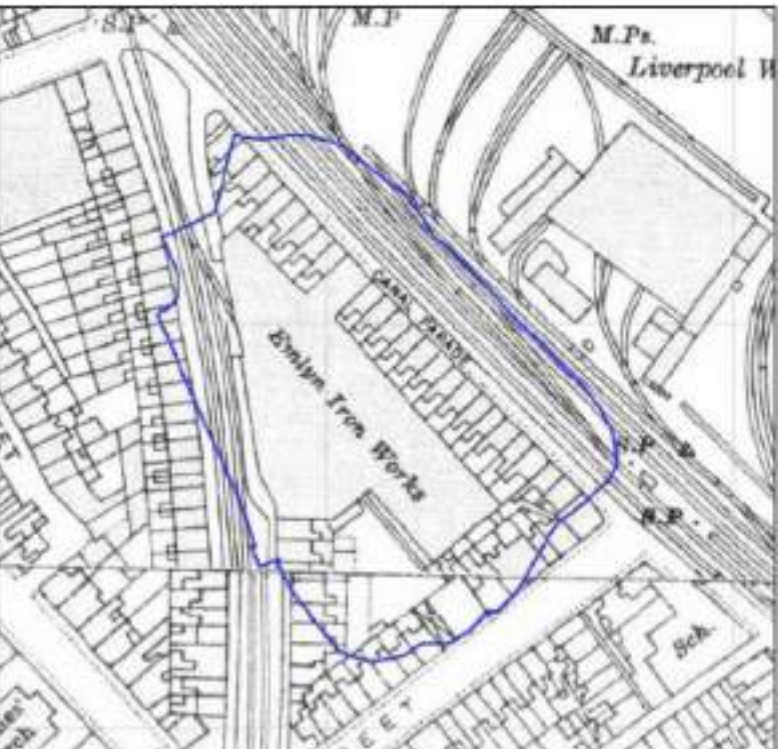
intercepted the streets, the construction of this massive, inward-facing retail footprint physically demolished the remaining street grid blocks, replacing a porous network of lanes with unyielding, solid masonry masses, elevated concrete ramps, and inactive parking deck elevations.

The cumulative effect of these two separate developments transformed the northern boundary of the application site from an integrated urban neighbourhood into a deeply severed, hostile boundary condition that left the northern edge of the conservation area entirely isolated from the commercial core of the city.

The current site condition therefore forms part of an altered dockland fringe environment rather than an intact nineteenth-century townscape.



The Skinner St Works c1905 - industrialgwent.co.uk



OS Map 25 inch 1892-1914 layer

3.0

Designations and Policies

3.1 Designations in the Scoping Area

3.1.1 Local Designation

The site is affected by Newport's placemaking strategy, for details please see 3.2.9 Relevant policies, A New Era for Newport - Newport.

3.1.2 Flood Risk

The site lies in flood zone 3, as shown in Figure 4.

3.1.3 Environmental Designations

The following statutory designated sites for nature conservation are located along the River Usk in the vicinity of the site (70m northeast): See Figure 5.

- River Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- River Usk (Lower Usk) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

3.1.4 Historic Designations

Conservation Areas (CA), historic buildings and monuments are shown in Figure 6,7 and 8.

For details, I refer to the Heritage Assessment Document: 'The principal designated heritage asset affected by the proposals is the Lower Dock Street Conservation Area, although the wider historic environment also includes listed buildings associated with Newport's nineteenth-century commercial, dockland and mercantile development.' The other Conservation Area is the St Woolos CA.

Grade I Listed building in the zone of influence is:

- 2998 St Woolos Cathedral

Grade II* Listed buildings and monuments in the zone of influence are:

- 25847 Name:George Street Bridge
- 2997 Name:Newport Castle

The following list includes most of the Grade II. Listed buildings and monuments in the zone of influence are:

- 3013 Name:St Paul's Church, including forecourt walls
- 3039 Name:Kingshill
- 3062 Name:Electricity Transformer at Park Square
- 3032 Name:11 Park Square
- 3031 Name:9 &10 Park Square

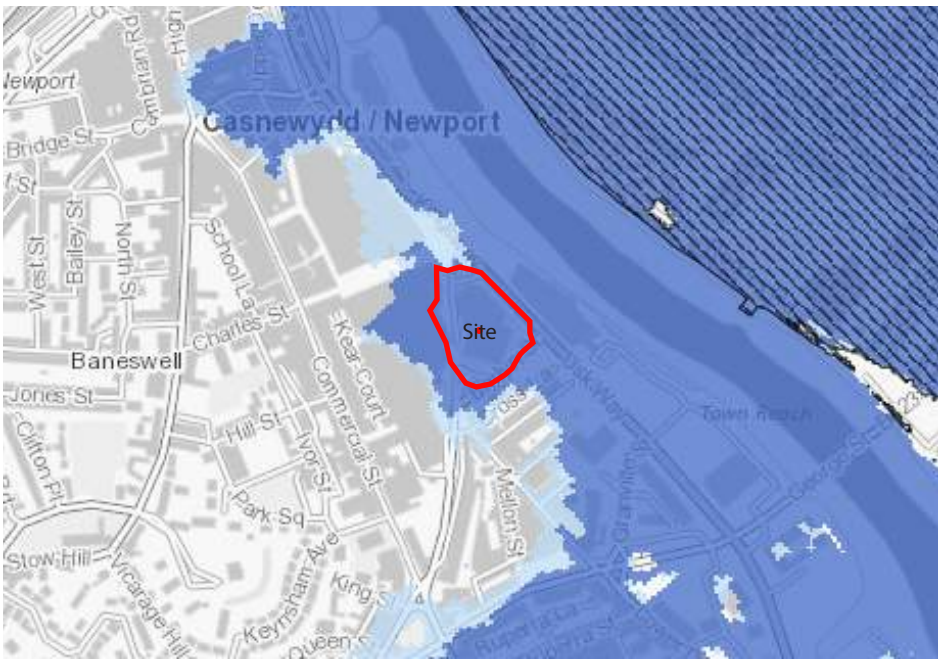


Figure 4 - Flood Map for Planning by Natural Resources Wales

Key



Figure 5 - Data Map Wales by Wales Government shows Site of Special Scientific Interest in pink.

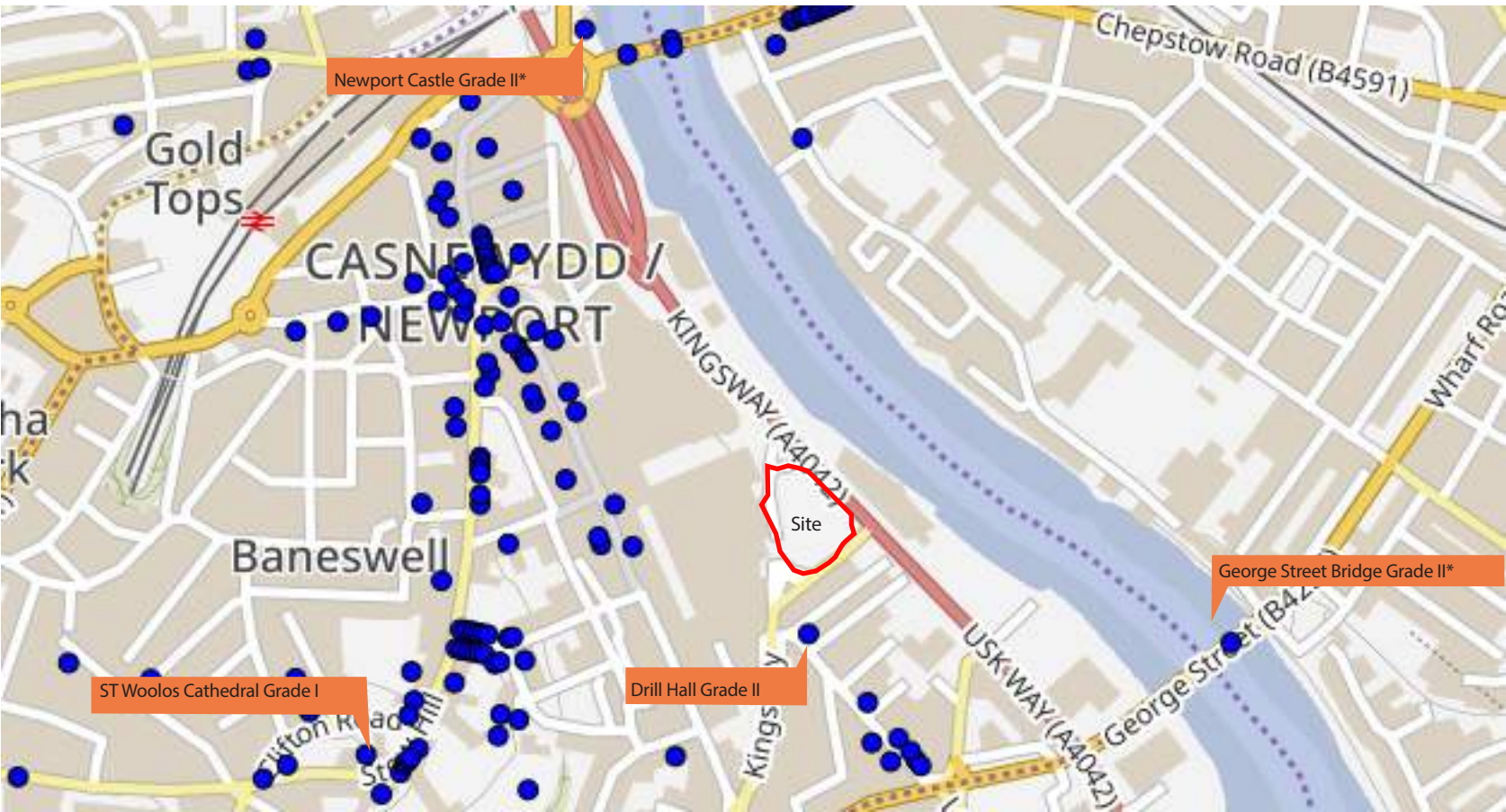


Figure 6: Data Map Wales by Welsh Government shows Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings



source: VoG QGIS
not to scale

- 3048 Name:Victoria Road United Reformed Church
- 23151 Name:14 Hill Street
- 3045 Name:Nos 1-6 Victoria Place, including area
- 23110 Name:46 Commercial Street
- 23111 Name:Halfords (Nos.142-143)
- 23109 Name:Lloyds TSB
- 23113 Name:Next (152-153)
- 23107 Name:Woolwich Building Society
- 3044 Name:Newport Market
- 23148 Name:Market Arcade, including entrance
- 3074 Name:Former Head Post Office
- 23139 Name:Newport Bridge (partly in St Julians
- 21459 Name:Newport Bridge (partly in Stow Hill
- 18274 Name:Newport Technical Institute
- 87805 Name:Memorial Gates and Gate-piers to north-west entrance to Newport Rugby Club Sports

- 3028 Name:109 Lower Dock Street
- 3030 Name:77 Lower Dock Street
- 21291 Name:Old Custom House (Celtic Displays)
- 3029 Name:69 Lower Dock Street
- 21290 Name:Former Drill Hall

3.1.5 Public Right of Way (PRoW)

Public right of way runs on the other side of the River Usk:
Rout code: 411/1/1 Newport-Victoria as 9 Figure shows (210m northeast at the closest point).

3.1.6 Active Travel

Existing active travel runs on the east and south side of the proposed development, while there is a proposed active travel route along the north and west site boundary, as identified on the Council's website. It is shown in the extract Figure 10.
National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 47, also known as the Celtic Trail Upland Route, is running along the River Usk.

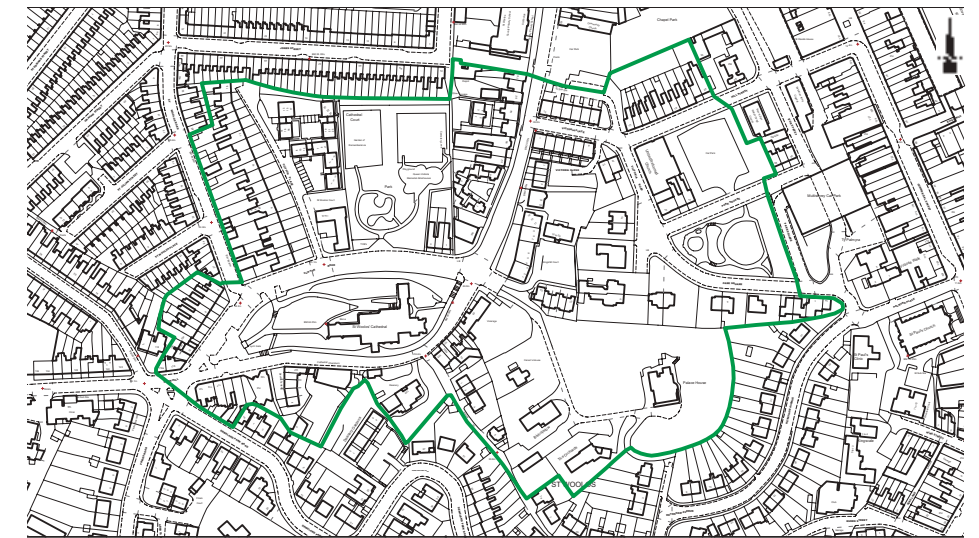


Figure 8 - St Woolos Conservation Area Map

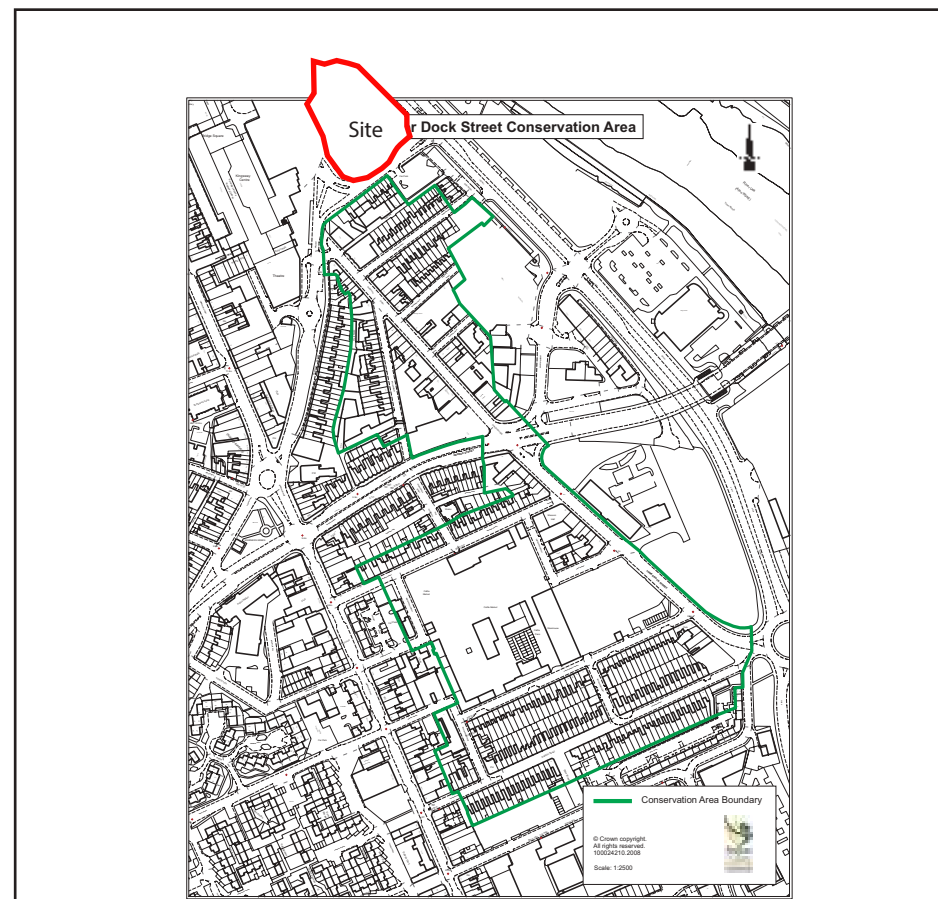


Figure 7 - Lower Dock conservation Area Map



Figure 9 - Newport City Council's Map showing Public Right of Way

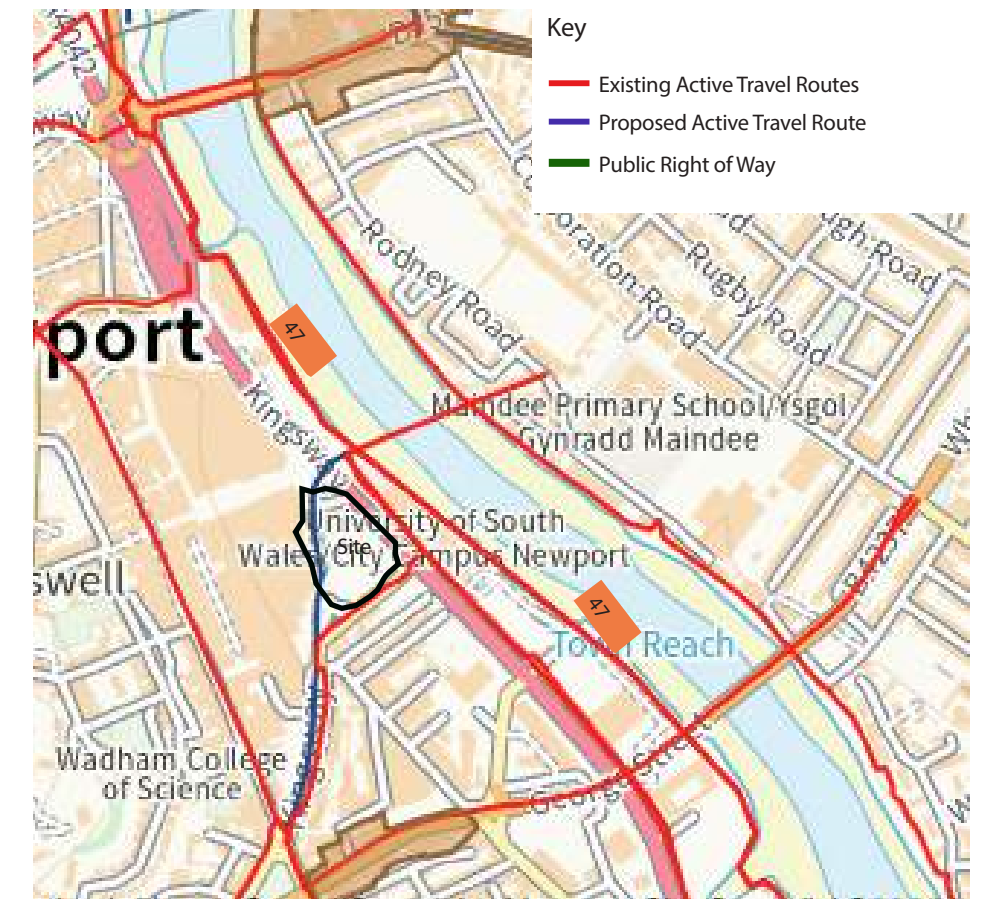


Figure 10 - Newport City Council's Map showing active travel - Cycle Lanes

3.2 Relevant Policies

3.2.1 Relevant Policy Context and material considerations

- The National Development Framework: Future Wales - the National Plan 2040
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) 2024
- Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023
- Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (Wales) 2015

3.2.2 The National Development Framework: Future Wales - the National Plan 2040

Future Wales is the Welsh Government’s twenty-year national development framework for shaping the future growth and development of Wales. Policy 2 notes that the growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. Policy 9 notes that action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.

3.2.3 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) 2024

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the Welsh Government’s principal statement of national policy and sets out the land use planning policies that should be taken into account by local planning authorities in Wales and may be material to decisions on individual planning applications. PPW requires decisions on planning application to ensure that “social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated” as part of a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 3.55 states that previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. Section 6.4 ‘Biodiversity and Ecological Networks’ sets out the implementation relating to biodiversity in Wales, expressing the . Paragraph 6.4.2 notes that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit

for biodiversity (Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016). Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Welsh Ministers to publish and maintain lists of species and types of habitats that are regarded as of ‘principal importance’ for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing that biodiversity.

3.2.4 Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

This piece of legislation came fully into effect on 4 November 2024 and provides the principal legal framework for the protection and management of the historic environment in Wales.

3.2.5 Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (Wales) 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. “Sustainable development” means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. Acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle means that a body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that each public body listed in the Act must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

3.2.6 Technical Advice Notes Planning Policy Wales:

Technical Advice Notes PPW is supplemented by a series of topic specific Technical Advice Notes (TAN’s). The relevant notes are the following:

- Technical advice note (TAN) 5: nature conservation and planning
- Technical advice note (TAN) 12: design
- Technical advice note (TAN) 15: Development, Flood and Coastal Erosion
- Technical advice note (TAN) 24: the historic environment

Technical Advice Note 5 (TAN 5) Nature Conservation (2009)

This document provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. Paragraph 4.1.1 refers to how the development control process can help achieve these objectives and identifies ways to build nature conservation into the design of new development and applies the five-point approach to decision-making - information, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and new benefits.

TAN 12 Design (2016) includes advice on how promoting sustainability through good design may be facilitated through the planning system.

TAN 15 Development, Flood and Coastal Erosion

The site is in Flood Risk Zone 3. As the TAN states: ‘The fundamental principles of the TAN are to restrict new development in Zone 3 subject to the limited exceptions in section 10 and to ensure that decision makers have taken flood risk matters into consideration in all other zones.’ This advice notes also set out principles for sustainable Drainage as follows:

‘7.1 Built development tends to increase the surface area of impermeable ground, thus reducing percolation and increasing rapid surface run-off. This has the effect of reducing the time it takes for precipitation to enter the watercourse and consequently increasing the peak discharge. Run-off from developments can, if not properly controlled, result in flooding at other locations and significantly alter the frequency and extent of floods further down the catchment.

7.2 SuDS perform an important role in managing run-off from a site and must be implemented in most new developments. They can have multiple placemaking, biodiversity and sustainable development benefits if they are considered and integrated at an early stage.’

TAN24 The Historic Environment

Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (March 2026); Cadw, Managing Conservation Areas in Wales; Cadw, Setting of Historic Assets in Wales.

3.2.7 Newport Local Development Plan (2011-2026)
2015 Policies in the Local Plan that are of relevance to this assessment are:

Strategic Policies

- SP1 Sustainability
- SP3 Flood Risk
- SP9 Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment
- SP18 Urban Regeneration

General Policies

- GP1 Climate Change
- GP5 Natural Environment
- GP6 Quality of Design
- GP7 Environmental Protection and Public Health

Environment

- CE1 Routeways, Corridors and Gateways
- CE2 Waterfront Development
- CE3 Environmental Spaces and Receptors
- CE7 Conservation Areas
- CE10 Renewable Energy

Transport and Waste

- T5 Walking and Cycling

The relevant Local Development Plan Policies are included in the Appendix 1.

3.2.8 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Sustainable Travel
- Wildlife and Development
- Trees, Woodland, Hedgerow and Development Sites

3.2.9 A New Era for Newport - Newport Placemaking Plan (June 2025) Rev 3

This local document set out key considerations related specifically to the Coleg Gwent Campus Development. For the Placemaking Plan Map see Figure 11. The document

states:

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

1. CONNECTIVITY & PUBLIC REALM

- Enhance pedestrian and cycle connections between the campus, transport hubs, and key city destinations.
- Improve wayfinding and public realm design to create a welcoming and navigable urban environment.

2. ECONOMIC & SOCIAL IMPACT

Promote a mix of uses around the campus, such as student-friendly cafés, study spaces, and cultural venues, to enhance vibrancy beyond academic hours.

3. PLACEMAKING & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Integrate arts, culture, and heritage elements into the campus environment to strengthen its connection to the city's identity.
- Consider how student housing, leisure, and wellbeing facilities can be improved within the city to support student life.

4. SUSTAINABLE & FUTURE-PROOFED GROWTH

- Support a low-carbon, walkable city Centre, reducing reliance on private transport.
- Use the campus as a catalyst for future regeneration, influencing development patterns and investment in surrounding areas.

NEXT STEPS:

- Establish collaborative partnerships between the college, city council, and local businesses.
- Leverage the campus to support local businesses by encouraging student footfall in retail, hospitality, and cultural spaces.
- Encourage partnerships with local enterprises to provide work placements, events, and collaboration opportunities.
- Identify key development sites for complementary uses such as student accommodation, start-up spaces, and leisure facilities.
- Implement public realm improvements that priorities accessibility, safety, and inclusivity

3.2.10 60 Big Ideas for Newport

This document of Newport City Council includes 60 ideas, which have been developed from suggestions made by residents. 'Some are transformational, some are smaller ideas to make the everyday better. At the moment they are just ideas, but some of these may become council-owned projects included in the placemaking plan. Others could be progressed by the community, business owners, public sector and investors.'

Some of the ideas are the following
Bring Music to the Streets of Newport
Youth Hub
Water Feature
Playground
Bring Newport's History to Life
City Centre Education
Plant More Trees
Street Lighting
Colourful Dragons
More Accessible Recycling Points
More Environmental Interventions



Figure 11 - Newport Placemaking Plan Map from the New Era Newport document

Austin-Smith:Lord

4.0

Urban Landscape Character

4.1 Urban Character Areas

4.1.1 National Landscape Character Areas

The National Resources Wales sets out the National Landscape Character Areas (NLCA) for Wales. These are defined at a broad landscape scale across the country. The descriptive profiles for the 48 individual character areas highlight what distinguishes one landscape from another, with reference to their regionally distinct natural, cultural and perceptual characteristics.

The Site is within 35 NLCA, called Cardiff, Barry and Newport (for reference, see Figure 12.) And is described as:

‘... One of the most urbanised and busy landscape character areas in Wales... Newport is an industrial city lying on the sloping valley sides of the tidal River Usk, which forms a focus for the town with its muddy banks and sinuous course. A series of landmark bridges punctuate the river, which is visible particularly where crossed by the M4 and the main line railway. The fine civic Centre building acts as a landmark, prominent above the town Centre. Newport has been famous for its gigantic landmark transporter bridge...’

4.1.2 Local Character Areas

To a finer grain, LANDMAP is a GIS-based landscape assessment tool developed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in partnership with local authorities. Planning Policy Wales (6.3.20) advocates the use of LANDMAP assessments to inform development management decisions, landscape character assessment, design and landscape/townscape sensitivity studies.

LANDMAP evaluates the Welsh landscape into five nationally consistent datasets:

- Geological Landscape,
- Landscape Habitats,
- Visual & Sensory,
- Historic Landscape,
- Cultural Landscape.

It is highly useful for localised site assessments. Of the five aspects, the Visual & Sensory aspect is most aligned with the assessment of local townscape character, as it classifies the landscape based on what is physically seen, felt, and perceived (e.g., forms, massing, scale, topography, sensory noise, and enclosure). For each of these five criteria, LANDMAP outlines the key characteristics and evaluates the area’s importance—usually on a scale ranging from International to Local.

According to LANDMAP, the site is located within the ‘Newport West’ Visual Sensory area but closely borders the ‘Usk Built Urban Corridor’ to the east, with Usk Way (A4042) forming the boundary (for reference, see Figure 13).

Related to the study area, the Newport West area basically contains the commercial and retail city Centre to the north and west of the site, but then extends further westward away from the river to contain the high ground around St Woolos and towards the Ridgeway. Set back from the immediate river corridor, the area also extends northwards to the M4 and south to the A48.

The LANDMAP description of the Visual Sensory area states:

‘West Newport - part of the city on the western side of the Usk running from hills at 109 m AOD at the Ridgeway to 10m AOD on the flat valley floor and levels. The area includes the Victorian retail Centre of Newport, close to the Usk, with vibrant main street and relatively new mall. The Portland stone art deco Civic Centre is dominant on a hill overlooking the city and visible from the station and railway. Stow Hill to the south with the church of St Woolos is the other main landmark of note.’

The adjacent ‘Usk Built Urban Corridor’ Visual Sensory area embraces the immediate river corridor to both banks of the River Usk and the delineation of the corridor is marked, particularly when viewed from Newport Bridge to the north and from the elevated George Street Bridge to the south. The LANDMAP description of the area states:

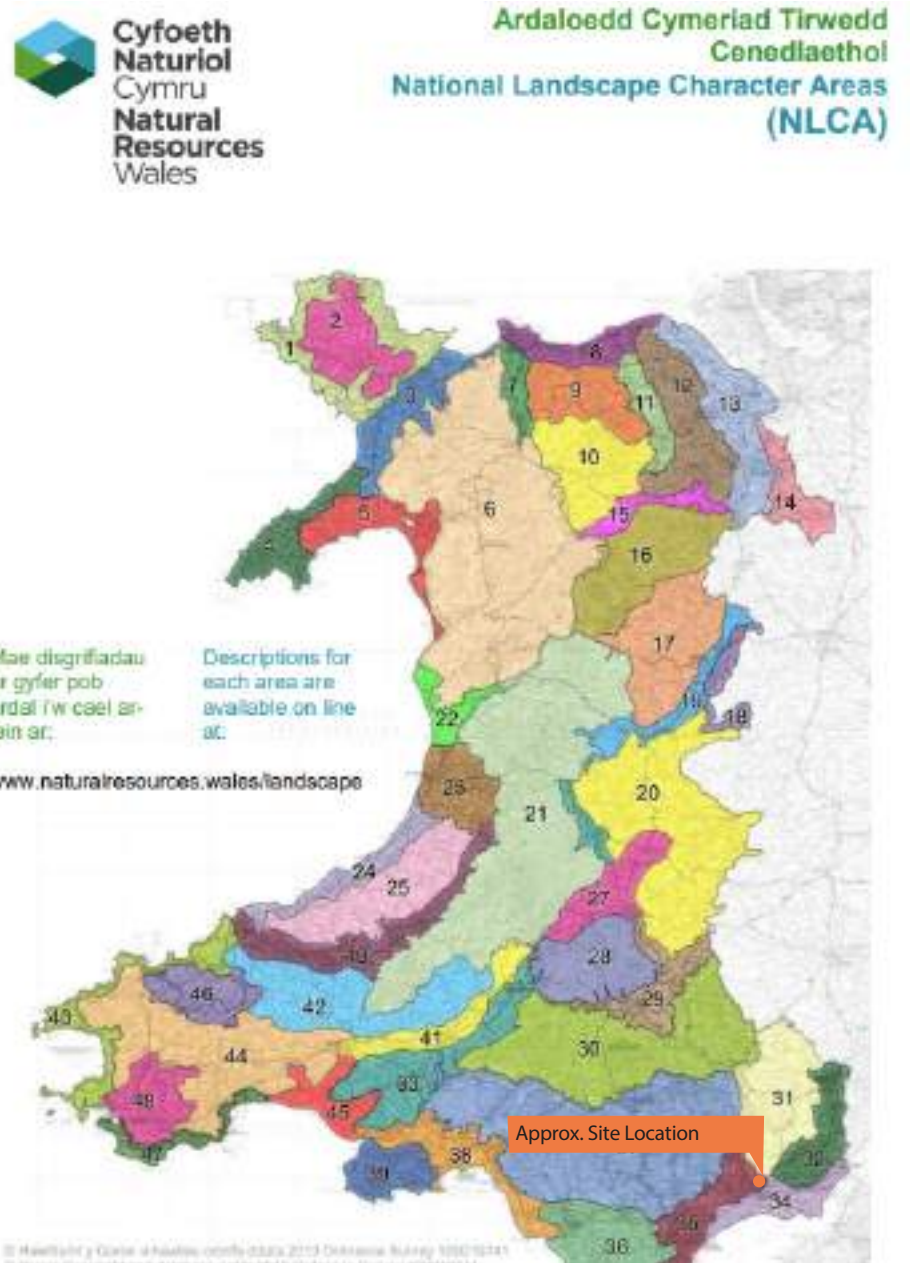


Figure 12 - National Landscape Character Areas Map

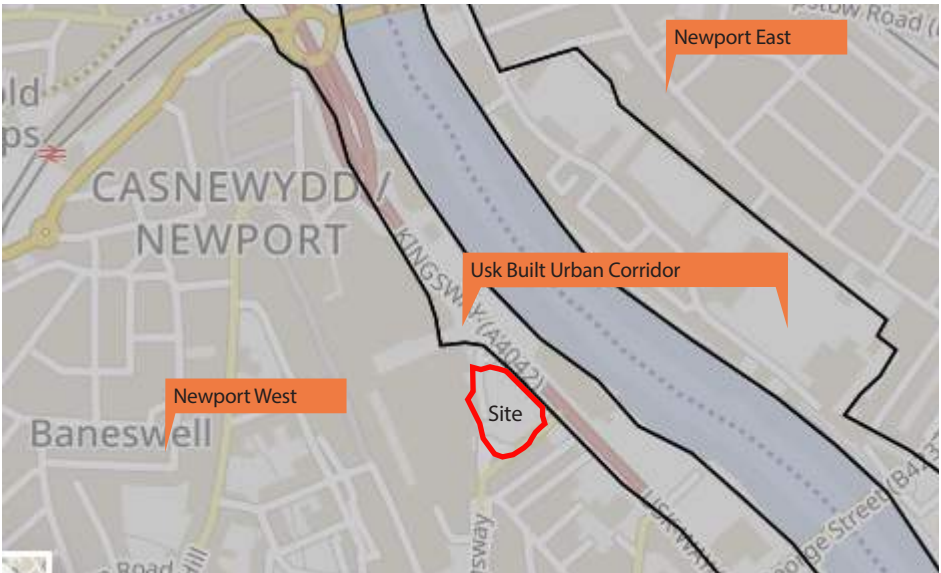


Figure 13 - Data Map Wales by Welsch Government showing the Visual ad Sesory areas of Newport

‘Industrial and commercial area with some dereliction on the lower river corridor of the River Usk in the urban area of Newport. The area is a mix of older Victorian and more recent commercial developments with a dislocated urban character. The older buildings and structures are often associated with defunct docks. Some refurbishment has created pleasant buildings, especially near the Centre and public spaces. Much of the older development does not address the river or use it in a positive way.’

As suggested by LANDMAP, within the study area the corridor is characterised to the west of the river by large, singular architectural buildings of leisure and educational use, including Riverfront Theatre and University of Wales Newport Campus. To the east of the river between Newport Bridge and St George’s Bridge, and connected centrally by the footbridge to the city Centre, the river is fronted by a virtually continuous façade of 4-6 storey waterfront apartments.

With continuous waterside walk and cycleways running along either bank of the river and secondary active travel routes connecting back into either hinterland, this central area of the city between the two bridges has addressed the observation within LANDMAP of a lack of connectivity with the river.

Newport Castle Grade II*, George Street Bridge Grade II*, Newport Bridge Grade II and the Memorial Gates to N. Rugby Club are the only historic assets of the river corridor.



Photo 1 - Panoramic view of the River Usk from the Kutaisi Walk looking at the 4-6 storey apartments.



Photo 2 - Panoramic view of the River Usk from Public Right of Way looking at USW, Footbridge, Frias Walk, Riverfront Theatre.



Figure 14- Showing the Usk built Urban Corridor

Beyond the river corridor to the east the wider site context is influenced by the Newport East Visual Sensory Area, centered on Rodney Parade. The LANDMAP description states:

‘East Newport- part of the city on the eastern side of the Usk running from hills at 80 m AOD to 10m AOD on the flat valley floor and levels. Victorian development of terraces to the west give way to estates further north and east. Primarily residential with commercial and industrial areas with some education and recreational uses. The M4 and the eastern peripheral distributor road form boundaries and allow intermittent views into the area. There is significant landscape treatment adjacent.’

Even more so than the contrast between the waterfront development to the west and the adjacent city Centre, east of the river there is a striking change of scale between the waterfront apartments and the Victorian terraces to their rear, and although there are footpaths that intermittently cut through the wall of waterside development to the waterfront, there is a noticeable visual and physical separation.

The other four aspects of the LANDMAP assessment, relevant to the development site, Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape are included in Appendix 2.

4.1.3 The Immediate setting

Within the still relatively broad Newport West and USK Built Urban Corridor LANDMAP Areas, the City Centre can be further divided into a number of distinct character areas fundamentally defined by their strategic position on the tidal river and the associated development of historic and industrial zones. Using a finer grain, therefore, the study area can be primarily divided into the following historical, commercial, and riverside character areas as identified and governed by the Local Development Plan and further defined within the Placemaking Plan:

Key Landscape and Townscape Character Areas

Character I. Commercial & Retail Core (City Centre)
The central hub of Newport is characterized by a mix of historic street layouts and modern regeneration projects. It encompasses the main pedestrianized shopping areas and the Friars Walk retail and leisure destination, immediately to the northwest of the site, which, in combination with the two

riverside walkways and the pedestrian bridge, redefined the city’s connection to the riverfront. The main, and historic, commercial spine is centered on Commercial Street, which runs parallel to the riverfront and to the north turns into High Street and to the south extends into Commercial Road. A strong axial route of Charles Street crosses Commercial St and extends into Lanarth Street and falls in level through Friars Walk down to riverfront level before crossing Kingsway and over the footbridge to the eastern bank and onto Rodney Parade. This cross route is immediately to the northern point of the basically triangular site. See Figure 15.

Character II. Riverside & Usk Valley
The River Usk acts as the prominent green and blue artery running through the city Centre. Its tidal character is defined by engineered banks, the iconic Newport Transporter Bridge, and modern waterfront developments.

The site is separated from the riverside by Kingsway (A4042), a busy dual carriageway approach into Newport from the south and northward on to Cwmbran, Pontypool and Crickhowell. Significant buildings stand to the east of Kingsway along the riverside including the University of Wales Newport Campus building which mostly screens the site from views directly across the river. North of the pedestrian bridge and to the west of the river, the contemporary angular form of the Newport Theatre acts as a strong marker to views from across and along the river from the Newport Bridge and the railway to the north.

Character III. Historic Elevated Districts
The areas sloping upwards from the city Centre, includes Stow Hill, St. Woolos, and Baneswell. These areas form distinct elevated conservation zones and are heavily characterized by 19th-century residential Victorian terraces, historic religious architecture (such as St. Woolos Cathedral), and steep streetscapes that offer elevated views of the city.

Character IV. Lower Dock Street & Industrial Heritage
Located immediately south of the site across Emlyn Street from the southern site boundary, The extensive Lower Dock Street Conservation Area contains over 240 structures and highlights Newport’s historic maritime and industrial heritage. A key component of this protected zone are the terraces of historically preserved townhouses. Although the area contains a number of significant historic industrial buildings, there is a dramatic change in scale and massing from the major buildings of the retail core and new development along the waterfront, to the tighter density and articulation of the conservation area.



Figure 15- Showing the Immediate Setting Characters

4.2 Material Palette

- 1

Friars Walk Shopping Centre

Materials: Stone effect & ACM cassette cladding, Glazed Canopy

Colours: Dark grey, Orange, Beige, Green, Multicolour
- 2

Kingsway Shopping Centre and Cinaworld

Materials: Stone effect & ACM cassette cladding, Glass

Colours: Dark grey, Orange, Beige, Multicolour
- 3

Multi-Story Car Park

Materials: Concrete frame, Metal facade with louvres

Colours: Brown, Grey
- 4

4-5 Kingsway (tower building) Centre for Health and Disability Assessment

Materials: Brick, concrete and render board, Glass

Colour: Grey

- 5

Dolman Theatre

Materials: Brick, Glass

Colours: Brown
- 6

Cross Lane Houses

Materials: Brick

Colours: Multicolour renders
- 7

Lidl Store

Materials: Metal cladding

Colours: Grey, Blue
- 8

Future Leisure Centre

Materials: Metal cladding, Glass

Colours: Bluegrey, white
- 9

University of South Wales

Materials: Stone effect &Metal Cladding, Glass

Colours: Dark Grey, Yellow
- 10

Riverfront Theatre

Materials: Brick, Metal Cladding, Glass

Colours: Grey, Light Grey,

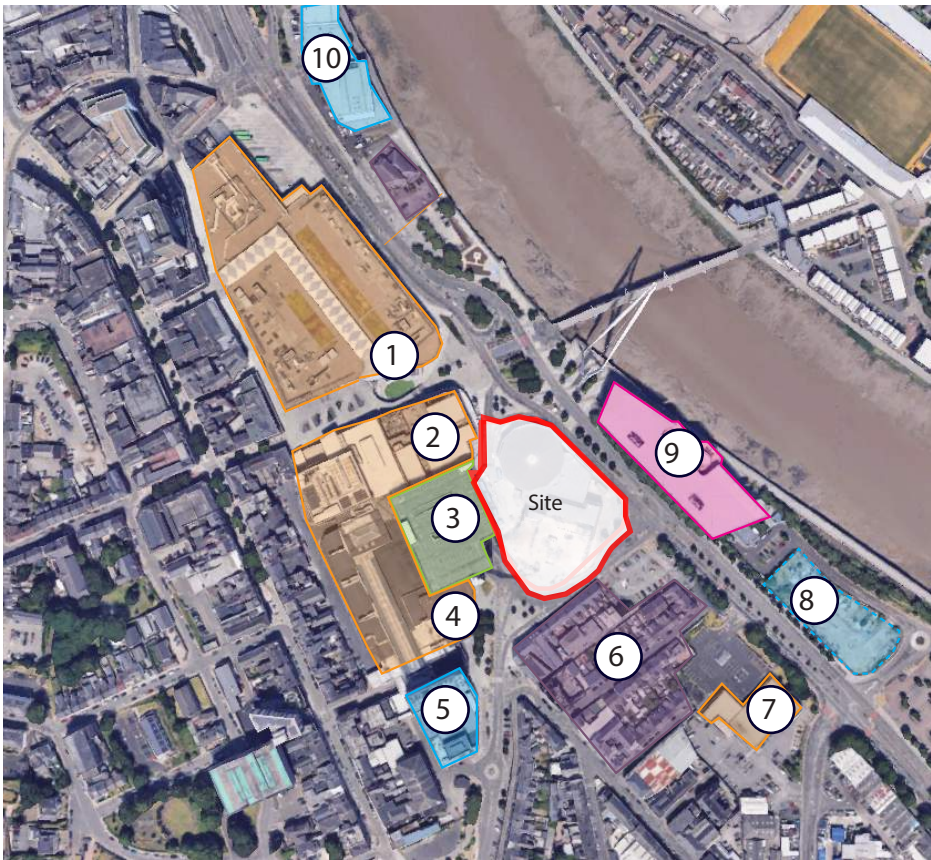


Figure 16- Showing the neighbour buildings locations



4.3 Landscape Asset

There are several recently completed public open spaces (POS) in the immediate setting of the development. These typically include high-quality rain gardens, street trees and some artworks.



Figure 17 - Extract from the Newport City Centre Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (May 2022)

POS -
Steel Wave at
Kutaisi Walk along
the River Usk



Street trees and
lawn in front of
the Dolman
Theatre



POS -
Viewpoint, Rain
Gardens and
Trees between
Kutaisi Walk and
Kingsway



Planting beds/
trees to front of St
Paul's Church



Rain Gardens and
Avenue trees
along Kingsway



City Square -
Planting beds,
Street trees at
Mariners Green



POS -
Raised beds at
John Frost Square



Avenue Trees
along Usk Way



5.0

Proposed Development

5.1 Scale

5.1.1 Overview

The proposal comprises a new educational campus of approximately 16,000m² for Coleg Gwent as part of the Newport Knowledge Quarter regeneration initiative.

The scheme will relocate the Nash Road Campus and provide further education, higher education, vocational learning, adult education, and community-facing facilities within Newport city centre.

5.1.2 Urban Design and Massing

The building adopts a substantial metropolitan scale that reflects the strategic prominence of the site, the scale of the Kingsway corridor, adjacent commercial development and the emerging educational quarter centered on the University of South Wales Campus building.

The proposal seeks to restore frontage definition and urban enclosure to a fragmented edge condition. Continuous built form is introduced along the principal frontages, while the triangular geometry of the site informs the massing.

The building is markedly larger than the surviving nineteenth-century terraces within parts of the conservation area. However, it also responds to the enlarged scale already established by Kingsway, Friars Walk, the former Newport Centre and adjacent commercial development.



Render 1- View showing the proposed building from the northeast (Usk way)



Render 2- The Entrance of the Building from the northwest (Usk Plaza)



Render 3- Public Realm between the Coleg Gwent and the MSCP



Render 4- looking north along Usk Way

5.2 Façades

The façade is articulated through vertical bays, expressed structural rhythm, recessed glazing, modulation of solid and void and variation in depth and shadow to reduce the apparent mass of the building.

This 5-storey building, with circa 16,000 sqm of floorspace, will be a significant landmark in Newport. The primary frontage faces north, providing a window onto the city and creates a great accent to the northern façade (See Detailed Elevation 1). Pedestrian scale is provided at the ground floor with carefully articulated brickwork, while the upper floors create a contrast in colour and material with the metal cladding. For the northern façade, which is the main side in the building’s hierarchy, glazing is a main element.

The eastern elevation (Detailed elevation 2), the core of the building is five-storey, with the entrance feature rising another two storey higher, before sloping gradually towards the south. This creates a visual effect of scaling down the building to the south towards the residential Conservation Area. This elevation also shows the transformation at the ground floor to a solid brick wall. The transition is smooth and balances out the massing of the building. The solid wall’s height varies, rising towards the southern boundary, while the frontage slopes down, as mentioned, and the core five-storey building roof is flat. These elements together give a dynamic to the building from the east side.



Key Plan - Building



Detailed Elevation 1 - North



Detailed Elevation 2 - East



Detailed Elevation 3 - Southeast

Photovoltaic panels will be installed on the south-facing sloping roof. These elements would potentially be visible from the southeast and southwest locations (Detailed elevations 3 and 4), and mitigation would be needed. The height of the rear brick solid wall varies, creating a dynamic wave pattern around the building.

The western elevation of the building differs from the east (Detailed Elevation 5). Glazing is more dominant; the brick details rise from the ground floor towards the third storey, forming a parallel line to the sloping roof. This façade is more settled, creating a good background to the public realm.

There is a service yard to the south of the building that requires screening from Emlyn Street. The southern elevation (Detailed Elevation 6) shows the reduced height building, with a featured brick wall boundary, incorporating some perforated metal elements to hide the proposed water tanks. The rear vehicular entrance is located to the south.

The scale and articulation of the brick boundary wall to the service yard lends itself to a level of detail to reflect the historic residential edge and complete the streetscape of Emlyn Street.



Key Plan - Building



Detailed Elevation 4 - Southwest



Detailed Elevation 5 - West

5.3 Proposed Material Palette

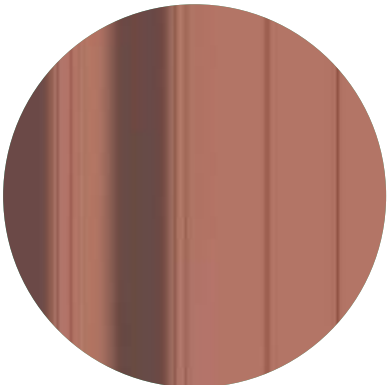
The design adopts a contemporary architectural language and does not attempt to replicate lost dockland buildings. Instead, it responds to the historic context through scale transition, frontage continuity, vertical articulation, and robust civic materiality. This approach draws on the repetitive plot rhythm and vertical emphasis of surviving commercial frontages within the Lower Dock Street Conservation Area without resorting to imitation.

The RIBA Stage 3 proposals describe a material palette that references the industrial and civic character historically associated with Newport’s dockland quarter while clearly presenting the building as a contemporary intervention. The specification of heavy masonry cladding, expressed structural framing, and robust vertical bay modulation draws direct contextual reference from the substantial brick frontages and exposed iron structural frameworks of the former Emlyn Iron Works buildings that historically defined this block.

The palette is anticipated to include masonry cladding, metal panelling, glazing and expressed structural framing to create depth, rhythm, and visual solidity in the principal elevations.

Durable, visually weighty materials are important in responding to the robust industrial character of the surrounding townscape and surviving dockland architecture.

An options study was carried out to explore a range of brick and cladding colour combinations. Final material and colour selections will be confirmed with consideration made to client requirements, architectural context, durability and aesthetic appeal. See the preferred colour options from the study.



Cladding



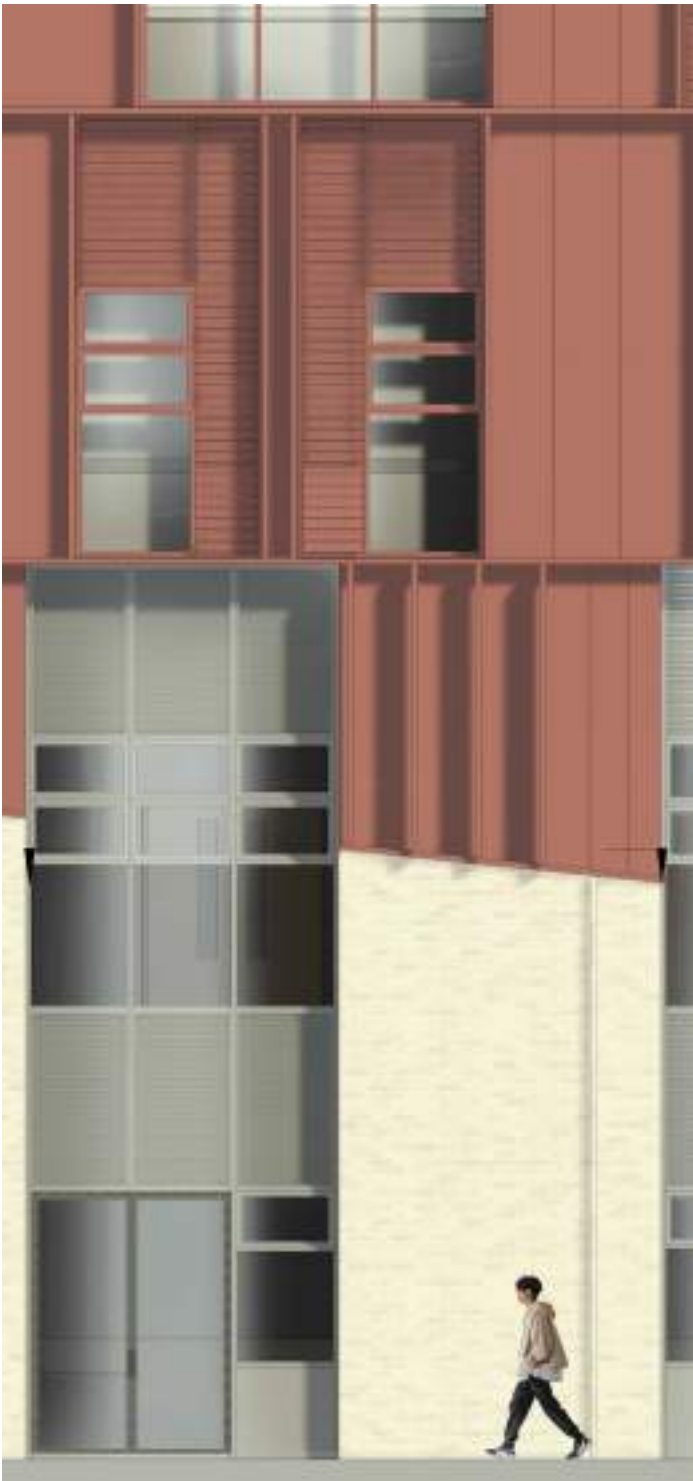
Window Frames



Curtain Walling



Brick Plinth



5.4 Landscape Proposal

5.4.1 Overview

The landscape design has been developed to respond sensitively to a complex set of site conditions, while creating a coherent and welcoming setting for the new building and its wider urban context. As a prominent city centre site with high levels of footfall, the proposals aim to support legibility, safety, and movement, while incorporating robust and manageable public realm elements. Key design moves include a clearly legible pedestrian network that accommodates strong north–south desire lines, connecting Friars Walk and the city centre to key destinations to the south and east. The layout facilitates inclusive access to all building entrances and accommodates anticipated pedestrian flows.

A simple broad paved footpath is provided to Usk Way, broken up and softened by the introduction of rain garden beds and semi mature street tree planting, mirroring and reinforcing the existing avenue planting to the North of Usk Way. To the West of the building the Public Realm area provides a more informal streetscape. Seating is provided for public and college users strategically located by entrances and key spaces. Planting design is restrained, primarily due to the density of underground services across the site. New tree planting in the ground is proposed where opportunities occur but is still subject to ongoing discussions with service providers and SABS approval. The use of movable raised planters with large specimen plants will provide impact and spatial definition.

A large cycle shelter is located to the west, near the boundary with the multi-storey car park, providing active travel infrastructure (80 spaces) close to the main building entrance.

To the south, an enclosed service yard accommodates operational needs, including staff cycle parking and vehicle access, while minimising its visual and spatial impact.

The scheme overall reflects a pragmatic but thoughtful approach to city centre public realm — balancing robustness, movement, and user comfort.



Landscape Masterplan - NE0101-ASL-00-ZZ-DR-L-00901

5.4.2 Proposed Hard Landscape

The proposed hard landscape design responds to the varying character and prominence of the spaces surrounding the new college building, using a clear material hierarchy to reflect movement, setting and function.

High-quality natural granite stone paving is proposed around the building's main circulation areas, continuing the palette established for Friars Walk. This area will also accommodate limited emergency vehicle access from the north, designed to maintain a predominantly pedestrian character while allowing for three-point turning movements.

All surfaces are designed to be flush and fully accessible, with paving set against planters, rain gardens, or retained edges to provide definition.

5.4.3 Proposed Soft Landscape

Opportunities for soft landscape interventions across the site are limited, primarily due to the density of underground services and associated easements. Tree planting is especially constrained, with limited scope in the prominent zones. However, opportunities have been taken to propose limited new tree planting through a variety of tree planting techniques. These include planting into topsoiled beds where utilities allow, provision of SuDS trees within rain garden beds, installing tree pits in paved areas using engineered tree pit systems, and planting multi-stemmed specimens in raised planters.

12 new trees are proposed across the site with 6 multi-stemmed specimens in planters. This includes the replacement of 3 poor quality trees to the junction at Emlyn Street as identified in the aboricultural report carried out in 2022.

Plant species have been chosen for climate change resilience, seasonal interest, and textural variety, providing visual richness while remaining suited to the challenging urban conditions. Many species are valuable for wildlife providing berries, flowers for pollinators, and increasing biodiversity across the site.

Extensive green roofs are proposed atop the service yard enclosures. These will help mitigate visual impact when viewed from the upper levels of the college building and will also contribute to the site's overall biodiversity value.

At the south west corner of the service yard wall, a façade

greening system is proposed using climbing plants growing up tensioned steel wires. This not only softens views towards this key approach but enhances biodiversity and green infrastructure.

5.4.4 SuDS Planting

The soft landscape integrates with the site-wide Sustainable urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS) through the inclusion of rain gardens, located where underground conditions allow. These features support surface water management while also enhancing the biodiversity and ecological character of the site. The rain garden beds include mixes of trees, shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses, suited to the extremes of temporary wet and dry conditions.

5.4.6 Material Palette

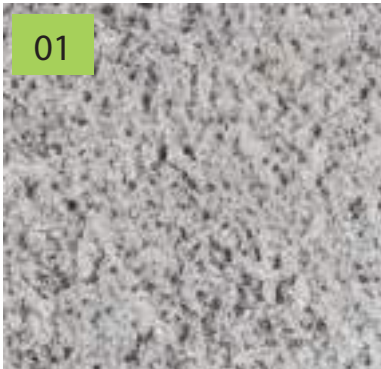
01/ Paving To Public Realm, Usk Way and north frontage
Manufacturer: Hardscape or accepted equivalent
Product: Grisa Vilsara
Material: Natural stone - granite
Bond: Staggered
Finish: Flammed
Colour: Grey
Dimensions: 600 x 200 x 80 mm

02/ Paving to south footpaths and service yard
Manufacturer: Hardscape or accepted equivalent
Product: Kilsaran - Newgrange
Material: Concrete
Bond: Stretcher
Finish: Shotblasted
Dimensions: 600 x 300 x 50 mm
Colour: Silver granite

03/ Paving to roof terrace
Manufacturer: Hardscape or accepted equivalent
Product: Kilsaran - Newgrange
Material: Concrete
Bond: Stacked
Finish: Shotblasted
Dimensions: 400 x 400 x 63 mm
Colour: Buff granite

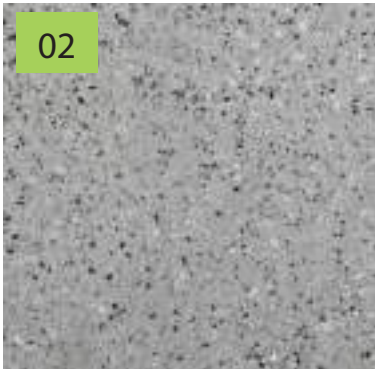
01/ Paving To Public
Realm and Frontage

600 x 200 x 80mm
Grisa Vilsara flamed



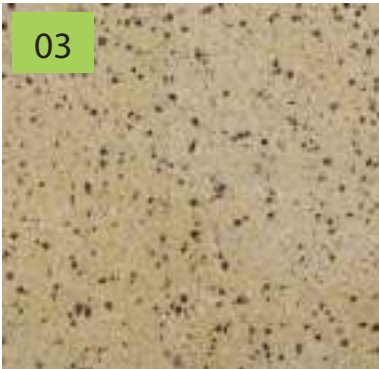
02/ Paving To South and
East Footpaths / Service
yard

600 x 300 x 50mm
Newgrange



03/ Paving to Roof Terrace

400 x 400 x 63mm
Newgrange



Indicative planting species



Deschampsia
caespitosa 'Goldtau'



Ajuga reptans 'Atropurpurea'



Miscanthus 'Yakushima
Dwarf'



Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'



Geranium 'Ingwersens
Variety'



Hebe 'Blue Gem'



Ceanothus 'Repens'



Brachyglottis 'Sunshine'



Prunus 'Umineko'



Amelanchier arborea 'Robin Hill' (MS)



Green wall trellis system

5.5 Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

5.5.1 Opportunities

The proposed development site lies within the City Core, adjacent to or in proximity to recently developed public realm projects in a prime location. There is a big opportunity to connect this development to these green spots using a similar approach, materials and landscaping language by creating raingardens and high-quality, long-life materials such as natural stone paving.

The Newport City Centre Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (May 2022) identifies green infrastructure opportunities within the city Centre (including the City Core) and describes them in the Building Blocks of Green Infrastructure Chapter. The recommended list is the following:

- SuDS Planting
- Green Roofs (extensive/Intensive) and Blue Roofs
- Green Walls (climbing plants/living wall)
- Street Trees
- Street Furniture
- Traffic-free routes
- Greenspace
- Blue Space
- Natural Play
- Biodiversity

Most of these green infrastructure opportunities can be utilised. There is an opportunity and scope to propose SUDs closer to the entrance area.

There are extensive and intensive proposals for green roofs along the scheme.

The rear wall offers an opportunity for climbing plants, which can grow even over the brickwork to the perforated metal elements.

There are proposed trees along the scheme, which link to the existing tree corridor and cluster of trees. However, these trees are constrained in size and location due to underground services.

Street furniture and utility structures can be chosen wisely, keeping biodiversity in mind. There is an opportunity to

create a place for a bug hotel within the quiet zone of the development in the west; proposed cycle storage can incorporate a sedum roof or a green wall.

Traffic-free routes can be achieved within the western part of the public realm, leaving an approx. 3-metre corridor for active travel.

The scheme is limited in terms of classical green or blue spaces to urban green infrastructure, mentioned above.

There might be an opportunity for play elements within the public realm, and there is a certain intention to enhance biodiversity by creating little blocks of green along the scheme.

A New Era for Newport - Newport Placemaking Plan (June 2025) Rev 3 is specifically gives recommendation in terms of the Coleg Gwent development. These key considerations, mentioned previously in the Policy section are also opportunities and can make the proposed public realm more lively. These opportunities are the following:

- Enhance pedestrian and cycle connections between the campus, transport hubs, and key city destinations.
- Improve wayfinding and public realm design to create a welcoming and navigable urban environment.
- Promote a mix of uses around the campus, such as student-friendly cafés, study spaces, and cultural venues, to enhance vibrancy beyond academic hours.
- Integrate arts, culture, and heritage elements into the campus environment to strengthen its connection to the city's identity.
- Consider how student housing, leisure, and wellbeing facilities can be improved within the city to support student life.
- Support a low-carbon, walkable city Centre, reducing reliance on private transport.
- Use the campus as a catalyst for future regeneration, influencing development patterns and investment in surrounding areas.

60 Big Ideas for Newport document also lists many place-making opportunities, which partially overlap with the previous lists, but also mention new ideas.

- Bring Music to the Streets of Newport
- Youth Hub
- Water Feature
- Playground
- Bring Newport's History to Life
- City Centre Education
- Plant More Trees
- Street Lighting
- Colourful Dragons
- More Accessible Recycling Points
- More Environmental Interventions

A good range of placemaking opportunities can be met in the scheme through a sensible urban realm design and chosen street furniture on the west side of the development.

In terms of proposing any reference to Newport's History, there is an opportunity to indicate the existence of previously standing Newport Iron Works and the related residential edge within the southern area design.

5.5.2 Constraints

There are several constraints relating to the landscape. These are the utilities, services, and easements along the Kingsway and Usk Way, which restrict tree planting and planting in general.

Functionality: To create access to all building entrances and anticipated pedestrian flows.

A strong north-south desire line, connecting Friars Walk and the city Centre to key destinations to the south and east.

The Lower Dock Conservation Area is adjacent to the southern site boundary and constitutes a sensitive area that has to be considered in the design.

Public safety has to be in mind to avoid any attack on the vulnerable northern frontage or anti-social behaviour in the proposed public realm next to the multi-story car park.

There must be fire engine access within the public realm area.

The rear service yard accommodates high features, such as water tanks, which need screening.

6.0

Visibility

6.1 Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) identifies the geographical area from which a proposed or existing development can theoretically be seen.

Our assessment is based on a site visit in June 2026. We identified the approximate extent of visibility, as well as tall buildings and bridges from which the proposed development will be visible.

As Figure 18 shows, Coleg Gwent will be a landmark, visible from the main roads in the city(Kingsway, Usk Way), from most of the river corridor paths and buildings, from the main city centre bridges (Newport Bridge, Newport City Footbridge, George Street Bridge), from tall buildings within the city and from some residential areas.

The Northern part of the visibility zone is the railway bridge and Clarence House. the Millennium Walk is in the East, and the George Street Bridge and Newport Student Village to the southeast. Usk Way, Cross Lane, and Ebenezer Terrace and Kingsway are to the South, and the Kingsway Shopping Centre, Multistory Car park, Friars Walk to the West. The Newport Market Sq Bus station lies to the northwest.

We identified 15 Viewpoint locations to show representative potential views towards the site (See Figure 18) and of these proposed five key views towards the site, which are potential photomontage locations (See Figure 24). These viewpoints were later agreed with the LPA.

The SZTV helps not only to identify the visibility area, but also used to identify receptors.

