

TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS AND INDICATORS REPORT

ERF 14888-RE, NEWMARKET STREET, WOODSTOCK



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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Specialist Study

The Response to the NID called for a townscape analysis as part of the Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed development of Erf 14888-Re, Newmarket Street, and this report looks to fulfil that requirement.

The report analyses how the site contributes to the physical townscape that it is located within, including the “high street” fabric along Albert Road/Newmarket Street, and the section of urban development immediately to the south, east and west. It also takes cognisance of the urban design framework planning for the large land parcels to the south, in District Six (Figure 1).

Following this analysis, the townscape study suggests the appropriate scale and form that reflects the structuring elements and spatial patterns of this part of Woodstock; and takes future planning into consideration.



Figure 1: Locality Plan, showing the site outlined in red, and the wider urban pocket within which it is located shown in a dashed red line.

Therefore, this report looks to:

- a. Analyse the urban townscape within which the site is located.
- b. Review of existing urban design framework plans for District Six and the surrounds, with a focus on the edges closest to the subject site.
- c. Distill townscape indicators for the site.

It is understood that this specialist study is to form part of a Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment, and therefore does not assess possible development proposals.

Instead, the central purpose of this study is to identify heritage significances related to the townscape surrounding the site, and to establish heritage related indicators to guide the townscape response of the intended development.

This report was undertaken by Claire Abrahamse, an urban designer and heritage practitioner, who is a member of UDISA and APHP, and who maintains her independence from the commissioning party and has no interests in the outcome of the proposed development.

2. SITE ASSESSMENT: THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE WITHIN WHICH THE SITE IS LOCATED

2.1 Purpose of a Site Assessment

A site assessment is vital in understanding the role and potential of the site within its broader context. It needs to occur at a variety of scales, and the information resulting from the site assessment directly informs the key heritage-based townscape indicators.

Unlike a pure urban design analysis, a heritage-based townscape analysis is primarily concerned with ensuring contextually-appropriate design responses, and does not deal as extensively with issues of urban regeneration and “visioning” as a traditional urban design response. The focus is on ensuring sufficient urban consistency within the context, ideally framing the townscape parameters within which the urban design vision can be realized.

2.2 Site Location and Context

The site is located on the edge of Cape Town’s Central Business District (CBD), in the inner-city suburb of Woodstock. As such, it shows a degree of high density and mixed-use that is directly related to its centrality within the wider metropolitan area.

The site is located close to major transport infrastructure: the main railway lines into Cape Town edge the site to the north, and the Strand Street on- and off-ramp from Helen Suzman Boulevard define the edge of the site to the west. The highway also provides a clear “gateway moment” along Stand-Newmarket Street, and defines the transition into and out of the central city. Historically, the toll into the city was located at Trafalgar Park.

Therefore, the site therefore forms part of an interesting threshold precinct, or urban “pocket”, between a more modern gateway element (the elevated freeway) and a more historical gateway, at the Hollandse Redoubt/bus station site, as well as at Trafalgar Park (Figure 2).

Within this “pocket”, the urban fabric is highly ordered by the narrowing together of the primary roadways, namely Victoria Road, Albert Road/ Newmarket Street and the highway system. Newmarket Street itself functions

as a primary arterial route within the city (Figure 3).

Major cultural and historical sites within the vicinity of the site include the Castle, the Good Hope Centre and District Six. Several historic religious buildings, as well as the park itself, add to the civic and historical landscape (Figure 4).

In recent years, there has been a revitalization of the immediate area with significant new developments, mainly introducing office space. To the east of Trafalgar Park, extensive new residential development has occurred. The scale and quality of investments in the area have led to it becoming a more vibrant and sought-after inner-city area, but is also changing its urban character, and sometimes creating difficulty for the receiving community (Figure 5).

The immediate site and its surrounds are not defined by residential development, either historically or recently. See section 2.3 for a character analysis.

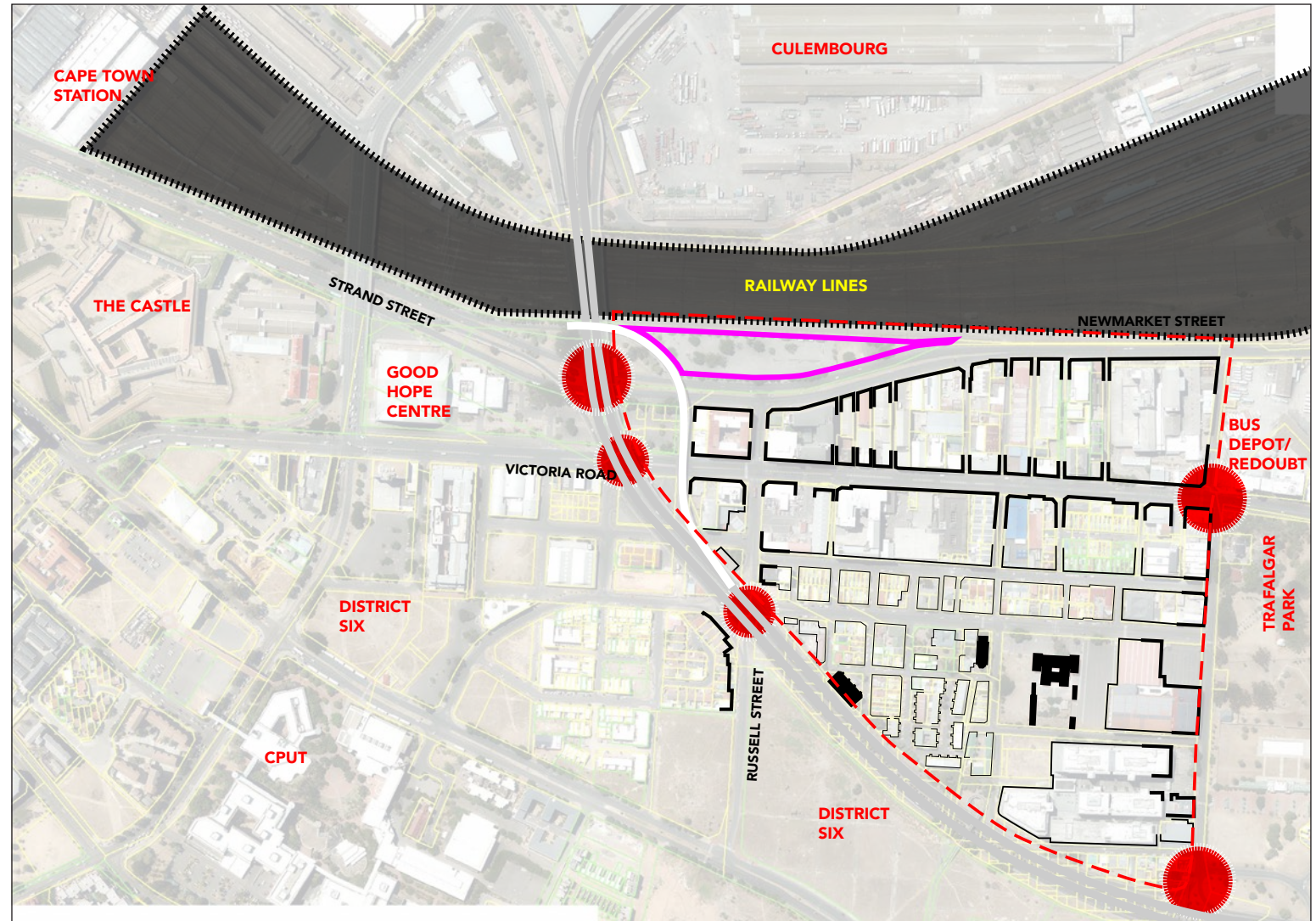


Figure 2: The site, shown in pink outline, is divided from the surrounding urban fabric by highways, railways and Trafalgar Park. There are a few "gateway moments" where access to this pocket can be obtained from the surrounding fabric,

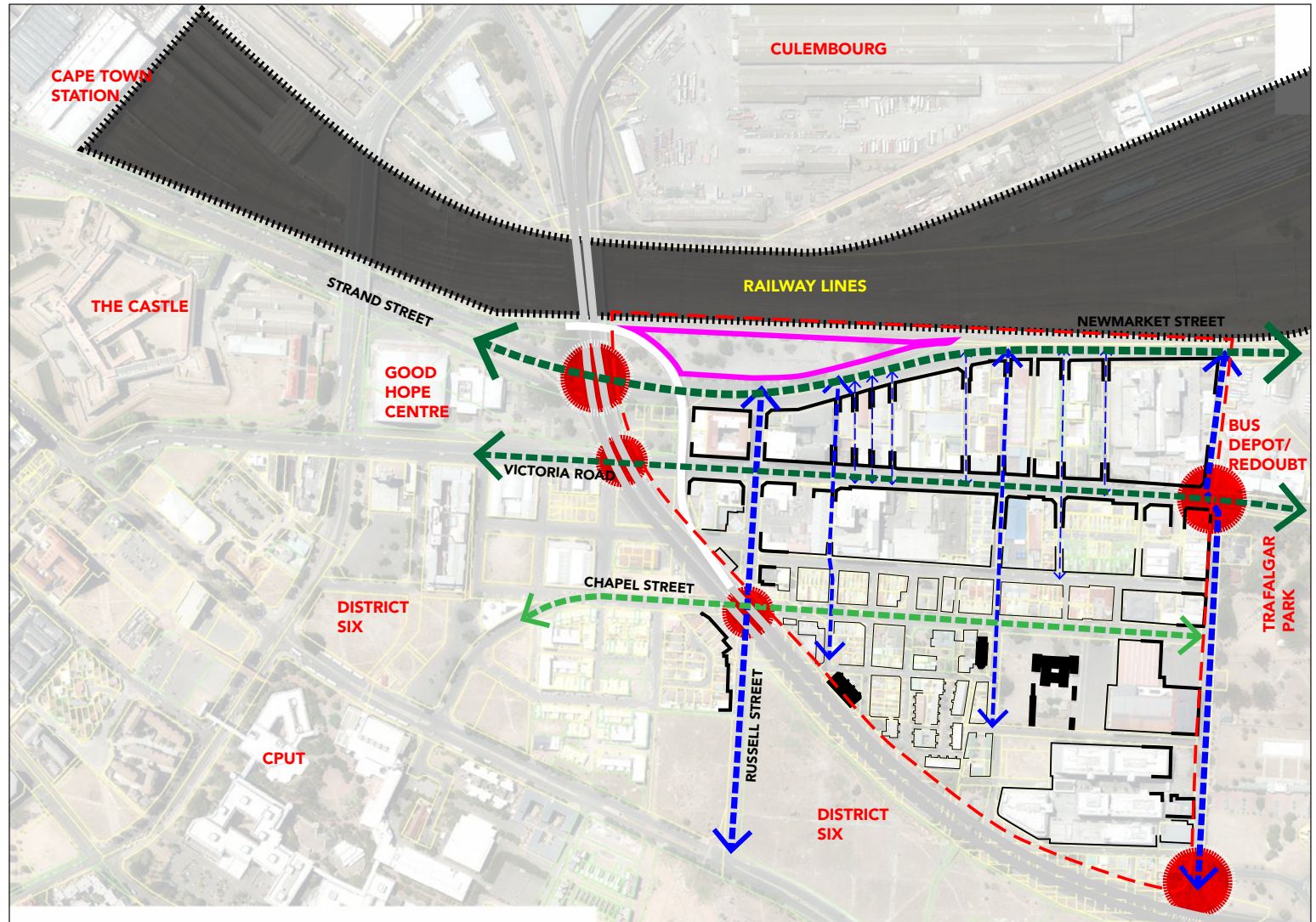


Figure 3: The site, shown in pink outline, is located along a major east-west arterial route - Newmarket and Albert Road. Victoria Road forms a similarly higher-order route, while Chapel Street will perform a local east-west connecting role with the development of District Six.

Similarly, Russel Street will become a primary north-south linking street once District Six is developed.

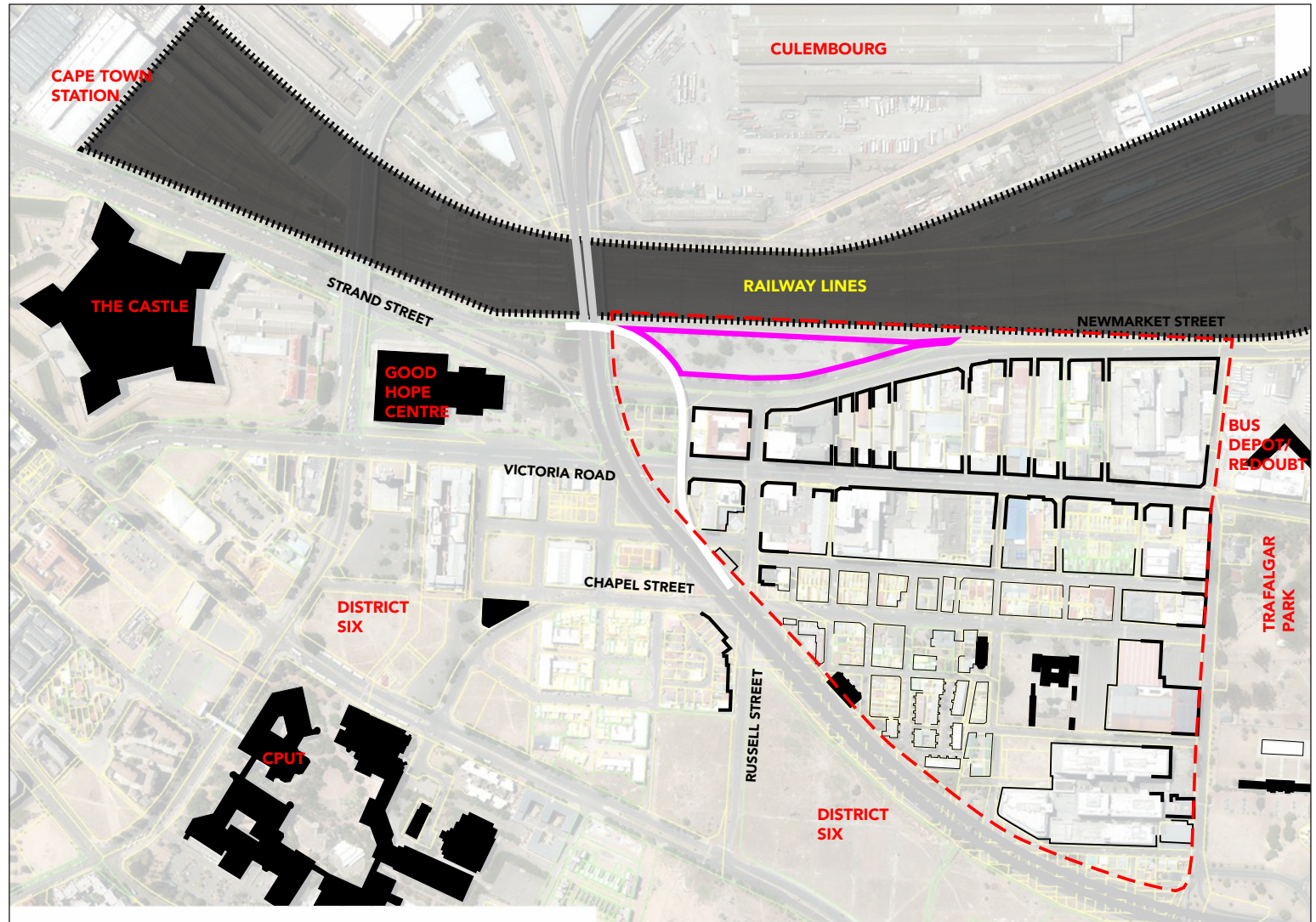


Figure 4: Major cultural/academic sites are shown in black.

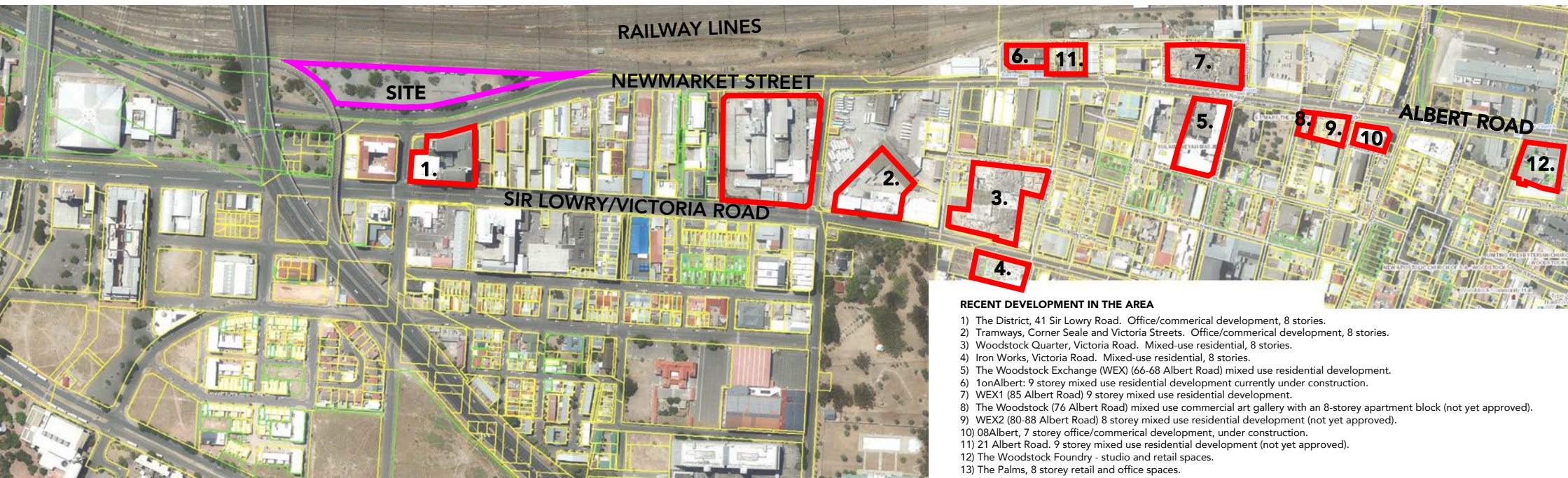


Figure 5A: The scale and quality of investments in the area have led to it becoming a more vibrant and sought-after inner-city area, but is also changing its urban character, and sometimes creating difficulty for the receiving community.



Figure 5B: The District Building, opposite the site. (Source: <https://www.commercialspace.co.za/properties/district/>).



5C: The Tramways redevelopment. (Source: Swish Property Group).



5D: Woodstock Quarter. (Source: Swish Property Group).



5E: The Palms redevelopment. (Source: <https://www.property24.com/to-rent/woodstock/cape-town/western-cape/10164/110418799>).

2.3 Character of the Context

Although close to the CBD and many notable civic and historical sites, and the “pocket” itself constitutes a mature and layered piece of urban fabric, the precinct within which the subject site is located has many negative urban characteristics.

- Firstly, the railway lines to the north and elevated freeway that encircles the precinct to the west and south create inactive edges and barriers that divorce the pocket from surrounding uses and fabric to the north, west and south.
- The precinct and its edges have also seen a substantial amount of demolition of historic building fabric, associated with the introduction of the freeways and with the demolitions at District Six.
- Many sites have been consolidated to accommodate industrial uses in the 20th century, with long and high walls along the street edges. This particularly impacts the narrow laneways that run between Victoria Road and Newmarket Street, which are very hostile pedestrian spaces.
- There is no predominant architectural character in the precinct, which instead “reads” as a collage of different building types and typologies from different eras. There is a notable and interesting juxtaposition of Victorian-era and modernist industrial buildings.
- It is also important to note that Newmarket Street is “one-sided” until it passes Gympie Street, on the opposite side of Trafalgar Park/ the Hollandse Redoubt site. The development of the subject site is the only opportunity to introduce built fabric on the seaward side of Newmarket Street.
- The industrial nature of many of the buildings means that the response to the main “high streets” of Victoria and Newmarket is relatively poor, as compared to the area further towards Salt River. There are no pedestrian canopies and few ground-level retail shops within the precinct.

All of this results in an urban pocket with fairly poor and hostile edge conditions.



Figure 6A: Highway forms a hostile edge.



Figure 6C: Solid walls create negative edges.



Figure 6D: Industrial edges and fine-grain.

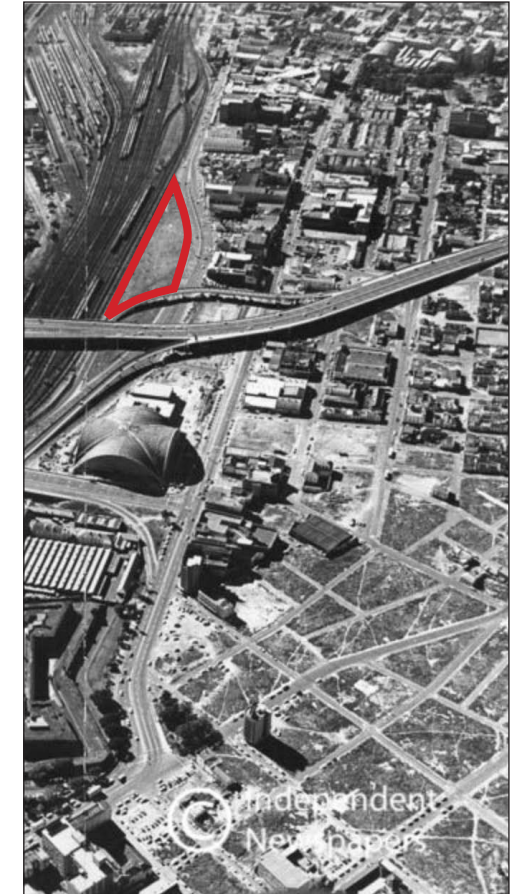


Figure 6B: Demolitions in c1960s (UCT Library)



Figure 6E: Inactive street edges.

Despite these challenges, the site and its wider context does display some positive characteristics:

- The site is characterised by many mature trees along its edges and within its extent.
- The site is located close to Trafalgar Park, a significant green space within the City.
- Although under-developed and bisected by busy vehicular routes, the site is edged to the west by a series of green, open “left over” spaces that connect to the Civic Centre and the Castle, and represent an opportunity for a more pedestrian-orientated space.
- The site enjoys spectacular views of Devil’s Peak, Table Mountain, Lion’s Head and Signal Hill. It has good views towards the CBD.
- The scale, massing and form of buildings in the area is strongly influenced by the sloping terrain, with smaller, finer and more residential fabric located along the upper slopes, and more bulky, mixed-use and taller development located between Victoria and Newmarket Street. This indicates that there is scope for intensification on the subject site.
- The site enjoys excellent access to vehicular, railway and public transport infrastructure.
- Because the area is mature, there are several well-developed public facilities in the vicinity, including schools, churches, mosques, clinics, and a swimming pool.



Figure 6F: Mature trees on the site.



Figure 6G: Trafalgar Park is close to the site. (Source: <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/Local/Peoples-Post/trafalgar-to-be-upgraded-20160222>)

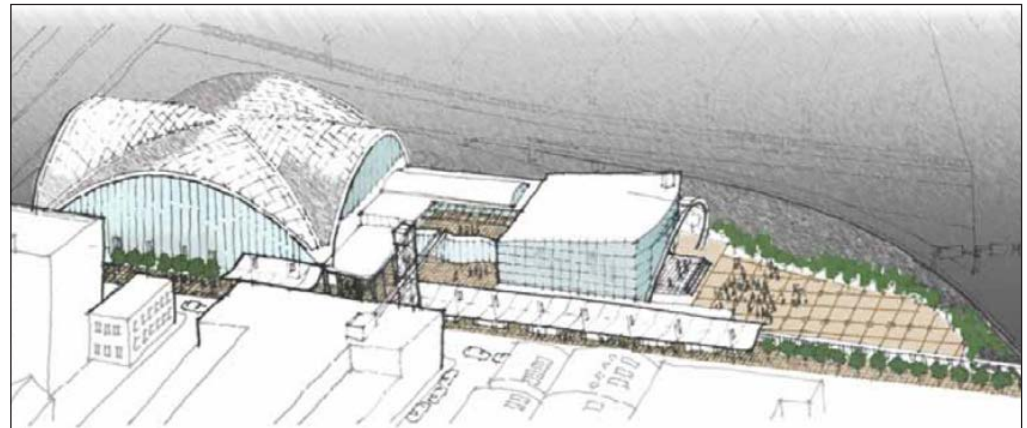


Figure 6H: Proposed renewal of the Good Hope Centre by ACG Architects, to create a Cultural Precinct with the Castle and Grand Parade.

2.4 Permitted Land Uses and Recent Development

One of the defining elements of the area is its mixed-use nature with a good mix of commercial, retail, residential and industrial/warehouse uses. In recent years, there have been several medium-to-high-rise developments in the area, largely comprising offices. However, a taller residential development is planned along Victoria Road. All these developments have capitalized on the excellent mountain and sea views that are achieved with taller structures. At present, a 25m height datum is largely adhered to.

To the east of the site, along Albert Road, several new developments have been realized in recent years, and largely focus on a residential offering.

The entire pocket, excluding the school, is zoned Mixed Use 2, which generally permits 8 storeys in height. However, some land parcels on the opposite side of the highway (westwards) are zoned Mixed Use 3, which allows 11 stories (Figure 7).

The Harbour Arch development, currently under construction to the north of the site, is set to be 24 stories in some areas. Six tower structures are planned. However, this building is located to the west of the highway, within the bounds of the CBD.

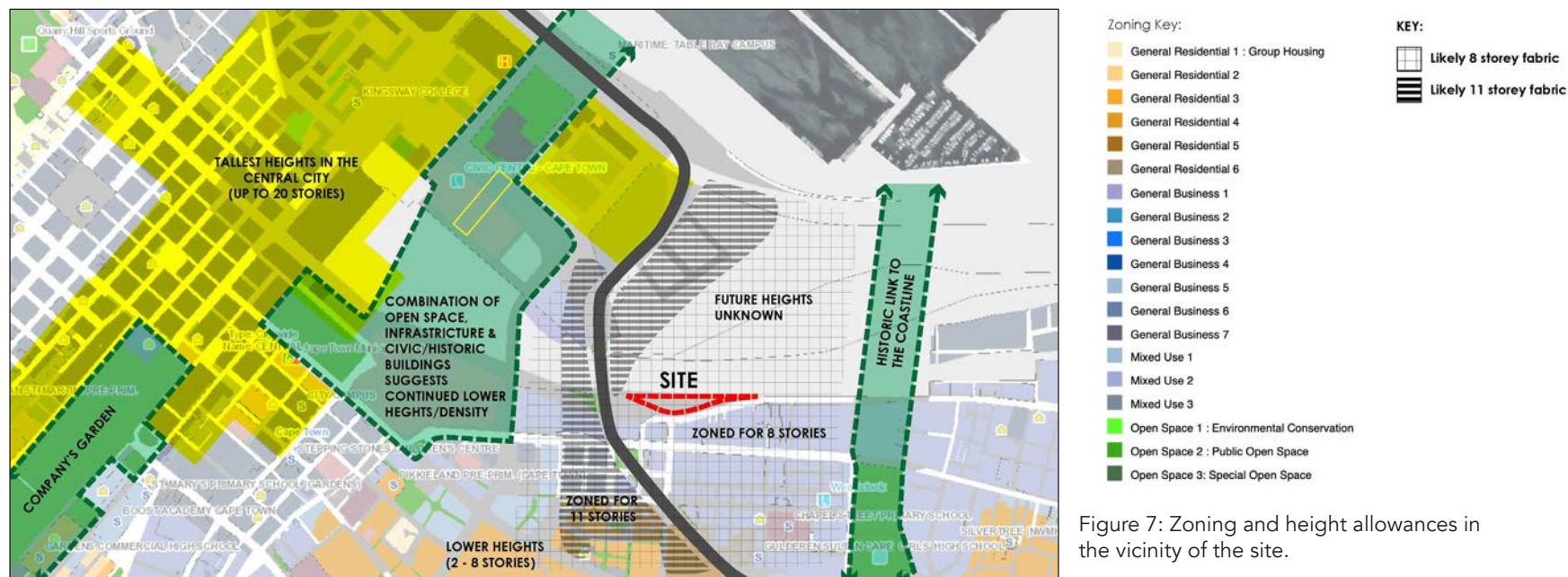


Figure 7: Zoning and height allowances in the vicinity of the site.

2.5 Heritage Aspects

The site is not graded and does not fall within a Heritage Protection Overlay Zone, nor is one proposed for this area. The rest of the precinct has been extensively surveyed from a heritage perspective, and all falls within an existing or proposed Heritage Protection Overlay Zone (Figure 8).

It is important to note that the buildings edging Newmarket Street to the south have all been graded, and largely have been found to be “Not Conservation Worthy”. Therefore, as a streetscape, Newmarket Street is of low heritage significance. However, on closer analysis it does display some clear patterns and characteristics that are important to consider and reinforce (Fig. 9):

1. The three-to-four storey height datum: Almost all the structures facing the street have a clear podium of 3-4 storeys, and additional height is set back above this.
2. The structures all present narrow edges to the street, which results from long, narrow plots running between Victoria and Newmarket Streets. This results in a relatively fine grain, with a lot of façade variation, despite the structures being quite tall.

3. The laneways and wider streets create a very clear movement order of intersecting streets. These laneways also contribute to the resultant finer grain.
4. The architecture is largely masonry/masonry-infill on concrete frame, plastered and painted.
5. The overall heights vary, but the general gradient is from 4 storeys close to the site, to 7/8 stories closest to the Hollandse Redoubt/Bus Depot site.
6. While the industrial sites tend to incorporate a yard along the street edge, the most successful buildings edge the street in a “perimeter block” arrangement. This is particularly discernable in the case of the 4 storey brick Victorian building on the corner of Newmarket and Russel Streets.



Figure 9: Prevalent streetscape patterns.

Dewar and Uytembogaard also note the following requirements for buildings facing the primary high streets within Woodstock (1997):

- Urbanity
- Shelter
- Individuality
- Responsibility to Public Space and
- Multifunctionality of Space.

- ✓ Local Heritage Resources: Grade III
 - Grade IIIA
 - Grade IIIB
 - Grade IIIC
 - Potential Grade III: Some significance
 - Not Conservation-Worthy
 - Requires Further Investigation
- ✓ Declared HPO/HA
- ✓ Proposed HPO/HA

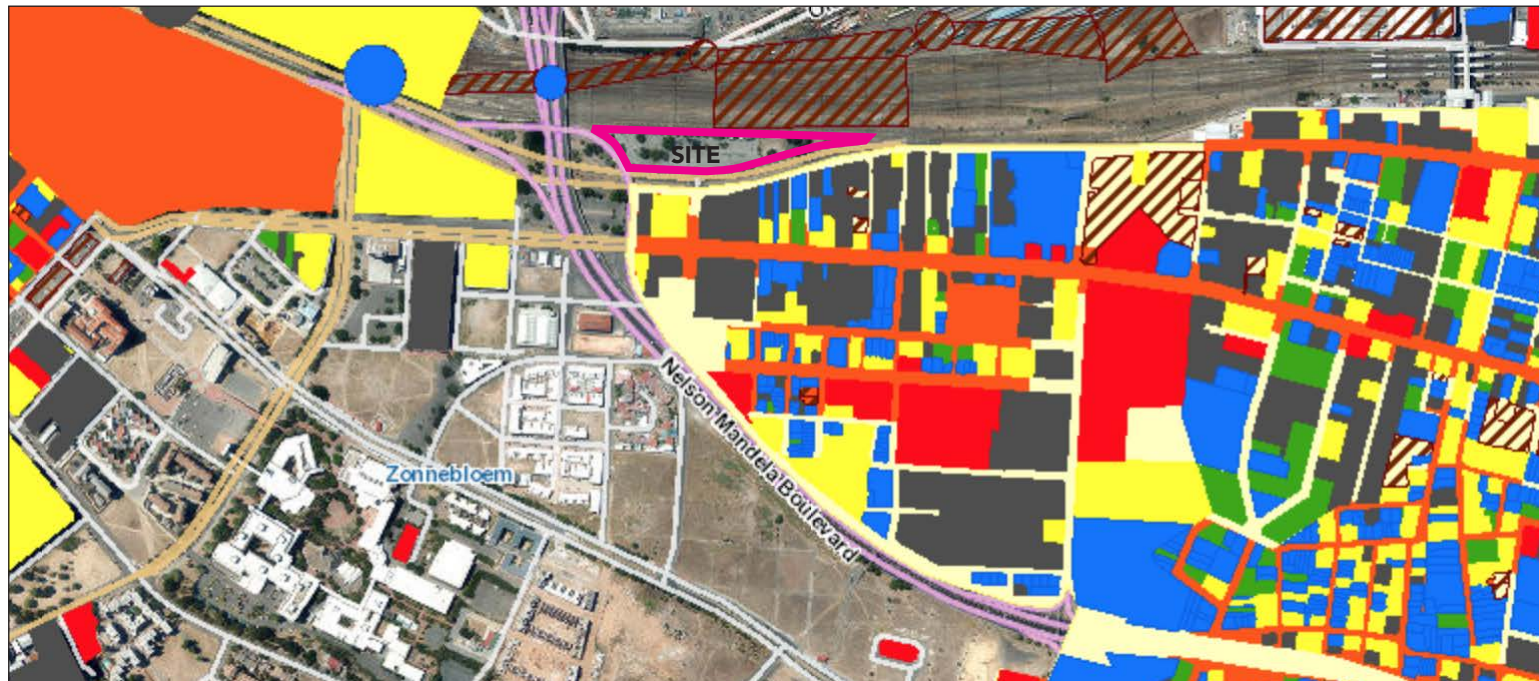


Figure 8: CoCT Heritage Map, with the site outlined in pink.

2.6 Relevant Planning and Urban Design Informants

The subject site is highly accessible within the metropolis, and its adjacency to the CBD gives it prominence in the City's planning and urban design frameworks. Because the precinct has seen demolition in the past, there have been large-scale urban design frameworks developed for the areas to the south and west of it.

From a purely heritage perspective, the site falls with the South African Heritage Resource Agency's proposed Grade 1 area for District Six (Fig. 10). In addition, the site falls outside the proclaimed Heritage Protection Overlay Zone running along Victoria Road (Fig. 11). However, it is located close to existing and proposed HPOZ's, so it is useful to consider the recommendation related to these areas, which are that:

New buildings within heritage areas must:

- Be positioned on the site in a way that follows earlier and existing patterns of development. The setbacks from boundaries should also be consistent with the older fabric.
- The form, volume, massing, scale and height of new buildings should be sympathetic to neighbours and follow the general patterns of development within the area.
- The choice of colours and materials should be based on the traditional colours and materials used in the area.
- The proportions of windows, doors and facades should be sympathetic to the proportions used in existing buildings.
- The roofscapes, boundary treatments, landscaping and planting should be carefully considered and should follow the original patterns of development in the area.

The Woodstock-Salt River Revitalisation Framework (Nisa Mammon and Associates with Du Toit and Perrin, June 2002) largely focusses on the area to the east of Trafalgar Park, but a major aspect of this framework was the proposal for a green link through the park, to Newmarket Street (Fig. 12). This proposal has been carried forward into later planning and landscape frameworks (CCDS and Trafalgar Park Landscape Plan, by City Think Space and Square1).

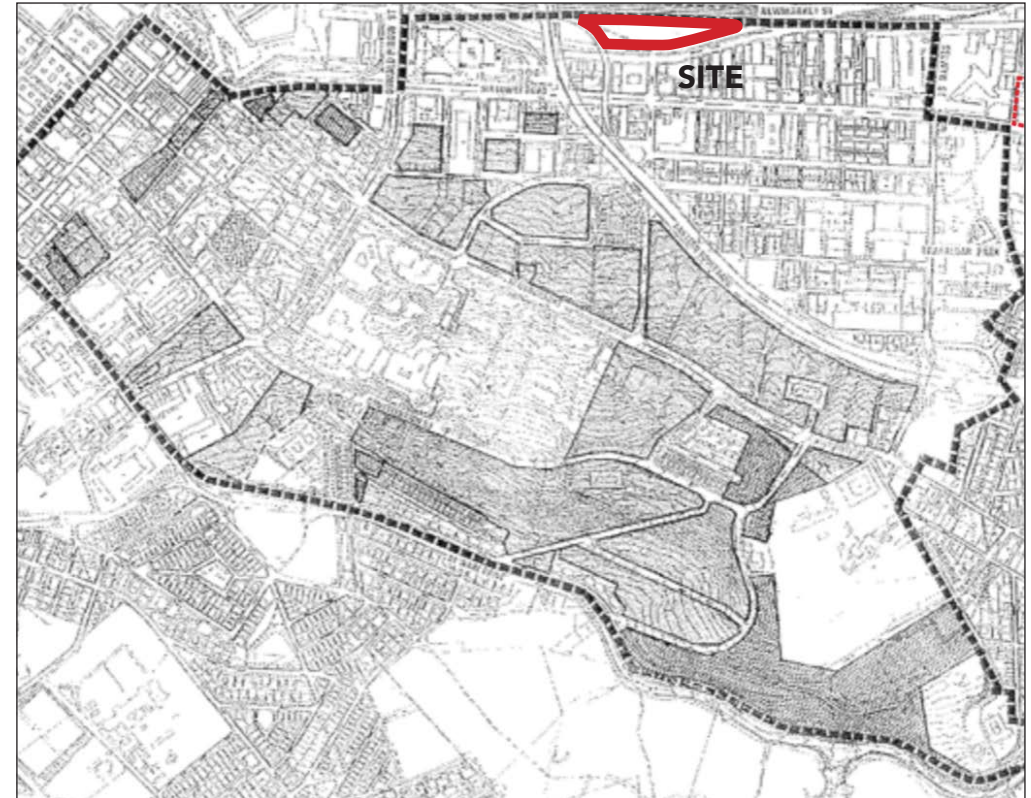


Figure 10: The site, outlined in red, forms part of the proposed Grade 1 District Six area.

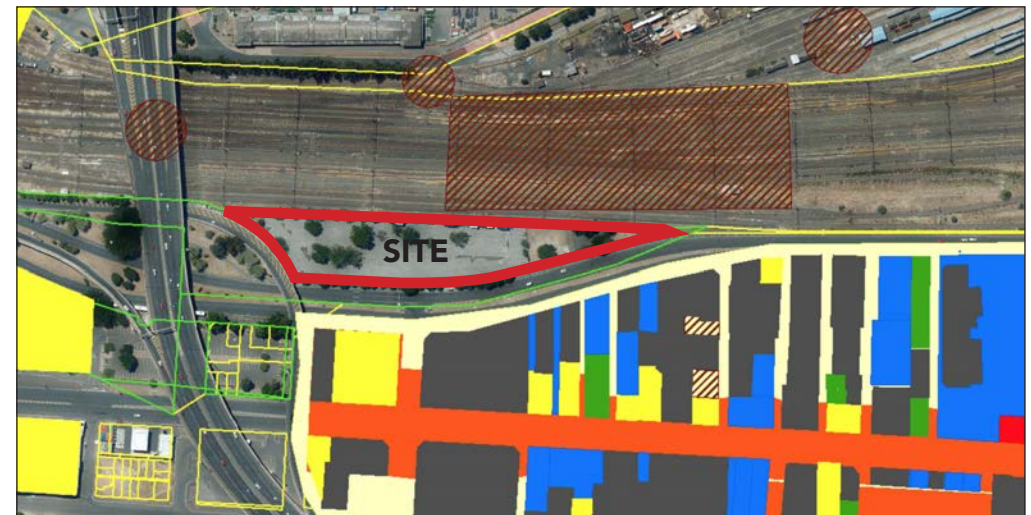


Figure 11: The site (in red outline) falls outside any proclaimed or proposed HPOZ areas.



Figure 12: Urban Design Framework for Trafalgar Park, Woodstock-Salt River Revitalisation Framework (Nisa Mammon and Associates with Du Toit and Perrin).

The Cape Town Central City Development Strategy, 2009 (City Think Space and others) remains an important underpinning document as it seeks to coordinate public and private sector development within the central city, and focuses on improving the quality of public space in the city. It also sought to provide and update the tools for development management and for dealing with increased development pressure within the central city.

The CCDS identifies the site as being located in an area with course-grained industrial, warehousing and workshops. It recommends that the band along Newmarket Street is intensified with fabric of medium height – 8 to 10 storeys (Fig. 13). In terms of character, the CCDS identifies the site as falling within a mixed-use corridor with commercial and industrial behind, and has very clear guidelines for development in this zone (Fig. 14):

- Encourage residential provision to ensure optimum missed use qualities and a range of housing options.
- Bulk Factor can be increased to 5.5 and permit an additional; 30% bulk for residential use.
- Retain historical street grid and frequent side road intersections. No road closures permitted. Limit large-scale consolidations for this reason.
- Retain continuity of street façade: no setbacks to front and side boundaries, step down to residential, and identify build-to lines rather than building lines. For Mixed Use zonings, the CCDS recommends a 4.5m setback above 10m height.
- Promote active street frontages along major public transportation routes. Discourage blank facades on street elevations on ground and first floor, no parking on ground or first floor, and high walls (above 1.5m)/service yards in the main street façade.

The Urban Design Framework for District Six (Nisa Mammon and Associates, 2012) deals with future development to the south of the site, the Urban Design Framework for “The Fringe” in the East City (Guy Briggs, April 2012), deals with the sliver of fabric between District Six and the Castle.

Both of these urban design frameworks proposed medium-rise development (6-8 storeys – see Fig. 15 and 16A) in the areas around the Castle, and a key proposal of the District Six development framework is the re-introduction of the historic urban grid, in particular with the reinforcement of Russel Street as

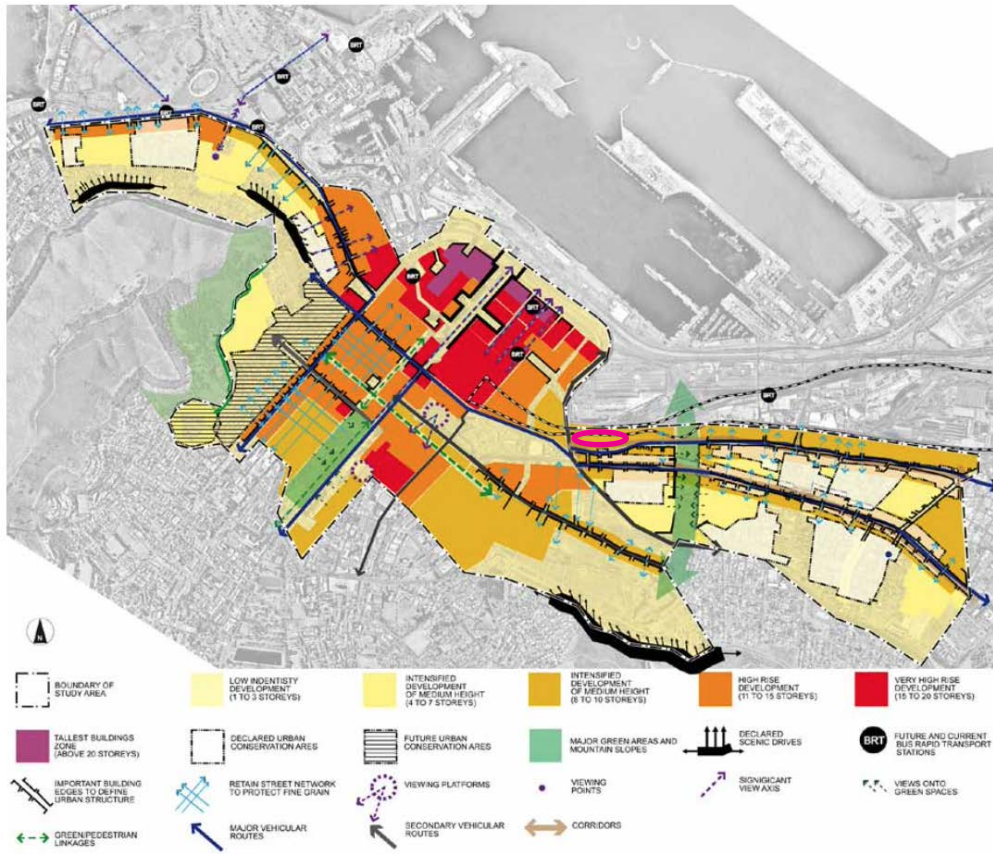


Figure 13: CCDS showing that the subject site (circled in pink) falls within a zone for intensified development of 8 - 10 stories.

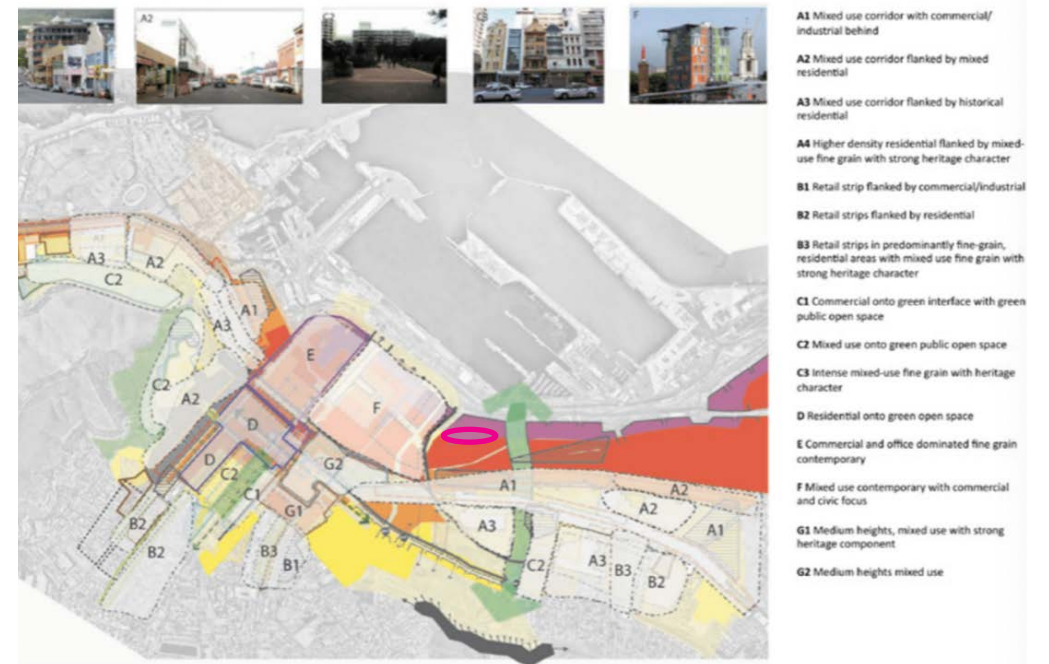


Figure 14: The CCDS identifies the site as being part of a mix-use movement corridor largely defined by industrial and commercial uses. Residential development is encouraged here.

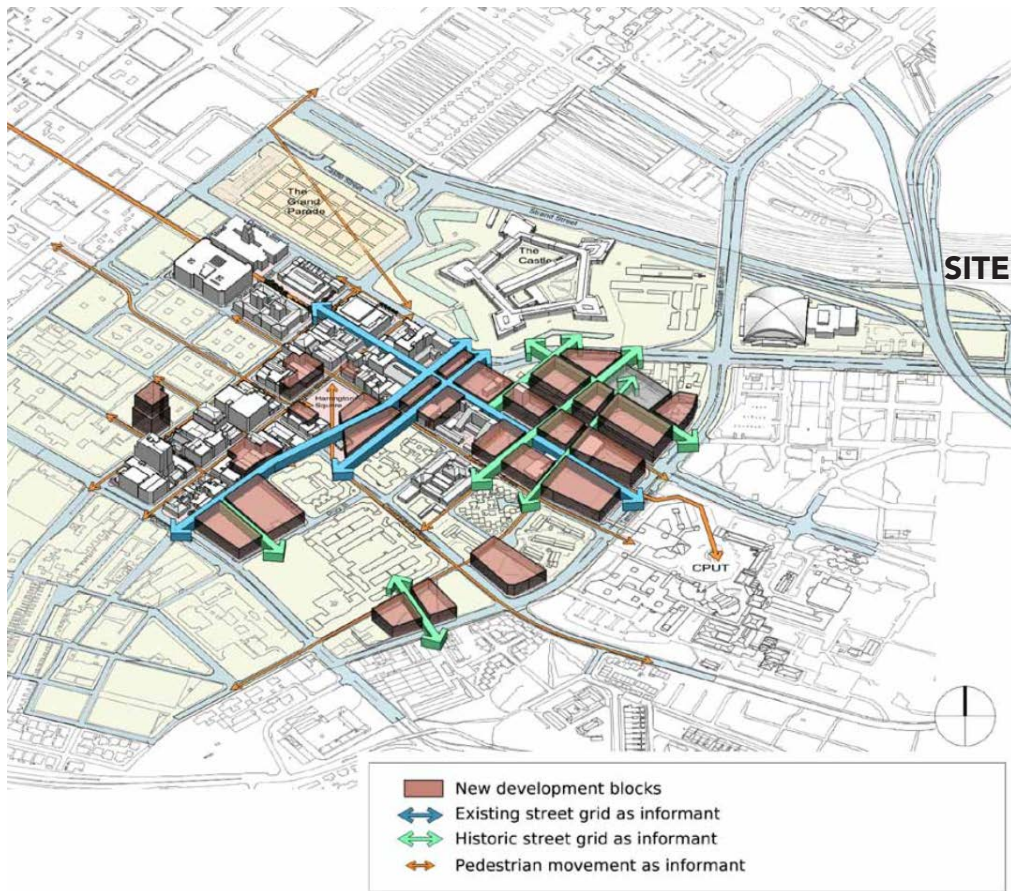


Figure 15: Briggs' urban design framework for the East City proposes medium height infill development between Buitenkant Street and the Good Hope Centre.

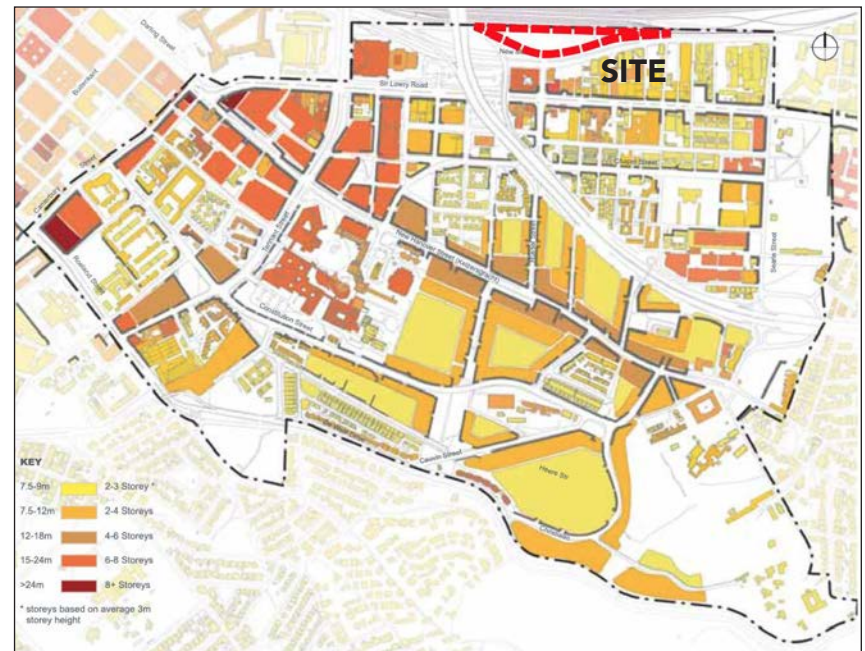


Figure 16A: District 6 Spatial Framework also proposed intensified height between the Castle and the elevated freeway, as well as around the site (8 stories).

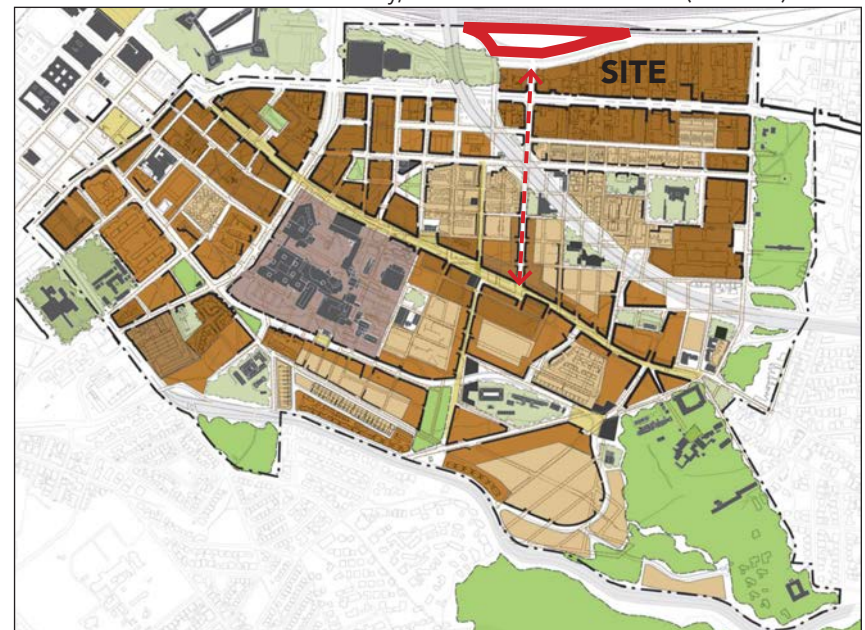


Figure 16B: District 6 Spatial Framework identifies a zone of intensification of use around the subject site, outlined in red.

a key north-south linking street between District Six and the subject precinct (Figure 16B).

Finally, the City of Cape Town has recently proposed five sites for the development of affordable housing in Woodstock-Salt River, and the subject site comprises one of the five.

In her analysis of the subject site and high-level approach to possible affordable housing designs, Rawoot (2017) notes that “The New Market Street site is wedged between a highway, major road and railway lines, creating multiple spatial challenges for the 0.8ha site. It is currently zoned Public Open Space 2 and used as a parking lot for surrounding offices. The site is an isolated developable pocket of land to the north of New Market. The south of New Market Street is characterised by multi storey mixed use development, predominantly offices with some light industry and retail function.

There are numerous public primary and high schools within a 2 kilometre radius and easily accessible via public transport. Some of these schools include Chapel Street Primary (0,6km), Walmer Estate Primary (1,2km), Trafalgar High (0,9km) and Harold Cressy High (1,4km). The site is a 15 minute walk to the Cape Town train and taxi stations.

The New Market Street site is a long linear site that runs parallel to the railway line. The design proposal (Fig. 17C) creates a street edge with building facades facing New Market Street and the inner linear, tree-lined courtyard. This creates passive surveillance with eyes on the street for the ground floor street edge as well as the inner semi-public spaces. There is only one entrance off New Market Street, as a result of the site’s constrained edges. The site is appropriate for medium-high rise development, by nature of its adjacent coarse grained infrastructure. The building heights range from eight storeys along New Market Street and five storeys along the railway line to allow north light on the southern building facade and into the courtyard.”

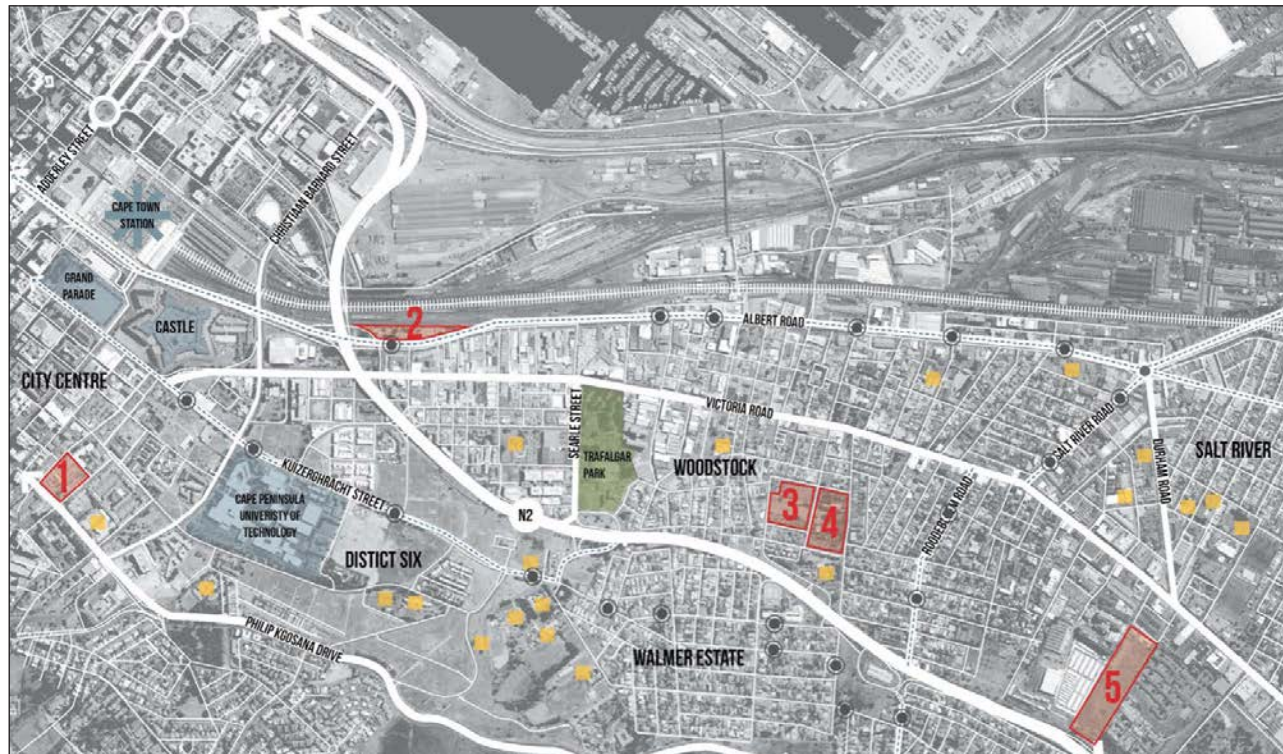


Figure 17A: The site forms one of 5 locations identified for the development of affordable housing in the area. (Source: <http://ourfuturecities.co/2017/11/5-design-proposals-for-the-woodstock-and-salt-river-affordable-housing-sites/>)

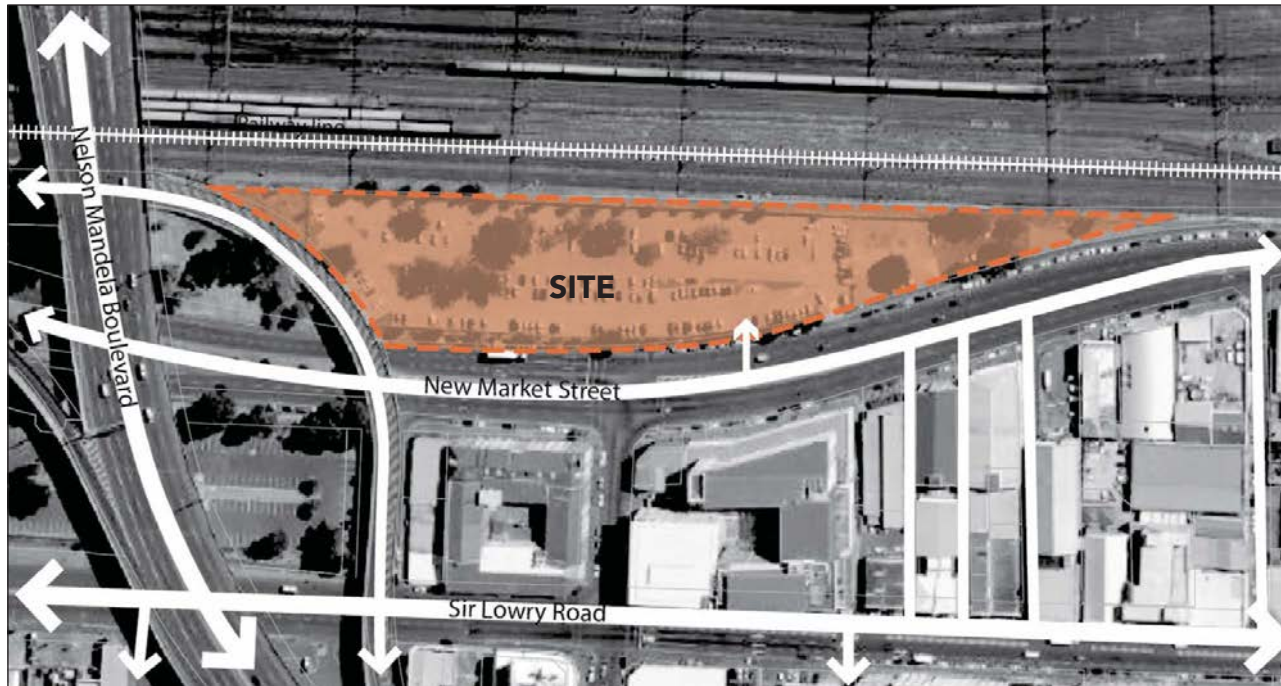


Figure 17B: Rawoot's analysis of the major surrounding urban informants to the site.



Figure 17C: Rawoot's proposed design for the site locates built fabric on the edges of the site, with a courtyard within.

3. HERITAGE-BASED DESIGN INDICATORS

From the foregoing analysis, the following townscape indicators must be integrated into the design proposal for the site, to ensure a heritage-sensitive response:

1. The three-to-four storey height datum: Almost all the structures facing the street have a clear podium of 3-4 storeys, and additional height is set back above this (Fig. 18A).
2. The structures all present narrow edges to the street, which results from long, narrow plots running between Victoria and Newmarket Streets. This results in a relatively fine grain, with a lot of façade variation, despite the structures being quite tall. The new development must respond to the prevailing grain through fragmentation of building form, and façade treatment (Fig. 18B).
3. Russel Street is a key future north-south link to District Six, and the built response on the site must be appropriate to its higher-order role as a linking street. It should be extended into the site as an internal street (note – not a road, it must primarily be a pedestrian-orientated space, see Fig. 18C).
4. The laneways and wider streets create a very clear movement order of intersecting streets. These laneways also contribute to the resultant finer grain. The placement of new building on the site must respond to the historic street grid, and must ensure positive street-like edges where they are extended into the site itself (Fig. 8D).
5. Retain continuity of the street façade: no setbacks to the street boundary: the Newmarket Street boundary is considered a “build-to” line. A perimeter block arrangement of building form is encouraged, in order to retain trees and respond to older patterns of building within the “pocket” (Fig. 8E).
6. The surrounding architecture is largely masonry/masonry-infill on concrete frame, plastered and painted. At street level, and certainly up to the 4 storey “plinth” datum, a masonry architectural response must be integrated.

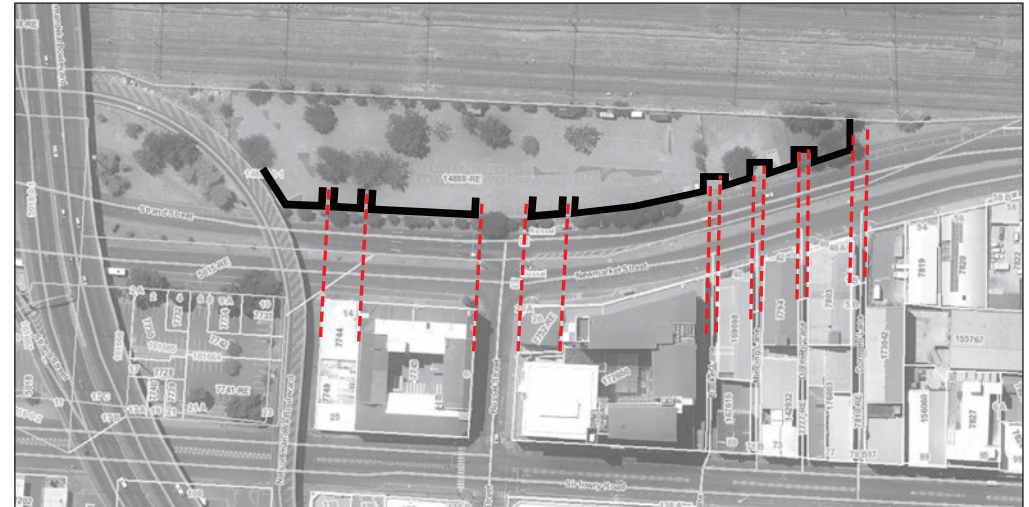


Figure 18B: Indicator 2 - Response to grain and fragmentation.

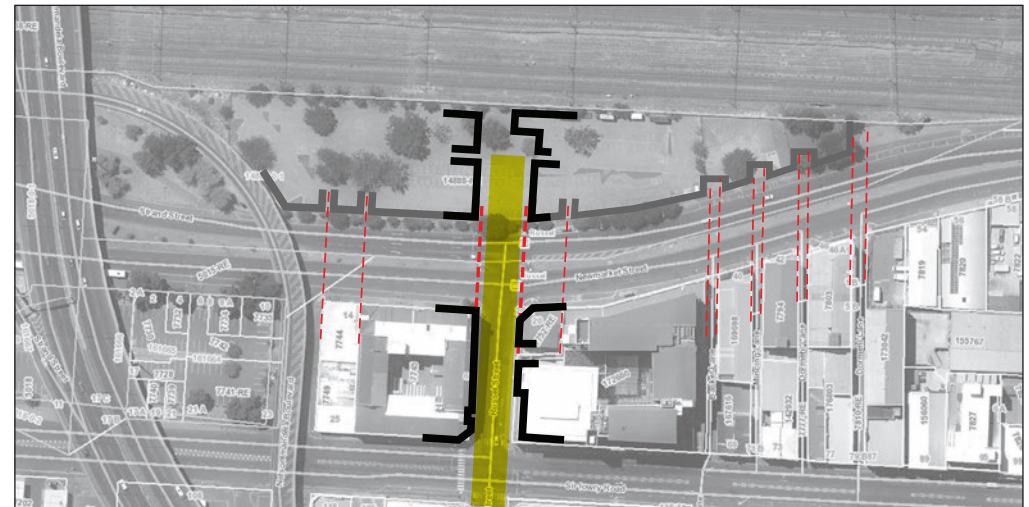
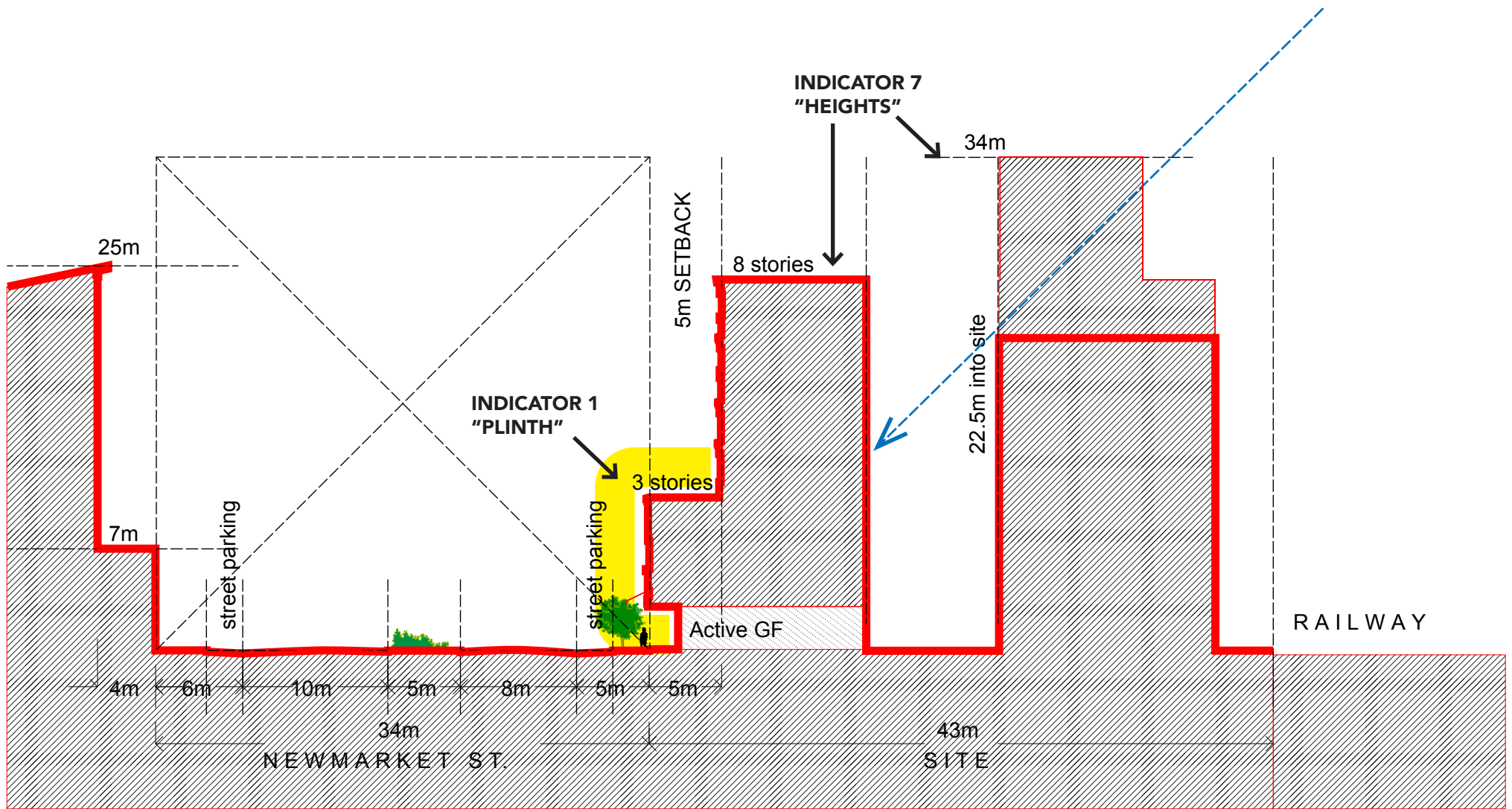


Figure 18C: Indicator 3 - Extension of Russel Street into the site.



NEWMARKET ST. SECTION

Figure 18A: Creation of a plinth along the street edge, and height limitations and responses to surrounding fabric.

7. The overall heights vary, but the general gradient is from 4 storeys close to the site, to 7/8 stories closest to the Hollandse Redoubt/Bus Depot site. The subject site must predominantly respond to the 25m/8 storey datum. Limited areas are permissible at 34m (which responds to the width of Newmarket Street - See Fig. 8A).
8. While the surrounding industrial sites tend to incorporate a yard along the street edge, the most successful buildings edge the street in a "perimeter block" arrangement. This is particularly discernable in the case of the 4-storey brick Victorian building on the corner of Newmarket and Russel Streets, and a similar response must be integrated for the subject building (Fig. 8E).
9. An active street edge must be integrated for 2/3rds of the Newmarket Street edge, and no parking is permitted within the first three storeys of the street-facing structures, and within 10m of the street boundary (Fig. 8D).
10. Boundary treatments, landscaping and planting should be carefully considered and should follow and reinforce the original patterns of development in the area. Mature trees must be retained as far as possible. A positive response to the green space below the freeway on-ramp is encouraged, so a future connection to the planned Cultural Precinct of the Good Hope Centre, Castle and Parade is made possible (Fig. 8F).

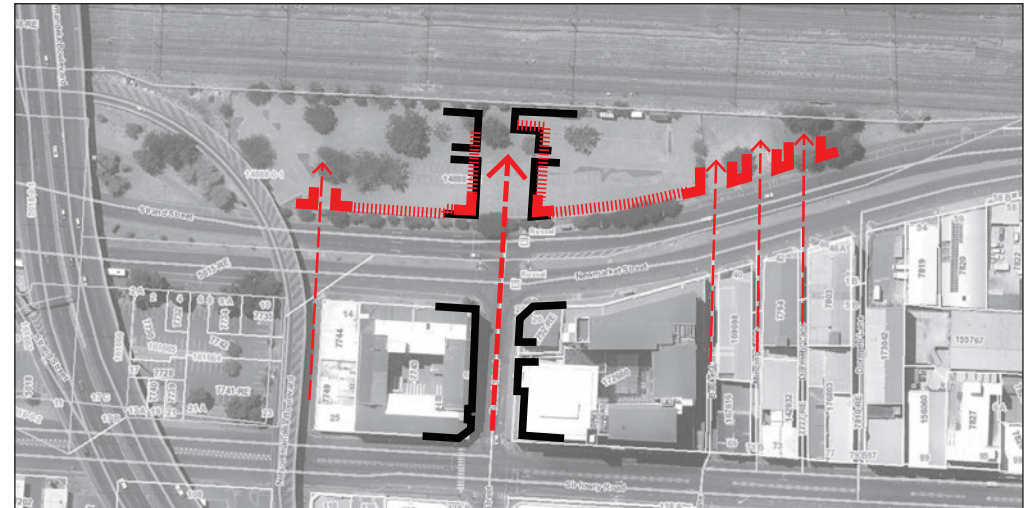


Figure 18D: Indicator 4 & 9 - Response to laneways and streets for entrances, active street-facing edges (dashed line)



Figure 18E: Indicator 5 & 8 - Perimeter block arrangement preferred.

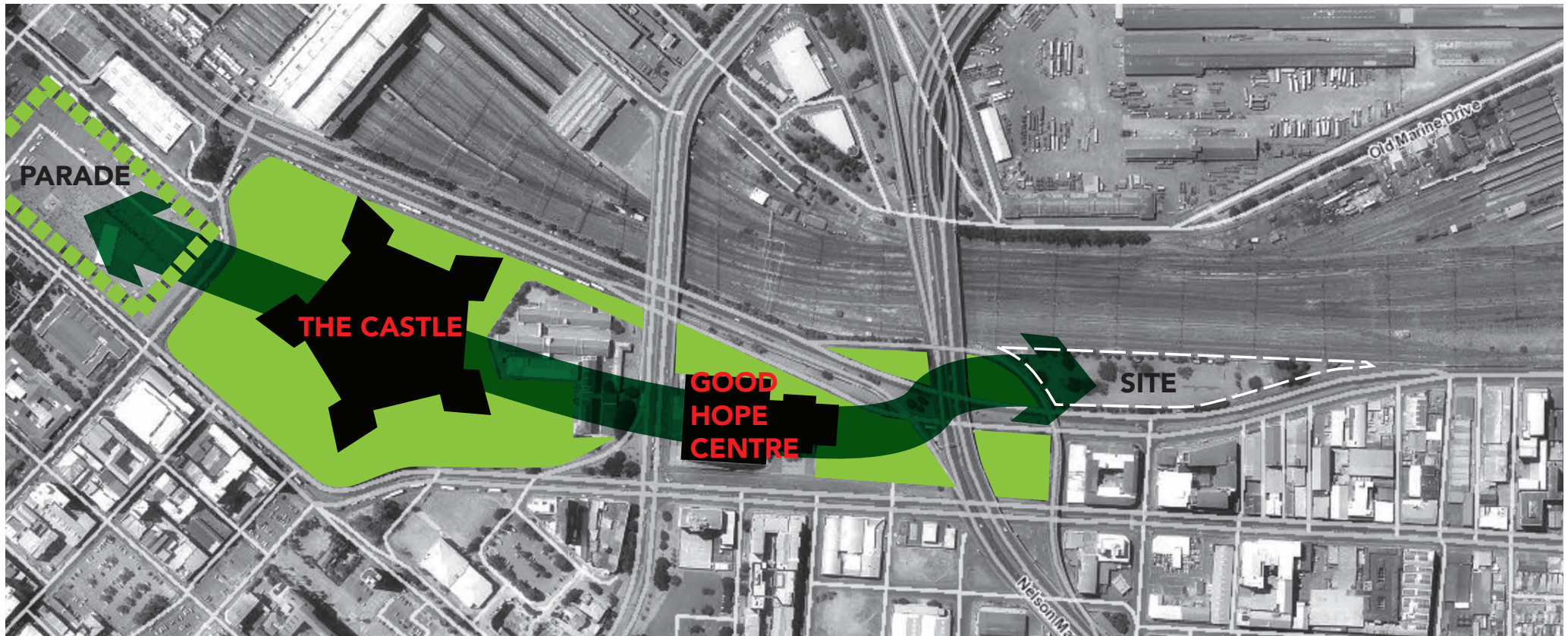


Figure 18F: Indicator 10 - The design proposal must be cognisant of the potentials to link westwards, via green and pedestrian-orientated spaces, to the cultural precinct formed by the Good Hope Centre, Castle and Parade.

Practically, this will also form a pedestrian link between the site and the station.

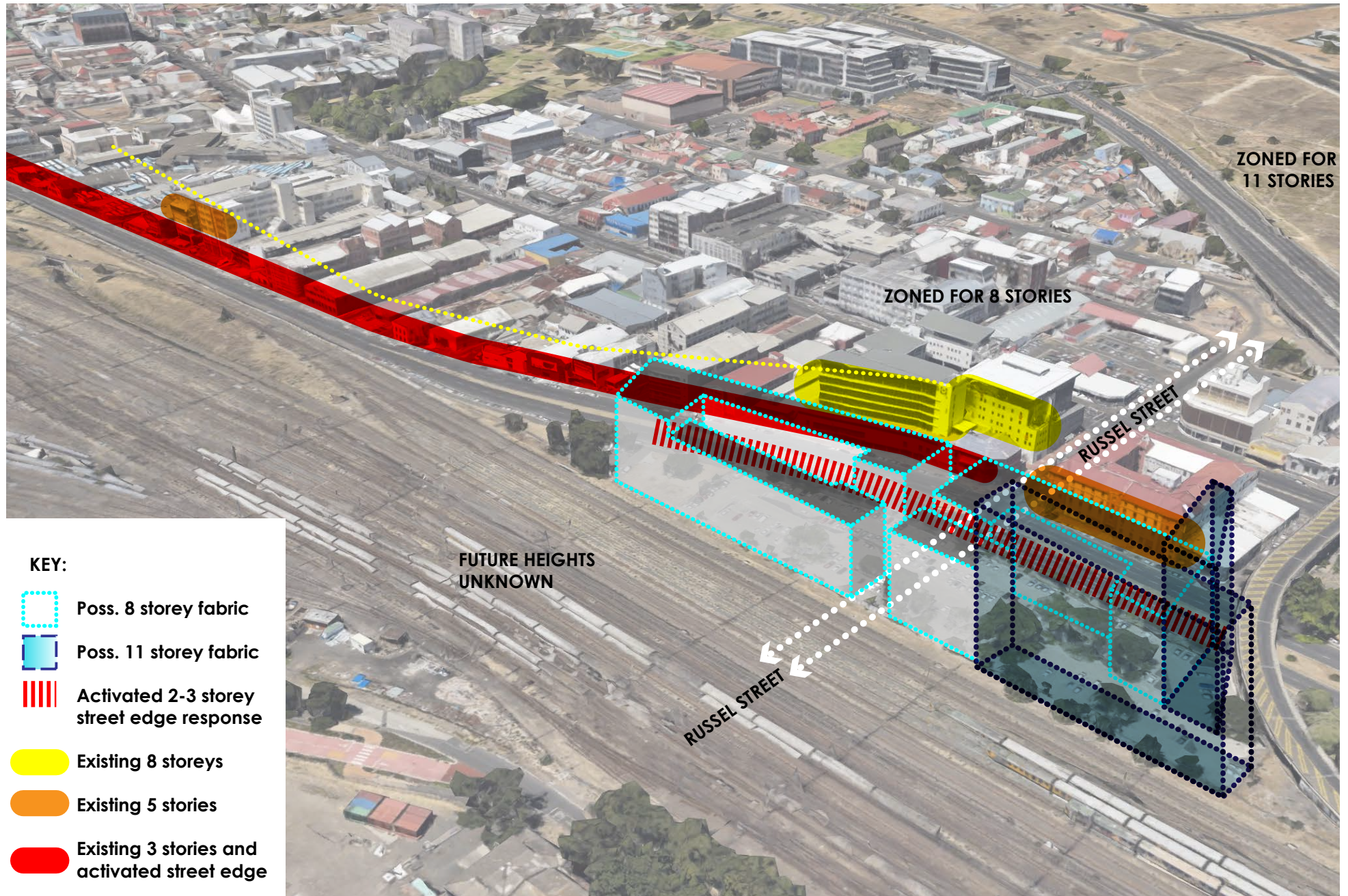


Figure 19: Diagrammatic 3D representation of the diagrams Figure 18A - 18F.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Phase 1 HIA look to intergate the findings of this townscape study - in particular the heritage-based townscape indicators, so that they can inform development proposals for the site going forwards.

Claire Abrahamse

29th September 2021.

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