



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT

With a unique and important history, Derby is a city that is familiar with tall buildings. From the soaring chimneys of the industrial revolution to the elegant spires of religious and civic buildings, the skyline of the city has always been defined by these extraordinary structures. In recent years, demand for a limited supply of land has resulted in new buildings coming forward at greater and greater heights with a number of key proposals sparking debate in the city.

Furthermore, the City is tightly constrained and has not been able to meet all of its objectively assessed housing needs in the current plan period. There is now an opportunity to get to grips with the opportunities and sensitivities of tall buildings and create a proactive vision for their future role in the city, and to identify opportunities for intensification in the city.

The Tall Buildings Study aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of tall buildings, both in general terms and specifically in relation to Derby. Following an innovative urban design based approach, the study then makes recommendations on how the height and location of future development can be optimised to bring regeneration and economic development while responding appropriately to the city's heritage and image. The Tall Buildings Study will be used to inform the Council's Local Plan and the development of the new City Centre Masterplan.

1.2 STUDY AREA

The focus of this study is the Central Business District (CBD), which stretches just beyond the inner ring road and south to include Castleward and the rail station. This is treated as a soft border, meaning it highlights the main area of focus for the study, but does not preclude the study from analysing and considering areas outside of it. To this end, Part 1 of the study presents the baseline analysis for the study at the scale of the entire city, with particular attention paid to the CBD. Whereas, Part 2, the presentation of recommendations on building height and tall buildings, only focuses on the area in and around the CBD.

1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

The Derby Tall Buildings Study report has two parts and is structured as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction

PART 1: BASELINE

Chapter 2 Planning Policy Context

Discusses the national and local policies that are relevant to this study.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework for Tall Buildings

Provides a high level definition of tall buildings and a comprehensive framework for understanding their roles and effects.

Chapter 4 Spatial Overview

Sets out a detailed analysis of the city, including its historic development, spatial structure, movement network and character areas.

Chapter 5 Building Heights

Details the height of every building in the city, defines context heights and provides a definition of tall buildings specific to Derby.

Chapter 6 Heritage, Views and Sensitivity

Provides an in depth discussion of the city's heritage and key views, and discusses how these are sensitive to tall buildings.

PART 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 7 Tall Buildings Objectives

Defines ten objectives that tall buildings in Derby must meet, which also guide the recommendations of this study.

Chapter 8 Sifting Process

Presents the process of “sifting” through parts of the city to define the optimal locations for tall buildings presented in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 Building Height Recommendations

Presents the concluding recommendations of the study for general building heights in the city, and locations and criteria for tall buildings.

Chapter 10 Design Criteria and Principles

Provides comprehensive guidance for the location, design and particular considerations related to tall buildings.

APPENDICES

Heritage Assessment

Provides the detailed methodology and assessment of heritage assets' sensitivity to tall buildings. This forms the background for Chapter 6.

3D Testing

Showcases further images of the 3D model used as part of the tall buildings testing, which is fundamental to the recommendations made in Chapter 9.

1.4 STUDY METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on guidance provided by the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England. It follows a proactive planning approach and is composed of the following components:

- a. **A conceptual framework**, providing a sound theoretical understanding of tall buildings, in the context of relevant planning policy context, establishing important principles for tall buildings, including how a tall building is defined, the potential role and contribution it can have for the development of a place, and the impacts that will need to be considered when deciding for the appropriateness of a tall building.
- b. **A comprehensive understanding of Derby**, its relevant physical, social and cultural characteristics, economic and planning imperatives and development pressures, together with a local definition of tall buildings.
- c. **Effective engagement** with relevant stakeholders through the plan making process, to understand local attitudes to principles of development in relation to place, context and design, to inform tall buildings objectives and situate the strategy on a broad base.
- d. **Identification of sensitivities to tall buildings**, where tall buildings could be harmful, such as designated heritage assets and their settings, local and skyline views, distinctive characters and townscapes, and other aspects that make a city or area distinctive and special.
- e. **Sifting out and testing of ‘areas of search’**, where potentially tall buildings could be appropriate as part an overall vision of a place and when considering their impact on relevant sensitivities.
- f. **Identification of areas appropriate for tall buildings**, and the provision of place specific guidance that provides greater clarity on the location and height of tall buildings considered appropriate together with other site specific criteria and sensitivities that will need to be considered.
- g. **Design guidance and criteria** that provide clarity on the expected quality of design and response of tall buildings development to its context and criteria on how to assess these.
- h. **Application requirements** to set out the process and requirements for planning application for tall buildings.

1.5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

1.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The creation of the Derby Tall Buildings Study has been underpinned by a comprehensive stakeholder engagement programme. This has been fundamental to ensuring the study reflects the particularities of Derby and is representative of local ambitions and concerns. This is not a one-size-fits all approach, it is a bespoke and considered process, for which stakeholder engagement has been a key element. The makeup of the client steering group is a clear indication of this, comprising of members of DCC Planning and Regeneration teams, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) members. This diverse group of people have been continuously involved in discussions and guided the strategy. The engagement programme consisted of the following elements:

- Early Stage, one to one meetings (01-02/08/2019);
- Stage One Stakeholder Workshop (13/09/2019)
- Stage Two Stakeholder Workshop (06/11/2019); and
- Various meetings with the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC).

Each of these elements is discussed in detail on the following pages.

1.5.2 EARLY STAGE MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS (01-02/08/2019)

At the beginning of the project, a series of one to one meetings with local stakeholders took place. This comprised of 14 meetings over two days on 1st and 2nd August 2019. The stakeholders who attended the meetings were representatives from:

- Historic England
- Marketing Derby
- Godwin Developments
- Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
- Cathedral Quarter Business Improvement District
- University of Derby
- Derby Cathedral
- Derby City Council Regeneration Team
- Raybould and Sons
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- Local Councillors
- St James Securities
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Derby Civic Society

Due to not being able to attend the formal meetings, phone calls were conducted with representatives of East Midlands Airport and Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust.

Each meeting was attended by two members of the consultant team and at least one staff member of Derby City Council planning authority. These one to one meetings and phone calls were treated fundamentally as a listening exercise for the consultant and client team with the aim to allow stakeholders to share any information and opinions that they thought was useful. They were conducted at the very beginning of the project to allow the views of stakeholders to guide the development of the tall buildings study. They proved very useful in framing the issues particular to Derby that the study must address and highlighting the sense of division between pro-development and pro-conservation perspectives in the city.

Some of the main points raised during the meetings are summarised as follows:

- Derby city centre is struggling economically. There is a need for new development to come forward to revitalise it. In particular, city living could be promoted to bring more footfall for local businesses and evening economy. Tall buildings can play a role in this by providing high density rental accommodation to appeal to young professionals.
- Derby is a historic city with exceptional listed buildings, conservation areas and part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. This means that the city is particularly sensitive to tall buildings that would detract from the historic character and compete with the Cathedral on the skyline.

- A particular issue for Derby is that the main employers are outside the city centre in industrial campuses or office parks like Pride Park. Within the city centre, there is a shortage of high quality office accommodation and in the past, speculative high-grade office development has not been seen as viable in the city.
- There were some differing opinions on the benefits of conducting a tall buildings study. Some felt that if the local authority were clear on where and at what scale tall buildings would be acceptable, this would provide certainty for developers and encourage investment, while resulting in better outcomes for the location and design of tall buildings. Others felt that restrictions should not be placed on tall buildings as this would make development unviable and prevent tall buildings from coming forward. Many stakeholders acknowledged that the study must find a compromise between facilitating development and conserving the historic identity of the city.

The local knowledge and market intelligence gleaned from the one to one meetings was invaluable in identifying development sites around the city where tall buildings may be proposed in the coming years and the particularities around developing tall buildings in Derby with regard to viability, market forces and local aspirations.

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1.5.3 STAGE ONE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP (13/09/2019)

The first of two stakeholder workshops took place in Derby on 13th September 2019. The attendees included a diverse mixture of local developers, businesses and built environment professionals, relevant public bodies, conservation advisors and Derby City Council staff. The format of the workshop was a presentation of work completed to date by the consultant team followed by round table discussions. The discussions were coordinated by splitting the attendees into four mixed groups with a member of the client or consultant team to facilitate the conversation. A designated scribe was present at each able to keep note of all comments made.

The material presented to attendees was the baseline analysis of the city, a discussion of the theoretical approach to tall buildings, the emerging tall buildings objectives for Derby, and the “sifting” exercise conducted to determine potential areas where tall buildings may be appropriate. The discussions following the presentation proved highly valuable for the consultant and client team and guided the next stage of the study. Some of the key points raised were the following:

- There was general agreement with the approach to the study. However, there were some concerns that the work had a bias towards conservation.
- The strategy must consider the positive aspects of tall buildings, give certainty for developers and attract investment into the city.
- There was general agreement with the tall buildings objectives. However, many were concerned about the narrow viability of tall buildings in Derby and the difficulty in delivering high quality design.
- A wider city centre strategy is needed for Derby to create a shared vision and agreement on how the city will develop and change over the coming years. However, it was acknowledged that this is not the purpose of the tall building study, although the process is helping to facilitate the right kind of discussions.
- There was a mixed response to the approach to mapping sensitivities. Some felt that this process was necessary to protect valued heritage assets. Others were concerned that most of the city is considered sensitive to tall buildings in some way and so opportunities are limited.
- There was general agreement with the approach to defining character areas and the potential role that tall buildings could have in each area.
- The next stage of study (providing recommendations and design principles) will be key. The study must not be overly prescriptive with design guidance of each site and recommendations must be flexible to changing conditions.



Figure 1.1: Stage One Stakeholder Workshop presentation



Figure 1.2: Stage One Stakeholder Workshop - materials for round table discussion

1.5.4 STAGE TWO STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP (06/11/2019)

The second stakeholder workshop took place on 6th November 2019. The format was the same as the first workshop with many of the same attendees. The focus of this workshop was on the draft building height and tall building recommendations. The main comments received from attendees are as follows:

- There was general agreement that high quality design of tall buildings is of great importance and with the general design principles presented.
- Some attendees made the point that a number of important views of the Silk Mill are missing from the analysis. Reference was made to the views tested for The Landmark, Phoenix Street application and Historic England monitoring views.
- The way the illustrative development blocks are shown in the tall buildings recommendation drawings seems to show a level of masterplanning that is too detailed for this study. Some found the study to be too detailed about particular sites and therefore inflexible and restrictive.
- The plans presented showed the recommended number of storeys for potential tall buildings, which was met with mixed responses. On one hand it is useful for guiding developers to what would be acceptable, but some felt that it made the study too rigid and prescriptive.

- With regard to the Historic City Centre Character Area recommendations, some did not believe that tall buildings should be ruled out entirely from this area.
- With regard to the Riverside Character Areas, there was agreement that this area has potential to accommodate tall buildings. However, some felt that comprehensive development of the entire area is highly unlikely due to costs involved. It is more likely that separate sites will be developed individually.
- For the Castleward Character Area, there was general agreement that it is possible for this area to accommodate higher than what has been granted as outline permission.
- Many felt that in the Character Areas on the fringes of the city, surface car parks are clear development opportunities, some of which could accommodate tall buildings.

1.5.5 MEETINGS WITH EDAC (02/08, 22/11) AND CAAC (05/12)

Two key stakeholder groups for this study are the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). Members of each group sit on the client steering group and representatives of each attended both workshop events. On top of this, a number of meetings with the wider members of each Committee were held as part of the stakeholder engagement programme.

The consultant attended EDAC meetings on 2nd August 2019 and 22nd November 2019, and a CAAC meeting on 5th December to have a more focused discussion on the committees' particular views and knowledge of Derby. This close relationship between both parties and the consultant/client team has been instrumental in creating a balanced, informed and useful study.

Feedback from the entire stakeholder engagement programme has been considered and has shaped the final recommendations contained in this study.