

Heights of BUILDINGS

guidelines for developers in the Gloucester area

November 2008



GLOUCESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Heights of BUILDINGS

guidelines for developers in the Gloucester area

1.0	Purpose of guidance	1
1.1	What is a tall building?	2
1.2	Status	2
1.3	Public consultation	2
1.4	Related work	2
1.5	National and local policy context	3
2.0	Tall buildings urban design study	5
2.1	Local tall buildings	5
2.2	Conservation areas analysis	5
2.2.1	Westgate Street	8
2.2.2	Historic Docks and Quays	10
2.3	View corridor designations	12
3.0	Design and assessment criteria	27
3.1	Planning applications	27
3.2	Application assessment requirements	27
• 1	Policy context	28
• 2	Siting of tall buildings: Areas	28
• 3	Siting of tall buildings: View corridors	28
• 4	Scale and massing	28
• 5	Relationship to context	29
• 6	Archaeology	30
• 7	Design/architectural quality	30
• 8	Public realm	30
• 9	Transport, access and parking	30
• 10	Microclimate/local environment impact	31
• 11	Sustainability	31
• 12	Lighting	32
4.0	Further advice and information	33
Plans		
1	Conservation Areas	13
2	Local View Corridors	14
3	Strategic View Corridors	24

Heights of BUILDINGS

guidelines for developers in the Gloucester area

1.0 Purpose of guidance

Tall buildings often stimulate debate and generate strong opinion. Whilst they can in some cases enhance an area, they can also obscure important views and sometimes detract from the character of an area through poor siting or inappropriate design.

Gloucester has a rich heritage and a large number of listed buildings and conservation areas. The influence of the cathedral and other historic structures on the local distinctiveness of Gloucester cannot be underestimated. Protecting and wherever possible enhancing these historic and cultural assets is a key issue for the City, and the potential impact of tall buildings requires careful consideration and management.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on issues relating to the heights of buildings within Gloucester. Clear criteria are set out which developers are required to work through, leading to a clear justification for the need for a tall building. Applicants should note that it will not generally be appropriate to use outline applications where the development involves a tall building. The Planning Authority will strongly recommend the submission of a detailed application in accordance with the advice of English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

Applicants should also note that where it is proposed to demolish a tall structure, it does not necessarily follow that a replacement tall structure would be acceptable. In such circumstances the guidance within this document will be applied to ensure that any replacement is both appropriate and acceptable.

By setting out the application requirements, a direct emphasis can be placed on some of the important issues surrounding the development of tall buildings. This guidance provides a clear and transparent evaluation process, which should be used when preparing a planning application. It will reduce the scope for unnecessary, speculative applications in the wrong places and help to protect the historic environment and the qualities, which make Gloucester special.

It should be noted that pre-application discussions would be encouraged involving any application for a tall building within the City. This process will identify at an early stage the issues, which are likely to cause objection or to suggest design improvements before an application is formally submitted. The benefits of the service are to introduce certainty, increase the chances of success and speed up the formal decision process.

Following advice set out in the document 'Guidance on Tall Buildings' (July 2007), published by English Heritage and CABE, Gloucester City Council has provided within this document a background study to the heights of buildings issues within the city. This study, in Section 2, sets out an evaluation of Gloucester's existing tall buildings. Identification of the unique character of two of Gloucester's conservation areas and the identification of important local and strategic view corridors completes the analysis. This background information is then used to support the assessment criteria set out in Section 3.0, which any applicant will be required to address.

1.1 What is a tall building?

Although no official definition of a 'tall building' exists for the purposes of this Supplementary Planning Document, a 'tall building' will be defined as any structure that breaks the skyline and/or which is significantly or noticeably taller than its surrounding built fabric.

1.2 Status

'Gloucester Heights of Buildings SPD' has been prepared as Interim Guidance, in accordance with PPS12 Local Development Frameworks (2004) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.

This document is, in effect, an extension of the 1983 Local Plan policy on tall buildings and has been modified to take into account the current planning and market conditions that exist both nationally and locally.

Gloucester City Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework, and this SPD will become an important material consideration with significant weight in the planning decision making process.

1.3 Public consultation

Between 3 December 2007 and 21 January 2008, a six-week Issues and Options consultation exercise was carried out (allowing an extra week for the Christmas break) in order to gauge public opinion on the most appropriate approach to the development of tall buildings in Gloucester.

Results from this exercise were taken into account when developing this draft SPD document. The Issues and Options consultation

document set out five options for consideration, which were as follows.

- Option 1 Do Nothing (Business as Usual)
- Option 2 Continuation of the 1983 Local Plan Approach
- Option 3 An 'Area Based' Approach
- Option 4 A 'View Corridor' Based Approach
- Option 5 Prohibitive Approach

The options ranged from a flexible approach, where each application would be dealt with on its merits, to a prohibitive approach whereby tall buildings would be discouraged. Options 2 to 4 offered different methods of managing the process, which reflected the local context within Gloucester.

The consensus of opinion was to produce guidance that followed a combination of Options 3 and 4. This combination appeared to provide the best option when considering both the protection of the unique character of the city and the need to consider taller buildings, and their potential associated benefits of higher density development and greater land use efficiency. It also performed well when assessed using the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Matrix.

This approach has already been adopted in a wide variety of tall building policies produced by other Councils, with a different emphasis placed on each technique depending on each local context.

1.4 Related work

The urban design study set out in Section 2.0 is based partly on the recently reviewed and updated Conservation Area Appraisals, which identify the unique historic character of the 14 designated Conservation Areas within Gloucester.

Conservation Area status recognises the architectural or historic interest of whole areas, not just individual buildings. These areas contain both ancient and comparatively modern structures, open spaces, gardens, parks and expanses of water like the Docks and the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal.

The Council has approved Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for all 14 Conservation Areas, and they now form interim planning guidance, and in due course will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents within the Local Development Framework.

1.5 National and local policy context

'*Guidance on Tall Buildings*' (July 2007, English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), identifies the Government's guidance on tall buildings. A number of the key issues from that document, which have relevance to Gloucester, are summarised below.

- Enable areas appropriate for tall buildings to be identified in advance within the local development plan or framework
- Identify locations where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate, local planning authorities should, as a matter of good practice, carry out a detailed urban design study
- The presentation of illustrative material should be of a very high standard. All proposals for tall buildings should be accompanied by accurate and realistic representations of the appearance of the building. These representations should show the proposals in all significant views affected, near, middle and distant, including the public realm and the streets around the base of the building

- Highlight opportunities for the removal of past mistakes and their replacement by development of an appropriate quality

The Jellicoe Plan for Gloucester (December, 1961) defined important central areas where development should not exceed a certain height and a number of important 'avenues of vision' based on the protection of the views towards the Cathedral. This plan was contained within a document titled 'A Comprehensive Plan for the Central Area of the City of Gloucester' which also proposed a comprehensive development plan for the city.

This plan was subsequently used as the basis for the heights of buildings policy within the central area, as set out in the 1983 City of Gloucester Adopted Local Plan, saved policy A.1(a) (p.38).

The 'Gloucester City Council Second Stage Deposit Local Plan (2002)', approved for Development Control purposes, sets out a number of clear policies relating to the character of Gloucester and the development of tall buildings. Policy BE.2 'Views and Skyline', located in Chapter 4: The Built Environment, sets out the following advice.

'Proposed development should respect and protect the city skyline and important views and vistas within the city, views of the surrounding countryside from within the city, and views of the city from the surrounding countryside. It will be particularly important to protect views of the Cathedral.'

Within the same chapter of the Local Plan, paragraph 4.10 describes the overall scale of Gloucester as modest, but does state that there will be opportunities for landmark buildings if there is no conflict with established patterns of development.

Paragraph 4.11 relates to the skyline of the central area, with the Cathedral as the focal point. The views to this landmark should be preserved or enhanced.

Policy ST.7 'Urban Design Principles', sets out that the City Council will 'expect high quality development that respects the rhythm, density, massing, height, layout and appearance of neighbouring buildings and the landscape of the local area.'

There are a couple of emerging Local Development Framework documents which also have a bearing on the issue of heights of buildings. The Central Area Action Plan (Preferred Options Paper) contains policy 'CA6 Views and Skyline'.

'Proposed development should respect and protect the City skyline and important views and vistas within the Central Area.'

It will be particularly important to protect views of the Cathedral and the Docks.

Development that would adversely affect important views including those identified on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.'

The Site Allocations & Designations (Non-Central Area) Preferred Options Paper contains Policy 'SAD10 Views and Skyline', also covers the heights of buildings issue, along the lines detailed in the 2002 Second Stage Deposit Local Plan.

2.0 Tall buildings urban design study

The following study has been developed to aid in the understanding of the issues relating to tall buildings and to help identify the locations where tall buildings would, and would not be appropriate.

The study aims to provide a design reference when developing proposals for a tall building within Gloucester, based on whether or not a tall building would both detract from the character of a specific area or if it could actually enhance the urban form and setting. Specific examples are given in 2.2, which will illustrate the principles surrounding the development of a tall building, in two conservation areas, of contrasting character.

2.1 Local tall buildings

Gloucester has a wealth of tall structures of historical importance, such as churches. There are also a number of modern tall buildings, which are not considered to enhance the image of the city. Several of these modern tall buildings are proposed for demolition as part of the Gloucester Renaissance initiative, involving the regeneration of large parts of the city centre.

The modern buildings identified within this section are characterised by their bulky, 'slab-like' appearance, which do not respect the historic patterns of development within the city. It is essential to take account of the history of development within Gloucester and not repeat past mistakes.

Details of the tall buildings within Gloucester are given below and overleaf.

Historic buildings

Gloucester Cathedral
St. Nicholas Church
St. Michael's Tower
St. Johns
St. Peters etc
St. Marks

Modern buildings

Gloscat Tower
Hospital Tower
County Council offices
Clapham Court

2.2 Conservation areas analysis

Conservation Areas are designated to preserve and enhance the special character of areas of architectural or historic interest. They are of value because they have a strong sense of place. They form part of the familiar and cherished local scene, and contain significant components of our regional and national cultural heritage. They make an important contribution to the quality of the lives of all those who live, work or play in them.

There are 14 of these areas within Gloucester and each has its own unique character. Within these areas, it is considered that a special character exists that could potentially be harmed with the introduction of a building that competes in terms of height or massing.

Historic buildings



St. Michael's Tower



St. Peters



Gloucester Cathedral



St. Johns

St. Nicholas

Modern buildings



Clapham Court



Gloscat Tower



Hospital tower



County Council offices

Development in Conservation Areas will be informed by the approved Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. Such development will normally be limited to a height that does not noticeably or significantly exceed that of the surrounding built form. An exception is only likely to be acceptable where it has some justification based on the character of the area, and sits comfortably with the pattern of existing historic tall buildings.

For larger development sites within conservation areas, it may also be appropriate to mirror the variety of building heights within the local context, in order to better integrate the development into the existing built environment.

During 2006/2007 the City Council undertook a review of all conservation areas in Gloucester, and developed Management Proposals for each of those areas. On 20 September 2007, Full Council approved all 14 Conservation Areas Appraisals. They are now interim planning guidance, and in the future will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents of the Local Development Framework. These appraisals will be used as the evidence base to support the need for restrictions on building heights in these areas.

In order to illustrate this approach, two examples of the special character which exists in the conservation areas, will now be presented. This will help to show how consideration of building heights in new developments would have to take into account quite different character details and respond to contrasting urban contexts.

2.2.1 Westgate Street

Westgate Street sits within the City Centre Conservation Area, which itself lies between The Docks and the Cathedral Precincts, encompassing the main commercial core of the city.

The four principal streets (of which Westgate is one) meet at The

Cross, reflecting their Roman origin, with the boundary of the area largely following the line of the former Roman wall, now lost below later development.

The conservation area has a dense urban character along the four main streets, where continuous terraces of varied buildings sit on the back of the pavement. Of note is the variety in width of these principal streets, representing the sites of medieval markets or island buildings, which have been demolished as part of highway improvements, which started as early as the 18th century.

The most complete and unaltered street is Westgate Street, containing a rich mix of well-detailed historic buildings with very little 20th century infill. Because most of the buildings were built as houses, the street retains a more intimate domestic scale, despite most of the ground floor accommodation now being in commercial uses.

There are a number of defining characteristics of the street. Firstly, there is a noticeable change in gradient along Westgate Street, which drops gradually towards the river and the historic quay area. This gives greater prominence to a number of the buildings around the Cross, when viewed from further down the street.

The street also curves slightly as it progresses away from the Cross, leading to changing views around the curve of the street. The combination of the slope and street curve presents an interesting and diverse montage.

Alternating height and plot widths of properties along Westgate are a feature common in medieval settlements, as organic patterns of growth emerged. A variation in materials from property to property is noticeable and further enhances the distinctions between buildings and the character of the area.

The introduction of a tall building along the street would have obvious impacts on the existing character of the conservation area

Westgate Street



and would uncomfortably disrupt the historic development pattern. Proposals for new developments along Westgate Street should reflect the variation of building heights and take account of the character of the area.

2.2.2 Historic Docks and Quays

The Docks Conservation Area is important historically as an example of a 19th century dock and canal terminus on the River Severn. When at its busiest, the Docks contained 15 major corn warehouses, two basins and a complicated network of rail lines that covered 22 acres. Most of the original 19th century buildings remain albeit converted to new uses.

The Cathedral seen from Gloucester Docks



Since designation as a conservation area, Gloucester Docks has undergone and continues to undergo massive redevelopment, which is transforming the character and appearance of the original conservation area. It is therefore important to identify the unique character of the area, within which development will take place.

In contrast to, say, an industrial complex linked to a road transport network, all the major industrial buildings in the Docks Conservation Area have been located in relation to the water network i.e. the River Severn, the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal and the dock basins.

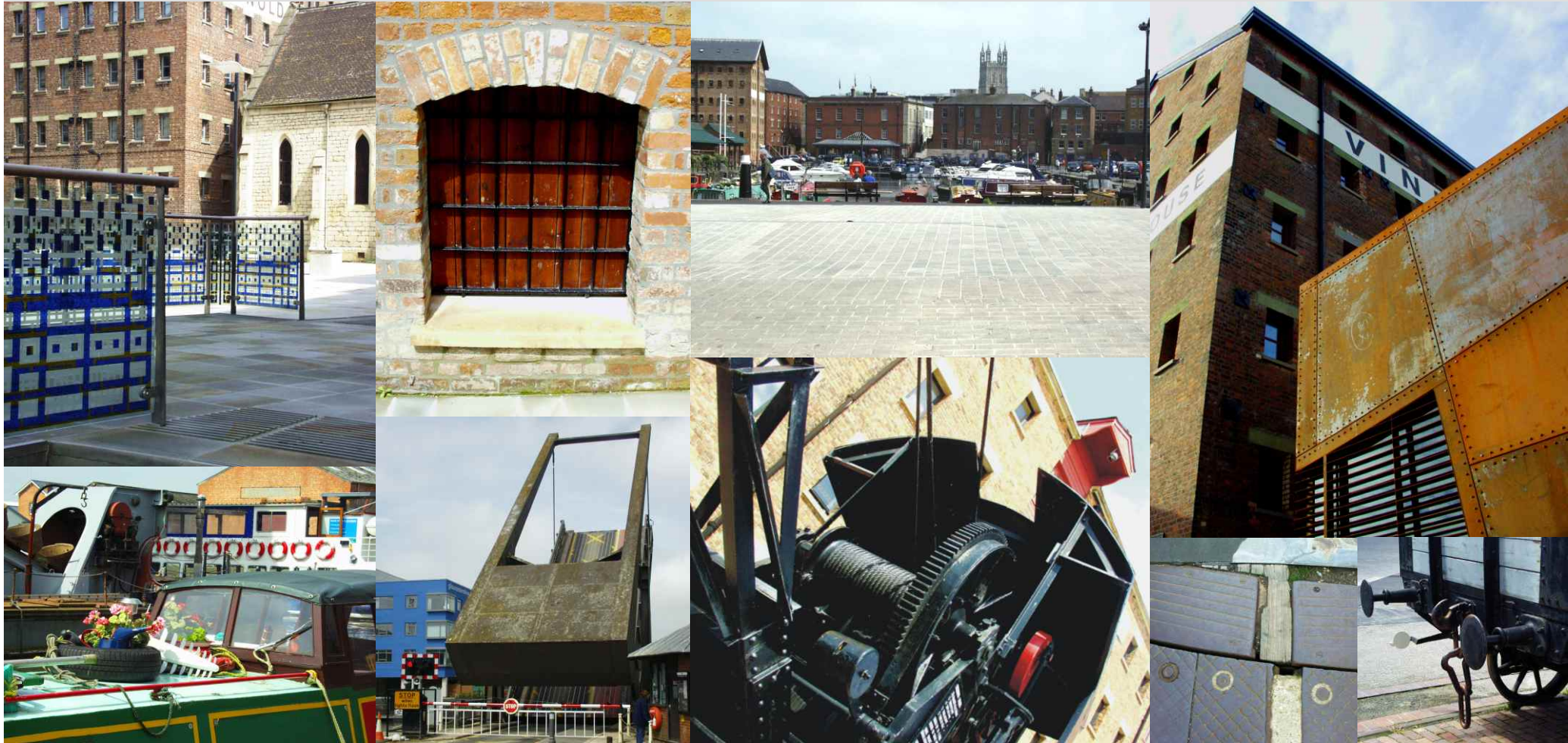
Tall rectangular-plan warehouses are set back from the quayside with either their short sides or long sides facing the water. The spacing between warehouses was developed to allow a team of horses or railway track to pick up and deliver goods and so are narrower than a normal street.

A characteristic of the Docks is the large scale and massing of the warehouse buildings, formed into defined clusters, with distinct gaps or spaces between. This pattern of development forms a rhythm along the canal frontage, which extends from the first Warehouses within bakers Quay to the very terminus of the canal, adjacent to North Warehouse.

In contrast to the Westgate Street example, brick is the predominant construction material within the area, with natural stone elements that exist as quoining features.

The similarities in appearance of the Warehouse buildings can be attributed to their common use and the insistence of the Canal Company that the warehouses conform to a common design and setback from the quay. The uniformity of warehouse widths and heights is also based on functional principles. They are all of red brick with slate roofs and display very uniform patterns of fenestration, notably for ventilation within the buildings.

Docks Details



Several places within the Docks offer clear views of the cathedral, notably Alexandra Quay, from where the cathedral's stone tower is framed between warehouses with a background of sky and a foreground of water. Gloucester Cathedral's tower can also be seen from West Quay, as well as from the Dry Docks area.

The historic Docks contain examples of unique warehouse buildings which share a common character, including heights, massing and materials. Any proposals for a new development should not exceed the established heights of buildings in the conservation area.

2.3 View corridor designations

Specific view corridors are proposed which are considered strategically important in retaining the unique character and distinctiveness of Gloucester. Direct or partial views of the Cathedral tower and other historic buildings have an important influence on people's perceptions of the historic character of the city.

Developments which impact on the settings of historic landmark buildings, or which are adjacent to the identified view corridors, should be avoided. The proximity of the proposed development to the view corridor will be a key consideration.

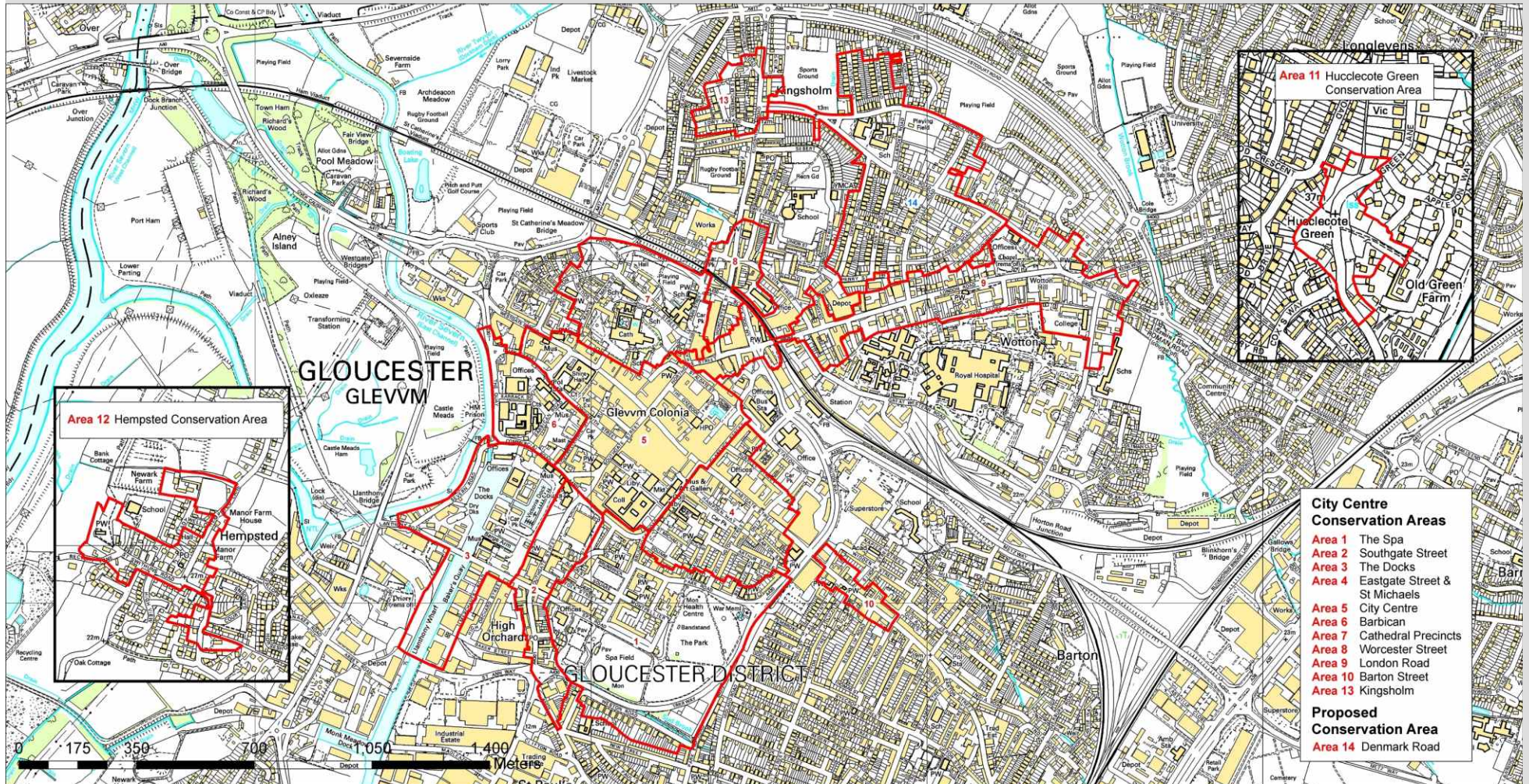
Views from both strategic points outside of the built-up area and from localised points within the city are important to consider. The view corridors identified in Plans 2 and 3 will be taken into account when considering the details of an application for a tall building within Gloucester.

'Seeing the History in the View' (April 2008), is a draft document, produced by English Heritage, which outlines a method for assessing heritage significance within views. It is a useful reference document for any new heights of buildings guidance and some of its recommendations appear relevant to Gloucester.

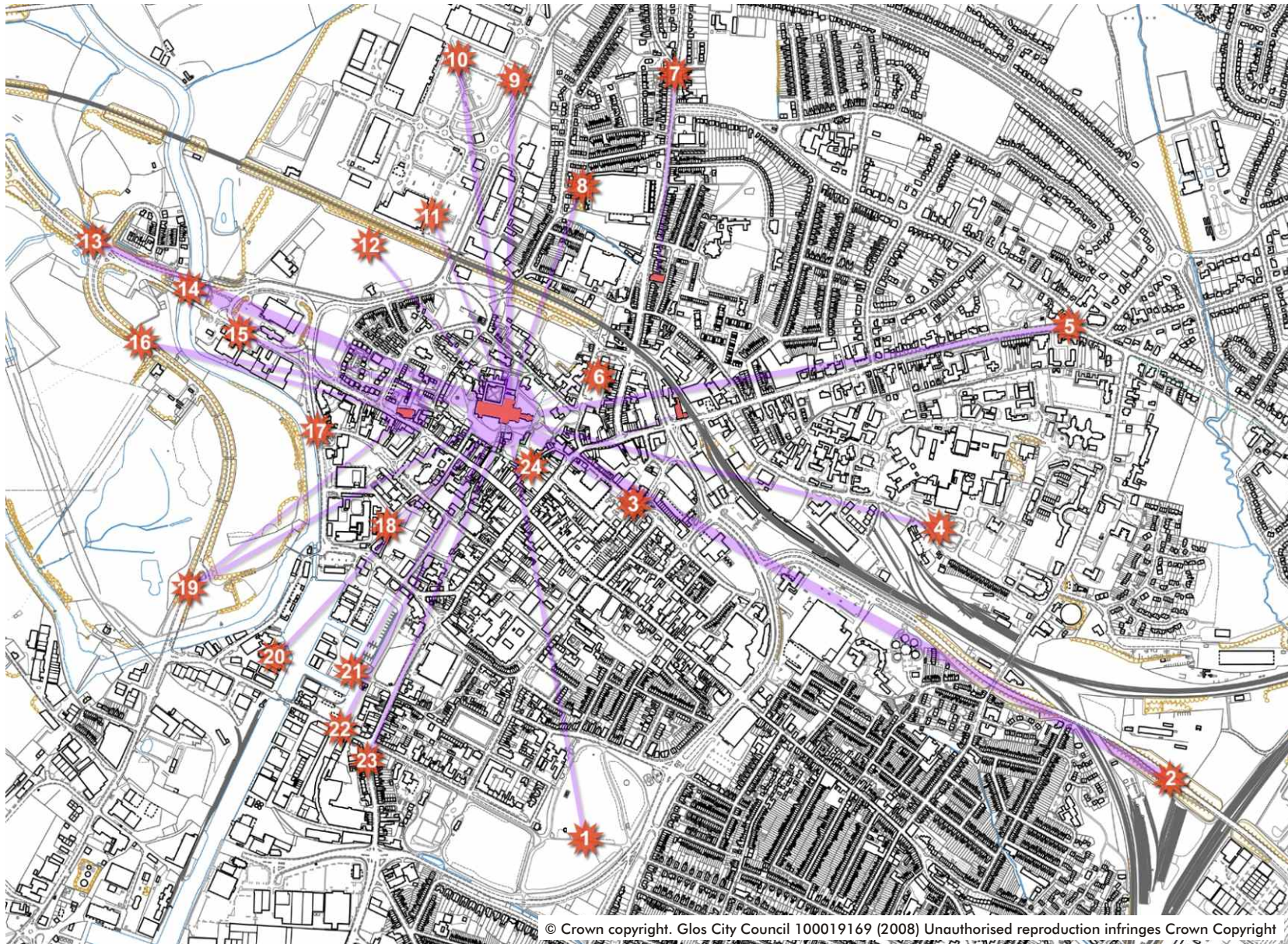
Specifically, the document promotes the concept of providing justifications for why particular viewpoints and corridors have been chosen, as well as defining the significance of features within the view. The following information is provided to develop the understanding of each of the selected view points.

Another consideration is whether the key views identified should be enhanced during redevelopment of city centre sites. The proposed regeneration of parts of the city centre may present opportunities to enhance views and we are seeking opinions on the importance of this issue.

Plan 1 Conservation Areas



Plan 2 Local View Corridors



© Crown copyright. Glos City Council 100019169 (2008) Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright



1 Playground area, Gloucester Park

Viewing site

Site well used by families and other general park users. It is a local node of activity.

Heritage assets

Clear view of the cathedral tower (both between and over buildings) and Georgian buildings along park Road, within the Spa Conservation Area.

2 Metz Way bridge over railway triangle

Elevated site with fairly long, moving views. Metz Way is a heavily used road into central Gloucester.

Clear view of the cathedral tower as well as other church spires. Views over central Gloucester and its conservation areas. Partial competition within view from tall lamp columns.





3 Kings Square

Well-used focal area within the city centre. A meeting place and congregation area for residents and location for events. Within main shopping area and will be focus for regeneration plans in the near future.

Clear view of the cathedral tower along NE side of square. View from within City Centre Conservation Area looking NW.



4 Gloucester Royal Hospital

Viewpoint from pedestrian and cycle path, which links Great Western Road with the main hospital grounds. Well used throughout the day.

View of cathedral tower between mature trees. Partially obscured during summer.



5 London Road

The main route into central Gloucester from eastern areas.

Long and clear views of the cathedral tower from the junction with Denmark Road. The view is framed with mature trees with staggered built form curving off. The viewpoint lies within the London Road Conservation Area.



7 Kingsholm Road

View along Kingsholm Road of St. Mark's Church, which lies within the Worcester Street Conservation Area.

This is one of the main routes into the centre from the north of Gloucester.



6 Sainsbury's car park

An important area of activity within the centre, located within the Cathedral Precincts Conservation Area.

Clear view of the cathedral tower, in close proximity to the structure.



8 Dean's Walk

View from pathway adjacent to the Gloucester rugby ground, a well-used route specifically on match days.

Clear view of the whole cathedral tower and part of the main structure.



9 St Oswalds Road

View south from St Oswalds Road adjacent to the retail park area.

Clear view of much of the cathedral and tower through a natural break in the existing vegetation along the road.



10 St. Oswald's Retail Park

A well-used congregation point within the car park of the retail area, used throughout the day.

Clear view of the whole cathedral tower and upper parts of the main structure.



11 Tesco St.Oswald's

A well-used congregation point within the car park of the retail area, used throughout the day.

Clear view of the whole cathedral tower and upper parts of the main structure.



12 Kings School playing field

Well-used area catering for cricket as well as a general playing field for the Kings School. The Cricket Festival is also held there.

One of the well-established views of the cathedral, across open ground. The primacy of the cathedral is well represented with only limited competition from the trees.

13 Over Causeway

An important view area on a heavily used road into and around Gloucester. View can be either stationary at the traffic lights or moving.

Illustration of seasonal changes within a view. Clear view of St. Nicholas Church and partially obscured view of cathedral tower during summer, with clear views of both during the winter. A key view, which reinforces the image of the city.



14 Over footbridge

Main pedestrian and cycle crossing over the River Severn, connecting the city centre with areas to the west.

Clear view of St. Nicholas Church along much of bridge. During winter months, the cathedral tower is also an obvious feature, although partially obscured by tree branches.



15 Lower Westgate Street

Viewpoint at the exit point of the busy petrol station.

During both the summer and winter months, there is a partially obscured view of both the cathedral tower and St. Nicholas Church.

16 Western By-pass

A very busy vehicular route around the western part of Gloucester. There are a number of vantage points and there are opportunities for moving and stationary views.

Provides long and unobstructed views across the floodplain towards the Barbican and City Centre Conservation Areas. The cathedral tower and St. Nicholas Church are both clearly visible above existing development along The Quay.



17 The Quay

The Quay connects lower Westgate Street with the Docks area and will be downgraded to vehicular traffic and improved as a pedestrian promenade.

A gap in the building line along The Quay, following Quay Street, offers clear views of both the cathedral tower and St. Nicholas Church.



19 South-Western By-pass

A very busy vehicular route around the western part of Gloucester. There are opportunities for moving and stationary views (particularly during peak periods).

Provides long views across the floodplain towards the Barbican and City Centre Conservation Areas. The top of the cathedral tower and St. Nicholas Church are both visible, but the Shire Hall extension obscures much of the cathedral tower.



18 Barbican Road

The strategic route between the Docks and cathedral (via Westgate Street) is well-used by pedestrians and cyclists.

Views along its length of the cathedral tower and Crown Court building, within the Barbican and Cathedral Precincts Conservation Areas.



20 Dry Docks

An important location adjacent to the listed Dry Dock structure, along the route between the river and Quays development.

One of the 'postcard' views of the city, with the combination of the cathedral, St. Nicholas Church, North Warehouse, the joined group of Herbert, Kimberley and Phillpotts Warehouses and the main Docks basin.



21 Victoria Dock (South end)

This position offers a clear view of the cathedral tower, in a busy part of the Docks Conservation Area. The combination of the dock and boats, with the listed buildings along Commercial Road, form a rich composition. The connection of the cathedral and Docks is important to preserve.



22 Llanthony Road



23 Spa Road/Southgate Street junction
Southgate Street, from Bristol Road, is one of the main routes into the city centre.

This position offers both stationary and moving views towards the city centre, through the Southgate Street Conservation Area, terminating in the buildings around the City Centre Conservation Area. The cathedral tower can be glimpsed over the roofline of the modern County Court buildings.



24 St. John's Lane

This viewpoint was chosen due to the very close proximity of the cathedral and the clear views of large parts of the overall structure. The only viewpoint within the centre (outside of the precincts themselves) where such a good view exists.



Plan 3 Strategic View Corridors

© Crown copyright. Glos City Council 100019169 (2008) Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright



1 Tewkesbury Road

A main road into Gloucester from the north, close to junction with A40.

Clear view of the cathedral tower.



2 Highnam

Elevated position on edge of Highnam, from a popular viewing area.

Clear views of the cathedral, including a natural foreground and backdrop of landscape. A number of modern tall buildings are also visible, as well as pylons.



3 A40/B4215

Traffic lights along the A40, at the junction with the B4215 provide an opportunity to stop on this busy road connecting Gloucester to other western areas.

Clear view of cathedral with hills in the background.



4 A48

Elevated position from lay-by along the A48 (off the A40 near Highnam).

Clear view of the cathedral, as well as the landscape around the western edge of Gloucester.



5 Castle Meads Ham

Viewpoint within the floodplain from a pedestrian and cycleway, which runs from Llanthony Road towards Over Farm.

The view of the cathedral tower and St. Nicholas Church is influenced by the modern Shire Hall extension, which is due for removal as part of the regeneration of the area.



6 Hempsted village

View from Hempsted to the south of the city centre. Viewpoint from a public footpath, within the Hempsted Conservation Area.

Many landmarks can be viewed from this location, including St. Nicholas Church, the cathedral and County Council Offices.



7 Netheridge

View north east over open ground from the start of the newly opened south western bypass.



8 Canal side

View north along canal from a publicly accessible area.

St. Nicholas Church and the cathedral tower are seen across the Docks Conservation Area. A number of listed Docks Warehouses are also visible.



9 Ribston Hall High School

View north towards the city centre across the playing fields of the school.



10 Robinswood Hill

View from the base of Robinswood Hill near to the visitor centre. This area is within the Country Park and is well used by visitors.

The cathedral is a prominent landmark in this view.



11 View west from Churchdown Hill towards Gloucester, from a public footpath.

The cathedral is clearly visible in the centre, with other notable landmarks, such as St. Nicholas Church, Clapham Court, Gloscat Tower and the Hospital Tower. The modern development in the foreground, including the Walls factory site, sits adjacent to the A417.

3.0 Design and assessment criteria

The following section outlines the criteria against which an application for a tall building will be considered, as well as the application type and process.

3.1 Planning applications

Scheme designs should be developed to the level of detail required by a full planning application. This is mainly due to the fact that only a detailed design, as required by a full application, will be sufficient to allow proper consideration of the proposals.

This information should be presented within the design and access statement, which is already a requirement of the application process. This document should present information under the standard design and access statement headings (Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscaping, Appearance), as well as the headings relating specifically to the issue of the height of the proposal, listed under section 3.2 below.

Applications for significant alterations to existing tall buildings will be considered against the full criteria set out in section 3.2.

3.2 Application assessment requirements

Where the term 'tall building' is considered applicable to a proposal, the following 13 assessment criteria will be used as a tool during the consideration of an application.

Pre-application discussions are essential within the design process. It is recommended that an initial scale and massing study is prepared which demonstrates that criteria 1-5 are capable of being answered, before proceeding further.

It should be noted that simply answering each criteria might not be sufficient to satisfy the requirements for planning permission. This SPD is designed to provide a structure to obtain the most appropriate information upon which to make a decision. The following criteria have been selected as important issues, which a proposal for a tall building will need to present.

These criteria are split into principle criteria (1-5) and detailed criteria (6-12). The first set form the basis for assessing in principle, the appropriateness of the development of a tall building within Gloucester. These should be applied first, before moving onto the detailed criteria.

- 1 Policy context
- 2 Siting of tall buildings: Areas
- 3 Siting of tall buildings: View corridors
- 4 Scale and massing
- 5 Relationship to context

- 6 Archaeology
- 7 Design/architectural quality
- 8 Public realm
- 9 Transport, access and parking
- 10 Microclimate/local environment impact
- 11 Sustainability
- 12 Lighting

The following section gives specific details for each criterion, each setting out exactly what the applicant will need to demonstrate as part of an application.

1 - Policy context

This SPD forms part of the emerging Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework is a 'portfolio' of planning documents that collectively provide the strategic planning framework for a particular area.

When it is adopted as part of the LDF, this SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Applicants will be required to:

- Set out in a clear and concise manner the underlying evidence and policy justification on which the development is based, making reference to all relevant policy at a national, regional and local level.

2 - Siting of tall buildings: Areas

Tall buildings should be sited in areas of the City which have minimum visual impact on sensitive historic environments. The Conservation Areas, which are identified within the Urban Design Study above, comprise a significant part of the city centre, and on the basis of the Study and the relevant Conservation Area Appraisals are unlikely to be appropriate sites for further tall buildings. All of the Conservation Areas in the City have the benefit of Conservation Area Appraisals, which can be found on the City Council's website. Each of these Appraisals includes detailed consideration of the special character of these areas which must be taken into consideration when preparing and assessing proposals for a tall building, which will only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances within Conservation Areas.

For development proposals, which fall outside the conservation areas, proposals will be dealt with on an individual basis, taking into account the merits of each scheme. Any effects on the setting or character of adjacent conservation areas will also be considered.

Applicants will be required to:

- Produce a detailed justification, which demonstrates that the siting of a proposed tall building is appropriate within its context.

3 - Siting of tall buildings: View corridors

The view corridors plan, presented within the urban design study, sets out what are considered to be significant views of the Cathedral Tower, as well as other historic structures. This does not constitute a comprehensive record but rather a guide that aims to identify the most sensitive examples, as a tool for quickly considering the likely impact of a tall building.

Applicants will be required to:

- Produce accurate 3-dimensional computer and photomontage visualisations which demonstrate that important views of the Cathedral Tower and other important historic structures, are not blocked or harmed by the introduction of a tall building (see Plan 2 'Local Views' Section 2.3).

4 - Scale and massing

Tall buildings have a tendency to impact on surrounding areas, due to their height, bulk and massing.

Historically, churches tended to be bulky at lower levels, rising to slender spires at the higher levels. Modern buildings have the capacity for greater mass at higher levels, due mainly to improved construction techniques. This inevitably leads to greater impacts on views and the character of areas.

In Gloucester, a series of modern buildings (as identified in section 2.1) have been constructed which have been poorly designed, bulky, 'slab-like' and tall. They have not responded to historic patterns of development and have competed with existing historic structures in terms of their effect on the image of Gloucester.

Generally, a tall building, which fails to respond positively to the character of an area, or its sense of place, will not be accepted.

Applicants will be required to:

- Demonstrate how the massing of a tall building has been developed with reference to its setting, taking into account any existing buildings or features which surround the development.
- Illustrate how the massing of the proposal creates an appropriate form.

5 - Relationship to context

PPS1 states that, 'design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.'

The way in which a proposal for a tall building responds to the local context will be a key principle in creating an appropriate and successful design.

There are a number of different approaches to the design of a tall building. One would be to incorporate locally distinctive design features and materials sympathetic to the existing character, while another would be to design a scheme, which stood out or contrasted with the surrounding built form.

Comments on this point are invited and will help in determining an appropriate approach to this issue.

Applicants will be required to:

- Demonstrate by way of a local character assessment how a proposed tall building would:
 - Contribute to and enhance the urban environment
 - Be an appropriate new element within the local area
- Use a range of 3-dimensional illustrative techniques to demonstrate how the proposal will sit within the existing built form.
- Provide a detailed urban design analysis of surrounding areas that details the positive and negative contributions that the proposed tall building makes to the visual quality of that area.
- Describe how the proposal relates to the public realm at street level. This is essential in encouraging active frontages at a human scale.

6 - Archaeology

Any proposal for a tall building which may have an impact on above or below ground archaeology will require a full desk-based archaeological assessment to be submitted with an application. If the area is identified as potentially sensitive, further works may be required.

Applicants will be required to:

- Detail how the proposals affect any archaeological remains, both above and below ground level. Specifically, the location of foundations of tall buildings may be a key issue.

7 - Design/architectural quality

A very high standard of design will be required of any proposed tall building. Due to the greater visual and physical impacts of tall buildings on surrounding areas, care will have to be taken to develop proposals which clearly utilise high quality materials.

Policies within the Gloucester Local Plan (2002) are clear on the importance of high quality design. There are specific references to the poor quality of development in the second half of the twentieth Century, examples of which can be seen in section 2.1.

Applicants will be required to:

- Produce a statement, which describes the rationale behind the design of the tall building. This should be accompanied by detailed colour elevations and 3-dimensional illustrations of the proposals.
- Show precedents for the use of specific materials, in order to show how they have been successfully used in developments elsewhere.

- Describe how the roofline of the proposed development affects the skyline of the City.

8 - Public realm

The areas of public space surrounding a tall building are important to consider in the design process. These spaces should be safe, attractive and provide amenity value for the general public.

Proposals should seek to provide ground floor uses which lead to activity around the building and overlooking into the public realm. Edges should be flexible and provide good visual connections between the building and surrounding spaces.

Applicants will be required to:

- Describe how the proposals are designed to provide high quality spaces around the development, including issues relating to daylight and over-shadowing, landscaping, surveillance, safety and the hierarchy of spaces.
- Describe the arrangements for short, medium and long-term maintenance of the public realm.

9 - Transport, access and parking

Parking is a major urban issue and one which has an influence over many design elements. Development of high-density urban forms should be capable of generating or linking with more sustainable transport options. A proposal for a tall building within the existing urban area should be developed to make full use of public transport services and other sustainable transport options.

Innovative methods for dealing with issues of parking will be considered for urban areas, along with ways of using existing parking provision more efficiently.

The current capacity or provision of the transport and parking network should be assessed before any proposals are put forward. The projected impact on these systems from a new development should be considered.

Applicants will be required to:

- Assess the current capacity of existing transport infrastructure, including public transport, road capacity, and cycle networks.
- Assess the parking capacity within the local area.
- Provide information on the accessibility to local public transport systems.
- Provide information on how the proposed development will provide adequate parking for the residents or users of the development.

10 - Microclimate/Local Environment Impact

Tall buildings can have impacts on the surrounding natural and built environment, in terms of overshadowing to residential properties and alteration and focussing of ground level wind patterns. Both of these effects can be mitigated through a proper assessment during the design process, as well as sensitive siting of the building.

Evidence of shadow patterns will be required in order to show how a proposed tall building will affect existing adjacent development.

Increased wind speeds around the entrances to buildings, along pedestrian routes and through recreation areas should be properly mitigated, or avoided completely.

Applicants will be required to:

- Describe how the local environment has been assessed and considered within the proposals.
- Explain and justify how the proposed design will effectively mitigate the effects of overshadowing and enhanced wind speeds at ground level.

11 - Sustainability

Sustainability is one of the most important emerging issues relating to the built environment. There are significant environmental impacts from both the building industry and private homes and any new development should aim to be as efficiently constructed and operated as possible.

The key issues here are the use of limited and non-renewable resources, combined with the production of many forms of pollution. Raised public awareness of environmental issues and design, along with advancements in construction technology, has started to focus attention on ways to improve the sustainability of existing and new-build developments.

Developers should be aware of a number of key issues. The energy consumption and retention of a building should be as efficient as

possible. This can be achieved through efficient insulation, as well as recycling the heat generated around internal spaces. Passive thermal cooling systems should be used, such as bris soleil, to shield the building from direct light exposure. Natural ventilation should be considered to avoid reliance on air conditioning systems.

The use of renewable energy systems will be key to reducing the energy demand of a tall building. Systems, which should be considered, are building integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) or other photovoltaic systems, solar water heating and wind turbines.

Using rainwater storage systems, as well as grey water recycling systems can reduce water demand. Sustainable drainage systems and living roofs (using Sedum or other plants), can reduce water run-off.

Developers should seek to create adaptable and sustainable internal spaces and footplates, which can be altered over time to accommodate alternative uses.

Applicants will be required to provide a sustainability statement, which provides:

- Information on how the development will achieve 10% of energy demand from on-site renewables.
- A BREEAM statement to fit regional/national guidance for commercial development.
- Code for sustainable homes to fit regional/national guidance.
- A waste management plan in line with County SPD.
- A Seagull management plan.

12 - Lighting

The lighting of the urban environment is an important design element to consider, as this will have a big impact on the way a place is perceived after dark.

The lighting of Gloucester's central area has been the subject of a recent study, which aims to improve both architectural and street lighting. It is hoped that the product of this work, the Gloucester Lighting Strategy, will contribute to the improvement of the evening and night-time economy of the city as well as the safety of the general public. The promotion of Gloucester's historic environment is also a key consideration when developing tourism within the city.

The strategy sets out both technical and creative guidelines for architectural and street lighting within the central area and it should be used as a reference when developing lighting proposals for a tall building.

Applicants will be required to:

- Address key issues contained within the Gloucester Lighting Strategy, paying particular attention to both the quality and energy efficiency of the lighting scheme.

4.0 Further advice and information

If further information is required, please contact the sustainable development team, as detailed below.

Policy Design and Conservation

Gloucester City Council
Herbert Warehouse
The Docks
Gloucester GL1 2EQ

01452 396847

Appendix 1: Statement of Consultation

Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal

Appendix 3: Design criteria checklist

- 1 Policy context
- 2 Siting of tall buildings: Areas
- 3 Siting of tall buildings: View corridors
- 4 Scale and massing
- 5 Relationship to context
- 6 Archaeology
- 7 Design/architectural quality
- 8 Public realm
- 9 Transport, access and parking
- 10 Microclimate/local environment impact
- 11 Sustainability
- 12 Lighting



GLOUCESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Policy Design and Conservation
Gloucester City Council
Herbert Warehouse
The Docks
Gloucester GL1 2EQ

01452 396847

November 2008