5

Context Appraisal

5.1 The Site

Aerial view of development site from the south-east

The platfrom site at New Rotterdam Wharf is a brownfield linear site running in a north – south orientation adjacent to the Forth and Clyde Canal.

The site comprises 0.54 hectares (5400m2), approx. 30m wide and 182m length. The site is fairly flat and forms a 'platform' sitting about 4m above the level of Scottish Opera's existing Production Studio [1] and about 8m below the canal. The site therefore is bounded by a substantial brickwork (or brick faced) retaining wall structure to the eastern canalside boundary, toppped by a metal fence [2].

The brickwork retaining wall structure to the western edge of the platform site does not run the full length of the site but terminates just beyond the end of the Scottish Opera Production Studio, beyond which there is a steep planted embankment (approx. 50 degrees) [3].

There is a pedestrian walkway and cycle route to the west side of the canal and a public stair connects Sawmillfield Street up to this level [4]. This is constructed in concrete in three flights rising some 8m in height.

There is a planting bank that screens the site from the view of the Speirs Wharf residential and mixed use development on the opposite side of the canal.

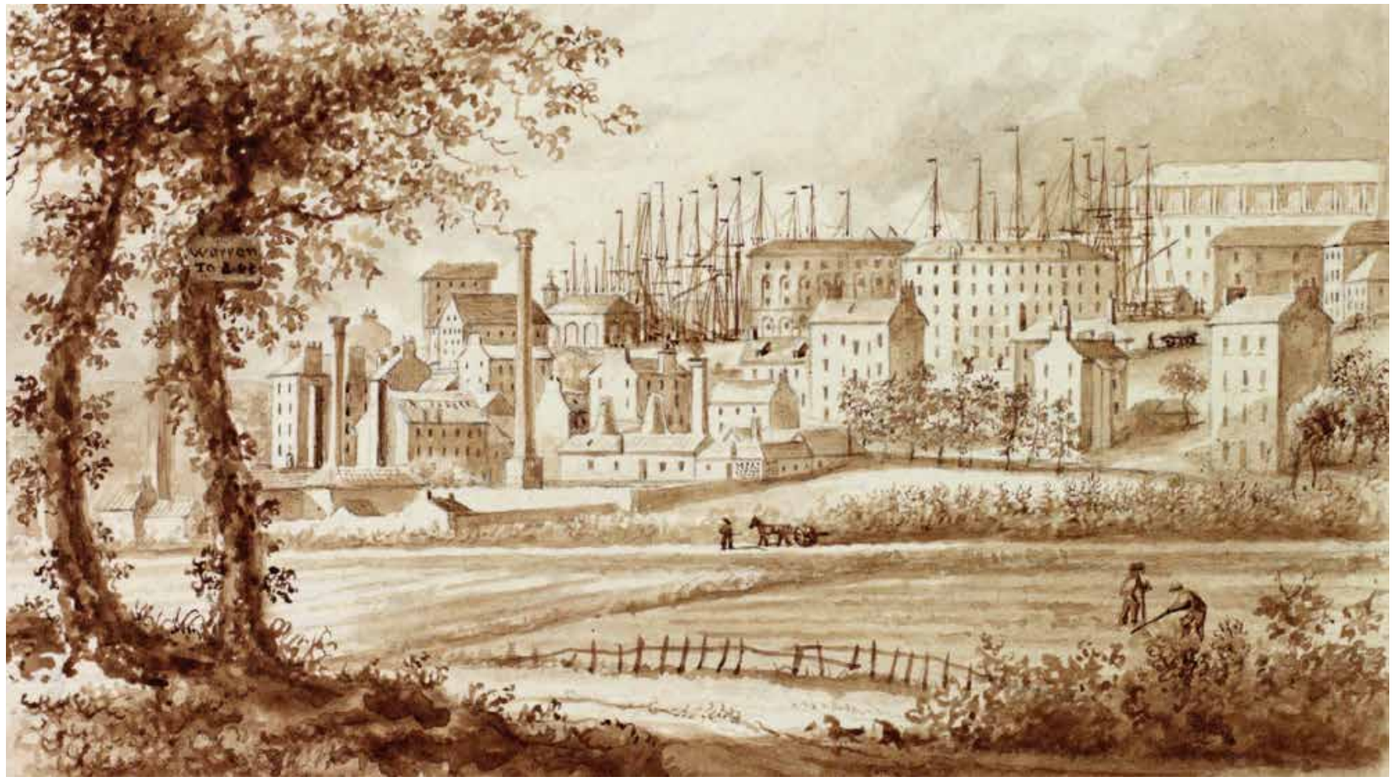
The platform site is currently accessed from Sawmillfield Street to the north [5], and historically from Corn Street from the south [6] - now bricked up.

Approximately 80% of the site is covered with a 200 mm thick concrete slab which is assumed to have been the floor slab of previous industrial development [7]. This is in a poor condition. The remaining 20% is soft earth with areas of self seeded shrubbery that has developed over a period of time.

Since aquiring the site Scottish Opera have undertaken some site clearnace and tidying up to facilitate the use of the platform site for outdoor performances.

Refer to separate Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment which accompanies the Planning application.

5.2 Area Character Appraisal



Top: James Hopkirk etching (Glasgow University Library)
Top Right: Aerial photograph (Canmore)
Bottom and Right: James Hopkirk etching (Glasgow University Library)

The application site at New Rotterdam Wharf sits in an area of Glasgow that over the past centrury has seen dramatic change in terms of use, urban form and character.

The 1827 etching of Port Dundas by James Hopkirk (left) illustrates the surge of development that occured around the canal in the industrial revolution. Buildings surround the canal - still distinctly separate from the city - intermingled with boat masts. The scene is described by Alfred Barnard;

"It is the basin of the celebrated Forth and Clyde canal, and is situated, strange to say, at the tope of a hill overlooking the city. The appearance of the ships' masts in such a position, over-topping the houses, presented to us a peculiar surprise."

Development through the 19th century extended the city's dense, relentless urban grid north to meet the canal, its massive industrial buildings and supporting tenemental terraces.

The 1960's then saw the infamous 'Highway Plan for Glasgow' cut swathes through the rigorous grid and tight urban grain of the city resulting is huge areas of the city being demolished to make way for a 'new grain' and urban typology that would come to define the character of the area.

Right: Construction of M8 motorway (Glasgow Motorway Archive)

5.2 Area Character Appraisal

Left: Low level aerial views from west and south west (Google Earth)

The relentless linear urban grid that existed prior to the demolitions was replaced by a loose and less dense urban pattern, containing new modernist interpretation of the Glasgow tenement (built in red brick) [1], a series of point block flanking towers [2] [3], and low rise industrial units to the western edge of the canal [4]. A further high rise block on New City Road [5] has served to reinforce the surrounding point block character and definition of the area.

The remaining fragments of the historic Speirs Wharf area; being the Whisky Bond to the north [6], Civic House to the south [7] and the Speirs Wharf range to the east [8] have become prominant and now more significant than they were when previously imbedded in a tight dense urban grain.

Speirs Wharf in particular, sitting in an elevated position when viewed from the west, is significant in the city scape and is a defining feature for the area and city.

Right: Aerial view of area from south west (Google Earth)

5.3 Connectivity

Sited immediately to the north of the core city centre, New Rotterdam Wharf is well connected to transport systems.

Glasgow is well served by the motorway network with the M8 passing immediately to the south of the site. This directly connects Glasgow to Edinburgh (46 miles) and connects with the M74 leading south to the M6.

The M8 directly connects with both Glasgow International Airport (9 miles/18 minute drive time) and Edinburgh International Airport (39 miles/46 minute drive time). Prestwick Airport is 32 miles (43 minute drive time) via the M77 and A77.

Both of Glasgow's main railway stations (Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street) are approximately an 18-minute walk from the site, with the main bus station a 14-minute walk. From here public transport connecting Glasgow to the remainder of Scotland and the wider UK can be accessed.

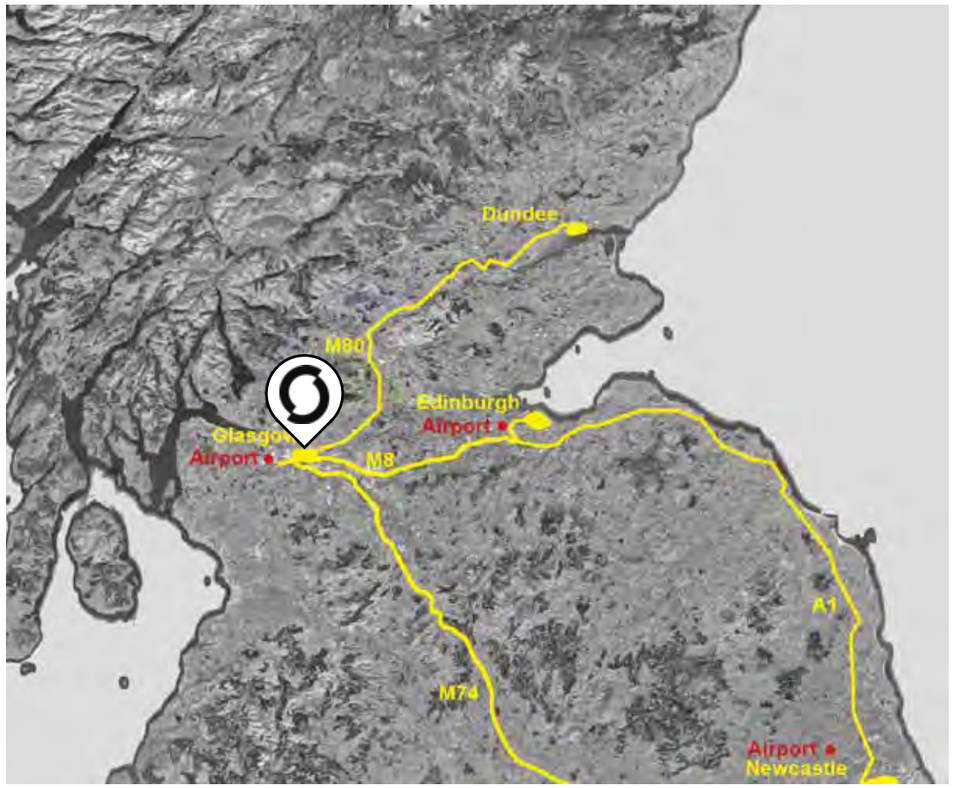
Cowcaddens subway (connecting with the immediate Glasgow area) is a short walk from the site, and Garscube Road is a major bus route with buses connecting the city centre with northern suburbs and satellite towns to the north of Glasgow such as Kirkintilloch and Lenzie.

There are 5 major city centre car parks offering 4236 spaces within a 20-minute walk of the site.

Dundasvale	460 spaces
Cambridge Street	812 spaces
Concert Square	592 spaces
Buchanan Galleries	2000 spaces
Bath Street (Q Park)	372 spaces

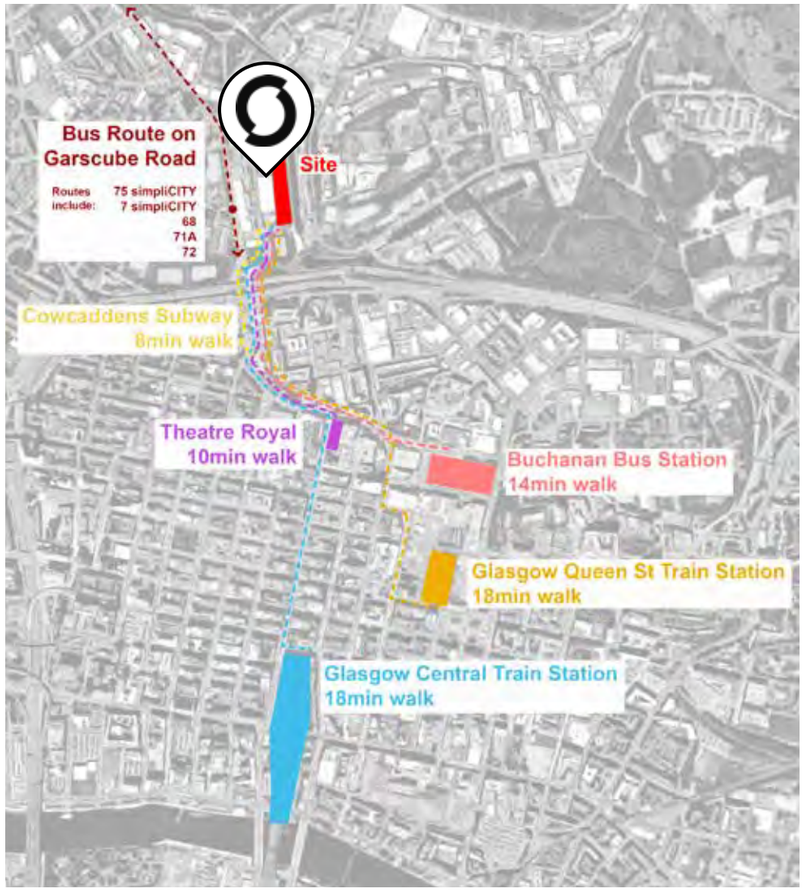
The site is well connected to active transport networks in north Glasgow, including the popular cycle and pedestrian walkways along the Forth and Clyde Canal.

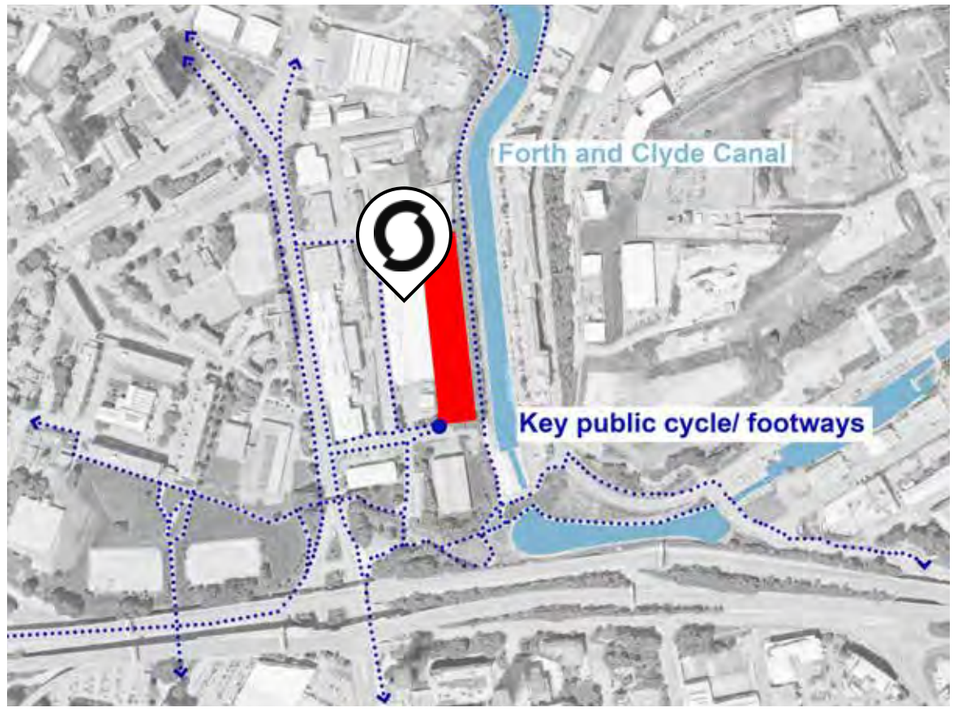
Refer to separate Transport Assessment submitted as part of the planning application.

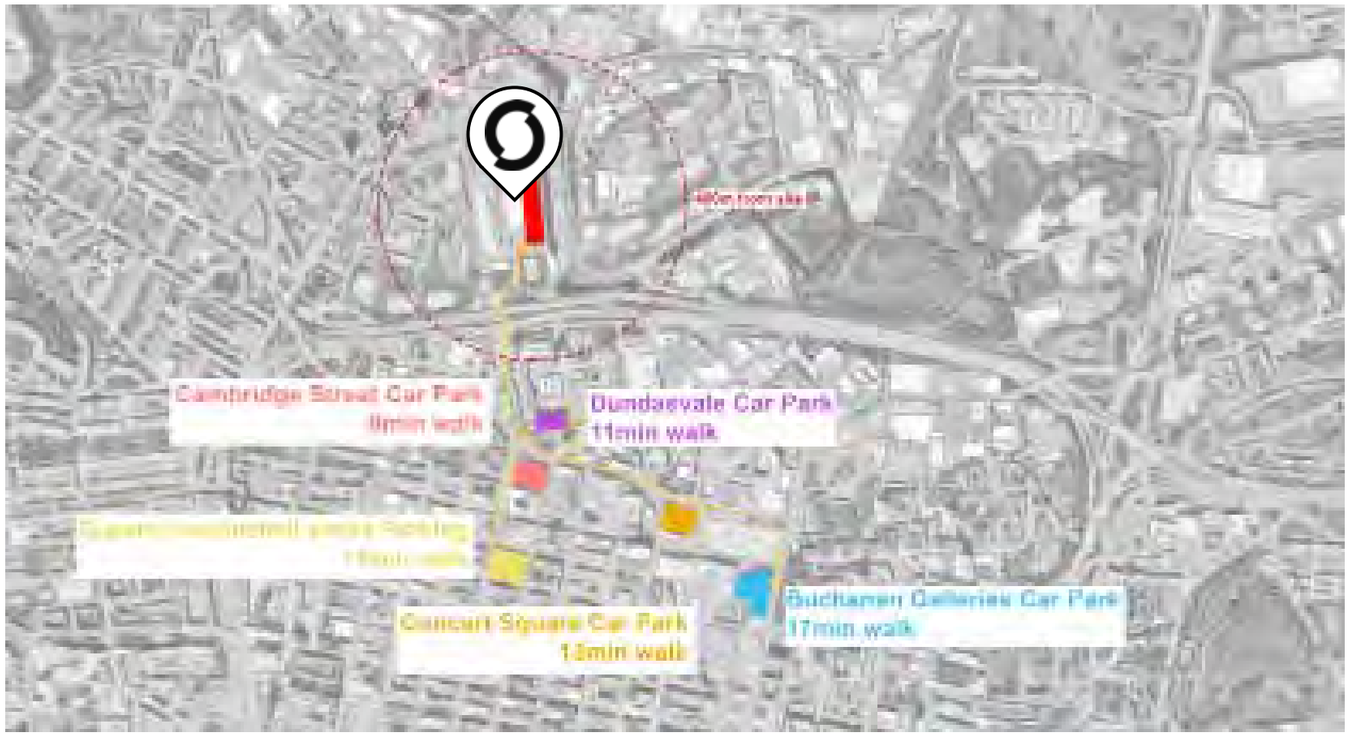


Left lower: Drive times to site

Left upper: map showing main arterial routes and airport locations







Top right: aerial indicating walking times to city transport hubs

Top far right: aerial indicating key public footways and cycle routes

Lower right: aerial indicating local car parking

5.4 Accessibility

The site sits within the Inner Urban Area of Glasgow on the edge of the City Centre boundary. The site lies on the boundary of the 'High Accessibility' definition for public transport provision as identified on the Public Transport Accessibility Map (below).

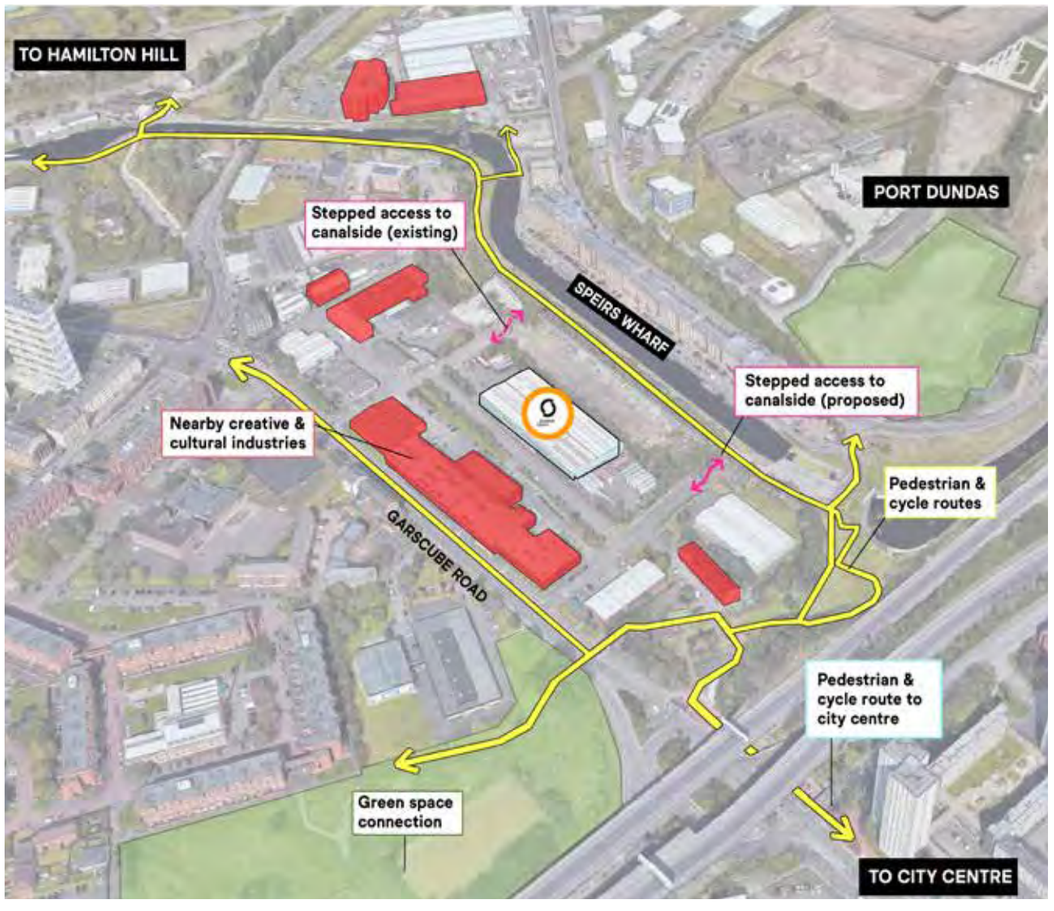
New Rotterdam Wharf is readily accessible by road, pedestrian footway and cycle paths.

The site is accessed by road from the south from Corn Street and from the north by Sawmillfield Street.

There is a well-established network of active travel routes linking with the city centre and from Garscube Road, with a combination of sloping and stepped paths leading to the southern end of the canal basin.

The canal towpath is a well-used pedestrian and cycleway route for leisure and provides an attractive route linking the northern areas of Glasgow with the city centre.

Existing steps link the end of Sawmillfield Street up onto the canal towpath. The proposal is to enhance this link with a widened feature set of steps at this northern end and to provide a similar link at the end of Corn Street to the south, improving pedestrian connections for the canal basin down to Garscube Road



Right: part Public Transport Accessibility Plan from https://glasgowgis.maps.arcgis.com/ with site locaiton inidicated

Far right: aerial view of site indicating key public footways and cycle routes

5.5 20 Minute Neighbourhood

One of the six overarching spatial principles of NPF4 is:

- **Local living** Meaning the Government will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.

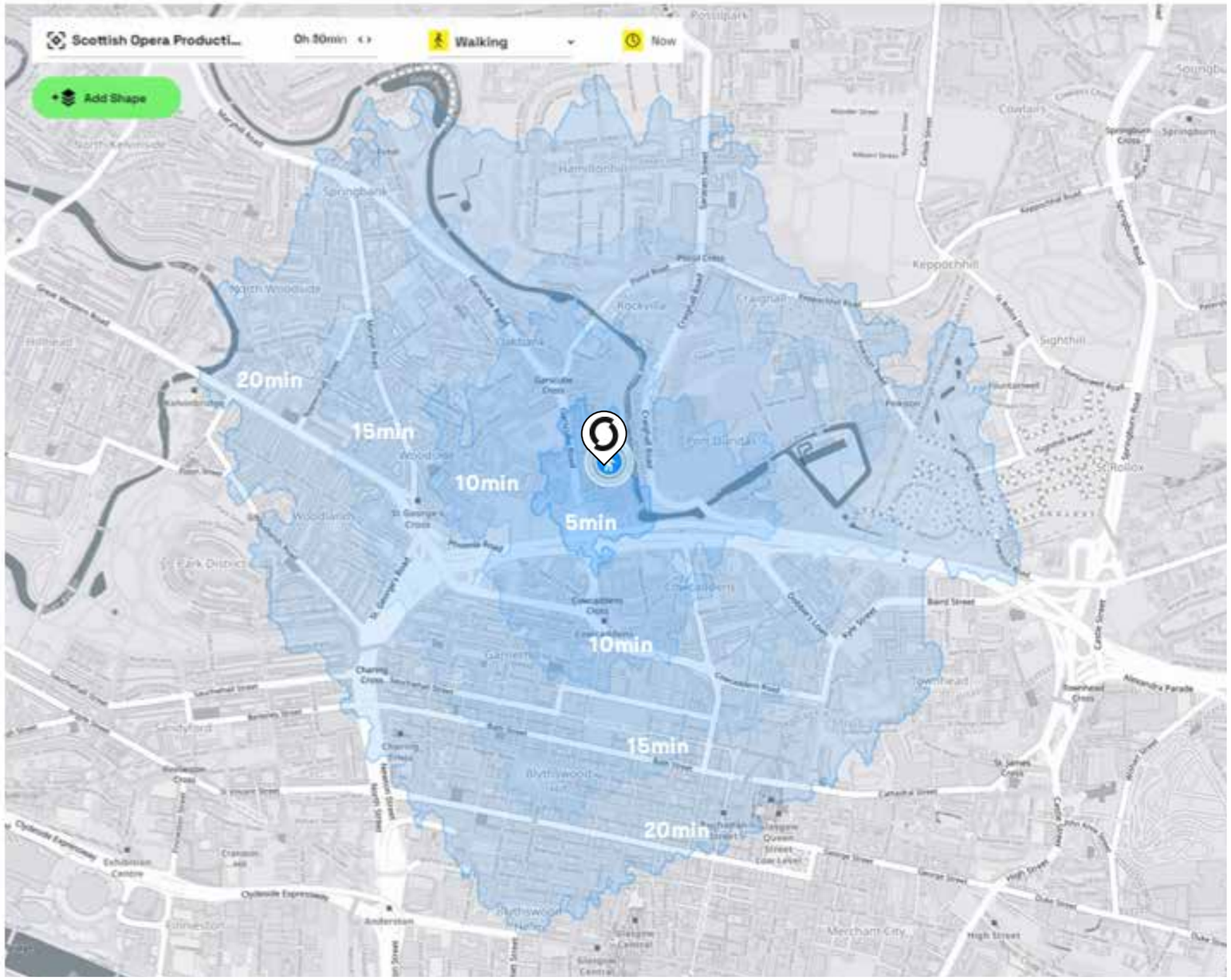
The principle of '20 minute neighbourhoods', whereby people can access local services and facilities within a 20minute walking distance is actively promoted.

In addition to this National Policy, Glasgow's Residential policy SG10 requires an analysis to be undertaken for developments containing a PBSA component, to demonstrate the range of local facilities and mix of uses within the locality such that the introduction of a student population on an area will not have a detrimental impact, but positively contribute to the community.

Using the App 'TravelTime' we have generated a map illustrating the extents of 5, 10, 15 and 20min walking times from the centre of the application site.

This demonstrates that within a 20min walk, residents will be able to access the heart of the city centre to the south, along the Great Western Road to the River Kelvin to the west, the Claypitd to the north and Sitehill to the east.

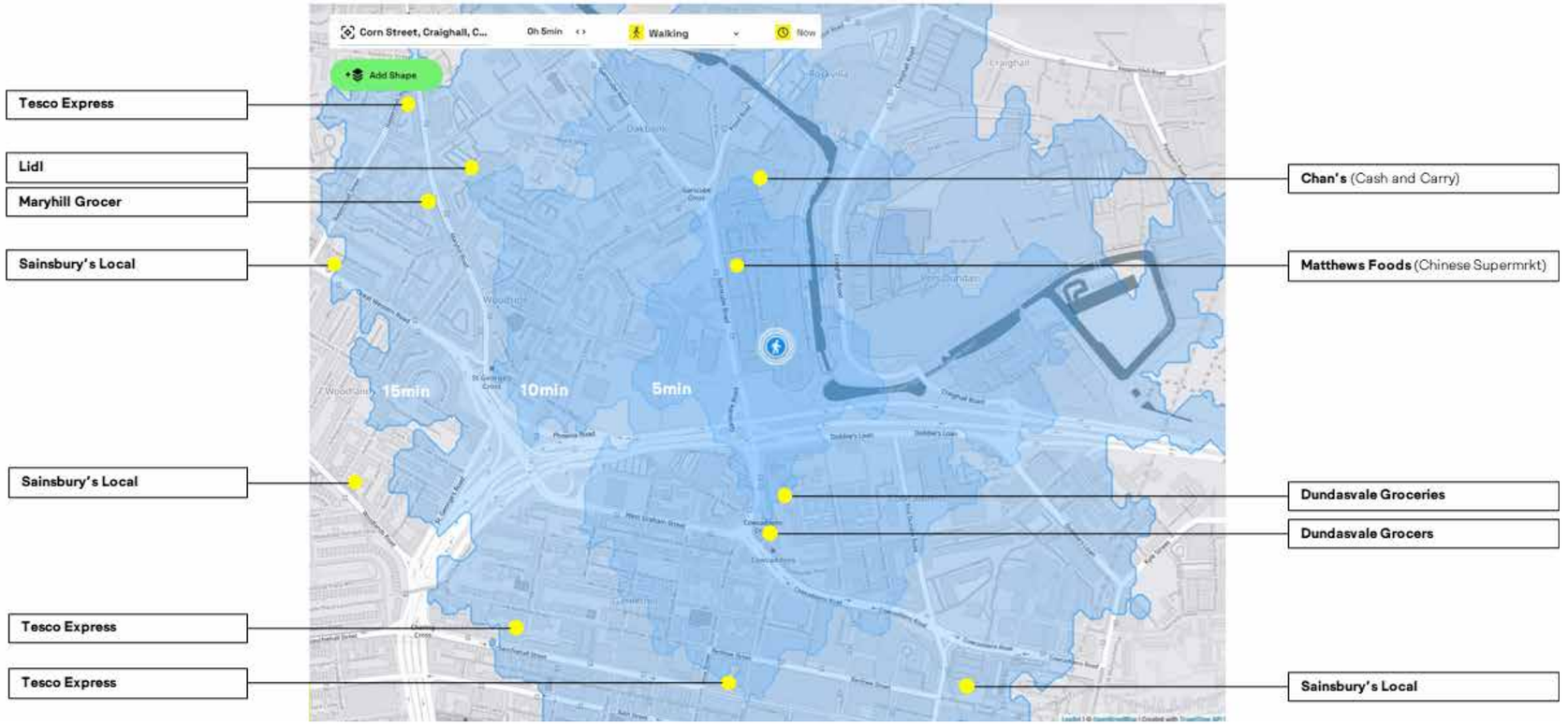
The following pages document the local services able to be accessed within a 15min walking time.



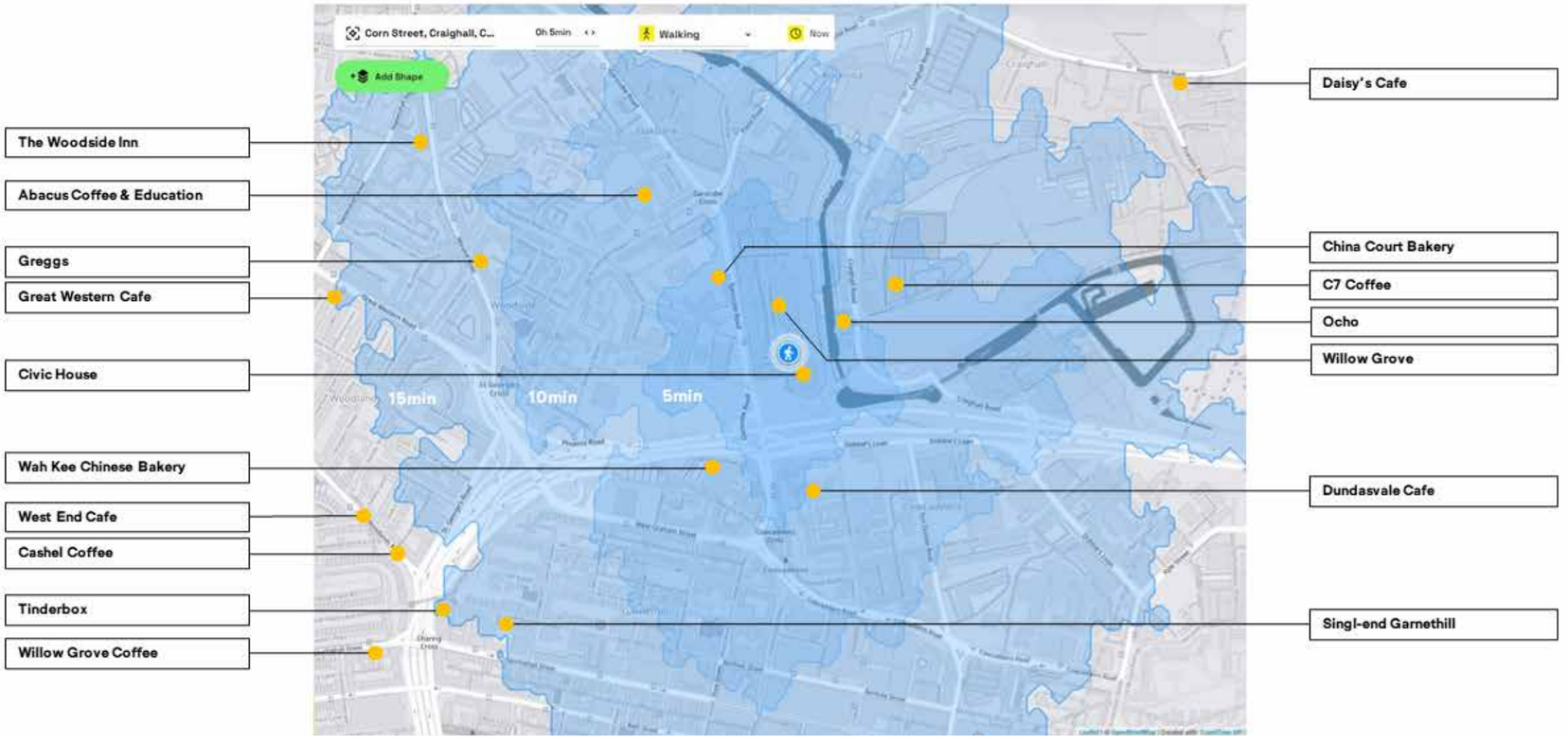
Right: TravelTime.com walking time analysis

5.6 Local Services

Supermarkets / Groceries



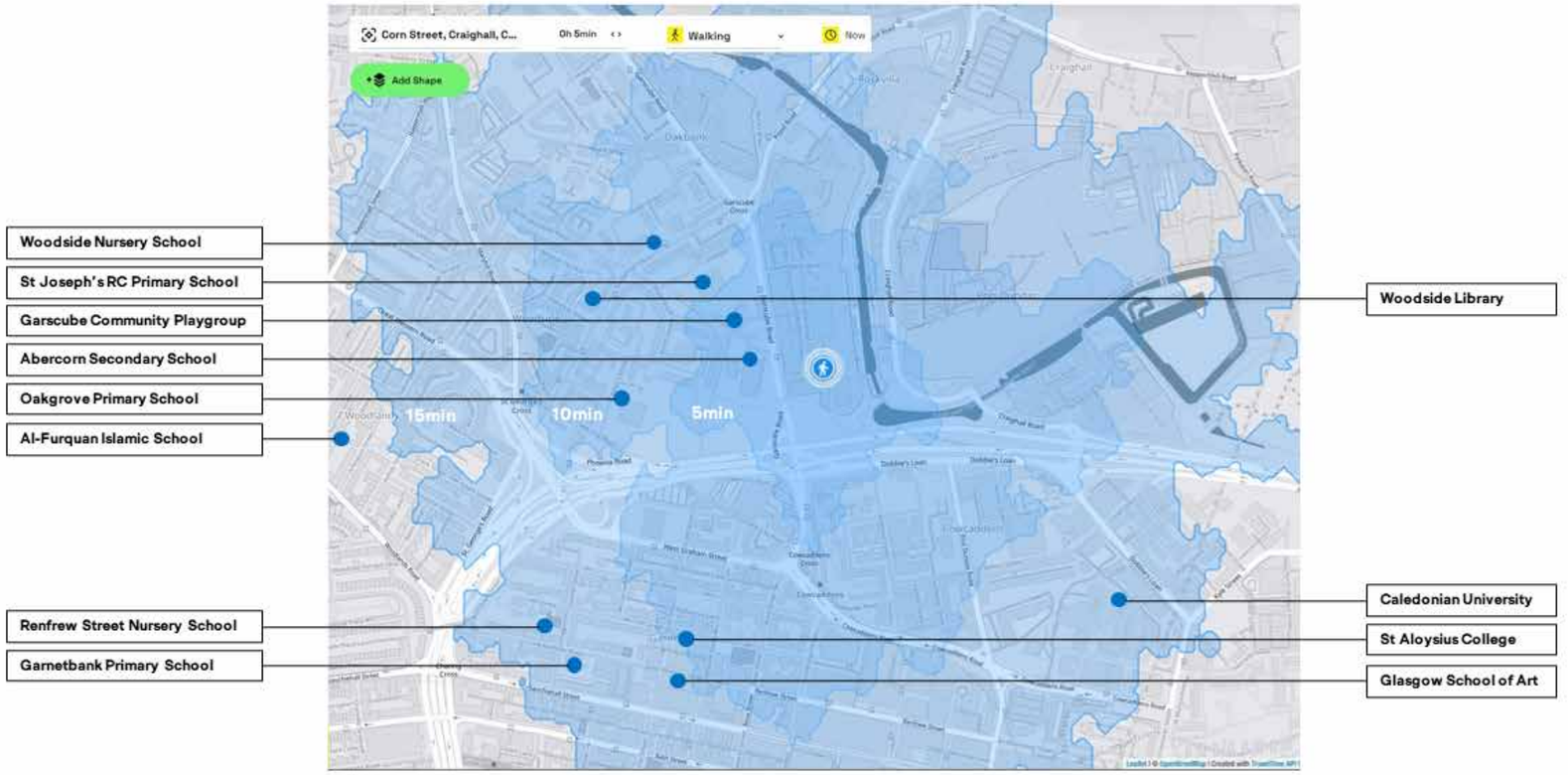
Cafe's / Convenience Food



Right: TravelTime.com walking time analysis

5.6 Local Services

Education / Learning

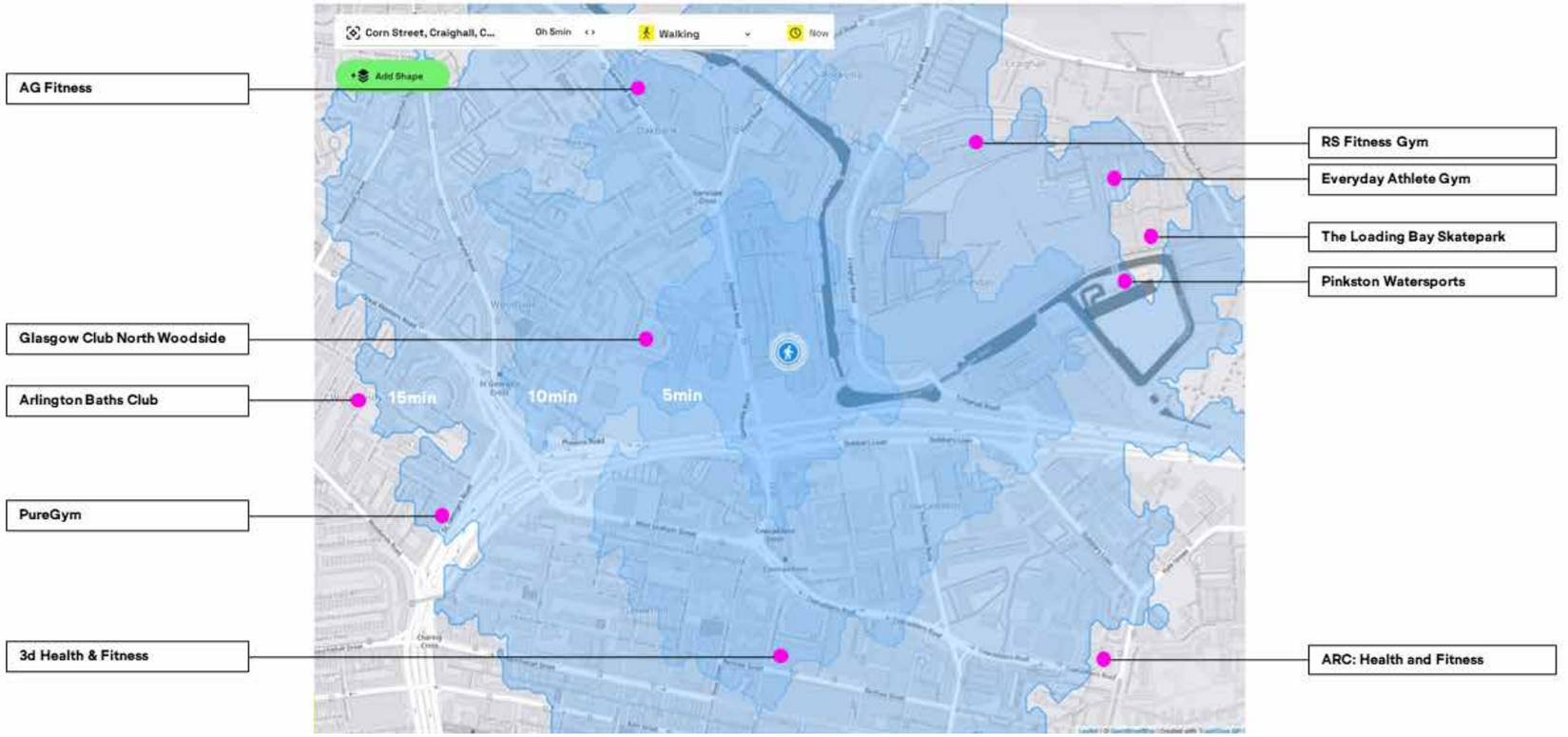


Healthcare

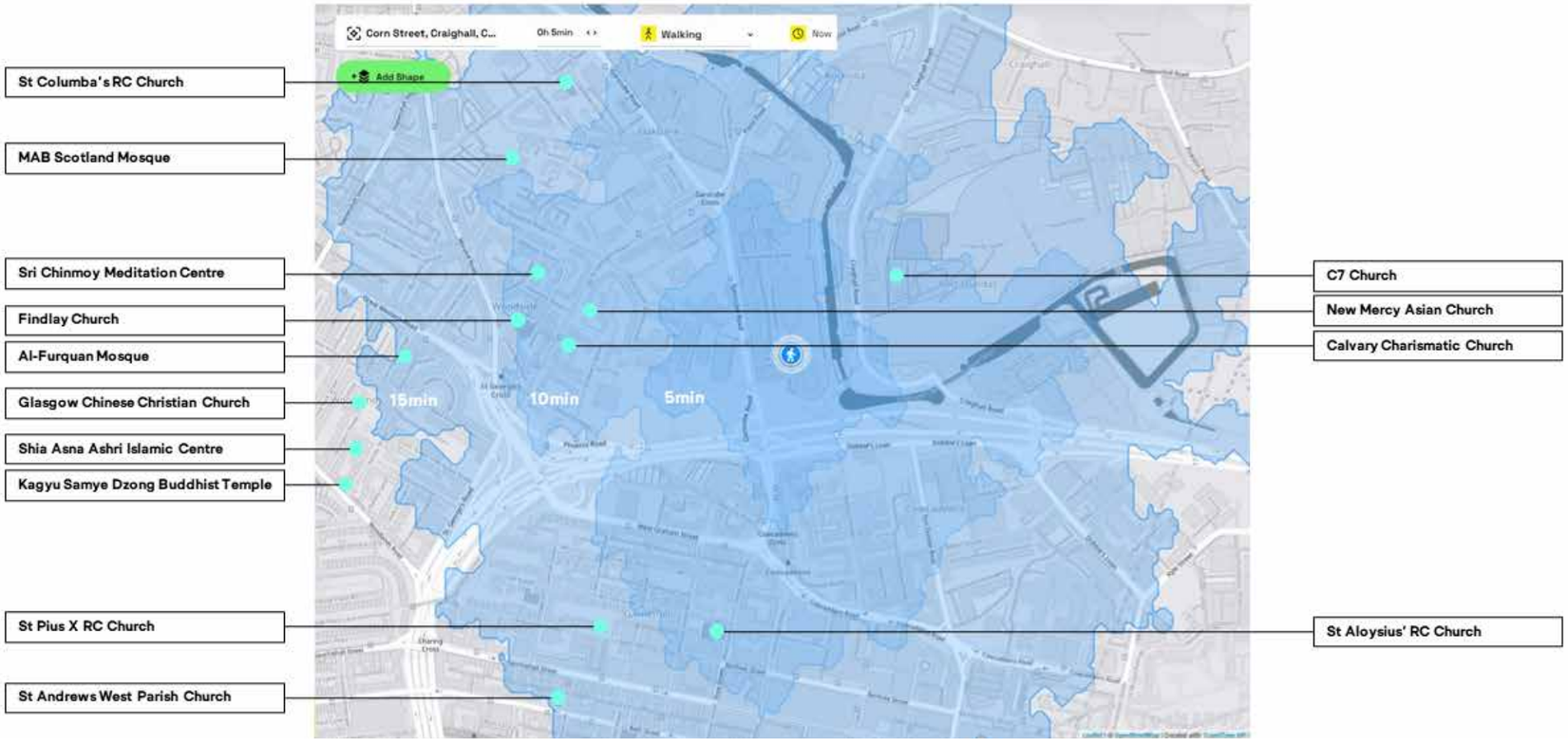
Right: TravelTime.com walking time analysis

5.6 Local Services

Health and Fitness



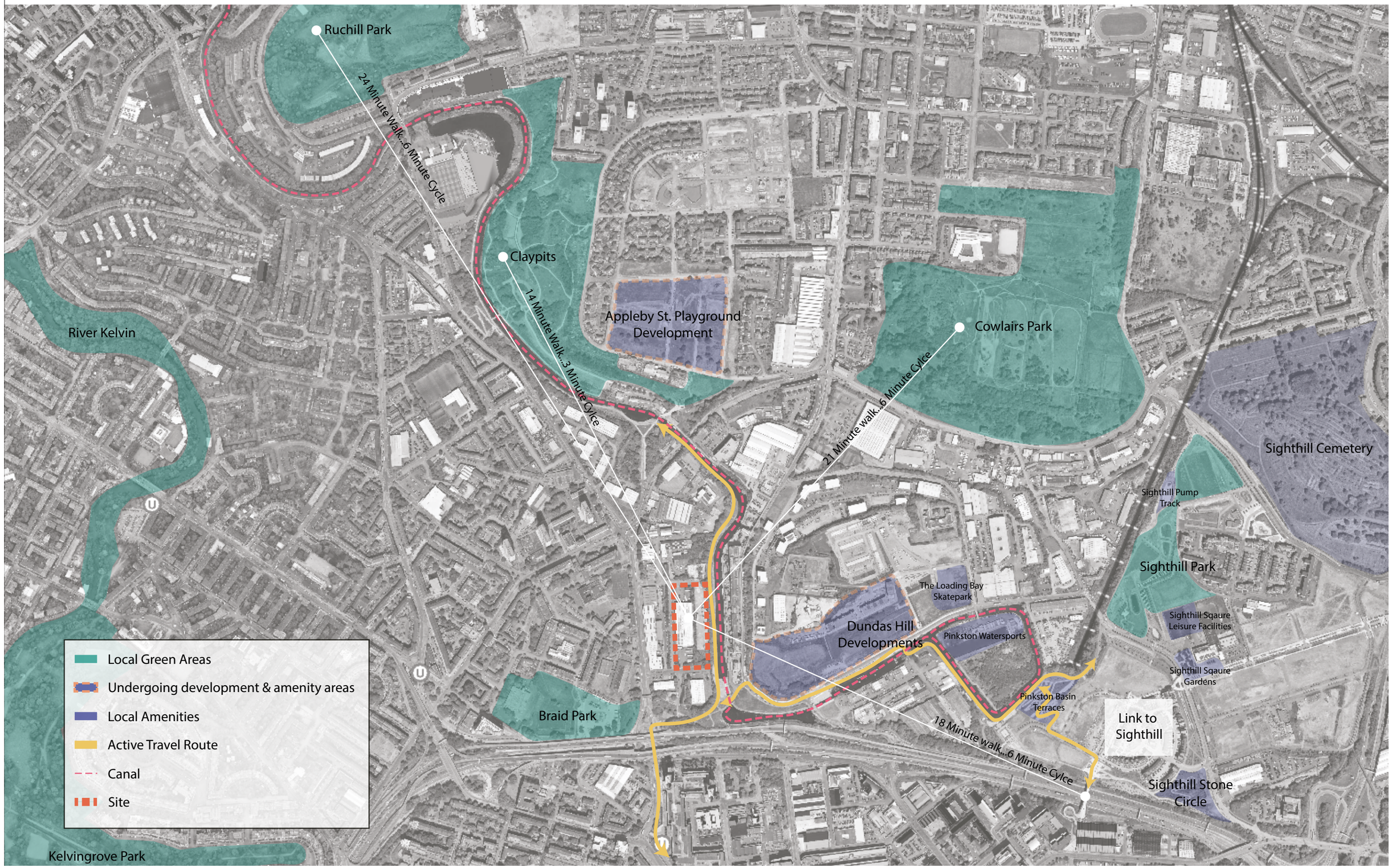
Mind and Spirit



Right: TravelTime.com walking time analysis

Right: Aerial view of area from south west (Google Earth)

5.7 Amenity and Open Space



Existing Provision

The location of New Rotterdam Wharf linking directly with the Forth & Clyde Canal (Glasgow Spur) offers the site and its occupants valuable links to a number of existing open spaces and amenities in the surrounding area - most of which can be accessed within 25 minutes by foot or 10 minutes by bike.

There are a few large parks in the vicinity such as Cowlairs Park, Claypits, Ruchill Park and Sighthill Park which offer extensive green areas that can be enjoyed thoughout the year. Within the parks, there are playgrounds and opportunities for gathering.

Being in close proximity to the city centre and Regeneration Areas, there are a number of active development sites which, when completed, will contribute to the local provision of accessible public spaces. One of the areas is Dundas Hill which will provide a mixed housing tenure, two playgrounds and various open green areas. This is programmed to be fully completed by spring 2025. At Hamilton Hill, Appleby St Playground is another project in progress that will provide enhanced paly facilities.

There is also a variety of sport & leisure facilities around the site featuring activities such as skateboarding, watersports and cycling. The direct adjacency to the Forth & Clyde Canal also provides access to boating activities.

Design Intent

Landscape design is an integral component of placemaking. Well-designed landscapes can provide many benefits: safe, creative spaces for people to gather in; public space that promotes access to the outdoors; biodiversity and water management; the reduction of airborne particles; and improved micro-climate. These are all important issues that can be combined and delivered effectively through good landscape design at Scottish Opera, Speirs Wharf.

Whilst the open space standards set by Glasgow City Council will be met on site for the proposed development, access to local amenity spaces close to the site such as the Claypits to the north, the proposed green spaces within the Dundas Hill development to the east, and Braid Park to the southwest all provide additional links to high quality open spaces. Wayfinding and accessibility of these connections will be enhanced within the proposed development at Speirs Wharf. The towpath route to the east edge of the development connects to existing routes to the north and into the City to the south. The project recognises this potential and provides accessible routes and enhanced linkages to key connections.

Left page
Existing Amenity & Open Spaces

Right page
Top: Claypits

Middle left: Cowlairs Park

Middle right: The Loading Bay Skatepark

Bottom: Pinkston Watersports

6

Site Analysis

6.1 Site Organisation

The application site is currently used as Production Studios and storage facilities for Scottish Opera with a large portion of the site occupied by the existing Production Studio building. Surrounding areas are designated for staff and HGV parking and logistics operations.

Access to the two lower service yards is taken from Corn Street to the south and Sawmillfield Street to the north. These yards are used predominantly for short term parking and regular deliveries to the Studio building. The waste bins and skips are kept externally at this lower site level. There are a number of entrances to the building, some of which are accessed through the service yards with the main entrance being from Edington Street. This entrance is accessed via steps or ramp and has 8 cycle spaces adjacent.

The mid site level (platform site) is accessed at the top of Sawmillfield Street via secure gates and is currently used for HGV parking. It has also been used to host and stage pop-up events by Scottish Opera during summer months

The towpath level, although not within the ownership boundary, plays an important role in connecting the site to the Forth & Clyde canal (Glasgow branch) and Speir's Wharf community. The mid site level and towpath are currently connected via a narrow set of stairs at the top of Sawmillfield Street.

Two retaining walls bridge the level differences between the three areas. seen on the application site. The lower retaining wall is partially covered by overgrown trees and vegetation. The upper retaining wall forms a part of the Scheduled Monument of the Forth & Clyde canal.

Existing Trees
Canal Boundary
Service Area & Pop-up Event Space (Lower Courtyard)
HGV Parking & Pop-up Event Space (Upper Courtyards)
Access Points
Tow Path
Existing Retaining Wall
Existing Retaining Wall (Part of Canal Historic Monument)
Canal
Cycle Route Connecting to NCN 754
Warehouse Vehicle Entrances
Warehouse Pedestrian Entrances
Existing Steps to Tow Path
Cycle Hoops
Potential Development Site

Left: Existing Site Land Use diagram

Far left: Pop-up event during summer festival programme

6.2 Site Photographs

(far-left): view of northern part of site showing steps and area of self seeded planting to north east corner.

(left) view of retaining wall with planting strip to tow path above.

(far-left) Existing railing along the top of the eastern retaining wall.

(left) view of northern gates and boundary to Sawmillfield Street.

(far-left) general view from the middle part of the site looking north.

(left) Existing planting at the southern end from Corn Street.

(right) Looking South from the northern end of the site.

6.3 Ecology & Biodiversity

Preliminary Ecological Assessment: Summary

The open spaces of the Site are mostly Phase 1 habitat type J5 hard standing. Within the development site there are several stands of mostly young shrubs and broadleaved trees, with a few semi-mature trees. These habitats approximate most closely to Phase 1 habitat type A1.1.2 broad-leaved plantation woodland. None of these habitats or the plant species present are protected or rare.

The key ecological issues for this development are the protection of the root protection zones of retained trees, and biodiversity enhancement in compliance with National Planning Framework 4 policy 3c.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report concludes that there is no evidence for nearby protected sites which could be adversely impacted or potentially constrain this development, nor of any protected species being within the Site.

With the exception of mitigation for birds potentially breeding within trees and shrubs which could be disturbed during breeding attempts, and a precautionary otter protection plan, no further mitigation is necessary. These requirements can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions.

Photographs of trees and vegetation present on the application site

6.4 Drainage

Surface water run off from existing SOEPS roof and hardstandings currently drain with no attenuation to the public combined sewer in Edington Street via road gullies positioned at low points. Two surface water connections have been made, one to the north of the SOEPS and one to the south.

Similarly, foul water from the SOEPS also connects to the public combined sewer in Edington Street via a third connection.

The existing high level concrete slab has no formal drainage system as it was originally the ground slab for the previous Depot building at the site. However, in times of exceedance, run off flows onto the low-level platform by spilling over the retaining wall and also by spilling at the northwest corner, of the high platform, at the level of 40m aod.

As explained above, run off from the high-level platform currently drains towards the low-level platform un attenuated. However, the actual volume that contributes to the combined sewer is difficult to quantify due to the lack of effective drainage on the high-level platform.

It is considered reasonable (and conservative) to assume that say 30% of the run off from the high-level platform enters the public sewers. Using this assumption, drainage modelling has been carried out to estimate flows from the pre-developed site to the combined sewers for returns periods 1 in 2, 1 in 30 and 1 in 100years with a 360 minute storm duration. This duration has been chosen as guidelines commonly require modelling of high return periods for 360 minutes.

The SEPA flood map shows that the site will not be affected by river flooding however, the predeveloped site is prone to surface water flooding in the north service yard (at lower platform level). The topographical survey shows that gullies exist at low points within this area and therefore, surface water ponding would only occur due to the poorly maintained existing drainage system. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that rainwater is ponding on the existing hardstanding due to limited effective drainage. Once the site becomes developed, ponding will no longer occur as the management of the surface water run off will have been improved.

Please refer to the full drainage report for further details.

6.5 Utilities

The existing Scottish Opera building has utility connections for Electricity, Gas, Water and Telecoms.

Electrical supplies
The electrical incomer is served from an existing SPEN substation located in the southern service yard.

Water supplies
There is an existing water connection serving the Scottish Opera Production Studios building which enters from the west side of the building.

Natural Gas supplies
There is an existing natural gas connection serving the Scottish Opera Production Studios building which enters from the west side of the building and serves gas fired boilers generating heat and hot water.

Telecoms
The existing Scottish Opera building has an existing telecoms connection serving the production studios.

6.6 Geotechnical Conditions

The review of the ground conditions was undertaken initially with a Phase 1 desktop study by Mason Evans (refer to report reference P22/271 dated September 2023). This report then informed the scope of an intrusive site investigation which were subsequently undertaken and the Interim Phase 2 Report on site investigations was produced by Mason Evans (refer to report reference P22/271-02 dated January 2024).

Ground Conditions
The ground conditions encountered were generally found to be made ground varying in thickness from 0.7m thick in the north and 3.3m to the south.

The made ground is underlain by natural soils recorded as clay up to 15.8m depth, below which rockhead was encountered comprising sedimentary rock, described as sandstone or mudstone with occasional coal seams. The sedimentary rock was encountered at depths of between 6.4m and 15.8m below ground level with it being deeper below the eastern / southeastern areas of the site.

Mining Stability
The Phase 1 desk study noted that unrecorded shallow workings potentially exist beneath the site and following the intrusive investigations, mine workings were recorded within the southern area of the site, which are considered to be part of the Upper Possil Coal. As such the southern part of the site is considered to be minerally unstable and that grouting consolidation works should be undertaken in this area. The Coal Authority did not record any mine entries within the site or immediate surrounding area.

The Phase 2 report notes that the site is not at risk of ground instability as a result of historical quarrying activities.

Contamination
Assessment of Risks to Human Health
The laboratory results have identified elevated toxic metals and poly aromatic hydrocarbon contaminants within the shallow made ground soils (between 0.40 m and 2.20 m depth), which pose a risk to human health.

Asbestos fibres were frequently encountered within the shallow made ground deposits and subsequent quantification analyses recorded the total mass percentage of asbestos to range between <0.001% (i.e. very low) and 0.225% (i.e. high). Note that whilst four samples of the identified asbestos were recorded within the natural subsoil, the design team consider this to be representative of cross-contamination from the overlying made ground (in where asbestos was frequently recorded), and not representative of the natural subsoil below the site. Importantly, two of the samples taken from BH02 at 0.50 m and 2.50 m depth recorded hazardous levels of asbestos, where >0.1% quantification was recorded.

Note that if disturbed, these exceedances would be considered as 'hazardous waste'. Subsequent to the removal of the known hazardous quantities of asbestos below the site, the widespread presence of asbestos (albeit at low quantity) within the made ground across the remainder of the site is still considered to pose a risk to human health.

No elevated TPH or PCB contaminants were recorded within the shallow soils, of which could pose a risk to human health.

Assessment of Risks to the Water Environment
Although ground water monitoring is ongoing, at this stage given the ground conditions recorded and review of the chemical leachate and groundwater results to date, the water environment is not considered to be at significant risk from the shallow soils.

Ground Gas
To date, gas monitoring of the well installations has been undertaken at the site on two occasions and the initial gas monitoring readings have recorded elevated CH4 readings within one of the boreholes (BH05), which is conjectured to be attributed to mine gas sourced from the shallow coal mine workings in the area.

As such and given the recorded ground conditions it is recommended that the site be classified as 'Characteristic Situation 2', whereby ground gas preclusion measures would be required (equating to a 3.5 required points score given the proposed usage), as per BS 8485 (2015) guidance.

A combination of: a) structural barrier of the floor slab, and/or; b) ventilation measures, and/or; c) a gas resistant membrane will be implemented in order to achieve an adequate score.

Please refer to the full engineering report for further details.

6.7 Existing Retaining Wall

The retaining wall to the eastern boundary of site, which is ownd by Scottish Canals, is a Scheduled Monument structure. As this wall forms part of the New Rotterdam Wharf project for Scottish Opera, a review of the condition of the wall, which bounds the Glasgow Branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal at Spiers Wharf is being undertaken at present, and these investigations have been the subject of Scheduled Monument Consents.

The existing wall is circa 6.3m high from the concrete base slab to the top of the wall head and comprises a buff brick wall with external piers at approximately 9.0m centres. From the initial inspection of the wall, at existing openings at the base, it is apparent that the outer brick is 102mm thick, has a varying cavity width, and a rendered / concrete retaining wall behind. Header bricks were noted as being at 3050mm spacing horizontally and 150mm centres vertically which suggested that there could be a pier in the cavity.

The ground behind the wall is set circa 200mm below the top of wall level and then slopes up an embankment to the canal towpath circa 2.0metres higher. A metal barrier / fence runs along the top of the wall.

A borescope inspection has been undertaken at 4 locations along the wall and this was followed up with opening up of the outer leaf of the wall in these locations. The investigations confirmed that the outer leaf is a cladding only and the main retaining wall was a brick structure with a rendered face. The outer leaf is fixed to the main wall by brickwork piers within the cavity and with brickwork ties.

The outer leaf wall appears to be in good condition with no signs of distress or cracking. The main retaining wall appears to be in reasonable condition with some spalling of the render observed and in one location it was observed that there is some water damage to the brickwork.

It should be noted that a representative of Scottish Canals has also visited site and viewed the condition of the wall. Discussions between the applicant, their design team, Scottish Canals and Historic Environment Scotland are ongoing.

7

Heritage Statement

7.1 Introduction

1816: Lanark Forestry Map showing Forth and Clyde Canal Glasgow Branch

The Heritage Statement forms an important section of the Design and Access Statement document and will be part of the submittals for the Planning Application and subsequent Scheduled Monument Consent applications.

Historical research on the development of the site has been undertaken - refer to section 3 for the historical development of the site known as New Rotterdam Wharf and the surrounding area, and Section 7.3 for the heritage designations.

The platform site of New Rotterdam Wharf is immediately bounded to the east by the Forth and Clyde Canal – Glasgow Branch. This is a Scheduled Monument (ref SM6771) and is in the ownership of Scottish Canals. This includes the towpath to the east of Speirs Wharf canal basin and the retaining structure that forms the western boundary with the platform site. The original retaining wall is hidden behind a brickwork wall which is covered with street art and graffiti. At the head of the wall there is a west facing slope up to the tow path. This grassed strip is a heavily self-seeded with trees. There is a metal fence erected behind the head of the retaining wall to prevent falls down onto the platform site below.

There are no listed buildings on the New Rotterdam Wharf application site, however there remains a fragment of the lower section of wall of the Port Dundas power station that was demolished in the early 1970's. This is located at the southwest corner of the site and forms the existing boundary onto Edington Street, as part retaining structure between the southern service yard and the pavement. This section of wall has been much altered with original openings infilled.

The development of the site does impact on the setting of the Category B listed buildings of Spiers Wharf (Reference LB33619) and the Canal House (Reference LB33618). The impact of the development of New Rotterdam Wharf has been assessed relative to this.

This statement has been developed to assure that the design proposals do not have a detrimental impact on the overall significance of the site or a negative impact on the heritage of Spiers Wharf, and to record that consideration has been given to each alternation in the context of the existing heritage policies.

Each of the limited interfaces with the scheduled monument has been assessed in terms of significance. The scope for each intervention has been succinctly described followed by the definition of the intention behind each intervention.

7.2 Historical Context

The Forth and Clyde Canal was opened in 1790 to provide a route that connected between the Firth of Forth in the east and the Firth of Clyde in the west across the Scottish Lowlands. The canal is 35 miles long and allows navigation between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

There is an important basin at Port Dundas in Glasgow close to the New Rotterdam Wharf site; effectively the terminus of the Forth and Clyde Canal in the city centre. Established between 1786 and 1790 it was named after Sir Lawrence Dundas, one of the major backers of the Forth and Clyde Canal Company. The area around the basin became a major industrial centre in the 19th Century with textile mills, chemical works, granaries, distilleries, glassworks, iron foundries, power stations and engineering works all operating in the area. This included a brick chimney built for F Townsend which, at 454 feet (138m) was the tallest chimney on the world at the time.

However due to the rise of the railway for freight and an increase in the size of sea faring vessels the use of the canal declined as a means of transportation. By 1930's the canal had fallen into almost terminal decline with certain sections of the canal (at Grangemouth) being drained and backfilled. Industrial uses moved away and areas around the canal were developed for residential expansion of the city. The canal network was nationalised and subsequently closed in 1963.
In recent decades the canal has been promoted for use as an active travel route and for leisure purposes. The heavy industry of the Port Glasgow area has been replaced with creative and cultural enterprise – the 21st Century industries.

Spiers Wharf is a series of grain warehouses dating from 1851. Ang the length of the complex building height varies from 4 – 6 storeys above ground level. The buildings were converted to residential in 1991 to designs by Nicholas Groves-Raines Architects will minimal alteration to the external elevations. The Canal House dates from 1812 and was built to house the office of the Forth and Clyde Canal Company. and has been sympathetically restored and refurbished into bright spacious office accommodation which has been finished to a very high standard as befits the listed status.

Heritage elements of the site setting

Forth and Clyde Canal: Glasgow Branch
Scheduled Monument. Added 1997.
Ref SM6771

The monument comprises a length of inland waterway forming that part of the Forth and Clyde Canal known as the Glasgow Branch.

It is 3 miles (5 km) long and runs from Stockingfield (at the north end) to Speir's Wharf (at the south end). The monument includes the entire length in water together with the banks on either side and the towing path running along the west side.

Statement of National Importance
The monument is of national importance because, as an integral part of the Forth and Clyde Canal, it is a superlative example of Georgian civil engineering. The canal was the first of Scotland's great inland waterways to be constructed (between 1768 and 1791) and at the time was known as the 'The Great Canal' ' a recognition of its national importance even then. The Glasgow Branch is an important element in the canal's overall design and is associated with two very notable civil engineers ' John Smeaton, who was responsible for the original section from Stockingfield Junction to Hamiltonhill Basin, and Robert Whitworth, who completed the branch to Port Dundas.

2 Spiers Wharf, Canal House
Category B listed, Added in 1970.
Reference LB33618

Summary:
Circa 1800. Late Georgian canal-side office building restored 1989-90 after years of neglect. 2-storeys, 5 bays, shallow advanced and pedimented 3-bay centre, centre Roman Doric porch, corniced ground floor windows, giant panelled angle pilasters.

Droved ashlar with architraves, cornice and blocking course, all painted; 3-bay flanks; end and apex stacks; piended slate roof.

Statement of special interest: Possibly an early work by David Hamilton.

4-38 (even numbers) SPEIRS WHARF
Category B listed, Added in 1985.
Reference LB33619

Summary:
Circa 1851 onwards, former City of Glasgow Grain Mills and Stores, all now (1991) converted for flats. Comprises 2 differing units of design: Southern section. Originally all 5 storey, 31 windows long, extended to 37 later, and 13th to 19th bays heightened to 6 storey, all with identical treatment.

Elevation to canal courses with distinctive chevron tooling, belt course at 1st floor level and margined openings.

Loading doors at all levels vertically integrated in tall margined recesses with stone bracketted open pediment hoods 10th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 34th bays, that at 16th forming the centre bay of the seven bay 5-storey section.

Segmentally arched loading door at 6th bay and semi-elliptical one set in antae at 21st (No 206).

Ground floor 30 to 34th bays altered. S end double-pile with 4 windows wide piended roof, S elevation returns on to rear elevation on Craighall Road for 11 bays with 4 storeys above pavement level and 2 loading bays, central section single pile at upper levels with single storey outbuildings to Craighall Road, later widening to double pile at N end with segmentally arched windows, (5 bays at 3 storey and 7 at 4 storey), all in red brick with white brick dressings and dentilled cornice.

Slated roofs with fire-break gables. Internal replaced in concrete at lower levels.

NORTHERN SECTION: Dated 1861 at pediment. 6-storey and basement droved ashlar 16 window elevation with band course between 3rd and 4th floor windows. segment headed windows all floors except top, open based pediment at 6th and 7th bays.

Original wheel anchor plates at ground 1st and 2nd floors. Deepended on plan to Craighall road. Later 4 storey basement 10-window red brick elevation with single-storey lean-to of paired windows terminating in 2-storey outshot with arched windows at S end.

Unusual internal construction, 3-aisle plan with longitudinal jack arches on stocky cast-iron columns. Timber floors on cast-iron columns above.

Statement of special interest: Built for John Currie & Co. Major enlargements are known to have been made in 1969-70. Formerly had 20 pairs of stones and 100 hp condensing engine.

7.3 Statement of Significance

Designations

In 1997 the Forth and Clyde Canal Glasgow Branch was designated as a Scheduled Monument of national significance, meeting the definition of a monument and the criterion of national importance as set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

The primary purpose of scheduling is the preservation of, and control of works on, monuments whose survival is in the national interest. The intention is to preserve as far as possible the characteristics that make a monument nationally important, and to pass these on to future generations.

The national importance of a monument is demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

a) It contributes significantly to our understanding or appreciation of the past or has the potential to do so. It may do so in itself, or as part of a monument type, or as a geographical group of related monuments.

b) It retains structural, architectural, decorative or other physical remains to the extent that it makes a significant contribution to our understanding or appreciation of the past. The remains can be upstanding fabric, evidence of buried archaeological structures and deposits, scatters of artefacts or a combination of these.

c) It is a rare example of a monument type when assessed against current knowledge of Scotland's history, archaeology and/or architecture, and of the region in which the monument is found.

d) It is a particularly representative example of a monument type when assessed against knowledge of Scotland's history, archaeology and/or architecture and of the region in which the monument is found.

e) It has research potential which could significantly contribute to our understanding or appreciation of the past. f) It makes a significant contribution to the landscape and/or our understanding of the historic landscape. This may include the relationship of the monument to other monuments or natural features in the landscape, and/or the significance of its setting in understanding the monument or the monument type.

g) It has significant associations with historical, traditional, social or artistic figures, events, movements and/or practices that are of national importance.

Category B listed Speirs Wharf and the Canal House are located on the east side of the Firth and Clyde Canal.

Listing is the process that identifies, designates and provides statutory protection for buildings of special architectural or historic interest as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Designating a site or place as a listed building recognises its cultural significance at a national level. To be listed, a building must meet the criteria of special architectural or historic interest as set out in the 1997 Act. The primary purpose of listing under the 1997 Act is to ensure that change to listed buildings is given careful consideration through the planning system. The intention is to maintain the character of Scotland's historic buildings and to prevent unnecessary loss or damage.

The proposed development of New Rotterdam Wharf has no direct physical impact on the buildings and therefore there is no requirement for listed building consent. There is an impact on the architectural setting of Speirs Wharf which is considered as part of this planning application and has informed the development of the proposals.

Existing legislation and policies

- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997
- Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland (2014)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019)
- Historic Environment Scotland: Scheduled Monument Consents Policy.

The aim is that works on scheduled monuments should normally be the minimum level of intervention with minimal impact on a monument's cultural significance.

7.3 Statement of Significance

Categories of cultural significance

This document follows the definitions of cultural significance that has been outlined in the Bura Charter (published 1992, revised 2013). This document has been widely adopted by heritage bodies for the purpose of assessment of significance of heritage.

The assessment of our built heritage in aesthetic (or artistic), historic, scientific (or evidential), social context is essential to fully understand the value of it and prevent it from losing its cultural significance. Defining what the building is encompassing is essential to define why the heritage asset is important and enables to avoid taking actions that diminish its significance.

The Forth and Clyde Canal Glasgow Branch, Spiers Wharf and the Canal House will be assessed in the following categories:

Aesthetic value refers to the sensory and perceptual experience of a place—that is, how we respond to visual and non-visual aspects such as sounds, smells and other factors having a strong impact on human thoughts, feelings and attitudes. Aesthetic qualities may include the concept of beauty and formal aesthetic ideals. Expressions of aesthetics are culturally influenced.

Historic value is intended to encompass all aspects of history—for example, the history of aesthetics, art and architecture, science, spirituality and society. It therefore often underlies other values. A place may have historic value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by, an historic event, phase, movement or activity, person or group of people. It may be the site of an important event. For any place the significance will be greater where the evidence of the association or event survives at the place, or where the setting is substantially intact, than where it has been changed or evidence does not survive. However, some events or associations may be so important that the place retains significance regardless of such change or absence of evidence.

Scientific value refers to the information content of a place and its ability to reveal more about an aspect of the past through examination or investigation of the place, including the use of archaeological techniques. The relative scientific value of a place is likely to depend on the importance of the information or data involved, on its rarity, quality or representativeness, and its potential to contribute further important information about the place itself or a type or class of place or to address important research questions.

Social value refers to the associations that a place has for a particular community or cultural group and the social or cultural meanings that it holds for them.

Grading of the cultural significance

The following grading system has been adopted for the assessment of cultural significance of the Forth and Clyde Canal (Glasgow Branch) and the listed buildings Spiers Wharf and the Canal House.

a) Exceptional significance

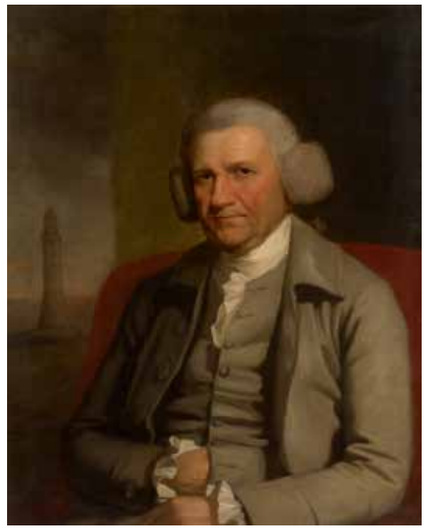
b) Considerable significance

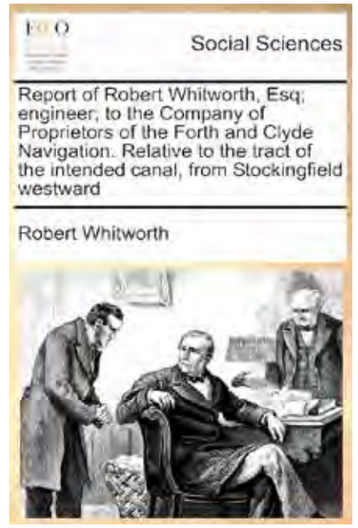
c) Moderate (or some) significance

d) Neutral (or little) significance

Additionally, some elements or unsympathetic alternations can be of intrusive nature. This will be noted accordingly in the document.

A summary assessment for each category of cultural significance is provided below.





Far left: portrait of John Smeaton, regarded as 'the father of modern civil engineering'.

Left: Cover of publication ISBN-13 978-1171442646

Left: 1888-1913 OS Map Six Inch

7.3 Statement of Significance

Assessment of the Significance of Forth and Clyde Canal

Aesthetic value	**Exceptional**
Historic value	**Exceptional**
Social value	**Exceptional**
Scientific value	**Exceptional**

The Forth and Clyde Canal Glasgow section is an important piece of industrial heritage of the city, and indeed the Scottish nation. It is one of three sea-to-sea canals constructed in Scotland, the others being the Caledonian and Crinan canals, and was the most successful of the three. Its importance is reflected in it being afforded Scheduled Monument status as a superlative example of Georgian civil engineering.

The canal and towpath provide a key visual and physical connection through the city which forms part of the attractive 'Green' network and active travel routes. Generally the canal walls, towpaths and features remain intact, resulting in an exceptional aesthetic value.

The canal is a remarkable engineering feat and was the first of Scotland's great inland waterways, constructed between 1768 and 1791, to the designs of notable engineers John Smeaton and Robert Whitworth. The later was responsible for the design of the Port Dundas branch of the canal. As such the canal is deemed to be of exceptional scientific value.

John Smeaton (1724 – 92) was the greatest civil engineer of his time and developed the initial report for the canal in 1763, which at that time did not include a link into the city but connected with the Clyde at Yoker. In March 1768 an Act of Parliament (8 Geo.III, cap 63) was passed to enable the Proprietors of the Forth and Clyde Navigation Company to construct the canal.

The preamble to the Act cited the canal as opening up 'easy communication between the Firths of Forth and Clyde' as a 'great Advantage to the Trade' it was also intended to lead to the 'Improvement of the adjacent lands, the Relief of the Poor, and the Preservation of the public roads, and moreover be of general Utility'. As such from inception the canal was deemed to hold exceptional social value.

Construction began in June 1768 however by 1775 the canal had only reached as far as Stockingfield Junction to the north of Glasgow, with goods having to be brought by carts into the city centre and to connect with the Clyde. Separate capital funding was then sought to construct the Glasgow branch.

Robert Whitworth (1734 – 99) developed the plans for the completion of the canal to connect to the Firth of Clyde and for the Glasgow branch, with the first vessel sailing from Leith to Greenock in August 1790. The Glasgow branch was finished concurrently, extending to the 'village' of Port Dundas.

The canal flourished as a commercial avenue for Central Scotland, allowing the easy transportation of all types of goods including coal, timber, iron, tin, copper, earthenware, meat, flour, barley, sugar, tobacco and textiles. The canal inevitably attracted industry such as ironworks and engineering plants along its route, including in Port Dundas.

The opening of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal in the 1820's, and the increasing of the canal depth in 1830 to ten feet facilitated even more traffic. The canal was purchased by the Caledonian Railway in 1867, as part of the purchase of Grangemouth harbour, and the Union Canal was purchased by the North British Railway. Neither rail company had much motivation to enlarge or improve the canals beyond their statutory obligations for maintenance.

With the rise of the railways for freight the use of the canal diminished, due in part to the difficulties of enlarging the canal and the restrictive size of the locks. Traffic on the canal was severely impacted by the closure of civilian shipping on the Firth of Forth and at Grangemouth during the First World War.

In 1948 the British Transport Commission took over the canal, seeing the canal as an important water provider but not a main mode of transport. With a decline in tonnage of goods transported by canal, in 1962 British Waterways Board took over the Forth and Clyde Canal whilst Parliament decided on the canal's closure. The cessation of navigation rights on January 1st 1963 led to the infilling of the canal at Grangemouth making the east end of the canal inoperable, and a reduction on the depth of the canal was made to reduce maintenance costs. At this point some industrial archaeology, such as nearly all the moveable bascule bridges, were lost, and locks ceased to be properly maintained.

By the 1970s restoration campaigns were started by canal enthusiasts with the notion that the canal could be used for leisure. Two reports in 1972 and 1974 by Willian Gillespie and Partners Landscape Architects advocated for the canal restoration, and volunteer groups started to clean up sections of the canal. This led to the formation of the Forth and Clyde Canal Society in 1980, a pressure group which grew in size and influence through the 80s. Local Authorities and British Waterways started to restore canalside buildings and making general improvements to the towpaths. This culminated in the 1990's in the Millenium Link project. This delivered a series of projects to remove navigational obstructions including the building of the Falkirk Wheel as a means of linking the Forth and Clyde Canal and Union Canal.

7.3 Statement of Significance

In recent years the canal network has been (re) developed into an important part of active travel networks, hosts an increasing number of leisure users and pleasure craft, and sites such as the Falkirk Wheel have become destinations in their own right. This reflects the importance of heritage tourism as a key economic sector, with the Forth and Clyde Canal once again reflecting contemporary society.

As demonstrated from this brief history, the rise and demise in use of the Firth and Clyde Canal perfectly charts the rise and demise of Scotland's industrial heritage and as such is deemed to hold exceptional social value.

Assessment of the Significance of the Spiers Wharf complex and the Canal House

Aesthetic value	**Exceptional in terms of townscape**
Historic value	**Considerable**
Social value	**Considerable**
Scientific value	**Considerable**

Spiers Wharf is a complex of warehouse buildings on the eastern side of the Forth and Clyde Canal at Port Dundas. Built between 1851 –1870 the buildings were the former City of Glasgow grain stores. The Canal House dates from 1800 and is a blonde sandstone 2 storey building withs some articulation reflecting its use as the offices for the Forth and Clyde Navigation Company. The buildings are Category B listed due to their importance as a major example of canalside warehousing of the mid-19th Century.

The warehouses buildings are a very long range of buildings and present a homogenous backdrop to the canal. After successful conversion in the early 1990's the warehouse buildings now houses a mix of commercial and residential conversions; a popular locality within easy reach of the city centre promoted by an active resident's community.

Speirs Wharf is an important remnant of the city's industrial past, and due to topography occupies a prominent visual position facing towards the west end of the city. The view of the Speirs Wharf from certain locations in the city have been identified as key views, and as such the visual impact of any development on Speirs Wharf must be carefully considered. Refer to the separate Visual Impact Assessment Report.

The aesthetic value is therefore deemed exceptional in terms of its contribution to the urban grain and place-making.

The warehouses and Canal House are typical in construction and typology and are therefore deemed considerable in terms of historic, social and scientific value.

From top:
RCAHMS images
View of Spiers Wharf wareshoues looking north from west bank of canal.
Ref SC 2140013
View of southern end of Spiers Wharf warehouses
Ref SC 2543652
View of Canal House, offices for Forth and Clyde Naviagatin Company
Ref SC 2543678

7.4 Heritage Impact Assessment of the New Rotterdam Wharf proposals

Impact on the Forth and Clyde Canal Glasgow Branch Scheduled Monument

The proposed works have a minimal physical impact on the Forth and Clyde Canal Scheduled Monument and a positive impact on the monument's cultural significance in that the proposals encourage greater footfall and use of the towpath and active travel network that runs along the canal.

Four new connections are proposed to the western towpath of the canal and are designed to span across the retaining wall structure that forms the western boundary of the scheduled monument and eastern boundary of the development site.

These connections include stepped access from Corn Street to the south and Sawmillfield Steet to the north of the development site, and the two connecting bridges that lead from the tow path onto the top of the Scottish Opera building, providing access into the publicly accessible roof top garden space and into the Scottish Opera building form the tow path level.

The structure for these new elements is being designed to 'bridge' over the top of the retaining wall that forms the eastern boundary of the site and land lightly onto the grassed strip between the tree belt and the towpath.
Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for site investigations to determine how best to land these elements to minimise disruption (Reference Case ID 300068921). In the consenting of the SI works it has been noted that

> The physical impact of the proposed works on the monument and its cultural significance would be minimal. .... Boring would interact physically with the embankment, which is thought to be comprised of soils and sediments imported and from the excavation of the canal in other areas, and thus is likely to be almost exclusively formed of redeposited natural sediments with very limited chance of archaeological finds or features being present.
>
> Thus, while the works will have a physical impact in the disturbance of the embankment and removal of sediments, this impact will be so limited when compared to the scale of the embankment, and so unlikely to interact with significant features associated with the canal's construction and use, that the physical impact upon the cultural significance of the monument is likely to be minimal. The works are thus in line with SMCP1.

There will be minimal aesthetic impact on the Scheduled Monument, with minimal intervention where the steps and bridges land on the grassed bank and new pathways link to the existing tow path. Lighting will be enhanced along the light of the development site, with cognisance to not disturb wildlife habitats.

The canal and its banks will still be readable by the public, in line with SMCP1.

Impact on the listed buildings of Spiers Wharf and the Canal House

Whilst the New Rotterdam Wharf proposals have no direct physical impact on the listed buildings of Speirs Wharf and the Canal House it is acknowledged that there will be an impact on the views of this important piece of city scape.

In discussion with the Planners the following key views have been identified:

The view towards Port Dundas from the M8 travelling eastbound
The view from Blythswood Square looking north along Rose Street.

Refer to the separate Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment that explores the implications of the development in depth.

A key driver for the location and orientation of the blocks on the New Rotterdam Wharf site and their massing has been to preserve views of Spiers Wharf. Refer to Section 8 of this Design and access Statement for further detail.

By centrally locating the lower Scottish Opera building this preserves views to and from the upper levels of Spiers Wharf. The pavilion elements that sit above the plinth extend to a similar height to the trees adjacent to the towpath to minimise their visual impact.

The PBSA blocks 'bookend' the site and are orientated east – west to minimise the visual impact on the setting of Spiers Wharf behind. These blocks frame the view of Spiers Wharf from the west.

It is noted and recognised that historically the Speirs Wharf range of warehouse buildings looked over other significant structures to the west and were not afforded the visual prominence they enjoy today.

The site was occupied by foundry and sawmill buildings before the building in 1898 of the Port Dundas Electricity Generating Station (refer to earlier photos in Section 4). That building had a terracotta brick façade, with a central tower and three large cooling chimneys to the canal side. The chimneys were demolished approximately ten years in advance of the whole building being removed in the early 1970s. The dominant horizontal roof line, three chimneys and central tower would have impacted on the view of Spiers Wharf. This impact would have been less consequential prior to the residential conversion of the warehouses, and the subsequent general loss of historic fabric in this part of the city due to the formation of the M8 motorway which has raised the importance of this important piece of urban heritage.

Extensive environmental modelling has been undertaken that describe the impact of the proposed development on Speirs Wharf in terms of sunlight and wind. This is described in separate reports accompanying the planning application.

Bibliography

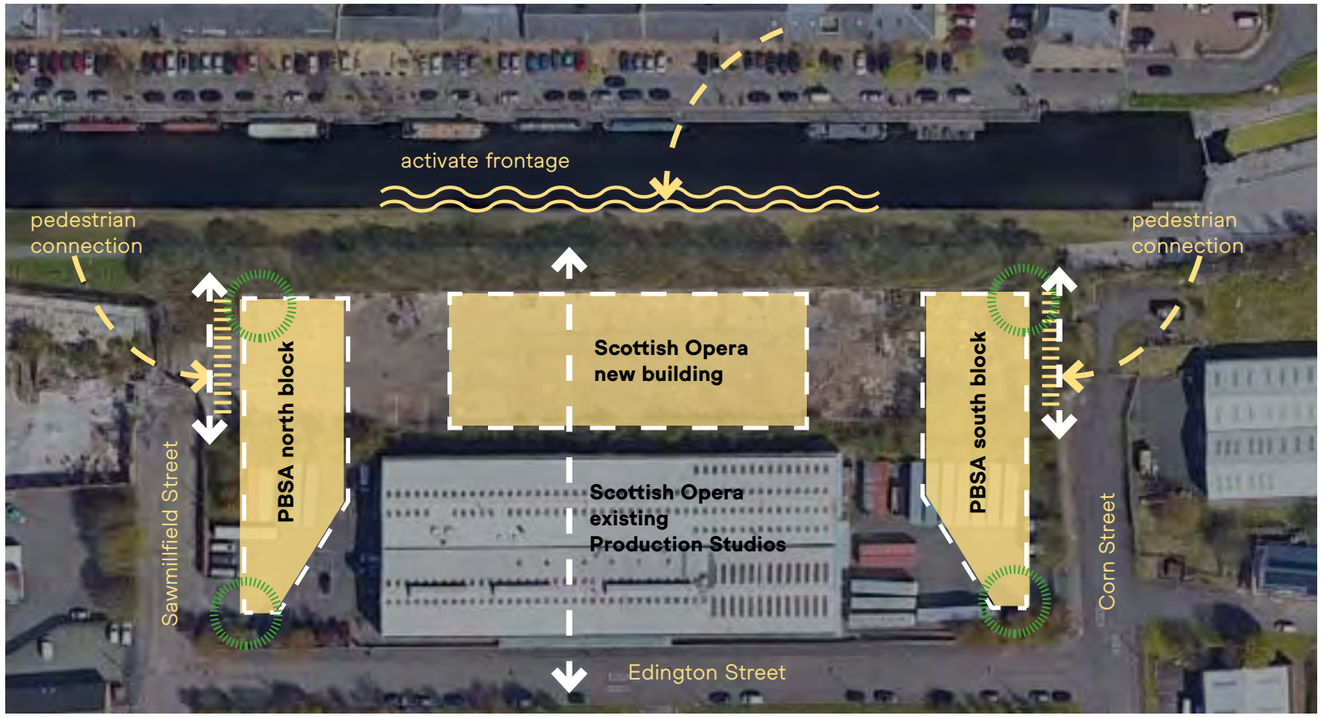
The Buildings of Scotland: Glasgow
Elizabeth Williamson, Anne Riches and Malcolm Higgs.
ISBN: 9780140710694 Penguin Books Ltd

Notes on Canmore website
https://canmore.org.uk/site/167216/glasgow-forth-and-clyde-canal-port-dundas-basins

8

Site Development Strategy and Consultation

8.1 Development Strategy



Development Strategy diagram

As previously described, the application site at New Rotterdam Wharf sits at the centre of an area directly north and connected to the city central core. Focused on the Glasgow branch of the Forth and Clyde canal, the area saw a rapid change during the Industrial Revolution with buildings supporting industrial, transport and commercial functions built to respond to the canal's arterial function. Indeed, the power station formerly located on the New Rotterdam site was powered by coal brought to site via the canal. The canal was the focus of activity and 'raison d'etre' for the area. Activity faced the canal and was fuelled by it.

The demise of heavy industry and the change of transport to road through the 20th century, led to widespread change of use in the area. Many of the brick built industrial buildings were demolished, and alternative uses explored.

The historic mill buildings of Speirs Wharf to the eastern side of the canal became the focus of canalside regeneration.

The six storey block to the northern end of the range was erected c 1851, whilst the other buildings in 1869-1870. Built high on a hill above the city, the buildings command excellent views across the west of the city and have become a historic landmark when viewed from certain locations to the west. When the mills were converted to flats in 1989 this signalled a pivotal change in use and activity, that has, and continues to inform the regeneration of the canal. The water became a social, leisure and amenity focus, with its arterial transport emphasis changing to the waters edge with core pedestrian and cycle paths taking over from the previous 'on water' focus.

To the western side of the canal, the change has been more challenging to a regeneration agenda, due primarily to the significant change in level between towpath and building platform levels adjacent to the historic canal retaining wall. The area has retained a generic industrial use and feel, but one that has replaced the majority of its large scale Victorian industrial structures with a low rise 'industrial shed' aesthetic. Critically through this change, the old Victorian buildings that bridged the level change between canalside and lower platform level (with resulting activation of the canal west towpath), have been lost along with their connections, and the replacement 20th century structures are totally disconnected from the canal. They therefore offer nothing to the leisure and amenity focus offered by the canal.

The two areas are effectively separated.

Healing this division is central to the thinking for the development strategy for our New Rotterdam Wharf site.

Key components of development strategy

Development of the site should:

- Recognise and respect the significance of the historic Speirs Wharf buildings in the wider townscape
- Provide physical connectivity between the canal towpath and lower platform level both within new buildings and via new quality public realm.
- Address the canal, providing canalside frontage and uses that contribute to its social Provide uses that give 24/7 activation, and contribute to the life of the local community and increase the attractiveness of the area for visitors.
- Treat all corners of the site with equal importance, activated at ground floor by public use and entrance.

Development Components

- Scottish Opera building
- PBSA blocks
- Public realm and landscape

8.2 Site Massing Option Testing

Initial Proposals (Pre-App Enquiry Submission)

Initial thinking for development on the site (outlined in the Pre-App Enquiry) placed the new Scottish Opera facility at the northern end of the site.

The Pre-App submission described the initial proposal as follows:

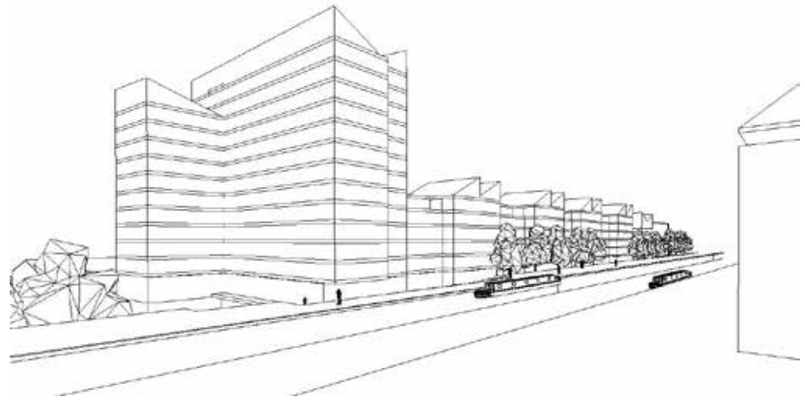
The proposed development – reflecting the 7N masterplan from 2008 – presents a tremendous opportunity to bring life and activation to this east side of the canal – echoing and complimenting the activation and life provided by the Speirs Wharf residential development on the opposite side of the waterway.

To the northern end of the site a significant new facility for Scottish Opera is proposed. This building will house a series of rehearsal and studio spaces, performance support spaces, practice rooms, offices and stores, along with a public facing open café, and music library, serving both the public and building occupants.

This new building will link directly with the existing Production Studios, that in turn will see a programme of refurbishment and fabric upgrade as part of the project, responding to Scottish Opera's sustainability goals.

On the east and southern edges of the site, wrapping the Production Studios, a development of PBSA student accommodation is proposed, bringing a 24/7 activation and life to the area. This development, made up of a linear block along the canal edge, and a vertical slab block to the southern edge fronting Corn Street, both positively address the canal and surrounding public realm, providing shared amenity space directly accessible off the surrounding public realm and landscape spaces.

The proposed massing of development across the site has been carefully considered to respond to the principles embedded in the 2008 7N masterplan, and the sensitivities of the Category B listed Speirs Wharf building. The 'tower' elements articulated in the 7N masterplan have been focussed in the outline proposals to the southern end of the site, reducing the scale moving northwards along the length of the plot. The vertical element to the south has been orientated in an east west direction, and aligned with the end of the Speirs Wharf building and 'gap' between it and the Category B listed Canal House – all in an effort to reduce the visual 'block' westwards from the Speirs Wharf development.



8.2 Site Massing Option Testing

Design Evolution

Discussion with GCC Planners and the City Design Team as part of the Pre-App process and analysis of the proposals utilising VuCity city wide modelling, identified that this development strategy and massing would actually result in a key view of Speirs Wharf – from the eastbound M8 motorway – being totally obscured along its entire length.

It was agreed with City Design that vertical components to the development were acceptable, but that the massing needed to be rethought to enable views to and from Speirs Wharf to not be totally obscured. Whilst some impact on the view was excepted, the Wharf range needed to remain visible from the key views identified.

The other point discussed was the impact on sunlight of the vertical elements of the scheme, and whether the taller elements should be at the south or north of the site.

First Alternative

The first alternative arrangement explored, was to test the new Scottish Opera facility at the southern end of the site – to reduce the height at this end and reduce the impact on sunlight.

The VuCity modelling however demonstrated that this strategy – due to the plan form - actually had more impact on the M8 view of Speirs Wharf than the initial proposal.

A revised strategy had to be evolved to reveal more of Speirs Wharf.

Top right: VuCity modelling of initial scheme
Bottom right: Physical model photomontage of initial scheme

8.2 Site Massing Option Testing

Revised 'bookend' Strategy

The new strategy placed the lower scale Scottish Opera facility directly behind their current Production Studio between it and the canal retaining wall. This location enabled the new building to tuck behind the existing retaining wall and only pop up with any significance at either end of the building in two flanking pavilions which went no higher than the existing trees on the towpath edge. This strategy resulted in views to and from Speirs Wharf being maintained along the length of the production studio.

The PBSA component of the development was as result of this move split into two 'bookend' blocks – one at each end of the site.

These blocks were developed in form to respond to their unique context in two specific ways;

First – the plan form of the blocks was set up and corners chamfered to open up as much view to and from Speirs Wharf as possible. Through VuCity modelling, the east west orientation of the blocks and chamfering of the corners was demonstrated to have significant benefit to the view impact.

Second – the plan form was evolved into two intersecting wings sharing a common central core, enabling each wing to be extruded in height independently. This enabled the wings fronting the canal to be of lower scale, responding appropriately to the context of the canal edge and the scale of the facing Speirs Wharf range of buildings.

The heights of each wing have been adjusted in response to both the Pre-App and PAN public consultation processes, reducing the height of the north east wing by two storeys, replacing the lost accommodation on the higher west wings of both the north and south towers.

Top right: VuCity modelling of 'bookend' strategy
Bottom right: VuCity modelling of developed massing

8.2 Site Massing Option Testing

Key Views

Through the VuCity modelling process, a second key view was identified by GCC Planners - looking from Blythswood Square north along Rose Street towards the site.

The positioning of the PBSA blocks and heights were adjusted through this modelling technique to ensure that each block was clearly articulated, with a clear sky 'gap' between the north and south blocks.

Each of these views, plus others identified in the townscape analysis process have been formally modelled in the separate Townscape and Visual Impact Assesment report.

Top right: Key view from Blythswood Sq (Google Streetview)
Bottom right: VuCity modelling of developed massing from keyview location

8.3 Consultation overview

There has been extensive consultation on the proposed redevelopment of New Rotterdam Wharf. This process and outcomes is fully described and referenced in the separate Consultation Report prepared by Rydens Planning Consultants.

Scottish Opera have shared their ambitions with representatives of Scottish and UK Government, local councillors, and potential partnering organisations. Feedback has been very positive and supportive of the need for Scottish Opera to consolidate their operations in Glasgow and to act as an ongoing catalyst for regeneration of the Forth and Clyde canal area.

The proposals have been subject to a formal pre-application process in which the Client and Design Team have met with GCC planners on four occasions to discuss massing, scale, establish key views and discuss architectural concepts and materiality. A separate meeting has been held with GCC Highways to discuss traffic impact.

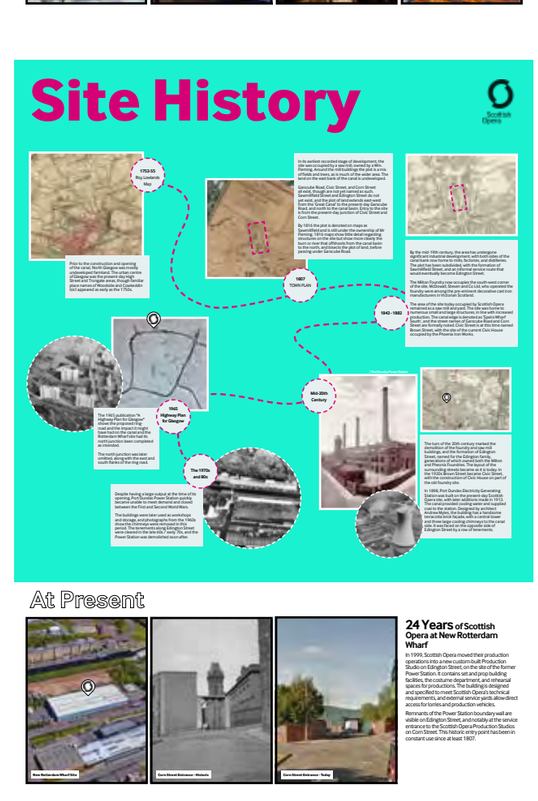
In addition, the Design Team have met with key stakeholder Scottish Canals and are liaising with HES to discuss the impact on the Forth and Clyde Canal Scheduled Monument both in terms of the final proposals, site investigation works and construction.

Two **public consultations** have been held on 24th October and 13th December 2023 at Edington Street. These events were publicised in advance in the local newspaper and by flier and streetlamp wraps. Presentation boards provided background information, accompanied by physical models of the site. Representatives of the Client and Design Team were on hand to answer queries.

In addition to the consultation events there is a dedicated website hosting the same information, with both in-person and digital attendees being encouraged to provide feedback on the proposals via an online questionnaire. Scottish Opera social media accounts have been used to drive traffic to the website.

Feedback received has been reviewed and reflected on by the Client and Design Team and has helped inform the developing designs. This is described in more detail in the following pages.

For full detail of the consultation process please refer to the separate Consultation Report by Rydens Planning Consultants that accompanies the planning application.



Planning Policy

The Statutory Development Plan covering the application site is the Glasgow City Development Plan ("CDP") adopted in 2017, and associated Supplementary Guidance ("SG"). The key aims of the CDP are creating and maintaining a high quality healthy place and developing a compact city form that supports sustainable development.

Within the CDP the site is designated as:

- Within the City boundary
- Economic Development Area
- The site does not have any listed buildings on it and located outwith the Central Conservation Area. Although there is a Scheduled Monument and listed buildings in the vicinity.
- In October 2021 GCC approved a new purpose built student accommodation policy ("SG 10 Student Accommodation"). We will evidence that the proposed development complies with criteria set out within the policy, including but not limited to:
- Meet minimum space standards.
- Demonstrate that the proposed development will not undermine the character and amenity of the surrounding area, including access to shops, services, healthcare, leisure and community facilities and will not place unsustainable pressure on local amenities and facilities due to the density of accommodation proposed.
- Design Criteria – we can evidence the following:
  - Ground floor amenity
  - Useable and mix of amenity with a specific purpose;
  - The provision of usable resident open space;
  - Built form that is sensitive to the local architectural vernacular and heritage in terms of the arrangement of buildings, their design, height, massing, and materiality;
  - Utilising a whole life approach with flexible floorplates and building design to ensure there is scope and flexibility for adaptation to alternative future uses;
  - Mixed tenure approach to the masterplan with a unique opportunity to promote a significant cultural quarter destination with international presence.

In terms of other policy matters, we are working with the Council on matters related to transport, ecology, access, flooding and drainage, sustainability to ensure the proposed development is deliverable and sympathetic land use.

National Planning Framework 4

In addition, following the approval by the Scottish Parliament of National Planning Framework 4 ("NPF4") on 13 February 2023, NPF4 forms part of the statutory development plan, along with CDP.

NPF4 is underpinned by six overarching spatial principles:

Just transition. We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.

Conserving and recycling assets. We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.

Localliving. We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.

Compact urban growth. We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.

Rebalanced development. We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline, and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.

Rural revitalisation. We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.

The proposed development will be assessed against NPF4 policies. We consider the proposals to support from each of the above principles and fact it is brownfield land, and that where necessary, the appropriate balance has been struck between promoting health, sustainability, conservation, and promoting development and cultural investment.

Cowcaddens District Regeneration Framework.

The Cowcaddens District Regeneration Framework ("CDRF") makes reference to the underutilisation of the Scottish Opera site and the opportunity it holds creative quarter throughout the document. In particular, the need for mix of uses and improved wayfinding, creating a focus point of the quarter as a public destination, and repairing the M8 severance. The proposal is to invest and create an improved mixed use creative culture cluster by Scottish Opera can take significant support from the DRF.

Wider Developments

The creation of a **Cultural Hub** at Speirs Wharf sits as a focal component of a wider and extensive regeneration of North Glasgow.

At **Hamiltonhill,** Queens Cross Housing Association are delivering a masterplan for over 600 homes, including both private and affordable units.

The adjacent **Claysits Nature Reserve** has recently been completed and provides a wonderful public space and environmental asset for the area.

At **Sighthill,** the tower blocks have been cleared and over eight hundred homes for private sale and mid-market rent are being constructed. A new pedestrian bridge over the M8 has been constructed connecting the site directly to the City Centre.

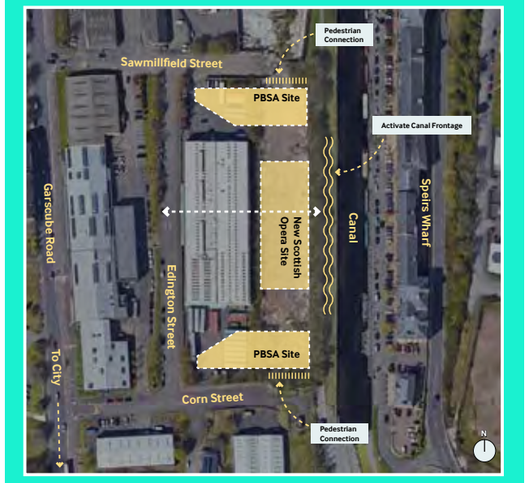
At **Dundashill** 600 more new homes including high quality public realm and open space are being constructed, and

At **Cowlairs,** the City are planning to deliver 850 new mixed tenure homes.

In summary

- Over 2850 new homes to be delivered within a 2km radius of the site
- Infrastructure upgrades to the canal and surrounding area
- Improved connections to the City Centre inc. active transport
- All embedded in a growing community of cultural tenants

Strategy



Site Development Strategy

The opportunity presented at New Rotterdam Wharf is to transform a single sided 'industrial estate' plot into a mixed use vibrant urban block, activated on all sides with new cultural, student use and commercial opportunity, all crucially connecting with the western tow-path of the Forth and Clyde Canal, bringing life and vitality to this amazing city centre asset.

The development strategy that has evolved for the site is to place the proposed new Scottish Opera rehearsal and support building between the existing Edington Street production studios and the canal towpath. A core circulation route through this new building will link a new canal-side entrance down into the existing production studio and to the existing entrance on Edington Street.

To the north and south, two student accommodation blocks (PBSA) are proposed, with stepping scales, effectively 'book ending' the site and providing activated frontages to all four corners of the plot. Pended access under each PBSA block provides access to two internal courtyards providing service and visitor access to the Scottish Opera building. New broad feature steps at both the north and south ends of the site provide connection between the ends of Sawmillfield St and Corn Street, connecting up to the canal edge.

Feedback from consultation No.1

31 *people attended our first consultation*

15 *feedbacks were received: 9 of which are positive comments and 6 highlighted some concerns, which we have responded to below:*

1. The two towers are too tall and should be lower
The scale of the development has been carefully considered. The towers are split into two elements, with the lower parts adjacent the towpath and fronting Speirs Wharf set lower to respond to the scale of the Speirs Wharf buildings. *See section A-A below.*
Through design development, the north east portion of the PBSA development has been reduced in height by 2 storeys.

2. There will be a negative townscape impact upon the outlook and views of Spiers Wharf residents
Views to and from Speirs Wharf have been a central consideration of the design approach taken. The floorplates of the PBSA blocks have been designed to minimise the impact on views by orientating the blocks perpendicular to the Spiers Wharf elevation (minimising the elevation width presented to the Wharf). In addition, by chamfering the corners of the blocks, this increases the openness of views, reducing the impact. *See Plan 1 on this page and refer to FAQ board*

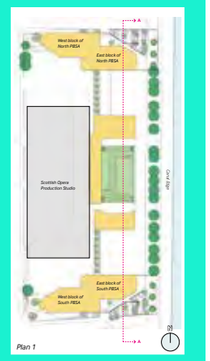
3. What are the sunlight and daylight impacts for residents?
Refer to the environmental impact assessment within the FAQ Boards board

4. Will there be any noise issues associated with the development?
Refer to FAQ board

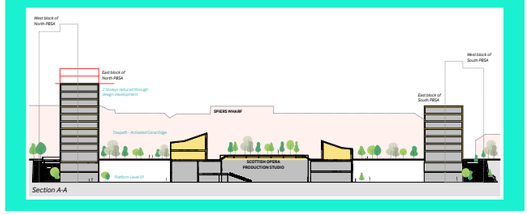
5. What is the parking solution?
Refer to FAQ board

6. What are the proposed commercial units going to be?
Café at the Walled Garden with an emphasis on weekend hours, Gym that is open to public membership and the possibility of a supermarket chain is being explored at the moment. There have also been early discussions with a Medical Practice and a Dental Practice about a possible relocation. *Refer to board 8*

7. How will the community spaces be curated and truly open to everyone?
The Walled Garden will be curated by Scottish Opera with the intention of hosting small scale music performances in the warmer months – both in the garden space and in the southern rehearsal room with the audience seated on the tiered steps. In addition, the Education Room on the lower northern end will (when not required for Scottish Opera projects) be available for performances for (and by) the Primary Schools of North Glasgow. The room will also be available to the wider community for events, meetings and displays.

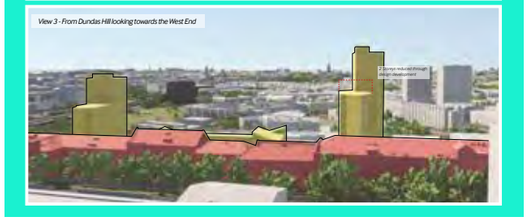


Plan 1

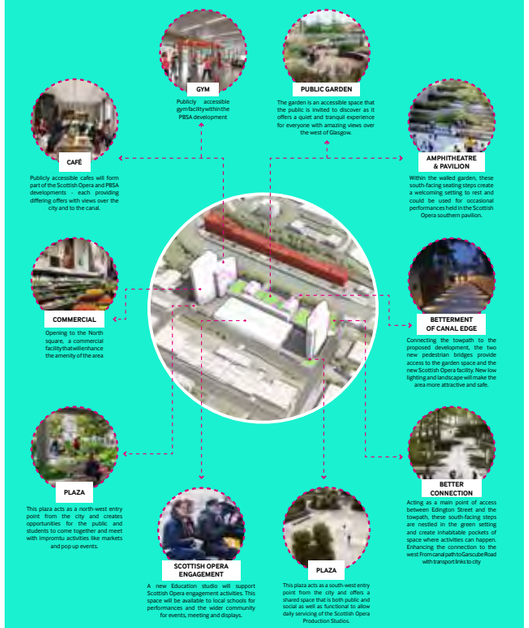


Section A-A

Massing



Public Benefits



Canal Edge

Life by the Canal

One of the key opportunities of the Scottish Opera project is to enhance the experience of the Forth and Clyde towpath and create an exciting relationship with the water's edge. The proposals engage directly with the towpath with new public spaces at the north and south ends of the site connecting the existing towpath down to Edington Street to the west. These links connect with existing active travel routes, improving accessibility for all.

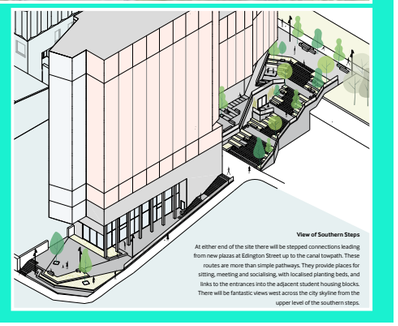
New paths and deck access provide varied accessible options to the water's edge, offering the potential for moorings and small craft launches. The new buildings and public realm will provide improved lighting, security and safe environment for all, creating a more attractive and safe place along the canal. This will all be done sensitively respecting the canal wildlife corridor along the canal edge. Animating the canal edge improves the experience for all and helps to reinforce the essence of 'Place' between Speirs Wharf and the Scottish Opera/ PBSA, creating a destination for the benefit of the community, both new and existing.

The existing trees along the towpath boundary will be retained between the key connecting points. Between these proposed connections, the trees will provide a screen and shelter from westerly winds, while the breaks in the trees offer views west out towards the Glasgow skyline.

Connection

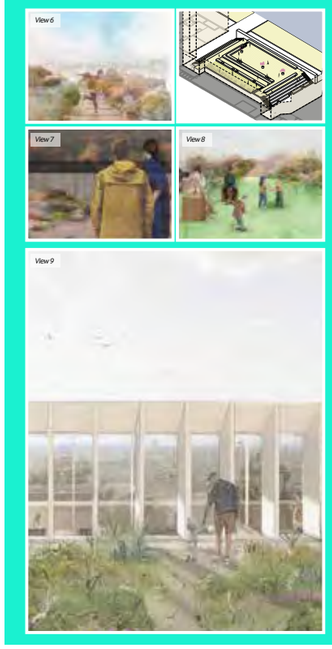
Canal Activity

The enhancement of the environment along the canal will create an attractive space for a potential range of activities. Visitor moorings for canal boats and launch facilities will all be possible, and the regeneration will encourage more water-based activities along the canal – for example stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, and launching model boats with schools and community groups. The proposed public realm to be delivered with the is designed to encourage a number of outdoor events and incidental performances which further animate and activate the canal edge.



View of Southern Steps
At either end of the site there will be stepped connections leading from new plazas at Edington Street up to the canal towpath. These routes are more than simple pathways. They provide places for sitting, meeting and socialising, with localised planting beds, and links to the entrances into the adjacent student housing blocks. There will be fantastic views west across the city skyline from the upper level of the southern steps.

Walled Garden



The walled garden is a place to discover and explore. The rooftop garden is discovered by crossing bridges from the canal towpath and provides a publicly accessible space which will be secured at night. The 'walled' garden is enclosed by two pavilions to the north and south and a linear pergola to the west.

The northern pavilion will provide an entrance into the Scottish Opera complex and will house their offices and meeting rooms. The southern pavilion is a rehearsal room / flexible studio. This space has the ability to open up to the garden, with raked steps providing opportunity for an amphitheatre type audience to sit and enjoy summer performances.

To the west a single storey glazed pergola provides a café and social space that enjoys stunning views out to the West End of the city. The glazing to both sides of the pergola provides city views from within the walled garden itself.

The roof top garden will be curated by Scottish Opera with the intention of hosting small scale music performances in the warmer months – both in the roof top garden and in the southern rehearsal room with the audience seated on the tiered steps.

Biodiversity

The site at present has a number of self-seeded trees and shrubs in opportune gaps in paving and to the base of walls. These do not offer great value to the site from a biodiversity and habitat perspective. With new planting areas and significant tree planting across the public realm spaces the extent of habitat provision will increase. The planting palette will be native, diverse and climate resilient to ensure that when the project is complete we are leaving a positive contribution to the site's biodiversity. In line with the National Planning Framework 4 the project will deliver biodiversity net gain through the introduction of the planting strategies and management regimes noted above.

Furthermore it is proposed to retain the existing the tree line to the canal boundary, breaking through this in four places to provide for connections onto existing streets or into the Scottish Opera facilities. These retained trees provide a wildlife corridor along the canal. The project will enhance this landscape screen through considered management and enhanced planting among the trees and understorey. The native planting swathes across the proposed development will offer increased habitat potential while providing seasonal colour, varied textures and graceful movement throughout the year to compliment the new public spaces.

Left: Boards from Public Consultation Event 2

8.4 Response to Pre-Application Consultation Comments

Feedback and Response

Consultation with both Glasgow City Council Planning Department and Design Group, as well as local Councillors and the community has been undertaken through the Pre-Application period.

Comments have been received through the process - both positive and negative – and this section of the Design and Access Statement outlines the design team's response (including any adjustments made to the design) to the primary points recorded.

Key points raised were:

Views of Speirs Wharf Obscured

The initial design and massing submitted with the pre-app enquiry to GCC had a design that placed the Scottish Opera new building at the north end of the site, and the PBSA accommodation in a linear block fronting the canal, rising to a tower at the southern end. The initial pre-app consultation with GCC highlighted the importance of retaining views of Speirs Wharf from the south west (principally from the M8 motorway), and through modelling, it was agreed that the initial proposal would totally obscure these views.

It was accepted that scale would be required in order to make the development viable, but the location of that scale needed to be considered carefully to retain views of Speirs Wharf as far as was reasonably practical.

In response, the design team completely revised the development strategy for the site, placing the Scottish Opera building at the centre of the site, tucked behind the large canal retaining wall and only raising above the towpath level in two low scale pavilion structures that would not extend higher than the existing tree line. The larger PBSA elements were moved to the north and south ends of the site – 'bookending' the development – with the block orientation and profile carefully considered and modelled in order to maximise the views of Speirs Wharf from the identified location. This revised massing and modelling was tested and presented to GCC, and agreed as the appropriate strategy for ongoing design development and consultation.

Inappropriate scale of the PBSA towers

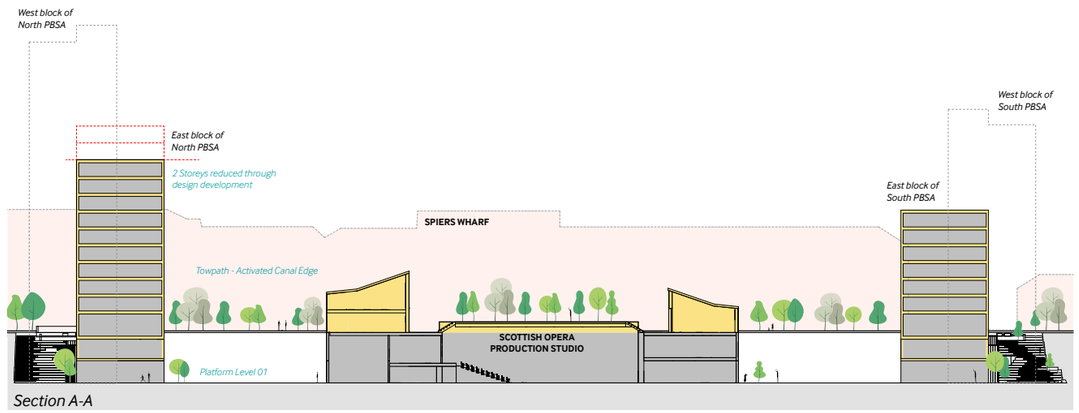
Comment was made by members of the community in both consultation events regarding the scale of the PBSA towers and how they were considered to not be in keeping with the area and Glasgow skyline.

As discussed in earlier sections of this report, the character of the Woodside, Woodlands and Garnethill districts have radically altered over time. These areas now all have 'point' buildings of significant scale – rising to 20 storeys – and as such additional isolated buildings of similar scale are not in principle 'out of keeping' for this area. The key matter that has been considered very carefully in the evolution of the design is, as discussed above, the mitigation of impact on views to and from Speirs Wharf.

The blocks have been orientated E-W, such that the slender gables face the Speirs Wharf terrace, thus maximising the open space (and resulting views) to and from Speirs Wharf. The block sides have also been chamfered in plan, thus increasing the visual sightlines to and from Speirs Wharf.

The overall massing of the PBSA blocks has been carefully considered to respond to the canal setting – lowering the eastern section of both blocks to a lower scale to respond to the scale of the Speirs Wharf development on the opposite side of the canal.

In direct response to the comments received, the scale of the north east canalside block has been reduced by two storeys, to be 10 storeys above towpath level - the south east canalside block being seven storeys above towpath.



Section A-A

Loss of privacy from overlooking from the PBSA blocks

Comments were received through the community consultation that the scale of development fronting Speirs Wharf would result in a loss of privacy to the existing community.
The original design intent for the gable ends was to include a significant amount of glass within the stair tower and lounge spaces. In light of the comments received, the design of the gable ends has been revised to reduce the quantum of glazing to reduce the impact of overlooking direct onto Speirs Wharf.

Impact on wildlife along the canal
With the exception of bridge links at either end of the development and at the centre into the Scottish Opera Building, physical impact on the existing towpath and canal edge is being kept to a minimum. All environmental surveys required for a planning application have been undertaken and results submitted, and any follow-up surveys and mitigation measures identified by those surveys will be carried out.
The existing tree line will be retained, thinned only at specific locations to enable the bridge links to be made.
Detailed consultation with Scottish Canals has been undertaken to ensure that all proposed work aligns with their own requirements, and legal agreement with them will be required ahead of development occurring.

Lack of amenity and public services for the scale of development proposed

Concern was raised through the consultation process regarding lack of amenity and services in the area to serve the student population that would be arrive with this development.
The PBSA blocks will include a minimum of 5sqm per bed space of amenity space as part of the development proposals. This will be provided internally and externally in and around the PBSA blocks. This will include a gym (which will be open to public membership) and an open café space/spaces. In addition, the Scottish Opera building itself will have a publicly accessible roof top garden that will be able to be accessed during normal working hours and at weekends, for the enjoyment of the existing community and new student population alike. There is no reliance on the existing towpath edge to provide the policy requirements for amenity space, but the fact remains that the canalside will provide significant amenity value for the population arising from the development and local community.

Acknowledging the issue of local service provision, the design team have revised the design of the north PBSA block to include a commercial unit at ground floor. This space may be used as a retail general store or occupied by a public service function (ie GP/Dentist). This ultimately will be demand led, but commitment is there for the allocation of space in recognition of the concern.

Traffic congestion and parking concerns

Understandable concern was raised through the consultation process regarding the potential additional traffic and parking requirements that potentially could result from the PBSA development, and the impact on the local network and existing community.
It will be a requirement of land sale, that the operators who will be taking the PBSA blocks, will be running these developments as 'car free' for their student tenants. As such there will be a requirement to this effect in the student room leases. We consider that the concerns of significant additional traffic and resulting parking requirements being generated by this development will be addressed by this land sale and lease condition. Possible planning conditions / Section 75 agreement regarding restrictions on this matter may well be considered necessary by the Council.
A full Traffic and Transport Analysis has been submitted as part of the application and further detail outlined.

Overshadowing concerns

Concerns were raised through the consultation regarding the impact on sunlight and overshadowing from the PBSA blocks onto the canal and Speirs Wharf building. Again, the orientation and massing of the blocks has been carefully considered to mitigate impact on the canal and Speirs Wharf elevation, with the summer evening shadow being limited to the slender elevation of both blocks. A full and detailed daylight and sunpath analysis has been carried out and submitted as part of the full application.