

# St. Michael's Estate

## Land Initiative / Regeneration Project



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

## BACKGROUND

This report examines proposals on advancing the St Michaels Estate site in Inchicore for development under the guidance of the City Development Plan 2016-2022 which came into effect on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2016.



Figure 1: Aerial Photo of former St. Michaels Estate

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

St. Michaels Estate is located c.4km west of the city centre in Inchicore. The property which extends to c.12.1 acres is bound to the north by Emmet Road, to the south by the Grand Canal and Goldenbridge Cemetery, to the east by the rear of residential dwellings on Connolly Avenue and Bulfin Court and to the west by St. Vincent's Street West. There is an internal road which runs in a north south direction and links the newly developed public housing at Thornton Heights to Bulfin Road. Earlier this year Richmond Barracks Exhibition Centre located on the eastern part of the site was opened to the public.

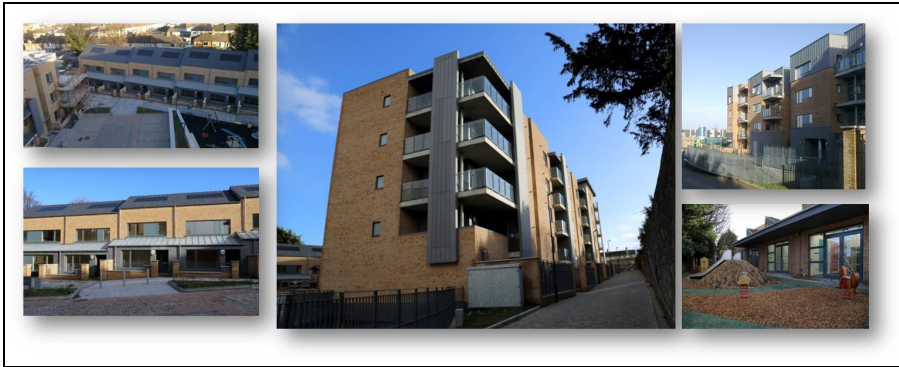


Figure 2: Thornton Heights new Development

Vehicular access to the site is available from the north western corner from Emmet Road via St. Vincent's Street West. From the north east, an internal access road provides access from Bulfin Road. Vincent Street West and Bulfin Road have un-signalised junctions with Emmet Road. There are (unlinked) pedestrian crossings in proximity to both junctions.

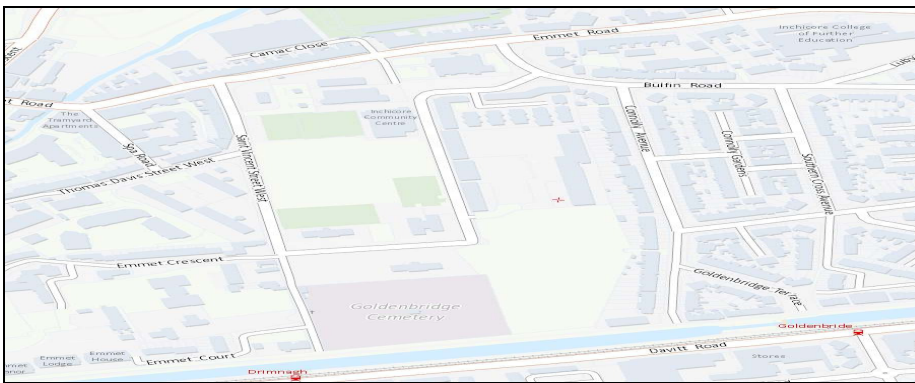


Figure 3: OS Site Location Map - Inchicore

The former Richmond Barracks dates from 1814, built as a recruiting centre by the British Army, and later used for housing by Dublin City Council when it was known as Keogh Square. Most of the barracks was demolished in 1969 and replaced by the St. Michael's Estate Local Authority Housing Complex, comprising four- and eight-storey floor blocks. These blocks are now also demolished with an aim to regenerate the estate into a thriving sustainable city neighbourhood.

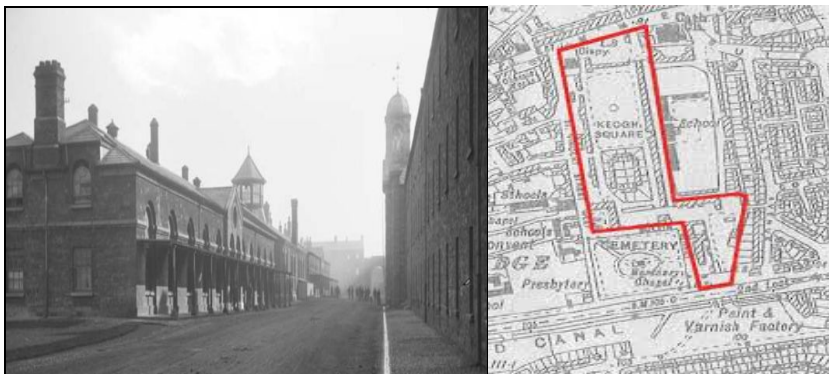


Figure 4: Former Richmond Barracks / Keogh Square



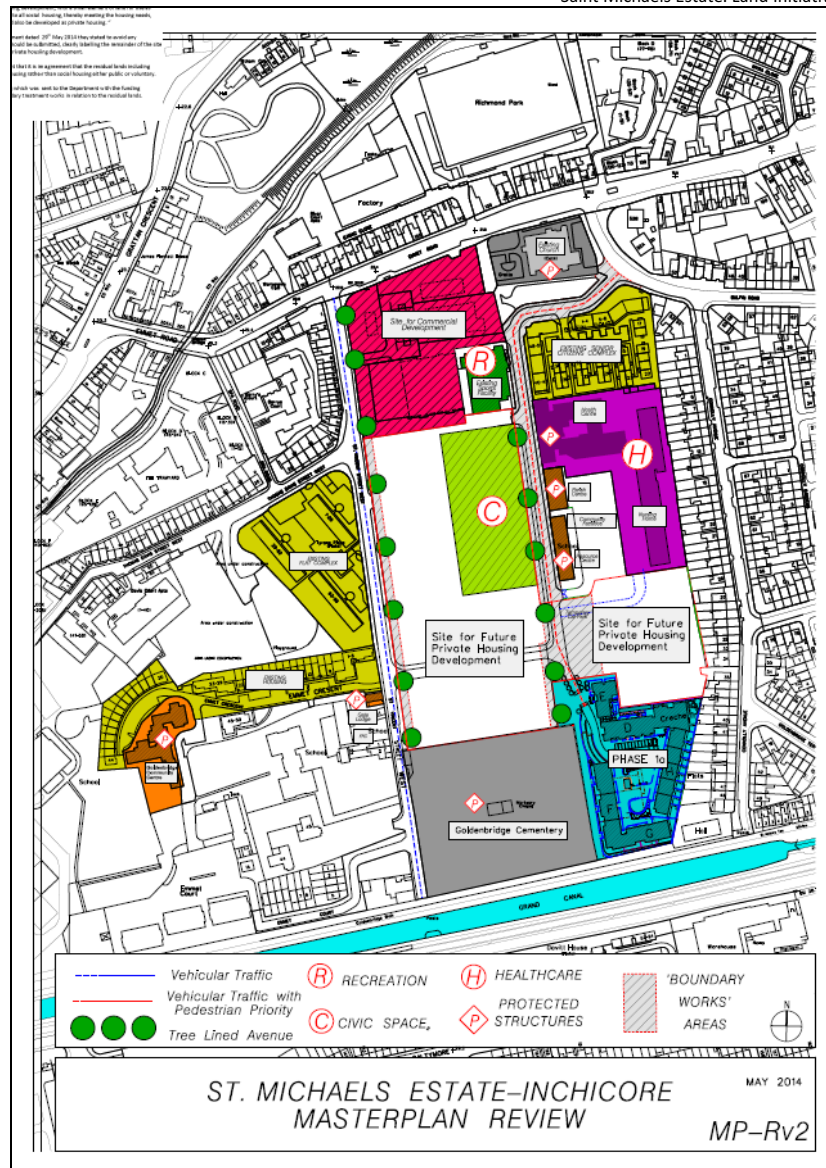


Figure 5: Masterplan Review - May 2014

#### PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT:

The site at St. Michaels Estate is zoned 'Z14' – a Strategic Development and Regeneration Area – in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, with a stated objective *"To seek the social, economic and physical development and/or rejuvenation of an area with mixed use of which residential and Z6 (employment) would be predominant uses"*.

The City Development Plan 2016-2022 contains a number of key guiding principles for this site under the heading SDRA 9, notably:

1. The development of a high-quality, vibrant, mixed-use urban quarter will be promoted; new facilities will be located in accessible locations and will maximise the opportunities to connect with the wider neighborhood.
2. The development will support and compliment the regeneration of Inchicore by encouraging a natural extension of the village centre eastwards along Emmet Road; the development will provide strong connections between the site and the functions of the village centre, for which a Local Environmental Improvements Plan is proposed.
3. The development of high-quality streetscape onto Emmet Road with accessible civic spaces, active frontages and an appropriate transition in scale, height and character between the village centre and the site will be promoted.
4. Strong permeability will be sought through the site, including pedestrian and cyclist connections, to achieve strong north-to-south connections between Emmet Road and the LUAS/Grand Canal corridor and east-to-west connections between St Vincent Street West and Bulfin Road; active streetscapes along these routes will be promoted.
5. Variety in housing tenures and unit types will be sought in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable community.





6. The important heritage features on, and adjoining the site, shall be respected and highlighted by urban design with particular regard to the tourism, heritage, community and amenity value of assets such as St. Michael's Church, Richmond Barracks, Goldenbridge Cemetery and the Grand Canal.
7. Innovative proposals that create a landmark destination within the city for combined facilities of a community, recreational, leisure and sports nature will be promoted; such facilities shall integrate positively with the existing sports facilities on site.
8. The development of high-quality housing for Older Persons. This will be located on the site between Thornton Heights and Richmond Barracks.

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 also contains an indicative land-use map for the future build-out of this proposed development:

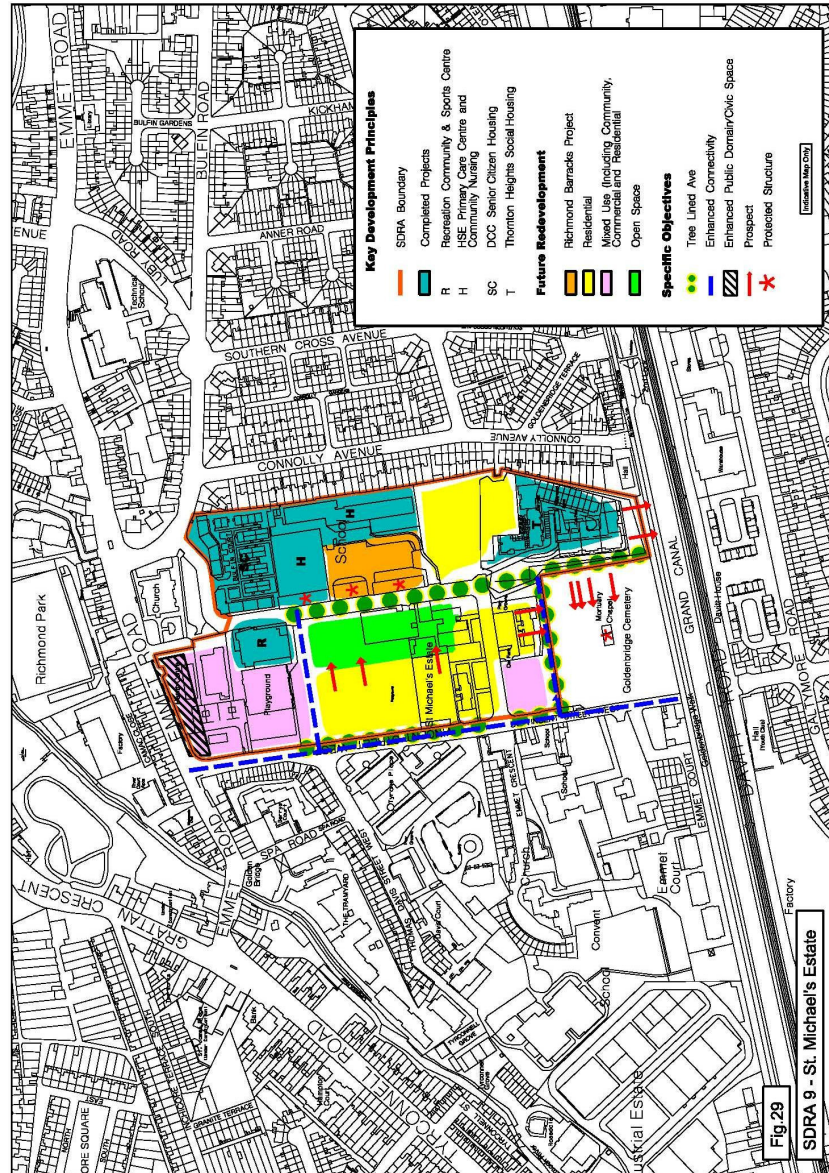


Figure 6: SDRA 9 - Dublin City Development Plan.

As evident from map Figure 6 there has been significant development on this site over recent years, including the newly constructed Thornton Heights residential scheme, the HSE Primary Care Centre and community nursing, the DCC Senior Citizen Housing at Bulfin Court and the Community and Sports Centre. Richmond Barracks has also been opened to the public providing a permanent interactive historical display and a venue for up to 200 people suitable for conferences, receptions and exhibition, along with the new landscaped gardens and coffee shop. The centre also runs tours of the Goldenbridge Cemetery.



## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE ST. MICHAELS ESTATE SITE

The remaining lands available for development can be grouped into three distinct but interlinked sites:

1. Lot 1: (c. 2 acres) located between Thornton Heights and Richmond Barracks. This site has proposals for 55 homes for older persons.
2. Lot 2: (c. 6.5 acres) located between Inchicore Community Sports Centre and Goldenbridge Cemetery. This site is currently vacant and maintained as grassland.
3. Lot 3 (c. 3.6 acres) located south of Emmet Road, inclusive of the Sports Centre site, Community Centre, HSE Building and Pigeon Club.

While these sites have been assessed together in terms of the overall requirements for the area, it is considered that there is potential for the three sites to be developed independently. In considering the indicative uses and the guiding principles of the Development Plan the following issues have been considered.

### Open Space:

Lot 2 and 3 (as above) shows an area of open space adjoining the Sports Centre and across from Richmond Barracks. This location is considered appropriate as it will enhance the setting of the Barracks and also allow for inter-usage between the open space and the sports centre. The park will serve as a local neighbourhood park, with the area generally well served by open space given its location adjoining the Grand Canal, c 950m from the IMMA gardens, c. 1km from the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, c. 650m from Grattan Crescent Park and 1.4km from Brickfields Park in Drimnagh. Depending on the tenure mix of new housing constructed within the overall site, consideration should be given to providing a new local playground in the park. It is noted that a new playground has been provided within Thornton Heights servicing this scheme. Quality landscaping for biodiversity and amenity will also be required. Importantly for this space is the fact that it is overlooked by housing on the southern and western edges in order to provide some passive surveillance.



Figure 7: Refurbished Richmond Barracks

Also to note in terms of open space there are proposals to re-open Goldenbridge Cemetery to accommodate cultural and heritage tours.



Figure 8: Goldenbridge Cemetery





## MIXED USE / COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

The SDRA indicative map Figure 6 shows an area of mixed-use; onto Emmet Road and also a small section within the south-east corner of the site, adjacent to Goldenbridge Cemetery. In considering the appropriate uses for these sites a preliminary assessment was made of the existing local community facilities in the vicinity. As indicated in the map Figure 9, the area is very well served by local schools, community centres, resident halls and parish centres, sports grounds etc. The site immediately adjoins and/or includes the refurbished Richmond Barracks, the HSE Primary Care Centre, the Inchicore Community Sports Centre, St. Michaels Youth Project, Bulfin Estate Resident's Association Hall and St Michaels Parish Community Centre. A new crèche and after-school facility has recently been provided in Thornton Heights, while Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. has approved planning permission (granted April 2015) for a significant extension and refurbishment of the existing school to include a new general purpose hall and new ball courts onto St. Vincent Street West. The Old Gate lodge at Emmet Crescent, an attractive building of local heritage value has recently received funding for refurbishment to accommodate a family resource centre. Consideration will be given to the provision of a local convenience shop, particularly somewhere in the vicinity of the Goldenbridge School.

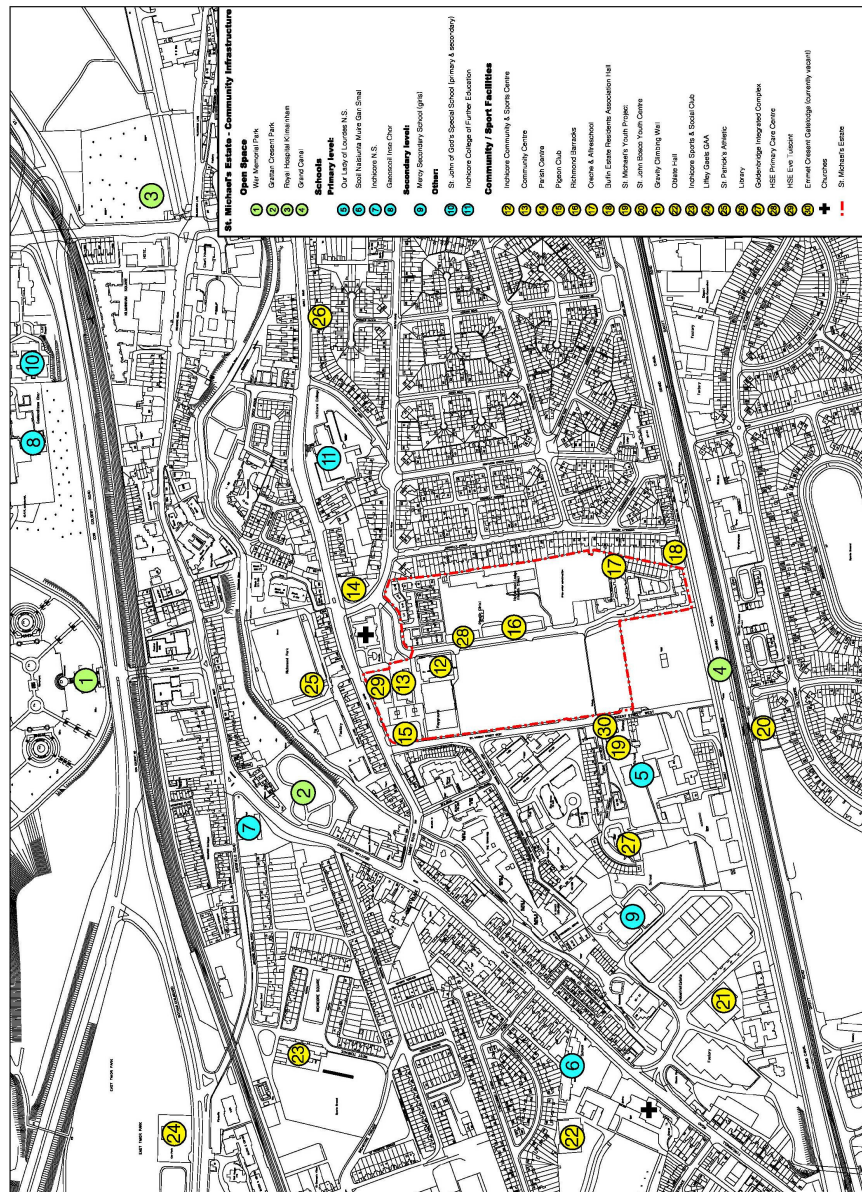


Figure 9: Preliminary Community Audit

Within Lot 3 there currently stands three older single-storey buildings containing (i) The Pigeon Club (ii) St. Michaels Parish Community Centre, and (iii) the HSE Eve Tuscent building, all currently in use. More recently constructed is the Inchicore Community Sports Centre, with all-weather pitch beside, accessed off the St Michaels Estate Road. The three older properties while serving the local community present an unattractive streetscape to Emmet Road at the entrance to Inchicore Village and at single-storey are considered a poor use of urban village land. It is proposed that these buildings be demolished if consent is forthcoming from HSE and the lease holders of the Pigeon Club. The site has potential to be redeveloped with a high quality streetscape onto Emmet Road inclusive of a new Civic Urban Space linking perhaps to the St. Michaels Church and/or connecting Emmet Road with Inchicore Community Sports Centre. Accommodating the existing community spaces will require detailed consultation and negotiation at both individual and community level.



It is also considered that this site could provide for new retail facilities, with space allocated for a possible mini supermarket serving the wider village area and some smaller retail units.



Figure 10: Inchicore Community Sports Centre



Figure 11: St. Michael's Church (view from Bulfin Road)

## ACCESS / PERMEABILITY

There are several existing uses on site which the existing and proposed road network will continue to serve. The northern portion of the site contains the HSE building, Inchicore Parish Centre and Inchicore Sports Centre. The HSE building is accessed directly from Emmet Road. The parish and Sports Centres are accessed from Bulfin Road. Also accessed via Bulfin Road is Richmond Barracks, the HSE Primary Care Clinic and Nursing Home and Thornton Heights residential development. The central portion of the site is clear and grassed over. There is predominantly residential development along the western perimeter of the site along St. Vincent Street West. Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is located at the south western corner of the site. Currently there is informal car parking along the entire road network available for all uses on the site including drop off associated with the school.



Figure 12: HSE Primary Health Care Centre

## TENURE

The residual lands are bundled into a number of lots and can accommodate up to 420 dwellings, commercial development and amenity open space. The residential housing will be primarily 70% private and 30% public. A Capital appraisal to construct 55 older person's homes on lot 1 will be issued to the Department for Housing and Planning in December 2016 seeking funding approval.. Subject to departmental approval, this development will be included in Social (Public) Housing Programme 2017 - 2020.

The residential development proposed for the main c. 10.5 acre site comprises of a mix of private (70%) and public housing units (30%) along with other amenities with the objective of delivering a sustainable mixed tenure residential development.

The homes will include a mix of one, two and three bedroom apartments and duplexes of varying sizes in blocks 3, 4 and 5 storeys high. It is proposed that the public housing element will encompass 30% of the total development (including Site 1B/Lot 1).

**THE FOCUS OF THIS REPORT IS ON THE EARLY DELIVERY OF HOUSING. EACH OF THE DEVELOPMENT PHASES/LOTS ARE SUBJECT TO THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES, POLICY CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS OF THE CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THE CONFIGURATION OF THE SITE ALLOWS FOR THE LANDS TO BE DEVELOPED ON A PHASED BASIS. THE DETAILS OF WHICH ARE SET OUT ALONG THE DETAILS OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AND TYPOLOGY. THE LAYOUT AND POTENTIAL ASSESSED FOR LOTS 2, AND 3 ARE INDICATIVE AND CAN BE MODIFIED IF NECESSARY TO MEET CHANGING HOUSING NEEDS. SOCIAL HOUSING NEED**

The table below outlines the number of households on the Dublin City Council housing waiting list with Area "J" as their first choice. The table shows the length of time each household has been on the housing waiting list and the size of unit required. In total, there are 2,132 households on the housing waiting list for this area (Area J), of which 184 have been on the list for more than 10 years.

Dublin City Council Housing List – Area J (May 2016)						
Number of Years on the Housing Waiting List	one bed	two bed	three bed	four bed	five bed	Total
0 to 1 year	109	67	7	0	0	183
1 to 5 years	523	373	77	2	1	976
5 to 10 years	346	335	101	6	1	789
over 10 years	54	54	58	16	2	184
Bed Total	1032	829	243	24	4	2,132
% of Total	48%	39%	11%	1%	-1%	100%

Housing Waiting List - Area "J" (May 2016)

## EXISTING TENURE MIX – ST. MICHAEL'S ESTATE – IMMEDIATE AREA

In the 2011 Census, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) recorded the tenure mix in the area immediately surrounding St. Michael's Estate as follows: 48% owner occupier; 33% private rented; 15% rented from Dublin City Council; 1% rented from an Approved Housing Body; and 3% other (occupied rent free or not stated). A full breakdown of the tenure mix is contained in the table below.



Census 2011	% and Tenure of Households Census 2011	Number and Tenure of Households Census 2011
Owner Occupier	48%	892
Private Rented	33%	607
Rented from Dublin City Council	15%	269
Rented from Approved Housing Body	1%	21
Occupied Rent free	1%	16
Not stated	2%	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1850</b>

Figure 15 Source: CSO Census 2011

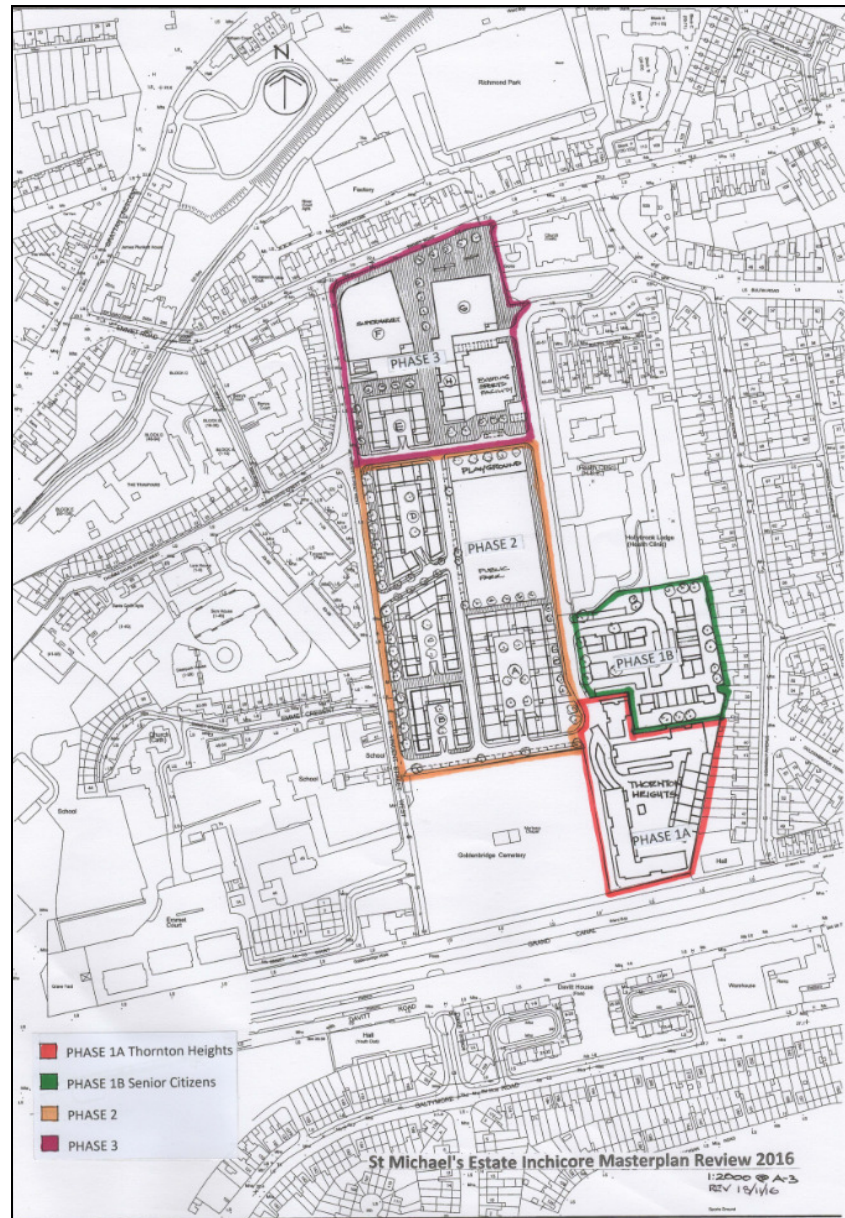


Figure 13: Proposed Phasing of Site Development



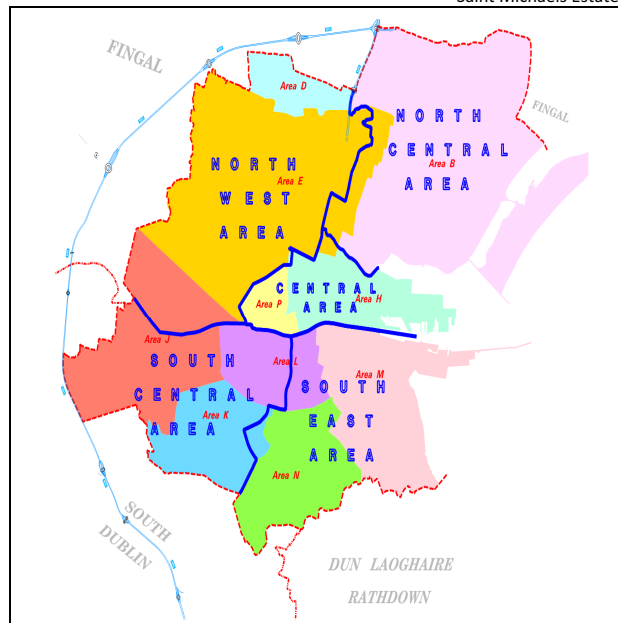


Figure 14: Catchment Area - Area J (in red)

The proposed development on the St. Michaels Estate site will include 123 Public Housing units, 55 of which are senior citizen units proposed for Site 1B.

#### QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT

The principles of the original project brief are still relevant. They envisaged a residential development of high quality in a strategic location with a demand for commercial development. The guiding principles are as follows:

- Integration with the wider Inchicore Village
- Permeability through the site
- Pedestrian links to/from LUAS through the development
- Provision of suitable economy retail anchor tenant
- Height limit of up to 5 storeys throughout the site; 4 storeys development fronting onto Emmet Road
- Development to be informed by rich local history/heritage
- High quality public spaces to include; liveable streets, public plaza, high quality open space.

Based on data provided by the Department of Social Protection we know that in September 2016 there were 149 households in receipt of rent supplement in the area immediately surrounding St. Michael's Estate. This means that 8% of all households in the area or 25% of all households in private rented accommodation are in receipt of rent supplement.

**Previous Housing Developments in this area have had quite a negative history in relation to social issues with both Keogh Square and the St Michaels Estate being demolished as a result of a failure to adequately deal with festering Social problems and ongoing maintenance and estate management issues. In more recent years there has been real difficulties arising in the private rented sector in the area.**

**It is essential that serious lessons are learned from this history and experience. Therefore the formulation of a Social Regeneration Plan side by side with the physical/infrastructural proposals will be a key element of this overall development.**

**In addition the whole issue of private management companies, the management of mixed housing complexes and the ongoing general management of apartments, car parking, cleansing etc has caused a myriad of problems throughout the city in recent years. New models of management are essential and hence there will be specific emphasis on this in the criteria involved in the the selection of a developer.**



Figure 15 – Proposed Heights Layout

## MAKING THE REGENERATION A REALITY – HOW?

### MIXED TENURE – BUILD FOR RENTAL MODEL

Details were given in the Housing Land Initiative Feasibility Study on the merits of providing housing for long term rental under a Build for Rent model. A key objective of a Build for Rent model is to provide long-term affordable accommodation for low to moderate income key worker households in urban areas of high demand for residential accommodation. New trends are emerging in Dublin's residential property market with reports of an increasing demand for residential accommodation from institutional and private investors that will lead to an increase in supply of housing accommodation for rental purposes. Financial Initiatives outlined in the Government's Action Plan on Housing and homelessness (Rebuilding Ireland) should also greatly assist in increasing the supply of housing for rental purposes. It is considered that the St Michaels Estate site given its convenient city location is ideally suitable to housing development for such purposes. In many locations across the city the market price of apartments are lower than the construction costs. Consideration should therefore be given by the City Council to providing and securing housing development for long term Build for Rent purposes.

The Governments 'Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' (2016) comprises of the following five pillars of planned actions right across government: addressing homelessness; accelerating public housing; building more homes; improving the rental sector; and, utilising existing homes. The key areas of action that focus on speeding up the delivery of housing will greatly assist in securing the early delivery of the proposed development as outlined above.



## SECURING THE EARLY REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. MICHAELS ESTATE SITE.

As outlined in the Housing Land Initiative Feasibility Study the City Council has traditionally secured the redevelopment of its land under development agreements with title to lands only being transferred when a development had been substantially completed.

A development agreement is in essence a contract that sets out the process under which an agreed development should be delivered. It sets out conditions on its future use and it establishes a timeline for defined actions to be taken and sets out mechanisms to address either party's failure to meet their commitments.

To procure the required development it is proposed that the lands (all or part) be advertised for submissions of interest from developers with the aim of having the site developed broadly in line with the proposals/indicative plans outlined in this report with conditions included, relating to tenure mix and future use (long term rental) under a Build for Rent model and other relevant matters.

Tenderers will be required to:

- furnish details of experience in delivering large scale housing projects;
- provide details of their professional teams with relevant experience;
- provide and substantiate details of their financial capacity to deliver the proposed development within a specified time period.
- make a financial proposal to undertake the proposed development.

## VALUATION OF THE SITE

The Market Value of the site will be updated prior to the seeking of Tenders.

The Full Market Value will be retrieved from the proposed new development as part of the Procurement Process and this can be done in a number of ways.

- Cash Payment.
- Provision of additional infrastructure.
- Subsidisation of Affordable / Private Units.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- A Housing mix of 50% Private, 30% Public and 20% Affordable Rent.
- Delivery potential of 420 new homes.
- Integration with wider Inchicore Village.
- Opportunities to highlight the heritage and vast amenity assets of Inchicore/Kilmainham.
- The development of high quality housing (55) for older persons on the site between Thornton Heights and Richmond Barracks. It is planned to develop this Lot in the shorter term.
- A Public Procurement Process will now be speedily progressed with the aim of securing a tender covering the:
  - a. Design of the new development based on the indicative existing plans.
  - b. Construction of the new development.
  - c. Proposals for the future management of the development.
  - d. The Financing mechanism required to fund the development, taking into account fully the market value of the site due to DCC.

**The proposal to progress this vital new development to the Procurement and tender stage was approved by the Housing and Planning Strategic Policy Committees (S.P.Cs) at a joint meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> December.**

**The Housing S.P.C and the Local Community (Inchicore / Kilmainham Network) will be kept fully informed on the progress of all aspects of the process on an ongoing basis.**

*Anthony Flynn  
Executive Manager and Director of Housing Delivery  
9<sup>th</sup> January 2017*