

Swansea Tall Buildings Strategy



OCTOBER 2015 DRAFT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

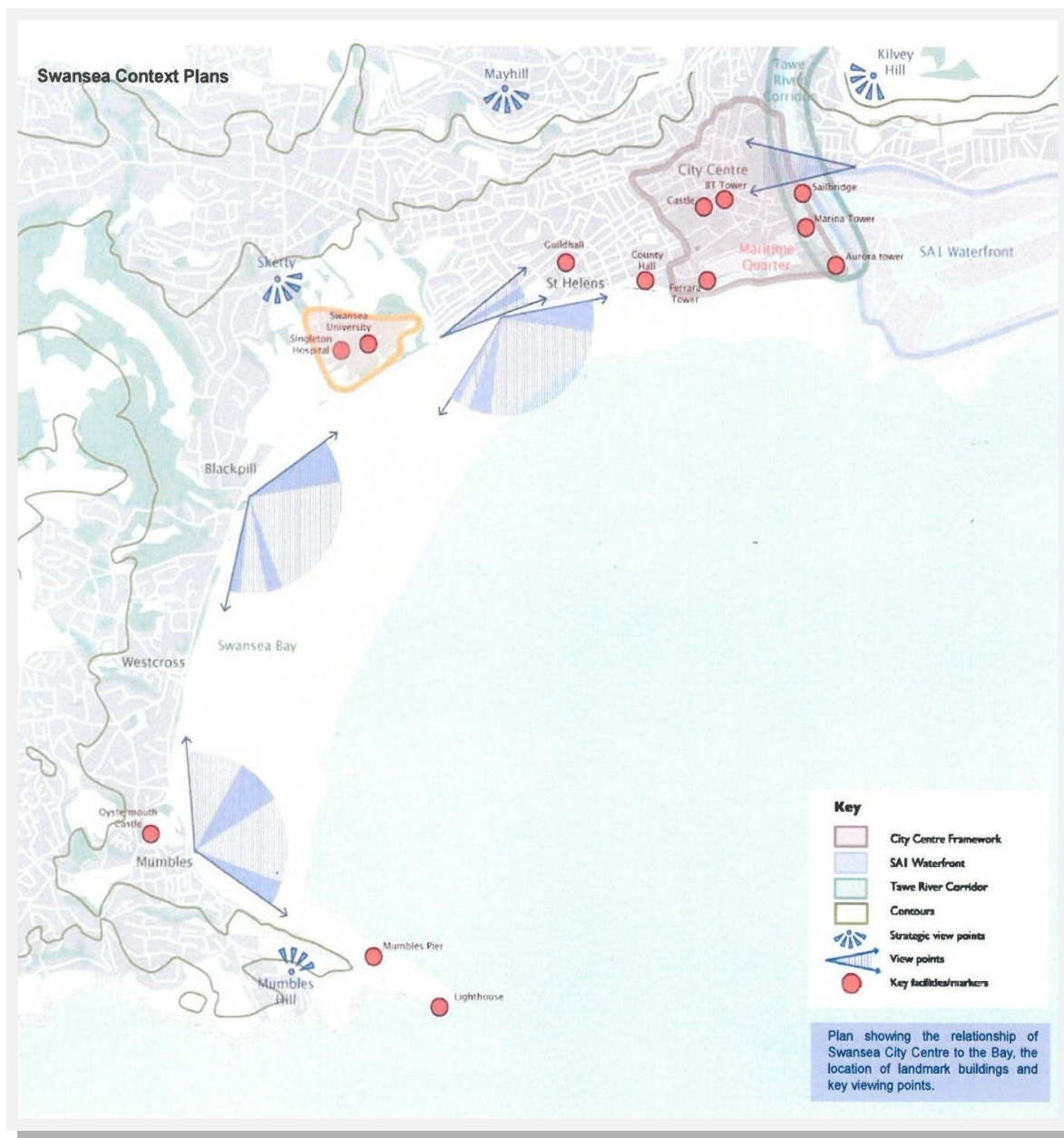
The Tall Buildings Strategy is one of a series of interrelated initiatives that the City and County of Swansea has developed to improve the vitality of the City and the quality of the built and natural environment for residents, visitors and businesses.

A Tall Building Strategy was originally prepared for Swansea by Consultants White Young and Green, and following a period of public consultation was adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the Unitary Development Plan in 2008. It is these two documents that have guided the development of tall buildings in recent years. Swansea is undergoing a further renaissance of development and pressure is growing for greater intensity of development, which has prompted the need for a revised and updated Tall Building Strategy to guide the growth of the city.

In order to implement the new vision and aspirations for development highlighted in the Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review (SCCSFR) there is considered to be a need to revisit the extent of the areas where tall buildings will be supported. A revised Tall Buildings Strategy will provide greater opportunity for tall buildings to be developed in the City Centre to align with the aspirations of the SCCSFR for a greater mix and intensity of land uses and activity in the central area.

This revised draft Tall Building Strategy for Swansea will be subject to a period of public and stakeholder consultation. The comments made and proposed alterations will be reported to Members and ultimately will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the prevailing adopted Development Plan policy, and supersede the existing Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance (2008)





1.2 Aims

The Strategy considers the urban context of the city, the role of tall buildings and identifies appropriate places where tall buildings may be located. The strategy sets out advice on the design of tall buildings and the supporting information that is required by the City and County of Swansea to be submitted with a planning application.

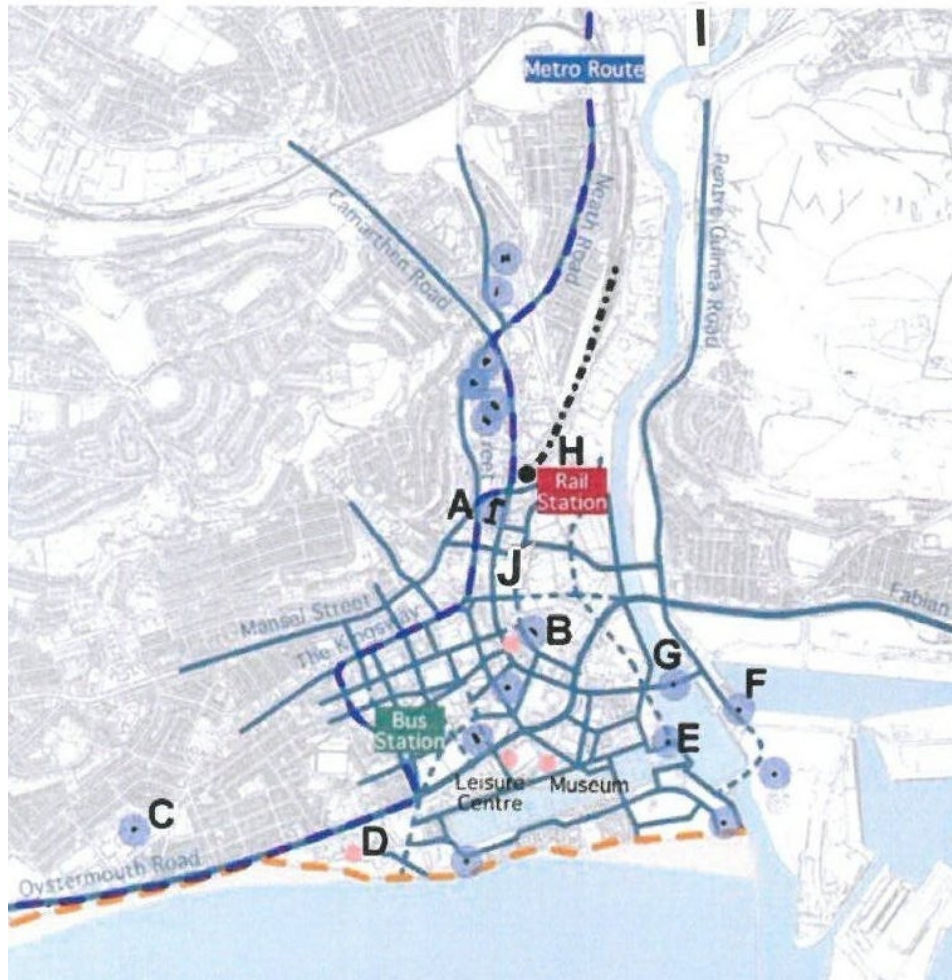
The aim of the Strategy is not to be site specific, nor to establish appropriate building heights, but to identify areas of opportunity. It focuses on the responsibility of the applicant to justify their tall building application, encouraging high quality design.

“a tall building will inevitably become a landmark” (DCfW Designing for Tall Buildings, 2015)

The Strategy recognises that tall buildings can have a positive role in the city, but that they must relate to the context of the area, be well designed, demonstrates the application of sustainability principles and be close to supporting uses and infrastructure.

The Tall Buildings Strategy is applicable to the whole of the City and County of Swansea. The main thrust of the Strategy however focuses on the City centre where tall buildings are considered more physically and economically viable. It also considers other areas including the University and the SA1 Waterfront development.

“... A well designed tall building in an appropriate location can make a positive contribution to the quality of a place. However the impact of a tall building is significant...” (DCfW Designing for Tall Buildings, 2015)



A Alexandra House	E Pocketts Wharf
B BT Tower	F SA1 Waterfront
C Guildhall Tower	G Swansea Sailbridge
D Civic Centre	H Swansea Railway Station

1.3 Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales Edition 7 July 2014- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the planning aims and policy objectives of the Welsh Government and should be taken into account when preparing development plans and policies. This guidance is supplemented by 21 Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

Technical Advice Note 12 (Wales) – Design TAN12 (2014) contains specific guidance regarding design, layout and public realm. It spells out the principles of good design based on an understanding of what makes existing places attractive, successful and sustainable

Technical Guidance- The Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) believes that a well designed tall building in an appropriate location can make a positive contribution to the quality of a place. Their guidance published in 2015 sets out the Commission's expectations for tall buildings and explains how the impact of a new tall building can be significant and how it should therefore be of the highest architectural quality and form. They recommend a number of key considerations and these are incorporated within this guidance note:

- Context analysis
- Environmental Impact
- Sustainability
- Transport and Servicing
- Quality
- Interaction with the public realm

Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008) The Tall Building Strategy provides supplementary planning guidance to a number of detailed policies of the Swansea Unitary Development Plan (2008). These policies include

EV1 Design

EV2 Siting and Location

EV3 Accessibility

EV4 Public Realm

AS1 New development Proposals

CC1 City Centre mixed use development

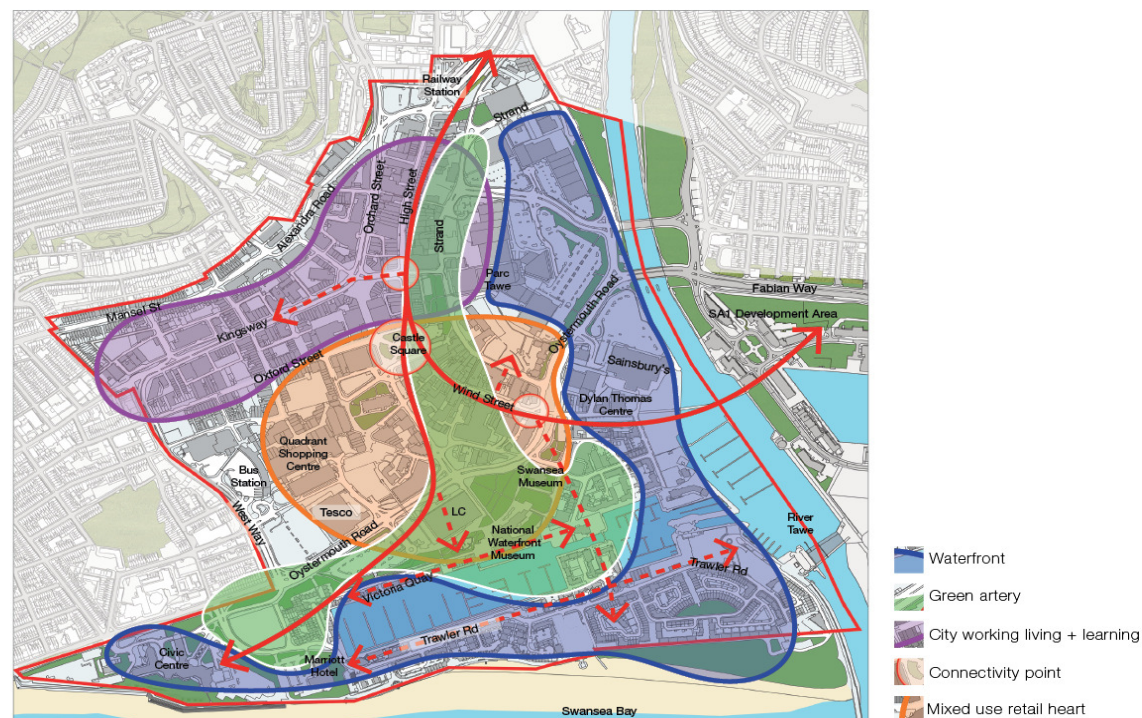
The above policies make clear the importance that Swansea places on good design as a significant contributing factor to the success and appeal of places and spaces.

1.4 Complementary Supplementary Planning Guidance and Initiatives

Other initiatives include the following:

- **Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review (Draft) (DTZ 2015)** This draft strategy document aims to define a new role for areas of the City Centre, and encourage a greater diversity of mixed uses with opportunities for living working and learning in areas such as the Kingsway and Alexandra Road, and high quality mixed use developments on the City's Waterfront and St Davids
- **Swansea Bay Strategy (White Young Green 2008)** The This adopted Strategy provides a vision for Swansea Bay and details potential new development and enhancement in order to achieve this vision. The Vision for Swansea Bay is to create a destination for culture, art, food, quality places and a space to meet people, through a series of Bay wide Initiatives and focusing development opportunities on 6 key locations including the City's waterfront.

These studies provide a framework to guide future development and enhancement in the City Centre, they also supplement the adopted development plan policies and compliment existing regeneration initiatives in the City of Swansea.



Extract from Swansea City centre Strategic Framework Review (Draft 2015)

2.0 Tall Buildings

2.1 What is a Tall Building?

A tall building in the context of the City and County of Swansea is one that is substantially taller than surrounding buildings.

In general a building that is more than twice the height of adjacent buildings will be classed as a tall building.

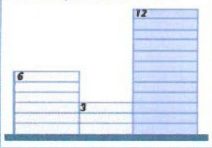
In the City Centre existing buildings are generally 3-5 storeys and a tall building would be any building taller than 6-10 storeys.

The proportion of a tall building, that is its width to height ratio, will affect the visual dominance of a tall building and consequently the aesthetic quality. Buildings that are as wide as their height will not look as slender as buildings that are higher than their width. Some church spires in Swansea are tall buildings because their height is generally greater than twice the height of the church and surrounding area and the spires are very slender. Alexandra House is a tall building. 13-storeys to the adjacent 3/4 storey buildings. It is however very wide and therefore creates a slab appearance, which is more dominant. Tall buildings also should not appear monolithic a common failing of many of the first generation tall buildings in Swansea.

Tall Buildings

The impact of a tall building is relative to its height and slender proportion.

The greater the building is above twice the height of surrounding buildings, the more impact it will have.



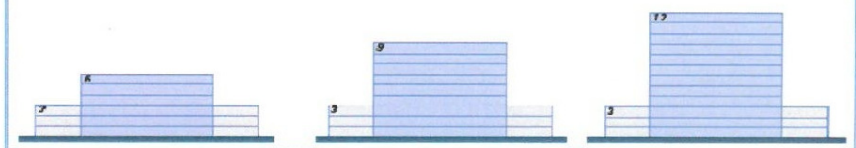
Marina Tower:
Tall building, twice the height of surrounding buildings

As the height of the building increases in relation to surrounding buildings, the impact increases. The taller and more slender the building, the greater the vertical emphasis it will have to its overall mass.



BT Tower:
Tall building with high visual impact

When the slender proportion decreases, and the height increases, the impact of the building increases. The taller and wider the building, the greater the impact of the building.



Alexander House:
Tall, slab building

Salubrious place:
Focal building, less than twice the height of surrounding buildings



2.2 Role of Tall Buildings

Tall buildings are playing an ever increasing role in the future development of our cities. Tall buildings can be iconic structures for an individual use, signify areas of regeneration or act as symbols of economic activity.

In the context of Swansea, tall buildings can serve a number of functions that:

- Create a distinctive skyline
- Form key landmarks within a legible city
- Contribute to a cluster signalling a key gateway or area.
- Mark important public, civic or institutional uses
- Demonstrate a growing economic position and
- Set a precedent for sustainable development through the application of best

practice requirements, maximising densities and proximity to public transport.

Tall buildings should, like all new development, be a positive contribution to the life of a city but due to the prominence of tall buildings more care is required in the siting and design of the buildings, to ensure that they achieve the role identified in the brief. Development schemes which incorporate tall buildings can provide opportunity for landmark developments contributing significantly to the City's skyline and views, with exceptional sea views because of Swansea's sea-front location. They can also capture the imagination and become associated with the City's image, consequently having a symbolic or iconic role. More significantly they can introduce intensive levels of activity which Swansea requires in order to become a more vibrant and viable destination



Spinnaker Tower Portsmouth: Landmark 170m tower with observation deck



The Shard London Bridge: Elegant slender 310m tall glass tower



Frankfurt, Germany clustering of tall buildings at the commercial heart of the City.



The Turning Torso, Malmö Sweden

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Overview of Tall Buildings in Swansea

During the extensive post war rebuilding of Swansea City Centre, most buildings were built to a lower scale (typically 3 to 4 storeys) in contrast to the more dense Victorian townscape. Therefore Swansea is generally not a tall city and the centre lacks a sense of intensity. However, opportunities do exist for new tall buildings.

The 1960's and 70's saw a changing City skyline with a number of new office developments in the City Centre. These included the BT Tower which raised the skyline

to 13 storeys, further residential development in the Maritime Quarter and the DVLA offices on the outskirts of Swansea near Morriston. The Singleton Campus of Swansea University has grown considerably over the years with many new buildings. More recent developments of tall buildings include the Meridian Quay, which is a 29 storey residential tower with restaurant and viewing tower at the top, the Aurora Tower which is a 14-storey building at Swansea Point and the Urban Village on Swansea High Street.



Kingsway Circle



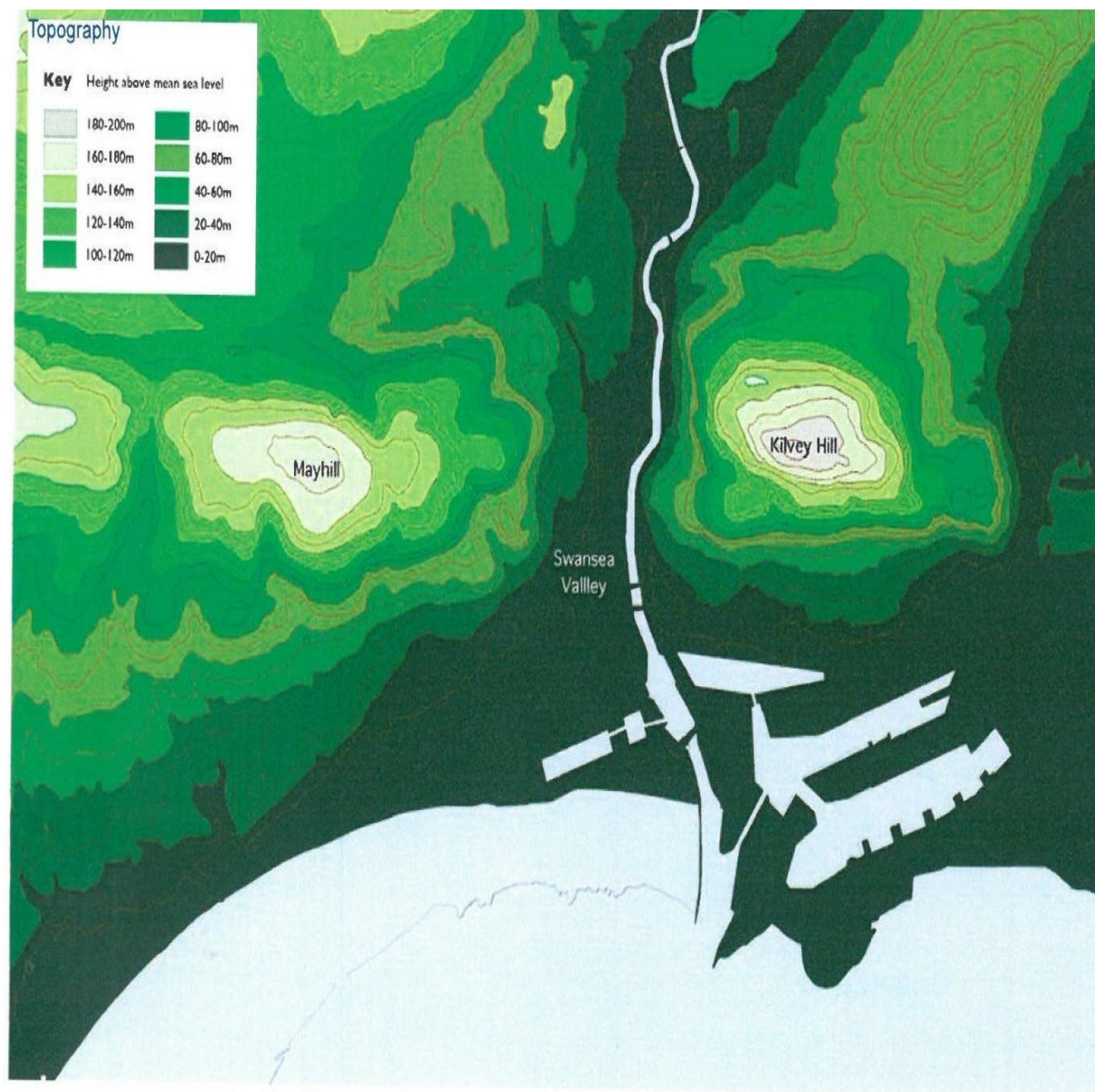
Meridian Quay



Swansea University campus



SA1 Waterfront



3.2 Topography

The topography of Swansea is an important factor to be considered in determining the appropriate location for tall buildings. The escarpment above the Strand forms a prominent topographical feature. Mayhill and Kilvey Hill form the upper ridgeline of Swansea's rolling hillside and the distinct edges of the lower Swansea Valley. The valley creates a distinct break in the skyline, clearly visible from the sea and along the western stretches of Swansea Bay.

In Swansea, the City Centre sits at a lower, relatively flat level, rising gradually towards the railway station. Tall buildings set against the backdrop of the surrounding landscape can have a lower visual impact than buildings that break the skyline. Buildings on top of the surrounding hillsides are visible on the horizon and therefore more prominent than building at a lower level.

3.3 Land Uses

The City Centre contains the major retail, leisure, cultural, commercial and office district for the City, with the civic and administrative uses generally located towards the City waterfront. Former and existing industrial areas are located along the Tawe River. Identified as a development opportunity, the Tawe Riverside Corridor Study established a vision to "develop a modern attractive and vibrant riverside urban area, creating a place where people wish to live, visit and work". SA1 Waterfront regeneration area and dockland area form the eastern approach to the City Centre.

The main campus of Swansea University and the Singleton Hospital are grouped along the waterfront, adjacent to Singleton Park, which is a significant Grade 1 listed Historic Park. Both sites have plans for investment and rationalisation. Areas for sports and recreational space dispersed along the foreshore, with additional sporting venues including the Liberty Stadium to the north. Surrounding land uses are essentially residential based with large areas of open space interspersed. Swansea Enterprise Park is a large industrial and retail park is located to the north of the city

3.4 Built Form

Swansea historically developed as a maritime port and to service industrial development along the river. It has a well-defined historic core. Buildings like the Guildhall tower and churches formed taller landmarks within the urban form of the City. Heavy bombing during the Second World War and subsequent post war development has resulted in a significant loss of urban grain and urban density of the Victorian city. Recent development with improved linkages and future aspirations are set to reinforce the vitality and scale of the City Centre.



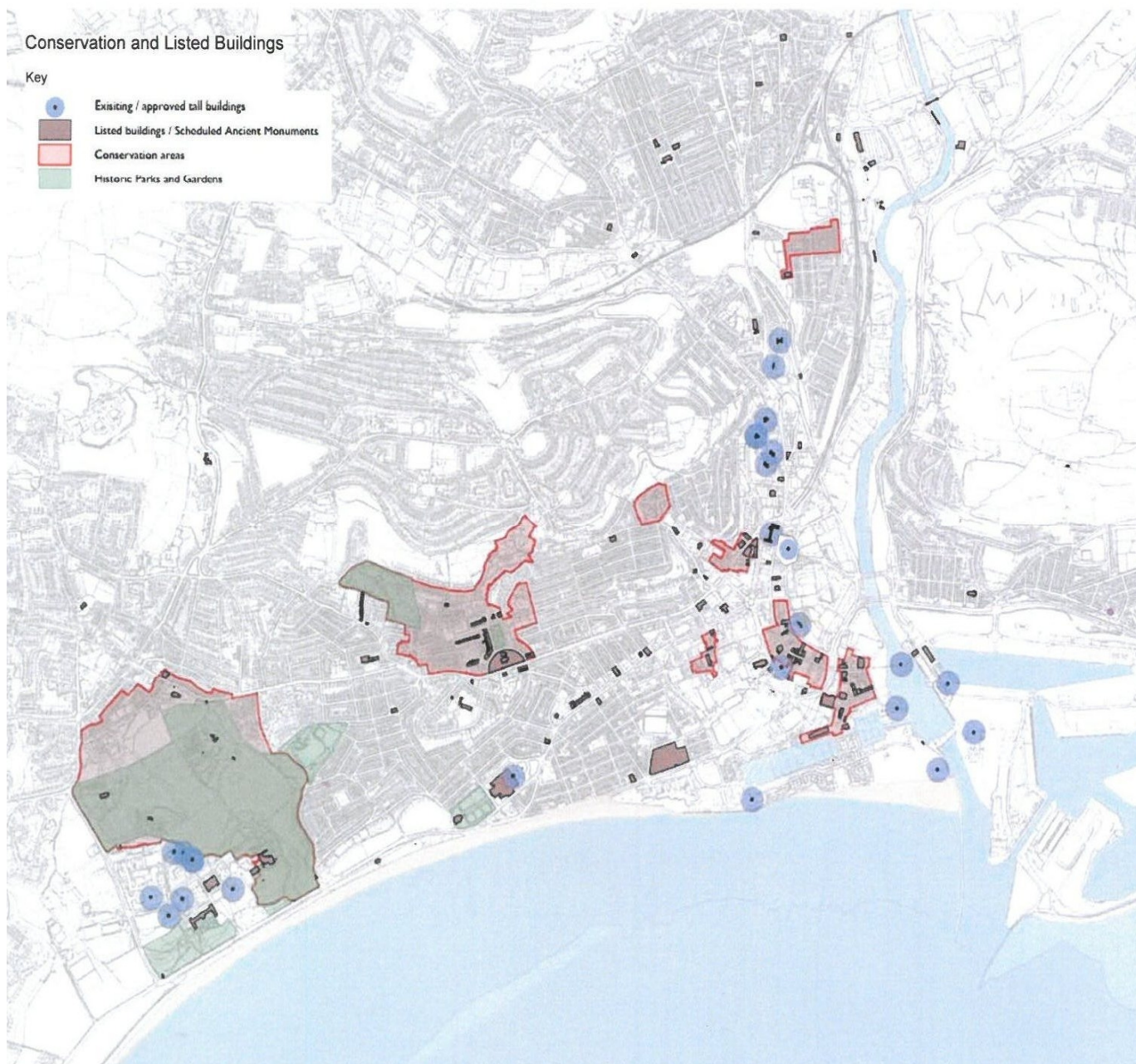
Morgan's Hotel



BT Tower and Swansea Castle



Guildhall Tower



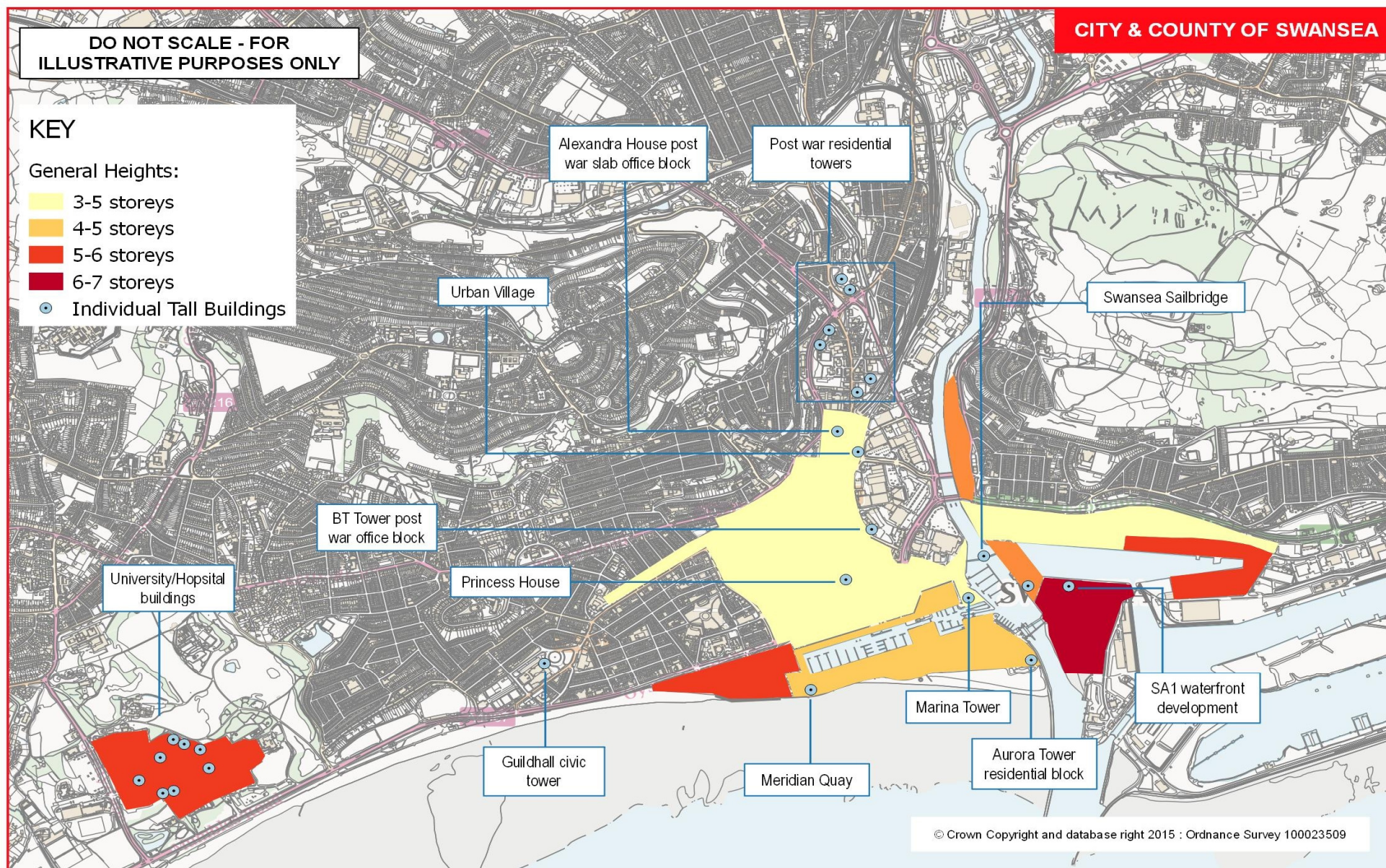
3.5 Conservation Areas

The historic setting of Swansea should be considered within the context of historic parks and gardens, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas and also the existing tall buildings. These are identified on the plan opposite. The City Centre comprises four conservation areas.

- Alexandra Road
- Oxford Street/Nelson Street
- Wind Street
- Maritime Quarter

Within the centre there are clusters of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments including Swansea's Medieval Castle, a Grade I listed building and scheduled ancient monument, currently overshadowed by the adjacent BT Tower.

The area immediately adjacent to Singleton Hospital and Swansea University is both a historic park and a significant part of the Sketty Conservation area.



3.6 Existing Buildings

The City Centre includes a number of tall buildings. Some of the more prominent tall buildings include mainly post war residential and commercial tower blocks.

The BT Tower, near Swansea Castle, the slab office block of Alexandra House and the residential towers at Dyfatty are dominant features across the north and eastern parts of the City. The photographs illustrate how the buildings sometimes are seen against the blue-sky but from other viewpoints their impact is lessened when seen against the background hills. The larger slab blocks are very dominant and the height and width combine to create a visually intrusive element.

The Swansea Sail Bridge forms a key element in the City structure, reconnecting disparate areas of the city and recent waterfront buildings include :

- Meridian Tower 29-storey
- Aurora Tower (Swansea Point 14 storey)
- Urban Village development at the Strand (10/11storey)
- Excelsior Building on Princess Way (9 storey)
- St Davids Student accommodation on Morfa Road (9 storey)

The Guildhall tower forms a slender civic landmark within the City structure. Comparatively Singleton hospital and the university campus form a clustering of tall buildings, ranging from 2 to 10 storeys in height. The slab blocks are a noticeable feature along the sweep of the bay.



Urban Village viewed from the Strand



Aurora Tower (Swansea Point 14 storey)



Excelsior Building on Princess Way (9 storey)

3.7 Landscape and Seascape

Swansea has extensive areas of open space within easy access of the City, including Kilvey Hill, Singleton Park and the Clyne Valley. Along the sweep of the bay, there are several Victorian parks and other areas of green space dedicated to recreational use. The high landscape quality of the setting of the City is reflected in the designation of Clyne Valley and gardens as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Many of the parks within the city are included in the register of Landscape, Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in Wales, reflecting their particular value. The views back to the City from the sands and water of Swansea Bay is an important consideration in terms of seascape.

Within the City Centre there are pockets of open space, creating a green setting for County Hall, the National Waterfront Maritime Museum, Morgans Hotel and in part, the Castle. In addition, the Swansea Bay Strategy identifies the opportunity for reinforcing the green edge to the bay, establishing a new waterfront park along the foreshore from Civic Centre through to Blackpill. The sea has an important influence on the character of Swansea and forms the southern boundary of the urban city. There is an awareness of the City on the edge of the sea and access to long distance views towards the North Devon Coast and conversely from the bay which is a key feature of Swansea. The proposed tidal lagoon which will stretch 4km out into Swansea Bay and has the western landfall on the eastern bank of the River Tawe will open up significant views of the City.

3.8 Key Views

The impact of tall buildings on the skyline will be most apparent from the sea and key vantage points along the sweep of the bay. Distant views across the bay illustrate a current massing of taller and larger buildings around the University, hospital district and city centre. Key views will exist from open and elevated areas, such as the Tawe Bridges that offer panoramic views through the Swansea Valley and down to the waterfront.

The photomontage illustrates the presence of the Meridian Quay development against the skyline. Due to the changing topography of the City, as the viewpoint moves the impact of the tall building against the skyline also changes, both exposing and containing the height of the building.

3.9 Key Approaches

The key approaches into the City essentially follow primary movement corridors.

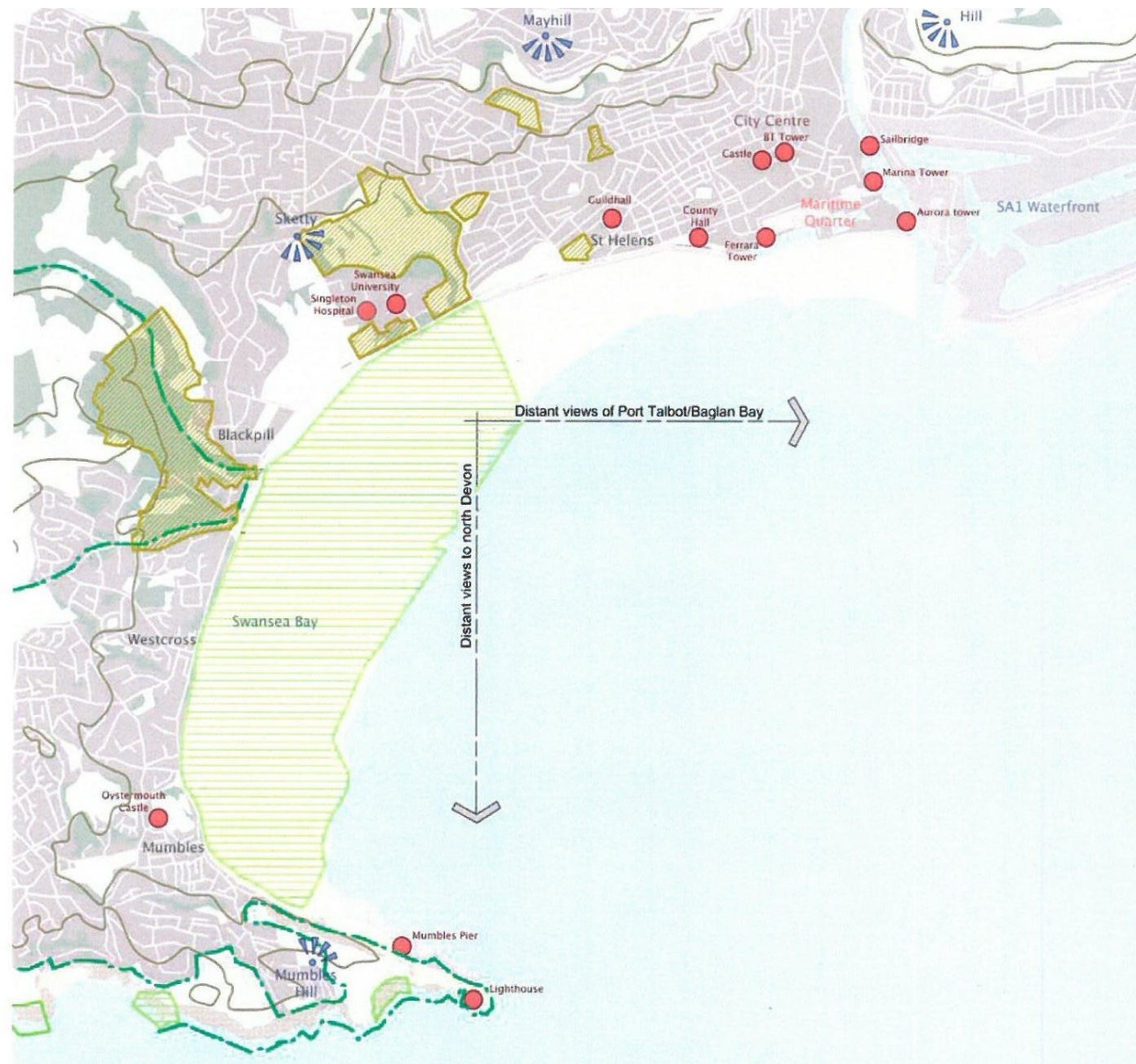
1. Fabian Way forms the eastern approach into the City Centre. The orientation of the route reveals a succession of closed and open views.
2. Pentre Guinea Road forms one of the key approaches to the city from the north and Whiterock and Morfa park and ride. The approach provides long-range views of the city centre, stretching down the waterfront. Existing tall buildings are clearly visible on the horizon.
3. The approach from the northwest along Carmarthen Road is relatively closed, providing a view across the Tawe River. The spire of St Johns church is visible in the distance.
4. The approach to the City from the west along Mansel Street is further limited, edged by the dense form of the City and confined by the prominent slab building of Alexander House.
5. Oystermouth Road forms the approach to the City Centre from the west. Along the foreshore, the Guildhall Tower frames the approach to the City Centre in the distance.
6. A further pedestrian linkage into the City Centre is proposed from the City Waterfront (Civic Centre site)

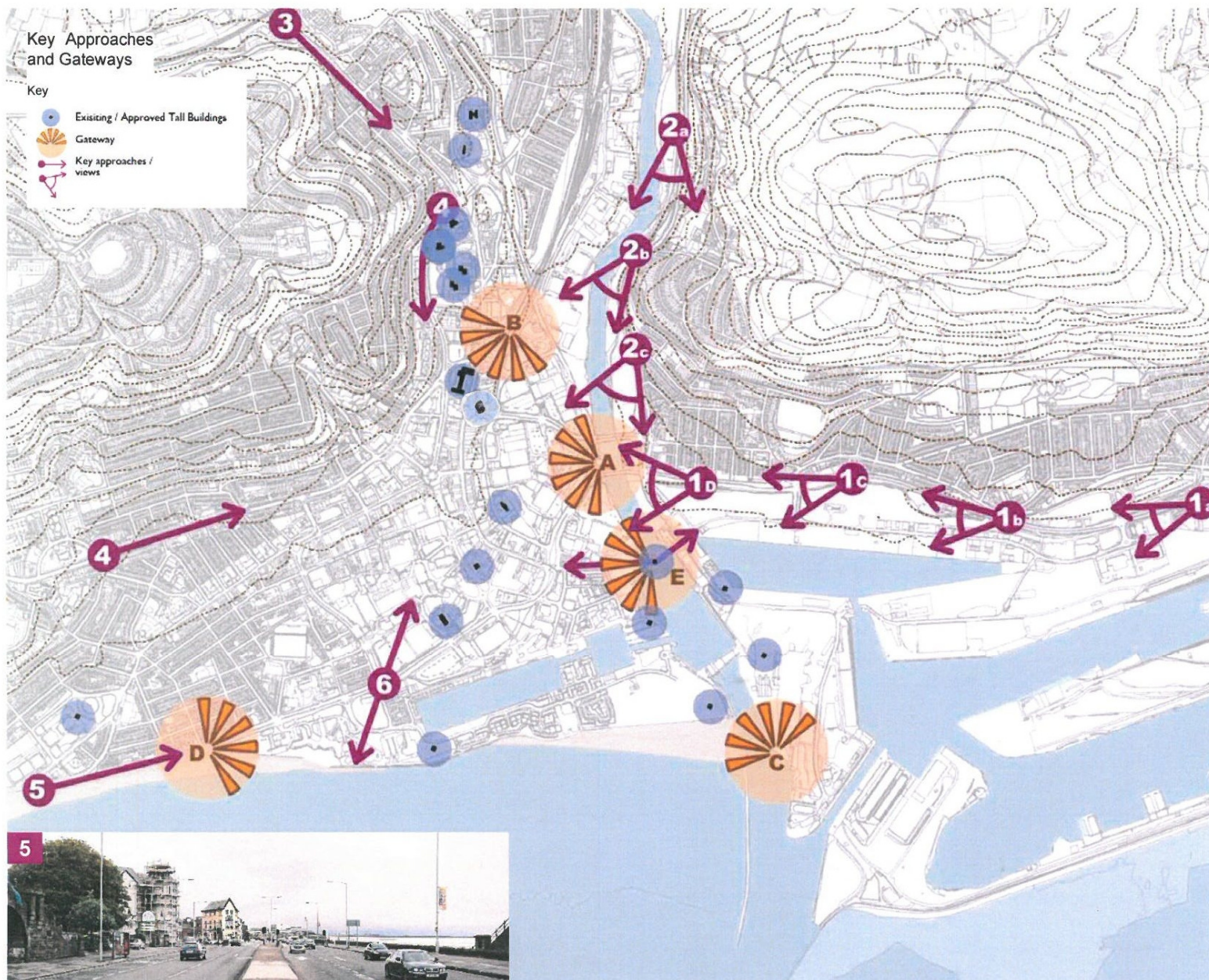
Views from a street level perspective are important. Tall buildings that have a strong visual impact from a distance have a differing visual impact close up. The BT Tower is an example of a visually dominant building, that can appear hidden up close due to changing topography and building heights, or unsympathetically juxtaposed against the historic castle setting. Similarly slab blocks, like Alexandra House which has poor architectural quality, may stand proud against the skyline, in other locations may sit within the surrounding context, yet at a closer range visually dominate the environment. Visual richness is a factor which should apply both to the distant and close perspectives of tall buildings.

Landscape and Seascape

Key

-  AONB
-  Mumbles Nature Reserve
-  Historic Parks and Gardens
-  SSSI
-  Strategic View Points
-  50m / 100m Contours
-  Key facilities/markers





3.10 Gateways

The Tawe Bridges from a gateway into the City Centre from the east. The rising topography, and the presence of larger commercial buildings, including the BT Tower and Alexander House, signal the entry into Swansea's commercial centre.

The railway station forms an arrival gateway into the City Centre and offers multi-modal transport opportunities.

A maritime gateway to the City is formed where the Tawe River meets the sea. The waterfront land edging both sides of the river corridor is undergoing redevelopment.

The strengthening of the urban form and the civic presence of County Hall mark a gateway into the City Centre from Swansea Bay.

The Sailbridge forms both a key approach and gateway for pedestrians and cyclists. The linkage with Wind Street connects the SA1 Swansea Waterfront with the heart of the City Centre and signals an arrival into these important City districts.



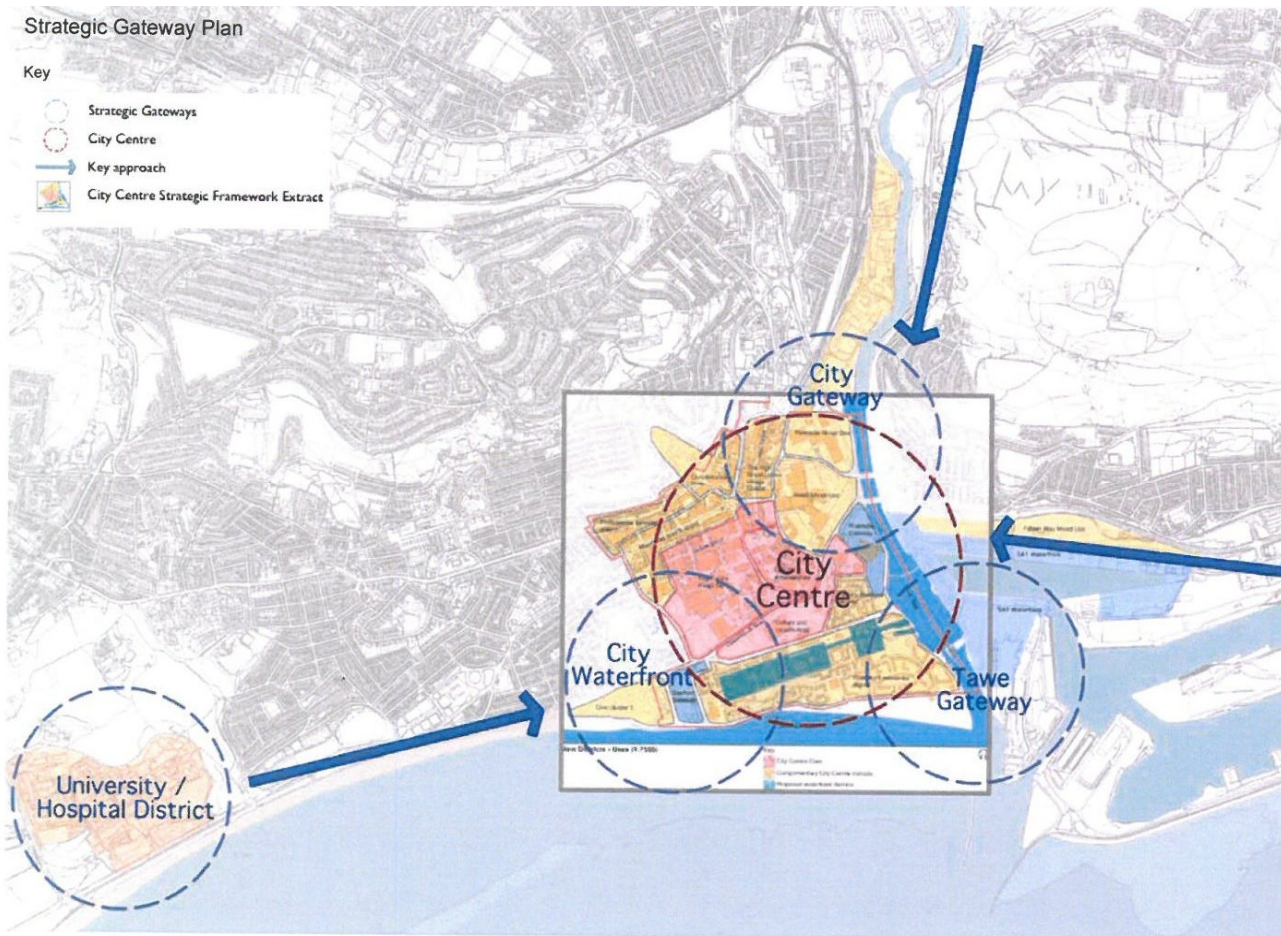
Pocketts Wharf, Marina



Railway Station



Sailbridge/River Tawe gateway



3.11 Strategic Gateway Plan

The character of the City will change as the traditional 3 storey height is redeveloped to a higher level and a more urban scale and character achieved. Within this context there is a role for a critical mass of taller buildings at the three strategic gateways into the City. The image opposite overlays these gateways with the new districts identified in the framework and extends to include the riverside, SA1 waterfront and hospital/university district. Each of the districts complement each other and reinforce the future role of the City Centre and its links to the waterfront.

4.0 TALL BUILDINGS POLICY

4.1 Policy Overview

The Tall Buildings Strategy is applicable to the whole of the City and County of Swansea. However, the main thrust of the strategy focuses on the central area where tall buildings are considered more likely to be promoted and where infrastructure and services are able to support the development. The Tall Building Strategy identifies the areas more likely to support tall buildings, which include:

- Railway Station District – local and regional connectivity supporting business, major route into the city from the north.
- City Waterfront – opportunity for clustering.
- Swansea SA1 Waterfront – unique opportunity, waterside edge, Heritage, employment and leisure, major regeneration area; University and Hospital District.
- Kingsway– Opportunity for intensive business development in an accessible location
- City Centre core– opportunity for City living and greater intensity of scale.

4.2 General Principles

Proposal for tall buildings must:

- Work with the Topography of the City. The point is made in Section 3, that buildings set against the backdrop of the surrounding landscape can have a lower impact than buildings that break the skyline. In the City Centre account will need to be taken of the relationship of proposed buildings to prominent topographical features such as Mayhill/Kilvey Hill and more locally the escarpment above the Strand.
- Define key districts gateways and areas of functional importance. The strategy refers to a number of City Centre gateways which are influential in defining the welcome/consider zones on the Building Zone Plan (page 21)
- Work within the grain of the City, creating a legible and permeable environment. It is recognised that the character of the City is changing with the standard three storey height giving way to a more urban scale and character. As part

of this process the strategy recognises that there is a role for strategically placed taller buildings.

- Ensure positive interaction with the public realm with active frontages and usable spaces around the building.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to historic areas, protecting and enhancing historic settings. The strategy recognises the importance of safeguarding historic parks and gardens, listed buildings, ancient monuments and conservation areas.
- Exhibit highest standards of architectural design with quality detailing and robust materials.. The strategy places considerable emphasis on the need to comply with key design principles and the preparation of supporting documentation such as Design and Access Statements and Visual Impact Assessment. The scheme design must be comprehensive, with full consideration given to public realm, the positioning of entrances and pedestrian access.
- Create a memorable skyline. Consideration is to be given to sightlines and strategic view corridors. The design of the upper sections of buildings is also important if the skyline is to be enhanced.
- Provide sustainable buildings with consideration given to the effect on the local microclimate. The requirement to respond fully to sustainable principles is fully recognised, as is the need to address climate factors and the impact on the local microclimate. Demonstrate compatibility with the transport infrastructure.

Clustering of tall buildings will generally be supported. Development potential exists for a group of tall buildings signalling Swansea's commercial heart. This would create a key focal point for the City Centre and redefine the importance of the City Gateway.

Major area regeneration is taking place in and around Swansea's SA1 Waterfront. A group of tall buildings in SA1 and around Trafalgar Bridge will create a focal area for the area and help define this strategic Tawe Gateway.

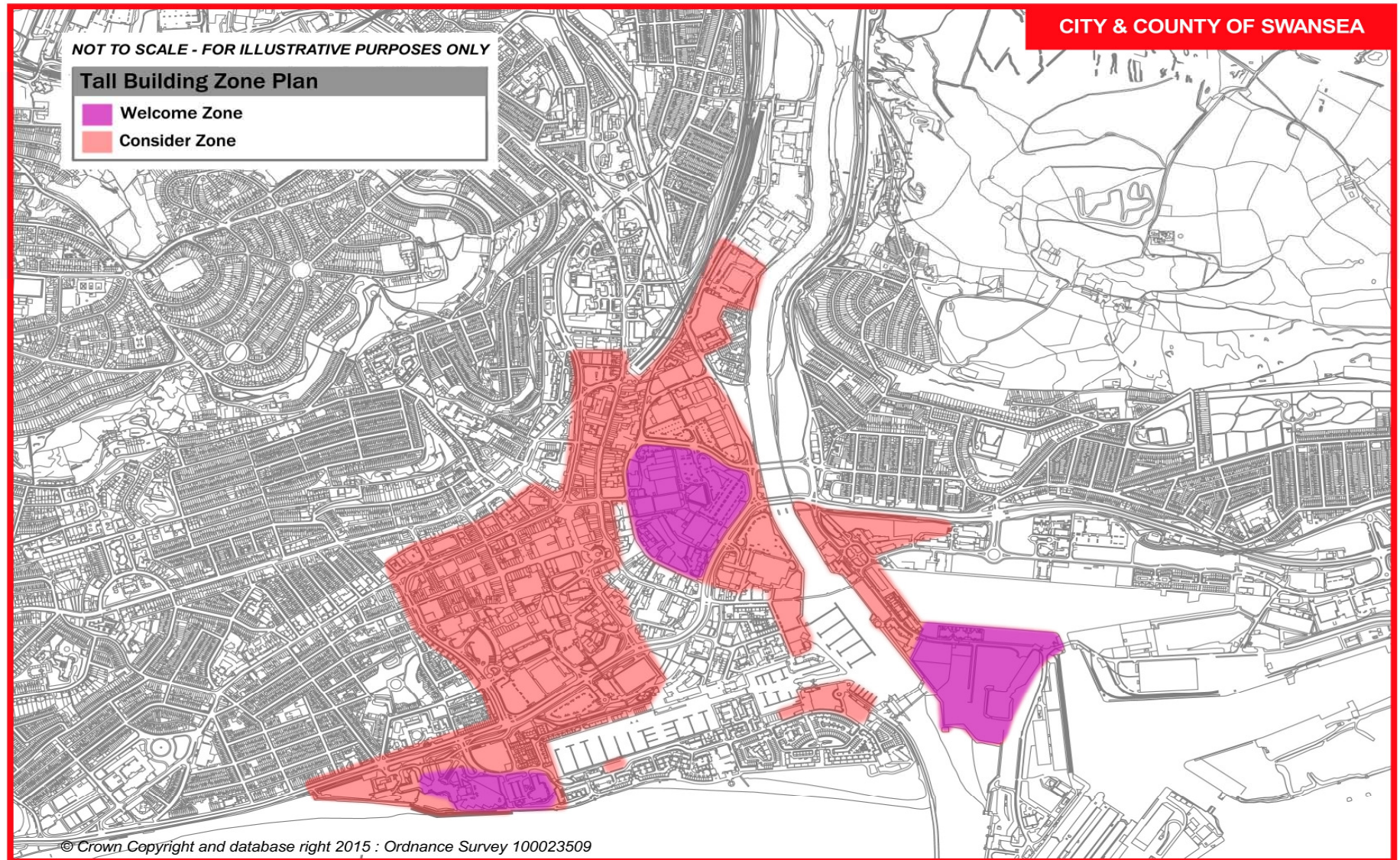
The potential exists to introduce well designed and prestigious buildings at the Waterfront Gateway which marks an important interface between the foreshore and the link to the retail heart of the City Centre. These could provide a visual marker to the location of the waterfront and contribute significantly to the innovative and excellent design quality which is expected to mark the comprehensive redevelopment of this area.

4.3 Location of Tall Buildings

The tall buildings plan identifies zones where tall buildings will be welcomed and zones where they will be considered.

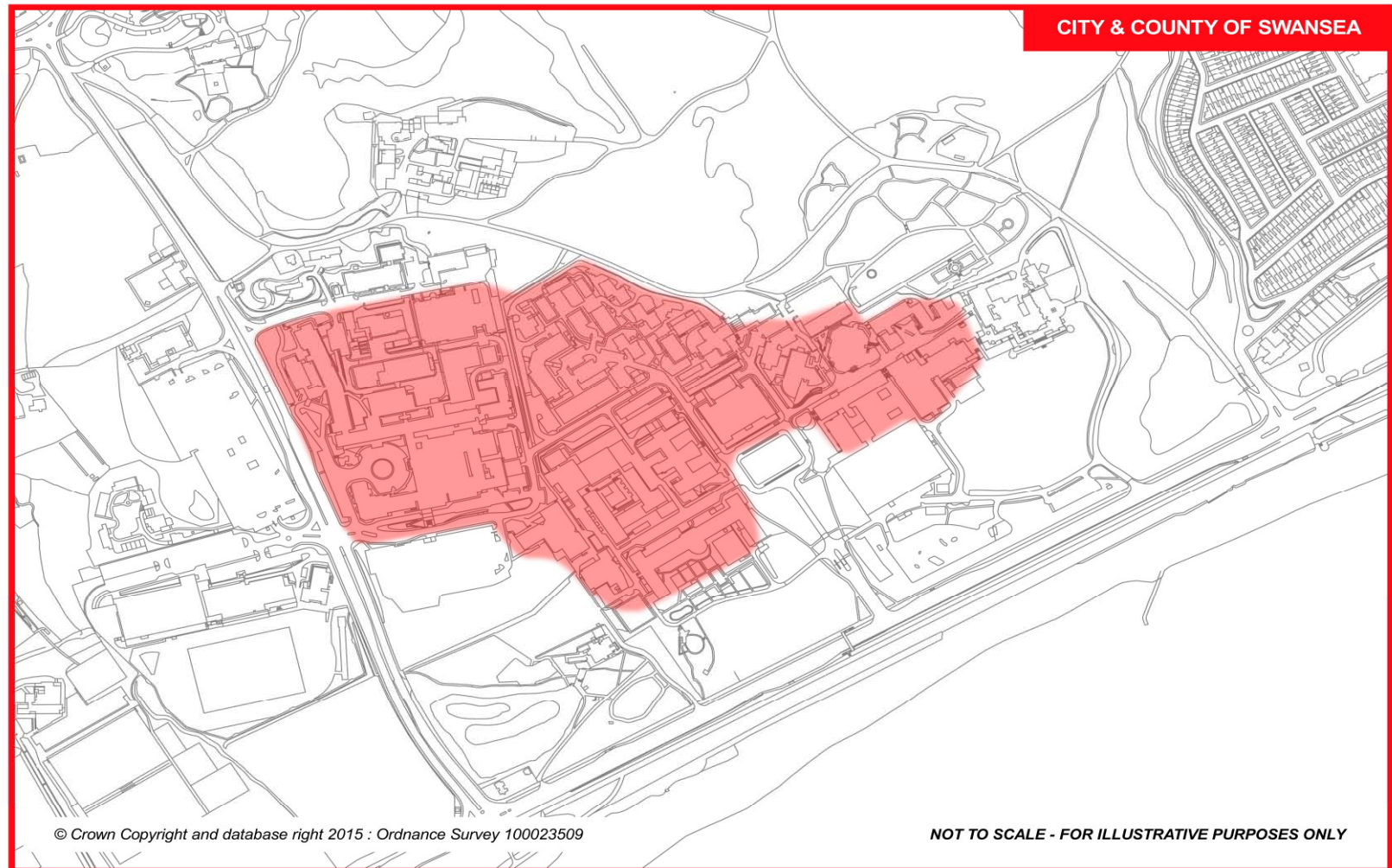
The **Welcome zones** are those areas of the City where well designed tall buildings can have a positive impact on the character and image of the City, where development is likely to be supported by sustainable transport initiatives.

The **Consider zones** are those areas of the City where tall buildings may have a positive impact, subject to the availability of supporting information to justify the proposals.



The boundary of the zones do not represent a distinct geographical boundary. The edges of the zones represent the limits/extent of where tall buildings will be considered on individual merits and local context as to whether they fall within or outside the zones of influence. Tall buildings proposed outside these zones will need additional supporting documentation to prove the case for tall buildings, and to demonstrate how it meets general development principles as set out on this page and the design requirements as set out on pages 25-27

Swansea University Campus and Singleton Hospital



4.4 Design of Tall Buildings

Proposals for tall buildings will be assessed against the key design principles outlined in national policy guidance and within this supplementary planning guidance. Key sources of reference are identified in Appendix 2.

Tall buildings proposals will need to demonstrate that the key design principles have been considered and incorporated into the design. A full planning application will be required with supporting information outlined in Appendix 1.

Uses

The uses with tall buildings should be compatible and respond to local need. Where possible tall buildings should provide a mix of uses that support a variety of users at different times of the day. Proposals will be encouraged to provide public uses at ground level that support social interaction and inclusion.

Scale Form and Massing

Tall buildings should be considered in relation to the urban morphology of the city. Consideration should be given to key townscape principles, the urban block, size of plots, and relationship to the street and adjacent buildings. Tall buildings should emphasise key locations, help define the edges of streets and open spaces. Proposals should consider the human scale of the building at ground level, and clearly define the public and private realm.

Conservation Areas

Tall buildings should not damage or detract from the settings of listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and scheduled ancient monuments. Tall building proposals should work within the townscape of the City, respecting the scale and urban fabric of the City.

Visual

Tall buildings should be of slender proportion, and elegant in design. Tall buildings must consider the importance of near, distant and far views and vistas. Where appropriate, tall buildings should be considered in relation to other landmarks, sight-lines and strategic view corridors. It is important that the visual impact is considered from all viewpoints and elevations to ensure that the building does not appear slab-like. Tall buildings must sit within a quality public realm, relating well to adjacent buildings. Consideration should be given to the design of the top of the building and its contribution to the skyline. Proposals should avoid roof top plants and where feasible include them within the envelope of the building.



Potsdamerplatz, Berlin where public realm treatment forms an integral part of the design

Transport

Tall buildings can place great demands on the local infrastructure network. Proposals should demonstrate the proximity and accessibility of the building to sustainable transport modes and the quality of links between transport and the site. The impact on the surrounding infrastructure and the potential generation of traffic must be assessed. This will include consideration of access in terms of public transport and the extent to which the services can cope with the increase in demand, car parking provision and demand, and general servicing arrangements. Where appropriate, tall building applicants will be encouraged to consider the introduction of green travel plans.

Tall buildings introduce intensive levels of use and activity to a site and therefore the relationship with transport infrastructure (particularly public transport) and existing activity patterns needs careful consideration. In particular, traffic generation and parking demand requires special evaluation. A thorough transport analysis should cover impacts on pedestrian movement, links to public transport, bicycle facilities and links to bicycle and pedestrian routes. Servicing arrangements should not have a negative impact on the public realm.

Developments will need to be considered within the context of all anticipated proposals which will have a bearing on the transport infrastructure to ensure there is no overloading of the system.

Any additional infrastructure and facilities, which may be required together with the means of delivery, will need to be identified and met by planning obligation.

Movement, Legibility, Permeability

Tall building proposals will be expected to place great emphasis on achieving high standards of inclusive design. Tall buildings should promote accessibility and contribute to the legibility and permeability of the City. They should act as landmarks to aid movement, orientation and define important routes. Proposals should set to strengthen the urban grain and connections back into the City, enabling users to move about easily and safely on foot. Public spaces should be overlooked, and accessed directly.

Access, Parking and Servicing

Access to tall buildings should be clearly defined and be directly from the public realm. Where possible, parking, servicing and utility functions should be integrated. Where possible, car parking should be provided underground. Detailed consideration should be given to parking and drop off areas, access to car parks, ramps and loading areas in particular consideration in relation to safety, visual and noise implications on the location of such functions.

Public Realm and Open Space

High quality public realm should form an integral part of the design of the site, creating a sense of place, contributing to local character and identify and promoting safety and accessibility for all. Provision may include areas of open space that are accessible to the general public, or areas of open space restricted to occupants of the buildings, comprising internal courtyards, balconies, gardens or roof terraces. Internal amenity space may also be provided, for example within a building atrium.

The treatment of the public realm should consider opportunities to introduce landscaping, the detailing of paving, materials, street furniture and lighting. Consideration should be given to the integration of public art within the development. It is essential to the quality of the public realm that negative environmental impacts on the microclimate are mitigated.

Interaction with the Public Realm

Proposals must maximise interaction at the street level, ensuring active frontages and well overlooked spaces. The positioning of entrances and commercial ground floor units should form a key consideration. There should be no blank inactive frontages at ground floor level. Public ground level access should be promoted with the opportunity to provide public access to upper levels.

Adaptable

Tall buildings should be adaptable to ensure flexibility over time, be functional and fit for purpose. Designs should be responsive to changing socioeconomic conditions and technological advances. Care should be given to the internal and external access and circulation arrangements.

Quality

Tall buildings should be designed to be of the highest architectural quality. Design competitions can provide a way of encouraging contemporary architecture. Every proposal should set a precedent for future development. The visual quality of the building at ground level is highly important and should be of an appropriate scale and character. High quality detailing and materials will be expected to make a positive contribution to the character of the area and sense of place. Existing tall buildings in Swansea that are deemed to be poor design quality will not be considered a precedent for new buildings.

Sustainability

Sustainability principles will be used to assess tall building applications. Tall building proposals must demonstrate an integrated energy conscious design that sets to achieve the highest energy efficiency and sustainability levels in terms of design and construction demonstrating the economic and social viability of the scheme (DCW 2015). This should be quantified using recognised criteria such as the BREEAM methodology. In order to ensure that the proposed measures are delivered, a pre construction analysis which sets out the potential rating should be checked against a post completion assessment. On Council land this could be made a requirement of the land sale.

The sustainable performance of the proposal will need to be demonstrated including environmental performance, renewable energy, materials and recycling. Reference should be made to the DCfW document: 'Practice Guide: Planning for Sustainable Buildings

Proposals should actively encourage the involvement of local people and the use of locally sourced recycled or sustainably managed materials and other resources. Key management controls should be introduced to ensure sustainable on and off-site construction processes and throughout the long term management of the building.

Microclimate

Tall buildings should comprehensively address the impact on the local microclimate. Consideration should be given to the effects of wind and rain, sunlight and shadowing, and reflection and glare. Where necessary, adjustments should be made to the positioning and/or design of the building to

limit the negative effects of wind tunnelling on the public realm and neighbouring buildings. Tall buildings can cause shadowing over surrounding buildings and public spaces. Applicants will need to consider the effect of shadowing throughout the year.

Lighting

Tall buildings must be illuminated at night. Proposals should consider imaginative and distinct lighting techniques to positively contribute to the creation of a unique city nightscape and Swansea identity. Sensitivity must be given to the impact of lighting on surrounding developments and habitats.

Security

Proposals for tall buildings must consider aspects of safety and security, and should encourage the clear definition of public and private space, maximising opportunities for overlooking. Consideration should be given to access controls with regard to the main entrance and car parking areas. Management system should be put in place and where feasible consideration should be given to the introduction of a concierge scheme.

Existing Tall Buildings

Applications for the replacement of existing tall building should be assessed on current policy and guidance on the design of tall buildings. The refurbishment of existing tall buildings, through addition of floors, removal of key elements, and change of materials may provide an opportunity to improve the design quality and functioning of existing tall buildings.

Appendix 1

Submitting a Planning Application

In addition to standard documentation required by the City and County of Swansea as part of a full planning application, the following information should be provided:

Design and Access Statement, clearly demonstrating the design. Rationale for the tall building proposal, including full character appraisal. By design provides good guidance on preparing statements. A record of the evolution of the design and testing of alternative schemes should also be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement (DAS)

Sustainability Appraisal, to include a preconstruction BREEAM Assessment.

Landscape/townscape and Visual Impact Assessment to include 360 degree view analysis and consideration of near, distant and far views using photomontages and three dimensional visualisations. The 360 degree visual impact analysis must include a stated methodology and be verified through recognised methods, such as weather balloon flying on a still day.

Relative height studies to demonstrate the contextual appearance and impact of the buildings at varying heights.

Micro-climate assessment including sun path studies, wind tunnel studies, and demonstration of how negative effects will be mitigated.

Details of the proposed lighting scheme and visual impact of the development at night.

Analysis of the effect of tall buildings on the local transport infrastructure and public transport network.

Proposals for significant tall buildings may require a full Environmental Impact Assessment, Landscape Visual Impact Analysis and Traffic Impact Assessment.

When planning permission is to be granted, the detailed design, materials and finishes and treatment of the public realm should be secured through the appropriate use of planning conditions and obligations, including Section 106 Agreements where appropriate.

Pre-application discussions are recognised as having an importance role in the planning process. A basic level of information is required (to be agreed with the planning department) if such discussions are to be meaningful.

The Design Commission for Wales offers a Design Review Service and given the sensitivity of Tall Buildings they will be asked for their views at the earliest appropriate stage.

Appendix 2

Policies and Guidance

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design

Learning to Live Differently, NAW (2000)

English Heritage & CABE, (March 2003) Guidance on Tall Buildings

CABE/EH Guidance on tall buildings – July 2007.

CABE/DETR, 2000. By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System. Towards better practice.

Manual for Streets – 2007/11/28.

Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2003. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

English Partnership/The Housing Corporation. Urban Design Compendium.

CABE/English Heritage, 2002 – Building in context – New development in historic areas.

CABE 2003. Creating Excellent Buildings – A guide for clients.

CABE, 2004. Creating Successful Masterplans. A guide for clients.

Unitary Development Plan – Adopted November 2008.

Tawe Riverside Corridor Study: Development and Transport Assessment – Adopted June 2008.

Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework – 2008

Swansea Bay Strategy – Adopted February 2008.

Swansea City Centre Strategic Framework Review 2015 draft

Designing for Tall Buildings –Design Commission for Wales (2015)

Practice Guide: Planning for Sustainable Buildings– Design Commission for Wales, 2014