

PLANNING REPORT

Proposed development for the Northern Ireland Boxing Academy (NIBA) at 4-6 Market Street, Armagh, BT61 7BU / April 2015
Edward McKeown 40051257



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The purpose of this planning report is to set out the brief, concept, strategy and ambitions for this proposed building project. The scheme aims to provide Armagh and Northern Ireland with a centre of excellence in boxing training and performance. The applicant wishes to build on Armagh's existing interest in amateur boxing along with the success of Commonwealth and European Championships. The design of the scheme will include a boxing arena with seating for up to one hundred and thirty people, gymnasium, function venue, residential accommodation for eighteen people and associated administrative facilities. The building will endeavour to personify the essential qualities of the boxing profession: honesty, resilience, precision and expertise.



Edward McKeown



Fig. 1: Armagh City within Northern Ireland



Fig. 2: Armagh City Growth 1760-2007 / Scale 1:6000

1.2 Site Description

Situated in the south of Northern Ireland and surrounded by counties Tyrone, Antrim, Down, Louth and Monaghan, Armagh is the county town of County Armagh. It is the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland with the seats of both the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops located in two cathedrals on prominent hills. With a population of approximately 15,000 people it is the least populated city in Northern Ireland.

It is a place steeped in history. Believed to have once been the royal capital of pagan Ireland, Saint Patrick himself is said to have established the church now known as Saint Patrick's Cathedral. The city has extended radially from this cathedral over time in the form of commercial and residential buildings.

Market Street is located east of the Church of Ireland Cathedral and has historical significance as the connection between the Cathedral and the main commercial district. Fig. 4 shows the drop in ground level from the Cathedral down to the Mall. The fall is at its steepest on Market Street.



Fig. 3: The Mall within Armagh City

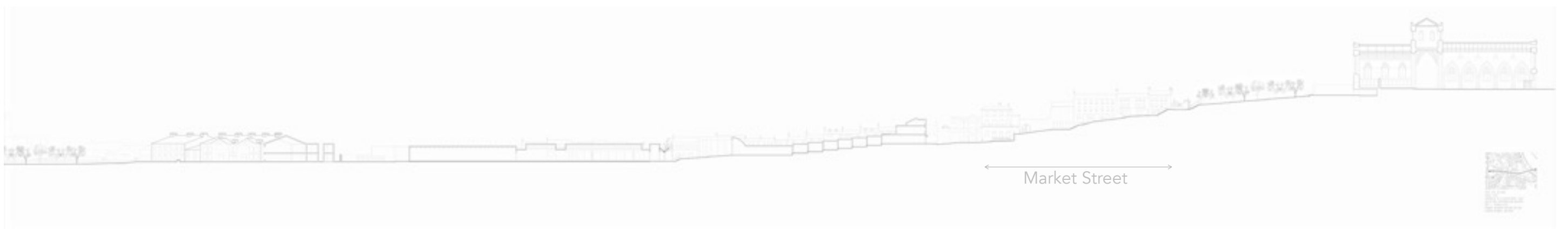


Fig. 4: Armagh City Centre Section From Cathedral to Mall

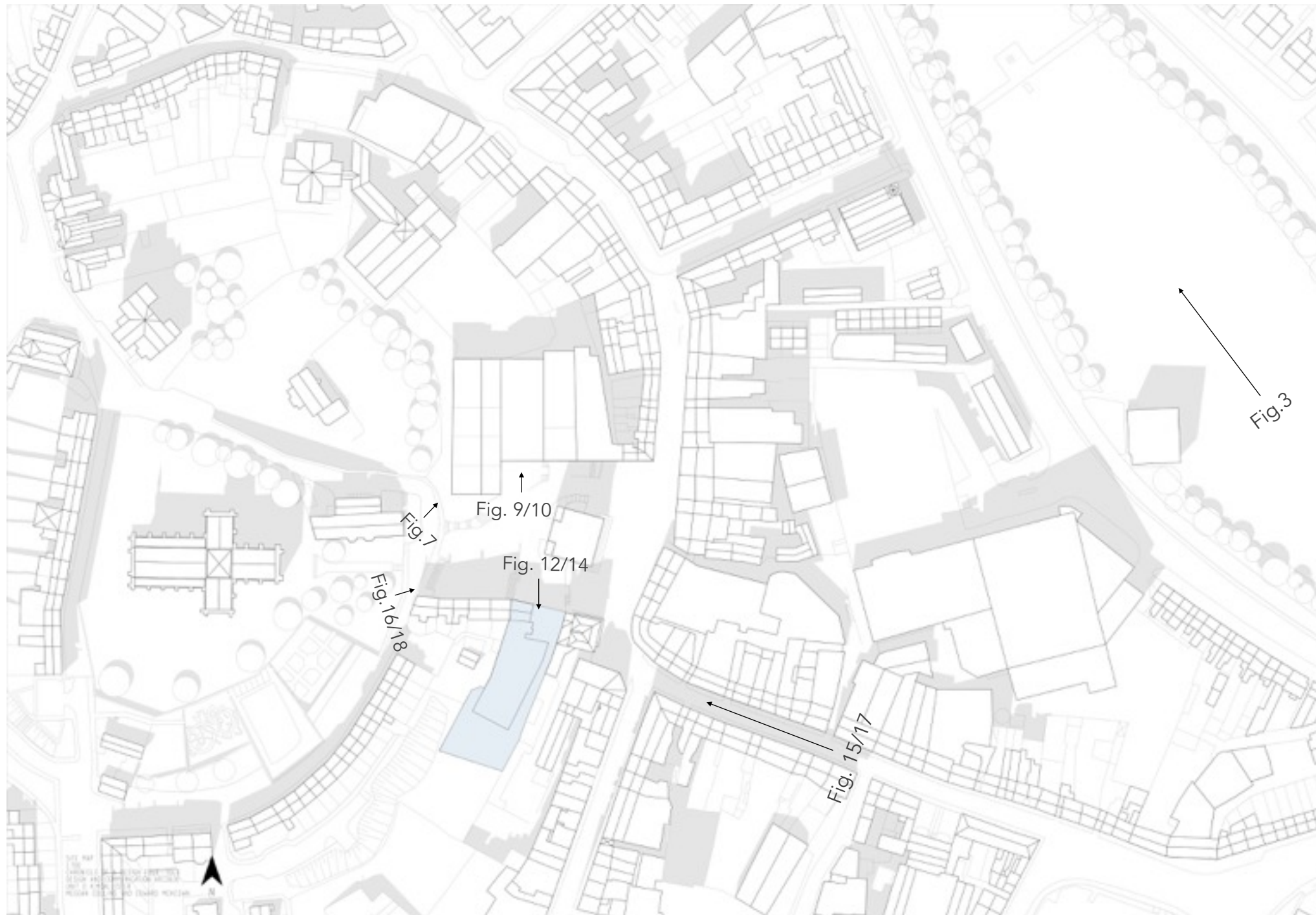


Fig. 5: Site Location / Photograph location and direction / Scale 1:1500

4-6 Market Street sits on the south side of Market Square amongst a collection of Georgian buildings of varying heights that cascade down towards Upper English Street. The site extends over what would have originally been two lots south towards Chapel Lane. Fig. 5 shows the full extent of the site in blue. The shadows on the map depict a typical clear winter day.

The site is located in the centre of the Armagh Conservation Area (ACA) with many individually listed buildings surrounding the site. It is between the "Church of Ireland Cathedral Precinct" and "Commercial Centre of Armagh" according to the Armagh Conservation Report (1992).

1.3 Folded Elevation

A folded elevation of all buildings in the immediate context (Fig. 6) gives a snapshot of the stepped nature of buildings both in floor levels and in ridge height. Chimneys are also a prominent feature of the square. Market House (library building) and Danske Bank building are of architectural significance and should be respected when considering a new addition to 4-6 Market Street due to their close proximity to the site.



Fig. 6: Folded Elevation



Fig. 7: Terrace in existence before MPT c.1910



Fig. 8: Detail to adjoining Omniplex Cinema



Fig. 9: Market Place Theatre at Night



Fig. 10: Market Place Theatre 2015

Other recent developments on Market Square have dramatically improved the environment for city users. The Market Place Theatre replaced a number of dilapidated buildings on the north side of the street. It is broken down into modules which replicate the massing of the former terrace. It's night time lighting breathes life into the area after sundown. It would be preferable to have a similarly innovative approach to the design of the boxing academy.

1.5 Photographic Analysis

Fig. 11 shows the site, painted blue and yellow, fronting onto Market Street. To the left of the site is the Danske Bank building. To the right of the site is a domestic terrace.

From Fig. 12 we can see the site was entirely built upon at one stage. One building has been demolished in the last one hundred years and there is now a boundary wall and gate, leaving a void in the build up of the street.

Comparing Fig. 12 and Fig. 14 the bottom floor of the yellow building has also been altered. It appears to have a Georgian arched door with fanlight in the historical photo which has since been replaced with a flat lintel. Two chimneys have also been removed from the roofscape. The East elevation of the Cathedral has also been altered over the years. The changing nature of the facades means that a new facade for the NIBA would be in keeping with the history of the site.

Fig 13 depicts the site at night time. We would be open to providing an option that breathes life into the square as in the previous example of the Market Place Theatre.



Fig. 11: 4-6 Market Street



Fig. 12: Market Square looking towards St. Patrick's Cathedral 1910



Fig. 13: 4-6 Market Street by Night



Fig. 14: Market Square looking towards St. Patrick's Cathedral 2015



Fig. 15: Scotch Street c.1910



Fig. 16: Market Square c.1910



Fig. 17: Scotch Street 2015



Fig. 18: Market Street 2015

Fig. 15 and 17 depict a view of St. Patrick's Cathedral from Scotch Street. Through the years the streetscape has not changed dramatically. This view also takes in a potential glimpse of the east elevation of the proposed boxing academy. It will be low enough to not block the public's quiet enjoyment of St. Patrick's from Scotch Street.

Fig. 16 and 18 show the change in Market Square in particular the modifications which have been made to Market House (Library building), which has had a third storey including new windows added to its facade. This again emphasises the history of changing facades on Market Street. Some sheds have also been removed. The MPT replaces the previous cascading terrace.

2.0 Land Use



Fig. 19: General Land Use Map / Scale 1:2500



Fig. 20: Self Betterment Location Map / Scale 1:3500

We have conducted our own land use analysis in two ways. An overall land use map and then a more specific “self betterment” map (Fig. 20). These are places like ecclesiastical, sport and leisure where you tend to feel better upon leaving. In terms of the use of our own building and how we will use the site the Armagh Masterplan (2009) states:

“Armagh City Centre must seek to nurture its mixed use character so that retail units are complemented by a range of other uses, including offices, residences and leisure facilities.”

“The presence of residential properties helps diversify the activity and use of the City Centre and should therefore be encouraged.”

The Northern Ireland Boxing Academy seeks to provide the city with a high quality facility who’s functions resonate with the planning aspirations for the area stated in the Masterplan.

3.0 Massing

For the purposes of massing we have constructed a model of the area. There has been a clear radial expansion of the city from the church. Market square itself has changed in recent years. The academy will conceal much of its bulk through massing of different elements.

The main gym is placed to the front while the arena, a tall space, is set back to give the square room to breathe.

Sustainable air circulation chimneys are placed to the left of the main arena. These raised elements react to the existing character of the area. The tallest element of the building, the residential accommodation, is placed at the back of the site to take full advantage of views and daylighting. The top floor is clad in zinc to give it a light appearance on the skyline of Armagh.

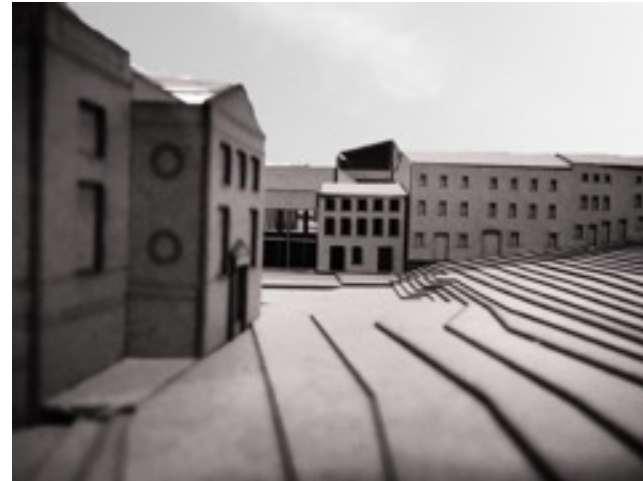


Fig. 21: View of mass from MPT



Fig. 22: Aerial View of Market Street

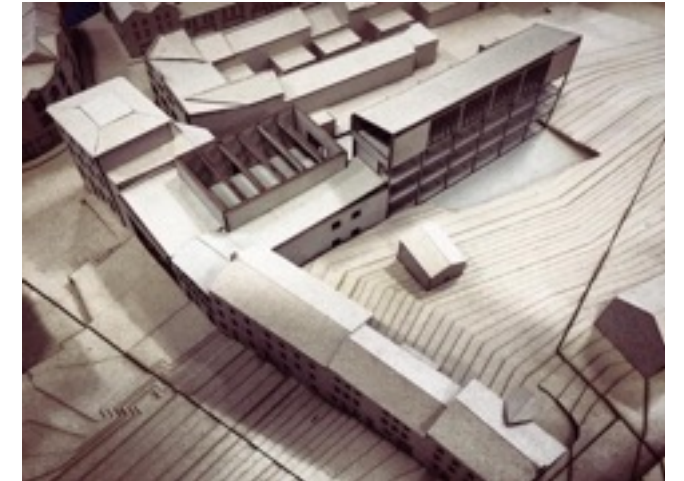


Fig. 23: Aerial View of Site

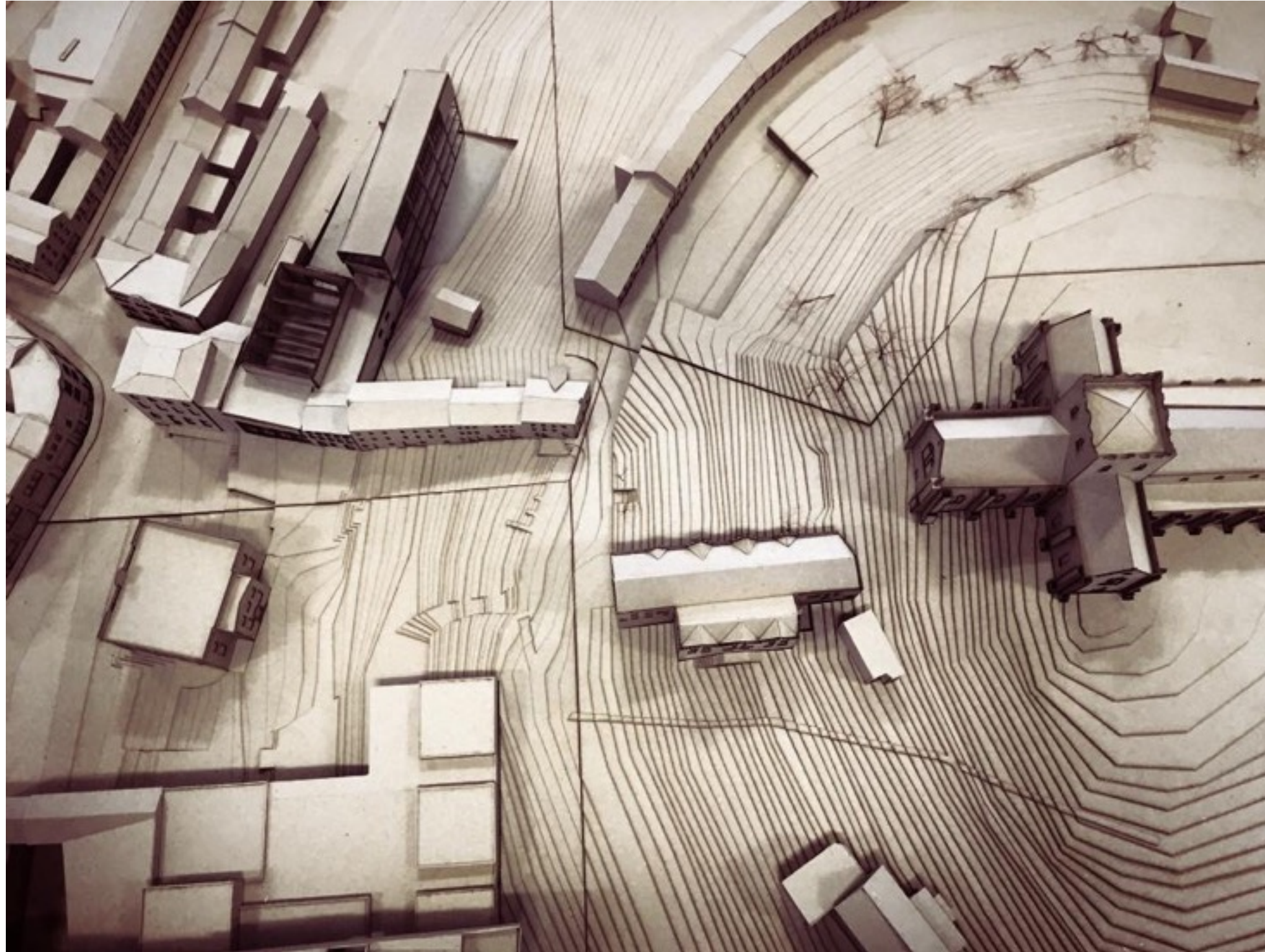
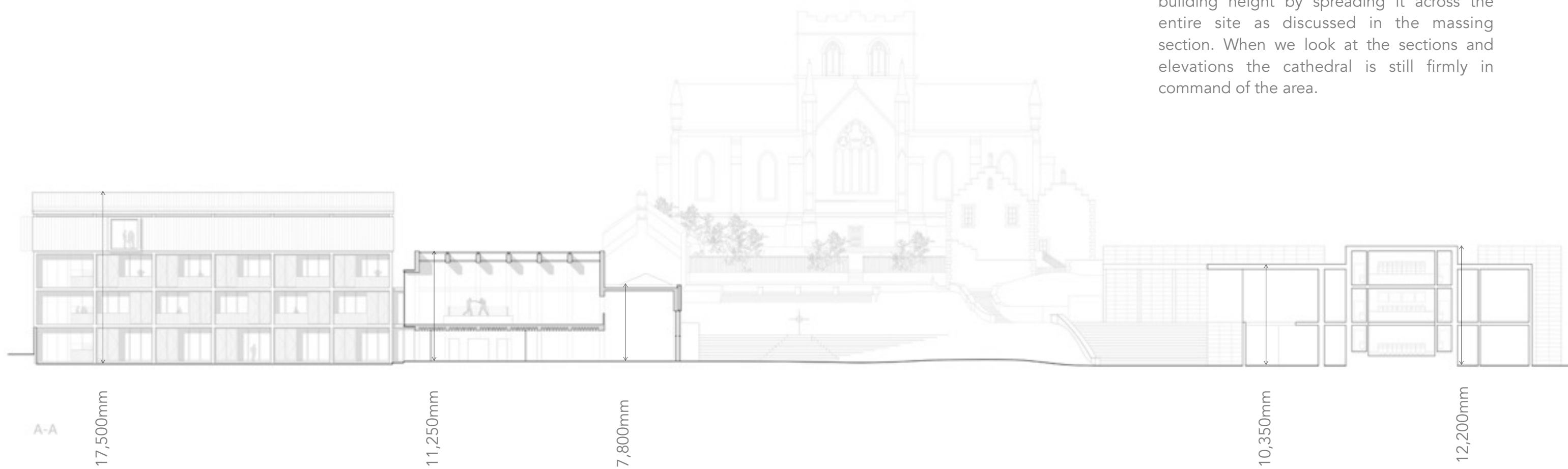


Fig. 24: Aerial View of Market Square / Scale 1:200

4.0 Building Height



Fig. 25: Section Through Market Street



The academy requires a large area of building over a relatively small site. Instead of simply stacking the floors to create a tall building there has been an effort to reduce the building height by spreading it across the entire site as discussed in the massing section. When we look at the sections and elevations the cathedral is still firmly in command of the area.

Fig. 26: Section Through Site, Market Street and Market Place Theatre / Scale 1:400

5.0 Access and Traffic

As seen on the right hand image there are five routes of access to 4-6 Market Street. These are north from Upper English Street, east from Scotch Street, south from Thomas Street, west from Castle Street and there is also rear site access via Chapel Lane.

The site may be accessed freely by pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport. Those accessing the site by car would be expected to walk to the site as Market Square is pedestrianised.

Traffic to the east of the site on Upper English Street includes, pedestrians, cyclists and cars this road is a main thoroughfare for the area. Market Square is used mostly as a transitional space. The theatre also creates pockets of traffic as people enter/exit shows and films.



Fig. 27: Access and Traffic Study

Thomas Street

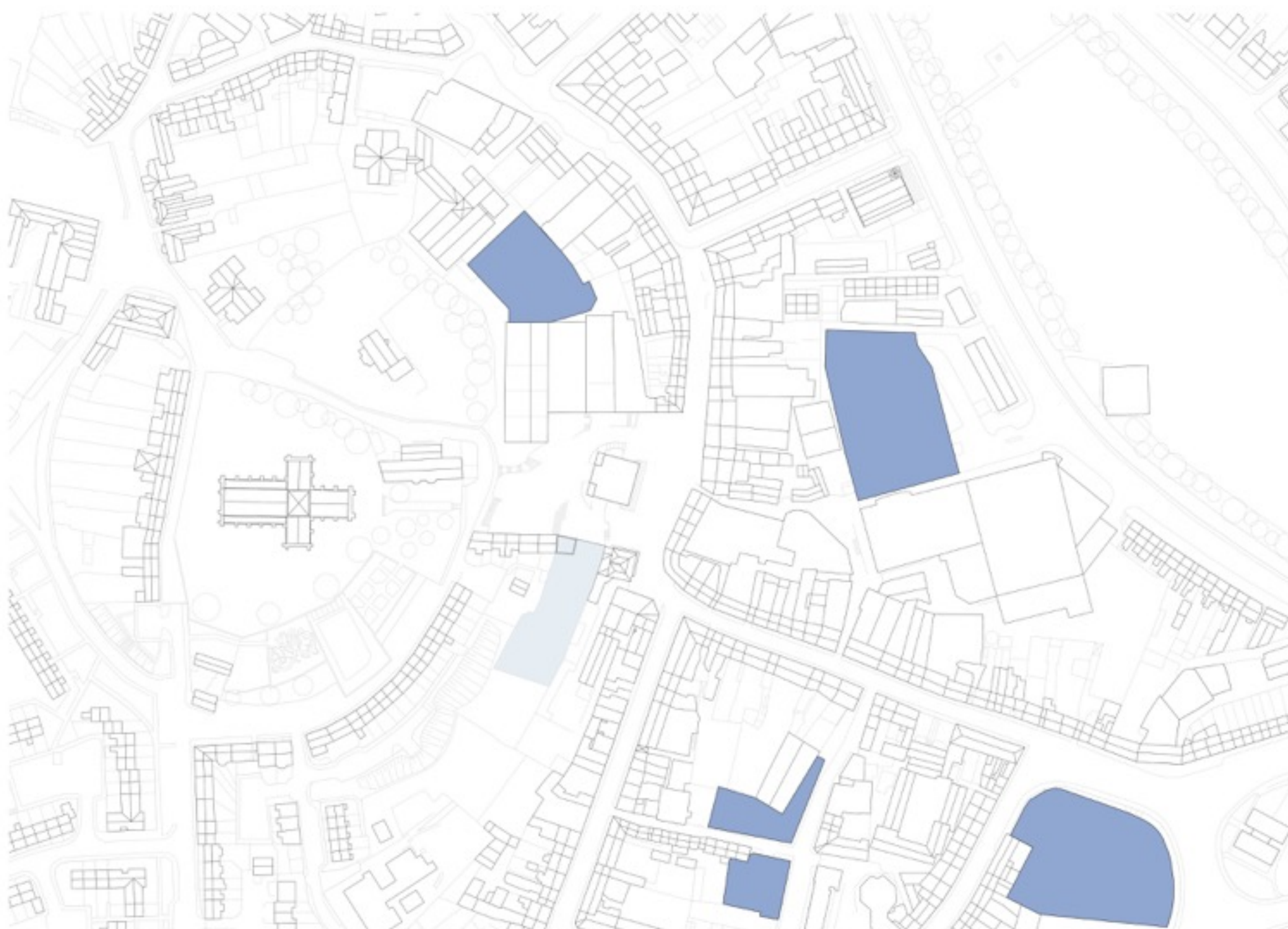


Fig. 28: Nearby Car Parks

The NIBA would expect that residents of the academy would stay in the venue for months at a time in preparation for events and so they would not need the use of a car. There will be a total of five staff at the academy who may require parking. In the same way that the theatre and cinema work there will be periods where a number of approximately 120 spectators may gather to see a match.

The 'Parking Standards' document from The Planning Service sets out the requirements for parking provision. The arena in the academy is 'Class D2 Assembly and Leisure.' This requires:

"One space per three seats"

The residential aspect of the building is 'Class C3 Residential Institutions.' This requires:

"1 space per 3 Ancillary Staff, 0.25 spaces per bed"

This brings the total number of parking spaces required to:

| | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 45 | Spectator Spaces |
| 3.75 | Accommodation |
| 1.6 | Staff Spaces |
| 51 | Total |

In this case it would be reasonable to expect that users may park in the short term street parking or use one of the long term car parks in the area.

7.0 Materiality

The boxing academy will tie into the surrounding area by way of contrast. Many of the existing buildings are of stone construction with render and paint finish. The library building is made of ashlar limestone. The NIBA will be built using concrete as the primary structure and it will be light grey in appearance. Upright weather treated timber will be used as a means of exterior cladding between this superstructure. This materiality reinforces the areas tough stone built appearance. While the timber will work to soften the composition. The existing building will be retained and restored to its original appearance of painted render walls, slate roof and sash windows.



Fig. 29: View of NIBA within the Streetscape



Fig. 30: Materiality Study of Market Square



Fig. 31: Rhythm Study

Due to the sensitive nature of neighbouring buildings we have conducted a rhythm study to make decisions regarding the make up of this new building.

In terms of noise the building has been constructed with noise transmission in mind. The main arena is comprised of thick 450mm walls and then buffered on the west side by administrative rooms. The north facade will be double skinned to improve sound transmission. It is expected that these efforts will reduce noise during large scale events. The building will be used all year round however large scale matches will not occur frequently.

An effort has been made in this design to prevent overlooking on neighbouring sites. The arena is naturally lit from the roof. There are two small west facing office windows. The east facing apartments look down onto an existing laneway and Scotch Street.

9.0 Risks / Hazards During Construction

The Health and Safety Executive reports the types of injuries that can be fatal when construction takes place. Their latest document 'Health and safety in construction in Great Britain, 2014' is represented in Fig. 32. This shows the challenges faced during building.

To keep most of the disruption away from the public we are proposing that the site be accessed from the southern rear entrance. This would allow for storage and disposal units to be placed away from the public and reduce the risk to their health.

It is proposed that an adequate safety boundary be erected in compliance with health and safety law to secure the site. All scaffolding should be covered to prevent anyone being struck by debris. Adequate warning signage should also be placed to educate the public of the dangers of entering a construction site.

Appointing a health and safety officer to manage the safety strategy for the site would also be appropriate.

A dilapidation and structural survey of surrounding buildings, in particular the listed Danske Bank and adjoining terrace shall be conducted to ensure that all precautionary steps are taken to ensure they sustain no damage in the construction of the boxing academy.

| Kind of injury | Fatal injuries 2013/14p | % of total fatal injuries to workers in construction |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Fall from height | 19 | 45% |
| Contact with machinery | 3 | 7% |
| Struck by object | 3 | 7% |
| Struck by moving vehicle | 3 | 7% |
| Contact with electricity | 3 | 7% |
| Struck against | 1 | 2% |
| Slip, trip, fall same level | 1 | 2% |
| Trapped by something collapsing | 1 | 2% |

Fig. 32: HSE "Health and Safety in Great Britain



Fig. 33: Example of Appropriate Signage



NORTH

Site Entrance

Area for storage

Building Entrance

Fig. 34: Proposed Ground Floor Plan / Scale 1:200

10.0 Long Term Societal and Civic Benefits

The NIBA are committed to providing an environment where inhabitants and users feel part of a learning and working community.

The building aims to promote this through its connection to individual and collective. The collective of Armagh and the NIBA as individual. The collective of NIBA and the individual boxer who is training and waiting for their time to prove them self to their opponent.

The boxing arena will be a fresh addition to Armagh and will help to boost the local economy with the new inhabitants, tourism and local interest it will generate. This will in turn create a heightened sense of pride for the area.

In closing, we can look to the words of Muhammad Ali - *"The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses - behind the lines, in the gym, and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights."* Strategy, planning and hard work are all contributing factors in what will make the academy a worthy addition to Armagh.



Fig. 35: Rumble in the Jungle / Muhammad Ali vs George Forman