

Coventry City Council

Tall Buildings Design Guide & Three Spires View Management Framework

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)



Contents Page

1. Introduction
2. Policy context
3. Pre-application advice
4. Environmental Impact Assessment
5. Definition of tall building
6. Assessment of tall building proposals
7. Three Spires View Management Framework



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced in conjunction with an updated View Management Framework which informs and supports the SPD and is also available through the city council's website.
- 1.2 This document has been written in response to a noticeable increase in the number of planning applications for tall buildings in the city of Coventry. This rise in applications locally reflects a wider national interest in tall buildings and wider market forces including that of the significant student market in the context of two nationally significant campuses of Coventry and Warwick universities. The SPD is intended to enable the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to provide a clear and well considered response to proposals for tall buildings and to ensure that the development of tall buildings occurs in the most appropriate parts of the city with necessary sensitivities to the city's notable heritage assets.
- 1.3 The document is divided into two parts, the first providing a clear set of criteria which the LPA will expect any applicant to address when bringing forward proposals for tall buildings. The principal objective of the criteria is to secure tall buildings of the highest possible design quality.
- 1.4 The second part of the document identifies notable view cones to the cities iconic three spires. Retaining these views, and the spires primacy in the city centre skyline, is a key consideration in any application for tall buildings in and around the city centre.

2.0 Policy Context

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's objectives for new development. Whilst the NPPF does not have any specific policies on tall buildings or view cones, it does set out a number of more general design and planning principles which run throughout the document and which are relevant to the development of tall buildings and the management of view cones.
- 2.2 Good design is a key requirement of the NPPF. The NPPF states that it is important to plan positively to achieve high quality and inclusive design and that local authorities should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected in their area. These should be based on a clear vision for the future of the area and upon a detailed evaluation of the characteristics that define it. The NPPF promotes an urban design led approach to planning that requires buildings to respond to the location in which they are located rather than prescribe specific architectural styles.
- 2.3 Planning policies are required to ensure that new development will:
 - Function well and add to the quality of the area;
 - Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive places to live;
 - Make the most of the potential of the site;
 - Respond to local character, history and identity;
 - Create safe and accessible environments;
 - Are visually attractive;
 - Respond well to heritage assets and their setting;
 - Respond to the views of local people;
 - Make effective use of land and make use of brownfield land as much as possible;
 - Encourage multiple benefits from land, in terms of development and net environmental gains, and;
 - Support opportunities for upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties.
- 2.4 The NPPF makes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that buildings which generate significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes maximised. The NPPF states that great weight should be given to outstanding and innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability as long as they respond to their context in terms of form and layout.
- 2.5 Section 12 of the NPPF discusses the need to achieve well designed places. The National Design Guide was published by central Government in October 2019 to illustrate how well-designed places can be delivered in practice. The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The

National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools

2.6 A core element of the Guide is that it sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics:

- Context - enhances the surroundings.
- Identity - attractive and distinctive.
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive uses – mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources – efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan – made to last.

2.7 The Council wants to significantly raise the standard of design in the built and green environments, as good design assists in the creation of sustainable and inclusive communities and can improve the quality of people's lives. Furthermore, good design can help to reduce environmental inequalities.

2.8 The Coventry Local Plan 2017 establishes the policy basis for determining development proposals across the city. This SPD should not be considered in isolation from relevant Local Plan policies relating to infrastructure, transport, sustainability and conservation, or any other policies that may be relevant to a specific proposal or site. Whilst all policies should be considered in the round, Local Plan Policy DE1: *Ensuring High Quality Design* is a key policy in relation to the design and layout of new developments. The policy sets out criteria which should be satisfied in order to create high quality developments, improve the quality of people's lives and sustainable and inclusive communities.

2.9 As well as policies contained within the Coventry Local Plan 2017, the City Centre is also subject to specific policies designed to ensure appropriate developments are managed in an appropriate way. The City Centre Area Action Plan 2017 provides additional policy and guidance for those seeking to development tall buildings and any development which may affect view cones.

2.10 Safety and security measures in the design of tall buildings are also a key design requirement and proposals should fully consider requirements, as established in the NPPF at paragraphs 92, 97 and 130.

2.11 Policy CC7: Tall Buildings:

The location of proposed tall buildings will be considered in relation to the views of the cities three spires. New development should reflect these view cones and seek to enhance the key views identified on plan.

Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design

1. All development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.
2. The setting, integrity and character of heritage assets will be protected in accordance with Policy HE2.
3. All development will be expected to meet the following key principles:
 - a. respond to the physical context of the site;
 - b. consider the local distinctiveness and identity of the site but also have regard to opportunities to enhance the local built and natural environment through new development and enhanced design;
 - c. where appropriate, retain and incorporate into the layout the protection of important views, including key views of the three spires;
 - d. preserve or enhance the character and setting of the historic built, landscape and where appropriate archaeological environment;
 - e. preserve or enhance the character and setting of major road, rail and canal corridors;
 - f. clearly define the boundaries between public and private spaces and enclosure of space;
 - g. provide attractive, safe, uncluttered, active and easily identifiable, high quality public spaces;
 - h. make places that inter-connect and are easy to move through;
 - i. ensure places are easily understood by users, with clear routes and distinct physical features;
 - j. seek high quality design and attention to detail in the layout of developments, individual buildings and infrastructure in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development;
 - k. be adaptable to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions and ensure that developments maximise the use of the site;
 - l. promote diversity through mixes of uses within a site or building, which work together to create vital and viable places;
 - m. be proactive in responding to climate change and adopt sustainable and low carbon construction principles in terms of their design, layout and density;
 - n. consider green infrastructure at the earliest stage in the design process, to ensure that it is well planned, designed, managed and maintained. It should also be well integrated and serve multiple purposes (as appropriate);
 - o. support the integration of through routes for public transport and incorporate suitable bus priority measures as appropriate;
 - p. minimise adverse impact on important natural resources;
 - q. conserve, restore or enhance biodiversity; and
 - r. respect and enhance landscape quality including trees, hedges and other landscape features of value.

3.0 Pre application advice

- 3.1 Prospective applicants and their agents should note that it will be strongly encouraged to engage in Pre-application discussions with the LPA for developments of tall buildings in the city.
- 3.2 In the context of the city's notable heritage assets, conservation and urban design specialisms will always be required to be consulted in Pre-application discussions for proposals of tall buildings.
- 3.3 In order to deliver fully informed Pre-application advice, applicants are encouraged to prepare townscape visual impact assessments to accompany Pre-application submissions, referencing and identifying key views where proposals may be impactful.
- 3.4 Outline planning applications for tall buildings are strongly discouraged, as it is seen by the LPA that such proposals require significant detail in order to provide a fully informed position of acceptability.

4.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Applicants and their agents should also note that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required as part of the application process. Potential developers may wish to seek an EIA screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority as part of any pre application discussion.
- 4.2 It should also be noted that an 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) – under the Conservation Natural Habitat Regulations 1994 - of a proposed tall building may also be required in addition to an EIA in those areas which are near a nature conservation site.

5.0 Definition of a tall building

- 5.1 In the context of Coventry, a city characterised by large areas of low rise two storey housing within a predominantly flat landscape, it is considered both necessary and useful to define a tall building. A tall building is therefore considered to be:
 - any building above 5 storeys in height (i.e. 6 storeys or more in height from ground level) or;
 - any building of 20m or above in height (inclusive of rooftop plant)
- 5.2 Any proposal for a building, which is equal to or exceeds either of the storey/height thresholds, will trigger this SPD. This SPD may also be triggered by extensions, and/or the addition of plant or machinery and any other structural projections to existing tall buildings which take the height of the building inclusive of any plant above 20m or 5 storeys in height.
- 5.3 The height thresholds apply in all instances, irrespective of whether an application for a tall building is being made within the city.

6.0 Assessment of tall building proposals

- 6.1 In order to facilitate and encourage the design of tall buildings of the highest quality, the LPA has identified the following principles or criteria which any successful tall building should address. It should be noted that the LPA will be seeking a satisfactory response to all of these criteria. If the applicant fails to provide the relevant information, the LPA may be unable to determine the application.
- 6.2 In order to assess the suitability of proposals for new or replacement tall buildings, the applicant will be required to submit a Tall Buildings Statement.
- 6.3 This statement would be required in addition to a Design and Access Statement, and there may be some overlap between the two documents. It would also be a requirement of the criteria by which the LPA validate applications. The statement should clearly indicate how the proposal responds to the criteria/points identified below.
- 6.4 It should be noted that the requirement for the submission of a tall buildings statement applies not only to new or replacement tall buildings, but also to those situations in which the addition of an extension, or of plant/machinery and/or any other structural projections to an existing building which would take its height above 20m or 5 storeys.

Visual Impact

6.5 Applications should contain:

- Accurate visualisations which illustrate the impact of the proposal from both its immediate context and the wider urban context,
- Where appropriate, and guided by Pre-application advice, Townscape Visual Impact Assessments (TVIAs) in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment published by the Landscape Institute which illustrate the impact of the proposal upon longer distance important views and vistas, and, wherever applicable, or city centre view cones as identified within section two of this document,
- An urban design analysis of the surrounding area that clearly outlines the positive and negative visual impact that the proposal would make, the taller the building and the more sensitive its location, the more extensive and detailed the analysis should be.

6.6 It is essential that all illustrations provided in support of the application must be accurate, of a high quality, and capable of being easily understood. They must not seek to minimise any real or perceived negative impacts of the proposal, and as such must not deliberately misrepresent the height, scale, mass, form or architectural detail of the proposal.

6.7 An effective means of ensuring accuracy (particularly if the images are computer generated) is to base three dimensional images on the plans submitted in support of the application.

6.8 The applicant should contact the LPA for further advice regarding the nature and number of images that it is considered appropriate to provide.

Siting

6.9 Applications should:

- demonstrate by means of accurate visual representation and supporting information how the proposal sits within the townscape; and
- describe where appropriate how the proposal would contribute to the creation of a 'cluster' of tall buildings or would contribute to an existing cluster.

6.10 Groups of tall buildings should ideally be staggered or graduated to help create a richness in townscape and emphasise the buildings at the core of the cluster. They should not block significant views or vistas within, into or out of the city.

Height

6.11 Applications should:

- provide a justification of the height of any proposed new tall building; and
- seek to ensure that lift transmission equipment, air conditioning units and other plant and equipment are addressed as an integral part of the initial design of a tall building.

6.12 Whilst this document clearly indicates the minimum height at which a building could be considered tall within the context of Coventry, it does not suggest a maximum height. This should not, however, be read as an indication that any height will be acceptable. All buildings have a reasonable limit, which relates to their context, surroundings and impact on the surrounding townscape and skyline.

6.13 Applicants should seek to moderate their aspirations towards excessive heights for tall buildings and will always be required to give a thorough and well-reasoned justification for the height of any proposal. It should also be noted that in terms of massing and form a proposal will always have an optimal height in relation to its width, depth and footprint.

6.14 Plant and other equipment which is added later in the design process, or as a 'bolt on' for the purposes of expediency can significantly add to the height of a tall building and have a detrimental impact on their overall design. Such additions/equipment should always be considered as an integral part of the initial design and not as a later addition.

6.15 Applicants should be aware that developments proposed in excess of 50m height above ground level, should undergo consultation with the Ministry of Defence



Images above: Good examples of detailed and wireframe TVIA imagery to assess proposals



Image above: Good example of plant screening integrated into roof design

Effect on local views

6.16 Applications should illustrate the impact of any proposal on any local views or vistas.

6.17 Foremost in this consideration are the identified view cones toward the cities iconic three spires identified within the Coventry View Management Framework; these are referred to as follows:

- View cone one – Foleshill Road
- View cone two - Stoney Stanton Road
- View cone three - Swanswell Pool
- View cone four - Sky Blue Way
- View cone five - Far Gosford Street
- View cone six - London Road
- View cone seven – Parkside
- View cone eight - Mile Lane
- View cone nine - Mile Lane (Christchurch)
- View cone ten - Quinton Road
- View cone eleven - Manor Road Footbridge and Friars Road
- View cone twelve - Spencer Park & Footbridge
- View cone thirteen - The Butts
- *View cone fourteen – (now incorporated into view come thirteen)*
- View cone fifteen - Holyhead Road
- View cone sixteen - Upper Hill Street and Footbridge
- View cone seventeen - St. Nicholas Street

6.18 The omission of a viewpoint from this list should also not be taken as an indication that they are not considered significant or sensitive. The impact on views and vistas generally should always be given extremely careful and sensitive consideration irrespective of the location and setting of any proposed tall building. Imagery and analysis of each of the identified view cones can be found in section two of this document.

Alignment

6.19 Applications should:

- indicate how the proposal responds in a positive way to the alignment and set back of surrounding buildings, and
- illustrate the effect of the alignment of the building on local views or vistas of importance or significance.

6.20 The alignment of a new tall building should be a site-specific response to the context and surroundings of the area. In certain contexts, it may be appropriate to align a building in a manner which provides a stop to a visual axis or frames a particular view or scene.

Mass

6.21 Applications should:

- describe how the massing of the proposal relates to surrounding development; and
- illustrate how the massing of the proposal has been derived, and how it creates a form which is contextually appropriate.

6.22 New tall buildings should have regard to the massing and form of other buildings in the surrounding area. Great effort should be made to ensure that the design of new tall buildings is neither bulky nor over dominant.

Scale

6.23 Applications should:

- describe the rationale for the scale of the building within its context; and
- describe how the design of the building and spaces proposed around, relate to human scale at ground level.

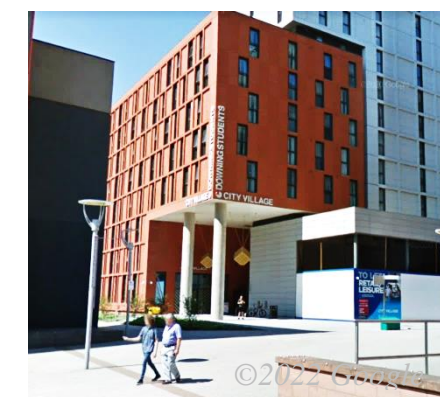
6.24 Scale is another essential ingredient in the integration of proposed tall building into their surroundings. Generally speaking, they should respond to the building heights, depths and articulation of surrounding buildings.



Image above: Extract from View Management Framework articulating prescribed viewcone locations



Image: The lower podium establishes a human scale to the base of the development (above)



Canopy introduces secondary scale (left)

Form

6.25 Applications should:

- provide a rationale for the form of the building, 'why does it have the form it does?'
- in the case of 'landmark' buildings, the rationale should consider:
 - The inspiration for the form of the building;
 - The silhouette it would create
 - Considerations of the important role of lighting in proposals for tall buildings
- the applicant should also describe and illustrate how the form of the upper part of the building would enhance the skyline of the city.

6.26 Form is one of the key factors which influence the quality of any proposed tall building. It is essential for the creation of an elegant, well-proportioned and aesthetically pleasing building.

6.27 The form of any proposal will be influenced by its proposed location, use, status and architectural context. In all instances, a proposed new tall building should seek to make a positive and elegant contribution to townscape.

Urban Grain

6.28 Applications should describe how the proposal complements and contrasts with the surrounding urban grain or pattern of the area

6.29 All new tall buildings should consider how they sit within the existing urban rhythms, architectural language, and historic setting and precedents of the area. It is essential that they make a positive contribution to their surroundings through an appropriate form, setback, massing and architectural language.

6.30 This can be achieved through a number of ways; articulation of the lower floors to reflect the surrounding streetscape, the setback of the upper floors to give continuity to the height of a proposed tall building with adjacent buildings in the streetscape, and through the use of materials that either complement or positively contrast with those on surrounding buildings. These measures should help to ensure that the streets around the building remain at a human scale.

Streetscape

6.31 Applications should indicate how the proposal contributes to the streetscape. Areas required to be articulated within the submission include :

- active frontages
- natural surveillance
- legible entrances
- clear definition of the public realm

6.32 New tall buildings should respond to and seek to have a positive impact on their surroundings. This can be achieved through the provision of active frontages, clearly legible entrances and a clear definition of public realm which reinforces the articulation of the surrounding streetscape. Applicants should seek to ensure that car parking is located within the development or behind the building and not at the front. Where this is not possible car parking should in all instances be in character with the surrounding streetscape well laid out and landscaped and provide an appropriate setting to the proposed tall building.

Architectural Lighting

- 6.33 Applications should, where appropriate give consideration to the incorporation of architectural lighting effects into any proposal for a tall building.
- 6.34 Architectural lighting has the ability to enhance the appearance of tall buildings and in situations where its use would not negatively impact on the amenity of nearby residents, consideration should be given to its use.

Signage

- 6.35 Applicants should, where appropriate give consideration to the incorporation of signage into any proposal for a tall building. The location of all signage should be given consideration at an early stage so that buildings can be designed to comfortably accommodate it rather than it having to be 'retro-fitted' at a later stage. All signage should follow the following criteria:
 - Signage should be provided in a shared or complimentary material palette to that of the rest of the proposal
 - Should represent a positive precedent of place/address not just branding to provide instinctive legibility
 - Signage should be responsive of sightlines that play a wider townscape role
 - Signage should not be over dominate to the architectural form
 - Overt branding of the skyline will be resisted and expected not to challenge the iconography of the skyline

Public Realm

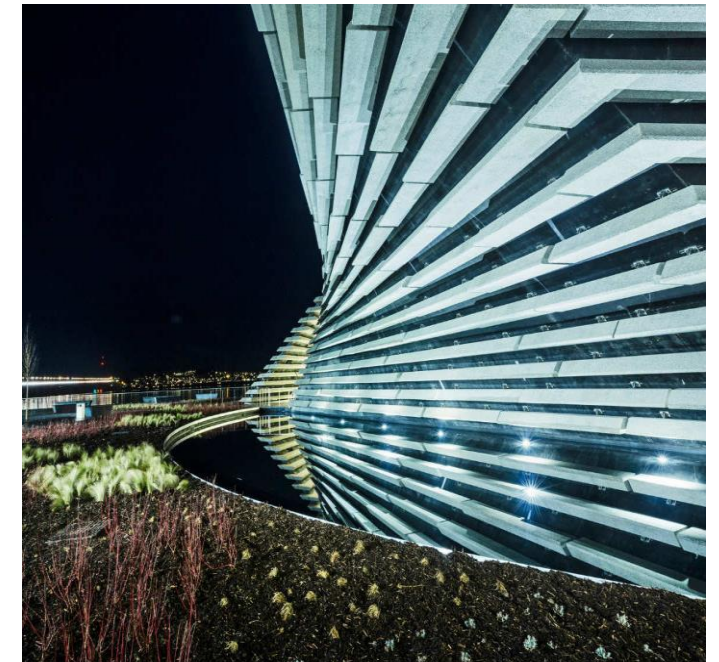
- 6.36 Applications should describe how the public space around the building has been designed to the highest quality; indicate how the proposal will where appropriate incorporate ground floor uses which encourage active use of the building throughout the day and evening; and, where appropriate provide a comprehensive scheme of quality external landscaping with associated maintenance plan.
- 6.37 Tall buildings are required to be designed in a way that creates safe and visually appealing environments around them. New spaces around tall buildings should be clearly defined and be activated by public uses with transparent facades at ground floor level. At a detailed design level, proposals should seek to create well oriented spaces that make a positive contribution to the quality and legibility of the wider public realm.

Public Access

- 6.38 Applications should explain how any proposal for a mixed use tall building will promote and encourage public access, not only at ground floor level, but also where appropriate at a height that would allow users a panoramic view or vista of the city and surrounding areas, allowing for enhanced appreciation opportunities of the city.
- 6.39 Public access to new tall buildings can promote their use at different times of the day, fostering a more positive perception of the building and allowing the community and visitors to make effective use of it.

Designing out Crime

- 6.40 All design proposals should consider the legacy of the development and if a maintenance plan could be appropriate, particularly In communal areas to reduce the risk of crime in the short, medium, and longer term.
- 6.41 Any relevant counter terrorism standards applicable should be taken into full consideration.
- 6.42 All proposals should consider the guidance of Secure by Design standards



Images above: positive precedents of the incorporation of architectural lighting

Climatic Impact

- 6.43 Applications should describe how the design of the building has had regard to its potential impact on the local climate; and explain how any proposal would seek to address the following climatic issues:
- high wind speeds at ground level
 - heat islands
 - glare
 - overshadowing
- 6.44 Applicants/agents may also be called upon to consider the production of documentation regarding climatic effect of any proposed tall building as part of a comprehensive submission accompanying the application.
- 6.45 Depending on their height, location and design, tall buildings can have a severely adverse effect on the environmental quality of surrounding areas. Consideration should be given to the negative effects of the diversion and funnelling of wind, and the potential overshadowing of nearby residential properties and their gardens. The impact of shadowing throughout the day and at different times of year will need to be assessed. In all instances, consideration should be given to avoiding, minimising or mitigating through design or siting any elements of a proposal which could have a negative climatic impact on the surrounding area.

Neighbourliness

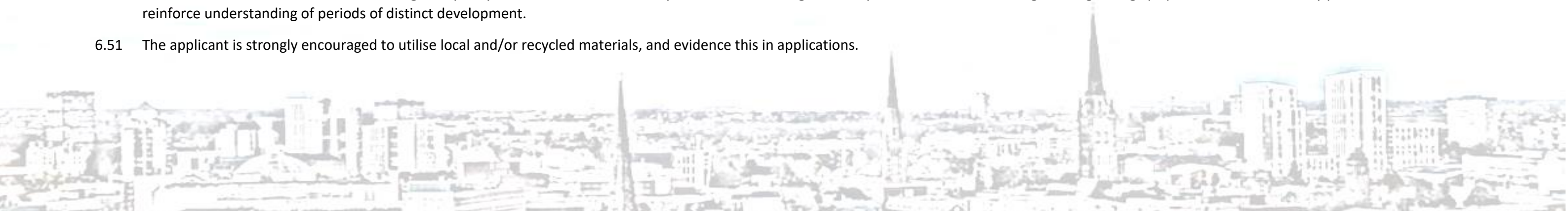
- 6.46 Applications should analyse and describe the impact of proposals on neighbouring buildings.
- 6.47 The potential impact of a tall building on the amenities of surrounding residents is of particular importance when considering the impact of any proposed tall buildings. Issues that require careful assessment include:
- outlook/aspect;
 - privacy
 - daylight/sunlight;
 - noise;
 - light glare;
 - overbearing impact;
 - increased sense of enclosure

Materials

- 6.48 Applications should provide comprehensive detail of the palette of materials they intend to use; and a justification of the appropriateness of the materials in relation to the character of the surrounding area and in terms of their durability and sustainability.
- 6.49 The materials specified for use on any new tall building are considered crucial to the overall impact that the building may have, crucial in buildings of high status through height, they can make the difference between a mediocre and a quality scheme.
- 6.50 The materials selected should be of the highest quality and should show sensitivity to their surroundings either by reference to surrounding buildings using sympathetic materials, or by positive contrast to reinforce understanding of periods of distinct development.
- 6.51 The applicant is strongly encouraged to utilise local and/or recycled materials, and evidence this in applications.



Image: Godiva Place



7.0 - Three Spires View Management Framework

- 12 Introduction
- 13 Assessment Principles
- 14 **View cone one** – Foleshill Road
- 15 **View cone two** - Stoney Stanton Road
- 16 **View cone three** - Swanswell Pool
- 17 **View cone four** - Sky Blue Way
- 18 **View cone five** - Far Gosford Street
- 19 **View cone six** - London Road
- 20 **View cone seven** - Parkside
- 21 **View cone eight** - Mile Lane
- 22 **View cone nine** - Mile Lane (Christchurch)
- 23 **View cone ten** - Quinton Road
- 24 **View cone eleven** - Manor Road Footbridge and Friars Road
- 25 **View cone twelve** - Spencer Park & Footbridge
- 25 **View cone thirteen** - The Butts
- 26 **View cone fourteen** – The Butts (superseded)
- 27 **View cone fifteen** - Holyhead Road
- 28 **View cone sixteen** - Upper Hill Street and Footbridge
- 29 **View cone seventeen** - St. Nicholas Street



Introduction

The View Management Framework takes forward the views of the Spires identified within the City Centre Action Plan (AAP), and undertakes an assessment of each view cone, outlining, through cross sections, an indicative constraint line required to retain positive appreciation of the spire views. Whilst establishing the constraints in respect of the preservation of identified views, any proposal for new development will also be subject to assessments in respect of established local and national policy.

The Spires of St. Michael, Holy Trinity & Christchurch have become synonymous with the image of the city, forming the iconic Three Spires Skyline. They are a majestic site on the skyline of the city and form an important link to the City's mediaeval past, therefore a crucial consideration of development in the city is the effect on setting and legibility of these iconic heritage assets.

The notable post-war reconstruction and that of development in recent years, saw the rise of a number of tall buildings which joined the Spires on the skyline and whilst many of these buildings provided a sense of modernity & dynamism, some were detrimental to the setting and views of the Spires.

Given the importance of the Spires to the identity of Coventry it is important that any additional large/tall buildings are carefully and respectfully designed and located so as to ensure the spires retain their rightful prominent position on the city Skyline

Identified Views of the Spires

Further to updated analysis undertaken 2021 / 2022, this document identifies 16 views of the spires considered to be of high value. They are located on the edge of the city centre and, in the majority of the cases, are on key routes into the city centre offering strong and extended views of one or more of the spires.

Additionally, there are further, distant views from notable local centers such as Earlsdon and Coundon which should be considered, these areas provide a broader city centre view alongside the spires which assist in providing a sense of place and city wide legibility. Whilst these outlying views are not individually identified in this guidance, analysis of any outlying appreciable viewpoint to the spires should always be considered in design proposals.

The formally Identified views contained in this document are therefore as listed below and correspondingly indicated via 3D mapping adjacent:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 9. Foleshill Road | 1. Quinton Road |
| 10. Stoney Stanton Road | 2. Manor Road Footbridge & Friars Road |
| 11. Swanswell Pool | 3. Spencer Park & Footbridge |
| 12. Sky Blue Way | 4. The Butts |
| 13. Far Gosford Street | 5. <i>The Butts (superseded)</i> |
| 14. London Road | 6. Upper Holyhead Road |
| 15. Parkside | 7. Upper Hill Street & Footbridge |
| 16. Mile Lane | 8. St. Nicholas Street |
| 17. Mile Lane (Christchurch) | |








Each of these views has its own particular characteristics, but they are all dynamic in nature with the view of the spires (the number, proportion visible, and their location) changing considerably along the length of the views.

The Strength of these views depends on a number of factors; whether they are viewed on foot or in a vehicle; the time of day – the image of the spires changes dramatically from hours of daylight to night-time when they are lit by architectural lighting; the time of year – the spires become more visible on certain routes when the trees are not in leaf and; the weather conditions – the spires stand out boldly against a clear blue sky as opposed to overcast weather conditions.

Tree Planting

The view from Quinton Road illustrates the impact that tree planting can have on the views. The other views affected by tree planting are: Foleshill Rd, Swanswell Pool, The Butts, Stoney Stanton Rd, London Rd and Upper Holyhead Rd.

View Management Key

-  View cone foregrounds
-  View cone backgrounds
-  St Michaels Cathedral Spire
-  Holy Trinity Spire
-  Christchurch Spire
-  Council House Clock Tower
-  Assessment Area

Note - Viewpoints plotted over AAP area, note – foreground view cones annotated only for clarity, background impact should also be assessed as shown in individual view cone analysis



Assessment Principles

Modern City Centre Development

In some of the views, the spires have been infringed upon by modern development, whilst this can be seen to be to the detriment of the views now, it is feasible that redevelopment may take place which may open up new views, and in turn be material in consideration of redevelopment proposals.

The example image below of the view from Butts Road (B4101) which illustrates the improvement that the removal of Coventry Point has had on the view toward the spires. Whilst this view is modern and kinetic in nature, this new context to the viewpoint will therefore be informative of future development proposals.

The structure of the ring road also infringes on some of the views – as illustrated in the image below, the impact of the structure towards views of the spires is also evident in views from Swanswell Pool and London Road. The elevated Ring road is also present in the Sky Blue Way view corridor but it is less dominant in the foreground as it blends in against the university buildings which sit behind it.

View Assessment

In support of the guidance outlined in this document, a visual assessment has been carried out for each view, identifying the primary points from where the spires are appreciable. Further to establishing this, a viewcone has been drawn for each view based on these points.

It is important to note that these viewpoint identifications do not preclude development taking place within them, rather they define potential height limitations on development in order to preserve the important townscape role that the views play. Therefore, each view assessment is accompanied by cross sections which give broad indications of the heights that *may* be achievable in a sensitive manner within the view cones and thus without infringing on the views, notwithstanding these suggestions, it will remain for any applicant to demonstrate impacts and officers to assess acceptability in each individual case. The sightlines within the cross sections are focused on specific features of the spires of St. Michael and Christchurch.



View cone Background

This document identifies the best quality, currently available views of the three spires of Coventry, and whilst height capacity indications are noted in the foreground of these view points, it is important to note that background development can also have significant impact on setting and appreciation of skyline through the potential for ‘challenge of prominence’ in the city skyline, and erosion of clear space between in and around the spires, which plays an important role in the visual definition of the landmark. Proposals for development within the identified background settings of the spires will also therefore need to be substantiated by applicants and carefully assessed.

Additional Views & Local Centres

The assessments undertaken in this document seek to highlight key views of the cities iconic three spires and ensure that any development potentially impactful on these viewpoints is fully considered and assessed in its impact. It is noted that additional views of the spires from those individually identified in this document are also present, notably from longer distance positions, applicants are therefore advised to always assess if proposals may be impactful. Notably of the longer distance views, are a number of appreciations of the spires available from distinct local centres, which provide a positive legibility of districts setting to the city centre, examples of this interface are shown below at the local centres of Earlsdon’s high street to the South of the city and Cramper’s Field in Coundon to the North West. These and other outlying views which deliver positive wider legibility of the city and its relationship to outlying districts should also be carefully assessed where development proposals may impact.



View cone 1: Foleshill Road

Foleshill Road offers a strong and evolving view of St. Michael and Holy Trinity, whilst Christchurch also becomes visible beyond. Although the photos are taken from the central embankment the views would be equally good from the pedestrian perspective, the North Western section of paving offers the longest view.

Upon Arrival at the roundabout St Michael and Holy Trinity come back into view as does Christchurch and the view develops to offer an excellent vista of not only the Spires but also the church rooflines, the Council House Clock Tower and the Blue Coat School and historic Priory Tower.

The cross-section provided below illustrates the graduation of the view and plots a resultant constraint line in order that the view is maintained.

To assist assessors, the view cone has been bisected into assessment areas A,B,C & D as noted in figure 1.3, these are also shown correspondingly in the cross section (fig 1.4) which suggests the line of constraint in order to retaining a positive appreciation of the spires from this approach. The suggestion is given as an indication only, and it is required by the applicant to demonstrate impact of any development within view cones irrespective of this guidance.

Matters of detailed design and materiality will also play a key role in assessing acceptability of any proposals in the view cone, whilst background impacts should also be considered.



Fig 1.1



Fig 1.2

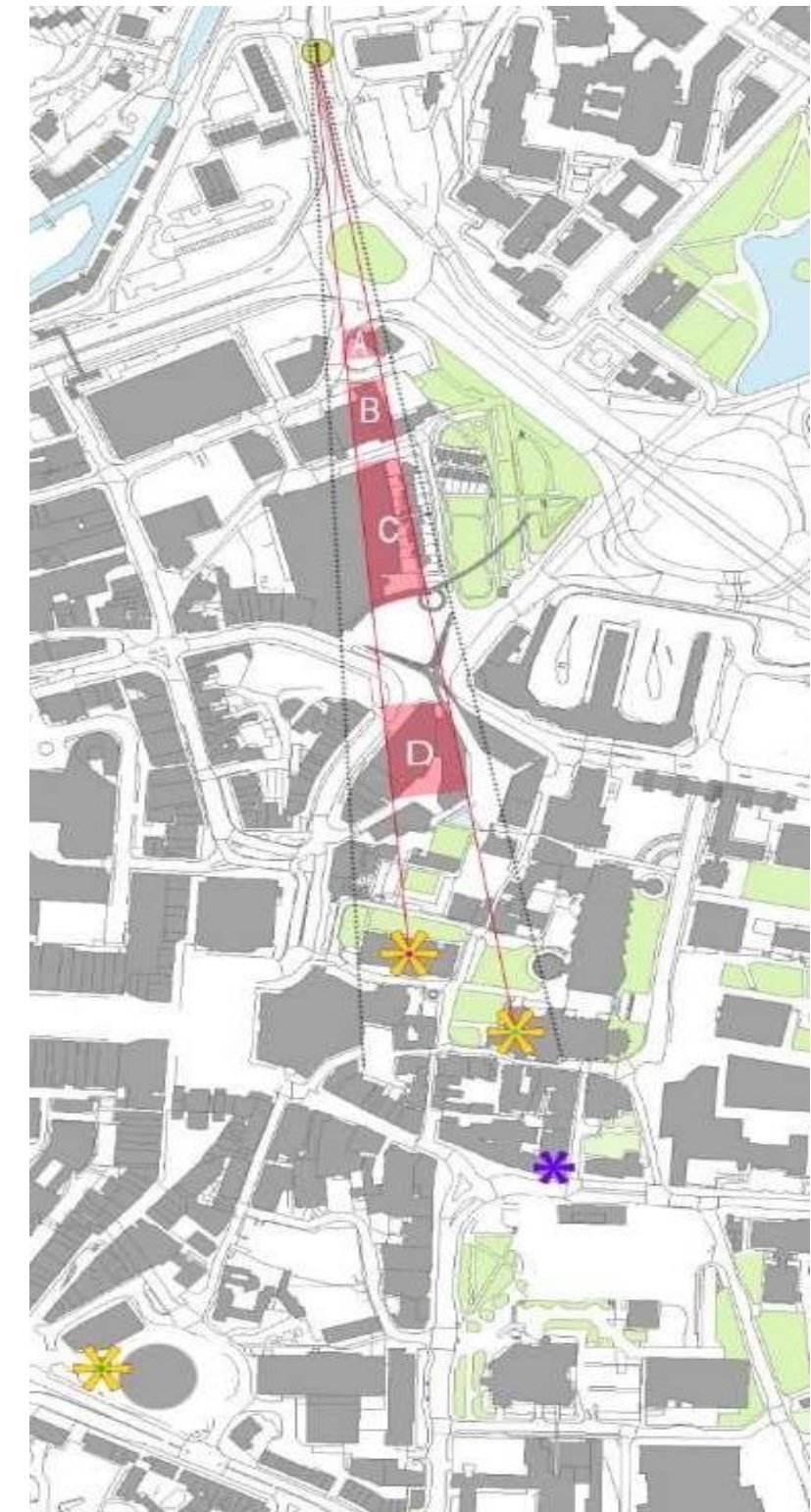


Fig 1.3

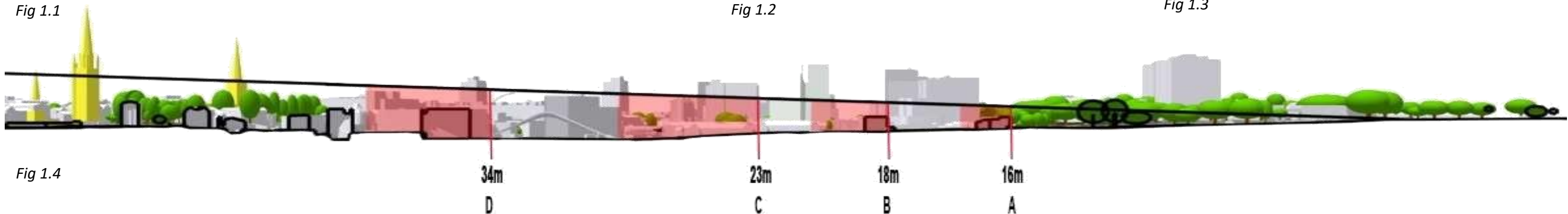


Fig 1.4

View cone 2: Stoney Stanton Road

The view down Stoney Stanton Road is limited due to the mature trees set around Swanswell Pool and along the road. Given this the Spires do not become visible until St. Mark's & here they are limited to views of St Michaels. Similarly to other views affected by mature trees, assessment of any proposals in this view cone should be undertaken both with and without the impacts of vegetation.

The Stoney Stanton Road view cone marks a positive location of appreciation of the spires set within a historic context of the Grade II listed Church of St Mark and the Grade II listed former nurses' home and outpatients' clinic, whilst viewed across the area of Lady Herbert's Garden and associated vegetation to the south west.

In defining guidance for any development proposed in the view cone, the area has been bisected into assessment areas A and B, as noted in figure 2.6, these are also shown correspondingly in the cross section (fig 2.7) which suggests heights the line of constraint to retain a positive appreciation of the spires. The suggestion is given as an indication only, and it is required by the applicant to demonstrate impact of any proposed development within view cones irrespective of this guidance.

Matters of detailed design and materiality will also play a key role in assessing acceptability of any proposals in the view cone, whilst background impacts should also be considered.



Fig 2.1



Fig 2.2



Fig 2.3

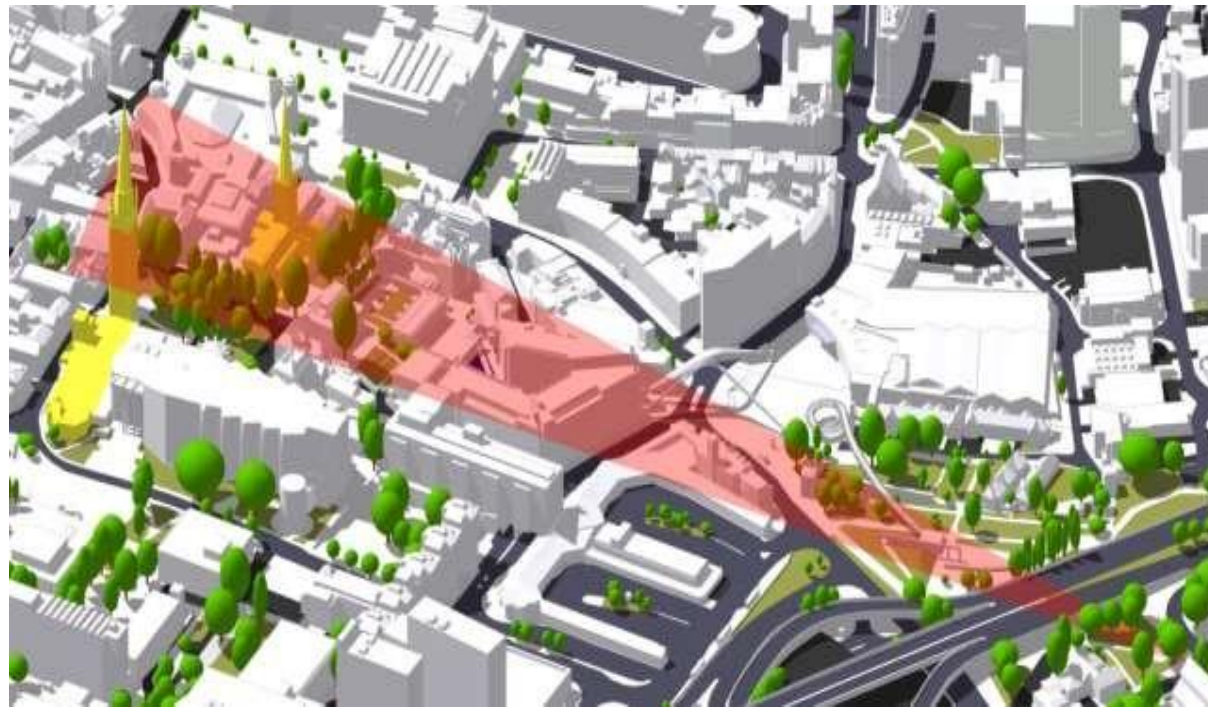


Fig 2.4

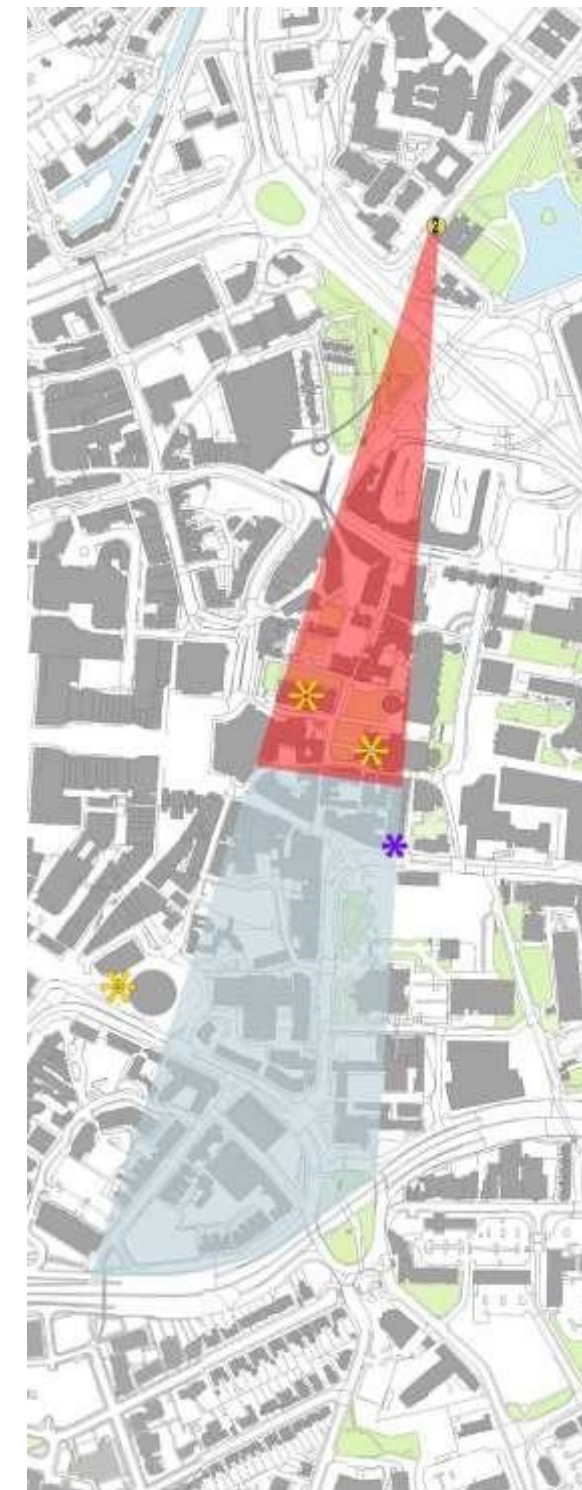


Fig 2.5

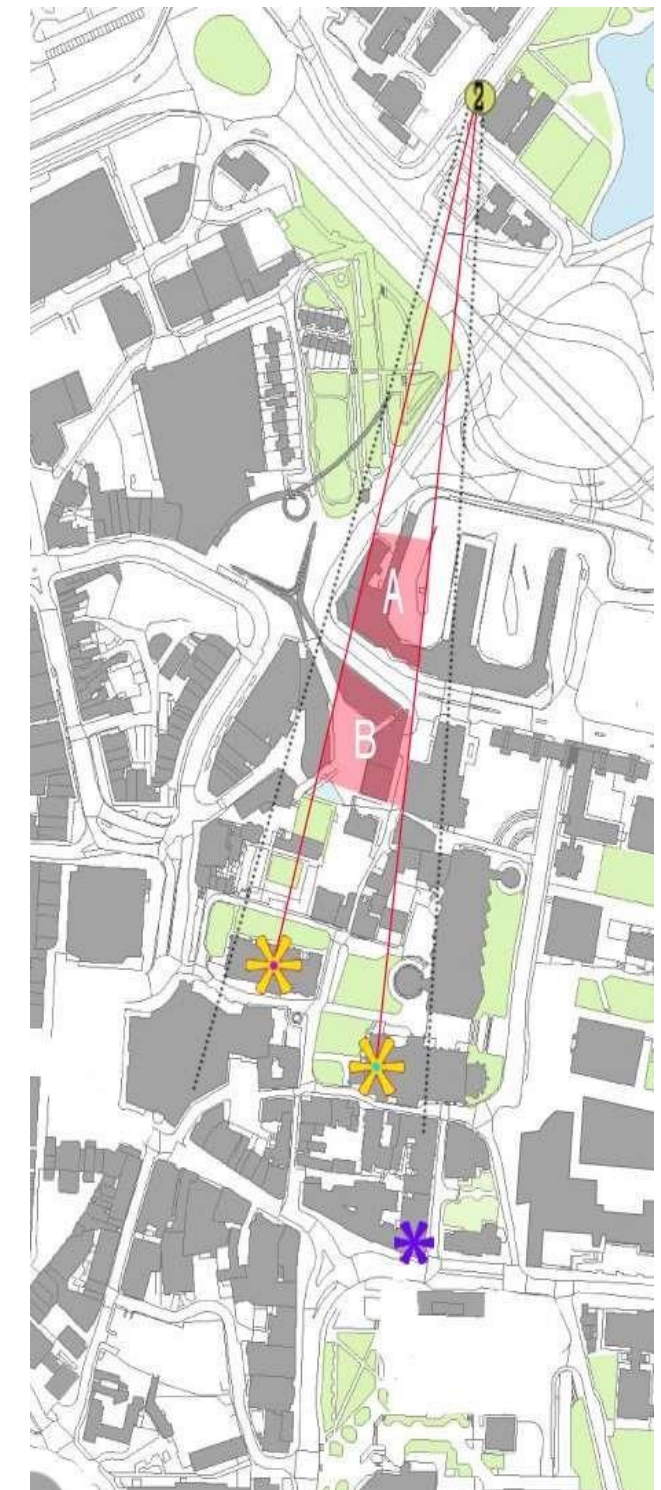


Fig 2.6

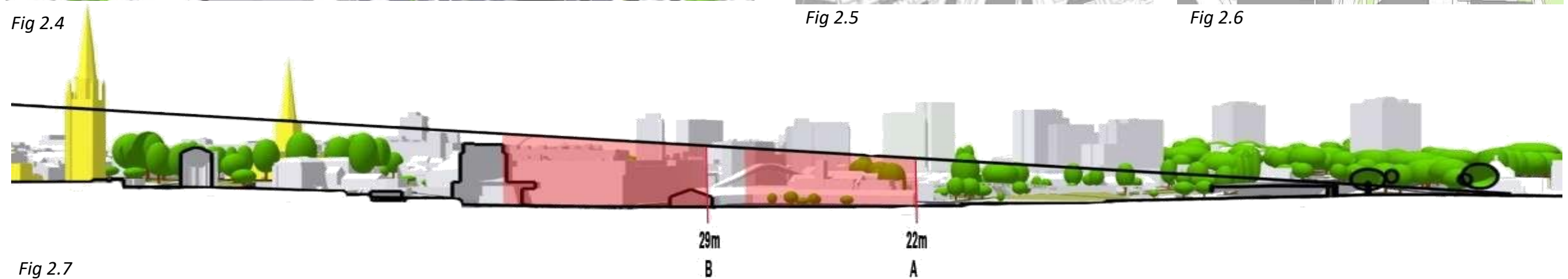


Fig 2.7

View cone 3: Swanswell Pool

Swanswell Pool offers an excellent view of St. Michaels and Holy Trinity particularly from the Northern portion of the park. This view is particularly important given that park users are likely to stop or sit and look back at the City Centre, the appreciation is therefore available for a longer time frame than those view cones identified on approach points to the city, and is experienced within a mature landscape setting. View cone 3 offers a high quality position of appreciation of the primary nature of the cities three spires over the modern skyline, with the spires of Trinity and St Michaels in the foreground, and Christchurch appreciable beyond.

Particularly of consideration upon any proposals in the North Eastern area of the city centre, the area has been bisected into assessment areas A,B, C & D as is noted in figure 3.3, these are also shown correspondingly in the cross section (fig 3.5) which suggests the line of constraint whilst retaining positive appreciation of the spires. The suggestion is given as an indication only, and it is required by the applicant to demonstrate impact of any proposal within view cones irrespective of indications contained in this guidance.

Matters of detailed design and materiality will also play a key role in assessing acceptability of any proposals in the view cone, whilst background impacts should also be considered.



Fig 3.1



Fig 3.2

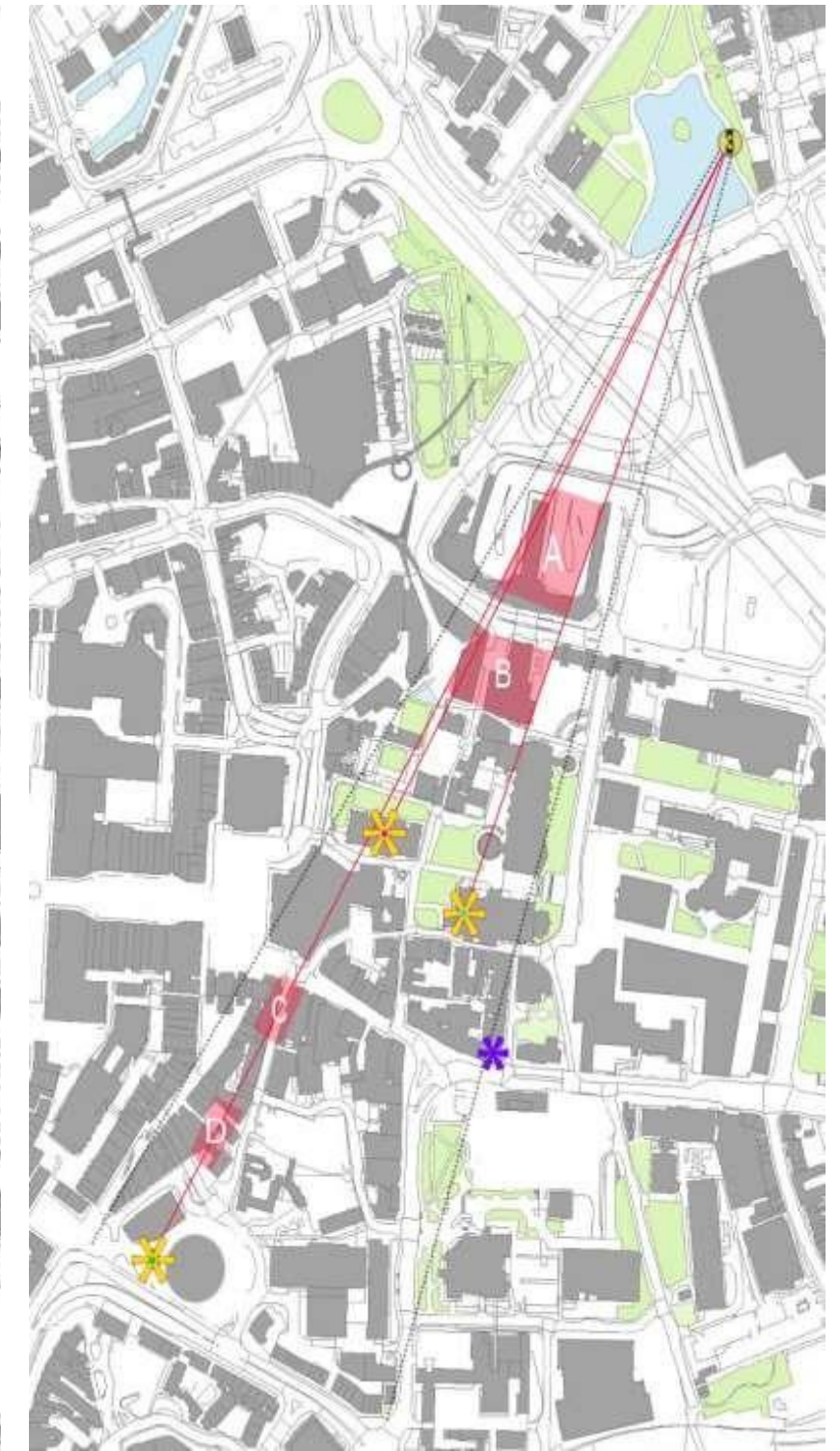


Fig 3.3



Fig 3.4

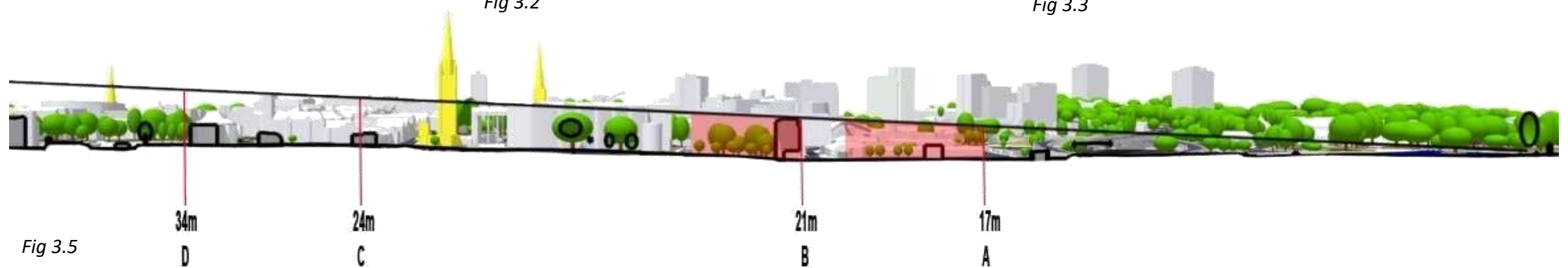


Fig 3.5

View cone 4: Sky Blue Way

Sky Blue Way offers possibly the most dynamic and evolving view of the Spires. St. Michael becomes visible from the junction of Walsgrave Road and Sky Blue Way with Holy Trinity coming into view adjacent to the junction of Oxford Street. The View remains relatively clear through to the Sky Blue Way Roundabout, thanks largely to the low rise development that surrounds the roundabout. There are also appreciable views of Christ Church particularly visible from the Northern side of the road offering road users long range views on the approach into the city.

Approaching the city from the East, Sky Blue Way forms a key axis of arrival for traffic into the city, whilst also being located beside the historic Far Gosford Street. Glimpsed views of the city's three spires are available on approach here, with the most defined being offered at the junction of Sky Blue Way and Oxford Street. At this identified location shown in mapping, the appreciation is that of two view cones, one towards the spire of St Michaels and Trinity church looking due west, and another toward Christchurch looking south west. Whilst the area between is not here defined as a view cone, development in such zones between will nevertheless be required to be considered, notably around assessment of principles of challenges of prominence in skyline.

Assessment zones A to D and E to I (fig 4.2) have been identified in the view cones with suggestions of the line of constraint to retain a positive appreciation of the spires. The suggestions of constraint are given as an indication only, and it is required by any applicant to demonstrate impact of any proposal within view cones irrespective of indications contained in this guidance. Matters of detailed design and materiality will also play a key role in assessing acceptability of any proposals in the view cone, whilst background impacts should also be considered.

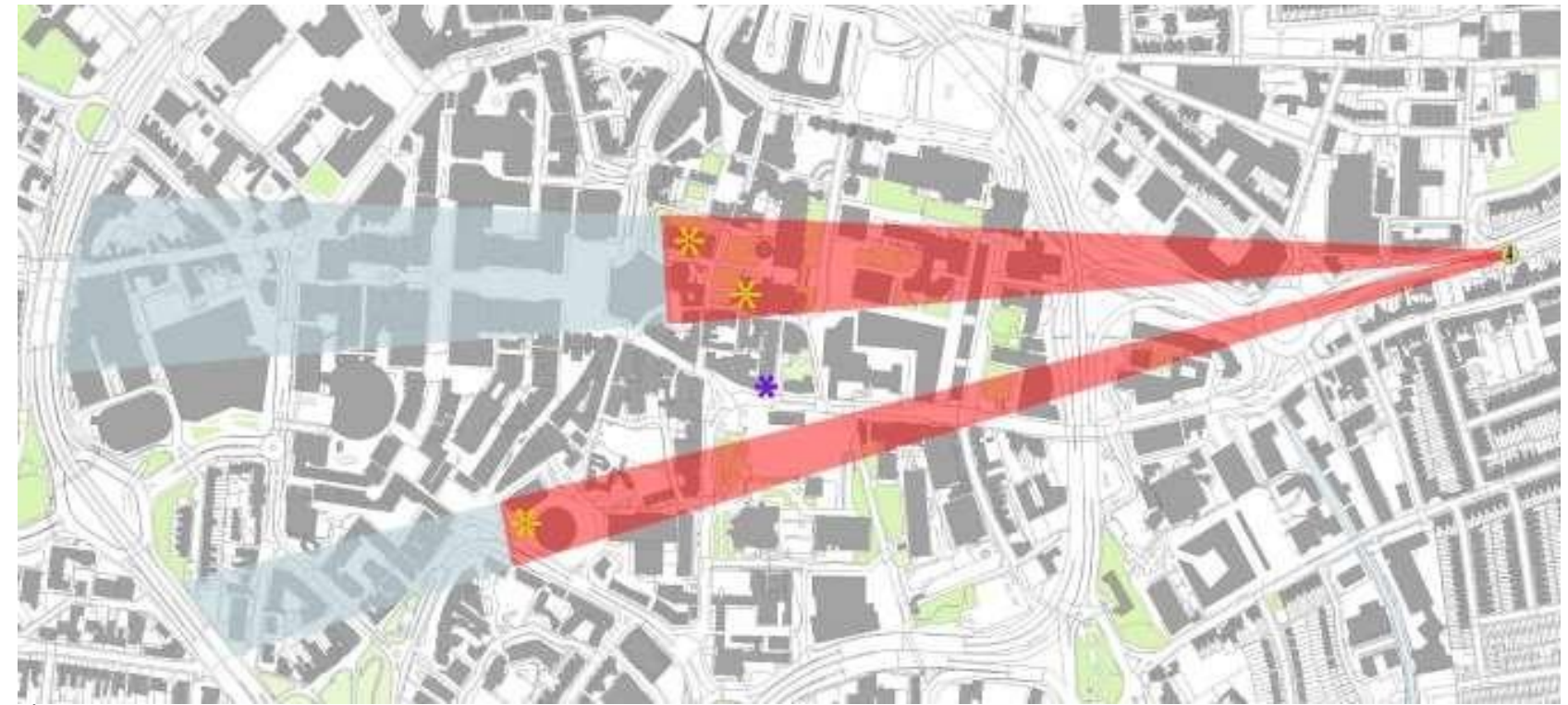


Fig 4.1

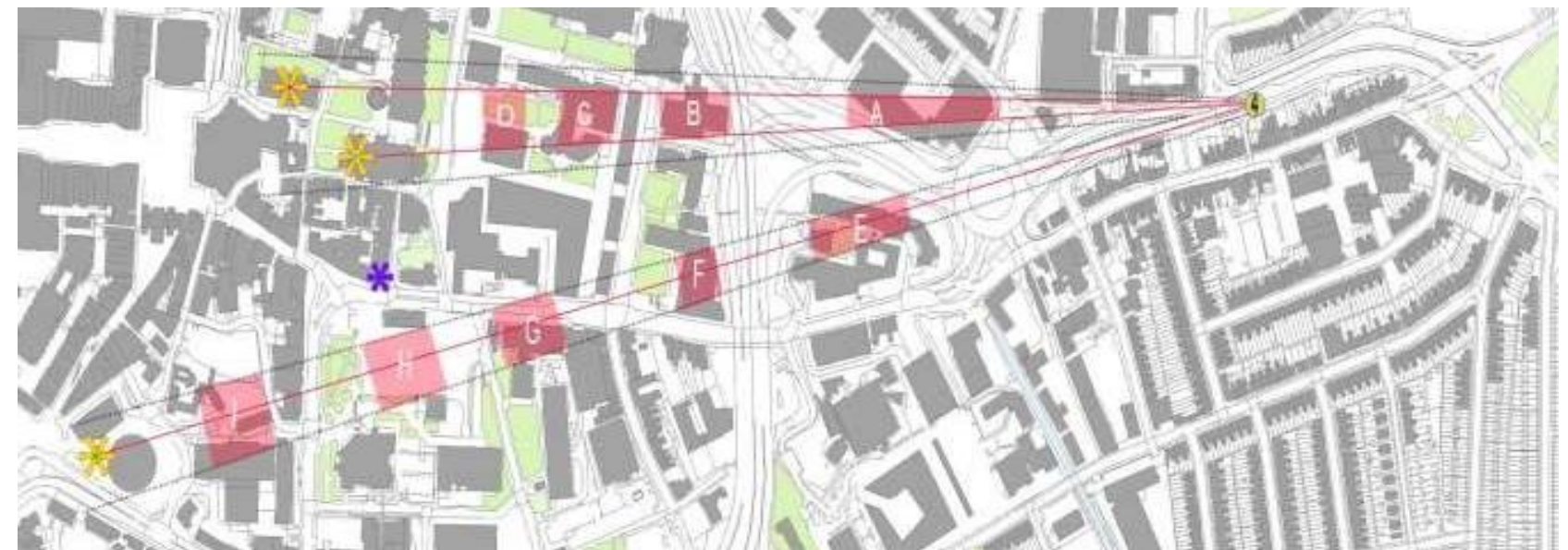


Fig 4.2



Fig 4.3

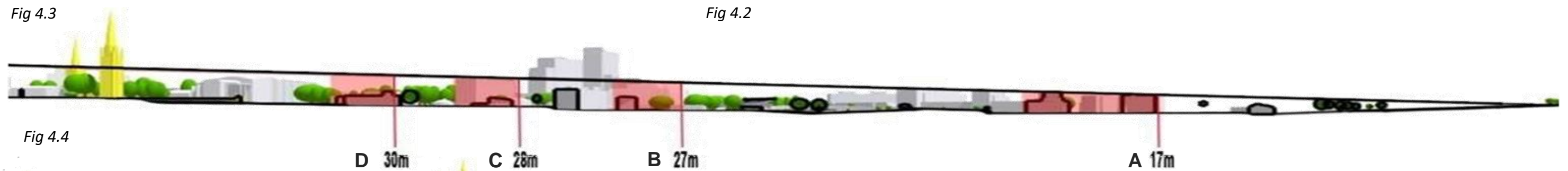


Fig 4.4

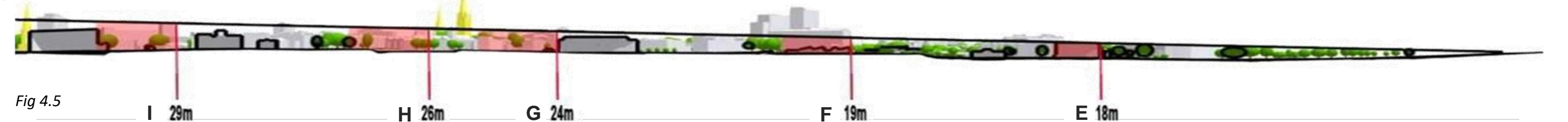


Fig 4.5

View cone 5: Far Gosford Street

Located to the West of the city centre, Far Gosford Street and associated conservation area includes a number of important heritage assets. Views towards the cities spires from this location are constrained, however a prime appreciable view of the spire of St Michaels is present around the junction of Bramble Street, playing an important townscape role of locating this distinct district in relationship to the centre of the city.

Set within the Far Gosford Street Conservation Area, around the junction with Bramble Street, this view cone offers a visual connection between two of the cities important heritage assets. Whilst the view is somewhat constrained, the spire of St Michael's is clearly legible in the skyline over historic properties and the protection of this visual link is of key importance in understanding of the conservation areas setting to the wider landscape of the city centre.

Although not appreciable from the identified viewpoint, the view cone contains a large area of highway infrastructure and therefore assessment areas are limited around the zones marked A and B (fig 5.2), set within the city ring road.

It is therefore stated that any development proposals in the viewcone should not be seen above the roofline of historic properties on Far Gosford Street in order to retain the view of the spire, and detailed analysis should be submitted with any proposals in order to ascertain this, whilst, as with all viewcone locations, any proposals set in the background will also need to be carefully considered in order to retain the spires primacy in the city skyline.

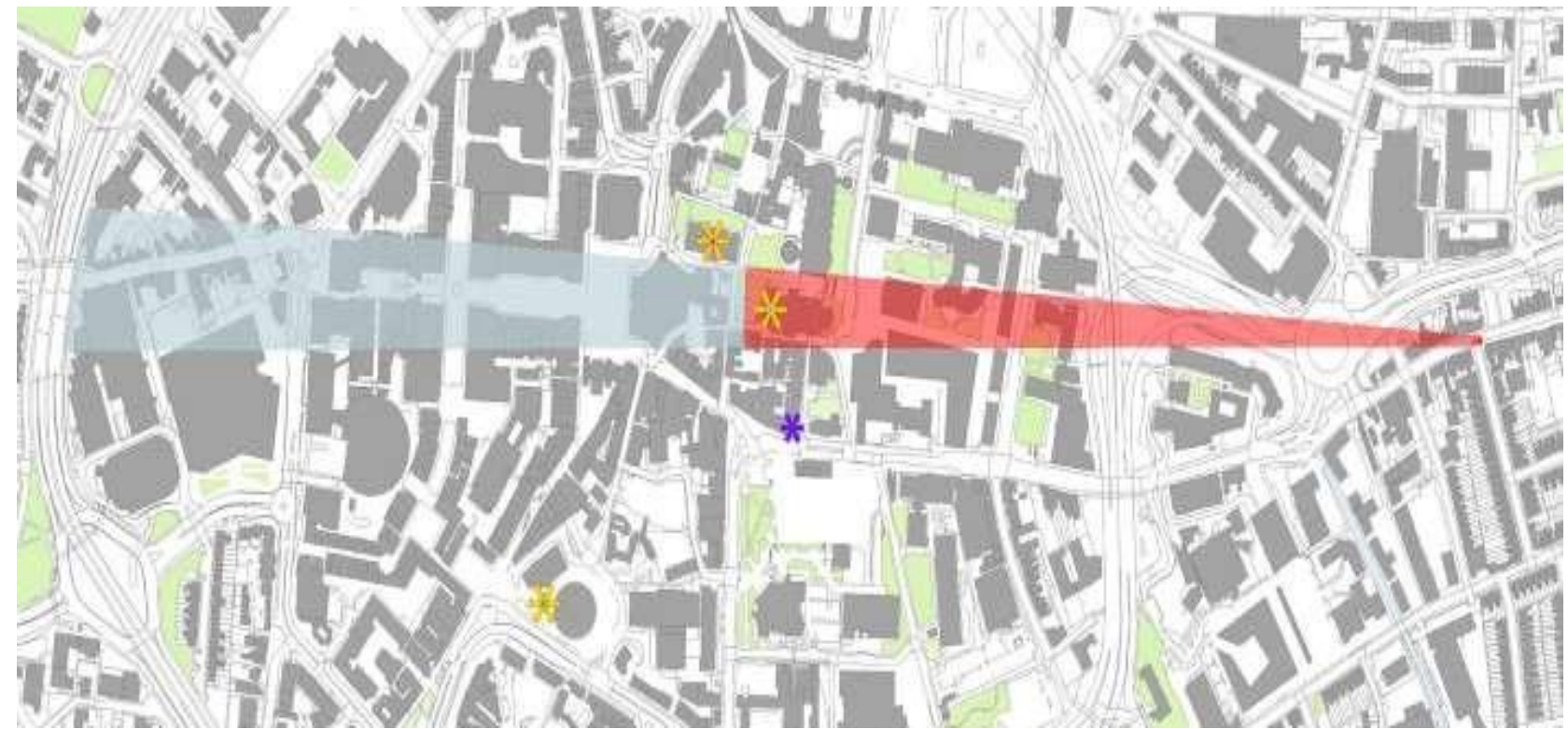


Fig 5.1



Fig 5.2



Fig 5.3

Fig 5.4

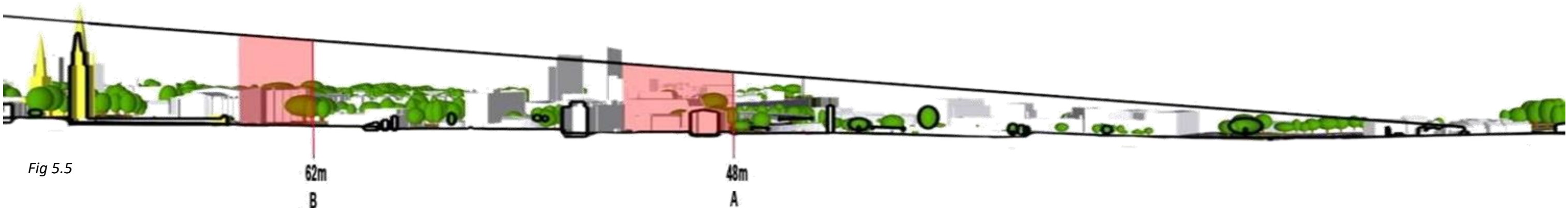


Fig 5.5

View cone 6: London Road

Although London Road is a key route into the city centre, the views it offers of St Michael and Holy Trinity are limited due to the flyover, street furniture and the mature vegetation at Junction Four of the ring road. This view cone is therefore most appreciable from the pedestrian perspective.

The St Michael Spire is the first available on this approach to the city becoming visible on the Eastern side of the road adjacent to No.63 London Road and is visible up to Whitefriars Monastery where it becomes masked by the flyover.

The Spires are most visible from the junction of Gulson Road with both St Michael and Holy Trinity being visible, although they remain partially masked by the Flyover and recent development within the City centre.

Approaching the city from the South East, London Road forms a key approach to the city, approaching aside key heritage assets of Charterhouse and the London Road Cemetery. Whilst the view of the spires of St Michaels and Trinity from this approach are heavily impacted both by modern development and highway infrastructure, the emergence of the spires to view delivers a strong sense of identity and legibility, marking the arrival into the area of the city centre.

A number of assessment zones are shown in figure 6.2, marked A,B and C, with a constraint line established in figure 6.9, however any proposal for development within or immediately adjacent to the identified view cone should be tested with impacts demonstrated to enable thorough analysis of development impacts. Background impacts should always also be assessed and the zone of background sensitivity is identified in figure 6.1.



Fig 6.1

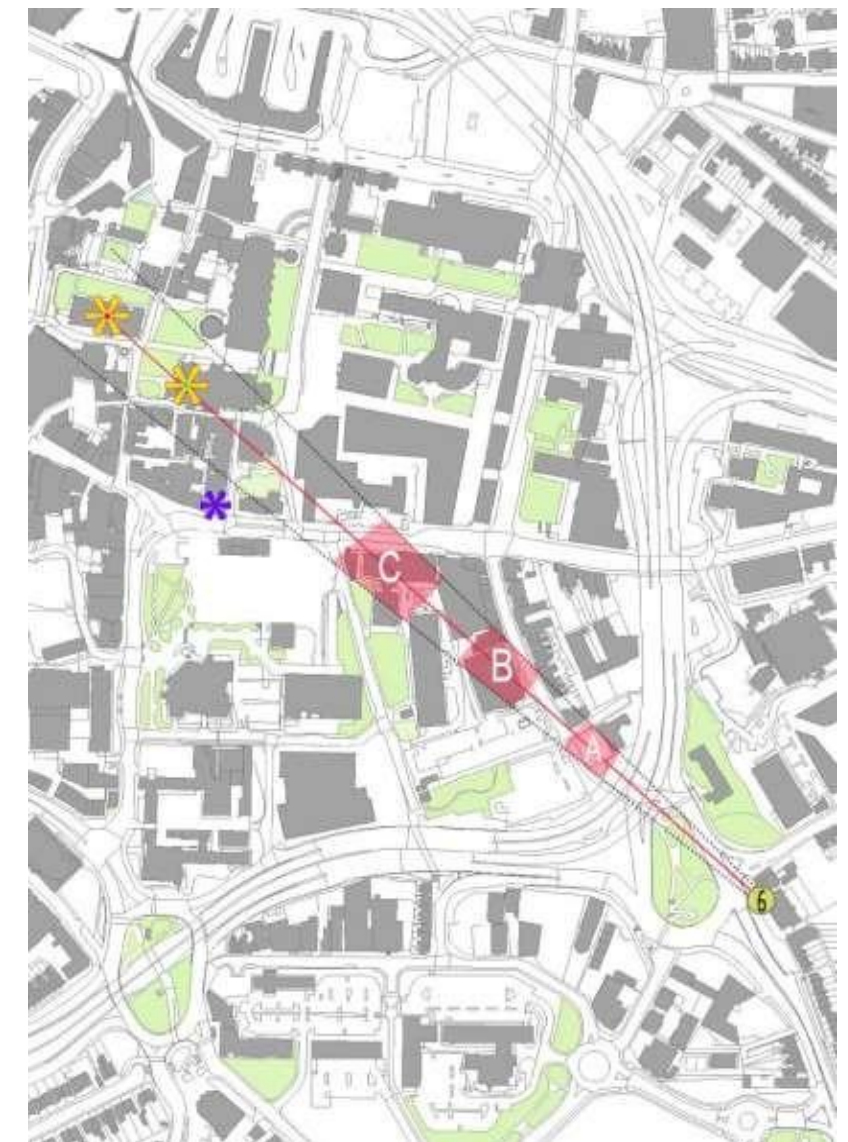


Fig 6.2



Fig 6.3



Fig 6.4



Fig 6.5



Fig 6.6



Fig 6.7



Fig 6.8

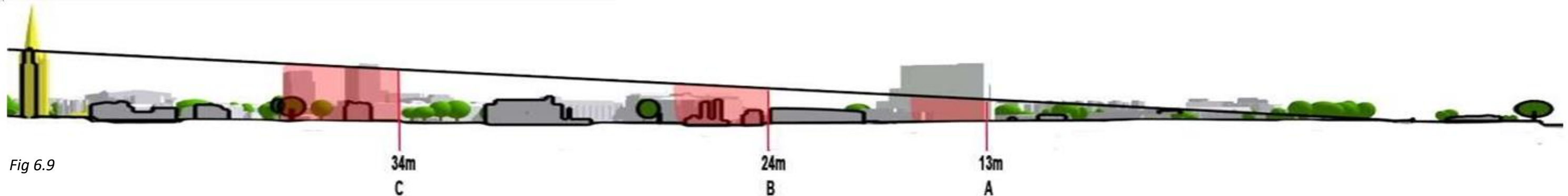


Fig 6.9

View cone 7: Parkside

Whilst this view is not a major route into the city centre, it is one of the main entrance points into the technology park and it offers a unique view of St. Michaels, Holy Trinity and the Council House clock tower. It also provides a strong visual link between the modern technology park and the historic city. At present the length of time the view is visible is relatively short being revealed on Deasy Road adjacent to the Feeder pillar on the southern side of the Road, with the best view being on the approach to the junction of the roundabout.

This view cone has an opportunity present to be improved upon with considered redevelopment of the sites that sit under the view cone – notably including light industrial units that sit in the foreground. If this area were to be redeveloped, it may be possible to enhance the view through the sensitive siting of new building footprints, the location of open space and through choosing soft landscaping that won't mature to infringe on the view – as is currently the case.

Elsewhere the view corridor passes over Whitefriars Gate and Buildings within the Civic Quarter. The cross-section provided shows a constraint line to ensure retention of positive appreciation of the spires from this viewpoint.

In assessment of view cone 7 observed from Parkside, three assessment areas are identified in the foreground as noted in fig 7.2, identified as assessment zones A,B and C. The foreground area of high sensitivity is shown red in fig 7.1, and it should also be noted that any proposal which falls into or aside the area of background sensitivity (indicated blue in figure 7.1) should be considered alongside demonstrations of impact, to ensure appraisals can be made which preserve appreciation of the spires in the city skyline. An informative, indicative constraint line whilst preserving the view cone is indicated in the section (fig 7.6) however notwithstanding this, demonstrations of impact will always need to be submitted and assessed, with architectural design, scale, height, massing and material finishes.



Fig 7.3



Fig 7.4



Fig 7.1

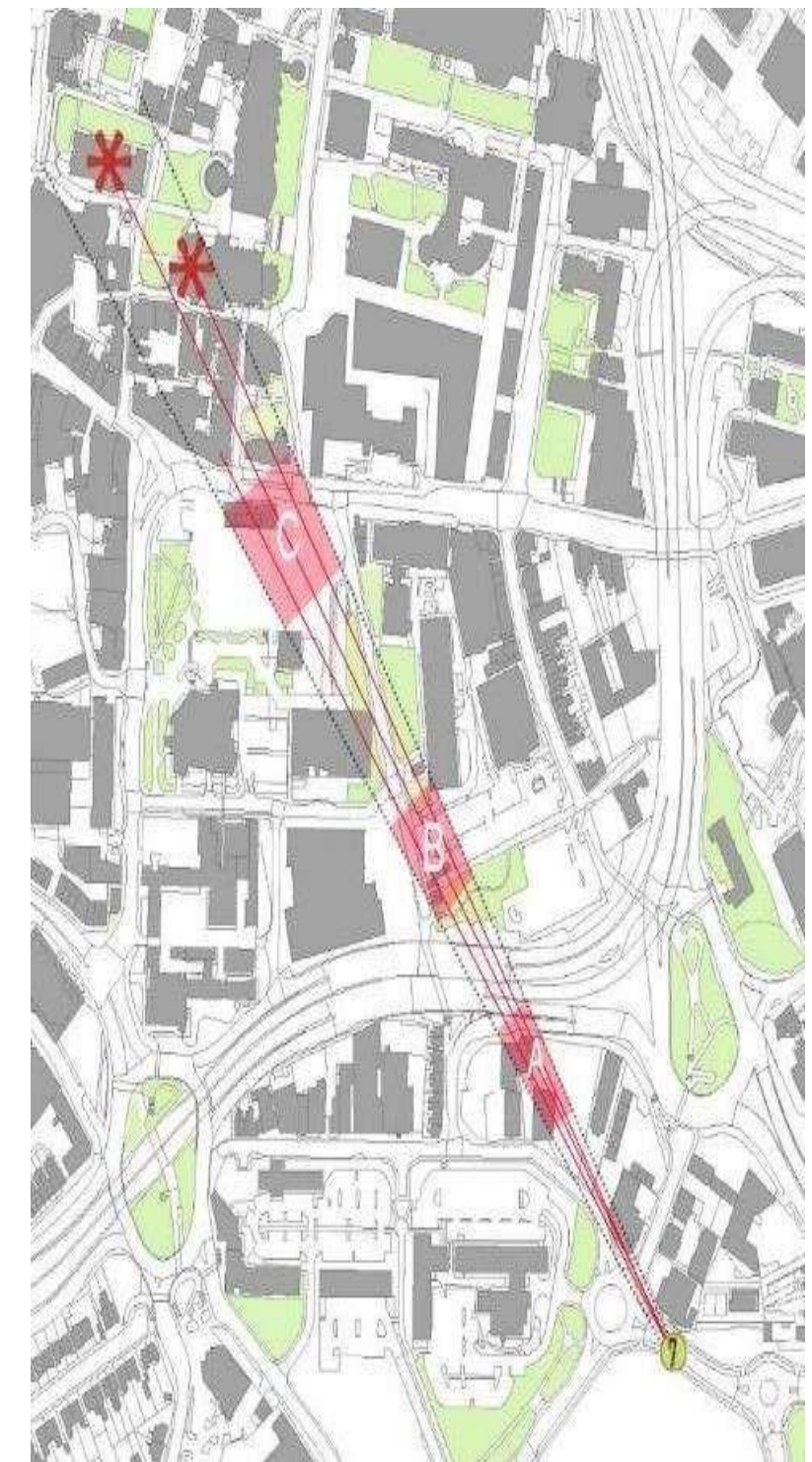


Fig 7.2



Fig 7.5

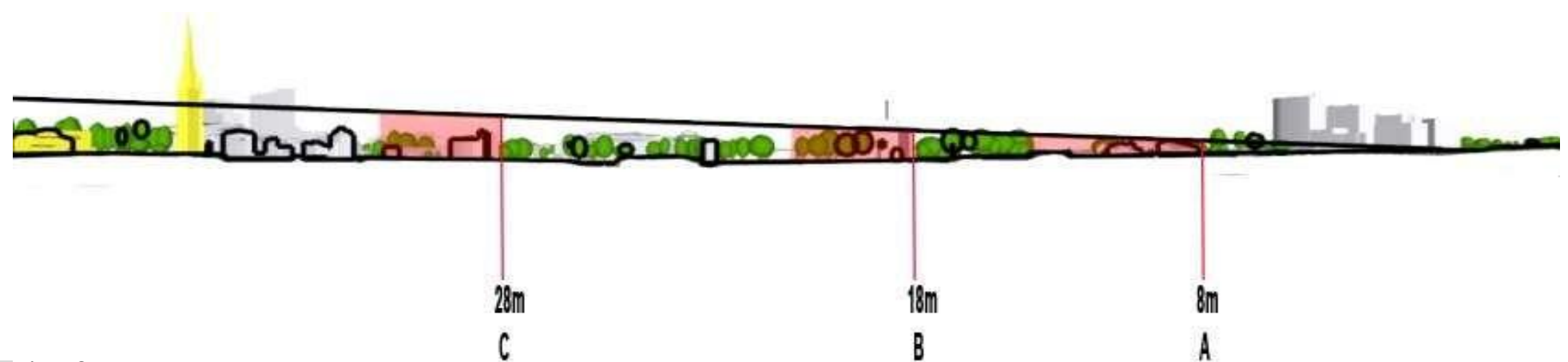


Fig 7.6

View cone 8: Mile Lane

Mill Lane offers a long and unfolding view of all three spires and the Council House clock tower. The spire of St Osburgs also becomes visible.

Western side of Mile Lane

From the point where Mile Lane bridges the railway, the Spires start to become visible. The view develops along the course of Mile Lane and is best between the crest of the hill and the junction of Merlin Road. From this point on, as the road runs down the hill curving left, the Spire of Holy Trinity gradually becomes less visible with the spire of St. Michaels disappearing from the centre of the Elm Bank Building. As the road bends to the left Christ Church Spire becomes visible up to the roundabout where it becomes masked by mature vegetation. Additionally St Michaels and Holy Trinity are masked beyond the Northern elevation of the Elm Bank Building by recent City Centre Developments, before coming back into view at the roundabout junction.

Eastern side of Mile Lane

This view is not as strong but it does offer a unique view of three spires along with St Osburgs as the road begins to bend to the left. Preservation of this view would be possible whilst still allowing development to take place within the viewcone as is suggested within the provided cross-section. Thanks to Mile Lane's elevated position development *could* take place within the Civic Quarter without infringing on the viewcone, whilst the careful siting of development on the remaining sites in Parkside that front Mile Lane would ensure the foreground remained clear and offers opportunities for framing as demonstrated with the Parkside development (fig 8.4).

Located close to the junction of Mile Lane and Merlin Close, the analysis has identified assessment zones in the view cone foreground, these are indicated as A,B,C and D in figure 8.2. As with all identified views, impacts must also be assessed in the immediate adjacencies to view cones and also the background impacts. Two zones are identified outside of the ring road, whilst two are indicated within, which deliver a graduation of constraint whilst indicating a retention of appreciation of spires from this viewpoint.

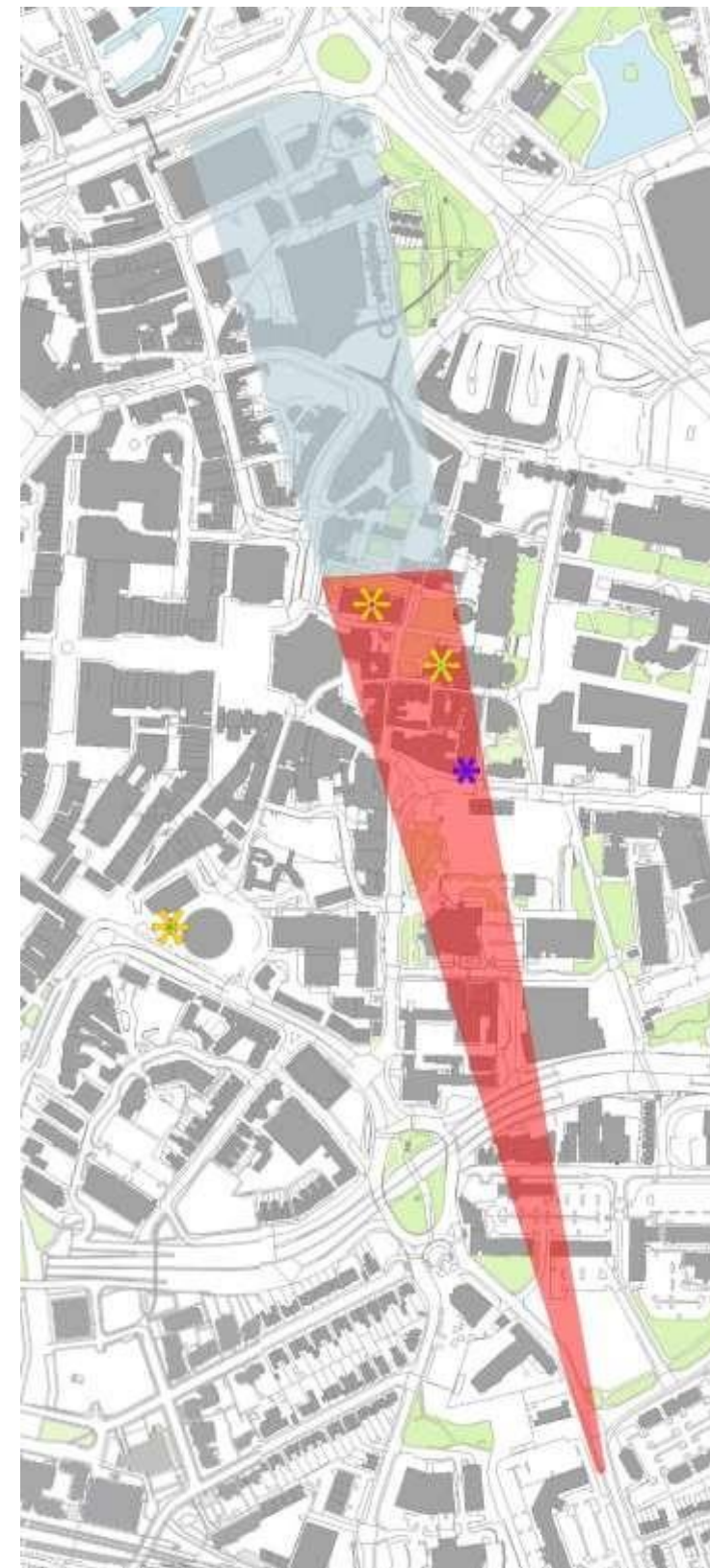


Fig 8.1



Fig 8.2



Fig 8.3

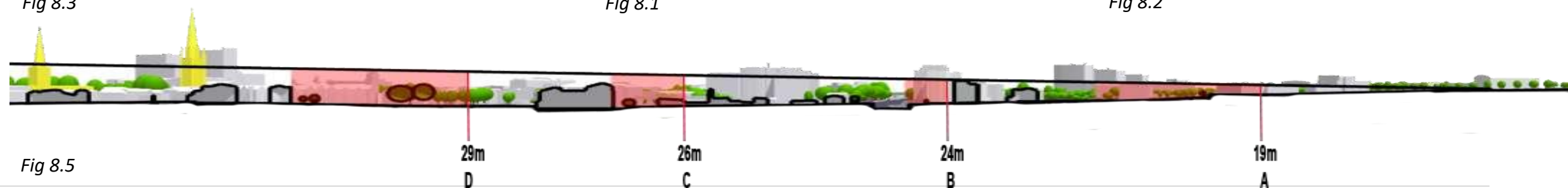


Fig 8.5



Fig 8.4

View cone 9: Mile Lane (Christ Church)

Moving northwest along Mile lane a second view cone appears with the spire of Christchurch becoming a dominant feature in the skyline as the road approaches the ring road junction 6.

Set aside the locally listed former Cheylesmore Council School and with the locally listed New Beeston works in the foreground, the view cone to Christchurch remains unimpeded by modern development and positive levels of appreciation of the asset, and also its positive contribution to townscape legibility are on offer.

This view cones also offers a demonstration of the importance of assessing background impacts, as seen in (fig 9.4), Mercia House is seen to the rear of Christchurch spire and as a result the primary nature of the spire in the skyline is compromised through the erosion of clear space surrounding. Similarly, the importance of materiality in background assessment is also demonstrated with the lighter materiality diminishing the impact and thus enabling the spire to remain distinct in the skyline

The foreground of the view cone is dominated by highway infrastructure and the large spaces seen around junction 6 of the ring road, therefore assessment zones in this view cone are shown as A and B in Fig 9.2, being inside the ring road.. Indicative suggestions of the constraint line to retain positive appreciation of the spire is shown in the cross section below. Any proposal made within the view cones or immediately aside (inclusive of background zone) should provide evidence of impacts upon the view cone in order to fully inform of impacts.

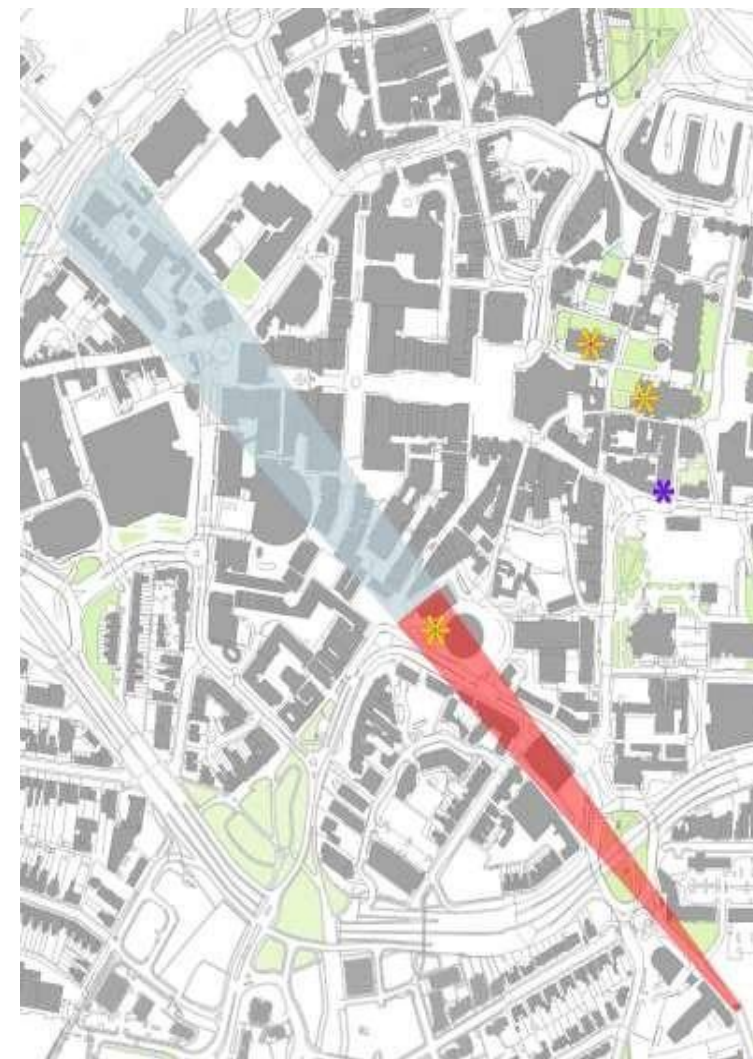


Fig 9.1

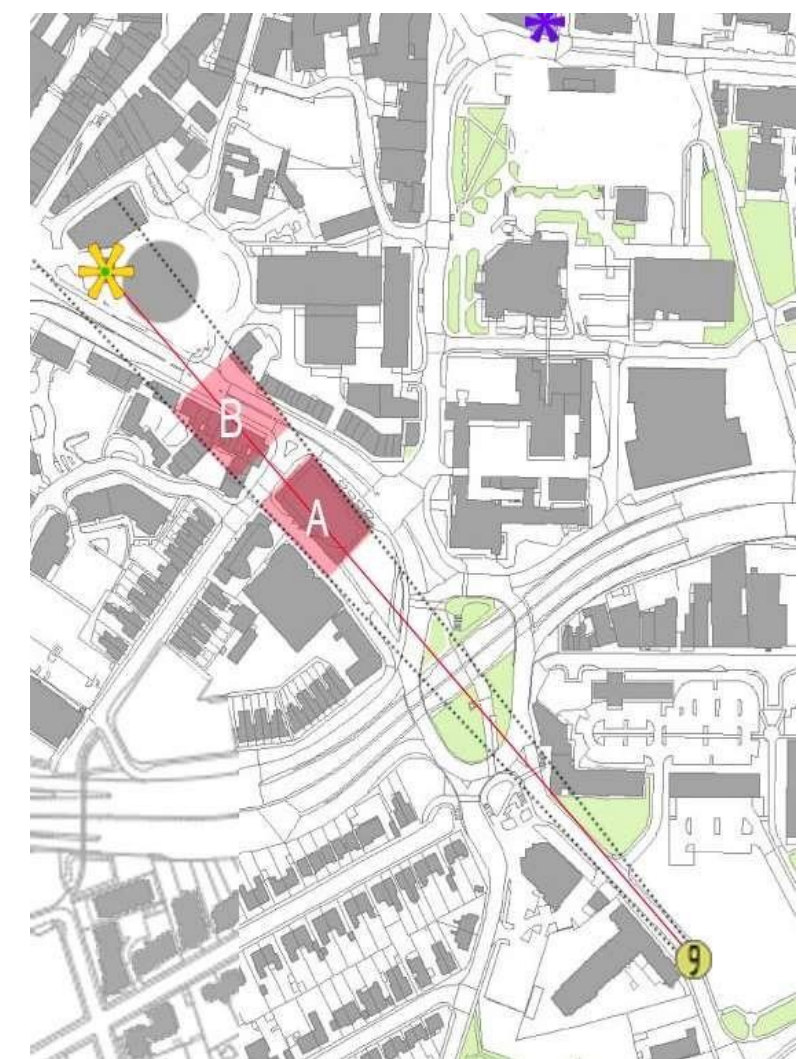


Fig 9.2



Fig 9.3



Fig 9.4



Fig 9.5



Fig 9.6

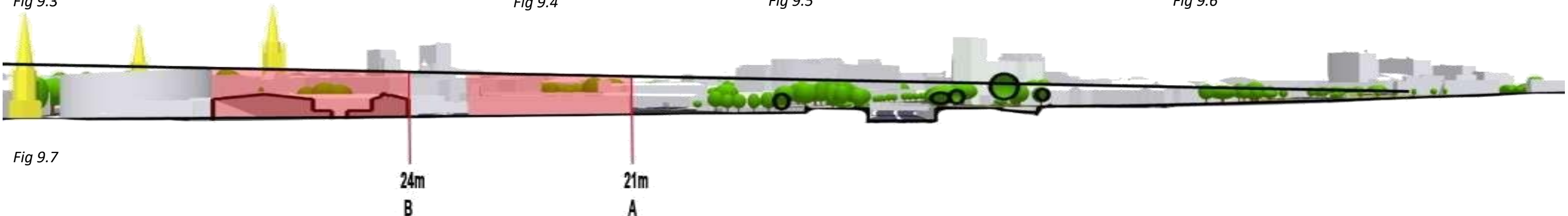


Fig 9.7

View cone 10: Quinton Road

The Quinton Road view is stronger in the winter when the trees are not in leaf. It offers a reasonable view of St. Michaels and Holy Trinity up to the ring road where a particularly strong vista opens up at the junction of Little Park and New Union Street. Due to the topography of this area with Quinton Road being only marginally higher than the land the spires, any development within the view cone would be required to be of lower level to retain this visual linkage, as is illustrated in fig 10.6 & 10.7

Similarly to view cone 9, much of the foreground is dominated by highways infrastructure and therefore assessment areas are noted only inside the ring road, and associated suggestions of the constraint line in order to protect the view is noted below.

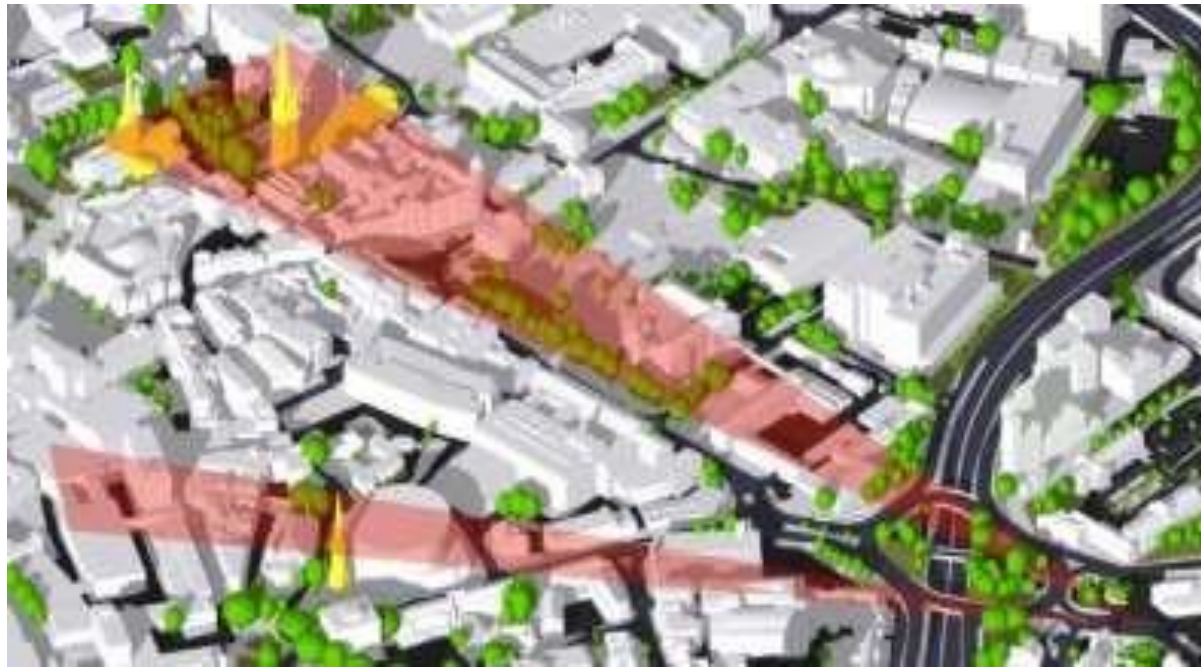


Fig 10.3



Fig 10.1

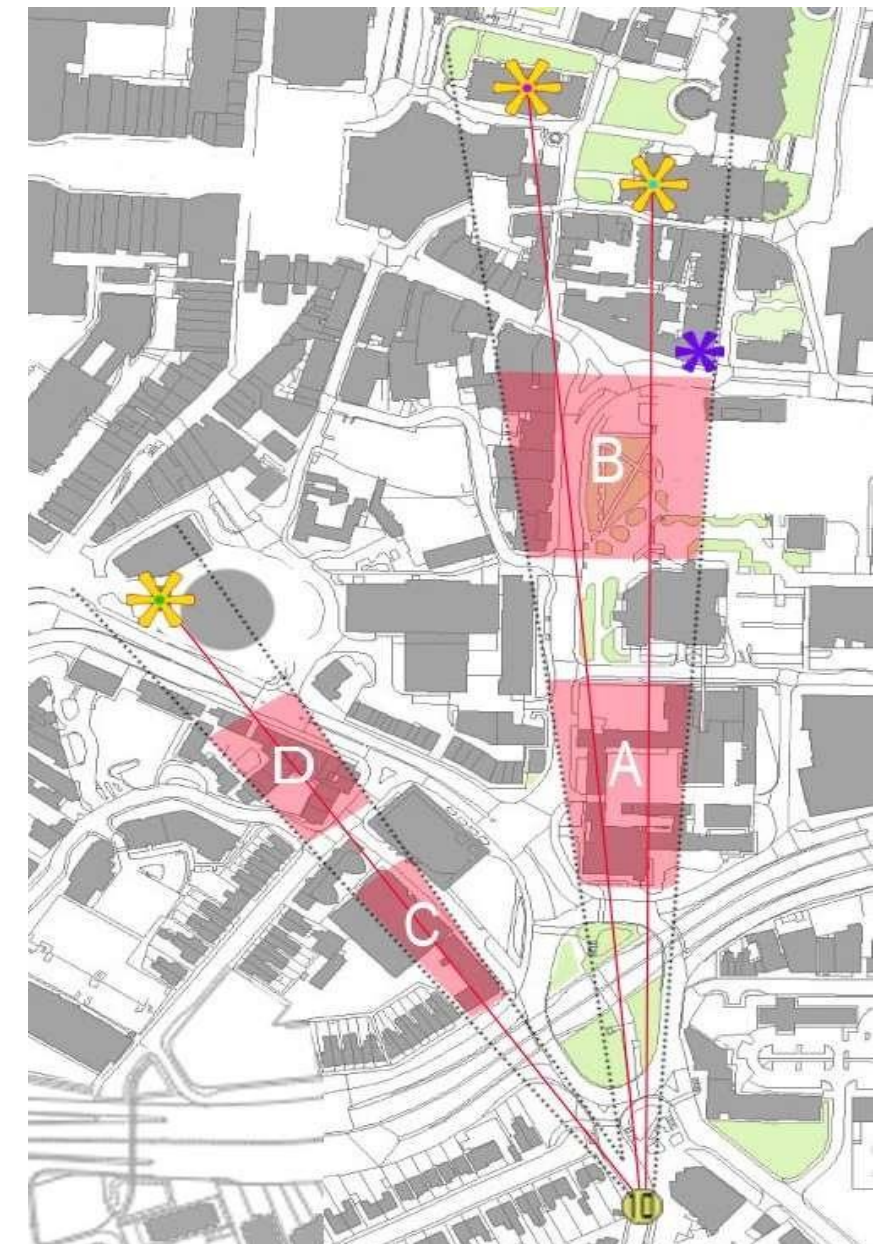


Fig 10.2



Fig 10.4



Fig 10.5

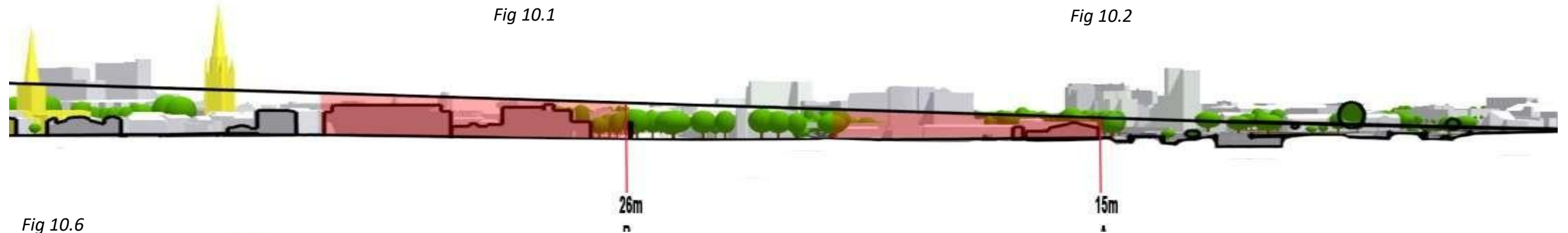


Fig 10.6

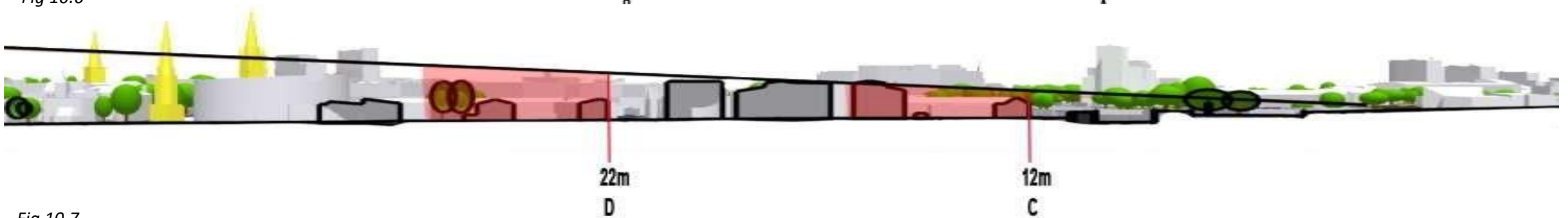


Fig 10.7

View cone 11: Manors Road Footbridge & Friars Road

Whilst Manor Road Footbridge and Friars Road offer limited views of the tops of the Spires of Christchurch and St. Michaels, given the elevated position, the length of time the views are visible to user is reasonably good. The close proximity of the Spires means that much of their detail can be appreciated and they make for a pleasant contrast with the modern buildings in the foreground.

Indicative assessment areas are shown in fig 11.2 and correspondingly in sections below (fig 11.6 and fig 11.7) showing a graduation of constraint whilst preserving appreciation of the spires from this viewpoint. Whilst the indicative constraint line is noted on the below sections, applicants should produce impact assessments when proposals are within, aside or in the background of identified view cones in order for impacts to be fully assessed.



Fig 11.3



Fig 11.1

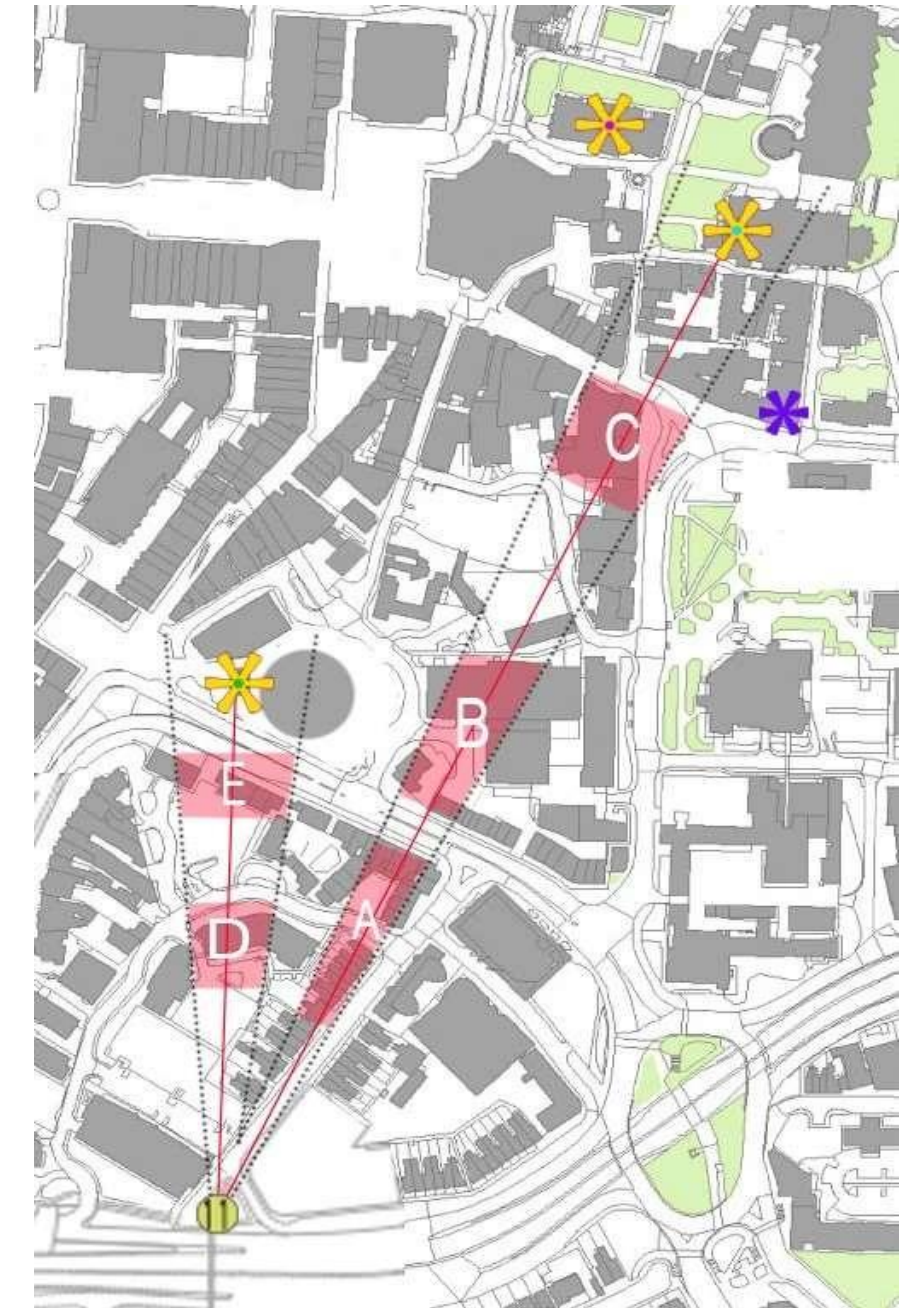


Fig 11.2



Fig 11.4



Fig 11.5



Fig 11.6

31m
E

18m
D



Fig 11.7

29m
C

26m
B

24m
A

View cone 12: Spencer Park & Footbridge

This is a Key pedestrian route into the city centre from the South and it offers one of the best views of the Three principle spires. The Spires become visible from the edge of the park and are clearly visible across the length of the Footbridge.

The view of the Spires disappears at the bottom of the Footbridge ramp as the view becomes obscured by mature vegetation. Given the height of the Footbridge it would be possible to preserve this view whilst still allowing development in the Viewcone as demonstrated with the provided cross-section.

This line of approach is notably historic, and in present day well trafficked via journeys from significant residential areas of the city to the south, the view cone from both the footbridge and appreciation from Spencer Park during times of lesser leaf cover, offers perhaps the foremost viewpoint in the city where the three spires are viewed together as an understandable group. The city skyline from this approach has developed a respectful 'bowing' in scale toward the spires, however some evidence of contradictions with this positive principle is also observed. Recent large-scale development on Fairfax Street has also demonstrated the sensitivity of background impact consideration.

The elevated topography of Spencer Park and the footbridge may allow for some change in the foreground whilst maintaining this important view of the iconic city spires, graduations of potential constraint are therefore indicated on the section below. As is the case in all identified view cones, applications sited within the view cones, both foreground and background, and also those immediately adjacent, should demonstrate levels of impact in order for robust assessment to take place and ensure preservation of this high-quality viewpoint.



Fig 12.3



Fig 12.1

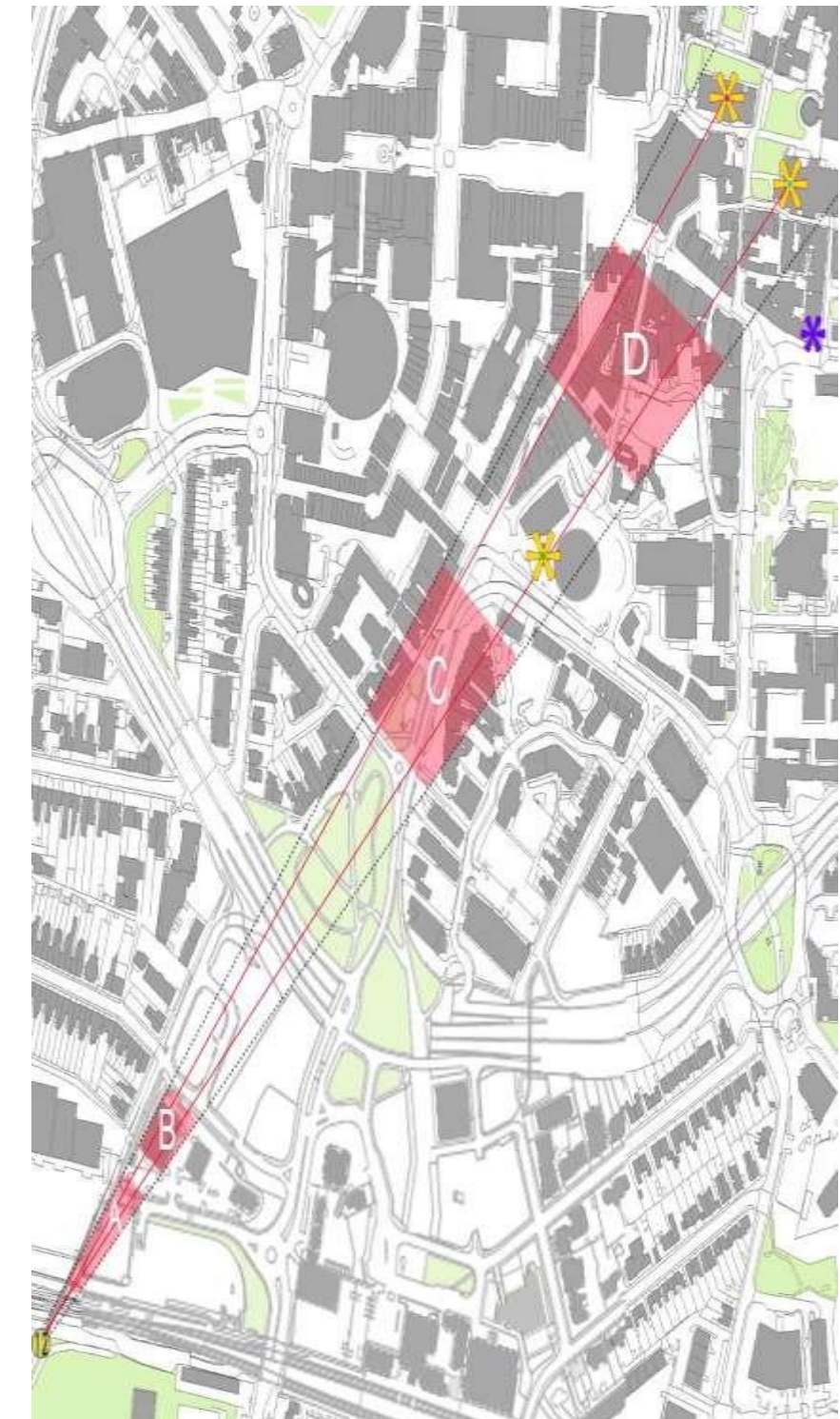


Fig 12.2



Fig 12.4

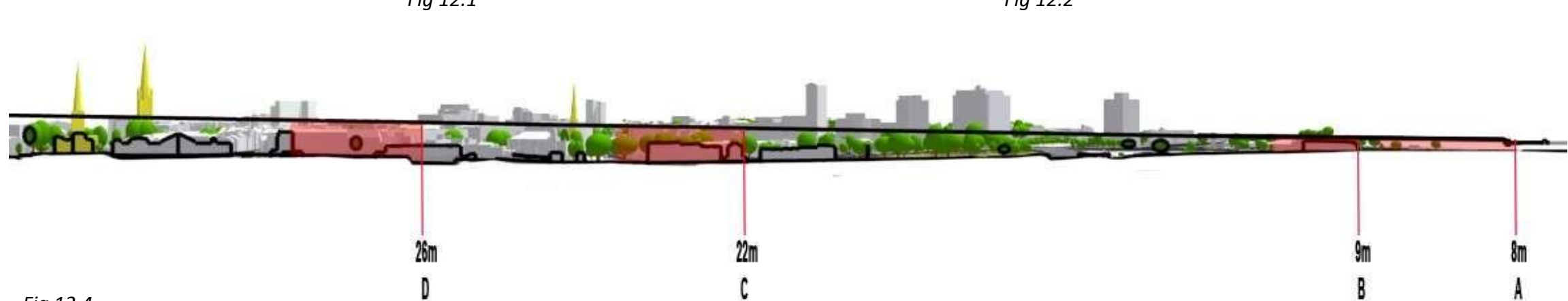


Fig 12.4

View cone 13: The Butts

The Butts is a Key route into the city centre and should offer a strong view of the Spires. This view was previously compromised by Coventry Point and currently now with its removal there is a clear view of St. Michaels and Holy Trinity that can be appreciated, with this view now appreciable, development should seek to retain the ability to appreciate the spires from this approach.

The view cone is both modern and kinetic in nature, unfolding on approach to the city as the highway sweeps toward the ring road junction and primarily visible from vehicular approach. The view cone towards the Cathedral and Holy Trinity is then also appreciable from pedestrian areas aside Croft road within the ring road. Given the kinetic nature of the view cone, a number of primary locations could be considered, however it is assessed that the location centrally in the highway of The Butts addressing vehicular approach which also covers the Croft Road approach, is the most representative location of this view as is therefore mapped as such in fig 13.1. Given the sweep of the highway however, the principle is that points of appreciation of all three spires should now be retained post the demolition of the formerly obscuring Coventry Point development.

Through examination of this newly appreciable view cone, a number of assessment areas are shown in fig 13.2, which seek to articulate the view cone constraint in order to retain the view toward the city spires, these suggestions are made only as guides and proposals should be assessed with detailed impact assessments in order to ensure impacts on views are able to be fully considered.



Fig 13.3



Fig 13.4



Fig 13.5

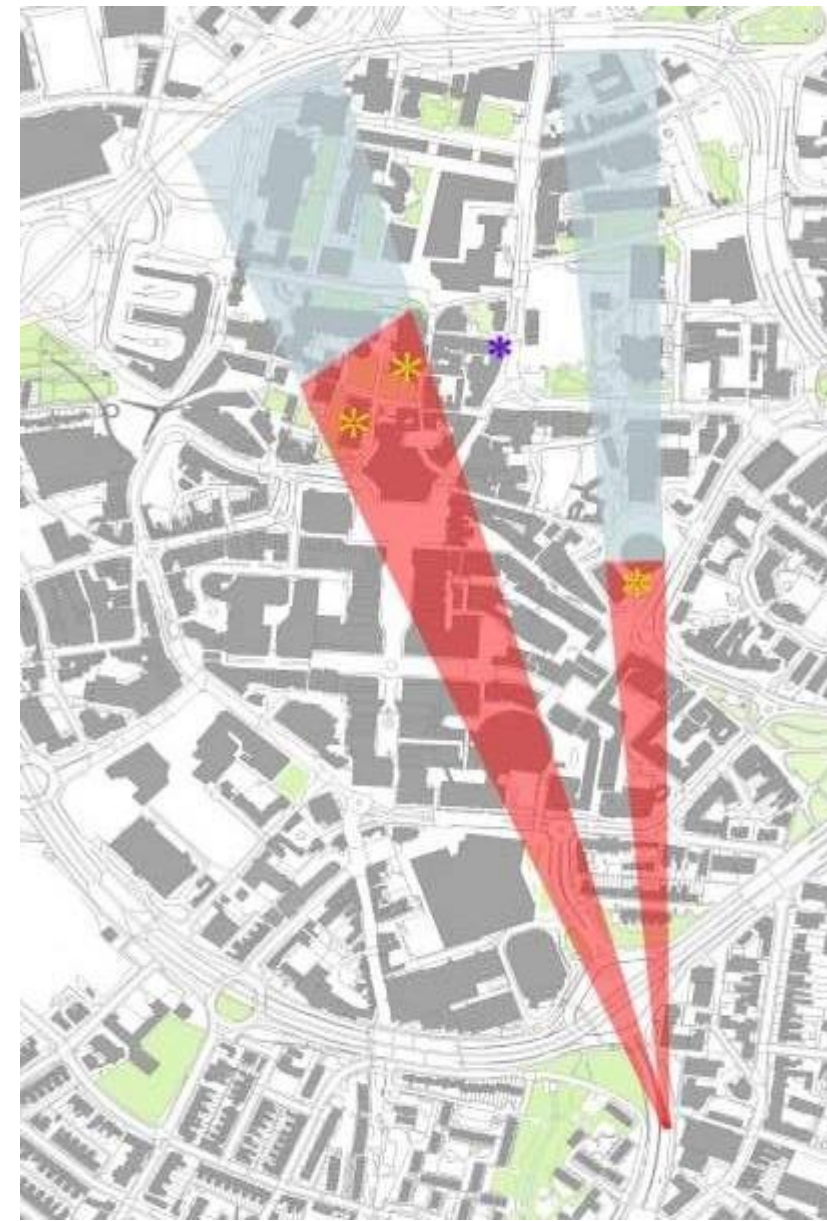


Fig 13.1

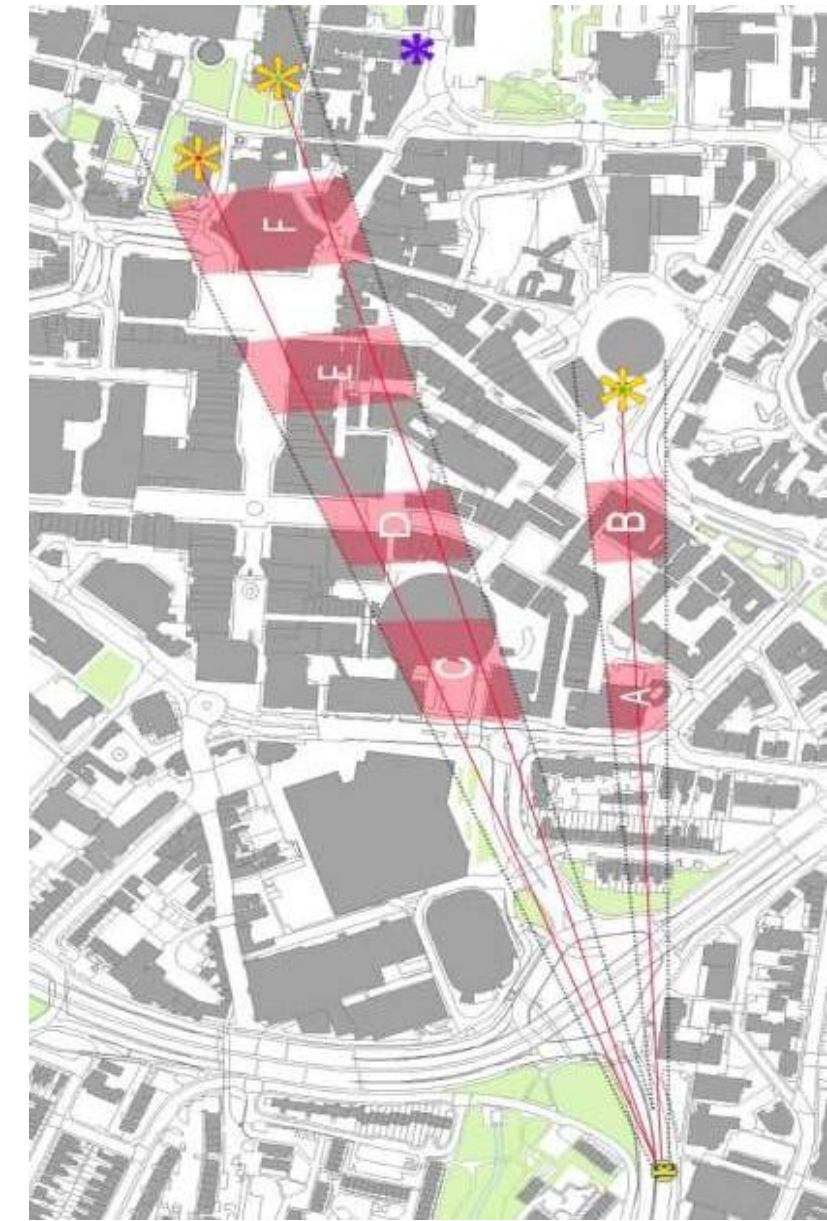


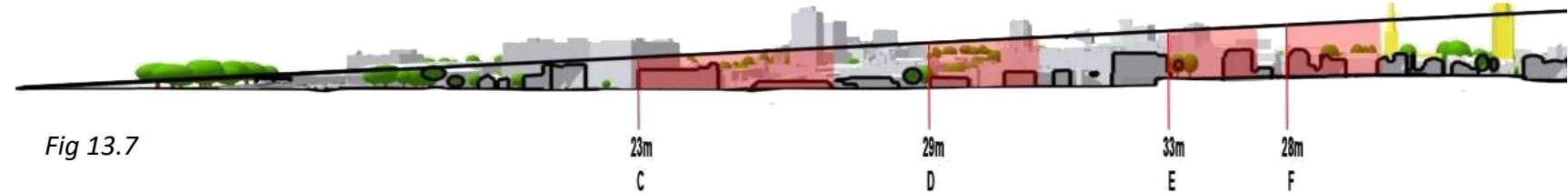
Fig 13.2



Fig 13.6



Fig 13.7



View cone 14: The Butts

Referenced within the AAP and now superseded within view management framework, viewcone 14 has now been incorporated into viewcone 13 in order to better articulate the primary points of appreciation of the Three Spires from the approach along the Butts.

View cone 15: Holyhead Road

Upper Holyhead Road offers a brief glimpse of St. Michaels, Holy Trinity and Christchurch as the view is largely obstructed by the mature vegetation on the ring road junctions roundabout, the view however intimes of low leaf cover or should vegetation be removed in future, is a key availability upon arrival to the city from a primary approach.

The spires re-emerge on either side of the ring road, with Christchurch to the right-hand side and St. Michaels & Holy Trinity to the left hand side of the roundabout, the views to left become appreciable between a gap in the buildings on the interior of the ring road. A good view of Christchurch can also be experienced from the top of Lower Holyhead Road (fig 15.4).

The provided cross-sections through this view cone indicate the level of constraint whilst preserving the view across multiple assessment areas. Indications of the line of constraint is given only as guidance, with any application submitted within or aside the immediate adjacencies and also inclusive of background zones, needing to demonstrate levels of impacts to the view, in order to provide a full assessment change in townscape.

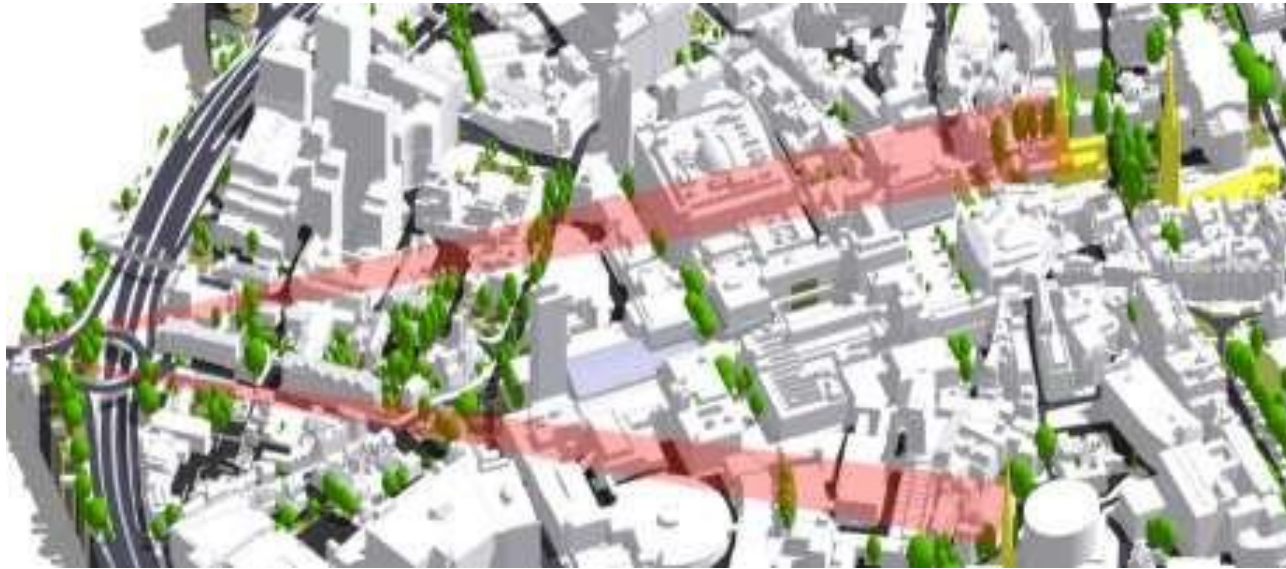


Fig 15.3



Fig 15.4

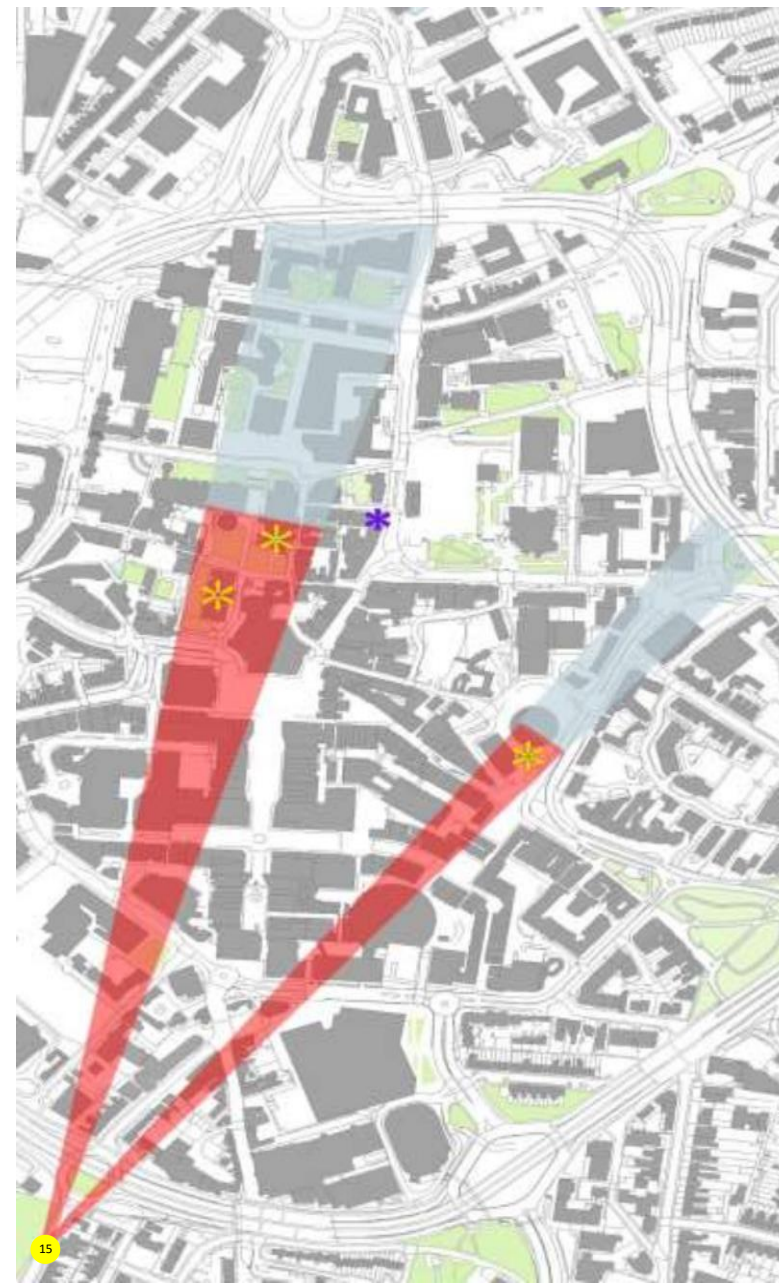


Fig 15.1

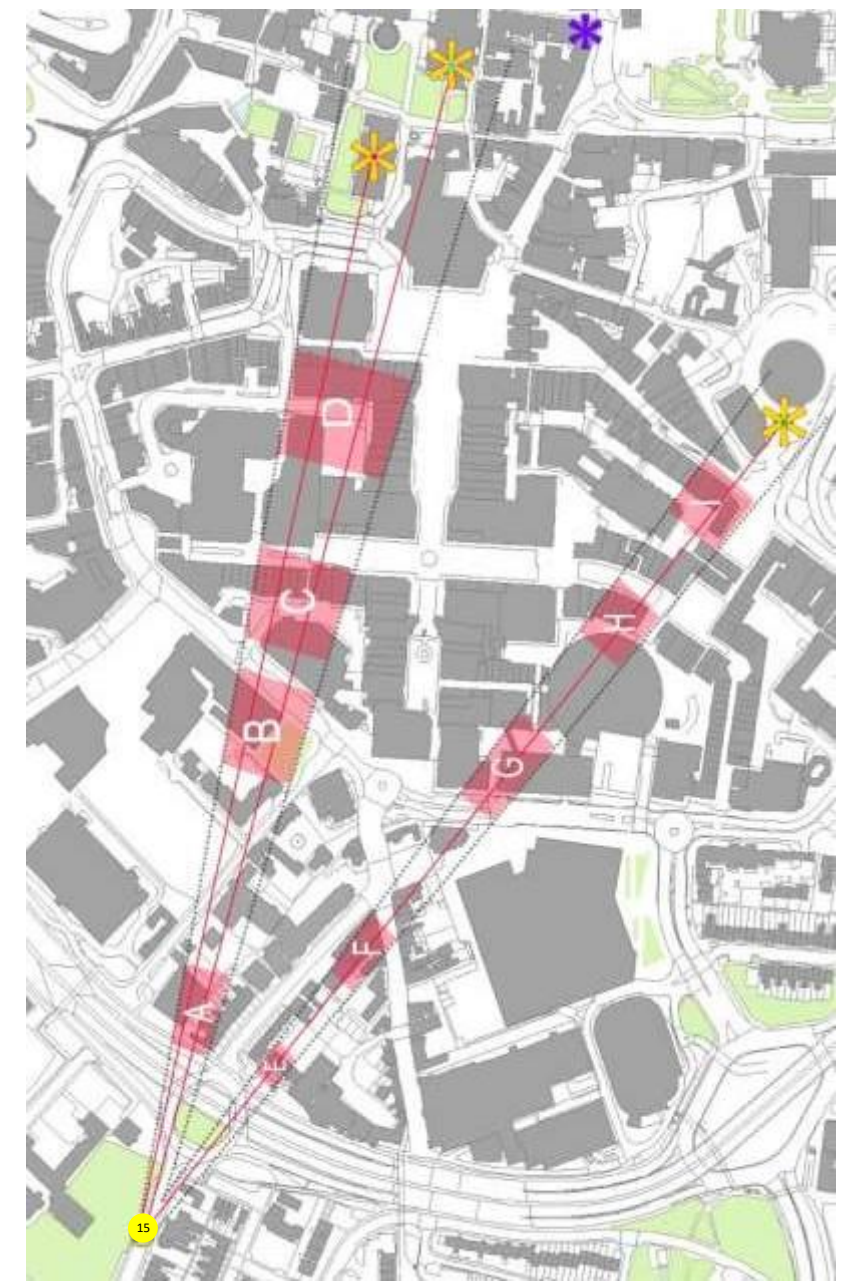


Fig 15.2

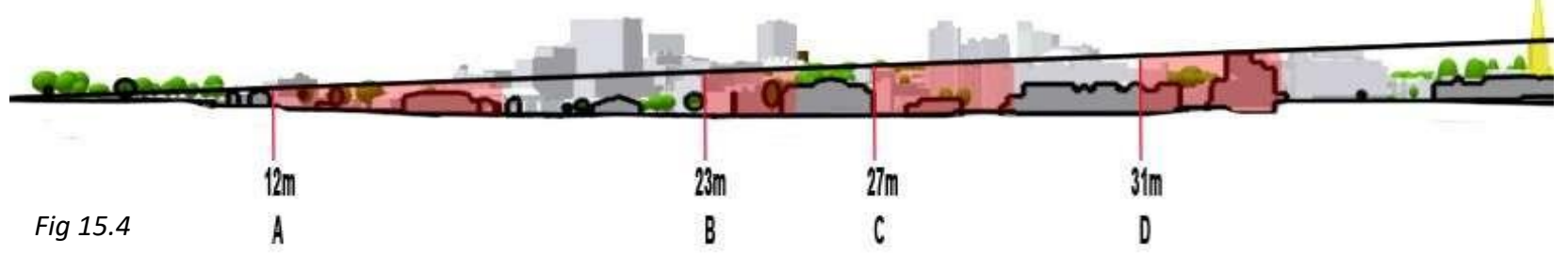


Fig 15.4

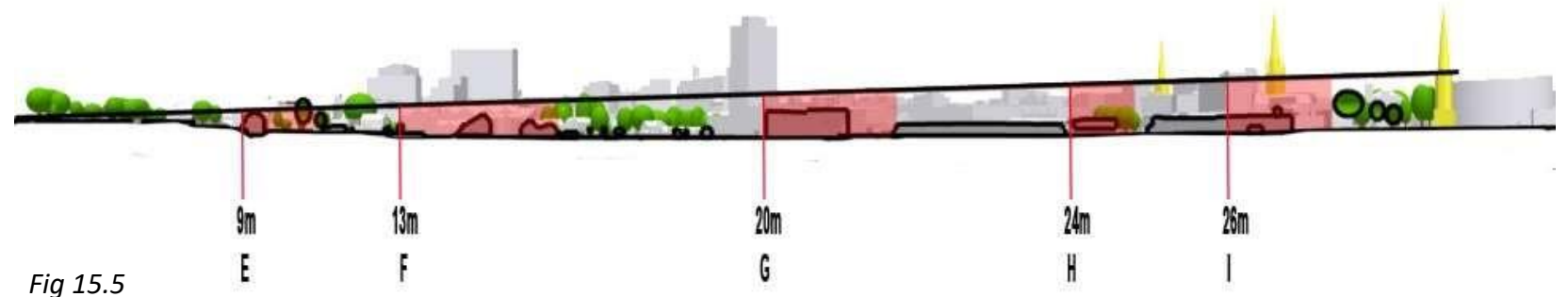


Fig 15.5

View cone 16: Upper Hill Street Footbridge

Whilst the views from Upper Hill Street are limited by developments within the ring road, excellent views become appreciable from the pedestrian footbridge crossing the ring road at the end of Upper Hill Street.

The Footbridge acts as a viewing platform offering a clear vista of the Spires on what is a busy pedestrian route into the city centre. This view is particularly sensitive due to previous developments having detracted from previously appreciable views from the junction of Upper Hill Street & Barras Lane (fig 16.6 - Historic and fig 16.7 - Current) and should be retained going forward in order to not lose the view entirely.

The provided cross-sections through this view indicatively illustrate the level of constraint in order to not further infringe on the view cone.



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Fig 16.5



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Fig 16.6



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Fig 16.7



Fig 16.1

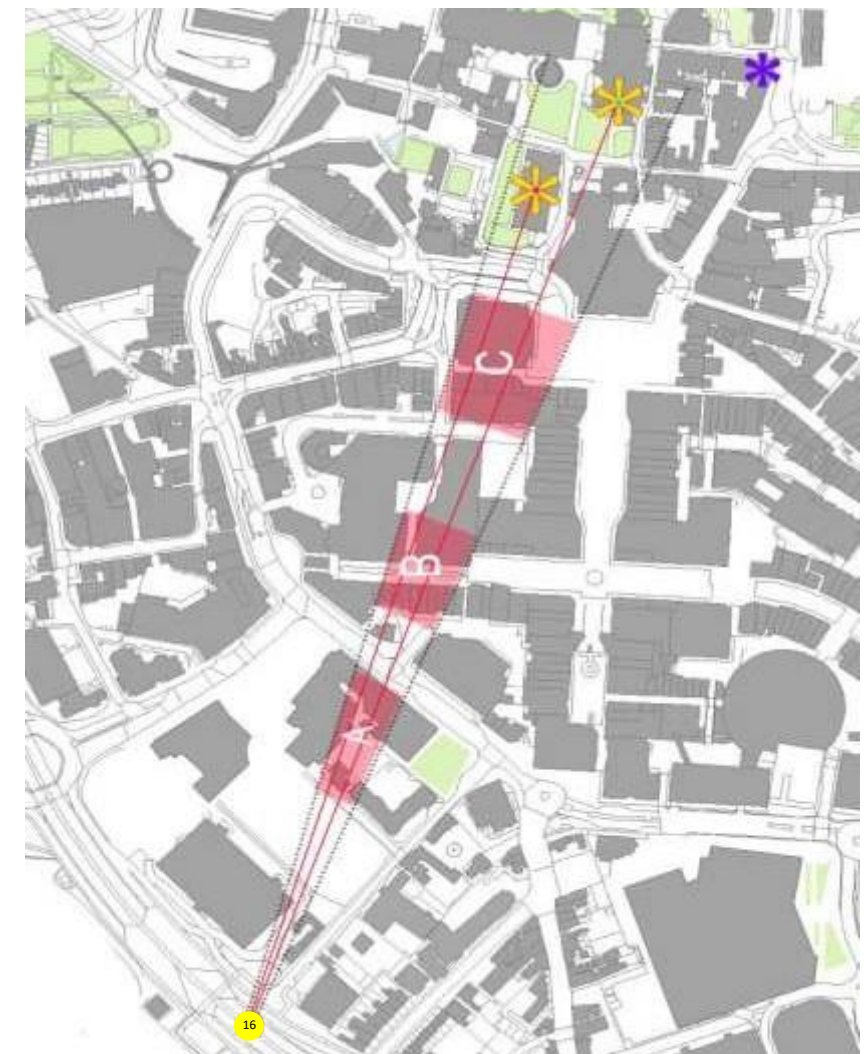


Fig 16.2



Fig 16.3

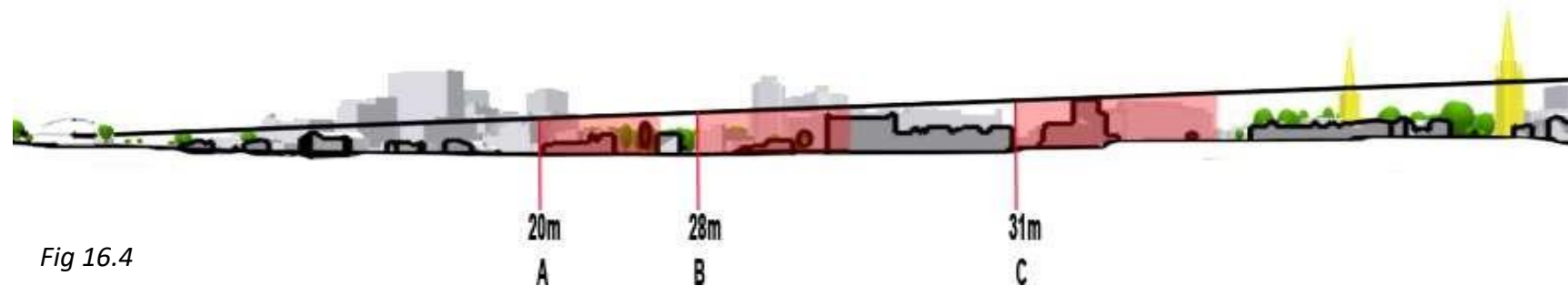


Fig 16.4

View cone 17: St Nicholas Street

St. Nicholas Street is a well used pedestrian route into the city centre and provides a visual connection from the heritage assets of the Coventry Canal Basin towards the cities three spires. St Nicholas Street offers strong views of St. Michaels and Holy Trinity, framed by modern development however remaining distinct in the skyline with positive 'space' around which benefits their primacy. From the junction with Light Lane the Spires become increasingly more prominent on the sky line with strong views looking across to Bishop Street.

The quality of the view experienced has improved with recent developments within the Civic Area which has resulted in the loss of Civic Centre 4 which previously formed the background of the Spires View. The removal of this building has resulted in this route now offering one of the best and consistent views of these Spires, which have been further framed by recent developments along Bishop Street. It is also evident on this view the importance of carefully considered street lighting infrastructure with the view somewhat compromised by a tall lighting column located aside the footbridge.

Retention of this positive viewpoint and the visual linkage between the heritage assets of the cathedral spires and the Coventry Canal Basin is crucial in delivering understanding of place, and demonstrates the constraint in order to respect this important view cone. The view corridor utilizes two assessment area within the city ring road to illustrate the graduation of constraint whilst retaining this view. Suggestions of the line of constraint is made as guidance only, and demonstrations of impact will be required to accompany any proposal which is located within, immediately aside or within the background of the view cone.

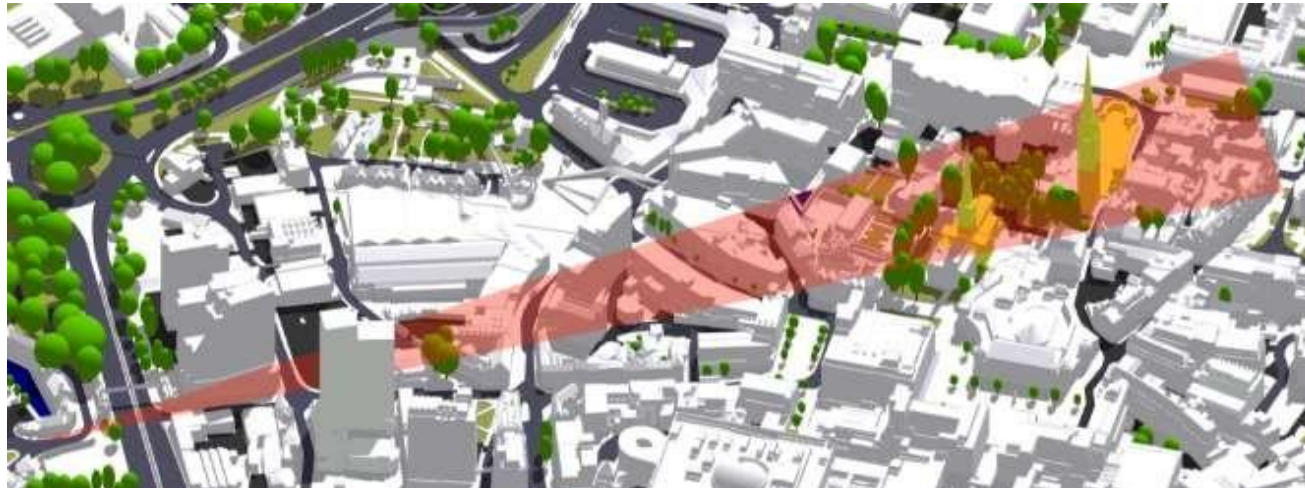


Fig 17.3



Fig 17.4



Fig 17.5

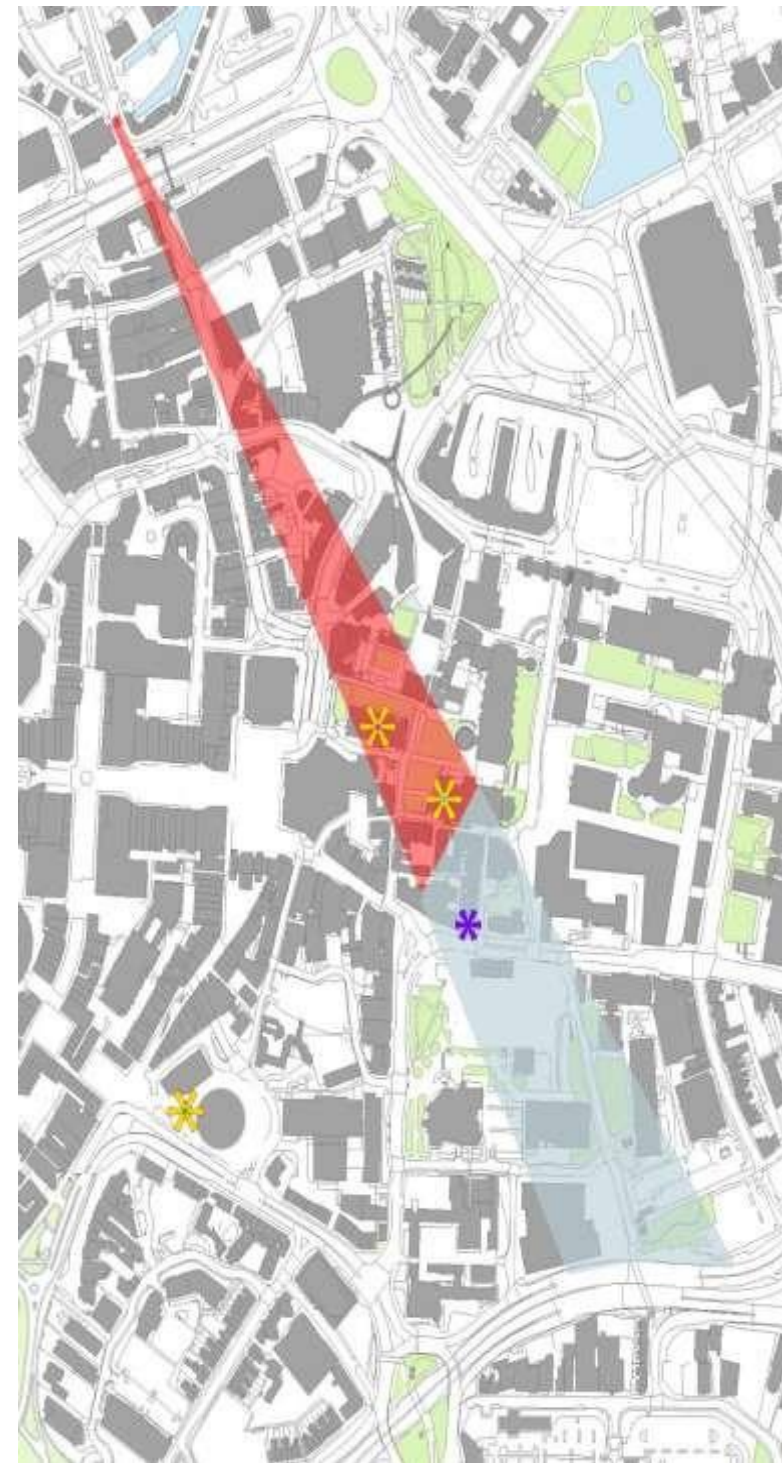


Fig 17.1

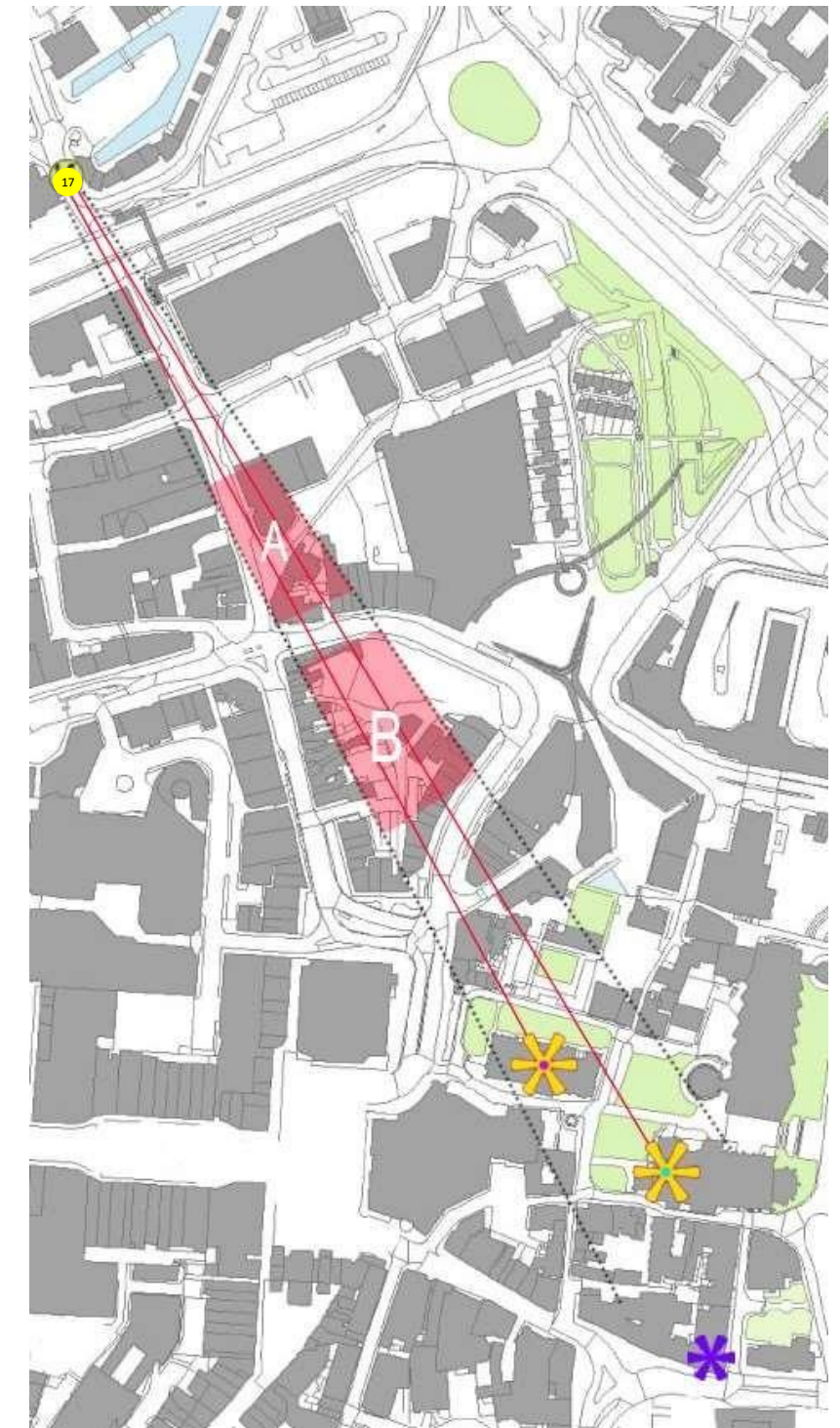


Fig 17.2



Fig 17.6

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Telephone – 02476 831109

Email – planningpolicy@coventry.gov.uk