
Report to South Central Area Committee

20th March 2024

Newmarket – Pedestrian Improvement Measures

Background

Newmarket and its environs is an area undergoing unprecedented change and regeneration. Since 2015, the area has seen the progressive replacement of former light industrial units and warehouses, and a number of longstanding vacant sites, with new high density developments including apartments, purpose built student accommodation, hotels, retail and leisure uses and office. From being a little used and overlooked area, Newmarket now has a substantially increased resident population, high levels of visitor footfall (to hotels and attractions in the area) and a large concentration of students staying in student accommodation in the area.

It has been a longstanding objective of Dublin City Council to regenerate this area. In 2017 the South Central Area Office initiated a redesign for the main square and its adjacent streets to improve the quality of the public realm in tandem with the development happening around its periphery.

The main elements of the Public Realm Improvement Scheme included the creation of a large pedestrianised events space at Newmarket (the Universal Square), the removal of most through-traffic, a rationalisation of car parking, and the introduction of more greenery and landscaping. Adjoining streets would also be repaved and services such as street lighting etc upgraded to create a coherent, high quality public realm.

The Newmarket & Environs Public Realm Improvement Scheme was approved by the City Council under Part VIII in 2017.

The approved Public Realm Improvement Scheme is currently listed in the Council's Capital Programme and the project is supported funded by the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (Tranche II). The project has been waiting on the allocation of staff resources by Roads Design Division for a number of years in order to proceed to detailed design and construction. The progress of the scheme has also been impacted by the scale and sequencing of development work around the square.

The need for interim measures

With the recent completion of Ardee Point Student Housing (300+ units) and the impending occupation of the large Newmarket Yards scheme (500+ apartments) on the north side of Newmarket, Newmarket is set to experience much greater levels of pedestrian use and there is a greater need for dedicated pedestrian space.

The Area Office originally sought to implement an interim scheme in 2021 under Covid 19 Measures but the commencement of development at the 'Newmarket Yards' site made that impossible. With the completion now of most of the large developments around the square, there is an opportunity to reduce the volume of through-traffic, to redistribute space away from excessive car parking, and to create a more pleasant and usable area for residents, workers and visitors.

Proposal

A series of rapid-install measures are proposed for Newmarket to increase the extent of pedestrian space on the square, to reduce the extent of car parking and restrict parking to the west end of Newmarket, and to better regulate and manage traffic flows on the square.

The proposed measures include:

- creating a large pedestrian space on the south side of the square. The new space will be approximately 10-12m deep and will be contiguous with the existing footpath. All parking in this area will be removed. This expansive area will be constructed using rubberised kerbs, asphalt and resin-bound surface.
- widening the footpath on the north side. These buildouts will be approximately 3m deep and will be contiguous with the existing footpath. Provision will be made for 2 no. disabled parking spaces (relocated from the south side of the square) and an area for loading. Again, buildouts will be constructed using rubberised kerbs, asphalt and resin-bound surfaces.
- creating a defined traffic route through the square (in both directions) and restricting vehicles from the area south of the former weigh station building on the east side of Newmarket/Ward's Hill.
- reordering car parking on the west end of the square including provision for loading. Pay parking will operate in this area.
- installing street furniture including tree planters, seating and bollards as required.

The measures are intended to be an interim solution that will begin the process of re-ordering Newmarket and its environs in line with the approved public realm improvement scheme (Part VIII 2017).

The measures are intended to reduce traffic speeds; improve facilities for pedestrian and create a more relaxing environment on this important public space; and substantially reduce the extent of car parking on the square.

Traffic into Newmarket and the wider network of streets will continue to be facilitated and the current HOHO tourist bus access to Newmarket will also be maintained. The bus stop for HOHO services was recently relocated back to Brabazon Place following the completion of the Premier Inn Hotel.

The existing recycling facility will remain in place.

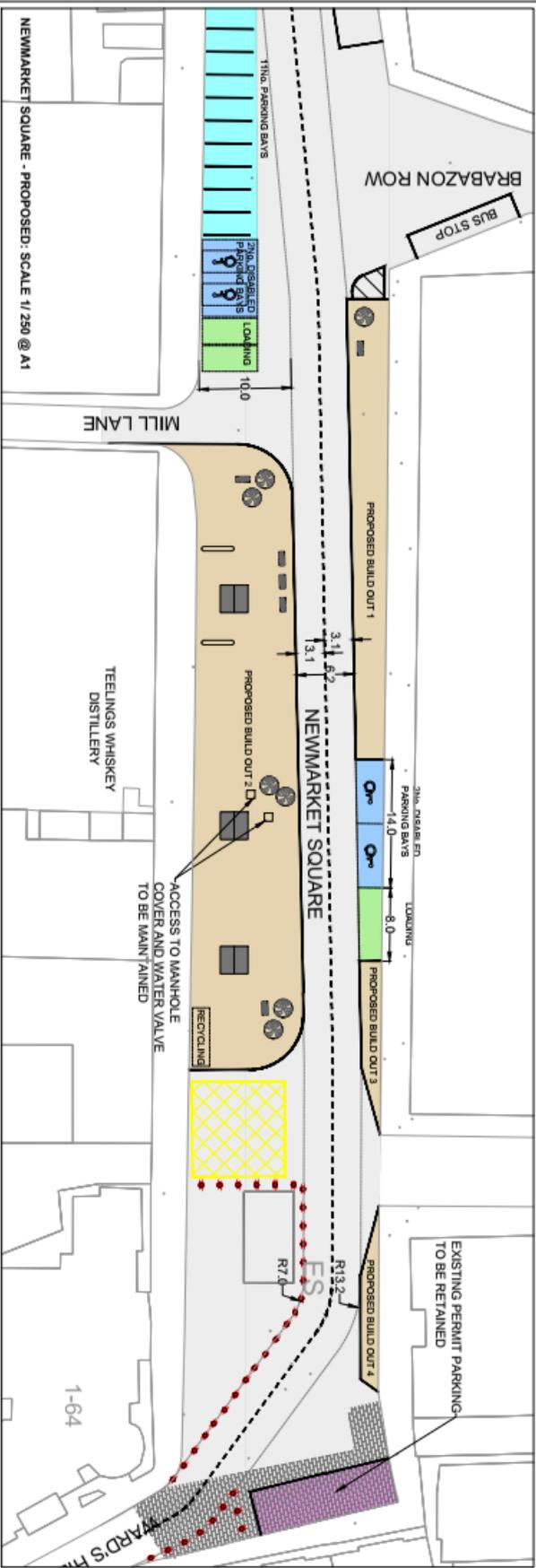
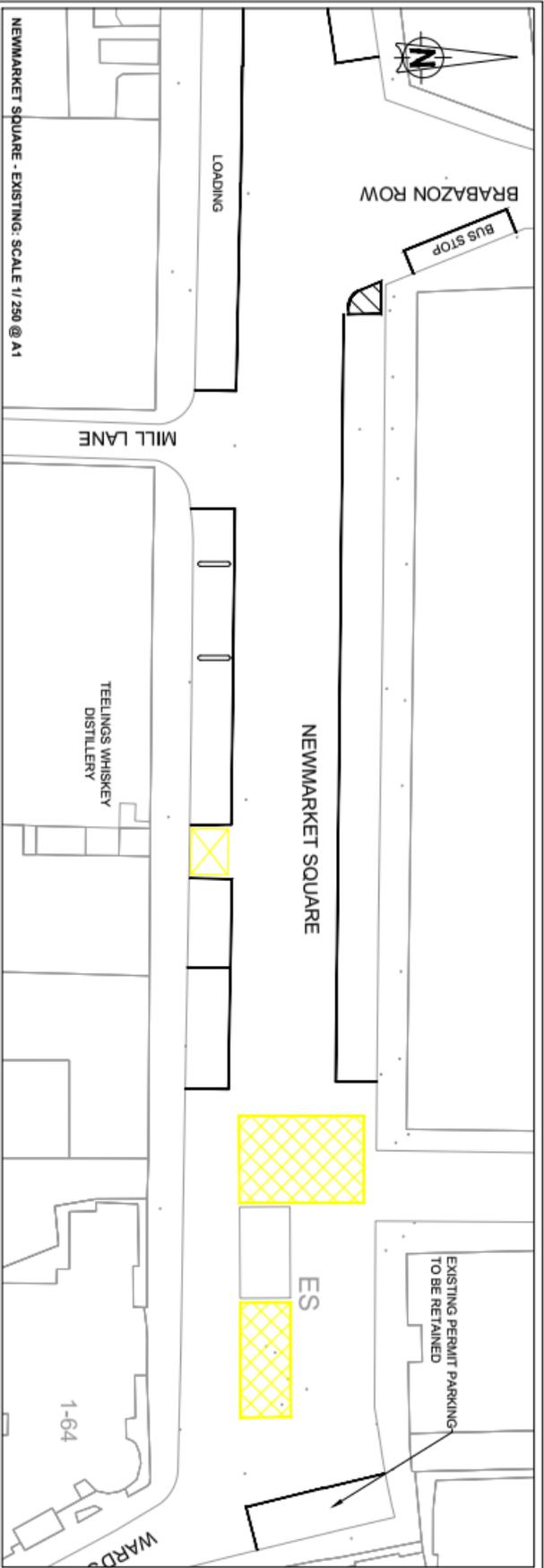
Access to existing gates and site entrances will be maintained.

Implementation

It is now proposed to undertake a short non-statutory consultation with local stakeholders to assess their views on the proposals. Details of the proposals will be advertised shortly.

The current expectation is that the main works will be undertaken by a contractor during the summer. Members will be advised of the programme once it has been agreed.

The project is being undertaken by the Transportation Section under the provisions of the Roads Acts.



- LEGEND:
- Proposed Parking
 - Proposed Disabled Parking
 - Proposed Loading
 - Proposed Build-Out
 - Existing Permit Parking

DRAFT