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13. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

13.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The LVIA assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual amenity. The LVIA was informed by desktop studies and receptor mapping, site visits, verified photomontages, and an impact assessment methodology which follows best practice guidance for LVIA. The LVIA also includes assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. This chapter is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix 13-1, LVIA Methodology: An appendix detailing the methodology and guidance used for the assessments reported in this chapter;
- Appendix 13-2 (Hereafter 'Photomontage Booklet'): A3 Photomontage Booklet presenting verified photomontage visualisations from representative viewpoints.

This chapter of the EIAR provides baseline information on the EIAR Study Area as a whole with a focus on the Proposed Development site, and specific impact assessment sections relative to the Proposed Development being contained in Section 13.7.

This chapter comprises the following sections:

- **Introduction** – Includes a description of the Proposed Development, its location and essential aspects requiring the most consideration from an LVIA perspective.
- **Methodology and Assessment Criteria** – A brief overview of the methodology and guidance used to conduct the LVIA. A full comprehensive description of the methods used is detailed in Appendix 13-1 – LVIA Methodology
- **Landscape Baseline** – A review of the landscape policy context and landscape designations pertinent to the Proposed Development site; a description of the baseline landscape conditions and character of the EIAR Study Area and wider landscape setting; as well as identification of landscape value and landscape sensitivities.
- **Visual Baseline** – An appraisal of likely visibility of the Proposed Development from prominent visual receptors, including a description of visibility from designated scenic amenity designations. The visual baseline identifies key visual receptors and locations selected as viewpoints for the production of photomontages.
- **Cumulative Baseline** – Identification and description of other permitted or proposed large scale developments in the surrounding area.
- **Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment** – An impact assessment of visual effects arising from 5 No. representative viewpoints.
- **Landscape and Visual Effects** – A determination of the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. Assessment of effects is informed by multiple site visits and photomontage visualisations. Cumulative and in-combination effects are also assessed, addressing the interactions with other relevant permitted and proposed developments in the surrounding area.

13.1.1 Statement of Authority

This LVIA was written by Jack Workman and reviewed by Michael Watson. James Crean provided technical support for the production of the LVIA including fieldwork and GIS with oversight from Jack and Michael.

Jack Workman MSc., TMLI. is the Landscape & Visual Project Director at MKO and is chartered as a Technician Member of the British Landscape Institute. Jack is an environmental scientist and an LVIA

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specialist with an academic background in the field of Environmental Science and Geography. Jack's primary role at MKO is scoping and writing LVIA for EIARs with over 5 years' experience managing all aspects of LVIA for a broad range of commercial infrastructure developments. Jack holds a BSc. in Psychology, and an MSc. in Coastal and Marine Environments (Physical Processes, Policy & Practice). Jack is an active participant in the National Landscape Forum, presenting in 2023 and 2024 on the topic of LVIA, he also regularly delivers guest lectures for students on the topic of LVIA at top third level institutions in Ireland including University of Galway, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and University College Cork. Jack holds a membership with the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management and is also a member of the Landscape Research Group.

Michael Watson is the Environmental Director at MKO, overseeing a team of highly skilled environmental professionals working on EIAR for a wide range and scale of projects, in particular large-scale infrastructure, housing, commercial and renewable energy development. His key strengths include project strategy, expert knowledge of the EIA Directive, and in-depth knowledge of the various disciplines contributing to EIAR and the Habitats Directive, including LVIA. Michael has been the Head of the Environment Team at MKO for over nine years. He is a key member of the MKO senior management team responsible for developing the business, mentoring team members, fostering a positive culture and promoting continuous employee professional development. Michael holds an MA in Environmental Management from NUI Maynooth, is a Member of IEMA, a Chartered Environmentalist national CEnv) and a Professional Geologist (PGeo).

James Crean is an Environmental Scientist and LVIA Specialist with MKO. His primary role at MKO is producing the LVIA chapter of EIAR reports. James holds an MSc. in Applied Coastal and Marine Management from University College Cork. Since joining MKO, James has worked widely on renewable energy infrastructure, commercial, recreational, and residential projects. James is a qualified Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator and holds an A1/A3 and A2 drone licence.

13.1.2 Proposed Development Description

The Proposed Development covers an area of 2.9 hectares (ha) and comprises a mix of 133 no. residential units, open spaces and all other site related infrastructure. The Proposed Development is a component of a larger residential development project referred to as the 'Proposed Project'.

The Proposed Project comprises both the Proposed Development and an application for 362 no. residential units and associated infrastructure on lands immediately to the east of the Proposed Development site, referred to throughout this EIAR as LRD East. An application for LRD East was submitted to GCC in October 2025 (Planning Reference Number: 25/60320). Permission was granted by GCC on the 9th April 2026 and the application is currently under appeal with An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) under Planning Reference Number: ACP-324237-26).

As such, the Proposed Project involves the construction of 495 residential units (362 no. units as part of LRD East and 133 no. units as part of the Proposed Development), with associated infrastructure, open spaces and all other site related infrastructure. The wider masterplan for the Knocknacarra area was extensively discussed and refined in collaboration with Galway City Council (GCC). The master planning process, initiated in 2023 for the Knocknacarra District Centre (South) and the adjoining "Kingston lands" considered access, connectivity, permeability, and a balanced mix of uses across the broader area, ensuring that each subsequent application, including the present proposal, is informed by cohesive and coordinated design framework.

The Proposed Development will consist of the following:

- Provision of 133 no. residential units in 2 no. development areas with a mix of duplex and house types on a site area of 2.9 ha. The buildings range between 2 no. and 3 no. storeys in height. The development will comprise the following:
  - 51 no. 3-bed townhouses;

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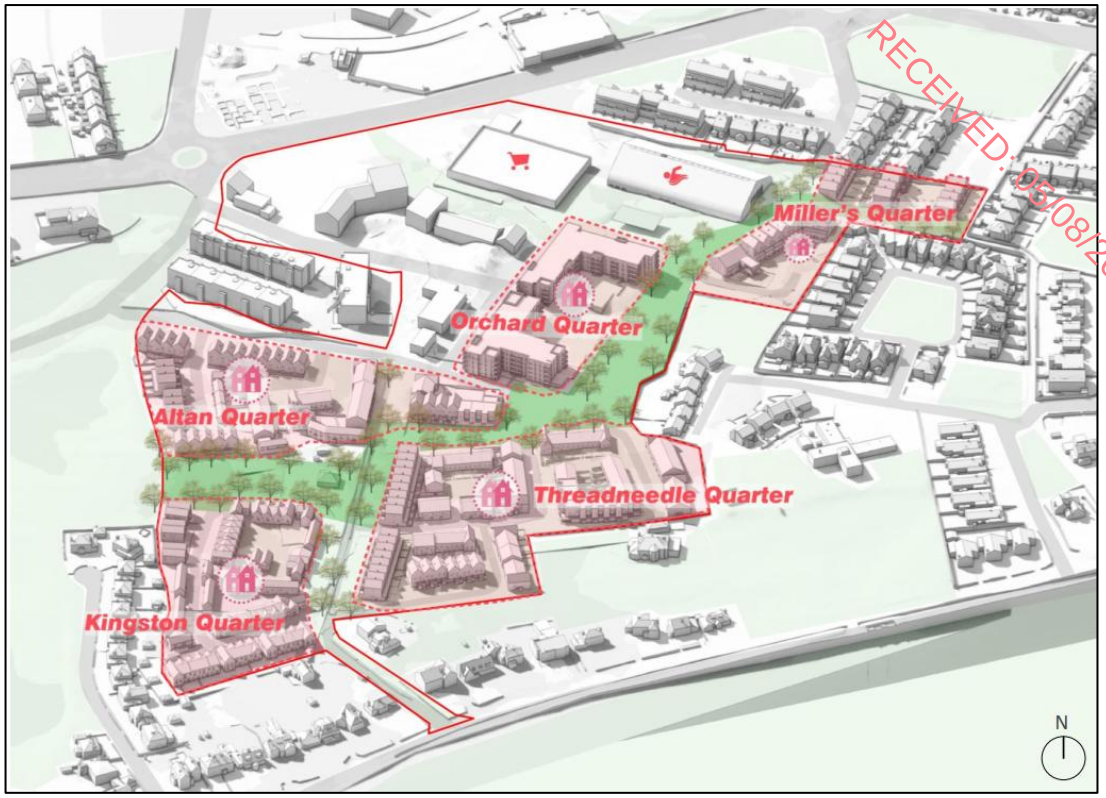
    - 6 no. 4-bed townhouses;
    - 1 no. 1-bed duplex apartments;
    - 1 no. 2-bed duplex houses;
    - 37 no. 2-bed ground floor duplex apartments;
    - 37 no. 3-bed duplex houses.
- Demolition of existing structures (388 m^2);
- Vehicular access to the Proposed Development from a permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Upgrades to the permitted road (Planning Reference 24/60370 refers);
- Pedestrian and cycle access to the adjacent Kingston Park (ACP Ref: 323873);
- Conversion and upgrade of an existing structure to a cafe (65.6 m^2);
- The provision of public open space;
- The provision of 192 no. bicycle parking spaces;
- The provision of 143 no. car parking spaces;
- Public lighting, bin stores, signage, services, 2 no. ground mounted substation kiosks, site landscaping and all ancillary site development and enabling works.

A comprehensive description of the Proposed Development is included in Chapter 4 of this EIAR. All elements of the Proposed Development have been assessed as part of this EIAR.

13.1.2.1 References to the Proposed Development

For the purposes of this chapter of the EIAR:

- 'Proposed Development' – This term refers to all the development components detailed in Section 13.1.2 above, which are the subject of the current planning application, comprising 133 residential units and associated infrastructure on a site of approximately 2.9 ha.
- 'LRD East' – This term refers to the adjacent residential development submitted to GCC under Planning Reference Number: 25/60320 which is currently under appeal with ACP under Planning Reference Number: ACP-324237-26 and comprises 362 residential units and associated infrastructure on a site of approximately 5.37 ha.
- 'Proposed Development site' – This includes all lands within the 'Planning application (red line) boundary' delineated by a red line within maps presented in this chapter.
- 'Proposed Project' – The Proposed Project involves the construction of 495 residential units. This includes the Proposed Development and LRD East within the EIAR Study Area which form part of the overall Masterplan for this area of Knocknacarra.
- 'EIAR Study Area' encompasses an overall area of 8.74 ha and covers the entire Proposed Project area delineated by a green line within maps presented in this chapter.
- 'LVIA Study Area' – This term refers to all lands within 1km of the EIAR Study Area and is the primary study area for the assessment of effects on landscape and visual receptors in this chapter.
- 'Local access laneway' refers to the laneway located at the southern portion of the EIAR which connects local residences to the R337.



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Figure 13-1 Neighbourhoods - Excerpt extracted from the Urban Framework Plan Design Statement for the Proposed Project.

The image above shows the layout of the Proposed Project with 5 distinct residential neighbourhoods illustrated by the red dashed line comprising various types of residential buildings. The components of the Proposed Development under assessment in this LVIA include the following neighbourhoods:

- Proposed Altan Quarter: Primarily duplex blocks and townhouses.
- Proposed Kingston Quarter: Detached, semi-detached and townhouses.

Section views extracted from the planning drawings and a CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery) of these different neighbourhoods are presented in the figures below showing the type of development and their above ground heights.

The Proposed Development forms part of a wider 'Masterplan' for this undeveloped area of Knocknacarra in Galway City. As seen in Figure 13-1 above the overall Proposed Project is highlighted in red within a red line encircling the full Masterplan area, including several areas which do not form part of the Proposed Development such as the Orchard Quarter, Threadneedle Quarter, and Miller's Quarter. A permitted regional aquatic centre (Planning Reference: 2460370) is located to the north of the Orchard Quarter and is This considered in the assessment of cumulative effects (see Section 13.5).



Figure 13-2 Section view of duplexes in the Altan Quarter – Excerpt Extracted from the Planning Drawings.



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Figure 13-3 Section view of townhouses in the Kingston Quarter– Excerpt Extracted from the Planning Drawings.



Figure 13-4 CGI View of townhouses in Kingston Quarter

13.1.3 Essential aspects of the Development from an LVIA Perspective

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition published by the Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) in 2013 (hereafter referred to as 'GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013)') states that:

> *"It is important to make sure that the project description provides all the information needed to identify its effects on particular aspects of the environment. For LVIA it is important to understand, from the project description, the essential aspects of the scheme that will potentially give rise to its effects on the landscape and visual amenity".*

The Proposed Development includes the construction of multiple buildings with the tallest houses reaching an of 38.6 metres AOD (See Section View of Altan Quarter above). The raised profile of these buildings (apartments, townhouses, semi-detached houses) shown in the section views and CGIs pictured above in Figure 13-2, Figure 13-3 and Figure 13-4 are likely to be the most visually prominent

features of the Proposed Development and are deemed to be the essential aspect of the proposal from an LVIA perspective and is the key focus of the assessments reported in this LVIA.

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The undeveloped land of the Proposed Development site is surrounded by boundary vegetation along portions of the western boundary, interrupted by stretches of palisade and wooden fences, along the northern boundary, and along the eastern boundary. In the southern portion of the Proposed Development site, the boundaries become low stone walls. Regardless of boundary vegetation, the Proposed Development site is visually screened by the built environment from most areas in the surrounding landscape, including LRD East (as illustrated throughout this LVIA). Most of the proposed buildings are located within the centre of the private lands of the Proposed Development site, inset and setback from surrounding receptors in the public realm such as residences and the public road network. The bulk and mass of most of the proposed buildings are consequently well set back, well-concealed and will have limited visual exposure in the surrounding landscape. Therefore, essential elements of the Proposed Development, and a focus of the assessments in this LVIA, are the proposed buildings located nearest the outer periphery of the Proposed Development site which have greatest potential for landscape and visual effects. As reported in this LVIA, and as illustrated by the photomontages, the positioning of buildings inset from the road network serves to reduce the visual prominence and visual impact of the Proposed Development from receptors in the surrounding landscape.

13.2 Brief Methodology and Assessment Criteria

This section of the LVIA provides a brief overview of the methodology used to undertake the LVIA of the Proposed Development. A full comprehensive description of the methodology and guidance used is included in Appendix 13-1 – LVIA Methodology. There are four main sections to this LVIA:

- Landscape Baseline:
  - Landscape Policy Context;
  - Identification of sensitive landscape receptors and designated landscape character areas for assessment;
  - Description of landscape character of the Site and wider landscape setting including analysis of landscape value, susceptibility to change and landscape sensitivity.
- Visual Baseline:
  - Visibility appraisal from site investigation and field survey;
  - Identification of key sensitive visual receptors for assessment;
  - Selection of photomontage viewpoints.
- Photomontage Viewpoint Impact Assessment Tables.
- Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects.

13.2.1 LVIA Guidance

The legislation and general guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment is set out in Chapter 1 of this EIAR. The LVIA reported in this chapter was guided and informed by guidance documentation specifically pertaining to LVIA. Details of all the guidance used to conduct this LVIA are outlined in the LVIA Methodology Appendix – Appendix 13-1. The methods and processes used in this Chapter are primarily based on the following guidance, which are widely considered the benchmark best practice guidance documents for LVIA:

- GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013), and
- 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3): Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2024-01' (hereafter, LI TGN 24-01) (LI, 2024).

13.2.2 Scope and Definition of the LVIA Study Area for Baseline Landscape and Visual Assessments

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Where the 'Proposed Development site' is referred to in this Chapter, this includes the lands where the Proposed Development is located and where the Proposed Development will materially change the landscape. The Proposed Development site is delineated by a red line labelled 'Proposed Planning Application (Red Line) Boundary' within mapping figures throughout this Chapter. Baseline assessments and descriptions also include lands immediately east of the Proposed Development site which includes LRD East and which are included in the cumulative assessments.

The GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013) refers to the identification of the area of landscape that is to be covered while assessing landscape and visual effects. The guidelines state:

> *"The study areas should include the Site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the Proposed Development may influence in a significant manner."*

Landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are therefore based on a wider study area referred to in this Chapter as the 'LVIA Study Area' with a 1km radius from the EIAR Study Area. The geographical parameters of this LVIA were determined by desktop study, survey work undertaken and the professional judgement of the assessment team, as well as experience from other relevant projects and policy guidance or standards.

Considering the scope and scale of the Proposed Development and its existing landscape setting, it is considered that landscape and visual effects will not be 'Significant' beyond the 1km LVIA Study Area, therefore assessment of landscape and visual effects from locations beyond 1km are scoped out of assessment in this Chapter. Figure 13-5 (below) shows the location and extent of the EIAR Study Area and LVIA Study Area.

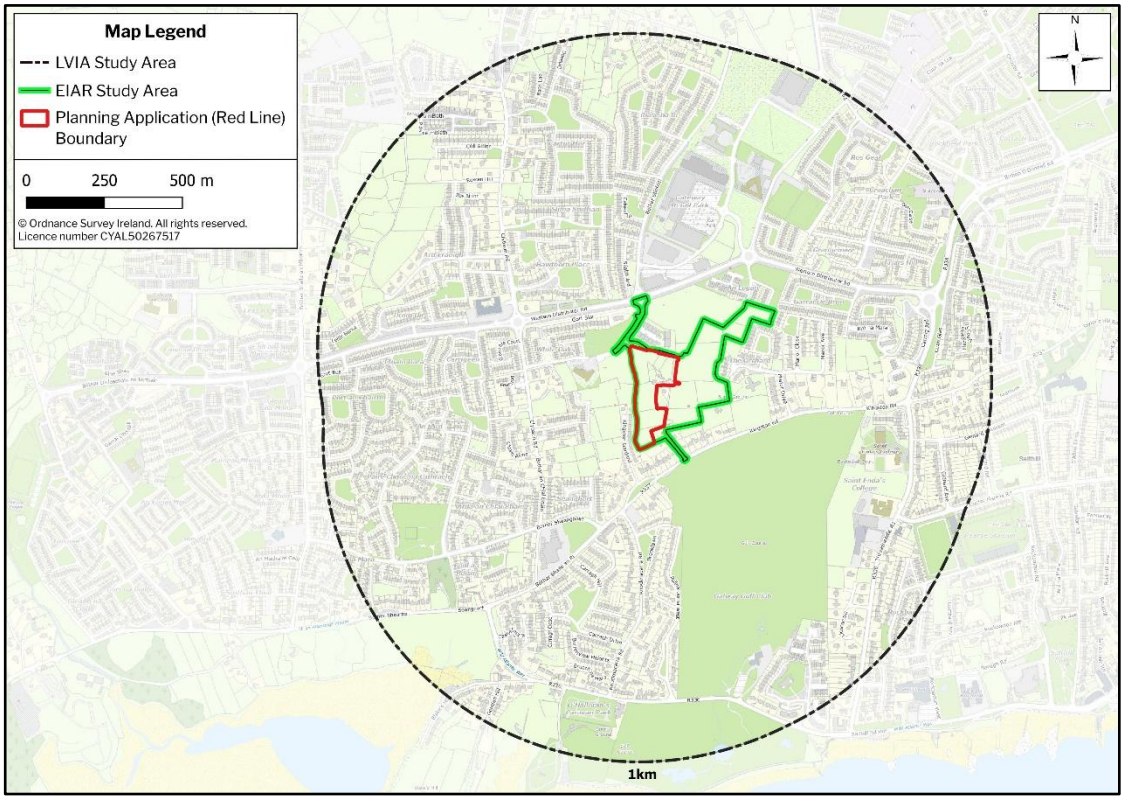


Figure 13-5 LVIA Study Area

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13.2.3 Methodology for Assessment of Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

The methodology used for the impact assessment in this chapter includes clearly documented methods based on the GLVIA3 (LI & IEMA, 2013). These include consideration of landscape and visual sensitivity balanced with the magnitude of the effect to determine the significance of effects. Mitigating factors are then taken into consideration to arrive at residual landscape and visual effects. Residual landscape and visual effects are graded upon an 'impact assessment classification of significance' scale, as defined by the 'Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' published by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2022).

The assessment of impacts is informed by the desk study and appraisals conducted during the site investigation. The assessment of potential impacts also uses photomontages, whereby the potential effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development are assessed from viewpoint locations representative of prominent and sensitive landscape and visual receptors located within the LVIA Study Area. The photomontages are included in Appendix 13-2 and a comprehensive assessment of each viewpoint is included in Section 13.6 of this Chapter. Detailed information on the methodology used for the production of photomontages and the methods used for LVIA are presented in the methodology appendix - Appendix 13-1.

13.3 Landscape Baseline

This section of the LVIA establishes the baseline landscape condition of the Proposed Development site and wider landscape setting. This includes identification and description of relevant landscape policy designations and sensitive landscape receptors located in the LVIA Study Area (within 1km from the EIAR Study Area). The receiving landscape of the Proposed Development site and LVIA Study Area are also described in terms of their landscape character, landscape value and landscape sensitivity.

13.3.1 Landscape Policy Context

The Proposed Development and LVIA Study Area are located in Galway City, therefore, the Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 was consulted to identify relevant landscape designations and policies pertinent to the assessments in this LVIA.

13.3.1.1 Galway City Development Plan 2023 - 2029

The Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (hereafter referred to as the GCDP) sets out planning policies and objectives for the city. *Chapter 5* contains specific zoning and associated objectives for recreational and amenity land uses, whilst *Chapter 11* includes specific landscape related zoning, policies, and objectives.

The policies relevant to the landscape contained in *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 11* of the GCDP, and policies and designations pertinent to the Proposed Development and its wider landscape setting, are reported in this section of the LVIA.

13.3.1.2 Land Use Zoning

The GCDP (as stated in *Section 11.2*) sets out "*land use zoning objectives for different area within the city and indicates examples of uses that may or may not be acceptable within each land - use zone.*"

The Proposed Development is located within the lands covered by the GCDP Land-Use Zoning, and is shown on the Land Use Zoning and Specific Objective Map A, which forms part of the GCDP and is reproduced in Figure 13-6 below. As seen below, the Proposed Development is located within land

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zoned as Residential (R) as well as Enterprise, light industry and commercial use (CI). Land directly surrounding the Proposed Development site is zoned as 'Residential', 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' and 'Recreation and Amenity'.

As stated previously, the Proposed Development is zoned primarily as 'Residential' (R) and the zoning objectives for R in the GCDP is stated to be:

> *"To provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods."*

The Proposed Project and a very small portion of the Proposed Development are also zoned within 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' (CI) and the zoning objective for CI in the GCDP is stated to be:

> *"To provide for enterprise, light industry and commercial uses other than those reserved to the CC zone.".*

Section 11.2.6 of the GCDP lists a number of uses that are consistent with this zoning objective, including:

> *"Allow for development of Regeneration and Opportunity Sites in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10 and Policy 10.2 Strategic Regeneration and Opportunity Sites, particularly where it is identified to provide for mixed use development which includes for residential.".*

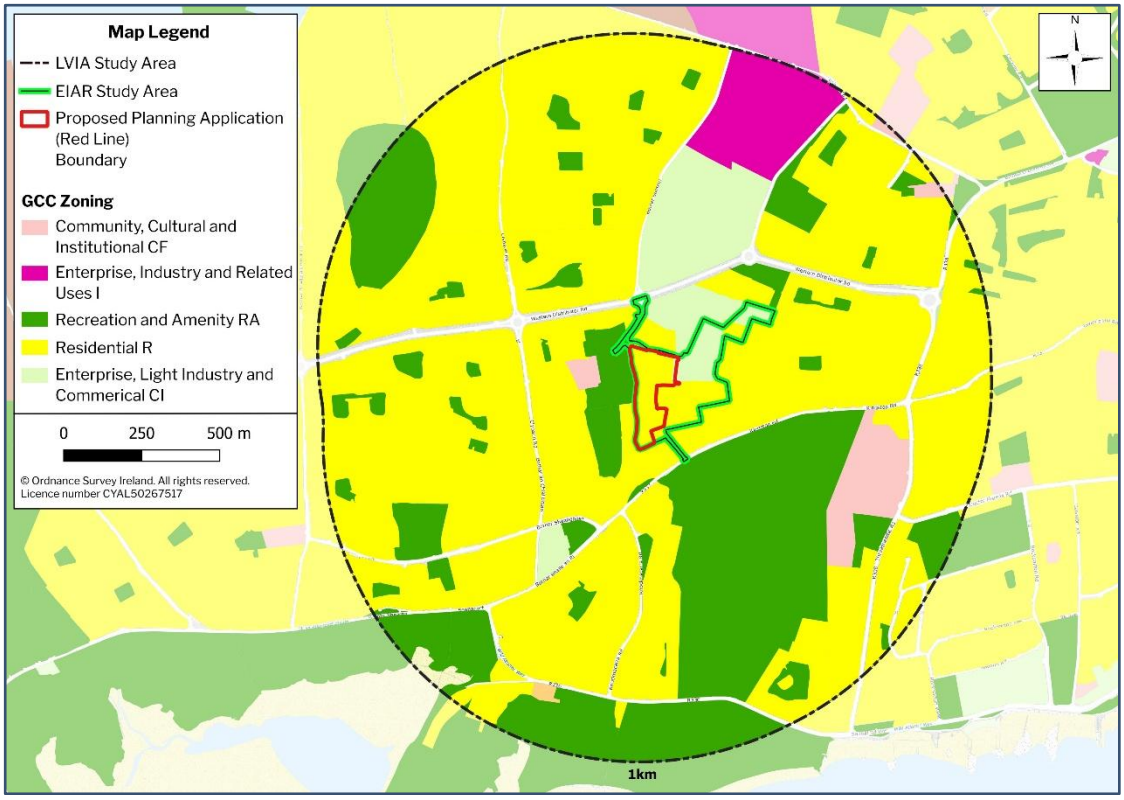


Figure 13-6 GCDP Land-Use Zoning Map and Proposed Development Location

The Proposed Development is a residential development and includes uses such as houses and apartments; therefore, the use of the Proposed Development for this land use is aligned with the land zoning and spatial planning of this area as set out in the GCDP. Alignment with the spatial planning

policy indicates that the Proposed Development site is an acceptable landscape for a residential housing development and is compatible with local planning objectives.

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13.3.1.3 Compact Growth and Regeneration

Chapter 10 of the GCDP - 'Compact Growth and Regeneration' sets out the following policy in section 10.22 for the strategic regeneration and opportunity site in 'Knocknacarra District Centre (South):

1. *Facilitate and enable the redevelopment of strategic Regeneration and Opportunity Sites in the city to support the sustainable and compact growth of the city which will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work and achieve alignment with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and the Regional Policy Objectives of the RSES and implementation of the Core Strategy.*
2. *Give priority to the development of the strategic Regeneration and Opportunity sites in line with core strategy, in particular to deliver new residential neighbourhoods, on lands supported by a number of land use zonings including CC and CI, as referenced in the land use zoning objectives in Chapter 11.*

13.3.1.4 Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Chapter 3 of the GCDP outlines policy on different neighbourhoods. Table 3.1 in the GCDP outlines Knocknacarra as an "*Outer Suburb*". Policy 3.4 sets out the following objectives for established suburbs.

- "*Facilitate consolidation of existing residential development and densification where appropriate within the outer suburbs to deliver on population targets while ensuring the reasonable protection of residential amenities.*
- *Ensure that sustainable neighbourhoods are places where housing, streets, open spaces and local facilities come together in a coherent, integrated and attractive form with appropriate community infrastructure delivered in tandem with new growth.*
- *Require the integration of biodiversity measures, green infrastructure and energy efficiency in the design and layout of residential development.*
- *Encourage a mix of housing types and sizes within residential developments.*
- *Encourage the use of homezones within residential developments. Require residential developments of over 10 units to provide recreational facilities as an integral part of the proposed open space.*
- *Ensure the design and layout of residential developments has regard to adjoining developments.*
- *Encourage the promotion of universal design principles and lifetime adaptability in the design and layout of residential developments.*
- *Promote the use of appropriate placenames for new residential development in accordance with the policy of An Coiste Logainmneacha and in support of recognition of Galway City as a Bilingual city."*

13.3.1.5 Green Network

The 'Green Network' is an expansive area, which the GCDP describes as *"a range of European, national and local sites of ecological importance that are important elements of the city's landscape, forming part of an ecological network of corridors and stepping stones that allow for the movement of wildlife in the urban environment".*

Chapter 5 of the GCDP notes that the *"the green network approach seeks to manage and protect the environment to ensure that necessary balance between the preservation of the city's natural heritage and recreation and amenity requirements".* The plan goes on to list the spaces in the city which make up the Green Network. They are reproduced below:

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- Protected Spaces
  - European Designated sites of ecological importance
  - National Designated sites
  - Local Biodiversity Areas
- Blue Spaces
  - Coastal areas, rivers, canals, waterways, lakes and enclosed marine and wetlands
- Green Spaces
  - Citywide Parks and City Centre Parks
- Community Spaces
  - Greenways, Allotments and community gardens, cemeteries, recreational facilities, protected views of special amenity value
- Open Spaces
  - Civic Spaces, Woodquay, The Small Crane, residential and commercial and industrial open spaces, institutional open spaces, recreation and amenity zones and agricultural and high amenity lands.

The Green Network has been mapped (*Figure 5.1* in the GCDP) and is reproduced in Figure 13-7 below. The Proposed Development is not located within any of the Green Network spaces in the GCDP; however, areas of the Green Network are located in the LVIA Study Area. This is shown by the map enlargement in Figure 13-8.

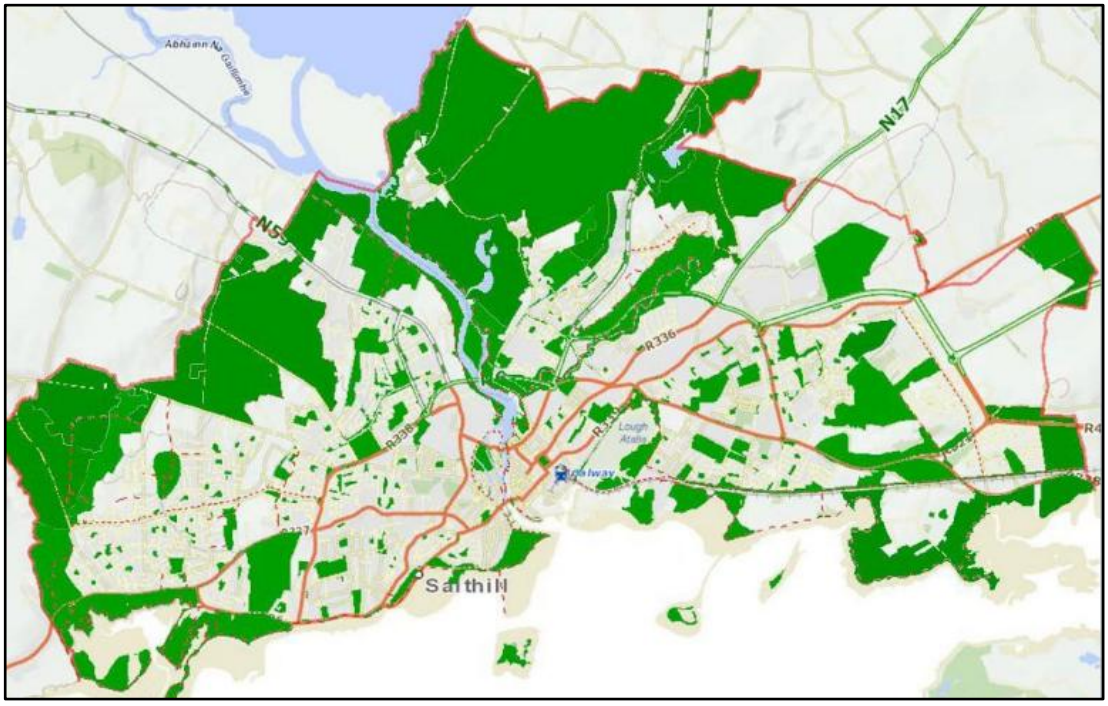
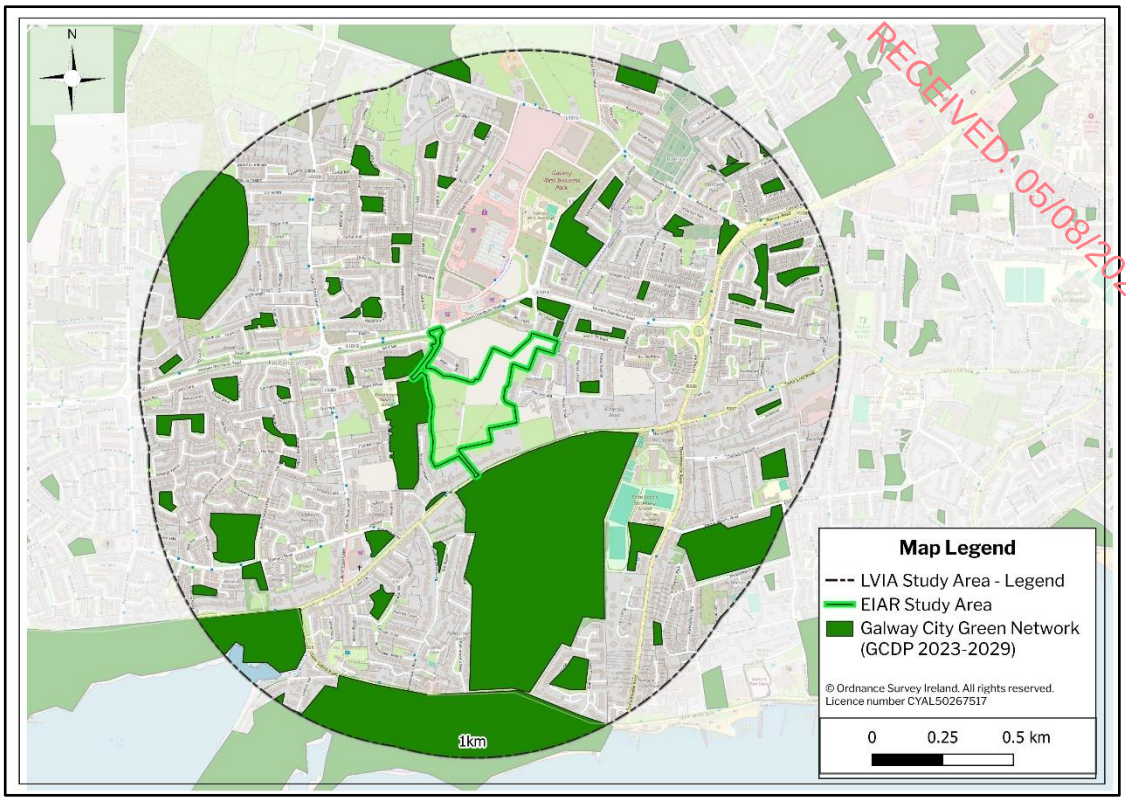


Figure 13-7 Map extracted from the GCDP Fig. 5.1 - Galway City Green Network



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Figure 13-8 The Green Network and the LVIA Study Area

To the south of the Proposed Development is Galway Golf Course, one of the largest areas of the 'Green Network' in close proximity to the Proposed Development site. All other Green Network spaces within the LVIA Study Area are mostly areas of undeveloped land and are not currently used for recreational purposes. Recently, Galway City Council launched plans to develop and connect several of the Green Network spaces in Knocknacarra (within the LVIA Study Area) for recreational purposes. Of relevance, is a large piece of the Green Network adjoining the south-west of the Proposed Development site called 'Kingston Park'; a proposed public park which will include various recreational amenities and connections with green spaces within the Proposed Development site and to Millers Lane at the north-east of the Proposed Development site. This LVIA considers all potential effects of the Proposed Development on Green Network spaces located in the LVIA Study Area and considers the cumulative effects with these proposed park developments.

13.3.1.6 Galway City Protected Views - Views of Special Amenity Value and Interest

Section 5.7.3 of the GCDP highlights specific views within the city's landscape that require special protection "*due to their distinctive scenic amenity, aesthetic or cultural or historic setting*". However, it is acknowledged that *"views are not static and some changes in a view can be absorbed without visually depreciating the integrity of the view and in some cases make a positive contribution to the characteristics and composition of protected views." Policy 5.7* of the GCDP relating to Protected Views of Special Amenity Value and Interest states:

> *"1. Protect views and prospects of special amenity value and interest, which contribute significantly to the visual amenity and character of the city, through the control of inappropriate development.*
>
> *2. Require landscaping schemes as part of planning applications to have regard to such views and limit any planting which could have a detrimental impact on the value of protected views."*

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The GCDP identifies two categories of protected views; panoramic and linear. There are 3 designated protected views located within the LVIA Study Area. These Protected Views and described in Table 13-1 and shown in Figure 13-9 below.

Table 13-1 GCDP Protected Views within the LVIA Study Area

Protected View	*Description GCDP*
Panoramic Protected Views	
V4	*Seascape views of Galway Bay from Grattan Road, Seapoint, the Salthill Promenade and the coast road to the western boundary of the golf course.*
V5	*Seascape views encompassing Lough Rusheen including section of Blakes Hill, sections of Knocknacarra Road, sections of Barna Road from Knocknacarra to city boundary and including the road to Silverstrand Beach.*
Linear Protected Views	
V11	*Seascape views of Galway Bay from Kingston Road*

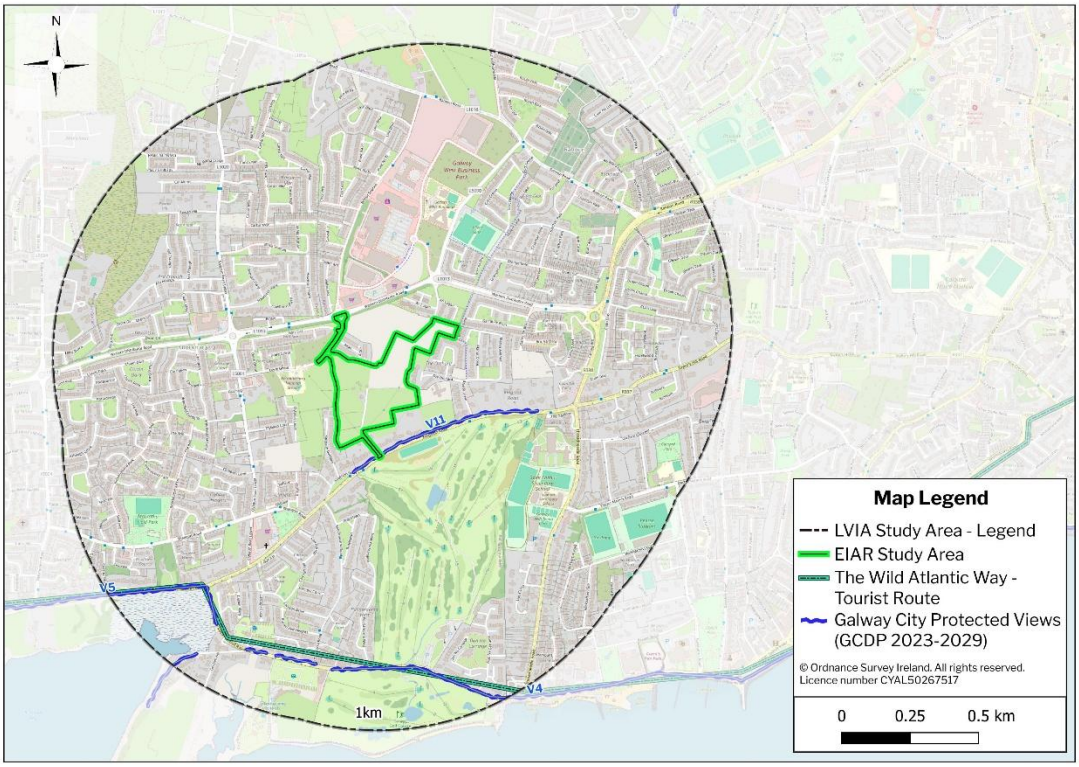


Figure 13-9 Galway City Protected Views in the LVIA Study Area

Due to the setback distance and nature of visibility from the low-lying coastal areas, Protected Views V4 and V5 are scoped out from further assessment and discussion in this Chapter.

Linear Protected View V11 is located on Kingston Road at the southern extent of the Proposed Development site where an existing laneway joins the public road network. The Proposed Development includes for minor upgrades to this existing laneway and the junction with Kingston Road. The protected views from V11 are 'Seascape views of Galway Bay' and are directed to the south

from Kingston Road, in the opposite direction from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development therefore does not impact the sensitive scenic amenity and protected views from V11.

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13.3.1.7 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

Galway City Council keeps a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within Galway. Within Section 8.2 of the GCDP, it states that:

> *"Protected structures are defined under planning legislation as buildings and structures considered to be of particular importance due to their architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical special interest".*

It is the council's policy to implement proactive measures to support the protection, enhancement, and active use of protected structures. Policy 8.1 in the GCDP for Record of Protected Structures states:

- *"Protect structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures, in accordance with legislation and DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011.*
- *Ensure new development enhances the character or setting of a protected structure.*
- *Avoid protected structures becoming endangered by neglect or otherwise by taking timely appropriate action.*
- *Have regard to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in the assessment of development.*
- *Consider the inclusion of buildings and structures of special interest or of distinctive heritage value in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and consider any recommendations for inclusion in the RPS made by Ministerial Recommendation.*
- *Consult with the DHLGH and have regard to recommendations of the DHLGH on planning applications relating to protected structures.*
- *Implement proactive measures to encourage the conservation of protected structures.*
- *Promote sustainable building design, best conservation practice and the appropriate maintenance, adaption, and reuse of historic buildings."*

The Galway RPS indicates that there are no designated protected structures within the LVIA Study Area. There are no National Monuments within the LVIA Study Area. There are also no archaeological sites located within the Proposed Development site or its immediate vicinity.

13.3.2 Landscape Character of the Proposed Development site

Landscape character refers to the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how people perceive this. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement, and creates the particular sense of place found in different areas. The identification of landscape character as outlined in the *Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft for Guidelines for Planning Authorities Guidelines* (DoEHLG, 2000) comprises the identification of primarily physical units (areas defined by landform and landcover) and, where appropriate, of visual units.

The Proposed Development is located directly south of the Western Distributor Road in Knocknacarra, Galway City. The Proposed Development site is separated from this road by a tract of tall dense hedges lining the roadway, an empty greenfield site and other existing residential development. The Proposed Development site was visited multiple times in May, July and August of 2024 and in May of 2026 where a preliminary assessment of topography, drainage, landcover and land use was conducted in conjunction with other LVIA surveys. Information gathered during this site visit has informed the following descriptions.

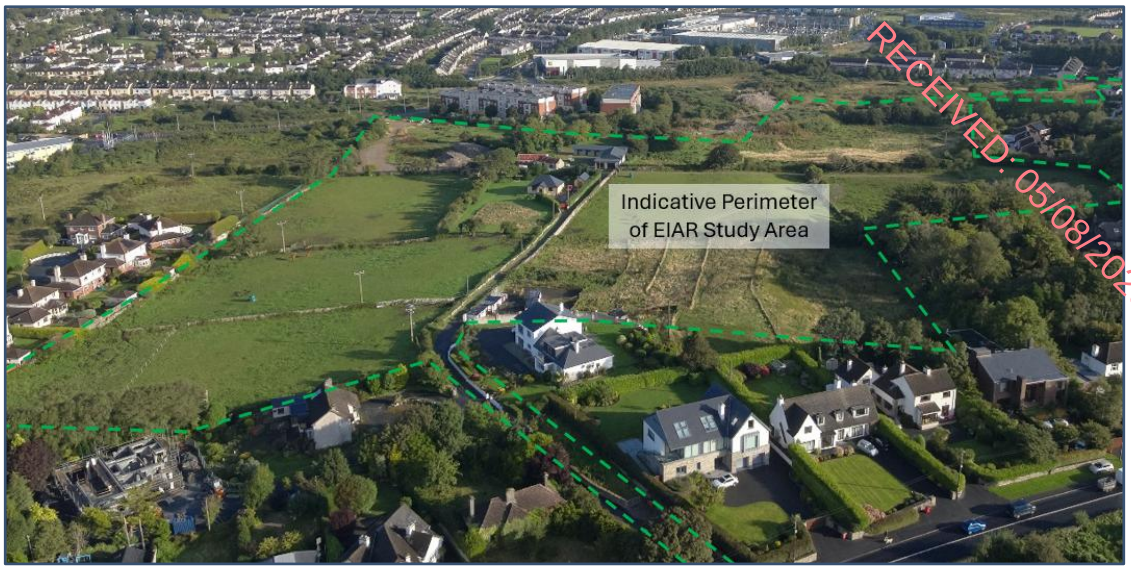


Figure 13-10 Aerial Map: Proposed Development site and other areas of the Proposed Project (EIAR Study Area)

The Proposed Development is located in an undeveloped greenfield site, comprising agricultural grassland and a vernacular building (which will be incorporated into a café within the Altan Quarter) within a suburban area surrounded by residential estates. In some areas the Proposed Development site is enclosed by mature boundary vegetation, separating it from surrounding residential estates and the proposed LRD East, both on lands zoned for residential use.

Landcover and Land Use

The Proposed Development site is an undeveloped landscape comprising several small fields of grassland, some of which are used for low intensity grazing, mainly horses. Plate 13-1 below, shows an aerial image of the lands of the Proposed Development site and Proposed Project from the south looking north. This imagery shows the Proposed Development is a greenfield site surrounded by both greenfield sites and suburban areas already developed for residential use. Fields within the Proposed Development site are divided by hedges, fences, and low stone walls. Some small buildings and stables exist on the Proposed Development site.



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Plate 13-1 Aerial View of the EIAR Study Area from the South

The landcover to the north of the Proposed Development site is predominately comprised of grassland over stockpiles of spoil, with some mature boundary vegetation which can be seen in Plate 13-2 and Plate 13-3 below.



Plate 13-2 Existing Landcover in the Proposed Development site.



Plate 13-3 Existing Landcover in the north of the Proposed Development site.

To the south of Proposed Development site the predominant landcover is grassland, used for open horse grazing pasture as seen below in Plate 13-4 (an area of the Proposed Project in the EIAR Study Area).



Plate 13-4 Agricultural Fields to the South of the Proposed Development site.

The surrounding areas of the wider landscape setting comprise a highly modified suburban landscape of roads and buildings for mixed uses. The proposal to develop this land for residential uses with roads, buildings, car parking and pedestrian pathways (and landscaping) will generally align with the landcover, land use and existing character of the surrounding suburban area.

Landform - Topography

The Proposed Development site comprises gently undulating lands. Elevation data was extracted from a drone survey which is presented in Figure 13-10 map below showing the topographic variation within the Proposed Development site.

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Figure 13-11 Digital Surface Model of the EIAR Study Area

Nature of Views from within the Proposed Development site itself

The Proposed Development site is surrounded by mature boundary vegetation and the built environment of the wider landscape setting which provides a sense of visual enclosure. The Proposed Development site is located in a slight bowl of low elevation relative to surrounding lands. Due to the landform characteristics and above ground features of the landscape enclosing the Proposed Development site, there are limited views of the wider landscape setting from within the Proposed Development site itself. Views from within Proposed Development site generally include short range views of neighbouring residential estates and commercial buildings.

Due to the Proposed Development's location within a depression of lower land enclosed by landform to the east, north and north-west, visibility into the Proposed Development site is limited to areas in immediate proximity. To the west and south, this includes Kingston Gardens and Clybaun Court residential estates. To the north and north-west, this includes the Gort Siar and Doire Gheal residential estates, Altán Apartments residential estate and the unnamed local road leading to Knocknacarra National School (L10111). The effects of the Proposed Development from these receptors are addressed later in this LVIA.



Plate 13-5 View North from the centre of the Proposed Development site.

Views north from within the Proposed Development site comprise vegetation, residential apartment buildings and housing developments as seen in Plate 13-5 above.



Plate 13-6 View East from the Northeast of the EIAR Study Area

A residential housing estate (Kingston Gardens) lines the Proposed Development site to the south-west. There are no long ranging views to the south-west as seen in Plate 13-6 above. To the south-east there are several one-off residential dwellings located along Kingston Road. Long ranging views are also restricted in this direction as seen in Plate 13-7 and Plate 13-8 below.


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Plate 13-7 View South from the Centre of the EIAR Study Area



Plate 13-8 View Southwest from the South of the EIAR Study Area.

13.3.3 Wider Landscape Setting- LVIA Study Area

The wider landscape setting is characterised by a variety of urban, suburban, and rural influences. The Proposed Development is located in the centre of Knocknacarra on the western side of Galway City. The immediate surroundings of the Proposed Development site include a greenfield site and retail/commercial buildings to the north, residential dwellings to the northeast, east, south and west of the Proposed Development site and Salthill Golf Club to the south. The R337 Regional Road is also located to the south, which also has many residential properties located along the road.



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Plate 13-9 Retail and Commercial Buildings to the North of the Proposed Development site

Plate 13-9 above shows a view of the entrance of the Gateway Retail Park to the north of the Proposed Development site. Multiple retail stores and commercial buildings can be found around this area. Plate 13-10 below shows a view down Bothar Stiofain at the back of the Gateway Retail Park. Along this road there are a large number of residential housing developments along with the commercial buildings of the retail park.



Plate 13-10 Residential Buildings on Bóthar Stiofáin, in Close Proximity to the Proposed Development site within 500m.

Plate 13-11 below shows a view over Salthill Golf Club along Galway City Protected View 11 to the south of the Proposed Development site. Protected View 11 will be adjacent to the Proposed Development site boundary but on the northern side of the road and will have no impact on Protected View 11.


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Plate 13-11 View towards Galway Bay and Salthill Golf Club to the South of the Proposed Development site



Plate 13-12 Residential and Commercial Buildings to the west of Altán Apartments on the L-10111 in Close Proximity to Proposed Development site

Landform of the Wider Landscape Setting – the LVIA Study Area

Figure 13-12 below shows the topography gradients of the wider landscape setting within the LVIA Study Area. The level of elevation in the vast majority of the LVIA Study Area ranges between sea level and 75m AOD. A linear ridgeline runs east to west along Kingston road at the southern extent of the Proposed Development site. From this ridgeline, landform slopes down towards Galway Bay in the south. The EIAR Study Area is located north of this ridgeline within a localised bowl of low elevation relative to the lands immediately surrounding it to the east, and north-west. As a result, where large commercial buildings are located to the north and adjacent to the Proposed Development or the road network to the north, east and south of the Proposed Development site, a visual screening effect is created in relation to views of the wider landscape.

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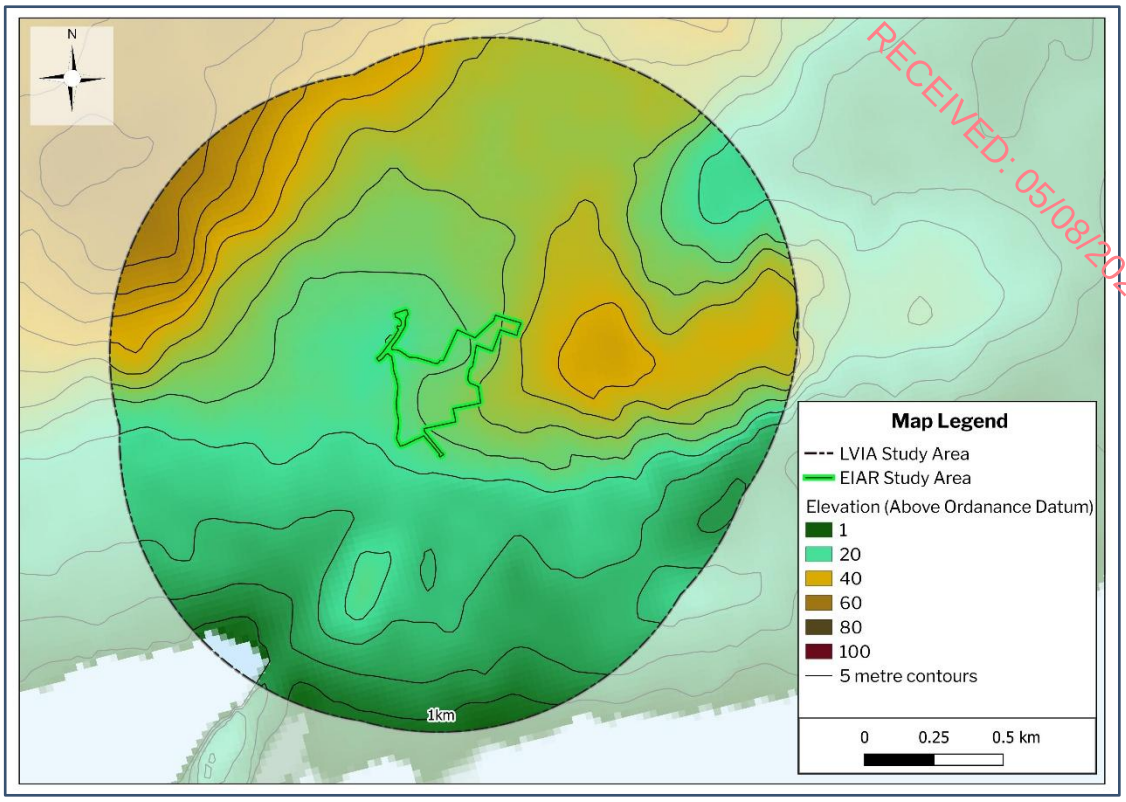


Figure 13-12 Landform of the LVIA Study Area

13.3.4 Landscape Sensitivity of the Proposed Development site

'Landscape value' and 'susceptibility to change' was assessed in order to determine the 'landscape sensitivity' of the Proposed Development site and establish the capacity of the immediate landscape in which the Proposed Development will be built, as is prescribed by best practice guidance (GLVIA3, p.80):

> *'...as part of the baseline description the value of the potentially affected landscape should be established'.*

Comprehension of the landscape value and landscape susceptibility to change' (to a residential development) enables determination of the sensitivity of the landscape at a micro-level (meaning, the landscape of the Proposed Development site) and its capacity to absorb the infrastructure of a residential development.

Table 13-2 below considers the collective appraisal of seven indicators of landscape value in the GLVIA3 (listed below). Landscape value and susceptibility to change are then combined to assign an overall sensitivity rating of the Proposed Development site. The determination of landscape value takes into consideration the scenic amenity designations and landscape sensitivity and value designations found in the local landscape policy, as well as other indications of landscape value attached to undesignated landscapes.

Below, Table 13-2 describes the following seven indicators appraised collectively to establish landscape value and susceptibility to change, which were then considered in forming the overall landscape sensitivity classification of the Proposed Development site:

- Landscape designations (LCA setting, Scenic Routes and Views, amenity areas, etc.);
- Quality/condition of landscape elements;

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- Scenic/aesthetic qualities;
- Rarity/conservation status;
- Wildness/naturalness;
- Recreational value;
- Cultural meaning/associations.

Table 13-2 Indicators of Landscape Value

Indicators of Landscape Value	Description
Landscape Designations	The Proposed Development site is located within Galway City and is primarily zoned as 'R – residential' within the GCDP 'City Map'. A large part of the 'Green Network' in the GCDP is located south-west of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development site is not the subject of any protected views in the LVIA Study Area.
Landscape Elements Quality / Condition	The Proposed Development site is in an undeveloped greenfield area of agricultural grassland and scrub surrounded by residential estates. It is of reasonable quality and condition, but is a working landscape used as grazing pasture.
Scenic / Aesthetic Qualities	There are some rural aesthetic qualities to the Proposed Development site. Due to the enclosure provided by the built environment, mature boundary vegetation and local landform characteristics, there are no external views from within the Proposed Development site of any unique scenic or aesthetic quality.
Wilderness / Naturalness	There is a limited sense of wildness due to its location in the suburban area of Galway City and piles of spoil. However, trees, scrub and hedgerows within and surrounding the Proposed Development site do provide a degree of naturalness.
Rarity / Conservation Interests	There are no unique or highly valued ecological rarity/conservation interests on the Proposed Development site.
Cultural Meaning / Associations	There are no cultural meanings or associations of wider significance pertaining to the Proposed Development site itself.
Recreational Values	There is no recreational value to the Proposed Development site itself.

The definitions and criteria of landscape 'value' and 'susceptibility to change' are outlined in the full methodology, presented in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology (Section 1.6.1: Assessing Landscape Sensitivity). These are combined to give an overall landscape sensitivity rating for Proposed Development site as either 'Very High', 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low'.

In consideration of the indicators detailed in Table 13-2 above, the landscape value of the Proposed Development site is deemed to be of 'Low' value. The landscape of the Proposed Development site is zoned to accommodate change such as that of the Proposed Development, therefore the susceptibility of this landscape to the proposed change is deemed to be 'Low'. Overall, the sensitivity of the Proposed Development site is considered to be 'Low'. Local policy designations within the GCDP pertaining to the lands of the Proposed Development site align with the proposals which are the subject of this EIAR.

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13.4 Visual Baseline

This section of the LVIA establishes the likely visibility of the Proposed Development from landscape and visual receptors located in the LVIA Study Area (area within 1km of the EIAR Study Area). This includes a description of views towards the Proposed Development from a variety of perspectives which has informed the selection of viewpoints. Certain areas were scoped out from assessment where it is very unlikely that any visibility will occur due to factors such as visual screening from vegetation, localised topography and the built environment.

Multiple site visits were conducted in May, July and August 2024 and May of 2026. The likely visibility of the Proposed Development was appraised from sensitive receptors and landscape policy designations identified in the previous section of this chapter - *Landscape Baseline*.

Site visits determined that visibility of the Proposed Development will be highly localised to receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site. The Proposed Development is unlikely to be visible from a vast proportion of the LVIA Study Area. The key receptors identified with most potential for visibility are located in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development site. These receptors are identified as local residents, local road users, the local school and receptors visiting the supermarkets immediately to the north. The nature of visibility is analysed from one designated linear protected view (V11) to the south of the Proposed Development site which was previously identified in Section 13.3.1.6.

Photos are used to show views towards the Proposed Development from prominent visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area, as well as local and regional roads surrounding the EIAR Study Area. The visibility appraisals and discussion reported in this section consider that the buildings of the Proposed Development will be between 2-3 storeys in height, thereby having the potential to appear as the most prominent features likely to cause visual effects within the landscape.

13.4.1.1 Visibility from Sensitive Visual Receptors (Protected Views, Recreational Amenities and Walking Trails)

Linear Protected View V11 (GCDP) is located on Kingston Road at the southern extent of the Proposed Development site where an existing laneway joins the public road network. The protected views from V11 are 'Seascape views of Galway Bay' which are directed to the south from Kingston Road, in the opposite direction from the Proposed Development, which is located to the north. The Proposed Development therefore does not impact the sensitive scenic amenity and protected views from V11. Plate 13-13 below shows a view along Kingston Road. Visibility appraisals determined there will be no open views of any proposed buildings of the Proposed Development from Kingston Road due to visual screening from an elevated landform, dense vegetation and the large number of residential properties to the north of the roadside. The Proposed Development includes for upgrades to an existing laneway at the junction with Kingston Road, with greatest visual effects occurring during the construction phase. There will be no impact on the key scenic views over Galway Bay to the south.


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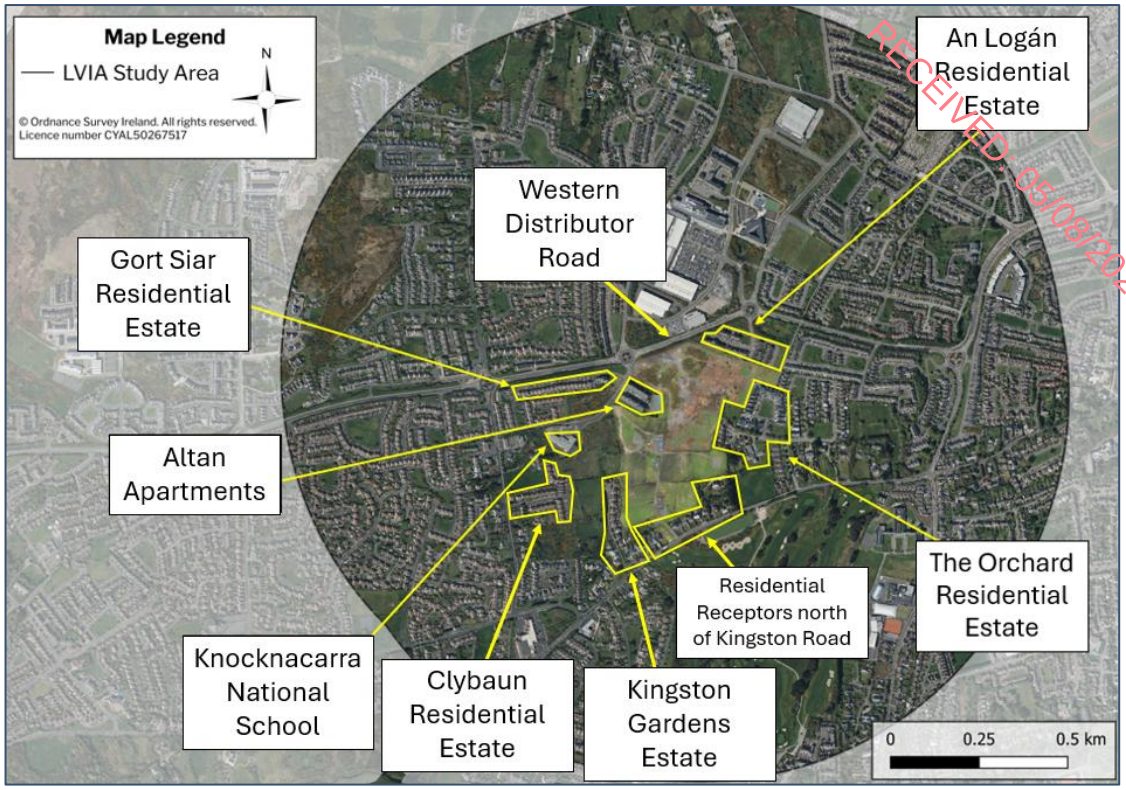
Plate 13-13 View along Kingston Road, where the Proposed Development would be located behind the housing on the right of the image (Protected View 11, GCDP)

Recreational amenities attributed to the coast and Salthill are located to the south of the LVIA Study Area, including the Black Rock, the promenade, 'Slí Chonamara' Way Marked Walking Trail and The Wild Atlantic Way. Visibility appraisal determined there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development from these receptors and they are not considered further in this chapter.

Visibility appraisals determined that there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development from any locations representative of high sensitivity recreational receptors or representative of highly scenic landscape views. Consequently, the focus of the visibility appraisal and impact assessment is on local residential receptors and receptors on the local road network.

13.4.1.2 Visibility from Residential Receptors and the Local Road Network

The Proposed Development will predominantly only be visible from receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site. The map below identifies the residential receptors and key roads surrounding the Proposed Development site. Visibility appraisals determined that the Proposed Development will not be visible within medium or long-ranging landscape views due to the landform characteristics and nature of visual screening by the built environment and mature vegetation.



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Figure 13-13 Receptors immediately surrounding the EIAR Study Area

Visibility from Receptors to the North

Due to its positioning at the south-western extent of the EIAR Study Area, the setback and landscape characteristics result in very limited visibility of the Proposed Development from receptors to the north and north-east. Visibility from receptors in these directions will be even less in a potential future receiving environment where LRD East is permitted and constructed. Potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with LRD East (the Proposed Project as a whole) is addressed and discussed in Section 13.7.4.

Western Distributor Road is a well trafficked road to the north of the Proposed Development; this road runs in a south-east to north-west orientation. Mature boundary vegetation lines the roadside, screening views of the Proposed Development for most stretches of this road in the LVIA Study Area where no visual effects will occur. Visibility of the Proposed Development from this road may occur in glimpses from a roundabout at the junction with Bóthar Stiofáin adjacent to the existing Lidl building, but it will be set behind the existing Altán Apartments. The two- and three-storey houses of the Proposed Development are not likely to be seen behind the existing four-storey Altán Apartments or the apartment buildings of LRD East in a potential future receiving environment. Mature boundary vegetation adjoining Western Distributor Road will visually screen most of the Proposed Development from view from many receptors to the north, including the retail car parks at Lidl and Aldi. The buildings of the Proposed Development are inset from Western Distributor Road and its roadside vegetation by an empty greenfield site, and the intervening Altán Apartments.

The existing Altán Apartment Blocks are seen in the background of VP01, VP02, VP05. These apartment blocks are located immediately adjacent to the Proposed Development site at the northern perimeter. Visibility will occur for the residents of these apartments, particularly those on floors above the ground floor on the southern façade of the building where clear and open views of the Proposed Development will occur. No visibility will occur for residences in the northern façade of the building or from ground levels. Residents in the Gort Siar residential estate to the north-west of the Proposed Development will likely have views from the rear gardens and upper storeys of the houses, as well as users of the unnamed L-10111 that faces the north-west entrance of the Proposed Development near the

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Altán Apartments. Viewpoint 02 was taken from this road to represent these receptors. Visual effects arising from Viewpoint 02 are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

The Gateway Shopping Park is located to the north-east of the Proposed Development. At its closest point, it is approximately 260m from the Proposed Development site. Given the visual screening from both vegetation and commercial buildings, there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development, thus the Gateway Shopping Park was scoped out from further assessment.

Residential estates located off of the Bóthar Stiofáin road to the north are scoped out from assessment as there will be no views directed towards the Proposed Development due to visual screening by vegetation and buildings in a relatively flat area.

From elevated locations to the north-west, there will be views towards the Proposed Development from residential receptors such as those within the Árd Na Gaoithe Housing Estate, for which some residents will have views from their back gardens towards the Proposed Development. Moreover, local road users along the L5020, as well as residents within other housing estates along this road, may also have views directed towards the Proposed Development. A viewpoint was not captured to represent these residential receptors as there were no open views towards the Proposed Development from the public realm and public roads in this elevated area. However, the likely significant visual effects for these receptors are discussed and reported later in Section 13.7 of this chapter.

Visibility appraisals determined that very limited visibility of the Proposed Development will occur from both Western Distributor Road and Gort na Bró road to the north-east east of the Proposed Development site due to visual screening by dense mature vegetation and the built environment of the An Logán Residential estate, the Altán Apartments, and LRD East. If LRD East is not permitted, there may be very minor visibility of the Proposed Development from receptors on Western Distributor Road to the north-east of the Proposed Development site through dense vegetation in winter months, but this is likely to be very occasional, intermittent and will not be significant.



Plate 13-14 View towards the Proposed Development from the Back of An Logan Housing Estate

Visibility from Residential Receptors to the East

The lands immediately east of the Proposed Project are elevated. There are many residential houses in this area, including The Orchard residential estate. Due to their positioning at an elevated vantage point relative to the Proposed Project, there will be clear and unobstructed views down into EIAR Study Area and of LRD East from these residential receptors, but only from back windows or gardens. Actual visibility into the Proposed Development site itself was found to be very restricted from street level due

to the built form of the many residential houses themselves, and LRD East in a future receiving environment.

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Plate 13-15 View towards the Proposed Development site from the southern section of The Orchard residential estate

Visibility from Receptors to the South

Visibility appraisals determined that there will be little visibility of the Proposed Development from R337 (Kingston Road), although there will be visibility from a local access laneway within the Proposed Development site which links with the R337, with residences on both sides of the laneway. The Proposed Development will be visible from the rear gardens and upper storey windows of a small number these residential houses on the Kingston Road, immediately south of the Threadneedle Quarter of LRD East where there are open views to the north and immediately south of the Kingston Quarter where there are also open views to the north. Viewpoint 04 is located along this laneway to represent the views of these residences. Visual effects arising from Viewpoint 04 are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

There is a slight rise in elevation to the north of the R337 in the direction of the Proposed Development, which peaks at the top of Manor Drive – approximately 480m east of the Proposed Development site. Due to these landform characteristics, visibility appraisals determined that all residential receptors located south and east of The Orchard residential estate (peak of the elevation) will have no visibility of the Proposed Development; this includes most residential receptors off Kingston Road and Manor Drive.

Visibility from Receptors to the West

Kingston Gardens is a housing estate running immediately south-west of the Proposed Development site, and will have immediate views of the Proposed Development. Viewpoint 03 is located at the end of the Kingston Gardens cul-de-sac to represent these residential receptors. Visual effects arising from Viewpoint 03 are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

Clybaun Court is a housing estate west of the Proposed Development (north-west of Kingston Gardens), residential receptors to the east of the estate will have open views in the direction of the Proposed

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Development. Viewpoint 05 is located in Clybaun Court and shows one of the most open views in the direction of the Proposed Development from street level. Visual effects arising from Viewpoint 05 are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

The Doire Gheal Residential Estate is located to the west of the Proposed Development and north of Knocknacarra National School. There will be views from the easternmost houses within this estate and Viewpoint 01 was captured from this estate where the most open views will occur. These views will also be similarly representative of views from the Knocknacarra National School. Visual effects arising from Viewpoint 01 are comprehensively assessed in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

13.5 Cumulative Baseline

This section identifies other relevant permitted or proposed large-scale developments within the LVIA Study Area with potential to cause cumulative landscape and visual effects in combination with the Proposed Development. Considering the extremely small visual envelope of the Proposed Development, potential cumulative effects can only occur in very close proximity to the Proposed Development site. As reported previously, from visibility appraisals, there are very limited medium or long ranging views in the direction of the Proposed Development from public areas in the LVIA Study Area. The location of the relevant cumulative developments identified for assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects are illustrated on Figure 13-14 below.

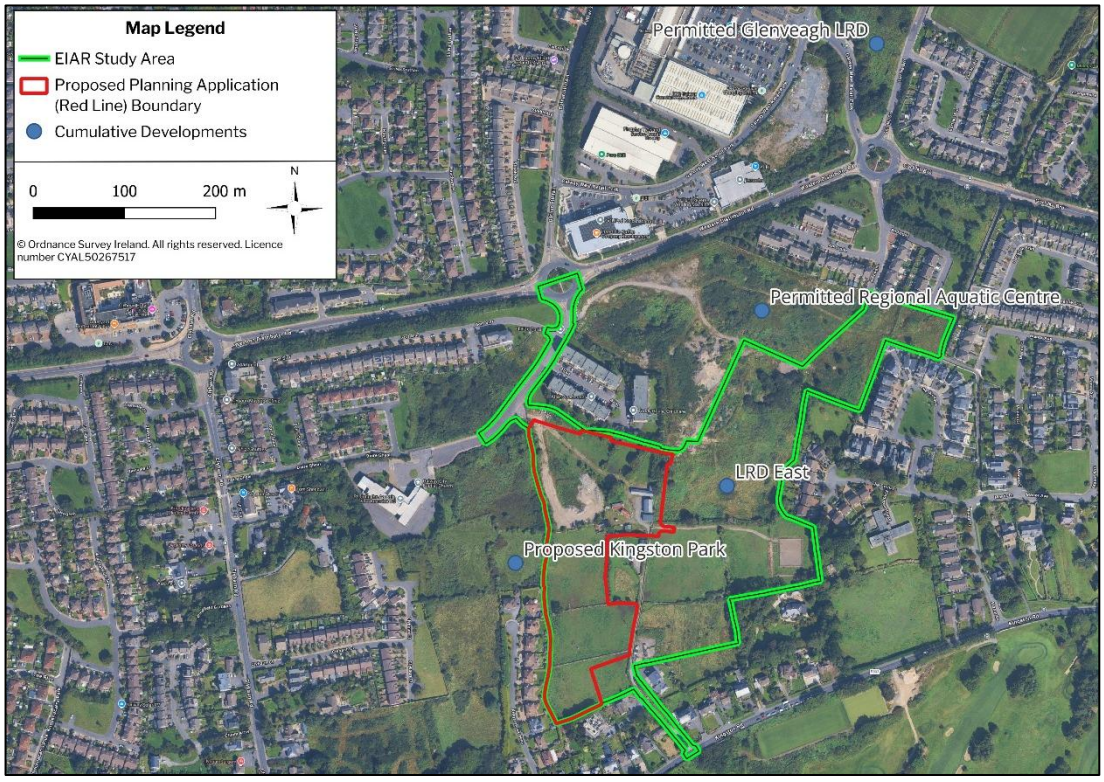


Figure 13-14 Relevant Cumulative Development Map

Other Neighbourhoods of the Proposed Project: Threadneedle Quarter, Miller's Quarter, and Orchard Quarter: LRD East is included as part of the Proposed Project (the EIAR Study Area) but does not form part of this planning application. This includes three areas of residential development called the Threadneedle Quarter, Miller's Quarter, and the Orchard Quarter located within the eastern extent of the EIAR Study Area as shown in the map above, but not within the Planning Application (Red Line) Boundary. LRD East was granted by GCC (Planning Reference 25/60320) and is currently under appeal with ACP under (Planning Reference: ACP-324237-26). The general layout and design of these residential areas are included in the design statement and shown previously in Figure 13-1 as separate neighbourhoods of the Proposed Project. Although under appeal, these neighbourhoods are

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assessed cumulatively with the Proposed Development in this LVIA. The Threadneedle Quarter, adjacent to the Altan and Kingston Quarters, is included in the Photomontage Booklet to ensure appropriate assessment of cumulative effects with the Proposed Development. A separate additional view is included for 1 No. relevant viewpoint (VP04) titled '*Cumulative Proposed View with Potential Future Residential Development of the Proposed Project*'. This view shows a block model with the mass, scale and position of this other residential development in a potential future receiving environment.

Permitted Aquatic Centre: An aquatic centre is permitted north of the Altán Apartments in adjacent undeveloped lands. The regional Aquatic Centre (Planning Reference 2460370) is permitted to the east of this land parcel. The aquatic centre forms part of the overall Masterplan for development of this area of Knocknacarra in combination with the Proposed Project and is considered in the cumulative assessments.

Permitted Glenveagh LRD: The permitted Glenveagh LRD (Planning Reference 233) is located directly east of the Gateway retail Park on the Gort Na Bró Road, approximately 160m from the Proposed Development site at its closest point. This development comprises several apartment blocks of substantial scale and includes public road re-alignments in the area. This development will cumulatively alter the suburban landscape of Knocknacarra in combination with the Proposed Development and is considered in the assessments within this chapter.

Proposed Kingston Park and Proposed Millers Lane: Galway City Council have developed plans for recreational park amenities at Kingston Park, immediately adjacent to the west of the Proposed Development. There are also plans to develop a park at Millers Lane to the north-east of the LVIA Study Area. These proposals have been submitted and are considered in cumulative effects. Part of the ambition of these projects is to ensure safe recreational connectivity between the two park developments. The Proposed Development (and Proposed Project) has been designed with this in mind to ensure connectivity with respect to landscape, biodiversity and recreation, which is discussed later in this chapter.

When applicable, the potential for cumulative landscape and visual impacts with these developments are considered and assessed in the Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment Tables below.

13.6 Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment

The methodology used for this LVIA, including viewpoint selection, photomontage production and visual impact assessment is comprehensively detailed in Appendix 13-1 – LVIA Methodology. A total of 5 no. photomontage viewpoint locations were selected. The viewpoints are described below and a map showing their locations is seen below in Figure 13-15.

It is not possible to represent every view and every location by means of photomontage viewpoints. The choice of viewpoint locations is influenced by both the views available and the type of viewer. Care was taken to provide a range of views from various geographic perspectives (distance, orientation, and elevation). It is to be noted that the photomontages are tools to assist the visual assessment and are not representative of visibility of the Proposed Development in the entirety of the LVIA Study Area.

All photomontages for this LVIA were captured during spring or summer months, thus it is considered that the vegetation shown in the imagery may be less dense during the wintertime, in cases where deciduous trees may have lost their foliage. This has been accounted for in the discussion of visual effects arising from each viewpoint.

The choice of viewpoint locations cover locations where the Proposed Development will be completely visible as well as partially visible. Due to the highly localised nature of visibility of the Proposed Development, all photomontages were captured within 250m of the Proposed Development site, where visual effects are likely to be the greatest. The choice of viewpoint locations has focused on locations on

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or near the public road network and residential dwellings where most potential visibility of the Proposed Development was established from visual receptors. Two viewpoints are similar to those within the previous EIAR, and are slightly different to reflect where proposed infrastructure or the built environment/vegetation has changed.

It is recommended that the following section should be read in conjunction with the high-resolution Photomontage Booklet– See Appendix 13-2, which presents all 5 no. photomontages at full size. In order to aid discussions in this chapter, the same photomontage imagery from the Photomontage Booklet is reproduced herein, at smaller size (see sections below), presented as 'Existing View' (baseline conditions at each viewpoint) followed by 'Proposed View' images and also 'Proposed Cumulative Views' where relevant (VP04); these are followed by a description of the existing baseline conditions at each viewpoint and discussion of the viewpoint sensitivity in consideration of local receptors. The proposed view is then described with a focus on determining the magnitude of change that will occur at each viewpoint. Factors that mitigate the visual impact are also noted and considered in the assessment process, thereby giving the final residual visual effect.

A full comprehensive description of the definitions and processes used for the visual impact assessment are detailed in Appendix 13-1.

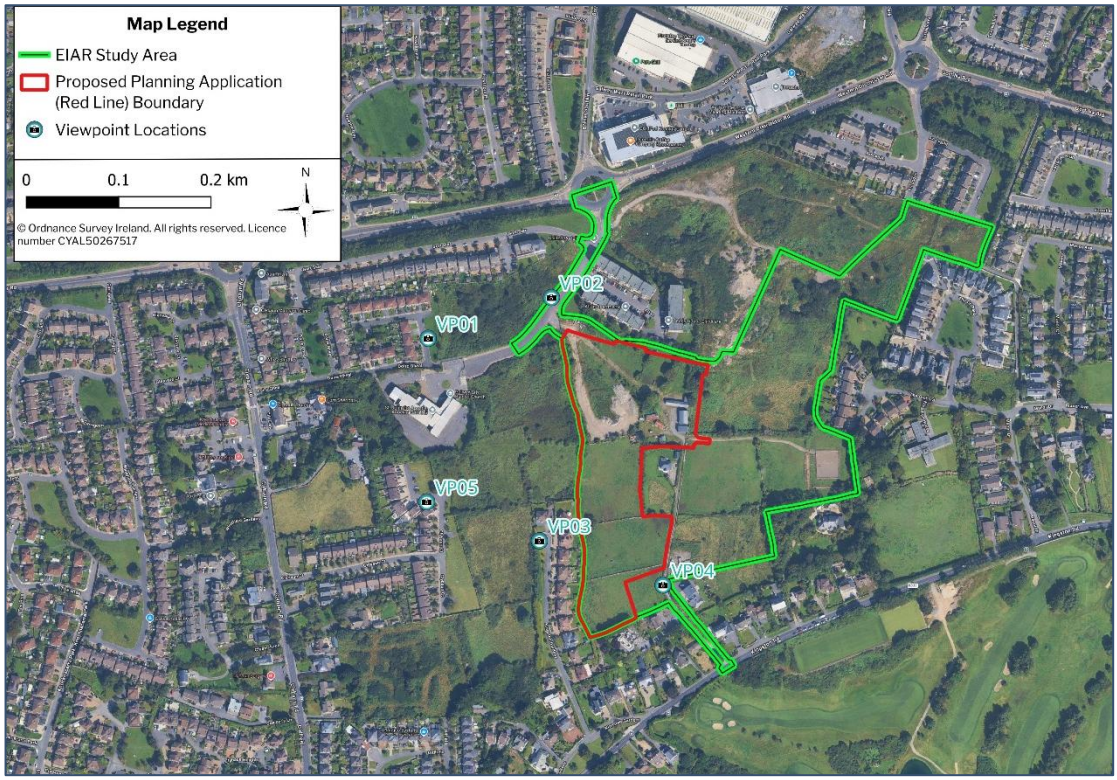


Figure 13-15 Viewpoint location Map.

Table 13-3 Photomontage Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint	Description	Grid Ref (ITM)
1	View east from the Doire Gheal Residential Estate across the L10111 Local Road toward the Proposed Development site.	**E 526361, N 724796**
2	View south-east from the unnamed L10111 Local Road, to the south of the Altán Apartments.	**E 526496, N 724838**

3	View east/north-east from the northern end of Kingston Gardens Residential Estate to the west/south-west of the Proposed Development.	**E 526482, N 724577**
4	View north from the local access laneway connecting to Kingston Road (R337), which is located to the south of the Proposed Development.	**E 526616, N 724529**
5	View north-east from the eastern portion of the Clybaun Residential Estate, located to the west of the Proposed Development.	**E 526360, N 724619**

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13.6.1 Viewpoint 1: Doire Gheal



Plate 13-16 Viewpoint 1 – Existing View: Doire Gheal Residential Estate

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Plate 13-17 Viewpoint 1: Proposed View: Doire Gheal Residential Estate

Table 13-4 Visual Impact Assessment: Viewpoint 1

Viewpoint 1: Doire Gheal	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View east from the Doire Gheal Residential Estate across the L10111 Local Road toward the Proposed Development site. › Grid Reference (ITM): (E 526,524; N725003)
Visual Receptors and Sensitivity	› Local Pedestrian Road Users: **Low** › Knocknacarra National School: **Medium/Low** › Residential Receptors: **High**
Description of 'Existing View'	The existing view comprises a cleared greenfield area with the L10111 Local Road and the greenfield sites of the Proposed Kingston Park and the Proposed Development beyond several scattered trees. Infrastructure associated with Knocknacarra National School can be seen to the right of the image, and some within the Proposed Development site can be seen in the centre of the view and the existing Altán Apartments can be seen behind vegetation to the left of the image.
Proposed Photomontage Description	The proposed three storey duplex houses of the proposed Altan Quarter are clearly visible in the centre left background of the view. These three storey houses raise the skyline moderately above existing background vegetation and are of similar height and scale as the existing Altán Apartment buildings seen to the left of the view. The two storey houses of the proposed Kingston Quarter, seen to the right of the view, are lower in height than the proposed Altan Quarter and partially visually screened beyond existing ground level vegetation.
Cumulative Effects with other developments	In a potential future receiving environment, in combination cumulative effects will arise as the proposed Kingston Park sports centre will be visible from this viewpoint within the cleared greenfield area, visually screening the proposed

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Viewpoint 1: Doire Gheal	
	Altan Quarter of the Proposed Development. In this scenario, the two storey semi-detached houses of the Kingston Quarter would remain visible from this vantage point in the background to the right of the view.
Potential Cumulative Effects with the Proposed Project	In a potential future receiving environment, in combination cumulative effects may arise from other future residential development of the Proposed Project and the planting of the Green Corridor may be visible from this viewpoint. Set-back beyond and through the narrow gap between the proposed Altan and Kingston Quarters, three storey duplexes of the proposed LRD East Threadneedle Quarter may be seen.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	'**High**' – Includes nearby residents with open views towards the Proposed Development.
Magnitude of Change (See Definition in Section 1.7.2 in Appendix 13-1)	**'Slight'** – The Proposed Development is visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible, but results in a low level of change with an altered character but overall similar to the existing baseline.
Significance of Effect	**High × Slight = Moderate/Minor = 'Moderate' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.'* Refer to Section 1.7.3 'Visual Effects Assessment Matrix' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.
Mitigating Factors	› The Proposed Development is impacting a relatively short-range view comprising existing residential apartments and greenfield vegetation in a suburban area of Galway City, it is not impacting sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality. › Residential receptors represented by this viewpoint include houses in the Doire Gheal and Gort Siar estates behind (west and north of) the viewpoint. Only a small number of residents represented by this viewpoint will actually have views of the Proposed Development and these will be partially obscured by trees between the L10111 Local Road and the houses, the effects of this visual screening will be more pronounced with full summer foliage. › For local pedestrian road users, the change in views will be in line with the suburban character of the surrounding landscape. › The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City.
Residual Visual Effect	**'Slight' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.'* Refer to Section 1.8 'Determining Residual Landscape and Visual Effects' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.

13.6.2 Viewpoint 2: L10111 Local Road nearby Knocknacarra National School

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Plate 13-18 Viewpoint 2 – Existing View: Local Road nearby Knocknacarra National School



Plate 13-19 Viewpoint 2 – Proposed View: Local Road nearby Knocknacarra National School

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Table 13-5 Visual Impact Assessment: Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint 2: L10111 Local Road	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View south-east from the unnamed L10111 Local Road, to the south of the Altán Apartments. › Grid Reference (ITM): (E 526912, N 725014)
Visual Receptors and Sensitivity	› Local Pedestrian Road Users: **Low** › Knocknacarra National School: **Medium/Low** › Residential Receptors: **High.**
Description of 'Existing View'	A short-range view comprising a plot of un-developed and unmanaged land of scrub and trees beyond a fence adjacent to the roadside. The existing Altán Apartments are visible in the left background of the wide angle (73.7°) field of view, set-back beyond dense hedgerow vegetation and an existing stone wall.
Proposed Photomontage Description	In the proposed view, the three storey duplex houses of the Altan Quarter are in the centre of the view, moderately raising the skyline of the existing view. Included are the entrance road and pedestrian pathways into the Proposed Development. Vegetation in the right foreground is retained, whereas vegetation to the left of the view includes new planting proposals from the landscape plan.
Cumulative Effects	Sequential cumulative effects may arise at this viewpoint location. In a future receiving environment, the sports centre of the proposed Kingston Park could be visible to the right of the view.
Potential Cumulative Effects with the Proposed Project	No cumulative effects are likely to arise from other elements of the Proposed Project as they are not visible from this viewpoint.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	'**Medium**' – Viewpoint mainly represents local road users going to Knocknacarra National School. Recent tree clearance means a very small number of residents may also be represented, however they are set-back from this viewpoint.
Magnitude of Change (See Definition in Section 1.7.2 in Appendix 13-1)	'**Substantial**' – The Proposed Development is in the centre foreground of the view, resulting in a prominent and permanent change in character or composition of the baseline view, over a relatively wide extent.
Significance of Effect	**Medium × Substantial = Moderate = 'Significant' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.'* Refer to Section 1.7.3 'Visual Effects Assessment Matrix' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.
Mitigating Factors	› The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City.

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Viewpoint 2: L10111 Local Road	
	› Visual impacts shown in the photomontage are only experienced by a small number of receptors in this location, there is limited visibility from elsewhere on this road. › The visual impact of the Proposed Development will only occur for a very small number of residential receptors from the rear garden and windows of the Gort Siar Estate where they face the Proposed Development, and sheds in the rear gardens of many of these properties will greatly restrict visual impacts, likely to upper storeys only. › The change in view is appropriately in keeping with the nature and character of the surrounding suburban landscape elsewhere in Knocknacarra; › Some essential elements of the existing view, including the old stone wall and roadside vegetation will be retained in the Proposed Development, reducing the degree of visual change. › The Proposed Development does not impact any sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality.
Residual Visual Effect	**'Moderate' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.'* Refer to Section 1.8 'Determining Residual Landscape and Visual Effects' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.

13.6.3 Viewpoint 3: Northerly end of Kingston Gardens



Plate 13-20 Viewpoint 3 – Existing View: The northerly end of Kingston Gardens.

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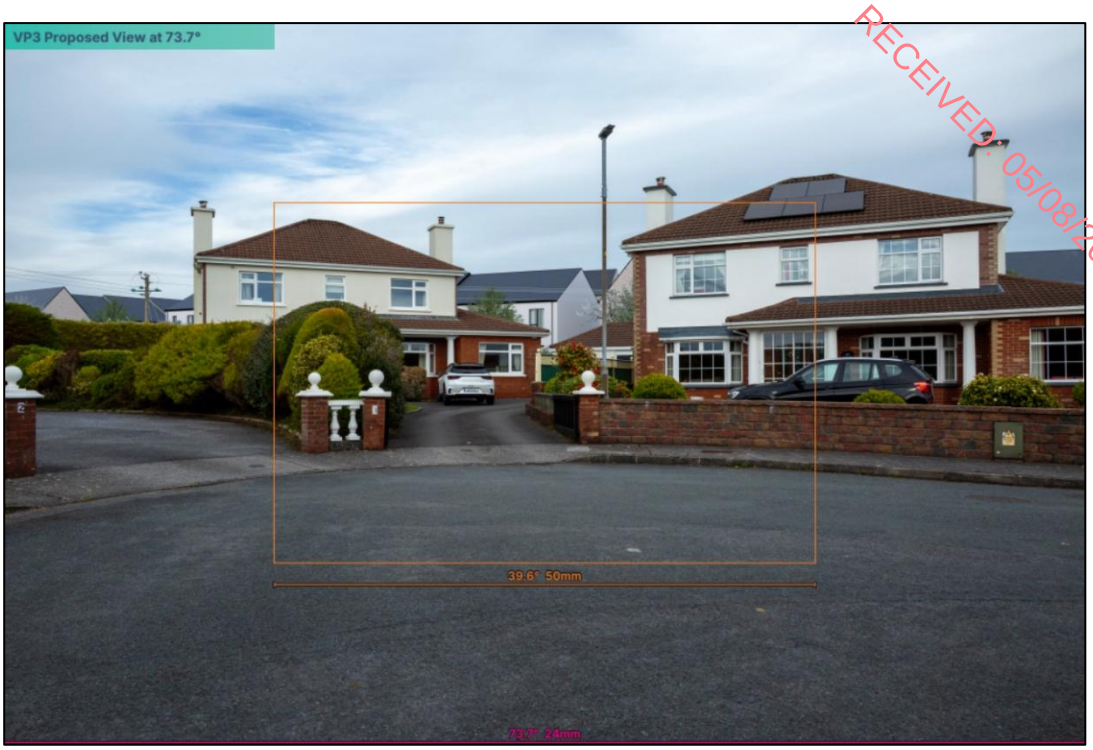


Plate 13-21 Viewpoint 3 – Proposed View: The northerly end of Kingston Gardens.

Table 13-6 Visual Impact Assessment: Viewpoint 3

Viewpoint 3: Kingston Gardens	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View east/north-east from the northern end of Kingston Gardens Residential Estate to the west/south-west of the Proposed Development. › Grid Reference (ITM): (E 526912, N 725014).
Visual Receptors and Sensitivity	› Residential Receptors: **High**
Description of 'Existing View'	A very short-range view of the residential cul-de-sac at the northern end of Kingston Gardens. The existing houses are two storey and close-set, with low vegetation and red brick walls separating the properties. Nothing is visible beyond the residences.
Proposed Photomontage Description	Multiple two storey semi-detached houses of the Kingston Quarter are partially visible, set-back beyond and between the existing Kingston Gardens residences which visually screen elements of the Proposed Development. The profile of these houses does not raise the overall vertical profile of the built environment seen from this viewpoint, although the density of the built environment is increased. Residences in Kingston Gardens will likely have views from their rear gardens and windows.
Cumulative Effects	In a potential future receiving environment, cumulative effects may arise with the proposed Kingston Park immediately to the north and an extended portion of the Masterplan to the west. Visibility is likely to be very limited. Where visibility does occur, it will likely be primarily elements of the landscape plan and from upper storey windows.

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Viewpoint 3: Kingston Gardens	
Potential Cumulative Effects with the Proposed Project	No cumulative effects are likely to arise from other elements of the Proposed Project as they are not visible from this viewpoint.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	'**High**' – Includes Local Residents
Magnitude of Change (See Definition in Section 1.7.2 in Appendix 13-1)	**'Moderate'** - The two storey semi-detatched houses of the Kingston Quarter will reduce open views between existing residences, but will not change the character of the view, remaining similar to the existing baseline and resulting in a 'Slight' degree of change from street level. The change in view is in keeping with the nature and character of the surrounding suburban landscape. However, a row of 8 No. residential buildings (ahead and to the right of the photomontage) are oriented along the perimeter of the Proposed Development site, with back windows looking towards the Proposed Development. A larger extent of the two storey semi-detached houses will be clearly visible from upper storey windows to the rear of these residential buildings amounting to a 'Moderate' degree of change.
Significance of Effect	**High × Moderate = Moderate = 'Significant' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.'* Refer to Section 1.7.3 'Visual Effects Assessment Matrix' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.
Mitigating Factors	› The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City. › Visual effects will be very limited from public areas at ground level within the residential estate itself. › Fencing and mature boundary vegetation to the rear of many of these properties will greatly restrict visual impacts. › The proposed buildings are impacting a short-range view of existing residential houses in a residential area of Galway City, they are not impacting sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality.
Residual Visual Effect	**'Moderate' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.'* Refer to Section 1.8 'Determining Residual Landscape and Visual Effects' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.

13.6.4 Viewpoint 4: Local access laneway to the south

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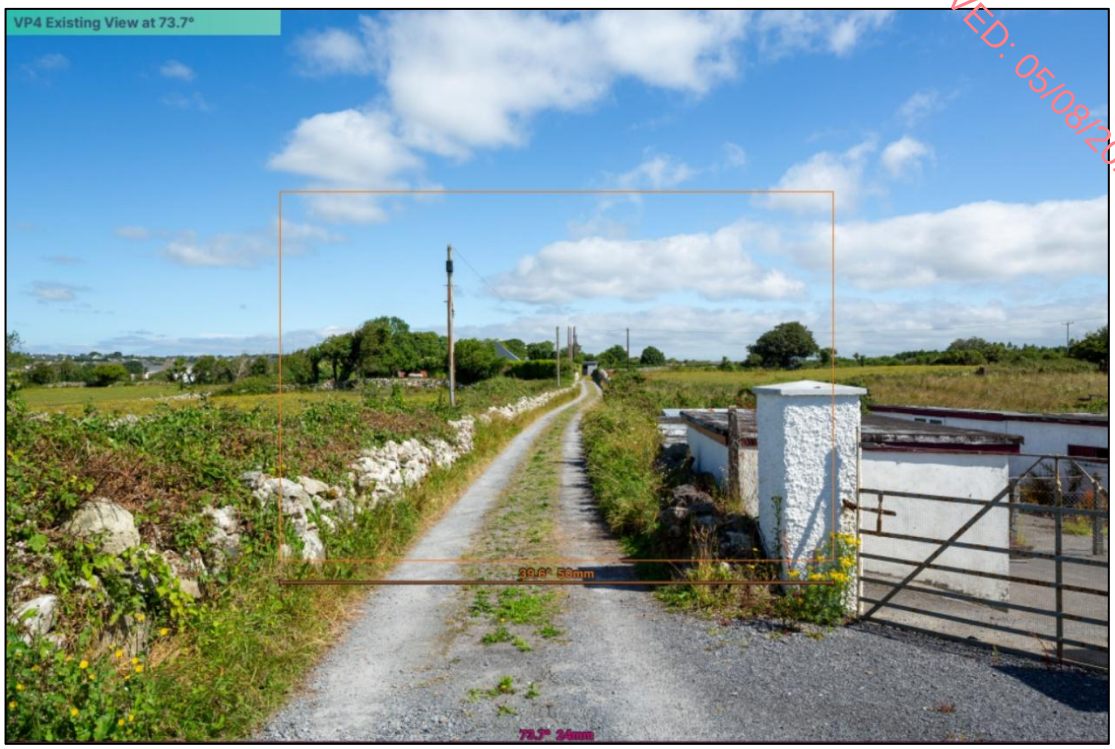


Plate 13-22 Viewpoint 4- Existing View: Local access laneway

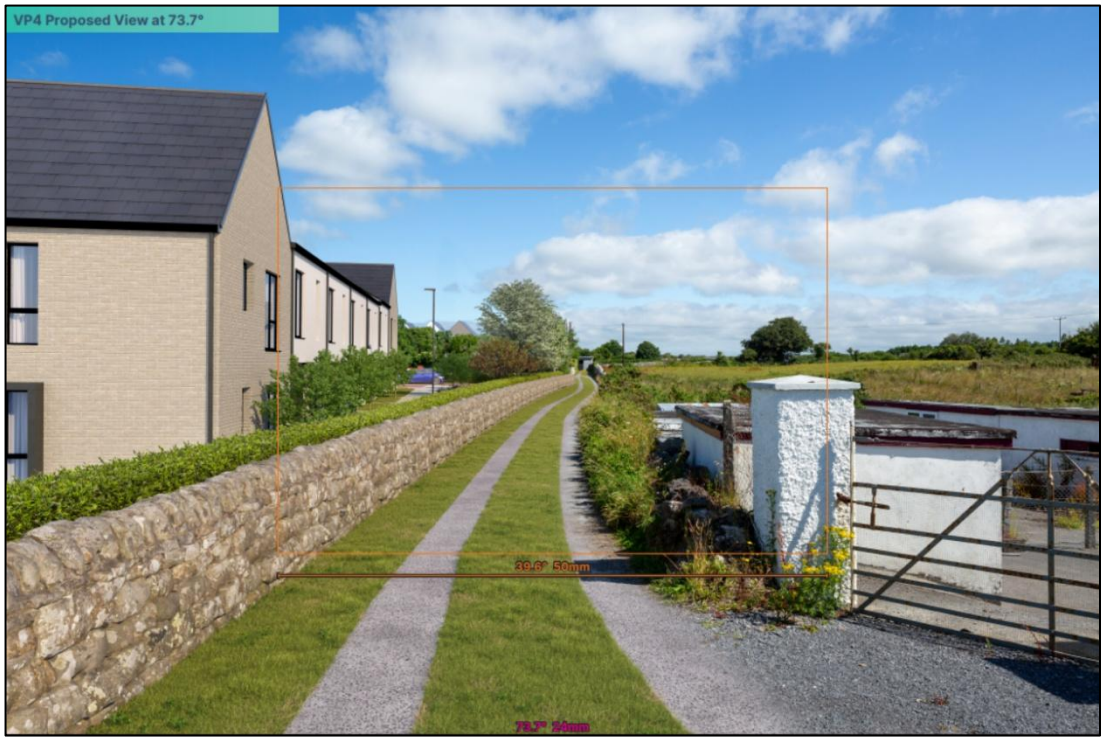


Plate 13-23 Viewpoint 4 – Proposed View: Local access laneway



Plate 13-24 Viewpoint 5 – Cumulative Proposed View: Local access laneway

Table 13-7 Visual Impact Assessment: Viewpoint 4

Viewpoint 4: Local access laneway	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View north from the local access laneway connecting to Kingston Road (R337), which is located to the south of the Proposed Development. › Grid Reference (ITM): (E 526360, N 724619)
Visual Receptors and Sensitivity	Residential Receptors: **High.**
Description of 'Existing View'	The existing image comprises a medium-range view along a private laneway lined on the western side with a low stone wall, traversing north through the centre of the Proposed Project. Agricultural grassland surrounds the laneway on both sides, with views into the Proposed Development site to the left and the Proposed Project to the right. Mature vegetation in the centre of the Proposed Development site can be seen in the centre left of the view. A disused gate and agricultural buildings are set below ground level to the right of the view.
Proposed Photomontage Description	One three storey townhouse and a row of 6 no. two storey townhouses of the Kingstone Quarter are seen to the left of the view, beyond a renovated stone wall lining the western side of the private laneway. These townhouses raise the vertical profile of the view. Beyond the townhouses of the Kingston Quarter, the dense vegetation of the Green Corridor connecting through LRD East and the Proposed Development. 2 no. roofs from the Altan quarter are visible above these trees. To the right of the view, agricultural grassland and the disused buildings are still visible.
Cumulative Effects	There will be no cumulative effects from this location.

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Viewpoint 4: Local access laneway	
Cumulative Proposed View of Proposed Project	In a potential future receiving environment, in combination cumulative effects may occur as the proposed LRD East would be visible to the right of the photomontage. The green block models within the cumulative view shows the approximate scale, mass and position of potential townhouses in the 'Threadneedle Quarter' which is in very close proximity and comprises buildings seen of similar scale.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	**'High'** – Includes Local Residents.
Magnitude of Change (See Definition in Section 1.7.2 in Appendix 13-1)	**'Substantial'** – The character of the view would change considerably, evolving from a baseline of open agricultural grassland to enclosed built environment and would be permanent in duration. This effect would be more pronounced in a future receiving environment where the proposed LRD East has been permitted. Elements of the current baseline have been kept, including the stone wall and mature vegetation.
Significance of Effect	**High × Substantial = Major/Moderate = 'Very Significant' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect, which by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.'* Refer to Section 1.7.3 'Visual Effects Assessment Matrix' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.
Mitigating Factors	› The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City. › Only a very small number of residences, set-back from the R337, will experience such visual change. In reality, the viewpoint essentially represents two to three residences on the brow of a hill in extremely close proximity, most other residences are located further south, set-back beyond mature vegetation or the brow of the hill with views in the opposing direction and represents a unique, worst-case scenario. › The lack of impact on any scenic sensitivities (residential amenity or landscape views) warrants a considerable reduction in overall residual visual effects. › Proposed planting softens the visual impact of built infrastructure of the Proposed Development, including the Green Corridor of the Masterplan, which is similar in scale and character to the existing vegetation within the centre of the Proposed Development site. › The stone wall and unpaved nature of the private laneway have been retained to reflect the original baseline character of the view. › The proposed buildings are not impacting sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality.
Residual Visual Effect	**'Moderate' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.'* Refer to Section 1.8 'Determining Residual Landscape and Visual Effects' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.

13.6.5 Viewpoint 5: Clybaun Residential Estate

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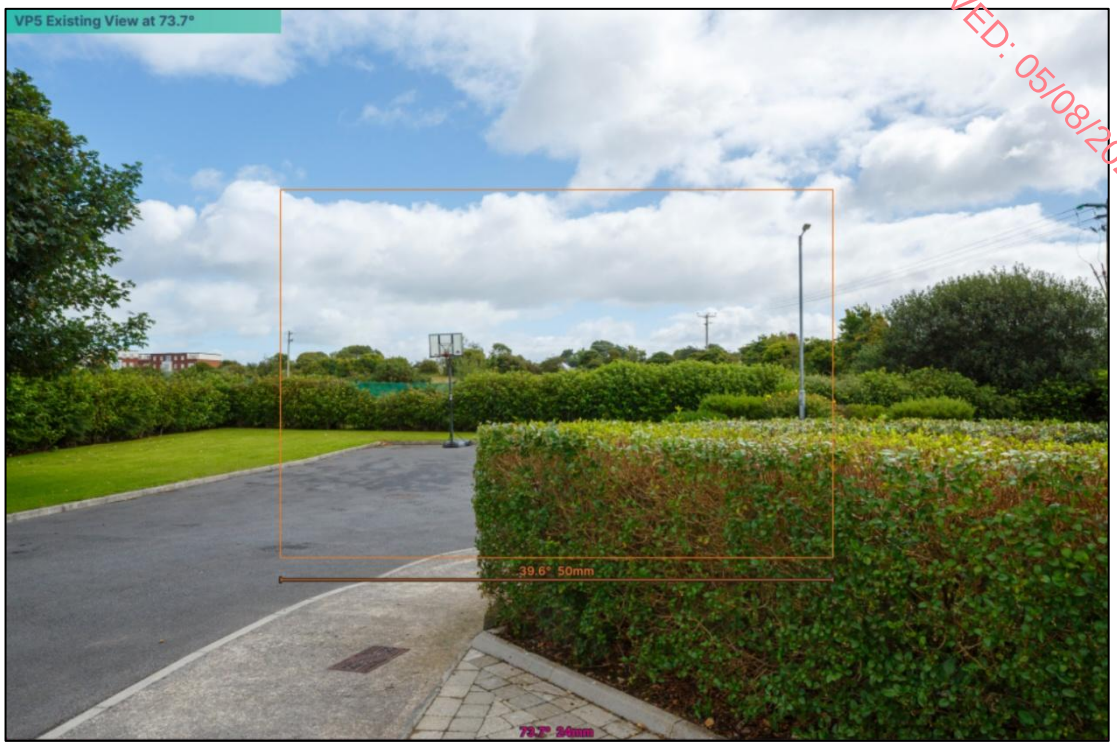


Plate 13-25 Viewpoint 5 - Existing View: Clybaun Residential Estate

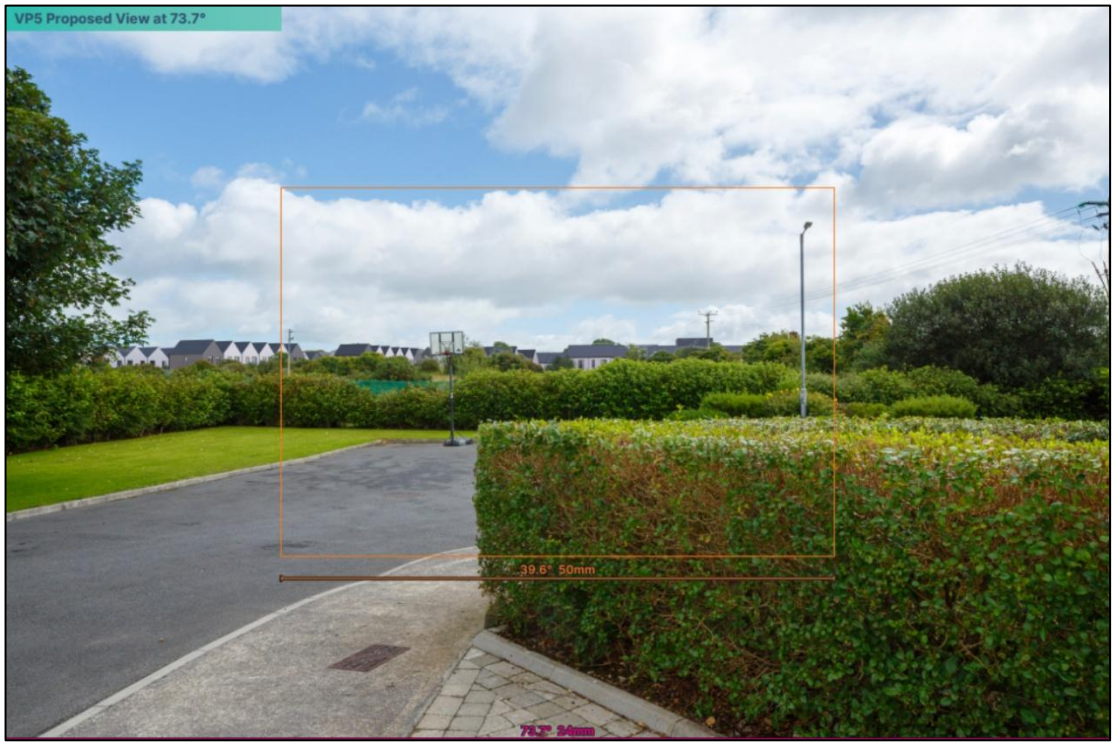


Plate 13-26 Viewpoint 5 - Proposed View: Clybaun Residential Estate

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Table 13-8 Visual Impact Assessment: Viewpoint 5

Viewpoint 5: Clybaun Residential Estate	
Viewpoint Description and Details	› View north-east from the eastern portion of the Clybaun Residential Estate, located to the west of the Proposed Development. › Grid Reference (ITM): (E 526953, N 724780).
Visual Receptors and Sensitivity	› Residential Receptors: **High.**
Description of 'Existing View'	The existing view comprises a relatively short-range view of a road and maintained green area of the housing estate set in front of a mature treeline in the middle distance. The Altán Apartments are visible beyond the treeline in the left background.
Proposed Photomontage Description	The upper storeys of the proposed three storey duplexes of the 'Altan Quarter' and the upper storeys of 2 No. 'Kingston Quarter' two storey semi-detached houses are visible within the slightly longer ranging view beyond the mature treeline. The profile of the houses very slightly raises the skyline of the built environment seen from this viewpoint, remaining lower than some vegetation within the view and obscuring views of the existing Altán Apartments beyond.
Cumulative Effects	In combination cumulative effects may arise from the proposed Kingston Park. Planting proposals along the western boundary of the Proposed Development may be visible along with ball-stop netting for the sports field.
Potential Cumulative Effects with the Proposed Project	In combinationcumulative effects may arise from the Proposed Project as houses from the Threadneedle Quarter may be visible beyond the Green Corridor through the space between the Altan Quarter and the Kingston Quarter.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	'**High**' – Includes Local Residents.
Magnitude of Change (See Definition in Section 1.7.2 in Appendix 13-1)	**'Slight'** – The Proposed Development is partially visible in the distance, visually screened by the intervening treeline. The houses of the Altan and Kingston Quarters are set-back from the viewpoint and do not greatly differ in scale to the existing Altán Apartments. The change in the view is readily noticeable, however, the treeline and residential character of the view remains unaltered.
Significance of Effect	**High × Slight = Moderate/Minor = 'Moderate' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.'* Refer to Section 1.7.3 'Visual Effects Assessment Matrix' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.
Mitigating Factors	› The houses of the Altan and Kingston Quarters are well set back from the viewpoint and of similar scale to the existing Altán Apartment blocks. › Existing vegetation and proposed planting softens the visual impact of built infrastructure of the Proposed Development and only upper parts of these buildings will be seen from this residential estate. › There will be very little to no visual effects from most public areas at ground level within other areas of the residential estate itself.

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Viewpoint 5: Clybaun Residential Estate	
	› The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City. › The proposed townhouses are impacting a view of existing apartment blocks in a residential area of Galway City, they are not impacting sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality.
Residual Visual Effect	**'Slight' (EPA, 2022)** *'An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities'.* Refer to Section 1.8 'Determining Residual Landscape and Visual Effects' in Appendix 13-1: LVIA Methodology.

13.7 Likely Significant Landscape and Visual Effects

The assessment of likely significant landscape and visual effects in this section follows the methodology detailed in Section 1.6 '*Assessing Landscape Effects*' and Section 1.7 '*Assessing Visual Effects*' of Appendix 13-1 (LVIA Methodology). These include consideration of landscape and visual sensitivity balanced with the magnitude of the effect to determine the significance of effects. Mitigating factors are then taken into consideration to arrive at residual landscape and visual effects. Residual landscape and visual effects are graded upon an 'impact assessment classification of significance' as per the EPA guidance (2022). This LVIA adopts quality-of-effect descriptors and EIA-threshold of significance statements in line with current EPA (2022) practice and the other chapters of this EIAR. This is a refinement from the previous EIAR for LRD East. All other assessments on magnitude of change, sensitivity and effect have been made following the same criteria as LRD East.

13.7.1 'Do-Nothing' Scenario

If the Proposed Development were not to proceed, there would be no change to the existing environment and landscape of the Proposed Development site. The Proposed Development site would continue to be an undeveloped landscape surrounded by urban landscape and the existing road networks would remain as they are. No landscape and visual impacts would occur. Should this occur the landscape and visual impact would be neutral in the context of this EIAR.

13.7.2 Construction Phase Effects

The construction works required to build the Proposed Development are set out in Chapter 4. These will have a direct effect on the landscape where the landform and landcover of the Proposed Development site is materially altered. During the construction phase, potential landscape and visual effects will occur as the Proposed Development site changes from an area of undeveloped land to a construction site. This is expected to be carried out across a period of approximately 3 years therefore the construction phase effects will be 'Short-Term' in duration as per definitions in the EPA (2022) guidance.

Potential landscape effects include vegetation removal, earthworks, demolition works, activities of machinery, resulting in noise and dust in the landscape, and a subsequent change in character. Construction phase visual effects include potential negative effects on the nearby visual receptors as a result of the vegetation removal, earthworks, demolition of existing farm buildings and operation of machinery. These visual effects will be most pronounced in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development site. Cranes will be intermittently required to facilitate construction of the residential buildings of the Proposed Development; these are likely to be visible from greater distances than other

components of the construction phase and are accounted for in the determination of visual effects. The construction phase effects will be 'Short Term' in duration.

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13.7.2.1 Likely Landscape Effects – Construction Phase

The predicted direct impacts upon the landscape arising from the construction phase will include the transformation of the landscape from requisite earthworks and construction activities, as well as the noise and dust from construction operations, material transport, and increased site traffic. Potential landscape effects will, where possible, be reduced by the implementation of appropriate site management procedures – such as the control of site lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, delivery of materials and appropriate car parking.

Significance of Landscape Effects – Construction Phase

Overall, the Proposed Development will have a localised 'Moderate', 'Short-Term', 'Negative' residual effect on the landscape of the Proposed Development site during the construction phase. The effect on the landscape is localised and will have a minor impact upon the wider character of the landscape surrounding Proposed Development site. The effects of the operational and maintenance phase are outlined in the following sections.

13.7.2.2 Likely Visual Effects – Construction Phase

In general, visibility of the Proposed Development is largely restricted due to the topographical characteristics of the surrounding area and visual screening from vegetation and the built environment. As demonstrated by the assessments conducted as part of the Visual Baseline in Section 13.4, and as illustrated by the photomontages, visibility of the Proposed Development is confined to locations in very close proximity (No visibility beyond distances of approximately 250m) to the Proposed Development site. Most visibility of construction activities will occur from residential properties immediately adjoining the Proposed Development site in Gort Siar, Doire Gheal, Clybaun and Kingston Gardens residential estates, and also from the existing Altán Apartments. These residential receptors are of 'High' sensitivity.

Cranes may be required to facilitate construction of proposed buildings depending on site conditions. As tall features, cranes will have a greater visual exposure than construction activities and the proposed buildings when constructed. Potential impacts of cranes will be 'Short-Term' and they will not impact any protected or highly sensitive landscape views.

Visual effects during the construction phase will be, where possible, reduced through appropriate site management measures, work practices and a waste management plan to ensure the Proposed Development site is kept tidy, dust is kept to a minimum and that public areas are kept free from building material and site rubbish. Site hoarding will be appropriately scaled, finished and maintained for the period of construction of each section of the works as appropriate.

Significance of Visual Effects – Construction Phase

A 'Moderate' degree of change will occur from the back windows of a small number of residential receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site where site clearance, earthworks and building processes required to construct the Proposed Development will be seen. 'Short-term', 'Negative' residual visual effects of 'Moderate' significance are likely to occur during the construction phase for the residential receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site.

In general, visual effects during the construction phase will be very limited and are highly localised due to the enclosure of the Proposed Development site by the built environment, mature boundary vegetation as well as the topographic characteristics of the area. Cranes will cause residual visual effects

of 'Moderate' significance on a greater number of receptors such as road users and residential receptors in the surrounding suburban landscape.

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13.7.3 Operational Phase Effects

The operational phase commences following completion of construction works. Mitigation, remedial and avoidance measures have been integral in the design of the Proposed Development. Strategic siting and design of infrastructure components reduce the potential landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and are therefore factored into the following assessments of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development has been designed with the intention of becoming a lasting benefit to the local area, and in this regard, all operational effects will be 'Permanent'.

13.7.3.1 Likely Significant Landscape Effects – Operational Phase

A desktop study of landscape policy did not identify any high sensitivity landscape receptors or designations pertaining to the lands of the Proposed Development site itself. 3 No. designated Protected Views were identified within the LVIA Study Area, with 1 No. Protected View (V11) located directly south of the Proposed Development site. The protected view designations are of a visual nature and are therefore considered and assessed in the following section – *Likely Significant Visual Effects – Operational Phase*. The desktop study and site investigations identified no other sensitive landscape receptors in the immediate setting and wider LVIA Study Area.

The quality of landscape and visual effects can naturally be somewhat subjective in nature. In this instance, the Proposed Development is altering a greenfield site to a developed area, an outcome that can be considered 'Negative' change in landscape and visual terms. However, the high quality of design and alignment with the land use zoning could be interpreted as a 'Positive' change by others. On balance, this LVIA takes a precautionary approach and considers landscape and visual effects in the operational phase reporting effects as 'Neutral/Negative'. Refer to Methodology Appendix for further details and definitions.

Landscape Effects - Proposed Development site

Section 13.3.4 assessed the 'landscape value' and 'susceptibility to change' of the landscape of the Proposed Development site in order to determine landscape sensitivity of the Proposed Development site. On balance, the Proposed Development site is deemed to be of 'Low' Sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

During the operational phase, the Proposed Development will result in a substantial change to the physical fabric of the landscape of the Proposed Development site and its landscape character compared with the baseline. The landscape will be changed from an undeveloped greenfield area of agricultural grasslands, scrub, and hedgerows to a suburban landscape comprising residential development, roads and all other supporting infrastructure. These impacts will be highly localised to the Proposed Development site itself. The scale of the change will be substantial as the character, structure and composition of the Site transitions from a rural environment to a well-developed landscape of a semi-urban nature. The magnitude of change within the Proposed Development site is deemed to be 'Substantial'.

Some rural qualities of the Proposed Development site will be lost, however, retention of the vernacular building as a café within the Altan Quarter and implementation of the designated landscape plan will mitigate the extent of the change and replace valuable landscape attributes lost during the construction phase and potentially enhance the recreational value of the landscape. On balance, considering factors such as the landscape plan and the alignment of the Proposed Development with the zoning of the subject lands, direct effects on the landscape of the Proposed Development site are deemed to be 'Permanent', 'Neutral/Negative' effects of 'Moderate' Significance – "An effect that alters the character

of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends" (EPA, 2022). This is not significant in the context of EIA.

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Landscape Effects: Landscape of the LVIA Study Area

The wider landscape setting surrounding the Proposed Development is predominantly an urban/suburban landscape with high levels of human influence evident throughout. Due to the enclosed nature of the Proposed Development site and limited visibility of the Proposed Development from locations beyond its immediate environment, there will be very limited effects on landscape character elsewhere in the LVIA Study Area. The Proposed Development will therefore have little to no impact on the character of the wider landscape setting owing to the nature of its design and siting, as is evident from the appraisals reported in Section 13.4 - *Visual Baseline* and the photomontages produced. As shown by the photomontages, the change to landscape character from locations in close proximity will be minimal, with the exception of VP04 in extremely close proximity, and the Proposed Development will effectively integrate with its existing landscape setting. The change in character of the landscape within views is appropriately in keeping with the nature and character of the surrounding suburban landscape elsewhere in Knocknacarra; particularly once planting as part of the landscape plan establishes and matures. Overall, the predicted landscape impact on the wider LVIA Study Area is deemed to be 'Slight'. On balance, the wider landscape effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be "Permanent", "Neutral/Negative" and "Slight", which is not significant in the context of EIA.

Landscape Effects: Green Network & Kingston Park

An area of the GCDP Green Network is located to the west of the Proposed Development site. There will be no direct landscape effect on this area. However, there is potential for recreational connectivity with the Proposed Project in a potential future receiving environment if plans proposed to develop this as parklands occur, such as the proposed Kingston Park development. The proposed planting included as part of the landscape plan, include a 'Green Corridor' (See Figure 13-16 below) which is designed to support ecological networks in this area and connectivity with the Green Network, reducing negative ecological effects once vegetation matures and establishes over time. Once vegetation matures, the landscape plan will contribute to mitigation of changes in the landscape. A comprehensive assessment on biodiversity is included in Chapter 6 of this EIAR - *Biodiversity*. This Green Corridor also includes walking loops and a greenway Cycle route. In a future receiving environment, the Proposed Project will provide recreational connectivity between the proposed Kingston Park and Millers Lane park development projects. On balance, the landscape effects of the proposed Green Corridor are considered to be "Permanent", "Positive" and "Slight", which is not significant in the context of EIA.

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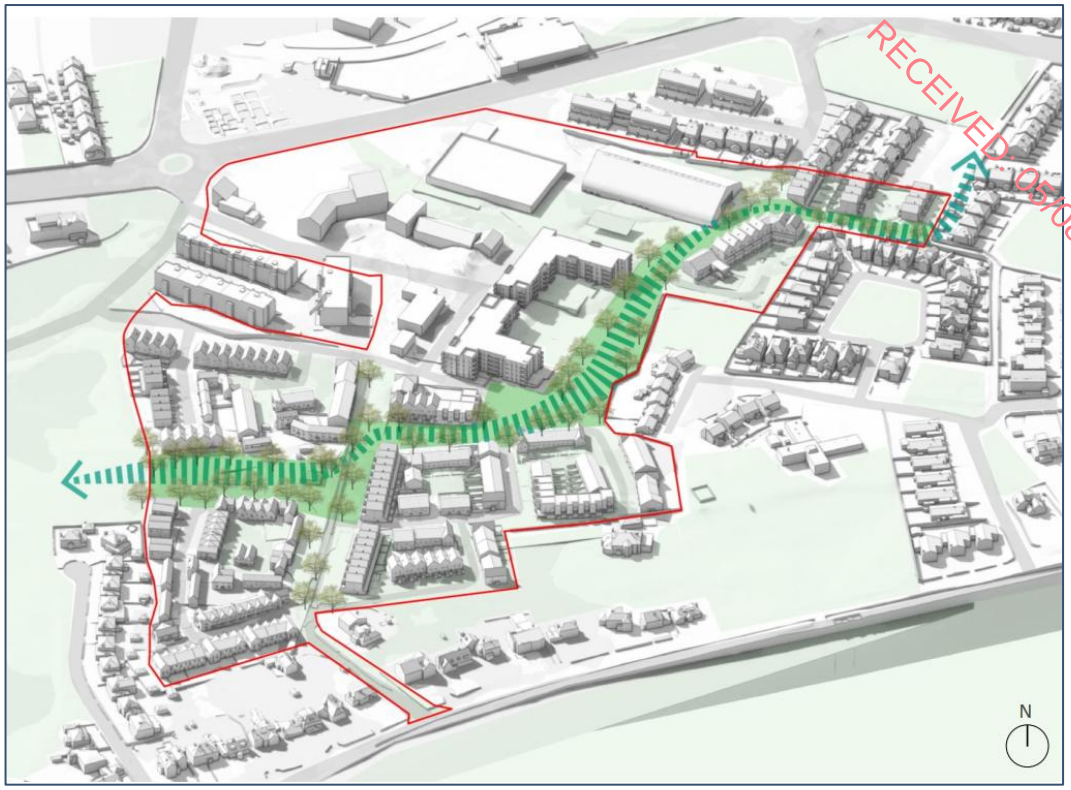


Figure 13-16 'Green Corridor' through the Proposed Project – Map Extracted from the 'Urban Framework Plan Design Statement' for the Proposed Project

13.7.3.2 Likely Significant Visual Effects – Operational Phase

The desktop study, site visits and photomontages all inform the assessment of visual effects. The landscape of this residential area of Galway City comprises many visual screening elements such as vegetation and built environment of Knocknacarra which greatly restricts visibility of the Proposed Development from a vast majority of visual receptors in the LVIA Study Area.

This LVIA determined that there will be **no** impact on any 'Very High' sensitivity visual receptors or views of high scenic sensitivity. The definition of visual receptor sensitivity is included in Section 1.7.1 of Appendix 13-1 – LVIA Methodology. A designated protected view and prospect (V11) in the GCDP is located directly south of the Proposed Development site on Kingston Road. The protected views from V11 are described in the GCDP as 'Seascape views of Galway Bay' which are directed to the south from Kingston Road, in the opposite direction from the Proposed Development, which is located to the north. The Proposed Development therefore does not impact the sensitive scenic amenity and protected views from V11.

On-site visibility appraisals determined that actual visibility of the Proposed Development will only occur within short-range views from visual receptors located in immediate proximity to the Proposed Development site, mainly residential receptors and the local road network. Local road users are considered 'Low' sensitivity, and local residential receptors in are considered 'High' sensitivity.

The likely visibility of the Proposed Development was appraised from multiple locations surrounding the Proposed Development, which was comprehensively reported with the aid of photographs in Section 13.4 – *Visual Baseline*. Visibility appraisals determined that the zone of greatest visual influence is limited to areas in very close proximity to the Proposed Development (<250m from the Proposed Development site), excepting a few occasional elevated vantage points to the north-west. Following the visibility appraisal, 5 no. photomontages were prepared from viewpoints surrounding the Proposed Development site. The viewpoints represent prominent visual receptors where potential visibility of the Proposed Development is most likely to occur. The viewpoints show views from multiple geographic

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and landscape contexts. Visual effects will occur from the Altán Apartments located immediately to the north of the Proposed Development. Visibility appraisals determined there is little to no ground level visibility of the Proposed Development from the apartments as mature boundary vegetation exists along the northern and southern sides of the apartments. However, there will likely be clear visibility of a large proportion of the Proposed Development from the upper storeys of the apartment block, particularly those on the southern façade of the southern block, amounting to a 'Moderate' degree of change for these receptors. On balance, the visual effects of the Proposed Development on the Altán Apartments are considered to be "Permanent", "Neutral/Negative" and "Moderate", which is not significant in the context of EIA.

The greatest visual effects will occur from a relatively small number of residential receptors in close proximity to the Proposed Development, particularly from the surrounding residential estates where residential properties have upper storey windows looking out into the Proposed Development site and will have clear unobstructed views of the Proposed Development. A visual impact assessment for each of the 5 viewpoints is set out in Section 13.6. The following mitigating factors were common from all viewpoints and were considered in the overall assessment of residual visual effects from each Viewpoint:

- Visual effects will be limited from public areas at ground level within all surrounding residential estates.
- Existing vegetation and proposed planting softens the visual impact of built infrastructure of the Proposed Development and only upper parts of buildings will be seen from most surrounding residential estates.
- The proposed buildings are mostly impacting views of existing apartment blocks, residential areas, and greenfields in a residential area of Galway City, they are not impacting sensitive views of any unique or distinctive scenic quality.
- The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City.
- Visual Impacts from residential properties occurs for a small number of residential receptors.

Residual visual effects of 'Slight' significance arise at 2 No. Viewpoints (VP01, VP05). 'Moderate' residual visual effects are deemed to arise at 3 No. viewpoints (VP02, VP03, VP04) from receptors in very close proximity. 'Moderate' residual visual effects occur from VP02 and VP04 from local roads in extremely close where the greatest visibility and substantial magnitude of change occurs causing "an effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends". Due to the location of the Proposed Development within an area that is not highly visible in the wider landscape, the viewpoints in this EIAR represent receptors in relatively close proximity, slightly increasing magnitude of change ratings and residual effects overall from LRD East, while less overall visibility occurs. On balance, the residual visual effects of the Proposed Development on residents in close proximity represented by Viewpoints 01-05 are considered to be "Permanent", "Neutral/Negative" and "Slight" to "Moderate", which is not significant in the context of EIA.

The visibility appraisals determined that visibility of the Proposed Development predominantly occurs from receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site. However, there is a large, elevated landform to the north-west of the LVIA Study Area comprising residential developments including the Árd Na Gaoithe Housing Estate. There will likely be views towards the Proposed Development from residential receptors at elevated vantage points in this area, where some residents will have views from their back gardens and upper storey windows towards the Proposed Development. A viewpoint was not captured to represent these residential receptors as there were no open views found towards the Proposed Development from the public realm and public roads in this elevated area. Where visibility does occur from back gardens or upper storey windows, visual effects are likely to be of 'Slight' significance due to the setback distances and limited magnitude of change likely to occur. On balance, the visual effects of the Proposed Development on residents set-back to the north-west are

considered to be “Permanent”, “Neutral/Negative” and “Slight”, which is not significant in the context of EIA.

‘Slight’ residual visual effects are also likely to occur from two rows of residential receptors on Kingston Road where residential receptors will have views of the Proposed Development from their back gardens and upper storey rear windows. No clear views towards the Proposed Development were found on the public areas of Kingston Road due to the visual screening from the row of residential houses themselves and the localised landform. On balance, the visual effects of the Proposed Development on residents along Kingston Road are considered to be “Permanent”, “Neutral/Negative” and “Not Significant”, which is not significant in the context of EIA.

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13.7.4 Cumulative Effects

There are many potential scenarios and interactions where cumulative visual effects may occur. While cumulative landscape and visual effects can occur due to the interaction of the Proposed Development with any other permitted or planned developments, the focus in the LVIA are those scenarios that are likely to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

13.7.4.1 Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

Assessment of cumulative effects considers the other developments identified in Section 13.5 – *Cumulative Baseline*. Cumulative effects are considered from specific viewpoints and receptors and are incorporated into the visual impact assessment of viewpoints reported in tables in Section 13.6 – *Photomontage Viewpoint Assessment.*

Several factors must be considered when determining cumulative visual effects; Combined visibility (simultaneously and successional) and sequential visibility. On balance, the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be “Permanent”, “Neutral/Negative” and “Moderate”, which is not significant in the context of EIA.

Combined Visibility - Simultaneous

Combined visibility occurs where an observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint. Simultaneous combined visibility occurs when two developments are simultaneously seen within the same field of view from one viewpoint. For example, from VP04, The Proposed Development is visible, but as shown in the ‘Cumulative Proposed View of the Proposed Project’, in a future receiving environment LRD East will also be visible in the same field of view. The overall residual effects arising from VP04 were deemed to be ‘Moderate’.

Combined Visibility - Successional

Combined successional visibility is when a receptor can view two developments from the same location but within differing arcs or fields of view. There will be in combination successional visual effects from VP02 as the Proposed Development is seen in the centre of the view, but if the view was directed to the south-east, a view of the proposed Kingston Park sports centre would occur. The overall residual effects arising from VP02 were deemed to be ‘Moderate’.

Sequential Visibility

Sequential cumulative visual effects occur when an observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments. Sequential cumulative effects should be assessed for travel along regularly used routes like major roads, railway lines, ferry routes, popular paths, etc. In a ‘Journey Scenario’ the magnitude of sequential effects will be affected by speed of travel and distance between viewpoints. Cumulative sequential effects are likely to occur as local road users travel around Knocknacarra, as

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they may see the Permitted Glenveagh LRD, travel along Western Distributor Road and see the Permitted Regional Aquatic Centre and then turn south on the L10111 and encounter the Proposed Development. For example, sequential cumulative visual impacts are likely to occur as residential receptors travel along the local access laneway to the south of the Proposed Development site. Due to the location of the Proposed Development set-back from both Western Distributor Road and Kingston Road and its position at relative lower elevation, sequential visibility with other cumulative developments in the wider area is low.

Other Neighbourhoods of the Proposed Project: Threadneedle Quarter, Orchard Quarter, and Miller's Quarter: Other residential development included as part of the Proposed Project which do not form part of this planning application and are permitted but currently under appeal, are of key consideration in the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. The general layout and design of these other residential areas are included in the design statement as separate neighbourhoods of the Proposed Project. Cumulative landscape effects will occur as these areas of land are developed in combination with the Proposed Development for residential use. The character of the undeveloped greenfield lands of the EIAR Study Area will be transformed to residential use – in line with the zoning for the city in the GCDP. These cumulative landscape effects are not significant.

The visual effects of these neighbourhoods are assessed cumulatively with the Proposed Development and where relevant are included in the Photomontage Booklet. A separate additional view is included for 1 No. relevant viewpoint (VP04) titled 'Cumulative Proposed View with Potential Future Residential Development in the Proposed Project'. This cumulative view shows a block model with the mass, scale and position of this other residential development in a potential future receiving environment with the Proposed Development where simultaneous combined visual effects occur. The greatest cumulative visual effects will occur from the local access laneway and along the private drive that will run through the centre of the Proposed Project. Overall, residual visual effects from this location (VP04) are 'Moderate'.

Greatest visual effects of LRD East occur to the north and north-east of the Proposed Project, these include 'Moderate' visual effects in The Orchard and An Logán residential estates (as reported in the previous EIAR). Although the Proposed Development is not visible from these receptors, there is a cumulative effect as these residential receptors are impacted by the Proposed Project.

Permitted Aquatic Centre: The permitted aquatic centre forms part of the overall Masterplan for development of the greenfield lands south of Western Distributor Road in Knocknacarra (adjoining the northern boundary of LRD East). Cumulative landscape effects will occur as these areas of land are developed in combination with the Proposed Development and the Proposed Project. The character of these undeveloped greenfield lands will be transformed into commercial, residential and recreational uses – in line with the zoning for the city in the GCDP. These cumulative landscape effects are acceptable and are not significant. Cumulative visual effects will occur from residential receptors in the existing Altán Apartments, and An Logan residential estate where there will likely be some in combination visibility of the Proposed Development with the permitted aquatic centre in a future receiving environment.

Permitted Glenveagh LRD: The permitted Glenveagh LRD is located to the north-east of the Proposed Development. As a large residential development including multi-storey apartment blocks, this has the greatest potential for cumulative visual effects in combination with the Proposed Project. There will be very few locations and instances where in combination views of both developments occur. This includes both in 'combination simultaneous' views (all seen in the same field of view) and also 'in combination successional' views (where different developments are seen from the same viewpoint but in opposing directions). Simultaneous views of the Proposed Project, both in combination and successional, with the permitted Glenveagh LRD are only likely to occur with LRD East as reported in the previous EIAR. However, cumulative visual effects are likely to occur in a journey scenario where a road user or pedestrian travels around this area of Knocknacarra and experiences the visual impact of the Proposed Development and then the permitted Glenveagh LRD. These cumulative visual effects

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are not significant, particularly considering the alignment with zoning in local planning policy and the suburban nature of the landscape in this area of Galway City.

Kingston Park and Millers Lane: The cumulative interactions of the Proposed Development and the proposed Kingston Park and Millers Lane developments are discussed previously (See Section 13.7.3.1). The Proposed Project includes a Green Corridor designed to provide ecological and recreational connectivity to these parks in a future receiving environment. Cumulative effects from the proposed parks and the Proposed Development are likely to be positive for the local area and overall cumulative effects will not be significant.

13.8 Conclusion

Desk studies, site visits and photomontages determined that there would be very limited visibility of the Proposed Development beyond the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Development site (Within 250m). **No** effects will occur on any landscape and visual receptors or designations of Very High sensitivity in the LVIA Study Area.

Most proposed buildings sit within the centre of the private lands of the Proposed Project. However, some buildings along the northern and western periphery of the Altan Quarter directly adjoin the Altán Apartments and the L10111, and buildings along the western and southern periphery of the Kingston Quarter directly adjoin residences on Kingston Gardens and 3 no. residences to the south. The Proposed Development is otherwise well set-back from receptors by the intervening greenfield lands of the proposed Kingston Park, the built environment and the lands of the proposed LRD East, leaving most buildings well concealed and with limited visual exposure in the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the focus of the LVIA and photomontages were on the proposed buildings located near the outer periphery of the Proposed Development site.

Perceptual and aesthetic changes on the wider landscape character surrounding the Proposed Development site are likely to be insignificant as a result of the very limited and localised visibility of the Proposed Development. The greatest landscape effects will occur on the footprint of the Proposed Development site itself where the landscape will be materially altered from an undeveloped greenfield site in previous use as agricultural grassland to a suburban landscape comprising residential development. Due to local landform characteristics and the nature of visual screening from mature vegetation and the built environment, there will be no significant visual changes to the character of the landscape of the wider LVIA Study Area. Visibility is only likely to occur from local residential receptors and the local road network immediately surrounding the Proposed Development site.

Overall, the landscape effects associated with the Proposed Development are highly localised and limited to the Proposed Development site itself where residual 'Moderate' landscape effects occur. Changes to the landscape and views are appropriately in keeping with the nature and character of the surrounding suburban landscape elsewhere in Knocknacarra. The Proposed Development is seen as residential development located in lands zoned as R (Residential) in the GCDP and is therefore aligned with the spatial planning of this suburban landscape of Galway City in local planning policy.

The Proposed Development was assessed from 5 no. viewpoints in the LVIA Study Area. Overall, residual visual effects as a result of the Proposed Development were deemed to be 'Slight' from 2 No. Viewpoints, and 'Moderate' from 3 No. Viewpoints. The visual effects occur within a highly localised area representing a small number of residential receptors and the local road network in very close proximity to the Proposed Development.

No significant cumulative landscape and visual effects are likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development. As noted in the previous section, any cumulative visual effects experienced (combined or sequentially) as a result of views with the other cumulative developments are unlikely, and when they

do occur, are in line with what is clearly envisioned in planning and development policy for the areas within which these developments are located, given that all developments are aligned with the zoning of these lands in the GCDP.

To conclude, likely landscape and visual effects anticipated from the Proposed Development are not deemed to be significant. Considering the zoning of these lands, residual effects upon the landscape and visual amenity are deemed to be acceptable and in line with the sustainable development of the area.

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