

Chapter 6:

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises an assessment of the likely effects on the landscape and visual environment of the proposed residential development as an extension to the *Rejuvenation Scheme* at Frascati Shopping Centre.

The proposal is for a residential development of 45 No. apartment units over 3 No. storeys, from second to fourth floor level, over the permitted ground and first floor levels of retail / restaurant floorspace and permitted lower ground floor car park. The proposal will be an extension of the *Rejuvenation Scheme* permitted under Reg. Ref.: D14A/0134 (which was the subject of an EIS), as subsequently amended by Reg. Ref.: D16A/0235 / ABP Ref.: PL 06D.246810; Reg. Ref.: D16A/0798; Reg. Ref.: D16A/0843; and Reg. Ref.: D17A/0599.

A series of Photomontages are included in *Appendix 6.1* to illustrate the physical and visual character of the proposed development as viewed from surrounding locations. In each instance the 'As Existing', 'As Permitted' (showing the permitted but not yet completed Rejuvenation Scheme), and 'As Proposed' view is provided (refer *Appendix 6.1 - Photomontages*).

Brady Shipman Martin has been commissioned to prepare this chapter of the EIAR on behalf of IMRF II Frascati Limited Partnership acting through its general partner Davy IMRF II GP Limited. It was carried out by John Kelly, B.Arch, MRIAI.

6.2 STUDY METHODOLOGY

6.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The assessment involved visiting the site and surrounding area; a review of statutory planning and other documentation in order to ascertain local and wider significance; a study of ordnance survey mapping and aerial photography; a review of plans, sections, elevations and 3D model of the proposed development, and a review of other chapters of this EIAR, in particular, the Project Description (Chapter 2), and Daylight and Sunlight Assessment (Appendix 1 of the EIAR).

This assessment has regard to the EPA Draft '*Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*' (2017) and '*Draft Advice Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements*' (2015). The landscape and visual impact assessment for the proposed development takes account of the character and nature of the existing site and its surrounds, the location of sensitive landscapes and visual receptors, the sensitivity and significance of the site, and its vulnerability to change. In addition, the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual impact Assessment 3rd Edition*. (Landscape Institute (UK) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) and the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment* (August 2018) were reviewed in the preparation of this report.

6.2.2 NATURE OF IMPACTS

Impacts on landscape/townscape arise in two distinct but closely related aspects. The first is impact on the character of the landscape/townscape arising from the insertion of new development or the alteration of elements within an existing context. The second aspect is visual impact, which arises as a result of changes or insertions within a view. The impact on the view depends on the degree and nature of the change and such changes may rise from either ‘visual intrusion’ (i.e. alteration without appreciable blocking) or ‘visual obstruction’ (i.e. alteration with a notable extent or full blocking).

It is recognised that as with all landscape/townscape and visual considerations, impacts will be influenced and informed, to some degree, by subjective perceptions of how the overall change(s) matter to any given individual.

The assessment of landscape/townscape and visual impacts includes:

- Direct impacts upon specific landscape/townscape elements within and adjacent to the site
- Effects on the overall pattern of the landscape/townscape elements which give rise to the character of the site and its surroundings
- Impacts upon any special interests in and around the site
- Direct impacts of the scheme upon views, and
- Overall impact on townscape character and visual amenity

6.2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS AND IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The classification of significance of effects (or impacts) utilised in the assessment and as set out in *Table 6.1* is derived from *Figure 3.5* of the *Draft Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (EPA, 2017).

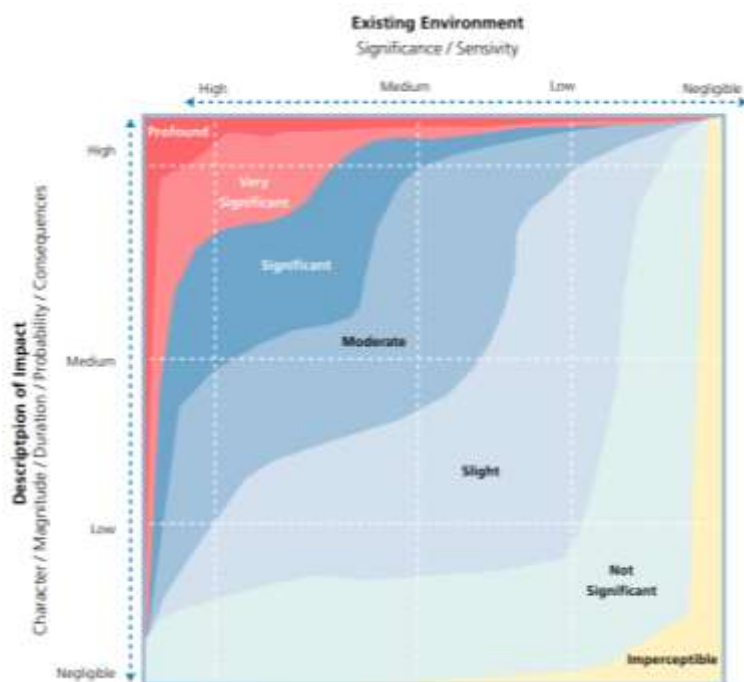


Table 6.1: Classification of Significance of Effects (Impacts)

These effects, which in nature may be positive, neutral or negative/adverse, are described as follows:

Imperceptible:	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.
Not significant:	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without noticeable consequences.
Slight:	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Moderate:	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.
Significant:	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Very Significant:	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Profound:	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

In terms of **duration** effects are considered as follows:

Momentary:	lasting seconds to minutes.
Brief:	lasting up to one day.
Temporary:	lasting up to one year.
Short-term:	lasting one to seven years.
Medium-term:	lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long-term:	lasting fifteen to sixty years.
Permanent:	lasting over sixty years.

Further aspects of effects including their magnitude (i.e. extent, frequency, and context); probability (i.e. likely, indeterminable); and type (i.e. cumulative, interaction (synergistic), residual, indirect, etc.) are also considered in the assessment, where appropriate.

6.3 THE EXISTING RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT (BASELINE SITUATION)

6.3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

Frascati Shopping Centre site is bounded by the N31 Frascati / Rock Road (Blackrock Bypass) to the east and by the rear of residential properties fronting Mount Merrion Avenue, Frascati Park and George's Avenue to the north, west and south respectively. Blackrock Shopping Centre (the 'Blackrock Centre') is located on the opposite side of the N31 to the east and incorporates the former Enterprise House commercial building (which has recently been demolished as part of an office redevelopment scheme- see Chapter 2, Appendix 2.1 for further details). Mature trees are a feature of the surrounding environment, particularly within the immediately surrounding residential neighbourhoods and most notably within Blackrock Park to the north of Frascati / Blackrock.

This part of Blackrock, including the shopping centre sites and the N31 itself, have and continue to be the focus of substantial regeneration, upgrade and expansion, and associated construction activity.

- The N31 Road has been reconfigured to include dedicated bus and cycle lanes, upgraded footpaths and pedestrian crossings, and median planting;
- Frascati Shopping Centre is currently at an advanced stage of construction with the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme*, and the overall form of the development is now clearly visible and pending final finishes;
- The former Enterprise House has been demolished and a new and more contemporary commercial development has commenced construction; and
- The Blackrock Centre is being modified and extended with revisions to carpark arrangements, development of an additional floor and modernisation of facades.

The permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* incorporates a full ground floor of active retail/restaurant facing the N31 and set back by a terraced public open space/plaza; and a full retail first floor. The building elements are largely constructed at this point in time, together with modified vehicular parking on site, and optimised vehicular access and egress between the N31 and the development. Upon final completion, the *Rejuvenation Scheme* will present a stronger, animated and more contemporary identity and presence along the N31 than the original shopping centre on the site, including high quality public open space along the N31 site frontage from George's Avenue to the northern site boundary. The permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* also includes a second floor with rooftop restaurant and concealed plant and equipment, however, these elements have not been constructed and are discussed further below.

Residential development surrounds the site on three sides. To the south and west are the mainly 2-storey residential streets of George's Avenue and Frascati Park. St Andrew's Church and Presbytery is a key local feature located on the corner of Merrion Avenue and Frascati Park to the northwest of the site. North of the site, the eastern end of Mount Merrion Avenue is a busy trafficked route to Blackrock Village, typified by fine terraces of mainly 2 storey over basement properties. The rear elevation of a terrace of 5 such properties, together with a 4 storey apartment development (Lisalea) located at the junction of Mount Merrion Avenue and Rock Road, overlooks the northern part of the site.

The nature of the site boundaries with adjoining residential properties varies. The southern and western boundaries, with George's Avenue and with Frascati Park, comprises a mixed belt of mature trees – principally Sycamore and Norway maple – but including some Rowan, Horse Chestnut, Lime and Cherry. In summer, these trees provide substantial screening from adjoining residential properties. Views into the development site from the residential streets and properties along Frascati Park and George's Avenue are either screened or moderated by these trees, although screening is reduced during winter months due to the deciduous nature of the trees.

The northern boundary is more open, particularly along the western portion where there are no boundary trees. Trees further east along the northern boundary, which are outside the development site boundary, are generally of younger age class and have yet to establish fully. These properties overlook the northern part of the site which include surface and deck level parking in the fore and middle ground, and the shopping centre building beyond.

The nature of the Frascati Road (N31) influences the physical and perceived connectivity within the area – separating the wider settlement area from the attractive fine grain core of Blackrock Village. The road has also influenced developments in the area – particularly where the larger grained block pattern of multi-storey commercial, retail, office and apartment developments such as Blackrock Shopping Centre, Enterprise House, Blackrock Park House, Permanent TSB, Blackrock Garda Station, Ulster Bank, Maple House and Les Buissonnets apartments, provide a strong and defensive edge character along the bypass south of Merrion Road and the Frascati Shopping Centre.

Pedestrian, public transport and cycle facilities along the N31 have been substantially upgraded in recent years, and three separate signalised pedestrian crossings are now operational along the frontage of the Frascati Shopping Centre site and providing connection to the Blackrock Centre and Blackrock Village. New median landscaping and upgraded pedestrian crossings, particularly along the frontage of the shopping centre sites, has helped to reduce the apparent width of the bypass and improve the facility and perception of connectivity across the N31.

Delivery of the *Rejuvenation Scheme* to date, and redevelopment work at the former Enterprise House, clearly signal the establishment of a stronger and more clearly defined built edge and public realm along the N31. The roadway that was until recently visually open to the adjoining shopping centre sites, is becoming more street-like in character that is visually contained on both sides.

6.3.2 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022

Under the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, the site is zoned Objective DC '*To protect, provide for and-or improve mixed-use district centre facilities*' in the. This zoning also extends east of the N31 and includes much of the lands between the N31 and Main Street/Temple Road, as well as the eastern side of Main Street/Temple Road.

All of the residential areas to the north, west and south are zoned Objective A '*To protect and-or improve residential amenity*'. St Andrew's Church and Presbytery and the residential terraces along the eastern end of Mount Merrion Avenue, including Nos. 8 to 16 Merrion Avenue directly north of the site are listed as Protected Structures. Three properties on the south eastern side of George's Avenue, Nos. 66, 68 and 73, are also identified as Protected Structures.

Development Plan mapping indicates an objective to protect and retain existing mature trees along the southern and western boundaries of the site.

Blackrock Park to the northeast is zoned Objective F '*To preserve and provide for open space with ancillary active recreational amenities*'.

Section 5.3.3 (Policy RES3: 'Residential Density') of the County Development Plan '*to generally promote higher residential densities provided that proposals ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of areas, with the need to provide for sustainable residential development*'.

The County Development Plan has objectives for the Conservation and Development of important public parks, including Blackrock Park to the northeast of the site on the opposite side of the N31.

Blackrock Local Area Plan, 2015-2021

Frascati Shopping Centre also falls within the boundary of the Blackrock Local Area Plan, 2015-2021. The Blackrock LAP recognises the Frascati and Blackrock shopping centres as fundamental to the economic well-being of Blackrock, and seeks to improve the relationship between Main Street and the shopping centres, particularly in terms of legibility and pedestrian permeability. The severance effect of the bypass is noted, and the establishment of a more walkable urban structure is seen as fundamental to the promotion of a sustainable urban village.

POLICY BK03 seeks to ensure that Blackrock develops a coherent urban form focused on a high quality built environment of distinct character and function.

Objective UDS1 of the Council is '*... to strengthen the urban structure of Blackrock by ensuring that any new development incorporates a coherent, legible and permeable urban form that protects and compliments the character of the street or area in which it is set - in terms of proportion, enclosure, building line, design and by the marrying of new modern architecture with historic structures*'.

POLICY BK05 seeks '*... ensure that Building Height within future developments in Blackrock makes a positive contribution to the built form of the area and do not adversely impact on local amenity*'.

Map 12, Existing and Proposed Building Heights, identifies the Frascati Shopping Centre site as suitable for 5 storey development including ground floor, and a perimeter buffer along the boundaries of George's Avenue and Frascati Park is identified and should step down to 2 storeys.

In general terms, building height is to be assessed having regard to the building's function, location, setting and whether it can be successfully integrated into the existing streetscape without being unduly overbearing, obtrusive or impacting adversely on existing amenities.

Under Section 7.4 Core Retail Area, POLICY BK21 seeks '*... ensure that retail in Blackrock remains concentrated within the Core Retail Area as identified on Map 15, in accordance with The Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016 and the County Development Plan 2010-2016*'.

Objective FR1 of the Council is '*... ensure that any redevelopment of the Frascati and Blackrock Shopping Centres is carried out in an integrated manner having regard to the Development Guidance set out in Section 7.7.2. Any redevelopment shall enhance the streetscape and public realm and assist in improved movement between the two centres. Any redevelopment proposals should focus on providing an attractive and legible streetscape and public realm. Details of the proposed public realm should form part of any redevelopment application*'.

Section 7.7.2 sets out detailed and specific guidance in relation to any significant redevelopment of the Blackrock and/or Frascati shopping centres, including:

Height	Guideline height of between two and five storeys, graduating down to 2 storeys along mutual residential boundaries.
Mix of Uses	Redevelopment to incorporate a mix of uses, including evening uses, which enhance the vitality and viability of the area, and any comprehensive redevelopment to incorporate an element of high quality residential development, a community / exhibition room and a crèche / childminding facility.
Design Guidance	Removal of surface car parking and creation of new building lines and an attractive and active streetscape along the Frascati Road, while respecting the existing streetscape in terms of height, scale and massing, and also the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
Public Realm	Public Realm along the Frascati Road boundary to include high quality public lighting, hard and soft landscaping, and attractive paving materials and street furniture.

Refer to the Planning Report prepared by John Spain Associates for a more detailed discussion of the appropriateness of the proposed development with respect to the planning policy context.

6.3.3 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE AND SENSITIVITY

As an established shopping centre with surrounding car parks, and with the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* at an advanced stage of construction, the site itself is not of particular significance. Similarly on the eastern side of the N31, the Blackrock Centre which is also being redeveloped, is not of particular significance. The site does have important urban street frontage to the N31 Frascati Road and existing mature trees located along the western and southern boundaries of the site help protect adjoining residential character of peripheral streets and are important in providing visual screening from properties into the site area.

Therefore particular landscape / townscape sensitivity relates to:

- the presence of adjoining residential properties to the north, west and south, including potential visual impact from same;
- the existing belt of mature trees located along the southern and western boundaries of the site, and
- the proposed treatment of the interface with the N31.

6.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is an extension of the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* that is at an advanced stage of construction. It is proposed to omit the permitted second floor rooftop restaurant level, and to provide three residential floors in its place. In summary, details of the proposed development include:

- Omission of the second floor rooftop restaurant and concealed plant and equipment from the N31 side of the permitted development;
- Provision of three floors of residential accommodation above the ground and first floor retail levels, with dual aspect apartments arranged around the front of the building, and stepping back along the south eastern and north western elevation; and
- Construction of a second level of deck car parking over the recently constructed carpark deck in the northern portion of the site.

Access to the proposed residences will be via a new stairs and lift core from the permitted basement/lower ground floor and leading through the retail levels to the new apartment levels above. Horizontal circulation to the front doors of apartments will be via a new external deck access overlooking a communal roof garden space at the second floor level and over the retail development beneath. The apartments will be dual aspect.

The proposed residential floor levels are designed as high quality residences that reflect the contemporary expression of the permitted retail floors below when viewed from the N31, and continue the materials of the permitted retail floors to achieve an appropriate consistency in the design and composition. The residential floors step back at the north western and south eastern ends of the development to reduce overall scale and height of the development when viewed from the adjoining residential properties.

The additional level of deck car parking will be directly over the recently constructed level, and will be uncovered but will have perimeter parapet walls and trellis landscaping.

Refer to Chapter 2 Project Description of the EIAR for full details of the proposed development, and also to the Residential Scheme Design Statement submitted with the planning application.

The new public open space/plaza permitted under the *Rejuvenation Scheme* is not altered by the proposed development, and will be implemented as permitted so as to contribute to a more active and vibrant streetscape along the frontage of the shopping centre.

6.5 POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Works as proposed within an established urban context will always have some potential for landscape/townscape and visual impact. However, the potential impacts are significantly mitigated by the existing developed nature of the site; the recent and ongoing construction activity associated with the delivery of the *Rejuvenation Scheme* and of the developments on the eastern side of the N31; by avoidance of impact on the trees along the western and southern boundaries of the site; and by the detailed consideration of the height and cross sections of the proposed development and of the architectural treatment of proposed facades.

Nevertheless, the scheme does have potential for direct visual impacts, and for impact on landscape/townscape character.

6.5.1 CONSTRUCTION STAGE

During the construction phase, landscape/townscape and visual impacts are related to the visual and physical disruption arising from temporary and short-term works; general construction site activity; vehicular movements; the use of cranes; views of the emerging building and scaffolding; and lighting etc. All of these aspects have the potential for significant visual impact particularly for immediately adjoining properties.

Potential construction impacts will be similar in nature to those currently on site, and will arise from:

- Establishment of scaffolding and site enclosures at ground level and above the first floor retail level;
- General construction, emergence of new built elements, car parking and site infrastructure.
- Craning activities, site lighting, etc.

Potential construction stage impacts, though visually significant, will be temporary to short-term and commonplace within the urban environment.

6.5.2 OPERATION STAGE

Given the existing shopping centre use and the ongoing emergence of the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme*, it is considered that the potential for landscape / townscape and visual impact during operation stage is reduced.

Nevertheless, the proposed development includes a taller structure over the north eastern portion of the site than previously permitted, and an increase in the intensity of development on the site. Therefore the development does have the potential to result in a significant change both in the appearance of the anticipated and permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme*, in particular from Frascati Road, in the townscape experience along the N31, and from proximate residential properties.

The range and extent of influence of such impacts is substantially restricted to the site, the N31 corridor, and to immediately adjoining residential properties to the north and southeast.

6.6 DO NOTHING SCENARIO IMPACT

Should the proposed development not proceed, it is likely that the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* will be completed as permitted.

6.7 AVOIDANCE, REMEDIAL AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The principal mitigation measures have involved mitigation by avoidance in the planning design and layout of the scheme, which are summarised below. No further mitigation is considered necessary during the construction and operation phase in respect to landscape and visual impact.

The development represents an extension of the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme*, omitting the permitted second floor level so as to better accommodate the proposed residential floors. The roof level of the proposed top floor is 37.385m OD compared to 32.535m OD of the roof level of the permitted scheme – a difference of 4.75m.

The taller elements of the development are focussed along the N31 frontage, with the returns at either end stepping back so as to reduce the apparent height and scale when viewed from the residential properties to the southeast and the northwest.

The development avoids impact on the existing mature tree belt located along the south eastern and south western site boundaries, thereby ensuring the integrity of existing boundary trees and the screening they provide. The development also proposes landscape planting – supplementary to that permitted under the parent permission – that will further reinforce the screening effect at boundaries.

The proposed additional car parking deck to the north of the site will incorporate substantial perimeter plant screening, including evergreen planting interspersed with multi-stemmed Birch trees all set 1.0m above deck level and providing effective screening of vehicular activity on the deck from nearby properties.

6.8 PREDICTED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.8.1 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE IMPACT

The Frascati Shopping Centre is a long established part of the urban fabric of Blackrock.

The north eastern frontage onto the Frascati Road has always been an important element of the streetscape along the Frascati Road. The permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* that is at an advanced stage of construction has brought the shopping centre notably forward as a more prominent feature defining the streetscape facing the Frascati Road and the Blackrock Shopping Centre and will bring more life to the street through the animated retail frontages and new public space between the building and the road.

The proposed development is focussed principally on the Frascati Road site of the site, and will omit the permitted second floor restaurant level and concealed plant and equipment to facilitate the establishment of three residential floors above the permitted first floor retail level. There will be a resulting increase in height of the primary roof level of 4.75m and an intensification of use above the retail levels. The architectural expression of the proposed development has been carefully considered and informed by the *Rejuvenation Scheme*. The dark stone cladding will continue from the shopping centre entrance and the first floor retail level, and will define the floor and roof levels of the residential floors. Glazing, alternating between full height and balcony height, will introduce a finer grain and rhythm at the upper floors to differentiate them from the larger scaled retail floors below.

The proposed development being taller than the *Rejuvenation Scheme*, will give greater visual prominence to the overall development, and will reinforce the identity of this important district centre location. The proposed development, in conjunction with the *Rejuvenation Scheme* and the current redevelopment of Enterprise House, will create a better defined and proportioned streetscape along the N31 with greater façade animation. The relative prominence of the bypass roadway over the adjacent land uses will be reduced, making the buildings more prominent and the roadway more street-like.

The proposed development will further strengthen the sense of street enclosure along the N31 and will give rise to a moderate positive impact on the character of this section of the N31.

Any impact on landscape / townscape arising from the construction stage is considered to be temporary to short-term and not significant in the context of the existing site and its location.

To the southeast and southwest of the site, the site boundaries are contiguous with the tree lined rear gardens of residential priorities and as such, the shopping centre has little or no streetscape presence or public interface. While more open, the north western façade and carpark area is similarly enclosed within the site and its residential surrounds.

While the proposed development will be partially visible from within surrounding some residential areas, its landscape/townscape impact will be slight to none.

6.8.2 VISUAL IMPACT

The assessment of visual impact is made with cognisance of the permitted and emerging *Rejuvenation Scheme* on the site, and the assessment also makes use of a series of Photomontages prepared so as to illustrate the likely physical and visual nature of the proposed development within its setting.

Photomontage locations are representative of the most open views available in the surrounding area and includes views along the N31 to the northeast and southeast of the site; from the northwest in the vicinity of Mount Merrion Avenue; Frascati Park to the west; and from George's Avenue to the southeast. The photomontages – see *Appendix 6.1* to this EIAR – show the “As Existing at October 2018” with the Rejuvenation Scheme at an advanced stage of construction; the “As Permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* as amended” shown on February 2018 baseline photography, and the “As Proposed” shown on February 2018 baseline photography. Where appropriate, the permitted commercial redevelopment of Enterprise House opposite Frascati Shopping Centre is also shown in outline or block format. Where the permitted development is not visible in the view, its profile is outlined in blue for reference. Similarly, where the proposed development is not visible in the view, its profile is outlined in red. Where appropriate, the permitted commercial redevelopment of Enterprise House on the eastern side of the N31 opposite the Frascati Shopping Centre is also shown in yellow.

Along the N31

The proposed development will be most visible from the N31, however, this is also the least visually sensitive receptor. Construction on the site will be readily visible, however, for many such temporary works are likely to be viewed as positive in the context of an emerging rejuvenated centre. Negative visual impacts may arise from time to time; however, they will be temporary in nature and not significant in the context of the existing Bypass.

On completion and during operation the visual impact of the proposed development from the N31 will be moderate and positive in that it will extend the permitted Rejuvenation Scheme and provide a distinctive high quality residential element that compliments the overall development, reinforces the built edge of the N31, and increases animation of the façade during and beyond normal retail opening hours.

Photomontage Views 1, 4, 5 & 6 clearly illustrate the anticipated change in the streetscape arising from the proposed development.

The development reinforces the built edge of the N31, creating a focal point from certain distance views; adding visual interest to the streetscape; and establishing a distinctive building that will have landmark

qualities and reinforce the identity of this important district centre location. The residential use at the new upper levels will increase animation of the façade both during and beyond normal retail opening hours.

The assessment of Visual Impact and Landscape / Townscape Impact is considered to be moderate and both positive in nature and long-term in duration.

Mount Merrion Avenue and Frascati Park (north)

At Mount Merrion Avenue at Frascati Park, and from the northern end of Frascati Park, there are both glimpse and more open views of the site from the streets and from the rear of properties, including Lisalea. These properties are set back from the proposed development and already have views over existing car parking to the existing and emerging shopping centre.

Construction stage impacts are likely to be most significant from these locations / properties; however, such impacts are temporary / short-term and will tend to change with the different stages of construction. It is noted that works to the northern carpark, including provision of an additional level of deck parking will be openly visible from the upper floors to the rear of these properties. The proposed additional deck will have perimeter evergreen planting interspersed with tree planting designed to soften the visual appearance of the structure and reduce visibility of traffic movements. It is considered that operation stage impacts will not be significant.

Photomontage Views 7 illustrates the anticipated change from Mount Merrion Avenue opposite St Andrew's Church and Presbytery. There is no difference between the 'As Permitted' and 'As Proposed' views indicating the proposed residential extension will be out of view and behind the residential terrace in the foreground, with only partial visibility of the southern and western parts of the permitted development. The assessment of Visual Impact is considered to be slight and neutral.

The assessment of Landscape / Townscape Impact is considered to be slight.

Photomontage Views 8 & 9 are from the northern and middle sections of Frascati Park respectively. While the proposed development will have a slight impact from public areas towards the northern end of Frascati Park, it is also clear that the development will be more openly visible from the rear of properties 8 to 16 Mount Merrion Avenue and the Lisalea apartments. From these locations, the proposed development will appear as a larger building, however, the development is set back from the properties and it will not detract from the existing/permitted views.

The assessment of Visual Impact is considered to be slight to moderate and neutral (from the rear of the properties). The assessment of Landscape / Townscape Impact is considered to be slight to imperceptible.

Frascati Park and George's Avenue

Views from along Frascati Park and George's Avenue are unlikely to be altered to any appreciable extent, given the relatively narrow streetscape and the continuous nature of 2 storey residential properties that define the streetscapes. Construction stage impacts are likely to be the most significant with cranes visible above the ridges of residences, however such impacts will be temporary / short-term. It is considered that operational stage impacts will be slight to none.

Views from the rear of properties towards the northern end of George's Avenue and facing the site boundary are dominated by the existing mature boundary trees. Views from these properties into the site are substantially screened during the summer months when the trees are in leaf, and are filtered in winter months when the trees are bare. Construction stage impacts are likely to be the most significant during winter months as cranes and the emerging development will be partly visible through the boundary trees.

It is considered that operational stage impacts will be moderate to slight depending on the time of year as the boundary trees will permit filtered views of the development during winter months but will effectively screen views of the development in summer months.

Photomontage View 2 is from the residential street of George's Avenue, approaching the junction with Frascati Park. The 'As Permitted' view illustrates that the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* (outlined in blue) will not be visible in views from public areas of the street. The image also illustrates the extent of the permitted commercial redevelopment of Enterprise House (in yellow) will be more prominent than the former Enterprise House at the end of the street. The 'As Proposed' view illustrates that some elements of the uppermost proposed floor will be partially visible between and beyond the chimneys of the residential properties along the street, but will not detract from the existing streetscape.

Photomontage View 3 is from further north along George's Avenue. The 'As Permitted' view illustrates that the permitted *Rejuvenation Scheme* (outlined in blue) will not be visible in views from public areas of the street, and also illustrates the extent of the permitted redevelopment of Enterprise House (in yellow) will be more prominent than the former Enterprise House at the end of the street, and will be similar in height to the existing Blackrock Park House visible to the right at the end of the street. The 'As Proposed' view illustrates partial visibility of some elements of the uppermost proposed floor between and beyond the chimneys of the residential properties along the street, but will not detract from the existing streetscape.

Photomontage View 5 is from the northern end of George's Avenue where it joins the N31, and is in line with the front building line of properties on the eastern side of the street and representative of the view from the front windows and doors of those properties. The 'As Permitted' view shows the ground and first floor retail levels facing southeast, and the second floor parapet appearing in line with the second of the two boundary wall chimneys. The image also illustrates the extent of the permitted commercial redevelopment of Enterprise House (in yellow) taller and closer to the street than the former Enterprise House. The 'As Proposed' view shows the proposed second and third floors of residential units with the fourth floor set back and all but its roof fascia being screened by the third floor roof edge. The building presents at a scale and height that is appropriate to the cross section of the N31 including the permitted Enterprise House, and together they will provide a better proportioned streetscape along the N31 than previously or currently exists.

In View 5, the southern return of the proposed development is also partially visible above and beyond the ridge and chimneys of the residential properties. The setback nature of the fourth floor is effective in screening itself behind the third floor parapet, and the change in materials to a lighter finish leading away from the N31 is effective in reducing the perceived overall massing of the proposed development. It is noted that the existing boundary trees are visible above and behind the existing ridge heights, and when in leaf during the summer months, will provide substantial screening of the proposed development.

The assessment of Visual Impact along George's Avenue is considered to be slight to moderate and neutral. The assessment of Landscape / Townscape Impact is considered to be imperceptible to moderate, and neutral to positive.

Residential Properties at the northern end of George's Avenue

Towards the northern end of George's Avenue, the rear of a number of properties face the site boundary. Views from these properties towards the site are dominated by the existing mature boundary trees that are at a minimum distance of c. 14m from the rear building lines. The boundary trees will appear significantly higher in perspective to a viewer located in the private rear gardens and rooms of these properties by virtue of their proximity to the trees – compared to their height in View 5 where the distance to the trees is greater. The tree canopies, viewed from the rear of these properties, will be substantially higher in perspective than

the skyline of the proposed development as the latter will be behind the trees and more than twice the distance from the viewer than the boundary trees.

Views from these properties into the site are substantially screened by the trees during the summer months when the trees are in leaf, and are filtered in winter months when the trees are bare. Construction stage impacts are likely to be the most significant during winter months as cranes and the emerging development will be visible filtered through the boundary trees. It is considered that operational stage impacts will be moderate to slight depending on the time of year as the boundary trees will permit filtered views of the development during winter months but will effectively screen views of the development in summer months.

It is noted that the proposed development lies north of the rear of these properties, and as such, will not obstruct potential winter sunlight. Equally, during summer, the orientation is such that only late evening sun might be obstructed, however, at that time of day, the elevation of the sun would be so low as to be blocked by the existing buildings and the boundary trees. As such, the proposed development will have a negligible, if any, effect on obstruction of sunlight or causing overshadowing at these properties.

6.8.3 IMPACT ON LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

It is considered that the proposed development respects existing sensitive features, including the mature trees and the objective for their protection and retention, as well as the amenity of adjoining residential properties. Aspects of potential visual impact on properties have been considered as moderate to slight under Sections 6.8.1 and 6.8.2 above.

The scheme further delivers on the aims for rejuvenation of the centre, strengthening the mixed use profile of the area, and for provision for greater pedestrian linkage and animation. The scheme has no impact on Blackrock Park.

6.8.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The site of the proposed development is part of an established and continually evolving urban locality that includes shopping centres, commercial and residential development, and roads and streets. Beyond the immediate locality, Blackrock also includes the more historic village core, an extensive mixture of traditional and more contemporary residential development, a range of commercial, educational and institutional developments, as well as open space, playing fields and parks.

It is noted that there are existing permissions for substantial developments both at and directly opposite the Frascati Centre. These developments are currently under construction, and will be prominent new and extended building elements along the N31 that will provide stronger and more contemporary definition along the N31. These will contribute to the ongoing consolidation of the built fabric of the locality, and to the transformation of the N31 from a vehicle dominated bypass road to a more pedestrian and cycle friendly streetscape.

The proposed development, in combination with permitted developments, will further contribute to this change in the nature, character and presentation of the emerging streetscape. The incorporation of residential uses within the overall mix of uses will increase the level of animation along the street during the daytime but also at night when the commercial and retail elements are closed.

6.9 MONITORING

The principal monitoring from a landscape and visual consideration is focused on the ongoing protection of trees to be retained under the parent permission of the Rejuvenation Scheme, as well as implementation of additional boundary planting proposed under the parent permission. The proposed development also

includes additional supplementary planting at boundaries to further reinforce visual screening at site boundaries. Monitoring of landscape protection and establishment will ensure the effectiveness of proposed landscape treatment.

6.10 REINSTATEMENT

The nature of the proposed development as an extension to the permitted development is such that there are limited landscape and visual reinstatement measures applicable, and are focused more on the completion of the overall development in accordance with the proposals and the reinstatement aspects of the parent permission.

6.11 INTERACTIONS

No significant interactions are expected to arise with landscape and visual aspects.

6.12 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN COMPILING

No particular difficulties were encountered in the preparation of this assessment

6.13 REFERENCES

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (2016): Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022.

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (2015): Blackrock Local Area Plan 2015-2021

Environmental Protection Agency: Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. (2017)

Environmental Protection Agency: Draft Advice Notes for preparing of Environmental Impact Statements. (2015)

Landscape Institute (UK) and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013): Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018).

APPENDIX 6.1- Photomontages