

murray & associates
landscape architecture

Landscape
Design
Statement

for

Creagh Residential Development,
Gorey, Co. Wexford

February 2019

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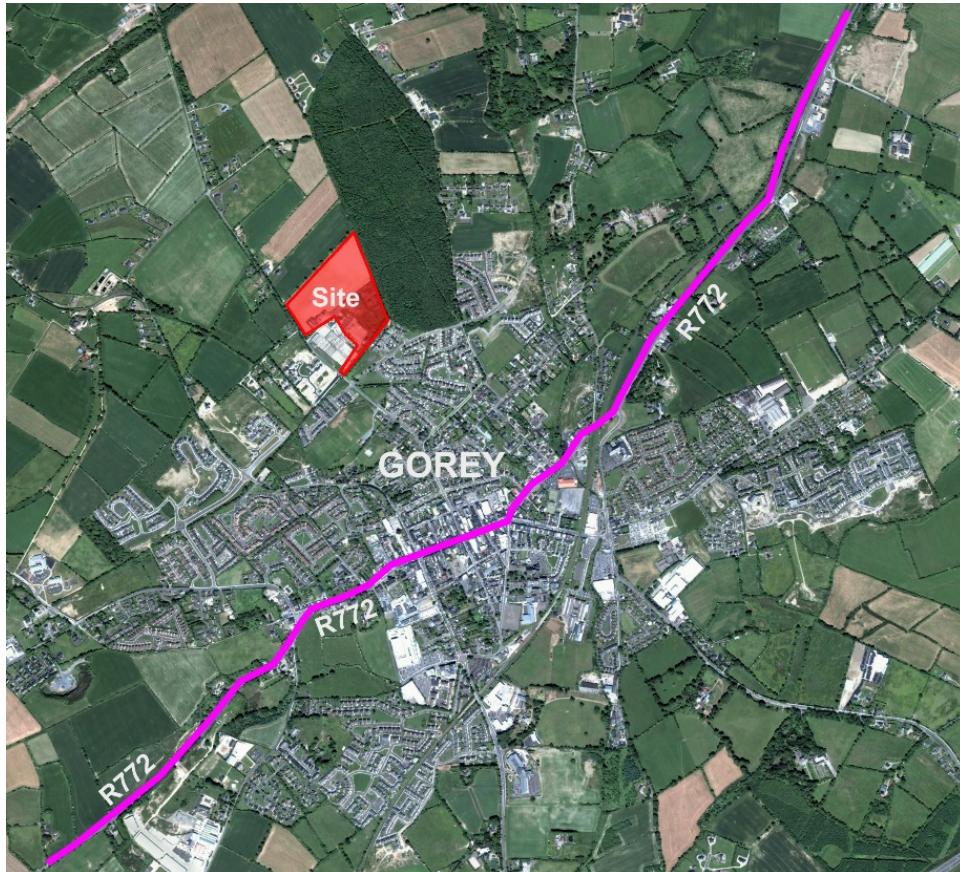
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Site and Context

The proposed site is located at Creagh, Gorey, County Wexford, 750 metres to the north of the Main Street of Gorey (R772). The closest road access to the lands is at Fort Road, adjacent to the east of the site. The lands are adjacent to the west of the Coillte lands of Ramsfort Park Forest.



Site Location

The site lies within the area characterised as Lowlands. The Lowland areas generally comprise of gently undulating lands and relates to extensive areas of the county. This landscape has characteristics which provide it with a higher capacity to absorb development without causing significant visual intrusion. The landscape is characterised by higher population levels and more intensive agriculture.

Agricultural land uses and scattered one-off rural housing border the north and west of the site. To the south-west new residential developments are currently being constructed. Existing residential developments border the south of the site. To the east Ramsfort Park Forest borders the site.

The site is bounded by mature hedgerows in various states of management. This ranges from the well managed *Griselinia* hedges to the south-west that have been

recently maintained to some portions of hedgerow to the western and northern boundary of the site that have been neglected for some time, with resultant overgrown areas and some large gaps in the fabric of the hedge. The boundary to Ramsfort Park forest is post and wire fence with a shelterbelt of juvenile Oak trees within the Coillte lands. To the south, poorly maintained boundaries consist of overgrown hedgerows and belts of large Leyland Cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*). Refer to the *Tree and Hedgerow Survey* (Drawing 1706_TS_P_01 and associated report) for further detailed information.

The hedgerows are generally of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with lesser amounts of Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Bramble (*Rubus spp.*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Included in this are several juvenile Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and mature specimen trees that include Oak (*Quercus robur*), Lime (*Tilia x europaea*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

Currently the southern portion of the site is taken up with the remnants of the previous industrial use on site. There are substantial areas of hardcore and rubble, with the shell of a demolished industrial unit still standing to the south. The northern portion of the site is currently in arable agricultural use. Pioneer species of Grey Willow and scrub vegetation has started to colonise this southern portion of the site.

Brief Description of the Proposed Development

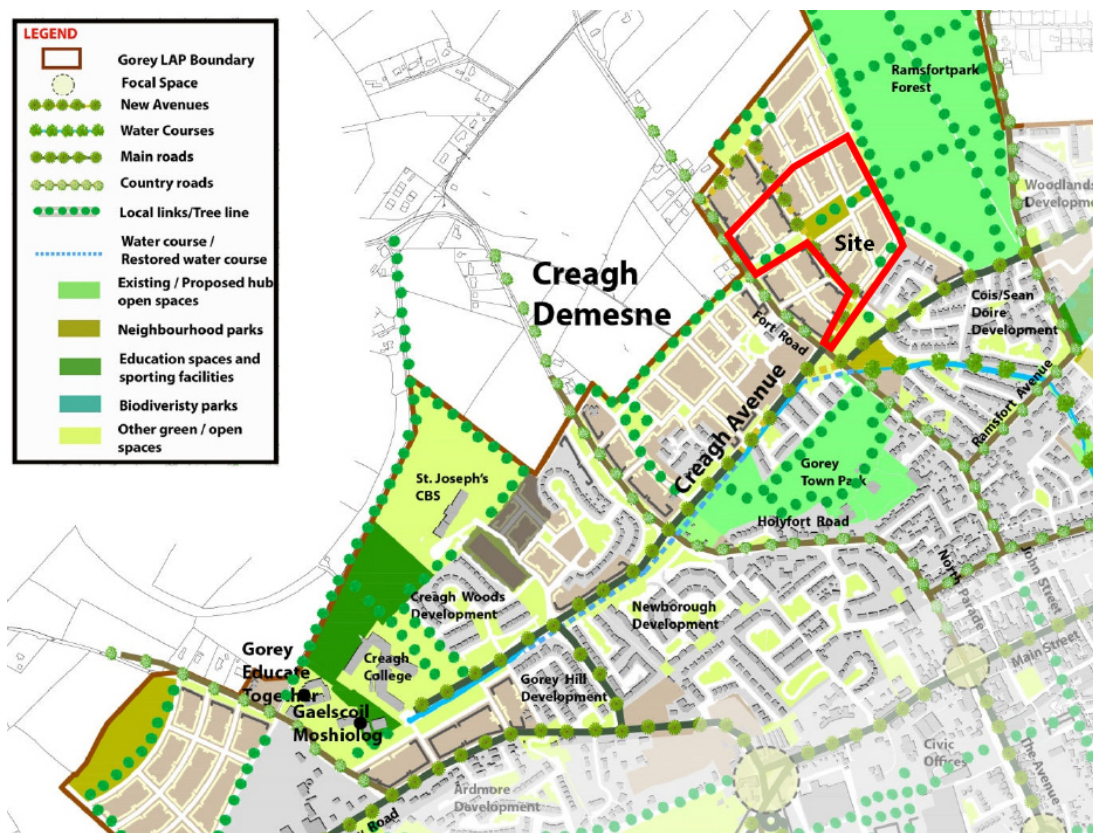
The proposed development is comprised of 297 no. dwellings. The development also includes 1.41 Ha of public open space; associated internal roads; car parking; public lighting; surface water attenuation; landscaping; and associated site development works. The gross residential site area measures approximately 9.7Ha and is bounded by Fort Road the west where the development is proposed to be accessed from. The open space elements within the site consist of a larger neighbourhood park through the centre of the development (measuring 0.885 Ha) linking Fort Road with the existing Coillte lands of Ramsfortpark Forest. Two further areas of open space are provided, one to the north of the site and one to the south, measuring 0.521 Hectares in total.

A proposed new foul sewer is to be constructed, running from the south of the site through the existing council owned land and under the existing road network, to eventually meet the road in Gorey Town, the R772.

Open Space Planning Context

The design intent is to create a high quality and appropriate landscape for future residents, which will meet their recreational needs and provide an attractive visual setting and social amenity space. The principles of inclusivity for all age groups, universal accessibility and sustainable development are applied to ensure an inclusive and environmentally responsible design solution.

Where feasible, native trees and plants are proposed to enhance local biodiversity, in accordance with the relevant policies of the Wexford County Council Development Plan 2013-2019 and the Green City Guidelines from the Urban Institute of 2008.



Creagh Landscape Concept (Fig 12 – Appendix 1, Gorey LAP)

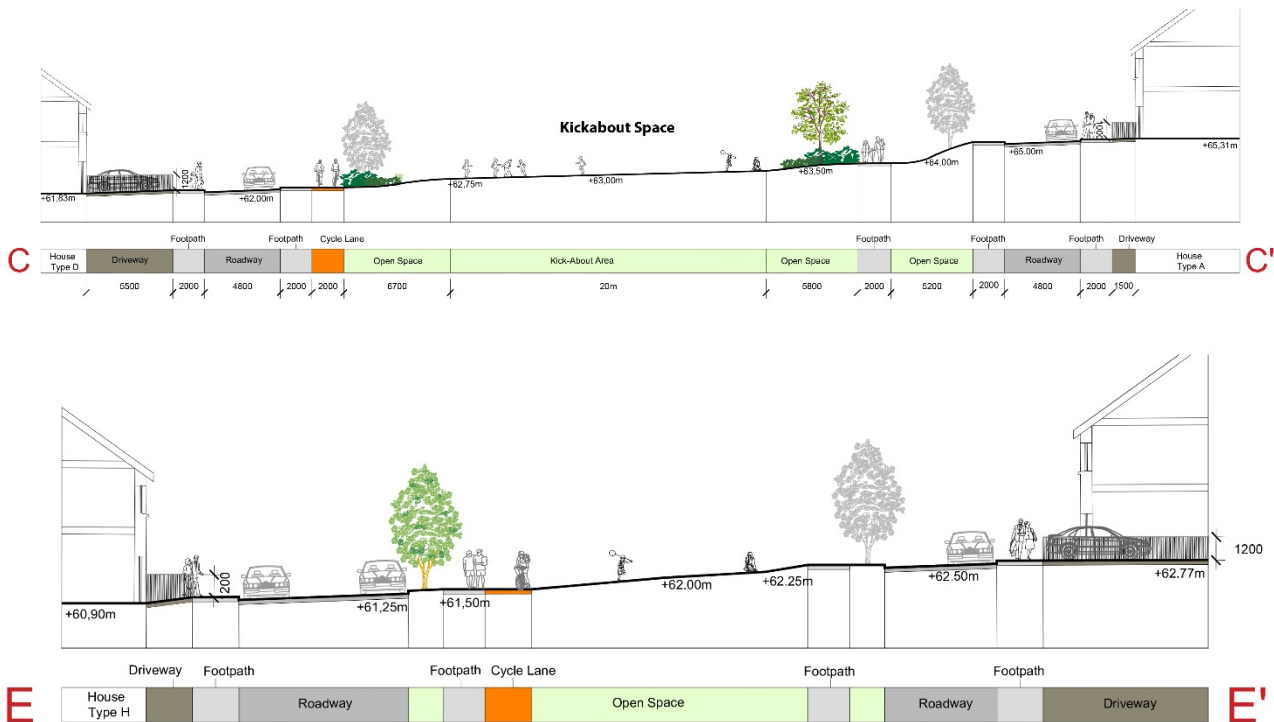
The proposed open spaces within the site layout plan, developed in collaboration with the project Architects, Strutec, will be primarily for the use of future residents. The landscape proposals are also in accordance with the objectives of Green Infrastructure and Open Space policies in the current Wexford County Development Plan. Within the Gorey Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2017-2023, the Creagh Neighbourhood Framework Plan (Appendix 1, Pg 11) shows development approaches and objectives that have been adhered to within the Landscape Masterplan. The

inclusion of a Neighbourhood Park within the site has been allowed for, with the major pedestrian routes and local open spaces suggested also incorporated.

Landscape Layout and Design Approach

The site layout proposal aims to create a unifying streetscape which is rich in detail and diverse in textural and spatial qualities, with open spaces and boundary planting lending a verdant and visually attractive atmosphere. The open spaces are directly over-looked by dwellings, providing passive surveillance for safety.

Part of the design approach is informed from An Bord Pleana's pre-application opinion (ABP-301472-18), in particular relation to connectivity, permeability and distribution of public open space. On a sloping site such as this, care has been taken to allow for usable, level open space within the development, most notably within the Neighbourhood Park.



Typical Sections through Neighbourhood Open Space showing useability and passive observation from adjacent units

While being cognisant of the Gorey LAP with regards to the central position of the neighbourhood park, two further open spaces are proposed. One local space to the north within a residential setting (containing a play area), and one local space to the south, also with a local play space. The southern open space acts as a pedestrian link with Gorey town and a gateway space to the development. The design language of this space is more formal as befits an entranceway to the development.



Landscape Masterplan.

Functionality of Open Space

The distribution of open space throughout the development allows for easy access to open spaces for all residents of the proposed development – all units are within 400 metres of the 3 open space areas. Indeed, the furthest walk required to access an open space is approximately 240 metres in distance from the proposed open space areas. Indeed, the furthest walk required to access an open space is approximately 240 metres in distance.

Within all open spaces there are areas for informal play, casual recreation and passive leisure. The quality of these spaces is enhanced by the inclusion of features such as natural play elements, seating, paths, native planting and landform, and the utilisation of environmentally appropriate materials. The palette of materials will also be used to integrate the proposed architectural forms and materials within the landscape.



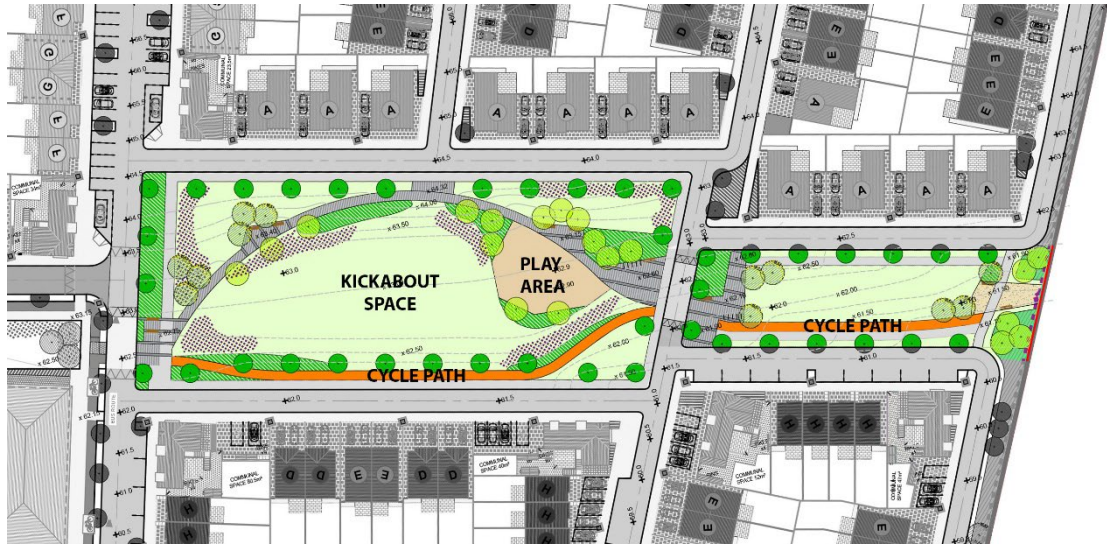
Circulation and Connections with Open Spaces

Neighbourhood Park

The neighbourhood Park is the central landscape feature within the development. This continuous green spine links Fort Road, through the development, with Ramsfort Park Forest. Although vehicular roadways cross the park in two locations, the open space reads as a continuous element, due to the raised tables and pedestrian crossings at each of the roadways. This continuity is also emphasised with similar structural planting species to the road edges of the three spaces and differing species within the park.

The central, wider area of the neighbourhood park allows for an informal grassed kickabout area and a formal playground space. Landforms are incorporated within the open space to further enhance the feeling of enclosure and privacy from the existing development, while still allowing for safe sightlines. This central open space has

a natural, rural feeling, with informal grouping of native trees and areas of meadow planting. This acts as a link with the wider rural landscape of the surrounding area.



Neighbourhood Park Plan

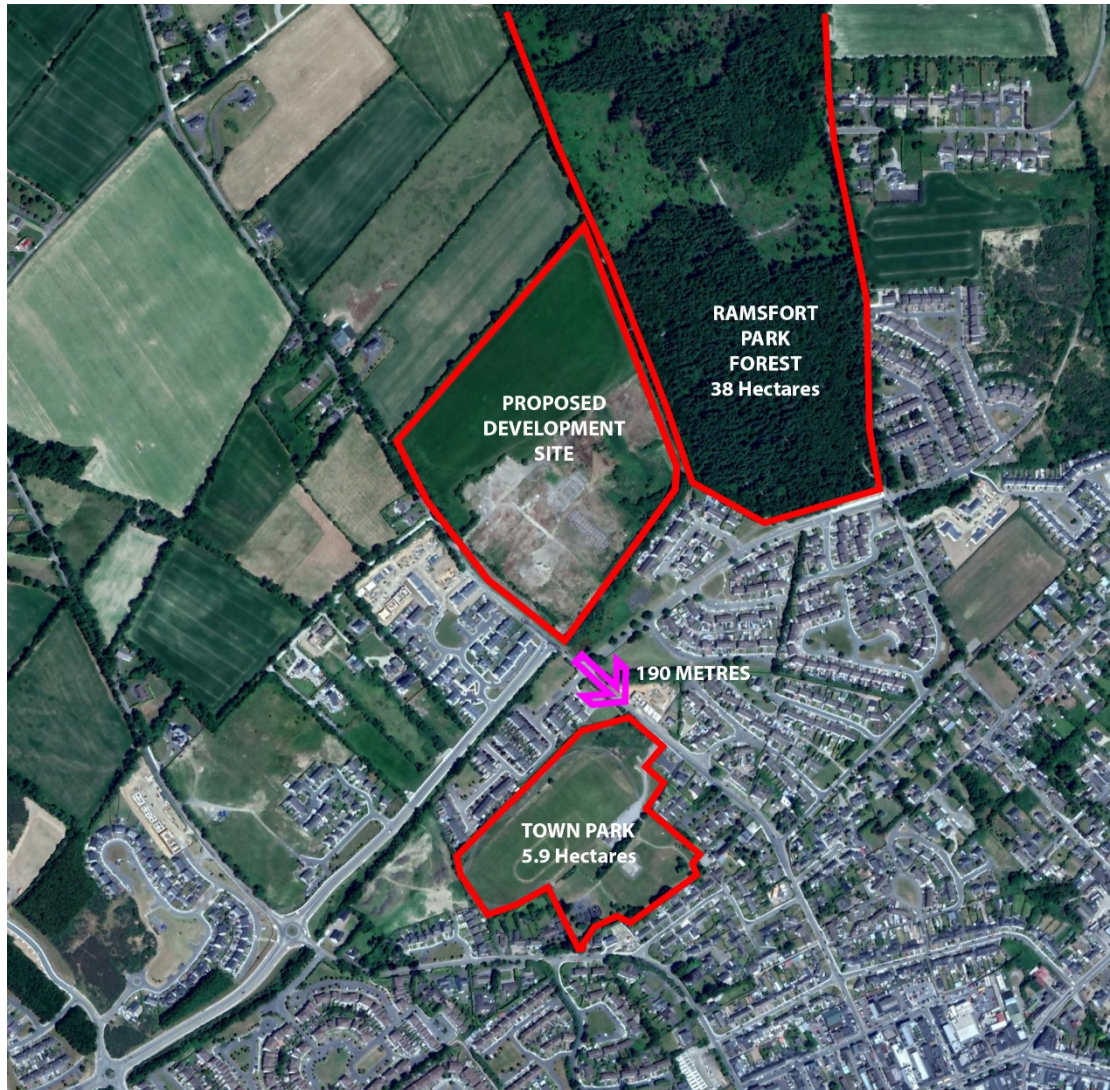
Public Open Space Provision

There are three areas of open space identified for passive recreation within the development, totalling 1.41 hectares. This mosaic of open spaces gives every resident easy and convenient access to recreational amenity and allows distinct landscape treatments and elements to be applied to different spaces. This aids wayfinding and contributes towards giving the development a recognisable character.

The Neighbourhood Park element of the development sits at the centre of the site, a maximum of 210 metres from the furthest housing unit. This is 8,846 square metres, or 9.1% of the developable area. The remaining local areas spaces to both north and south cumulatively account for 5,181 square metres, or 5.4% of the developable site area. These quantum of open space count for a total of 14.5% of open space within the development.

This modest shortfall of 0.5% (in relation to the 15% Open Space objective within the Local Area Plan) should be considering in relation to the close proximity of the Town Park (5.9 Ha) 190 metres to the south and Ramsfort Park Forest (38 Ha) immediately adjacent to the east. Both of these open spaces are considered Hub Open Spaces (Gorey Local Area Plan 2017-2023, pg 55). These are the highest level of open space within the environs of Gorey and are intended as destination spaces for all residents of

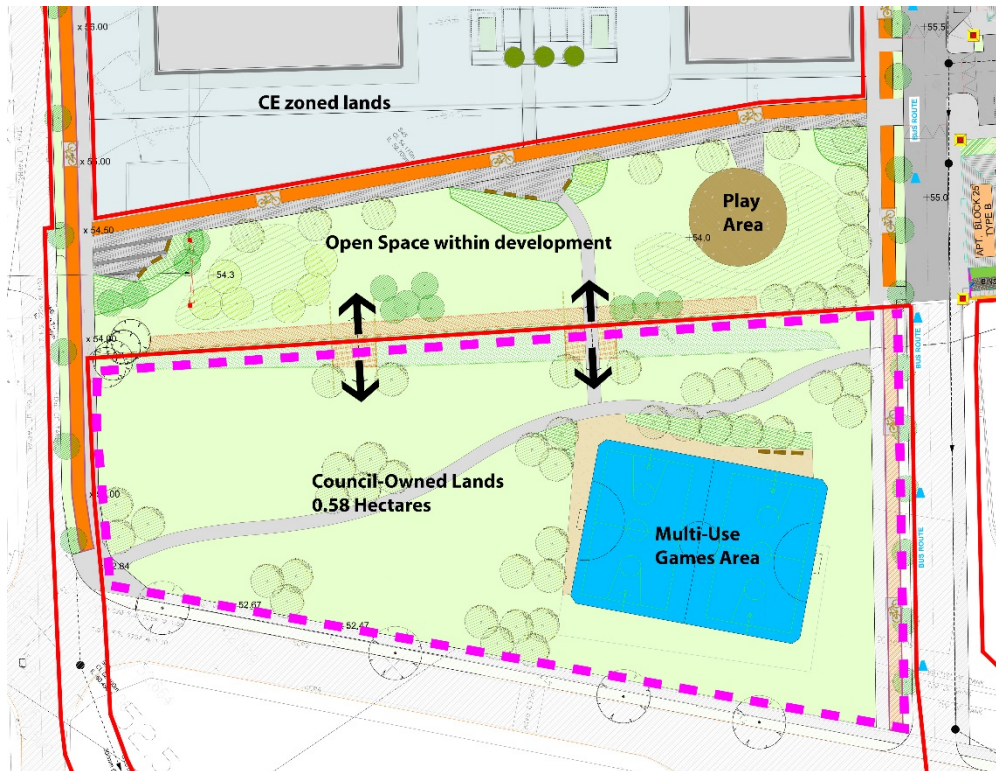
the town. The Town Park will be redeveloped into a high-quality public park and recreational area, while Ramsfort Park Forest (in consultation with Coillte and local groups) will potentially be developed into an amenity area with associated trails for pedestrians and cyclists. There will be a direct pedestrian linkage with Ramsfort Park Forest from the neighbourhood park within the development.



Adjacent Open Spaces

The local open space to the south can also potentially be linked in with the council-owned lands immediately adjacent to the south. These lands measure approximately 6033 sq.m. (0.6 Ha). This is an opportunity to create a sizeable open space that would benefit not just the residents of the proposed development, but also the existing residents in the vicinity. Presently there is an abandoned hard ballcourt in this vicinity, while the remaining space is underused and contains some invasive species. The landscape plan shows an indicative layout that retains the line of the existing boundary, while allowing linkages between the spaces. The disused ball court is

replaced with a new multi-use games facility. The delivery of this space is dependent on further discussions with Wexford County Council.



Plan showing indicative layout of how council-owned open space can link in with adjacent open space to north



Disused ballcourt



Overgrown nature of site

Communal Open Space

Within the apartment blocks there is an allowance of semi-private communal open space for use by the residents of the block. The quantum of space for each apartment is in accordance with the DoHPLG Planning Guidelines for Design Standards for New Apartments.

Materials and Site Furniture

A simple palette of hard landscape materials is proposed. External spaces are designed to minimise hazards or impediments to access or movement and will be void of steps or pronounced level changes. Hard landscape surfaces are chosen for slip resistance and to be free draining. Public footpaths are to be brushed concrete, with pre-cast concrete kerbs. Private driveways are to be permeable concrete block paving, while rear terraces are to be concrete flag paving. Site furniture is simple yet robust, with all proposed landscape lighting to utilise LED lamps.



Permeable Paving for Driveways



Brushed Concrete Footpaths



Robust Composite Timber Seating



Galvanised Sheffield Stands

Play

The play strategy within the development is to incorporate a formal fenced play area of approximately 300 square metres (10-12 equipment pieces) in the central neighbourhood park with other natural play areas within other local open spaces. Natural play incorporates a number of elements that enable play spaces to blend in with their natural surroundings and



Willow Tunnels



Natural Play Spaces

encourages interaction with the natural landscape. These elements will include changes in levels, boulders, tree trunks, mounds, sensory planting and natural play surfacing such as bark and gravel.

These components represent the larger wild environment in a way that feels safe and manageable to young visitors. A few man-made components might also be carefully integrated to support creative play and encourage confident exploration. Within the neighbourhood park there is also a 40-metre x 20-metre informal kickabout space.



Timber Play Elements



Wetpour Surfacing

Planting

The landscape planting proposals will reflect various character areas, albeit in a subtle manner, with a variation of planting associated with each character area where possible. This adds a potential distinctness to each area, contributing towards creating a real sense of place within the development.

The streetscape is proposed to be planted with trees where possible, to create a strong avenue structure particularly on the north/south avenue to the north of the neighbourhood park. Specimen shrub planting within the development is specified where possible. These planting treatments will give contrasting texture, colour and seasonal variety.

Boundary Planting

Western Edge

Along the western boundary with Fort Road it is proposed to retain, where possible, the existing specimen trees (Ash, Oak and Beech). However, 15no. trees will be removed due to the development roadway and cycleway. Many of these existing trees are of fair to poor quality. (see Tree Survey Report by Murray and Associates). These remaining trees would benefit from remedial pruning works, including the removal of sub-dominant stems and the reduction of crown heights. The existing trees are growing on top of an existing bank within an area of very overgrown hedgerow. This current hedgerow will be rehabilitated by removing the Bramble (*Rubus sp.*) and Ivy (*Hedera sp.*) and reinforcing the existing hedgerow planting of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with mixed native hedgerow underplanting. There are portions of the existing hedgerow that will be removed to facilitate access to the development, however there will be 134 linear metres of hedgerow rehabilitated and planted along this boundary to compensate for this loss.



Overgrown and unmanaged nature of Existing Hedgerow from proposed development side

Northern Edge

The 7no. existing trees along the northern boundary are to be removed to facilitate development. However, these will be replaced by 26no. semi-mature native trees (Lime - *Tilia x europaea*, 30-35cm girth). Although the trees are required to be removed, the existing hedgerow will remain intact.



Unmanaged nature of northern boundary



Large gaps in fabric of existing hedgerow

However, the existing hedgerow boundary in this location (387 linear metres) consists of a few unmanaged native species (Hawthorn, Holly and Gorse) with large areas overgrown with Bramble, Ivy and Bracken. Elsewhere, large gaps are present in the fabric of the hedge.

Proposals for the existing hedgerow allow for the rehabilitation of this boundary. The existing bramble and ivy will be cleared, with new native hedgerow species planted to fill in the gappy nature of the existing hedgerow.

Eastern Boundary

This portion of the site is adjacent to the existing Coilte-owned Ramsfort Park Forest. The existing boundary vegetation of juvenile oak trees will not be effected by the proposed development. The boundary treatment proposed is a wire mesh fencing with steel pole supports. The supports will be hand dug where required to minimise any potential conflict with tree roots.

Southern Boundary

The existing Leyland Cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*) planting to the south of the site, adjacent to the north of Ashwood Grove, is proposed to be removed to allow for the development. There will be a solid boundary wall of 2 metres in height between the dwellings on Ashwood Grove and the proposed rear gardens of the development in this area.

Overall, there will be an increase of approximately 316 metres of native hedgerow on the boundary with Ramsfort Park Forest, with a further 521 linear metres being rehabilitated and enhanced (both the western boundary with Fort Road and the northern boundary adjacent to the neighbouring development site). Therefore, there is a total of 837 linear metres of native hedgerow associated with the development.

Across the site there will also be approximately 340no. new native and non-native trees planted. Native trees include: Cherry (*Prunus avium* 'Plena'), Birch (*Betula pendula*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*). Other trees include Field Maple (*Acer campestre* 'Elegant'), Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides* 'Columare'), Ornamental Pear (*Pyrus* 'Chanticleer') and Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'). These species and cultivars are planted to the street verges and to emphasise areas within the open spaces. The upright and compact nature of these trees is suited to constrained areas and verges, while providing good spring and autumn interest.

Invasive Species

Invasive species monitoring for invasive weeds of any kind, most particularly Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and other notable invasive plants as prescribed by Invasive Species Ireland and relevant EU Legislation, shall be undertaken as part of the existing maintenance schedule as applies currently to the area. Invasive weeds of any type shall not be allowed to establish in any area of the site.

It will be the responsibility of the contractor/maintenance operator to be able to identify invasive species if possible and treat at first sign of emergence. Methodology for removal of invasive plants is to be agreed with the Local Authority and relevant authorities.

All works to the proposed site must comply with the relevant legislation Wildlife/ Nature Conservation Legislation, notably The EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. A blacklist of unwanted species is set out in the Regulations. It will be an offence without a licence, to release or allow to disperse or escape, to breed, propagate, import, transport, sell or advertise such species. The regulations that deal specifically with these lists of species are:

- Regulation 49: Prohibition on introduction and dispersal of certain species

This places restrictions on the introduction of any plant species listed in Part 1 of the Third Schedule.

A person shall be guilty of an offence if they: plant, disperse, allow or cause to disperse, spread or cause to grow the plant in the Republic of Ireland.

Regulation 49 addresses both plants and animals but only plants are addressed here.

- Regulation 50: Prohibition on dealing in and keeping certain species

Section 50 of the Regulations makes it an offence to or intend to: import, buy, sell, breed, reproduce or propagate, advertise, offer or expose for sale, publish a price list, transport or distribute; any animal or plant species or vector material listed in the Third Schedule.

Third Schedule, Part 3: Vector materials. Two vector materials are referred to. One is blue mussel seed and the second is: Soil or spoil taken from places infested with Japanese knotweed, Giant knotweed, or their hybrid Bohemian knotweed.

Regulation 50 is not in effect until the date on which the Minister gives public notice of this.

The above activities can be undertaken in accordance with a granted licence.