9.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1.1 Introduction

Murray and Associates were engaged to complete a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the proposed apartment development on the lands known as "RB Central" at Rockbrook, Carmanhall Road, Sandyford Business District, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

The report was completed by Jim Bloxam (MLArch, MILI) and Alanagh Gannon (PLA, PMP). Jim is an Associate and Senior Landscape Architect and holds a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from University College Dublin and is a full corporate member of The Irish Landscape Institute.

Alanagh Gannon is a Project Landscape Architect and holds a Master's Degree in Urban Design & Planning from University College Dublin and is a qualified Landscape Architect.

The site is located in Sandyford Business District in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County. The site is located on the Rockbrook development site, which has stood uncompleted for 10 years, with only 60% of the 3-basement level completed. The proposed development is comprised of 428 no. dwellings. The development also includes; 2,841 sq.m. of communal amenity space at ground level and roof terrace level, 5,664 sq.m. of open space, underground car parking, public lighting, landscaping, and associated site development works.

The landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development is a means of appraising the effect the proposed development would have on the receiving environment in terms of the quality of landscape – both physically and visually. The assessment aims to indicate the layout and design of the proposed development which would present the least overall landscape and visual impact. Also considered are construction and demolition works, the operational phase, light emissions and the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects.

9.1.2 Methodology

9.1.2.1 Terminology

Landscape impacts are defined as changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape as a result of the development. This includes direct effects on landscape receptors and greater effects that can alter the wider distinctiveness of the landscape. Landscape receptors are the physical or natural resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an impact. The sensitivity (of a landscape receptor) is the vulnerability to change. The extents of the landscape impacts have been assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per Tables 9.1.1, 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.1.5 and 9.1.6. The terminology is based on the criteria set down in the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, published by the EPA (Draft, August 2017) and with additional guidance from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (3rd Edition, by The Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment published by Routledge, 2013).

Table 9.1.1: The extent of Landscape Effect	
Imperceptible Effects	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences. There are no noticeable changes to landscape context, character or features.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape but without noticeable consequences. There are no appreciable changes to landscape context, character or features
Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape without affecting its sensitivities. There are minor changes over a small proportion of the area or moderate changes in a localised area or changes that are reparable over time.
Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. There are minor changes over some of the area (up to 30%) or moderate changes in a localised area.
Significant Effect	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (30-50%) or an intensive change over a more limited area
Very Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (50-70%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area.
Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over an extensive area (70-100%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area.

Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effects of those changes on people viewing the landscape. They include the direct impact of the development on views, the potential reaction of viewers, their location and number and the impact on visual amenity. The intensity of the visual impacts is assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per Tables 9.1.2, 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.1.5 and 9.1.6 below:

Table 9.1.2: The extent of Visual Effect	
Imperceptible Effects	There are no changes to views in the visual landscape.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment but without noticeable consequences. The proposal is adequately screened due to the existing landform, vegetation or constructed features.

Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment without affecting its sensitivities. The affected view forms only a small element in the overall visual composition or changes the view in a marginal manner.
Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the visual environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends. The proposal affects an appreciable segment of the overall visual composition, or there is an intrusion in the foreground of a view.
Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the visual environment. The proposal affects a large proportion of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
Very Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the visual environment. The proposal affects the majority of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. The view is entirely altered, obscured or affected.

Table 9.1.3: The Quality of the Landscape & Visual Effect	
Neutral Effect	Neither detracts from nor enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or view
Positive Effect	Improves or enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or a particular view
Negative Effect	Detracts from the quality of the landscape or view

Table 9.1.4: The Duration of the Landscape & Visual Impact	
Momentary	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
Brief	Effects lasting less than a day
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less
Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years

Please note: "Momentary" and "Brief" Effects as defined in the Draft EPA Guidelines (August 2017) are not considered relevant to landscape & visual assessment as effects of such short duration are extremely unlikely to generate appreciable effects.

Table 9.1.5: The Extent and Context of Effects	
Extent	Describes the size of the area, the number of sites and the proportion of a population affected by an effect
Context	Describes whether the extent, duration or frequency conforms or contrasts with established conditions

Table 9.1.6: The Probability of Effects	
Likely Effects	Effects that can be reasonably expected to occur if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
Unlikely Effects	Effects that can be reasonably expected not to occur if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.

The landscape and visual assessment methodology will be utilised in conjunction with a professional evaluation of the proposed development to determine the degree of impact.

The term 'study area' as used in this report refers to the site itself and its wider landscape context in the study of the physical landscape and landscape character. This may extend for approximately 1km or more in all directions from the site in order to achieve an understanding of the overall landscape. In terms of the visual assessment, the study of visual amenity may extend outside the study area, from areas where views of the site are available, but the majority of visual impacts for a development of this nature would be most likely are within 500 to 600m.

9.1.2.2 Methodology

The methodology employed in the landscape and visual impact assessment is as follows:

1. Desktop survey of detailed maps, aerial photography and other information relevant to the study area, including the *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022* and the *2016 Sandyford Urban Framework Plan*.
    a. Site survey and photographic survey to determine landscape character of the general study area and specific landscape of the site.
2. Assessment of the potentially significant impacts of the proposed scheme utilising the plan and elevation drawings of the scheme to determine the main impacting features and the degree to which these elements would be visible in relation to observations made during the field survey. In determining visibility, the views to

the proposed development site are considered based on the heights, finishes, design and other visual characteristics of the proposed structures and setting.

3. The proposal of a scheme of mitigation measures. These will be defined as measures which will be generally implemented and specific landscape measures which would be site-specific and address particular landscape or visual issues identified.

4. An evaluation of the impacts of the scheme with and without amelioration. For the purposes of assessment, the predicted visual effects of the scheme are assumed at 10 years following the completion of the proposed development. This is to allow a professional judgement on visual effects that are based on early mature tree planting sizes.

The study will follow from prescribed methodologies as set down in the following publications:

1. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, by The Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment published by E&FN Spon (2013),

2. Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in environmental impact statements, published by the EPA (Draft, August 2017).

The assessment has operated in a stepwise refinement method with the identification of impacts forming the basis for the design of the proposed scheme. Therefore, the methodology has informed and assisted in the design of the proposed development as opposed to being an assessment of a predetermined development. For the purposes of impact assessment, however, the landscape planting will be described under the mitigation measures section and impacts with and without this mitigation will be considered as part of the study.

9.2 Planning Context

9.2.1 *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022*

A Landscape Character Assessment was completed for part of the County and is part of the *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022.* The completed Historic Landscape Character and Landscape Character Assessment covers the southern part of the county and does not include Sandyford nor the RB Central site. Several of the Landscape Character Areas have views towards the Sandyford Business District, but these views are not included as part of the character assessment of the areas. In regard to the site and regional specifics, the Development Plan refers to the Sandyford Urban Framework Plan, which is examined below.

9.2.2 2016 Sandyford Urban Framework Plan

The Sandyford Urban Framework Plan is part of the *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022.* This framework lists the Rockbrook site as part of the Mixed-Use Inner Core (MIC) Area Zone, whose objective is:

> '*consolidate and complete the development of the Mixed-Use Inner Core to enhance and reinforce its sustainable development'*

This is tied in with the overarching goals of the framework, to convert the urban Sandford area from low density to a '*higher density development within a tighter urban grain'*. This development will contribute to this goal through the infill of the vacant, mid-construction statue of the site.

Additional Relevant Landscape objectives within the County Development Plan include:

Mixed Use Core Areas Objectives

- MC5 It is an objective of the Council to require all residential development within the Plan boundary to benefit from the public open space requirements set down in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan. The applicant shall set out clearly in any proposed development, how this requirement is being addressed. Where the Planning Authority agrees it is not possible **to provide meaningful and usable public open space** or where a specific local objective requires, the applicant shall provide indoor community facilities (e.g. community rooms, indoor active recreational uses for residents) or a financial contribution in lieu of open space, the nature of which should be agreed with the Planning Authority at pre-planning stage.

- MC8 It is an objective of the Council to seek the provision of a use that **animates the street corner**s e.g. Hotel/ Apart Hotel at the north-western end of Ballymoss Road at the junction with Blackthorn Drive (Map 1, SLO 109)

- MC9 It is an objective of the Council to locate uses that enliven, and attract customers fronting the **routes leading to the Luas**, particularly along Ballymoss Road.

Objectives Public Realm

- PR1: It is an objective of the Council to ensure the provision of a **high quality, safe, attractive and functional public realm**. This shall be achieved through the appropriate and planned use of space and structure, building interface, continuous street frontages and enclosure, hard and soft surfaces, high-quality materials, textures, planting, street furniture, lighting and signage and by encouraging a positive relationship between the buildings and the surrounding environment.

- PR2: It is an objective of the Council to ensure the provision of local identity, distinctive places and character areas through the use of co-ordinated high-quality surface materials, street furniture, public art, signage, lighting and planting.

- PR5: It is an objective of the Council to endeavour to conserve all street and roadside trees where feasible and to **replace all trees removed with an appropriate species**, where the removal of street and roadside trees is necessary.

- PR6: It is an objective of the Council to implement a programme for enhanced planting along Green Routes and along all roads and streets suitable for such planting.

In particular to the Rockbrook site, the Urban Framework Plan calls for a *''diagonal set back' building line would both provide a connection with the Beacon South Quarter / Rockbrook sites and also a sense of presence by setting the building within its own hard landscaped civic plaza'.*

- PR9: It is an objective of the Council to **protect the mature trees** and their setting at Burton Hall and along Carmanhall Road.

- PR10: It is an objective of the Council to design **sustainable urban drainage** systems in accordance with best practice. A multidisciplinary design approach should be taken to integrate runoff and water attenuation requirements into:

    - The design of the capacity in streetscapes for **structured soils** for trees;

    - Planting of **large canopy trees** in accordance with the Council's Tree Strategy; and

    - Maximising the use of **green roof systems** within new developments.

2.3 Further Planning Context and Objectives

There are no scenic routes adjacent to the site, neither are there any Tree Preservation Orders. The site is not within an ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) and there are no Natura 2000 sites (statutory protection areas under the Habitats and Birds Directives) on or near the proposed site.

The abandoned construction was part an approved application in 2005, which construction was halted in 2008. The previously proposed buildings were 7-14 storeys, averaging 10 storeys between the two buildings. This report will take into account this site history when assessing the landscape and visual impact.

2.4 Planning Summary

In summary, based on the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022 and the 2016 Sandyford Urban Framework Plan, the existing site does not possess any significant features of note or trees that require protection. Furthermore, the planning documents suggest that any high-quality and high-density development will improve the character of the area. Below is a summary of key points and objectives from the Sandyford Urban Framework Plan which reflect the character of the Sandyford District.

- to provide meaningful and usable public open space;
- animate the street corners;
- routes leading to the Luas;
- high quality, safe, attractive and functional public realm;
- local identity, distinctive places and character areas;
- replace all trees removed with an appropriate species;
- pedestrian and cycle route from the planned transport interchange at Blackthorn Avenue into the centre of Sandyford Business District;
- Form a visual relationship with, and provide clarity to, the network of routes between Beacon South Quarter and the Rockbrook development.

9.3.0 Baseline Environment

9.3.1 Landscape Character and Site Setting

The site measures approximately 2.02 hectares and is bounded by Carmanhall Road to the south and 3 other development sites to the north (existing Rockbrook, completed), west (Sentinel, under construction), and east (site known as Tivway, recently approved SHD scheme). The block, including these four development sites, is bounded by Carmanhall Road to the south, Blackthorn Drive to the west and north, and Ballymoss Road to the east. Blackthorn Drive is a major connector for the Sandyford District to the M50 and Drummartin Link Road, which is a connector towards Dundrum and Dublin City centre. The site is located near the edge of the Sandyford Business District and approximately 400 meters from the Stillorgan Luas stop. The site is currently identifiable to the adjacent road network and areas as a gap between existing and under-construction buildings within the Sandyford Business District.

The Sandyford area, while not officially described by a Landscape Character Area in the *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022,* can be described as an urban area with a tightening urban fabric, perception supported by the Sandyford Urban Framework Plan. The surrounding blocks have mid to high-rise residential and commercial building making up the character of the area, including a building to the south of the site (Beacon South Quarter) which directly and in-directly overlooks the vacant site.

9.3.2 Description of Site

As previously stated, the site is currently a vacant mid-construction, which was halted approximately 10 years ago. The site currently has a partially-constructed underground parking basements (Figure 9.1). The site is surrounded by site hoarding on all sides. The southern edge along Carmanhall Road the site hoarding is buffered from the footpath by a thin row of small street trees or hedging (Figure 9.2-3). The western and northern edges, adjacent to the Sentinel and existing Rockbrook developments, have pedestrian paths and parking ventilation openings (Figure 9.4-5) and are also edged by site hoarding (Figure 9.6-8). The northern edge is planting with a buffer to visually screen the vacant state of the site from the completed developments (Figure 9.9). Within the sites, there is no vegetation within the

site beside a row of established evergreen trees along the Carmanhall Road site hoarding (Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.1 – View south into constructed part of site

Figure 9.2 – View south-east along Carmenhall Road

Figure 9.3 – View north from Carmenhall Road

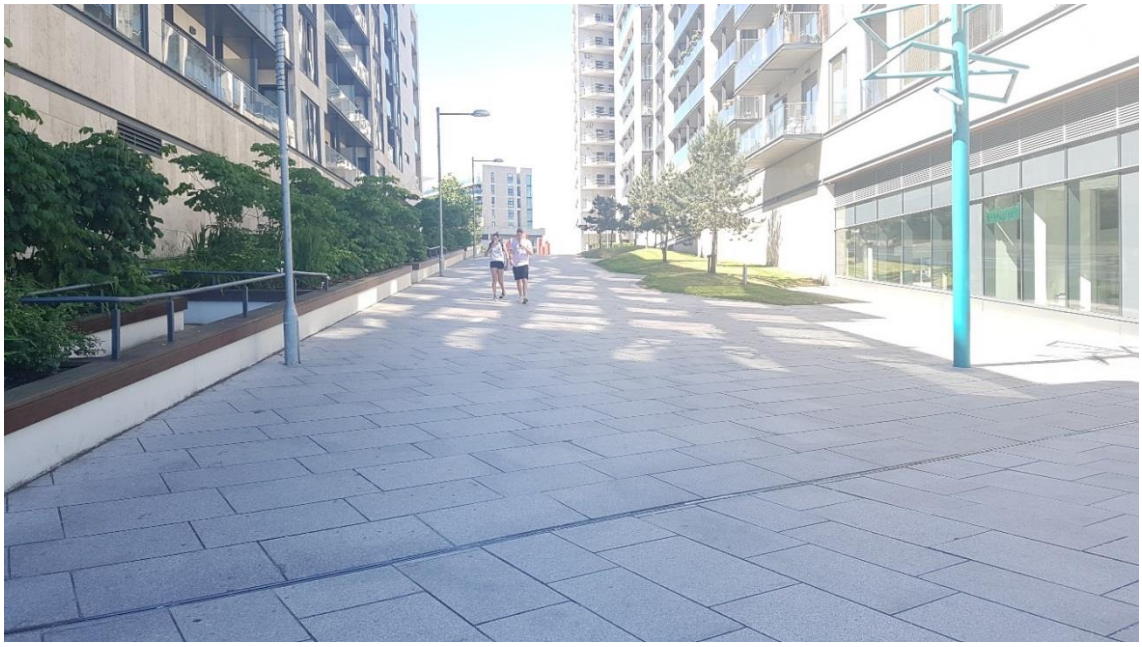

Figure 9.4 – View South from pedestrian link to Blackthorn Avenue

Figure 9.5 – View of existing car park vents to north of site

Figure 9.6 – View north along existing pedestrian link from Carmenhall Road

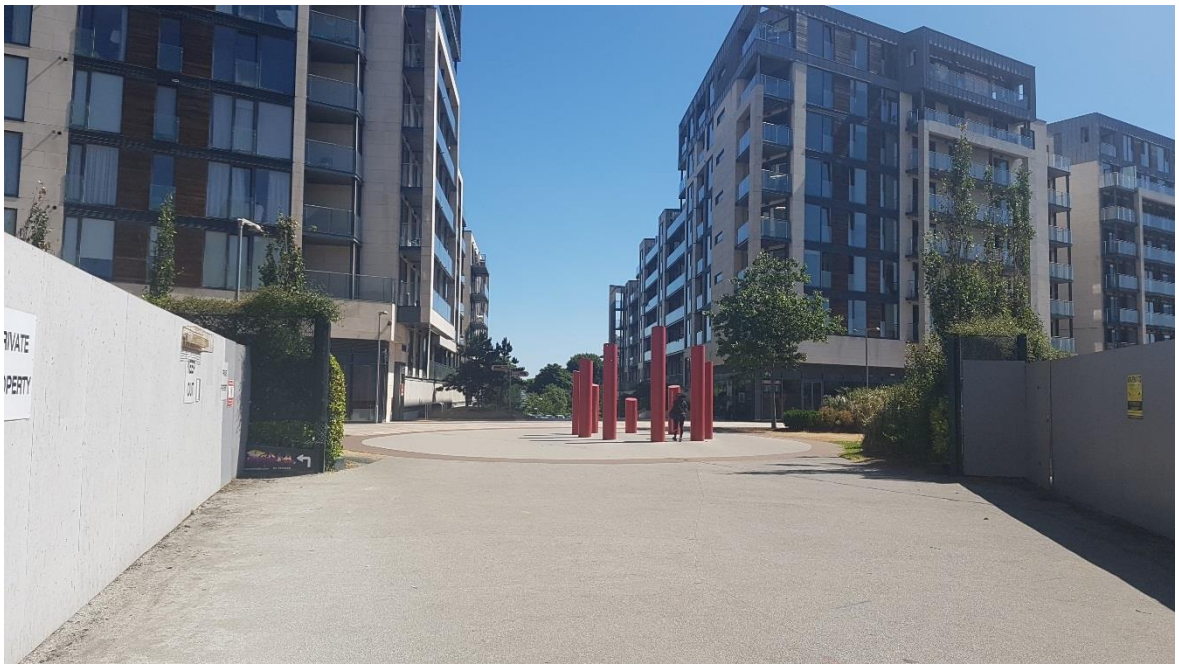

Figure 9.7 – Existing Urban Plaza area with sculpture

Figure 9.8 – View south from Urban Plaza

Figure 9.9 – View west towards Sentinel Building (part-complete)

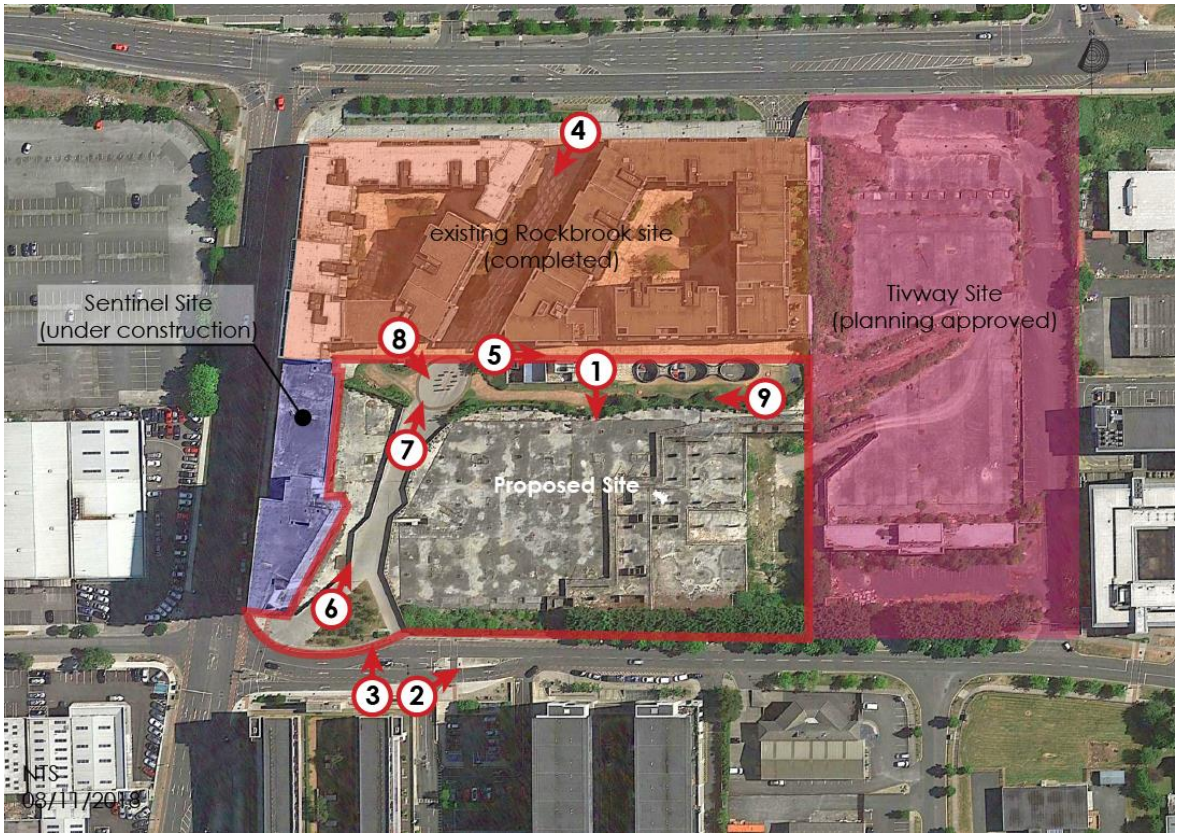

Figure 9.10: Location Key for Site Images above

9.4.0 Existing Visual Context and Views

The site is surrounded by completed and under-construction developments on adjacent sites. This restricts the existing views into the site from the wider area. The main views are from the completed Rockbrook development and the building to the south of the site (Beacon South Quarter). These buildings have commercial units on the ground floor and residential on the upper storeys with views towards and into the site. The views from the Beacon South Quarter units are mainly oblique unit views separated from the site by Carmanhall Road and a courtyard. The views from the Rockbrook development are more direct views from the units and look directly over the site. The site's void can be seen from the multi-story serviced apartments and suites building on Ballymoss Road.

Glimpsed views are also available from the adjacent junctions on Carmanhall Road, including Blackthorn Drive, Corrig Road, and Ballymoss Road, although the sensitivity of these views is considered low, as it is primarily passing views from vehicles that are under consideration.

In regard to the surrounding neighbourhood, views from distant vantage points (over 600m) will be effected by the proposed development but will be evaluated within the existing urban context and character of the site. Possible views from outside the Sandyford Business District are oblique and slight. When visible, the height of the surrounding buildings, as well as urban density screen the site from view. For this reason, these similar views have been grouped, both north and south of the Estate, since they will be impacted similarly.

As previously stated, the existing visual context would have been altered if the previous construction had not been abandoned in 2008. If that had been so, the area of Potential Visual Receptors would not have been restricted to the adjacent buildings, for the previously proposed building was 14 stories and therefore visible to the surrounding area. This, in combination with the urban context and character of the area, was considered in the selected location of Potential Visual Receptors.

Figure 9.11: Map showing the location of Potential Visual Receptors

9.5.0 Sensitivity of the Identified Receptors

Landscape sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, as well as the visual sensitivity in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact.

The areas landscape and urban fabric are not only changing now but being planned and encouraged to change in the future through planning zoning and the associated Development Plan and Urban Framework Plan. The consolidation and densification of the urban fabric in Sandyford is the context of this site. The majority of the existing landscape within the site is brownfield, a part-completed car parking basement to three levels under the ground. There is also a previously-granted application for development on the lands.
Therefore, the landscapes' sensitivity to change is low.

In regard to the Potential Visual Receptors, the viewpoints closer to the site are more likely to be effected by the change, even if that change is part of the planning for the area and in line with the character of the area. Therefore, the sensitivity of the visual receptors is considered to be low.

9.6.0 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The planned development for the site includes a 428-unit apartment building with active mix-use frontage on the ground floor, surrounded and containing public amenity spaces, and private communal terraces. The site's existing open spaces and paths along the edge of the site will be altered, with wider paths and an increase of plantings in the public spaces.

The building proposal includes high pedestrian permeability on the ground floor, both visually and physically within the public realm. This access includes several diagonal pedestrian paths from the street through the public amenity spaces in the open courtyard and between developments to the adjacent existing developments, as well as Blackthorn Drive and the Stillorgan Luas stop to the north.

The building will have a variety of heights, ranging up to 14 storeys, to allow for maximized daylight within the internal courtyards and to avoid overshadowing existing residential areas. The planned development includes four communal roof terraces on top of the lower-midlevel sections. The building will fill the gap in the Sandyford skyline that is visible from the adjacent road network and be slightly visible from the surrounding area. The building will be at a comparable height to the surrounding buildings. The existing Rockbrook is 6-10 storeys, the Sentinel is 14 storeys, and when completed, the Tivway, 5-12 storeys. The proposed RB Central development reflects and responds to these adjacent heights.

There will be changes to the existing character of the site due to the conversion from a disused construction site to a complete building surrounded by programmed public space with associated softscape. Light spill will be minimised through the use of directional LED fittings.

9.7.0 Potential Impact of the Proposed Development without Mitigation

The potential impacts are the effects that the development could have without consideration of landscape and/or public realm mitigation or amelioration – i.e. without landscape works. For the sake of clarity, these shall be considered under the following headings: Landscape Impacts and Visual Impacts.

These impacts are considered under the following headings:

- temporary effects (construction phase up to one year);
- short-term impacts (construction phase up to two years);
- short-term impacts (operation phase up to seven years);
- medium-term impacts (operation phase, seven to fifteen years) and
- long-term impacts (operation phase up to fifteen years and beyond).

These effects have been compiled to identify any areas where the proposed development may be injurious to the visual character of the area and represent the potential impact rather than the eventual long-term effect. For this section, it is assumed that no specific landscape works are carried out with the construction of the development. This enables recognition of potential, rather than actual, effects which facilitate the identification of suitable landscape mitigation measures.

9.7.1 Construction Phase – Potential Landscape and Visual Impact

9.7.1.1 Temporary & Short-Term effects

During this process, the site will undergo a change from that of an area of previously disused development, with some portions of existing public realm associated with the existing residential/commercial developments to the north, into a large construction site. Any impacts generated at this stage will be short-term in duration, save for some landscape effects which will be permanent.

The temporary closure of the existing pedestrian path and urban plaza to allow for construction of the pedestrian path and public space between the proposed development and the existing developments to the west and north of the site will be a slightly negative, yet temporary, effect. Currently it is a direct, non-vehicular connection from the existing development south of the site to the Stillorgan Luas stop. The alternative route would require pedestrians to used footpaths adjacent to existing roadways, a slower, less calm route to the Luas.

There will be moderately negative effects associated with the construction works of this development elsewhere. This will be due to the site clearance, minor regrading of boundary areas, and the building processes required to construct the proposed development and associated roadway. These are temporary and short-term.

Visual impacts will be more acute than in the operational phase, but short-term in duration. This is due to the construction traffic, site hoarding, cranes, etc. Cranes will be taller than the

proposed buildings and therefore more visible in the landscape. There will also be vehicular and crane movement and changes to the configuration of the site, typical of building sites.

Visually, the impacts will be moderately negative. The path closure will visually disconnect the site during construction. The most sustainable effect during construction will be experienced by the adjacent residential units in the adjacent Developments. As the building progresses, the resident's views will alter and shorten to the face of the new building, which effect will be considered in Operational Phase effects.

9.7.1.2. Medium to Long-Term Landscape Effects

During construction, the existing landscape buffer to the north and to the south along the site hoarding will be removed. The effect of the removal of the northern buffer will be slight, due to the minimal disruption to the existing movement and function of the space between the existing Rockbrook and the proposed site. In regard to the removal of the 9 no. street trees and hedging along the south site hoarding, these planting's main function is screening the existing hoarding and are not part of a continuous streetscape planting. Yet, they are part of the existing landscape character of the street, therefore their removal will have a moderately negative effect, for the hoarding will no longer be screened and the construction will be visible.

9.7.2 Operational Phase - Potential Landscape Impact

9.7.2.1. Short-term landscape impacts after the construction works (up to seven years)

Following construction, the main landscape effects of the proposed development are associated with completion of the site. The completed landscape character of the site is fitting with the character of the Sandyford Business District. The effect of the completed site will be moderately positive, due to the conversion from the current closed abandoned construction site to the present of open permeable building and space in character with the area. This effect can be considered positive.

9.7.2.2. Medium-term landscape impacts (seven to fifteen years)

There will be no significant change to the initial operational phase. The areas character will likely continue to grow.

9.7.2.3. Long-term landscape impacts (over fifteen years)

There will be no significant change over fifteen years after the initial operational phase. The areas character will likely continue to grow.

9.7.3 Potential Visual Impact

The potential visual impact of the proposed development is different at an adjacent block, surrounding area, and distant vantage point. The potential visual impact is assessed at each of those levels. As previously stated, the existing visual effects would have been altered if the 2005 approved development had been completed. This, in combination with the existing urban context of the site, is considered when evaluating the potential visual impact. Therefore, the context of the previous partially-constructed development, the current planning designation and the existing urban fabric contribute to a low sensitivity to change for the likely receptors.

9.7.3.1. Adjacent Block and Surrounding Area Visual Impact

Following construction, the existing Rockbrook development and the Beacon South Quarter viewpoints will both be visually effected by the new 5 to 14 storey building filling the void of the existing space. This will have a moderately negative effect on views from the existing Rockbrook development and moderately negative effects on views from the Beacon South Quarter residential units facing onto the site. The negative effects above are mitigated due to the proposed development creating a cohesive streetscape and positive urban edge.

The visual impact from the adjacent junctions on Carmanhall Road, the surrounding road network, and the serviced apartments and suites building on Ballymoss Road will be slightly to moderately positive. The proposed development will be at a similar height to the adjacent buildings and be partially masked by the existing street trees. The development will also create an active road frontage with a cohesive urban edge and mask the existing part-completed Sentinel Building. Therefore, the effects along and from these points are judged to be slightly positive, due to the overall urban visual composition (See Views 1-2 & 6).

At two points along the surrounding network, on Blackthorn Avenue and St Raphaela's Road and on Corring Road, the proposed development will have a slightly negative effect on the visual character. This is due to the currently vacant Tivway development site, which provides a long viewshed with the proposed RB Central development in the foreground. This view impact will change once the Tivway development is completed (See Views 3 &9 and See Section 9.11.2 Potential Cumulative Impacts). Once Tivway is completed, the proposed RB Central site will be barely visible.

9.7.3.2. Distant Visual Impact

In regard to the surrounding neighbourhood, views from distant vantage points (over 600m), the impact will be slightly. The character of the proposal from these distant views is consistent with the existing and emerging trends of the urban Sandyford area. The building will blend-in, completing the northeastern skyline of Sandyford. The effect of the proposed development will be slight and neutral to these distant viewpoints (See Views 10-15).

Viewpoints 1&2: Slight - Moderate and Positive
Viewpoints 4&8: Moderate and Neutral

Viewpoints 6: Slight and Positive
Viewpoints 8: Moderate and Negative
Viewpoints 5&7: No Impact
Viewpoints 3 & 9: Slight and Negative
(Once Tivway is completed: Imperceptible, Section 9.11.2 Potential Cumulative Impacts).
Viewpoints D1, D2, 10-15: Slight and Neutral

View Number	No Impact	Imperceptible Impact	Slight Impact	Moderate Impact	Significant Impact	Profound Impact
View 1				Positive		
View 2				Positive		
View 3			Negative			
View 4				Neutral		
View 5	No Impact					
View 6			Positive			
View 7	No Impact					
View 8				Neutral		
View 9			Negative			
View 10			Neutral			
View 11			Neutral			
View 12			Neutral			
View 13			Neutral			
View 14			Neutral			
View 15			Neutral			
D1			Neutral			
D2			Neutral			

9.7.3.3 Potential Night-time Effects

Lighting to the proposed development consists of columns to the road and low-level lighting measures to the residential areas/courtyards. The luminaires are LED fittings which allow for low energy, directionally-focused lighting that minimise light spill to the surrounding areas. Due to the distance of the site from the identified receptors, the lighting to the roads and residential areas will have a slightly negative effect during the hours of darkness. This impact is also mitigated by the use of the LED fittings.

9.8.0 Mitigation Measures

The following recommendations are put forward to mitigate against the negative impacts mentioned above and to reinforce the positive impacts of the proposed development. Mitigation measures are proposed and considered only on the lands of the subject site.

9.8.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase, the existing site hoarding will be extended to restrict views of the site during construction. Hours of construction activity will also be restricted in accordance with local authority guidance.

9.8.2 Operational Phase

The primary proposed mitigation measures can be seen on Murray and Associates Drawing no. **1729_PL_P_01**, and are as follows:

Along Carmanhall Road, there will be an addition of street trees along the road and textured planting along the foot of the building. The planting will increase at the entrance to the diagonal pedestrian path, delineated with shaded pavers, and will continue along the path. This will create visual interest and buffer the ground floor of the development. The development will continue to be softened and screened over time as the trees and planting mature.

On the 6th and 9th floor, there will be communal terraces for the residents of the proposed development. These terraces will be planted with trees, shrubs, and perennial plantings which will be visible to the existing Rockbrook development and Beacon South Quarter.
At the north side of the space, there will be a communal play area for the block, with plantings along the edge of the play area and the building. This addition of public and private amenity areas will soften the landscape and visual character, having a positive effect on the area.

The biodiversity of the area will be increased significantly due to the addition of approximately 125 new trees planted within the development, along with approximately 4,350 sqm. of planting at ground level and terrace levels. This will have a positive effect on the local habitat and ecology compared with the existing site's lack of biodiversity.

At the time of planting, the proposed trees will be at least 3.0m in height. The trees will reach a mature height of at least 7 to 12 metres, dependant on species and environmental factors within the medium term (seven to fifteen years). As specified on the plan, topsoil may be imported where necessary to ensure that mitigation measures establish and grow appropriately.

9.9.0 Predicted Impact of the Proposed Development with Mitigation

The predicted impacts are the impacts that the development is most likely to have on the receiving environment having regard to the remedial and reductive measures outlined in the previous section.

9.9.1 Construction Phase

Predicted landscape impacts at construction stage are likely to be as per the potential impacts – see section 9.7.1. Any new development will require site hoarding. Due to the site hoarding currently being the existing site condition on the boundaries, the development will have a neutral visual impact on adjacent developments, until the development progress over the height of the hoarding. As the proposed development will be higher than the hoarding, the predicted visual effects will remain largely unchanged from the potential impacts.
The construction phase will have a moderately negative impact on the adjacent developments and Carmanhall Road due to the proximity of the development.

9.9.2 Operational Phase - Predicted Landscape Impact

The landscape effects of the proposed development would overall be moderately positive, particularly considering the existing vacant site is not fitting with the area's context or urban character.

These predicted effects are mitigated by the potential quality of the public realm, the cohesive land use and pattern that would result; and the new spaces, landscape features and distinctiveness introduced by the proposed development with its associated landscape spaces and planting interventions.

Within the site, there will be approximately 125 new trees planted with the development, with an approximately 3,400 sqm. of planting, along with pattern pavers, helping to delineate space, will create high-quality public realm in and around the building.

These mitigation measures contribute towards improving the moderately positive impact of the development upon the landscape. The proposed planting would substantially increase the tree resource and quality in the area overall.

9.9.3 Predicted Visual Impact

The predicted visual impacts are those that will persist following implementation and establishment of the proposed landscape measures (medium term). As previously discussed, the scale of this development is appropriate to the site, due to the urban context and existing framework. The size and quality of the public amenity space and the preservation and enhancement of access through and around the development will mitigate the visual impact at ground level, for visitors and residents alike. However, due to the allowed scale of the proposed development. As stated above, the effect on the predicted views of the proposed development will be similar to the potential views (Section 9.7.1).

The proposed new public realm will contribute towards integrating the development into the existing urban block fabric.

9.9.4 Summary

During construction, there will be a change to the landscape and there will be negative visual effects for residents and visitors to the areas adjacent to the site associated with construction activity.

In the medium to long-term, the landscape effects due to the completed development would overall be moderate and positive, due to the conversion of the site from vacant and closed space to public and integrated. In the longer term, the assessment concludes that the proposed development will continue to fit into the landscape and visual character of the area.

Landscape works are proposed to reduce and offset any effects generated due to the proposed development, where possible. The planting of substantial numbers of new trees and plantings will enhance the overall appearance of the new development. Further to this, there is a net gain of c. 125 new trees planted within the site and approximately 3,400 sqm of new planting at ground level.

While the effects on views persist, the tree and shrub planting will increase the visual quality of the site. Future visitors to the development will perceive the development in positive terms due to the context and the quality of the public realm and proposed buildings.

9.9.5 'Do Nothing' Scenario

The do-nothing impact refers to the non-implementation of the proposed development. The primary effect of this would be that the impacts and effects identified would not directly occur. In this regard the following issues are relevant.

In the event that the proposed development does not proceed, the site will likely to remain vacant and closed until future development. At that point, it is likely that the subject site would be developed in the future with high density, which is concurrent with the trend of the area. If the site is left in its current state, the site will continue to have a negative impact on the existing landscape and visual character of the area.

9.9.6 'Worst-Case' Effects

The worst-case effects arise when the mitigation measures as proposed substantially fail. This would result in the effects as laid out in section 9.7, where the landscape and visual impacts of the project are assessed without the proposed mitigation measures.

9.10.0 Monitoring

9.10.1 Construction phase

Landscape tender drawings and specifications will be produced to ensure that the landscape work is implemented in accordance with best practice. This document will include tree work procedures, soil handling, planting and maintenance. The contract works will be supervised by a suitably qualified landscape architect.

The planting works will be undertaken in the planting season after completion of the main civil engineering and building work.

9.10.2 Operational phase

Monitoring of the mitigation measures forms part of the landscape management plan. Replacement trees, replacement planting and pruning measures are captured in landscape management plans and are intrinsically linked to the proposed mitigation measures. All landscape works will be in an establishment phase for the initial three years from planting. A landscape management plan accompanies the planning application. Prior to completion of the landscape works, a competent landscape contractor will be engaged and a detailed maintenance plan, scope of operation and methodology will be put in place.

9.11.0 Interactions of Impacts

9.11.1 Interactions

The assessment of the landscape impacts associated with the proposed development has a number of interactions with other parameters of the assessment. In summary, these are as follows:

- Population and Human Health
- Biodiversity

The interactions of the landscape with these parameters were as follows:

Population and Human Health

The landscape and visual impact associated with human beings focused on the effects of dwellings. The proposed development generates visual effects; the effects and associated amelioration of these effects are discussed in the impact section of the report.

Biodiversity

The long-term effects of the proposed development will have a positive effect on the areas, through the increase of tree canopy and vegetation, both at the ground level and at the courtyard terraces level.

Further consultation with the Ecological Consultant will take place at detailed design, implementation and monitoring stages to ensure adherence to best practice and sound ecological principles.

9.11.2 Potential Cumulative Impacts

Within the urban block of this development, there is one completed residential development, one under construction (The Sentinel Building), and one with planning approval (Tivway). After the competition of the above proposed adjacent developments, the effect on some views will change. For example, once Tivway is completed, this proposed development will not be visible from St Raphaela's Road and Corring Road.

These cumulative effects were considered in the evaluation of near and distant viewsheds and fitting with the existing character and planning objectives of the Sandyford Business District. Future or alternative developments adjacent or near the site will further effect the area, potential through the altering of the skyline from distant viewpoints.