

10 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

10.1 Introduction

This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) addresses the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed mixed-use development located in Mervue, Galway. The emphasis in this chapter is on the *likely significant effects* of the proposal. It outlines the methodology for the assessment, a description of the proposed project, the existing landscape as well as landscape policy and relevant guidance.

The assessment is based on desk study of the study area, field surveys of the site and surrounds and the use of photographs and photomontages from representative viewpoints of the site. The landscape of the area is described in terms of its existing character, which includes a description of the physical and visual character, landscape values and the landscape's sensitivity to change. The potential impacts in both landscape and visual terms are then assessed, including cumulative impact.

10.1.1 Statement of Authority and Competence

MKO has developed extensive expertise and experience over the last 15 years in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of a range of projects, including quarries, road schemes, wind and solar energy developments and a range of other projects. This landscape and visual impact assessment was carried out by a qualified landscape architect, Ms Kathryn Blade, BSc (Hons) with assistance from Ms Joanna Mole, BSc, PGDipLA, MSc, CMLI

Kathryn Blade is a Landscape Architect with McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan and holds a BSc (Hons) in Landscape Architecture from University College Dublin. Kathryn has worked primarily in private practice and has experience in the areas of public realm design, commercial, leisure and residential development in Ireland, the UK and the Middle East. Joanna Mole is a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Specialist and Chartered Landscape Architect with McCarthy O'Sullivan Ltd. with over 15 years of experience in both private practice and local authorities. Joanna holds a BSc (Hons) in Landscape Design & Plant Science from Sheffield University, a Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Leeds Beckett University, a MSc in Renewable Energy Systems Technology from Loughborough University.

10.1.2 Proposed Development Description

The subject site is located in the north-east of Galway City in the townland of Mervue, approximately 2.1km from Galway City Centre. The proposed development site, which has an area of circa 5.1 ha, is a brownfield site. Development had been permitted in 2006 and construction works had started with substantial works completed (Pl Ref. 06/223/ ABP Ref. PL 61.220893). Following the onset of the economic recession, development was put on hold and the site was hoarded up. The site is approximately 175m to the south of the Bothar Na Dtreabh (N6) and 100m to the south east of the Tuam Road (R336). Access to the site can be gained from Joyce's Road. The site is now a recently reactivated construction site for Phase 1 of the development.

The proposed development strategy envisages that the subject lands will be developed in two distinct stages, with two separate planning applications. This planning application relates to Phase 2 of the overall development. The proposed development

masterplan is described in detail in Chapter 3, Phase 2 will generally consist of the following:

1. A residential scheme comprising 288 no. apartments and amenity accommodation with a gross floor area of 32,379 sqm, which will include:
 - Block G (104 no. units); Block H (136 no. units) and Block J (48 no. units).
 - 75 no. one-beds (26%); 185 no. two-beds (64.2%); and 28 no. three-bed units (9.7%)
 - Ancillary residential amenity areas (1,275 sqm).
 - Block G extends to eight-storeys, Block H extends to seven-storeys and Block J extends to five-storeys.
 - External balconies are provided on all elevations.
2. A commercial scheme with a cumulative gross floor area of 4,096 sqm, which will include:
 - A neighbourhood facility comprising a restaurant (500 sqm), café (50 sqm), local convenience store (225 sqm), a pharmacy (200 sqm), 5 no. retail/commercial units (797 sqm in total), a crèche (310 sqm)
 - A fitness/leisure facility (1,140 sqm); and
 - A medical centre (655 sqm).
3. Public realm and landscaping works, including pedestrian and cyclist linkages.
4. Vehicular access to the double basement permitted under Pl Ref 18/363 and the allocation of 288 no. car parking spaces located on the lower basement level to service the residential units. Visitor car parking will be provided on the upper basement level and will be managed in accordance with an Operational Management Plan and a Mobility Management Plan.
5. The provision of a dedicated cyclist ramp and 733 no. secure bicycle parking spaces located in the upper basement permitted under Pl Ref 18/36 (comprising 529 no. residential; 144 visitor parking and 60 no. bicycle parking spaces to service the neighbourhood facility).
6. All other associated site development, plant and servicing works.
7. The application will be supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement.

10.1.3 Do-Nothing' Scenario Impact Assessment

In the 'Do Nothing' scenario, the proposed Phase 2 development would not take place. Phase 1 of the development (which includes Commercial Offices (Blocks A-E), Hotel and Site Infrastructure, including all basement structures for the entire site) has received permission, and will be constructed regardless of whether this currently proposed phase 2 is permitted or not. The Phase 2 section of the site would exist as an unfinished construction site. Should this occur, the effect would be a negative moderate and long term as it would require hoarding and look unfinished. The site is currently unstructured and incongruous in a City setting and is impacting negatively on the visual amenity of the area locally.

10.1.4 Scoping Replies/Pre-Planning Meetings

A scoping and consultation exercise has been carried out by MKO, as detailed in Chapter 2 of this EIAR. Copies of all scoping responses are presented in Appendix 2-1 of this EIAR.

10.2 Methodology and Assessment Criteria

This section broadly outlines the methodology used to undertake the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development, and the guidance used in the preparation of each section. There are four main sections to the assessment:

- Outline of guidance followed
- Baseline landscape and visual assessment
- Nature and visibility of the proposed development
- Assessment of potential impacts

10.2.1 Guidance Documents

In 2000, the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoEHLG) published *'Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities'*, which recommended that all local authorities adopt a standardised approach to landscape assessment for incorporation into development plans and consideration as part of the planning process. This document remains in Draft.

In 2002, Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention (ELC). This introduced a pan-European concept that centres on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a National Landscape Strategy for Ireland in 2015. The strategy aims to ensure compliance with the ELC and contains six main objectives, including undertaking a National Landscape Character Assessment and developing landscape policies.

Although the DoEHLG 2000 guidance remains in draft form, this section of the LVIA has been informed by the landscape assessment guidelines presented in the DoEHLG document as well as a range of other guidelines, which include:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, UK, 2013).
- *'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment'; Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/2011* (2011);
- *EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained on Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2002)*
- *EPA Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2003).*
- *Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports'* (EPA, August 2017),

Consideration is also given to the Draft EPA guidance documents.

10.2.2 Baseline Landscape and Visual Information

As part of this assessment, an initial desk study was undertaken which identified relevant policies and guidelines, both at national and local level. This includes policies on landscape and landscape character, designated landscapes, and protected views. The site and study area are described in terms of landscape character types as identified in *'Landscape and Landscape Assessment: Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* (DoEHLG, 2000), while the surrounding landscape within 2km kilometres of the site is described with reference to landscape character as well as other landscape designations contained in the Galway County Council Development

Plan 2015 – 2021 and as identified in the DoEHLG 2000 guidelines. In addition, field visits were undertaken to assess the landscape character and elements both on the site itself, and in the wider landscape.

10.2.3 Scope and Definition of Landscape and Visual Impact (LVIA) Study Area

For the purposes of this EIAR, where the ‘proposed development site’ or ‘the site’ is referred to in the LVIA, this relates to the primary study area for the proposed development, as delineated in red on the EIAR figures (maps). This total area measures approximately circa 5.1 hectares. The proposed development site is discussed in some detail in terms of its landscape character.

However, the landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are based on a wider study area, consisting of all the area within 2 km from the development site boundary. This area for which the baseline maps and viewpoint locations are produced and is referred to as the Landscape and Visual Impacts (LVIA) Study Area or ‘study area’.

10.2.4 Assessing Landscape Effects

Landscape Effects: This can be described as changes which affect the landscape as a resource. This includes how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects and its landscape character. Landscape effects also relate to changes in the structure of the landscape. Under the GLVIA (2013), the assessment of likely significant effects on landscape receptors includes a judgement on both the sensitivity of the receptor as well as the magnitude of change.

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity, which is described in the GLVIA (2013) as a combination of the landscape’s susceptibility to change as well as the value attached to the landscape, as shown in Table 10.1 below. Susceptibility to change can be described as the ability of the landscape receptor (either the overall character or quality of the landscape, or a particular landscape feature), to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline (existing) landscape situation, and/or the achievements of landscape planning policies and strategies. Landscape value is a combination of the values listed in Table 10.1 below as well as any other characteristics which indicate landscape value and summarized in Section 1.6.2.

Magnitude of the change

The magnitude of change within a landscape, as outlined in Table 10.2 below, is a combination of the size and scale of the change, the extent of the area affected (e.g. how much of a feature is lost or the extent of the feature to be added) and the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects are altered. The duration and reversibility of the effect. Significance is then arrived at by combining the magnitude and sensitivity judgements.

Table 10.1 Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

Susceptibility of landscape to change	Description and example criteria
High	Landscapes where the overall landscape character or condition is highly susceptible to change and where the landscape receptor has a low ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for

Susceptibility of landscape to change	Description and example criteria
	the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Medium	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a moderate ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Low	Landscapes where the overall landscape character has a strong ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences to the maintenance of the landscape character and in compliance with planning policies/strategies.
Value attached to Landscape elements	Description and example criteria
High	Landscapes deemed as high value or forming part of designations (e.g. areas of amenity, scenic routes/views) in the development plan, at a national or international level.
Medium	Landscapes where value is not formally designated, but are of value as good examples of high quality, intact landscapes and are areas deemed to be of relatively high scenic quality. Landscapes that contain some rare elements, include areas which are wild or have a sense of naturalness, strong cultural associations or which have recreational value.
Low	Landscapes that are not formally designated and considered as modified. Areas which do not have particularly scenic qualities, do not include rare elements or landscape features and do not have strongly evident cultural or heritage associations.

Table 10.2 Assessing Magnitude of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Major loss or alteration of key landscape elements with an effect on the overall landscape character, resulting in a high degree of change to the aesthetics of the landscape. Changes will be evident over a wide geographical area.
Medium	Some loss or alteration of landscape elements resulting in some change to landscape character and aesthetics. This includes landscapes where there is a moderate effect on the overall landscape character but does not affect key characteristics.
Low	Minor loss of or change to landscape elements. These changes do not affect the overall landscape character or key elements. Changes to the overall aesthetics of the landscapes are low and limited in their geographical extent.

10.2.5 Assessing Visual Effects

10.2.5.1 Viewpoint Selection

A step by step process was followed in selecting appropriate photomontage locations. The first step was to select a number of representative locations following a detailed desk top study of mapping. These locations were based on the following criteria:

- Potential visibility of the development site
- Critical landscape designations e.g. views and prospects, scenic routes, areas classed as sensitive
- Close to settlements or groups of residential dwellings

- Within public areas or on public roads, particularly more trafficked routes
- Views that cover a wide area in terms of geographical location, elevation and varying distance from site.

Finally, following a site visit, to assess visibility on the ground, a total of 6 no. photomontage locations were agreed upon. The locations provide a representative range of local views.

10.2.5.2 Visual Receptors - Assessing Magnitude and Sensitivity

Visual Receptor Sensitivity, listed in Table 10.3 below, depends on the occupation or activity of the people as well the extent to which the attention is focused on views and visual amenity, according to the GLVIA Guidelines (2013). It is also based on the value attached to the view. Table 10.4 below outlines the magnitude of visual effects, consisting of size and scale of the change, the extent of the area affected and the duration or reversibility of the effect.

Table 10.3 Assessing Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Susceptibility of visual receptor	Description and example criteria
High	These include viewers at designated views or landscapes; viewers such as residents which are focussed to a large extent on the development due to location in close proximity; viewers at well-known heritage or popular tourist or recreational areas, viewers along scenic or tourist routes
Medium	Visual receptors who may have some susceptibility to changes in view, such as those from views which are not designated, but may have local significance or those travelling along routes or at views which are considered moderately scenic.
Low	Viewers engaged in activities where the focus is not on the landscape or view, such as those travelling along busy routes, viewers at work or engaged in sport not related to views or experience of the landscape.
Value attached to the view	Description and example criteria
High	Protected views or views from designated landscapes of national or international importance, views indicated on tourist/cultural publications or considered of high scenic quality, naturalness, tranquillity or views with rare elements.
Medium	Non-designated views, but including panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, demonstrating some sense of naturalness, tranquillity or have some rare element in the view.
Low	Views which are not designated and are not judged to be panoramic views or of particular scenic quality as described above. These are views which have no distinctive features.

Table 10.4 Assessing Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Viewpoints where the proposed development results in a significant change of the view and its composition and creates a high degree of contrast to the existing. This includes viewpoints where the proposed development is fully or almost fully visible over a wide area at close proximity to the viewer. The effects are long term or permanent and have a low level of reversibility.

Magnitude of Change	Description
Medium	Viewpoints where the proposed development results in moderate changes to the view and a moderate degree of contrast with the existing view. This includes viewpoints where the development is visible over a significant proportion of the view and viewpoints, which are not in close proximity to the development.
Low	Viewpoints where the proposed development results in a low level of change in the view and its composition with a low degree of contrast. Viewpoints where the development is partially or barely visible in a small proportion of the view and includes viewpoints at a distance from the proposed development.

10.2.1 Viewpoint Assessment

Table 1.1 in Chapter 1, showing the standard definitions as outlined in EPA guidelines, has been adapted for the determination of effects, as shown in Table 10.5 below, in this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Chapter. Values will be ascribed visual effects in viewpoints arising from the proposed development in terms of quality, significance and duration in line with the EPA guidance, while extent, probability and type will form part of the viewpoint descriptions.

Table 10.5 Impact Classification Terminology (EPA, 2017)

Impact Characteristic	Term	Description
Quality	Positive	A change which improves the quality of the environment.
	Neutral	No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
	Negative	A change which reduces the quality of the environment.
Significance	Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
	Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant 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 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 most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
	Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.
Duration and Frequency	Momentary Effects	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes.
	Brief Effects	Effects lasting less than a day.
	Temporary Effects	Effects lasting less than a year.

Impact Characteristic	Term	Description
	Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years.
	Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
	Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
	Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years.
	Reversible Effects	Effects that can be undone.
	Frequency	Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)
	Irreversible	When the character, distinctiveness, diversity, or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost.
	Residual	Degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect.
	Synergistic	Where the resultant effect is of greater significance than the sum of its constituents.
	'Worst Case'	The effects arising from a development in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail.

10.2.1.1 Scope and Definition of Landscape and Visual Impact (LVIA) Study Area

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However, the landscape and visual baseline mapping and viewpoint selection are based on a wider study area, consisting of all the area within 2 km from the development site boundary. This area for which the baseline maps and viewpoint locations are produced and is referred to as the Landscape and Visual Impacts (LVIA) Study Area or 'study area'.

10.3 Landscape Baseline: Policy Context

10.3.1 Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

The Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) sets out policies and objectives for the city. Chapter 4 contains specific landscape related zoning, policies and objectives. These include recreation and amenity land use zoning and associated objectives as well as proposed greenways in the city and protected views.

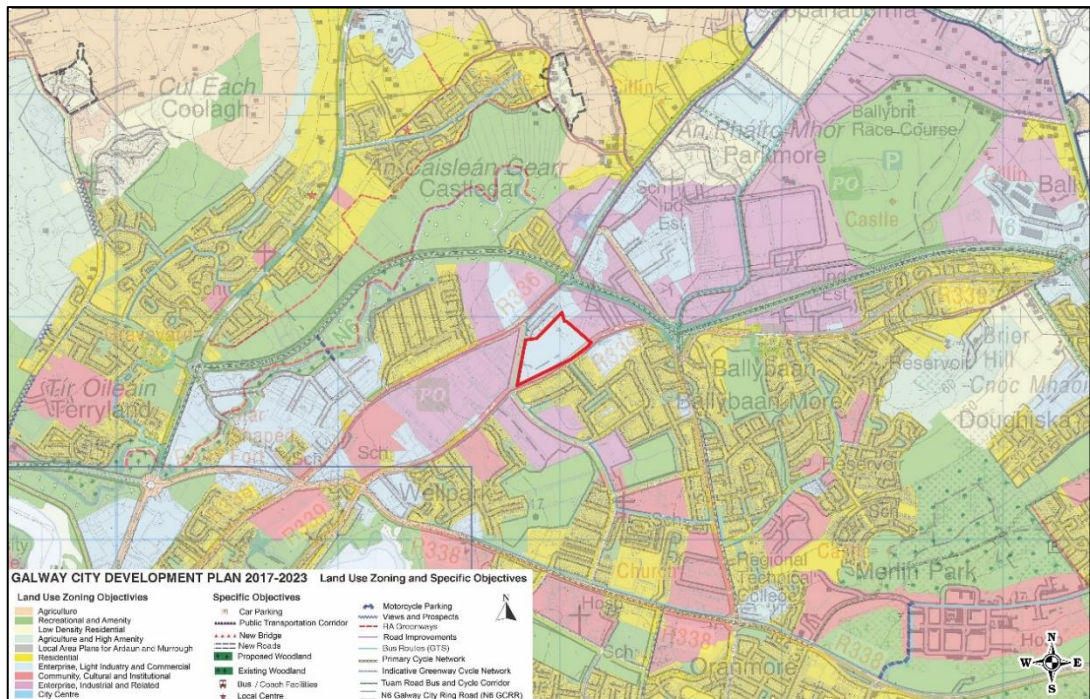


Figure 10.1: Land Use and Zoning and Specific Objectives. The site boundary is indicated in Red. (Source: Galway City Development Plan)

10.3.1.1 Landscape Zoning and Designations

The proposed development site is zoned as 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' within the CDP. Areas bordering the wider site boundary are classed as 'Enterprise, Industrial and Related'. There are also areas zoned as 'Residential', 'Recreational and Amenity' and 'Low Density Residential' in the study area, as shown in Figure 1.1 above.

Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial

Chapter 11 of the County Development Plan discusses the Land Use Zoning Objectives and Development Standards and Guidelines. The site is located in the 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' zone. The following objectives for this zone are relevant to the proposed site.

Uses which are compatible with and contribute to the zoning objective, for example:

- *Warehousing/Storage*
- *Retail of a type and of a scale appropriate to the function and character of the area*
- *Specialist offices*
- *Offices of a type and of a scale appropriate to the function and character of the area*
- *Light Industry*
- *Accommodation for Travellers*
- *Childcare facilities*
- *Community and cultural facilities*

Uses which may contribute to the zoning objectives, dependant on the CI location and scale of development, for example:

- *General industry (small scale)*
- *Service retailing*
- *Residential content of a scale that would not unduly interfere with the primary use of the land for CI purposes and would accord with the principles of sustainable neighbourhoods outlined in Chapter 2*
- *Offices*
- *Car parks (including heavy vehicle parks)*
- *Waste management facility*
- *Public transportation facility*
- *Public utilities*
- *Outdoor recreation*
- *Commercial leisure/indoor recreation*
- *Places of worship*

Former Crown Equipment Site zoned CI. The majority of retail floor space shall be dedicated for bulky goods retailing and the balance for local retailing needs. Parking shall be kept back from Monivea Road and separated from the Monivea Road by buildings. The design of frontage facing Monivea Road shall be of a high architectural standard.

Green Network

Chapter 4 of the CDP states that the aim is ‘*to provide a green network for the city that will allow for sustainable use, management and protection of natural heritage, recreation amenity areas, parks and open spaces in an integrated manner*’. The plan goes on to list the spaces in the city which make up this green network:

- Blue Space of the city’s coastal areas, rivers, lakes and canals
- Protected Spaces of ecological and biodiversity importance
- Green spaces of woodland parks
- Open Spaces including recreational and amenity and agricultural zoned lands and
- Community Spaces, which afford direct access by the community to nature and amenity e.g. greenways

The Green Network has been mapped (Figure 4.1 in the CPD) and is reproduced as Figure 10.2 below.

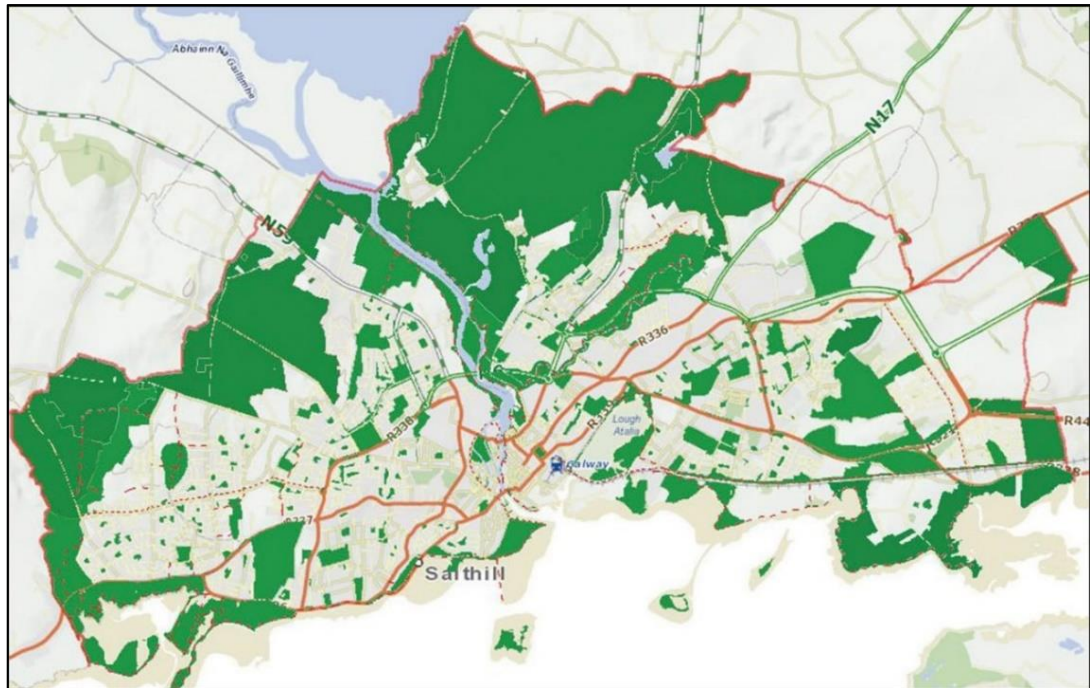


Figure 10.2: Galway City Green Network (Source: Galway City Development Plan)

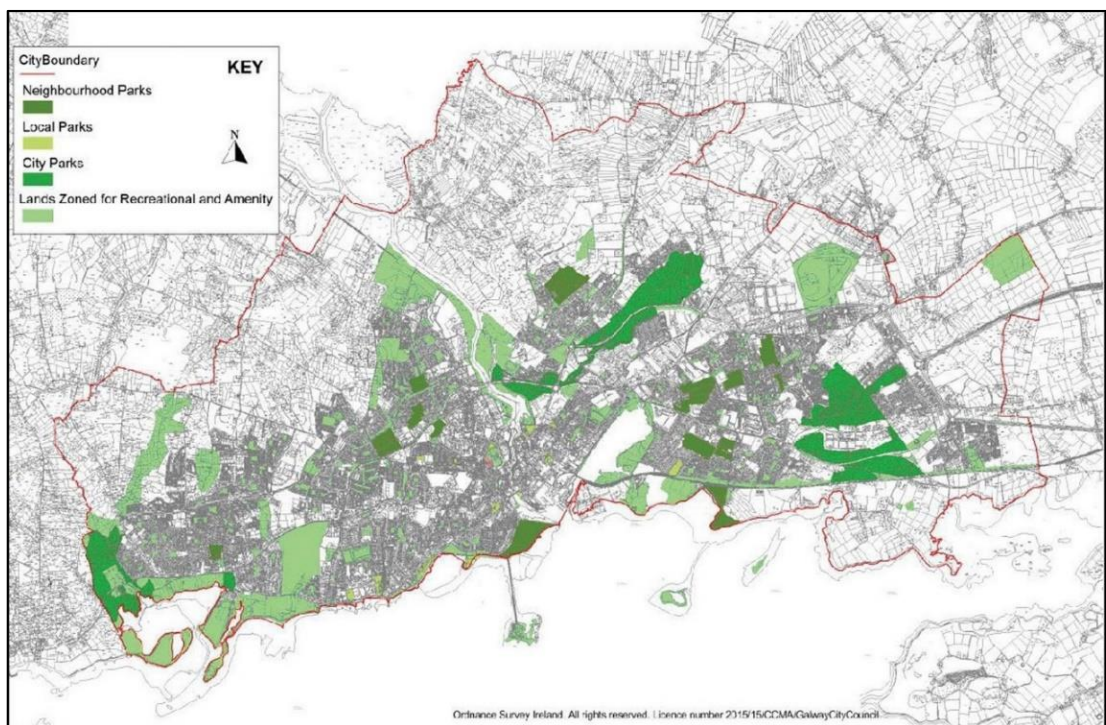


Figure 10.3: Galway City Park Hierarchy (Source: Galway City Development Plan)

The Galway City Council published the *Recreation and Amenity Needs Study* in 2008, conclusions of which have since been adopted into the current CDP. This study established a hierarchy of parks provision of Citywide Parks, Neighbourhood Parks and Local Parks in the city as shown in Figure 10.3 above. Terryland Forrest Park is within 1km of the of the development site boundary and is one of three parks described as Citywide Parks, which are large scale open spaces for passive and active recreation, wildlife conservation and education.

Greenways are also mentioned as established or potential amenity corridors for non-motorised travel (pedestrian and cyclists).

There will be no landscape or visual impacts on the park mentioned above or any greenways arising due to the proposed development.

10.3.1.2 Protected Views

Section 4.5.3 of the CDP is dedicated to the protection of views ‘*due to their distinctive scenic amenity, aesthetic or cultural value*’, although it is acknowledged that ‘*that views are not static and some changes in a view can be absorbed without visually depreciating the integrity of the view*’. Policy 4.5.3 relating to *Protected Views of Special Amenity Value and Interest* of the CDP states:

Protect views and prospects of special amenity value and interest, which contribute significantly to the visual amenity and character of the city through the control of inappropriate development.

Require landscaping schemes as part of planning applications to have regard to such views and limit any planting which could have a detrimental impact on the value of protected views.

Galway City Council identifies two categories of protected views, linear and panoramic. There are no protected views within the site boundary of the proposed development. There are 3 protected views within the study area, located within 1km from the proposed development. One is a panoramic protected view V3 and is described below:

V3: *Seascape views of Lough Atalia from Lough Atalia Road, College Road, Dublin Road and Lakeshore Drive.*

A viewpoint was selected from along this protected view and it was assessed that there would be no visual impact arising from the proposed development on this panoramic protected view. A detailed assessment can be found below in Section 10.7.

The other view within the study area is a linear view and is described below:

V17: *Seascape views from Military Walk, Renmore*

There will be no visual impact arising from the proposed development on this linear protected view.



Figure 10.4: Scenic Views (Source: Galway City Development Plan)

10.4 Landscape Baseline: Landscape Character

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

10.4.1 Site of the Proposed Development

A mixed-use development project commenced on site in 2008, later that year development was halted due to the economic downturn, the site remains in a partially constructed state since that time. The site would therefore be classed as a brownfield site. Development had significantly advanced with evidence of site works clearly visible. The site has been excavated to create a double basement area over the entire site footprint, on the Monivea Road side, a large area has been partially infilled with a two-storey concrete frame. There are also a large number of foundations poured in other areas of the site with sections of basement slab.

The surrounding area is a mix of commercial and residential. The townland of Mervue runs from south east to south west of the site and is predominately residential. Industrial elements that surround the site include, Mervue Business Park to the south with Thermo King, a manufacturing facility located south west of the site. Section 10.4.2 describes the landscape character of the site and surrounding landscape in further detail.

10.4.2 Physical Landscape

The topography, vegetation and anthropological features on the land surface in an area combine to set limits on the amount of the landscape that can be seen at any one time. These physical restrictions form individual areas or units, known as physical units,

whose character can be defined by aspect, slope, scale and size. A physical unit is generally delineated by topographical boundaries and is defined by landform and landcover.

10.4.2.1 Landform

Present-day landscapes owe their form to the geological materials from which they were carved. Landform is the term used to describe the spatial and formal arrangement of landscape components as a natural product of geological and geomorphologic processes in the past and refers primarily to topography and drainage.

10.4.2.1.1 Topography

As discussed in Section 10.4.1, the entire footprint of the site has been excavated to create a double basement, with parts filled with concrete frames and others not. However, the general topography of the site excluding the excavation work is predominately flat with a gentle slope falling towards the west of the site. Levels vary on Joyce's Rd from 28-29mAOD and rise to approx. 30mAOD on Monivea Road at the eastern extremity of the site. The excavated site area has been reduced to formation level for the original basement which was at an FFL of 23.3mAOD. The proposed basement level under this planning application is also to be at 23.3AOD.

10.4.2.1.2 Drainage

The existing site is currently permeable with significant excavation works having been previously undertaken, there is some shallow collection of surface water after rainfall but in general the site is dry.

Further information relating to drainage can be found in Section 7.3.4 of Chapter 7.

10.4.2.2 Landcover

Landcover is the term used to describe the combinations of vegetation and land-use that cover the land surface. It comprises the more detailed constituent parts of the landscape and encompasses both natural and man-made features.

The site is dominated by the previous development construction works which can be evidently seen in Plates 10.1 to 10.4, below.



Plate 10.1 View from the north-east of the site looking south-east towards the Eir Building on the Monivea Road. This view shows the extent of the stalled construction works on site. The vegetation present in this image is typical of what is found on undisturbed sites.

The view across the north-eastern section on the site shows the scale of the construction work previously carried out on site. Plate 10.1 shows the foundation footprint for one of the previously permitted buildings and the depth at which it is sitting. Most of the vegetation present on site are weeds and grasses that have flourished on rubble and rock piles.



Plate 10.2 View from the top of the two-storey concrete frame located south of the site adjacent to the Monivea Road. The view is looking north-east. This view again shows the depth currently on site along with the numerous mounds of rubble scattered throughout the site. There are also parts of a dismantled tower crane seen to the left of the image. The site is currently being prepared for construction work of Phase 1.

Plate 10.2 shows that the site is generally dominated by the effect of construction activity and materials, with evidence of grasses and weeds in places. Plate 10.3 shows the site boundary along the Monivea Road, mature leylandii trees can be seen beyond the hoarding.



Plate 10.3: This is a view taken from the south-east of the site looking south-west. A row of large leylandii trees can be seen along the Monivea Road beyond the site hoarding. Again, grasses and weeds have colonised on earth and rubble mounds along the inside of the site boundary. To the left shows the two-storey concrete frame structure.



Plate 10.4: View taken from the west of the site looking north-east showing recolonising bare ground with breaks of scrub on the higher ground.

10.4.2.3 Land Use

The site is not in active use and represents a brown field site, which has been left in an abandoned state. Historic site development and excavation is evident. Land-use in the wider landscape is a combination of residential, commercial and industrial development. Residential developments are predominately located south of the site, adjacent to the Monivea road in the neighbourhood of Mervue.

10.5 Indications of Landscape Value

10.5.1 Landscape Value

To determine the landscape sensitivity, and ultimately the likely significance of the effects, assessments of landscape value for the proposed development site and wider (LVIA) study area were assessed. Landscape value includes designations such as scenic views and sensitivity designations found in development plans, as well as values which are attached to undesignated landscapes. A number of criteria were developed to assess the landscape values of the study area. These, combined with susceptibility, contribute to the assessment of landscape sensitivity. See Table 10.6 below.

Table 10.6 Features of Landscape Value

Feature	Description
Landscape Designations	The proposed development site is zoned as 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' with a variety of zonings in the surrounding areas. Terryland Forrest Park is located within 1.0 km of the study area. Terryland Forrest Park is one of three parks described as Citywide Parks, which are large scale open spaces for passive and active recreation, wildlife conservation and education. Greenways, another designation outlined in the CDP are

Feature	Description
	not found within the study area. There will be no landscape or visual impacts on Terryland Forrest Park or any greenways arising due to the proposed development. There are no protected views within the proposed development. The closest protected view is panoramic protected view V3 approx. 1.9km from the development site, which will be unaffected.
Landscape Quality/Condition	This refers to the physical state of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. The landscape is regarded as modified by man in terms of development with the site being a brownfield site. The vegetation present on site is mostly recolonising bare ground with breaks of scrub in parts, which has very low landscape value.
Aesthetic Qualities	Topography and site vegetation do not represent any aesthetic qualities or interest. There are no views into site due to the hoarding in place. Within the site, there are short distance views, which have no aesthetic value.
Wildness/naturalness	There is no sense of wildness/naturalness on the proposed development site.
Rarity/ Conservation Interests	See Environmental Report
Cultural Meaning/Associations	See Environmental Report
Recreation Value	The site itself is privately owned and not used for recreation. In the study area, Terryland Forrest Park, a Citywide Park, has recreation value for the public which is also part of Galway City Green Network.

10.6 Visibility of the Proposed Development

Following the desktop study, a site visit was carried out to assess the visibility of the site from the surrounding area as well as the views available from the site. This informs the visual baseline study, indicates the areas which have potential visibility and facilitates the choice of viewpoint locations.

10.6.1 Views from the Site

Views from the site are generally restricted due to the excavation on the site sitting significantly below road level, mature vegetation present along the southern boundary of the site also restricts visibility. Plate 10.6 shows the extent of the views from site.



Plate 10.6: View from higher ground on the north-eastern corner of the site looking south-west. The mature vegetation present on the Monivea Road and Wellpark Road can be seen from this point which screens any potential views.

The views towards the north are restricted due to the industrial buildings bordering the site. Plate 10.7 shows a view from the lower ground looking northeast showing the extent of the views.



Plate 10.7: View towards the northeast of the site. Views are restricted due to the industrial buildings bordering the site.

10.6.2 Views towards the Site



Plate 10.8 – View from the Monivea Road looking northwest towards the site. The site hoarding can be seen clearly from this point along with the existing structure present on the southern part of the site. The large leylandii trees can be seen clearly here, running adjacent to the Monivea Road, screening the western part of the structure.



Plate 10.9 – View from Joyces Road looking southwest towards the site. The site hoarding bordering the site restricts any potential views onto site. The large leylandii trees which border the south of the site can be seen from this point.

Plate 10.8 and 10.9 show that visibility is largely restricted due to the hoarding along the site boundary. The leylandii trees along the Monivea Road is the only significant vegetation present in the vicinity of the site.



Plate 10.10 – Views taken from the entrance of Murvue Industrial Estate looking northeast towards the site. This view is located on the Wellpark road. Promotional signage (from the previous development) which is located on the eastern corner of the site can be seen in this view.

Plate 10.10 shows views from the Wellpark Road looking northeast towards the development site. Mature vegetation dominates this viewpoint.

Several viewpoints, marked on Figure 10.4, show the photo locations chosen for the landscape and visual impact assessment which are described and presented below. For each viewpoint, the development has been computer generated (CGI) to show the extent of visual impact from the chosen viewpoints.

10.6.3 Viewpoint Locations

A total of 9 viewpoint locations were selected. They are briefly described in Table 10.7 below and shown in Figure 10.4. Views and visibility from these locations are described and assessed in greater depth in Section 10.8.1.1. It is important to note that these are tools to assist the visual assessment.

It is not possible to present every view and every location by means of viewpoints. The choice of viewpoint locations is influenced by both the views available and the type of viewer. These include viewpoint locations from or close to local settlements, such as VPs 2, 3 and 8 as well as locations on the surrounding roads at varying distances from the site. VP9 was chosen specially to assess the impact of the proposed development on the protected panoramic view across Lough Atalia. Care was taken to provide a range of views from various elevations, distances and orientations.

The choice of viewpoint locations should cover locations where the development will be completely visible as well as partially visible. Views are taken from different landscape character areas around the site. All views are taken within 2 kilometres of the site boundary, where visual effects are likely to be greatest.

Table 10.7 Viewpoint Locations

No.	Description	Grid Reference
1	View from the Bothar na dTreabh where the pedestrian path rises up towards Ballybrit Industrial Estate. It lies approximately 400 metres east of the development site boundary in the townland of	E 132440 N 226992
2	View from the Monivea Road just at the entrance road to Cregal Art, 150 metres north east of the development site boundary.	E 132252 N 226936
3	View from the residential houses along McDonagh Avenue, 170 metres south east of the development site boundary.	E 132148 N 226676
4	View from the Well Park road, near the entrance to Mervue Buisness Park, 260 metres north east of the development site boundary.	E 131635 N 226514
5	View from the Tuam Road 300m west of the development site boundary.	E 131531 N 226839
6	View from Collins Avenue, across from the current access to the site, approximately 50 metres north west of the development site boundary.	E 131824 N 226945
7	View from the Tuam Road and Bothar na dTreabh junction approximately 240 metres north of the development site boundary.	E 132054 N 227227
8	View from Murvue Church on the Michael Collins Road, approximately 670 metres south east of the development site boundary.	E 132246 N 226178
9	View from the Lough Atalia Road approximately 1.9 kilometres south west of the development site boundary.	E 130549 N 225379
10	View from the Monivea Road and Clarke Avenue junction approximately 30 metres south of the development site boundary.	E 132,021 N 226,778
11	View from Monivea Road approximately 50 metres south east of the development site boundary.	E132,149 N226,881

12	View from Tuam Road approximately 130 metres north of the development site boundary.	E131,942 N227,097
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10.7 Likely and Significant Effects and Associated Mitigation Measures

The section below discusses the potential likely significant effects. It should be noted that, as per the EPA guidelines, referred to in Section 10.2.1 above, effects (or Impacts as they are referred to in the guidance) are described with reference to quality, significance and duration.

Where mitigation measures are proposed, a residual effect is then included.

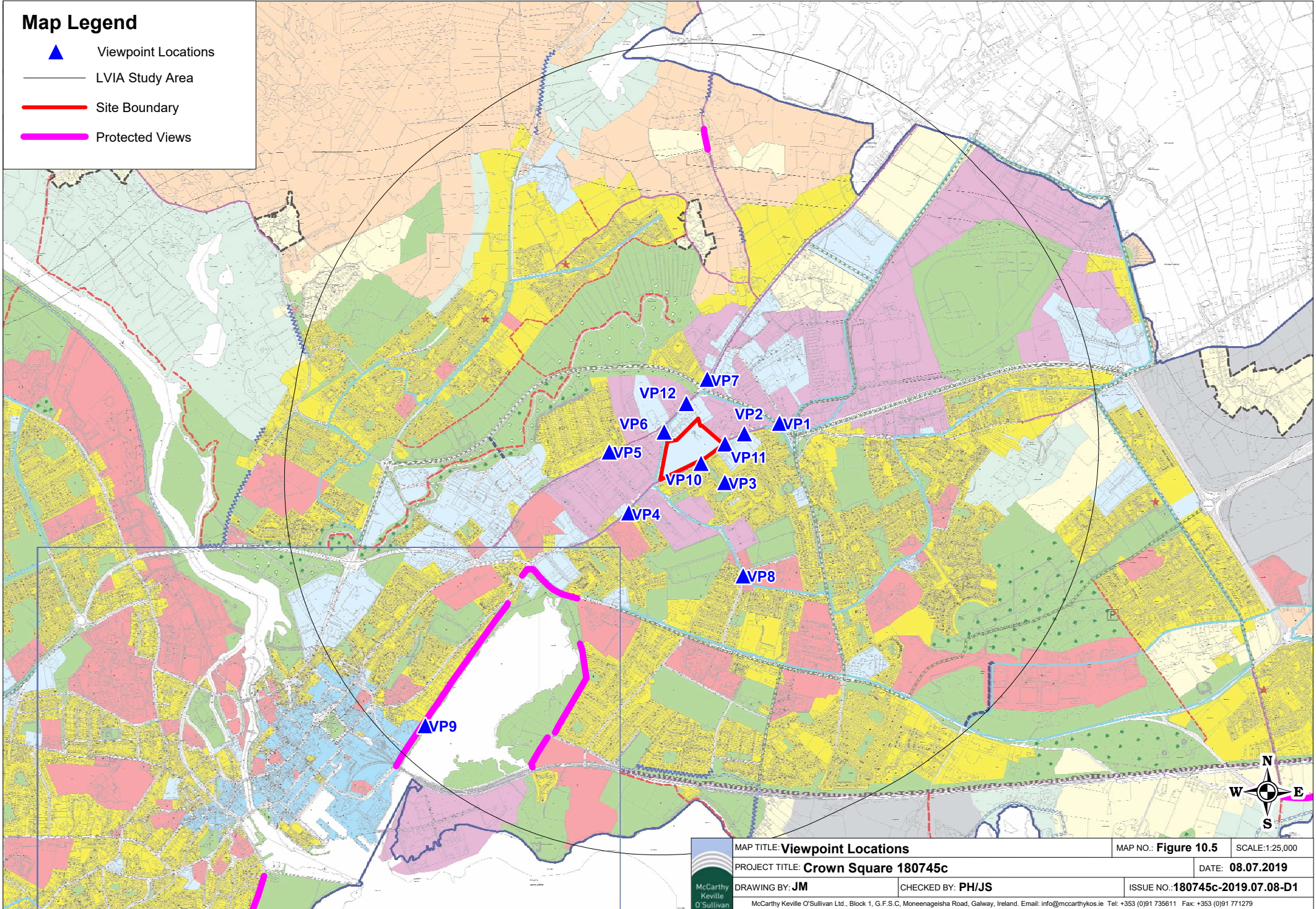
10.7.1 Viewpoints

Tables 10.8 to 10.16 below present the overall assessment of visual effects based on 12 viewpoints. Where possible, viewpoints were taken where there was no vegetation within the immediate view so as to show the most open view possible. Each table includes the viewpoint name and details as well as an image showing the predicted extent of the proposed residential development, descriptions of the views and prediction of the visual effects of each phase. These in turn lead to an assessment of the visual receptor sensitivity and magnitude of change. All are then combined to come to a final assessment of effects for each viewpoint.

Whether a visual effect is deemed to be positive, negative or neutral involves a degree of subjectivity. What appears to be a positive effect to one viewer could be deemed to be a negative effect by another viewer. All predicted visual effects of viewpoints 1-12 below are long term and direct effects.

Map Legend

- ▲ Viewpoint Locations
- LVIA Study Area
- Site Boundary
- Protected Views



	MAP TITLE: Viewpoint Locations	MAP NO.: Figure 10.5	SCALE: 1:25,000
	PROJECT TITLE: Crown Square 180745c	DATE: 08.07.2019	
	DRAWING BY: JM	CHECKED BY: PH/JS	ISSUE NO.: 180745c-2019.07.08-D1
	<small>McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd., Block 1, G.F.S.C. Moneenageisha Road, Galway, Ireland. Email: info@mccarthykos.ie Tel: +353 (0)91 735611 Fax: +353 (0)91 771279</small>		

10.7.1.1 Viewpoint Description and Visual Impact Assessment

Table 10.8 Viewpoint 1



<p>Viewpoint 1 Bothar na dTreabh</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 400 metres Grid Reference E 132440 N 226992</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from the Bothar na dTreabh taken in front of the Ballybrit Industrial Estate looking west towards the development site. This view lies approximately 400 metres east of the development site boundary. The view looks across the dual carriageway with adjacent footpaths and a small wall. Beyond the wall, to the left of the image the roofs of residential dwellings can be seen along with the upper parts of street trees and other vegetation. To the right of the image is Kirby engineering with the brown Eir Building behind this. A tall telecommunications mast can be seen behind the Kirby building.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects</p>	<p>Most of the proposed building will be screened by existing buildings and the permitted Crown Plaza buildings in the foreground. The ridgeline of the proposed buildings will be slightly higher than the that of the permitted Crown Plaza buildings in the foreground and therefore the skyline of this view will be slightly raised by the proposed development. The spatial extent of the change within this view is minor. As this view is already impacted greatly by industrial and commercial developments the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view. Construction work will be visible from this viewpoint albeit partially screened by the topography and buildings. The nature of the view will not change as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>The visual receptors are motorists and pedestrians travelling along Bothar na dTreabh. Hence, visual receptor sensitivity is considered Low.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>The skyline will only be slightly raised and the character of the view will not change due to the proposed development, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Imperceptible - An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.</p>

Table 10.9 Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint 2 Monivea Road	Approximate Distance from site boundary: 150 metres Grid Reference E 132252 N 226936
Existing View Description:	View from the Monivea Road just at the entrance road to Cregal Art, 150 metres north east of the development site boundary. To the left of this view there are the first two of a row of houses bordered by walls. Grass verges, footpaths and boundary walls run alongside the Monivea Road. To the right of the image is the Eir Building, predominantly screened by mature trees and a boundary wall.
Description of visual effects.	The proposed buildings appear behind the permitted Crown Plaza development. Therefore, the skyline of this view will be raised, where the proposed development is not screened by mature trees in the foreground, reducing the openness of the view slightly. The ridgelines of the proposed buildings are higher than adjacent residential properties, however the height of the Eir building appears considerably higher than the proposed development. The spatial extent of the change within this view is minor. As this view is already impacted by industrial and commercial developments the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view. The proposed planting will provide some screening from this point and also help integrate the development into the surrounding landscape fabric. Construction work will be visible from this viewpoint albeit partially screened by trees and buildings.
Mitigation Measures & Factors	A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	The visual receptors are motorists and walkers travelling on the Monivea Road as well as some nearby residences. Hence, visual receptor sensitivity is considered Medium to High .
Magnitude of Change	The skyline will be slightly raised and there will be no change to the character of the view due to the proposed development, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low to Medium .
Significance of Effect	Slight. An impact which causes noticeable changes in the environment without affecting its sensitivities.

Table 10.10 Viewpoint 3



<p>Viewpoint 3 McDonagh Avenue, Mervue</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 170 Meters Grid Reference: E 132148 N 226676</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from the residential houses along McDonagh Avenue, 170 metres south east of the development site boundary. This view is taken from a residential area in the townland of Mervue. The view is dominated by the green space which sits between McDonagh Avenue and Clarke Avenue. There are mature trees on the centre of this green which screens part of the Monivea Road. To the left and right of the image are a row of dwellings facing onto the green, the dwellings are bordered by boundary walls. There are footpaths either side of McDonagh Avenue.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>The majority of the proposed development will be screened by the houses along McDonagh Avenue and some of the nature trees along Monivea Road. Only a small part of the development visible at the end of the road and above some of the houses. The ridgeline of the proposed buildings will be higher than the permitted Crown Plaza buildings and adjacent residential houses and therefore the skyline of this view will not be slightly raised in a small part of the view.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>The visual receptors are cyclists and walkers travelling on McDonagh Avenue as well as nearby residential houses. Hence visual receptor sensitivity is considered High.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>The development will be a very small element in this view due to most of the development being screened by vegetation, the distance from the development is also a considerable factor, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Imperceptible - An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.</p>

Table 10.11 Viewpoint 4



<p>Viewpoint 4 Wellpark Road</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 260 Meters Grid Reference: E 131635 N 226514</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from the Wellpark Road at the entrance to Tara Grove, a residential development with the entrance to Mervue Industrial Estate 70m from this viewpoint. This viewpoint is located 260 metres north east of the development site boundary. Mature trees and vegetation dominate this view creating almost an avenue effect on the Wellpark Road. To the right of the image sits the entrance to Tara Grove with a dormer redbrick dwelling visible inside the estate's boundary wall. A footpath is present on both sides of the Wellpark Road which is bordered by a low stone wall, beyond which there is a high level of vegetation. The entrance to Mervue Industrial Estate can be seen in the near distance on the left of the image, with large white signage indicating the entrance.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>The view will be unaltered as the proposed development will be screened by the permitted Crown Plaza Phase 1 development and also by the existing vegetation.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>The visual receptors are motorists, cyclists and walkers travelling on Wellpark Road as well as nearby residential houses. Hence visual receptor sensitivity is considered Medium.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>There will be no change to the view and therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>No Effect</p>

Table 10.12 Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 5 Tuam Road	Approximate Distance from site boundary: 300m Grid Reference E 131531 N 226839
Existing View Description:	View looking east across the Tuam Road towards the proposed development site. The foreground of the view is dominated by the road and its infrastructure. Across the road is a stone retaining wall, separating the Tuam Road from the industrial park beyond. Parts of the industrial park are visible, but mature trees run along the boundary screen the rest. The telecommunications tower can be seen to the left of the image in the near distance, partially screened by vegetation in the foreground.
Description of visual effects:	Parts of the upper levels of the proposed development will be seen visible behind the permitted phase 1 development and the telecommunications tower, raising the skyline of this view slightly. The parts of the proposed development not screened by the phase 1 buildings in the foreground will be screened by the mature trees of the industrial park. The spatial extent of the change within this view is minor. As this view is already impacted greatly by industrial developments the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view.
Mitigation Measures & Factors	A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	The visual receptors are motorists, cyclists and walkers travelling on the Tuam Road as well as nearby residential houses. Hence visual receptor sensitivity is considered Medium .
Magnitude of Change	The spatial extent of the change within this view is minor and there will be no change to the character of the view due to the proposed development, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low .
Significance of Effect	Imperceptible - An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.

Table 10.13 Viewpoint 6



Viewpoint 6 Collins Avenue	Approximate Distance from site boundary: 50 metres Grid Reference E131824 N226945
Existing View Description:	View from Collins Avenue, 50m north of the proposed development site. To the left of the road is pavement bordered by a lawn in front of an industrial/commercial unit. To the right of Collins Avenue a grassed verge and footpath can be seen. The proposed development is distinguished by security fencing in the centre of the image.
Description of visual effects:	The majority of the proposed building will be screened by the existing building to the left with only a fraction visible above the ridgeline from this viewpoint. The skyline within this view will be raised slightly by the proposed development.
Mitigation Measures & Factors	A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	The visual receptors are motorists travelling along Collins Avenue. Hence visual receptor sensitivity is considered Low
Magnitude of Change	The skyline of this view will be only slightly raised, as only a small part of the proposed buildings appears higher than the existing commercial premises ridge line. The view is deemed predominantly industrial therefore the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view. Therefore, the magnitude of change is considered Low .
Significance of Effect	Imperceptible - An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.

Table 10.14 Viewpoint 7



<p>Viewpoint 7 Tuam Road</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 240 metres Grid Reference E132054 N227227</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>This view is taken adjacent to the junction of Tuam Road with Bothar na dTreabh located 240 metres north of the development site boundary. The view is looking south across Tuam Road and its junction with Bothar na dTreabh junction and is dominated by transport infrastructure such as a two-lane carriageway with associated road markings, road signs, railings and lighting columns in the foreground. Beyond and to the left of the junction there is a line of mature trees with glimpses of the Eir building through the branches. To the very left of the image, the telecommunications tower can be seen. Commercial premises can be seen in the centre to the image, beyond the junction. Electricity lines can be seen running across the image.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>The upper parts of the proposed development will be seen above the commercial premises in the centre of the image, which screens the majority of the proposed structures along with mature trees along Bothar na dTreabh. The skyline of this view will be slightly raised in a small part of the view. The spatial extent of the change within this view is minor. As this view is already impacted greatly by industrial developments the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual receptors will be local vehicular traffic, as well as pedestrian road users. Visual receptor sensitivity therefore is considered Low.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>The majority of the development is screened by the building in front and the spatial extent of the change within this view is minor, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low to Medium.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Slight. An impact which causes noticeable changes in the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p>

Table 10.15 Viewpoint 8




<p>Viewpoint 8 Mervue Church, Michael Collins Road</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 670 metres Grid Reference E132246 N226178</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from Michael Collins Road, outside The Holy Family Church in the townland of Mervue, approximately 670m south east of the development site boundary. This viewpoint is taken from an area which is largely residential. To the left of the image sits a block of apartments located behind a boundary wall. To the left of the road is pavement bordered by lawn grass and small street trees. To the immediate right of the image sees the entrance steps to the church. Commercial premises can be seen further up the road on the right. The telecommunications tower is sitting behind this in the distance.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>Save for a very small corner in the center of the view the entire proposed building will be screened by the permitted Crown Plaza buildings and intervening vegetation. There will be no change to the view due to the proposed development.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual receptors will be residents living in the vicinity of Michael Collins Road and also the users of the church therefore visual receptor sensitivity are considered High.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>The distance to the development within this view and level of vegetation present mean the magnitude of the change is considered Low.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Imperceptible - An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.</p>

Table 10.16 Viewpoint 9



<p>Viewpoint 9 Lough Atalia Road</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 1.9km Grid Reference E130549 N225379</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from Lough Atalia Road approximately 1.9km south west of the development site boundary. This viewpoint was chosen to evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the protected panoramic view (V3: Seascape views of Lough Atalia from Lough Atalia Road, College Road, Dublin Road and Lakeshore Drive). The view is looking north east along Lough Atalia Road with associated road markings, road signs, railings and lighting columns. To the left of the image Lough Atalia can be seen with the Wellpark Retail and Leisure Center in the background. The telecommunications tower can be seen sitting behind this complex, screened partially by vegetation. The grassed embankment on the right of the road has numerous trees along it. Residential dwellings run parallel to the left side of the road.</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>The majority of the proposed buildings are screened by the permitted phase 1 development and the remainder by mature trees. Therefore, there will be no change to this view.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual receptors will be local residents and vehicular traffic, as well as pedestrian road users. Visual receptor sensitivity therefore is considered Medium to High.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>The entire proposed development will be screened by the building in front, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low.</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>No Effect</p>

Table 10.17 Viewpoint 10



<p>Viewpoint 10 Monivea Road</p>	<p>Approximate Distance from site boundary: 30 metres Grid Reference E132,021 N226,778</p>
<p>Existing View Description:</p>	<p>View from the Monivea Road taken at the junction with Clarke Avenue approximately 30 metres south from the development site boundary. This viewpoint is taken from an adjoining area of residential and commercial/industrial use which is separated by the roadway. The linear Monivea Road with its associated road markings and road signs dominate the centre and foreground of the image. Beyond the proposed site boundary is indicated by a stone wall topped by railings. Unfinished construction elements can be seen beyond the railings to the left and to the right the Eir Building and telecommunications tower can be seen. ...</p>
<p>Description of visual effects:</p>	<p>Most of the proposed development will be screened by the permitted phase 1 buildings and partially by trees to be planted as part of the proposed development and therefore the spatial extent of the change to the view is not significant. Although the small part of the proposed development that will be seen will raise the skyline of this view slightly the proposed ridgeline is in proportion with the permitted adjacent buildings.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures & Factors</p>	<p>A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects</p>
<p>Visual Receptor Sensitivity</p>	<p>Visual receptors are predominately residents (which are situated across from the proposed development), vehicular traffic, as well as pedestrian road users, therefore visual receptor sensitivity is considered Medium to High.</p>
<p>Magnitude of Change</p>	<p>Primarily this development is screened by the buildings to the front of it and would have a minor impact on this view, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low to Medium</p>
<p>Significance of Effect</p>	<p>Slight. An impact which causes noticeable changes in the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p>

Table 10.18 Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 11 Monivea Road	Approximate Distance from site boundary: 50 metres Grid Reference E132,149 N226,881
Existing View Description:	View from Monivea Road approximately 50 metres south east of the development site. A stone wall railings on top marks the boundary of the proposed development site. The majority of the image follows the R339 road passing the development site with pedestrian routes accompanying the road at both sides. To the right of the image the Eir Building can be seen.
Description of visual effects:	Due to the proximity of this viewpoint to the site boundary the visual impact is amplified. The trees to be planted on the proposed site boundary will screen a large part of the proposed buildings. The skyline of this view will be raised considerably, however the ridgeline of the proposed buildings are approximately level with the adjacent industrial building. The spatial extent of the change within this view is significant. As this view is already impacted by industrial developments the proposed development will not add incongruent elements to the view.
Mitigation Measures & Factors	A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual receptors will be the Eir block adjacent to the development site, vehicular traffic and pedestrian road users as well as some nearby residences. Visual receptor sensitivity therefore is considered Low to Medium .
Magnitude of Change	The majority of the development is to the foreground of the other developments within this site however this development is considerably of a lower scale and magnitude to the adjacent buildings, therefore the magnitude of the change is considered Medium to High .
Significance of Effect	Significant- An effect which, by its character, magnitude duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Table 10.19 Viewpoint 12



Viewpoint 12 Tuam Road	Approximate Distance from site boundary: 130 metres Grid Reference E 131,942 N 227,097
Existing View Description:	View from the Tuam Road approximately 130 metres north of the development site. The R336 road dominates this image with the road markings, railings and pedestrian routes visible in the foreground and centre of the image. Beyond the railings there are numerous mature trees on the grassed green area in front of various industrial and commercial buildings.
Description of visual effects:	The mature trees along with the buildings in the foreground screen the majority of the proposed development. The spatial extent of the change within this view is not significant, even though the skyline of this view will be raised in a small part of this view.
Mitigation Measures & Factors	A detailed landscape plan has been designed for the proposed development which will mitigate any potential visual effects
Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Visual receptors will be predominantly vehicular traffic, with pedestrian road users also being impacted. Visual receptor sensitivity therefore is considered Low .
Magnitude of Change	The majority of the development is screened by the building in front and the spatial extent of the change within this view is minor, therefore, the magnitude of the change is considered Low to Medium .
Significance of Effect	Slight -An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.

10.8 Likely and Significant Impacts and Associated Mitigation Measures

10.8.1 ‘Do-Nothing’ Scenario

In the ‘Do Nothing’ scenario, the proposed Phase 2 development would not take place. Phase 1 of the development (which includes Commercial Offices (Blocks A-E), Hotel and Site Infrastructure, including all basement structures for the entire site) has received permission, and will be constructed regardless of whether this currently proposed phase 2 is permitted or not. The Phase 2 section of the site would exist as an unfinished construction site. Should this occur, the effect would be a negative moderate and long term as it would require hoarding and look unfinished. The site is currently unstructured and incongruous in a City setting and is impacting negatively on the visual amenity of the area locally.

10.8.2 Landscape Plan

The Landscape Master Plan, prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, has been well designed and will provide an attractive setting for the proposed mixed-use development. Special attention has been given to the Monivea Road and Joyce’s Road to integrate the proposed development with the existing surrounding character and fabric. It is proposed that a double row of semi-mature street tree planting be used to filter views of the new buildings visually softening the high-quality architectural design in a complimentary manner. Species size will be selected to provide a large deciduous tree line adjacent to the buildings that will help contextualise the scale of the built form, with a second parallel line of medium species deciduous trees that will step the canopy height down in height in a tiered manner, effectively filtering views at two levels. The landscape master plan states the following in terms of a planting strategy for phase 2 of the development. Planting philosophy will follow a balance between pragmatic concerns and the desire to visually inspire, with species choice being selected to meet a variety of criteria such as suitability to local climate / planting conditions, visual function, biodiversity value, year-round interest, maintenance requirements etc. The Landscape Master Plan is included in Appendix 3-5.

10.8.3 Construction Phase Effects

10.8.3.1 Visual Effects

It is estimated that the construction phase of the phase 2 will last approximately 31 months in phased stages and will commence 11 months after Phase 1. The development will involve movement of construction and transport vehicles into and out of the site. It is considered that this is a Temporary, to Short-term Slight Negative effect in terms of visual effects. Construction methodologies for all individual Phase 2 works, including construction of the basement, offices, hotel and site access is contained within Appendix 3-2 Section 2.4.

10.8.3.2 Landscape Effects

The predicted impacts arising from the proposed residential development will include noise and dust from construction operations as well as increased site traffic. These impacts are referred to in other sections of this EIA report, but overall will have a Short Term, Slight Negative Impact on the character of the landscape

10.8.4 Operational Phase Effects

10.8.5 Predicted Visual Effects

The desktop study, site visit, proposed development layout and photomontages all informed the assessment of visual effects. Assessment of the road network around the site during the site visits established that the actual visibility of the proposed development site is limited and localised. Twelve photomontages were prepared for viewpoints taken from local and national roads in the vicinity of the site, their locations are shown in Figure 10.5 and the images are described and presented in Section 10.7 above, to represent different orientations, elevations and contexts.

As discussed above, the proposed development can only be seen from a very limited area outside the site as illustrated in the photomontages for Viewpoints 1 to 12 and set out in Section 10.6.2.

Visual receptor sensitivity was considered High from Viewpoint 3 and 8, which were within residential areas. In Viewpoints 2, 9 and 10 it was deemed medium to high as it was near many residential properties. In five other viewpoints, mainly heavily used commuter routes (4,5, 9 and 11) it was Medium, as passing road users were also included as visual receptors. In the remaining viewpoints (1,6, 7, 10 and 12) visual receptors were road users only and therefore sensitivity was deemed **Low**.

In Viewpoints 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 the magnitude of change was judged to be **Low**, as only small parts or none of the proposed development, due to screening by buildings and vegetation, will be seen. Although screening also greatly mitigates the visibility of the proposed development in Viewpoints 2, 10 and 12, the spatial extent of the change in these views was deemed **Low to Medium** due to the proximity of the viewpoint to the site. Viewpoint 11 is considered of **Medium to High** magnitude of change as a result of the development being perceived in the foreground of this view due to the viewpoint being within approx.. 50m of the site boundary. .

There will be no visual effect in Viewpoints 4 and 9 as there will be no change to the views. The visual effect was considered Imperceptible in Viewpoints 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 as the spatial extent of the change was minor within the view. The proposed development was deemed to have a slight visual effect on Viewpoints 2, 7, 10 and 12 as although much of the development was screened, still the spatial extent of the proposed development within the view was noticeable. Due to Viewpoint 11 being in close proximity of the site boundary the visual effect was amplified and in this view it was judged to be Significant as the spatial extent of the proposed development within the view was considerable and the skyline would be raised.

The proposed development would be a generally positive effect as the Do-Nothing scenario has been assessed to have a negative moderate and long-term effect. Phase 1 of the development (which includes Commercial Offices (Blocks A-E), Hotel and Site Infrastructure, including all basement structures for the entire site) has received permission, and will be constructed regardless of whether this currently proposed phase 2 is permitted or not. The existing site comprises of temporary hoarding with the remains of previous construction work visible at locations external to the site. The site is currently unstructured and incongruous in a city setting and is impacting negatively on the visual amenity of the local area.

10.8.6 Predicted Landscape Effects

During the desktop study landscape designations in the form of areas designated as part of the Galway City Green Network, Greenways and Protected Views were identified as well as establishing the land zoning as 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial'. No landscape designations applied to the development site nor will the landscape designations in the surrounding landscape be affected by the proposed housing development. Furthermore, there were neither any rare landscape features or cultural or heritage associations identified on site.

The site is considered modified due to its previous development history and as such is not of high landscape value. On the grounds of these points and taking the landscape policies of the city development plan into account the landscape value is considered **Low**.

The susceptibility of the landscape of the site to this type of change is deemed Low. In the context of the wider landscape, it would be considered **Low**, particularly as the land zoning is 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial' and the nature of the development is in keeping with the surrounding suburban landscape. No landscape designations apply to the site.

The magnitude of change in the landscape is considered to be **Low** within the study area.

Overall, the predicted landscape impact is deemed to be Low and the overall effect on the landscape character of the area will be **Imperceptible**.

10.8.7 Cumulative Assessment

Projects with the potential for cumulative effects are listed in Chapter 2 and have been assessed with the proposed project. The most relevant of these is, an office development within the study area, PL Ref 18/338. McDonogh Capital Investments Limited applied to Galway City Council for a 10-year planning permission for 3 no. office blocks and a café. Galway City Council granted permission for the development 23rd May 2019 subject to 26 no. conditions. The site is located approximately 500m to the north east of the site. The Landscape and Visual impact report for this site concluded that the landscape and visual impacts are considered positive. Therefore, the cumulative effect will be positive and in keeping with the Galway City Council zoning of 'Enterprise, Light Industry and Commercial'.

Phase 1 of the development is a mixed-use development comprising of 5 no. blocks of commercial offices which range in height from 3-6 stories, a hotel development comprising 175 no. bedrooms, conferencing facilities and restaurant/bar areas, double basement parking and all other associated site development and servicing works. The application was submitted to Galway City Council on 12th November 2018. Galway City Council issued a request for Further Information on the 11th January 2019 seeking clarification and additional information on a number of items. A comprehensive response which addressed all of the items raised was submitted to the Planning Authority on the 18th February 2019. Galway City Council granted planning permission for the proposal on 10th May 2019 subject to 27 no. conditions. As this phase is part of the overall design masterplan, Phase 1 and Phase 2 will read as one development, will not extend the spatial extent significantly and will be visually coherent. It is considered that the cumulative effect will be positive as the two phases will complement each other.

10.8.8 Conclusions

Overall the landscape impact is deemed **Low** and visual impact as Low to Medium. The overall landscape character of the area will not be affected. The proposed development is in keeping with its zoning status and the emerging trends of development proposed in the vicinity.

The site of the proposed development is in most places well screened from the surrounding areas in general. While the proposed development will be visible from some views in the immediate vicinity, particularly from the south, as seen in Viewpoint 11, it is not visible over a significant area. The subject site will be visible intermittently from roadways to the south east, however extensive planting of trees and shrubs as part of the proposed landscape masterplan will help to visually integrate and partially screen the proposed buildings. The views will be slightly modified, but on a localised level.