

14.0 LANDSCAPE

14.1 Introduction

Ronan MacDiarmada & Associates Ltd were commissioned by Stephen Ward Town Planning & Development Consultants Ltd, on behalf of Ravala Limited to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to accompany an application in respect of a planning submission request, for a residential Housing development on the Townlands of Newtown, Drogheda.

The development shall consist of 450 residential units with supporting neighbourhood and employment uses located east of Drogheda town. It is situated on the southern side of the Boyne River between the river and Drogheda train station. A new entrance is proposed along R150 for access to the development. The site is located 1.5 km from the centre of Drogheda, a busy satellite/commuter town of Dublin city and is 40km North of Dublin Airport.

This development shall form an important and expanding area within the town of Drogheda.



Figure 13.1 Location Map of Newtown, showing Masterplan - Drogheda.

The proposed residential units shall be characterised by houses, semi-detached houses, terraced houses, apartments and duplex units with open spaces, retention of existing trees, associated tree planting, roads, driveways, and new boundary treatments. The proposal also includes drainage and all associated works facilitating the proposed development.

14.2 Methodology

Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology: -

This assessment of the impact on the Landscape and Visual character as a result of the proposed development is based on the guidelines laid down by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the

- Revised Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements Draft September 2015.
- Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements Draft (September 2015).
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The following Methodology was used in this assessment:

1. A desk top study of the proposed site and its environs, including reviewing aerial photography and ordinance survey documents.
2. A site survey was undertaken to determine the character of the landscape and the surrounding area, including site visits during the month of February & May 2019.
3. An assessment of the proposed development was carried out by examining the layout plans, elevations and sections to determine the impacts of the development.
4. An evaluation of these impacts was carried out in accordance with the criteria set out in the EPA guidelines.

14.3 Nature of Impacts

14.3.1 Impact Significance Criteria

In determining the Visual Impacts, the following definitions were used to assess the significance of the impacts:

Imperceptible - An effects capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.

Not significant - An effects which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without noticeable consequences

Slight Effects - An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.

Moderate Effects - An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.

Significant Effects - An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Very Significant - An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Profound Effects - An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics

Terms used to describe Quality of visual impact: -

Neutral Impact: A change which does not affect the quality of the landscape;

Positive Impact: A change which improves the quality of the environment or landscape;

Negative Impact: A change which reduces the quality of the environment or landscape.

Terms used to describe the Duration of visual impact: -

Temporary: Impacts lasting one year or less.

Short-term: Impacts lasting one to seven years.

Medium-term: Impacts lasting seven to twenty years.

Long-term: Impacts lasting twenty to fifty years.

Permanent: Impacts lasting over fifty years.

14.4 Existing Visual Character

The proposed development site is approximately 9.68 hectares, located East of Drogheda town and South of the River Boyne in the county of Louth.

This is an area characterised by the expanding town of Drogheda to the east and north, consisting primarily of suburban housing, Port and associated businesses, with lands north of the application site zoned for employment uses. Lands south of the site, comprise rail tracks, the Drogheda railway station and its associated buildings, structures and infrastructure. To the east is the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant. Lands abutting the application site are either developed or zoned for development in the Drogheda Development Plan. Overall, the area is part of the planned urban expansion area for Drogheda and is therefore likely to see significant development and landscape character change irrespective of the development proposed.

It is located relatively close to the river Boyne which the proposal overlooks. As the land grades down to the banks of the river, there are a number of views and walkways. The existing Character Type has an open character combined with large field patterns with tree belts and hedges. There are a number of existing native hedgerows that once formed part of an overall field pattern of the area but now is becoming increasingly isolated due to the increased development in the surrounding areas. It is proposed to retain the western, southern and a large portion of the Northern hedgerow.

The river Boyne lies to the North, which flows directly into the Irish Sea. The development site area is separated by a number of fields that are in a state of transition, with an established Rowing Club, Flogas and other large scale installations such as the WWTP and the railway with its infrastructure and a number of cleared fields.

The area is adjacent to Housing developments to the South and West, with a number of Industries and large infrastructural installations to the North.

The land of Newtown remains largely undeveloped, and is currently a system of fields.

14.5 Landscape Type - Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The proposed scheme involves the development of new homes and supporting built-infrastructure on appropriately zoned and serviceable lands for the increasing population of Drogheda town and its immediate environs.

The access to the site shall be directly from the R150. The R150, travels east from the Drogheda's Bull Ring to the Meath coastal towns of Bettystown and Laytown, via Mornington. There shall be another proposed pedestrian access point from this road also.

On completion of the residential development, it shall be landscaped to a very high standard, with tree planting and paving that shall characterise the external open spaces and shall feature a high standard of landscape development. The open spaces shall contain green areas, paths, play spaces and extensive tree and bulb planting.

Although works shall occur in the construction of the units, much of the works shall be complimented by extensive external landscape planting and hard landscape works. There are a number of open spaces throughout the proposed development which shall be made available to the public from external connections.

The Soft Landscape proposals shall compliment the development aesthetically and functionally and shall tie in with the existing and surrounding landscape. The proposed and existing trees, hedges and shrubs shall position the development into the landscape and provide a large element of screening. It is intended to blend the development into the local landscape befitting of its rural – urban background.

In landscape terms the proposed development will have the following objectives: -

1. To renew and augment existing vegetation with planting suitable to the local & newly proposed environment;
2. To create new landscape features & habitats that will complement and enhance the Landscape utilizing principles of Biophilic design.
3. To provide a new landscape feature in the form of a housing development that will significantly enhance and retain the character of the area.

14.6 Analysis

14.6.1 Potential Impact of the Proposed Development

The visual impacts of the proposed development on the landscape are considered in the context of the construction and operational stages. Generally, the development shall reduce the amount of land in agricultural use, replacing it with the proposed buildings, and associated walls, roads and driveways.

The fields with hedgerows and trees, other than those to be retained on the perimeter of the site, shall be replaced by buildings, roads and associated landscape works.

The main visual changes shall be the height and the extent of the proposed residential development and associated building works to the landscape.

The design and organisation of the open space shall ameliorate the impact of this development and of this decrease in spatial area. This shall be aided through provision of extensive semi - mature tree planting, native hedge planting and mounding. The hedge and tree planting shall position the housing into the landscape as per the proposed landscape design.

The lines and the height of the buildings shall be visually reduced through the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, the proposed use of more soft landscape materials shall further reduce the impact of the development.

Semi - mature trees and shrub planting shall give an immediate effect tying in with the surrounding landscape. The impact of the landscape intervention on the existing development shall be positive and long term. The impact on the agricultural nature of the surrounding landscape shall be moderate in the long term.

The overall impact with the existing housing estates and encroaching town of Drogheda, shall be significant in the short term. However, as the town expands to the south and east, the emerging pattern of development shall reduce the visual impact upon the landscape. In time the development shall form part of the urban landscape, with the associated landscape development it shall be a positive visual impact upon the new urban environment.

14.6.1.1 Visual Impact of the removal of the site vegetation

During the construction stages traffic movement, excavation operations and construction works shall have a significant visual impact on the site. There may be some significant visual impacts during the construction stage. The access road from the R150 shall require extensive excavation works.

Arable crops form the groundcover over the majority of the site with native hedges and trees providing screening and boundary treatment. The existing hedgerows shall screen much of the building works from the southern and western boundaries.

The removal of agricultural use will be necessary for the development to commence. Some of the existing internal hedges and trees shall be removed due to the requirement to provide access roads and housing.

Although the portion of 'Green' land will be reduced no loss of botanical significance shall be incurred. However the native hedge line and some mature trees shall be removed. The visual impact upon the area shall be moderate - significant to the short to medium term, due to the change from fields and hedgerow to urban development.

The long term impact shall be moderate due to the emerging pattern of development in the area. The location of the proposed development, in an infill area with large-scale existing buildings and structures in the vicinity and the planned expansion area for Drogheda, shall be in keeping with existing and future urban housing developments.

14.6.2 Potential Visual Impact

The proposed development has a significant planting scheme, with a large number and range of species of trees proposed. The range and number of trees exceed what is currently on site, which shall provide a positive visual impact to the area.

There shall be new homes with a landscape scheme, both hard and soft, accompanying them to provide a highly developed and coherent design.

The proposed houses, neighbourhood and employment buildings, roads, parking and planting shall be clearly identified and developed in an organised manner. The development has been designed by a qualified and experienced firm of architects. Given this and the quality and type of materials to be used on the buildings the potential visual impact following commencement of construction will be negative but as the development proceeds, buildings are completed and the landscaping matures, it shall change to positive.

The development shall therefore be a maturing site becoming increasingly knitted to the fabric of the landscape in this area, which in isolation has a suburban feel but increasingly urban. The main avenue of the development has been developed as an urban space with associated tree planting, seating and external landscape furniture.

The planting of trees and shrubs shall mitigate the impact of the dwellings providing an organised and well-developed housing in the landscape. The planting shall provide visual relief and add to the amenity of the current landscape. As the development progresses and the landscaping matures the development matures, the development of the external spaces shall have a positive impact on the landscape.

14.6.2.1 Visual Impacts due to introduction of new structures

Following initial site set-up and at the early stages of construction there will be a negative visual impact. This is normal and to be expected. The introduction of the proposed buildings shall then have a neutral visual impact that will turn to positive as the development proceeds, buildings are completed and the landscaping starts to mature. Any initial negative impacts shall be reduced by retaining existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries. It shall be further ameliorated by new planting and improved open space design.

The new structures and associated works shall reduce the amount of agricultural land and remove a number of trees and hedgerow within the site, though the majority of the perimeter planting will be retained, especially on the northern and western boundaries.

The proposed development will require the regrading of the site which will generate impacts to the existing topography. In the short term, therefore, and during this phase of the development, the visual impact of the development shall be significant. In the medium to long term the visual impact shall be moderate due to the extensive landscape development, and expected development patterns.

14.6.2.2 Visual Impacts due to access roads

The entrance and access roads shall be well defined with extensive avenues of trees and woodland planting upon the bank along the entrance road. The embankment to the access road will, of itself, and although not part of the open space provision for the development, create a 'greening' effect.

Internally there shall be a hierarchy of roads with associated details. The roads shall be heavily planted with semi mature trees, pollinator plants and hedges, reducing the impact of the roads and streets on the environment.

There will be no vehicular access to the development site via McGrath's Lane or Railway Terrace either during the construction or operational phases of the development. This access route will be improved to facilitate pedestrian and cyclist access and there will be no negative visual impacts as a result of these improvement works. The western and northern boundaries too shall retain the boundary hedgerow, which shall link with the planting proposals of the new layout. The visual impact of the roads shall be ameliorated by the retention of existing hedgerows and trees and extensive tree planting. During construction the impact shall be significant, notably to the R150, however as the development and the planting matures, the visual impact shall be moderate in the long term.

14.6.2.3 Visual impacts due to telecommunications/power lines

On this site, the development shall be served from existing services and telecommunications. The services on site shall be underground. The opportunity to organise and reduce the telecommunication and services shall be utilised to reduce the visual impact, if any of the development. In particular, the existing overhead cables and support structures will be removed and the cables placed underground. This will be a positive visual impact.

14.6.2.4 Visual Impact of lighting

The lighting of the new houses shall be limited and shall be typical of a housing development. Currently the R150, Railway terrace, adjoining housing development and the railway station have established lighting levels, the impact has been established.

Internally the roads and streets shall be lit by individual columns, which shall visually change the character of the landscape. Therefore the impact of lighting on the existing landscape shall be moderate in the medium term, as Newtown, Drogheda develops within its hinterland.

14.6.2.5 Visual Impact of Landscaping Proposals

The landscape proposals shall consist of the retention of much of the existing boundary hedgerows. New planting of a variety of tree species, including native trees, along with shrubs in specified areas shall reduce the visual impact of the proposal. The site shall change from a series of fields to a completed development with an associated landscape scheme.

The landscape scheme shall visually impact on the development in a positive way, working with the landscape through the use of and retention of trees and hedging to create an environment maintaining desirable aspects of the existing landscape and accentuating them through introduction of new elements.

There shall be an increase in the species and varieties of plants, notably trees on the existing landscape which was primarily a monoculture of arable crops.

The landscape proposals shall include a range of pollinator plants, trees, hedges and shrub planting. The flowering of these plants shall enable bees to flourish but also increase the texture and colour in the landscape. This shall be a positive and long term visual impact.

The concept for the landscape proposals is based on Biophilic design i.e. *to create an environment where the residents want to actively participate in, preserve, and connect with the natural landscape that surrounds them.*

14.6.3 Predicted Visual Impact of the Proposed Development

14.6.3.1 Construction Phase – Predicted Impact

During the construction of the development, the area shall be changed from fields to a residential development with supporting neighbourhood uses as well as employment uses.

Tree protection shall be provided to retain the character of the existing trees and hedge along the boundaries shall reduce the visual impact during construction.

The development shall be carried out in an organised basis, thus reducing the visual impact upon the environment; however, the impact on the initial stage of construction shall be significant.

The retention of habitats, combined with the maintaining of the most significant hedgerows along the western, southern and much of the northern boundaries shall reduce the visual impact of the proposal during construction. The requirement to remove some of the hedgerows shall be significant visually in the short term.

As the development proceeds and phasing continues, the improvement- growth and maturity - of the landscape elements, trees, hedges and shrubs, shall reduce the visual impact and in the long term be positive.

The greatest impact shall be the views through the site as they will become determined by the new elements of built structures, trees and hedges.

As much of the existing boundary hedgerows are being retained and augmented by the introduction of new trees and planting, the predicted impact during construction shall be moderate – significant in the short term and moderate in the medium term.

14.6.3.2 Operational Phase – Parking

Some 38 per cent of the car parking to serve the development is by way of basement / undercroft parking and this makes a significant contribution to the visual quality of the development and significantly reduces the visual impacts from on-street parking. Those parking areas that are on street and shall be ameliorated by tree planting and screened by new planting of pollinator and existing trees. The visual effect shall be moderate to significant in the short term and neutral in the medium term as the development progresses and the landscaping matures.

14.6.3.3 Waste handling areas - Operational Phase

Bin storage shall be developed in an organised manner. The bin storage of an individual house shall be to the rear. Bin stores for apartments, duplex and terrace buildings, shall be in purpose built Bin storage unit, located as per the Architects drawings. Further detail is provided in the Landscape Rationale under separate cover.

14.6.3.4 Residual Impact - Operational Phase

Initially, on completion of the development the shrubs, plants and trees will be at early stages of establishment. The trees shall be semi mature at planting. As time progresses the plants and trees will grow and stabilise in their new environment creating better defined avenues and spaces.

The number and quality of landscape elements shall be an addition to the built environment providing quality visual amenity for the residents.

The development of the external spaces shall provide an improvement on the existing landscape. The ordered design shall be visually positive and long term. The visual impact on the surrounding landscape shall be significant in the short term, however with maturity of the trees, hedges and plants it shall be neutral to positive in the long term.

14.6.4 Visual Impact Assessment Viewpoints

14.6.4.1 Visual Impacts: Images

We have noted images from various receptor points as per the aerial plan, enclosed in the accompanying landscape receptor views. They have been prepared to illustrate the impacts, if any, with respect to the proposed development in the surrounding landscape.

View	Description
1	Looking South West, R167 (T-Junction before Queensborough)
2	Looking South south west from R167 – Entrance of Premier Periclase.
3	Looking South south east, Junction of R167 & L2307 (Behind Amray Medical).
4	Looking South South West, Marsh Road – at Flogas Ireland (R150)
5	Looking South from The Glen, Newfoundwell Rd.
6	Looking East south east from Bridge of Peace.

7	Looking Southeast, Weirhope housing estate.
8	Looking South, Marsh Road – at Inver Colpa Rowing Club (R150)
9	Looking South South West, Marsh Road – at Flogas Ireland (R150)
10	Looking East, Junction of Railway terrace and McGrath's Ln.
11.	Looking East south east, Millmount Museum – Mount St. Oliver.

The 11 visual receptors that are presented were selected as they represent the most significant and sensitive location points.

	View 1
Existing View	Looking South West, R167 (T-Junction before Queensborough)
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the Road over the river Boyne.
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 2
Existing View	Looking South south west from R167 – Entrance of Premier Periclase.

Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the Road over the river Boyne. It is quite visible against the skyline,
Impact – Construction Stage	Negative in the short term.
Impact – Operational Stage	Moderate impact – in the short term
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 3
Existing View	Looking South south east, Junction of R167 & L2307 (Behind Amray Medical).
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the Road over the existing hedgerow. The hedgerow screens the development and reduces the visual impact.
Impact – Construction Stage	Negative in the short term.
Impact – Operational Stage	Moderate impact – in the short term
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 4
Existing View	Looking South South West, Marsh Road – at Flogas Ireland (R150)

Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and may be only seen as a red outline.
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact – Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact – Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 5
Existing View	Looking South from The Glen, Newfoundwell Rd.
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is indicated as a red line and is screened by buildings and vegetation
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 6
Existing View	Looking East south east from Bridge of Peace.
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is indicated as a red line and is screened by buildings.
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 7
Existing View	Looking Southeast, Weirhope housing estate.
Proposed View	The red line denotes the location and outline of the proposed development. The proposed development cannot be seen from the Road due to the existing housing
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

	View 8
Existing View	Looking South, Marsh Road – at Inver Colpa Rowing Club (R150)
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the R150, with the River Boyne behind the viewer.
Impact – Construction Stage	Significant Impact
Impact – Operational Stage	Moderate – short term - Neutral long term
Quality of Change	Moderate - Neutral in the long term

	View 9
Existing View	Looking South South West, Marsh Road – at Flogas Ireland (R150)
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the R150 through existing hedgerows and trees.
Impact – Construction Stage	Significant Impact
Impact – Operational Stage	Moderate – short term - Neutral long term

Quality of Change	Moderate - Neutral in the long term
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	View 10
Existing View	Looking East, Junction of Railway terrace and McGrath's Ln.
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and can be seen from the Railway terrace over the existing train lines.
Impact – Construction Stage	Significant Impact
Impact – Operational Stage	Moderate – short term - Neutral long term
Quality of Change	Moderate - Neutral in the long term

	View 11
Existing View	Looking East south east, Millmount Museum – Mount St. Oliver.
Proposed View	The image shows the visual impact the development shall have on the landscape. The proposed development site is as a photomontage and is screened by existing vegetation and buildings
Impact – Construction Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Impact – Operational Stage	No Impact - Neutral
Quality of Change	Neutral in the long term

14.6.4.2 Visual Receptors – Commentary

The visual receptors were chosen following a visit to the site and to an extended area surrounding the site, with particular emphasis on the Baltray Road, including Bealieu House and grounds on the north side of the river and the Marsh Road on the south side of the river. In addition, the medieval centre of Drogheda and potential impacts on protected views and buildings were also assessed. Following this exercise the location of the photomontages were chosen so views from these locations with and without the development could be assessed. As concluded above, there are no negative visual impacts on any protected views or the setting or character of protected buildings or the general setting and character of the town of Drogheda, including the medieval centre or Millmount. As the site is set back some 300 metres from the southern bank of the river, the site and the proposed development does not enter or is at the very edge of the viewfield of the Medieval town area on either the Baltray Road or Marsh Road approaches and from the river itself. Furthermore, the port facility at Tom Roes point with its associated cranes, storage facilities and large scale buildings and the Premier Periglaze facility adjacent with its conveyors, coupled with the horizontal alignment of the Baltray road means there are no views of the site from Bealieu and long distance views towards the site from this road and the river are limited and interrupted by large-scale built-forms with the view focus being directly downstream to the viaduct and the town centre beyond. The site is set well off to the south of this viewfield and will appear as an expansion of the Drogheda development area, similar to what has already taken place on rising ground on the north side of the river. At no point does the development interrupt or block (or even partially block) any important views, for example of the viaduct, the Church spires or Millmount.

Equally, given the topography of the town, distances, intervening buildings and structures and the landscape, there are no views of the site, or of the proposed development from the medieval core of the settlement, or any protected structures, with the proposed development located east of the Viaduct, for example.

In terms of the potential for visual impact the following is noteworthy in terms of the existing and emerging development patterns surrounding the site –

1. The development site is zoned for development of the type proposed.
2. The lands between the southern boundary and the river are also zoned for development.
3. The Development Plan specifically calls for high density residential development under that zoning.
4. The topography of the site does not lend itself to large floor plate buildings and in any event such a building typology would be dominant in the landscape, with, for example, large and extensive roof coverings.

14.6.5 Mitigation of Visual Impacts

14.6.5.1 Remedial and Reductive Visual Measures

During construction, the existing hedges and trees that are being retained shall be fenced off, so that they are protected during construction. An Environmental Management Programme of good husbandry will be undertaken to ensure environmental protection and that there is no debris, pollutants or otherwise that would damage the landscape.

An arborist has been employed to survey the existing trees and hedgerows and will be employed to review operational works and prepare a final report on the status of the retained trees and hedgerows.

The landscaping proposals for this scheme shall be developed to form an integral part of the development. There are several measures that shall reduce the visual impact of this proposed development, i.e. extensive planting, retention of existing hedgerows and trees, development of pathways, seating areas and textured road & path surfaces.

In the operational stage, the site will have established a landscape that shall be integrated around the houses. The planting will have matured and will be actively used by the residents and therefore having a positive visual impact on the landscape of the surrounding environment.

Although the some of the existing hedgerows internally shall be removed due to the layout, in order to provide for the development, it is proposed to retain many of the existing mature trees and shrubs to the Western, Southern and much of the Northern boundary. This coupled with an extensive landscape programme, shall create the best landscape solution within this environment.

The impact of the building shall be reduced through retention and planting of mature trees, shrubs and careful use of landscape material, both hard and soft.

The car spaces and paths to the front of the houses and buildings shall be surfaced with high quality materials thus increasing the texture in the environment which is a further positive visual improvement. 38 per cent of the car parking to serve the overall development is provided at basement / undercroft levels and this of itself makes a significant contribution to the visual quality of the development. The central spine running through the centre of the development has extensive textured surfaces – such as bricks, and flags, with associated soft landscape materials and furniture such as seating.

There shall be a defensive planted buffer to the proposed housing and apartments. The landscaping of the gardens surrounding the buildings shall soften hard edges and reduce the visual impact on the landscape.

14.6.6 Executive Summary

At the early stages, during site development works and initial construction, the visual impact of the development shall be negative due to the reduction in open space and the removal of some of the existing hedgerows. However the well-designed development, including the type and quality of materials and finishes proposed as well as the landscape proposal, and retention of much of the existing boundary hedgerows, shall provide a positive visual impact in the long term.

The increase and coherent design of external spaces, shall replace the existing field systems. Direct access to connection to Drogheda town, utilising the existing connections shall provide a positive visual long term impact.

The retention of much of the existing native hedgerows on the boundaries, retention of habitats along with the proposed planting shall provide a connection with nature which shall be a positive long term visual impact.

Although the character of the environment shall change, it is in line with emerging patterns of development in Newtown and Drogheda. As noted, the area forms a zoned extension area for the town of Drogheda and surrounding lands are either already developed or are designated for development in the statutory Development Plan. The landscape character of this area will change, irrespective of the proposed development. The proposal is however sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and shall present a positive visual impact in the long term.

The increased tree cover shall also enhance and increase the biodiversity of the existing landscape and tie in with the existing hedgerows and trees.

The duration of construction shall have a negative visual impact in the short term. However the long term impact shall be moderate as development forms part of an emerging trend of construction in the area.

The proposed development shall influence the surrounding land use, providing organised open space and a new urban environment that is sympathetic to its surrounding context and setting including existing and emerging built elements. The development, including the housing shall be an addition to the existing urban fabric of Newtown and Drogheda, and in the long term have a positive impact upon the landscape and its usage as detailed in the landscape proposals.

The development shall provide a coherent ordering of buildings and external spaces and present a positive visual impact upon the existing development and shall not detract from the local landscape.

Therefore the visual impact upon the nature of the landscape shall be significant in the short term, moderate in the medium term resulting and positive in the long term.

14.6.7 Monitoring

None Required

14.6.8 Interactions

Please see matrix contained in Chapter 15 for summary of interactions

14.6.9 Difficulties in Compiling Information

None encountered.

References:

- British Standard BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Recommendations.
- Revised Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements Draft (September 2015)
- Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements Draft (September 2015)
- Guidelines On The Information To Be Contained In Environmental Impact Assessment Reports Draft (August 2017)
- Louth County Development Plan 2015 - 2021
- Meath County Council Development Plan 2013 - 2019
- Newtown Masterplan 2017
- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Planning and Development, Act 2000, as amended.