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Downey Planning
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Arboricultural Issues in Respect of Proposed Development at Clongriffin, Dublin 13

Report brief

The Tree File Ltd has been instructed by Downey Planning to undertake an Arboricultural review of the proposed development at Clongriffin, Dublin 13, on behalf of Gerard Gannon Properties.

This report effectively comprises a simple screening in respect of the likely need for, or the extent of, any full Arboricultural review, noting current site contexts and conditions.

Report context

This report relates to the findings and understandings subsequent to a walk-through review of the site area and a desktop study of the design proposals. This report does not include any detailed or individual tree or hedge investigations.

The report acknowledges that fact that the site is an existing brownfield site, with limited tree or hedging given its brownfield nature, but where there is any vegetation of a stature to make it visually notable it is discussed further below.

Development Context

The proposed development involves the creation of substantial numbers of mixed use blocks within the broader Clongriffin area. Note is made that the proposed site area is adjoined by the existing DART line to the east and by existing and completed developments to the south and west. The proposed development area is effectively limited by the Mayne River to the north.

Site Description

The site area can in many respects be regarded as a brownfield site in that much has suffered prior conversion and or disturbance with large areas effectively comprising hardstanding associated with now completed and adjoining developments. In respect of the above, much of the original field system has been eradicated and demarcation within the site relates more to structural road networks and access routes to, from and through the proposed site area.

Much of the site area is devoid of any vegetation of consequence and where it does exist, it tends to be limited and, for the most part, comprising relatively recent natural regeneration. One exception to this exists adjoining Block 29 to the south-east of the site.

Assessment of Likely Impacts

Having reviewed the development area and in appreciation of the fact that the greater proportion of the development zone is devoid of any vegetation of interest then very few concerns arise in respect of Arboricultural issues. Throughout the centre of the site and most apparent in respect of Blocks 5, 13, 14, 15, note is made of notable, spurious vegetation redevelopment though this tends to comprise invasive species including Goat Willow and Buddleia. Such vegetation would readily be expected to develop on any area receiving no management and or being left fallow for any number of years. Such material would not be regarded as being suitable for consideration of retention into a developed context.

The review of the proposed development noted three potential areas of possible conflict that involves what might be regarded as significant vegetation. These areas included –

1. North and east of Block 25,
2. North and east of Block 26
3. West of Block 29.

In the above instances, vegetation of a stature to make it visually notable or worthy of consideration was found and thus has been described as below.

Block 25

In this area, note is made of the existing riverside footpath that runs parallel to the river and beside the existing pond feature. The northern edge and eastern edge of the proposed Block 25 appears to coincide with an existing planting utilising relatively small (feathered whip – half-standard) Silver Birch and Common Alder. The full impact of the proposed development remains unknown however, the small stature of these trees, most being significantly less than 3.00 m tall, is considered minimal on the grounds that either a, the trees could be readily lifted and relocated or be, the trees can be readily replaced with freely available stock.

Block 26

In respect Block 26, two elements of vegetation are noted. The 1st and least significant is that which comprises naturally regenerative thicket arising from the boundary with the dart line. This material typically comprises a contiguous Bramble thicket with emergent Sycamore, Ash and Goat Willow saplings. The thicket is currently impenetrable but is of a value that is considered insignificant and irrelevant regarding any potential for retention. Accordingly, it is considered that this material would be removed.

To the north of Block 26, note is made that the site adjoins the Mayne River. However, in this area, the intention of there being open space suggests that there remains the potential to retain any vegetation associated with the river banks though, it is noted that the vast majority of this appears to arise from the northern side of the river channel and thus is beyond the jurisdiction of the site. In this instance and though such vegetation is proximate to the site, it appears that there is substantial potential for its retention as a margin to the open space.

Block 29

This area of the development comprises the most south-westerly element of the proposal. The site is broadly devoid of any vegetation of interest however it is noted that it supports notable Bramble thicket and sporadic outcrops of Goat Willow and Buddleia, none of which will be regarded as suitable for retention. Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that the western boundary of the site is adjoined by a notable ditch and embankment feature that appears to support the remnant of an original hedge line on its Western side. There is a small proportion of material arising from eastern side of the ditch however, the development proposals appear to suggest little if any impact.

The design proposals are wholly within what is the physical constraints of the site including the existing palisade railing. Accordingly, and in appreciation of the fact that the original ditch and embankment alignment commences

some 3.00 m west of this suggests that all elements of the development can be achieved without undue disturbance of this hedgerow. Nonetheless, and appreciating the scrubby and spreading aspect of the higher crown, it is envisaged that minor, localise pruning will be required, for example to improve and or maintain access and to provide clearance.

Conclusions

Based on the above, I would suggest that the general lack of material that will constitute any Arboricultural interest across the site is such as to limit any benefit to be gained from the undertaking of a full Arboricultural report. It appears that the greatest risk of plant loss, applies to material that either would not be retained, or can readily be replaced, this being broadly applicable to the two northernmost areas of concern. Regarding Block 29 to the south-west, it appears from review of the existing drawings that there is little risk of damage or disturbance to the existing hedge line other than a possible requirement to apply pruning to the easternmost side of the hedge.

If you have any queries what so ever regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 086 3819011

Yours Sincerely
The Tree File Ltd



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