

4 Consideration of Alternatives

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter has been prepared by Brock McClure Consultants and O'Mahony Pike Architects.

The requirement to consider alternatives within an EIAR is set out in Annex IV (2) of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) and in Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended (“the Regulation”), which state;

*“A description of the **reasonable alternatives** studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposed development on the environment.”*

The Schedule 6, para. 2 (b) of the Regulations implement this requirement by requiring the following information –

(b) a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects;

Reasonable alternatives may include project design proposals, location, size and scale, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics. The Regulations require that an indication of the main reasons for selecting the preferred option, including a comparison of the environmental effects to be presented in the EIAR.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018) *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála* - states;

The Directive requires that information provided by the developer in an EIAR shall include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer. These are reasonable alternatives which are relevant to the project and its specific characteristics. The developer must also indicate the main reasons for the option chosen taking into account the effects of the project on the environment.

Reasonable alternatives may relate to matters such as project design, technology, location, size and scale. The type of alternatives will depend on the nature of the project proposed and the characteristics of the receiving environment. For example, some projects may be site specific so the consideration of alternative sites may not be relevant. It is generally sufficient for the developer to provide a broad description of each main alternative studied and the key environmental issues associated with each. A ‘mini- EIA’ is not required for each alternative studied.

As such, the consideration and presentation of the reasonable alternatives studied by the project design team is an important requirement of the EIA process.

This chapter provides an outline of the main alternatives examined during the design phase. It sets out the main reasons for choosing the development as proposed, taking into account and providing a comparison on the environmental effects.

4.2 Rationale for Proposed Development

The proposed development has been carefully designed to:

- Complete the existing Grange development
- Be landscape driven
- Ensure permeability and connectivity from Brewery Road throughout the site
- Increase the provision of residential amenities on site, including a crèche
- Respect the residential amenity of the existing cottage not in the ownership of the applicant

- Allow for coherent expansion should the lands to the North East become available in future

The proposed development consists of 5 no. blocks which are mostly residential, although they also contain ancillary uses such as a crèche & residents amenity facility.

As in the existing Grange development, the proposed scheme is arranged around a central garden which provides a focal point for the apartments.

A strong and varied frontage is provided to Brewery Road, with two gateway buildings flanking the entrance to the scheme on this street, which now becomes the 'front door' to the entire Grange development.

The layout is permeable, with visual & pedestrian connections from Brewery Road to the central garden and on to the existing development.

Parking for the proposed development is also covered, with a single access point under the courtyard.

The proposed development is designed to respect the residential amenity of the cottage fronting onto the N11 which is not in the ownership of the applicant, being both set back a minimum of 26.5m from its rear facade and stepping down in height to the north.

Input from Dun Laoghaire County Council and An Bord Pleanála informed design changes, leading to improved connectivity and universal access throughout the site and a generous landscaped edge to Brewery Road.

4.3 Consideration of Alternatives

The alternative locations, layout and designs for this project and proposal are set out below.

Alternative Locations

The site was acquired by the applicant in 2017. The site represented a suitable site for development, being zoned for residential development under the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Development Plan 2016-2022, with 'residential' being permitted in principle under Objective A, which governs the subject site.

The applicant considered the following elements in selection of the site for development:

- The site offered significant opportunity to deliver significant residential development on an underutilised suburban infill site in close proximity to existing services at Stillorgan village.
- The subject site has excellent connectivity to public transport and major areas of employment.
 - Bus - The overall site is located adjacent to the N11 Bus Priority Route / Quality Bus Corridor. Distances to the nearest bus stops are less than 5mins walk. Travel time to St. Stephen's Green by bus is 25 mins.
 - Luas - The Sandyford LUAS stop is a 14min walk from the proposed development. This stop is on the Green Luas line and journey time to St. Stephen's Green is 26 minutes.
 - Employment Areas - The site is located within 2km of Sandyford Business Park, Central Park and South County Business Park. The site is also within 1km of Stillorgan Village Centre.
- The site is not subject to any statutory nature conservation designation.
- The site is associated with the existing Grange development and offers an opportunity to complete the overall Grange development.
- The site has capacity to absorb development without significantly effecting the existing landscape and visual characteristics of the surrounding area.
- The site is not susceptible to flooding.

- The size of the site at 1.8ha offers a significant opportunity to deliver infill residential development along a key public transport corridor which supports the provisions of the National Planning Framework.
- The site is located along a key public transport corridor (the N11); is proximate to the Green Luas line and a number of employment areas and is therefore opportunely located to deliver on the build to rent accommodation model.

Having considered the above, the application site was considered the preferred site for the current build to rent accommodation proposal.

Alternative Layout & Designs

The design approach for the proposed development is present in the Design Statement prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architects.

The subject proposal has evolved during the design phase of the project in response to input from the appointed EIA team; advice received at the pre-planning stage of the process with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council; advice received during pre-planning discussions with An Bord Pleanála; and the formal opinion that issued from An Bord Pleanála under Ref. ABP-304147-19.

This process highlighted matters that informed the consideration of alternative layouts and designs including set back distances, open space provision, permeability and connections, height of the proposed blocks etc.

The evolution of the design and various layouts and design considered are summarised below.

Option A

Positives:

- Compact, consistent volumes.
- Repetition and buildability.
- Large distance between existing Jade building and block M.
- Cons:
- Overlooking and overbearing of the existing Grange Cottage.
- Continuous overbearing elevation on Brewery Road.
- No permeability to Brewery Road.
- Restrict possibilities of future extension into lands along the N11.

Negatives:

- Overlooking and overbearing of the existing Grange Cottage.
- Continuous overbearing elevation on Brewery Road.
- No permeability to Brewery Road.
- Restrict possibilities of future extension into lands along the N11.

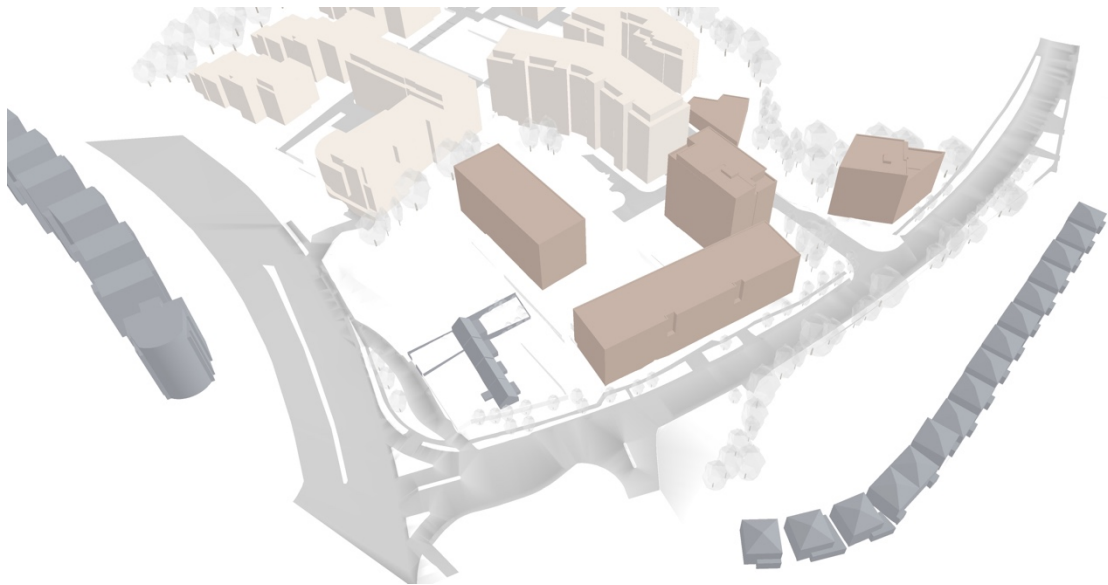


Figure 4.1 - Option A

Option B

Positives:

- Compact, consistent volumes.
- Repetition and buildability.
- Large distance between existing Jade building and block M.
- Allows for a large shared open space should lands along the N11 be developed.

Negatives:

- Less overlooking of the existing Grange Cottage but volume of block M still potentially overbearing.
- Continuous overbearing elevation on Brewery Road.
- No permeability.

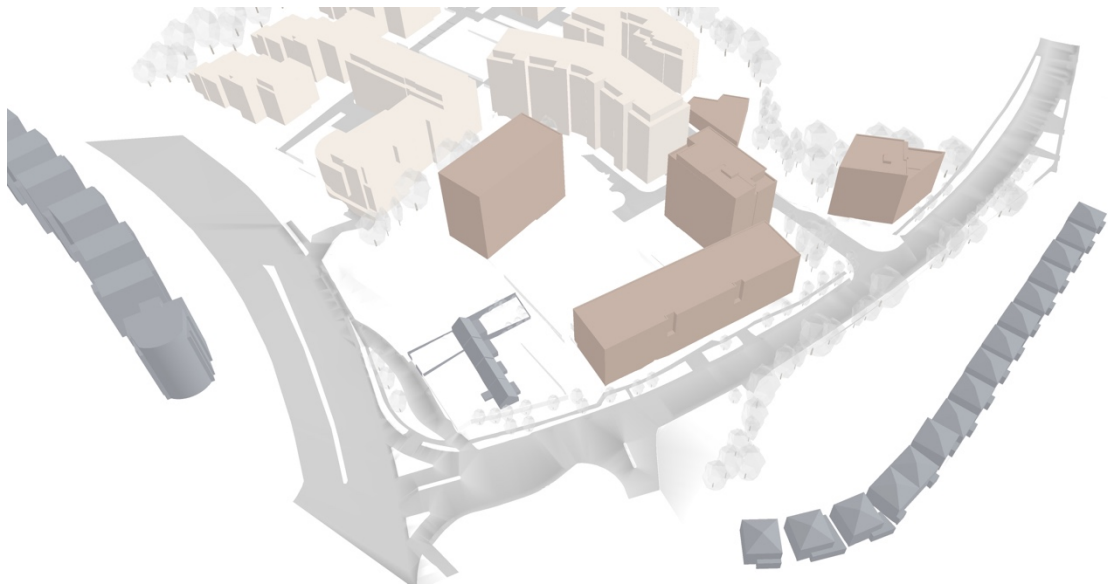


Figure 4.1 - Option B

Option C

Positives:

- Modulation on Brewery Road provides animation and overlooking.
- Blocks M and J are lowered near the Grange Cottage, reducing visual impact and minimising overlooking.
- Better permeability of scheme along Brewery Road.
- Cons:
- Series of courtyards and podium make universal access difficult
- Lift and elevated walk provided near Grange Cottage could have a negative impact on Cottage's amenity.

Negatives:

- Series of courtyards and podium make universal access difficult
- Lift and elevated walk provided near Grange Cottage could have a negative impact on Cottage's amenity.

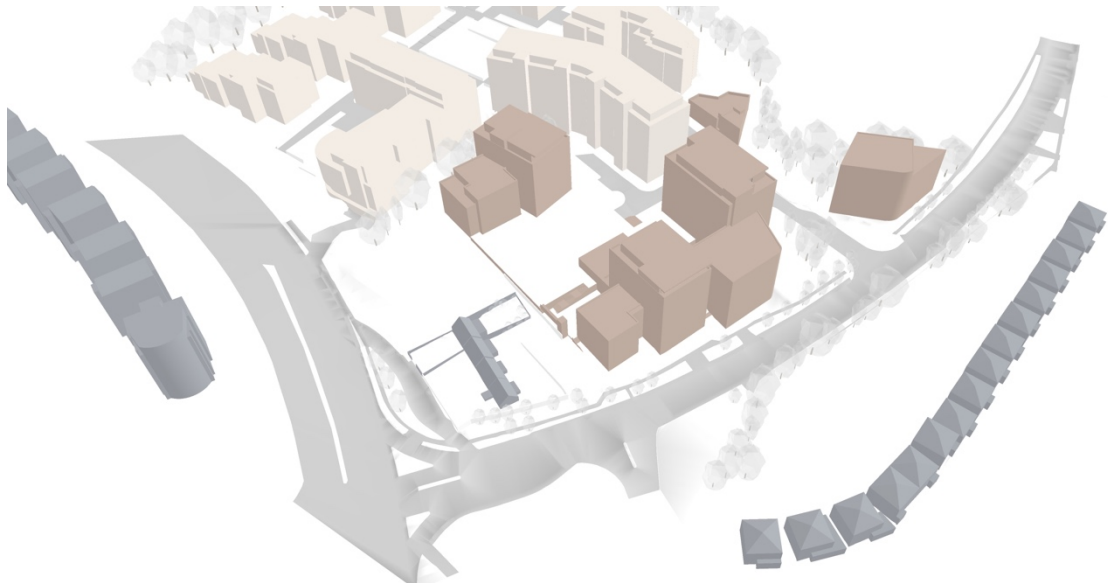


Figure 4.2 - Option C

Current Scheme

Positives:

- Modulation on Brewery Road provides animation and overlooking.
- Blocks M and J are lowered near the Grange Cottage, reducing visual impact and minimising overlooking.
- Simplified lowered podium allows for full universal access.
- Lowered podium protects the Grange Cottage's amenity.
- Good permeability of scheme along Brewery Road. Steps and lifts provided at each entrance point.
- Buildings set back provide wider landscaped area along Brewery Road.
- Extra pedestrian landscaped connection to N11, and consistent levels along pedestrian spine, from N11 to existing park.

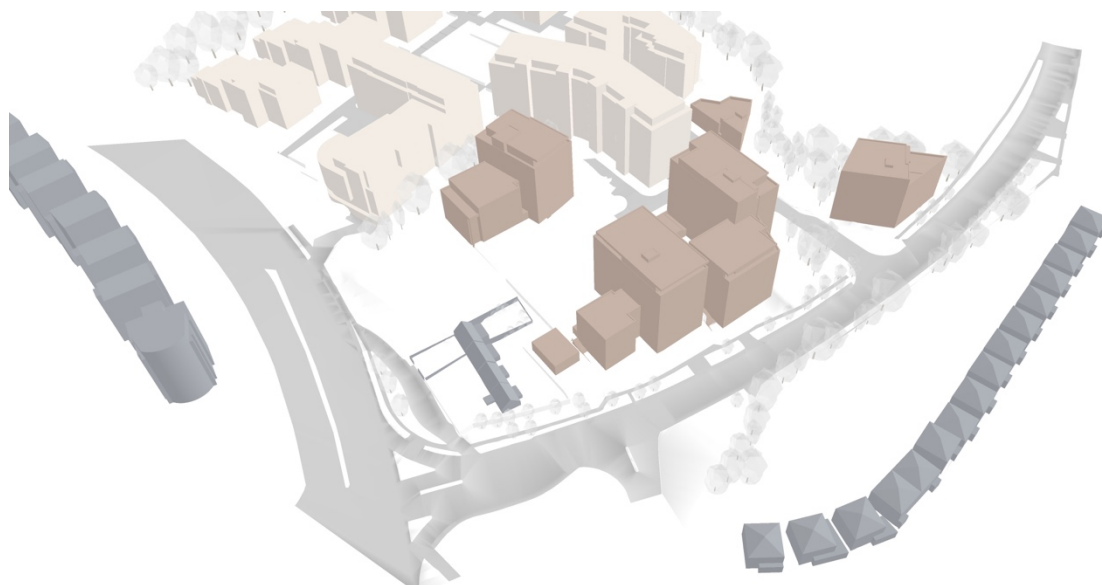


Figure 3 Current Option

4.4 “Do Nothing” Alternative

The ‘Do Nothing’ Alternative associated with this particular site involves the site remaining in the current condition, that being the retention of 2 derelict buildings (Oaktree Business Centre and The Grange Select Marketing Suite” and the Lodge residential unit. This is a completely inefficient use of lands proximate to key public transport nodes and significant employment areas. Furthermore, the opportunity to complete the Grange Residential development and deliver on important pedestrian connections/permeability and a new public realm along Brewery Road would be lost.

4.5 Conclusion

The proposed layout was carefully developed, taking into consideration the existing neighbouring properties, the conditions along Brewery Road and the N11, as well as local environmental conditions such as orientation, wind, noise and overshadowing.

The scheme aims to maximize the efficiency and quality of the proposed apartments blocks while minimizing the impact on existing properties, improve the landscaping of Brewery Road and provide a coherent, pleasant and fully accessible permeable public realm that will stitch together the existing Grange Development, Brewery Road, the N11 Stillorgan Road and the existing public open space to

the South East. Consideration was also given to potential future development of the lands to the north east, around the cottage not in the ownership of the applicant.