

8.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Introduction

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Mitchell + Associates was engaged by Ardstone Homes Limited, in January 2019 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for a proposed residential development at Two Oaks, Scholarstown Road, Dublin. The LVIA summarises the impact of the proposed development on the landscape character and visual amenity of the current site and on the contiguous area and the site environs. It considers these in the context of the site, in the south-western suburbs of Dublin. It describes the landscape character of the subject site and its hinterland, together with the visibility of the site from significant viewpoints in the locality. It includes an outline of the methodology utilised to assess the impacts and descriptions of the receiving environment (baseline) and of the potential impacts of the development. Mitigation measures introduced to ameliorate or offset impacts are considered and the resultant predicted (residual) impacts outlined.

This report should be read with reference to the photomontages prepared by 3D Design Bureau, which are contained in Appendix 8.1 and also within a separate booklet entitled 'Photomontages, CGIs and Aerials'.

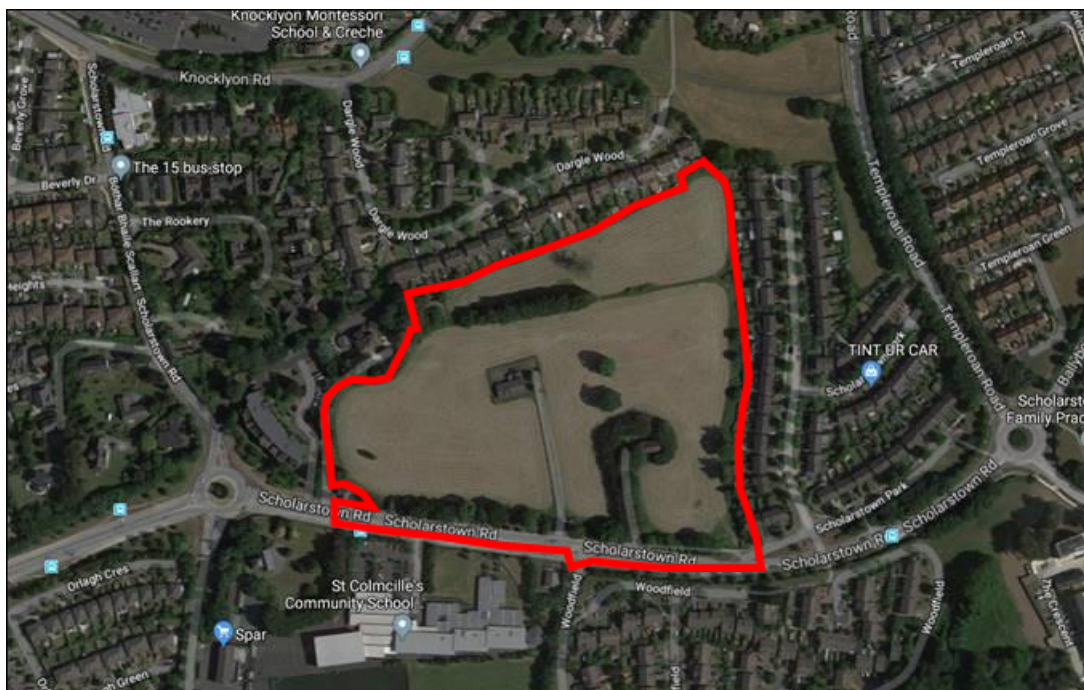


Figure 8.1: Site Location and Context

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 Introduction

This preliminary assessment was carried out between February and September 2019. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) includes consideration of two main aspects:

- Landscape Character Impact – the assessment of effects on the character of the landscape arising from the insertion of the proposed development into the existing landscape context. The 'landscape' aspect of assessment is relatively subjective and can be described broadly as the human, social and cultural experience of one's surroundings. These combined impacts will elicit responses whose significance will be partially dependent on how people perceive a particular landscape and how much the changes will matter in relation to other senses as experienced and valued by those concerned. Despite the extremely large part played by our visual experience in forming our views on landscape, one's perception and indeed memory also play an important part if the changes brought about in landscape character are to be fully understood. It is clear therefore that different people doing different things will experience the surrounding landscape in different ways. Such sensitivities and variations in response, including where and when they are likely to occur, are taken into consideration in the assessment.
- Visual Impact – the assessment of effects of the proposed development on the visual environment and visual amenity as evidenced by the comparison of baseline (existing) images and photomontages illustrating the proposed development in context. This second aspect is somewhat less subjective in that direct 'before and after' comparisons can be made. Visual impact occurs by means of visual intrusion and/or visual obstruction and the distance between subject and viewpoint has a bearing on the scale of such impact.

It is appropriate that aspects of architectural context and design approach are addressed when assessing impact of proposed development on the landscape. In this regard, aspects of the architectural design rationale and the specific architectural responses to the site and context, are referred to within this report.

The standard evaluation methodology used in the preparation of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR) is utilised. The evaluation methodology is therefore based on the following:

- 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2002.
- 'Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2003.
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, published by Routledge, 3rd Edition 2013.
- Reference is also made to the DRAFT 'Revised guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2015

- The DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017.

This preliminary Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment involved:

- Visiting the area in February 2019 and preparing a photographic record of the main landscape features;
- Undertaking a desk study of the subject site and its immediate environs in relation to its local and broader significance using the information gathered from site visits, studying aerial photography, historic and Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Establishing and describing the receiving environment in terms of the existing landscape, its visual amenity and its significance;
- Assessing the nature, scale and quality of the proposed development through examination of the design team's outline drawings, illustrations and descriptions of the proposed scheme;
- Assessing potential viewpoints, choosing and agreeing those which could be considered most important and most representative in terms of visual impact; and
- Assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development through consideration and interpretation of the prepared draft photomontages.

8.2.2 Photomontage Methodology

The primary method adopted for Visual Impact Assessment relies largely on a comparative visual technique whereby accurate photomontages incorporating the proposed development are compared to the existing corresponding baseline photograph so that an assessment of impact can be made. These 'before' and 'after' images are prepared for a number of selected viewpoints. The general methodology for the preparation of photomontages, including site photography, 3D computer modelling and rendering of views, is outlined in Appendix 8.2.

8.2.3 Selection of Views

In recognition of the sensitivities of this location and to enable a full and detailed assessment of the proposal, a total of 16 views were selected for which photomontages have been prepared.



Figure 8.2: Selected Viewpoints (Near)

The views were chosen to represent the greatest likely visual impact from a variety of directions around the site, allowing sufficient distance to see the proposed development within its landscape context.

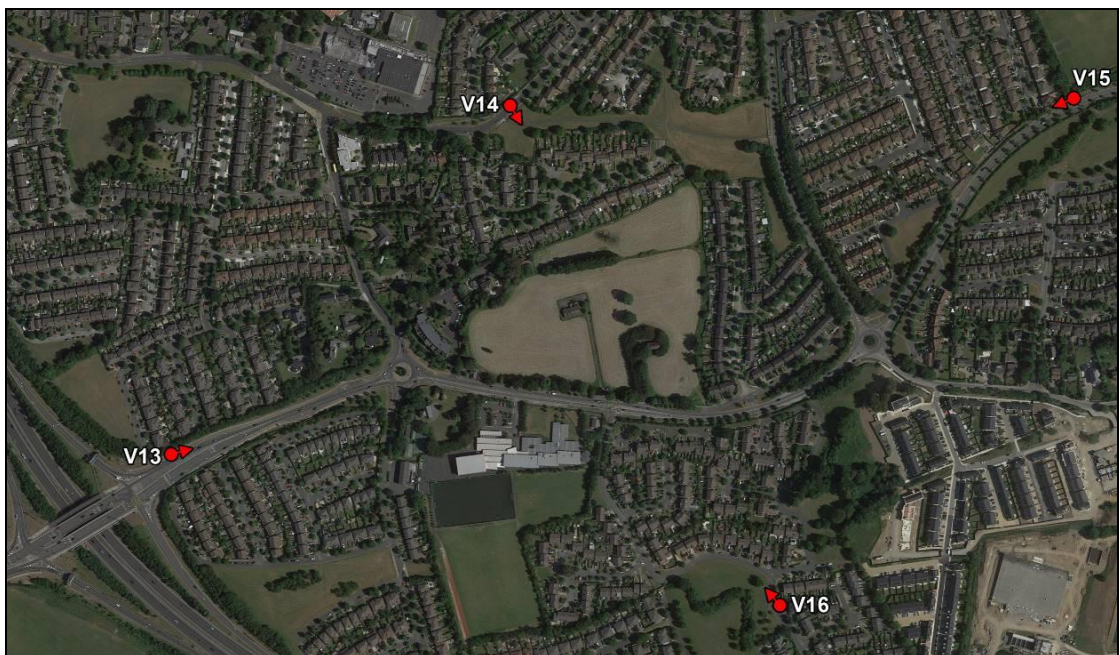


Figure 8.3: Selected Viewpoints (Distant)

In accordance with the guidelines, views from the public domain were given priority, particularly those from main thoroughfares and public places. The Guidelines also require that the proposed development is considered in context and that photomontages illustrate the proposed development with sufficient context for proper assessment. The views submitted are considered to be the most important and representative, having regard to the requirement to examine the likely significant impacts.

The initial photomontages prepared are also used to assess the design and to inform the design team of any advisable amendments – this is an iterative process and offers an opportunity for the design team to adjust the design or for the location of viewpoints to be adjusted to be sure of illustrating maximum impact. A location map of the selected viewpoints is also included with the photomontages in the separate A3 document.

8.2.4 Methodology for Rating of Impacts

An assessment is made in respect of the significance, scale or magnitude of predicted impacts which is set against an assessment of the quality/sensitivity of the impact. For each view, the scale/magnitude of impact is related to the simple quantum of change within the field of view and to the nature and sensitivity of such change in respect of the respective receptors, in the context of the existing (receiving) environment. Therefore, whilst the significance or scale of impact may range from 'imperceptible' to 'profound' and these may in part be related to distance and proximity, it should be remembered that the nature of the change and the sensitivities of the viewers also play a part in this aspect of assessment for each view.

The quality of impact can be assessed as 'positive' or 'negative' depending on whether the change is considered to improve or reduce the quality of the landscape character or visual environment. The quality of impact may also be assessed as 'neutral' if the quality of the environment is unchanged. The assessment of quality in particular, needs to consider and weigh-up a range of issues and potentially conflicting standpoints. The nature of the proposed change, its context, appropriateness, quality of design and the sensitivities of the viewers are all important considerations for this aspect of assessment.

This latter issue of sensitivity can however create emotive responses which often have little or no regard for the appropriateness and/or design of the proposal and the assessment needs to be considered in that context. For example, in this case of a residential development proposed for agricultural lands, the interests or concerns (sensitivities) of say, a farmer in the area may differ greatly to those of an existing local resident or potential house-buyer. The reconciliation of such sensitivities could be considered unlikely, in which case, issues of appropriateness and design quality become more influential in the assessment. The quantum, scale and proximity of proposed development are important aspects to be considered in terms of the carrying capacity of any sensitive landscape. The scheme design of the whole development (buildings, roads, planting etc) and the subtleties of detail design in such circumstances are important in mitigating potentially negative impacts and ultimately, in determining appropriateness.

The duration of impact is a third aspect of assessment to be considered and may range from temporary to permanent. In this case, the proposed housing is likely to be long term, however the effectiveness of existing and proposed planting in assimilating the scheme into the existing landscape context or in totally screening it will presumably develop and mature over time. The temporary/short term impacts during the construction of the proposed development are also considered.

The significance criteria used for landscape and visual assessment are based on those given in the EPA 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements', 2002, (Section 5 Glossary of Impacts) and the DRAFT 'Guidelines on the

information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017 (Section 3, pp 50-52). These are outlined in Appendix 8.3.

8.3 Description of Receiving Environment

8.3.1 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site for proposed development occupies lands on the northern edge of the Scholarstown Road, approximately 500 metres east of the M50. The developable site area is essentially a greenfield site of approximately 5.35 Ha. featuring two existing individual dwellings. The site is currently open grass land which appears as one existing field, surrounded by adjacent residential development on all sides, backing onto the site – this is predominantly, but not solely, 2-storey semi-detached and terraced property within a number of housing estates. On the site's southern fringe, a relatively mature, well-established hedgerow incorporating a number of reasonable quality mature trees marks the northern edge of the Scholarstown Road. There are a number of other fairly high quality trees within the body of the site and marking its other boundary edges. The site is zoned for residential development and this represents a natural extension of the existing residential development around the site. The north-east corner of the site links with the existing public open space to the north at Dargle Wood.

Works are also proposed to Scholarstown Road and Woodfield junction on an area measuring 0.7 hectares, providing a total application site area of 6.05 hectares.

8.4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

8.4.1 Introduction

A comprehensive description of the design for the proposed residential development is contained in the Architect's Design Statement. Please refer also to the design layout drawings and sections included with the application.

Ardstone Homes Limited intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development at a 5.35 hectare site located north of Scholarstown Road incorporating dwellings known as 'Beechpark' and 'Maryfield', Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16, D16 X3X8 and D16 N6V6. Works are also proposed to Scholarstown Road and Woodfield junction including new traffic signals, the elimination of the left-turn slip-lane into Woodfield off Scholarstown Road, upgraded public lighting and upgraded cycle and pedestrian facilities on an area measuring 0.7 hectares, providing a total application site area of 6.05 hectares.

The development will principally consist of: the demolition of all existing structures on site which include a single story dwelling known as 'Beechpark' (172 sq m), a 2 No. storey dwelling known as 'Maryfield' (182 sq m), with associated garage/shed (33.5 sq m) and associated outbuildings (47.1 sq m); and the construction of 590 No. residential units (480 No. Build-to-Rent apartment units and 110 No. Build-to Sell duplex units and apartments), ancillary residential support facilities and commercial floorspace. The total gross floor space

of the development is 51,252 sq m over a partial basement of 5,888 sq m (which principally provides car and bicycle parking, plant and bin stores).

The 480 No. 'Build-to-Rent' units will be provided in 8 No. blocks as follows: 7 No. blocks ranging in height from part 5 to part 6 No. storeys (Blocks B1 – B5, C1 and C3) and 1 No. block ranging in height from part 4 to part 6 No. storeys (Block C2) and will comprise 246 No. one bed units and 234 No. two bed units. The 110 No. 'Build-to-Sell' units will be provided in 9 No. duplex blocks which will be 3 No. storeys in height (Blocks A1 – A9) and will comprise 55 No. two bed units and 55 No. three bed units.

The development will also consist of the provision of a part 1 to part 2 No. storey ancillary amenity block (Block D1) (414 sq m) within the central open space which comprises a gymnasium, lobby, kitchenette and lounge at ground floor level and lounge at first floor level in addition to a roof terrace (facing north, south and west) to serve the Build-to-Rent residents; a 2 No. storey retail/café/restaurant building (Block D2) (657 sq m) comprising 2 No. retail units at ground floor level (328.5 sq m) and a café/restaurant unit at first floor level (328.5 sq m); a creche (438 sq m) within Block C2 at ground floor level; and a management suite (261 sq m) and café/restaurant (288 sq m) within Block C3 at ground floor level.

The development provides a vehicular access off Scholarstown Road between Blocks C1 and C3 towards the south-east corner of the site; a separate pedestrian access and emergency vehicular access off Scholarstown Road between Blocks A9 and C2 towards the south-west corner of the site; the facilitation of a pedestrian connection from the north-east corner of the subject site to the public open space in Dargle Park; 459 No. car parking spaces (178 No. at basement level and 281 No. at surface level); bicycle parking; bin storage; boundary treatments; private balconies and terraces; hard and soft landscaping; plant; services; sedum roofs; PV panels; substations; lighting; and all other associated site works above and below ground.

8.4.2 Context and Design Characteristics

The designed scheme seeks to harmonise and integrate the development within the existing landscape. The design rationale and details employed seek to mitigate any negative effects on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area by:

- retaining existing vegetation where possible and introducing appropriate planting to further screen and absorb the buildings over time
- including public open spaces within the design which link with and relate appropriately to existing adjacent open spaces.
- incorporating the development to integrate with the existing adjacent housing and finishing the new buildings primarily in earth tones and natural materials as noted in the architectural design report:

'The proposed buildings will be finished with a sympathetic mix of red/ orange brick and buff brick facade with black cantilevered steel balconies. This will be broken up, to soften the massing, by rendered panels and a set-back top floor sitting behind the brick parapets. A high quality, modern brick will be used to give the building longevity and easy maintenance. The front elevation is divided into wings, differentiated with render and brick and glazed stairwells Each apartment will

have a steel balcony with railings or a bay window as appropriate. The glazing elements will be a powder coated black aluminium framed window system with glazed spandrel panels.'

8.5 Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development

A development such as this proposal has the potential to impact significantly upon the landscape and visual aspects of the existing environment in a number of ways, at both construction and operational stages. Effects can be short or long term; temporary or permanent. The purpose of this section of the report is to describe the potential effects of such proposed development; upon the visual and landscape aspects of the immediate area, and further afield, where relevant.

8.5.1 Construction Phase

Potential visual impacts during the construction phase are related to temporary works, site activity, and vehicular movement within and around the subject site. Vehicular movement may increase in the immediate area, and temporary vertical elements such as scaffolding, site fencing, gates, plant and machinery etc., will be required and put in place. All construction impacts will be temporary, and may include the following:

- Site preparation works and operations (including tree protection measures)
- Site excavations and earthworks
- Site infrastructure and vehicular access
- Construction traffic, dust and other emissions
- Temporary fencing/hoardings
- Temporary site lighting
- Temporary site buildings (including office accommodation)
- Scaffolding

8.5.2 Operational Phase

The proposed development will consist of the insertion of new residential buildings, road infrastructure and associated ancillary elements onto the subject site and will replace the existing agricultural field currently covering the site. It should be noted that despite the proximity of the proposed development to existing residential development to its north and east, the location and effectiveness of existing field boundary hedgerows and tree screens if retained, will assist in restricting and screening existing views into the site from without. The potential impact of the proposed development however, could be negative, particularly if the existing boundary vegetation is damaged or degraded. Many aspects of the proposed scheme design are included specifically to respond to such issues and any associated concerns. The design approach and specific mitigation measures employed to address such sensitive contextual issues and to respect and enhance the local rural environs are outlined in Section 8.6 (Mitigation), below.

8.5.3 The 'Do Nothing' Approach

If the proposed development were not to proceed, the site would presumably (in terms of its landscape impact), remain in its present form for a period. In such circumstances the current land uses would also presumably continue. All existing boundary hedgerows would continue to grow and mature, subject to their maintenance and management by the adjoining occupiers.

8.6 Mitigation (Remedial/Reductive Measures)

8.6.1 Construction Phase

The building site including a site compound with site offices, site security fencing, scaffolding and temporary works will be visible during the construction phase. This is generally viewed as a temporary and unavoidable feature of construction in any setting. Other mitigation measures proposed during this delivery stage of the development, revolve primarily around the implementation of appropriate site management procedures during the construction works – such as the control of lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, control of vehicular access, and effective dust and dirt control measures, etc. Such mitigation is set out in the Preliminary Construction Management Plan prepared by DBFL Consulting Engineers. This is a working document which will be continually reviewed and amended to ensure effective mitigation throughout the construction period. The planning application includes a Preliminary Construction Management Plan which specifically references the following construction phase mitigation measures as relevant to the assessment of Landscape and Visual impact:

- Site hoarding will be erected to restrict views of the construction activity e.g. standard 2.4m high construction hoarding.
- Establishment of tree protection measures as required (no-dig construction zones, tree protection fencing and existing hedgerow retention). Any trees which are not to be taken down shall remain undisturbed and undamaged.
- Tree protection fences if required are to be constructed in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations".
- A 'Construction Exclusion Zone' notice shall be placed on tree protection fencing at regular intervals.
- Tree Protection Zones are not to be used for car parking, storage of plant, equipment or materials.
- A post construction re-assessment of any retained trees shall be carried out.

8.6.2 Operational Phase

The proposed scheme is designed to integrate well within its existing context. This will be accomplished through:

- establishing an integrated and respectful relationship between the existing housing and the proposed development, incorporating aspects of prevalent built forms, scale, texturing, colour and materials.

- the insertion, positioning and modelling of the built elements, in order to assist in the visual reduction of the apparent mass of buildings – in particular; the siting of the higher 6-storey apartment blocks along the main road and within the central part of the site, coupled with the positioning of the lower 3-storey blocks at the west, north and east site edges, adjacent to existing dwellings.
- appropriate architectural detailing to assist in the respectful integration of the external building facades – including the modulation of openings and fenestration in a manner that reflects current local proportions and rhythms.
- rationalisation of all services elements and any other potential visual clutter and its incorporation internally within building envelopes (as far as practically possible).
- use of appropriate and harmonising colour, tones and materials.
- the provision, maintenance and management of a sensitively considered soft landscape design for the development, which interacts with Hydrology (SuDS) and Biodiversity, and which assists in the integration and screening of the buildings within the existing landscape.

8.7 Predicted Landscape Character Impact of the Proposed Development

The proposed development will impact on the landscape to varying degrees in terms of its perceived nature and scale. These impacts are tempered and conditioned by sensitivities associated with the receptor however the adjacent and surrounding land uses are also residential in character so adverse sensitivity on the basis of the nature of the development would not be expected. The duration of such impacts is however determined by the design life of the proposed development as tempered by the mitigating effect of the maturing designed landscape proposed as an integral part of the development. In this case the development has a design life of up to 60 years. Impacts on landscape character are therefore deemed to be of long term duration in this instance.

In assessing the landscape character impacts specifically, there are three main inter-related aspects to be addressed in considering the development proposals, namely:

- The perceived character of the existing edge-of-town, agricultural landscape – how it is impacted by the proposal.
- Impacts of the proposed development on social and cultural amenity.
- The proposed views of the development, relative to the existing site (outlined in Section 8.2 below) and the associated impact on visual amenity.

8.7.1 Construction Phase

Initially the erection of site hoarding and tree protection fencing will be completed, site access points established and site accommodation units placed. Early in the construction period, topsoil stripping and excavations for building foundations will commence. Removal and/or storage of excavated materials from site and the delivery of construction materials will generate increased traffic within, to and from the site.

As construction progresses over the construction period, visual impacts will vary, with the on-going business of construction - delivery and storage of materials, the erection of the

buildings, etc. Mitigation measures have been proposed as per Section 8.6 (Mitigation) to minimise the impact of the construction works on the site environs.

People living in the existing housing estate to the north and east of the site will be impacted negatively to a slight extent by the construction of the proposed development. For the more sensitive of these receptors (occupiers of existing houses backing onto the subject site boundary) the visual impact of the proposed development during construction will vary from moderate and neutral to moderate and negative, depending on the stage of construction, and the intensity of site activity. The construction impacts will be of short-term duration.

8.7.2 Operational Phase

Impact on the perceived character of the area

Whilst the term 'landscape character' is generally held to involve more than simply appearances, there is little doubt that a place's visual qualities contribute most to its character. Generally speaking, this is particularly so for say, visitors whose experience is often fleeting. In the context of the proposed development, impacts will typically be felt by people who live nearby, who may no longer enjoy a prospect of the green fields behind them, rather a view (albeit filtered by retained hedgerows and trees) of a housing scheme similar in many respects to that in which they live.

One might surmise that the current landscape character of this area is perceived largely by local people as essentially agricultural land located in the Dublin suburbs. However, the actual visual penetration into the site from the main public access routes is somewhat limited due largely to the presence of existing intervening groups of trees and hedgerows – this has the effect of limiting impact to those residing more closely to the site.

It is clear that the insertion of any proposed development into this existing open expanse will alter the landscape context of the area to an extent, however for this particular site, existing clear views-in are actually quite limited and this will limit associated impacts.

The existing site with limited access into it, offers little in the way of an amenity resource for the local populace. The proposed development will not greatly alter that but will provide open space amenities for residents. The scheme design provides linkage into and through the scheme as appropriate, for both vehicles and pedestrians, and includes the potential for a direct pedestrian connection at the site's north-east corner into the adjacent existing public open space and public footpath at Dargle Wood.

8.8 Predicted Visual Impact of the Proposed Development

8.8.1 Introduction

The assessment of visual impact is determined through the comparison of 'before' and 'after' photomontages – it is therefore, perhaps, a little less subjective than an assessment of landscape character. It too is inevitably influenced to some extent by the standpoint of the viewer (the receptor). The assessment of visual effects created by the proposed development includes a consideration of the visual effects on the visual environment likely to be impacted. A total of 16 photomontages has been prepared that illustrate the visual effect of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape. They are included in a separate A3 report submitted with this pre-application submission for the proposed development. In this photomontage report the existing view from each viewpoint is shown together with the proposed development as seen from the same viewpoint. The red line that appears on some of the proposed photomontages indicates the location of the new development in the background, which in such cases is largely screened from view by distance, the intervening built environment, topography or vegetation.

Because the design life of the proposed development is up to 60 years, the duration of predicted visual effects is assessed as long term, as is the case for predicted landscape character impacts, as outlined in Section 8.7 above.

The assessment of visual effects through the use of comparative photomontages serves to identify impacts upon the visual environment. The photomontages are important in illustrating the impact of the proposed scheme from the more sensitive viewpoints. In this instance, they also serve to support and illustrate an aspect of the landscape character impact assessment.

It is important to remember that whilst photomontages are a useful tool in illustrating comparative visual impact, they are recognised as having their limitations and potential dangers. The guidelines for their use in assessment clearly advocate their use in the context of a site visit to the viewpoint locations and point out that photomontages alone should not be expected to capture or reflect the complexity underlying the visual experience (refer to the GLVIA, 3rd Edition and the Landscape Institute's Advice Note 01/11).

8.8.2 Assessment of views

Photomontages were prepared for 16 views from a range of viewpoints. For each view, the significance/magnitude and quality/sensitivity of the effect are assessed and summarised as follows:

View 1

This is a view from Templeroan Road looking south-westwards. The existing public open space north of the site is in the foreground, beyond the low wall and railing. The white rendered gable of a dwelling in the Dargle Wood estate marks the approximate northern boundary of the subject site beyond it. The red line in the proposed view indicates the profile of the proposed development which will be screened by hedgerow and trees.

The visual effect from this viewpoint is imperceptible.

View 2

This is a view from the public open space north of the site, looking south. The white rendered houses of the Dargle Wood estate can be seen to the right of view. To the left, the substantial tree screen and hedgerow mark the northern edge of the Scholarstown Park estate. A small gap between the two, permits a view into the subject site which in the 'proposed' view reveals a glimpse of several of the centrally located apartment blocks. The open nature of the site has changed and the narrow distant view to the Dublin Mountains is now partially occluded by the development. The proposed development is of a fairly subdued scale and finish. It is not out of character with the existing adjoining residential developments.

The visual effect from this viewpoint is moderate and neutral.

View 3

This view is taken from within the Dargle Wood housing estate north of the site looking south. The existing conifer hedge within the subject site is visible beyond the existing properties. The proposed development will be barely visible above and beyond the existing roof line of the existing houses. It is only partially visible between the existing housing blocks. The scale of the proposed development is in keeping with that of the existing residential development.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and neutral.

View 4

This is also a view from Dargle Wood housing estate north of the site looking south (this viewpoint location is west of View 3). The red line on the 'proposed' view indicates the profile of the proposed development which will not be visible above the existing property roof line. The rear of the proposed duplex units along the northern edge of the proposed development are visible between the existing housing blocks. The scale of the proposed development is in keeping with the existing residential properties.

Visual effect from this viewpoint is slight and neutral.

View 5

This is a view from Scholarstown Road, west of the site, looking south-east. The existing hedgerow screens the proposed development in this view. The red line represents the full profile of the proposed development.

The visual effect from this viewpoint is imperceptible.

View 6

This view is from the main Scholarstown Road at the south-western corner of the site, looking along the road in an easterly direction. The existing small gate lodge building is the

dominant built element in the view and its roof profile is clearly picked out against the open sky beyond, which isolates it within a neutral context. However, its small scale is even further diminished by the large scale of the road (and road markings) in the foreground. The proposed development will be seen in the gap between existing trees (which are proposed for retention) and the lower 3-storey elements which have been set back to reveal a view through to the proposed open space within the development, and associated planting, now form a backdrop to the gate lodge. Whilst this doesn't greatly further affect its already compromised scale context, the gate lodge is no longer seen in isolation. This aspect of the proposed development in the short term is slightly negative, however it should be understood that this view is specifically orientated towards the gate lodge and the development and will not represent how most people will experience the proposed scheme from this part of the road (ie. from their cars). The proposed façade materials are neutral in tone, and the new tree planting within the proposed scheme will in time provide a complete and pleasantly sylvan, neutral backdrop for the gate lodge, offsetting any shorter term negative aspects of the proposal.

The visual effect from this viewpoint is moderate and neutral.

View 7

This view is taken from the entrance road to the Woodfield housing estate, looking northwards. The view aligns on the road junction with the Scholarstown Road, though it terminates with the existing hedgerow on the northern edge of the Scholarstown Road, which merges with the planting either side of the Woodfield estate entrance road. The proposed development will just be visible in the view, beyond new tree planting adjacent to the proposed entrance for the new development and will assist in defining the road junction. A very small part of the development is visible within the field of view.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and positive.

View 8

This view is taken from within the Woodfield housing estate along its northern edge, looking north-westwards. The foreground vegetation on both sides of the Scholarstown Road will effectively screen the proposed development from this viewpoint, though a part of the proposed development is visible above and beyond the foreground trees.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and neutral.

View 9

This is a view along the main Scholarstown Road from a location south-east of the site and looking westwards. The Scholarstown Park housing estate lies beyond the foreground hedgerow and a small part of the proposed development will be visible in the distance beyond this. The red line indicates the profile of the full proposed development from this viewpoint.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and neutral.

View 10

This is a view taken from within the Scholarstown Park housing estate east of the site, looking westwards. The red line indicates the profile of the proposed development, which is barely visible above and beyond the existing roof line. One will only be aware of the new development beyond the existing housing because it will be partially visible between the existing housing blocks. The scale of the proposed development is in keeping with that of the existing residential development.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and neutral.

View 11

This is a view along the main Scholarstown Road from a location at the south-east corner of the site (west of viewpoint 9) and looking westwards. The main road and its mature vegetated fringe dominate the existing view. The existing 2-storey red brick residential development at Scholarstown Park (right of view) and the white rendered Dargle Wood (in the distance, beyond the green field site) establish the extent of the subject site on its eastern and northern boundaries respectively. The removal of some of the boundary vegetation along the south-eastern corner of the proposed built development creates a greater level of visibility into the site through the gaps in the existing boundary hedgerow even when supplemented by new planting. The rationalisation of the foreground footpath, cycle path, boundary wall, and new hedge planting along the site boundary along the roadside at this location provides a safer and more appropriate access way along the road and an improved relationship between site and road in the changed context. The scale and finish of the proposed scheme is very much in keeping with the existing residential development. This and the proposed boundary and roadside treatment, including the proposed new tree planting will assist greatly in visually integrating the scheme into its existing context.

The visual effect from this location will be moderate and neutral.

View 12

This view is from just west of the roundabout on the Scholarstown Road which is just west of the site, looking eastwards. The roundabout and its central tree planting dominate the view. Beyond, the existing 4-storey apartment development with its screen planting will largely mask the proposed development though the corner of one of the proposed blocks is clearly visible. The apparent scale of the proposed development is in keeping with the prevailing scale of building elements.

The visual effect from this location will be slight and neutral.

View 13

This view is from a location just east of the M50 junction 12, looking eastwards. The alignment of the road focusses on the area at the roundabout with the adjacent 4-storey residential apartments being just visible to the left of the mature trees located to the south-west of the subject site. Part of the proposed development will be just visible beyond the trees and to the right of the existing apartment development. It is equivalent in scale to the

existing apartments. Given the distance to the subject site, the effect in this view is however very small.

The visual effect from this location will be imperceptible.

View 14

This view is from Knocklyon Road at the entrance to the public open space north of the site, looking south-eastwards. The red line indicates the profile of the proposed development, which is barely visible above and beyond the existing roof and tree line.

The visual effect from this location will be imperceptible.

View 15

This view is from Ballyboden Way, east of the site, looking south-westwards. The red line indicates the profile of the proposed development, which is not visible in the view.

The visual effect from this location will be imperceptible.

View 16

This view is from within the Woodfield estate, south of the site, looking north-westwards. The viewpoint is south of a reasonably expansive grass open space, maximising the potential for visibility of the proposed scheme, beyond the existing housing. The red line indicates the profile of the proposed development, which is partially and very marginally visible above the existing roof line.

The visual effect from this location will be not significant.

In summary, the visual effects of the proposed development are markedly reduced primarily because of the limitation placed on building heights in the designed scheme coupled with the screening effect of other built developments in the vicinity and the existing tree lined hedgerows edging the subject site. The proposed scheme retains most of the site boundary hedgerows and trees which limits and screens views into the site from the existing adjacent housing areas and from the main Scholarstown Road – this also greatly assists in the successful integration of the proposed residential units into the landscape. The topography in and around the site also offers no high vantage points. The site is not particularly visible from outside so all of the selected views do not offer full clear views into the site – views in are often glimpsed through gaps in hedges etc.

The only view to have any marginally negative aspects at this stage is View 6 where this is primarily a shorter term assessment related to the specific visual context of the small gate lodge building just beyond the south-west corner of the site. The architectural set back – revealing a glimpse to the open space within the scheme, and the neutral tones of the facades help to mitigate the effects. In time, as the proposed tree planting matures, the context for this building will also have matured and the negative aspects of effects will be ameliorated. Whilst the gate lodge building is within the curtilage of a Protected Structure and there is some sensitivity attached to it, it is not a very common view, in that it is generally glimpsed by most people who pass along the road in cars, largely unaware of its

existence. As such it is neither typical nor representative of the views generally available around the site, which generally reflect the relatively low key aspects of the designed scheme, the design mitigation already employed and the inherently screened nature of the site which is both recognised and retained within the proposed scheme.

The nature and scale of the proposed development are entirely appropriate to the surrounding landscape context. The scheme is well-designed to integrate with its surroundings and to connect with and improve the existing urban fabric. The open space and outdoor facilities provided are of a high quality and of a type and scale appropriate to the nature of the residential scheme. The proposed planting scheme is of a high quality and will be fundamental to the successful integration and future maturity of the scheme.

8.9 Monitoring

The retention of most of the existing boundary hedgerows and existing trees coupled with the effective use of new planting to screen and integrate the built elements of the proposal into the existing landscape are important aspects of the proposed scheme design. The success of the proposed scheme is dependent on both operations being properly executed. Effective tree and hedgerow protection measures must be established in advance of construction work commencing and an approved system of monitoring the on-going health and vigour of both existing and proposed planting will be necessary. The timely planting and the maintenance and management required to successfully establish new planting with the projected rates of growth and general performance required, needs a significant and effective input from professionals with the necessary expertise to ensure it is effectively delivered. The monitoring of the planting performance and suitably appropriate responses to ensure same will be essential to the success of the development as proposed.

8.10 Cumulative Impacts

8.10.1 Introduction

Current guidelines suggest that a determination should be made as to whether cumulative effects are likely to occur – these are outlined in the current GLVIA guidelines (3rd edition) as *'additional effects caused by the proposed development when considered in conjunction with other proposed developments of the same or different types'*. It has become accepted practice that such a determination generally needs to be made as to whether any likely pending or permitted development of a similar nature will have any bearing on the assessment of the proposed development and this is subject to the assessor's judgement in the matter.

8.10.2 Cumulative Impacts Related to the Proposed Development

The Local Authority's planning strategy for this area includes for further residential development on other sites nearby. Notwithstanding this, for this proposed development, there is only one substantial development (Scholarstown Wood) which, while largely completed, may still be technically 'proposed' and therefore could possibly be considered to be of relevance in creating such 'additional effects' or to have a bearing on this assessment.

However, in the context of its separation from the subject site and the nature of the proposed respective developments, it is not considered to have any real bearing on the assessment. Being largely completed, it also substantially forms part of the receiving environment (rather than being 'planned' or 'proposed' development). There are therefore no cumulative effects likely to occur.

8.11 References

1. Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2002.
2. Revised guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DRAFT, September 2015.
3. DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017.
4. Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2003.
5. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, published by Routledge, 3rd Edition 2013.
6. Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Landscape Institute (UK) Advice Note 01/11.
7. South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022.