

LANDSCAPE POLICY ASSESSMENT

The proposed development site is uniquely positioned in terms of current policy. At publication of the most recent development plans it was located within Cork County Council jurisdiction. It has since been integrated into the Cork City boundary. As a result, the Cork County Development Plan 2014-20 is still relevant, yet cognisance of the Cork City Development Plan 2015-21 must be considered. This section looks at the pertinent landscape policies from each plan and how applicable the content is to the site.

NATIONAL POLICY

The National Planning Framework 2040 addresses high level landscape policy, but emphasises the need for enhancing the personal experience in urban places (Part 4) and Green Infrastructure planning (Part 9).

The proposals aim to comply with Objective 1 of the *National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-21*, which highlights the following need:

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation.

Of national guidelines, the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)* plays a very large role in the landscape, dictating design templates for pedestrian and vehicular interaction and design of public space. Most pertinent information is contained in Part 4 - Street Design.

CORK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014

The following Policy Objectives have been targeted in Chapter 1 for specifically incorporating into the landscape design:

- HOU 3-1: Sustainable Residential Communities (walking and cycling)
- HOU 3-2: Urban Design (taking account of DMURS)
- SC 5-2: Quality Provision of Public Open Space (links)
- TM 2-1: Walking (coherent network and bus stop access)
- HE 2-3: Biodiversity outside Protected Areas (hedgerows, tree lines)
- HE 4-6: Design and Landscaping of New Buildings (part D)
- GI 6-1: Landscape (sustainability and tree protection)
- GI 7-4: Development on Approaches to Towns and Villages (setting)

Volume 2 identifies the sensitivities of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, Nature Conservation Sites and Scenic Routes. Impact on these must be considered. Drawing L3 makes this assessment. As an example of more detailed policy context, Scenic Route no. 39 would be one of the more closely reviewed receptors. When reading the SR39 description (blue table, top of page), the presence of 'settlement' and 'urban areas' form part of the scenery. This provides a framework into the type of landscape the scheme is being introduced to, which is different than characteristics of other designated Scenic Routes.

Scenic Route	Does Route Run Through or Adjoin High Value Landscape	Does the Route Adjoin a NHA, pNHA, cSAC, SPA or pSPA	Landscape Type(s) Route Runs Through	Overall Landscape Value	Main Features of Land Cover	Description & General Views Being Protected	Structures of Historic or Cultural Importance Visible from Route	Key Characteristics of Land Use	Is There a Sense of Remoteness as you Travel the Route	Rural Character
S39	Yes	pNHA Blarney Castle Woods	Type 6A Broad fertile lowland valleys & Type 1 City harbour & estuary	High - Very High	Settlement, residential development, pastoral fields and trees	Local Road and R617 Regional Road between Clogheen, Tower and Blarney and the road to Blarney Lake, Views of the settlements of Ballincollig, Tower & Blarney, Castle & the Lee Valley	Tower Bridge, a Protected Structure	Urban area of Tower, Kerry Pike, one-off housing and limited agriculture	No	Not Prevalent

Extract from Volume 2 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 of the Scenic Route profiles. This table identifies the characteristic features inherent in the route and the important qualities to retain or enhance.

BLARNEY MACROOM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2017

The site is included within the settlement boundary of Tower, which is identified as a 'Key Village'. Within the Tower description, there is no specific mention of *Landscape*. But, it does allude to "quality of life" elements, making reference to the following:

Part 4.8.18 - The "small but important neighbourhood centre" in Cloghroe.

Part 4.8.20 - The opportunity for a cultural facility closer to Blarney, but complemented by "...improvement of off road pedestrian and cycling facilities, improved footpaths and improved ranges of children's play facilities."

Part 4.8.21 - "The village is quite well provided for in terms of recreational activities..." and ample open space has been zoned for within the plan.

Part 4.8.27 - The Owennagearagh River "is at risk from urban and agricultural discharges".

DEVELOPMENT PERTINENCE - In terms of landscape relevant to this site and in support of the vision for Tower described in Part 4.8.1, we would interpret the above as translating into the following parameters:

+ (responding to 4.8.18) - The term 'important' as applied to the neighbourhood centre indicates an accepted urban retail core distinctly separate than the retail at the other end of town. Support and strengthen it by providing an improved local base. Make it convenient by encouraging pedestrian use of the village centre and access across the R617.

+ (responding to 4.8.20) - Provide a cycle lane and footpath along the (uphill) western edge of the R617. Offer children's play facilities that are creative and an alternative to standard play areas.

+ (responding to 4.8.21) - A large pitch or regional park is undesirable at this location.

+ (responding to 4.8.27) - Include landscape solutions that would filter surfacewater for improved water quality and reduce flow during storm events.

CORK CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-21

As the site will fall under the jurisdiction of Cork City Council, large scale objectives of their development plan should also be adhered to. The site has no specific landscape designation in the County development plan and would not be anticipated to have any in the City plan. In terms of landscape, the pertinent City Objectives would include the following:

OBJECTIVE 10.8 - Non Designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance

- a. To work with (landowners) to identify, protect, manage and enhance sites of local biodiversity value.
- c. To encourage the management of features which are important for flora and fauna.

OBJECTIVE 10.10 - Trees and Urban Woodland

- a. To protect and enhance the city's tree and urban woodlands.
- d. To ensure that new development benefits from adequate landscape structure/ tree coverage.
- f. To promote the planting of native deciduous trees and mixed forestry in order to benefit biodiversity.

OBJECTIVE 11.1 - Recreational Infrastructure Strategic Objectives

- d. To ensure that play provision meets the needs of all age groups to best practice standards in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- g. To ensure that the network of green infrastructure linkages are protected and enhanced to provide for movement and ecological networks... so that people have access to nature close to home.

OBJECTIVE 11.7 - Public Open Space

- d. Enhance and protect natural features and views and be set in safe and secure environments, accessible to and enjoyed by all sectors of the community.

OBJECTIVE 11.15 - Children's Play Facilities

Provide play facilities in new developments... of 75 units and over. ...And be provided within easy walking distance of home or within the curtilage of apartment blocks.