

Doyle &  
O'Troithigh  
Landscape  
Architecture

Landscape Design Report  
Oldtown Residential - North of Rathbeale Road



**Project** Ref 16-015  
**Client** Gannon Properties  
**Date** 01/04/2022



# Landscape design report

Design development for Proposed Residential Development (377no. residential units (173no. houses, 35 duplex units, 169no. apartments and a childcare facility)) on lands to the north of Rathbeale Road and to the west of Miller's Avenue and East of Glen Ellan Road, Oldtown, Swords, Co. Dublin.

Prospective Applicant Name: Gannon Properties

## 1.0 Vision for the Landscape

The layout and design of the streetscape, landscape amenity areas, landscape mitigation, interaction with the adjoining Swords Regional Park (under construction) and protection of cultural heritage is central to the long-term successful establishment of this Strategic Housing Development (SHD) at Rathbeale Road, Oldtown, Swords.

The site design development has been guided and influenced by the topography of the lands, the connection with permitted adjoining development and with future amenity lands; as well as cultural heritage and ecological appraisals of the land, both of which have been enclosed as part of this application. The landscape scheme offers a strategic opportunity to provide positive connections outward to the adjoining Swords Regional Park (under construction). This will offer a permeability through the scheme, offering a strong and valued public amenity to the development and wider lands.

The development lands feature a variety of open spaces throughout the scheme which provide a range of passive and recreational uses. A centrally located open space, which will link positively outward to the future Swords Regional Park. This overlooked space will offer a multifunctional space for future users, including formal play elements along with pathlinks and seating zones with good aspect.

To the north-east, there is an open space connected to a permitted open space which will form positive connections to the 'gateway entrance' of the Swords Regional Park. This space features cultural remains in the form of a ringfort which fully influence the design and as such a sensitive approach has been adopted at this location.

Two pocket parks are proposed within the northern portion of the scheme. One pocket park features a 'triangular' shaped arrangement which is fully overlooked by the built elements and features envisaged desire lines which will create and encourage a vibrancy to this space.

Along the western edge, a linear open space is proposed in largely a north-south direction. The design of this space has been developed to be fully in line with the concept plan for the future Swords Regional Park as developed by Fingal County Council. Refer to Fig. 1 below for reference. The space is relaxed in nature; and incorporates feature woodland blocks with some natural play elements, linkages to and from the future Regional Park, along with a temporary wildflower meadow area within the Regional Park lands until the hard lines of development are fully ascertained. The linear park is supplemented by a network

of linked open spaces throughout the scheme which provide for a variety of passive and recreational uses.



Fig. 1. Fingal County Councils – Swords Regional Park Masterplan.

To the south-west of the scheme, a linear open space offers pathway linkages to and from the Rathbeale Road to the development. This route offers pedestrians users to access the scheme, interlink with private and semi-private open space as well as connecting onwards to the Swords Regional Park and the aforementioned linear park above. Whilst this space is narrow in form, it plays a key and focused role in successfully delivering permeability through the scheme

The design and layout of the open space is essential in the creation of a visual appealing built environment for the scheme. The landscape design for the scheme has been developed to offer its own character and sense of place with the use of a comprehensive set of cohesive and complimentary external finishes. Refer below to a series of images referencing some typical examples of finishes to be used.





**Fig. 1. Typical reflection of external palette to be used**

The use and mix of trees, shrubs, wildflower meadow mixes has been considered in detail in order to be robust enough to establish, whilst still offering seasonal interest, movement and a focussed expression. Native plant material shall be considered for the scheme to improve the overall biodiversity of the site and to act as supporting compensatory measures. The new native planting shall be located to merge with existing hedgerows beyond the site lands to encourage and bolster wildlife corridors.

Where appropriate, much of the open green areas with tree groupings and grassed side slopes shall be under-planted with bulb species to offer 'flurries' of colour from early to late spring. Leaf colour, bark tone and berries shall all be considered for the scheme which allows for good contrast and again, seasonal variation.

The designed landscape must be comfortable, passively supervised, accessible, welcoming, sheltered and safe. The open space areas must provide a high level of visual amenity and must provide a seamless connection both within and beyond this development and the future surrounding developments and amenity lands; and in particular the connection to the adjoining Swords Regional Park to the north and west.

Second to the core principal of amenity is the development of a palette of materials for both hard and soft landscaping to both the amenity lands and the streetscape. To aid us during the process to select materials we have developed a simple check list of both hard and soft landscape materials.

Hard works materials must;

- Allow for ease of movement for all users
- Enhance the space and not conflict with the building finishes
- Work and look attractive in both wet and dry conditions
- Have a long timeline appeal

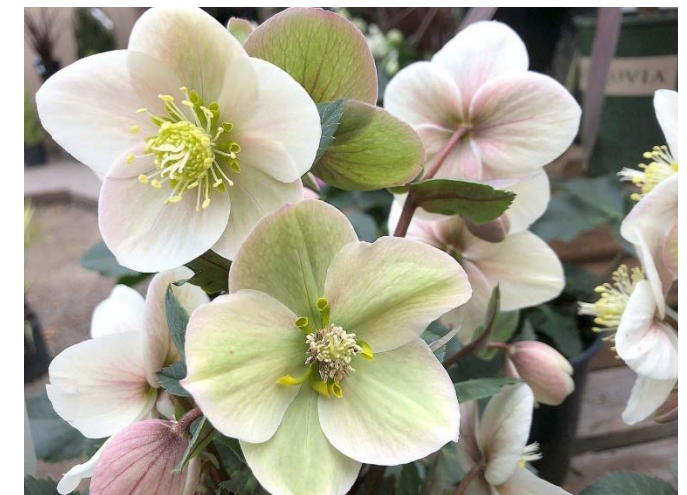
Soft works plant materials must;

- Be suitable for the Irish climate
- Be non-invasive
- Collectively provide visual interest all year round
- Enhance biodiversity and habitat creation
- Be disease resistant

By approaching the overall landscape design of the scheme at both macro and micro levels, the scheme delivered will provide a high level of amenity. This strategic consideration provides for a workable, aesthetically appealing, and robust scheme which will environmentally enhance both the subject lands and surrounding development.



**Fig. 2. Trees with year round interest**



**Fig. 3. Shrub planting with form, colour and texture (where applicable)**



## 2.0 Landscape Proposals and Green Infrastructure

It is proposed that both the streetscape and landscape amenity areas proposed will receive a landscape treatment of a high standard in terms of materials and specification; both for hard and soft landscape elements. Refer to drawing no LP-01-PP 'Overall Landscape Plan' for reference; and support landscape drawings as provided.

There is no existing vegetation pertaining to the site and as such a Hedgerow Survey and Arboricultural Impact Statement has not been required. As noted and referenced previously, and specifically in Fingal County Council's Opinion, the line of a townland boundary was referenced on mapping along the northern boundary and its north-eastern section. To fully clarify, this hedgerow was removed a number of years previous to facilitate the installation of underground cabling and to allow for general project enabling works. In order to compensate and re-establish a hedgerow along the general alignment of the former townland boundary, some 225 linear metres of native hedgerow is proposed along the northern interface of the scheme along with a streetscape arrangement which features a double line of featured fastigate trees to the north-east. Marker posts will also be included at either 'end' of the townland boundary to reference and acknowledge the importance of the same.

In order to ameliorate against the previous loss of the northern hedgerow some years back, further **ecological compensatory measures** are proposed as part of the scheme which include

- A. the **planting of native hedgerows** (linking to outward boundary hedgerows), some 225 linear metres in total.
- B. developing new **compensatory 'part-native' woodland blocks and native planting** where space allows and merge with existing hedgerow runs where possible.
- C. planting of **semi-mature trees**, with many flowering varieties which are beneficial for pollinators. Refer to detailed planting plans provided for numbers/species proposed.
- D. planting **diverse meadow mixes**, including **naturalised bulb planting** and managing key grass areas zones as meadows in particular along the linear park to the west.

The key objectives of the landscape proposals specific to this development are:

- To provide a landscape scheme which delivers a high level of visual amenity and passive recreation for the residents all year round;
- To create an attractive, high quality landscape for the residents and their lifestyles. Well-designed landscapes, especially in neighbourhoods contribute to an overall sense of well-being by providing places for people to meet up for a walk, for collaboration or just to chat. People places are successful places.
- To ensure that the plant material proposed are suitable in terms of scale, species selection, on-going maintenance and overall longevity;
- To adopt a repetition and rhythm of plant species to ensure a cohesive style and an overall consistency.
- To adopt ecological compensatory measures for the scheme as references above.

- To link seamlessly with the adjoining Swords Regional Park; and to provide full permeability and offer users a quality amenity for the long term.



Fig. 4. Colour and variety to open space planting – *Camassia quamash*



Fig. 5. Sustainable trees which are suited to the scale of the open space area.

The proposed landscape design relates to the following key areas:

### 2.1 Open Space and Play Provision

The location and positioning of open spaces have been considered in detail as part design development stage. \*Refer to CCK Architects drawing no. 1736-SHD-S-132 entitled 'Public Open Space' and drawing no. 1736-SHD-S-134 entitled 'Public Open Space Class 1' which provides all detailed information with regard to Class 1 and Class 2 provision. They have been positioned within the scheme by responding to proximity to end users, and future lands in terms of the Swords Regional Parks, as well as being located to receive passive surveillance and maximising on aspect.

*\* Duplicate drawings in the landscape package entitled 'Public Open Space and Public Open Space Class 1' (drawing ref. OS-02-PP) for ease of reference as part of the landscape suite of document. It is also noted here that drawing entitled 'Open Space Zoned Lands' which reflects the Class 1 land take in two areas (namely 'Open Space 02 and 04 from CCK Architects reference) proposed in the Regional Park. This drawing references 'Open Space 02 – Class 1' which lies on The Regional Park Swords. In this instance, an 'approximate overlay of the publicly available 'Swords Regional Masterplan' has been provided for ease of reference. It is respectfully noted that the hard and soft landscape detail of the said lands can only be fully addressed once the masterplan is updated and /or fully developed in accordance with FCC's requirements. For 'Open Space 04 – Class 1', this land parcel has already been constructed and forms part of the wider Swords Regional Park/Broadmeadow connection. Hard and soft details have been referenced on drawing no. OS-02-PP*



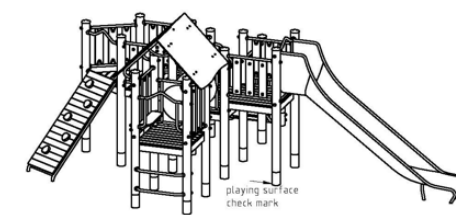
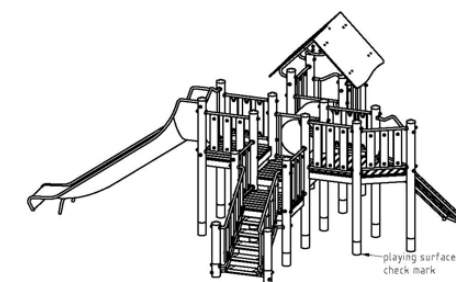
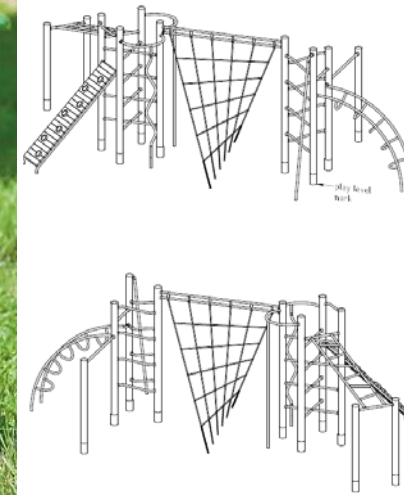
As a general note, the following key elements have been considered as part of the open space detailed design and developing and improving the site's 'Green Infrastructure': (refer to supporting Landscape Plan prepared)

- Pathways (and in some cases cycleways) which link to surrounding pedestrian routes. Consideration of potential desire lines within and beyond the site have been assessed
- Structural tree planting and meadow grass mixes with diverse seed range
- Naturalised bulb planting and largely native hedgerows.
- Grass mounding to provide form and visual interest where considered suitable.
- Informal kick-about space
- A variety of seating zones with good aspect.
- Play elements, largely set within the open landscape (including opportunity for natural play); as well as provision of formalised play within the Swords Regional Park which is currently being delivered. Further focus has been given to ensure play needs are provided in association with the communal open space of the apartments to cater for the needs of toddlers and young children (<6 years) with suitable play equipment and seating for parents/ guardians.

It was noted at the SHD pre-application meeting with ABP and FCC (30/11/2020), that there was a notable shortfall of playground provision in the order of 325 Sq.m. for the development's public open spaces. To clarify, this has been further assessed. Please refer to supporting drawings PG-01-PP to PG-03 PP inclusive as prepared for reference however in summary, the playground provision is referenced below:

<b>Playground requirement (4m2 per unit)</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1508 Sq.m.</b>
Playground provided within the red boundary line	=	<b>653 Sq.m.</b>
Playground currently been provided within formalised Regional Park	=	<b>562 Sq.m.</b>
Natural play provided within western linear park (Swords Regional Park)	=	<b><u>300 Sq.m.</u></b>
<b>Overall playground requirement provided</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>1515 Sq.m.</b>

Whilst there has been some engagement with Fingal County Council's Parks and Green Infrastructure Division on the play elements proposed, in particular the central open space as referenced in 2.1.1, there has been an acknowledgment however that whilst there is on site play provision; the positioning and focus of play has been within the adjoining Swords Regional Park. The Park will and is currently delivering spaces which maximise play and amenity value for future residents, as well as the wider community. Refer to drawing no. PG-01-PP to PG-03-PP for all playground equipment proposals and overall play provision plan.







**Fig. 6. Feature play elements of designed open space (concept images)**

All open spaces provided as part of the scheme shall offer linkages and connectivity to and from the scheme, including direct connections to the future Swords Regional Park to the north and western designated amenity lands beyond. There is an opportunity for designated play, kickabout activities, biodiversity improvement with the introduction of native hedgerows and improved diverse grass seed mixes, along with formal tree planting to offer structure to the overall setting.

The designed open spaces will be developed on the basis of linkages and connectivity throughout the scheme; pre-empting desire line connections. People places are successful places and it is envisaged that these spaces will be actively used and enjoyed by future residents which will bring about a great sense of ownership and overall pride.

The pocket parks proposed throughout the scheme will be reflective and complimentary of the varying 'character zones' which will be visible throughout the built elements of the scheme. The colour palette of hardscape external elements in conjunction with the built finishes have been considered in detail.

The key open spaces included are referenced as follows:

#### **2.1.1 Central Open space**

This central open space is positioned centrally within the scheme; and pathway linkages proposed have been positioned to respond well to future desire lines and particularly onward connection to the Swords Regional Park. This space is overlooked by the proposed built development and will promote an edging of formal specimen trees which will include clear stems to 2.0m to allow intervisibility, passive surveillance and ensure clear sightlines at

junctions. Refer to CGI below which offers views outward to the north-east from the northern portion of the open space.



**Fig. 6. Central Open space – View north-eastwards from the northern portion of the open space.**

A kick-about or multi-functional space is proposed within the central portion of the open space to offer an open area for a range of uses. Play elements have also been located within this space; to the eastern end which are referenced on enclosed drawing no. PG-01-PP and PG-02-PP.

#### **2.1.2 Western Linear Open Space**

A linear open space is proposed along the western edge of the built development. This space is effectively outside of the red boundary line but shall be delivered as part of the Swords Regional Park. To the north and southern ends of this linear space are two key areas of archaeological constraints in terms of below ground cultural remains. It is envisaged that these focussed areas shall receive mounding (with tree planting as appropriate) to further protect the below ground cultural remains.

This linear space will include a series of east-west interlinking pathway routes from the proposed built development to ensure future desire lines to and from the Swords Regional Park are accommodated. This formalised green space shall be edged with a 1.6m high buff top rail arrangement (as agreed with Fingal County Council Parks and Green Infrastructure Division) along with gated arrangements to allow for future management of the Regional Park. A wildflower meadow is proposed to the western end of the linear park which will perhaps be a temporary measure in the interim until the hard lines of Regional Park proposals are fully ascertained.

The aforementioned space offers a significant extent of 'passive' open space in the form of a linear park. Feature trees of parkland scale are proposed within this arrangement to provide strong visual appeal and feature in the long term. Looping and linking pathways are proposed



to offer an increased amenity and increase play and leisure opportunities for future residents and users alike. A focussed natural play area is also included as which accommodates boulders, steppers, climbers, mounds etc. which feature along a trail route through the proposed trees/understorey grassland area. All details envisaged for this natural play area are included in enclosed drawings PG-01-PP and PG-02-PP.

### 2.1.2 North Eastern Open Space 'Ringfort Zone'

To the north, there is an open space connecting to an already permitted open space; which will form the gateway entrance to the Swords Regional Park. This space features cultural remains in the form of a ringfort and a sensitive approach has been adopted. Pathways interlinking through the space, with further mounding being proposed to protect the sub-terranean cultural remains. Wildflower and bulb planting will mirror in form 'part of' the ringfort arrangement; all which we be interpreted within signage; which is currently being adopted in the wider Oldtown and Mooretown lands.

This open space merges to the west with a planted embankment edge to the south of the completed GAA pitch. To the north of proposed 'Road 1', it will be edged with a 2.0m wide grass strip devoid of lighting and obstacles as agreed with FCC's Parks and Green Infrastructure Division. This grass margin will receive a backdrop of a native hedge and 1.6m high buff top rail fence. The native hedge arrangement shall formalise and mirror the former townland boundary at this location and marker post similar to these traditional versions below shall be adopted. It will also clearly define the edge formally of the Swords Regional Park.



Fig. 7. Concept images of the traditional marker posts – to reference the former townland boundary

### 2.1.3 North Eastern Pocket Park

To the northeast, a small pocket park connects to the aforementioned 'Ringfort' open space. The streetscape and planting mimics the route of the former town land boundary at this location. The space, although transitional in spirit, offers opportunity for 'rest and play' and includes a contemporary planting arrangement with formal fastigate trees. It connects seamlessly to the Regional Park formal entrance (currently under construction) and it is envisaged that this space will be successful in terms of local amenity value. Refer to Fig. 8 below for CGI reference.



Fig. 8. Proposed CGI view southwards to the North Eastern Pocket Park which offers quality 'rest and play'.

### 2.1.4 'Triangular' Pocket Park – North of the Scheme

To the northeast, a small 'triangular' shaped pocket park is proposed. The space is fully overlooked by the built development with feature pathways and seating bordering the space. The space is predominantly proposed as a grass arrangement with feature contemporary mounding, formal specimen trees and feature spring bulbs. The space will offer 'relief' to the built environment, and as it features good aspect it is likely to be a local gathering/connection point. Refer to Fig. 9 below for CGI reference.



Fig. 9. Proposed CGI view depicting the 'triangular' pocket park which peripheral seating.



### 2.1.5 Communal Open Space (in association with apartment blocks)

A series of open communal open spaces have been proposed in association with the apartment blocks. These feature small breakout spaces with feature play equipment designed for up to the age of 6 along with appropriate seating. Details of the same have been provided in drawing no. PG-01-PP and PG-02-PP.

### 2.1.6 'Connector Open Space' – South-west of the Scheme

A linear overlooked 'connector' space to the south-west of the scheme will offer permeability and promote pedestrian movement from the Rathbeale Road interface to the future Swords Regional Park, offering engagement with the formalised communal open space and allowing for the introduction of a new native hedgerow/woodland edge to the south-western edge of the scheme. This space will unlock the envisaged desire lines and linkages throughout the scheme whilst also developing potential for improving the sites local biodiversity. Refer to Fig. 10 below for CGI reference.

## 2.2 Front Gardens / Internal Access Roads

It is proposed that the internal access roads will receive specimen trees, suited to streetscape development; where possible. Size, seasonal interest, colour and variation have all been considered in choosing specific trees for these locations. Tree planting has been coordinated with site lighting in accordance with requirements set out by Fingal County Council.



Fig. 10. Proposed CGI view northwards along 'connector' open space.

## 2.3 Stormwater Storage Tank

The application also includes for a stormwater storage tank on the Irish Water foul water network, Balheary Road, Swords. This will drain to the Swords Wastewater Treatment plan and will serve the Oldtown/Mooretown and Holybanks catchment in Swords, Co. Dublin.

Landscape screening proposals associated with this proposed stormwater storage tank are referenced on enclosed drawing no. LP-09-PP

## 2.3 Planting Programme

Planting on site will commence with the completion of each stage of the works and as a result the programme is closely tied to construction operations.

Ground preparation will precede planting and will include weed clearance and soil amelioration where necessary. Planting will largely be carried out during the dormant period from November – March, with grass seeding carried out from April – September. An 18 month defects liability and landscape maintenance period will be set in place for all plant material with plant failures being replaced in the following planting season. Plant materials selected for this residential scheme will largely follow the planting plan to be prepared.



The logo consists of the letters 'D&' stacked above 'O'T' in a white, sans-serif font, set against a dark grey square background.

D&  
O'T

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