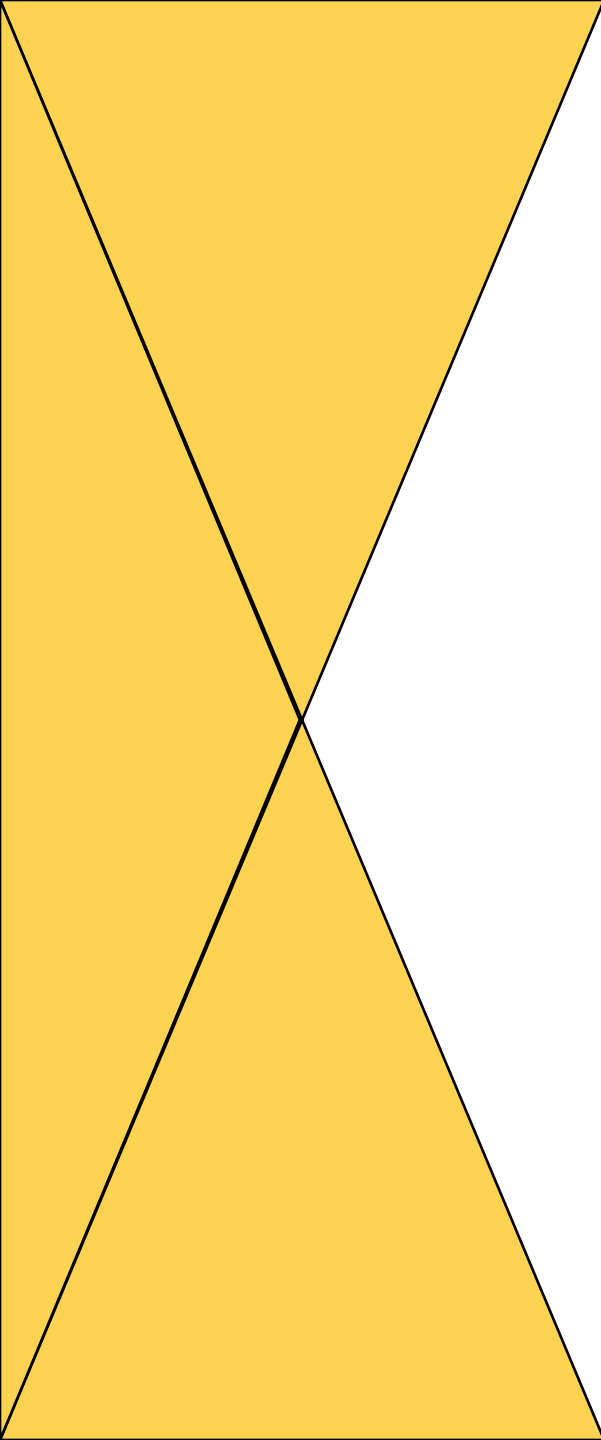




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Auburn SHD 2 Development Access Assessment Report

In response to Item No. 1 of the ABP Notice of Opinion

D C W N E Y

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Downey Planning, Chartered Town Planners, 29 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, have prepared this Development Access Assessment Report on behalf of the proposed applicant, Kinwest Limited. This report accompanies a planning application to An Bord Pleanála for a proposed strategic housing development on lands at Auburn House (Protected Structure), Little Auburn and Streamstown off the R107 Malahide Road/Dublin Road and Carey's Lane, Malahide, Co. Dublin.

The purpose of the report is to respond to Item No. 1 of An Bord Pleanála's Notice of Opinion to the applicant, following the Pre-Application Consultation Meeting. Furthermore, it gives due consideration into all potential access options to serve a proposed strategic housing development on these lands at Auburn. It was specifically prepared have regard to the comments from the Inspector and Board in their assessment of the previous application at the site (ABP Ref. 309907-21) and their refusal for same and in response to Item No. 1 of the Board's Notice of Opinion to the applicant concluding the Pre-Application Consultation stage of this current application. In this regard, the Inspector on the previous application stated:

"In my view, the new entrance as currently proposed is not the best solution for this site, and greater care, should in my view, be taken to minimise all tree removal along this important edge of the site. The applicant has not clearly explained why a new vehicular access is required and greater illustration of the existing access is not possible, or indeed whether the access to the 'Little Auburn' lands could not have been modified to serve the proposed development. In my view, greater utilisation of the existing entrance (without extensive modification), or a modified access at the existing vehicular access to the 'Little Auburn' Lands, would perhaps have been a better solution for the site".

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is evident therefore that the current proposed application needs to provide a far more robust assessment of all options to access the site and provide a clear rationale and justification for the chosen option.

The report assesses 4 access options from the adjoining R107 Malahide Road/Dublin Road. The report has been informed through a collaborative process involving the various design team members, including CCK Architects, Waterman-Moylan Consulting Engineers, The Tree File arborists, Sheehan & Barry Conservation Architects, The Big Space Landscape Architects, 3D Design Bureau (visualisers) and Downey Planning.

The report should be read in conjunction with the Auburn Architects Design Statement (prepared by CCK Architects), Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers Response to Engineering Items in ABP's Pre-Application Consultation Opinion and the Review and Conservation Impact Assessment of Main Entrance Strategies (prepared by Sheehan & Barry Conservation Architects) all of which are submitted with the planning application.

2.0 THE ACCESS OPTIONS

A total of 4 options have been considered in full as part of this report, which are:

1. A new entrance on the junction replacing that of Little Auburn.
2. The existing historic Auburn entrance.
3. An 'in-out' approach entering by the existing historic Auburn entrance and exiting by the existing Little Auburn entrance.
4. The existing Little Auburn entrance.

It is noted that alternative options via Abington were ruled out as this is a private estate and it was not possible to provide a vehicular access at this location. A single entrance via Carey's Lane was also ruled out on a preliminary basis as it would not have the carrying capacity to accommodate the development.

2.0 THE ACCESS OPTIONS

It is important to note that the entrance options were discussed with the Planning Authority at the Section 247 Pre-Planning Meeting and then in more detail at the Pre-Application Consultation with An Bord Pleanála. There was a clear understanding and indeed preference from the Roads Department of Fingal County Council that the access proposed as part of this application is the most suitable option for the subject site. The detailed design of this access has been agreed in principle with the Roads Department and Waterman-Moylan Consulting Engineers in advance of lodging this application.

This report shall now discuss the 4 options assessed and make a clear and rational justification for the access arrangement at the R107 Malahide/Dublin Road, which is proposed as part of this application.

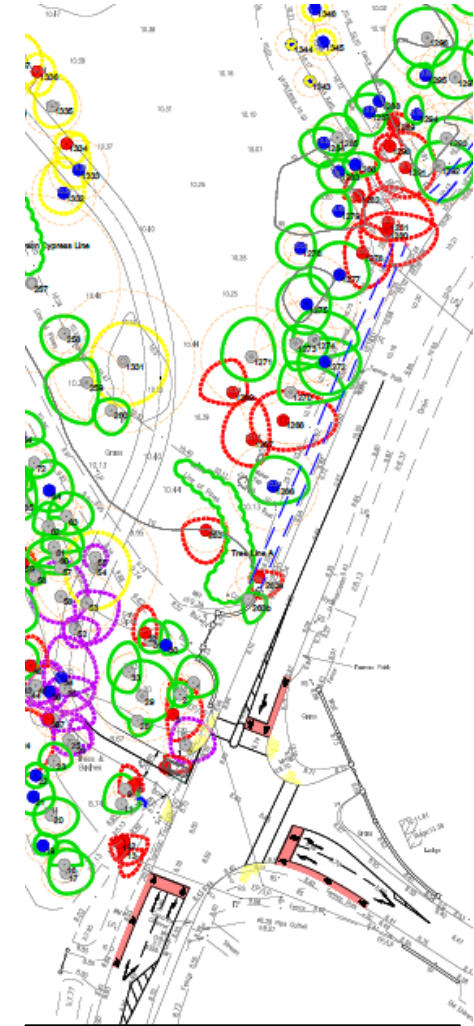
OPTION 1 – NEW ENTRANCE AT JUNCTION

This would be located just south of the historic entrance to Auburn and would be directly opposite the existing junction to Back Road. The existing roadside edge consists of an informal hedge with a backdrop of trees, which extend approximately 150 metres into the site along the existing historic entrance. The overhanging tree canopy that is on both sides of the R107 ceases at the junction with Back Road.

This was the option proposed under the previous application (ABP Ref. 309907-21) and was chosen for the following reasons:

- There is no right-turn lane or road widening required.
- It will result in the loss of just 2 category B and 14 category C trees.
- Most of the trees that would be lost are approximately 25 metres back from the road and so their loss would not be too noticeable from the main road.
- It will not cause a lessening of the overhanging canopy on either side of the R107.

- The processional forward view along the R107 will not be adversely affected.
- The existing Little Auburn entrance would be closed and the tree canopy at that location protected.
- The existing visual backdrop of trees will not be adversely affected.
- The new entrance is understated and the historic entrance retains primacy and full integrity.
- The existing piers and gates to Auburn House would be preserved unaffected with it just being used for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The view opposite Back Road is to be discretely detailed and the existing road signs relocated.
- The new entrance is aligned with Back Road and facilitates a signalised junction, which is significantly safer from an engineering and traffic safety perspective.



Tree Impact for Option 1 (Source: The Tree File)

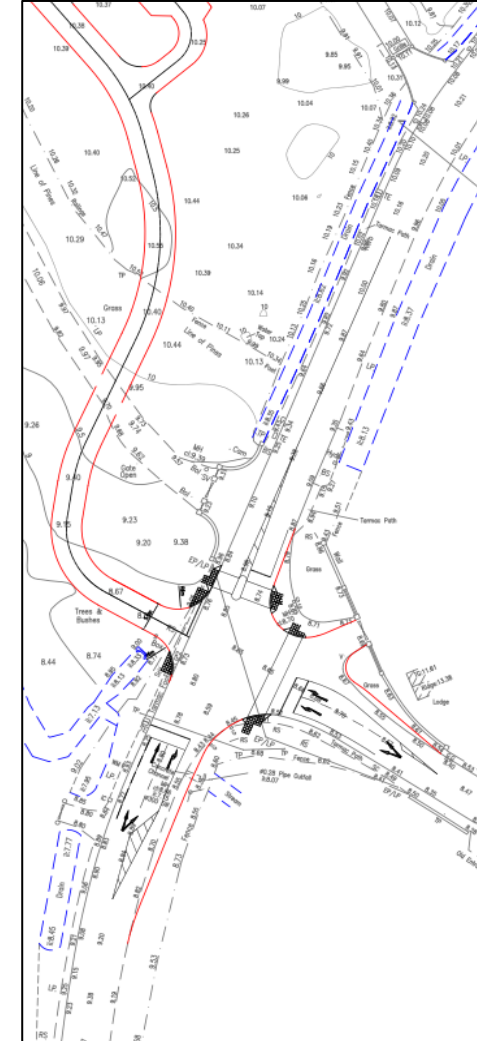
OPTION 1 – TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

Advantages:

- The Council hope to upgrade the priority junction with Malahide Road/Back Road as part of the Broomfield LAP.
- Signalisation offers the maximum degree of control and safety at intersections.
- The junction will remain under capacity for the worst-case scenario and stress tests.
- Offers improved safety for pedestrians with signalised pedestrian crossings.

Disadvantages:

- There is limited scope for additional developments as the junction would be approaching capacity by 2040.
- Traffic queues may take place northbound due to signals.



OPTION 1 – VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Existing view from Back Road junction towards entrance to Auburn House



Existing view from Back Road junction towards entrance to Auburn House with junction improvements only (no housing development)



Existing view from Back Road junction towards entrance to Auburn House with junction improvements and housing development

OPTION 1 – VISUAL ASSESSMENT



VIA19 View south towards back road junction
Baseline

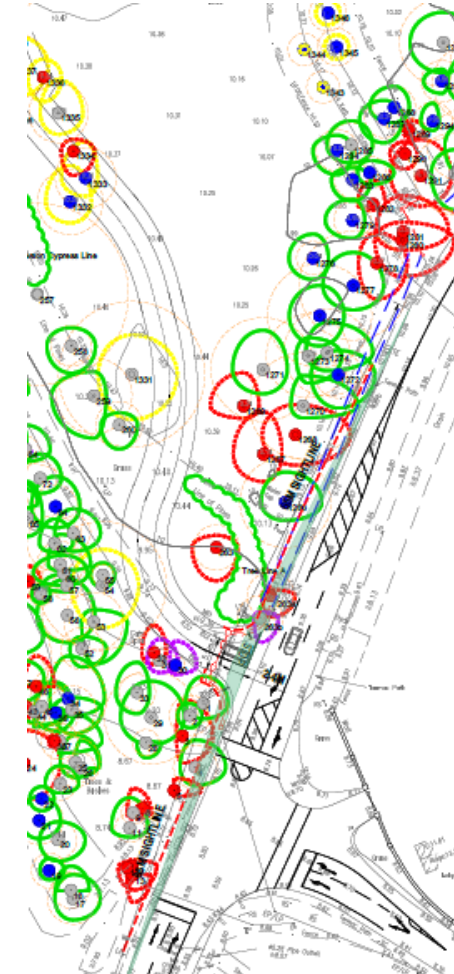


VIA19 View south towards back road junction
Proposed

OPTION 2 – EXISTING HISTORIC AUBURN ENTRANCE

The existing entrance to Auburn House consists of two free standing rendered masonry piers within a frame of rendered wing walls with piers at the inner ends. The composition of four piers contains the main carriage gates and a pedestrian gate each side. The entrance is approximately 22 metres north of the junction with Back Road. It is framed by trees. The impacts of this option can be summarised as follows:

- There is a right turning lane and road widening required into the site.
- It will result in the loss of 2 category B and 7 category C trees.
- The trees lost are close to the site boundary.
- It results in a lessening of the overhanging canopy on the Auburn side of the R107.
- The processional forward view along the R107 is negatively impacted.
- The existing Little Auburn entrance would be closed and the tree canopy there protected.
- The existing visual backdrop of trees facing Back Road would not be altered. However, signalisation of the junction still occurs.
- The historic entrance piers and gates to Auburn are almost entirely lost. The central piers and gates are lost for access, while the wing walls are lost for road widening. Discrete signage is also to be added.
- The pedestrian and cycle route along the avenue cannot continue out to the entrance.
- The new entrance does not line up with Back Road and so there is a conflict and requirement for a yellow box on the R107, adjacent to the signalised junction. This has a visual impact in itself.
- The pedestrian route to the pedestrian crossing is more complicated by the access option.
- The junction entrance is least suited to meet engineering, traffic and safety concerns.



Tree Impact for Option 2 (Source: The Tree File)

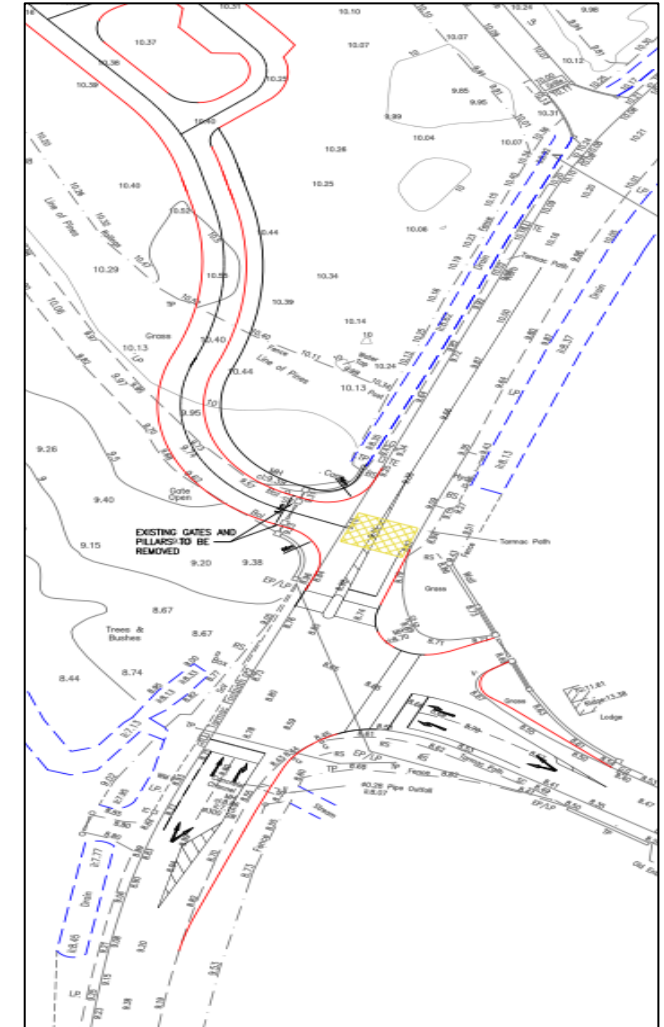
OPTION 2 – TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

Advantages:

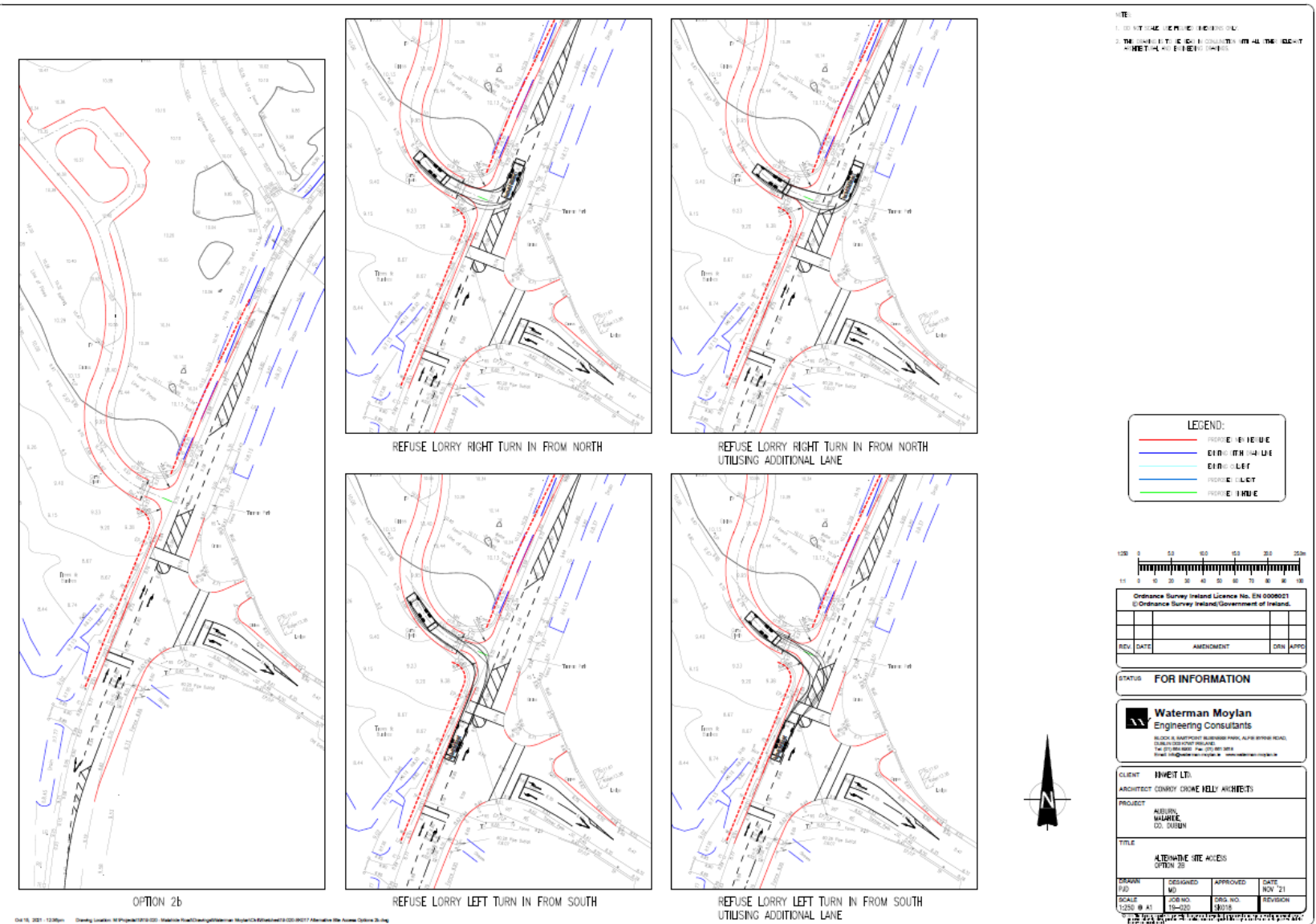
- Can make use of the existing road for site access.

Disadvantages:

- RFC and Queue indicate that the junction will be over capacity for 2040.
- All turning movements on the priority site access junction have potential to create conflict.
- Right turn movements onto and off the site access road can lead to serious collisions.
- Site access road is too close to the signalised T-junction. This could lead to difficulties to find a gap to access the R107 southbound and lead to increased delays.
- May need to relocate Bus Stops as they are too close to the junction.
- Right turning lane into the site access road may not be accommodated.



OPTION 2 – TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS



OPTION 2 – VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Existing view of historic entrance to Auburn House
from Back Road/R107



Proposed view of Option 2 access showing historic
entrance to Auburn House removed

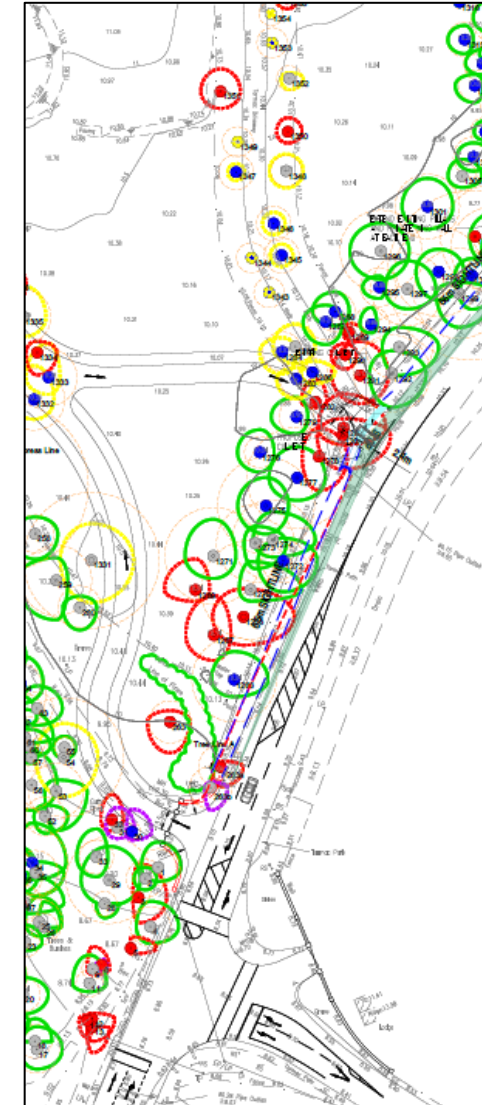
OPTION 3 – ‘IN-OUT’ APPROACH

This option is a hybrid approach that incorporates the existing entrance to Auburn House and Little Auburn. As each entrance is single directly only, neither has to be significantly widened. The entrance would be via the historic access to Auburn. There is still a need to provide a right-turning lane and road widening that is also required in option 2. The historic piers and gates to Auburn would be retained, while the wing walls would be lost. The exit is at Little Auburn, a short distance north of Auburn House and would not require road widening or excessive tree loss. This option would require 2 no. vehicular junctions onto the R107, as opposed to a single junction and both of these would be in addition to a signalised junction with Back Road, which is proposed to be carried out as part of the Broomfield Masterplan.

The impacts of this option can be summarised as follows:

- There is a right turning lane required at the entrance, which will also require road widening.
- It will result in the loss of 8 category B and 11 Category C trees.
- There will be 2 junctions to the R107 as opposed to one, in addition to signalisation with Back Road.

- The trees lost at the entrance are all beside the roadside boundary.
- It will result in a lessening of the overhanging canopy on the Auburn side of the R107.
- The processional forward view along the R107 will be negatively impacted.
- The existing Little Auburn access remains open (as an exit only) and the tree canopy would be largely unaffected.
- The existing visual backdrop of trees facing Back Road will not be altered, but signalisation will still occur.
- The historic entrance piers and gates to Auburn House are to be retained with the gates left open. However, the wing walls would be lost due to road widening.
- The width of the entrance is very narrow and there is heightened risk of damage being caused from vehicular impacts, particularly from refuse vehicles etc.
- The pedestrian access from the avenue can access the pedestrian crossing with conflict.



Tree Impact for Option 3 (Source: The Tree File)

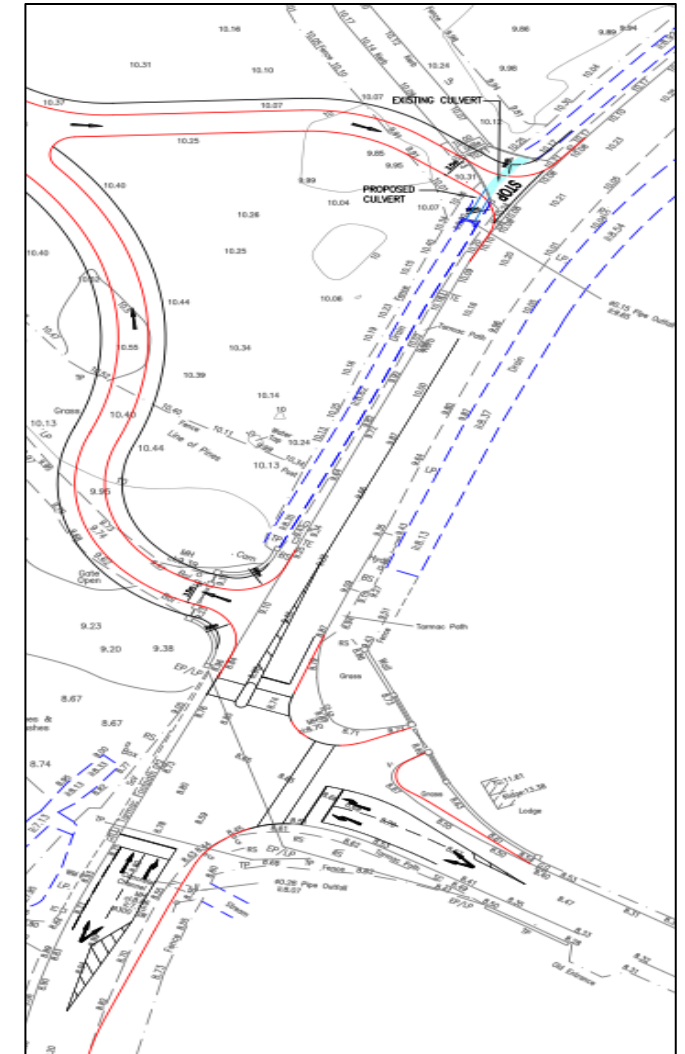
OPTION 3 – TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

Advantages:

- Can make use of the existing road for site access.
- Through traffic on the major site exit road is not delayed.

Disadvantages:

- DOS and Queue indicate that the junction between Malahide Road and Back Road will be over capacity for 2040.
- Right turning movement into the site have potential to create conflict given the close proximity to the signalised junction and will also cause significant delays without right hand turning lanes.
- Right turn movements onto and off the site access road can lead to serious collisions.
- Visitors to the development would not be familiar with the site access arrangements and could use wrong way to access or egress the site leading to potential conflicts and accidents.
- May need to relocate Bus Stops as they are too close to the junction.



OPTION 3 – VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Existing view of historic entrance to Auburn House
from Back Road/R107

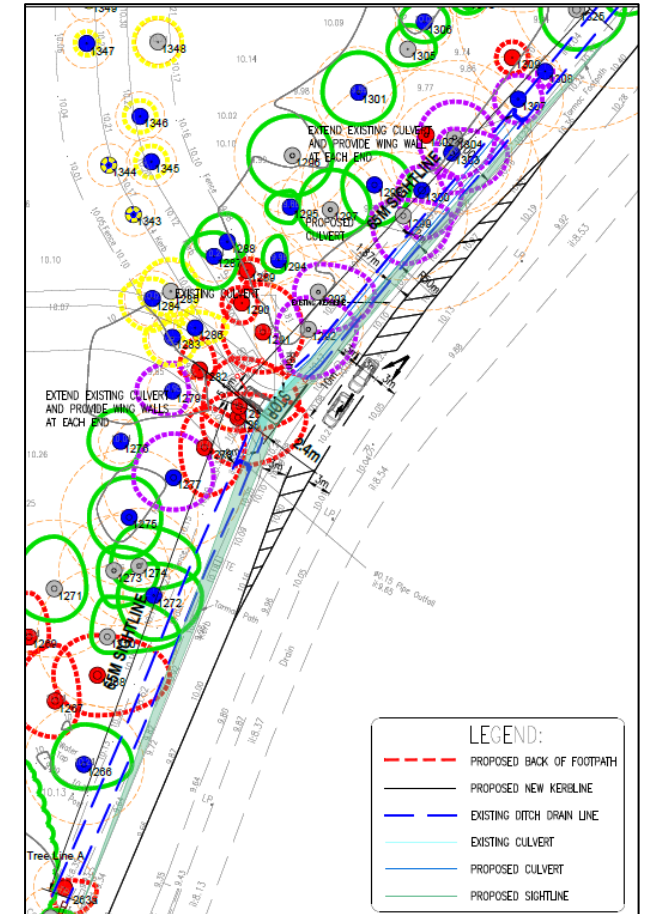


Proposed view of Option 3 access showing amended historic
entrance to Auburn House, including removal of Pier wall to
provide for footpath on R107

OPTION 4 – EXISTING LITTLE AUBURN ENTRANCE

This option would see the main entrance being located at Little Auburn, north of the junction with Back Road. The existing entrance is a single domestic gate with discrete wing walls under a tree canopy. There are a number of category U trees located at the entrance. The impacts of this option can be summarised as follows:

- The existing Little Auburn entrance is to be widened and discrete signage to be added.
- There is a right turning lane required at the entrance with consequent road widening into the site. This brings the sightline requirements back into the roadside tree line in both directions.
- It results in the loss of 9 category B and 5 Category C trees.
- Most of the trees lost are significant and along the roadside boundary.
- .
- It will also result in significant loss of the overhanging canopy on the Auburn side of the R107. The processional forward view along Malahide Road will be adversely impacted.
- The existing visual backdrop of trees facing Back Road will not be altered but signalisation will occur in any case.
- The existing entrance piers and gates to Auburn House shall be preserved with it being used for pedestrian and cyclist use only.
- The pedestrian and cycle route connects to the main road without prior vehicular conflict.
- Pedestrian routes divided with vehicular entrance is remote from the pedestrian crossings.
- The junction location meets traffic capacity, with residual pedestrian safety concerns.



Tree Impact for Option 4 (Source: The Tree File)

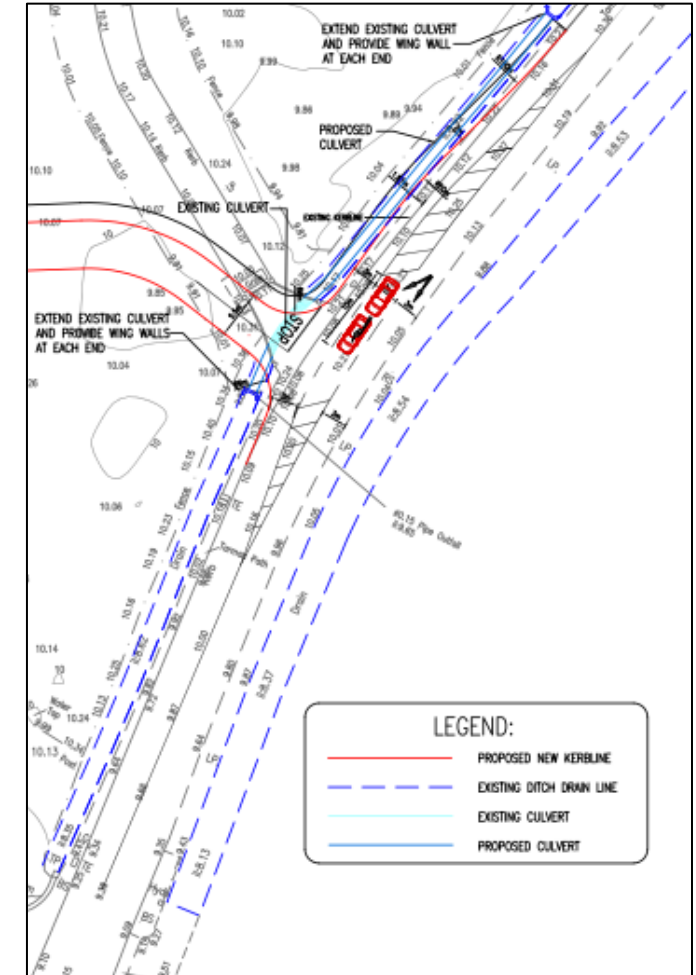
OPTION 4 – TRAFFIC AND ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS

Advantages:

- It can make use of the existing road for site access.
- Through traffic on the major site exit road is not delayed.

Disadvantages:

- All turning movements have the potential to create conflict and accidents.
- Right turn movements onto and off the major road (R107) can lead to serious collisions.
- Traffic on the main road, if not controlled, could lead to a lack of safety for pedestrians when crossing the road.



OPTION 4 – VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Existing view south from R107 towards existing Little Auburn entrance



Proposed view south from R107 towards Option 4 entrance via Little Auburn



Proposed view south from R107 towards Option 4 entrance via Little Auburn with right hand turning lane on R107

3.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This report has carried out a full and robust assessment of the various entrance and access/egress options that would be available to serve this proposed strategic housing development at Auburn. As noted at the start of the report, the wider multi-disciplinary design team have engaged to analyse the options from a design, traffic and engineering, historic and conservation impact as well as a visual impact perspectives.

There are benefits and constraints associated with all of the four options assessed and all options will result in a change to the character of the setting of Auburn. It is also important to note that the character of the road will be altered regardless of this development as it is separately proposed to signalise the junction of the R107 and Back Road to facilitate a junction.

This report and assessment concludes that Option 1 (the new entrance and signalised junction at Back Road) is the most suitable and least impactful of the 4 reasonable options and alternatives considered.

Option 1 is considered to be most sensitive to the woodland edge of the R107 and it ensures that the historic entrance to Auburn House is maintained intact and used most appropriately.

Option 1 is by far the most appropriate from an engineering and traffic safety perspective. This was also made clear to the applicant and design team during the Section 247 pre-planning meeting with Fingal County Council and was essentially endorsed by the Roads Department of the Council at that meeting.

Option 1 retains the best balance of mitigation against conservation impacts of the 4 options considered. It retains the original gateway in a viable use for pedestrians and bicycles and avoids any damage or alteration to the material, character or form of the existing gateway. The proposed new entrance does not compete visually with the retained existing entrance. The impacts on the setting of the estate are relatively modest and are the least impactful on the tree beltway of the options considered.