

# NEWCASTLE SOUTH

Newcastle South  
Landscape Design Statement

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landscape architecture

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Newcastle is situated to the west of Dublin City, approximately 11km from the M50. Within the Draft South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028, identifies Newcastle as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town and in the County Settlement Hierarchy with a forecasted population of 5,039 in 2028.

While this designation stands, the character of the town retains a village atmosphere. The western area of Newcastle is designated as an architectural conservation area (see SDCC Development Plan Maps 3 & 7).

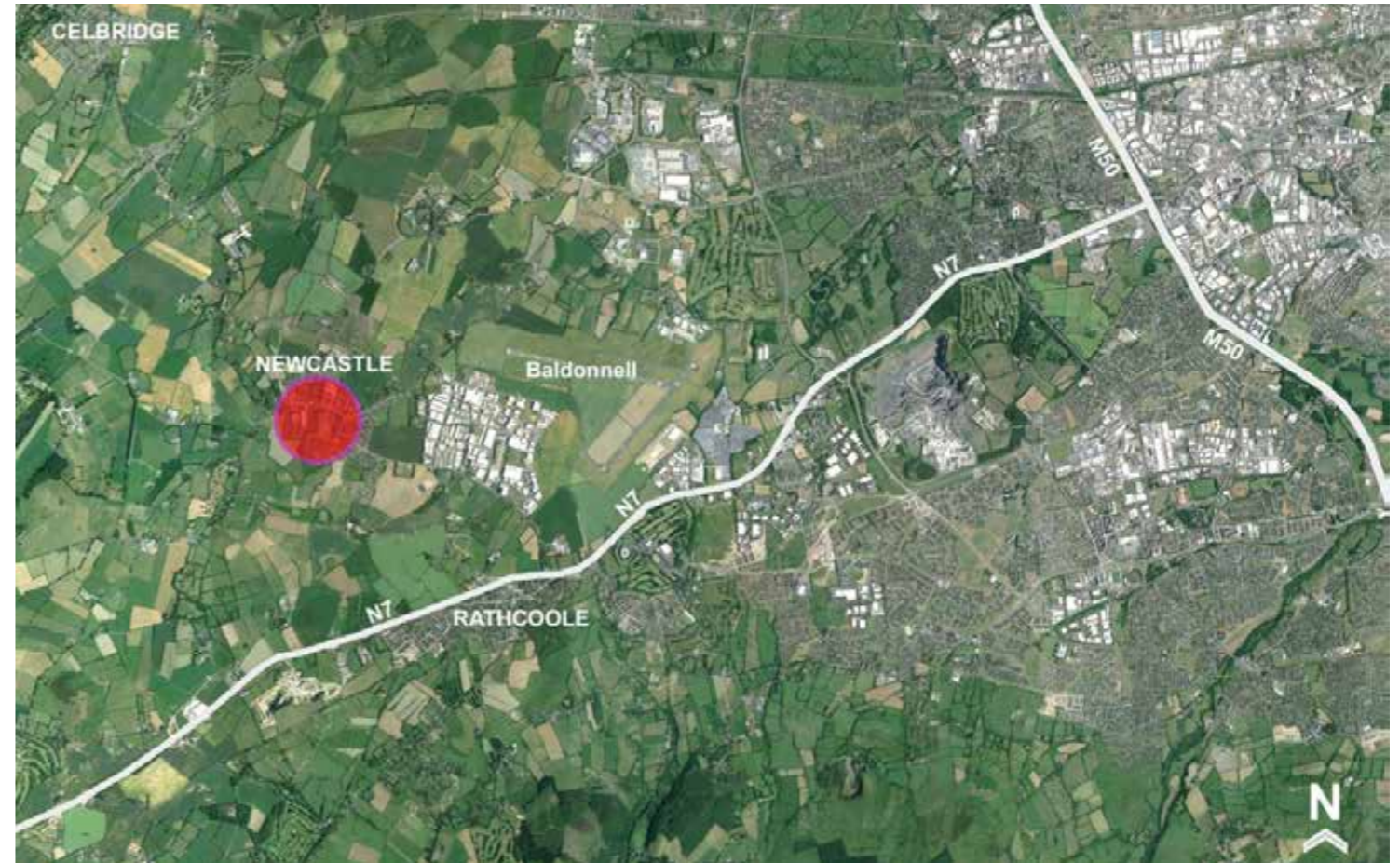
The town itself sits in the Newcastle Lowlands Landscape Character Area, as defined by the 2015 Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County. The LCA continues further, and calls Newcastle a 'Historic Urban' character area - towns and villages that have developed historically, surrounded by primarily 20th Century residential development, and with significant recent development in the past two decades. The bulk of Newcastle is designated as an area of Archaeological Potential due to the large range of recorded archaeological sites within the environs of the village.

The village of Newcastle underwent significant change with extensive new development over the early 2000's and particularly to the east of the village. In this respect, the Newcastle Local Area Plan (2012) notes that Newcastle has transformed the area from a rural village to a development village with suburban characteristics. Residential development to the west of the village is predominantly low density, one-off dwellings centred on Main Street while development to the east is characterised by medium density, suburban type housing estates to the north and south of main street. The lands generally comprise of greenfield backlands located to the south of Main Street and west of established residential development at Ballynakelly, a mid-noughties development of houses, duplexes and apartments. The application lands comprise of 8.47 Hectares and are zoned RES-N (to provide for new residential communities in accordance with approved planning schemes).

The overriding feature within this landscape are the existing elements of the original burgage plot field system, dating from the Anglo-Norman manorial system. These are long rectangular field boundaries extending perpendicularly from properties fronting onto Main Street. This landholding system and pattern has been identified as of regional importance.

*'This significance is due to....the remnant field-systems which encapsulate the historic fabric of the village. The burgage plots, open- or three-field system and the commons beyond can still be traced in the hedgerows which surround and comprise the historic core of the village. This landholding system was the product of a form of farming common on the European Continent which was introduced into Ireland by the Anglo-Normans.'* (Newcastle Lyons Historic Area Assessment 2011)

The retention and enhancement of these landscape elements have been a central part of the design process.



Newcastle Location



Site Location within Newcastle

## 2. Site Analysis

### 2.1 Historic Landscape

The application lands generally comprise of greenfield backlands, mainly disused fallow agricultural fields, located to the south of Main Street, west of the Graydon residential development residential. The application lands comprise of approximately 8.47 Hectares and are zoned RES-N ('To provide for new residential communities in accordance with approved area plans').

Previous development works associated with the Graydon development are visible within the site. This is mainly the current access road for the Graydon site compound. The remaining site comprises of fallow fields giving the site a rural character, with the boundaries reinforced by the existing hedgerow network to the north, providing a rural backdrop and a sense of enclosure, with views extending to the south.

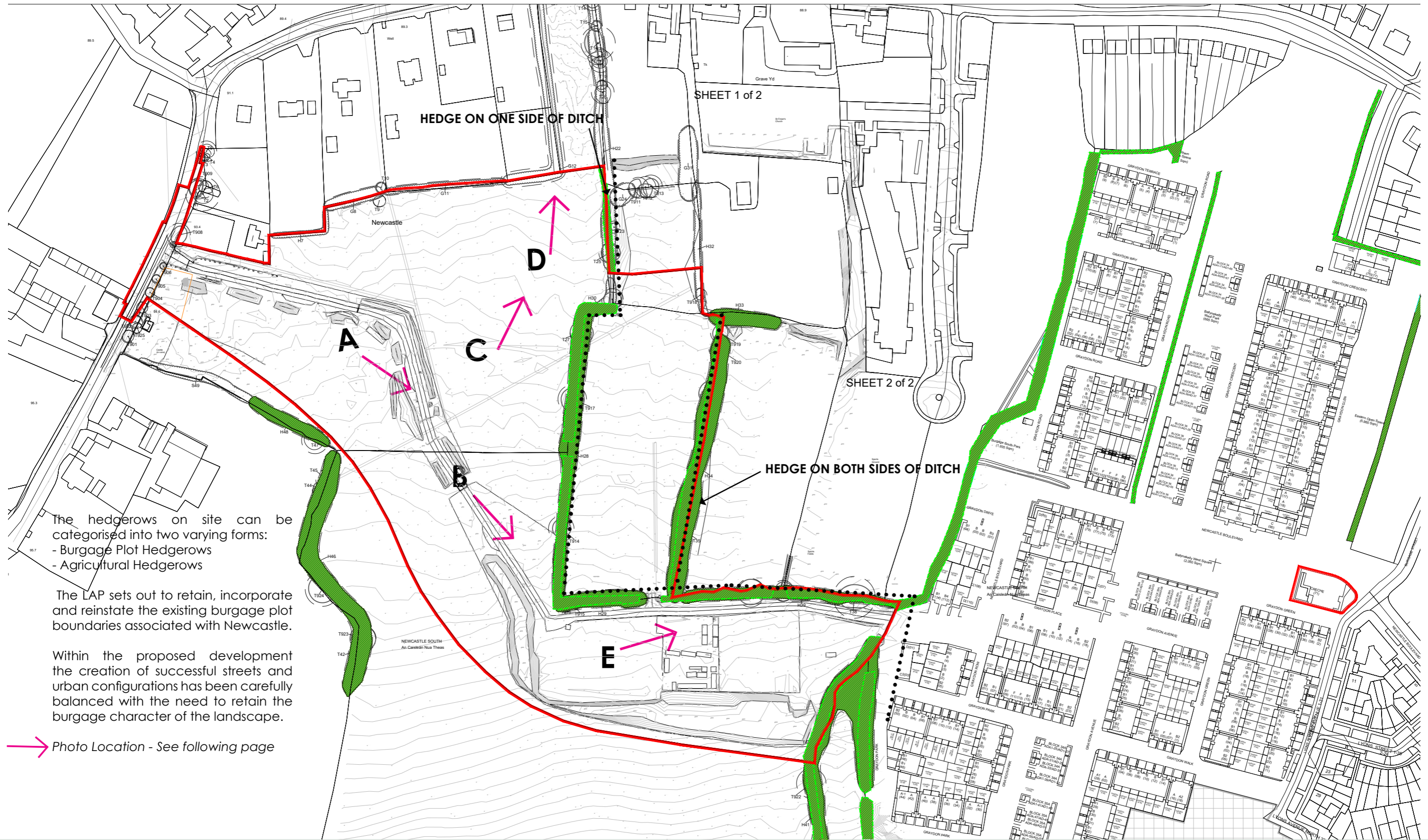
As such, the site will extend the suburban character of the Graydon development to the west of the site, further east into the backlands of Newcastle village, where development is solely located along Main Street.

Most of Newcastle is designated as an area of Archaeological Potential due to the large range of recorded archaeological sites within the environs of the village. The overriding features within this landscape are the existing elements of the original burgage plot field system, dating from the Anglo-Norman manorial system. These are long rectangular field boundaries extending perpendicularly from properties fronting onto Main Street. This landholding system and pattern has been identified as being of importance in the LAP.

The portions of hedgerows that remain are associated with this historic land use. The majority of the trees within the remaining hedgerows are Ash, with the occasional Sycamore, Wych Elm, Cherry and Poplar evident. The hedgerow themselves are mature and have not had any significant maintenance in recent years. The hedgerow species are dominated by Blackthorn, with large portions being colonised by bramble and ivy. Elsewhere there are areas of discontinuity within the hedgerow lines, while there are portion of encroachment by Blackthorn into the existing fields.



Site Photos



The hedgerows on site can be categorised into two varying forms:  
 - Burgage Plot Hedgerows  
 - Agricultural Hedgerows

The LAP sets out to retain, incorporate and reinstate the existing burgage plot boundaries associated with Newcastle.

Within the proposed development the creation of successful streets and urban configurations has been carefully balanced with the need to retain the burgage character of the landscape.

→ Photo Location - See following page



2.2.3. Existing Hedgerows: Defining Characteristics



The existing hedgerows on site form a defining pattern in the landscape, but have suffered from a lack of maintenance in recent years.

The following are typical examples of the various conditions on site:

1: Blackthorn and other hedgerow vegetation encroaching on field through natural succession and suckering;

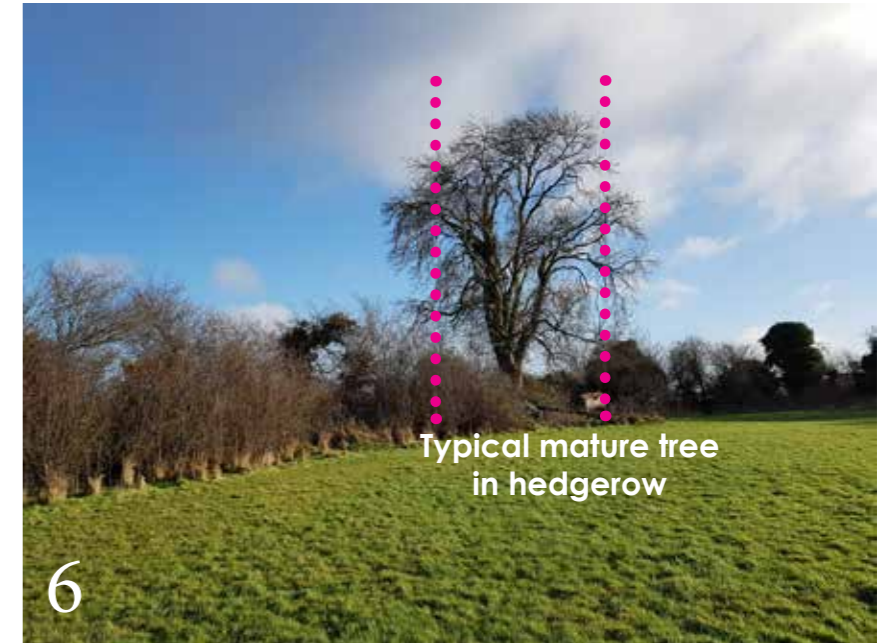
2: Trees growing on top of the mound (single or multi stemmed);

3: Brambles and/or ivy spreading colonising the hedgerows;

4: drainage ditches along the hedgerows;

5: gaps and discontinuity in the vegetation;

6: Typical mature tree in central location of original hedge line



## 2.2.4. LAP Objectives Regarding Hedgerows

**Existing hedgerows :**  
 - To be retained as much as possible

**Reinstated hedgerows :**  
 - To be planted as much as possible



LAP objectives regarding hedgerows conservation and reinstatement include the following:

Protect the historic burgage plot boundary and townland delineations (including townland boundaries) around Newcastle Village including their associated hedgerows and ditches. **(Objective G17)**

Require that burgage and townland field boundaries and ditches are utilised wherever possible as SUDS elements such as swales for conveying water; landscape features; and biodiversity-protecting elements. **(Objective G19)**

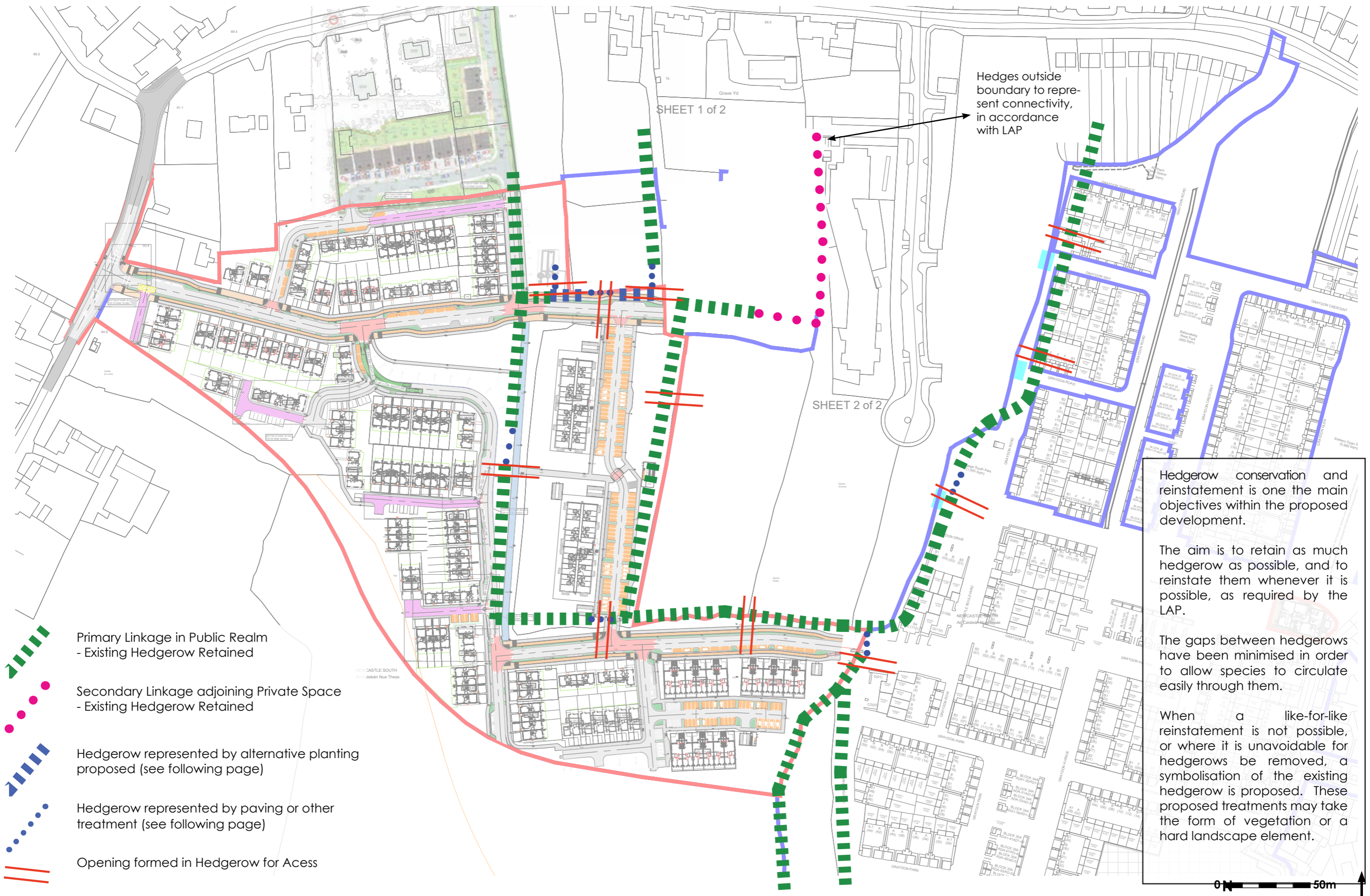
Allow for limited sections of field boundaries (burgage and townland) to be carefully altered where a need has been clearly demonstrated on the basis of a requirement for accessibility in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movement and the creation of successful streets and spaces. Where this occurs, high quality design cues that signal and delineate the pre-existing plot line of the section of removed hedgerow boundary shall be utilised. **(Objective G110)**

Where removal of a section of hedgerow is required for street access, the street width and gap in the hedgerow shall be kept to a minimum and determined by street typology. **(Objective G111)**



# 2.2 Hedgerow Strategy

## 2.2.5. Hedgerow Connectivity and Linkage



## 2.2.6. Hedgerow: Alternative Representation in Landscape where not Retained or Reinstated

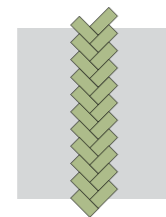
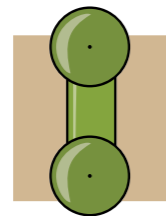
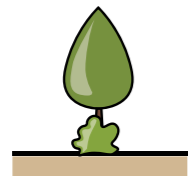
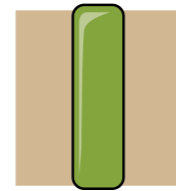
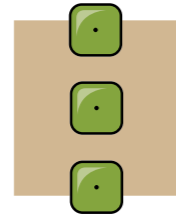
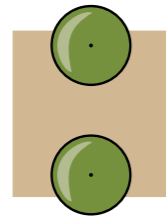
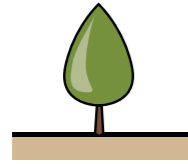
POSSIBLE WAYS OF SYMBOLIZATION :

Depending on the available surface and the use of the said surface, different processing can be implemented in order to represent where the hedgerow, either burgage or agricultural, used to be.

Where space and soil are concomitant with plantations :

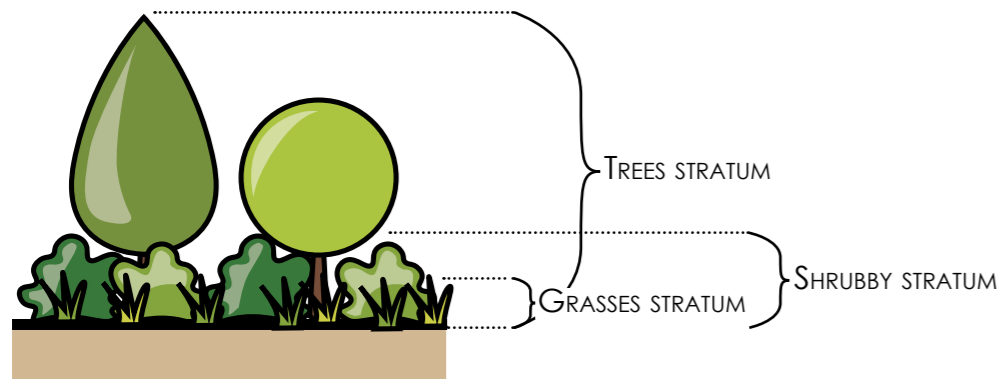


In other places, when neither soil or space allows, other ways of symbolising can be imagined :



Retaining and reinforcing connectivity and reinstating linkages :

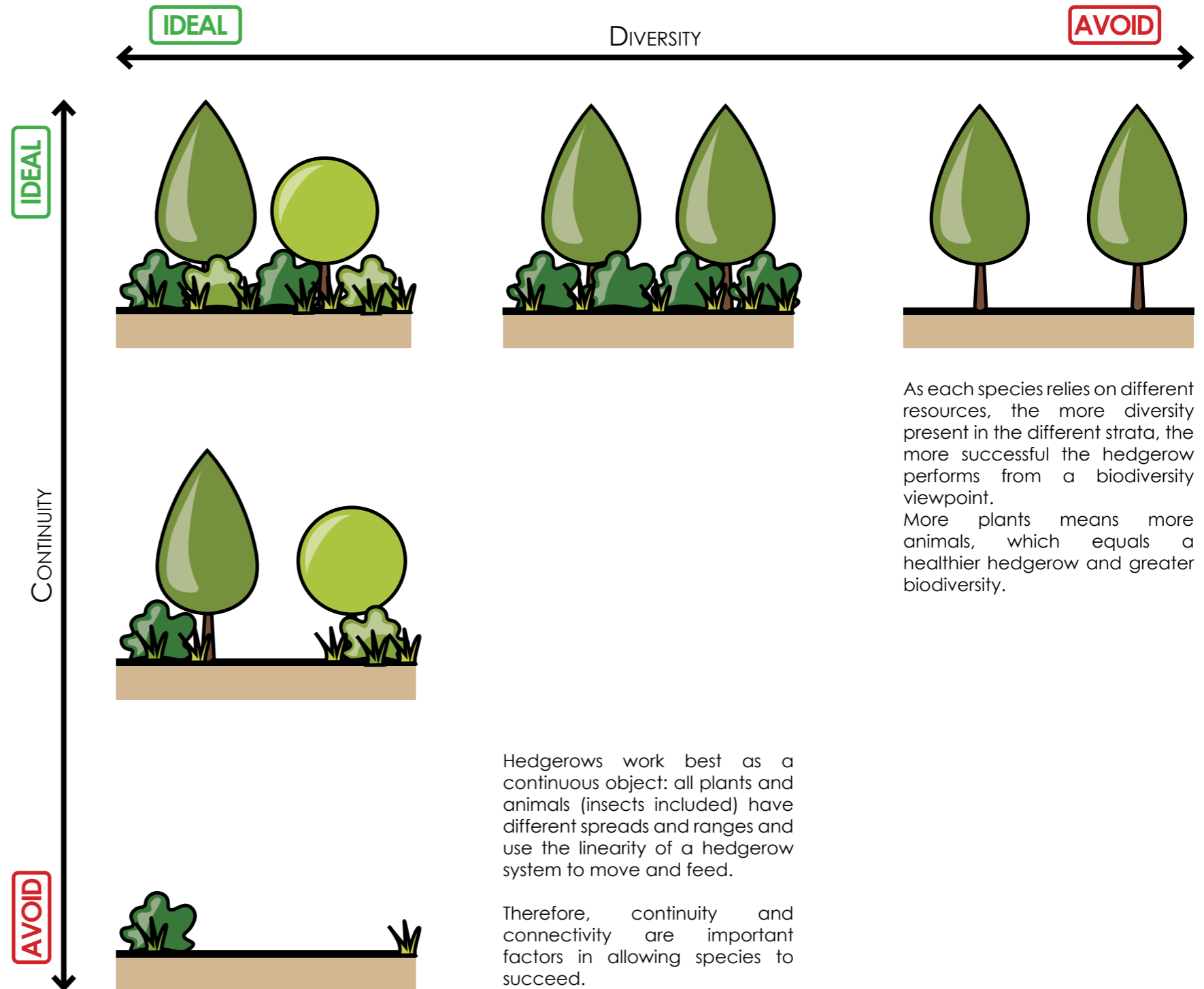
A FUNCTIONING LAYOUT:



Hedgerows function by layers :

- Trees Stratum (TS) ;
- Shrub stratum (SS) ;
- Grasses Stratum, or herbaceous stratum (GS) ;

Each one is important in its own right: and provide the natural habitat for different kinds of plants, animal and insects. They also work together, as each stratum feeds the other one: bird nesting in the TS will feed on insects and berries from SS and GS. Fox will feed on birds from TS, small mammals from GS and berries from SS.



As each species relies on different resources, the more diversity present in the different strata, the more successful the hedgerow performs from a biodiversity viewpoint. More plants means more animals, which equals a healthier hedgerow and greater biodiversity.

Hedgerows work best as a continuous object: all plants and animals (insects included) have different spreads and ranges and use the linearity of a hedgerow system to move and feed.

Therefore, continuity and connectivity are important factors in allowing species to succeed.



#### Design Approach & Open Space Planning Context

The design intent is to create a high quality and appropriate landscape for future residents, which will meet their recreational needs and provide an attractive visual setting and associated social amenity spaces. The principles of inclusivity for all age groups, universal accessibility and sustainable development are applied to ensure an inclusive and environmentally responsible design solution.

The objective of the landscape strategy for the proposed development is not simply to apply greenery to open areas but to place the new residential and community facilities within a cohesive landscape that responds to and integrates the proposed development within the site.

The landscape developments that are proposed are in accordance with the relevant Green Infrastructure policies of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022, the draft South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Newcastle Local Area Plan 2012.

The Local Area Plan seeks to create a permeable network of green infrastructure and open spaces across the LAP lands. This allows for the creation of a series of local parks within easy walking distance of future residents, along with a larger village park area (Taobh Chnoic Park), a significant portion of which is to be delivered as part of Graydon development, zoned to the south of the landscape. Each of the smaller open spaces will cater for active and passive needs while the Taobh Chnoic Park will cater for more formal play activities, with the inclusion of a senior size playing pitch, a multi-use games area and a playground catering for a large range of age groups.

These open spaces are linked with a Greenway pedestrian/cycle network. This network links existing developed areas to the east to the centre of Newcastle to the north through the new development and continues out to the existing roadway on the western side of Newcastle. The proposed greenway incorporates existing hedgerows where feasible and is separated from the proposed roadway system as much as possible.



Site Photo from Newcastle Phase1 Open Spaces

#### Burgage Plots

Overarching this permeable pedestrian-focused network is the existing burgage plot and hedgerow system. The LAP sets out to retain, incorporate and reinstate the existing burgage plot boundaries associated with Newcastle. Within the proposed development the creation of successful streets and urban configurations has been carefully balanced with the need to retain the burgage character of the landscape. A study of existing and proposed hedge typology has been undertaken, which, along with recommendations from the LAP, and has formed the basis of a system of retention and reinstatement of plot boundaries and hedgerows.

#### Landscape Layout and Design

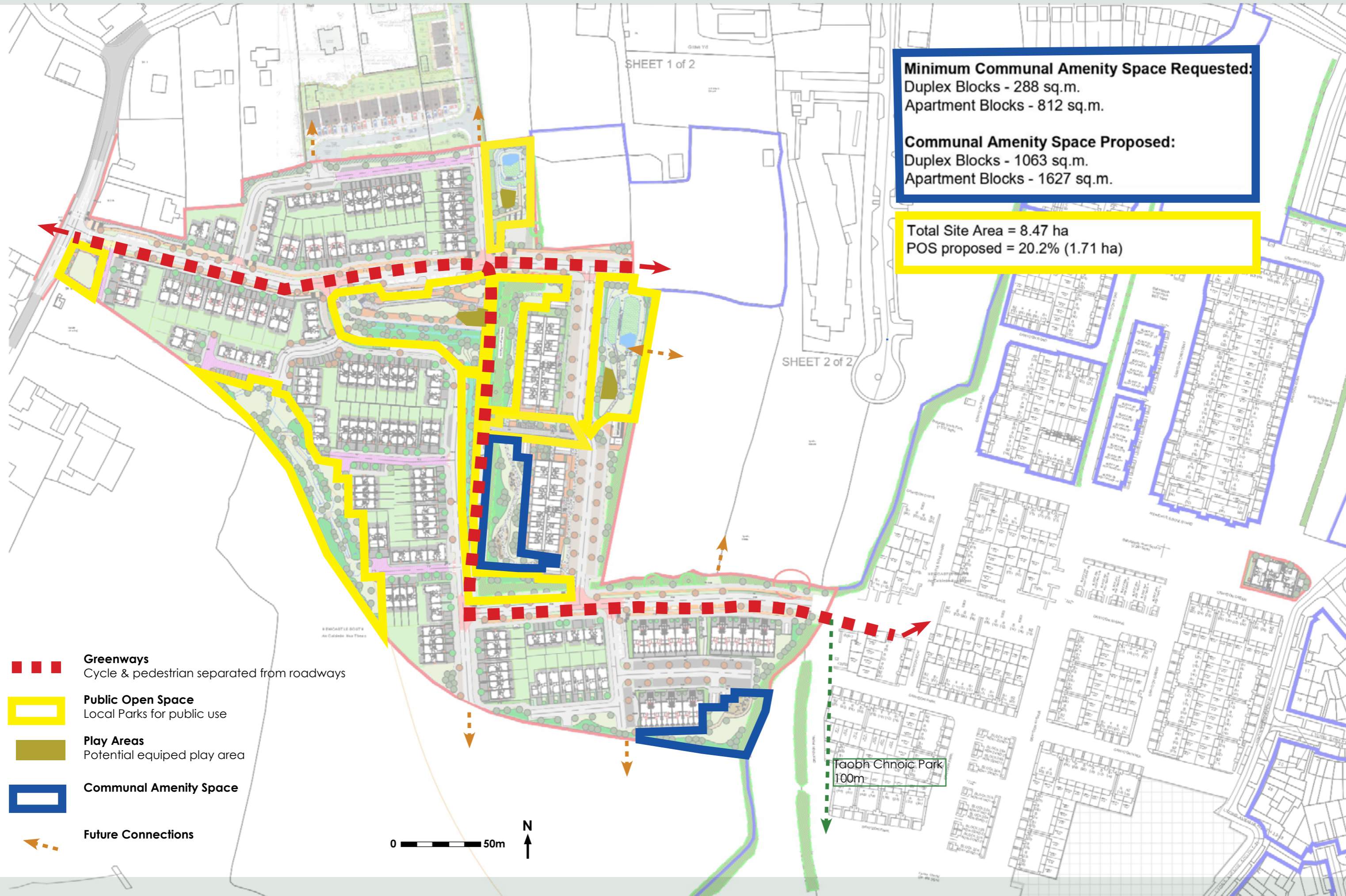
The site layout proposal aims to create a unifying streetscape which is rich in detail and diverse in textural and spatial qualities, with open spaces and boundary planting lending a verdant and visually attractive atmosphere. The open spaces are directly over-looked by dwellings, providing passive surveillance for safety.

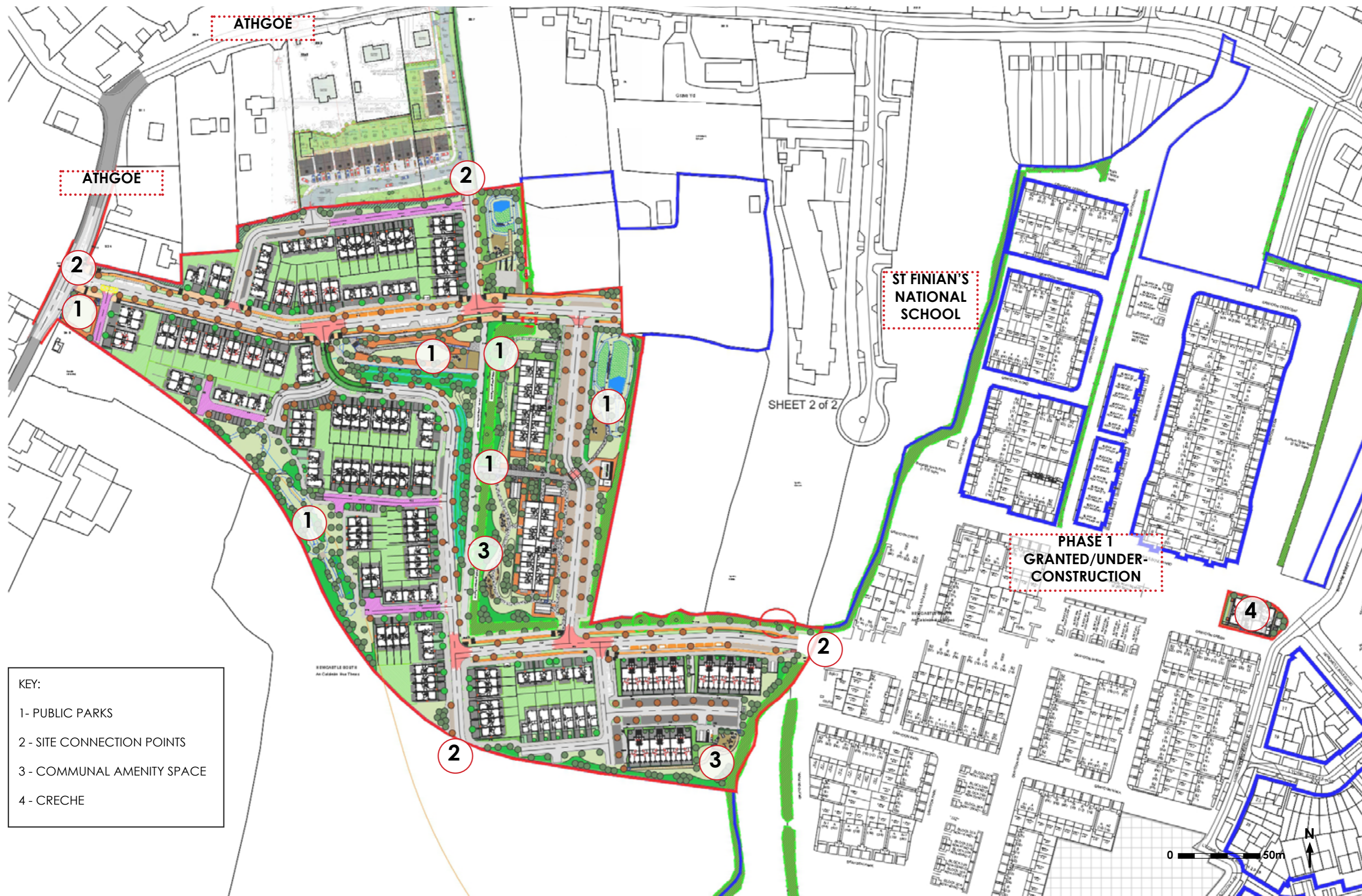
Within the open spaces there are areas for informal play, casual recreation and passive leisure. The quality of these spaces is enhanced by the inclusion of features such as, seating, paths, native planting and landform, and the utilisation of environmentally appropriate materials.

Natural Play elements will be incorporated within the spaces, in accordance with the LAP requirements. Natural Play incorporates designed elements that enable play spaces to blend in with their surroundings and encouraging interaction with the natural landscape. Specific play equipment will be selected in collaboration with specialist playground designers and South Dublin Co. Council Parks Dept. post-planning.

In aesthetic terms, the landscape design takes inspiration from the natural world, with a naturalistic approach to planting and an informal approach to design. Planting for pollinators with a large selection of native and non-native plants is proposed.

A restrained palette of materials will also be used to integrate the proposed architectural forms and materials within the landscape.







The proposed development and associated open spaces are linked with a Greenway pedestrian/cycle network.

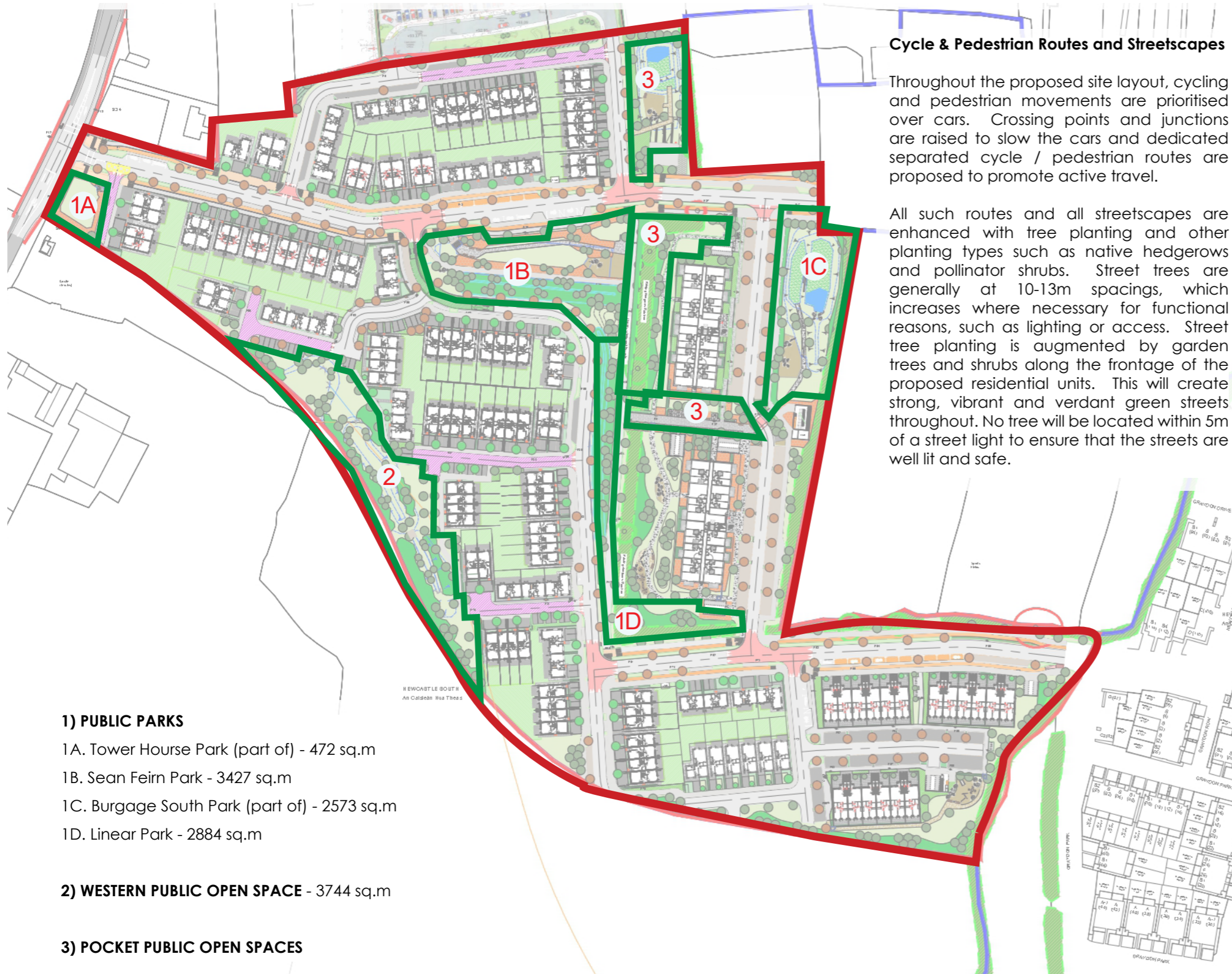
This network links existing developed areas to the east to the centre of Newcastle to the north through the new development and continues out to the existing roadway on the western side of Newcastle.

	<b>Greenway</b>
	<b>Main connections</b>
	<b>OS = Open Space</b>
	<b>CAS = Communal Amenity Space</b>

## Parks & Public Open Spaces

There are three parks proposed as part of the proposed development, including Sean Feirm Park and parts of both Tower House Park and Burgage South Park. A further large public open space is proposed along the south-western boundary, as well as other green spaces throughout.

SuDS features have been adapted into the design of the parks and open spaces throughout the development, in accordance with South Dublin County Council's publication SuDS Explanatory, Design and Evaluation Guide 2022.



### 1) PUBLIC PARKS

- 1A. Tower House Park (part of) - 472 sq.m
- 1B. Sean Feirm Park - 3427 sq.m
- 1C. Burgage South Park (part of) - 2573 sq.m
- 1D. Linear Park - 2884 sq.m

### 2) WESTERN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE - 3744 sq.m

### 3) POCKET PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

## Cycle & Pedestrian Routes and Streetscapes

Throughout the proposed site layout, cycling and pedestrian movements are prioritised over cars. Crossing points and junctions are raised to slow the cars and dedicated separated cycle / pedestrian routes are proposed to promote active travel.

All such routes and all streetscapes are enhanced with tree planting and other planting types such as native hedgerows and pollinator shrubs. Street trees are generally at 10-13m spacings, which increases where necessary for functional reasons, such as lighting or access. Street tree planting is augmented by garden trees and shrubs along the frontage of the proposed residential units. This will create strong, vibrant and verdant green streets throughout. No tree will be located within 5m of a street light to ensure that the streets are well lit and safe.

Indicative Landscape Reference Images from other Cairn Homes projects



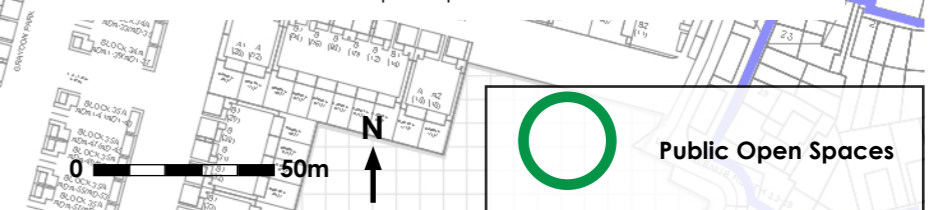
Oak Park Square - Central Open Space with SuDS features



Parkside Greenway - Positive relationship between housing and space



Marianella Park - Central Open Space with SuDS features





## Sean Feirm Park - 3427 sq.m

Sean Feirm Park is a formal local park that performs a number of functions, in accordance with the requirements of the LAP, which are as follows (taken from Table 7.3 Summary of Requirements for Landscaped Parks):

<b>Minimum Size (Ha.)</b>	0.25 ha. (Note: 3.4 ha. provided in site layout)
<b>Play Equipment</b>	1 x YCAP [Young Children's Area of Play]
<b>Features</b>	Formal local park that caters largely for passive recreation with an element of children's play.
<b>Materials</b>	Soft landscaping including formal landscaping with park furniture & SUDS water feature.

The design of the park incorporates seating areas, pedestrian routes, playspace and SuDS features including swales and detention basin. The sides of the detention basin are planted with native shrubs, including willow and dogwood, creating light and textured enclosure for the kickabout space at the base of the basin. The swale is planted with wildflowers for pollination and to allow for overlooking and passive supervision from adjacent dwellings. The seating areas will be universally accessible, and specific measures have been incorporated to ensure this is achieved.

## Burgage South Park (part of) - 2573 sq.m

Burgage South Park will be a large neighbourhood park serving a wide range of active and passive functions in a series of linked spaces defined by hedgerows. This development includes approximately 25% of the full park area. The requirements for this park in the LAP are as follows (taken from Table 7.3 Summary of Requirements for Landscaped Parks):

<b>Minimum Size (Ha.)</b>	1 ha. (Note: 2.5 ha. provided in site layout)
<b>Play Equipment</b>	1 x YCAP [Young Children's Area of Play]
	1 x LEAP [Local Equipped Area for Play]
<b>Features</b>	Large neighbourhood park serving a wide range of active and passive functions in a series of linked spaces defined by hedgerows. Formal planting around outer edges.
<b>Materials</b>	Soft landscaping with park furniture & SUDS water feature.

This proposed development delivers c.25% of the park area. As this park is aligned with the Burgage plots, the park is 'cellular' in nature. Thus, the form of this park, defined by the burgage plot as a long/narrow space-oriented north-south and bounded by mature hedgerow on the eastern boundary means that this will function well as a stand-alone park until the remaining areas are built out in future. This form captures the historic landscape and tells the story of this place for the future residents and visitors, enabling them to see and experience first-hand the pattern of the landscape established in Norman Ireland.

This park contains a nature-based play space along the western boundary, which will work as a YCAP. Further play spaces can be delivered with later phases of development.

## Tower House Park (part of) - 472 sq.m

The area of land included in this open space at the entrance to the site is an extension to the Tower House Park area proposed in the LAP. The tower house is in the adjoining landholding and not part of this site.

The requirements for this park in the LAP are as follows (taken from Table 7.3 Summary of Requirements for Landscaped Parks):

<b>Minimum Size (Ha.)</b>	0.1 ha. (Note: 0.047 ha. provided in site layout)
<b>Play Equipment</b>	1 x YCAP [Young Children's Area of Play]
<b>Features</b>	A gateway park with an historical feature entrance to the Plan Lands. Gateway space with SuDS feature and buffer planting.
<b>Materials</b>	Soft landscaping including formal landscaping with park furniture.

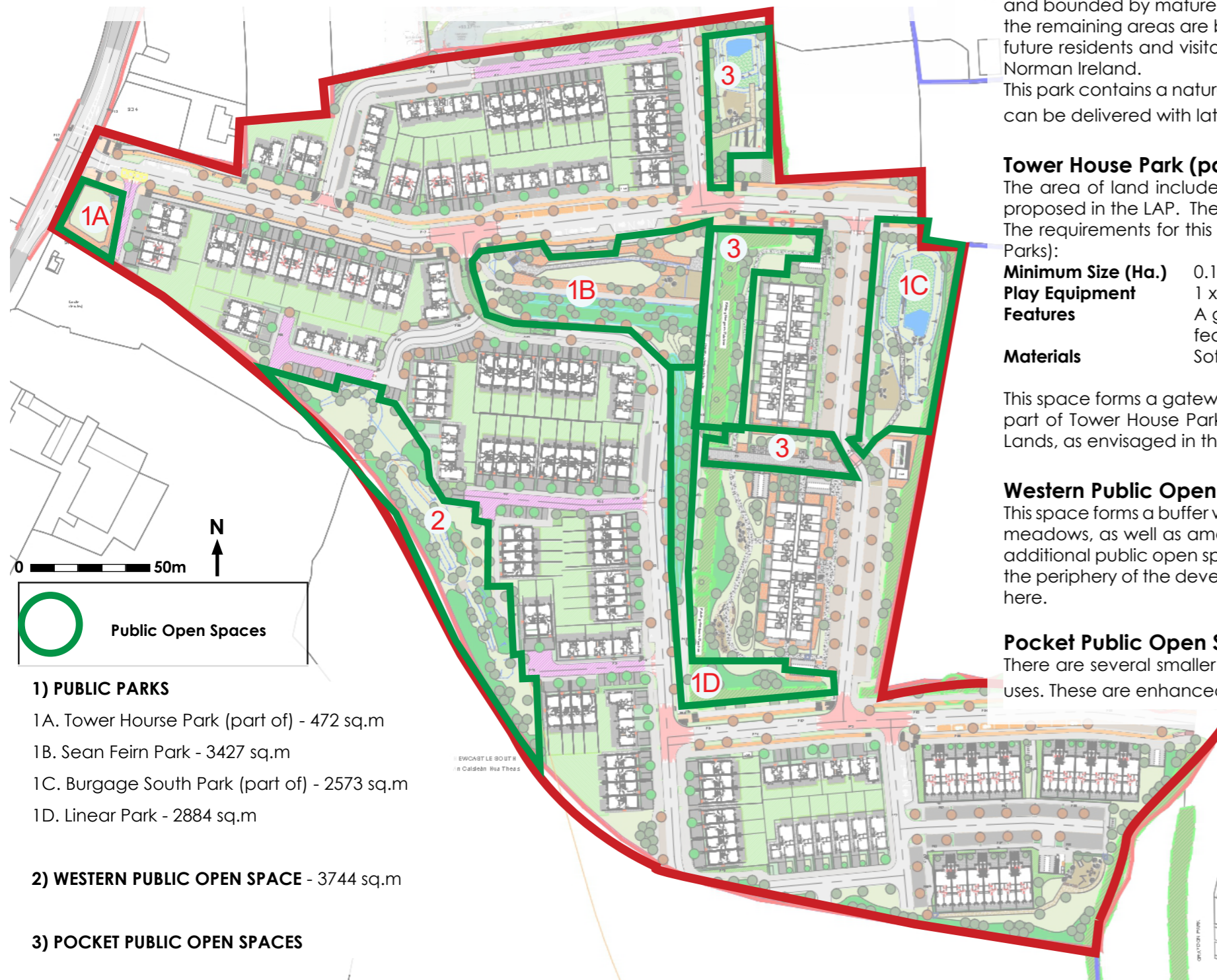
This space forms a gateway framing the entrance into the LAP. In future, this space can be integrated with the remaining part of Tower House Park and become part of a heritage trail and walking and cycling circuit routes around the Plan Lands, as envisaged in the LAP.

## Western Public Open Space - 3744 sq.m

This space forms a buffer with the adjoining rural landscape (outside LAP lands). It will be planted with native trees wildflower meadows, as well as amenity grass for kickabout. The requirement for underground tanks created an opportunity for an additional public open space with detention areas and this creates a space with a connection to the wider landscape on the periphery of the development, ideal for local recreation. There are passive and local active recreational opportunities here.

## Pocket Public Open Spaces

There are several smaller open spaces within the development, with nature-based play areas, cycle parking and similar uses. These are enhanced with native and pollinator planting to contribute to local biodiversity and pollinator health.



- 1) PUBLIC PARKS**
  - 1A. Tower House Park (part of) - 472 sq.m
  - 1B. Sean Feirm Park - 3427 sq.m
  - 1C. Burgage South Park (part of) - 2573 sq.m
  - 1D. Linear Park - 2884 sq.m
- 2) WESTERN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE - 3744 sq.m**
- 3) POCKET PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**





**Sustainable Drainage Systems - SuDS**

SuDS features are integrated into the landscape design for the spaces where possible, primarily in the form of swales and detention basins. These features will be planted with native shrub and wildflower as appropriate, adding to the value of these elements.

All SuDS elements are in accordance with South Dublin County Council's publication *SuDS Explanatory, Design and Evaluation Guide 2022*.

**Natural Play**

Natural play elements are proposed throughout the development.

Natural play incorporates a number of elements that enable play spaces to blend in with their natural surroundings, and encourages interaction with the natural landscape.

These components represent the larger wild environment in a way that feels safe and manageable to young visitors. A few man-made components might also be carefully integrated to support creative play, encourage confident exploration and help children develop a lasting affinity for the natural world.

Indicative Landscape Reference Images from other Cairn Homes projects



Churchfields Play Area



Glenheron Swale



Mariavilla Plays Space



NATIVE PLANT PALETTE



Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)



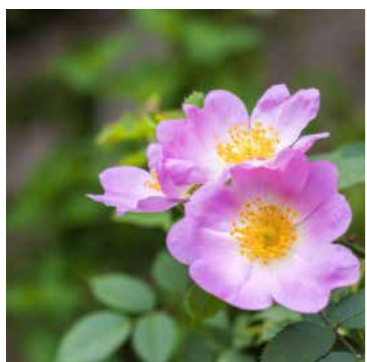
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)  
(Non-native, Naturalised)



Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)



Crab apple (*Malus campestre*)



Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)



Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)



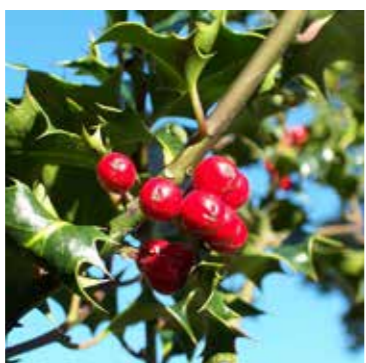
Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)



Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)



Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)



Oak (*Quercus sp.*)



Rowan (*Sorbus sp.*) and  
Whitebeam



Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)



Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*)



Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)



Willow (*Salix sp.*)

Planting proposals form a vital part of the strategy for the site, in accordance with County Development Plan objectives and national policy on biodiversity. Green Infrastructure is a term that is used to describe the interconnected networks of land and water that sustain environmental quality and enhance the quality of our lives. The European Union's Biodiversity Strategy recognises the application of Green Infrastructure policies as a way to maintain biodiversity and ecosystems in the wider landscape. Green Infrastructure networks operate on many scales, from the national to local, and the protection and enhancement of these networks has the ability to positively affect communities into the future, especially in terms of climate change, sustainable development and spatial planning.

As previously described, hedgerow retention and reinstatement is the most important element of the Green Strategy for the site. In the wider landscape, there are areas of landscape, woodland and habitat to the south of the site in particular. The proposals for the site will create linkages and stepping stones for some species, notably birds and insects, including pollinators and the planting proposals are intended to benefit these species.

The planting proposals are aimed at gaining the maximum possible benefit for biodiversity and pollinators and are in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. This means that wherever possible, native vegetation is proposed and where needed for functional or aesthetic reasons, non-native plants are specified, with due care. Any non-native plants are chosen to be non-invasive (i.e. the planting selection avoids the use of all known invasive species, with reference to the latest lists of invasive species published by the National Biodiversity Data Centre) and have value to insect and other fauna as a pollinator.

Ground layers in open spaces will primarily be wild grass and wildflower with amenity grass only in those areas designed for kickabout or active use. A six-week mowing regime will be applied to the maintenance of peripheral amenity grass areas to ensure that they have maximum possible ecological and biodiversity benefit, allowing the grass and ground flora to develop. Kickabout and play areas will need more frequent mowing, but margins will be maintained in accordance with the six-week guideline.

In boundary and edge spaces, native provenance wildflower seed mixes for bird and pollinator benefit are proposed. These will be cut no more than three times per annum, in accordance with best practice for biodiversity.

In the open spaces, courtyards, gardens and planted areas, high-value and diverse pollinator plants are proposed to ensure that the site has value for insects and the ecologies that depend on them, including those of humans, with a community garden proposed which will benefit from a health pollinator insect population.

See Drawing 1855\_PL\_02 for further planting details.



Wildflower meadow with bulbs



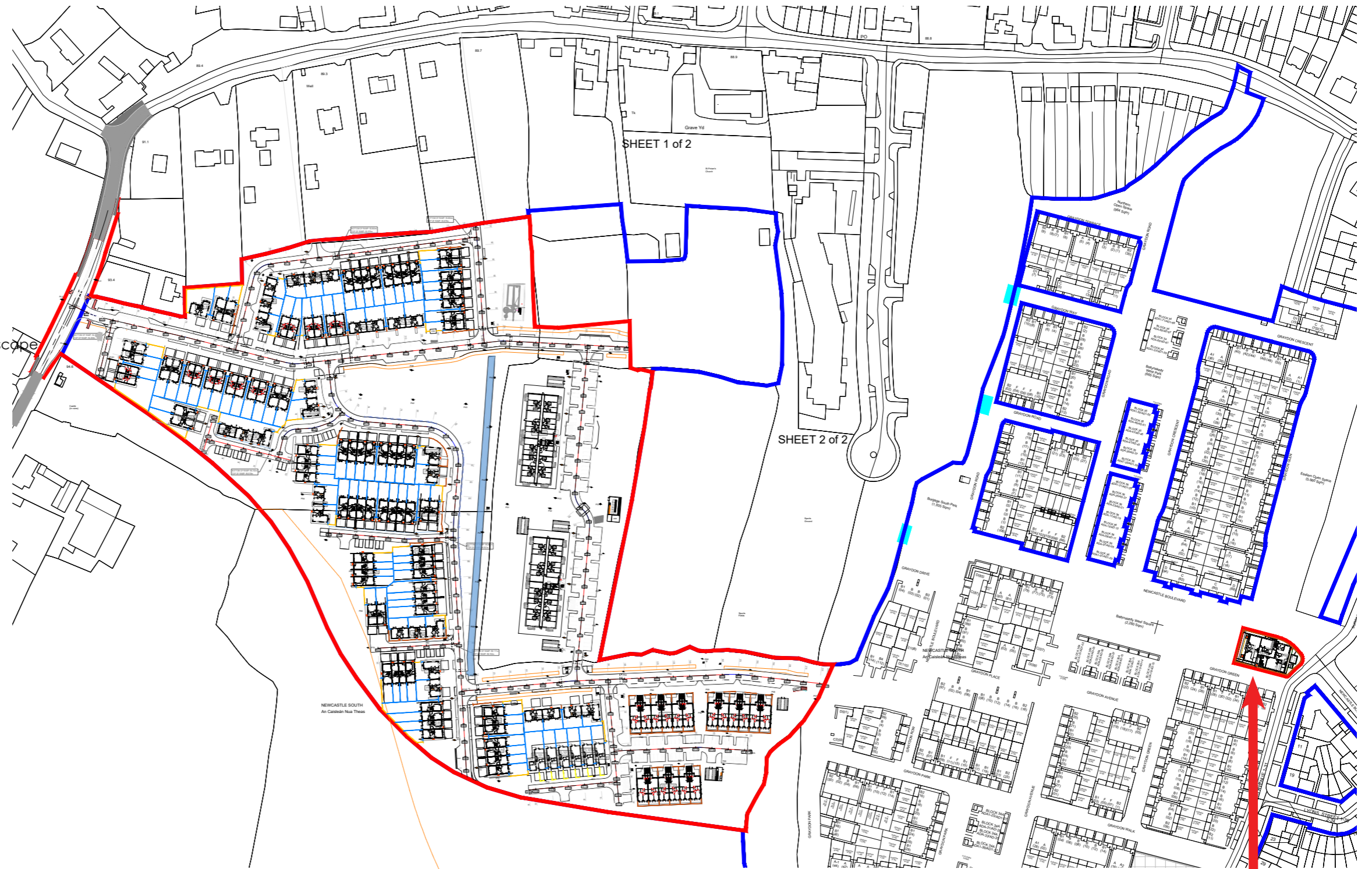
**Rendered Concrete Block Wall: +2m**  
- Facing Public Realm areas within streetscape



**Steel Bar Railing: +1.0m**

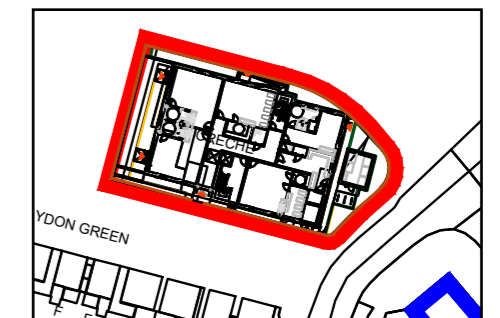


**Timber Panel & Concrete Post: +1.8m to 2.0m**  
- Within residential unit rear gardens



Proposed Site Boundaries (See Drawing 1855\_PL\_P\_03 for details)

**Creche area**  
Boundary treatment:  
Steel Bar railing



**Hard Landscape Materials**

A simple and robust palette of hard landscape materials is proposed. The paving materials are arranged to reflect the various changes in use and identity of the proposed public realm, while allowing a coherent and consistent treatment over the site. This creates a strong and integrated urban identity for the development.

Proposed paving is generally within a light colour range, with various darker colours used sparingly for contrast.

Specific areas within the development are further defined by the use of various paving sizes, layout and colour. For example, internal courtyards and specimen seating spaces have a smaller block unit to create a more human-scale, domestic feeling within the communal spaces.

See Drawing 1855\_PL\_P\_01 for further details and Drawing 1855\_PL\_P\_03 for boundary details.



Simple & Robust Street Furniture



Permeable concrete block pavers used for driveways



Concrete Block Paving to thresholds and private paths



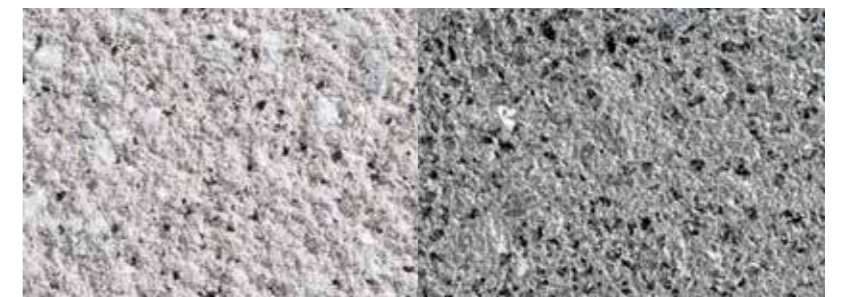
Asphalt Paths within open spaces



Brushed Concrete Paths for public realm footpaths



Pre-cast Concrete Kerbs



Pre-cast concrete paving with natural stone aggregate finish for specimen paving areas with Open Spaces