CHAPTER 6

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was prepared by Richard Butler of Model Works Ltd and comprises an assessment of the likely effects on the landscape and visual environment of the proposed Strategic Housing Development application, for which a seven year permission is sought, on lands at Ballyoulster, Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Richard Butler has degrees in Landscape Architecture (BLArch, University of Pretoria, South Africa, 1995) and Town Planning (MSc Spatial Planning, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2007), is a member of the Irish Landscape Institute and the Irish Planning Institute and has 25 years' experience in development and environmental planning, specialising in LVIA.

This Chapter of the EIAR should be read with reference to the verified photomontages, which are contained in Appendix 6.1 of this EIAR and in a separate A3 brochure, also submitted with the planning application.

6.2 STUDY METHODOLOGY

The LVIA was prepared with reference to the Landscape Institute's *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 2013 (GLVIA) and the EPA *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2022.

The EPA guidelines provide a general methodology and impact ratings for all types of specialist assessments. The GLVIA provides specific guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessments. Therefore, a combination of the EPA guidelines, the Landscape Institute guidelines and professional experience has informed the methodology for this assessment.

The following legislation and EIA Guidelines were also consulted in the process of preparation of the EIAR:

- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2022;
- Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 (as amended);
- Transposition of 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU) in the Land Use Planning and EPA Licensing Systems – Key Issues Consultation Paper (2017; DoHPCLG);
- Preparation of Circular letter PL 1/2017 - Advice on Administrative Provisions in Advance of Transposition (2017).
- Development Management Guidelines (DoEHLG, 2007).
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in environmental impact assessment reports, EPA, 2022;
- Environmental Impact Assessment – Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018; DoHPLG); and
- Advice Notes on Current Practice (in preparation of Environmental Impact Statements) (EPA 2003).
- Guidelines on Information to be Contained in an Environmental Impact Statement (EPA 2002). EU / European Commission (in addition to Directives referenced above)
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (2017)
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Screening (2017)
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Scoping (2017)
- Study on the Assessment of Indirect & Cumulative Impacts as well as Impact Interaction (DG Environment 2002).
- EU Guidance on EIA Screening (DG Environment 2001).
- Guidance on EIA Scoping (DG Environment 2001).
- EIA Review Checklist (DG Environment 2001).

6.2.1 Key Principles of the GLVIA

Assessment of Both 'Landscape' and 'Visual' Effects

The GLVIA requires that effects on views/visual amenity be assessed separately from the effects on townscape, although the two topics are inherently linked.

'Landscape' results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations and spatial distribution of these elements create variations in townscape character. Landscape impact assessment identifies the changes to these elements and characteristics which would result from a proposed development, and assesses the significance of those changes on the landscape as a resource. Visual impact assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area's visual amenity.

Use of the Term 'Effect' vs 'Impact'

The GLVIA requires that the terms 'impact' and 'effect' be clearly distinguished and consistently used. 'Impact' is defined as the action being taken, e.g. the introduction buildings, infrastructure or landscaping to the townscape. 'Effect' is defined as the change resulting from those actions, e.g. change in townscape character or in the amenity value of a view.

6.2.2 Methodology for Assessment of Landscape Effects

Assessment of potential landscape effects involves (a) classifying the sensitivity of the landscape resource, (b) classifying the magnitude of landscape change which would result from the development, and (c) combining these factors to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects.

Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape is a function of its character, which may be determined by its land use pattern, urban grain, building typologies and architecture, cultural and natural heritage elements (e.g. topography, drainage features, vegetation), and the quality of the public realm. These factors determine the value that is placed on the landscape. The nature and scale of the proposed development is also taken into account (a particular townscape can have varying sensitivity to different development types), as are any trends of change, and relevant policy. Five categories are used to classify sensitivity (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Categories of Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape exhibits very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The landscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is very low. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national or international value and the principle management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principle management objective for the area is conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong, or has evidence of alteration, degradation or erosion of elements and characteristics. The landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in policy at local or county level and the principle

	management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principle management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes include derelict industrial lands, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principle management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

Note on definitions used in this assessment

The definitions in Table 6.1 (townscape sensitivity), 6.2 (magnitude of townscape change), 6.4 (viewpoint sensitivity) and 6.5 (magnitude of visual change) are not taken from either the GLVIA or the EPA Guidelines. Both of these guidance documents require that classifications of sensitivity and magnitude of change (such as high, medium, low, etc.) be used in the assessment process (see EPA Guidelines Figure 3.4 and GLVIA Box 3.1, Paragraph 3.26 and Figure 3.5) - but neither guidance document provides definitions for such classifications.

The GLVIA specifically avoids being prescriptive in this this regard (GLVIA paragraph 1.20): *"The guidance concentrates on principles... It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances."* (emphasis added)

The EPA Guidelines state (in Section 3, p.49): *"While guidelines and standards help ensure consistency, the professional judgement of competent experts can play an important role in the determination of significance. These experts may place different emphases on the factors involved. As this can lead to differences of opinion, the EIAR sets out the basis of these judgements so that the varying degrees of significance attributed to different factors can be understood."* (emphasis added)

The GLVIA and EPA Guidelines thus require that the factors used in arriving at significance conclusions (i.e. classifications of sensitivity and magnitude) should be explained in the EIAR, but the guidelines do not provide the explanations themselves. It is for this reason that the definitions in Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5 are provided in this section. These definitions have been developed and refined by LVIA practitioners in Ireland and the UK, including the chapter author, over decades of practice. They are not standard, i.e. the classifications/definitions used in this assessment may differ from those used by other practitioners. However, the author considers them to be reasonable and appropriate for the purpose of classifying the significance of landscape/townscape and visual effects and the same definitions have been used in many previous LVIA reports/chapters prepared by the author and accepted by the planning authorities.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

Magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape by a development, with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics, and any affected surrounding character areas (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Categories of Landscape Change

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the landscape.
High	Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Medium	Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Low	Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.
Negligible	Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the landscape character.

Significance of Effects

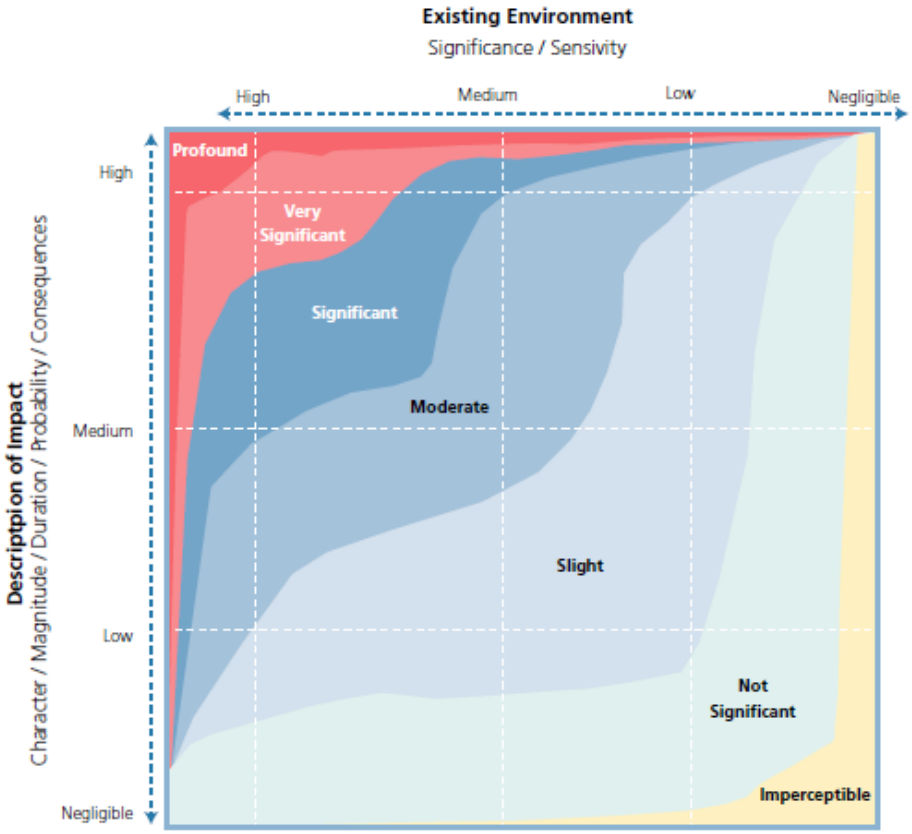
To classify the significance of effects (for both landscape and visual impacts) the magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the receiving environment/receptor using the guide in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Guide to Classification of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

		Sensitivity of the Landscape/View				
		Very High	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**
Magnitude of Landscape/Visual Change	**Very High**	Profound	Profound to Very Significant	Very Significant to Significant	Moderate	Slight
	High	Profound to Very Significant	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate to Slight	Slight to Not Significant
	Medium	Very Significant to Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant
	Low	Moderate	Moderate to Slight	Slight	Not significant	Imperceptible
	Negligible	Slight	Slight to Not Significant	Not significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

This matrix is derived from the EPA's *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2022 (specifically Figure 3.4 of the Guidelines – see Figure 6.1 below).

Figure 6.1: 'Chart showing typical classifications of the significance of impacts' (Source: Figure 3.4 of the EPA *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2022)



The matrix and the EPA's chart (Figure 6.1) are only a guide to the classification of impact significance. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable. In the EPA guidelines the chart above is accompanied by a footnote that states: *"The depiction of significance classifications is indicative and should not be relied on as being definitive. It is provided for general guidance purposes"* (EPA guidelines Section 3, page 53).

The impact significance classifications, i.e. imperceptible to profound, are taken from the EPA Guidelines. The Guidelines define the classifications as follows (Table 6.4):

Table 6.4: Impact Significance Classifications

Significance	Description
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

6.2.3 Methodology for Assessment of Visual Effects

Assessment of visual effects involves identifying a number of key/representative viewpoints in the site's receiving environment, and for each one of these: (a) classifying the viewpoint sensitivity, (b) classifying the magnitude of change which would result in the view (informed by photomontages of the proposed development), and (c) combining these factors to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects on the view.

Sensitivity of the Viewpoint/Visual Receptor

Viewpoint sensitivity is a function of two main considerations:

- Susceptibility of the visual receptor to change. This depends on the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location. Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage attractions and places of congregation where the setting contributes to the experience. Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping.
- Value attached to the view. This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

Five categories are used to classify a viewpoint's sensitivity (Table 6.5):

Table 6.5: Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Iconic viewpoints (views towards or from a landscape feature or area) that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of national value. The composition, character and quality of the view are such that its capacity for change is very low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change.
High	Viewpoints that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of value, or viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (e.g. views from houses or outdoor recreation amenities focused on the landscape). The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity to accommodate change may or may not be low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	Views that may not have features or characteristics that are of particular value, but have no major detracting elements, and which thus provide some visual amenity. These views may have capacity for appropriate change and the principle management objective is to facilitate change to the composition that does not detract from visual amenity, or which enhances it.
Low	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, and where the composition and character are such that there is capacity for change. This category also includes views experienced by people involved in activities with no particular focus on the landscape. For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that does not detract from visual amenity or enhances it.
Negligible	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, or in which the composition may be unsightly (e.g. in derelict landscapes). For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that repairs, restores or enhances visual amenity.

Magnitude of Change to the View

Classification of the magnitude of change takes into account the size or scale of the intrusion of development into the view (relative to the other elements and features in the composition, i.e. its relative visual dominance), the degree to which it contrasts or integrates with the other elements and the general character of the view, and the way in which the change will be experienced (e.g. in full view, partial or peripheral view, or in glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, as well as the duration and reversibility of the visual effects. Five categories are used to classify magnitude of visual change to a view (Table 6.6):

Table 6.6: Categories of Magnitude of Visual Change

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Full or extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features or characteristics, or introduction of elements that are completely out of character in the context, to the extent that the development becomes dominant in the composition and defines the character of the view and the visual amenity.
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.
Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

Significance of Visual Effects

As with landscape effects, to classify the significance of visual effects, the magnitude of change to the view is measured against the sensitivity of the viewpoint, using the guide in Table 6.3 and Figure 6.1 above.

6.2.4 Quality of Effects

In addition to predicting the significance of the effects, EIA methodology requires that the quality of the effects be classified as positive, neutral, or negative/adverse.

For landscape to a degree, but particularly for visual effects, this is an inherently subjective exercise. This is because landscape and visual amenity are perceived by people and are therefore subject to variations in the attitude and values - including aesthetic preferences - of the receptor. One person's attitude to a development may differ from another person's, and thus their response to the effects of a development on a landscape or view may vary.

Additionally, in certain situations there might be policy encouraging a particular development in an area, in which case the policy is effectively prescribing landscape and visual change. If a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be considered positive, even if the landscape character or views are profoundly changed. The classification of quality of landscape and visual effects should seek to take these variables into account and provide a reasonable and robust assessment.

6.2.5 Photomontage Methodology

To assess the potential visual effects of the proposed development 10 no. viewpoints were selected for detailed assessment informed by verified photomontages. The viewpoints were selected to represent the key receptors in the receiving environment, as identified in Section 6.3.3. The viewpoints were also selected with the objective of providing photomontages of the proposal from a range of angles and distances.

The photomontages were produced by Model Works Ltd and are included in Appendix 6.1. The photomontage methodology is based on the Landscape Institute advice note 01/11 Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and 20 years' experience in photomontage production. The method has five main steps:

- Photography
- Survey
- 3D Modelling and Camera Matching
- Rendering and Finishing of Photomontages
- Presentation

Photography

Date, Time and Conditions
The photography is timed so that the scene conditions, weather conditions and sun position allow - as far as possible - for a clear and representative baseline photograph to be captured. The objective is to ensure that all key elements of the view are clearly visible and unobscured by, for example, vehicular or pedestrian traffic in the foreground, precipitation, darkness/shade, sun glare, etc. The date and time of each photograph are recorded so that the sun position can be accurately portrayed in the 3D model ultimately montaged into the baseline photograph.

Camera and Camera Set-up
The photographs are taken using a Canon EOS5D Mark II camera with a 21 mega pixel sensor and image resolution of 5616 x 3744 pixels. At each viewpoint the camera was positioned on a tripod with the lens 1.65m above ground level (the level of the average adult's eyes), directed at the site and levelled in the horizontal and vertical axes.

Lenses
Prime lenses (fixed focal length with no zoom function) are used as this ensures that the image parameters for every photograph are the same and that all photographs taken with the same lens are comparable. For the close-up to middle distant views a 24mm prime lens is normally used. This lens captures a field of view of 73 degrees. This relatively wide field of view is preferred for the purpose of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as it shows more of the context landscape/townscape surrounding a site. For distant viewpoints a 50mm prime lens may be used, capturing a 39 degree horizontal field of view.

Survey

The coordinates of each viewpoint/camera position, including the elevation, are recorded using a survey grade GPS receiver, the Trimble Geo7X, which is accurate to within 1cm. For each viewpoint, the coordinates of several static objects in the view are also surveyed (e.g. lamp posts, bollards, corners of buildings, etc.). The coordinates of these 'markers' are used as reference points later in the process, to ensure that the direction of view of the cameras in the 3D model matches the direction of view of the photographs.

3D Model and Camera Matching

Creation of 3D Model
An Autodesk Revit model of the proposed development was supplied by the architect for the production of the photomontages. Model Works exported the Revit model into the software package Autodesk 3DS Max, in which materials were applied to the model's buildings and surfaces. Model Works built a 3D model of the proposed public realm/landscaping based on AutoCAD drawings provided by the landscape architect.

3D Camera Positions
The surveyed camera positions and the markers for each view are inserted into the 3D model, with information on the focal length of the lens attributed to each camera. For each camera/view, the date and time is set to match those of the original photograph. This ensures that the direction of sunlight and shadows in the 3D model match those of the photographs.

Camera Matching
The photographs are then inserted as backdrops to the views of each camera in the 3D model. The direction of view of the cameras in the 3D model are matched with the direction of view of the photographs using the surveyed markers. This ensures that the camera positions, the direction of the views and the focal length of the cameras in the 3D model are accurate, so that the proposed development appears in the correct position and scale when montaged into the photographs.

Rendering of 3D Model and Finishing of Photomontages

For each view a render of the development is generated. This is the process of creating a photo-realistic image of the 3D model, as seen from each camera position, with sunlight and shadow applied to the model. The render of the development is then montaged into the photograph to create the photomontage.

Presentation and Viewing

The individual photomontages are presented on A3 pages in landscape format in the accompanying booklet. For each photomontage, the viewpoint number, location description, and the date and time of photography are provided on the page.

6.3 THE EXISTING RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT (BASELINE SITUATION)

6.3.1 Site Location

The site is an irregularly shaped greenfield land parcel at the eastern edge of Celbridge, part enclosed within the urban area (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3).

The site is accessed from the R403/Dublin Road to the north. The Dublin Road is served by a bus route linking Celbridge town centre to Dublin city centre. The Shinkeen Road (a local distributor road) passes to the west, connecting the Dublin Road to the R405/Hazelhatch Road to the south. The Loughlinstown Road passes to the east. Both Hazelhatch Road and Loughlinstown Road lead to the Hazelhatch and Celbridge railway station approximately 1.7km (by road) to the south of the site.

The site is some 800m by road/footpath from Main Street in Celbridge town centre. There are also two local retail/commercial centres closer to the site, one at the junction of the Dublin Road and Shinkeen Road (approximately 200m from the site) and the other in the adjacent Primrose Gate estate. The site also benefits from proximity to open space and sports facilities. The Celbridge GAA club and Ballyoulster Football Club are both less than 1km, i.e. walking distance, from the site.

The site is thus strategically located with respect to (a) the town centre, retail and other services, (b) the road network, bus and rail services, and (c) open space and sports facilities. These and other factors, e.g. the presence of industry and office uses on adjoining lands, led to the Ballyoulster area being identified as a Key Development Area (KDA 2) in the Celbridge Local Area Plan (LAP) 2017-2023.

The site (as part of the Ballyoulster KDA 2) is thus designated for urban development. Its transformation from agricultural in use to urban is an objective of the statutory plan for Celbridge and has been deemed acceptable in principle through the process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Figure 6.2 The Site's local environment

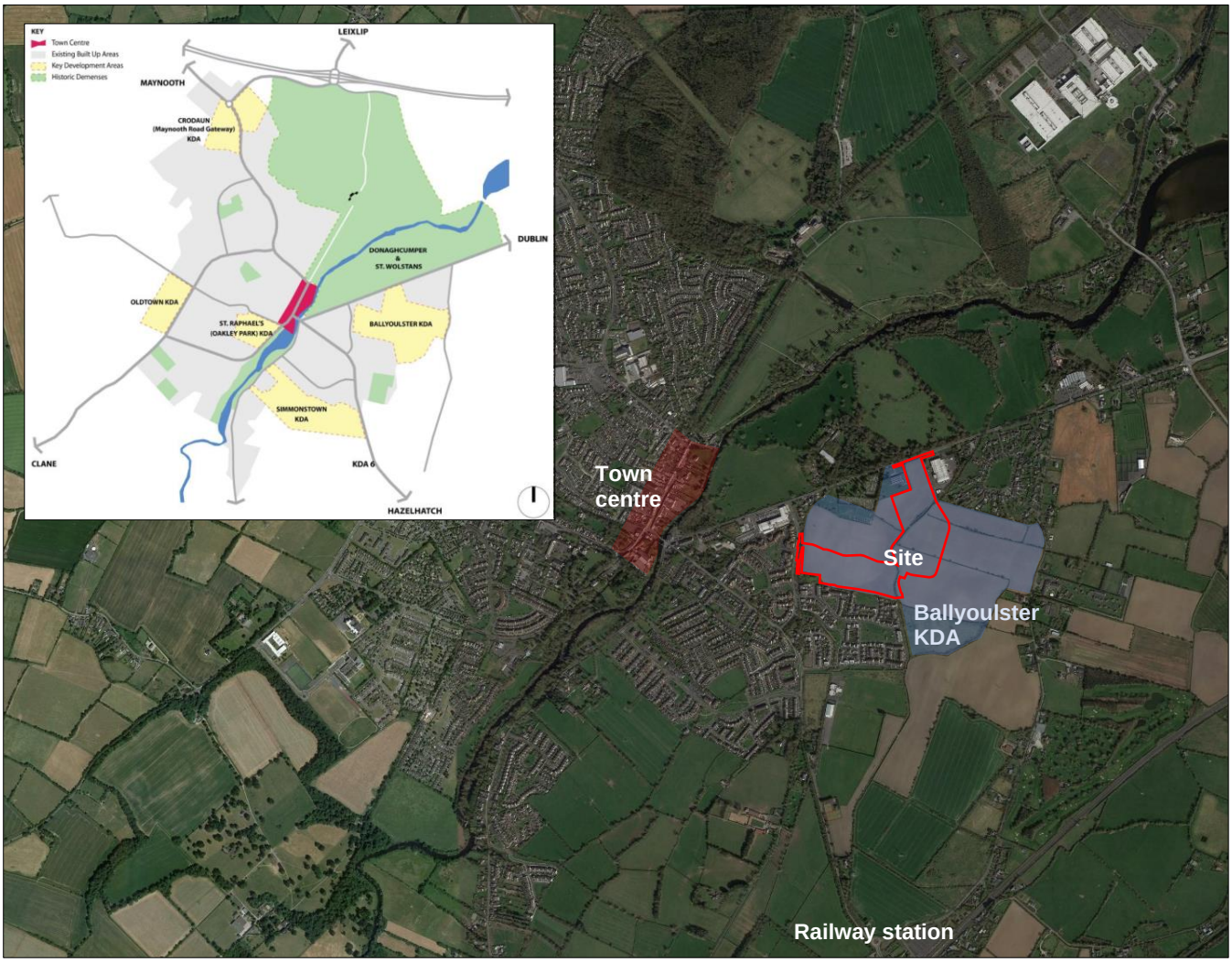


Figure 6.3 Site location in the context of the Celbridge urban area (source: Google Earth, with inset map from Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023, Figure 4.1)

6.3.2 The Site

The site is comprised of parts of several large tillage fields divided by hedgerows (see Figure 6.2). The lands are flat to gently undulating. The Shinkeen Stream traverses the area (flowing north towards the Liffey River). The stream's narrow channel follows a distinctively angled, winding alignment, and it has no discernible valley. The stream is lined by hedgerows on both sides.

Due to the current use of the lands for intensive agriculture there is little vegetation on the site other than the hedgerows, which contain occasional mature trees. There is also a belt of maturing trees inside the west boundary along the Shinkeen Road. The Hazelhatch Stream runs through this belt of vegetation on the boundary.

The most important and valuable landscape features of the site are (a) the Shinkeen Stream, (b) the internal hedgerows along the stream banks and dividing the fields, and (c) the tree belt and stream inside the Shinkeen Road boundary. The flat topography is a notable characteristic in that it provides no cues for layout/design.

Plate 6.1 A view from the neighbouring Primrose Gate estate, showing the flat topography and the lack of vegetation on the site

Plate 6.2 A view of the tree belt inside the site boundary along Shinkeen Road, as seen from the St Wolstan's Abbey development across the road

6.3.3 Key Elements and Character Areas of the Receiving Environment

The key elements and character areas of the landscape surrounding the site, i.e. the receptors of potential landscape and visual change, are as follows:

Surrounding Roads and Roadside Development

- **Dublin Road/R403**. The Dublin Road is a key route of entry into Celbridge from the east. The road has a mixed character as it approaches the town, passing a large garden centre, two light industrial premises (to either side of the site frontage), the Donaghcumper Cemetery and scattered houses before entering the

urban area at the Shinkeen Road junction. In between these developments there are stretches without road-front development, including along the frontage of the former St Wolstan's demesne, where broad belts of mature woodland enclose the road. Overall, the road corridor as it approaches the town has a mixed or indistinct character, not fully urban but with strong urban influence. It is significant that the site frontage to the Dublin Road is the short stretch between the two industrial premises.

Plate 6.3 A view of the site frontage to the Dublin Road, between two industrial premises, with the stone boundary wall and perimeter woodland belt of St Wolstan's demesne across the road

- **Shinkeen Road**. The Shinkeen Road is a winding local distributor road which connects the Dublin Road to the Hazelhatch Road (another road artery into the town) and gives access to an emerging mixed density residential neighbourhood along the road. The road has a modern, suburban street configuration, with the road surface flanked by cycle lanes, narrow green verges with street trees, and footpaths. The only as yet undeveloped stretch of the road frontage is the Ballyoulster KDA including the site (see Plate 6.4). This is opposite the St Wolstan's Abbey residential estate.

- **Loughlinstown Road**. The Loughlinstown Road forms the east boundary of the Ballyoulster KDA, and passes some 300m to the east of the subject site (see Figure 6.2). The road has a typical peri-urban character, being lined by scattered houses and other uses such as a football club, a nursing home and a motor mechanic, in addition to farm houses/buildings. Through gaps in the roadside hedgerows the urban area of Celbridge can be seen from the road (and from the roadside houses)(see Plate 6.5). Currently, the urban edge is in the distance beyond the Ballyoulster lands, but these lands are part of the wider KDA 2 lands and are thus designated for urban development. The character of the Loughlinstown Road is thus set to change, with the road itself to be the future boundary of the urban area.

Plate 6.4 A view of the St Wolstan's Abbey estate across the Shinkeen Road from the site

Plate 6.5 A view through a field entrance on the Loughlinstown Road, across the Ballyoulster lands towards the eastern edge of Celbridge

Surrounding Residential Neighbourhoods

- **The Primrose Gate estate**. The area with the most potential to experience landscape and visual change as a result of the proposed development is the Primrose Gate estate which lies directly to the south of the site. This is a large, mixed density estate include semi-detached and terraced houses, duplex terraces and apartment buildings up to four storeys. The neighbourhood includes a small retail centre just off the Shinkeen Road. Along the northern edge of the estate there are various sub-areas that interface with the site in different ways (e.g. facing the site across a green, or backing onto the site, etc. – see Figure 6.4). Two of the areas potentially most exposed to the development include:
  - **Willow Crescent**. This is a green area enclosed on three sides by rows of semi-detached houses, which either face the site across the green or present their gable walls to the site at the boundary.

- **Willow Square**. This is a small triangular green surrounded by terraced houses, duplexes and apartment buildings. Some of the duplex blocks back onto the site, separated from the boundary by their back gardens (see Plate 6.7a & b). The upper floors, including living rooms with balconies, have views directly over the site.

- **St Wolstan's Abbey**. To the west of the site across the Shinkeen Road is another mixed density modern residential estate, St Wolstan's Abbey. The neighbourhood includes linear apartment blocks of three storeys fronting the Shinkeen Road (see Plate 6.4 above). The apartments facing the road have views of the site.

Figure 6.4 The interface between the site and Primrose Gate and St Wolstan's Abbey

Plate 6.6 A view of the boundary between Willow Crescent and the site

Plate 6.7a A view across Willow Square showing the three storey duplex terraces which overlook the site

Plate 6.7b A view along the boundary between the site to the left and Willow Square to the right

- **Ballyoulster Park**. The third residential neighbourhood potentially affected by the proposed development is Ballyoulster Park (see Figure 6.5). This is a mid-20th century estate of semi-detached bungalows in large plots, arranged around a large central green. Most of the houses have been extended and some appear to have 2nd houses in their very long back gardens, which border on the site. The houses in the south western part of Ballyoulster Park are potentially visually exposed to the proposed development. The Shinkeen Stream runs between the estate and the industrial premises just east of the site's frontage to the Dublin Road.

Cultural Heritage Features

- **Donaghcumper Cemetery**. The cemetery has frontage to the Dublin Road to the north of the site, and extends south from the road into the Ballyoulster lands. The older parts of the cemetery are enclosed by rows of tall, closely spaced trees, which generate a high degree of visual enclosure. There is a modern southern extension, beyond the tree lines, which would be visually exposed to the Ballyoulster lands (including the site) were it not for the high wall on the cemetery boundary.

Figure 6.5 The interface between the site and Ballyoulster Park and the demesnes north of the Dublin Road

Plate 6.8 A view south from the modern part of Donaghcumper cemetery. A very wide (275m) field, which is part of the Ballyoulster KDA, is hidden by the cemetery wall. The houses and duplex blocks of Primrose Gate can be seen beyond the field, with the Wicklow Mountains in the distance to the left

- **Donaghcumper Church (RPS No. B11-02)**. The ruined medieval church is located alongside the Dublin Road, behind the cemetery wall. The church is buffered from the Ballyoulster KDA lands (and the subject site over 200m distant) by the cemetery and its many mature trees. There is no potential for direct impact on the church but its setting will be changed by the development of the KDA including the site.

- **Francis & Margaret Finlay House, Donaghcumper (RPS No. B11-26)**. The house dating from 1905 is described in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as an 'early 20th century artisan-style dwelling that retains much of its original form and character' (see Plate 6.9). The house is located on the Dublin Road, facing the road at an angle, directly to the north of the site. A triangular field behind the house separates it from the Ballyoulster KDA lands and it is separated by over 200m from the subject site. There is thus no potential for direct impact on the protected structure or its curtilage, but its wider setting would be changed by the expansion of the urban area around it.

Plate 6.9 A view of Francis & Margaret Finlay House, a protected structure on the Dublin Road north of the site

- **St Wolstan's Priory and Donaghcumper Demesne**. The Priory and Donaghcumper House were located in demesnes side by side on the southern side of the Liffey River, north of the Dublin Road and Ballyoulster (see Figure 6.5). Both demesnes included frameworks of woodland and large parts of these woodlands survive in the landscape today. Due to the remaining walls and trees inside the former demesne boundaries along the Dublin Road, there is limited relationship between these historic designed landscapes and the lands to the south of the road, including the Ballyoulster KDA and the site (refer to Plate 6.10).

Plate 6.10 A view along the Dublin Road showing the screening/buffering effect of the boundary wall and woodland of the Donaghcumper demesne (right) in combination with the road. There is limited potential for development south of the road (including the site) to cause significant landscape or visual impacts on the historic demesne north of the road

- **Castletown House and Estate**. Castletown House and estate is a former country mansion and demesne located on the north side of the Liffey, at the edge of Celbridge, overlooking the broad Liffey valley (and the two demesnes on the south side of the river, mentioned above). Castletown has been developed into a major tourism/visitor attraction and is a highly valued and sensitive landscape. A number of views in and from Castletown demesne are protected, including the following (Ref. Section 12.4.2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023):

  - *Views from the House to the river and across the back parterre*
  - *Views across the river and to the linked demesnes of Donaghcumper and St. Wolstan's*

  The subject site is over 1km from Castletown House, beyond the Liffey River, the Donaghcumper and St Wolstan's demesnes and the Dublin Road. There is no potential, given the nature of the proposed development, to cause a significant visual impact on views from Castletown House and estate, The site is too far away and there is a substantial amount of screening vegetation in the intervening landscape.

6.3.4 Landscape Character and Sensitivity

At the macro level the site falls into the Northern Lowlands Landscape Character Area as defined in the Kildare Landscape Character Assessment. (The site is close to, but falls outside of the Liffey River Valley Character Area.)

In the Sensitivity Classification the Northern Lowlands is identified as a Class 1 (Low Sensitivity) landscape, described as follows: *"Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area".* Additionally, the Northern Lowlands area is identified as having High Compatibility with Urban Expansion development.

At the local level the proposed development's receiving environment can be considered peri-urban in character. It retains certain 'rural elements and characteristics' (the agricultural fields that make up the site) but is heavily influenced and part-enclosed by the urban area of Celbridge (for example the industrial premises on either site of

the site frontage to the Dublin Road, the Willow mixed density residential neighbourhood to the south, and the St Wolstan's Abbey development to the west across the Shinkeen Road).

A further important factor in considering the receiving environment's sensitivity to landscape change is the Ballyoulster area's designation as a KDA (Key Development Area) in the Celbridge LAP.

6.3.5 Relevant Policy – National Planning Policy

Irish national policy of particular relevance to the assessment of Landscape and Visual Impacts is the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (December 2018, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). This is rooted in the National Planning Framework 2018 ('the NPF'), which sets out National Policy Objective 13, which states "In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected."

In respect of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018, section 3.4 states:

"Newer housing developments outside city and town centres and inner suburbs, i.e. the suburban edges of towns and cities, typically now include town-houses (2-3 storeys), duplexes (3-4 storeys) and apartments (4 storeys upwards). Such developments deliver medium densities, in the range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare net. Such developments also address the need for more 1 and 2 bedroom units in line with wider demographic and household formation trends, while at the same time providing for the larger 3, 4 or more bedroom homes across a variety of building typology and tenure options, enabling households to meet changing accommodation requirements over longer periods of time without necessitating relocation. These forms of developments set out above also benefit from using traditional construction methods, which can enhance viability as compared to larger apartment-only type projects."

SPPR4 states that:

"It is a specific planning policy requirement that in planning the future development of greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes, planning authorities must secure:

1. the minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), titled "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007)" or any amending or replacement Guidelines;

2. a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and

3. avoid mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more."

6.3.6 Relevant Policy – Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

Core Strategy

The Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (KCDP) was varied on the 9th June 2020 to align with the NPF and RSES. The Settlement Hierarchy (Table 2.2) identifies Celbridge as a 'Self Sustaining Town', and it is located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The preferred development strategy for the County includes the objective to

achieve a 'critical mass' of population in the Metropolitan Area Strategy Plan (MASP) area, including Maynooth, Celbridge, Leixlip and Kilcock.

Policy SO 1 of the KCDP states:

> *"Support the sustainable long-term growth of the Key Towns (Naas and Maynooth) and the area to the north-east of the county located within the MASP and zone additional lands, where appropriate, to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy of this Plan."*

The implication of this strategy is that these metropolitan towns will need to grow and or consolidate their urban areas, and this in turn will cause landscape and visual change to the affected areas.

Landscape Policy

> Policy LA 1: *"Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations."*

In this regard, the site falls into the Northern Lowlands Landscape Character Area. This is defined in Tables 14.1 and 14.2 of the KCDP as a Class 1 (Low Sensitivity) landscape, described as follows: *"Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area"*. Additionally, the Northern Lowlands area is identified in Table 14.3 of the KCDP as having High Compatibility with Urban Expansion development.

> Policy LL 2 (regarding the Lowland Plains): *"Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation."*

> Policy LA 4: *"Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development."*

In this regard, the most important and valuable landscape features of the site are (a) the Shinkeen Stream, (b) the internal hedgerows along the stream banks and dividing the fields, and (c) the tree belt and stream inside the Shinkeen Road boundary.

Local Area Plans

> *"LAPs set out in greater detail the Council's requirements for new development, including such factors as density, layout and design requirements, community facilities, transportation, open space and recreational facilities. These plans must be consistent with the County Development Plan."*

The above statement from the KCDP confirms that the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (LAP), which was prepared and adopted in the same period as the KCDP, can be considered the most relevant statement of planning policy for the proposed development's receiving environment. The LAP is (a) consistent with the KCDP, and (b) provides a level of detail that might be relevant to the assessment of the proposed development's landscape and visual impacts.

6.3.7 Relevant Policy – Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023

In the Celbridge LAP the site is zoned 'C: New Residential' and partly E: Community and Educational and additionally is identified as part of the Ballyoulster KDA.

Section 12.2.2 of the LAP provides specific policy for the Ballyoulster KDA, including the following:

Vision

> *"To provide for the development of a new residential neighbourhood, including primary and post primary schools and a local park that integrates with its surroundings whilst having its own unique character and a strong sense of place."*

The following diagram is provided in the LAP to guide the spatial arrangement of development in the Ballyoulster KDA. Notable elements of this 'Design Concept' include:

- The development of an all-modes entrance to the area from the Dublin Road to the north, and another from the Shinkeen Road to the west (in addition to one from the Loughlinstown Road to the east);
- The positioning of 'key building frontage along the main access roads to reinforce the new urban structure;
- The creation of a landscape corridor along the Shinkeen Stream as it traverses the site, effectively using the stream as one of the main arranging elements of the urban structure (in addition to the access roads);
- The creation of a large Local Park in a central position in Ballyoulster, and contiguous with the Shinkeen Street corridor;
- The creation of another, smaller local park along the southern boundary with Primrose Gate, so that the park effectively straddles the boundary, merging with the existing open space in Willow Crescent.

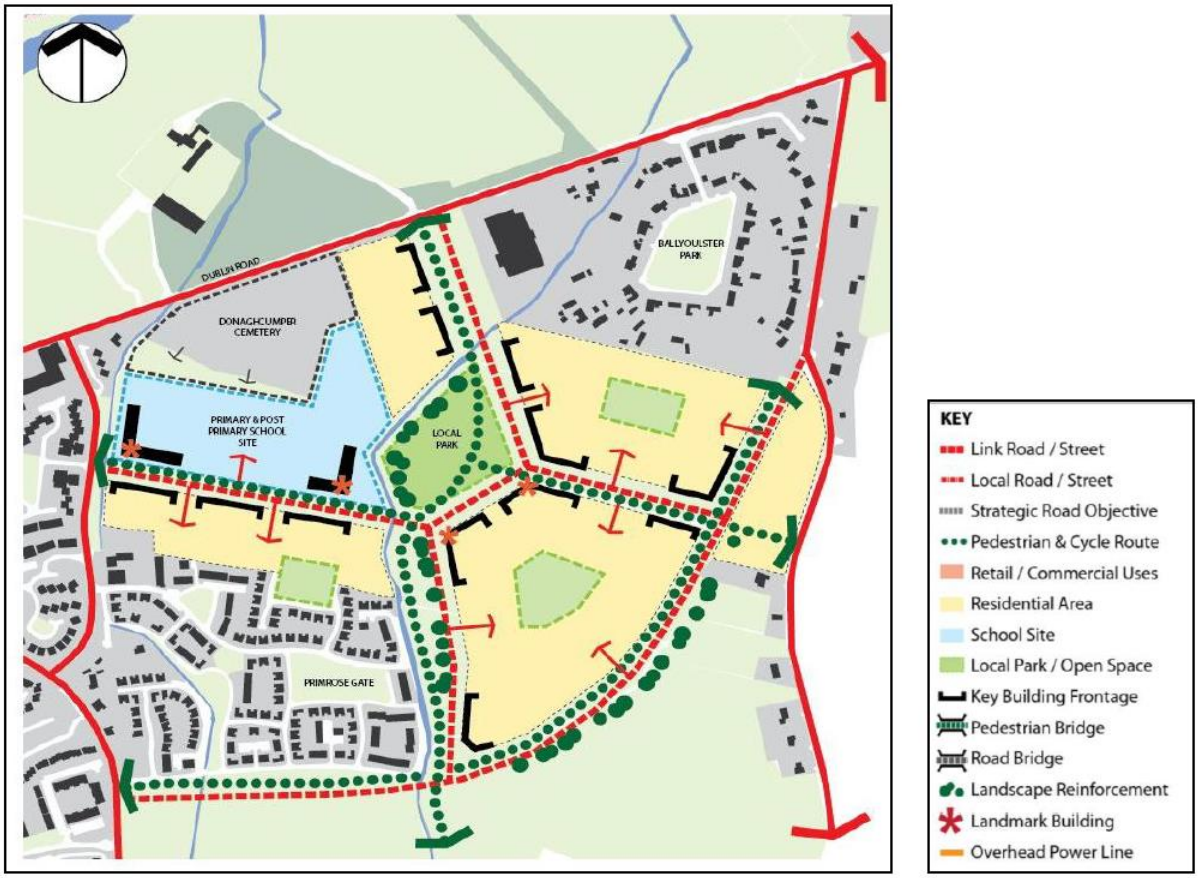


Figure 6.6 The Celbridge LAP's Design Concept for KDA 2 Ballyoulster

The Design Concept informed the initial site strategy for the Phase 1 lands, however updated flood maps from the Hazelhatch Flood Extent Study and the findings of archaeological investigations (particularly to the north of the site) impacted on the layout and extent of the developable area on the site. Given the constraints of archaeology and

flooding, the scheme architects, OMP, prepared an amended Design Concept diagram which is set out in the Design Statement submitted with the application.

Figure 6.7: Proposed Amended Design Concept (Figure 12.1)

The key change to the design concept is in respect of the open space strategy, which provides a necklace of local parks within each character area, rather than a central local park. It is considered the revised Design Concept continues to deliver on the objectives and design brief set out in Section 12.2.2 of the LAP in respect of the vision, connectivity / movement, built form, landscape and spaces. In particular, it delivers on the design brief to incorporate 'the Shinkeen Stream as a landscape feature that includes a continuous pedestrian and cycle link along its bank, structured around a variety of open spaces that provide for both active and passive recreation, with the retention of existing mature trees and the planting of new trees along the Ballyoulster/Loughlinstown townland boundary.

This revised design concept was then used to guide the revised proposals for Phase 1, which include 3 no. local parks, in addition to communal open space.

Connectivity/ Movement

> *"Vehicular access to this KDA should be provided from the Dublin Road, Shinkeen Road and the Loughlinstown Road and should provide for continuous routes through the KDA that connect to surrounding areas. Provision should be made for a road connection from the Loughlinstown Road to the R405/Hazelhatch Road, south of the Willows housing estate, in the longer term"*

"A permeable network of pedestrian and cycle friendly streets and spaces that incorporate existing site features such as the Shinkeen stream and existing mature trees will be required."

Built Form

"The development of this KDA should reflect the established pattern of development in the area...

"Site layouts should seek to fully integrate the identified primary and post primary school sites...

"A mix of housing types that range from two to three storeys in height is encouraged. Landmark / feature buildings should be provided along prominent routes and at key junctions in order to provide for legibility and variety in the urban environment and to reinforce the proposed hierarchy of streets and spaces. This site will accommodate medium to low-density residential development in the order of 30 units per hectare."

Landscape and Spaces

"The Shinkeen Stream should be incorporated into new developments as a landscape feature that includes a continuous pedestrian and cycle link along its bank. This green link should include natural landscaping that will enhance the ecological value of the stream. New residential areas should be structured around a variety of open spaces that provide for both active and passive recreation. Landscape proposals should provide for the retention of existing mature trees and the planting of new trees along the Ballyoulster/Loughlinstown townland boundary."

General

The following general policies contained in the Celbridge LAP are also relevant to this assessment:

Policy RD1 - Residential Development: Capacity and Delivery
"It is a policy of the Council to ensure that sufficient zoned land continues to be available at appropriate locations in Celbridge to satisfy the housing needs of the town and that each household has access to good quality housing that is appropriate to its circumstance."

RDO1.1: *"To promote and facilitate the phased development of identified Key Development Areas in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 12".* (emphasis added)

RDO1.4: *"To focus the majority of new housing in Celbridge within walking or cycling distance of a school cluster, the town centre, neighbourhood centre or transport routes".* (emphasis added)

Policy RD 2 - Residential Density, Mix and Design
"It is the policy of the Council to require that all new residential development provides for a sustainable mix of house types, sizes and tenures and that new development complements the existing residential mix."

RDO2.1: *"To require all new residential developments meet the standards and guidance set out in:*

- *The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHG (2009)*
- *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2015)*
- *The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DECLG (2013)*
- *The policies, objectives and development management standards contained in this LAP and the Kildare County Development Plan".*

Heritage including Landscape and Views

Policy BH2 – Protected Structures
"It is the policy of the Council to preserve and enhance the buildings identified on the Record of Protected Structures and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such structures, including their historic curtilage, both directly and indirectly."

BHO2.1: *"To ensure the protection and preservation of all protected structures, (or parts of structures) and their immediate surroundings including the curtilage and attendant grounds of structures contained in the Record of Protected Structures."* (emphasis added)

Policy HLA1- Historic Landscapes Areas
"It is the policy of the Council to preserve the special landscape character of historic landscapes within Celbridge as set out on Map 13.1 Land Use Zoning."

HLAO1.1: *"To protect the special landscape character of historic landscape areas and ensure that new development enhances the special character and visual setting of the historic landscapes outlined on Map 13.1 and to prevent development that would have a negative impact on the character of the lands within the Historic Landscape Areas".*

The 'Historic Landscape Areas' (HLA) identified on the land use zoning map include the demesnes of Castletown House, Donaghcumper and St Wolstan's Priory, as well as the Liffey River corridor. **The designation ends at the northern edge of the Dublin Road, i.e. the HLA designation does not extend across the road into the Ballyoulster area**.

It is noteworthy that a footnote to Objective HLAO1.1 states that the HLA designation will not preclude development in an area identified as KDA 2 (for town centre extension) in Donaghcumper, as the relevant lands were 'considered to be outside of the "Designed" areas of the landscape'. This is notable in that it indicates that the HLA designation is focussed on the designed demesne landscapes themselves, and is not intended to restrict/restrain development outside of these historic landscape areas.

10.3.2 (iii) Scenic Routes and Views

"The LAP area comprises scenic routes and views that significantly enhance the amenity value of the town's landscape setting".

Table 6.7: Copied from Table 10.3 of the Celbridge LAP - Scenic Routes and Protected Views – Extract from the County Development Plan 2017-2023

Scenic Routes	Description	Location
No. 31	Views within Castletown – Donaghcumper Rural Area; Views to the South and North from Castletown House, including axial views to Obelisk.	Castletown, Barrogstown, Barnhall, Rinawade, Cordaun
No. 32	Views of the River Liffey from the main avenue of Castletown House	Castletown
Views		
RL 2	View of the River Liffey from New Bridge	New Bridge, Coneyburrow
RL 3	View of the River Liffey from Celbridge Bridge	Celbridge Bridge, Celbridge

"In addition to the above, it is also an objective of the current County Development Plan to protect the following views from Castletown House (Ref. Section 12.4.2 of the County Development Plan 2017-2023):

- *Axial views between the Castletown House and Conolly's Folly*

- *Views between Castletown House and the Wonderful Barn*
- *Views from the House to the river and across the back parterre*
- *Views across the river and to the linked demesnes of Donaghcumper and St. Wolstan's*
- *Views from the main avenue to the river towards Castletown, and up and down the river to Celbridge and New Bridges"* (emphasis added)

Policy SRV1- Scenic Routes and Views
"It is the policy of the Council to ensure that the proposed location, siting and design of buildings and structures and any mitigation measures identified in the LAP, protect the special character of the identified scenic routes and protected views."

SRVO1.1: *"To protect the visual amenity and character of scenic routes and views in Celbridge and Castletown as identified in the County Development Plan."*

SRVO1.2: *"To require a Visual Impact Assessment of proposals for development that may impact the special character and visual amenity of scenic routes and views as part of the planning application process."*

As noted in Section 6.3.3.3 above, the subject site is over 1km from Castletown House, beyond the Liffey River and the Donaghcumper and St Wolstan's demesnes and the Dublin Road. There is no potential, given the nature of the proposed development (particularly the height of the buildings at up to three storeys) to cause a significant visual impact on views from Castletown House and estate. The site is too far away and there is a substantial amount of screening vegetation in the intervening landscape.

Open Space and Green Infrastructure

Policy GI 1 – Green Infrastructure
"It is the policy of the Council to protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network in Celbridge and to strengthen links to the wider regional network".

GIO 1.1: *"To reduce and avoid fragmentation or deterioration of the Green Infrastructure network and strengthen ecological links within Celbridge and to the wider regional network."*

GIO 1.2: *"To preserve, protect and augment trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the town by increasing, where appropriate, tree canopy coverage using locally native species by incorporating them within design proposals and supporting their integration into the existing Green Infrastructure network."*

GIO 1.3: *"To integrate Green Infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and restrict development that would fragment or prejudice the Green Infrastructure network."*

GIO 1.4: *"To ensure key hedgerows identified, and the linkages they provide to larger areas of Green Infrastructure and the wider countryside, are retained where appropriate and integrated into the design of new developments."*

GIO 1.5: *"To promote a network of paths and cycle tracks to enhance accessibility to the Green Infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes responds to the ecological protection needs of each site."*

GIO 1.6: *"To maintain a biodiversity protection zone ... of not less than 10 metres from the top bank of smaller watercourses in Celbridge, with the full extent of the protection zone to be determined on a case by case basis by the planning authority, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities. Strategic green routes and trails will be open for consideration within the biodiversity protection zone, subject to appropriate safeguards and assessments."*

Policy OS1 - Open Spaces
"It is the policy of the Council to provide for a hierarchy of high quality multi-functional public open spaces within Celbridge, and to preserve and protect such spaces through the appropriate zoning of lands."

OSO1.1: *"To support and facilitate the provision of open spaces with ecological and recreational corridors to aid the movement of biodiversity and people, subject to appropriate environmental assessment."*

6.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development comprises a Strategic Housing Development of 344 no. residential units (comprising 54 no. 1 beds, 30 no. 2 beds, 210 no. 3 beds and 50 no. 4 beds), a 2 no. storey childcare facility with a GFA of c. 369 sq.m, public and communal open space, landscaping, car and cycle parking spaces, provision of an access road from Dublin Road and Shinkeen Road, associated vehicular accesses, internal roads, pedestrian and cycle paths, bin storage, cycle storage, pumping station and all associated site and infrastructural works.

The residential component of the development consists 214 no. apartments / duplex units, and 130 no. houses of to be provided as follows:

- 4 no. 3 bed two storey detached houses;
- 28 no. 3 bed two storey semi-detached houses;
- 48 no. 3 bed two storey terraced houses;
- 50 no. 4 bed three storey semi-detached houses;
- 214 no. duplex apartments / apartments (54 no. 1 beds, 30 no. 2 beds, and 130 no. 3 beds) in a series of 15 no. duplex apartment / apartment blocks of 3 no. storeys in height, and all duplex apartments / apartments are provided with a terrace / balcony or private garden;

The development includes a total of 585 no. car parking spaces, 4 no. loading bays and a total of 770 no. cycle spaces. The proposal includes hard and soft landscaping, lighting, boundary treatments, the provision of public and communal open space, including 3 no. Local Parks, children's play areas, and an ancillary play area for the childcare facility.

The proposed development includes road upgrades, alterations and improvements to the Dublin Road / R403 and the Shinkeen Road, including the provision of new vehicular accesses and signalised junctions, pedestrian crossing points, and associated works to facilitate the same. The proposal includes internal roads, including 3 no. bridge crossings, cycle paths, footpaths, with proposed infrastructure and access points provided up to the application site boundary to facilitate potential future connections to adjoining lands.

The development includes foul and surface water drainage, pumping station, 3 no. ESB Substations, services and all associated and ancillary site works and development.

The proposed development is described in further detail in Chapter 2 of the EIAR and in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by O'Mahony Pike Architects and the Landscape Strategy Report prepared by Bernard Seymour Landscape Architects accompanying the planning application.

The elements and aspects of the proposal most relevant to this assessment are discussed in Section 6.6.2.2 below, in terms of their impacts on the key landscape receptors in the receiving environment.

6.5 POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – VISUAL EFFECTS

6.5.1 Construction Stage

During construction the site and immediate environs would be disturbed by construction activity and haulage, and the incremental installation of hard infrastructure, the buildings and finally the green infrastructure. Construction is an inherently unsightly process and causes negative visual impacts.

The significance of the visual effects during construction would range from 'Moderate' (in parts of the Willows estate), to 'Slight' (e.g. along stretches of the Dublin Road, Shinkeen Road and in St Wolstan's Abbey estate) to 'Negligible' (e.g. the cultural heritage receptors along the Dublin Road, and the Loughlinstown Road). These classifications of significance take into account the fact that the construction impacts would be temporary.

6.5.2 Operational Stage

To assess the potential long term/permanent visual effects of the proposal 10 no. viewpoints were selected for detailed assessment informed by verified photomontages. The viewpoints were selected to represent the key receptors in the receiving environment, as identified in Section 6.3.3. The viewpoints are as follows:

Figure 6.9 Viewpoints for visual effects assessment

1. Dublin Road approaching the site from the east;
2. (2a and 2b) Donaghcumper Cemetery;
3. Shinkeen Road approaching the site from the south;
4. Willow Green 'village centre' in the Willow south of the site;
5. Willow Square view along shared boundary with the site;
6. Willow Crescent view north west
7. Willow Crescent view north east;

8. Willow Lawn view along the Shinkeen Stream;
9. Loughlinstown Road;
10. Ballyoulster Park.

The effects on these views are individually assessed below. The assessment should be read in conjunction with the verified photomontages provided in Appendix 6.1 of this chapter of the EIAR. For the methodology and explanation of the criteria and terms used in the assessment refer to Section 6.2.3 above.

Viewpoint 1 – Dublin Road approaching the site from the east

Existing View

- The view is taken from the Dublin Road in front of the industrial premises (a brewery) adjacent to the site. The building is set back from the road behind an internal access road and parking. This is an unfortunate development typology for a site with road frontage on one of the main roads entering the town.
- Another large, low industrial building can be seen just beyond the portion of the site that fronts the road.
- There is a substantial quantity of vegetation in the view, along the near site boundary, the road frontage and across the road behind the demesne boundary wall.

Proposed View

- A three storey duplex block is positioned beside the new site entrance. The building turns 90 degrees at the corner so that it addresses both the entrance to the new neighbourhood and the main road. It projects forward slightly at the corner, presenting a peaked gable, to give additional emphasis to the new junction.
- A formal hedge is proposed along the main road frontage (replacing the existing hedgerow), with a row of trees inside the hedge (replacing the street trees outside the site boundary) for additional softening of the built frontage. (The existing street trees are required to be removed to allow for the widening of the road approaching the new junction.)
- The tree line continues around the corner and along the side of the new road entering the site, reinforcing its presence. The large number of new trees are a notable feature of the development, reflecting the character of the existing landscape.
- As road users pass the new junction the new neighbourhood extending back from the roadside behind the duplex block would be revealed.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Medium.
- Significance of visual effects: Moderate positive. The positioning of a feature building at the new junction and entrance to the neighbourhood would make a positive contribution to legibility. The attractive residential building would also counteract the somewhat negative effect of the two existing industrial buildings to either side of the site. Overall, the landscape composition and visual amenity would be improved at this key point of entry to the urban area of Celbridge.

Viewpoints 2a and 2b – Donaghcumper Cemetery

Existing View

- The views are taken from the new extension to the cemetery, which extends south into the Ballyoulster lands (so that the KDA lands wrap around the cemetery to the east, south and west – see Figure 6.5 above). The camera was positioned on a slight rise and well back from the cemetery boundary wall for maximum visibility of the surroundings.
- The wall hides the very flat Ballyoulster lands from view, but the houses and three storey duplex blocks of Primrose Gate, on the far side of the site, are clearly visible to the south (View 2a). To the east (View 2b)

the trees along the Shinkeen stream and dividing the Ballyoulster fields can be seen over the wall. These hide the Ballyoulster Park estate from view.
- The distant mountains are a valuable element of the view.

Proposed View
- In View 2a the three duplex terraces (in Site A) facing the new east-west access road across the site would be a prominent addition to the view, protruding above the cemetery wall, with an avenue of street trees softening the frontage. These would hide Primrose Gate from view, effectively bringing the urban edge closer to the cemetery. The mountains would remain visible in the distance to the left.
- In View 2b the new neighbourhood of houses and duplex blocks on Sites B and C to the east of the cemetery would be visible over the wall. The arrangement of built form is such that there is a visible depth and diversity to the neighbourhood, as well as extensive open space. There would ne no sense of excessive density or built enclosure resulting from the development.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects
- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Medium.
- Significance of visual effects: Moderate neutral. Despite the views being restricted by the cemetery wall there is a discernible pattern/structure to the expanded urban area. The buildings are of appreciably high quality design, and the extensive open space and numerous trees add to the visual amenity of the new neighbourhood. The retention of visibility of the distant mountains is also significant.

Viewpoint 3 – Shinkeen Road approaching the site from the north

Existing View
- The view is taken from the Shinkeen Road just to the north of the proposed site entrance, outside of the existing St Wolstan's Abbey estate across the road.
- The tree belt (along a hidden watercourse) inside the site's roadside boundary is a key element of the landscape/view, although it contrasts with the urban configuration of the road (which features footpaths and cycle lanes on both sides, and a line of street trees and street lights along the St Wolstan's Abbey frontage.
- The three storey duplex blocks of St Wolstan's Abbey contribute further to the emerging urban character of the road corridor.

Proposed View
- The development would introduce a new junction to the Shinkeen Road, with an entrance opened in the roadside tree belt, through which a three storey duplex block is visible.
- The building is set well back from the road behind the retained tree belt and a new linear open space used for attenuation. Although only glimpsed through the entrance betwen the trees the new building is clearly of similar typology to the St Wolstan's Abbey buildings.
- As road users pass the new junction the creche and associated playground would be visible just inside the entrance to the new neighbourhood.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects
- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Low-Medium.
- Significance of visual effects: Moderate positive. The most important aspect of this view is the retention of the tree belt along the road. This will both preserve a key element of the local green infrastructure and give identity and character to the new neighbourhood behind it. The complementary form, scale and architecture of the building (with respect to St Wolstan's Abbey), and the visibility of the creche and playgrounds from the junction, contribute further to the comfortable integration of the development into the evolving urban landscape.

Viewpoint 4 – Willow Green 'village centre' in Primrose Gate south of the site

Existing View

- The view is taken from the parking area of the neighbourhood centre in Primrose Gate. The ground floor units in the centre are occupied by a Tesco Express, a pharmacy and a creche. This cluster of non-residential uses combines with the building typologies (apartment and duplex blocks) to generate a distinctly urban character locally.
- A gap between the three storey buildings affords a view towards the site, although the lands are hidden by boundary walls and a stand of tall trees (Tree Group 3).

Proposed View

- The gable end and rear elevation of a two storey terrace of houses would be visible though the gap between the foreground buildings, to the side of the retained trees.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Low.
- Significance of visual effects: Slight positive. The built form, architecture and materials of the terrace are appreciably complementary to the village centre buildings (there is a logical step down in density and scale from the village centre into the site), so that the development would take its place comfortably in the emerging urban landscape. The retention of the trees contributes further to the seamless integration of the development and the maintenance of existing visual amenity.

Viewpoint 5 – Willow Square view along shared boundary with the site

Existing View

- The view is taken from a cul-de-sac at the boundary between Primrose Gate and the site. It shows the existing three storey Willow Square duplex block to the right, set back from the boundary behind relatively deep gardens.
- This viewpoint was selected to (a) show the 'worst case scenario' in terms of magnitude of change experienced by any visual receptor in the receiving environment, and (b) assess the response of the proposal to this sensitivity.

Proposed View

- A row of two storey terraced houses is proposed inside the boundary, presenting their rear facades to the neighbouring estate, set back 11m+ from the boundary.
- The houses would thus be a prominent addition to the view (and to views from the existing Willow Square duplex block), but this arrangement of terraces back-to-back and 22m apart *'reflects the established pattern of development in the area'* – as required by the Celbridge LAP policy on built form.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium. This reflects the zoning of the site for residential use. The development of residential buildings in direct view of the neighbouring estate is unavoidable, and has been deemed acceptable through the process of Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Magnitude of change: Medium-High.
- Significance of visual effects: Moderate neutral. The arrangement of residential buildings back-to-back and 22m apart across the boundary is a logical and appropriate response to the existing condition, and reflects the established pattern of development in the area. There would be a loss of visual amenity for the directly affected Willow Square duplex blocks, but this is an unavoidable outcome of the site's development at sustainable density in accordance with the Celbridge LAP. Any alternative arrangement to lessen the impact along this boundary would result in a less efficient use of the residential-zoned land.

Viewpoints 6 and 7 – Willow Crescent

Existing View

- The view is taken from Willow Crescent just to the east of Willow Square. Willow Crescent is a U-shaped arrangement of houses facing a green area located alongside the site boundary.
- Both views show the open space of the site in its current agricultural use, with banks of mature trees (along the Dublin Road to the north) forming a backdrop.

Proposed View

- A large neighbourhood park is proposed in the eastern part of Site 1, contiguous with the open space of Willow Crescent and connected to/incorporating the Shinkeen Stream open space corridor.
- Both Views 6 and 7 show the extent of this space – spatially connected to Willow Crescent – and its enclosure/definition by terraces of houses and duplex blocks.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium. This reflects the zoning of the site for residential use.
- Magnitude of change: Medium.
- Significance of visual effects: Moderate positive. The arrangement of built form and open space, and the architecture and materials of the buildings, are appreciably responsive to the neighbouring estate and the opportunities and constraints of the site. The development would result in a visually pleasing expansion of the urban neighbourhood, with noticeably generous provision of green infrastructure.

Viewpoint 8 – Willow Lawn view along the Shinkeen Stream

Existing View

- The view is taken from Willow Lawn at the eastern edge of Primrose Gate. The Shinkeen Stream runs along the boundary and the vegetation on the stream banks limits the visibility of the Ballyoulster lands to the north east.

Proposed View

- Site C lies in the middle distance to the north east. Due to the modest height of the proposed buildings (all two or three storeys) the development would not be visible from street level; it would be screened by the vegetation in the foreground. (The development would be visible from some 1st floor windows of the Willow Lawn houses but in the context this would not constitute a significant visual impact.)

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Negligible.
- Significance of visual effects: Not significant neutral.

Viewpoint 9 – Loughlinstown Road

Existing View

- The Loughlinstown Road is the planned/future eastern edge of the Celbridge urban area (see Figure 6.2 above).
- The road is currently peri-urban in character, lined by developments such as the Elm Hall Nursing Home and Ballyoulster United Football Club, as well as houses and farm building clusters in a ribbon pattern of development.
- This view is taken from the road opposite the entrance to Elm Hall. The Ballyoulster lands in view are currently in agricultural use but form part of KDA2 and are zoned for urban development.

Proposed View

- The houses and duplex blocks of Site C would be visible in the distance across the fields - all of modest scale, with an orderly arrangement to the built form and some variety in the architecture.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Low-Medium.
- Significance of visual effects: Slight positive. There would be a discernible structure to the expanding urban area, and an interesting diversity of built form, architecture and materials. In combination with the mature vegetation in the wider landscape the development would result in a pleasing composition overall.

Viewpoint 10 – Ballyoulster Park

Existing View

- As an existing residential estate adjacent to the site Ballyoulster Park is a sensitive potential receptor of landscape and visual change. This view is taken from the central green in the estate, where a gap between the estate houses affords a view towards the site.
- The site itself is screened by obstructions in the foreground, but a small part of the industrial building beside the site (fronting the Dublin Road) can be discerned in the distance.

Proposed View

- The development would be screened from view from this location. (It is likely that parts of the development would be visible from some rear gardens and outbuildings or mews houses in the existing estate, but in the context this would not constitute a significant visual impact. In any such views the development would be seen alongside the two neighbouring industrial buildings and may be considered an improvement - by consolidating the urban landscape with relatively benign infill residential development.)

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects

- Viewpoint sensitivity: Medium.
- Magnitude of change: Negligible-Low.
- Significance of visual effects: Not significant neutral.

6.6 POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.6.1 Construction Stage

During construction the site and immediate environs would be disturbed by construction activity and haulage, and the incremental installation of hard infrastructure, the buildings and green infrastructure. This would cause a high magnitude of landscape change in close proximity to the site (e.g. parts of Primrose Gate and Ballyoulster Park), a medium magnitude of change along stretches of the Dublin Road and Shinkeen Road, and the St Wolstan's Abbey estate across the Shinkeen Road. The magnitude of change would reduce with increasing distance from the site, for example the Loughlinstown Road would experience a low magnitude of change.

Considering the degree of exposure and the sensitivity of the various receptors – and also the temporary duration of the construction stage - the significance of the landscape effects during construction would range from 'Moderate' (in parts of the Primrose Gate estate) to 'Slight' (e.g. parts of St Wolstan's Abbey and Ballyoulster Park estates, and stretches of the Dublin Road and Shinkeen Road), to 'Not Significant' (Loughlinstown Road).

It is important to note that there would be no significant effects on the curtilage or immediate environs of the two local protected structures, i.e. Donaghcumper church ruin and Finlay House, although the development would cause a shift in character of their wider setting, from peri-urban to urban.

6.6.2 Operational Stage

Landscape Sensitivity

The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment state that landscape/townscape sensitivity should be classified with consideration of '*the particular project or development that is being proposed'*, and '*the location in question'*.

Informed by the analysis in Section 6.3 above and the nature of the proposal**, the sensitivity of the receiving environment can be classified 'medium'** (definition: *Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong, or has evidence of alteration, degradation or erosion of elements and characteristics. The landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.*).

This classification is informed by the following factors:

The valued elements in the landscape include the Shinkeen Stream which traverses the site, the hedgerows and trees on the site (particularly the tree belt along the Shinkeen Road boundary), the two nearby protected structures (Donaghcumper Church ruin and Finlay House), and to the north of the Dublin Road St Wolstan's Priory and Donaghcumper Demesne. The existing residential estates adjacent to the site (Primrose Gate, Ballyoulster Park and St Wolstan's Abbey estate) are also sensitive to change, but equally they can be considered to create capacity for change.

Castletown House and Estate are sensitive landscape resources (and potential/theoretical receptors of landscape and visual change). However, the site is over 1km from Castletown House and due to the nature of the development (being at most three storeys in height, and contiguous with the existing urban area of Celbridge), there is very limited potential for any material effect Castletown House and Estate.

Counterbalancing the sensitivities is the fact that the site is contiguous with the existing urban area, and is included in the Ballyoulster Key Development Area (KDA2) and zoned 'New Residential' in the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017. The LAP was subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment in the course of its preparation. Therefore, the landscape change resulting from the development of the Ballyoulster KDA (including the site), i.e. the urban development of the lands, has been deemed acceptable in principle.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The potential magnitude of change to the key landscape receptors can be summarised as follows:

The Landscape Features of the Site

- **Shinkeen Stream**. The site's most important landscape feature, the Shinkeen Stream, would be incorporated into the open space/green infrastructure network of the new neighbourhood, with a 'riparian zone' of 10m to either side of the stream (see Figure 6.10). This would improve its condition and context as both a landscape/open space asset and an ecological resource.

- **Internal hedgerows**. Where existing hedgerows cross the site, these are proposed to be retained – as much as possible - as features within the open space network, giving structure to the new urban area (most notably in Site C – see Figure 6.10), retaining their value as landscape assets.

Figure 6.10 Excerpt of proposed landscape master plan showing the Shinkeen Stream open space corridor and a retained hedgerow traversing the Site C housing area

- **Western tree belt**. Apart from the opening to be created for the new site entrance/access road from the Shinkeen Road, the western tree belt would be retained and supplemented (see Figure 6.11). This would retain and enhance its value as both (a) a landscape resource (being part of a managed, interconnected network of open spaces and vegetation features) and (b) a visual resource (in providing a visual screen of the new buildings for the St Wolstan's Abbey apartments across the road).

Figure 6.11 & 6.12 Excerpts of proposed landscape master plan showing the retained tree belt inside the Shinkeen Road boundary, and the local park contiguous with the neighbouring Willow Crescent open space

In summary, despite the change of land use from agricultural to urban/residential the proposed development would to a meaningful extent protect and in cases enhance the existing landscape features of the site. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Medium, positive.

Surrounding Roads and Roadside Development

- **Dublin Road/R403**. There would be a direct impact on the Dublin Road corridor along a stretch of some 85m (between two existing industrial premises). A road entrance from the Dublin Road is proposed alongside a three storey duplex block. This proposed building turns to front both the Dublin Road and the new entrance road, with its design and three storey height creating a local landmark beside the new junction (see Figure 6.13). The proposed building is set back behind a green strip with trees and a boundary hedge, which would replace the existing street trees outside the site which are required to be removed to facilitate the widening of the Dublin Road approaching the new junction. The development's effect would be to (a) shift the character of the Dublin Road corridor towards a more urban condition, and (b) elevate the quality of the road corridor in this area, counteracting the negative effect of the neighbouring industrial premises. Elsewhere along the Dublin Road the development could be glimpsed in the distance, and would have no significant effect on landscape character or visual amenity. **Magnitude of change**: Medium, positive.

Figure 6.13 Photomontage showing the new junction at the entrance to the site off the Dublin Road, with the three-storey duplex block at the junction functioning as a new local landmark and urbanising the character of the road corridor

- **Shinkeen Road**. There would be a direct impact on the Shinkeen Road where an entrance to the new neighbourhood is proposed alongside a three storey duplex block and a creche and playground facing the road. The proposed buildings are set back some distance form the road in order to retain the existing tree belt inside the boundary (along a watercourse). Therefore the buildings would have minimal visual presence in the road corridor (less than the St Wolstan's Abbey development across the road). The development would nonetheless contribute – positively - to the emerging urban character of the Shinkeen Road corridor. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Low, positive.

- **Loughlinstown Road**. The development would be visible in the distance from the Loughlinstown Road and the roadside houses/premises. The eastern edge of Celbridge is already visible in these views, so the expansion of the urban area towards Loughlinstown Road would not constitute a significant landscape or visual change. With the implementation of the Celbridge LAP, particularly the development of the Ballyoulster KDA (of which the site is a part), the Loughlinstown Road itself will become the future boundary of the urban area. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible, neutral.

Surrounding Residential Neighbourhoods

- **The Primrose Gate estate**

  - **Willow Crescent**. The large Site A Local Park is proposed to the north and north east of Willow Crescent (see Figure 6.12 above). This is in compliance with the Celbridge LAP guidance for the Ballyoulster KDA, and is aligned with the a key principle of green infrastructure design, i.e. connectivity

of GI assets to compound their value. As well as having ecosystem services benefits, this arrangement avoids any potential for perceived negative visual impact on the existing houses around Willow Crescent. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Medium, positive.

Figure 6.14 Photomontage view across the open space of Willow Crescent and the proposed Site A local park

- **Willow Square**. A row of two storey terraces of houses is proposed inside the boundary shared with Willow Square, presenting their rear facades to the neighbouring estate, set back 11m+ from the boundary (1st floor elevation to boundary). This is a typical urban/sub-urban arrangement of dwellings, back to back and 22m+ apart, separated by their private gardens. It reflects the established pattern of development in the area – in Primrose Gate itself and in other estates nearby. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that the introduction of the new houses/neighbourhood to the currently open field to the rear of Willow Square would result in a loss of visual amenity for a number of directly affected dwellings. It must also be acknowledged that this is an unavoidable outcome of the site's development at sustainable density in accordance with the Celbridge LAP. Any alternative arrangement to lessen the impact along this boundary would result in a less efficient use of the residential-zoned land. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Moderate, neutral.

Figure 6.15 The proposed arrangement of two storey terraced houses along the Willow Square boundary

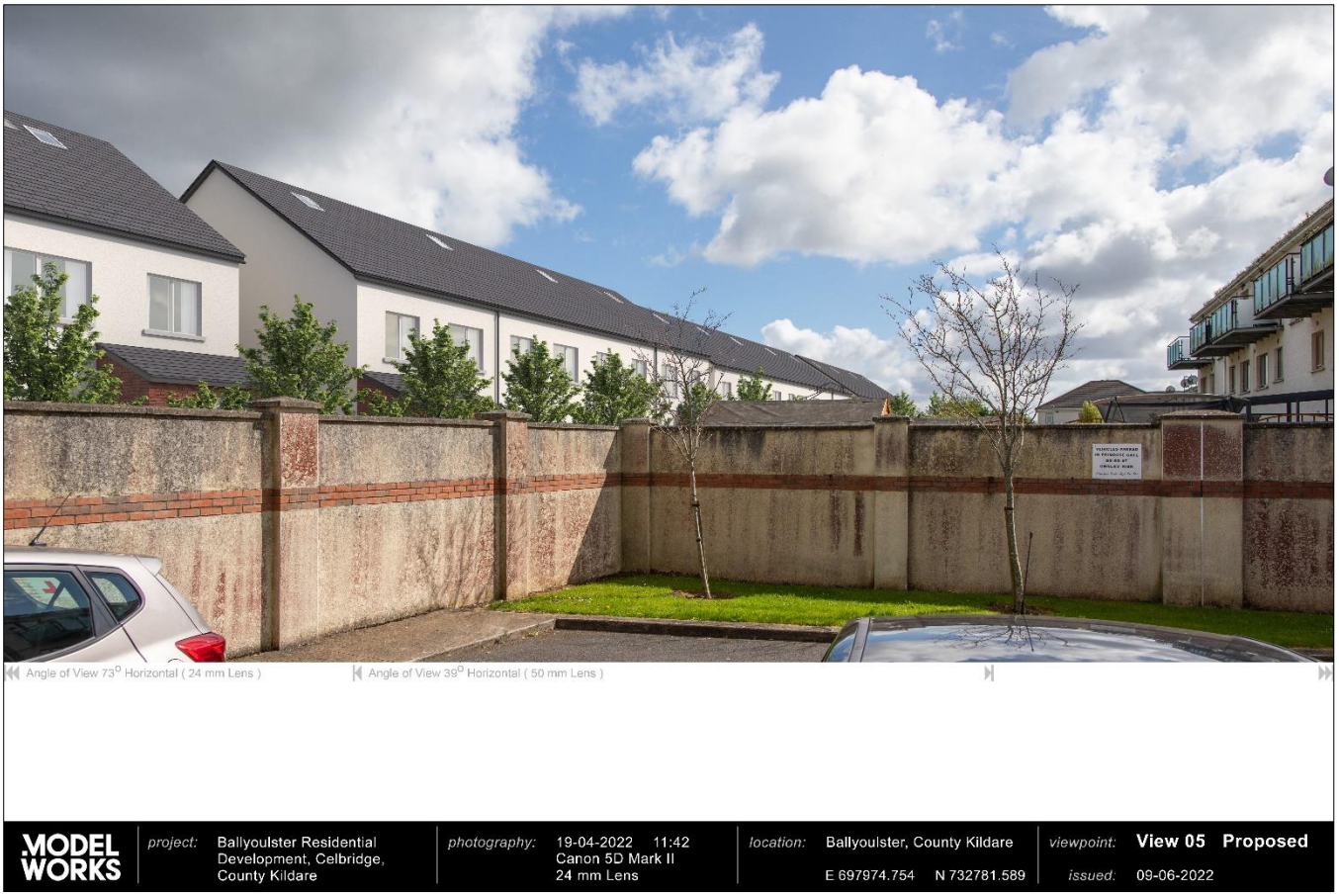


Figure 6.16 Photomontage view along the boundary to the rear of Willow Square, showing the new two storey terraced houses on the site. This is a typical urban/sub-urban arrangement of dwellings

- **St Wolstan's Abbey**. The development would introduce a new junction to the Shinkeen Road opposite the St Wolstan's Abbey estate. The gap created in the roadside tree belt on the site (for the entrance road) would provide a glimpse of a three storey duplex block, the creche and playground, all set well back behind the retained tree belt. The retention of the trees would be of benefit to St Wolstan's Abbey, but the development would also positively contribute to the evolving urban character of the Shinkeen Road corridor. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Low-medium, positive.

- **Ballyoulster Park**. Despite its proximity to the site the landscape effects on Ballyoulster Park would be relatively limited. It is likely that parts of the development would be visible from some rear gardens and outbuildings or mews houses in the existing estate, but in the context this would not constitute a significant impact. The development would be seen alongside the two neighbouring industrial buildings, and would likely be considered an improvement to the landscape character - by consolidating the urban landscape with relatively benign infill residential development. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible-Low, neutral.

Cultural Heritage Features

- **Donaghcumper Cemetery**. The proposed development would be visible to the south and east from the modern extension of the cemetery. The development would be partly screened by the cemetery boundary wall, and located beyond open fields surrounding the cemetery (future KDA development lands). The older parts of the cemetery are largely enclosed by trees and would be mostly unaffected by the development. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Medium, neutral.

- **Donaghcumper Church (RPS No. B11-02)**. The ruined medieval church is located alongside the Dublin Road and is buffered from the Ballyoulster KDA lands by the cemetery and its many mature trees. The wider setting would be changed by the urban expansion in its environs, but the effect on the church would be minimal. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible, neutral.

- **Francis & Margaret Finlay House, Donaghcumper (RPS No. B11-26)**. The house is located on the Dublin Road, over 200m from the subject site. Its wider setting would be changed by the urban expansion in its environs, but the effect on the house would be minimal. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible, neutral.

- **St Wolstan's Priory and Donaghcumper Demesne**. The Priory and Donaghcumper House demesnes are located on the north side of the Dublin Road, well removed from the site - except where the site has frontage to the Dublin Road opposite an entrance to Donaghcumper demesne and a gate lodge inside the entrance. The demesnes are enclosed by walls and belts of woodland along the Dublin Road boundary, and the house and priory and their designed landscapes generally would have orientated north towards the Liffey, i.e. away from the site. Apart from the new urban frontage across the road from the Donaghcumper entrance (between two industrial premises also opposite Donaghcumper), there is limited potential for impact on the historic demesnes. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible, neutral.

- **Castletown House and Estate**. Castletown House is over 1km to the north of the site at its nearest (where the site fronts the Dublin Road). There is no potential, given the nature of the proposed development, to cause a significant visual impact on views from Castletown House and estate. **Potential** m**agnitude of change**: Negligible, neutral.

Significance of Landscape Effects

Considering the sensitivity of the landscape (6.6.2.1 above) and the potential impacts on the key landscape receptors (6.6.2.2), the overall effect on the landscape is predicted to be of 'Moderate' significance.

For the most part the effects can be considered neutral or positive, given that (a) the proposed development would initiate the realisation of the Celbridge LAP vision for the Ballyoulster KDA and (b) the proposal exhibits many of the principles of good urban design including making optimal use of the existing landscape features/assets of the site.

6.7 'DO NOTHING' IMPACT

The site would remain in agricultural use in the peri-urban landscape at the eastern edge of Celbridge. There would be no landscape or visual change in the site environs although an important part of the planned expansion of the town would not be realised.

6.8 AVOIDANCE, REMEDIAL & MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed development is a considered response to the sensitivities of the landscape (see 6.6.2.1 above), the opportunities provided by the site, and the relevant policy which encourages the site's development. The proposal incorporates all the avoidance and mitigation measures required to either limit the landscape and visual effects impacts to an acceptable level (e.g. the case of the Willow Park interface), or to ensure that the effects are positive.

No negative potential landscape or visual effects have been identified. Therefore, no avoidance, remedial or mitigation measures are recommended.

6.9 PREDICTED LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Since no potential negative landscape or visual impacts were identified, and therefore no avoidance, remedial or mitigation measures were recommended, the predicted effects are the same as the potential effects identified and described in Sections 6.5 (Visual Effects) and 6.6 (Landscape Effects) above.

6.10 POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

6.10.1 Planned and Permitted Developments

The following two planning applications have been identified within 1km of the site:

Table 6.8: Relevant Planning Permissions in Proximity to the Application Site

Reg. Ref.:	Location	Description	Decision
Reg. Ref.: 17914	The Commons, Hazelhatch Road, Celbridge	Development comprising 11 no. dwellings	Final grant 17th July 2018
Reg. Ref.: 171481 / ABP Ref.: 302312-18	Tony King motors, Dublin Road, Celbridge	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 6 no. dwellings	ABP Granted permission 15/01/2019

The above planning applications have been reviewed and it is not considered that there is any potential for cumulative landscape or visual impacts to arise as a result of these developments in combination with the proposed development.

Three larger scale residential developments (following the SHD planning process) have been identified in Celbridge outside of the 1km radius from the subject site.

Table 6.9: Relevant SHD Planning Permissions in Proximity to the Application Site

Reg. Ref.:	Location	Description	Decision
ABP Ref.: 303295-19	Land at Shackleton Road, Oldtown, Celbridge	251 no. residential units (167 no. houses and 84 no. apartments), creche and all associated site works.	Granted Permission 12th April 2019
ABP Ref.: 306504-20, as amended by S. 146B ABP Ref.: 309361-21	Townland of Crodaun, Celbridge	Demolition of existing structure, construction of 372 no. residential units (218 no. houses, 154 no. apartments), childcare facility and associated site works. (Note: reduced from 372 to 352 no. permitted units under the S. 146B amendment)	Parent permission Granted 3rd September 2020, S.146B approved 10th May 2021
ABP Ref.: 307100-20	Crodaun, Celbridge* currently subject to a JR	467 no. residential units (199 no. houses, 216 no. apartments, 52 no. duplexes), childcare facility, gym, café, retail unit and associated site works.	Granted Permission 8th September 2020

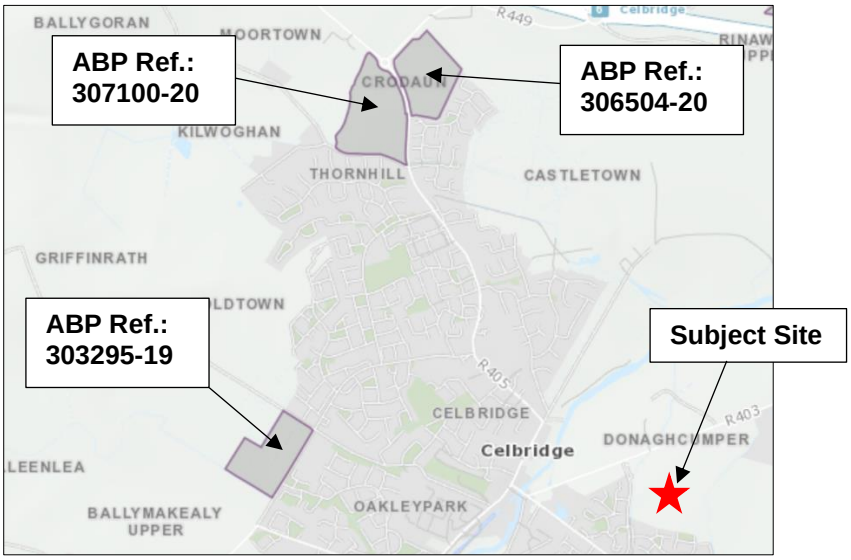


Figure 6.17: Strategic Housing Developments (Source: KCC Online Planning Enquiry System)

Like the subject proposal the three existing SHD applications/permissions are for sites identified as Key Development Areas (KDAs) in the Celbridge LAP. If all are permitted and implemented, at a macro level they would result in an expansion of the urban area of Celbridge and a consolidation and modernisation of the urban edge in the affected areas. However, at the local scale there is no relationship between the subject site and these existing SHD permissions; they are at the northern and western extents of the urban area and too far from the site to result in any perceivable cumulative landscape/townscape or visual effects.

6.10.2 Future Development

The subject site is identified as part of the 'Key Development Area (KDA2) – Ballyoulster' within the Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023 and the proposed development forms the Phase 1 lands of the overall KDA2 lands. It is planned to construct the adjoining and remaining KDA2 lands for educational use (provision of 3 no. schools to be brought forward and delivered by the Department of Education and Skills) and residential development to be brought forward on a phased basis as part of potential future development subject to planning approval.

The development of the remainder of the Ballyoulster KDA lands (Phase 2 and beyond), in combination with the proposed development (Phase 1), will complete an important part of the planned expansion of Celbridge as prescribed in the Celbridge LAP. The cumulative effect of these developments would be the creation of a large new residential neighbourhood to the east of Celbridge town centre, expanding the urban area to the Loughlinstown Road.

6.11 MONITORING

The retention of certain existing hedgerows, trees and tree groups on site is an important element of the proposal. Any unplanned loss of hedgerows or trees could result in negative landscape and visual impacts.

The planning application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report prepared by Arborist Associates Ltd, which includes a detailed Tree Protection Strategy. It includes the requirement that (a) all tree works should be undertaken under the guidance of the project arborist, (b) that site works potentially affecting the hedgerows and trees to be retained should be monitored, and (c) that on completion of site works the retained trees are to be re-examined and any necessary remedial works to ensure the health of the trees implemented.

The implementation of the Tree Protection Plan is the only monitoring required in respect of potential landscape and visual impacts.

6.12 REINSTATEMENT

No reinstatement works are required following implementation of the development as proposed.

6.13 INTERACTIONS

Biodiversity

The site's most important landscape feature, the Shinkeen Stream, is also its most important ecological feature. Currently the stream runs in a narrow channel between the fields that make up the site. There are hedgerows along its banks but overall the stream 'corridor' is narrow/contained, the principal use of the lands having been intensive agriculture. There are also hedgerows dividing the fields, and another biodiversity asset is the belt of trees inside the site's west boundary along the Shinkeen Road.

The incorporation of the Shinkeen Stream into the open space/green infrastructure network of the new neighbourhood, with a 'riparian zone of 10m to either side of the stream as proposed, would improve the condition and context of the stream as both a landscape resource and an ecological resource.

To a significant extent, where existing hedgerows cross the site, these are proposed to be retained as features within the open space network, retaining or enhancing both their landscape and biodiversity value.

The tree belt inside the western boundary along the Shinkeen Road is also proposed to be retained – apart from the opening to be created for the new site entrance/access road. This retained and supplemented tree belt would have both landscape benefits (as a visual screen of the development for the St Wolstan's Abbey apartments across the road) and biodiversity benefits in that the habitat would be retained, supplemented and managed as part of the neighbourhood's green infrastructure network.

Population and Human Health

The change in landscape character, i.e. the expansion and consolidation of the urban area and the residential neighbourhood at the eastern edge of Celbridge, would have population benefits. A new/expanded residential neighbourhood would be provided favourably located with respect to (a) the town centre, retail and other services, (b) the road network, bus and rail services, and (c) open space and sports facilities.

In combination with the planned future provision of three schools on the remaining Ballyoulster KDA lands, the proposed development would create a well serviced urban residential neighbourhood, making optimal use of the strategically located land resource.

6.14 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN COMPILING

No difficulties were encountered in the drafting of this chapter.

6.15 REFERENCES

1. *Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023* (2017), Kildare County Council.
2. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition (2013), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
3. *Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*, 2018, published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
4. *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (2022), Environmental Protection Agency.

5. *Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023* (2017), Kildare County Council.
6. *National Planning Framework - Ireland 2040* (2018), Government of Ireland.
7. *Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (2011), Landscape Institute.
8. *Townscape Character Assessment*, Technical Information Note 05/2017 (2017), Landscape Institute.
9. *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* (2009), Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
10. *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018), Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

APPENDIX 6.1 – VERIFIED PHOTOMONTAGES BROCHURE

Verified Photomontages

To be read in conjunction with
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Report

Proposed

Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

Prepared by Model Works Ltd
for Kieran Curtin, Receiver over certain assets of Maplewood Developments Unlimited Company (in liquidation and in receivership)

June 2022

MODEL WORKS

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

viewpoint: **View Location Plan**

09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 12:42
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698373.304 N 733340.729

viewpoint: **View 01 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 12:42
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698373.304 N 733340.729

viewpoint: **View 01 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 15:45
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698088.356 N 733075.052

viewpoint: **View 02a Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 15:45
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698088.356 N 733075.052

viewpoint: **View 02a Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 15:39
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698086.080 N 733076.769

viewpoint: **View 02b Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 15:39
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698086.080 N 733076.769

viewpoint: **View 02b Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 15:00
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 697842.831 N 732985.209

viewpoint: **View 03 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

.MODEL WORKS	*project:*	Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare	*photography:*	22-09-2021 15:00 Canon 5D Mark II 24 mm Lens	*location:*	Ballyoulster, County Kildare E 697842.831 N 732985.209	*viewpoint:* **View 03 Proposed** *issued:* 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:35
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 697895.251 N 732750.918

viewpoint: **View 04 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:35
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 697895.251 N 732750.918

viewpoint: **View 04 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:42
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 697974.754 N 732781.589

viewpoint: **View 05 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

.MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:42
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 697974.754 N 732781.589

viewpoint: **View 05 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 14:07
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698177.118 N 732704.089

viewpoint: **View 06 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 14:07
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698177.118 N 732704.089

viewpoint: **View 06 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698080.381 N 732718.279

viewpoint: **View 07 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 11:55
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698080.381 N 732718.279

viewpoint: **View 07 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 12:09
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698262.335 N 732632.069

viewpoint: **View 08 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 19-04-2022 12:09
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698262.335 N 732632.069

viewpoint: **View 08 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 13:26
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698783.705 N 732781.291

viewpoint: **View 09 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 13:26
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698783.705 N 732781.291

viewpoint: **View 09 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 13:44
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698607.381 N 733203.732

viewpoint: **View 10 Baseline**

issued: 09-06-2022

Angle of View 73° Horizontal (24 mm Lens)

Angle of View 39° Horizontal (50 mm Lens)

MODEL WORKS

project: Ballyoulster Residential Development, Celbridge, County Kildare

photography: 22-09-2021 13:44
Canon 5D Mark II
24 mm Lens

location: Ballyoulster, County Kildare
E 698607.381 N 733203.732

viewpoint: **View 10 Proposed**

issued: 09-06-2022