

# Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

For

**Omni Plaza SHD**

**August 2022**

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## **1.0 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Murray and Associates were engaged to complete a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the development at Omni Plaza SHD, Omni Park, Swords Road, Santry, Dublin 9, a site located to the north west corner of the Omni Park Shopping Centre, Santry and at Santry Hall Industrial Estate.

The report was completed by John Ward (MLArch, MILI).

The site is located in Santry, Dublin 9 and is located on the north-west sector of the Omni Park Shopping Centre, on the Swords Road. The site is adjacent to the existing Lidl store to the east, and Santry Business park to the north.

Currently the lands are used as a distribution and logistics centre and are brownfield in nature. Various outbuildings are also present, with the remaining site area laid with concrete hardstanding. The site is zoned Z4 – Mixed-services facilities, along with the rest of the Omni Shopping Centre. The site is located along the Sword Road, a major north-south arterial route and is only 5.1 km from Dublin City Centre.

The proposed development is comprised of 457 no. residential units and ground floor commercial units with associated basement carpark. The development also includes; communal amenity space and a creche at ground level, public realm improvements to the existing car park area, a new public plaza, playgrounds, public lighting, landscaping, and associated site development works.

The landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development is a means of appraising the effect the proposed development would have on the receiving environment in terms of the quality of landscape – both physically and visually. The assessment aims to indicate the layout and design of the proposed development which would present the least overall landscape and visual impact. Also considered are construction and demolition works, the operational phase, light emissions and the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects.

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## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

The following sources were used to inform and structure this report:

- Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA Directive);
- The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland 2015-2025.;
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, Environmental Protection Agency (2022 (EPA Guidelines 2022));
- Draft Advice Notes For Preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2015)
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA), published by the Landscape Institute;
- 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;
- Technical Information Note on Townscape Character Assessment, 2016, published by the Landscape Institute;
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Technical Guidance Note 2/19, published by the Landscape Institute.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland Publication no. PE-ENV-01101, published December 2020: Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of Specified Infrastructure Projects - Overarching Technical Document

### 1.2.2 Terminology

Landscape impacts are defined as changes in the fabric, character and quality of the landscape as a result of the development (*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* - 3rd Edition, by the Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment published by E&FN Spon, 2013). This includes direct impacts to landscape receptors and greater effects that can alter the wider distinctiveness of the landscape. Landscape receptors are the physical or natural resource, special interest or viewer

group that will experience an impact. The sensitivity (of a landscape receptor) is the vulnerability to change. The extent of the landscape impacts have been assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The terminology in the following tables is based on the criteria set down in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition, by the Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Assessment published by E&FN Spon, 2013). Landscape impacts are assumed to be permanent. This report also has regard to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, 2018), and Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (European Commission, 2017).

The landscape and visual assessment methodology will be utilised in conjunction with a professional evaluation of the proposed development to determine the degree of impact.

**Table 1 – The Significance of Landscape Impact (based on ratings from the EPA Guidelines, 2022)**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Level 1 Imperceptible Effects</b>	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.  There are no noticeable changes to landscape context, character or features.
<b>Level 2 Not significant</b>	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape but without noticeable consequences.  There are no appreciable changes to landscape context, character or features.
<b>Level 3 Slight Effects</b>	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the landscape without affecting its sensitivities.  There are minor changes over a small proportion of the area or moderate changes in a localised area or changes that are reparable over time.
<b>Level 4 Moderate Effects</b>	An effect that alters the character of the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.  There are minor changes over some of the area (up to 30%) or moderate changes in a localised area.

<b>Level 5</b>  <b>Significant Effects</b>	<p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape.</p> <p>There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (30-50%) or an intensive change over a more limited area</p>
<b>Level 6</b>  <b>Very Significant Effects</b>	<p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment.</p> <p>There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over a substantial area (50-70%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area</p>
<b>Level 7</b>  <b>Profound Effects</b>	<p>An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.</p> <p>There are notable changes in landscape characteristics over an extensive area (70-100%) or a very intensive change over a more limited area</p>

Visual impacts relate solely to changes in available views of the landscape and the effects of those changes on people viewing the landscape, or “the change in the appearance or view of the built or natural landscape and urban areas” as stated in Recital 16 of the EIA Directive. They include the direct impact of the development on views, the potential reaction of viewers, their location and number and the impact on visual amenity. The intensity of the visual impacts is assessed by professional evaluation using the terminology defined as per the tables below.

**Table 1 – Significance of Visual Effect (based on ratings from the EPA Guidelines, 2022)**

Extent	Description
<b>Level 1</b>  <b>Imperceptible Effects</b>	<p>There are no noticeable changes to views in the visual landscape.</p>
<b>Level 2</b>  <b>Not significant</b>	<p>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment but without noticeable consequences.</p> <p>The proposal is adequately screened due to the existing landform, vegetation or constructed features.</p>
<b>Level 3</b>  <b>Slight Effects</b>	<p>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the visual environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p> <p>The affected view forms only a small element in the overall visual composition, or changes the view in a marginal manner.</p>

<b>Level 4</b> <b>Moderate</b> <b>Effects</b>	An effect that alters the character of the visual environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging trends.  The proposal affects an appreciable segment of the overall visual composition, or there is an intrusion in the foreground of a view.
<b>Level 5</b> <b>Significant</b> <b>Effects</b>	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the visual environment.  The proposal affects a large proportion of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
<b>Level 6</b> <b>Very</b> <b>Significant</b> <b>Effects</b>	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the visual environment.  The proposal affects the majority of the overall visual composition, or views are so affected that they form a new element in the physical landscape.
<b>Level 7</b> <b>Profound</b> <b>Effects</b>	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.  The view is entirely altered, obscured or affected.

**Table 3 – Quality of the Landscape and Visual Impact (EPA Guidelines 2022)**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Description</b>
Neutral Effect	Neither detracts from nor enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or view
Positive Effect	Improves or enhances the landscape of the receiving environment or a particular view
Negative Effect	Detracts from the quality of the landscape or view

**Table 2 – The Duration of Landscape and Visual Effects (EPA Guidelines 2022)**

<b>Extent</b>	<b>Description</b>
Momentary	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
Brief	Effects lasting less than a day
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less
Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years

Permanent Effects	Effects lasting over sixty years.
Reversible Effects	Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration.

*Please note: "Momentary" and "Brief" Effects as defined in the EPA Guidelines (2022) are not considered relevant to landscape & visual assessment as effects of such short duration are extremely unlikely to generate appreciable effects.*

**Table 3 – The Extent and Context of Effects** (EPA Guidelines 2022)

<b>Extent</b>	Describes the size of the area, the number of sites and the proportion of a population affected by an effect
<b>Context</b>	Describes whether the extent, duration or frequency conforms or contrasts with established conditions

**Table 4 – The Probability of Effects** (EPA Guidelines 2022)

<b>Likely Effects</b>	The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.
<b>Unlikely Effects</b>	The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.

The landscape and visual assessment methodology will be utilised in conjunction with a professional evaluation of the proposed development to determine the degree of impact.

The term 'study area' as used in this report refers to the site itself (i.e. the extent of the planning application) and its wider landscape context in the study of the context, physical landscape and landscape character. This may extend for approximately 1km or more in all directions from the site in order to achieve an understanding of the overall landscape. In terms of the visual assessment, the study of visual amenity may extend outside the study area, from areas where views of the site are available, but the majority of visual impacts for a development of this nature would be most likely within the local context, as this landscape is relatively flat and enclosed. Please see Figure 1 for a map indicating the study area with reference to identified receptors.

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**The methodology employed in the landscape and visual impact assessment is as follows:**

1. Identifying Baseline Conditions: Desktop survey of detailed maps, aerial photography and other information relevant to the study area.
2. Characterizing the Landscape & Identifying Sensitive Receptors: Site survey and photographic survey to determine landscape character of the general study area and specific landscape of the site and to identify the sensitivity of receptors that have potential to be affected by changes in the baseline conditions.
3. Predicting the Magnitude of Likely Changes to the Baseline Landscape & Visual Environment: In determining visibility, the views to and from the proposed development areas are considered based on the heights, finishes, design and other visual characteristics of the proposed structures and setting. Verified Photomontages have been prepared by a specialist 3-D Visualizations company to represent selected views which are typical of the views within the area and are intended to demonstrate the scale of the buildings in the wider landscape. The extent of visual effects of the proposed development on the built environment is demonstrated through a selection of representative view locations around the proposed development. The photomontages on which the following assessments is based are provided in the CGIs and Verified Views brochure issued by 3D Design Bureau.
4. Assessing the Significance of Effect Taking into Account Sensitivity of Receptors and Magnitude of Effect: Assessment of the potential significant impacts of the proposed scheme utilizing the plan and elevation drawings of the scheme, and Verified Views to determine the main impacting features and the degree to which these elements would be visible in relation to the baseline environment.
5. Identifying and assessing appropriate mitigation measures, including alternatives: A scheme of mitigation measures is proposed, where relevant. These will be defined as measures which will be generally implemented and specific landscape measures which would be site-specific and address particular landscape or visual issues identified.
5. Assessing the significance of residual effects, taking account of any mitigation measures: For the purposes of assessment the predicted visual effects of the scheme are assumed at 10 years following the completion of the proposed development.

### **Specific Considerations from the EPA Guidance 2022**

The EPA Guidance 2022 suggests that the following should be considered in Landscape and Visual Assessment, and these are considered in the assessment where relevant:

#### Visual Effects:

- Context
- Character
- Significance
- Sensitivity
- Views & Prospects

#### Landscape Amenity:

- Public access
- Public amenities
- Recreation
- Tourism

#### The Landscape:

- Landscape Appearance and Character
- Landscape Context
- Historical Landscapes

Sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, as well as the visual sensitivity in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact.

During the initial research and evaluation of the suitability of the subject site for the development, a typology was developed based on the fieldwork and research into the site. These categories will help to identify the sensitivity of the existing receptors.

**Table 7: Baseline Evaluation – Sensitivity of Landscape Receptor (developed by the author for the proposed development with reference to fieldwork and research)**

Landscape typology / Receptor	Category
ACA and/or Urban Landscape associated with listed or protected buildings	IV

Key Public Urban Spaces/ Historic Character Street/ Local Parks/ Tourist Attractions/Routes, Mature trees in the public realm, Local Landmark	III
Local Streets, Residential landscapes	II
Degraded urban townscapes/ streetscapes, Arterial Roads	I
A low-quality landscape, e.g. Industrial landscape, etc.	Not sensitive

**Table 8: Baseline Evaluations – Sensitivity of Visual Receptors (developed by the author for the proposed development with reference to fieldwork and research)**

Receptor	Category
Listed Views in Relevant Planning Documents Views from Key Public Urban Spaces Good quality / extensive views from listed buildings, within 50m	IV
Local receptors within 100m of the site (residential properties, nursing homes, residential care units, schools, cemeteries, tourist accommodation, tourist facilities, parks) with direct views of the development Publicly accessible viewpoints identified in the study with high-quality views or within a high-quality visual environment.	III
Local receptors within 100m of the site with oblique or compromised views of the development, or more than 100m from the site with existing high-quality views, or from a primary pedestrian route. Existing views from elevated viewpoints, within 1.5 km	II
People travelling through the area.	I
People working in the area.	Not sensitive

The significance of effects can be measured as a function of the magnitude of change and the sensitivity of the receptor. This allows for the following Table to be compiled that acts as a guide-point for the assessor. It is important to note that the assessor's professional judgement, common sense and experience are also factors in ascribing rational judgements for the significance of effects.

**Table 9: Level of Impact resulting from combination of Sensitivity Rating & Magnitude of Change**

	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>				
<b>Sensitivity</b>	Very High	High	Medium	Low	No appreciable change
Very High (IV)	Profound	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
High (III)	Very Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
Medium (II)	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant
Low (I)	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible
No sensitivity	Slight	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

The term 'study area' as used in this report refers to the site itself and its wider landscape context in the study of the physical landscape and landscape character. This may extend for approximately 1km or more in all directions from the site in order to achieve an understanding of the overall landscape. In terms of the visual assessment, the study of visual amenity may extend outside the study area, from areas where views of the site are available, but the majority of visual impacts for a development of this nature would be most likely are within 500 to 600m.

## 2.0 Planning Context

### 2.1 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 and Draft Plan 2022-2028

The site is zoned Z4: to provide and improve mixed service facilities. Z-4 focuses on the creation of district centres which can “provide a comprehensive range of commercial and community services.” There is a focus on sustainable transportation, as “new development should enhance their attractiveness and safety for pedestrians and a diversity of uses should be promoted to maintain their vitality throughout the day and evening” and “be well served by public transport”. The zoning prioritizes additional uses. “opportunity should be taken to use the levels above ground level for additional commercial/retail/ services or residential use with appropriate social facilities.”

Additionally, the plan outlines Santry Park, which is north of the site, as a proposed Natural Heritage Area with a landscape character assessment, which is defined as low-lying character, which is not to have view or prospects.

#### Key Development Principles Relevant to site and development

- Creation of residential population bases with diversity in unit types and tenures capable of establishing long-term integrated communities.
- Establishment of high-density developments capable of sustaining quality public transport systems and supporting local services and activities. Account should be taken in any such development of any distinct or valuable architectural or historical features that influence the urban form, character and scale of the existing area.
- Provide improved access to public transportation and prioritise pedestrian and cyclist movement and facilities.
- The creation of a vibrant retail and commercial core with animated streetscapes.
- The creation of high-quality, mixed-use urban districts with a distinctive spatial identity and coherent urban structure of interconnected streets and child-friendly public spaces and urban parks.
- Encourage the development/re-development of under-utilised sites.
- Permissible Uses include hotel, open space, residential, restaurant, and shops

## **2.2 National Planning Framework (NPF), February 2018**

The NPF recommends a more flexible approach within planning policies and standards in relation to building height and parking provision.

NPO 11 favours development that encourages more people, and generates more jobs and activity in existing urban areas.

NPO 13 promotes a performance-based approach to planning standards, and '*in particular building height*', that '*seek to achieve well-designed high quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth*'.

Further to NPO 13, the framework plan states:

"To enable brownfield development, planning policies and standards need to be flexible, focusing on design-led and performance-based outcomes, rather than specifying absolute requirements in all cases. Although sometimes necessary to

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safeguard against poor quality design, planning standards should be flexibly applied in response to well-designed development proposals that can achieve urban infill and brownfield development objectives ..."

*"In particular, general restrictions on building height...may not be applicable in all circumstances in urban areas and should be replaced by performance-based criteria appropriate to general location, e.g. city/town centre, public transport hub, inner suburban, public transport corridor, outer suburban, town, village etc."*

*"This more dynamic approach will also be applied to urban land use, where the existing character of land use in an urban area may be subject to change."*

NPO 35, aims to *"increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights."*

### **2.3 Urban Development and Building Heights, December 2018**

The Guidelines build on the policy objectives sought by the NPF for more compact forms of urban development. Further to this, the Guidelines state *that "A key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that greatly increased levels of residential development in our urban centres and significant increases in the building heights and overall density of development is not only facilitated but actively sought out and brought forward by our planning processes ..."* (Para 1.20)

Additionally, the Guidelines also state that higher buildings can also play a role in placemaking, in that 'they can also assist in reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place within a city or town centre, such as indicating the main centres of activity, important street junctions, public spaces and transport interchanges. In this manner, the increased building height is a key factor in assisting modern placemaking and improving the overall quality of our urban environments."

A set of Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) are laid out in the guidelines, These *"take precedence over any conflicting, policies and objectives of development plans, local area plans and strategic development zone planning schemes."*

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With regard to demonstrating that the proposed development is an appropriate addition to the fabric of the city, the Guidelines set out the following criteria (appropriate extracts with regard to landscape and visual amenity):

***At the scale of the relevant city/town***

- Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks and protection of key views.
- On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.

***At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street***

- The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape
- The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.
- The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being in line with the requirements of "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (2009).
- The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.
- The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.

The residual landscape and visual impacts are considered within both the above scales.

**2.4 Further Planning Context and Objectives**

There are no scenic routes adjacent to the site, neither are there any Tree Preservation Orders. The site is not within an ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) and there are no Natura 2000 sites (statutory protection areas under the Habitats and Birds Directives) on or near the proposed site.

The site is strategically located on a core transportation corridor and near several employment areas, which are in line with national and local planning objectives.

## **2.5 Planning Summary**

In summary, the landscape character as set out by the Dublin City Development Plan and Draft Development Plan aims for this site to be a multi-use, multi-story structure which integrates into the surrounding community and compliments the existing uses while providing new public spaces for the community. Additionally, the Dublin City Development Plan and Draft Development Plan do not specify any significant features of note or trees that require protection on the site. Below is a summary of key points and objectives:

- Mixed-use, with a diversity of unit type and high-density
- Adjacent to sustainable transportation
- High-quality and animated public realm; streetscape, plaza, etc.
- Focus on the re-development of under-utilised sites.

## **3.0 Baseline Environment**

### **3.1 Landscape Character and Site Setting**

The lands primarily comprise of the former Molloy and Sherry Warehouse premises and lands generally to the north-west corner of the Omni Park Shopping Centre, including a portion of the existing car park. The lands are currently occupied by large industrial premises currently in use as a distribution and logistics facility. The site is bounded by Swords Road to the east, Omni Park Shopping Centre to the south, existing residential dwellings to the west, and Santry Hall Industrial Estate to the north. The Swords Roads is a key north-south road and is designated as a future Bus Connects corridor. The site is located 4.4 km south of Dublin Airport, 1.2 km south of the M50, and 5.8 km from the city centre.

### 3.2 Description of Site

The main area of the site is currently occupied by industrial warehouses which are enclosed by boundary walls. The rest of the site within the boundary walls is laid with concrete hardstanding.

The application site also includes lands within the existing Omni Park Shopping Centre, currently part of the existing car park area, and the primary access is proposed from same. Service access will be from the Swords Road along the access road south of AIB, Swords Road, Santry.



Fig 2 - Site (shaded in orange) and Location



Fig 1 - View north-west of site

The only vegetation of note on the site are the existing trees planted within the car park area to the east. There are also trees located within neighbouring properties adjacent to the west and north-west boundaries. See Tree Survey Report for details on the condition of the existing trees.



*Fig 3 – View to east of Northern boundary*



*Fig 4 – Concrete Hardstanding*



*Fig 5 - North-west boundary*



*Fig 6 - Northern Boundary*



Fig 7 - View to south



Fig 8 - View to west



Fig 9 - Warehouse Structure

#### 4.0 Existing Visual Context and Views

The site is surrounded by the Omni Shopping Centre to the south and east, Santry Hall Industrial Estate to the north, and residential houses abutting the boundary to the west and north-west.

The immediate visual context is dominated by the Omni Shopping Centre and its associated retail and commercial buildings. The area to the south is mainly surface car-parking and roadways, with tree planting along the main access route and within some parking areas. The main part of the site to the north-west is partly screened by an existing concrete block wall and conifer hedge. The existing warehouse unit is partially visible to the boundary with the existing Lidl development.

There are direct views northwards to the site from the Omni Shopping Centre environs. Views from the east are partly screened by the existing Lidl store and the First Stop mechanic unit, with open views present from the existing access roadway and car parks to the east also. Further glimpsed views are present through to the site from the residential areas to the east of Swords Road, though these are partial and oblique. The rear of the two storey units of Santry Hall Industrial Estate that directly back onto the northern site boundary have direct views to the site. These commercial units screen the site from the remaining areas to the north.

The residential dwellings directly to the west (Shanliss Avenue) have direct views from their upper storey windows across to the site. Other residential properties, further to the west, south-west and north-west have indirect, oblique views towards the site, existing views from residential areas to the south are screened by the shopping centre buildings.

There are glimpsed views from along the Sword Roads, but not further than the extent of the shopping centre's surrounding blocks. In regard to the surrounding neighbourhood, there are no views of the site from Santry Park. The park is part of Santry Demesne and is a proposed Natural Heritage Area.



Fig 10 – Approx. Area of Potential Visual Receptors

**(NOTE: Please see 3D Design Bureau's map of locations for exact location, which are in 3D Design Bureau's report under separate cover)**

### 5.0 Sensitivity of the Identified Receptors

Landscape sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, as well as the visual sensitivity in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact.

The significance of effects can be measured as a function of the magnitude of change (i.e. the degree of change from the baseline) and the sensitivity of the receptor. Table 9.7 below acts as a guide for the assessor in combining these assessment criteria. It is

important to note that the assessor's professional judgement, common sense and experience are also factors in ascribing rational judgements for the significance of effects.

**Table 1-1 showing Level of Impact resulting from a combination of Sensitivity Rating & Magnitude of Change**

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>				
	<b>Very High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>No appreciable change</b>
<b>Very High (IV)</b>	Profound	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
<b>High (III)</b>	Very Significant	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight
<b>Medium (II)</b>	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant
<b>Low (I)</b>	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible
<b>No sensitivity</b>	Slight	Slight	Not Significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

In landscape and visual assessments, one of the key factors is the sensitivity of a landscape to change, where the proposed development will inevitably result in adding a new element to the landscape. The publication *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (2013) defines sensitivity as: "A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgments of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor."

Sensitivity refers to the inherent sensitivity to change of the landscape resource, as well as the visual sensitivity in terms of views, visibility, number and nature of viewers and scope to mitigate visual impact.

The adjacent uses are retail and business, with zoning allowing for mix-use development in the future. The existing site conditions are not in line with the current zoning since the site is in use as an industrial/ logistics facility with several warehouses on site. Therefore, the site's landscape sensitivity to change is low.

In regard to the Potential Visual Receptors, the viewpoints closer to the site are more likely to be affected by the change.

The northern business estate is considered of low sensitivity due to its existing visual quality and zoning. Any changes would be insignificant and therefore are not included further in this assessment.

West and North-west of the site, there is a sprawling 2 story residential neighbourhood, who will have glimpses of the 12 story development, where there is currently a view of the shopping centre or sky. The sensitivity of those visual receptors is considered to be low due to the current zoning of the site.

The main shopping centre is 3 stories, with an average of 2 stories throughout the shopping centre, and since it surrounds the site is the primary visual receptor. Therefore, the sensitivity of the visual receptors is considered to be low.

## **6.0 Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development comprises:

- The demolition of existing buildings (including 2 no. ESB sub stations) and the construction of a mixed use residential (457 apartments) and commercial development ranging in height from 4 to 12 storeys over basement in four blocks. The overall non-residential unit mix proposed comprises: 2 no. retail/café/restaurants; 1. no residential amenity space; 1 no. creche (plus playground); and 1 no. community space.
  
- Public realm improvements and amenity facilities to include:
  - 1) Upgrade of existing footpaths to provide 2 no. new shared surface access routes through the existing Omni Park Shopping Centre development providing direct access for pedestrians and cyclists to the subject development from the Swords Road and Omni Park Shopping Centre;
  - 2) Provision of a new public plaza to the northeast corner of Omni Park Shopping Centre, providing access to the Swords Road including pedestrian and cyclist access route (as substantially permitted under planning permission ref: ABP-307011-20);
  - 3) Provision of a new public plaza to the northwest corner of existing Omni Park Shopping Centre integrating the proposed development with the existing district centre lands, provision of which shall require amendments to existing carpark layout and a reduction of 104 no. existing commercial car parking spaces;
  - 4) Public and communal open spaces (incl. 2 no. playgrounds) and internal communal residential amenity for the residential development and private residential amenity in the form of terraces and balconies to all elevations.

- The development will include provision of access to a basement via a ramp to be located within the Omni Park Shopping Centre development proximate to the IMC Cinema. The provision of 768 no. bicycle parking spaces (504 at basement and 264 at surface).
- The provision of 213 no. basement car parking spaces including 11 No. accessible spaces and 22 No. EV charging points. In addition, 7 no. motorcycle parking spaces are provided at basement.
- The development also entails the reconfiguration of existing car parking to the northwest of Omni Park Shopping Centre with a net reduction of 104 no. commercial car parking spaces to allow for the provision of a new public plaza. Reconfiguration shall provide for the provision of 7 no. creche drop-off spaces and 6 no. carshare spaces to facilitate the proposed development.
- Emergency services / servicing access to the rear of existing retail premises at Omni Park Shopping Centre from the Swords Road.
- Provision of 5 no. ESB Substations including the relocation of an existing substation.
- All associated and ancillary site development, demolition and clearance works, hoarding during construction, revisions to car parking within the Omni Park Shopping Centre, soft and hard landscaping, public realm works, public lighting and signage, ancillary spaces, plant including photovoltaic panels, water infrastructure, utilities and services.

### **7.0 Potential Impact of the Proposed Development without Mitigation**

The potential impacts are the effects that the development could have without consideration of landscape and/or public realm mitigation or amelioration – i.e. without landscape works. For the sake of clarity, these shall be considered under the following headings: Landscape Impacts and Visual Impacts.

These impacts are considered under the following headings:

- temporary effects (construction phase up to one year);
- short-term impacts (construction phase up to two years);
- short-term impacts (operation phase up to seven years);

- medium-term impacts (operation phase, seven to fifteen years) and
- long-term impacts (operation phase up to fifteen years and beyond).

These effects have been compiled to identify any areas where the proposed development may be injurious to the visual character of the area and represent the potential impact rather than the eventual long-term effect. For this section, it is assumed that no specific landscape works are carried out with the construction of the development. This enables recognition of potential, rather than actual, effects which facilitate the identification of suitable landscape mitigation measures.

## **7.1 Construction Phase – Potential Landscape and Visual Impact**

### **7.1.1 Temporary & Short-Term effects**

During this process, the main change within the site is that the space where the existing industrial warehouses and concrete hardstanding sits will undergo a change into a construction site which will cover the enclosed part of the site. Any impacts generated at this stage will be short-term in duration.

There will be slightly negative effects associated with the construction works of this development elsewhere. This will be due to the site clearance, minor regrading of boundary areas, and the building processes required to construct the proposed development and associated works to the car park area and access routes. These are temporary and short-term.

Visual impacts will be more acute than in the operational phase, but short-term in duration. This is due to the construction traffic, site hoarding, cranes, etc. Cranes will be taller than the proposed buildings and therefore more visible in the landscape. There will also be vehicular and crane movement and changes to the configuration of the site, typical of building sites.

Visually, the impacts will be moderately negative. The most substantial effect during construction will be experienced by the residential units to the west (viewpoint 11) and within the Omni Shopping Centre. As the building progresses, the resident's views will alter and shorten to the face of the new building, which will be considered in Operational Phase effects.

## **7.2 Operational Phase - Potential Landscape Impact**

### **7.2.1. Short-term landscape impacts after the construction works (up to seven years)**

Following construction, the main landscape effects of the proposed development are associated with the completion of the site. The completed landscape character will have a positive effect on the site. The effect of the completed site will be moderately positive, due to the conversion from an industrial site to a usable high-quality public realm, allowing for permeability through the site and with the additions of new plantings throughout the site. These impacts are in line with landscape planning goals for the site.

### **7.2.2. Medium-term landscape impacts (seven to fifteen years)**

There will be no significant change to the initial operational phase. The area's character will likely continue to grow as planting matures.

### **7.2.3. Long-term landscape impacts (over fifteen years)**

There will be no significant change over fifteen years after the initial operational phase. The area's character will likely continue to grow as the area adapts and planting matures.

### 7.3 Potential Visual Impact

Following construction, the below visual receptors may be visually affected by the new 4 to 12 storey buildings replacing the existing industrial units on the site. **(NOTE: Numbering of Viewpoints references 3D Design Bureau's verified views, which are in 3D Design Bureau's report under separate cover)**

Table 1.8 – Visual sensitivity analysis

<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Viewpoint location</i>	<i>Approx Distances from Developed Site</i>	<i>Description of View</i>	<i>Sensitivity Level</i>
V1	Santry Park	400m north	There will be no views of the development from Santry Park due to the distance from the site and the existing vegetation. The development will have an imperceptible effect on views.	Low
V2	Santry Villas environs	400m north-east	Potential views are to the south-west. Due to the distance from the site, the interceding Santry Place development and the existing vegetation within the property boundaries, the development will have an imperceptibly negative impact on views.	Low
V3	Magenta Crescent environs	260m east	The potential views west towards the site from the residential properties are partial and oblique with the dwellings mainly facing east and west. Interceding vegetation, property boundaries and existing commercial developments to the west of Swords Road form another screening element. Due to the distance from the site, the existing developments and vegetation, the development will not have significantly negative effect on views.	Low
V4	Lorcan Road environs	300m east	The view west towards the site from the residential properties are partial and oblique, with most views being from upper storey windows or the existing public realm. Interceding vegetation, the existing roadway and commercial developments to the west form a screening element. Due to the distance from the site and the existing interceding	Low

			developments and vegetation, the development will not have significantly negative effect on views.	
V5	South-East of site: Residential properties to the east and west of Swords Road	300 – 500m South & South-east	The views north and north-west towards the site from the residential properties are partial and oblique, and mainly from upper floor windows. The existing Omni Park Shopping Centre screens the development. Interceding vegetation and boundaries within properties add another screening element to the north. Due to the distance from the site and the existing Omni Park centre, the development will have an imperceptibly negative effect on views.	Low
V6	Shanliss Road/ Shanliss Ave (south)	200 – 325m South-west	The views north and north-east towards the site from the residential properties are partial and oblique, and mainly from upper floor windows and the public realm. The existing Omni Park Shopping Centre partially screens the development from some receptors. Interceding vegetation and boundaries within properties add another screening element to the north-east. Due to the distance from the site, the existing Omni Park centre and interceding vegetation, the effects on views will not be significant.	Low
V7	Residential receptors to the west	100m to 300m	Views of the development site are to the east and will be glimpsed and oblique. Due to the distance from the site, the interceding vegetation and existing development, the effects on views will not be significant.	Low
V8	Residential receptors to the west	300m to 400m	Views of the development site are to the east and will be glimpsed and oblique. Due to the distance from the site, the interceding vegetation and existing development, the effects on views will not be significant.	Low
V9	Residential Receptors to the north-west	Over 300m	The views south-east towards the site from the residential properties are partial and oblique, and mainly from upper floor windows. Interceding vegetation and boundaries within properties add another screening element to	Low

			the north-west. Due to the distance from the site and the boundaries and developments, the proposed development will have an imperceptibly negative effect on views.	
V10	Shanliss Ave (north), Shanliss Way environs	150m to 300m	Views of the development site are to the south-east and will be glimpsed and oblique. Due to the distance from the site, the interceding vegetation and existing development, the effects on views will not be significant.	Low
V11	Shanliss Avenue	From 30m min west	Potential direct views of the development to the east are partially screened by existing boundaries and vegetation. Due to the low sensitivity yet high magnitude of change, the effect on views will be moderately negative.	Low

### 7.3.2 Potential Night-time Effects

Lighting to the proposed development consists of columns to the road and low-level lighting measures to the residential areas/courtyards. The luminaires are LED fittings which allow for low energy, directionally focused lighting that minimises light spill to the surrounding areas.

Due to the distance of the site from the identified receptors, the lighting to the roads and residential areas will have a neutral effect during the hours of darkness due to the existing public lighting in the area. This impact is also mitigated by the use of the LED fittings.

### 8.0 Mitigation Measures

The following recommendations are put forward to mitigate against the negative impacts mentioned above and to reinforce the positive impacts of the proposed development. Mitigation measures are proposed and considered only on the lands of the subject site.

### 8.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase, the existing site hoarding will be extended to restrict views of the site during construction. Hours of construction activity will also be restricted in accordance with local authority guidance.

## **8.2 Operational Phase**

The primary proposed mitigation measures can be seen on Murray and Associates Drawing no. **1863\_PL\_P\_01.1**, and are as follows:

Within the landscape areas to the north and west there will be substantial planting of native standard trees to aid screening for the residential areas to the west and north-west.

There will be additional tree and shrub planting within the courtyard areas and the new public plaza. There will be additional visual interest within the plaza, buffering the ground floor of the development. The development will continue to be softened and screened over time as the trees and planting mature.

The biodiversity of the area will be increased significantly due to the addition of approximately 150 new trees planted within the development, along with approximately 3,400 sqm. of planting at ground level and terrace levels. This will have a positive effect on the local habitat and ecology compared with the existing site's lack of biodiversity.

At the time of planting, the proposed trees will be at least 3.0m in height. The trees will reach a mature height of at least 7 to 12 metres, dependant on species and environmental factors within the medium term (seven to fifteen years). As specified on the plan, topsoil may be imported where necessary to ensure that mitigation measures establish and grow appropriately.

## **9.0 Predicted Impact of the Proposed Development with Mitigation (Residual Effects)**

The predicted impacts are the impacts that the development is most likely to have on the receiving environment having regard to the remedial and reductive measures outlined in the previous section.

### **9.1 Landscape: Construction Phase**

Predicted landscape impacts at the construction stage are likely to be as per the potential impacts – see section 7.1.

### **9.2 Landscape: Operational Phase**

Short-Term:

Following construction the main landscape impacts of the proposed development are associated with the change from industrial warehouses with extensive concrete

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hardstanding areas (with no vegetation on site), to a more intensified residential/mixed use, with associated tree and shrub planting. Within the site, there will be approximately 150 new trees planted and approximately 3,400 sqm. of planting.

Therefore, the effects on the existing landscape of the proposed development would overall be moderately positive, particularly considering that the development is in line with zoning aims for the area and consistent with emerging trends of the area.

These predicted effects are mitigated by the potential high quality of the public realm, creating a new connection across the site with distinctive landscape features and sense of place introduced by the proposed development with its associated landscape spaces and planting interventions.

Medium-Term:

As the existing planting matures on site the effect of the development on the landscape remains moderately positive as the planting and vegetation matures.

Long Term:

Maturing trees and shrub planting will further integrate the proposed development into the existing landscape, resulting in a long term moderately positive impact on the landscape.

### **9.3 Predicted Visual Impact**

Construction Stage:

Due to the existing site boundaries the development will have a neutral visual impact on adjacent properties, until the development progresses over the height of the hoarding. As the proposed development will be higher than the hoarding, the predicted visual effects will remain largely unchanged from the potential impacts.

Operational Stage:

The predicted visual impacts are those that will persist following the implementation and establishment of the proposed landscape mitigation measures (medium-term). As previously discussed, this development is appropriate to the site, due to the zoning and mixed-use nature of the development. The size and quality of the public amenity space and planting along the boundaries and within the public realm will have a small ameliorative effect at ground level, but due to the height of the proposed development, many impacts will persist as described in 7.3.

**Table 1.10 – Predicted Visual Effects**

<b>View</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Magnitude</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
VP1	Neutral	Imperceptible	Not appreciable	Likely	Long-Term	Medium
VP2	Negative	Imperceptible	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP3	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP4	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP5	Negative	Imperceptible	Low	Likely	Short-Term	Low
VP6	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP7	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP8	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP9	Negative	Imperceptible	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP10	Negative	Not Significant	Low	Likely	Long-Term	Low
VP11	Negative	Moderate	Medium	Likely	Long-Term	Low

**(NOTE: 3D Design Bureau's views, which are in 3D Design Bureau's report under separate cover)**

### **10.0 Summary**

During construction, there will be a change to the landscape and there will be negative visual effects for residents and visitors to the areas adjacent to the site associated with construction activity.

In the medium to long-term, the landscape effects due to the completed development would overall be moderate and positive, due to the conversion from industrial warehouses positioned in a closed space to a public and integrated space. In the longer term, the assessment concludes that the proposed development will continue to fit into the landscape and visual character of the area.

Landscape works are proposed to reduce and offset any effects generated due to the proposed development at ground level, where possible. The planting of substantial numbers of new trees and plantings will enhance the overall appearance of the new development. Further to this, there is a net gain of c. 150 new trees planted within the site and approximately 3,400 sqm of new planting at ground level.

While the effects on views persist, the tree and shrub planting will increase the visual quality within the site. Future visitors to the development will perceive the development in positive terms due to the context and the quality of the public realm and proposed buildings.

## **11. 'Do Nothing' Scenario**

The do-nothing impact refers to the non-implementation of the proposed development. The primary effect of this would be that the impacts and effects identified would not directly occur. In this regard the following issues are relevant.

The current land use of the subject site is not a land use which is likely to persist in the longer term due to the current zoning within the Dublin City Development Plan and Draft Development Plan. In the event that the development does not proceed it is likely that the subject site would be developed in the future for some mixed use residential and commercial uses in line with its zoning. Therefore, there will be potential for future effects on the quality of landscape and visual impacts associated with future development on these lands. It is anticipated that the effects of the impacts would be consistent with those identified in this assessment.

### **11.1 'Worst-Case' Effects**

The worst-case effects arise when the mitigation measures as proposed substantially fail. This would result in the effects as laid out in section 7, where the landscape and visual impacts of the project are assessed without the proposed mitigation measures.

## **12.0 Monitoring**

### **Construction**

Landscape tender drawings and specifications will be produced to ensure that the landscape work is implemented in accordance with best practice. This document will include tree work procedures, soil handling, planting and maintenance. The contract works will be supervised by a suitably qualified landscape architect.

The planting works will be undertaken in the planting season after completion of the main civil engineering and building work.

### **Operation**

This will consist of weed control, replacement planting, pruning etc. All landscape works will be in an establishment phase for the initial three years from planting. A landscape management plan accompanies the planning application. Prior to completion of the landscape works, a competent landscape contractor should be

engaged and a detailed maintenance plan, scope of operation and methodology be in place.

### Summary of Mitigation & Monitoring and residual visual effects

The Table below summarises the Construction Phase mitigation and monitoring measures.

**Table 1.1 – Construction: Mitigation & Monitoring Measures**

Likely Significant Effect	Mitigation	Monitoring
Visual: - Construction Traffic/Cranes	Site Hoarding	Regular site visits as per the Inspection Plan
Landscape: Site Clearance, Change from brownfield landscape to mixed used residential	Mitigation measures for landscape only applicable in operational phase	Inspection of tree protection measures to relevant trees

The Table below summarises the Operational Phase mitigation and monitoring measures.

**Table 1.12 – Operation: Mitigation & Monitoring Measures**

Likely Significant Effect	Mitigation	Monitoring
Visual: Negative effect on adjacent visual receptors	Proposed tree planting will mature over time, contributing to the visual softening of the development.	Initial Defects period applicable as per regular planning grant. Landscape Management plan detailing maintenance of trees etc included as part of planning application.
Landscape: Change in landscape character	Retention of existing boundary hedgerows. Proposed planting within development of new native standard trees, native woodland, native wildflower meadow.	Regular maintenance regime by experienced landscape contractor

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### **13.0 Interactions of Impacts**

The assessment of the landscape impacts associated with the proposed development has a number of interactions with other parameters of the assessment. In summary, these are as follows:

- Population and Human Health
- Biodiversity

The interactions of the landscape with these parameters were as follows:

#### **Population and Human Health**

The landscape and visual impact associated with human beings focused on the effects of dwellings. The proposed development generates visual effects; the effects and associated amelioration of these effects are discussed in the impact section of the report.

#### **Biodiversity**

The long-term effects of the proposed development will have a positive effect on the areas through the increase of tree canopy and vegetation.

### **14.0 Potential Cumulative Impacts**

The assessment took into account the existing development within the immediate areas. Currently, the permitted Omni Living development to the east, adjacent to Swords Road (Ref: ABP-305737-19) would have an impact on potential views to the east. The cumulative effect of the impact of this future development will contribute towards lessening the magnitude of the impact of the proposed Omni Plaza development on visual receptors to the east.