

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

of a proposed strategic housing development at

Kilgobbin, Stepside

Dublin 18

for McGarrell Reilly Homes

6th July 2022

Mitchell + Associates

Landscape Architects and Urban Designers

5 Woodpark, The Rise, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

Tel: +353 (0)1 4545066

Email: info@mitchell.ie

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

Mitchell + Associates was engaged by McGarrell Reilly Homes., to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for a proposed Strategic Housing Development and associated facilities on a site located to the north-east of Stepside Park, and incorporates an extension to the Loop Road 'Clay Farm Road', Stepside, Dublin 18. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) summarises the impact of the proposed development on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and on the contiguous urban landscape and its environs. It describes the landscape character of the subject site and its hinterland, together with the visibility of the site from significant viewpoints in the locality. It includes an outline of the methodology utilised to assess the impacts, descriptions of the receiving environment (baseline) and of the potential impacts of the development. Mitigation measures introduced to ameliorate or offset impacts are outlined and the resultant predicted (residual) impacts are assessed.



Fig.1 Area of site location (circled in red) and context (Source: Google maps with annotation by Mitchell + Associates)

This report has been prepared as part of the planning submission and should be read with reference to the photomontages included in the separate A3 report produced by Digital Dimensions, which accompanies the application. It should also be read in conjunction with the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Conroy Crowe Kelly Architects which accompanies the submission. This LVIA has been prepared in response to Item no. 12 of An Bord Pleanála's

Opinion.

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This assessment was carried out between September 2021 and June 2022 and assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development on the basis of the scheme design and the photomontages produced to illustrate it. The methodology adopted for the assessment takes account of the capacity of the existing site and environs to accommodate the proposed development, the sensitivities involved, and it assesses its impacts upon the broader existing urban landscape. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) includes consideration of two main aspects:

- Landscape Character Impact – the assessment of effects on the character of the landscape arising from the insertion of the proposed development into the existing landscape context. This ‘landscape’ aspect is relatively subjective and can be described broadly as the human, social and cultural experience of one’s surroundings. These combined impacts will elicit responses whose significance will be partially dependent on how people perceive a particular landscape and how much the changes will matter in relation to other senses as experienced and valued by those concerned. Despite the extremely large part played by our visual experience in forming our views on landscape, one’s perception and indeed memory also play an important part if the changes brought about in landscape character are to be fully understood. It follows therefore that different people doing different things will experience the surrounding landscape in different ways. Such sensitivities and variations in response, including where and when they are likely to occur, are taken into consideration in the assessment.
- Visual Impact – an appraisal of effects of the proposed development on the visual environment and visual amenity as evidenced by the comparison of baseline (existing) images and photomontages illustrating the proposed development in context. This second aspect is somewhat less subjective in that direct ‘before and after’ comparisons can be made. Visual impact occurs by means of visual intrusion and/or visual obstruction and the distance between subject and viewpoint has a bearing on the scale of such impact.

This assessment utilises the standard evaluation methodology normally used in the preparation of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) when being prepared for inclusion within an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The evaluation methodology for this assessment report is therefore based on the following:

- ‘Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements’ - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2002.
- ‘Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements’ - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2003.
- ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, published by Routledge, 3rd Edition 2013.

- The DRAFT 'Revised guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2015 and to the DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017
- The 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), May 2022
- Reference is also made to the 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (August 2018) - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals: Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Landscape Institute UK (LI) September 2019.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has involved:

- Visiting the area, including preparation of a photographic record of the main landscape features;
- Undertaking a desk study of the subject site and its immediate environs in relation to its local and broader significance using the information gathered from the site visits, studying aerial photography, historic and Ordnance Survey mapping;
- Establishing and describing the receiving environment in terms of the existing landscape and its visual amenity;
- Assessing the nature, scale, and quality of the proposed development through examination of the design team's drawings, illustrations and descriptions of the proposed scheme;
- Assessing potential viewpoints, choosing and agreeing those which could be considered most important and most representative in terms of visual impact; and
- Assessing the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development through consideration and interpretation of the prepared photomontages.

2.2 Selection of views

In order to provide a full and detailed appraisal of the proposal, 13 viewpoints have been identified and selected for photomontage preparation. The views were chosen to accurately represent the likely visual impact from a variety of viewpoints and directions around the subject site.

In accordance with the GLVIA guidelines, views from the public domain are given priority, particularly those from main thoroughfares and public places. The viewpoints chosen are considered to be the most important and representative, having regard to the requirement to examine the likely significant impacts. A location map of the final selected viewpoints is illustrated in Figure 2 (below) and is also included with the photomontages in the A3 document included in the submission. The process of view selection paid particular regard to Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's policies in respect of views and prospects as set out in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022–2028.

The guidance on viewpoint selection and baseline photography requires that the proposed development is considered in context and that photomontages used to illustrate the proposed development include sufficient landscape context for proper assessment. Both summer and winter views were included in assessment, in order to illustrate the extent of leaf coverage that may affect the evaluation of effects.

The photomontages prepared have also been used to assess the preliminary design and to inform the design team of any advisable amendments – this is an iterative process and offers an opportunity for the design team to adjust the design in mitigation of the indicated impacts.



Fig.2 Selected Viewpoints (Source: 3D Digital Dimensions)

2.3 Photomontage methodology

The primary method adopted for Visual Impact Assessment relies largely on a comparative visual technique, whereby accurate photomontages, incorporating the proposed development are compared to the existing corresponding baseline photograph so that an assessment of impact can be made. These 'before' and 'after' images are prepared for a number of selected viewpoints. A general methodology for the preparation of photomontages, including site photography, 3D computer modelling and rendering of views, is outlined in Appendix 1 of this document, however the specific detailed methodology employed by Digital Dimensions for this project is described in their A3 photomontage document.

2.4 Methodology for rating of impacts

An assessment is made in respect of the significance, scale and magnitude of predicted impacts which is set against an assessment of the quality/sensitivity of the impact. For each view, the scale/magnitude of impact is related to the quantum of change within the field of view and to the nature and sensitivity of such change in respect of the respective receptors, in the context of the existing (receiving) environment. Therefore, whilst the significance or scale of impact may range from 'imperceptible' to 'profound' and these may in part be related to distance and proximity, it should be remembered that the nature of the change and the sensitivities of the viewers also play a part in this aspect of assessment for each view. This latter issue of sensitivity can however create emotive responses that often have little or no regard for the

appropriateness and/or design of the proposal; however, the assessment needs to be considered in that context. In such cases, issues of appropriateness and design quality become more influential in the assessment of impact and the appraisal of the designed scheme. The subtleties of design and detail in such circumstances are important in mitigating potentially negative impacts and ultimately, in determining appropriateness.

The quality of impact can be assessed as 'positive' or 'negative' depending on whether the change is considered to improve or reduce the quality of the landscape character or visual environment. The quality of impact may also be assessed as 'neutral' if the quality of the environment is unaffected. The assessment of quality needs to consider and weigh-up a range of issues and potentially conflicting standpoints. The nature of the proposed change, its context, appropriateness, quality of design and the sensitivities of the viewers are all important considerations for this aspect of assessment.

The duration of impact is a third aspect of assessment to be considered and impacts may range from temporary to permanent. In this case, the proposed development has a design life up to and possibly exceeding 60 years and so its impact is likely to be long term to permanent. The temporary/short term impacts during the construction of the proposed development are also considered in this assessment.

The significance criteria used for this landscape and visual assessment are based on those given in the EPA 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements', 2002, (Section 5 Glossary of Impacts) as refined by the Draft 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017, and subsequently in the final 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports May 2022. These are outlined in Appendix 2.

3. Description of Receiving Environment

3.1 Site location and landscape context

The site for the proposed development is in the townland of Kilgobbin and lies to the north-east of Stepside village, and south of the residential area known as Kilgobbin Woods. The Clay Farm residential area which is to the north and east is currently (June 2022) under construction.



Fig.3 Looking northwards across the site from Stepside Park. The house of Clay Farm is on the extreme left.

A section of the alignment of the proposed Loop Road (Clay Farm Loop Road) traverses the scheme. The site therefore is a piece of the jigsaw of infrastructure and development envisaged in the Ballyogen and Environs Local Area Plan 2019-2025.

The built up (residential) nature of adjoining lands, low rise housing in Stepside Park to the south and west and higher density mixed use development of Clay Farm to the north-east and south-east (under construction) establish the setting and the character of the lands, as the aims of the LAP begins to consolidate.

The higher lands to the north & north-east are a generally a greenfield landscape including the Stepside Golf Course and agricultural land.

The former landfill site, now proposed as Jamestown park lies approx. 500m to the east of the site, and Fernhill Park and Gardens approx. 1km to the west. The Ballyogen Stream valley, noted as Clay Farm Eco Park, is approximates 250m north of the scheme and provides a significant green infrastructure link

between Fernhill and the future Jamestown Park. Figure 3 looks northwards across the site from the Stepside Park play area, showing the Clay Farm development under construction.



Fig.4 View along the Clay Farm Loop Road from the bridge over the Ballyogan Stream.



Fig.5 Fernhill Park and Gardens

3.2 Topography

The site is on the lower side of Stepside Park which falls steeply from Stepside northwards towards the Ballyogan Stream. The topography levels out somewhat towards the Ballyogan Road before falling towards the M50 and Leopardstown. The landscape is typical of this northern section of the Dublin mountains, where this high ground affords sweeping views across Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, towards Dublin Bay. On a more immediate scale, the site itself falls 9m from 120 to 111m which informs the proposed design.

3.3 Vegetation

The site is partially cleared of topsoil, with some spoil heaps, grass and scrub vegetation as illustrated in Fig 3 above. There is a significant stand of mature Beech Trees beyond the site to the west, within the established residential estate at Stepside Park, and further mature trees in the grounds of Clay Farm, also outside the site. Mature gardens contain a wide variety of shrubs and trees in variable condition. The proposed development will necessitate the removal of the Monterey cypress hedge which falls within the road alignment (#1485 on tree survey)

3.4 Planning Context

The site is in the Ballyogan and Environs Local Area Plan 2019 - 2025, and straddles both the Kilgobbin Quarter and Stepside Quarter and is within the Site Development Framework (SDF) for Kilgobbin (see Figure 12.5 of the LAP). Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022–2028 indicates the subject site and the adjacent lands as having the zoning objective A – ‘To provide residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting the existing residential amenities.’ (refer to Figure 6, below).



Fig. 6: Extract from Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028. The subject site is indicated by the red outline.

There are protected and preserved trees and woodlands to the west and south, outside of the application site. See Figure 6 above

There are no preserved views in proximity to the site, however there is an objective to preserve views along the Burrow Road looking northwards (not towards the site) and further uphill along Ballyedmonduff Road looking north eastwards across the sloping landscape towards Dublin Bay. This view looks across the environs of the site which is approx. 1km away. See Figure 6 above

There is a cluster of villas that are Protected Structures along Kilgobbin Road, but there are no protected structures close to the site.

4. Characteristics of the Proposed Development

4.1 Introduction

A comprehensive description of the design for the proposed development is contained in the Architectural Design Statement prepared by Conroy Crowe Kelly Architects. Please refer also to the design layout drawings, sections and elevations included with this planning application.

4.2 Proposed development

The development will consist of;

- i. the construction of 118 no. residential units comprising:
 - a) 28 no. 1-bedroom and 69 no. 2-bedroom apartments in 1 no. block ranging from 3 to 6-storeys in height;

- b) 10 no. 3-bedroom houses all with private amenity space;
- c) 11 no. 4-bedroom houses all with private amenity space;
- ii. the provision of podium level communal open space with a Gross Floor Area (GFA) of 1,454sq.m to serve the apartments in Block 1;
- iii. the provision of 4,002 sq.m of public open space;
- iv. the construction of a 2-storey childcare facility with a GFA of 156sq.m. with an associated play area and set-down car parking spaces;
- v. the provision of 153 no. on-site car parking spaces that will provide for 97 no. under podium spaces for residents of the apartment building, 10 no. visitor car-parking spaces, 42 no. in-curtilage car parking spaces for the housing units and 4 no. car-parking spaces designated for the childcare facility;
- vi. 4 no. motorcycle parking spaces at under podium level;
- vii. the provision of 248 no. bicycle parking spaces including 170 no. long-stay spaces, 56 no. short-stay spaces and 22 no. for use by the childcare facility;
- viii. access will be provided via a 137m extension to the Clay Farm Loop Road and construction of local access roads to serve the development which will connect with the new section of the Clay Farm Loop Road;
- ix. provision of 4 no. new pedestrian and cyclist links to adjoining residential development in Stepside Park, one of which will also facilitate emergency vehicle access to Stepside Park and access to re-configured bin-store for existing residents of The Courtyard;
- x. all ancillary site development works including plant, waste storage areas, landscaping, green roofs, boundary treatments, SuDS measures, ESB substation, public lighting, and solar PV panels.

The scheme is laid out as per the site plan in Figure 7 below.



Fig. 7: Site layout, with the apartment building to the west, the semi detached and terraced houses to the south and north, including the creche.. (CCK Architects)



Fig. 8: Site section viewed from the south east showing the apartment building in relation to slope and adjacent houses. (CCK Architects)

Potential Impacts of the Proposed Development

The purpose of this section of the report is to describe the potential effects of such proposed development upon the landscape and views/visual amenity within the area, and further afield, where

relevant - at both construction and operational stages. The effect of such changes may of course be positive or negative. Effects can also be short or long term; temporary or permanent.

5.1 Construction phase

Potential impacts during the construction phase are related to temporary works, site activity, and vehicular movement within and around the subject site. Vehicular movement may increase in the immediate area, and temporary vertical elements such as cranes, scaffolding, site fencing/hoarding, gates, plant and machinery etc., will be required and put in place. All construction impacts will be temporary to short-term, and may include the following:

- Site preparation works and operations
- Site excavations and earthworks
- Site infrastructure and vehicular access
- Construction traffic, dust and other emissions
- Temporary fencing/hoardings
- Temporary site lighting
- Temporary site buildings (including office accommodation)
- Cranes, crash deck and scaffolding

5.2 Operational phase

The main issues regarding potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposed scheme will include:

- Scale, height, and massing of the proposed development, particularly in the existing context, which is predominantly 2-storey residential development, with higher and denser development in the environs;
- Impacts on the visual amenity of the existing neighbouring residential developments
- Visual impacts along local roads and amenity spaces;
- Appropriateness and quality of the design, detail and finishes.

The importance of design quality in the process of inserting new buildings into the urban/suburban fabric should not be underestimated. Good design in such circumstances is a rigorous process involving: a deep understanding of the site, its context, and existing sensitivities; testing of the range of appropriate design options; a broad knowledge of suitable design approaches and; the ability to convert these through careful detailing, materials selection and effective control throughout the construction process. These aspects of design are central to the appropriate and successful integration of new development within its context. Any development has the potential to impact negatively, if poorly designed. Conversely it has the potential to impact positively, indeed to inspire, if well-designed.

Aspects of the proposed scheme design are included specifically to respond to such issues and any associated concerns. The basic design approach and mitigation measures employed to address potentially sensitive contextual issues and to respect and enhance the local environs are outlined in Section 6, below.

6 Mitigation (remedial/reductive measures)

6.1 Construction phase

The building site including a site compound with site offices, site security fencing, scaffolding and temporary works will be visible during the construction phase. The provision of site hoarding along the property boundaries will substantially address many potential effects of construction operations during the delivery stage. Construction cranes and of course, the emerging buildings will become visible from neighbouring properties, along Sandyford Road and from a number of more distant vantage points as the development proceeds. The cranes and site facilities are generally viewed as a temporary and unavoidable feature of construction. Mitigation measures proposed during the construction stage of the development, primarily revolve around the implementation of appropriate site management procedures during the construction works – such as the control of lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, control of vehicular access, and effective dust and dirt control measures, etc. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan for the project has been prepared and is included with the planning submission, which sets out the basic measures to be employed to mitigate potential negative effects during construction. This is a working document which is refined and added to as the project proceeds.

6.2 Operational phase

The designed scheme seeks to harmonise and integrate the development within the existing landscape and the broader environment whilst adhering to national planning policy which seeks residential densification and the provision of increased height on appropriate urban sites. The design rationale and detail employed, seeks to mitigate potential negative effects on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area by:

- Establishing an integrated relationship between the proposed development and surrounding buildings and the broader landscape, including developing infrastructure and amenity beyond, incorporating aspects of current and emerging trends in built-form, scale, texturing, colour and materials;
- The insertion, positioning and detailed modelling of the buildings, in order to assist in the appropriate visual assimilation of their mass (eg. the taller 6 storey element is located at a lower ground level than existing two storey houses to the south and west (see Fig 8 above) and the proposed buildings closer to existing residential properties are lower in height);
- Appropriate architectural detailing to assist in the integration of the external building facades – including the modulation of openings, balconies and fenestration, and variation in material types (pale render and brick)
- Simplification and rationalisation of the proposed roof lines;
- Rationalisation of all services elements and any other potential visual clutter and its incorporation internally within building envelopes (as far as practically possible).
- Use of appropriate materials;
- The provision of significant open space with pedestrian and cycle linkage;

- The inclusion of a considered landscape design which deals appropriately with the relationship between the buildings and the adjacent communal and public open spaces (which includes semi-private buffering where appropriate between external and internal living areas at 'ground' level);
- The provision of communal open space within the development located adjacent to the site boundary, thereby reducing impact of the proposed buildings on existing neighbouring residential properties.
- The landscape design incorporates nature based Sustainable Drainage Systems which is appropriate in the proximity of the Ballyogan Stream valley.

5. Predicted effects of the proposed development

7.1 Effects on landscape character

In assessing the landscape character effects, there are three main inter-related aspects to be addressed in considering the development proposals, namely:

- The perceived character of the area – how it is affected by the proposal
- Effects of the proposed development on social and cultural amenity
- The proposed views of the development, relative to the existing site (outlined in section 7.2) and the associated effects on visual amenity.

A person's experience of 'landscape' may be described as an individual's response (sometimes an emotional response) to their surroundings. It is a complex concept which involves individual perception, social amenity, memory, beliefs, allegiances etc.

The proposed design seeks to integrate the new development into the established and relatively verdant and mature residential landscape and the developing character of the adjacent surrounding housing schemes, transport and green infrastructure. The range of mitigation measures incorporated within the proposed design seeks to ensure that the potential impacts are kept to a minimum. The proposed design is generally of high quality and effectively addresses these issues.

The potential impact of the proposed development upon the residential amenity of existing neighbouring residential properties contributes something to local sensitivities in this regard but is not considered a major aspect of impact upon the landscape or indeed upon the general visual amenity within the area. The scale of the proposed apartment building is larger than the prevailing norm in the immediate area, however the planning context and current development under construction demonstrates the additional new residential development in this area and the additional scale and height which is visible locally (see Figures 4 above 9 below).



Fig.9 View across the Ballyogan Stream (Clay Farm Eco Park) towards part of the Clay Farm development under construction (June 2022).

7.2 Effects on views and visual amenity

The assessment of effects on views created by the proposed development is determined through the comparison of 'before' and 'after' photomontages – it is therefore, perhaps, a little less subjective than the assessment of effects on landscape character. It too is inevitably influenced to some extent by the standpoint of the viewer (the receptor). Photomontages are important in illustrating the impact of a proposed scheme from the more sensitive and/or protected viewpoints. In this instance, they also serve to support and illustrate an aspect of the landscape character impact assessment.

It is important to remember that while photomontages are a useful tool in illustrating comparative visual impact, they are recognised as having their limitations and potential dangers. Guidelines for their use in assessment, advocate a site visit to the viewpoint locations and point out that photomontages alone should not be expected to capture or reflect the complexity underlying the visual experience (refer to the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', 3rd Edition and 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals': Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Landscape Institute UK, September 2019). One might imagine the effect of the proposed development on the visual environment is readily assessed by way of a perusal of the prepared photomontages, however a full examination involves walking the area and viewing the images from the respective viewpoint locations and then imagining and interpolating the sequential experience of the proposed development in context, when moving around it. This is particularly important in trying to appreciate the dynamic relationship between a set of buildings and their landscape context. The assessments made for each view have taken this into account.

Photomontages of the 13 views selected have been included with this submission in a separate A3 document prepared by Digital Dimensions. They include summer and winter views, with the exception of summer views for 4, 11, 12 & 13. The numbered viewpoint locations are illustrated in the Selected Viewpoints map (Figure 2). The views selected are from all directions around the proposed development site to provide a representative selection of the views which are potentially most impactful, especially in the public domain. .

The existing view from each viewpoint is shown together with a 'proposed' view of the proposed development as seen from the same viewpoint. The red line that appears on one of the 'proposed' photomontages indicates the location and profile of the proposed new development in the background, which in this case is largely screened from view by intervening buildings and vegetation.

The projected visual impact (in terms of magnitude and quality) for each view is outlined below – for clarification of the significance criteria used in the assessment of impacts please refer to Appendix 2. Because the life of the proposed development is up to 60 years, the duration of visual effects is assessed as **long term**.

View 1

This is a view from Fernhill Park and Gardens, close to Fernhill House. The foreground is the garden of the house and a footpath with large mature trees in the middle distance. The elevated view gives a sense of the landscape falling away in the far distance, towards the site.

The scheme is outlined in red and is not visible.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 2

This is a view from Old Kilgobbin Church looking towards the site. The view is of an open grass space with the ruins of the church and its graveyard on the left. In the middle distance is a residential development of apartments and semi-detached houses.

The development is outlined in red, below the mound of the graveyard.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 3

This is a view from Burrow Road looking north eastwards towards the site. The view is a typical golf course landscape of grass, trees and greens, with suburban development visible beyond between layers of vegetation. It is a panoramic view with Dublin Bay and Howth Head visible in the distance.

The red line in the proposed image represents the outer profile of the proposed development which will not be easily perceptible in this view.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 4

This is a view from Kilgobbin Heights, a street that is orientated towards the site. The view is along a street in a typical suburban detached housing estate, although the corner unit has a striking new extension.

The proposed scheme is outlined in red and is not visible in this view.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 5

This is a view looking northwards towards the site along one of the streets in Stepside Park (all the local streets are called Stepside Park). The view is of a narrow street with a granite garden wall to the right and two storey terraces stepping down the hill to the right. Through the gap at the end of the street is a view across the local landscape of Clay Farm, towards Dublin Bay.

Several of the two storey houses of the proposal can be seen terminating the view of Clay Farm at the end of the street, although they are well below the tree line and horizon line of Dublin Bay.

The impact from this location is assessed as **slight and neutral**.

View 6

This is a view looking westwards towards the site along one of the streets in Stepside Park (all the local streets are called Stepside Park). The view is of a tree lined street with rendered garden walls to either side, and a gate at the end.

The scheme can be partially seen through the existing and proposed trees at the end of the street. The gate has been removed and the street appears to link in to the proposed development.

The impact from this location is assessed as **moderate and positive**.

View 7

This is a view looking westwards towards the site along one of the streets in Stepside Park (all the local streets are called Stepside Park). The view is of a paved shared surface with parking between 3 storey terraced residential units. The end of this space is closed off, with trees beyond.

The scheme can be partially seen through the existing trees at the end of the shared space to the right. The scheme has been linked through from the shared space to the left.

The impact from this location is assessed as **moderate and positive**.

View 8

This is a view from Cruagh Green and the Cruagh Greenway to the south east of the site, looking across the Clay Farm development which is under construction. There are 5 storey apartments to the left, and

there are two and three storey units in the middle distance. The construction site of Clay Farm is in the foreground.

The proposed scheme is outlined in red and is not visible in this view.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 9

This is a view from the bridge on the Clay Farm Loop Road crossing the Ballyogan Stream, looking westwards towards the site. The view across the bridge is of a striking apartment block under various stages of construction in the summer and winter views. Some completed units can be seen in the middle distance to the left. To the right, there are views across layers of vegetation and glimpses of roofscapes towards the Dublin Mountains.

The scheme is nestled in to the hillside in the summer view, and is obscured by trees along the Ballyogan Stream in summer.

The impact from this location is assessed as **slight and neutral**.

View 10

This is a view from a small tree lined road off Kilgobbin Road, leading to Clay Farm. The lane has a distinct character of a farm lane with local granite walls and mature trees in the field beyond. In the distance to the right the land rises to the Dublin Mountains.

The scheme is partially visible to the right in the winter view through a screen of trees. The scheme is not visible in the summer view.

The impact from this location is assessed as **slight and neutral**.

View 11

This is a view from further south along the newly built Clay Farm Loop Road, with recently completed units to the left. The upper stories and roofscapes of neighbouring developments can be seen in the middle ground, with the Dublin Mountains rising beyond. Further units of the Clay Farm scheme are being built behind a site hoarding to the right.

The scheme is partially visible to the right above the hoarding line. It is likely that the scheme will not be visible in the view when the Clay Farm scheme is completed.

The impact from this location is assessed as **moderate and neutral**.

View 12

This is a view looking towards the site along one of the streets in Stepside Park (all the local streets are called Stepside Park). The view is of a street of large detached suburban houses. In the distance, the large stand of mature Beech trees to the west of Stepside Park can be seen.

The scheme is outlined in red and is not visible beyond the existing houses.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

View 13

This is a view looking southwards towards the site from Castle Court. The view looking towards a dense copse of trees beyond a railing on a plinth wall that lines the roadway.

The scheme is outlined in red and is not visible beyond trees in this winter view.

The impact from this location is assessed as **imperceptible**.

6. Cumulative Effects

8.1 Introduction

Current guidelines suggest that a determination should be made as to whether cumulative effects are likely to occur – these are outlined in the current GLVIA guidelines (3rd edition) as '*additional effects caused by the proposed development when considered in conjunction with other proposed developments of the same or different types*'. It has become accepted practice that such a determination generally needs to be made as to whether any likely pending or permitted development of a similar nature will have any bearing on the assessment of the proposed development and this is subject to the assessor's judgement in the matter.

8.2 Cumulative effects related to the proposed development

Several residential developments are currently in the planning process or under construction in close proximity to the proposed development. As the developments under construction are not completed nor clearly defined within the baseline photography for photomontages, they are considered in this report to be developments which may have a bearing on this aspect of the assessment. They are listed below, with the locations identified in Figure 10.



Figure 10 Development schemes in the environs of the LAP. (MH Planning)

Site 1 – Clay Farm Phase 2 Residential Development : 927 no. residential units (Planning Ref. ABP-301522-18).

Site 2 – Clay Farm Phase 1 Residential Development : 410 no. residential units (Planning Ref. D15A/0247 & D17A/0468 & ABP-304288-19).

Site 3 – Residential Development of 200 apartments in 4 blocks and a crèche (Planning Ref. 307415-20).

Site 4 - Residential Development at Glencairn of 341 no. residential units (Planning Ref. ABP-302580-18).

Site 5 - The Quadrant Neighbourhood Centre (including retail, retail services and restaurant/café uses), retail warehouses, cinema and other leisure space, residential units, crèche, office space, car showroom, medical centre, linear park (Planning Ref. Pl. Ref. D18A/0257).

Site 6 - Residential Development of 249 residential units at Murphystown Way (Planning Ref. ABP-308227-20).

Site 7 – Residential Development of 482 residential units at Golf Lane (Planning Ref. ABP-309026-20).

7. Conclusion

The proposed development represents a relatively modest insertion into the existing residential area. The design incorporates many aspects of mitigation of the potential for high levels of visual impact due to height or massing and would appear to be successful in appropriately integrating the proposed buildings into their local landscape and the emerging context of Clay Farm Loop Road. This is most pertinent in relation to neighbouring residential occupiers. The views of the proposed development also reveal a well-conceived and considered design which successfully mitigates potential visual impacts, and will continue to do so as the planting scheme matures.

8. References

1. Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2002.
2. Advice Notes on Current Practice in the preparation of Environmental Impact Statements - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2003.
3. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, published by Routledge, 3rd Edition 2013.
4. DRAFT 'Revised guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2015.
5. DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017
6. 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment' (August 2018) - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
7. Visual Representation of Development Proposals: Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Landscape Institute UK (LI) September 2019.
8. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028.
9. Ballyogen and Environs Local Area Plan 2019-2025
10. 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2022

Appendix 1: A general methodology for the production of photomontages

Photography of Site

1. Photographs are taken from locations (as advised by the person carrying out the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) with a professional SLR digital camera. The photographs are taken horizontally with a survey level attached to the camera. The photographic positions are marked (for later surveying), the height of the camera and the focal length of the image recorded.
2. In each photograph, a minimum of 2No visible fixed points are marked for surveying. These are control points for model alignment within the photograph.
3. The photographic positions and the control points are geographically surveyed and these positions are plotted on the site survey drawing as supplied by the Architect/Engineer.

3D Computer Model, Rendered Views and Photomontage Preparation

4. The buildings are accurately modeled and materials applied according to plans, elevations and finishes supplied by the Architect and aligned to the survey drawing with the camera positions.
5. Within the 3d software virtual 3d cameras are positioned according to the survey co-ordinates. The focal length of the photograph is input. Pitch and rotation are adjusted using the survey control points to align the virtual camera to the photograph.
6. The proposed development is output from the 3D software using this camera and the image is then blended with the original photograph to give an accurate image of what the proposed development will look like in its proposed setting. A highly accurate 3D-computer model of the proposed development is created with photo-realistic materials, finishes and colours. Rendered views of the proposed scheme are produced, accurately representing the 'proposed' view from the original baseline camera locations at the selected viewpoints.
7. In the event of the development not being visible, the roof line profile of the development will generally be outlined in the proposed view.
8. A document is usually produced with the following information:
 - a) Site location map with view locations plotted.
 - b) Photomontage sheet showing:
 - Existing and proposed conditions
 - View with surveyed control alignment points
 - Reference information including field of view/focal length, range to site/development
 - Date of baseline photograph.
9. All surveying is carried out by a qualified topographical surveyor. Where GPS devices are used they are Survey grade.

Appendix 2: Significance criteria for the Rating of Impacts

The appropriate significance criteria for this landscape and visual appraisal (LVIA) are based on those given in the EPA 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements', 2002, (Section 5 Glossary of Impacts) and the DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017. For this LVIA they may be described as follows:

Degree or magnitude of effects (significance)

Imperceptible / Not Significant: The development proposal is either distant or adequately screened by existing landform, vegetation or built environment.

Slight Effects: The development proposal forms only a small element in the overall panorama / field of view, or there is substantial intervening screening by the existing landform, topography and/or vegetation. The view or character of the landscape is noticeably changed but without affecting its sensitivities.

Moderate Effects: An appreciable segment of the existing view is affected by the proposed development or the development creates visual intrusion in the foreground. The view or the character of the landscape is altered but in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.

Significant Effects: Effects which, by their character, magnitude, duration or intensity alter a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Very Significant Effects: Effects which, by their character, magnitude, duration or intensity alter most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.

Profound Effects: Effects which obliterate sensitive characteristics.

Quality of effects

The quality of potential visual and landscape effects are assessed according to EPA guidelines as follows:

Positive Effects: Changes which improve the quality of the landscape/view.

Neutral Effects: Changes which do not affect the quality of the landscape/view.

Negative Effects: Changes which reduce the quality of the visual environment or adversely affect the character of the landscape.

Duration of effects

Potential effects arising from a proposed development may also be considered in terms of duration as described in the EPA Guidelines:

Temporary: Effects lasting less than one year

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 lasting over sixty years

