Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Proposed Residential, Creche and Shop Scheme at Stocking Lane, Ballyboden Dublin 16

For MacCabe Durney Barnes Ltd

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PC ROCHE
+ associates

ENVIRONMENTAL, URBAN DESIGNERS, PHYSICAL PLANNERS +LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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1 Introduction

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared that addresses the impact of the proposed development on Stocking Lane and neighbouring residential areas. This report has been carried in association with PCRoche Landscape Architects and with reference to the photomontages produced by Digital Dimensions, which are included separately with the application. It should also be read in conjunction with the updated Architectural Design Statement prepared by Matt Barnes Architects which also accompanies the application and background planning policy provided by MacCabe Durney Barnes Planning Consultants.

This report summarises the impact of the proposed development on the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and on the contiguous 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.

In summary, the proposed development consists of 131 no. residential units, a creche, a shop, landscaping, parking and site development works. The detailed proposal of the development is fully described in the Planning Report that accompanies this application.

Figure 1: *Site Location*

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This appraisal was carried out in September 2021. It 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 landscape.

This LVIA includes consideration of two main aspects:

2.2 Landscape Character Impact

Landscape Character Impact is an 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.

2.3 Visual Impact

Visual Impact is 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. It is appropriate that aspects of architectural context and design approach are addressed when assessing the impact of proposed building development on the landscape. In this regard, aspects of the architectural design rationale and the specific architectural responses to the site and context are referred to within this report.

The standard evaluation methodology used in the preparation of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for inclusion within an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is utilised for this appraisal. The evaluation methodology 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.
- DRAFT 'Revised guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), September 2015 and
- DRAFT 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), August 2017

The following are also taken into account:

- European Landscape Convention ratified by Ireland in March 2002 and came into effect in Ireland in 2004
- The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland 2015-2025 (to be implemented by the Government in the future)
- South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-22

This appraisal relates solely to the proposed development in the context of its existing suburban environment. However, in assessing its landscape and visual impacts, specific reference is also made to the cumulative effects of this proposed development when considered in conjunction with other pending/permitted development in the vicinity, as required.

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment involved:

- Visiting the area in 2020 and 2021, including preparation of a photographic record of the main landscape features;
- A study area has been identified, from the vicinity of the proposed development, selected to identify potential significant landscape and visual effects having regard to the specific request from the Board which identified the key areas of interest
- The extent of the study area has been identified through a review of maps and aerial photographs of the development site and the site surveys
- It is acknowledged that the proposed development may be visible from locations beyond the study area, and as such it is important to note that the study area defines the area within which potential effects could be significant, rather than defining the extent of visibility.
- Photomontages have been produced to illustrate views from representative viewpoints.
- 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 visit, studying aerial photography 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 impacts of the proposed development and the visual impacts through consideration and interpretation of the photomontages (included with the planning application submission documents).

2.3.1 Selection of Views

In order to provide a full and detailed appraisal of the proposal, a total of seven verified views and one internal CGI were prepared. The views were chosen to accurately represent the likely visual impact from a variety of viewpoints and directions around the subject site including those considered to be from more sensitive locations. In accordance with the guidelines, views from the public domain were given priority, particularly those from main thoroughfares and public places. In addition to a sequence of views from inside the scheme towards the neighbouring areas. The viewpoints chosen are considered to be the most important and representative, having regard to the requirement to examine the likely significant impacts.

Figure 2: *Viewpoints*

Location maps of the final selected viewpoints are illustrated in Figure 2 (above) and are also included with the photomontages in the A3 document submitted with the application. The process of view selection also paid particular regard to South Dublin County Council's policies in respect of views and prospects as set out in the County Development Plan 2016 - 2022. 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.

2.3.2 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. The 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 and reflects the specific detailed methodology employed by Digital Dimensions for this project is described in their original 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 simple 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. It should also be remembered that the impact of the proposed development is assessed in terms of its current context, as opposed to any historic context.

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 in particular, 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 probably 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 appraisal. The significance criteria used for 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. These are outlined in Appendix 2.

2.5 Temporal Scope

The development will create the potential for townscape and visual effects. The type and duration of the townscape and visual effects fall within two main stages as follows:

Construction (temporary and of a short duration)

- Potential physical effects arising from construction of the development on the landscape resource within the development application boundary area;
- Potential effects to townscape character or visual amenity within the wider study area as a result of visibility of construction activities or the development during construction;
- Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as – site traffic; construction compounds; and
- Potential effects of partially built development in various stages of construction.

Operational

- Potential effects of the proposed development on landscape resources and townscape character, including the perceptual qualities of the landscape;
- Potential effects of the proposed development on views and visual amenity; and
- Potential cumulative effects of the development in combination with other planned and proposed developments of a similar type and scale upon the townscape and visual resource of the study area.

2.6 Effects Scoped Out

The proposed building structures will become a permanent feature in the landscape following the completion of construction works. The assessment takes account of this in the determination of residual landscape and visual effects.

3 Description of Receiving Environment

3.1 Site Location and Landscape Context

The proposed development occupies a site (approx. 2.4 ha) on the eastern side of Stocking Lane. The site consists of agricultural land, in grass, with mature trees along Stocking Lane and along boundaries to the site.

Stocking Lane is an old road which follows the Military Road from Rathfarnham, south across the spine of the Wicklow Mountains. A major feature opposite the application site on the western side of Stocking Lane is the Ballyboden Reservoir and water treatment works (a protected structure), established in 1883, taking water from the Glenasmole Reservoirs upstream. The application site is located on the section of Stocking Lane that is c570 m from the M50 and c325 m from the junction with Scholarstown Road. The area historically developed as the hinterland to the city with the variety of housing estates and styles largely dating from the late 19th and early 20th century, with significant route corridors to the city. The underlying historic patterns of settlement are large estate houses on substantial lands developing into the prevailing built form of suburban housing from the 1980s onwards and in particular with the advent of the M50 in 1990.

More recent residential developments at the junction of Scholarstown Road which are mainly family homes introduce a modest variation in height and scale.

The tree lined Stocking Lane in the vicinity of the application site is characterised to the south and east by low density housing in estates known as Prospect Manor and Spingvale and to the north by substantial detached houses on large plots. Two houses, St. Winnows and Coolamber are located to the north of the site, both set back from Stocking Lane and adjacent to the north east of these houses is Rockwood House oriented to the north east with the rear of that property (south west) angled towards the application site. Along the application site section of Stocking Lane, there are no buildings fronting the road, and the accesses to houses and Prospect Manor estate are set back from a tree lined Stocking Lane providing a rural feel in this part of the city.

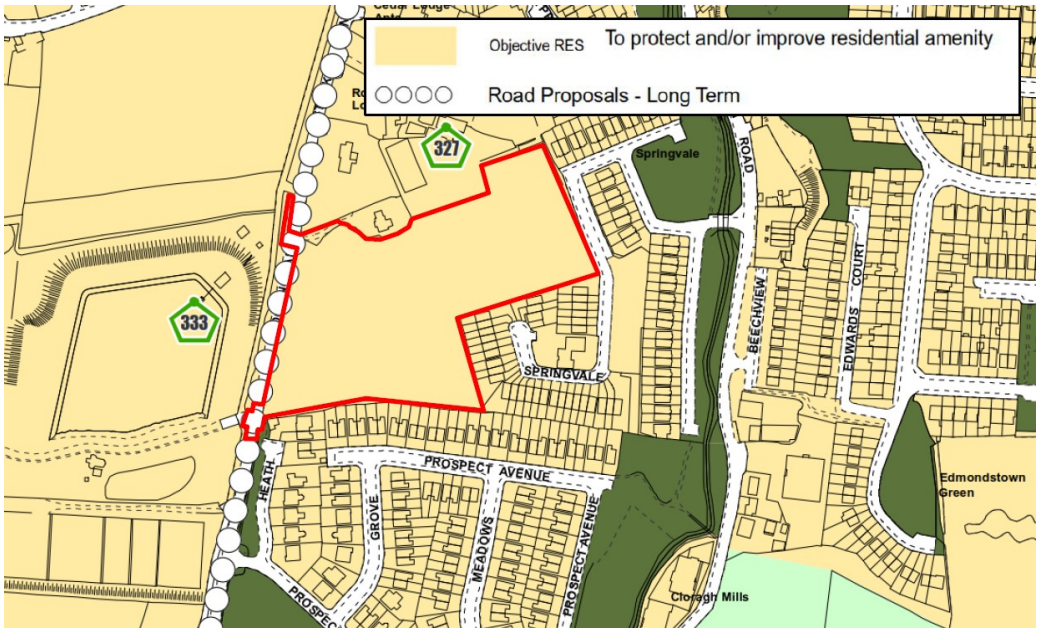
Stocking Lane does not have a footpath on the eastern side but an elevated footpath/cycle path on the western side with mature trees and a bank between that and the carriage way. This stretch of Stocking Lane has retains its sylvian feeling and setting.

There are no sudden dramatic changes in level on the site and longer-range views around the area are prevented by the trees along the roadside. The site slopes very gently to the east and north and it is notable that the housing estate to east is significantly lower c 2m, lying close to the Owendoher River and Edmonstown Road. The view of the site from the adjacent Springvale is limited to within that estate and not from the Edmonstown Road. The application site is elevated above the existing housing. The estate to the south, Prospect Manor is on a similar level to the application site with a number of cul de sacs running in various directions and views of the application site are limited from that area.

4 Planning Context

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022 indicates the subject site as having the zoning objective A – 'to protect and/or improve residential amenity'.

Figure 3: *Zoning objective*



This is a common zoning within the vicinity of the site. There are no specific objectives in the area to protect and preserve trees and woodlands and the nearest protected structure are the Ballyboden Water works to the east and c 40 m to the north of the site, Rockwood House, which presents the rear of that large property to the application site. There are no protected views or prospects in the area likely to be affected by the proposals.

The Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County (2015) highlights the high landscape value and sensitivity of the rural hinterland areas of the County, given the proximity to Dublin. The Landscape Character Assessment defines five Landscape Character Areas, as follows:

- Urban
- Dodder and Glenasmole
- Athgoe and Saggart Hills
- Newcastle Lowlands
- Liffey Valley

The application site is located in the urban landscape designation. The urban areas of the county were not assessed as they would normally merit more detailed and finer scale assessment, through townscape assessment or through local area plans.

5 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

5.1 Introduction

A comprehensive description of the development is contained in the Master Plan and Architect's Design Statement prepared by MacCabe Durney Barnes and Matt Barnes Architects. The scheme has been designed having regard to:

- Creation of a frontage onto Stocking Lane
- Location of open space
- Creation of a sense of enclosure of the east-west boulevard
- Elevation design and orientation to address internal roads in the scheme
- Consideration of connections

5.2 Proposed Development

The development will consist of

- 131 residential units including:
  - 21 houses (1 no. 3-bed; 11 no. 4-bed; 9 no. 5-bed) of up to two-storey plus roof storey.
  - 51 duplex apartment units (11 no. 1-bed; 23 no. 2-bed; 17 no. 3-bed) in seven blocks of up to three-storeys.
  - 59 apartment units (18 no. 1-bed; 38 no. 2-bed; 3 no. 3-bed) in three apartment blocks up to four-storeys.
- A creche of c. 128 sqm at the ground floor of Block L.
- A shop of c. 65 sqm at the ground floor of Block G, with associated storage.
- A total of 167 car parking spaces, of which:
- 88 are at surface level and 79 in the basement under apartment Blocks F and G.
- 5 are dedicated visitor parking spaces.
- A total of 288 cycle parking spaces and 5 no. motorcycle spaces.
- A new vehicular access onto Stocking Lane.
- A new pedestrian and cycle access to the Springvale estate to the east.
- New roads, footpaths and cycle paths and connections within the site
- A new pedestrian crossing on Stocking Lane to the north west.
- The expansion and upgrade of the existing pedestrian crossing on Stocking Lane to the south west.

The development also includes landscaped private and public open space, boundary treatment, lighting, play area, an ESB substation, site drainage works and all ancillary site development works above and below ground.

5.3 Proposed Building Design

The Architect's Design Statement and scheme drawings comprehensively illustrate the proposed scheme and outline the architectural context, detailed considerations, constraints and rationale for the proposed architectural design. The existing context poses some challenges to successful integration of a development into the existing area by any new development proposed for this site. These include:

- An absence of building lines along Stocking Lane;
- The relationship of the proposed scheme to estate to the east on a lower level;
- The detached houses to the north;
- The mature trees on the site; and
- An overflow pipe for the Ballyboden Reservoir which is aligned in an east-west direction

5.4 Height, Scale and Massing

The eastern part of the site is allocated for 2 and 3 storey houses and apartments, with the western part consisting of 2/3 storey duplexes and 4 storey apartment blocks set out in a perimeter block form and the creation of streets and public open spaces.

6 Potential Impacts

6.1 Introduction

Potential impacts are identified in the first instance and these assist in determining the design and construction response.

6.2 Potential Construction Impacts

During the construction phase these are primarily related to temporary works, site activity, and vehicular movements within and around the boundaries of the subject site. All construction impacts will be temporary, and will include the following:

- Demolition of existing structures/buildings – none proposed save removal of walls
- Site preparation works, excavations and operations
- Site infrastructure and vehicular access
- Construction traffic – increase in vehicular movements
- Dust and other emissions
- Temporary site hoardings
- Temporary site lighting
- Temporary site buildings (including office accommodation)
- Scaffolding and crash deck structure

6.3 Potential Visual Impacts at Operational Phase

The proposed development would be expected to remain in operation for up to sixty years and will therefore create landscape and visual impacts on its environs which are deemed to be long term.

Two related aspects need to be addressed in considering the impact of the design proposals:

- The perceived landscape character of the area (including social and cultural amenity) and how it is impacted by the proposal
- The visual impact of the proposed buildings, relative to existing views. [For a more detailed explanation of the meaning of and differences between these aspects of impact, refer to Appendix 2].

7 Mitigation Measures

7.1 Introduction

Mitigation measures are included with the design and construction of the scheme to mitigate the potential impacts previously identified.

7.2 Mitigation of Construction Impacts

The construction works will require a site compound with the usual array of site accommodation, hoarding, scaffolding, cranes and other temporary works. These will be visible during the construction phase. However this is generally viewed as a temporary and unavoidable feature of construction in the urban setting. The mitigation measures proposed revolve around the implementation of appropriate site and construction management procedures – such as the control of lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, control of vehicular access, and effective measures to control dust, dirt and other emissions. The description of the proposed demolition and construction set out in the Outline Construction Management Plan accompanying the application outlines aspects of the proposed construction methodology to deliver the development. This includes measures to reduce construction impacts across the site area and beyond.

7.3 Design Mitigation

The proposed scheme is designed to integrate well within its existing context. This will be accomplished through:

- positioning, modelling and detailing of the higher elements, in order to assist in the visual reduction of the apparent building mass - the overall composition is specifically designed to minimise impacts upon adjoining residential areas of Springvale and Prospect Manor and setting of Rookwood House, a protected structure;
- appropriate architectural detailing to assist in the integration of the external building facades;
- use of appropriate tones, colour and materials – Please refer to the Architect's Design Statement for further details regarding the proposed colour palette;
- creating a considered and active relationship between the buildings and the frontage along Stocking Lane;
- retaining trees around the perimeter of the site to screen the development; and
- placing of a proportion of the parking at basement level.

8 Predicted Landscape Impacts

8.1 Introduction

These are the predicted impacts upon the landscape of the proposed development as designed, including mitigation measures. The proposed development will impact on the landscape to varying degrees in terms of its perceived nature and scale. These effects are tempered and conditioned by sensitivities associated with the receptor. The duration of such impacts is therefore deemed to be of long-term duration in this instance.

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

- The effect of the development on the character of the area
- Effects of the proposed development on social and cultural amenity
- The proposed views of the development, which are considered in section 9.

8.2 Construction Phase Landscape Character Impacts

The impact of the proposed construction works on the visual environment of the area over the period of construction (approx. 20 months) will be moderate and negative. The works will be visible and apparent through the presence of temporary structures (including hoardings), site accommodation, site storage, and plant and machinery operating in and around the site area.

There will be slight and negative amenity impacts within the area during the works due to construction traffic etc. The landscape character effects over the construction of the development will vary from moderate and neutral to moderate and negative, depending on one's location, the stage of construction, and the intensity of site activity. Mitigation measures, as outlined in Section 7.2, will minimise effects. All construction impacts are limited to the construction period and therefore of temporary to short term duration.

8.3 Operational Phase Landscape Character Impacts

The photomontages provided give a good indication of the scale and nature of the proposed building in its broader suburban context. The site is a greenfield site in a suburban area. The development is not out of character and not without precedent elsewhere in this area (Stocking Wood). The buildings make clear contemporary statements, which respects the suburban and sylvian environment into which it is to be placed. Consequently, it integrates well in its broader overall context. The specific mitigation measures incorporated in the proposed building design and its interface with Stocking Lane will deliver a quality development which will enhance the urban visual environment - both in terms of the impacts on its local context and also as part of the broader fabric of the area.

The combination of carefully crafted forms, harmonious but contrasting materials and articulated solid to void ratios provides a coherent architectural expression which is both legible in close proximity and at the scale of the site. The photomontages however only illustrate how the proposed building appears and how it relates to neighbouring buildings as an ensemble. As such, the photomontages only convey a part of the overall impact on and contribution to the character of the area. The relationship between buildings and the adjacent public realm creates a social dynamic which heavily influences whether a building design is ultimately considered ‘successful’ or not. The majority of the social and cultural changes created through the development of the proposed building will be experienced at the ground level interface between the building and the public thoroughfares and spaces around it.

The sylvian characteristics of Stocking Lane itself, is retained, as there is no major road widening involved along the road frontage, the footpaths are set behind the existing tree line and trees are retained where possible. The landscape character within the site is changed from a greenfield to an urban form of development. The impacts are mitigated.

The proposed development includes proposals to retain and protect many of the existing trees around its boundaries and to provide a significant quantum of new tree planting throughout the scheme to assist in its early integration of the new development into its existing context. In terms of its effects on landscape character and social and cultural amenity, it will provide moderate positive effects - these effects will be long term.

9 Predicted Visual Impacts

9.1 Introduction

The appraisal of visual effects likely to be created by the proposed development is determined through the comparison of 'before' and 'after' photomontages. It too is inevitably influenced to some extent by the standpoint of the viewer (the receptor). A total of 7 viewpoints has been selected for which photomontages have been prepared. Please refer to the full set of photomontages prepared by Digital Dimensions accompanying the Planning Application. The location of each viewpoint is indicated on the accompanying viewpoints map, (or refer to 'Figure 2: Selected viewpoints' in this report). The existing view from each viewpoint (annotated as 'Existing' on the View number) is shown together with the proposed development as seen from the same viewpoint (annotated as 'Proposed' on the View number). A red line that appears on some of the proposed photomontages indicates the location and profile of the new development in the background, which in such cases is screened from view by intervening buildings, vegetation or topography. These illustrate the visual effects of the proposed development on the surrounding visual environment.

St. Winnows and Coolamber are covered by View 6, which is from the pedestrian gate between St. Winnows and Coolamber. View 3 is from Prospect Manor and Views 4 and 5 are from Springvale.

An additional internal CGI of the proposed scheme has also been prepared. They are all submitted in a separate A3 document prepared by Digital Dimensions, accompanying the application.

Given the design life of the scheme, the duration of the predicted visual effects is long term. The assessment of visual impacts through the use of comparative photomontages serves to identify impacts upon the visual environment. The photomontages are important in illustrating the impact of the proposed scheme from sensitive and protected views. In this instance, they also serve to support and illustrate an aspect of the landscape character impact assessment. It should be noted that photomontages have their limitations (refer to the GLVIA, 3rd Edition and the Landscape Institute's Advice Note 01/11).

9.2 Assessment of Views

Photomontages were prepared for 7 locations from a range of viewpoints. For each view, the significance/magnitude and quality/sensitivity of the impact are assessed and summarised as follows.

View 1

Existing View

This view is taken from the western side of Stocking Lane c10m to the north of the proposed entrance and incorporates existing macrocarpa trees.

Proposed View

The two front apartment blocks are visible. The existing macrocarpa trees are replaced with new planting and dwarf wall. The footpath and cycle path lying behind the planting is not visible. Blocks G and L are four storeys with the top floor set back with a distinctive roof. The set back top floor of Block L is not readily visible, while the set back floor of Block G is, although the visual impact of the upper floor element is mitigated by the use of subdued colour and finish. Given the scale of these two buildings related to their generous distance from the road and the façade mix of brick, stone and brick finish and glazed balconies assists in reducing any potential massing effects.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view are **significant** and **neutral**.

View 2

Existing View

This view is taken from the western side of Stocking Lane c10m to the south of the proposed entrance. There is an existing gap in the hedgerow at this point and is presently filled by a chain link fence. The view is across the open field, with the houses in the Springvale Estate visible in distant views.

Proposed View

The two front apartment blocks are visible and the main central boulevard with glimpsed views of the apartment blocks in the middle of the site. There is new planting on either side of the proposed vehicular entrance and the cycle track and footpath lies behind the tree line. The footpath and cycle path lying behind the planting is not visible. Blocks G and L are four storeys with the top floor set back with a distinctive roof. The set back top floor of Block G is not readily visible, while the set back floor of Block L is, although the visual impact of the upper floor element is mitigated by the use of subdued colour and finish. The mix of brick, stone finish and glazed balconies assists in reducing any potential massing effects of these blocks. The building elements within the site that are visible, Blocks E and 1-3, and houses nos.21 to 27 are of a lower massing when viewed from this point.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view are **significant** and **neutral**.

View 3

Existing View

This view is from Prospect Grove and from a point 120m to the south of the site boundary. There are two storey semi-detached houses on either side of this north-south suburban road. Prospect Avenue runs east west direction at the northern end of Prospect Grove. Two storey semi-detached houses on Prospect Avenue back onto the subject site.

Proposed View

The proposed development, the profile of which is outlined by the red line, is not visible in this view.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view will be **imperceptible.**

View 4

Existing View

This view is from the Springvale Estate road which runs along the eastern boundary of the site. The view is taken from the south eastern corner of the site. The ground level of the site is c2m higher than the surface of the carriageway and there is a white dashed and brick peer retaining wall along this frontage of the site. There are a number of semi mature trees at the northern end of the frontage and there is hedging/brambles overhanging the retaining wall. There are two storey semi-detached houses immediately to the south and aligned to the north eastern corner. On the eastern side of the Springvale estate road, there is a sloping embankment of open space, beyond which there is a further row of semi-detached houses which back onto the open space. This view is visible from the rear of these houses.

Proposed View

With the introduction of a pedestrian and cycle path linking down to the Springvale estate, the removal of the part of the retaining wall, and the provision of dormer bungalow, two and three storey residences within the site, there will be a change which alters the visual characteristics of this part of Springvale. Along the roadside boundary, the impacts are mitigated through the use of an appropriately designed railing and planting behind. The buildings are set well back from the road and, while on a higher level, do not have an overbearing effect on this view.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view will be **moderate** and **positive.**

View 5

Existing View

This view is from the northern leg of the Springvale Estate road which runs at right angles to the north eastern boundary of the site. The view is 25m from the boundary and the ground

level of the site is c2m higher than the surface of the carriageway and there is a white dashed and brick peer retaining wall along this frontage of the site. There are mature trees poplar trees along this section of the boundary and there are two storey semi-detached houses on the right of the view.

Proposed View

The two storey houses are sited to the rear of the trees. The landscape plans indicate that tree planting will be reinforced along this boundary. Given this planting and the fact that the houses are set back from the boundary, there are only glimpsed views of the houses within the development.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view will be **slight** and **neutral.**

View 6

Existing View

This view is from the northern boundary of the site with 'Coolamber' behind 'St.Winnows' on the left. Presently, the view is of a garden hedge in the foreground, behind which lies the green field. The houses in Prospect Manor are visible in the middle distance with the Dublin Mountains in the distance. There is a mound with silver birch trees on the left with a glimpsed view of St. Winnows on the left.

Proposed View

Significant elements of the development will be visible including the rear of the duplex Block M, the four storey Block L, incorporating the ground floor creche, the four storey Block F along with views of Block E and the duplex Block K which runs up to the southern boundary. In the foreground is the turning head, fenced pond and integrated wetland the central open space in the middle distance.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view will be **significant** and **neutral.**

View 7

Existing View

This is an internal view of the eastern part of the green field. There are semi-mature trees along the northern and southern boundaries, with lower trees on the eastern boundary in the distance. The mature tall trees in the Springvale estate are also visible.

Proposed View

The proposed view has been taken to demonstrate the impact of parking arrangements and development on either side of the central boulevard. The view introduces an urban street enclosed by two storey houses, with attic accommodation and three storey apartment Blocks

E and 1-3. Existing trees along the northern and southern boundaries are screened by the intervening built development with parking and trees. The parking is broken up by tree planting and layout of spaces.

The visual effects of the proposed development on this view will be **significant** and **neutral.**

10 Cumulative Impacts

There are no potential large schemes in proximity to this site for which proposals are likely to emerge in the near future. There are no likely pending or permitted developments which could be considered relevant in terms of cumulative impact.

11 Residual Effects on Landscape and Environment

The photomontages reasonably reflect the design intent for the scheme, within normal constraints to illustrate the scheme from a range of viewpoints. Generally, impacts created by the proposed development itself are benign, particularly when considering the retention of existing trees on site.

The proposed built environment is of a high quality and is well considered in its context. The buildings are appropriately scaled and located, given the existing site constraints and sensitivities. The designed scheme offers many positive attributes and is reflective is a changing and consolidating urban area. It is a well designed scheme and is not inappropriate when set within its receiving environment.

Given the retention of boundary planting and trees along the northern boundary, the proposed development makes no impact on the Protected Structures at Rookwood House, or Ballyboden Reservoir.

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Appendix 1 - Methodology for the Preparation of Photomontages

1. Photographs are taken from locations as advised by client with a full frame SLR digital camera and prime lens. 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 3no. visible fixed points are marked for surveying. These are control points for model alignment within the photograph. All surveying is carried out by a qualified topographical surveyor using Total Station / GPS devices.
3. The photographic positions and the control points are geographically surveyed and this survey is tied in to the site topographical survey supplied by the Architect / client.
4. The buildings are accurately modelled in 3D cad software from cad drawings supplied by the Architect. Material finishes are applied to the 3D model and scene element are place like trees and planting to represent the proposed landscaping.
5. Virtual 3D cameras are positioned according to the survey co-ordinates and the focal length is set to match the photograph. Pitch and rotation are adjusted using the survey control points to align the virtual camera to the photograph. Lighting is set to match the time of day the photograph is taken.
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.
7. In the event of the development not being visible, the roof line of the development will be outlined in red if re-quested.
8. The document contains:
    a) Site location map with view locations plotted.
    b) Photo-montage sheet with existing or proposed conditions.
    c) Reference information including field of view/focal length, range to site / development, date of photograph.
9. The proposed view will contain the building where visible or partially visible. Where the building is not visible or where the visible proportion of the building is not perceptible then a redline will indicate the extent of the proposed development in the background. Where there are other developments in the vacinity with planning permission or under construction a blue line and or grey massing will represent the adjacent development.

Appendix 2 - Definitions

The significance criteria used for the rating of visual and landscape effects illustrated in the photomontages - based on the 'Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements' prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency 2002 (Section 5 Glossary of Impacts) as amended for use in landscape and visual appraisals within urban contexts.

The updated 2017 DRAFT EPA Guidelines reiterate the 2002 criteria under Table 3.3 'Descriptions of Effects', however it should be noted that for the purpose of impact assessment of buildings in an urban context we have reduced the number of categories and specifically amended the description of 'moderate effects' as set out below:

The magnitude of potential visual and landscape effects are evaluated as follows:

Imperceptible effect: An effect which may be measurable in the view but is without noticeable consequences.

Slight effects: An effect which causes small but noticeable changes in the view and which may affect the character of the environment or its sensitivities.

Moderate effects: An effect which causes moderate changes in the view and which may affect the character of the visual environment or its sensitivities.

Significant effects: An effect which causes substantial changes in the view which may affect the character of the visual environment or its sensitivities.

Profound effects: An effect which dominates the view which will affect the character of the visual environment or its sensitivities.

The quality of potential visual and landscape effects are evaluated as follows:

Positive: A change which improves the quality of the visual environment and/or the quality of the landscape character in the view.

Neutral: A change which does not affect the quality of the visual environment and/or is consistent with the existing or emerging context.

Negative: A change which reduces the quality of the visual environment and/or the quality of the landscape character in the view.

Potential effects arising from a proposed development may also be considered in terms of duration, as follows:

Temporary: Effect lasting one year or less Short-term: Effect lasting one to seven years Medium-term: Effect lasting seven to fifteen years

Long-term: Effect lasting fifteen to sixty years

Permanent: Effect lasting over sixty years