

# ACP *Architectural Conservation Professionals*



## Visual Impact Assessment Report

For  
Proposed telecommunication equipment at Ballyroan Community & Youth Centre, Marian Rd, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.

**Client:** Ontower Ireland Ltd.



**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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**Copies of this report  
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The Client (Ontower Ireland Ltd).

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Page 3

## Table of Contents

<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Levels of significance – NIAH Definitions 2006 .....	6
<b>PENALTIES FOR OFFENCES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Architectural Heritage Protection .....	7
Monuments and Places included in the Record .....	7
<b>1.0 SCOPE OF STUDY</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>2.0 BASIS FOR THE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	8
2.2 Methodology .....	8
2.2.1 Guidelines, plans, and policies .....	8
2.2.2 Structure and approach .....	8
2.2.3 Definition of terms .....	9
<b>3.0 VISUAL BASELINE: THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	<b>9</b>
3.1 Study area: landscape character and visual amenity .....	9
3.2 Defining the study area and visual receptors .....	21
3.3 Assessment of viewpoints .....	24
<b>4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>5.0 IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF EFFECTS</b> .....	<b>41</b>
5.1 R1: Ballyroan Rd/ R817.....	41
5.2 R2: Residential East and Marian Rd. ....	42
5.3 R3: Residential West.....	42
5.4 R4: Residential South.....	42
5.5 R5: Ballyboden Rd / R115 / ACAs.....	43
5.6 Summary .....	43
<b>6.0 MITIGATION</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>7.0 EVALUATION OF PREDICTED EFFECTS (AFTER MITIGATION)</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>8.0 SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>9.0 SIGNING OFF STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>46</b>

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- 1. ACA** An **Architectural Conservation Area** is a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, scientific, social or technical interest, or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, whose character it is the objective of a development plan to preserve - Section 52 (1) (b) of the 2000 Act.
- 2. Area of Special Planning Control** **Areas of Special Planning Control** provide powers to planning authorities not alone to give protection to the character of certain qualifying areas, but also to enhance that character, that is, to restore it and to require owners and occupiers to conform to a planning scheme – Section 84, of the 2000 Act
- 3. NIAH** The **National Inventory of Architectural Heritage**. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS)
- 4. Protected Structure** A “**protected structure**” is defined as any structure or specified part of a structure, which is included in the Record of Protected Structures. The term “**structure**” is defined by Section 2 of the 2000 Act to mean ‘any building, structure, excavation or other thing constructed, or made on, in or under any land, or any part of a structure so defined, and where the context so admits, includes the lands on, in, or under which the structure is situate’. – Section 2 (1) of the 2000 Act
- 5. Section 57 Declaration** **Section 57 Declaration** Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request a ‘declaration’ under Section 57 of the 2000 Act. The purpose of which is for planning authorities to clarify in writing the kind of works that would or would not materially affect the character of that structure or any element of that structure which contributes to its special interest. Declarations guide the owner as to what works would and would not require planning permission in the context of the protection of the architectural heritage. This is because the character of a protected structure cannot be altered without first securing planning permission to do so.
- 6. RMP** **Archaeological sites** are legally protected by the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The **National Record of Monument & Places (RMP)** is a statutory list of all known archaeological monuments provided for in the National Monuments Acts. It includes known monuments and sites of archaeological importance dating to before 1700AD, and some sites which date from after 1700AD.
- 7. RPS** Record of Protected Structures. A Protected Structure is a structure which is considered to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is a list of the buildings held by a Local Authority which contains buildings considered to be of special interest in its operational area. Section 51 (of the 2000 Act) requires that the development plan shall include a Record of Protected Structures and that the Record shall include every structure which is, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, of special interest.



## Levels of significance – NIAH Definitions 2006

<b><i>International Significance</i></b>	Structures or sites of sufficient architectural heritage importance to be considered in an international context. Examples include St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork. These are exceptional structures that can be compared to and contrasted with the finest architectural heritage in other countries.
<b><i>National Significance</i></b>	Structures or sites that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage of Ireland. These are structures and sites that are considered to be of great architectural heritage significance in an Irish context. Examples include Ardnacrusha Power Station, Co. Clare; the Ford Factory, Cork; Carroll's Factory, Dundalk; Lismore Castle, Co. Waterford; Sligo Courthouse, Sligo; and Emo Court, Co. Laois.
<b><i>Regional Significance</i></b>	Structures or sites that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage within their region or area. They also stand in comparison with similar structures or sites in other regions or areas within Ireland. Examples would include many Georgian terraces; Nenagh Courthouse, Co. Tipperary; or the Bailey Lighthouse, Howth. Increasingly, structures that need to be protected include structures or sites that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage within their own locality. Examples of these would include modest terraces and timber shopfronts.
<b><i>Local Significance</i></b>	These are structures or sites of some vintage that make a contribution to the architectural heritage but may not merit being placed in the RPS separately. Such structures may have lost much of their original fabric.
<b><i>Record only</i></b>	These are structures or sites that are not deemed to have sufficient presence or inherent architectural or other importance at the time of recording to warrant a higher rating. It is acknowledged, however, that they might be considered further at a future time

## Penalties for Offences

### Architectural Heritage Protection

A Protected Structure and built fabric within its curtilage is protected by law under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The penalties for breaches of this Act are severe. Section 156 of the Act states:-

(1) A person who is guilty of an offence under *sections 58(4), 63, 151, 154, 205, 230(3), 239 and 247* shall be liable—

(a) on conviction on indictment, to a fine not exceeding £10,000,000, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or to both, or

(b) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £1,500, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or to both.

### Monuments and Places included in the Record

Section 12 (3) of the Act provides for the protection of monuments and places included in the record stating that

"When the owner or occupier (not being the Commissioners) of a monument or place which has been recorded under subsection (1) of this section or any person proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such monument or place, he shall give notice in writing of his proposal to carry out the work to the Commissioners and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Commissioners, commence the work for a period of two months after having given the notice."

**A person contravening this requirement for two months notification to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland of proposed works at or in relation to a recorded monument or place shall (under Section 13 of the Act) be guilty of an offence and be liable on summary conviction to a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine and 12 months imprisonment and on conviction on indictment to a maximum penalty of a £50,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment.**

It should also be noted that Section 16 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 amended the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 (the Act of 1987) so that under Section 2 (1) (a) (iv) of that Act **the use or possession of a detection device**

*"in, or at the site of, a monument recorded under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994,"*

**is prohibited** otherwise than in accordance with a consent of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland granted under the provisions of Section 2 of the Act of 1987.

**A person contravening the above provisions relating to use or possession of detection devices shall (under Section 2 (5) of the Act of 1987) be guilty of an offence and be liable (under Section 23 (1) of the Act of 1987) on summary conviction to a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine and 6 months imprisonment or on conviction on indictment to a maximum penalty of a £50,000 fine and 12 months imprisonment.**

It should be further noted that under Section 7 (1) (a) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 a member of the Garda Síochána may without warrant seize and detain:

*"a detection device found in, at the site of, or in the vicinity of a monument recorded under Section 12 of the Act unless the person in possession of the device has a consent of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of the Act of 1987."*

## 1.0 Scope of Study

This report follows a request by our client to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment for the proposed communications infrastructure at Ballyroan Community & Youth Centre, Marian Rd., Rathfarnham, Dublin 14. It follows an RFI (CD21A/0155) from South Dublin County Council and considers the effects of the proposal on the visual environment in terms of its contribution to the nature and quality of views currently experienced.

## 2.0 Basis for the Visual Impact Assessment

### 2.1 Introduction

This report examines the likely effects of proposed changes to the visual amenity available to people as a result of the replacement of 12m chimney flue with a 20m multi-user lattice tower and associated infrastructure to be encased in a chimney flue to match existing at Ballyroan Community & Youth Centre, Marian Rd. Dublin 14. The purpose of the report is to identify potential positive/negative impacts and assess the predicted effects on the visual amenity. It also considers and proposes measures to mitigate negative impacts. The assessment comprised of desk-top and field survey utilizing relevant local authority policy documents, topographic maps and plans, field notes, and photographic records and observations. The field work was conducted on 18 September 2021 on a clear day in which visibility was good and deemed appropriate for assessment. Assessment considered the impact on the public realm only and no private property was accessed as it is beyond the scope of the report.

### 2.2 Methodology

#### 2.2.1 Guidelines, plans, and policies

The report follows best practice guidance in visual impact assessment detailed in:

- Landscape Institute's (UK), *Guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessment* (3rd edition, Landscape Institute, 2013).
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland, *Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of specified infrastructure projects – overarching technical document* (Dublin, 2020).

The report regards the following relevant guidelines and local authority policies and plans:

- *South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022* (South Dublin County Council, 2016).
- *Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County* (Minogue & Associates, 2015).

#### 2.2.2 Structure and approach

The assessment addresses the likely impacts on landscape character and visual environment including extent of visible development, loss of visibility of existing features or the introduction of new features. The report follows the structure below:

- Landscape baseline: the receiving environment.
- Description of the proposed development.
- Identification and description of effects.
- Proposed mitigation of impacts.
- Evaluation of predicted effects of the development on the landscape character and visual environment.



### 2.2.3 Definition of terms

*The quality of the impact may be described as:*

- Neutral – neither enhance or detract from the visual or landscape character.
- Positive – improve or enhance the visual or landscape character.
- Negative – reduce or have an adverse effect on the visual or landscape character.

*The duration of impacts is defined as follows:*

- Temporary – lasting one year or less.
- Short-term – lasting one to seven years.
- Medium-term – lasting seven to fifteen years.
- Permanent – lasting over sixty years.

*The significance of impacts is described as follows:*

- Imperceptible – an impact without noticeable consequences.
- Slight – causing noticeable changes in the visual or landscape character without affecting its sensitivities.
- Moderate – alters the visual or landscape character in a manner that is consistent with emerging trends or where an important element is affected.
- Significant – an impact which by its magnitude, duration or intensity alters sensitive aspects of the visual or landscape character.
- Profound – an impact which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

## 3.0 Visual baseline: the receiving environment

### 3.1 Study area: landscape character and visual amenity

The proposed site is located at Ballyroan Community & Youth Centre, Dublin 14 which is in a suburban residential area bounded by the R817 to the southwest, the R114 to the north, and Marian Rd to the east. To assess the visual amenity the report considers the landscape character which forms a principal component of the nature, quality, and value of the visual environment. Impact on the landscape character is assessed in this report in the context of its contribution to the visual environment only.

South Dublin County Development Plan (2016-2022) (CDP) contains details of the county's landscape character assessment which is based on a study conducted in 2015 that identified 5 Landscape Character Areas (LCA) for the district (fig. 3.1).<sup>1</sup> The proposed site is in the Landscape Area: Suburban South Dublin which although is not assessed in detail owing to its urban nature requiring a smaller scale analysis, has been identified with some key characteristics as follows:

- ‘Built-up urban area with extensive housing estates and industrial /commercial parks. Variety of house styles and layouts dating from the late 19th century to late 20th century.
- Settlements of Rathfarnham, Templeogue and Clondalkin with important historical legacy and remnants.
- Major traffic corridors with M50 traversing north- south through the area, and LUAS line travelling north from Tallaght, parallel to the M50, to city centre.
- Corridors of natural and semi natural vegetation, notably along the River Dodder (a linear park) and the Camac River.
- Grass open spaces in gardens, industrial parks, golf courses, school playing fields, and miscellaneous spaces in housing areas.
- Street trees planting.

<sup>1</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County* (Minogue & Associates, 2015). pp 77-9.

Recreational facilities – public parks and golf courses - provide amenities and ecological resources.’

The landscape values and forces for change for LCA: Suburban South Dublin are identified as follows:

Landscape values:

‘Public Parks with recreational and ecological resources.  
Dodder River Valley.  
19th century industrial heritage.  
Views out to Dublin Mountains and agricultural hinterland.’

Forces for change:

‘West boundary is set against agricultural and mountain hinterlands. Untidy urban developments can adversely impact on the character of the hinterlands.  
Urban developments can impact on open views to the hinterlands.  
Ongoing urban infrastructure developments notably road improvements generate increasing volumes of traffic and detract from opportunities to create or maintain tranquil settings.  
New infill or other built developments can be insensitive to remnant historical or vernacular features.’

The LCA Suburban South Dublin ‘extends east from Tallaght/Oldbawn to Rathfarnham, and north/north-west along the county boundary to Clondalkin.’ It ‘retains little of historical significance and the setting of its primary settlements have been radically altered by built developments, notably through the 20th Century.’<sup>2</sup> Its landscape condition, which requires more detailed assessment, was identified as:

‘the older settled urban areas such as Rathfarnham have matured into relatively leafy suburbs, whereas more recent developments have created a sense of anonymity. They do not appear to have benefited from comprehensive master planning which would have considered housing, roads and open space provision in an integrated manner.’<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the landscape designations, South Dublin CDP identifies and Scenic Views and Prospects. There are no Scenic Views and Prospects within the study area, the nearest being about 2km to the southwest with two more about 2.5km to the west and southwest of the proposed site fig. 3.2). In respect of these views, the South Dublin CDP states<sup>4</sup>

‘they include localised views and panoramic prospects of rural, mountain, hill, coastal and urban landscapes such as Dublin City and environs, Dublin Bay, the Liffey Valley and the Dublin and Wicklow Hills and Mountains including the Glenasmole Valley. Views of places of natural beauty or interest are not confined to those that are visible from scenic places but also from and to existing built up areas.’

They ‘relate to prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value or special interest that are widely visible from surrounding areas. Prospects from prominent public places will be protected.’

Natural heritage in vicinity of the proposed site includes a proposed Natural Heritage Area: Dodder Valley (fig. 3.2). The Dodder River and amenity spaces lie to the north of the proposed development about 1km at its nearest point. A number of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas designated in South Dublin CDP are within the study area. One, the Church of the Holy Spirit (RPS: 264), is adjacent the proposed development, while some ACAs are within 1km to the east,

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<sup>2</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment*, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> South Dublin CDP, pp 159-160.

southeast and northeast including Boden Village Cottage ACA and Saint Patrick's Cottages ACA (fig 3.3).

#### *Landscape sensitivities and planning objectives*

Though the Landscape Character Assessment prepared for South Dublin CDP contains assessment of landscape and visual sensitivities and landscape values as a means to determine the LCAs capacity to accommodate change<sup>5</sup>, there are no details in respect of sensitivity and value for the LCA: Suburban South Dublin. South Dublin CDP lists a number of heritage objectives that are pertinent to this report:

#### Landscape objectives<sup>6</sup>:

##### HCL7 Objective 1:

To protect and enhance the landscape character of the County by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the landscape, taking full cognisance of the Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County (2015).

##### HCL7 Objective 2:

To ensure that development is assessed against Landscape Character, Landscape Values and Landscape Sensitivity as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for South Dublin County (2015) in accordance with Government guidance on Landscape Character Assessment and the National Landscape Strategy.

#### Views and prospects objectives<sup>7</sup>:

##### HCL8 Objective 1:

To protect, preserve and improve Views and Prospects of special amenity, historic or cultural value or interest including rural, river valley, mountain, hill, coastal, upland and urban views and prospects that are visible from prominent public places.

#### Built heritage objectives<sup>8</sup>:

##### HCL3 Objective 2:

To ensure that all development proposals that affect a Protected Structure and its setting including proposals to extend, alter or refurbish any Protected Structure are sympathetic to its special character and integrity and are appropriate in terms of architectural treatment, character, scale and form. All such proposals shall be consistent with the Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DAHG (2011) including the principles of conservation.

##### HCL4 Objective 2:

To ensure that new development, including infill development, extensions and renovation works within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) preserves or enhances the special character and visual setting of the ACA including vistas, streetscapes and roofscapes.

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<sup>5</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment*, pp 81-93.

<sup>6</sup> South Dublin CDP, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 160.

<sup>8</sup> South Dublin CDP, p. 154.

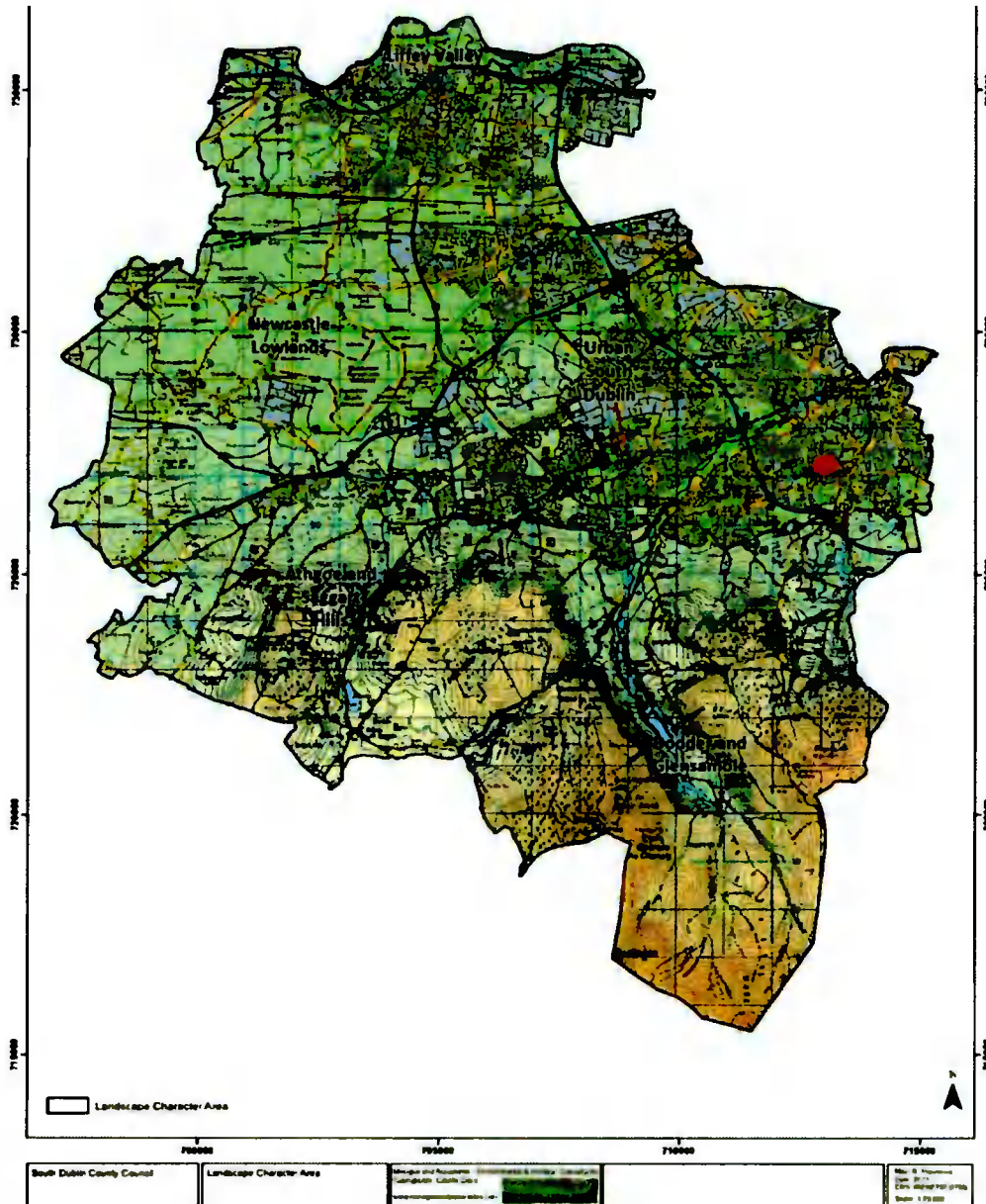


Fig. 3.1 Copy of Landscape Character Areas map for South Dublin County Council. The proposed site falls into Urban South Dublin (approximate location in red).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Landscape character assessment, p. 54.



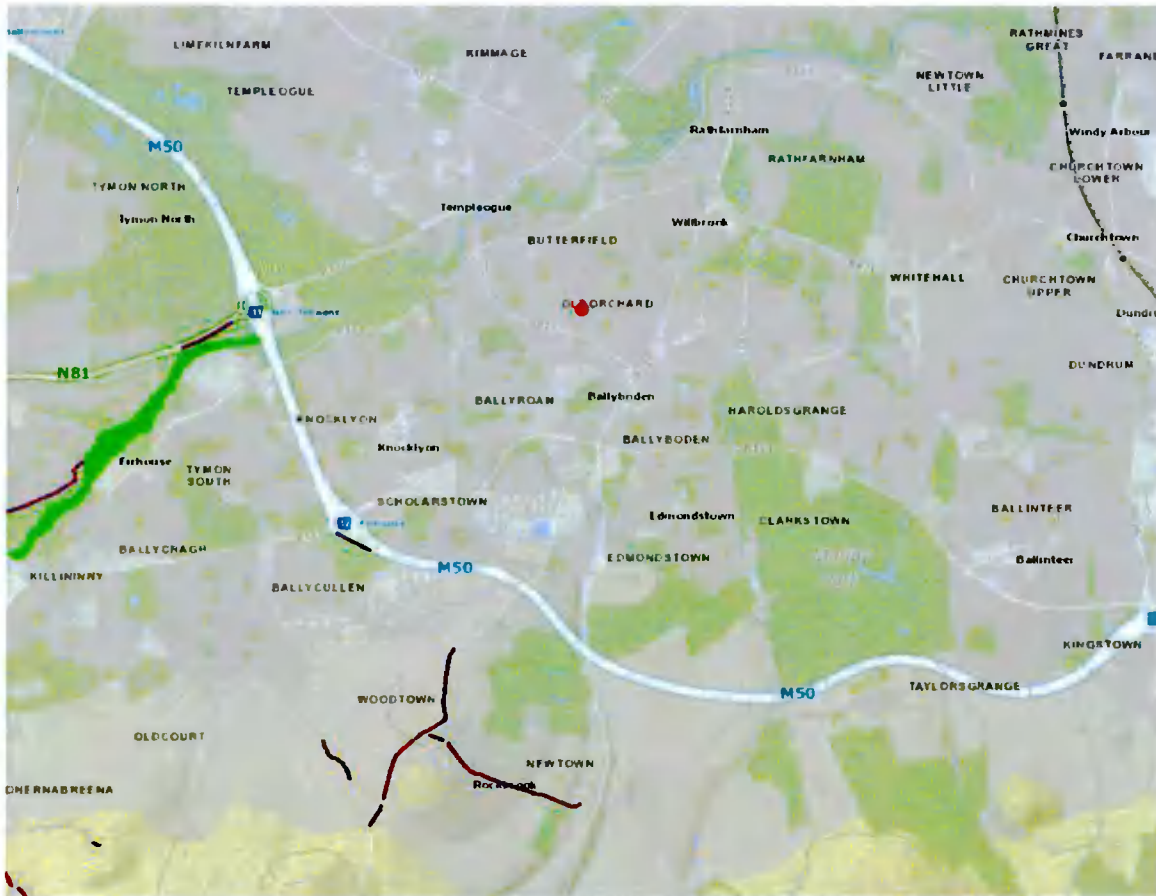


Fig. 3.2 Scenic View and Prospects (purple hatch) and proposed Natural Heritage Area: Dodder Valley (green hatch) designated in South Dublin CDP. Approximate location of site in red.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> South Dublin heritage designations, available at: [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie), accessed 15 September 2021.





Fig. 3.3 Built heritage (Protected Structures in yellow and Architectural Conservation Areas in pink) designated in South Dublin CDP. Approximate location of proposed site in red.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Study area and site: specific description*

The proposed site is in an urban environment which covers relatively flat terrain for the most part. The prime land uses within the study area comprises public and commercial buildings, residential housing, recreational spaces and riparian strips along the watercourse which connects with the Dodder River situated to the north. The houses in the surrounding neighbourhoods are generally two-storey detached or semi-detached with front gardens, street trees and grass verges creating a suburban environment with a vegetal character owing to the relatively high degree of green infrastructure (figs 3.4-8).

The most prominent building in terms of scale and height is the Church of the Holy Spirit (RPS: 264), the spire of which is visible from within the surrounding area creating a distinctive visual landmark in the study area (fig. 3.9). While the church spire extends some distance into the skyline and dwarfs the roof line of houses within its immediate proximity, views of it from further distances are largely screened or partially screened by treelines or houses owing to their heights across similar terrain.

The area surrounding the proposed site is visually relatively contained as a result of the terrain and high level of tree canopy which means long distance views are limited to areas where vistas are afforded across open spaces or along narrow streets. In these limited cases, slightly more expansive views are offered to distant hills. An elevated area to the south of Ballyroan Rd offers some wider

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

views across the study area from open spaces within this residential area. Otherwise, where streets are aligned by houses, gardens and street trees, views are limited in range and expanse. (figs. 3.10-12).

The proposed site is located in Ballyroan Commercial Centre comprising shops, youth centre, library, pastoral centre and the protected structure Church of the Holy Spirit (RPS: 264). There is an existing 12m square concrete chimney flue on the site bounded to the east by the youth centre, to the west by the pastoral centre, while the library and church are slightly more distant to the north and south respectively. There is open access across a public open space connecting each of these buildings (figs. 3.13-15).



Fig. 3.4 Ballyroan public library with street trees and access street to the community and commercial centre.



Fig. 3.5 Ballyroan commercial centre with car park and low rise properties.



Fig. 3.6 Surrounding area is formed by street trees, two-storey residences with front garden, and pocket parks which creates a sub-urban character with strong vegetal elements.





Fig. 3.7 Some open green spaces within residential areas formed by greens and parkland trees. The low rise environment offers some views to surrounding hills.



Fig. 3.8 Section of riparian corridor aligning Ballyboden Rd about 1km to the east of the proposed site.



Fig. 3.9 Church of the Holy Spirit (RPS: 264) brings historic character and distinctive landmark to the visual environment.



Fig. 3.10 An elevated area of open space to the south of the proposed site offering more expansive views.





Fig. 3.11 Typical street vista created by street trees and property boundaries.



Fig. 3.12 Some streets to the west enable partial views to distant hills.



Fig. 3.13 Location of proposed site. Proposal to replace existing chimney flue. View looking north with library in the background and pastoral centre to the left.



Fig. 3.14 Height of the existing chimney flue in relation to the pastoral and youth centres.





Fig. 3.15 Current chimney flue with Church of the Holy Spirit (RPS: 264) in the background.

### 3.2 Defining the study area and visual receptors

The character of the area surrounding the proposed site is designated Landscape Area: Suburban South Dublin in South Dublin CDP, but no visual or landscape sensitivities nor values have been attributed to it. This assessment of the local visual environment within this LCT was found to be suburban in nature and containing considerable green infrastructure and open space as well as small scale houses from the 20<sup>th</sup> century predominantly. These elements create a medium quality visual environment owing to the mix of built and vegetal element, the relatively mature tree canopy, and the contrast between enclosed streets and open spaces. The terrain is predominantly flat and restricts long range visibility across expansive space.

The Church of the Holy Spirit is the most prominent building in terms of scale, height and architectural merit being a protected structure. In this assessment it was found to be the visually most dominant from the more longer range views owing to the height and distinctive character of the church spire. Though prominent, views remain limited to relatively close range from adjacent streets.

The zone of visibility is therefore set to around 0.5-1km which should enable assessment of the proposed structure from areas most affected due to proximity, elevation, or sensitivity in terms of having a designated status, such as the protected structure and ACAs in the area. Beyond this, it is unlikely that the proposed development would be visible, or the level of visibility would be partial and slight. The Scenic Routes identified in the South Dublin CDP fall beyond the zone of visibility and so they are not included.

Within this, the visual receptors (those affected) are identified as the users of the residential streets, Ballyroan commercial centre, Church of Holy Spirit (protected structure), and open amenity spaces. In each case the visual receptors are users of the public realm only and no private residences have been accessed within their private property as it is beyond the scope of this report.

The visual receptors are located on fig. 3.16 together with the selected viewpoint locations representing the types of views currently experienced by these visual receptors. These viewpoints form the basis of assessment of potential visual effects.



Location of visual receptors

- R1 – Ballyroan Rd / R817
- R2 – Residential East and Marian Rd
- R3 – Residential West
- R4 – Residential South
- R5 – Ballyboden Rd / R115 / ACAs

Viewpoint locations 1 ↑

Proposed site location •

Fig.3.16 Types and location of visual receptors and location of viewpoints.



### 3.3 Assessment of viewpoints

Several viewpoints have been selected that represent each visual receptor and these are located on fig. 3.16. All viewpoints are assessed below for the nature and significance of the visual amenity together with its sensitivity to change.

**Table 3.1 Assessment of viewpoints.**

<b>R1: Ballyroan Rd/ R817</b>
<p>Views 1 to 5 represent those experienced by users of Ballyroan Rd/ R817 which offer some partial views of the proposed site along it. View 1 shows the roadside residences and front gardens along with footpath and street trees in the middle ground against the sky backdrop. This section of has relatively high amount of tree canopy. Moving further east the level of tree cover reduces at Views 2-5 which are similar in nature and show roadside residences and front gardens in the middle ground with foot paths and grass verges in the foreground. The roof line of houses forms the backdrop against the sky backdrop. The church tower adjacent to the proposed tower is visible in the centre background above the roof line of houses along this stretch of road. Of these, View 3 shows relatively open views of the church spire rising above the rooflines in a view frame holding open amenity space and tree canopy which softens the urban character. Views of the proposed site are reduced to slight at View 5 which hold a small amount of church spire adjacent the proposed tower in the background beneath the tree canopy. There is sensitivity to change to the height lines of the existing treetops and roofline of residences against the sky backdrop through the introduction of new industrial materials and forms into the visual environment which contains built elements of historic significance.</p>



**View 1**



**View 2**



**View 3**

**Ireland:-** Grageen House, Cappanuke, Cappamore, Co Limerick, Ireland  
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**View 4**



**View 5**

**R2: Residential East and Marian Rd.**

Views 6 to 13 represents the views experienced along Marian Rd and residential areas to the

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east of the proposed site. Views 6 and 10-13 show the nature of view along Marian Rd. View 6 is from the north on approach to the proposed site and shows residences along the road with front garden boundaries formed by hedgerow and ornamental shrubs and street trees which form the middle and background. The church spire adjacent the proposed site is visible above the roof tops but beneath the tree canopies. Views 10 and 11 are similar showing more of the commercial centre in the background on approach from the north and east. Garden properties and street trees occupy the middleground of View 10. There are more open views of the site in Views 10 and 11 with both the church spire and existing chimney flue in the background against the sky backdrop. View 12 shows the nature of view from an open space within a residential area to the east. Garden and street trees form the right and left foreground and middleground while street trees further back create the background, beyond which the church spire rises into the sky backdrop. View 13 shows the approach along Marian Rod from the south showing the edge of an open amenity space with relatively established trees in the foreground and middleground beyond which the commercial centre properties and car park is seen partially. The proposed site is not currently visible. Views 7 to 9 represent views from residential areas to the east where there are partial glimpses of the proposed site on approach from View 7 to 8. These show front facades of suburban residences and their garden boundaries beyond which the church spire adjacent the proposed site is visible in the background against the sky backdrop and beneath the roof line. There are no views of the proposed site from around View 9 which shows a row of residential houses and relatively established street trees in the foreground and middleground against the sky backdrop. In each case more visibility of the proposed site could be afforded when the canopies drop in the dormant season. There is sensitivity to change to the height lines formed by church spire, residences roofline, and treelines through the introduction of new materials and forms into the visual environment which contains significant built elements and forms, some of a historic nature.



**View 6**





**View 7**



**View 8**





**View 9**



**View 10**



**View 11**



**View 12**

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**View 13**

### **R3: Residential West**

Views 14 to 21 represent the views experienced by residential areas and open spaces to the west of the proposed site. Views 14 and 15 are from Anne Devlin Ave and are similar in nature showing the residences on both sides of the street with their garden properties and street trees forming the foreground and middle ground with the pastoral building in the background. In View 14 the chimney flue is in the left background but beneath the tree canopy while the church spire rises against the sky backdrop. Along this street from around View 15 the chimney flue is concealed behind tree canopy. Views 16, 17 and 18 show the nature of view from Anne Delvin Park to the southwest of the proposed site. Views 16 and 17 are similar showing the street residences and trees on approach to the proposed site. The proposed site is not visible beyond tree canopies in View 17 but moving closer to it at View 16 the church spire adjacent the site comes into view where canopies are reduced. At closer range shown in View 18 the church façade and spire forms the right middle ground and garden of dwelling forms the left middleground against the sky backdrop. The chimney flue forms the centre background against the sky backdrop but remains beneath the tree line and church spire. Views 19 and 20 shows the nature of visibility from Orchardstown Ave and Anne Devlin Dr from the northwest. View 19 shows garden trees and facades of houses in the foreground and middleground beyond which there are slight glimpses of the upper portion of the church spire adjacent the proposed site in the background. Views 20 is similar in nature in terms of character and shows a small amount of the church spire adjacent the proposed site in the background above the roofline of houses from Orchardstown Ave. Intermittent views of the proposed site are afforded where there are breaks in houses. View 21 illustrates the nature of view along the street immediately north of the proposed site showing an access street to the public commercial space between two buildings in the foreground and middle ground beyond which the existing chimney flue is in the background and hold the church and church spire in its backdrop. In these views, greater



visibility of the proposed site may be afforded with canopies drop. There is sensitivity to change to the suburban environment which holds considerable vegetal elements in its view frame. There is sensitivity to change to the height lines of suburban environment formed by roofs, tree canopies and the church spire against the sky backdrop through the introduction of new materials and forms into the visual environment which contains some built, industrial, and historic elements.



**View 14**



**View 15**



**View 16**



**View 17**



**View 18**

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**View 19**



**View 20**



**View 21**

#### **R4: Residential South**

Views 22 to 25 represent the views experienced from residential areas and green spaces to the south of the proposed site. The nature of these views is similar having considerable open green space and vegetal elements. View 22 shows the nature of view from a residential street and green space just off the R817 showing the facades of properties along the R817 in the middle ground with green open space in the foreground. Trees rise into the skyline with the church spire adjacent the proposed site in the background against the sky backdrop. View 23 shows a green space in the foreground aligned with dense mature hedge on the right and left with partial views of front facades of houses in the background. The church spire adjacent the proposed site is slightly visible above the hedge line in the background against the sky backdrop. View 24 shows the edge of this green space at closer range which shows the facades of more houses in the background and a greater portion of the church spire in the background above the roof and hedge line. View 25 shows the nature of view from an elevated residential area to the south of the proposed site which is formed by an open green space in the foreground and upper stories of residences in the left middle ground and parkland trees in the right middle ground. Roof tops of houses, trees, and the upper part of the church spire adjacent the proposed site form the background against the sky backdrop. There may be more visibility of the proposed site when canopies drop in the dormant season. There is sensitivity to change to the vegetal nature of these views which hold some historic elements (church spire) and to the height lines defined by rooflines, church spire, and treelines against the sky back through the introduction of new industrial material and forms.



**View 22**



**View 23**

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Page 37





**View 24**



**View 25**

**R5: Ballyboden Rd / R115 / ACAs**

Views 26 to 28 represent the views experienced by users of Ballyboden Rd (R115) and the ACAs located on this road. The nature of each of these views is similar showing the riparian and sylvan corridor along the stream which feeds into the Dodder River. This corridor is formed by a thick and mature tree belt which occupies the middleground with the R115 in the foreground and can be seen in all views. These include the ACA to the southeast, a point along the R115 to the east of the proposed site, and from the ACA to the northeast. The proposed site is not visible. There may be some partial or slight visibility once the canopy drops in the dormant season. There is sensitivity to change to the sylvan character through the introduction of new materials and forms into the visual environment.



**View 26**





**View 27**



**View 28**



The landscape surrounding the site is deemed to be of low sensitivity with no sensitivity designations assigned it in South Dublin CDP with the exception of the Church of the Holy Spirit (protected structure). The character of the areas is suburban in nature having a mix of built and industrial elements with a diversity of tight streets and open spaces. The visual amenity is of medium quality as a result of the small-scale street networks, low-rise buildings, architectural diversity and level of vegetal cover and green space. The visual amenity assessed in this report was found to be limited in range and contained primarily along streets with some more expansive views across green areas. Though largely limited and contained in nature, the visual amenity is enhanced by the church spire which creates a landmark feature in the surrounding area. Though the area has not been designated any particular sensitivities in South Dublin CDP, the church being a protected structure contributes to the visual environment due to its architectural form and historic character. There is an objective to protect such character in South Dublin CDP. Views of the proposed site are limited to close range open views from adjoining streets. While some elevated views enable more long distance ranges beyond localised streets, these offer no-to-slight glimpses of the proposed site and are intermittent in nature. The main vulnerabilities come from the residential streets and amenity spaces and commercial areas at close range, particularly those which also hold the church (protected structure) in their backdrops.

#### **4.0 Description of the proposed development**

The development proposes to locate telecommunication equipment to be shrouded within a chimney flue adjacent to Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Rd, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14. The main components of the proposal are as follows:

- 1 nr. proposed 20m lattice tower with ladder, antenna and dishes mounted and enclosed in a concrete chimney flue and fixed on concrete foundation (5x5 m approx.).
- Concrete foundation to be dressed with existing paving.
- Proposed cabinets on concrete plinth (1.4x4.3m approx.).
- Removal of existing 12m chimney flue.

#### **5.0 Identification and description of effects**

The proposed development would potentially affect the nature and quality of the visual amenity of selected viewpoints and their visual receptors. The potential impacts are reviewed below, and these will then be considered with a view to suitable mitigation measures and/or alternative designs in section 6.0 below. Refer also to photomontage study (Indigo: visual impact appraisal).

##### **5.1 R1: Ballyroan Rd/ R817**

*View 1, 2, 3, 4, 5:* the visual amenity experienced from the R817/Ballyroan on approach from the southwest and southeast shown at Views 1, 2, 4 and 5 would be largely unaffected due to intervening houses and street trees which conceal views of it. There are more open views of the proposed site at the junction with Marian Rd (View 3) which would experience some change as the top of the proposed chimney flue is likely to be visible above the rooftops and beneath the tree

line. It would also show the church spire in its view frame. Receptors would be affected during the during the operational phase in the long term.

### *5.2 R2: Residential East and Marian Rd.*

*View 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13:* The residential areas to the east of Marian Rd. would be largely unaffected to the northeast as visibility is minimal as shown in Views 7 and 9. From around View 8 and moving south along this residential street more intermittent visibility would be afforded the proposed development in which the upper portion of chimney flue may be seen but this is likely to be minimal owing to intervening houses and trees which largely screen views. The residences around View 12 would experience most change as the proposed chimney flue would be visible above the Community Centre roofline, particularly in the winter months when the canopy has dropped. This would show a considerable portion of the proposed chimney flue in the view which holds the church spire in its frame. Marian Rd would experience no to some change to the visual environment on approach from the north. Of these the area at View 6 from the north and View 13 from the south would be unaffected as the proposed chimney flue would not be seen from the north (at View 6) while intervening trees screen views from the south (at View 13). When the canopies drop, partial visibility is likely to be afforded. The most affected on Marian Rd would be the section from View 10 up to View 13 which would show relatively open views of a considerable portion of the proposed chimney tower where the church spire forms the backdrop. Receptors would be affected in the construction and operational phases in the long term.

### *5.3 R3: Residential West*

*Views 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21:* the visual amenity experienced for users of these residential streets would remain unaffected in Views 17, 19 and 20. View 15 and 16 would have minimal change as although a portion of the proposed chimney flue would be visible above rooflines at a distance, this would be a small amount and limited to the winter months when canopies drop. The most affected are from closer range in this area as shown in Views 14, 18 and 21. Of these, View 21 would be the least affected as while a most of the proposed chimney flue and cabinets would be visible with the spire in its backdrop, there is a high degree of built elements in the visual environment that have the ability to absorb the change to a greater degree. Views 14 and 18 would show the proposed chimney flue against the sky backdrop in a frame that holds more vegetal elements and the church spire in view. Change would affect users in construction and operational phase in the long term.

### *5.4 R4: Residential South*

*Views 22, 23, 24, 25:* the visual amenity experienced from these areas would remain unaffected in Views 23, 24 and 25 as the proposed chimney flue would not be visible beyond intervening houses and trees. View 23 may afford some visibility of the upper portion in the winter when canopy has dropped but this would be minimal. View 22 may be slightly affected where the upper portion of the proposed chimney flue may be seen above the roofline but beneath the tree line. Changes would affect users in the long term during operational phase.

### **5.5 R5: Ballyboden Rd / R115 / ACAs**

View 26, 27, 28: the quality of the visual amenity from this road and ACAs to the southeast and northeast would remain unaffected as the proposed development would not be visible owing to intervening tree cover.

### **5.6 Summary**

Most of the visual receptors would experience some change to the visual environment because of the proposed development. Where visibility is afforded the proposed chimney flue, it ranges from partial and intermittent to relatively open at close proximity. Potential visual impact arises for sensitive receptors. These are Ballyroan commercial Centre and along Marian Rd to the east owing to the proximity and amount of chimney flue that would be visible. The impacts are absorbed to a degree from these areas owing to the level and diversity of built elements in the environment. This creates some ability to absorb the changes being introduced through increased heights, materials and forms. For some of the most sensitive, which are the amenity spaces and commercial area users, the most noticeable change will be experienced in which the proposed chimney flue will be visible in proximity of the church spire. This adds more sensitivity owing to its protected status. Further sensitivity arises from amenity areas along residential streets in proximity to the east which creates a vista towards the church. In the winter months when canopies drop, greater portions of the chimney flue may become available at closer ranges from the surrounding areas. Impacts would be of a long term duration overall and experienced during construction phase (for some receptors where openly visible) and operational phase (for all).

## **6.0 Mitigation**

Mitigation measures are limited as there is no scope for tree planting to help screen the proposed chimney flue. Therefore, mitigation is limited to design of the chimney flue and more particularly to its fabric. It is suggested that material be selected from suitable built materials/colours in the surrounding environment to aid the chimney flue blend more harmoniously. It could be possible to develop a design which references the materials of the church spire for example. The form of the proposed chimney flue is in contrast with the existing church spire but if built sensitively in terms of bulk and mass, it could contribute positively to the visual environment. These are subject to further design analysis.

## **7.0 Evaluation of predicted effects (after mitigation)**

Table 7.1 summary of views discussed above to be read in accordance with definition of terms (2.2.3). The evaluation of effects place judgements on the significance of impact and provides a summary of predicted visual effects (after mitigation) in a series of categories of significance. These are based on proposals without further mitigation measures for this development and relate only to the public arena and not reflective of the predicted impact on private properties.



**Table 7.1 Summary of predicted landscape character and visual effects.**

Visual receptor	View No	Description of view and character	Quality of impact	Duration	Significance
R1	1-5	Ballyroan Rd/ R817	Neutral to negative	Permanent	Imperceptible to slight
R2	6-13	Residential East and Marian Rd.	Neutral to negative	Permanent	Imperceptible to moderate
R3	14-21	Residential West	Neutral to negative	Permanent	Imperceptible to moderate
R4	22-25	Residential South	Neutral to negative	Permanent	Imperceptible to slight
R5	26-28	Ballyboden Rd / R115 / ACAs	Neutral	Permanent	Imperceptible

## 8.0 Summary

The character of the area surrounding the proposed site is designated Landscape Area: Suburban South Dublin in South Dublin CDP, but visual and landscape sensitivities and values have not been attributed to it. This assessment of the local visual environment within this LCT was found to be suburban in nature and containing considerable green infrastructure and open space as well as small scale houses creates a medium quality visual environment. The Church of the Holy Spirit (protected structure) adds to the quality being a visual landmark with architectural merit and historic character.

The view types are limited in range being contained within localised streets and delimited by houses and trees. Views are therefore largely contained primarily along streets with some more expansive views across green areas or at elevated locations. Within these the most vulnerable receptors are those that catch open amenity space, tree canopies and the church spire in their view frame, while others contain a high degree of built element which are not of particular merit though hold the church spire in their backdrop.

The visual receptors (those affected) are identified as the users of the residential streets, Ballyroan commercial centre, Church of Holy Spirit (protected structure), and open amenity spaces. The proposed development's potential effects on the visual amenity of the study area would impact four of the five assessed visual receptors to some degree.

Mitigation is not possible through the planting of trees. Therefore, the potential impacts will arise from the design of the proposed chimney flue. The chimney flue design should take references from the surrounding environment to help absorb changes through similar materials and colours. In terms of form, the chimney flue could add to the visual diversity of the area if its mass and bulk does not compete negatively with the church spire. This is subject to further analysis.

The report bases its assessment on the current design of the chimney flue (without details of the above recommended mitigation measures).

In this, the predicted effects would be moderate for the most affected. These are areas in close proximity in which the magnitude of change is slight-to-moderate as the chimney flue would be visible in an environment which contains a high degree of built elements that has an ability to absorb some noticeable change. But as the proposed chimney flue would rise above existing

height lines in some cases (roofs and tree tops) against the sky backdrop which also holds the church spire in its backdrop the magnitude of change would affect a sensitive element. The impact is slight from all other areas as either the receptors are less sensitive, or the magnitude and intensity of change is considered small and intermittent.

These predictions are based on the proposal without the suggested mitigation measures recommended in section 6.0 which would be subject to further design analysis.

## 9.0 Signing Off Statement

### Conservation Company:

ACP Archcon Professionals Limited. (Registration No: 591604). Trading as ACP.



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**Client:** Ontower Ireland Ltd.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Humphrey's".

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
For ACP Archcon Professionals Limited.

**Date:** 24/09/2021







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Project Managers, Quantity Surveyors and Building Economists

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