

Wilson's Auctions, Green Isle Rd. Dublin 22,

Clarification of Additional Information Submission

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

14th December 2021

1.1 Proposed Development

The continuance of use of the existing 3 buildings and all associated external areas for storage and warehousing of motor vehicles, plant, machinery, and other durable products for the sale by public auction, all associated ancillary uses including support staff and office facilities and all associated site and development works comprising hard and soft landscaping areas, roads and footpaths, car parking, boundary treatments/ fencing, signage, and water services infrastructure. The development described above was previously permitted under Reg. Ref. SD18A/0126 and the duration of the permission was limited to two years by condition 9 of that permission. A Protected Structure - Former Gun Powder Store (RPS Ref. 205) - is located within the application site

1.2 Methodology

This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Kevin Fitzpatrick Landscape Architecture. The purpose of this assessment was to analyse the existing landscape and to assess the likely potential visual impacts arising from the proposed development on the existing landscape and any mitigation measures proposed.

The criteria as set out in the Draft "Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports" (2017) are used in the assessment of the likely impacts. The criteria for rating the significance of impacts are as defined in table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 Criteria for significance of effects under EPA Guidelines

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

The ratings may have negative, neutral, or positive application where:

Positive impact - a change which improves the quality of the environment.

Neutral impact – No effects of effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.

Negative impact - a change which reduces the quality of the environment.

Terms relating to the duration of impacts are as described in the EPA Guidelines as:

Momentary Effects - lasting from seconds to minutes

Brief Effects - lasting less than a day

Temporary Effects - lasting less than a year

Short-term Effects - lasting one to seven years

Medium-term Effects - lasting seven to fifteen years

Long-term Effects - lasting fifteen to sixty years

Permanent Effects - lasting over sixty years

The significance of impacts on the perceived landscape will depend partly on the number of people affected, but also on judgments about how much the changes will matter and in relation to other senses i.e., sound, feeling, etc., experienced by those concerned.

Character, for the purposes of this assessment refers to the interaction of elements in the landscape that combine to give the area its identity. In this context, impacts on character include the effect on existing land uses and responses that are felt towards the combined effects of the new development.

This chapter has been prepared having regard to the following guidelines;

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, 2018)
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (European Commission, 2017);
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – Draft (EPA, 2017);
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (Landscape Inst. + IEMA 2013)

The assessment was carried out by visiting the site and its surroundings in June 2021, by analysis of the proposals through photomontages, plans, aerial photographs, historic maps and by reference to the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022 and Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County Council (June 2016 updated).

1.2.1 Relevant Legislation & Guidance

Within the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022 there are no specific landscape objectives that apply to the subject lands. There are several objectives that apply to the general environs of the site and new development which may occur on subject lands listed below. The proposed development is in compliance with the aims of those objectives listed.

Green infrastructure objectives:

G2 Objective 1 states: 'To reduce fragmentation of the Green Infrastructure network and strengthen ecological links between urban areas, Natura 2000 sites, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, parks and open spaces and the wider regional Green Infrastructure network.'

G2 Objective 2 states: 'To protect and enhance the biodiversity value and ecological function of the Green Infrastructure network.'

G2 Objective 6 states: 'To protect and enhance the County's hedgerow network, in particular hedgerows that form townland, parish and barony boundaries, and increase hedgerow coverage using locally native species.'

G2 Objective 9 states: 'To preserve, protect and augment trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the County by increasing tree canopy coverage using locally native species and by incorporating them within design proposals and supporting their integration into the Green Infrastructure network.'

G3 Objective 3 states: 'To ensure the protection, improvement or restoration of riverine floodplains and to promote strategic measures to accommodate flooding at appropriate locations, to protect ground and surface water quality and build resilience to climate change.'

Heritage Conservation & Landscape Objectives:

HCL15 Objective 3 states: 'To protect existing trees, hedgerows, and woodlands which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/ or contribute to landscape character and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management in accordance with Living with Trees: South Dublin County Council's Tree Management Policy 2015-2020.'

There are no protected trees or tree groups within the Proposed Development site listed in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2020.

There are no views or prospects that include the Proposed Development site listed in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2020.

In the Landscape Character Assessment of South Dublin County Council (June 2016 updated), the Proposed Development site is designated as being in the 'Urban Fringe Character Area'. This area is listed as having a low landscape sensitivity, due to the built nature of the environment.

1.3 Site Context and Description

1.3.1 Overview

The site is in Kingswood, approximately 2 kilometres to the west of the M50, north of junction 2 on the N7. The site is located to the northeast of the junction and is an irregular form, framed by Corkagh Park to the northeast, the Camac Valley Tourist Caravan and Camping Park to the east and the public road and stream to the south and west. The northern boundary is formed by a mature woodland that has been supplemented with recent new woodland planting inside the subject lands. The eastern boundary is formed by the woodland on the adjoining Caravan Park lands. The boundary to the Green Isle Rd to the south is formed by a palisade fence with a mature formal hedge on the public side and a newly planted woodland strip inside the site. On the western

side the old boundary fence boundary has been supplemented with new hedgerow planting in the southern section of this perimeter. Along the northern section of this perimeter a 15m wide section of woodland buffer has recently been planted between the stream and the hardstanding on site. This woodland is separated from the site by a new chain-link fence.

Due to the surrounding woodland and trees and generally flat topography there are few locations from where the site is visible in the local landscape. Most of the built development on site sits in a hollow below the levels of the road and trees along the slip road of the junction. In the wider landscape, the lands are situated within a mixed-use landscape, consisting of industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational green space areas.



Fig 1.1 Context Map

1.3.2 Characteristics of the site and its environs

The character of the site and its environs has largely been determined by the following:

- the flat topography of the subject site and its surrounding environs

- woodland and trees belts on the subject lands and in neighbouring developments and green space areas
- the stream, its riparian vegetation, and the surrounding woodland.
- the cluster of protected structures at Old Mill House within the woodland to the north of the site and the protected structure in the northern section of the lands
- the public park landscape to the northeast
- the N7 dual carriage way and the roads and levels of the Kingswood junction.
- the number of large-scale industrial and commercial built developments in the local area
- the extent of the large-scale quarry operation in the local area

The site could be considered as consisting of two landscape types. The western section of the site could be considered an Urban landscape. The areas of hardstanding and commercial units are surrounded by native woodland and meadow on all sides. The eastern section of the land has the character of a rural landscape. It consists of a native grassland meadow surrounded on three sides by established and recently planted woodland.

1.3.3 Views and visibility

In the assessment of the visibility of the subject lands within the site it is noted that that views of the lands from the surrounding lands are extremely limited. The extent of tree cover and topography of the site and surrounding environs significantly limit the visibility of the development. The most visually prominent features on the subject lands are the warehouse buildings, signage, vehicle storage and the larger trees which can be seen in close range views of the site. The extent and density of the surrounding woodland trees and topography prevents any long-distance views of the subject lands

1.4 Likely Significant Effects Impact Assessment

Landscape assessments measure the sensitivity of specific landscape types and features and describe the nature and significance of changes to that landscape occurring because of a proposed development. In this instance the assessment is of an existing development and its operation. In general, it can be assumed that landscape and visual impacts are intrinsically linked and for this study both types of impacts are assessed separately in this study where a development characteristic may result in a starkly different type, quality, or magnitude of impact in landscape or visual terms. The assessment of likely significant impacts has been made on the basis that all incorporated design mitigation measures are included.

Character, for the purposes of this assessment refers to the interaction of elements in the landscape that combine to give the area its identity. In this context, impacts on character include the effect on existing land uses and responses that are felt towards the combined effects of the new development.

1.4.1 Operational Phase

Visual impacts due to the introduction of new buildings and built structures.

As noted in section 1.3.3, views of the lands from the surrounding lands are extremely limited. The extent of tree cover and topography of the site and surrounding environs significantly limit the visibility of the development. The most visually prominent features on the subject lands are the buildings, signage, vehicle storage and the larger trees which can be seen in close range views of the site. The extent and density of the surrounding woodland trees and topography prevents any long-distance views of the subject lands

The extent of potential visual impact of the development from 8 representative view locations around the wider area and form within the subject lands is discussed in section 1.7.3. The view locations assessed are representative of locations from which the development might be visible. Photomontages, prepared by Digital Dimensions Ltd, from these locations are included with this submission.

1.5 Mitigation

1.5.1 Incorporated Design Mitigation

- Retention and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows in compliance with planning permission SD18A/0126.
- Introduction of significant perimeter woodland as permitted in compliance with planning permission SD18A/0126.
- Significant additional planting including formal hedging, avenue trees, grassland meadow and ornamental planting in compliance with planning permission SD18A/0126.

1.5.2 Operational Phase Mitigation

- Implementation and monitoring of a landscape management plan for the full duration of the defects liability period to ensure successful establishment of all proposed trees and vegetation.
- Periodic tree surveys and implementation of a tree management plan for the mature trees on site to ensure their continuing sustainability in compliance with planning permission SD18A/0126.

1.6 Residual Impact Assessment

1.6.1 Operational Phase

In the 'assessment of likely significant impacts' (section 1.4) in this report the assessment has been made on the basis that all incorporated design mitigation measures are included. Therefore, the level of impact will remain the same as those listed under section 1.5.2 for the operational phase impacts.

1.6.2 Assessment of Visual Impacts from Specific Locations

The extent of potential visual impact of the proposed development on the built environment from 8 representative view locations around the proposed development is discussed below. Photomontages produced by Digital Dimensions Ltd can be found at the end of this document in Appendix 1.



Fig 1.2 Specific Viewpoint Locations

A. Locations from which the proposed development will not be visible

The development is not visible from the selected view location listed below:

View 1: From within Corkagh Park

View 2: From the vicinity of the protected structures at Old Mill House

View 3: From the entrance lane at Old Mill House

View 6: From the entrance to Camac Valley Tourist Caravan and Camping Park

B. Locations from which the proposed development will be seen in the view

This study aims to assess the visual impacts of the continued use of the development as a commercial business. For this assessment the impacts of the works that have recently been completed in compliance with planning permission SD18A/0126 are included in the assessment as 'proposed development'.

View 4	View from the vicinity of the Protected structure in the North of the subject Lands towards the South
Existing view The dominant feature in this view is the warehouse and greenhouse buildings that house the commercial operations. These form the centre of the view, creating a visual screen, while the foreground is taken up by the native grassland meadow. Some vehicles stored at the side of the buildings are also visible. The protected structure (Gun Powder Store) is visible on the right side of the view.	
Proposed view The view will not be significantly altered by the business operations or the proposed development. A staggered line of trees is proposed that will partially screen the view of the buildings as shown in the photomontage. A path is proposed around the protected structure providing protection to the building and access from the main site. The final layer of this path is to be installed and will define the structure. The ongoing management of the meadow will result in the view changing with the season.	
Proposed view after 5 years The staggered line of trees proposed will grow and fill out to increase the level of screening provided. The upper sections of the green cladding are the only parts of the building visible between the trees. The vehicles along the road will be completely screened from view in summer months with some potential partial glimpsed views in the winter months	
Predicted Impact during Operation	A significant, positive, long-term visual impact

View 5	View from the Green Isle Road towards the northwest.
Existing view This view is dominated by the boundary hedge in the foreground of the view. In the background of the view, the woodland trees create the visual ridgeline and the buildings and vehicles associated with the business are visible in a narrow section of the view between the hedge and the woodland. There is also a moderate amount of visual clutter caused by power lines and signage.	
Proposed view The proposed woodland belt and avenue trees within the site will provide a significant level of screening to the development. The trees that have recently been planted are visible directly behind the hedge. As these trees fill out and the saplings grow the visible elements of the business operation will be completely screened from view, eliminating any visual impact	
Proposed view after 5 years The trees have grown and filled out to create an almost continuous visual screen. The saplings have grown to create a substantial woodland shrub layer under the trees. Built elements and operations are almost completely screened from view.	
Predicted Impact during Operation	A significant, positive, long-term visual impact

View 7	View from the Eastern perimeter of the site towards the west.
Existing view	This view towards the site is dominated by the native grass land meadow in the foreground. In the background of the view, the woodland trees create the visual ridgeline and the buildings and vehicles associated with the business are visible in a narrow section of the view between the meadow and the woodland
Proposed view	The proposed avenue trees will run in a line from left to right across the view. The recently planted trees on both sides of the access road are visible from the left side of the view as far as the green office building. The remaining avenue trees to be planted will continue this line covering the full extent of the visible elements of the operations. In the long-term, as the avenue trees along the access road mature, the development will become significantly screened from view, reducing much of the visual impact.
Proposed view after 5 years	The new roadside hedges have grown and filled out to provide some screening of the vehicles and other materials stored on site. The avenue trees have filled out and are more prominent which visually integrates the buildings and vehicles with the surrounding landscape.
Predicted Impact during Operation	A moderate, positive, long term visual impact

View 8	View from the entrance to the site along the access road.
Existing view	In this view the foreground is dominated by the recently planted roadside hedge and line of avenue trees on both sides of the road. In the background of the view, the woodland trees create the visual ridgeline and the buildings and vehicles associated with the business are visible, obstructing parts of the view of the woodland
Proposed view	The recently planted trees on both sides of the access road are already quite visible in this view. The trees and hedge will continue to fill out and create a planted avenue effect that will greatly enhance this view. In the long-term, as the avenue trees along the access road mature, the development will become also significantly screened from view, reducing much of the visual impact of the vehicle storage.
Proposed view after 5 years	The new roadside hedges and trees have grown and filled out, creating a strong avenue effect along the entrance road. The hedges and trees provide some screening of the vehicles and other materials stored on site.
Predicted Impact during Operation	A moderate, positive, long term visual impact

Conclusion

The character of the subject lands will not be significantly changed from its current character by the continued operation of the commercial business. The recent planning permission (Reg. Ref. SD18A/0126) has reduced the footprint of the hardstanding and the extent of the business operation. Under this permission a significant amount of new woodland, hedgerows and meadows were introduced. In addition to this, the landscape sensitivities, the woodland, stream, landscape setting and protected structure are all retained protected and enhanced under the particulars of the planning permission.

The proposed scheme includes a comprehensive landscape scheme which includes the retention of the high-quality trees on site along with a variety of soft and hard landscaping proposals. These design measures will mitigate the level of impact. As described in section 1.3.2 of this report the current landscape has the character of an urban landscape in the west and a rural landscape in the eastern part of the site. The sensitivities of the existing landscape character will not be negatively impacted by the continued operation of the commercial business on site. The resulting impact would be considered neutral in the long-term.

Addendum – Visual Impact Assessment of Signs No.2, No. 3 and No 12 on views to the protected structure

This visual assessment is in response to Clarification of Additional Information request item 6, Clarification of item 7. This item requests that a photomontage is required to show the signage cluster and impact on views to the protected structure of signs no 2, no 3 and no 12.



Fig A1 – excerpt from Clarke Engineers Drawing 4996-02-P1001 showing details of the signs

As demonstrated in Figure A1 the signs being assessed are not significant features with sign no. 1 the largest measuring 2.98m high but the actual sign is only 2m in diameter. Sign No. 2 is smaller measuring only 1.325m in height and at only 2m in length. Sign No. 12 is very small at just slightly over a meter in height and 1.1 m in length.



Fig A2 – View 8 from Entrance gate towards the buildings (5 years after installation of landscape proposals) with Sign No. 1 and No.2 visible at the end of the avenue.

As demonstrated in figure A2 the signs are very small visual features in the landscape. Sign No. 12 is to the left of these signs at the front of the office building and is too small to see in this view. The signs visible in this view are screened from the north immediately by the hedge directly behind the signs. Beyond this lies the buildings and greenhouses and a significant belt of mature trees recently supplemented with additional woodland planting and further woodland is proposed within this submission. There are no views of the protected structures from this side of the buildings due to the level of screening provided by the woodland trees and the buildings.



Fig A3 - View 2: From the vicinity of the protected structures at Old Mill House

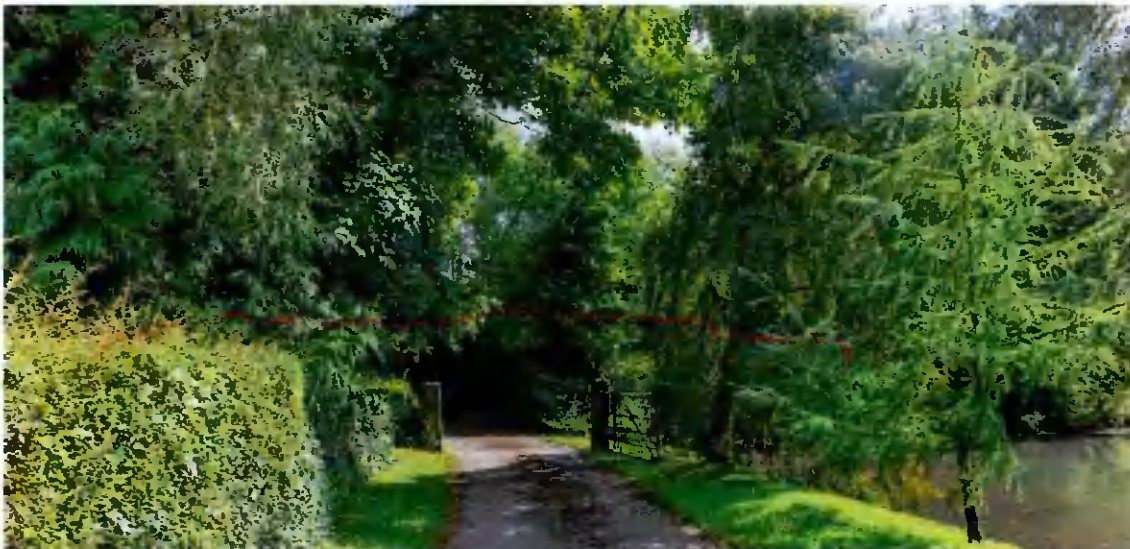


Fig A4 - View 3: From the entrance lane at Old Mill House



Fig A5 - View 4: From the vicinity of the Protected structure in the North of the subject Lands towards the South

The photomontages in figures A3-A5 shown the existing view from the vicinity of the protected structures. Where the buildings are not visible the outline of the building is shown in red. As can be seen the woodland screens any views to the south from the Old Mill House. View 4 shows the existing view from the gunpowder house in the north of the subject lands. As the signs being assessed are on the opposite side of the buildings it is clear they are not visible.

Conclusion

As the signs are not visible from the vicinity of any of the protected structures it is clear that the signs will have no impact on any views of the protected structures from any location in the area.