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Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Dublin 16
Co. Dublin

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

Prepared for
Clancy Homes

by
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1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd (CSR), landscape architects and planners.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was informed by a desktop study and a survey of the site and receiving environment in July 2022. This report identifies and discusses the townscape and the receiving environment in relation to proposed development at Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Co.Dublin.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Definition of Landscape

Ireland is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The ELC defines landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. This definition is important in that it expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It encourages a focus on landscape as a resource in its own right - a shared resource providing a complex range of cultural, environmental and economic benefits to individuals and society.

As a cultural resource, the landscape functions as the setting for our day-to-day lives, also providing opportunities for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment and inspiration. It contributes to the sense of place experienced by individuals and communities and provides a link to the past as a record of historic socio-economic and environmental conditions.

As an environmental resource, the landscape provides habitat for fauna and flora. It receives, stores, conveys and cleans water, and vegetation in the landscape stores carbon and produces oxygen. As an economic resource, the landscape provides the raw materials and space for the production of food, materials (e.g. timber, aggregates) and energy (e.g. carbon-based fuels, wind, solar), living space and for recreation and tourism activities.

2.2 Forces of Landscape Change

Landscape is not unchanging. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. For example, within the receiving environment, the environs of the proposed development have altered over the last thousand years, from wilderness to agriculture and settlement or townscape.

Many of the drivers for change arise from the requirement for development to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. The concept of sustainable development recognises that change must and will occur to meet the needs of the present, but that it should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This involves finding an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental forces and values.

The reversibility of change is an important consideration. If change must occur to meet a current need, can it be reversed to return the resource (in this case, the landscape) to its previous state to allow for development or management for future needs.

Climate change is one of the major factors likely to bring about future change in the landscape, and it is accepted to be the most serious long-term threat to the natural environment, as well as economic activity (particularly primary production) and society. The need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which includes the management of water and more extreme weather and rainfall patterns, is part of this.

2.3 Guidance

Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity. As this report is not

part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects. However the process by which the landscape and visual effects are identified is similar to that of a Landscape and Visual Assessment carried out as part of an EIAR .

The methodology for assessment of the landscape and visual effects is informed by the following key guidance documents, namely:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition 2013, published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA).
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements, 2022, published by the Environmental Protection Agency
- South Dublin Development Plan 2022 – 2028
- Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. December 2018

Key Principles of the GLVIA

Use of the Term 'Effect' vs 'Impact'

The GLVIA advises that the terms 'impact' and 'effect' should be clearly distinguished and consistently used in the preparation of an LVIA.

'Impact' is defined as the action being taken. In the case of the proposed development, the impact would include the construction of the buildings and associated boundaries and external areas.

'Effect' is defined as the change or changes resulting from those actions, e.g. a change in landscape character, or changes to the composition, character and quality of views in the receiving environment. This report focusses on these effects.

Assessment of Both 'Landscape' and 'Visual' Effects

Another key distinction to make in a LVIA is that between landscape effects and the visual effects of development.

'Landscape' results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create distinctive character of landscape in different places. 'Landscape character assessment' is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape, and by which to understand the potential effects of a development on the landscape as 'a resource'. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of landscape that make a place distinctive.

Views and 'visual amenity' refer to the interrelationship between people and the landscape. The GLVIA prescribes that effects on views and visual amenity should be assessed separately from landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked. Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area's visual amenity.

2.4 Methodology for Landscape Assessment

In Section 6 of this report the landscape effects of the development are assessed. The nature and scale of changes to the landscape elements and characteristics are identified, and the consequential effect on landscape character and value are discussed. Trends of change in the landscape are taken into account. The assessment of significance of the effects takes account of the sensitivity of the landscape resource and the magnitude of change to the landscape which resulted from the development.

Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource

Landscape sensitivity is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and distribution of visual receptors, scope for mitigation, and the value placed on the landscape. It also relates to the nature and scale of development proposed. It includes consideration of landscape values as well as the susceptibility of the landscape to change.

Landscape values can be identified by the presence of landscape designations or policies which indicate particular values, either on a national or local level. In addition, a number of criteria are used to assess the value of a landscape. These are described further in Section 2.6 below.

Landscape susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as *the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline scenario and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*. Susceptibility also relates to the type of development – a landscape may be highly susceptible to certain types of development but have a low susceptibility to other types of development.

For the purpose of assessment, three categories are used to classify the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Sensitivity is therefore a combination of Landscape value and Susceptibility.

Table 1: Categories of Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that it has limited/low capacity for accommodating change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principal management objective for the area is conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character of the landscape is such that it has capacity for change; where development would result in a minor change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and where the principal management objective is to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Four categories are used to classify magnitude of landscape change.

Table 2: Categories of Landscape Change

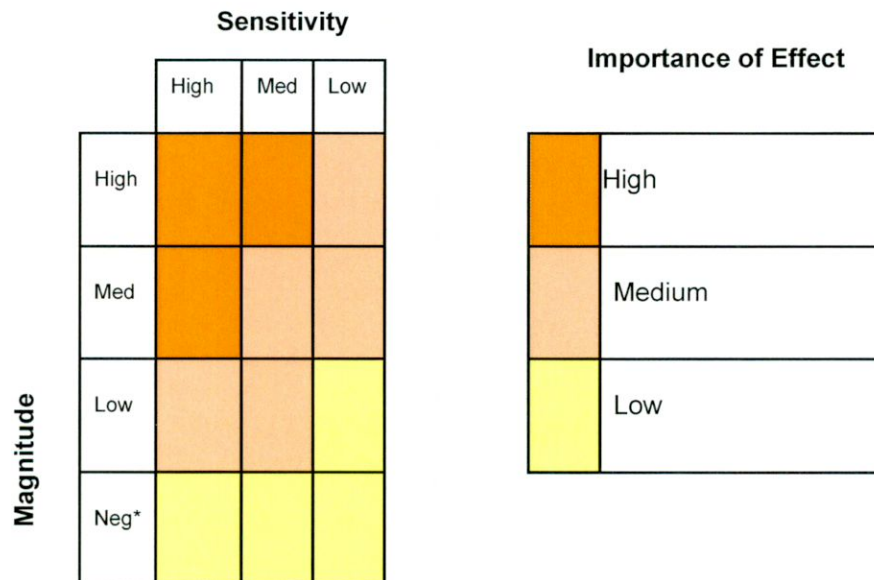
Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration or compromise of important landscape receptors, and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape

Medium	Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Low	Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.
Negligible	Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the landscape character.

Landscape Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of landscape effects (either on physical landscape elements or on the landscape character) can be arrived at by combining the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is illustrated in Figure 1. below.

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* Negligible

Figure 1: Guide to the classification of the level of effects

The matrix above is used as a guide only. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense, to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable.

Landscape effects are also classified as positive, neutral or negative/adverse (See definitions in Section 2.6). Development has the potential to improve the environment as well as damage it. In certain situations, there might be policy encouraging a type of change in the landscape, and if a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed.

2.5 Methodology for Visual Assessment

Visual appraisal considers the changes to the composition of views, the character of the views, and the visual amenity experienced by visual receptors. Visual receptor sensitivity is a function of two main considerations:

- *Susceptibility of the visual receptor to change.* This depends on the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention or interest is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location.

Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage or other attractions and places of community congregation where the setting contributes to the experience.

Visual receptors less susceptible to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes which would be more susceptible), people engaged in outdoor recreation or sports where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping where the setting does not influence their experience.

- *Value attached to the view.* This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

Three categories are used to classify a viewpoint's sensitivity:

Table 3: Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
High	Viewers at viewpoints that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of value, or viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features) and views which are highly valued by the local community. This may also include tourist attractions, and heritage features of regional or county value, and viewers travelling on scenic routes. The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity for accommodating compositional change in the form of development may or may not be low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views. The views are generally not designated, but which include panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, which demonstrate some sense of naturalness, tranquillity or some rare element in the view.
Low	Viewers at viewpoints reflecting people involved in activities not focused on the landscape e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping, etc. The view may present an attractive backdrop to these activities but there is no evidence that the view is valued, and not regarded as an important element of these activities. Viewers travelling at high speeds (e.g. motorways) may also be generally considered of low susceptibility.

Magnitude of Change to the View

Classification of the magnitude of change takes into account the size or scale of the intrusion of development into the view (relative to the other elements and features in the composition, i.e. its relative

visual dominance), the degree to which it contrasts or integrates with the other elements and the general character of the view, and the way in which the change will be experienced (e.g. in full view, partial or peripheral, or glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, the duration and the reversibility of the visual effects.

Four categories are used to classify magnitude of change to a view:

Table 4: Categories of Visual Change

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.
Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

Visual Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of visual effects can be arrived at by combining the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is included in Figure 1 above as for Landscape Effects.

As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects.

Visual effects are also classified as positive, neutral or negative/adverse as set out below:

2.6 Quality and Timescale

Qualitative Impacts

The predicted impacts are also classified as beneficial, neutral or adverse. This is not an absolute exercise; in particular, visual receptors' attitudes to development, and thus their response to the impact of a development, will vary. However, the methodology applied is designed to provide robust justification for the conclusions drawn. These qualitative impacts/effects are defined as:

- **Adverse** – Scheme at variance with landform, scale, pattern. Would degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of valued features, elements or their setting or cause the quality of the landscape(townscape)/view to be diminished;
- **Neutral** - Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;
- **Beneficial** – improves landscape(townscape)/view quality and character, fits with the scale, landform and pattern and enables the restoration of valued characteristic features or repairs / removes damage caused by existing land uses.

Timescale of the Impacts

Impacts/effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

- **Temporary** – Lasting for one year or less;
- **Short Term** – Lasting one to seven years;
- **Medium Term** – Lasting seven to fifteen years;
- **Long Term** – Lasting fifteen years to sixty years;
- **Permanent** – Lasting over sixty years.

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought by Emmaville Limited for the proposed development at Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Dublin 16, D16 HWH9.

The development will consist of:

- a) The demolition of the 4 no. existing shed structures on site within the curtilage of the protected structure;
- b) The retention and conversion of Scholarstown House (Protected Structure) into two no. units comprised of 1 no. 2-bed and 1 no. 3-bed units served by private open space in the form of ground floor terraces. The proposed works to Scholarstown House include but are not limited to internal re-configuration; the re-location of the staircase to its original location within the house; the removal of non-original features including the closing up of non-original openings; and the creation of a new door opening within the existing alcove, and the blocking up of a window opening both located on the northern elevation.
- c) The construction of a 5-storey apartment block containing 74 no. apartment units comprised of 32 no. 1-bed apartments, 33 no. 2-bed apartments, and 9 no. 3-bed apartments all served by private open space in the form of balconies and/or ground floor terraces.
- d) The proposed development also includes 100 sq.m of residential amenities and facilities consisting of but not limited to a reception, communal amenity room and parcel room.
- e) The development will be served by a total of 40 no. car parking spaces including 8 no. EV parking spaces and 183 no. cycle parking spaces accessed via a new pedestrian and vehicular access off Orlagh Grove with the existing entrances on Scholarstown Road and Orlagh Grove being re-configured to provide for pedestrian and cycle access.
- f) The development will also consist of all ancillary development works required to facilitate the development including but not limited to, plant rooms, a substation, bin stores, landscaping, boundary treatments and lighting.

The development to be applied for includes a building on the South Dublin County Council Record of Protected Structures: Scholarstown House (RPS Ref: 322).

Key characteristics of the development of relevance to this assessment are:

- the demolition of the existing low-rise structure at the site,
- the retention of Scholarstown House and its conversion to a new residential use,
- the removal of much of the existing tree cover,
- the removal of the high boundary walls and the opening up of views to the site,
- the construction of an apartment block of 4-5 storey buildings as a new built intervention within the grounds of Scholarstown House,
- the change to the built form and setting of Scholarstown House as a result of new architecture and elevations and its interaction with surrounding established and new residential areas.

For further detail see Architects Drawings and Design Statement and Planners Report.

4 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

This section is divided into a review of landscape related Planning Policy as set out in the South Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated documents, and a description of the study areas informed by desktop assessment.

4.1 Relevant Planning Policy

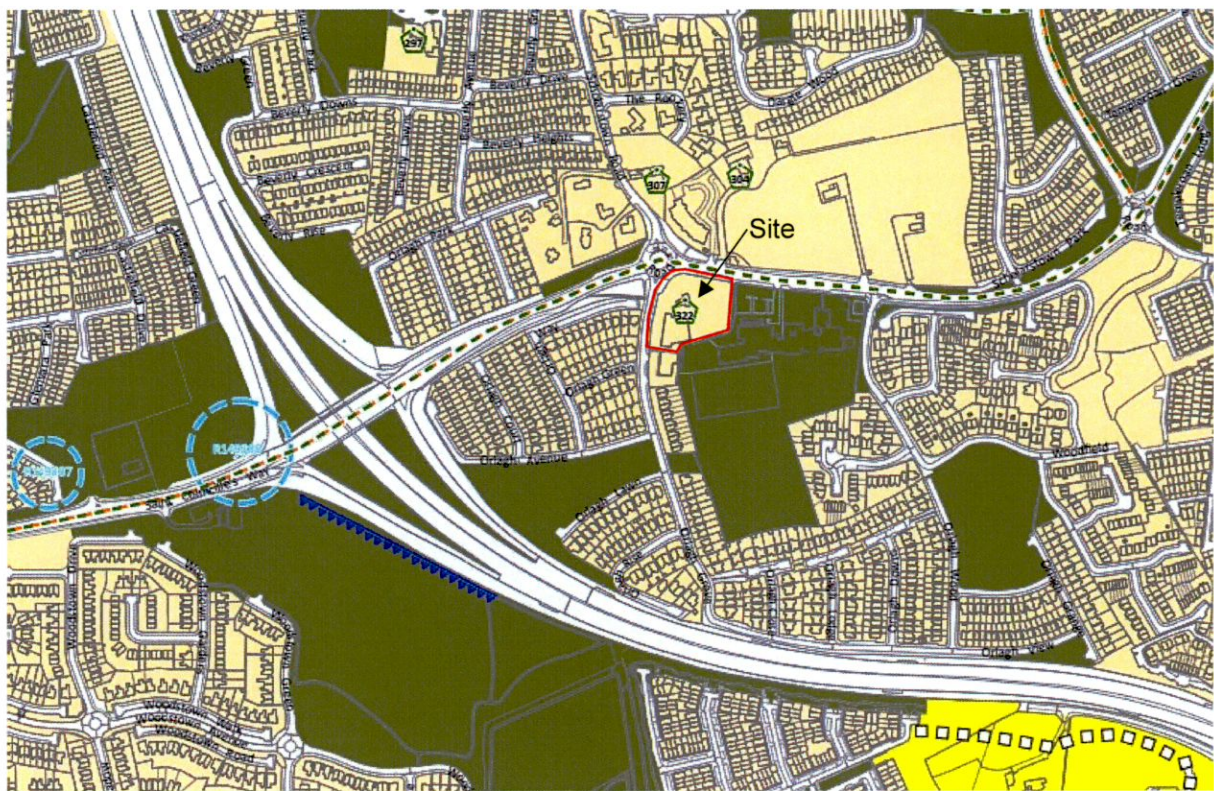
4.1.1 South Dublin Development Plan 2022-2028 (SDDP)

The SDDP contains a range of policies relevant to establishing the landscape and visual values and sensitivities for the site and site environs, guiding the appropriate design and mitigation of impacts for the proposed development.

Zoning

The application lands are zoned 'OBJECTIVE RES To protect and/or improve residential amenity'

Figure 2: Extract of SDDP Zoning Map



Zoning Objectives

- RES:** To protect and/or improve residential amenity.
- OS:** To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities.
- RES-N:** To provide new residential communities in accordance with approved planning schemes

Specific Objectives

-  Record of Protected Structures
-  Protect and Preserve Significant Views
-  Sites and Monuments Record Zone of Notification

Core Strategy

The SDDP has identified the settlements of Palmerstown, Naas Road, Templeogue, Ballyroan, Ballyboden, Knocklyon, Firhouse, Ballycullen and parts of Greenhills, Walkinstown, Terenure and Rathfarnham as Consolidation Areas within the Dublin Gateway.

A key element of the SDDP's overall Settlement Strategy is to promote the consolidation and sustainable intensification of the existing urban/suburban built form to the east of the M50 and south of the River Dodder, thereby maximising efficiencies from established physical and social infrastructure.

Relevant Policies and Objectives:

Policy CS6: Settlement Strategy -Strategic Planning Principles -Promote the consolidation and sustainable intensification of development within the urban settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy.

CS6 Objective 2: To promote compact growth and to support high quality infill development in existing urban built-up areas by achieving a target of at least 50% of all new homes to be located within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin City and Suburbs (consistent with NSO 1, RSO 2, NPO 3b and RPO 3.2).

Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage

In relation to landscape assessment the SDDP sets out its policies in relation to the protection, enhancement, management of key natural, cultural and built heritage assets.

The following is set out in Chapter 3 of the SDDP in relation to Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage and is relevant to the proposed development.

Relevant Policies and Objectives:

Policy NCBH1: Protect, conserve and enhance the County's natural, cultural and built heritage, supporting its sensitive integration into the development of the County for the benefit of present and future generations.

Policy NCBH11: Tree Preservation Orders and Other Tree Protections: Review Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) within the County and maintain the conservation value of trees and groups of trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order while also recognising the value of and protecting trees and hedgerows which are not subject to a TPO.

There are no tree preservation orders upon the various tree coverage within the application site.

Landscape

Policy NCBH14 Landscape: Preserve and enhance the character of the County's landscapes, particularly areas that have been deemed to have a medium to high Landscape Value or medium to high Landscape Sensitivity and to ensure that landscape considerations are an important factor in the management of development.

Objectives

NCBH14 Objective 1: To protect and enhance the unique 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 (2021).

NCBH14 Objective 3: To ensure that development respects and reinforces the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Landscape Character Types and retains important characteristics such as habitats, landform, vernacular heritage and settlement patterns.

Views

Policy NCBH15 Views and Prospects: Preserve Views and Prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest including those located within and outside the County.

The nearest protected view to the proposed development is located approximately 375m to the southwest along the edge of Knocklyon Park. The view looks across the playing fields towards the Dublin Hills with the viewer oriented facing away from the site.

Protected Structures

Policy NCBH19 Protected Structures: Conserve and protect buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the setting, special character or appearance of a Protected Structure including its historic curtilage, both directly and indirectly.

Objectives

NCBH19 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 Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DAHG (2011 or any superseding documents) including the principles of conservation.

NCBH19 Objective 4: To support alternative uses for Protected Structures including former institutional sites in order to provide continued security of the heritage value of these buildings, attendant grounds and associated landscape features.

Policy NCBH21 Vernacular/Traditional and Older Buildings, Estates and Streetscapes: Ensure appropriate design of new-build elements and interventions in historic buildings and environments.

NCBH21 Objective 4: To ensure that infill development is sympathetic to the architectural interest, character and visual amenity of the area.

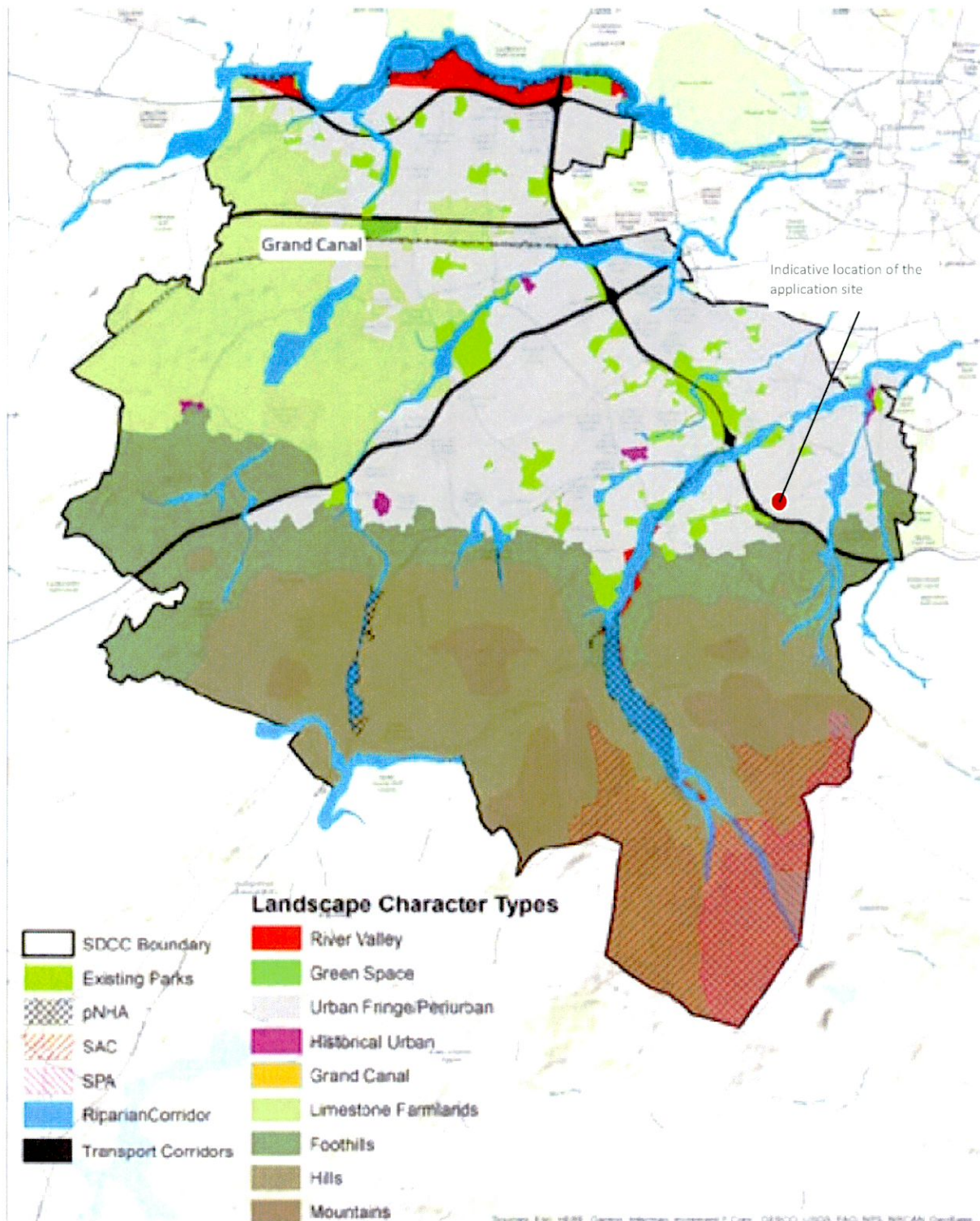
Policy NCBH25: Placemaking and the Historic Built Environment - Ensure that historic buildings and built environments are sensitively incorporated within development and regeneration schemes, taking advantage of their intrinsic attributes including character, visual amenity, sense of identity and place.

Green Infrastructure

The SDDP describes green infrastructure as 'an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, greenways, parks and conservation lands, forests and other open spaces that adjoin and area threaded through urban areas'.

The Plan notes that the County's Green Infrastructure network comprises an interconnected network of green spaces that possess a broad range of ecological elements including inter alia: core areas such as the County's three Natura 2000 sites; proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), the Liffey Valley, Dodder River Valleys and the Grand Canal; and individual elements such as watercourses, parks, hedgerows/ tree-lines and sustainable drainage features in park lands.

Figure 3: South Dublin County Council Strategic Green Infrastructure Network



The following objectives are set out in Chapter 4 of the SDDP in relation to Green Infrastructure and is relevant to the proposed development;

Policy GI1: Overarching: Protect, enhance and further develop a multifunctional GI network, using an ecosystem services approach, protecting, enhancing and further developing the identified interconnected network of parks, open spaces, natural features, protected areas, and rivers and streams that provide a shared space for amenity and recreation, biodiversity protection, water quality, flood management and adaptation to climate change.

Policy GI2: Biodiversity: Strengthen the existing GI network and ensure all new developments contribute towards GI, in order to protect and enhance biodiversity across the County as part of South Dublin County Council's commitment to the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025 and the South Dublin County Council Biodiversity Action Plan, 2020-2026, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the East Region Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

Policy GI4: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems: Require the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in the County and maximise the amenity and biodiversity value of these systems.

Policy GI7: Landscape, Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage: Protect, conserve and enhance landscape, natural, cultural and built heritage features, and support the objectives and actions of the County Heritage Plan.

Placemaking

The SDDP aims to create sustainable and healthy urban built environments which build upon the existing character of a place to provide distinct and vibrant places for people to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.

The following objectives are set out in Chapter 5 of the SDDP in relation to Quality Design and Place Making and is relevant to the proposed development;

Policy QDP8: High Quality Design – Building Height and Density Guide (BHDG): Adhere to the requirements set out in the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines (2018) issued by the DHLGH through the implementation of the Assessment Toolkit set out in the South Dublin County's Building Heights and Density Guide 2021.

Policy QDP9: High Quality Design - Building Height and Density Apply a context driven approach to building heights in South Dublin, as supported by South Dublin's Building Heights and Density Guide.

QDP9 Objective 1:

To require that designers and applicants demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that applications for landmark type buildings or for amplified heights akin to a landmark, are contextually appropriate and that the proportionate function of the landmark justifies it, having regard to the primary, secondary and local landmark classifications.

Housing

The SDDP aims to deliver high quality homes and well designed homes create sustainable communities through a diverse mix of housing which is located in the right location.

The following objectives are set out in Chapter 6 of the SDDP in relation to Housing and is relevant to the proposed development;

Policy H7: Residential Design and Layout

Promote high quality design and layout in new residential developments to ensure a high-quality living environment for residents, in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units and the overall layout and appearance of the development.

Policy H8: Public Open Space

Ensure that all residential development is served by a clear hierarchy and network of high quality public open spaces that provide for active and passive recreation and enhances the visual character, identity and amenity of the area.

Policy H9: Private and Semi-Private Open Space

Ensure that all dwellings have access to high quality private open space and semi-private open space (where appropriate) and that such space is carefully integrated into the design of new residential developments.

Policy H13: Residential Consolidation

Promote and support residential consolidation and sustainable intensification at appropriate locations, to support ongoing viability of social and physical infrastructure and services and meet the future housing needs of the County.

Implementation

The SDDP sets out the different development standards and criteria in relation to the plan's policies and objectives to ensure development is in compliance with the SDDP.

The following standards and criteria are set out in Chapter 13 of the SDDP in relation to Implementation and Monitoring and is relevant to the proposed development;

Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage

The Landscape Character Assessment sets out principles of development within each landscape character type which is discussed in the following section 4.15. The proposed development falls within the Urban Landscape Character Type whose Principles for Development include:

*Appropriate siting and boundary treatments of new residential developments.
Demonstrate through design statement /masterplan/planting plan how it relates to historic core where present.
Stronger use of hedgerows and trees as a visual screening*

Works to a Protected Structure

Principles in relation to reimagining a protected structure or historic property include:

Assessments and reports (see above) should be prepared by a conservation specialist in accordance with the above Guidelines and should assess the likely effects of the proposed development on the special character of the Protected Structure and its setting.

Alterations should reflect and respect the scale, setting and original building character, should not undermine the original built fabric, and should not detract from the significance or value of the structure.

Original features of architectural and historic interest should be retained, and new features should not be presented as original or older features.

New uses should be compatible with the existing building and should respect key architectural and cultural characteristics.

The impact and insertion of new build should be reduced by utilising original boundaries, screen walls and return structures and mature planting/natural scoping

(iv)Development in Proximity to a Protected Structure Planning applications for development in proximity to a Protected Structure may require a Design Statement to outline how the proposal responds to the setting and special interest of the Protected Structure and its curtilage. Pastiche designs that confuse new features/structures with older and original features/structures should be avoided

Green Infrastructure

A range of measures can be implemented to create GI connections to the wider GI network.

The use of natural features such as woodlands, hedgerows, trees, water courses, ponds and grasslands or other natural methods to strengthen GI assets and provide connections to the wider GI network.

The incorporation of nature-based solutions such as SuDS schemes, permeable paving, green and blue roofs, green walls, swales, SuDS tree pits, raingardens, ponds to support local biodiversity and mitigate potentially harmful effects of development.

The provision of new native tree and plant species as well as pollinator friendly species within developments, consistent with National Pollinator Plan.

Where possible, no net loss of existing trees/hedgerows on site.

GI management/maintenance plans to be included as part of the landscape plans submitted for the Planning process. May include hedgerow/ tree and grassland management plans

Planting appropriate tree species to match the location and context of the site.

Requiring street trees to be planted at frequent intervals within the public areas of all streets, integrated with the other elements of street design such as footpaths, public lighting and on street car parking

4.1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

South Dublin Landscape Character Assessment, May 2015 and Draft update May 2021.

A landscape character assessment (LCA) was undertaken on behalf of South Dublin County Council in 2015 with a draft update in 2021 following a review of the original assessment to see if there were any notable changes to the landscape baseline, views and prospect and co-ordinating with the county green infrastructure strategy. The LCA assessment is included within Appendix 9 of the SDCCDP and is referred to below.

The application site and all surrounding urban areas of South Dublin County Council have been classed as falling under LCA 5 – Suburban South Dublin in the assessment. The following is an extract from the Landscape Character Assessment for LCA – Suburban South Dublin.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

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

The area extends east from Tallaght / Oldbawn to Rathfarnham, and north/ north- west along the county boundary to Clondalkin.

LCA retains little of historical significance and the setting of its primary settlements have been radically altered by built developments, notably through the 20th Century.

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.*
- *On-going 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*

LANDSCAPE CONDITION

(n.b Further detailed appraisal as part of a townscape assessment recommended).

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.

MITIGATION MEASURES

(Some pointers, but Guidelines on Mitigation: Detailed sensitivity and capacity assessment recommended)

- *Grassland and other amenity area open spaces should be managed for the dual benefits of public access and biodiversity*
- *Tree and shrub planting should be an integral component of amenity grasslands (schools recreational grounds, golf courses and playing fields)*
- *The development of green infrastructure to connect different habitats within the urban context.*
- *Tree planting on streets and open spaces – particularly on ‘miscellaneous’ open space in housing areas - to improve their character*
- *Enhance connectivity between open spaces as a means of enhancing biodiversity while providing off road connections for pedestrian and cyclists.*
- *Proposed developments should be audited for their impact on views particularly those to the rural hinterland of the county.*

The LCA 5 – Suburban South Dublin assessment has not been fully assessed in the South Dublin Landscape Character Assessment (May, 2021) and the report recommends further townscape assessment.

The main points relevant to the application site is the;

- Views towards the Dublin Mountains and hinterland to be retained, and
- Tree planting along streets and open spaces to be prioritised.

4.1.3 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018)

Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. December 2018 was issued by the Department of Housing.

In order to discourage generic restrictive policies on building heights in local development plans the Government introduced the above guidelines in 2018. The guidelines set out to encourage higher

building and densities within, particularly, existing built up areas to take advantage of existing infrastructure, vary the building typology and contribute to placemaking.

Section 2.5 of the Guidelines states:

Furthermore, while taller buildings will bring much needed additional housing and economic development to well-located urban areas, they can also assist in reinforcing and contributing to a sense of place within a city or town centre, such as indicating the main centres of activity, important street junctions, public spaces and transport interchanges. In this manner, increased building height is a key factor in assisting modern placemaking and improving the overall quality of our urban environments.

The guidelines require the applicant to demonstrate that they satisfy the following criteria:

At the scale of the relevant city/town

- *The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.*
- *Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.*
- *On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.*

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

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

At the scale of the site/building

- *The form, massing and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.*
- *Appropriate and reasonable regard should be taken of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision outlined in guides like the Building Research Establishment's 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'.*
- *Where a proposal may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the daylight provisions above, this must be clearly identified and a rationale for any alternative, compensatory design*

solutions must be set out, in respect of which the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála should apply their discretion, having regard to local factors including specific site constraints and the balancing of that assessment against the desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution.

Summary of Planning Policy and Objectives

- The site is zoned as 'RES – to protect and/or improve residential amenity'
- Planning policy supporting compact growth and high-quality infill development.
- The site contains a protected structure where any infill development needs to sympathetic to the architectural interest, character and visual amenity of the area.
- All new developments contribute towards Green Infrastructure, in order to protect and enhance biodiversity across the county.
- National guidelines (and evolving policy in Development Plan) require more flexibility in accomodating taller builings and provide a range of criteria for tall builings to satisfy, including the preparation of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

4.2 Description of Receiving Environment

The existing site and its environs are described below in terms of:

- Location
- Site Boundaries
- Topography
- Access
- Landcover
- Built, Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Landscape Character

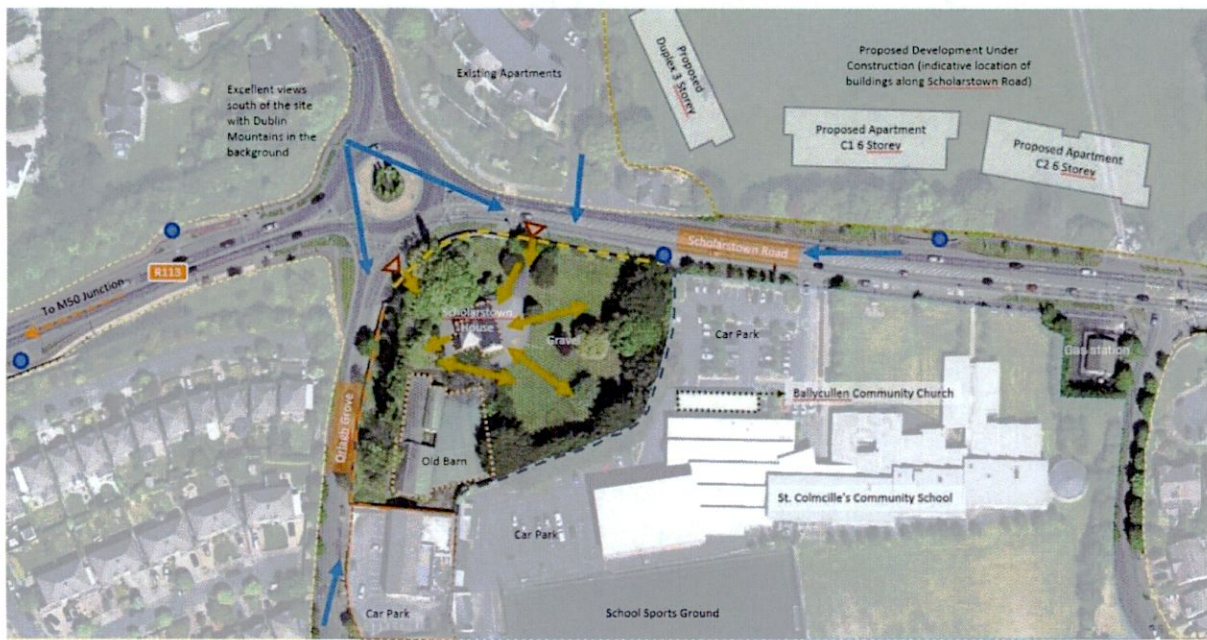
Location and Overview

The proposed site is located within the grounds of Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Dublin 16 within part of the expansive suburban residential areas of southwest Dublin near to Junction 12 of the M50 motorway City with the foothills of the Dublin Mountain further to the south

Figure 4: Aerial view of Scholarstown House and local setting



Figure 5: Existing Features and Views of Scholarstown House and immediate surroundings















- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Existing Access to the Site |  | Existing Wall – Light Yellow with Brick Strips, approx. 1.8m ht. |
|  | Existing Residential Area |  | Existing Wall – Beige, approx. 2m ht. |
|  | Proposed Residential Area |  | Existing Wall – Boundary to School Area, Dark Grey Wall with Steel Railing |
|  | Community School Area |  | Views limited to within the site |
|  | Existing Grocery & Take-away |  | Views - towards the site |
|  | Existing Structure on Site | | |
|  | Bus Stop | | |



Plate 1: View from elevated position within Knocklyon Park – approx. site location indicated by red arrow

Site boundaries

A modern rendered wall of approx. 2.4m in height runs along the site's full boundary length, of which its northern and western sides are clearly visible from the adjoining public roads. Directly behind the walls western, southern and eastern boundaries are line of mature trees and hedge which help to further enclose the site from its surroundings.

The various surrounding residential areas within the immediate area are similarly enclosed by high walls along with established vegetation cover along their boundaries which restricts outward views.



Plate 2: Northern boundary along Scholarstown Road



Plate 3: Western boundary from Orlagh Grove/R113 road junction.

Topography

The site at its highest is approx. 89m along its western end with the lands slightly declining by 1-2m towards the eastern and southern boundary ends. Scholarstown house is positioned on a slight dip of 1m lower than the surrounding Scholarstown Road and footpath to the north.

The immediate area is at a similar elevation. The lands slightly decline further towards the east along the far end of Scholarstown Road and its surrounding suburbs. The lands rise to around 95-100m AOD within the housing estates off of southern ends of Orlagh Grove just north of the M50 motorway and those estates and open space directly south of the motorway. The lands then rise further through the surrounding rural landscape along the foothills of the Dublin Mountain.

Access

Access to the existing site can be gained via a gated entrance directly off Scholarstown Road along the site's northern boundary or along Orlagh Grove against the site's western boundary. As visible above in **Plates 2** and **3**. The main entrance being from off Scholarstown Road. A roundabout next to the site's northwest boundary links both roads with the St Colmcille's Way R113 Road, itself leads towards Junction 12 of the M50 motorway



Plate 4: Roundabout looking southeast towards the Site's boundary wall



Plate 5: Scholarstown Road west towards the Site

Access through the wider area is via the surrounding roads which link up the many residential areas which are bounded by them and include Scholarstown Road, Ballycullen Road, Knocklyon Road, Stocking Avenue, Stocking Lane (R115), Templeroan Road and others. Many of these roads provide direct or indirect access to the M50 motorway and greater Dublin area.

Landcover

Vegetation

The site's vegetation cover consists of a mix of mature trees, hedge amenity grass and some shrub/perennial planting. The mature tree and hedge cover are predominately located against the boundary ends with a few individual specimens add to the amenity lawn and either side of the main laneway. The tall narrow forms of the poplar trees and the distinctive forms of some evergreen trees are clearly visible from the immediate adjoining roads, notable those on the western and eastern boundaries as visible within **Plates 2-5** and **Plates 12-14**. They consist of a range of species including Poplar, Leylandii, Lawson Cypress, Monterey Cypress, Ash and Sycamore and others.

A separate supporting arborist impact assessment has assessed the condition and value of these trees and the potential impacts of the proposed development.



Plate 6: Trees within the site

Tree cover across the surrounding area is mostly found lining the streets and edges of the housing estates, open space and M50 road corridor. Minor remnants of former hedgerows within some estate's open space. Some mature trees associated with the former country houses are present including on the edges of the nearby Two Oaks residential development.

Open Space and amenity

The local area contains a number of open spaces around the various housing estates, playing fields within school grounds including the adjoining Colmcille's College and Knocklyon Park pitches located directly west of the M50. Further south are some golf course and farmland on the lower slopes of the Dublin Hills while further north is the linear Dodder Valley Park.

Built structures

Contained within the northern end of the site is a single two storey house to the front and three storey to the rear. The current house dates from 1909 having been rebuilt after a fire with evidence of a dwelling on the site dating date as far back to c.1599. The house is listed within the SDCDP as a protected structure (RPS no.322) and listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (ref; 11216036) as having regional significance. Set within the southwestern end of the site is a group of agricultural sheds dating from the 19th century and 20th century which are of no significance.

Further details of the house can be found within the Historic Building Appraisal of Scholarstown House by John Cronin & Associate which accompanies this application.



Plate 7: View of Scholarstown House from within the site



Plate 8: View of house and sheds with site **Plate 9: View of House from its's entrance off Scholarstown Road**

The surrounding urban landscape includes a broad mix of residential areas with supporting services including shops, educational and religious buildings. St. Colmcille's Community school directly borders the site's southern and eastern boundaries. The residential areas predominately consist of modern two storey housing estates. However, directly north of the site off Scholarstown Road is the existing 4-Ros Mór View apartment block and to the northeast is the new Two Oaks residential development containing a mix of 5-6 storey apartment blocks currently under construction.

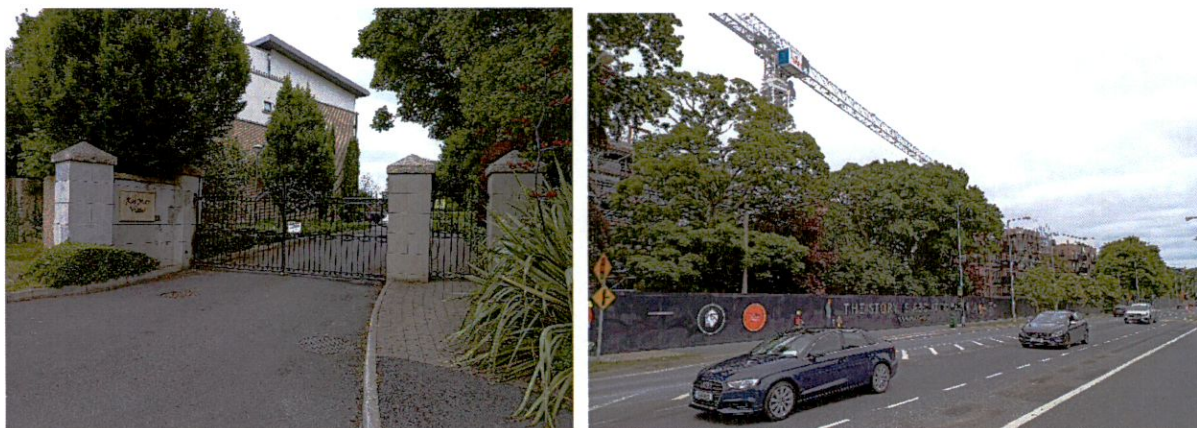


Plate 10: Ros Mór View Apartment block



Plate 11: Two Oaks residential development under construction on Scholarstown Road



Plate 12: St Colmcille's Community school bordering the Site



Plate 13: Shops and Services on Orlagh Grove next to the Site

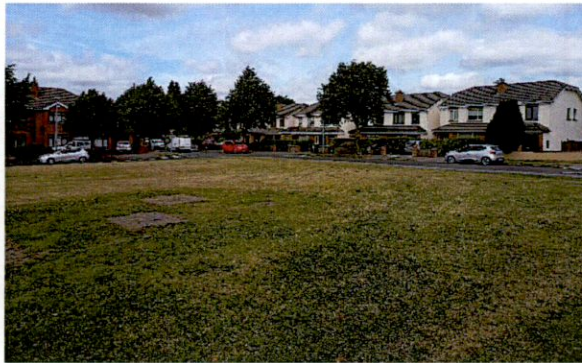


Plate 14: Established houses within Orlagh Way west of the site

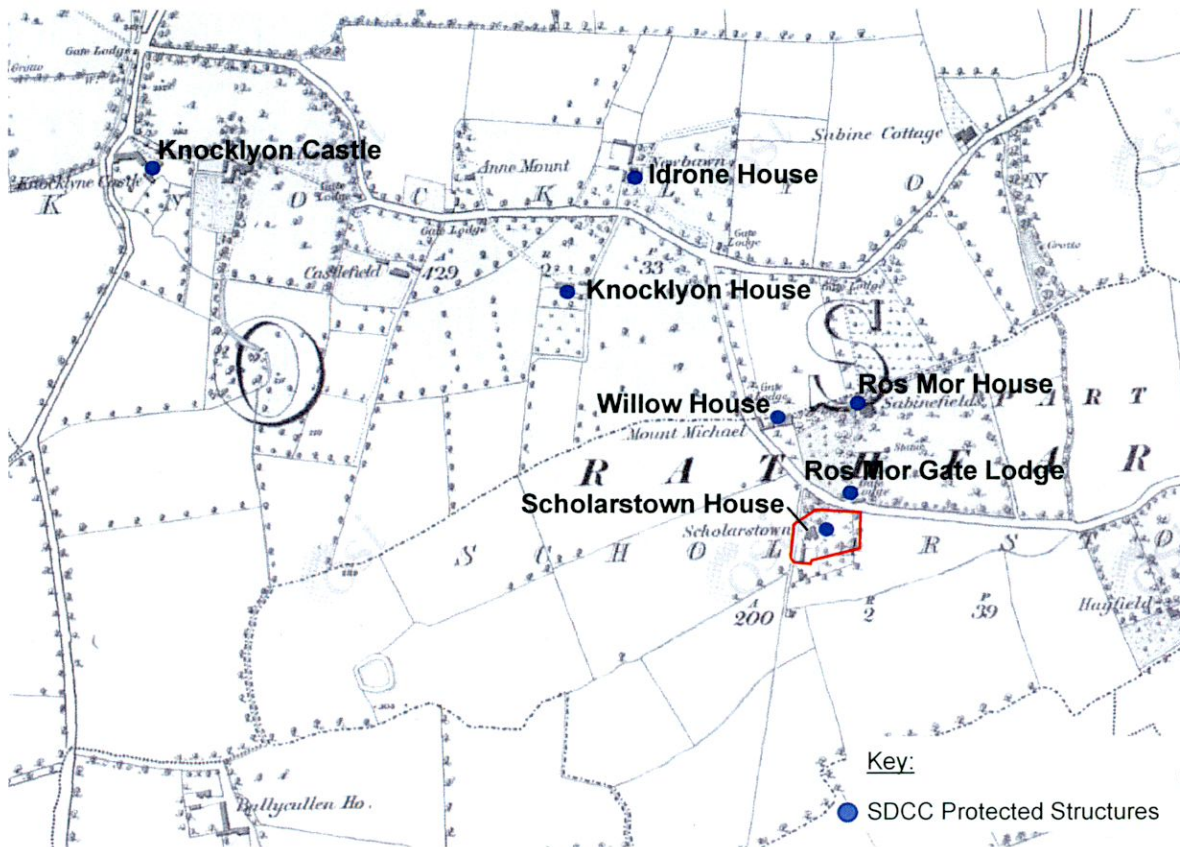
Plate 15: Small open space by Orlagh Grove

Built, Natural and Cultural Heritage

The main heritage features within the local area include Scholarstown House and several other former country homes within 500m of the site including Ros Mor, Willow House, Knocklyon House, Idrone House, as indicated on Figure 6 below. These houses along with associated gate lodges and boundaries walls are protected structures. Various mature trees are contained within their grounds. Knocklyon Castle is the nearest historic feature within record of monument and places (RMP) approx. 950m northwest of the site.

The historic 6" map below shows how Scholarstown House and other neighbouring large country house once sat within a rural landscape, but which are all now fully enclosed by suburban areas as the city has expanded.

Figure 6: Historic 6" Map 1st ed. 1829-41 of site and wider context with site outlined in red (Source: Heritage Maps, Heritage Council, Government of Ireland 2022)



Landscape and Visual Amenity

The house and its varied mature trees cover provide a pleasant historic feature of high value set amongst busy residential areas and transport corridor. The agricultural sheds within the site are of a low value lacking any architectural heritage significance.

Views towards the site from the neighbouring residential areas and roads are heavily constrained by the high boundary wall and mature trees and hedge along its boundary and within its grounds. Some limited views of the upper portions of the house are possible from the Scholarstown Road directly north of the site, looking above the roadside wall but such views are still partially obscured by the individual trees through its grounds.

Landscape Character

The site is characterised by mature trees which enclose most of the grounds and act as a backdrop to the historic house and help buffer it from its urban surroundings. The former country house setting is long gone, and it is now located by a busy road amongst a large suburban residential area.

The immediate area consists of established residential areas and new apartment development, which are reflective of the wider suburban areas which extend beyond the nearby M50 out to the foothills of the Dublin Mountains.

4.3 Summary of Landscape Characteristics and Values

The values and characteristics of the site are listed below and can be categorised in two ways – values which should be conserved, and those that provide opportunity for enhancement. These values are summarised below:

The character of the area is not protected but any development should consider the setting of the area and where possible be sympathetic to it.

4.3.1 Conservation Values

The values to be conserved indicate those aspects of the receiving environment which are valued and sensitive and could be negatively impacted on by the proposed development.

- Setting of Scholarstown House as a protected structure
- Mature trees/treelines and hedgerows across the site boundaries.
- The relationship between existing residential communities and the site in terms of views, boundary treatments and character.

4.3.2 Enhancement Values

The enhancement values reflect change that is occurring in the landscape and its inherent robustness. These include:

- Robust wider landscape setting
- Current Development Plan zoning and strategy for consolidation
- Adjacent regional roads and suburban context – ongoing transition as part of the urban area

5 POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is described in section 3.1 and in the Architectural Design statement. From a landscape and visual impact perspective the key issue is the height of the proposed development and its visibility / interaction with surrounding areas both at construction stage and on completion – operational stage and in particular its interaction with and changes to the existing setting of Scholarstown House.

5.1 Construction Stage

Potential Landscape Impacts

The potential construction impacts on the landscape include the:

- Demolition of existing building and erection of hoarding and construction equipment (cranes) change of the townscape to a construction site and the resultant change in landscape character. Reduction of some mature tree cover within the site to accommodate the works.
- Entry and exit of construction plant, vehicles and materials

Potential Impacts on Views

The potential construction impacts on views include the:

- Demolition of the existing agricultural buildings, removal of mature trees along parts of the boundaries, excavation for and erection of the new building and all engineering, building and landscape works required with associated site infrastructure, fencing and plant.
- Visibility of site plant and machinery, which will be both still and moving. Cranes will be visible over the roofs of existing buildings.

The construction stage will be approximately 18 months.

5.2 Operational Stage

Potential Landscape Impacts

The potential operational impacts on the landscape include the:

- Change in character from the enclosed mature grounds of a single historic house to a more open and accessible grounds
- The addition of new housing within the site in the form of 1 stepped apartment block rising to between 4 and 5 storeys sited near to the retained historic house.
- Change in character around the roundabout and environs of adjacent residential areas where a portion of the building will be visible as a result of the altered boundary edges creating a visually more open or permeable boundary with adjacent areas.
- Construction of improved pedestrian paths and public realm within the site connecting out to the existing roads and new planting added through the grounds.

Potential Impact on Views

The potential operational impacts on views include the:

- Introduction of new urban apartment block into the views and setting of Scholarstown House.
- Potential change in ground level visibility towards the site from the immediate surroundings as a result of changes to the boundary edges
- Potential visibility of the new apartment building from adjacent residential areas given its height.

5.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts

The proposed development is located near to the large Two Oaks residential development along Scholarstown Road. This development is currently under construction and consists of a range of 5-6

storey blocks of apartment and 3 storey housing. These buildings are in the process of changing the composition of views towards the site in general which will include a greater proportion of taller, high-density development alongside the main road. The new development will be part of this change to a more urban context already underway.

5.4 Do-Nothing Approach

The 'do-nothing' impact refers to the non-implementation of the proposed development. The primary effect of this would be that the impacts and effects identified would occur and the opportunity for significant and potentially positive change in the landscape and visual quality of the environs would be limited.

5.5 Remedial or Reduction Measures: Mitigation

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

5.5.1 Construction Phase

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

The remedial measures proposed revolve around the implementation of appropriate site management procedures – such as the control of site lighting, storage of materials, placement of compounds, delivery of materials, car parking, etc. Visual impact during the construction phase will be mitigated somewhat through appropriate site management measures and work practices to ensure the site is kept tidy, dust is kept to a minimum, and that public areas are kept free from building material and site rubbish.

Site hoarding will be appropriately scaled, finished and maintained for the period of construction of each section of the works as appropriate. To reduce the potential negative impacts during the construction phase, good site management and housekeeping practices will be adhered to. The visual impact of the site compound and scaffolding visible during the construction phase are of a temporary nature only and therefore require no remedial action other than as stated above.

Adverse impacts both during construction will be short-lived and superseded by the completed new development.

5.5.2 Operational Phase

The scheme design reflects the planning objectives for the area and change that is already proposed / underway. In general mitigation is inherent to the design and detailing of elevations and selected materials, and of design features to enhance the quality of amenity for new residents as well as to mitigate any potential adverse impacts on nearby existing residents. These include;

- The careful design and placement of building within the site in relation to the existing Scholarstown House and its setting and the integration of the historic house as part of the overall residential scheme.
- The design / creation of new elevations as features and focal points in the views available from the surrounding local area.
- The planting of new trees along with the retention of certain trees and hedges will help soften the setting of the new building, frame its elevations, reduce its visual mass and integrate the development over time from various viewpoints, as identified in the assessment, thereby minimising the visual impacts and generally enhancing the current outlook for many viewpoints and restoring the current wooded setting and outlook.
- The design of the communal landscape scheme to a high standard.
- The stepping down of building height to the east towards the school grounds

5.5.3 'Worst-case' Scenario

The 'worst-case' scenario would arise if the site was developed to its full extent with buildings massing and heights extended to their maximum allowance under current planning guidance.

6 PREDICTED LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

6.1 Landscape Sensitivity

The proposed site and its environs are located in a robust, mixed leafy suburban character area with some partial distance views towards the Dublin Mountains to the south. The site itself contains Scholarstown House, a protected historic structure and its mature trees and high boundary walls adds a strong degree of enclosure. There are several other protected historic houses and structures within a short distance of the proposed site. The settings of these have changed dramatical over the years as housing and other buildings have gradually encroached upon them with the expansion of suburban areas.

Immediately east and south of the proposed site is the educational building of Colmcille Community school buildings and playing fields. The character of the surroundings areas is of an established low-rise residential area with some supporting retail and institutional services. The proximity of the housing to the M50 makes it a poplar place to live. The recent large Two Oak development reflects a change in the housing density and height to higher 5 to 6 storey apartments. Which reflects an area in transition, accommodating the needs of local housing following policies of the SDCDP and the consolidation of the urban area.

The character of the landscape is robust and change is an existing feature. Its capacity for accommodating change is therefore high.

The sensitivity of the landscape is regarded as Medium - *Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change*

6.2 Predicted Landscape Impacts and Effects

Construction Impacts and Effects on the Landscape

The construction stage will result in ongoing infrastructure, building and related works. This will entail:

- Site clearance, including some of the existing trees, demolition as well as protection / retention of identified trees.
- The temporary movement and stock piling of earth and materials.
- The temporary movement of machinery in and out of the site.
- All engineering, building and landscape works required with associated site infrastructure, fencing and plant.

In the context of the landscape character of the Site and Environs the change at Construction is confined to the site and low in magnitude - *Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape...*

The significance of this change is considered Low, as construction works generally, this would temporarily reduce the landscape quality and be Adverse in quality..... *cause the quality of the landscape(townscape)/view to be diminished;*

Operational Impact and Effects on the Landscape

The site's *Enhancement Values* reflect a body of policy that is supportive of landscape change at this location and the surrounding receiving environment involving the consolidation and intensification of development and in particular residential. This intensification of existing residential lands is reflective of the ongoing townscape change along Scholarstown Road. The landscape is regarded as robust in character and of Medium sensitivity.

The site's *Conservation Values* predominantly relate to the site's historic house and existing mature trees and some prospects / views of the Dublin Mountains and the adjoining existing residential developments.

Whilst the proposed scale of development contrasts with the height of Scholastown House and the nearby residential estate which are detached and semi-detached houses which are 2-3 storeys in height. The wider area includes some apartments, 4-6 storeys high, including Ros Mor View apartment directly to the north and the nearby Two Oaks development. The proposed development would be locally significant but in the context of the landscape character of the receiving environment is regarded as of **Medium** magnitude - *Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.*

Localised impacts and effects are primarily visual and are described in the Visual Impact Assessment below.

The importance of the change to the local landscape character is regarded as **Moderate**. Given the mitigation efforts inherent in the design proposals this would be qualitatively **Neutral** - *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality*

This effect would be permanent.

7 PREDICTED VISUAL IMPACT

7.1 Zone of Visual Influence and Potential Visual Receptors

Based on the assessment of the landscape characteristics, values and sensitivities, 9 representative viewpoints were selected to assess visual impact and effects. These are scheduled and mapped below. Existing photographs and proposed photomontages are provided by 3D Design Bureau.

Verified views were captured in August 2022.

The views are listed below and described / assessed in Section 7.2. The viewpoint locations are identified in Figure 7.

Table 5: Proposed Viewpoints

No.	Receptor and views	Rationale for selection	Approx. distance from site boundary
VP01	Scholarstown Road next to Ros Mór Lodge	Part of the Immediate environs on Scholarstown Road and next to a protected structure	18m
VP02	At Lacona house on Scholarstown Road	Representative of views experienced by road users and passers by	103m
VP03	Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove	Views from the immediate environs next to roundabout	29m
VP04	By Bus Stop on the R113 Road	Representative of views experienced by road users and passers by	85m
VP05	Orlagh Grove	Representative of views from local residential area	54m
VP06	Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park	Elevated views from public park	400m
VP07	Next to No.38 of Woodfield Housing Estate	Representative of views from local residential area	223m
VP08	Next to No.49 of Woodfield Housing Estate	Representative of views from local residential area	233m
VP09	At entrance to Two Oaks residential development	Part of the Immediate environs on Scholarstown Road by a new residential development	180m

Photography and presentation of viewpoints

Each Viewpoint is illustrated by a photograph showing the existing view and the photomontage showing the proposed development.

Photomontages have been produced by 3DDesign Bureau and are presented in a separate booklet with a map of their locations. Verified photographs and photomontages have been taken with a wide angle focal length (FL) and prime lens to allow representation of the development within its context. In all visualisations, the extent of the 50mm FL view has been indicated for reference, which is broadly equivalent to the c.40 degree Horizontal Field of View (HFOV) and is representative of what the human eye perceives and reflects the requirements of the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note on Visual Representation 2019.

To correctly view the photomontage at the correct scale the extents of the 50mm lens or 40 degree angle of view should be extended to A3 in size and viewed at arms length. This can be done by printing

a hard copy or, more easily, digitally on screen, allowing reference back to the wider angle to understand the context.

Each viewpoint is described below in its existing condition and the effects of the proposed development. The descriptions, including of the change / effects, focus primarily on the extent of the 50mm image, and the winter (worst case scenario) view, but refer to the context, as appropriate, to inform analysis.

Figure 7: Close-range viewpoint location



7.2 Description of Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1 - Scholarstown Road next to Ross Mór Lodge

Existing View

This view is located along the public footpath which bounds the gate lodge of Ros Mór House.

The view looks southwest across the busy road towards the proposed development site approximately 18m away. The existing road dominates the view. The proposed site occupies the central portion of the view although its high boundary wall next to the road screens out much of the site from the view. Only the roofline of Scholarstown House and its mature boundary and trees are visible protruding above the high wall. The varied mix of deciduous and conifer trees provide visual interest through the year. The mix of modern lighting and signage fixtures detract from the view.

The view is from next to one historic protected structure across to another although the historical setting is eroded by the busy traffic thoroughfare running between both.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape.....

Visual Impacts and Effects

Some of the trees in the view will be removed. The existing boundary wall will be reduced and replaced with a railing which will allow greater views into the grounds of Scholarstown House, than currently experienced. Views will consist of the existing house backdropped by the new apartment building with several new trees within the grounds restoring the previous leafy character to the road and softening the new buildings to the rear.

The magnitude of change would be Medium –*introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity*

The importance of the effect is **Medium** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the effect would be Neutral i.e. *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality*.

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Medium and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 2 – At Lacona house on Scholarstown Road

Existing View

This view is located along the footpath on Scholarstown Road next to a private residential house, looking southeast approximately 103m away from the proposed development site.

The foreground view is framed by the old boundary wall of Mount Michael house, a protected structure. to the left (east) and stone wall of the adjoining residence on the right (west).

The view looks down from the elevated section of this road towards the roundabout and northern boundary of the site visible in the middle ground. The various traffic signage and lighting associated with the roundabout detract from the view. The site's white coloured high boundary wall is visible along with the various mature trees within it's central area and boundary edges. The same trees and some trees and shrubs within the adjoining residences help to screen out views of Scholarstown House. The Dublin Mountains can be seen in the background beyond the site's trees.

The view is typical of the local area with leafy suburban streets offering extended views to the Dublin mountains.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium . *Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are not entirely focused on the landscape,*

Visual Impacts and Effects

Some of the trees in the view, within the site, will be removed. Part of the new building elevation to the west - Orlagh Grove – and to the north – the roundabout junction, would be visible. This would be more evident in the winter with reduced leaf cover. There would be more open views into the grounds of Scholarstown house with the replacement of the existing high boundary wall with railings.

The magnitude of change would be Low – *Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.*

The importance of the effect is **Medium** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;*

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Low and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 3 - Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove

Existing View

This view is located at the junction of the R113 road and Orlagh Grove looking southeast towards the proposed development site approximately 29m away on the opposite side of the road.,

The view looks directly across the footpath and pedestrian towards the site's high boundary wall and a gated entrance in the middle ground. A row of street trees is on the outside of the boundary wall along Orlagh Grove. Beyond this boundary wall is a dense tree group including the distinct group of mature fastigiate poplar trees. The trees and wall close views to the remaining elements of the site including Scholarstown House.

The view is of a mature tree lined boundary adjacent the residential area of Orlagh Grove.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - *Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape.....*

Visual Impacts and Effects

The existing high boundary wall and section of the tall tree line will be replaced with a low wall and railings and the western elevation of the proposed new apartment building. Some of the existing internal mature trees would be removed to facilitate the development. There will be partial views of Scholarstown House through gaps in the retained trees on the corner.

The new building would provide a distinct new feature in the view, creating a more urbanised edge to the roundabout and surrounding streets.

The magnitude of change would be High – *Extensive intrusion of the development in the view to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.*

The importance of the effect is **Important** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Medium and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 4 - By Bus Stop on the R113 Road

Existing View

This view is located by the bus stop on the R113 Road looking southeast in the direction of the proposed development site 85m away.

The view looks across the main road towards the small cluster of trees on the edge of the road near the junction with Orlagh Grove. Beyond this and still within the middle ground are a white and buff rendered concrete wall and a gated entrance which define the southern edge of the road and the site's northern and western boundary. Several of the site's trees along its western boundary are partially visible above the intervening group of trees along the roadside and edge of Orlagh Crescent, Grove and the foreground roadside verge.

Within the wider context view the Two Oak apartment development currently under construction and associated cranes are visible in the background.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - *Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars*

or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views.....

Visual Impacts and Effects

A small portion of the upper floor of the proposed building's western elevation is visible peering through a gap in the intervening street trees on the opposite side of the road and residential area. Lower level views will see changes to the new railing and boundary treatment allowing greater views into the grounds of Scholarstown House. These views are softened by the retained and new tree planting within the site, with views greatest during the winter months when the site and the surrounding street trees are lacking leaf coverage. From this viewpoint trees lost from site have little impact.

The magnitude of change would be Low – *Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.*

The importance of the effect is **Medium** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;*

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Low and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 5 - Orlagh Grove

Existing View

This view is located at the northern end of Orlagh Grove opposite the collection of local shops and services. The view looks northeast towards the proposed development site approximately 54m away and adjacent to the shop.

The view looks across the tree lined residential road towards the carpark and building containing a shop and range of local services in the middle ground. Beyond this is the high masonry wall running along the site boundaries. Above the wall and adjacent building are the various mix of mature trees within the site visible within the middle to background view. The roof belonging to the site's shed and house can be partly seen through a minor gap in the boundary tree cover near to the building edge the shop. In general the development site is very enclosed.

The view is of an established local shopping area in a mature residential environment with good tree cover and a leafy character.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - *Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views.....*

Visual Impacts and Effects

Many of the site trees visible in the view would be removed to facilitate the development. The southern and western elevations of the new apartment building would be visible along the site boundary with Orlagh Grove and the corner with the adjoining 2 storey shopping units, where it rises to 4 to 5 storeys. The proposed site access would result in the loss of one street tree. Nonetheless will be a new landscape internally and with the upper balconies this, coupled with the materiality and detail of the elevations, will help animate the new setting. The new building will fully screen the previously limited views of Scholarstown House's.

The new development will see the view change from soft and green to a more urban composition as land use intensifies within a well-presented new apartment building and its new landscape.

The magnitude of change would be High – *Extensive intrusion of the development in the view to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.*

The importance of the effect is **Important** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality; (the loss of trees is mitigated by the attractive new built form and use, in keeping with ongoing change)

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Medium and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 6 - Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park

Existing View

This view is located by the feature stone on the small hill within Knocklyon public park and looking northeast towards the proposed development site approximately 400m away.

The location provides an elevated vantage point with view across the neighbouring urban areas. The tall lighting, gantry and fencing of the M50 motorway are visible on the edge of the park in the foreground.

The mature trees along the site's boundaries help to define the site's location within the middle view, particularly distinguishable are the evergreen and taller poplar trees. Beyond this against the background can be seen the existing Ros Mór apartment block and the apartment blocks under construction within the Two Oaks development with the temporary cranes against the skyline.

The view includes an evolving urban environment of which the various built elements are softened by the strong tree cover.

The viewpoint sensitivity is High – Viewers at viewpoints that are ...highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features) and views which are highly valued by the local community.

Visual Impacts and Effects

The western elevation of the proposed buildings will be visibly rising to 5th storey. Although, the presence of the retained trees within the site and surrounding street trees help to soften the building edges. Some taller trees extend above the building further helping to enclose it. There will be some more filtered views during winter months when the deciduous trees are lacking leaf coverage. A slight change to view will occur due to the removal of several taller trees along the proposed site boundaries.

The building is similar in form to the other two groups of apartments already visible and will tie in with this arrangement.

The proposed building will not affect the setting of Scholarstown House, itself not visible from this point.

The magnitude of change would be Low – *.....Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity*

The importance of the effect is **Medium** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality.*

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Medium and generally Adverse.

Viewpoint 7 - Next to No.38 of Woodfield Housing Estate

Existing View

This view is located further within the same housing estate as viewpoint 8. The view looks northwest towards the proposed development site approximately 223m away.

The view looks across the established small cluster of housing in this cul de sac with a large Eucalyptus tree on the small island in the centre view. The houses restrict outward views with only the upper tips of several trees located along the site boundary between the houses and school. The site is not visible from this point.

The viewpoint sensitivity is High – viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features) and views which are highly valued by the local community.

Visual Impacts and Effects

Despite the relatively proximity of this group of residential properties the proposed development will not be visible due to screening provided by the intervening houses and vegetation.

The proposed development would not be visible from this location.

There would be no impact or effect.

During the Construction Phase there would be no effects.

Viewpoint 8 - Next to No.49 of Woodfield Housing Estate

Existing View

This view is located at the end of the first cluster of houses within Woodside housing estate. The view looks northwest across the small open space towards the proposed development site approximately 233m away.

The view from this small group of resident looks onto the small green opposite on the edge of the estate. Outward views are contained by the line of trees along the boundary of the adjoining St Colmcille's Community school. Only a small part of the school building is visible filtered through the trees. The site is not visible.

The view is from the residential area has a pleasant green backdrop.

The viewpoint sensitivity is High – viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features) and views which are highly valued by the local community.

Visual Effects

Visual Impacts and Effects

Potential views are screened by the intervening vegetation and sports hall within the college grounds.

The proposed development would not be visible from this location.

There would be no impact or effect.

During the Construction Phase there would be no effects.

Viewpoint 9 - At entrance to Two Oaks residential development

Existing View

This view is located at the entrance to the Two Oaks residential development currently under construction and shielded by hoarding. The location is also directly opposite the junction leading into the Woodside housing estate off of the Scholarstown Road.

The view looks west across the busy road towards the proposed development site approximately 180m away.

The foreground view is dominated by Scholarstown Road itself and the undergoing construction works within the adjoining Two Oaks development. Across the road the northern boundary edge and grounds of St Colmcille's Community school encloses the road and adjoins the proposed development site. The existing site is indicated by the various forms of the mature trees and roadside boundary wall.

The presence of mature trees within the existing site and surrounding lands either side of the road help to soften the various built elements alongside the main road, integrating them into an overall leafy townscape setting.

The viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - *Viewers considered of medium susceptibility, such as locations where viewers are travelling at slow or moderate speeds through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views.....*

Visual Impacts and Effects

The loss of some of the trees currently in the site is highlighted by the reduction in crowns around the site. A small part of the eastern elevation of the proposed building as it steps up to the 5th storey would be partially visible between a gap in tree crowns..

Other changes within this view will include some loss of existing trees along the proposed site's boundaries and the existing site's solid roadside wall would be lowered with a railing, and hedgerow and tree planting behind. Reflecting the existing boundary treatment along the college's boundary. There may be some partial increased visibility of the new development in winter.

The magnitude of change would be Low - *.....Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity*

The importance of the effect is **Medium** and would remain so in the Short, Medium and Long Term.

Qualitatively the impact would be Neutral i.e. *Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality.*

During the Construction Phase the effects would be Medium and generally Adverse.

7.3 Summary of Visual Effects

The following table summarises the results of the assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the visual resource.

The proposed development is expected to have a temporary adverse effect on the visual resource during construction. Upon operation and into the future, the development is expected to have a neutral or beneficial long term / permanent effect on the visual resource.

Table 6: Summary of Visual Effects

VP No.	Location	Sensitivity	Degree of Change	Importance and Quality		
				Short	Medium	Long
VP01	Scholarstown Road next to Ross Mór Lodge	Medium	Medium	Medium and Neutral		
VP02	At Lacona house on Scholarstown Road	Medium	Medium	Medium and Neutral		
VP03	Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove	Medium	High	Important and Neutral		
VP04	By Bus Stop on the R113 Road	Medium	Low	Medium and Neutral		
VP05	Orlagh Grove	Medium	High	Important and Neutral		
VP06	Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park	High	Low	Medium and Neutral		
VP07	Next to No.49 of Woodfield Housing Estate	High	None	No Change		
VP08	Next to No.38 of Woodfield Housing Estate	High	None	No Change		
VP09	At entrance to Two Oaks residential development	Medium	Low	Medium and Neutral		

8 CONCLUSION

This LVIA has assessed the impact of the proposed residential development at the application site on Scholarstown House, Scholarstown Road, Scholarstown Dublin 16. A high-quality proposal has been submitted that adheres to local planning policy and is designed to reflect best practice and guidance. The design process has incorporated mitigative measures that have contributed towards the generally benign assessment described above. This is summarised below.

Landscape Effects

The landscape (townscape) sensitivity of the site and wider environs is regarded as Medium - it is a landscape with valued characteristics but reflecting ongoing change and with a capacity to accommodate change – a robust landscape / townscape.

Local policy is supportive of change that consolidates and densifies the urban form. Valuable characteristics include the historic house, mature trees and views to the mountains. The proposed development is comparatively modest and well composed to integrate in the receiving landscape. Change is regarded as of Medium magnitude. The single building has been sensitively designed within the confinements of the site and around the existing setting of Scholarstown House, which will still maintain its residential function. The landscape design seeks to enhance the historical characteristics of the house for both residents of the new development and surrounding local residents by providing a new communal landscape around Scholarstown House and reducing the visual barriers that currently hide the existing house from the wider context.

Whilst a number of trees lost to facilitate the development the new buildings have an attractive materiality and elevational treatment and will, coupled with the historic Scholarstown House, present an attractive new , more urban , composition to its setting.

The importance of the effect is regarded as Moderate and qualitatively Neutral to Beneficial.

Visual Effects

The predicted visual effects of the proposed development range from Low to High importance depending on location, but all Neutral i.e. the development integrates well and complements the views. Currently the visibility of Scholarstown House from the surrounding area is very limited due to screening by its high boundary wall and mature tree lines along its boundaries. The removal of the existing high boundary wall and some of these boundary trees will allow receptors from most viewpoints to experience new views of Scholarstown House alongside part of the proposed residential building. These receptors typically experience such views in passing as they travel by foot, bike or vehicle along the immediate roads. Here views will be possible through gaps in the new railings, the retained trees and new planting. Where both buildings are visible together, the scale and design of the new building looks to compliment the historic house and its redesigned grounds. In combination the development would enhance the house within an evolving urban setting.

Summary

Overall, the development integrates well, is well designed and composed of appropriate materials in a contemporary manner that engages with its environs in different ways. The design will result in change to the historic house's existing setting through the loss of some mature trees, and its boundary walls. The opening up of the proposed site's boundaries, through tree removal and reduction of the boundary wall, will allow opportunities for greater visibility of Scholarstown House from the immediate area and new public interaction around the grounds of the house as any integrated development in a well-considered urban setting.

The proposed development will also ensure the historic house is retained and improved allowing for its continued use as a residence and retaining its historic character.

Overall, the potential effects of the proposed development although locally high in places, are Neutral to Benign – a complementary change to the townscape and visual quality of the site and wider area and in keeping with existing ongoing change and as proposed in local policy.

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DOCUMENT ISSUE SHEET

Sheet no.: 1

Project No.: 22159

Issue By: LC

Project: Residential Development at Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Dublin 16

Notes: Planning Stage

Day	30	4	10	11	18	21	21				
Month	9	10	10	10	10	10	10				
Year	22	22	22	22	22	22	22				

Dwg. No.	Dwg. Title	Revision /type (P=print, E=electronic)									
Landscape Plans											
22159-2-101	Landscape Masterplan	0/E	A/E	B/E	C/E	D/E	E/E	E/E			
22159-2-201	Landscape Sections	0/E	A/E				C/E	C/E			
22159-2-D01	Landscape Design Rationale Report	0/E					A/E	A/E			
22159-2-LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment						0/E	0/E			
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