



AUSTEN ASSOCIATES

Burgage Plot Boundary Assessment

Lidl Newcastle

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1.0 Introduction

This report sets out to describe and evaluate the Burgage Plot boundaries on the proposed development site for the construction of a Discount Food store Supermarket with ancillary off-licence sales at Main Street Upper, Newcastle, Co. Dublin.

The Burgage Plots in Newcastle are important historic field boundaries that contribute to the character and heritage of Newcastle Village. They form important ecological corridors, including commuting routes for bats. They are referenced in the Newcastle Local Area Plan 2012. Preservation and protection of the plot boundary hedgerows is a critical part of the approach to this development and has been carefully considered by the development design team from the outset.

The burgage plot boundaries on this site are located on the eastern and western borders of the site. The quality of the hedgerow vegetation varies considerably. On the eastern boundary, Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* have been planted and dominates a c. 50m long segment of the plot boundary. The Leyland Cypress is proposed for removal and replacement with more appropriate native species.

The native vegetation in the remainder of the eastern boundary is weak and sparse. It needs to be protected and augmented. The design proposals allow room for this hedgerow to be retained and strengthened with appropriate native planting.

The vegetation on the western boundary is of better quality. A dry ditch approximately 2 - 2.5m in width and 1.3 - 1.5m in depth is located to the front, (site side) of the hedge for approximately half the length of the boundary.

The burgage plot boundaries are described in more detail below.

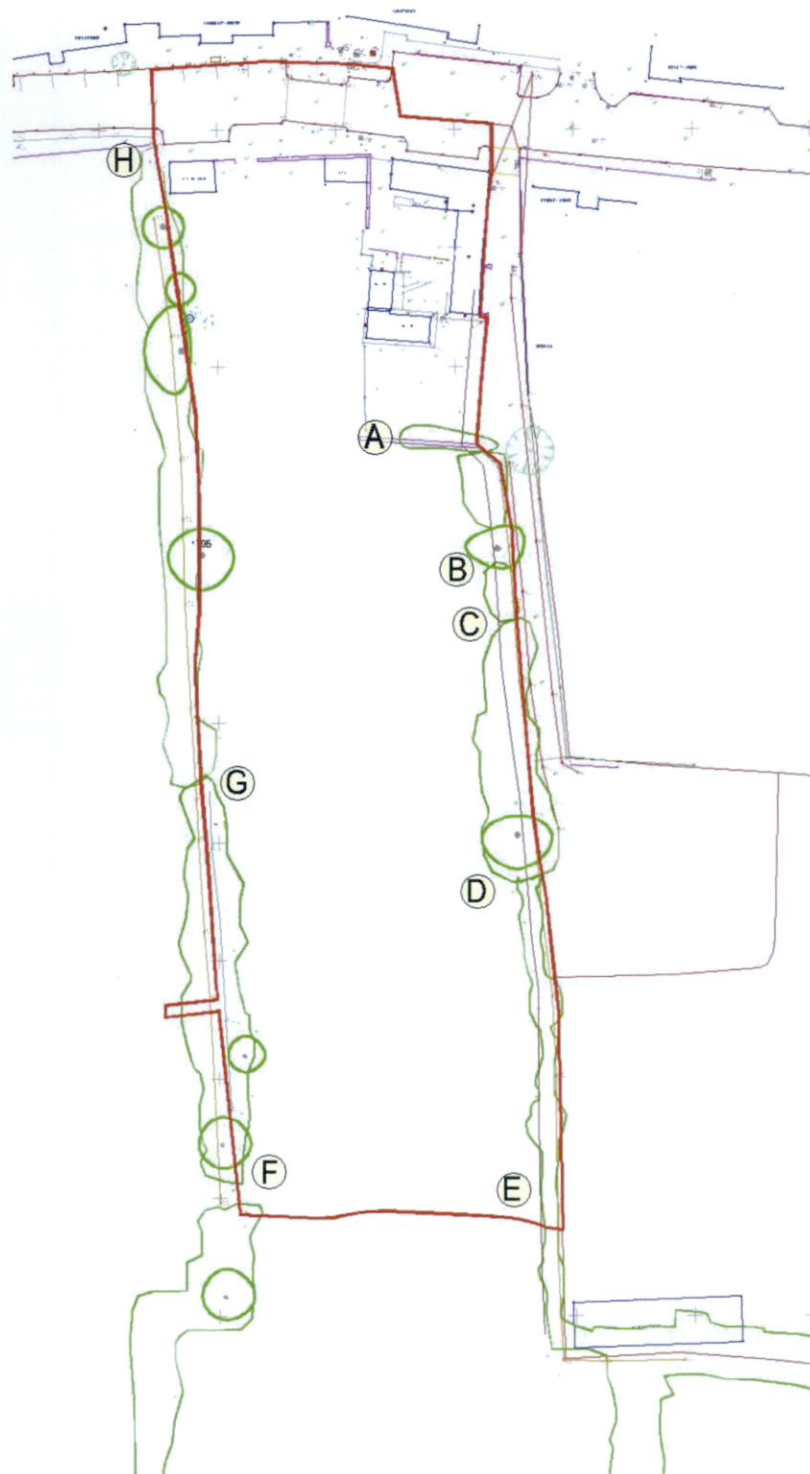


Figure 1: Existing site boundaries, A to G, described below

2.0 Burgage Plot Boundary Description

A to B

The boundary vegetation from A to B consists group of self-seeded Sycamore, *Acer platanooides* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* extend inwards to the site, at almost a right angle to the eastern boundary. The trees are juvenile and are growing along the base of the rear wall of Kelly's Estate Agents. A small group of Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* is located in the footprint of the burgage plot boundary to the south of the self-seeded Sycamore, *Acer platanooides* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* are mature, poor-quality trees. The crowns are in the process of breaking up and starting to drop branches, as is characteristic for this species when they mature. One of the trees has already fallen over.

These trees are considered incompatible with the retention of good quality boundary hedgerow vegetation as is characteristic in the area, as they will continue to deteriorate over the short to medium term.



Figure 2: Boundary A - B, self-seeded scrub Ash and Sycamore to the left-hand side of the hedge and poor-quality Leyland Cypress, all proposed for removal

B to C

The boundary vegetation from B to C consists of a small thicket of self-seeded of juvenile Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. This planting is proposed for retention.



Figure 3: Boundary B-C, Juvenile Hawthorn, proposed for retention

C to D

The boundary vegetation from B to C consists of a line of poor-quality mature to over mature Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii*. This species is non-native and poor from an ecological point of view. It is considered that this planting does not represent the important historical heritage of the Burgage plot boundaries. It is proposed that this planting be removed, as they will to deteriorate over the short to medium term. It is proposed that they are replaced with more appropriate native species.



Figure 4: Mature/over mature Leyland Cypress on the eastern boundary

D to E

The boundary vegetation from D to E consists of a hedgerow. Species are *Fraxinus excelsior* Ash and *Crataegus monogyna* Hawthorn and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. The hedge is quite sparse in places with views through to the neighbouring site. There is plenty of Briar *Rubus fruticosus* present in the hedgerow. It is proposed that this hedgerow be retained, the briar removed and the hedge be strengthened with appropriate native species.

F to G

The boundary vegetation from F to G consists of a mature mixed native hedgerow with a ditch located to the front of the boundary for its entire length. The hedge appears to be a typical field boundary construction; where a ditch has been excavated, soil placed on one side of the ditch and the soil planted with

native hedgerow species. Species are *Fraxinus excelsior* Ash and *Crataegus monogyna* Hawthorn with some *Sambucus nigra* Elder, present. The hedge is quite overgrown with *Rubus fruticosus* Briar and *Hedera helix* Ivy. A dilapidated timber post and wire fence is intermittently located on the boundary, in places secured to the vegetation. There are 2 number Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees located within this hedgerow. These trees have Ash Die Back disease *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. These trees will die over the next few years regardless of development.

The ditch is approximately 2.5 m in width and 1.5 m in depth. When the site was visited on 23/03/2022, 03/05/2022 and 19/10/2022, the ditch was dry with no water present. A piped culvert is located to the top end of the ditch, this is connected to a spring to the north. There was no flowing water to or from this pipe on the dates the site was visited above. The ditch has little or no vegetation present. There are arisings present in the ditch from pruning of briar.

It is proposed that this hedgerow and the ditch will be retained. It will be protected during construction. The existing ground levels will be dropped to allow for part M accessibility through the site. The site level will be below that of the invert level of the ditch, a retaining gabion structure will be used to keep the ditch in place. Excavation of the ditch would see damage to the roots of the burgage plot vegetation and therefore no excavation of the ditch is proposed.



Figure 5: Pipe at northern end of ditch



Figure 6: Drainage ditch, photograph taken 03/05/2022

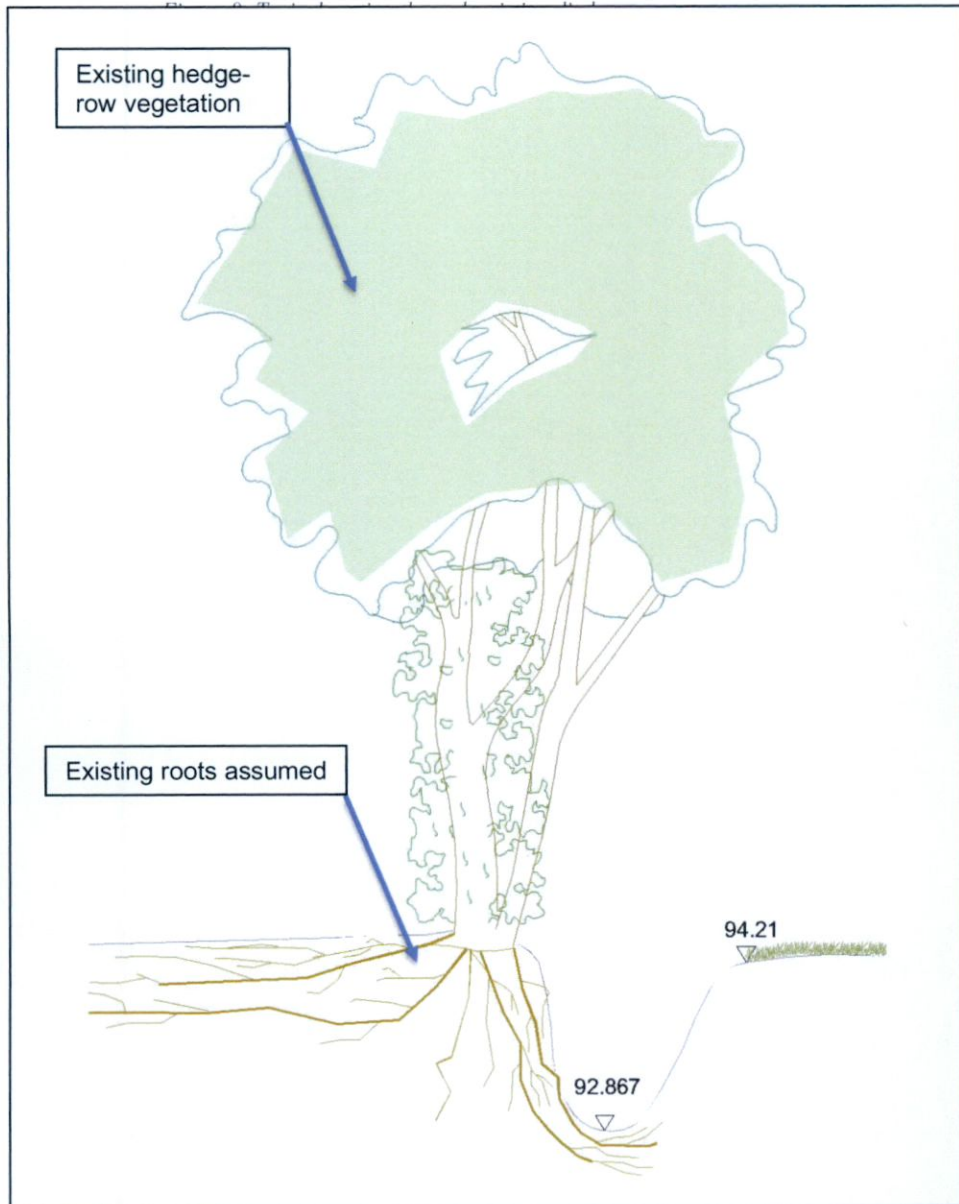


Figure 7: The existing ditch and hedgerow

G to H

The boundary vegetation from G to H consists of a mature mixed native hedgerow. Species are *Fraxinus excelsior* Ash and *Crataegus monogyna* Hawthorn and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. The hedge is quite overgrown with *Rubus fruticosus* Briar and *Hedera helix* Ivy. There are a number Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees located within this hedgerow. These trees have Ash Die Back disease *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*. These Ash trees will die regardless of development. There is a large Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* tree growing as part of this hedgerow. It has been severely pruned on the eastern side.

This hedgerow is to be retained. It will be protected during construction. Ash species are to be removed. Any gaps created as a result will be filled with native species.

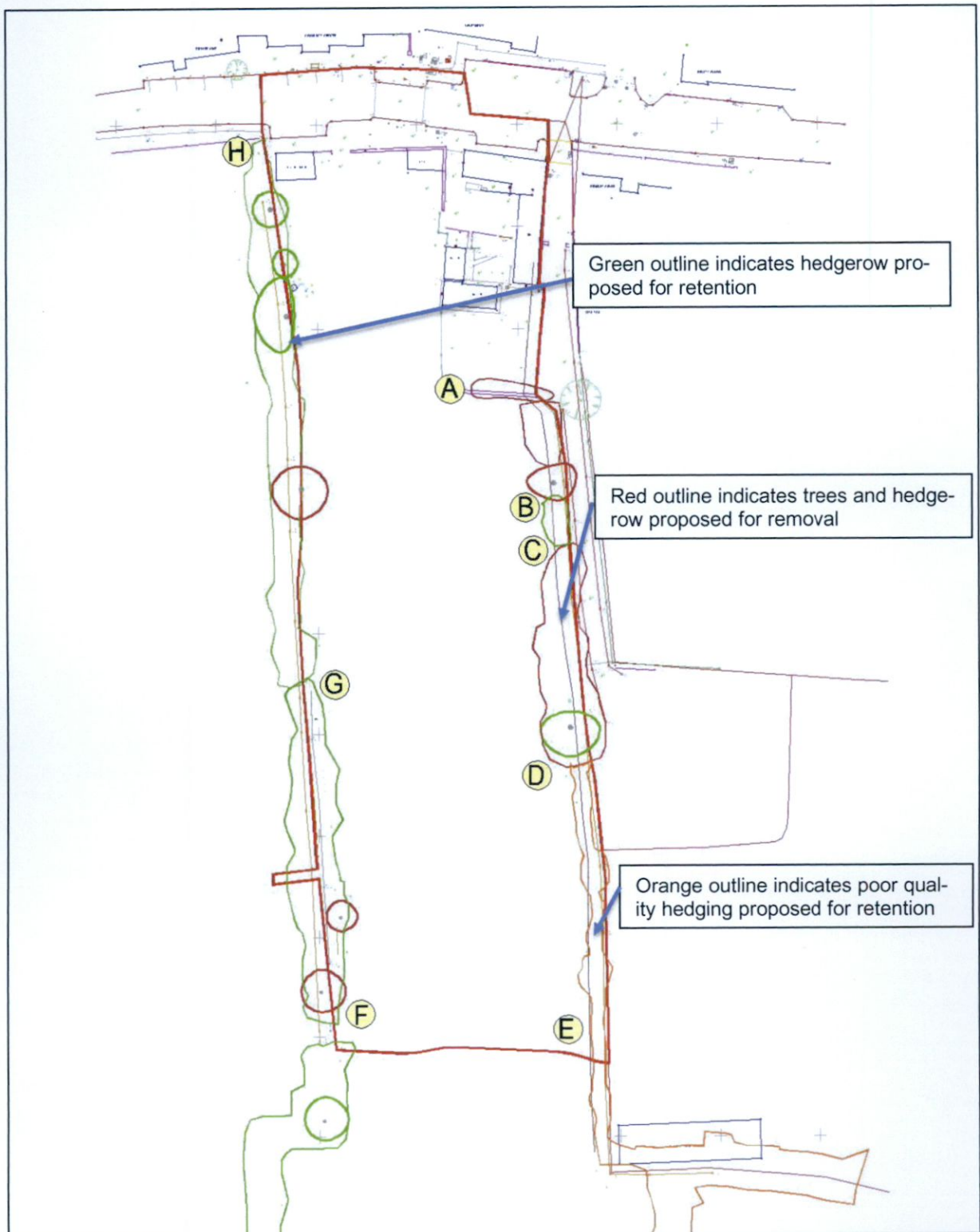


Figure 8: Areas of vegetation to be removed from the burgage plot boundaries are shown in with a red out line, not to be confused with the site red line boundary

3.0 Conclusions

The Burgage Plot boundary hedgerows are an important part of the heritage of Newcastle Village. They contribute to the local ecology and visual amenity.

They Burgage plot boundaries on this proposed development site have been identified by the design team as an important factor in the site design and have been evaluated in this report. They vary in quality with undesirable and unsustainable Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* forming segments of the boundaries. It is proposed that the Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* and a small section of *Acer platanooides* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* be removed and replaced with more appropriate native species. Refer to the Landscape Plan 077622_LP_01 for further detail.

The remainder of the Burgage Plot boundaries on the site are to be protected during construction and retained. This approach to the development will result in a better-quality environment and improved burgage plot boundaries. It will leave a superior ecological legacy for future generations and wildlife, repairing and preserving the heritage character of Newcastle Village. Retention of the Leyland Cypress *X Cuprocyparis leylandii* would see a short to medium term degradation of the Burgage Plot boundaries and health and safety issues with likely loss of major limbs.