

LAND PLANNING & DESIGN

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Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Dublin 16
Co. Dublin

Landscape and Visual Impact Addendum
RFI stage

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April 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd (CSR), Landscape Architects and Planners.

The document is to be read as a short addendum to the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted with the application in relation to proposed development at Scholarstown House, Scholarstown, Co. Dublin. The purpose of this addendum is to review the findings of the original LVIA against the proposed development's site layout changes, as altered in response to the request for further information (RFI), to determine if these changes could in anyway alternate the predicted potential impacts and effects on the landscape and visual receptors considered in the original LVIA.

2 PREDICTED LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

The following assessment has reviewed the original predicted findings of the LVIA and then reassessed the identified affected landscape and visual receptors against the revised proposed development site layout using the same methodology approach as used in the original LVIA report.

The proposed development's RFI site layout changes that could impact on landscape and visual matters previously assessed in the LVIA include:

- Upper floors adjusted to reduce the overall massing of the building, including a notable reduction of the overall apartment floor space on the 5th floor, changes to the façade of the 4th floor and offsetting it slightly inwards from the building edge and changes to façade of one section of the 3-storey block in order to improve the proposal's setting with Scholarstown House.
- Revised carparking and immediate landscaping along the northern boundary edge. This includes reorientating some spaces to provide 4 additional spaces, which adjustment to the previous near landscaping nearer the boundary edge and bringing this area of carparking closer to the boundary edge.
- Other smaller layout changes to the landscape proposals include some additional planting to provide further screening of the new residential Scholarstown House apartments and new building apartments 008 and 009, both to aid reducing views internally within the site only.
- Also, there is a slight change to the proposed road entrance including setting back of the raised surface from the road edge and replacing a short section of wall/railing with railings only. Much of the landscape proposals previously proposed in the landscape masterplan remain the same.

2.1 Predicted Landscape Impacts

Construction Impacts and Effects on the Landscape

The original LVIA stated:

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;

Proposed changes to the construction phase:

The proposed revised layout falls within the same building footprint as the original proposed development. There will be a slight variation to the carpark layout, but this occurs within the same area of open ground within the site. The changes proposed will not result in any further loss of tree cover within the site than what has already been proposed for removal under the submitted application. The level of site works, and its duration will be the exact same as the proposed development as originally submitted to SDCC.

Overall, the proposed RFI changes to the site layout will have no change to the above predicted landscape impacts during the construction phase.

Operational Impact and Effects on the Landscape

The original LVIA stated:

*Whilst the proposed scale of development contrasts with the height of Scholarstown 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.*

*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.

The proposed changes to the site layout will have no change to the above predicted landscape impacts during the operation phase.

Proposed changes to the operational phase:

The proposed changes will result in a slight reduction of the massing of the building across the proposed third floor. There have also been minor alterations to the landscape design proposal to accommodate these changes including additional car park spaces (4no.), providing additional screening to the rear of the existing Scholarstown House from the apartments and very minor alterations around the road entrance.

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

2.2 Predicted Visual Impacts

The original LVIA submitted considered a total of nine viewpoints to be assessed which took into consideration the views/setting of the Proposed Development with Scholarstown House and within the local context. These nine existing views and proposed photomontages were provided as a set by 3D Design Bureau and accompanied the original LVIA.

All nine viewpoints were initially reviewed to help determine any potential visual changes to the original modelled views as a result of the proposed RFI site layout changes. Only four of the nine viewpoints (nos. 1, 3, 5 and 6) were considered likely to experience any perceptible changes to their previous modelled views due to the proposed development's revised design. The four views were remodelled by 3D Design Bureau and a set of new photomontages were produced along with additional CGIs and

aerial view. The set of photomontage views were subsequently reassessed to determine if the revised RFI site layout would have any notable changes to the previously predicted effects for the same viewpoints of the original LVIA. The four reassessed views are listed below and mapped in Figure 1, with the revised photomontages provided as an appendix to this report.

The revised photomontages pack can be viewed alongside the previously submitted photomontages pack to allow for comparison between the verified views from the same four selected viewpoints which reflect the resulting visual changes due to the proposed development's revised site layout.

Table 1: 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
VP03	Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove	Views from the immediate environs next to roundabout	29m
VP05	Orlagh Grove	Representative of views from local residential area	54m
VP06	Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park	Elevated views from public park	400m

Figure 1: Close-range viewpoint locations of the original LVIA's 9 viewpoints with the four reviewed viewpoints in this report circled.



Description of Viewpoints Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 6

The following provides the original LVIA text for the four viewpoints, for ease of reference, followed by comments on any perceived changes to the proposed views as a result of the revised site layout.

Viewpoint 1 - Scholarstown Road next to Ross Mór Lodge

The original LVIA stated:

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.

Change to the proposed view:

The revised building layout will result in a reduction to the fifth-floor of the proposed apartment block, set back of the fourth floor and changes to the building's façade which provide a better stepped back profile and greater contrast in materials which help reduce the visual prominence of the proposed building's structure when viewed as the new backdrop to Scholarstown House.

The revised landscape layout will bring the carpark closer to the proposed site's road boundary but the new boundary hedge along with new trees will help buffered inwards views of the nearest parked vehicles.

Overall, these proposed changes seek to reduce the visual prominence of the proposed development from this viewpoint and within the site itself when looking towards Scholarstown House. On balance the predicted visual effects remain as **Medium and Neutral**.

Viewpoint 3 - Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove

The original LVIA stated:

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 fastigiata 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.

Changes to proposed view:

The main change to this view is as a result of the updated design to the proposed apartment block y where development has been reduced at fifth floor level. This results in a slight reduction of the uppermost floor being visible from this point as it shifts slightly to the right (southwards) of the view. There are some minor partial views of the revised building facades along the section of the building further to the southeast.

No additional landscaping changes from those previously proposed are visible.

Overall, the change in layout visible from this point will only have a slight positive alternation to those previously proposed. On balance the predicted visual effects remain as **Important and Neutral**.

Viewpoint 5 - Orlagh Grove

The original LVIA stated:

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.

Changes to proposed view:

There will be no notable difference between the revised and previously proposed building layouts when viewed from this viewpoint.

The only visible changes to the site layout are some minor alternations to the street level elements including further set back from the road of the raised traffic island and a change from low wall/railings to railings on the southern end.

Overall, there are no notable visual changes between the revised and previously proposed layouts. On balance the predicted visual effects remain as **Important and Neutral**.

Viewpoint 6 - Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park

The original LVIA stated:

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 arehighly 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.

Changes to the proposed view

The change in this view occurs due to the reduce overall floor plan of the apartment block across the proposed building's fifth floor. This results in a notable reduction of the building present along its southern boundary end (right side of view). Which provides a step and increased view of the skyline in the direction of the Two Oaks development. While views of this floor fronting the western boundary (left of image) are slightly shortened from the previous proposed layout.

3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary:

The above assessment was carried out to determine if the proposed RFI changes to the proposed development's site layout could affect the previously predicted landscape and visual impacts effects upon receptors assessed within the original LVIA,

Landscape Effects:

The proposed development's RFI site layout will not have any notable change to landscape receptors of the LVIA when compared to the previous proposed layout. As the layout falls within the same building footprint with only very minor adjustments to the external landscape layout proposals nor any additional loss of trees or other elements.

Visual Effects:

Visually, the greatest visual changes will result from the proposed development's revised variations in its upper floor where the building mass has been broken up and set back further along with material changes to some of the building's façade. These changes being most prevalent when viewed from the edge of Scholarstown Road directly next to the site's northern boundary and within the site itself. Where the new building will be viewed as a direct backdrop to the existing Scholarstown House as experienced by passers-by on the shared footpath/cycle lane and road as they pass the boundary and by the site's new residents. The revised layout seeks to reduce the prevalent of the new building from such views compared to the previously proposed building layout.

Changes to views from the other selected viewpoints are generally of the shortened ends of the fifth floor apartment block, which helps provide a better stepped building profile than the previous layout and thereby helping to reduce its visual prominence. While minor changes to the landscape layout will be barely perceptible when viewed from receptors within the immediate vicinity of the adjoining Scholarstown Road and Orlagh Grove.

Table 2: Summary of Visual Effects- LVIA and rfi assessments

VP No.	Location	Sensitivity	Degree of Change	Importance and Quality		
				Short	Medium	Long
VP01	Scholarstown Road next to Ross Mór Lodge	Medium	LVIA: Medium RFI - same	LVIA: Medium and Neutral RFI - same		
VP03	Junction of the R113 Road and Orlagh Grove	Medium	LVIA: High RFI: - same	LVIA: Important and Neutral RFI - same		
VP05	Orlagh Grove	Medium	LVIA: High RFI: - same	LVIA: Important and Neutral RFI - same		
VP06	Elevated Hill in Knocklyon Park	High	LVIA: Low rRFI: - same	LVIA: Medium and Neutral RFI - same		

Conclusion:

The key proposed changes to the site layout are attended to help reduce the prevalent of the new building against the setting of the Scholarstown house, as will be experienced from within the site and nearest section of Scholarstown Road.

On review the proposed changes will have some localised positive visual changes over the previous proposed building layout. Overall, these changes on balance, do not alternate from the original findings of the LVIA which concluded:

“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.”

Appendix A

Revised Photomontages – Viewpoints 1, 3, 5 and 6

- 3D Design Bureau (April 2023). Scholarstown House Aerial View, CGIs and Verified Views Booklet. (provided as a separate document)