

REPORT: Visual Impact Assessment

CLIENT: Bluemont Developments (Firhouse) Ltd.

DATE: June 2022.

## **VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **Introduction**

The Visual impact assessment has been prepared by, Landscape Architect Daithi O'Troithigh MSc Urban Design, Pg Dip LA, BA Larch, Dip Arch Tech and MLLI of doyle + o'troithigh landscape architecture Ltd. Daithi has prepared Landscape & Visual Impact reports for a variety of projects including commercial, recreational, residential and tourism.

The purpose of this study is to appraise the visual impacts arising from the proposed development based on 12 no. views selected by Digital Dimension (see enclosed photomontage booklet). This Visual Impact Assessment is submitted as part of a Strategic Housing Development proposal on foot of comments provided by both An Bord Pleanála and South Dublin County Council at the Pre-Application Consultation stages. This report aims to specifically address Item Nr. 4 of the An Bord Pleanála's Opinion, which states:

*'A visual impact assessment of the proposed development that addresses, inter alia, the scale and massing of the proposal in the context of the transitional nature of the receiving environment, which includes domestic scale two storey development to the northeast in Mount Carmel Park Housing Estate. The VIA should also address long range views from the N81 and along Firhouse Road including the proposed treatment to the public realm.'*

The Council of Europe defines 'Landscape as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is a result of action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. This definition of Landscape, which is referenced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Landscape Institute's Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and is included in the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2010 (No. 30), broadens the concept of landscape further than solely framed in terms of aesthetics and visual amenity. This definition of landscape is what will be used in this report.

This assessment should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 Description of Development and Alternatives Examined and in conjunction with the Photomontages prepared for the scheme (refer to Appendix 15A).

### **Photomontage selection**

As part of the preplanning process a selection of 19 Nr. Photomontage location points were proposed, following a review of those proposed 19 Nr. locations we found that many were similar in location orientation and impact analysis. Doyle + O'Troithigh have undertaken a full review of the previously proposed 19 Nr. locations reducing these to 12 Nr. which allow for a comprehensive visual impact assessment of the proposed development.

### **Assessment Methodology**

This assessment has been based on the following guidelines:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)– Guidelines and the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2002) and Advice Notes on Current Practice and the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2003). Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Reports (2022)

'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment', 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.

*Urban Development & Building Heights*, Dept. of Housing Planning & Local Government 2018

This assessment has involved:

- Undertaking a desk-top study of the site; including reviewing ordnance survey mapping and aerial photography.
- Reviewing the plans, sections, and elevations of the proposed scheme.
- A review of statutory planning and other documentation to ascertain the local and wider; significance; and
- Visiting the site and surrounding area in May and June 2022.

### **Nature of Impacts**

Impact on landscape arising from development has two distinct but closely related aspects as outlined in Chapter 2 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Landscape Institute's Guidelines for LVIA and in the EPA Draft Advice Notes for Preparing an EIS. The first is impact in the form of change to character of the landscape that arises from the insertion of the proposed development into the existing context. The second aspect is the visual impact, which depends on the degree and nature of change in the visual environment.

It is recognised that the combined impact on character and views will draw responses, the significance of which will be partly informed by an individual's subjective perception of how much the changes matter.

The assessment of landscape and visual impacts include:

Off Site: -

- Designated tourism Routes – roads, paths, trails, and associated view points;
- Public Roads, paths, and access areas;
- Residences, hotels, and amenities;
- Sites and monuments of archaeological, architectural, or historical interest.

Site and environs: -

- Topography and drainage;
- Enclosures;
- Settlement patterns and land-uses;
- Natural features;
- Archaeological, architectural, historical, or cultural features;

- Visual foci – external and internal;
- Vegetation;
- Circulation routes

**Significance Criteria**

Whenever appropriate the following terms are used to describe the degree, quality, and duration of an impact: (Note this is based on the EPA Advice Notes and Guidelines) and provided in table 15.1 below.

**Impact Significance Criteria Table 1**

<b>Impact Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
Profound Effects	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters the majority of a sensitive aspect of the environment
Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment
Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with the existing and emerging trends
Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities
Not Significant	An effect which causes notable changes in the character of the environment but without noticeable consequences
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences

Table 2

	<b>Terms used to describe the quality of change</b>
Positive effect	A change which improves the quality of the environment.
Neutral effect	A change that does not affect the quality of the environment.
Negative / adverse effect	A change that reduces the quality of the environment.

Table 3

	<b>Terms relating to the duration of impacts as described in the RPA Guidelines</b>
Temporary effect	Lasting less than a year
Short-term effect	Effect lasting one to seven years
Medium-term effect	Lasting seven to fifteen years
Permanent effect	Lasting over sixty years.

**Photomontages**

A collection of 12 Nr. photomontages have been prepared surrounding the site to fully illustrate the physical and visual nature of the proposed development.

The Photomontages have been prepared from locations that are representative of views of the scheme from surrounding areas (Appendix 1). Existing views and proposed versions both summer & winter of most views have been provided, (summer views in some cases were not possible due to these images being included at a late stage of the study when summer foliage was present on the trees), and the photomontage views have been taken at the following locations: -

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the location of all 12Nr. photomontages (see Digital Dimensions submission for full map & locations)



Figure 1. Detailing the location of Photomontages 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 and 9. See Digital Dimensions submission for full map & locations.



Figure 2 Detailing the location of Photomontages 7,10,11 and 12. See Digital Dimensions submission for full map & locations.



Figure 3 below, illustrates the site plan and building layout as prepared by OMP. See OMP drawings for details.

**Table 1 View Locations**

<b>View</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
View 01	View from the R114 flyover of the M50 looking West toward the site.	East
View 02	View from the Ballycullen road looking North to the site	South
View 03	View from the junction of the Ballycullen Road and the R114 looking Northwest to the site	Southeast
View 04	View from the entrance to the Sallypark Close residential estate looking North to the site	South
View 05	View from the southern side of the R114 directly opposite the site lands looking North to the site	South
View 06	View from the southern side of the R114 from the western end of the site lands looking Northeast to the site	Southwest
View 07	View from the southern side of the R114 opposite the entrance to Monalea Wood looking Northeast to the site	Southwest
View 08	View from the access road to Mount Carmel Park looking south toward the site	North
View 09	View from a public pathway in the Dodder Valley Park west of the Balrothery Weir looking Southeast to the site	Northwest
View 10	View from the N81 (Tallaght Road) to the west of the Kilsaran Tallaght quarry looking South-southeast to the site	North - Northwest
View 11	View from the pedestrian bridge over the river Dodder at the Balrothery Weir in the Dodder Valley Park looking South-Southwest to the site	North-northeast
View 12	View from the southern end of Mouth Carmel Park looking west to the site	East

**NOTE: See Digital Dimensions submission for full map & locations.**

### **Characteristics of the Development**

Bluemont Developments (Firhouse) Limited intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for a Strategic Housing Development with a total site area of c.0.46 ha, on lands located at No. 2 Firhouse Road and the former 'Morton's The Firhouse Inn', Firhouse Road, Dublin 24.

The development will consist of the demolition of all existing structures on site (c. 1,326 sq. m), including:

- Two storey building formally used as public house, ancillary off-licence, and associated structures (c. 972 sq. m);
- Two storey building comprising an existing barber shop and betting office (c. 260 sq. m);

- Single storey cottage building and associated structures (c. 94 sq. m); and
- Eastern boundary wall and gated entrance from Mount Carmel Park.

The development with a total gross floor area of c. 11,638 sq. m, will consist of 100 no. residential units arranged in 2 blocks (Blocks 01 and 02) ranging between 3 and 5 storeys in height, over lower ground floor and basement levels, comprising:

- 96 no. apartments (consisting of 2 no. studio units; 45 no. one bedroom units; 10 no. two bedroom (3 person) units; 34 no. two bedroom (4 person) units; and 5 no. three bedroom units), together with private (balconies and private terraces) and communal amenity open space provision at podium and roof levels; and
- 4 no. duplex apartments (consisting of 2 no. one bedroom units and 2 no. two bedroom units (4 person) located within Block 01, together with private balconies and terraces.

The development will also consist of non-residential uses (c. 355 sq. m), including:

- 1 no. café (c. 58 sq. m) and 1 no. office (c. 30 sq. m) located at ground floor level of Block 01;
- 1 no. medical unit (c. 59 sq. m) and 1 no. betting office (c. 66 sq. m) located at ground floor level of Block 02;
- 1 no. barber shop (c. 28 sq. m) located at ground floor level between Blocks 01 and 02; and
- 1 no. crèche (c. 114 sq. m) located at lower ground floor level of Block 01 and associated outdoor play area to the rear.

Vehicular access to the site will be from the existing access off Firhouse Road. The proposal includes minor alterations to the existing access, including the provision of new and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

The development will also consist of the provision of public open space and related play areas; hard and soft landscaping including internal roads, cycle and pedestrian routes, pathways and boundary treatments, street furniture, basement car parking (80 no. spaces in total, including accessible spaces); motorcycle parking; electric vehicle charging points; bicycle parking (long and short stay spaces including stands); ESB substations, piped infrastructural services and connections to existing public services, (including relocation of existing surface water sewer and water main from within the application site onto the public roads area along Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park); ducting; plant; waste management provision; SuDS measures; stormwater management and attenuation; sustainability measures; signage; changes in levels; public lighting; and all ancillary site development and excavation works above and below ground.

## **Receiving Environment**

### **Site Description**

The subject site, approximately 0.46 hectares in area, 'No. 2 Firhouse Road and the former 'Morton's, The Firhouse Inn', is located at a corner of Dodder Valley Park, 507.00m south of Balrothery Weir on the River Dodder. The subject site is located at the north-west of the crossroads of the R114 Firhouse Road, Ballycullen Road and Mount Carmel Park, 503.00m due west of the R114's bridge over the M50 motorway.

There are no trees located within the Application site, and limited vegetation.

The site occupies a prominent location at the junction of Firhouse Road R114, Mount Carmel Park and Ballycullen Road. The existing site comprises a pub at the south-eastern corner of the site (the Firhouse Inn), with an adjoining off-licence, and a two-storey mixed-use residential and commercial building at the south-western corner of the subject site. Most of the site is surfaced in car-parking, with no extant vegetation on site of note.

A coursed random rubble stone wall with portions of concrete blockwork forms the north-western boundary of the site with Dodder Valley Park. Balrothery Weir (also known as the Firhouse Waterfalls), the River Dodder and Dodder Valley Park (a high amenity area) are located to the north of the subject site.

The subject site has a gently sloping topography, falling from spot levels surveyed at +73.400 at the existing site entrance off the R114 down to +70.910 in the northern corner of the site at the junction of Mount Carmel Park and the existing wall to Dodder Valley Park. Adjacent to the north-western boundary of the site, formed by an existing stone- and concrete block-built wall, is a group of mature trees standing in the adjacent site, Dodder Valley Park, including Leyland Cypress, Ash, Beech, and Sycamore species. Mount Carmel Park is located to the north-east of the subject site and comprises a housing estate of two-storey dwellings.

### **Existing Vegetation on Subject Site:**

Please refer to the tree survey drawing and report<sup>1</sup>, tree protection measures and arboricultural impact assessment documentation prepared by Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy (CMCAC) in accordance with BS 5837 for details of existing vegetation on the site (submitted separately), and the value categories that they have assigned to it, as well as details of vegetation protection measures, proposed felled and retained existing vegetation.

There are no trees located within the subject site, however adjacent to the north-western boundary of the site is a group of mature trees standing in the adjacent site (Dodder Valley Park) on the other side of the boundary wall, including Leyland Cypress, Ash, Beech, Holly, and Sycamore species. The arborist has assessed this tree group as being 'visually prominent and of high public amenity value' and forming a significant landscape feature within the local surrounding area.

The design team's approach has been informed by the arborist's survey and comments to retain certain trees and groups of vegetation on or adjacent to the site because of characteristics like the nature of the species, the maturity of a tree or tree group, the ecological contribution of the vegetation.

CMCAC has assessed that the proposed development does not require the removal of any trees but has recommended some pruning works to these trees to facilitate the development works, and as part of maintenance to ensure sufficient clearance between tree canopies and the proposed development and its balconies.

### **Landscaping Proposals**

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<sup>1</sup> 'Arboricultural Report – Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement in relation to the development proposal at Firhouse Inn', Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy

The proposed landscape design is distinctive and easily legible by the visitor and responds to the site setting, responding to the architectural treatment of the building with a palette of contemporary aesthetics and quality hard and soft landscape materials. A high-quality durable palette of hard landscape materials such as stone and pre-cast concrete paving and kerbing, wooden seating elements and benches, green-roofed cycle parking shelters and playable sculptures lends the site an immediate sense of welcoming, permanence, and appropriateness.

Tree and transplant planting in the amenity open space sequences will be selected from a primarily indigenous palette suitable for the site setting, and supplemented with appropriate exotic pollinator-friendly trees, shrubs, and flowering perennials.

The planting proposals within the subject site addressing Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park will significantly 'green' the appearance of these streets. Tree and transplant planting in the amenity open space sequences have been selected from a palette suitable for the site setting and streetscape, and supplemented with appropriate pollinator-friendly trees, shrubs, and flowering perennials. All landscape boundaries have been significantly greened in the design proposals.

Public Open Space has been provided in the developed scheme design in a mainly south-oriented area fronting onto Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park and comprises a 2.00m width path along the road frontages of the two streets; planted landscape buffers; improved biodiversity; amenity tree, shrub, ornamental grass, bulb, and perennial planting; a 3.00 width path to the front of the development's elevations; natural SuDS stormwater attenuation; and 'play-along-the-way' provisions for all ages and abilities. The existing area is currently laid out as an asphalt-surfaced car park and the design proposals envisage turning it into a heavily planted space with improved legibility and universal access for the public. The planting proposals represent a significant increase in greening of the space from the existing site appearance and from the previously submitted Pre-App layout.

The origin of the placename 'Firhouse' originates from the Gaelic phrase 'Teach an Giúise', meaning the 'House of the Fir'. To recall the upland Fir woodland of old, we propose to plant ground floor area with evergreen native Scot's Pine and multi-stemmed Birch, set amongst rocky granite boulder outcrops.

### **Arrangement of landscape spaces:**

The sequence of open spaces suitable for landscape amenity design and gathering in the site layout have been outlined and described as below:

- Public Open Space: landscape buffer at lower ground level along Firhouse Road R114/Mount Carmel Park (public open space, natural SuDS functions, planting privacy buffer, street tree planting and greening)
- Peripheral open space along the north and north-western site boundary, planted with a native species boundary hedge and pollinator-friendly ground cover plants
- Creche Playspace at ground level, landscaped 'naturally'
- Communal Amenity Open Space: triangular-shaped courtyard communal amenity open space, designed and detailed to support a 'passive' therapeutic function as a wander route, a place for gathering and socialising, a green view when looked down on from above. Shadier in character

than the other garden spaces, so evergreen planting has been specified to the ground cover amenity planting, with feature Scot's Pine trees arranged in a central planter, and Birches and multi-stemmed decorative trees arranged as the perimeter tree planting to evoke the sense of a small forest

- Communal Amenity Open Space: sequence of roof gardens at different levels throughout the development providing smaller gathering spaces, with pergolas, raised planters and tree planting
- Communal Amenity Open Space roof garden dedicated to children's play

### **Sequence of Amenity Open Spaces in Landscape**

In landscape terms, the design intends to provide a usable and enjoyable sequence of open spaces appropriate for the residents and locals. Public Open Space (POS) has been located by the architects to the south of the proposed building, directly engaging with Firhouse Road R114/Mount Carmel Park. Communal Amenity Open Space (CAOS) has been located within the development itself, at a main podium courtyard and in several roof podium gardens dispersed through the scheme.

### **Design Measures to Reduce Visual Impacts**

The planting proposals within the subject site addressing Firhouse Road R115 and Mount Carmel Park will significantly 'green' the appearance of these streets. Tree and transplant planting in the amenity open space sequences have been selected from a palette suitable for the site setting and streetscape, and supplemented with appropriate pollinator-friendly trees, shrubs, and flowering perennials. All landscape boundaries have been significantly greened in the design proposals.

**Impact Assessment.**

<b>Photomontage View 01</b>	<b>View from the R114 flyover of the M50 looking West toward the site.</b>
Existing View	Taken from the R114 flyover of the M50 the southern portion of the site can be seen in particular the carparking and the two-storey building accommodating the barbers and book makers. The remainder of the site is screened from view by the trees to the south of the Mount Carmel Park. The trees to the west of the site standing outside the site lands are clearly visible.
Proposed View	The front façade and upper floors of the proposed development are visible to the south and above the existing trees to the south of Mount Carmel Park. The landscape treatment to the boundary with the Firhouse road R114 is visible as are the mature trees to the west of the site lands which stand outside the site.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative / neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate, neutral short term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 02</b>	<b>View from the Ballycullen road looking North to the site</b>
Existing View	The view is dominated by the trees rear of the site, with the eastern boundary wall of the site and the two-storey rear extension of the public house in view.
Proposed View	The proposed new buildings Blocks 1 and 2 are screened by the boundary wall and existing trees to the western side of the Ballycullen road. The eastern elevation of Block 1 is visible with the upper floor and roof of the eastern most portion of Block 1 visible above the tops of the existing vegetation to the west of the Ballycullen road.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate, neutral / positive short term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 03</b>	<b>View from the junction of the Ballycullen Road and the R114 looking Northwest to the site</b>
Existing View	View from the junction of the Firhouse road R114 and the

	Ballycullen road. The full extent of the existing site is viewed from this location point with the trees to the adjoining site to the north and west visible above the roof line of the existing buildings.
Proposed View	The view shows the full extent of the development Blocks 1 and 2 to the Firhouse road and to Mount Carmel Park. The step back in façade treatment and the variation in roof heights help to reduce the visual impact of the development to the left and right of the development where the trees to the adjoining site become visible, as does the landscape treatment to the Firhouse road.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate, positive medium term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 04</b>	<b>View from the entrance to the Sallypark Close residential estate looking North to the site</b>
Existing View	The view is from the entrance road into the Sallypark Close residential estate, looking north the photo shows the front gardens and access road to each of the dwellings.
Proposed View	This view shows the upper floor of Block 1 as it appears over the roof of the residential dwellings in the Sallypark Close
Construction Phase Impacts	Slight neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Slight neutral medium / long term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 05</b>	<b>View from the southern side of the R114 directly opposite the site lands looking North to the site</b>
Existing View	The view includes Mortons Public House and the one storey cottage building to its left. Includes in the view is the parking to the south of the Public House the trees to the rear of the site on the adjoining lands and in the background to the right of the public house are the two storey houses of Mount Carmel Park
Proposed View	This view shows the manner with which the development will address the Firhouse road R114. The variety in the elevations, separations in the blocks 1 and 2, access points and set back from the public pathway with the buffer of landscape hedge and

	tree planting are clearly visible.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate positive short to medium term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 06</b>	<b>Taken from the southern side of the R114 from the western end of the site lands looking Northeast to the site</b>
Existing View	This view includes the full extent of the existing development clearly showing how the existing development addresses the Firhouse road. The view shows the two storey barbers and book makers with the stone wall to the rear, the single storey cottage with the Public House to the right of the view. The trees to the south of Mount Carmel Park and those to the north of the site on adjoining lands can be view above the roof of the existing development.
Proposed View	The view shows the interaction and relationship between the new development and the Firhouse road R114. The proposed view clearly shows the variation in the building elevations, with the setbacks to Block 2 evident, as is the separation between both blocks 1 and 2 and the access from the inner landscape walkway to the podium. The proposed landscape treatment to the boundary with the public pathway of the Firhouse road R114 can be seen with this proposed landscape treatment helping to ground the development and reduce the visual impact of the development. The existing trees to the south of Mount Carmel Park remain in the view as do the trees to the west of the site lands on the adjoining site.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate positive short to medium term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 07</b>	<b>Taken from the southern side of the R114 opposite the entrance to Monalea Wood looking Northeast to the site</b>
Existing View	View 7 is taken from the southern side of the Firhouse road R114, the trees to the west of the site on the adjoining lands screen a view of the 2-storey building containing the barbers and bookmakers and the one storey cottage. The southern elevation of the Public house is visible along with the parking to

	the boundary with the Firhouse road R114.
Proposed View	The proposed view shows southern section of Block 1. The landscape treatment to the south of Block 1 help to ground the development and reduce the visual impact. The framing of the development by the trees to the north and south of the Firhouse road R114 and those to the south of Mount Carmel Close reduce the scale and visual impact of the development.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate neutral short-term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate neutral / positive short to medium term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 08</b>	<b>Taken from the access road to Mount Carmel Park looking south toward the site</b>
Existing View	The view from the access road to Mount Carmel Park looking south includes the two storey dwellings of Mount Carmel Park and the stone wall boundary of the adjoining site north of the development lands, beyond which the rear elevation of the Public house is visible as is the area of open space / car parking to the east of the Public house
Proposed View	The proposed buildings rise in height from the north to south toward the Firhouse road, the set back of the building from the boundary line with the introduction of a public pathway is clear in the view, as the development moves toward the Firhouse road R114 the landscape treatment to the east of Block 1 is visible helping to ground the development.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative short-term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate neutral short-term tending towards positive medium term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 09</b>	<b>Taken from a public pathway in the Dodder Valley Park west of the Balrothery Weir looking Southeast to the site</b>
Existing View	The viewpoint from the Dodder Valley Park shows a mix of hedgerow planting and tree species with a public path and grass area in the foreground. There is no development visible in the view.

Proposed View	The proposed view shows the outline of the development screened from view by the vegetation.
Construction Phase Impacts	Imperceptible neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Imperceptible neutral long term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 10</b>	<b>Taken from the N81 (Tallaght Road) to the west of the Kilsaran Tallaght quarry looking South-southeast to the site</b>
Existing View	The view is taken from the N81 Tallaght Road, with the recently completed landscape works to the road side and hedge planting to the grass roadside verge along with the mature hedge to the south of the rolling grass area. The Kilsaran Tallaght quarry is visible to the east of the view.
Proposed View	The proposed view shows the outline of the development screened from view by the vegetation.
Construction Phase Impacts	Imperceptible neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Imperceptible neutral long term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 11</b>	<b>Taken from a pedestrian bridge over the river Dodder at the Balrothery Weir in the Dodder Valley Park looking South-Southwest to the site</b>
Existing View	This view from the pedestrian bridge across the river Dodder at the Balrothery Weir in the Dodder Valley Park shows the mature trees to the site to the north of the site lands and the two-storey dwelling of Mount Carmel Park
Proposed View	A small section of the proposed upper levels of the taller block is visible above the trees. As the trees screening the development are evergreen the screening does not reduce or increase from that shown during the summer and winter months.
Construction Phase Impacts	Not significant neutral short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Not significant neutral long term visual impact

<b>Photomontage View 12</b>	<b>Taken from the southern end of Mouth Carmel Park looking west to the site</b>
Existing View	The view from the southern internal road to Mount Carmel Park is framed with the two storey dwellings to the north and the mature trees / woodland to the south. The view shows the northern end of the three storey Public house and the eastern elevation of the two-storey extension and boundary wall.
Proposed View	The framing of the view by the two-storey dwelling and trees / woodland focus the viewer on the eastern elevation of Block 1 with the stepping down in the upper floors and the landscape treatment helping to ground the development the separation of the development from Mount Carmel Park by the access road and existing trees outside the site lands help to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development.
Construction Phase Impacts	Moderate negative short term visual impact
Operational Phase Impacts	Moderate positive visual impact medium term

**Mitigation Measures (Ameliorative, Remedial or Reductive Measures)**

There are a number of mitigation measures which will be implemented by the Developer to prevent and reduce significant impacts during the construction and operational phases.

**Construction Phase**

Appropriate measures will be taken to mitigate any potentially adverse construction-related effects on immediately adjoining neighbours, particularly on the residents of the existing Mount Carmel Park. Operation of a well-managed organised and planned construction site, with adequate control of construction traffic and working activity, is key to avoiding or minimising impact.

**Construction Phase Mitigation Measures**

<b>Character of potential impact</b>	<b>Mitigation measure</b>
<b>Construction Phase</b>	
Protecting of existing trees	Provision of secure hoarding / tree protection measures for existing retained trees to the west and north of the site lands.
Materials falling from a height	Use of screening and webbing to prevent materials falling from a height endangering residents and members of the public.

Site lighting	Directing site lighting away from existing residents.
Building phasing	Phasing of development in order that the buildings and surrounding landscape works are completed as soon as possible.
Landscape Contractor selection	Landscape Architect to ensure a competent experienced landscape contractor is appointed to undertake the work
Landscape tender implementation	Landscape Architect to oversee soil preparation, planting and hardworks commissioning to be as specified in the in the Landscape Drawings and Landscape Hardworks and Softwoks specifications.

### **Operational Phase**

Consistent and effective maintenance of hard and soft landscape areas, (entrance areas, open space area and walkways) together with quality site and building management are key to avoiding or minimising negative landscape and visual impacts arising from the operation of the proposed development given the location of the site to the south of the Dodder Valley Park

The design and layout of the proposed open space is considered appropriate in terms of its character, zoning, and context. The proposed scheme (Refer to Figure to the Landscape Architects drawings) includes for a series of measures that will ensure a long-term positive impact in areas to the Firhouse Road R114.

### **Construction Phase**

The residual moderate to slight short term negative visual impacts arising during the construction phase will relate primarily to the rising buildings and associated hoarding, scaffolding and cranes when viewed from the surrounding area. As these are short term the completed buildings and associated hard and soft landscape elements will tie the development into its surrounds. It is not envisaged that there would be any residual impacts from the construction phase other than the usual developing and establishing planting and other normal minor landscape maintenance and replacement issues.

### **Do Nothing Impact**

The site is in zoned lands. Given that the lands are zoned for development, and they are in an area where residential development is ongoing and close to existing transport infrastructure and shopping / restaurants / schools and open space it is likely that the lands would not remain undeveloped for very long.

Any residential development similar to this proposed scheme is likely to result in a similar level of impact on the surrounding landscape and visual environment.

### **Monitoring**

Soft landscape works will be monitored to check establishment during the first 12 months post-planting. Plant failure during this defect's liability period shall be replaced within the following planting season (i.e., November to March) as necessary.

Aftercare to a high standard of both hard and soft landscape elements throughout the scheme will form part of the annual management/maintenance programme which shall be adopted as part of the scheme.

Regular monitoring of existing trees on site shall be carried out as necessary to ensure the tree stand is maintained. The ongoing monitoring shall identify trees which will require surgery works/potential removal which will be essential for the ongoing duty of care associated with the site. Paving will also require ongoing maintenance with the high level of through pedestrian traffic linking the various parts of the site

### **Reinstatement**

Post construction, all soft landscape areas shall be top-soiled (to the required depths), cultivated and seeded or planted in line with the landscape proposals. Should any plants fail during the first 12 months post construction, replacement planting shall be carried out within the following planting season (i.e., November to March) as necessary.

### **Difficulties Encountered**

There were no specific difficulties encountered during the preparation of the visual impact assessment.

### **References**

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (2017) and the accompanying Advice Notes on Current Practice in the Preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (2017); and,

'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment', 3rd Ed., The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.

*Urban Development & Building Heights*, Dept. of Housing Planning & Local Government 2018

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