

Belgard Square East Dublin 24

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment



13.11.25

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1.0 Introduction

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Purser has been instructed by Midsal Homes Limited¹, in association with a wider multi-disciplinary design team, to prepare this Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) in relation to the development of a mixed-use development at lands located at Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

The proposed development consists of 2 No. blocks (Block A to the south and Block B to the north), ranging from 1 to 7 storeys (with mezzanine level) over basement, with a gross floor area of 23,540 sq m (excluding 275 sq m basement). It will provide 199 apartments (49 senior living and 150 standard units) in a mix of studio, one-, two- and three-bed formats.

Non-residential uses (totalling 2,123 sq m) include retail, commercial, food and beverage, healthcare, childcare and personal services. The scheme also incorporates an undercroft car park (58 spaces), cycle parking, new pedestrian and cycle connections, public and communal amenity areas, landscaping, and associated site infrastructure. Roofs will accommodate PV arrays, blue roofs, lift overruns, rooftop vents and 4 No. microwave link dishes on Block B.

For the purposes of this Assessment, the landholding is referenced as the “subject site”. (Figure 1.1.)

The purpose of this TVIA is to identify and determine the potential effects on the character and visual amenity of the townscape as a result of the proposed development.

This report describes the methods used to assess the existing baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area; predicted effects on townscape character, predicted visual effects; mitigation measures that may be required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects; and the likely residual effects after these measures have been adopted. This report and its associated figures should be read in conjunction with the plans and particulars that accompany the application.

This Assessment was prepared by Seamus Donohoe of Purser. Seamus has degrees in Landscape Architecture (BAgrSc Landscape Architecture, University College Dublin, 2010) and Town Planning (MRUP – Masters of Regional and Urban Planning, University College Dublin, 2013). He is a Registered Landscape Architect / Member of the Irish Landscape Institute, a Corporate Member of the Irish Planning Institute and a Chartered Member of the Royal Village Planning Institute. He has over 15 years’ experience in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

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Figure 1.1: Aerial Image showing the location of the subject site in red. Source of aerial image: Google Earth, annotated by Purser

2.0 Assessment Methodology

2.1 General Approach

This chapter sets out the methodology developed by Purser to assess the likely effects of new development on the townscape, landscape, and visual amenity. It draws upon best practice guidance set out in the:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA), published by the Landscape Institute;
- Technical Information Note on Landscape Character Assessment, 2016, published by the Landscape Institute;
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2022, published by the EPA;
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018, published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The assessment methodology takes into account EU Directives in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Planning Legislation (including the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)), and national, regional and local planning policy and guidance, in particular that relating to townscape, landscape, urban design, views, built heritage and supplementary guidance related to specific sites.

The area around the subject site was visited on several dates between November 2024 and February 2025 to assess the potential visibility of the proposed development and its potential impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area.

The EPA guidelines 2022 provide a general methodology and impact ratings for all types of specialist assessments. The GLVIA provides specific guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessments. Therefore, a combination of the EPA guidelines, the Landscape Institute guidelines and professional experience has informed the methodology for this assessment.

The European Landscape Convention 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 expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It recognises landscape as a resource in its own right, providing a complex range of cultural, environmental and economic benefits to individuals and society.

2.1.1 Multi-disciplinary Approach ensuring Design Quality

Purser has worked with the project architects, landscape architects and the wider design team, to understand the proposed development and to provide feedback on design throughout its development, as well as potential effects on built landscape and visual amenity. Through this process, the intention has been to achieve a high quality of design in order to maximise the beneficial effects of the proposed development, on potentially affected receptors.

Computer and physical models were used during the design process to illustrate how different iterations of the design would affect views. This information was used to make early assessments on the landscape and visual effects and thereby inform modifications to the design. The resulting high-quality design provides integrated mitigation measures eliminating potentially harmful or adverse effects.

2.2 Key Principles of the GLVIA

Use of the Word ‘Townscape’

The GLVIA recommends that the word ‘townscape’ be used (instead of landscape) in urban areas, where a proposed development’s receiving environment is dominated by built elements. The GLVIA defines townscape as “the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationships between them, the different types of urban spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces”. As the subject site is located in the urban environment, the word townscape is used.

Use of the Term ‘Effect’ vs ‘Impact’

The GLVIA requires that the terms ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ be clearly distinguished and consistently used. ‘Impact’ is defined as the action being taken, e.g. the introduction of buildings, infrastructure or landscaping to the landscape. ‘Effect’ is defined as the change resulting from those actions, e.g. change in landscape character or in the amenity value of a view.

Assessment of Both ‘Landscape’ and ‘Visual’ Effects

The GLVIA requires that effects on views/visual amenity be assessed separately from the effects on landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked.

- ‘Landscape’ results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations and spatial distribution of these elements create variations in landscape character. Landscape impact assessment identifies the changes to these elements and characteristics which would result from a proposed development and assesses the significance of those changes on the landscape as a resource.
- Visual impact 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.

2.3 Methodology for Assessment of Landscape Effects

The assessment of potential landscape effects involves:

(a) classifying the sensitivity of the landscape receptors (the main elements, features, characteristics and character areas of the landscape);

(b) classifying the potential magnitude of change to each receptor, and

(c) combining these factors to arrive at an assessment of the significance of the effects on each receptor - and the quality of the effects (positive, neutral or negative).

2.3.1 Townscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the townscape is a function of its character, which may be determined by its land use pattern, urban grain, building typologies and architecture, cultural and natural heritage elements, and the quality of the public realm. These factors determine the value that is placed on the townscape. The nature and scale of the proposed development is also taken into account (a particular landscape can have varying sensitivity to different development types), as are any trends of change, and relevant policy. Five categories are used to classify sensitivity. Please refer to **Table 2.1**.

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Areas where the townscape exhibits very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The townscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is very low. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national or international value and the principal management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the townscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The townscape character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principal management objective for the area is the conservation of existing character.
Medium	Areas where the townscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong, or has evidence of alteration, degradation or erosion of elements and characteristics. The townscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in 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 townscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such townscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principal management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the townscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such townscapes include derelict industrial lands, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principal management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the townscape through development, repair or restoration.

Table 2.1: Categories of Townscape Sensitivity.

2.3.2 Magnitude of Townscape Change

Magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the townscape by a development, with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics, and any affected surrounding character areas (also known as ‘townscape receptors’). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change. The categories and criteria used are given in **Table 2.2** below.

Definition	Magnitude
Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the townscape.	Very high
Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the townscape.	High
Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, 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 townscape.	Medium
Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the townscape.	Low
Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the townscape character.	Negligible

Table 2.2: Categories of Townscape Change.

2.3.3 Significance of Townscape Effects

To classify the significance of effects the magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the townscape using the guide in Table 2.3 below. Please refer to Section 2.6 below in relation to significance of effects for both townscape and visual impact assessment.

2.4 Methodology for Assessment of Visual Effects

Assessment of visual effects involves identifying a number of key/representative viewpoints in the site’s receiving environment, and for each one of these: (a) classifying the viewpoint sensitivity, (b) classifying the magnitude of change which would result in the view (informed by photomontages of the proposed development), and (c) combining these factors to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects on the view.

2.4.1 Sensitivity of the Viewpoint/Visual Receptor

Viewpoint 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 is focused 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 townscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage attractions and places of congregation where the setting contributes to the experience. Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation where the surrounding townscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping.
- **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).

Five categories are used to classify a viewpoint’s sensitivity. Please refer to **Table 2.3**.

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Iconic viewpoints (views towards or from a townscape feature or area) that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of national value. The composition, character and quality of the view are such that its capacity for change is very low. The principal management objective for the view is its protection from change.
High	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 (e.g. views from houses or outdoor recreation amenities focused on the townscape). The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity to accommodate change may or may not be low. The principal management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	Views that may not have features or characteristics that are of particular value, but have no major detracting elements, and which thus provide some visual amenity. These views may have capacity for appropriate change and the principal management objective is to facilitate change to the composition that does not detract from visual amenity, or which enhances it.
Low	Areas where the townscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such townscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principal management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the townscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such townscapes include derelict industrial lands, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principal management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the townscape through development, repair or restoration.

Table 2.3: Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity

2.4.2 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 view, or in glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, as well as the duration and reversibility of the visual effects. Five categories are used to classify magnitude of visual change to a view (**Table 2.4**):

Definition	Magnitude
Full or extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features or characteristics, or introduction of elements that are completely out of character in the context, to the extent that the development becomes dominant in the composition and defines the character of the view and the visual amenity	Very 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	High
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.	Medium
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.	Low
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.	Negligible

Table 2.4: Categories of Magnitude of Visual Change.

2.5 Cumulative Impacts

The methodology for assessment of cumulative impacts has been derived from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013) (GLVIA3).

The purpose of the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to consider the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development when viewed in context with other similar development.

Cumulative effects consist of direct effects on the physical character of the site containing the development, and indirect, perceived effects on the character of areas from which the developments would be visible. GLVIA3 identifies:

Cumulative effects as 'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together' (SNH, 2012:4);

Cumulative townscape effects as effects that 'can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the townscape, or any special value attached to it' (SNH, 2012:10);

Cumulative visual effects as effects that can be caused by combined visibility, which 'occurs when the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint' and/or sequential effects which 'occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments' (SNH, 2012:11).

The significance of any identified cumulative townscape and visual effect has been assessed as per the main LVIA methodology. These categories have been based on the same combination of receptor sensitivity and predicted magnitude of impact in order to identify the residual significance of effects.

2.5.1 Cumulative Baseline

This assessment has considered the cumulative baseline in townscape and visual terms, informed by a review of relevant planning permissions in the surrounding area. The schemes identified include SD20A/0289 (service yard alterations north of The Square Shopping Centre), SD238/0004 (Heritage Centre east of the existing Civic Theatre), SD23A/0231 (road upgrade works north of the N81), and SD218/0009 (public realm upgrade works south of the Tallaght Luas line and in front of Rua Red Arts Centre). (See Section 3.0 below for more detail.)

The assessment incorporates the service yard alterations and the Heritage Centre within the cumulative views. In relation to the road and public realm schemes, these works are limited to localised infrastructure and environmental improvements. They do not introduce new built form or massing that would alter the townscape character or visual composition of the assessed views. The submitted photomontages already represent the worst-case scenario in terms of built form, and the implementation of these schemes would serve to improve the quality of the public realm rather than add additional visual impact.

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On this basis, their cumulative contribution has been fully considered narratively within this report. This approach ensures the assessment is both comprehensive and robust, capturing all relevant cumulative effects while recognising that certain improvements will only serve to enhance the overall environment.

2.6 Significance of Townscape and Visual Effects

As with townscape effects, to classify the significance of visual effects, the magnitude of change to the view is measured against the sensitivity of the viewpoint, using the guidance in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.1** below. This matrix is only a guide. 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.

Magnitude of Townscape / Visual Change	Sensitivity of Townscape / View				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very high	Profound	Profound - Very Significant	Very Significant - Significant	Moderate	Slight
High	Profound - very significant	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate -Slight	Slight - Not significant
Medium	Very Significant - Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not significant
Low	Moderate	Moderate - Slight	Slight	Not significant	Imperceptible
Negligible	Slight	Slight - Not Significant	Not significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 2.5: – Guide to Classification of Significance of Townscape and Visual Effects.

The matrix (Table 2.5) and the EPA chart (Figure 2.1) are only a guide to the classification of impact significance. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification that is reasonable and justifiable. In the EPA guidelines the chart above is accompanied by a footnote that states: "The depiction of significance classifications is indicative and should not be relied on as being definitive. It is provided for general guidance purposes" (EPA guidelines Section 3, page 53). For example, according to the EPA chart a change of high magnitude affecting a receptor of medium sensitivity could be classified as either 'significant' or 'moderate'. That judgement must be made by the assessor.

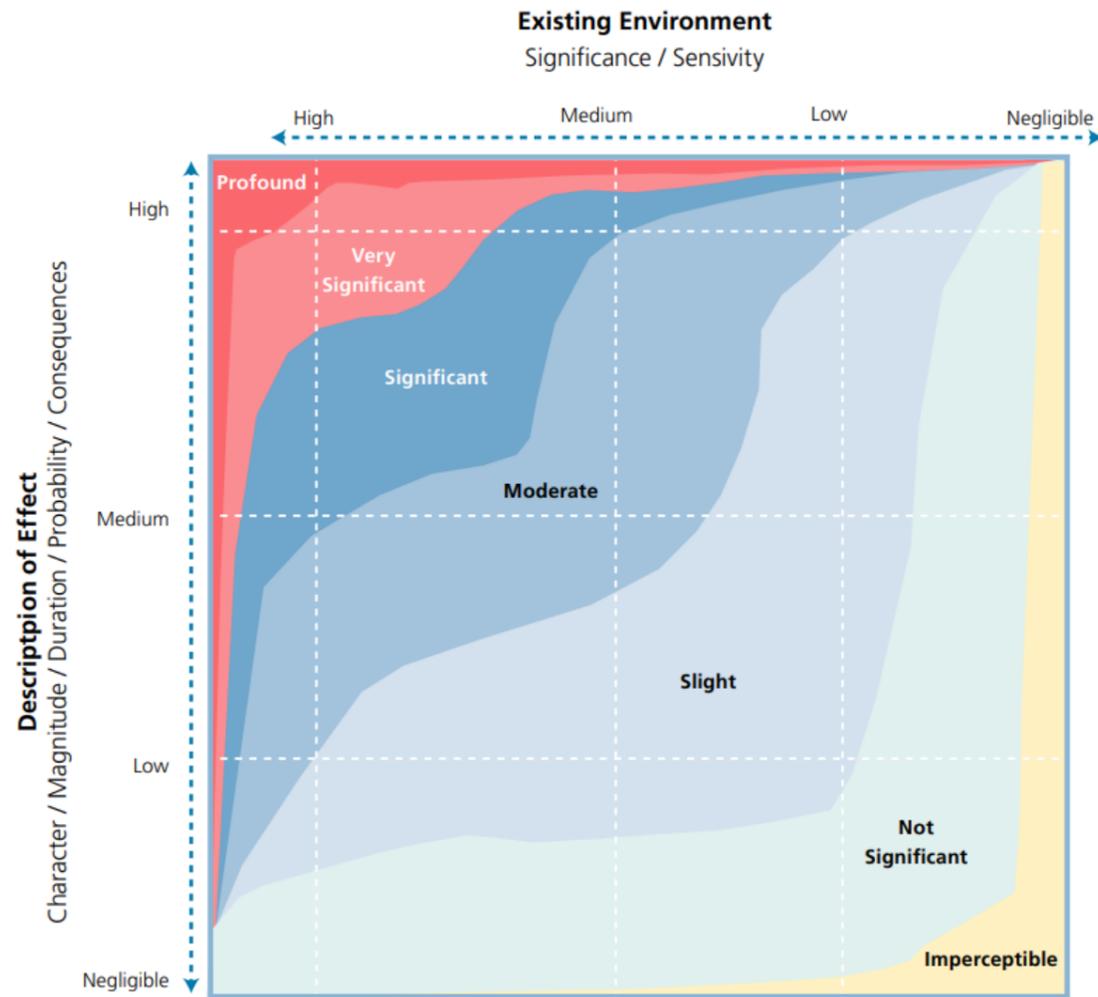


Figure 2.1: Figure 3.4 of EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports shows how comparing the character of the predicted effect to the sensitivity of the receiving environment can determine the significance of the effect.

2.7 Quality of Effects

The predicted impacts are also classified as beneficial (positive), neutral or adverse (negative). 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 follows:

- **Adverse (negative):** 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 townscape (landscape) / view to be diminished.
- **Neutral:** Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the townscape (landscape) / view and maintains townscape quality.
- **Beneficial (positive):** Scheme improves townscape (landscape) / 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.

For townscape to a degree, but particularly for visual effects, this is an inherently subjective exercise. This is because townscape and visual amenity are perceived by people and are therefore subject to variations in the attitude and values - including aesthetic preferences - of the receptor. One person’s attitude to a development may differ from another person’s, and thus their response to the effects of a development on a townscape or view may vary.

Additionally, in certain situations there might be policy encouraging a particular development in an area, in which case the policy is effectively prescribing townscape and visual change. If a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be considered positive, even if the townscape character or views are profoundly changed. The classification of quality of townscape and visual effects should seek to take these variables into account and provide a reasonable and robust assessment.

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2.8 Timescale

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

Duration	Description
Construction Phase	
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less ²
Operational Phase	
Short-term	Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium-term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long-term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years

Table 2.6: Impacts / effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale.

² In this case, construction is likely to take c.24 months for the proposed development. However, in any given viewpoint or location construction may only be experienced for short period and across the overall site construction and operational stages may occur at the same time or overlap.

3.0 The Receiving Environment

3.1 The Site

The subject site is situated in a prominent location at the junctions of Old Blessington Road and Belgard Square East and Old Blessington Road and Belgard Road (R113) (See Figure 3.1). Currently, the site comprises a flat open area with scrub grasses and some hardstanding which appears to have been previously used for car parking. The site is enclosed by a mix of fencing, brick walls, hoarding and vegetation to restrict access. (See Figures 3.2 -3.5).

The site measures c. 1.19 ha in size and is rectangular in shape. It is bordered: to the south by McDonald's Restaurant and Drive-thru along with associated car parking; to the north by Blessington Road; to the west by Belgard Square East and to the east by Belgard Road (R113). Currently, there are two access points to the site from Belgard Square East with a further access point at the northern end of the site opening onto Old Blessington Road. The site is flat with mature vegetation that lines the boundaries, while the centre of the site is predominantly covered in scrub grasses.

Immediately surrounding the site is a mixture of commercial/office uses, community facilities (Garda station and Intreo offices), residential use and large box retail units. The adjacent buildings range in height from 1 to 7 storeys.

The site is located to the west of the historic village of Tallaght which dates back to the 8th century. Historic maps show that the subject site remained undeveloped until the 1990s. The 1990s was a period of concentrated development for the wider Tallaght area which included Tallaght University Hospital, The Square Shopping Centre and the TU Dublin campus. During this period the site was developed for industrial purposes and comprised a number of industrial buildings. These buildings were previously demolished and the site is free from any built structures, save for a substation on the eastern boundary at Belgard Road.

3.1.1 Wider and Emerging Context

The character of the area in which the subject site is located is urban in nature bordered by low density suburban residential development to the west, south and east. The area is a mix of well-established and more contemporary residential, retail and commercial/commercial land uses.

The N81 is a dominant feature further south of the site. The N81 is a dual carriageway known as the Tallaght by-pass and provides access to the M50 which is a major distributor route within the Dublin metropolitan area. The N81 creates a visual barrier between the urban character surrounding the site which comprises Tallaght town centre and the transition into low density suburban development to the south.

To the west of the site is Tallaght shopping centre known as 'The Square' which was constructed in the 1990s. The shopping centre is laid out over three floors with approximately 163 stores. The shopping centre also benefits from a multi-storey car park which is visible from the subject site. The shopping centre is considered to be the anchor point of all modern development within Tallaght since the 1990s. This is further strengthened by the construction of the Red Line LUAS which

terminates outside the shopping centre and approximately 550m west of the subject site. Beyond the shopping centre to the north and north west is Tallaght University Hospital, South Dublin County Council offices. Tallaght library, the Glashaus Hotel as well as a number of mixed use developments. Beyond the hospital to the west of Cookstown Way the character alters from urban to low density housing comprising semi-detached and terraced housing.

To the north of the site the large commercial/office blocks give way to large box retail stores and employment uses. To the northeast of the subject site is TU Dublin – Tallaght campus which comprises a cluster of educational buildings and associated playing fields. Beyond the TU campus the commercial/employment character continues to the north before reaching Mayberry Road where the character changes again to low density suburban development.

To the east of the site is the historic village of Tallaght and the Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area. The historic village centres around the present day Church of St Maelruain which was built circa 1829. This is on the site of an early Christian monastery dating from the 8th century. The ACA extends west along Old Blessington Road encompassing Main Street and part of Greenhills Road. This area retains its characteristics of a small village with low density two storey housing and some individual retail/commercial offerings. There are a number of Protected Structures within the ACA of which St. Maelruain's Church and neighbouring semi-detached dwellings are the closest in proximity to the development site.



Figure 3.1: Aerial Image of the Subject Site in red. Source of map: Geohive map, annotated by Purser

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Figure 3.2: View from the north western site corner looking southeast



Figure 3.4: View from the east of the site looking west towards the Tuansgate Building



Figure 3.3: View from the north of the site looking south



Figure 3.5: View from the west of the site looking northeast

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3.1.2 Planning History of the Subject Site

There is a limited planning history relating to the subject site with 3 No. relevant applications identified. We set out the following relevant planning history below.

(Please note that this planning history review is high-level only for the purposes of the preparation of this assessment. Please refer to the Planning Report prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning for more information in relation to the planning history of the subject site or adjacent / nearby sites).

3.1.2.1 SHD Application Ref. SHD3ABP-313760-22

In June 2022 an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the construction of a mixed use development comprising 310 No. Build to Rent apartments across 3 No. blocks over partial basement, creche and 10 no. retail and commercial units comprising c. 2,289sqm with active street frontages. The blocks would range in height from part 6 to part 12 storeys.

An Bord Pleanála has yet to make a decision regarding the application, with the Local Authority report being returned to An Bord Pleanála. As of September 2022 a letter from An Bord Pleanála advised there would be a delay in providing a decision on this application.



Figure 3.6: CGI of the proposed scheme at the junction of Old Blessington Road and Belgard Road. Source: Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref: SHD3ABP-313760-22.

3.1.2.2 Application Reg. Ref. SD09A/0419 / SD09A/0419/EP

In October 2009 an application was submitted to South Dublin County Council for the construction of a mixed use development extending to 5 storey over basement level car park. The scheme comprised retail use (c.6,339sqm at ground level and c.6,856sqm at first floor level), café/restaurant (c.297sqm) at ground level, leisure/bowling use (c.3,321sqm) and cinema (c.2736sqm at second floor level); a 14 screen multiplex cinema (c.6,154sqm) at third floor level. The development would also comprise a new landscaped public plaza at the corner of Belgard Square East and Blessington Road together with a new public street linking Belgard Square East and Belgard Road. The development would provide 240 No. car parking spaces and 200 No. bicycle spaces with vehicular access via a ramp from Belgard Road.

Further information was submitted reducing the overall retail floorspaces over two floors to c.2,000sq, the addition of leisure use at first floor level and addition of a mezzanine within each of the proposed retail units resulted in internal alterations to the escalators. The alterations included amendments to the substation and switch rooms. Alterations to the access arrangements, reconfiguration of the basement car park, bicycle parking and plant.

South Dublin County Council granted permission for the development on 01 April 2010. Condition No. 2 provided the Applicant with the option to omit 10 no. car spaces at basement level to facilitate an exit lane to the exit ramp or submit an alternative layout for the basement car park. Condition No. 3 requested the amelioration of level changes across the site to ensure accessibility and pedestrian safety. Condition No. 4 related to access and safety arrangements including the omission of a traffic island. Condition No. 5 requested the omission of steel mesh climbing pole structure from the plaza

An extension of duration was granted until 1 April 2020. The application was never implemented. Permission has since expired.



Figure 3.7: View from Blessington Road/Belgard Square East junction. Source: Architectural Design Statement prepared by BKD architects submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref: SD09A/0419.

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3.1.2.3 Application Reg. Ref. SD04A/0975 / SD04A/0975/EP

In December 2004 an application for the construction of a mixed-use development arranged across 4-6 storeys consisting of 223 No. apartments (42 No. 3 bedroom units; 118 No. 2 bedroom units; and 63 No. 1 bedroom units), retail unit, two storey creche, residents laundry and children's playroom. A 200 space LUAS park and ride car park would be constructed at -1 basement level, a further 223 dedicated residential car parking spaces and 91 public parking spaces would be located at -2 basement level.

Further information was submitted and altered the development by reducing the number of units from 223 to 214. The redesign included changes to the residential block overlooking McDonalds and the retail frontage.

The amended retail offering provided c.13,283sqm of shops, creche and children's play area and laundrette.

Clarification of further information was subsequently submitted and altered the development by reducing the height of the development therefore reducing the number of apartments to 199 units. The retail area was reduced to c.9,658sqm. A reduction in the inner courtyard to Blocks A and C and alterations to the building line of the southern boundary. The park and ride car park was omitted and the total car park provision was 504 spaces. Shopfront glazing and signage was omitted from the southern boundary. Width alterations were made to pedestrian link between shopfronts.

South Dublin County Council granted permission for the development on 16 March 2006. Condition 2 required the removal of 4 No. apartments at 5th floor level, reducing the overall number to 195 units.

An extension of duration was granted until 16 March 2016. The application was never implemented. Permission has since expired.

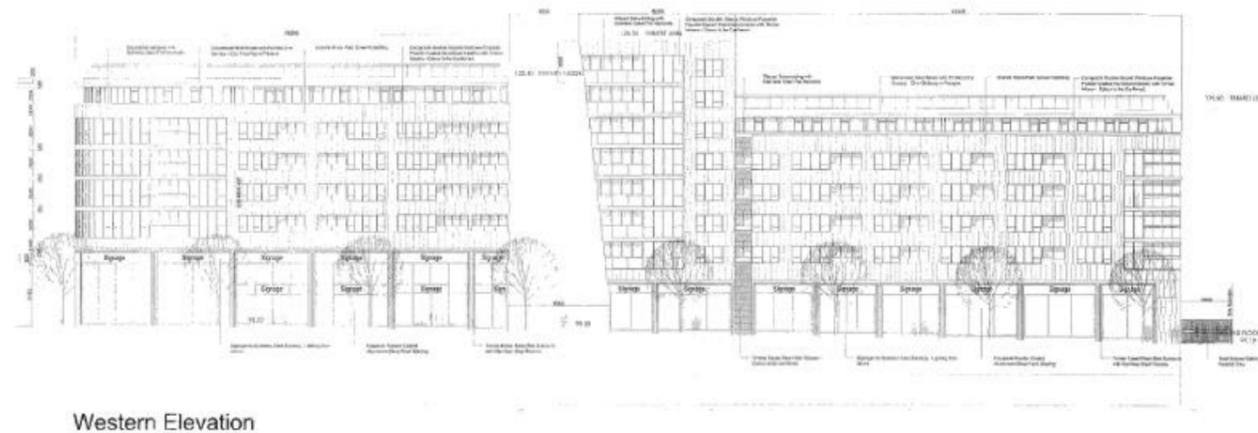


Figure 3.8: Western elevation. Source Spain Courtney Doyle submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. SD04A/0975

3.1.3 Planning History of Adjacent Sites

3.1.3.1 Lands to the East of Unit 11 Broomhill Road - Application Reg. Ref SD23A/0288

In May 2024, an application for residential development was made to South Dublin County Council for the construction of 82 no. residential apartment units and associated commercial floorspace in 3 no. residential apartment blocks 5 to 6 storeys. Following a request for further information, a floor was omitted reducing the height to 5-6 storeys and reducing the number of units from 82 to 75 units. Permission was refused by SDCC.

The decision was later appealed and permitted by An Bord Pleanála on the 6 February 2025.



Figure 3.9: Verified view of the development at Unit 11 Broomhill Road. Source: Richard Tудо Architectural Visualisation submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. SD23A/0288

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3.1.3.2 Lands at Broomhill Road & Unit 51 Broomhill Road – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-313591-22

In May 2022, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for 242 no. residential units, a childcare facility, gym and associated amenity spaces.

An Bord Pleanála refused permission for the development on the 12 December 2024 on three grounds relating to contravention of the Tallaght LAP.

1. Limited level of business, enterprise and employment uses provided as the development is predominantly residential;
2. Development contrary to sequencing and implementation objectives of the LAP; and
3. Plot ratio and height exceed the range specified in the LAP.

3.1.3.3 Former ABB Site, corner of Belgard Square North and Belgard Road – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-313606-22

In May 2022, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the construction of a residential development consisting of 334 No. units (216 residential units which includes 3 No. live-work units and 118 No. Build to Rent units); new home/tertiary pedestrian and cycle route; public open space; communal open space and landscaping, residential amenity space and car parking. –

An Bord Pleanála has yet to make a decision regarding the application, with the Local Authority report being returned to An Bord Pleanála. As of September 2022 a letter from An Bord Pleanála advised there would be a delay in providing a decision on this application.



Figure 3:10: CGI image of 'The Arbour' - Former ABB Site. Source: 3D Design Bureau submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-313606-22.

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3.1.3.4 Glen Abbey, Belgard Road, Cookstown Industrial Estate – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-309916-21

In April 2021, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the demolition of the existing buildings, construction of 170 no. Build to Rent apartments, creche and associated site works. The proposal extended to 4-7 storeys over basement and a net density of 256 units per hectare.

Following an oral hearing, An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on the 21 September 2021. Construction has not yet commenced.



Figure 3:11: Verified view of the development at Glen Abbey. Source: 3D Design Bureau submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP- 309916-21

3.1.3.5 Former Gallaher's Cigarette Factory site, at the junction of Airton Road and Greenhills Road— SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-306705-20

In February 2020, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the demolition of existing factory/warehouse buildings on site (total floor area circa 10,076.8 square metres); construction of 502 number apartments (comprising 197 number one-bed; 257 number two-bed; and 48 number three-bed units) within six number blocks ranging in height from four to eight storeys and provision of residential amenity facilities, three number retail units, creche, and services/bin store areas (total non-residential floor area circa 1,839 square metres).

The proposed development was arranged across 4-8 storeys providing a density of 202 units per hectare. An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on the 16 June 2020.

An extension of duration of permission was granted until 30 July 2027. Construction has commenced on site.



Figure 3:12: Verified view of the development at the Former Gallaher Site. Source: 3D Design Bureau submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP- 306705-20

PURSER

3.1.3.6 Units 66 & 67 Fourth Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-308398-20

In October 2020, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the demolition of existing industrial buildings and the construction of 252 no. build to rent apartments with private open space, communal amenity space, a gym and all associated site works on 28th January 2021 on a site at Units 66 and 67 Fourth Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate, Tallaght, Co. Dublin. The site is c. 900 metres / 11 minutes walking distance from the subject site.

An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on the 28 January 2021. Condition No. 2a and 2b omitted two floors reducing the height to 7 storeys in Block B and omission of 1 floor reducing the height to 6 storeys in Block A. Condition No. 2c requested the relocation of the creche with the provision of an outdoor play space resulting in the omission of an apartment unit and relocation of community/amenity space.

Construction has commenced on site and development is close to completion.



Figure 3:13: CGI image of the site at Units 66 & 67 Fourth Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate. Source: 3D Design Bureau submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-308398-20

PURSER

3.1.3.7 Corner of Airton Road and Belgard Road – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-305763-19

In October 2019, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the demolition of the existing industrial units on site and the construction of 2 No. blocks comprising 328 No. apartments (93 No. one bedroom units, 222 No. two bedroom units and 13 No. 3 bedroom units); ancillary residential facilities; commercial floorspace at ground floor level. The blocks would range in height from 5 to 9 storeys.

An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on the 20 February 2020. This scheme is currently being built out and is close to completion.

A retention application was made for minor amendments to the parent permission under Ref LRD24A/0004W granted on 2 September 2024.



Figure 3.14: Artistic impression image of the development from the junction of Airton Road and Belgard Road. Source: John Fleming Architects submitted as part of SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-305763-19.

3.1.3.8 Unit 5A-C, Second Avenue, Cookstown Industrial Estate – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-303803-19

In July 2019, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the demolition of the existing 2,590 square metres industrial building and the construction of a ‘build-to-rent’ housing development providing a total of 196 number residential apartments in four number six to nine storey blocks over basement. The development will include one number commercial unit (248 square metres, accommodating Class 1, 2 and 8 uses as per the Planning and Development etc.

The proposal was subject to an Oral Hearing on the 09 July 2019. The main concern which was discussed at the Oral Hearing was in relation to proposal potential impact on aviation safety. The development consisted of a net density of 329 units per hectare and extended to building heights of 6-9 storeys.

An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on the 25 July 2019. Minor alterations were made to the parent permission under Ref. ABP-307177-20 relating to internal layouts, the omission of a basement level and relocation of a car park. The development is complete and occupied.

3.1.3.9 Lands at junction of Belgard Road and Belgard Square North residential development – SHD Application Reg. Ref. SHD3ABP-303306-18

In December 2018, an application for a Strategic Housing Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála for the construction of a residential development consisting of 438 No. units consisting of 158 No. 1 bedroom units, 230 No. 2 bedroom units and 50 No. 3 bedroom units arranged over 4 No. blocks. The total number of units included 8 No. live/work units with 509sqm of work space on the ground floor. Block B2 would comprise 403 No. bedspace student accommodation scheme with associated facilities.

The scheme would also consist of a childcare facility; external play area; 6 No. retail/commercial units; 107 car parking spaces below podium level and 22 car parking spaces at ground level; 1227 bicycle parking spaces; outdoor amenity space and landscaping.

An Bord Pleanála granted permission for the development on 15 April 2019 for a period of 7 years until 2026. Construction has not yet commenced.

3.1.3.10 Old Blessington Road (East of the Civic Theatre) – SD238/0004

In August 2023, a Part 8 application was published by South Dublin County Council for the development of a new Heritage Centre for Tallaght with a gross floor area c. 870sqm comprising (i) a new two storey structure which will accommodate gallery and exhibition spaces, multi-purpose room, reception, external terrace, and all of the required supporting spaces including storage, welfare facilities, services and bin storage (ii) removal of existing boundary fence, removal existing bottle-bank and bike lockers, removal of 39 no. existing surface car-parking spaces to facilitate development and (iii) all associated site works to include hard and soft landscaping including courtyard garden, planting, 20 no of bicycle parking spaces, lighting, signage and all associated site and development works.

South Dublin County Council approved the development on 09 October 2023. At the time of writing, construction has yet to commence.



Figure 3.15: Render of proposed West Elevation. Source: McCullough Mulvin Architects submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. SD238/0004

3.1.3.11 The Square Shopping Centre, Tallaght – SD20A/0289

In November 2020, an application was submitted to South Dublin County Council for alterations to an existing external service area to the north eastern side of The Square Shopping Centre at the entrance to the existing service yard. The proposed amendments comprised the following: construction of an external plant area (c.135sq.m) enclosed by 2.4 metre high galvanised fencing to accommodate an Air Handling Unit (AHU) and a Chiller Unit ancillary to the shopping centre; new flat roof boiler room building (c.34sq.m gross floor area) within the proposed new enclosed plant enclosure; installation of a metal frame (2.4 metres wide x 1 metre high and located 2-3 metres above the ground supported by metal stilts) to facilitate the connection of the Air Handling Unit and Chiller within the plant area to the covered service yard area; replacement of mesh panels on existing wall on the western and northern side of the service yard with metal louvered panels.

South Dublin County Council granted permission for the development on 15 February 2021. The development is complete and operational.

3.1.3.12 A new Public Square at the Tallaght LUAS stop and improved Public Space in front of Rua Red Arts Centre and The Civic Theatre – SD218/0009

In August 2021, a Part 8 application was published by South Dublin County Council for a new public square at the Tallaght LUAS stop and improved public space in front of Rua Red Arts Centre and The Civic Theatre. The proposed development comprised the following works:

- Construction of Mobility Hub at the existing Tallaght Luas stop including hard and soft landscaping works.
- Provision of information point totem and a feature bench.
- Provision of feature streetlighting. Provision of outdoor seating to Rua Red and Betelnut cafes to include parasols, tables and chairs.
- Associated ancillary works.

South Dublin County Council approved the development on 11 October 2023. At the time of writing, construction has yet to commence.



Figure 3.16: Extract of Dwg. No.20017_04 – Site Layout Plan demonstrating the extent of the proposed works at the Tallaght Cultural Quarter . Source: South County Dublin online planning search tool submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. SD218/0009.



Figure 3.17: Extract of Dwg. No.20017_03 – Site Layout Plan demonstrating the extent of the proposed works at the Tallaght Luas stop . Source: South County Dublin online planning search tool submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. SD218/0009.

3.2 Key Townscape Elements and Character Areas of the Receiving Environment

The character of the area in which the subject site is located is urban in nature bordered by low density suburban residential development to the west, south and east. The area is a mix of well-established and more contemporary residential, retail and commercial/commercial land uses. The Square shopping centre to the west of the site and the N81 to the south are dominant features in the townscape. In the immediate vicinity of the subject site there have been a number of planning applications for mixed use including residential development. The density of the proposed developments will further strengthen the urban character of the surrounding area.

The main elements and character areas of the receiving environment (i.e. the main potential receptors of townscape and visual impacts) can be summarised as follows:

a) Surrounding and Adjacent Land Uses

- **Residential**
The residential surrounding the site is predominantly high-density apartment buildings with ground floor/retail commercial. Beyond the N81, Cookstown Way and Belgard Road the character of residential development changes to low-density two storey terraced or semi-detached properties.
- **Town Centre**
To the west of the site is the Square shopping centre which forms the core of Tallaght town centre. The site and its immediate surroundings also comprise South Dublin County Council offices, a branch of South Dublin Libraries, and a Civic Theatre. A number of public bodies such as the HSE and Department of Social Protection have offices in this area.
- **Transport**
The N81 is a dominant feature to the south of the site. This is a key route providing access to the M50 which is a main distributor within the Dublin Metropolitan area. Directly bounding the east of the site is the R113 (Belgard Road). To the west of the site is Cookstown Way which provides links to the M7 motorway. Approximately 500m to the west the Tallaght Red Line LUAS terminal stop is located outside the Square shopping centre.
- **Education**
Educational facilities contribute to the social infrastructure of the area. To the northeast of the site, TU Dublin – Tallaght campus and its associated playing fields are located along the R113 (Belgard Road). To the west of the TU campus St. Mary's National School is located, while St. Dominic's National School is located to the south of the N81. Old Bawn Community School is located directly south of the subject site adjacent to Tallaght Stadium
- **Open Space / Park**
Sean Walsh Memorial Park is located to the south of the site. It comprises a sensory garden and playground contributing to the green infrastructure of the area. Other areas of green/open space nearby include the TU campus sports pitches and Tallaght Athletics track.

b) Local and Major Roads

- **N81**
The N81 is a national road which runs from the M50 to Tullow in Co. Carlow. The road is a dual carriageway between the M50 and west of Tallaght known as the Tallaght by-pass. The N81 is a key connection point to the M50 and the wider metropolitan road system. The N81 is characterised by both residential and commercial/industrial development along its boundaries. The immediate area is characterised by the Sean Walsh Memorial Park which provides a green boundary to the south and medium to low density development along the northern boundary. The N81 creates a visual barrier between the urban character surrounding the site which comprises Tallaght town centre and the transition into low density suburban development to the south.
- **R113 (Belgard Road)**
The R113 known as the Belgard Road runs to the east of the subject site. It is a dual-carriageway national road providing links between the N81 in the south and M7 motorway in the north. The road is characterised primarily by low rise industrial development or large retail box stores on large plots and office developments, there are some high-density mixed-use developments being constructed along the Belgard Road particularly in the Tallaght town centre area.
- **Belgard Square East**
Belgard Square East is a two-way street to the west of the subject site. It is characterised by large plots which accommodate retail/commercial/office uses. It provides access to the multi-storey carpark which serves Tallaght Shopping Centre.
- **Old Blessington Road**
Old Blessington Road is a two-way street to the north of the subject site. It connects the Tallaght Shopping Centre and the historic Tallaght Village.

c) Other Landscape Features

- **University Hospital Tallaght**
University Hospital Tallaght is a large hospital which was constructed in the 1990s as part of the wider development of Tallaght. It opened in June 1998 and is the amalgamation of three hospitals which were previously located within the wider Dublin area. The hospital campus is located to the west of the subject site and is a focal point within Tallaght town centre.
- **Red Line LUAS**
The Red Line LUAS terminates outside Tallaght Shopping Centre at the Tallaght Park and Ride stop. The LUAS line is a key transport facility that provides access to adjacent suburban areas as well as Dublin City Centre.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 Introduction

We outline a review of key policies at national, regional and local level. (Please note that this policy review is limited and for the purposes of the preparation of this assessment only. Please refer to the Planning Report prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning for more information in relation to the planning policy of the subject site or adjacent / nearby sites).

4.2 National Planning Framework First Revision (April 2025)

The NPF sets out a number of planning policy objectives that specifically relate to the location, scale, design and massing of developments to create more compact development. The following objectives are considered to be most applicable to the residential development at the subject site:

- **National Policy Objective 4** supports a target of half (50%) of future population and employment growth will be focused in the existing five cities and their suburbs.
- **National Policy Objective 7** states that 40% of all new homes nationally will be delivered within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.
- **National Policy Objective 8** states that at least half (50%) of all new homes to be delivered within the five cities and their suburbs will be within their existing built-up footprints to ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.
- **National Policy Objective 10** states that Transport Orientated Development will be delivered at scale in suitable locations, served by high capacity public transport and located within or adjacent to the built up footprint of the five cities or a metropolitan town and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.
- **National Policy Objective 12** ensures that the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- **National Policy 20** states that in meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.

- **National Policy Objective 22** states in urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth.
- **National Policy Objective 42** requires a target of the delivery of housing to accommodate approximately 50,000 additional homes per annum to 2040.
- **National Policy Objective 43** will prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.

4.3 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (December 2018)

The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities ("Building Height Guidelines") were adopted in December 2018 under Section 28 of the 2000 Act.

In order to meet development targets urban development within towns and cities must grow upwards not outwards. Decisions around appropriate building heights must be carefully made in order to strike a balance between allowing long term strategic development of an area and promoting the highest standards of urban design, architectural quality and place-making.

Paragraph 1.9 of the Guidelines states that:

*“the Government considers that there is **significant scope to accommodate anticipated population growth and development needs, whether for housing, employment or other purposes by building up and consolidating the development of our existing urban areas**”.* [our emphasis].

The Guidelines further emphasise that:

“increasing prevailing building heights therefore has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas....through enhancing both the scale and density of development.”

The Building Height Guidelines advise that in order to implement the National Planning Framework:

“it requires increased density, scale and height of development in our town and city cores, including an appropriate mix of both the living, working, social and recreational space we need in our urban areas”.

The Building Height Guidelines expressly seek increased building heights in urban locations:

“In relation to the assessment of individual planning applications and appeals, it is Government policy that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations. There is therefore a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility. “[our emphasis]

In Section 3.2 of the Guidelines, ‘development management criteria’ are set out to guide the evaluation of development proposals for buildings taller than the prevailing heights in the area. The following criteria from Section 3.2 of Guidelines are most relevant to the consideration of a taller building’s landscape/townscape and visual impacts:

“In the event of making a planning application, the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority/ An Bord Pleanála, that the proposed development satisfies 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...** thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure...*

- *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.**” [Our emphasis.]*

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.*

4.4 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2024)

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (“Sustainable Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines”) were adopted in January 2024 under Section 28 of the 2000 Act. These Guidelines replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued as Ministerial guidelines under Section 28 of the Act in 2009.

The NPF priorities for compact growth include an emphasis on the renewal of existing settlements, rather than continued sprawl. The Sustainable Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines advise that:

“In order to achieve compact growth, we will need to support more intensive use of existing buildings and properties, including the re-use of existing buildings that are vacant and more intensive use of previously developed land and infill sites, in addition to the development of sites in locations served by existing facilities and public transport”.

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The Guidelines go on to state that:

“It will also be necessary to adapt the scale and form of development to the receiving environment and to ensure a proportionate response” and that “this approach will provide greater diversity in housing stock in all locations and support a critical mass of population that will make services, including public transport more viable”.

The proposed development benefits from several public transport options, with Tallaght LUAS stop only 380m west of the site, and multiple nearby bus stops on Belgard Road, Blessington Road and Belgard Square North which offer travel in north-south and east-west directions.

4.5 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (“RSES”) for the East and Midlands Regional Assembly comprises a number of core Regional Policy Objectives which coincide with the National Planning Framework (NPF). The purpose of the guidelines is to direct all Local Authority future plans, projects and activities requiring consent of the Regional Assembly.

The Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) for Dublin contained within the RSES states the following:

*“RPO 5.4: Future development of **strategic residential development areas within the Dublin Metropolitan area shall provide for higher densities** and qualitative standards as set out in the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', 'Sustainable Urban Housing - Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines', and 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities.’ [our emphasis]*

Chapter 9 of the RSES advises that achieving compact growth targets will require active land management responses to ensure that land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential.

Regional Policy Objective 9.8 states that the Land Development Agency will work with local authorities, government departments and relevant agencies to promote increased urban densities in all existing settlements.

4.6 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 and Tallaght LAP 2020

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 provides the relevant statutory planning context for the subject site. The following sections outline policies and objectives of the above policy documents that are relevant to the assessment of potential townscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

4.6.1 Zoning

The application site is primarily zoned ‘Town Centre’ (TC) with an objective “to protect, improve and provide for the future development of Town Centres”. Residential is permitted in principle under this zoning.

The surrounding sites are also zoned ‘Town Centre’ (TC), this zone covers all of the newer area surrounding Tallaght Shopping Centre and the new town centre. A sliver of land directly east of the site comprising the burial ground associated with St Maelruain’s Church connects the church grounds with Belgard Road with and is zoned ‘Open Space’ (OS).

The older village of Tallaght is zoned ‘Village Centre’ which focuses on the future development of village centres.



Figure 4.1: Extract of the Zoning Map of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028. The subject site is outlined in red.

4.6.3 Protected Structures

There are no Protected Structures located within the subject site.

The closest Protected Structure are located to the east of the site contained within the Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area. There are 6 No. Protected Structures located approximately 250m to 700m from the site. For completeness, they are listed below:

Protected Structure	Name	Description	Distance from Subject Site
RPS 268	St. Basil's Training Centre, Greenhills Road	Detached ten-bay single storey building.	c. 697m to the east.
RPS 269	The Priory, Tallaght	Tallaght Castle Gate	c. 519m to the east.
RPS 270	St. Mary's Dominican Priory, Tallaght Gothic Revival Priory	Detached multiple-bay three storey with attic	c. 519m to the east.
RPS 271	St. Maelruain's Church, Tallaght and Monastic Enclosure	Stone church, font, cross, graveyard	c. 263m to the east.
RPS 272	Blessington Road	Pair of semi-detached single storey houses, Blessington Road	c. 290m to the east.
RPS 273	St. Mary's Dominican Church, Tallaght	Detached gable-fronted gothic revival church	c. 517m to the east.

Table 4.1 – List of nearby Protected Structures. Source: South Dublin County Council List of Protected Structures

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4.6.4 Recorded Monuments and Places

There are a number of Recorded Monuments located to the east of the site. They are located within the Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area and adjacent to the ACA boundary.

Reference Number	Description	Address	Distance from Subject Site
R187888	Font, tomb - unclassified x 2, tomb - chest tomb, church, historic town, ecclesiastical enclosure, graveyard and cross	Tallaght	c.130m
R187980	Ritual site/holy tree/bush	Tallaght	c.455m
R187889	Gatehouse and castle – unclassified	Tallaght	c.400m
R187979	SMR Zone	Tallaght	c.470m
R187959	SMR Zone	Tallaght	c.390m
R149404	Enclosure	Tallaght	c.340m
R187891	Mill – unclassified	Tallaght	c.115m

Table 4.2 – List of nearby Recorded Monuments. Source: South Dublin County Council List of Recorded Monuments.

4.6.5 Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

The subject site is not located within an ACA. However, it is located approximately 200m west of Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area. The ACA stretches from St. Maelruain’s Church and graveyard on Blessington Road to the Old Greenhills Road in the east. It takes in the Priory buildings and the terraced houses opposite on the southern site of Main Street. The ACA centres on the area which was considered Tallaght village prior to the development of the new town centre from the 1960’s onwards. The character of the ACA is distinct from that of the new town centre in that it retains its village feel despite the surrounding area being developed and regenerated. The Development Plan states “*the character of Main Street today is largely defined by the attractive and substantially intact early twentieth century houses in the village.*”

4.6.6 Preserved Views

There are no preserved views associated within, or in close proximity to the subject site.

4.6.7 Relevant Policies

The Development Plan includes the following relevant policies:

Chapter 3: Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage	
Policy NCBH 1	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 NCBH 6	Protect and enhance the visual, environmental, ecological, geological, archaeological, recreational and amenity value of the Dublin Mountains, as a key element of the County’s Green Infrastructure network.
Policy NCBH13	Manage development in a manner that protects and conserves the Archaeological Heritage of the County and avoids adverse impacts on sites, monuments, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.
Policy NCBH14	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.
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 2	To ensure that development is assessed against Landscape Character, Landscape Values and Landscape Sensitivity as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment for South Dublin County (2021) in accordance with Government guidance on Landscape Character Assessment and the National Landscape Strategy (2015-2025).
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.
NCBH14 Objective 4	To require a Landscape / Visual Impact Assessment to accompany all planning applications for significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes and to provide mitigation measures to address any likely negative impacts.
NCBH14 Objective 5	To protect skylines and ridgelines from development.
Policy NCBH15	Preserve Views and Prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest including those located within and outside the County.
NCBH15 Objective 1	To protect, preserve and improve Views and Prospects of special amenity, historic or cultural value or interest including rural, river valley, mountain, hill, coastal, upland and urban views and prospects that are visible from prominent public places and to prevent development which would impede or interfere with Views and / or Prospects.
NCBH Objective 2	To require a Landscape / Visual Assessment to accompany all planning applications for significant proposals that are likely to affect views and prospects.

NCBH Objective 3	To seek to create a viewing platform in the vicinity of Woodford Hill to allow panoramic views from this which is the highest point in Clondalkin
Policy NCBH19	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.
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.
Policy NCHB20	Preserve and enhance the historic character and visual setting of Architectural Conservation Areas and carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such areas.
NCBH20 Objective 3	To ensure that new development, including infill development, extensions and renovation works within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) preserves or enhances the special character and visual setting of the ACA including vistas, streetscapes and roofscapes.

Chapter 4: Green Infrastructure

Policy GI7	Protect, conserve and enhance landscape, natural, cultural and built heritage features and support the objectives and actions of the County Heritage Plan.
GI7 Objective 1	To protect, conserve and enhance natural, built and cultural heritage features and restrict development that would have a negative impact on these assets in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 3: Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage of this Development Plan.
GI 7 Objective 2	To protect and enhance the landscape character of the County by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the landscape, in accordance with the provisions of South Dublin's Landscape Character Assessment and the provisions of Chapter 3: Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage of this Development Plan.

Chapter 5: Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking

Policy QDP3	Support and facilitate proposals which contribute in a positive manner to the character and setting of an area.
QDP3 Objective 1	To ensure new development contributes in a positive manner to the character and setting of the immediate area in which a proposed development is located taking into consideration the provisions set out in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Plan and having regard to the requirements set out in Chapter 12: Implementation and Monitoring in relation to design statements.

4.6.7.1 Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan

The site is located within the Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan which came into effect from 20th July 2020. The Local Area Plan seeks to provide a strategic framework for sustainable development within Tallaght Town Centre. In this way the LAP will deliver high quality housing, well connected neighbourhoods and a strong sense of local community. The LAP also seeks to preserve and protect the special interest and character of Tallaght. In particular Tallaght ACA which centres around Tallaght Village.

The LAP identifies Belgard Road to the east as an existing/improved primary route, Belgard Square East to the west as an existing/improved secondary route and the Old Blessington Road to the north as an existing improved tertiary route/local route/homezone. A proposed tertiary route/local route/homezone is specified through the site in the general location of the proposed public plaza.

The LAP advocates heights of 6-7 storeys residential on the northern and eastern boundaries with 4-6 storeys on the western boundary with mixed use frontage on public facing streets. The proposed development complies with height and use parameters set out in the LAP.



Figure 4.2: Extract of the Tallaght LAP 2020. The subject site is outlined in green.

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Objective HC3: It is the policy of the Council to preserve and enhance the historic character and visual setting of Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area and to carefully consider any proposal for development that would affect the special value of such areas.

Relevant Key Objectives of the Town Centre include:

- TC1: Continue the transformation of the centre with an increase in existing residential, commercial, retail, civic, services and cultural uses and functions.
- TC4: Improve the condition of existing streets to encourage walking and cycling
- TC7: Improve interface with all existing and proposed routes and open spaces.
- TC10: Improve and enhance the public realm.
- TC11: Improve connectivity to all surrounding areas.

4.6.8 Landscape Character Assessment

The Landscape Character Assessment forms Appendix 9 to the Development Plan. The full county LCA was undertaken in 2015 and accompanied the South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022. In 2020, South Dublin County Council commissioned a review of the 2015 LCA in order to:

- Review the existing county LCA to assess and describe any significant changes since 2015, with particular focus on new land use zonings in the intervening period.
- Review, assess and evaluate existing Views and Prospects in South Dublin CDP, any additional views identified in the 2015 LCA study and any new views proposed as part of the 2022-2028 Development Plan.

The Landscape Character Assessment identified four Landscape Character Areas. A fifth (Urban Lowlands) is also included however it is noted that due to the nature of the urban area it would require a separate townscape assessment, but the grouping has been included as it takes up such a large section of the county. The site sits within the Urban Lowlands/LCA 5 – Suburban South Dublin.

The area is described as a built up urban area with extensive housing estates and industrial/commercial parks. The residential development predominantly dates from the late 19th century to late 20th century. There are major traffic corridors which include the M50 and N81. There are some corridors of natural/semi-natural vegetation along the River Dodder and River Camac. Other green spaces include golf course, school playing fields, residential back gardens and public open space.

The LCA suggests various mitigation measures set out below:

- 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 the rural hinterland of the county.

The LCA does not provide commentary on the landscape sensitivity of LCA 5 Suburban South Dublin describing it as not applicable. However the LCA does provide some principles for development within the urban area as listed below:

- 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

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 (P-2024-35-82)

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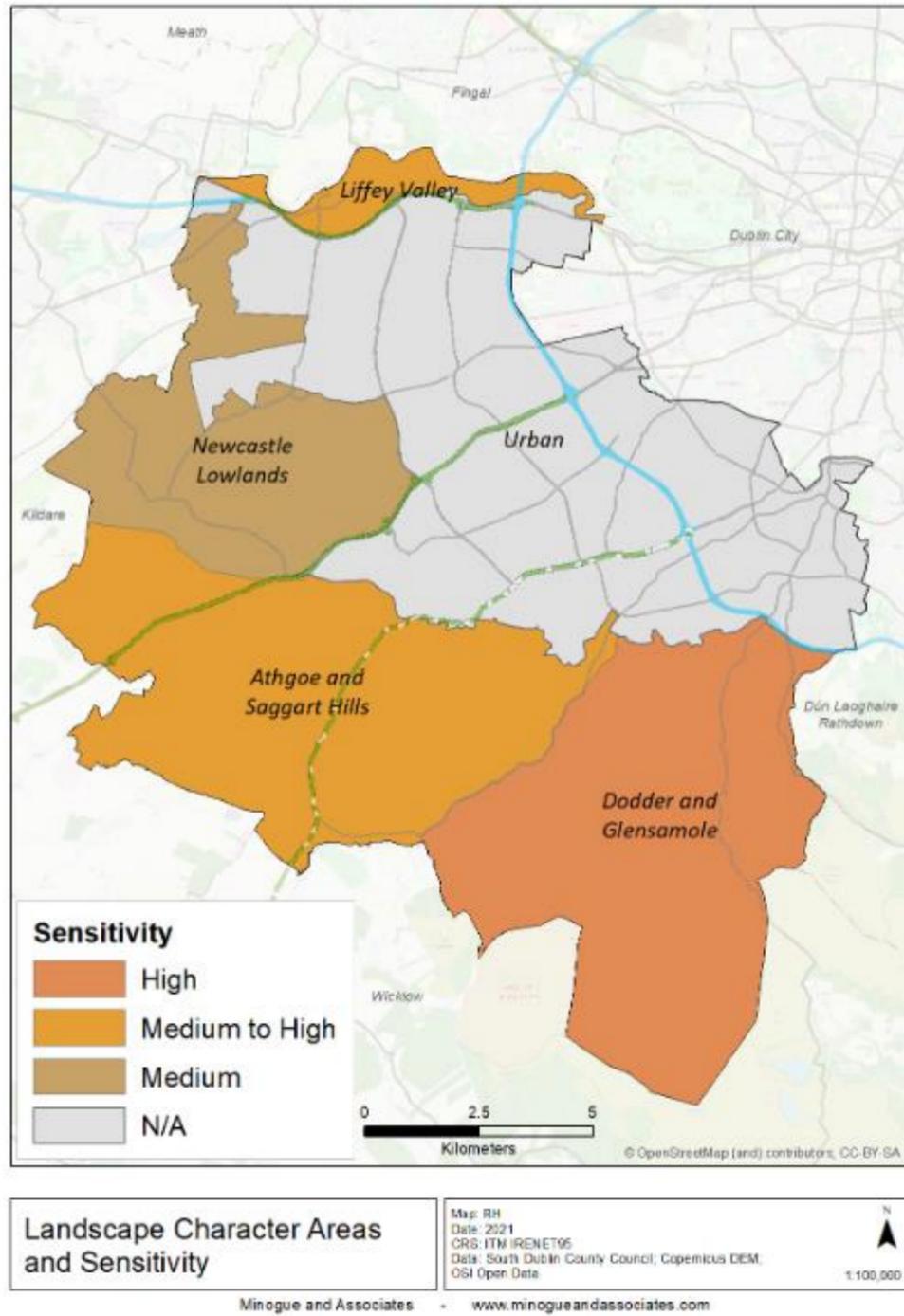


Figure 4.3: Landscape Character Map extracted from Appendix 9 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 (P-2024-35-82)

5.0 Proposed Development

5.1 Proposed Development

The proposed development will consist of the construction of a mixed-use scheme at lands located at Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24. The main development site (approximately 0.91 Ha) is generally bound: to the north by Old Blessington Road; to the east by Belgard Road (R113); to the south by McDonald's Restaurant property (D24 HW74); and to the west by Belgard Square East. The site also includes parts of the carriageways and verges of Belgard Square East, Belgard Road and Old Blessington Road (approximately 0.293 Ha) for the provision of landscaping, 2 No. pedestrian crossings, accesses/junctions, minor road and footpath works, cycle infrastructure, and water services infrastructure.

The proposed development principally comprises the demolition and removal of existing boundary walls and railings on the main development site's eastern, western and northern sides, and the construction of a mixed-use development in 2 No. blocks (Block A to the south and Block B to the north) with a gross floor area of 23,540 sq m (excluding basement of 275 sq m) and ranging in height from 1 No. to 7 No. storeys (with mezzanine level) over basement. The development includes a total of 199 No. residential dwellings (6 No. studios, 47 No. 1-bed, 98 No. 2-bed and 48 No. 3-bed) in the 2 No. blocks, with Block A comprising 49 No. 'senior living' apartment units and Block B comprising 150 No. 'standard' apartment units. The development also provides 2,123 sq m of non-residential floor space, with the following uses proposed: 4 No. retail units (totalling 331 sq m); 4 No. class 1 / class 2 commercial units (totalling 387 sq m); a bicycle sales and repair shop (81 sq m); an off-licence (64 sq m); a bar (151 sq m); a café (87 sq m); a medical centre (210 sq m); a dental practice (72 sq m); a pharmacy (195 sq m); a beauty/health salon (195 sq m); and a crèche (350 sq m) with external play area.

The development also comprises an undercroft car park providing 58 No. car parking spaces, accessed via a new entrance/exit at Belgard Square East; a gated service lane to the south of Block A, with entrances/exits off Belgard Square East and Belgard Road; 2 No. pedestrian/cycle crossings at Belgard Square East and Belgard Road; continuation of the northbound cycle lane from Belgard Road onto Old Blessington Road; cycle parking; internal communal amenity spaces for the senior living units; hard and soft landscaping, including public open space, communal amenity space and incidental spaces; private amenity spaces as balconies and terraces facing all directions; boundary treatments; 2 No. sub-stations; plant/operational rooms; bin stores; public lighting; blue roofs; rooftop PV arrays; lift overruns and rooftop opening vents atop both blocks; 4 No. 0.3 m diameter microwave link dishes mounted on 2 No. steel support poles affixed to the Block B lift overrun, all enclosed in radio-friendly GRP shrouds; and all associated works above and below ground.

5.2 Site Layout

The proposed development is arranged in two main blocks, A and B, separated by a new landscaped public plaza and linked by a pedestrian concourse running east-west through the site.

Block A (Senior Living Block): Block A is located along the southern boundary. It comprises two 6-storey elements connected by a lower 2-storey section accommodating internal and external communal amenity spaces. The block contains 49 no. one- and two-bedroom senior living apartments, together with ground floor commercial/retail/café space addressing the plaza and pedestrian concourse. Ancillary areas and service access are provided via a gated laneway linking Belgard Road and Belgard Square East .

Block B (Residential Block): Block B forms a U-shaped perimeter block along the northern, western and eastern site boundaries, enclosing a podium-level courtyard garden at first floor. The block steps from 7 storeys at its tallest to 6 storeys and contains 150 no. apartments (a mix of studio, 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed units), above commercial space at ground floor level. An external car park for 58 spaces is located within the podium, concealed from the street by active ground floor frontages. The podium courtyard is open to the south to maximise sunlight penetration .

Public Plaza: A centrally located public plaza (c. 520 sq.m.) provides separation between the two blocks. The plaza is part of a wider pedestrian concourse (c. 93m long, 15m wide) that connects Belgard Road with Belgard Square East. The plaza incorporates seating, landscaping and space for outdoor dining, markets and performances. It is overlooked by commercial frontages and residential amenity areas, creating passive surveillance and activity throughout the day and evening .



Figure 5.1: CGI of the Proposed Development. Source: 3D Design Bureau

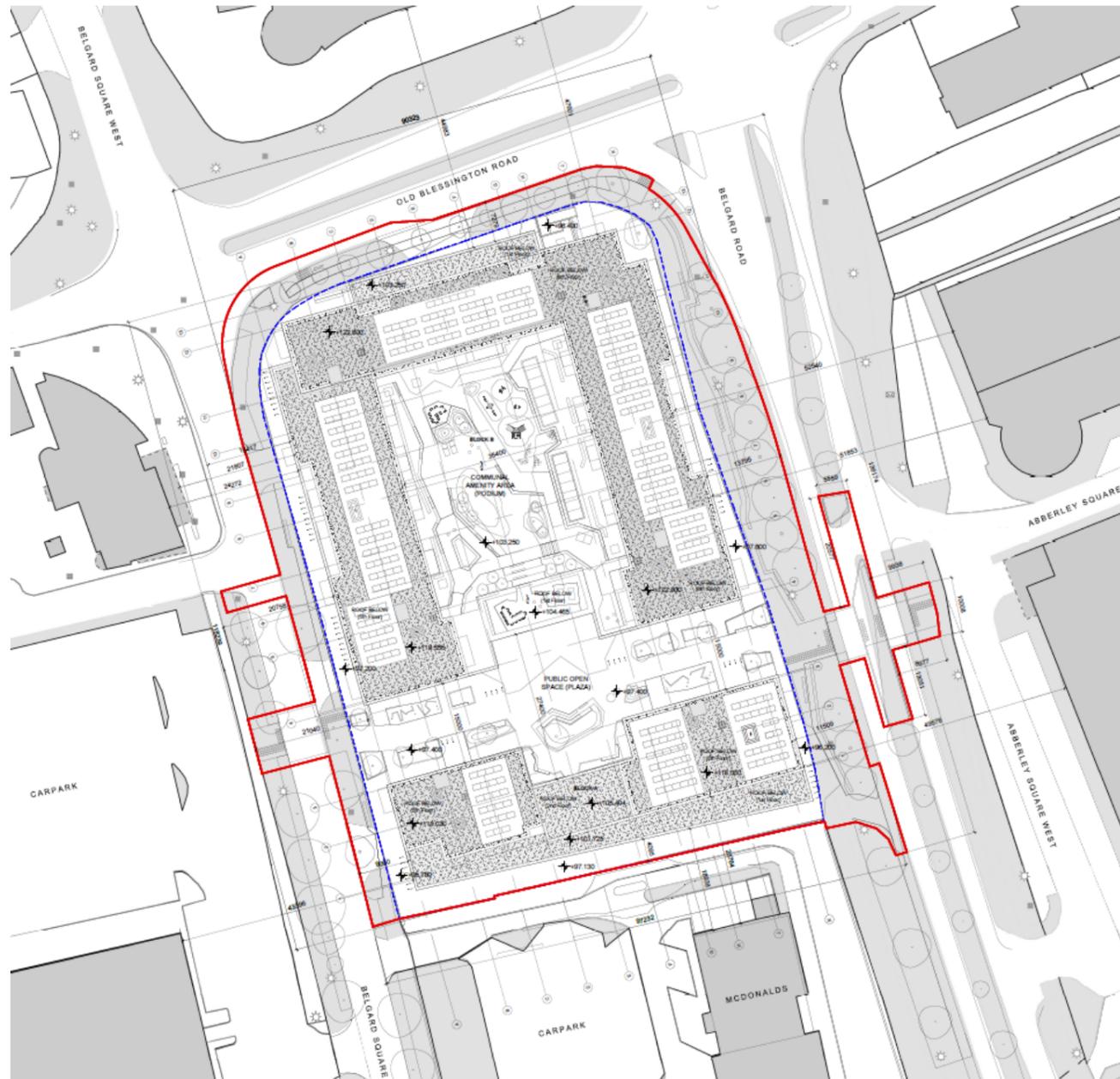


Figure 5.2: Extract of the Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing No. P01_03). Source: Donnelly Turpin Architects

5.3 Building Form, Massing and Materiality

The proposed development ranges in height from 1 to 7 storeys, reflecting the scale of buildings within the surrounding Tallaght Town Centre context.

Form and Massing

Block B is designed in a U-shaped form enclosing a podium-level courtyard. It establishes continuous building edges to Old Blessington Road and Belgard Road, with additional frontage to Belgard Square East.

Block A is a linear block positioned along the southern boundary, expressed as two separate elements connected by a lower central section. The variation in height between the blocks, together with the public plaza between them, provides a break in the overall massing across the site. The massing of both blocks is articulated through the use of projecting balconies, recessed elements, window placement, and set-backs at upper levels.

Materials

The external material palette consists of cream and buff-coloured brickwork with textured and decorative panels, precast stone elements, and aluminium detailing. Balcony balustrades are formed in vertical steel and aluminium, with variations in solid and perforated finishes. The palette is tonal, primarily cream and brown, applied consistently across both blocks.



Figure 5.3: CGI of the Proposed Public Plaza between Blocks A and B. Source: 3D Design Bureau

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5.4 Landscape Proposals

High quality landscape proposals are integral to the overall design, ensuring that the proposed development assimilates into the existing environment and that no material negative visual impact arises.

Landscape proposals for the development are guided by providing a safe, comfortable environment while incorporating modern design and sustainability principles. The design starts at the building entrances and flows into communal amenity spaces for outdoor recreation, enhancing the liveability of the area. The overall goal of the landscape proposals is to create distinct zones for leisure, recreation and social interaction all while fostering a sense of community. (See Figure 5.4 and 5.5 below)

Features include: a central plaza with dedicated seating and raised planters and podium with terraced seating, community allotments, communal tables, tennis tables, sun beds and natural play equipment.

These areas support social interactions and solitary activities, such as reading or relaxing, promoting self-care, resilience, and recovery. The design fosters a connection to the landscape, ultimately leading to a healthier and better life for residents and visitors.

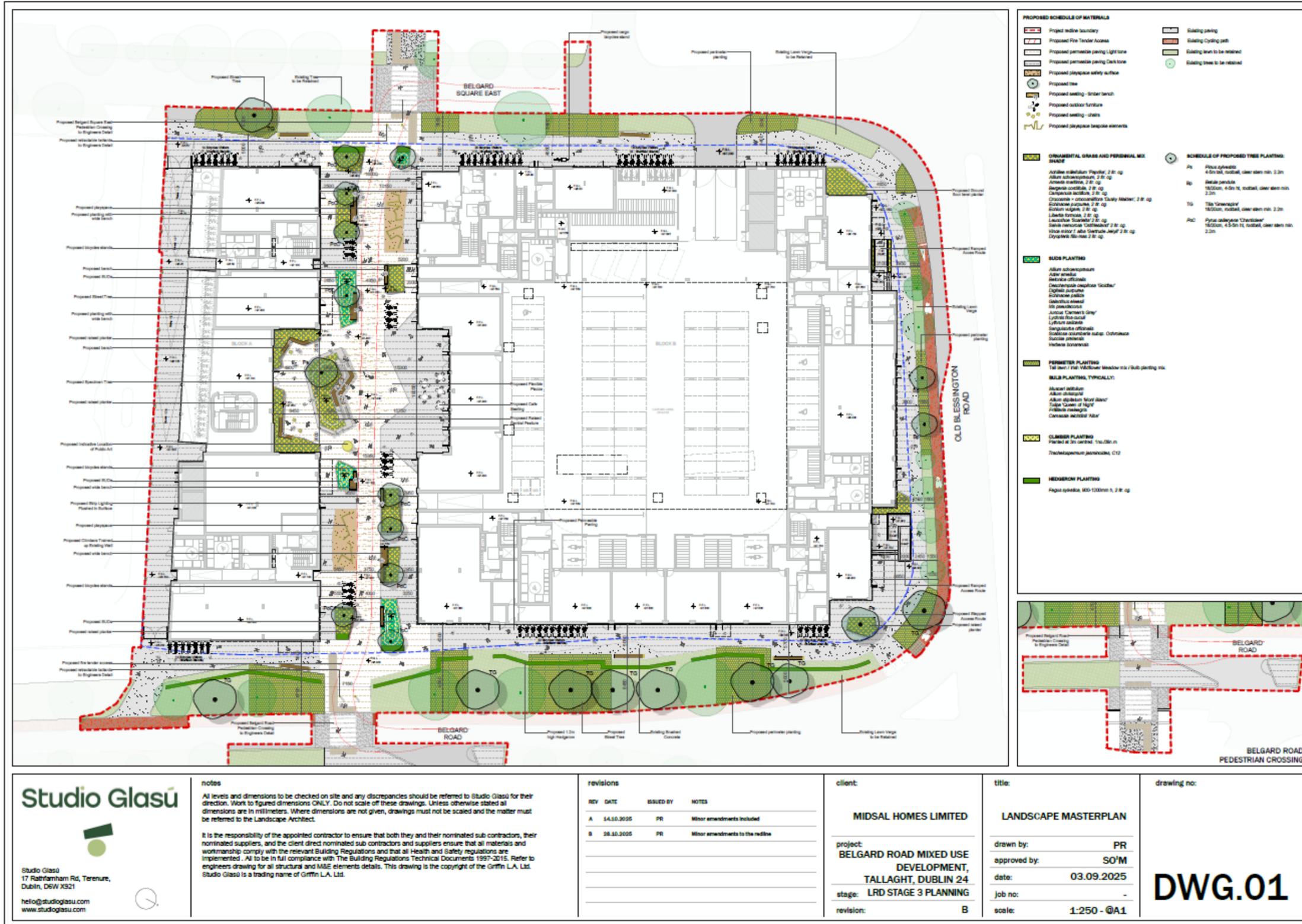
A comprehensive hard and soft landscaping scheme has been designed by Studio Glasú and detailed drawings are included as part of this application.

(Please refer the Landscape Plan and particulars prepared by Studio Glasú, forming part of the Planning Application, for more details.)



Figure 5.4: CGI of the Proposed Public Plaza between Blocks A and B. Source: 3D Design Bureau

Figure xx: Copy of the Proposed Landscape Masterplan Dwg No. 01 prepared by Studio Glasú.



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notes
 All levels and dimensions to be checked on site and any discrepancies should be referred to Studio Glasú for their direction. Work to figured dimensions ONLY. Do not scale off these drawings. Unless otherwise stated all dimensions are in millimeters. Where dimensions are not given, drawings must not be scaled and the matter must be referred to the Landscape Architect.
 It is the responsibility of the appointed contractor to ensure that both they and their nominated sub contractors, their nominated suppliers, and the client direct nominated sub contractors and suppliers ensure that all materials and workmanship comply with the relevant Building Regulations and that all Health and Safety regulations are implemented. All to be in full compliance with The Building Regulations Technical Documents 1997-2015. Refer to engineers drawing for all structural and M&E elements details. This drawing is the copyright of the Griffin L.A. Ltd. Studio Glasú is a trading name of Griffin L.A. Ltd.

REV	DATE	ISSUED BY	NOTES
A	14.10.2025	PR	Minor amendments included
B	28.10.2025	PR	Minor amendments to the redline

client:
MIDSAL HOMES LIMITED
 project:
BELGARD ROAD MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT, TALLAGHT, DUBLIN 24
 stage: **LRD STAGE 3 PLANNING**
 revision: **B**

title:
LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN
 drawn by: **PR**
 approved by: **SO'M**
 date: **03.09.2025**
 job no: **-**
 scale: **1:250 - @A1**

drawing no:
DWG.01

6.0 Townscape Impact Assessment

6.1 Townscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the receiving environment can be generally classified as **‘Low’**.

(Definition: “Areas where the townscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such townscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principal management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.” (Please refer to Section 2.3.1 above.)

This takes account of the following main factors:

- The site is currently vacant previously developed commercial land.
- A combination of Development Plan zoning objectives – including the site’s zoning, development of other sites in the area to provide high density urban form – will transform the townscape character of the receiving environment. In this planned future scenario, the subject site will form part of a consolidated and evolved urban area.
- The existing subject site has a weak townscape character and limited visual amenity due to a lack of (a) buildings of architectural merit, (b) built enclosure/definition of streets and spaces. (c) quality public realm/open space, and (d) legibility.
- There are several other permissions for developments within the wider area, which, when completed, will fundamentally alter the character of the surrounding area. The area is transforming into a high density urban townscape characterised by compact, mixed-used development, modern buildings of design and material quality, and a high quality public realm.

In summary, the local receiving environment, is in a transitional stage between low/medium density to high-density urban development. Its existing character is a result of 20th century urban-generated development, which occurred piecemeal. This use of the land resource and services is unsustainable and the Development Plan includes a range of objectives which support the continued development of the town centre. Due to its scale and frontage onto three key local roads and its potential to be a gateway site, the subject site has a key role to play in the evolution of the area towards an modern urban setting. There are several factors that indicate existing residential areas can accommodate change in their setting without unacceptable impact on their amenities.

6.2 Magnitude of Townscape Change

The main townscape impacts of the proposed development would be as follows:

- Land use pattern: A high-density mixed-use development would be introduced to the area. The combination of medium-density mixed uses would be a substantial change to the land use mix in the area, delivering key objectives of the Development Plan but also the Regional Spatial and Economics Strategy and the National Planning Framework.
- Plot and building typologies, scale and architecture: The proposed arrangement of the buildings would strengthen the urban structure of Tallaght, within an area that has at present from weak definition/character. The open spaces and main thoroughfares around the site would benefit from improved built enclosure, with the buildings defining streets of distinctly urban character. The arrangement and design of the buildings respond appreciably to the immediate context of each building.

The magnitude of townscape change which would result from the proposed development is **‘Low -Medium’**.

(Low Definition: “Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the townscape”.

Medium Definition: “Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the townscape, 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 townscape”.

The development would see the introduction of a cluster of buildings (Blocks A and B) of contemporary urban typology, scale and architecture in a framework of centralised open space, to a large site in a currently medium density, urban townscape - consolidating the urban area through infill. At the local scale this would constitute a high magnitude of change. It would initiate a shift in the character of the area, towards a more urban condition.

Considered at the wider scale, the consolidation of the subject site would constitute a low magnitude of change. It would complement the already consolidated urban areas (with well-defined urban street and space) that exist to the north of the subject site.

6.3 Significance of Townscape Effects

Measuring the magnitude of change against the sensitivity of the receiving environment, the significance of the townscape effects are predicted to be **‘Not Significant – Slight’** and **‘Positive’** overall.

The development would undoubtedly change the character of the townscape locally. However, given that (a) the existing urban townscape is of varied value character type, (b) the wider area is due to undergo a process of urban consolidation facilitated by the South Dublin County Development Plan, and (c) the proposed development is demonstrably responsive to its context and local sensitivities and of high design and material quality, the change can be considered appropriate.

7.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

7.1 Viewpoint Locations and Verified Photomontages

17 No. viewpoints were originally selected for detailed visual effects assessment informed by verified photomontages. The viewpoints were selected to represent the main elements, character areas and groups of visual receptors in the receiving environment. The images were taken during Winter when tree foliage and vegetation is very limited. The visibility of the proposed development presented in the original viewpoints below, is therefore the worst-case scenario.

Following pre-planning discussions (LRD Meeting) with South Dublin County Council, the Planning Authority requested that verified photomontages be provided for both summer and winter conditions, as well as three additional viewpoints (Views 18–20) in the vicinity of St. Maelruain’s Church.

As this request was received during the summer period, Views 18, 19 and 20 could only be captured in summer conditions and therefore do not have corresponding winter views. Where relevant, cumulative schemes have also been assessed and included within the photomontages.

All viewpoints have been located within the public domain and are representative of views available from main thoroughfares/ pedestrian areas/ key viewpoints within the vicinity of the proposed development.

The assessments should be read in conjunction with the baseline photographs and verified photomontages provided in A3 format under separate cover prepared by 3D Design Bureau. For each viewpoint the following views are provided:

- **Winter Baseline View:** Photograph of the existing scenario during winter.
- **Winter Proposed View:** Photomontage of the proposed development during winter.
- **Summer Baseline View:** Photograph of the existing scenario during summer.
- **Summer Proposed View:** Photomontage of the proposed development during summer.
- **Cumulative View:** Photomontage including the proposed development and other relevant cumulative schemes in the vicinity

We assess visual impact below.



Figure 7.1: Viewpoint locations. (Source 3D Design Bureau.)

View 1 – Winter Baseline

7.1.1 Viewpoint 1 – Old Blessington Road/Belgard Road Junction (east of the subject site)

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road, specifically, at the corner of TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground, looking southwest towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 55m north of the proposed development site. The subject site is visible from this location.

The Old Blessington Road, associated infrastructure, traffic lights, landscaping and road planting occupies much of the foreground and middle ground. The northeastern elevations of the Tuansgate Building and The Square Car Park are visible in the centre right. The northern elevation of the Abberley Building is partially visible to the left. The Dublin Mountains are visible in the background. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Low



View 1 – Winter Proposed

7.1.2 Viewpoint 1 – Old Blessington Road/Belgard Road Junction (east of the subject site)

Proposed View:

The proposed development is clearly visible from this view. The development is 7 storeys and blends seamlessly with the adjoining Tuansgate building to the right of the image which is 6-7 storeys.

The proposed development will introduce a recognisable new element to this view, establishing a distinctly urban character in the middle distance. The proposed development appears as a suitably scaled, piece of contemporary multi-storey architecture. The scale of the buildings is comfortably accommodated in a townscape characterised by wide thoroughfares (i.e. the Old Blessington Road).

The building façade incorporates a balanced solid to void ratio and a natural vertical rhythm is maintained through window and balcony position. The public facing façade creates an attractive and inviting streetscape along Old Blessington Road.

Magnitude of change:

High

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Moderate -Slight and Positive



View 1 – Summer Baseline

7.1.3 Viewpoint 1 – Old Blessington Road/Belgard Road Junction (east of the subject site)

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road, specifically, at the corner of TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground, looking southwest towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 55m north of the proposed development site. The subject site is visible from this location.

The Old Blessington Road, associated infrastructure, traffic lights, landscaping and road planting occupies much of the foreground and middle ground. The northeastern elevations of the Tuansgate Building and The Square Car Park are visible in the centre right. The northern elevation of the Abberley Building is partially visible to the left. The Dublin Mountains are visible in the background. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Existing mature vegetation and street trees are visible in the centre of the view along the boundary of the subject site. Two street trees are visible on the left and right of the view.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Low



View 1 – Summer Proposed

7.1.4 Viewpoint 1 – Old Blessington Road/Belgard Road Junction (east of the subject site)

Proposed View:

The proposed development is clearly visible from this view. The development is 7 storeys and blends seamlessly with the adjoining Tuansgate building to the right of the image which is 6-7 storeys.

The proposed development will introduce a recognisable new element to this view, establishing a distinctly urban character in the middle distance. The proposed development appears as a suitably scaled, piece of contemporary multi-storey architecture. The scale of the buildings is comfortably accommodated in a townscape characterised by wide thoroughfares (i.e. the Old Blessington Road).

The building façade incorporates a balanced solid to void ratio and a natural vertical rhythm is maintained through window and balcony position. The public facing façade creates an attractive and inviting streetscape along Old Blessington Road.

The base of the building is partially obscured by mature vegetation and street trees ensuring that the proposed development appears grounded within the view. The existing vegetation and trees help integrate the building into the surrounding landscape and soften its visual impact

Magnitude of change:

High

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Moderate -Slight and Positive



View 2 – Winter Baseline

7.2.1 Viewpoint 2 – Belgard Road (R113) adjoining TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from Belgard Road looking south towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 155m northeast of the proposed development site.

Belgard Road and railings bounding TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground occupy much of the foreground. The Abberley building is partially visible in the left background appearing above and railing. Similarly, Clarity House Office Building is partially visible to the right of the view and is obscured by street trees. The Dublin Mountains are partially obscured by street trees to the centre right. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Low



View 2 – Winter Proposed

7.2.2 Viewpoint 2 – Belgard Road (R113) adjoining TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground

Proposed View:

The proposed development occupies the middle ground of the view creating a new built form.

The Dublin Mountains are no longer visible from this viewpoint as a result of the proposed development. The existing street trees soften the built form with the upper storeys of the development appearing out of the vegetation.

The contemporary design and high-quality materials will create a well-designed and point of architectural interest along this section of the Belgard Road.

Magnitude of change:

Medium

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Slight and Neutral



View 2 – Summer Baseline

7.2.3 Viewpoint 2 – Belgard Road (R113) adjoining TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from Belgard Road looking south towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 155m northeast of the proposed development site.

Belgard Road and railings bounding TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground occupy much of the foreground. The Abberley building is partially visible in the left background appearing above and railing. Similarly, Clarity House Office Building is glimpsed to the right of the view and is obscured by mature street trees. The Dublin Mountains are partially obscured by street trees to the centre right. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Low



View 2 – Summer Proposed

7.2.4 Viewpoint 2 – Belgard Road (R113) adjoining TU Dublin Tallaght Football Ground

Proposed View:

The proposed development occupies the middle ground of the view creating a new built form. The upper levels are visible above the existing street trees along Belgard Road.

The Dublin Mountains are no longer visible from this viewpoint as a result of the proposed development, although the Mountains are currently only partially visible from this viewpoint. The existing street trees soften the built form with the upper storeys of the development appearing out of the vegetation.

The contemporary design and high-quality materials will create a well-designed and point of architectural interest along this section of the Belgard Road.

Magnitude of change:

Medium

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Slight and Neutral



View 3 – Winter Baseline

7.3.1 Viewpoint 3 – Tallaght Campus

Baseline:

This viewpoint is from an internal road at Tallaght TU Dublin Campus looking southwest towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 235m northeast of the proposed development site.

The internal road, parked cars and green verge occupy much of the foreground with the existing fencing associated with the TU Dublin Tallaght Football Grounds visible in the middle ground. Clarity House Office Building and the Dublin Mountains are partially visible to the centre and right appearing above the railings. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Low



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View 3 – Winter Proposed

7.3.2 Viewpoint 3 – Tallaght Campus

Proposed View:

The proposed development is visible in this view. However, the height of the proposed development is suitably scaled against the surrounding structures such as Clarity House, helping to assimilate the proposed development into its environment.

The proposed development appears as a landmark in an otherwise commercial/industrial local context, thus aiding legibility within the surrounding area.

The primary palette of cream and brown brick complements the material used nearby at Maro House while establishing a distinctive new architectural form at this prominent location.

Magnitude of Change:

Low

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Not significant and Neutral



View 3 – Summer Baseline

7.3.3 Viewpoint 3 – Tallaght Campus

Baseline:

This viewpoint is from an internal road at Tallaght TU Dublin Campus looking southwest towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 235m northeast of the proposed development site.

The internal road, parked cars and green verge occupy much of the foreground with the existing fencing associated with the TU Dublin Tallaght Football Grounds visible in the middle ground. Clarity House Office Building and the Dublin Mountains are partially visible to the centre and right appearing above the railings. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

An existing street tree is visible in the left of the view providing a vertical element to the view. Existing mature trees and vegetation are visible along the horizon.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Low



PURSER

View 3 – Summer Proposed

7.3.4 Viewpoint 3 – Tallaght Campus

Proposed View:

The proposed development is visible in this view. However, the height of the proposed development is suitably scaled against the surrounding structures such as Clarity House, helping to assimilate the proposed development into its environment. The mature trees and existing vegetation assist with the integration of the development into the existing landscape.

The proposed development appears as a landmark in an otherwise commercial/industrial local context, thus aiding legibility within the surrounding area.

The primary palette of cream and brown brick complements the material used nearby at Maro House while establishing a distinctive new architectural form at this prominent location.

Magnitude of Change:

Low

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Not significant and Neutral



View 4 – Winter Baseline

7.4.1 Viewpoint 4 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght adjoining Tramway Court

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 225m east of the proposed development site.

Road infrastructure and hard landscaping associated with the Main Street occupy much of the foreground. St Maelruain's Graveyard, boundary wall, railing and tree cover is visible in the middle ground. The Dublin Mountains are only partially visible in this viewpoint located between the trees and eastern elevation of Abberley Building and Uppercross Court. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Medium



View 4 – Winter Proposed

7.4.2 Viewpoint 4– Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght adjoining Tramway Court

Proposed View:

The eastern elevation of Block B of the proposed development is partially visible from this view located between the established trees in St Maelruain’s Graveyard and gable of Uppercross Court apartments.

The proposed development provides an attractive backdrop to the graveyard. The palette of colours assimilates with the natural colours of vegetation along the road and use of red brick at Uppercourt Cross.

Magnitude of change:

Low

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Slight and Neutral



View 4 – Summer Baseline

7.4.3 Viewpoint 4 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght adjoining Tramway Court

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 225m east of the proposed development site.

Road infrastructure and hard landscaping associated with the Main Street occupy much of the foreground. St Maelruain's Graveyard, boundary wall, railing and extensive tree cover is visible in the middle ground. Further free cover is visible in the right of the view.

The Dublin Mountains are only partially visible in this viewpoint located between the trees and eastern elevation of Abberley Building and Uppercross Court. There are no protected views or vistas of the Dublin Mountains from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Medium



View 4 – Summer Proposed

7.4.4 Viewpoint 4– Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght adjoining Tramway Court

Proposed View:

The eastern elevation of Block B of the proposed development is partially visible from this view located between the established trees in St Maelruain’s Graveyard and gable of Uppercross Court apartments.

The proposed development provides an attractive backdrop to the graveyard. The palette of colours assimilates with the natural colours of vegetation along the road and use of red brick at Uppercourt Cross.

Magnitude of change:

Low

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

Slight and Neutral



View 5 – Winter Baseline

7.5.1 Viewpoint 5 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght opposite St Maelruain’s Church

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road/Main Street looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 265m east of the proposed development site.

The main street occupies much of the foreground with the subject site located out of view in the centre of the view. The Cottage and vehicular entrance/boundary associated with St Maelruain’s Church are visible in the centre of the view with mature trees visible in the middle ground.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Medium



View 5 – Winter Proposed

7.5.2 Viewpoint 5 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght opposite St Maelruain’s Church

Proposed View:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening built form and landscape.

Magnitude of change:

None.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

No change.



View 5 – Summer Baseline

7.5.3 Viewpoint 5 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght opposite St Maelruain’s Church

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from the Old Blessington Road/Main Street looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 265m east of the proposed development site.

The main street occupies much of the foreground with the subject site located out of view in the centre of the view. The Cottage and vehicular entrance/boundary associated with St Maelruain’s Church are visible in the centre of the view with mature trees visible in the middle ground.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Medium



View 5 – Summer Proposed

7.5.4 Viewpoint 5 – Old Blessington Road/Main Street, Tallaght opposite St Maelruain’s Church

Proposed View:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening built form and landscape.

Magnitude of change:

None.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

No change.



View 6 – Winter Baseline

7.6.1 Viewpoint 6 – Main Street, Tallaght

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from Main Street looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 390m east of the proposed development site.

The main street occupies much of the foreground with the subject site located out of view in the centre right of the view. Visible town centre uses including retail units along Main Street and Old Bawn Road are located in the middle ground.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Medium



View 6 – Winter Proposed

7.6.2 Viewpoint 6 – Main Street, Tallaght

Proposed View:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening built form and landscape.

Magnitude of change:

None.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

No change.



View 6 – Summer Baseline

7.6.3 Viewpoint 6 – Main Street, Tallaght

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from Main Street looking west towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 390m east of the proposed development site.

The main street occupies much of the foreground with the subject site located out of view in the centre right of the view. Visible town centre uses including retail units along Main Steet and Old Bawn Road are located in the middle ground.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Medium



View 6 – Summer Proposed

7.6.4 Viewpoint 6 – Main Street, Tallaght

Proposed View:

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to intervening built form and landscape.

Magnitude of change:

None.

Significance and Quality of Visual Effects:

No change.



View 7 – Winter Baseline

7.7.1 Viewpoint 7 – Belgard Road (R113)/High Street Pedestrian Crossing

Baseline View:

This viewpoint is from Belgard Road looking northwest towards the development site. The viewpoint is located approximately 70m southeast of the proposed development site.

Belgard Road and the pedestrian crossing occupy much of the foreground with the subject site located out of view (obstructed by trees) in the centre of the view.

Viewpoint sensitivity:

Low

