

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Proposed Strategic Housing Development at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18

Prepared by Model Works Ltd for
Zolbury Limited

July 2022

**.MODEL
WORKS**

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Proposed Development	1
1.2	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology	1
2.0	Receiving Environment	2
2.1	The Site	2
2.2	Surrounding Landscape Character	3
2.3	Potential Receptors of Landscape and Visual Impacts	5
2.3.1	<i>Lamb's Cross and Blackglen Road to the East of the Site</i>	5
2.3.2	<i>Lamb Doyle's Pub and Blackglen Road to the West of the Site</i>	8
2.3.3	<i>Woodside Road</i>	9
2.3.4	<i>Slate Cabin Lane</i>	12
2.3.5	<i>Cullen's Way and Barnacullia</i>	12
2.3.6	<i>Rockview Road and Explorium</i>	13
2.3.7	<i>Ticknock Road and Ticknock Forest</i>	13
2.3.8	<i>North of the M50 – Ballinteer and Sandyford</i>	14
3.0	Relevant Policy	16
3.1	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028	16
3.1.1	<i>Land Use Zoning</i>	16
3.1.2	<i>Creation of a Compact and Connected County</i>	17
3.1.3	<i>Quality Design and Placemaking</i>	17
3.1.4	<i>Residential Density and Building Height</i>	17
3.1.5	<i>Constraints to Higher Density (Development Plan p.81-)</i>	18
3.1.6	<i>Existing Trees and Hedgerows (Section 12.8.11)</i>	18
3.1.7	<i>Views and Prospects (Section 8.4.5)</i>	18
3.2	National Planning Framework	19
3.3	Urban Development & Building Height Guidelines	19
4.0	Proposed Development	20
4.1	Site Layout, Massing, Height and Architecture	20
4.2	Landscape Proposals	25
5.0	Assessment of Landscape Effects	26
5.1	Landscape Sensitivity	26
5.2	Magnitude of Landscape Change	27
5.3	Significance of Landscape Effects	28
6.0	Assessment of Visual Effects	28
7.0	Conclusions	41

APPENDIX 1 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY ii

1.0 Introduction

This report discusses the potential townscape and visual impacts of a proposed Strategic Housing Development at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

1.1 Proposed Development

The development shall consist of a new residential scheme comprising 360 no. residential units, associated resident amenity facilities and a childcare facility in the form of 9 no. new apartment buildings (A1-C3) as follows:

- Block A1 (4 storeys) comprising 18 no. apartments (3 no. 1 bed units and 15 no. 2 bed units); a crèche facility of approx. 401 sq. m with associated outdoor play space of approx. 20 sq. m; and resident amenity facilities of approx. 30 sq. m.
- Block A2 (3-4 storeys) comprising 24 no. apartments (2 no. 1 bed units and 22 no. 2 bed units) and resident amenity facilities of approx. 390m2.
- Blocks B1 and B2 (2-6 storeys) comprising 69 no. apartments (30 no. 1 bed units, 34 no. 2 bed units, 5 no. 3 bed units).
- Blocks B3 and B4 (2-6 storeys) comprising 62 no. apartments (30 no. 1 bed units, 27 no. 2 bed units and 5 no. 3 bed units).
- Blocks C1, C2 and C3 (3-6 storeys) comprising 187 no. apartments (58 no. 1 bed units, 126 no. 2 bed units and 3 no. 3 bed units); and resident amenity facilities of approx. 187.5 sq. m.

Each residential unit is afforded with associated private open space in the form of a terrace / balcony. Total Open space (approx. 22,033 sq. m) is proposed in the form of public open space (approx. 17,025 sq. m), and residential communal open space (approx. 5,008 sq. m).

Podium level / basement level areas are proposed adjacent to / below Blocks A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, C2 and C3 (approx. 12,733 sq. m GFA). A total of 419 no. car parking spaces (319 no. at podium/basement level and 100 no. at surface level); to include 80 no. electric power points and 26 no. accessible parking spaces); and 970 no. bicycle spaces (740 no. long term and 230 no. short term), and 19 no. Motorcycle spaces are proposed. 10 no. car spaces for creche use are proposed at surface level.

Vehicular/pedestrian and cyclist access to the development will be provided via Blackglen Road to tie in with the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme. A second access is also proposed via Woodside Road for emergency vehicles, pedestrian and cyclist access only.

The proposal also provides for Bin Storage areas and 4 No. ESB substations to supply the development. 3 no. sub-stations shall be integrated within the building structures of Blocks B and Blocks C. In addition, one Sub-station shall be classed as a unit sub-station mounted externally on a dedicated plinth.

The associated site and infrastructural works include provision for water services; foul and surface water drainage and connections; attenuation proposals; permeable paving; all landscaping works; green roofs; boundary treatment; internal roads and footpaths; electrical services; and all associated site development works.

1.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

The assessment was carried out with reference to the Landscape Institute *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 2013 (GLVIA), the Institute's Information Note *Townscape Character Assessment* 2017, and the EPA *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* 2022. The appraisal methodology including explanation of the criteria and terms used is provided in Appendix 1. The appraisal was carried out by Richard Butler MILI MIPI of Model Works Ltd.

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”. The GLVIA requires that the effects on views and visual amenity be assessed separately from the effects on the landscape, although the topics are linked:

- Landscape results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our environment. Different combinations of these elements create variations in landscape/townscape character. Landscape impact assessment is concerned with the effects of a proposed development on the character and value of the landscape as an environmental, cultural and economic resource. The potential landscape impact of the proposed development is assessed in Chapter 5.
- Visual impact assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to those changes and the overall effects on the area’s visual amenity. The potential effects on 23 no. viewpoints in the receiving environment are assessed in Chapter 6, informed by verified photomontages (provided under separate cover).

2.0 Receiving Environment

2.1 The Site

The site is an irregularly shaped greenfield land parcel of 3.7 ha. It is located on Blackglen Road some 400m to the west of the Lamb’s Cross neighbourhood centre, and just to the east of Lamb Doyle’s pub at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road. The site also has frontage to Woodside Road to the south.

Although the lands surrounding the site have been developed (mostly for low density residential use), the site has never been developed and is also not in agricultural or other use. It is covered in gorse-dominated scrub. Apart from small trees growing in the scrub there are few trees on the site. The most significant vegetation feature is a belt of trees along the frontage to Woodside Road. There is also scrubby vegetation along the site boundaries but any trees are mostly located on the neighbouring properties.

Figure 1: The site and immediate environs



The site's most distinctive characteristic is its topography. At its highest point near the west boundary it is approximately 160m above sea level. The land falls to the east and north, at varying gradients, to a low point of approximately 139m in the north east corner off Blackglen Road.



Figure 2: Site topography

2.2 Surrounding Landscape Character

The site lies within the urban edge of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, but in a transitional zone where urban generated development bleeds into the rural landscape of the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. **This peri-urban landscape, of urban-generated but low density development, can be clearly seen in the area between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road west of Lamb's Cross and the Enniskerry Road** (see Figures 1, 3 and 4). It also extends to the south in a narrow band along Barnacullia Road. To the west and east the urban-rural edge is more clearly defined, by the M50 and the Enniskerry Road respectively.

Figure 3: The site's wider landscape context

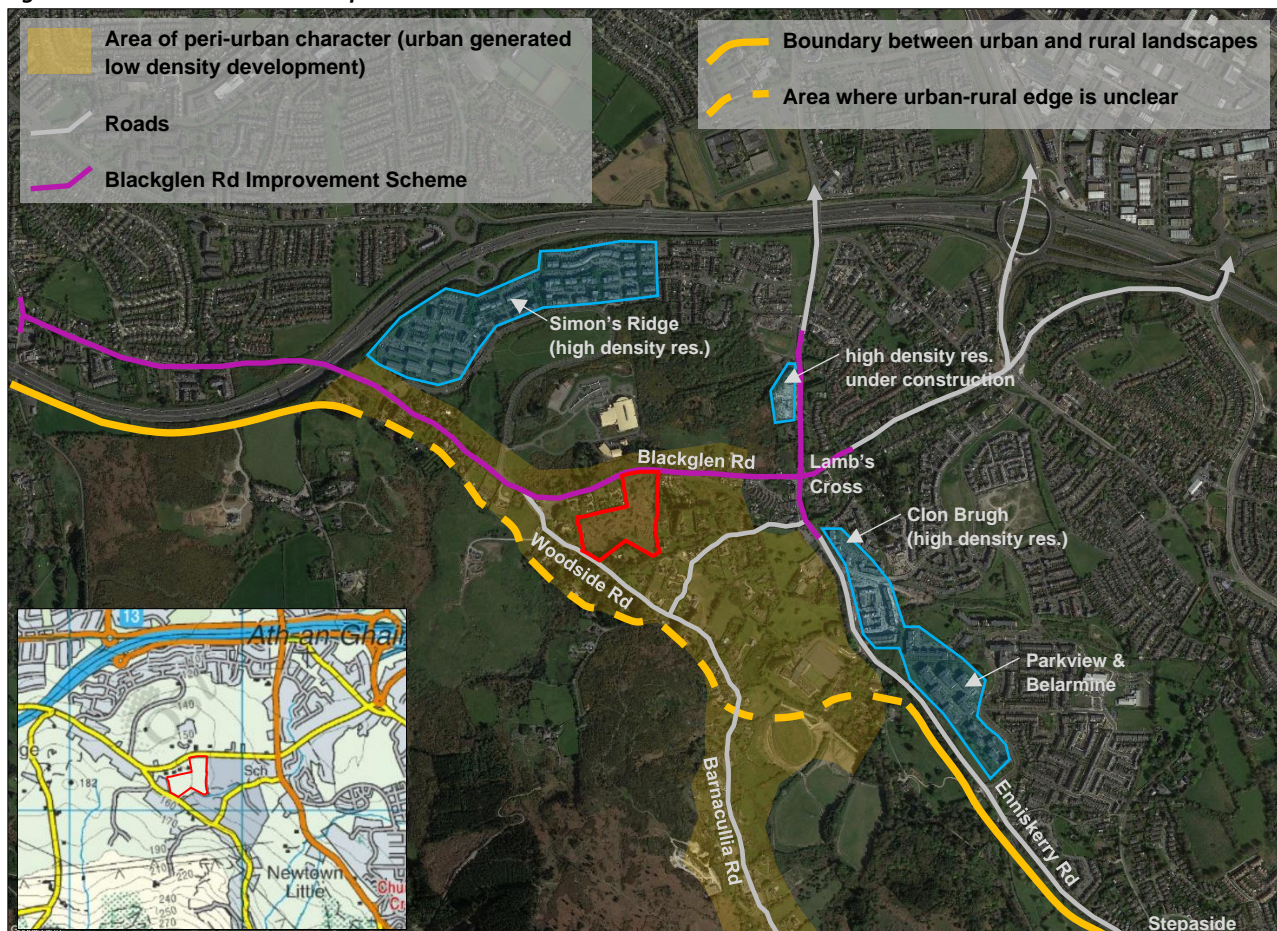
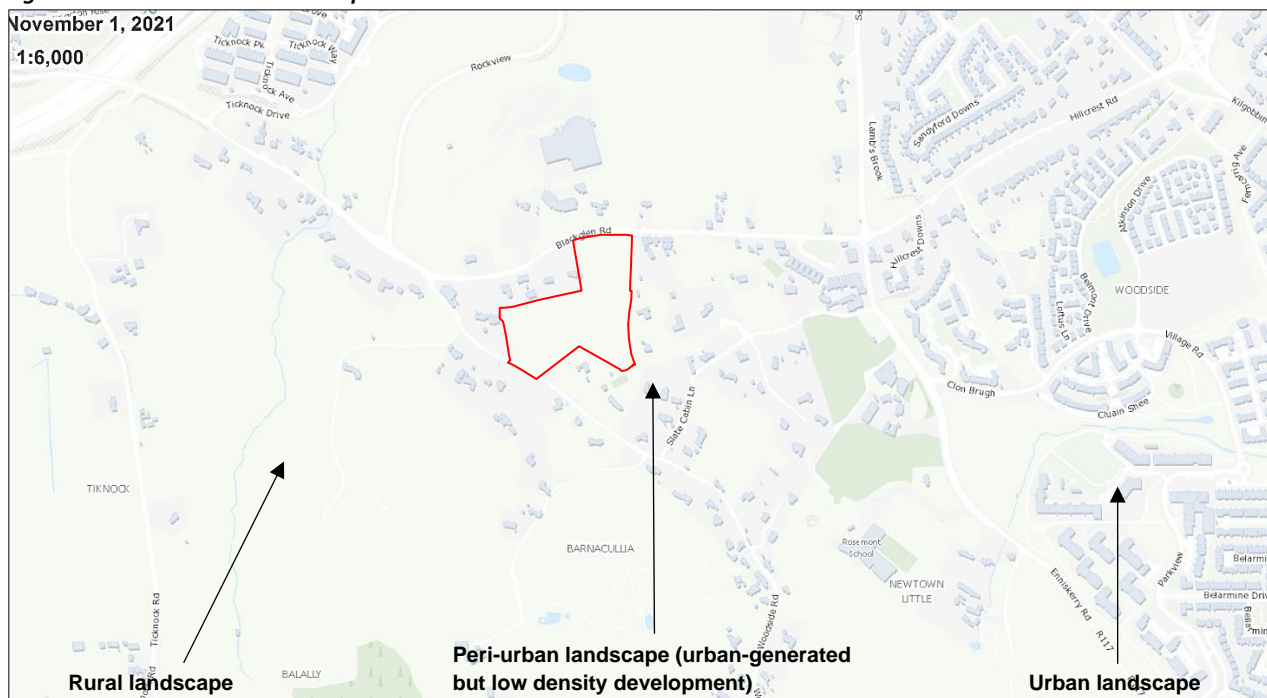


Figure 4: The site's wider landscape context



Figures 3 and 4 show that while the site environs have remained peri-urban, there has been consolidation of the urban area to the east inside the Enniskerry Road, and to the north west along the M50.

The north/east side of the Enniskerry Road between Lamb's Cross and Stepside is now characterised by contemporary, mixed density development. **This includes apartment developments (e.g. Clon Brugh, Parkview and Belarmine) a similar distance from the M50 as the site, and at similar elevation** (see Figure 3). The main differences between their location and the site's are (a) their position alongside the Enniskerry Road, and (b) their consolidated urban context. Like all development in the area these apartment complexes are notable for their response to the steep topography and the elevation. The buildings step down the slope and height is used to make the most of the views over the city.

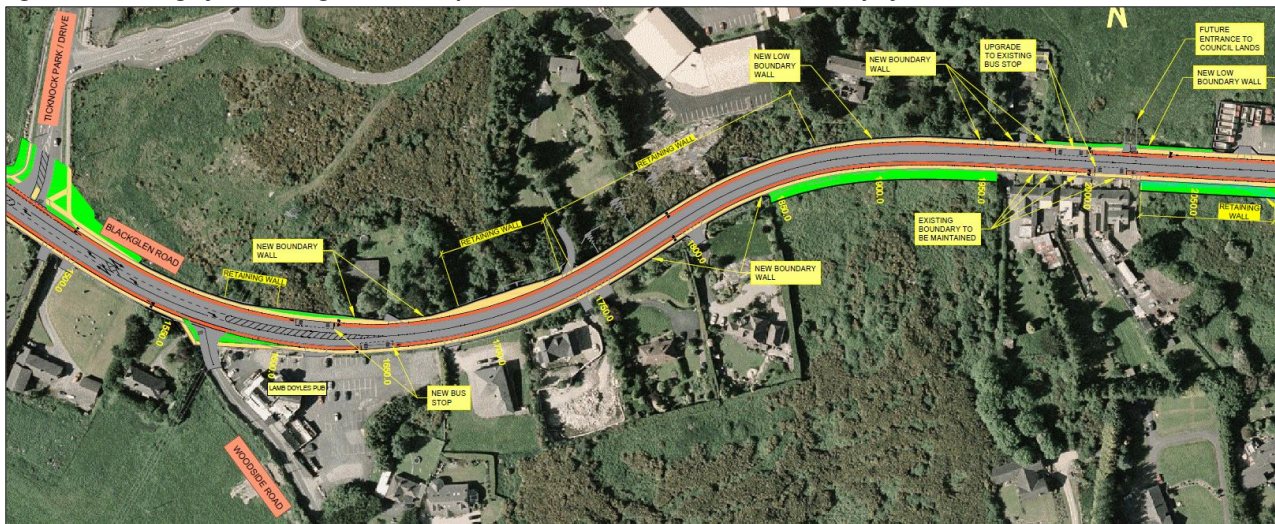
Photo 1: Belarmine and Parkview apartments



Developments such as Parkview, Belarmine and their adjoining lower and medium density estates contribute to the clear definition of the urban edge to the east of Lamb's Cross. **Such a strong, legible boundary between the urban and rural landscapes is a positive quality both from a landscape character perspective and in terms of sustainable development.**

An important change is currently taking place in the site environs, with the construction of the Blackglan Road Improvement Scheme. This will see the road widened, and the addition of dedicated cycle lanes and pedestrian paths on both sides of the road (see Figure 5). The existing bus stop 25m from the site will be upgraded. **The upgraded Blackglan Road will be of urban character (as a streetscape) and capacity, facilitating pedestrian and cycle movement and the use of public transport, and it will tie the adjacent lands – including the site - into the urban area.**

Figure 5: Drawing of the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme works in the vicinity of the site



To the south and west of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road the landscape is rural in character (see Figure 3 above). This area comprises rough grassland fields, widely dispersed farm houses and farm building clusters, large areas of heather and scrub, and conifer plantations. The land rises steeply into the mountains.

There is an opportunity – arguably a requirement, given the national policy of compact growth – to capitalise on the opportunity presented by (a) the partly built-up (peri-urban) condition of the site environs, (b) the proximity to a neighbourhood centre and (c) the impending improvements to Blackglen Road, to consolidate the urban area between Blackglen Road, Woodside Road and Lamb’s Cross/Enniskerry Road. This would strengthen the urban-rural edge in an area where currently that definition is weak, improving the urban structure of not only the local area but also the wider Dun Laoghaire Rathdown townscape.

2.3 Potential Receptors of Landscape and Visual Impacts

The key elements and character areas in the receiving environment are as follows:

- Lamb’s Cross and Blackglen Road to the east of the site
- Lamb Doyle’s pub and Blackglen Road to the west
- Woodside Road
- Slate Cabin Lane
- Cullen’s Way and Barnacullia
- Rockview Road and Explorium
- Ticknock Road and Ticknock Forest
- North of the M50 – Ballinteer and Sandyford

2.3.1 Lamb’s Cross and Blackglen Road to the East of the Site

Lamb’s Cross

400m to the east of the site along Blackglen Road is Lamb’s Cross (see Figure 1 above and Figure 7 below). This is a long established village centre (historic maps show a school and library near the junction) with a small shopping centre at the junction and the Sandyford Community Centre in the former library (a protected structure). The urban core extends south along the Enniskerry Road beyond the community centre and school, to a large transport business premises and a pitch and putt course with roadside parking area. Across the road from these is the Clon Brugh residential development, which includes apartment buildings of six storeys. The DLR County Development Plan 2022 allows for expansion of the mixed use core around the junction.

Photo 2: The view from Lamb's Cross along Blackglen Road towards the site, with the shopping centre in the foreground. The lands in the foreground to the right are zoned NC, for expansion of the mixed use neighbourhood centre



Photo 3: Entering Lamb's Cross on the Enniskerry Road, with the six storey Clon Brugh apartments to the right opposite the entrance to a business premises, and the school and community centre ahead along the street



Blackglen Road East of the Site

Adjacent to the Lamb's Cross, to the west along Blackglen Road, is a small late 20th century estate of detached houses, Blackglen Court. Extending to the west on the south side of Blackglen Road are several further houses forming a low density built-up strip entering/exiting the neighbourhood centre.

An SHD planning application has been lodged for a site along this stretch of Blackglen Road, between Lamb's Cross and the site (see <https://www.blackglenroadshd.com>). The proposal includes an apartment block of four storeys fronting the road, and terraces of houses and duplex apartments to the rear within the site.

Figure 6: Layout of the proposed Blackglen Road SHD scheme located between Lamb's Cross and the site
 (source: Blackglen Road SHD Site Layout Plan, drawing No. PL02, McCrossan O'Rourke Manning Architects, <https://www.blackglenroadshd.com>)



Figure 7: CGI showing the proposed apartment building of the Blackglen Road SHD scheme fronting the road
 (source: Blackglen Road SHD Architectural Visualisations, SketchRender, <https://www.blackglenroadshd.com>)



To the west of the above site is a row of five artisans' cottages (Photo 4), with the westernmost cottage adjacent to the site's east boundary. The occupants of these cottages are key receptors of landscape and visual change on the site.

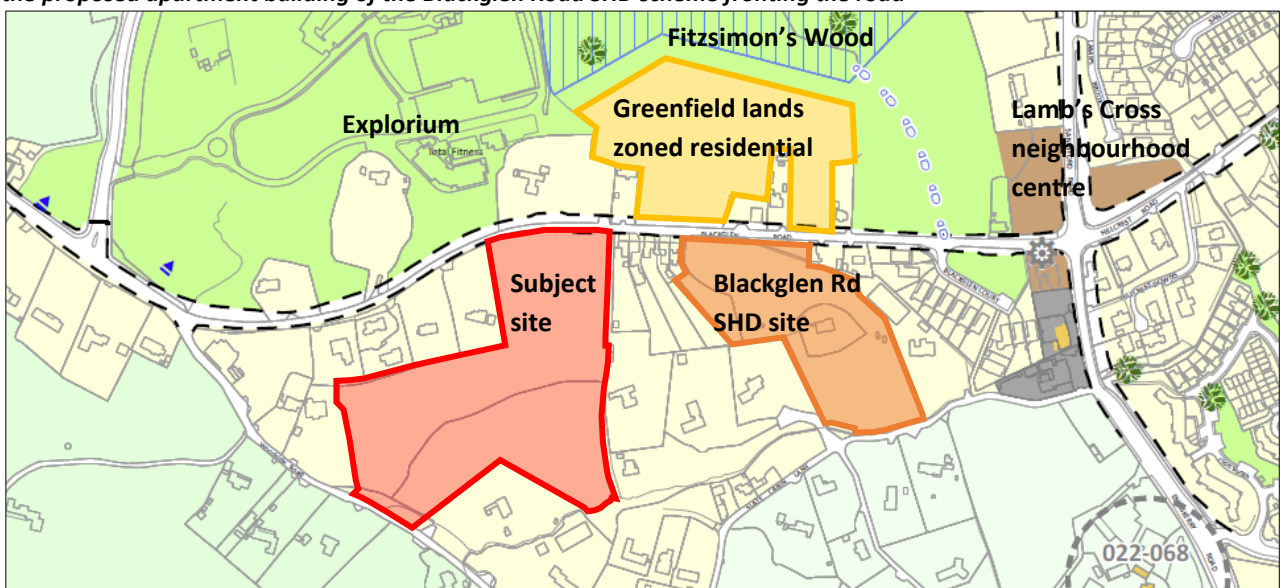
Photo 4: The row of cottages fronting Blackglen Road immediately to the east of the site



By comparison to the south side of Blackglen Road there is limited development on the north side of the road (see Figure 4). There are only a small number of dispersed houses and the Explorium centre (see 2.3.6 below). A large undeveloped area behind and between the houses on the north side of the road is however zoned for residential development (see Figure 7). This future development site includes the road frontage opposite the cottages in Photo 4.

Also of note is a large proposed Natural Heritage Area (Fitzsimon's Wood) to the north behind the roadside properties and the residential zoned area. Access to this area has been developed from the Kilcross estate to the north. **The Fitzsimon's Wood pNHA is an important consideration in the site's development in that it provides a large, accessible open space less than 200m from the site.**

Figure 8: Annotated excerpt of DLR County Development Plan 2022 zoning map showing the site in relation to CGI showing the proposed apartment building of the Blackglen Road SHD scheme fronting the road



2.3.2 Lamb Doyle's Pub and Blackglen Road to the West of the Site

To the west of the site fronting Blackglen Road are five residential properties occupying the strip of land between the site and Lamb Doyle's pub. These are large detached houses in extensive gardens mostly enclosed by tall trees and shrubs. The houses are set back from the road behind the roadside vegetation so there is no discernible building line. The character of the road corridor is in-between suburban and rural (see Photo 5). The occupants of these houses are key receptors of change on the site. Lamb Doyle's is a pub at the corner between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road (Photo 6). The sprawling building is surrounded by a large parking area.

Photo 5: A view along Blackglen Road to the west of the site



Photo 6: Lamb Doyle's pub at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road



2.3.3 Woodside Road

Woodside Road runs to the south of the site, climbing towards the south east. It is lined on both sides – except along the site frontage – by large detached houses mostly in extensive, densely vegetated gardens. This strip of urban-generated but low density development forms the boundary between the urban area to the north and the rural landscape to the south. The area directly to the south of the site is characterised by particularly densely

wooded gardens (see Figure 1 and Photo 7) which generate a high degree of visual enclosure locally. Approaching the site from the east there is a high wall along the north side of the road which adds to the visual enclosure (Photo 8). Further to the east (near the junctions of Cullens Way and Slate Cabin Lane) the landscape is more open, exposing views to the north over the urban area of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

Photo 7: A view along Woodside Road just to the west of the site showing the high degree of visual enclosure caused by the vegetation in the gardens of the residential properties neighbouring the site



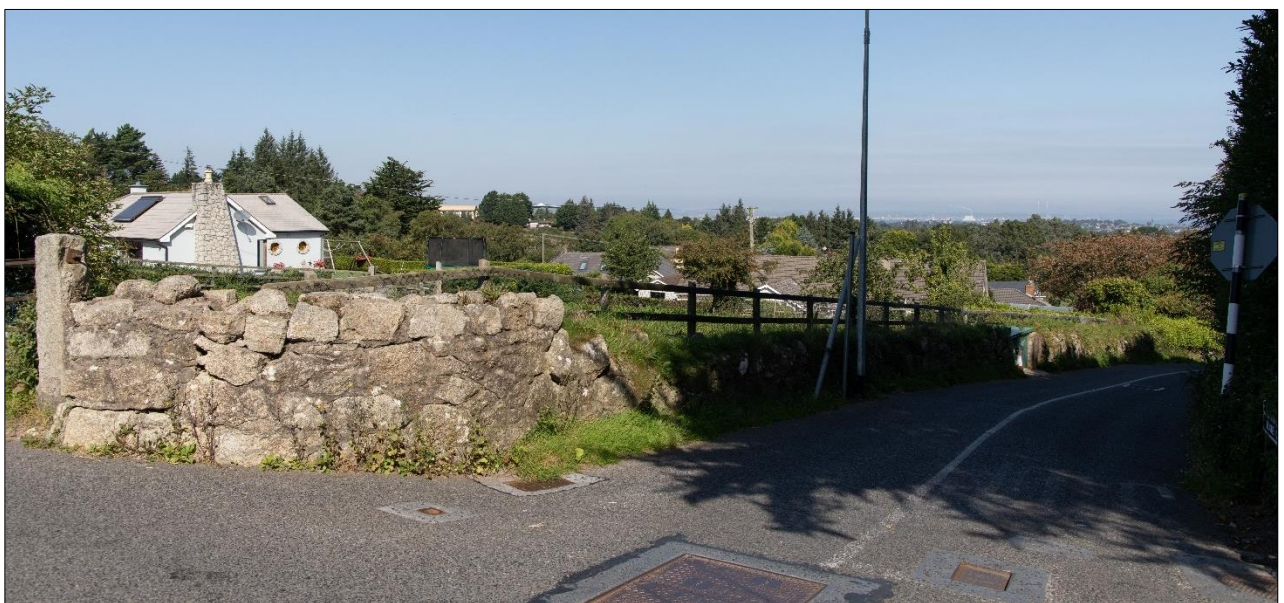
Photo 8: The view along Woodside Road approaching the site from the south east



Figure 9: The site and immediate environs



Photo 9: The view from the junction of Woodside Road and Slate Cabin Lane showing the suburban character of the Slate Cabin Lane area east of the site, and the view over the city towards Dublin Bay



2.3.4 Slate Cabin Lane

Slate Cabin Lane winds down the hill from Woodside Road through a landscape of not quite suburban character, leading to Lamb's Cross neighbourhood centre (meeting the Enniskerry Road beside the school). The area has the appearance of having developed piecemeal, with an irregular grain/layout, although one unifying factor is the houses' siting and design to take advantage of the views to the north (i.e. away from the site, which lies to the west).

Photo 10: A view west towards the site from Slate Cabin Lane



2.3.5 Cullen's Way and Barnacullia

Cullen's Way is a narrow lane that runs south up the hill from Woodside Road, serving a number of residential properties and farms on the side of Barnacullia Hill. There are walking trails from the lane leading over Barnacullia.

Photo 11: A view from Cullen's Lane towards the site, which is hidden by the trees down the slope along Woodside Road



2.3.6 Rockview Road and Explorium

A short distance to the west of the Lamb Doyle's pub at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road is the junction of Rockview Road. The road winds down the hill around a large area of open space, giving access to an extensive modern, mixed density residential neighbourhood (Blackthorn Hall, Corrig Hall, Sandyford Apartments, etc.) overlooking the M50 and Sandyford. Due to the separation distance and the intervening topography this area has no visual connection to Blackglen Road or the site.

Rockview Road also gives access to Explorium, an interactive science and sports visitor centre to the north of the site across Blackglen Road. The centre is comprised of several very large footprint buildings and a parking area set on the hillside below Blackglen Road in extensive parkland and woodland grounds. The facility attracts a large number of visitors, but (similar to the nearby residential neighbourhood) these people have limited visual exposure to the site due to the topography and vegetation in the intervening landscape.

Figure 10: The site's relationship to Explorium and Rockview Road



Photo 12: The view towards the site from the Explorium entrance road



2.3.7 Ticknock Road and Ticknock Forest

Some 700m to the west of the site, Ticknock Road leads south from its junction with Blackglan Road up the mountain side to Ticknock Forest. The views to east and west from the road are protected in the County Development Plan. The forest covers the summit of a prominent peak in the Dublin Mountains. It is a popular site for walking and cycling. In places there are views from the forest roads and trails between the trees over the city, and the large yellow Explorium buildings identify the approximate location of the site.

Photo 13 a & b: A view from Ticknock Forest towards the site



2.3.8 North of the M50 – Ballinteer and Sandyford

To the north of the M50 are the neighbourhoods of Ballinteer and Sandyford. From the southern parts of these areas, and from the roads crossing the M50, there are views south towards the Dublin Mountains. In these views there is a primary horizon formed by the highest peaks, and a secondary horizon formed by the foothills. The Explorium building is discernible in places on the secondary horizon (see Photo 14), and this identifies the approximate location of the site in the views.

Photo 14 a & b: The view towards the site from the Sandyford Road bridge over the M50. Note the visibility of the Explorium building on the secondary horizon



The areas and views identified in Sections 2.3.1-2.3.8 above are the main potential receptors of landscape and visual change on the site. The assessment of the proposal's townscape and visual impacts in Sections 5 and 6 below focusses on these areas.

3.0 Relevant Policy

3.1 Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028

3.1.1 Land Use Zoning

The site is zoned A “To provide residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting the existing residential amenities”.

Figure 11: Excerpt from DLR Development Plan land use zoning map



The map clearly shows the *intended* boundary between the urban and rural landscapes (with the site in the urban area and Woodside Road and Slate Cabin Lane forming the edge), although in the vicinity of the site this is not properly realised. The urban generated but low density development bleeds into the rural landscape, blurring the boundary. Other items of note on the zoning map include the following:

- The identification of Blackglan Road and the Enniskerry Road as ‘6 Year Road Objective/Traffic Management/Active Travel Upgrades’. This is soon to be realised with completion of the Blackglan Road Improvement Scheme.
- The planned expansion of Lamb’s Cross into a more substantial urban core (more than doubling the size of the neighbourhood centre).

- The Residential zoning of a broad belt of land on the north side of Blackglan Road between the site and Lamb's Cross (including the existing roadside houses but more significantly a large greenfield area between and behind these houses).
- The extensive open space zoning in the vicinity of the site, and the public right of way identified between Blackglan Road and Fitzsimon's Wood pNHA. There is also potential to provide an additional, more direct link between the site and this open space through the large residential-zoned site north of Blackglan Road opposite the site.

In combination these Development Plan objectives will transform the landscape character locally, with Blackglan Road forming the spine through a consolidated and evolved/modernised urban area, served by a mixed use neighbourhood centre and abundant open space.

3.1.2 Creation of a Compact and Connected County

Table 1.4 of the Development Plan sets out the Five Strategic County Outcomes of the Plan, including the following:

"Creation of a Compact and Connected County: One of the best ways to transition to a climate resilient County is to consolidate development within the existing urban footprint thus making best use of land. Sustainable planning policy has long been underpinned by the matching of land use and transport policies so that denser development takes place close to good quality public transport options and supporting services. This will allow those living, working and visiting the County easy access to amenities and services by way of high-quality public transport and the softer modes of walking and cycling." (emphasis added)

3.1.3 Quality Design and Placemaking

"Placemaking is supported through high quality urban design, aimed at supporting and creating vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible public spaces which promotes and facilitates social interaction. In this regard, good placemaking is a key component to promoting the creation and maintenance of sustainable residential communities. High quality design of all housing options also supports the creation of quality public spaces. High quality and inclusive urban design will aid in creating healthy, attractive and accessible places to live for all residents, employees and visitors and to the County..." (emphasis added)

"Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes and establishing the processes that make successful development possible. Urban design encompasses the way places work as well as how they look. The Council is committed to ensuring that good urban design principles are applied in the design and planning of existing and new development areas..."

"Adhering to good urban design principles can help ensure the delivery of high quality environments with a clear and interesting urban structure, the conservation of architectural heritage and townscape, the promotion of high standards of architectural design for new buildings and the reinforcement of local identity, pride and 'sense of place'."

3.1.4 Residential Density and Building Height

Policy Objective PHP18 states: "It is a Policy Objective to:

- Promote compact urban growth through the consolidation and re-intensification of infill/brownfield sites.
- Encourage higher residential densities provided that proposals provide for high quality design and ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of the surrounding area, with the need to provide for high quality sustainable residential development." (emphasis added)

Citing the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' guidelines and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual', the Development Plan states (p.81):

"As a general rule the minimum default density for new residential developments in the County (excluding lands on zoning Objectives 'GB', 'G' and 'B') shall be 35 units per hectare (net density)... "This density may not be appropriate in all instances but should be applied particularly in relation to 'greenfield' sites or larger 'A' zoned areas. Higher density schemes should offer an exemplary quality of life for existing and future residents in terms of design and amenity." (emphasis added)

3.1.5 Constraints to Higher Density (Development Plan p.81-)

"In older residential areas, infill will be encouraged while still protecting the character of these areas. Any new communities and additional residential units shall have regard to the character of the area and site context. All new development in established residential areas shall be designed to the highest standards, integrate well into the existing streetscape and be capable of adapting to changing household requirements." (emphasis added)

Policy Objective PHP20 states: *"Protection of Existing Residential Amenity: It is a Policy Objective to ensure the residential amenity of existing homes in the Built Up Area is protected where they are adjacent to proposed higher density and greater height infill developments."* (emphasis added)

- *"On all developments with a units per hectare net density greater than 50, the applicant must provide an assessment of how the density, scale, size and proposed building form does not represent over development of the site. The assessment must address how the transition from low density to a higher density scheme is achieved without it being overbearing, intrusive and without negatively impacting on the amenity value of existing dwellings particularly with regard to the proximity of the structures proposed. The assessment should demonstrate how the proposal respects the form of buildings and landscape around the site's edges and the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring uses."*
- *On all developments with height proposals greater than 4 storeys the applicant should provide a height compliance report indicating how the proposal conforms to the relevant Building Height Performance Based Criteria "At District/Neighbourhood/Street level" as set out in Table 5.1 in Appendix 5.*
- *On sites abutting low density residential development (less than 35 units per hectare) and where the proposed development is four storeys or more, an obvious buffer must exist from the rear garden boundary lines of existing private dwellings.*
- *Where a proposal involves building heights of four storeys or more, a step back design should be considered so as to respect the existing built heights."* (emphasis added)

3.1.6 Existing Trees and Hedgerows (Section 12.8.11)

"New developments shall be designed to incorporate, as far as practicable, the amenities offered by existing trees and hedgerows. New developments shall, also have regard to objectives to protect and preserve trees and woodlands (as identified on the County Development Plan Maps)".

"The retention of existing planted site boundaries will be encouraged within new developments, particularly where it is considered that the existing boundary adds positively to the character/visual amenity of the area."

3.1.7 Views and Prospects (Section 8.4.5)

"DLR contains many sites and vantage points from which scenic views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, adjoining Counties, and the City of Dublin may be obtained. In addition, the County also contains important prospects i.e. prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value, or special interest which are widely visible from the surrounding area. Specific Views and Prospects for protection have been identified in the Plan and are considered when assessing planning applications."

Policy Objective GIB6 states: *“Views and Prospects: It is a Policy Objective to preserve, protect and encourage the enjoyment of views and prospects of special amenity value or special interests, and to prevent development, which would block or otherwise interfere with Views and/or Prospects.”*

3.2 National Planning Framework

Compact growth is one of the main principles and intended outcomes of the NPF. This encourages higher density – and therefore taller - development in urban areas where supporting infrastructure and services are available.

National Policy Objective 11 states: *“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... subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.”*

“The National Planning Framework targets a significant proportion of future urban development on infill/brownfield development sites within the built footprint of existing urban areas...”

As a large infill site in a well-serviced urban area (refer to 3.1.1 above) with the site represents an important opportunity to achieve compact growth. The NPF allows that this may include development taller than the height limit specified in the DLRDP if the particular circumstances allow for this.

3.3 Urban Development & Building Height Guidelines

The Guidelines state: *“Reflecting the National Planning Framework strategic outcomes in relation to compact urban growth, 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...”*

“Therefore, these guidelines require that the scope to consider general building heights of at least three to four storeys, coupled with appropriate density, in locations outside what would be defined as city and town centre areas, and which would include suburban areas, must be supported in principle at development plan and development management levels...”

“A key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that greatly increased levels of residential development in our urban centres and significant increases in the building heights and overall density of development is not only facilitated but actively sought out and brought forward by our planning processes and particularly so at local authority and An Bord Pleanála levels.”

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:

“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.*

It is noteworthy that the Height Guidelines allow for “significant increases in building height and overall development density” even within architecturally sensitive areas and suburban areas, subject to the development responding appropriately to its context.

4.0 Proposed Development

In response to pre-planning consultation and the An Bord Pleanála Opinion the proposed design has been modified across the site with a view to reducing the development’s landscape and visual impacts (among other objectives). The modifications are identified where relevant in the description below.

4.1 Site Layout, Massing, Height and Architecture

The site is divided into four main character/development areas based on (1) its irregular shape, (2) the topography, and (3) the character and sensitivities of the adjacent lands (see Figure 12 overleaf).

4.1.1 Area A

Area A is the part of the site fronting Blackglén Road. This is the part of the site exposed to the largest number of visual receptors, i.e. the users of Blackglén Road. It thus has the greatest potential for changing the character of the landscape locally. Immediately to the east is the row of cottages fronting the road, and to the west is a row of large detached houses set back from the road, at higher elevation in large gardens with numerous mature trees.

The design objectives for Area A are to (1) address the upgraded Blackglén Road with an urban-type built frontage to reinforce the change in character initiated by the road scheme, (2) respond to the neighbouring houses, particularly the cottages which are distinctive, and (3) to form an ‘arrival court’ at the main entrance to the new neighbourhood.

The proposal for Area A is to position two buildings along the street-front, adopting the building line of the neighbouring row of cottages. Building A2 (closest to the cottages) is three storeys, and A1 is four storeys. The

gap between the buildings forms the 'arrival court' where the main entrance is proposed. The buildings are contemporary in typology, scale and architecture but they adopt certain characteristics of the cottages including the peaked roofs and rendered facades (see Figure 14). The built frontage is softened by a strip of ornamental planting with scattered trees between the building line and the street. The ground floors of the buildings are occupied by a creche and residents' amenity space for an active street frontage.

Figure 12: Site character areas informing the layout, massing/height and architecture of the proposed development



Figure 13: Proposed layout and height of buildings



Figure 14: Proposed Buildings A2 and A1 fronting Blackglenn Road either side of the 'arrival court'



4.1.2 Area B

Area B is the eastern part of the site behind the roadside portion, rising up the hill. The northern part of Area B is between the long back gardens of the cottages to the east and the houses along Blackglenn Road to the west. The southern part of Area B faces the Slate Cabin Lane area to the east and borders two large residential properties fronting Woodside Road to the south.

This is a substantial development area and the design objectives for Area B are to (1) optimise the residential use of the land and derive maximum amenity benefit for the dwellings, and (2) avoid excessive impacts on the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties.

The proposal for Area B is to position four buildings in two pairs (B1 and B2 forming one pair, and B3 and B4 the other) along the centre of the linear area, roughly equally set back from the site boundaries to east and west. Their rectangular footprints are aligned roughly east-west, but splayed to open up views and achieve the necessary separation distances between buildings. The floor levels and overall height step down the slope towards the east, from six storeys to 2/3 storeys (see Figure 13 above). This arrangement of form and height is intended to present a stepped and permeable massing to the sensitive receptors to the west and particularly the east where the site is more exposed (the Slate Cabin Lane area - refer to Viewpoints 12 and 13 in Section 6). The facades of Buildings B1-4 are clad in mottled tan brick.

Figure 15: Proposed Buildings B2, B3 and B4 showing the stepping of the building height in response to the topography and the sensitive area to the east. The built form also responds to the view over Dun Laoghaire Rathdown towards the coast



One of the most significant modifications to the proposal in response to the ABP Opinion was the reduction in height of Blocks B3 by one storey and B4 by two storeys. This was done to reduce the overall density of built form in this area.

Another significant change was the omission of the previously proposed Block D, which had been conceived as a tall (eight storey) 'marker' to identify the site/development in the landscape and thereby improve legibility in the area. This was considered unnecessary and a contributing factor to the proposal's excessive density. Its removal has reduced the overall height on the site and increased the area of open space (see Figures 16 and 17 overleaf).

Figure 16: Original/Stage 2 proposal with elements removed for Stage 3 highlighted in red



Figure 17: Proposed built form, highlighting the splay between the B blocks to achieve required separation distances



Figure 18a, b: The modifications to Buildings B3 and B4 and the removal of Block D to reduce the overall density of built form on the site (Stage 2 proposal to left, current proposal right)



4.1.3 Area C

Area C is the broad, elevated south western part of the site. It is located up the hillside behind the houses along Blackglan Road and has a short stretch of frontage to Woodside Road to the south. It also borders on large residential properties to either side along Woodside Road. In addition to its large area, elevation and slope, Area C is characterised by abundant mature tree/woodland cover to the south across Woodside Road, and along the road corridor (see Figure 9 and Photos 7 and 8).

Similar to Area B, the design objectives for Area C are to (1) optimise the residential use of the land and derive maximum amenity benefit for the dwellings, and (2) avoid excessive impacts on the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties. The position of Area C adjacent to Woodside Road also demands a different design response than that of Area A to Blackglan Road. Area A seeks to urbanise the road corridor. Woodside Road is of a lower order in the road hierarchy and forms the edge between the zoned urban area and the rural landscape to the south.

The proposal for Area C is to position three ‘finger blocks’ parallel to the slope, cranked at their centre to follow the site contours. The main bodies of buildings C1 and C2 are six storeys and they step down to three and four storeys respectively at their northern ends above the neighbouring properties fronting Blackglan Road. Building C3 is four storeys where it faces Woodside Road, and three storeys along the west boundary that is shared with a residential property. The materials of the C blocks differ on either side of the cranks in the buildings, dividing

each building into two distinct volumes. The volumes 'internal to the site are clad in bronzed metal, and the lower elements are buff brick.

Figure 19: The four storey Buildings C3 in the foreground, and the six storey C1 and C2 along the internal access road (as seen from the entrance off Woodside Road). The access road forms part of a wide corridor of space between the buildings and the neighbouring property to the south east



Figure 20: The lower northern ends of Buildings C1, C2 and C3 on the hillside above the houses fronting Blackglen Road



4.2 Landscape Proposals

The key elements of the landscape masterplan with respect to the potential landscape and visual impacts are as follows:

- **Perimeter woodland belt.** It is proposed to establish a woodland belt around the perimeter of the site, notably along the shared boundary with the Blackglen Road properties to the north west and the Slate Cabin Lane and Woodside Road properties to the east and south east. These woodland belts are sufficiently broad that they would form a dense, tall visual screen as they mature, complementing the existing vegetation in the neighbouring gardens.
- **Blackglen Road streetscape.** The Blackglen Road streetscape combines formal, urban elements, e.g. raised steel planters with incorporated seating, and elements referencing the naturalistic local landscape, e.g. ornamental grasses, 'planting for nature' and an informal arrangement of trees of various species.
- **Woodside Road landscape corridor.** The planting of the landscape strip inside the Woodside Road frontage focusses on screening as opposed to 'streetscape'. This recognises the character and function of Woodside Road as a local road forming the boundary of the urban edge, in contrast to the newly urban character of Blackglen Road.
- **Central public open space.** At the centre of the site beside the internal access road (which also functions as a public through-route), a public open space is proposed. This comprises a lawn area and playground surrounded by a framework of trees.

Figure 21: Proposed landscape masterplan



Overall the development would result in an increase in accessible open space and in tree cover on the site (over 400 no. new trees are proposed), delivering a range of ecosystem services in addition to the screening function.

5.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

5.1 Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the receiving environment can be classified medium (definition: ‘Areas where the landscape 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 landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change’ – refer to Section 2.1, Appendix 1).

The sensitivity classification takes account of the following main factors:

- The site is an infill site within the boundary of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown urban area, and is zoned for residential development.
- The site’s receiving environment - the Blackglen Road corridor west of Lamb’s Cross and the triangle of land between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road - is peri-urban in character as opposed to suburban. The urban-generated, low density development in the area occurred piecemeal over the course of the 20th century. There is thus no established, valued landscape character; the area is in an unsustainable, transitional stage between rural and urban.
- There is a related weakness in the boundary between the urban and rural landscapes in the site environs. This is emphasised by the comparatively strong/legible boundary to the east and west, where urban consolidation/densification has taken place right up to the edge of the urban area.
- A combination of DLR Development Plan zoning objectives - including the (a) the site’s zoning, (b) the residential zoning of a broad belt of land on the north side of Blackglen Road between the site and Lamb’s Cross, (c) the expansion of Lamb’s Cross into a substantial urban core, (d) the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme, and (e) the provision of extensive areas of open space in the locality – will transform the landscape character of the receiving environment. In this planned future scenario Blackglen Road will form the spine through a consolidated and evolved urban area, served by a substantial mixed use urban neighbourhood centre, bus services and a range of open spaces.
- At 3.7 ha the site is of a scale that its development can:
 - establish (or contribute to the establishment of) a new context, i.e. contribute to the evolution of the receiving environment as opposed to being perceived an anomaly within it, and
 - protect the neighbouring properties by (a) setting buildings back from the boundaries, (b) stepping down in height towards the boundaries, and (c) introducing broad belts of screening vegetation inside the boundaries to protect the neighbouring houses’ amenities.
- In the wider area there are examples of high density development a similar distance from neighbourhood centres and from the M50, and at similar elevation to the site (e.g. Clon Brugh, Parkview and Belarmine). The main difference between these developments and the site is their position adjacent to the Enniskerry Road. The Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme will result in the road being of urban character (as a streetscape) and capacity, facilitating pedestrian and cycle movement and the use of public transport, tying the adjacent lands into the urban area. The site context will then be similar to that of the aforementioned developments – although with an as yet unconsolidated urban structure.
- The main sensitivities in the area are the existing low density residential properties to the east and west along Blackglen Road, to the south east in the Slate Cabin Lane area, and along Woodside Road. While low density residential use is generally sensitive to the introduction of higher density development typologies, there are factors that indicate there is some capacity (and requirement) to accommodate change:

- Generally, the existing houses' amenities derive principally from (a) their detached typology and large size, (b) their large gardens which are well vegetated, limiting visibility of the surroundings apart from framed views, (c) the views north over Dun Laoghaire Rathdown towards Dublin Bay afforded by their elevation, and (d) the generally high degree of visual enclosure generated by the quantity of trees in the area (refer to Photos 5-11). The proposed development generally does not threaten any of these conditions.
- The existing peri-urban development pattern cannot be considered sustainable and the area is due to undergo substantial, planned change (see 4th bullet above).
- It is county-level and national policy to consolidate and densify the urban area to make the most efficient possible use of physical and social infrastructure. The implication of this is that new high density typologies - i.e. taller buildings - will be introduced to previously low density areas, unavoidably changing their character and the composition of views from the public realm and private property.
- Due to the factors identified above, urban consolidation and densification can occur without significant loss of the neighbouring residential properties' amenities – if the development is of high design quality responsive to the sensitivity of the neighbouring properties.
- Another sensitivity is the area's proximity to the High Amenity zoned rural area to the south west across Woodside Road (see Figure 11 above). The site, while adjoining this area (across Woodside Road), is *outside* of it, and the rural high amenity zone would be better served by there being a clear dividing line between the rural and urban areas rather than the gradual transition which currently occurs between Woodside Road and Blackglen Road. The proposed development poses no threat to the High Amenity area; it rather provides potential for better delineation of the area.

In summary, the local receiving environment is in a transitional stage between rural and urban. 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 will transform the area into an urban environment. Due to its scale and frontage to Blackglen Road the site has a significant role to play in the evolution of the area towards an urban condition. While the existing residential properties in the vicinity are individually sensitive to landscape and visual change, as a whole the peri-urban landscape is not a valued character type. Additionally there are several factors that indicate these houses can accommodate change in their setting without unacceptable impact on their amenities.

5.2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change which would result from the proposed development is Medium¹-High².

The development would see the introduction of a cluster of buildings of contemporary urban typology, scale and architecture in a framework of open space and screening vegetation, to a large site in a currently low density, peri-urban landscape - consolidating the urban area through infill. At the local scale this would constitute a high magnitude of change. In combination with the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme it would initiate a shift in the character of the area, towards a more urban condition.

¹ Medium magnitude of change definition: *'Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape'.*

² High magnitude of change definition: *'Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape'.*

Considered at the wider scale, the consolidation of the area between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road would constitute a medium magnitude of change. It would complement the already consolidated urban areas (with well defined urban-rural edge) that exist to the east and west (see Figure 3 above).

5.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

Measuring the magnitude of change against the sensitivity of the receiving environment, the significance of the landscape effects is predicted to be 'Moderate' overall (definition: *'An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends'*).

The development would undoubtedly change the character of the landscape locally. However, given that (a) the existing peri-urban landscape is neither a valued character type nor a sustainable use of the urban land resource, (b) the affected area is due to undergo a process of urban consolidation facilitated by the DLR Development Plan and the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme, 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. In summary, the predicted landscape effects are moderate and positive.

6.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

For the Stage 2 submission 23 no. viewpoints were selected for 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.

In the PA and ABP Opinion, it was requested that:

- Winter photomontages be provided with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (this report);
- Additional photomontages be provided from (a) Sandyford Road south of the M50, (b) the public view-point on Blackglen Road to the west of the subject site, and (c) more locations along Tinknock Road, given the objective to preserve the views from that location.

In response to these requests for additional information the following material has been prepared to inform this assessment:

- A full set of winter photomontages (for the same Viewpoints for which summer photomontages were previously prepared);
- Several new winter photomontages, including (a) three views from Sandyford Road south of the M50, (b) a view from the public viewing point on Blackglen Road to the west of the site, and (c) an additional location on Tinknock Road.
- The original summer photomontages have also been updated to show the modified proposal.
- Where relevant, cumulative photomontages have also been prepared, showing the Blackglen Road SHD scheme (currently under consideration by ABP) in combination with the subject proposal.

The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 22 overleaf.

The visual effects on these viewpoints are assessed in Table 1 below. For the methodology, terms and criteria used in the assessment refer to Appendix 1.

The assessments should be read in conjunction with the baseline photographs and verified photomontages provided in A3 format under separate cover.

Figure 22: Viewpoints for visual effects assessment

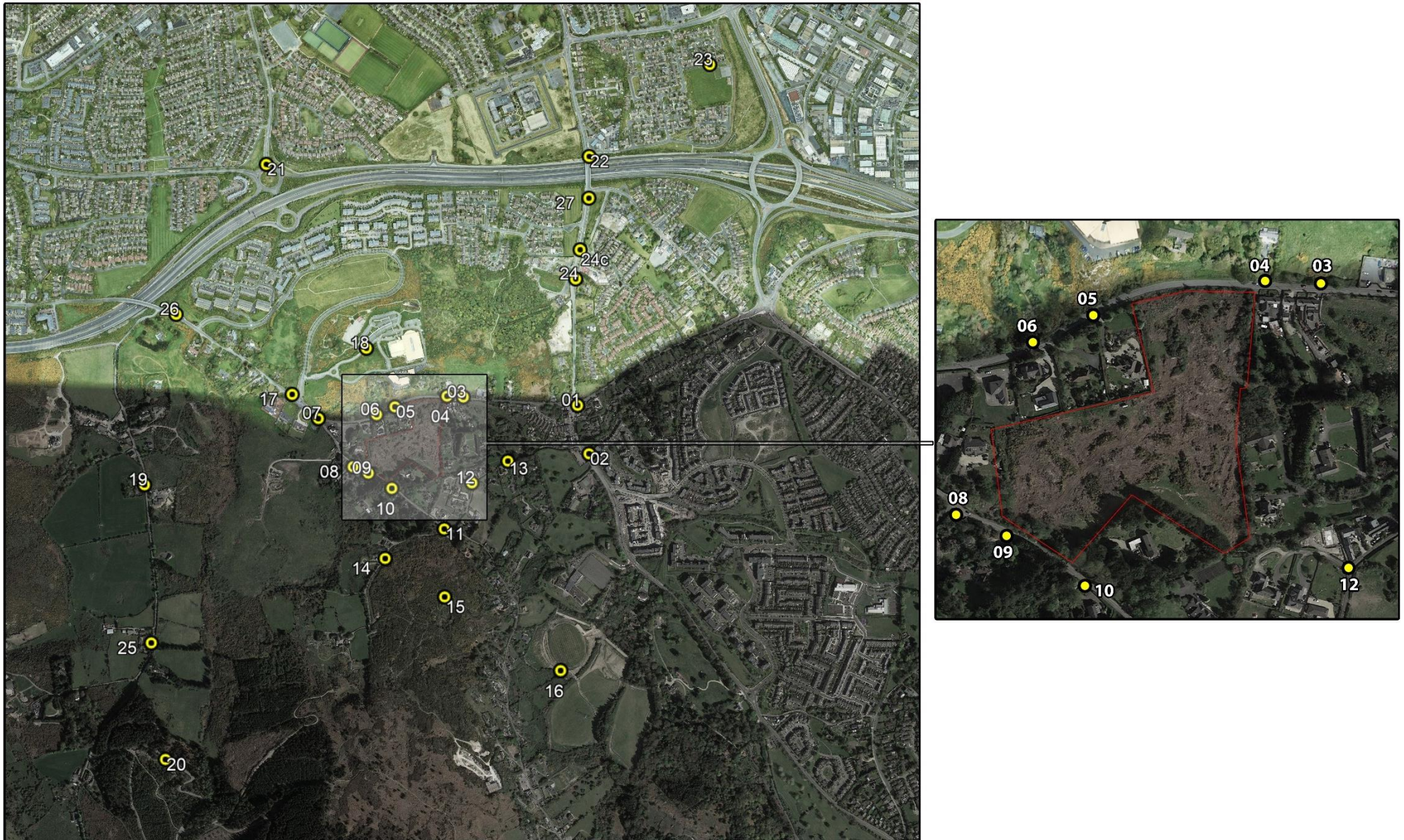



Table 1: Assessment of Visual Effects

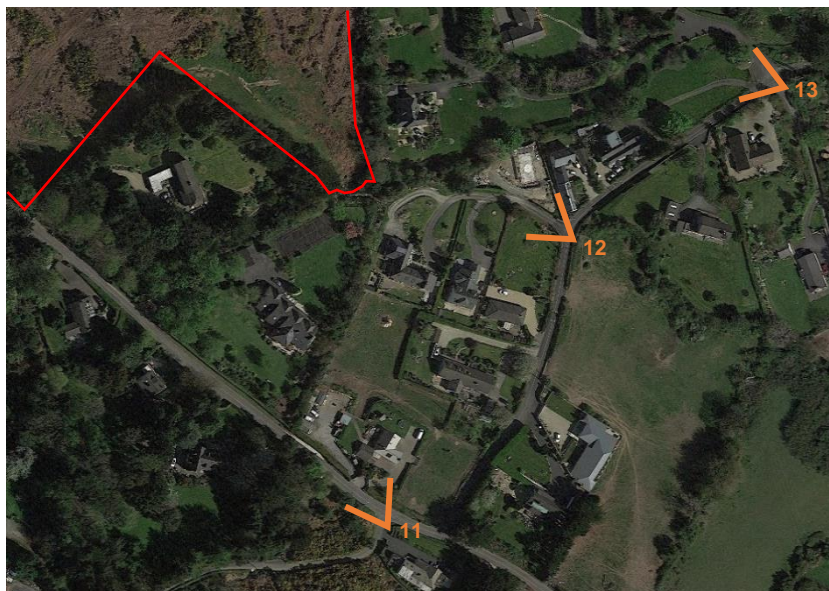
No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
Views from Lamb's Cross and Blackglen Road to the east of the site					
01	Lamb's Cross (Sandyford) neighbourhood centre	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the foreground to the left is the shopping centre, beyond which are the community centre and school (out of frame to the left), together forming the small urban core of Lamb's Cross. The undeveloped corner site to the right across the road is also zoned neighbourhood centre and was recently the subject of an unsuccessful SHD application. The proposed views show the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme which will transform the road from local/rural in character to an urban streetscape with dedicated cycle lanes and footpaths on both sides. At a distance of 400m and with the road's gently winding alignment the proposed development (Buildings A1 and A2) would be barely discernible – in winter and summer. The cumulative view shows that the proposed Blackglen Road SHD apartment building fronting the road (between Lamb's Cross and the site) would be visible, and would screen the proposed development entirely from view. 	Negligible	Not significant neutral
02	Enniskerry Road entering the neighbourhood centre	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entering the neighbourhood centre along Enniskerry Road from the east there is a distinctly urban character as the road passes the Clon Brugh apartments to the right and then the imposing St Mary's National School, the community centre and the shopping centre beside the crossroads with Blackglen Road. This position was selected to test the proposal's visibility along the face of the hillside, from the edge of the neighbourhood centre where there is (briefly) no enclosure of the road by trees or buildings. The development would not be visible – in winter or summer. 	None	No effect
03	Blackglen Road approaching the site from the east	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view is taken from the bus stop across the road from the cottages east of the site frontage. It is notable that there are no footpaths leading to the bus stops on either side of the road. With the absence of visible development around them the cottages and their setting appear rural. However, their positioning close to the road edge and their terracing and uniformity also suggest they would not be out of place in an urban setting. The proposed view shows the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme which will widen the road considerably and <i>transform it into an urban streetscape</i> with dedicated cycle lanes and footpaths on both sides. This initiates the change of character in the area. The proposed Buildings A1 and A2 would be prominent additions to the road corridor, reinforcing the shift towards an urban character. The two new street-front buildings share the same building line as the cottages and adopt certain traditional characteristics, e.g. the pitched roofs and render finish. The step up in height from the cottage to the 3 storey A2 is notable but not unusual in an evolving urban context, and the composition of building typologies and forms is visually interesting. 	Medium-High	Moderate positive

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lands to the right across the upgraded road, opposite the cottages, are part of a large undeveloped area zoned residential. The frontage opposite the cottages can thus be expected to be developed in the future, contributing further to the planned urbanisation of the Blackglen Road corridor. The proposed change would be of medium-high magnitude. The composition and character of the view would be dramatically changed, but (a) the change follows that initiated by the road improvement scheme, (b) the buildings clearly respond to their context and are of high design and material quality, and (c) there is further change planned along the road corridor including opposite the site. The visual effects can thus be classified of moderate significance and positive. 		
04	Blackglen Road along the site frontage	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently the view shows the site in its undeveloped condition beside an <i>apparently</i> rural road. It should be noted that (a) at the time of the photograph the road was due to be upgraded, and (b) the Explorium buildings are just to the right, hidden by the local topography and vegetation. The appearance of rural character in the view does not therefore reflect the reality. The proposed view shows the frontage of Buildings A1 and A2 to the new, widened Blackglen Road streetscape. The buildings are set back behind a strip of ornamental planting with clusters of trees which soften the built frontage. The ground floor of the buildings is occupied by a creche and residents' amenities to provide an active frontage to the street. Although it can't be seen in the photomontage (due to the enforced camera position; the only safe place to photograph from prior to the road upgrade) there is a gap (the 'arrival court') between A1 and A2 in which the main entrance to the development is proposed. This can be seen in the CGI view, Figure 14 above. The magnitude of change would be high. The composition and character of the view would be dramatically changed but (a) the change follows that initiated by the road improvement scheme, (b) the Explorium across the road creates favourable context, (c) the buildings clearly respond to their context and are of high design and material quality, and (d) there is further change planned along the Blackglen Road corridor. The visual effects can thus be classified of moderate significance and positive. 	High	Moderate positive
Views from Lamb Doyle's Pub and Blackglen Road to the west of the site					
05	View from Blackglen Road – entrance to neighbouring property	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is taken from Blackglen Road at the entrance to the neighbouring residential property west of the site. The house is set back a long distance from the road, up the hillside in an extensive, landscaped garden. The proposed 6 storey Buildings B1 and B2 are positioned over 30m to the side of the house, at lower elevation and presenting their shorter elevations to the neighbouring property. Nonetheless, the photomontage shows that they would be prominent additions to views from the property. (Building A1, set further down the hill fronting the road, would also be visible.) The development would substantially change the character of the house's setting and the composition of views from the property. Such change is unavoidable in the process of urban consolidation and densification. 	High	Significant neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recognition of the potential impact, the embedded mitigation includes the setback of B1 and B2 from the shared boundary by 22m, their positioning to present a permeable built frontage to the neighbouring house, the high quality of the facades (in terms of design and materials), and – most importantly – the proposed screening vegetation. The photomontage shows the short term impact of the buildings' introduction to the landscape. In the medium to long term the multi-layered woodland planting in the 22m open space corridor inside the site boundary would mature to screen and soften the buildings' presence. The landscape character and the views from the property would thus be changed, but not inappropriately in the evolving/urbanising context, and the house would retain a high level of residential and visual amenities. 		
06	Blackglen Road approaching the site from the west	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view is taken from Blackglen Road approximately 65m west of Viewpoint 05 (the width of one residential property). It shows the high degree of visual enclosure generated by the trees on these properties, particularly along the road-front. The development would not be visible in the summer and in the winter it would be barely discernible through the bare tree canopies. The effectiveness of the existing trees as a visual screen is noteworthy. While it will take time for the new planting to mature, the considerably wider woodland belt (than the existing roadside tree line in View 06) proposed inside the site boundaries would be similarly effective. 	Negligible	Not significant neutral
07	Lamb Doyle's at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pub is positioned facing the junction, surrounded by extensive parking areas. The roofs of the neighbouring houses can be seen above the hedge and trees along Blackglen Road to the left. Out of frame to the right, the land rises steeply into the Dublin Mountains. The vegetation to the left of Blackglen Road is in the grounds of Explorium; the large Explorium buildings lie directly north of the stretch of Blackglen Road in this view. A small part of building B2 would be visible protruding above the roofline of the houses fronting Blackglen Road to the east of Lamb Doyle's. The urbanised Blackglen Road streetscape provides favourable context for this change, and it would amount to a negligible to low magnitude of change, having limited effect on the landscape character or visual amenity. 	Negligible-Low	Slight neutral
Views from Woodside Road					
08	Woodside Road approaching the site from the west	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view shows the high degree of visual enclosure along Woodside Road in the vicinity of the site. There are houses to both sides of the road but they are set back a long distance from the road and their gardens are densely wooded, restricting visibility of the surrounding landscape. (Views from the adjacent properties would be of similar character to the view from the road.) The winter view shows that the the 3 storey volume of Building C3 would be visible protruding above the site boundary and roadside vegetation. (In summer it would be nearly entirely hidden.) The two different façade 	Medium	Moderate positive


No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<p>treatments, a bronzed aluminium cladding and buff brick can both be seen, and both have a softening effect that complements the wooded landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The magnitude of change would be medium. The development would cause a distinct shift in character in the landscape north of the road, but this is not inappropriate given that Woodside Road is the planned urban edge (see Figure 11 above). The development would in fact reinforce the urban-rural delineation, which is positive in urban design terms. 		
09	Woodside Road opposite site frontage	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view is taken from the entrance to the driveway of a house across Woodside Road from the site. (The house itself is 35m back from the road and enclosed by trees in the garden.) The unkempt condition of the site is evident in the existing view. It contributes to the rural character of the road corridor, although it is somewhat untidy. The summer and winter views show that the 4 storey Building C3 would be a prominent addition to the landscape, despite being set back 20m from the road behind a belt of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees and a hedge. The composition and character of the view would be dramatically changed – <u>along the short stretch of the site's frontage to the road.</u> If it is accepted that the consolidation and densification of the urban area north of Woodside Road is appropriate, and that the road should form a distinct edge between the urban and rural landscapes (as the DLR Development Plan indicates and the Enniskerry Road does successfully to the east), then the effect can be classified positive. The urban-rural edge would be reinforced, by a building of distinctly urban character, but also a building that is attractive in its own right. <u>It should be considered whether a lower density typology (e.g. detached houses, which typically have walled gardens), would have any/substantially less visual impact, or a more positive visual effect than the proposal (given the site is zoned for some form of residential development). In our opinion that alternative would be a less optimal outcome.</u> 	High	Moderate positive


No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a separation distance of some 60m between C3 and the house across the road, and considering the screening effect of the existing and proposed trees between the two buildings, the visual effects on the house would be negligible. 		
10	Woodside Road approaching the site from the east	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like View 08 this view shows the high degree of enclosure along Woodside Road in the vicinity of the site. The view is taken from the driveway entrance to a house that is situated close to the road, but the house is orientated to take advantage of the view to the north east, away from the site. In winter Building C3 would be visible through the existing and proposed roadside trees, and passing by the site the new entrance and access road would be revealed. The magnitude of change would be low-medium but there would nonetheless be a significant change in character in the view. The presence (and typology) of the building, the entrance and boundary treatment would define the urban-rural edge along a short stretch of Woodside Road. This can be considered a positive change, and the effects on the houses across the road would be negligible. 	Low-Medium	Moderate positive
11	Junction of Woodside Road and Cullens Way	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This view is taken from a position 200m to the east of View 10 at the junction with Cullens Way. The existing view highlights the peri-urban character of the area, being neither rural, nor urban or suburban. It also illustrates the gradient of the land and the visual enclosure along the road and around the individual properties. The roofline of the Explorium is discernible in the distance through a gap in the trees. A small part of Building B2 (including the set-back upper floor and cantilevered canopy roof) would be visible above the tree line in the middle distance – in the same gap as the Explorium building. 	Negligible-Low	Not significant neutral



No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The magnitude of change would be negligible to low. The development would cause a slight change in character, resulting from the new development typology introduced to the landscape (although by replacing the Explorium in the view this would not be significant). There would be no loss of visual amenity, nor any gain. 		
12	Slate Cabin Lane - A	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is along a driveway off Slate Cabin Lane leading to a cluster of houses to the east of the site, positioned on the side of the hill to take advantage of the view north (afforded by the combination of elevation and falling topography). The houses have large gardens which are mostly enclosed by hedges or trees. It should be noted (as can be seen in the baseline photo) that the houses are positioned/orientated for the view north. This photo is the view east and does not represent the principal/most valued views from the houses. (The proposed development has no potential to obstruct the views north.) Therefore the sensitivity is classified medium. The 'B' buildings would be visible to the east along the face of the hill, arranged in two pairs - B3 and B4 higher up the hillside, and B1 and B2 lower down. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wide gap between the two pairs (in which the 'marker building' D was located in the Stage 2 submission), and the splayed arrangement of each pair, makes the built form permeable despite the high density typology. The stepping down of the floor levels and overall building height across the site, reflecting the site/local topography, is appreciable. (It is notable that the two storey volume of building B4, the element closest to the neighbouring houses, is hidden by the boundary vegetation.) Another notable characteristic of the buildings is their articulated form and facades, emphasised by the variations in materials. This reduces the perception of massing. The material textures and colours (natural, earthy shades) are effective in further softening the buildings' presence. Although the development typology is markedly different to the houses, the buildings are responsive to the context, attractive and distinctive. The magnitude of change would be medium and the presence of the development would cause a fundamental shift in the landscape character. This is not inappropriate in the evolving urban area. <u>In this future scenario the urban area (i.e. the area north of Woodside Road) is consolidated and densified in accordance with national policy. Within this urban landscape there are areas of low density, high amenity, high value houses coexisting with areas of higher density housing - also of high quality and also providing a high level of residential amenities.</u> <u>The houses, as dwellings, would not be devalued by this change. They would retain most of the qualities that generate their residential amenities, i.e. large dwellings with generous private open space and views over the city to the north. The neighbourhood would lose the perception of being in a rural setting, but that is a</u> 	Medium	Moderate neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
			<p><u>necessary change and would not itself diminish their visual or residential amenities. The mere presence/visibility of buildings of contemporary urban typology and scale should not be considered negative in a modern urban context.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therefore, while the composition and character of the view would be dramatically changed, due to the high quality of the new elements, the effect can be considered neutral. 		
13	Slate Cabin Lane - B	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is from Slate Cabin Lane a short distance to the east, down the slope towards Lamb's Cross. From this elevation only the top of Buildings B3 and B4 would protrude marginally above the foreground vegetation – in the winter view. In summer the development would be screened. The magnitude of change would be negligible to low and there would be a slight change in character resulting from the new development typology being introduced to the landscape. There would be no loss of visual amenity, nor any significant gain (e.g. in the landscape's legibility). The magnitude of change would be negligible to low. The development would cause a slight change in character, resulting from the introduction of a new development typology to the landscape, but there would be no loss of visual amenity, nor any gain. 	Negligible-Low	Not significant neutral
Views from Cullens Way and Barnacullia					
14	Cullens Way	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view is from roughly half way up Cullens Way just above a cluster of houses beside the lane. The viewpoint represents the residents and also hill walkers who access Barnacullia from Cullens Way. This is ostensibly a rural area although a proportion of the housing along the lane appears to be urban-generated (there are more houses than farms). The view is dominated by the tall trees on the south side of Woodside Road. Where the treeline dips the roof of the Explorium building can be seen, and beyond that Dublin (with the larger buildings of the port, the Docklands and the city centre discernible). One of the proposed 'C' buildings would be discernible through a dip in the treeline, in the same place and to the same height as the Explorium building. One building would thus replace another in the view, and being clad in bronze coloured aluminium (i.e. a natural colour), it would be less prominent than the yellow Explorium building. In the broad panorama this would constitute a negligible magnitude of change and there would be no significant change in the character or quality of the view. 	Negligible	Not significant neutral
15	View from a walking trail at the summit of Barnacullia	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elevation and the lack of trees and buildings at the top of the hill combine to afford a panoramic view over the city and Dublin Bay. As a walking trail valued specifically for the views, this viewpoint is of high sensitivity. That sensitivity relates principally to any potential change in the foreground, which might block or substantially intrude in the view. 	Low	Slight positive

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects	
	above Cullens Way		<p>Beyond the foreground there is considerable capacity for change, i.e. development can take place without causing harm - due to the breadth and complexity of the view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Although out of frame in the view towards the site, the urban core of Lamb’s Cross is prominent in views from Barnacullia. Sandyford and Leopardstown are also prominent.It is also notable that to the north east there is a visible edge between the rural and urban landscapes (the edge formed by the Enniskerry Road) – whereas in the view north (towards the site and the Blackglan Road area) the landscape character is mixed/indistinct (with a scattering of houses and the Explorium prominent).A number of the proposed buildings would be visible protruding above the trees at the foot of Barnacullia, in front of the Explorium buildings. They would combine with the houses of the Slate Cabin Lane area to form a more distinctly urban landscape. The diversity of the proposed building forms and materials contributes to this strengthening of character. <u>Such clarity of the distinction between the urban and rural landscapes is a positive change.</u>Although relatively close to the viewer, in the wide panorama of a vast urban area and seascape, the development would amount to a low magnitude of change. It would strengthen the character and add visual interest to a part of the landscape, and can be considered a positive change.			
View from Fernhill Park						
16	View from the oval open space in Fernhill Park	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fernhill Park is a recently developed public park of exceptional amenity value. One of its attributes is the panoramic views afforded from parts of the park. It was selected as a viewpoint to test whether the development would be visible to the north west along the face of Barnacullia. (The site is some 550m from the park.)The camera position up the slope at the back of the oval was selected as views from the north western edge of the park (closer to the site) are blocked by the trees visible in the photomontages.The development would not be visible.		None	No effect

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects	
Views from Blackglen Road to the west of the site, Rockview Road and Explorium						
17	Blackglen Road at Rockview Road junction	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The top of Rockview Road affords a panoramic view north over a large part of Dublin. This is identified as a protected view in the DLR Development Plan. It is noteworthy that the very large Explorium building appears in this protected view.In the view east from this location Lamb Doyle’s pub can be seen a short distance away at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road.One of the proposed buildings would protrude marginally above the vegetation in the intervening landscape (the Explorium grounds) in the distance. Considering the prominence of the other developments in view from this location, e.g. Lamb Doyle’s and the Explorium, and the breadth of the panorama, this would amount to a negligible magnitude of change.	Negligible	Not significant neutral	
26	Blackglen Road public viewing point	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>The DLR Opinion to ABP recommended that the visual impact on the Blackglen Road public viewing point be assessed.</u> The viewing point provides a panoramic view over Dublin to the north.The proposed development lies to the east of the viewing point. <u>A combination of the topography and vegetation in the intervening landscape would screen the development from view.</u>	None	No effect	
18	Explorium entrance road	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explorium attracts a large number of visitors and although the activities are concentrated indoors the location affords panoramic views both over the city to the north and up into the mountains to the south. This visual amenity contributes to the experience.A very small part of one of the buildings would be discernible just to the side of the smaller Explorium building. This would amount to a negligible change and it would have no effect on the views of the city or the mountains.	Negligible	Not significant neutral	
Views from Ticknock Road and Ticknock Forest						
19	Ticknock Road	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Views along the full length of Ticknock Road are protected in the DLR Development Plan.This view, from a point on the road at similar elevation to the site (and one of the few views east unobstructed by roadside vegetation), was selected for assessment at Stage 2 in the SHD process.The development would be hidden by the convex landform between the site and Ticknock Road (there is a slight rise to the east of Ticknock Road which screens the site).		None	No effect

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
25	Ticknock Road further south, up the hill	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DLR Opinion to ABP recommended that additional views from Ticknock Road be assessed. The road is lined by hedgerows for much of its length and this restricts lateral views. An unobstructed view from well up the hillside was found and this view has been provided for assessment. The elevation affords a panoramic view over South Dublin and Dublin Bay, with Howth Head on the horizon. The high density district of Sandyford and Leopardstown is a notable element of the view. Similar to viewpoint 19 lower down the slope, the proposed development would be screened by the landform between the site and Ticknock Road. <u>It appears from the two views (Viewpoints 19 and 25) that there are no views from Ticknock Road in which the proposed development would be visible.</u> 	None	No effect
20	Ticknock Forest	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ticknock Forest is a popular recreation area and one of its attractions is the views that the upland forest affords over the city to the north and into the mountains to the south. Due to the forest trees surrounding the roads and trails there are few open/unobstructed views; views are generally framed or filtered by foreground trees. The position of this viewpoint was selected as the Explorium buildings were visible, identifying the site location. The proposed development would be largely hidden by the foreground trees in this view. If the trees were not blocking the view (as may be the case elsewhere around the Ticknock), the buildings would be discernible protruding through the large patch of trees to the south of Woodside Road (similar to the impact in View 15, only further away). In the vast and complex panorama this would amount to a negligible change and there would be no effect on the visual amenity of Ticknock Forest. 	Negligible	Not significant neutral
Views from North of the M50					
21	Ballinteer Road roundabout	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This location affords a view south across the M50 and up towards the Dublin Mountains. The Rockview apartments can be seen just beyond the M50. The proposed development would not be visible. 	None	No effect
22	Sandyford Road bridge over the M50	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The elevation of the bridge and the lack of foreground obstructions combine to afford a panoramic view south towards the Dublin Mountains. There is a belt of mixed density development on the south side of the M50 to the right. To the left along Sandyford Road (which leads up to Lamb's Cross) a new apartment development is under construction. In addition to the primary horizon formed by the highest peaks there is a secondary horizon formed by the foothills of the mountains. The Explorium building is discernible on this secondary horizon and this identifies the approximate location of the site in the view. The proposed buildings would protrude only very marginally above the tree-covered secondary horizon, to the left of the Explorium building. Their protrusion would be so limited that they might not be noticed in the complex panorama. There would be no significant change to the landscape character or visual amenity. 	Negligible	Not significant neutral

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Commentary	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
23	Blackthorn Grove/ Moreen Park	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This viewpoint was selected to assess whether the open space of Moreen Park in front of the Blackthorn Grove houses would afford a long distance view of the development. The development would not be visible. 	None	No effect
Views from Sandyford Road south of the M50					
24	Sandyford Road south of the M50	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DLR Opinion requested the provision of additional views from Sandyford Road south of the M50. Due to the variability of the roadside uses and boundaries, and the variable topography between the road and the site, three views have been provided. <u>The development would not be visible from any of the viewpoints. It would have no effect on Sandyford Road south of the M50.</u> 	None	No effect
24c				None	No effect
27				None	No effect

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Landscape Effects

The landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment can be classified medium. This takes account of the following main factors:

- The site is an infill site within the boundary of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown urban area, and is zoned for residential development.
- The site's receiving environment – the Blackglenn Road corridor west of Lamb's Cross and the triangle of land between Blackglenn Road and Woodside Road – is peri-urban in character *as opposed to suburban*. The existing urban-generated, low density development occurred piecemeal over the course of the 20th century. There is thus no established, valued landscape character; the area is in an unsustainable, transitional stage between rural and urban.
- There is a related weakness in the boundary between the urban and rural landscapes in the site environs. This is emphasised by the comparatively strong/legible boundary to the east and west, where consolidation/ densification has taken place right up to the edge of the urban area.
- A combination of DLR Development Plan zoning objectives - including the (a) the site's zoning, (b) the residential zoning of a broad belt of land on the north side of Blackglenn Road between the site and Lamb's Cross, (c) the expansion of Lamb's Cross into a substantial urban core, (d) the Blackglenn Road Improvement Scheme, and (e) the provision of extensive areas of open space in the locality – will transform the landscape character of the receiving environment. *In this planned future scenario Blackglenn Road will form the spine through a consolidated and evolved urban area, served by a substantial mixed use urban neighbourhood centre, bus services and a range of open spaces.*
- At 3.7 ha the site is of a scale that its development can:
 - establish (or contribute to the establishment of) a new context, i.e. contribute to the evolution of the receiving environment as opposed to being perceived as an anomaly within it, and
 - protect the neighbouring properties by (a) setting buildings back from the boundaries, (b) stepping down in height towards the boundaries, and (c) introducing broad belts of screening vegetation inside the boundaries to protect the neighbouring houses' amenities.
- In the wider area there are examples of high density development at a similar distance from neighbourhood centres and from the M50, and at similar elevation to the site (e.g. Clon Brugh, Parkview and Belarmine). The main difference between these developments and the site is their position adjacent to the Enniskerry Road. The Blackglenn Road Improvement Scheme will result in the road being of urban character (as a streetscape) and capacity, facilitating pedestrian and cycle movement and the use of public transport, tying the adjacent lands into the urban area. The site context will then be similar to that of the aforementioned developments – although with an as yet unconsolidated urban structure.
- The main sensitivities in the area are the existing low density residential properties to the east and west along Blackglenn Road, to the south east in the Slate Cabin Lane area, and along Woodside Road. While low density residential use is generally sensitive to the introduction of higher density development typologies, there are factors that indicate there is some capacity (and requirement) to accommodate change:
 - Generally, the existing houses' amenities derive principally from (a) their detached typology and large size, (b) their correspondingly large gardens which are well vegetated, limiting visibility of the surroundings apart from framed views, (c) the views north over Dun Laoghaire Rathdown towards Dublin Bay afforded by their elevation, and (d) the generally high degree of visual enclosure generated by the quantity of trees in the area (refer to Photos 5-11). The proposed development generally does not threaten any of these conditions.

- The existing peri-urban development pattern cannot be considered sustainable and the area is due to undergo substantial, planned change (see 4th bullet above).
- It is county-level and national policy to consolidate and densify the urban area to make the most efficient possible use of physical and social infrastructure. The implication of this is that new high density typologies - i.e. taller buildings - will be introduced to previously low density areas, unavoidably changing their character and the composition of views from the public realm *and* private property.
- Another sensitivity is the area's proximity to the High Amenity zoned rural area to the south west across Woodside Road (see Figure 11 above). The site, while adjoining this area (across Woodside Road), is *outside* of it, and the rural high amenity zone would be better served by there being a clear dividing line between the rural and urban areas rather than the gradual transition which currently occurs between Woodside Road and Blackglen Road. The proposed development poses no threat to the High Amenity area; it rather provides potential for better delineation of the area.

Considered at the local scale the magnitude of change to the landscape would be high. The proposed development would see the introduction of a cluster of buildings of contemporary urban typology, scale and architecture, in a framework of open space and screening vegetation, to a large site in the currently low density, peri-urban landscape. In combination with the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme it would initiate a shift in the character of the area towards a more urban condition.

Seen at the wider scale, the development would contribute to the consolidation of the urban area between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road, strengthening the boundary between Dun Laoghaire Rathdown's urban and rural landscapes. This would complement the areas to the east and west where such clear delineation already exists. The change would thus not be out of character, and can be considered of medium magnitude overall.

Measuring the magnitude of change against the sensitivity of the receiving environment, the significance of the landscape effects is predicted to be 'moderate' overall.

The development would undoubtedly change the character of the landscape locally, but this is an intended effect. Given that (a) the existing peri-urban landscape is neither a valued character type nor a sustainable use of the land, (b) the affected area is due to undergo a process of urban consolidation facilitated by the DLR Development Plan and the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme, (c) urban consolidation and densification is encouraged by county and national policy, and (d) the proposed development is responsive to its context and local sensitivities and of high design and material quality, **the change can be considered positive.**

7.2 Visual Effects

The predicted visual effects are summarised in Table 2 below (for detailed commentary and explanation of the significance classifications for each view refer to Table 1).

Table 2: Summary of visual effects assessment

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
01	Lamb's Cross (Sandymount) neighbourhood centre	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
02	Enniskerry Road entering the neighbourhood centre	Medium	None	No effect
03	Blackglen Road approaching the site from the east	Medium	Medium-High	Moderate positive
04	Blackglen Road along the site frontage	Medium	High	Moderate positive

No.	Viewpoint Location	Viewpoint Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Effects
05	View from Blackglen Road – entrance to neighbouring property	High	High	Significant neutral
06	Blackglen Road approaching the site from the west	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
07	Lamb Doyle's at the junction of Blackglen Road and Woodside Road	Medium	Negligible-Low	Slight neutral
08	Woodside Road approaching the site from the west	Medium	Medium	Moderate positive
09	Woodside Road opposite site frontage	Medium	High	Moderate positive
10	Woodside Road approaching the site from the east	Medium	Low-Medium	Moderate positive
11	Junction of Woodside Road and Cullens Way	Medium	Negligible-Low	Not significant neutral
12	Slate Cabin Lane - A	Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral
13	Slate Cabin Lane - B	Medium	Negligible-Low	Not significant neutral
14	Cullens Way	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
15	View from a walking trail at the summit of Barnacullia above Cullens Way	High	Low	Slight positive
16	View from the oval open space in Fernhill Park	High	None	No effect
17	Blackglen Road at Rockview Road junction	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
26	Blackglen Road public viewing point	High	None	No effect
18	Explorium entrance road	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
19	Ticknock Road	High	None	No effect
25	Ticknock Road further south, up the hill	High	None	No effect
20	Ticknock Forest	High	Negligible	Not significant neutral
21	Ballinteer Road roundabout	Medium	None	No effect
22	Sandyford Road bridge over the M50	Medium	Negligible	Not significant neutral
23	Blackthorn Grove/ Moreen Park	Medium	None	No effect
24	Sandyford Road south of the M50	Medium	None	No effect
24c	Sandyford Road south of the M50	Medium	None	No effect
27	Sandyford Road south of the M50	Medium	None	No effect

The main findings for the key visual receptors are as follows:

- **Blackglen Road to the east of the site.** Approaching and passing by the site along Blackglen Road from the east, the visual effects would be of moderate significance and positive (Viewpoints 03 and 04). Buildings A1 and A2 would be prominent additions to the road corridor, reinforcing the shift towards an urban character. The new street-front buildings would share the same building line as the neighbouring

cottages and adopt certain traditional characteristics, e.g. pitched roofs and render finish. The step up in height from the cottages to the 3 storey A2 building would be notable but not excessive nor unusual in an evolving urban context. The resulting composition of building typologies would be visually interesting, and the communal uses in the ground floors of both buildings would contribute to visual interest by activating the frontage. The buildings would be complemented by high quality landscaping of the streetscape, incorporating elements of urban character (raised planters) and naturalistic aspects (in the planting palette and arrangement of trees).

- **Blackglen Road to the west of the site.** The effects on views from the road itself to the west of the site (Viewpoint 06) would be limited due to the visual enclosure along the road. Viewpoint 05 shows the effect on the neighbouring property (as seen through the driveway entrance). Buildings B1, B2 and A1 would be prominent additions to views from the property, causing a significant change in its landscape setting. This is unavoidable in the process of urban consolidation and densification. In recognition of the potential impact, the embedded mitigation includes the 22m setback of the buildings from the shared boundary, their positioning to present a permeable frontage to the house, the high quality of the facades, and – most importantly – a broad woodland belt inside the boundary. In time this would mature to soften the buildings' presence considerably. The landscape character and the views from the property would thus be changed, but not inappropriately in the evolving context, and the house would retain a high level of residential and visual amenities.
- **Woodside Road.** The effects on views from close proximity to the site along Woodside Road and the neighbouring properties would be of moderate significance. In summer the development would be largely screened, but in winter Building C3 would feature in the views, three storeys tall along the south west boundary (shared with a single neighbouring house) and four storeys along the Woodside Road frontage (Viewpoints 08, 09, 10). Screening vegetation is proposed inside both boundaries, and as this matures it would soften the building's presence. The natural-coloured façade materials, a bronzed aluminium cladding and buff brick, would also have a softening effect that complements the wooded landscape. If it is accepted that the consolidation and densification of the urban area north of Woodside Road is appropriate, and that the road should form a distinct edge between the urban and rural landscapes (as the DLR Development Plan indicates and the Enniskerry Road does successfully to the east), then the effect can be classified positive. The urban-rural edge would be reinforced, by a building of urban character, but which also reflects aspects of its rural context.

It should be considered whether a lower density typology (e.g. detached houses, which typically have walled gardens), would have any/substantially less visual impact, or a more positive visual effect than the proposal (given the site is zoned for some form of residential development). In our opinion that alternative would be a less optimal outcome.

- **Slate Cabin Lane area.** Buildings B2, B3 and B4 would be visible from the Slate Cabin Lane area (e.g. View 12). Some of the main modifications made to the proposal following the ABP Opinion – specifically the reduction in height of B3 and B4 and the omission of Block D - would have most effect on these views.

Although the development typology is markedly different from the houses, the buildings would be attractive and distinctive, and softened by their articulated form and facades, and the material textures and colours. The magnitude of change would be medium and the presence of the development would cause a fundamental shift in the landscape character. This is not inappropriate in the evolving urban area.

In this proposed future scenario the urban area (between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road) is consolidated and densified in accordance with national policy. Within this urban landscape there are areas of low density, high amenity, high value houses coexisting with areas of higher density housing - also of high quality and also providing a high level of residential amenities.

The houses, as dwellings, would not be devalued by this change. They would retain most of the qualities that generate their residential amenities, i.e. large dwellings with generous private open space and views over the city to the north. The neighbourhood would lose the perception of being in a rural setting, but that is a necessary change and would not itself diminish the houses' visual or residential amenities. The

mere presence/ visibility of buildings of contemporary urban typology and scale should not be considered negative in a modern urban context.

- **Cullen's Lane and Barnacullia.** There would be negligible change to views from Cullen's Lane and the houses along the lane. The development would be visible from the walking trails on Barnacullia however. The development would combine with the houses of the Slate Cabin Lane area to form a more distinctly urban landscape at the foot of Barnacullia. Although relatively close to the viewer, in the wide panorama over a vast urban area and seascape, the development would amount to a low magnitude of change. It would strengthen the character and add visual interest to a part of the landscape, and can be considered a positive change.
- **Ticknock Road and Ticknock Forest.** The development would have no effect on the protected views from Ticknock Road and no significant effect on views from Ticknock Forest.
- **North of the site across the M50: Ballinteer and Sandyford.** The development would have very limited effect on the area north of the M50.
- **Sandyford Road south of the M50.** The development would have no effect on Sandyford Road south of the M50.

7.3 Conclusion

It is inevitable that a development of the typology proposed, in the context, would change the character of the landscape and the composition of views. In the existing unsustainable peri-urban environment between Blackglen Road and Woodside Road such change is not necessarily adverse. The site is zoned for residential development and any development of sustainable density (or even much lower density development) would have some effect on the landscape character and views - from neighbouring properties in particular.

The assessment has found that while the proposal would have a significant visual effect on a small number of surrounding properties (e.g. on the neighbouring property represented by Viewpoint 5), the proposal is sufficiently responsive to the sensitivity, and of sufficiently high design quality, to avoid a long term negative impact on visual amenity. The development would be visible, but the visual and other residential amenities of the neighbouring properties would remain of a high standard. In conclusion, no significant negative landscape or visual impacts are predicted.

APPENDIX 1 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The TVIA methodology is informed by the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition 2013 (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA) and the EPA *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports*, 2017.

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.

The word ‘townscape’ is used to describe the landscape in urban areas. 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 space*”.

1.0 Key Principles of the GLVIA

1.1 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 to the landscape of buildings, infrastructure or landscaping. ‘Effect’ is defined as the change resulting from those actions, e.g. change in landscape character or in the composition of views.

1.2 Assessment of Both ‘Landscape’ and ‘Visual’ Effects

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

‘Landscape/townscape’ 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/townscape character. ‘Landscape/townscape character assessment’ is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape/townscape and by which to understand the effects of development on the landscape/townscape as a resource.

Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area’s visual amenity.

2.0 Townscape Effects Assessment

Assessment of potential landscape/townscape effects involves (a) classifying the sensitivity of the receiving environment, and (b) identifying and classifying the magnitude of landscape/townscape change which would result from the development. These factors are combined to arrive at a classification of significance of the landscape/townscape effects.

2.1 Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape/townscape is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and the distribution of visual receptors, and the value placed on the landscape/townscape. The nature and scale of the development in question is also taken into account, as are any trends of change, and relevant policy. Five categories are used to classify sensitivity (Table 1).

Table 1 *Categories of Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity*

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Areas where the landscape exhibits very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The landscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change in the form of development is very low. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national or international value and the principle management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The landscape character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principle management objective for the area is the conservation of existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape 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 landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principle management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or could make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principle management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The landscape 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 landscapes include derelict industrial lands or extraction sites, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principle management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

2.2 Magnitude of Landscape/Townscape Change

Magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape/ townscape with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change (Table 2).

Table 2 *Categories of Landscape/Townscape Change*

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very High	Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the landscape.

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

2.3 Significance of Landscape/Townscape Effects

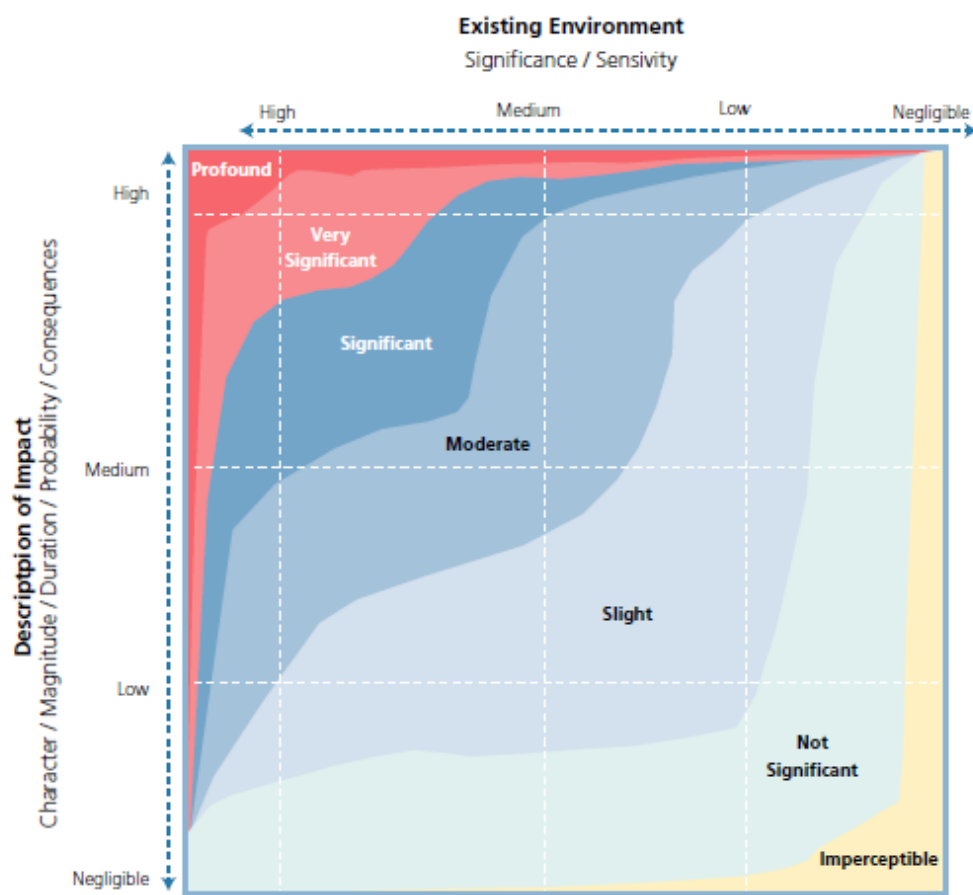
To classify the significance of effects the magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the landscape/townscape using Table 3 and Figure 1 as a guide. The significance classification matrix (Table 3) is derived from the EPA's Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2017 (specifically Figure 3.4 of the Guidelines – see Figure 1 below). In addition to this guidance the assessor uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable.

There are seven classifications of significance, namely: (1) imperceptible, (2) not significant, (3) slight, (4) moderate, (5) significant, (6) very significant, (7) profound.

Table 3 Guide to Classification of Significance of Landscape/Townscape and Visual Effects

		<i>Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource/View</i>				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
<i>Magnitude of Change</i>	Very High	<i>Profound</i>	<i>Profound to Very Significant</i>	<i>Very Significant to Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>
	High	<i>Profound to Very Significant</i>	<i>Very Significant</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate to Slight</i>	<i>Slight to Not Significant</i>
	Medium	<i>Very Significant to Significant</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Not Significant</i>
	Low	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate to Slight</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>
	Negligible	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Slight to Not Significant</i>	<i>Not significant</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>	<i>Imperceptible</i>

Figure 1: 'Chart showing typical classifications of the significance of impacts' (Source: Figure 3.4 of the EPA's Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2022)



The impact significance classifications are taken from the EPA Draft Guidelines, which define the classifications as follows (Table 4):

Table 4 EPA definitions of environmental impact classifications

Significance Classification	Description
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.
Profound	An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.

3.0 Visual Effects Assessment

Assessment of visual effects involves identifying a number of key/representative viewpoints in the site's receiving environment, and for each of these: (a) classifying the viewpoint sensitivity, and (b) classifying the magnitude of change which would result in the view. These factors are combined to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects on each viewpoint.

3.1 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 focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location. Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage or other attractions and places of community congregation where the setting contributes to the experience. Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation or sports where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping where the setting does not influence their experience.
- ***Value attached to the view.*** This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

Five categories are used to classify viewpoint sensitivity (Table 5).

Table 5 Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
Very High	Iconic viewpoints (views towards or from a landscape 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 in the form of development is very low. The principle 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 (such as views from houses or outdoor recreation features focused on the landscape). The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity for accommodating change in the form of development may or may not be low. The principle management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	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 principle management objective is to facilitate change to the composition that does not detract from visual amenity, or which enhances it.
Low	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, and where the composition and character are such that there is capacity for change. This category also includes views experienced by people involved in activities with no particular focus on the landscape. For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that does not detract from visual amenity, or enhances it.
Negligible	Views that have no valued feature or characteristic, or in which the composition may be unsightly (e.g. in derelict landscapes). For such views the principle management objective is to facilitate change that repairs, restores or enhances visual amenity.

3.2 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 change to a view (Table 6).

Table 6 *Categories of Visual Change*

Magnitude of Change	Description
Very High	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.
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/or the visual amenity.
Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

3.3 Significance of Visual 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 3 and Figure 1 above.

4.0 Quality of Effects

In addition to predicting the significance of the effects on the landscape and views, EIA methodology requires that the quality of the effects be classified as positive/beneficial, neutral, or negative/adverse.

For landscape effects to a degree, but particularly for visual effects, this is an inherently subjective exercise since landscape and views are perceived and therefore subject to variations in the attitude and values 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 landscape or view may vary. Additionally, there might be policy encouraging a particular development in an area, in which case the policy is effectively prescribing landscape change. If a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be considered positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed. The classification of quality of landscape and visual effects should seek to take these variables into account and provide a reasonable and robust assessment.

