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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Student Accommodation Development at Wilton Road, Victoria Cross,
Bishopstown, Cork.

Client: Bellmount Developments

Project: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for
proposed student accommodation

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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects have been commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development, which seeks to construct proposed student accommodation development on a circa 0.29-hectare (ha) site at Wilton Road/Orchard Road, Cork.

The site is located on the former site of the Finbarr Galvin Car Dealers at the junction of Orchard Road at Wilton Road, Cork. As such this assessment looks at the planning context for the site as well as the landscape context of the wider area.

This report has been prepared in tandem with a series of Landscape drawings of the proposed development and is included as Appendix 1 to this report (in A3 format). A series of Photomontages of the proposed development prepared by Pederson Focus is included as Appendix 2 (also included in A3 format). These photomontage locations are the subject of the assessment in section 6 of this report.

Further supporting documentation is included with this planning application and includes

- **Planning and Design Statement** by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
- **Statement of Consistency** by McCutcheon Halley Planning;
- **Material Contravention Statement** by McCutcheon Halley Planning;
- **Drawing Issue Sheet** by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
- **Housing Quality Assessment** by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
- **Schedule of Areas** by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
- **Site Location Maps** prepared by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
- **Architectural Drawings & Schedule** prepared by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;
 - o Site Layout Plans at 1:500;
 - o Site Sections at 1:500;
 - o Floor Plans, Elevations, and Sections at 1:200;
 - o Plan (by Butler Cammoranesi Architects) of areas proposed to be **Taken in Charge**;
- **Landscape Plans** by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architect;
- **Landscape Design Strategy** by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Consultant;
- **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Consultant;
- **Photomontages** by Pederson Focus;
- **Engineering Drawings** by JODA Engineering Consultants;
- **Site Infrastructure Report** (including Confirmation of Feasibility from Irish Water and **Letter from Irish Water** confirming development is in line with Standard Details and Codes of Compliance) by JODA Engineering Consultants;
- **Flood Risk Assessment** by JODA Engineering Consultants;
- **Sustainable Urban Drainage System Report** by JODA Engineering Consultants;

- **DMURS Statement of Consistency** by MHL Consulting Engineers;
- **Mobility Management Plan** by MHL Consulting Engineers;
- **Road Safety Audit** by MHL Consulting Engineers;
- **Public Lighting Report** by JODA Engineering Consultants;
- **Ecological Impact Assessment** by Malone O'Regan Environmental;
- **Natura Impact Statement** by Malone O'Regan Environmental;
- **Preliminary Construction Environmental and Demolition Waste Management Plan** by Malone O'Regan Environmental;
- **Noise Impact Assessment and Acoustic Design Statement** by Malone O'Regan Environmental;
- **Wind and Microclimate Modelling** by B-Fluid Ltd;
- **Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report** by Passive Dynamics;
- **Report on Supply, Demand and Concentration of Student Accommodation** by McCutcheon Halley Planning;
- **Student Accommodation Management Plan** by McCutcheon Halley Planning
- **EIAR Screening** by Malone O'Regan Environmental;
- **S299B Report** by Malone O'Regan Environmental
- **Building Heights Report** by McCutcheon Halley Planning;
- **Building Lifecycle Report** by Butler Cammoranesi Architects;

2.0 Methodology

This Assessment methodology follows best practice advisory guidelines set out in the following guidance documents

- “Guidelines for landscape & Visual Impact Assessment” 3rd Edition, published by the Landscape Institute (UK), - (2013).
- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA 2017) and the Draft Advice Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2015)
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018)

This assessment has regard to related documents, specifically

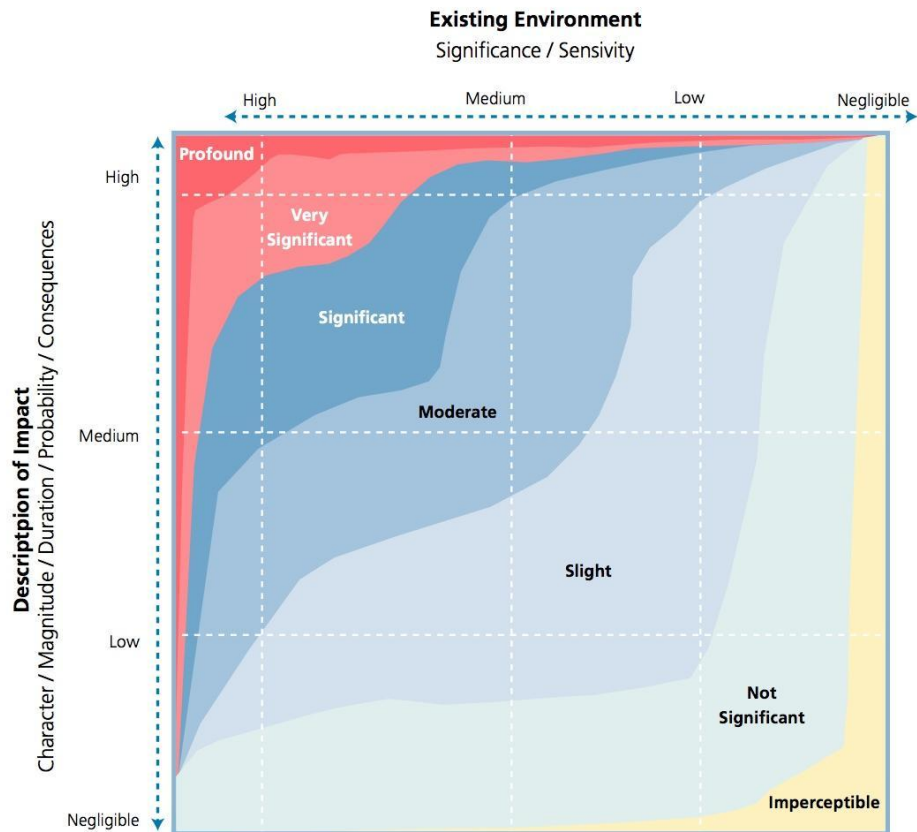
- Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 and
- Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028
- Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy (2007)
- Bishopstown & Wilton Area Action Plan (2007)

This methodology includes a desktop analysis of the existing landscape area, including specific designations and land use patterns. Two site visits were undertaken to assess the likely visibility and consequent visual impact of the proposed development. Catha O’Meara Landscape Architects undertook these visits of the site and from the roads in the vicinity during December 2021 and July 2022. The conditions on both days were clear with good visibility.

The following maps were included as part of the desktop review and were also used as field references.

- 1:50,000 OSI Discovery Series (Map 87)

In order to classify the significance of effects/impacts of the proposed development the “Draft Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, 2017)” was used, specifically Table 7.1 as indicated below.



Figure

Figure 1. Classification of Significance of effects (impacts), EPA, 2017



Figure 2. Location of Photomontages/principal (distant) receptors selected

3.0 General Description of the Receiving Environment

A detailed description of the landscape and surrounding context to the proposed development is included below. This description is subdivided under separate headings to allow a structured overview of the existing landscape context as it relates to the sensitivity of the site and the proposed development.

3.1 Existing Context

The 0.29ha site is located to the west of Cork City Centre identified as the Western Suburbs in the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021, at the site of the former Finbarr Galvin Car Dealers on the Wilton Road. The N22/Carrigrohane Road corridor lies approximately 220 meters to the north of the site. The immediate site is bounded to the east by a tributary of the Curragheen River and to the west with Wilton Road. From the north the site is contained by Orchard road and to the south by a derelict site which is the location of a recently permitted scheme which rises to six stories.

Notwithstanding the immediate context, there is a larger process defining this area. This process, already well underway, has seen the development of a series of student accommodation buildings in the wider area. These range from four to nine stories to the northeast, towards UCC. To the north the newly constructed Crows Nest Student Accommodation is also completed. This complex comprises a series of interlinked vertical buildings which rise to 10 storeys. Also further west is the (under construction) student accommodation residences at the site of the former Coca Cola Bottling plant which will also rise to 10 storeys. These complement the existing 17-storey Cork County Council building (known as County Hall) and the newer adjacent 6-storey Cork County Library and are both sited in close proximity to the proposed development. The County Hall building is the primary focal point of the wider landscape and is described as a “Landmark building” in the current Cork City Development Plan (2015-2021). This building is also a protected structure RPS Nr PS527 and contains the Cork County Council offices.

The immediate site contains very limited existing vegetation as the forecourt is mostly composed of paved surfacing. Some self seeded woody vegetation exists on the steeply sloping banks of the River Curraheen.

3.2 Site significance

The site is situated on a busy transport route into the city from the south and in close proximity to a primary city gateway at the eastern extent of the Carrigrohane Road at its junction with the Orchard Road at Wilton Road.

3.3 Outline Planning Policy

In the Cork City Development Plan the site is located to the west of the City in the South Western Suburbs and is zoned as Objective 4, “Residential, Local Services and Institutional Users”. These residential uses are consistent with surrounding land uses to the east of the site and of the wider south-western suburbs in general.

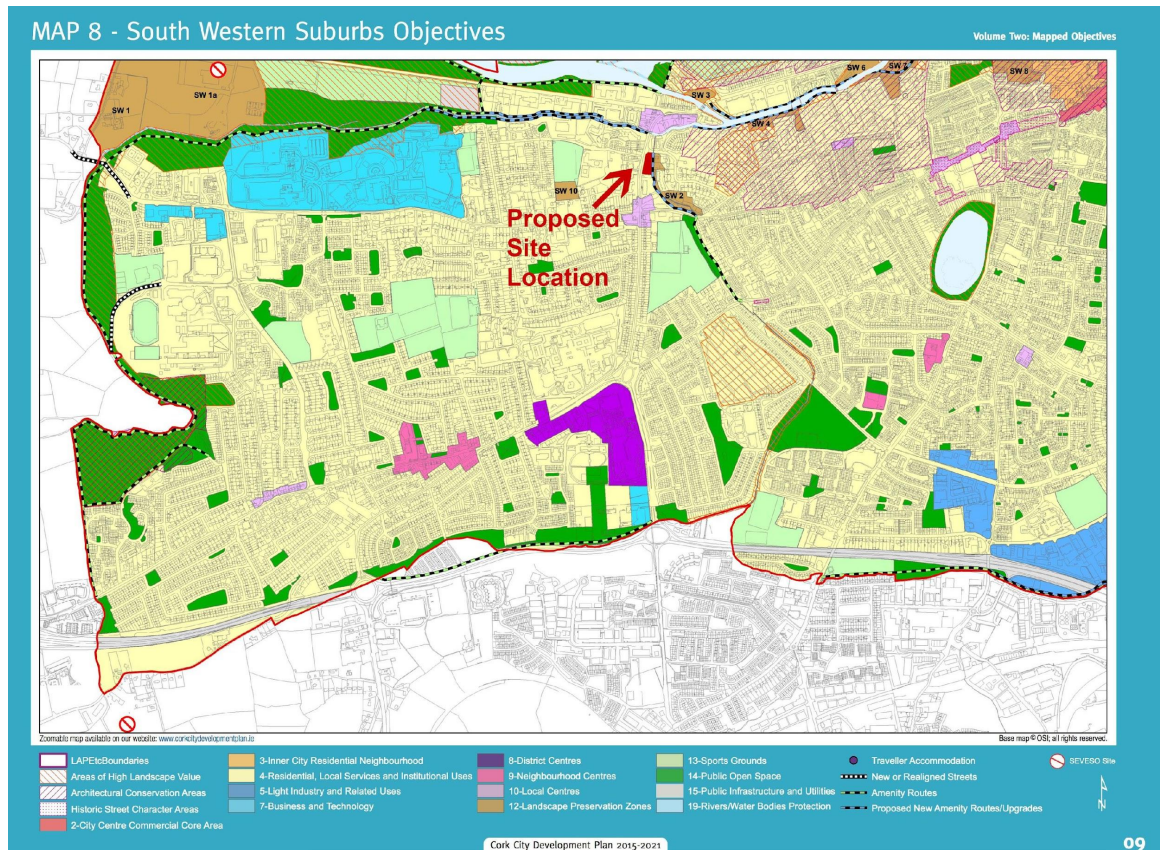


Figure 4. Extract from Cork City Development Plan showing south-western suburbs development objectives

Goal 5 of the Core Strategy (Chapter 2, P.15) of the Cork City Development Plan, states that “There are ... opportunities for creation of new character areas in locations such as Docklands, Mahon and Blackpool and at the arrival points or gateways into the city”. This Gateway concept is noted further within this report.

Within both the current City Development Plan and the Draft Cork City Development Plan the site contains the specific stated development objective of SW2, which is to “provide a riverside walkway/cycleway” adjacent to the River Curraheen.

3.4 Zone of Visual Influence and Potential Visual Receptors

The zone of visual influence is the extent of potential visibility of the site from the landscape and is defined further by topography and built structures. Due to screening and local topography adjacent to the River Lee as well as the presence of the 17-storey County Hall, the number and spread of potential visual receptors is limited to lands principally to the north, south and east of the proposed development. The dominance of County Hall constitutes a large focal point in the landscape and also acts as a partial visual barrier, excluding much of the area to the west of the site. This visual barrier will also be strengthened with the inclusion of the Crow’s Nest development.

The context of the River Lee and the adjacent open space define the entrance to Cork City from the West. From this approach the view of County Hall has been

identified as a Primary Approach Road view and signifies the principal entrance threshold to the city from the west. An abrupt definition of city and country is evident in the transition from wooded river valley to an abrupt urban environment. Landscape significance and sensitivity derives from the setting of the River Valley and associated inch fields and its steep sided wooded hill to the north.

Objective 10.6 of the current Cork City Development Plan states that “There will be a presumption against development that would harm, obstruct or compromise the quality or setting of linear views of landmark buildings, panoramic views, rivers prospects, townscape and landscape views and approach road views”.

Within the surrounding area of Cork City southwest there are a number of protected views. Protected views with the potential to be impacted are listed in the attached map extract from the current Cork City Development Plan (2015-2021) and include:

- CH 2, represented by photomontages 4, 5, 6 and 7
- Landscape/Townscape view (un-named) looking north along Victoria Cross Road/Wilton Road towards the Shanakiel Ridge, represented by photomontages 1 and 8.

It should be noted that both Viewpoints as described above are no longer specifically noted in the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

Further protected views exist and are detailed on Map 14 Views and Prospects – Northwest and Map 18, Views and Prospects Southwest however these will not be affected by the proposed development.

A number of additional views from adjacent streets/areas have also been considered to represent a complete picture of the potential impact of the proposed building on the receiving environment. These are:

- Photomontage 2, view from Farranlea Road, to the west of site
- Photomontage 3, view from Wilton Road/Victoria Cross Road, north of site
- Photomontage 9, view from Atkins Apartments, Lee Road, northeast of site

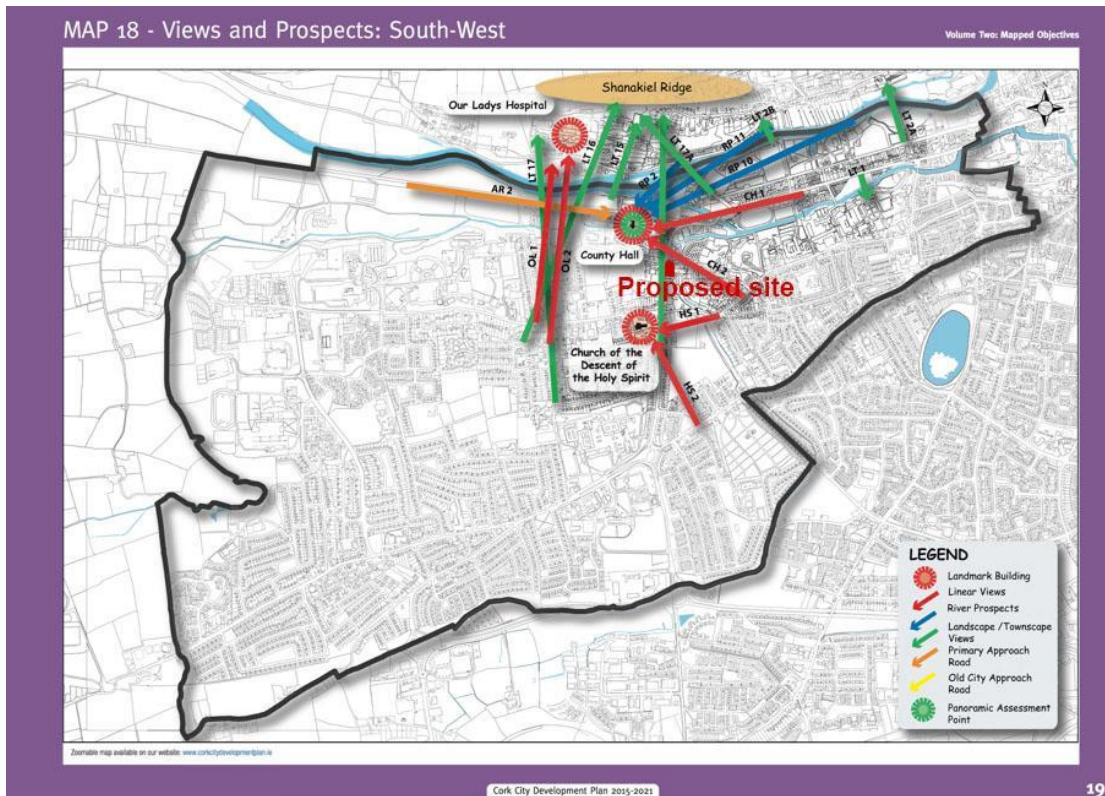


Figure 5. Extract from Cork City Development Plan showing views and prospects in the South-west of Cork City



Figure 6. Extract from Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 showing views and prospects in the South-west of Cork City, Note the simplification of viewpoints in the vicinity of the proposed site.

4.0 Description of the Proposed Development

Bellmount Developments, seek planning permission for a Strategic Housing Development at Wilton Road, Victoria Cross, Bishopstown, Cork comprising:

1. The demolition of existing structures on site; and
2. The construction of 78 no. student accommodation apartments (ranging in size from single bed studio apartments to 8-bed apartments) comprising a total of 206 no. bed spaces in 1 no. 6 storey block;
3. Student amenity facilities including a study area, games room, lounge space, laundry room and server/ICT room;
4. The provision of landscaping and amenity areas including a courtyard space (including modifications to the external amenity area of the student accommodation scheme permitted under An Bord Pleanála Ref. ABP 306714-20), 1 no. rooftop terrace and a riverfront amenity incorporating a pedestrian and cycle path accessing onto Ashbrook Heights and Orchard Road;
5. The provision of a set down area, 1 no. access point (for emergency vehicles only), footpaths and repositioned pedestrian crossing and associated tactile paving on Orchard Road;
6. The provision of a new junction build out at the junction of Orchard Road and Victoria Cross Road;
7. The provision of footpaths and landscaped areas along Victoria Cross Road; and
8. All associated ancillary development including pedestrian/cyclist facilities, lighting, drainage, boundary treatments, bin and bicycle storage and plant at ground and roof top levels.

5.0 Potential Landscape Effects

5.1 Landscape Sensitivity

The assessment of potential landscape effects considers the sensitivity of the landscape resource and the magnitude of landscape change, which would result from the development. By employing these criteria, the potential significant impacts (prior to mitigation measures) are considered to occur where highly sensitive landscape and visual receptors occur with high order landscape and visual effects.

The site contains two existing industrial type sheds all shuttered or fenced off from public access and surrounded by hard surfaced yards. Limited existing landscape features exist onsite. Visually the site presents a largely level surface with some evidence of self-seeded vegetation adjacent to the Curraheen River Stream and with occasional pioneering species breaking through the hard standing yard. The visual appearance is a neglected site and this sense of neglect is imparted on the wider area.

Victoria Cross is currently undergoing significant change. The context of the City Gateway, long established by the vertical (17 stories) expression of the nearby County Hall has informed recent developments. These developments have sought to strengthen this architectural expression with further vertical emphasis. Recently granted permissions include the Crows Nest development (10 stories), the site of the former Coca Cola Bottling Plant on the Carrigrohane Road (10 stories), as well as the nearby Victoria Mills developments which rise to a maximum of 9 stories (at its eastern extent). Closer to the north of the site the former Kelleher's Auto Centre has also received permission for the development of a nine story student accommodation complex.

Given this evolving context, it is appropriate to characterise the site as having a Low-Medium level of Landscape Sensitivity.

5.2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

The magnitude of landscape change is a crucial measurement to assess the degree to which change is perceived. The same element can impact visual receptors to different degrees depending on proximity, orientation and landscape context.

The proposed development will represent a Medium degree of change to the existing landscape and visual character of the wider lands surrounding the site. The proposed development is comprised of two connected built volumes which have similar potential to cause landscape change. These elements are:

- 1 distinct 6 storey high block forming an important bookend to Orchard Road at Wilton Road;
- A landscaped connective corridor of open space provided along the Curragheen River. This fulfils the objective SW2 in the Current

Development plan by facilitating a cyclist and pedestrian amenity route on this corridor.

- New streetscape treatment to Wilton Road, that makes provision for a built edge as well as street tree planting and high quality street furniture.
- Clear Stemmed Lime trees will dilute the building impact at street level and give definition to the existing streetscape.

In addition to these primary building elements there will be the following elements of development:

- Construction access will be via a new entrance in the northern corner of the site. Construction cranes will be in place for the short duration of the construction phase of development;

In summary, the proposed works would cumulatively result in a high magnitude of change during the construction period due to the presence of cranes on the skyline. After construction the development would result in a Medium change in the landscape. It is further however noted that the anticipated landscape change is consistent with the site and its evolving context as the western City Gateway.

5.3 Significance of Potential Landscape Effects

Considering the urban context of the landscape and the magnitude of change proposed, the significance of the potential landscape effects could be classified as moderate. The changes would take place in an urban landscape that is noted as being a “City Gateway” where the proposed development and its vertical expression would result in a progression, consistent with the characteristics of this area.

It is noted that the landscape does have cultural, historic and visual amenity value. The proposed development is not inconsistent given this context and represents a natural progression of anthropomorphic development at this location.

The evolution from a car dealers to student housing complex animates and will declutter the Wilton Road/Victoria Cross streetscape bringing cohesion and an urban built edge. This positive landscape character impact outweighs the minor visual impact brought about by the development.

6.0 Potential Visual Effects

In order to determine the potential visual effects on views and visual amenity a number of viewpoints were determined to represent key visual receptors in the receiving environment. These are based on the analysis of the receiving environment (Chapter 3).

Nine viewpoints were selected for detailed visual impact assessment informed by photomontages of the proposed development. These images are presented as a before and after analysis.

In the case of each of the views proposed a description is provided identifying the following:

- Key elements and characteristics of the existing view;
- Sensitivity of the view;
- Proposed change to the view;
- Conclusion of the significance of the potential visual effects.

6.1 Viewpoints (Please refer to appendix 2 for Photomontages, prepared by Pedersen Focus)

Viewpoint 1:

Victoria Cross Road/Wilton Road looking north, 20M from site.

Existing View:

This view is influenced by the linear expression of the Wilton Road. As this landscape is predominantly one that is engaged with in a transient manner, viewpoints are not static but are experienced in motion and are dynamic. Owing to the recently completed Crow's Nest apartments, views towards the Shanakiel Ridge are curtailed. Occasional views of the wooded Shanakiel Ridge are however possible depending on the exact viewpoint location, between the vertical built forms of the Crow's Nest Apartments.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

This view is included within the protected Landscape/townscape Views Corridor of the current Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021. Given this designation the Viewpoint Sensitivity is **High**. However, this view is not listed within the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022- 2028. Views of the wooded Shanakiel Ridge have been reduced from this receptor over recent years.

Proposed Change:

The proposed development will be visible from this location with a strong built edge lending definition to this street. The high-quality brick façade and regular fenestration will bring some cohesion to this semi derelict site, with street trees and paving lending some civic focused elements to this underused site. The scale of change predicted will be Medium.

The proposed change would be diluted when considered against the as permitted development to the south. In this instance the proposed development would appear only in the top 1.5 stories. In this instance the scale of change predicted would be Low.

Conclusion/Summary:

While the development will have a visual impact on the wider location, the significance of this visual impact is considered within the context of an evolving city gateway and is determined to be of Moderate impact and Positive in the long term.

Viewpoint 2:

View from Farranlea Road adjacent to the back entrance of the county hall complex, looking east, 220M from the subject site.

Existing View:

This existing viewpoint is composed of suburban type housing and industrial type buildings which allow a small frame of mid-ground horizon consisting of the subject site and its low industrial type building and the background of woody vegetation from the Orchard Road gardens.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Viewpoint sensitivity is classified as Medium-Low as it represents an inner urban road. Although local residential receptors may have partial oblique views of the subject site, these are generally peripheral to their frame of view.

Proposed Change:

The proposed development would result in the loss of this small glimpse of woody vegetation and the bookending of this viewpoint with a high quality brick finished architectural scheme. Scale of change predicted will be low.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Medium.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of this visual impact is considered to be Slight and Positive in the long term.

Viewpoint 3:

View from Victoria Cross Road, looking south 50 Meters from the subject site

Existing View:

This receptor represents a similar location to viewpoint 1, however looking north in the opposite direction. The context of the Victoria Cross /Wilton Road dominates this receptor. The lack of active frontages reinforces the transport function of this receptor location. The neglected site of the proposed development

and the also neglected adjacent site of the as permitted scheme dominate the midground composition.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Viewpoint sensitivity is classified as Medium-Low as it represents an inner urban road.

Proposed Change:

The proposed development would result in replacement of views of a derelict site with views of an active streetscape, with associated entrances, active frontages including ground level windows, and street tree planting. Scale of change predicted will be Medium.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Medium, with the notable effect of extending the built form northwards to lend definition to the Orchard Road/ Victoria Cross junction.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of visual impact from this receptor is considered to be Moderate and Positive.

Viewpoint 4 :

Orchard Road Lower looking west approximately 60 Meters from the site.

Existing View

This view represents the western terminus of Orchard Road approaching its junction with Victoria Cross Road. Orchard road contains a selection of early-mid 20th century housing as well as more recent residential development.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

Viewpoint sensitivity is classified as Medium - High as it represents residential receptors.

Proposed Change:

The proposed development would result in replacement of views into a derelict site with views of a tall residential building. The inclusion of sawtooth windows on the rear (east) façade will prevent overlooking into nearby residential gardens. However despite this architectural consideration, the scale of change predicted will be Medium - High.

When considered in conjunction with the as permitted development to the south the magnitude of change will be diluted somewhat. As the as permitted development lies to the southwest of this receptor this will have a greater bearing on the daylight and overshadowing. The impact of the proposed development vs the as permitted development represents a Medium level of Change.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of visual impact from this receptor is considered to be Moderate and Negative moderating to Neutral over time.

Viewpoint 5:

Orchard Road Lower looking west approximately 100 Meters from the site.

Existing View:

This street characterises an earlier suburban expansion of Cork City with low density housing. The street composition is mainly of early and mid 20th century houses. The foreground composition is of leafy front gardens and associated hedgerows and boundary walls. The tall massing of County Hall (the protected “Landmark building”) is partially evident above garden vegetation. Views of the proposed development will be more or less evident depending on the exact receptor location.

Glimpses of the Shanakiel Ridge although not visible in the photomontage are available from this location and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

This view is indicated in the Cork City Development Plan (2015-2021) as CH-2 – a Protected Linear View of County Hall. As this view is listed in the current Cork City Development Plan viewpoint sensitivity is High. However, this view is not listed within the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022- 2028.

Proposed Change:

Changes to this viewpoint are considered within the context of a multi-layered urban cityscape. The dominant views of County Hall will remain largely unaffected by the proposed development. It is unlikely that the existing partial views of the ancillary buildings of St Kevin’s Hospital and the associated church will be impacted by the proposed development.

Given the evolving context at Victoria Cross and the fact that the proposed development does not dominate the view or impede views of the Shanakiel Ridge or County Hall the proposed change is therefore classified as Medium-Low.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Low.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of the visual effects at this location would be Moderate and Neutral.

Viewpoint 6:

This viewpoint is taken from Orchard Road looking West, approximately 170 meters from the site.

Existing View:

This receptor represents a continuation of the residential street described above as Viewpoint 5. The tall massing of County Hall (the protected “Landmark building”) is partially evident above the foreground elements of garden vegetation.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

This view is indicated in the Cork City Development Plan as CH-2 – Linear View. Viewpoint sensitivity is high.

Proposed Change:

The proposed development will not alter (protected) views towards County Hall. The proposed change is deemed as low.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Medium.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of the visual effects will be Slight and Neutral.

This focal point terminates with the Shanakiel Ridge at its apex and the lower buildings of St Kevin’s Hospital visible beneath.

Viewpoint 7:

From Orchard Road, looking west towards County Hall, approximately 250 metres from the subject site.

Existing View:

This viewpoint represents a continuation of the residential street (Orchard Road) described in views 4, 5 and 6 above. The tall massing of County Hall (the protected “Landmark building”) is still evident above the foreground elements of garden vegetation and residential housing.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

As this viewpoint represents a street with a high degree of residences and is listed as CH-2 – Linear View in the current Cork City Development Plan viewpoint sensitivity is high.

Proposed Change:

The proposed student accommodation would be only partially visible from this viewpoint, rising above the adjacent residences. The proposed development will not alter (protected) views towards County Hall. The proposed change is deemed as low.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Negligible.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of the visual effects will be Slight and Neutral.

Viewpoint 8:

This viewpoint is taken on Wilton Road, 420 meters south of the subject site.

Existing View:

This receptor represents a northern approach to the site. This viewpoint represents a transient receptor, and while it is possible some residential amenity is also represented by this view, this is less likely. Long distance views of the wooded Shanakiel Ridge terminate this receptor.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

This view is included within the protected Landscape/townscape Views Corridor of the current Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021. Given this designation the Viewpoint Sensitivity is High. However, this view is not listed within the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022- 2028.

Proposed Change:

The impact of the proposed development represents a Low level of Change.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Negligible.

Conclusion/Summary:

The significance of the visual effects will be Not Significant and on balance Neutral.

Viewpoint 9:

This viewpoint is taken from the site of the former Our Lady's Hospital (Now Atkins Apartments), Lee Road, 750 Meters northwest of the site, Looking southeast.

Existing View:

This viewpoint represents an elevated panorama on the north bank of the River Lee and looks southeast over the city. The large County Hall building is the prominent element within this composition. County Library is a sub dominant visual element with similar volume apartment developments recently constructed to the east (Crows Nest) and under construction to the west (Carrigrohane road – former coca cola bottling site). Also visible is the domed shaped roof of the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit located 1km distant. The southern city ridgeline is evident in the background.

Viewpoint Sensitivity:

As this viewpoint represents a residential neighbourhood viewpoint sensitivity is Medium - High.

Proposed Change:

The proposed building is not likely to be visible from this location, scale/magnitude of change is classified as negligible.

The predicted change vs the as permitted development to the south would be Negligible.

Conclusion/Summary:

There would be no significant effect on the composition, character or quality of the view. The significance of the visual effects at this location would be Not Significant – Imperceptible.

6.2 Additional views from private dwellings, streets and areas of the city

These are a number of private dwellings, public streets and workplaces in the vicinity of the site and it is likely that some of these are afforded partial views into the site, particularly from the upper floor windows of dwellings and businesses. As many of these locations are private dwellings further investigation was not feasible. The height of the proposed residential buildings will likely increase the visibility from these locations. However, it is considered that the proposed structure will be similar in appearance to the existing and planned built environment in this area.

Based on the assessment criteria employed herein, potential significant impacts (i.e., those impacts of significance which may arise prior to consideration of mitigation measures and which, therefore, can be distinguished from residual impacts) are considered most likely to occur in instances where highly sensitive landscape and visual receptors coincide with high order landscape and visual effects.

6.3 Summary of Landscape and visual impacts:

The proposed development will give rise to landscape and visual impacts especially during construction. Close up views will be impacted, however most of these are transient in nature and are less critical in terms of impact.

The proposed development will provide a high-quality scheme for this area with contemporary architectural detailing contributing positively to this gateway setting. The addition of new landscape treatments to the streetscape will add coherence and active frontages to this location allowing it become enveloped into its urban context.

The overall assessment of landscape and visual impact is considered to have a generally positive impact on the urban environment that will include the

regeneration of a neglected industrial site. It is noted that the closest residential receptor as represented by Photomontage 4 will have the most adverse impact. However, the as permitted scheme to the south will have a greater impact on this receptor especially when considered in terms of overshadowing. It is important that the architecture presents a high level of façade detailing to mitigate its monolithic impact. The inclusion of the amenity route through this site will facilitate greater local access for neighbouring residences introducing positive aspects.

Views of the Shanakiel Ridge are not impacted when viewed on approach from Wilton Road (designated *Landscape/Townscape View*). North of Dennehy's Cross, the viewshed changes to a framed view of the wooded hillside with negligible visual impact from the proposed development. Close to the site the insertion of a tall residential block in the place of the existing garage is significant but generally results in positive gains to the streetscape.

7.0 Summary of Landscape and Visual Impacts

7.1 Potential cumulative impacts

Lands to the north of the proposed site are separated from the Lee corridor by the linear presence of the N22 approach road.

Surrounding lands already contain significant medium-tall buildings including County Hall, County Library and the cluster of apartment buildings in the Victoria Mills complex and the recently completed development at the Crows Nest. These are in addition to the under-construction scheme at the former site of the Coca Cola bottling plant on the Carrigrohane Road, the recently permitted scheme to the north at the site of the Kelleher's Garage and the site immediately to the south. Cumulatively these developments portray an area that is undergoing substantial evolution.

The proposed development will, in concert with adjacent developments reinforce visually the presence of the Gateway to the City from the west. The cumulative developments in this area underscore this evolution already well underway.

7.2 Do nothing scenario

In this Scenario, the site will likely continue to operate in its current state for a period of time (refer Worst Case Scenario). The as permitted scheme to the south will likely be constructed. The existing site would continue in its derelict industrial appearance with the dominance of surface hardstanding lending a neglected appearance to the wider area. No significant changes in the landscape and visual environment would be expected in the short-term.

The development of the wider area will proceed and the evolution of this area as a City Gateway will continue in the event the applicant site remains undeveloped.

7.3 Mitigation Measures (Please refer to Appendix 1 – Landscape Layout Drawing LA_P001)

Consideration has been given to avoid adverse impacts from the visual receptors described above. Given the scale of the proposal, impacts are inevitable, however the following measures have been identified to mitigate these impacts.

- Provision of robust treatments to the Curraheen River tributary which include hard paved and soft landscaped edge which will embrace the amenity aspect of this location.
- A line of Mature Tillia Cordata (Lime Trees) will be planted to strengthen the Streetscape of Victoria Cross. These placemaking elements will soften this hard transport corridor. This street tree line is further enhanced by the presence of raised planters which reinforce the boundary between the footpath and the adjoining site.
- A significant gain in width to the pedestrian footpaths will be realised with

the new building alignment.

- Creation of a courtyard communal external space between the building and the River Curraheen tributary stream. The planting of mature feature trees and the addition of suitable ornamental planting will provide a softened amenity area.

7.3.1 Construction mitigation

- Visual and audible disturbances to the site will be minimised by outlining a programme of works in which construction activities are confined to normal operational (working) hours/days of the site.
- Any identification signage to the site will have low visual impact and minimal illumination.
- Site lighting will be minimised where possible and not exceed standard minimum operating requirements. Light fixtures will be unidirectional or have shields to minimise light pollution and will incorporate energy efficient lamps.

7.4 Residual Impacts

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development impacts are predicted to fall under 2 categories.

- Local impacts
- Citywide impacts

Local Impacts

Local changes concerning views and character are considered consistent with permitted developments in this area. Such changes are subjective in nature and will impact upon a number of proximate residential properties, the adjacent transport corridor as well as light industrial/storage uses. Specifically, the streetscape elements proposed as part of this development proposal will add positive urban characteristics to the local area.

In conclusion it should be borne in mind that the proposal is consistent with the objective for residential uses at this location with Goal 5 of the Core Strategy (Cork City Council Development Plan 2015-2021, Chapter 2, P.15) stating “There are also opportunities for creation of new character areas in locations such as Docklands, Mahon and Blackpool and at the arrival points or gateways into the city”.

Citywide Impacts

The overall height of the proposed development is subservient to the height of adjacent and recently completed and permitted developments in this area and will not adversely impact on this City Gateway threshold. The strengthening of this area through addition of tall elements within this predominantly horizontal landscape will add coherence to this threshold.

Given the architectural merits of the proposal the anticipated positive impacts will substantially outweigh the limited negative aspects of the proposal

8.0 Conclusion

The conclusion of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed development is that this application will not result in a significant change to the process of evolution already well underway at this City Threshold.

In summary the broader landscape character area and visual context around Wilton Road/Victoria Cross, has the capacity to absorb the proposed alterations of this scale in landscape and visual terms.

Figure: Appendix 1; Landscape Layout Drawing LA_P001
Figure: Appendix 1; Landscape Details LA_P002
Appendix 2; Photomontages taken by Pedersen Focus