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## **Landscape Design Rational – Landscape Architecture**

### **Project:**

Student Accommodation Development at Wilton Road, Victoria Cross, Cork

**Prepared on behalf of:** Bellmount Developments Limited

### **Prepared by:**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The objective of the design rationale is to describe the landscape and external works as part of the proposed mixed-use student development, which will include the demolition of existing structures on site and the construction of 78 student accommodation apartments comprising a total of 206 bed spaces.

Student amenity facilities will include a study area, lounge space, laundry room and server/ICT room.

The provision of landscaping and amenity areas including 2 semi enclosed courtyard spaces (including modifications to the external amenity area of the student accommodation scheme permitted under Cork City Ref of 19/38385 ) which adjoin a riverfront amenity incorporating a pedestrian and cycle path accessing onto Ashbrook Heights and Orchard Road, and 1 rooftop garden.

Landscaping works extend into the public realm along Wilton Road and Orchard Road. Here a comprehensive streetscape plan with high quality paving, street tree planting and complimentary street furniture adorn the road.

The landscape plan also includes associated ancillary development such as pedestrian/cyclist facilities including bicycle storage and boundary treatments with architectural and engineering drawings facilitating other ancillary elements such as bin storage areas, ESB Sub-stations and plant rooms.

This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects, McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants, Butler Cammoranesi Architects, and others.

Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects visited the site in May 2022 in order to observe conditions on site, such as existing riverside habitat and the urban environment, giving context with respect to adjoining sites, boundaries, and other items, which would have a bearing on the design process.

The following additional documents have been issued by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects as part of this submission:

No.	Scale	Size	Title
2130-LA-P001	A1	Various	Ground Floor Landscape Layout
2130-LA-P002	A1	Various	Roof Garden Landscape Layout

## 2.0 Landscape Appraisal

### 2.1 General

The site for the proposed development extends to 0.29 Ha and is bounded by the Wilton Road on the West, Orchard Road on the North and a tributary stream of the Curragheen River to the East, with the Southern boundary adjoining Ashbrook heights where car parking separates the road from Wilton Road HSE offices.

The development site is a brownfield site housing a derelict garage building with associated sheds and hard surfaced yards. A soft landscape buffer runs along the banks of the stream, this is both narrow and steep so the embankment contains only a few small self seeded trees with the majority of the bank formed from bramble overgrowth.

For further site information see accompanying Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.



*Existing conditions, the site viewed from Wilton Road*





*Existing conditions showing main site site buildings, hard surfaced yard and river boundary*



*Existing conditions showing neighboring site along Wilton Road*

## 2.2 Strategic Location/Policy Context

Situated in the South Western Suburbs of Cork City, the site forms a pivotal gateway to the City from the west.

Within the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 the area is zoned as a Local Centre under Objective 10, as such residential use is acceptable and in keeping with the surrounding land uses of the neighbouring suburban area.

Although some of these residential developments are of a lower density and retain gardens the adjacent site (directly opposite on the Wilton Road) already contains apartment based student accommodation with UCC Student halls further North along the road. With goal 5 of the Core Strategy (Chapter 2,P.15) of the Cork City Development Plan, stating 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 and the Policy Context is further expanded within the accompanying Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.



*Existing condition along the Victoria Cross Road showing UCC Student Halls*



## 2.3 Boundaries

The Northern Boundary is formed by Orchard Road and its intersection with Victoria Cross Road, the site lies within a 1.5m high fence on a low wall with a narrow 1m wide footpath.

Eastern Boundary- A small stream leading off the Curragheen River forms the eastern boundary separating the site from private residential dwellings of Orchard Road. The stream boundary is partially closed off from the site by a 1.8m high hoarding and fence while the rest is secured only by bramble and overgrowth.

Southern boundary- Formed by Ashbrook Heights a small entrance road for the Wilton Road HSE offices with car parking and a tree lined planting bed separating the project site from the offices.

Western Boundary- Formed by the main Wilton Road a major high-capacity urban road, which separates the site from neighbouring housing including a large existing student housing complex.



*Existing condition at Ashbrook Heights*

### **3.0 Landscape Strategy**

The landscape strategy is driven by 4 key components:

- Establishment of a high quality streetscape to ground the building within the existing environment along the busy urban road.
- The creation of a pleasant riverside amenity along the banks of the Curraheen Rivers tributary stream, which provides a hard path for multiple users.
- Provision of ground floor open space as a high quality central core allowing access for service vehicles and an open space for gatherings.
- Creating a semi-private roof garden which provides an assortment of social and private spaces for students to hangout.

### **3.1 Proposed Boundaries**

The proposed buildings will act as a boundary along the Wilton Road but will provide a wide public footpath and street furniture for public use, a stepped entrance opens of the streetscape into the building core, this will not be gated but will act as a strong visual transition between public and private. Along the carriageway a heavy reconstituted concrete kerbs form a physical barrier with the road, this is enforced by the use of street trees to stop vehicular access along the footpath.

Similarly the Northern and Southern boundary lines will be set by the new buildings with pedestrian/cycle and emergency vehicle entrances at both ends.

The Eastern boundary formed by the Stream will have a 1.2m high quayside railings to secure the stream while allowing users to rest safely against the boundary and access views along the water. This will run the length of the boundary meeting the existing bridge to the North and terminating with an end post to the South.

### **3.2 Public Space Design: Streetscape**

The public realm will be defined by the use of exemplary materials to complement and reflect the proposed architectural finishes and existing urban landscape context.

The public footpath will be paved using reconstituted concrete pavers with granite aggregate – a material that is sympathetic with much of the streetscape improvement works currently being undertaken by Cork City Council. Here the wide footpath will be delineated with 2 rows of contrasting block paving (200 x 100mm) in light and dark grey to the outer edge while larger (400 x 200mm) light grey slabs form a 3-4M wide feature zone flanking the building, this is interspersed with street furniture and raised planters.

Textured concrete and granite aggregate kerbs are proposed to separate the road from the footpath with the heavy duty 100 x 200mm block pavers able to withstand occasional vehicular over run. As the footpath turns the corner onto Orchard road the smaller paving blocks will be used to delineate the site entrance and the start of the shared pedestrian cycle route.

Street trees will be planted within one of the outer paving stripes to the back of the footpath breaking up the wide expanse of paving but still allowing for a wide walkable area to the building side, planted at regular intervals the trees will create a rhythm along the frontage and soften the proposed built facade. Contemporary concrete furniture has been chosen to provide robust seating with raised concrete planters and modular benches.

### **3.3 Semi Private Spaces: Courtyard and Riverfront areas.**

The Riverside Amenity walkway will provide a 3.5M wide path along the waterfront with a quayside railing securing the river boundary and providing a safe leaning post which allows users to stop and take in the river view. This will be paved to match the streetscape and public open spaces. To the inside of the path a further 2M wide area is required to allow emergency vehicular access, this has been left free of planting and furniture but the surface changes to grasscrete where it meets green areas thus visually merging the path and planted nodes.

The majority of the public open space between the Northern building and the stream is covered by a Water Service Wayleave meaning no built structures can be housed here. Therefore the area is largely planted, containing some modular furniture with the angled design of the paths and planting beds taken from the alignment of the proposed building's windows.

An architectural overhang creates a sheltered node linking the North and South public spaces, this area houses both benches and single seat stools creating an outdoor seating area for all weather.

The Southern public open space is unaffected by this wayleave allowing more room for built structures, the area has been divided into soft green nodes with tree planting and seating and hard paved spaces housing the built structures. These include timber clad bike stores, raised concrete planters with seating and a games area with a concrete table tennis table.





*Modular concrete street furniture with benches, individual seats and planters*



*Concrete table tennis table area.*

### 3.4 Semi Private Spaces: Roofgarden.

A roof garden will be created on the 6th floor (275m<sup>2</sup>) of the development set within a larger expanse of green roof. This will be secured with a 1.5m high glass balustrade to the outer edge of the space and surfaced in a mix concrete /aggregate pavers.

Raised planters at 450mm high soften the outer edge of the gardens while enclosing the internal space. This space is divided by another large raised planter which creates an angled dynamic within the garden. This also allows space for 3 multi stem trees and provides seating around all four sides. Further angled nodes of low level planting are planted with a low growing mix which aesthetically aligns itself with the planting on the green roof while more small multi stem trees are set within 1m high steel tubs.

The area is subdivided by the use of contrasting paving with 600x400mm contemporary light grey and dark grey flags used in adjoining areas. The garden also contains several seating options with single cube stools available and long stretches of bench built within planters.



*Raised steel planter edge to roof garden*



## 4.0 Planting

Landscape Plans, Drawing number's 2130 LA-P001 and 2130 LA-P002 show planting locations and include a schedule of proposed ornamental planting and trees.

### 4.1 Tree planting

As the site currently contains an extensive built footprint the only existing vegetation borders the river. This stripe houses some small trees with the majority of this area overgrown with bramble and weeds. It is proposed to clear this bramble and any invasive vegetation in order to allow the trees and natives to thrive.

Proposed tree planting will see trees selected for different landscape characters suited to specific areas:

-Street trees: Tilia Cordata (Lime) Trees are proposed to strengthen the streetscape facing the Wilton Road, having a tight conical form the trees will add rhythm and structure to the streetscape while the clear stem allows unrestricted views along the street. These will be planted at 20-25 cm girths, 4.5-5M high and will be guyed underground to avoid using tree stakes in such a prominent area.

-Riverfront: Only 1 tree can be planted within the river area due to the existing Water Service wayleave. A Populus tremula (Aspen) will be planted to the north of the riverfront area, Aspen is a native to the riverside environment with the form of the tree clear stemmed to 3.5M allowing light to the planting below. As this is a feature tree it will be planted at 40-45cm girth, 7M high.

-Northern Groundfloor Public Open Space: Again this area is restricted due to the existing Water Service Wayleave allowing only 1 Mature feature tree. Robinia pseudoacacia (Black Locust) planted at 40-45cm girth, 7M high will form a feature close to the main entrance. This tree is used again within the Southern public open space within a feature planter.

-Southern Groundfloor Public Open Space: As this area is not affected by the way leave two areas of Silver Birch have been planted to soften and divide the space. Clear stemmed native Betula pendula will be planted at 16-18cm girth, 4-4.5M high with a timber stake securing system.

#### Roofgarden Trees:

Two small growing ornamental trees have been selected for use in the roof garden. Both will be multi stemmed planted at 2M high, offering a lot of structural interest. Prunus serrula (Tibetan cherry) offers a loose branched shape with deep rust coloured bark while Amelanchier lamarckii (Juneberry) provides a light, leafy structure with small, delicate white flowers.

All trees will be guyed securely within the planters to help counteract wind pressure.





*Amelanchier lamarckii* for roof garden



*Tillia Cordata* clear stemmed for Streetscape

## 4.2 Ornamental shrub, Grass and perennial planting

Ornamental planting is proposed at specific locations to introduce some diversity to the landscape with a series of hardy, low maintenance plants chosen and arranged in site specific mixes to soften, add drama or define a character area. The planting choice will provide year round interest with lively pops of seasonal colour and retained winter structure.

At ground and street level 3 planting mixes have been composed, planting 1 offers a mix of architectural grasses and perennials, planting 2 a single species block of ornamental grass and planting 3 a low growing native mix of grasses and ferns for the thin riverside planting bed.

Within the roof gardens raised planters will again house a mix of softer ornamental grasses with flowering perennials adding a delicate color mix while ground level planting will feature sedums and geranium to tie in with the surrounding green roof.



*Mixed ornamental grasses and perennials for use in the raised planters*

## 5.0 Implementation

It is proposed that the full landscape planting be undertaken to the later stages of the building works to ensure the safety of trees and softer planting materials. Note all planting and landscaping is to be completed before practical completion of the development.

Where possible all bare root trees shall be planted from October to March while potted planting material may be planted year round.

Planting to streetscape, courtyard and riverside will be carried out in conjunction with the development of specific units, close to the end of the development, ensuring minimal damage to the vegetation.

## **6.0 Maintenance**

### **6.1 After Care Period:**

The Aftercare Period shall extend for an 18 month period. During the Aftercare Period maintenance visits shall be carried out, at least monthly from March to October and twice during the dormant season to carry out the following operations to establish healthy growing plants in weed free areas. Maintenance operations shall include: watering, firming-up, pest and disease control, grass cutting, general pruning, weed control, top up mulch and autumn tidying. Replacement Planting. All plants, which have died, are missing or have failed to thrive, shall be noted and replaced with the same size and species as originally planted, as soon as failure has been observed or if in winter in the following planting season.

### **6.2 Scope of work**

The maintenance of trees, shrubs and perennials for the period of each contract.

During this period the contractor shall keep all footpaths clear of weeds, mulch and rubbish from site at the conclusion of each days work.

### **6.3 Trees and Shrubs**

Shrubs and trees loosened by wind, frost or any maintenance operations shall be firmed up. This shall be carried out at least four times a year. If any plants have been completely lifted out of the ground they shall not be replanted but replaced. A 500 mm diameter circle shall be kept free of grass around the base of each tree to facilitate grass cutting and root development of the tree.

### **6.4 Perennials and Ornamental Grasses**

All perennial plantings shall be maintained in a weed free state by hand removing weeds. No herbicide shall be used within perennial beds. All perennials shall be pruned annually in February each year, by cutting to their base. Arising's shall be removed off site and disposed of in accordance with legislation. All exposed soil shall be topped up with 50mm of fine-composted bark mulch and maintained to this height.



#### 6.5 Drainage and Irrigation

-Maintenance, All gardens require a minimum of two inspections a year to ensure that the irrigation and drainage outlets etc. are maintained, maintenance regime to be confirmed with manufacturer.

#### 6.6 Furniture and Pergola

All external furniture shall be checked annually to ensure that all material is of sound condition, and has not been damaged during the maintenance and/or operations periods.

#### 6.7 Paving and footpaths

All paving and footpaths shall be maintained in a weed and mould free condition and shall be power hosed at a minimum of once per year. Cleaning frequency may need to be increased to ensure that all paths remain clean and tactile.

#### 6.8 Weed Control

Any weed growth occurring during the maintenance period shall be spot treated with a glyphosate free herbicide – “Basta” or similar approved. All herbicide shall be applied to the manufacturers instructions.

#### 6.9 Plant deaths

All tree and shrub losses to natural causes after planting shall be replaced by the contractor within the following season with plants equal in size and shape to those lost.

#### 6.10 Pests and diseases

Experienced personnel shall inspect all plants at least twice a year for the presence of pests and diseases. If either or both are present the contractor shall report the conditions and implement the appropriate control measures immediately.

Any heavily infested plants may need to be removed and replaced with clean stock.