

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

Brady's Public House, Old Navan Road
for Bartra Property (Castleknock) Limited

Issue 2
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1.0 Introduction

Preamble

The following Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development has been undertaken (in combination with the photomontages as prepared by 3DDB) to provide the Planning Authority with the best information available to assist them in making a considered evaluation of the overall development.

The Visual Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the 5no. photomontages and taken from the viewpoints as shown during October 2018.

Introduction – General

The LVIA has been prepared by TBS – Landscape Architects & Urbanism on behalf of Bartra Property (Castleknock) Limited and provides an assessment of the visual impacts of the proposed build-to-rent shared living residential development located at Brady's Public House, Old Navan Road, Dublin 15.

The assessment involved reviewing plans (current and historical), site layout plan, sections and elevations of the proposed building, Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 and aerial photography, together with a visit to the subject site and its environs.

1.1 References

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023
Photomontages as prepared by 3DDB
Aerial photography

The visual appraisal was carried out during October 2018 in the course of preparing the application, when visibility was low due to the presence of foliage in the largely deciduous vegetation which surrounds the site. Information regarding the site and surrounds was gathered from Ordnance Survey maps, a site survey of the subject site and immediate lands and from on-site observations.

1.2 Format and Methodology

The methodology for conducting the LVIA is derived from the Landscape Institute *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (3rd Edition) 2013.

The GLVIA prescribe that landscape and visual impacts be assessed by separate, although linked procedures. Landscape assessment considers the effects deriving from alterations to the elements and characteristics of the landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character, how it is experienced and hence the ascribed value of the landscape. Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition and character of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area's visual amenity.

The LVIA has been informed by a survey of the site and receiving environment carried out during October 2018, as well as consultation with the architects and analysis of relevant local planning policy. Photomontages included in the report to illustrate the potential visual amenity impacts have been produced by visualization specialists, 3DDB.

The format of the LVIA is as follows. The methodology applied in undertaking the LVIA, including the criteria for decision making, is described where appropriate:

Section 2 Receiving Environment - The site is described and the landscape character of the receiving environment analysed in terms of land use and density, as well as relevant County Development Plan policy.

Section 3 Proposed Development – The proposed development is described, along with the ameliorative, remedial or reductive measures built into the scheme in consideration of its potential impact.

Section 4 Potential Visual Impact - The potential impact of the proposed development during operation is discussed. (The short term, variable impact imposed during construction has not been addressed specifically).

The potential landscape impact is assessed based on:

- **The sensitivity of the landscape resource**, which is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and distribution of visual receptors, and the value placed on the landscape.

The landscape sensitivity is classified as high (exhibits a very strong positive character with valued elements and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony, therefore particularly sensitive to change in general), medium (exhibits positive character but has evidence of alteration to / degradation / erosion of elements and characteristics resulting in an area of mixed character, therefore potentially sensitive to change in general, or low (exhibits generally negative character with few valued elements or characteristics), and;

- **The scale or magnitude of landscape effects** to be imposed on the landscape by the development.

The magnitude of change to the landscape is classified as high (total loss of or major alteration to the key elements or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context of the receiving environment's landscape character), medium (partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or features, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic in the context of the receiving environment), low (minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic in the context), or negligible (very minor loss, alteration or introduction of elements of the landscape).

The potential visual impact assessment describes the changes in the character of the available views and the changes in the visual amenity of the visual receptors for a number of places/viewpoints selected to represent the receiving environment and its users. The potential visual impact on each viewpoint is assessed based on:

- **The sensitivity of the visual receptors**, which is a function of the location and context of the viewpoint, the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor, and the importance of the view.

Viewpoint sensitivity is classified as high (e.g. users of outdoor recreation facilities or centres of activity focused on the landscape, and occupiers of residential properties with views affected by the development), medium (e.g. people travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, i.e. viewing but not focused on the landscape), or low (e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping, etc., whose attention will be focused on these activities).

- **The magnitude of change** to the field of view (towards the site) resulting from the development. This takes into account the extent of the view that would be occupied by the intrusion, e.g. full, partial, glimpse, etc. including the distance of the viewpoint from the development and its effect on the importance of the development in the field of view, the proportion of the development or particular features that would be visible, and whether the view of the development would be static, or a sequence or transient (as seen from a moving vehicle).

The magnitude of change to each view is classified as high (total loss of or major alteration to the key elements or characteristics of the view, and/or introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context of the view), medium (partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or features, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic in the context of the view), low (minor loss of or

alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic in the context), or negligible (very minor loss, alteration or introduction of elements of the view).

The significance of the impacts (both landscape and visual) are determined based on the measurement of the magnitude of change against the sensitivity to change:

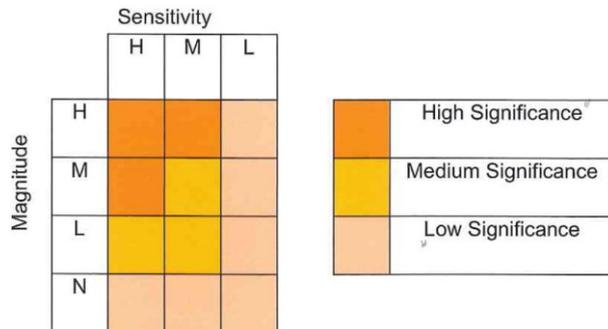


Figure 1: Assessment/Grading of impact significance

The predicted impacts are also classified as beneficial, neutral or adverse. This is not an absolute exercise; in particular, visual receptors' attitudes to development, and thus their response to the impact of a development, will vary. However the methodology applied is designed to provide robust justification for the conclusions drawn.

The LVIA also reflects the Draft EPA Advise Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements (September 2015). The EPA advice notes state that two aspects of the landscape need to be considered: (i) visual impacts – focusing on the extent to which new developments can be seen, and (ii) impacts on the character of the landscape. In addition, it is stated that: ...'landscape impacts concern the surrounds as well as the site itself. In many instances effects at a considerable distance can be much greater than those at the development site. Such impacts can affect large areas or populations'.

The description of the receiving environment and expected impacts are thus considered at two levels:

- The experience from within the site itself and from the immediate surroundings
- The experience from the motorway/road network and immediate surroundings

2.0 Receiving Environment

2.1 Site Context and Description

The subject site (0.3170ha.) is located at the junction of Old Navan Road and Talbot Downs east of Blanchardstown village. The site is regular in shape and is bounded by an existing public space along the northern boundary and existing residential development along the eastern boundary. Old Navan Road and Talbot Downs form the southern and western boundaries respectively. The lands are accessed from Old Navan Road.

The subject site is relatively flat with a gentle and gradual fall eastwards across the lands of 0.3m approx. The lands contain an existing public house with associated car parking. The perimeter of the subject lands is defined by a low wall and several trees along the western boundary and by an existing wall along the eastern boundary. The southern and northern boundaries are formed by tree and shrub planting.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the subject lands

The subject site has a land use zoning objective RS – *‘Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity’* within the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023. The lands immediately north of the site have a land use zoning objective OS – *‘Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities’*.



Figure 3: Extract from the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 (Sheet No. 13 – Blanchardstown South)

The Development Plan also identifies an Indicative Cycle/Pedestrian Route on Old Navan Road immediately south of the subject lands extending eastwards to Navan Road Parkway rail station. No protected structures or recorded monuments exist on the site.

The landscape character of the area within and around the subject site is typical of suburban Dublin, characterised by suburban housing in combination with a number of public spaces, typical of the location and zoning objective. Blanchardstown village west of the subject lands contains a number of established uses including retail, commercial and community facilities. The existence of the N3/M50 motorway interchange 350m east of the subject site, reinforces in this mixed semi urban fringe landscape.

2.2 Views and Prospects

The Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 identifies a number of Key Views and Prospects. However, there are no Views or Prospects within the subject lands area generally.

2.3 Visibility into the site

The varied levels, existing buildings, motorway interchange with associated slip roads of the N3/M50 and existing vegetation contribute to screen the subject site, which is located at a similar elevation to the surrounding roads, when travelling throughout the surrounding roads.

The primary views towards the subject site are from the housing on Old Navan Road and at Talbot Downs/Talbot Court immediately adjacent to the subject site.

Existing vegetation within the public park along the northern boundary of the subject site assists in screening the public house. The existing vegetation along the western boundary (Talbot Downs) and also along the south-eastern boundary (Old Navan Road) assists in screening the public house and restricting views into the subject site generally. Views into the subject site are possible (primarily from first floor level) from the existing housing located along the eastern boundary.

Note: the visual assessment did not access areas within private gardens.

2.4 Views from the site

Views from the site are restricted by the existing housing immediately south, east and west of the subject site. Views northwards are restricted by the existing vegetation along the northern boundary of the site in combination with the existing vegetation located along the northern boundary of the public park.

3.0 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

3.1 Site layout and access

The proposed development has been developed in response to the site location and design parameters. The proposal includes the provision of a part 1 to part 5 storey (roof level +58.325m to +71.325m). over basement build-to-rent residential development comprising 210 single occupancy bedspaces. The layout has been designed as a H shaped block around two amenity courtyards.

The proposed elevational treatments of varying heights, employ different and contrasting materials such as pale coloured clay facing brick and dark coloured cementitious render. The design intent in expressing different elements in contrasting external materials in this way, is to reduce the scale of the building to be more in keeping with the scale of surrounding developments.

The northern elevation successfully addresses the public park through the retention of the existing trees, allowing for passive surveillance of the space. The building line extends to the northern boundary where the gymnasium is provided (with door access to the park), reinforcing the connection with the public park and providing passive surveillance. Access to the public park is also possible through the provision of a pedestrian gate within the boundary railing.

The existing trees along the western boundary consist of a mix of species including Rowan and Maple. The trees are of varying condition and several are distorted directly adjoining the gable wall of the adjoining building. It is proposed to remove the trees and replace them with a boundary wall/railing, in a combination with number of new trees along the boundary.

The central courtyard not only physically connects the buildings, but also provides an attractive informal meeting area. A plaza/set down area is provided along the southern boundary directly fronting Old Navan Road. The ground plane responds to the site requirements and incorporates the plaza, providing pedestrian access to the ground level courtyard. The plaza also includes a number of street trees that successfully separates the area from Old Navan Road.

3.2 Landscape Treatment

A proposed landscape plan has been developed by TBS for the ground level, basement courtyards and plaza fronting Old Navan Road and the third floor roof terrace, to maintain and enhance the receiving environment's existing landscape character.

The proposed landscape for the subject site is based on two different characters which are identified by their function (Outer Irish landscape and Inner Courtyards). The ground level inner courtyard is a pedestrian space that physically connects the building to the plaza. The landscape in this area relates to the requirements of the building design, with feature tree planting and a sculptural element acting as a central focus. The outer zone includes the important arrival area which has a more functional character and includes the set down area within the high quality plaza area.

Following construction of the development and related infrastructure, the landscape scheme will be implemented based on the proposals contained in the landscape plan.



4.0 Visual Impact Assessment

4.1 Description of the likely significant impacts

Every development has some degree of visual impact and this impact is influenced by emerging and likely trends for development in any given location. The impact tends to be most pronounced during the construction phase when the initial unfamiliarity, disturbance and visual intrusion associated with general construction activity and development of new structures are all aspects of particular attention. On completion of construction, this general disturbance and change associated with the site ceases as the new development establishes its presence and character influences on its environs.

The various visual impacts of the proposed development are considered in detail in the following section.

4.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The process of visual impact assessment involves the identification of the potentially affected elements or character areas in the receiving environment and the selection of representative locations within these areas for detailed assessment. Any objectives or concerns expressed by the planning authority about visual amenity are also taken into account.

Viewpoint Assessments

5 viewpoints (refer to photomontages pm01-pm05) representing the main elements of the receiving environment and taking into account of relevant policy have been selected for detailed visual impact assessment. The assessment should be read in conjunction with the prepared photomontages (pm01-pm05).

View (pm01) south-eastwards from Talbot Downs



Figure 5: Viewpoint 1 - Existing View



Viewpoint 1 – Proposed view

Existing View (viewpoint 50m approx. from proposed building)

The foreground of the view is occupied by the public park/space and existing mature trees. The public house is partially screened by the existing vegetation along the site boundary.

Proposed Change

The upper levels of the proposed 5 storey part of the building (roof level +71.325m) will be visible above the existing vegetation. The proposed building will be visible behind the existing vegetation, even during the winter months when there is no foliage on the mainly deciduous vegetation, so no change would result. The varying heights of the elements of the building, in combination with the use of contrasting external materials, combine to reduce the visual impact. Since none of the dominant elements or characteristics of the view, nor any locally prominent features would be affected, the intrusion would amount to a negligible change (very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements) that would not be considered uncharacteristic in the context.

Predicted Visual Impact

The magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is low (minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic in the context), even during the winter months when there is no foliage present on the mainly deciduous vegetation. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus low and neutral.

View (pm02) north-eastwards from Old Navan Road



Figure 6: Viewpoint 2 – Existing View



Viewpoint 2 – Proposed View

Existing View (viewpoint 50m approx. from proposed building)

The foreground of the view is occupied by the car parking area and existing boundary planting and wall. The public house is visible in the background and is partially screened by the existing vegetation along the site boundary.

Proposed Change

The proposed building (roof level +65.175m /+71.325m) south and west elevations are clearly visible within the centre of the view. The varied building heights and treatment of the south and west elevations, both in terms of design and materials, assists in reducing the mass and scale of the building.

While the proposed building is a large and visible structure, the dominant elements or characteristics of the view are not significantly affected by the proposed development when viewed in the context of the expanding urban form of Blanchardstown village. The intrusion in views from this distance would amount to a low change (minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements) that would not be uncharacteristic in the context, given that the proposed development is an extension of existing residential development within the immediate area.

Predicted Visual Impact

The viewpoint sensitivity is low as the visual receptors are not focused on the view of building, but rather of the developing urban fringe in general. The magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is low. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus low and neutral.

View (pm03) north-eastwards from bridge over Royal Canal on Castleknock Road



Figure 7: Viewpoint 3 - Existing View



Viewpoint 3 – Proposed View

Existing View (*viewpoint 325m approx. from proposed building*)

The foreground of the view is occupied by the Royal Canal and existing public space/park and associated trees/vegetation 325m south-west of the subject lands.

Proposed Change

The proposed buildings would not be visible behind the existing trees/vegetation even during the winter months with the predominantly deciduous vegetation so no change will result. Since none of the dominant elements or characteristics of the view, nor any locally prominent features would be affected, the intrusion would amount to a negligible change (very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements) that would not be uncharacteristic in the context, given that the proposed development is an extension of existing residential development within the immediate area.

Predicted Visual Impact

The magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is negligible (very minor loss, alteration or introduction of elements of the view). The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus low and neutral. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus negligible and neutral.

View (pm04) northwards from Royal Canal



Figure 8: Viewpoint 4 - Existing View



Viewpoint 4 – Proposed View

Existing View (*viewpoint 225m approx. from proposed building*)

The foreground of the view is occupied by the Royal Canal and existing vegetation located along the canal edge and associated trees/vegetation 225m south of the subject lands.

Proposed Change

The proposed buildings would not be visible behind the existing trees/vegetation even during the winter months with the predominantly deciduous vegetation so no change will result. Since none of the dominant elements or characteristics of the view, nor any locally prominent features would be affected, the intrusion would amount to a negligible change (very minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements) that would not be uncharacteristic in the context, given that the proposed development is an extension of existing residential development within the immediate area.

Predicted Visual Impact

The magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is negligible (very minor loss, alteration or introduction of elements of the view). The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus negligible and neutral.

View (pm05) north-westwards from Old Navan Road



Figure 9: Viewpoint 5 – Existing View

Viewpoint 5 - Proposed View

Existing View (viewpoint 50m approx. from proposed building)

The foreground of the view is occupied by the existing boundary planting which screens the public house from this location.

Proposed Change

The proposed building (roof levels +58.325m/+65.175m/+68.250m/+71.325m) south and east elevations are clearly visible within the centre of the view and are similar in height to the existing trees that are proposed for removal along the southern boundary of the subject site. The varied treatment of the south and east elevations both in terms of design and materials, assists in reducing the mass and scale of the building.

While the proposed building is a large and visible structure, the dominant elements or characteristics of the view are not significantly affected by the proposed development when viewed in the context of the expanding urban form of Blanchardstown village. The intrusion in views from this distance would amount to a low change (minor loss of or alteration to one or more key elements or characteristics, and/or introduction of elements) that would not be uncharacteristic in the context, given that the proposed development is an extension of existing residential development within the immediate area.

Predicted Visual Impact

The viewpoint sensitivity is low as the visual receptors are not focused on the view of the building, but rather of the developing urban fringe in general. The magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is low. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus low and neutral.

Impact on other Visual Receptors

Given the relatively low lying nature of the area, contained within existing housing and vegetation, there are no areas of elevated ground which may provide views into the subject site. Therefore no other visual receptors were considered in the preparation of this report.

Worst Case Scenario

The worst case scenario assumes a hypothetical situation where mitigation measures are not put in place or fail entirely. In this instance, this would relate primarily to the provision of tree planting throughout the site. Such an outcome however, is considered highly unlikely, as the proposed development includes for comprehensive landscape proposals.

5.0 Summary of Landscape and Visual Impact

Photomontage View pm01

The proposed building is visible from this location. However, the viewpoint sensitivity is low and the significance of the predicted visual impact is thus low and neutral.

Photomontage View pm02

The proposed building is visible from this location. The significance of the predicted visual impact however, is considered low and in the emerging context neutral, given the existing zoning context of the subject site.

Photomontage View pm03

The proposed building is not visible from this location. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus negligible and neutral.

Photomontage View pm04

The proposed building is not visible from this location. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus negligible and neutral.

Photomontage View pm05

The proposed building is visible from this location. The significance of the predicted visual impact however, is considered low and in the emerging context neutral, given the existing zoning context of the subject site.

Summary

Recent national policy guidelines for residential housing within strategically located lands proximate to existing infrastructure and public transport require higher densities, to ensure a more sustainable form of zoned land. Consequently, the subject site is changing accordingly to reflect a more urban character.

The subject site has a land use zoning objective RS – *‘Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity’* within the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023. Given the changes that are taking place in national policy and within the immediate environs, the magnitude of change which would arise from the proposed development is low.

While the proposed building is a large and visible structure when viewed from a close distance, the dominant elements or characteristics of the viewpoints are not significantly affected by the proposed development. The intrusion in views from the viewpoints would amount to low or negligible change, given that the proposed development is an extension of existing residential development within the immediate area.

The relatively flat lands, which are framed by existing residential development on three sides, as well as by the existing vegetation relating to the N3 and M50 interchange, restricts views towards the subject site. The significance of the predicted visual impact is thus considered low and neutral, even during the winter months when there is no foliage present on the dense mainly deciduous vegetation.

6.0 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are inherent within the proposed development. The mitigation measures as outlined, are intended to reduce the visual impact/visual intrusion of the proposed buildings on the landscape over time, as follows:

- High quality outer and inner landscape treatments incorporating tree planting and high quality paved areas is employed to provide spatial definition, interest, and to assist in reducing the visual mass of the buildings
- It is proposed that the tree planting palette within the courtyards is restrained, yet using a number of semi-mature trees, which provide living sculptural elements in both a natural and semi-formal layout. A number of trees will be of 20-25cm girth size to provide scale and maturity to the parkland setting. Within the outer landscape, the tree planting will be of native species to enhance bio-diversity and will include Maple, Birch and Hazel etc.
- The proposed elevational treatments of varying heights, employ different and contrasting materials such as pale coloured clay facing brick and dark coloured cementitious render to reduce the scale of the building to be more in keeping with the scale of surrounding developments.



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