

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

Proposed LRD Development at the former Dell/EMC premises,
Mechterstadt Road, Ballincollig, Cork.

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CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS
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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

1.1 Introduction

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by CSR was informed by a desktop study and a survey of the site and receiving environment in the summer and autumn of 2025. The appraisal is in accordance with the methodology prescribed in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA) published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment and the relevant updates and Clarifications as issued by the Landscape Institute.

This report identifies and discusses the landscape and visual constraints, and likely effects in relation to the proposed LRD development at the former Dell-EMC premises, Mechterstad Road, Ballincollig, Cork.

1.2 Methodology

Ireland is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The ELC 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 definition is important in that it expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It encourages a focus on landscape as a resource in its own right - a shared resource providing a complex range of cultural, environmental, and economic benefits to individuals and society.

As a cultural resource, the landscape functions as the setting for our day-to-day lives, also providing opportunities for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment and inspiration. It contributes to the sense of place experienced by individuals and communities and provides a link to the past as a record of historic socio-economic and environmental conditions. As an environmental resource, the landscape provides habitat for fauna and flora. It receives, stores, conveys, and cleans water, and vegetation in the landscape stores carbon and produces oxygen. As an economic resource, the landscape provides the raw materials and space for the production of food, materials (e.g., timber, aggregates) and energy (e.g., carbon-based fuels, wind, solar), living space and for recreation and tourism activities.

1.2.1 Forces for Landscape Change

The GLVIA notes that the landscape change is ongoing. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. For example, within the receiving environment, the environs of the proposed development have altered over the last thousand years, from wilderness to agriculture and settlement.

Many of the drivers for change arise from the requirement for development to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. The concept of sustainable development recognises that change must and will occur to meet the needs of the present, but that it should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This involves finding an appropriate balance between economic, social, and environmental forces and values.

The reversibility of change is an important consideration. If change must occur to meet a current need, it is essential to distinguish whether this could be reversed to return the resource (in this case, the landscape) to its previous state to allow for development or management for future needs.

Climate change is one of the major factors likely to bring about future change in the landscape, and it is accepted to be the most serious long-term threat to the natural environment, as well as economic activity (particularly primary production) and society. The need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which includes the management of water and more extreme weather and rainfall patterns, is part of this.

1.2.2 Guidance

Landscape and Visual Appraisal is a tool used to identify the effects of change resulting from appraisal of both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, people's views, and visual amenity. As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and is instead a

standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects. However, the process by which the landscape and visual effects are identified is similar to that of a Landscape and Visual Assessment carried out as part of an EIAR.

The methodology is informed by the following key guidance documents, namely:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition 2013, published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA).
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft August 2017, EPA).

References are also made to the '*Landscape and Landscape Assessment – Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' document, published in 2000 by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Use of the Term 'Effect' vs 'Impact'

The GLVIA advises that the terms 'impact' and 'effect' should be clearly distinguished and consistently used in the preparation of an LVIA.

'*Impact*' is defined as the action being taken. In the case of the proposed works, the impact would include the construction of the proposed extension.

'*Effect*' is defined as the change or changes resulting from those actions, e.g., a change in landscape character, or changes to the composition, character, and quality of views in the receiving environment. This report focusses on these effects.

1.2.3 Assessment of Both 'Landscape' and 'Visual' Effects

Another key distinction to make in a LVIA is that between landscape effects and the visual effects of development.

'*Landscape*' results from the interplay between the physical, natural, and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create distinctive character of landscape in different places. 'Landscape character assessment' is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape, and by which to understand the potential effects of a development on the landscape as 'a resource'. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of landscape that make a place distinctive.

Views and '*visual amenity*' refer to the interrelationship between people and the landscape. The GLVIA prescribes that effects on views and visual amenity should be assessed separately from landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked. 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.

The appraisal of landscape and visual effects included a desktop study, review of the proposed development drawings and visualisations, and a site visit which was carried out in March 2022.

1.2.4 Methodology for Landscape Appraisal

Landscape appraisal considers the sensitivity of the receptor, and the likely nature and magnitude of the changes to the main landscape elements and characteristics. Existing trends of change in the landscape are taken into account.

Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource

Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape sensitivity is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and distribution of visual receptors, scope for mitigation, and the value placed

on the landscape. It also relates to the nature and scale of development proposed. It includes consideration of landscape values as well as the susceptibility of the landscape to change.

Landscape values can be identified by the presence of landscape designations or policies which indicate particular values, either on a national or local level. In addition, a number of criteria are used to assess the value of a landscape. These are described further in Section 1.6 below.

Landscape susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as *the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline scenario and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*. Susceptibility also relates to the type of development – a landscape may be highly susceptible to certain types of development but have a low susceptibility to other types of development.

For the purpose of assessment, three categories are used to classify the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Sensitivity is therefore a combination of Landscape value and Susceptibility.

Sensitivity	Description
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features, and characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that it has limited/low capacity for accommodating 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 principal management objective for the area is conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features, or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character of the landscape is such that it has capacity for change; where development would result in a minor change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and where the principal management objective is to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration, or enhancement.

Table 1.1 – Categories of Landscape Sensitivity

Magnitude of Landscape Change: The magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape with reference to its key elements, features, and characteristics (also known as ‘landscape receptors’). Four categories are used to classify magnitude of landscape change.

Magnitude of Change	Description
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 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.

Table 1.2 – Categories of Landscape Change

Landscape Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of landscape effects (either on physical landscape elements or on the landscape character) can be arrived at by combining the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects.

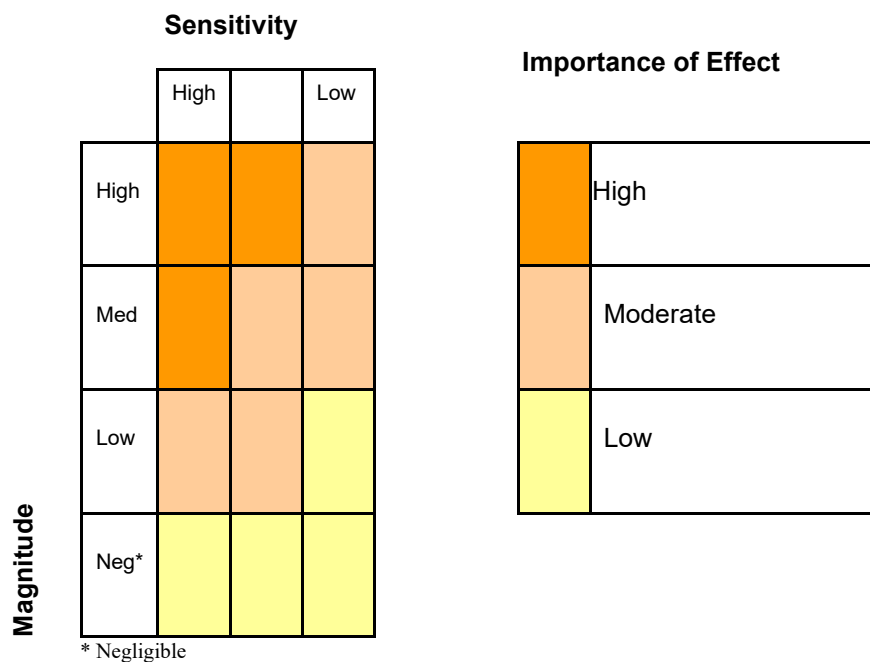


Figure 1.1: Guide to the classification of the level of effects

Landscape effects are also classified as positive, neutral, or negative/adverse. Development has the potential to improve the environment as well as damage it. In certain situations, there might be policy encouraging a type of change in the landscape, and if a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed.

1.2.5 Methodology for Visual Appraisal

Visual appraisal considers the changes to the composition of views, the character of the views, and the visual amenity experienced by visual receptors. Visual receptor 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 or interest is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location.

Visual receptors most susceptible to change include frequent users (such as students and faculty), 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 susceptible to change include travellers on road, rail, and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes which would be more susceptible, 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).

Three categories are used to classify a viewpoint's sensitivity:

Sensitivity	Description
High	Viewers at 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 / frequently used buildings or outdoor recreation features) and views which are valued by the local community. This would include tourist attractions, and heritage features of regional or county value, and viewers travelling on scenic routes.
Medium	Viewers at viewpoints representing people travelling at slow or moderate speed through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views. The views are generally not designated, but which include panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, which demonstrate some sense of naturalness, tranquillity, or some rare element in the view.
Low	Viewers at viewpoints reflecting people involved in activities not focused on the landscape e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping, etc. The view may present an attractive backdrop to these activities but there is no evidence of that the view is valued, and not regarded as an important element of these activities. Viewers travelling at high speeds (e.g. motorways) may also be considered of low susceptibility.

Table 1.3 – Categories of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.
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.

Table 1.4 – Magnitude of Visual Change

Visual Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of visual effects can be arrived at by combining the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is included in Figure 1.1 above as for Landscape Effects.

As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects.

Visual effects are also classified as positive, neutral, or negative/adverse as set out below:

Quality and Timescale of Effects

The predicted effects 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. These qualitative impacts/effects are defined as:

- Adverse – Scheme at variance with landform, scale, pattern. Would degrade, diminish, or destroy the integrity of valued features, elements or their setting or cause the quality of the landscape(townscape)/view to be diminished;
- Neutral - Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;
- Beneficial – improves landscape(townscape)/view quality and character, fits with the scale, landform and pattern, and enables the restoration of valued characteristic features or repairs / removes damage caused by existing land uses.

Effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

- Temporary – Lasting for one year or less;
- Short Term – Lasting one to seven years;
- Medium Term – Lasting seven to fifteen years;
- Long Term – Lasting fifteen years to sixty years;
- Permanent – Lasting over sixty years.

1.3 The Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises:

A Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at this c. 1.0 ha site of the former DELL EMC premises, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork.

The proposed development will consist of the demolition of the existing former 2 no. storey DELL EMC building (c. 3882 sq m) and ancillary plant area, with associated site clearance works. The proposed development will provide for the 130 no. residential units, arranged in 3 no. blocks in a development ranging in height from 3 to 6 no. storeys.

The development will comprise a mix of 108 no. apartments (total apartment blocks area - c. 10,657 sqm), arranged in 2 no. blocks, providing a unit mix of 52 no. 1-bed and 56 no. 2-bed apartment units. In addition, the proposed development will provide 22 no. duplex units (total duplex block area - c. 2,159 sqm), arranged in 1 no. block, providing a unit mix of 4 no. 1-bed, 9 no. 2-bed, and 9 no. 3 beds.

Vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access to the proposed development will be via 2 no. entrances from Innishmore Lawn (to the north east) and Mechterstadt Road (to the south-west) and the development will include for pedestrian and cyclist permeability. Additionally, pedestrian access points are provided to the west of the subject site and to the south, off Mechterstadt Road.

The development will also include the provision of private, communal and public open space (including all balconies); car parking at ground floor level and undercroft; bicycle parking; internal roads and pathways; bin stores; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; the provision of new surface water and foul drainage pipes and any associated pipe diversion works; retaining walls; changes in level; services provision and related ducting, piping and cabling; electric vehicle charging points; attenuation tanks; SUDS; signage; 1 no. ESB substation; wayfinding structures; public realm works including public lighting; and all site development and excavation works above and below ground. The application contains a statement setting out how the proposal will be consistent with the objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

1.4 Receiving Environment – Policy Context

The following section includes policies and objectives from the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022-28 (hereafter referred as the Plan) which relate to the site zoning, including policies relating to landscape, views and prospects, and green infrastructure.

1.4.1 Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The following section includes policies and objectives from the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022 - 2028, hereafter referred to as the Plan. These include policies relating to development, landscape character, and viewpoints.

Volume 1

A number of objectives relating to the landscape and developments in general are as follows:

Strategic Objective 5

To strengthen the green and blue infrastructure of Cork City. To protect and promote biodiversity and habitat connectivity and protect natural areas. To protect and enhance Cork City's unique landscape character and maritime heritage. To ensure all of Cork City's residents have access to open spaces, recreation and amenity facilities and natural areas.

A strong green and blue infrastructure network is essential to the quality of life of Cork City's residents and contributes towards the creation of places where people want to live and work. It is an objective of Cork City Council to achieve a healthy, green and connected City with high-quality and interconnected open spaces, parks, diverse natural areas and green and blue corridors.

Proposals for new development in Cork City will respect and reflect the topography, landscape and ecology of the City, and will protect and enhance the City's green and blue infrastructure by ensuring that development does not fragment existing networks of green and blue

infrastructure. Proposals for new development will demonstrate how green and blue infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation, landscape and biodiversity are considered commensurate to the scale and context of the development in the development process.

Chapter 6: Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and Biodiversity

Cork's Landscape:

6.10: *With the intensification of the City, its landscape and natural heritage assets are of huge importance to those living, working and visiting Cork. They are vital to quality of life, are non-renewable assets and help enhance the attractiveness and image of the city as a place to live and work.*

6.11: *Cork City has an attractive physical setting formed by the Lee Valley and Estuary and the ridges rising to the north and south of the city. These features are supplemented by a range of public open spaces, parks, walkways, public and private spaces, trees and tree groups, and together form the green infrastructure of the city, which play a significant role in supporting biodiversity, such as mammals, birds, invertebrates, trees and plants.*

6.12: *The distribution of landscape, natural heritage and recreational assets is vitally important to creating an accessible city. Cork City Council will strive to create a network of natural heritage areas and recreational open spaces / amenity areas by promoting linkages and accessibility between these areas and by using walkways / cycleways to connect them where appropriate, and to encourage active transportation modes.*

Landscape Protection:

6.17: *Cork City Council seeks to protect and enhance the landscape character of the City by protecting the significant landscape elements that contribute to the general amenity of Cork City. This is achieved through a number of land use mechanisms in this Plan, including the designation of Land Preservation Zones (LPZ) and Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV).*

6.18: *Planning applications within areas or on sites benefiting from such landscape protection must demonstrate that there is no resulting adverse impact on the landscape assets and character of the area, by means of a design statement that includes a landscape assessment and visual impact assessment the impact. The City Council may seek discretionary Environmental Impact Assessments on development proposals that it considers would be likely to have a negative impact on the landscape.*

View Management Framework

6.25: *Cork City offers a visually striking landscape that combines urban settlements with rivers, ridges, spaces, streets, rural hinterland, as well as fantastic buildings that we are all proud of. The views of Cork that we experience help define our understanding of the City – its character and identity.*

6.26: *In general, the City is appreciated by most people from viewing locations along the River Lee and its tributaries and from elevated locations.*

6.27: *Cork City Council seeks to manage development through its View Management Framework in order to protect the views and prospects of special amenity value and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest, where these are not protected by other objectives of this Plan. These views are seen from places that are publicly accessible and well used and include significant buildings or urban landscapes that help to define Cork City at a strategic level.*

6.28: *These views represent at least one of the following:*

- 1. Panoramas that offer expansive views of the City.*
- 2. Linear views to landmark buildings.*

3. River corridor views.

4. Scenic hinterland routes.

Active Recreation and Open Space:

6.39: *The quality and quantity of public realm in towns and cities is a key determinant of the quality of life that any place can offer its residents, workers and visitors. Open spaces are a key component of public realm.*

6.44: *The quality of public open spaces is paramount, in terms of design, accessibility, shared use, biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage systems and provision for allotments and community gardens.*

Non-Designated Areas of Natural Heritage Importance

6.66: *Natural heritage and biodiversity of Cork City is not just contained within designated areas alone but is found throughout the City. Many areas which do not have formal protection under legislation have a local natural heritage value in terms of the urban environment in which they are located, the plant and animal life that they support and the biodiversity that lies within them e.g. woodlands, hedgerows, rivers, private gardens, parks, sports grounds graveyards, institutional lands including religious grounds, hospitals, schools and universities.*

Trees and Woodlands

6.69: *Trees and woodlands make a valuable contribution to the biodiversity, landscape value of and health and well-being of its citizens as well as playing a role in climate adaptation and enhancing the aesthetics of the built environment and public realm thus benefiting the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of Cork City's residents.*

6.70: *It is important to protect and maintain existing trees or groups of trees in the City, particularly those in private ownership and promoting new planting on public land. As set out in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Study, woodland habitat in Cork City is predominantly located in the north western fringe of the wider city, within the hinterland, Tower and Blarney and along the boundary fringe at Glanmire and Rochestown. Tree canopy coverage is estimated to be 14% in Cork City.*

Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and Biodiversity Development Objectives:

Objective 6.5: Trees & Urban Woodland

a. *To protect and enhance the City's tree and urban woodlands in public and private ownership. Cork City Council will seek to survey, map and maintain existing important individual and groups of trees, using Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate.*

d. *To support retaining existing trees and the planting of new trees as part of new developments subject to care on the species of tree and the siting and management of the trees to avoid conflict with transport safety and residential amenity in particular.*

e. *To promote the planting of pollinator friendly native deciduous trees and shrubs*

Objective 6.9: Landscape

a. *To preserve and enhance Cork's landscape character, key landscape assets and views and prospects of special amenity value.*

b. *Landscape will be an important factor in all development proposals, ensuring that a proactive view of development is undertaken while maintaining respect for the environment and heritage generally in line with the principle of sustainability.*

c. *To ensure that new development meets the highest standards of placemaking, siting and design.*

d. To protect those prominent open hilltops, valley sides and ridges that define the character of the Cork City Hinterland and those areas which form strategic, largely undeveloped gaps between the main Hinterland settlements from development.

e. To discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

f. To support, as appropriate, any relevant recommendations contained in the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025.

Objective 6.11: Landscape and Development

To ensure that the management of development throughout Cork City will have regard for the value of the landscape, its character, distinctiveness and sensitivity in order to minimize the visual and environmental impact of development, particularly in designated areas of high landscape value where higher development standards (layout, design, landscaping, materials) are required.

Objective 6.22: Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

a. To protect, promote and enhance Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity.

b. To support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and successor publications in Cork City.

c. To support and implement the biodiversity actions from the Cork City Heritage and Biodiversity Plan (2021-2026) in partnership with all relevant stakeholders.

e. Cork City Council will seek the enhancement of existing, and the delivery of new, biodiversity-rich areas throughout the City including individual buildings, streets, public and private spaces by supporting the provision of green roofs and walls, rain gardens, biodiversity-rich parklets, rainwater harvesting, natural banks and naturalised SUDS.

f. Cork City Council will seek, where appropriate, to enhance the linear habitat connectivity, including the interconnection and enhancement of:

- Woodlands, gardens, open spaces, fields and hedgerows.*
- Coastal habitats, river catchments, lakes, streams, ponds.*
- Aquatic, marginal and bank side habitats.*
- Parks, playing fields and recreational areas.*
- Upstream of mapped flood*

Objective 6.25: Non-designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance

Cork City Council will seek to map the City's ecological networks and corridors of local biodiversity value outside of designated areas, and to work with local stakeholders in supporting the effective management of features which are important for wild flora and fauna and habitats.

Strategic Objective 9: Environmental Infrastructure

To develop a compact, sustainable City by ensuring the creation of attractive, liveable, diverse, safe, secure and welcoming and well-designed urban places, communities and neighbourhoods that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.

Proposals for new development will follow a design-led approach with sustainable, high-quality, climate resilient placemaking at its core. Development should have a positive contribution to its receiving environment delivered by innovative architectural, landscape and urban design, that respects the character of the neighbourhood, create a sense of place, and provide green

spaces and community and cultural amenities commensurate with the nature and scale of the development.

Chapter 11: Placemaking and Managing Development

Development and Landscape, Natural Environment and Biodiversity

11.220: New development shall be sensitively designed to fit the existing landscape setting, using high quality design and where necessary, landscape mitigation measures that maintain or enhance the landscape.

11.222: All development proposals are expected to:

1. Avoid, or as a last resort satisfactorily mitigate, adverse impacts on existing designated and non-designated habitats. This is in addition to the Appropriate Assessment requirement relating to designated sites.
2. Integrate provision for biodiversity enhancement which may include compliance through public open space, gardens, areas of planting (pollinator friendly planting and native tree species should be prioritised), sustainable urban drainage systems, incorporating green roofs, bee hotels, bird and bat boxes.
3. Avoid adverse impacts, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on mature trees, protected flora, animal or bird species.

1.5 The Site



Figure 1.2: Site Location Map

(Source: Google Maps)

1.5.1 Description of Site

The subject site is the former Dell-EMC premises at Mechterstadt Road, Ballincollig comprised of a large office building and an L-shaped surface car park which wraps around the building to the south and east of the site. The site is cut into the local topography along the southern and eastern boundaries giving rise to large embankments along Innishmore Lawn and Mescherstad Road. These are planted with trees and extensive areas of ornamental shrubbery. The site is accessed via Mechterstadt Road at the south-western corner of the site. The site boundaries are defined by metal railings with the exception of the northern boundary, which has a concrete post and concrete panel fence.



Plate 1.5.1 View of subject site from Mechterstadt Road



Plate 1.5.2 View northward across site from Mechterstadt Road



Plate 1.5.3 View eastward to site from adjoining Lidl site



Plate 1.5.4 View of south-eastward from western site boundary showing Westview Estate



Plate 1.5.5 View southward from Innishmore Lawn showing northern boundary of site and adjoining site.

1.5.2 Local Landscape Character

The local area has a mixed-use edge of town character located at the interface between existing housing areas, retail shopping and food/beverage shopping destinations. The adjoining roads also facilitate access to local schools, a church and Ballincollig Regional Park. The area is located at the western end of Ballincollig town centre just off the Main Road (R608). The development of the town is aligned east to west generally following the course of the River Lee local and along the contour lines along the river valley. There is some mature tree cover in the locality. Visibility onto the site from Innishmore Lawn and Mechterstad Road is limited by boundary vegetation such that there is no activation or sense of overlooking from the site. The redundant condition of the subject site and the adjoining housing site to the north of it lend an air of transition to the setting.



Plate 1.5.5 View eastward from R608 Main Street / Coolroe junction



Plate 1.5.6 View northward along Innishmore Lawn from Main Street R608



Plate 1.5.7 View northward from Parknamore access road



Plate 1.5.8 View of site from adjoining retail outlets to the west



Plate 1.5.9 View westward along Mechterstadt Road



Plate 1.5.10 View north-eastward along Innishmore Lawn



Plate 1.5.14 View northward to site from Coolroe



Plate 1.5.15 View northward to River Lee valley ridge from main street at centre of town

1.5.2 Local Landscape Character



Figure 1.5: Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 - Densities

1.5.3 Landscape Designations

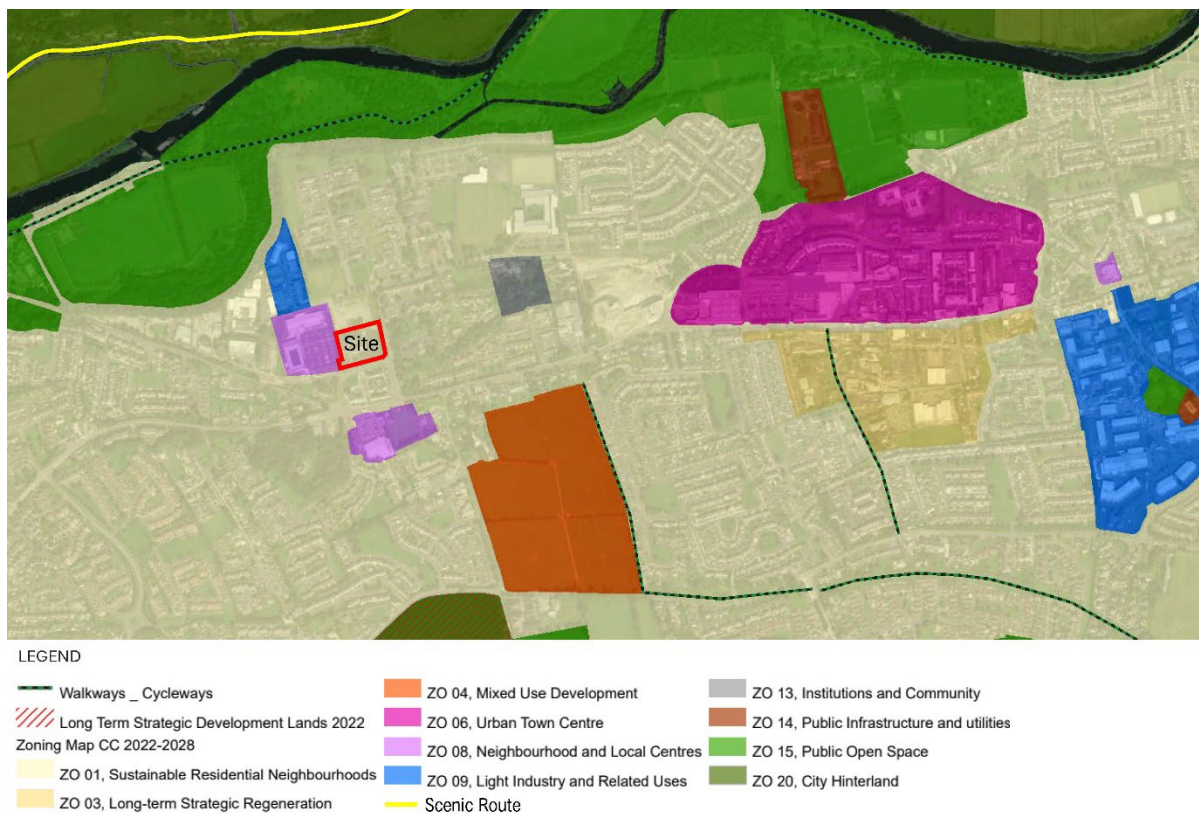


Figure 1.3: Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 - Landscape Designations



Figure 1.4: Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 Heritage / Conservation feature extract

1.5.4 Summary of Landscape Character and Values

- The subject site has a commercial / business park character defined by the former office building and the strong visual screen provided by site boundary trees, hedges and shrubbery. Clearance of the adjoining housing site to the north and the redundant nature of the subject site lends a sense of change and transition to the locality.
- The local area has a mixed-use edge of town character located at the interface between existing housing areas, retail shopping and food/beverage shopping destinations. The adjoining roads also facilitate access to local schools, a church and Ballincollig Regional Park.

Landscape Values

The landscape values of a site can be identified through formal designations which infer landscape value, as well as values which are not enshrined in policy but are evident on the site. These values are listed below, and further be categorised in two ways – values which should be conserved, and those that provide opportunity for enhancement.

In addition to formal designations at international, national and local level, the GLVIA 3rd edition (2013) recommend the use of a number of criteria which can help to describe landscape values. These are listed below and include:

- *Landscape Quality/Condition*
- *Heritage/Conservation interests*

- *Scenic Quality*
- *Rarity*
- *Perceptual aspects*
- *Recreation Value*
- *Enhancement values*

Landscape Quality/Condition

The subject site has considerable ornamental vegetation including hedge and shrub species along the southern and eastern site boundaries which restricts views onto the site.

Heritage/Conservation interests

There are no built heritage or conservation structures on the site. The following structures are located in the wider locality.

NIAH Reg. No. 20907368, House,

NIAH Reg. no.	Description	Location	Distance from Subject Site (m)
20907368	House	Parknamore	265
20842001	Officer's House	Oriel Hotel	428
20842002	Gate Lodge	Oriel Hotel	498
20842003	House	R608 opposite Oriel Hotel	524
RPS ID no.	Description	Location	Distance from Subject Site (m)
PS1223	Weir on River Lee	Ballincollig Regional Park	590
PS1225	Ballincollig Castle	Castle Road	1100
National Monument ID no.	Description	Location	Distance from Subject Site (m)
CO10554	Bridge	L2211 at Regional Park Entrance	900
CO10561	Gunpowder Mill	Ballincollig Regional Park	630

Scenic Quality

The site has existing green infrastructure made up of ornamental hedges, shrubbery and trees concentrated along the eastern and western site boundaries. There are five mature trees located just outside the site entrance. The planting has a pleasing softening effect on the local environment.

Rarity

The site has no rare built or natural features.

Perceptual aspects

The site appears as a commercial premises enclosed and screened by site boundary hedges and shrubbery. The area has a transitional character associated with the redundant nature of the site and clearance of the adjoining housing site to the north of it.

Recreation Value

The site is private and does not have any recreational function.

Conservation Values

Conservation values relate to the protection of any significant trees along the perimeter of the site.

Enhancement Values

The enhancement values reflect change that is occurring in the landscape and its inherent robustness and identify elements which could be enhanced.

- The potential to demonstrate sensitive design in fulfilment of the development potential of the site.
- The potential to deliver a distinctive residential development of high quality which enhance local sense of place and enliven the adjoining streets as well as providing passive supervision.
- Potential to mitigate the loss of any existing trees which are required to be removed.

1.5.5 Zone of Visual Influence and Potential Visual Receptors

A thorough assessment of potential views of the proposed development was carried out during the site visit. The surrounding vicinity was walked and driven, and the areas with likely views were identified. Additional viewpoints were added following consultation with Cork City Council.

Locations for viewpoints identified include:

Views from the south

- View from Castle Road
- View from R608 Main Road
- View from Supervalu site entrance

Views from the north

- View from Innishmore Housing Estate
- View from Innishmore Lawn

Views from the east

- View from Innishmore Crescent
- View from Innishmore Lawn

Views from the west

- View from Lidl site
- View from Innishmore Lawn
- View form Coolroe / R608 Junction

A list of the 11 viewpoints taken to represent a variety of visual receptors in the vicinity is included in Table 1.5 below and an accompanying map showing the viewpoint locations is included in Figure 1.5, below and also in the Photomontage Booklet prepared by Pedersen Focus.



Figure 1.5: Viewpoint Location Map

Viewpoint	Description	Distance to Site
1	View from Inishmore Lawn	0.06 km
2	View from R608 Main Road / Innishmore Road Junction	0.12 km
3	View from R608 / City West Mews Junction (at Supervalu)	0.15 km
4	View from R608 / L2211 Ininiscarra Road Junction	0.04 km
5	View from Mechterstadt Road	0.12 km
6	View from Mechterstadt Road at Lidl Store	0.03 km
7	View from Inishmore Drive	0.12 km

8	View from Inishmore Road	0.08 km
9	View from Inishmore Crescent	0.17 km
10	View from Coolyduff Road	0.8 km
11	View from Ballincollig Regional Park	0.6 km
12	View from Castle Road	0.7 km

Table 1.5: Viewpoints contained in Photomontage booklet.

1.6 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

1.6.1 Landscape Effects

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. Medium is described in Table 1.1 as:

Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features, or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.

Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will result in change that can be considered to be Medium. Medium is described in Table 1.2 as:

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.

Level of Landscape Effect

The landscape effect resulting from a **Medium** landscape sensitivity, and a **Medium** magnitude of change, is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will incur change contemplated in the zoning objective for the site, transforming the former office premises to a new neighbourhood comprised of apartments buildings and duplex apartments along with well-defined open spaces, parking areas and access infrastructure.

The proposed apartment buildings range from four to six storeys in height while the duplex apartments will be three-storeys in height. The adjoining site to the north is a Cork City Council Part 8 housing site

The nature of the proposed development is reflective of on-going change in urban centres with good transport links to Cork City, the relative proximity of the site to the city centre and the zoning of the lands for *Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods*. The adjoining site to the north is also zoned for housing and is a Cork City Council Part 8 development site.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and the detailing of elevations which include façade recessions, variations in height, balconies, and colour contrasts in finishes.

The development also incorporates public realm spaces, green infrastructure and site boundary treatments.

Overall, the landscape effect is considered to be **Beneficial**.

1.6.2 Visual Effects

Photomontages

Based on the desk study, review of the proposed development, site characteristics and sensitivity, as well as visibility of the site, eleven representative viewpoints (listed in Table 1.6) were selected to assist in the appraisal of visual effects. The photomontages were prepared by Pedersen Focus. These are described below, and existing photographs and proposed photomontages are provided in a separate booklet.

Each viewpoint is described below in two parts, firstly its existing (baseline) condition, and secondly to describe the predicted effects or change brought about by the proposed development.

Viewpoint 1 - View from Innishmore Road

Existing View

The view north-westward along Innishmore Lawn shows Westview housing development on the southern side of Mechterstadt Road and the former Dell/EMC building on the subject site on the opposite side of the road. The distant ridge and tree cover to the north of the River Lee forms the backdrop to the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered to be of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed buildings relative to the existing Westview housing scheme. The proposed development will constitute a prominent intervention in the suburban setting which will extend the residential character along Innishmore Lawn in line with the zoning objective for the site. The view of the distant valley ridge will be reduced.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will introduce clearly defined function and sense of place in the delivery of residential development on the site which is zoned for housing.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The proposed development complements the existing development at Westview Estate in terms of form and scale.

The proposed development will also provide passive supervision for pedestrians and cyclists along the local road network. While there will be some reduction in the view to the distant ridge, the axial view northward along Innishmore Lawn will remain intact.

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree and hedgerow planting along the site boundaries and in a grass verge along Mechterstadt Road which will partially screen and integrate the development as they mature.

Overall, the quality of the effect will be **Beneficial** in the short term, as well as in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 2 - View from R608 Main Road / Innishmore Road Junction

Existing View

The view north-ward from the R608 main road through Ballincollig shows Westview housing development and the former Dell/EMC building on the subject site to the rear. The distant ridge to the north of the River Lee forms the backdrop to the view. There is considerable tree cover on the ridge and along Innishmore Lawn.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed buildings relative to the existing Westview housing scheme. The proposed development will constitute a prominent intervention in the suburban setting which will extend the residential character along Innishmore Lawn in line with the zoning objective for the site. The view of the distant valley ridge will be reduced.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will introduce clearly defined function and sense of place in the delivery of residential development on the site which is zoned for housing.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The proposed development complements the existing development at Westview Estate in terms of form and scale.

The proposed development will also provide passive supervision for pedestrians and cyclists along the local road network. While there will be some reduction in the view to the distant ridge, the axial view northward along Innishmore Lawn will remain intact.

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree and hedgerow planting along the site boundaries and in a grass verge along Mechterstadt Road which will partially screen and integrate the development as they mature.

Overall, the quality of the effect will be **Beneficial** in the short term, as well as in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 3 - View from R608 / City West Mews Junction (at Supervalu)

Existing View

The view north-ward from the junction shows Westview apartments which define the opposite corner at the busy junction. The view is heavily influenced by road infrastructure and traffic, with the distant ridge providing a backdrop to the setting.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will not be visible from this location as demonstrated by the red outline on the photomontage image. There will be no visual effects experienced from this location.

Visual Effect

There will be **No Change** in respect of visual effects from this location.

Viewpoint 4 - View from R608 / L2211 Ininiscarra Road Junction

Existing View

The view eastward from this location shows Westview Estate apartments in the foreground and part of the former Dell/EMC building on the subject site in the middle distance. The rear of the local health and youth resource centre is visible to the left of the view. The backdrop to the view is provided by the distant ridge and tree cover.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed development, relative to the existing Westview Estate apartments. The proposed development will constitute a prominent intervention, positioned at a lower level relative to the existing housing scheme, and offset from it on the opposite side of Mechterstadt Road. The view of the distant valley ridge will be reduced by the development.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will be prominent, introducing clearly defined function and sense of place in the delivery of residential development on the site which is zoned for housing. The proposed apartment building is lower in height than apartment building on the Westview Estate.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The proposed development complements the existing development at Westview Estate in terms of form and scale.

While there will be reduction in the view to the distant ridge, retention of views is not always possible in the valley is not always possible and the view from this location is not a defined or protected view.

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree planting along Mechterstadt Road which will partially screen and integrate the development as the planting matures.

Overall, the quality of the effect will be **Beneficial** in the short term, as well as in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 5 - View from Mechterstadt Road

Existing View

The view eastward from this cul-de-sac access road shows the mixed-use nature of the location where retail shopping, housing and play facilities merge at the western end of Ballincollig. The former office premises on the subject site is visible in the middle-distance. Westview Estate houses are visible to

the right, on the opposite side of Mechterstadt Road while the apartment block on the Westview Estate is visible to the extreme right on higher ground.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed development, relative to the existing Westview Estate on the opposite of Mechterstadt Road and the Lidl store to the left of the foreground. The proposed development will constitute a prominent intervention providing definition of function in the middle ground.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will be prominent, introducing clearly defined function and sense of place in the delivery of residential development on the site which is zoned for housing.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The proposed development complements the existing development at Westview Estate in terms of form and scale.

While there will be reduction in the view to the distant ridge, retention of views is not always possible in the valley is not always possible and the view from this location is not a defined or protected view.

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree planting along Mechterstadt Road which will partially screen and integrate the development as the planting matures.

Overall, the quality of the effect will be **Beneficial** in the short term, as well as in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 6 - View from Innishmore Lawn at Lidl Store

Existing View

The view eastward from this cul-de-sac access road shows the mixed-use nature of the location where retail shopping, housing and play facilities merge at the western end of Ballincollig. The former office premises on the subject site is visible in the middle-distance. Westview Estate houses are visible to the right, on the opposite side of Mechterstadt Road. There is considerable tree cover in the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will constitute a prominent intervention in the setting by virtue of the proposed high-density nature of the development where the proposed four to six storey apartment buildings and three-storey duplex apartments are visible.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will be prominent but generally in line with expectations for a high-density intervention, introducing clearly defined form, function and sense of place in the delivery of residential development in the suburban setting.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The proposed development complements the existing development at Westview Estate in terms of form and scale.

While there will be reduction in the view to the distant ridge, retention of views from all locations is not always possible. The view from this location is not a defined or protected view.

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree planting along Mechterstadt Road and the western boundary of the site which will partially screen and integrate the development as the planting matures.

Overall, the quality of the effect will be **Beneficial** in the short term, as well as in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 7 - View from Innishmore Drive

Existing View

The view southward from Innishmore Drive shows the proposed development site in the middle distance where the back of the former office building is visible. The vacant site located immediately to the north of the subject site in the middle distance is a Part 8 planning housing site. Part of Innishmore housing area is visible to the left while the adjoining West City retail park is visible to the right. Part of Westview Estate is visible behind the subject site. There is substantial tree cover in the backdrop to the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed duplex apartments and the upper storeys of the apartment buildings.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will be prominent but generally in line with expectations for a housing intervention in the suburban setting where it backs on to the adjoining Part 8 housing site. The site layout reveals the rear elevations of the duplex apartments along the northern boundary of the site.

The overall quality of the effect will be **Neutral** in the short term and in the medium to long term.

Proposed View along with adjoining Cork City Council Part 8 Housing Scheme – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining Part 8 housing located adjacent to the subject site. The cumulative visual effect is considered to be Negligible, and Neutral in quality.

Viewpoint 8 - View from Innishmore Road

Existing View

The view westward from Innishmore Road shows the proposed development site in the middle distance where the back of the former office building is visible. The adjoining Part 8 housing site is visible in the foreground located immediately to the north of the subject site. Part of Innishmore housing area is visible to the left while the adjoining West City Retail Park is visible to the right. Part of Westview housing estate is visible in the distance.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows the scale and form of the proposed development, notably the duplex apartments along the northern boundary and the backdrop of the apartment buildings to the rear.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will be prominent but generally in line with expectations for a housing intervention in the suburban setting where it backs on to the adjoining Part 8 housing site. The site layout reveals the rear elevations of the duplex apartments along the northern boundary of the site.

The overall quality of the effect will be **Neutral** in the short term and in the medium to long term.

Proposed View along with adjoining Cork City Council Part 8 Housing Scheme – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining Part 8 housing located adjacent to the subject site. The cumulative visual effect is considered to be Low, and Neutral in quality.

Viewpoint 9 - View from Innishmore Crescent

Existing View

The view eastward toward the subject site shows the local residential neighbourhood comprised of the existing housing cluster with a green space and the backdrop of considerable tree cover and garden vegetation.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will not be visible from this location as demonstrated by the red outline on the photomontage image. There will be no visual effects experienced from this location.

Visual Effect

There will be **No Change** in respect of visual effects from this location.

Viewpoint 10 - View from Coolyduff Road

Existing View

The view southward shows the elevated nature of the location on the local road and the panoramic view facilitated toward Ballincollig which is characterised by extensive tree cover and the backdrop of the distant ridge.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed view shows that the proposed development will be partly visible from this location. While the apartment building will be visible it will not be intrusive in the context of the expansive view.

The magnitude of change is considered Low. Low is defined as:

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.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered to be **Moderate**. Part of the proposed development will be visible in the distance but will not be intrusive given the diminishing effect of distance and the colour finishes in elevations which assist in integrating it in the panoramic view.

The overall quality of the effect will be **Neutral** in the short term and in the medium to long term.

Viewpoint 11 - View from Ballincollig Regional Park

Existing View

The view south-westward toward the subject site shows the boundary fence and hedge to the regional park and buildings and floodlighting on Ballincollig Community School site on the other side of the boundary. Distant tree cover provides a backdrop to the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be users of the pedestrian/cycle path through the regional park who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will not be visible from this location as demonstrated by the red outline on the photomontage image. There will be no visual effects experienced from this location.

Visual Effect

There will be **No Change** in respect of visual effects from this location.

Viewpoint 12 - View from Castle Road

Existing View

The view north-westward toward the subject site shows a large agricultural field which adjoins along Castle Road, and Flynn Road where the apartment buildings are located in the middle distance. The rear of houses along the R608 Main Road through Ballincollig are visible to the right but partially screened by the substantial vegetation which prevails in the locality. The distant ridge on the opposite side of the River Lee Valley provides the backdrop to the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be primarily road users who are considered of Low sensitivity and pedestrians and local residents who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will not be visible from this location as demonstrated by the red outline on the photomontage image. There will be no visual effects experienced from this location.

Visual Effect

There will be **No Change** in respect of visual effects from this location.

Summary of Visual Effects

The viewpoints described above are summarised below:

Viewpoint	Description	Level of Visual Effect and Quality	
		Short Term	Long Term
1	View from Inishmore Lawn	Moderate (Beneficial)	Moderate (Beneficial)
2	View from R608 Main Road / Innishmore Road Junction	Moderate (Beneficial)	Moderate (Beneficial)
3	View from R608 / City West Mews Junction (at Supervalu)	No Change	No Change
4	View from R608 / L2211 Ininiscarra Road Junction	Moderate (Beneficial)	Moderate (Beneficial)
5	View from Mechterstadt Road	Moderate (Beneficial)	Moderate (Beneficial)
6	View from Mechterstadt Road at Lidl Store	Moderate (Beneficial)	Moderate (Beneficial)
7	View from Inishmore Drive	Moderate (Neutral)	Moderate (Neutral)
8	View from Inishmore Road	Moderate (Neutral)	Moderate (Neutral)
9	View from Inishmore Crescent	No Change	No Change
10	View from Coolyduff Road	Moderate (Neutral)	Moderate (Neutral)
11	View from Ballincollig Regional Park	No Change	No Change
12	View from Castle Road	No Change	No Change

Table 1.6: Summary of Visual Effects at Viewpoints

1.6.3 Cumulative Effect

The adjoining site to the north is currently the subject of a Cork City Council Part 8 housing application. Additional photomontages for viewpoints 7 and 8 show white models of the proposed Part 8 development. The cumulative visual effect for both viewpoints is considered to be Negligible and Low respectively, and Neutral in quality.

1.6.4 Mitigation and Enhancement

Avoidance mitigation relates to careful consideration of scale and height in the context of the receiving environment and the considered selection materiality and colour finishes in elevations. Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of tree and hedge planting along the perimeter of the site and on internal spaces which will contribute towards partial screening and softening of the new neighbourhood.

1.6.5 Summary

1.6.5.1 Landscape Effects

The landscape effect resulting from a **Medium** landscape sensitivity, and a **Medium** magnitude of change, is considered to be **Moderate**. The proposed development will incur change contemplated in the zoning objective and reflected in developments permitted in Ballincollig, transforming the former office site to a new neighbourhood comprised of apartment buildings, duplex units along with well-defined open spaces, parking areas and access infrastructure.

The proposed apartment buildings range from four to six storeys in height. The development will incur change in the local suburban setting aligned with existing residential development but in a higher density format characterised by apartment buildings four to six storeys in height and lower three-storey duplex apartments.

The nature of the proposed development is reflective of on-going change in urban centres with good transport links to Cork City, the relative proximity of the site to the city centre and the zoning of the lands for *Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods*. The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which includes including variations in the building line and in height, balconies, fenestration, colour contrasts in finishes, and recesses in the building line.

The development also incorporates accessible, up-lifting public realm spaces, green infrastructure and

Overall, the landscape effect is considered to be **Beneficial**.

1.6.5.2 Visual Effects

The visual effects associated with the proposed development are found to be **Moderate** for views 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10, **No Change** for view 3 and there will be No Change for views 9, 11 & 12.

The quality of visual effects is found to be **Neutral** for views 7, 8 & 10, No Change for view 3 and **Beneficial** for views 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6.

The proposed development has a relatively compact zone of visual influence with just three distant views included, two of which will not experience any visual effects.

The photomontages demonstrate the nature of the proposed intervention on the site, which is zoned for *Sustainable Residential Neighbourhood*. The site has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development by virtue of the careful consideration of building heights, offset distances from existing housing to the south of the site, the placement of the lower duplex apartments along the northern boundary which adjoins the proposed Part 8 housing site, and the overall effect of the scheme in delivering a high-quality development with a strong sense of place.

The design qualities of the development are expressed in its form, materiality, and in the detailing of elevations which include variations height, façade recessions, balconies and colour contrasts in material finishes. The development will complement the local residential setting and provide passive supervision along Mechterstadt Road and Innishmore Road. Hard and soft landscape treatments will enhance breakout spaces within the site, and tree and hedge planting along the site boundaries will have a softening effect which will increase as the vegetation matures in the medium to long term.

While there will be partial loss of views northward to the distant ridge from some viewpoints, axial views along Innismore Road will be retained, and no vistas or landmarks recognised in Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028 will be affected by the proposed development.

There are no overlooking or overshadowing issues associated with the development and there are no adverse effects recorded in the assessment.