

DESIGN RATIONALE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Project: **Holywell Housing**

Project no.: **Fc.10**

Prepared on behalf of: **Fingal County Council**

Prepared by: **DFLA**

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1 Introduction

The objective of this report is to describe the proposed landscape and external works as part of the proposed residential development at Holywell, Swords, Co. Dublin. This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by DFLA, Henchion + Reuter Architects, Roughan & O'Donovan Consulting Engineers, Matt O'Mahony & Associates, Walsh Associates, the Planning Partnership, and others.

DFLA visited the site in June 2023, to observe conditions on site, such as existing vegetation, conditions under foot, boundaries and other items which would have a bearing on the design process.

The following additional documents have been issued by DFLA as part of this submission:

No.	Scale	Size	Title
2001	1:250	A1	<i>Landscape Plan</i>
2002	1:1000/1:50	A2	<i>Boundary Treatments</i>
2400	1:100	A1	<i>Landscape Sections</i>
2500	1:20	A1	<i>Typical Landscape Details</i>

2 Landscape Appraisal

2.1 General

The subject site is approximately 0.7ha in size. It is broadly rectangular in shape. A public link road bounds the site to the north and west. To the south, the site borders a public open space which is associated with the adjoining residential developments of Holywell Drive and Holywell Gardens. Holywell Avenue and Holywell Court are situated to the east. The site is enclosed on all sides and is not open to the public at present. The lands are generally free-draining, gently sloping to the south. The site was formerly used for grazing and mainly comprises of grasslands.

2.2 Boundaries

The site boundaries vary in character. The northern and western boundaries are open to the link road and currently comprise of a low timber post and rail fence. The southern and eastern boundaries are lined with deciduous trees and shrubs. They comprise of concrete post and panel fence to the south and a mix of concrete block wall and paladin fence to the east.



Figure 1: Photograph taken from the south-western corner of the site, looking north-east towards the link road and the existing timber post and rail fence.



Figure 2: Photograph taken from the north-eastern corner of the site, looking east towards the existing vegetation along the boundary with Holywell Avenue and Holywell Court.



Figure 3: Photograph of the concrete post and panel fence along the southern boundary of the site.

3 Landscape Strategy

3.1 General

The proposed landscape strategy has been formulated by the entire design team and client in order to integrate residential amenity, civil engineering, and ecological considerations. The landscape design facilitates circulation, seating, bicycle parking, fire tender access and at the same time ensures abundance of vegetation and flexibility of use and provides opportunities for passive and active recreation and visual amenity.

The following components make up the overall landscape strategy:

1. A diverse and attractive range of open space, including hard and soft landscape areas with tree planting and ground flora;
2. Provision of informal natural play equipment within the communal open space;
3. Improved permeability throughout the site for pedestrians and cyclists, with consideration given to the wider masterplan strategy for Swords;
4. Integration of SUDS, functional landscape, and external works to ensure accessibility to parking areas and building cores.

3.2 Diverse Range of Open Space

A strong geometry and a clear landscape strategy create a distinct sense of place for the proposed development. Topography and level change are utilised as the main space-making elements across the site. The open space is designed as a sequence of spaces. Along the northern and western boundaries grids of trees and formal hedge and groundcover planting create a well-defined 'entrance' to the development and help to screen car parking. The existing timber post and rail fence to the north and west is proposed to be replaced with a 1500mm height steel railing.

The vehicular access to the site is conceived as a pedestrian friendly surface with proposed traffic calming measures. Dense pockets of vegetation help to screen vehicles from view. The boundary treatments to the south and east are proposed to be retained and made good where required. The main pedestrian circulation route meanders through various landscape typologies, creating a safe, attractive environment for visitors and residents. A courtyard space is nestled between the building blocks. Tree and hedge planting along the periphery of the space create a sense of enclosure and act as a buffer, sheltering the private terraces at ground floor from the main usable open space. Clipped hedges and flowering, ornamental trees create an intimate, garden-like environment.



Figure 4: Artist's impression of the landscape strategy for the proposed development.



Figure 5: Perspective view of the internal courtyard space of the proposed development. Image by Henchion + Reuter Architects

A generous lawn area to the south, which also acts as above-ground attenuation in rare flood events, accommodates active and passive recreation and a variety of natural play equipment catering for children up to twelve years of age. Nature play is proposed in the form of a rope course, trails of timber logs, various balancing equipment, and a see-saw. All play elements are located amongst proposed trees and surrounded by planting. A schedule of play equipment is outlined in Drawing 2001 Landscape Plan, prepared by DFLA.



Figure 6: Precedent images for the character of incidental nature play proposed within the development site.

4 Proposed Planting

4.1 General

The existing vegetation along the northern and eastern site boundaries is proposed to be retained. In addition, substantial tree planting is proposed as part of the new development, to improve the proportion of native species on site and to build on the existing character of the area. Drawing *2001 Landscape Plan*, prepared by DFLA, includes detailed schedules of proposed planting and illustrate the location and extent of mown lawn, managed long grass/meadow, groundcover, hedge and tree planting.

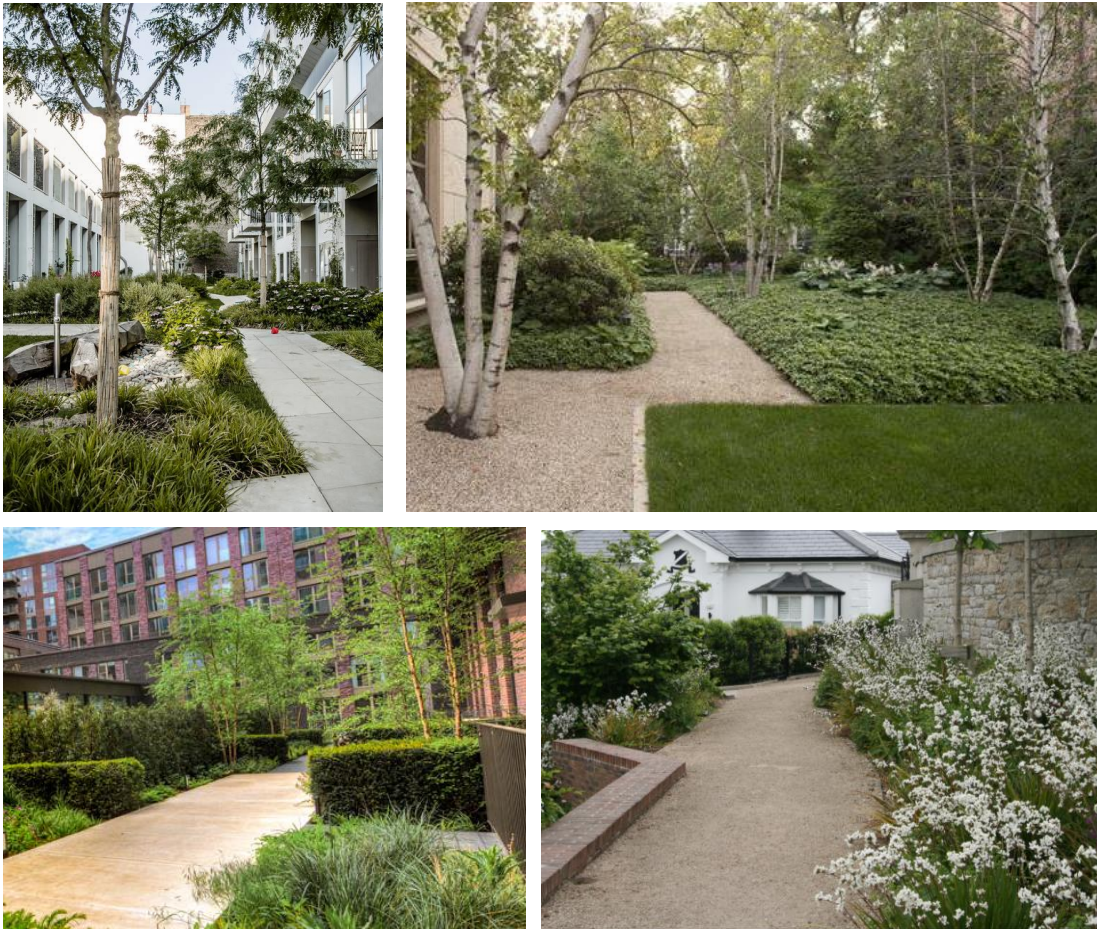


Figure 7: Precedent images showing character of proposed planting within the development site.

4.2 Tree Planting

Tree species are selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species) and suitability for proximity to residential buildings. Proposed tree sizes range from semi-mature (35-40cm girth) specimen trees to multi-stems. Typical tree species are illustrated on the following pages.



Figure 8: Selection of proposed tree species, clockwise from top left: *Quercus robur*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Betula pubescens* and *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'.

4.2 Hedge, Groundcover and Bulb Planting

Low planting is utilised to create and reinforce sub-spaces within the larger landscape; for visual screening, defensible space, visual interest, ecological purposes and to guide or direct pedestrian's movement. The low planting is conceived as subtle layering of greens within the open spaces. The planting is layered as follows; lowest - bulb planting, groundcover planting, highest - clipped hedge planting.



Figure 9: Species for shade groundcover – native & exotic including *Darmera*, *Luzula*, *Dryopteris* and *Asplenium*.



Helleborus spp.



Libertia grandiflora



Luzula sylvatica



Dianella nigra



Dryopteris filix-mas



Asplenium scolopendrium

Figure 10: Typical individual groundcover species.

5 Hard Landscape Materials and Finishes

The landscape strategy incorporates the full range of functions required by the proposed development. These include circulation, parking, bicycle parking, access for delivery and emergency vehicles and sustainable drainage systems. The surface water drainage strategy has been designed by the engineers to slow down run-off and retain stormwater on site. The choice of landscape materials reflects this strategy with porous/permeable products used where possible.

The selection of hard landscape materials is determined by function but also to provide a cohesive palette of materials across the site. The open spaces are proposed to incorporate several different hard landscape finishes to delineate the different spaces and recreational zones. The materials and furniture in these locations are chosen to create an intimate environment and encourage communal activities. Materials are chosen for permeability, durability, but where practical, are proposed to be constructed in a way which is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, in order to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces.

Primary vehicular, pedestrian and cycle circulation are proposed as durable, limited range of neutral materials with robust construction. The fire-tender route to the core of the development is designed to 'play-down' the impact of the road infrastructure in the landscape setting. Secondary pedestrian paths and informal access to private open space are proposed to be of 'flexible' construction and in some cases a mix of paving and lawn.



Figure 11: Range of hard landscape finish details (from left to right): permeable gravel detail, self-binding gravel.



Figure 12: Precedent image showing pedestrian footpath and reinforced grass for fire tender access in a residential development.

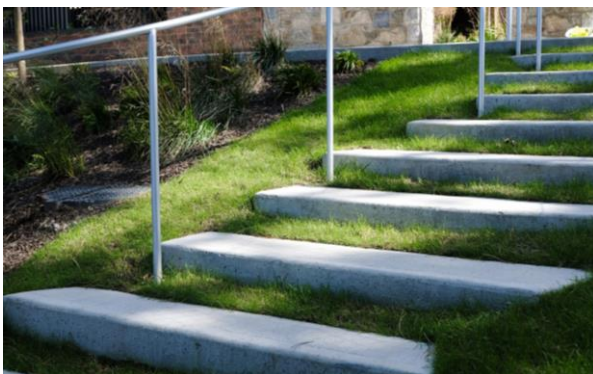


Figure 13: Mix of hard landscape materials integrated with soft landscape.

END