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Design Rational: Landscape Architecture

Project:
Residential Development at Cloverhill, Cork City, Co. Cork.

Prepared on behalf of: Cork City Council

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1.0 Introduction

The objective of this report is to describe the proposed landscape and external works as part of the residential development at Cloverhill, Cork, Co.Cork

This report should be read in conjunction with all other documents issued and included in this submission by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects and all other disciplines, namely:

- OMP Architects;
- Varming Consulting Engineers;
- PUNCH Consulting Engineers;and
- Cork County Council.
- G-Net
- Atkins
- MGP

Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects visited the site preceding this application in Nov 2020 in order to observe conditions on site, such as existing vegetation, context with respect to adjoining sites, boundaries, and other items, which would have a bearing on the design process.

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

| No. | Size | Scale | Title |
|-----------------|------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 2031 - LA- P001 | A1 | 1:250 | Landscape Layout |
| 2031 - LA- P002 | A1 | 1:250/1:50 | Landscape Boundaries & Details |

2.0 Landscape Appraisal

2.1 Existing Conditions

The brownfield site facing the Bessboro Road once housed an industrial unit which has since been demolished leaving only the building foundations and hardstanding from the entrance road and associated parking/delivery areas. The site has been recently contained within a 2M high Heras safety fence with matching locked security gates.

A green boundary to the site can be clearly seen but this is largely made up of overgrown bramble, small self seeded bushes such as willow and Alder and ornamental shrub planting remaining from the site's previous life. Additionally the Western boundary contains a row of overgrown mature Leylandii in poor condition with the Northern boundary encroached by a *Prunus laurocerasus* hedge based within the neighbouring property.



Existing view of site interior.



Existing leylandii to be removed

2.2 Existing Site Boundaries

The site is presently closed off by security fencing with newly instated heras fencing and gates along the Eastern perimeter bounded by the Bessboro Road, The southern boundary consists of a 1.8m high concrete post and wire mesh fence, it meets a planted verge and parking spaces associated with Riverview business park. The Western boundary has a 1.8m heras fence and a row of over mature Leylandii separating the site from the existing residential area of Clover Lawn while the Northern boundary is again composed from a 1.8m heras fence but also has a low red brick wall and mature Ornamental planting fronting the Jacobs Engineering Offices.



Interior image showing Southern Boundary



Interior image showing Northern Boundary

3.0 Landscape Strategy

The landscape design approach seeks to create a high quality scheme which will integrate the residential scheme within a more industrial/ commercial streetscape. A contemporary approach to street design (incorporating DMURS homezone principles) is paramount while combining a range of both hard and soft landscaping features.

3.1 Streetscape

The streetscape has been designed as a partial shared surface space to create an inclusive development where traffic is slowed by a sense of uncertainty and all users are asked to be aware of the presence of others.

The main site road and parking spaces will be surfaced in asphalt and will be delineated on either side by a 300mm 'cobble' strip. This visually narrows the width of the street giving it a more human scale and slowing traffic movements in favour of more vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists, similarly the street entrance is enhanced with a cobble stripe announcing entry to the home zone.

Footpaths will largely be surfaced in in-situ poured concrete with high quality reconstituted concrete paving used to create feature areas such as the building footprint facing the main entrance at the Bessboro Road and within the semi-enclosed courtyard space.



Exemplar image showing shared surface street with asphalt surfacing and cobble stripe edging

3.2 Open Space

There are several large areas of open space throughout the development each designed to suit its individual location and offering differing users experiences.

The first area apparent as you approach the site is the expanse of land flanking the Bessboro Road, here open spaces are largely lawn but interplanted with several tree species and formations. Semi-mature feature trees add instant impact while smaller orchard grids and linear street trees soften the new building facades and create interest areas with seating nodes.

The site entrance contains a small paved plaza to the front of the eastern building, site lines here draw the eye to the building frontage and a focal sculpture, low walls frame the plaza where one can sit on the benches/seats provided or lounge on the formal lawn during summer months.

To the North / Western corner of the site a wayleave has created a 'sterile' no build zone zone this area will be kept as a large open space suitable for informal kick abouts but will be defined by soft ornamental planting and enlivened with a play based public sculpture (To be confirmed through the Percent for Arts Scheme) and a picnic area.

The main semi private open space will see a designed courtyard within the internal space of the site. Framed by the new buildings this space will provide several areas of interest set within a paved grid. The area includes large raised planters with seating edges, ornamental planting and specimen tree planting, a large lawn framed with linear tree planting and a timber pergola with sheltered seating. Screen planting to the perimeter of the semi-private space will provide a layer of separation between public and private areas.

A linear extension of the courtyard flanks the southern face of the new buildings and will be treated in a similar vein to the main space with high quality paving and soft ornamental planting but will also house a small apple orchard, two picnic tables and two semi-mature feature trees, one framed by timber seating.



Exemplar image showing courtyard with raised planters/seating and structural features

4. Proposed Boundaries

A separate boundaries drawing has been prepared as part of this proposal Drawing No. 2031-LA-P002. This details all site boundaries with planting to screen and soften these included on the main Landscape Layout Plan.

4.1 External site boundaries

Northern boundary: This boundary will be formed by a new 1.8M high timber panel fence with concrete posts, the reasoning for using this as opposed to a block boundary wall is to lessen the impact on the root zone of the existing mature trees within the neighbouring site. A block wall would require a strip foundation with considerable root zone impact whereas the proposed boundary requires a smaller footprint foundation.

Eastern boundary: This street boundary will remain open but will be defined in part by low seating walls and structural tree planting.

Southern and Western boundary: A new 1.8m high rendered block wall will provide a secure border along these two boundaries. The wall will be dressed with a precast concrete capping with both faces rendered and painted white. Screen planting at appropriate areas will help assimilate the wall and create a green façade.

4.2 Private Open Spaces in the form of back gardens to the terraced houses are divided to provide individual secure spaces. Back gardens are divided by 1.8m high concrete post and timber panel fence while the small patio spaces to the ground floor apartments will be separated using a 1M high steel fence.



The rear garden boundaries are defined by a Concrete post and timber infill panels

5.0 Planting

Detailed Landscape Plans, Drawing number 2031-LA-P001 prepared by Cathal O'Meara Landscape Architects, includes a schedule of proposed planting showing the location of the different planting areas.

5.1 Tree planting

A large range of trees have been chosen to offer aesthetic and ecological diversity to the site.

Along the Bessboro Road a mix of tree typologies will be used in order to break up the existing regulated, business-like character and highlight the change to a softer, residential street environment. Here the first public lawn will house a grid of small flowering apple trees (*Malus 'Evereste'*) and a large feature Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). The second linear lawn will house a row of semi mature Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*) providing instantaneous structure, these will be clear stemmed to 2 meters allowing clear views to the new building behind and revealing a larger Irish Oak (*Quercus robur*).

Due to a services wayleave trees cannot be planted at the development entrance or along the main residential street but here taller growing structural shrubs such as Rhys, Hamamelis and *Corylus avellana* will be used to provide structural interest. To the southern side of the street open green spaces will contain a mixture of mature feature trees (*Castanea sativa*) a grid of smaller ornamental Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and another clear stemmed row of Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*). Towards the end of the street where the wayleave moves of to the north of the site planting between carparking spaces will see the introduction of River birch (*Betula nigra heritage*) and Chinese red birch (*Betula albosinensis*), this continues along the street as it runs south to the turning head with the Chinese red birch also used within the front gardens of the terraced houses.

Within the main public open space the planting diversity continues with trees species picked to create focal areas within the courtyard such as multi stem Strawberry trees (*Arbutus unedo*) and Chilean Myrtle (*Luma apiculata*) with clear stemmed Paperback Maple (*Acer griseum*) used to create a linear shelter between the public lawn and the private residential patios. The landscaped link to the courtyard also contains a mix of tree planting from large feature Walnuts (*Juglans regia*) to a small orchard of edible Orange Pippin Apples (*Malus cox*).



Multi stemmed Chilean Myrtle (Luma apiculata)



Street tree Quercus palustris shown in with a 2m clear stem

5.2 Boundary planting

Boundary planting is proposed to soften the timber fence proposed along the Northern site boundary, this will include hardy, low maintenance architectural grasses and structural dogwoods with groups of taller woody shrubs. Additional two linear stripes containing climbing plants on a timber and steel wire structure will front this planting adding another layer of interest to the boundary (as trees cannot be planted here due to aforementioned wayleave).

5.3 Ornamental planting

Two mixes of Ornamental planting are proposed at specific locations to introduce some diversity to the landscape and to create specific, individual spaces. A spectrum of hardy, low maintenance perennials and architectural grasses have been chosen and will be planted in large mixed species blocks creating drama and texture with the public areas. The planting choice will provide year round interest with lively pops of seasonal colour and retained winter structure.



A selection of the ornamental grasses and perennials to be used in the public open spaces

6.0 Hard Landscape Materials & Furniture

A simple palette of hard materials is proposed to create a robust but considered development with a mix of insitu concrete footpaths and paved feature areas (as per 3.1 & 3.2)

All materials will be in subtle shades of grey ranging from sliver grey to darker black granite shades the only deviation from this comes with the use of grasscrete paving to around areas of the building curtilages and the private parking spaces to the terraced house. This softens the development while still allowing a compliant accessible route for service vehicles.

This simple pallet will compliment the colours of the built façades, allowing the softer elements of the planted landscape to stand out.

7.0 Implementation

It is proposed that the full landscape planting be undertaken to the later stages of the building works to ensure the safety of trees and softer planting materials.

All bare root trees shall be planted from October to March. Potted planting material may be planted year round.

8.0 Maintenance

9.1 Scope of work

The maintenance of grass, trees, shrubs and perennials for the period of each contract. During this period the contractor shall keep all roads and pavements clear of weeds, grass mowing's, mulch and rubbish from site at the conclusion of each days work.

9.2 Trees and Shrubs

Tree stakes shall be checked at least once a month to make sure they are still performing correctly. Any loosened tree stakes shall be re-firmed and any damaged or broken stakes shall be replaced immediately and the ties adjusted to hold the tree firm.

Shrubs and trees loosened by wind, frost or any maintenance operations shall be firmed up. This shall be carried out at least four times a year. If any plants have been completely lifted out of the ground they shall not be replanted but replaced.

A 500 mm diameter circle shall be kept free of grass around the base of each tree to facilitate grass cutting and root development of the tree.

9.3 Weed Control

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

9.4 Plant deaths

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

9.5 Pests and diseases

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

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