



Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Proposed Student Residence on the Former Victor Motors Site, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

Prepared on behalf of

Orchid Residential Limited.

March 2022 / Project No. 7034

Proposed Student Residence on Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

Townscape and Visual Assessment – Summary Report

Client Name	Orchid Residential Limited
Agent Name	John Spain Associates Planning and Development Consultants
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Quality Assurance

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Issue	Date	Baseline Prepared by	Graphics prepared by	Report prepared by
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<i>Reviewed</i>	07-03-2022	<i>Andrew Bunbury CLMI Landscape Architect and Director; Park Hood</i>		
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Disclaimer

All feasible and reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that the information provided by a range of public sector institutions and presented in this report is accurate and up-to-date. Park Hood is not responsible for accidental perpetuation of inaccuracies in these records and any consequent effect on the conclusions in this report.

This report has been prepared by Park Hood with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the General Terms and Conditions of the Contract with the client.

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1.0 Introduction

Statement of Expertise

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of Orchid Residential Limited.
- 1.2 Park Hood is a Chartered Member of the Irish Landscape Institute and Landscape Institute UK with extensive experience in preparation of Landscape / Townscape and Visual Impact Assessments for large scale projects throughout Ireland and the UK. The primary author is Andrew Bunbury who is a fully qualified Landscape Architect and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 25 years' consultancy experience in the profession across Ireland and the UK. He works between the Dublin, London and Belfast offices of Park Hood where there are 21 members of staff including a further ten Chartered Landscape Architects.
- 1.3 All work is undertaken in compliance with the *Landscape Institute's Code of Standards of Conduct and Practice for Landscape Professionals* and checked in accordance with Park Hood's ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015.

Proposed Development Summary

- 1.4 The report relates to a proposed development at the car sales premises currently known as Vector Motors (formerly known as Victor Motors), Goatstown Road in Dublin 14 (the "Application Site") and can be summarised as demolition of all existing buildings (extending to c.960m²) and hard surface parking area on site and construction of a purpose built student accommodation development (including use as tourist or visitor accommodation outside the academic term) comprising 221 no. student bedspaces all within a part single storey, part 4 no. storey and part 6 no. storey 'U'-Shaped building.
- 1.5 A full description of the Proposed Development is contained within the Planning Statement (*John Spain Associates*) and Urban Design Report (*Reddy Architecture and Urbanism*) submitted with this application and is not repeated here.
- 1.6 This report outlines the potential effects of the proposed development on the townscape / landscape character and visual amenity of the Application Site and surrounding area in this part of Dublin.

Guidance Documents

- 1.7 The approach and methodology based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)* by *The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013)* by *The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (GLVIA)*. The European Landscape Convention definition of landscape confirms that

it includes the landscapes of villages, towns and cities, i.e., townscapes. So 'Townscape' is defined as the landscape within a built-up area, including the buildings and the relationships between them.

- 1.8 There are a number of published guidance documents including the Development Plan relevant to this assessment as listed below:-
- *Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-22;*
 - *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Draft County Development Plan, 2022-2028, as amended and adopted on 10 March 2022 that will come into operation on 21 April 2022;*
 - *Goatstown Local Area Plan 2012 (as extended);*
 - *Guidelines on Residential Developments for 3rd Level Students (Section 50 of the Finance Act 1999) (updated 2005);*
 - *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) (2018);*
 - *Urban design manual - a best practice guide by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009);*
 - *National Landscape Strategy 2015–2025;*
 - *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2015); and*
 - *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide (2009).*
- 1.9 Other sources of information include:
- *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie>; and*
 - *National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Environmental Protection Agency - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps>*
- 1.10 The baseline assessment included study of Ordnance Survey Ireland historical mapping and recent aerial photography to assess how this part of Dublin has developed since the 19th century as well as assess calculations of relevant distances or areas.
- Method of Assessment**
- Townscape and Visual Effects – Distinctions**
- 1.11 Townscape and Visual effects deriving from a proposed development are assessed separately although the process is similar. The conclusions on significance are ultimately an evaluation of the combined effects of both. The distinction between townscape and visual effects can be summarised as follows:-

- Townscape effects relate to the potential impacts on the physical characteristics or components of the environment which together form the character of this part of the city, including buildings, roads, paths, vegetation and water areas; and
- Visual effects relate to potential impact on visual receptors whose views in this part of the city could change be changed as a result of this proposal, such as pedestrians, people working in offices, or people in vehicles passing through the area.

Townscape and Visual Assessment Process

- 1.12 The process can be summarised as undertaking the following key tasks:
- Site survey and visits undertaken in September 2020 and February 2022;
 - Assessing the Baseline Townscape Setting and Conditions;
 - Evaluation of key components of the proposed Development based on site layouts, plans and elevations prepared by Reddy Architecture and Urbanism and other members of the design team;
 - Consideration of Mitigation and Enhancement Measures;
 - Assessment of Townscape / Landscape Effects;
 - Assessment of Visual Effects; and
 - Conclusions.
- 1.13 The process includes assessment of photomontages of the proposed development from 14 no. representative viewpoints prepared by 3D Design Bureau.

Establishing the Study Area

- 1.14 The study area includes the Application Site itself and the wider townscape where the proposed development may have an influence either directly or indirectly. There is no specific guidance on extents of study areas applicable to this type of development in Ireland. Given the Goatstown area comprises existing built townscape, the use of digital Zone of Theoretical Visibility Maps (based on topography) to assess potential viewpoints was considered superfluous as urban views are usually constrained by built environment.

Townscape Character Assessment

- 1.15 The combination of desk-top analysis and site survey allows judgment to be made on the key elements that contribute to the townscape character and its wider condition, value and sensitivity. Townscape value, quality and sensitivity is affected by factors including: (i) whether the resource is common or rare; (ii) whether it is considered to be of local, regional, national or global importance; (iii) whether there are any statutory or regulatory limitations / requirements relating to the resource; (iv) the quality of the resource; (v) the maturity of the resource, and (vi) the ability

of the resource to accommodate changes. The following rating is the basis of this part of the assessment:-

- **Highest Value Townscape** - Very vulnerable to change. *High Sensitivity*;
- **Very Attractive Townscape** - Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. *Medium Sensitivity*;
- **Good Townscape** - Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. *Medium Sensitivity*;
- **Ordinary Townscape** - Able to accommodate change without significant effects. *Low Sensitivity*;
- **Poor Townscape** - Damaged landscapes very capable of accommodating change. *Very Low Sensitivity*.

1.16 The report considers the magnitude and scale of effects the proposed development would have on existing townscape elements, character areas and resources either directly or indirectly. This is affected by factors including: (i) the physical extent and nature of the key elements that make up the proposal; (ii) the townscape context of these effects and (iii) the time-scale of impact, such as whether it is temporary (short, medium or long term), permanent with reversible potentials, or irreversibly permanent and are rated as follows:-

- **Profound** - Total loss or major alteration to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and /or introduction of elements considered to be totally dominant when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.
- **Substantial** - A prominent change that may be large in scale and / or extent and include the loss of key townscape characteristics or the addition of new features or elements that would potentially change the overall landscape quality and character at a wider scale.
- **Moderate** - Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and / or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.
- **Slight** - Minor loss or alteration to one or more) key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development townscape or view and /or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.
- **Negligible** - Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and /or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding townscape - approximating the 'no change' situation.

Visual Amenity Assessment

- 1.17 The baseline studies establish the area from which the proposed development may potentially be visible and the different groups of people ("visual receptors") who may experience views or changes to view context. Fourteen representative viewpoints were identified in locations that are publicly accessible near the Application Site with determination based on known visibility or from locations where there may be significant numbers of visual receptors e.g., commuter traffic, Goatstown Road, local parks or residential areas. These were based in part on the An Bord Pleanala Consultation Opinion (6th June 2020) that requested "...verified photomontages of the development from Goatstown Road (north and south of the site), from within the Trimbleston development and from Willowfield Park. The VIA should include views of the development with both winter and summer vegetation and to include any plant or other structures on the roof of the proposed development, in order to give as accurate a representation as possible".
- 1.18 Viewer sensitivity ranges from high to low based on the nature of the visual receptor (resident, tourist, commuter etc.) and the visual value or quality attached to a particular view. The visual effects deriving from the proposed development are based on the combined judgement of the anticipated change in nature, visual amenity and duration of the particular view (magnitude) and the nature of the visual receptor (sensitivity) and are rated as follows:-
- **Severe** - A major change or obstruction of a view that may be directly visible, appearing as the dominant and contrasting feature appearing in the foreground.
 - **Substantial** - The proposal forms the focus or an immediately apparent component in the view and will redefine its baseline characteristics.
 - **Moderate** - The proposal is likely to form a readily apparent component within the overall view but the baseline characteristics will continue to prevail.
 - **Slight** - The proposal forms a minor component in the wider view which might be missed by the casual viewer / observer. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the view.
 - **Negligible** - The proposal is barely discernible or may be at such a distance that it is very difficult to perceive equating to a no-change situation.

Nature of Townscape and Visual Effects

- 1.19 Townscape / landscape and visual assessment has aspects that can be considered subjective. While magnitude of change to a view can be factually defined, any subsequent objective assessment is based on, experience, observation, evidence and informed professional opinion.
- **Positive Effect** - A change that improves the quality of the townscape character and fits very well with the existing townscape character.
 - **Neutral** - A change which does not affect the scale, landform or pattern of the townscape and maintains existing townscape quality.

- **Adverse Effect** - A change which reduces the quality of the townscape and cannot be fully mitigated.

Significance of Townscape and Visual Effects

1.20 The assessment process aims to be objective and quantify effects as far as possible. However, townscape and visual assessment has aspects of it that can be considered subjective. Magnitude of change to a view can be factually defined but any subsequent objective assessment should be based on professional training, experience, observation, evidence and informed opinion.

Table 1 Summary Scale of Significance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive views or visual receptors; • Effects on recognised scenic, rare or distinctive townscapes; • Effects on mature or diverse landscape elements, features, characteristics, aesthetic or perceptual qualities; and • Large scale changes 		More Significant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on poorer condition or degraded townscapes / landscapes; • Effects on low sensitivity visual receptors; and • Small scale changes 		Less Significant

1.21 Significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location. Usually an effect is considered 'significant' if the level of effect is 'moderate/substantial' or 'substantial.' The significance of townscape and visual effects is determined by cross-referencing sensitivity of townscape / landscape or view with the magnitude of change.

Table 2 Assessment of Significance Matrix

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Impact			
	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor
Low	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor	Minor or moderate
Medium	Negligible or minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or major
High	Minor	Minor or moderate	Moderate or major	Major

2.0 Baseline Townscape Setting

The Application Site

- 2.1 The Application Site comprises 0.34 hectares (0.84 acres) of land to the east of the R825 Goatstown Road, Dublin 14 on a site currently known as Vector Motors (formerly known as Victor Motors). The city centre is located approximately 6km to the north.
- 2.2 The site is currently in use as a used car sales premises including associated showrooms, garages and car parking areas. It comprises an irregular area set between Goatstown Road, the rear gardens of properties on Willowfield Park and the more recent development of Trimbleston to the north. It is set on a reasonably flat site with levels gradually falling from the south (c. 47.5m) to the north (c 46m).



- 2.3 To the north of the site is a single story car showroom facing the road with utilitarian taller garages and worksheds to its rear that extend to a footprint of approximately 750m² (or 31% of the site area). The architecture is functional in nature with glazing set into a concrete rendered and light grey cladded building to which signage has been added advertising the premises and commercial use. The area to the south and majority of the site is surfaced in tarmac and used for parking about 85 no. cars.
- 2.4 Goatstown Road is part of the R825 that connects the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. As it passes the site it is approximately 9.5m wide comprising a single

carriageway with delineated cycle-lanes and concrete pedestrian footpaths to both sides.

- 2.5 There are three entrances off the 95m long frontage onto Goatstown Road though the southernmost gates are locked and not in use at this time. The other two entrances are wider vehicular entrances with no gates set into a low 400mm high brick and concrete block wall subject of differing treatments and condition which defines the site boundary towards Goatstown Road.

Photo 2

Application Site Setting



View across Goatstown Road looking at Application Site with Trimbleston development rising to its rear (north)

- 2.6 The wall abuts a concrete surfaced pedestrian footpath which is partially separated from the passing road by linear strips of ornamental shrubs and hedging plants (approximately 1m wide) set towards the verge.
- 2.7 A raised triangular planter (approximately 7m²) with ornamental shrubs is located aside the central entrance and comprises the only vegetation on the site. There is however a backdrop of smaller trees and shrubs located in peripheral garden areas of neighbouring properties. The site is bound by a concrete block wall (2.5m high) to the east towards the rears of properties at Nos. 157 to 164 Trimbleston. To the south, this wall merges into a rubble stone (2.5m high) set on the boundaries to the rear of the terrace of properties at Nos. 2 to 10 (even numbers only) Willowfield Park. There are no entrances and gates in these walls.
- 2.8 An ecology survey identified no significant habitats, designated sites or individual or group of species on the Application Site

Photo 3

Application Site Setting



View of the garage / showroom at the Application Site from open space to north-west off Goatstown Road

Local Townscape History

- 2.9 Maps from the 19th century show the alignment of R825 Goatstown Road comparable to that existing today. At that time, the area is depicted as a predominantly rural landscape between Roebuck Park to the west and Trimbleston Lodge and Prospect Hall to the east with the lands being annotated as a field and part of the Trimbleston property (which had associations with the nearby Roebuck Castle demesne). The earliest record of this historic residence dates to the 11th century when the lands were called Rabo or Raboge. It is described as a district within Taney (civil) parish in *Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of 1837*, with Roebuck Castle as '*...seat of A. B. Crofton, Esq., was originally erected at a remote period and strongly fortified*', and the land around described as '*...chiefly occupied by handsome villas, situated in tastefully disposed grounds, many of which command magnificent views of the bay and city of Dublin, the Dublin and Wicklow mountains, and the beautiful adjacent country...*'.
- 2.10 The name of the Trimbleston property changed to Rosemount by the 20th century but mapping shows that from the mid-century the city significantly expanded and enveloped this area with extensive suburban housing estates which are now the dominant built form and type in this area. Within a couple of decades, the area was part the Dublin cityscape and any association with the rural landscape was gone having been replaced by a myriad of housing estates and incidental institutional lands. The legacy of former demesnes and large houses in Goatstown is reflected in the names of the streets and housing estates including Trimbleston, Airfield and Roebuck.
- 2.11 The Application Site itself contains no historical significance or features and there are no protected

structures or notable features in the immediate locality. An Archaeological Assessment prepared by IAC Archaeology also concludes no archaeological interests on the site.

Adjacent Townscape Character

- 2.12 Goatstown (*Baile na nGabhar*) is a small suburb in the south city located between Blackrock, Dundrum, Sandyford and Ranelagh. The suburb is roughly centred off a pub called The Goat at the junction of Goatstown Road and Taney Road approximately 590m south of the Application Site. It is the only public house in the local area. The name derives from a history of goat breeding in the area and it was once notable for its goat's milk.
- 2.13 This area is historically dominated by low-rise residential townscape that forms part of the inner-suburban cityscape of Dublin city though there are incidental institutional, retail areas and open landscapes in the form of sporting facilities and parks. The majority of land in the Goatstown area is covered by housing developments and estates and there is little in the way of local industry or commercial buildings. This characteristic includes the nearby detached houses opposite the Application Site at Nos. 74-98 (even only) Goatstown Road located between 15m and 100m from the Application Site boundary. These houses back onto further housing estates at Farmhill, Larchfield and off Goatstown Avenue to the west. To the south is the Willowfield estate which merges into further housing estates to the south and east towards the Robuck townland. The housing type is dominated by rows of detached and semi-detached two-storey dwellings served by front and rear gardens that benefit from on-street and off-street parking.
- 2.14 The adjacent section of properties at Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park have ground floor commercial / retail units and a café which acts as a local neighbourhood centre. Residential units located on the 1st floor of Nos. 4 and 8. Located further east (100m from the Application Site boundary) on Willowfield Park is part of St Michael's House (formerly Prospect Hall) which provides social care and services.
- 2.15 In terms of more recent developments, the Goatstown Local Area Plan (LAP) states:-

"The character and context of the area has been evolving, as evidenced by the recent construction of residential developments including Trimbleston and Goatstown Close. These developments, which cater for a variety of dwelling types and introduce a greater diversity in building form, have enhanced the built environment, added some vibrancy and generally made a positive contribution to the local area."
- 2.16 The site is adjacent to Trimbleston which is a recent development including 335 no. apartments across 13 acres. Phase One was initially launched in 2005 and Phase Two in 2019. The buildings are set around courtyards and well landscaped parks and rise to five storeys. The Goatstown LAP specifically mentions Trimbleston and notes it "... is an attractive residential development and makes a positive contribution to the local streetscape" (LAP Section 6.5).
- 2.17 Approximately 150m north of the site off Goatstown Road is a recently completed development called The Grove which includes further five storey apartment blocks fronting onto the road. Beyond this and the institutional lands of Our Lady's Grove Primary School, Goatstown Road and adjacent townscape is once again aligned and dominated by low-rise development.

Photos 4 and 5 Local Townscape



View of Trimbleston development off Goatstown Road to north of Application Site



View of The Grove development off Goatstown Road

- 2.18 Beyond this, a notable land-use in this area is that of the UCD Belfield Campus less than 1km to the north / north-east. This comprises 133 hectares (330 acres) which includes a complex of modern buildings, a legacy of some Georgian townhouses which accommodate the various colleges and student residences as well as extensive leisure and sporting facilities. It is Ireland's

largest university, based on 2017/18 enrolments (32,000 students).

- 2.19 There are no listed buildings within 500m of the Application Site. The nearest designated buildings are at the Central Mental Hospital to the west and an unclassified castle at Robuck to the north-east. None are close enough to be affected by activity or land-use on the Application Site.

Local Amenities, Parklands and Open Spaces

- 2.20 While the Goatstown area is a desirable place to live, it is not well endowed with local park facilities. The majority of open spaces or green landscapes are associated with institutional premises such as UCD Belfield or Our Lady's Grove Primary School. Public parks such as DLR Deer Park are too distant at 1km from the site for there to be any potential effects deriving from activity on the Application Site lands. This is also applicable to the Airfield Estate farm to the south.

Planning, Heritage and Environment Designations

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2016-2022

- 2.21 The County Development Plan (CDP) indicates the site is zoned under *Objective A* which is summarised as “*To protect and/or improve residential amenity*” (CDP Table 8.3.2). Under this, assisted living accommodation, open space, public services, residential, residential institution and traveller’s accommodation are permitted in principle.
- 2.22 Within CDP Section 8.2.3.1 Quality Residential Design states it is “*Council policy to promote high quality design and layout in new residential development. A core aim of land-use planning is to ensure that new residential developments offer a high quality living environment for residents, both in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units and in terms of the overall layout and appearance of schemes*”.
- 2.23 In terms of Student Accommodation, CDP Section 8.2.3.4 (xii) notes “*The architectural quality of the design and also the external layout, with respect to materials, scale, height and relationship to adjacent structures*”.
- 2.24 The CDP notes that Goatstown Road is designated a “*Proposed Quality Bus-Bus Priority Route*”.

Building Heights Strategy 2010-2016

- 2.25 Appendix 9 of the County Development Plan includes Building Heights Strategy (BHS). It “*...sets out a broad strategy for building height based on the accepted urban hierarchy of the County and focuses on the role of Local Plans (Local Area Plans/Urban Framework Plans/Strategic Development Zones) for delivering detailed policy on building height. It also proposes a more generic policy for assessing building height in areas which may not be covered by a Local Area Plan or other similar statutory/non-statutory planning framework*”.
- 2.26 BHS Section 3.4 acknowledges that within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area there “*...has been a discernible pattern of gradually increasing residential densities in ‘infill’ sites within the built up area of the County over the last decade or so. Many of these infill developments have been at a higher density and with a taller building height profile than the prevailing local low rise context*”.
- 2.27 In terms of defining or providing guidance on building heights in the Goatstown area, the BHS

defers to the relevant Local Area Plans in the county.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2022-2028

- 2.28 The plan for 2022-2028 was adopted on 10 March 2022 and will replace the current plan from 21st April 2022. The relevant parts of the adopted plan are addressed in the reports of John Spain Associates though the Application Site continues to be zoned under *Objective A* which is summarised as “*To protect and/or improve residential amenity*”

Building Heights Strategy 2022-2028

- 2.29 Within this *Appendix 5* refers to the *Building Heights Strategy* and includes *Policy Objective BHS 2 – Building Height* that notes it is the Policy Objective in areas covered by an approved Local Area Plan to promote and support proposed heights as set out in any approved statutory Local Area Plans.
- 2.30 Section 4.2 Identification of Areas for Increased Height (SPPR1) notes the “*... appropriate vehicle for identifying areas where increased building height will be supported as per SPPR 1 and section 2.11 of the Guidelines is via Local Area Plans, the CDP or SDZ's*”.
- 2.31 Section 4.2.9 refers to and extracts from the *Goatstown Local Area Plan (2012)* as reviewed below but there is specific mentions of the Application Site where it states “*Former Victor Motors Site: Within this area a benchmark height of 3-storeys is recommended (with possible setback floor or occupied roofspace depending on site levels)*”.
- 2.32 Section 4 Policy Approach notes the following

This section sets out a policy approach for the assessment of building height in the County which aligns with the Section 28 Guidelines. It is based on the Building Height Strategy as contained in the 2016 - 2022 Plan and a combination of identifying areas (using statutory LAPs and the CDP) where increased building height will be supported as per SPPR 1 and performance based development management criteria as per SPPR3. The policy approach builds on the principle of allowing taller buildings in town centres, district centres, areas close to high frequency public transport and some other areas identified as suitable for height. However, this will be subject to “performance based criteria” so as to ensure protection of residential, heritage, streetscape, landscape and seascape amenity. The County Development Plan and LAPs are used to identify areas where height will be encouraged subject to local planning frameworks as set out in the LAPs having regard to section 2.11 of the Guidelines which stresses the importance of master planning and providing frameworks for areas where there will be an increase in height. The criteria set out in section 3.2 of the Section 28 Guidelines are expanded and revised to include specific guidance relating to the particular sensitivities of DLR.

- 2.33 Policy Objective BHS 1 – Increased Height states:

“It is a policy objective to support the consideration of increased heights and also to consider taller buildings where appropriate in the Major Town Centres of Dún Laoghaire and Dundrum, the District Centres of Nutgrove, Stillorgan, Blackrock, and Cornelscourt, within the Sandyford UFP area, UCD and in suitable areas well served by public transport links (i.e. within 1000 metre/10

*minute walk band of LUAS stop, DART Stations or Core/Quality Bus Corridor, 500 metre/5 minute walk band of Bus Priority Route) provided that proposals ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of existing amenities and environmental sensitivities, protection of residential amenity and the established character of the area. (NPO 35, SPPR 1 & 3). Having regard to the Building Height Guidelines and more specifically in order to apply SPPR 3 there may be instances where an argument can be made for increased height and/or taller buildings in the areas mentioned above. In those instances, any such proposals must be assessed in accordance with the performance based criteria set out in table 5.1 which is contained in section 5. The onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the criteria. **Within the built-up area of the County increased height can be defined as buildings taller than prevailing building height in the surrounding area. Taller buildings are defined as those that are significantly taller (more than 2 storeys taller) than the prevailing height for the area".***

- 2.34 Policy Objective BHS 2 – Building Height in areas covered by an approved Local Area Plan or Urban Framework Plan (UFP must form part of the County Plan) states:

"It is a policy objective to promote and support proposed heights as set out in any approved statutory Local Area Plans and as set out for certain areas in this draft County Development Plan (Sandyford Urban Framework Plan area, Dundrum Urban Framework Plan Area and Dun Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan area).

*Having regard to the Building Height Guidelines and more specifically in order to apply SPPR 3 there may be instances where an argument can be made for increased height and/or taller buildings in the areas mentioned above on the basis of placemaking. In those instances, any such proposals must be assessed in accordance with the performance based criteria set out in table 5.1 which is contained in section 5. The onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the criteria. **Within the built-up area of the County increased height can be defined as buildings taller than prevailing building height in the surrounding area. Taller buildings are defined as those that are significantly taller (more than 2 storeys taller) than the prevailing height for the area."***

Goatstown Local Area Plan (2012)

- 2.35 The Application Site falls within the boundaries of the Goatstown LAP which includes Section 4 Urban Design. This section includes a number of policies of which the following are related to potential townscape and visual impacts.

- Policy UD1 states "*It is an objective of the Plan that new development within Goatstown shall be of a high quality design and layout that makes a positive contribution to the local built environment and enhances the identity and sense of place of the Plan area and its environs*". It goes on to specifically list the Victor Motors / Application Site as one of three notable redevelopment opportunities in the Plan area and states the "*...pursuit of high quality architecture in any redevelopment of these sites is essential having regard to the obvious opportunities to more clearly define the streetscape*";
- Policy UD5 states "*It is an objective of the Plan that height in excess of two-storeys shall only be permitted where it is considered by the Planning Authority that the proposed development can be easily absorbed into the existing urban landscape and will not be visually obtrusive or overbearing*". This also notes that "*Goatstown's ability to accommodate increased height is*

constrained having regard to the almost ubiquitous low-rise residential context of the area. There are nevertheless a limited number of sites with redevelopment potential which may be able to absorb heights of up to three and four storeys. Applications for development, which comprise of heights over two-storeys, should demonstrate that the proposed buildings can be readily absorbed into the existing urban fabric”:

- *Policy UD6 states “It is an objective of the Plan that a benchmark height of three storeys (with a possible additional set back floor or occupied roof space) shall apply on the sites of the Goat Public House, Topaz garage and adjoining retail units and the former Victor Motors site. Height should graduate down to a maximum of two-storey along the site boundaries where they adjoin existing low-rise development”.*

2.36 LAP Section 6.5 identifies specific areas considered to be key sites and which may have potential for development / redevelopment. As noted above, this includes the Application Site for which the opening paragraphs include the following:-

- *Any redevelopment of the former Victor Motors site should be designed to complement the Trimbleston development in terms of building height and building line; and*
- *The site represents an obvious opportunity on Goatstown Road to improve the built environment and enhance the visual amenities of the area.*

2.37 This section includes *Table 6.4: Former Victor Motors Site - Development Guidance* which sets out general guidance on height, density, design, movement and landscaping.

Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

2.38 These Guidelines have recently been issued which state that “*planning authorities shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height*” (SPPR1). Within this, Section 3 outlines Building Height and the Development Management Process and the subsequent Development Management Criteria advises on assessment requirements (including Landscape & Visual Assessments).

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

2.39 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) identifies no monuments or historic sites on the Application Site.

Environmental Protection Agency

2.40 Maps available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicate no protected landscapes, environment or ecology areas on or close to the Application Site.

Townscape / Landscape Quality and Value

2.41 The Application Site comprises a set of functional buildings set aside a large car park. It does have a presentable and tidy character in commercial terms but such a land-use would be categorised as poor townscape of low sensitivity and very capable of accommodating change. This would have been a key factor in the Goatstown LAP designating this site as a notable redevelopment opportunity.

2.42 The site carries no environment, amenity, heritage, visual amenity or landscape designations and possesses nothing that would be categorised as sensitive in terms of townscape character, notable features or vegetation. The buildings are basic structures in design terms and parking areas are purely practical presenting a utilitarian landscape that would be rated as *low* quality and value in townscape and visual terms.

Photo 6

Townscape Quality



The Application Site presents a utilitarian and functional landscape to this part of the Goatstown townscape.

- 2.43 The townscape aside the Application Site is a mix of *ordinary* and *good* townscape that has *medium* sensitivity though it is severed by the broad and busy linear route of the R825 Goatstown Road. The character of the area is dominated by ubiquitous and monotonous detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey residential housing developments and estates. This characteristic is noted in the Goatstown LAP (Section 4) that states the following:
- “Goatstown lacks a distinctive identity. This is a result of a weak urban structure, uniform built form, absence of a defined streetscape, the overall dominance of traffic and the area’s close proximity to the competing larger higher order urban centres of Stillorgan and Dundrum”; and
 - “The absence of any variety in the residential mix has resulted in a uniform building form. The estates lack any real identity and add little to the Plan area’s overall sense of place”.
- 2.44 The recent developments to the immediate north of the Application Site including The Grove and Trimbleston have offered variation to the monotonous low-rise housing and it is notable that this diversity has been assessed as a positive contribution and welcomed in the Goatstown LAP.

Photo 7

Townscape Quality

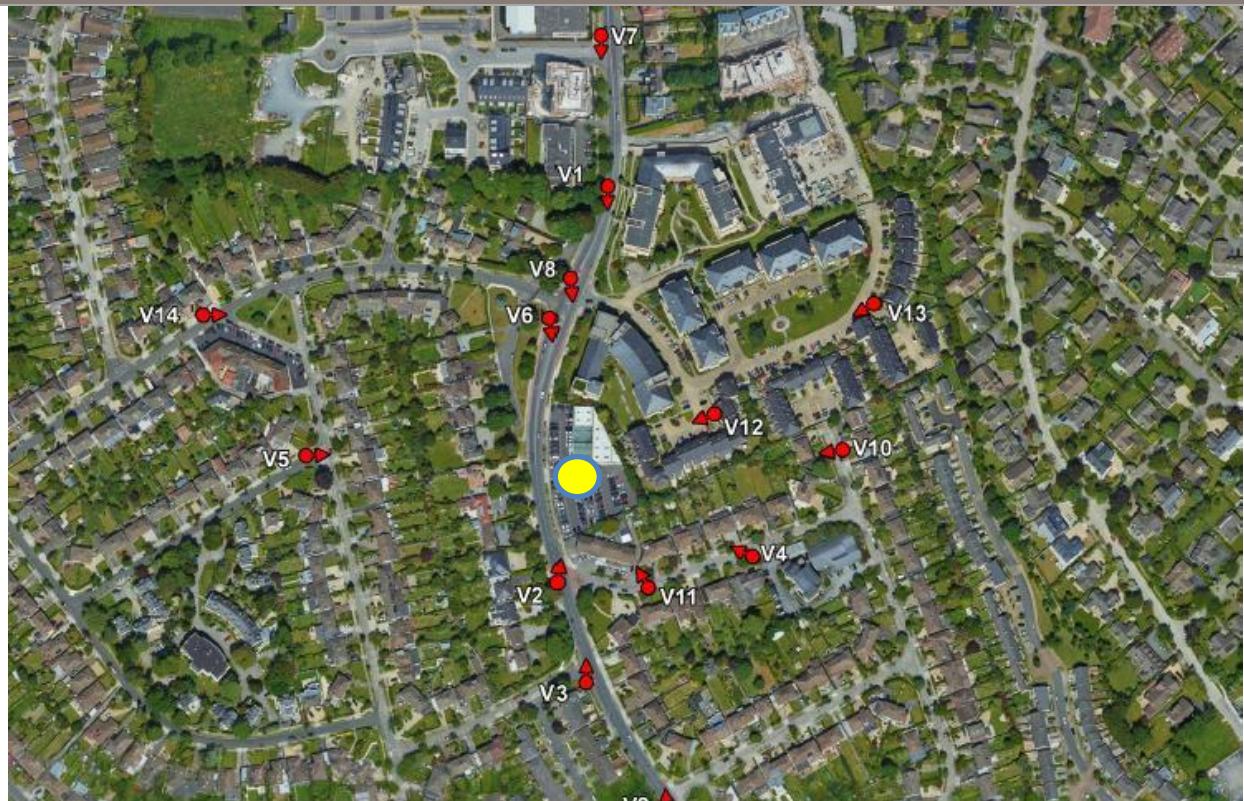


The Goatstown Road cuts a corridor through a townscape comprising very similar scale and types of development as it approaches the Application Site .

Existing Views and Representative Viewpoints

- 2.45 Built townscape ensures that views consistently change in context, scale and extent with many views of the Application Site, even from close proximity locations at Willowfield Park and Trimbleston closed off by intervening buildings or boundary features. There are no medium or longer views. Short range views of the Application Site are largely confined to an approximate 250m long corridor beside the Goatstown Road as it approaches and passes the site. To demonstrate site visibility or impacts, viewpoints were selected within publicly accessible areas based on the following criteria:-
- Review of viewpoint locations as per An Bord Pleanala Consultation Opinion (6th June 2020);
 - Site investigation to establish locations where there was likely to be significant views; and
 - Identifying those locations where there was likely to be a significant number of visual receptors (e.g., main roads, potential public congregation places and residential areas)
- 2.46 Fourteen representative viewpoints were selected at the locations identified on Map 1 below.

Map 1 Viewpoint Locations



 *Application Site Location*

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed development includes for the demolition of all existing structures and a comprehensive redevelopment of this site.

Site Preparation and Construction Works

3.2 The construction operations likely to affect townscape and visual amenity include the following:-

- Site access off Goatstown Road;
- Demolition works to include removal of all existing showroom / garage buildings, plant, yard, parking areas, boundary walls to Goatstown Road and associated landscape areas;
- Removal of existing shrub vegetation in linear strip along Goatstown Road;
- Fixed construction plant, including cranes and scaffolding and gantries;
- Site hoarding along the property boundary with Goatstown Road;
- Mobile construction plant, such as excavators and lorries;
- Storage and compound areas, welfare facilities, security and safety lighting; and
- Staged works relating to the construction of new buildings and infrastructure.

3.3 All construction impacts will be temporary, localised and short-term.

Summary of Proposed Development

3.4 The development is for professionally managed student housing with associated entrance lobby and communal facilities. It will include:-

- 221 no. student bedspaces (including 10 no. studios), all within a part single storey, part 4 no. storey and part 6 no. storey 'U'-Shaped building;
- The building is single to 4 no. storeys along the southern boundary (with roof terraces at 4th floor level) and part 5 and 6 storeys along Goatstown Road (with set-backs) and boundary to the north (with roof terrace at 5th floor level fronting onto Goatstown Road);
- Amenity space equating to c. 2,025 sqm is provided across the site consisting of c. 1,516 sqm of external amenity in the form of a central courtyard at ground level and roof terraces at 4th and 5th floor levels;
- Internal amenity space equating to c. 509 sqm is provided in the form of 2 no. ground floor lounge/study areas, kitchen/tearoom, laundry, and concierge/office space;
- Provision of 210 no. bicycle parking spaces distributed within the central courtyard (stacked parking with glass roof cover) and adjacent to the front boundary (north);

- Provision for 6 no. carparking spaces comprising 2 no. disabled parking spaces and 4 no. set-down parking spaces adjacent to the front entrance to the site
 - Vehicular access to the site is via Goatstown Road from 2 no. entrance points [reduction from 3 no. entrances currently];
 - Ancillary single storey ESB substation and switch room and refuse store are provided at ground level; and
 - Provision of surface water and underground attenuation and all ancillary site development works including site wide landscaping works, lighting, planting and boundary treatments.
- 3.5 A full description of the Proposed Development is contained within the Urban Design Report (*Reddy Architecture + Urbanism*) submitted with this application and is not repeated here.

Design Considerations

- 3.6 In broad terms, the proposed development comprises a contemporary building with facade materials and treatments selected to ensure durability, ease of maintenance and a high quality of finish prepared using best practice urban design principles.
- 3.7 The following mitigation measures and considerations were made in relation to the architectural design and materials selection and are relevant as to how the proposed development will sit into and be seen in the Goatstown Road area and local townscape:-
- The proposal is designed on an axis that correlates with the townscape structure with geometry aligned to Goatstown Road; the building line aligns that set out within the Goatstown LAP;
 - The building is designed to be viewed from all directions and has no blank facades;
 - The facades or elevations of the building include the following treatments and features designed to give the proposed development a crisp, modern and quality visual appearance:-
 - Brick finish with brick return detailing;
 - Recessed metal cladding / brick / rendered panels;
 - Protruding bay windows;
 - Glazed Curtain Walling; and
 - Selected Aluminium Windows / Doors
 - The contemporary distinctive front façade, associated architecture and public realm design reflects the high quality of architecture and landscape in the neighbourhood;
 - The building height varies in height from 6 storeys along Goatstown Road to 4 storeys at the southern boundary of the site towards Willowfield Park. This correlates with more substantial and modern building mass at Trimbleston to the north while reducing to address the two storey

properties to the south;

- The scale offers adequate enclosure to the street and public/private spaces as well as creating a strong urban edge along Goatstown Road;
- The mass of the building façade has been broken into sections both vertically and horizontally to address Goatstown Road. A section of the building is cantilevered towards Goatstown Road while the building line is moved forward to the north to visually break up the mass of the façade when viewed from areas on the road and adjacent properties;
- Amenity uses are set at ground floor level on Goatstown Road to provide an active street frontage and vitality with the building having active uses and facades on lands adjacent to the public realm;
- Indoor communal spaces are integrally linked to external terraces, roof gardens and courtyards to provide social amenity spaces for use by all residents aiding in the creation of a community;
- The majority of functional uses, such as bin storage, are located in areas that are visually obscured from public vantage points on Goatstown Road and adjacent properties; and
- The proposed development will fully comply with all building regulations in terms of access for all and needs for residents.

Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure Considerations

- 3.8 The development included landscaped areas for public and residential amenity use and internal courtyard zones and roof terraces dedicated to private use for residents.
- 3.9 The landscape plan includes extensive tree planting (including at semi-mature size) along Goatstown Road to create a natural and welcoming environment for residents. The proposed planting schedule will provide seasonal interest and natural buffers between external spaces, path routes and the courtyard whilst creating shelter and focal points. The proposals include green roofs, hedges, groundcover and shrub planting that will enhance biodiversity on this site.
- 3.10 The existing mixed quality planting in the Goatstown Road footpath is to be removed and replaced with a quality paved landscaped edge providing enhanced public realm on this section of the road that will form a transitional space between the public and private areas.
- 3.11 Hard landscaping materials were chosen based on suitability for a residential scheme and long term use with variations provided in the form of shape unit size, mix and colour. All of the specified materials are robust in nature in order to maximize the longevity of the development and minimise maintenance issues. The landscape designs are indicated on the accompanying RMDA Landscape Architects Drawings.
- 3.12 The majority of green space is overlooked by resident's windows or balconies ensuring adequate passive surveillance of all spaces by residential units in order to both enliven the area and make it a 'home' for the residents of the development. The collective landscape and public realm areas associated with this development correlate with open space requirements. Please see



accompanying report prepared by RMDA Landscape Architects and the Urban Design Report prepared by Reddy Architecture and Urbanism.

4.0 TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 4.1 The aim of this report is to objectively and professionally assess how the proposed development will affect the landscape, townscape and visual amenity of the Application Site and this part of Dublin. The terminology and glossary is based those used in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (2013)*.
- 4.2 The key consideration in this project is the magnitude and significance of effect based on comparing the scale and shape of the proposed development against what is offered by the existing setting, visual quality and sensitivity of the Application Site. Particular regard is taken to the proposal's mass and height. A further consideration is the people who use or pass through this area who may feel that the visual and townscape quality could be affected by this proposal.

Construction Stage

- 4.3 Visual impacts will potentially derive from the following:-
 - Presence and operation of construction traffic, cranes, plant and equipment;
 - Removal / demolition and changes to local built structure and vegetation cover; and
 - Lighting for safety and security.
- 4.4 Such is their condition, the removal of the existing buildings would have no significant effects on local townscape character and demolition would have *neutral* effects (i.e., no better or worse) on the character of the site.
- 4.5 To the majority of areas in the Goatstown area, the construction phase will have *negligible* effects in the earlier stages of demolition and construction due to visual containment and nature of these works. The Goatstown Road site will be bound by hoardings to clearly delineate working areas towards and these will obscure views from ground level areas. Existing walls to the north, east and south will be retained in situ for the construction period to also form this function. The removal of existing ornamental shrubs within the road verge on Goatstown Road will have localised *slight adverse* effects but access will be retained along the footpath.
- 4.6 In the immediate area, there will be a temporary reduction in townscape quality to facilitate demolition works, construction activity, building works and land-take associated with gantries, scaffolding and hoardings. As the construction of higher floors commences, there will be a greater degree of exposure with significant effects to the immediately adjacent areas which abut the Application Site.
- 4.7 This stage will represent a *substantial* change to the Application Site setting resulting in *moderate temporary adverse* effects to the immediate area and along the adjacent section of Goatstown

Road and properties on the site boundary.

- 4.8 Effects deriving from construction traffic on Goatstown Road would not represent a significant change, in landscape or visual terms, from the existing situation given that this is a notably busy section of road
- 4.9 As the higher stories are constructed, the works will inevitably become more evident with *slight* to *moderate* effects but, given context of existing built environment, the effects would be of a *medium* magnitude (i.e., insignificant).

Townscape Effects (on completion)

- 4.10 Any assessment must be measured against that of the situation that pertains at present and the current site contributes little to the local townscape setting being a commercial site with utilitarian buildings set in a largely functional landscape. In terms of this TVIA assessment, the mass and height of the proposed building is the overriding factor. In this instance the historic prevailing height is that of two-storey suburbia but there are notable variations in form and height in the area local to the Application Site as identified in the baseline section above, with Trimbleston and The Grove taller.
- 4.11 In broad terms, a proposal of this nature and scale will become part of the integrity, legibility and identity of this section of Goatstown Road. The following reviews the likely impact on key townscape areas as identified in the baseline assessment section above and includes consideration of *Section 3.0 Building Height and Development Management process* within the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018)*.

Application Site

- 4.12 In terms of the actual Application Site, there are no distinctive or notable built or natural features including vegetation, facades or architecture that will be lost. The key part of the assessment therefore relates to the scale and nature of the proposed development.
- 4.13 The subsequent development will result in *major* changes to site character due to introduction of a higher and more substantial building that will occupy much of the site when viewed from external areas and will completely alter the baseline setting once operational and completed. While a major change, this proposal utilises this strategic site more effectively in townscape terms than is currently the case and provided improved architecture and public realm.
- 4.14 The road pattern and public realm areas towards Goatstown Road will be unaffected. The public realm is increased and enhanced allowing for the planting of approximately 12 no. street trees (at semi-mature size) and enhanced landscape works that will more than compensate for the loss of any existing vegetation as well as assisting in place-making. Further landscape works are proposed

on courtyard areas and roof gardens and these will enhance the amenity, ecological worth and landscape vegetation cover comparative to the existing situation.

- 4.15 Irrespective, the proposed development will have a *profound* effect on the Application Site categorised as being of *high* magnitude but this is not something that is adverse in townscape / landscape character terms. The improved facades, architecture and frontage to Goatstown will reinvigorate and revitalise this site giving it a more appropriate use contributing to the immediate cityscape character and sense of place in line with both the County Plan and LAP objectives.

Goatstown Road and Local Townscape

- 4.16 The proposed development is highest to the north (towards Trimbleston) and steps down towards Goatstown Road and the south (towards Willowfield Park) to reflect the reduced height of existing building within the residential areas. While higher than the existing buildings to the south and west, the façade designs includes elements and treatments to break up its mass and scale in the local views.
- 4.17 The architecture and mass is compatible with the adjacent Trimbleston and nearby Grove developments which have both demonstrated that Goatstown Road is broad enough to be able to absorb higher buildings without causing detriment. The architecture and landscape design quality at Trimbleston further demonstrates how the local townscape has been positively changed in line with National Planning Framework objectives while providing built form that breaks up the mass of low-rise and ubiquitous housing types in this area. This proposal correlates and effectively integrates with the scale and context of these developments and will contribute to the legibility, sense of place and urban townscape of this part of Goatstown.
- 4.18 There will inevitably be *substantial* and *major* effects to areas on and aside the proposed development on Goatstown Road and within the adjacent properties at Trimbleston and Willowfield Park due to the change in use from a commercial and open car park to a higher residential apartment scheme and complex that covers much of the site. However, it is also reasonable to conclude that this proposal will have positive effects in terms of local townscape character through enhanced streetscape while providing a distinctive and notable building giving this part of Goatstown added variation and identity.
- 4.19 Beyond this short section of Goatstown Road and its junction with Willowfield Park, the existing built environment comprises a density of building and vegetation that ensures the majority of areas to the south, west and north will experience *slight* / *negligible effects* categorised as being of a *minor* magnitude (i.e., insignificant) due to the proposal being visually obscured.
- 4.20 Existing built form towards Trimbleston to the north and east ensures the proposed development will be visually contained with only *slight* or *negligible* effects (i.e., insignificant) to these areas in character and visual terms. (Note it is likely the adjacent façade of Trimbleston to the north was deliberately designed as blank on the understanding the Application Site would be built out with

similar scale buildings at some stage).

Existing Aerial View of Goatstown Townscape & Photomontage View Proposed Development



Existing View looking south across Goatstown to the south.



Proposed View looking south across Goatstown to the south.

- 4.21 Consequently, the development can be successfully absorbed into this district and neighbourhood without causing adverse townscape / landscape effects and it is evident in townscape character terms that this site lends itself to a proposal of this nature and scale.

Goatstown

- 4.22 The existing Goatstown townscape has a density of built form that ensures the majority of areas in this part of the city will experience *negligible* or *no* effects (i.e., insignificant) due to the proposal being visually obscured. There will be no effects to any designated historic sites / environments at a local or city wide level.
- 4.23 In isolation, the proposal will result in a distinctive and major new building that will add to this area's sense of place and be a major addition to the local architecture and townscape. Given the LAP notes the areas ubiquitous character that is dominated by standard detached and semi-detached two-storey dwelling houses, such an introduction would have positive effects to this area in terms of townscape character, definition and variety of built form. Further, LAP Section 4.1 acknowledges "...that there are only a limited number of opportunities for new development and/or redevelopment in the Plan area" and specifically noted this Application Site as being one of only three areas where such variation of development is possible or to be promoted.
- 4.24 The proposal will be higher than the existing buildings in this area but it not unique in terms of mass or scale when measured against other developments in this area. This is best demonstrated in the aerial photomontage above that shows it in relation to the adjacent townscape.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown / Dublin City

- 4.25 In citywide terms, it is notable that the National Planning Framework advises increased density, scale and height of development in town and city cores. As noted above there are recent examples of similar scale buildings in the Goatstown area including the nearby Grove and Trimbleston as well as Knockrabo on Mount Anville Road.
- 4.26 The current site and setting contributes little to the character or quality of this part of the city. The principle of this type of townscape change at this location is specifically endorsed in the County Development Plan being Zoned 'A' with a stated objective '*To protect and/or improve residential amenity*'. This development will signify a fresh phase or stage for this site which will have *substantial* effects on areas closer to the proposed development but the baseline setting ensures this can be successfully absorbed without causing any adverse townscape / landscape effects. The completed building will improve the quality and character of this part of Goatstown that would symbolise progress, rational townscape evolution and positivity in line with the Development Plan objective.
- 4.27 In general, any views experienced by pedestrians across the south city are focused at ground level where the proposal will be obscured by existing buildings ensuring *negligible / no* effects (i.e., insignificant) to the vast majority of areas. Where visible in glimpse views, it will invariably be a part of a built townscape and its location and adjacent land-uses ensure it can be accommodated without causing any detriment to the wider cityscape character. For passing traffic on the Goatstown Road, it will be seen in context with the adjacent higher buildings at Trimbleston and The Grove and contribute positively to this area's identity, sense of place and the emerging architectural character of skyline. There are no designated views, landmarks, prospects or vistas affected by this proposal.
- 4.28 In summary, the effects, while significant to the Application Site and adjacent area will have no adverse effects and will be a positive statement in terms of the townscape development, legibility and future. It is consistent with the prevailing building height in the immediate area, tying in effectively with the ambitions and objectives of the Goatstown LAP and the County Development Plan in terms of compact, appropriate and sustainable development.

Visual Impact Assessment

- 4.29 The following section summarises the existing setting and likely or anticipated effects on the fourteen no. representational viewpoints.
- 4.30 Note that all views were photographed in summer and winter months to provide an objective basis for the assessment and these are included in the appended photomontages prepared by *3D Design Bureau*. The winter views were specifically requested in the An Bord Pleanala Consultation Opinion (6th June 2020). However, due to site location and townscape context, site surveys and visualisation work established that vegetation was not a factor in the assessment of magnitude or

significance of visual effects.

- 4.31 The running order of viewpoints assessed below is out of sync with the numbering provided by 3D Design Bureau due to assessing the potential effects or collectivised areas in an appropriate order in visual assessment terms. An extract from the proposed view photomontage is included below for ease of cross-reference but the existing and proposed views are set out in larger scale within the Aerials, Presentation, CGIs and Photomontages Document prepared by 3D design Bureau which also accompanies this application.

Viewpoints 2, 3, 6 and 8 Goatstown Road (views within 100m of Application Site)



Photomontage 2 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)



Photomontage 3 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)



Photomontage 6 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)



Photomontage 8 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Goatstown Road	Distance to Application Site	Less than 100m
Viewpoint Baseline	<p>Goatstown Road is part of the R825 connecting the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. As it passes the site it comprises a 9.5m wide single carriageway and delineated cycle-lanes and footpaths to both sides. It abuts the site boundary for an approximate 95m length off which there are three entrances to the existing car showroom, garage and car park. The boundary is delineated by a low wall with a linear strip of ornamental shrubs and hedging set aside the road kerb. The low nature of this boundary allows open views across the site from an approximate 150m section of Goatstown Road.</p> <p>To either side of the road are residential housing estates and developments comprising detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey houses. To the south and west, these are of an older and established nature having been built out approximately 60 years ago. There are incidental street trees but mature trees and wooded areas in front gardens give sections of the road a green character. To the north are the more modern developments of Trimbleston and The Grove which have a more substantial height and mass.</p> <p>The road is subject to heavy traffic with significant numbers of visual receptors including commuters, those passing for shopping / retail / commercial purposes as well as for pedestrian or cycle use.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	<p>The proposed development will be a <i>major</i> change from the existing situation with built form extending across the majority of the frontage of the Application Site representing a <i>substantial</i> change in close proximity views on account of being a readily apparent addition to the local skyline. In visual terms, the proposed development will discernibly step down towards Willowfield Park to the south constituting a <i>slight adverse</i> effect on visual setting though this would not be rated as unacceptable given the existing visual setting and land-use.</p> <p>Further, the proposed building would effectively balance and visually correlate to the broad width of Goatstown Road and integrate with the architecture, form, scale and mass of the recent developments to the immediate north at Trimbleston and The Grove. The collective will provide enhanced townscape legibility and offer variation and relief from the prevailing monotonous and repetitive building type in Goatstown. While more substantial than the existing buildings on the site, this would be outweighed by a marked improvement the architecture and streetscape frontage comparative to the existing situation including</p>		

	semi-mature tree planting and extended public realm landscape works facing the road.
Significance Summary	Major to Moderate Neutral

Viewpoints 1, 7 and 9 Goatstown Road (views beyond 100m of Application Site)



Photomontage 1 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)



*Photomontage 7 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*



Photomontage 9 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Goatstown Road	Distance to Application Site	More than 100m
Viewpoint Baseline	<p>Goatstown Road is part of the R825 and connects the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. To either side of Goatstown Road are residential housing estates and developments. Many of the adjacent properties have mature trees and wooded areas in their front gardens, which in conjunction with street trees, give sections of the road a green character. To the north are the more modern developments of Trimbleston and The Grove which have a more substantial height and mass.</p> <p>The road is subject to heavy traffic with significant numbers of visual receptors including commuters, those passing for shopping / retail / commercial purposes and pedestrian or cycle use.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	<p>A small portion of the proposed development will be visible from these more distant sections of Goatstown Road with transient, glimpse, filtered or limited views of the higher storeys being possible but never of a significant nature. Despite relatively close proximity, the extent of intervening townscape and vegetation ensures very limited visual impact.</p> <p>Any awareness of the proposal will not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the existing views or visual amenity on these sections</p>		

	of Goatstown Road to the north and south due to visual screening. As such, the visual impact is assessed as <i>slight neutral</i> .
Significance Summary	Minor Neutral



Photomontage 4 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Willowfield Drive Friarland	Distance to Application Site	80m
Viewpoint Baseline	Willowfield Park is the closest road to the south of the Application Site. It comprises a straight road leading east off a junction with the Goatstown Road and is bound by a series of semi-detached two-storey houses. The townscape comprises housing estates of semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing with mature trees within road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
Significance Summary	No change		

Viewpoint 11 Willowfield Park



Photomontage 11- Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Willowfield Park, Friarland	Distance to Application Site	45m
Viewpoint Baseline	<p>Willowfield Park is the closest road to the south of the Application Site. It comprises a straight road leading east off a junction with the Goatstown Road and is bound by a series of semi-detached two-storey houses. A two-storey terrace (Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park) including commercial / retail units and a café is located at its western end close the junction and these properties bound the south of the Application Site. Further east is St Michael's House which provides social care and services.</p> <p>The primary visual receptors in this area will be those using the commercial / retail / café facilities and residents within the units located on the 1st floor of Nos. 4 and 8.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	<p>While it will be an evident change, the proposal steps down towards Willowfield Park in terms of storey height to address the height of the existing houses serving to reduce potential visual impacts on this area and ensuring they are of a non-significant nature. This reduction ensures only a small portion of the proposed development will be visible from the western section of this road with a glimpse and filtered views of part of</p>		

	<p>the southern elevation set behind trees to the rear of Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park having <i>slight adverse</i> effects. Note the terrace of the café faces away from the Application Site and no views are afforded of the site area.</p> <p>There will be <i>negligible</i> effects to the remainder of this street including St Michael's House.</p>
Significance Summary	Minor Adverse to Negligible/Neutral

Viewpoint 10 St Aiden's Drive



Photomontage 10 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)

Viewpoint Address or Location	St Aidan's Drive, Mountanville	Distance to Application Site	130m
Viewpoint Baseline	St Aidan's Drive is a residential street located to the east of the Application Site. The townscape comprises semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing estates with mature tress within road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
Significance Summary	No change		

Viewpoint 12 and 13 Trimbleston



Photomontage 12 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)



Photomontage 13 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Trimbleston	Distance to Application Site	50-210m
Viewpoint Baseline	Trimbleston is a recent development including 335 no. apartments across 13 acres located to the east and north of the Application Site. The		

	<p>buildings are set around courtyards and well-landscaped parks and rise to five storeys.</p> <p>The Application Site is located just beyond the western boundary of Trimbleston towards Goatstown Road and the existing car showroom/garage and car park are obscured by the three to four storey high buildings within this development.</p> <p>The primary visual receptors in this area will be residents and those using the central open space as shown in Viewpoint 13 above.</p>
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium
Predicted Change	<p>The proposed development will be apparent addition to the western skyline with upper stories rising above the intervening buildings on the western edge of Trimbleston.</p> <p>The magnitude of change is not significant given the existing nature and mass of the Trimbleston development and is considered acceptable as the proposed development will effectively balance and correlate with the adjacent townscape character in views from the open spaces or public realm areas within this development.</p> <p>As such, no detrimental effects are predicted when measured against the extent of proposed development visible, urban context and compatible architecture and style of buildings in this view. The effects are assessed as <i>slight neutral</i></p>
Significance Summary	Minor Neutral

Viewpoint 5 Larchfield Park



*Photomontage 5 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

Viewpoint Address or Location	Larchfield Park / Farmhill Road junction	Distance to Application Site	150m
Viewpoint Baseline	Farmhill Road is the next closest road to the west of the Application Site beyond the Goatstown Road. The townscape comprises housing estates of semi-detached two-storey housing with mature tress set in road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
Significance Summary	No change		

Viewpoint 14 Larchfield Road



*Photomontage 14 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

Viewpoint Address or Location	Larchfield Road	Distance to Application Site	185m
Viewpoint Baseline	Larchfield Road leads west from a junction with the Goatstown Road just to the north of the Application Site. It is bound by detached, semi-detached and terraces of two-storey houses. At the junction with Farmhill Road is a small triangle of open space aside a small set of retail / commercial units offers potentially longer views. The collective of trees and peripheral buildings confine views to the local streetscape.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
Significance Summary	No change		

5.0 Conclusion

Baseline Setting

- 5.1 The Application Site comprises 0.35 hectares (0.84 acres) of land to the east of the R825 Goatstown Road, Dublin 14. The city centre is located approximately 6km to the north. It includes commercial buildings and garages associated with a car sales operation and would be categorised as poor townscape of low sensitivity, quality and value and very capable of accommodating change in terms of baseline character and visual amenity.
- 5.2 The site carries no environment, amenity, heritage, visual amenity or landscape designations and possesses nothing that would be categorised as sensitive in terms of townscape character, features or vegetation. The buildings are functional in design and the associated site has a utilitarian character which collectively presents a low quality landscape in character and visual terms.
- 5.3 The townscape aside the Application Site is a mix of ordinary and good townscape through which the broad linear route of the R825 Goatstown Road traverses. The character of the area is dominated by ubiquitous and monotonous detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey residential housing developments and estates dating from the 1950s to 1970s. A neighbourhood centre providing local services is located in the adjacent Willowfield Park.
- 5.4 The recent developments to the immediate north of the Application Site including The Grove and Trimbleston have offered variation to the low-rise housing and it is notable that this diversity has been assessed as a positive contribution in the Goatstown LAP. Built townscape ensures that views consistently change in context, scale and extent with many views of the Application Site, even from close proximity locations closed off by intervening buildings or vegetation.
- 5.5 A notable land-use in this area is that of the UCD Belfield Campus less than 1km to the north / north-east. This comprises 133 hectares and Ireland's largest university, based on 2017/18 enrolments (32,000 students).
- 5.6 The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2016-2022 indicates the site is zoned under Objective A which is summarised as "*To protect and/or improve residential amenity*".
- 5.7 Within the Goatstown Local Area Plan 2012, it notes "...*that there are only a limited number of opportunities for new development and/or redevelopment in the Plan area*" and specifically lists this site as being one of only three areas where such variation of development is possible or to be promoted.

Proposed Development

- 5.8 The proposed development is for the demolition of all existing buildings (extending to c.960m²) and hard surface parking area on site and construction of a purpose built student accommodation development (including use as tourist or visitor accommodation outside the academic term) comprising 221 no. student bedspaces all within a part single storey, part 4 no. storey and part 6 no. storey 'U'-Shaped building

- 5.9 The higher parts are towards Trimbleston (to the north) to reflect the scale and mass of buildings in this area with the building stepping down (to the south) to reflect the lower heights of the existing properties on Willowfield Park.
- 5.10 Ancillary works include services and amenities, car parking and cycle spaces, public realm works towards Goatstown Road and creation of communal open spaces and roof terraces.

Predicted Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 5.11 Any assessment must be measured against that of the situation that pertains at present and the current site contributes little to local townscape and has limited aesthetic appeal. In broad terms, a proposal of this nature and scale will become part of the integrity, legibility and identity of this section of Goatstown Road.
- 5.12 The proposed development will be a major change from the existing situation with built form extending across the majority of the Application Site representing a substantial change to the local skyline and built form from immediately adjacent areas on account of close proximity.
- 5.13 The proposal would effectively balance and visually correlate to the broad width of Goatstown Road and integrate with the architecture, form, scale and mass of the recent developments to the immediate north at Trimbleston and The Grove making a positive contribution to place-making. It will discernibly step down towards Willowfield Park. The collective will provide enhanced townscape sense of place and legibility while offering variation and relief from the prevailing similar and repetitive building type in Goatstown.
- 5.14 While clearly more substantial than the existing buildings on the site and higher than the prevailing buildings in the wider Goatstown area, any potential adverse effects would be outweighed by a marked improvement the architecture and streetscape comparative to the existing situation. This includes semi-mature tree planting and extended public realm landscape works towards the Goatstown Road. Consequently, it is considered the development can be successfully absorbed into this area without causing adverse townscape / landscape effects and the site lends itself to such a proposal.
- 5.15 Beyond close proximity areas, the existing built environment across Goatstown provides a density of building and vegetation that will ensure the majority of areas will experience negligible to no effects (i.e., insignificant) on townscape character and visual amenity due to the proposal being visually obscured. There will be no effects to any designated historic sites, views, townscapes, key landmarks or environments at a local or city wide level.

Conclusion

- 5.16 The Application Site comprises a commercial site that contributes little to the character and visual quality of this part of Dublin. The proposed development, while more substantial, would result in a positive contribution to the townscape character and urban fabric of Goatstown. While recognising a high magnitude of impact to the Application Site itself, this report concludes that this proposal, on balance, has no unacceptable townscape / landscape or visual effects and can be successfully absorbed into the character and views of this part of the city.