



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Proposed Large Scale Residential Accommodation at Sarsfield Road, Wilton, Cork

Prepared on behalf of

Land Development Agency

December 2024 / Project No. 7848


Proposed Large Residential Accommodation in Wilton, Cork City

Landscape and Visual Assessment

Client Name	Land Development Agency
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Quality Assurance

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Issue	Date	Baseline Prepared by	Graphics prepared by	Report prepared by
<i>Baseline</i>	20-12-2024	Ann Sharrock	Ryan Hood	Mark Johnston
<i>Preliminary Issue</i>	20-12-2024	Mark Johnston CLMI Landscape Architect and Director; Park Hood		
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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 INTRODUCTION

Statement of Expertise

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of the Land Development Agency. 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 Mark Johnston who is a fully qualified Landscape Architect and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 20 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 30 members of staff including a further ten Chartered Landscape Architects.
- 1.2 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

- 1.3 These proposals relate to the construction of a Large Residential Development with a total application site area of c. 2.61ha, on lands adjoining the ESB Networks DAC Office, at Farrandahadore More, Sarsfield Road, Wilton, Cork City. The development will provide 348 no. residential units and a 156 sqm childcare facility, revised access arrangements to Sarsfield Road and all associated development above and below ground.
- 1.4 This report outlines the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape/townscape character and visual amenity of the Application Site and surrounding area in this suburb of Cork City.

Guidance Documents

- 1.5 The overall approach and methodology is based on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (GLVIA).
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 There are a number of published guidance documents including Development Plans, which include planning designations relevant to the Study Area as listed below:-
- *Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework, 2018;*
 - *Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028;*
 - *Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP);*
 - *Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) 2040;*
 - *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 (December 2022);*
- *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide (2009).*
- *Bishopstown and Wilton Area Action Plan, Cork City Council, Adopted October 2007. This is listed as a Non Statutory Plan on the Cork City Council Local Area Plans section.*
- *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie>;*
- *ESM Webtool, Environmental Sensitivity Mapping, project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and hosted by the OSI on GeoHive, the State Geospatial DataHub;*
- *<https://en.wikipedia.org>;*
- *Historic Environment Viewer, <https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>;*
- *Environment Protection maps, <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/default>;*
- *Tom Phillips Associates, Wilton LRD Site – Height and Density Policy Considerations, 20th February 2024.*

1.8 The baseline assessment included study of Ordnance Survey Ireland historical mapping and recent aerial photography to assess how this part of County Cork has developed since the 19th century as well as assess calculations of relevant distances and areas.

2 Methodology

Landscape and Visual Effects – Distinctions

2.1 Landscape and Visual effects deriving from a proposed development are assessed separately although the process is similar. The conclusions on level of effect are ultimately an evaluation of the combined effects of both. The distinction between landscape and visual effects can be summarised as follows:-

- *Landscape 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 be changed as a result of this proposal, such as pedestrians, people working in offices, or people in vehicles passing through the area.*

Landscape and Visual Assessment Process

2.2 The process can be summarised as undertaking the following key tasks:

- *Site survey and visits undertaken in July and November 2024;*
- *Assessment of the Baseline Landscape/Townscape Setting and Conditions;*
- *Evaluation of key components of the proposed development based on site layouts, plans and elevations prepared by Reddy Architecture + Urbanism and other members of the design team;*
- *Consideration of Mitigation and Enhancement Measures;*
- *Assessment of Landscape/Townscape Effects;*
- *Assessment of Visual Effects; and*
- *Conclusions.*

2.3 The process includes photomontages of the proposed development from 19 no. representative viewpoints, which are presented in a separate stand-alone document accompanying this planning application.

Establishing the Study Area

2.4 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. In this report the visual assessment is approximately 1km from the periphery of the site, although references to the wider area will be made in relation to landscape character and local and national planning policies. Given the area comprises 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.

2.5 Item 1 B) of the LRD opinion received from Cork City Council for the application requests that a balloon test be carried out on site in order for the Planning Authority to determine suitable viewing assessment points having regard to the variation in ground levels in the surrounding area. The ESB depot currently has a large communications mast within the curtilage of the site. This mast was used in place of the balloon test as a visual

reference point during the visual assessment to establish the likely range and orientation of visibility for the site as the structure is of significant height and is readily visible within the landscape. The selected viewpoints were then further ratified by the production of verified photomontage imagery.

Landscape Character Assessment

2.6 The combination of desk-top analysis and site survey allows judgment to be made on the key elements that contribute to the landscape/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 Landscape** - *Very vulnerable to change. High Sensitivity;*
- **Very Attractive Landscape** - *Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. Medium Sensitivity;*
- **Good Landscape** - *Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. Medium Sensitivity;*
- **Ordinary Landscape** - *Able to accommodate change without significant effects. Low Sensitivity;*
- **Poor Landscape** - *Damaged landscapes very capable of accommodating change. Very Low Sensitivity.*

2.7 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

- 2.8 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. Nineteen 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., users of local parks or residential areas.
- 2.9 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 Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.10 Landscape / townscape 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.*

3 Baseline Landscape Setting

The Application Site

- 3.1 The Application Site is a rectangular plot of land approximately 4km southwest of Cork City Centre. It is bound by Wilton Shopping Centre to the north, ESB Networks site to the south, Sarsfield Road and residential area to the east and residential developments to the west. Current access to the site is that used for the ESB Networks facility, from Sarsfield Road via a signalised junction on Sarsfield Road. **See Figure 1.**

Figure 1: Site Location



Source: OpenStreetMap

- 3.2 There are no buildings on the site. The east end of the site has a mature stand of trees, screening it from Sarsfield Road. This stand of trees is a training site for the ESB Networks and has a number of telegraph poles and electrical infrastructure within it. A row of specimen trees is planted down the centre of the site and on the southern boundary. The entire southern boundary is open to the ESB complex, with the northern, western and eastern boundaries consisting of a mixture of fencing, boundary walls and perimeter hedging and trees.
- 3.3 The ESB Networks site to the south of the Application Site borders Sarsfield Road, and the Eastbound Parallel Link Road. It is screened from the road system including the N40 flyover, by wide grass verges and mature vegetation. The entrance drive has a linear area of parking at its western end bordering the southern boundary of the Application Site. The drive gives entrance and egress to a number of parking locations on the ESB Networks site. **See Photo 1 and Figure 2.**

Photo 1 Entrance site on Sarsfield Road to ESB Networks site and Application Site



- 3.4 The pedestrian path on Sarsfield Road bordering the eastern boundary of the ESB Networks site continues to the corner of Sarsfield Road and then through the woodland circumventing the ESB site. The River Glasheen River runs to the north of this pathway and flows north into the River Lee.
- 3.5 Although set within a residential area the only housing in close proximity to the Application Site is Cardinal Court bordering its western boundary. This 1960's housing runs in a north-south direction and comprises 2-storeys. Those abutting the western boundary of the Application Site are two blocks of 4 terraced houses and a semi-detached house and are stepped with gardens and well screened by mature trees.
- 3.6 Wilton Shopping Centre covers an area of approximately 7.3 hectares and lies to the north of the Application Site. The large utilitarian buildings with various roof profiles, external cladding and plant location, occupy the centre of the site and the car parking is located around them. They are relatively low lying at 1/2 storeys. The later addition of the Tesco's store is slightly higher. Cork University Hospital occupies a large site 400m to north of Wilton Shopping Centre on Bishopstown Road.
- 3.7 The northern boundary of the Application Site borders the car park and overspill car park to the south of Tesco Superstore, which is screened with mature trees.

- 3.8 A gated roadway, off Sarsfield Road, between the northern boundary of the Application Site and the southern boundary of the Tesco carpark, runs to St Joseph's SMA, formerly St Joseph's College, and associated buildings. It has mature planting on both sides of this road and an area of trees, shrubs and scrub on the corner. St Joseph's SMA has a large grassed area to the front lined with trees and a 2.4m wall separating it from the Tesco's overspill car park, 65m to the south. The associated buildings include St Joseph's Catholic Church, graveyard and SMA Parish Community Centre. On the Cork City Council Management Framework Map 05 (Volume 2, p.48-49), Saint Joseph's Church is designated a Local Landmark Building.
- 3.9 The western boundary of the Application site has mature trees screening it from the rear gardens of Cardinal Court and this screening continues north to St Joseph's SMA and south to the ESB Networks western boundary. St Joseph's SMA and associated buildings are enclosed by mature trees and vegetation with little visibility beyond the boundaries. The spire of St. Joseph's Church is visible from Cardinal Way, but the Church is screened by tall hedgerows and mature trees from much of the public area beyond its boundaries.

Photo 2 Extent of the Application Site looking east



Photo 3 The Application Site in the foreground and ESB Networks site beyond.



Figure 2: Application Site looking west on Sarsfield Road



Source: Google Earth Pro

Drive off Sarsfield Road to the Application Site on the right and the ESB complex to the left.

Local Landscape Character

- 3.10 The City Boundary has increased over the years and in 1965 the boundary was extended to include Wilton and the Application Site. Wilton is an established neighbourhood, well connected to a range of mixed-use areas. It is set in the south west suburbs of Cork City, which have experienced a significant growth in housing and population over the last ten years, and given its close proximity to the city centre and the range of large employers including Cork University Hospital, the demand for housing is likely to increase. The Application Site is in the south west corner of Wilton. To the west is Bishopstown and to the east Glasheen and Togher.
- 3.11 The Land Development Agency (LDA) identified the site as suitable for a comprehensive residential development. This accords with the land use zoning in the CCDP, which identified the Application Site in Z0 01, Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods. The site is vacant, managed and benefits from a number of site access options, is within walking distance of local employment and retail services in Wilton and the surrounding area. The proposed development on this site accords with the national and local planning objectives which promote the development of compact growth within the built-up footprint of the City in underutilised locations. (Figure 2.21: Growth Strategy Map, CCDP)
- 3.12 The Site rises from the south west corner to the north east corner. **See Figure 3.** The road infrastructure and neighbouring land is at a lower elevation than the lands further afield. The Site is in a tight visual envelope of mature trees.

Figure 3: Topographical plan of the Application Site surrounding area



Source: topographic-map.com

- 3.13 The study area is traversed by major route corridors including the N40 (Cork South Ring Road), in a west – east direction with a flyover at the Sarsfield Road Roundabout. The Eastbound Parallel Link Road, and Westbound Parallel Link Road, link to Sarsfield Road, giving access to the Application Site. It serves as both a commuter route and a bypass of the city centre for traffic between the south west and forms part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). (Source: Transport Infrastructure Ireland, N40 Demand Management Study, May 2017).

- 3.14 Sarsfield Road is an urban dual carriageway and heads north to the environs of the River Lee and the N22, and south beyond the industrial estates and residential area to rural fields and Spur Hill.
- 3.15 The Wilton roundabout is located to the north east of the Wilton shopping centre and serves traffic from Wilton Road to the north, Bishopstown Road to the west and Glasheen Road to the east. It also serves Sarsfield Road to the south.
- 3.16 The larger industrial estates tend to be located on the outskirts of the city. The area to the south of the N40 between the N71 and N27 has a strong presence of industrial land uses and includes Doughcloyne Industrial Estate, Togher Industrial Estate, Southside Industrial Estate and Lehenaghmore Industrial Estate and residential housing including Matthew Hill. Beyond this is pastoral farmland with scattered farms and large houses.
- 3.17 Cork Airport including the Business Park is set further south in the rural landscape.

Local Amenities, Parklands and Open Spaces

- 3.18 The closest area of green space is adjacent to the footpath running parallel to the South Ring Road, circumventing the ESB Networks site.
- 3.19 There are a number of public open spaces and formal recreation grounds to the east of Sarsfield Road including a large area of open grassland with mature trees bordering Sandbrook Road, Togher community ground, Neenan Park has 3 sports pitches and is the home St Finbarr's GAA Club. Clashduv Park is 640m to the east of the Application Site and has tennis courts, a pitch, and playground with surrounding grassland and trees.
- 3.20 St Finbarr's Cemetery and Liam Lynch Park, a small grassed area with surrounding trees, is north of Togher Community ground
- 3.21 To the west of the Application Site are Bishopstown GAA Club and Highfield Rugby Club and there are a number of pocket parks set in Bishopstown including Bishopscourt Park, a small tree lined park.
- 3.22 The notable public park is Fitzgerald Park, an 18 acre park adjoining the River Lee with walkways, playground, sculpture trail, performance pavilion and Cork Public Museum set in the grounds. It is set in Mardyke, c.2km north of the Application Site, and lies between two branches of the River Lee. This is also the site of Cork County Cricket Club, Mardyke Sports Ground and Mardyke Arena (University College Cork). This area has a number of registered monuments on the NIAH. The park area is bordered by housing with many Victorian villas/houses registered on the NIAH.
- 3.23 Cork Lough 1.5km to the north east of the Application Site is a large body of water with surrounding park, trail and play area.

Transport

- 3.24 There is an emphasis in the Cork City Development Plan to achieve a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes: walking, cycling and public transport and linking sustainable transport provision with land use providing a co-ordinated approach to the development of the city, which in turn can facilitate compact growth.
- 3.25 Buses into the city centre are currently within a 15 minute walk of Sarsfield Road. The CCDP notes that the Application Site is located to take advantage of Core Bus Corridor Routes (7) and (8) and also current and future cycle network development. The Kent Railway Station is on the north east side of the City on the north bank of the River Lee. The CCDP puts Wilton in Car Parking Zone 2, "*areas accessible to mass transit alongside public*

transportation corridors” and describes it as a city suburb with good public transport frequencies. (Table 4.6 p.129)

- 3.26 Section 10.339 notes that *“BusConnects and future Light Rail Transit will likely be located adjacent to Wilton District Centre. The feasibility of this route is underway and will be supported through the delivery of Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy projects. The proposed upgrades in public transport along with cycle lanes will improve access to the City Centre, Ballincollig and Mahon.”*

Planning and Designations

Planning History

- 3.27 There are currently no active planning applications pertaining to the Application Site. Previous applications between 2004 and 2008 relate to the wider site and ESB Networks site.
- 3.28 Relevant to this case is the submission for a mixed use development at Wilton Shopping Centre on a site of 4.82 hectares (ABP 28.302596, CCC ref 1837794). This was granted permission with conditions in May 2019 and comprises an extension to the existing shopping centre ranging in height from 2 to 7 storeys, with the removal of the Penneys store, Homefront store and 420 surface-level car parking spaces. The centre’s two existing malls, home to approximately 60 retailers and the Tesco store will remain unaffected. The proposed extension consists of:
- *Retail and café/restaurant*
 - *14 screen cinema*
 - *Offices*
 - *190-bedroom hotel*
 - *Public plaza and outdoor seating area*
 - *Multi-storey car park with 6 levels providing 874 spaces*
 - *Surface car park on the roof of the second storey accessed from the multi storey car park providing 257 spaces and the replacement of 178 surface car parking spaces as well as 227 bicycle parking spaces and 70 motorbike parking spaces.*

- 3.29 The changes relate to the north of the Wilton Shopping Centre, leaving the Tesco Superstore and the area of car parking to the south, which borders the northern boundary of the Application Site unaffected. The existing overspill car park adjacent to the northern boundary of the Application Site is not an area shown on the redline boundary of the permitted development.

- 3.30 This application was granted with a 10-year permission and work has yet to commence on implementing the approval however it will overlap with the proposed development as the permission does not expire until 2029.

Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP)

- 3.31 The proposals in this report have been informed by the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP) along with national and local planning policies and guidance. The CCDP accords with the provisions of National, Regional and Local Policies, including the National Planning Framework 2018, the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2023),

Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide (2009) and the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018).

3.32 The key strategic principles for Cork City include:

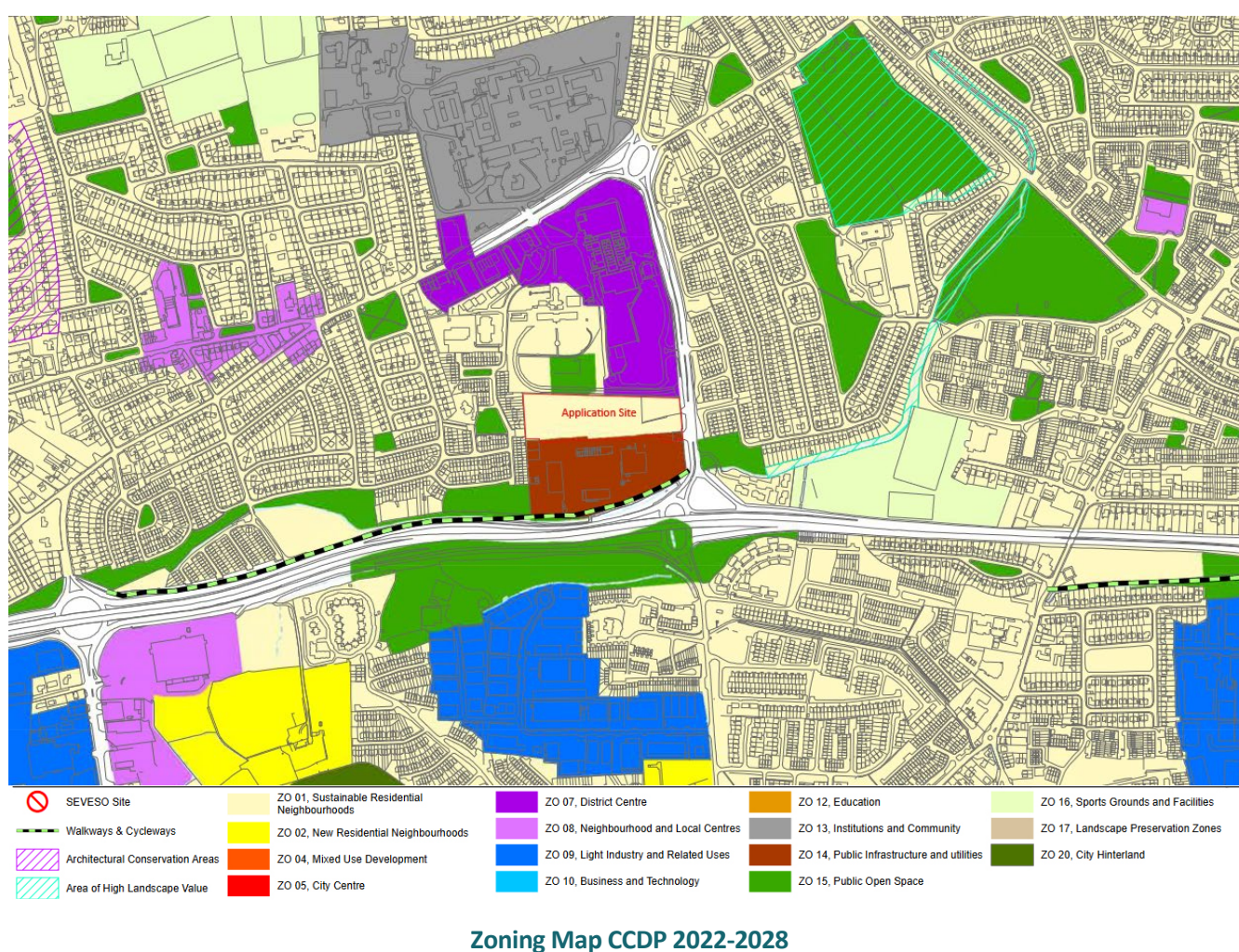
- *Compact growth – integrate land-use and transport planning to achieve a compact city with 50% of all new homes delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the City on regenerated brownfield, infill and greenfield sites identified in the Core Strategy, and to achieve higher population densities aligned with strategic infrastructure delivery.*
- *A city of neighbourhoods and communities – develop a sustainable, liveable city of neighbourhoods and communities based on the 15-minute city concept, ensuring that placemaking, accessibility and safety is at the heart of all development.*
- *Sustainable and active travel – implement the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Study (CMATS) and develop a transformed sustainable transport system with a significant shift toward walking, cycling and public transport.*
- *Enhanced built and natural heritage – protect, enhance, support and develop our built and natural heritage, our open spaces and parks and our green and blue infrastructure, and expand our built heritage with new buildings, townscapes and public spaces achieved through the highest standards of architecture and urban design.*
- *A resilient city, contributing to the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient city.*
- *A healthy, inclusive and diverse city.*
- *A connected city.*

3.33 Section 7.89 defines Wilton as a District Centre within the City Suburbs. These have a primary function mixed-use in nature, with a range of retail services, community and social facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of the local population and should not be dominated by one particular type of use.

3.34 Section 10.337 identifies Wilton as an area for growth consolidation and enhancement by providing a mix of new neighbourhood uses in suitable and underutilised location. Wilton shopping centre forms the core of the District Centre and with its proposed redevelopment will be the commercial and community focus for the south west suburbs.

3.35 The Application Site is zoned Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods, Zoning Objective 01: to protect and provide for residential uses and amenities, local services and community, institutional, educational and civic uses within easy reach of residents. **See Figure 4.**

Figure 4: Land use zoning of Application Site and environs - Source: Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

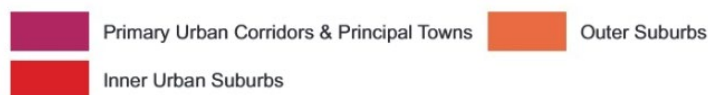
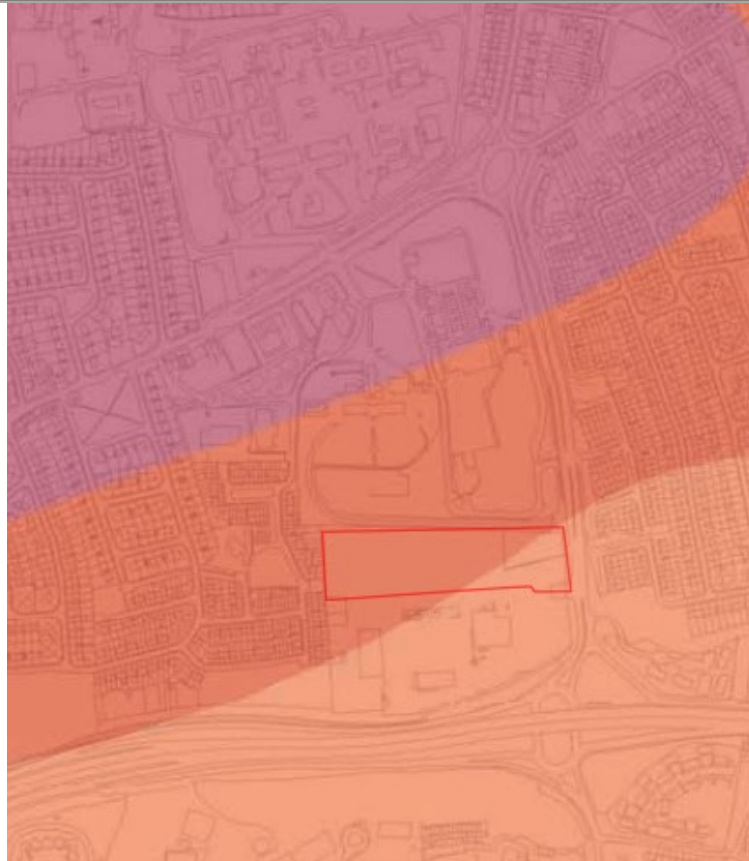


3.36 Chapter 11 Cityscape and Building Height sets out Cork City's building height and tall building strategy and is based upon work prepared as part of the Cork City Urban Density Building Height and Tall Building Study 2021. Table 11.1 Cork City Building Height Standards in the CCDP locates Wilton in the Fringe/Corridor/Centre. The majority of the Application Site falls within 'Inner Urban Suburbs' and a small portion of the south-eastern boundary is designated as 'Outer Suburbs'. See Figure 5. This designation determines the prevailing and target

heights of the site, which are based on the prevailing building heights in the area, which in the case of Wilton is 4 storeys and the 'Inner Urban Suburbs' and 'Outer Suburbs' 3 storeys.

- 3.37 According to Map 8 in the Mapped Objectives of the CCDP, buildings in Wilton have an upper target height of 5 storeys. However, the location of the Application Site according to the Map is substantially located in the Southwest Corridor and defined as 'The Inner Urban Suburbs' and 'Outer Suburbs' with an upper limit of 4 storeys. **See Figure 6.**
- 3.38 Section 11.45 of the CCDP defines a tall building as one that is equal to more than twice the height of the prevailing building height in a specific locality, the height of which will vary between and within different parts of Cork City. *"Within Cork City only buildings above 18m/6 residential storeys are considered 'tall buildings' and only then when they are significantly higher than those around them."* The proposed development ranges from 2 no storeys to 6 no storeys and so not considered a 'tall building'. This is addressed further in the visual assessment section in this report.
- 3.39 The Application Site has a large number of detractors and features, including light industrial works, large retail outlets with extensive car parking and a major road infrastructure, which degrade the quality of the landscape. The Application Site has a high level of containment and the landscape has a high level of ability to tolerate the nature and scale of change of the development.

Figure 5: Location of Application Site and Density and Building Heights Strategy



Source: CCDP Volume 2 Mapped Objectives Map 8 South-Western Suburbs

- 3.40 Chapter 10 Key Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Development Sites, Objective 10.94, identifies Wilton as an area for growth consolidation and enhancement by providing a mix of new neighbourhood uses in suitable and underutilised locations and to support the sustainable redevelopment of the District Centre as a mixed-use, urban-format, in line with retail and other relevant objectives. The proposed development is contributing to the neighbourhood in an underutilised location. In addition, compact growth is one of the key strategic principles in the CCDP.
- 3.41 The granted permission for the development of the Wilton shopping centre supports a 7-storey building and the proposed development is situated within an area incorporating large buildings and complexes including the shopping centre, the ESB Networks site and Cork University Hospital, and integrates positively with this area, strategically and at a district and local scale.

Figure 6: Location of Application Site and Density and Building Heights Strategy

Density and Building Heights Strategy	Density					Heights			
	FAR		Dwellings Per Hectare			No. of Storeys			
	Prevailing	Target	Prevailing	Target*		Prevailing		Target	
				Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
City	2.5 - 7	4+	10 - 25	100	N/A	2	5	4	8**
City Centre	2.5 - 7	4+	10 - 25	100	N/A	2	5	4	6
North Docks	0.5 - 1	3+	0 - 40	100	N/A	2	3	4	7
South Docks	0.5 - 1.5	4+	0 - 10	100	N/A	2	4	5	10**
Fringe / Corridor / Centre	1.0 - 3.5	2.5 - 4+	25 - 100+	50	150	2	6	4	7
City Fringe / Corridor	1.5 - 3.5	2.5 - 4.5	25 - 100	50	150	3	6	5	7
Mahon	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Blackpool	0.5 - 3.0	1 - 4	0 - 40	50	120	2	5	4	6
Wilton	0.5 - 3.5	1 - 4	10 - 25	50	120	2	4	3	5
Inner Urban Suburbs	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	10 - 40	45	100	2	4	3	5
1. The Urban North	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	50	100	2	3	3	4
2. Tivoli	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 3.5	0 - 10	50	100	2	4	3	5
3. Ballintemple & Blackrock	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	40	80	2	4	3	5
4. Douglas	0.2 - 2.5	0.5 - 3.5	5 - 20	50	100	2	3	3	4
5. South Link Road Corridor	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	15 - 40	50	100	2	3	3	4
6. South West Corridor	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 2.5	20 - 40	50	100	2	3	3	4
7. North West	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	10 - 25	40	80	2	2.5	2	4
8. North Blackpool	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	40	100	2	4	3	5
9. Central Ballincollig	0.5 - 3.0	0.7 - 3.5	10 - 25	50	100	2	4	3	5
10. Blarney	0.2 - 1.5	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	25	50	1	2	2	3
11. Stoneview	0.2 - 0.7	0.5 - 1.5	0 - 25	40	80	1	2	2	3
Outer Suburbs	0 - 1.5	0.2 - 1.5	0 - 25	35	60	2	3	2	4

* Assuming resi-led scheme.

** Potentially suitable for exceptional tall building(s).

Source: Reddy architecture + urbanism/CCDP Chapter 11, Table 11.1

- 3.42 Section 11.33 notes that the building height of development will respond directly to the proposed density of development, the character of an area, as well as block development typologies, site coverage and a range of other factors.
- 3.43 Section 11.48 notes that *“Tall buildings that are of exemplary architectural quality, correctly sited, can make a positive contribution to the cityscape. However, they can also have detrimental visual and environmental impacts if in inappropriate locations or of poor design quality.”*
- 3.44 In assessing development proposals for tall buildings, Cork City Council will apply the guidance set out in the Cork City Density, Building Height and Tall buildings Study (2021) and indicates that the development proposals should address the following visual impacts:
- 3.45 Visual Impact:
- *Views of buildings from long-range, medium-range and immediate context should not be adversely affected by the building.*
 - *Whether part of a group or stand-alone, tall buildings should reinforce the spatial hierarchy of the local and wider context and aid legibility and wayfinding.*
 - *Architectural quality and materials should be of an exemplary standard.*
 - *Proposals should avoid detrimental impact to heritage assets and their settings and should positively contribute to the character of the area.*
 - *Buildings should not cause adverse reflected glare and should minimise light pollution from internal and external lighting.*
- 3.46 Section 11.60 notes that tall buildings should be designed to ensure that:
- *They are of exemplary design quality;*
 - *The design process analyses the nearby urban morphology and, where possible, adopts a finer grain of building footprint and slender form*
 - *They integrate positively into Corks cityscape at a strategic, district and local scale, contribute positively to their immediate context and have a positive relationship with the street and public realm;*
 - *Their architectural strategy effectively provides a top, middle and bottom to the building;*
 - *They are energy efficient.*
- 3.47 Section 11.66 notes that issues when assessing proposals for residential developments include:
- *Design quality;*
 - *Site features and context;*
 - *Residential Density;*
 - *Building Height;*
 - *Residential mix (dwelling type, size, tenure and specialist housing);*
 - *Existing neighbourhood facilities;*

- *Integration with the surround environment;*
- *Transport and accessibility;*
- *Residential amenity eg private/communal/public space;*
- *Impacts of residential amenity;*
- *Utilities provision;*
- *Waste management.*

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

- 3.48 Section 3.4 relates to the suburban/edge locations (city and town) and notes *“Development should include an effective mix of 2, 3, and 4-storey development which integrates well into existing and historical neighbourhoods and 4 storeys or more can be accommodated alongside existing larger buildings, trees and parkland, river/sea frontage or wider streets”*. SPPR 4 notes that planning authorities must secure *“a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and avoid mono-type building typologies (eg two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more.”*

Key Views and Prospects

- 3.49 View Management Framework – Map 05 does not indicate any ‘Strategic Linear Views’ or a ‘Viewing Location of Special Amenity Value’ related to the Application Site. St Joseph’s Church c.189m to the north of the site is indicated as a Local Landmark Building. The Church is screened by St Joseph’s SMA, which is very well screened by mature trees, hedges and walls. Long views along Sarsfield Road and Wilton Road are covered by the verified views.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

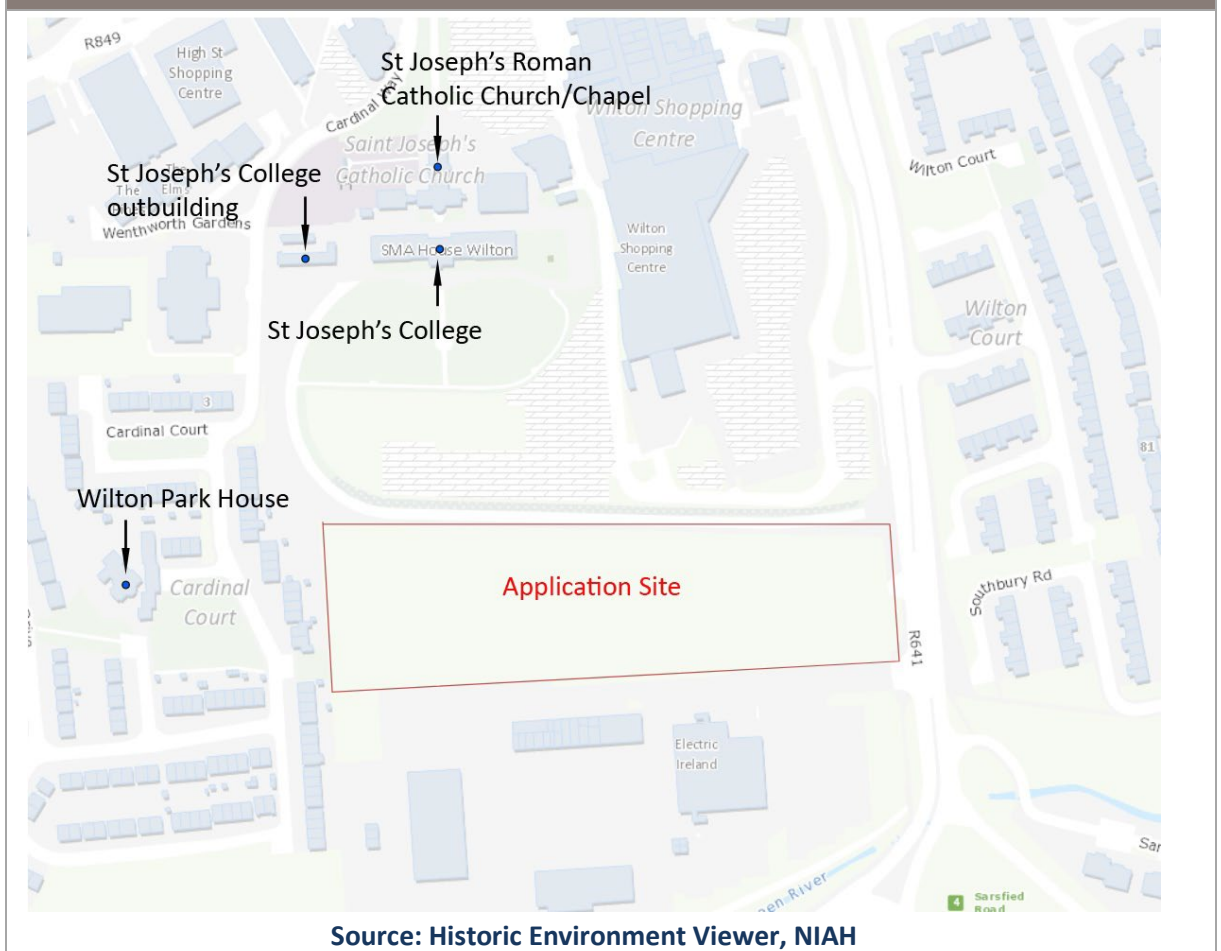
- 3.50 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) does not identify any sites or monuments on the Application Site. The majority of heritage sites are clustered in and around Cork City. As the Application Site is set in what was formerly the rural lands beyond the city, the heritage assets largely relate to large country houses, ecclesiastical institutions and sites and monuments. **See Figure 7.**

- *Wilton Park House, Bishopstown Road, Ballinaspig More, 1890-1900, reference 20869001, originally named Holly Grove.*
- *St Joseph’s College outbuilding, Cardinal Way, Farrandahadore More, 1840-1880, reference 20869002.*
- *St Joseph’s College, Cardinal Way Farrandahadore More, 1800-1840, reference 20869003*

- 3.51 The closest heritage asset, Wilton Park House, is approximately 110m to the west of the Application Site. This two-storey detached building has retained much of its original fabric, which contributes to the character of the house. Sold to the Society of African Missions (1902), it subsequently was leased to an order of priests and then lay tenants. It fell into disrepair and was subsequently renovated in 1977 and handed over to Bishopstown Community Association (1979).

- 3.52 St Joseph's College, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church/Chapel and St Joseph's College outbuilding, form part of a group of related buildings. St Joseph's College was formerly a country house, built c.1820 it once formed the parkland on which the Application Site is located 140m to the south. Now known as St Joseph's SMA, it has had a number of uses, including a house of formation for students of the Society of African Missions preparing for priesthood in Africa. It is now a retirement house for missionaries. St Joseph's outbuilding is no longer in use but retains its original form.
- 3.53 Joseph's Church is constructed from red brick, grey limestone and fishscale roof tiles, which add colour and textural interest to the site. The intervening vegetation and built form screen visibility of the broach-spire from beyond areas in close proximity.
- 3.54 Two entries on the NIAH are just north of the Wilton Roundabout, a milestone/milepost on Wilton Road, dated 1820-1840 indicating the early developments in road transport and Wilton Villas on Glasheen Road, a terrace of 5 houses built c.1900, which is an interesting juxtaposition between the historical and the more recent housing.

Figure 7: Sites and monuments in proximity to the Application Site



Environmental Protection Agency

- 3.55 Maps available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) do not indicate protected landscapes, environmental or ecology areas on the Application Site. The River Glasheen flows along the southern boundary of the ESB Network site and its status is poor and the Water Framework Directive assesses it as At Risk.

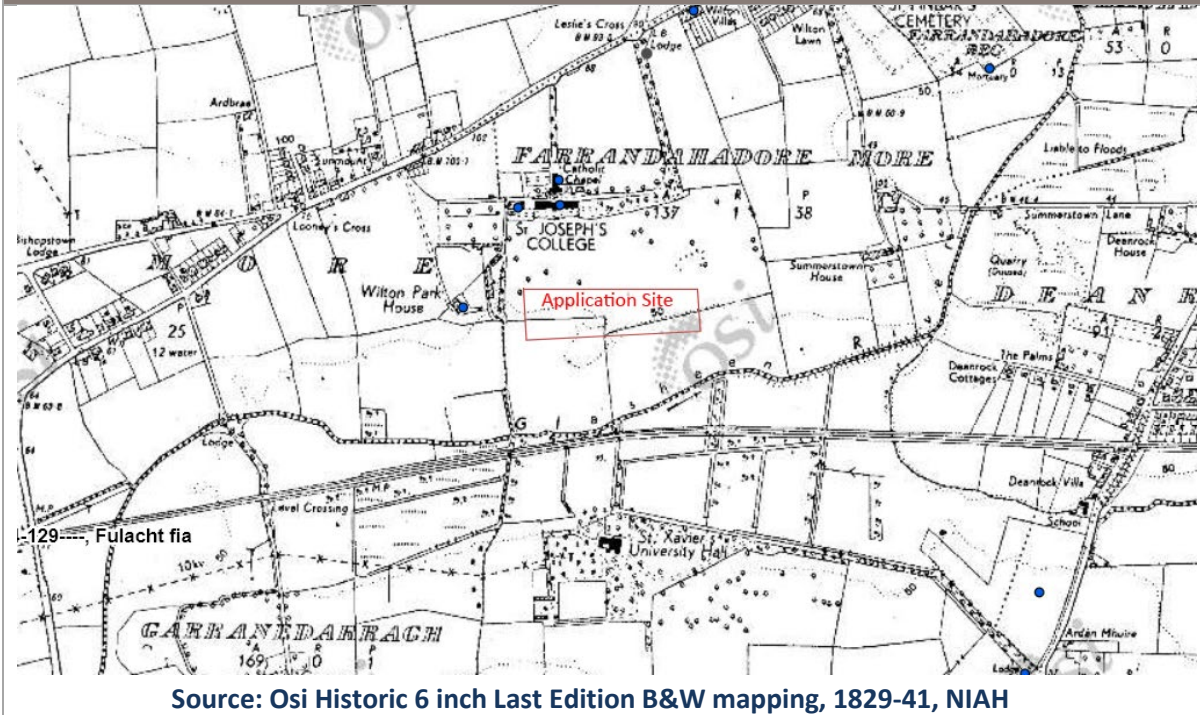
National Planning Framework

- 3.56 The National Planning Framework objectives include seeking to achieve compact urban growth, focusing on reusing previously developed 'brownfield' land, building up infill sites and either reusing or redeveloping existing sites and buildings, in well serviced urban locations, particularly those served by good public transport and supporting services, including employment opportunities. Section 2.6 outlines the advantages: *"It can bring new life and footfall, contribute to the viability of services, shops and public transport, increase housing supply and enable more people to be closer to employment and recreational opportunities, as well as to walk or cycle more and use the car less. Along with transport demand, higher densities and shorter travel distances will also reduce energy demand and use."*

Local Landscape History

- 3.57 Cork was founded in 6th century as a monastic settlement and was expanded by Viking invaders around 915. Cork City was once fully walled and the remnants of the old medieval town centre can be found around South and North Main streets. In the early 20th century agriculture was the predominant employer of men. The industrial classes at this time included shoemakers, brewery workers, clerks, egg packers, labourers and were the highest employer of women, who were also employed as governesses and in domestic service. The sea also offered various forms of employment. The port at Queenstown (renamed Cobh in 1922) was central to the process of emigration to America between the Great Famine and 1950.
- 3.58 **Figure 8** below indicates that the Application Site was set in rural fields and was part of the estate of St Joseph's College, which was originally a country house, built c.1820 and is set approximately 140m north of the Application Site in grassed grounds. The building has been extended over time and has changed in use, from the late 19th century functioning as a college for students for the Society of African Missions (SMA) preparing for priesthood in Africa. It is now a retirement house for missionaries as well as a house of mission animation. It forms part of a group of related structures with the church and associated graveyard, which are registered on the NIAH.

Figure 8: Historical map of site location



4 Proposed Development

4.1 This is a Large Scale Residential Development for 348 dwellings on this former ESB networks site in Wilton and is one of a number of strategic sites being developed by the Land Development Agency in Cork that has the objective of supplying affordable and social homes on public land creating thriving communities with positive social impact.

- Construction of 348 no residential units and a 156m² childcare facility consisting of 16 no 2-storey, 3 no bedroom townhouses and 332 no apartment units:
 - 152 no 1 bedroom apartments
 - 168 no 2 bedroom apartments and
 - 12 no 3 bed apartments
- Arranged in 3 no apartments blocks:
 - The East Block at 6 no storeys
 - The Middle Block from 5 to 6 storeys and
 - The West Block from 5 to 6 storeys
- Public, communal and private open space.
- Vehicular access is via a shared access with the ESB Networks site from a controlled junction on Sarsfield Road, with proposed upgrades to this access point.
- A cycle and pedestrian path runs parallel to the main vehicular route through the landscape and an additional pedestrian/cycle entrance slightly further north on Sarsfield Road, which will pass through a landscape area of public open space, the 'Village Green'.
- 148 no car parking spaces, along with bicycle parking space at surface and undercroft level.
- Hard and soft landscaping. Boundary treatments include repair and replacement of some existing boundary treatments.
- All associated works to facilitate development including SuDs measures with green roof provision and below ground attenuation structures, EV charging points and 3 no ESB substations, and photovoltaic panels.

Mitigation Measures

Construction Stage Mitigation

4.2 Due to the nature of construction, it is inevitable that adverse effects will occur to the townscape and visual amenity in the immediate area. The significance of these temporary effects will be limited by implementing the following measures:

- *Standard construction management plans in accordance with the local authority guidance.*
- *Deliveries will be timed outside of peak hours.*

- *Pollution prevention measures and control of disturbance including dust, mud, noise. Damaged surfaces to be made good.*
- *Temporary hoarding where appropriate consisting of visually impermeable fabric or hoarding board, for the full duration of construction will be erected around construction areas to clearly delineate working areas and protect the public from the works.*
- *Publicity material may be displayed on the hoardings to inform the public and passers-by about the proposed development.*
- *Lighting will be maintained in good order and provided where necessary to ensure sufficient illumination. Precautions will be taken to ensure no shadows are cast by hoardings or building works onto pavement and road areas. Internal construction lighting will be angled so that it does not cause nuisance to adjacent properties to neighbouring properties.*
- *An effective site and litter management system will be established from the outset to ensure a clean, tidy and presentable image.*

Design and Landscape Mitigation

- 4.3 The proposed development has a large public realm component based on the location of existing stands of mature trees and orientation of the buildings with the apartment buildings and townhouses arranged along the length of the site facing south to take advantage of the southerly aspect.
- 4.4 The Landscape Masterplan indicates the extent of hard and soft landscaping contributing to an increase in biodiversity and community identity and sense of place. **See Figure 9.**

Figure 9: Landscape Masterplan

Source: Park Hood



- 4.5 The East Block is perpendicular to Sarsfield Road to retain the existing mature and specimen trees to enhance and protect the natural landscape features of the site and enhance biodiversity. Following a tree survey in 2023 a Root Protection Area has been defined.
- 4.6 Cyclists and pedestrians, both residents and the public have access to a footpath and cycle path network that runs parallel to the main vehicular route and also routes through the landscaped parkland. **See Figure 10.**
- 4.7 The buildings are arranged in a series of distinct character areas to create a sense of place. **See Figure 11.** A 'Village Green' is located at the site entrance and a 'Formal Square' in the western portion of the site.
- 4.8 The scheme incorporates a creche close to the entrance to the site presenting a lively community welcome to visitors.

Figure 10: Movement & Connectivity



Source: Reddy architecture + urbanism

Figure 11: Character areas of the proposed development



Source: Park Hood

Figure 12: CGIs of entrance to proposed development on Sarsfield Road



Source: Redline Studios

- 4.9 The design of the apartment buildings with differing roof profiles and levels of ridge heights along with external balconies and apartments with dual aspects, creates visual interest in the massing and form of the buildings. This is particularly relevant in Viewpoints taken in close proximity to the scheme. **See Figure 12.**
- 4.10 The Middle Block and West Block are 'U-shaped' buildings with a podium deck over parking, bikes, plant area and storage facilities, creating a more private elevated, sunny space for residents, and a secure and screened space for parking and storage. These offer more intimate semi-private space for residents.

Figure 13: CGIs of western end of proposed development



Source: Redline Studios

- 4.11 The western end of the site consists of 2-storey terraced townhouses that transition between the taller apartment buildings and the 2-storey terraces on Cardinal Court that run adjacent to the western boundary of the Application Site. This aspect of the design is particularly important to respect the private space of the 2-storey terraces on Cardinal Court, lessening the visual impact. **See Figure 13.**

- 4.12 This development has high quality planted and walkable public open space with 0.62ha (23% of 2.61ha total site area) of the site allocated to public open space. This is well in excess of the 13% requirement noted in Table 11.11 in Chapter 11 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

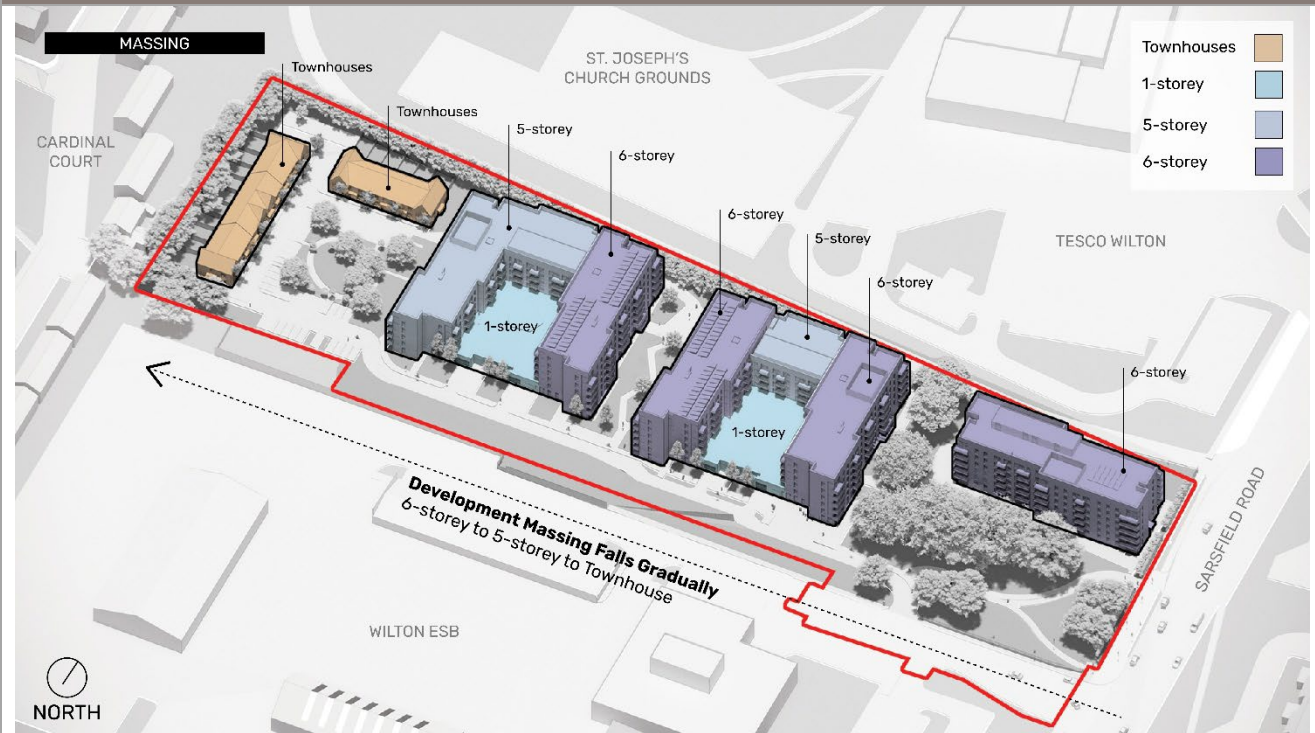
Figure 14: Allocation of open space on Application Site



Source: Reddy architecture and urbanism

- 4.13 **Figure 15 and Figure 16** indicate massing in the proposed development. The 6-storey apartment blocks to 2-storey townhouses at the west end of the site, allowing a transition to the existing 2-storey terraces on Cardinal Court. The reduction in scale to the 2-storey townhouses and the landscaped square, brings a more intimate feel to this part of the site and is more in keeping with the neighbouring terraced housing.

Figure 15: Massing and heights of the proposed scheme



Source: Reddy architecture + urbanism

4.14

Figure 16: Elevations of the proposed scheme



Source: Reddy architecture + urbanism

5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this report is to objectively and professionally assess how the proposed development affects the landscape/townscape and visual amenity of the application site and the wider environment. The terminology is based on that used in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (2013)*.
- 5.2 The key consideration in this project is the magnitude and level of effect based on the scale of the proposed development against the existing setting, visual quality and sensitivity of the Application Site. A further consideration is the people who live or work in close proximity and those that pass by and who may feel that the visual and townscape quality could be affected by this proposal.

Landscape character assessment

- 5.3 The level of landscape effects is determined by assessing the sensitivity of the landscape resource and the magnitude of the effect (both physical and perceptual).
- 5.4 The sensitivity of the landscape resource is determined by a combination of the landscape value and the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline.
- 5.5 Table 1 summarises the components affecting the landscape value of the Application Site and wider study area.

Table 1

Factors Affecting Landscape Value		
Factors	Comment	Landscape Value
Landscape Quality/Condition	<p>The Application Site is a rectangular plot of land. There are no buildings, it comprises grassland and trees. The eastern boundary borders c.85m of Sarsfield Road and has a large stand of mature trees, with telegraph poles and electrical infrastructure for training the ESB engineers. The entire southern boundary is open to the ESB Networks site and planted with avenue trees. There are scattered mature trees in the centre of the site. The northern, western and eastern boundary consist of a mixture of fencing, boundary walls and perimeter hedging and trees.</p> <p>The site is well managed. Sarsfield Road has a boundary of railings and brick pillars and incorporates a pedestrian path and cycle route.</p> <p>It is set within a functional and ordinary townscape between car parking for a Tesco Superstore and an ESB Networks site. The entrance/egress to the site is on an urban dual carriageway subject to heavy traffic. The N40 flyover is at the end of Sarsfield Road with the infrastructure that large scale national roads bring.</p>	Ordinary/Good

Factors Affecting Landscape Value		
Factors	Comment	Landscape Value
	<p>Open green space and residential housing lie on the opposite side of Sarsfield Road and also to the west of the Application Site.</p> <p>The land beyond the Tesco overspill car park is St Joseph's SMA with a collection of buildings of the former St Joseph's College, including the Catholic Church, graveyard and SMA Parish Community Centre. These are designated on the NIAH and St Joseph's Church is also a designated Local Landscape Building.</p> <p>The Application Site is set within an ordinary landscape alongside a busy dual carriageway, with large retail, electrical infrastructure and utilities, and residential neighbourhoods, however, the green infrastructure assets on the site and its boundaries, encloses the site from the urban form and the proximity of the St Joseph's SMA and associated buildings adds to the character of the area.</p>	
Scenic Quality	The Application Site is relatively enclosed by the trees at the entrance and the walls and vegetation at the boundaries, consequently, views in and out of the site are restricted. There are views from the ESB Networks Site and the access road from Sarsfield Road.	Ordinary
Rarity	The site is devoid of heritage and natural rare assets but is in proximity to heritage assets.	Ordinary
Representativeness	The Application Site represents a suburban residential area with a major traffic corridor, low density housing and large scale electrical infrastructure and utilities, retail and community services.	Ordinary
Conservation Interests	The conservation interests relate to the existing trees on site, which will be retained and protected during the construction phases.	Ordinary
Recreational value	The site has no formal recreational value.	Ordinary
Perceptual aspects	The perception is of a plot of land with well managed green infrastructure assets set in an suburban/urban townscape with functional outlets.	Ordinary
Overall Landscape Value		Ordinary

5.6 Table 2 summarises factors affecting the ability of the application site and wider area to accommodate the proposals without affecting the landscape/townscape character.

Table 2

Factors affecting the ability of the Application Site and wider area to accommodate the proposed development	
Factors	Comment
Land cover	
Existing residential development	The closest housing is on Cardinal Court running parallel with the western boundary of the site. This 1960's housing is 2-storeys and formed of two blocks of 4 terraced houses and a semi-detached house and are stepped with the rear gardens of different lengths abutting the site.
Existing trees, hedgerows and shrubs	The Site is bound by mature trees, hedgerows, walls and fencing and is a well enclosed site with substantial vegetation, including mature trees both on the site, many of which are to be protected and retained.
Adjacent Urban Settlement	
Nature of existing urban edge	The area around the Application Site comprises large-scale retail, infrastructure and utilities and a major road network. Large car parks are a dominant feature. St Joseph's SMA and the collection of buildings, just north of an overspill car park for Tesco Superstore, are registered on the NIAH and St Joseph's Church is designated a Local Landmark Building. Boundaries of the built form and car parks are generally well planted with mature trees, hedgerows and shrubs and walls/railings/fencing.
Settlement pattern	The roads from Wilton Roundabout form a quadrant with the large-scale shopping centre and car park, ESB Network Site and Cork University Hospital in the top left quadrant. This incorporates the proposed development. Doughcloyne Industrial Estate skirted by a narrow strip of semi detached and terraced housing in the south west quadrant. The area of Glasheen comprising the green spaces of Presentation Brothers College Sports Grounds, Liam Lynch Park, St Finbarr's Cemetery, Togher community ground, Clashduv Park and Neenan Park set within residential housing, in the north east quadrant. And several industrial estates, bordered by residential estates with their own mini quadrants in the south east quadrant.
Settlement edge	Cork is a relatively compact city and the south west suburbs border rural lands. The proposed development has 5-6 storey buildings reducing in height to 2 storeys to integrate with the existing 2 storey terraces on Cardinal Court. A 6 storey building is not designated as a tall building by the CCDP. It is however, higher than the upper target number of storeys permitted on the Application Site, whether it is considered to be Wilton, the Inner Urban Suburbs or the Outer Suburbs. However, the nature of the receiving townscape and surrounding transport infrastructure

Factors affecting the ability of the Application Site and wider area to accommodate the proposed development	
Factors	Comment
	should be borne in mind. The Application Site between the Tesco Superstore car park and ESB Networks Site is eminently suitable for this development. A 7 storey building was approved in a planning application for the adjacent Wilton Shopping Centre site.

- 5.7 It is considered that the Application Site is set within an **ordinary** townscape with **ordinary** landscape value and **low** sensitivity and is able to accommodate the proposed development without significant effects.

Site Preparation and Construction Works

- 5.8 The construction is to be carried out in a single phase. The greatest impact during the majority of construction operations will be on pedestrians, road users and customers/staff at the ESB Networks site and the residents on Cardinal Court. The level of effect will be moderate/substantial adverse. Beyond the site the potentially adverse temporary/short term landscape and visual impacts are likely as a result of the following:

Table 3

Construction works			
Construction operations	Extent	Duration of construction works	Level of effect (adverse)
Site establishment: Hoardings on site perimeter, storage and compound areas, welfare facilities, security and safety lighting.	Local – This construction operation will be more confined to the site and less obtrusive to those bordering the site.	Short term	Moderate
Ground works	Root protection on retained trees. Removal of trees to accommodate proposed development.	Short term	Moderate
Site access and haulage routes.	Local – Construction access is to be off Sarsfield Road. Delays are unlikely on Sarsfield Road, which is a major road.	Medium term	Low

Construction works			
Construction operations	Extent	Duration of construction works	Level of effect (adverse)
Excavation of new foundations.	Local – Screened by hoardings. Disturbance, noise, dust. The greatest will be on the residents on Cardinal Court, with only a slight level of effect on pedestrians on Sarsfield Road and residents on Wilton Court.	Short term	Moderate
Fixed construction plant, including cranes, scaffolding and gantries.	Local – The greatest impact will be on the residents of Cardinal Court. However, the townhouses are 2 storeys and will require lower fixed construction plan than the buildings further east. The residents of Wilton Court are well separated from the site. Pedestrians and road users on Sarsfield Road will be affected for a short distance only.	Medium term	Moderate
Construction of building.	As construction of higher floors commences, there will be more visual exposure but only locally.	Medium term	Moderate
Hard and soft landscape works.	New internal cycle and pedestrian paths, paving, play area, podium level green roofs, retaining wall and railing, planters.	Short term	Moderate
Roadworks and infrastructure.	Local – new internal access road and paths and some surface level car parking, SUDs measures including podium level green roof provisions, and ancillary infrastructure and services provision including photovoltaic panels. The hard landscape operations on Sarsfield Road will affect pedestrians and car users and there will be visibility, disturbance, dust and noise.	Short term	Slight/ Moderate

Construction phase

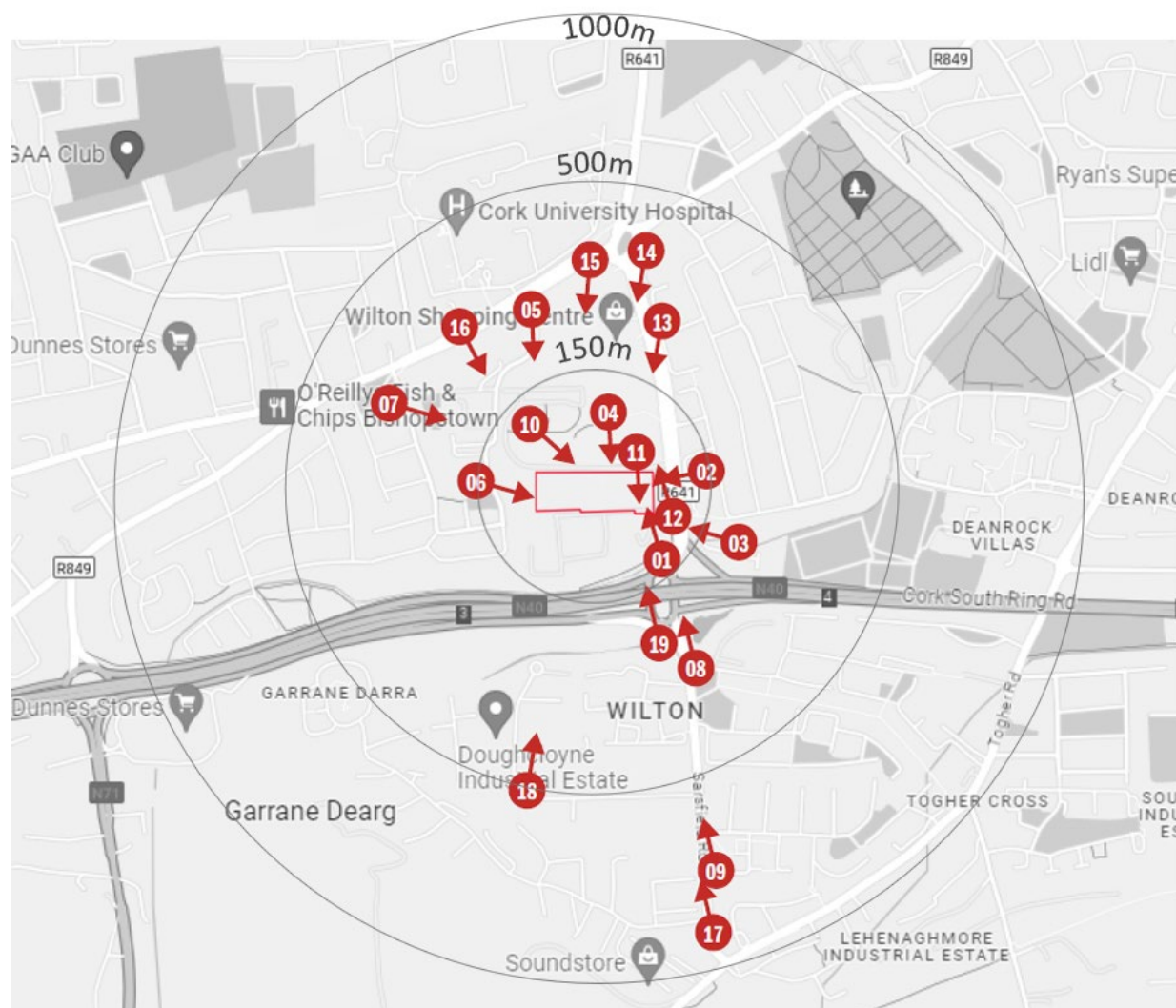
- 5.9 The landscape impacts during construction will be local, in close proximity to the Application Site due to the enclosure created by mature planting, the limited public access to the site and the limited number of visual receptors and their receiving environment. The greatest impact of the construction works will be on the staff and visitors to the ESB Networks Site. The staff, however, will be less sensitive to the works as they are working in a semi-industrial environment. Customers and staff at the Tesco Superstore may be aware of the construction works but the car park is screened by the mature planting on the boundaries and their transition through the car park and their focus on parking and shopping will make any impact during the construction phase minimal.
- 5.10 Sarsfield Road: Views will be transient and screened by mature trees and hoardings. There will be some level of impact on pedestrians and car users, during construction at the entrance to Sarsfield Road.
- 5.11 There will be impact on the residents on Cardinal Court during construction of the town houses. Construction on the east side of the site will be screened and there is a measure of separation and distance.
- 5.12 The residents and pedestrians to the east of Sarsfield Road have some measure of separation and distance from the construction works on the site and less liable to experience disturbance, dust and noise. Fixed construction plant including cranes, will stand higher than the site hoardings so will change the local landscape character in the short-term and these will be visible from Wilton Court, the residents experiencing moderate medium term impacts.
- 5.13 Further afield the effects of construction works will have little impact due to the enclosed nature of the site.

Visual Impact Assessment

- 5.14 The following section summarises the existing setting and likely or anticipated effects on the nineteen representational viewpoints. To demonstrate site visibility and impacts, viewpoints were selected within publicly accessible areas based on the following criteria:
- *Site investigation to establish locations where there were 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)*
 - *Distance of the view. Sarsfield Road figures repeatedly as it is a major road running in a north-south direction past the Application Site between the N22 and the N40 and has the potential for close, middle and long distance views.*
 - *Viewpoints on the N40 at the Sarsfield Road junction were assessed and are fleeting in nature and restricted by the height of screens along edge of the carriageway. Road safety issues prevented verified view photographs being taken from this location but an assessment was made from a moving vehicle along this road to ensure impacts were insignificant.*
- 5.15 The following viewpoints were selected
- *Viewpoint 1 – Sarsfield Road*

- *Viewpoint 2 – Wilton Court*
- *Viewpoint 3 – Southbury Road*
- *Viewpoint 4 – Tesco carpark*
- *Viewpoint 5 – Cardinal Way*
- *Viewpoint 6 – Cardinal Court*
- *Viewpoint 7 – Bishopscourt Drive*
- *Viewpoint 8 – Richmond*
- *Viewpoint 9 – Sarsfield Road*
- *Viewpoint 10 – Tesco car park*
- *Viewpoint 11 – Tesco car park*
- *Viewpoint 12 – Sarsfield Road*
- *Viewpoint 13 – Sarsfield Road*
- *Viewpoint 14 – Wilton Roundabout*
- *Viewpoint 15 – Wilton Roundabout*
- *Viewpoint 16 – Bishopstown Road*
- *Viewpoint 17 – Sarsfield Road*
- *Viewpoint 18 – Doughcloyne Industrial Estate*
- *Viewpoint 19 – Sarsfield Road*

Figure 17: Viewpoint Location Plan



Source: Redline Studios

- 5.16 The following section summarises the existing setting and provides an illustration of the visual impact of the proposed development from representational viewpoints from which photomontages have been prepared based on the proposed development plans and elevations. The photographs were taken on site visits in July and December 2024.
- 5.17 The selection of the final viewpoints used for the assessment took account of
- *Accessibility to the public;*
 - *Potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected;*
 - *Viewing distance, ie short, medium and long distance views, and elevation;*
 - *Nature of viewing experience eg views from settlements and sequential points along routes;*
 - *Potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other developments.*
- 5.18 The level of effect will vary depending on the amount of screening and/or filtering of views by the built townscape and vegetation. As the trees have lost their leaves at the time of taking the photographs, this is the worst case scenario.
- 5.19 For clarity and ease of interpretation, views are categorised according to their distance from the site as follows:
- *Short-range – 0-150m from the nearest site periphery;*
 - *Mid-range – 150m-500m from the nearest site periphery;*
 - *Long-range – 500+m from the nearest site periphery.*

Viewpoint 1 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	70m looking north
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	<p>In the foreground is the wide grass verge on Sarsfield Road. The railings border the grassed and tree lined space on the eastern boundary of the car parking area of ESB Networks site.</p> <p>Sarsfield Road is a busy four lane road leading north to the Wilton Roundabout and access to arterial roads to Cork centre, residential estates to the west and east and Cork University Hospital. To the south Sarsfield Road leads to the N40, the Doughcloyne Industrial Estate and further residential estates. The vertical road infrastructure including street and road lighting, signs and traffic lights are prominent features.</p> <p>The main vehicular entrance visible in the photo gives access to the ESB Networks site and the Application Site and is controlled by overhead traffic lights. Approximately 80m further on is the entrance to a road St Joseph's SMA associated buildings that circumvents the southern boundary of the Tesco car park.</p>		

Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include commuters, car users and those accessing the residential estates and retail outlets. Views along Sarsfield Road change in nature as the receptors travel past the site. At Viewpoint 1 there are filtered views through the boundary planting to the ESB Networks parking area. Further north are filtered views through the boundary trees of the extensive car park of the Tesco Superstore and Wilton Shopping Centre. Residential housing is visible on the east side of the road across the 4-lane urban carriageway.
Magnitude	Slight
Predicted Change	<p>The East Block is a readily apparent component from this viewpoint on Sarsfield Road. During the winter months the views of the south elevation of the East Block will be filtered through the mature trees on the boundary of the Application Site and the ESB Network Site. During the summer months visibility is largely screened with only a partial view of the top floor of the East Block visible above the existing mature trees.</p> <p>The building is perpendicular to Sarsfield Road, the end of the block occupying approximately 34m along Sarsfield Road. The existing entrance to both the ESB Networks site and the Application Site is to remain and there will be further pedestrian and cycle routes from Sarsfield Road, which will pass through a landscaped area of public open space, the village green.</p>
Level of effect	<p>Neutral – The proposals form a readily apparent component within the overall view. The mature trees filter in the winter and screen in the summer and soften the built form providing a human scale to the proposals. Sarsfield Road slopes up from this viewpoint, diverting the focus from the East Block by creating a perspective, which gives the appearance of depth and space and lessens the impact of the mass. Any views would be transient and heavily influenced by the existing urban environment.</p> <p>This is essentially an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area and visual interest/positive townscape and will represent new development and investment in this part of the city.</p>

Viewpoint 2 Wilton Court



Viewpoint Address or Location	Parking area Wilton Court	Distance to Application Site	42m looking west
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	<p>This viewpoint is taken from the parking area for Wilton Court, a 1950s/1960s residential estate on the east side of Sarsfield Road.</p> <p>The low lying building and the car park on the ESB Networks Site is just perceptible, filtered through the railings on Sarsfield Road and the mature trees bordering the Application Site and the ESB Networks Site. To the extreme right of the photograph is the gate post identifying the entrance/egress to St Joseph's SMA.</p> <p>Wilton Court is arranged with two rows of terraced housing, with front and rear gardens, offroad parking, and access roads on three sides. The housing alternates between facing and lying perpendicular to Sarsfield Road. There are 10 houses facing the site: 71 to 74 from which this photograph was taken and 100 to 105, bordering an area of green space at the junction of Sarsfield Road and the Cork South Ring Road. They are set back from Sarsfield Road with additional parking, as in the photograph, and wide grassed verges. Some are partially screened by</p>		

	trees but at this location the view looks directly across to the mature planting at the east end of the Application Site. The houses are slightly elevated at this point on Wilton Court Road. The road rises fairly steeply to the north screening much of the townscape.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium – The east elevation of the East Block is prominent in the view from this location. There will be visibility of the full extent of the end of the East Block from the top and bottom floors of nos 71 to 74 Wilton Court. Receptors include residents and their visitors and possibly pedestrians from the estate using this route to avoid Sarsfield Road.
Magnitude	Moderate
Predicted Change	The proposed development will introduce a discernible change to the outlook from nos 71 to 74 Wilton Court. The mature conifers will now be replaced by views of the end of the 6-storey East Block and partial oblique view of the north elevation. Nos 71-74, have no screening to the front or along the boundary of Sarsfield Road. There are mature trees bordering Sarsfield Road in front of house nos 100 to 105, which will screen much of the proposed development. Residents in nos 65 to 70 are at an oblique angle to Sarsfield Road, and outlook on the gable ends and gardens of Nos 74 and 75. More generally, visibility will be transient and also the receptors will be viewing the proposals across a heavily trafficked 4-lane road.
Level of effect	<p>Slight adverse - The proposals will form a significant new component and a notable change in the land-use of the Application Site. Those most affected will be nos 71 to 74 Wilton Court, who will have visibility from the top and bottom floors of their houses. Those in nos 100 to 105 will be less affected, although there may be more visibility during the winter months, when there is less leaf cover. Views of the proposals for residents in nos 65-70 will be transient and also viewed in the context of a heavily trafficked 4-lane road.</p> <p>This is essentially an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area and visual interest/positive townscape and will represent new development and investment in this part of the city.</p>

Viewpoint 3 Southbury Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Southbury Road	Distance to Application Site	90m looking north west
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	In the foreground is the path running from Sarsfield Road to Southbury Road. To the right of the photograph is no 105 Wilton Court, which is the end house of a row of terraces, nos 100 to 105. Beyond the curved wall and the mature trees is the junction of Sarsfield Road and the traffic controlled entrance/egress to the ESB Networks site and the Application Site, the lighting and signalling infrastructure just visible to the left of the photograph. The view is foreshortened by the mature trees to the left of the photograph bordering the ESB Networks site and those on the eastern boundary of the Application Site.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low/Medium - The road infrastructure and ordinary estate housing is prominent in the view. Receptors will include the residents on Wilton Court and pedestrians from the south of the estate cutting through to Sarsfield Road or accessing the estates to the south of the Cork South Ring Road.		
Magnitude	Moderate		
Predicted Change	There are filtered views of the south elevation of the east block partially visible through the mature trees on the Application Site and those bordering the boundary of Wilton Court. Partial views of the Middle Block and West Block are visible to the		

	left of the photograph. The trees form enclosure and provide a visual break from the built form and soften the urban environment.
Level of effect	Slight adverse - The partial view of the south elevation of the East Block will form a noticeable new component. The view from the residential housing at nos 100 to 105 Wilton Court will be screened by the mature trees. Pedestrians will have transient views that are seen in the context of the major road infrastructure and flyover, which they may have negotiated. The building breaks into the skyline but aligns with the trees and gives visual interest. Filtered views of the building will increase during the winter months, when there isn't the benefit of tree cover.

Viewpoint 4 Tesco carpark



Viewpoint Address or Location	Tesco carpark	Distance to Application Site	183m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	This photo is taken on the east side of the Wilton shopping centre, outside the Tesco Superstore. This is a very large car park, bordering the north boundary of the Application Site, which is well screened by the stands of trees on the south boundary of the car park and the mature trees on the Application Site. This is a particularly busy part of the car park as it is close to the entrance/egress to Tesco.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include car users and pedestrians who are likely to have momentary or little interest in the view and their surroundings as their focus will be on accessing the shopping centre.		
Magnitude	Slight - the top one/two storeys of the north elevation of the East Block are evident above the trees. The north elevation and an oblique view of the east elevation of the Middle Block are partially visible behind the parked cars.		
Predicted Change	The top one/two storeys of the north elevation of the East Block will be an evident but minor addition to the skyline to the south of the car park. The north elevation and oblique view of the Middle Block are more prominent as there is less tree cover.		

	The proposed development breaks into the skyline but is lower than the Tesco Superstore so not obtrusive.
Level of effect	Neutral - The level of effect is assessed as Neutral as the proposals are set within a functional and ordinary townscape and form a minor component in the view. Given the distance and nature of the location any views will be transient, partial and heavily influenced by the infrastructure, parking and paraphernalia within the Tesco car park.

Viewpoint 5 Cardinal Way



Viewpoint Address or Location	Cardinal Way	Distance to Application Site	320m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	In the foreground to the left is a vehicular entrance to the car park at the south end of Wilton Shopping Centre. The stand of trees in the middle distance is the avenue that leads up the St Joseph's Church, the church spire visible beyond the trees. To the right is the Wilton Pub and Restaurant. Cardinal Way has 4 lanes of traffic at this point and reduces to two as it skirts the graveyard of the church and gives access to the residential area of Bishopstown.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium – St Joseph's Church is a designated Local Landmark Building.		
Magnitude	None		
Predicted Change	The Application Site is at a lower elevation, +15m AOD, than the viewpoint at +27m AOD. The proposed development will be screened by the intervening built form and vegetation.		
Level of effect	None		

Viewpoint 6 Cardinal Court



Viewpoint Address or Location	Cardinal Court	Distance to Application Site	36m looking east
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	In the foreground is the car parking area and green public space between no 51 and no 52 Cardinal Court. The rear gardens of 2 blocks of 4 no 2-storey 1960's terraces and 2 semi-detached houses border the western boundary of the Application Site. The two semi-detached houses lie closest to the Application Site. The terraced blocks further north are offset with longer rear gardens. The rear gardens are well screened from the Application Site by the retained mature trees on the western boundary. Access to these houses is from Cardinal Way, off Sarsfield Road.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium – receptors include residents and their visitors and car users and pedestrians accessing other areas of the estate.		
Magnitude	Moderate		
Predicted Change	The end gable and pitched roof of the proposed 2-storey terraced housing is visible from this viewpoint and a filtered partial glimpse of the west boundary of the West Block. The rear gardens of the proposed terrace of townhouses run parallel to the western boundary of the Application Site and border the rear gardens of the housing on Cardinal Court. There will be views from the upper windows of the existing terraces (nos 42 to 52) to the upper floors and		

	pitched roof of the proposed 2-storey townhouses. Nos 41 to 33 Cardinal Court will have a restricted oblique view of the proposed development.
Level of effect	Moderate Adverse - The proposals will have the greatest impact on the residents of Cardinal Court that are adjacent to the western boundary.

Viewpoint 7 Bishopscourt Drive



Viewpoint Address or Location	Bishopscourt Drive	Distance to Application Site	280m looking south east
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	This viewpoint is on Bishopscourt Drive, which comprises a mix of 1960's/1970's detached and semi-detached housing. Bishopscourt Park is out of view to the west of the viewpoint. The Application Site is screened by nos 5 and 6 Bishopscourt Drive, detached houses, and other built form including the 2-storey Gaelscoil Ui Riada, an Irish School and 2-storey terraced housing on Cardinal Court. The viewpoint, at +21m AOD, is at a higher elevation than the Application Site at +14m AOD.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium – The receptors include residents and their visitors and car users and pedestrians accessing other areas of the estate.		
Magnitude	None		
Predicted Change	None		
Level of effect	None		

Viewpoint 8 Richmond



Viewpoint Address or Location	Richmond	Distance to Application Site	336m looking north west
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>This viewpoint is taken at the junction of Richmond and Sarsfield Road. The flyover on the N40, Cork South Ring Road, is visible in the middle distance. To the east of the viewpoint, to the right of the photograph is The Headlands, a development of 3 storey apartments set in mature vegetation, which largely screens it from the Cork South Ring Road and Sarsfield Road.</p> <p>The Headlands is on the periphery of a larger residential estate with a partial grid-like structure bordered by housing parallel to the access roads. The mature trees and vegetation to the west of Sarsfield Road borders a small area of residential housing bordered by industrial estates.</p> <p>The Application Site lies beyond the Cork South Ring Road, Sarsfield Roundabout and the slip roads and there is no visibility due to the road infrastructure and the mature vegetation on the boundary of the ESB Networks Site.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	<p>Low – This view is taken on the edge of the estate in close proximity to the Cork South Ring Road flyover. The receptors will be car users, and pedestrians accessing the industrial estates and residential area to the north and south of the Cork South Ring Road. The residents of the apartments at nos 2, 4, 5 The Headlands are aligned with a view of the Application Site but are effectively</p>		

	screened by the dense vegetation bordering the slips roads off the Sarsfield Road Roundabout to the Cork South Ring Road.
Magnitude	Negligible
Predicted Change	The rear elevations of the West, Middle and East Blocks are barely perceptible above the flyover and if perceived will be seen in conjunction with the road network. The elevation of this viewpoint at +11m AOD is lower than the east end of the Application Site at +15m AOD consequently the majority of the proposals are screened by the road infrastructure.
Level of effect	Neutral - The distance, along with the nature of the view beside a major road and flyover ensures the proposed development is unlikely to be perceived by receptors. If it is perceived it will be seen as part of the infrastructure of the city and transport system and can be accommodated and absorbed into this landscape without any adverse effect.

Viewpoint 9 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	709m looking north
Viewpoint Baseline Long distance	In the foreground is Sarsfield Road and to the east, right of the photograph, is the grassed area bordering mainly terraced housing on Elm Park. To the west of Sarsfield Road is a new development of 2 and 3-storey housing set around a central grassed area. In the far distance to the west of Sarsfield Road is Doughcloyne Industrial Estate with Kearys Renault garage on the corner. In the far distance is the dome of the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit just visible alongside the 17 storey Cork County Council offices.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low		
Magnitude	Negligible		
Predicted Change	There are partial glimpses of the Middle and East Block, which are only just perceptible at this distance.		
Level of effect	Neutral – Distance and the density of the built townscape renders the proposed development a very minor component in the view and unlikely to be perceived but rather seen in the context of the cityscape. The viewpoint is at a higher elevation, +28m AOD, then the Application Site at +14m AOD and even the tall, prominent buildings such as the Cork County Council offices are difficult to perceive.		

Viewpoint 10 Tesco staff/overspill carpark



Viewpoint Address or Location	Tesco overspill/staff car park	Distance to Application Site	40m looking south east
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	<p>This photo is taken in the overspill/staff car park for Tescos, and Penneys. There are filtered views through the trees to the ESB Networks Site at a lower elevation and the hills to the south of the Application Site. The viewpoint is at +20m AOD, the Application Site is +15m AOD and the ESB Networks Site is approximately +13m AOD.</p> <p>The access road to St Joseph's College, not visible from this elevation runs between the car park and the Application site and is lined by trees and vegetation.</p> <p>This is a less busy part of the car park as it is intended for staff parking and is removed from the main entrance and egress.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	<p>Low – This is the overspill/staff car park with fewer receptors than the main car park. Receptors are likely to have momentary or little interest in the view and their surroundings as their focus will be on making their way to the shopping centre. The sensitivity of the receptors will be low as their attention will be focused away from the landscape and their tolerance to change is likely to be high.</p>		
Magnitude	<p>Moderate - the rear elevations of the West, Middle and East Blocks will be visible and will be an apparent new component and focus in the view from the car park</p>		

	<p>at this point. The photomontage shows the winter view, which is the worst case scenario as although the buildings are filtered by the trees they are nonetheless prominent. The trees are a similar height to the proposed development and the views will be more substantially screened during the summer months when the trees are in full leaf.</p> <p>The visitors to St Joseph's College will have fleeting glimpses of the proposed development for approximately 300m from Sarsfield Road.</p>
Predicted Change	<p>The proposed development will be an evident addition to the skyline to the south of the car park. The 4/5 storeys of the rear elevation of the West Block are directly opposite this viewpoint. The Middle and East Blocks are seen at an oblique angle. The existing tree line on the road leading to St Joseph's SMA will be retained and along with the trees bordering the car park will soften the built form, particularly in the summer months.</p>
Level of effect	<p>Moderate positive - The proposed development is a substantial component in the view. The set backs and variety of heights of the buildings have a striking quality and an interesting skyline and add architectural interest to the ordinary townscape. This is essentially an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive but relatively low rise light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area and visual interest/positive townscape.</p>

Viewpoint 11 Tesco car park



Viewpoint Address or Location	Tesco car park	Distance to Application Site	32m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	<p>This photo is taken at the south end of the main Tesco car park. There are filtered views through the trees to the ESB Networks Site at a lower elevation and the hills to the south of the Application Site. The Application Site is not visible as the viewpoint is at +22m AOD, the Application Site is +15m AOD and the ESB Networks Site is approximately +13m AOD.</p> <p>The access road to St Joseph's College, not visible from this elevation, runs between the car park and the Application site and is lined by trees and vegetation. This area of the car park is near the entrance/egress of the main entrance to the shopping centre.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	<p>Low – The receptors are likely to have momentary or little interest in the view and their surroundings as their focus will be on making their way to the shopping centre. In addition, their attention will be focussed away from the landscape and their tolerance to change is likely to be high.</p>		
Magnitude	<p>Moderate - the rear elevation of the Middle Block and a partial view of the West Block will be visible will be an apparent new component and focus in the view from the car park at this point. The photomontage shows the winter view, which is the</p>		

	worst case scenario as although the buildings are filtered by the trees they are nonetheless prominent. The trees are a similar height to the proposed development and the views will be more substantially screened during the summer months when the trees are in full leaf.
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be an evident addition to the skyline to the south of the car park. The 4/5 storeys of the rear elevation of the Middle Block are directly opposite this viewpoint. A partial view of the West Block is seen at an oblique angle. The existing tree line on the road leading to St Joseph's SMA will be retained and along with the trees bordering the car park will soften the built form, particularly in the summer months.
Level of effect	Moderate positive - The proposed development is a substantial component in the view. The set backs and varied heights of the buildings have a striking quality and an interesting skyline and add architectural interest to the ordinary townscape. This is essentially an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive but relatively low rise light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area along with visual interest/positive townscape.

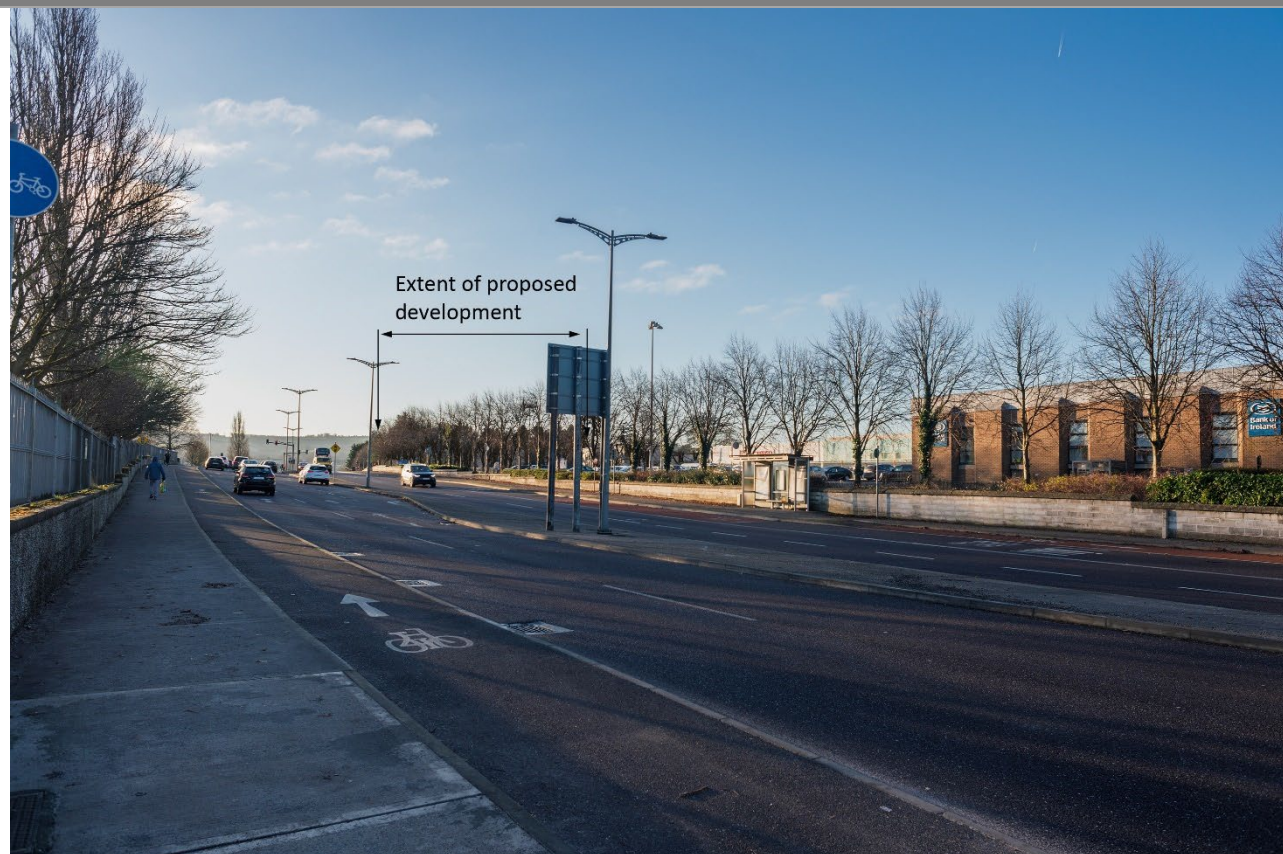
Viewpoint 12 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	10m looking north
Viewpoint Baseline Short distance	<p>In the foreground is the pedestrian path, grass verge and cycle lane running along the eastern boundary of the Application Site on Sarsfield Road. In the foreground is a mature stand of trees that will be retained to provide the structure for public open space along the site frontage. This viewpoint is just north of the main traffic controlled entrance/egress to the Application Site and the ESB Network Site.</p> <p>Sarsfield Road is a busy four lane road leading north to the Wilton Roundabout and access to arterial roads to Cork centre, residential estates to the west and east and Cork University Hospital. To the south Sarsfield Road leads to the N40, the Doughcloyne Industrial Estate and further residential estates. The vertical road infrastructure including street and road lighting, signs and traffic lights are prominent features.</p> <p>On the east side of Sarsfield Road is Wilton Court, a 1950s/1960s terraced housing estate, set back from Sarsfield Road, by access roads and front gardens. Residential housing lies on the east side of Sarsfield Road from the N40 to the Wilton Roundabout.</p>		

	Approximately 140m north of the viewpoint is the main 4-laned traffic controlled entrance/egress to the Tesco Superstore and Wilton Shopping Centre. Sarsfield Road continues to the Wilton Roundabout with trees lining the car parks bordering the Wilton Shopping Centre and Tesco Superstore.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include commuters, car users and pedestrians from the residential estates accessing the retail outlets and ESB Networks Site.
Magnitude	Moderate - the southern elevation of the 6-storey East Block and partial view of the east end will be an apparent new component and focus in the view. The photomontage shows the winter view, which is the worst case scenario as although the views of the Block are filtered by the trees it is nonetheless prominent. The trees in the foreground rise above the proposed development, and will provide substantial screening during the summer months when the trees are in full leaf.
Predicted Change	In the foreground is a landscaped grassed and tree lined 'Village Green', the entrance to the proposed development designed to create a strong sense of place. Two pedestrian entrances from Sarsfield Road lead through this communal space. The 6-storey East block lies to the north of this landscaped area and is an evident addition, breaking into the skyline. The retained trees bordering the site will soften the built form, particularly in the summer months.
Level of effect	<p>Neutral – The proposals form a readily apparent component within the overall view. The mature trees will filter in the winter and screen in the summer and soften the built form providing a human scale to the proposals. Sarsfield Road slopes up from this viewpoint, diverting the focus from the East Block by creating a perspective, which gives the appearance of depth and space and lessens the impact of the mass.</p> <p>This is essentially an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive but relatively low rise light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area and visual interest/positive townscape and will represent new development and investment in this part of the city.</p>

Viewpoint 13 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	305m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>In the foreground is the southbound lane of the Sarsfield Road dual carriageway and cycle path leading to the N40, the Doughcloyne Industrial Estate and further residential estates. The hills beyond Sarsfield Road and the Doughcloyne Industrial Estate are just visible in the far distance.</p> <p>The viewpoint is taken near a traffic-controlled pedestrian crossing giving access to Wilton Court and the residential housing beyond and on the opposite side of the road, the Tesco Superstore and tree lined car park and the Bank of Ireland red brick building.</p> <p>Out of view is the terraced houses on Wilton Court, lying at a slightly lower elevation to the east of Sarsfield Road, and set back with a wide grass verge and mature trees and a road running parallel with Sarsfield Road.</p> <p>Wilton Roundabout lies to the north of the viewpoint and gives access to arterial roads to Cork centre, residential estates to the west and east and Cork University Hospital. The vertical road infrastructure including street and road lighting, signs and traffic lights are prominent features.</p>		

Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include commuters, cyclists, car users and pedestrians from the residential estates and shoppers accessing the retail outlets.
Magnitude	Slight - the proposed development does not rise into the skyline, and is filtered by the trees lining the boundary to the Tesco's Superstore and Application Site and the existing built form. During the summer months when the trees are in leaf it will be difficult to discern the proposed development.
Predicted Change	The proposals are in the mid distance and screened by the mature trees bordering the Tesco's Superstore and existing built form. Given the urban infrastructure, existing mature trees, parking and paraphernalia within the Tesco car park it is difficult to discern the proposed development.
Level of effect	Neutral - The proposals will form a minor component in the view and are difficult to discern from the existing buildings and urban infrastructure. The sensitivity of the receptors will be low as their attention will be focused away from the landscape and their tolerance to change is likely to be high.

Viewpoint 14 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	412m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>In the foreground is the Sarsfield Road southbound dual carriageway just past the slip road from Wilton Roundabout. This is a heavily trafficked section of the road as Wilton Roundabout gives access to Bishopstown Road to the west with access to Cork University Hospital, and Wilton Shopping Centre. To the east is Glasheen Road giving access to St Finbarr's Cemetery and residential housing. The northern exit, the R641, runs through large areas of residential housing and educational establishments to the N22.</p> <p>This section of Sarsfield Road is at a higher elevation than the apartment blocks of Wilton Manor that lie to the east beyond the iron railings. The slip road, parking for the apartments and Wilton Manor Road give a level of separation from Sarsfield Road.</p> <p>Further south is Wilton Court, a 1950s/1960s terraced housing estate, set back from Sarsfield Road, by access roads and front gardens.</p> <p>Views along Sarsfield Road change in nature as receptors travel past the site. At this viewpoint the Application Site is screened by mature trees and urban built form. The elevation of this viewpoint gives views to the hills north of the</p>		

	Application Site.
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include commuters, car users and pedestrians and shoppers from the residential estates accessing the retail outlets.
Magnitude	Negligible - the proposed development does not rise into the skyline, and is filtered by the trees on the boundary to the Tesco's Superstore and the existing built form. The distance, mature tree lined boundaries of the shopping centre car parking screen the proposed development.
Predicted Change	The land slopes down at this point creating a perspective of the hills in the far distance. Given the existing mature trees, including the urban infrastructure, parking and paraphernalia within the Tesco car park it is difficult to discern any change in the view with the proposed development.
Level of effect	Neutral - The distance, mature tree lined boundaries of the shopping centre car parking screen the proposed development.

Viewpoint 15 Wilton Shopping Centre car park



Viewpoint Address or Location	Wilton Shopping Centre car park	Distance to Application Site	432m looking south
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>In the foreground is the car park at the northern end of Wilton Shopping Centre. The small patch of green space is slightly elevated and borders the Bishopstown Road slip road heading west off Wilton Roundabout. The view in the middle distance looks across the Wilton Shopping Centre and car park to the hills to the south of Doughcloyne and Lehenaghmore Industrial Estates.</p> <p>The church spire in the far distance to the right of the photograph is St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, a designated Local Landmark Building, which lies to the south west, approximately midway between the viewpoint and the Application Site.</p> <p>The viewpoint is at a higher elevation than the Application Site but visibility is screened by the Wilton Shopping Centre.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include shoppers at the Wilton Shopping Centre, pedestrians and car users on Bishopstown Road.		
Magnitude	Negligible – there is a partial glimpse of the proposed development, a very minor component and barely discernible.		

Predicted Change	Glimpses of the top of part of the proposed development are a minor component in the view and seen in an urban context with varying roof profiles and buildings, parking and the paraphernalia associated with the shopping centre.
Level of effect	Neutral - The proposals will form a minor component in the view and will not have any adverse effect on its overall quality. The partial glimpses of the buildings do not obscure the existing view of the hills in the far distance.

Viewpoint 16 Bishopstown Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Bishopstown Road	Distance to Application Site	326m looking south east
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>In the foreground is the east bound Bishopstown Road dual carriageway. In the middle distance is the Allcare Late Night Pharmacy at the junction of Bishopstown Road and Cardinal Way. The Wilton Steak Bar & Carvery is just visible to rear of Allcare. A small lawned area with trees lies between Allcare and a 2-storey block of offices.</p> <p>This viewpoint is at a higher elevation (+29m AOD) than the Application Site (+15m AOD at its centre point). The spire of St Joseph's Catholic Church is visible on the skyline. St Joseph's Church and college is south east of the viewpoint and along with intervening mature vegetation screens any visibility of the Application Site.</p> <p>To the rear of the viewpoint at the corner of Bishopstown Road and the vehicular entrance/egress to Cork University Hospital is a large area of raised grassed landforms and trees with picnic benches and seating. A further landscaped area with steps and trees forms the entrance to Cork University Hospital.</p>		

Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include passing pedestrians and car users and those visiting and working at Cork University Hospital and the Wilton Shopping Centre.
Magnitude	None
Predicted Change	The proposed development is screened by the urban built form between the Application Site and Bishopstown Road.
Level of effect	None

Viewpoint 17 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	875m looking north west
Viewpoint Baseline Long distance	<p>In the foreground is the traffic controlled filter road to Eagle Valley. Wilton funeral home lies out of view at the corner of Eagle Road and Sarsfield Road. Sarsfield Road is now a two lane road passing through established residential estates on the east side and relatively new housing on the west side. The viewpoint is at a higher elevation (+36m AOD) than the Application Site (+15m AOD at its centre point) of which there is no visibility. The land around Sarsfield Road rises and falls to the River Lee, rising to the north of the Application Site and then descending just beyond Cork University Hospital to the River Lee. Further north the land rises steeply to the hills beyond.</p> <p>This is the southern end of Sarsfield Road and 100m to the south it joins Spur Hill and a rural landscape with geometric agricultural fields.</p> <p>In the middle/far distance is the dome of the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and 17 storey Cork County Council offices. Beyond in the far distance, at a higher elevation, over the River Lee, are the northern suburbs of Shanakeil and Holly Mount.</p>		

Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low – receptors will include commuters and car users visiting the industrial estates or driving to the N40 and surrounding coastal areas and pedestrians from the surrounding residential housing either walking to the rural area south of the viewpoint or accessing the surrounding shops.
Magnitude	Negligible – The undulating topography along with the built form screens much of the proposed development. The majority of the East Block of the proposed development is screened by mature trees and set in the context of a number of prominent buildings including the dome of the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and 17 storey Cork County Council offices and the built form on the hills beyond, which all remain visible.
Predicted Change	Glimpses of the upper storeys of the East Block are distant, a minor component in the view and integrated into the urban context alongside the prominent buildings of Cork City.
Level of effect	Neutral - The proposals are difficult to discern and any perception of it will be seen within the context of the existing urban townscape.

Viewpoint 18 Doughcloyne Industrial Estate



Viewpoint Address or Location	Doughcloyne Industrial Estate	Distance to Application Site	583m looking north east
Viewpoint Baseline Long distance	<p>This viewpoint is taken on the Doughcloyne Industrial Estate giving access to the warehouses and industries and leading to a small roundabout bordering the N40. It is at a higher elevation (+25m AOD) than the Application Site at +15m AOD. The terrain slopes down towards the Application Site and then rises to the north of Cork and the hills on the agricultural farmland north of the city. There is no visibility of the Application Site from this viewpoint.</p> <p>This is the southern end of Sarsfield Road and 100m to the south it joins Spur Hill and a rural landscape with geometric agricultural fields.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	<p>Low – receptors will include commuters and car users visiting and working on the industrial estates or driving to the N40 and onto the surrounding areas. Pedestrians from the surrounding residential housing accessing the industrial estate and surrounding shops and walking to the rural area south of the viewpoint. Receptors are unlikely to be sensitive to changes to the view.</p>		
Magnitude	<p>Slight - There are long distance glimpses of the West and Middle Blocks of the proposed development. There is a partial view of the East Block. Only the upper storeys of the Blocks are visible as the lower storeys are screened by intervening trees and vegetation and built form.</p>		

Predicted Change	The top storeys of the West and Middle Blocks are visible, viewed against the background of St Joseph's SMA and collection of buildings and Cork University Hospital. The proposed development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion and settles well into the distant townscape.
Level of effect	Neutral - Glimpses of the upper storeys of the East Block are distant, a minor component in the view and integrated into the urban context alongside the prominent buildings of Cork City without breaking the skyline of North Cork.

Viewpoint 19 Sarsfield Road



Viewpoint Address or Location	Sarsfield Road	Distance to Application Site	328m looking north west
Viewpoint Baseline Mid distance	<p>In the foreground to the left is the filter road leading to the Cork South Ring Road. The two lane road beside it is the Sarsfield Road Roundabout running north under the Ring Road. The far lane is traffic heading south on Sarsfield Road. In the middle distance is the Cork South Ring Road flyover.</p> <p>This viewpoint is beside an area of mature trees and vegetation on the boundaries of Sarsfield Road and the slip road to the Ring Road, beyond which is White Oaks, a small enclave of terraced housing set in woods and grassland. White Oaks is bordered to the west and south by Doughcloyne Industrial Estate comprising a wide range of small businesses.</p> <p>The viewpoint is at a slightly lower elevation than the Application Site.</p> <p>The Application Site lies beyond the Cork South Ring Road, Sarsfield Roundabout and the slip roads and the ESB Networks site and there is no visibility due to the road infrastructure and the mature vegetation on the boundary of the ESB Networks Site.</p>		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	<p>Low – This view is taken in close proximity to the Cork South Ring Road flyover. The receptors will be car users, and pedestrians accessing the industrial estates and residential areas to the north and south of the Cork South Ring Road. The</p>		

	residents on White Oaks are at a lower elevation than the Application Site and are effectively screened by the dense vegetation bordering the slips roads off the Sarsfield Road Roundabout to the Cork South Ring Road.
Magnitude	None
Predicted Change	The elevation of this viewpoint at +12m AOD is lower than the Application Site at +15m AOD and the proposals are screened by the road infrastructure and the mature vegetation on the boundary of the ESB Networks site.
Level of effect	None - the proposals are screened by the road infrastructure and the mature vegetation on the boundary of the ESB Networks site.

Summary

Viewpoint	Range of view	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of effect
Viewpoint 1:	Short	Sarsfield Road	Low	Slight	Neutral
Viewpoint 2:	Short	Parking area Wilton Court	Medium	Moderate	Slight adverse
Viewpoint 3:	Short	Southbury Road	Low/Medium	Moderate	Slight adverse
Viewpoint 4:	Short	Tesco car park	Low	Slight	Neutral
Viewpoint 5:	Mid	Cardinal Way	Medium	None	None
Viewpoint 6:	Short	Cardinal Court	Medium	Moderate	Moderate adverse
Viewpoint 7:	Mid	Bishopscourt Drive	Medium	None	None
Viewpoint 8:	Mid	Richmond	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 9:	Long	Sarsfield Road	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 10:	Short	Tesco overspill/staff car park	Low	Moderate	Moderate positive
Viewpoint 11:	Short	Tesco car park	Low	Moderate	Moderate positive
Viewpoint 12:	Short	Sarsfield Road	Low	Moderate	Neutral
Viewpoint 13:	Mid	Sarsfield Road	Low	Slight	Neutral
Viewpoint 14:	Mid	Sarsfield Road	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 15:	Mid	Wilton Shopping Centre car park	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 16:	Mid	Bishopstown Road	Low	None	None
Viewpoint 17:	Long	Sarsfield Road	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Viewpoint 18:	Long	Doughcloyne Industrial Estate	Low	Slight	Neutral
Viewpoint 19:	Mid	Sarsfield Road	Low	None	None

Cumulative Assessment

- 5.20 Cumulative land visual effects are the combined effects that arise through the interaction of two or more developments, whether of the same type or not, within the landscape and visual baseline context. Collectively they give rise to an overall combined effect.
- 5.21 The granted development, ABP 28.302596, CCC reference 1837794, for an extension to the Wilton Shopping Centre is proposing a 2-storey to 7-storey building. Any cumulative effects with the proposed development are rated as positive, collectively contributing to the growth of the area in their sustainable use of land and collectively enhancing the townscape character and sense of place in the area.

Summary

- 5.22 The proposed development is regarded as being permanent or long term in landscape and visual terms. The most appreciable effects relate to the nature of the proposed development, which will result in the change of use from a landscape with mature and specimen trees to a residential development.

Close Range Views:

- 5.23 There will be views at close quarters from the ESB Networks site, adjacent to the south of the site, as indicated in **Photo 3**. The receptors, however, are working in light industrial premises including large storage warehouses and offices and the views are not the focus of attention and their sensitivity to the proposed development will be low. The site has distinctive character areas. A 'village green' landscaped area is proposed at the entrance to the proposed development to the south of the East Block and a 'formal square' provides a landscape setting for the townhouses on the west of the site. Any views through the woodland walkway will look over to the south facades of the Middle and West blocks and the landscaped podiums and a formal planted square.
- 5.24 The only boundary on the public highway is the east end of the proposals bordering Sarsfield Road. The east end of the East Block is approximately 33m in length and the majority of the boundary of approximately 90m comprises the landscaped 'village green' character area, the entrance portal to the site. Views in close quarters along Sarsfield Road will be transient and largely screened by the mature trees retained on site and those on the boundary of the ESB Network site boundary and drive. The visual impact will be neutral. **See Viewpoint 1, 12, 13 and 14.**
- 5.25 Those residents directly opposite the Application Site on Wilton Court are approximately 50m west of the site and will have a direct view of the east end of the East Block. This will have a **slight adverse** impact on residents in nos 71 to 74. This is an area of low-rise residential suburbia, set in close proximity to extensive but relatively low rise light industrial and retail sites, which are particularly functional and ordinary. This building introduces a new built form to the area and can be accommodated and absorbed into this landscape without causing any significant unacceptable landscape or visual effects. **See Viewpoint 2.**
- 5.26 **Viewpoint 3**, Southbury Road, is assessed as **slight positive**. The proposed development is well sited and contributes to its setting, forming an interesting positive townscape.
- 5.27 Those residents of Cardinal Court directly adjacent to the western boundary will experience a **moderate adverse** effect. This is apparent from **Viewpoint 6**, which is taken directly at the proposals through the gap between the terraced housing. The visibility is filtered by the mature trees with the gable end and pitched roof of one of the 2-storey townhouses and partial glimpse of the west elevation of the West Block visible. **Photo 2** is taken on the site from over 100m west of Sarsfield Road and indicates the extent of the mature planting and boundaries on the Application Site.
- 5.28 Any views from the west beyond Cardinal Court of the West, Middle and East Blocks will have little impact due to the distance. It would only be the upper storeys and a minor component in the view and assessed as Slight.
- 5.29 Two viewpoints (**Viewpoints 10 and 11**) were taken at close range from the southern end boundary of the Tesco car park, both looking directly across to the proposed development. They are assessed as **moderate positive** as whilst they are a substantial components in the view, the set backs and varied heights of the buildings have a striking quality and an interesting skyline. They introduce a new built form to the area and contribute to their

setting. The mature trees on both boundaries that line the entrance/egress to St Joseph's College, will filter and screen much of the proposed development at different times of the year.

- 5.30 **Viewpoint 4** was taken 180m north of the Application Site. The upper floors of the north elevation of the East Block are visible on the skyline, however, the proposed development is a minor component in the view and aligns visually with the Tesco building. The impact is assessed as neutral as views will be transient and heavily influenced by the façade of the Tesco Superstore along with the parked cars and parking paraphernalia.

Mid range views:

- 5.31 From the north of Sarsfield Road the proposed development will be largely screened by mature trees on the boundary of Tescos and those retained on the site and will be seen in the context of the major transport infrastructure. **See Viewpoints 13, and 14. Viewpoint 15** on the northern boundary to Wilton Shopping Centre car park is directly north of the proposed development and is screened by the shopping centre.
- 5.32 Any visibility from mid range views from Cardinal Way and Bishopstown Road are screened by intervening built form and vegetation. **See Viewpoint 5.** There is no visibility of the proposed development from **Viewpoint 16** or the public open space bordering Bishopstown Road. Views of the proposed development from **Viewpoint 7** are screened by built form between Bishopscourt Drive and Cardinal Way.
- 5.33 Mid range views from the south of Sarsfield Road are screened by the mature trees bordering the ESB Networks Site and the major traffic junction at Sarsfield roundabout. In addition, the proposals are difficult to perceive due to elevation differences: the Application Site at +14 to +15 AOD and **viewpoints 8 and 19** at +11 and +12m AOD. Any views towards the Site would be a small component in the view, transient and heavily influenced by existing urban development.

Long range views

- 5.34 Long range views were taken from the south of the Application Site, as views from the north are influenced by the heavily urbanised area of the Wilton Shopping Centre and built form on Bishopstown Road as well as the traffic infrastructure and transient nature of the view around Wilton Roundabout. The proposals are difficult to discern in long range views to the south, **Viewpoints 9, 17 and 18**, and any perception of them will be seen within the context of the existing urban townscape.
- 5.35 In summary, the majority of long distance, medium distance and short distance views are not adversely affected by the building and have either neutral or no impact on the visual receptors. Viewpoint 2 and Viewpoint 6 have slight and moderate adverse impact, affecting a small number of residents.

- 5.36 Wilton Park House and St Joseph's SMA and associated buildings are sensitive sites, registered on the NIAH. Wilton Park House lies 114m to the west of the Application at an oblique angle to the site and to the terrace of houses that border the property. The mature stand of trees on Cardinal Court to the south east of the 2-storey Wilton Park House and the housing on Cardinal Court (see **Viewpoint 6**) will screen the proposed development. Distance and intervening buildings and trees will ensure that any views of the taller storeys in the proposed development will be imperceptible.
- 5.37 St Joseph's SMA, is 3-storeyed and very well screened by mature trees, hedges and walls. The intervening Tesco overspill car park and dense vegetation will ensure that any views of the taller storeys in the proposed development will be imperceptible. St Joseph's Church is a Local Landmark Building. This will be screened by the St Joseph's SMA and the intervening vegetation.

Conclusion

- 5.38 The location, design and build of the proposed development conforms to the key strategic principles of the CCDP. It is respecting the existing mature trees and biodiversity on the site, retaining as many as possible and enhancing the biodiversity on the site and the green corridors and green infrastructure in the area. The design accommodates and encourages cycling and walking and provides affordable and social housing, contributing towards developing a healthy, inclusive and diverse city.
- 5.39 The proposed development at a maximum of 6 storeys is in an ideal location, with little visual impact and aligning with Wilton shopping centre, which has had permission for a 7 storey building as part of the extension to the shopping centre, which will reinforce a spatial hierarchy and form in the local context with a capacity in the area and transport network to accommodate facilities and services.
- 5.40 The Application Site is in an area with a large number of detractors and features which degrade the quality of the landscape including light industrial works, large retail outlets with extensive car parking and a major road infrastructure, all of which have a negative influence on the character and experience of the landscape. The proposed development is a well designed and considered scheme with opportunities for both the residents and general public to take advantage of the high quality public realm.
- 5.41 The photomontages are illustrating the proposals during the winter months, the worst case scenario. Summer views when the trees are in full leaf will give greater screening of the proposals, particularly from Viewpoint 1 Sarsfield Road, Viewpoint 3 Southbury Road, and Viewpoint 6 Cardinal Court. These will be filtered views but unlikely to change the assessment. The Application Site has a high level of containment and the landscape has a high level of ability to tolerate the nature and scale of the proposals.
- 5.42 The proposed development, while substantial and higher than the existing surrounding light industrial, retail, car parks, road infrastructure and residential areas, would result in a positive contribution to the character and urban fabric of this area in terms of landscape character. The architecture, facades, landscape design, usage and enhanced public realm will contribute to the townscape character of the south west suburbs of Cork and will give the Application Site a more productive and appropriate land-use. On balance there are no unacceptable landscape/townscape or visual impacts and from the majority of views the proposals can be accommodated

alongside the existing and proposed built form and infrastructure and can be successfully absorbed into the character and views of the south west suburbs of Cork City.