

## **11.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT**

### **11.1 Introduction**

11.1.1 This section of the report, prepared by VCL Consultants, considers the landscape in terms of the potential impact of the proposed development on the existing character and quality. The visual impact on properties and public vantage points are also assessed.

11.1.2 A description of the landscape appraisal method is provided as a precursor to a detailed examination of the existing landscape character and the potential impact of the proposed development.

11.1.3 Measures to achieve an integrated development that fits with its context are also outlined in Section 11.6: Mitigation Measures.

### **11.2 Landscape and Visual Assessment Method**

11.2.1 The assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the character of the environment involves:

- An appraisal of the existing character.
- An assessment and evaluation of the physical and visual impact of the proposed development within its local context.

### **11.3 Landscape and Visual Appraisal Method: Significance Criteria**

11.3.1 In order to determine the effects of the proposed development on visual amenity and suburban character the following significance criteria have been adopted:

- *None* – There will be no change to an existing view.
- *Imperceptible* – An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.
- *Low (Slight)* – An impact, which does not cause significant or profound changes to the existing environment.
- *Moderate* – An impact, which by its magnitude, duration or intensity alters an important aspect of the environment.
- *High (Profound)* – The view would be altered to a significant degree as to affect a dramatic change.

11.3.2 The visual assessment uses the following terminology, defined as follows:

- *Visual Intrusion* – This occurs where a proposed development impinges on an existing view without obscuring the view.
- *Visual Obstruction* – This occurs where a proposed development obscures an existing view.

11.3.3 Visual Impacts may be neutral, positive or negative:

- *Neutral* – A neutral impact will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or viewpoint.
- *Positive* – A positive impact will improve or enhance the landscape character or viewpoint.
- *Negative* – A negative impact will have an adverse effect on the existing landscape character or viewpoint.

11.3.4 The duration of impacts is defined as follows:

- *Temporary* – Impacts lasting one year or less.
- *Short-term* – Impacts lasting one to seven years.
- *Medium-term* – Impacts lasting seven to twenty years.
- *Long-term* – Impacts lasting twenty to fifty years.
- *Permanent* – Impacts lasting over fifty years.

11.3.5 The significance of any impact on the existing environment will depend partly on the number of people affected, but also on value judgements as to how much the changes will matter.

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## **11.4 The Receiving Environment – Site Context**

11.4.1 The proposed development site is located between Bluebell and Ballyfermot. Bounded on its southern side by the Grand Canal with the Bluebell industrial estate beyond and on the Northern side by the Galback Stream, Kylemore Park industrial estate and Labre Park, a residential development to accommodate settled travellers. The site is currently accessed off the Kylemore Road (pedestrian only) by crossing the footway's on the lock gates.

11.4.2 Vehicular access to the site is not readily available.

### **Landscape Character**

11.4.3 The area is generally characterised by a gently undulating topography through which the Galback Stream follows a winding course and the Grand Canal has been constructed set approximately 1.8 m above the western end of the site and level with the eastern end of the site. The difference in level results from the operation of the Lock Gates. This is an Urban industrialised area and much of the surrounding land use is given over to extensive industrial development. The original land boundaries are no longer applicable and the only remnants remaining are the alignment of the local lanes and roads.

11.4.4 The subject site has been filled over time and is currently used extensively for fly tipping and disposal of vehicles. Some local residents keep horses and ponies in the lands however due to the nature of the fill in site grazing capacity would be very limited.

11.4.5 Numerous large steel pylons supporting high voltage electrical power lines are dominant within the site.

11.4.6 The photographic record attached provides a visual reference of the existing conditions.

11.4.7 Plates 11.1 to 11.8 have been taken in series from the southern side of the Canal looking initially in an easterly direction through a northerly direction and terminating in a westerly aspect. They indicate the extent of the industrial development surrounding the site and the dominance of the steel Pylons and power lines. These features contrast against the landscape of the canal and the canal banks.

11.4.8 Plates 11.9 to 11.13 were taken from the northern side of the canal looking south and are a study of the lock structure with the Bluebell industrial estate in the background.

11.4.9 Plates 11.14 through 11.18 were taken from within the site and depict, looking in a clockwise direction from west through north to the east, the extent of fly tipping occurring on the site and the residential development Labre Park and Kylemore Park industrial estate in the background.

11.4.10 Plates 11.19 is a panoramic view generated from plates 11.2 to 11.4 above.

11.4.11 Plate 11.20 is an aerial photograph of the complete site, which indicates graphically the industrial nature of the lands to the North and south and the strip of residential properties immediately north of the subject site known as Labre Park.

Figure 11.1: Map showing locations where photographs were taken

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date

Jan 2005

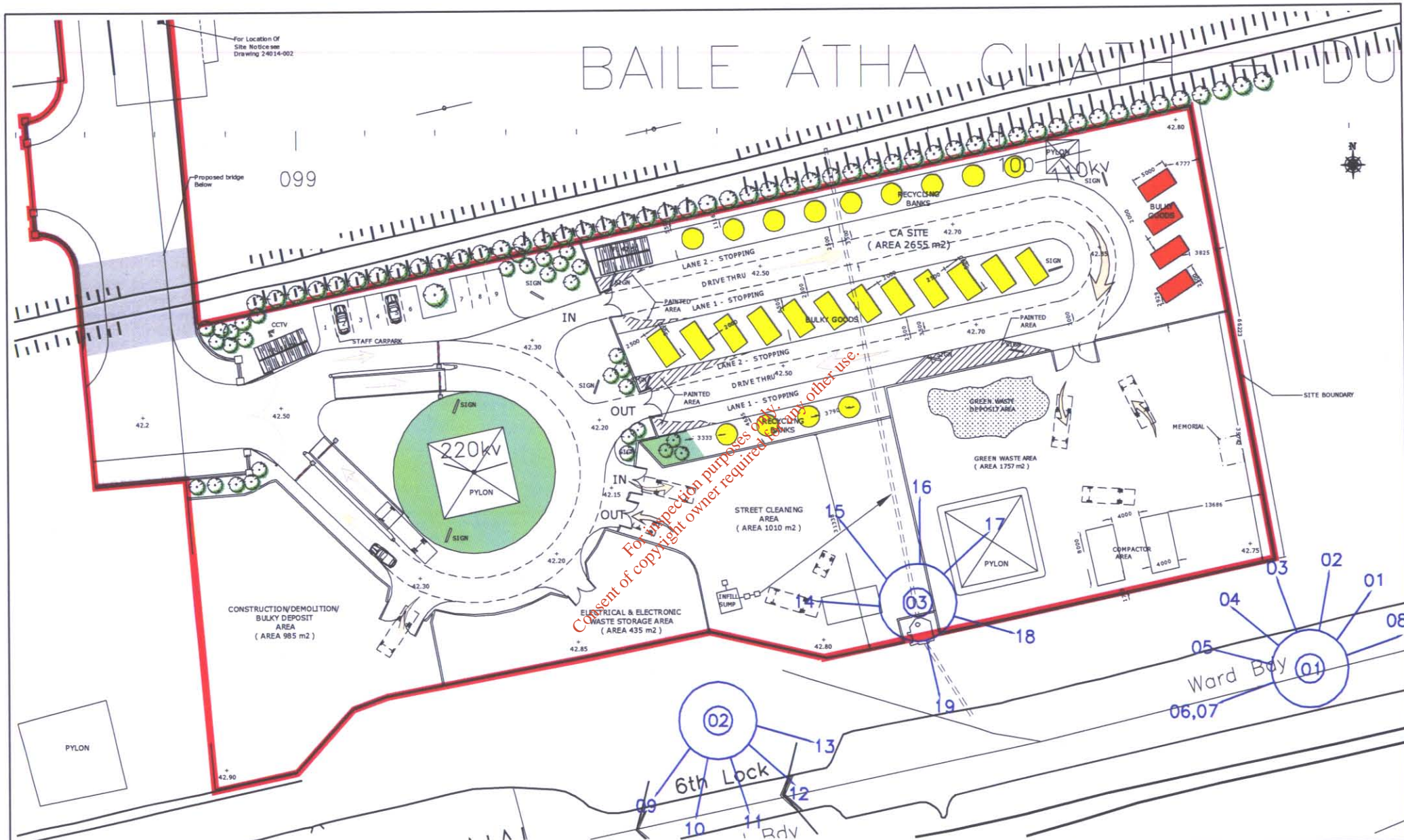
project

Labre Park EIS

client

Dublin City Council

# BAILE ÁTHA CLATHAIR DUBLIN



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN  
 SCALE 1:250  
 SITE AREA : 11053 m2  
 OS LICENCE : AR0037504  
 OS REF : 3262-18 & 23

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OFFICE	Civil	BY	DATE
REVISIONS			
A/			
B/			
C/			
D/			
E/	Site layout and Entrance Revised	EPP	14/12/04
DRAWN	AR	CHECKED	
		SURV	
		DATE	05/05/2004

Drawing Status	Planning
<b>VCL Consultants</b> 12 Ashdale, Wheaton Hall, Drogheda (D41) 9839658 	
Client	DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
DRAWING TITLE	PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN
Job Title	C . A SITE LABRE PARK
SCALE	1:250
DRAWING No.	24...-EIS-001

Plate 11.1



Plate 11.2



Plate 11.3



Plate 11.4



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Plate 11.5



Plate 11.6



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Plate 11.7



Plate 11.8



Plate 11.9



Plate 11.10



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Plate 11.11



Plate 11.12



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Plate 11.13



Plate 11.14



Plate 11.15



Plate 11.16



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Plate 11.17



Plate 11.18



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Plate 11.19



Plate 11.20



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- 11.4.12 The subject site is within an area which has experienced extensive industrial activity over a considerable period of time with typical steel and concrete framed steel clad large buildings constructed around large collector roads. The uses have generally outgrown the allocated sites resulting in materials and processes over spilling into all available areas without substantial planning control. Within this area the Labre Park development has been constructed to facilitate housing requirements for settled travellers. There are no notable buildings or structures that are visible from the site.
- 11.4.13 The industrial development is very important to the economy of the area and surrounding catchments including a substantial level of retail warehousing centered primarily along the Kylemore Road. Demand for boating activities on the Grand Canal would be limited as most activities on the canal commence further out and head in a westerly direction. This was evident from the levels of activity noted on the canal and the build up of material within the lock gates.

#### **Existing Site Characteristics**

- 11.4.14 The site is currently undeveloped serviced land 'sandwiched' between Kylemore Park and Bluebell industrial estates. The site lies close to the local distributor road Kylemore Road and is easily reached from the M50. The northern perimeter of the site is bounded by the river Galback Stream. The Grand Canal provides the southern boundary to the site.
- 11.4.15 The site consists of an area of flat filled sparsely vegetated land, with an upper layer of poor quality soil vegetated with mainly grasses. Fires have been lit in areas resulting in complete removal of vegetation in certain areas. This site has been known to flood. From local reports the cause of the flooding was illegal dumping in the Galback Stream blocking upstream culverts.
- 11.4.16 The site is strongly screened on all sides by the industrial buildings and from Labre Park by a 3 m high masonry wall & railings therefore the impacts considered will be confined to views from the Kylemore Road and from the canal and associated tow paths.

#### **Visibility**

- 11.4.17 A visual envelope plan and photographs accompany this section of the report.
- 11.4.18 The site is essentially orientated towards the Grand Canal, where the most open views of the site are afforded. The site lies parallel to the canal, thus offering views of the site from the Canal and associated towpaths to the North. Views from the Kylemore Road are currently limited by a 1,8 m high wall over most of the length of the road adjacent to the site, in addition a reservation of land separates the road from the subject site and it is proposed to construct and industrial/Warehousing development on this reservation.
- 11.4.19 To the west, views of the site from the surrounding buildings are very limited. A combination of screening by boundary walls and industrial buildings has substantially obscured views of the site.
- 11.4.20 From the north, views of the site from the industrial development and Labre park are completely obscured by high boundary/security walls.

- 11.4.21 To the east of the site the roadside boundary wall almost completely obscures the site with the exceptions of local areas where the wall has been removed or knocked. This road is a busy fast road with limited pedestrian traffic. From here, there are partially obscured views looking west across the site however these views will be removed when the walls are repaired or the proposed warehousing project constructed.
- 11.4.22 To the south of the Canal, the towpath provides a facility for walking, day to day commuting and cycling and the canal provided access and views from boating activities. The site is currently quite open with good vantage points from this direction. This area is approximately 1.5 m above the site improving the visibility over the site.

#### **Planning Context**

- 11.4.23 The Dublin City County Development Plan, 1999 is the Statutory Plans controlling development in the area. A draft Development Plan 2005 - 2011 is currently under review. The land use zoning for this site and the surrounding lands under the current development plan is industrial with the exception of residential zoning for the existing housing and linear open space either side of the canal. The proposed development plan should be adopted early in 2005.
- 11.4.24 The Dublin City Development Plan sets out the development framework for Dublin City over the 1999-2004 period. Under the Development Control Section of the Development Plan, the planning authority sets out qualitative and quantitative standards for new development in the Dublin City Area.
- 11.4.25 The Plans do not identify any Protected Views within or surrounding the site, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of High Visual Amenity and Outstanding Views and Prospects.
- 11.4.26 There are no trees or woodlands within the subject site subject to protection or preservation. However, as part of the proposed development, it is intended that trees be included within the development and especially along the Northern boundary.
- 11.4.27 There are no structures on site other than the aforementioned electricity Pylons.

## **11.5 Characteristics of the Proposed Development**

- 11.5.1 The proposed development comprises a number of distinct elements. The project comprises:
- A CA site which will be visited by the public, containing skips and containers for depositing domestic recyclable materials.
  - A green waste area for collecting domestic green waste in preparation for transportation for shredding and composting.
  - A street cleansing area to allow Dublin City Council's street cleansing vehicles deposit collected materials for compaction and transfer to a suitable deposit.
  - An area for temporary storage of waste electrical and electronic equipment awaiting transportation off site for reprocessing.
  - A construction, demolition and bulky waste deposit area pending transfer to a suitable recycling/disposal or processing facility.
- 11.5.2 The complete facility will be surrounded by a high Boundary wall, or secure fencing as appropriate. The internal partitions will be provided by high walls or railings.
- 11.5.3 Internal landscaping will generally be a mix of concrete and asphalt with the junction between the two used to define area functions. Soft landscaping will be interspersed within the site with particular reference to the northern boundary.
- 11.5.4 The southern boundary will be planted on the canal side with native deciduous species to extend the existing vegetation on the western end of the site.
- 11.5.5 It is envisaged that the proposed development will help to make a significant contribution to the availability of recycling facilities in the western Dublin City Area and help prevent the high incidence of 'fly-tipping' and illegal disposal of waste.

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## **11.6 Visual Impact Assessment**

### **Construction Impact**

- 11.6.1 The project will begin with the construction of a bridge over the Galback Stream to provide access to the site and allow clearing off the illegally deposited materials to a suitable facility. This will be followed by removal of unsuitable sub-soil from the site. Fill material suitable for retention will be compacted and a capping layer of stone laid down to allow construction works to proceed. The bridge will be below road level and as such not easily visible.
- 11.6.2 The next stage will be construction of the boundary walls and secure fences, installation of the required utilities, construction of the two structures on site, construction of internal walls/fencing and finally kerbing and surfacing. Construction is to take place over a 10-12 month period.
- 11.6.3 The greatest impact from the development will take place during the construction period, and is therefore a moderately short-term impact. Initially, there will be a significant change to the appearance of the site as fly tipped material is removed and fill material is imported and spread. Impacts will arise from the visual appearance of the fill material (probably a light grey colour) and from machinery movements across the site.
- 11.6.4 Once filling has been completed, activity will then focus on the construction of the boundary walls and secure fences around the site. Impacts will arise from concentrated areas of activity by machinery and construction workers, the visual appearance of structures and pavements under construction and the temporary storage of materials on the site.
- 11.6.5 Throughout the construction period, there will be an initial positive impact as the site is cleaned up followed by a moderate negative visual impact on the surrounding area, but only in the short-term. As construction progresses, the degree of visual impact will lessen as buildings and pavements are completed and a degree of screening of the remaining site activities is afforded by the boundary walls themselves.

### **Operational Impact on Character**

- 11.6.6 Currently the site has a distinct urban wasteland character, one that lies within a distinctly industrialised urban area. When seen from the south, the existing industrial buildings provide a strong backdrop to the site. When seen from the north and west, the Grand Canal and associated towpaths provide a degree of relief from the ravaged image of the site.
- 11.6.7 Once established, the newly developed site will have brought a significant change to the character of the site and the immediate surroundings. The proposed development will integrate the site into the adjoining urban area and will prevent significant re-occurrence of the level of dumping which has occurred to date.
- 11.6.8 The internal areas of the site will be characterised by modern office/gatehouse structures with a clean paved area interspersed with trees. The offices/gatehouses will be modest in size and simple in nature using traditional building materials and slate or tiled roofs. The receiving containers and skips will be arranged in an organised pattern, which will present an image of order and tidiness to the facility. The core building facades and roofs will comprise materials of a traditional appearance (stone/render/slate) with more modern materials, including glazing and steel, used for other elements within the facility of the building. Overall, the character of the site will be one of a modern, efficient facility.

**Operational Impact on Visual Amenity**

- 11.6.9 Once construction has been completed, visual impact will reduce significantly as the development becomes an established part of the landscape. Buildings will be completed and the landscape works carried out as part of the development will quickly become established, beginning to soften the appearance of the built elements and gradually absorbing the development into the surrounding landscape. Activity on the site will assume levels that would be expected in Civic Amenity areas. Traffic will be mostly confined to private cars arriving and leaving the site at normal peak times, with occasional delivery/collection HGVs.

**Views of the Site from the South**

- 11.6.10 The greatest visual impact will be on the Canal and associated towpaths. This currently has views of the wasteland, pylons dumped materials with a backdrop provided by the industrial buildings, therefore a very threatening landscape. Views of the Wasteland and dumped materials will be removed and views of the industrial facility will become partially or completely obscured and views will be foreshortened, replaced with a view of modern Civic Amenity Facility in a paved/landscape setting, including new trees and shrub areas. The current dominance of the pylons will be slightly reduced by the integration of the pylons in an ordered fashion into the alignment of the proposed development. The new view will be attractive but significantly different, and without views of the dumped materials, the result will be a significant positive visual impact and less threatening.

**Views of the Site from the West**

- 11.6.11 Views from the west are limited to views from within the existing industrial developments. Again the current wasteland view will be replaced with a view of modern Civic Amenity Facility in a paved/landscape setting, including new trees and shrub areas. The new view will be attractive but significantly different, and without views of the dumped materials, the result will be a significant positive visual impact.

**Views of the Site from the East**

- 11.6.12 Views from the west are limited to views from breaks in the roadside boundary. Again the current wasteland view will be replaced with a view of modern Civic Amenity Facility in a paved/landscape setting, including new trees and shrub areas. The new view will be attractive but significantly different, and without views of the dumped materials, the result will be a significant positive visual impact. It should be noted that this view will be temporary as repair to the wall and construction of the proposed industrial/warehousing facility will permanently screen any views from this direction

**Views of the Site from the North**

- 11.6.13 Views from the north are currently completely screened and on completion this will not alter. There will be no impact on views from the North.

## **11.7 Remedial and Mitigation Measures**

- 11.7.1 In preparing the development proposals, care has been taken to consider the height, massing, layout and materials to be used, in order to minimise the potential visual impact of the development itself. Further, the landscape proposals are intended to strike a balance between screening parts of the development and providing a practicable workable facility. The overall layout of the site responds to the site context, with elements placed to satisfy both functional and aesthetic requirements.
- 11.7.2 The inclusion of trees and a planted boundary screen on both northern and southern boundaries will reduce any negative impact of the boundary wall from the canal view. The overall visual impact when compared to the existing site will be positive.

## **11.8 Difficulties in compiling Information**

- 11.8.1 No specific difficulties were encountered in compiling the information on this section.

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