



ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

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# THORNTONS RECYCLING

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT MILLENNIUM BUSINESS PARK

### VOLUME 2 – MAIN EIS

### CHAPTER 13 – LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

JANUARY 2017



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## 13 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT

### 13.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the existing landscape in the vicinity of the proposed development location and the visual character of the local landscape. This section also set out the factors that impinge on the landscape and visual characteristics of the locality, setting out how the proposed development interacts with them and specifying any significant effects.

The term 'landscape' refers primarily to the visual appearance of an area, including its shape, form and colour and the interaction of these elements to create specific patterns that are distinctive to particular localities. Landscape is also not purely a visual phenomenon. Its character relies closely on the local physical geography and environmental history. Besides any scenic and/or visual dimension, there are also a whole range of other constituents of significance. These include:

- Topography
- Ecology
- Landscape history
- Land use
- Buildings and settlement
- Architecture

### 13.2 Study Area

The assessment area has been defined with reference to potentially affected sensitive receptors, regardless of the distance from the proposed development, which must be assessed with regard to any landscape or visual impacts. With respect to the viewpoint locations presented in the figures within this section, the furthest potentially affected viewpoint is located c.260 m north east of the development location.

### 13.3 Assessment Methodology

This landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Department of Environment and Local Government - Landscape and Landscape Assessment, Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June, 2000
- The Landscape Institute – Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013
- The Landscape Institute – Advice Note 01/11 – Photography & Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - 2011

#### 13.3.1 Existing Landscape Assessment

The landscape character, values and sensitivity of the area in the vicinity of the development location is outlined in accordance with the Department of Environment and Local Government Guidelines - Landscape and Landscape Assessment, Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2000.

In these guidelines, landscape character, values and sensitivity are defined as follows:

- Landscape *character* can be established for an area where there is visual distinctiveness and identity through a continuity of similar characteristics. This description outlines 'what is physically on the land surface', resulting from geology, soils, hydrology, topography, vegetation and land-use.
- Landscape *values* can be described as the environment or cultural benefits that are derived from various landscape resources. These resources may include physical and visual components.
- Landscape *sensitivity* can be described as the extent to which a landscape can accommodate change without unacceptable loss of existing character or interference with values.

The baseline condition in relation to the landscape character of the area of the proposed development was assessed by means of a desk-based study to assess the available information in relation to the sensitive landscapes in the area of the proposed development, the current presence of sensitive visual receptors in the area and the presence of sites of cultural significance in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Once the baseline assessment had been carried out, an assessment of both the positive and negative impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding area in terms of the visual impact was undertaken. These impacts are presented in this section, as well as the mitigation measures proposed, if appropriate, to mitigate any negative impacts.

The data and publications used to compile the baseline assessment are listed below:

- Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022
- Fingal County Development Plan 2011- 2017

The development site was visited by personnel from FTC in May 2016. A site walkover and windscreen survey of the surrounding area was undertaken. The purpose of the site walkover and the windscreen survey was to assist in the characterisation of the landscape in the local and broader context, in addition to identifying sensitive receptors.

### 13.3.2 Visual Impact Assessment

The landscape impact assessment describes the nature and scale of changes to the landscape elements and character and outlines the effect of the proposed development on the landscape character of the area. Landscape impacts may be viewed as positive, neutral or negative.

The magnitude of the effects from the proposed development on landscape is rated as follows:

- *No change* – very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline i.e. the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape
- *Low* – minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline i.e. the introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape
- *Moderate* – partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline i.e. the 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 landscape

- *High* – total loss or major alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline i.e. the introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape

The significance of the change to the landscape is dependent on the sensitivity of the landscape or viewer and the magnitude of the change.

### Significance of Change

The visual impact assessment will describe the visual effects or changes due to the proposed development. Visual impact may occur by means of intrusion and/or obstruction. These terms can be defined as:

- Visual Intrusion:** An impact on a view without blocking  
**Visual Obstruction:** An impact on a view involving blocking thereof.

Visual impacts on a particular view may be viewed as positive, neutral or negative. The significance of these effects will be rated as follows:

- *Little/None* - arises where the proposal is adequately screened by existing landforms, vegetation or the general built environment and there is no discernible deterioration within the existing view.
- *Low* - arises where views affected by the proposal form only a small element in the overall panorama and there is a perceptible deterioration within the existing view
- *Moderate* - arises where an appreciable segment of the panorama is affected and where may be readily noticeable to the receptor or where there is an intrusion into the foreground and there would be a noticeable deterioration within the existing view
- *High* - arises where the view is significantly affected, obstructed or so dominated by the proposal as to form the focus of attention and there is a significant deterioration of the existing view

## 13.4 Existing Environment

### 13.4.1 Existing Landscape Character

#### Immediate Area

Being located within the functional area of Fingal County Council, the Fingal County Development Plan 2011- 2017 provides for the classification of Fingal's landscapes into types and values and associated sensitivities. The Development Plan Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) divides the county into 6 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) representing generic areas of distinctive character that makes one landscape different from another. The LCTs identified are:

- Rolling Hills Character Type, Modest value, medium sensitivity
- High Lying Character Type, High value, high sensitivity
- Low Lying Character Type, Modest value, low sensitivity
- Estuary Character Type, Exceptional value, high sensitivity
- Coastal Character Type, Exceptional value, high sensitivity
- River Valleys and Canal Character Type, High value, high sensitivity

The proposed development location within the Millennium Business Park is located with a 'Low Lying' Character Type, as per Sheet No.14 of the Fingal County Development Plan 2011 – 2017, that is, being of modest value and low sensitivity.

This Character Type is identified in the Plan as being *"characterised by a mix of pasture and arable farming on low lying land with few protected views or prospects. The Low Lying Character Type has an open character combined with large field patterns, few tree belts and low roadside hedges"*.

While within this Character Type, the proposed development location is wholly within an industrially developed area.

### Visual Envelope

The visual envelope is the extent of potential visibility of the site to or from a specific area or feature. The visual envelope for the development location is defined by:

- views along the local Cappagh Road when approaching the site from a southerly direction.
- views from within the Millennium Business Park directly north of the development location
- views from the Rosemount Business Park 300 – 400 metres to the east of the development location
- views from the Roadstone Huntstown Quarry directly east of the site location

#### 13.4.2 Existing Landscape Values & Sensitivity

The DoELG publication *"Landscape and Landscape Assessment, Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities"* (June, 2000), identifies the more common values to be considered when assessing landscape as:

1. aesthetic - most frequently visual, vistas, scenic areas, outstanding landscapes, areas of special amenity
2. ecological - habitats, biotopes, wildlife sanctuary, special areas of conservation, natural heritage areas and special protection areas
3. historical - archaeological heritage, artefacts, field patterns
4. socio-cultural - buildings, settlements, monuments, social history or social geography
5. religious - shrines, wells, burial places, pilgrimages
6. mythological - ancient Celtic stories

Of these, items 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 are addressed in other relevant chapters of this EIS. The proposed development location, being located within an industrial area in a 'Low Lying' Landscape Character Type, is identified as having a low sensitivity.

In terms of the proposed development, the aesthetic value and ecological value are considered the more important of these values to be considered.

The description of the ecological values has been assessed in Chapter 10 of this EIS.

The descriptions of the aesthetic value i.e. most frequently visual, vistas, scenic areas, outstanding landscapes, areas of special amenity, are considered to be appropriately addressed in the assessment of the Fingal LCA, where the sensitivity of the Low Lying Agricultural area is identified as being low.

### 13.4.3 Amenity Views

The Fingal County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 identifies a number of views and prospects, identified as being particularly “*along the coast, the river valleys and the upland area to the north along the border with County Meath.*” with objectives presented to ensure these views and prospects are protected.

The nearest amenity view to the proposed development are those along the ‘Strawberry Beds’ within the Liffey Valley Special Amenity Area, located some 5 km south west of the proposed development location.

## **13.5 Potential Visual & Landscape Impacts**

### 13.5.1 Viewpoint locations

To determine the visual impact of the development, a number of viewpoints were selected for detailed assessment, in keeping with the visual envelope identified above. These viewpoints correspond to locations where the most significant impacts may be realised and this corresponds with the local views from the Cappagh Road, when approaching the site from a general northerly or southerly direction.

Photomontages have been created for these viewpoints from a number of locations along the Cappagh Road to demonstrate the visual impacts of the facility. Before and after views are presented for each viewpoint and the location of each viewpoint is presented, with respect to the facility. As the photomontage is only a representation of what will be seen by the eyes in reality, it is intended that they are used as a tool to aid visual assessment.

All of the photographs were taken in GPS recorded locations. The proposed structures have been modelled in AutoDesk REVIT. The GPS camera position is used to place viewpoints which are then rendered. The image is transferred into Adobe Photoshop using known existing place markers.

These photomontages are presented in Figures 13.1 to 13.5.





**Photomontage Panoramic View of Proposed Waste Reception and Processing Building**



**Existing View**



**View Details**

**Viewpoint Location - E710383, N740609**

**Job Title**

**PROPOSED MATERIALS PROCESSING & TRANSFER FACILITY AT MILLENNIUM BUSINESS PARK**

**Figure Title**

**VIEWPOINT 1**



Drn: SK	Ckd: AR	App: DM
Rev: A - Issue for Planning Application		
Date: November 2016		
Filed : LW15/046/02/LW15-046-02-Figure 13-1		

**FIGURE 13-1**




**Photomontage Panoramic View of Proposed Waste Reception and Processing Building**



**Existing View**



**View Details**  
**Viewpoint Location - E710301, N740682**

<b>Job Title</b>		<b>PROPOSED MATERIALS PROCESSING &amp; TRANSFER FACILITY AT MILLENNIUM BUSINESS PARK</b>		
<b>Figure Title</b>		<b>VIEWPOINT 2</b>		
			<b>Drn: SK</b> <b>Ckd: AR</b> <b>App: DM</b> <b>Rev: A - Issue for Planning Application</b> <b>Date: November 2016</b> <small>Filed : LW15/046/02/LW15-046-02-Figure 13-2</small>	
		<b>FIGURE 13-2</b>		