Landscape Architecture

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council County Hall,
Marine Road,
Dún Laoghaire,
Co.Dublin,
A96 K6C9

06.12.2024

Reg Ref : ABP31445922
Location: Site of 3.7 ha at, Blackglen Road and Woodside Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18
Applicant: Zolbury LTD

OPINION REPORT

A Chara,

Further to the request for WCC LRD Opinion 1, 8, and 10 of ABP31445922 for the proposed development, please find below the response from Gannon + Associates Landscape Architecture as they relate to landscape matters.

WCC LRD Opinion 1: Open Space and Landscaping

A quantitative and qualitative assessment that provides a breakdown of the public, private and communal open space provision proposed, in accordance with the relevant standards for same as set out by the Development Plan, must be provided. The assessment shall detail the functionality of the public space and shall disregard any areas required for circulation space such as footpaths between buildings etc..

Response: In response to the requirement for a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the open space provision, we have provided the following breakdown, in accordance with the relevant standards set out by the Development Plan:

1. Public Open Space:

- The Development Plan requires 15% of the site area to be dedicated to public open space.
- We are providing 23.09% public open space, which includes areas such as the natural play area, fitness area, and dog park. Circulation spaces such as footpaths between buildings and water attenuation areas have been excluded from these calculations, in line with the guidelines.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

2. Communal Open Space:

- The communal open space provision across the development exceeds the required standards outlined in the Development Plan and the Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments (2020).

- There is a requirement for 1,340 sq.m of communal open space and we are providing for 2,168 sq.m representing an over provision of 160% communal open space.

3. Private Open Space:

- Private open space provision, such as gardens for houses type D1, has been designed and detailed in the architect's layout drawings. For further clarification, please refer to the architect's drawings for the exact size of the front & rear gardens.

The proposed open spaces have been designed to provide a range of recreational opportunities and meet the functional needs of residents. Public and communal spaces are strategically located to encourage social interaction, active recreation, and safe play areas. The detailed design ensures that these spaces are accessible, secure, and contribute positively to the overall functionality of the development. For additional details, please refer to drawing 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_POS.

	Public Open Space including:	**Area, Sq.m**	**%, of the site**
	Play provision of them		
	- Natural Area for Play	412.79	
	- Fitness Area	54.84	
	- Dog Park	126.98	
	TOTAL	**8,686.56**	**23.09**
	Communal/Semi-private Open Space including:		
	- Podiums	1201.23	
	- Courtyards	966.86	
	Play provision of them		
	- Local Area for Play (LAP)	169.03	
	- Accessible Roof Gardens	424	
	TOTAL	**2,168.09**	**5.76**
	Widlife Corridor	**4,665.70**	**12.40**

Red Line boundary: 37,608sq.m or 3.76ha

Figure 1. Open Space Provision table taken from drawing 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_POS.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

WCC LRD Opinion 8: Parks & Landscaping

a) The Applicant is invited to also consider an alternative potential layout, with the omission of the public footpath to the western boundary. In the event the Applicant decides to retain the currently proposed layout, a written justification should be provided with regard to the retention of that layout.

The Applicant is invited to also consider an alternative potential layout, with the rerouting of the road layout in the central part of the proposed development site. In the event the Applicant decides to retain the currently proposed layout, a written justification should be provided with regard to the retention of that layout.

Response: Regarding the alternative potential layout for the road in the central part of the proposed development site, a series of workshops were held to explore the possibility of rerouting the road. Due to changes in site levels, it was not feasible to amend the current road layout. Please refer to OMP's written justification for further details on this decision.

With that in mind, a redesign of the central public open space was undertaken to address these concerns. In the updated layout, the footpath has been relocated away from the road to create a safer and more secure natural play area next to the western boundary. The area originally intended for the play area, located below the road, has now been transformed into an open space featuring an amphitheater, plaza, tennis area, and a smaller natural play area. Please see drawing 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_LM.



Figure 2. Snapshot of central open space taken from 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_LM drawing.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

WCC LRD Opinion 9: Drainage

f) The applicant is requested to comment on the lack of tree pits or bioretention areas adjacent to the roads within the development.

Response: We have reviewed our SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) strategy and introduced several enhanced measures to address this concern. The revised design now includes the implementation of rain gardens, bioretention areas, and tree pits strategically placed along the roads within the development. These features are designed to manage surface water runoff effectively, improve water quality, and enhance the overall landscape aesthetic.

For the rain gardens, we have selected a variety of plants that are well-suited to both the drainage needs and aesthetic goals of the project. The plant selection for the rain gardens includes Cistus ladanifer, Echinacea pallida, Eryngium yuccifolium, Perovskia 'Little Spire', Rudbeckia maxima, Festuca mairei, Helenium 'Rubinzwerg', Molinia transparent, Persicaria amplexicaulis 'Orange Field', and Stipa gigantea. These plants are drought-tolerant, support local biodiversity, and provide seasonal interest throughout the year.

For the bioretention areas, we have selected a wet-tolerant wildflower meadow mix, which includes species such as Devil's Bit Scabious, Common Sorrel, Cowslip, Fleabane, Greater Trefoil, Hemp Agrimony, Lesser Knapweed, Marsh Cinquefoil, Marsh Marigold, Meadow Buttercup, Meadowsweet, Meadow Rue, Oxeye Daisy, Purple Loosestrife, Ragged Robin, Red Clover, Red Rattle, Ribwort Plantain, Selfheal, Sneezewort, Tufted Vetch, Water Avens, Wild Angelica, Wild Valerian, Yarrow, Yellow Flag Iris, Yellow Rattle, and Red Rattle. This mix is specifically designed to thrive in wet conditions, support diverse ecosystems, and contribute to the overall ecological value of the development.

In addition to the wildflower meadow mix, we are proposing a variety of trees and shrubs within the bioretention areas to further enhance their function and visual appeal. The proposed species include Alnus glutinosa, Betula nigra, Betula pendula, Cornus amomum, Corylus avellana, Salix babylonica, Quercus palustris, and Viburnum opulus. These species are well-suited to wetland environments and will contribute to the biodiversity and ecological health of the development.

Additionally, the front gardens of house types D1 and C1, C2, and C2a are designed with permeable paving, allowing for natural water infiltration and further supporting the overall drainage strategy. The parking spaces within the development are designed with Grasscrete surfaces, which promote permeability and reduce surface water runoff.

For more detailed information on the landscape design, please refer to the Soft Landscape Plan (drawing No. 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_SLP), as well as the relevant drawings from OSCS (engineers), which provide further details of the drainage and surface water management strategies.

These additions ensure that the development aligns with sustainable drainage best practices while providing an environmentally sensitive solution to stormwater management.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

WCC LRD Opinion 10: Biodiversity

b) Landscape Plan

It is requested that the Landscape Plan is revised to provide the following:

i. More native planting for the boundaries to include native crab apple, elder, etc for agreement with DLR Biodiversity Officer.

Response: As requested, the current boundary planting selection includes a variety of native shrubs and trees, providing diverse benefits to local biodiversity. Specifically, the plan proposes native shrubs like **hard fern, hawthorn, broom, foxglove, holly, crab apple, myrtle, blackthorn, and elder.** These selections support various wildlife species, encourage pollinator presence, and enhance ecological stability.

The inclusion of native tree species such as **silver birch, downy birch, holly, sessile oak, and pedunculate oak** further demonstrates a commitment to local biodiversity and carbon sequestration. These trees are well-suited to the local climate and soil conditions, and they offer food sources and habitats for numerous native insects and birds, fostering a sustainable ecosystem.

The selection of these species, particularly the addition of native oaks and birch, aligns closely with the Council's biodiversity objectives, as these trees are critical for supporting native wildlife. Oak trees, for instance, support hundreds of insect species and contribute to complex food webs in Irish ecosystems, while birch trees provide early pollen sources for bees and add to the structural diversity needed for various fauna.

ii. Bracken although native can be highly invasive and may impact on the planned landscaping of the proposed site, if it becomes dominant. Therefore, a bracken management plan will be required as part of any landscaping plans or contracts. This is requested at this stage to ensure that it considers biodiversity also.

Response: Regarding the request for a bracken management plan, we would like to clarify that bracken (Pteridium aquilinum) was never included in the proposed landscaping plan for the site.

The current plan is designed to prioritize a diverse range of native trees and shrubs that align with Dun Laoghaire County Council's biodiversity goals, including species such as oak, birch, crab apple, elder, hawthorn, and holly. These species were selected to support local flora and fauna without the potential invasive risks associated with bracken. Please refer to Enviroguide's biodiversity management plan for further details.

iii. The planting of gorse is not recommended given its invasive nature and although it is native it is likely to arrive back to the site naturally over time. It is also considered a fire fuel and not suitable for a boundary treatment (as a planted species) along the edge of a residential development.

Response: In response to the Council's recommendation to avoid the planting of gorse due to its invasive tendencies and fire risk, we confirm that gorse has been excluded from the species selection for the conifer boundary area. We agree that gorse, while native, can easily reestablish itself naturally on the site and does not align with the goals for a safe and sustainable boundary planting in a residential area.

The revised species selection for this boundary includes low-growing, native plants that support biodiversity without the risks associated with gorse. The updated list of shrubs and groundcover plants includes: **heather, hawthorn, bell heather, common juniper, purple moor grass.**

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

These choices provide a suitable mix of low-maintenance and fire-resistant vegetation that promotes habitat diversity while reducing fire risk.

In terms of trees, the following species are now proposed: **silver birch, downy birch, scots pine, spruce.** This combination of birch, Scots pine, and spruce provides a balanced structure to the landscape, supporting local biodiversity and visual appeal without introducing species that could pose an invasive or fire hazard.

iv. Any plant species of the proposed development will be checked by the ecologist for any likely chance of becoming invasive or spreading to the adjacent Fitzsimons Woods pNHA including any dogwood species.

Response: We confirm that all plant species proposed for the development have been thoroughly reviewed by an ecologist from Enviroguide and no species with the chance of becoming invasive is proposed.

v. Cutting of ivy from existing trees should not be the default approach by the Arborist or for tree management without good reason and it would be requested that if any is planned that it is done in consultation with DLR Biodiversity Officer and Parks.

Response: Please refer to the Arboricultural report prepared by Enviroguide which limits cutting of Ivy on existing trees to be retained.

c) A revised Green Infrastructure Plan

Green Infrastructure Plan revised to remove any references to non-native deer species, from the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge. The wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge is not to be considered as a 'foraging' area for non-native deer that may damage the biodiversity planting and will not achieve the mitigation that is needed for biodiversity, as part of the proposed development.

This does not remove the need to allow for a safe route for the deer and it recommended that it be considered outside of the wildlife corridor on the site where there are other routes for the deer to allow them to traverse the site safely.

It is requested that the ecologist addresses this matter in the EcIA and all other documents and reports.

Response: Gannon + Associates have reviewed the Green Infrastructure Plan and removed all references to non-native deer species from the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge. This area will no longer be considered a foraging zone for non-native deer, as their presence could harm biodiversity planting efforts and compromise the intended ecological mitigation.

d) A Wildlife Corridor and Biodiversity Refuge Management Plan is required, that addressed the following areas:

i. The integrity of the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge will require protection into the future from pressures from land use, from residential activities and from climate change in the long-term. Therefore, a Wildlife Corridor and Biodiversity Refuge management plan will be provided by a suitably qualified ecologist with input by a landscape architect, to demonstrate how it will be created, timing of its development relative to the

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

phasing of the proposed site and construction works, management in the long-term for the habitats and species and also a monitoring programme over the course of its development and in the long-term, for agreement with DLR Biodiversity Officer. It is requested that it will include the cross sections of the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge to ensure it is of sufficient area/length/width to function and protect wildlife.

Response: Gannon + Associates have revised the Landscape Masterplan and prepared cross sections of the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge to ensure it provides sufficient area, length, and width to effectively function and protect wildlife. For specific details, please refer to the drawing 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_GIM.

Additionally, a comprehensive Wildlife Corridor and Biodiversity Refuge Management Plan has been developed by Enviroguide. Please refer to Enviroguide's input for more detailed information.

ii. It is noted that the Green Infrastructure plan shows arrows are indicating that that there is a particular direction that species will go which is not the objective of the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge as it has many functions not just a connection to the north. This may leave the GI open to misinterpretation.

Response: The arrows indicating directional movement of species have been removed from drawing **23170_Blackglen_PA_J_GIM**. This adjustment clarifies that the wildlife corridor/biodiversity refuge is intended to support a range of ecological functions, not just a connection to the north, thereby avoiding any potential misinterpretation of its purpose.

iii. It is requested that signage regarding the wildlife corridor/ biodiversity refuge would be agreed with DLR Biodiversity Officer, in terms of content.

Response: Signage for the wildlife corridor and biodiversity refuge has been developed and wording subject to agreement with DLRCC, ensuring that the content aligns with the ecological objectives and effectively communicates the purpose and importance of the area.

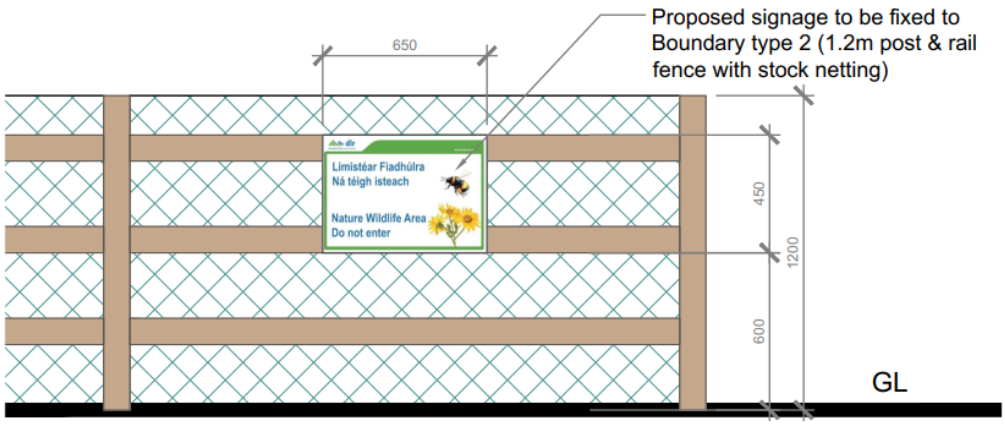


Figure 3. Wildlife Area Sign.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie

e) An Invasive Species Management Plan is required, that addresses the following areas:

i. It is noted that some of the invasive species such as Winter Heliotrope have more recently been identified as highly impactful species (EPA report) and all IAS will be reassessed based upon more recent reports and data.

Response: Please refer to Enviroguide's input for a detailed approach on the reassessment and management of IAS as part of the overall plan.

ii. An Invasive Alien Species Management Plan will be prepared by an invasive species specialist for the proposed development. This plan will be also incorporated into a revised CEMP.

Response: Please refer to Enviroguide's input for a detailed approach on the reassessment and management of IAS as part of the overall plan.

iii. The invasive species specialist may be required at various stages of the proposed development and will be included in the CEMP, along with their role and any IAS treatments, where relevant.

Response: Please refer to Enviroguide's input for a detailed approach on the reassessment and management of IAS as part of the overall plan.

WCC LRD: Specific Additional Information Required for Lodgment

u) Details of works and landscape integration with adjacent cycle ways and road improvement measures at Blackglen Road and the immediate environs of the subject.

Response: At the entrance to the site, we are proposing a dense and colorful ornamental planting scheme featuring specimen trees along the road. This will create a visually striking natural “wall” that provides seasonal interest, enhances the streetscape, and acts as a buffer between the road, cycle ways, and the development. The planting will transition to a more open arrangement closer to the building, ensuring a welcoming and airy feel that invites residents and visitors into the space.

To further activate this area, we are incorporating open landscaped zones near the building that include seating areas. These spaces are designed to encourage community interaction and provide an inviting, functional environment for relaxation and socialization.

The landscape design integrates seamlessly with the adjacent cycle ways and road improvement works. The planting layout ensures clear visibility lines at crossings and entrances, prioritizing safety for cyclists and pedestrians while maintaining an attractive streetscape.

Overall, the proposed landscaping enhances the visual quality and functionality of the Blackglen Road area, creating a cohesive connection between the development and its surroundings while providing meaningful outdoor spaces for residents.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie



Figure 4. Snapshot of arrival plaza taken from 23170_Blackglen_PA_J_LM drawing.

I trust the enclosed response is satisfactory and appreciate your consideration of same.

Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Gannon
Director,
B.Ag.Sc, LL.M, M.I.L.

+ 353 1 442 8187
+ info@gannonandassociates.ie
+ Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17
Rathfarnham Rd, Terenure, Dublin, D6W X921
+ gannonandassociates.ie