LAND PLANNING & DESIGN

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

For

Proposed LRD at

Countess Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry

June 2026

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS
LAND PLANNING & DESIGN
www.csrlandplan.ie

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

1.1 INTRODUCTION 2
1.2 METHODOLOGY 2
1.2.1 Forces for Landscape Change 2
1.2.2 Guidance 2
1.2.3 Assessment of Both 'Landscape' and 'Visual' Effects 3
1.2.4 Methodology for Landscape Appraisal 3
1.2.5 Methodology for Visual Appraisal 5
1.3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 8
1.4 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT – POLICY CONTEXT 8
1.4.1 Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028 8
1.5 THE SITE 12
1.5.1 Description of Site 12
1.5.2 Local Landscape Character 15
1.5.3 Landscape Designations 18
1.5.4 Summary of Landscape Character and Values 19
1.5.5 Zone of Visual Influence and Potential Visual Receptors 20
1.6 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL 22
1.6.1 Landscape Effects 22
1.6.2 Visual Effects 23
1.6.3 Cumulative Effects 30
1.6.4 Mitigation and Enhancement 31
1.6.5 Summary 31

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

1.1 Introduction

The Preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by CSR was informed by a desktop study and a survey of the site and receiving environment in September 2025. The appraisal is in accordance with the methodology prescribed in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA) published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment and the relevant updates and Clarifications as issued by the Landscape Institute.

This report identifies and discusses the landscape and visual constraints, and likely effects in relation to the proposed LRD Development at Countess Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry. The report is supported by photomontages, prepared by specialist providers Gnet 3D.

1.2 Methodology

Ireland is a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The ELC defines landscape as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. This definition is important in that it expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It encourages a focus on landscape as a resource in its own right - a shared resource providing a complex range of cultural, environmental, and economic benefits to individuals and society.

As a cultural resource, the landscape functions as the setting for our day-to-day lives, also providing opportunities for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment and inspiration. It contributes to the sense of place experienced by individuals and communities and provides a link to the past as a record of historic socio-economic and environmental conditions. As an environmental resource, the landscape provides habitat for fauna and flora. It receives, stores, conveys, and cleans water, and vegetation in the landscape stores carbon and produces oxygen. As an economic resource, the landscape provides the raw materials and space for the production of food, materials (e.g., timber, aggregates) and energy (e.g., carbon-based fuels, wind, solar), living space and for recreation and tourism activities.

1.2.1 Forces for Landscape Change

The GLVIA notes that the landscape is change is ongoing. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. For example, within the receiving environment, the environs of the proposed development have altered over the last thousand years, from wilderness to agriculture and settlement.

Many of the drivers for change arise from the requirement for development to meet the needs of a growing population and economy. The concept of sustainable development recognises that change must and will occur to meet the needs of the present, but that it should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This involves finding an appropriate balance between economic, social, and environmental forces and values.

The reversibility of change is an important consideration. If change must occur to meet a current need, it is essential to distinguish whether this could be reversed to return the resource (in this case, the landscape) to its previous state to allow for development or management for future needs.

Climate change is one of the major factors likely to bring about future change in the landscape, and it is accepted to be the most serious long-term threat to the natural environment, as well as economic activity (particularly primary production) and society. The need for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which includes the management of water and more extreme weather and rainfall patterns, is part of this.

1.2.2 Guidance

Landscape and Visual Appraisal is a tool used to identify the effects of change resulting from appraisal of both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, people's views, and visual amenity. As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and is instead a

standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects. However, the process by which the landscape and visual effects are identified is similar to that of a Landscape and Visual Assessment carried out as part of an EIAR.

The methodology is informed by the following key guidance documents, namely:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition 2013, published by the UK Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (hereafter referred to as the GLVIA).
- Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft August 2017, EPA).

References are also made to the *'Landscape and Landscape Assessment – Consultation Draft of Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* document, published in 2000 by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Use of the Term 'Effect' vs 'Impact'

The GLVIA advises that the terms 'impact' and effect' should be clearly distinguished and consistently used in the preparation of an LVIA.

'Impact' is defined as the action being taken. In the case of the proposed works, the impact would include the construction of the proposed extension.

'Effect' is defined as the change or changes resulting from those actions, e.g., a change in landscape character, or changes to the composition, character, and quality of views in the receiving environment. This report focusses on these effects.

1.2.3 Assessment of Both 'Landscape' and 'Visual' Effects

Another key distinction to make in a LVIA is that between landscape effects and the visual effects of development.

'Landscape' results from the interplay between the physical, natural, and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create distinctive character of landscape in different places. 'Landscape character assessment' is the method used in LVIA to describe landscape, and by which to understand the potential effects of a development on the landscape as 'a resource'. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of landscape that make a place distinctive.

Views and '*visual amenity'* refer to the interrelationship between people and the landscape. The GLVIA prescribes that effects on views and visual amenity should be assessed separately from landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked. Visual assessment is concerned with changes that arise in the composition of available views, the response of people to these changes and the overall effects on the area's visual amenity.

The appraisal of landscape and visual effects included a desktop study, review of the proposed development drawings and visualisations, and a site visit which was carried out in March 2022.

1.2.4 Methodology for Landscape Appraisal

Landscape appraisal considers the sensitivity of the receptor, and the likely nature and magnitude of the changes to the main landscape elements and characteristics. Existing trends of change in the landscape are taken into account.

Sensitivity of the Landscape Resource

Landscape Sensitivity: Landscape sensitivity is a function of its land use, landscape patterns and scale, visual enclosure and distribution of visual receptors, scope for mitigation, and the value placed

on the landscape. It also relates to the nature and scale of development proposed. It includes consideration of landscape values as well as the susceptibility of the landscape to change.

Landscape values can be identified by the presence of landscape designations or policies which indicate particular values, either on a national or local level. In addition, a number of criteria are used to assess the value of a landscape. These are described further in Section 1.6 below.

Landscape susceptibility is defined in the GLVIA as *the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline scenario and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*. Susceptibility also relates to the type of development – a landscape may be highly susceptible to certain types of development but have a low susceptibility to other types of development.

For the purpose of assessment, three categories are used to classify the landscape sensitivity of the receiving environment.

Sensitivity is therefore a combination of Landscape value and Susceptibility.

Sensitivity	Description
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features, and characteristics. The character of the landscape is such that it has limited/low capacity for accommodating change in the form of development. These attributes are recognised in landscape policy or designations as being of national, regional, or county value and the principal management objective for the area is conservation of the existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features, or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character of the landscape is such that it has capacity for change; where development would result in a minor change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and where the principal management objective is to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration, or enhancement.

Table 1.1 – Categories of Landscape Sensitivity

Magnitude of Landscape Change: The magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape with reference to its key elements, features, and characteristics (also known as 'landscape receptors'). Four categories are used to classify magnitude of landscape change.

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Change that is moderate to large in extent, resulting in major alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape and/or introduction of large elements considered uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Medium	Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may

	be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.
Low	Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.
Negligible	Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape key elements features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are characteristic of the context. Such development results in no change to the landscape character.

Table 1.2 – Categories of Landscape Change

Landscape Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of landscape effects (either on physical landscape elements or on the landscape character) can be arrived at by combining the landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects.

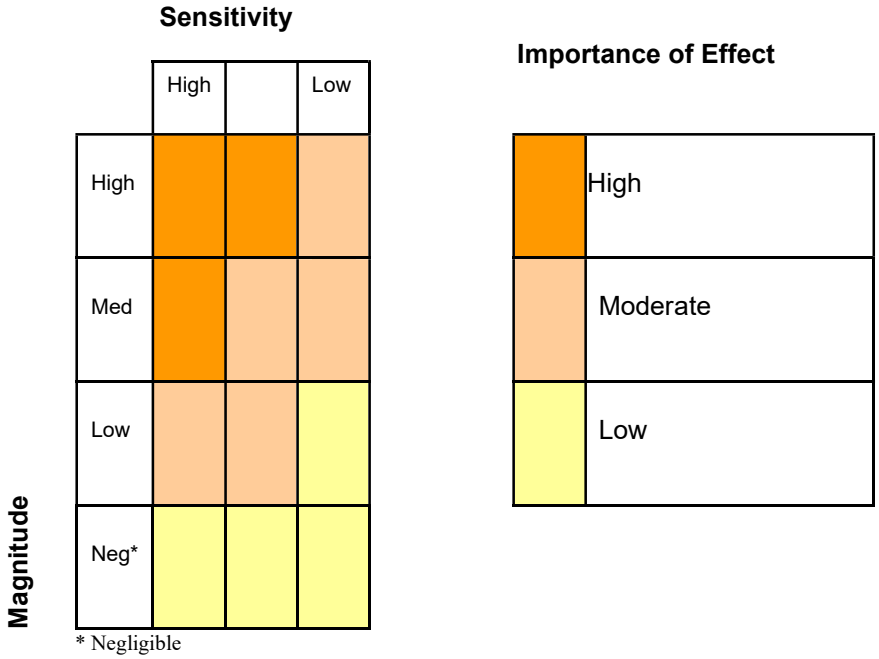


Figure 1.1: Guide to the classification of the level of effects

Landscape effects are also classified as positive, neutral, or negative/adverse. Development has the potential to improve the environment as well as damage it. In certain situations, there might be policy encouraging a type of change in the landscape, and if a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be positive, even if the landscape character is profoundly changed.

1.2.5 Methodology for Visual Appraisal

Visual appraisal considers the changes to the composition of views, the character of the views, and the visual amenity experienced by visual receptors. Visual receptor sensitivity is a function of two main considerations:

- *Susceptibility of the visual receptor to change.* This depends on the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention or interest is focussed on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location.

Visual receptors most susceptible to change include frequent users (such as students and faculty), residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage or other attractions and places of community congregation where the setting contributes to the experience.

Visual receptors less susceptible to change include travellers on road, rail, and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes which would be more susceptible, people engaged in outdoor recreation or sports where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping where the setting does not influence their experience.

- *Value attached to the view.* This depends to a large extent on the subjective opinion of the visual receptor but also on factors such as policy and designations (e.g. scenic routes, protected views), or the view or setting being associated with a heritage asset, visitor attraction or having some other cultural status (e.g. by appearing in arts).

Three categories are used to classify a viewpoint's sensitivity:

Sensitivity	Description
High	Viewers at viewpoints that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of value, or viewpoints that are highly valued by people that experience them regularly (such as views from houses / frequently used buildings or outdoor recreation features) and views which are valued by the local community. This would include tourist attractions, and heritage features of regional or county value, and viewers travelling on scenic routes.
Medium	Viewers at viewpoints representing people travelling at slow or moderate speed through or past the affected landscape in cars or on public transport, where they are partly but not entirely focused on the landscape, or where the landscape has some valued views. The views are generally not designated, but which include panoramic views or views judged to be of some scenic quality, which demonstrate some sense of naturalness, tranquillity, or some rare element in the view.
Low	Viewers at viewpoints reflecting people involved in activities not focused on the landscape e.g. people at their place of work or engaged in similar activities such as shopping, etc. The view may present an attractive backdrop to these activities but there is no evidence of that the view is valued, and not regarded as an important element of these activities. Viewers travelling at high speeds (e.g. motorways) may also be considered of low susceptibility.

Table 1.3 – Categories of Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Magnitude of Change	Description
High	Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.
Medium	Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in

	change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.
Low	Minor intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in minor alteration to the composition and character of the view but no change to visual amenity.
Negligible	Barely discernible intrusion of the development into the view, or introduction of elements that are characteristic in the context, resulting in slight change to the composition of the view and no change in visual amenity.

Table 1.4 – Magnitude of Visual Change

Visual Effects

A conclusion on the relative importance of visual effects can be arrived at by combining the visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change. This is included in Figure 1.1 above as for Landscape Effects.

As this report is not part of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and is instead a standalone Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the report does not include a statement of the significance of effects.

Visual effects are also classified as positive, neutral, or negative/adverse as set out below:

Quality and Timescale of Effects

The predicted effects are also classified as beneficial, neutral, or adverse. This is not an absolute exercise; in particular, visual receptors' attitudes to development, and thus their response to the impact of a development, will vary. However, the methodology applied is designed to provide robust justification for the conclusions drawn. These qualitative impacts/effects are defined as:

- Adverse – Scheme at variance with landform, scale, pattern. Would degrade, diminish, or destroy the integrity of valued features, elements or their setting or cause the quality of the landscape(townscape)/view to be diminished;
- Neutral - Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape(townscape)/view and maintains landscape quality;
- Beneficial – improves landscape(townscape)/view quality and character, fits with the scale, landform and pattern, and enables the restoration of valued characteristic features or repairs / removes damage caused by existing land uses.

Effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

- Temporary – Lasting for one year or less;
- Short Term – Lasting one to seven years;
- Medium Term – Lasting seven to fifteen years;
- Long Term – Lasting fifteen years to sixty years;
- Permanent – Lasting over sixty years.

1.3 The Proposed Development

The proposal is for the delivery of a new residential development at Countess Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry along with public open space provision, landscape treatments and all associated access and statutory services infrastructure.

1.4 Receiving Environment – Policy Context

The following section includes policies and objectives from the Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022 - 2028, hereafter referred to as the Plan. These include policies relating to development, landscape character, and visual sensitivities.

2.3.2.1 Green and Blue Infrastructure

Strong communities and a thriving economy need a healthy natural environment. Green and blue (waterways, rivers etc) infrastructure within our environment – built and natural - provides habitats for flora and fauna to thrive and thereby enhances our biodiversity. The plan supports the protection, enhancement and creation of biodiversity in the public realm such as nature-based solutions for management of water run-off, actions from the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and where compatible with the town's architectural heritage, installing swift nest boxes. Killarney benefits from an abundance of rich natural resources such as the National Park, surrounding mountains and lakes. Where appropriate, these should be interconnected more seamlessly through green and blue infrastructure in order to benefit both residents and tourists alike.

Climate Action Objectives It is an objective of the Council to:	
KA 16	Align the sustainable development and renewal of Killarney with the National Transition Objective, the RSES, The National Climate Action Plan 2021, the European Commission policy initiatives of the European 'Green Deal'.
KA 17	Protect and improve air quality in the Town, especially in relation to reducing particulate matter.
KA 18	Ensure that all new developments in the Town are energy efficient and reflect the sustainability ethos in their approach to development.
KA 19	Strengthen Killarney's existing green and blue Infrastructure and facilitate its sustainable expansion in line with The EU's Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

11.2.5 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 sets out natural management measures to increase habitats and food for wild pollinators. Actions include a change in the management of grasslands, reduction in the use of pesticides, management of hedgerow cutting and the retention of unmanaged roads and park areas. The council supports the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 (and any replacement plans) and will have regard to the actions of this Plan when managing parks, open spaces, and roadside verges.

As part of the council's commitment to biodiversity and Climate Change, Kerry County Council is seeking to return more open grassed areas such as grass verges along roads, sections of public parks, appropriate areas in graveyards etc. to natural biodiversity areas to encourage natural wildflowers to recolonise and support enhanced bee and insect populations. This will be achieved through a reduction in the amount of seasonal mowing and the establishment and restoration of rewilded areas.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 It is an objective of the Council to:	
KCDP 11-19	Support actions from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan including the plan's recommendations for grassland management and pollinator friendly species.

KCDP 11-20	Support the management of appropriate green areas to become natural biodiversity areas to encourage natural wildflowers to recolonise and support enhanced bee and insect populations.

11.2.6 Green and Blue Infrastructure - Ecological Corridors

Ecological corridors/ steppingstones are habitat patches that may not necessarily be of high conservation value themselves but serve to maintain ecological connectivity in the landscape. An ecological corridor permits the movement of wildlife between areas of high conservation interest or through areas that have little ability to support these species. Examples of ecological corridors include field boundaries comprising of stone walls, hedgerows and treelines, which support biodiversity by providing food and shelter for plants and animals. These may form part of green infrastructure proposals. Ecological corridors can also be classed as blue infrastructure essentially watercourses. They also act as pathways along which species travel and disperse though the wider countryside. Urban Blue Corridors can provide many co-benefits including more effective management of urban flood risk, improved access, additional and more useable public open space, and improved biodiversity. Given the extent of the Tarbert Ballylongford landbank and its location relative to areas of nature conservation value, it is of particular importance that ecological connectivity at a landscape level is taken into account as part of development proposals for this area.

A primary threat to biodiversity both within and outside protected areas is habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss of these ecological corridors. The cumulative impact of loss of ecological corridor features on an incremental or site-by-site basis over time can have significant repercussions for biodiversity in the County, including both designated and non-designated habitats and species. To address this issue, Kerry County Council will, where it is considered necessary, require planning applications to be accompanied by habitat mapping of the proposed development site. Habitat mapping can also be useful at a strategic level in identifying landscape features of ecological value. In recent years, habitat maps have been prepared for the towns of Tralee, Killarney, Listowel, Cahersiveen and Tarbert. The CDP supports the ongoing mapping of habitats at a strategic level to inform future land use planning in the County and Municipal Districts.

Green and Blue Infrastructure – Ecological/Urban Blue Corridors **It is an objective of the Council to:**	
KCDP 11-21	Require, where necessary, proposals to be accompanied by a habitat map prepared in accordance with the Heritage Councils Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping, 2011.
KCDP 11-22	Encourage and facilitate the retention and creation of features of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and networks that connect areas of high conservation value such as watercourses, woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks and wetlands.
KCDP 11-23	Identify key areas in the County, in collaboration with other relevant bodies, where habitat mapping would be of particular benefit to record existing features of local biodiversity and where applicable to integrate this information in the development management and plan preparation process.
KCDP 11-24	Promote the integration and improvement of natural watercourses in development proposals having regard to the IFI's guidance *Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment.*

11.6.3 Landscape Designations

In the preparation of landscape designations for the County, the Planning Authority has had regard to the Landscape Review of County Kerry which outlines the quality of a landscape itself, but also the level of existing development and the ability of the landscape to absorb further development without altering it to an unacceptable degree.

Designations are not wholly dependent on a hierarchy of the quality of landscapes. Designations also reflect the importance of a landscape to the overall amenity of a locality and its importance to communities within these areas.

There are two landscape designations for the county.

1 **Visually Sensitive Areas**
2 **Rural General**

It is important that development in all areas be integrated into its surroundings in order to minimise the effect on the landscape and to maximise the potential for development. Development in areas outside of designated areas, should, in their designs take account of the topography, vegetation, existing boundaries and features of the area.

Permission will not be granted for development which cannot be integrated into its surroundings.

11.3.3.2 Lights and Biodiversity

Excessive or directional lighting can also impact on nocturnal species effecting their ability to forage (feed) or commute. Bat species vary in their sensitivity to light pollution. Kerry has international important populations of the annexed II Lesser Horseshoe bat, a bat species particularly vulnerable to light pollution and habitat loss and fragmentation arising from same.

Lights and Biodiversity **It is an objective of the Council to:**	
KCDP 11-44	Take into consideration the Bat Conservation Trust 2018 Note 08/18 *Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK* Guidelines when choosing lighting specifications for developments and/or Bat specialist advice, so as to ensure the requirements of the Habitats Directive are adhered to, including Article 10.

11.2.7 Urban Ecology

Urban habitats are sometimes viewed as being less important than rural habitats, however urban settlements are often located near biodiversity hotspots, such as along rivers or on the coast. In urban areas, artificial habitats such as parks and water features also support wildlife, and this can be enhanced through improved

wildlife friendly management. Studies have also found brownfield sites, in certain instances to be diverse for flora, particularly those that persist longer on nutrient poor substrate or under disturbance. Private gardens can also encourage wildlife and buildings can incorporate biodiversity through features such as green roofs and living walls. These features can play an important role in supporting biodiversity in urban areas.

Urban Ecology It is an objective of the Council to:	
KCDP 11-25	Support projects such as the swift nesting project (that are compatible with protection of our architectural heritage); pollinator friendly initiatives, tree planting, nature based sustainable urban drainage systems and other actions that seek to enhance urban wildlife.

11.2.8 Woodlands and Trees

Trees and woodlands, particularly those that are broadleaf deciduous, provide a valuable resource in terms of both biodiversity and by contributing to a varied, interesting, and attractive landscape. Kerry County Council will seek to protect trees, groups of trees and woodland areas of particular importance due to their biodiversity or visual amenity value. Careful consideration will be given to the potential impact of proposed developments on trees. Landowners and developers will be encouraged to retain existing trees and hedgerows, where practicable and to plant additional trees of native species, locally provenanced and grown where possible. Local provenance refers to the use of plantings derived from local seed or other propagule material. Plants sourced from outside of the Country can bring diseases which can threaten native stocks (e.g., Ash die back). Where the Council is satisfied that existing trees cannot be retained, for example due to poor condition or location within the site it will require acceptable replacement planting using native species. The Council will also have regard to the Tree Preservation Guidelines in this matter.

The Tralee MD Tree Management Strategy 2020-2025 sets out the Tralee MD's approach to managing trees in its care in urban centres so as to maximise their long-term benefit within the built environment. Tree management strategies are to be undertaken for all Municipal District areas in the county.

Woodlands and Trees It is an objective of the Council to:	
KCDP 11-26	Facilitate and support the actions of the tree management strategy for the respective municipal districts.
KCDP 11-27	Support the preservation and enhancement of the general level of broadleaf tree cover throughout the County in both urban and rural areas and ensure that development proposals satisfactorily retain existing trees and/or provide additional native planting. A Tree Survey Report shall inform applications where appropriate.
KCDP 11-28	Encourage the provision of locally provenanced native tree species including those recommended by the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan* as part of development landscaping schemes.
KCDP 11-29	Work with stakeholders to protect and sustainably enhance the biodiversity and where appropriate the landscape and recreational interests of woodlands in the County.
KCDP 11-30	Support the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Creation of Woodland on Public Lands Scheme, on public authority owned lands in the county at appropriate locations.

1.5 The Site



Figure 1.5: Site Location Map ***(Source: Google Earth)***

1.5.1 Description of Site

The subject site is comprised of two fields, one large one located to the north and a smaller one to the south. The greenfield site and some adjoining fields to the east are surrounded by existing housing areas aligned along Countess Road to the north, Countess Grove to the west, Woodlawn Road to the south and Rookery Road to the east. St. Oliver's Primary School is located on Rookery Road.

The site is currently accessed along a track from Countess Road next to an existing unoccupied dwelling which forms part of the site. There are matures trees along the eastern and southern boundaries of the northern portion of the site, as well as along the southern and western boundaries of the southern portion. The interface between the two portions of the site is defined by a line of mature trees. The trees are the subject of a specialist arborist's report which accompanies this planning submission. There are spectacular views southward and westward from the northern part of the site taking in Mangerton Mountain and the MacGillycuddy Reeks.

The surrounding housing areas which adjoin the site are visible from both parts of the site particularly along sections where site boundary vegetation is absent or sparse. The topography of the site is relatively flat including a low-lying area located in the south-western part of the northern parcel.



Plate 1.5.1 View westward from north-eastern corner of the site



Plate 1.5.2 View southward from north-eastern corner of the site



Plate 1.5.3 View of northward from boundary between northern and southern parts of site



Plate 1.5.4 Trees at interface between northern and southern parts of site



Plate 1.5.5 View southward across southern part of site



Plate 1.5.6 View westward across southern part of site

1.5.2 Local Landscape Character

The local area has a suburban character defined by extensive housing and road infrastructure and a mix of schools, retail premises, commercial premises and hotels. The subject site is located approximately 0.75km from Kenmare Place at the southern end of Killarney's Main Street. The local topography is relatively flat but there are some areas of higher ground which give rise to views of the surrounding landscape, notable the mountains to the south and west of Killarney, where breaks in development and vegetation allow.



Plate 1.5.7 View eastward along Countess Road from north-eastern corner of site



Plate 1.5.8 View westward along Countess Road showing northern site boundary



Plate 1.5.9 View westward along Countess Road from north-western extremity of site



Plate 1.5.11 View westward from Hawthorn Avenue



Plate 1.5.12 View westward along section of Woodlawn Road



Plate 1.5.13 View southward along The Rookery



Plate 1.5.14 View southward along Countess Grove

1.5.3 Landscape Designations and Zoning

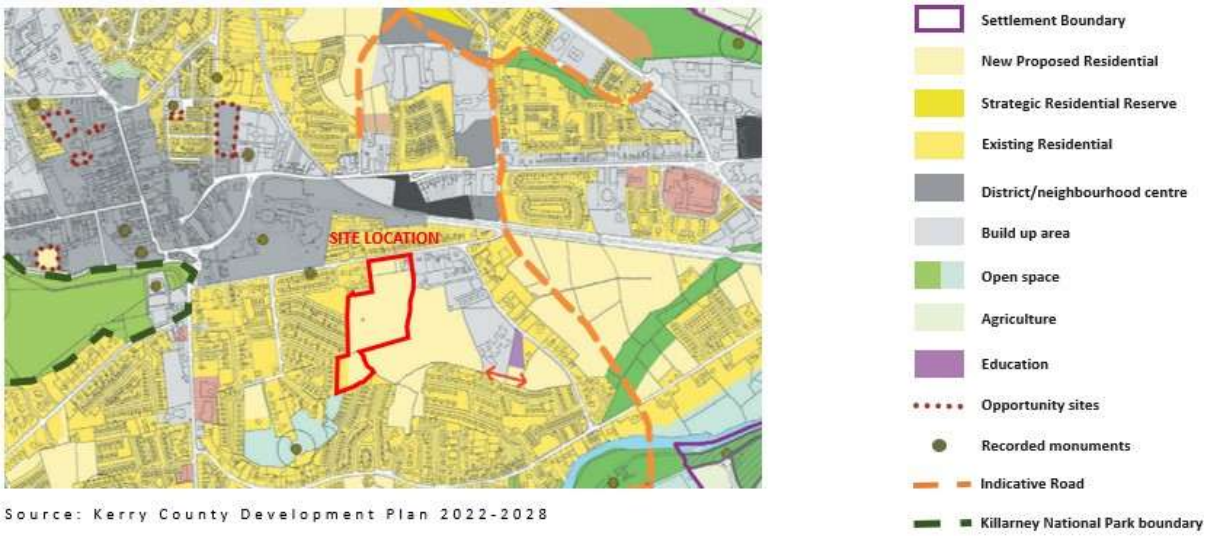


Figure 1.7: Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022-28 - Landscape Designations

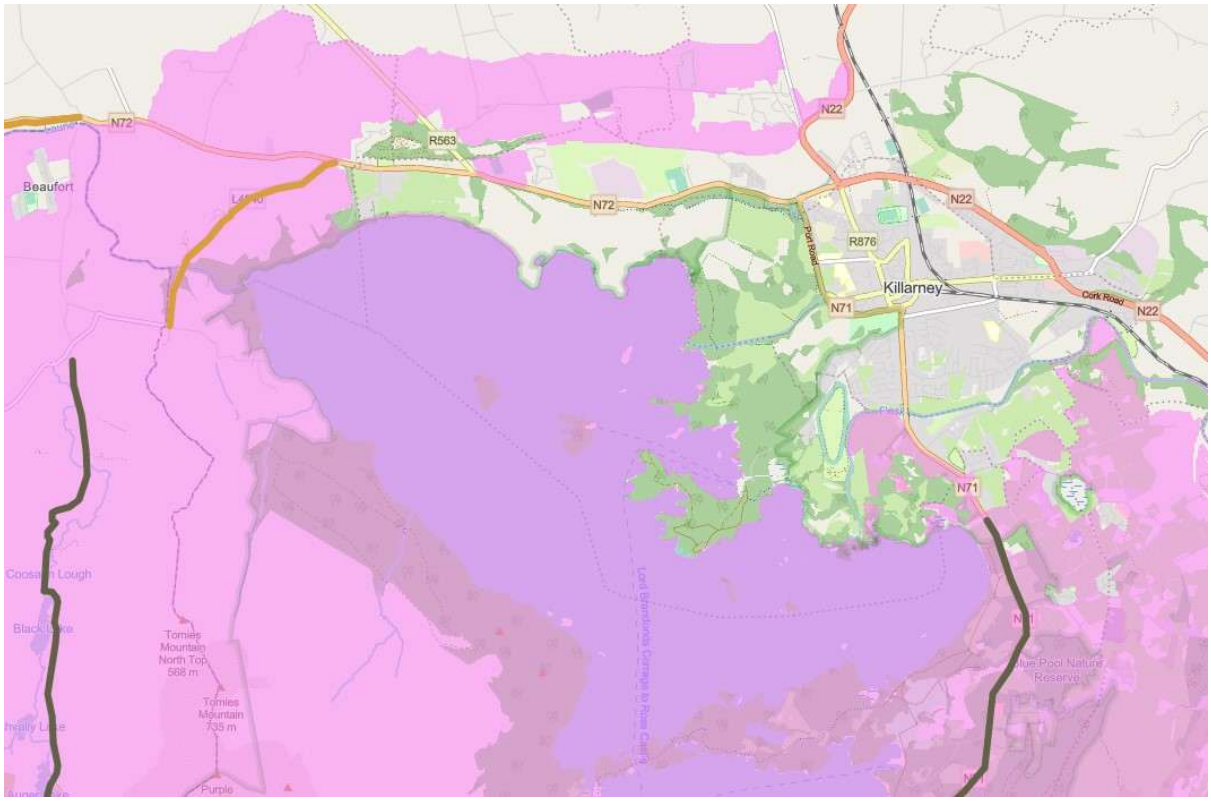


Figure 1.8: Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022-28 – Visually Sensitive Areas

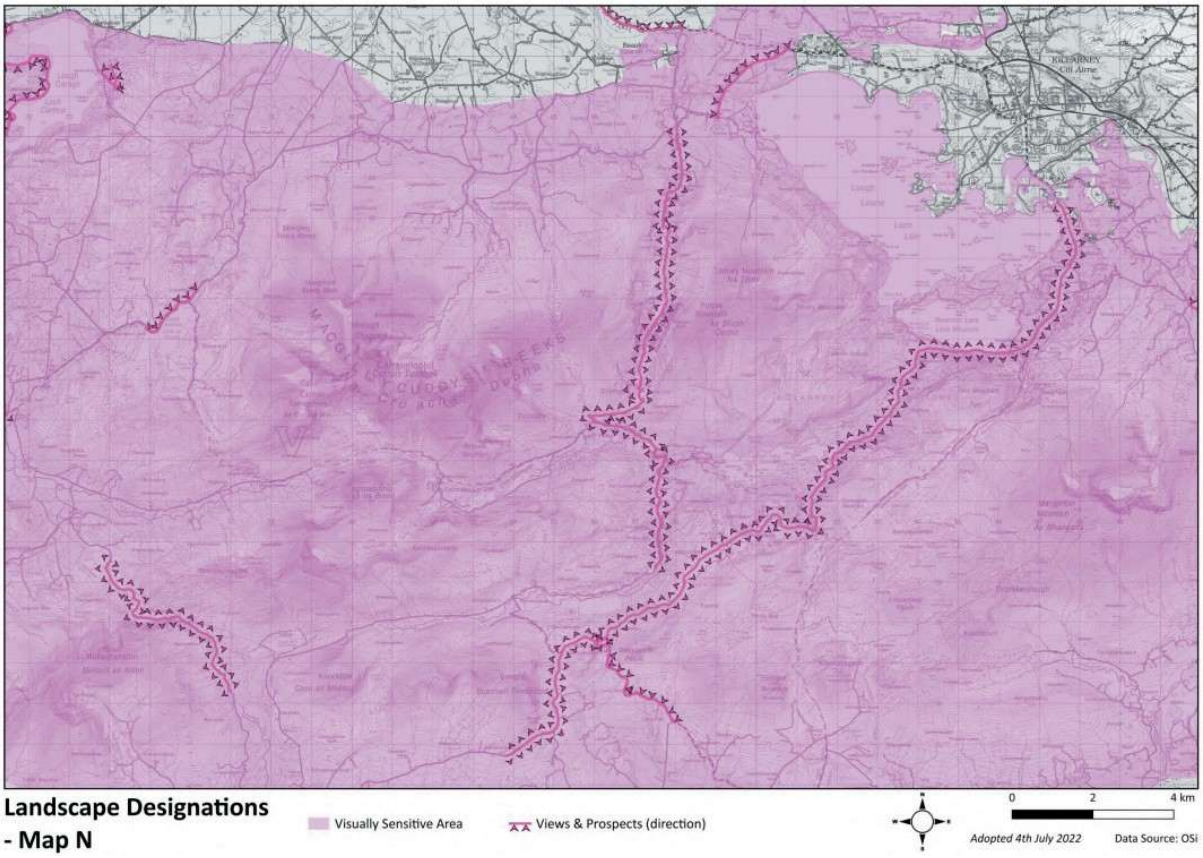


Figure 1.9: Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022-28 – Landscape Designations

1.5.4 Summary of Landscape Character and Values

- The subject site is a greenfield site located close to the centre of Killarney Town with existing mature boundary trees along some boundaries.
- The site is zoned for medium-density housing in Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022-2028
- The local area has a suburban character defined by extensive housing and road infrastructure, along with schools, retail premises, commercial premises and hotels.

Landscape Values

The landscape values of a site can be identified through formal designations which infer landscape value, as well as values which are not enshrined in policy but are evident on the site. These values are listed below and can be further be categorised in two ways – values which should be conserved, and those that provide opportunity for enhancement.

In addition to formal designations at international, national and local level, the GLVIA 3rd edition (2013) recommend the use of a number of criteria which can help to describe landscape values. These are listed below and include:

- *Landscape Quality/Condition*
- *Heritage/Conservation interests*
- *Scenic Quality*

- *Rarity*
- *Perceptual aspects*
- *Recreation Value*
- *Enhancement values*

Landscape Quality/Condition

The subject site has considerable boundary vegetation consisting of mature trees and hedges which contribute to local landscape character.

Heritage/Conservation interests

There are no protected structures or archaeological sites within the subject site

Scenic Quality

There are no designated scenic routes in the vicinity of the site, and the site is not located within the Visually Sensitive Area associated with Killarney National Park.

Rarity

The site has no rare built or natural features but does have green infrastructure which contributes to the character of the local area.

Perceptual aspects

The boundary trees on the subject site have a valuable softening effect on the local environment.

Recreation Value

The site is private and does not have a recreational function.

Conservation Values

The conservation values reflect the need to protect and conserve existing valued elements of the natural and built environment.

- The need to minimise impacts on existing mature trees and hedgerows.

Enhancement Values

The enhancement values reflect change that is occurring in the landscape and its inherent robustness and identify elements which could be enhanced.

- The potential to demonstrate sensitive design in fulfilment of the development potential of the site.
- The potential to define sense of place through innovative and sensitive interventions.
- The potential to enhance the green network and biodiversity potential of the site.

1.5.5 Zone of Visual Influence and Potential Visual Receptors

A thorough assessment of potential views of the proposed development was carried out during the site visit. The surrounding vicinity was walked and driven, and the areas with likely views were identified.

Locations for viewpoints identified include:

Views from the south

- View from Doire Coille

Views from the north

- Views along Countess Road

Views from the east

- View from The rookery

Views from the west

- Views from Countess Road
- View from Dromhale Close

A list of the 8 viewpoints taken to represent a variety of visual receptors in the vicinity is included in Table 1.5 below and an accompanying map showing the viewpoint locations is included in Figure 1.7 below.

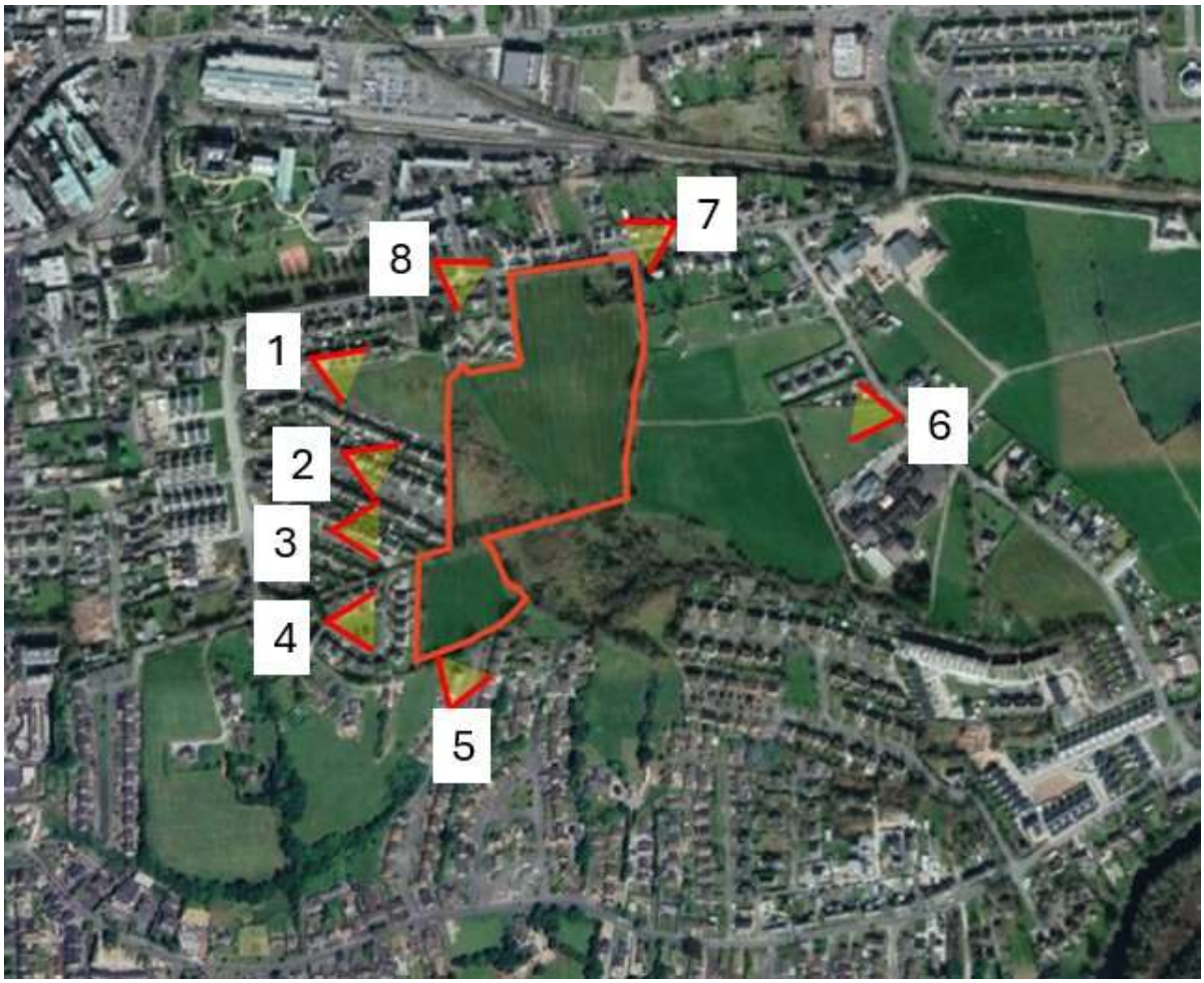


Figure 1.7: Viewpoint Location Map ***(Source: Google Maps)***

Viewpoint	Description	Distance from site (metres)
1	View from Countess Grove	125m
2	View from Countess Grove	100m
3	View from Countess Grove	75m
4	View from Countess Grove	75m
5	View from Doire Coille	40m
6	View from The Rookery	290m
7	View from Countess Road	25m
8	View from Countess Road	30m

Table 1.5: Viewpoints contained in Photomontage booklet.

1.6 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

1.6.1 Landscape Effects

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. Medium is described in Table 1.1 as:

Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features, or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong. The character of the landscape is such that there is some capacity for change in the form of development. These areas may be recognised in landscape policy at local or county level and the principal management objective may be to consolidate landscape character or facilitate appropriate, necessary change.

Magnitude of Change

The proposed development will result in change that can be considered to be Medium. Medium is described in Table 1.2 as:

Change that is moderate in extent, resulting in partial loss or alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in change to the character of the landscape.

Level of Landscape Effect

The landscape effect resulting from a Medium landscape sensitivity, and a Medium magnitude of change, is considered to be **Moderate**. Qualitatively the landscape effect is considered to be **Neutral/Beneficial**. The retention of site boundary hedgerows and trees facilitates integration of the proposed development in the local suburban landscape setting. The exception is along Countess Road where existing boundary trees are to be been removed at the request of the local authority to facilitate residential frontage along the street which will provide passive supervision and enliven the street.

1.6.2 Visual Effects

Photomontages

Based on the desk study, review of the proposed development, site characteristics and sensitivity, as well as and visibility of the site, eight representative viewpoints (listed in Table 1.6) were selected to assist in the appraisal of visual effects. The photomontages were prepared by Gnet 3D. These are described below, and existing photographs and proposed photomontages are provided in a separate booklet as part of this submission.

View 1: View from Countess Grove

Existing View:

This view eastward from the adjoining housing area shows the local area character comprised of an overlooked green space and the backdrop of existing vegetation along the subject site boundary. Some more distant vegetation associated with the eastern boundary of the subject is also visible. The tree cover imparts a mature character on the setting.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

The roof line of the proposed housing will be visible from this location along with some house elevations at the centre of the view. The development, however, will be substantially screened by the existing site boundary hedgerow and will complement the scale and form of existing surrounding houses.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **Moderate**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Neutral** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will be visible but will be integrated successfully in the context of the existing screening provided by the site boundary hedgerow and the scale and form of the proposed houses which complement the existing residential setting.

Remedial mitigation measures in the form of additional planting to supplement the existing boundary hedgerow.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. The cumulative visual effect is considered to be Negligible, and Neutral in quality.

View 2: View from Countess Grove

Existing View:

This view eastward along Countess Grove shows the cul-de-sac residential street along with the backdrop of mature tress located on the subject site. These, along with trees and garden vegetation along the street, have a softening effect on the setting.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

Part of the gable end of one of the proposed houses will be visible from this location. In the context of the residential street, this will not be intrusive in the context of existing houses in the view.

The magnitude of change is considered Medium. Medium is defined as:

Partial intrusion of the development in the view, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic in the context, resulting in change to the composition but not necessarily the character of the view or the visual amenity.

and mitigation will be provided in the form of hedge planting along the interface between the two sites which will soften and screen the gable end as it matures.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **Moderate**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Neutral** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will be visible but not intrusive in the context of the existing street view.

Remedial mitigation measures in the form of planting along the garden boundary of the new house in the view.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. The cumulative visual effect is considered to be Medium, and Neutral in quality.

View 3: View from Countess Grove

Existing View:

This view eastward along Countess Grove shows the cul-de-sac residential street. There is considerable garden vegetation along the street and the distant mature trees at the end of the vista are located on the subject site.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

The roof of one of the proposed housing units will be visible from this location which will not be intrusive in the context of existing houses in the view.

The magnitude of change is considered Low. Low is defined as:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **Moderate**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Neutral** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will be visible but not intrusive in the context of the existing street view.

Remedial mitigation measures in the form of planting along the garden boundary of the proposed house in the view.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced as no element of the Ballycasheen development will be visible.

View 4: View from Countess Grove

Existing View:

This view north-eastward shows the mature character of the local housing cluster with established vegetation and the backdrop of mature tree cover on the subject site.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View - Magnitude of Change

The photomontage view shows that there will be no visual effects experienced from this location given the screening effect of existing houses and mature tree cover in the view.

Visual Effect

There will be no visual effects experienced from this location.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced from this location.

View 5: View from Doire Coille

Existing View:

The view northward along the cul-de-sac street shows part of the southern boundary of the subject site which is defined by mature trees. These heavily screen the subject site.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

The roof of one of the proposed housing units will be visible from this location which will not be intrusive in the context of existing houses in the view.

The magnitude of change is considered Low. Low is defined as:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **Moderate**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Neutral** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will be visible but not intrusive in the context of the existing street view.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced as no element of the Ballycasheen development will be visible.

View 6: View from The Rookery

Existing View:

This view eastward toward the subject site shows the local primary school playing field and the mature tree cover and hedgerow which defines the eastern boundary of the subject site. The distant McGuillacuddy Reeks provide the backdrop to the view.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

The roof of one of the proposed housing units will be visible from this location which will not be intrusive in the context of existing houses in the view.

The magnitude of change is considered Low. Low is defined as:

Change that is moderate or limited in scale, resulting in minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in minor change to the character of the landscape.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **Moderate**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Neutral** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will be visible but not intrusive in the context of the existing street view.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced, the proposed development will be fully screened by the Ballycasheen development.

View 7: View From Countess Road

Existing View:

This view westward along Countess Road shows the existing house on the subject site and existing vegetation along the northern boundary of the site.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Viewers will be local residents primarily who are considered to be of High sensitivity.

Proposed View – Magnitude of Change

The proposed apartment buildings which address Countess Road will be prominent from this location. They will replace the existing house and boundary vegetation and reveal the nature of the transition of this part of the site from greenfield to residential development.

The magnitude of change is considered High. High is defined as:

Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **High**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Beneficial** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will incur significant change along the road in line with the zoning aspirations for the site for the delivery of housing.

The design qualities of the development will be represented in the scale, form, and materiality of building elevations. Integration along the street will be facilitated by the manner in which the building blocks step down from four-storey at the centre, to two-storey at the eastern and western ends at the interface with adjoining properties. The proposed development will provide passive supervision along the street and foster a new sense of place and destination in the locality. Hard and soft landscape treatments will soften and enhance the setting and contribute to the overall beneficial visual effects.

Remedial mitigation measures in the form of planting along the site boundary which will provide additional screening as it matures and fill the gap in the hedgerow.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced as no element of the Ballycasheen development will be visible.

View 8: View From Countess Road

Existing View:

This view eastward along Countess Road shows the existing vegetation along the northern boundary of the site and an adjoining residential property.

The proposed apartment buildings which address Countess Road will be prominent from this location. They will replace the existing house and boundary vegetation and reveal the nature of the transition of this part of the site from greenfield to residential development.

The magnitude of change is considered High. High is defined as:

Extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features, or introduction of elements that may be considered uncharacteristic in the context, to the extent that the development becomes co-dominant with other elements in the composition and affects the character of the view and the visual amenity.

Visual Effect

The effect is considered **High**, and the quality of the effect is considered to be **Beneficial** in the short term as well as in the medium to long term. The proposed development will incur significant change along the road in line with the zoning aspirations for the site for the delivery of housing.

The design qualities of the development will be represented in the scale, form, and materiality of building elevations. Integration along the street will be facilitated by the manner in which the building blocks step down from four-storey at the centre, to two-storey at the eastern and western ends at the interface with adjoining properties. The proposed development will provide passive supervision along the street and foster a new sense of place and destination in the locality. Hard and soft landscape treatments will soften and enhance the setting and contribute to the overall beneficial visual effects.

Remedial mitigation measures in the form of planting along the site boundary which will provide additiona screening as it matures and fill the gap in the hedgerow.

Proposed View along with adjoining Balllycasheen LRD – (Cumulative)

An additional photomontage view is shown, depicting the adjoining LRD scheme. There will be no cumulative visual effect experienced as no element of the Ballycasheen development will be visible.

Summary of Visual Effects

The viewpoints described above are summarised below:

Viewpoint	Description	Level of Visual Effect and Quality		Cumulative
		Short-Term Effects	Long-Term Effects	Negligible (neutral)
1	View from Countess Grove	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)
2	View from Countess Grove	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)	N/A
3	View from Countess Grove	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)	N/A
4	View from Countess Grove	No Change	No Change	N/A
5	View from Doire Coille	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)	N/A
6	View from The Rookery	Moderate (neutral)	Moderate (neutral)	N/A
7	View from Countess Road	High (beneficial)	High (beneficial)	N/A
8	View from Countess Road	High (beneficial)	High (beneficial)	N/A

Table 1.6: Summary of Visual Effects at Viewpoints

1.6.3 Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative effects relate to the potential combined impact of the proposed development in association with other recent developments or proposed developments in the vicinity of the site.

Of particular note is Balllycasheen LRD located immediately to the east of the subject site. Currently in preparation, the proposed development is for the construction of a residential development of 268 no. residential units with ancillary crèche, landscaping and associated site development works.

Cumulative effects are mostly absent and apply to just two of views as shown in the Table 1.6. The are found to Negligible (neutral) and Moderate (neutral).

1.6.4 Mitigation Measures:

Avoidance and reductive mitigation measures integral to the design strategy for the site include the development of housing typologies compatible with the setting, the use of dark roofing materials, the careful positioning of the apartment buildings and the retention of existing boundary trees and hedgerows for screening purposes.

In terms of remedial mitigation, a comprehensive tree planting programme is proposed throughout the site including along streets, open spaces and site boundaries to supplement existing tree cover and to soften and integrate to proposed development in the locality.

1.6.5 Summary

1.6.5.1 Landscape Effects

The landscape effect resulting from a Medium landscape sensitivity, and a Medium magnitude of change, is considered to be **Moderate**. Qualitatively the landscape effect is considered to be **Neutral/Beneficial**. The retention of site boundary hedgerows and trees facilitates integration of the proposed development in the local suburban landscape setting. The exception is along Countess Road where existing boundary trees are to be removed at the request of the local authority to facilitate residential frontage along the street which will provide passive supervision and enliven the street.

1.6.5.2 Visual Effects

Short-term visual effects are found to be **Moderate** for five of the views, **High** for two of the views and there will be **No Change** for the one remaining views. The short-term importance of the visual effects will be **Neutral** for views 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6, Beneficial for views 7 and 8, and there will be no change associated with view 4.

Long-term visual effects are found to be **Moderate** for five of the views, **High** for two of the views and there will be **No Change** for the one remaining views. The short-term importance of the visual effects will be **Neutral** for views 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6, Beneficial for views 7 and 8, and there will be no change associated with view 4.

The proposed development will deliver change to the site in line with the zoning objective for medium-density housing as set out in Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022 -2028. From locations in the local area represented by viewpoints 1 to 8, this change will be most evident from Countess Road (views 7 & 8) where the proposed apartment buildings will front onto the road to provide a strong urban edge in line with the aspirations of the local authority expressed during the LRD process.

The design qualities of the development will be represented in the scale, form, and materiality of building elevations. Integration along the street will be facilitated by the manner in which the building blocks step down from four-storey to two-storey at the eastern and western extremities which interface with existing adjoining properties. The proposed development will provide passive supervision along the street and foster a new sense of place and destination in the locality. Hard and soft landscape treatments will soften and enhance the setting resulting in beneficial visual effects.

For the remaining viewpoints, the assessment finds that visual effects will be relatively low-key by virtue of existing site boundary screen vegetation, the relative heights of the proposed development relative to existing houses in the locality, and the use of dark roofing materials which assist integration in the local setting. There are no adverse effects arising from the proposed development

Remedial mitigation is provided in the form of comprehensive tree planting proposals to supplement existing boundary screening and to enhance the experience throughout the proposed development.

There will be no effect on any visually sensitive areas or scenic routes highlighted in Kerry County Council Development Plan 2022-2028.