

PURSER

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
Project: Flintfield LRD - Flemington Lane, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin - Application No. 1
Applicant: Lagan Homes Balbriggan Limited

LVIA

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Purser has been instructed by Lagan Homes Balbriggan Limited, in association with a wider multidisciplinary design team, to prepare this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed residential development on lands at Flemington Lane, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin, comprising 146 No. residential units, together with a childcare facility, active travel hub, public open space, active travel infrastructure, internal roads and accesses, landscaping and all associated site and development works.

For the purposes of this Assessment, the landholding is referenced as the “subject site”. (See **Figure 1.1.**)

The purpose of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is to identify and determine the potential effects on the character and visual amenity of the landscape as a result of the proposed development.

This report describes the methods used to assess the existing baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area; predicted effects on landscape character; predicted visual effects; mitigation measures that may be required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant negative effects; and the likely residual effects after these measures have been adopted. This report and its associated figures should be read in conjunction with the plans and particulars that accompany the application.

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was prepared by Seamus Donohoe, Director and Landscape Architect at Purser, with assistance from Adithi Nair.

Adithi Nair holds a Bachelor of Architecture and a Master of Regional and Urban Planning (MRUP) from University College Dublin. She is also a Registered Architect with the Council of Architecture, India.

Seamus Donohoe holds degrees in Landscape Architecture (BAgrSc Landscape Architecture, University College Dublin, 2010) and Town Planning (MRUP, University College Dublin, 2013). He is a Registered Landscape Architect and Member of the Irish Landscape Institute, a Corporate Member of the Irish Planning Institute and a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. He has over 16 years’ professional experience in landscape architecture and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).



Figure 11: Aerial Image of Subject Site and Surrounding Context. Source: Bing Maps, annotated by Purser. Site Boundary indicative only.)

2.0 Assessment Methodology

2.1 General Approach

This chapter sets out the methodology developed by Purser to assess the likely effects of new development on the townscape, landscape, and visual amenity. It draws upon best practice guidance set out in the:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA), published by the Landscape Institute;
- Technical Information Note on Landscape Character Assessment, 2016, published by the Landscape Institute;
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, 2022, published by the EPA;
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, 2018, published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The assessment methodology takes into account EU Directives in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Planning Legislation (including the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)), and national, regional and local planning policy and guidance, in particular that relating to townscape, landscape, urban design, views, built heritage and supplementary guidance related to specific sites.

The area surrounding the subject site was visited in June and July 2026 to assess the potential visibility of the proposed development and its potential effects on the landscape character of the surrounding area.

The EPA guidelines 2022 provide a general methodology and impact ratings for all types of specialist assessments. The GLVIA provides specific guidelines for landscape and visual impact assessments. Therefore, a combination of the EPA guidelines, the Landscape Institute guidelines and professional experience has informed the methodology for this assessment.

The European Landscape Convention 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 expands beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. It recognises landscape as a resource, providing a complex range of cultural, environmental and economic benefits to individuals and society.

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2.2 Key Principles of the GLVIA

Use of the Term ‘Effect’ vs ‘Impact’

The GLVIA requires that the terms ‘impact’ and ‘effect’ be clearly distinguished and consistently used. ‘Impact’ is defined as the action being taken, e.g. the introduction of buildings, infrastructure or landscaping to the landscape. ‘Effect’ is defined as the change resulting from those actions, e.g. change in landscape character or in the amenity value of a view.

Assessment of Both ‘Landscape’ and ‘Visual’ Effects

The GLVIA requires that effects on views/visual amenity be assessed separately from the effects on landscape, although the two topics are inherently linked.

- ‘Landscape’ results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations and spatial distribution of these elements create variations in landscape character. Landscape impact assessment identifies the changes to these elements and characteristics which would result from a proposed development and assesses the significance of those changes on the landscape as a resource.
- Visual impact 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.

2.3 Methodology for Assessment of Landscape Effects

The assessment of potential landscape effects involves:

- (a) classifying the sensitivity of the landscape receptors (the main elements, features, characteristics and character areas of the landscape);
- (b) classifying the potential magnitude of change to each receptor, and
- (c) combining these factors to arrive at an assessment of the significance of the effects on each receptor - and the quality of the effects (positive, neutral or negative).

2.3.1 Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape is a function of its character, which may be determined by its land use pattern, urban grain, building typologies and architecture, cultural and natural heritage elements, and the quality of the public realm. These factors determine the value that is placed on the landscape. The nature and scale of the proposed development is also taken into account (a particular landscape can have varying sensitivity to different development types), as are any trends of change, and relevant policy. Five categories are used to classify sensitivity. Please refer to **Table 2.1**.

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Areas where the landscape exhibits very strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The landscape character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is very low. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national or international value and the principal management objective for the area is protection of the existing character from change.
High	Areas where the landscape exhibits strong, positive character with valued elements, features and characteristics. The landscape character is such that it has limited/low capacity to accommodate change. These attributes are recognised in policy or designations as being of national, regional or county value and the principal management objective for the area is the conservation of existing character.
Medium	Areas where the landscape has certain valued elements, features or characteristics but where the character is mixed or not particularly strong, or has evidence of alteration, degradation or erosion of elements and characteristics. The landscape character is such that there is some capacity for change. These areas may be recognised in 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 is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principal management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes include derelict industrial lands, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principal management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

Table 2.1: Categories of Landscape Sensitivity.

2.3.2 Magnitude of Landscape Change

Magnitude of change is a factor of the scale, extent and degree of change imposed on the landscape by a development, with reference to its key elements, features and characteristics, and any affected surrounding character areas (also known as ‘landscape receptors’). Five categories are used to classify magnitude of change. The categories and criteria used are given in **Table 2.2** below.

Definition	Magnitude
Change that is large in extent, resulting in the loss of or major alteration to key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape, and/or introduction of large elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the context. Such development results in fundamental change in the character of the landscape.	Very 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.	High
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.	Medium
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.	Low
Change that is limited in scale, resulting in no alteration to 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.	Negligible

Table 2.2 – Categories of Landscape Change.

2.3.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

To classify the significance of effects the magnitude of change is measured against the sensitivity of the landscape using the guide in Table 2.3 below. Please refer to Section 2.6 below in relation to significance of effects for both landscape and visual impact assessment.

2.4 Methodology for Assessment of Visual Effects

Assessment of visual effects involves identifying a number of key/representative viewpoints in the site’s receiving environment, and for each one of these: (a) classifying the viewpoint sensitivity, (b) classifying the magnitude of change which would result in the view (informed by photomontages of the proposed development), and (c) combining these factors to arrive at a classification of significance of the effects on the view.

2.4.1 Sensitivity of the Viewpoint/Visual Receptor

Viewpoint 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 is focused on the views or visual amenity they experience at that location. Visual receptors most susceptible to change include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on the landscape (e.g. trail users), and visitors to heritage attractions and places of congregation where the setting contributes to the experience. Visual receptors less sensitive to change include travellers on road, rail and other transport routes (unless on recognised scenic routes), people engaged in outdoor recreation where the surrounding landscape does not influence the experience, and people in their place of work or shopping.
- **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).

Five categories are used to classify a viewpoint’s sensitivity. Please refer to **Table 2.3**.

Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Iconic viewpoints (views towards or from a landscape feature or area) that are recognised in policy or otherwise designated as being of national value. The composition, character and quality of the view are such that its capacity for change is very low. The principal management objective for the view is its protection from change.
High	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 (e.g. views from houses or outdoor recreation amenities focused on the landscape). The composition, character and quality of the view may be such that its capacity to accommodate change may or may not be low. The principal management objective for the view is its protection from change that reduces visual amenity.
Medium	Views that may not have features or characteristics that are of particular value, but have no major detracting elements, and which thus provide some visual amenity. These views may have capacity for appropriate change and the principal management objective is to facilitate change to the composition that does not detract from visual amenity, or which enhances it.
Low	Areas where the landscape has few valued elements, features or characteristics and the character is weak. The character is such that it has capacity for change; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes are generally unrecognised in policy and the principal management objective may be to facilitate change through development, repair, restoration or enhancement.
Negligible	Areas where the landscape exhibits negative character, with no valued elements, features or characteristics. The character is such that its capacity to accommodate change is high; where development would make no significant change or would make a positive change. Such landscapes include derelict industrial lands, as well as sites or areas that are designated for a particular type of development. The principal management objective for the area is to facilitate change in the landscape through development, repair or restoration.

Table 2.3: Categories of Viewpoint Sensitivity

2.4.2 Magnitude of Change to the View

Classification of the magnitude of change takes into account the size or scale of the intrusion of development into the view (relative to the other elements and features in the composition, i.e. its relative visual dominance), the degree to which it contrasts or integrates with the other elements and the general character of the view, and the way in which the change will be experienced (e.g. in full view, partial or peripheral view, or in glimpses). It also takes into account the geographical extent of the change, as well as the duration and reversibility of the visual effects. Five categories are used to classify magnitude of visual change to a view (**Table 2.4**):

Definition	Magnitude
Full or extensive intrusion of the development in the view, or partial intrusion that obstructs valued features or characteristics, or introduction of elements that are completely out of character in the context, to the extent that the development becomes dominant in the composition and defines the character of the view and the visual amenity	Very 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	High
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.	Medium
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.	Low
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.	Negligible

Table 2.4: – Categories of Magnitude of Visual Change.

2.5 Cumulative Impacts

The methodology for assessment of cumulative impacts has been derived from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013) (GLVIA3).

The purpose of the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA) is to consider the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development when viewed in context with other similar development.

Cumulative effects consist of direct effects on the physical character of the site containing the development, and indirect, perceived effects on the character of areas from which the developments would be visible. GLVIA3 identifies:

Cumulative effects as 'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together' (SNH, 2012:4);

Cumulative landscape effects as effects that 'can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special value attached to it' (SNH, 2012:10);

Cumulative visual effects as effects that can be caused by combined visibility, which 'occurs when the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint' and/or sequential effects which 'occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments' (SNH, 2012:11).

The significance of any identified cumulative landscape and visual effect has been assessed as per the main LVIA methodology. These categories have been based on the same combination of receptor sensitivity and predicted magnitude of impact in order to identify the residual significance of effects.

2.5.1 Cumulative Baseline

The planning history and wider development context surrounding the subject site are reviewed in Section 3.0 of this Assessment. Having regard to the nature, scale, location and potential visibility of the developments identified, the following schemes are considered to have the potential to give rise to cumulative landscape and/or visual effects in combination with the proposed development:

- North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Grid Facility – ABP-319866-24, located to the north-east of the subject site; and
- Glenveagh Large-scale Residential Development – Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E, located immediately to the south-east of the subject site.

These developments have been included due to their proximity, scale and potential to influence the landscape character and/or visual context within which the proposed development would be experienced.

The other permitted, proposed and previously considered developments identified in Section 3.0 have been reviewed but are not included in the detailed cumulative assessment. Having regard to their distance from the subject site, their scale and nature, intervening development and vegetation, and/or the limited extent to which they could contribute to combined or sequential landscape and visual effects, they are not considered likely to give rise to material cumulative effects in combination with the proposed development.

The cumulative landscape assessment is addressed in Section 6.0. The cumulative visual assessment is addressed in Section 7.0, with the NISA Grid Facility and Glenveagh development shown where relevant in the verified photomontages.

2.6 Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

As with landscape effects, to classify the significance of visual effects, the magnitude of change to the view is measured against the sensitivity of the viewpoint, using the guidance in **Table 2.1** and **Figure 2.1** below. This matrix is only a guide. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification of significance that is reasonable and justifiable.

Magnitude of Landscape / Visual Change	Sensitivity of Landscape / View				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very high	Profound	Profound - Very Significant	Very Significant - Significant	Moderate	Slight
High	Profound - very significant	Very Significant	Significant	Moderate -Slight	Slight - Not significant
Medium	Very Significant - Significant	Significant	Moderate	Slight	Not significant
Low	Moderate	Moderate - Slight	Slight	Not significant	Imperceptible
Negligible	Slight	Slight - Not Significant	Not significant	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

Table 2.1: – Guide to Classification of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects.

The matrix (Table 2.1) and the EPA chart (Figure 2.1) are only a guide to the classification of impact significance. The assessor also uses professional judgement informed by their expertise, experience and common sense to arrive at a classification that is reasonable and justifiable. In the EPA guidelines the chart above is accompanied by a footnote that states: “The depiction of significance classifications is indicative and should not be relied on as being definitive. It is provided for general guidance purposes” (EPA guidelines Section 3, page 53). For example, according to the EPA chart a change of high magnitude affecting a receptor of medium sensitivity could be classified as either ‘significant’ or ‘moderate’. That judgement must be made by the assessor.

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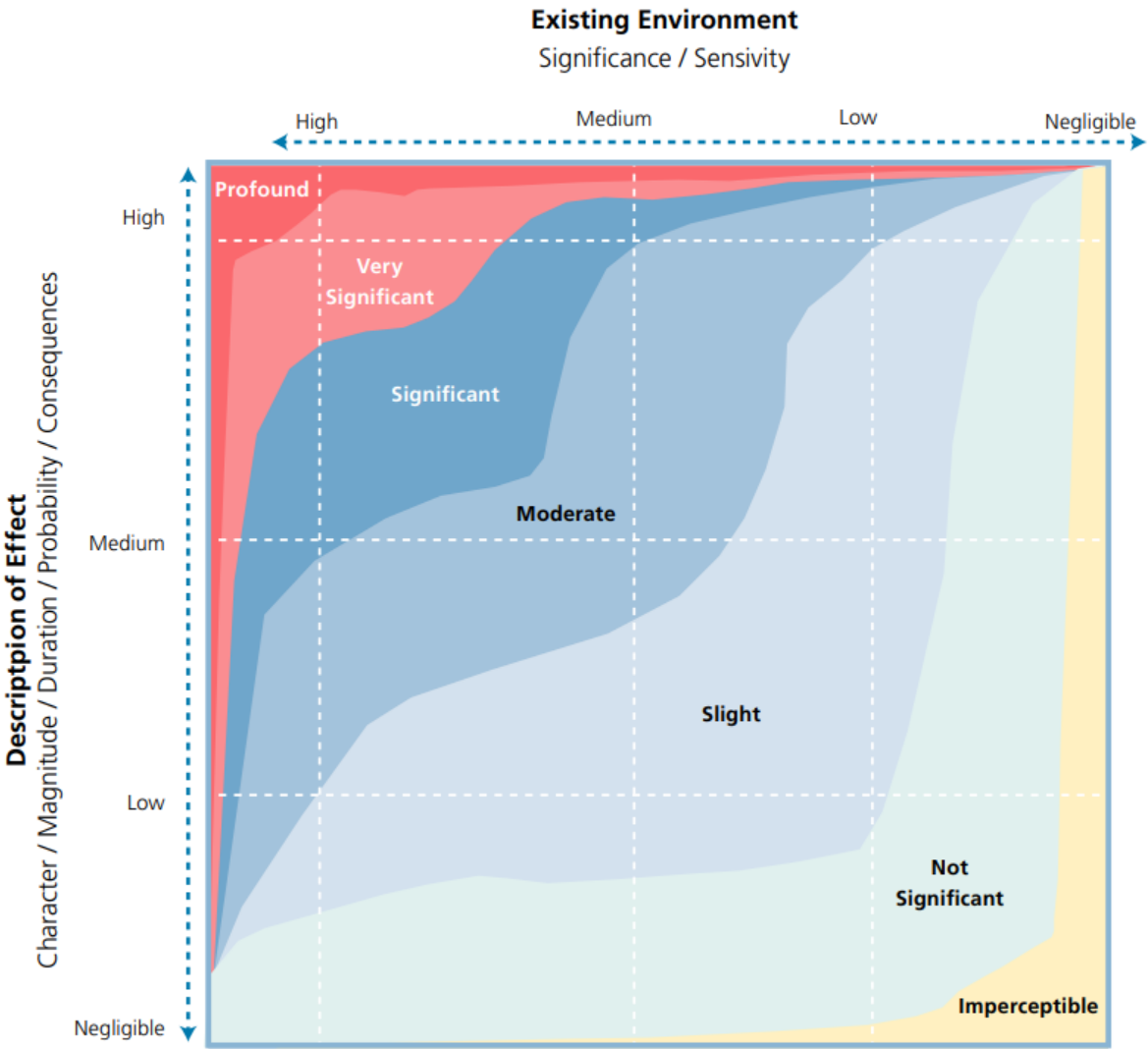


Figure 2.1: Figure 3.4 of EPA Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports shows how comparing the character of the predicted effect to the sensitivity of the receiving environment can determine the significance of the effect.

2.7 Quality of Effects

The predicted impacts are also classified as beneficial (positive), neutral or adverse (negative). 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 follows:

- **Adverse (negative):** 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 (landscape) / view to be diminished.
- **Neutral:** Scheme complements the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape (landscape) / view and maintains landscape quality.
- **Beneficial (positive):** Scheme improves landscape (landscape) / 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.

For landscape to a degree, but particularly for visual effects, this is an inherently subjective exercise. This is because landscape and visual amenity are perceived by people and are therefore subject to variations in the attitude and values - including aesthetic preferences - of the receptor. One person’s attitude to a development may differ from another person’s, and thus their response to the effects of a development on a landscape or view may vary.

Additionally, in certain situations there might be policy encouraging a particular development in an area, in which case the policy is effectively prescribing landscape and visual change. If a development achieves the objective of the policy the resulting effect might be considered positive, even if the landscape character or views are profoundly changed. The classification of quality of landscape and visual effects should seek to take these variables into account and provide a reasonable and robust assessment.

2.8 Timescale

Impacts / effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale:

Duration		Description
Construction Phase		
Temporary		Effects lasting one year or less ¹
Operational Phase		
Short-term		Effects lasting one to seven years
Medium-term		Effects lasting seven to fifteen years
Long-term		Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
Permanent		Effects lasting over sixty years

Table 2.2: Impacts / effects are also categorised according to their longevity or timescale.

¹In this case, construction is likely to take c. 18 months² for the proposed development. However, in any given viewpoint or location construction may only be experienced for short period and across the overall site construction and operational stages may occur at the same time or overlap.

² Source: Section 13.4 of the Preliminary Construction Management Plan dated August 2026, prepared by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers and submitted as part of the planning application.

3.0 The Receiving Environment

3.1 The Site

The subject site is located on the northern side of Flemington Lane, at the northern edge of Balbriggan, Co. Dublin (see Figure 3.1). The application site has a gross area of approximately 4.4 hectares, with a net development site area of approximately 3.55 hectares. It is currently in agricultural use and comprises principally agricultural fields defined and subdivided by existing hedgerows and associated trees.

The Arboricultural Report prepared by CM Arbor, dated August 2026 identifies a number of native hedgerows within and along the boundaries of the site. Existing hedgerows and trees form a characteristic component of the site's landscape structure, defining field boundaries, providing localised enclosure and influencing the nature and extent of views across and into the lands.

The site falls gently from west to east. This landform, together with the existing field pattern, hedgerows and trees, contributes to its existing agricultural character.

The subject site is principally defined to the:

- **South:** by Flemington Lane, beyond which is established residential development;
- **North:** by agricultural lands and existing field boundaries;
- **West:** by agricultural lands and existing hedgerow boundaries; and
- **East:** by adjoining agricultural lands forming part of the wider Flemington LAP lands.

The subject site fronts Flemington Lane along its southern boundary. Existing hedgerows and associated vegetation provide enclosure along parts of the site boundaries and within the site, while agricultural fields and associated vegetation extend beyond the site to the north, east and west.

The subject site therefore occupies an edge-of-settlement location at the northern extent of the established built-up area of Balbriggan. Its immediate landscape and visual setting is characterised by the relationship between the established residential development to the south, the agricultural lands to the north, east and west, and the existing hedgerow and tree structure.

3.1.1 Wider and Emerging Context

Existing Wider Context

The subject site is located at the northern edge of the established built-up area of Balbriggan. Immediately to the south of Flemington Lane are established residential neighbourhoods, including New Haven and Dún Saithne, characterised principally by low-rise housing, private gardens, boundary treatments, street trees and areas of public open space.

Beyond the existing settlement edge, the landscape to the north, east and west remains predominantly agricultural, comprising fields defined by hedgerows and trees. This agricultural landscape forms the immediate rural hinterland to the northern edge of Balbriggan.

The wider area includes a number of established recreational, transport and settlement features. O'Dwyers GAA facilities are located to the east of the Flemington lands, while the R132 forms a principal north-south route through northern Balbriggan. Balbriggan town centre and railway station lie to the south-east of the subject site.

The Irish Sea and the coastal landscape of Balbriggan lie farther to the east. King's Strand, Briggs Beach and Balbriggan Harbour form part of the wider landscape and recreational context, although the subject site is physically separated from the coastline by the intervening settlement and transport infrastructure.

The existing receiving environment is therefore characterised by the transition between the established urban area of Balbriggan and the predominantly agricultural landscape to its north.

Emerging Development Context

While the existing landscape retains this edge-of-settlement character, the subject site forms part of an area in which substantial planned change is anticipated.

The Flemington Local Area Plan encompasses approximately 17.2 ha of residentially zoned lands and establishes a coordinated framework for their development as a new residential neighbourhood incorporating housing, public open space, community infrastructure, streets, active travel connections and green infrastructure. The current application relates to Character Area 4 of the LAP, with Character Areas 1–3 intended to come forward through a separate coordinated residential application.

The permitted Glenveagh Large-scale Residential Development (Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E) is located immediately to the south-east of the subject site. It comprises 775 dwellings together with associated community, retail, childcare, transport and landscape infrastructure and will represent a substantial extension of the existing residential area of northern Balbriggan.

The Bremore Regional Park and Balbriggan Sports and Recreational Hub also form part of the changing context of northern Balbriggan. The Regional Park has been approved and is under construction to the east of the Flemington lands. The wider transport context is also subject to planned change, including the DART+ Coastal North project and other transport infrastructure associated with the continued growth of northern Balbriggan.

The proposed North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Grid Facility is located to the north-east of the subject site. The proposal remains under consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála and does not therefore form part of the existing landscape baseline. If permitted and constructed, however, it would introduce substantial electricity infrastructure and associated buildings into the wider landscape setting and is relevant to the emerging and cumulative landscape and visual context. It is considered further in Section 3.1.3 and in the cumulative assessment.

The existing agricultural character of the subject site and adjoining lands therefore represents the current landscape baseline. However, the statutory planning framework, permitted residential development, development of the remaining Flemington LAP lands and other planned infrastructure establish a clear context of future change. The receiving environment should accordingly be understood as an existing agricultural settlement-edge landscape within an area planned to transition progressively to a more developed urban-edge character.

3.1.2 Planning History

A review of the planning history of the subject site and surrounding area has been undertaken to establish the nature and scale of previous and permitted development and to assist in understanding the existing and emerging context of the site.

The following sections summarise the planning history considered most relevant to this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, including applications relating to the subject site and adjacent or nearby lands.

Please note that the planning history review is provided at a high level for the purposes of this Assessment. Reference should be made to the Statement of Consistency prepared by Stephen Ward Town Planning & Development Consultants for a more comprehensive review of the planning history of the subject site and surrounding area.

3.1.3 Planning History of the Subject Site

3.1.3.1 Application Reg. Ref. F25A/1028E

On 6 November 2025, Lagan Homes Balbriggan Limited submitted a planning application for infrastructure works on lands north of Flemington Lane within the wider Flemington Local Area Plan area. The application boundary extended across the wider Lagan Homes landholding and included the lands forming the current subject site.

The proposal principally comprised approximately 330 linear metres of the Link Street identified in the Flemington LAP, together with a new vehicular access from Flemington Lane, connections to adjoining lands and associated infrastructure.

During the assessment of the application, Fingal County Council raised concerns regarding the delivery of the road infrastructure separately from the coordinated residential development envisaged for the wider LAP lands. Matters raised included the integration of the Link Street with the planned urban and landscape structure, landscaping, and the treatment of existing trees and hedgerows. Further information included a requirement for additional arboricultural assessment of the vegetation affected by the proposed works.

Fingal County Council subsequently refused permission in January 2026. Of relevance to this LVIA, the decision highlighted the importance of considering infrastructure, landscape structure and existing vegetation as part of the coordinated development of the Flemington LAP lands rather than in isolation.

The application is relevant to the present Assessment because it included the current subject site and provides context for the subsequent development of the present residential proposal for Character Area 4. The current scheme has been developed within the wider framework established by the Flemington LAP, including the integration of streets, active travel infrastructure, public open space, landscaping and existing vegetation, and its relationship with the remaining LAP lands.

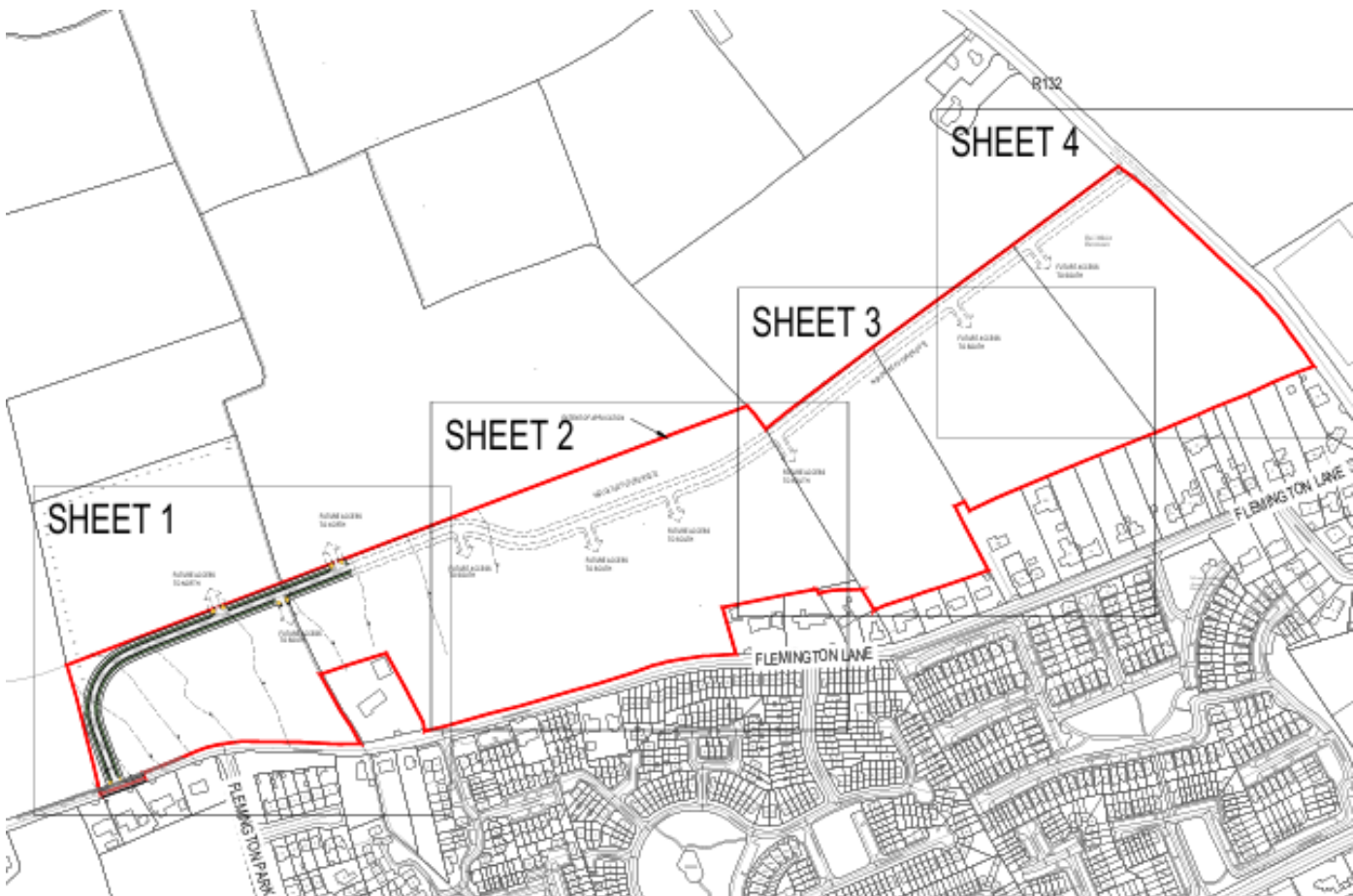


Figure 3.2: Extract from Dwg. No. 25-107-100, entitled 'Site Layout General Arrangement' submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. F25A/1028E. Source: Fingal County Council online planning search tool.

3.1.3 Planning History of Adjacent and Nearby Sites

A review has been undertaken of relevant planning applications, permitted developments and infrastructure proposals on lands adjoining and within the wider vicinity of the subject site. The purpose of the review is to identify developments which, having regard to their location, scale, nature and relationship with the subject site, are relevant to understanding the existing and emerging landscape and visual context and, where appropriate, the potential for cumulative landscape and visual effects.

The review is proportionate and is not intended to provide an exhaustive planning history of northern Balbriggan. A number of other developments identified through the planning search were reviewed but have not been considered further due to their greater distance from the subject site, intervening built development and vegetation, and/or their limited potential to interact materially with the proposed development in landscape or visual terms.

The principal adjacent and nearby developments considered relevant to this Assessment are:

- the proposed North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Grid Facility – ABP-319866-24, located to the north-east of the subject site;
- the permitted Flemington South Large-scale Residential Development – Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E, located to the south-east of the subject site;
- the approved Bremore Regional Park and Balbriggan Sports and Recreational Hub – PART XI/006/20; and
- the permitted DART+ Coastal North – ABP-320164-24, including railway electrification and associated infrastructure within the wider Balbriggan area.

Not all of the identified developments are considered capable of giving rise to material cumulative landscape or visual effects in combination with the proposed development. Having regard to their proximity, scale and potential landscape and visual relationship with the subject site, the detailed cumulative assessment focuses on the Flemington South LRD and the proposed NISA Grid Facility. Bremore Regional Park and DART+ Coastal North are considered as part of the wider emerging development context but, for the reasons set out below, are not included in the detailed cumulative assessment.

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3.1.3.3 Flemington South LRD – Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E

A Final Grant of Permission was issued by Fingal County Council on 30 July 2026 to Glenveagh Homes Limited under Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E for a large-scale residential development at Flemington South, Balbriggan. The application as submitted comprised 815 dwellings; however, the Final Grant permits a total of 775 dwellings, together with a portion of the C-Ring Road, community and retail floorspace, childcare facilities, public open space and associated infrastructure and landscape works.



Figure 3.3: CGI of the proposed development prepared by 3D Design Bureau and submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. LRD0069/S3E

The permitted development is located to the south-west of the subject site, on lands to the south of Flemington Lane, and represents a substantial extension of residential development within northern Balbriggan. Given its scale, proximity and residential character, it is relevant to the emerging landscape and visual context within which the proposed development would be experienced.

The permission includes substantial public open space and landscape works and is subject to conditions requiring, inter alia, revised landscape, boundary-treatment and street-tree proposals.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Park Hood as part of the EIAR, which assessed the 815-unit scheme as submitted, recognises that the development would result in a substantial change to the character of its application lands, from predominantly agricultural fields to residential townscape. The assessment identifies a Major magnitude of landscape change within the application site, while concluding that effects reduce with distance due to the existing built environment, topography and vegetation. It also identifies the development as part of the continuing expansion of the western settlement edge of Balbriggan.

In this context, the permitted development is relevant to the present Assessment because, if implemented, it will materially alter the emerging landscape setting to the south-east of the subject site and form part of the planned transition of this part of Balbriggan from an agricultural settlement-edge landscape to a more continuous residential townscape. Given its scale and proximity, it is included in the cumulative landscape assessment and, where represented in the verified photomontages, in the cumulative visual assessment in Sections 6.0 and 7.0 of this Report.

3.1.3.2 North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Grid Facility – ABP-319866-24

An application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 7 June 2024 for the proposed North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Offshore Wind Farm and associated offshore and onshore infrastructure. Of particular relevance to the present Assessment is the proposed Grid Facility at Bremore, located to the north-east of the subject site and immediately north of part of the wider Flemington LAP lands. The Grid Facility does not directly adjoin the current subject site.

The Grid Facility comprises substantial electricity infrastructure associated with the connection of the proposed offshore wind farm to the national grid. Submitted elevations indicate a proposed ground level of approximately 31.80 m AOD, with the principal substation building extending to approximately 48.80 m AOD and lightning protection elements to approximately 51.80 m AOD. This equates to approximately 17 m in building height and approximately 20 m to the highest elements above the indicated ground level. The scale and form of the proposed infrastructure are therefore materially different from the predominantly low-rise residential development and agricultural lands within the surrounding area. The NISA response documentation also confirms that lightning arrestor masts extend above the substation parapets and that ground-mounted masts extend to approximately 17 m above proposed ground level.

A Request for Further Information was issued on 10 April 2025 which, among other matters, required the NISA applicant to review the relationship between the Grid Facility and the Flemington LAP, having particular regard to the potential for visual impacts from the substation on the residential lands to the south and south-west.

In response, the NISA applicant undertook an updated assessment of the relationship between the Grid Facility and the Flemington LAP lands. The applicant's assessment identifies the potential for the upper sections of the substation buildings to be visible above intervening vegetation. During construction, the NISA assessment identifies a High magnitude of visual change and a Major (significant) effect from the nearest portion of the LAP lands, with effects reducing with increased distance and screening. For the operational phase, the applicant identifies the potential for partial views of the substation structures above the intervening treelined hedgerow.



Figure 3.4: Extract from Dwg. No.s 281240_MCR_ONS_GF_DR_YE_1010-Grid-Facility-Landscape-Plan and Dwg. No. 281240-ARP-ONS-GF-DR-PL-1008 building elevations submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. ABP-319866-24.

The further information submitted by the NISA applicant also includes revisions to the architectural treatment and landscape proposals for the Grid Facility. These include revised external finishes, supplementary woodland planting and the introduction of semi-mature trees along the southern boundary adjoining the Flemington LAP lands. These measures and the conclusions reached in the NISA assessment are those of the NISA applicant and are recorded here for the purposes of describing the emerging development context; their adequacy or effectiveness is not independently assessed as part of this LVIA.

The NISA application remains under consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála. The Grid Facility is relevant to the present Assessment because, if permitted and constructed, it would introduce a substantial infrastructural element into the emerging landscape setting to the north-east of the subject site. Given its proximity, scale and potential visibility, the Grid Facility is considered as part of the emerging landscape context and is included, where relevant, in the cumulative landscape and visual assessment in Sections 6.0 and 7.0 of this report, respectively.

3.1.4.5 ABP-320164-24, DART+ Coastal North

A Railway Order has been granted for the DART+ Coastal North project, which provides for the electrification and upgrade of the existing Northern Line between Malahide and Drogheda and associated works along the existing railway corridor. The works within the Balbriggan area include overhead line electrification infrastructure, modifications to the Balbriggan Viaduct and station footbridge, and the construction of a Balbriggan electrical substation compound.

The railway corridor and associated works are physically separated from the subject site and occur within and immediately adjoining the established rail corridor. The Inspector's assessment concluded that, while changes close to the railway would be appreciable at certain locations, landscape and visual effects diminish rapidly with distance and that the project would not give rise to unacceptable direct, indirect or cumulative landscape effects.

DART+ Coastal North therefore forms part of the wider emerging infrastructure context of northern Balbriggan. However, having regard to the distance and separation from the subject site, the linear nature of the works and their relationship with the existing railway corridor, it is not considered likely to give rise to material cumulative landscape or visual effects in combination with the proposed development and is not included in the detailed cumulative assessment.

3.1.4.3 Bremore Regional Park – PART XI/006/20

Fingal County Council progressed the development of Bremore Regional Park through the Part 8 process under Ref. PART XI/006/20. The wider Regional Park extends to approximately 43.5 ha, with the Part 8 proposals relating to approximately 15.07 ha of lands within the park. The development comprises the Balbriggan Sports and Recreational Hub, Central Zone open spaces and Coastal Park.

The proposals include an athletics track, GAA and football pitches, basketball and tennis courts, changing facilities, car parking, recreational and play facilities, new planting and associated landscape works. Sports lighting is also proposed, including columns of up to approximately 20 m in height within the Sports and Recreational Hub.

Bremore Regional Park forms an important element of the wider recreational and green-infrastructure context of northern Balbriggan. However, having regard to its location and separation from the subject site, together with the predominantly open-space, recreational and landscape-led character of the proposals, it is not considered likely to give rise to material cumulative landscape or visual effects in combination with the proposed development. It is therefore acknowledged as part of the wider emerging context but is not included in the detailed cumulative assessment.



Figure 3.5: CGI of the proposed development prepared by Áit and submitted as part of Application Reg. Ref. PART XI/006/20.

3.2 Key Landscape Elements and Character Areas of the Receiving Environment

The receiving environment comprises a combination of established residential development, agricultural lands, recreational uses, road infrastructure and established vegetation. The subject site occupies a transitional position at the northern edge of the built-up area of Balbriggan, where the established residential settlement meets the agricultural landscape beyond. The principal landscape elements and characteristics relevant to this Assessment are identified below.

a) Surrounding and Adjacent Land Uses

- Existing Residential Development**
Established residential development lies immediately to the south of the subject site, beyond Flemington Lane. The New Haven and Dún Saithne areas are predominantly characterised by low-rise housing, private gardens, boundary walls and hedges, street planting and areas of public open space.

Further established residential development occurs at Bremore Cottages to the east, towards the R132. The increasing presence of housing, boundary treatments and associated infrastructure contributes to a progressively more developed character towards the eastern part of the receiving environment.

An existing detached dwelling (Eircode K32 K198) and associated curtilage is also located within the central part of the application lands, fronting Flemington Lane. In addition, a number of individual detached dwellings front Flemington Lane opposite the western part of the subject site, to the east of Flemington Park. These properties have a more dispersed roadside character than the more continuous residential development at New Haven and Dún Saithne.
- Agricultural Lands**
The subject site and adjoining lands to the north, east and west retain a predominantly agricultural character. These lands comprise fields defined and subdivided by hedgerows and associated trees. Agricultural use remains evident particularly to the north and west of the subject site. The Landscape Design Statement similarly identifies the rural area to the north and west as comprising agricultural fields divided by hedgerows.

The agricultural field pattern provides a clear contrast with the established residential settlement to the south.

Existing farmyard buildings are located immediately to the west of the subject site and form part of the established agricultural context of the receiving environment. Together with the adjoining fields, hedgerows and trees, these buildings reinforce the working rural character of the lands to the west.
- Existing Recreational Uses**
Established recreational uses form part of the wider local context, including O'Dwyers GAA facilities to the east and public open spaces associated with the adjoining residential neighbourhoods. The Landscape Design Statement identifies O'Dwyers GAA and nearby recreational areas as part of the suburban context surrounding the application lands.

b) Local and Major Roads

- Flemington Lane**
Flemington Lane extends along the southern boundary of the subject site and forms the immediate physical interface between the agricultural lands to the north and established residential development to the south.

The Landscape Design Statement describes Flemington Lane as a two-lane road, with one lane in each direction and pedestrian footpath provision along part of its length. The road continues east through Bremore Cottages towards its junction with the R132.

Existing houses, gardens, boundary treatments and vegetation occur along its southern side, while agricultural lands and established hedgerows characterise much of its northern side in the vicinity of the subject site.
- R132**
The R132 lies to the east of the subject site and forms a principal north-south route through northern Balbriggan. Its road infrastructure, adjoining development, vegetation and utilities contribute to the more developed character of the eastern part of the wider receiving environment.

c) Landscape Structure and Key Features

- Topography and Landform**
The subject site falls generally from west to east. The relatively gentle landform combines with the existing field pattern and vegetation to influence the extent and direction of views across the site and towards the surrounding landscape.
- Existing Hedgerows and Trees**
Hedgerows and associated trees form a characteristic component of the subject site and adjoining agricultural landscape. They define existing field boundaries, provide varying degrees of enclosure and influence views across and into the lands.

The Arboricultural Report describes the application site as an existing agricultural site with native hedgerows. It identifies, among other features, the maintained southern boundary hedgerow H32, native western boundary hedgerow H34, central moderate-quality native hedgerow H22 and native southern boundary hedgerow H31.
- Field Pattern and Enclosure**
The existing hedgerow network creates an identifiable agricultural field pattern within the subject site and adjoining lands. Variations in hedgerow height, density and associated tree cover result in differing levels of enclosure and permeability across the landscape.
- Northern Settlement Edge**
The subject site lies directly at the interface between the established built-up area of Balbriggan and its agricultural hinterland. Low-rise residential development to the south of Flemington Lane contrasts with the agricultural fields and vegetation to the north.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 Introduction

This section sets out the planning policy context relevant to the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development. It focuses on the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 and the Flemington Local Area Plan 2024, with particular regard to land-use zoning, landscape character, visual amenity, green infrastructure, open space, trees and hedgerows, protected views and prospects, and the integration of new development within its receiving environment.

The Fingal Development Plan establishes the wider statutory landscape, environmental and development framework for Balbriggan, while the Flemington LAP provides the more detailed and site-specific framework for the planned development of the subject lands and the wider Flemington area.

The review is necessarily focused on matters relevant to this LVIA and does not constitute a comprehensive planning policy assessment. Reference should be made to the Statement of Consistency prepared by Stephen Ward Town Planning & Development Consultants, submitted with the planning application, for the wider planning policy assessment of the proposed development.

4.2 Land Use Zoning

The subject site is zoned **RA – Residential Area** under the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029.

The zoning objective is to: *“Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.”*

The associated vision seeks the provision of high-quality residential environments with appropriate layout and design, sustainable transport connections, access to community facilities and a suitable mix of house sizes, types and tenures. The Flemington LAP confirms that the wider LAP lands are subject to this RA zoning objective.

The zoning therefore establishes a clear statutory objective for the development of a new residential neighbourhood on the subject lands.

For the purposes of this LVIA, the zoning is relevant in establishing the planned land-use context of the site. It does not alter the existing landscape baseline, which remains agricultural, or predetermine the significance of landscape and visual effects. The assessment therefore considers the actual change from the existing landscape to the proposed development, while having regard to the planned residential use of the lands.

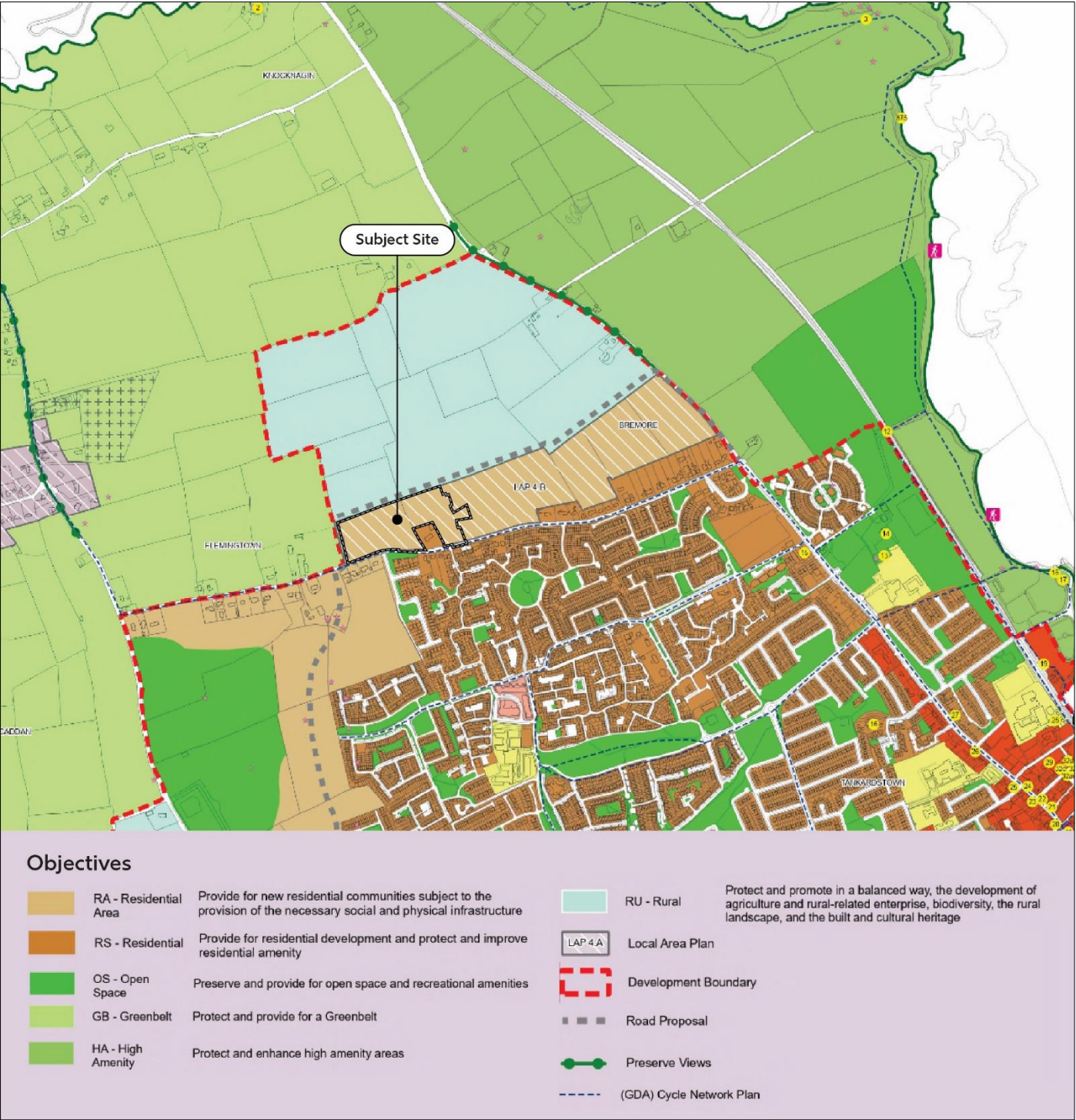


Figure 4.1: Extract from Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029, Sheet No. 4 Balbriggan. Indicative subject site boundary outlined in black by Purser.

4.3 Flemington Local Area Plan 2024

The Flemington Local Area Plan 2024 was adopted by Fingal County Council on 9 December 2024 and provides the detailed statutory framework for the development of approximately 17.2 ha of lands at Flemington Lane, on the northern edge of Balbriggan. The lands are presently predominantly agricultural, with established residential development to the south and rural and Greenbelt lands to the north and west.

The LAP establishes a vision for the coordinated development of the lands as a new residential neighbourhood supported by community facilities, high-quality public open space and active travel infrastructure. Development is structured around four Character Areas, each with its own residential, landscape, open-space and movement requirements.

The subject development relates to Character Area 4 (CA4), located at the western end of the LAP lands adjoining Flemington Lane and the existing Dún Saithne and New Haven residential areas. The LAP identifies a number of considerations for CA4 of particular relevance to this LVIA, including:

- the relationship of new development with Flemington Lane and adjoining residential development;
- retention of mature vegetation where possible, together with replacement and augmentation planting;
- new planting along Flemington Lane;
- provision of quality public open space, including a MUGA / games area;
- incorporation of a SuDS garden; and
- delivery of the western access to the east-west Active Travel Route and an Active Travel Hub.

More generally, the LAP requires development to respond sensitively to the existing local landscape character, retain trees and hedgerows where possible, and establish an interconnected network of green and blue infrastructure.

4.4 Architectural Conservation and Heritage

The subject site is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and does not contain any Protected Structures.

The Balbriggan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area is located within the established town centre to the south of the subject site and is physically separated from the Flemington lands by intervening residential development, roads and other elements of the existing urban area.

A number of Protected Structures are located within the wider Bremore and northern Balbriggan area. Those considered most relevant to the wider landscape and visual context are identified below.

Protected Structure	Distance from Site
Railway Bridge, Bremore, RPS Ref. 0012	c. 400m
St. Molaga's Church and Graveyard, Bremore, RPS Ref. 0013	c. 650m
Bremore Castle, RPS Ref. 0014	c. 670m
Bremore Lodge, RPS Ref. 0015	c. 550m

Table 4.1: Nearby Protected Structures.

These structures are principally associated with the historic Bremore area and the R132/Drogheda Road corridor. Bremore Castle forms a distinctive heritage feature within the wider northern Balbriggan landscape, while St. Molaga's Church and Graveyard and the nearby railway bridge contribute to the historic character of the Bremore area.

For the purposes of this LVIA, the Balbriggan Historic Core ACA and the identified Protected Structures have been reviewed as potential landscape and visual receptors. Having regard to their distance from the subject site, the intervening established residential development, roads, vegetation and other elements of the existing urban area, and their limited relationship with the immediate landscape setting of the application lands, they are not considered likely to experience material landscape or visual effects as a result of the proposed development.

Accordingly, these heritage receptors are screened out of the detailed landscape and visual assessment, and no verified viewpoints have been selected specifically from the ACA or the identified Protected Structures.

4.5 Recorded Monuments and Structures

There are no Recorded Monuments identified within the subject site.

A number of recorded archaeological sites and monuments are, however, located within the wider Bremore and northern Balbriggan area, including prehistoric and medieval features. The most relevant identified monuments in the wider landscape context are set out below.

Reference Number	Description	Distance from Subject Site
DU002-001001 to DU002-001005	Bremore Passage Tomb Cemetery, comprising a group of megalithic passage tombs	c. 1,460m
DU002-001006	Fulacht fia, Bremore	c. 700m
DU002-002001	Fortified house, Bremore	c. 550m
DU002-002002	Church, Bremore	c. 650m
DU002-002003	Graveyard, Bremore	c. 650m
DU002-003	Mound, Bremore	c.1,200m
DU002-013	Barrow, Bremore	c. 1,300m

Table 4.2: Nearby Recorded Monuments and archaeological sites. Source: Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029, Appendix 6, Record of Monuments and Places / Sites and Monuments Record.

The Bremore Passage Tomb Cemetery, located to the north-east of the subject site, comprises a group of megalithic monuments within the wider Bremore landscape. The cemetery is separated from the subject site by substantial distance and by intervening landscape and infrastructure, including the R132 road corridor and the railway line, together with associated vegetation and development. These intervening elements materially limit the visual relationship between the cemetery and the application lands.

The other identified archaeological features are likewise located outside the subject site and are separated from it by distance, intervening vegetation, roads and/or existing development.

For the purposes of this LVIA, the identified monuments have been reviewed as potential landscape and visual receptors. Having regard to their distance from the subject site, the intervening R132 and railway corridors, existing vegetation and development, and the resulting limited intervisibility with the application lands, they are not considered likely to experience material landscape or visual effects as a result of the proposed development.

Accordingly, the identified archaeological receptors are screened out of the detailed landscape and visual assessment, and no verified viewpoints have been selected specifically from these locations.

4.6 Landscape Policy and Objectives

Chapter 9 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 includes a number of policies and objectives that are relevant to the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

4.6.1 Landscape Character Assessment

Section 9.6.14 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 sets out the Landscape Character Assessment for the County. It identifies six Landscape Character Types and assigns each a landscape value and sensitivity to change.

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity
Rolling Hills Type	Modest	Medium
High Lying Type	High	High
Low Lying Type	Modest	Low
Estuary Type	Exceptional	High
Coastal Type	Exceptional	High
River Valley and Canal Type	High	High

Table 4.3: Landscape Character Types, Values and Sensitivities. Source: Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029.

The subject site is located within the Coastal Landscape Character Type, which is identified as having Exceptional landscape value and High landscape sensitivity. The Coastal Character Type extends along the eastern part of Fingal and

includes a number of established settlements, including Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush, Malahide, Portmarnock and Howth. The landscape is generally low-lying, with more prominent headlands and hills occurring in parts of the coastal area.

The Development Plan attributes the exceptional value of the Coastal Landscape Character Type to the combined visual, ecological, recreational and historical qualities of the wider coastal landscape. These include beaches, islands and headlands, important views towards the sea and surrounding uplands, archaeological and architectural heritage, natural heritage and areas of high ecological value. It also notes that views along the coast are frequently contained by headlands, ridgelines and harbours, creating a series of distinct visual compartments.

The subject site forms part of this wider Landscape Character Type but has a different and more localised landscape expression. It is not located on the immediate coastline and does not itself contain the beaches, headlands, coastal prospects or other features which principally underpin the exceptional value of the wider character type. The Flemington lands comprise agricultural land on the northern edge of Balbriggan, adjoining established residential development to the south, with rural and Greenbelt lands extending farther north and west.

At the site and immediate setting, landscape character is therefore derived principally from the agricultural field pattern, established hedgerows and trees, Flemington Lane and the relationship between the agricultural lands and the existing settlement edge. The influence of the established built-up area of Balbriggan is readily apparent, particularly along Flemington Lane, while the site is physically and visually removed from the immediate coastal edge.

The Development Plan classification of the Coastal Landscape Character Type as Exceptional value and High sensitivity remains an important strategic consideration in this assessment. However, the county-scale LCA does not replace the more detailed assessment of the particular landscape receptor affected by the proposed development. For the purposes of this LVIA, the sensitivity of the subject site and its immediate receiving landscape is therefore considered separately in Section 6.0, having regard to both its landscape value and its susceptibility to the specific form of change proposed.

The statutory zoning and Flemington LAP are considered as part of the wider planning context, but are not used to alter the existing agricultural baseline or to reduce the assessed landscape sensitivity.

4.6.2 Protected Views

Section 9.6.15 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 identifies views and prospects which are considered to contribute to the landscape character and amenity of the County. The Development Plan notes that the identification of a protected view or prospect does not prohibit development within its wider surroundings, but that development should not hinder or obstruct such views and should be appropriately designed and located to minimise its impact.

- **Policy GINHP26 – Preservation of Views and Prospects** seeks to:
“Preserve views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest including those located within and outside the County.”
- **Objective GINHO60 – Protection of Views and Prospects** seeks to:
“Protect views and prospects that contribute to the character of the landscape, particularly those identified in the Development Plan, from inappropriate development.”

The Development Plan mapping identifies two mapped Preserve Views within the wider landscape surrounding the subject site. (See Figure 5. The first is located along the R132 to the north-east of the subject site. The second is located within the Bascadden area to the west / north-west, beyond Flemington Road. Neither Preserve View is located within the subject site or the Flemington LAP lands.

The relationship between the proposed development and the Preserve View along the R132 has been specifically considered through the verified visual assessment. Viewpoint 1, located on the R132, represents the visual relationship between this part of the road corridor and the subject site. The assessment demonstrates that the proposed development is not visible from this location, being screened by intervening development, vegetation and other elements within the receiving environment. The proposed development would therefore not obstruct or materially interfere with the mapped Preserve View associated with the R132.

The mapped Preserve View within the Bascadden area is considerably more removed from the subject site. The intervening landscape includes distance, topography, hedgerows, trees, existing development and road infrastructure. There is no meaningful visual relationship between the subject site and the mapped Preserve View from Bascadden, and views of the proposed development are not available from this area. The proposed development therefore has no potential to obstruct, interrupt or materially affect the protected view or prospect associated with Bascadden.

The subject site is consequently not located within a mapped Preserve View and would not interfere with either of the relevant protected views identified in the wider area. Wider visual effects are assessed through the representative verified viewpoints in Section 7.0.

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Figure 4.2: Extract of Green Infrastructure Map of the Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 - Sheet No.14, annotated by Purser. Site Boundary indicative only.

4.6.3 Sensitive Landscapes

The Coastal Landscape Character Type, within which the subject site is located, is identified in the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 as having High landscape sensitivity. The Development Plan therefore includes a number of objectives which are relevant to the consideration of development within the wider landscape.

- **Objective GINHO56 – Visual Impact Assessments** requires any necessary assessments, including visual impact assessments, to be prepared prior to the approval of development in highly sensitive areas.
- **Objective GINHO58 – Sensitive Areas** seeks to resist development, including houses, which would interfere with the character of highly sensitive areas or with a view or prospect of special amenity value which it is necessary to preserve.
- **Objective GINHO59 – Development and Sensitive Areas** requires that new development does not significantly impinge upon the character, integrity or distinctiveness of highly sensitive areas or detract from their scenic value. In particular, development should not:
 - cause unacceptable visual harm;
 - introduce incongruous landscape elements; or
 - result in the disturbance or loss of landscape elements, historic features or characteristic vegetation which contribute to local distinctiveness and landscape character.

These objectives establish an important landscape and visual test for the proposed development. While the subject site forms part of the wider Coastal Landscape Character Type, the assessment must also consider its relationship with the specifically mapped Highly Sensitive Landscapes within the surrounding area.

To the west and north-west, the Development Plan mapping identifies a Highly Sensitive Landscape extending from the Balscadden area towards the subject site. (See Figure 4.2.) The mapped designation extends up to the western boundary of the subject site but does not extend into the application lands. The principal extent of this sensitive landscape lies within the rural landscape surrounding Balscadden, from which the subject site is physically and visually separated by intervening distance, topography, established hedgerows and trees, local roads and existing development.

The potential relationship between the proposed development and this sensitive landscape has nevertheless been considered through the verified visual assessment, including in particular Viewpoints 7 and 8 from Flemington Road and the surrounding area. These views demonstrate the restricted visual influence of the proposed development in this direction. The development would therefore not materially affect the character, integrity, distinctiveness or scenic qualities of the mapped Highly Sensitive Landscape associated with Balscadden.

A further area of Highly Sensitive Landscape is identified within the coastal landscape to the north-east and east of the subject site. (See Figure 4.2.) The application lands are physically separated from this area by intervening development, vegetation, the R132 corridor and the wider northern Balbriggan landscape. The visual relationship with this area is

considered through the verified assessment, including Viewpoint 1 from the R132, from which the proposed development is not visible. No material effect on the character or visual qualities of this mapped sensitive landscape is therefore identified.

As described in Section 4.6.1, the immediate receiving landscape of the subject site is principally an agricultural settlement-edge landscape, defined by fields, hedgerows and trees and influenced by the established built-up edge of Balbriggan. The site is physically removed from the immediate coastline and from many of the coastal features which contribute to the exceptional value of the wider Coastal Landscape Character Type.

The RA zoning and Flemington LAP establish the planned development context for the lands but do not remove the requirement to assess the effects of the proposed change on the existing landscape. Accordingly, particular consideration is given in this LVIA to the retention and integration of existing hedgerows and trees, the establishment of a coherent new landscape structure, the treatment of the settlement edge, the quality of public open space and planting, and the scale and visual prominence of the proposed built form.

These matters are assessed in detail in Sections 6.0 and 7.0.

4.7 Other Relevant Policies

The following additional policies and objectives of the Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029 are relevant to the landscape design and mitigation measures incorporated within the proposed development.

- **Policy GINHP9 – Landscape Character**
“Ensure green infrastructure provision responds to and reflects landscape character including historic landscape character, conserving, enhancing and augmenting the existing landscapes and townscapes of Fingal which contribute to a distinctive sense of place.”
- **Policy GINHP10 – Green Infrastructure and Development**
“Seek a net gain in green infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of existing assets, through the provision of new green infrastructure as an integral part of the planning process, and by taking forward priority projects including those indicated on the Development Plan Green Infrastructure maps during the lifetime of the Development Plan.”
- **Objective GINHO21 – Integration of Green Infrastructure**
“Avoid the fragmentation of green spaces in site design and to link green spaces / greening elements to existing adjacent green infrastructure / the public realm where feasible and to provide for ecological functions.”

- **Policy GINHP21 – Protection of Trees and Hedgerows**
“Protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management in line with the adopted Forest of Fingal – A Tree Strategy for Fingal.”
- **Policy GINHP22 – Tree Planting**
“Provide for appropriate protection of trees and hedgerows, recognising their value to our natural heritage, biodiversity and climate action and encourage tree planting in appropriate locations.”
- **Objective GINHO46 – Tree Removal**
“Ensure adequate justification for tree removal in new developments and open space management and require documentation and recording of the reasons where tree felling is proposed and avoid removal of trees without justification.”
- **Policy SPQHP37 – Open Space Hierarchy**
“Ensure that all residential development in Fingal is served by a clear hierarchy and network of high quality public open spaces providing for active and passive recreation purposes which is easily accessible and integrated with local communities.”
- **Objective IUO11 – SuDS in New Developments**
“SuDS shall be incorporated into all parts of a development (open spaces, roads, footpaths, private areas)...” and requires that the design of SuDS **enhances the quality of open spaces** and contributes positively to their design and quality.