

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FOR

PART 8 DEVELOPMENT FOR CIVIC AMENITY CENTRE AT CELBRIDGE, COUNTY KILDARE

for: Kildare County Council

Áras Chill Dara,
Devoy Park,
Naas,
County Kildare.



by: CAAS Ltd

1st Floor,
24-26 Ormond Quay Upper
Dublin 7



FEBRUARY 2019

Table of Contents

Section 1	Introduction	1
Section 2	The Proposed Development.....	1
Section 3	The Existing Environment.....	4
Section 4	Impact of the Proposed Development	5
4.1	Methodology	5
4.2	Views	9
4.3	The Likely Effects	15
Section 5	Mitigation and Residual Effects	17
Section 6	Conclusion	17

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Site Location Map	1
Figure 2.1 Proposed site Layout	2
Figure 2.2 Site Location Plan	3
Figure 3.1 The site in context of existing landscape features.....	4
Figure 4.1 Kildare Landscape Character Areas	6
Figure 4.2 Kildare Landscape Sensitivity Areas	7
Figure 4.3 View Locations	9

Table of Tables

Table 4.1 View points and reasons for selection	11
Table 4.2 View points and likely effects	16

Section 2 The Proposed Development

- i. A single storey Administration/ Staff Building
- ii. A single storey Pay Station Building
- iii. A single storey Weighbridge Building

iv. A single storey (57.64m²) Household Hazardous Waste Storage Building

Additional works required to support the facility include internal roads and set down areas; a site wastewater treatment plant; material handling areas; staff and visitor parking, moveable waste skips; public lighting and landscape works (including retaining walls), in addition to all necessary services and utility provision and associated site works.

The proposed development includes modifications to the R449 adjacent to the proposed site entrance including a right-hand turning lane and associated road infrastructure signage, and modifications and widening to the existing site entrance, footpaths, cyclepaths and landscaping.

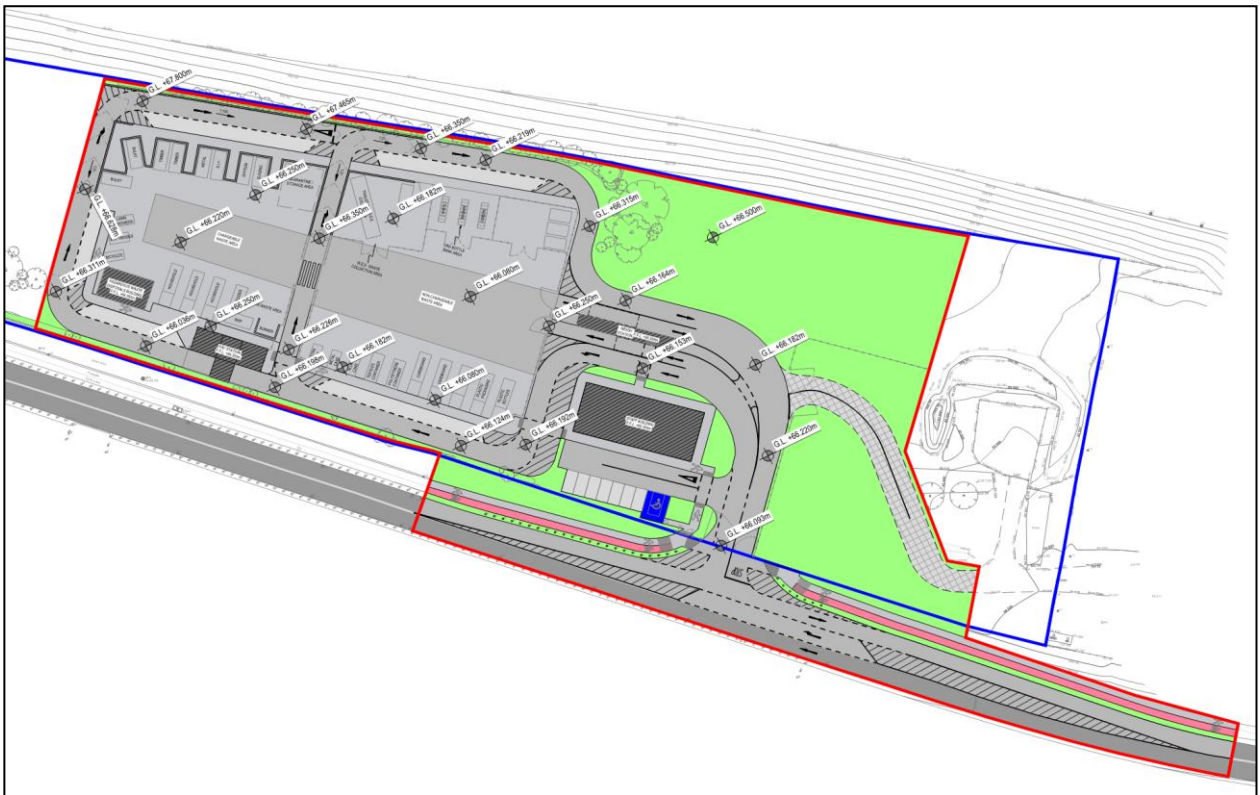


Figure 2.1 Proposed site Layout

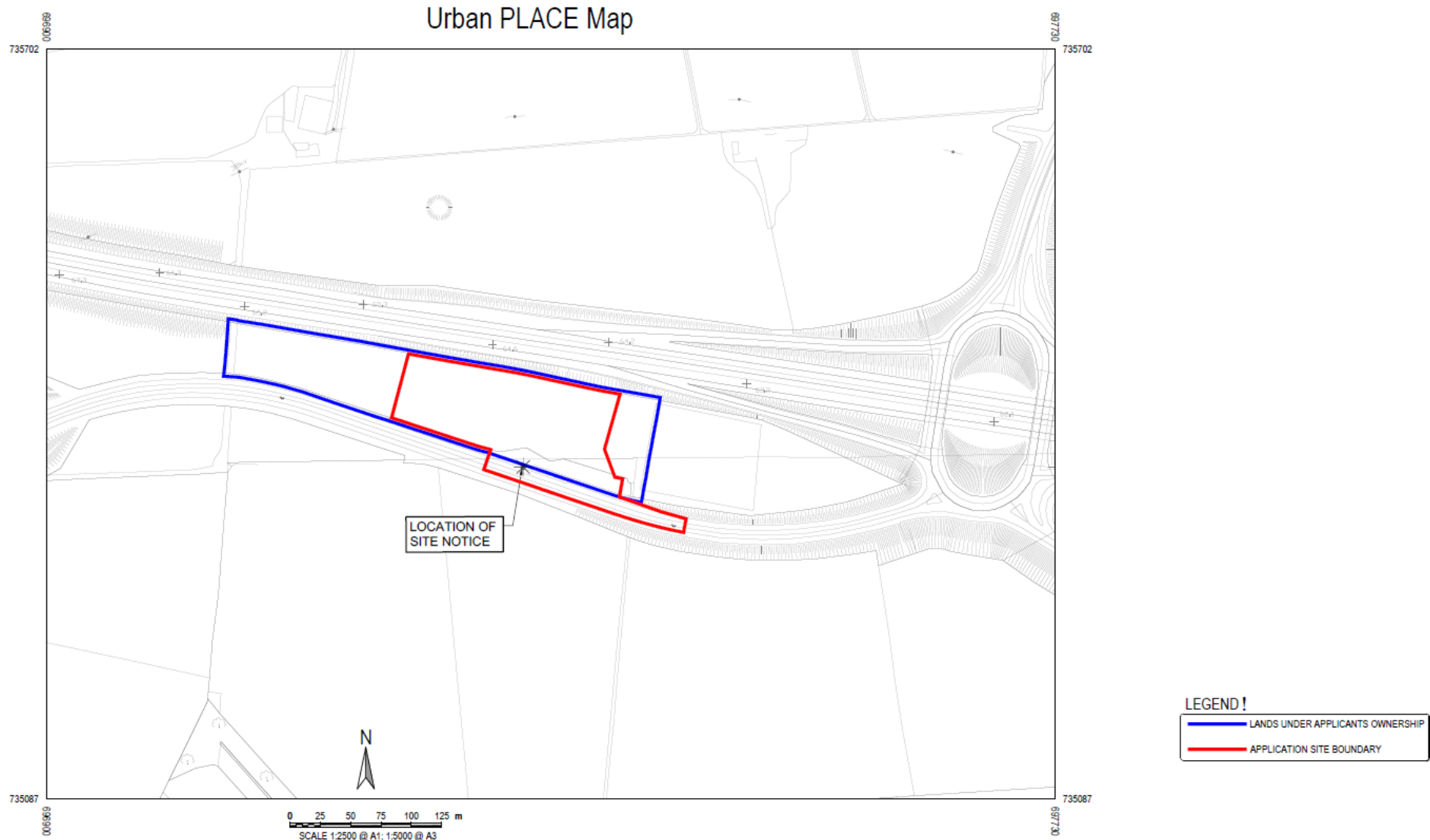


Figure 2.2 Site Location Plan

Section 3 The Existing Environment



Figure 3.1 The site in context of existing landscape features

Section 4 Impact of the Proposed Development

4.1 Methodology

The assessment is a combination of expertise, experience and evidence. The assessment has been carried out by a landscape architect with significant expertise and over 20 years of experience of landscape and visual impacts¹. The assessment of the likely impacts of the proposed development on the landscape has considered legislation, policy documents, and guidelines. The following are of particular relevance.

International and National Legislation

The key legislation is the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2000 (as amended). This piece of legislation is the basis for land use planning in Ireland. Under the legislation, development plans (usually implemented at local authority level) must include mandatory objectives for the conservation of the protection of landscape, views and amenities.

Relevant Plans

The proposed development is within the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 boundary and is proposed to be situated on land which is unzoned.

Relevant Designations

Chapter 14 (Landscape, Recreation and Amenity) of the Kildare County Development Plan references the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) undertaken for the county in 2004. Within the context of this LCA, the proposed development site is located within the 'Northern Lowlands' Landscape Character Area, as illustrated on Figure 4.1 **Kildare Landscape Character Areas** below.

¹ ¹ D. Conor Skehan FILI, MRIAI, MLA, B.Arch (Sc). Dipl. Arch. is a co-founder and past president of the Irish Landscape Institute and a registered Impact Assessor with the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management as well as the International Association of Impact Assessment. He is the author of the EPA's statutory Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements and the accompanying Advice notes. He is also a co-author of both editions of the standard text Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Spons, London, 1995, 2002).

¹ Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, Ireland, 2002)
Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Spons, London, 1995, 2002).

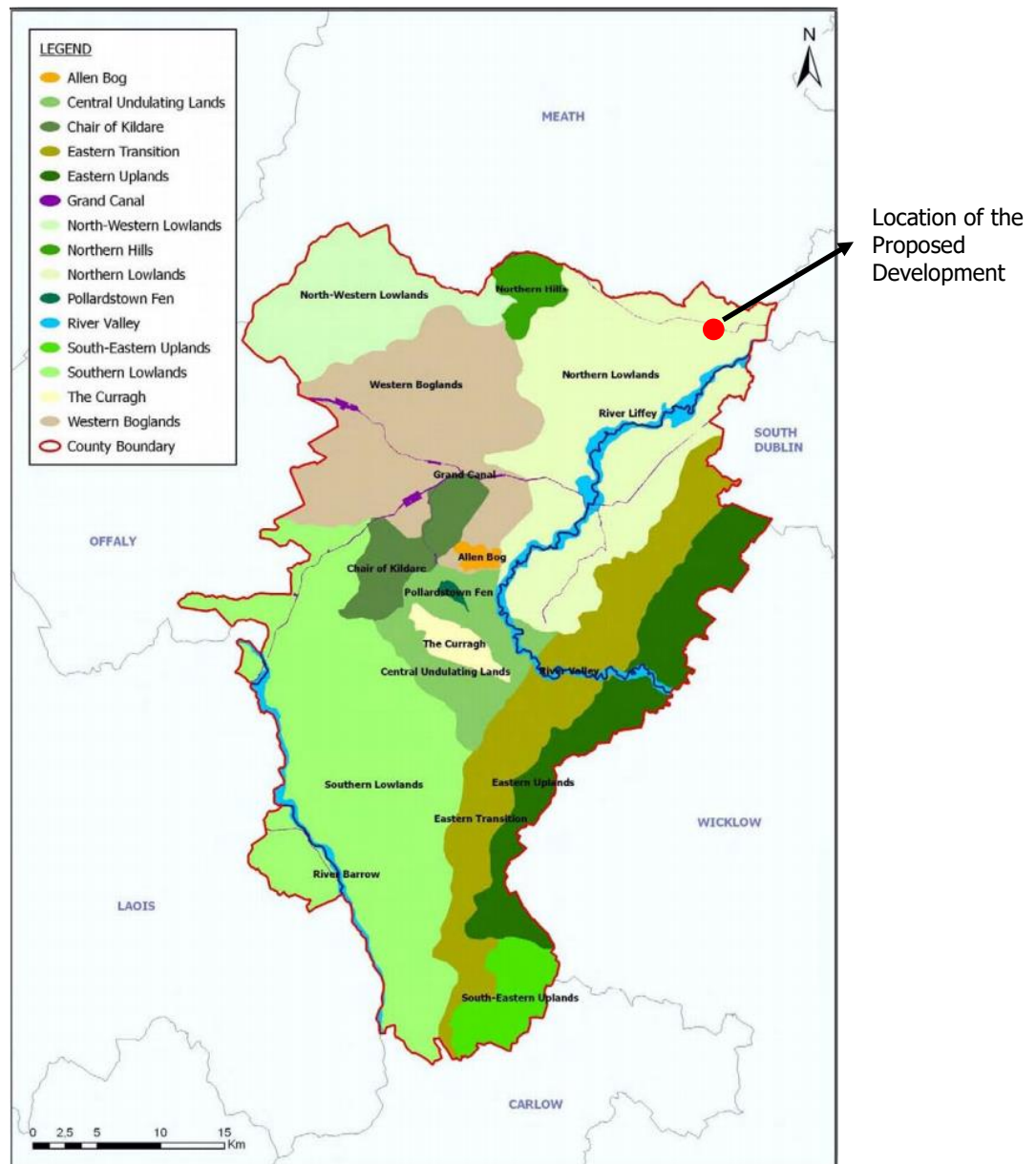
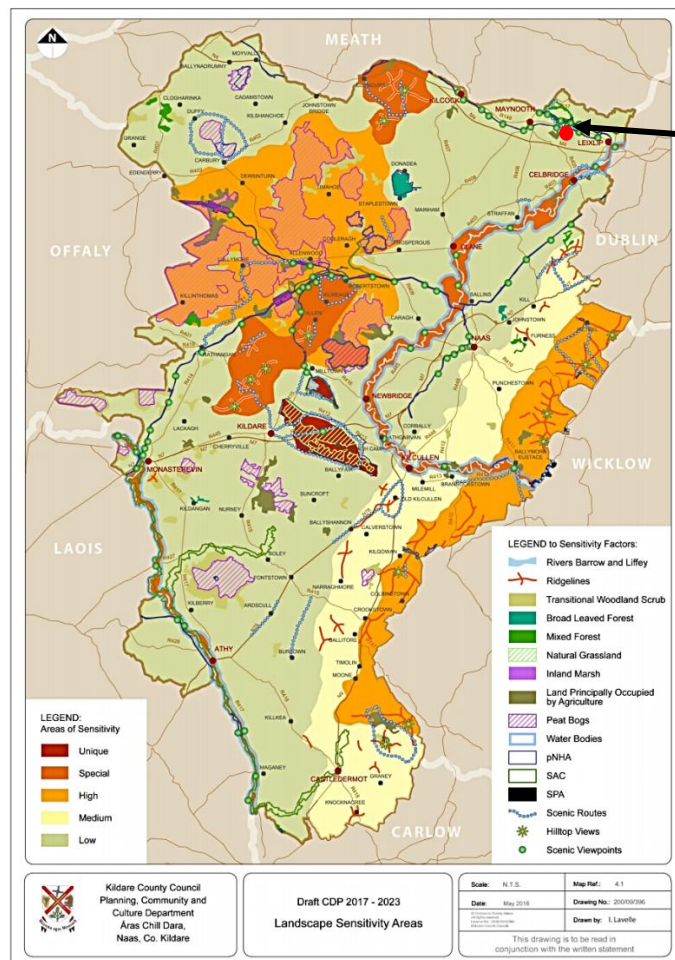
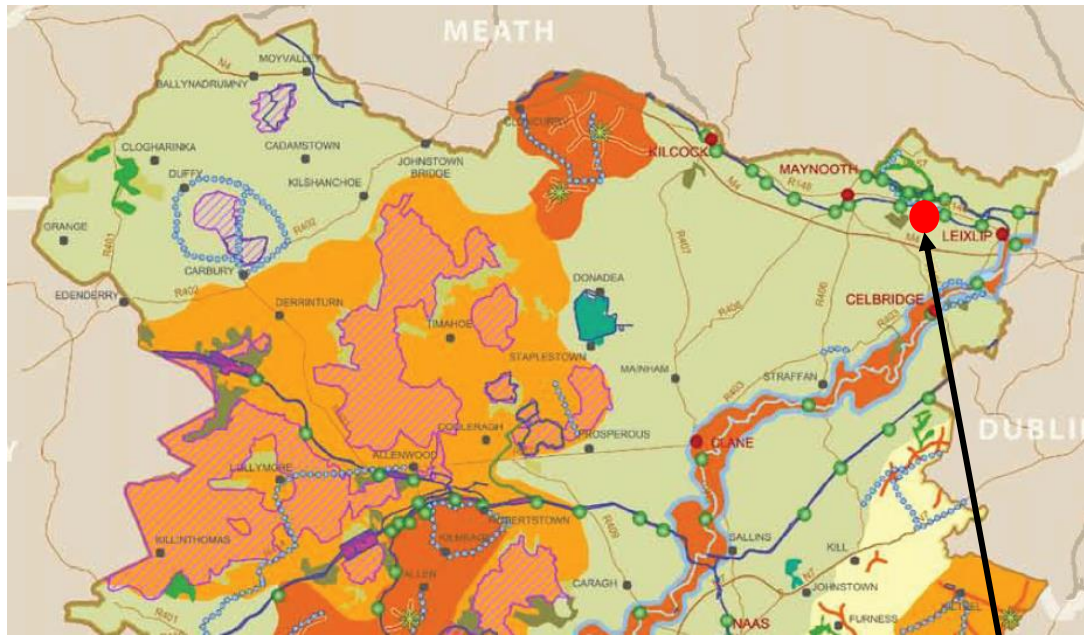


Figure 4.1 Kildare Landscape Character Areas

Source: Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023



Proposed
Development
Location

Figure 4.2 Kildare Landscape Sensitivity Areas

Source: Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

Table 14.1 of the development plan indicates the dominant sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area with the accompanying note (Sect. 14.4) which states "*It is important to note that within each of these areas there can be a wide variety of local conditions that can significantly increase or decrease sensitivity*". Within this context, the Northern Lowlands has been classified as having a 'Low Sensitivity' rating (Class 1).

Landscape areas of low sensitivity are described as '*Areas with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area*'. Landscape Sensitivity Areas based on the findings of the LCA are indicated in Figure 4.2 **Kildare Landscape Sensitivity Areas** above. This illustrates that the Civic Amenity site is situated within a 'Low Sensitivity Area'.

Within Chapter 14, Section 14.4.2 examines the impacts of development types on different landscape areas. A table is provided for "*guidance on the likely compatibility between a range of land-use classes and the principal landscape areas of the county classified by sensitivity*". 'Urbanisation'/'Industrial Projects' are indicated as having a 'High' compatibility rating within the Northern Lowlands area.

The Plan acknowledges the uniqueness of individual developments and that these need to be assessed at micro / local level landscapes where their ability to absorb development varies, and that each site should be assessed on its individual merits.

Additional Landscape policies within the Chapter considered to be of relevance to the proposed development are:

LA 1: *Ensure that consideration of landscape sensitivity is an important factor in determining development uses. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design, type and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.*

LA 2: *Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape.*

LA 3: *Require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals that are likely to significantly affect:*

- *Landscape Sensitivity Factors*
- *A Class 4 or 5 Sensitivity Landscape (i.e. within 500m of the boundary)*
- *A route or view identified in maps 14.2 and 14.3 (i.e. within 500m of the boundary)*

LA 4: *Seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development.*

LA 7: *Be informed by consideration of the County Landscape Character Appraisal*

A number of specific policies are also outlined in respect of the specific Landscape Character Areas. Those applicable to the subject proposed development, and relating to Lowland Plains and Boglands Character Areas (Section 14.8.2), are identified as:

LL 1: *Recognise that the lowlands are made up of a variety of working landscapes, which are critical resources for sustaining the economic and social well-being of the county.*

LL 2: Continue to permit development that can utilise existing structures, settlement areas and infrastructure, whilst taking account of the visual absorption opportunities provided by existing topography and vegetation.

LL 3: Recognise that this lowland landscape character area includes areas of significant landscape and ecological value, which are worthy of protection.

LL 4: To recognise that intact boglands are critical natural resources for ecological and environmental reasons.

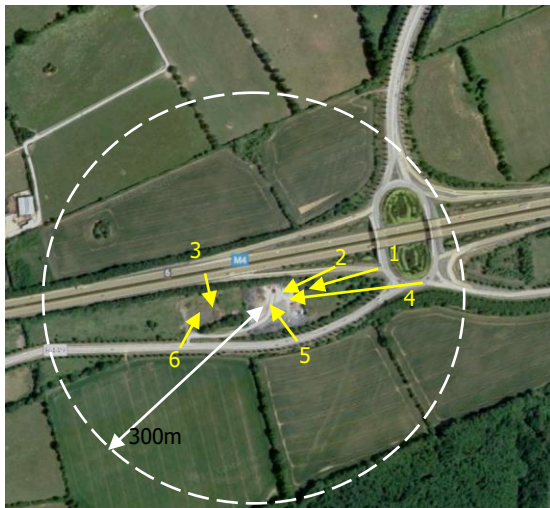
LL 5: To recognise that cutaway and cut-over boglands represent degraded landscapes and/or brownfield sites and thus are potentially robust to absorb a variety of appropriate developments.

4.2 Views

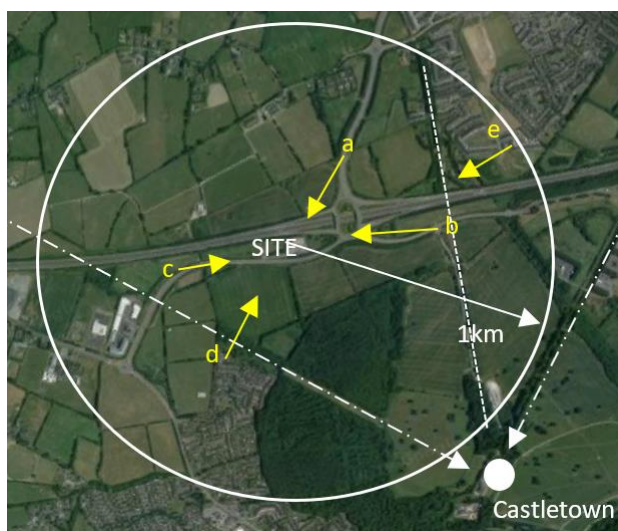
On the basis of field work to examine potential views from the local environs, views 1 – 6 have been selected for detailed assessment - the reasons for their selection are outlined below.

Further Views in the wider landscape [a – e] have been included to discuss implications on issues such as nearby heritage landscapes and residential amenity.

Figure 4.3 View Locations



Viewpoints [1 -6] in the immediate vicinity [300m] of the site



Viewpoints [a-e] from the wider landscape [up to 1 km]

Table 4.1 View points and reasons for selection

View	Location	Reason for Selection	View Point Selection Criteria					
			Adjacent to nearest representative residence	At nearest public road	At nearest busiest road	From designated nearby visual amenities [cultural heritage /view points]	From areas that overlook the site	From potentially 'worst case' location of minimal screening
1	looking south-west towards site from near top of entry ramp to M4	First View of site from a busy public road						
2	looking south towards site from near end of entry ramp to M4	Elevated view towards site at a point with little road-side screening by planting						
3	looking south towards site from M4	View from closest point on a busy motorway						
4	looking west from roundabout connection to M4	First View of site from a busy public road junction						
5	looking north-west from R449 ramp to M4 roundabout	Elevated view towards site at a point with little road-side screening by planting						
6	looking north towards proposed site entrance from R449 approach to ramp to M4 roundabout	View from closest point on a busy road						
a	R449 450 m to north-east	Leads to Leixlip West						
b	On link road to HP 600 m to east	Leads to Castletown entrance						
c	R449 500 m to west	Leads to Celbridge						
d	Beech Park 700m to north-east	Nearest residential area						
e	Crodaun Forest Park 450m to south-west	Nearest residential area						

Viewpoints [1 -6] in the immediate vicinity [300m] of the site

Views from M4 and environs



View 1 looking south-west towards site from near top of entry ramp to M4



View 2 looking south towards site from near end of entry ramp to M4



View 3 looking south towards site from M4

Views from R 449 and environs



View 4 looking west from roundabout connection to M4



View 5 looking north-west from R449 ramp to M4 roundabout



View 6 looking north towards proposed site entrance from R449 approach to ramp to M4 roundabout



Viewpoints in the wider landscape [a – c] at distances within 1km. This image also includes cultural heritage features with landscape-scale visual relationships and axes as well as the two nearest residential locations [d, e].



View a: 450 m to north-east



View b: 600 m to east



View c: 500 m to west



View d: 700m to north-east



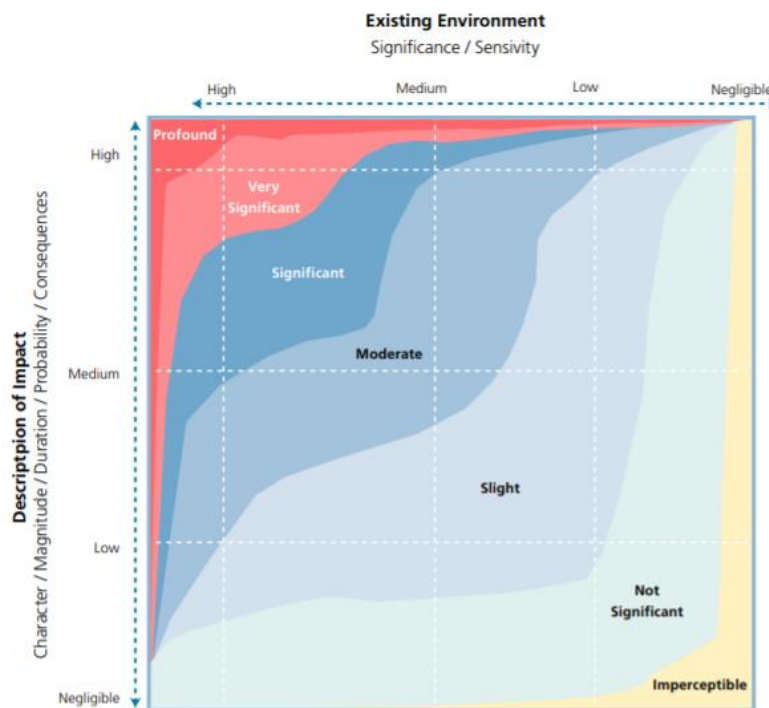
View e: 450m to south-west

4.3 The Likely Effects

This section describes the likely effects of the proposed development on the landscape – by reference to changes to the appearance and character of the local and wider environs – as illustrated in the selected viewing points.

The assessment uses the EPA Guideline's chart for the generalised determination of the degree of impacts.

This refers to the character and magnitude of the impact as well as to the significance and sensitivity of the receiving environment.



There are seven generalised degrees of impact significance that are commonly used in EIA. Imperceptible, Not Significant, Slight, Moderate, Significant, Very Significant and Profound. Generalised definitions of each of these are provided in Table 3.3 above. Where more specific definitions exist within a specialised factor or topic e.g. biodiversity, these should be used in preference to these generalised definitions. (ref. Advice Notes¹¹)

Figure 3.5 Chart showing typical classifications of the significance of impacts¹²

The assessment of impacts, by reference to the preceding table shows that impacts are classified as negligible to slight and the effects, where they do occur are intermittent and very localised – affecting locally enclosed landscape that are highly modified by road projects.

The analysis shows that the existence of significant topographic and vegetation screening means that the site of the proposed development is visually isolated from sensitivities in the surrounding landscape that include both residential areas and important cultural heritage site – that include Carton, Castletown House – as well as the Wonderful Barn and Connolly's Folly.

The assessment also demonstrates that there is effect on the context or setting of protected structures, nor any effects on the landscape-scale visual relationships and visual axes in the vicinity.

Table 4.2 View points and likely effects

View	Location	Reason for Selection	Likely Effect on Appearance	Likely Effect on Character	Likely overall Landscape Effect
1	looking south-west towards site from near top of entry ramp to M4	First View of site from a busy public road	Slight distant visibility	None	Not significant
2	looking south towards site from near end of entry ramp to M4	Elevated view towards site at a point with little road-side screening by planting	Intermittent and partial visibility of upper portions of some structures that will diminish once screen planting grows.	None	Slight
3	looking south towards site from M4	View from closest point on a busy motorway	No visibility on account of intervening vegetation and topography	None	None
4	looking west from roundabout connection to M4	First View of site from a busy public road junction	Slight distant visibility	None	Negligible
5	looking north-west from R449 ramp to M4 roundabout	Elevated view towards site at a point with little road-side screening by planting	Intermittent and partial visibility of upper portions of some structures that will diminish once screen planting grows.	None	Slight
6	looking north towards proposed site entrance from R449 approach to ramp to M4 roundabout	View from closest point on a busy road	Intermittent and partial visibility of upper portions of some structures that will diminish once screen planting grows.	Localised	Not significant
a	R449 450 m to north-east	Leads to Leixlip West	No visibility on account of distance, intervening vegetation and topography	None	None
b	On link road to HP 600 m to east	Leads to Castletown entrance	No visibility on account of distance, intervening vegetation and topography	None	None
c	R449 500 m to west	Leads to Celbridge	No visibility on account of distance, intervening vegetation and topography	None	None
d	Beech Park 700m to north-east	Nearest residential area	No visibility on account of distance, intervening vegetation and topography	None	None
e	Crodaun Forest Park 450m to south-west	Nearest residential area	No visibility on account of distance, intervening vegetation and topography	None	None

Section 5 Mitigation and Residual Effects

Site selection has been the key mitigation measure employed to ensure lack of visibility from any nearby sensitive receptors – residential, amenity or cultural.

Site layout, the design of buildings and the selection of materials will minimise visual contrasts arising from colour, scale or configuration.

The screening afforded by the layout of the entrance, in particular will minimise views of the site interior and the selection of a vegetated finish for the main building will further minimise visibility.

The Design Drawing [Landscape Master Plan ref KCCCA/LMP/001a] Describes the landscaping measures that will be used to further screen the project.

Section 6 Conclusion

Based on the landscape and visual impact assessment prepared, the landscape impacts will be localised and consistent with the established character of the area.

The proposed development will not give rise to any significant permanent residual impacts in the wider landscape following the implementation of the mitigation measures stated above.