



## **Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Revision A)**

**Proposed Student Residence on the Former Victor Motors Site, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14**

**Prepared on behalf of Orchid Residential Limited.**

**November 2024 / Project No. 7034**


## Proposed Student Residence on Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

### Townscape and Visual Assessment – Summary Report

<b>Client Name</b>	Orchid Residential Limited
<b>Agent Name</b>	John Spain Associates Planning and Development Consultants
<b>Document Reference</b>	7034/GSTD14/TVA/2024
<b>Project Number</b>	7034

#### Quality Assurance

Approval Status in accordance with Park Hood's IMS (ISO 14001:2015, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 & SSIP).

Issue	Date	Baseline Prepared by	Graphics prepared by	Report prepared by
<i>Baseline</i>	<i>25-02-2024</i>	<i>Conor Thallon</i>	<i>Ryan Hood</i>	<i>Andrew Bunbury</i>
<i>Reviewed</i>	<i>07-03-2024</i>	<i>Andrew Bunbury CLMI Landscape Architect and Director; Park Hood</i>		
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#### Disclaimer

All feasible and reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that the information provided by a range of public sector institutions and presented in this report is accurate and up-to-date. Park Hood is not responsible for accidental perpetuation of inaccuracies in these records and any consequent effect on the conclusions in this report.

This report has been prepared by Park Hood with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the General Terms and Conditions of the Contract with the client.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Statement of Expertise

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of Orchid Residential Limited.
- 1.2 Park Hood is a Chartered Member of the Irish Landscape Institute and Landscape Institute UK with extensive experience in preparation of Landscape / Townscape and Visual Impact Assessments for large scale projects throughout Ireland and the UK. The primary author is Andrew Bunbury who is a fully qualified Landscape Architect and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 25 years' consultancy experience in the profession across Ireland and the UK. He works between the Dublin, London and Belfast offices of Park Hood where there are 31 members of staff including a further ten Chartered Landscape Architects.
- 1.3 All work is undertaken in compliance with the *Landscape Institute's Code of Standards of Conduct and Practice for Landscape Professionals* and checked in accordance with Park Hood's ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015.

### Proposed Development Summary

- 1.4 The report relates to a proposed development at the car sales premises currently known as Vector Motors (formerly known as Victor Motors), Goatstown Road in Dublin 14 (the "Application Site") and can be summarised demolition of the existing structures on site and construction of a purpose-built student accommodation scheme (PBSA) comprising 220 no. bed spaces, indoor and outdoor student amenity space and site wide landscaping.
- 1.5 A full description of the Proposed Development is contained within the Planning Statement (*John Spain Associates*) and Urban Design Report (*Reddy Architecture and Urbanism*) submitted with this application and is not repeated here.
- 1.6 Following the planning submission, a Large-Scale Residential Development Opinion was provided by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council following a LRD Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This resulted in changes that would be considered in assisting in integration and general architectural detailing of the proposal. The amendments include the following:-
  - Reduced number of bedspaces from 221 to 220 resulting in a density of 161uph;
  - Increased set back on the northern elevation at 5<sup>th</sup> floor level resulting in a 10.4m setback from the boundary;
  - Redesign of the bicycle parking area to provide additional Sheffield stands – an additional 38 no. spaces provided;
  - Increased bicycle parking area provided on the northern boundary of the site;
  - Amended materials and finishes on the northern elevation; and

- Updated landscaping treatment across the site.
- 1.7 The changes since the previous application also include the removal of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor level roof terrace on the southern boundary. All roof terraces are now provided fronting Goatstown Road (western elevation).
- 1.8 This report outlines the potential effects of the proposed development on the townscape / landscape character and visual amenity of the Application Site and surrounding area in this part of Dublin.

### Guidance Documents

- 1.9 The approach and methodology based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)* by *The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013)* (GLVIA). The European Landscape Convention definition of landscape confirms it includes the landscapes of villages, towns and cities, i.e., townscapes. So 'Townscape' is defined as the landscape within a built-up area, including the buildings and the relationships between them.
- 1.10 There are a number of published guidance documents relevant to this assessment as listed below:-
- *Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council County Development Plan, 2022-2028;*
  - *Guidelines on Residential Developments for 3rd Level Students (Section 50 of the Finance Act 1999) (updated 2005);*
  - *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) (2018);*
  - *Urban design manual - a best practice guide by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009);*
  - *National Landscape Strategy 2015–2025;*
  - *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2015); and*
  - *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide (2009).*
- 1.11 Other sources of information include:
- *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie>; and*
  - *National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Environmental Protection Agency - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps>*
- 1.12 The baseline assessment included study of Ordnance Survey Ireland historical mapping and recent aerial photography to assess how this part of Dublin has developed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as assess calculations of relevant distances or areas.

## **Method of Assessment**

### **Townscape and Visual Effects – Distinctions**

- 1.13 Townscape and Visual effects deriving from a proposed development are assessed separately although the process is similar. The conclusions on significance are ultimately an evaluation of the combined effects of both. The distinction between townscape and visual effects can be summarised as follows:-

- Townscape effects relate to the potential impacts on the physical characteristics or components of the environment which together form the character of this part of the city, including buildings, roads, paths, vegetation and water areas; and
- Visual effects relate to potential impact on visual receptors whose views in this part of the city could change as a result of this proposal, such as pedestrians, people working in offices, or people in vehicles passing through the area.

### **Townscape and Visual Assessment Process**

- 1.14 The process can be summarised as undertaking the following key tasks:
- Site survey and visits undertaken between 2020 and 2024;
  - Assessing the Baseline Townscape Setting and Conditions;
  - Evaluation of key components of the proposed Development based on site layouts, plans and elevations prepared by Reddy Architecture and Urbanism and other members of the design team;
  - Consideration of Mitigation and Enhancement Measures;
  - Assessment of Townscape / Landscape Effects;
  - Assessment of Visual Effects; and
  - Conclusions.
- 1.15 The process includes assessment of photomontages of the proposed development from 14 no. representative viewpoints prepared by 3D Design Bureau.

### **Establishing the Study Area**

- 1.16 The study area includes the Application Site itself and the wider townscape where the proposed development may have an influence either directly or indirectly. There is no specific guidance on extents of study areas applicable to this type of development in Ireland. Given the Goatstown area comprises existing built townscape, the use of digital Zone of Theoretical Visibility Maps (based on topography) to assess potential viewpoints was considered superfluous as urban views are usually constrained by built environment.

## Townscape Character Assessment

- 1.17 The combination of desk-top analysis and site survey allows judgment to be made on the key elements that contribute to the townscape character and its wider condition, value and sensitivity. Townscape value, quality and sensitivity is affected by factors including: (i) whether the resource is common or rare; (ii) whether it is considered to be of local, regional, national or global importance; (iii) whether there are any statutory or regulatory limitations / requirements relating to the resource; (iv) the quality of the resource; (v) the maturity of the resource, and (vi) the ability of the resource to accommodate changes. The following rating is the basis of this part of the assessment:-

- **Highest Value Townscape** - Very vulnerable to change. *High Sensitivity*;
- **Very Attractive Townscape** - Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. *Medium Sensitivity*;
- **Good Townscape** - Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. *Medium Sensitivity*;
- **Ordinary Townscape** - Able to accommodate change without significant effects. *Low Sensitivity*;
- **Poor Townscape** - Damaged landscapes very capable of accommodating change. *Very Low Sensitivity*.

- 1.18 The report considers the magnitude and scale of effects the proposed development would have on existing townscape elements, character areas and resources either directly or indirectly. This is affected by factors including: (i) the physical extent and nature of the key elements that make up the proposal; (ii) the townscape context of these effects and (iii) the time-scale of impact, such as whether it is temporary (short, medium or long term), permanent with reversible potentials, or irreversibly permanent and are rated as follows:-

- **Profound** - Total loss or major alteration to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and /or introduction of elements considered to be totally dominant when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.
- **Substantial** - A prominent change that may be large in scale and / or extent and include the loss of key townscape characteristics or the addition of new features or elements that would potentially change the overall landscape quality and character at a wider scale.
- **Moderate** - Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and / or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.
- **Slight** - Minor loss or alteration to one or more) key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development townscape or view and /or introduction of elements that may

not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving townscape.

- **Negligible** - Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e., pre-development) townscape or view and /or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding townscape - approximating the 'no change' situation.

### Visual Amenity Assessment

- 1.19 The baseline studies establish the area from which the proposed development may potentially be visible and the different groups of people ("visual receptors") who may experience views or changes to view context. Fourteen representative viewpoints were identified in locations that are publicly accessible near the Application Site with determination based on known visibility or from locations where there may be significant numbers of visual receptors e.g., commuter traffic, Goatstown Road, local parks or residential areas.
- 1.20 These were based in part on the An Bord Pleanála Consultation Opinion (6<sup>th</sup> June 2020) that requested *"...verified photomontages of the development from Goatstown Road (north and south of the site), from within the Trimbleston development and from Willowfield Park. The VIA should include views of the development with both winter and summer vegetation and to include any plant or other structures on the roof of the proposed development, in order to give as accurate a representation as possible."*
- 1.21 Viewer sensitivity ranges from high to low based on the nature of the visual receptor (resident, tourist, commuter etc.) and the visual value or quality attached to a particular view. The visual effects deriving from the proposed development are based on the combined judgement of the anticipated change in nature, visual amenity and duration of the particular view (magnitude) and the nature of the visual receptor (sensitivity) and are rated as follows:-
- **Severe** - A major change or obstruction of a view that may be directly visible, appearing as the dominant and contrasting feature appearing in the foreground.
  - **Substantial** - The proposal forms the focus or an immediately apparent component in the view and will redefine its baseline characteristics.
  - **Moderate** - The proposal is likely to form a readily apparent component within the overall view but the baseline characteristics will continue to prevail.
  - **Slight** - The proposal forms a minor component in the wider view which might be missed by the casual viewer / observer. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the view.
  - **Negligible** - The proposal is barely discernible or may be at such a distance that it is very difficult to perceive equating to a no-change situation.

### Nature of Townscape and Visual Effects

1.22 Townscape / landscape and visual assessment has aspects that can be considered subjective. While magnitude of change to a view can be factually defined, any subsequent objective assessment is based on, experience, observation, evidence and informed professional opinion.

- **Positive Effect** - A change that improves the quality of the townscape character and fits very well with the existing townscape character.
- **Neutral** - A change which does not affect the scale, landform or pattern of the townscape and maintains existing townscape quality.
- **Adverse Effect** - A change which reduces the quality of the townscape and cannot be fully mitigated.

#### Significance of Townscape and Visual Effects

1.23 The assessment process aims to be objective and quantify effects as far as possible. However, townscape and visual assessment has aspects of it that can be considered subjective. Magnitude of change to a view can be factually defined but any subsequent objective assessment should be based on professional training, experience, observation, evidence and informed opinion.

1.24 Significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location. Usually an effect is considered 'significant' if the level of effect is 'moderate/substantial' or 'substantial.' The significance of townscape and visual effects is determined by cross-referencing sensitivity of townscape / landscape or view with the magnitude of change.

Table 2 Assessment of Significance Matrix				
Landscape and Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Impact			
	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor
Low	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor	Minor or moderate
Medium	Negligible or minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or major
High	Minor	Minor or moderate	Moderate or major	Major



## 2.0 BASELINE TOWNSCAPE SETTING

### The Application Site

- 2.1 The Application Site comprises 0.34 hectares (0.84 acres) of land to the east of the R825 Goatstown Road, Dublin 14 on a site currently known as Vector Motors (formerly known as Victor Motors). The city centre is located approximately 6km to the north.
- 2.2 The site is currently in use as a used car sales premises including associated showrooms, garages and car parking areas. It comprises an irregular area set between Goatstown Road, the rear gardens of properties on Willowfield Park and the more recent development of Trimbleston to the north. It is set on a reasonably flat site with levels gradually falling from the south (c. 47.5m) to the north (c 46m).

**Photo 1      Aerial Photograph**



**Aerial view of Application Site showing context in relation to adjacent townscape and built form (courtesy of Google Earth with photography dated September 2023)**

- 2.3 To the north of the site is a single story car showroom facing the road with utilitarian taller garages and workshops to its rear that extend to a footprint of approximately 750m<sup>2</sup> (or 31% of the site area). The architecture is functional in nature with glazing set into a concrete rendered and light grey cladded building to which signage has been added advertising the premises and commercial

use. The area to the south and majority of the site is surfaced in tarmac and used for parking about 85 no. cars.

- 2.4 Goatstown Road is part of the R825 that connects the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. As it passes the site it is approximately 9.5m wide comprising a single carriageway with delineated cycle-lanes and concrete pedestrian footpaths to both sides.
- 2.5 There are three entrances off the 95m long frontage onto Goatstown Road though the southernmost gates are locked and not in use at this time. The other two entrances are wider vehicular entrances with no gates set into a low 400mm high brick and concrete block wall subject of differing treatments and condition which defines the site boundary towards Goatstown Road.

**Photo 2 Application Site Setting**



**View across Goatstown Road looking at Application Site with Trimbleston development rising to its rear (north)**

- 2.6 The wall abuts a concrete surfaced pedestrian footpath which is partially separated from the passing road by linear strips of ornamental shrubs and hedging plants (approximately 1m wide) set towards the verge.
- 2.7 A raised triangular planter (approximately 7m<sup>2</sup>) with ornamental shrubs is located aside the central entrance and comprises the only vegetation on the site. There is however a backdrop of smaller trees and shrubs located in peripheral garden areas of neighbouring properties. The site is bound by a concrete block wall (2.5m high) to the east towards the rears of properties at Nos. 157 to 164 Trimbleston. To the south, this wall merges into a rubble stone (2.5m high) set on the boundaries to the rear of the terrace of properties at Nos. 2 to 10 (even numbers only) Willowfield Park. There are no entrances and gates in these walls.



- 2.8 An ecology survey identified no significant habitats, designated sites or individual or group of species on the Application Site

**Photo 3** Application Site Setting



**View of the garage / showroom at the Application Site from open space to north-west off Goatstown Road**

### Local Townscape History

- 2.9 Maps from the 19<sup>th</sup> century show the alignment of R825 Goatstown Road comparable to that existing today. At that time, the area is depicted as a predominantly rural landscape between Roebuck Park to the west and Trimbleston Lodge and Prospect Hall to the east with the lands being annotated as a field and part of the Trimbleston property (which had associations with the nearby Roebuck Castle demesne). The earliest record of this historic residence dates to the 11th century when the lands were called Rabo or Raboge. It is described as a district within Taney (civil) parish in *Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of 1837*, with Roebuck Castle as '*...seat of A. B. Crofton, Esq., was originally erected at a remote period and strongly fortified*', and the land around described as '*...chiefly occupied by handsome villas, situated in tastefully disposed grounds, many of which command magnificent views of the bay and city of Dublin, the Dublin and Wicklow mountains, and the beautiful adjacent country...*'.
- 2.10 The name of the Trimbleston property changed to Rosemount by the 20<sup>th</sup> century but mapping shows that from the mid-century the city significantly expanded and enveloped this area with extensive suburban housing estates which are now the dominant built form and type in this area. Within a couple of decades, the area was part the Dublin cityscape and any association with the rural landscape was gone having been replaced by a myriad of housing estates and incidental institutional lands. The legacy of former demesnes and large houses in Goatstown is reflected in

the names of the streets and housing estates including Trimbleston, Airfield and Roebuck.

- 2.11 The Application Site itself contains no historical significance or features and there are no protected structures or notable features in the immediate locality. An Archaeological Assessment prepared by IAC Archaeology also concludes no archaeological interests on the site.

#### **Adjacent Townscape Character**

- 2.12 Goatstown (*Baile na nGabhar*) is a small suburb in the south city located between Blackrock, Dundrum, Sandyford and Ranelagh. The suburb is roughly centred off a pub called The Goat at the junction of Goatstown Road and Taney Road approximately 590m south of the Application Site. It is the only public house in the local area. The name derives from a history of goat breeding in the area and it was once notable for its goat's milk.
- 2.13 This area is historically dominated by low-rise residential townscape that forms part of the inner-suburban cityscape of Dublin city though there are incidental institutional, retail areas and open landscapes in the form of sporting facilities and parks. The majority of land in the Goatstown area is covered by housing developments and estates and there is little in the way of local industry or commercial buildings. This characteristic includes the nearby detached houses opposite the Application Site at Nos. 74-98 (even only) Goatstown Road located between 15m and 100m from the Application Site boundary. These houses back onto further housing estates at Farmhill, Larchfield and off Goatstown Avenue to the west. To the south is the Willowfield estate which merges into further housing estates to the south and east towards the Robuck townland. The housing type is dominated by rows of detached and semi-detached two-storey dwellings served by front and rear gardens that benefit from on-street and off-street parking.
- 2.14 The adjacent section of properties at Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park have ground floor commercial / retail units and a café which acts as a local neighbourhood centre. Residential units located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Nos. 4 and 8. Located further east (100m from the Application Site boundary) on Willowfield Park is part of St Michael's House (formerly Prospect Hall) which provides social care and services.
- 2.15 The site is adjacent to Trimbleston which is a recent development including 335 no. apartments across 13 acres. Phase One was initially launched in 2005 and Phase Two in 2019. The buildings are set around courtyards and well landscaped parks and rise to five storeys. The character and context of the area has evolved recently as evidenced though this development and the nearby Goatstown Close. These developments include a variety of dwelling types and have introduced a greater diversity in building form to the Goatstown townscape and added vibrancy to the local area.
- 2.16 Approximately 150m north of the site off Goatstown Road is a recently completed development called The Grove which includes further five storey apartment blocks fronting onto the road. Beyond this and the institutional lands of Our Lady's Grove Primary School, Goatstown Road and adjacent townscape is once again aligned and dominated by low-rise development.

**Photos 4 and 5 Local Townscape Character and emerging Architecture**



**View of Trimbleston development off Goatstown Road to north of Application Site**



**View of The Grove development off Goatstown Road**

- 2.17 Beyond this, a notable land-use in this area is that of the UCD Belfield Campus less than 1km to the north / north-east. This comprises 133 hectares (330 acres) which includes a complex of modern buildings, a legacy of some Georgian townhouses which accommodate the various colleges and student residences as well as extensive leisure and sporting facilities. It is Ireland's largest university,



based on 2017/18 enrolments (32,000 students).

- 2.18 There are no listed buildings within 500m of the Application Site. The nearest designated buildings are at the Central Mental Hospital to the west and an unclassified castle at Robuck to the north-east. None are close enough to be affected by activity or land-use on the Application Site.

#### **Local Amenities, Parklands and Open Spaces**

- 2.19 While the Goatstown area is a desirable place to live, it is not well endowed with local park facilities. The majority of open spaces or green landscapes are associated with institutional premises such as UCD Belfield or Our Lady's Grove Primary School. Public parks such as DLR Deer Park are too distant at 1km from the site for there to be any potential effects deriving from activity on the Application Site lands. This is also applicable to the Airfield Estate farm to the south.

#### **Planning, Heritage and Environment Considerations**

##### Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2022-28

- 2.20 The County Development Plan (CDP) indicates the site is zoned under *Objective A* which is summarised as "To provide residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting the existing residential amenities." In broad terms, the CDP defers to the adopted Goatstown Local Area Plan in relation to specific considerations related to the Application Site.

- 2.21 Within the CDP, 4.3.2.5 Policy Objective PHP29: Provision of Student Accommodation notes the following:-

*It is a Policy Objective to facilitate increased provision of high-quality, purpose built and professionally managed student accommodation in line with the provisions of the National Student Accommodation Strategy (2017). Purpose built student accommodation should be provided on campus or in suitable locations which have convenient access to Third Level colleges (particularly by foot, bicycle and high quality and convenient public transport) in a manner compatible with surrounding residential amenities avoiding overprovision of student accommodation in any one area.*

(The UCD Belfield Campus less than 1km to the north / north-east)

- 2.22 No protected views or amenity areas identified in the DLRCDP including within any relevant Townscape or Landscape Character Assessment in this part of the city would be affected by the proposed development due to their distance from the site.

##### Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

- 2.23 Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1 of these Guidelines states the following:-

*"In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height".*

- 2.24 Within Section 3.1 regarding Building Height and the Development Management Process, it notes there is a “...*presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility.*”
- 2.25 The subsequent Development Management Criteria advises on assessment requirements and states planning applications satisfies the following criteria:-
- *The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport;*
  - *Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect;*
  - *On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.*

#### National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

- 2.26 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) identifies no monuments or historic sites on the Application Site.

#### Environmental Protection Agency

- 2.27 Maps available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicate no protected landscapes, environment or ecology areas on or close to the Application Site.

#### **Townscape / Landscape Quality and Value**

- 2.28 The Application Site comprises a set of functional buildings set aside a large car park. It does have a presentable and tidy character in commercial terms but such a land-use would be categorised as *poor* townscape of *low* sensitivity and very capable of accommodating change.
- 2.29 The site carries no environment, amenity, heritage, visual amenity or landscape designations and possesses nothing that would be categorised as sensitive in terms of townscape character, notable features or vegetation. The buildings are basic structures in design terms and parking areas are purely practical presenting a utilitarian landscape that would be rated as *low* quality and value in townscape and visual terms.
- 2.30 The townscape aside the Application Site is a mix of *ordinary* and *good* townscape that has *medium* sensitivity though it is severed by the broad and busy linear route of the R825 Goatstown Road. The character of the area is dominated by ubiquitous and monotonous detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey residential housing developments and estates.

**Photo 6 and 7 Townscape Quality of Application Site and immediate area.**



**The Application Site presents at utilitarian and functional landscape to this part of the Goatstown townscape.**



**The Goatstown Road cuts a corridor through a townscape comprising very similar scale and types of development as it approaches the Application Site .**

- 2.31 The repetitive and samey nature of the existing townscape characteristic was historically acknowledged in the (now expired) Goatstown Local Area Plan (LAP) which dates from 2012.



Section 4 within this stated the following:-

- *“Goatstown lacks a distinctive identity. This is a result of a weak urban structure, uniform built form, absence of a defined streetscape, the overall dominance of traffic and the area’s close proximity to the competing larger higher order urban centres of Stillorgan and Dundrum;”* and
- *“The absence of any variety in the residential mix has resulted in a uniform building form. The estates lack any real identity and add little to the Plan area’s overall sense of place.”*

2.32 The recent developments to the immediate north of the Application Site including The Grove and Trimbleston have offered variation to the monotonous low-rise housing and it is notable that this diversity was assessed as a positive contribution and welcomed in the Goatstown LAP. Further, Section 4.1 acknowledged *“...that there are only a limited number of opportunities for new development and/or redevelopment in the Plan area”* and specifically noted the Application Site as being one of only three areas where such variation of development is possible or could be promoted.

**Photo 8** Local Townscape Context and Character



The Application Site location (red outline) shown in context with the adjacent developments at The Grove and Trimbleston (courtesy of Google Earth with photography dated September 2023)

### Existing Views and Representative Viewpoints

2.33 Site surveys were undertaken in April 2021 to establish locations where there may be potential views of the proposal or where key visual receptor groups might visit, work or stay and any general



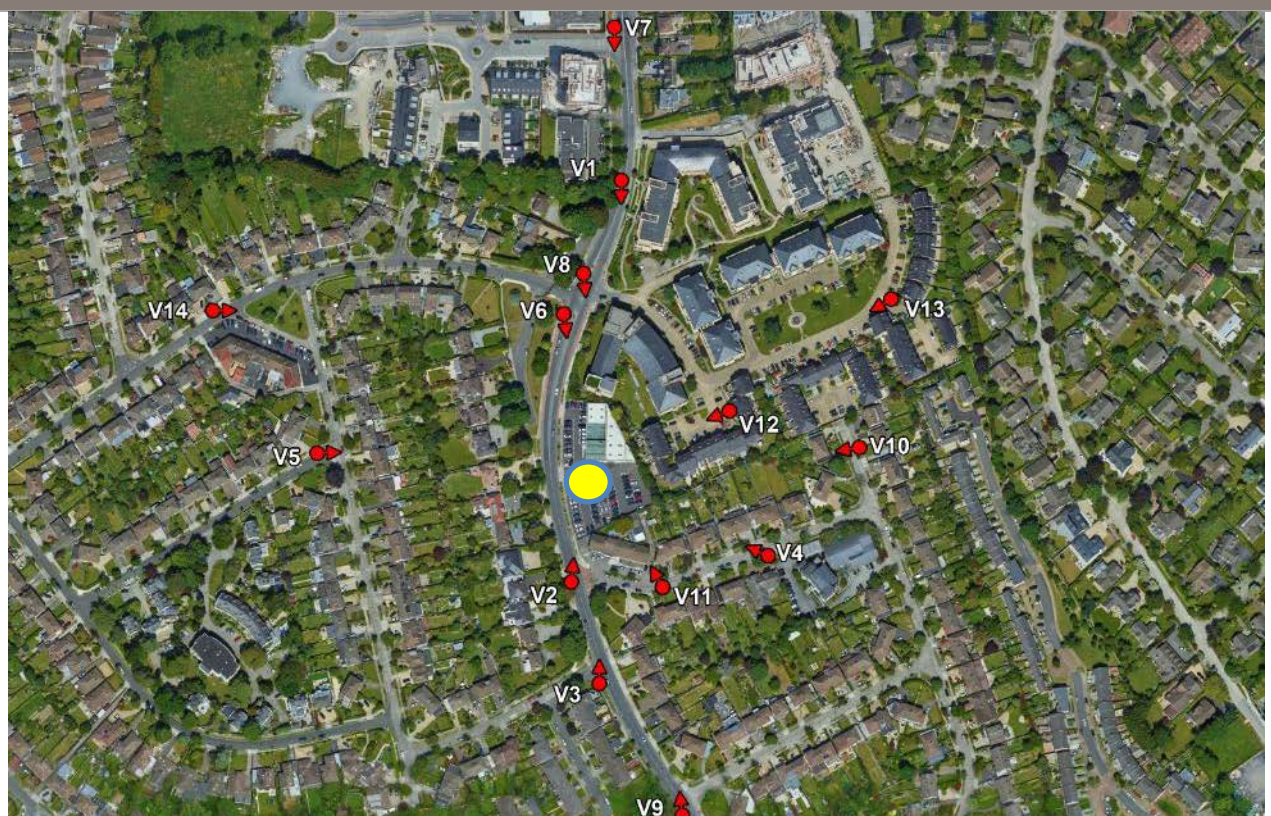
movement through this part of the city. Built-up townscape, infrastructure and vegetation are features of the Goatstown townscape and this ensures that views consistently change in context, scale and extent with many views of the Application Site, even from close proximity locations at Willowfield Park and Trimbleston often closed off. There are no designated “Views” or “Prospects” identified on or near the Application Site within the DLRCDP.

2.34 Short range views of the Application Site are largely confined to an approximate 250m long corridor on the Goatstown Road as it approaches and passes the site. Representative viewpoints were selected within publicly accessible areas based on the following criteria:-

- Review of viewpoint locations as per An Bord Pleanála Consultation Opinion (6<sup>th</sup> June 2020);
- Site investigation to establish locations where there was likely to be significant views; and
- Identifying those locations where there was likely to be a significant number of visual receptors (e.g., main roads, potential public congregation places and residential areas)

2.35 Fourteen representative viewpoints were selected at the locations identified on Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1 Viewpoint Locations**



 **Application Site Location**

### 3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

#### Summary of Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposals consist of demolition of the existing structures on site and construction of a purpose-built student accommodation scheme (PBSA) comprising approximately 220 no. bed spaces, indoor and outdoor student amenity space and site wide landscaping.
- 3.2 The scheme will provide studios and individual ensuite study bedroom accommodation, in clustered groupings, generally of 5-8 bedrooms with associated shared living / kitchen / dining areas, providing a model of high quality student accommodation.

Visualisation 1

Proposed Development



Proposed elevation of the PBSA looking east from Goatstown Road (courtesy of 3D Design Bureau 2024)

- 3.3 Amenity space 1247sqm of external communal amenity space is provided in the form of a central courtyard at ground level and roof terraces at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floor levels. Internal amenity space is provided in the form of 2 no. ground floor lounge/study areas, kitchen/tearoom, laundry, and concierge/office space. Bicycle parking spaces is distributed within the central courtyard (stacked parking with glass roof cover) and adjacent to the front boundary (north) and provision for 6 no. carparking spaces comprising 2 no. disabled parking spaces and 4 no. set down parking spaces adjacent to the front entrance to the site. Vehicular access to the site is via Goatstown Road from 2 no. entrance points.
- 3.4 A full description of the Proposed Development is contained within the Urban Design Report (*Reddy Architecture + Urbanism*) submitted with this application and is not repeated here.

### **Site Preparation and Construction Works**

- 3.5 The construction operations likely to affect townscape and visual amenity include the following:-
- Site access off Goatstown Road;
  - Demolition works to include removal of all existing showroom / garage buildings, plant, yard, parking areas, boundary walls to Goatstown Road and associated landscape areas;
  - Removal of existing shrub vegetation in linear strip along Goatstown Road;
  - Fixed construction plant, including cranes and scaffolding and gantries;
  - Site hoarding along the property boundary with Goatstown Road;
  - Mobile construction plant, such as excavators and lorries;
  - Storage and compound areas, welfare facilities, security and safety lighting; and
  - Staged works relating to the construction of new buildings and infrastructure.
- 3.6 All construction impacts will be temporary, localised and short-term.

### **Design Considerations**

- 3.7 In broad terms, the proposed development comprises a contemporary building with facade materials and treatments selected to ensure durability, ease of maintenance and a high quality of finish prepared using best practice urban design principles.
- 3.8 The following mitigation measures and considerations were made in relation to the architectural design and materials selection and are relevant as to how the proposed development will sit into and be seen in the Goatstown Road area and local townscape:-
- The proposal is designed on an axis that correlates with the townscape structure with geometry aligned to Goatstown Road;
  - The building is designed to be viewed from all directions and has no blank facades;
  - The facades or elevations of the building include the following treatments and features designed to give the proposed development a crisp, modern and quality visual appearance:-
    - Brick finish with brick return detailing;
    - Recessed metal cladding / brick / rendered panels;
    - Protruding bay windows;
    - Glazed Curtain Walling; and
    - Selected Aluminium Windows / Doors
  - The contemporary distinctive front façade, associated architecture and public realm design reflects



the high quality of architecture and landscape in the neighbourhood;

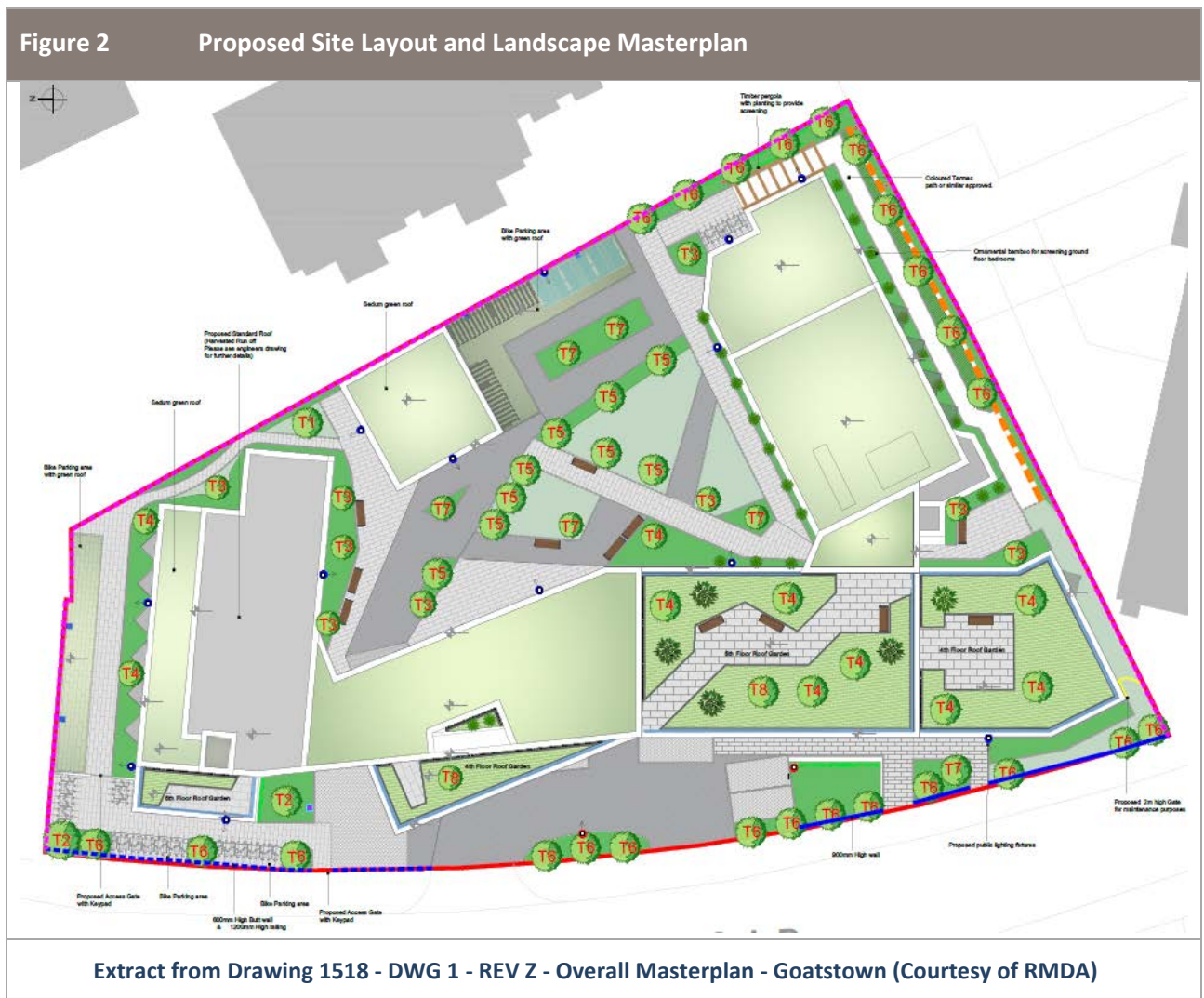
- The building height varies in height from 6 storeys along Goatstown Road to 4 storeys at the southern boundary of the site towards Willowfield Park. This correlates with more substantial and modern building mass at Trimbleston to the north while reducing to address the two storey properties to the south. As noted above, the proposals were amended following consultation with DLR Council to increase the set back on the northern elevation at 5<sup>th</sup> floor level resulting in a 10.4m setback from the boundary;
- The scale offers adequate enclosure to the street and public/private spaces as well as creating a strong urban edge along Goatstown Road;
- The mass of the building façade has been broken into sections both vertically and horizontally to address Goatstown Road. A section of the building is cantilevered towards Goatstown Road while the building line is moved forward to the north to visually break up the mass of the façade when viewed from areas on the road and adjacent properties;
- Amenity uses are set at ground floor level on Goatstown Road to provide an active street frontage and vitality with the building having active uses and facades on lands adjacent to the public realm;
- Indoor communal spaces are integrally linked to external terraces, roof gardens and courtyards to provide social amenity spaces for use by all residents aiding in the creation of a community;
- The majority of functional uses, such as bin storage, are located in areas that are visually obscured from public vantage points on Goatstown Road and adjacent properties; and
- The proposed development will fully comply with all building regulations in terms of access for all and needs for residents.

### **Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure Considerations**

- 3.9 The development included landscaped areas for public and residential amenity use and internal courtyard zones and roof terraces dedicated to private use for residents.
- 3.10 The landscape plan includes extensive tree planting (including at semi-mature size) along Goatstown Road to create a natural and welcoming environment for residents. The proposed planting schedule will provide seasonal interest and natural buffers between external spaces, path routes and the courtyard whilst creating shelter and focal points. The proposals include green roofs, hedges, groundcover and shrub planting that will enhance biodiversity on this site.
- 3.11 The existing mixed quality planting in the Goatstown Road footpath is to be removed and replaced with a quality paved landscaped edge providing enhanced public realm on this section of the road that will form a transitional space between the public and private areas.
- 3.12 Hard landscaping materials were chosen based on suitability for a residential scheme and long term use with variations provided in the form of shape unit size, mix and colour. All of the specified materials are robust in nature in order to maximize the longevity of the development and minimise

maintenance issues. The landscape designs are indicated on the accompanying Ronan MacDiarmada + Associates Ltd Drawings (See Figure 2 below).

- 3.13 The majority of green space is overlooked by resident's windows or balconies ensuring adequate passive surveillance of all spaces by residential units in order to both enliven the area and make it a 'home' for the residents of the development. The collective landscape and public realm areas associated with this development correlate with open space requirements.



- 3.14 Please refer to the Landscape Rationale (2024) prepared by Ronan MacDiarmada + Associates Ltd and the Urban Design Report prepared by Reddy Architecture and Urbanism.

## 4.0 TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

### Introduction

- 4.1 The aim of this report is to objectively and professionally assess how the proposed development will affect the landscape, townscape and visual amenity of the Application Site and this part of Dublin. The terminology and glossary is based those used in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013)*.
- 4.2 The key consideration in this project is the magnitude and significance of effect based on comparing the scale and shape of the proposed development against what is offered by the existing setting, visual quality and sensitivity of the Application Site. Particular regard is taken to the proposal's mass and height. A further consideration is the people who use or pass through this area who may feel that the visual and townscape quality could be affected by this proposal.

### Construction Stage

- 4.3 Visual impacts will potentially derive from the following:-
- Presence and operation of construction traffic, cranes, plant and equipment;
  - Removal / demolition and changes to local built structure and vegetation cover; and
  - Lighting for safety and security.
- 4.4 Such is their condition, the removal of the existing buildings would have no significant effects on local townscape character and demolition would have *neutral* effects (i.e., no better or worse) on the character of the site.
- 4.5 To the majority of areas in the Goatstown area, the construction phase will have *negligible* effects in the earlier stages of demolition and construction due to visual containment and nature of these works. The Goatstown Road site will be bound by hoardings to clearly delineate working areas towards and these will obscure views from ground level areas. Existing walls to the north, east and south will be retained in situ for the construction period to also form this function. The removal of existing ornamental shrubs within the road verge on Goatstown Road will have localised *slight adverse* effects but access will be retained along the footpath.
- 4.6 In the immediate area, there will be a temporary reduction in townscape quality to facilitate demolition works, construction activity, building works and land-take associated with gantries, scaffolding and hoardings. As the construction of higher floors commences, there will be a greater degree of exposure with notable effects to the immediately adjacent areas which abut the Application Site.
- 4.7 This stage will represent a *substantial* change to the Application Site setting resulting in *moderate temporary adverse* effects to the immediate area and along the adjacent section of Goatstown Road

and properties on the site boundary.

- 4.8 Effects deriving from construction traffic on Goatstown Road would not represent a significant change, in landscape or visual terms, from the existing situation given that this is a notably busy section of road
- 4.9 As the higher stories are constructed, the works will inevitably become more evident with *slight* to *moderate* effects but, given context of existing built environment, the effects would be of a *medium* magnitude (i.e., insignificant).

### **Townscape Effects (on completion)**

- 4.10 Any assessment must be measured against that of the situation that pertains at present and the current site contributes little to the local townscape setting being a commercial site with utilitarian buildings set in a largely functional landscape. In terms of this TVIA assessment, the mass and height of the proposed building is the overriding factor. In this instance the historic prevailing height is that of two-storey suburbia but there are notable variations in form and height in the area local to the Application Site as identified in the baseline section above, with Trimbleston and The Grove taller.

**Visualisation 2**

**Proposed Development**



**Proposed (summer) view of PBSA looking south on Goatstown Road (courtesy of 3D Design Bureau 2024)**



- 4.11 In broad terms, a proposal of this nature and scale will become part of the integrity, legibility and identity of this section of Goatstown Road. The following reviews the likely impact on key townscape areas as identified in the baseline assessment section above and includes consideration of *Section 3.0 Building Height and Development Management process* within the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities by Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018)*.

#### Application Site

- 4.12 In terms of the actual Application Site, there are no distinctive or notable built or natural features including vegetation, facades or architecture that will be lost. The key part of the assessment therefore relate to the scale and nature of the proposed development
- 4.13 The subsequent development will result in *major* changes to site character due to introduction of a higher and more substantial building that will occupy much of the site when viewed from external areas and will completely alter the baseline setting once operational and completed. While a major change, this proposal utilises this strategic site more effectively in townscape terms than is currently the case and provided improved architecture and public realm.

Visualisation 3

Proposed Development – Internal View within Application Site



Internal view of proposed development and landscaped courtyard (courtesy of 3D Design Bureau 2024)

- 4.14 The road pattern and public realm areas towards Goatstown Road will be unaffected. The public

realm is increased and enhanced allowing for the planting of approximately 12 no. street trees (at semi-mature size) and enhanced landscape works that will more than compensate for the loss of any existing vegetation as well as assisting in place-making. Further landscape works are proposed on courtyard areas and roof gardens and these will enhance the amenity, ecological worth and landscape vegetation cover comparative to the existing situation.

- 4.15 Irrespective, the proposed development will have a *profound* effect on the Application Site categorised as being of *high* magnitude but this is not something that is adverse in townscape / landscape character terms. The improved facades, architecture and frontage to Goatstown will reinvigorate and revitalise this site giving it a more appropriate use contributing to the immediate cityscape character and sense of place in line with both the County Plan objectives.

#### Goatstown Road and Local Townscape

- 4.16 The proposed development is highest to the north (towards Trimbleston) and steps down towards Goatstown Road and the south (towards Willowfield Park) to reflect the reduced height of existing building within the residential areas. While higher than the existing buildings to the south and west, the façade designs includes elements and treatments to break up its mass and scale in the local views.

Visualisation 4

Proposed Development



Proposed view of PBSA looking north on Goatstown Road (courtesy of 3D Design Bureau 2024)

- 4.17 The architecture and mass is compatible with the adjacent Trimbleston and nearby Grove



developments which have both demonstrated that Goatstown Road is broad enough to be able to absorb higher buildings without causing detriment. The architecture and landscape design quality at Trimbleston further demonstrates how the local townscape has been positively changed in line with National Planning Framework objectives while providing built form that breaks up the mass of low-rise and ubiquitous housing types in this area. This proposal correlates and effectively integrates with the scale and context of these developments and will contribute to the legibility, sense of place and urban townscape of this part of Goatstown.

- 4.18 There will inevitably be *substantial* and *major* effects to areas on and aside the proposed development on Goatstown Road and within the adjacent properties at Trimbleston and Willowfield Park due to the change in use from a commercial and open car park to a higher residential apartment scheme and complex that covers much of the site. However, it is also reasonable to conclude that this proposal will have positive effects in terms of local townscape character through enhanced streetscape while providing a distinctive and notable building giving this part of Goatstown added variation and identity.

Visual 5

Photomontage View Proposed Development



Proposed View looking south across Goatstown townscape to the south (courtesy of 3D Design Bureau 2024)

- 4.19 Beyond this short section of Goatstown Road and its junction with Willowfield Park, the existing built environment comprises a density of building and vegetation that ensures the majority of areas

to the south, west and north will experience *slight / negligible effects* categorised as being of a *minor* magnitude (i.e., insignificant) due to the proposal being visually obscured.

- 4.20 Existing built form towards Trimbleston to the north and east ensures the proposed development will be visually contained with only *slight* or *negligible* effects (i.e., insignificant) to these areas in character and visual terms. (Note it is likely the adjacent façade of Trimbleston to the north was deliberately designed as blank on the understanding the Application Site would be built out with similar scale buildings at some stage).
- 4.21 Consequently, the development can be successfully absorbed into this district and neighbourhood without causing adverse townscape / landscape effects and it is evident in townscape character terms that this site lends itself to a proposal of this nature and scale.

#### Goatstown

- 4.22 The existing Goatstown townscape has a density of built form that ensures the majority of areas in this part of the city will experience *negligible* or *no* effects (i.e., insignificant) due to the proposal being visually obscured. There will be no effects to any designated historic sites / environments at a local or city wide level.
- 4.23 In isolation, the proposal will result in a distinctive and major new building that will add to this area's sense of place and be a major addition to the local architecture and townscape. Given the areas ubiquitous character that is dominated by standard detached and semi-detached two-storey dwelling houses, such an introduction would have positive effects to this area in terms of townscape character, definition and variety of built form.
- 4.24 The proposal will be higher than the existing buildings in this area but it not unique in terms of mass or scale when measured against other developments in this area. This is best demonstrated in the aerial photomontage above that shows it in relation to the adjacent townscape.

#### Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown / Dublin City

- 4.25 In citywide terms, it is notable that the National Planning Framework advises increased density, scale and height of development in town and city cores. As noted above there are recent examples of similar scale buildings in the Goatstown area including the nearby Grove and Trimbleston as well as Knockrabo on Mount Anville Road.
- 4.26 The current site and setting contributes little to the character or quality of this part of the city. The principle of this type of townscape change at this location is specifically endorsed in the County Development Plan being Zoned 'A' with a stated objective '*To protect and/or improve residential amenity.*' This development will signify a fresh phase or stage for this site which will have *substantial* effects on areas closer to the proposed development but the baseline setting ensures this can be successfully absorbed without causing any adverse townscape / landscape effects The

completed building will improve the quality and character of this part of Goatstown that would symbolise progress, rational townscape evolution and positivity in line with the Development Plan objective.

- 4.27 In general, any views experienced by pedestrians across the south city are focused at ground level where the proposal will be obscured by existing buildings ensuring *negligible / no* effects (i.e., insignificant) to the vast majority of areas. Where visible in glimpse views, it will invariably be a part of a built townscape and its location and adjacent land-uses ensure it can be accommodated without causing any detriment to the wider cityscape character. For passing traffic on the Goatstown Road, it will be seen in context with the adjacent higher buildings at Trimbleston and The Grove and contribute positively to this area's identity, sense of place and the emerging architectural character of skyline. There are no designated views, landmarks, prospects or vistas affected by this proposal.
- 4.28 In summary, the effects, while being major on the Application Site and immediate area will have no adverse effects and will be a positive statement in terms of the townscape development, legibility and future while tying effectively in with the ambitions and objectives of the Goatstown LAP and the County Development Plan in terms of compact, appropriate and sustainable development.

### **Visual Impact Assessment**

- 4.29 The following section summarises the existing setting and likely or anticipated effects on the fourteen no. representational viewpoints.
- 4.30 Note that all views were photographed in summer and winter months to provide an objective basis for the assessment and these are included in the appended photomontages prepared by *3D Design Bureau*. The winter views were specifically requested as part of an earlier An Bord Pleanála Consultation Opinion (6<sup>th</sup> June 2020) and it was considered appropriate to follow this as part of this assessment. However, due to site location and townscape context, site surveys and visualisation work established that vegetation was not a factor in the assessment of magnitude or significance of visual effects. All photomontages below reflect the winter situation.
- 4.31 The running order of viewpoints assessed below is out of sync with the numbering provided by 3D Design Bureau due to assessing the potential effects or collectivised areas in an appropriate order in visual assessment terms. An extract from the proposed view photomontage is included below for ease of cross-reference but the existing and proposed views are set out in larger scale within the Aerials, Presentation, CGIs and Photomontages Document prepared by 3D Design Bureau which also accompanies this application.



**Viewpoints 2, 3, 6 and 8 Goatstown Road (views within 100m of Application Site)**



*Photomontage 2 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*



*Photomontage 3 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*





Photomontage 6 – Winter View - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)



Photomontage 8 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)

Viewpoint Address or Locations	Goatstown Road	Distance to Application Site	Less than 100m
Viewpoint Baseline	Goatstown Road is part of the R825 connecting the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. As it passes the site it comprises a 9.5m		

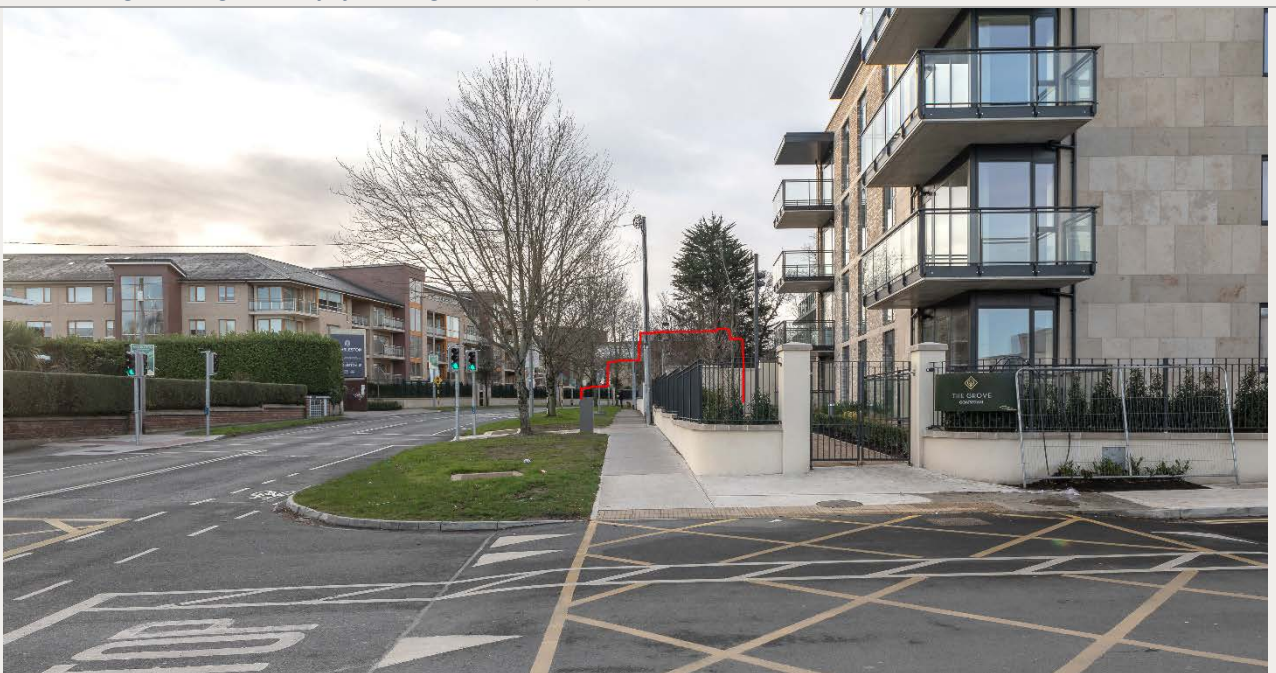
	<p>wide single carriageway and delineated cycle-lanes and footpaths to both sides. It abuts the site boundary for an approximate 95m length off which there are three entrances to the existing car showroom, garage and car park. The boundary is delineated by a low wall with a linear strip of ornamental shrubs and hedging set aside the road kerb. The low nature of this boundary allows views across the site from an approximate 150m section of Goatstown Road. To either side of the road are residential housing estates and developments comprising detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey houses. To the south and west, these are of an older and established nature having been built out approximately 60 years ago. There are incidental street trees but mature trees and wooded areas in front gardens give sections of the road a green character. To the north are the more modern developments of Trimbleston and The Grove which have a more substantial scale, height and mass. The road is subject to heavy traffic with significant numbers of visual receptors including commuters, those passing for shopping / retail / commercial purposes as well as for pedestrian or cycle use.</p>
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium
<b>Predicted Change</b>	<p>The proposed development will be a <i>major</i> change with built form extending across the majority of the frontage of the Application Site equating to <i>substantial</i> effects for close proximity views on account of being a readily apparent addition to the local skyline.</p> <p>In visual terms, the proposed development will discernibly step down towards Willowfield Park to the south constituting a <i>slight adverse</i> effect on visual setting though this would not be rated as unacceptable given the existing visual setting and land-use.</p> <p>Further, the proposed building would effectively balance and visually correlate to the broad width of Goatstown Road and integrate with the architecture, form, scale and mass of the recent developments to the immediate north at Trimbleston and The Grove. The collective will provide enhanced townscape legibility and offer variation and relief from the prevailing monotonous and repetitive building type in Goatstown.</p> <p>While more substantial than the existing buildings on the site, this would be outweighed by a marked improvement the architecture and streetscape frontage comparative to the existing situation including semi-mature tree planting and extended public realm landscape works facing the road.</p>
<b>Significance Summary</b>	Major to Moderate Neutral



**Viewpoints 1, 7 and 9 Goatstown Road (views beyond 100m of Application Site)**



*Photomontage 1 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*



*Photomontage 7 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*  
*(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*





Photomontage 9 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)

<b>Viewpoint Address or Locations</b>	Goatstown Road	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	More than 100m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	<p>Goatstown Road is part of the R825 and connects the R117 Milltown Road at Clonskeagh to the N31 in Blackrock. To either side of Goatstown Road are residential housing estates and developments. Many of the adjacent properties have mature trees and wooded areas in their front gardens, which in conjunction with street trees, give sections of the road a green character. To the north are the more modern developments of Trimbleston and The Grove which have a more substantial height and mass.</p> <p>The road is subject to heavy traffic with significant numbers of visual receptors including commuters, those passing for shopping / retail / commercial purposes and pedestrian or cycle use.</p>		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	<p>A small portion of the proposed development will be visible from these more distant sections of Goatstown Road with transient, glimpse, filtered or limited views of the higher storeys being possible but never of a significant nature. Despite relatively close proximity, the extent of intervening townscape and vegetation ensures very limited visual impact. Any awareness of the proposal will not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the existing views or visual amenity on these sections of Goatstown Road to the north and south due to visual screening. As such, the visual impact is assessed as <i>slight neutral</i>.</p>		
<b>Significance Summary</b>	Minor Neutral		

**Viewpoint 4 Willowfield Drive**



*Photomontage 4 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*

*(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

<b>Viewpoint Address or Location</b>	Willowfield Drive Friarland	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	80m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	Willowfield Park is the closest road to the south of the Application Site. It comprises a straight road leading east off a junction with the Goatstown Road and is bound by a series of semi-detached two-storey houses. The townscape comprises housing estates of semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing with mature trees within road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
<b>Significance Summary</b>	No change		



## Viewpoint 11 Willowfield Park



Photomontage 11- Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)

<b>Viewpoint Address or Location</b>	Willowfield Park, Friarland	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	45m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	<p>Willowfield Park is the closest road to the south of the Application Site. It comprises a straight road leading east off a junction with the Goatstown Road and is bound by a series of semi-detached two-storey houses. A two-storey terrace (Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park) including commercial / retail units and a café is located at its western end close the junction and these properties bound the south of the Application Site. Further east is St Michael's House which provides social care and services.</p> <p>The primary visual receptors in this area will be those using the commercial / retail / café facilities and residents within the units located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Nos. 4 and 8.</p>		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	<p>While it will be a small change, the proposal steps down towards Willowfield Park in terms of storey height to address the height of the existing houses serving to reduce potential visual impacts on this area and ensuring they are of a non-significant nature. This reduction ensures only a small portion of the proposed development will be visible from the western section of this road with a glimpse and filtered views of part of the southern elevation set behind trees to the rear of Nos. 2-8 (even only) Willowfield Park having <i>slight adverse</i></p>		

	<p>effects. Note the terrace of the café faces away from the Application Site and no views are afforded of the site area.</p> <p>There will be <i>negligible</i> effects to the remainder of this street including St Michael's House.</p>
<b>Significance Summary</b>	Minor Adverse to Negligible/Neutral

#### Viewpoint 10 St Aidan's Drive



*Photomontage 10 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*  
*(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

<b>Viewpoint Address or Location</b>	St Aidan's Drive, Mountanville	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	130m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	St Aidan's Drive is a residential street located to the east of the Application Site. The townscape comprises semi-detached and terraced two-storey housing estates with mature trees within road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
<b>Significance Summary</b>	No change		



## Viewpoint 12 and 13 Trimbleston



*Photomontage 12 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*



*Photomontage 13 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*

<b>Viewpoint Address or Locations</b>	Trimbleston	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	50-210m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	Trimbleston is a recent development including 335 no. apartments across 13		

	<p>acres located to the east and north of the Application Site. The buildings are set around courtyards and well-landscaped parks and rise to five storeys.</p> <p>The Application Site is located just beyond the western boundary of Trimbleston towards Goatstown Road and the existing car showroom/garage and car park are obscured by the three to four storey high buildings within this development.</p> <p>The primary visual receptors in this area will be residents and those using the central open space as shown in Viewpoint 13 above.</p>
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium
<b>Predicted Change</b>	<p>The proposed development will be apparent addition to the western skyline with upper stories rising above the intervening buildings on the western edge of Trimbleston.</p> <p>The magnitude of change is not significant given the existing nature and mass of the Trimbleston development and is considered acceptable as the proposed development will effectively balance and correlate with the adjacent townscape character in views from the open spaces or public realm areas within this development.</p> <p>As such, no detrimental effects are predicted when measured against the extent of proposed development visible, urban context and compatible architecture and style of buildings in this view. The effects are assessed as <i>slight neutral</i></p>
<b>Significance Summary</b>	Minor Neutral

## Viewpoint 5 Larchfield Park



*Photomontage 5 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2024)*  
*(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

<b>Viewpoint Address or Location</b>	Larchfield Park / Farmhill Road junction	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	150m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	Farmhill Road is the next closest road to the west of the Application Site beyond the Goatstown Road. The townscape comprises housing estates of semi-detached two-storey housing with mature trees set in road verges and some private gardens. The collective confine views to the local streetscape.		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
<b>Significance Summary</b>	No change		



## Viewpoint 14 Larchfield Road



*Photomontage 14 - Image courtesy of 3D Design Bureau (2022)  
(Note the redline indicates the outline of the proposed development)*

<b>Viewpoint Address or Location</b>	Larchfield Road	<b>Distance to Application Site</b>	185m
<b>Viewpoint Baseline</b>	Larchfield Road leads west from a junction with the Goatstown Road just to the north of the Application Site. It is bound by detached, semi-detached and terraces of two-storey houses. At the junction with Farmhill Road is a small triangle of open space aside a small set of retail / commercial units offers potentially longer views. The collective of trees and peripheral buildings confine views to the local streetscape.		
<b>Viewpoint Sensitivity</b>	Medium		
<b>Predicted Change</b>	The proposed development will be obscured by intervening townscape and no visual effects are predicted.		
<b>Significance Summary</b>	No change		

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

### Baseline Setting

- 5.1 The Application Site comprises 0.34 hectares (0.84 acres) of land to the east of the R825 Goatstown Road, Dublin 14. The city centre is located approximately 6km to the north. It includes commercial buildings and garages associated with a car sales operation and would be categorised as poor townscape of low sensitivity, quality and value and very capable of accommodating change in terms of baseline character and visual amenity.
- 5.2 The site carries no environment, amenity, heritage, visual amenity or landscape designations and possesses nothing that would be categorised as sensitive in terms of townscape character, features or vegetation. The buildings are functional in design and the associated site has a utilitarian character which collectively presents a low quality landscape in character and visual terms.
- 5.3 The townscape aside the Application Site is a mix of ordinary and good townscape through which the broad linear route of the R825 Goatstown Road traverses. The character of the area is dominated by ubiquitous and monotonous detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey residential housing developments and estates dating from the 1950s to 1970s. A neighbourhood centre providing local services is located in the adjacent Willowfield Park.
- 5.4 The recent developments to the immediate north of the Application Site including The Grove and Trimbleston have offered variation to the low-rise housing and it is notable that this diversity has been seen as a positive contribution in the Goatstown area. Built townscape ensures that views consistently change in context, scale and extent with many views of the Application Site, even from close proximity locations closed off by intervening buildings or vegetation.
- 5.5 A notable land-use in this area is that of the UCD Belfield Campus less than 1km to the north / north-east. This comprises 133 hectares and Ireland's largest university, based on 2017/18 enrolments (32,000 students).
- 5.6 The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2022-2028 indicates the site is zoned under Objective A which is summarised as *"To protect and/or improve residential amenity"*.

### Proposed Development

- 5.7 The proposed development consists of demolition of the existing structures on site and construction of a purpose-built student accommodation scheme (PBSA) comprising approximately 220 no. bed spaces, indoor and outdoor student amenity space and site wide landscaping. Ancillary works include services and amenities, car parking and cycle spaces, public realm works towards Goatstown Road and creation of communal open spaces and roof terraces.
- 5.8 The higher parts are towards Trimbleston (to the north) to reflect the scale and mass of buildings in this area with the building stepping down (to the south) to reflect the lower heights of the existing properties on Willowfield Park.
- 5.9 Amendments to the set back and building heights were made following the LRD Meeting with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 which resulted in changes that assist in

integration and general architectural detailing of the proposal

### **Predicted Townscape / Landscape and Visual Effects**

- 5.10 Any assessment must be measured against that of the situation that pertains at present and the current site contributes little to local townscape and has limited aesthetic appeal. In broad terms, a proposal of this nature and scale will become part of the integrity, legibility and identity of this section of Goatstown Road.
- 5.11 The proposed development will be a major change from the existing situation with built form extending across the majority of the Application Site representing a substantial change to the local skyline and built form from immediately adjacent areas on account of close proximity.
- 5.12 The proposal would effectively balance and visually correlate to the broad width of Goatstown Road and integrate with the architecture, form, scale and mass of the recent developments to the immediate north at Trimbleston and The Grove making a positive contribution to place-making. It will discernibly step down towards Willowfield Park. The collective will provide enhanced townscape sense of place and legibility while offering variation and relief from the prevailing similar and repetitive building type in Goatstown.
- 5.13 While more substantial than the existing buildings on the site and higher than the prevailing buildings in the wider Goatstown area, any potential adverse effects would be outweighed by a marked improvement the architecture and streetscape comparative to the existing situation. This includes semi-mature tree planting and extended public realm landscape works towards the Goatstown Road. Consequently, it is considered the development can be successfully absorbed into this area without causing adverse townscape / landscape effects and the site lends itself to such a proposal.
- 5.14 Beyond close proximity areas, the existing built environment across Goatstown provides a density of building and vegetation that will ensure the majority of areas will experience negligible to no effects (i.e., insignificant) on townscape character and visual amenity due to the proposal being visually obscured. There will be no effects to any designated historic sites, views, townscapes, key landmarks or environments at a local or city wide level.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.15 The Application Site comprises a commercial site that contributes little to the character and visual quality of this part of Dublin. The proposed development, while substantial, would result in a positive contribution to the townscape character and urban fabric of Goatstown. While recognising a high magnitude of impact to the Application Site itself, this report concludes that this proposal, on balance, has no unacceptable townscape / landscape or visual effects and can be successfully absorbed into the character and views of this part of the city.