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2808  
Mountgorry, Swords  
Co. Dublin  
September 2024

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# MOUNTGORRY, SWORDS

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT



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Figure 1 - View from Roundabout towards Swords Road  
(south site boundary)

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of The Report

This report has been prepared by Coady Architects on behalf of the applicant, Bartra Propco 23 Limited, to describe the architectural design of the proposed development at Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin.

This design statement report is prepared in support of an application for permission for development for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) to Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall Fingal County Council under the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. The proposal is for the development of 123no. apartment units on a greenfield site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin.

## 1.2 Description of Proposals

The net site area is 0.8731 Ha site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is bounded to the west by an existing Public Park, with Seamount View Housing Estate further beyond, to the south by the R106, to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park.

The development's surface water drainage network shall discharge from the site into the respective existing manhole located along the access road to the east of the site. The development site area and drainage work areas will provide a total application site area of c. 0.8792 Ha.

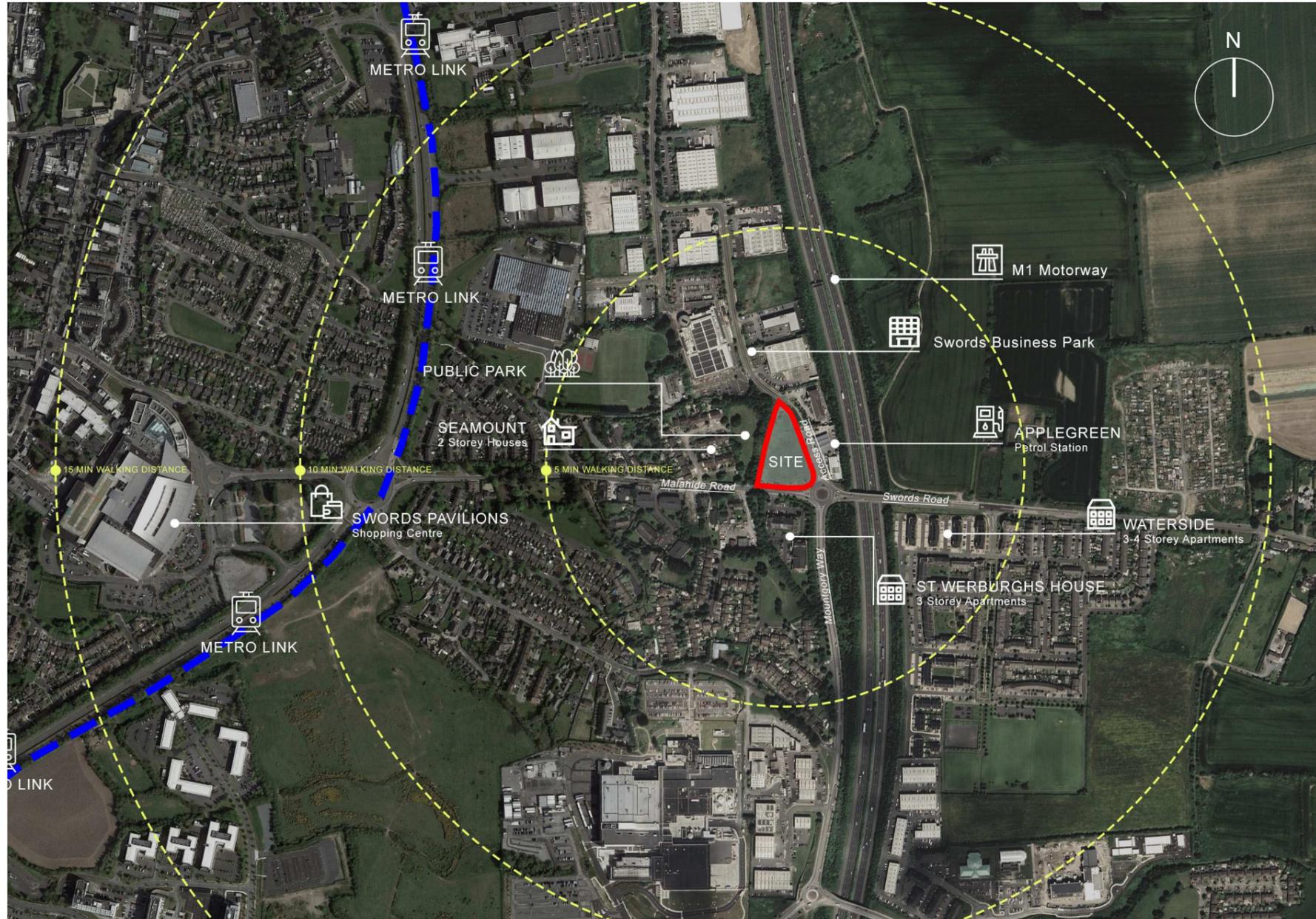
The proposed development will principally consist of: the construction of 123 No. residential units (55 No. one bed apartments and 68 No. two bed apartments). The development is designed in a courtyard block arrangement ranging in height from part 4 No. to part 5 No. storeys. The proposed development has a gross floor area of c. 10,281 sq m.



The proposed development will also provide: vehicular access from the access road to the east; 24 No. car parking spaces; bicycle parking spaces; motorcycle parking spaces; pedestrian/cycle entrances at the south-west and north of the site, and along the western boundary connecting into the adjoining open space; a footpath and bicycle path around the south, east and north of the site perimeter and a shared cycle/pedestrian path along the western boundary; balconies and terraces

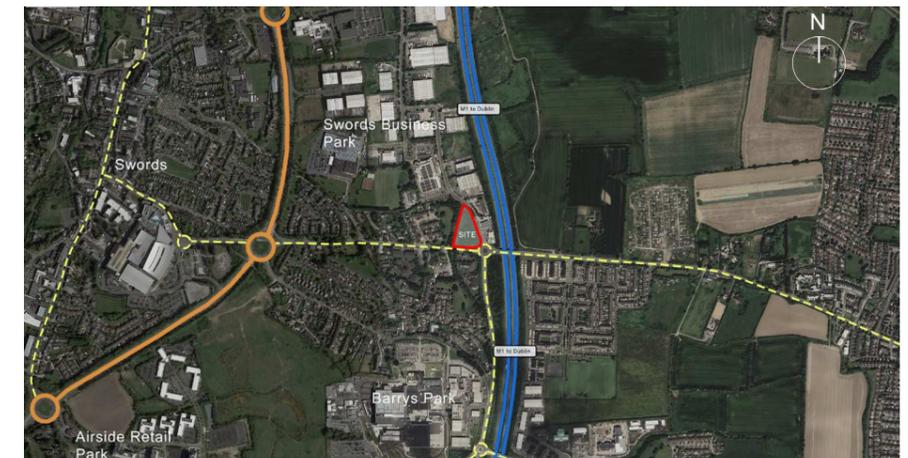
facing all directions; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; green roofs; lift overrun; PV panels; lighting; ESB substation; switch-room; plant; and all associated works above and below ground.

# 2.0 Site Assessment



## 2.1 Location

The site fronts onto the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is located at a prominent position on the approach to Swords from Malahide, as it crosses over the M1 motorway. It provides an opportunity to landmark the transition to the Swords urban area.



■ M1 Motorway   ■ R132   ■ R106 Primary Road

## 2.2 Site Description and Characteristics

The images shown on this page indicate the subject site's existing roadside and streetscape condition along Swords Road.

The application site, which has a stated area of c.0.87ha, is located on the northern side of the Swords to Malahide Road R106. The site is currently undeveloped and overgrown.

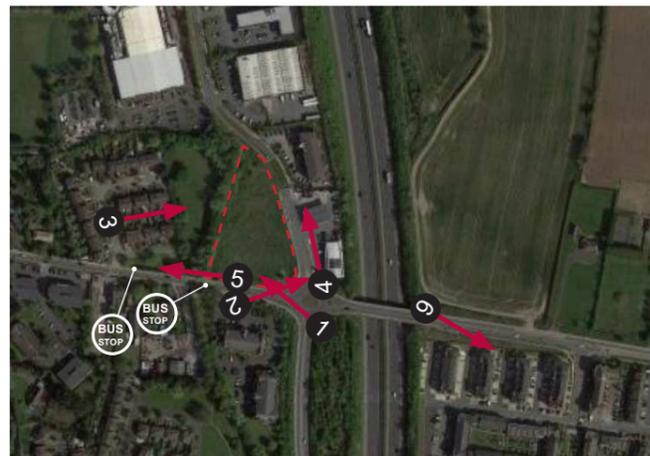
Site levels vary from 22.3 m at the southern site boundary to 19.8 m to the north, a difference of 2.5 metres across the site.

Existing boundary treatments includes a mature tree line to the west and fencing to the east and south.

The eastern boundary of the site is adjoined by an existing access road which serves the Applegreen service station and Costa coffee further east of the site. This access road terminates adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site.

The west of the site is adjoined by a public park and existing 2 storey residential properties at Seamount View. Swords Business Park is located to the north of the site.

There are 2 no. bus stops within 10-60 metres of the site on Malahide Road (R106) and a further 2 no. bus stop c. 400 metres from the site also on R106. These stops are served by routes 102, 102P, 102A, 102T, 506 and 507 which connect to the local towns in the surrounding area and to Dublin city and airport.



1 View from Roundabout towards Swords Road (south site boundary)



2 View from Swords Road towards Roundabout (south site boundary)



3 View from Seamount View Estate towards public park to the west of the site.



4 Street View towards Applegreen (east of Site Boundary)



5 Street View towards St Werburghs opposite footpath



6 View of Waterside apartments

## 2.3 Site Constraints & Opportunities

### Constraints:

The site is well defined to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park.

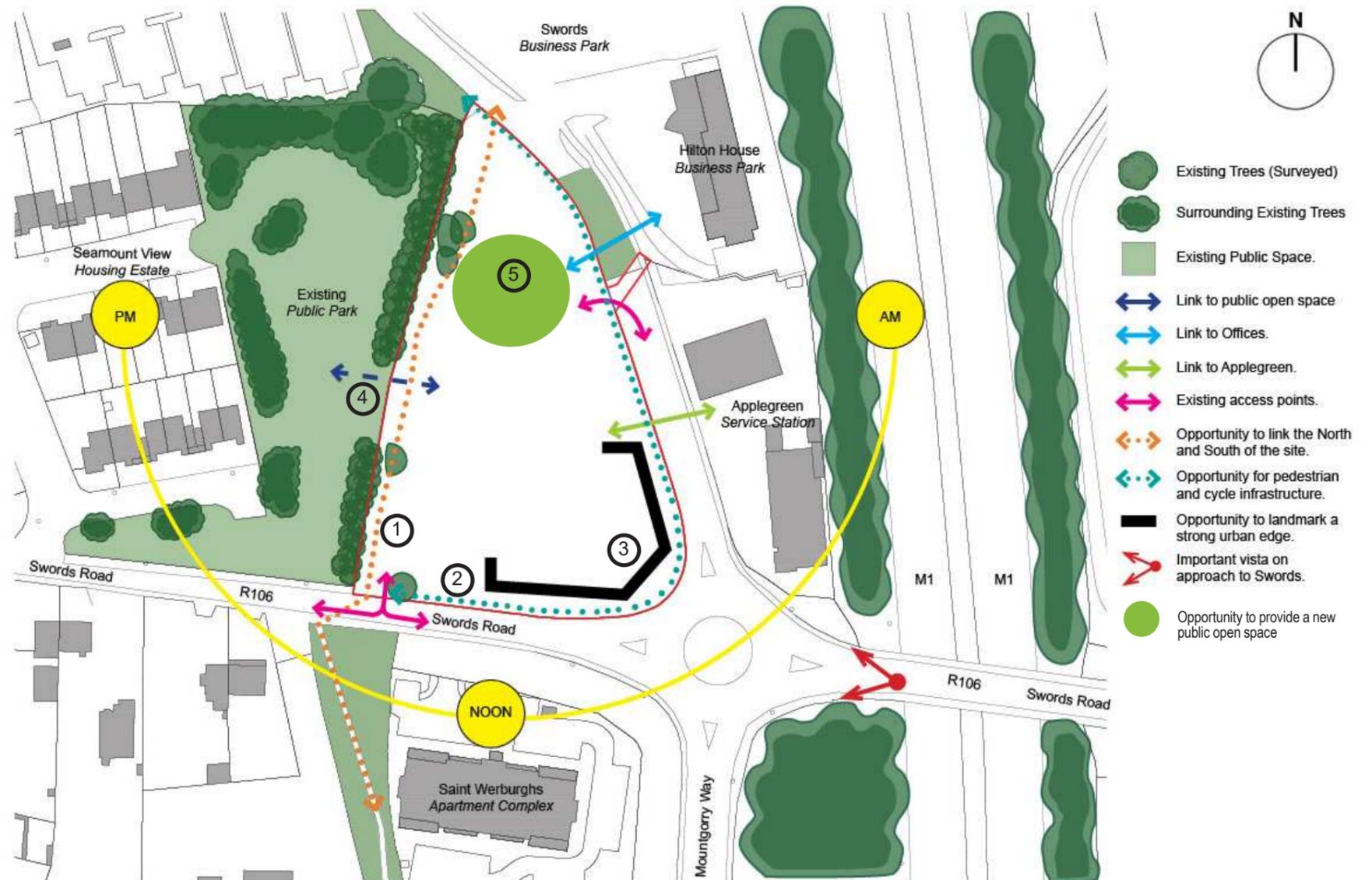
The West of the site is adjoined by a public park and a well defined tree line and hedgerow along the western boundary with Seamount Houses. The line of existing trees runs for approx. 140m along the western boundary and along the north end of the site.

The Swords Road is a busy route, and its proximity to the roundabout makes vehicular access from the south less suitable.

### Opportunities:

This site is at an important nodal position on the approach to Swords and provides an opportunity to create a strong architectural design that appropriately landmarks this node:

- ① Provide a new north-south pedestrian route that connects the existing pathway along the Saint Werburgh's apartment complex to the Swords Business Park to the north.
- ② Complete new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the south, east, and north boundaries.
- ③ Establish a strong urban edge at the roundabout, which is currently visually undefined and open, creating a prominent architectural landmark as the Swords Road crosses the M1 motorway.
- ④ Provide a pedestrian link to the adjoining public park to improve connectivity.
- ⑤ Provide a new public open space and play amenity to compliment the existing public park, positioned away from the busy Swords Road.



**2.4 Planning Context**

The statutory planning context of the subject site is contained in the Fingal County Council Development Plan 2023-2029. The site is within the Zoning Objective Type: ME - Metro Economic Corridor.

**Zoning Objective Description**

*Facilitate opportunities for high density mixed use employment generating activity and commercial development, and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro Economic Corridor Zoning Objective Vision*

*Provide for an area of compact, high intensity/density, employment generating activity with associated commercial and residential development which focuses on the Metro within a setting of exemplary urban design, public realm streets and places, which are permeable, secure and within a high quality green landscape.*

*Landmark buildings will provide strong quality architectural features, which respect and enhance the character of the area into which they sit.*

*The designated areas will form sustainable districts which possess a high degree of connectivity and accessibility and will be developed in a phased manner subject to the necessary provision of social and physical infrastructure.*

The site lies within the MRE zoning which supports:

- An appropriate quantum of residential development.
- Exemplar urban design.
- Landmark building, which respect the character of the area into which they sit.

The site represents only 1.5% of the MRE zoned area, as follows:

- 50.2 hectares, area of existing Swords Business Park and commercial uses.
- 0.8 hectare, area of development site, which is 1.5% of the MRE zoned area.

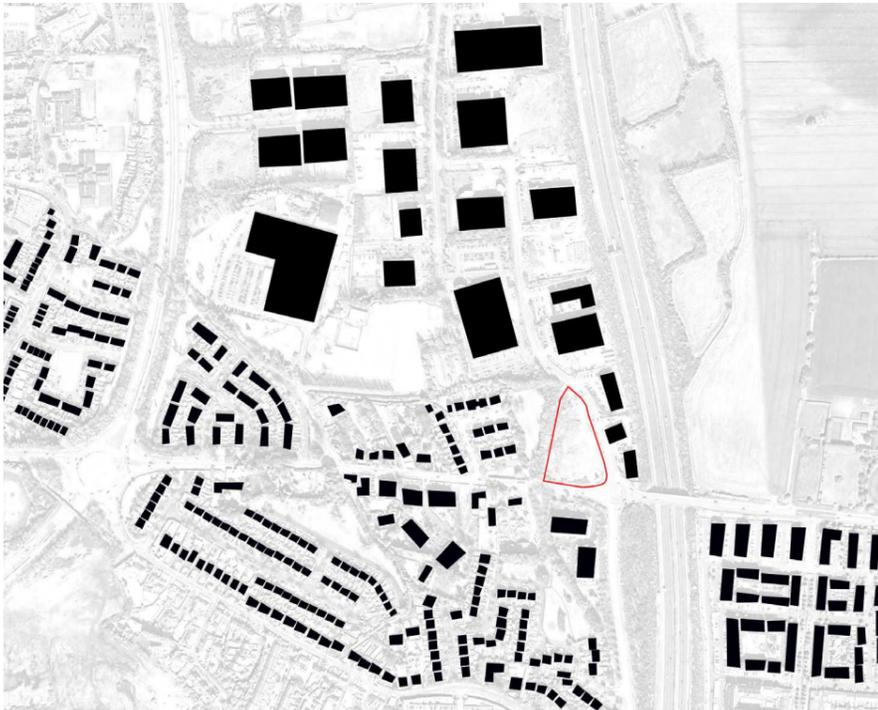
The Swords Business Park is occupied by factories and logistics warehouse enterprises, featuring ancillary offices and substantial hardstanding areas for trucks and parking. This is evident from the scale of the building footprints shown in the Density and Google Maps view below.

The proposed development site is not accessible from the Business Park and is significantly smaller, with an irregular shape, making it unsuitable for the type of economic activity currently taking place in the park. Therefore, the provision of residential development on this site does not impact the potential for commercial activity within the Business Park.

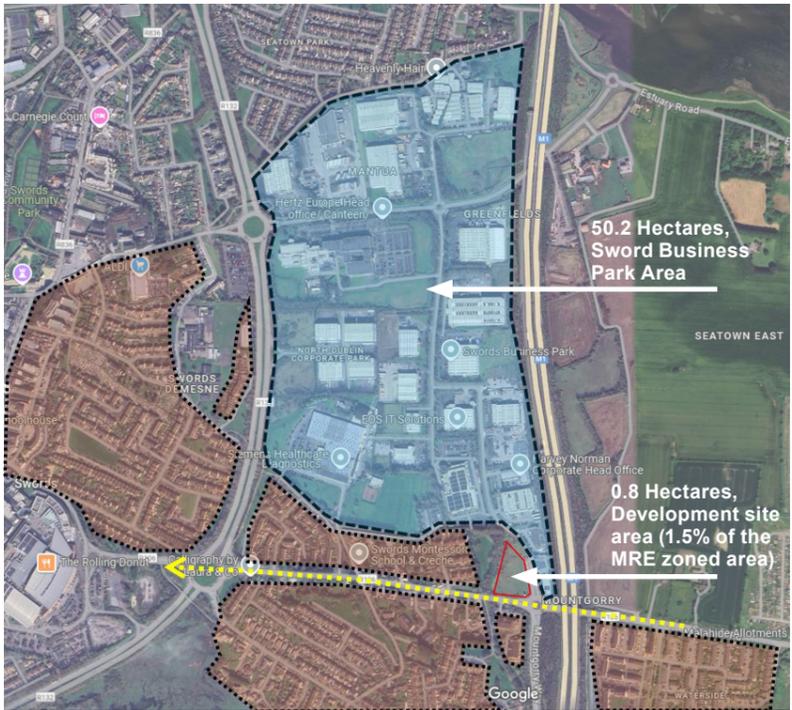
The proposed site represents 1.5% of the MRE zoned area, which is a very modest provision of residential development, within the overall mix, which is permitted by the zoning.



Land-Use Zoning - Fingal County Council Development Plan.



Zone Density Map - Figure and ground.



Zone Uses Map - Google maps overlay.

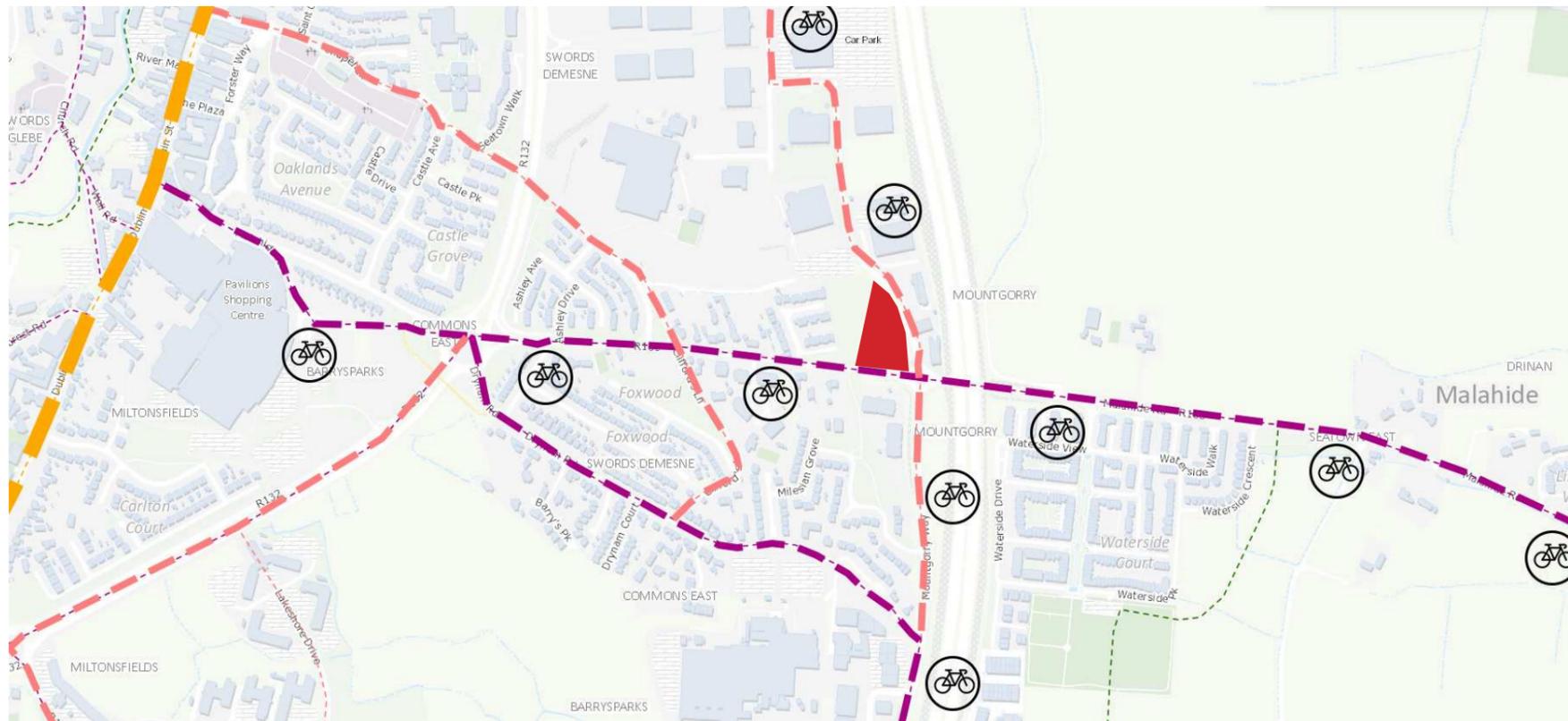
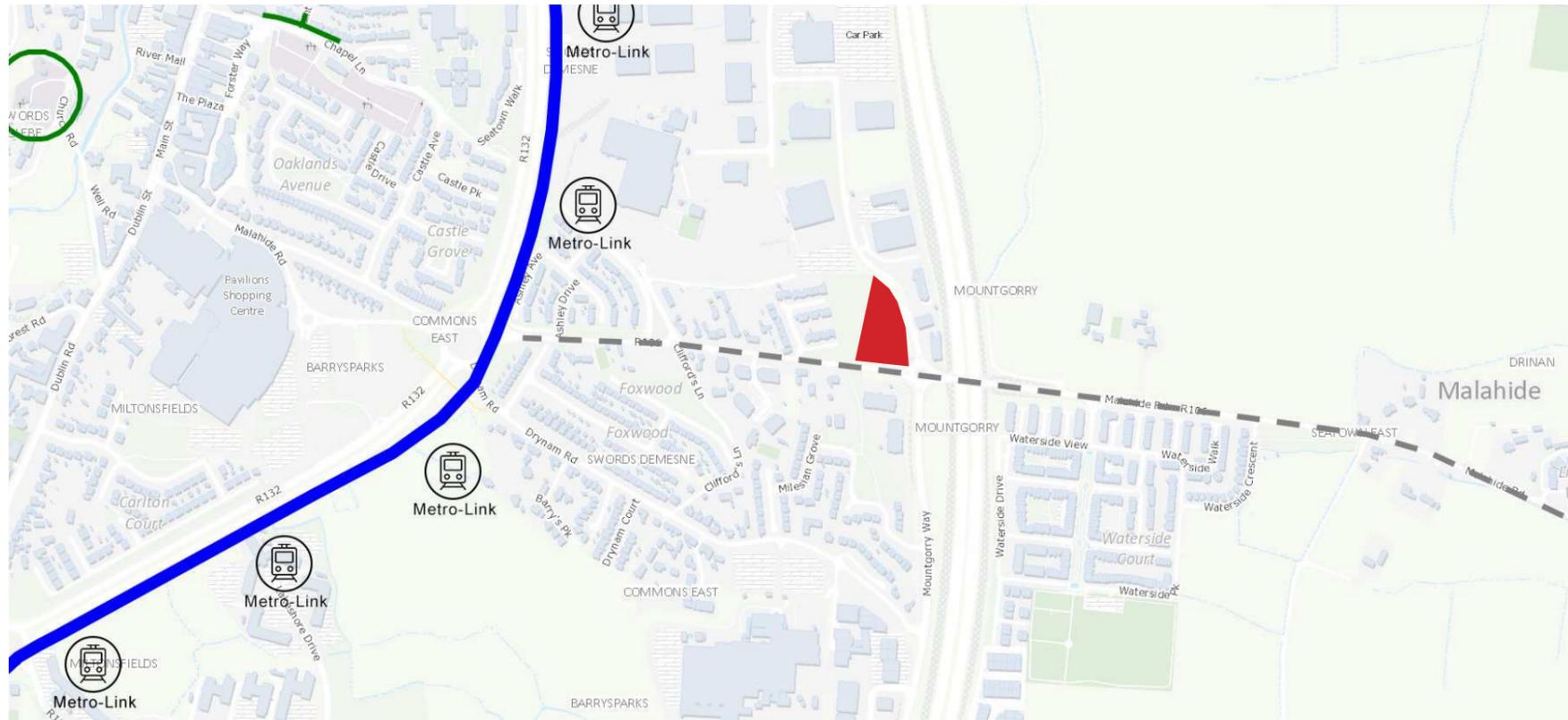
## 2.4.1 Urban Design Strategy

The Swords Road (R106) from Malahide is characterized by two-storey housing with incidental tree planting and is punctuated by more recent three-to-four-storey apartment developments, reflecting the increasingly urban character of Swords. The road terminates at a large roundabout leading to the Swords Pavilions shopping centre

The roundabout at Mountgorry, located at the crossing of the M1 motorway and just west of the Green Belt-zoned area, serves as a key nodal point on the approach to Swords. This presents an opportunity to create a landmark that signals the consolidated urban area.

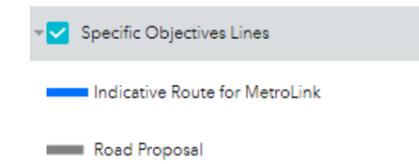
A residential development at this nodal point will compliment the existing character and ensure a vibrant, active building use at this prominent location, rather than a commercial building. An apartment building would best provide the required height of four to five storeys, with an animated elevation that offers the appropriate scale to effectively landmark the nodal point.



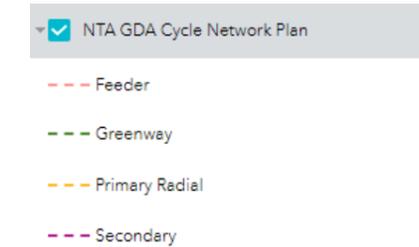


## 2.4.2 Land-Use Zoning

The planned Metrolink route will link locations including Swords and Dublin Airport to the city centre, with trains planned to operate every three minutes during peak periods once the line initially opens. Once fully operational it is anticipated that the network could be capable of carrying up to 20,000 passengers per hour in each direction.



Fingal County Council has an exciting programme of greenway infrastructure under development across the County at present. It plans to develop a network of high quality greenways over the coming years, as part of the wider sustainable transport infrastructure programme, in order to reduce the demand for private car use, promote sustainable modes of transport and ensure that the public realm is not dominated by parked vehicles.



**2.5 Previous Permitted Scheme - 2019 Application**

**The previous permitted scheme** The previously permitted scheme (Planning reference F19A/0521) included 154 apartment units and 1,738 sq.m of non-residential space over six floors, arranged in an L-shape tightly adjacent to the southeast roundabout. The design featured a publicly accessible internal courtyard and a full basement.

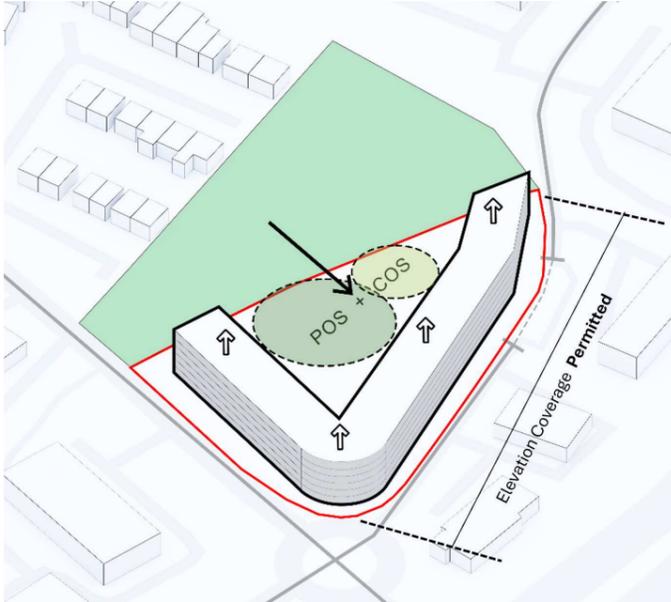
The design had a very robust expression, with a six-story building closely aligned to the southern, eastern, and northern boundaries. However, the central open courtyard did not provide any dedicated public open space, and the communal open space lacked clear boundaries, failing to secure communal areas for residents. The Fingal Development Plan and the DHLGH's design guidance require residential apartment developments to provide public open space that is clearly legible and accessible to the general public, as well as communal (semi-private) open space exclusively for residents, which should be secure and distinguishable from public open space. The DHLGH promotes the creation of communal open space through building design, such as perimeter blocks with internal courtyards, to avoid reliance on railings or fences to distinguish between communal and public open spaces. Therefore, a new approach is required to achieve high-quality housing design and to comply with the open space requirements of Fingal County Council's Development Plan.

**The proposed scheme**, The proposed design establishes a well-defined building edge to the southeast, set back to allow for a more expansive landscaped edge. The proposal is one storey lower, featuring five storeys transitioning to four, and it is also set back from the western boundary to better integrate with the existing context.

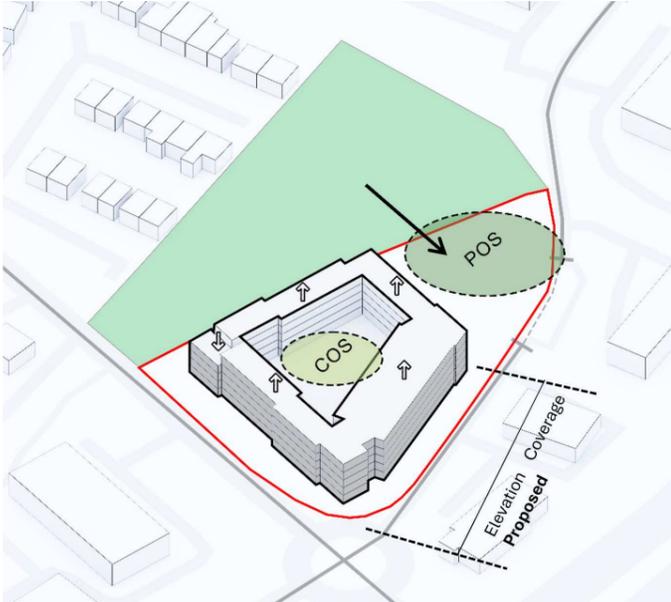
The length of the eastern elevation is significantly reduced, allowing for the creation of a clearly identifiable public open amenity space. The building wraps around to enclose a secure communal open space, ensuring full compliance with the Apartment Guidelines (Sections 4.10 - 4.14).



Aerial View from Malahide Roundabout - Permitted scheme



Permitted scheme - Massing analysis



Proposed scheme - Massing analysis

Permitted scheme - CGI's



1 View from Malahide Roundabout towards Swords Road.



2 View from Applegreen Petrol Station towards Roundabout.



3 View from Swords Road towards Roundabout.

Proposed scheme - CGI's



View from Malahide Roundabout towards Swords Road.



View from Applegreen Petrol Station towards Roundabout.



View from Swords Road towards Roundabout.

## 2.5 Previous Permitted Scheme Analysis

The urban design of the proposed development is improved from the permitted design as follows:

1. Permitted scheme was closer and taller at the western boundary to the adjacent residents.

The proposed design increases the separation distance to the closest housing, reduces building height from 6 storeys to 4 and 5 storeys, and provides active frontage.

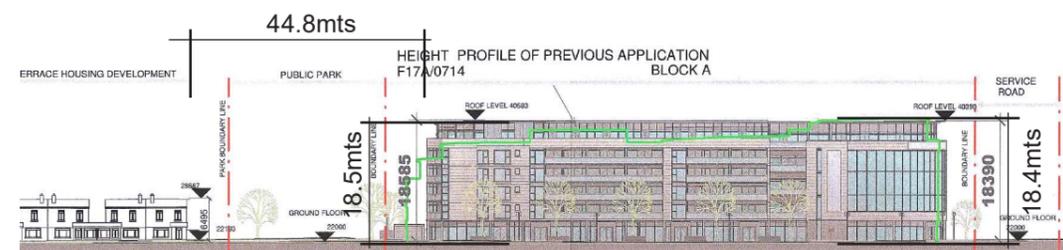
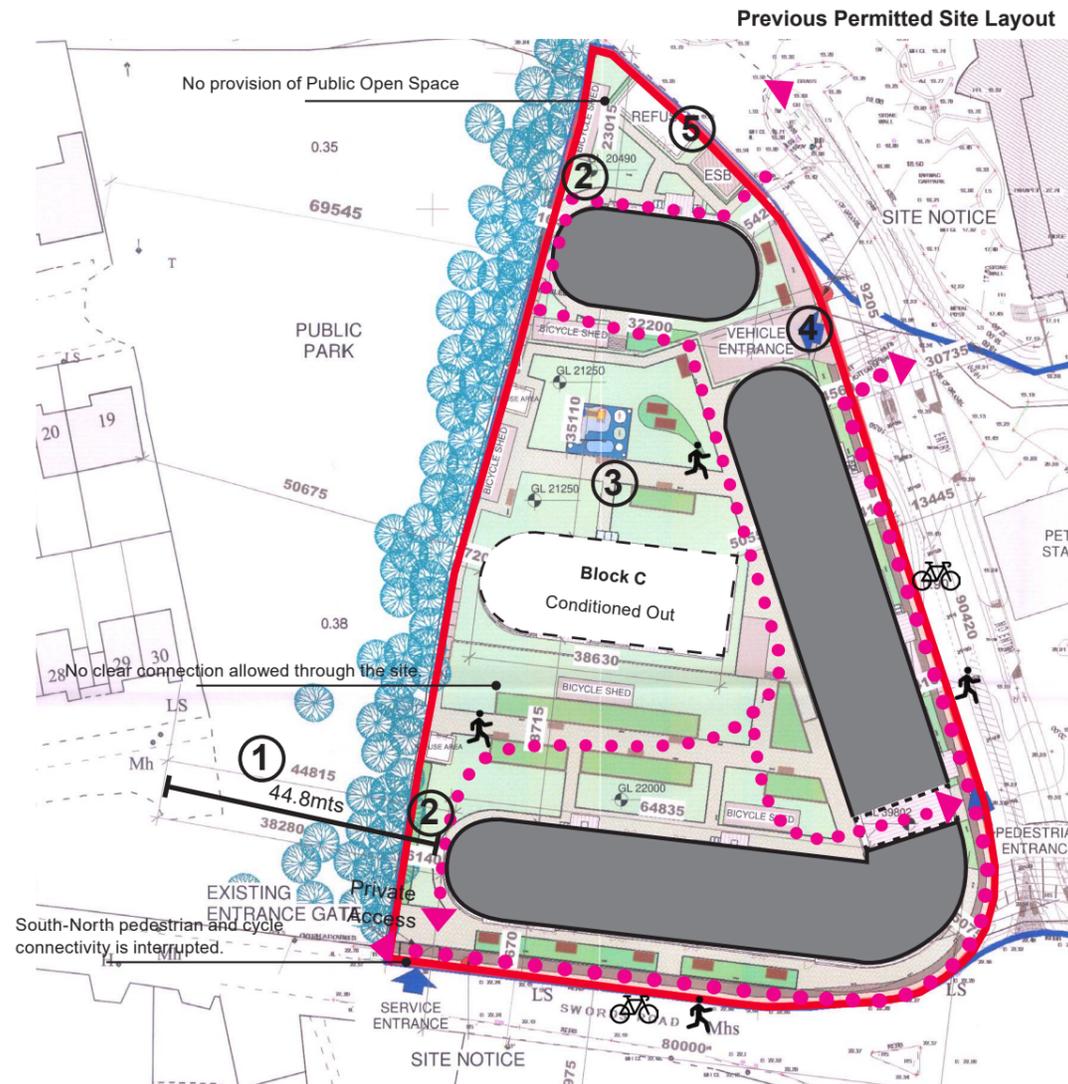
2. Permitted scheme allowed access into the scheme from the south and north, but did not create a legible, activated and overlooked strong pedestrian route north south, which the proposed scheme does.

3. Permitted scheme did not provide a clearly legible public open space, it provided a central courtyard scheme, to communal open space which was publicly accessible.

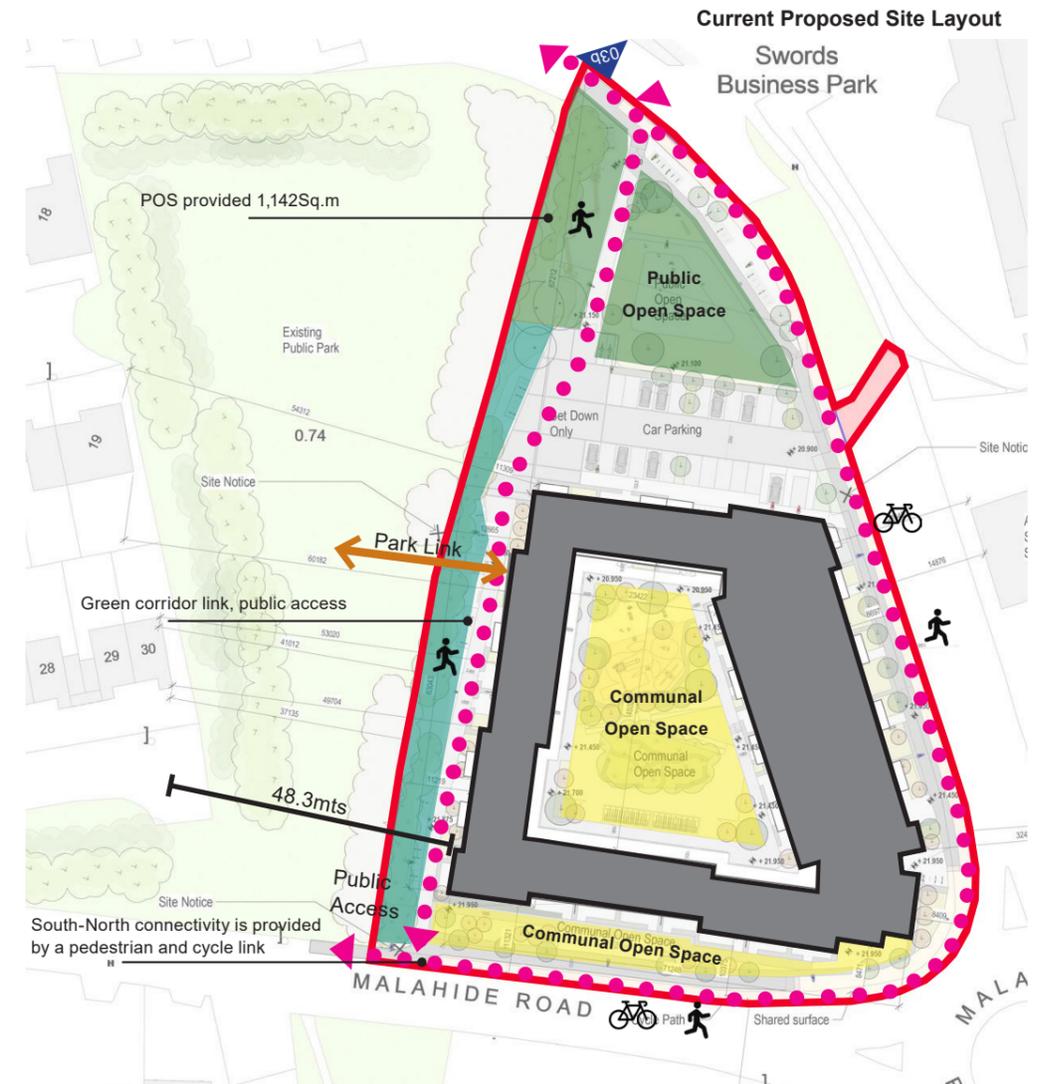
The proposed design provides separate communal and public open space in compliance with the FCC Development Plan and DHLGH's apartment design guidelines.

4. Permitted scheme depended on unviable basement parking, which impacts on affordability, the proposed scheme removes this economic burden and provides a greater range of active transport options.

5. Permitted scheme provided bin storage and substation in single storey structures, forming a poor urban edge to the north, the proposed scheme has these facilities within the building envelope.

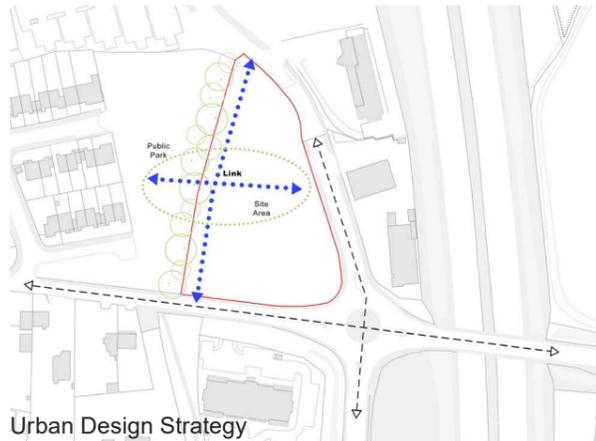


South contextual elevation- Previous



South contextual elevation- Proposed

## 2.6 Massing Strategy Analysis



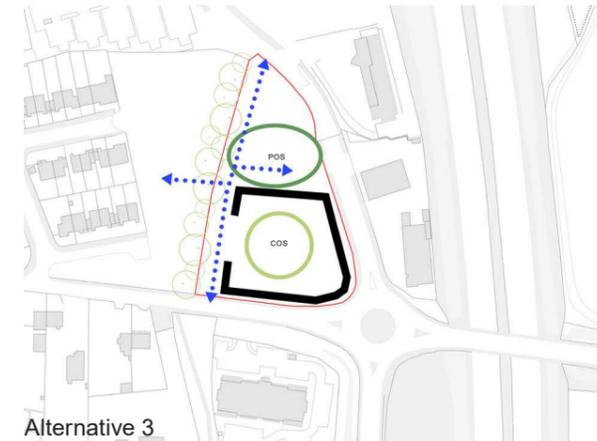
Urban Design Strategy

- Provide opportunity for a pedestrian and cycle link through the site at the western side of the site
- Provide opportunity for a new east-west and south north pedestrian and cycle routeway
- Create a new public open space that connects the site to the existing public park.
- Create a strong urban edge to the streetscape.



Permitted Scheme

Design issues with the previously approved scheme were its reliance on non-viable basement parking and is not compliant with current apartments design guidelines. Additionally, connecting the public park to Malahide Road through the central space created privacy concerns for ground-floor units facing the public area.

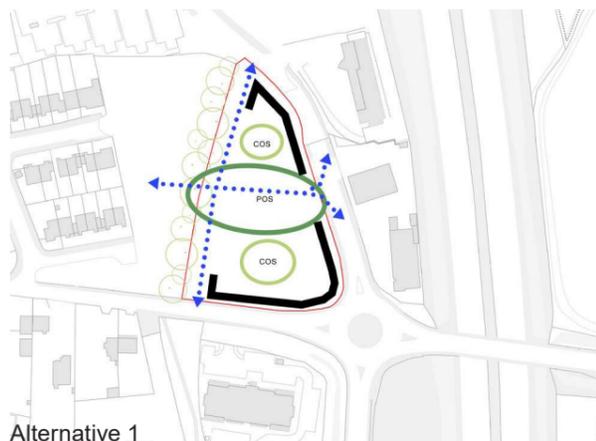


Alternative 3

Relocate the public open space to the northern side of the building to establish a direct connection to the GF units

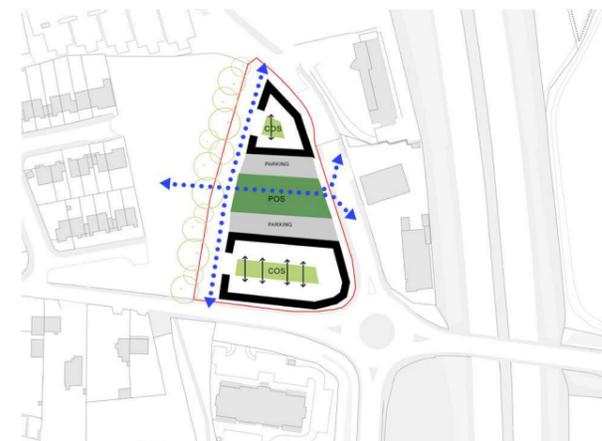


This approach reduces the amount of public open space, and the car parking area faces directly onto the streetscape without the option to introduce a green buffer.

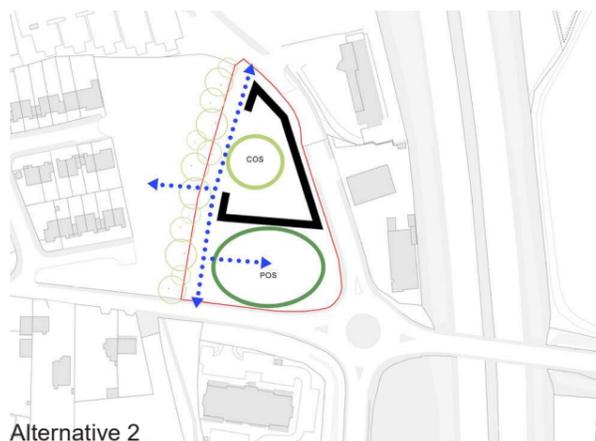


Alternative 1

Separate the site with public open space, relocating the buildings to the southern and northern corners.



The blocks to the north and south are not large enough to create communal landscaped courtyards.



Alternative 2

Relocate the public open space and parking to the southern side of the site.



This approach lacks integration with the urban edge and streetscape, and does not define the roundabout at Malahide Road.



Proposed Layout

The proposed design features a perimeter apartment block that creates a clear, legible building form. It defines a secure boundary with most perimeter units having their own entrances. This layout encloses a distinct, secure amenity courtyard exclusively for resident use, a clearly defined public amenity accessible to all, complementing the adjoining park, with a compact building form that provides a strong landmark at the prominent corner.

# 3.0 Response to Fingal County Council - Large Scale Residential Development Opinion

## 3.1 LRD Opinion

The same site strategy has been presented as at Stage 1 of the LRD process, where concerns were raised about the suitability of this strategy on the site. At the time it was noted the massing and position of the block on the site is inferior to that previously granted for the site. There are concerns with;

- i) 3 sides of the building face on to roads or carparking, with only 1 side benefitting from the park to the west.
- ii) Units in the north block are facing north as access deck has been placed on the sunny southern side - these units have no connection to either the inner courtyard or the park to the west. This is a missed opportunity.
- iii) The position of the Car parking slices the site in two not allowing for flow or connection between the open space and the building.
- iv) The position of the building appears to be too hard / close to the roundabout. Appropriate buffers / setback for residential use in this area do not appear to have been provided.
- v) The uniform height around the courtyard presents a large mass - while the massing has been broken to some extent by the elevational treatment the proposal is not sympathetic to context.
- vi) Some different treatment of the western block, as this faces onto a quiet pedestrian route, with an opportunity for lower heights or own door access, presents a missed opportunity.

Given these concerns revised proposal are required as part of any application that illustrate a break up of the massing and provide for height variation of the proposed five storey elements of the proposal. Considerations for the integration of all elements of the proposal to the streetscape should be carefully considered. Further attention is required to the corner expression at the roundabout, the corner section should read as a strong elevation at this dominant location. There should be a greater set back from the roundabout to give the residential units facing the roundabout more privacy and allow for a more purposeful public realm and greening of this important corner. Material details should be provided and should include a wider range of brick or stone and colour to break up the mass of the building and better integrate the development in its surroundings. The quality required for a development at a corner location and at the entrance into Swords from the east should be of the highest standards, including the balcony details which should be enclosed rather than clip-on and should be carefully considered to complement the scheme and ensure usability.

## 3.2 Response to LRD Opinion

i) Issue: 3 sides of the building face on to roads or carparking...

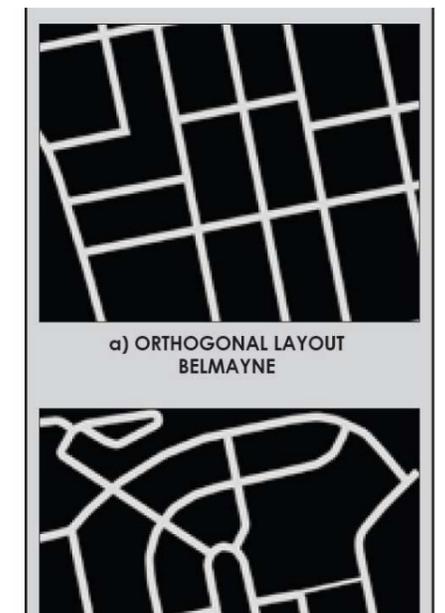
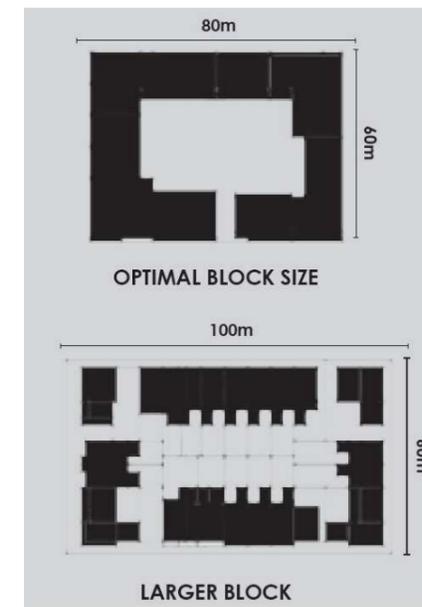
We have reflected on the site and considered various alternatives, thoroughly reviewing the Department's Design Guidelines as well as the Fingal County Council Development Plan. We conclude that the proposed strategy is the optimal solution, far superior to the previously approved scheme.

The proposed design follows the principles outlined in the 2022 and 2023 Design Manual for Quality Housing, prioritizing a secure and high-quality public realm. It incorporates perimeter blocks to clearly define public spaces while safeguarding private and communal areas for residents. This approach aligns with the FCC Development Plan by offering a range of external amenity spaces, including private, communal, and public areas. The optimal length for an apartment block has been identified as 60-80 meters to enhance urban design permeability. In contrast, the permitted scheme has a length of approximately 90 meters on the eastern side for Blocks A and B, with an additional 15 meters for Block D. It does not distinguish between public and communal external spaces, with poorly defined public access and routes that are inadequately overlooked. Additionally, it allows access to the private areas of ground-floor apartments.

The proposed design forms a perimeter apartment block with own-door access, enclosing a secure courtyard for residents. Three sides of the block feature single-depth apartments with external walkways, while the fourth side has a double-loaded internal corridor. Apartments are designed to offer either dual or single aspects with views over a quiet road, the internal courtyard, or public open spaces. All apartments have access to the courtyard, optimizing orientation and views, ensuring a high level of amenity through efficient design.

Good urban design requires building elevations to address streets, and pedestrian foot paths, enlivened with own door access where possible, which is achieved on the north, east and west elevations. The south elevation faces a busy road, the proposed building is setback to provide a greater landscape buffer, whilst providing good overlooking at upper floors to ensure good passive surveillance.

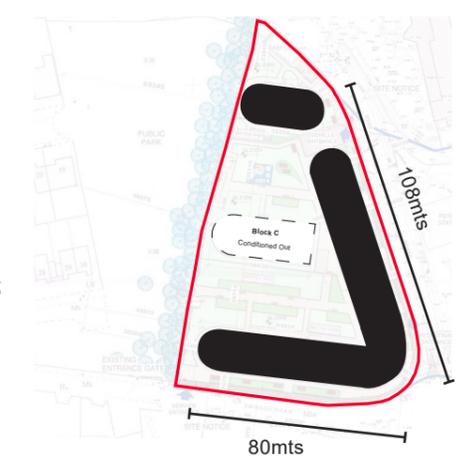
We believe the design is responsive to each perimeter condition and accords with good urban design principles, and is far more successful than the permitted scheme.



Extract from Design Manual for Quality Housing, Section 3.5.2.2, indication optimum urban block size



Proposed Scheme



Previous Permitted

ii) Issue: Units in north block...

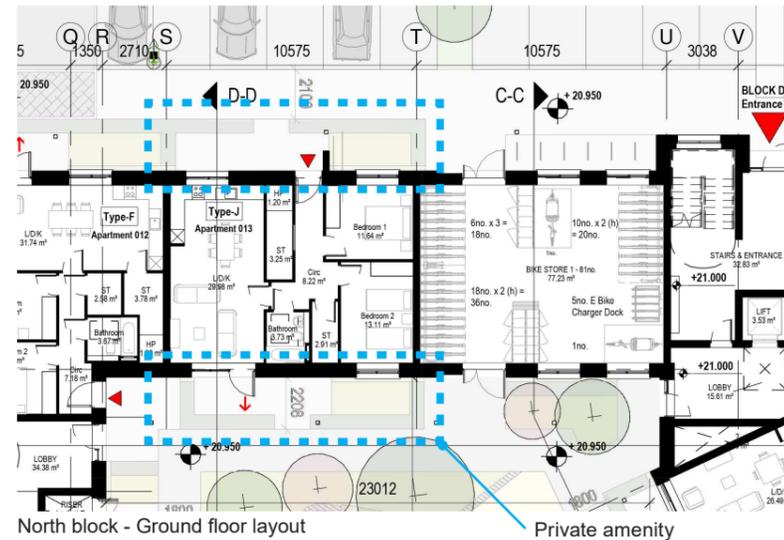
The northern ground-floor apartments feature direct, own-door access to parking and public open spaces, as well as a private terrace that opens onto the landscaped courtyard. Upper-level apartments are accessed via an external walkway on the courtyard side, seamlessly connected to stairs and a lift for convenient access. This walkway also provides opportunity for social interaction with a south facing aspect, overlooking the courtyard. By fostering a sense of community, these thoughtfully designed social spaces enrich the living experience for all residents.

The apartments have living rooms and balconies facing the public open space, receiving morning and evening sunlight, especially in summer. The design avoids external walkways on the outer elevation, allowing for more generous fenestration and daylight. Coady Architects has successfully used this approach in other housing schemes where residents have given direct feedback of how much they like it to allow incidental calling into neighbours and the security it allows young children to gather and play in the courtyard, whilst parents can overlook them from the gallery.

We have rearranged the apartments in the north block to enhance the dual aspect and improve daylight. Additionally, we have widened the walkway in the north block to create a buffer for the kitchen windows and provide extra space on the side for outdoor seating facing the internal courtyard, similar to a front garden in a terraced house.

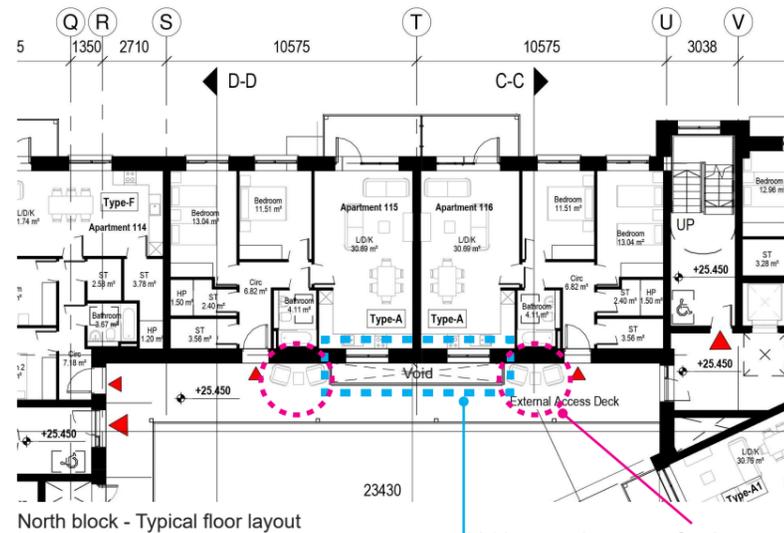


External deck facing the courtyard area - Social hub



North block - Ground floor layout

Private amenity space and own door access.



North block - Typical floor layout

Void separation buffer to kitchen windows.

Outdoor seating area.

iii) Issue: The position of the Car parking...

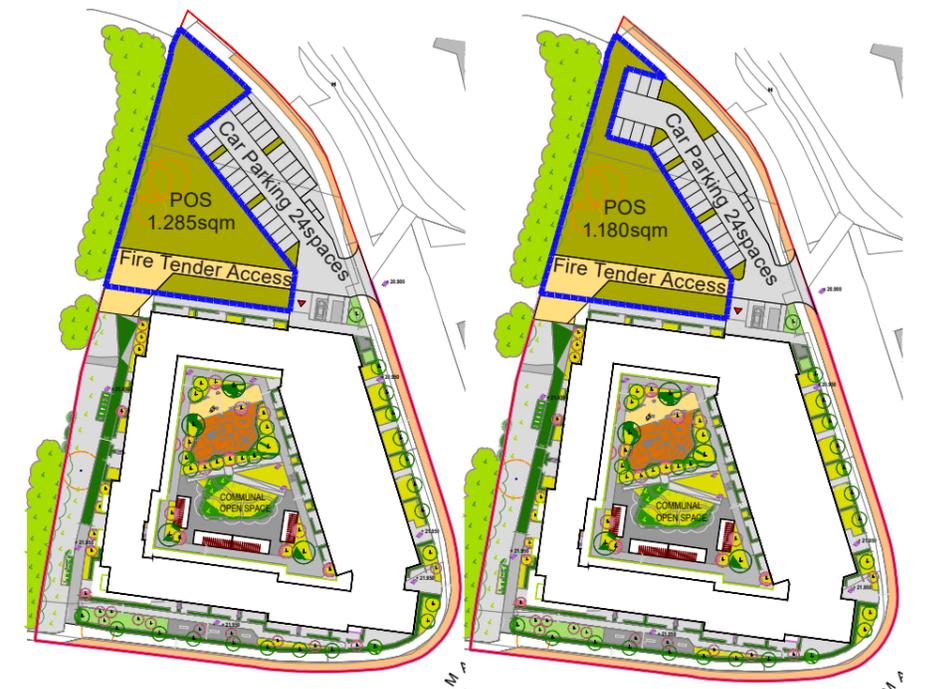
The courtyard building is designed to zone the site, creating distinct and secure communal open space for residents and a separate public open space, aligning with Fingal County Council's (FCC) Development Plan. The design secures a private inner courtyard, as recommended by the Design Manual for Quality Housing. *Design Manual for Quality Housing, Section 3.6.4.4*

The building's form establishes a "home zone" for resident parking, drop-offs, servicing needs, and emergency access, efficiently utilizing space to avoid detracting from the public open area. The design incorporates on-street parking and street planting close to homes to enhance resident convenience and ensure passive surveillance, following the guidelines of the Design Manual, this is typical of street facing apartment design, ensuring convenience for residents, but also close supervision of parking areas to avoid antisocial behaviour, which can arise where parking areas are remotely positioned and not closely associated and overlooked by residents.

On the other hand the public open space is not just for residents, it is also for the wider public, therefore its position beyond the residential parking is appropriate.

The public open space is only a 18mts walk from the building entrance. Furthermore young children can freely access the central secure courtyard, with play amenities. Therefore the design has fully considered the hierarchy of spaces, resident and public users, and security when positioning each element of the design.

Alternatively two configurations of parking were tested with varying quantum of POS. Both options result in parking being less convenient and reduces overlooking by residents. Fire tender and maintenance access is required to transverse the area, limiting about 30% of the POS to reinforced grass, which will be shaded by the building, resulting in a poor amenity. Therefore we believe the proposed scheme provides the optimum public open space.



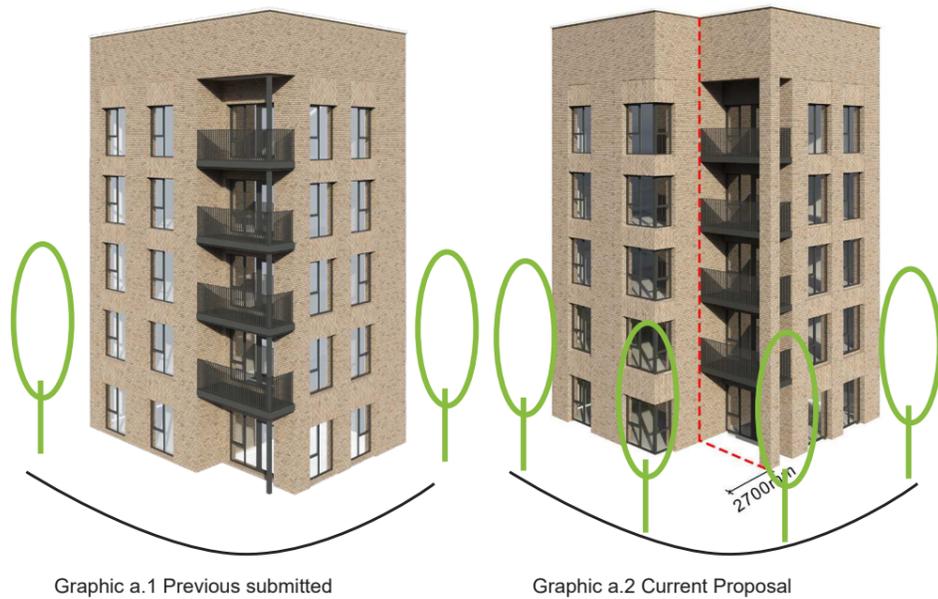
**Option A** Reduces the green buffer between the parking and the streetscape.

**Option B** Reduces significantly the Public Open Space area

iv) Issue: *The position of the building appears to be too hard / close to the roundabout...*

The proposed design is set back further from the roundabout compared to a previously approved scheme, allowing for a strong tree-planted edge along the southern and western boundaries.

We have considered the comments regarding the proximity to the roundabout, as illustrated in graphics a.1 - a.2 and b.1 - b2. In response, the corner block has been repositioned with a setback of approximately 2.7 meters from its original location. This adjustment creates a larger area for landscaping and tree planting, effectively buffering the ground floor level of the corner block from the roundabout. Additionally, corner windows have been added to this elevation. These changes not only enhance the overall aesthetic but also improve the functionality and visual appeal of this prominent corner.



Graphic a.1 Previous submitted

Graphic a.2 Current Proposal



Graphic b.1 Previous submitted



Graphic b.2 Current Proposal

v) Issue: *Uniform height around the courtyard...*

The block design is based on a perimeter courtyard, with dimensions of approximately 64m x 72m, fitting within the Design Manual for Quality Housing's recommended block size of 60 to 80 meters. The building height matches the context and is similar to the permitted scheme but appears more compact, as the façade only covers 50% of the eastern site edge compared to the full coverage in the previous design.

The northern elevation, facing the public amenity space, is 30 meters long and appropriately designed at 5 storeys to ensure good passive surveillance. The western elevation faces a substantial hedgerow and tree planting, creating a sense of enclosure along the pedestrian route. While the building is consistently 5 storeys, its scale is perceived differently from each direction, providing variety in its appearance without altering its height.

Additionally, the elevations have been enhanced with increased brickwork to create a distinct differentiation of scale at each corner. This design approach not only adds visual interest but also emphasizes the architectural character of the building, ensuring that each corner stands out with a unique identity. By incorporating more brick, the design achieves a sense of solidity and permanence, while also breaking up the building's mass to create a more dynamic and engaging façade.



South-East corner elevation treatment



South-West corner elevation treatment

vi) Issue: *Some different treatment of the western block...*

The proposed design for the western elevation incorporates an attractive and functional pedestrian route that serves as a key connection between the public open space and the Malahide Road. The space has been thoughtfully designed with a 2:3 width-to-height ratio, creating an intimate, well-defined pedestrian street. This design not only ensures a comfortable scale for pedestrians but also fosters a sense of enclosure and urban character that enhances the overall experience of the space.

This route is further enlivened by the inclusion of ground-floor apartments with their own door access, which directly engage with the street. This feature, combined with the presence of two communal stair cores and communal bike storage areas, ensures a high level of activity and interaction at the street level. The design also includes balconies overhead, which provide passive surveillance and contribute to a safer, more secure environment.

In contrast, the previously permitted scheme lacked a well-considered public route and did not effectively delineate between public and private residential spaces. The current proposal addresses these shortcomings by creating a clear division between public and private spaces, ensuring that the public realm is inviting, well-organized, and functional.

Overall, the proposed design is more successful in crafting an engaging and active public realm that meets the needs of the community while enhancing the architectural and urban qualities of the development. This approach not only addresses the feedback provided but also seizes the opportunity to create a more vibrant and connected urban environment.



Western pedestrian route - Enviromental open space



Western pedestrian route - Enviromental open space

# 3.0 Development Proposal

## 3.1 Vision

The objective of the new development at Mountgorry, Swords, is to create an active, living edge to the Metro economic area, connecting it to the adjoining residential areas and providing an appropriate scale to serve as a landmark at this transitional nodal point on the approach to Swords.

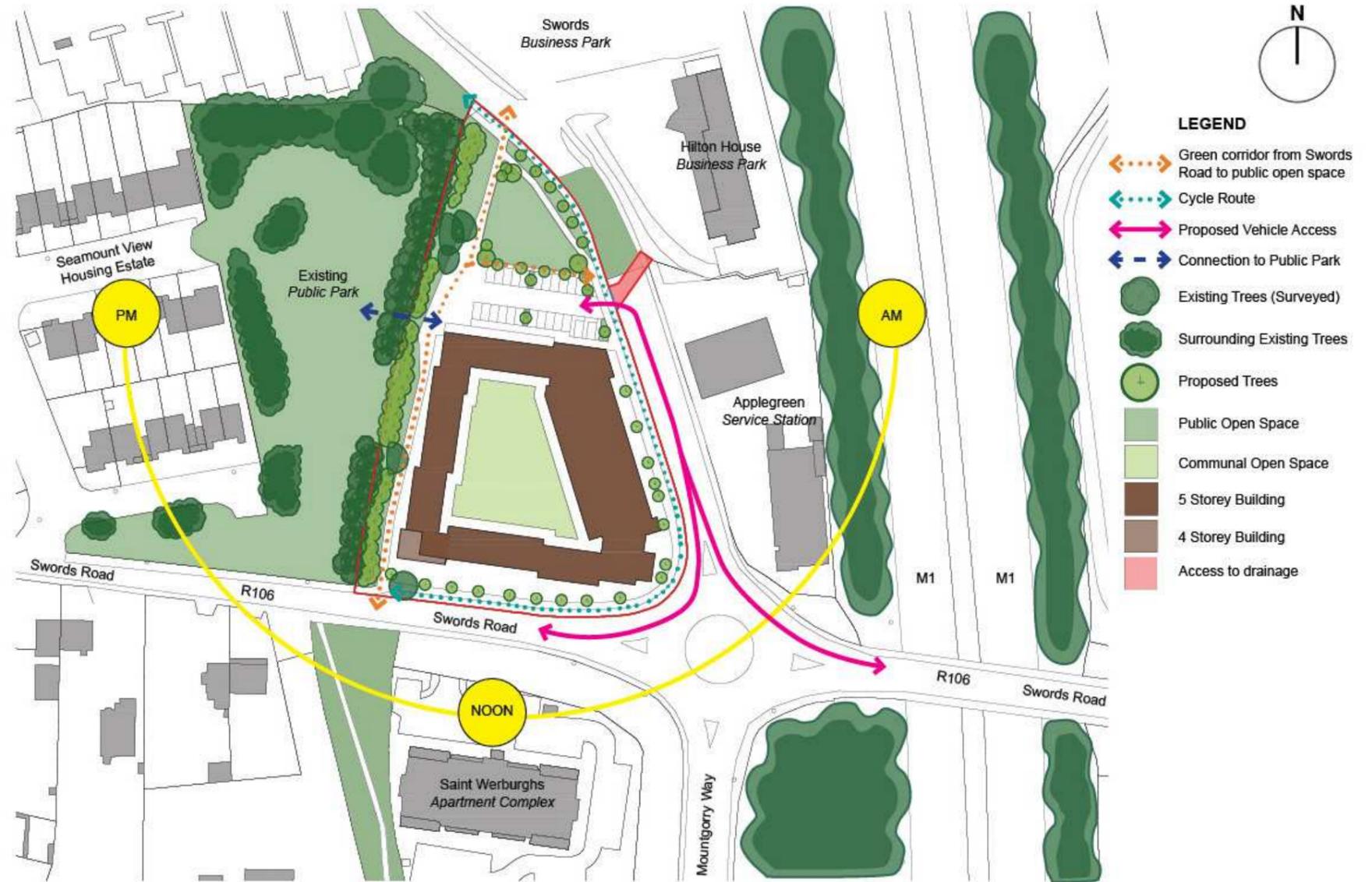
The development will be responsive to its existing environment, making the most of ecological amenities, such as the existing trees along the boundary with the public open space and Seamount View Housing Estate stream along the West boundary.

The new apartments will offer low-energy, low-maintenance homes that are affordable and sustainable, set within a high-quality landscaped public realm and public amenity spaces.

## 3.2 Design Strategy & Concept

The design strategy for the development at Mountgorry includes:

- Provide opportunity for a pedestrian route through the site at the western side of the site, connecting Malahide Road to the north-east to the Swords Business Park.
- Provide opportunity for a pedestrian and cycle routeway around the site, to meet the Development Plan objectives.
- Create a new public open space in the northeast of the site, complementing the new pedestrian route along the western side.
- Retain and enhance the existing trees and landscape.
- Create a strong urban edge along the streetscape with appropriate landscaping at the street edge.
- Create a compact building form with active frontages on all four sides, enclosing a private residential courtyard with secure communal landscaping.



Proposed development within the immediate context

### 3.3 Design Development

The proposal is for a residential scheme comprising 123 units, designed to address housing needs. It includes amenities, communal areas, and open spaces in accordance with the Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines.

A community space is located at the most prominent corner, with easy access from stair core N.01. The remainder of the ground floor consists of apartments, many of which have own door access on the east, north, and west blocks.

Access to upper floor apartments is via 2 main stair cores to the southeast and northeast corners of the building. The primary core entrance is at the southeast, immediately adjacent to the Malahide roundabout corner. The entrance here gives access to a stair core and single lift, which then opens onto an internal corridor to the residential amenities and communal courtyard. *Figure 1*

A secondary core entrance is provided at the northeast corner, with access to the core from the street facing the car parking spaces. This core gives access to a stair and single lift, and to the waste storage room as well as to the communal courtyard. *Figure 2*

Two additional cores are included at the western side of the building, but these are provided for means of escape, and is not envisaged as a primary means of access to the building. Both cores are beside the bicycle store for easy access for maintenance. *Figure 3*

At ground floor, own door apartments wrap most of the east, north and west sides of the building. Each apartment features a private curtilage to the street facing side, and a private terrace for amenity on the courtyard side. Otherwise, there are short breaks in the continuity of apartments at ground floor level to allow for necessary building plant and services to be located at plinth level.

Typically, at upper floors, apartments are accessed from the access deck that wraps around three sides of the communal courtyard. This ensures that all apartments at this location are dual aspect, with balconies generally on the street facing side of the building. The exception is the eastern element of the building, which features a double loaded central corridor, with apartments either facing west towards the courtyard, or east to the access road.

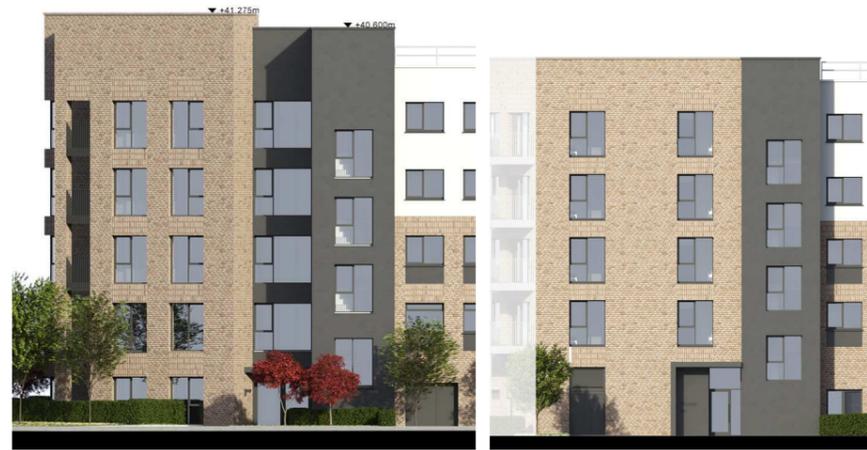


Figure 1 - Access core south-east corner

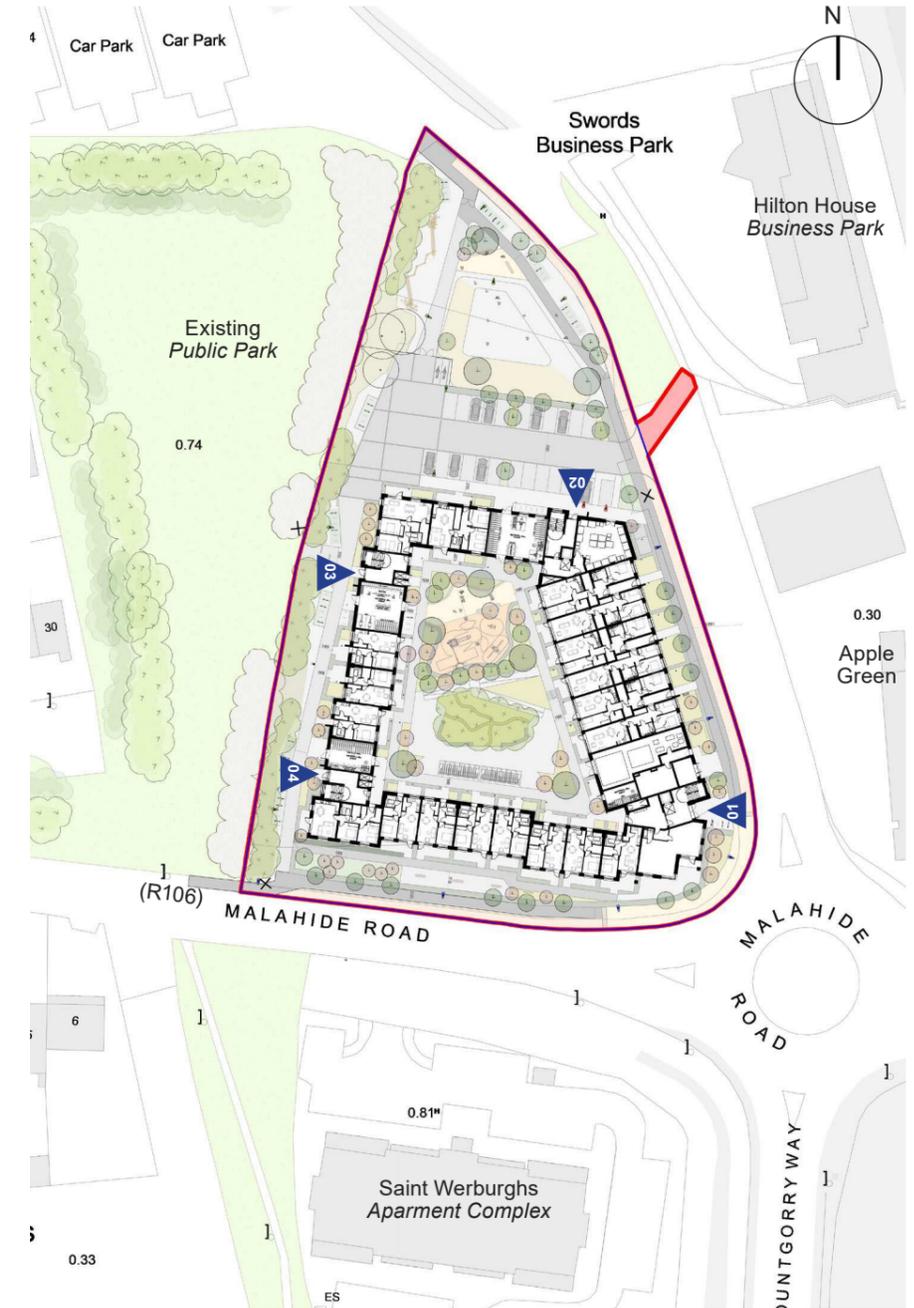
Figure 2 - Access core north-east corner



Figure 3 - Additional cores west elevation

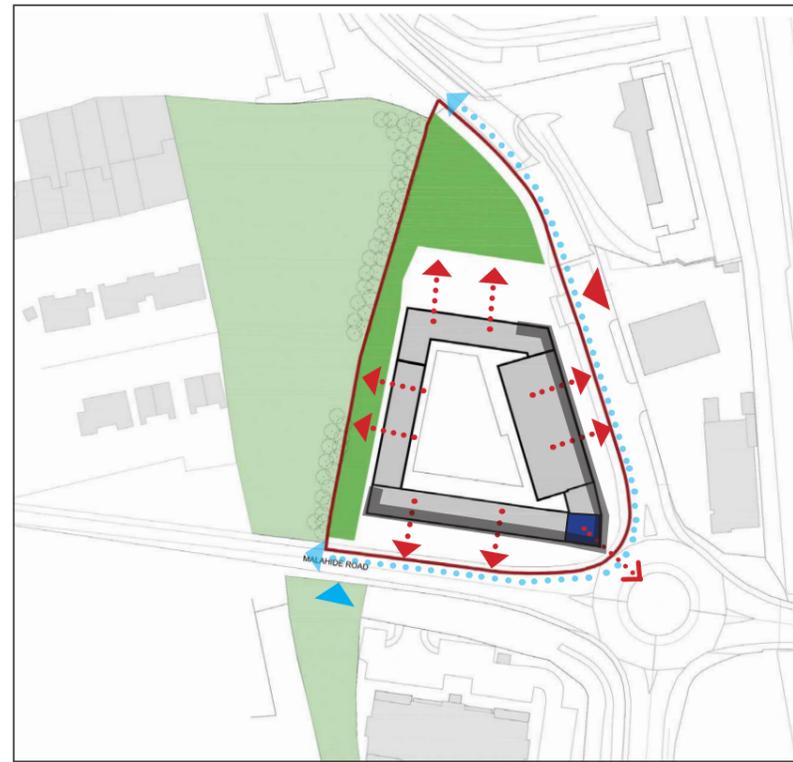
In addition to plant at ground floor level, there is a provision of 194 PV panels at roof level, 1 panel per unit and 70 for amenities.

Generally, public, communal, and private realm are all very clearly defined within the proposed development. This has largely been achieved by using the building to clearly define the boundaries between each. The apartments facing Malahide Road are accessed from within the courtyard to allow terraces facing south to maximise



their orientation and provide a landscape buffer zone of communal amenity area to the public road and to allow a modest level difference to the public path.

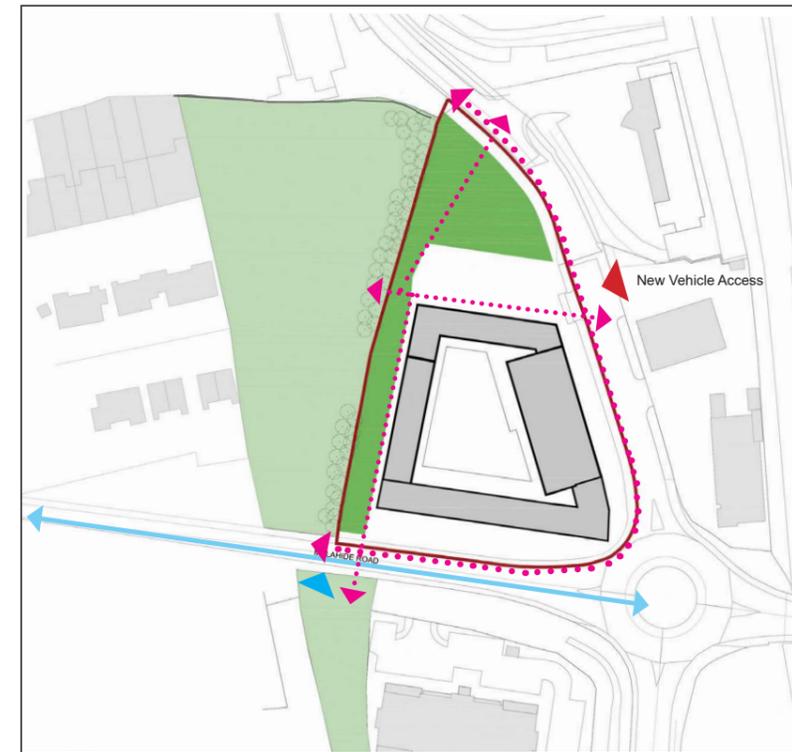
### 3.3 Design Development



#### 1 Legibility + Placemaking

The enclosed courtyard form of the scheme addresses both roads to the South and East of the roundabout, the public open space to the north and the existing park to the west of the site. The building form creates a good sense of enclosure and overlooking into the streets helping to make the public realm safer and providing legibility at this important junction. The S/E corner of the scheme acts as an anchor and serves to address and mark the approach to Swords.

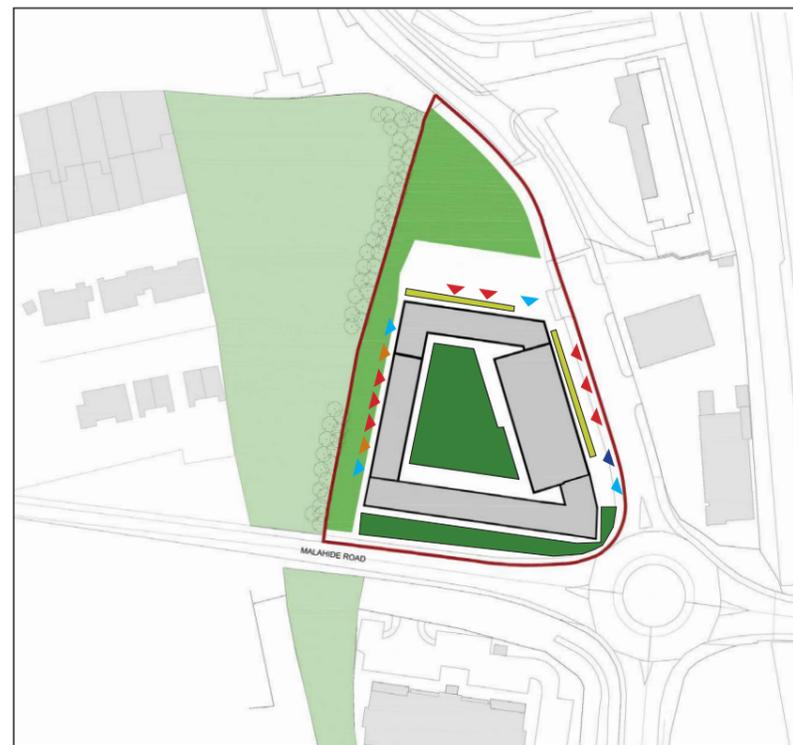
- Key**
- Passive Overlooking
  - Vehicle Access Point
  - Pedestrians + Cyclists Access Point
  - Existing Public Open space
  - Proposed Public Open space
  - Edge Condition/ Streetscape
  - South/East corner landmark



#### 2 Permeability + Connectivity

A strong network of new pedestrian and cycle links are provided within this neighbourhood which connect the scheme to the existing Public Park to the west and Green way to the south of Swords Road. New vehicle access point is located to east of the site.

- Key**
- Existing Public Open Spaces
  - Main Road
  - Pedestrian + Cycle Links Network
  - Vehicle Access Point
  - Pedestrian and Cyclists Access point



#### 3 Public Open space + Active Frontages

The Public Open space is located along the west and North edge of the site, abutting the Existing Public open space to the west of the site. Communal gardens are located at the centre of the perimeter block. This makes it very secure and private, the space can foster community cohesion. All residential units have direct access to the courtyard.

- Key**
- Own Door Access
  - Staircore Access
  - Plant Room Access
  - Bike Stores
  - Existing Public Open space
  - Proposed Public Open space
  - Proposed Communal Open Space
  - Planting Buffer



#### 4 Active Uses

Provision of Residential amenity to the east corner of the site activate the public realm and courtyard by a range of facilities. Own door apartments wrap most of the north, east and west sides of the building providing activities at the ground floor.

- Key**
- Residential Amenities
  - Residential Units
  - Ancillary



**NOTES:**

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the 23FG03 - Landscape Report

**K E Y**

**Hard Landscape**

- Paving: To Courtyard and OMC areas. PC concrete block with reon stone surface.
- Porous resin bound gravel
- Play space: Bound rubber softfall.
- Private Terraces: PC flag paving.
- Paths through Public Open Space: Asphalt (SMA).
- Road: Asphalt (SMA)
- Outdoor Quad: Exposed Concrete Aggregate
- Footpaths: In-situ concrete, brushed finish
- Reinforced Grass: Under cycle stands in Public Open Space
- Cycletrack: To the Consulting Engineers Details and Specification
- Low Wall: To the Social Hub
- Shared Surface

**Soft Landscape**

- Existing Tree Canopy from Neighbouring Site
- Proposed Woodland
- Existing Trees to be retained
- Proposed specimen trees
- Proposed heavy standard trees
- Proposed small trees
- Clipped evergreen hedging
- Pollinator Friendly Planting: Full sun mix
- Pollinator Friendly Planting: Shade mix
- Meadow grassland
- Mown amenity grassland

**Site Furniture**

- Seating: Hardwood seating with back and armrests
- Cycle stands: Sheffield type cycle stands
- Proposed Railing to POS: Max. 1.1m height metal railing
- Existing Railing: Existing palisade railing

**Planting Schedule**

Proposed Trees	
2no. Ag	Alnus glutinosa
21no. Bp	Betula pendula
5no. Ca	Corylus avellana
10no. Cj	Cercidiphyllum japonicum
14no. Mr	Malus Royal 'Raindrops'
9no. Pc	Pyrus chandlerii
9no. Pp	Prunus padus
5no. Pn	Prunus sylvestris
7no. Qr	Quercus robur
4no. Sa	Sorbus glutinosa

**3.4 Final Site Layout Design**

The layout and orientation of the development support the formation of a coherent and legible urban structure in terms of block layouts and building heights with particular regard to the location of the site, landmarking the approach to Swords, appropriate building frontage to the public realm, creating functional open amenity spaces and access to daylight and sunlight.

The architectural and urban design strategy has been presented in a way that will ensure the development is sustainable, distinctive, complements the urban structure and promotes a strong sense of identity for the area.

The quantum of parking has been minimised in accordance with SPPR4 *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines*, appropriate to the site's location and proximity of public transport. Parking has been designed and located to minimise its impact on public realm and balanced with convenient and secure bicycle and motorbike parking facilities.

The landscape proposal complements and interconnects the open space, and existing tree corridor through a link to the existing public park at the western side.

**3.5 Boundary Treatments**

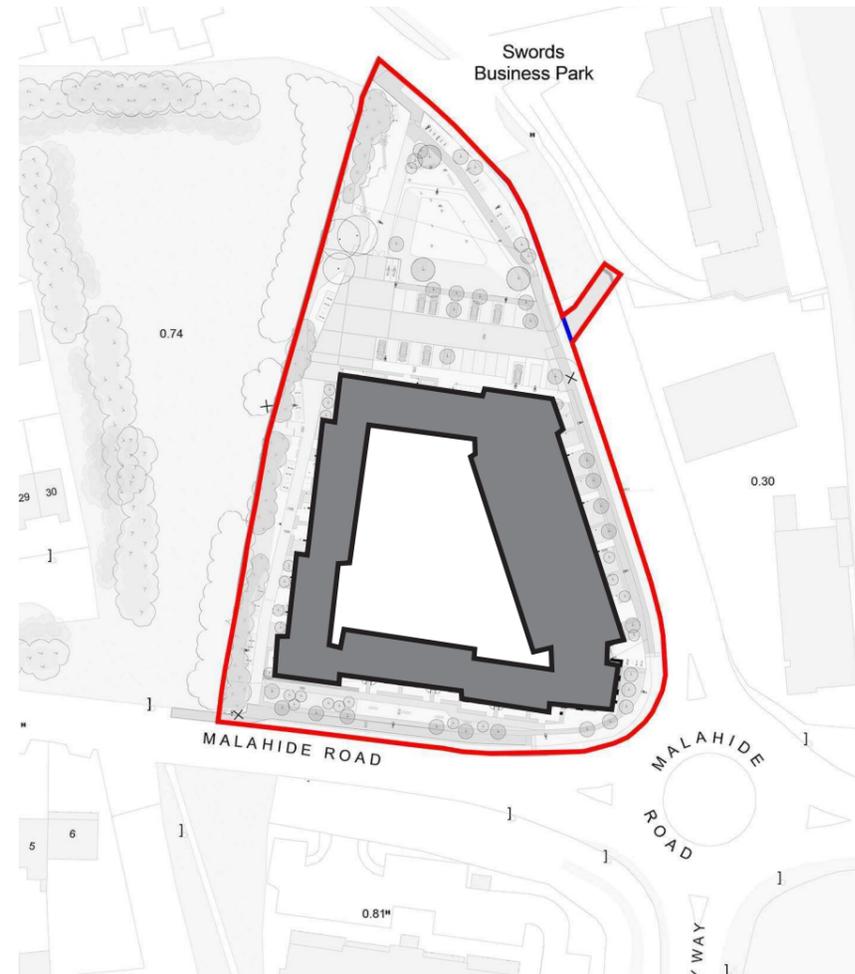
There are differing boundary proposals to the site which respond to adjacent site conditions:

- Retention of existing boundary hedgerow with reinforcement planting along the western boundary with a new link to the adjoining public park.
- Planted/ landscaped areas to the south elevation to create a green buffer between the Malahide Road and the residents at ground floor.
- New east-west and south-north pedestrian and cycle routeway around the site.
- Refer to the Landscape Architects report for more detailed description of the landscape and boundary design.

### 3.6 Proposed Density

The density is calculated on the basis of the 'net' site area having regard to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines. Development also aligns with the policies and objectives set out for Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes and promotes appropriate densities, having regard to factors including the location of the site, accessibility to public transport and the principles of sustainability, compact growth and consolidation.

- Gross Site Area: 0.8792 hectares (total area of red line)
- Net site area: 0.8731 hectares (excluding areas for drainage connections) (Blue line)
- Proposed no. of Units: 123
- Density: 141 uph.



### 3.7 Building Heights

The Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018 Specific Planning Policy Requirements states that “Support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores. 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”.

The development will be provided in a courtyard block arrangement ranging in height from part 4 No. to part 5 No. storeys. Note previous scheme was 6 storeys Residential and 5 storeys commercial. 5 Story commercial due to higher floor to floor level is reflective of 6 story Residential.

Actual heights of the Previous Permitted Scheme:

**Residential Block B:** 18.00mts

**Office Block A:** 18.4mts

A number of surrounding apartments are 3/4 storey; however, this site is more prominent and 4/5 storeys is more appropriate at this location.



### 3.8 Public Open Space Calculation

Section 14.6 of the Fingal Development Plan states that public open space is required at a minimum rate of 12-15% on greenfield sites.

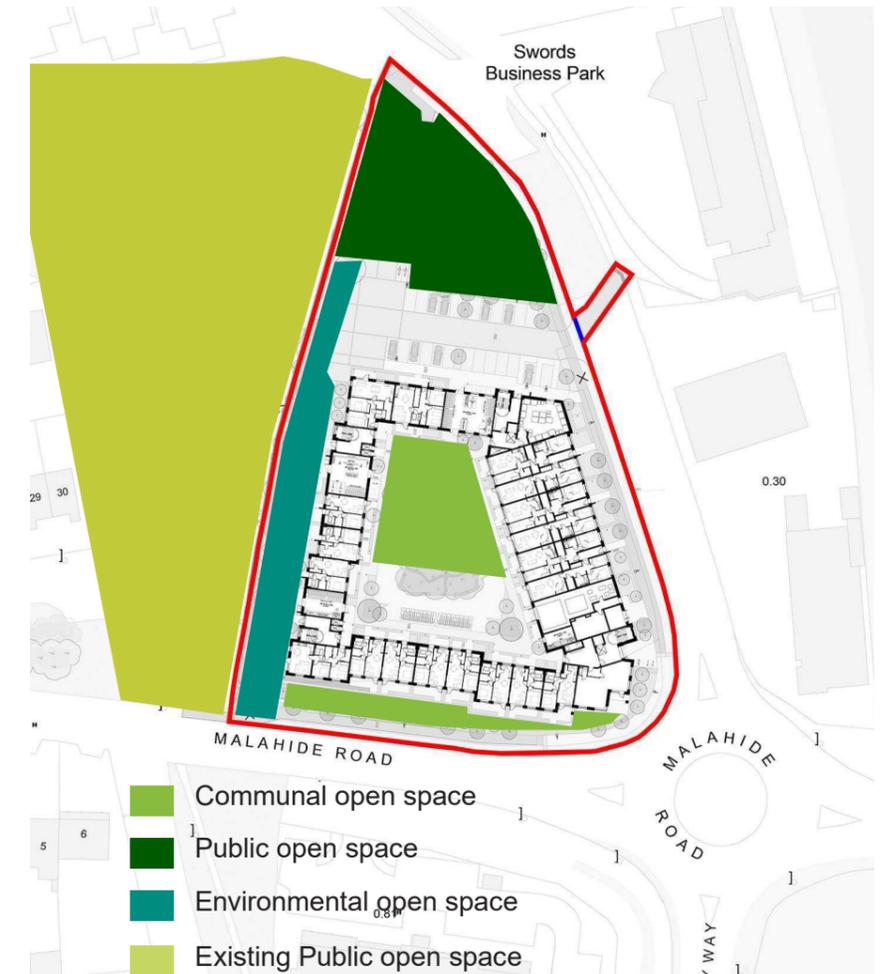
Public open space is located at the north-east and western boundary of the site, and is calculated as follows:

- Net Site Area: 8,731 sq.m
- Required 12%: 1,047 sq.m
- Provided 13%: **1,142 sq.m**
- Environmental open space: **589 sq.m**

### 3.9 Communal Open Space Calculation

Resident communal space is located at the centre of the development (courtyard), and is calculated as follows:

- 1 Bed 55x5 275 sq.m
- 2 Bed (3p) 6x6 36 sq.m
- 2 Bed (4p) 62x7 434 sq.m
- Total Required 745 sq.m
- Total Provided **932 sq.m**





# 4.0 Urban Design

## 4.1 Introduction

This section describes the design rationale for the proposed development under each of the twelve criteria from the *Urban Design Manual*, to demonstrate the urban design of the proposed development.

## 4.2 Context

How does the development respond to its surroundings?

The development of the subject site has been carefully considered within the context of Swords.

The site is bounded to the west by open space, with Seamount View Housing Estate further to the west, to the south by the R106, to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park

The site abuts an existing green open space to the west, where there are some existing semi-mature trees. We propose to enlarge the existing open space with a green corridor to the western boundary and retain the existing trees as an ecological amenity.

The development provides an opportunity to facilitate south-north pedestrian and cycle connectivity at Malahide Road to the north-east. This routeway can continue north-west, along the Swords business park corridor.

## 4.3 Connections

How well connected is the new neighbourhood?

Vehicular access is available via the roundabout on the Malahide Road, connecting the R106 to the site through the wayleave located at the east. There are not existing pedestrian or cycle links into the site. Opportunities for new pedestrian and cycle connections are available from the north, south, east, and west of the site.

The site is highly accessible by bus with the nearest stops located on Malahide Road c. 10-50m from the site boundary. These stops provide access to a variety of bus services including Go Ahead Routes 102/A/P/T and Swords Express Routes 506 & 507 with extensive additional routes accessible within a 10-minute walking distance, including Dublin Bus routes 42, 43 and 142, as set out in detail in the Transport Assessment prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin. The site is also located less than 1km walk from the proposed MetroLink Swords Central Station on the R132.

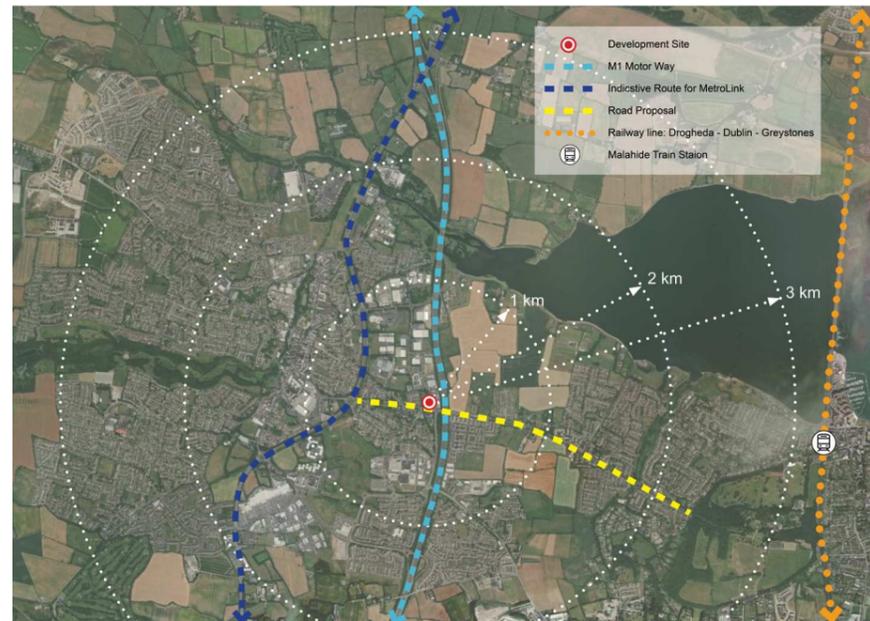


Figure 4 - Road, Train and Metrolink proximity

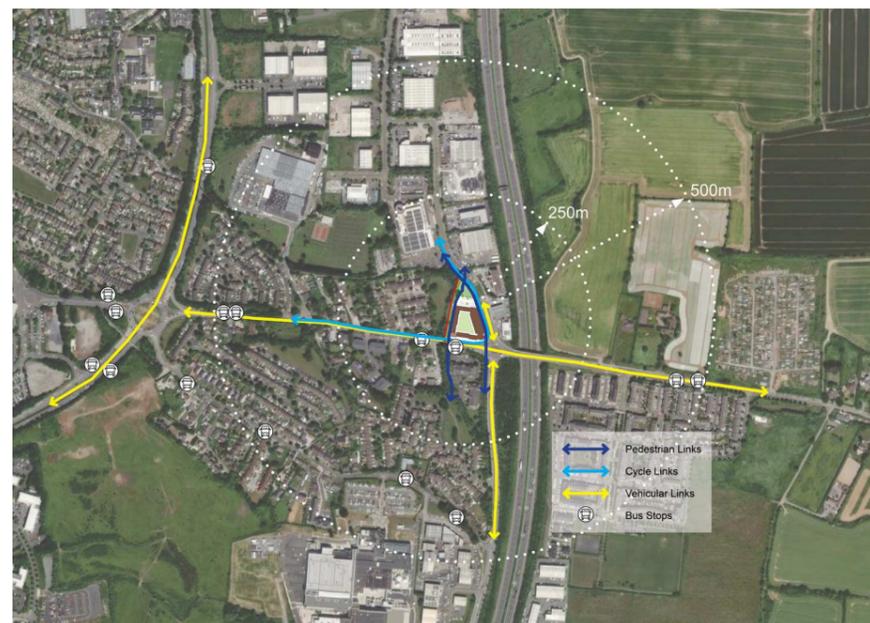


Figure 5 - Pedestrian Links and Bus stops distances

The proposed development provides a walkable street network, which is well connected within the development itself, and includes provision of future pedestrian and cycle connections to the west and north. *Figure 5, Figure 6*

The layout seeks to exploit these opportunities and to provide a well-connected residential neighbourhood, with good, sustainable links.

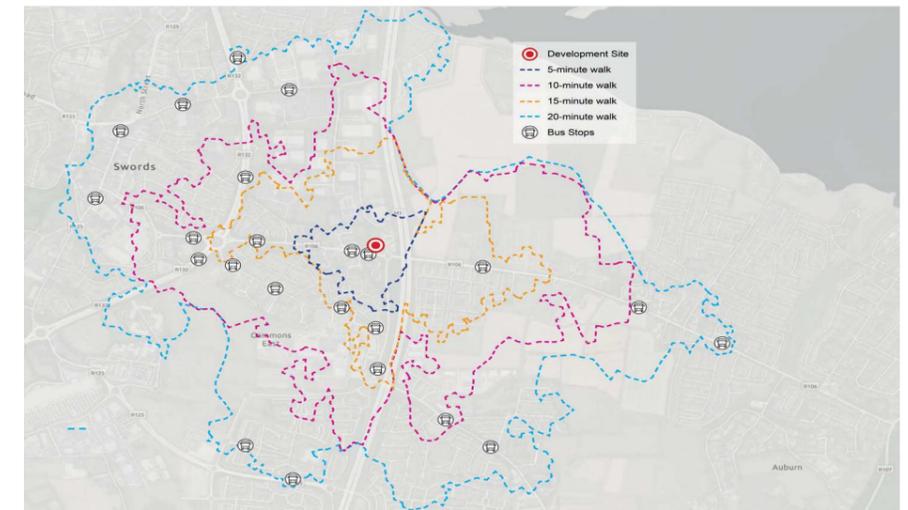
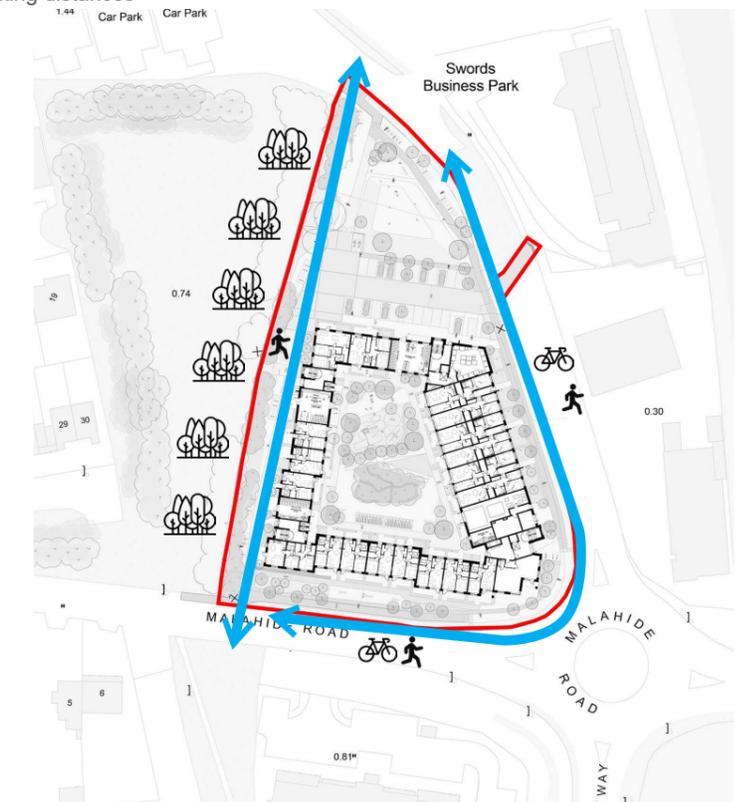


Figure 6 - Walking distances



South-North connectivity is provided by a pedestrian and cycle link through the site at the western side of the site, connecting Malahide Road to the north-east to the Swords Business Park.

The proximity to the site to the MetroLink, brings a great opportunity for residents to use public transport and reduce dependency on car use as a main transport. *Figure 4*

#### 4.4 Inclusivity

How easily can people use and access the development?

The range of units proposed includes 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. All units are compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations, Access, and Use. The proposal allocates a total of 14no. of apartments (11%) for Universal Design units.

The site layout has been developed in line with the Urban Design Manual and based on universal design guidelines. Footpath gradients are generally gently sloped and are no greater than 1:20 where existing site gradients are steeper. Paving surfaces comprise of concrete, pavements, and bound gravel.

A public open space arrangement is proposed that allows for flexibility in recreational activity, for social interaction and active play as well as spaces that are quiet and calming. All spaces are accessible and inclusive for all ages and abilities. The public open space contributes to the character and amenity of the development and it will be a central feature for the community.

Own door access units have been strategically orientated so that their entrances address the public realm, providing active streetscape at the west, north and east of the development. The network of roads, paths and cycle routes ensure full permeability throughout the scheme.



#### 4.5 Variety

How does the development promote a good mix of activities?

The typologies and mix of units which include: 1bed, 2bed(3p), 2bed(4p), and 11% of the units designated to Universal Design, provide a varied mix of apartment types and sizes within a context which is largely 3 and 4 bed houses

1 Bed	2Bed (3P)	2 Bed (4P)	TOTAL APARTMENTS
10	6	3	19
11		15	26
11		15	26
11		15	26
12		14	26
55	6	62	123
44.7%	4.9%	50.4%	100%
123			

Communal facilities, mix of open space and connectivity, become an important part to create a good mix of activities on the open spaces.

Play areas, exercise equipment, range of bike parking and motor bike parking, cargo bikes and mobility scooters store, facilitates a mix of activities around the development and the enlargement of the Public Open Space and its connectivity to the existing park on the western side of the site.

#### 4.6 Efficiency & Density

How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?

The site is located in the transitional zone between the established low-density residential estates to the south-east and south-west and the urban district / town centre to the west of the site.

The design strategy is to provide an efficient scheme with appropriate open space for a quality environment, considerate of the existing landscape, with 123 units in total.

The density and building heights proposed in this development provide an appropriate and balanced response to the existing site context, the need to increase affordable housing provision and the parking needs to serve the accommodation.



View from the eastern road looking towards the north block.



## 4.7 Distinctiveness

How do the proposals create a sense of place?

The proposed development will create a distinctive, well-designed, and attractive urban landscape. The south-east corner will become a landmark on the area establishing a key pedestrian and cycle links around the Malahide Road and connecting pedestrians through the west side link to the POS and Business Park adjacent at the north of the site.

The enclosed courtyard form of the scheme addresses both roads to the South and East of the roundabout, the public open space to the north and the existing park to the west of the site. The building form creates a good sense of enclosure and overlooking onto the streets-helping to make the public realm safer and providing legibility at this important junction.

The South-East corner of the scheme acts as an anchor and serves to address and mark the roundabout. Modest changes in the corner block that faces the roundabout in terms of finishes, parapet height, and balconies, assist in bringing clarity to the building massing.

Figure 8

## 4.8 Layout

How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces?

The layout focuses activity on the streets by creating active frontages with own front doors access to the units at ground floor level located at the north, east and west sides of the building. These units will be provided with a planting buffer to create a separation between the public and the private.

Permeability and connectivity are central to the proposed development. The site layout is developed around two distinct pedestrian and cycle routeways. South-North connectivity is provided by a pedestrian and cycle link through the site at the western side of the site, connecting Malahide Road to the north-east to the Swords Business Park.

The Public Open Space is strategically located at the northern side of the development and contributes to the character and amenity of the development and it will be a central feature for the community. The landscape design compliments the architectural and urban design strategies, giving primacy to the south and east pedestrian and cycle routes.

Existing trees are largely retained in the western open space. The public open space and the communal open space will be planted with native species and low maintenance planting, within a landscape which facilitates both active and passive play.

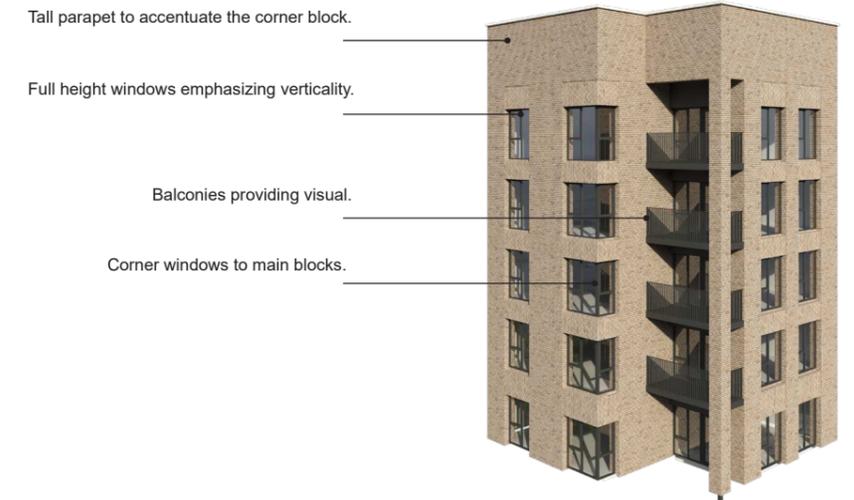


Figure 7 - Existing view from roundabout Malahide Road (south-east)



Figure 8 - Proposed view from roundabout Malahide Road (south-east)