

PROPOSED LARGE SCALE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

AT SPA GLEN, MALLOW, CO. CORK

ON BEHALF OF O'FLYNN CONSTRUCTION CO UNLIMITED COMPANY

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT



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Aerial View of development site with 7No. selected viewpoint locations for photomontages

Introduction

This visual and landscape report is an appraisal of the existing landscape at a site zoned for residential development located at Spa Glen, Mallow, County Cork. It also looks at the wider context of its situation within northern western environs of Mallow town and the changing landscape context as it straddles the Spa Glen Stream corridor which is to become a green infrastructure corridor dividing blocks of zoned lands, those nearing completion north of the stream and those yet to be developed south of the stream. It will describe the proposed development and how this will physically change the site and landscape. It will proceed to assess the likely landscape and visual impacts that will be created due to proposed development within the site area. Mitigation strategies will be explained and residual landscape and visual impacts identified post such mitigation measures.

The landscape and visual assessment of the site and environs has been ongoing since the inception of the project in January 2020 with regular site visits undertaken since then and visits with other

members of the design team at various stages to review and improve the design proposals in relation to traffic safety, heritage and ecology values etc.

Planning Authority development plans, project drawings, 3D views and photomontage images, as well as various specialist reports and documents prepared for the assessment were reviewed in the preparation of this report.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Booklet; ***Verified View Photomontages for Proposed Residential Development at Spa Glen, Mallow, Co. Cork, G-Net 3D, 2022.***

Statement of Competence

Kieran McDonogh B.Arch., Dip. Arch., qualified from the HumberSide Polytechnic in 1990 completing his post graduate diploma within the landscape unit at the School of Architecture. Kieran has been in practice since 1990 and has over thirty years of experience in both architecture and landscape architecture inclusive of the preparation of landscape and visual assessments.

Kieran has been involved in both the architectural and landscape design of this development site at Spa Glen, Mallow from the outset and has prepared both the architectural and landscape master planning.

Methodology

Assessment of the site takes into account the sensitivity of the landscape and its ability to accommodate change. The methodology is founded on national and local government policy guidance, current legislation and best practice. A range of published and unpublished material relating to the site and its environs was consulted.

There are two components to a landscape and visual assessment. The primary is visual impact, that is the degree to which a proposed development and its integral alterations to the existing landscape may be seen. In tandem is the impact on the landscape character, examining responses which may be felt towards the combined effects of the new development.

Landscape character encompasses many other measurable impacts such as noise, odour, ecology, history - as well as emotions and perceptions such as expectations, experience and personal circumstances. It also needs to cross-reference with other appropriate specialist topics such as biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The assessment of visual impact requires an in depth understanding of the site; topography, vegetative cover, existing structures and other features together with the likely carrying capacity of the lands for development. At Spa Glen, Mallow the proposed development is, in the first instance, defined by the zoning first bestowed on the lands by the planning authority. This requires a development delivering primarily residential structures ranging from semi-detached to larger terrace and duplex type structures together with a childcare facility. An area in the south west corner is within the flood plain and needs to be reserved as an open space for recreation and increasing biodiversity value. An essential element of the lands zoning are upgrades to existing roads with new pedestrian crossings and a new road alignment on the existing N72 at the junction with the L5331. There are new pedestrian and bicycle links through the site to encourage and accommodate more sustainable modes of transport. Within the context of the brief outlined by the local authority in its zoning guidance, the site is assessed at a range of scales and on an ongoing basis as the clients brief and resulting designs evolved over time.

A series of key vantage points from which the development proposals would be potentially visible was selected and a set of photomontage views showing the before and after has been prepared.

The assessment of Landscape Character seeks to scientifically examine responses which are felt towards the combined effects of the new development. Such an assessment is complex because it encompasses many other measurable impacts such as noise, odour, ecology, history - as well as emotions and perceptions such as expectations, experience and personal circumstances. Attempts to scientifically measure feelings and perceptions are not reliable.

“13.5.2 Landscape is the context in which all changes take place. Change can be driven by natural forces (eg: climate) but is largely the result of the actions of many different people and agencies, which is often not coordinated.

The challenge we face is to manage our landscapes so that change is positive in its effects, so that the landscapes which we value are protected and those which have been degraded are enhanced. Meeting this challenge is a key element in achieving sustainable development.” (Cork County Development Plan 2014)

Descriptions of landscape effects also need to cross-reference with other appropriate specialist fields such as biodiversity and cultural heritage. Factors such as noise, odour, traffic and safety also influence perception of landscapes and are considered. The range of criteria employed to measure impact are outlined in the Potential Impacts section.

Graphic images have been prepared to assist and inform this assessment these include before and after photographs / photomontages. 3D images were prepared to look at views within the proposed development area. The photomontage viewpoints are from positions located outside the site area. The viewpoints (receptors) were discussed and agreed in advance with the design team as being the key locations to inform a visual and landscape impact assessment. Photomontages are provided.

Receiving Environment - Site Context

The proposed site is located within the development boundary of Mallow Town, a suburban area located at the north east edge of the town. Existing suburban development straddles the Ballyvinitter Road, south of the disused Mallow -Dungarvan railway corridor and north of the existing N72 Mallow to Dungarvan National Road. The N72 road runs alongside the northern bank of the Spa Glen Stream to the south of the Clonmore & Hazelbrooke Estates and the proposed development site. This is a small stream flowing into the site from the east passing through the south west corner of the site before flowing on into a deep wooded glen dropping down to the Mallow Town Centre and its confluence with the Blackwater River. This portion of the site is a floodplain area and must remain undeveloped. North of the railway corridor the lands are zoned as a greenbelt and are in Agricultural use.

From the development site the area to the north is developed with suburban and one-off residential dwellings. There is a strong vegetative backdrop to this development where the trees have grown along and within the disused railway corridor. The land immediately to the east is occupied by a residential development called Hazelbrooke, this is well screened by an existing hedgerow. To the south there is a depression in the landscape which accommodates the Spa Glen flowing from east to west, this has unmanaged hedgerow vegetation with tree lines. South of the stream corridor the lands rise, this area is currently in agricultural use but is zoned as a Residential Reserve Live/Work

Neighbourhood. This will infill the already developed areas between Ballyvinitter and St Joseph's Road and extend further south.

In the distant views beyond the near ridge at St Joseph's Road, agricultural land and woodland is visible on the prominent hill called Knockaroura which peaks at 261m approximately 4kilometres away, well to the south of Mallow and the Blackwater.

To the west across the road that links the N72 and the Ballyvinitter Road there is a field area in agricultural use visible from the proposed site this area is part of the Spa Glen Amenity Corridor. Further west beyond the field area further older residential development called Beechwood Park is visible. The lands continue to rise gently beyond Beechwood but visibility between the site and these areas becomes restricted due to the housing on the lower slope area. There is an existing education campus to the south west but this is screened from view due to the existing woodland along the west side of the Spa Glen. The Spa Glen terrain and vegetation also completely closes and visibility between the proposed site and the Town Centre of Mallow.

The area of the actual site is 8.12Hectares sitting on ground sloping gently from north to south before falling along the N72 / Spa Glen Stream corridor on the southern side of the site. The lands zoned residential in general are at an elevation similar to existing and proposed development areas to the north and east.

Receiving Environment -The Development Site

The subject lands are located within the Spa Glen Townland on the north west side of Mallow town. The site consists of a total landholding of 8.12Hectares which abounds the Ballyvinitter Road to the north; with two lengths of road frontage broken by the presence of Meadowbrook an existing house with extensive grounds indenting the site with its' own frontage on to the Ballyvinitter Road interrupting that of the site. The existing hedgerows are very dense and create an effective visual screen between the site area and the Ballyvinitter Road and the bungalows fronting on to this road. To the east, the Hazelbrooke Estate is built or under construction there is a dense hedgerow along the boundary separating the site from Hazelbrooke and providing good screening. Most of the dwellings in Hazelbrooke are backing onto this hedgerow boundary along the northern section and presenting blank gable ends along the southern section of the boundary.

Due to the site layout of Hazelbrooke there are a number of potential points where connections are possible between Hazelbrooke and any proposed development on the site. Along the south side of the development site there is a road frontage on to the N72 national route Mallow to Dungarvan. This is a narrow 80km speed zone with no pedestrian or bicycle provision and with a dense almost continuous existing hedgerow along the boundary providing excellent visual screening. The roadway is below the level of the site at the eastern section and level with the site on the western section. On the west side of the site a short section of road connects between the N72 and the Spa Glen and Ballyvinitter Roads.

On the southern section the Spa Stream flows through the site with a floodplain area within the site on the northern bank of the stream. The midsection has some hedgerow but generally this road frontage is quite open to view at the road junctions. Views are also quite open to the field opposite (zoned as open space) and the residential areas on the gently rising slopes to the west and north west, Beechwood, The Fairway and River Valley Estates.

The entrances to the development site are two field gates located on the Ballyvinitter Road one on the west side of Meadowbrook (Eircode; P51 R007) and another to the east side. The garden surrounding Meadowbrook has both treelines and hedge screening in place and this naturally separates the development site into two distinct areas. The dwelling is not visible from within the development site.

The key landscape elements on the site are a series of unmanaged hedgerows, a flood plain area in the south west where the Spa Glen Stream briefly enters and exits the site and a disused farmyard complex now overgrown with scrub vegetation. Meadowbrook House indents the site and is densely enclosed with hedging and treelines.



Diagram illustrating the existing vegetation on site

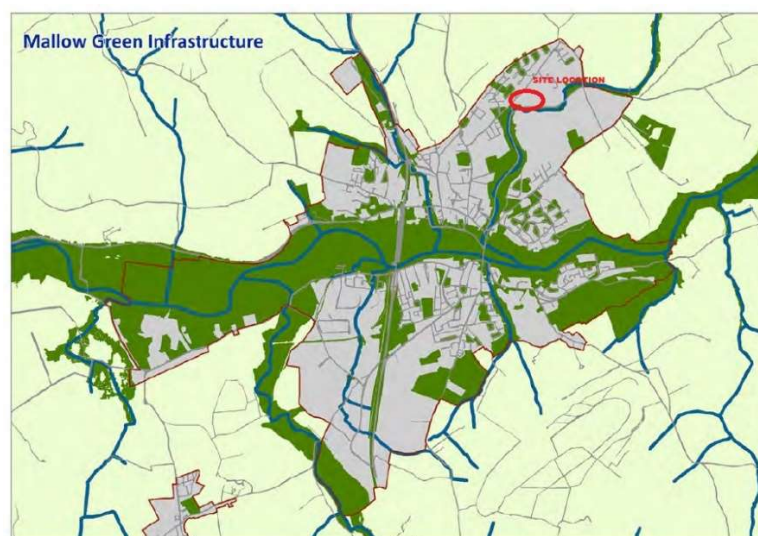


Figure 3.2.3 – Mallow Green Infrastructure Diagram

Mallow Green Infrastructure diagram with site location indicated.



Meadowbrook indents the site and this aerial view shows the extent of screen and shelter vegetation along its' boundaries. This winter view also shows the roofing on the disused farmyard structures.

Between the eastern entrance and Meadowbrook there is a disused farm yard area with some stone buildings and a large steel frame agricultural shed. This area has become overgrown with self-seeded scrub vegetation and the buildings are not visible except for a stone built former cottage structure whose gable and a rubble limestone wall both stand on the edge of the Ballyvinitter Road.



The gable end of the derelict cottage together with a pedestrian gate and limestone rubble walling standing on the carriageway edge of the Ballyvinitter Road.



The farmyard is now used for storage of materials, machinery and tools



Meadowbrook House is screened by existing vegetation.



The treeline and dense coniferous and Beech Hedging along the southern boundary of Meadowbrook.



The treeline and dense coniferous hedging along the eastern boundary of Meadowbrook.



The hedgerow along the Ballyvinitier Road from Meadowbrook to Eircode: P51 HK3V a dwelling on the north east corner of the site from within the site (South Side).



The hedgerow along the Ballyvinitier Road from Meadowbrook to Eircode: P51 HK3V a dwelling on the north east corner of the site from the Ballyvinitier Road (north side).



The existing hedgerow on the eastern boundary of the site with the roof of Eircode: P51 HK3V a dwelling on the north east corner of the site visible.



Looking east on to the existing hedgerow between the development site and Hazelbrooke with more advanced construction



Looking east on to the existing hedgerow between the development site and Hazelbrooke where construction is more advanced.



Looking towards the south east corner of the northern field with the Hazelbrooke development under construction. The north facing slope of the Blackwater valley wall is seen in the distance some 4kms away.



Looking south on to the existing hedgerow of the north field. The fields in the middle ground are in the Keatley's Close area zoned as Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood. In the distance is Kilnaroura a hill peaking at 261m on the south side of the Blackwater Valley.



Looking west from the south end of the north field the hedgerow currently encloses the field as does the vegetation surrounding Meadowbrook to the right. Part of Mallow town (Upper Lacknaloocha) is visible in the distance.



On the southside of the hedgerow separating the north and south fields looking east with Hazelbrooke on the east side of the hedgerow. To the right there is scrub vegetation extending into the site from the southern boundary with the N72 National Road.



Looking south east at the eastern boundary with Hazelbrooke Estate beyond to the right scrub vegetation has spread up the sloped terrain into the field area from the hedgerow along the N72 National Road.



Looking west from the eastern side of the south field with scrub vegetation extending into the field area from the south (left) up from the N72 Hedgerow boundary and from the north in from the hedgerow separating the north and south field areas. The River Valley Estate is seen in the middle ground with a range of tree lines in the distance creating a soft backdrop to the roofscape, the older Beechwood estate is seen on the left.



The view south east from the centre of the south field. Hazelbrooke is beyond the eastern hedgerow with scrub hedgerow vegetation to the right. The power line takes a south eastern route across the landscape. The N72 National Road is concealed by the existing vegetation.



View south from centre of south field the continuity of the hedgerow screening effect along the N72 has some gaps and traffic is visible. The arable fields in the middle ground are zoned as an Urban Expansion Area. Kilnaroura Hill (peak 261m) is visible at a distance of 4km.



A view south-south-east from the middle of the south field looks out over the arable lands Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood. On the ridge (St Joseph's Road) Mallow Rugby Club pitch posts are to the left, with gable end of bungalows in Castle Heights visible in the midway. The ridge along the southside of the Blackwater valley is seen in the distance approximately 4kms away.



A view west from the N72 National Road approaching Mallow Town with dense hedgerow vegetation in place totally screening the development site.



A view west across the south field area. The signage visible is on the N72 National Road clearly shows the existing gap in the continuity of the existing hedgerow which is generally dense and provides an effective visual screen between the carriageway and the site area. In the middle ground to the left is the Lachnaloocha Upper area of Mallow town and the Beechwood Estate. The Fairway and River Valley Estates are seen to the right.



A view west across the south field area. The traffic visible is on the N72 National Road clearly shows the existing gap in the continuity of the existing hedgerow from the N72 junction to the Ballyvinitier Road. The Ballyvinitier Road Hedgerow is broken at the field entrance gate where the pylon and an existing bungalow are seen. The Fairway and River Valley Estates are seen in the middle ground with treelines providing a vegetative backdrop on the hillside in the distance.



A view west from the south field entrance showing gaps in the hedgerow on the west side. The traffic visible is on the N72 and in that corner of the site the Spa Glen stream briefly passes through the site and there is a floodplain space. Beechwood Estate is seen on the hillside. The field area in the middle ground is zoned as an amenity space.



The south field entrance and hedgerow as seen from the Ballyvinitter Road looking west currently concealing the site area.



The south field entrance and hedgerow as seen from the Ballyvinitter Road looking south from the Tinley Park estate entrance and currently concealing the site area.



A view from the west off site looking east across the south field. The farm complex and Meadowbrook are completely concealed by vegetation. The existing hedgerow separating the north and south fields is visible in the to the right of the trees with the roofscape of Hazelbrook further away. The N72 is concealed by the existing hedgerow vegetation on the right.



The south west corner of the south field is in the foreground and this is where the Spa Stream is passing through the site. This portion of the site is a flood plain area. In the distance the row of Poplar Trees denotes the south boundary of Meadowbrook.

Distant View Points

Distant views from the site have been mentioned and include views west to Lacknaloocha Upper and south across the low ridge at St. Josephs Road to the valley wall on the south side of the Blackwater Valley. To the north views are restricted due to a very gentle rise in the gradient combined with a series of hedgerows and treelines. Views east are closed off by hedgerows the existing Hazelbrooke Estate and flat terrain. Any viewpoints such as the 261m peak of Kilnaroura at a 4km distance are so far away that no impact is deemed possible from the development of the proposed site. At such distances and vantage points the entire townscape of Mallow or what may be seen of it is visible and the proposed development will simply form an element in the overall urban landscape.

Characteristics of the Proposed Development



The proposed development abounds the Ballyvinitter Road to the north; with two lengths of road frontage broken by the presence of Meadowbrook an existing house with extensive grounds which indents the site with a section of frontage on to the Ballyvinitter Road interrupting that of the site. The existing hedgerows are very dense and create an effective visual barrier between the site area and the Ballyvinitter Road and the bungalows fronting on to this road. This hedgerow currently restricts the Ballyvinitter Road to a narrow two-way route with a footpath and public lighting along the north side only. There are two proposed entrances into the development site off the Ballyvinitter Road to east and west sides of Meadowbrook. To achieve safe entrances the existing hedgerows, the stone wall and the gable end of the derelict cottage dwelling will have to be removed to provide the necessary sightlines and footpaths along the south side of the roadway. This will change the current mixed character of the road; urban on the north side and rural on this portion of the south side. With the realisation of the proposed development the Ballyvinitter Road will become a more coherent urban environment from Tinley Park through to Clonmore.

To the east, the Hazelbrooke Estate is built or under construction there is a dense hedgerow along the boundary separating the site from Hazelbrooke and providing good screening. Most of the dwellings in Hazelbrooke are backing onto the hedgerow boundary along the northern section and presenting blank gable ends along the southern section of the boundary. The proposed development responds to this arrangement and similarly proposes to have dwellings present their back or side elevations to this boundary. It is proposed to retain the existing hedgerow vegetation with some degree of pruning to reduce the potential for future residents to undertake similar measures in a more ad hoc fashion. The site layout of Hazelbrooke has a number of potential points where

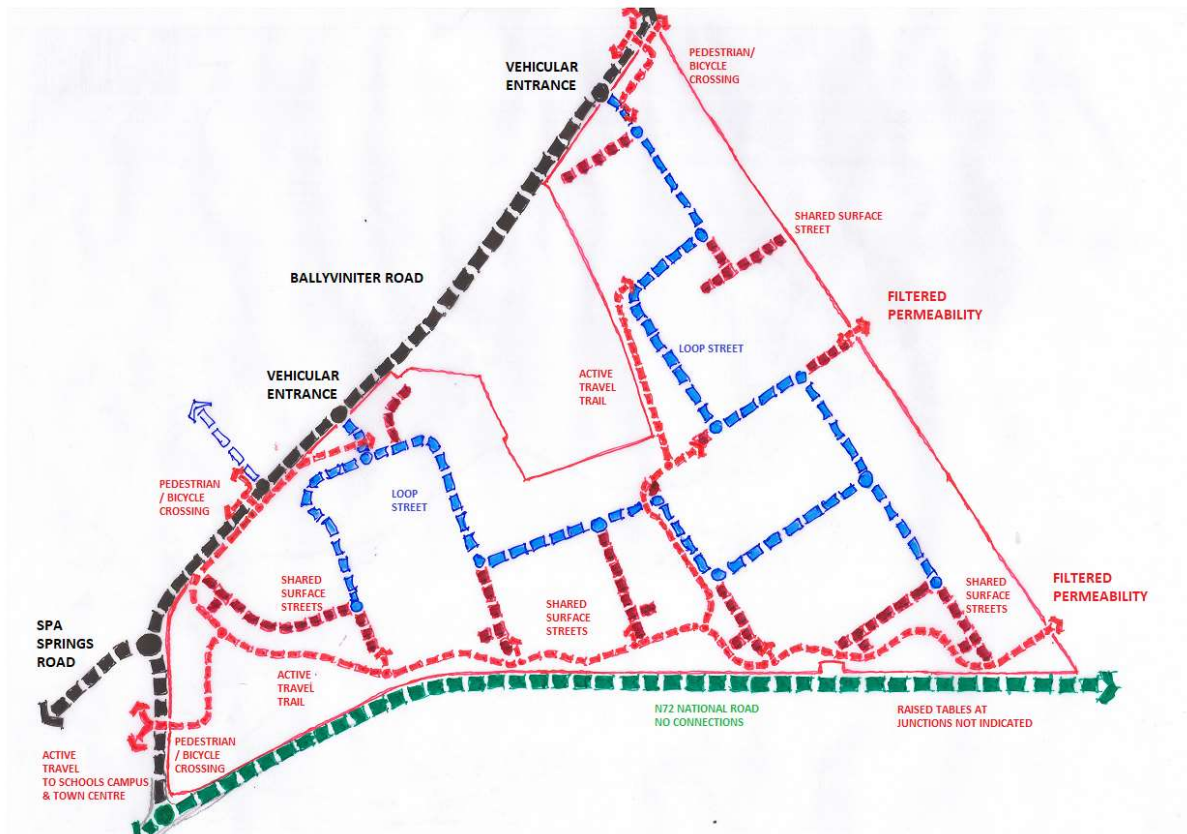
In order to achieve the density requirements required by the residential zoning it is necessary to remove the hedgerow separating the site into two field areas. The hedgerow is quite dense with unmanaged shrub trees but contains no significant large trees. With the two sections of road frontage and the presence of Meadowbrook indenting the site, the development is divided into two sections; east and west. These areas are designed as two distinct character areas. To the west the development will have 60 dwellings with a classic styling with render and raised plaster mouldings and to the east the proposed 126 dwellings will have a contemporary style. The Creche facility is positioned on its own site by the western entrance and will have a contemporary style. Each character area is laid out with a hierarchy of roads some looped with others dead ending for vehicles but mainly remaining thoroughfares for pedestrians and bicycles allowing onward movement on to open space areas and along the trails provided. To discourage vehicles taking routes from one side of the development to the other the internal connect at the north side of the main open space is reduced to a chicane which is circuitous to reach from the eastern side.



A large open space area is positioned between the character areas, with the classic style housing area fronting the west and north sides of the open space and the contemporary character area fronting on to the east side of the space.

The pedestrian and cycle trail which runs along the south of the development is taken north at two points. At the west end a trail leads directly to a crossing point proposed to provide permeability with Tinley Park, River Valley via which a connection with the potential greenway is possible. This trail will also directly connect to the creche facility proposed as part of the development. A further route goes north from the main open space area and gives access into the northern section of the contemporary neighbourhood area. On the north west corner of the contemporary area a

pedestrian/cycle crossing is proposed to achieve permeability with the Cairn Woods Estate through which a future connection maybe made with the potential greenway corridor (Mallow to Waterford via Dungarvan).



Potential Impacts

The methodology for the assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the landscape is based on terminology given in the *'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environment Impact Assessment Reports' August 2017, EPA*

The potential visual and landscape impacts are assessed from within the context of the visual envelope of the site or the Zone of Visual Influence. That is to say the general extents from which the site is visible and significant in terms of the type and scale of development proposed. This is, to a large extent, determined by the general topography and the vegetative covering layer over the topography together with proximity to the site. In the case of this visual and landscape assessment, a series of five key viewpoints were identified for this purpose. To assess the impact of the proposed development on the landscape, photomontages of the proposed development have been generated from each of these key viewpoint locations, as presented in the Photomontage Report.

Impact Definition

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	
Degree of Sensitivity	Parameters
High	Has strong positive overall character containing valuable elements with a high sensitivity to change.
Medium	Has positive general character or elements with some compromise due to former or current usage with sensitivity to further change
Low	Has a neutral to negative character, little or no valued elements where change may be valued
LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE	
Degree of Impact	
Imperceptible	Measurable yet without noticeable consequence, essentially remaining the same
Slight	Noticeable change without change to the landscape sensitivity
Moderate	Alters character of landscape at a level that is noticeable in a portion of the view.
Significant	Alters the character of a sensitive view, change encroaches to become the dominant feature
Profound	Utterly changes the sensitive characteristics through removal, obstruction or alteration
Impact Type	
Neutral	Creates change but does not affect the quality of the environment.
Positive	Creates change that contributes to the quality of the environment
Negative	Creates change that degrades the quality of the environment
Duration of Impact	Duration
Temporary	Present less than or equal to 1 year
Short Term	Present from 1 to 7 years
Medium Term	Present from 7 to 15 years
Long Term	Present from 15 to 60 years
Permanent	Present from 60 years onwards



Viewpoint Locations 01-07

“Verified View Photomontages for Proposed Residential Development at Spa Glen, Mallow, Co. Cork”, G-Net 3D, 2022.

Predicted Impacts

Do Nothing Scenario

In a do-nothing scenario the development site would likely continue temporarily as a derelict farmyard complex together with two fields in agricultural use. The proposed site is, however, zoned by Cork County Council for residential development and it is inevitable that a development similar in nature to what is currently proposed will be permitted and constructed.

Visual Impact

We are informed by previous sections of this assessment that the site does not have a high degree of landscape sensitivity. The development site is generally on flat and gently sloping land on the north side of the N72 and the Spa Stream. At the south west corner of the site the Spa Stream passes

through the site and its course then turns south west and begins a sharp descent to its confluence with the Blackwater in Mallow town centre. To the west, north and east are existing suburban dwellings and developments. There are a few existing individual dwellings and housing estates at close quarters (Hazelbrooke) and others at varying distances with views towards the site. Those more distant viewpoints from the south look across agricultural lands that are also zoned Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood. The proposed development site will therefore become surrounded by similar type development once the zoning to the south of the Spa Stream is realised.

Cork County Council through their zonings have identified the critical landscape features and areas in the environs and afforded these areas protection to ensure that the integrity of the landscape is conserved. The high Landscape value and sensitivity relates mainly to the conservation of the landscape within the visual field of the Blackwater Valley together with the lower gorge like area of the Spa Glen where the retention of vegetation on the valley walls and ridges is prioritised with zoning objectives and tree preservation orders in place. The Spa Stream and Glen are an important green infrastructure element in the landscape positioned south of the site and passing through its south west corner. The south side of the site has the potential to reinforce and extend this green corridor in accordance with zoning objective MW-GC-01.

While on plan it appears that the site area is situated in an area potentially exposed to views from all sides existing residential development, tree lines, hedgerows, around and beyond the site restrict site exposure from the north and the east. The site area is generally exposed to the south and west but the lands are not prominent and roofscapes are visible of the existing Hazelbrooke development immediately east of the site from available vantage points. The site has little exposure to the Spa Glen corridor which the planning authority want to improve upon as a green corridor and an amenity for the district.

Viewpoint 01 Tinley Park



In the before view existing hedgerows close the vista from existing dwellings. The overhead wire-cape is unsightly. The L5331 is a very busy but narrow road with a footpath only on one side. No space is available for bicycle paths.



The photomontage shows the hedgerow and wire-scape removed. Dwellings front on to but are stepped back from the Ballyvinitter Road but are accessed from within the development. This will make the road frontage landscaping more coherent and effective. The initial impact will be negative but this will diminish in the short to medium term as the replacement hedgerow landscaping matures. The Ballyvinitter Road will become a more urban environment. The streetscape will be attractive and provision for Active travel will become available to existing residents and accessible via the road crossing proposed at this location. This will also help to calm traffic speed along this section of the road.

Viewpoint 02 Cairn Woods



In the before view the hedgerows close the vista from existing dwellings. The L5331 is a very busy but narrow road with a footpath only on one side. No space is available for bicycle paths. The footpath on the left terminates abruptly without any crossing point.



The proposed development requires the removal of the existing hedgerow which will have a negative impact visually and ecologically. It is however an unkempt hedgerow and at odds with the general suburban streetscape. The proposed development brings more order and coherence to this section of the Ballyvinitier Road. The development is setback from and fronts on to the existing road with an extensive landscaped open space mitigating the loss of the hedgerow. The proposed crossing point will reduce traffic speed and make the road space safer for pedestrians and Bicyclists. There will be an initial negative impact but this will diminish in the short to medium term as the proposed landscaping matures.

Viewpoint 03 Hazelbrooke



The existing streetscape is recently built and landscaping has not yet softened the street environment. The boundary hedgerow with the development is all that is softening the scene.



The boundary hedgerow with the development is proposed to be removed across a 3m width to connect the proposed pedestrian and Bicycle trail directly with the Hazelbrooke Estate to provide permeability. A Duplex unit block is just visible above the hedgerow. The development will have a positive impact from this viewpoint as it allows for a more direct active travel route towards the Schools Campus, Mallow Town Centre and Mallow Town Park

Viewpoint 04 Castle Heights



The existing view looks north across lands zoned Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood from an estate of Bungalows whose frontages are not oriented towards the site area.



The proposed development nestles into the scene with minimal impact some field space is covered but the intervening hedgerows and treeline conceal much of the development proposed. The impact of the development from this location is neutral.

Viewpoint 05 N72 - L5331Junction



The existing streetscape is incoherent, the boundary of the site is not well defined. The N72 is a very busy national road and along this section it is very narrow. The existing hedgerows are well formed on both sides of the road.



The proposed development is set well back from this boundary due to the Spa Stream and flood zone running through the south west area of the site. The development has minimal impact from this location especially due to the retention of hedgerows, planting of new hedgerows and further dense planting proposed along the south and west boundaries. Road improvement works will improve this view but necessitate the loss of the existing hedgerow. This is mitigated with the construction and planting of a 320m long new sod and stone dyke with a 2m wide hedgerow planted on top. This is a negative ecological impact but the impact is temporary and will diminish as the hedgerow matures.

Viewpoint 06 Beechwood Park



The existing street arrangement focusses views toward the development site. The trees on the hill to the left are within Meadowbrook. The trees in the foreground are along the N72 national road and the Spa Stream. Hazelbrooke Estate roofscape is visible in the distance.



The scene changes little from this viewpoint with the existing pasture exchanged for the proposed dwellings and roofs. The existing tree vegetation remains intact and continues to soften the scene. There is a minor negative visual impact as the townscape becomes more filled in but the development is nestled into the landscape very successfully from this viewpoint location.

Viewpoint 07 River Valley



The existing viewpoint looks across an open space within the River Valley Estate. In the background the Hazelbrooke Estate is visible.



The scene changes little from this viewpoint with the existing pasture exchanged for the proposed dwellings and roofs. The existing tree vegetation remains intact and continues to soften the scene. There is a minor negative visual impact as the townscape becomes more filled in but the development is nestled into the landscape very successfully from this viewpoint location.

Impacts on Adjacent dwellings

The development along the Ballyvinitter Road is designed to appropriately address the road and the existing dwellings fronting on to that road. Together with footpaths, pedestrian/bicycle crossing points and landscaping. The area will become a more coherent urban landscape and a safer place for pedestrians and bicyclists with the three new crossing locations proposed. Overhead wires crossing the development site are to be removed which will have a positive visual impact. The development is exposed along this edge and the mass and scale of the new neighbourhood is broken down into two distinct character areas & broken by the presence of Meadowbrook and its garden separating the site road frontage into two sections this reduces visual impact. The current view on to hedgerows is pleasant and will change which may be a negative impact for some existing residents. To mitigate the proposed development fronts on to the Ballyvinitter Road and avoids an external enclosure, this will create a more integrated feel with the existing dwellings. Some hedgerow planting will be reinstated and elsewhere along the road frontages space is reserved for landscaping and open space amenity. These areas will become more and more attractive as they mature therefore any negative impact will diminish over time.

Impacts from other locations

Other locations are too distant from this site to be impacted upon. The site is well concealed from the east and north and has limited exposure to the distant hills; the valley wall south of the Blackwater River. The hills are some 4km away. There is no visibility between Mallow Town Centre or the Schools Campus south west of the site due to the deeply incised Spa Glen with its densely wooded slopes.

Construction Impacts

The timeframe for construction of the development will be over a five-year period and therefore it will have differing impacts at different times during that period, dependent on what is under construction and how much of it at any given time. The early phases will see the more prominent locations on the western and northern sides of the site developed first and the work in this area will create temporary impacts. These road and earth remodelling works will attract attention and increase the visual disturbance experienced, resulting in a moderate, negative, temporary impact.

These early works will involve the formation of the entrances to the development site from the Ballyvinitter Road. Once these works are implemented, mitigation measures will reinstate turf, shrub and tree vegetation and the landscaping and proposed townscape will be put in place. Where possible sod and stone wall with mixed native hedgerow planting will be repositioned and reinstated.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

As with all development and in particular the development of greenfield sites, impacts are inevitable. From the outset of the design process mitigation has been considered in order to minimise the potential negative impact the proposed development may have on the environs at this location in Mallow Town and in particular impacts from the selected viewpoint locations (Photomonatge Report).

Impact on the existing Hazelbrooke dwellings backing on to the eastern boundary is mitigated with the retention of the existing hedgerow and proposing rear elevations and gardens on to the boundary. This generally creates a back to back relationship with minimum 22m distancing.

Mitigation will be in place along the southern boundary of the site bounding with the N72 Mallow to Dungarvan Road in the form of the retention of the existing hedgerow trees and the augmentation of vegetation to infill gaps along the existing hedgerow together with extensive additional planting to create further screening and to mitigate for the loss of hedgerows and biodiversity elsewhere on the development site. This will extend the existing woodlands straddling the Spa Stream further west toward the Town Centre and help to provide a deeper vegetative break between the Spa Glen/Ballyvinitier District of the town and the Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood area south of the Spa Stream corridor.

The development will deliver sustainable transport infrastructure that does not exist in this district at the present time. There will be permeability between the proposed site to existing neighbourhoods such as Hazelbrooke, Tinley Park and Cairnwoods with direct connections proposed and with two new pedestrian / Bicycle crossings. Permeability for sustainable transport is proposed between the general district and Mallow Town Centre as well as the Residential Reserve Live/Work Neighbourhood area to the south via the Pedestrian and bicycle trails through the proposed development to a further pedestrian /bicycle crossing at the west of the site enhancing access to the Spa Glen (N72) footpath and the to the Spa Springs Road leading to the schools campus off Fair Street further west.

The development along the Ballyvinitier Road is designed to appropriately address the road and the existing dwellings fronting on to that road. Together with footpaths, pedestrian/bicycle crossing points and landscaping. The area will become a more coherent urban landscape and a safer place for pedestrians and bicyclists with the three new crossing locations proposed. The development is exposed along this edge and the mass and scale of the new neighbourhood is broken down into two distinct character areas. The development will also front towards the south so that it presents the best possible elevation towards the south to the N72 national road and towards the urban expansion zoned lands further south.

Impact on bio-diversity due to the removal of hedgerows and scrub woodland is mitigated with the retention of as much existing vegetation as possible in particular in the area along the N72 Roadside and the Spa Stream on site. Some meadow areas are to be included to broaden the range of habitat within the development. The wet meadow on the stream edge will be retained as existing without path routes proposed to access this area. The eastern boundary hedgerow is proposed to be retained. Bicycle and pedestrian trails are proposed to enable access through and around the amenity space area to the public in a managed way minimising impact on the existing habitats and new biodiversity plantings.

Residual Impacts

Mallow is an expanding town and the proposed zoned development lands at Spa Glen are in the vicinity of a range of existing residential developments and lands zoned for residential and commercial and amenity developments. The construction of a residential development will therefore infill, a gap at the south west quadrant of the Spa Glen/Ballyvinitier District of the town bringing more coherence to the townscape already in place.

With mitigation strategies in place, the development once completed will generally result in neutral to slight negative impact, the negative impacts arising are due primarily to the change from open pasture lands to a residential neighbourhood. The development overall will not have any significant or profound residual landscape or visual impacts except on the individual property dwellings at close

proximity accustomed to a rural outlook. The design of the proposed development has, however, mitigated the extent of impacts where ever possible. These dwellings are surrounded by or overlook lands zoned for change from agricultural to residential and commercial use. It is therefore an inevitability that they too become integral elements in the expanded townscape.

The Spa Glen development will become a permanent element in the urban landscape and the proposed buildings will front out toward the surrounding roads with excellent elevational treatments and landscaping. The sub-division into character areas and positioning of open spaces and biodiversity corridors will reduce the apparent volume of the development proposed. The visual impact of the proposed development will be permanent.

Worst Case Scenario

In the worst-case scenario, a development could be halted before it completes, as was seen for some developments such as Hazelbrooke on adjoining lands as a result of the 2008 economic downturn. In such a 'Ghost Estate' situation ground works and indeed structures could be partially complete and begin to look progressively unsightly for a period of time until the economy recovers. The phasing of the development has the areas more exposed to external viewpoints earmarked for early completion and this will minimise the potential for incomplete site development work and building construction.

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