

## Landscape Design Rationale – Landscape Architecture

Project: Dalguise House, Monkstown, Dublin

Prepared on behalf of: GEDV Monkstown Owner Limited

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### 1.0 Introduction

The objective of the design rationale is to describe the landscape and external works as part of the proposed development of the site (Dalguise House, Monkstown, Dublin). This will include the demolition of certain existing structures on site and the construction of 481 apartments (comprising a mix of studios 1,2,3 bed apartments), three 3 bed houses and the provision of seven units within existing structures, in addition to the provision of various amenities, a restaurant and childcare facility.

The provision of landscaping and amenity areas will include a central lawn area, garden areas with associated play and seating provision, a new arrival area to the north of Dalguise House and a south facing terrace to be used for outdoor eating with views of the restored Walled Garden, which will be converted into an Edible Forest. There will be various wilderness trails around the periphery of the site that open up to glades with play, seating, sculptures and structures, such as an elevated bird hide and cantilevered yoga platform. Improvements will include addition tree planting and other planting, biodiversity measures and greater permeability across the site with three additional pedestrian access points, linking to the neighbourhoods to the east and west and an additional vehicle gateway to the north via Purbeck. The landscape proposals also include associated ancillary development such as pedestrian/cyclist facilities, lighting, SUDS, boundary treatments, bin and bicycle storage. The Landscape Plan shall be accompanied by a timescale for its implementation, including a minimum 18-month landscape maintenance period and a defects liability clause

This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by Cameo & Partners Landscape Architects.

Cameo & Partners Landscape Architects visited the site in 2021 in order to observe conditions on site, such as existing trees, the neighbouring urban environment, boundaries, and other items, which have had a bearing on the design process.

## 2 Landscape Appraisal and Design Approach

### 2.1 General

The site is located in Monkstown, Dublin, within the administrative area of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The greenfield site extends to circa 3.58 ha and forms part of the wider curtilage of Dalguise House, (Protected Structure RPS No. 870).

The site is currently accessed via a driveway from the R119 Monkstown Road. The site adjoins the new development at Purbeck on Monkstown Road, this will provide a new road access to the development.

The site comprises of Dalguise House, 2 gate lodges and a dwelling house, walled garden and associated buildings and garden lands. There is significant tree coverage and vegetative screening from the surrounding area, which is predominantly residential. Parts of the site are of a steep topographical nature and there are many existing mature trees on site. The site borders the existing Stradbrook stream to the north, the neighbouring Cheshire Homes site and Richmond Park development to the east and south and the Monkstown Valley residential development to the west.

A landscape masterplan was developed for the site as part of the design approach and study of site. Particular attention was paid to the existing trees and structures of historical significance. The proposed landscape attempts to retain as many high value trees as possible and also retain and honour historical structures such as the walled garden wall, while re-using some of the quality materials on the site, such as the existing cast iron railings and granite cobbles etc. The following documents, among others, were used for design guidance:

- The Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Development Plan (2022-2028)
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020)
- Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

## 2.2 Existing trees on site

The Leinster Trees Ltd. were commissioned to update the Tree Survey and Report in compliance with BS 5837:2012 created by The Tree File Ltd. The survey and report of the existing trees were used as an important tool in the design process and enabled the consultant team to try to reduce impact on trees of high value. These documents are included separately as part of this submission.

In addition to the tree survey and report by the project arborist, Leinster Trees Ltd produced an arboricultural assessment plan, which showed trees for retention and trees lost due to the development. Some 142 trees of C grade value and above will be retained. In the incidences where it will not be possible to keep a tree of grade C value or above because of the proposed development, replacement trees are proposed. Additional landscape measures have been taken such as the installation of no dig paving and no dig planting within areas of root protection zones, so that there is no unnecessary tree loss of high-grade trees due to the landscaping proposals. Where possible edging has been proposed to minimise the impact on root protection zones. The existing winding avenue that leads up to Dalguise House will be repaired and resurfaced with Buff macadam, but this will be done on top of the existing surface, so further excavation will not be necessary. In most areas the width of the original road will be retained with distinct incidences of road widening for passing bays. However, these passing bay areas have been carefully chosen so as not to encroach on existing root protection zones. The road will act as a shared surface, and not be the main vehicular route into the development, therefore widening the road for a pavement is not necessary.

Where possible existing trees have been used to create focal points within the landscape plan, this includes the tree in the garden area between Blocks E & F, trees which fall within the area of the outdoor creche and the trees associated with the tree top walk, in addition to a high value tree to the west of the site within a play node. Where structures such as the tree walk, elevated

play nets and outdoor creche decking have been created around the trees, these structures will be self-supporting and not put any loading on the trees. Foundations and joists will be positioned selectively and in a considered way to reduce impact on any root protection zones.

### 2.3 Existing and Proposed Boundaries

#### Northern boundary

The mesh fence that runs along the northern part of the site is in disrepair will be replaced, a proposed road bridge will act as a connection with the Purbeck development and create the main vehicular access to the site. There will be some minor maintenance works to reduce overgrown planting and in areas where there are no root protection zones additional native shrub planting will be provided. The proposals will include the removal of existing blockwork on the southern bank of the stream where this falls within the planning boundary and is possible without damaging the root protection zones of the existing trees. This will allow for ecological improvements along small stretches of the stream.

#### Eastern Boundary

The eastern boundary to Cheshire Homes site is currently a mesh fence surrounded by dense vegetation and existing trees. Maintenance works are proposed to reduce overgrown vegetation and the mesh fence will be upgraded to a 2m Wire mesh fence using existing foundations.

Further south along the eastern boundary, the existing boundary is formed by concrete block and stone walls. These will remain but a hedge will be planted in front of these walls and the concrete block wall will be hydroseeded to allow for a more pleasing aesthetic.

#### Southern Boundary

The southern boundary is comprised of a stone wall. This will be retained, and any overgrown vegetation cut back, managed and supplemented with new native planting in areas outside of the root protection zones.

#### Western Boundary

The stone wall continues within the southwest corner of the site near the coach house, to the north of this lies a continuous concrete block wall which runs all the way up to the coach house in the northwest part of the site. There are several existing mature trees along this wall and therefore the boundary will be retained as is, but hydroseeded for increased biodiversity and better visual aesthetics.

#### Walled Garden Boundary

There is an existing wall garden located to the south of Dalguise house with a granite wall. This wall will be retained and extended in certain places to renovate the walled garden. Access to the garden will be through existing gaps in the wall or through gaps created from the removal of ancillary buildings. Existing fruit trees will be retained and the wall will be supplemented with new planting. Sections of existing path that follow the alignment of the wall will be retained.

The boundary strategy is illustrated within the DAS and Combined General Arrangement drawings (C0135 L100 series) prepared by Cameo+Partners and included in this planning application.

### 3 Landscape Strategy

#### 3.1 General

The proposed landscape strategy has been developed by the landscape architects in close collaboration with other disciplines in the design team. Focus was placed on retaining the existing trees on site where possible with minimal re-grading in root protection areas. Therefore, this has impacted the distribution of the communal open space and public open space.

The general landscape design objectives are to:

- Establish a high-quality parkland space that is in keeping with the historical era of Dalguise House.
- Retention and enhancement of existing historical features such as the tree lined avenue approach to Dalguise House, the Gate lodges, Coach House and the Walled Garden.
- Retention of high-quality mature trees, and increased tree planting
- Maximise views towards the coastline and views towards the historical Dalguise House
- Create a predominantly public landscape with open space for locals and visitors to enjoy with greater permeability and potential improved accessibility to the wider townscape.
- Facilitate pedestrian/cycle links with the wider neighbourhood.
- Introduce environmental elements that residents and visitors can interact with and learn from.
- Increase biodiversity and management of the site.
- Introduce SUDS in a way that benefits amenity
- Minimal intervention is being sought with manicured areas only where it would be in keeping from a historical perspective

#### 3.2 Public Open Space

This landscape consists of a sequence of different open spaces that are open to the public. Not all of these are accessible for all - due to the steep topography of the existing site and the desire to retain as many high value trees as possible and therefore undertake minimal regrading within root protection zones.

However, the landscape masterplan does provide 6,350 sq m of public open space that is accessible and usable by all, well over and above the 15% requirement of 5,370 sq m. This includes the following areas:

- The central lawn; this area comprises of a formal lawn with meadow planting and mounds to the sides, circuitous paths edged with rills and planting beyond. It includes an outdoor pavilion with indoor and external seating opportunities and other opportunities for seating within the lawn, with great views towards Dalguise House, framed by the trees. There is no play equipment in this area, but the landscape mounds and meadow and rills will provide a playable landscape.
- The garden between Blocks E & F; this area includes a raised timber deck to the north of Block E with tables and chairs and a more enclosed garden and play area which is characterised in part by the existing mature tree at its centre and also by the provision of another mature tree (Scotts Pine) rising up from a hole in the podium/basement floor.
- The woodland area west and north of Block G; this area comprises of several play nodes at ground, the elevated walkway and elevated play nets and the surrounding woodland landscape.

- The Walled Garden; this area includes the terrace directly to the south of Dalguise House which has provision for outdoor eating and drinking with views of the house to the north and the restored wall garden to the south. It also includes the regenerated walled garden. The Walled Garden will be split into a more active area with play to the north and a quiet, reflective space to the south, where people can grow and pick edible plants and rest in this sheltered spot. Plant beds will contain mainly edible plants and trees, including herbs, fruits, nuts and vegetables, but also plants of botanical interest. An edible forest approach will be used with the trees planted in an orchard style. The walled garden wall will be retained and lengthened while access into the walled garden will be at points where there is already a break in the wall. The two existing trees of value will be retained within the design. There will be interesting structures within the garden - such as a long pergola trained with fruit trees. Along the paths there will be benches for rest and relaxation. Within the planting there will be areas for beehives, insect hotels and bird tables. Growing information boards will be positioned in key areas to educate people about the edible forest approach

### 3.3 Communal Open Space

The proposals allow for 3,880 sqm of communal open space (above the required 3,869 sqm based upon the communal open space for the apartments and the additional communal open space to compensate for units without, or with a shortfall in private open space). This includes

- The garden area between Blocks D & E; which consists of a play area with water play, seating provision, and associated planting including a raised planter.
- The communal roof terrace on Block E, which includes outdoor dining and seating provision enclosed within raised planters with views of the coastline to the north and a viewing deck.
- The courtyard by the Coach House
- Woodland areas to the north and south of the site that include resting and play opportunities and sculpture interspersed within the woodland environment.

In most places informal boundaries exist between public open space and communal space, such as changes in level/planting etc. but where no such boundaries exist informative signs that do not restrict the natural flow of the site will highlight the change in use.

The Communal and Public Space strategy is illustrated within the DAS prepared by Cameo+Partners and included in this planning application.

### 3.4 Play

The 'Play Standards' in the 2020 Apartment Guidelines were used for design guidance.

The play strategy proposes three different types of play experience within the site:

- Play off the ground (160 sq m) - Play which is mainly elevated off the ground to ensure minimal disruption to root protection areas and a different level of interaction with the existing trees and canopy. This includes the tree top walk and elevated play nets.
- Natural looking & sculptural play (903 sq m) - Play made out of timber and stone which feels in keeping with its natural environment. This includes Stepping Stumps, Existing Fallen Logs, Timber Climbing Ramp, Logs, Play Boulders, Jumping Discs, Timber Stilted Balance Beam.
- Naturally occurring play (1344 sq m) - Play encouraged by landscape features - such as depressions and mounds, slopes, dry swales, woodland, wildflowers.

This amounts to 2,407 sq m of playable landscape across the masterplan, some of which is within the public open space and other areas that fall within the communal space. The play areas are spread

across the site, with most of the areas provide a variety of equipment that appeals to different ages - 0-5yrs, 5-11yrs, and 11yr plus. The exception to this is the smaller play areas to the north that only contain equipment for 0-11yrs. The elevated tree walk will not be restricted to certain ages, but adult supervision will be necessary for under 5yrs.

The proposed play equipment will be designed and manufactured in accordance with standards EN 1176 and EN 1177. There will be a mix of impact absorbing play surfaces including loose bark mulch in areas of root protection zones and bonded rubber mulch that looks like bark mulch within the gardens where root zones are not impacted. Within the walled garden a high quality artificial grass will be used as the play safety surface to ensure that it is fitting with the Walled garden character.

A list of all play equipment can be found within the DAS and Combined General Arrangement drawings (C0135 L100 series) prepared by Cameo+Partners and included in this planning application.

### 3.5 Access

The site is currently accessed via a driveway from the R119 Monkstown Road. This access point leads to the historical winding avenue that leads up to Dalguise House. The road is currently narrow and not conforming to standards for a two-way route. Increasing the width of this road for two-way traffic would have a detrimental effect on the existing trees. Therefore, another access route through the adjoining Purbeck development is proposed. This new access route will be the main vehicular access and lead directly into the basement of the development where there will be underground parking. This was heavily influenced by the desire to retain as many high value trees as possible in this part of the site.

The existing winding avenue that leads up to Dalguise House will be repaired and resurfaced with Buff macadam, but this will be done on top of the existing surface, so further excavation will not be necessary. In most areas the width of the original road will be retained with distinct incidences of road widening for passing bays. However, these passing bay areas have been carefully chosen so as not to encroach on existing root protection zones. The road will act as a shared surface, and not be the main vehicular route into the development, therefore widening the road for a pavement is not necessary.

Another objective for the site was to facilitate future increased cycle and pedestrian permeability. Three additional access points are facilitated within the new landscape masterplan, two to the east and one to the west, subject to appropriate consents, to link the site with the adjoining neighbourhoods, so that it is easy for the locals to benefit from the new amenity of the site. The access route to the west and the southern eastern access will enable cycle access in addition to pedestrian access with a wide gate and paths leading on from these access points. The third access point to Cheshire Homes development to the northeast will be for pedestrians only, as here narrower 1.2m bark chip paths connect with the site so as not to interfere with root protection zones. All pedestrian/cycle access points will be secured with lockable cast iron gates, but these are intended to stay open for the majority of the time.

These proposed access points can be seen on the General Arrangement Drawings supplied by Cameo+Partners Ltd as part of the submission (C0135 L100 series).

### 4.0 Proposed Planting

The Landscape Softwork Plans (C0135 L300 series) prepared by Cameo & Partners Landscape Architects illustrate the location and extent of different planting and tree types – such as flowering lawn, managed long meadow, bulbs, swale, marginal/emergent and aquatic planting, hedges and tree planting as well as existing ground flora and trees to be retained and managed.

#### 4.1 Proposed Trees:

There are a large range of trees on site including native, ornamental varieties and complementary species. There is also a range of tree ages and condition with the majority of trees being mature and of fair condition as per the tree survey.

The scheme proposes 213 new trees to be planted, using many of the same species as the existing trees with some additional complementary species to increase biodiversity and sustainability of tree cover. Tree species were selected based on suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, longevity and biodiversity.

Proposed trees have been categorised into different types for different positions/areas within the landscape masterplan. These include:

- Large parkland trees
- Native/naturalistic trees
- Ornamental trees
- Swale trees
- Edible trees
- Main avenue trees

Tree species can be referenced within the DAS supplied by Cameo+Partners Ltd as part of the planning submission.

Trees planted will be a combination of Mature and Semi-Mature species. Clear Stem Trees will be specified to have a range of sizes: 60-70 Girth for the Large Parkland Trees, 40-45 Girth 30-35 Girth for other categories. These will have a minimum of 2m clear stem.

Multi Stem Trees will be specified to be at least 4-5m high with canopy lifted by at least 1m.

Espaliers will be 3-4m high.

Where possible trees will be planted in tree pits as part of the SUDs strategy and to increase the health of the trees. This will not be possible where there are root protection zones.

Trees within the podium will either be planted in raised landscape mounds or within raised planters to ensure they receive enough build up for healthy, sustainable growth.

#### 4.2 Proposed Planting:

The soft landscape strategy proposes seeding the majority of grass areas with a long meadow mixture with the exception of the central lawn area and grass within 1m of paths/roads, which will have a shorter flowering lawn mixture. Grass mixtures along swales and pond edges will consist of a suitable wetland species. Woodland floors will remain as is, apart from where there is too much disruption to the understorey. In these areas a woodland meadow mix will be seeded.

Along the main avenue there will be some bulb planting punctuating the route in areas and bulb planting will also be used selectively in the main garden areas and central lawn.

Along the periphery of the site native shrub planting and hedges will be introduced in areas that are free from root protection zones.

Edible plants (all edible forest layers) will be specified within the walled garden and climbers will be planted at the base of the walled garden wall and entrance archways to achieve a secret garden character.

Ornamental planting is proposed directly around the blocks, in some areas this will be low level planting to account for lower build ups and a no dig planting method within root protection zones. In other areas this will also include taller species to allow for more structural interest. Marginal (both

dry and wet), emergents and submerged aquatics will be proposed around the pond area, whereas dry swale species will be used along the slopes of the dry swales. A mix of sedum and biodiverse roof planting will be planted within the green/blue roofs and sedum boxes will also be provided on the tops of bicycle sheds.

Specifications of healthy, full specimens at a density that allows for instant impact will ensure that the site feels like a mature landscape from the start. Species are selected based on their suitability of particular positions – dry swales / shade etc. in addition to their aesthetics and ecological criteria. Refer to the Landscape Soft works drawings (C0135 L300 series) submitted for the planning application by Cameo+Partners.

## 5.0 Hard Landscape Materials & Furniture

The hard landscape elements have been carefully selected to for their proposed function and durability, and their ability to enhance the space and honour its historical parkland character. In parts of the site where there are lots of existing trees and therefore root protection zones, paving that can be laid using a no dig construction method has been favoured. Sustainability has also been a key consideration with a desire to use as much of the high-quality materials on site as possible. Materials that will benefit the SUDs strategy have also been proposed where possible, such as permeable resin bound paving, permeable concrete blocks, gravel suds pavers and reinforced grass.

The main avenue will be resurfaced with a buff macadam over the existing tarmac, this will repair the surface and create a shared surface aesthetic that is fitting for its parkland setting, but also durable and fit for purpose. As it will be laid on top of the existing tarmac it will have less impact on root protection zones. Main paths closer to the residences will be permeable resin bound gravel, and woodland paths will be laid with loose bark chip and timber edging using a no dig construction to protect tree roots. Where raised decking, bridges and elevated walkways are necessary composite timber decking will be used to ensure longevity. With timber being used for structures within the woodland – such as the yoga platform, elevated bird hide and elevated tree walk.

The existing granite cobbles from the path that leads up to Dalguise House will be retained and used around the main house. These will be supplemented with new granite cobbles, (chosen to match existing), and used around the Coach House. Private terraces will be laid with granite flags. The two other feature paving areas, such as the area around the outdoor pavilion within the central lawn and the terraced gardens will consist of large high quality, polished concrete slabs with gravel joints. These materials should complement and further enhance the existing hard materials and natural surroundings.

Reinforced grass system will be used for the Fire emergency route that runs up the northern slopes in addition to various road widening passing bays along the main avenue to help retain the parkland character of the site at these points.

Refer to the Landscape Hard works drawings (C0135 L200 series) submitted for the planning application by Cameo+Partners.

Furniture and features are carefully selected to enhance the space without cluttering the scheme. Through careful spatial planning, the selected furniture and features will enrich the space and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy the space and feel connected with the surroundings. The design and placement of elements will respond to the architecture through sympathetic, appropriate and consistent materials, textures and scales. High quality elements will help to create a positive, inclusive and inspiring environment, where people feel comfortable to walk through, sit, contemplate and enjoy the landscape setting.



Furniture proposed is mainly timber to enable a more natural look and feel. Within the woodland edges reclaimed tree trunks will be used for seating to fit with the more rural character, whereas in the gardens timber park benches will be used. Timber tables and chairs and picnic benches will be provided in the social areas to enable eating outdoors. Cycle stands will be steel with a timber top and be provided either as normal two way stands or within semi-enclosed timber sheds with sedum roofs.

Bird and Bat Boxes will be located in positions coordinated with the ecologist along the darker corridors where more mature trees exist.

Refer to the Landscape General Arrangement drawings (C0135 L100 series) submitted for the planning application by Cameo+Partners.

## 6.0 Ventilation Strategy

There will be different approaches used for the ventilation of the central podium. This will include the use of landscape design features already proposed within the landscape to allow ventilation to be facilitated in a subtle manner. These will be developed in detail in subsequent design stages.

These features include:

- A) Benches
- B) The feature opening in the podium slab where the tree comes up from the basement
- C) The outdoor pavilion.
- D) Raised Steel planters.