



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AT LISDARAN, CAVAN, COUNTY CAVAN

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF

LISDARAN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

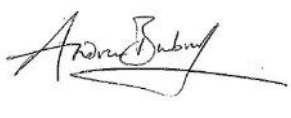
OCTOBER 2025 / PROJECT NO. 7348

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, LISDARAN TOWNLAND, CAVAN, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Client Name	Lisdaran Development Limited
Planning	Genesis Planning Consultants
Architects	Michael Fitzpatrick Architects Ltd
Document Reference	7348/LCC/LVIA/2025
Project Number	7348

Quality Assurance

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

Issue	Date	Baseline Prepared by	Graphics prepared by	Report prepared by
<i>Baseline</i>	<i>05-05-2025</i>	<i>Jonathan Pollock</i>	<i>Ryan Hood</i>	<i>Andrew Bunbury</i>
<i>Preliminary Issue</i>	<i>28-09-2025</i>	<i>Andrew Bunbury CLMI Landscape Architect and Director; Park Hood</i>		
<i>Final Issue</i>	<i>17-10-2025</i>			

Disclaimer

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

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

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Statement of Expertise

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared by Park Hood Chartered Landscape Architects on behalf of Charton Homes Ltd (Client) and Genesis Planning (Planning Agent).
- 1.2 Park Hood is a Chartered Member of the Irish Landscape Institute and Landscape Institute UK with extensive experience in preparation of Landscape / Townscape and Visual Impact Assessments for large scale projects throughout Ireland and the UK. The primary author is Andrew Bunbury who is a fully qualified Landscape Architect and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over 25 years' consultancy experience in the profession across Ireland and the UK. He works between the Dublin, London and Belfast offices of Park Hood where there are 35 members of staff including a further fifteen Chartered Landscape Architects.
- 1.3 All work is undertaken in compliance with the *Landscape Institute's Code of Standards of Conduct and Practice for Landscape Professionals* and checked in accordance with Park Hood's ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015.

Proposed Development Summary

- 1.4 This assessment relates to the proposed development of 109 no. residential units along with provision of a crèche on lands in the Lisdaran townland off the Loreto Road, Cavan Town, Co Cavan.
- 1.5 This LVIA outlines the potential effects of the proposed development on the townscape / landscape character and visual amenity of the Application Site and the surrounding area in this part of Cavan and has been prepared to support the planning application to Cavan County Council. It should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Plans, Landscape Design Statement and Landscape Management & Maintenance Plan submitted with this planning application.

Guidance Documents

- 1.6 The approach and methodology based on the Guidelines for *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)* by *The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013)* (GLVIA).
- 1.7 There are a number of other published guidance documents which include planning designations and matters of relevance to the LVIA and the Study Area including the following:-
 - *Cavan County Development Plan, incorporating a Local Area Plan for Cavan Town 2022-2028;*
 - *National Planning Framework (2018);*

- *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage* <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie>;
 - *National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Environmental Protection Agency* - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps>;
 - <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie>; and
 - <https://www.townlands.ie/>
- 1.8 The baseline assessment included study of Ordnance Survey Ireland historical mapping and recent aerial photography (primarily using Google Earth) to assess how this part of Cavan has developed since the 19th century as well as assess calculations of relevant distances or areas.
- 1.9 All feasible and reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that the information provided by a range of public sector institutions is accurate and up-to-date.

Method of Assessment

Landscape and Visual Effects – Distinctions

- 1.10 Landscape and Visual effects deriving from a proposed development are assessed separately although the process is similar. The conclusions on significance are ultimately an evaluation of the combined effects of both. The distinction between Landscape and visual effects can be summarised as follows:-
- 1.11 Landscape Effects are the effects on Landscape as a resource and defined as follows:
- “An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource. The concern ... is with how the proposal will affect the elements that make up the landscape, the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character. ... The area of landscape that should be covered in assessing landscape effects should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner.” (GLVIA 3 paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2)*
- 1.12 Visual effects are the effects on Views and Visual Amenity and summarised as follows:-
- “...establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.” (GLVIA 3 paragraph 3.13)*

Establishing the Study Area

- 1.13 The study area includes the Application Site itself and the wider Cavan townscape / landscape where the proposed development may have an influence either directly or indirectly. There is no specific guidance on extents of study areas applicable to this type of development in Ireland. A 1km range from the Application Site was deemed appropriate following site surveys and desktop

research which established key views towards the site are limited to being within this area due to the topography and nature of the landscape. However, reference to the wider area is made in relation to landscape character and any connections between this and local and national policies and guidance.

Figure 1– Site Location Map



Landscape and Visual Assessment Process

1.14 The process can be summarised as undertaking the following key tasks:

- Site survey and visits undertaken between February and June 2025;
- Assessing the Baseline Landscape Setting and Conditions;
- Evaluation of key components of the proposed Development based on site layouts, plans and elevations prepared by Michael Fitzpatrick Architects Ltd and other members of the design team;
- Consideration of Mitigation and Enhancement Measures;
- Assessment of Townscape / Landscape Effects;

- Assessment of Visual Effects; and
- Conclusions.

1.15 The process includes assessment of photomontages and wirelines of the proposed development from 8 no. representative viewpoints prepared by Big Lolly which are presented in a separate stand-alone document. The viewpoint locations and selection was discussed at the LRD Meeting with Cavan County Council Planning Authority on the 7th May 2025. This meeting also confirmed that a Landscape and Visual Assessment, a Landscape Design Statement and Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan are required from this proposal. Extracts from each of the viewpoints are included within this document for ease of reference.

Landscape Character Assessment

1.16 As part of the Baseline Assessment, the combination of desk-top analysis and site survey allows judgment to be made on the key elements that contribute to the landscape character and its wider condition (positive, neutral or negative) and wider value and sensitivity. **See Table 1**

Table 1 - Determination of Landscape Value and Sensitivity

Terminology	Definition	Summary
Highest Value Landscape	Nationally or regionally important landscape with high quality, highly valued rare or unusual features recognised by designation such as AONB's, Areas of Scenic Value or World Heritage Sites. Distinct landscapes that exhibit a strong structure and character with valued features that combine to give the experience of scenic quality, tranquillity, rarity and harmony. Negligible pedestrian and traffic conflict.	Very vulnerable to change. <i>High Sensitivity</i>
Very Attractive Landscape	Locally or regionally designated landscapes – including Local Landscape Policy Areas - or areas where local evidence indicated as being more valued than the surrounding area.	Some ability to absorb change in some situations without having significant effects. <i>Medium Sensitivity</i>
Medium Landscape	“Everyday” or community / undesignated landscapes which may be appreciated by the local community but has no or little wider recognition of its value.	Able to accommodate change without significant effects. <i>Low Sensitivity</i>

Poor Landscape	Low importance and degraded landscapes with few redeeming features. No evidence of being valued by the community	Damaged landscapes very capable of accommodating change. <i>Very Low Sensitivity</i>
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1.17 This report considers how the proposed development would impact on existing landscape elements and resources which are normally associated with the direct effects on the Application Site itself. This is affected by factors including: (i) the physical extent and nature of the key elements that make up the proposal; (ii) the landscape context of these effects and (iii) the time-scale of impact, such as whether it is temporary (short, medium or long term), permanent with reversible potentials, or irreversibly permanent. **See Table 2**

Table 2 - Magnitude Criteria for Landscape Character Effects

Terminology	Definition
Substantial	Total loss or major alteration to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e. pre-development) landscape and /or introduction of elements considered to be totally dominant when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Moderate	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e. pre-development) landscape or view and /or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Slight	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e. pre-development) landscape or view and /or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline (i.e. pre-development) landscape or view and /or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape - approximating the 'no change' situation.

Visual Amenity Assessment

1.18 Visual Effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the development on views, along with the general visual amenity and are defined by the Landscape Institute in GLVIA, Paragraph 6.1 which

states:-

“An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on views available to people and their visual amenity. The concern ... is with assessing how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the context and character of views.”

- 1.19 The baseline studies establishes the area from which the proposed development may potentially be visible and the different groups of people (“visual receptors”) who may experience views or changes to view context. Viewer sensitivity is based on the nature of the visual receptor (resident, tourist, commuter etc.) and the visual quality or value attached to a particular view. [See Table 3](#)

Table 3 - Viewer Sensitivity and Types

Terminology	Definition	Summary
High	Notable views of heritage assets, quality, valued or scenic landscapes. Views that may be designated or feature in guidebooks, scenic tours, associated with culture, literature and art or an important contributor to experience.	People engaged in outdoor activity whose interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views. e.g. hill-walkers, tourists, scenic tours, users of public rights of way. Residents / Communities living within close proximity of the proposal.
Medium	Ordinary views where the reason for visual receptor to be in the area and does not involve or depend upon an appreciation of the views of the landscape.	Outdoor activity with focus on recreation, sports or water-based activities such as golf, mountain biking, or country sports. Travellers on road and rail.
Low	Areas that may be viewed by the majority as incidental landscapes where the focus of the viewer is on their work or activity and the setting is not important to the visual amenity or quality of working life.	Landowners for proposal. Workers with employment related to construction and management / maintenance activity and likely to have a low interest or appreciation of the view.

- 1.20 The visual effects deriving from the proposed development are based on the combined judgement of the anticipated change in nature, visual amenity and duration of the particular view (magnitude) and the nature of the visual receptor (sensitivity). [See Table 4](#)

Table 4 - Visual Effects Criteria

Terminology	Definition
Severe	A major change or obstruction of a view that may be directly visible, appearing as the dominant and contrasting feature appearing in the foreground
Substantial	A major change or obstruction of a view that may be directly visible, appearing as a prominent and contrasting feature and/or appearing in the foreground / middle ground.
Moderate	A moderate change or partial view of a new element within the view that may be readily noticeable, directly or obliquely visible including glimpsed, partly screened or intermittent views, appearing as a noticeable feature in the middle ground.
Slight	A small level of change, affecting a small part of the view that may be obliquely viewed or partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape. May include moving views at speed. The proposal forms a minor component in the wider view which might be missed by the casual viewer / observer.
Negligible	The proposal is barely discernible or may be at such a distance that it is very difficult to perceive equating to a no-change situation.

Duration of Effects

- 1.21 The duration of effects is an important consideration for developments and corresponds to the following terms. **See Table 5**

Table 5 – Duration of Effects

Terminology	Definition
Temporary	Effect lasting one year or less.
Short-term	Effects lasting one to five years.
Medium-term	Effects lasting five to ten years.
Long-term	Effects lasting between ten and twenty years.
Permanent	Effects lasting over twenty years and irreversible.

Nature of Landscape and Visual Effects

- 1.22 The assessment process aims to be objective and quantify effects though landscape and visual assessment has aspects of it that can be considered subjective. **See Table 6**

Table 6 - Nature of Landscape and Visual Effects

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

Significance Criteria and Determination

1.23 This assessment bases “Significance” of effects on the following definitions:-

- “Significant” in the Oxford Dictionary 2025 is defined as “Sufficiently great or important to be worthy of attention; noteworthy”; and
- “Significance” in the GLVIA guidelines 2013 is defined as “A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic”.

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

See Table 7

Table 7 - Significance Criteria

Magnitude of Change	Landscape and Visual Sensitivity			
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>High</i>	Substantial	Substantial/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Slight
<i>Medium</i>	Substantial/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Slight	Slight
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate / Slight	Slight	Negligible /No effect
<i>Negligible</i>	Slight	Slight / Negligible	Negligible / No effect	Negligible /No effect

Photomontages and Visualisations

- 1.25 Park Hood use the *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals* as the guidance on selection of appropriate and representative viewpoints for this development. The methodology and presentation techniques used for the subsequent photomontages is contained within the introduction to the Photomontages booklet by Big Lolly that accompanies this planning application.

2.0 BASELINE LANDSCAPE SETTING

Site Location

- 2.1 The Application Site is located within the townland of Lisdaran, in the barony of Loughtee Upper, to the north of the town of Cavan in County Cavan. It comprises totalling 8.6 hectares of land and includes 'Upper Residential' and 'Lower Residential' sections. The site is situated on the north-western boundary of the defined settlement limit of Cavan, with the town centre located approximately 1.5km to the south.

Figure 1 – Site Location Map



Landform – Topography and Drainage

- 2.2 The site is set across an area of undulating farmland that is part of a broader undulating lowland landscape. The 'Lower Residential' section of the site is situated on rising lands with levels ranging from +77m to +89m AOD. The land falls in a northerly direction towards a woodland of approximately 4 acres and the Loreto Road (L1513) at Carrickane. It also falls steeply to the east towards the Railway Walk (Greenway) set at approximately +63m AOD, and also descends westward across open fields towards the rear of properties on Golf Links Road and to the rear of Cavan General Hospital.
- 2.3 The 'Upper Residential' section of the site is located on lower lands on a north facing slope

towards the Loreto Road (L1513) Road at Carrickane where the levels range from approximately +55m to +64m AOD. This part of the site sits between the area of woodland and a small unnamed watercourse set to the south and defining the boundaries of four detached residential properties aligning the road. The entrance area off the Loreto Road (L1513) is set at approximately +54m AOD from where the lands rise steeply from to the south and east.

- 2.4 There are no streams or watercourses within the core of the Application Site. The site and adjacent fields are naturally self-draining towards ditches on the existing field boundaries with the most appreciable being that to the north towards Carrickane. Beyond this the Cavan River flows within the valley to the east of the site in the Drumlark and Keadew townlands though its corridor in inconspicuous due to being set within riparian woodland. The site does not fall under any flood zones as identified in the Cavan Town Local Area Plan 2022-2028 map, as published by Cavan County Council.

Photo 1 – Existing Site Conditions



View from Loreto Road (L1513) looking east towards the Application Site lands

Land Use and Vegetation

- 2.5 The Application Site is currently in use as farmland and used for grazing or silage purposes. The fields have an open character with the core of fields having no significant vegetation as in improved pasture (i.e. maximised for farming use). The site encompasses part of four fields, which are currently bound by post and wire fences set within or aside hedgerows dominated by hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) with sections subject to colonising scrub such as elder, ivy and briars. The condition of hedgerows is variable in terms of health and condition with both thicker and sparser sections.
- 2.6 OSI historical mapping illustrate that the current field layout or pattern is comparable with that of

today. On these and other mapping the limited annotations suggest the majority of these lands have not been used for anything other than farming since that time. However, there is evidence of historical settlement and past quarrying activity based on the OSI annotations.

Photos 2 and 3— Existing Site Conditions



View of existing hedgerow and rath area to the core of the Application Site



Southern boundary of the Application Site towards Cavan General Hospital looking over the Cavan River Vally towards Keadew.

- 2.7 The woodland to the north of the site and set between the 'Upper Residential' and 'Lower Residential' sections has had a comparable boundary and extent since the 19th century. The

hedgerows include mature trees and woodland including Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), some of which are suffering from ash dieback. A Tree Survey (Dr Philip Blackstock: June 2025) identified 35 individual trees or woodland groups and noted the following:-

Location & visual impact of the trees. The site reported on here consists of a series of agricultural fields bounded by mature hedges and by belts of trees and woods. These trees form a rural landscape that is very typical of rural Cavan. Because of the topography, the hedgerow trees give the impression that the land is well wooded. Trees growing on adjoining lands also provide shelter and screening to buildings and dwellings. Taken together, these trees and woods should be considered significant in the local landscape.

Historical development of the site. The hedgerow trees and woods on and adjacent to these lands are noted in the first edition Ordnance Survey maps. This suggests that some of these trees are over two hundred years old. As with all sites of this nature, the original trees have been supplemented by those growing from coppiced stumps, suckers or from naturally dispersed seeds. The trees growing in the grounds of the adjoining Hospital and along the old railway track are probably about one hundred and fifty years old.

Tree condition & recommendations. The hedges intersecting these lands are dominated by ash and Englis elm. Both species are now susceptible to wilts and dieback and both species will have only a limited useful life expectancy. These trees should be monitored and felled as they succumb. The woods and shelterbelts on adjoining lands are more sustainable, as are the thorn hedges.

- 2.8 The Survey assessed the majority of trees or woodlands (19 no.) on this site as being Category B (i.e. of fair condition) with 11 no. being Category C (poor condition) and 5 no. being dead or dying.

Photo 4 – Existing Site Conditions



Internal view within Application Site looking west towards rath site and existing line of trees on upper elevation.

Settlement and Infrastructure

- 2.9 The Application Site is accessed off the Loreto Road (L1513) via an existing gate and laneway which runs for approximately 450m towards the boundary to Cavan General Hospital to the south. This provides access to a number of agricultural sheds though planning consents have been given for Nursing Homes and Medical Centres in this area (Cavan County Council Ref: 19236 and 21601).
- 2.10 There are no residential dwellings or buildings located on the Application Site and none are annotated on historical OSI maps.

Local Landscape Setting

- 2.11 The Application Site is located near the northern edge of Cavan on the rural-urban fringe within its defined settlement limit. Cavan, derived from the Irish An Cabhán meaning 'The Hollow'. The town was founded in the early 14th century and while largely destroyed during the Battle of Cavan (1690), it redeveloped over the 18th century under the influence of the Maxwell family, particularly around Farnham House and further growth was stimulated with the new railway in the mid-19th century. Substantial urban and suburban expansion took place throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and today Cavan (Population: 11,741 - 2022 census) functions as a key economic and service centre within the north-central region of Ireland.
- 2.12 OSI historical maps suggest there was extensive settlement in the area, mainly in the form of farmsteads as well as the presence of ringforts (raths). These maps also highlight an industrial legacy, with annotations illustrating the presence of quarries in this part of Cavan.

Photo 5 – Existing Landscape Setting



View towards Application Site from Keadew looking over the Cavan River Valley

- 2.13 The landscape to the north has a predominantly rural characteristic while that to the south is affected by the built-up townscape of Cavan town. The rural landscape is largely made up of

small to medium scale fields predominantly in pasture bound by mixed quality hedgerows and wooded groups draped over the drumlin topography. It is a landscape possessing features common to many Irish rural landscapes namely rough, semi improved and improved grassland bound by hedgerows, wooded belts and groupings of variable quality. The collective of trees, belts, groupings and hedgerows in combination with the undulating topography give the landscape a deceptively wooded characteristic in ground level views that is not evident when studying aerial photography. In general, the area to the north is characterised by a linear low-density pattern of development but there is a cluster of approximately 35 detached residential properties set off the Loreto Road in the Carrickane area. Local services are embedded within this residential setting indicating a small-scale mixed-use function. Loreto College, a secondary school based around a neoclassical country house (Drumkeen House originally built around 1750) is located just over 500m to the north of the site.

- 2.14 Demesne or estate landscapes played a role in the development of character and setting out of the landscape north Cavan. This was based in part on Farnham Estate, a 1,300-acre country estate comprising woodland, parkland, and lakelands, located approximately 1.5 km west of the site. Since 2006, the estate has operated as a hotel, spa, and golf destination.
- 2.15 The L1513 Road to the north of the site is a county-level local road approximately 1.8km long that connects the Golf Links Road to the west with the Drumgola Road to the north-east which both provide access into Cavan town. The road has number of names including the Loreto Road, Carrickane Road and Lisdaran Road and Drumlark Road but for the sake of this LVIA, it is referred to as the Loreto Road.

Photo 6 – Local Landscape Setting



The Loreto Road (L1513) located to the north of the Application Site near the proposed site entrance.

- 2.16 The nearest road to the east of the site is the Keadue Lane, a narrow road linking Drumlark with the town centre set on the rising lands on the opposite side of the Cavan River valley. This road and those in the wider area are generally set between well-established hedgerows, earthbanks and wooded belts or mature garden plots for much of their routes that limit views across the adjacent landscapes.
- 2.17 To the west of the site, Golf Links Road, over 360m distant is the closest road and is aligned for this section by a linear strip of detached houses on individual garden plots that back onto open fields. Across the Golf Links Road, lies the County Cavan Golf Club, an 18-hole parkland course that was originally built out in 1920.

Photo 7 – Local Landscape Setting



View west from the Application Site towards the Golf Links Road

- 2.18 The landscape to the south of the site is dominated by Cavan General Hospital that originally dates from 1989 but has extended over the intervening period and further expansion is underway. The multi-storey hospital includes extensive car parking areas with access onto Golf Links Road and had large areas of associated open space. To its south is Drumnavanagh, a late 1990s/early 2000s development comprising a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings that merges into the wider linear townscape aligning the Golf Links Road and Farnham Road.
- 2.19 Within the river valley to the south-east of the Application Site is the Cavan Waste Water Treatment Plant which is accessed off Keadue Lane and extends over 2 hectares.
- 2.20 A notable local feature and amenity is the Cavan Town Urban Greenway located to the east of the site within the Cavan River valley. This is a developing shared 3–4 m wide walking and cycling trail and has repurposed the former railway line that closed in 1960. The route as it passes by the Application Site area is contained within a linear wooded belt that limits views across the adjacent

landscape and valley. Remnant features of the railway line present notable landmarks.

Photo 8 – Local Landscape Setting



Cavan Town Urban Greenway located to the east of the Application Site within the Cavan River Valley area

Establishing the Wider Study Area – Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 2.21 County Cavan has a diverse landscape characterised by highlands in the east of the County, Cuilcagh-Anierin uplands in the north-west of the County and drumlin and lakelands throughout. A preliminary Landscape Character Assessment, as set out in Appendix 14 of Volume 1 of the Appendices of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP) identified five Landscape Character Areas within which the Application Site is located within *Area 2: The ‘Lakelands Landscape Character Area’*. As of June 2024, Cavan County Council advised they were carrying out a more detailed Landscape Character Assessment of the county
- 2.22 The Lakelands Landscape Character Area is characterised by a distinctive and extensive network of inland lakes associated with the Erne drainage system. The surrounding landscape comprises drumlin farmland interspersed with well-established hedgerows which form a recognisable and repeated field pattern. Located in west Cavan, this Landscape Character Area spans the corridor from Belturbet to Butlersbridge and extends southwards to encompass Killeshandra, Arva, Lough Gowna, and Ballinagh. Cavan town is categorised as one of the principal urban centres within County Cavan.

Planning, Heritage and Environment Designations

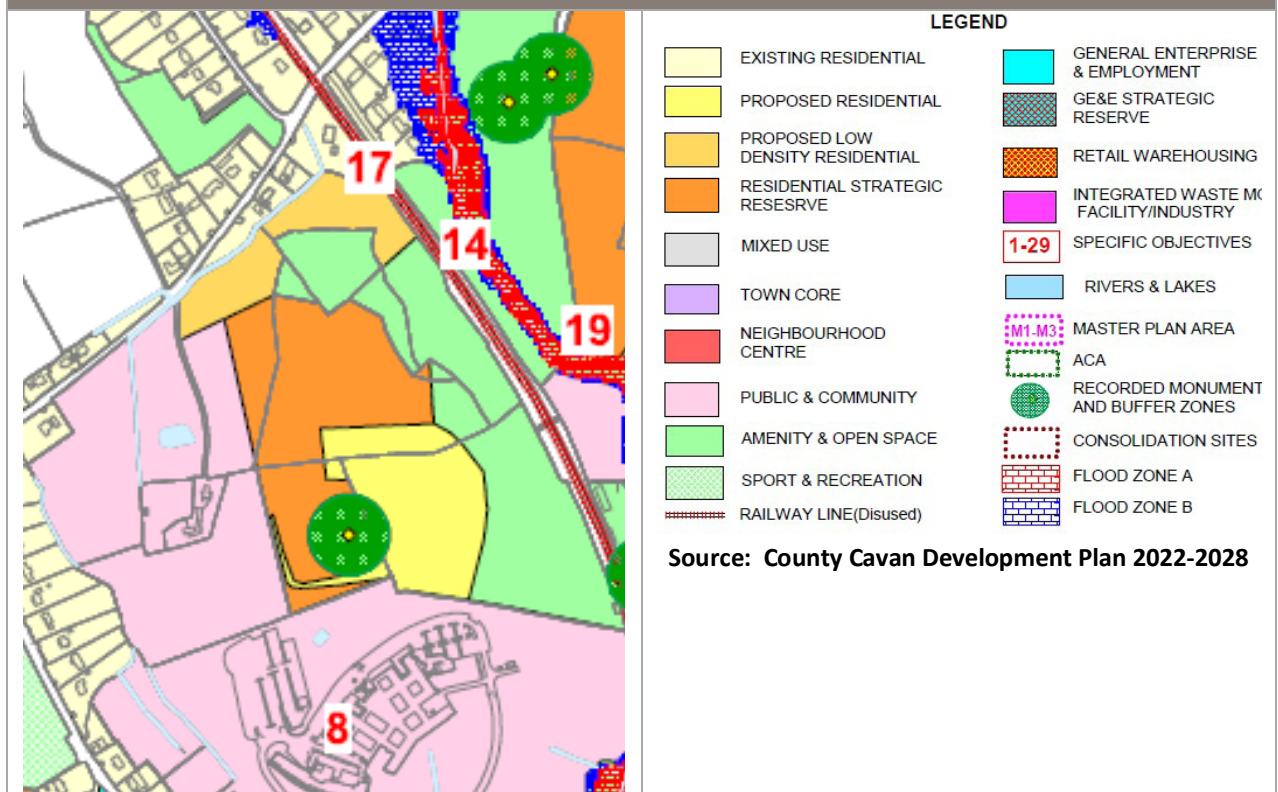
County Cavan Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP)

- 2.23 Within the CCDP, the Application Site is zoned as ‘Proposed Residential’ with the objective stated as to “... provide for new residential development in tandem with the provision of the necessary

social and physical infrastructure”. The section of the site to the north is also zoned as ‘Proposed Low Density Residential’ with the objective stated as to “... *facilitate serviced low density residential development in a structured and coordinated manner.*”

The majority of the land immediately east of both the northern and southern sections of the site is zoned as ‘Amenity & Open Space’. Land directly south of the southern portion of the site is zoned as ‘Public and Community’, while land immediately to the west and north is designated as ‘Residential Strategic Reserve’. Beyond this, further west the zoning transitions to ‘Amenity & Open Space’ and ‘Existing Residential’, particularly along Golf Links Road and the Loreto Road (L1513). In addition, the land immediately north and west of the northern section of the site is zoned as ‘Existing Residential’. To the south, the zoning comprises a mix of ‘Residential Strategic Reserve’ and ‘Amenity and Open Space’.

Figure 2 – Planning Designations



- 2.24 In the wider surrounding area, there is a mix of zoning designations; however, the area is predominantly zoned ‘Residential Strategic Reserve’ to the east and southwest, ‘Sport and Recreation’ to the west, and ‘Amenity & Open Space’ to the northeast and south. Additionally, areas of ‘Existing Residential’ zoning are set out in all directions.
- 2.25 The CCDP identifies Cavan as a ‘Key Town’ and sets out a number of general development objectives for Cavan town including CTG 06 which aims to “*Encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed used, sustainable communities that include a suitable mix of housing types and tenures with supporting facilities, amenities and services that meet the needs of the entire*

community and accord with the principles of universal design and Age Friendly Standards.”

2.26 The CCDP outlines a number of development objectives within Chapter 10: Natural Heritage , many of which are directly relevant to landscape and visual considerations. These are listed below:-

- Objective LC1: Ensure the preservation of the unique landscape character type by having regard to the character, value and sensitivity of a landscape when determining a planning application;
- Objective LC2: Ensure development reflects and reinforces the distinctiveness and sense of place of the landscape character areas. This should include the retention of important features or characteristics which contribute to their distinctiveness such as geology and landform, habitats, settlement patterns, historic and vernacular heritage;
- Objective LC4: Ensure that new development does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of highly sensitive areas and does not detract from the scenic value of the area such as visual harm, not in keeping elements of the landscape, causes loss or disturbance of the landscape elements contributing to the local distinctiveness, historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality, vegetation which is characteristic of a particular landscape and visual conditions of a landscape. ;
- Objective LC5: Ensure new development meets high standards of siting and design;
- Objective LC6: Protect skylines and ridgelines from development;
- Objective SR1: Regulate development that would seriously obstruct and detract from views of high scenic value from designated Scenic Routes;
- Objective SR2: Maintain and protect the natural landscapes visual character which is recognised to be of an exceptional high amenity value;
- Objective NH7: Assess the impact on biodiversity of proposals for large developments, particularly those on greenfield sites, or in environmentally sensitive areas. Such developments must include measures for the enhancement and protection of biodiversity;
- Objective NH8: Promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, including features such as wetlands, woodlands, hedgerows and uplands;
- Objective WTHS3: Encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling where possible when undertaking, approving or authorising development;
- Objective WTHS6: Promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species of local provenance;
- Objective WTHS7: Encourage the retention of hedgerows and stone walls and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where possible. Where removal of a hedgerow or stone wall is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required and where removal is proposed which may

affect bat species it shall be subject to regime of protection under the EC (Birds and Habitats) Regulations, 2011, as amended.

2.27 The CCDP outlines a number of development objectives within Chapter 4: Sustainable Communities and Chapter 11: Built and Cultural Heritage, many of which are directly relevant to landscape and visual considerations as follows:-

- Objective SH02: Achieve densities for new housing that respect the local character of surrounding areas whilst making efficient use of land;
- Objective RPS10: Proposals for large scale developments and infrastructure projects should consider the impacts on the architectural heritage and seek to avoid them. The extent, route, services and signage for such projects should be sited at a distance from Protected Structures, outside the boundaries of designed historic landscapes, and not interrupt specifically designed vistas. Where this is not possible the visual impact must be minimised through appropriate mitigation measures such as high quality design and/or use of screen planting; and
- Objective AH3: Development adjacent to or near an archaeological site or monument should not interfere with the character of the site, or its setting. Proposed developments should be sited to ensure minimal impact on the site or monument. Development which has a negative impact on a site or monument will not be permitted.

2.28 The CCDP outlines a number of development objectives within Chapter 13: Development Management, many of which are directly relevant to landscape and visual considerations. These include:-

- Objective UDO3: Require a detailed Design Statement to be submitted in respect of residential schemes comprising 10 or more units, large scale developments (commercial, business and enterprise buildings, office retail, educational facilities etc) and any other development proposed on key strategic or sensitive sites within the urban areas, as determined by the Planning Authority;
- Objective UD04: The Design Statement shall:-
 - Describe the design concept;
 - Clearly demonstrate how the urban design criteria have been taken into account when designing schemes in urban area, as per the 'Urban Design Manual' – A Best practice Guide;
 - Set out how the development meets the relevant Development Plan Objectives, Local Area Plan, Masterplan or similar;
 - Provide site photographs;
 - Provide an open space/ landscape strategy which identifies any areas of ecological interest and sets out proposals for same; and

- Set out how energy efficiency measures have been incorporated into the project design process.
- Objective RD03: Ensure densities of proposed developments reflect the key attributes and character of the surrounding/adjoining area;
- Objective BHDO3: The appropriate maximum or minimum height of any building will be determined by:
 - The prevailing building height in the surrounding area;
 - The proximity of existing housing;
 - The formation of a cohesive streetscape pattern, including height and scale of the proposed development relative to width of street or area of open space;
 - The impact of any Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and/or sensitive sites;
 - Design shall take into account overlooking and privacy; and
 - Proposal should not interfere with scale, amenities and visual quality of existing development;
- Objective POS01: Require that new development has regard to the character of the area in which they are located in terms of requirements for private open space; and
- Objective DL03: Planning proposals for housing schemes are required to present a considered design approach to tailor the scale, design, layout and density of housing in responding to the individual character of the respective town or village.

Designated Views and Prospects

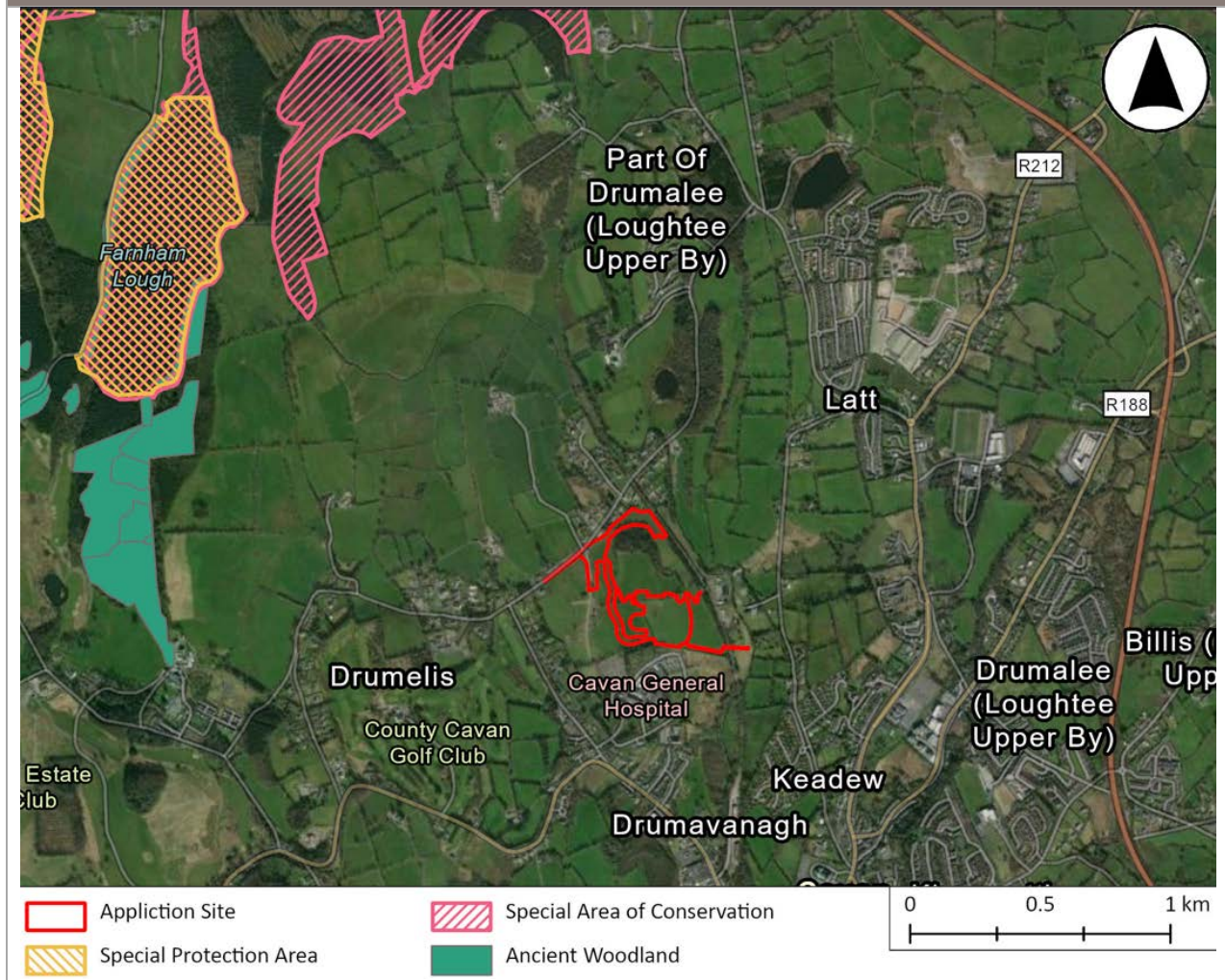
- 2.29 Within the CCDP 17 scenic views / viewing points and 3 designated scenic routes are identified in Appendix 16 (Scenic Viewing Points and Scenic Routes Map). These are recognised as being of significant landscape value and are afforded protection under the Plan (based on development objectives SVP1, SVP2, SR1, and SR2). The nearest designated areas namely SV15 (Inchin), SV16 (Derrygid), and SV17 (Drumcalpin) are located at such a distance or are not orientated towards Lisdaran and therefore visual impacts deriving from this proposal is not a consideration.

Natural Heritage

- 2.30 The site is not within any site designated under statute or convention or for the protection of habitats or wildlife (SAC, SPA, Ramsar, ASSI, NNR, NHA) as per the NPWS Map Designations Viewer. There are no landscape, environmental, or ecology designations identified within the CCDP (within Appendix 8: Special Protection Areas, Appendix 9: Special Areas of Conservation and Appendix 11: Natural Heritage Areas).
- 2.31 Approximately 0.5km from the site, Drumkeen House Woodland (NH11) is designated as a Natural Heritage Area (NHA). Further to the northwest are the Lough Oughter and associated Loughs, National Heritage Area (NHA), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation

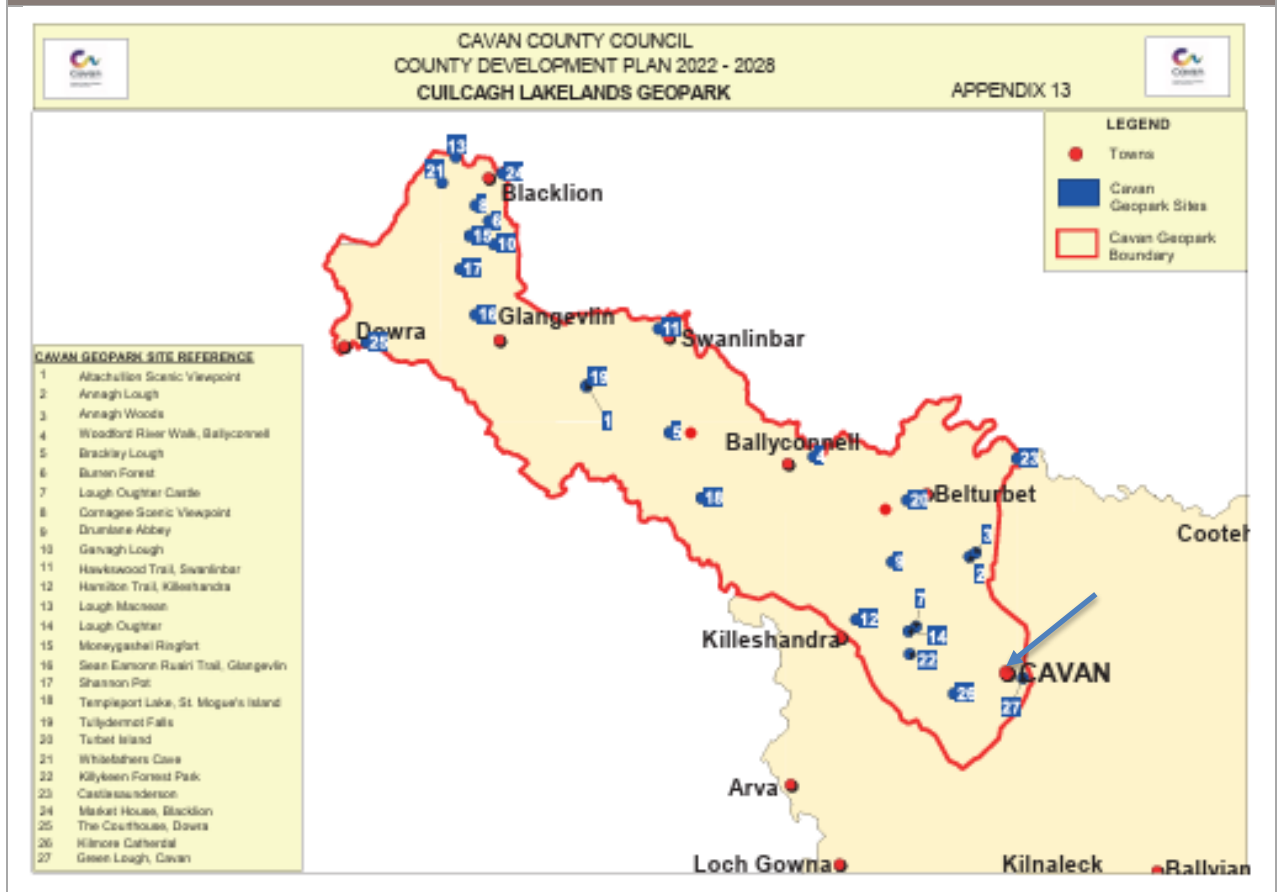
(SAC), located approximately 1.5km from the site. These areas are considered to be sufficiently distant to ensure they would not be impacted by the proposal in terms of landscape or visual amenity. See Figure 3

Figure 3 – Natural Heritage Designations



- 2.32 The Application Site is located within the broader Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark (as set out in CCDP Appendix 13) that extends from Lower Lough Erne to Lough Oughter and covers c. 20,000 hectares.

Figure 4 – Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark



Cultural Heritage

- 2.33 The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) map viewer identifies a ringfort-rath (CV020-057) is located along the western boundary of Application Site. This is described as follows:-

"Marked 'Fort' on OS 1836 and 1876 eds. Situated just S of the summit of a drumlin hill. Remains comprise a circular area (diam. 27.1m) raised to between 0.5m and 0.9m above external ground level. Enclosing elements have been levelled. Original entrance not recognisable."

- 2.34 While no other monuments are on the site itself, within close proximity (less than 1km) are six further ringfort-raths (CV020-032, CV020-072, CV020-058, CV020-051, CV020-035 and CV020-005), an enclosure (CV020-094), and a church (CV020-050002).
- 2.35 Within Cavan town there are numerous historical and archaeological sites including ringforts (raths), burnt mounds, a crannog, a fulacht fia and a ritual site, demonstrating evidence of a long history of settlement in the wider area but all are distant enough not to be affected by activity or land-use changes on the Application Site.

Local Amenities and Provision

- 2.36 The site is currently private land and has no public amenity provision or use and the ringfort-rath is not open to the public or of such note to be of any high or notable public interest. The Loreto Road (L1513) Road is not designated part of any scenic driving route, cycle route or promoted walk.
- 2.37 The nearest public amenity is associated with Cavan Town Urban Greenway set on the former Midland Great Western Railway line to the east of the site in the Cavan River Valley linking the Killeshandra Road (R198) and Cavan General Hospital area to Carrickane. Views towards the core of the site, 80m distant, are partially obscured or filtered by existing tree belts to the west of the greenway.
- 2.38 The grounds of County Cavan Golf Club are located over 400m to the west. Due to the intervening topography, vegetation, and built form, any development or activity on the Application Site would not have any discernible impact on the views or setting of this area.

Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity

- 2.39 Sensitivity is based on the landscape's physical landform, shape scale, pattern its visual environment/enclosure, any sense of remoteness of tranquillity, presence of man-made features, its skyline, inter-visibility with adjacent sensitive areas and the presence of sensitive or rare features. Landscape sensitivity ultimately is an assessment of the ability of a surrounding landscape to accommodate and absorb change within the Application Site without affecting its character.

Photo 9 – Landscape Setting and Quality



View of core of site demonstrating its open and typical farmland character.

- 2.40 The Application Site is situated on the periphery of Cavan town in an area that includes urban and

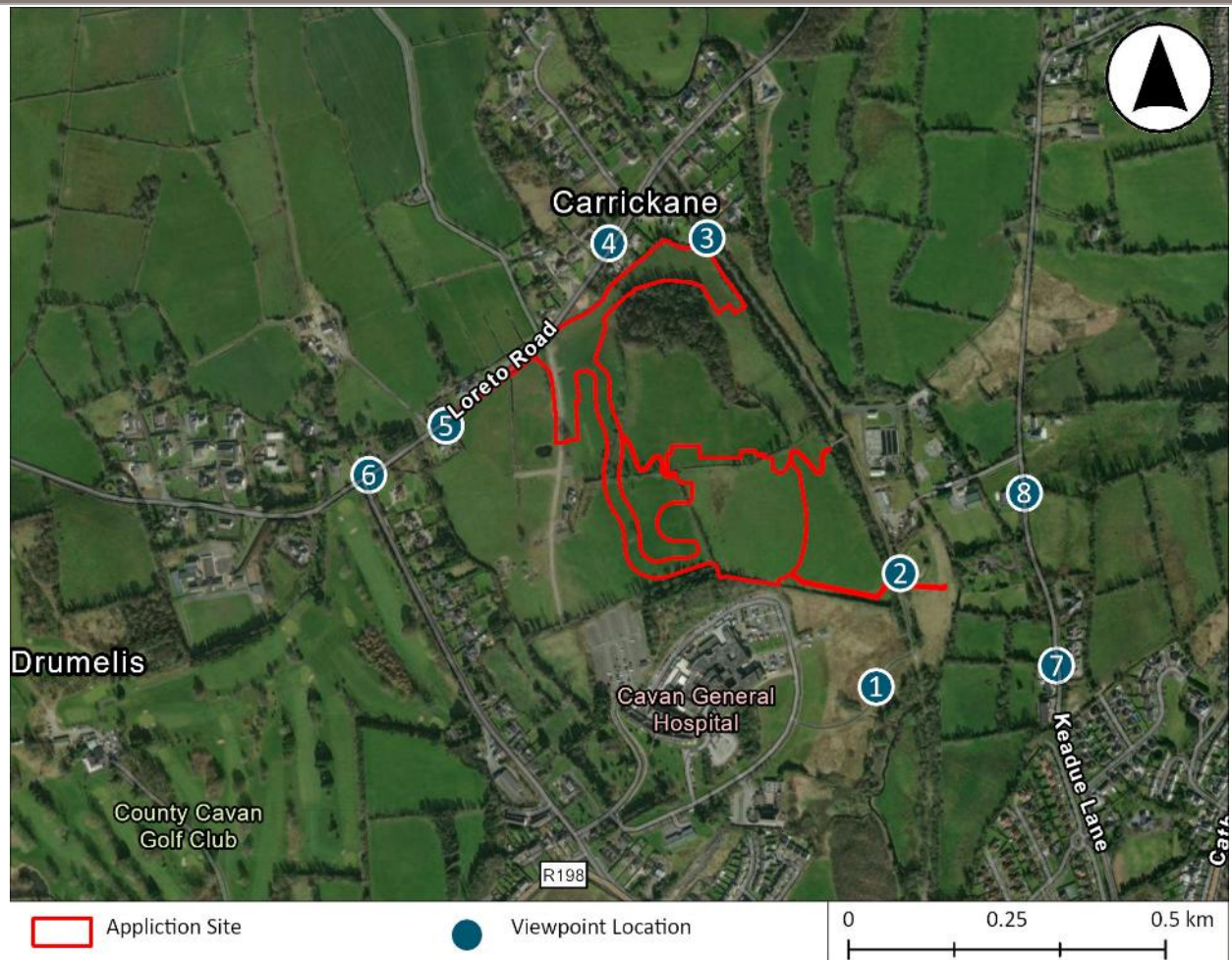
rural and characteristics with the former evidenced by the fact that within 500m of the site are residential areas, a golf course, Cavan General Hospital and the Cavan Wastewater Treatment Plant. There are retained peripheral trees and the woodland cluster to the north of the site give parts of the Lisdaran area a wooded character to the site and serve to close off views and break up vantage of the larger developments such as the hospital and treatment plant. The proximity of the townscape has ensured that built form and infrastructure is a feature of this area, and the site would not be categorised as sensitive in landscape or visual terms. This was likely to have been a factor in the CCDP designation of these lands for 'Proposed Residential' zoning rather than solely for open space or retention as it currently is.

- 2.41 The undulating nature of the landscape and extent of vegetation on and aside the site helps to disguise and mute the site's influence in the majority of potential (public) views from the nearest roads (namely the Loreto Road (L1513). It contains few notable features beyond boundary hedgerows and associated trees and would be considered a normal everyday rural landscape typical of Irish Countryside. There is very little species or landscape diversity away from hedgerows and ditches that would result in a higher category of value or ecological worth. The site comprises open fields in pasture not covered by any scenic designations or protections and its general value and quality would be rated as "medium" or "ordinary" based on its 'everyday character'.
- 2.42 CCDP Appendix 14: Landscape Categorisation sets the Application Site within 'Area 2' that is rated as having 'medium' to 'high' sensitivity while noting that "... much of this area lies within the European Designations of SAC and SPA protection including NHA". The nearest higher sensitivity landscapes are identified as being the Lough Oughter 'Lakeland' Area and Drumkeen Woodland, located approximately located 1.5km to the north-west and 0.5km to the north of the site respectively. The Application Site or immediate Lisdaran area is not directly referenced or mentioned in CCDP Appendix 14 and is considered to be located within a landscape of 'medium' sensitivity, characterised by undulating farmland bound by mixed hedgerows, incidental trees, tree groupings and belts and the townscape edge of Cavan.

Baseline Visual Evaluation

- 2.43 Site surveys were undertaken as part of the design process to establish locations where there are potential views of the existing site and proposed development, to assess local topography, built environment and vegetation cover. Eight representative viewpoints were selected within publicly accessible areas based on the following criteria for the basis of visualisations/photomontages.
- 2.44 Viewpoints were selected within publicly accessible areas following site surveys to assess the built environment, local topography and vegetation cover undertaken in January 2025 (when leaf cover on trees and hedgerows were at a minimum). The viewpoints (**See Figure 5**) were selected for photomontages were based on the following criteria:-
- Site investigation to establish those locations where there was likely to be notable or open views (e.g. close proximity views or exposed landscapes);
 - Site investigation to establish those locations where there was likely to be a high number of visual receptors (e.g. public roads or residential areas).

Figure 5 – Visual Reference Points Map



Viewpoint 1 – Cavan General Hospital Car Park
Viewpoint 2 – Cavan Greenway (Lisdaran)
Viewpoint 3 – Cavan Greenway (Carrickane)
Viewpoint 4 – Loreto Road (L1513), Carrickane

Viewpoint 5 – Loreto Road (L1513), Lisdaran
Viewpoint 6 – Loreto Road (L1513) and Golf Links Road junction, Drumelis
Viewpoint 7 – Keadue Lane, Drumlark
Viewpoint 8 – Keadue Lane, Drumlark

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Summary of Proposed Development

3.1 The development will consist of the provision of a total of 109 no. residential units along with provision of a crèche. Particulars of the development comprise as follows:

- (a) Site excavation works to facilitate the proposed development to include excavation and general site preparation works;
- (b) The provision of a total of 65no. residential dwellings which will consist of 23no. 2 bed units, 26no. 3 bed units and 16no. 4 bed units. The dwelling types range from detached units to terrace units and are 2 storey;
- (c) The provision of a total of 44no. duplex apartment units consisting of 8no. 1 bed units, 18no. 2 bed units and 18no. 3 bed units. The duplex units range in height from 2 storey to 3 storey;
- (d) Provision of a two storey creche with associated parking, bicycle and bin storage;
- (e) Provision of associated car parking at surface level via a combination of in-curtilage parking for dwellings and via on-street parking for the creche and duplex apartment units;
- (f) Provision of electric vehicle charge points with associated site infrastructure ducting to provide charge points for residents throughout the site;
- (g) Provision of associated bicycle, bin and bulky items storage facilities for duplex apartment units;
- (h) Upgrading the existing access point from Loreto Road with associated works to include for provision of a right turning lane, provide for internal access roads, footpaths and associated site works;
- (i) Provision of internal access roads and footpaths and associated works to include for regrading of site levels as required along with connections onto the Greenway;
- (j) Provision of residential communal open space and public open space areas to include formal play areas along with all hard and soft landscape works with public lighting, planting and boundary treatments to include boundary walls, railings & fencing;
- (k) Internal site works and attenuation systems which will include for provision of hydrocarbon and silt interceptors prior to discharge; and
- (l) All ancillary site development/construction works to facilitate foul, water and service networks for connection to the existing foul via a rising main and provision of a foul pumping station, water connections and ESB network connections along with provision of an ESB

substation.

- 3.2 In terms of essential infrastructure, including foul sewer and mains water services, this is already in place along Loreto Road, with sufficient existing capacity to accommodate development on the site so there would be no landscape or visual considerations in this regard.

Figure 6 - Proposed Landscape Masterplan



Extract from 7348-PHL-00-ZZ-DR-L-0002 Overall Landscape Plan showing overall Application Site in context with existing landscape setting.

Landscape Design Considerations

- 3.3 The appearance of the development is a key influence on how the site is perceived by the public, so the proposed development includes for extensive landscape and open space works with the overall objective of providing a layout that integrates the development into the surrounding landscape and visually blends into the north Cavan area.
- 3.4 The proposed development has been designed to take account of the relevant planning designations on this site and is in accordance with the requirements of the Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 and relevant section 28 guidelines. The zoning and policy objectives

largely inform the arrangement of the residential layout and open space including the following principles relevant to landscape considerations:-

- The creation of localised areas of open space; 18% open space for the medium density housing zone and separate pocket park for the low density housing zone;
- The creation of vistas to and from the development;
- Positioning taller buildings at a location which will be screened from local views;
- The provision of connections within and through the subject site to enable neighbourhood connections and permeability;
- The orientation and layout of buildings is designed to create a balance between scale, active streetscapes and also providing a sense of place.

Visualisation 1 – Proposed Residential Development



Proposed 'Lower Residential' development towards the Loreto Road (L1513), Carrickane (courtesy of Big Lolly)

- 3.5 As part of the design process, existing environmental and technical constraints and assets were reviewed with the design team and the landscape design considerations focused on provision of open spaces, playgrounds, and linkages / connectivity within the proposed development site that would be accessible to all members of the community.
- 3.6 In terms of Green Infrastructure and Connectivity, the site is ideally positioned within a convenient walking and cycling distance from Cavan Town Centre. It is well-served by existing road infrastructure, which includes designated cycle lanes and footpaths, promoting sustainable and active transportation options. The main access road through the site, is designed to provide a strong "green" boulevard character that is aligned with field and parkland including avenue trees, landscape areas, broad walking routes and cycleways. Link paths across the site will provide a safe

environment for walkers, runners and cyclists across the site linking the linear open spaces and Cavan Greenway and offering potential links to the Cavan General Hospital.

- Landscape areas will be retained and enhanced towards the site boundary and throughout the site to allow for connected habitat creation and wildlife corridors. This will include areas managed for biodiversity and ecosystems that will see a net gain of biodiversity on the site. The internal and boundary hedgerows will be managed to remove dead, dying and dangerous branches and any colonising scrub or brier. The works will also entail removal of trees on site suffering from Ash die-back disease. For retained trees, the recommendations given in BS5837:2012 Guide for trees in relation to construction will be adopted to ensure site and tree safety.

Visualisation 2 – Proposed Residential Development



Visualisation of the proposed 'Upper Residential' area (courtesy of Big Lolly)

3.7 In terms of the core Open Space, the following elements are designed into the proposed development:-

- For public open space provision the scheme will provide children play areas as well as passive and active recreational spaces to the total of 18% of the net developable area for medium density housing;
- The open spaces will be interconnected by landscaped links or pedestrian paths that have a functional and aesthetic purpose with a mix of informal and formal landscape character with recreational and amenity spaces;
- On-going open space management plans will identify areas that can be managed to encourage habitats creation as the designed landscape measures mature and evolve;

- Retention of existing hedgerows and trees to the core of site that will form part of linear public open space;
- Creation of core open space around the retained rath and associated trees;
- All age groups will be catered for with the layout based on best practice in terms of safe and aesthetic design proposals that will complement interaction between varied groups with Universal Design being the overriding consideration. This will include provision of playgrounds to cater for the recreational and educational requirements of children of residents. These will be designed to be both secure and overlooked in line with RoSPA safety advice and European Standard (EN 1176);

Figure 7 – Lower Residential Development at Lisdaran



Extract from Drawing No. 7348-PHL-00-ZZ-DR-L-1001 Overall Landscape Plan indicating proposed Lower Residential development towards the Loreto Road (L1513)

- The site layout has been designed in a manner that allows for natural surveillance of all open spaces with houses fronting these areas to give a feeling of security and encourage positive social behaviour;
- The design sets out a clear distinction between public and private spaces;

- Open spaces are designed with consideration given to their long term management ensuring this is not onerous with heavy resource requirements. The planting of semi-mature trees will give instant impact and provide enclosure and screening. High canopy trees or ones that will be easy to manage are specified to be used along main roads and streets to ensure vehicular sightlines are retained;
- Due regard has been given with the landscape design coordinating with engineers in terms of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as required in terms of swales, compensation areas and retained watercourses or culverts.

Figure 8 – Upper Residential Development at Lisdaran



Extract from Drawing No. 7348-PHL-00-ZZ-DR-L-1001 Overall Landscape Plan indicating proposed Upper Residential development at Lisdaran

- 3.8 The landscape works include for planting of trees within parkland areas and core streets throughout the proposed development that will entail over 200 no. 'semi-mature' or 'extra-heavy standard' size trees. The collective trees will, as they mature, assist in merging the proposed development into the surrounding Cavan townscape / landscape as well as contribute to the creation of the areas new landscape character. Further landscape works include woodland planting (856m²), new hedgerows (1,175 linear meters), and shrub planting (2,950m²). The extent of planting will more than compensate for the loss of any vegetation on this site and enhance the overall wooded character, biodiversity and ecological nature of the site.
- 3.9 Planting and augmentation of existing boundary hedgerows will consist of evergreen and deciduous trees with under-story scrub mix. A range of plant species and heights will be selected to provide quick establishment and assist in visual integration. Amenity planting will consist of

trees, native woodlands, hedgerows, shrub / groundcover planting, meadow / wildflower and grass seeding works. Plants selected are predominantly indigenous and species based on those in the “All-Ireland Pollinator Code 2021-2025” to ensure successful plant establishment that will merge visually and ecologically into this area. Landscape works will be undertaken by an ALCI approved landscape contractor and in accordance with BS 4428:1989 Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces). Any trees or shrubs dying, damaged or removed will be replaced in the following planting session with plant of similar size and species. Trees supply and planting shall correspond to *BS 8545 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations*.

- 3.10 While the baseline site character will inevitably change due to this proposal, in terms of woodland and trees the retention of the majority of boundary trees and the new planting provides the opportunity for this part of Cavan town to have substantially enhanced tree cover and a more wooded character in the longer term with positive effects on amenity, environment and ecology.
- 3.11 The planning application is accompanied by a Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan that sets out the objectives for management of the external hard and soft landscape areas. It sets out the management aims and objectives for this development along with the specific management objectives for each landscape component, and the associated maintenance works required on an Annual and Occasional basis.

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

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

Visualisation 3– Proposed Residential Development



Proposed 'Lower Residential' near the proposed rath park (courtesy of Big Lolly)

Application Site

- 4.3 The proposal will result in permanent changes to the landscape character of the Upper and Lower Residential areas of the Application Site due to change from field or open landscape to built townscape character across this part of the 'Proposed Residential' designated lands including buildings, landform changes and boundary treatments that will essentially change the context of these core areas to a residential and predominantly urbanised area. The proposed development has been designed to follow the principles of this designation and that of the associated open

space across Lisdaran but has sought to retain key boundary trees and natural features across the site within areas of public open space, including those in and around the rath. The boundary vegetation and internal hedgerows towards the rath will be managed in accordance with the recommendations as set out in the Tree Survey (e.g. ivy and deadwood removed) and these areas augmented to ensure that they continue to feature and be a presence in the Lisdaran / Cavan landscape into the future. The works include for augmentation and gapping up of the hedgerow alongside the ditch to the north of the site towards the rears of properties on the Loreto Road (L1513). The minor loss of any trees and hedgerows should be considered in relation to the proposed landscape works across the wider site and associated with the upper and lower residential areas and to the central core of the site that will, as it matures, redress and increase the extent of trees and vegetation on the site.

- 4.4 The collective development will have *Substantial* effects to the character and sense of place across the site but would not necessarily be one of an adverse nature on account of the extent of landscape and open space development (equating to 18%) that would contribute to the local landscape character in the medium to longer term. Furthermore, the site is not one that would be considered a pristine landscape or one of an overly sensitive nature due to current land-use, its medium landscape condition / quality rating and location on the urban / rural interface.

Visualisation 4 – Proposed Residential Development



Visualisation of the proposed 'Upper Residential' area (courtesy of Big Lolly)

Cavan Town

- 4.5 In areas to the north of Cavan and leading towards Carrickane and the Loreto Road (L1513), there would be a conscious feeling the urban influences have shifted north beyond the current town

edge and that areas perceived as open landscape or farmland have become part of the townscape. Across much of the existing town, the effects will be *Negligible* due to topography, intervening townscape, the hospital complex, infrastructure and tree-lined hedgerows on the site boundaries which will remain intact thus visually obscuring the development extent. The new site entrance and road will be a readily discernible change with Moderate effects on a short section of the Loreto Road (L1513). The “Lower Residential” development will be visible to the rear of existing properties aligning the Loreto Road and have the visual backdrop of the area of woodland at Lisdaran that will assist in its visual integration though it would signify additional townscape in this area. While the road to the “Upper Residential” area will be visible, the core of this part of the proposal is set over a ridgeline at Lisdaran and any impacts deriving from this would be of a Slight and not-significant nature.

- 4.6 The design includes for planting of trees and hedgerows in the intervening landscape (and retention of hedgerows on the site periphery) that would have Slight Positive effects by the medium-term offsetting some of the perceived adverse effects deriving from the change of part of Lisdaran from landscape to townscape.
- 4.7 Residential properties backing onto the site on Loreto Road (L1513) and Golf Links Road will experience Slight to Moderate Adverse effects in terms of sense of place as the context of the site and backdrop views will include residential areas sitting behind the intervening trees and hedgerows. The magnitude of effects will reduce over time as the landscape measures mature as the proposal allows for retention and augmentation of existing boundary vegetation.
- 4.8 The proposed development will be largely obscured from roads away from the Loreto Road (L1513) due to topography and wooded belts but there will be a conscious feeling or sense that Cavan town has extended. In landscape or visual terms, this would not be rated as a substantial change beyond the actual site and the magnitude of effect will reduce over time as the proposed landscape works within the site matures. Away from the Loreto Road, there would be incidental views from the grounds of Cavan General Hospital and the Cavan Greenway to the south and east of the site but there is a degree of screening afforded by intervening boundary hedgerows that would serve to ensure landscape character impacts on these areas is not unacceptable. The Cavan River valley to the east of the site has and will retain a wooded character and this serves to limit any potential landscape character effects to areas to the east towards Keadew. Effects on the landscape character of north Cavan are assessed as Slight Neutral.
- 4.9 In terms of Cavan town centre and its peripheral landscapes, any of the associated National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) listed properties or higher valued or sensitive landscapes, there will be Negligible Neutral effects. The proposal would have no bearing on any notable views or townscape character and it would not result in any lessening of appreciation or enjoyment of its key features, designated or quality areas.

The 'Lakelands Landscape Character Area' and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark

- 4.10 There will be Negligible effects on the landscape or character to the vast majority of the Lakelands Landscape Character Area' and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark due to intervening topography, vegetation and built environment and the townscape already having a degree of influence in the Lisdaran area. The proposed development would not change the actual character of these areas apart from very restricted areas near and aside the Application Site as assessed above. There will be Slight effects to areas within the north of Cavan town with the extension of the urban form being discernible, but this would not be something that would be readily appreciable or have a major or notable effect on any broader appreciation of landscape, setting or context. Effects are rated as Neutral.
- 4.11 The proposal will have a Negligible and neutral effect on the sense of place and would not result in any lessening of appreciation or enjoyment of the more visited or notable landscapes in the Lakelands Landscape Character Area' and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark. Any effects should be measured in context with the adjacent cityscape and the Area Plan zoning ensuring this will appear as a logical and appropriate location in landscape (and visual) terms for this type of development.

Visual Impact Assessment

- 4.12 The following section summarises the existing setting and likely or anticipated effects on the eight no. representational viewpoints for which photomontages have been prepared and included in **LVIA Photomontages (Big Lolly 2025)**.
- 4.13 The tables include extracts of the photomontages for proposed development in each of the selected views for ease of cross-reference. The existing and proposed wireframes or photomontages are presented at a larger scale for each viewpoint within the LVIA Photomontages Booklet.

Viewpoint 1 - Cavan General Hospital Car Park



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Cavan General Hospital Car Park	Distance to Application Site	135m
Viewpoint Baseline	Cavan General Hospital is set to the south of the Application Site on the generally lower lands towards the Cavan River corridor. Originally established in 1989, the hospital complex has expanded incrementally set off an access onto the Golf Links Road. Open views from much of the hospital grounds to the north are limited by existing woodland and topography. More open views are afforded to the south-east from the broad expanse of car park where the Application Site will be visible on a near ridge though it is set behind an intervening boundary hedgerow. The primary visual receptors will be hospital staff and visitors. A section of the Cavan Greenway runs in close proximity to this view which would have leisure and recreational use.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	A partial view will be afforded of the southern facades of the upper residential area to the western edge of this view with the majority of the development either screened by intervening vegetation or topography. While evident, the proposal would be 250m distant and would be of limited scale and consequence in the view comparative to the existing hospital and associated infrastructure. The key effect will be a sense that the urban townscape of Cavan has extended south and this will have <i>slight</i> effects on the visual backdrop and setting of this area. Due to distance and intervening screening elements, the proposal would not have any notable effect on the visual quality and character of the Cavan Greenway.		
Significance Summary	Slight: A minor level of change, affecting a small part of the view that will be partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape.		

Viewpoint 2 - Cavan Greenway (Lisdaran)



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Cavan Greenway (Lisdaran)	Distance to Application Site	>50m
Viewpoint Baseline	The Cavan Town Urban Greenway, also commonly known as ‘Railway Walk,’ is located to the east of the site along the former railway line. It comprises a 3–4m wide walking and cycling trail linking Carrickane to Cavan town centre. For much of its length, views across the adjacent landscape / townscape are restricted due to embankments and mature hedgerows. This viewpoint is taken from a gap in the hedgerow within the section of greenway approaching the hospital with the site set on a ridge to the west (though topography obscures the vast majority of the site). The primary visual receptors are likely to be local residents and recreational users including hospital staff availing of this local amenity.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will represent a discernible change to part of the backdrop of this view, with the upper sections of residential properties partially visible in filtered views through the intervening hedgerow, having <i>slight</i> effects. Such views reduce appreciably in extent in summer months with leaf cover. It is also relevant that landscape works to the east of proposed upper residential area will serve to restrict views further as it matures. There are no views of the lower residential area.		
Significance Summary	Slight: A minor level of change, affecting a small part of the view that will be partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape.		

Viewpoint 3 - Cavan Greenway (Carrickane)



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Cavan Greenway (Carrickane)	Distance to Application Site	>10m
Viewpoint Baseline	The Cavan Town Urban Greenway, also commonly known as 'Railway Walk,' is located to the east of the site along the former railway line. It comprises a 3–4m wide walking and cycling trail linking Carrickane to Cavan town centre. For much of its length, views across the adjacent landscape / townscape are restricted due to embankments and mature hedgerows. This viewpoint is from a field gate towards Carrickane where a partial view is afforded over the northern part of the Application Site. The primary visual receptors are likely to be local residents and recreational users including hospital staff availing of this local amenity.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	Upon completion, part of the lower residential area will be visible at this gap including their gardens and an area of public open space. The most notable change will be the formalising of this landscape to include housing and urbanising elements that would visually suggest the extension of townscape in Carrickane into an area previously perceived as largely rural. While a discernible change, it would not have a significant impact on this oblique view for passing walkers / Greenway users given the baseline setting and limited extent of view. There are no views of the upper residential area.		
Significance Summary	Moderate: Proposed development will lead to a partial alteration to the baseline landscape setting but the proposed development will not have a marked effect on existing view quality.		

Viewpoint 4 - Loreto Road (L1513), Carrickane



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Loreto Road (L1513), Carrickane	Distance to Application Site	35m
Viewpoint Baseline	Loreto Road is the closest road to the north of the Application Site and a busy peripheral road connecting Golf Links Road to the west with the Drumgola Road to the northeast. For much of its route, it is set between hedgerows, earthbanks and woodland belts that limit views but in the Carrickane area, it is also bound by detached residential properties and their associated curtilage or gardens. This viewpoint is representative for those travelling west on this road with the site set partially behind intervening trees and buildings. The primary visual receptors will be transient consisting mainly of passing pedestrian and road users including commuters and those who live in the adjacent residential properties.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The roofs and upper facades of buildings within the lower residential area will be visible towards the proposed site entrance (155m distant and out of view) and have a slight visual impact on the midground of this view. Trees on Golf Links Road remain visible on the majority of the low backdrop skyline. The proposal will suggest an extension of the urban townscape of Cavan into this area but given the retained gap of open space within the lower residential area and the set back from Loreto Road, the magnitude of visual effect is reduced and the change would not have a significant effect on this view. There are no views of the upper residential area.		
Significance Summary	Slight: A minor level of change, affecting a small part of the view that will be partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape.		

Viewpoint 5 - Loreto Road (L1513), Lisdaran



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Loreto Road (L1513)	Distance to Application Site	160m
Viewpoint Baseline	Loreto Road is the closest road to the north-west of the Application Site and a busy peripheral road connecting Golf Links Road to the west with the Drumgola Road to the northeast. For much of its route, it is set between hedgerows, earthbanks and woodland belts that limit views. Towards the Golf Links Road junction, the road has a slightly exposed nature due to limited roadside vegetation offering open views to the east and south-east towards the Application Site. This viewpoint is representative for those travelling east on this road towards Carrickane. The primary visual receptors will be transient consisting mainly of passing pedestrian and road users including commuters and those in the adjacent residential properties.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	Partial views will be afforded of both the proposed lower and upper residential areas though the full extent of the development will be obscured by existing vegetation and topography. The lower residential area will represent an extension of the current townscape towards Carrickane. The majority of the upper residential is obscured though a number of houses will be visible on the skyline as well as works associated with access provision and infrastructure. The majority of the landscape in the view will remain as open field and woodland. The proposal will suggest an extension of the urban townscape of Cavan into this area and have, collectively, slight visual effects.		
Significance Summary	Slight: A minor level of change, affecting a small part of the view that will be partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape..		

Viewpoint 6 - Loreto Road (L1513) and Golf Links Road junction, Drumelis



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Loreto Road (L1513) and Golf Links Road Junction.	Distance to Application Site (Approx)	330m
Viewpoint Baseline	Loreto Road is the closest road to the north-west of the Application Site and a busy peripheral road connecting Golf Links Road to the west with the Drumgola Road to the northeast. For much of its route, it is set between hedgerows, earthbanks and woodland belts that limit views. This is a busy roundabout which has a slightly elevated profile affording views to the east and south-east at gaps through trees within residential property gardens towards the Application Site. The primary visual receptors will be transient consisting mainly of passing pedestrian and road users including commuters and those who live in the adjacent residential properties.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	Partial and limited views will be afforded of small parts of the proposed lower and upper residential areas though the full extent of the development will be obscured by existing vegetation and topography. The lower residential area will represent an extension of the current townscape towards Carrickane. The majority of the upper residential is obscured though a number of houses will be visible on the skyline in the gap between existing trees off Golf Links Road. The proposal will suggest an minor extension of the urban townscape of Cavan into this area and have, collectively, slight visual effects.		
Significance Summary	Slight: A minor level of change, affecting a small part of the view that will be partly screened and/or appearing in the background landscape..		

Viewpoint 7 - Keadue Lane, Drumlark



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from Big Lolly Photomontage Booklet)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Keadue Lane	Distance to Application Site	280m
Viewpoint Baseline	Keadue Lane is a quiet, narrow and minor-category lane linking Drumlark to the north and Cavan town to the south. It is set between well-established hedgerows, earth banks, woodland belts and mature gardens that restrict views to the west over the Cavan River, even in winter months. This view is from a gap in the hedge on lands towards Cherrymount and Carrickfern where the elevation allows open views across the valley towards the site set to the north (right) of the Cavan Hospital grounds. The view would not be subject to large number of visual receptors but is representative for road users and local residents, landowners, and farmers.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be a notable addition in the view to the west sitting across part of hill brown on the opposing valley side and skyline having <i>moderate</i> effects on the view. A new area of parkland will also be visible on the slopes between the upper residential area and valley floor. The extent of housing visible is limited to the south and east facing part of the development and this and topography ensure the majority of the development is obscured. The intervening wooded valley allows for nearly 500m between this viewpoint and the nearest proposed building ensuring that its introduction to the view would not be of an overwhelming or significant nature. There are no views of the lower residential area		
Significance Summary	Moderate: Proposed development will lead to a partial alteration to the baseline landscape setting but the proposed development will not have a marked effect on existing view quality.		

Viewpoint 8 - Keadue Lane, Drumlark



Proposed Photomontage View (extract from LVIA Photomontages)

Viewpoint Address or Location	Keadue Lane	Distance to Application Site (Approx)	240m
Viewpoint Baseline	Keadue Lane is a quiet, narrow and minor-category lane linking Drumlark to the north and Cavan town to the south. It is set between well-established hedgerows, earth banks, woodland belts and mature gardens that restrict views to the west over the Cavan River, even in winter months. This view is from a gap in the hedge on lands just east of the waterworks where the elevation allows open views across the valley towards the site set to the north of woodlands associated with Cavan Hospital. The view would not be subject to large number of visual receptors but is representative for those passing road users and local residents, landowners, and farmers.		
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Medium		
Predicted Change	The proposed development will be a notable addition in the view to the west sitting across part of hill brown on the opposing valley side and skyline having <i>moderate</i> effects on the view. A new area of parkland will also be visible on the slopes between the upper residential area and valley floor. The extent of housing visible is limited to the east facing part of the development and this and topography ensure the majority of the development is obscured. The intervening wooded valley allows for nearly 375m between this viewpoint and the nearest proposed building ensuring that its introduction to the view would not be of an overwhelming or significant nature. There are no views of the lower residential area.		
Significance Summary	Moderate: Proposed development will lead to a partial alteration to the baseline landscape setting but the proposed development will not have a marked effect on existing view quality.		

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Baseline Landscape Setting

- 5.1 The Application Site extends over 8.6 hectares and includes a 'Upper Residential' and 'Lower Residential' section. It lies within the townland of Lisdaran, in the barony of Loughtee Upper, situated approximately 1.5km to the north of Cavan Town Centre in Co. Cavan.
- 5.2 The fields have an open character with the core of fields being improved pasture (i.e. maximised for farming use). The site encompasses part of four fields, which are currently bound by post and wire fences set within or aside hedgerows dominated by hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) with sections subject to colonising scrub such as elder, ivy and briars. The condition of hedgerows is variable in terms of health and condition with both thicker and sparser sections.
- 5.3 The surrounding landscape to north has a predominantly rural characteristic while that to the south is affected by the built-up townscape of Cavan town. The rural landscape is largely made of up of small to medium scale fields predominantly in pasture bound by mixed quality hedgerows and wooded groups draped over the drumlin topography. It is a landscape possessing features common to many Irish rural landscapes namely rough, semi improved and improved grassland bound by hedgerows, wooded belts and groupings of variable quality. The collective of trees, belts, groupings and hedgerows in combination with the undulating topography give the landscape a deceptively wooded characteristic in ground level views that is not evident when studying aerial photography.
- 5.4 The landscape to the north is also characterised by a linear low-density pattern of development but there is a cluster of approximately 35 detached residential properties set off the Loreto Road in the Carrickane area. Local services are embedded within this residential setting indicating a small-scale mixed-use function.
- 5.5 Demesne or estate landscapes have also played a role in the development of character and setting out of the landscape north Cavan. This was based in part on Farnham Estate, a 1,300-acre country estate comprising woodland, parkland, and lakelands, located approximately 1.5 km west of the site.
- 5.6 The site is not within and designated or sensitive landscape as identified within current and regional planning documents, NIAH and NPWS sources. It is set on the rural/urban fringe edge of Cavan Town, Co. Cavan
- 5.7 The Application Site has a medium landscape sensitivity, quality and value though there is a higher rating to the north/northwest towards the Lough Oughter Lakeland Area and Drumkeen Woodland. The area benefits from a degree of visual containment due to the undulating topography and an accumulation of mature hedgerows, tree belts and groupings, even in winter months.

Proposed Development

- 5.8 The proposal is for 109 no. residential units along with provision of a crèche on lands in the Lisdaran townland off the Loreto Road, Cavan Town, Co Cavan.

Predicted Significance of Townscape and Visual Effects

- 5.9 Taking into account the existing landscape setting, and context and correlating this with the scale of the development and the proposed landscape works, it is concluded this proposal can be accommodated into this landscape type successfully having limited character or visual implications beyond the site itself; i.e. the site has the ability to absorb change without causing major detriment to its landscape character and visual amenity. It will impact the immediate farmland within and adjacent to the site itself having substantial effects on these areas as the lands will be changed from a predominately agriculture use (with cattle grazing) to one including residential development.
- 5.10 The extent of proposed planting will more than compensate for the loss of any vegetation on this site and enhance the overall wooded character, biodiversity and ecological nature of the site. This includes over 200 no. street trees, native woodland (over 800m²) and hedgerows (over 1km).
- 5.11 Beyond the immediate Application Site area, the effects on landscape and visual amenity are not significant on account of the nature of the baseline landscape character (i.e. the undulating nature of the topography, woodland, the accumulation of associated field hedgerows and the built environment) closing off views. Effects to any publicly accessible areas – away from the site entrance – are assessed as being slight to negligible, with the perceived adverse effects deriving from the change of part of Lisdaran from landscape to townscape effectively mitigated through the planting of trees and hedgerows in the intervening landscape (and retention of hedgerows on the site periphery), which as they mature, would ensure the proposed development would not have a significant effect on any broader appreciation of landscape, setting or context.
- 5.12 In terms of Cavan town centre and its peripheral landscapes, any of the associated National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) listed properties or higher valued or sensitive landscapes, there will be Negligible Neutral effects. The proposal would have no bearing on any notable views or townscape character and it would not result in any lessening of appreciation or enjoyment of its key features, designated or quality areas.

Summary Statement on Townscape and Visual Effects

- 5.13 Given the baseline setting, this is considered an appropriate location for the proposed development in landscape and visual terms. The nature of the proposal, within this landscape type, allows this assessment to conclude that although some localised impacts will occur, largely confined to the application site, the overall magnitude and significance of effects will be low and slight, respectively. In summary, the proposal will not give rise to any unacceptable effects on the landscape character or visual amenity of the application site or the wider Lisdaran area