

DESIGN RATIONALE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Project: **KNOCKRABO BLOCK E**

Project no.: **Re.18**

Prepared on behalf of: **KNOCKRABO INVESTMENTS DAC**

Prepared by: **DFLA**

Date of First Issue: **19.09.2025**

Revisions: **-**

ISSUED FOR: INFORMATION/BILLING/**PLANNING**/TENDER/CONSTRUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The objective of this report is to describe the proposed landscape and external works of Block E as part of the proposed development at Knockrabo, Dublin. This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by DFLA, O'Mahony Pike Architects, Tom Philips & Associates, Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers, Arborist Associates and others.

DFLA visited the site, in order to observe conditions on site, such as existing vegetation and structural conditions under foot, boundaries and other items which would have a bearing on the design process. DFLA have been involved in delivery of completed Phase 1 works.

Arborist Associates were commissioned before the design process of the extant permission began to carry out a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment in compliance with BS 5837:2012. These documents are included separately as part of this submission.

The following additional documents have been issued by DFLA as part of this submission :

No.	Scale	Size	Title
2001	1:200	A2	<i>Landscape Plan</i>
2400	1:100	A1	<i>Landscape Sections</i>
2500	1:20	A1	<i>Typical Landscape Details</i>

2.0 Landscape Appraisal

2.1 General

The overall site at Knockrabo comprise the Phase 1 development to the east which has already been completed by the applicant, comprising 69 no. apartments in 4 no. buildings, and 50 no. houses, including a gate lodge which is a protected structure. Additionally, The Phase 2 development to the north and west which has already been granted planning permission.

The subject application includes Block E within the Phase 2 of the development.

The site is located on the north side of Mount Anville Road and is an amalgamation of fragments of the large private suburban gardens associated with the former Knockrabo House and Cedar Mount House to the west. The lands were formally used by the Bank of Ireland as a sports ground and underwent extensive remodeling in the past to accommodate flat sports surfaces and built structures. The site is not visible from the road and is bounded on its southern edge (Mount Anville Road) by a stone boundary wall, a large coniferous hedge and mixed deciduous tree planting. There are, however, panoramic views to the north from within the site. The site slopes down to the north. The slope is generally uniform and varies between 1:12 and 1:20.

Construction works have recently been completed on the eastern side of the lands, as part of Phase 1 of the proposed development. The project won the Irish Landscape Institute Awards 2020 Residential category.



Figure 1, 2 and 3: Works carried out as part of Phase 1 development: View of new streetscape and housing from site entrance (first image), view across public open space with completed new development in background (second image), view across new playground near a mature redwood tree retained as part of new public park.

2.2 Existing and Proposed Boundaries

The boundaries of the proposed Block E vary in character. At the southern boundary, at Mount Anville Road, the existing stone boundary walls are proposed to be retained and made good where necessary.

The boundaries to the north and west will marry in with the future construction of the Phase 2 development. The eastern boundary at Block E will marry in with completed Phase 1 works (refer to figure 5). A temporary steel mesh and timber post fence is placed there. Once the site is complete, it will form part of the rest of the development without vertical boundaries.



Figure 4: View to the site from the east, showing the temporary boundary.



Figure 5: View from the site to the north looking along the edge of completed Phase 1 works.

3.0 Landscape Strategy

The proposed site strategy has been generated by DFLA, O'Mahony Pike Architects and Arborist Associates by locating the proposed 'Block E' of residential development within the site to allow for an area of public open space to the southern boundary and communal open space to the south of the Block E. Open spaces are designed around existing trees which are used to create a strong identity on site while retaining and protecting the existing trees and habitats. Spaces are designed in such a way as to make them visible, identifiable, and easily accessible for residents and the wider community. Engineering requirements for drainage and utilities have also been integrated into the overall landscape strategy. The landscape have developed carefully considering landscape proposal for Phase 1 which has been carried through from the previously granted planning permission and Phase 2 which has already been granted planning permission.

The following components contribute to the landscape strategy:

1. Improved permeability throughout the site for pedestrians;
2. Public open space to the south of the site and communal open space to the south of Block E;
3. A safe environment which is available to future residents but is also a positive addition to the public realm of the wider area;
4. Integration of functional landscape and external works such as parking and defensible space within the overall strategy;
5. Substantial and realistic retention of existing trees;
6. Native planting to assist with the biodiversity metric of the site post-development;
7. Retention of significant site boundaries, protected structures and substantial existing walls within the site;
8. Facilitation of the possible future taking-in-charge of the public areas of the development by the local authority.

3.1 Permeability

The main vehicular entrance to the Block E forms part of the Phase 1 works. Additionally, accessible public pedestrian routes from Mount Anville Road have also been provided. The proposed Block E development builds on this strategy. The general site strategy also includes public open space at the southern boundary, and communal open space south of the Block E, both ensuring full permeability across the site.

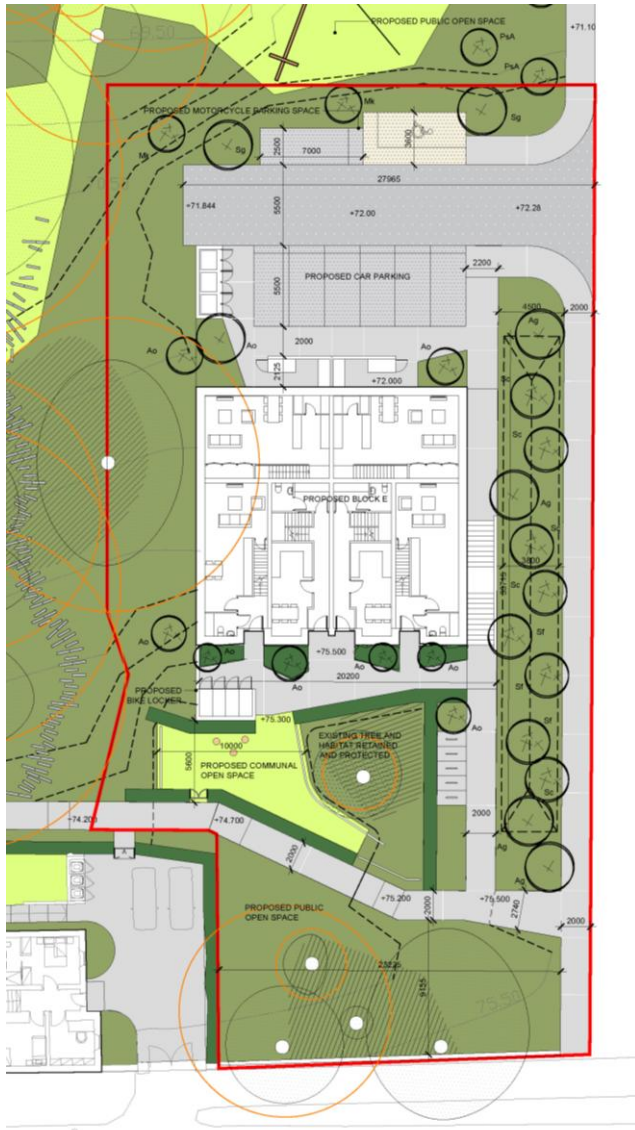


Figure 6: Landscape Plan.

3.2 Diverse Range of Open Spaces

The public open space located in the southern end of the site is enclosed to the west by hedge planting and at the south by existing stone boundary wall. The space is covered in meadow / groundcover planting. The main strategy is to retain and protect the existing trees and habitat, leaving open lawn for leisure. The space is designed as natural and informal, facilitates permeability and pedestrian access, fully accessible and passively overlooked from adjacent residential units.

The communal open space is located at the south of the Block E providing seating opportunities for the residents, benefits from passive surveillance and enclosure formed by the proposed hedge planting and estate railing. Adjacent to it, meadow / groundcover planting covers the existing tree with tag number 0711 (Category A tree of high quality/value, with a minimum of 40 years life expectancy) and habitat area that is retained and protected, designed to work with the slope of the site.



Figure 7: Illustration of completed Phase 1 public open space which have similar finishes to our proposed landscape layout.

3.3 Retention of Existing Trees

The Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Arborist Associates, are included separately in this submission. All trees on site have been surveyed in accordance with BS 5837:2012. Efforts have been made to retain as many existing trees as possible. Minimal impact on all existing trees to be retained will also be ensured when carrying out works on site. Additionally, a substantial schedule of new trees is proposed, to replace the existing trees removed and to improve the species mix and the proportion of native species.

BS 5837:2012 calls for a realistic assessment of the viability of retaining trees in the context of proposed construction. The British Standard has been used here to rigorously assess the stock of existing trees and to make recommendations which are realistic and represent a fair assessment of the quality and long-term viability of the trees on site. The retention of trees is allied to the proposals for new tree planting which will provide a more diverse age profile across the site and which is in line with good arboricultural, horticultural and ecological practice. Particular attention has been paid to trees located on boundaries with minimal removal of trees at Mount Anville Road. The finished floor levels of the buildings and the levels of the roads have all been designed to maximize tree protection.

3.4 Taking-In-Charge

All public open space and streetscape is designed to a standard such that, if required, it will be acceptable for the purposes of taking-in-charge in the future. Private space is delineated from shared-private and public. Drainage of private space is designed to function separately from shared-private and public space, and vice-versa.

4.0 Planting

Drawing 2001 *Landscape Plan*, prepared by DFLA includes a detailed schedule of proposed planting and illustrates the location and extent of mown grass, low groundcover, hedge, swale and tree planting as well as existing trees to be retained.

4.1 Tree planting

Tree species are selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species) and where required suitability to close proximity to residential buildings. Proposed tree sizes range from semi-mature (35-40cm girth), to extra heavy standards and multi-stemmed trees. A total of 25 new individual trees are proposed in order to compensate for the removal of existing trees and to improve the species mix and the proportion of native species. Typical species are illustrated on the following pages.



Figure 8: Illustrating a selection of proposed native tree species. Left: *Alnus glutinosa* (alder) (canopy); Centre: *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant redwood) (semi-mature); Right: *Magnolia kobus* (magnolia).

4.2 Hedge, Groundcover and Bulb Planting

Low planting is utilized to make and reinforce sub-spaces within the larger landscape spaces, for visual screening, defensible space, visual interest, ecological purposes and to guide or direct people's movement. The low planting is conceived as subtle layering of greens within the open spaces. The planting is layered as follows; lowest - bulb planting, groundcover planting, highest - clipped hedge planting.



Carpinus betulus (hornbeam)

Figure 9: Typical species for low clipped vegetation, or boundary treatment with fencing.



Figure 10: Species for shade groundcover – native & exotic including *Dianella*, *Dryopteris* and *Asplenium*.



Figure 11: Typical groundcover under tree canopy



Helleborus spp.



Hemerocalis sp



Dianella nigra.



Dryopteris filix- mas



Asplenium scolopendrium

Figure 12: Typical individual groundcover species.

5.0 Hard Landscape Materials & Furniture

The selection of hard landscape materials is determined by function but also to provide a cohesive palette of materials throughout. Materials are chosen for durability, but where practical are proposed to be constructed in a way which is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, in order to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces. Primary vehicular, pedestrian circulation is proposed as a durable, limited range of neutral materials with robust construction. Typically, outside the apartment block area, a 5.5m wide carriageway with a 2m wide footpath is proposed with in-situ reinforced concrete with selected finish. Permeable precast concrete block paving are proposed for the parking bays.

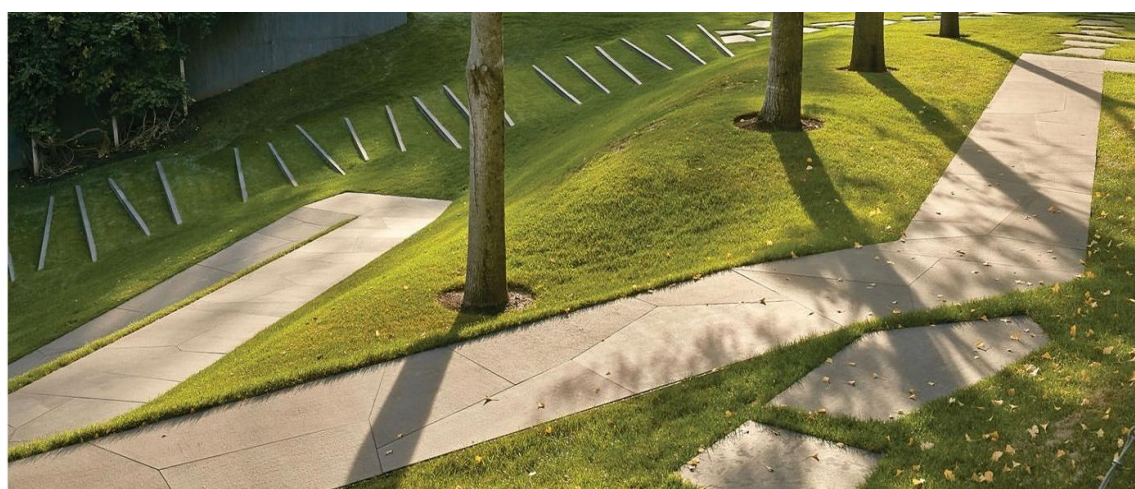


Figure 13: A range of paving details (from top to bottom) – in-situ concrete footpath integrated with soft landscape. Image from Diamond Park by DFLA, Dublin; paving in soft landscape (Project by Hollander design).

END.