



**AMENDMENTS TO PERMITTED BLOCKS A AND B2
AT 42A PARKGATE STREET, DUBLIN 8
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LVIA)**

FEBRUARY 2025



This short Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by ARC Consultants in relation to proposed amendments to permitted Blocks A and B2 at No. 42A Parkgate Street, Dublin 8.

Short Description of the Proposed Development

The description below is an extract from the planning notice for the proposed development:

The proposed development comprises amendments to development permitted under ABP Ref. ABP-310567-21 (as amended by DCC Reg. Ref. LRD6042/23) at No. 42A Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 to expand the footprint and façade of Block A to accommodate a 2nd fire core. As a result of the expanded footprint, Block B2 is to be reconfigured to provide 8no. new 'Build-to-Sell' apartments at the interface of Block A and Block B2.

No further amendments to site works, demolition or works to protected structures, including the river wall, (consented under original SHD ABP-306569-20 and proposed under concurrent planning application DCC Reg. Ref. LRD6074/ involves the 24) are proposed.

Executive Summary

The proposed development involves the amendment of the permitted Block A to introduce a second fire core. The height of Block A remains the same, as does the external expression except for a small increase in the overall width of the building. Block B2 remains virtually unchanged facing the street and amendments to the approved Block B2 are mostly confined to the rear of the building, which faces into an inner court and is almost entirely concealed from view from the public realm. Therefore, it is highly unlikely the observers in the public realm will notice any change. This particularly so since the buildings have not yet been constructed and the public will have no opportunity to compare the physical existence and character of the permitted Blocks A and B2 with how these blocks will appear after the small amendments now sought. In terms of the scale, mass and bulk of these blocks, and their potential to give rise to visual effects on their surroundings, there is unlikely to be any material change perceived by observers.

Methodology

A survey of the potential visibility of the proposed development was carried out having regard to the contents of the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 (including in particular the location of key views and prospects, protected structures and conservation areas). A survey of the potential visibility of the proposed development was carried out by ARC on various occasions in 2024 and in early 2025

ARC carried out mapping analysis to identify locations surrounding the application site, which would be representative of the extent of visibility of the proposed development, including locations from which views of the proposed development were likely. Photomontages were prepared by Model Works from these view locations and these photomontages are submitted with this application. ARC had regard to those photomontages in the preparation of this Visual Impact Assessment.

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as follows:

"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors;

Landscape and visual impact assessment discusses how the existence of a proposed development might change how a surrounding area might be 'perceived by people' visually.

Assessment of visual effects, has three main parts: -

1. Analysis of the likely extent of visibility of a proposed development.
2. Description of the visual sensitivity of the receiving environment and its consequent capacity to absorb development.
3. Assessment of the objective extent of change in the visual character of the receiving environment likely to arise from the existence of the proposed development, and of the likely response of observers to that change.

Extent of Visibility

The proposed amendments to Blocks A and B2 will not result in any change in the extent of their visibility from the surroundings as compared from that of the permitted buildings. It is unlikely, therefore, that there will be any change in perceived visual effects.

Visual Sensitivity of the Receiving Environment

The visual sensitivity of the receiving environment will remain unchanged.

Change in the Visual Character of the Receiving Environment

The proposed amendments will result only in visual changes that are very minor and as such are unlikely in any perceivable change in the visual character of the receiving environment.

Definition Of Visual Impacts

The assessment of visual impacts on landscape and on the built environment had regard to the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (2022), and to Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) on the assessment of the likely effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

The list of definitions given below is taken from *Table 3.4: Descriptions of Effects* contained in the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency. Some comment is also given below on what these definitions might imply in the case of visual impact or landscape and visual impact. The definitions from the EPA document are in italics.

Imperceptible: *An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.* The definition implies that the development would be visible, capable of detection by the eye, but not noticeable to the casual observer. If the development were not visible, there could be no impact.

Not Significant: *An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.* The definition implies that the development would be visible, capable of detection and of being noticed by an observer who is actively looking for the development with the purpose of assessing the extent of its visibility and visual effects.

Slight: *An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.* For this definition to apply, a development would be both visible and noticeable, and would also bring about a change in the visual character of the environment. However, apart from the development itself, the visual sensitivity of the surrounding environment would remain unchanged.

Moderate: *An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.* In this case, a development must bring about a change in the visual character of the environment; and this change must be consistent with a pattern of change that is already occurring or is likely to occur.

Significant: *An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.* The definition implies that the existence of the development would change an important characteristic of the visual environment in a manner that is not “consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends”. Whether an effect might or might not be significant can depend on the response of individual observers, since what one person might regard as a sensitive aspect of the visual environment, another might not. A conservative approach, classifying effects as significant even though many observers might not regard them as significant, is taken here.

Very Significant: *An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.* The definition implies that the existence of the development would substantially change most of the visual characteristics of the environment in a manner that is not “consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends”.

Profound: *An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics.* In visual terms, profound impacts are only likely to occur on a development site, in that it is only on the site that all previous visually sensitive characteristics could be obliterated. Outside the site, some visual characteristic of the original environment is likely to remain.

The range of possible effects listed above deal largely with the extent of impact; and the extent of the impact of a development is usually proportional to the extent to which that development is visible. The extent of impact will also, in part, depend on the sensitivity of the spaces from which the development is seen. This proportionality may be modified by the extent to which a development is regarded as culturally or socially acceptable. The character of the impact: positive, negative or neutral, will depend on how well a development is received by the public, and on the general contribution of the development to the built environment. The character of a visual impact, and even the duration of a visual impact, is very dependent on the attitude of the viewer. If a viewer is opposed to a new building for reasons other than visual, that viewer is likely to see the building in a negative light, no matter how beautiful the building might be. Though buildings are intended to be permanent, and will be permanently visible, the extent of visual impact associated with a building often diminishes with time as further development in the area takes place.

Potential Visual Effects

The permitted residential tower, Block A, at 96 metres in height, is likely to be visible from surrounding areas and even from some relatively distant locations. Detailed assessment of the visibility and likely visual effects arising from the construction and existence of Blocks A and B2 were carried out as part of the planning applications for the Blocks A and B2, permitted under ABP Ref. ABP-310567-21 (as amended by DCC Reg. Ref. LRD6042/23). It is not proposed to repeat this assessment in this report. The proposed amendments will not change the extent of visibility or visual effects these buildings.

This assessment confines itself solely to the potential visual effects that might arise from the **amendments** to the permitted Blocks A and B2, and not to the permitted buildings themselves.

In carrying out this assessment ARC recommended that a small number of photomontages be prepared by Model Works to illustrate the differences between Blocks A and B2 both as permitted and as now proposed to be amended. Photomontage views from 5 representative locations were prepared. In the case of each location three versions of each views presented: One as existing, A second with the permitted development, and A third with the permitted Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended. These views are tabled below, the table including the assessed likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from each location.

Table 1: Table of Potential Visual Effects arising from the Proposed Amendments to Blocks A & B2

View	Location	Potential Visual Effect
1	From Father Matthew Bridge at Arran Quay	None to Imperceptible
2	From St John's Road West at the junction with Military Road	None to Imperceptible
3	From Conyngham Road at the entrance to Phoenix Park	None to Imperceptible
4	From St John's Road West at Heuston Station	None to Imperceptible
5	From Benburb Street at the Aisling Hotel	None to Imperceptible

View by View Description

View 1: From Father Matthew Bridge at Arran Quay

This view looks west along the River Corridor from Father Matthew Bridge. The trees at the Croppies Acre are seen in the centre of the view in the middle distance. Behind these trees, the top portion of the Wellington Monument is just visible at a further distance. In this view, the landmark residential tower that forms part of the proposed development will be seen in the middle distance at the centre of the view. The proposed landmark tower will be a relatively modest element in the view, though perhaps the focus of the view. The Wellington Monument will be seen in the far distance to the right of the landmark tower. The visual difference as seen from this view location between Blocks A and B2 as permitted and Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended is so small that it is unlikely to be noticed. The likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from this view location are assessed a none to 'imperceptible'.

View 2: From St John's Road West at the junction with Military Road

This view looks north east across St John's Road West towards the train sheds at Heuston Station. The historic terminal building at Heuston Station is seen to the far right in the middle distance. The Criminal Courts of Justice are seen to the left. In this view, the proposed development will be seen behind the train sheds at Heuston Station, as a cluster of buildings in the middle of the view, with the residential tower seen behind lower elements of the development that step up towards the tower. The proposed development is a moderately substantial element in the view, but the Criminal Courts of Justice, over to the left are more visually prominent. The visual difference as seen from this view location between Blocks A and B2 as permitted and Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended is so small that it is unlikely to be noticed. The likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from this view location are assessed a none to 'imperceptible'.

View 3: From Conyngham Road at the entrance to Phoenix Park

This view looks east along Conyngham Road / Parkgate Street. The proposed development will be seen as a substantial element in the centre of the view, although the largest element in the view is the Criminal Courts of Justice, seen to the left. Lower elements of the proposed development will be seen in the middle ground with upper floors of the residential tower seen behind. The visual difference as seen from this view location between Blocks A and B2 as permitted and Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended is so small that it is unlikely to be noticed. The likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from this view location are assessed a none to 'imperceptible'.

View 4: From St John's Road West at Heuston Station

This view looks north across the front of the main historic station building at Heuston Station and across the concourse in front of the station, a transport interchange with a Luas Stop and bus stops as well as being the forecourt of the Station. The Riverside Stone Wall on the subject site can be seen in the centre of the view across the River. In the view as proposed, the proposed residential tower at the east end of the site becomes the focus of the view, and the focus of the perspective of the front façade of Heuston

Station. The tower is the central element in the view. Parts of lower elements of the proposed development are just visible to the left. The subject site is a designated site for a tall building, and policies expressed through the Dublin City Development Plan call for development on the subject site to play an important role in place making. The visual difference as seen from this view location between Blocks A and B2 as permitted and Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended is so small that it is unlikely to be noticed. The likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from this view location are assessed as none to 'imperceptible'.

View 5: From Benburb Street at the Aisling Hotel

This view is quite close to the site of the proposed development and looks west towards the subject site from outside the entrance to the Aisling Hotel. In the view as proposed and permitted the proposed residential landmark tower, Block A, is the dominant element in the centre of the view, and the central focus of the view, with lower elements of the proposed development seen behind and curving away to the right. The existence of the permitted development will result in a dramatic change of scale on the subject site, which is now occupied by low buildings. The visual difference as seen from this view location between Blocks A and B2 as permitted and Blocks A and B2 as proposed to be amended is so small that it is unlikely to be noticed. The likely visual effect of the proposed amendments as perceived from this view location are assessed as none to 'imperceptible'.

Conservation Note

The proposed amendments to the permitted Blocks A and B2 do not involve any works to structures of architectural heritage value, whether they are protected structures or not. Nor are the proposed amendments to the permitted Blocks A and B2 likely to result in any material or perceived effects on the setting of structures of architectural heritage value over and above effects occasioned by the permitted Blocks A and B2.

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W. H. Hastings FRIAI • February 2025

RIAI Accredited Grade 1 Conservation Architect