# DESIGN RATIONALE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Project: **VOLUMETRIC BUNDLE – ST. ANDREWS COURT**

Project no.: **Dc.41**

Prepared on behalf of: **DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL**

Prepared by: **DFLA**

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

# Table of Contents

## 1 Introduction

The objective of this report is to describe the proposed landscape and external works as part of the proposed residential development at St Andrews Court, Dublin. This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects, O'Donnell and Tuomey Architects, Horganlynch Engineers, and others.

Dermot Foley Landscape Architects visited the site on several occasions from September 2021 to May 2022, in order to observe conditions on-site, such as existing vegetation and structural conditions underfoot, boundaries, and other items that would have a bearing on the design process.

Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy was commissioned before the design process 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 Dermot Foley Landscape Architects as part of this submission:

| No. | Scale | Size | Drawing Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| 200100 | 1:200 | A2 | Landscape Plan |
| 200101 | 1:100 | A2 | Roof Terrace Plan |
| 200400 | 1:50, 1:25 | A1 | Landscape Sections |
| 200500 | 1:20 | A2 | Typical Landscape Details |

# 2 Landscape Appraisal

## 2.1 General

The site is located between Fenian Street and Sandwith Street Upper. It is currently a 3-floor residential housing block along Fenian street with a surface car park to the north of the existing building which is accessed via Sandwith Street Upper. There is an existing cul-de-sac between the subject site and the residential dwellings to the north. There are a couple of existing trees in the surface car parking, but unfortunately, site constraints do not allow for their retention. A new apartment block with an internal courtyard forms part of the current proposals. Several planters and a semi-mature tree are proposed along the private open spaces facing outwards along Fenian Street and Sandwith Street Upper. A roof communal roof terrace is proposed on level 04.

The site is generally flat, with the levels gently dropping from south to north.

4 no. existing trees and overgrown vegetation are in the surface car parking. All the 4 no. trees are category ‘C’ trees (trees of low quality) and are proposed for removal to facilitate the development. A range of new trees will be proposed within the new courtyard and on the roof terrace at level 04.

*Figure 1: Existing view from the cul-de-sac to the north of the site looking towards the existing car parking to the south.*

## 2.2 Existing and Proposed Boundaries

The existing boundaries of the site vary in character. The northern boundary is formed by an open boundary to the existing cul-de-sac. There is a proposal for a railing with a gated entrance to the courtyard in this location.

*Figure 2: View from the cul-de-sac to the north of the site looking inwards at the existing car parking to the south.*

The eastern boundary to the site is currently formed by a brick wall and a railing followed by a footpath and a road (Sandwith Street Upper.) The proposed building will eliminate the existing railing and together with low-level planting and upgrade works to the footpath will create a new amenity streetscape for pedestrians.

*Figure 3: View of the eastern boundary along Sandwith Street Upper*

*Figure 4: View from the southwest of the site looking towards the existing residential building along Fenian street.*

The southern boundary along Fenian Street is currently formed by a brick wall and railing offset from the existing building. The new boundary will be formed by the private amenity space. The western boundary is currently a car park in adjoining property enclosed with a palisade fence. It's proposed that the western boundary will be formed by the proposed building.

*Figure 4: View of the western boundary as seen from north of the site.*

## 3. Landscape Strategy

The proposed site strategy has been generated by DFLA and O'Donnell & Tuomey Architects to maximise greening opportunities in an urban environment. The proposal includes a new verdant courtyard with play opportunities and a shared roof terrace. Open spaces are designed in such a way as to make them visible, identifiable, and easily accessible for residents. Engineering requirements for drainage and utilities have also been integrated into the overall landscape strategy.

The following components contribute to the landscape strategy:

1. a safe communal environment that is available to future residents and is also a visually positive addition to the public realm of the wider area;
2. use of a mature tree as a placemaking element to give a strong identity and character to the proposed communal open space;
3. substantial site greening strategy through proposed trees, planting and other soft landscape proposals;
4. the proposed planting includes native species to assist with the biodiversity metric of the site post-development;
5. a diverse range of recreational activities and play facilities for future residents in an environment, that benefits from passive surveillance;
6. careful maintenance consideration and facilitation of the taking-in-charge of the development by the local authority.


*Figure 5: An early concept sketch illustration developed as part of the design process.*

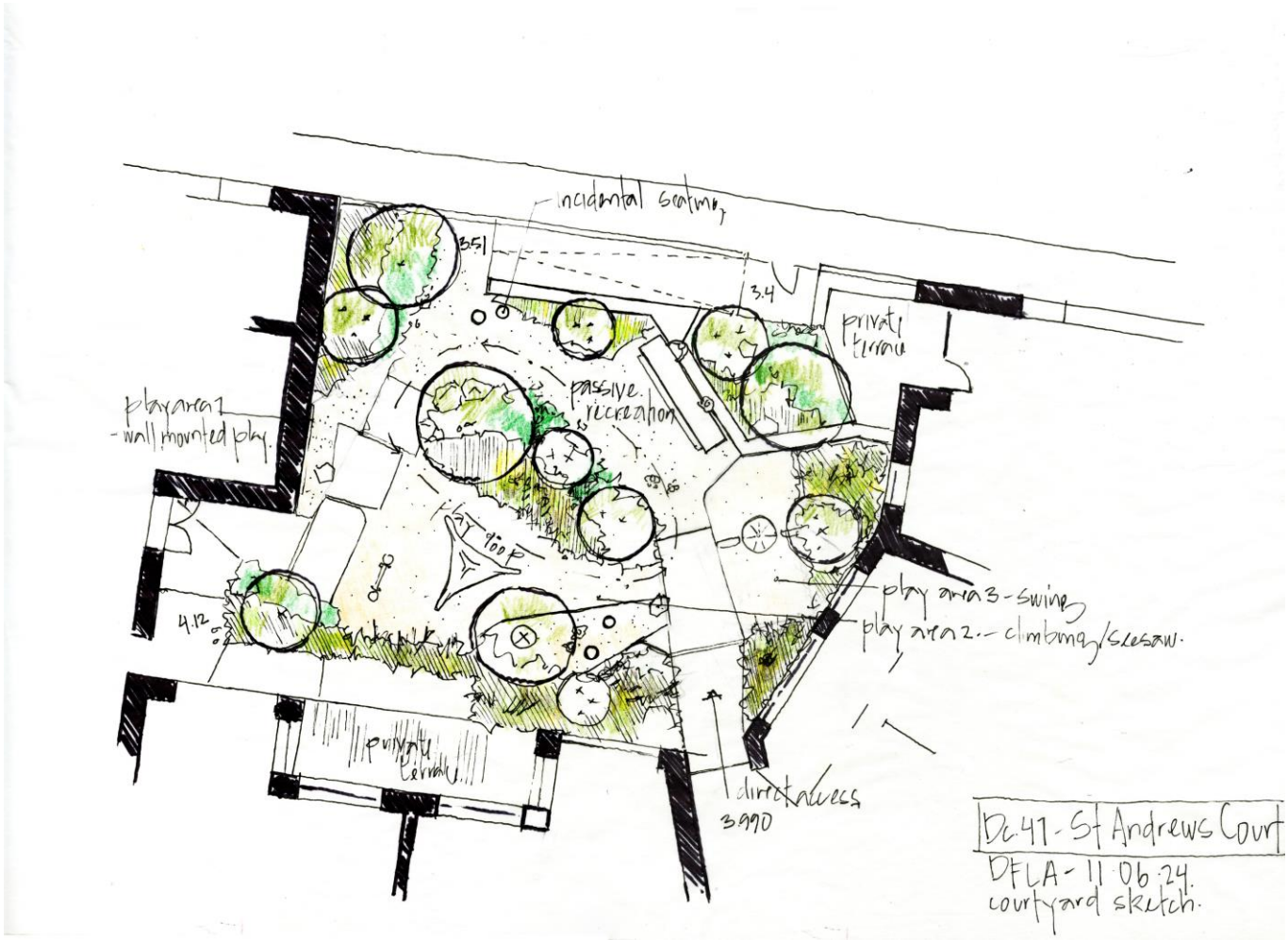


*Figure 6: A more recent concept sketch illustration of recent sitewide changes within the design process.*

### 3.1 Diverse Range of Open Space & Play Facilities

Located in the heart of the proposed development, the communal courtyard has been designed as a universally accessible open space benefiting from the passive surveillance of the surrounding apartment buildings. With future use and maintenance in mind, a range of soft and hard materials have been judiciously used to create a range of activities within a green, informal setting.

A range of play elements has been proposed throughout the courtyard to form a loop that caters to children of different age groups. A long feature table with seating is also proposed for communal use as part of the overall amenity of the courtyard. An impact-absorbing play surfacing is located beneath all proposed play equipment. The space is designed as an adventurous, semi-natural 'play landscape' in an urban setting. The play equipment is not fenced off but is equipped with an impact-absorbing surface where required for fall heights and is designed and manufactured in accordance with standards EN 1176 and EN 1177.

All units on the ground floor are provided with defensible space. Typically, the private space is separated from the wider courtyard by a discrete hedge, groundcover, or climber planting.

*Figure 7: Illustration of proposed play equipment. Top Left: Little Spider Swing*; Top Right: *Wall mounted Turning Circle Bottom: Rope Pyramid*

## 3.2 Public Open Space Provision

The public open space is situated adjacent to Kanade Lane, which runs along the northern boundary of the site. Currently, the lane is in disrepair, featuring a dead end and flanked by vacant buildings to the north and vacant lots to the south and west. This area lacks passive surveillance and active frontages, resulting in minimal vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

In the future, as the surrounding vacant sites are redeveloped, this space can be integrated into the lane, establishing a connection with the public open spaces planned for the north side.
In the short term, the public open space will be enclosed by a fence, yet it will still provide community benefits. As outlined in Section 5.3.3 of the Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines, this area will '...support the conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity. The public open spaces should also form an integral part of the design and layout of a development and provide a connected hierarchy of spaces, with suitable landscape features....'
This is achieved with provision of planting and trees within the space, enhancing the greening and biodiversity of Kanade Lane. This will also facilitate passive recreation and provide a visual buffer between the lane and the proposed building.
Once the adjacent sites are developed and the risk of anti-social behaviour significantly decreases, DCC will consider opening the public open space on the St Andrews Court site to the lane, thereby enhancing the amenity of the area. This could be accomplished by relocating the fence and gate southward to establish a clear separation between public and communal open spaces.

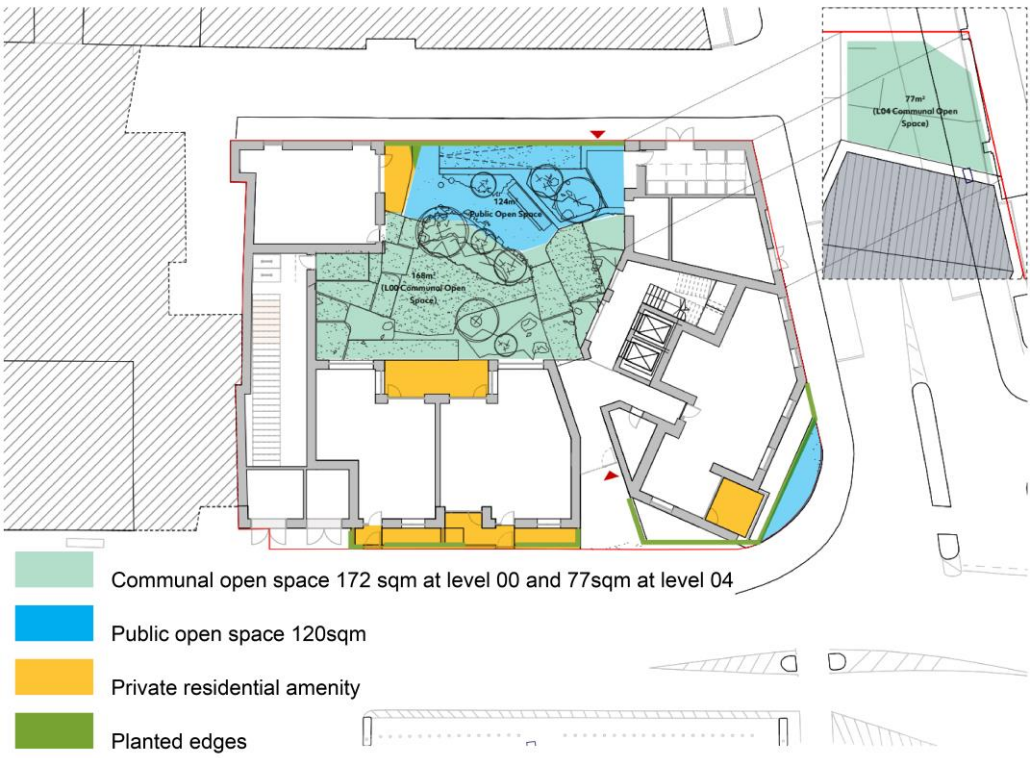


*Figure 8: Illustration of Open Space Provision.*

## 4.0 Planting

Drawing 200100 *Landscape Plan*, prepared by Dermot Foley Landscape Architects includes a detailed schedule of proposed planting and illustrates the location and extent of mown grass, low groundcover, climber planting, hedge, and tree planting. The planting has been carefully selected to suit the north-facing aspect of the courtyard.

## 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 18 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 9: Illustrating a selection of proposed native tree species. Top Left: Pinus sylvestris* (pine) (at mature stage); Top Right: *Betula pubescens* (birch) (semi-mature); *Bottom: Corylus avellana* (strawberry tree) (foliage.)

## 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.

*Caprinus betulus* (hornbeam) (left) *Quercus ilex* (evergreen oak) (right)
*Figure 10: Typical species for low clipped vegetation, or boundary treatment.*

*Figure 11: Species for shade groundcover – native & exotic including Darmera, Luzula, Dryopteris and Asplenium.*


*Figure 12: Typical groundcover under tree canopy*

*Helleborus spp.*

*Hemerocalis sp*

*Luzula sylvatica*

*Dianella nigra.*

*Dryopteris filix- mas*

*Asplenium scolopendrium*

*Figure 13: 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 is proposed to be constructed in a way that is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, in order to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces. Primary vehicular, pedestrian, and cycle circulation is proposed as a durable in-situ concrete surface of robust construction and minimal maintenance.

*Figure 14: A range of paving details: Self-binding gravel (left), impact absorbing play surfacing (right).*

*Figure 15: An illustration of exposed aggregate concrete texture.*