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ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT
&
IMPACT REPORT

BLESSINGTON LRD
CO. WICKLOW

Project No.	Project name	Date	Revision
TBLE002	Blessington LRD	04/09/24	B

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Summary

The subject site is located at Cookehill, Blessington, Co. Wicklow (image 1). An assessment of the site was undertaken by Ciaran Keating (CMK Hort + Arb Ltd.) on the 2nd of April 2024 to determine the extent of woody vegetation on the site.
The site contains one dying oak (*Quercus robur*) tree near the centre only. This tree will be removed. A hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedge up to 5m in height with no standard trees is located on the northern boundary with the neighbouring.
A number of mature trees are located outside of the northern boundary near the western perimeter road and overhang the site by up to 6m (image 1). No impact on these trees is envisaged as the existing watercourse will negate the possibility of tree roots entering the site and the general area will be incorporated into the open space provision.
The hedge on the northern boundary with Oak Drive housing estate will also be incorporated into the open space provision of the site and will be unaffected by the works.
The location of tree protection fencing for the retained hawthorn hedge on the boundary with Oak Drive is shown on drawing TBLE003 102 Arb Impact & Tree Protection.

1. Client brief & Methodology

CMK Hort + Arb Ltd. were commissioned by Marshall Yards Development Company Limited to provide an assessment of existing trees in support of a planning submission for a site at Cookehill, Blessington, Co. Wicklow, Co. Dublin (image 1).

Image 1. Site location and boundary

The purpose of this assessment is to provide data on the nature and quality of the trees on the site with a view to this information informing the design in terms of tree retention/removal.
The initial fieldwork was undertaken on the 2nd of April 2024.
The arboricultural impact of the proposed development is discussed within section 3 of this report.

The survey methodology, supporting drawings and documentation follow the recommendations contained within BS 5837 (2012). The analysis of the trees was undertaken using the VTA methodology as developed by Mattheck and Breloer (1994).

2. General description of trees

One dying oak tree (*Quercus robur*) is located on the site (image 3). It has extensive basal decay and fire damage at base and has very limited potential outside of its current environment. This tree conforms to category U within BS5837 (2012).

The remaining woody vegetation is composed of a hawthorn hedge on the northern boundary with the Oak Drive housing development (images 2 & 4). The hedgerow conforms to classification WL1 (Fossitt 2000). This hedgerow is on average 4m high and contains no standard trees.

The neighbouring parcel of land to the north of the subject site contains a number of mature oak (*Quercus robur*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees (image 4).

The older trees in this location are likely to be remnants of the Blessington Demesne plantings. A number of these trees overhang the subject site by up to 6m. No roots from these trees are likely to extend into the site as there is a stream separating both sites in this area (image 5).

Image 2. Location of hedge and trees within neighbouring lands

Image 3. Tree within centre of site. Note extensive basal decay

Image 4. Hawthorn hedge on boundary with Oak Drive

Image 5. Trees within neighbouring site

3. Impact of the proposed development

3.1 Project description

Marshall Yards Development Company Limited intend to apply for permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development at this site of 6.05 hectares at Blessington Demesne, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The site is generally bound: to the north-east by undeveloped land and Oak Drive; to the south-east by Saint Mary's Senior National School, Cocoon Childcare and Newtown Centre (across a local street); to the south-west by Downshire Park (across a local street); and to the north-west by the Blessington Inner Relief Road.

The proposed development principally comprises the construction of a mixed-use development with a gross floor area of 23,219.1 square metres and ranging in height from 1 No. to 5 No. storeys that includes: 233 No. residential dwellings (24 No. 1-bed, 103 No. 2-bed, 94 No. 3-bed and 12 No. 4-bed), of which 185 No. are houses (103 No. 2-bed, 70 No. 3-bed and 12 No. 4-bed) and 48 No. are apartments/duplexes (24 No. 1-bed and 24 No. 3-bed); 36 No. 'later living' dwellings (12 No. 1-bed and 24 No. 2-bed), of which 12 No. are houses (all 2-bed) and 24 No. are apartments (12 No. 1-bed and 12 No. 2-bed); a medical centre (224 sq m); a pharmacy (115 sq m); and a café (60 sq m).

The development also comprises: 2 No. multi-modal entrances/exits with junctions at Blessington Inner Relief Road to the north-west and the local street to the south-west; a new pedestrian/cycle crossing to the south-east at the local street; upgrades to the Blessington Inner Relief Road roundabout to the west, including pedestrian/cycle crossings; new pedestrian/cycle crossing at Blessington Inner Relief Road to the north-west; 341 No. car parking space; cycle parking; hard and soft landscaping including public open space, communal amenity space and private amenity space (as gardens, balconies and terraces facing all directions); boundary treatments; 3 No. sub-stations; bin stores; public lighting; PV arrays atop all dwellings; PV array, lift overrun and plant atop the 5-storey mixed-use building; and all associated works above and below ground.

3.2 Arboricultural impact of the proposed development

The proposed development will require the removal of the one category U tree on the site. No impact on trees within the neighbouring site is envisaged as the existing watercourse will negate the possibility of tree roots entering the site and the general area will be incorporated into the open space provision.
The northern boundary hedge will also be incorporated into the open space provision of the site and will be unaffected by the works.

4. Tree protection

Tree / hedge protection fencing shall be erected prior to the main mobilisation of site plant and infrastructure. It shall be retained in situ for the duration of the site works and only removed when soft landscaping works require its removal (refer to drawing TBLE002 102 Tree Protection)

5. Limitations of Survey

This survey should be regarded as a preliminary assessment of the trees and deals with the current condition as identified during this survey only. Every attempt was made to identify hazardous trees in this report; however, this survey was carried out from the ground and therefore cannot be held to have identified elements of decay, which may be hidden out of sight within the crown or beneath ivy or other obstructions. To counter this limitation in the survey process it is vital that during tree works any additional defects found by the climbing arborist are communicated to the consulting arborist to allow appropriate action to be taken.
The details within this survey are based on the condition of the trees during the survey period only. The findings in this survey cannot be held to be valid after any site disturbance, man-made or natural, which may have an adverse effect on any trees present.

6. Relevant legislation

There are no Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) on any of the trees within the site.
There are no restrictions on removing trees (Forestry Act 2014) within an urban area however trees should not be felled when nests are present. A suitably qualified ecologist should be engaged to assess trees for nests prior to felling unless the trees are to be removed outside of the bird nesting season (1st of March - 31st of August).
Mature trees may contain bats. Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976 and Schedule 1 of the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997. Professional advice from a licenced surveyor should be sought prior to any works commencing on trees.

7. Terminology

Tree categories

A	Trees of high quality and value due to their size, age, condition, historical/visual merit and/or conservation potential (a minimum of 40 years).
A1	Mainly arboricultural values. Particularly good examples of species, essential components of groups or of formal or semi-formal arboricultural features.
A2	Mainly landscape values. Trees, groups or woodlands which provide a definite screening or softening effects to the locality in relation to views into or out of site, or those of particular visual importance.
A3	Mainly cultural values, including conservation. Trees, groups or woodlands of significant conservation, historical, comparative or other value (e.g. veteran trees or wood-pasture).
B	Trees of moderate quality and value (a minimum of 20 years).
B1	Mainly arboricultural values. Trees that might be included in high categories but are downgraded because of impaired condition (e.g. presence of remedial defects including unsympathetic past management and minor storm damage).
B2	Mainly landscape values. Trees present in numbers, usually as groups or woodlands, such that they form distinct landscape features, thereby attracting a higher collective rating than they might as individuals but which are not, individually, essential components of formal or semi-formal features (e.g. trees of moderate quality within an avenue that includes better A category specimens) or trees situated internally to the site, therefore individually having little visual impact on the wider locality.
B3	Mainly cultural values including conservation. Trees with clearly identifiable conservation or other cultural benefits.
C	Trees of low quality and value (a minimum of 10 years).
C1	Not qualifying in higher categories.
C2	Trees present in groups or woodlands but without conferring on them greater landscape value and/or trees offering low or only temporary screening benefit.
C3	Trees with very limited conservation or other cultural benefits.
U	Trees in such condition that any existing value would be lost within 10 years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management. Trees that are dead, dying or showing immediate and irreversible decline.

Comments: Refers to the tree's condition and suitability for the site.

Common name: Most widely used non-botanical name.

Terminology cont.

Co-dominant: Two branches assuming the role of leading shoots. When growing close together may form a weak attachment (included bark) at their point of contact. Trees with this defect may be in danger of splitting at this weak attachment.

Crown Spread: Measured in meters north, south, east and west.

Decay fungi: Refers to those species of fungi which degrade living wood and which may, depending on the degree of degradation, render the tree structurally unsound.

Defects: Refers to cracks, storm damage and any other damage mechanical or biological.

Diameter: Diameter of the trunk (millimetres) at 1.5m. M.S. after the measurement refers to the tree being multi-stemmed.

Genus & Species: Refers to the botanical names for the tree.

Height: Measured in meters.

Monitor: Refers to trees which need to be re-surveyed on a yearly basis to assess their condition. This timescale may be sooner where works or adverse weather conditions have impacted negatively on the trees.

Overhaul: A reference to standard tree surgery work which consists of the removal of deadwood, crossing branches and balancing where appropriate.

Recommendations: Indicates surgery work necessary for the retention or, where necessary, removal of the tree.

Tree No. Refers to numbered tag fixed to tree during survey.

8. References

- BS 5837 (2012). Trees in Relation to Design Demolition and Construction
- Fossitt J, 2000, A guide to habitats in Ireland, Heritage Council
- Mattheck and Breloer (1994). The body language of trees

Appendix i. Tree Survey & Preliminary Recommendations

Tag number	Species	Age Class	Vigour	Comments	Preliminary Recommendations	Category	Long-term potential (years)	Dbh mm	Height m	Spread m N, E, S, W
1	Common oak Quercus robur	Mature	Very Poor	In a state of advanced decay with a large basal cavity	Fell	U	<10	550	4	3,3,3,3