

DESIGN RATIONALE - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Project: **SANTRY AVENUE, SWORDS ROAD, SANTRY**

Project no.: **Dw.03**

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1 Introduction

The objective of this report is to describe the proposed landscape and external works as part of the proposed residential development at Santry Avenue, Swords Road, Santry, Dublin 9. This report should be read in conjunction with documents issued and included in this submission by DFLA, Davey & Smith Architects, Armstrong Fenton Associates Planning and Development Consultants, DBFL Consulting Engineers and others.

DFLA visited the site on several occasions from 2021 to 2024 to observe conditions on site such as existing vegetation, conditions under foot, boundaries and other items which would have a bearing on the design process.

The Tree File Ltd. was commissioned before the design process 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	1:250	A1	<i>Landscape Plan</i>
2002	1:250	A1	<i>Roof Terrace Plan</i>
2003	1:1000/50	A1	<i>Boundary Treatments</i>
2400	1:100	A1	<i>Landscape Sections</i>
2500	1:20	A1	<i>Typical Landscape Details</i>

2 Landscape Appraisal

2.1 General

The subject site is approximately 1.5 hectares in size. It is located at the junction of Santry Avenue to the north and Swords Road to the east. To the south, it borders the development of Santry Place (granted under Dublin City Council Reg. Ref.: 2713/17 & 2737/19), and to the west - Santry Avenue Industrial Estate. The lands subject to this planning application are currently occupied by Chadwicks (former Heiton Buckley) builders' providers.

There is a large, single-storey industrial building on site of modernist architecture dating back to the early 1950s. The building was originally built as a factory for agricultural machinery and later re-purposed as builders' providers in the 1990s.

2.2 Boundaries

The site boundaries vary in character. The northern boundary is a high palisade fence on a low brick wall. The eastern boundary with Swords Road currently consists of a palisade fence and hedge planting. A line of Lime trees runs in a grass verge along this boundary. The southern boundary is generally open, comprising of a fence to an internal road. A wall runs along the western side of the development with some existing trees and vegetation overhanging the lands from the neighbouring site.



Figure 1: Image looking south-east from Santry Avenue, towards the north-western corner of the site.



Figure 2: Image looking south-west from the junction of Swords Road and Santry Avenue, towards the north-eastern corner of the site.



Figure 3: Image looking west from Swords Road, towards the eastern site boundary.

2.3 Existing Trees

There is very little vegetation present on site. Tree and hedge planting is located beside and mostly just outside the boundaries of the site. Most of the trees can be described as young with great variance in quality. To the east of the site is a prominent line of 8no. Lime trees (*Tilia europea*) running in a north-south alignment, adjacent to Swords Road. The trees are to be retained and protected as part of the proposed development. A detailed Tree Survey Report and Arboricultural Assessment has been carried out by The Tree File Ltd. and is included separately within the planning submission.

3 Landscape Strategy

3.1 General

The proposals submitted in this planning application show a lively, innovative, and durable landscape which will integrate the proposed development within the surrounding context of Santry and generate a new landscape setting for the occupants and the wider public. The landscape strategy is integrated with the building design and considers proposed uses, as well as the site's proximity to Santry Park.

The proposed landscape strategy has been formulated in conjunction with the entire design team and client to integrate architecture, civil engineering, ecological considerations and improved circulation and accessibility. The landscape design facilitates circulation, seating, and bicycle parking and at the same time ensures abundance of vegetation and flexibility of use, providing opportunities for passive and active recreation as well as expansion of ground floor community uses into public open space, privacy for ground floor residential units and visual amenity from the apartments above. Tree planting as well as hedge and groundcover planting are proposed as part of the scheme. Areas of lawn are also included.

Several components make up the overall landscape strategy:

1. A diverse and attractive range of open space, including hard and soft landscape areas with tree planting and ground flora;
2. Provision of a wide variety, high-quality play, and sports equipment within public and communal open space;
3. Creation of a safe environment which is available for community uses and future residents but is also a positive addition to the public realm of the wider Santry area;
4. Improved permeability throughout the site for pedestrians and cyclists;
5. Integration of functional landscape and external works to ensure accessibility to parking and building cores.

3.2 Diverse Range of Open Space

The landscape proposals have been designed with the wider context in mind. The site's proximity to Santry Park, coupled with strong geometries and a clear landscape strategy, create a distinct sense of place for the new development. The landscape strategy also builds upon the principles established as part of Santry Place to the south, ensuring a cohesive and coherent overall masterplan.

The location of Santry Park to the north of the proposed development is the most significant contribution to the site regarding open space. The large public park provides a wealth of outdoor opportunities and, as result, the landscape strategy for the site is designed to complement this amenity. Public open space is located between the central blocks, while communal open space is located between the blocks to the east and west and on roof terraces at level 01, 07 and 12.

The overall site area and areas of proposed public open space, private open space and communal open space are scheduled in documents included in this submission by Davey & Smith Architects.



Figure 4: Diagram of the subject site showing combined landscape plan at ground and roof level.

3.2 Public Open Space

Topography and level change have been utilised as the main space-making element across the site, helping to define sub-spaces and create distinct landscape typologies.

The main public open space is located in the centre of the development and is designed as a sequence of spaces: a large central lawn area accommodates active and passive recreation while smaller sub-spaces at key nodes are enclosed by vegetation and tree planting to create a garden-like environment.

Pedestrian routes and open spaces have been deliberately separated from vehicular traffic, to maximise human interaction with open space rather than road-scape. A small plaza space with a café and outdoor seating area is located to the north, acting as a fulcrum for intersecting pedestrian circulation coming from Santry Park and the wider area. Further south, the space opens out onto a large lawn area with various play and sports equipment located along the periphery. Two long mounds break up the space and accommodate tree planting over podium. From this point, the pedestrian access follows the line of the buildings on either side where ground floor community use expands out into the public open space. A strong sense of enclosure permeates throughout, creating a comfortable and secure setting for residents and visitors alike.



Figure 5: Diagram of the subject site highlighting transitional space (yellow) and public open space (orange).

3.4 Permeability

A key objective of the landscape strategy is to link the new development to the wider public realm of Santry. The proposed public open space connects to Santry Park to the north and Santry Place to the south. Wayfinding has been considered as part of the proposals with wayfinding totems located at the north-eastern and north-western corners of the site. They invite users to meander through the development as a car-free alternative to the footpath along Swords Road. As a similar strategy, the free-standing entrance canopy of the existing industrial building on site is proposed to be retained, protected, and re-located to the south, to act as a landmark within the public open space.

The landscape proposals for the site are also aligned with the general strategy for Santry Place to the south. This is to ensure that the wider network of open space is perceived as one, continuous public realm, accommodating complementary uses and activities and contributing collectively to the wider ecology of Santry. The interest and complexity of the wider masterplan strategy comes at the detail level where the spaces break up into series of character areas, comprising dense planting, open lawn areas, play areas and seating nodes. For example, various sports and play equipment have been scattered across the development to create a series of trails within the wider landscape, ensuring a varying play experience and challenges which complement each other.

To the east, the full length of the existing site boundary along Swords Road is proposed to be removed, while the existing Lime trees are proposed to be retained. The existing pedestrian footpath is proposed to be removed and replaced by soft landscape, creating a buffer between the busy road and the new footpath. Ground floor units along this facade are proposed for commercial use, creating active street frontage along the road.

Vehicular access across the site is conceived as a pedestrian friendly surface with proposed traffic calming measures and dense vegetation to create a safe and calm environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike.



Figure 6: Aerial photograph showing overall masterplan and Santry Park.



Figure 7: Diagram showing coherent landscape strategy of the granted development at Santry Place and the subject site at Santry Avenue.

3.4 Communal Open Space

Communal open space is located between the building blocks and on roof terraces. At ground level much of the shared space is situated over basement car park. The communal areas are designed to provide a sequence of usable open spaces for the residents and cater for circulation and accessibility. Substantial tree, hedge and groundcover planting are proposed within these spaces, providing for visual amenity from inside the apartments and balconies, as well as an attractive setting for outdoor recreation. An arrangement of hedges with post and wire mesh fencing is proposed adjacent to ground floor units so that all private space is separated from the public open space.

The proposed development also caters for resident's amenity at roof level, delivering a complementary experience framed by long distance views. Tall hedges, screens and dense tree planting provide enclosure and serve as wind breaks to create a favorable microclimate for long- and short-term recreation. Generally, the terraces adopt a similar configuration to that of the communal open space at ground level: lawn areas are provided which include natural play as well as lounging decks, communal seating, and free-standing furniture. The build-up of the communal courtyards and roof terraces ensures a minimum depth of topsoil of 300mm for lawn and 800mm for tree planting. All areas have been designed in accordance with the Technical Guidance Document Part M: Access and Use (2010).



Figure 8: Diagram of the subject site highlighting communal open space at ground (pink) and roof level (blue).

3.5 Play

A variety of nature play equipment is proposed within public and communal open space on ground floor and roof level. These are designed to be integrated within the wider landscape and ideally located to allow for passive surveillance. All play elements have been situated next to proposed trees and surrounded by planting. Nature play equipment is proposed in the form of trails of timber logs, various balancing equipment including beams, jumping discs and sound cushions, a see-saw, large and small play animals and huts, encouraging imaginative play for young children. Youth-focused spaces are also proposed including two table tennis tables and sports equipment with flexible uses catering for various forms of exercise.

A large climbing structure is proposed in the central public open space which can accommodate many children playing at the same time within a flowing play rhythm. This piece of play equipment not only allows children to climb with their hands and feet and experience height, but also provides seating opportunities for older children to relax, converse and observe. This approach adheres to the Dublin City Council's policies for Children's Playing Facilities - General and Children's Playing facilities in New Residential and Mixed Developments:

It is the Policy of Dublin City Council:	
GI51	Children's Playing Facilities - General To seek the provision of children's playing facilities that encompasses local and public places and spaces for play that are accessible and inclusive for children and young people of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.
GI52	Children's Playing facilities in New Residential and Mixed Developments To seek the provision of children's playing facilities in new residential developments and mixed developments with a residential element. To provide playgrounds to an appropriate standard of amenity, safety, and accessibility and to create safe and accessible places for socialising and informal play.

Figure 9: Extract from Chapter 10 of Dublin City Development Plan (2022-2028).

A schedule of play equipment is outlined as part of *Drawing 2001 Landscape Plan* and *Drawing 2002 Roof Terrace Plan*, prepared by DFLA and included in this planning application.



Figure 10: Precedent images for the type of play proposed within the development site.

4 Planting

4.1 Tree planting

Drawing 2001 Landscape Plan and Drawing 2002 Roof Terrace Plan, prepared by DFLA, include detailed schedules of proposed planting and illustrate the location and extent of mown lawn, managed long grass, bulb, low groundcover, hedge and tree planting.

4.2 Tree planting

Substantial tree planting is introduced in the landscape proposals to improve the proportion of native species on site and to build on the existing character of Santry Park along the north. Tree species have been selected for longevity, suitability to local soil conditions and microclimate, biodiversity (native species) and suitability for close proximity to residential buildings. Proposed tree sizes range from semi-mature (35-40cm girth) specimen trees to multi-stems. Typical tree species are illustrated on the following pages.

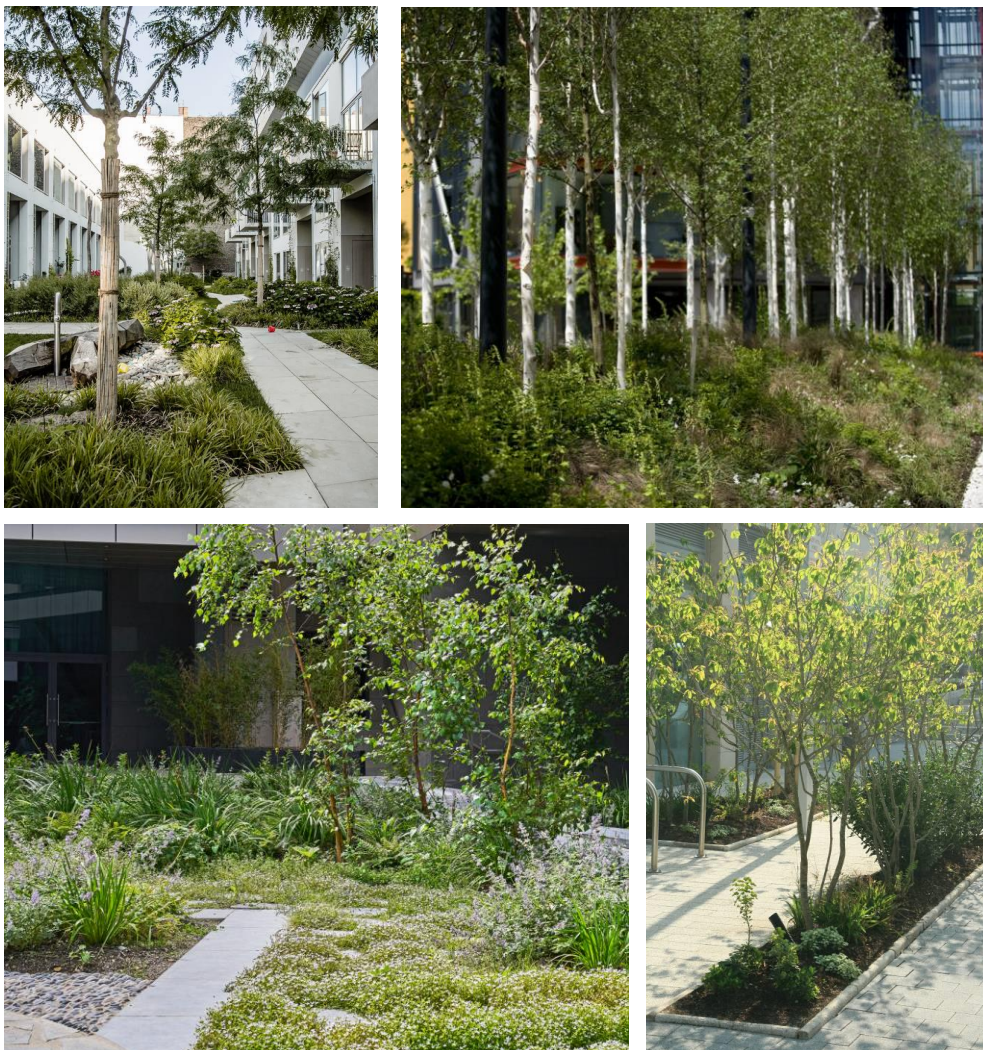


Figure 11: Precedent images showing character of tree planting within the development site.

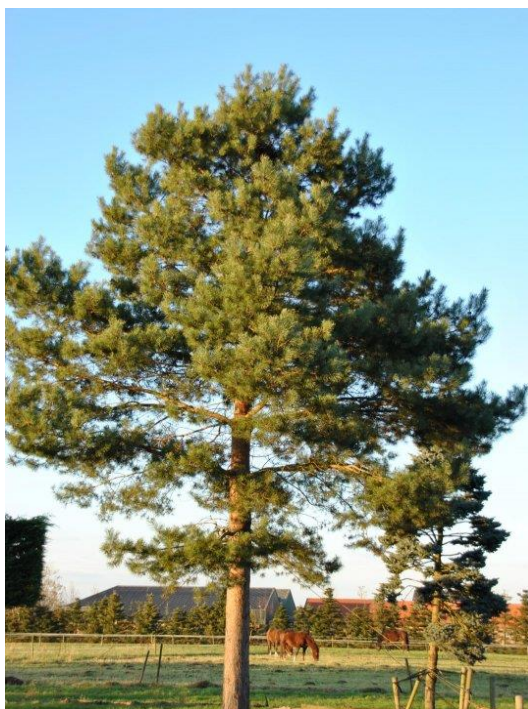


Figure 12: Selection of proposed tree species, clockwise from top left: *Quercus robur*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Betula pubescens* and *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'.

4.2 Hedge, Groundcover and Bulb Planting

Low planting is utilized to create and reinforce sub-spaces within the larger landscape; for visual screening, defensible space, visual interest, ecological purposes and to guide or direct pedestrian'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.



Figure 13: Species for shade groundcover – native & exotic including *Darmera*, *Luzula*, *Dryopteris* and *Asplenium*.



Helleborus spp.



Libertia grandiflora



Luzula sylvatica



Dianella nigra



Dryopteris filix-mas



Asplenium scolopendrium

Figure 14: Typical individual groundcover species.

5 Hard Landscape Materials and Finishes

The landscape strategy incorporates the full range of functions required by the proposed development. These include circulation, parking, bicycle parking, access for delivery and emergency vehicles and sustainable drainage systems. The surface water drainage strategy has been designed by the engineers to slow down run-off and retain stormwater on site. The choice of landscape materials reflects this strategy with porous/permeable products used where possible.

The selection of hard landscape materials is determined by function but also to provide a cohesive palette of materials across the site. The open spaces are proposed to have several different hard landscape finishes to delineate the different spaces and recreational zones. The materials and furniture in these locations are chosen to create a more intimate environment and encourage communal activities. Materials are chosen for permeability, durability, but where practical, are proposed to be constructed in a way which is sensitively integrated with lawn and soft landscape, to minimise the impact of hard landscape surfaces.



Figure 15: Self-binding gravel with reconstituted stone paving.



Figure 16: Range of hard landscape finish details (from left to right): permeable gravel detail, self-binding gravel.



Figure 17: Reconstituted stone paving integrated with lawn.



Figure 18: Mix of small and large format natural stone paving integrated with self-binding gravel.

END.