

PLANNING APPLICATION PART VIII FOR PROPOSED  
MERLIN WOODS SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT  
FOR GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

# LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS DESIGN STATEMENT

PREPARED BY

DAVE RYAN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

MILI, GRAD DIP LA, BA (HONS) LA, DIP ARCH TECH

4TH JUNE 2021

(7 PAGES + COVER PAGE)



12 BARRINGTON STREET, THE GEORGIAN QUARTER, LIMERICK

TEL : 061 59 0001      EMAIL : INFO@DAVERYAN.IE

MOB : 087 314 52 70      WEB : WWW.DAVERYAN.IE

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN STATEMENT

Galway City Council Architects Department are applying for planning permission (Part VIII) for a social and affordable housing development at lands located south of the Pope John Paul Centre / the Coillte Mhuirlinne housing development and north of the Merlin Hospital grounds. This development includes a crèche, terraced housing, terraced live/work units, duplex units and bungalows.

This statement with accompanying drawings is to be read together with all architects and engineers drawings and reports.

The site of the proposed development is currently pasture land under the ownership of Galway City Council. The land is zoned for residential in Galway City and County Councils Development Plan 2017-2023 (Fig. 1)

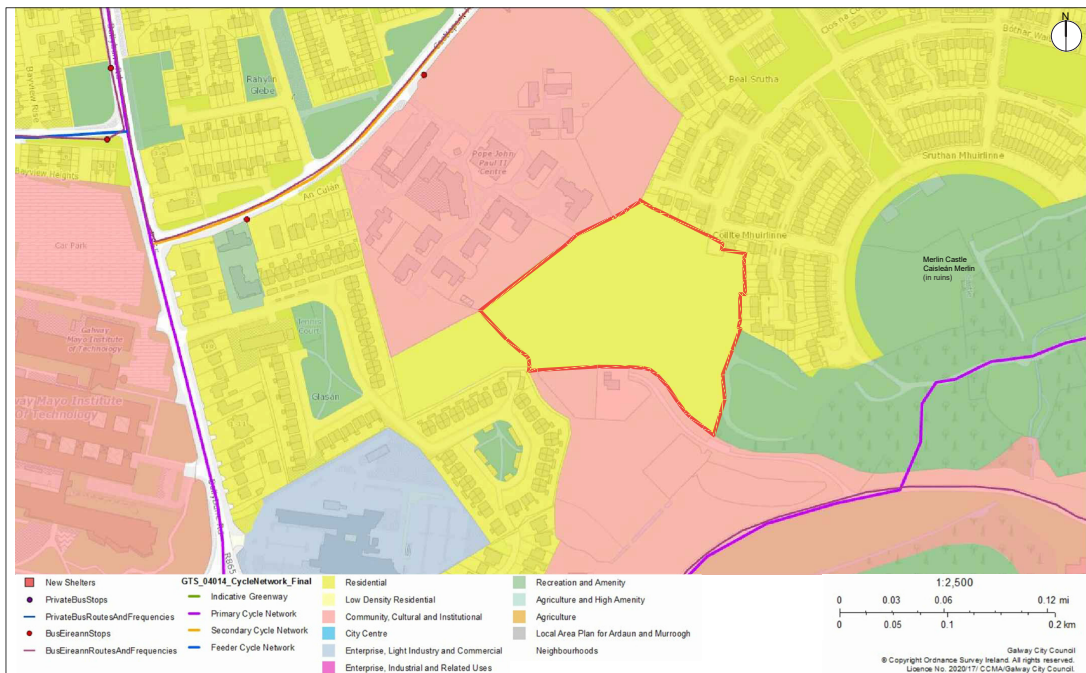


Fig. 1 Excerpt from Galway City Council Development Plan Zoning Map, site outlined in red.

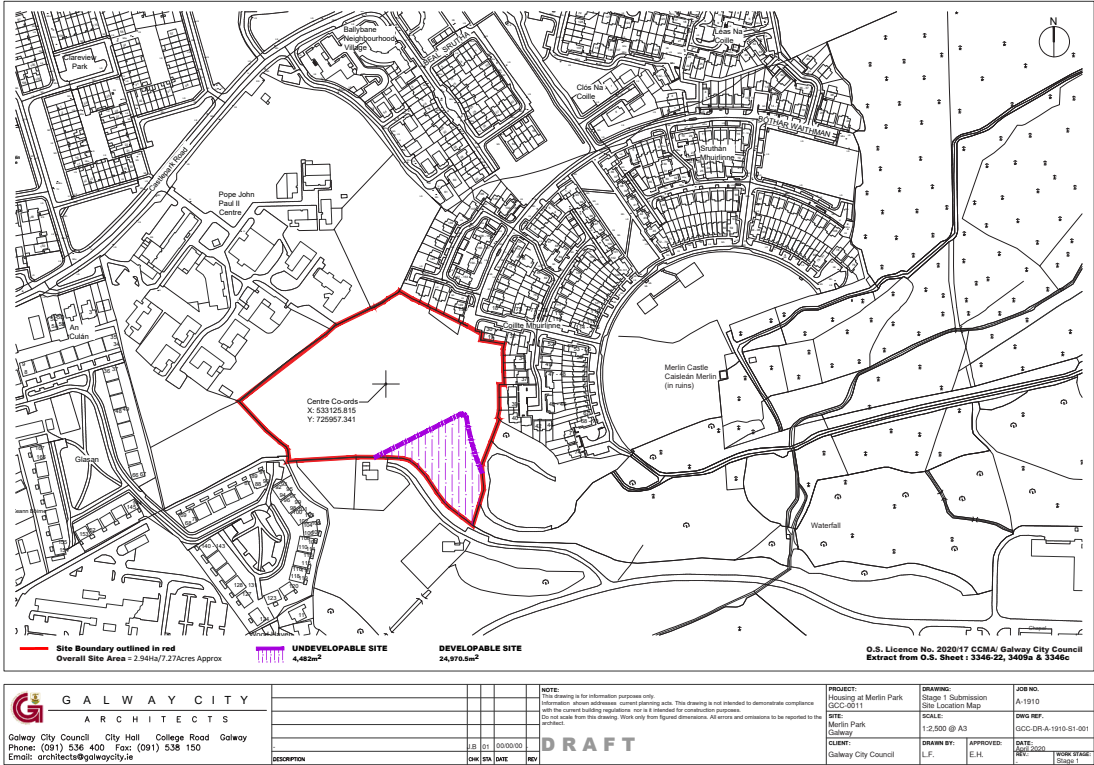


Fig. 2 Site Location Map, site outlined in red.

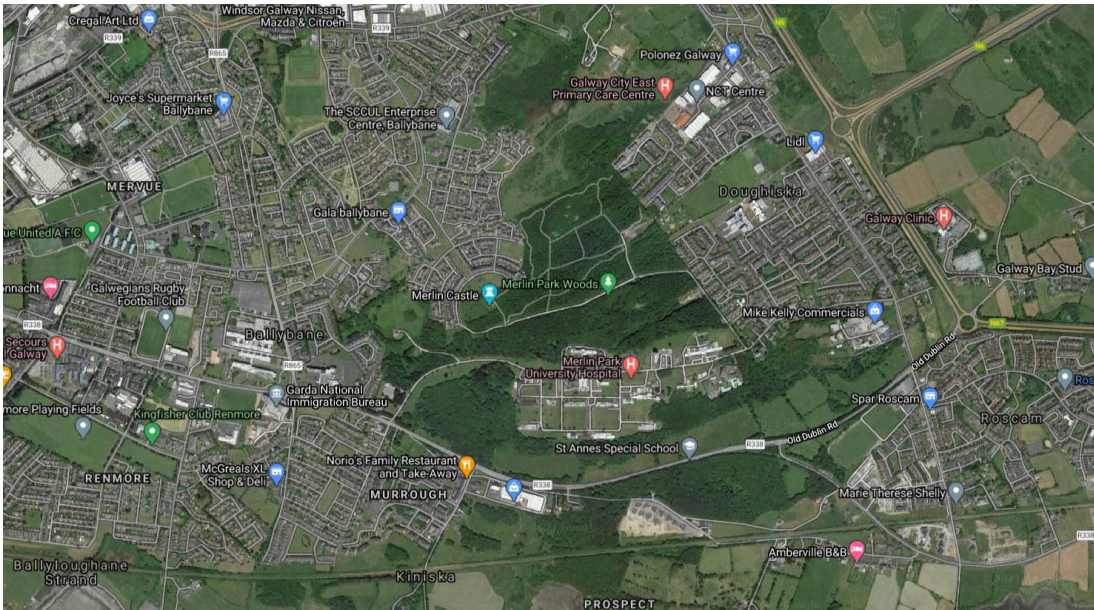


Fig. 3 Aerial Photography (Google Maps extract 11-03-2021). This shows the scale and size of Merlin Woods in the context of the city scale.

As can be seen from Figs 1, 2 and 3 the proposed development site is located to the west of Merlin Woods Park, one of the three large Galway City wide parks, as described in the City Development Plan. In the Local Biodiversity Area table the Merlin Park Woods is identified as having Mature broad-leaf trees, mixed broad-leaf / conifer woodlands. The site is not within or adjacent to a Protected space (as per NPWS Designations Viewer 11-03-2021).

A desktop study of historic environments, through the National Monuments Service Environment Viewer, displays 2 locations of interest including the Merlin Park Castle Ruin, see Fig. 4 below.

GA094-023---- is recorded as a Castle - tower house

GA094-144---- is recorded as a Midden

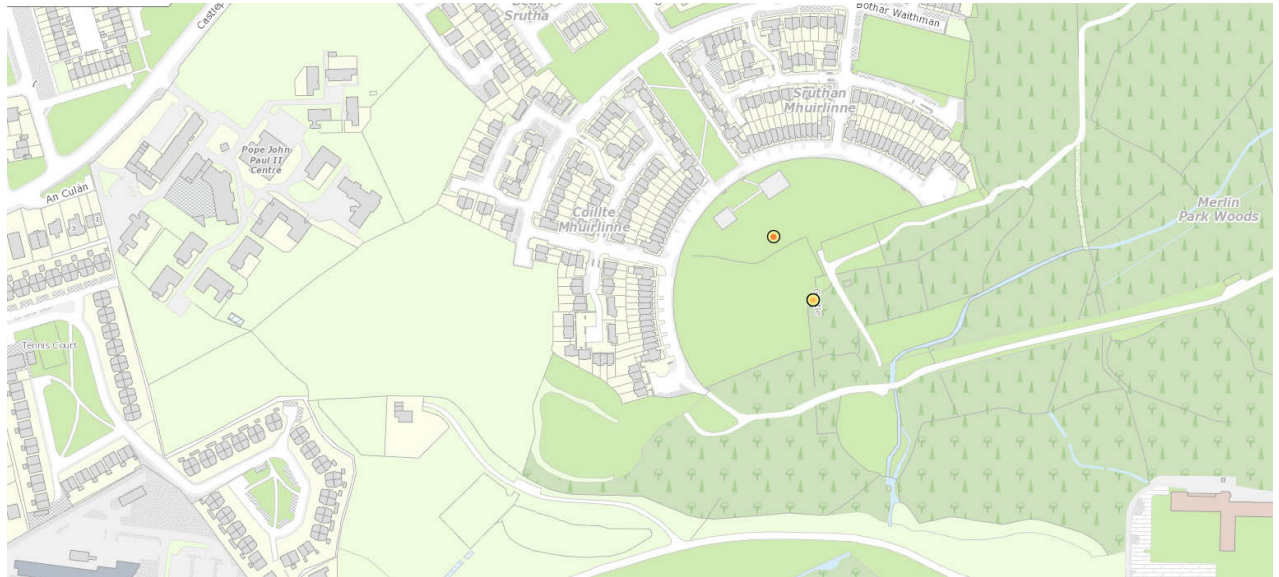


Fig. 4 National Monuments Service, Environmental Viewer Extract (extract 11-03-2021), showing monuments in the vicinity of the development site.

The tree survey has identified few trees of significance, primarily trees on site form part of the perimeter hedgerow or integrated into the wall boundary, with others part of a remnant internal boundary, now dismantled (Fig.5). See attached tree assessment report by Arborcare, with accompanying drawing.



Fig. 5 11th Sept 2020, The above photo shows some limestone rubble along the line of where a field boundary once was.



Fig. 6 11th Sept 2020 A view from the middle of the site looking SouthEast to Merlin Park Woods.



12 BARRINGTON STREET, THE GEORGIAN QUARTER, LIMERICK

TEL : 061 59 0001 EMAIL : INFO@DAVERYAN.IE

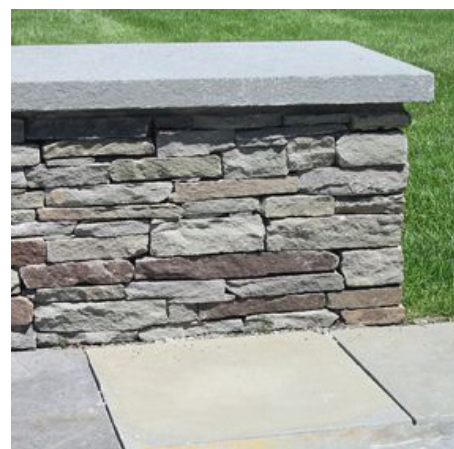
MOB : 087 314 52 70 WEB : WWW.DAVERYAN.IE

**Our design** proposes to retain as many trees, hedgerows and existing ground vegetation as possible on site, while also freeing up development space at the centre of the site. The overall context of the site being adjacent to one of Galways largest Parks forms the key design principal in this proposal. We propose to provide a strong access link to Merlin Woods and embrace the opportunity to connect pedestrian routes eastwards from the site. We believe this will be a huge advantage to future residents.

We have developed many interesting pedestrian spaces throughout the scheme that cater for all ages and users, our concept is to provide interest across the site, maximising all of the open space available. The development is for the most part positioned along the natural contours, which helps sit the buildings in a natural way into the landscape, without the need for very much elaborate constructed landscape. We wish for the existing natural landscape to become the landscape feature as much as possible, guiding pedestrians down along fully accessible paths to the woodlands, leaving the existing sloped grassland accessible, proposing native species of trees and hedge plants, catering for birds and pollinators, all the time trying to embrace the natural environment as much as possible.

The proposed landscape features include urban plazas, wide tree lined streets, pedestrian only access paths, Pollinator Garden, Sensory Garden, Mini Basket Ball court, Playground, Informal Ball Play Area, picnic benches etc.. We envisage future residents making full use of the site features, and having the various amenity areas spread across the site means that there will be space for a diversity of interaction and usage.

**Small stone walls** that will be made from the old rubble stone currently scattered across the site, are to become features through out the scheme, and this repetition of using this material throughout aims to give the project an aesthetic identity. This identity harks back to the time when the rubble stone was at one time in the past used as stone walls on the site, and this we believe creates an interesting connection to the past and our local heritage. Rubble stone walls also create great habitats for bees and other creatures.



*Fig. 7 & 8, illustrating the construction of rubble stone walling*

**Paving Materials** are for the most part cast in situ concrete on footpaths that are a minimum of 2m in width. On other smaller paths through amenity spaces we have proposed Ballylusk fines, which is a beige coloured quartzite stone, 10mm down to dust (hoggin), which compacts very well and provides an ideal accessible path that is also permeable within green areas.

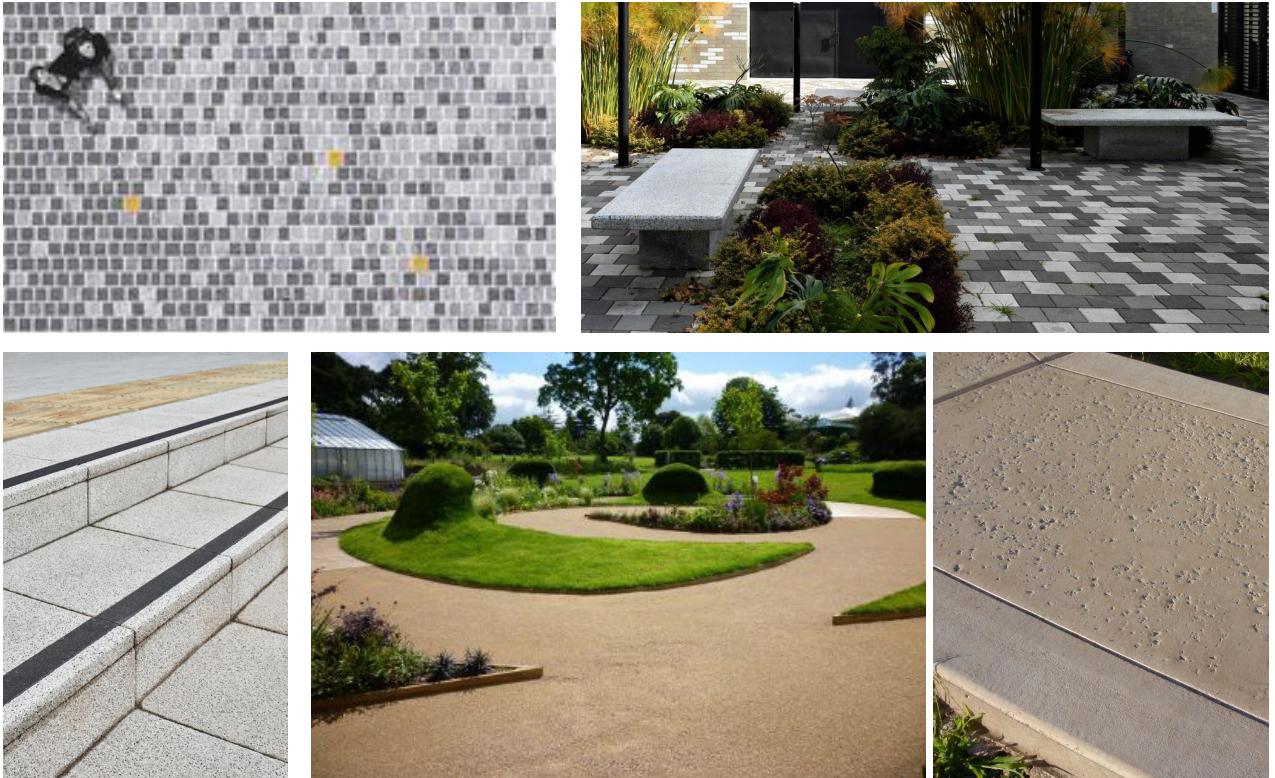
Feature paving within Plaza areas includes concrete block paving in grey colours that will wear well over time. The idea being that the paving will provide a good non slip surface, but an upmarket finish to areas that we propose for community use, such as the area outside the live work units. We think the proposed concrete block paving will also tie in aesthetically with the contemporary building materials proposed.



12 BARRINGTON STREET, THE GEORGIAN QUARTER, LIMERICK

TEL : 061 59 0001      EMAIL : INFO@DAVERYAN.IE  
MOB : 087 314 52 70      WEB : WWW.DAVERYAN.IE

Steps where required will also use a paving flag, that is specifically designed to match the other paving products, they will be non slip and have built in contrasting nosing.



*Fig. 9 Shows a collage of various paving materials proposed, Concrete paving setts, Steps, Ballylusk Fines, and Cast in Situ conc.*

We have proposed a coloured Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA, Fig. 10) in road areas, turning circles and other public areas. The buff coloured SMA helps tie the colour theme together with the Ballylusk fines footpaths. It also helps to break up the monotony of the normal tarmac finish. The permeable paving in the parking bays will also have a beige look to match in with the over all colour scheme (Fig. 11).



*Fig's. 10 & 11 Show Buff coloured SMA and permeable concrete pavers*

The planting scheme on the project is intrinsically tied to biodiversity, we are proposing plants that pollinator species are attracted to, plant species that are of benefit to them. We have used the All Ireland Pollinator Plan as a palette from which to choose our plants. On top of this we have gone with native species trees for the most part, to benefit birds and other wildlife foraging and nesting in these plants.

We are using a significant quantity of Whitethorn hedging, cultivated Hawthorn street trees, Mountain Ash, Apple cultivars, Wild Cherry and Bird Cherry in our planting scheme, all classed as pollinator plants. Shrub and Perennial areas include pollinator species such as : Rudbeckia, Lavender, Salvia, and Rosemary and many more. We plan to achieve at a minimum 75% of plants being suitable for pollinators, but realistically we will be in the region of 85-90% pollinator plants.

Dave Ryan Landscape Architects are happy to have signed up to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan in June 2020, as business supporters, and believe it is an important and necessary support to the food chain and biodiversity in general, but vital for the survival of so many pollinator species.



*Figs. 12 to 16 below, illustrating the oval planters, Secure Bike Storage, Mini basketball, a Sensory Garden and proposed signage for the open space and entrance to Merlin Woods.*



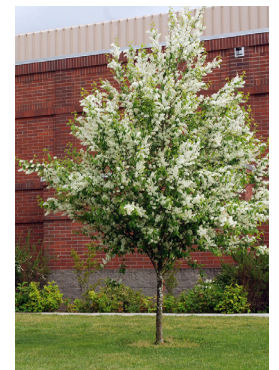
12 BARRINGTON STREET, THE GEORGIAN QUARTER, LIMERICK

TEL : 061 59 0001 EMAIL : INFO@DAVERYAN.IE

MOB : 087 314 52 70 WEB : WWW.DAVERYAN.IE



*Fig's. 17 to 23 above illustrating play mounds, Seating around trees, Mountain Ash berries, picnic benches, drifter bench and various other concrete furniture*



*Fig's. 24, 25, 26 and 27 Irish Oak, Mountain Ash, Birch and Bird Cherries*



**DAVE RYAN**  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

12 BARRINGTON STREET, THE GEORGIAN QUARTER, LIMERICK

TEL : 061 59 0001      EMAIL : INFO@DAVERYAN.IE

MOB : 087 314 52 70      WEB : WWW.DAVERYAN.IE