

14.0 Visual Impact Assessment

14.1 Introduction

ARC Consultants has been commissioned to prepare an analysis of the likely impacts of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital, to be located at St Vincent's University Hospital Campus, Elm Park, Dublin 4.

The proposed development comprises the redevelopment of The National Maternity Hospital at St. Vincent's University Hospital campus, Elm Park, Dublin 4. The proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be located at the eastern side of the hospital campus and comprises the construction of a building that rises to 5 and 6 storeys above ground level, with one partial basement level, plus additional ancillary plant areas at the roof level. The proposed development also includes an extension to the existing multi-storey car park at the north of the campus. The proposed development will be constructed in a sequential manner that allows for the continual operation of the hospital campus and, as such, includes the phased demolition of existing buildings at St. Vincent's University Hospital campus to facilitate clearing the site for the proposed development and the construction of temporary accommodation to facilitate construction sequencing (including a single storey temporary canteen, catering staff changing facilities, household services store and carpenters workshop). The full detail of the nature and extent of the proposed development is set out in Chapter 2 of this EIS and the Draft Construction Management Plan is appended to same.

14.2 Methodology

On a number of dates in November 2014, and on numerous dates in March, June, July and November 2015 and February 2017, ARC Consultants visited the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus and locations in the surrounding areas to identify locations from where there might be a potential for the subject development to be visible. At all locations visited, ARC took photographs looking towards the site of the proposed development. Before visiting the surrounding area, ARC carried out mapping analysis to identify locations from which views of the proposed development were likely.

From mapping analysis and from on-site analysis of potential visibility both within the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus and from the surrounding areas, ARC identified 21 no. locations where further analysis of visibility and potential visual impact would be assisted by the preparation of photomontages.

Photographs were taken at each location using a high-resolution digital camera with a horizontal field of coverage of 73.6°, which would be considered a wide angle. A wide-angle lens was used so as to provide sufficient context in the view. Photographs with a narrow field of view may exclude relevant context. Wide-angle views, capable of providing sufficient context are particularly important when the viewpoint is close to the proposed development. The camera positions of the views were established using ordnance survey mapping and a topographical survey of the site and surroundings. The date and time when each photograph was taken was recorded.

Photomontages were prepared for each of these 21 no. chosen view locations and are reproduced in Appendix 14.1 (bound separately). Models of the proposed development were constructed using 3D Studio Max based on information supplied to ARC by the Design Team. Surveyed reference points on existing buildings were attached to the three dimensional models. The model used for photomontages included appropriate detail of the proposed buildings as shown on design drawings. Renderings were made on computer from each camera position using the field of view of each photograph, and with the sun position correct for the date and time that each photograph was taken. The renders were inserted into the relevant view, and were scaled and positioned using the field of vision of each photograph and the surveyed reference points in each view. ARC would expect the dimensional view to be better than $\pm 1\%$.

Photomontages based on wide angle photography are printed at A3 size, so that the angle of vision covered by the print, when held at reading distance, is approximately the same as would be covered by the same extent of the real scene when viewed from the camera position. Where the proposed development is not visible or barely visible in a view, the location of the building envelope is indicated with a red line. ARC had regard to the photomontages in the preparation of this Visual Impact Assessment.

14.2.1 Definition of Visual Impacts

The extent of potential and predicted visual impacts on the built environment has been defined with reference to the list given below, which is taken from Section 5: Glossary of Impacts contained in the *Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements* prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2002, and to Directive 2011/92/ EU (as amended) on the assessment of the likely effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. Some comment is also given below on what these definitions might imply in the case of visual impact. The definitions from the EPA document are in italics.

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

Slight Impact: An impact 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 should remain unchanged.

Moderate Impact: An impact that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with emerging 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 taking place.

Significant Impact: An impact which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. The wording of the definition is clear. Difficulty in assessing whether an impact might or might not be significant lies in the word 'sensitive'. In visual terms, particularly when related to the appearance of landscape or the built environment, what one person might be sensitive to another might not. A conservative approach, classifying impacts as significant even though many observers might not regard them as significant, is taken here.

Profound Impact: An impact 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 impacts 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.

14.3 Receiving Environment

The change in the visual character of the area resulting from the existence of the development of the new National Maternity Hospital is likely to be much less than changes in visual character that have taken place on the Elm Park site in the past, and much less than past changes in the visual character of the surrounding area, particularly those brought about by development that has taken place in recent years.

Elm Park is located in the townland of Merrion, a place of considerable historic importance. Francis Elrington Ball in his *'History of the County of Dublin'* published in 1903 begins his description of Merrion as follows:

'MERRION, now a suburb of Dublin, lying about three miles to the south-east of the city, on the coast, and intersected by the road to Blackrock and by the Dublin and Kingstown Railway, contains no building of earlier date than the eighteenth century. It was, however, for many generations the home of a family foremost amongst the landed proprietors in the metropolitan county, and the ground now occupied by the Asylum for the Female Blind, opposite Merrion Railway gates, was for several centuries the site of one of the principal mediaeval castles in the neighbourhood of Dublin, the ruins of which were removed more than a hundred years ago.'

The Fitzwilliams of Merrion, now represented by the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (their descendant in the female line and the owner of their estates), were a family amongst whose members the sovereigns of England found many of their most valiant liegemen and faithful adherents, and are also remarkable as being one of the few families in Ireland descended from early settlers which retained their property through all the troublous periods'

Later in his long description of the life and times of the Fitzwilliams of Merrion, Francis Elrington Ball continues:

'The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the removal of the seat of the Fitzwilliams to Mount Merrion, the Irish residence of the Earl of Pembroke, and under that place the remaining history of the family will be found. Thenceforward Merrion Castle fell more and more into decay, and the neighbourhood rapidly dwindled in importance. So deserted was it about the year 1729 that one of the leading Dublin journals of that day, The Flying Post, told a credulous public that Merrion was completely at the mercy of rats of an extraordinary size, as large as cats or rabbits, said to be partly indigenous and partly imported in foreign ships, which moved about in droves; and assured its readers that these outlandish animals had killed a woman and a child. The ruins of the Castle were visited by Austin Cooper, the painstaking antiquary, to whom reference has so often been made, in May, 1780, when he formed the opinion that the structure had been a piece of patch-work, part of it very old and part more modern, with limestone casements to the windows. The ground floor, used as a. cowhouse, and some outlying buildings, used as a stable, were, then standing.'

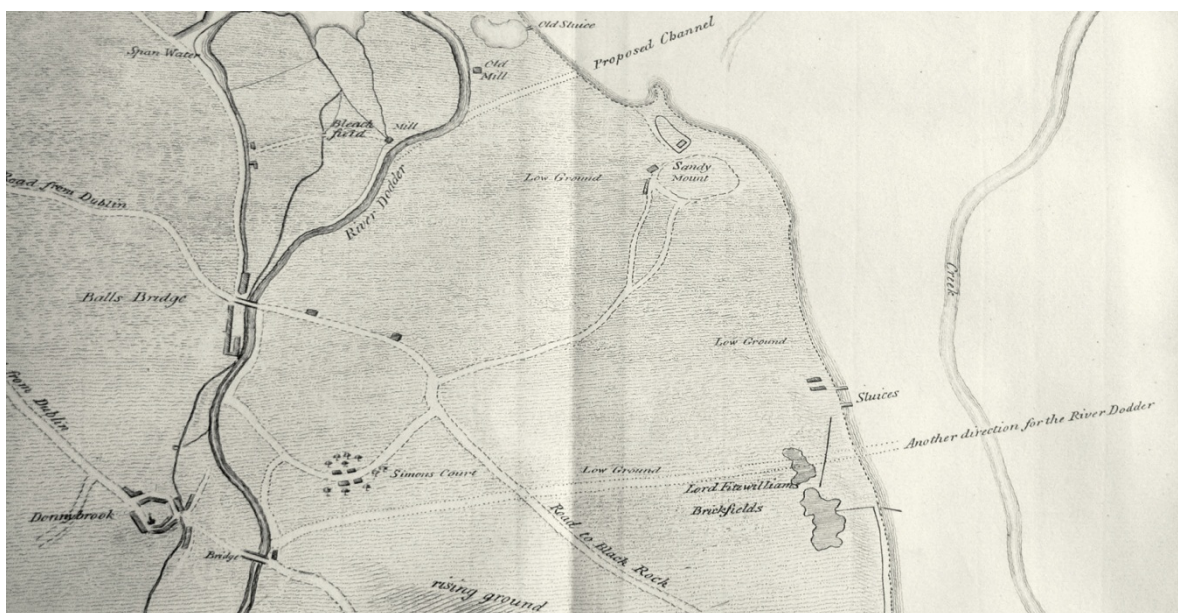
In the 18th century and into the 19th, Merrion and adjacent townlands became the location for a number of large private houses, each with their own extensive grounds. Some of these 'seats' appear on John Rocque's map of the County of Dublin of 1760. The map also shows small clusters of smaller houses, one close to the present location of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus. The map also shows 'Lord Merrion's Brick Fields' along the present location of Strand Road. The line of Merrion Road on Rocque's is very similar to its present alignment. Merrion Castle is shown towards the bottom of the map (below) just left of centre.

Plate 14.1: Extract from Rocques map of the County of Dublin, 1760



Another map from the 18th century, Plate 14.2, this time unpublished and dated 1784, shows two alternatives for diverting the River Dodder out into Merrion Strand, presumably so that the Dodder would no longer separate Ringsend and Irishtown from the City. One of the two possible routes was along the line of the present Ailesbury Road.

Plate 14.2: Unpublished Map, 1784



In Samuel Lewis's 'A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland' published in 1837, just 3 years after St Vincent's Hospital was founded, there is an entry for Merrion:

'MERRION (OLD), a village, in the parish of ST. MARY'S, DONNYBROOK, in the half-barony of RATH- DOWN, county of DUBLIN, and province of LEINSTER, 3 miles (s. E. by S.) from the General Post-Office, Dublin: the population is returned with the parish. It is situated on the south side of the bay of Dublin, the strand of which is here crossed by the Dublin and Kingstown Railway. Here are several neat villas occupied during the summer months by visitors resorting hither for the benefit. of sea-bathing, for which purpose the fine broad and firm strand at this place is well adapted; and in the immediate vicinity are several handsome seats, commanding fine views of the bay of Dublin. The principal are Elm Park, the residence of Joseph Watkins, Esq.; Bloomfield, of Thos. Ord Lees, Esq.; Merrion Castle, of Fras. Low, Esq.; and Merrion Hall, of R. Davis, Esq. In the vicinity are also the extensive nursery grounds of Messrs. Simpson, from the dwelling-house in the centre of which is obtained a fine view of the hill of Howth and the sea, and there is a pleasing drive through the grounds from the Rock road to the road to Donnybrook. In the demesne of Merrion Castle are the ivied ruins of the old castle from which it derives its name; and at the village is an old burial-ground, still generally used.'

The 'seats' listed by Lewis are all shown on the First Edition Ordnance Map of the area, published in the same year as the Topographical Dictionary.

Plate 14.3: Extract from the First Edition Ordnance map of 1837



Most of the lands of the original Elm Park are now occupied by the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, the remainder being part of the golf course. It would appear that almost all of the lands of Bloomfield were absorbed by the golf course. The avenue into Bloomfield from Merrion Road is mostly within the Hospital Campus, and the original castellated gateway still stands on Merrion Road at the south east corner of the Campus. Merrion Castle became St Mary's Asylum for the blind, and the lands of Merrion Hall are occupied by an elegant office building designed by the late Arthur Gibney.

The process of large private houses and their lands being taken over for sporting commercial or institutional uses began in the 19th century and continued through the 20th century. Merrion Castle was St Mary's Asylum for the blind by the time Francis Elrington Ball published his 'History of the County of Dublin' in 1903. UCD started its move to Belfield in the late 1950s and since then has continued to absorb the lands of other houses on its periphery. Radio Telefis Éireann set up shop in Montrose in the early 1960s. St Vincent's Hospital moved to Elm Park in 1970, but the Sisters of Charity had owned the property for 36 years prior to that.

Plate 14.4: St Vincent's Hospital, on St Stephen's Green circa 1930



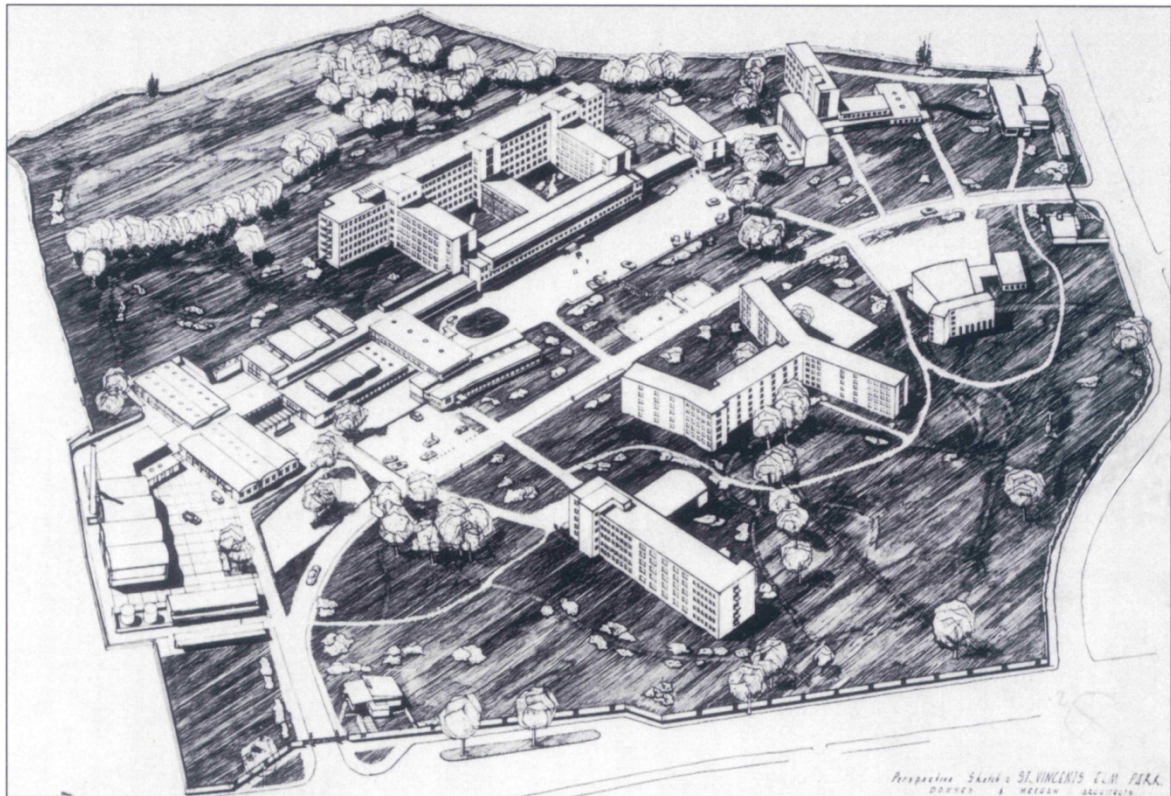
Venerable Mother Mary Aikenhead founded the Irish Sisters of Charity in 1815. She was born in a house in Daunt's Square, Cork, on the 19th January 1787. She died on the 22nd July 1858. In March 2015, she was declared Venerable by Pope Francis. Mother Mary Aikenhead founded St Vincent's Hospital on St Stephen's Green in 1834. In 1999 the Hospital was renamed St. Vincent's University Hospital.

A number of books and other publications discuss the move of St Vincent's Hospital from St Stephen's Green to Elm Park. The following passage is to be found in *'St Vincent's Hospital 1834-1994, an Historical and Social Portrait'*, by F. O. C. Meenan, published in 1995:

'In the summer of 1934, it was brought to the attention of the Sisters of Charity that the lands of Elm Park, at Merrion were for sale. The property consisted of a large mansion, Nutley House, standing in its own grounds of fifty acres with almost infinite space for extensions. It bordered on the main roads to Bray and to Dun Laoghaire which were served by buses and trams. On 7 June 1934 the Archbishop of Dublin gave permission for the Sisters to bid for Elm Park. On 5 July 1934 the congregation of the Irish Sisters of Charity purchased the lands at Elm Park for £24,000 (plus £1,700 auctioneer's fees). The Irish Press carried the story on:

"The Irish Press understands that the purchasers of Elm Park, a mansion which stands in its own grounds of 50 acres, at Merrion Road, Dublin, are the Board of St Vincent's Hospital. It was learned last night that St Vincent's Hospital has planned to erect a huge new hospital on the site at Merrion and is at present negotiating with the Hospitals Commission for an allocation of the Sweepstake proceeds."

Plate 14.5: Aerial Perspective of St Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park (Downes & Meehan)



The move to Elm Park is also discussed in *'Irish Hospital Architecture – A Pictorial History'* By Frederick O'Dwyer published in 1997:

'Another major scheme to suffer from the hiatus of the late 1950s was St. Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park. This was a relocation of the old Hospital housed in Georgian buildings on and around St. Stephen's Green. The Sisters of Charity had purchased a 50-acre site comprising the demesnes of Nutley and Elm Park in 1934, but it was not until 1947 that design work got underway, with Downes and Meehan (later Downes Meehan and Robson) as architects. The war had halted the development of hospital architecture in Europe and the Department of Health wanted to see what trends emerged before deciding on a definite plan. Eventually a prototype turned up in the Bürgerspital Hospital in Basel (1939-46) which was closely studied. Site development works, including the construction of basements and foundations for a 450-bed hospital, was carried out in 1956-58. The department wanted the project scaled back to 250

beds but this proved impossible on the completed substructure. Authorisation to proceed with the original plan was finally received in 1964 and the Hospital was formally opened in 1970'.

Plate 14.6: Aerial view of St Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park in the 1970s (Rex Roberts)



What is notable about the construction of St Vincent's Hospital at Elm Park and other suburban institutions constructed in the 1950s and 1960s is that they were generally not arranged in a manner that addressed the surrounding roads, but instead were inward looking, or considered as buildings set in parkland, conceived in a modern movement ambition to create buildings set in the landscape. The result is that UCD, Ireland's largest university, is virtually invisible from the roads that surround it, hiding its light behind bushes.

Because of the relatively small size of the lands attached to the original Elm Park house, and because it would appear not all the lands of Elm Park house were retained by the Hospital, the first buildings of the new suburban St Vincent's, unlike at UCD, were openly visible from Merrion Road and Nutley Lane. The Campus was, nevertheless, inward looking, with the main hospital buildings set well back.

What the new hospital presented to the road was the blank end and lift tower of the now demolished 14 storey nurses' home, and the back end of other smaller buildings, including the 5 storey St Rita's. For 1970 suburban Merrion Road and Nutley Lane, the stark presence of these buildings, with the somewhat austere elevations of the main Hospital behind, must have represented a very major change in the visual character of the area. St Rita's remains the most visually intrusive element on the St Vincent's University Hospital Campus, when viewed from the Merrion Road.

Plate 14.7: Illustration from the 1834 - 1984 St Vincent's Hospital Anniversary Annual



The surrounding visual character in which the development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be placed is much more robust than that of the surrounding context in 1970. There are now a number of very substantial developments in the area including: a number of new buildings in the St Vincent's University Hospital Campus, the Merrion Centre, and the large 'Elm Park' commercial and residential development at Merrion Gates. In the interests of clarity, it should be noted that this last large development was called Elm Park was built on the lands of Merrion Castle and not on lands associated with of the original Elm Park, a suburban house, some distance away.

14.3.1 Relevant Aspects of the Design of the Proposed Development

In visual terms, the subject development may be divided into three main elements: the new National Maternity Hospital building, the enlarged and extended car park, and landscape works including some adjustments to the road layout. The visual character of each of these elements will be a factor in determining their likely visual impact individually, and the overall impact of the subject development.

14.3.1.1 The new National Maternity Hospital building

The proposed new National Maternity Hospital building is a substantial building but a complex one. Externally, the building will read as a series of different volumes, which will have the effect of reducing its apparent scale. A palate of complimentary materials, both in colour and texture, is proposed to articulate the elements and volumes of the building. The principal façade material is granite, of a colour matching the granite facing on the façade of the Clinical Services Building. The volume of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building nearest the Clinical Services Building also aligns with it.

14.3.1.2 The Enlarged Car Park

It is proposed to increase the size of the existing multi-storey car park by adding one full level above the present footprint of the car park, adding a further partial level at the west end of the carpark, and by extending the car park westward at all levels. The new elements of the car park will continue the existing palate of materials used in the building.

14.3.1.3 Proposed New Landscape Works

One of the stated underlying strategies for new landscape works is to use local changes in landscape treatment to give a different identity to each space within and approaching the new National Maternity Hospital building. The present landscape treatment on the Hospital Campus uses this strategy to some degree, but the approach taken as part of the subject development is likely to result in viewers having a more varied experience of spaces within the Campus.

14.4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

As outlined in Section 14.0, the proposed development comprises the development of the new National Maternity Hospital at St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus. The full detail of the nature and extent of the proposed development is set out in Chapter 2 of this EIS and the Draft Construction Management Plan is appended to same.

14.5 Potential Impact of the Proposed Development

14.5.1 Construction Phase

The visual impact of the proposed development during the construction phase will be influenced by the extent to which construction activity will be visible. From those locations within the St. Vincent's University Hospital where construction activity is visible, the visual impact of construction activity and of the emerging development is likely to be negative at first, becoming more positive as the development proceeds.

From outside the Campus, the visibility of construction activity will be quite limited, and from many locations where construction activity is visible, it is likely to be limited to views of cranes. From a short section of the Merrion Road, a 3 storey group of temporary construction offices, to be located in the car park beside St Rita's, will be visible for most of the construction period.

As the proposed new buildings emerge, the visual impact will be similar to that likely to be experienced during the operational phase, discussed below.

14.5.2 Operational Phase

The development that is the subject of analysis of potential visibility and visual impact in this chapter consists of new elements including the new National Maternity Hospital building, the extension of the existing car park, landscape works, and other minor elements, all of which form part of the continuing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus. The St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus has been the subject of continuing and emerging development since construction on the site began in the late 1950s. In the future, further development can be expected. It is in the nature of a large, nationally important teaching hospital that development on its Campus will continue to emerge in response to clinical need and national health policy. Overall, changes in the visual character of the area that might be occasioned by the existence of the new National Maternity Hospital building, the proposed enlarged car park and the proposed landscape works will be minor when compared to what the impact of the St Vincent's Elm Park Hospital was when first built.

The potential visibility of the proposed development and its consequent visual impact is dependent on a number of factors including: the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development, the relative openness of the surroundings of any viewpoint, the nature of intervening landform and landscape features, and the nature and extent of any intervening buildings and structures.

The character of the area around the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus is that of a mature inner suburb, with many houses and other buildings considered to be of significant architectural heritage value. The existence of the new National Maternity Hospital building, the enlarged car park and the proposed landscape works, will have a visual impact on the character of the surrounding area. Where the proposed development is visible, it is likely to give rise to some degree of impact on the setting of buildings of architectural heritage value. Given the extent of development already located on the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, the change in the setting of any building of heritage value in the surrounding area is likely to be very minor in extent and neutral in character.

The greatest potential visibility of the proposed development will be from within the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, including from within buildings on the Campus. There will, of course, be locations on the Campus from which the proposed development will not be visible.

From outside the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, the most open views of the proposed development will be from the Merrion Road and from Nutley Lane, where these roads run along the boundary of the Campus. From locations on Merrion Road and Nutley Lane not immediately adjacent to the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, visibility of the proposed development will be very limited, and from many locations on these roads the proposed development will not be visible. Restricted views will be possible from Nutley Avenue and Herbert Avenue, but, again, from some locations on these roads the proposed development will not be visible.

From locations to the east, such as Sydney Parade or Sandymount, there may be occasional glimpses of the proposed development, but ARC's survey of visibility could not identify any such locations. To the north it is likely that the proposed development will be visible in the middle distance from the upper floors of some private houses, such as houses that look out towards the development across the open ground of the playing fields of St Michael's College. However, ARC did not identify viewpoints on public roads to the north, apart from a short length of Nutley Avenue. To the east and south of the St. Vincent's University Hospital there are a restricted number of locations from where there is a potential for the proposed development to be visible.

There will be some visibility from parts of Elm Park Golf Club and across the golf course from one location on Bellview Park. Where the proposed development is visible from such locations, it will only be partly visible, and will be seen behind existing buildings on the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus. Extensive tree planting on and the boundary treatment around almost all of the golf course prevent views into the course, and, therefore, potential views of the proposed development from suburban roads that adjoin the course.

Analysis of potential visibility from the UCD campus suggests that there will be very few locations at UCD from which the proposed development will be visible. One potential location a little to the south of Belfield House was identified. The extent of planting on the UCD campus, together with the presence of intervening obstacles, suggests that this may be the only location at UCD.

Although Mount Merrion is elevated, it was again found very difficult to identify locations from where the proposed development might be visible. The location with the most potential was found to be at a high point along Mount Anville Road. From this location, the St. Vincent's Private Hospital is visible, but the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building is likely to be less so.

Three distant locations were identified for analysis: at Dun Laoghaire Pier, Poolbeg and Howth. The proposed development is likely to be visible, at considerable distance, from all three locations.

From Dun Laoghaire Pier the recent Elm Park commercial and residential development together with the St. Vincent's Private Hospital form a cluster of development. If visible from Dun Laoghaire Pier, the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen behind these existing developments. From Poolbeg and Howth the Elm Park development, the St. Vincent's Private Hospital and the Main Hospital and Clinical Services Building appear quite separated. From these two locations, the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will appear attached to the Clinical Services Building, but will be a very small element in any view, even imperceptible.

The potential visual impact of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital from each of the 21 chosen photomontage locations is tabulated below:

Table 14.1: Potential Visual Impact

View	View Location	Potential Impact
View A:	View from Merrion Road at Ailesbury Park	Moderate
View B:	View from Merrion Road at the entrance to the Hospital Campus	Moderate
View C:	View from Merrion Road just south east of Herbert Avenue	Slight to Moderate
View D:	View from Merrion Road at Merrion Gates	Imperceptible
View E:	View from Merrion Road south east of Merrion Gates	None to Slight
View F:	View from near the centre of Herbert Avenue looking west	Moderate
View G:	View near the centre of Herbert Avenue looking north	Imperceptible to Moderate
View H:	View from the entrance to the Private Hospital	Moderate
View I:	View from near the entrance to the Herbert Wing	Moderate
View J:	View from outside the Clinical Services Building	Moderate
View K:	View from the vehicular access to the A and E Department	Moderate
View L:	View from pedestrian lights on Nutley Lane	Moderate
View M:	View from Nutley Avenue at the entrance to St Michael's College	Slight to Moderate
View N:	View from Sydney Parade Dart Station	None
View O:	View from Elm Park Golf Club	Imperceptible to Slight
View P:	View from Bellview Park, looking into Elm Park Golf Club	None
View Q:	View from The UCD Campus, just south of Belfield House	None
View R:	View from Mount Anville Road, Mount Merrion	Imperceptible to Slight
View S:	View from Poolbeg	Imperceptible
View T:	View from West Pier, Dun Laoghaire	None to Imperceptible
View U:	View from Howth	Imperceptible

The table above indicates the extent of potential visual impact. The character of impact: positive, negative or neutral, will depend in large measure on the attitude of the viewer. Given the national importance and potential benefits of the proposed development, it is likely that almost all viewers will regard its visual impact as positive.

14.6 Mitigation Measures

14.6.1 Construction Phase

The proposed development is intended to provide attractive new national medical facilities. It is intended to have a positive visual character and result in positive visual impacts. No mitigation measures to reduce such intended positive impacts are proposed.

14.6.2 Operational Phase

The proposed development is intended to provide attractive new national medical facilities. It is intended to have a positive visual character and result in positive visual impacts. No mitigation measures to reduce such intended positive impacts are proposed.

14.7 Predicted Impact of the Proposed Development

14.7.1 Construction Phase

The visual impact of construction activity and of the emerging development is likely to be negative at first, becoming more positive as the development proceeds.

14.7.2 Operational Phase

14.7.2.1 Predicted Visibility and Visual impact from Individual Photomontage Locations

Since remedial and reductive measures do not apply, predicted impacts will be as described for potential impacts above. The nature and extent of predicted visual impact of the proposed development on the built environment from the 21 no. locations around the proposed development chosen for analysis and for the preparation of photomontage views is described below. Photomontages from each of these 21 no. locations and maps showing the photomontage are reproduced in Appendix 14.1.

Listed Views and Prospects

One listed view looking towards St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus was identified in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2010-2016, that being from Deerpark Mount Merrion. This is discussed at View R below. In the Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017, there are numerous listed viewpoints on Howth Head, including views towards the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. This is discussed at View U below. No relevant listed views were identified in the Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017.

View A: View from Merrion Road at Ailesbury Park

The southern end of the new upper levels of the extended car park will be openly visible in this view, partially concealed behind new landscaping. Above this and to the left, parts of the upper floors of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be visible extending south east from the Clinical Services Building, the two buildings forming a relatively continuous elevation. The proposed new National Maternity Hospital will be partly concealed behind St Rita's, which is in the foreground to the left of the view. A small portion of the St Vincent's Private Hospital is seen in the middle distance to the left of St Rita's, but is only a minor element of the view, visually disconnected from other buildings. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View B: View from Merrion Road at the entrance to the Hospital Campus

The southern and eastern facades of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen in the centre of this view, and will be the major focus of the view. The Clinical Services Building will be seen to the right, as a minor element of the view, extending away from the new National Maternity Hospital building. The view looks in through the southern entrance to the Hospital Campus, and will show the proposed changes to that entrance and proposed changes to the landscaping. St Rita's is seen to the right, where it forms a larger element of the view than the Clinical Services Building. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View C: View from Merrion Road just south east of Herbert Avenue

The top of the new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen in the centre of the view, appearing in the middle distance over the Gowan Motors premises and in part over modern flats on Herbert Avenue, just west of Gowan Motors. The development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be a secondary, though noticeable, element of the view. The subject development forms part of the continuing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Slight to Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View D: View from Merrion Road at Merrion Gates

A small part of the new National Maternity Hospital building will be barely visible in the distance behind foreground obstacles and then through trees. It will be a very minor element of the view. The subject development, therefore, is likely to give rise to an 'Imperceptible' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View E: View from Merrion Road south east of Merrion Gates

A small part of the development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be visible in the distance through trees. It will be a minor element of the view. In the summer, the trees may fully conceal the development of the National Maternity Hospital. The subject development, therefore, is likely to give rise to a visual impact ranging from 'None to Slight' when seen from this view location. The St Vincent's Private Hospital is seen to extreme left of the view, and from this location does not appear to be visually connected to the development of the new National Maternity Hospital.

View F: View from near the centre of Herbert Avenue looking west

The top of the new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen in the centre of the view, appearing in the middle distance between buildings on Herbert Avenue and over a modern house set back from Herbert Avenue. The new National Maternity Hospital building will be a secondary, though clearly visible, element of the view. The subject development forms part of the continuing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this specific view location. From many locations along Herbert Avenue the proposed development will not be visible, and so will have no visual impact. The new National Maternity Hospital building is likely to be clearly visible from the backs of houses nearest the proposed building on the north side of Herbert Avenue. From such locations the visual impact is likely to be 'Moderate'.

View G: View near the centre of Herbert Avenue looking north

The new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen to the left of the view, through a gap between buildings in the foreground, and through trees. The new National Maternity Hospital building will be a minor element of the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future.

Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'imperceptible to Moderate' visual impact when seen from this specific view location. The new National Maternity Hospital is likely to be clearly visible from the backs of houses nearest the proposed building on the north side of Herbert Avenue. From such locations the visual impact is likely to be 'Moderate'.

View H: View from the entrance to the Private Hospital

The southern and part of the western facade of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen to the left of this view, partially concealed behind buildings, trees and landscaping. The new National Maternity Hospital building will be a major element in the view. Apart from a small single storey building in the centre of the foreground, other buildings on the Hospital Campus will not be visible in the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View I: View from near the entrance to the Herbert Wing

Part of the western facade of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen to the left of this view, in part seen behind, trees and landscaping. The new National Maternity Hospital building will be a major element in the view. The new building is not seen in the context of the main existing Hospital buildings that adjoin it from this location. The St Vincent's Private Hospital is seen as a separate element at the right of the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View J: View from outside the Clinical Services Building

The proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be seen to the left of the view extending south east from the Clinical Services Building, the two buildings forming a relatively continuous elevation. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View K: View from the vehicular access to the A and E Department

The new extended north western end and the new upper levels of the extended car park will be openly visible in this view, partially concealed behind new landscaping. The new extensions to the car park will be a major element in the view. No other Hospital buildings, existing or proposed will be visible in the view. Changes to the road layout and new landscaping within the Hospital Campus will also be seen in the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View L: View from pedestrian lights on Nutley Lane

The new extended north western end and the new upper levels of the extended car park will be openly visible in this view, partially concealed behind new landscaping. The extended car park will be a major element in the view. Above this and to the left, parts of the upper floors of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be visible at some distance extending south east from the Clinical Services Building. The proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be a minor element in the view. Changes to the road layout and new landscaping within the Hospital Campus and at the Nutley Lane entrance to the Campus will be seen in the foreground of the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View M: View from Nutley Avenue outside the entrance to St Michael's College

The new extended north western end and the new upper levels of the extended car park will be visible in this view, partially concealed behind new landscaping. The extended car park will be a minor element in the view. Above this and to the left, parts of the upper floors of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be just visible in the distance to the left of Clinical Services Building. The proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be a very minor element in the view. The subject development forms part of the ongoing and emerging development of the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, development that has been continuing since the late 1950s, and is likely to continue into the future. Given this, the subject development is likely to give rise to a 'Slight to Moderate' visual impact when seen from this view location.

View N: View from Sydney Parade Dart Station

The subject development will not be visible from this specific view location, and no visual impact will arise.

View O: View from Elm Park Golf Club

Glimpses of the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will be possible from some locations within the lands of the Elm Park Golf Club. From locations where it is visible, the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be seen behind existing buildings in the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, and is likely to be a minor element in any view. Where it is visible the visual impact of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital is likely to range from 'Imperceptible to Slight'.

View P: View from Bellview Park, looking into Elm Park Golf Club

The subject development will not be visible from this specific view location, and no visual impact will arise.

View Q: View from The UCD Campus, just south of Belfield House

The subject development will not be visible from this specific view location, and no visual impact will arise.

View R: View from Mount Anville Road, Mount Merrion

Table 9.1: *Prospects to be preserved* of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2010-2016 lists 'Dublin City and Bay from Deerpark Mount Merrion' as a prospect to be preserved. Although Mount Merrion is elevated, it was very difficult to find locations from where the proposed development might be visible. The location with the most potential for visibility of the proposed development was found to be at a high point along Mount Anville Road, just outside the north west corner of the Deerpark. From this location, parts of the top of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be visible in the distance above intervening trees. A little to the right part of the St Vincent's Private Hospital will be just visible, but it will not be apparent that the two buildings might be on the same campus. The subject development will be a very small element in the view. From this location, the visual impact of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital is likely to range from 'Imperceptible to Slight'.

View S: View from Poolbeg

From Poolbeg, the Elm Park commercial development, the St. Vincent's Private Hospital and the Main Hospital and Clinical Services Building appear quite separated. In views from Poolbeg the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building will appear attached to the Clinical Services Building, but even taken together, the two buildings will be a very small element in any view. From the specific chosen view location, the visual impact of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital is likely to be 'Imperceptible'.

View T: View from West Pier, Dun Laoghaire

From the West Pier Dun Laoghaire Pier a cluster of buildings at Merrion is visible in the distance, buildings somewhat taller than the surrounding suburban development. This cluster of buildings consists for the most part of the Elm Park commercial development and the St Vincent's Private Hospital. The Clinical Services Building and the office building at Merrion Gates housing Jacob's Engineering are seen as minor and lower elements at the right side of the cluster. From the West Pier, the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital will be behind the Private Hospital, and, from most locations on the pier, will not be visible. Where visible, its visual impact is likely to be 'Imperceptible'.

View U: View from Howth

The Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017 lists numerous view locations on Howth Head from where there are views in various directions, including views of the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains. Where visible from Howth, the Elm Park commercial development, the St. Vincent's Private Hospital and the Main Hospital and Clinical Services Building appear quite separated. In views from Howth the proposed new National Maternity Hospital building, seen at a distance of over 10 kilometres, will appear attached to the Clinical Services Building, but even taken together, the two buildings will be a very small element in any view. In any view from Howth, the St Vincent's University Hospital Campus will be difficult to pick out with the naked eye, surrounded by the southern suburbs of Dublin with the Dublin Mountains rising in the background. From the specific chosen view location, the visual impact of the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital is likely to be 'Imperceptible'.

14.7.3 'Do Nothing' Scenario

If no development takes place, there will be no change in the visual environment and no potential new visual impact will result.

14.7.4 'Worst Case' Scenario

The views chosen for analysis are those from where the proposed development was most likely to be visible and so the analysis of impacts, above, represents a worst case scenario.

14.8 Monitoring

Monitoring of visual impact is not usually undertaken.

14.9 Reinstatement

The proposed development is intended to be permanent, so reinstatement is, in general, not relevant. A proposed 3 storey group of temporary construction offices, to be located in the car park beside St Rita's, and will be visible for most of the construction period. At the end of the construction period, these temporary construction offices will be removed, and any visual impact associated with them will cease.

14.10 Interactions and Potential Cumulative Impacts

14.10.1 Interactions

There are likely interactions between the visual impact of the proposed development and the likely impacts on Human Beings, on Cultural Heritage and on Material Assets – including Archaeological and Architectural heritage.

14.10.2 Potential Cumulative Impacts

The third edition of the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' published in the UK by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment discusses the assessment of cumulative visual impacts as follows:

'Assessment of cumulative effects is required both by the EIA and the SEA Directives and by the associated Regulations. Cumulative effects have been defined in a broad generic sense as 'impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project' (Hyder, 1999: 7).

Cumulative landscape and visual effects must be considered in LVIA when it is carried out as part of EIA. The 2002 edition of these guidelines defined cumulative landscape and visual effects as those that:

result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

(Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2002: 85)

...

The requirement for consideration of cumulative landscape and visual effects is a matter for agreement at the scope stage of the assessment but could relate to one or a combination of:

- *other examples of the same type of development;*
- *other types of development proposed within the study area, including those that may arise as an indirect consequence of the main project under consideration;*

- *in the case of large, complex projects, different scheme components or associated and ancillary development that in some cases may require their own planning consent.'*

The baseline against which the impact of the subject development was assessed includes all the existing development on the site and in the surrounding area.

Any new development, which has a visual presence and a consequent visual impact, when viewed together with the subject development, may cumulatively result in more significant change to the visual environment than what is described above in a long established suburb. However, while there is development pressure on sites in the area, particularly sites close to Merrion Gates and, in the longer term, undeveloped land within the St. Vincent's University Hospital Campus, it is understood that, at present, there are no extant planning permissions or planning applications within the zone of visual influence of the proposed development, which have the potential to result in material cumulative visual impacts.