



**DRAFT** Marlay Park  
SITE ANALYSIS



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

To facilitate the on-going development of Marlay Park in a holistic manner avoiding a piecemeal approach to development. In recent years, the park has become intensively used for active recreation, in particular running and jogging. With the new park facilities in place, visitor numbers have also steadily risen. In 2007, it was estimated that there were approximately 1 million visits to Marlay Park whereas in 2016, the estimate is approximately 2.5 million visits. The Masterplan is now being reviewed and updated to reflect these changes and to solve a number of on-going logistical challenges.

The following aims and objectives are being used to formulate the Marlay Park Masterplan;

- 1. To put in place a long term vision for Marlay Park that arranges the elements into a logical order to maximise the parks amenity value within the context of the historic landscape.
- 2. To protect and enhance the natural heritage, the flora and fauna of the site.
- 3. To conserve and protect the built heritage and provide suitable, sympathetic and sustainable uses for the properties in the setting of the historic landscape.
- 4. To ensure the park is designed to cater for existing and future needs of its users while recognising its limitations as a resource.
- 5. To develop high quality active recreation facilities, available to a wide range of the population in order to encourage a more active lifestyle.
- 6. To provide high quality passive recreational facilities including rest and relaxation spaces in appropriate locations.
- 7. To ensure a suitable and appropriate level of visitor facilities are provided throughout the park.
- 8. To ensure suitable number and varied type of events are provided at appropriate stages throughout the year.
- 9. To provide a high quality level of horticultural display at appropriate scale and locations.
- 10. To use smart technologies throughout the park in order to improve visitor facilities and uses.
- 11. To encourage community participation and education throughout the park.
- 12. To encourage the use of sustainable energy sources throughout the park.
- 13. To ensure the final adopted Masterplan is used in its entirety for the development and conservation of Marlay Park without significant amendment.
- 14. To acknowledge the size and scale of the park through strategic interventions that will also benefit the broader county.
- 15. To maximise the biodiversity and pollinator potential of the park through sustainable maintenance policies that seek to minimise or eliminate the use of herbicides.





## 1.1 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

At approximately 100 Hectares Marlay Park is the largest regional park managed by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

It lies at the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and is easily accessed from the M50 motorway at Sandyford/Ballinteer and Firhouse exits. It was acquired in 1972 by the former Dublin County Council and opened as a public park in 1975.

It is one of Dun Laoghaire Rathdowns most popular Flagship Parks and boasts a wide range of visitor facilities. It lies in the townland of Rathfarnham and is surrounded by the residential areas of Rathfarnham, Whitechurch, Ballinteer, Broadford and Pine Valley. Its southern boundary lies adjacent to College Road, which runs parallel to the M50 motorway.





*Restored walled garden with thatched arbour, Marlay Park*



*Regency planting, Marlay Park*



*Restored Regency garden and Ornamental pool, Marlay Park*

## 1.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MARLAY PARK

The Park today consists of mature woodland, extensive informal lawns – laid out for playing pitches and passive recreation areas, sporting facilities, ponds, streams, paths and acres of recreational land with uninterrupted views of the distant mountains. Marlay Park contains many of the landscape features associated with 18th and early 19th century Parks. These features include the substantial boundary wall, gate lodges, ornate iron entrance gates and pillars, walled garden, ponds, waterfalls, bridges, ha-ha ditch.

Some of the major projects undertaken in the park since its purchase by Dublin Corporation in 1972 (passed to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in 1994) include;

- The continued restoration and conservation of Marlay House and outbuildings.
- The introduction of an informal path network.
- The introduction of new car parking at both College Road and Grange Road and adjacent to the playground
- The introduction of an avenue through the park to the south west section of the park.
- The introduction of new pedestrian and vehicular entrances.
- The restoration of the formal walled gardens.
- The provision of parks depots and works yards with staff welfare, office facilities and public toilets.
- Works to facilitate the park as a concert venue.
- The installation of a model railway facility.
- The construction of public toilets.
- The introduction of lighting and security system around Marlay House & Courtyard.
- The construction of tennis courts and a modest clubhouse.
- New boundary treatment to the southern boundary to facilitate the M50 and College Road construction.
- Restoration and conservation of the lodges and other built heritage including Bolands for use as a cafe and Laurelmere Cottage.
- The construction of playgrounds including a regional playground.
- Installation of sculptural mounding and sculpture at locations in the park.
- The introduction of a dogs-off-leash area.
- The provision of car parking in the small walled garden space.
- Planting of trees and woodland areas.
- The installation of new boundary treatments to the park at its western boundary (alongside Grange Golf Club) and southern boundary (to facilitate the M50 and College Road).
- The construction of an all-weather pitch and temporary pre-fabricated buildings.
- Construction of a 9 hole golf course and recent upgrade works including a new golf pavilion.