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RE: Planning Report for the Coastguard Cottages, Crosshaven Part 8 Scheme. (33no. Residential units).

To whom it concerns,

The proposed development, namely, for the construction of 26no. new social housing units and the refurbishment of 7no. existing units as social housing at the former Coastguard Cottages, Lower Road, Crosshaven, Co. Cork. The 33no. units comprises: refurbishment of 7no. units within the existing terrace of coastguard cottages; 7 x 2 bed units @ 54.6sq.m. New build:

Block A. 2 x 1 bed apartments @ 49.6sq.m.

Block B. 7 x 1 bed apartments @ 47.7sq.m.; 7 x 3 bed @ 106sq.m.

Block C. 7 x 1 bed apartments @ 49.3sq.m.; 7 x 3 bed @ 101sq.m.

Core Strategy

Crosshaven is a 'key village' within the County Metropolitan Cork Area. Crosshaven and the Bays with a population of 2,577 (2016 Census) with a 2028 target of 2,847 or requirement to deliver 103 residential units to accommodate same. *"The strategic aim is to encourage the consolidation of Crosshaven, to recognise its important economic, leisure, tourism and marine roles and to promote sympathetic development in tandem with the provision of infrastructure and services that are compatible with the ecological designations within the lower harbour and Owenabue Estuary."*

With 5ha of zoned land, 'brownfield' infill sites such as this one, will need to deliver higher densities, particularly, targeted socio-economic/ demographic or age friendly units to meet these targets, and counter unsustainable growth in surrounding rural areas and the greenbelt.

The **core strategy objective CS 2-3** recognises the County Metropolitan Area as the main engine of growth for the region, and that critical water services, roads and transport infrastructure is provided in a timely manner to ensure that sufficient lands are available to support the ambitious population growth targets; and *"Maintain the principles of the Metropolitan Greenbelt... and to provide easy access to the countryside"* and *"Facilitate the development of the villages so that the rate of future population growth compliments the strategy to achieve a critical mass of population in the towns and provide protection for those areas recognised as under pressure from urban development."*

Objective CS 2-7 Key Villages

The stated strategic objective is to *"Establish key villages as the primary focus for development in rural areas in the lower order settlement network and allow for the provision of local services, by*

encouraging and facilitating population growth at a scale, layout and design that reflects the character of each village, where water services and wastewater infrastructure is available. Supporting the retention and improvement of key social and community facilities, and interurban public transport."

Zoning

The subject site is zoned Existing Residential/ Mixed Residential and other uses. **ZU 18-9 "Existing Residential/ Mixed Residential and Other Uses."** The objective states that "the scale of new residential and mixed residential ... should normally respect the pattern and grain of existing urban development in the surrounding area. Overall increased densities are encouraged..."

Density and Mix

The proposed scheme of 33no. units on 0.93ha equates to 35units per ha. The settlement density guide for Key villages such as Crosshaven is specified as up to 35units per hectare at edge of centre sites and within villages and village centres, higher densities will be considered. The density is considered appropriate within the Metro Cork Strategic Planning Area, given the development pressures on the greenbelt.

The scheme comprises of

7no. units within the existing terrace of coastguard cottages; 7 x 2 bed units @ 54.6sq.m.

Block A. 2 x 1 bed apartments @ 49.6sq.m.

Block B. 7 x 1 bed apartments @ 47.7sq.m.; 7 x 3 bed maisonettes @ 106sq.m.

Block C. 7 x 1 bed apartments @ 49.3sq.m.; 7 x 3 bed maisonettes @ 101sq.m.

All units are dual aspect and are served by private/communal amenity spaces. The variety of units is acceptable.

Quality Assessment

The floor area of the new units exceed the minimum floor area standards (45sq.m. for 1-bed; 90sq.m. for 3bed unit) in accordance with SPPR 3, as set out in Appendix A of the CDP, and standards set out in the '**Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities,**' - (45sq.m. for 1-bed , 70sq.m. for 2-bed unit, 90sq.m. for 3-bed unit).

The existing cottages (2-bed, 23 person) fail to meet the regulatory standard of 70sq.m. as per the above stated guideline, and the '**Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities**' standards. However, storage standards are far exceeded by re-use of out buildings. Given the heritage value of the structures, the low-level intervention to protect the build fabric of same and the objective to re-use this valuable and strategically located dis-used building stock, the failure to meet the minimum standard is considered acceptable in this instance. The generous provision (qualitative and quantitative) of private and communal amenity space and the overall design standard achieved does in some way balance the below par internal floorspace provision.

The quality and quantity of amenity space exceeds minimum standards. This includes communal gardens, private gardens, patios, terraces and balconies.

Townscape

The site is a wide, c.40metres at road front, extending to c100metres; and c130metres in length, on a steep slope falling south to north. The area is characterized by large 2-storey 'Victorian' style / scale dwellings, detached, pairs and terracing. 3-storey buildings also evident, such as the Grand Hotel. Dwellings are orientated northwards towards the river and follow the contours. The scale, massing orientation of the proposal respects this morphology and established character.

The proposal is considered to be sensitive to the existing sites / residences in the immediate vicinity and respects the scale, form and massing of the built fabric of the town. It will result in localised public realm improvements including a walkway through the site and coast road to/from the school above the site of former rail station, Prospect Villas. The area is noted for its deficiencies in pavement network due to the steep topography.

The proposal creates a positive edge to the road/ street (R612) with active frontages. The provision of car parking is considered appropriate given sites proximity to town centre and local services and will reinforce prioritisation of active modes along this constrained route. Compact urban development, place-making and townscape enhancement is considered to be a priority for a small infill site such as this. The scheme is considered to be a progressive in design and layout arrangements and represents an efficient use of village landbank.

The 1, 2 & 3-storey scale of development respects the massing of the existing neighbourhood and would not seriously injure residential amenities in the vicinity. High levels of residential amenity are achieved within the scheme by way of internal floor areas and provision of private amenity spaces and communal areas. Adequate separation distances have been achieved between blocks and extant buildings surrounding the site. The proposal responds well to the receiving environment.

Amenity space

Public/ communal amenity space exceeds 15% and so meets the CDP requirement of 12-18%. The site is proximate to significant green/ blue infrastructure such as the estuary and the adjoining greenway.

Parking

Parking standards are maximum standards and reduced provision is encouraged to support active and smarter travel initiatives and support modal shift from private car use.

The current work commuting mode share is 73.6% in Carrigaline. No figure is available for Crosshaven and Bays area, but would be considered to be comparable. The 2028 mode share target is 60%. This requires habitual changes and designing out car parking is a required in certain circumstances. The context of this scheme and its location within walking distance of the village centre and bus route lends itself to significantly reduced parking from the maximum prescription of 2 spaces per house, 1.25spaces per apartment and as such is considered to be in accordance with Objective TM 12-9 (Parking) "to restrict parking provision to achieve greater modal shift."

The provision of 44 no. spaces is below that of maximum standard of 55 no. spaces, if one considers 1- bed units to be apartments, and 2, 3-bed units as houses. The reduced provision is considered acceptable given the active travel policy context and its strategic location.

The arrangement of two distinct car parks via two access routes is considered to be desirable in order to distribute demand on the local road network and minimise localised congestion at junctions and mitigate loss of amenity.

Building Conservation

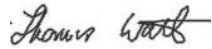
I note the contents of the JCA "Conservation Report" (referring to the Coastguard Cottages) and "Damp, and Timber Decay Report." The Conservation Officer should report on content of same and strategy for these buildings and out-houses.

Ecology /Appropriate Assessment

I note the content of the AA Screening Report and Invasive Species Report. The Heritage Unit should report on content and conclusions of same.

Conclusion

The proposed redevelopment/ regeneration of the site is considered to be in accordance with the core strategy and objectives of the County Development Plan 2022 having regard to its 'residential' zoning, (**ZU 18-9 "Existing Residential/ Mixed Residential and Other Uses**) objective and national design guidance standards and as such represents proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Thomas Watt.
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