



Planning Report

for

26 no. New Housing Units & Refurbishment of 7 Existing
Units

at

Lower Road, Crosshaven



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

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0.0 Introduction

This report relates to an application to seek Part 8 approval for the construction of 26 no. new social housing units and the refurbishment of 7 no. existing units as social housing at Lower Road, Crosshaven, County Cork. This report has been prepared and compiled by Cork County Council’s Housing Directorate.

1.0 Site

1.1 Site Context

The subject site is situated on the western side of Crosshaven Village, County Cork. The site is embedded in the urban fabric of the town with the old Coastguard Cottage terrace to the north, the new Coastguard Station to the west, national school to the south and existing dwellings and garages to the east. Further north of the site is the Royal Yacht club and Crosshaven bay.

This site has been identified by Cork County Council’s Housing Directorate as a key site within the existing residential area of Crosshaven suitable for development. It is considered that the proposal to develop the subject site will provide for much needed social housing units in an established residential area in accordance with the principles and objectives set out in the Cork County Development Plan.



Aerial View of Site Context



Aerial 3D View of Site Context

1.2 Site Capacity

The overall site area is 0.93 hectares. The provision of 33 units provides an overall density of 35 dwellings per hectare.

1.3 Local Housing Need

There are 126 approved applicants for social housing in Crosshaven. This breaks down as follows:

Crosshaven - Total - 126

- 1 Bed – 30
- 2 Bed – 63
- 3 Bed – 27
- 4 Bed – 3
- 1 Bed – Specially Adapted – 0
- 2 Bed – Specially Adapted – 2
- 3 Bed – Specially Adapted – 0
- 4 Bed – Specially Adapted – 1

The proposed development of 33 units comprises of 26 new units and 7 refurbishment units. The proposed housing mix breaks down as follows:

New Units – 26 units

- 14 no. 1 bed 2 person units (8 1bed units will be 'Age Friendly' units)
- 7 no. 2 bed 3 person units (Refurbishment of former Coastguard Cottage Units)
- 12 no. 3 bed 5 person units.

1.4 Strategic Site Location and Description

The site is located within the development boundary of Crosshaven, adjacent to the Coastguard Station, Garda Station, Primary School and Crosshaven Yacht Club. The general area is predominantly residential in nature. This area is within good walking distance of the village centre (500m / 5 min walk). Based on guidance outlined in 'Shaping Neighbourhoods' by Barton, Grant and Guise (2003), it is generally accepted that 500m represents a suitable catchment area from which residents can access local services and convenience shopping. The site is also within walking distance of the main bus route to Cork City.

Given its proximity to educational and recreational facilities located close-by the development of the site for residential use will offer an appropriate location for social housing and would contribute to the creation of sustainable mixed communities, in accordance with national and local statutory planning policy, and raises no concerns as to sustainable community proofing.

1.5 Services

Please refer to consultant engineers (OCSC) drawings and reports for proposed services and services connections.

2.0 Planning Policy

2.1 Development Plan and Local Area Plan

In accordance with the Cork County Development Plan 2022, the proposed site is situated within the settlement boundary of the village. The proposal is supportive of the following objectives in the Development Plan:

1.8.24 It is also important to maintain and enhance the village's built and natural heritage. Infill development and sensitive alterations to facades in the older village core will be encouraged.

1.8.33 There are opportunities to deliver compact growth in Crosshaven and Bays which would include infill developments, backlands developments, and through addressing

vacancy. These opportunity sites have the potential to help meet the planned level of growth allocated to Crosshaven and Bays as a settlement and as a Key Village.

2.2 Planning History

There have been no previous planning applications on the subject Coastguard cottage units or on the brownfield site to the rear of the cottages. The OPW received permission (125646) to amend a previous planning permission (Pl. Ref. No. 08/9048), comprising the reconfiguration of the permitted car parking area on the access road to the Coastguard Station building, to provide an access point to the proposed car park to the rear of the Garda station, the removal of 9 no. car parking spaces and consequent landscaping, boundary treatment and other associated works.

2.3 Access and Roads

Lower Access Junction

The site can be accessed from both the Lower Crosshaven Road and from a cul-de-sac road at the higher part of the site. The existing lower access junction contains two entrances off 'Lower Road'. One serves the Coastguard Station and Garda Station and the other provides access to a privately owned undeveloped site. The proposed scheme rationalizes this access junction where both access roads are combined into one single access road. This new road is 6m wide and facilitates 1.8m foot paths on both sides. This provides a wider and more direct access and egress for the Coastguard in the event of an emergency. The proposed road layout includes road markings and bollards to prevent parking on the road.

The Garda Station currently use a shared car park to the rear of the Garda Station. It is proposed to re-make this car park as a private car park with 4 spaces for 'An Garda' with a controlled access gate.

Upper Access Junction

It is proposed to access the upper half of the site via the existing cul-de-sac road adjacent to the school. It is proposed to provide a shared surface access road adjacent to the school that can facilitate parking during school hours while allowing for single lane traffic. The shared surface will also allow for access for emergency and refuse vehicles. The design of the shared surface is informed by 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURs) section 4.3.4:

‘Shared surface streets and junctions are integrated spaces where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share the main carriageway. This may include streets where the entire street reserve is shared or where designated sections may provide for pedestrians and/or cyclists use only with a shared surface carriageway along part of the street.’

‘Shared surface streets and junctions are particularly effective at calming traffic. Research has found that shared carriageways perform well in terms of safety and there is also evidence to suggest that well designed schemes in appropriate settings can bring benefits in terms of visual amenity, economic performance and perceptions of personal safety.’

The proposed shared surface uses a transition zone/gateway from the existing road to the shared surface to highlight to users that they are entering a shared surface. The school parking zone is defined using materials rather than line markings. The shared surface also incorporates a roundabout at the entrance to the proposed scheme to allow traffic to turn freely.

OCSC have carried out a ‘Traffic Impact Assessment’ on the access roads which concludes that the impact of the development on this road will be low and will not have any negative implications for the school. Please refer to full Traffic Impact Assessment by OCSC for further detail.



Example of shared surface at New Road Brighton



Example of shared surface at Castlegate Down, Co. Dublin

2.4 Car Parking

The proposed development consists of a mix of 1,2 & 3 bed units with a number of Age Friendly units intended for the elderly. The site is centrally located within Crosshaven and is within a 5minute walk of public transport connections. A total of 45 new car spaces are proposed for the development, which is considered sufficient considering the location of the site and the unit types being proposed.

Parking and turning bays are provided at both the upper and lower access roads to serve the new development. 25 spaces are proposed to the lower access road which serve Block C and the existing Coastguard Cottage units. It is proposed that 6 of the 12 units in Block C are 1Bed Age Friendly Housing where the need for car spaces may be reduced.

It is proposed to provide 19 car parking spaces to the upper parking area to serve Blocks A&B. Blocks A&B are made up of 14 units compromising of 2 1Bed Age Friendly units, 6 1Bed units and 6 3Bed Family units.

3.0 Environmental & Heritage Considerations

3.1 Environmental Parameters

The development site does not sit within a Special Area of Conservation or any Special Protected Areas. It does however sit within the 'Cork Harbour' Special Protection Area screening zone. An Appropriate Assessment Screening and Determination have been completed and forms part of this application.

The Appropriate Assessment Determination concludes that in accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the objective information provided in this report, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans/projects are not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of a European site (Natura 2000 site). It is therefore considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), is not required.

As per Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening determination has been made and concludes that the proposed development does not fall into a project Class specified in Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, nor does it meet the threshold for any Class of development in Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations which requires an EIA. It is therefore determined that an EIA is not required and can be excluded at this pre-screening stage. Please refer to the EIA Screening assessment and determination which forms part of this application.

3.2 Archaeological and Architectural Heritage

The Coastguard Cottage Terrace is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The subject site is not within the vicinity of any structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures. The site is not within an Architectural Conservation Area.

3.3 Flooding

The elevation of the subject site places it outside any identified Flood Zones as per *the Cork County Development Plan 2022*. Please refer to OCSC Engineering Services Report for further detail.

3.4 Invasive Species

Cork County Council appointed Atkins Ecology to carry out a non-native invasive plant species survey on the site. This survey involved a desktop review along with a site visit to thoroughly investigate the presence of invasive species on the subject site. The only invasive plant species recorded during the survey within the red line boundary of the proposed project that is listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended, was three-cornered garlic. It is recommended that a pre-construction invasive species survey will be conducted prior to the commencement of works on site to establish if there has been a change in the distribution of invasive species on site. The recommendations of the report will be implemented by Cork County Council.

3.5 Bat Survey

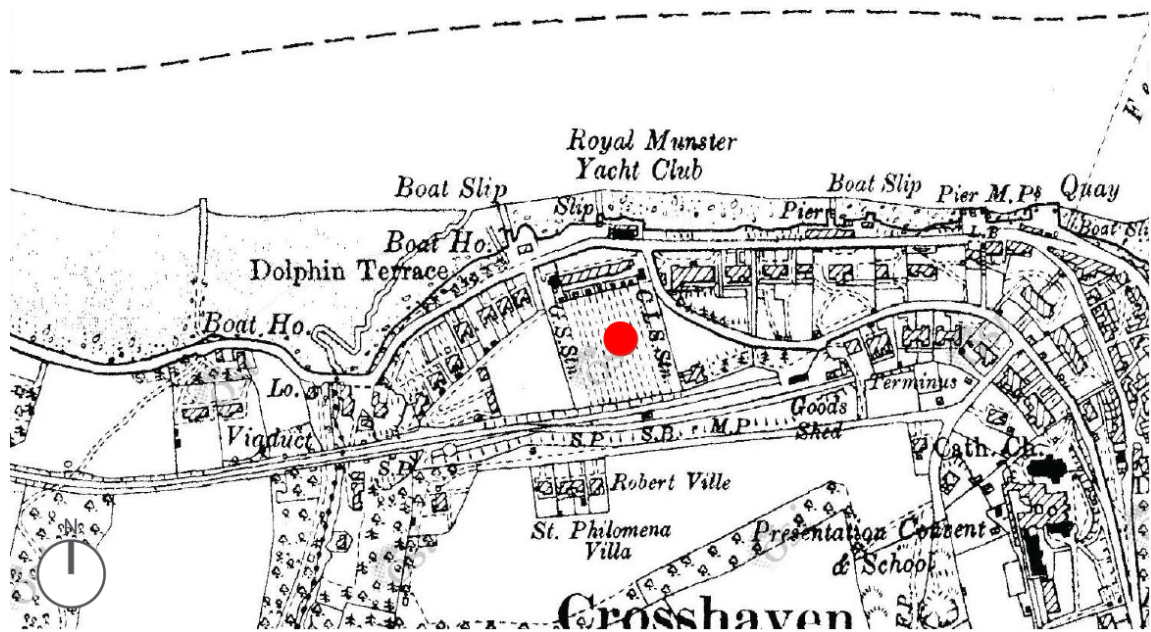
Cork County Council appointed Karen Banks, Greenleaf Ecology, to undertake a bat survey on the subject site. The cottage buildings and the roof void were examined externally and internally with close focussing binoculars and a high powered torch. No evidence of bats (e.g. actual sightings, droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks, urine stains) was observed during the inspection of the buildings. No evidence of bats was recorded during the inspection of the trees at the proposed site. One common pipistrelle bat was recorded emerging from the roof of dwelling no. 8. No emergent bats or bat roosts were identified in the outbuildings or trees during the emergence roost surveys. It is recommended that works to the roof of dwelling number 8 shall occur between 1st September and 1st May. The recommendations of the report will be implemented by Cork County Council.

4.0 Project Proposal

4.1 Coastguard Cottages

The old Coastguard Station and cottages were built in the 1860's comprising of an officer's house and eleven coastguard workers houses laid out as a terrace of identical houses. There was a watch house attached to the station, a rocket house to the eastern end of the cottages and a boat house on the beach opposite the officer's house. With the exception of the larger units at either end, the eleven units have identical plans (laid out as handed plans), each having a living room, kitchen and small pantry (under the stairs) with three bedrooms to the first floor. The small outbuildings seen on the OSI map are likely to have been the outhouses (toilets) and possibly a coal store.

There are 7 derelict cottages within the terrace which form part of this application. The cottage buildings are remarkably intact in terms of their floor plan, timber staircases, pantry cupboards and in many cases timber sash windows, doors, fire surrounds and floor tiles. The Cottages are listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage but are not listed on the Record of Protected Structures.



OSI Map 6 Inch Cassini -1830s-1930s

4.2 Cottage Access and Amenity

The area to the front of the cottages was originally a communal open space entered from either end of the terrace. It has since been subdivided to provide separate gardens for some of the houses. A number of these now have gateways to the northern boundary wall allowing access off the street. Two of the houses also have new doorways inserted to the front (north) elevation with a porch, allowing access to the houses by way of a path from the Lower Road. The remaining houses retain their original entrance, from the rear (south) elevation only.

It is proposed to re-create a shared green space to the front of units 7-11 which can be accessed from the 'Lower Road'. This provides the cottage terrace with its own shared green space fully overlooked by the terrace and allows for the sensitive re-furnishment of the cottages and cottage windows fronting onto this green space. It is proposed to remove the front porches of cottages 4 and 5 and replace the front window with a door to retain the existing front access arrangement. The front porches are in poor condition and create a cold bridge to the cottages which has caused damp issues. The removal of these non-original porches brings the cottages back to their original form in line with conservation best practice.

The terrace was designed to serve the original Coastguard Station and so the area to the rear of the cottages between the outhouses and the cottages was shared. It is proposed to sub-divide the rear passageway into private external patio areas. This will provide a private amenity for each cottage making the rear patio areas more private for all residents of the terrace.

The proposal incorporates a shared parking area to the rear of the cottages to provide parking for the cottages. The original stepped access to the rear of the cottages is retained which provides a connection from the cottage gardens to the parking area. Similarly, a communal bin store will be provided within this parking area to serve the cottages.



Photo Montage of Coastguard Cottages

4.3 Conservation Approach

Cork County Council have appointed Jack Coughlan Architects (Garreth O’Callaghan) to carry out a Conservation Report on the cottages. This report has informed the conservation approach to retain and repair the cottage fabric in so far as is possible. This approach has been supported by the Architectural Conservation Officer (refer to ACO report). The cottages themselves are below the recommended target floor areas and so it is proposed to utilise the outhouses to the rear as a utility space to support the servicing of the main house. Please refer to the application drawings for further detail on the conservation methodology.

4.4 Brownfield Site Layout

The brownfield site to rear is approximately 0.6 hectares. OSI maps suggest that this site was previously part of the Coastguard cottages accessed directly from the cottage outhouses. This brownfield site is currently unoccupied and heavily overgrown. It is proposed to occupy this pocket of land with a new high quality infill development that compliments the coastguard cottages.

The proposed new development to the rear is informed by the existing terraced cottages in the form of two simple terraced rows (Blocks B&C) running parallel to the contours. The unit types are repeated across the terrace forming a consistent façade treatment which is articulated by recessed balconies and vertically orientated window openings. The terraces overlook a new public green area to the centre of the site providing a safe, social green area for the whole community.

Block A is made up of two age friendly units which define the boundary to the adjacent Eircom building providing a sense of enclosure to the southern area whilst ensuring all areas are fully overlooked.



Site Strategy Diagram

4.5 Central Courtyard

The Coastguard cottages originally defined a shared communal green space directly off the terrace. Similarly, it is proposed to define a new enclosed green space between the new terraces. This courtyard is free of cars and parking, creating a safe play area for the residents encouraging social interaction community events. The central courtyard incorporates a tiered landscaped area forming level hard and soft landscaped areas for community events and winter play areas.

The courtyard is made possible by the two access routes to the brownfield site. As the site falls approx. 14m from top to bottom, it is proposed to access the site from the top and bottom to serve the new terraces. The falls across the site are managed by a lower ground floor cut into the contours on both terraces. This facilitates a usable green space between the two blocks accessed directly from the new units.

The central courtyard along with the second shared green to the front of the cottages provides 15% green space across the overall site. This green space is supplemented by planted areas throughout the site. The courtyard also facilitates a pedestrian north-south connection through the site encouraging pedestrian movement through the site.

Out of the 24 units defining the courtyard, 19 units have direct access to the courtyard from their dwelling. All family units open directly onto the courtyard.

4.6 Unit Types

The proposal is for 33 units including 26 new units and 7 refurbishment cottages. The unit breakdown includes 14 1bed units (8 age friendly), 7 2bed units(cottages) and 12 3bed units. The age friendly units account for 30% of the new development.

The new part of the scheme is made up of 5 unit types across Blocks A, B, and C. The unit types are simple in form and designed to create a sense of enclosure and overlooking of the public areas. Each unit is accessed from the parking areas and addresses both the parking areas and the central courtyard creating high quality dual aspect units. The proposal incorporates ‘own door access’ to each unit where the access stair is within the ownership of each unit. This creates a sense of ownership over all internal areas with no internal communal circulation spaces.

Each unit has a private amenity space in line with the minimum target areas. Embankments slope away from the terraces forming south facing private patios to the rear of the lower units. This approach can be seen in the existing coastguard cottages and outhouses. The rear patios inform bridged access connections to the upper units which define the threshold between the units and the public spaces.

4.7 Materiality

The materiality of the new terraces is informed by the Coastguard terrace. The Coastguard terrace façade is a wet dash render that has weathered over time to expose some of the aggregate. It is proposed to use similar dash render with similar aggregate size and colours to that of the cottages. Dash is particularly traditional to Crosshaven and its use on a new development will assist in incorporating the proposal into the landscape. The material pallet is intended to be robust, understated and subtle.



Figure 11 Material Palette. Examples of dash render.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with the policies and objectives of Cork County Council Development Plan 2022 and other relevant statutory documents. There is adequate service infrastructure in the area to accommodate the development proposal including water and transport infrastructure. The subject site’s proximity to education, commercial and recreational facilities and it’s position relative to Crosshaven village centre offers an appropriate location for social housing. The proposed development seeks to address and meet some of the critical need for housing in the County Cork area, providing much needed accommodation for those on the housing waiting list.

The proposed development of the site, accommodating 33 dwellings, will assist in meeting the need for social housing accommodation and to facilitate a broader objective of enhancing place making on this vacant infill site.