

Planning Statement

For Development at

on behalf of Cork County Council

March 2024



McCutcheon Halley
CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Cork County Council in relation to a proposed social residential development, which is proposed in accordance with Section 179A of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) at Liscahane, Millstreet, County Cork.

The proposed development consists of:

- a) 26 residential units comprising two 3-bed two-storey houses, sixteen 2-bed townhouses and eight one-over 1-bed apartments, and
- b) all other associated ancillary development and works including footpaths and cycle paths, communal bike and bike stores, car parking including spaces designated for reduced mobility access, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas.

The proposed development, Pairc Chatháin, will provide 26 much needed new homes to meet a mixture of housing solutions with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised infill site within the existing development boundary of the town. It will deliver a high-quality social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing urban environment and sensitive to the natural environment of the immediate surrounds, that will help address the current housing shortages in a highly desirable main town in County Cork.

This report is submitted in support of the proposed scheme and is presented under the following headings:

- Site Context & Proposed Development
- Planning Policy Context
- Planning History
- Assessment of Proposed Development
- Appropriate Assessment
- Environmental Assessment
- Conclusion

2. Site context & Proposed Development

2.1 Site Context

The subject site which measures approx. 1.09ha is located off the L5229-0, Drishane Road, approximately 0.6km south of Millstreet town centre and is zoned 'Existing Residential' in the County Cork Development Plan 2022. The subject site is within walking distance of the town centre and is in close proximity to various services, facilities and recreation amenities, connected via continuous footpaths and public lighting.

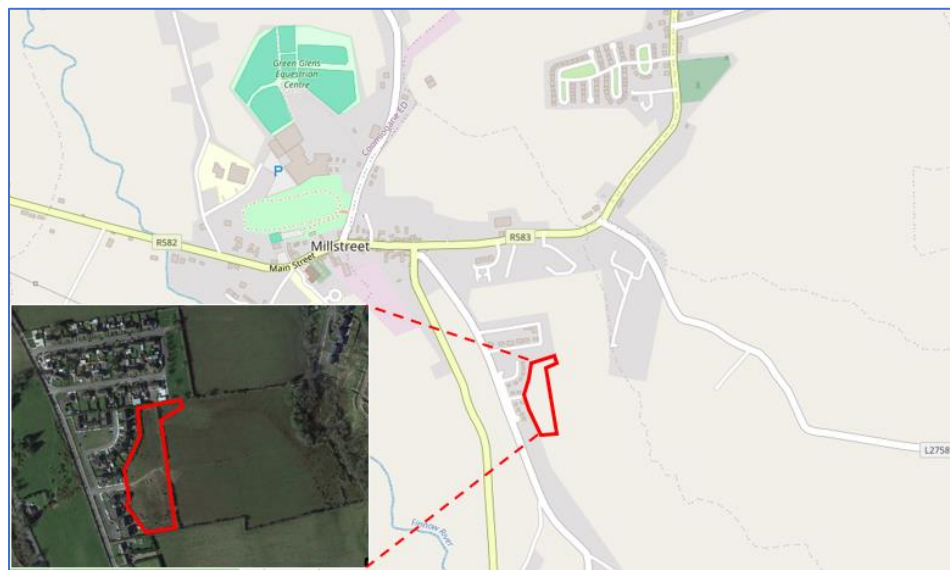


Figure 1: Site location in context of Millstreet Town (approximate boundary in red)

The subject site is within the development boundary of the Main Town of Millstreet and the area immediately surrounding the site is a mix of residential in character, with agricultural fields to the east and west. The subject site is located to the rear of an existing residential estate (Old Coach Avenue and Old Court Drive) which comprises semi-detached and mid-terrace town houses. The proposed development will be accessed via the existing entrance and estate road built out during the previous stage of development.

The site of approximately 1.09ha is roughly rectangular in shape and sits at a slightly elevated position above the adjoining estate. There are existing hedgerows to the west, south and north, with some scrub towards the northeastern boundary, which is bounded by residential walls continuing along the southeast boundary. An existing ESB substation is located centrally in the site. The River Finnow flows in a north south direction approximately 0.55km to the west of the site (Finnow (Blackwater)_020) and another tributary of the Finnow flows to the east of the subject site (Finnow (Blackwater)_040).



Figure 2: View of the site from the existing access road.

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to develop 26 2-storey residential dwellings with a mixed typology on a green field site within an existing residential area (see Fig.3). The proposed residential development is consistent with the zoning objectives for the site, providing much needed social housing options in Millstreet, a designated Main Town. All units comply with the standards set out in the CDP, and guidance provided in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DCHLG, 2024) and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DHPLG, 2022).



Figure 3: Extract of proposed site layout

The overall approach of the proposed residential development at Liscahane, to be named Pairc Chatháin, will secure the delivery of new homes in a location in Millstreet close to the town centre, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon footprint. The proposed infill residential development will benefit from excellent existing walking connectivity to the town centre (see Fig. 4), of an approximate 10-minute walk, with links to public transport, employment, recreation, community facilities, and schools. The public bus route 257 runs from Killarney to Macroom. The bus stop is approximately 800m from the subject site.

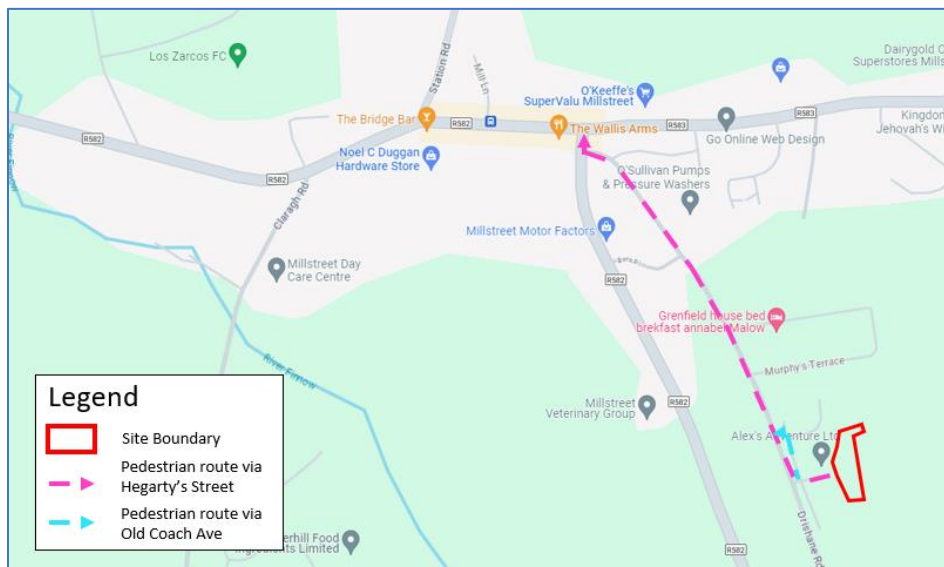


Figure 4: Pedestrian routes from site entrance to Millstreet Town Centre

The proposal is for 26 residential units within a developable area of 1.09ha, resulting in a density of 24 units per ha, falling in line with the Medium Density B category, which is consistent with the population thresholds set out in the CDP and the growth targets set for Millstreet. A usable open space of 0.09ha, equal to 8.7% of the developable area has been set aside as landscaped communal open amenity space.

The proposed site layout is developed along a single internal spine road, to the front of the proposed development accessed from the existing L5229-0, Drishane Road, and includes hammerheads on the north and southern ends of the site. Footpaths throughout the development, including separate access routes and internal shared-user roads, provide a pedestrian focused residential area.

Car parking is allocated in line with the maximum standards set out in table 12.6 of the CDP. All parking spaces will be capable of accommodating future charging points within the curtilage of each dwelling. The proposed development provides 18 covered bike parking spaces within a secure bin and bike storage area for use by residents of apartments and house units without rear access. A further 8 bike spaces are provided for use by visitors.

The retention of the hedgerows on site will result in minimal impact on the existing ecology, whilst the inclusion of nature-based solutions to urban drainage such as bio-swales will deliver an overall biodiversity net gain.

The site is currently under-utilised, comprising an open field of agricultural land of low ecological value adjoining the rear of existing residential development. The proposed development will not result in the removal or interference with habitats that support local biodiversity, with the retention of the existing boundary hedgerows and communal open green spaces included as part of the overall proposal. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening report prepared by McCutcheon Halley and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AA) and Ecological Impact

Assessment (EIA) have been prepared by Flynn Furney in support of this proposed development.

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

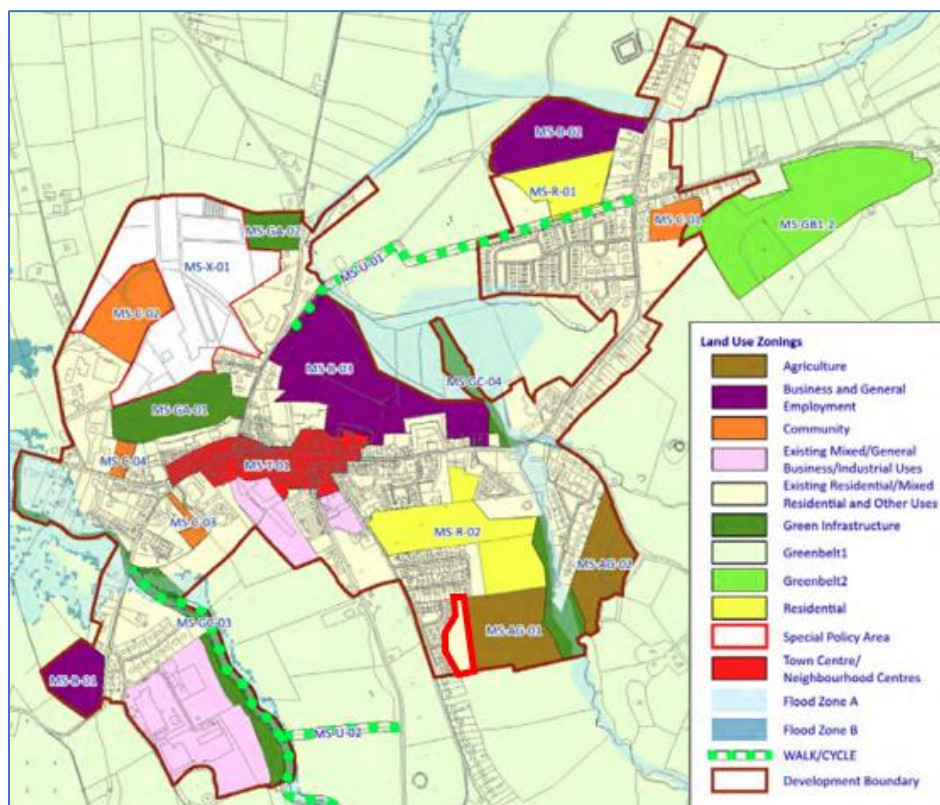


Figure 5: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022 Land Use Zoning

The Cork County Development Plan 2022-28 (CDP) identifies Millstreet as a Main Town in the Macroom Municipal District. The site is located on lands zoned as **“Existing Residential/Mixed Residential and Other Uses”** (see Fig. 5). The main objective for this zoning is to *“conserve and enhance the quality and character of established residential communities and protect their amenities”*. Infill development will be considered where appropriate to the character and pattern of development in the area and do not significantly affect the amenities of the surrounding properties. The infill site adjoins existing residential developments to the north and west. Lands to the south are zoned as Greenbelt 1 and lands to the east are zoned for Agricultural uses.

The CSO 2022 Census population for Millstreet is 1,722. The CDP sets out a population target for 2028 of 1,948 people and requires an additional 150 new residential units to meet the expected demand.

Table 4.4.8: Millstreet Population and Housing Supply				
	Population and Housing Requirement			Housing Supply Units
	Population Census 2016	Population Target (to 2028)	New Units Required (to 2028)	Housing Supply from Residential and Mixed-Use Zoning including Compact Growth Sites
Millstreet	1,555	1,948	150	150

Figure 6: Extract of Table 4.4.8 of the CDP, Volume 4

A review of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-28 identifies a number of relevant Policy Objectives, which include the following:

General Objective MS-GO-01:

Plan for development to enable Millstreet to achieve its target population of 1,948 persons.

Objective PL 3-1: Building Design, Movement and Quality of the Public Realm:

Support measures to improve building design quality, accessibility and movement including investment in quality public realm across the settlement network of the County

Objective PL 3-3: Delivering Quality and Inclusive Places:

In assessing future development proposals the Plan will implement and promote a series of aims outlined in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and accompanying Urban Design Manual and the Design Standards for New Apartments, which seek to create high quality inclusive places.

Objective HOU 4-6: Housing Mix:

a) Secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County as a whole to meet the needs of the likely future population across all age groups in accordance with the guidance set out in the Joint Housing Strategy and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

b) Require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multi-unit residential development in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective. The Statement of Housing Mix should include proposals for the provision of suitable housing for older people and the disabled in the area.

Objective HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land (Fig. 7):

Sets out the new density categories in the Plan and Table 4.1 (Fig 8) sets out the new tiered density approach recommended to respond to the diverse settlement scales within the County’s hierarchy:

County Development Plan Objective HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land			
	Min Net Density	Max Net Density	Comment
Medium B	20	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normally applicable to lands in the suburban/greenfield lands of the smaller towns <5,000 population and key villages as part of sequential development. In larger towns with a population >5,000 or planned to grow >5,000 population, may be applicable in a limited instance (outside Metropolitan Cork) for edge of centre sites and sensitive sites with difficult topography, heritage constraints to allow for a broader typology within the urban envelope.

Figure 7: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Table 4.1: Settlement Density Location Guide					
Settlement Type	Settlement	High (50 units/ha+)	Medium A (30-50 units/ha)	Medium B (20-35 units/ha)	Medium C (5-20 units/ ha)
Other Large Towns (1,500 – 5,000 population)	Bantry Kanturk Millstreet Dunmanway Skibbereen Macroom Mitchelstown			Generally applicable for future development on edge of centre sites.	Applicable in a limited amount of circumstances not exceeding 20% of the new housing requirements as an alternative to one off housing.

Figure 8: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Objective WM 11-10: Surface Water, SuDS and Water Sensitive Urban Design:

- a) Require that all new developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Efforts should be taken to limit the extent of hard surfacing and impermeable paving.
- b) Encourage the application of a Water Sensitive Urban Design approach in the design of new development or other urban interventions. Opportunities to contribute to, protect or re-enforce existing green infrastructure corridors or assets should be maximised.
- c) Optimise and maximise the application of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate flood risk, enhance biodiversity, protect and enhance visual and recreational amenity; all in the most innovative and creative manner appropriate and in accordance with best practices. Proposals should demonstrate that due consideration has been given to nature-based solutions in the first instance in arriving at the preferred SuDS solution for any development.

Objective TM 12-9: Parking:

Secure the appropriate delivery of car parking and bicycle spaces and facilities in line with the Standards set out in Section 12.24 of this document:

Table 12.6 of the CDP (Fig. 9) outlines the maximum provision for car parking in residential developments as 2 spaces per dwelling unit and 1.25 spaces per apartment.

Table 12.6: Car Parking Requirements for New Developments (Maximum per sq. m.)	
Development Type	Parking Provision Requirement
Residential: Dwelling houses	2 spaces per dwelling unit
Residential: Apartments	1.25 spaces per apartment unit

Figure 9: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Table 12.8 of the CDP (Fig. 10) outlines the minimum cycle parking provision for residential development as 1 space per bedroom for apartments with an addition space per 2 units for short stay (visitor) parking and 1.2 spaces per house.

Table 12.8: Cycle parking for residential development (Minimum)		
Residential Development type	1 long stay parking space per:	1 short stay (visitor) parking space per:
Apartments	1 bedroom	2 units
Houses	1 unit	5 units

Figure 10: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Objective TM 12-12: EV Charging:

All residential development should be constructed to be capable of accommodating future charging points as required within the curtilage of the dwelling where possible.

Objective GI 14-3: Green Infrastructure and Development:

a) Require new development and redevelopment proposals, to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green and blue infrastructure of the local area in terms of the design, layout and landscaping of development proposals.

b) Require all development to submit a green infrastructure statement outlining how the proposal contributes to green and blue infrastructure both within its environs as well as within the wider settlement or rural area. Larger

developments (multiple residential developments including Part 8 applications, retail, industrial, mineral extraction, etc) will be expected to prepare a Landscape/ Green (and Blue) Infrastructure Plan including a Landscape Design Rationale. This Plan should identify environmental assets and include proposals which protect, manage and develop green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner.

Objective GI 14-6: Public/Private Open Space Provision:

a) Public Open Space within Residential Development shall be provided in accordance with the standards contained in Cork County Council's Interim Recreation & Amenity Policy (2019) and any successor policy, the "Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" and "Making Places: a design guide for residential estate development. Cork County Council Planning Guidance and Standards Series Number 2".

b) Promote the provision of high quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open space and promote linking of new open spaces with existing spaces to form a green infrastructure network.

c) Apply the standards for private open space provision contained in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG 2009) and Cork County Council's Design Guidelines for Residential Estate Development. With regard to apartment developments, the guidelines on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments will apply.

Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development:

Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by:

b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments;

c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments;

d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;

3.2 Design Standards for New Apartments 2022

The Design Standards for New Apartments 2022 notes that apartments continue to be an increasingly common form of housing in Ireland's urban areas. The Guidelines note that the average national household size is decreasing and that apartments can provide appropriate housing for smaller households.

Section 2.4 identifies three different locations which are considered suitable for apartment development. Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations, such as the subject site, are considered generally suitable for residential developments that will include a minority of apartments at low-medium densities.

The Guidelines outline Specific Planning Policy Requirements to guide the development of apartments. SPPR 3 sets out the minimum floor area for one-bed apartments as 45m² and 73m² for two-bed apartments. SPPR 4 requires a minimum of 50% dual aspect units in suburban or intermediate locations. SPPR 5 stipulates a minimum of 2.7m floor to ceiling heights in ground floor apartments.

Section 4 outlines guidance concerning communal facilities in apartments, with access, refuse storage, bike and car parking and communal amenity space having relevance to the subject proposal.

Appendix 1 of the Guidelines sets out minimum floor areas and standards for apartment development.

3.3 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The holistic approach of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets to understand and design the streets as part of the open space network was applied to the proposed development with the intention to promote sustainable transport and encourage social activities and active neighbourhoods.

The four design principles of DMURS are:

- Connected Networks
- Multi-Functional Streets
- Pedestrian Focus
- Multidisciplinary Approach

These design principles have been integrated into the design of the proposed scheme.

3.4 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities were published in January 2024.

The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied.

The standards set out in the Guidelines have been incorporated into the design of the proposed scheme, including:

- Medium Density B has been revised to 25-35dph from 25-40dph.
- Minimum separation distance reduced from 22 m to 16m at rear and side elevations of units.
- Bicycle parking quantity standards require a minimum of 1 space per bedroom where housing units do not have ground level open space, or that have smaller terraces.

The Guidelines note that any deviation from the revised standards shall be at the discretion of the planning authority and shall be justified with respect to factors such as location and the quality of facilities proposed etc.

4. Planning History

The site is located in the townland of Liscahane, south of Millstreet Town Centre, Co. Cork. There are no previous planning applications related to the site, as shown in Fig. 11, which was extracted from the Cork County Online Planning Register, with the approximate location of the subject site marked in red. Whilst the majority of applications in the wider Millstreet area include one-off houses or extensions and renovations to existing buildings, a number of relevant applications are provided in Fig. 12.

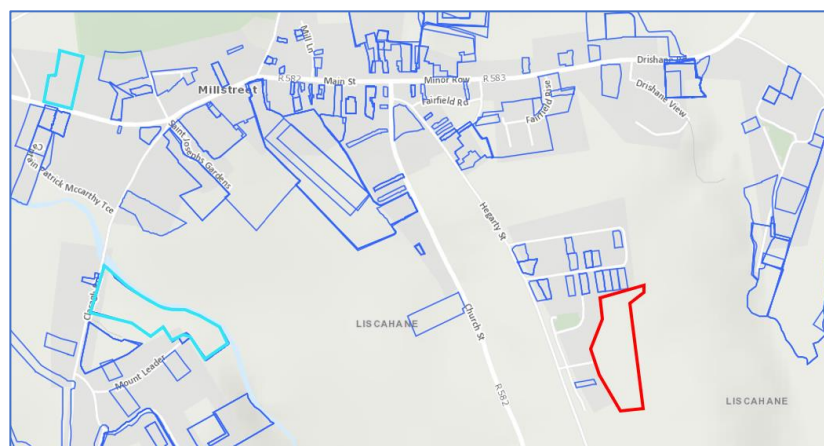


Figure 11: Extract from Online Planning Register, approximate locations of relevant planning applications in blue

No.	Planning Ref	Description	Location	Status
1	19/4070	Construction of 14 residential units with vehicular entrance. An NIS was submitted with the application.	Mountleader, Millstreet	Granted 17/01/2020
2	20/4722	Conversion of existing convent into 7 2-bed residential units and construction of 3 new 2-bed units. An NIS was submitted with the application.	Comlogane	Granted 08/20/2021
3	20/5904	A new public footpath from Drishane Castle entrance to Cool crossroads.	Drishane More	Granted 27/10/2020

Figure 12: Table showing relevant nearby planning applications.

The CDP provides for the development of 150 new units within the period of the plan. The cumulative permissions are for 24 new units with the addition of the proposed 26 new units, totalling 50 units. However, the previous permissions were granted prior to the adoption of the current CDP and can be discounted. The proposed new development, therefore, contributes positively towards meeting the housing target of the CDP.

5. Assessment of Proposal

The proposed development is considered in compliance with all relevant planning policies at national, regional and local levels.

5.1 Planning Policy

The proposed development provides for a range of housing options within the development boundary of Millstreet, within an area zoned as *'existing residential'* and in accordance with the principle of sequential development. The modest development will contribute positively towards the housing target for the provision of 150 new homes within the period of the current development plan, comprising a range of social housing, with housing typologies catering for a variety of needs that will create a diverse and inclusive community.

5.2 Layout & Design

The overall approach of the proposed housing development at Pairc Chatháin will be an aesthetically pleasing and highly efficient new residential scheme that will provide homes in a location close to the centre of Millstreet, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon

footprint. The proposed infill development will benefit from excellent walking connectivity to the town centre (see Fig. 3), an approximate 10-minute walk, with links to public transport, employment areas, recreation, community facilities and schools.



Figure 13: Extract of Landscaping Plan

The proposed layout (Fig. 13) makes the most efficient use of the subject site, sloping to the west and north with levels ranging from 147.9m OD in the centre east of the site to 142.6m OD to the entrance on the west boundary. The development comprises of two parcels of mixed residential typologies overlooking a central green amenity space. Two 2-storey apartment blocks face onto the central green space providing passive surveillance. Terraced housing fronts onto the public road over-looking the green amenity space to the front of the development. Two semi-detached houses to the north provide passive surveillance over the green space to the north of the site. The layout provides permeability throughout, green amenity spaces and connectivity to the existing Old Coach Ave/Old Court Drive development.

A 6m wide local road serves the scheme with separate pedestrian infrastructure and shared surface spaces providing direct access to the housing units. The shared surfaced areas incorporate parking areas, a roadside pedestrian path, lighting, bin storage and landscaping.

The proposed development will be set within landscaped public and private amenity space. This will include passive open space distributed through the scheme and active spaces including a range of age-appropriate equipment. Nature-based sustainable urban drainage systems will be employed throughout the scheme, incorporated within the landscaped public amenity and private open spaces that will provide surface water drainage for the site and provide opportunity for biodiversity net gain. The Landscaping Plan is supported by a SUDs plan and a Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects.

5.2.2 Housing Design

The proposed dwellings offer a broad range of accommodation choice, in terms of both unit size and configuration, which reflects the current trends for smaller sized 1- and 2 – bed units. Open spaces are designed to provide facilities for all age groups and support outdoor activities. The housing mix will comprise 3-bed semi-detached houses, two-bed townhouses and one-bed apartments (Fig.14 & 15). It is proposed to introduce through this application a wider range of dwelling types and sizes to encourage a more diverse population and permit a greater level of mobility within the local area and encourage aging in place. Universal design ground floor apartments are provided for mobility restricted residents. Residential units meet or exceed the standards set out the County Development Plan and the relevant Guidelines. Compliance with these standards is demonstrated in the Housing Quality Assessment that accompanies this application.

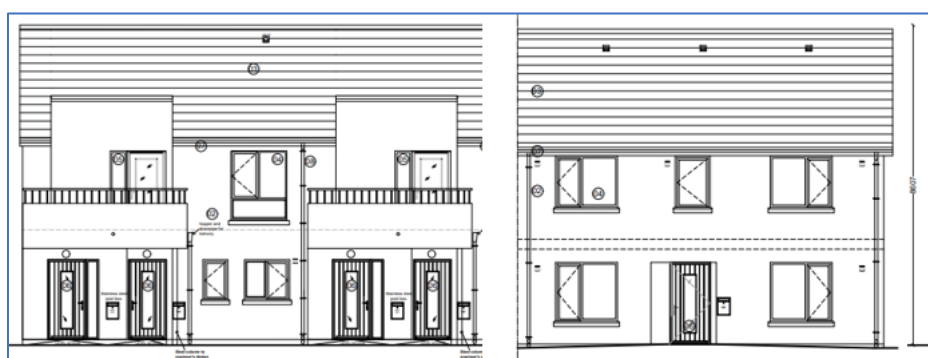


Figure 14: Front elevation of Type A (left) apartments and Type C (right) semi-detached.

All apartments will be provided with a private outdoor amenity space of either a garden or balcony space. First floor balconies will provide a recessed porch and lobby area for both the own-door ground floor and first floor entrances. The design and layout of the proposed development will meet the requirements of all relevant documents, in particular Part M of the Technical Guidance Documents which deal with accessibility and inclusivity. In this regard, the design of the proposed development is also guided by the principles of universal design. The proposed Type C 3-bed dwellings have further been designed to be adaptable and to respond to the potential changing needs over their lifetime. The units are strategically designed to allow the owner to extend into the attic and/or to the rear if they so require.

Unit Type	Quantity	Description	Bed Spaces
A	8	Apartment (ground and first floor)	2
B	16	2-storey Townhouses	4
C	2	2 Storey Semi-detached houses	5

Figure 15: Proposed housing mix.

A restrained palette and selection of material finishes have been selected to ensure a cohesive, understated and robust aesthetic. The proposed facades will consist of pale wet dash render finish. Roofs will be finished with a blue/black fibre cement tile. Front doors will be composite engineered with a hardwood finish and windows and rear doors will be of uPVC. The rainwater goods will also be of dark uPVC. First floor apartment balconies will include painted galvanised steel railings.

All buildings are designed and sited to provide passive surveillance of the public realm, including streets, paths and open spaces. The residential units have been orientated to ensure sufficient daylight into the rooms whilst also minimising overlooking between parcels.

5.2.3 Boundary Treatments

A Boundary Treatment Plan, prepared by Cork County Council accompanies this application.

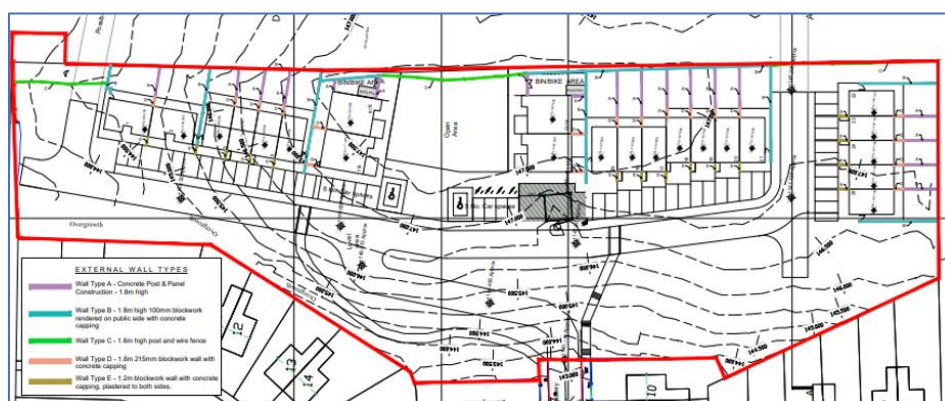


Figure 16: Boundary Treatments

The boundary treatment for the proposed development comprises a mixture of soft and hard landscaping features, including the establishment of a double-row mixed native species hedgerow to the northern boundary.

The existing hedgerow will remain in place along most of the eastern boundary. A concrete post and panel fence is proposed where the hedgerow is proposed to be removed to provide adequate private rear open space to the dwelling units to the north of the site. A 1.8m rendered block wall is proposed where the bin and bike store meets the hedgerow to provide security from the east and the wall extends to the north slightly between the hedgerow and the private rear open space allocated to the northeastern most apartment. A 1.8m post and wire fence will provide a perimeter boundary between the hedgerow and the central public open space, which will revert to a 1.8m concrete rendered block wall as the boundary of gardens meets the existing hedgerow to the eastern boundary adjacent to the southeastern dwelling units. A 1.8 post and wire fence is proposed along the eastern edge of the southeast and southern portion of the existing hedgerow, with a 1.8m rendered block wall where the rear private open space of the southeastern most unit meets the hedgerow. Mixed shrub planting interspersed with native species solitary trees will provide a boundary to the western boundary of the development.

Within the built environment, internal 1.8m high walls comprising a mixture of concrete post and panel and rendered and capped blockwork construction will provide privacy between adjoining private rear open space, with 1.2m high rendered and capped blockwork walls will provide definition to open spaces to the front of units whilst maintaining visibility over public open spaces.

5.3 Bike and Bin Storage

Where direct access to rear gardens is provided by, bike and bin storage can be provided by future residents to the rear of each housing unit. On site bin stores will be provided for mid-terrace units. Communal bin and bike stores will be provided for apartments, which will also provide bike storage for mid-terrace units where there is no rear access.



Figure 17: Communal Bin and Bike storage areas (magenta) and visitor bike parking (yellow).

A total of 26 bike parking spaces have been provided within the development, including 17 secure spaces for the use by residents without rear access or sufficient private space for the onsite storage of bikes. The proposed quantum of bike parking spaces includes one space for 1-bed apartments and 2-bed mid-terrace townhouses and two spaces for one mid-terrace 3-bed house. An additional 9 parking spaces are provided for visitor parking. The quantum of bike parking spaces has considered both the minimum standards set out in the CDP and the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines as well as the peripheral location of the settlement of Coachford. Given the rural location of the village of Millstreet and the limited cycling infrastructure, we consider the quantum of bike parking provided to be appropriate.

The storage areas located to the west of the site will also provide storage space for bins. Communal bin storage has been calculated to provide 1000l for the one-bed apartments and 1,700l for the two-bed apartments. The

calculations are based on the British Standard (5906:2005). The bin and bike stores are located within the layout to benefit from passive surveillance, aesthetic considerations and to ensure that they do not impede on any traffic sightlines.

5.4 Recreation, Amenity, Open Space & Biodiversity

The site is currently in agricultural use with the boundary defined by mature hedgerows, trees and hedgerows. The landscape design has, where possible been guided and influenced by the topography, the Ecology and Arboricultural appraisal of the lands and surrounding environment.

Native plant material shall be considered for the scheme, in part, to improve the overall biodiversity of the site. the inclusion of pollinator plants as part of the species mix will be a focused element of the planting palette.

A natural attenuation area will provide a nature-based landscaped SUDs measure to hold surface water during rain events and enhance biodiversity net gain attracting a range of fauna species including insects, birds and bats. The attenuation area will comprise a shallow sloped depression of c 0.3m of naturalised meadow benefiting from passive surveillance from the northernmost dwelling unit.



Figure 16: Extract from Landscaping Plan.

The provision of permeability and improved overall pedestrian movement is one of the core principles of the site layout design. This core principle is coupled with the design objective to provide designed landscape amenity areas which offer comfort, passive supervision, ease of access in terms of the varying age groups and levels of mobility and a safe amenity space for all end users. The central amenity space (Fig.15) includes one long bench seat, one short bench seat and one picnic set (see Landscape Design Report prepared by DRLA for details) to foster social interaction, active aging and enhanced walkability of the amenity open space. A natural play area of level grass includes the provision of locally sourced boulders and a honed tree truck to promote inclusive and exploratory play, yet also suitable as hangout elements for teenagers. A variety of trees, pollinator-friendly shrubs and perennial planting will make for a diverse and engaging play environment.

5.4.4 Biodiversity, Recreation & Amenity Approach

Objective BE 15-6(b) and (c) of the County Development Plan relates to Biodiversity and New Development and encourages the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments and the use of native trees and particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments.

In accordance with this objective and as shown on the Landscape Plan prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects, the existing hedgerows along the site boundaries will be retained and protected as far as possible and an overall promotion of biodiversity net gain has been adopted to off-set necessary removal of hedgerows. All trees that are being retained will be maintained and will be protected appropriately during the construction and operational phases of the development. In addition to planting measures, the Landscaping design proposes a bat, bird and bee box initiative to promote a thriving ecosystem. Please refer to the Landscaping package for further details of all landscaping measures.

The Landscape Plan includes a number of biodiversity features to enhance the open space and which incorporate a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions (SUDs). These include features such as rain gardens and grass bioswales adjacent to paved areas, an attenuation pond, floral grass and wild meadow areas, pollinator friendly planting (planted in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan guidelines) and solitary native trees (Fig 17). The area around the existing ESB substation is to be retained in grasscrete surface. Grass areas will be provided to the front of dwelling units can be plated out by future residents. The attenuation pond will comprise two shallow slopes and two landings, allowing for different species of flora and fauna.



Figure 17: Examples of proposed nature-based SUDs with pollinator/wildflower species

A Green Infrastructure Statement prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects and an Appropriate Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants have assessed any existing habitats and includes the implementation of appropriate mitigation to ensure that there is an overall net biodiversity gain. These reports have been used to inform the landscape and amenity strategy for the development.

In addition to the biodiversity considerations, the Landscaping Plan also sets out the proposed strategy to the public amenity spaces that include natural play areas and a level grass area for more structured sports play. The open

spaces area designed as inclusive spaces that cater for a range of activities and age groups. Open spaces are enhanced with the integration of tree planting and flowering pollinator planting.

5.4.5 Amenity/Open Space

In total, 0.118ha of public open space is provided within the development, equating to 12% useable open space. As part of the amenity provision, it is proposed to provide a series of open spaces, a 3m pedestrian and bicycle trail and a biodiversity reservation area.

5.4.6 Entrance Treatment

The arrival space of the housing scheme comprises an entrance road and three separate footpaths. These comprise a 2m sloping path to the north and a 1.2 m wide path to the south of the scheme. A central path consists of five flights of 6 steps with handrail, safety nosing and tactile paving in compliance with Part M. All approaches to the scheme arrive through open space of naturalised wildflower meadow, interspersed with native solitary trees and pollinator-friendly shrub and perennial beds.



Figure 18: Extract from the Landscaping Development Package showing entry features.

5.5 Traffic and Access

The proposed development is accessed via a single vehicular access point from the L5229-0 Drishane Road onto the local road serving the Old Court Estate, which are is back from the main road.

The Engineering Report prepared by Walsh Design Group notes that it is proposed to use a road width of 6.0m throughout the development as most parking spaces/driveways are perpendicular to the carriageway. All roads shall be served by at least one footpath with a minimum width of 2.0m and all estate roads shall have a sign posted speed limit of 30km/h.

Vehicular routes through the site will be calmed through various design measures including alignment, to reduce traffic speeds, with horizontal and vertical deflections introduced as required. A design speed limit of 30 km/hour has been applied throughout the development in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

5.6 Parking Requirements

In line with the standards set out in the CDP and revised within the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines, a total of 47 car parking spaces are provided, including two designated for limited mobility use. The allocation of parking spaces for housing and apartment units are outlined in Fig. 19

Vehicle Parking Spaces			
Unit Type	No. of Units	Parking per Unit	Total Parking
3-bed 2-storey House	2	2	4
2-bed 2-storey House	16	2	24
1-bed apartment	8	1.25	10
Total Private parking spaces	26		38
Visitor Spaces			9

Figure 19: Proposed parking allocations

5.7 Water & Wastewater

Pre-connection enquiries were submitted to Uisce Éireann (UE) to assess the feasibility of providing water supply and wastewater connections to the site. UE have issued a confirmation of feasibility for both, noting that the water supply connection can be facilitated without any upgrade after the third quarter of 2023. Confirmation of feasibility letters are included in Appendix C of the Engineering Report.

A number of SUDs have been incorporated into the design of the housing scheme to address surface water run-off. The SUDs measures comply with the guidance set out in the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual. SUDs measures include the installation of 300l water butts within the private open space of each unit that has a rear garden. Water butts will collect run-off from the downpipes and will be fitted with a tap for domestic non-potable water uses. Rain garden planters are also proposed for rear gardens that will reduce the velocity of surface water run-off in rain events.

Further SUDs measures will be incorporated into the public realm of the development. These include the provision of permeable paving for all car parking spaces, allowing surface water to soak into the subsoil and ground water, rather than leaving the site via the sewer network.

In addition, it is proposed that rain garden bio swales and tree pits are located alongside areas of hard surfacing where rainwater can be diverted. The bio swales will be located over perforated drainage pipes, allowing water penetration deep into the soil. The bioretention tree pits offer run-off

interception, filtration and water storage as well as other benefits including the promotion of biodiversity and evapotranspiration. An attenuation pond within the open green amenity space provides additional storage capacity to hold rainwater run-off during and following rain events until it can naturally percolate to ground.

The overall strategy to green and blue infrastructure, including SUDs measures are outlined in the Green Infrastructure Statement and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Plan, both prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects.

6. Appropriate Assessment

According to the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), member states are required to designate areas in order to protect priority habitats and species. These sites are known as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) respectively. Collectively, these sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. An “Appropriate Assessment” (AA), means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge of the potential impacts of a plan, on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the development where necessary of measures to preclude negative effects. The impact assessment must include indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan considered, with any current or proposed activities, development or policies impacting on the site. All plans and projects should aim to identify any possible impacts early in the plan making process and then either alter the plan to avoid them or introduce mitigation measures to the point where no adverse impacts remain.

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon either individually or in combination with other plans or projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implication of the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provision of paragraph 4, the competent National Authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states;

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons or overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all

compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The AA screening report prepared by Flynn Furney concludes that the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European Site, in light of their conservation objectives. The report further notes that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

7. Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and current government and EU guidance, the Planning Authority must screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and decide whether the planning application for the proposed development does or does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Having regard to the nature, extent, and the characteristics of the likely impacts we consider that when screened in accordance with EU Screening Guidelines that the proposed development is not a project defined by Part 1 and Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as requiring an EIAR and would not warrant a sub threshold EIAR in accordance with Article 10 of the Regulations.

With regard to EIA requirements, the proposal is well below the mandatory EIAR threshold for residential developments of 500 units (which is the statutory test in this regard) and is also below the 10ha EIAR threshold for development within a built-up area. Any potential impact on the environment is likely to be confined to the immediate site area, is likely to be limited in magnitude and the site is not one of special environmental sensitivity.

A formal EIA screening has been carried out by McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants and is submitted as part of this application. Based on the findings of the EIA screening assessment, the proposed development does not require a mandatory EIA. With regards to the nature, extent and characteristics of the likely impacts for the construction and operational phase of the proposed development, the EIA screening considers that the proposed development will not give rise to any likely significant environmental effects and accordingly a sub-threshold EIA is not required.

8. Conclusion

The proposed Part 8 exempted development, Pairc Chatháin, Liscahane, Millstreet, will provide 26 much needed new residential dwellings to meet a mixture of housing solutions with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised infill site within the existing built footprint, zoned '*existing residential*' and in accordance with the principle of sequential development. The scheme has been carefully designed by a multidisciplinary team to ensure a high-quality development consistent with all the relevant national, regional and local policies. The development will positively contribute towards meeting the housing target for 150 new homes within the period of the current CDP. It will deliver a high-quality social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing urban environment and sensitive to the natural environment of the immediate surrounds, achieving a medium-high density housing that will help address the current housing shortages in a highly desirable key town in County Cork in an accessible location with all amenities, facilities and services within a short walking distance of the development.