



An
Bord
Pleanála

Record of Meeting ABP-305981-19

Description	416 no. residential units (245 no. houses and 171 no. apartments), creche and associated site works. Lands at Cornamagh, Clonbrusk and Coosan, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.		
Case Type	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request		
Date:	8 th January, 2020	Start Time	11:00am
Location	Offices of Westmeath County Council, Mullingar	End Time	12:15pm
Chairperson	Tom Rabbette	E.O.	Hannah Cullen

Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Joanna Kelly, Senior Planning Inspector
Hannah Cullen, Executive Officer

Representing Prospective Applicant:

Shane Walsh, MCORM Architects
Tony O'Reilly, MCORM Architects
Andrew McDermott, OCSC Engineers
Anthony Horan, OCSC Engineers
Loretto Gonzalez, OCSC Engineers
Alastair Ferrar, CSR Landscape Architects
Ronan Barrett, Prospective Applicant
David McNicholas, MKO (ecology)
Pamela Harty, MKO (planning)

Representing Planning Authority

Barry Kehoe, Director of Services Planning and Transportation
Cathaldus Hartin, Senior Planner
Yvonne Haughey, Executive Planner
Ciaran Martin, Acting Senior Executive Officer Housing

Damien Grennan, Senior Engineer Transportation
PJ Carey, Senior Executive Engineer Transportation
Alan Kelly, Senior Executive Engineer
Paul Hogan, Senior Executive Architect.

Introduction

The representatives of An Bord Pleanála (ABP) welcomed the prospective applicant, Planning Authority (PA) and introductions were made. The procedural matters relating to the meeting were as follows:

- The written record will be placed on the pre-application consultation file and will be made public, along with that file, should an application arise following the conclusion of this consultation process,
- ABP received a submission from the PA on 17th December, 2019, providing the records of consultations held pursuant to section 247 and its written opinion of considerations related to proper planning and sustainable development that may have a bearing on ABP's decision,
- The consultation meeting will not involve a merits-based assessment of the proposed development,
- The meeting will focus on key site-specific issues at strategic overview level, and whether the documents submitted require further consideration and/or amendment in order to constitute a reasonable basis for an application,
- Key considerations will be examined in the context of the statutory development plan for the area and section 28 Ministerial Guidelines where relevant,
- A reminder that neither the holding of a consultation or the forming of an opinion shall prejudice ABP or the PA concerned in relation to any other of their respective functions under the Planning Acts or any other enactments and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

The ABP representatives acknowledged the letter dated 19th November 2019, formally requesting pre-application consultations with ABP. Prospective applicant advised of the need to comply with definition of SHD as set out in the Act of 2016, in relation to thresholds of development. It was also noted that the Inspector dealing with the pre-application consultation request would be different to who would deal with the application when it was submitted. Recording of the meeting is prohibited.

Agenda

- 1. Development strategy for the site to include inter alia local planning policy provisions, urban design response, open space hierarchy/functionality, unit mix and type.**
- 2. Surface water management and flood risk to include AA considerations.**
- 3. Traffic and Transportation including DMURS and connections to adjoining lands.**
- 4. Any other matters**

1. Development strategy for the site to include inter alia local planning policy provisions, urban design response, open space hierarchy/functionality, unit mix and type.

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:

- Clarification if the LAP has been subsumed into the CDP.
- Comments referred to in the PA opinion in relation to urban design issues.
- Proposed cut and fill proposed for the site and proposed levels vis-à-vis existing levels and interface with public realm.
- Impact on existing residential amenity due to height impact.
- Why a 10-year permission for the development is being sought, has this been discussed with the planning authority?
- Lands omitted from the red-line boundary between the site and Rugby lands and clarity regarding intended future use.
- Concerns raised regarding significant number of apartments which are referred to as dual aspect however would not be considered as such.
- Clarity regarding timing of distributor road

PA Comments:

- The LAP has been subsumed with the Athlone Development Plan.
- Consider improvements to the orientation of the blocks.
- Overall happy with the layout
- Not too concerned with proposal for a 10 year permission, strong phasing plans will need to be included.
- Would prefer to see internalisation of balconies.
- Visual presentation of elevations is extremely important at the north and south of the site.
- Concern with slit windows proposed to units in the east.
- Consider height of apartments to Coosan Road excessive given levels of site at this location

Prospective Applicants response:

- Feel the height of the apartments are appropriate.
- The location of the 'open space' zoning influences the positioning of the units.
- Internal spine road has been moved slightly from that in the LAP to provide suitable frontage to this road.
- Dealing with a high amount of cut and fill on this particular site.
- The north aspect units are dual aspect and similar has been permitted previously by ABP, can review in light of comments.
- Mix of apartments and duplexes will be reconsidered.
- Need to balance efficiencies of the blocks with the aesthetics.
- Detailed feedback from the planning authority is appreciated.
- Proposing a 10 year scheme due to the market and infrastructure that is required to be delivered.
- A distributor road could be delivered at phase two or three.
- Balconies have been externalised due to cost control - can review in light of comments
- Demand for apartments in Athlone is not high.

- Undecided on the use of the residual land, possibility of connectivity opportunities or vehicle linkages. It is not intended to leave this land unused, will clarify before application is submitted.
- Brick will be used as a high quality elevational treatment.

Further ABP Comments:

- Consider the interface of buildings with the open space, including hierarchy and functionality of open space areas
- If there is any deviation from the heights as indicated in the LAP, justification should be provided having regard, inter alia, to national policy.
- The strategic housing process is designed to deliver fast-track housing, need to clarify why you are seeking a 10 year permission, what is being delivered in each phase and clarify when the distributor road is to be delivered.

Further PA Comments:

- More consideration to be given to the future residential amenities for future occupants.

Further Applicants Comments:

- We are working with the national height guidelines, can provide a justification for the proposed heights in the application.
- Will re-engage with the planning authority.

2. Surface water management and flood risk to include AA considerations.

ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:

- Comments contained in the PA opinion in respect of surface water management
- Whether the planning authority is satisfied with the proposed 5 litre per second discharge rate?
- Clarity of catchment areas and ability to cater for increased run-off.
- Consider any amendments in surface water management proposals in the AA screening report.

PA Comments:

- We are satisfied with the 5 litre per second discharge rate.

Prospective Applicants response:

- The watercourse currently naturally drains the lands, no issues are envisaged.
- SuDS strategy proposed does not increase the hydraulic load.
- Looking to adapt a 'no maintenance' regime in respect of surface water management.
- Proposal consistent with the SuDS manual and CIRIA guidance.
- Working alongside landscape and ecologist team as the aim is to promote aquatic life.

Further PA Comments:

- A site-specific safety and risk assessment study to be provided at application stage.

Further Applicants Comments:

- The requested reports can be provided at application stage.

Further ABP Comments:

- Ensure there is consistency in the application regarding surface water management details as there is no further information mechanism in SHD.
- Consider boundary treatment particular concerns raised by the PA in respect of proposed surface water features and risk to public safety.

3. Traffic and Transportation including DMURS and connections to adjoining lands.**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Clarity regarding the function of the indicative route to the north and whether it is to be a road or a street.
- Special contribution referred in the LAP in respect of the Cornamaddy underbridge.
- Special contribution in respect of public lighting as referred to in the PA opinion.
- Clarity regarding pedestrian connectivity to the west of the site with adjoining residential development.

PA Comments:

- Northern route will be a distributor road.
- Special contribution will be considered and will be discussed further with applicant.
- Contributions re lighting are sought to upgrade the public lighting along Coosan Road, no report received on lighting and not clear if applicant was providing same.
- Extensive conversations have taken place with the applicant, overall happy with the layout of the road.

Prospective Applicants response:

- The alignment of the road is dictated by the LAP.
- There is pedestrian connectivity proposed to north-west to promote use of open space
- There are further conversations that will be had with the planning authority to work out the final details.

Further PA Comments:

- A detailed junction layout to Coosan Road should be provided along with a mobility management plan at application stage.

Further ABP Comments:

- PA will be required to submit details including costings in respect of any special contribution to be paid. Advised to discuss further prior to making application.
- The onus is on the planning authority in relation to calculation of costs, there is no appeal process in SHD so ensure likely special contribution conditions are discussed and agreed if possible.
- Take on board any DMURS concerns raised in the planning authority's report.

4. Any other matters**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Comments in the planner's report re part V and excessive costs.
- It is noted an EIAR was submitted with the pre-application which has not been considered.

- Tree classification plan should be more legible at application stage.
- Report required identifying likely demand for school places likely to be generated and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand.
- Upsizing of the watermain to support the development, is the applicant in contact with Irish Water regarding upgrade works?

PA Comments:

- Possibility of increasing/relooking at 4 bed detached units, currently at 7%.
- Scope to include more family friendly homes to cater for all aspects.

Prospective Applicants response:

- We will look at the comments regarding part V.
- We can demonstrate the adaptability of the 3 bed homes at application stage as an alternative to 4 bed units.
- We are satisfied with the density of the site.
- We are going to respond to any issues arising in the planning authority's report and make sure to include all supporting documentation at application stage.
- We will work out the details with Irish Water at connection stage.

Conclusions:

The representatives of ABP emphasised the following:

- There should be no delay in making the planning application once the public notice has been published
- Sample notices, application form and procedures are available on the ABP website
- Irish Water would like prospective applicants to contact Irish Water at cdsdesignqa@water.ie **between the Pre-Application Consultation and Application stages**, to confirm details of their proposed development and their proposed design.
- The email address to which applicants should send their **applications** to Irish Water as a prescribed body is spatialplanning@water.ie

Tom Rabbette,
Assistant Director of Planning
January, 2020