



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Record of Meeting ABP-305195-19

<b>Case Reference / Description</b>	350 no. residential units (185 no. houses, 165 no. apartments), creche and associated site works. Lands to the south of Old Dublin Road and west of Rosshill Road, Co. Galway.		
<b>Case Type</b>	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request		
<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	<b>Start Time</b>	11:00 a.m.
<b>Location</b>	Offices of Galway City Council	<b>End Time</b>	12:45 p.m.
<b>Chairperson</b>	Tom Rabbette	<b>Executive Officer</b>	Ciaran Hand

### Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Stephen Rhys Thomas, Senior Planning Inspector
Ciaran Hand, Executive Officer

### Representing Prospective Applicant:

Meabhann Crowe, MKO, Planning Consultant
Brendan Heaney, Tobin Consulting Engineers, Project Engineer
Keith Mitchell, CSR, Landscape Architect & Arborist
Barry Duffy, Director Alber Homes, Developer
Matt Merrick, Director Alber Homes, Developer
Colm Ryan, MKO, Planning Consultant
Anne Carey, Archaeological & Historic Buildings Consultant, Project Archaeologist
Michael Geraghty, Tobin Consulting Engineers, Project Engineer
John O' Neill, O'Neill O' Malley Ltd, Project Architect
John O' Malley, O'Neill O' Malley Ltd, Project Architect
Richard Daly, Tobin Consulting Engineers, Project Engineer

## Representing Planning Authority

Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner
Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Diane Egan, Executive Planner
Susan Loughnane, Executive Engineer Transportation
Theo McLoughlin, Executive Engineer Transportation
Stephen Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Engineer
Frank Clancy, Senior Executive Engineer Water Services

### 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 12<sup>th</sup> September 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 19<sup>th</sup> August 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. Residential Density – local policy provisions and core strategy**
- 2. Sustainable Transport – public transport, cycling and walking**
- 3. Urban Design and Layout – setting, topography and hierarchy of open space**
- 4. Natural and cultural heritage**
- 5. Pump Station Upgrades (Merlin Park No. 1) – timeframe and IW engagement**
- 6. Any other matters**

### **1. Residential Density – local policy provisions and core strategy**

#### **ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- The overall rationale for the proposed density at this location in the context of the Development Plan objective for low density residential development.
- Comments were sought from the planning authority in relation to their core strategy and the upcoming Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).
- Plot ratio or residential density as the main concern, or both?

#### **Planning Authority's comments:**

- The site is located on lands subject to Low Density Residential (LDR) Zoning but with a slightly higher residential density than immediate surroundings, the previous permission on the site illustrates this.
- The location is acknowledged as a transition zone to the rural and coastal area.
- There is a legacy of trees on the site and a previous recreational use, par three golf course.
- There is capacity in the core strategy to achieve growth in accordance with the Draft RSES with the current zonings in the development plan. The RSES target is 35 units per hectare across residential zonings.
- The Residential (R) zoning target is 35 units per hectare, LDR zoning envisages less than this and there is a preference for a plot ratio of 0.37:1
- To be clear, the proposed plot ratio and density are both material contraventions of the development plan.

#### **Prospective Applicant's response:**

- Zoning is residential and therefore the housing is in accordance with SHD can be proposed for the lands. The overall core strategy is for 850 units on LDR lands and this proposal falls well below that.
- In the LDR zoning the plot ratio is 0.2:1, the proposal is for 0.37:1
- There is no material contravention of zoning, but there is a material contravention of the plot ratio, that is an objective of the plan.

#### **Further ABP comments:**

- Submit a robust rationale for the proposed development and clearly explain if the proposed density and plot ratio are material contraventions.

### **2. Sustainable Transport – public transport, cycling and walking**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- Some of the documentation submitted illustrated a possible future train station on the site, adjacent to the railway. Have Irish Rail been approached and are there any future plans for railway stations in the Galway Area?
- Explain what forms of sustainable transport will be available to future residents, given the number of car parking spaces proposed and the lack of good pedestrian and cycle facilities.

**Planning Authority's comments:**

- A train station is not in the Galway Transport Strategy, a bus stop adjacent to the site is not currently in use.
- The Old Dublin Road is not part of the 5 major roads proposals in Galway.
- Cycle parking on the site is not well planned across the site, greater detail regarding cycle parking is required.
- There are low quality footpaths to the Dublin Road.
- More detail is required regarding the ramped access from the Old Dublin Road, detailed cross sections should be submitted.
- There needs to be high quality cycle and walking connections to the Dublin Road.

**Prospective Applicant's response:**

- The bus stop on the Dublin Road is 1.2 km away from the site about a 10-minute walk. Footpaths are in place along the Old Dublin Road. Pedestrian connectivity to the Dublin road is good.
- The Galway Transport Strategy states that there is to be a bus lane both ways and cycle paths on the main Dublin Road.
- The rationale for cycle parking is that it's based on the locations and proximity to apartments.
- There is provision for a greenway along the coast and this has been accommodated within the site.
- There is ramped access with a dedicated footpath on the northern end of the site.

**Further ABP comments:**

- In relation to the Dublin Road ensure future proofing on this proposed development
- A report should show sustainable transport alternatives, such as walking, cycling and public transport. The report should include an assessment of city bound traffic as well as other commuting patterns that might originate from this site.

**3. Urban Design and Layout – setting, topography and hierarchy of open space****ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- The overall urban design for the site, in the context of the existing site features and the resultant landscape layout.
- The value of retaining on site features, such as the farm building ruins and also reassessing the importance of the topography of the site. The documentation did not fully address the unique qualities of the site in terms of landscape features such as trees and topography.

- Open spaces should be overlooked and well supervised if they are to be successful.
- More information is required in relation to the design of apartments and gable end houses, elevation treatments and opportunities for overlooking should be explored.

**Planning Authority's comments:**

- Open spaces and the level of surveillance is a concern and has not been adequately addressed in drawings.
- Woodland is residual space in the landscape design masterplan.
- A woodland trail does not seem feasible in its current form.
- There is a lot of uniformity on the site and no legibility in terms of the definition of spaces and placemaking.

**Prospective Applicant's response:**

- The tree survey shows that the western boundary row contains the best trees and these have been integrated into the landscape masterplan.
- An effort was made to prioritise the quality of trees over the quantity of trees retained.
- There are character areas and a hierarchy of spaces throughout the site as demonstrated in the masterplan.
- Native woodland will be added to the continuous woodland off the site.
- All spaces are overlooked by apartments and by houses that gable onto open spaces with front elevations. There is passive supervision at the northern perimeter of the site, houses have been designed to overlook these spaces. A trail will be created with active amenity uses.
- Two to three of the cul-de-sacs are connected by footpaths and cycleways.

**Further ABP comments:**

- Ensure more of a site-specific design
- Provide detail of how residential units overlook open spaces.

#### **4. Natural and cultural heritage**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- The site is located close and adjacent to an SAC and SPA.
- There is a folly to the south of the site, recorded on the RPS and a designated national monument.
- The farmyard enclosure has some interesting buildings, but they appear not to form any part of the landscape design.

**Planning Authority's comments:**

- There is a buffer zone of interest around the folly site for referral purposes.
- Existing structures and landscape forms on site could be used to create a sense of place.

**Prospective Applicant's response:**

- An EIAR will be prepared for the proposed development.

- The farmyard is linked to Rosshill House and the folly to the south is a recorded monument. In terms of incorporating the folly into the overall design, it is noted that the folly is a rural setting and under different ownership.
- Rosshill House is not a protected structure and nor is the probable out farm buildings on the site. The farm buildings contain a silage pit and two overgrown gables of interest, one with a simple dovecote arrangement.
- It would be difficult to retain the farmland complex in its current form, but more onsite recording is required.

**Further ABP comments:**

- A detailed conservation report should be prepared in order to answer questions that might arise: such as, how the overall urban design and landscape masterplan approach chose not to integrate these features.

**5. Pump Station Upgrades (Merlin Park No. 1) – timeframe and IW engagement**

**ABP sought further elaboration/discussion on:**

- The proposed upgrades in relation to the foul water network in the area and what third party consents or statutory consents would be necessary.

**Planning Authority's comments:**

- Merlin Park storage and pumping station is shared between county and city councils
- Increased storage is required which will provide a longer pump time.
- This is the same pump station for Ardaun, a large development area subject to an LAP.
- In terms of third party consents, to allow an upgrade on the lands, Department of Health will transfer to Galway City Council and then to Irish Water.
- An underground tank could be required and planning permission may be required.

**Prospective Applicant's response:**

- Residential units will be developed on a phased connection basis.
- Irish Water have stated upgrade works are required.
- Phasing and timeframes will be detailed and agreed with IW.

**Further ABP comments:**

- Liaise with IW and outline the nature of proposed upgrades and detail whether third party or statutory consents are required.
- Any works requiring planning permission could mean that an application could be considered premature pending the delivery of infrastructure.

**6. Any Other Matters**

**ABP comments:**

- Have regard to EIAR regulations

**Planning Authority's comments:**

- No comments

**Applicants Comments:**

- No comments

**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](mailto: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](mailto:spatialplanning@water.ie)

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Tom Rabbette  
Assistant Director of Planning  
October 2019