



Case Reference / Description	242 no. residential units (86 no. houses, 156 no. apartments), childcare facility and associated site works. Old Slane Road, Mell/Tullyallen, Drogheda, Co. Louth.		
Case Type	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request		
Date:	22 nd May, 2020	Start Time	2.30 pm
Location	Via Microsoft Teams	End Time	4.45 pm
Chairperson	Tom Rabbette	Senior Executive Officer	Cora Cunningham

Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Stephen Rhys Thomas, Senior Planning Inspector
Cora Cunningham, Senior Executive Officer

Representing Prospective Applicant:

Stephen Ward, Stephen Ward Town Planning and Development Consultants Limited
Judith Horgan, Stephen Ward Town Planning and Development Consultants Limited
Reuben Kirrane, Denis Williams Design Services
Vincent Osbourne, Denis Williams Design Services
Jason Walsh, Atkins

Representing Planning Authority

Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner
Patricia Hughes, Senior Executive Planner
Frank McGee, Senior Executive Engineer
Aoife Lawlor, Senior Executive Officer

Introduction

The representatives of An Bord Pleanála (ABP) welcomed the prospective applicant, Planning Authority (PA) via Microsoft Teams having regard to the Covid-19 virus.

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 28th April, 2020 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 12th March, 2020 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 Plan Context - Core Strategy and other objectives.**
- 2. Site Linkages – improvements to the local road network and access from R168**
- 3. Landscape Strategy – landscape design and open space usability**
- 4. Unit Distribution and Phasing**
- 5. Environmental, Natural and Cultural factors**
- 6. Any other matters.**

1. Development Plan Context - Core Strategy and other objectives.

ABP Comments:

- Have regard to the multi-layered planning context in relation to the proposed development including the RSES for the area, clarity is required in relation to core strategy, phasing and local objectives.
- It is noted that a Statement of Material Contravention is to be submitted with application and a question over the requirement for an area masterplan.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- High degree of agreement between PA and prospective applicant in relation to the proposed development.
- The PA acknowledge that the site is zoned for residential development.
- Drogheda and Environs Core Strategy, even though development has not taken place on Phase 1 lands, justification provided for why these lands be developed ahead of Phase 1 lands.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- PA support and have no objection to development of these lands.
- Existing plans for the area are outdated and do not align with NPF.
- The proposed site is not included in the need for a masterplan, PA Opinion references 2 plans both of which have expired.
- Material Contravention of proposed development relates to Core Strategy only.

2. Site Linkages – improvements to the local road network and access from R168

ABP Comments:

- Address the documentation necessary in relation to improvements proposed on Slane Road, such as junction improvements proposed, pedestrian and cyclist linkages proposed, footpath and public realm improvements outside of proposed site. Submit cross sections through all parts of proposed site to describe in detail works proposed.
- Describe in detail the provision of pedestrian access onto the R168 to bus stops and retail park
- Significant works are proposed along roads, these considerations should include any AA issues, impacts on ecology etc.
- Prospective applicant should be satisfied that all works proposed to the road can be carried out in the public domain.
- Consider if some of the works are ancillary to the SHD application.
- Have regard to providing sustainable modes of transport.
- Consideration of provision of temporary pedestrian/cycle connection from proposed development to retail park.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- Linkage through and around site is an important factor and has been designed into the scheme.
- PA have raised concerns in relation to footpaths on R168, the prospective applicant has had regard to the position of footpath in relation to existing structures along road.

Footpath located 2-3 metres from hard shoulder, risk assessment carried out. Retail park should be considered at local neighbourhood centre.

- Cycleway will form part of the route to the town centre.
- New pedestrian infrastructure will reduce speed limit on Slane Road, PA do not want this road to be heavily trafficked. Proposed footpath over narrow bridge will have to create one-way system.
- Risk assessment carried out in relation to junction improvement at R168, junction assessed in its current form, capacity can accommodate development traffic. The reconfigured junction and improvements will not impact on traffic, some elements have been carried out already by PA, aim to control speeds at junctions.
- Prospective applicant will consider the attachment of a special contribution condition in positive light to ensure improvement works can happen.
- No issue with providing additional cross sections and will review in conjunction with PA and will provide additional information in application including achieving works within public realm. Will discuss Slane Road improvements further with PA.
- Ecologist involved in scheme, will ensure all ecology issues considered prior to lodging application.
- Prospective applicant can provide significant setback for future upgrade along the R168. However, there is no objective in Development Plan to upgrade road to dual carriageway.
- Pedestrian access into retail park may land in service areas at back of units and this is not workable.
- All lands to the south of the retail park area zoned for development and alternative access could be sought here.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- Letter of consent is required from PA, it is noted that ownership of the new road lies with Meath County Council due to history of motorway, responsibility and maintenance lies with Louth County Council.
- PA propose to upgrade R168 to dual carriageway, lands adjoining R168 need to be reserved for future upgrade, footpath may not be suitable at this location. The R168 is a busy route, and considered to be a distribution route, not an urban road.
- Footpaths already exist along parts of the Slane Road, this road is narrow in places with pinch points close to proposed development. The PA would prefer 2-way traffic along road with footpath on one side and narrow verge on other side.
- Cross sections required at various stages along Slane Road
- Local lane between Slane Road and R168 is only suitable for one-way traffic.
- Works required to Leonard's Cross, improvements need to be justified, PA would require special contribution in relation to these works.
- Provide cross sections through all parts of proposed site in the application.
- Protracted history on old Slane Road, PA looking for proposed development to link in with the developments already there, to fill in the gaps between existing footpaths.
- Consider links to north (R168) as this will be the M1 port route. Port access route an objective of Development Plan, PA seeking funding.
- Consider links to retail park, PA require desire line into retail park for bus connections into town centre.
- Consider and address AA in regard to tree removal.
- Development Plan currently under review, draft to be presented to members in August.

3. Landscape Strategy – landscape design and open space usability

ABP Comments:

- Have regard to the design and usability of the open spaces proposed given the topography of the entire site. Submit documentation detailing how the characteristics of the steep ravine can be tackled in the landscape masterplan.
- Design proposals to incorporate the Ravine/Kenny River into proposed development should be described in any landscape strategy and provide for passive surveillance.
- Address how the landscape treatment will deal with the M1.
- How does character area 4 address the usability and configuration of open spaces?

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- Ravine is the main feature of the proposed development so it has been incorporated into the scheme and landscape strategy. An open space is located beside ravine, but the intent is to keep the ravine as is. Some planting proposed on embankment. Ravine slope is excessive, would require significant retaining structure if access is provided. Such an intervention is not beneficial from an ecological perspective.
- Main public open space to interact with as much of the development as possible including ravine.
- Existing green infrastructure along M1 to be retained. Noise considered in relation to M1 and northern boundary of proposed site, acoustic report carried out, construction of wall not considered appropriate to eliminate noise.
- Main open space proposed with pocket parks dispersed throughout proposed development.
- Greater need to consider passive surveillance over open space from entrances to duplexes and ground floor units.
- Prospective applicant has taken PA comments on board in relation to footpaths, so access is proposed to south of site and footpath proposed along stream retaining hedgerows.
- Degree of slope along ravine requires significant amount of work to provide a safe footpath around ravine and pedestrian access to retail park. The stream connects into SAC and SPA to south of proposed development.
- Spine road moved back from stream to alleviate any safety issues, will further address PA safety concerns in application. Propose to have timber fence on top of ravine and landscaped in front of and behind.
- Cross sections to be included in application.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- Pay particular attention to the design of the main open space and the ravine, provision of informal track around ravine (local example can be found in Yellowbatter) could be considered.
- Have regard to the requirement of 3rd party consents that may be required with regard to footpath improvements along Slane Road.
- Good opportunity to access from southern side of proposed site, explore the provision of higher buildings along the spine road to address main open space.
- No documentation provided to show that footpath around ravine was considered, opportunity to incorporate this into proposed development if feasible.

- PA concern regarding the proximity of the ravine in relation to the proposed spine road, can vehicle restraints be mitigated, steepness for pedestrians and so on.

4. Unit Distribution and Phasing

ABP Comments:

- PA Opinion raises an issue in relation to the proposed phasing and in particular the delivery of the apartments, this also has a connection with passive surveillance opportunities of open spaces.
- Phasing strategy needs to be clearer in application.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- The rationale for proposed apartment at northern end of the site relate to creating a landmark structure at the entrance to Drogheda.
- Higher density situated on northern part of site, but a 1/3 of apartments provided throughout entire site as duplex units.
- Phasing can be reformatted for clarity of delivery and distribution of units.
- Enabling works will be required, prospective applicant in discussions with Irish Water and ESB and therefore infrastructure required may change phasing plan proposed.
- Number of units proposed higher than originally proposed having regard to viability of propose development.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- PA have concerns regarding bulk of apartments in final phase.
- The northern part of the site is considered a gateway development location.
- PA satisfied with initial Part V proposals.
- Phasing should be cognisant of the significant enabling works and upgrades required.
- Each phase should stand independently of each other if entire development is not completed.
- Consider open space having regard to phasing.

5. Environmental, Natural and Cultural factors

ABP Comments:

- It is noted that EIAR is screened out by prospective applicant and a NIS is to be submitted with the application.
- Hydrological connections, flora and fauna in AA documentation are noted, however, ensure that all documents refer to the same baseline material and that there are no discrepancies between documentation.
- All applications are screened for EIAR at application stage.
- Site boundary includes all of the works proposed to the Slane Road but prospective applicant not carrying out works on the entire section, greater clarity required on who is doing what works along this road and clarify how this may impact on the documentation relating to EIA and AA.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- Proposed development just below 10ha threshold requiring an EIAR.

- Large proportion of the site area includes the road improvements, residential development site approx. 6ha.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- Proposed development subthreshold but consider EIAR.

6. Any other matters

Planning Authority's Comments:

- Have regard to the usability of open space as part of the landscape strategy.
- Consider the orientation of the housing in relation to areas of open space.
- Have regard to the buffer area proposed along M1.
- Daylight/sunlight analysis should be submitted, particularly in relation to apartment development and courtyard areas.
- Consider AA and factor in any areas of development that include works along roads, hedge removal etc.
- Be cognisant of the neighbouring developments and the impact that may arise, have regard to possible issues that may arise in 3rd party submissions.

Conclusion

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 [cgsdesignqa@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

Tom Rabbette
Assistant Director of Planning
June, 2020