



Case Reference / Description	213 no. residential units (147 no. houses, 66 no. apartments), creche and associated site works. In townland of Rathgowan or Farranshock, Rathgowan, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.		
Case Type	Section 5 Pre-Application Consultation Request		
Date:	25 th February 2022	Start Time	10:00 am
Location	Remotely via Microsoft Teams	End Time	10:50 am
Chairperson	Tom Rabbette	Executive Officer	Helen Keane

Representing An Bord Pleanála:

Tom Rabbette, Assistant Director of Planning
Karen Hamilton, Senior Planning Inspector
Helen Keane, Executive Officer

Representing Prospective Applicant:

Tracy Armstrong, Armstrong Fenton Associates
Jacques D'Arcy, BKD Architects
Paul Casey, Punch Consulting Engineers
Isabel Ottewill, DSPL
Tom Leavy, DSPL

Representing Planning Authority

Cathaldus Hartin, Senior Planner
Paula Hanlon, Senior Executive Planner
Jonathan Deane, Senior Engineer, Environment Department
Damien Grennan, Senior Engineer, Roads & Transport Department
Antonia Smyth, Senior Executive Officer Housing Department

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 once the Opinion has issued,
- ABP received a submission from the PA on 7th January 2022 providing the records of consultations held pursuant to section 247 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended 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 30th November 2021 formally requesting pre-application consultations with ABP. The prospective applicant advised of the need to comply with the definition of SHD as set out in the (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act of 2016, as amended, in relation to thresholds of development. The representatives of ABP advised that the Inspector dealing with the pre-application consultation request would be different to the Inspector who would deal with the application when it was submitted. Recording of the meeting is prohibited.

Agenda

1. Development Strategy, *inter alia*, open space strategy, location of the apartments, urban design response to the R394,
2. Traffic and Transport, *inter alia*, Active Travel, interaction with the R394, DMURS,
3. Any Other Matters

1. Development Strategy, *inter alia*, open space strategy, location of the apartments, urban design response to the R394

ABP Comments:

- ABP representatives acknowledge that a large portion of the proposed development site is zoned as public open space.
- The prospective applicant is to provide further information on the design and layout of the proposed development and the rationale for locating the apartments at the northern side of the proposed development site.
- Further detail is required in relation to the urban design response. The existing development should not be setting the form for future developments.
- Provide further information on the design preparation for the proposed development.
- The location of the apartments on the northern part of the site is out of context from an urban setting. The submitted documentation does not demonstrate that the location of the apartments is appropriate.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- The proposed creche would have a relationship with the existing facilities.
- The higher density development is located on the northern part of the site due to wayleave and servicing issues.
- The disposition of the apartments is broadly north/south. The views out of these are predominantly in these directions.
- The development plan requires 15% open space, and this is accommodated on the zoned land.
- A landscape rational has been submitted.
- Communal and public open space is provided.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- The zoning accommodates the proposed development in principle.
- The PA envisages that some element of connectivity would be provided to the existing facilities from the proposed development site.
- Acknowledges the central location of the creche.
- The PA has concerns in relation to the location of the apartments on the northern side of the site.
- The development has, in principle, met the open space provision requirements.
- The prospective applicant is to address the zoning objectives in the development plan.

2. Traffic and Transport, *inter alia*, Active Travel, interaction with the R394, DMURS

ABP Comments:

- The prospective applicant should have consideration for removing the necessity for car dominance.
- ABP representatives acknowledge the comments in the submitted documentation in relation to pedestrian and cyclist access.
- The prospective applicant is to discuss what other potential upgrades could be applied.
- Have concerns in relation to how pedestrians will move from the proposed development across the R394.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- The prospective applicant will adjust certain road widths in relation to DMURS.
- There is the potential for permeability throughout to adjoining lands, this will be demonstrated in the application documentation.
- The proposed development does not prejudice the roundabout on the R394.
- The prospective applicant is happy to engage with the PA in relation to the R394.
- There are currently non-signalised crossing points across the R394.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- The R394 is one of several strategic routes around Mullingar.
- There are plans to commence a detailed design process for the R394 and the PA is currently assessing if an off-road cycling path can be provided.
- The prospective applicant is to ensure pedestrian and cyclist linkage towards the town.
- Have consideration for permeability in terms of footpath infrastructure.
- There is a good layout in the context of DMURS with minor changes to be taken into consideration.
- The PA hopes to have a detailed design for the active travel plan completed before the end of the year.
- The PA is happy to discuss the above with the prospective applicant.
- The proposed cyclist and pedestrian accesses are acceptable.

3. Any other matters**ABP Comments:**

- The proposed 35 units per hectare is on the low end.
- The phasing is to reflect the intention for supporting higher densities on the proposed development site.
- The prospective applicant is to ensure that the documentation dovetails and correlates at application stage.

Prospective Applicant's Comments:

- The prospective applicant is required to take the commercial viability of units into consideration.
- Can provide a piece of land near the roundabout to the PA for the junction.
- Seeks to have consideration for the PA's comments.

Planning Authority's Comments:

- The prospective applicant is to have consideration for the requirement to provide a linkage from the prospective development to existing services.
- There is a team in place to deliver the active travel measures.
- There are no issues in relation to water services.
- The prospective applicant is to decide the location of the construction facilities. The PA has concerns in relation to a green space becoming a brown field site if construction facilities are located on it.
- The PA encourages the use of nature-based surface water drainage solutions.

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.
- A Schedule of Documents and Drawings should be submitted with the Application.
- 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
March 2022