

S. 6(7) of Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016

Inspector's Report on Recommended Opinion 304783.

Strategic Housing Development 120 apartments.

Location Mill Street, Maynooth, Kildare.

Planning Authority Kildare County Council.

Prospective Applicant Ladas Property Company.

Date of Consultation Meeting 30 August 2019.

Date of Site Inspection 23 July 2019.

Inspector Stephen Rhys Thomas.

1.0 Introduction

Having regard to the consultation that has taken place in relation to the proposed development and also having regard to the submissions from the planning authority, the purpose of this report is to form a recommended opinion as to whether the documentation submitted with the consultation request under section 5(5) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 - (i) constitutes a reasonable basis for an application under section 4, or (ii) requires further consideration and amendment in order to constitute a reasonable basis for an application under section 4.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1.1. The site is identical to that previously applied for under ABP-301775-18, I concur with the site location and description in that application, described as follows:
- 2.1.2. The site has a stated area of 1.05ha. It is in the centre of Maynooth, Co. Kildare. It is a brownfield site, where excavations were carried out pursuant to a residential development that was not completed. It has c50m frontage onto Mill Street on its western boundary which is marked by a low stone wall. St. Mary's Church stands to the north. It dates from the first half of the 19th century and is a protected structure. A late 20th century apartment building lies to the south, known as the Millrace Manor. It is 2 and 3 storeys in height, and is served by a surface car park by the current site's boundary. A contemporary mixed use development stands on the other side of Mill Street, known as Manor Mills. It has retail and commercial use on the ground floor with up to 5 storeys of residential use above. The eastern part of the site extends to the Lyreen River and includes lands behind the church and Millrace Manor. The central part of the northern boundary adjoins institutional lands occupied by the Divine Work Missionaries. The north-eastern part of the site adjoins undeveloped lands on the upstream bank of the river. The opposite bank of the river across from the site runs along public open space off Pound Lane.

3.0 Proposed Strategic Housing Development

3.1.1. The proposed development of 120 apartment units and comprises:

- 43 one bedroom apartments.
- 70 two bedroom apartments.
- 7 three bedroom apartments

The apartments are provided in four separate blocks, from three to six storeys, with a central open space and underground car park.

Additional development includes:

- Crèche 205 sq.m
- Restaurant/cafe unit 246 sq.m
- 3 office units 93 sq.m
- 74 basement car parking spaces and 278 bicycle spaces.

49% of the apartment units are dual aspect and the residential density equates to 114 units per Hectare.

4.0 National and Local Planning Policy

5.1 Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines

Having considered the nature of the proposal, the receiving environment, the documentation on file, including the submissions from the planning authority, I am of the opinion that the directly relevant S.28 Ministerial Guidelines are:

- 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2018
- 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities' - 2018
- 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (including the associated 'Urban Design Manual')
- 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets'
- 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (including the associated 'Technical Appendices')
- 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities'

'Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'

5.2 Statutory Plan for the area

The **Kildare Development Plan 2017-2023** is the statutory development plan for the area. The County Development Plan includes chapters on relevant topics including housing, density, urban design, infrastructure, movement/transport, landscape and development management standards.

The site falls within the **Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019** where the land use zoning objective is identified as 'A1 Town Centre – to provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office, residential, amenity and civic use'. The purpose of this zone is to protect and enhance the special character of Maynooth town centre and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial, office, cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of a developing town.

Part B, Section 7 of the LAP deals with housing. The following policies are noteworthy in the context of the proposal:

HP 5: To require applications for residential developments over 20 units, to demonstrate the provision of an appropriate mix of dwelling types having regard to the following:

- The nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area
- The desirability of providing for mixed communities
- The provision of a range of housing types and tenures
- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable for all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle
- The need to cater for special needs groups

HP 6: To restrict apartment developments generally to the University campus and town centre locations or suitably located sites adjoining public transport connections. Apartments will not be permitted where there is an over concentration of this type of development. Higher density schemes will only be considered where they exhibit a high architectural design standard creating an attractive and sustainable living environment. Duplex units shall not generally be permitted.

HP 7: To facilitate and co-operate in the provision of community facilities in tandem with residential development including, in particular, local services, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities.

HPO 1: To promote a high standard of architecture in the design of new housing developments and to encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure to cater for the needs of the population and facilitate the creation of balanced communities.

HPO 2: To encourage the appropriate intensification of residential development in existing residential areas and the town centre, subject to compliance with relevant development management criteria and the protection of residential amenity of adjoining properties.

Table 14 Record of Protected Structures in Maynooth identifies St. Mary's Church adjacent to the site as a protected structure. The Church lands are also identified on the national monuments and places record.

Section 7.6.3 deals with surface water drainage and section 7.6.5 deals with flood risk management. It is noted that the site is located within an area for which a site specific flood risk assessment should be undertaken.

5.0 **Planning History**

Subject site:

An Bord Pleanála reference ABP-301775-18 permission refused for a mixed use development of 135 apartments in 3 blocks, provision for crèche (259.17 square metres) and restaurant/café (218.59 square metres), 190 basement car parking spaces, 370 bicycle storage spaces, refuge storage areas at basement level, provision of open space areas. September 2018. The reasons are as follows:

1. The proposed development, by reason of its design, scale and bulk, in close proximity to St. Mary's Church, which is a protected structure, would materially and detrimentally affect the setting of this protected structure and would diminish the level of light reaching the stained glass windows on the eastern and southern elevations of the Church, thereby detracting from its artistic, historic and architectural interest, and would injure its setting. The proposed development would, therefore, materially contravene the policies and objectives of the Maynooth Local Area Plan

- 2013 2019 (in particular policy HP2) and the Kildare County Development Plan 2017 2023 (in particular policies DL1, PS2 and PS3), and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area
- 2. The proposed development, by reason of its bulk, design and location, would significantly detract from the character and amenities of the town of Maynooth, and in particular from the amenities of the lands along the Lyreen River and the open space at Pound Lane, due to the aspect that it would present towards the river which would be dominated by a high wall over which the proposed apartment buildings would appear as structures of substantial mass and extent. The proposed development would, therefore, be visually obtrusive, would fail to enhance the visual corridor of the Lyreen River and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- 3. It is considered that the proposed development would not integrate with existing and authorised development in the vicinity nor provide adequate pedestrian and cyclist permeability, in order to encourage suitable facilities for travel by sustainable modes, in accordance with national policy. In particular:
- The proposed development would fail to provide convenient and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists from the adjoining lands through the site towards the town centre, either along the river or otherwise.
- The design of the access to the proposed development has not been co-ordinated with approved works to improve cycling and pedestrian facilities along Mill Street.
- The proposed amount of car parking is considered to be excessive and has not been significantly reduced to reflect the town centre location of the site in accordance with the advice given at section 4.19 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in March 2018.

Furthermore, the Board is not satisfied that the trip generation from the proposed development has been adequately modelled or justified so as to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have a significantly negative impact on traffic flows at this location between two heavily congested traffic junctions.

The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to these Ministerial Guidelines, would endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard and obstruction

of road users (including vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists), and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 4 The proposed development would fail to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for its future occupants in accordance with the provisions of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in March 2018, and the policies and objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and the Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019 because:
- It would contain a number of single aspect apartments whose orientation would be predominantly towards the north and which would be in close proximity to the site boundary and would not overlook any significant amenity, contrary to section 3.18 of the Ministerial Guidelines.
- The amenity provided by the proposed central open space would be compromised by the width and extent of the vehicular route that would be run through it.
- The amenity provided by the open space along the river would be compromised by its narrow width, which would contravene policy FRA 8 of the Maynooth Local Area Plan, by the high wall alongside it, and by the failure to provide convenient and attractive access at either end of it.

The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the above-mentioned plans and Ministerial Guidelines issued to planning authorities under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

5 Having regard to the use of a bespoke river flood model rather than the Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) model prepared by the Office of Public Works in the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application, to the preliminary nature of the submitted drainage designs and to the failure to address flood risks resulting from the proposed development, it is considered that it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board that the proposed development would not pose an increased flood risk to third party properties and lands arising from the loss of floodplain storage.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal has not been subject to an appropriate flood risk assessment that would satisfy criterion number 2 of the Justification Test

for development management set out in section 5.15 of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in November 2009. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to these Ministerial Guidelines and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

PA reference Reg. Ref. 04/767 – the planning authority granted permission on 8th September 2006 to demolish the house on the site and carry out a development of 93 apartments, a creche and retail unit.

PA reference Reg. Ref. 05/2420 – the planning authority granted permission on 8th September 2006 for a development of 105 apartments, a creche, retail and office accommodation with basement car parking.

PA reference Reg. Ref. 10/1295 – the planning authority extended the duration of the above permissions to 6th September 2016.

Nearby sites:

An Bord Pleanála reference ABP-301230-18: The board granted permission on 3rd July 2018 for housing development on the land adjoining the north-east of the current application site. The authorised development includes 319 houses, 142 no. apartments and student accommodation units with 483 bedspaces. The student accommodation would be provided in the part of the site closest to the current application site, with the nearest block E having four storeys of accommodation. Condition 3(a) required this block to be moved east/north-east of its proposed position by 12m with the resulting area being used for open space and a future pedestrian link to the application site.

6.0 Forming of the Opinion

Pursuant to section 6(7) of the Act of 2016, regard is had in the forming of the opinion to the documentation submitted by the prospective applicant; the planning authority submissions and the discussions which took place during the tripartite

consultation meeting. I shall provide a brief detail on each of these elements hereunder.

6.1 Documentation Submitted

The prospective applicant is required to submit certain information pursuant to section 5(5)(a) of the Planning & Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 and Regulation No. 285 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017.

The information submitted included *inter alia*: a completed application form; site location and site layout and other plans, a planning report that includes a statement of consistency, Architectural Design Statement, CGI and Photomontage Booklet, pre-connection enquiry letter from Irish Water, EIAR Screening Report, NIS, Ecological Impact Assessment, Environmental Report, Part V calculations; Floor Area Schedule, Building Life Cycle Report, Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment, Drainage Assessment, Energy and Sustainability Report, Archaeological Impact Assessment, Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Tree Survey, Construction Management Plan, Lighting Plan, Light Impact Assessment, Basement Construction Methodology Statement and a Traffic and Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

I have reviewed and considered all of the above mentioned documents and drawings.

6.2 Planning Authority Submission

In compliance with section 6(4)(b) of the 2016 Act the planning authority for the area in which the proposed development is located, Kildare County Council, submitted a copy of their record of the section 247 consultations with the prospective applicant and also submitted their opinion in relation to the proposal. These were received by An Bord Pleanála on the 24/07/2019.

The planning authority's 'opinion' included, *inter alia*, the following: reference to the current County Development Plan and the Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-2019; details of the internal Council technical reports; and an assessment of the proposed development in the context of the issues raised as reasons for refusal in the previous application as follows:

Context – minor changes have been made to the overall proposal that improve matters. However, concerns remain over detailed design, building finishes and fenestration. Significant changes such as the removal of block A would improve the layout and result in the optimal architectural solution for the site.

Site Integration – connections to the adjacent Cairn development have been shown, but the contextual elevations of permitted development would be useful. Greater engagement with adjacent developer and more detailed information concerning the pedestrian linkage along the Lyreen river is required.

Residential Amenity and Connections – with regard to the proposed public open space, which is satisfactory in quantum, greater detail concerning railings and cross sections are required.

Car Parking – the parking provision of 74 car spaces and 278 bicycle spaces is satisfactory.

Public Realm – the public plaza to the front of the site that includes a bus stop is preferable and the alterations to the ground floor of Block A are noted.

Flood Risk Assessment – additional information is still required with regard to the content of the FRA and the additional SuDS features are noted.

Other Matters – A housing Mix statement has not been submitted in accordance with CDP objective MDO 3. 46% of units are single aspect. Separation distance between upper floor (blocks B1 and B2) windows should be at least 35 metres. No secure external open space has been provided for the creche facility.

In the context of the above, the planning authority recommend seven individual points to address concerns prior to the lodgement of a planning application.

The planning authority's submission also included internal reports from; Heritage Officer, Architectural Conservation Officer, Transportation Department, Environment Section, Environment Health, Housing Department and Water Services Department.

All of the documentation submitted by the planning authority has been reviewed and considered by the undersigned as part of the opinion forming.

Submission from Irish Water

A submission was received from Irish Water and is available on file. In summary, the submission states that the proposed development is a standard connection, requiring no network or treatment plant upgrades for water or wastewater by either the customer or Irish Water. No third party consents are required for these connections.

6.3 Consultation Meeting

A section 5 Consultation meeting took place at the offices of An Bord Pleanála on the 30 August 2019, commencing at 11.30 am. Representatives of the prospective applicant, the planning authority and An Bord Pleanála were in attendance. An agenda was issued by An Bord Pleanála prior to the meeting.

The main topics raised for discussion at the tripartite meeting were based on the Agenda that issued in advance and contained the following issues:

- 1. In the context of the previous planning application (ABP-301775-18):
 - a) proximity to St. Mary's Church,
 - b) Lyreen River and Pound Lane open space amenity,
 - Pedestrian and cyclist permeability to adjoining sites and car parking/traffic generation,
 - d) Residential amenity,
 - e) Flood Risk Assessment

Discuss the adequacy and detail of information prepared.

- 2. Road layout changes
- 3. Any other matters.

In relation to proximity to St. Mary's Church, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion on the relationship between the amended design proposal and the protected structure. New documentation shows a significant separation distance around the church building and proposed apartment building block heights in the vicinity have been reduced, these changes were elaborated upon by the applicant. The width of side laneway was queried and the importance of passive supervision and usability of the space was raised.

In relation to Lyreen River and Pound Lane open space amenity, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion on the following: details of how the proposed central open space will relate to the Lyreen river, in terms of slope and gradient. The importance of selecting informative site sections was discussed, particularly in relation to areas where buildings are proposed relatively close to the river bank. The visual connection between the proposed public open space on the site and the Pound Lane Park across the river was discussed and Pound Lane Park was noted as taken in charge by the Council.

In relation to Pedestrian and cyclist permeability to adjoining sites and car parking/traffic generation, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion on the proposed link through the site from lands to the east, currently being developed for student housing and Mill Street. The applicant confirmed that discussions were ongoing between both landowners and a pedestrian linkage will be achieved. The new link will be constructed using materials that will enable it to be taken in charge by the Council.

In relation to Residential amenity, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion on the residential amenities for future occupants. The daylight and sunlight analysis was noted for adjacent properties and such analysis could be extended to sensitive locations in the proposed development.

In relation to Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) issues, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion in relation to the FRA prepared by the applicant and any queries or clarifications sought by the planning authority. The applicant explained how since the lodgement of pre-app documentation, engagement between parties has been ongoing and further refinements to the FRA have been made. The planning authority agreed that considerable work to improve the FRA had been made and further dialogue is welcomed. Board officials reminded the applicant to respond in detail to the issues raised by the previous reason for refusal and specifically to set out and conduct the FRA with regard to the guidelines on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management.

In relation to Road layout changes, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion in relation to the Part 8 proposals for Mill Street and in particular the bus pull in area detailed for the front of the site. The applicant

discussed two options for the front of the site, in both examples the position of the vehicular entrance remains the same and the planning authority agreed with this approach. The planning authority also noted that the Part 8 for Mill Street had been approved and included preliminary design drawings agreed by the elected members, detail design drawings are yet to be published but could easily accommodate the applicant's proposals for the site frontage. Board officials mentioned that it would be preferable if a single agreed layout for the site frontage be submitted as part of any planning application. Furthermore, the applicant was alerted to minor changes with regard to the Design Manual for Roads and Streets, that are available on the Department of the Environment website. Any new advice in the guidelines should be incorporated into any street design as appropriate.

In relation to any other matters, ABP representatives sought further elaboration/discussion in relation to the location and management of creche play space and the applicant detailed that a play area will be provided for the sole use of the creche. The planning authority reiterated the importance of the Mill Street elevation of Block A and the applicant agreed to work further to refine this elevation.

Both the prospective applicant and the planning authority were given an opportunity comment and respond to the issues raised by the representatives of ABP. Those comments and responses are recorded in the 'Record of Meeting 304783' which is on file. I have fully considered the responses and comments of the prospective applicant and planning authority in preparing the Recommended Opinion hereunder.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

- 7.1.1. Based on the entirety of the information before me, it would appear that the proposed development falls within the definition of Strategic Housing Development, as set out in section 3 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016.
- 7.1.2. I have examined all of the information and submissions before me including the documentation submitted by the prospective applicant, the submissions of the planning authority, submissions received from statutory consultees referred to under Section 6(10) of the Act and the discussions which took place at the tripartite

- meeting. I have had regard to both national policy, via the s.28 Ministerial Guidelines, and local policy, via the statutory plan for the area.
- 7.1.3. Having regard to the above, I recommend that the Board serve a notice on the prospective applicant, pursuant to Section 6(7)(b) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, stating that it is of the opinion that the documentation submitted with the consultation request under section 5(5) of the Act: constitutes a reasonable basis for an application under section 4 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016.
- 7.1.4. I would also recommend that the prospective applicant be notified, pursuant to article 285(5)(b) of the 2017 Regulations, that specified information (as outlined hereunder) be submitted with any application for permission that may follow. I believe the specified information will assist the Board at application stage in its decision making process. I am also recommending that a number of prescribed bodies (as listed hereunder) be notified by the prospective applicant of the making of the application.

8.0 Recommended Opinion

- 8.1.1. An Bord Pleanála refers to your request pursuant to section 5 of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016. Section 6(7)(a) of the Act provides that the Board shall form an opinion as to whether the documents submitted with the consultation request (i) constitute a reasonable basis for an application under section 4 of the Act, or (ii) require further consideration and amendment in order to constitute a reasonable basis for an application under section 4.
- 8.1.2. Following consideration of the issues raised during the consultation process, and having regard to the opinion of the planning authority, and submissions received from statutory consultees referred to under Section 6(10) of the Act, An Bord Pleanála is of the opinion that the documentation submitted would constitute a reasonable basis for an application for strategic housing development to An Bord Pleanála.
- 8.1.3. Pursuant to article 285(5)(b) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017, the prospective applicant is hereby notified that in

addition to the requirements as specified in articles 297 and 298 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017, the following specific information should be submitted with any application for permission arising from this notification:

- 1. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) report that should have regard to the requirements of the Drainage Division as indicated in their report dated 09 July 2019 and contained in Appendix B (page 11) of the Planning Authority's Opinion. In addition, any surface water management proposals such as Sustainable Drainage Systems, should be considered in tandem with the FRA and specifically relate to an appropriate flood risk assessment that demonstrates the development proposed will not increase flood risk elsewhere and, if practicable, will reduce overall flood risk. A Flood Risk Assessment should be prepared in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management' (including the associated 'Technical Appendices') and include a suitably detailed assessment that satisfies criterion number 2 of the Justification Test for development management as set out in the guidelines. All documentation in respect of the above should address the issues raised by reason for refusal number five of the previous SHD application on the site.
- Detailed proposals and design rationale for the area of new public realm along Mill Street should be submitted together with the necessary legal consents. In particular, the area connected with any works to improve or alter the public road along Mill Street.
- 3. A suite of sufficiently detailed site sections that clearly show the relationship between the proposed central public open space, the proximity of apartment blocks and location of pedestrian linkages with the Lyreen River.
- 4. Contextual elevations should show existing development and permitted development on the site to the immediate east.
- 5. A detailed landscaping plan for the site which also clearly sets out proposals for hard and soft landscaping along the Lyreen River and the public realm area along Mill Street. Details of the recreational area for children should also

- be submitted including any proposals for play equipment provision, surface and boundary treatment to this area.
- 6. A layout plan that clearly shows pedestrian/cyclist connections to adjacent lands, specifically, footpaths and/or cycleways should be shown right up to the boundary without any ransom strip so as to facilitate future connections.
- 7. A Daylight/Sunlight analysis, showing an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupiers and neighbours of the proposed development, which includes details on the standards achieved within the proposed residential units, in private and shared open space, and in public areas within the development and on adjacent properties.
- 8. A sufficiently detailed phasing arrangement for the proposed development should be provided.
- 9. A site layout plan, which clearly indicates what areas are to be taken in charge by the Local Authority.
- 10. A housing quality assessment which provides the details regarding the proposed apartments set out in the schedule of accommodation, as well as the calculations and tables required to demonstrate the compliance of those details with the various requirements of the 2018 Guidelines on Design Standards for New Apartments including its specific planning policy requirements.

Pursuant to article 285(5)(a) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017, the prospective applicant is informed that the following authorities should be notified in the event of the making of an application arising from this notification in accordance with section 8(1)(b) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016:

- 1. Irish Water
- 2. The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- 3. The Heritage Council
- 4. An Taisce the National Trust for Ireland

- 5. Fáilte Ireland
- 6. An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- 7. Inland Fisheries Ireland
- 8. Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- 9. National Transport Authority
- 10. County Kildare Childcare Committee

PLEASE NOTE:

Under section 6(9) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, neither the holding of a consultation under section 6, nor the forming of an opinion under that section, shall prejudice the performance by the Board, or the planning authority or authorities in whose area the proposed strategic housing development would be situated, of any other of their respective functions under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2016 or any other enactment and cannot be relied upon in the formal planning process or in legal proceedings.

Stephen Rhys Thomas Senior Planning Inspector

05 September 2019