



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report Addendum

ABP-313953-22

Development	82 houses, 8 apartments, 8 duplexes, landscaping works to facilitate public park use over a total application site area of 6.84 ha., vehicular access from R772 via new roundabout junction and associated site development works. The application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement (NIS)
Location	Inchanappa South, a Protected Structure, Ashford, Co. Wicklow
Planning Authority	Wicklow County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	211407
Applicant(s)	Beakenford Limited.
Type of Application	Planning Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission.
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	Barbara Wilding.

Observer(s)

Oonagh Stokes.

Date of Site Inspection

30th November 2023.

Inspector

Elaine Sullivan

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This report is an addendum to my original report dated the 20th day of December 2023. Both reports relate to a third-party appeal against a notification of decision to grant permission issued by Wicklow County Council for a housing development comprising 82 houses, 8 apartments, 8 duplex units, a creche and a public park. The development site is on land which was previously part of Inchananppa House and estate.
- 1.2. My original report recommended a grant of permission subject to conditions. At a Board meeting held on the 25th of January 2024 the Board decided to refer the file back to the Inspector for additional consideration. The Board requested an addendum report considering the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024, with particular focus on guidance regarding **settlements, area types and density ranges** relevant to the proposed development.

2.0 Assessment

- 2.1. **Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024**
 - 2.1.1. These Section 28 Guidelines replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and support the application of densities that respond to settlement size and different contexts within each settlement type. In accordance with the principles contained in the NPF, the Guidelines seek to prioritise compact growth and a renewal of existing settlements. Section 3.3 of the Guidelines refers to Settlements, Area Types and Density Ranges.
 - 2.1.2. In the Compact Settlement Guidelines, Ashford is categorised as a Rural Town / Village. These settlement types are described as having a population of 1,500 persons or less and offer services to a rural hinterland. They are not identified for significant population growth under the National Planning Framework, (NPF) and should grow at a limited pace that is appropriate to the service and employment function of the settlement and the availability and capacity of infrastructure to support the development.

- 2.1.3. The Guidelines do not prescribe a specific density range for Rural Towns / Villages. Instead, the focus is on growth that is appropriate to the character and capacity of the settlement. However, it is noted that the lower density range for development on the edge of Small / Medium towns, (which is the next level of settlement), is 25 – 40 dwellings per hectare, (dph). As with all settlement types, the overarching policy is for the promotion of infill development on central, under-utilised sites.
- 2.1.4. Section 3.3.5 of the Compact Settlement Guidelines set out the key priorities for compact growth in Rural Towns and Villages. In order of priority these are to:
- a) strengthen the existing urban core through the adaptation, re-use, and intensification of existing building stock,
 - b) realise opportunities for infill and backland development, and
 - c) provide for sequential and sustainable housing development at the edge of the settlement at suitable locations that are closest to the urban core and are integrated into or can be integrated into the existing built-up footprint of the settlement and can be serviced by necessary supporting infrastructure.
- 2.1.5. It is a policy and objective of the Guidelines that development in rural towns and villages is tailored to the scale, form and character of the settlement and the capacity of services and infrastructure (including public transport and water services infrastructure). Lands zoned for housing at the edge of rural towns and villages with good walking and cycling networks can offer an effective alternative to the provision of single houses in the countryside. The density of development at such locations should respond in a positive way to the established context.
- 2.1.6. The Guidelines also state that it is necessary to ensure that the quantum and scale of development at all locations can successfully integrate with the receiving environment. New development should respond to the receiving environment in a positive way and should not result in a significant negative impact on character (including historic character), amenity or the natural environment.

2.2. Conclusion

- 2.2.1. As the Guidelines are not prescriptive regarding density for the subject settlement type, I defer to the Wicklow County Development Plan and the Ashford Town Plan 2022-2028. In the settlement strategy for the County, Ashford is categorised as a 'Type 1 – Small Town'. These towns have a population range from approximately 800-1,500 people and are prioritised for local indigenous growth and investment.
- 2.2.2. The proposed development would yield a density of c. 20 dph which is lower than the recommended density of 30-40 dph in the Ashford Town Plan 2022-2028. Although the proposed density of the development is lower than that recommended in the Town Plan, the character and context of the site should also be considered. The site is located within the former estate lands of Inchanappa House, which is a Protected Structure. It is greenfield in nature with a sloping topography with a steep incline. Among the development objectives for the site, is a requirement to deliver a public park along the western boundary and to provide greater connections to the adjacent town centre.
- 2.2.3. As noted in my previous report, I am satisfied that the proposed development is in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy for the County. The Ashford Town Plan proposes to encourage the provision of high-quality housing, concentrated principally around Ashford town Centre and lands within 500 meters of the town Centre. Section 2.3 of the Town Plan states that, *'Having regard to the aggregate population target for the Level 5 plans, land is zoned for residential development to meet housing targets. All of the lands that are suitably zoned to cater for residential development are within the built-up envelope of the town and therefore considered 'compact growth'.* The Town Plan clearly states that the lands zoned for development within the town boundary have been zoned to meet the housing targets of the Development Plan. I am also satisfied that the development is in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines as the density and typology of the proposal considers the defining characteristics of the surrounding area including the prevailing scale and mass of buildings in the area, the character of the greenfield site and its proximity to a Protected Structure.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1. I recommend that planning permission is granted as per my original report of the 20th day of December 2023.

4.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 4.1. Having regard to the zoning of the site in the Ashford Town Plan 2022 to 2028, for residential development and open space, the location of the site within the settlement boundary of the town and its proximity to the Town Centre, 'Regeneration' area, and, subject to compliance with the conditions below, it is considered that, the proposal would be in accordance with the provisions of the current Wicklow County Development Plan, would not endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard, would not injure the residential or visual amenity of property in the vicinity and would, therefore, accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Elaine Sullivan
Planning Inspector

9th day of February 2024