



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ACP-323718-25

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Development</b>                  | Mixed use development consisting of 48 apartments and one café/ retail unit and all associated site works. |
| <b>Location</b>                     | 62-62 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth  |
| <b>Planning Authority</b>           | Louth County Council   |
| <b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b> | 2460539  |
| <b>Applicant(s)</b>                 | Berryglade Limited   |
| <b>Type of Application</b>          | Permission   |
| <b>Planning Authority Decision</b>  | Grant Permission   |
| <b>Type of Appeal</b>               | Third Party  |
| <b>Appellant</b>                    | Trinity Gardens Residents Association  |
| <b>Observers</b>                    | Marguerita Sampson   |
| <b>Date of Site Inspection</b>      | 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2025   |
| <b>Inspector</b>                    | Paul O'Brien   |

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The subject site, with a stated area of 0.210 hectares, is located to the northern side of Trinity Street, which is located to the west of Drogheda town centre. The site is approximately 185m to the west of the junction of Trinity Street/ George's Street and West Street. West Street is historically the primary shopping/ commercial street in Drogheda and Trinity Street is the western extension of this street with retail/ commercial development on the eastern part and primarily residential development to the west.
- 1.2. The subject site contains a number of buildings, including McCloskeys bakery/ shop, and an open yard to the rear/ north. The existing buildings have a stated floor area of 1,225.25sq m and approximately 568.3sq m is proposed for demolition. Some of the buildings on site are in poor repair with damaged/ missing roof tiles/ rainwater goods. The bakery/ shop unit is listed on the Record of Protected Structures, RPS Ref. DB-314 refers.
- 1.3. The River Boyne is located approximately 75m to the south west of the subject site. The site rises steeply on a south to north axis; this is an approximately 6.5m rise from the footpath to the front of the site to the rear boundary. The existing buildings are built into the slope with the front units consisting of two and three storey units and those to the rear are primarily single storey. There is an access laneway to the east of the site, and which connects into Fair Green. This provides access to a mix of commercial developments, mostly in detached, single storey buildings. The section of Trinity Street, which the subject site is located on, consists primarily of two storey terraced buildings.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The development, as submitted to the Planning Authority, consists of the following:
  - Demolition of existing derelict storage buildings and out-houses located to the rear of site. Area to be demolished is stated to be 568.3sq m.
  - The renovation, sub-division, refurbishment, extension and change of use of existing buildings (Nos 62 – 63 Trinity Street) to accommodate a new café/bakery shop, 3 no. 2-bed units, 1 no 3-bed unit and 1 no. 4-bed unit (Block A).

- The construction of 1 no. 4 - storey block (Block B) consisting of 2 no. 2 bed units & 1 no. 3 bed unit within the footprint of the former Bakehouse located to the rear of No. 63 Trinity Street. Block B will incorporate all existing external walls.
- The change of use, renovation and extension of the existing Bakery Store buildings located to the rear west of the site to accommodate 2 no. 1 bed units and bin store (Block C).
- The construction of a 7-storey block with basement (Block D) consisting of 17 no. 1-bed units, 20 no. 2-bed units, & 1 no. 3-bed unit. The basement to provide for bicycle and bulky storage.
- New pedestrian entrances to the development off Fair Green, Trinity Street and Brickfields.
- New internal pedestrian footpaths, car parking, bicycle parking, bicycle storage, bin store, ESB substation, open spaces, boundary treatments and landscaping and all associated site works.

The proposed development to consist of 48 apartment units in total.

Following the receipt of Significant Further Information on 08/08/2025, the development was revised as follows:

- Reduction in overall building height, reducing Block D from a 7-storey building with basement to a 6-storey building with basement.
- The total number of apartments proposed is reduced by 6 to provide for a total of 42 units.
- Revisions made to the red line application boundary.
- Revisions to proposed elevations including fenestration, to floor plans & private amenity space and to internal circulation, pedestrian footpaths, public open space, boundary treatment and landscaping.
- Also, revisions to proposed public lighting.
- All associated site works.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

The Planning Authority decided to grant permission for this development, subject to conditions, following the receipt of a response to a further information request.

### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

#### **3.2.1. Planning Reports**

The Planning Authority recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions. Further information was sought in relation to a number of items as follows:

- Concern was expressed about the height/ scale/ mass of Block D and its impact on the protected structure/ skyline in this location. The proposed density was also raised as an issue of concern and regard to be had to Policy Objective SS 5 which seeks to support increased heights in appropriate locations. The applicant was requested to address these issues.
- Concern was raised about the size/ configuration of the apartment units, and which were considered to be below minimum standards. The functionality of private amenity space was also raised as an issue of concern and the unit within the protected structure would not be provided with private amenity space; these issues were requested to be addressed.
- The applicant was requested to provide a detailed floor area schedule and to indicate which units provide for at least 10% in excess of the minimum requirements.
- Revisions to the balconies on Fair Green such that they do not project over the street.
- Requested to submit a revised Vertical Sky Component demonstrating compliance with the BRE requirements for the units on Brickfield. Also requested to submit a revised shadow impact assessment for the 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

- Requested to submit a revised Building Lifecycle Report in accordance with Section 6.13 of the Apartment Guidelines.
- Provide details in relation to public lighting.
- Provide an Archaeological Impact Assessment.
- Submit a Construction and Waste Management Plan for the proposed development.
- Submit additional details in relation to roads infrastructure, including car parking details.

The applicant submitted a detailed response to the above items and a decision to grant permission was issued.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Infrastructure Section: No objection subject to conditions.

### 3.2.3. Conditions

The Planning Authority conditions are generally standard for a development of this nature, though I note the following:

- Condition no. 2 which requires the development of the café/ shop unit in accordance with the submitted plans and as amended by further information received on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Details of signage to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the unit.
- Condition no.5 requires a pre-construction survey for bats and roosts to determine if there are any bats present on site. No tree felling or vegetation removal between the 1<sup>st</sup> of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.
- Condition no.6 requires the employment of a Landscape Architect during the site development works phase.
- Condition no. 16 requires details on public street lighting.
- Condition no. 22 requires archaeological monitoring of the site.
- Condition no. 24 sets out Development Contributions, nothing additional here.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage: Notes the submitted Archaeological Assessment but recommends that additional investigation be undertaken especially to the area to the rear of the site/ behind the shop. A condition is recommended in the event that permission is granted for this development.

Uisce Éireann: Water Supply: No objection in principle, subject to condition including which includes upgrade works to the existing water supply network in the vicinity of the subject site. Foul drainage: No objection subject to condition.

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

A total of 17 submissions were received on the original application by the Planning Authority, and 11 submissions was received following the receipt of further information.

The following points were made, summarised under relevant headings:

#### **Planning Issues:**

- Meath and Louth County Councils have failed to prepare a joint Local Area Plan for Drogheda including the subject site.
- The development would materially contravene the Louth Development Plan in terms of car parking provision.
- The development does not demonstrate compliance with the 2018 Building Height Guidelines.
- The development does not demonstrate compliance with the Louth County Council Core Strategy as set out in the County Development Plan.
- It is considered likely that the number of units permitted exceeds the Core Strategy figures.
- No public open space is provided for, and this is a material contravention issue. Whilst a reduced open space requirement may be acceptable, this does not allow for zero provision. The area is lacking in public open space at present.
- Reference to other developments in the area as a precedent are not appropriate as they were permitted under different criteria set out in Section 28 Guidelines which no longer apply.

**Impact on Residential Amenity:**

- The proposed development would have a negative impact through overshadowing which will reduce the amount of available natural sunlight to existing houses. This in turn may give rise to increased energy costs.
- Insufficient analysis given as to the impact on daylight/ sunlight to existing properties in the area.
- Submitted details demonstrate that there will be an impact on sunlight/ daylight to existing properties.
- The development will give rise to overbearing on existing residential units.
- Loss of privacy through overlooking, which is contrary to the Constitution and European law.
- Potential health implications through loss of daylight.
- Will give rise to devaluation of property values in the area.
- There is a shortfall in open space provision to serve this development. The provision is less than the required 15%.
- No playground is proposed as part of the development.
- Concern about the impact from the proposed rooftop garden. This could be addressed through measures that reduce the potential for overlooking.

**Impact on the character of the area:**

- The height and scale of the proposed block is excessive in this location.
- There is an abrupt transition between the existing building and the seven storey nature of the new apartment block.
- The height would have a negative impact on Drogheda which is an important historic town in the Irish context.
- Concern about how Block D will appear in relation to existing development/ the protected structure.
- The number of units proposed here is excessive.
- The proposed block would have a negative impact on the protected structure.
- The development would have a negative impact on the Trinity Street, Trinity Gardens and Brickfield areas of Drogheda.
- Comparison of this development to others in Drogheda is not appropriate as there are significant differences in the locations/ type of scheme proposed elsewhere in the town.

- The submitted visual impact images do not demonstrate how the development will appear from adjoining residential properties.

#### **Traffic:**

- The proposed entrance may give rise to traffic safety issues.
- Concern that access for fire brigades may be restricted.
- No provision is made for deliveries to the site.
- Potential for increased congestion in the area.
- There is a shortage of car parking in this part of Drogheda.
- The proposed development does not provide for an adequate number of car parking spaces on site. Four spaces are proposed and the development has a requirement for more; 37 spaces is referenced but also 48 spaces.
- Public transport provision is not adequate in this part of Drogheda.
- Drogheda is not a cycle friendly location, and this is especially the case in terms of topography.
- Reference is made to the location of supermarkets in out of town locations.
- Laneway serving Brickfields should be accessible at all times during the construction phase of the development as there is concern that it may be used by construction vehicles during that phase of the development.
- Concern that the provision of pedestrian routes/ access points could become the location for anti-social behaviour.

#### **Environmental Issues:**

- The construction of the proposed development would have a negative impact on air quality.
- Potential for noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of this development.
- Potential impact on bats and other wildlife living on the site. Specific reference is made to bats living in the sheds on this site.
- Insufficient details are provided to make an EIA Screening Determination.

#### **Other:**

- The development will set a precedent for similar schemes in the area.
- Query over the zoning, the site is zoned for commercial use, and the proposed development is primarily residential.



- There are numerous vacant sites in Drogheda that would be more suitable for development of this nature than the subject site.
- There was a lack of consultation with the local community about this development.

Photographs were submitted with some of the letters of objection.

Following the receipt of further information, additional comments were received and the points raised were similar to those in the original submissions and include:

- Concerns raised in the original submissions were not addressed by the applicant.
- The height, though reduced, remains excessive.
- The revisions remain a concern in terms of loss of light and potential overbearing.
- Need to address the potential for overlooking.
- Notes the reference to an existing public car park in the area. This is 200m from the subject site and is at full capacity at most times. Paid parking is also nearly at full capacity in this part of Drogheda.
- Request that the Council, if permission is granted, provide measures to prevent parking in Brickfields and Trinity Gardens.
- There is a need for additional disabled parking spots on the subject site.
- Laneway serving Brickfields should be accessible at all times during the construction phase of the development.
- The impact on existing residential units is not clearly provided from the submitted visual impact images.
- The existing site has not been well maintained and the submitted documentation including the Building Lifecycle Report do not give any comfort to residents that the site will be well maintained into the future.
- Unacceptable that there will be a loss of light to existing properties as a result of the proposed development.
- Notes again that there are a significant number of vacant properties in the area/ Drogheda that could be developed and would not require a scheme of the height/ density proposed.
- Procedural issues raised about the amount of time that third parties had to comment on the submitted further information. Revised public notices were submitted with the further information response and which should only have been

done when the submitted information was deemed significant by the Planning Authority. This issue is not within the scope of the Commission to adjudicate.

- There is welcome for the redevelopment of this site but not at the scale/ height proposed in this application.

Additional photographs were provided in support of some of the objections.

## 4.0 Planning History

There are no recent, relevant applications on this site.

**PA Ref. 97/510103** refers to an August 1997 decision to grant permission for alterations to an existing townhouse, conversion of townhouse to apartments and other site works.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

The current County Development Plan is the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. This plan includes Map Number 1.1 which is the ‘Drogheda Zoning and Flood Zones’ map.

The subject site is zoned B1 – ‘Town or Village Centre’ and which has an objective ‘To support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities.’

Under ‘Guidance’ it is stated:

‘The purpose of this zoning is to protect and enhance the character and vibrancy of existing town and village centres and to provide for and strengthen retailing, residential, commercial, cultural, entertainment and other appropriate uses. It will promote the consolidation of development on town and village centre lands, allowing for a broad range of compatible and complementary uses, which will be encouraged to locate in this area in order to create an attractive environment to reside, shop, work, visit and in which to invest. The appropriate reuse, adaptation and regeneration of buildings, backlands, vacant, derelict and underutilised lands for uses suitable to the location will be encouraged. Such uses may include residential

development. The full use of upper floors in retail and commercial premises in the town centre for residential use is considered permissible.

Primacy of the Retail Core area will be retained and prioritised for any new retail development to enhance its vitality and viability. Retail proposals shall have regard to relevant policies and objectives in the Retail Strategy (Appendix 4, Volume 3) and Chapter 5 of this Plan and the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012. Town centre development proposals will be required to be of a high architectural quality, which contributes to a distinct sense of place and public realm, promotes sustainable modes of travel and be appropriate to its location.'

Permitted Uses include:

'Advertisements and Advertising Structures, Bank/Financial Institution, B&B/ Guest House, Bring Banks, Business Enterprise Centre, Coffee Shop/Tea Room, Car Park, Casual Trading, Childcare Facility, Children Play/ Adventure Centre, Cinema, Conference/ Event Centre, Craft Centre/Shop, Crematorium, Cultural Facility, Digital Innovation Hub/Co-working Space, Education Facility (Primary or Second Level), Education Facility (Third Level or Training Centre), E- Charging Facility, Funeral Home/ Mortuary, Health Care Centre, Healthcare Practitioner, Hotel/ Hostel/ Aparthotel, Nightclub, Offices, Place of Worship, Public House, Public Services, Public Transport Infrastructure (Rail/Bus), Recreational/ Amenity Open Space, Residential, Restaurant, Sheltered Accommodation, Shop, Taxi Office, Telecommunications Structures, Utilities.'

The site is not within Flood Zones A or B.

A section of the site is within a designated 'Zone of Archaeological Potential' and this is further referenced in Appendix 9 of the County Development Plan.

Volume 4 of the County Development Plan provides the Record of Protected Structures. McCloskeys Bakery on 63 – 65 Trinity Street is listed on the Record of Protected Structures, RPS No. DB-314 refers. This is described as an 'Attached three-bay three-storey house, built c. 1850, now also in use as shop. Attached to three-bay two-storey bakery with integral carriage arch to east. Bakelite and chrome shopfront c. 1950' and an appraisal states that it is 'An attractive example of a bakelite shopfront. Full of fine quality, materials and character, McCloskey's Bakery is a local landmark and enhances its streetscape.'

The 'Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives' are provided in Chapter 13.

The following Policies/ Objectives/ Sections of the Louth County Development Plan, in order by chapter, are considered to be relevant to this development:

## Chapter 2 – Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy

National Planning Policy is provided under Section 2.2 and Regional Planning Policy is provided under Section 2.3. Section 2.13 refers specifically to Drogheda.

Table 2.3 provides a 'Transitional Population Projections for Louth with additional 25% Headroom' as follows:

| <b>Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly</b> |                |                        |   |                        |
|--|----------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| <b>Region and Counties</b>                   | <b>2016</b>    | <b>2026</b>            | <b>2026<br/>(incl.25% Headroom)<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>2031</b>            |
| <b>Mid-East</b>                              |                |                        |   |                        |
| <b>Louth</b>                                 | <b>129,000</b> | <b>139,000-144,500</b> | <b>141,500-148,375</b>                          | <b>144,000-151,500</b> |

<sup>1</sup> This Plan runs until 2027, which is factored into the population figures later in this Chapter

Drogheda is located on the Dublin to Belfast Corridor. In accordance with the RSES 'Drogheda and Dundalk are designated as Regional Growth Centres.' 'Regional Growth Centres are large towns with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.' Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk have a target population of 50,000 each by 2031. The population of Drogheda in 2016 was given as 34,199, which was a 4.9% increase since the 2011 figures. I note that table 2.7 includes a footnote that the figure here is for the area within County Louth only and the overall total including South Drogheda which is in County Meath is 40,956 persons as per the 2016 Census.

Table 2.11 provides the 'Population Projections & Distribution by Settlement Category, County Louth' and I have extracted the following for Drogheda:

| Column A               | Column B   | Column C               | Column D                  | Column E                         | Column F                      | Column G   | Column H  | Column I                                   |
|------------------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Settlement Category    | Settlement | Census Population 2016 | Projected Population 2027 | Projected increase in Population | Population Increase 2002-2016 | Annual Average Population increase p/a 2002-2016 | Projected average Population increase per annum 2016-2027 | Projected % of Total Growth Rate 2021-2027 |
| County                 | Louth      | 128,884                | 149,966                   | 21,082                           | 27,063                        | 1,933  | 1,916   | 100%                                       |
| Regional Growth Centre | Drogheda   | 34,199                 | 41,113                    | 6,914                            | 5,866                         | 419  | 629   | 32.8%                                      |
|                        | Dundalk    | 39,004                 | 46,664                    | 7,660                            | 6,499                         | 464  | 696   | 36.3%                                      |

Table 2.16 indicates that Drogheda has the potential for 500 units on lands zoned for Town Centre and Mixed Use development.

Table 2.17 provides the Core Strategy Table, and I have again extracted the relevant information for Drogheda:

| Column A               | Column B   | Column C        | Column D                              | Column E                  | Column F                           | Column G                                 | Column H                          | Column I                     | Column J  | Column K   | Column L                                       | Column M   |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Settlement Category    | Settlement | Population 2016 | Projected Population Increase to 2027 | Projected Population 2027 | Total Projected Housing Stock 2027 | Total Additional Housing Units 2016-2027 | Approx. Units Completed 2016-2020 | Housing Allocation 2021-2027 | Lands with potential to deliver Infill or Brownfield Development (ha) | Potential units to be delivered on Infill/Brownfield Lands | Total Lands Zoned New Residential Phase 1 (ha) | Total lands zoned New Residential (Phase 1 and Phase 2) (ha) |
| County                 | Louth      | 128,884         | 21,082                                | 149,966                   | 61,717                             | 10,318                                   | 2,040                             | 8,278                        | 110.4   | 4,302  | 506.1  | 597.1  |
| Regional Growth Centre | Drogheda   | 34,199          | 6,914                                 | 41,113                    | 17,184                             | 3,443                                    | 400                               | 3,043                        | 34.8  | 1,725  | 270  | 270  |
|                        | Dundalk    | 39,004          | 7,660                                 | 46,664                    | 19,892                             | 3,541                                    | 935                               | 2,606                        | 30  | 1,743  | 150.3  | 225.7  |

The following Policy Objectives are noted as relevant:

CS 1: 'To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Strategy in so far as practicable, by directing sustainable growth towards the designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.'

CS2: 'To achieve compact growth through the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing built up footprint of settlements, by developing infill, brownfield and regeneration sites and redeveloping underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.'

CS10: 'Direct and consolidate the majority of the County's future population growth into the strong and dynamic Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk in line with the objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and in accordance with the Core and Settlement Strategies of the Development Plan.'

CS11: 'Support the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk as regional economic drivers targeted to grow to city scale with a population of 50,000 by 2031 and capitalise on their strategic location on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.'

CS13: 'To prioritise the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP/LAP) for Drogheda in partnership with Meath County Council, which will incorporate the

existing local area plan areas affecting the wider town environs into one overall planning framework for the Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda. The preparation of the UAP/LAP will be informed by a local transport plan, in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.11 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.’

Table 2.18 provides an ‘Overview of Key Statistics for Drogheda’:

| <b>DROGHEDA</b>   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Population 2016</b>  | <b>34,199</b>        |
| <b>Projected Population 2027</b>                                  | <b>41,113</b>        |
| <b>Projected population increase</b>                              | <b>6,914</b>         |
| <b>Housing Stock</b>  | <b>13,741</b>        |
| <b>Projected Housing Stock 2027</b>                               | <b>16,311</b>        |
| <b>Projected Housing Stock increase 2021-2027</b>                 | <b>2,606</b>         |
| <b>Residents Workers 2016</b>                                     | <b>16,108</b>        |
| <b>Total Jobs 2016</b>  | <b>12,361</b>        |
| <b>Job: Workforce Ratio 2016<sup>9</sup></b>                      | <b>0.76</b>          |
| <b>Resident workforce working in Dublin City and suburbs 2016</b> | <b>2,662 (16.5%)</b> |

<sup>9</sup> The Total Jobs, Resident Workers, and Job:Workforce ratio for Drogheda includes the Southern Environs of the town which is in the administrative area of Meath. In 2016 the population of Drogheda within the administrative area of Louth was 34,199. There were 12,408 resident workers in the Louth area of the town and 11,145 jobs resulting in a Job:Workforce ratio of 0.90.

Policy Objectives that are relevant to this development:

SS1: ‘To support the role of Drogheda as a Regional Growth Centre and a driver of growth along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to facilitate the continued expansion and growth of the town based on the principles of balanced, sustainable development that enables the creation of employment, supports economic investment, and creates an attractive living and working environment.’

SS2: ‘To continue to support and promote the economic role of Drogheda as a regional centre of employment along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to facilitate any infrastructural investment or employment generating sustainable development that will strengthen the role of the town and maintain its competitiveness.’

SS3: 'To support the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan for Drogheda in conjunction with Meath County Council in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.11 in the RSES.'

SS4: 'To support high density sustainable development, particularly in centrally located areas and along public transport corridors and require a minimum density of 50 units/ha in these locations.'

SS5: 'To support increased building heights at appropriate locations in Drogheda, subject to the design and scale of any building making a positive contribution to its surrounding environment and streetscape.'

### Chapter 3 – Housing

#### Relevant Policy Objectives:

HOU 11: 'To encourage and support a range of appropriate uses in town and village centres that will assist in the regeneration of vacant and under-utilised buildings and land and will re-energise the town and village centres, subject to a high standard of development being achieved.'

Table 3.2 provides the 'Recommended Densities in Higher Tier Settlements' and for Drogheda Town Centre this is 50 dph.

HOU 15 states 'To promote development that facilitates a higher, sustainable density that supports compact growth and the consolidation of urban areas, which will be appropriate to the local context and enhance the local environment in which it is located.'

HOU 16: 'To support increased building heights in appropriate locations in the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk.'

HOU 32: 'To encourage and promote the development of underutilised infill, corner and backland sites in existing urban areas subject to the character of the area and environment being protected.'

HOU 33: 'To promote the use of contemporary and innovative design solutions subject to the design respecting the character and architectural heritage of the area.'

### Chapter 7 – Movement

MOV4: 'To promote sustainable higher density development along public transport corridors.'

MOV5: 'To prepare a Local Transport Plan in consultation with the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and other relevant stakeholders<sup>1</sup> for Drogheda and Dundalk as part of the preparation of the Urban Area Plans / Local Area Plans for these settlements. The preparation of these Plans will be based on the guidance note on Area Based Transport Assessments published by the NTA/TII in 2019 and these Plans will be subject to screening for SEA and AA and full assessments will be undertaken if appropriate.'

#### Chapter 9– Built Heritage and Culture

BHC 7: 'To require applicants seeking permission for development within Zones of Archaeological Potential and other sites as listed in the Record of Monuments and Places to include an assessment of the likely archaeological potential as part of the planning application and the Council may require that an on-site archaeological assessment is carried out by trial work, prior to a decision on a planning application being taken.'

BHC 20: 'To ensure that any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a protected structure and / or its setting is sensitively sited and designed, is compatible with the special character and is appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, density, layout, and materials of the protected structure.'

BHC 21: 'The form and structural integrity of the protected structure and its setting shall be retained and the relationship between the protected structure, its curtilage and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, designed views or vistas from or to the structure shall be protected.'

BHC 26: 'To encourage the retention, sympathetic reuse and rehabilitation of protected structures and their settings where appropriate and where the proposal is compatible with their character and significance. In certain cases, development management guidelines may be relaxed in order to secure the conservation of the protected structure and architectural features of special interest.'

#### Chapter 10– Utilities



IU 26: 'To reduce the risk of new development being affected by possible future flooding by:

- Avoiding development in areas at risk of flooding and
- Where development in floodplains cannot be avoided, taking a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and adaptation to the risk.'

#### Chapter 12– Climate Action

CA3: 'Actively implement policies that support and encourage sustainable compact growth and settlement patterns, integrate land use and transportation, and maximise opportunities through development location, form, layout and design to secure climate resilience and reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse emissions.'

Chapter 13 provides Development Management Guidelines, and the following are noted as relevant:

Section 13.8.16: 'Developments of 50 units or more shall include proposals for the provision of a dedicated children's play area designed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.'

Section 13.8.17 provides details on Private Open Space and details for Apartments/ Duplexes are set out in Table 13.5.

Car/ bicycle parking is detailed in Section 13.8.18. I note that 'In communal parking areas the necessary ducting and wiring to facilitate the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points shall be provided at a rate of 20% of total spaces' and 'A Transport Mobility Management Plan supporting any reduction in car parking would be required with any application where the quantum of parking is significantly below that set out in the Car Parking Standards.' Cycle Parking Standards are set out in Table 13.12 and Car Parking in Table 13.11. The subject site is in an Area 1 location within Drogheda Town Centre and has a requirement for 1 car parking space per unit and 1 per 20sq m for Restaurants, cafes and takeaway'.

The following is included in relation to car parking and is relevant to this development:

'A reduction in the car parking requirement may be acceptable where the Planning Authority is satisfied that:

- There is sufficient parking available in the vicinity of the development to cater for any shortfall;
- The nature of the development is such that existing parking spaces in the vicinity could facilitate the dual use of parking spaces, particularly if the development operated at off-peak times. Supporting documentation will be required demonstrating how the dual use will work;
- The public transport links available would reduce the demand for car parking;
- The central location of the development is such that the customers/residents/users of the development would be likely to walk or cycle; and
- There was no off street car parking provided with the existing/previous use of the property and the redevelopment of the property would not result in a significant increase in the car parking requirement.

A Transport Mobility Management Plan supporting any reduction in car parking shall be included with any application where the quantum of parking is significantly below that set out in the Car Parking Standards (Table 13.11). Parking demand calculations shall be provided detailing the demand throughout the day from a database of similar types of development in similar circumstances.'

Section 13.8.32 refers to 'Infill and Backland Development in Urban Areas'.

### **Variations to the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027:**

There have been three variations to date to the Louth County Development Plan as follows:

Variation No. 1: Made in July 2022. This updates the 'County Development Plan to take account of the methodology and housing projections as set out in the Section 28 Guidelines 'Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning' and the 'Projected Housing Demand by Local Authority Area 2020-2031 – ESRI NPF Scenario Housing Supply Target' provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in December 2020. This will ensure that the housing provision in the Development Plan is consistent with, and aligned with, national and regional policy.' In addition, this variation update the County Development Plan 'to ensure it is consistent with Part V of the Planning and Development Act as amended by the Affordable Housing Act 2021.'

The following are noted:

Table 2.17 Core Strategy Table is revised to Table 2.15 and as for Drogheda includes the following:

| Column A               | Column B   | Column C        | Column D                              | Column E                  | Column F                           | Column G                                 | Column H                           | Column I                     | Column J  | Column K  | Column L                                       | Column M   |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Settlement Category    | Settlement | Population 2016 | Projected Population Increase to 2027 | Projected Population 2027 | Total Projected Housing Stock 2027 | Total Additional Housing Units 2016-2027 | Approved Units Completed 2016-2020 | Housing Allocation 2021-2027 | Lands with potential to deliver Infill or Brownfield Development (ha) | Potential units to be delivered on Infill/ Brownfield Lands | Total Lands Zoned New Residential Phase 1 (ha) | Total lands zoned New Residential (Phase 1 and Phase 2) (ha) |
| County                 | Louth      | 128,884         | 21,082                                | 149,966                   | 61,717                             | 10,318                                   | 2,040                              | 8,278<br>6,524               | 110.4   | 4,302   | 506.1  | 597.1  |
| Regional Growth Centre | Drogheda   | 34,199          | 6,914                                 | 41,113                    | 17,184                             | 3,443                                    | 400                                | 3,043<br>2,447               | 34.8  | 1,725   | 270  | 270  |
|                        | Dundalk    | 39,004          | 7,660                                 | 46,664                    | 19,892                             | 3,541                                    | 935                                | 2,606<br>2,447               | 30  | 1,743   | 150.3  | 225.7  |

Variation No. 2: Made in May 2024 and this updated ‘the County Development Plan to take account of the Guidelines ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2024 and issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 28 provides that planning authorities shall have regard to Ministerial Guidelines and shall apply any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) of the Guidelines, within the meaning of Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in the performance of their functions.’

Variation No.3: Made in October 2025 and this was to take account of the Dundalk Local Area Plan and is not relevant to this site in Drogheda.

## 5.2. Drogheda Local Area Plan

The most recent local area plan was the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011 – 2017 and which has now expired. The preparation of a Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan has commenced with a Draft Issues Paper produced in 2024 and work is ongoing on this plan, but no specific dates are available at this time for its implementation.

## 5.3. National Planning Framework – First Revision

National Policy Objective 5 states: ‘The regional roles of Athlone in the Midlands, Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West and the Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border networks will be supported in the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and in Regional Enterprise Plans.’

#### 5.4. **Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy – EMRA**

Under the Section ‘Growth Enablers for the Core Region include;’ it states ‘Drogheda to realise its potential to grow to city scale and secure investment to become a self-sustaining Regional Growth Centre on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, driving synergies between the Drogheda - Dundalk - Newry cross border network.’ Table 4.2 ‘Settlement Strategy’ indicates Drogheda to be within the Core Region and to be one of the ‘Regional Growth Centres’.

#### 5.5. **Other Guidance**

The following is a list of Section 28 - Ministerial Guidelines considered of relevance to the proposed development. Specific policies and objectives are referenced within the assessment where appropriate.

- Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2025)
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoHLGH, 2024).
- Urban Development and Building Heights - Guidelines for Planning Authorities – (DoHPLG, 2018).
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (DoEHLG, 2007).
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management including the associated Technical Appendices (DEHLG/ OPW, 2009).
- Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001).

#### **Other Relevant Policy Documents include:**

- The Climate Action Plan 2024
- The Climate Action Plan 2025
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030
- Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025 – 2030
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) - 2023 Update.
- Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020.
- Permeability Best Practice Guide – National Transport Authority.

## **5.6. Natural Heritage Designations**

- King William's Glen NHA (Site Code 001804) is located 3.9km to the north west of the subject site.
- The nearest European Site is the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299) which is 70m from the subject site and the Boyne Estuary SAP (Site Code 004232) and which is 2.4km to the west of the subject site. The Boyne Estuary SPA (Site Code 004080) is 2.42km to the east of the subject site.

## **6.0 The Appeal**

### **6.1. Grounds of Appeal**

A single first party appeal was received, from the Trinty Gardens Residents Association, and the following points were made, which I have summarised:

- Procedural issue due to the issuing of public notices with the submitted further information response. This reduced the amount of time for the two-week period for comments.
- Failure to address the concerns raised in relation to the overdevelopment of the site.
- Also concerns about the lack of car parking, daylight/ sunlight impacts, density, misapplication of SPPRs, public open space and other issues. These are set out in Appendix 3 of the Appeal and are the same issues as originally identified in the letter of objection to this development.
- The Planning Authority raised concerns about the height, scale and mass of the proposed development and these were not adequately addressed by the applicant in their further information response.
- The stated density is 200 dph, which is 30% higher than the maximum for a Regional Growth Town in the Compact Settlements Guidelines. This is a material contravention of HOU 20 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

- The Planning Authority misapplied the EIA Directive and request that the developer produce the EIA Screening Information required to make a Screening Determination.
- The proposed development is premature pending the preparation and adoption of the Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan. This plan would identify suitable sites for taller buildings within the plan area. A transport plan is also to be provided for Drogheda and has not been adopted to date.

## 6.2. **Observation**

A single observation opposing the development was received from Marguerita Sampson. Issues raised are similar to those in the third party appeal and include:

- Concern about impact on daylight/ sunlight to existing residential units in Brickfield.
- There are a number of errors in the assessment of impact on daylight.
- Need to ensure that the Planning Authorities are compliant with the most recent approved climate action plan and relevant EIA Directives. The submitted documents make very little reference to climate change.

The observation is supported with a number of photographs.

## 6.3. **Applicant's Response**

The applicant submitted the following response to the third-party appeals; I have provided them under the applicant's heading:

1. Failure to Address Appellants' and Authority's Concerns: The Planning Authority have fully assessed, sometimes twice, issues raised in relation to car parking, daylight/ sunlight, density etc. A comprehensive summary of the submissions is provided in the PA reports, and it is considered that all raised points were adequately considered.

In relation to the PA concerns, the applicant has reduced the height of the 7 storey Block by a floor so that it is now 6 storeys instead of the originally proposed 7 storeys. In addition, the removal of a floor has impacted on the scale, massing and density of the proposed development. Full details are provided in

the submitted documentation. The density has reduced from 228.5 dph to 200 dph.

2. **Density and Compliance with the Section 28 Guidelines: Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024:** The appeal claims that the development would materially contravene HOU 20 of the Louth County Development Plan in relation to density/ compliance with relevant Section 28 guidelines. The development has been revised with the loss of a floor and a reduction in the density to 200 dph. The revisions were considered to be acceptable to the PA. The applicant has set out a justification for the density in their submission having full regard to the Compact Settlements Guidelines. Consolidation is to be supported within Regional Growth Centres such as Drogheda, and this is achieved through a number of key priorities which the applicant has identified in their appeal response statement. The site is located within Drogheda Town Centre and having used the National Transport Authority (NTA) Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) tool, it was found that the site is served with a Medium to High Level of Service during the AM Peak. Full details are provided as to how the development will integrate with the existing area it is located within. In conclusion the applicant considers that the density is acceptable for this accessible, brownfield site within Drogheda town centre. The density can be justified on the basis of the Compact Settlements Guidelines and proximity to high quality/ frequency public transport.
3. **Height and Compliance with SPUR3 of the Urban Development & Building Heights: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2018:** The further information response resulted in the removal of a floor. The applicant demonstrates how the development complies with the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines in their appeal response. Specific response is made to demonstrating compliance with SPUR 3 of these guidelines and its relevant criteria.
4. **Sunlight/ Daylight Concerns:** A report was prepared by BPC Consulting Engineers and which the appeal discounts the findings of. BPC have submitted a response to the appeal and in summary they report that the BRE Guidance is advisory rather than statutory and IS EN 17037:2018 is best practice guidance rather than a statutory requirement. They note the need to balance good daylighting whilst delivering compact development within urban areas. It is

accepted that the development will result in a reduction in daylight, but this is within acceptable ranges as per the BRE Guidance. Open space areas exceed the required minimum of sunlight as per the BRE Guidance. In summary, all standards were met and all assessments were undertaken in accordance with best practice.

5. Accessibility: Note the issues raised. The 45 minute walking distance was from the PA report, and which considered that all of the services within the town could be reached within 45 minutes from the subject site. The applicant has provided details of services within this walking band distance. 43% of residents within the Drogheda Urban Area use sustainable forms of transport to travel to school or work. The site is located within an accessible, central location.
6. Car Parking & Traffic: Car Parking Standards in Table 13.11 of the Louth Development Plan are maximums and can be reduced. Car parking provision is in accordance with the County Development Plan, and no material contravention issues arise, and the development is also compliant with SPPR3 (ii) of the Compact Settlements Guidelines. The existing commercial/ retail business operates with no dedicated car parking as it is located within a town centre site. The submitted Transport Statement acknowledges that there is congestion but on all main routes within Drogheda town centre. The proposed development with four car parking spaces will not add to any congestion. Impacts from the development on the R168 and Fair Green would be negligible.
7. Public Open Space & Play Areas: Section 13.8.15 of the Louth County Development Plan allows for the setting aside or reduction in the area of public open space to be provided. A total of 632sq m of communal open space is to be provided and which is in excess of the requirements of the County Development Plan. The applicant has also identified existing public open space in the immediate area of the subject site. There is no requirement to provide for a children's playground as the development is for less than 50 units. A small play area can be provided within the communal open space area if required, by way of a condition.
8. Screening for EIA: The Planning Authority carried out a screening for EIA as part of its assessment. The applicant notes that issues raised in the appeal would raise a broader debate about EIA and legal requirements and is not within the



scope of this application at this time. The applicant has provided an EIA Screening Report in support of the appeal response and in conclusion there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.

9. Bat Assessment: There is no evidence raised in the appeal that there are bats on site. The applicant's Bat Assessment has found no evidence of bats roosting in the buildings on site and there was minimal bat activity evidenced during the surveys.
10. Archaeology: A revised Archaeological Impact Assessment Report was submitted in support of the FI response, and no issues of concern were raised by the PA.
11. Prematurity Pending Adoption of the Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan: This issue was raised in the submitted third party appeal with no evidence to support the claim. Whilst it is accepted that there is a delay in the preparation of this plan, this does not impede the ability to consider and permit development within the town centre.
12. Core Strategy: There is a target for the population of Drogheda to reach 50,000 by 2031. The proposed development of 42 units would help achieve this figure, but the applicant notes that this would only make up 1.7% of the current total housing target and 0.5% of the requirement between now and 2034 when revised housing targets are to be provided.
13. Validity of the Planning Authority Decision: The applicant provides full details on the submitted further information response and the provision of revised public notices, which was a requirement of the request issued by the Planning Authority. On receipt of the further information, the Planning Authority raised no issue of concern, and third parties were still afforded the opportunity to comment on the response; 11 further responses were received on the details provided in the further information response.

Conclusion: Request that the decision of Louth County Council be upheld and that permission be granted for this development. The response to the appeal is supported with a details on the Daylight/ Sunlight Assessment and also through the provision of an EIA Screening Report.

#### **6.4. Planning Authority Response**

The Planning Authority responded that all issues have been substantively addressed in their reports dated the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 and 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025, and through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Appeal Response dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and first party response dated 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. The Planning Authority reported that they were satisfied that correct procedures and timeframes were adhered to in relation to public notices and submissions. It is reported that Louth County Council and Meath County Council have commenced the preparation of a Joint Local Area Plan for Drogheda and its environs. It is requested that the Commission uphold the decision of the Planning Authority to grant permission.

#### **6.5. Further Third Party Appeal Comments:**

I have summarised the issues under the heading provided:

1. Failure to Address Appellants' and Authority's Concerns: The appellant has the right to raise these concerns and considers the first party response to be ineffective. The reduction in height does not necessarily improve other factors such as massing and scale. Notes the lack of open space on site.
2. Density: There are exceptions allowed in terms of density, but the development does not adequately address this issue. The issue of public transport accessibility is overstated, with bus services not running at a high frequency.
3. Height and SPPR3 of the 2018 Guidelines: The development does not demonstrate compliance with SPPR3, and the height remains excessive in this location.
4. Sunlight/ Daylight Concerns: The submitted details are noted but concern is raised about the submitted assessments and review by the same person.
5. Accessibility: Note the issues raised. The 45-minute walking distance was from the PA report, and which considered that all of the services within the town could be reached within 45 minutes from the subject site. The applicant has provided details of services within this walking band distance. 43% of residents within the Drogheda Urban Area use sustainable forms of transport to travel to school or work. The site is located within an accessible, central location.
6. Car Parking & Traffic: The site is considered to be peripheral and not accessible. The submitted walking bands map is confusing as no scale is provided.

7. Public Open Space & Play Areas: There is no substitution of public open space by communal open space. Issues raised about the provision of a playground to serve this development.
8. Screening for EIA: Concern expressed about the late provision of the EIA Screening. Impacts on houses in Brickfield have not been addressed in this screening.
9. Local Area Plan: There is nothing in legislation as to what happens if a Planning Authority fails to provide a suitable plan, as this scenario was not expected to occur. The fact remains that there is no plan in place at present.
10. Core Strategy: Requests that the Commission source up to date Core Strategy information, a significant deviation from targets would be a material contravention issue.

Requests that the appeal be upheld and permission refused for this development.

#### **6.6. Further Third Party Observation Comments:**

Notes the Daylight/ Sunlight Assessment and the provision of an EIA Screening Report. Continues to support the appeal and considers the EIA Screening to be deficient as it does not consider the impact on her property.

### **7.0 Assessment**

- 7.1. The main issues that arise for assessment in relation to this appeal can be addressed under the following headings:

- Nature of the Development
- Density and Height
- Impact on the Character of the Area
- Residential Amenity
- Transport and Access
- Water Supply, Drainage and Flood Issues
- Other Issues

#### **7.2. Nature of the Development**

- 7.2.1. Background: The application lodged to Louth County Council was for a development consisting of 48 apartments and one café/ retail unit and all associated site works at

Trinity Street, Drogheda. The development included four blocks; Block A included the existing 62-63 Trinity Street buildings and was the location of the proposed café/ bakery shop and incorporated five apartment units. Block B provided for a four storey block consisting of three apartment units. Block C consisted of two apartment units, and Block D provided for 38 apartment units in a seven-storey block. Following the receipt of further information, revisions were made to the layout and scale of development primarily resulting in a reduction in height of Block D from seven to six storeys and a reduction in the overall number of units to 42 apartments.

7.2.2. The reduction in the number of units/ revisions to the development have other implications for this development/ impact on the area and these will be considered further in this report. Considering the revisions made to the development in response to the further information request, it is this version of the development that has been appealed, and which I will be assessing, and not the 48 unit apartment development originally submitted. The applicant has submitted their appeal response on the basis of the revised development.

7.2.3. Zoning: The subject land is zoned B1 – ‘Town or Village Centre’ with an objective ‘To support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities’ and which allows for residential in addition to commercial development. Comment was raised in the appeal and submissions which queried the use of these lands for residential development; I consider that the zoning is appropriate for a mixed use development, though predominately residential, of the nature proposed. I welcome the inclusion of the coffee/ bakery shop, and which is an appropriate use of the protected structure continuing the existing use into the future and which retains the established identity of the site. The proposed development will not have a negative impact on the protected structure.

7.2.4. Conclusion on Nature of the Development: The subject site is suitably zoned for mixed use development including residential units and also allows for the proposed café/ bakery shop here.

### 7.3. **Density and Height**

7.3.1. Background: The subject site area is given as 0.21 hectares and 42 units are proposed giving a gross density of 200 dwellings per hectare (dph). The net density as calculated in accordance with Appendix B of the Compact Settlements Guidelines

would be 210dph. The appeal refers to the excessive density on site, and which is not in accordance with the Compact Settlements Guidelines, and the proposed height of the development is also excessive. The applicant rejects this and considers the density and height to be appropriate in this town centre location.

7.3.2. Planning Authority Comment: The Planning Authority reported the original 48 unit development to be excessively dense at 228dph. The revised development of 42 units provides for a reduced density, but the Planning Authority did not specifically comment on this in their FI report. The reduction in building height of Block D from 7 to 6 storeys, a height reduction of 3m was welcomed by the Planning Authority and considered the 'proposal is compatible with the nearby protected structure and the surrounding streetscape..'.

7.3.3. Assessment: I consider the issues of building height and density to run together as combined considerations. Whether gross or net density is used, the proposal would provide for in excess of 200dph on this site. I refer to Policy Objective SS4 which seeks 'To support high density sustainable development, particularly in centrally located areas and along public transport corridors and require a minimum density of 50 units/ha in these locations and SS5 which seeks 'To support increased building heights at appropriate locations in Drogheda, subject to the design and scale of any building making a positive contribution to its surrounding environment and streetscape.'

7.3.4. In terms of density, the submitted development clearly provides for in excess of 50dph. The RSES designates Drogheda to be a Regional Growth Centre, and the Compact Settlements Guidelines indicate that a density 'in the range 50-150 dph (net) shall generally be applied in centres and urban neighbourhoods.' The proposed density is clearly in excess of this range and I consider this would be contrary to the Compact Settlements Guidelines. The Louth County Development Plan requires densities to be at least 50dph but does not set an upper limit. As it refers to the Compact Settlements Guidelines, noting Variation No.2 adopted in May 2024, I consider the upper limit should be 150dph. Some exceedance may be acceptable if residential amenity is protected, site is suitably accessible, good quality of design etc. is demonstrated, however I consider the density to be excessive and would set a poor precedent for similar development within the town centre. I have a

concern about aspects of this development in terms of impact on residential amenity and I will address these points later in my report.

7.3.5. The issue of height follows on from density, and it is this aspect of the development that may be used to address the concern about density. I note the submitted supporting documentation including the Architectural Design Statement, photomontages/ visual impact details and the revisions made in response to the further information request. I note the concerns made about the height and impact it would have on residential amenity but also on the character of Drogheda. The photograph included on Page 8 of the Architectural Design Statement, clearly indicates that tall buildings are in place in Drogheda mostly in the form of churches but also the hospital and the railway viaduct. Not shown, but since constructed, is the large apartment development located to the north west of the bridge over the Boyne, to the south east of the subject site and which would be located almost to the centre of the referenced picture.

7.3.6. I have no objection to Blocks A, B and C as submitted/ as per the FI response. Block D is problematic in terms of its height and impact on the character of the area. Block D would dominate the area and would have a negative impact on the setting of the protected structure. The design of this block is generally of a high quality but is not located in an appropriate location. The site rises steeply on a south to north/ roadside to rear axis and locating this block to the rear only increases the dominance it would have. If the site were flat, the issue would not be so pronounced. The revised photo montages do not demonstrate the true visual impact due to the angles that the images are provided from. I am satisfied that central areas of Drogheda can take six or seven storey apartment blocks, but not on a constrained site, with a defined slope and adjacent to a protected structure. The removal of additional floors may address the issue of visual impact and density, to bring the density down to 150 would require the removal of 10 units or the removal of the fifth and sixth storeys (total of eight units) and reconfiguration of the fourth storey in Block D. The Commission could decide to grant permission on the basis of floor removal and reduction in unit numbers, though I would not support such an approach as other impacts, not known at this time, could arise such as adverse impact on the architectural design and/ or impact on existing residential amenity.

7.3.7. Section 3.2 – ‘Development Management Criteria’ of the ‘Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, December 2018, sets out a number of considerations for developments with increased heights/ building with heights that are significantly taller than existing adjoining sites.

In the interest of convenience/ completeness, I have set these out in the following table:

**Table A: Considerations for development with increased height**

| <b>At the scale of the relevant city/ town</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Response</b>   |
| The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport. | <p>The site is located within the centre of Drogheda and most journeys can be undertaken on foot or by bicycle.</p> <p>Bus stops on George’s Street, approximately 250m to the east of the subject site serve a number of bus routes including routes D4 and D which provide a combined 15 minute frequency to the bus station and the train station. Other bus routes here include the 173 town bus and the 182 which serve the bus station southbound and the Lourdes Hospital, and Ardee outbound/ northbound. The 190 serves the 190 serves the hospital, Navan and Athlone. The 901 serves Dundalk and Dublin City Centre. The 100 serves Dunleer and Dundalk.</p> <p>Whilst public transport may not be used regularly, there is a good bus service available within easy walking distance of the subject site.</p> |
| Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no protected views or Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) impacting this site.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key view.</p> <p>Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The McCloskeys Bakery building is a protected structure and will be integrated into the overall site development.</li> <li>• CGIs have been prepared and submitted in support of this application.</li> <li>• The front/ retained elevations of the buildings on Trinity Street will provide for good integration with the existing streetscape. The retention and restoration/ reuse of these buildings will provide for a high quality frontage here.</li> <li>• Landscaping proposals are confined to the proposed communal open space areas and no public open space is proposed here.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed development is of a brownfield site where much of the site is vacant and unused. The buildings on Trinity Street are in good condition and are in partial use.</li> <li>• The proposed development would provide for a good reuse of this site and integration with the surrounding area, though I am concerned that Block D to the north of the site is over dominant through its bulk, mass and six storeys height.</li> <li>• Other than Block D, there is good integration proposed with the existing streetscape and adjoining properties.</li> <li>• Ground floor uses it the form of the coffee/ bakery shop and associated frontage retaining the existing streetscape on Trinity Street will</li> </ul> |



|  | ensure that the proposed development will provide for active and attractive streetscapes as part of the overall scheme.   |
|--|---|
| <b>At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street</b>   |   |
| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Response</b>   |
| The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The subject site is located within an established urban area within Drogheda town centre. The proposed retention of the existing buildings on Trinity Street will ensure that the development will continue to integrate with the streetscape here.</li> </ul>   |
| The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design includes a variety of building types, heights and roof types, thereby ensuring that the design is not monolithic.</li> </ul>  |
| The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being in line with the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design provides for a development that is far in excess of the specified density for these lands. The Compact Settlements Guidelines provide for a density range of 50 – 150 dph and the proposed development is in excess of 200dph.</li> <li>No public open space is provided, which is acceptable in terms of the Louth County Development Plan. Communal space is provided in excess of Development Plan requirements.</li> <li>The ‘Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2009) are complied with, and there is no history of flooding in this area, and the site is considered to be within Flood Zone C.</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
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| Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2009).   |   |
| The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the development provides for a comprehensive redevelopment of this site for residential development, it would be contrary to density requirements for such development in Drogheda town centre.</li> <li>• The height of Block D is excessive at six storeys when compared with the existing form of development which is primarily 2 storey buildings or low height commercial/ warehousing/ light industrial units. Taller buildings have been permitted in Drogheda but in locations which respect existing development in terms of not having an adverse impact on the character of the area or on existing residential amenity.</li> </ul> |
| The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed development will provide for a mix of apartments in the form of one, two and three bedroom units.</li> <li>• The overall mix of unit types is considered to be acceptable and appropriate within Drogheda town centre where there is an identified demand for such dwelling types.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>At the scale of the site/ building</b>  |   |
| <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Response</b>   |
| The form, massing, and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The internal layout is generally acceptable.</li> <li>• The submitted Daylight/ Sunlight Assessment demonstrates that adequate daylight and sunlight will continue to be received at existing houses most notably in Brickfields to the west of the subject site.</li> </ul>   |

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| views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is acceptable separation distances between the blocks, however the separation distance with existing houses is deficient at between 12m and 14m with the houses in Brickfields to the west of the subject site.</li> </ul> |
| Appropriate and reasonable regard should be taken of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision outlined in guides like the Building Research Establishment's 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above.</li> </ul>   |
| Where a proposal may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the daylight provisions above, this has been clearly identified and a rationale for any alternative, compensatory design solutions has been set out, in respect of which the Commission has applied its discretion, having regard to local factors including specific site constraints and the balancing of that assessment against the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, no specific issues of concern were raised here.</li> </ul>   |

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|---|--|
| desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution.   |  |
| <b>Specific Assessment</b>  |  |
| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
| To support proposals at some or all of these scales, specific assessments may be required, and these may include: Specific impact assessment of the micro-climatic effects such as downdraft. Such assessments shall include measures to avoid/ mitigate such micro-climatic effects and, where appropriate, shall include an assessment of the cumulative micro-climatic effects where taller buildings are clustered. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale of development is not significantly large enough to warrant the preparation of a micro-climate assessment.</li> <li>• Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing analysis have been submitted and full details of the assessment of these is provided in this report.</li> </ul>                  |
| In development locations in proximity to sensitive bird and / or bat areas, proposed developments need to consider the potential interaction of the building  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Bat Assessment was undertaken and in summary, bat activity was found to be very low and no impacts on bats were foreseen according to the applicant's report. The site has limited roosting potential, and a more desirable location is located to the north of the site within the open</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| location, building materials and artificial lighting to impact flight lines and / or collision.                            | space in Trinity Gardens and which contains a number of mature trees.  |
| An assessment that the proposal allows for the retention of important telecommunication channels, such as microwave links. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No impacts are foreseen in this regard.</li> </ul>  |
| An assessment that the proposal maintains safe air navigation.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No impacts are foreseen in this regard.</li> </ul>  |
| An urban design statement including, as appropriate, impact on the historic built environment.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An 'Architectural Design Statement' has been prepared and submitted in support of the development. This demonstrates how the proposed development will integrate into its surroundings.</li> </ul>  |
| Relevant environmental assessment requirements, including SEA, EIA, AA and Ecological Impact Assessment, as appropriate.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEA and EIA not required/ applicable due to the scale of the development. I have carried out an EIA Screening of the proposed development and is included in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.</li> <li>An AA screening report was submitted with the application – See Appendix 3 for further details.</li> </ul> |

7.3.8. The above table demonstrates that the development does not comply with all aspects of Section 3.2 of the 'Urban Development and Building Height' guidelines. Several of the issues identified in the table are assessed in greater depth in the following sections of my report. As I have already reported the issue of height and excessive density are a significant concern and Block D of this development, forming

a major element of the overall scheme, is the primary source of concern with the overall proposal.

7.3.9. Conclusion on Section 9.3: Block D is a very large building and through the restricted nature of the site it would have a significant visual impact on this character of the area and one which I consider to be excessive. Drawing No. FI-105 clearly indicates the dominance of this element of the development over the rest of the scheme and also the impact on the adjoining area. As reported, I am satisfied that Drogheda is suitable for buildings of this height, but I consider this restricted site, on a slope, not suitable. Whilst Block D could be revised or even removed, that would have a negative impact on the overall design of this development. The proposed density is also excessive and is not in accordance with the Compact Settlements Guidelines and materially contravenes the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 under Variation No.2. I recommend that permission be refused due to the excessive density and height of this development.

#### **7.4. Impact on the Character of the Area**

7.4.1. Layout Design: The overall layout is considered to be of a good quality, and the development would revitalize this section of Trinity Street within Drogheda town centre. I have already reported on density and height, and it should be added that no public open space is provided here and the applicant has addressed this in their submitted reports on the basis that the development plan allows for this. Also, it should be added that car parking provision on site is very low at four spaces, though a total of 632.2sqm/ 29.6% of the site area is in the form of communal open space.

7.4.2. The proposed layout is considered to be appropriate for the nature of this development. Access is available from Trinity Street but also from the existing laneways/ accesses to the east and west of the site. The proposed development would provide for significantly increased passive surveillance on all sides, though excessively so the west giving rise to overlooking.

7.4.3. Building Design: I consider the proposed architectural design to be of a good quality and this was not issued as a specific issue of concern in the appeal other than in terms of the height of the development. I wish to again commend how the café/ bakery shop is incorporated into the overall design and which would provide for a suitable active frontage onto Trinity Street.

7.4.4. Conclusion on Design: I am satisfied that the proposed building design is of a good quality and the site layout is also good. The issue of height, as a reason for refusal, has been addressed in my report.

## **7.5. Residential Amenity**

7.5.1. Background: The Planning Authority raised a number of concerns about the internal layout of the proposed apartments, and on receipt of the further information response they are satisfied that the units are acceptable. The appeal raises a number of concern in relation to impact on existing residential amenity including overlooking leading to a loss of privacy, overshadowing/ loss of daylight/ sunlight and nuisance.

7.5.2. Assessment – Proposed Residential Amenity: As reported, revised details were submitted in response to a further information request. In summary all units are provided with appropriate floor space and private amenity space. 11 units or 25% of the total provide a floor area that is in excess of 110% of the minimum requirements. This is not in accordance with SPPR 3 of the Apartment Guidelines 2023 (note application was originally lodged in September 2024 with Louth County Council) which requires over 50% of units to be in excess of this 110%, however the site is less than 0.25hectares and is an urban infill scheme, with reduced standards open for consideration.

7.5.3. 74% of the new units will receive adequate daylight provision as per the BRE Guidance and BS EN 17037 and detailed in the BPC report. The refurbished units provided for a 45% pass rate, those below are restricted by window openings. Communal open space will be provided with adequate sunlight as per the test date of 21<sup>st</sup> of March.

7.5.4. As reported, there is an adequate area of communal open space provided for these units. I note the comments raised about the provision of play equipment in the appeal. There is no requirement for such on this site and in any case, this could be addressed by way of condition in the event that permission were to be granted for this development. Overall, the proposed units would provide for good residential amenity.

7.5.5. Assessment – Existing Residential Amenity: A number of issues were raised in the appeal. Overlooking of existing properties adjacent to the site was a significant

concern. To the west of Block D are numbers 4 to 9 Brickfields, which are two storey houses that back onto the laneway with the subject site. The applicant has indicated the separation distances to be between 12.9m and 14.9m. I consider this to be unacceptable. A variety of rooms are located on the western elevation of block D including bedrooms, bathrooms and living rooms. In addition, the private amenity space of some units is located on this side of the block. The level of overlooking from this side of the block would be significant and this is increased through the height of the block.

7.5.6. Overshadowing and loss of daylight/ sunlight were also raised as concerns. Revised details were submitted with the further information response. Referring to the submitted report by BPC received by Louth County Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2025, the units on Brickfields demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) test in all cases. All units here receive adequate daylight. The test for Sunlight to Amenity Spaces demonstrates that all gardens will receive sunlight for 50% of the site area on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March for at least two hours on this date. The submitted report indicates that the tested houses on Brickfields will be impacted by increased overshadowing in the morning (March and June) primarily as a result of Block D, though this impact is gone by 10/ 11am on these dates.

7.5.7. I would expect there to be impacts during the construction phase of this development due to the location of the site within an urban area. These impacts can be reduced through the implementation of a Construction Management Plan and suitable controls on the construction phases of the development.

7.5.8. Conclusion on Residential Amenity: The proposed development would provide for a good quality of residential amenity for future occupants of this development. However, the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the existing residents to the west of the subject site in Brickfields in terms of overlooking leading to a loss of privacy. There will be an increase in overshadowing and a reduction in daylight/ sunlight receipt, but this is within an acceptable range in accordance with the BRE Guidance. The layout of the development, specifically Block D, is such that I cannot suggest suitable mitigation measures other than the omission or total redesign of this block. The proposed development would have a negative impact on existing residential amenity, and I recommend that permission be refused for that reason.



## **7.6. Transport and Access**

- 7.6.1. Background: The appeal raises a number of issues in relation to the poor quality of transport in the area, lack of cycle infrastructure and insufficient car parking. The Planning Authority raised no concerns and recommended a grant of permission subject to conditions.
- 7.6.2. Assessment: The lack of suitable public transport in order to consider this to be an accessible site was raised in the appeal. I would be concerned that the appeal is missing the point of accessibility and availability of public transport. I am satisfied that the site is located within the centre of Drogheda and the need for frequent public transport on the site doorstep is not necessary. The site is approximately 210m to the west of the junction of West Street/ Trinity Street and Georges Street; this is one of the major focal points/ junctions to the western side of Drogheda Town Centre. Further east approximately 560m away is St Peters Church opposite the Drogheda Shopping Centre, which could also be considered to be the centre of the town and also within walking distance. The appeal has acknowledged that a number of bus routes serve the area/ are within 200m from the site. The site is centrally located and I consider that a range of services are accessible by walking without the need for public transport provision.
- 7.6.3. Secondly, the issue of no cycle infrastructure was raised a number of times in the appeal/ observation/ letters of objection. I accept that the terrain in Drogheda and lack of cycle tracks does not make cycling an easy option, however the subject site is centrally located within the town centre, and likely cycle destinations such as the train station (approximately 2km away), bus station (870m away) and Scotch Hall SC (1.4km away) are all within a short cycle distance. The Lourdes Hospital, a major source of employment within Drogheda, is approximately 1km walk/ cycle from the subject site. The lack of on-street cycle tracks is not a barrier to bicycle use and I would not agree with the comments in this regard.
- 7.6.4. I note that car parking provision is very low at 4 spaces. Section 13.8.18 of the Louth County Development Plan sets out criteria where a reduced car parking standard would be appropriate and the following is relevant; 'The central location of the development is such that the customers/residents/users of the development would be likely to walk or cycle.' I am satisfied that the site is located within a central

location in Drogheda town centre and a reduced car parking provision is appropriate. Most trips can be made on foot or by cycling to town centre services including major sources of employment such as the Lourdes Hospital. On street public car parking is available in the area and this can meet demand for visitor parking.

7.6.5. The applicant submitted a Quality Audit which included a Road Safety Audit and clarified that no vehicular access was proposed into the site through their further information response. The car parking is located to the north east of the site but will take the form of on-street parking. This will not require any road access within the site or junction alterations. An existing loading bay to the front of the site can serve the coffee/ bakery shop. There is no indication that the proposed development would give rise to increased traffic congestion in the immediate area. As I have reported, most trips can be undertaken on foot with no requirement for car use.

7.6.6. Conclusion on Transport and Access: I have no objection to the reduced car parking on site, considering the sites central location. The site is located within the town centre and as is characteristic of the adjoining area, individual car parking serving residential units is not a feature of this part of Trinity Street. The car parking provision is in accordance with the requirements of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. I consider that cyclists can use the local road network and there is no requirement, though would be desirable, for on street cycle tracks to serve this development or to provide access to services in the area. No issues of concern arise in relation to access.

## **7.7. Water Supply, Drainage and Flood Issues**

7.7.1. Water Supply & Foul Drainage: No objection has been raised in relation to water supply or in terms of foul drainage to serve this development. The Louth Water Supply Capacity Register, dated August 2025, indicated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 that there was 'Capacity Available - LoS improvement required' for Drogheda. In terms of Wastewater Treatment Capacity, the Drogheda WWTP had a 'Green' available capacity for August 2025 when checked on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2026. Uisce Éireann reported no objection to this development subject to conditions including the need for upgrade works to increase the capacity of the Uisce Éireann water supply network and there was no requirement for upgrade works to the wastewater network.

7.7.2. Surface Water Drainage: Full details of surface water drainage on site is provided in the submitted 'Engineering Service Report' dated August 2024. Proposed measures include a green roof for Blocks C and D with the existing roofed areas to continue to drain into existing infrastructure. SuDS measures will be provided in accordance with the GDSDS requirements. The Infrastructure Section of Louth County Council raised no issues of objection to the proposed surface water drainage system to serve this development.

7.7.3. Flood Risk: The submitted 'Engineering Service Report' dated August 2024 provide details on the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and this is supported with maps included in Appendix III of the applicant's report. There has been no record of flood events in the immediate area and the OPW and Louth County Council Flood Maps indicate that the site is not within Flood Zone A or B.

7.7.4. Conclusion on Water Supply, Drainage and Flood Issues: I am satisfied that the proposed development will be adequately served in terms of water and foul drainage. No issues of concern arise in terms of surface water drainage of the site. I am satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of the requirements of the Flood Risk Guidelines and having regard to the established form of development here.

## **7.8. Other Issues**

7.8.1. Lighting: Details on site lighting are provided in the report by Signify dated September 2024 and a Draft Public Lighting Report dated February 2025. No issues of concern were raised by the Louth County Council Infrastructure Section and conditions are provided in the event that permission is to be granted for this development. Public lighting details can be agreed by way of condition if permission is granted. From my site visit it was evident that adjoining streets and laneways were already served with public lighting.

7.8.2. Bats: Comment was made in the letter of objection to the original application about the impact on bats on site. The applicant has provided a Bat Assessment Survey, dated July 2024 (I note this was approved in August 2022, but I consider this to be a typographical error). Surveys were undertaken in May and July 2022. There was no evidence of bats roosting on site and only minimal evidence of bats actually using

the site. There was evidence of a limited amount of bat activity within the public green area to the north of the site in Trinity Gardens.

- 7.8.3. Archaeology: An 'Archaeological Impact Assessment' was provided in support of the application. This reports on the protected structure and also no archaeological features/ deposits were identified on the site. The report refers to the distance of the site from the original medieval town wall and the west entrance to the town at West Gate. The report recommended that archaeological testing to be carried out in the area to the rear of the site and that archaeological monitoring of all site groundworks is carried out behind the current shop post demolition/ site clearance.
- 7.8.4. The Department of Housing Local Government & Heritage (DAU) recommended that further information be sought in relation to archaeology. Following the receipt of the further information response, including a new Archaeological Impact Assessment Reported dated June 2025, the DAU reported no objection to the development subject to condition that groundworks be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and procedures to be followed in the event that archaeological material is found on site. The Archaeological Impact Assessment dated June 2025 found no archaeological features on the northern part of the site as part of the archaeological testing.
- 7.8.5. Core Strategy: I have outlined the number of units to be provided in Drogheda over the period of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. I note the target for 50,000 population by 2031 set out in CS11 and the updated RSES. The proposed development of 42 units would have a marginal impact on the overall number of units required by 2031 and infill development would be encouraged in any case where it can be established to not have an adverse impact on existing residential amenity/ character of an area.
- 7.8.6. Procedural Issues: The appeal makes reference to a number of procedural issues. The first is the lack of time that third parties had to comment on the received further information response. At the end of the further information response the PA have included a note which states: 'The applicant is requested to submit revised newspaper & site notices if the above further information will result in a significant alteration from the original proposal in relation to site size, site layout, development location or description, etc, in accordance with Article 35, (1) of the Local

Government (Planning & Development) Regulations, 2001, which include reference to these alterations.’ The applicant included the public notices with their further information response. Standard practice is that on receipt of the revised details, the PA would issue a requirement for new public notices. The applicant has provided the notices with the FI response without being asked specifically to do so, however there is nothing procedurally incorrect about this. The planning regulations do not specify a period of notice other than there are four weeks from receipt of information to the making of a decision by the Planning Authority. I am satisfied that procedures were correctly followed.

7.8.7. The appeal referred to the lack of a Local Area Plan for Drogheda and that this precluded the making of a decision on this development. As I have reported, the lands are zoned as part of the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, full regard is had to the protected structure on site, there are relevant objectives for development of this nature in the County Development Plan, and the site is located within an established urban area in Drogheda. I am satisfied that the lack of a Local Area Plan does not prevent the development of this site as proposed or for similar development. Permitting this development would not prejudice/ negatively impact on the making of a Local Area Plan for Drogheda.

## **7.9. Conclusion**

I consider that the subject site is suitably zoned under the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 for a mixed use development which includes residential units. The subject site is located centrally in Drogheda, and which is within walking/ cycling distance of a range of services. The proposed development provides for adequate car parking in accordance with the Louth County Development Plan and which is sufficient for this town centre site. However, I recommend that permission be refused due to the excessive density at over 200 dph and the excessive height of Block D which through its location on a sloping site would have an adverse impact on the character of the area. In addition, the height and design of Block D is such that it would give rise to overlooking of the existing houses to the west in Brickfields leading to a loss of privacy and adverse impact on residential amenity.

## 8.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening

- 8.1.1. I have considered case ACP 323718-25 in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
- 8.1.2. The subject lands contain retail/ residential units on Trinity Street, Drogheda and a number of derelict buildings/ hard standing to their rear. There are no habitats of biodiversity value located within the subject site. The site is located to the western side of central Drogheda, and the surrounding area is developed in the form of residential and commercial units. The site slopes on a south to north axis. There are no water courses on or adjoining the site, though the River Boyne is located approximately 75m to the south of the site. The area is served by public water supply and foul drainage.
- 8.1.3. The closest European Site, part of the Natura 2000 Network, is:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299)

Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The nature and limited scale of the proposed development.
- The separation of the site from the European Site, through established urban development and Trinity Street providing a buffer.
- The absence of ecological pathways to any European Site.
- Taking into account the Screening Report from Louth County Council, the Planning Authority for the area.

I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299). The site is located within an established urban area, and which is served by suitable foul drainage and surface water drainage systems. The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s).

No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

## **9.0 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 9.1.1. Under Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, the development is classed as 10(b)(iv) urban development. The proposed development is located in a built up area and has a stated area of 0.21 hectares. The proposed development is sub-threshold for mandatory EIA as the site area is less than 10 hectares.
- 9.1.2. The Planning Authority reported that the development was below threshold and 'EIAR is not a mandatory requirement'.
- 9.1.3. The applicant has submitted Schedule 7A information and concludes that the development is sub-threshold, would not cause significant effect on the environment and EIA is not required. I have carried out an EIA screening determination on the project which is set out in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 9.1.4. Having regard to: -
  - a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, which is below the threshold in respect of Class 10(b)(iv) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
  - b) Class 14 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
  - c) the location of the site on lands governed by zoning objective B1 – 'Town or Village Centre' and which has an objective 'To support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities.' in the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2028,
  - d) The existing use on the site and pattern of development in surrounding area,
  - e) The planning history relating to the site,
  - f) The availability of mains water and wastewater services to serve the proposed development,

- g) The location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 299(C)(1)(v) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended),
- h) The guidance set out in the “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development”, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003),
- i) The criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, and
- j) The features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects on the environment,

It is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report would not therefore be required.

## **10.0 Water Framework Directive**

- 10.1. The subject site is located approximately 75m to the north of the River Boyne, but there are no watercourses adjacent or on the site. The subject site overlies the Drogheda Ground Waterbody. The proposed development consists of the construction of 42 residential units, a coffee/ bakery shop and all associated site works. There will be demolition of some of the existing derelict buildings on site.
- 10.2. I have assessed the development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. I have undertaken a WFD Impact Assessment Stage 1: Screening and which is included in Appendix 3 after my report. This assessment considered the impact of the development on:
  - Drogheda Groundwater Source
  - River Boyne Estuary (this section runs from the Coast westwards approximately 4.4km to the west of the subject site).



10.3. The impact from the development was considered in terms of the construction and operational phases. Through the nature of the development, and separation distance to the relevant waterbodies, all potential impacts can be screened out. The River Boyne Estuary is at risk, primarily from agricultural sources, the proposed development is for an urban scheme within Drogheda town centre, and which will be connected to the public foul drainage and surface water drainage systems.

### **Conclusion**

10.4. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

## **11.0 Recommendation**

I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the following reasons.

## **12.0 Reasons and Considerations**

1. The proposed development, located on Trinity Street, Drogheda, provides for 42 residential units on a site area of 0.21 hectares which results in a density of 200 dwellings per hectare (dph). Whilst the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 specifies a minimum density of 50dph on such sites with no maximum density stated, by Variation No.2 dated May 2024, the Louth County Development Plan has adopted the requirements of the Sustainable and Compact Settlements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities. Under Table 3.4 of these guidelines a density range of 50 -150 dph(net) shall be normally applied for town centre locations within Regional Growth Centres, which Drogheda is designated under the Eastern-Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The density in excess of 200dph net would be significantly in excess of Table 3.4 and this excessive density is exacerbated by the excessive height of the proposed Block D which is six storeys on a higher level of the site, therefore dominating the surrounding existing residential areas to the west and north. The proposed development would provide for a significantly excessive density

contrary to National and Local Policy Objectives and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is considered that the proposed development, by reason of its height, scale, massing and density on a site made prominent through the sloping nature of the subject lands, would constitute overdevelopment of the site and would have an adverse impact on the established character of this part of Drogheda through the provision of a six storey apartment block into an area primarily consisting of two storey buildings/ low level commercial/ warehousing/ light industrial units. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and would have an adverse effect on the established character of Trinity Street, Drogheda.
3. Block D, the proposed six storey apartment block, does not provide for adequate separation distances with the existing houses in Brickfields to the west of the subject site. Separation distances of between 12.9m and 14.9m are proposed and which would give rise to excessive overlooking of the rear of the existing houses through the six storey nature of Block D. The proposed development would therefore seriously injure the amenities and depreciate the value of property in the vicinity through excessive overlooking leading to a loss of privacy.

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.

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Paul O'Brien

Inspectorate

8<sup>th</sup> January 2026

## Appendix 1

### EIA Pre-Screening

|  |  |                                  |   |
|--|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>An Coimisiún<br/>Pleanála<br/>Case Reference</b>  | ACP-323718-25  |                                  |   |
| <b>Proposed<br/>Development<br/>Summary</b>  | Mixed use development consisting of 42 apartments and one café/ retail unit and all associated site works. |                                  |   |
| <b>Development<br/>Address</b>   | 62-63 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth  |                                  |   |
| <b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a ‘project’ for the purposes of EIA?</b><br>(that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)   |  | <b>Yes</b>                       | √ |
|  |  |                                  |   |
| <b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>  |  |                                  |   |
| <b>Yes</b>   |  |                                  |   |
| <b>No</b>  | √  | Not a development under Class 1. |   |
| <b>3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/ exceed the thresholds?</b> |  |                                  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2,  |  |                                  |   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.                             |   |   |
| If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4.   |   | <b>Part 2 - Class 10.</b> Infrastructure projects<br>(b) (i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units. – subthreshold – only 42 units proposed.<br>(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.<br>– subthreshold – Business district but with a gross site area of 0.21 hectares.<br><b>Information submitted in accordance with Schedule 7A.</b> |
| <b>4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?</b> |   |   |
| Yes   | √ | Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)  |

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### EIA Screening Determination:

| A. CASE DETAILS  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>An Coimisiún Pleanála<br/>Case Reference</b>                                | 323718-25  |   |
| <b>Development<br/>Summary</b>   | Mixed use development consisting of 42 apartments and one café/ retail unit and all associated site works. |   |
|  | <b>Yes /<br/>No /<br/>N/A</b>  | <b>Comment (if relevant)</b>  |
| <b>1. Was a<br/>Screening<br/>Determination<br/>carried out by the<br/>PA?</b> | Yes  | The PA determination concludes:<br>'However, the site, which is located in a 'business district' (i.e. town centre, retail core) is just 0.21 hectares, which is well under the 2 hectare threshold for such urban development, and so is considered sub-threshold. From a preliminary examination, based on information provided and having considered the nature, size and location of the development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment and as such the need for an EIAR can be ruled out.' |
| <b>2. Has Schedule<br/>7A information<br/>been submitted?</b>                  | Yes  |   |
| <b>3. Has an AA<br/>screening report or</b>                                    | Yes  | AA Screening.   |

|  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| NIS been submitted?  |     |  |
| <b>4.</b> Is a IED/ IPC or Waste Licence (or review of licence) required from the EPA? If YES has the EPA commented on the need for an EIAR?   | No  |  |
| <b>5.</b> Have any other relevant assessments of the effects on the environment which have a significant bearing on the project been carried out pursuant to other relevant Directives – for example SEA | Yes | Bat assessment survey and an Asbestos Survey Report have been submitted in support of the application. |

| B. EXAMINATION  | Where relevant, briefly describe the characteristics of impacts (ie the nature and extent) and any Mitigation Measures proposed to avoid or prevent a significant effect<br><br>(having regard to the probability, magnitude (including population size affected), complexity, duration, frequency, intensity, and reversibility of impact) | Is this likely to result in significant effects on the environment?<br><br>Yes/ No/ Uncertain |
|---|---|---|
| <b>1. Characteristics of proposed development</b> (including demolition, construction, operation, or decommissioning) |   |   |
| 1.1 Is the project significantly different in character or scale to the existing surrounding or environment?          | The development proposes the provision of a mixed use development of residential and commercial use. The residential element includes an apartment block of six storeys. This   | <b>No.</b>  |

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
|   | <p>established urban area is predominately characterised by two-storey houses/ retail units/ detached commercial units however the development of residential units and commercial use is in keeping with the urbanised/ town centre location of this site.</p> |                   |
| <p><b>1.2</b> Will construction, operation, decommissioning or demolition works cause physical changes to the locality (topography, land use, waterbodies)?</p>   | <p>The proposed development is located on a brownfield site in Drogheda town centre.</p>  | <p><b>No.</b></p> |
| <p><b>1.3</b> Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy, especially resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?</p> | <p>Construction materials will be typical of such an urban development. The loss of natural resources or local biodiversity as a result of the</p>  | <p><b>No.</b></p> |



|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
|   | development of the site are not regarded as significant in nature.   |            |
| <b>1.4</b> Will the project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substance which would be harmful to human health or the environment? | Construction activities will require the use of potentially harmful materials, such as fuels, hydraulic oils and other such substances. Such use will be typical of construction sites. Any impacts would be local and temporary in nature and implementation of a Construction Management Plan will satisfactorily mitigate potential impacts. No operational impacts in this regard are anticipated. | <b>No.</b> |
| <b>1.5</b> Will the project produce solid waste, release pollutants or any  | Construction activities will   | <b>No.</b> |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>hazardous / toxic / noxious substances?</p> | <p>require the use of potentially harmful materials, such as fuels and other such substances and give rise to waste for disposal. Such use will be typical of construction sites. Noise and dust emissions during construction are likely. Such construction impacts would be local and temporary in nature and implementation of a Construction Management Plan will satisfactorily mitigate potential impacts. Operational waste will be managed via a Waste Management Plan. Significant operational impacts are not anticipated.</p> |  |
|--|--|--|

|  |   |                   |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <p><b>1.6</b> Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?</p> | <p>No significant risk identified.</p> <p>Operation of a Construction Management Plan will satisfactorily mitigate emissions from spillages during construction. The operational development will connect to mains services. No significant emissions during operation are anticipated.</p> | <p><b>No.</b></p> |
| <p><b>1.7</b> Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?</p>   | <p>Potential for construction activity to give rise to noise and vibration emissions. Such emissions will be localised, short term in nature and their impacts may be suitably mitigated by the operation of a Construction</p>   | <p><b>No.</b></p> |

|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
|   | <p>Management Plan.</p> <p>Management of the scheme in accordance with an agreed Management Plan will mitigate potential operational impacts.</p>   |                   |
| <p><b>1.8</b> Will there be any risks to human health, for example due to water contamination or air pollution?</p> | <p>Construction activity is likely to give rise to dust emissions. Such construction impacts would be temporary and localised in nature and the application of a Construction Management Plan would satisfactorily address potential impacts on human health. No significant operational impacts are anticipated.</p> | <p><b>No.</b></p> |

|  |   |                   |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <p><b>1.9</b> Will there be any risk of major accidents that could affect human health or the environment?</p> | <p>No significant risk having regard to the nature and scale of development. Any risk arising from construction will be localised and temporary in nature. The site is not at risk of flooding. There are no Seveso / COMAH sites in the vicinity of this location.</p> | <p><b>No.</b></p> |
| <p><b>1.10</b> Will the project affect the social environment (population, employment)</p>                     | <p>The development of this site as proposed will result in a change of use and an increased population at this location. This is not regarded as significant given the urban location of the site and surrounding pattern of land uses, which are characterised by</p>  | <p><b>No.</b></p> |

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
|   | mixed use development similar to the subject application.  |            |
| <b>1.11</b> Is the project part of a wider large scale change that could result in cumulative effects on the environment?   | This is the development of a brownfield site for a mixed use development located in an established urban area within Drogheda town centre.   | <b>No</b>  |
| <b>2. Location of proposed development</b>  |  |            |
| <b>2.1</b> Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or have the potential to impact on any of the following:<br>a) European site (SAC/ SPA/ pSAC/ pSPA)<br>b) NHA/ pNHA<br>c) Designated Nature Reserve<br>d) Designated refuge for flora or fauna<br>e) Place, site or feature of ecological interest, the preservation/conservation/ protection of which is an objective of a development plan/ LAP/ draft plan or variation of a plan | No European sites located on or adjacent to the site. An Appropriate Assessment Screening accompanied the application which concluded the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or | <b>No.</b> |

|   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
|   | <p>projects would not adversely affect the integrity of any designated European sites.</p>  |                    |
| <p><b>2.2</b> Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, for example: for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be significantly affected by the project?</p> | <p>The submitted AA Screening did not raise any issues of concern.</p> <p>The site is not identified as a suitable habitat for bats and is limited as a bird habitat.</p>   | <p><b>No.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>2.3</b> Are there any other features of landscape, historic, archaeological, or cultural importance that could be affected?</p>   | <p>There is a protected structure on site - McCloskeys Bakery, 63 – 65 Trinity Street is listed on the Record of Protected Structures, RPS No. DB-314. The proposed scheme includes this building in the overall development of this site. No</p> | <p><b>Yes.</b></p> |

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
|   | adverse impacts are foreseen.  |            |
| <b>2.4</b> Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, for example: forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals? | There are no such features that arise in this urban location.  | <b>No.</b> |
| <b>2.5</b> Are there any water resources including surface waters, for example: rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or groundwaters which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?      | None on site.  | <b>No.</b> |
| <b>2.6</b> Is the location susceptible to subsidence, landslides or erosion?  | Site is located in a built-up urban location where such impacts are not foreseen.  | <b>No.</b> |
| <b>2.7</b> Are there any key transport routes (eg National primary Roads) on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?          | The site is served by a local street network. There are sustainable transport options available to future residents. No significant contribution to traffic congestion is anticipated. | <b>No.</b> |



|   |   |                   |
|---|---|-------------------|
| <b>2.8</b> Are there existing sensitive land uses or community facilities (such as hospitals, schools etc) which could be significantly affected by the project?            | There are no sensitive land uses adjacent to the subject site.  | <b>No.</b>        |
| <b>3. Any other factors that should be considered which could lead to environmental impacts</b>   |   |                   |
| <b>3.1 Cumulative Effects:</b> Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulative effects during the construction/ operation phase? | No developments have been identified in the vicinity which would give rise to significant cumulative environmental effects. Some cumulative traffic impacts may arise during construction. This would be subject to a construction traffic management plan. | <b>No.</b>        |
| <b>3.2 Transboundary Effects:</b> Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?   | No trans-boundary effects arise as a result of the proposed development.  | <b>No.</b>        |
| <b>3.3</b> Are there any other relevant considerations?   | <b>No.</b>  | <b>No.</b>        |
| <b>C. CONCLUSION</b>  |   |                   |
| <b>No real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | EIAR Not Required |
| <b>D. MAIN REASONS AND CONSIDERATIONS</b>   |   |                   |
| Having regard to: -   |   |                   |

- a) the nature and scale of the proposed development, which is below the threshold in respect of Class 10(b)(iv) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
- b) Class 14 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
- c) the location of the site on lands governed by zoning objective B1 – ‘Town or Village Centre’ and which has an objective ‘To support the development, improvement and expansion of town or village centre activities.’ in the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2028,
- d) The existing use on the site and pattern of development in surrounding area,
- e) The planning history relating to the site,
- f) The availability of mains water and wastewater services to serve the proposed development,
- g) The location of the development outside of any sensitive location specified in article 299(C)(1)(v) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended),
- h) The guidance set out in the “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development”, issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2003),
- i) The criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, and
- j) The features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects on the environment,

It is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report would not therefore be required.

**Inspector** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved (DP/ADP)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

| Screening for Appropriate Assessment<br>Test for likely significant effects                      |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Brief description of project</b>  | Mixed use development consisting of 42 apartments and one café/ retail unit and all associated site works.  |
| <b>Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms</b>     | <p>The subject lands consist of retail/ residential units on Trinity Street, Drogheda and a number of derelict buildings/ hard standing to the rear. There are no habitats of biodiversity value located within the subject site. The site is located to the western side of central Drogheda and the surrounding area is developed in the form of residential and commercial units. The site slopes on a south to north axis. There are no water courses on or adjoining the site, though the River Boyne is located approximately 75m to the south of the site. The area is served by public water supply and foul drainage.</p> <p>Potential Impact Mechanisms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release of dust during demolition and construction phases.</li> <li>• Noise and traffic nuisance during demolition, construction and operational phases.</li> <li>• Pollution of water courses during the construction and operational phase of the development.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Screening report</b>  | A 'Habitats Directive Screening Report' dated August 2024 has been prepared by Whitehill Environmental on behalf of the applicant.  |
| <b>Natura Impact Statement</b>   | None  |
| <b>Relevant submissions</b>  | None from prescribed bodies in relation to AA.  |
| <b>Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model</b> |   |

The proposed development is not located within or adjacent to any designated site. therefore, the proposed development would not result in any direct effects such as habitat loss on any European Site.

| European Site (code)                          | Qualifying interests <sup>1</sup><br>Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)  | Distance from proposed development   | Ecological connections   | Consider further in screening Y/N |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alkaline fens [7230]</li> <li>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> [91E0]</li> <li>River Lamprey [1099]</li> <li>Salmon [1106]</li> <li>Otter [1355]</li> </ul> | <b>75m to the south of the site.</b> | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Surface water will be treated on site through proposed SUDs measures as standard for a development of this nature and will be directed to the existing storm water drainage network.</p> <p>There is an indirect hydrological pathway to this SAC via foul wastewater drainage. Foul water from the development will be directed through the existing public foul network and processed at Drogheda WWTP. Plant is within capacity.</p> <p>The site is within 75m of the River Boyne and further consideration to be made in relation to noise impact on Otters.</p> | <b>Y</b>                          |

|   |  |  |   |                 |
|---|--|--|---|-----------------|
| <p>The Boyne Estuary SPA (004080)</p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grey Plover</li> <li>• Shelduck</li> <li>• Oystercatcher</li> <li>• Golden Plover</li> <li>• Lapwing</li> <li>• Knot</li> <li>• Sanderling</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit</li> <li>• Redshank</li> <li>• Turnstone</li> <li>• Little Tern</li> <li>• Wetlands &amp; Waterbirds</li> </ul> | <p><b>3.3km to the east of the site.</b></p>         | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Surface water will be treated on site through proposed SUDs measures as standard for a development of this nature and will be directed to the existing storm water drainage network.</p> <p>There is an indirect hydrological pathway to this SPA via foul wastewater drainage. Foul water from the development will be directed through the existing public foul network and processed at Drogheda WWTP. Plant is within capacity. Having regard to separation distance and dilution effect, significant effects on this SPA can be ruled out.</p> | <p><b>N</b></p> |
| <p>Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>• Salicornia and other</li> </ul>  | <p><b>3.6km to the east of the subject site.</b></p> | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Surface water will be treated on site through proposed SUDs measures as standard for a development of</p>   | <p><b>N</b></p> |

|   |  |                          |  |          |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|----------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annuals colonizing mud and sand</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with white dunes</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)</li> </ul> |                          | <p>this nature and will be directed to the existing storm water drainage network.</p> <p>There is an indirect hydrological pathway to this SAC via foul wastewater drainage. Foul water from the development will be directed through the existing public foul network and processed at Drogheda WWTP. Plant is within capacity. Having regard to separation distance and dilution effect, significant effects on this SPA can be ruled out.</p> |          |
| River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingfisher [A229]</li> </ul>  | <b>2.4km to the west</b> | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Surface water will be treated on site through proposed SUDs measures as standard for a development of this nature and will be directed to the existing storm water drainage network.</p> <p>This SPA is upstream of the subject site and significant effects can be ruled out.</p>   | <b>N</b> |

|  |  |  |  |           |
|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (004158) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oystercatcher</li> <li>• Ringed Plover</li> <li>• Golden Plover</li> <li>• Knot</li> <li>• Sanderling</li> <li>• Herring Gull</li> <li>• Wetlands &amp; Waterbirds</li> </ul> | <b>8.7km to the south east.</b>                      | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Having regard to separation distance and lack of hydrological connections, significant effects on this SPA can be ruled out.</p> | <b>N</b>  |
| Clogher Head SAC (001459)                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</li> <li>• European dry heaths</li> </ul>  | <b>11.6km to the north east of the subject site.</b> | <p>No direct hydrological connections.</p> <p>Having regard to separation distance and lack of hydrological connections, significant effects on this SPA can be ruled out.</p> | <b>N.</b> |

**Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites**

There is an indirect hydrological connection to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC through foul water and surface water drainage, and noise, further consideration of this site is required.

**AA Screening matrix**

| Site name<br>Qualifying<br>interests          | Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*  |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | Impacts   | Effects  |
| River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299) | <p>Direct:</p> <p>None, due to location of the site and scale of development.</p> <p>The site is within 75m of the River Boyne and consideration is made of impact on Otters, however having regard to the location of the site within an established urban area and the site is separated from the river by Trinity Street which is a busy street within Drogheda town centre, and existing urban development, it can be</p> | <p>Potential damage to the habitats and qualifying interest species dependent on water quality, an impact of sufficient magnitude could undermine the sites conservation objectives.</p> <p>This is not likely due to the limited nature of the site area and also through the</p> |

|   |  |                               |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
|   | <p>concluded that no impacts arise and no mitigation measures are required.</p> <p>Indirect:<br/>There is an indirect hydrological pathway to the SAC via foul drainage. This is routed from the site through the existing public drainage system and is processed at the Drogheda WWTP. The plant is with capacity and no effects on the SAC are likely, in the absence of mitigation measures.</p> | location of this development. |
|   | <b>Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): N</b>  |                               |
|   | <b>If No, is there likelihood of significant effects occurring in combination with other plans or projects? N</b>  |                               |
| <p>The scale and nature of development combined with the location of the site within an established, serviced, urban area would ensure that there is no likelihood of significant effects.</p>  |  |                               |
| <b>Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site</b>  |  |                               |
| <p>I conclude that the proposed development (alone) would not result in likely significant effects on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299). The site is located within an established urban area, and which is served by suitable foul drainage and surface water drainage systems. The proposed development would have no likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on any European site(s). No further assessment is required for the project.</p> <p>No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.</p> |  |                               |



#### Appendix 4: Water Framework Directive

| WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING             |               |  |   |
|--|---------------|--|---|
| Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality |               |  |   |
| An Coimisiún Pleanála<br>ref. no.                    | ACP-323718-25 | Townland, address  | 62-63 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth |
| Description of project                               |               | Mixed use development consisting of 42 apartments and one café/retail unit and all associated site works.  |   |
| Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening,   |               | The subject site, with a stated area of 0.21 hectares, contains an almost rectangular shaped area of land located to the northern side of Trinity Street on the western part of central Drogheda. The Boyne River is located approximately 75m to the south of the subject site, though does not adjoin the site due to Trinity Street and existing development forming a clear buffer. The site slopes upwards from south to north. The proposed development includes |   |

|  |                 |                           |   |  |                              |   |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|---|
|  |                 |                           | the demolition of derelict structures on site and also includes the retention of the building which front onto Trinity Street.                      |  |                              |   |
| Proposed surface water details   |                 |                           | SuDS measures to be used in the engineering design.   |  |                              |   |
| Proposed water supply source & available capacity                            |                 |                           | For Drogheda, including the subject site, for water supply there is ‘Capacity Available - LoS improvement required’ – dated August 2025.            |  |                              |   |
| Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues      |                 |                           | For Drogheda, including the subject site, in terms of wastewater treatment there is a ‘Green’ indication of available capacity – dated August 2025. |  |                              |   |
| Others?  |                 |                           | N/A   |  |                              |   |
| Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection |                 |                           |   |  |                              |   |
| Identified water body  | Distance to (m) | Water body name(s) (code) | WFD Status  | Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at | Identified pressures on that | Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, |

|  |           |   |                                    |                                   |                           |  |  |
|--|-----------|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
|  |           |   |                                    |                                   | risk, review, not at risk | water body   | drainage, groundwater)                           |
| e.g. lake, river, transitional and coastal waters, groundwater body, artificial (e.g. canal) or heavily modified body.   |           | Located approximately 75m to the south of the subject site. | Boyne Estuary (IE_EA_010_0100)     | Poor                              | At Risk                   | Agriculture is the most significant pressure on this section of the Boyne. | Surface water run-off, groundwater and drainage. |
|  |           | 0m  | Drogheda Groundwater (IE_EA_G_025) | Good                              | Not at Risk               | N/A  | Groundwater                                      |
| Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage. |           |   |                                    |                                   |                           |  |  |
| CONSTRUCTION PHASE   |           |   |                                    |                                   |                           |  |  |
| No.  | Component | Water body receptor (EPA Code)                              | Pathway (existing and new)         | Potential for impact/ what is the | Screening Stage           | Residual Risk (yes/no)   | Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is        |

|    |                               |                                    |  | possible impact                          | Mitigation Measure*  | Detail | there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2. |
|----|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--------|---|
| 1. | Site clearance & Construction | Boyne Estuary (IE_EA_010_0100)     | Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway | Water Pollution<br>Surface water run-off | Use of Standard Construction Practice. Also distance/ buffer between site and River Boyne. | No     | Screen out at this stage.   |
| 2. | Site clearance & Construction | Drogheda Groundwater (IE_EA_G_025) | Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway | Water Pollution                          | Use of Standard  | No     | Screen out at this stage.   |

|                          |                       |                                |  |                 |  |    |                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|----|---------------------------|
|                          |                       |                                |  |                 | Construction Practice  |    |                           |
| <b>OPERATIONAL PHASE</b> |                       |                                |  |                 |  |    |                           |
| 3.                       | Surface Water Run-off | Boyne Estuary (IE_EA_010_0100) | Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway | Water Pollution | SuDS features incorporated into development. Separation of the site from the River Boyne through existing urban development including roads. | No | Screen out at this stage. |

|                              |                       |                                    |  |                 |   |     |                           |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|---|-----|---------------------------|
| 4.                           | Surface Water Run-off | Drogheda Groundwater (IE_EA_G_025) | Indirect impact via Potential hydrological pathway | Water Pollution | Several SuDS features incorporated into development | No  | Screen out at this stage. |
| <b>DECOMMISSIONING PHASE</b> |                       |                                    |  |                 |   |     |                           |
| 5.                           | N/A                   | N/A                                | N/A  | N/A             | N/A   | N/A | N/A                       |