

PART 8 ARCHITECTURAL REPORT – HOUSING CAPITAL

50 No. SOCIAL HOUSES AND ASSOCIATED SITE DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT HARBOUR ROAD, MULLINGAR, Co. WESTMEATH.

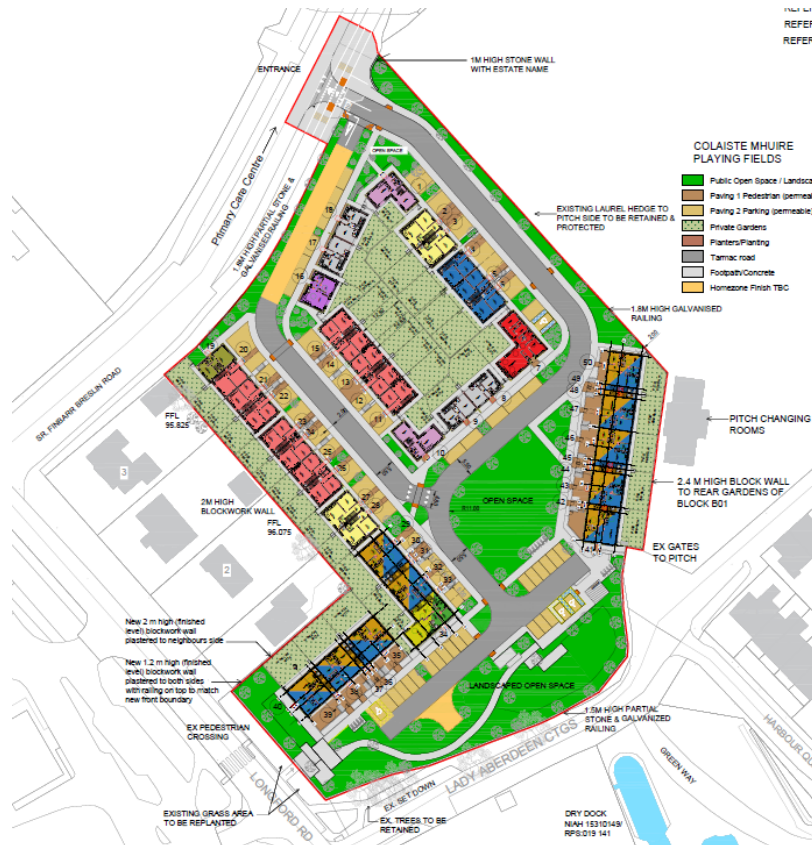


Fig 1: Proposed Site plan

Introduction:

Westmeath County Council acquired the site at Harbour Road, Mullingar for the purpose of providing much needed social housing units on a town centre site and are now applying for Part 8 Planning Permission for the development of 50 no. Social Housing units & associated site works. The proposed housing mix is proportionally based on the current need in Mullingar and comprises the following breakdown of units:

- 1 no. 1-bed 2 person Universal Design bungalow**
- 1 no. 3-bed 5 person universal design bungalow**
- 13 no. 2-bed 4 person two-storey terrace units**
- 4 no. 2-bed 4 person two-storey semi-detached units**
- 2 no. 3-bed 5 person two-storey detached units**
- 4 no. 3-bed 6 person two-storey semi-detached units**
- 3 no. 4-bed 7 person three-storey terrace units**
- 11 no. 2-bed 3 person ground floor Universal Design Age Friendly apartments**
- 11 no. 1-bed 2 person first floor apartments**

The site will be accessed from Harbour Road / Sr. Finbarr Breslin Road with a pedestrian access provided to the Southwest onto Harbour Street /Longford Road adjacent to the Age Friendly units. The works shall include the provision of fifty social housing units along with landscaping, works to boundaries and open space and all necessary associated ancillary works and site services including drainage, attenuation and a new ESB substation.



Fig 2: Satellite Image of the existing

Siting and Zoning:

The site of the proposed development is zoned General Urban District in the current County Development Plan and Mullingar Local Area Plan.

The Site is a green field site, which is overgrown with vegetation at present. It is located to the North of Mullingar Town Centre and the Royal Canal and is adjacent to the Harbour Quay and Harbour Meadows residential developments, Loreto College and Colaiste Mhuire sports field. The Midlands Regional Hospital Mullingar and the Primary Care Centre are near the proposed development.

The site is entered from Harbour Road (also known as Sr. Finbarr Breslin Road) to the North of the site and this entrance will be used as the construction entrance and the final estate entrance.

The area of the site is 1.5439 hectares. Providing fifty dwellings provides a density of 33.1 units per hectare which is in line with the Mullingar Local Area Plan. (the provision of medium density residential development close to the town centre).

The site easily accessed by car from the R394, also known as the Longford Road, which runs directly South to Mullingar Town Centre and onwards to the N4.



Fig 3: Site location Map



Fig 4: Site Zoning Development Plan

Boundaries:

The existing boundaries are formed by a timber post and rail post with hedging behind to Sister Finbarr Breslin Road and Lady Aberdeen Cottages, a plastered 1.2-metre-high capped blockwork wall to Harbour Street and a fairfaced block work wall of varying heights (1.2 – 2.4m) to the rear of the existing dwellings on Harbour Street/Longford Road. Where neighbouring property owners are amenable on Harbour Street WMCC will increase the height of their existing blockwork boundary walls to a minimum of 2 metres in height to the adjoining property side from ground level in order to ensure privacy and not disturb the amenity of these existing residents.

The boundary with Colaiste Mhuire playing fields is currently a concrete post and wire mesh fence of circa 1.8 metre high with a laurel hedge to the pitch side of the boundary which will be protected during the works. A 1.8 metre high Galvanised fence is proposed along this boundary with the laurel hedges with a 2.4-metre-high blockwork wall proposed to the rear of the duplex dwellings which back onto the pitch changing rooms to ensure privacy is retained to this area. The main access route into the development will be alongside the pitch boundary and this will be lined with native trees and planting to supplement screening of the pitch and provide a pleasant green environment for residents.

Existing Access gates are located to the North of the site and adjacent to the setdown area on Lady Aberdeen Cottages. The main entrance to the scheme will be from the existing access point off Sister Finbarr Breslin Road with a pedestrian access only provided to Harbour Street/Longford Road.

A 1.5m high boundary wall is proposed to Lady Aberdeen Cottages and to Harbour Street/Longford Road finished with partial low level stone walls to echo the stone structures surrounding the site and a high-quality railing to allow visibility both in and out of the site and thus mitigate antisocial behaviour. The area to the scheme site of this new boundary will be landscaped to provide a high-quality amenity space for the residents and create a parklike finish in this town centre location to encourage biodiversity and replace trees that have reached end of life and taken down to accommodate the dwellings. A similar style boundary low partial stone wall and railing will form the Sister Finbarr Breslin Road boundary.



Fig 5: Similar Stone and railing Boundary Treatments to those proposed and these will be supplemented with hedge and tree planting to the proposed estate side to give a high-quality finish.

The duplex apartments are all own door units with no shared spaces. All have adequate open space in the form of balconies to the first-floor units and rear and front gardens to the ground floor units.

Bin and bike storage are provided to the first-floor units at the ground floor entry point within the curtilage of their entrance area. All the dwellings have their own bin stores located to the rear in those with side gate access and in purpose-built brick finish bin stores to the front of terrace units within the curtilage of their entrance area.

All areas of the scheme will be fully supervised with no hidden spaces, the landscaped open space areas and all parts of the development, including the access points, will be overlooked and passively supervised by the residents. To achieve this, dwellings are either located back-to-back with frontage to the street network and onto existing streets and public areas and rear gardens back onto existing rear gardens or structures to ensure visibility while maintaining privacy.

WMCC have considered all aspects of the design of the scheme including how it interacts and connects with its surroundings an topography and how best to provide a development that will contribute to its location, provide a sense of place and promote community and provide 50 local families with much-needed homes in adherence with all required guidelines and good practice.

The proposed pedestrian route to Harbour Street/Longford Road is for the inhabitants of the housing development to access the public footpaths, greenway and town centre in a sustainable manner to take advantage of the town centre location of the site and provide connectivity and permeability. The site layout and design are of an appropriate density, scale and size considering its location and the site constraints and amenities required with building heights designed to be sympathetic to the surrounding residences on Harbour Street and Lady Aberdeen Cottages and respect the use of the adjacent playing fields by many children in the locality. The existing road infrastructure has the capacity to absorb development in the area as confirmed by recent road surveys undertaken in the development of the Primary care and Harbour Meadows schemes.

Twelve Age Friendly units are proposed in the scheme mostly located in the duplex blocks to the South of the site. These units are designed to adapt to the changing needs of tenants as they age through the incorporation of Universal Design features including wetrooms and are easy to navigate and approach and are located close to all amenities and connected to the outdoors with small easily maintained but usable gardens adjacent to the public realm.



Fig 7: Typical Elevations of dwellings and duplex units

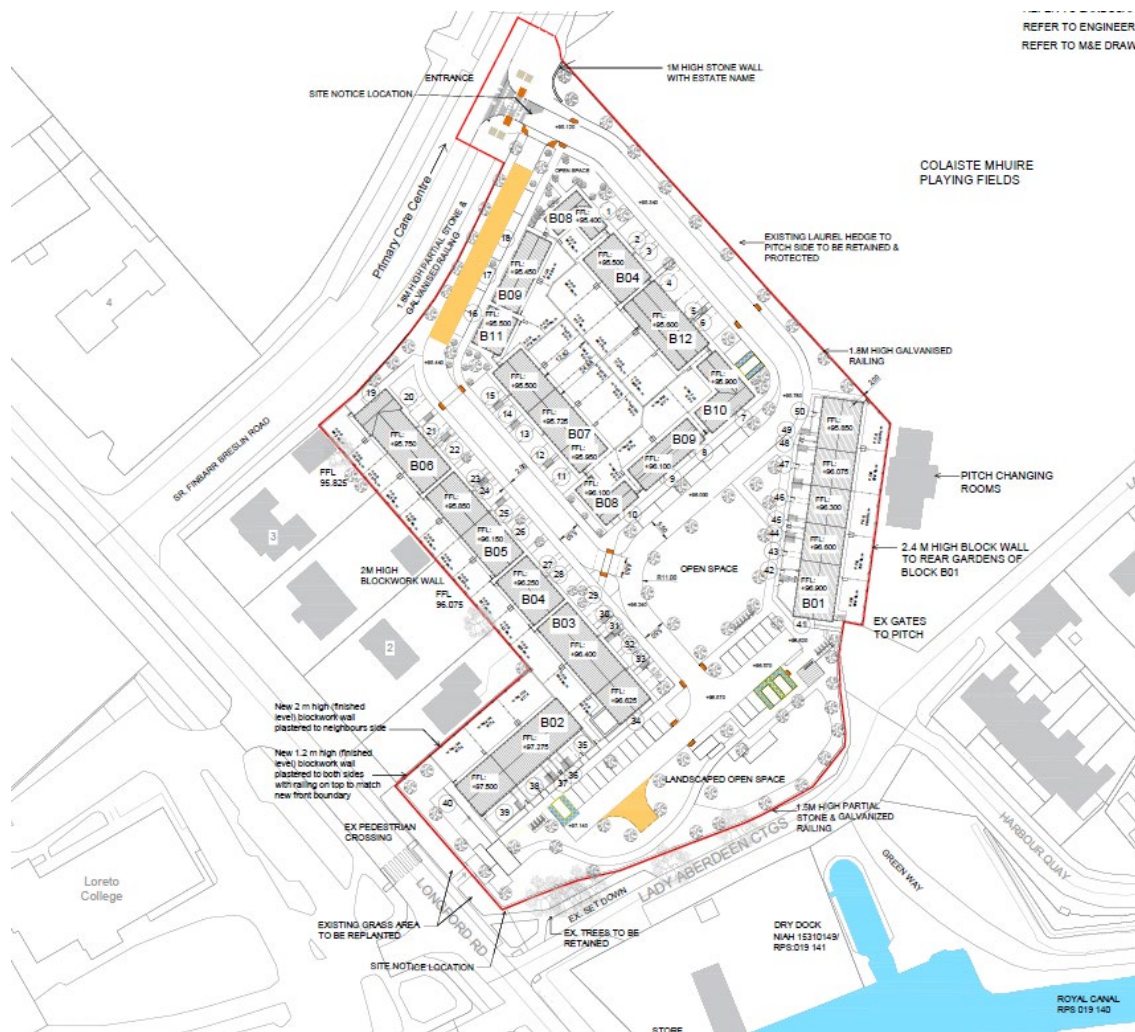


Fig 8: Site Layout Plan

Private Open Space: All the dwellings have private open space to the rear and privacy strips to the front. The placing of the new dwellings has been carefully considered to avoid overlooking or overshadowing existing houses.

A high-quality finish will be provided to the shared open spaces throughout the development. Landscaping & Boundary Treatments are noted on the accompanying boundary detail drawings and outlined above. A landscape plan and specification prepared by DFLA Landscape Architects accompanies this application.

A full survey of all existing trees on the site has been carried out, and the Arborist report accompanies this Part 8. Many of the trees are in fair to poor condition and the landscaping provided will endeavor to replace these end-of-life trees through the provision of quality native landscaping in the open spaces and pocket green areas throughout the proposed development to encourage biodiversity and provide a quality green space within Mullingar town centre. Open space more than that required by development plan will be provided in the region of 20% of the site area. Open space is supervised and easily accessible by all.

Parking: Eighty-five spaces are proposed including visitor parking. The housing units are provided with two no. dedicated spaces each and the apartments share courtyard parking within easy reach of their front entrance, and this complies with Development Management Standards of 1.3 per unit. Visitor bicycle Parking will be provided adjacent to the open space of the development in compliance with development plan requirements.

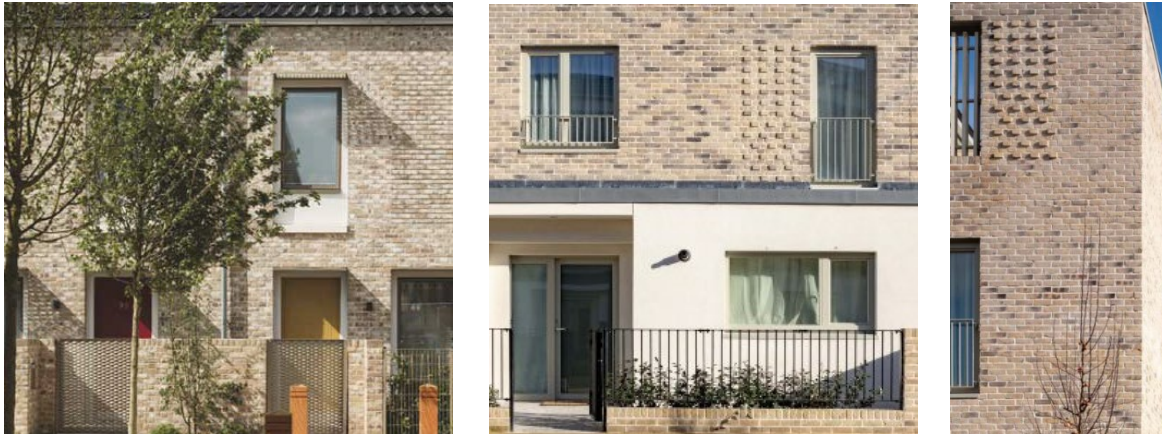


Fig 9: Materials: The development will be finished with a brick finish throughout and high-quality materials such as those in the images above. Balconies will be sheltered, private and usable all year round, like those below.



Transport:

The site is within walking distance of Mullingar Regional Hospital, Aldi Supermarket, the Omniplex and Harbour place shopping centre. Numerous schools and the Primary Care Centre are adjacent to the site making it an ideal location for family homes without impacting traffic and the site is less than 1km from the town centre where all essential services are available.

Road, footpath and parking layouts are designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) and a Road Safety Audit has been carried out on the proposed layout by the National Roads authority (NRO). See attached report by Meinhardt Consulting Engineers.

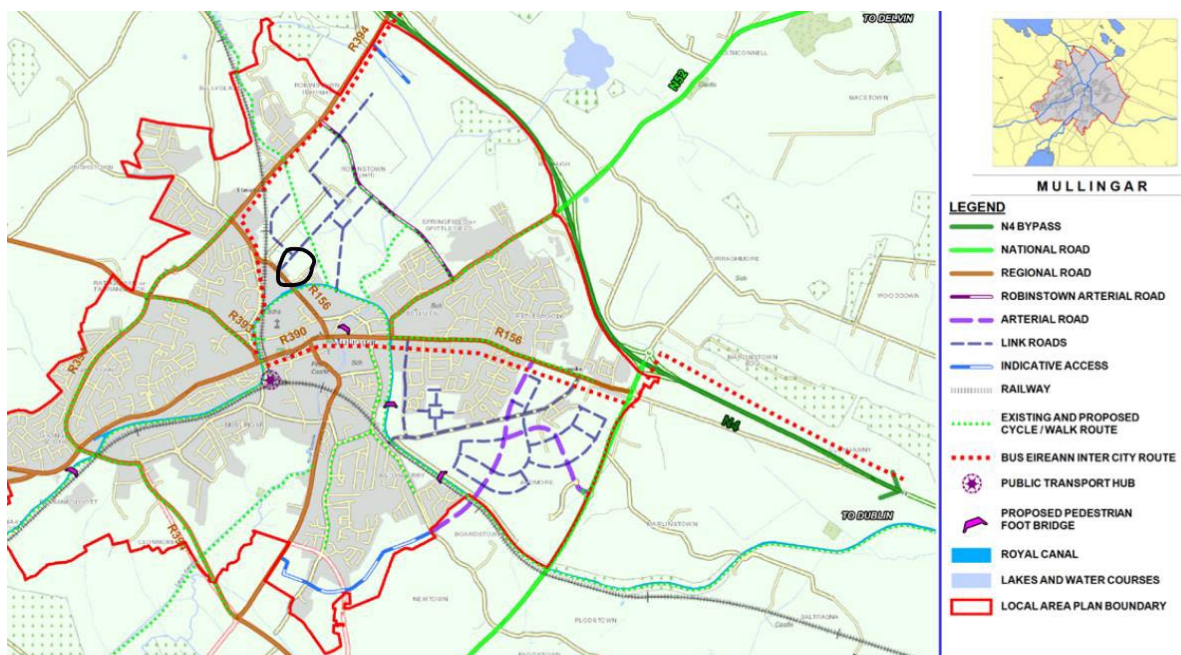


Fig 10: Transport map: Site is well located near Mullingar Town Centre and close to transport hubs

All Site services will connect into the public mains directly outside the site with Water, sewage, ESB and Eir connections readily available adjacent to the site. The development will include an ESB substation designed in accordance with ESB requirements.

Surface Water Management: The Civil engineering consultant's proposal for the proposed Water & waste management is included as part of the proposal for the works.

CFRAM flood maps have been consulted, and the site is not deemed to be a flood risk. Please refer to Civil Engineering Report for details.

Appropriate assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment:

An Appropriate Assessment Screening process and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening process have been carried out by CAAS Ltd. These reports are available on the consultation portal. No significant impacts were identified therefore an Appropriate Assessment or Environmental Impact assessment are not required.



Fig 11: Waste management on site- orange rectangles indicate bin stores to front of dwellings

Archeology:

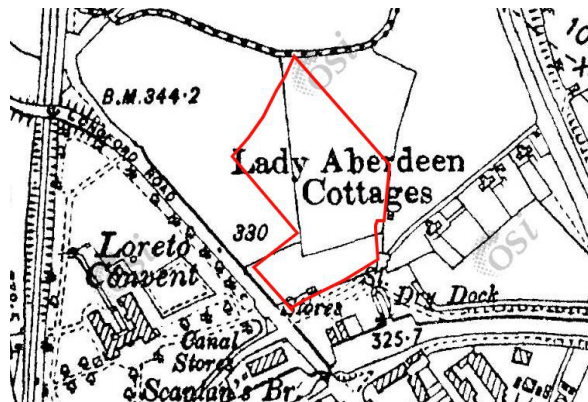
A desktop study of the site has not revealed any findings of archeological impact. Historical maps below do not indicate any features on the site.

There are several structures on the Record of protected Structures (RPS) to the South of the housing development site listed below, but these are outside the curtilage of the site and thus the development will have no impact on these structures. A green belt of planting and open space overlooked by the living spaces of the proposed dwellings will form a buffer to the Lady Aberdeen Cottages side of the site supplemented by a partial stone and railing boundary wall to give a high-quality finish to this area which is a busy pedestrian route to the playing pitch and greenway. Note the privately owned former canal store to the south is not a protected structure but listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH).

Royal Canal: RPS 019 140, Royal Canal Dry Dock: RPS 019 141, Royal Canal Harbour: RPS 019 142 & Scanlon's Bridge: RPS 019 143



6-inch first edition OS Map c. 1830



6-inch last edition OS Map c. 1930-41



25-inch OS Map 1897-1924

Fig 12: Historical Ordnance Survey Maps

Conclusion:

The development represents a carefully considered response to the site, the project brief and the site location and context. The design has been developed with a focus on the surrounding environment, the quality of individual and collective living areas and the goal of creating a community within the town by creating a sense of place and safety to inspire pride of place and connection to the area.

The restrained contemporary architectural finish will complement the natural setting of the site, and the landscaping proposal will serve to reinforce the environmental objectives of Westmeath County Council.

The proposal complies with the objectives of the current Westmeath County Development Plan and best practice design guidelines and regulations and will deliver an inclusive and sustainable residential amenity and provide a positive contribution to the town of Mullingar.