

3.0 INTRODUCTION TO SITE AND PROJECT

In the interest of brevity, a detailed description of the application site location and proposed project is provided by this section and is not repeated in each individual chapter.

This Chapter also details the reasonable alternatives considered for the proposed project and reasons for the chosen option.

3.1 Description of the Location of the Proposed Development

The subject site is located at Newtown, Marsh Road and McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace, Drogheda, approximately 2 kilometre south east of Drogheda Town Centre and approximately 1.5 kilometre south-east of the Scotch Hall shopping centre. The site takes the form of a broadly rectangular parcel of land which rises up towards the north before widening into a broadly level area. The overall site area extends to approx. 9.68 hectares and the net¹ site area is 7.25 hectares. At present the site is in agricultural use. It does not contain any buildings or structures.

The site is located south of the Marsh Road with mostly Greenfield land zoned for development located between the site and the Road. The Dublin-Belfast railway line runs along the southern boundary of the site, with McGrath's Lane running between the railway line and the site linking to Railway Terrace before meeting the Dublin Road (R132). The residential development of Wheaton Hall is located directly south of the proposed development on the opposite side of the railway line. The closest residential property is located to the south west corner of the application site with access from McGrath's Lane. A second property is located at the south east of the site on the opposite end of McGrath's Lane. Railway Terrace runs in a south westerly direction from McGrath's Lane and crosses the railway line. McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace has a mixed residential character including recently built terraced housing, single houses on their own plots and Railway Terrace Architectural Conservation Area which consists of 6no. houses noted of local importance in the DBCDP. The Drogheda railway station is located approximately 100 metres west of the nearest boundary of the application site. The Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant is directly north east of the application site.

The lands are essentially within/encompassed by the urban area of Drogheda, albeit within a largely undeveloped 'wedge' that juts in towards the centre of Drogheda – see figure 3.1 overleaf. Land within this wedge is identified for future development under the provisions of the Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017, and the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019.

¹ The measurement of net site area, net density and public open space includes only those areas which will be developed for the project and directly associated uses and therefore excludes the access road and significant landscape buffers permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387 as it will serve both permitted residential development under P.A. Ref. 17/387 and future residential development on adjoining lands. This approach is in keeping with methodology for density calculations as set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2009).

Planning permission has been granted under P.A. Ref. 17-387 for 133no. houses and access road on lands to the south east of the application site. The access road leading from the permitted development to the Marsh Road to the north has planning permission and has received funding from the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF). To ensure the development proposed is not dependent on the implementation of other permissions, the LIHAF Road is included as part of the proposed SHD application. This means the development can be undertaken independently of other proposed developments. Necessary consent letters have been provided by Louth County Council and are included with the SHD application documentation.

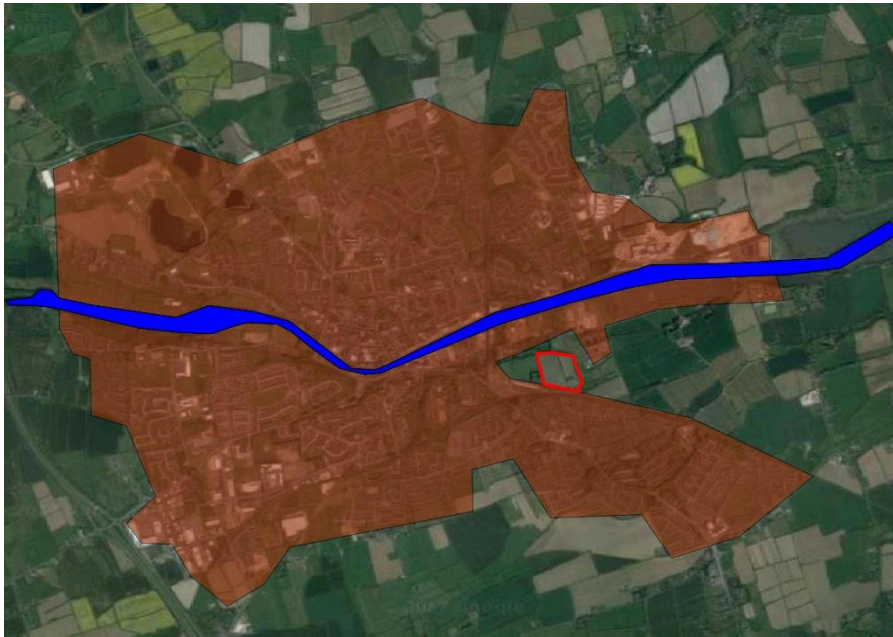


Figure 3.1 - Application site (outlined red) in context of urban area of Drogheda

3.2 Description of the Project

The proposed development has a combined gross floor area (GFA) of 44,742.7m². The project has been designed as a new urban neighbourhood and adheres to the principles of Urban Design. The DMURS compliant road hierarchy and generous public open space areas will create a calm and pleasant environment. High quality materials and finishes are proposed through the scheme as detailed in the Architects Design Statement under separate cover.

Proposed buildings on the site will range between 3 – 5 storeys in height. Parking to serve the proposed development is provided at both surface level and by way of undercroft/basement parking. Public open spaces will be provided throughout the development in four distinct areas – Neighbourhood Square, Central Green, The Natural Playground, Civic Plaza in addition to communal open space provided for apartment residents. Two vehicular access points will connect to the access roadway permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387, for which LIHAF funding exists. This roadway has been included as part of the proposed project in the interest of comprehensive development to ensure that the LIHAF funded road can be provided prior to (under P.A. Ref. 17/387) or in tandem with the development as proposed.

Improvement works are also proposed to McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace to improve its attractiveness as a pedestrian link for both existing and future residents. No vehicular access is proposed via McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace to the application site.

Table 3.1 below contains a summary of the principle measurements that apply to the proposed project.

Density	62 units per hectare
Plot Ratio	0.7
Site Coverage	21.3%
Public Open Space	15,905 (22%)

Table 3.1

The proposed development is of a mixed use commercial / residential nature comprising:

- 81 houses
- 24 duplex units
- 345 apartments
- 4,100.4m² of neighbourhood and employment floor space (e.g. local shops, offices and crèche)

Proposed buildings on the site will range between 3 – 5 storeys in height. Parking to serve the proposed development will be provided at both surface level and by way of undercroft/basement parking with 38% of the overall car parking provided by way of basement/undercroft parking with a further 22% on-curtilage meaning only 40% of the overall car parking to serve the development is proposed on street. Public open spaces will be provided throughout the development. Two vehicular access points will connect to the access roadway permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387, and which is the same roadway for which LIHAF funding exists.

3.3 Breakdown of Development Proposed

The proposed development has a combined gross floor area (GFA) of 45,081.9m², which can be broken down as follows:

- 450 No. residential units GFA 40,642.3m²
- Non Residential GFA 4,100.4m² (9% of Total GFA)
 - Total GFA 44,742.7m²

The following sections set out more information on the land uses and key elements proposed in the planning application.

3.3.1 Residential

The the proposed development provides a mix of dwelling types to include terraced (81 No.), duplex apartments (24 No.), and apartment units (345 No.). The breakdown across the 450no. dwellings is- 91 No. 1-bed units, 276 No. 2-bed units and 83 No. 3-bed units. This mix avoids the creation of a homogenous residential development. Rather the mix enables the creation of a more diverse population profile that assists the development of an integrated community. Households can move within the development as families expand and contract.

Unit Type	Number of Units	Percentage of Development
Apartment	345	77%
Duplex Apartment	24	5%
Terrace Houses	81	18%
<i>Total</i>	450	100%

Table 3.2- Breakdown of Residential Accommodation Type

Proposed Mix of Residential Units		
1-Bed	91	20%
2-Bed	276	61%
3-Bed	83	19%

Table 3.3 – Proposed Development – Mix of Dwelling Size

House type A (52no.) are terraced/semidetached three storey houses containing three bedrooms while House Type A1 (29no) are all three storey and terraced housing containing two bedrooms There are seven types of apartments as detailed in the Architects Schedule that accompanies the application package and summarised by Table 7 of this Statement.

Apartment Type	Quantity Proposed	No. Of Bedrooms
Type B1	12	2-Bed
Type B2	12	3-Bed
Type C	72	2-Bed
Type D	72	2-Bed
Type E	72	1-Bed
Type F/F1	72	2-Bed
Type G	19	1-Bed
Type H	19	3-Bed
Type J	19	2-Bed
Total	369	

Table 3.4 – Apartment Types

Considered separately from the terraced housing, apartments within the proposed development have an overall mix as follows-

1-Bed	91	25%
2-Bed	247	67%
3-Bed	31	8%
Total	369	

Table 3.5 – Apartment Mix

3.3.2 Neighbourhood Uses

4,100.4m² of neighbourhood/employment floorspace will be provided for in the development. 1,277.8m² floor space is provided at ground floor level of proposed buildings 9 & 10 which will open onto the Neighbourhood Square. Flexible use for this floor space is proposed as end-tenants have yet to be identified and it is desirable that the floorspace be adaptable and able to respond to market demands. It is envisaged that the floorspace could provide for such uses as neighbourhood small scale retail and café use for example. For the purpose of clarity specific uses are stated for the neighbourhood uses in the planning application. The office building (1,902.8m²) and crèche (919.8m²) are located to the north of the site and are adjacent to a civic square and green space. The crèche building has private open space for the children attending the crèche.

3.3.3 Public Open Space Provision

The site provides a hierarchy of public open spaces with of four primary public open space areas proposed including a hard surfaced urban squares at the neighbourhood area at the south and at the employment buildings at the north of the site linking the spine pedestrian/cyclist route though the site. A large central park is provided as well as a natural playground. Smaller pocket parks and communal areas with seating have been allocated to the apartments which will function as passive spaces. In total, 18% of the site area is designated as public open space. The calculation of open space does not include ancillary areas or the areas of green space associated with the LIHAF Road such as the LIHAF Road embankments. When communal open space associated with the apartments is included, this figure rises to 22% of the site area.

All public open spaces have been designed by an appropriately qualified and experienced landscape architect as an integral part of the site layout. A Landscape Rationale by RMDA accompanies this SHD application under separate cover which includes the detailed design rationale behind the creation of each of the primary open spaces as well as detailed design elements such as car parking and bin storage areas.



Figure 3.2 – Extract from the Landscape Masterplan by RMDA

Natural Playground	Children’s Playground and seating area	3,315m ²
Central Green	Walking, informal “Kick about” activity area and seating.	3,867m ²
Neighbourhood Square	Spill out area for neighbourhood uses. Seating areas and pedestrian zone.	3,390m ²
Civic Plaza	Hard Landscaped area adjacent to employment uses with green space to the south for relaxation and informal activities.	2,777m ²
Communal Open Space	Passive recreation and relaxation areas for apartment residents.	2,556m ²

Table 3.6 – Breakdown of Public Open Space

3.3.4 Car Parking

The topography of the site has been utilised to provide 38% of all car parking below ground level reducing the overall visual impact of the quantity of car parking and enabling a high level of public open space to be provided. It is submitted that the distribution of car parking on site together with the site layout will encourage more sustainable modes of transport use over the private car.

Car Parking Allocation and Location		On Curtilage	On Street	Underground/Undercroft
Parking for Housing		162		
			11	
Parking for Duplex Units			27	
Parking for Apartments	Block 1		13	30
	Block 2		13	30
	Block 3		13	30
	Block 4		13	30
	Block 5		17	26*
	Block 6		43	
	Block 7		19	24*
	Block 8		5	17*
	Block 9		34	
	Block 10		34	
Parking for Neighbourhood Uses	Block 9 & 10		44	
Parking for Offices				40*
Parking for Crèche			10	22*
Visitor Parking				33*
Sub-Total		162	296	282
Total Car Parking Proposed				740

*Underground car parking refers to the three level car park beneath the office and crèche building accessed directly from the LIHAF Road.

Table 3.7 – Car Parking Breakdown

Car parking at surface level is proposed both in curtilage for the proposed housing and on street for the apartments. A car parking allocation drawing accompanies this planning application (PL06). Whilst the specific allocation of car parking spaces for the apartments will be decided by the Management Company in due course, the car parking allocation plan illustrates how the applicant has addressed the overall car parking for occupiers of the apartments while giving due regard to the pattern of demand for travel that is likely to arise from the occupation of the proposed development, as well as to the likely demand from households to have access to private transport even where it does not provide the primary mode for travel to work or school. The mobility Management Plan that accompanies the application will also be incorporated into the site management company. Car Parking locations for the apartments are intentionally and specifically designed to be accessible but to a remove from apartments to discourage use of the private car as a ‘first thought’ option.

Provision has been made for Electric Vehicle Charging Points/Parking spaces and parking for those who are mobility impaired. As detailed in the Landscape Rationale by RMDA, the car parking has been integrated into the landscape plan with hard landscaping defining pedestrian priority zones and planting softening communal parking areas. All parking areas are overlooked.

Cycle parking is provided throughout the site as illustrated by architect drawing PL-06. A total of 853 cycle parking spaces are provided including 460 at surface level that are conveniently placed to encourage use and security and in proximity to the cycle path network.

3.3.5 Improvement Works to McGrath's Lane and Railway Terrace

The proposed improvement works are illustrated by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers Drawings 16-137-P150 and 16-137-P151. There is no vehicular access proposed to or from the application site via McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace. It is proposed to widen McGrath's Lane from its current width of 2.75metres to a shared surface with a width of c.5.8metres. The shared surface will consist of a 1.8metres pedestrian strip and 4 meter carriageway with appropriate signing and linage provided. The existing footpath on Railway Terrace is proposed to be widened from 1.8metres to a minimum of 2meters. Where the road carriageway reduces in width below 5metres, yield signage and marking will be provided. Due to the low traffic volumes and speed anticipated it is considered appropriate to keep cyclists on road at this section. Public lighting will be provided along the length of McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace from the main body of the development site to the junction with the Dublin Road (R132).

3.4 Construction Programme/Phasing

As acknowledged by Guidelines² (para. 3.5.8), the nature of the construction process limits the amount of detail that is available at consent stage. However, in the assessment of the proposed project every effort has been made to provide precise detail to ensure the avoidance and accurate assessment of potential significant impacts.

For this reason a preliminary construction management plan has been prepared to provide details relating to general construction activities including-

- General site set-up and pre-commencement measures
- Construction and demolition waste management
- Deliveries of materials to site
- Parking and Storage

² EPA, Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in EIA R (2017)

A detailed Construction Management Plan will be prepared on receipt of planning permission by the appointed contractor. This Plan will include any conditions imposed as part of this decision as well as the mitigation measures as set out in this EIAR.

The applicant seeks a ten year permission. It is anticipated that the total construction period for the proposed development will be approximately 5- 8 years. The proposed phasing plan is provided below.

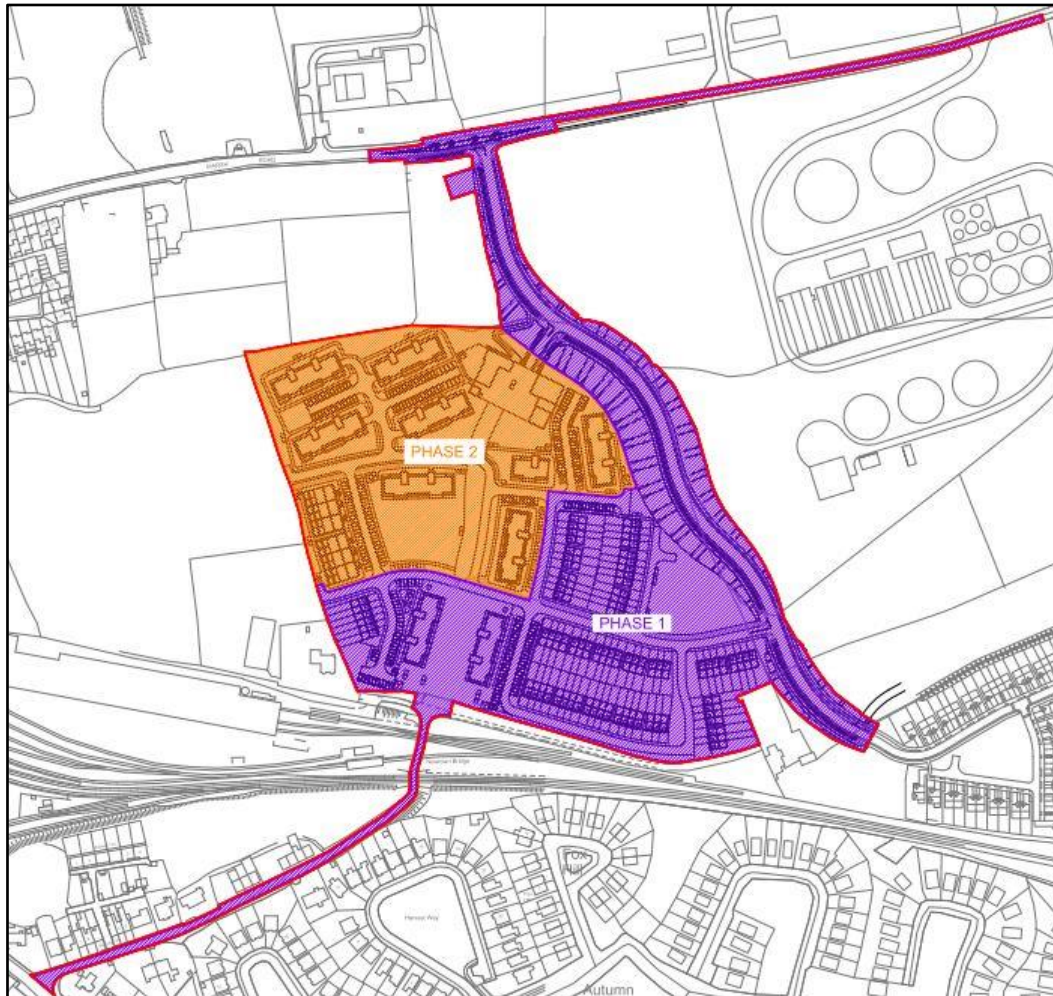


Figure 3.3 – Proposed Phasing Plan

 Phase 1

Phase I will include the 81no. houses together with two apartment buildings (Buildings 9 & 10) with neighbourhood uses (1,277.8m²) at ground floor level, the construction of the LIHAF Road and improvement works to McGraths Lane/Railway Terrace and associated infrastructure. This will ensure pedestrian connectivity to the train station is achieved at the start of the development and new residents have supporting neighbourhood uses within walking distance. Two areas of public open space are provided in Phase 1 by way of the neighbourhood square linking to McGraths Lane and the natural playground to the east serving the houses. Phase I as proposed would have the following mix of residential units-

- 81no. 3-bed townhouses
- 60no. apartments – 16no. 1-bed, 40no. 2-bed, 4no. 3-bed

Apartment buildings 9 & 10 provide active ground floors for occupation for neighbourhood uses such as small retail outlets, cafes, restaurants and supporting neighbourhood uses such as laundrette/dry cleaners. The gross overall floor area of these units is 1,278sq.m and they are divided into unit outlets ranging in size from 144sq.m to 172sq.m. For the purpose of this application, uses are allocated to each unit with details of the final occupier to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to first occupation.



Phase 2

Phase 2 will complete the development in three further stages envisaged as follows-

Phase 2 (a) consists of the duplex apartment units and apartment blocks 5 & 6 with the following mix-

- 12no. 2-bed duplex apartment
- 12no. 3-bed 2-storey duplex apartments
- 76no. apartments – 20no. 1-bed, 52no. 2-bed and 4no. 3-bed

This phase of the development will enclose the third public open space to be provided (4,070sq.m) and the continuance of the pedestrian spine.

Phase 2 (b) will provide the office and crèche building together with apartment buildings Block 7 & 8. This will provide increased employment opportunities on site. It will also provide the second civic space which will form the top of the pedestrian spine and complete the cycle route to the LIHAF road and Marsh Road in a north-south direction through the site and onward via McGrath's Lane. Phase 2 (c) will consist of the final four apartment buildings (blocks 1-4).

3.5 Main Characteristics of Operational Phase

The proposed development will create a new neighbourhood consisting of residential dwellings and supporting neighbourhood and employment land uses together with associated roads, landscape and infrastructure. The primary source of potential significant impacts on the environment will be at construction stage. The proposed development will connect to the public foul drainage and surface drainage network. With the implementation of mitigating measures as outlined by this EiAR and best practice techniques including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, it is not envisaged that the proposed development will have any significant impact on the environment during operational phase.

The likely significant impacts of the operation of the proposed development on each environmental factor are fully addressed in this EIAR document. The potential for cumulative, secondary and indirect impacts particularly in relation to traffic has also been assessed in the context of the proposal. Secondary/off site works proposed include improvements to the signal controls at existing junctions as detailed in the Traffic Assessment prepared by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers. It is not envisaged that any substantial enabling works are necessary to facilitate the proposed development.

Due to the unique location of the proposed development, north of a railway line and south west of a Wastewater Treatment Plant, this EIAR also details inward impact assessments undertaken in relation to noise and odour and the potential impact on future residents. Due to the location of the site south of a SEVESO site, the potential vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents and/or disasters was also assessed by way of a COMAH Land Use Planning Assessment by AWN.

3.6 Description of the Reasonable Alternatives

Impact avoidance is principally achieved by consideration of alternatives³. The approach to identifying alternatives is project specific.

Schedule 6 (1) (d) of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001) was amended following the transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU and requires an Environmental Impact Assessment Report to include:

“a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and in indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposed development on the environment”.

By way of explanation or amplification of the above information, Schedule 6 (2) (b) states;

“a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the person or persons who prepared the EIAR, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects”.

³ Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – Draft – EPA – 2017, para. 2.4.1

The 'Do-nothing' Scenario

The 'do nothing' scenario or 'no Project' Alternative describes what would happen should the Project not be implemented at all. It is submitted that there is identified need for the proposed project and as such the 'do-nothing' scenario would not be desirable. The application site is zoned and serviceable with residential development permitted to the east and an access road that is both permitted and funded under LIHAF. The project will have positive benefits to the community and is in keeping with National, Regional and Local Planning Policy. In the 'do-nothing' scenario, the only potential environmental impact would be as a result of agriculture practice relating to soil. It is considered that any potential impact would be neutral and imperceptible.

3.6.1 Alternative Sites

The application site is located on appropriately zoned lands within the urban area of Drogheda which are serviceable via public mains drainage and water supply. Mixed use residential developments such as the proposal are permitted in principle under the zoning designation – 'Drogheda Transport Development Area'. A neighbouring site benefits from extant planning permission e.g. P.A. Ref. No. 17/387. The proposal will use an approved access road (P.A. Ref. No. 17/387) to the Marsh Road. This access road has been awarded funding from the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) on the basis that it provide 260 housing units by 2021. 133no. units will be provided under P.A. Ref. No. 17/387. The proposed development will provide the balance of housing units to support the provision of this access road.

The application site is currently in agricultural use. Habitats identified are mostly of low ecological value. An access road and 133no. houses have been permitted to the south east of the site under P.A. Ref. 17/387. The site is surrounded by urban development with a high capacity rail line to the south, Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant to the north east, industrial zoned lands to the north of Marsh Road as well as existing residential development. While the project will result in the increased urbanisation of this area it is submitted that it will not result in the significant or material loss of productive agricultural lands and represents an efficient use of land in proximity to an existing town centre and train station.

The application site represents the closest area of zoned undeveloped and serviceable land in proximity to the Drogheda train station. There are no alternative sites with this advantage.

3.6.2 Alternative Uses

The subject site is zoned as 'Drogheda Transport Development Area'. Table 2.2 of the Drogheda Borough Development Plan 2011-2017 lists uses which are permissible and non-permissible on such zoned lands.

Alternative uses such as industry/industry (Light) are listed as Not Permissible under the zoning objective that affects the site, and would be in conflict with surrounding residential developments and represent a material contravention of the Development Plan.

The proposed development provides a mix of uses consisting of residential, neighbourhood and employment uses, which are permitted uses. In addition, the proposed development is to be served by an approved access road with LIHAF funding on the basis of 260 housing units being provided by 2021. Only 133no. have been permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387. The proposed development is required to provide the balance of required housing units within phase one of its construction to secure LIHAF funding.

As the DTDA zoning objective allows for economic activities such as High Technology Based Employment and Office type employment (Table 2.2 DBCDP), an examination was undertaken on the use and availability of employment lands in Drogheda. This study found that there are ample lands zoned for employment in Drogheda that are currently undeveloped including lands to the immediate north of the application site. It is also considered that due to the application site’s topography, it would be prohibitively expensive to develop for large floorplate buildings in this location.

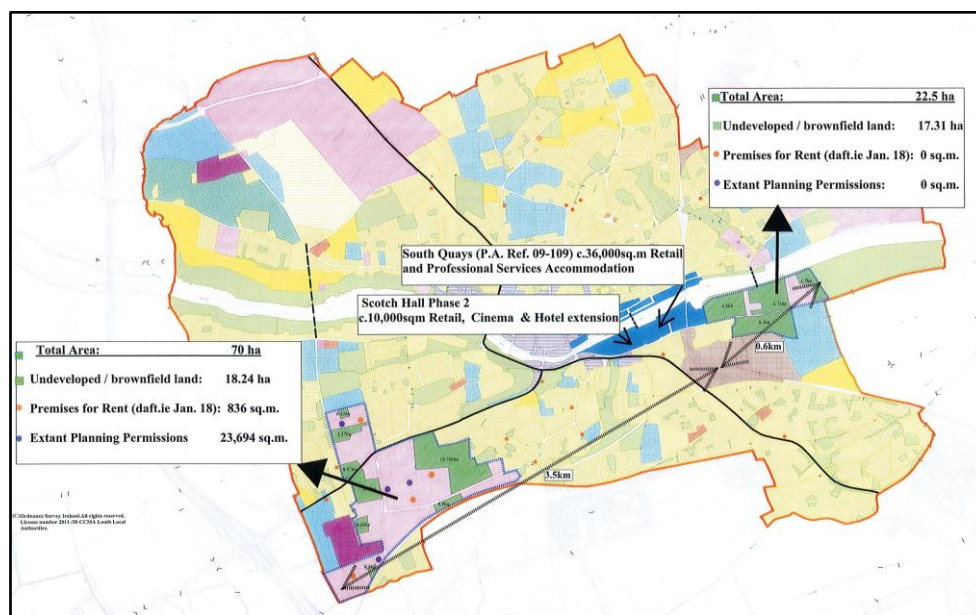


Figure 3.4 - Employment Lands south of River Boyne

3.6.3 Alternative Design and Layout

At the inception stages of the project, a report was commissioned into the potential for issues arising out of proximity to the Flogas Terminal which is a Seveso site. A report was prepared by AWN Consulting outlining risk contours based on consequence assessment and risk modelling of an LPG BLEVE event at the Flogas site. The Assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Policy and Approach of the *Health and Safety Authority to COMAH Risk-based Land-use Planning, 2010*. A topographical survey also informed the layout of the proposed development as did a tree survey undertaken by Dr. P. Blackstock (report under separate cover).

Subsequent to these baseline studies, the proposed development has been designed in line with the recommendations of the Drogheda Borough Development Plan 2011-2017 and Government Guidelines. The design has been influenced by the permitted route of the approved access road to serve P.A. Ref. No. 17/387 and the scale and pattern of 133no. houses to the south east of the application site also permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387. Alternative designs and layouts were considered and continued to be reviewed throughout the process including the results of later reports undertaken on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing and the findings of this EIAR.

Full site and context analysis is outlined in the Architects Design Statement under separate cover. Below is a sample of the layouts considered and the evolution of the final layout.

Layout 1: The initial proposal comprised of 424 dwelling units in a range of formats and centred around two main public open space areas with an additional linear park. 1,980m² of commercial floorspace also formed part of the scheme.



Figure 3.5

Layout 2: The density of scheme was then increased with a change of dwelling types in recognition of the strategic location of the application site in proximity to Drogheda Train Station. This proposal comprised of 615 dwelling. 2,585m² of commercial space was also proposed.

It was considered that this layout did not provide the correct balance of dwelling types that would create a successful new neighbourhood community. In addition, the pedestrian link to McGraths Lane was not given the importance it deserved. This lead to a redesign and new layout as detailed below.



Figure 3.6

Layout 3: The revised layout comprised of 508 dwelling units in a range of formats and orientated around a main 'spine' leading from McGraths Lane with public open space areas (both hard and soft landscaped) off it. 4,400m² of commercial space (including offices) formed part of the proposal. This included an office building as well as a proposal for a crèche building and commercial uses at ground floor level onto the civic space towards the southern end of the site.



Figure 3.7

Layout 4: Pre-Application Proposal – The layout submitted for consideration at pre-application stage had a density of 61 dwellings per hectare and 456 dwellings. An office building and crèche were located at the northern end of the site with commercial units at ground floor level of units fronting the civic space at the south end of the site.



Figure 3.8

Final Layout: Following the receipt of An Bord Pleanála’s Opinion and Inspectors Report on case ABP-302215-18 the design was reviewed and the comments of An Bord Pleanála were taken into consideration in relation to the hierarchy of roads, vehicular access, car parking, open space and pedestrian linkages (please see Response to Opinion under separate cover for full detail). The design of the access road permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387 was also advanced during this phase and influenced the final design.

To ensure the development proposed is not dependent on the implementation of other permissions, the LIHAF Road is included as part of this SHD application. This means the development can be undertaken independently of other proposed development. Necessary consent letters have been provided by Louth County Council and are included in the SHD application documentation.

The proposed pedestrian link from the application site to the Dublin Road and McBride Train Station via McGrath’s Lane and Railway Terrace is important to the future success of the new neighbourhood. This area has also been included within the red line boundary and drawings are provided detailing the improvement works proposed which include the creation of a shared surface and public lighting.

In preparation for the application, the applicant commissioned IES to undertake an assessment of Sunlight, Daylight and Overshadowing (please find under separate cover). On review of this information, it was decided to revise the proposed layout to replace 6no. of the proposed duplex units at the south west corner with housing. It is considered that this layout will provide greater separation distance between the proposed development and the existing property on McGrath's Lane and protect both existing and future privacy and residential amenity of the residents. The final layout is shown below and includes 450no. residential units and 4,100.4m² of supporting neighbourhood and employment uses. The layout achieves a density of 62 units per hectare based on the net site development area. Public and communal open space provided represents 22% of the net site area. This is partly achieved by the location of 38% of car parking underground.



Figure 3.9

3.7 Main Reasons for Chosen Option

The objective of the examination of alternatives is to adopt a combination of options that presents the best balance between avoidance of adverse environmental effects and achievement of the objectives that drive the project (EPA, para. 2.4.1). It is submitted that the examination of alternative outlined above demonstrates the chosen option is the most appropriate for the following reasons-

- The proposed layout is considered the most practical and feasible having regard to site constraints, and limited alternative layout(s) options due to the permitted route of the access road (P.A. Ref. 17/387).
- The mix of uses proposed is fully compliant with the zoning objective for the application site and will assist in the creation of a new neighbourhood and provide employment opportunities.
- The proposed development compliments development already permitted to the south east under P.A. Ref. 17/387.
- The location of the office building and crèche and the north of the site will be well located relative to future development of the employment plans to the north of the application site.
- The proposed residential development will secure funding that has been awarded under LIHAF for the access road– the provision of a total of 260 dwellings by 2021.
- Careful consideration has been given to ensure the areas of public open space provided are of appropriate size, are usable and functional and located in areas which benefit from passive surveillance.
- 22% of the net site area is public/communal open space.
- The proposal will result in the improvement of McGrath's Lane/Railway Terrace.
- The layout proposed will achieve an average density of 62 dwellings per hectare across the site. Lower density housing is proposed adjacent to existing housing on McGrath's Lane with higher density to the centre and north of the site.
- The proposal provides a range of designs with different house types ranging from one bed to three bed along with apartments. The broad range of dwelling sizes and types will ensure the development is able to cater for a variety of family types from different socio-economic groups.
- The landscape rationale takes full account of existing hedgerows and trees and will introduce pollinator friendly planting.
- The application site boundary now includes the LIHAF funded access road permitted under P.A. Ref. 17/387 and works proposed to McGraths Lane to ensure a comprehensive development is delivered. The phasing plan ensures delivery of a mix of uses across the site and the timely completion of the pedestrian access and open space areas for residents.

References

- Drogheda Borough Development Plan 2011-2017
- Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in EIAI (EPA, 2017)
- Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019
- Planning and Development Regulations (2001, as amended)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009).