



**Proposed Residential Development
at Rathmullan, Co. Meath**
.....
Architectural Design Statement

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Site Context	4
3. Site Photographs	6
4. Connectivity	8
5. Planning Policy	10
6. Proposed Development	12
Appendix 1. Architectural Drawings	1.1
Appendix 2. Housing Quality Assessment	2.1
Appendix 3. Building Life Cycle Report	3.1

General Note:

Drawings/maps in this statement are for illustrative purposes only, and are not to scale. For exact site boundary and architectural details, please refer to the NDBA drawing pack.

1. Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by NDBA Architects on behalf of Trailford Ltd. to accompany a planning application for a 661 unit residential proposal at Rathmullan Co. Meath. The report forms part of the suite of drawings and documents to be submitted to An Bord Pleanala.

It is the intention of this report to demonstrate how the proposal relates to the site and its context, and to outline how the design addresses the policies, objectives and guidance of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 and the South Environs of Drogheda Local Area Plan 2009-2015. The report proceeds with the site context, followed by an analysis of the relevant planning policy. The document concludes with a description and analysis of the proposed development.

Note that the proposed design, as demonstrated in the document, has been informed by an experienced design team, consisting of

NDBA Architects	Architectural Drawings
Waterman Moylan	Consulting Engineers
Cunnane Stratton Reynolds	Landscape Consultant
Hughes Planning and Development Services	Planning Consultant

In preparation of the proposal, the design team have adhered closely to all relevant legislation and guidance documentation, including the following publications:

Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2018)

Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007)

Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)

Urban Design Manual Best Practice Guide (2009)

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2009)

Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 (2017)

South Environs of Drogheda Local Area Plan 2009-2015 (2017)

1.2 PROPOSAL SUMMARY

1 Bedroom Apartment	13
2 Bedroom Apartment	139
2 Bedroom House	158
3 Bedroom House	269
4 Bedroom House	82
Creche	486m ²
Cafe/Retail	381m ²

2. Site Context

SITE DESCRIPTION

The 26.2 hectare greenfield site is located on the outskirts of Drogheda, to the west of Drogheda town centre. The site is bound to the south and south-east by a regional road which separates the site from neighbouring agricultural land. The site is bound to the north-east by existing residential development, consisting of two-storey terraced houses and three-storey duplexes. The site is bound to the north by Rathmullan Road and the Boyne River. To the west the site is bound by the M1 Motorway. There are a number of access points of the existing roads to the south and east of the site.

There are significant level changes across the site with a difference of roughly 35m between the highest and lowest points on the site. There is a steeply sloping area to the north boundary with the majority of the site gently sloping downwards from south to north.

There are a number of existing agricultural buildings on the site. The majority are located in an informal cluster towards the eastern boundary, and there is a large shed towards the southern boundary. The site is currently in use as farm land.

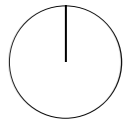
The northern boundary is defined by steeply sloping ground which is covered in a dense, well-established vegetation. The western boundary is defined by a thick layer of trees and shrubbery that was planted during the construction of the M1 motorway. The southern boundary is defined by a timber post fence, and a hedgerow to the southwest. The eastern boundary is defined by an established hedgerow which separates the site from the existing road.

In addition to the established vegetation located along the site boundaries, there are two established hedgerows running west-east across the site, dividing the site into three separate fields, and a hedgerow running north-south, which separates the fields from an unused parcel of land adjacent to the M1 motorway. There is no other notable vegetation existing on the site.

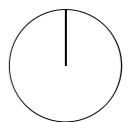
Historic archaeological testing carried out on the site identified a large enclosure towards the northern boundary which contained a wealth of bronze age pottery. (See archaeologists report for more information).



Location of Site relative to Drogheda town centre



Aerial Photograph





Existing Site Plan 1:2500

3. Site Photographs

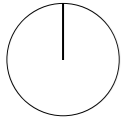




4. Connectivity



Public Transport Links



Walking/Cycling Connectivity

5. Planning Policy

5.1 MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2019

The proposed development has been designed with close attention to the guidance and design criteria set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019. Particular attention has been paid to sections 3.6 'Housing' & 11 'Development Standards'.

ZONING AND LAND USE

The majority of the subject site is zoned A2 'New Residential'. The objective for this zone is *"To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses"*.

Towards the northern boundary the site is zoned F1 'Open Space', corresponding to a set back for development from the River Boyne natural amenity area. In addition, a narrow strip of land towards the western boundary is zoned 'F1', corresponding to a setback for the M1 motorway. The objective for this zone is *"To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities"*.

In line with the zoning objectives, a large scale residential development comprising 661 dwellings and resident amenities is proposed.

BUILDING HEIGHT

The majority of the proposed development is 2-storey terraced and semi-detached dwellings, combined with bookend 3-storey elements to form strong and active corner and end of terrace conditions.

Towards the Boyne Valley Bridge at the north-western corner of the site the height of the proposal increases to 4 and 5-Storey apartment blocks. An increase of height at this location is employed for the built form to respond to the scale of the bridge tower, which has a visually significant presence in this area of the site.

The three proposed blocks are arranged around a public square. Adequate separation distances and overshadowing considerations have informed the design and layout of the apartment blocks, in accordance with 11.1.1 of the County Development Plan.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN SPACE

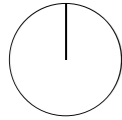
The proposed design has been developed with close attention to the guidance and objectives of 11.2.2 of the County Development Plan.

The guidance for public open space within residential developments requires that a minimum of 15% of the gross site area be allocated for public open space. Including the area of land Zoned F1, along with designated areas of open space within the scheme, the total area of open space within the proposal is 8.79ha, constituting 33.5% of the total site area.

In line with the criteria for design of public open space contained in 11.2.2, existing natural features of value within the curtilage of the site are retained, a variety of spaces of differing character are provided, and all open spaces benefit from passive surveillance from the adjacent dwellings.

CAR PARKING

In accordance with 11.2.2.7 and 11.9 of the County Development Plan, 2 spaces/house and 1.25 spaces/apartment unit are provided. 1 space/4 apartment units is allocated for visitor parking adjacent to the apartment blocks, with an additional 68 visitor spaces distributed throughout the site. A total of 42 visitor/staff parking spaces are provided to serve the creche/cafe/retail element of the proposal.



South Environs of Drogheda LAP Zoning Map

6. Proposed Development

CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVE

The proposal aims to develop the site in a way that creates a network of distinct character areas. The urban response to the site is to create a sequence of streets, squares, avenues, parks and housing clusters, which will be well defined and diverse in character. Place making strategies are employed throughout to encourage a sense of community, to increase permeability, and to enhance recreational enjoyment of the scheme. Where possible, existing natural and archaeological features have been preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the urban and landscape framework, to root the development in a sense of place. The natural advantages of the site- existing mature woodland, proximity to the River Boyne, views of the dramatic Mary McAleese Bridge- have all been drawn upon to create an exceptionally high level of outdoor amenity value throughout the development.



View of site from South East.



Proposed Site Plan 1:2500

SITE STRATEGY

The site contains several features which informed the site strategy from the outset. An important archaeological feature to the north of the site, combined with a zoned set back from the river Boyne, resulted in a large area of open space to the north of the site. From this area of open space, a major avenue runs south, providing the main spine of residential units to the west of the site. This avenue links periodically with the area of existing mature trees along the western boundary. Another avenue runs along a linear park to the south east, to connect with the main entrance of the scheme. This park is orientated to maximise on views of the Boyne bridge, which forms its focal point. Further south, the scheme is interspersed with more areas of open space, notably a small pocket park, along with the major Central Park element, which forms a well-defined urban square towards the Sheephouse Road end of the development.

Higher density housing is located to the North of the site, commanding views of the largest open space area, and the Boyne bridge and river. A pocket of medium density housing occurs at the entrance of the scheme (along with a crèche, retail unit and café), and another is located on the southern boundary of the site.

The site lies to the east of the Unesco world heritage Brú na Bóinne archaeological site, and also west of the Battle of the Boyne visitor centre. Given the visual sensitivity of these landscapes, it was decided to limit the height of the apartment blocks to 5 stories maximum, rather than build up the scale to a “landmark” tower at the northern end of the site. This strategy will minimise the visual impact of the scheme in particular from the buffer area of the Unesco world heritage site.

Notable features:

1. The Boyne River Walkway, which is connected to the pedestrian routes within the site.
- 2 A significant Bronze Age site, which will be retained and form the centrepiece of the northern area of public open space.
3. The western woodland section will contain a 4m high burn to act as an acoustic and visual barrier to the M1.
4. The main avenue running NE from the entrance will focus on a view of the Boyne Bridge.
5. A new park, Rathmullan Green, will provide a neighbourhood focus with multiple recreational options provided for.
6. The main western spine boulevard, which forms a focus to the western end of the scheme and runs parallel to the western woodland.



Major Masterplan features

CHARACTER AREAS

Boyne Valley Parklands- a sloping area of public open space leading to the existing mature woodland on the bank of the River Boyne, with views to the neighbouring bridge. The higher density apartment element of the scheme will be located here.

The Green- a boulevard running along a linear park, linking the main entrance to the scheme with the Boyne Valley Parklands to the north west. This boulevard will terminate with a dramatic view of the bridge.

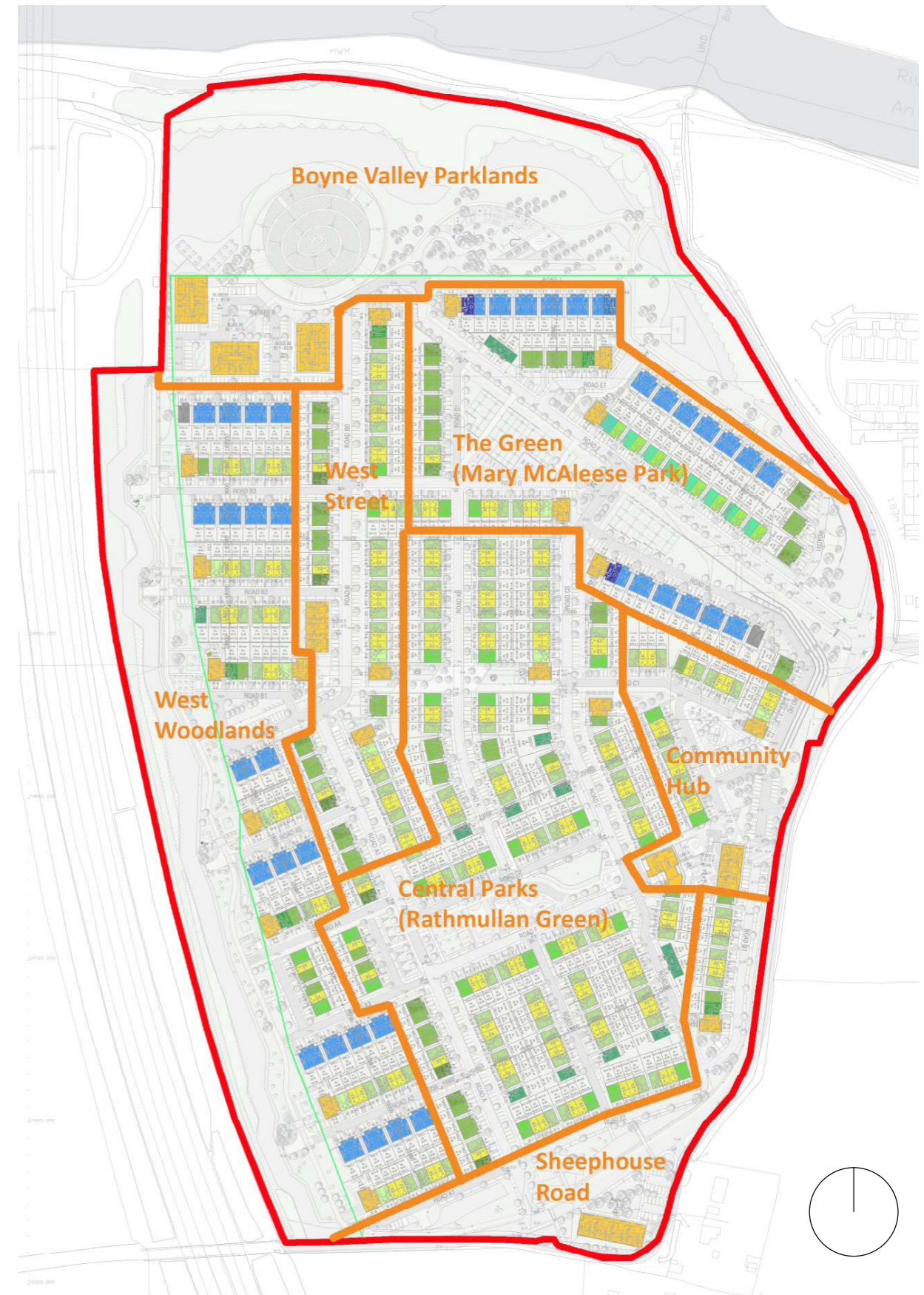
Community Hub- An area close to the main entrance with community features including a retail unit, creche and cafe.

Central Parks- the main body of the plan which features a pocket park and a larger formal garden square, with an array of recreational opportunities for children and adults.

Sheephouse Road- the southern boundary of the site with a mid-density block of apartments.

West Woodlands- a long peripheral area with a deep bank of new and existing woodland, and a 4m high burn, providing recreational amenity along with visual and noise resistance to the M1.

West Street- an attractive formal boulevard terminated with parks at either end.



Proposed Character Areas

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Vehicular access is from the east of the site on Rathmullan Road and to the south of the site off Sheephouse Road. A hierarchy of roads is proposed within the development. These will be designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Street (DMURS). An internal link road provides a vehicular spine through the development. Local roads circulate traffic within the development, while “homezones” are lightly trafficked residential streets (including cul-de-sacs). A network of pedestrian and cycling routes operate throughout the scheme. These are often located away from vehicular accessed streets and so provide a high level of recreational amenity.

Within the site, houses will be provided with mostly in-curtilage parking, while apartments will have surface parking in the vicinity of the blocks, including visitor parking. These parking areas will be landscaped and visually relieved by tree planting.

The scheme aims to maximise permeability within the site, with pedestrian and cycling networks running around and through the site. A perimeter cycle track provides high amenity value. Pocket parks, road layout and existing woodland all create an ideal environment for recreational walking and cycling, as well as minimising pedestrian travel times. The design seeks to ensure that the requirements of all street users are considered in a balanced manner that encourages sustainable travel choices for local journeys.

“Homezone Road”

Local Road

Internal Link Road

Cycle Route



Movement Diagram

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

The western boundary to the M1 requires a high degree of consideration, given the noise and visual impacts generated. An existing woodland along this boundary is to be preserved and enhanced, to become the “western wood” landscape feature. This will include a 4m high wooded bund, and will act as a noise buffer between the motorway and the estate. It will also provide walking and cycling infrastructure, and play an important role in the development’s recreational resources. It is proposed to provide intermittent play areas and recreation areas throughout this space, particularly at the termination of cul-de-sacs.

To the north of the site lies the River Boyne, which is bounded to the south by existing mature woodlands. This area will form the northern perimeter of the main area of open space. New tree planting will form a buffer zone between the open space and the more sensitive existing woodland. This open space connects via a pathway to the Boyne River Walkway to the east.

To the east and south of the site the development boundary consists of Rathmullan Road and Sheephouse Road, both public roads. Housing on the periphery of the development will face these roads, and a landscaped strip will separate internal access roads within the development from the public roads.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

A thorough landscape strategy has been prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds. This strategy is detailed in an accompanying report. In summary it seeks to enhance the urban strategy of the development with appropriate landscaping, working together with the architectural expression to create a sense of place, inviting areas of recreation, enhanced environmental comfort in relation to, for example, noise, and emphasising the natural and existing qualities of the site to create attractive and unique open spaces.



Landscaping Masterplan prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds, NTS

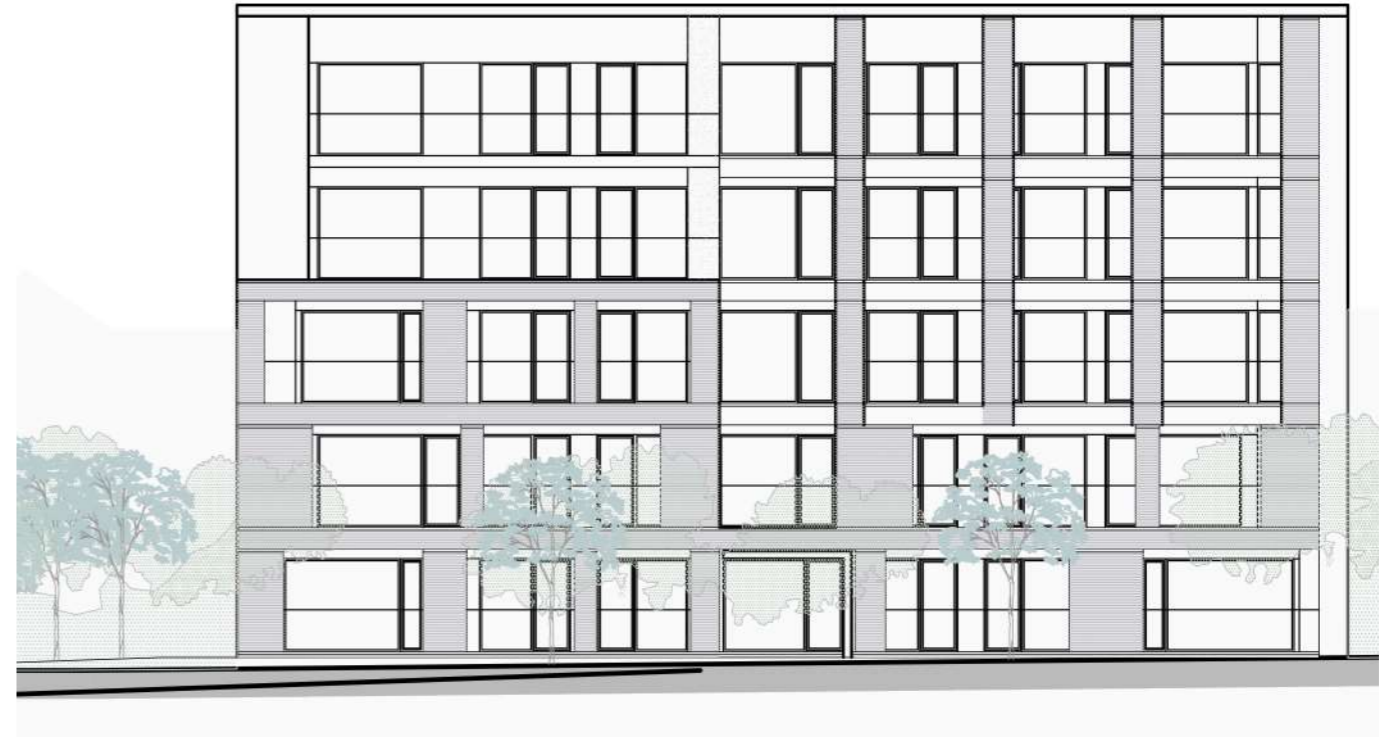
DWELLING DESIGN

Given demands for multiple house types/ household sizes in the current residential market, the scheme provides for a range of low, medium and high density housing at appropriate areas throughout the site.

A mixture of dwelling types have been developed, including deep plan and wide plan units. These types allow a range of variations to accommodate diverse family and household types. The majority of units will be 2 storey three and four bedroom houses, with conventional rear gardens.

Apartments are provided throughout the scheme in small walk-up blocks of 3 no. apartments. These blocks serve as “book-ends”, to provide visual interest to streets, relieving potential monotony of housing terraces. These blocks each contain a semi-private garden space, and on-street car parking in the vicinity of the block. These blocks allow a range of housing types, both housing and apartments, to feature throughout the scheme, enlivening the scheme with a range of household types in each part of the scheme.

Flexibility and adaptability are provided for with potential for future roof conversions and extensions to the rear of the houses.



MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

The proposed design employs a contemporary architectural language expressed through the use of high quality materials and detailing. The dwellings are given a contemporary expression, with a palette of brick, coarse and smooth render along with areas of timber panelling, resulting in a crisp, modern, and visually diverse development.

The scale of the apartment blocks is broken down with a play of solid/ void elements and recessed balconies, with material changes providing further visual interest. Balconies within the proposed design are recessed, adding depth and variety to the façades.

The housing terraces are expressed minimally, with an emphasis on simplicity of design- doors and windows are incorporated into visually coherent architectural features, producing an uncluttered streetscape.

