

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

OUR REF: CON23002
YOUR REF: ABP-321688-25

14th February 2025

RE: THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, AS AMENDED, AND THE STATUTORY REGULATIONS MADE THEREUNDER: FORMAL FIRST PARTY RESPONSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 129 TO THE THIRD-PARTY APPEAL REF: ABP-321688-25, AGAINST THE DECISION OF CORK CITY COUNCIL TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION UNDER APPLICATION REGISTER REFERENCE 2443031 FOR A LARGE SCALE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 246NO. RESIDENTIAL UNITS, A CRËCHE AND ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS AT RINGWOOD, SHEAN UPPER, BLARNEY, CORK CITY.

A Chara,

We, Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd., of NSC Campus, Mahon, Cork, are instructed by the applicants, Clockstrike Limited., hereafter referred to as the 'Applicants', to submit this formal response to the various grounds of appeal contained in the 4no. Third Party Appeals submitted to the Board against the decision of Cork City Council to grant permission for the above development on the 12th December 2024 subject to 61no. planning conditions.

While acknowledging that the application will now be assessed 'de novo' by the Board, we respectfully submit that the notification to grant planning permission was arrived by Cork City Council following a thorough and detailed assessment of the relevant planning issues pertaining to it, and we are satisfied that it is in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

We respectfully request An Bord Pleanála to arrive at the same conclusion, set aside the grounds of appeal in this instance, and grant permission for the proposed development.

Our considered response, and the reasons, arguments, and considerations upon which it is based are detailed herein. The response follows an overview section, which outlines the context of the planning application and proposed development.

Emphasis, where added to quotations and elsewhere, is ours. We confirm that we have inspected the third-party appeals, the Planning Authority file, and have undertaken a site visit.

This appeal response should be read in conjunction with the planning application (and associated reports submitted with the application) and the response to the Request for Further Information lodged with the Planning Authority.

1.0 PLANNING APPLICATION OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

1.1 Site Location, Description

The subject site is located immediately east of Blarney town centre inside the town's settlement boundary and is approximately 7km north-west of Cork city centre.

The site (red line) is approximately 8.32ha in area, forms part of larger landbank in agricultural use, and is located on sloping, undulating lands that comprise a series of agricultural fields immediately north of the "Ringwood", a circular wooded area.

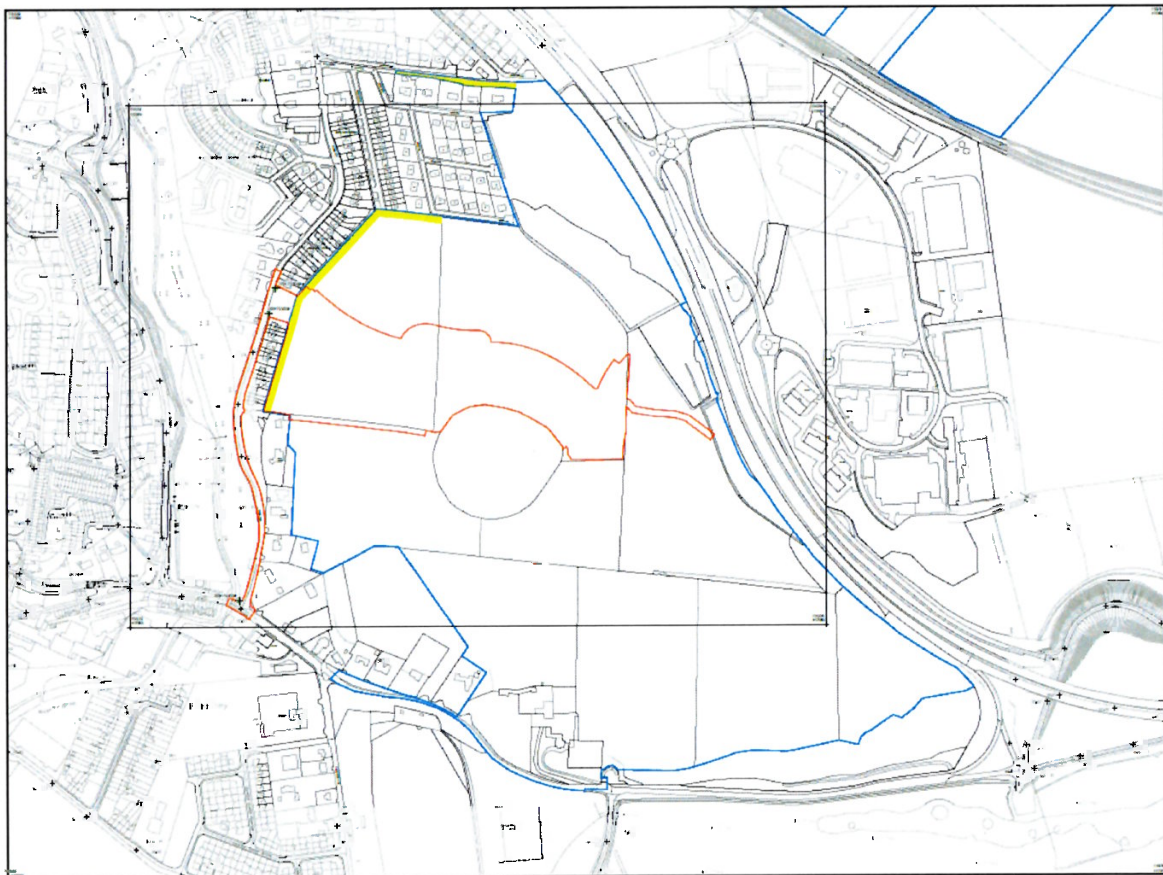


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red (Source: CCK Architects, 2024)

The subject site is located in and immediately adjacent to the existing built footprint of Blarney and within its defined development boundary. The existing and evolving character of the area is residential and urban in nature. Areas further north are already characterised by long-established housing estates.

The subject site is bound to the east and south by agricultural land, as well as the Ringwood, a locally prominent circular shaped woodland. To the west the site is bound by Station Road, which is included within the red line, and existing residential dwellings along that road, and to the north the site is bound by agricultural land and other existing residential development along Station Road.

1.2 Nature of Proposed Development

The proposed development as submitted is comprised of the construction of 246no. residential units, as follows:

- 101no. apartments arranged in 4no. part 3-storey, part 4-storey apartment blocks (to include 6no. 1-bed studio units, 35no. 1-bed units and 60no. 2-bed units);
- 30no. duplex dwellings arranged in 3no. 3-storey buildings (to include 15no. 1-bed dwellings and 15no. 2-bed dwellings); and
- 115no. 2-storey and 3-storey houses (to include 19no. 2-bed dwellings, 64no. 3-bed dwellings, and 32no. 4-bed dwellings).

The proposed development also includes the provision of a crèche facility with capacity to cater for 61no. children. At further information stage in the planning process, the crèche's capacity was increased to cater for 137no. children.

Another important element of the proposed development is the construction of a new signalised access onto Station Road and road and footpath improvement works on Station Road and the R617 Road.



Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout as initially submitted to Cork City Council (Source: CCK Architects, 2024)

Both the planning history of the site and the planning policies pertaining to it are set out in detail in the documentation submitted with the planning application.

1.3 The Planning Application Process, Planning Authority Assessment and Decision

On 24th April 2023, a Section 247 pre-planning meeting was held between Planning Authority and the Applicants in respect of the proposed development of the subject site. The meeting was held online via Microsoft Teams. The scheme submitted for discussion during this Section 247 meeting comprised the construction of 485no. residential dwellings and crèche facility.

A second s247 meeting was held on the 3rd August 2023, again via Microsoft Teams. The scheme presented comprised the construction of 474no. residential dwellings and a crèche facility.

Following these meetings, and on foot of the feedback received, the proposed development of the site was split into 2 phases.

Phase 1 was brought forward to a Section 32(c) pre-planning meeting with the Planning Authority on 26th January 2024, LRD Reference: LRD 007-23). This scheme comprised a large scale residential development (LRD) of 193no. residential dwellings and a crèche facility.

The Planning Authority's LRD Opinion was issued on the 22nd February 2024.

Separately, the Applicants held a consultation day for residents in Blarney Woolen Mills Hotel on the 26th January 2024. Consultation was also undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) preparation. More detailed consultations and discussions were held with Irish Rail, the N20/M20 TII Design Team, the Cork City Childcare Committee and Blarney Castle.

The Board can clearly see that the Applicants undertook a comprehensive consultative approach to the preparation of their planning application.

The planning application (Ref: 2443031) was submitted to the Planning Authority on the 27th June 2024. An EIAR was included to help the Planning Authority make an informed assessment on the potential for environment impacts.

A total of 24no. submissions were made during the consultation period, 4no. from public bodies - Inland Fisheries Ireland, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Uisce Éireann, and the Cork City Childcare Committee. The remaining submissions were from local residents and included Blarney Castle.

Inland Fisheries Ireland had no objection to the granting of planning permission subject to standard planning conditions.

Uisce Éireann had no objection subject to standard conditions being applied to any grant of permission from the Council. They also confirmed that the Applicants had engaged with them and that a Confirmation of Feasibility had been issued.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland in their submission asserted that insufficient information had been submitted to assess the impact upon national road network; raised a concern at proximity of eastern outfall to the national road and advised that as the site was within a road national scheme reservation area, consultation with the NRDO office was merited.

The Cork City Childcare submission argued that a crèche facility to cater for 101 no. children was required.

The Blarney Castle submission sought a historic landscape and woodland management plan and enhanced screening on southern boundary to protect views from the Castle.

The submissions made by all of the above formed part of the Planning Authority's assessment of the proposed development.

The remaining submissions were from local residents and their content generally reflects the grounds of appeal, as set out in section 2 below. The relate to a suggested loss of privacy and amenity due to the proposed apartments to the rear of Woodville Terrace, a suggested lack of social and physical infrastructure in the town, traffic congestion and road safety on Station Road, the impact of construction traffic, flooding risk and boundary treatments.

These submissions were comprehensively listed and addressed in the various Planning Authority assessment reports.

None of the Planning Authority's internal assessments recommended a refusal of permission. Four reports, from the drainage, architecture, infrastructure and strategic planning recommended further information be submitted, primarily on matters of a technical or environmental detail, unforeseen at the time of the LRD Opinion, and new matters raised in submissions.

The initial Planner's Report, picking up on these various assessments, and noting the proposal was acceptable in principle, provided the following commentaries, which are of relevance:

With regard the zoning of the site:

The Strategic Planning Report has not raised any concern relating to the incorporation of ZO 20 lands into the development boundary.....It is considered that the works, proposed in the ZO 20 lands, are minor in nature and will not result in any material change to the use of the land. Accordingly, it is considered that the principle of the development in the ZO 20 is acceptable.

With regard to servicing and access:

The Core Strategy further designates the lands as Tier 2 where lands that are not currently fully serviced have the potential to become fully serviced within the life of the Plan. As part of the pre – planning consultation process, under Section 247 of the Act, and at the LRD Opinion state two servicing related matters were raised regarding the subject site.

The first was whether Uisce Éireann had supply and waste water capacity to serve the development. Uisce Éireann have confirmed, in their submission dated 1/08/2024, that connection is feasible.

Secondly, access to the site was discussed. Initially a larger scale development was proposed, to incorporate the subject site and lands to its north, reaching as far as southern boundaries of Ard Na Greine and Aisling Gael estates. The applicant was advised that the scale of the development could not be facilitated via Station Road. Following direct discussions with the Strategic Transportation section a revised proposal proceeded, limiting the scale of development.

It is considered that, as the Uisce Éireann submission and the Strategic Transportation Report have not raised any concerns, regarding water and access, the principle of new residential development of these Tier 2 lands is acceptable.

With regard to housing mix:

The housing mix for the proposed scheme is acceptable and in compliance with the City Development Plan.

With regard to the proposed apartment blocks:

The proposed separation distance is well in excess of this minimum separation distance. It is considered that the proposed apartments will not impact unduly upon the privacy of residents in Woodville Terrace.

As regards the impact on the setting of these homes, through overbearance, the development will result in a change in the setting of these residences. It is noted that this is the lower part of the subject site, where there is capacity for taller buildings. Placing the apartment blocks here reduces wider visual impacts, including from a protected view. On balance it is considered that, given the separation distance and landscaping proposed that the proposal will not have an undue visual impact through overbearance.

The Daylight and Sunlight Analysis Report, submitted with the application, includes an assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon existing homes and their gardens. It confirms that the impact of the proposed development upon access to light is within the recommendations of the relevant requirements.

With regard to the overall development:

It should be noted that, on balance, the proposed development is considered a positive proposal that responds well to the current policy context. The lands are ideally located for much needed new residential development in a manner that should not unduly impact upon the existing settlement of Blarney.

The Planning Authority's Senior Executive Planner's report contained the following comments, also of relevance:

It is considered that, as the Uisce Éireann submission and the Strategic Transportation Report, have not raised any concerns, regarding water and access, the principle of new residential development of these Tier 2 lands is acceptable.

It is further noted that Blarney has not had a significant recent new housing development permitted planning given certain constraints, and this scheme (sic) is to be welcomed.

Further information was subsequently requested on the 21st August 2024, requesting the Applicants to address the following:

- Drainage: Attenuation tank and detention basin details;
- Architecture: Apartment block design;
- Childcare Facility size;
- Principle and servicing of development;
- Infrastructure works on Station Road; and
- Revisions to EIAR.

The Applicants responded on the 18th October 2024 and included the following documentation:

- Revised Architectural and Landscape Plans;
- Engineering Plans and Reports; and
- EIAR Addendum.

The subsequent Planner's Report details that all items that formed part of the RFI were addressed appropriately.

Revised plans have been submitted providing for a crèche facility accommodation 137no. children. This will be located close to the centre of the proposed development, adjacent to the Ringwood, which is zoned ZO 15 Public Open Space....This is welcomed and the response is considered satisfactory.

Having reviewed the RFI response and EIAR addendum it is considered that the revised proposal will not have significant effects on the environment.

I am satisfied that that the proposal, on lands zoned for new residential development, accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. I recommend that planning permission is granted.

Based on the recommendations of the various internal reports, a Notification of a Grant of Permission was issued by the Planning Authority on the 12th December 2024, where it was considered that:

Having regard to the nature, location and context of the site and surrounding area, the policies and objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 and the nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in the Second

Schedule, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area, and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The permission decision was subject to 61no. conditions, including the following, which are pertinent to the assessment of this appeal.

No.1: *The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted to the Planning Authority on 27/06/2024 as amended by the Further Information plans and particulars submitted to the Planning Authority on 18/10/2024, except where otherwise required by the conditions in this schedule. Reason: To define the scope of the permission, and to enable the planning authority to check the proposed development when completed, in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.*

No.2. *The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and particulars submitted with the planning application, as modified by further information submitted on 18/10/2024 and in accordance with the mitigation measures and the timescale for their implementation contained in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), save as may otherwise be required by the following conditions. Reason: To clarify the plans and particulars for which permission is granted and to ensure that the mitigation measures contained in the EIAR are implemented in a timely manner.*

No.4. *The development, including the childcare facility, shall be carried out in Phase 1A of the proposed development, in accordance with the phasing scheme, as shown on Proposed Site Layout Plan Phasing, lodged with the application, except as otherwise may be required to comply with the following conditions. Reason: To ensure the timely provision of services, for the benefit of the occupants of the proposed dwellings.*

No.5. *The childcare facility hereby permitted, shall not be converted to any other use without a prior grant of planning permission in the event of the childcare facility ceasing operations. Reason: To protect the amenities of residential properties in the vicinity.*

No.6. *The construction of the enhanced active travel infrastructure along Station Road between the entrance to the development and the R617 shall form part Phase 1A, as set out in the Proposed Site Layout Plan Phasing, lodged with the application and works shall be completed prior to the occupation of any residential unit. Reason: In the interest of orderly development and to support enhanced sustainable mobility.*

No.15. *All findings of the Quality Audit (which includes a Road Safety Audit, Walking & Cycling Audit, Accessibility Audit, Street Design Audit, Visual Quality Audit and Community Audit) shall be closed out, signed off and incorporated into the development. A Stage 3/4 Road Safety Audit shall also be undertaken, closed out, signed off and acted upon. All costs associated with this condition shall be borne by the Applicant. Reason: In the interest of road safety.*

No. 28. *The Applicant shall submit an application for a new storm water connection to the Drainage*

Section of Cork City Council, and obtain written approval for same, prior to the making of any connection to the public storm water sewer. **Reason:** In the interest of public health.

No.33. The final geometric layout for the entrance on Station Road and the active travel infrastructure proposed along Station Road (including all road markings and signage) shall be finalised in consultation with the Infrastructure Directorate of Cork City Council and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. **Reason:** To support enhanced sustainable mobility and ensure the safe operation of the road network for all users.

No. 40. As part of the Monitoring and Review of the Mobility Management Plan, the planning authority are to be notified who the appointed Mobility Manager is before commencement of development. A review of the Mobility Management Plan including the carrying out of residential travel surveys to be carried out Year 1 and Year 2 after first occupation and then every two years until final occupation. **Reason:** To provide oversight of mobility issues associated with such a large- scale development.

No.41. The final Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be prepared in consultation with the appropriate Directorates in Cork City Council, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. The plan shall include the phasing of works associated with the enhanced active travel works on Station Road. **Reason:** In the interest of orderly development.

No.42. All construction related traffic shall be required to access the site via the proposed entrance on Station Road and no construction related traffic shall be permitted to use any other entry point without written agreement from the planning authority. All HGV construction related traffic shall be required to enter/exit the proposed development via the R617 as presented in Figure 7.3 of the EIAR. **Reason:** In the interest of public safety and residential amenity.

No.43. There shall be no parking for construction vehicles along the public road or footpath. During construction the developer shall provide adequate off carriageway parking facilities within the curtilage of the site for all traffic associated with the proposed development, including delivery and service vehicles/trucks. **Reason:** In the interests of traffic safety.

No.44. No waiting or staging of vehicles entering the construction site shall be permitted on the public road network. **Reason:** To ensure the safe operation of the existing road network

No.45. Any vehicular gate or barrier entering the site shall be positioned as such to ensure any entering vehicles do not block the road carriageway. **Reason:** To ensure the safe operation of the existing road network

No.54. No dust, mud or debris from the site shall be carried onto or deposited on the public road/footpath. Public roads and footpaths in the vicinity of the site shall be maintained in a tidy condition by the developer during construction (sic). **Reason:** To protect the amenities of the area and in the interests of road safety.

No.55. *The developer shall clean any spillages on the public roads arising from the development, as the need arises or when requested to do so by the Planning Authority. Reason: In the interest of road safety.*

No.56. *The developer shall undertake frequent sweeping and cleaning of Station Road and the R617 to clean debris and spillages and ensure they do not enter nearby watercourse / river which are spawning grounds for fish. Reason. In the interest of road safety and the environment.*

No. 57. *The developer shall install and operate a wheel wash for the duration of the construction period and ensure that it is used by all vehicles entering and exiting the site. Reason: In the interest of road safety and the environment.*

No.58. *The developer shall install and operate a wheel wash for the duration of the construction period and ensure that it is used by all vehicles entering and exiting the site. Reason: In the interest of road safety.*

2.0 GROUNDS OF APPEAL

Four third party appeals have been submitted to An Bord Pleanála in respect of the grant of permission issued by the Planning Authority.

The appeals were lodged by Rory O'Keeffe, Patricia and Denis Donoghue, Trevor Daly and Paul Byrne.

Rory O'Keeffe is a resident of Assumption Terrace, which is located on Station Road to the northwest side of the proposed development site. His grounds of appeal relate to the following:

- Lack of Infrastructure Improvements
- Increased traffic congestion
- Overbearing apartments behind Woodville Terrace
- Construction traffic
- Road Safety at the proposed Station Road entrance

Patricia and Denis O'Donoghue are residents of Woodville Terrace, which backs onto the subject site on Station Road. Their grounds of appeal relate to the following:

- Location of apartments
- Traffic and parking on Station Road
- Lack of proper sewage and wastewater infrastructure
- Lack of social and community infrastructure
- Title issues

Trevor Daly is a resident of Assumption Terrace, which is located on Station Road to the northwest side of the proposed development site. His grounds of appeal relate to the following:

- Lack of existing infrastructure including health provision and bus services
- Potential impact on traffic congestion, particularly on Station Road
- Road Safety on Station Road and due to construction traffic
- Height and location of the four-story apartments
- Residential density
- Built heritage impacts

Paul Byrne is a resident of Woodfield, located to the northwest of the subject site on the opposite side of Station Road. His grounds of appeal relate to the following:

- Lack of a masterplan
- Landownership issues and validity of the application
- Traffic congestion and road safety on Station Road
- EIAR
- Height and impacts of proposed apartment blocks

- Housing Mix
- Lack of infrastructure and town health check
- Crèche design
- Tourism impacts and views from Blarney Castle
- Quality of open space areas
- Road safety in wider area
- Relevance and merit of planning conditions applied
- Flood risk

The 4no. appeals, which are similar in nature and extent, largely mirror the points raised in the appellants' various submissions at planning application stage.

These matters were comprehensively assessed and addressed by the Planning Authority in arriving at their decision to grant permission.

We ask the Board to dismiss the grounds of appeal following their own assessment of the planning merits of the proposed development.

Our detailed response to each of the appeal grounds is set out in the following sections.

3.0 SITE, DEVELOPMENT, AND POLICY CONTEXTS

Before addressing the Appellants' grounds of appeal, we wish to set out a number of important contexts which we believe should be central to the Board's assessment of the proposed development.

Current Planning Policy Context for Blarney, Ringwood and Stoneview

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF) sets a population growth target of at least 50-60% for Cork City and its suburbs by 2040. This is to facilitate Cork becoming a city of scale which can compete internationally and be a driver of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.

In the context of Cork, **National Policy Objective (NPO) 2a** translates to a target of half (50%) of future population and employment growth in Cork to be focused on Cork City and its suburbs.

The preferred spatial development approach contained in the NPF is to provide as compact an urban environment as possible, where increased residential densities are complemented by easy access to sustainable modes of transport and high-quality education, services and amenities.

Compact Growth and Sustainable Mobility form part of the NPF's National Strategic Outcomes. In terms of achieving these Outcomes, one of the key future growth enablers identified for Cork is:

Progressing the sustainable development of new greenfield areas for housing, especially those on public transport corridors, such as Monard. [emphasis added]

The Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) sets out a 12-year development plan for the Southern Region based on the strategic objectives of the NPF. The strategy acknowledges that Cork is targeted to be one of the fastest growing areas in the state over the next 20 years.

The RSES and its constituent Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) both build on the policy contained in the 2001 Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) and 2008 CASP update, all of which emphasise Blarney as a strategic residential growth node on the Cork commuter rail network, where major population growth and development should be prioritised via an integrated land use and transportation strategy that is infrastructure-led.

Compact sustainable growth is one of the guiding principles of the Cork MASP. The MASP contains population growth targets for 2031 that are consistent with those in the NPF that are set for 2040.

According to section 5 of the Cork MASP, Cork City and Suburbs are to grow by 75,000 by the year 2031, with a target population of 283,669 for that year.

In the MASP, Blarney is specifically identified as being one of the Metropolitan Towns that requires consolidation, regeneration, and infrastructure-led growth and investment regarding housing. Specifically, one of the Cork MASP enablers identified for the Cork Metropolitan Area is:

Progressing the sustainable development of new areas for housing, especially those on public transport corridors such as Monard and urban expansion areas on the rail corridor such as at Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Cobh and **Blarney**. [emphasis added]

The MASP cites the development of a new commuter rail station and Park and Ride facility in Blarney as some of the key transport priorities for the Cork Metropolitan Area. **Cork MASP Policy Objective 8** is explicit in this regard.

The MASP also states the indicative residential yield at Blarney, defined as a Strategic Residential Growth Node on the Metropolitan Rail Line, **as being 3,555 units (including 2,600 units at Stoneview)** up to 2031.

The **Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040** (CMATS) was devised and published in 2020 in response to the policies contained in the NPF which envisage that Cork will become the fastest-growing city region in Ireland with a projected 50% to 60% increase of its population in the period up to 2040.

CMATS (2020) reaffirms the preceding two decades of planning policy for Blarney backing the development of a new rail station and associated Park and Ride facility to support sustainable growth. CMATS envisages enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure for Blarney, including the Blarney Greenway Route, as well as a Core Radial Bus Network to serve the town, all of which will facilitate connectivity between Blarney and the wider metropolitan area.

Under the existing **Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028**, the subject lands are zoned ZO 02 – New Residential Neighbourhoods. The areas zoned ZO 02 largely corresponds with Tier 2 land as identified in the City Development Plan's Growth Strategy Map (Figure 2.21). The Tier 2 lands in Blarney have the potential to yield 840no. dwelling units as per Table 2.3 of the Growth Strategy for Cork.

With regard to Tier 2 lands, Section 2.51 of the CDP states the following:

Tier 2 sites are zoned land that are considered serviceable by physical infrastructure within the life of this Plan. While the NPF's tiered approach does not focus on community infrastructure, this is of central importance in the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods and is covered in detail in Chapter 3 Delivering Homes and Communities.

The surrounding lands to the north, east and west are identified for Long Term Strategic Residential and form part of c. 105 net hectares of land identified for Long Term Strategic Residential development for Blarney. These lands have a potential residential yield of 3,707no. dwelling units (Table 2.4), with a significant portion of these to be located in close proximity to Stoneview at Ringwood.

As per CDP Objective 10.63, Ringwood/East Blarney is identified as one of seven strategic areas in Cork city identified for compact consolidation and expansion.

To support the compact growth and development of Blarney East / Ringwood Expansion Area as a strategic City consolidation and expansion area, as identified in the Core Strategy. All development shall be

designed, planned and delivered in a co-ordinated and phased manner, using a layout and mix of uses that form part of an emerging neighbourhood integrated with the wider area.

This is underpinned by the provisions outlined in CMATs, in terms of maximising opportunities offered by the existing rail network to support the travel needs of the population across the metropolitan area. There is further validation in same when the proposed growth targets for the area are brought into consideration.

As highlighted in the Plan:

The provision of new train stations at Blackpool, Blarney and Tivoli is consistent with Cork City Councils policy and objective to significantly intensify development around these locations. As the Suburban Rail will utilise the existing mainline between Mallow and Kent and onto Midleton, it is important to ensure that the provision of additional suburban rail stations and services will not preclude the ability of train providers to increase the speed or frequency on this line.

Chapter 10 Key Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Development Sites discusses Blarney, Ringwood and Stoneview in respect of the current planning and development context for the area.

Section 10.233 of the Plan provides the following commentary regarding Stoneview:

*Stoneview, a large area earmarked for residential and employment development, requires investment in transport and utilities infrastructure to enable growth. Cork City Council recognises the potential Stoneview presents for **public transport orientated development** given its strategic position on the Dublin-Cork Railway line and will be preparing a framework plan in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including the NTA, TII, IDA and landowners which aims to address infrastructural constraints and allow for the development of this area.*

Section 10.263 goes on to further state:

*In addition to bus improvements, **CMATS has also identified lands at Stoneview for the construction of a new railway station as part of the expansion of Cork Commuter Rail services.** Enabling infrastructure such as new pedestrian and cycling linkages and upgrades to the local road network will be examined in both the Blarney Town Centre and Stoneview Framework Plans.*

Regarding the Stoneview Framework Masterplan, the following commentaries are provided:

10.274

Stoneview which is situated 1.9km north west of Blarney town centre site has been identified in successive plans as major residential expansion for the town. It occupies a strategic position on the Dublin-Cork railway line and the development of a large site in close proximity to the suburban rail network offers a major opportunity to achieve high modal shift by providing new homes at a location where residents can gain easy access to high quality rail. However, there are a number of infrastructural constraints which will

prohibit development of this site in the short term, primarily water services and the need for major local road upgrades.

10.275

During the lifetime of this plan Cork City Council will collaborate with key stakeholders including Irish Water, NTA and TII to develop solutions to these constraints and provide a Framework Masterplan for the co-ordinated development of this site which is considered paramount in delivering on the ambitions for both Blarney and Cork City in the National Planning Framework.

Objective 10.65 of the Plan outlines that during the lifetime of the Plan, Cork City Council will seek to provide and implement a framework for a transit-oriented mixed-use and residential development at Stoneview. This will require the coordinated provision of infrastructure, services, land use, movement, urban design and development.

All of the above provisions provide a strongly supportive planning policy context for the proposed development.

Blarney – Planning Policy Development

Taking account of the above, we would also like to draw the Board's attention to the context in which the current national, regional, and local planning policy for the development of Blarney was arrived at.

Beginning with the CASP in 2001, Blarney has long been identified as a suitable location for significant population growth owing to its location along the Cork-Mallow/Dublin rail line. Since the publication of the CASP, the significant potential of Blarney to play a strategic role in the growth and development of the Cork Metropolitan Area (CMA) has been reflected in an abundance of statutory and non-statutory plans, including:

- The *South West Regional Authority – Regional Planning Guidelines (2004)*, which supported the delivery of a new rail station and Park and Ride facility at Blarney, in line with the CASP;
- The Cork County Council *Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan – 2005*, which was premised on the findings of the *Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study (2002)* and sanctioned the creation of a Masterplan to guide significant new residential development in tandem with a new rail station at Stoneview;
- The non-statutory *Masterplan for Lands at Stoneview Blarney County Cork*, adopted by the County Council in 2006 to guide the phased delivery of a major new residential neighbourhood at Stoneview supported by major new infrastructure including a new rail station;
- The 2008 CASP Update and the *South West Regional Authority – Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022*, which both re-emphasised the significance and appropriateness of Blarney as a location for major population growth and development given its location along the metropolitan rail line;
- The *Blarney Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2011*, which placed a significant emphasis on the development of Stoneview as a new neighbourhood on the rail line, so much so that it formed part of the vision for Blarney town as a whole.

Draft First Revision to National Planning Framework

In the Draft First Revision to the NPF more ambitious growth targets have been set out, in particular for the cities of Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Galway to enhance their significant potential to become cities of scale.

These 4 cities are to become regional drivers and it is envisaged that they will lead in partnership with each other and as partners in regional/ inter-regional networks as viable alternatives to Dublin.

A review of the 2018 NPF Strategy by an expert group in 2023 revealed the following:

- *Compact growth targets should be more ambitious and more clearly defined;*
- *The roles of the bodies involved in its implementation should be clarified and strengthened (particularly in relation to the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans) and mechanisms put in place for more detailed measurement and monitoring of its progress; and*
- *There should be greater coordination at whole of government level across all infrastructure projects (including the NDP) and new efforts made to generate broader support for national spatial planning across all of society.*

Further analysis of development trends carried out by ESRI have revealed that the 4 cities are growing but not at the pace or scale required to function as realistic alternatives to Dublin.

In terms of population growth, ESRI projects that the population of Ireland will increase by around one million people over 2022 levels, to approximately 6.1 million people by 2040. As a result, this will give rise to the need for approximately 50,000 additional households per annum. This is a significant increase to the initial housing target set out in 2018 of 35,000 per annum. Further reports have even increased on this figure, with the latest from Davy indicating up to 93,000 could be required.

In respect of the Southern Region, **National Policy Objective (NPO) 3** details that the projected population increase will be approximately 330,000 additional people over 2022 levels (c. 450,000 additional people over 2016-2040), leading to a population of just over 2 million people.

When translated to Cork City and its suburbs, Cork is expected to grow by 96,000 people, leading to a population of 320,000.

As detailed in **section 2.4 Growing our Regions**, this can only be undertaken and delivered in line with longer term strategic planning for Transport Orientated Development (TOD) in Ireland's five Cities. The purpose of this is to support the delivery of new sustainable communities at brownfield and greenfield locations along existing or planned high capacity public transport corridors within the metropolitan area, with a particular focus on TOD opportunities along high-capacity rail corridors. The allocation for these new sustainable communities provides greater flexibility to plan for future growth and investment.

NPO 4 sets a target of half (50%) of future population and employment growth will be focused in the existing five cities and their suburbs.

Regarding achieving compact growth, the physical format of urban development in Ireland is one of our greatest national development challenges.

Analysis undertaken in the preparation of the NPF in 2018, showed that more than anything else, getting the physical form and location of future development right offers the best prospects for unlocking regional potential.

The following NPO's are therefore significant:

NPO 7 Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.

NPO 8 Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints.

NPO 10 Deliver Transport Orientated Development (TOD) at scale at suitable locations, served by high capacity public transport and located within or adjacent to the built up area of the five cities or a metropolitan town.

In the context of Cork and the wider metropolitan area, Cork already performs well as a major urban centre in Ireland and the City has positioned itself as an emerging medium-sized European centre of growth and innovation. It is still critical that the metropolitan profile of Cork is further enhanced.

A wide range of critical enabling infrastructure is required, to deliver large-scale urban growth in terms of housing, transport, connectivity and amenities.

In respect of Blarney, this will require focus on a number of large regeneration and redevelopment projects within the existing built up area, and a more compact urban form, facilitated through well-designed higher density development.

Further to this, significant development will be required on sites that can be integrated into the existing built up area of existing settlements within the metropolitan area, which are serviced by existing and planned high capacity public transport, which will include for large-scale greenfield or brownfield TOD opportunities.

The Draft First Revision notes the following key future growth enabler for Cork:

*Delivering BusConnects Cork and the Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme. Progressing the sustainable development of new brownfield and greenfield areas for housing along existing and planned high capacity **public transport corridors with a particular focus on large-scale Transport Orientated Development (TOD) opportunities within the metropolitan area;***

NPO 93 further notes in respect of the provision of TOD within metropolitan areas:

*The Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans, shall include provision for large-scale Transport Orientated Development (TOD) opportunities and may target a proportion of planned growth in the metropolitan areas **towards the delivery of new sustainable communities at brownfield and greenfield locations in the principal city and suburbs areas and in the wider metropolitan areas** focused on opportunities arising from existing and planned major public transport investment, along planned high capacity public transport corridors and in accordance with the principles of Transport Orientated Development.*

While **NPO 95** outlines the Government's role in facilitating Transport Orientated Development opportunities:

The Government will work to establish the necessary institutional and funding arrangements to support the development and accelerated delivery of Transport Orientated Development at suitable locations in conjunction with the ongoing programme of investment in the public transport network.

This new overarching principle of delivering Transport Orientated Development is premised on achieving **National Strategic Outcome 5 Sustainable Mobility**, which has been expressed by the NPF since it was adopted in 2018.

A focus on Transport Orientated Development that promotes the provision of homes, jobs, services and amenities along high capacity public transport will be key in supporting sustainable mobility in cities and surrounding metropolitan areas.

As detailed above, the strategic importance of the Ringwood Urban Expansion Area is evident, given the range of policy provisions contained in RSES, CMATs and the Cork City Development Plan that support its development in terms of housing delivery and public transport.

The ambitious growth targets for Cork City and the metropolitan area are underpinned by RSES and at a national level by the NPF. These growth targets have been increased further in line with current population and housing delivery targets for the city and its suburbs.

In this regard, Blarney, and by extension Ringwood and Stoneview, are identified for considerable growth over the course of the Development Plan period.

These growth targets must be complemented by the corresponding large-scale infrastructure development on greenfield/brownfield sites which are in close proximity to the existing built up footprint of existing settlements.

The existing Tier 2 and Long Term Strategic Residential Lands at Ringwood will contribute significantly to the planned housing and population growth targets set out in the Cork City Development Plan.

The existing employment function of the expanding Blarney Business Park and the close proximity of the existing rail line and N20 National Road lends further validity to this point.

In addition to these population and housing growth targets, Iarnród Éireann are currently advancing plans for new rail stations on the Cork Area Commuter Rail Network. Funded by the National Transport Authority under Project Ireland 2040, Iarnród Éireann has awarded a contract to a multi-disciplinary team for the design, planning and construction of this phase of Cork commuter rail network investment. This includes:

- New stations at Blackpool, Monard, Tivoli, Carrigtwohill West, Waterrock, Ballynoe, **Blarney** and Dunkettle.
- A new fleet maintenance depot to cater for a new electrified fleet of up to 150 carriages.
- Electrification of the Cork Commuter network.
- The programme also includes the upgrade of nine existing commuter stations on the Cork network.

The station at Blarney is to be located on the Applicants lands at Stoneview and in this regard they have already been in consultation and discussion with Iarnród Éireann on its specific location and design and its integration with the development of adjoining lands.

For a sustained period over the past 30 years, while the southside of the City has seen major expansion, the northside has lagged behind. Despite a largely supportive planning policy environment, the spatial imbalance in the City's development has continued and become more pronounced.

Development at Blarney on the northside of the City presents an opportunity to negate this risk and address the City's spatial, social, and economic imbalance in a truly sustainable manner, and it is on this basis that Ringwood (and Stoneview) can be considered as important areas for Transport Orientated Development.

On this basis, it is clear that the Ringwood/East Blarney Urban Expansion Area can be considered as a specific Cork based Transport Orientated Development opportunity area, given that it can accommodate a significant amount of growth in Cork City's Metropolitan Area, which is already adjacent to the commuter rail line for which a new station is planned to open in the next number of years.

The current policy provisions across the RSES, CMATs and the City Development Plan already support this.

The lands at Ringwood can, and should, play a pivotal role in the delivery of the Cork Metropolitan Area's land use and transportation strategy.

Their development can help address the troubling recent trend of slow development within the Cork MASP area.

The Planning Authority's Strategic Transport Planning Report on the subject planning application is particularly informative and insightful in relation to the implementation of these various policy provisions at a local level and how the proposed development aligns and impacts upon same.

Within this report, it is stated:

At a strategic transport planning level the proposed development is supported and will assist Cork City Council deliver on the following key strategic priorities as described on the Cork City Development Plan, 2022-2028:

- *Compact growth*
- *A city of neighbourhoods and communities*
- *Sustainable and active travel*

The provision of new homes proximate to the established town centre of Blarney with its array of services including education, healthcare, retail and leisure facilities supported by good quality active travel connections and the potential for improved public transport services through the delivery of increased bus services under the BusConnects programme of works and the delivery of a new rail station at Stoneview will allow for the sustainable development of the Blarney area. This new community at Ringwood will be supported by enhanced active travel infrastructure along Station Road and other planned sustainable and active transport networks in time.

The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) provides the framework to deliver an accessible integrated transport network that enables the sustainable growth of the Cork metropolitan area. The strategy has identified the following key active and sustainable transport investments to support the sustainable growth of the Blarney area:

Cork City Council are currently preparing plans to improve such facilities throughout Blarney on the key routes into the town including:

- *R617 (Convent Road)*
- *Station Road*
- *Castle Close Lawn*
- *Catsle Close Road*

The strategy also supports the Blarney Greenway, which will connect to Tower and Cloghroe with Cork City via Blarney. Additionally, the National Transport Authority's CycleConnects programme of works includes additional connectivity to Ballincollig, Kerry Pike and the proposed new town of Monard to the east of Blarney.

In summary, the proposed development is located in zoned lands which will generate the required demand to support the delivery of enhanced public transport services earmarked for the Blarney area as recommended in CMATS. The proposed development is located in an area which is well served with local services (i.e. shops, schools, sports clubs etc.) and the continued delivery of enhanced active travel infrastructure in Blarney will ensure access to such services is focused on active and sustainable transport modes.

The proposed development therefore can be found to be strongly aligned with the strategic planning vision for both the Cork Metropolitan Area and the Blarney area in particular.

The provision of new residential populations in Ringwood will support the growth and development of both the town and Irish Rail's imminent proposals for a new rail station at Stoneview.

Being located on the commuter rail line, it is envisaged that the proposed development, in tandem with planned upgrades to the local public transport network and a new rail station at Stoneview, will contribute to the overarching objective of the NPF of achieving compact growth and regional parity across the country in a more timely fashion.

This would fundamentally align with existing policies and objectives outlined at both regional and local level regarding the delivery of a new rail station and park and ride facility at Stoneview, in line with the ambitious growth targets set for Blarney in terms of housing delivery and population.

On all of this points, the proposed development has strong merit from a planning perspective.

We ask the Board to acknowledge and give due regard to same in their assessment of the subject appeal.

Merits of the Proposed Development

In addition to all of the above points on strategic land use and transport planning, the need for the proposed development is itself justified on the basis of the urgent requirement for new residential dwellings on appropriately zoned and serviced sites within Cork City and the wider Cork Metropolitan Area.

The latest Government pronouncements indicate that there is a shortage of c.250,000 homes nationwide. The need for new residential dwellings in Cork City is therefore self-evident, as is the obligation to make the most efficient use of zoned and serviced development land.

The proposed development is situated on serviceable lands, within the development boundary of the City, in an area zoned for residential development, which is subject to ongoing and planned infrastructural improvements, and with access to existing and planned public transport.

From a housing need perspective therefore, the proposed development demonstrates a strong level of compliance and consistency with current policies. In accordance with national housing policy, it will help address the urgent need to bring new housing units to the market; in accordance with national planning policy it will ensure that this housing is delivered in an appropriate and sustainable urban location and finally, in accordance with local planning policy, it will ensure the consolidation and growth of Cork City which is earmarked for a significant scale of growth in population over the coming years.

These points have been acknowledged by the Planning Authority.

Given the residential zoning objective that applies to the site, the proposed residential development is the most suitable use for the site. This has also been acknowledged by the Planning Authority and the increased crèche capacity has been welcomed. A Social and Community Audit was carried out and did not identify any constraints.

The proposed development is not out of character with the area. The area has long been designated as an Urban Expansion to the City. The proposal is therefore entirely in keeping with the vision for this new urban area.

The site has the benefit of access onto the public road network. The site entrance and pedestrian infrastructure to be provided have been properly designed to the relevant design standards. Overall, it is submitted that the proposals outlined will help improve road and traffic safety in the area.

The proposed development has been subject to robust transportation and road safety assessments, all of which demonstrate that the proposed development can be progressed without undue road safety or traffic impacts in the area.

These conclusions have been accepted by the Planning Authority.

The proposed development can be fully and properly serviced. Upgrades to the Uisce Éireann network in the area have been identified and Uisce Éireann has confirmed that the proposed development is feasible. There are

therefore no infrastructure constraints to the development of the lands. This has been acknowledged by the Planning Authority.

The application was accompanied by an EIAR, which was informative to the Planning Authority's EIA conclusions:

Having reviewed the RFI response and EIAR addendum it is considered that the revised proposal will not have significant effects on the environment.

The proposal has been fully assessed by qualified ecologists and both Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment have been carried out. It is found that no undue impacts on the area's ecology arise.

The Planning Authority have raised no concerns in relation to ecology.

The only potential archaeological issue identified at this stage has been addressed by way of an appropriate planning condition.

In conclusion, it is submitted that the Applicants have put forward a credible plan for the delivery of homes within the lifetime of the Cork City Development Plan, one which incorporates a sustainable approach to travel, landscape and the sensitivity of the local context.

Current national, regional, and local planning policies in place for these lands at Ringwood in Blarney are all strongly supportive of the delivery of new housing units at a significant scale to ensure that the ambitious growth targets for the City are achieved.

The National Planning Framework's National Policy Outcomes 1b and 5 place an onus on planning authorities, including the Board, to help deliver substantial population growth in the southern region, and in Cork City in particular.

On all of the above grounds, we submit that the Board should be strongly supportive of the proposal brought forward by the Applicants, that is now subject to these Third Party appeals.

4.0 RESPONSE TO GROUNDS OF APPEAL

4.1 Introduction

At the outset, the Applicants wish the Board to note that they are satisfied with the decision of the Planning Authority to grant permission for the subject development and the various conditions attached to same. In terms of the justification for the proposed development, the following is of note.

The Planning Authority comprehensively assessed the planning application and were satisfied that the materials submitted at both initial planning application and further information stages provided them with all the relevant and necessary information required to approve the proposed development. Furthermore, the planning application itself was developed and prepared on the basis of a collaborative approach with the Planning Authority where discussion took place prior to it being lodged so as to ensure a high standard of development was proposed.

The Board will note that every departmental report prepared by the City Council recommended and endorsed the granting of planning permission, including the reports of the A/Senior Executive Planner and the Senior Planner.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) was revised, by way of Addendum, to take account of the Planning Authority's Further Information Request and the minor changes made to the proposed development at that stage.

In the first instance, it must be pointed out that several claims made in the appeals are misleading and more than often, wholly exaggerated. It is also of note that the appeals points raised have little proper reference to the Planning Authority's assessments, other than to claim they were lacking. In this endeavour, it must be said, the appeals have presented nothing further of any real planning merit, or at the very least nothing that amounts to any evidential basis for arriving at a contrary decision to refuse permission.

It is also of note that the grounds of appeal reference numerous matters that were comprehensively addressed by the Planning Authority during the planning process, all of which the Planning Authority considered did not give rise to any material or significant planning issues and which have been responded to satisfactorily.

Moreover, the decision to grant permission includes clear and concise planning conditions, which will fully address the grounds of appeal raised. These conditions have been reviewed and the Applicants are happy to accept conditions to that effect if the Board see fit to grant permission for the proposed development.

We therefore submit that the decision of the Planning Authority and the conditions attached thereto have successfully and comprehensively addressed the issues raised by the Appellants to ensure that the development fully accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

This appeal response has been informed by the technical inputs of design team members addressing relevant engineering, architectural and landscape matters. Their submissions are appended to this appeal statement.

4.2 Traffic Congestion

The site is located within the development boundary of the town and zoned for residential development as part of a designated strategic urban expansion area.

From its proposed entrance on Station Road, the site is 450m from the zoned town centre, a 5min walk for most people. Enhanced active travel measures along Station Road are included within the proposed development. A new rail station is proposed to the north at Stoneview.

By all policy standards and measures the site is an accessible urban location.

The overall site development strategy and the phasing of development put forward by the Applicants were discussed and agreed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.

The proposed development has been subject to a Traffic and Transportation Assessment. The planning application also incorporates a Mobility Management Plan and a Quality Audit, which includes a Road Safety Audit, a Walking & Cycling Audit, an Accessibility Audit, a Street Design Audit, a Visual Quality Audit and a Community Audit.

The junction capacity assessments carried out are in accordance with industry standard and best practice and based on traffic survey data collated by an independent third party survey company at the identified road junctions. The approach to assessment of these junctions was agreed with the Planning Authority.

The Planning have reviewed the findings of the junction assessments carried out and found that they present a robust and reliable indication of traffic volumes, both before and after development. Their traffic engineers are satisfied that no undue traffic impacts arise. The Planning Authority's strategic transport planning report makes reference to this.

While the proposed development has been phased to align with planned transport infrastructure improvements on the Applicants' adjoining lands and other transportation schemes throughout Blarney, including the City Council's Blarney Village Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure Scheme, the NTA's BusConnects and CycleConnects Schemes, the TII's N/M20 Scheme and Irish Rail's new Blarney Rail Station, it is not reliant upon any of these schemes and can be developed independently of any, or all, of these in a manner that does not impact unduly upon traffic congestion and which actually enhances existing active travel provisions in the town.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for a more detailed response to these matters, prepared by the Applicant's Transportation Consultants.

4.3 Road Safety

The proposed development entrance onto Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant road and urban design standards and guidelines. The design has been subjected to a Stage 1 / 2 Road Safety Audit to address any possible road safety issues.

Condition No.15 of the Planning Authority's decision requires that a further Stage 3 / 4 Road Safety Audit be undertaken, closed out, signed off and acted upon. Any road design issues can be captured and resolved at this stage in the process, as is standard and best practice.

Furthermore, Condition No.33 of the Planning Authority's decision requires that the final geometric layout for the entrance on Station Road and the active travel infrastructure proposed along Station Road are finalised in consultation with the Council's Infrastructure Directorate and agreed in writing prior to the commencement of development.

The Applicants are happy to accept conditions to this effect if the Board see fit to grant permission for the proposed development.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a more detailed response to these matters, prepared by the Applicant's Engineering Consultants.

4.4 Apartment Development

The location and siting of the proposed apartments have strong merit in terms of the overall approach to the development of the site from topographical and landscape perspectives, reducing the potential for visual impacts both within the site and in the wider area.

The Appellants argue that the Applicants should have included a contiguous elevation from Station Road of the relationship of the apartments with existing houses on Woodville Terrace.

Yet, the apartments are not contiguous to these houses. They are located between 33m and 42m to their rear. The situation depicted in the Appellants' submission therefore will not be experienced by those travelling along Station Road and it is misleading to suggest that it would be.

A more appropriate indication of the relationship between these buildings can be seen and properly understood in the site section drawing (in Appendix 3), where both the change in levels and the separation distances involved are given.

For the perusal of the Board, the Applicant's submit artists impression showing a more accurate picture of how these apartment buildings will be experienced from Station Road.

Furthermore, other than that misleading elevation drawing, it is noted that the Appellants have not attempted to provide any factual or evidential basis to indicate that the proposed apartments would result in undue or

negative impact upon their amenity by way of overbearance, overshadowing, loss of light or loss of privacy. Perhaps that is because there is none.

The Applicants prepared a detailed Daylight and Sunlight Analysis Report providing information on daylight and sunlight studies within the proposed development and assessing the impact on daylight and sunlight to surrounding areas and properties. The potential for impact upon dwellings at Woodville Terrace was specifically addressed and found to be fully in accordance with the constraints and recommendations of the BRE Report – Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight BR209 2022.

It is clear to us that the proposed development has been designed to ensure that it does not negatively impact on existing residential amenity and, on the basis of the objective and verified evidence provided by the Applicants, we invite the Board to find that the Appellants submissions have no basis and dismiss this ground of appeal.

The housing tenure of these apartments does not form a basis for either objection or refusal of permission.

Notwithstanding the above, the Applicants are happy to revise the design of these buildings and instead propose a duplex arrangement for these blocks if the Board is minded to see a change in this area of the site. In this regard, the Applicants have prepared an indicative site layout plan (enclosed in Appendix 3) showing how this change could be easily facilitated, resulting in the replacement of the proposed apartments with 2 Duplex blocks contained 12no. units each.

While this would drop the overall site density to 35.8 units per hectare this would still be within the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines density range for the subject site of between 35 and 50. The Applicants will leave it to the Board to decide whether the apartment or duplex arrangement is more appropriate. Neither have any undue impact upon the residential amenity of neighbours.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for a more detailed response to this matter prepared by the Applicants' Architects.

4.5 Social and Community Infrastructure

The subject is zoned for residential development and located within the development boundary of an existing urban area earmarked for expansion.

This matter has been addressed in the planning application by the submitted Social and Community Audit and the subsequent response to the Planning Authority at Further Information stage.

It is submitted that these clearly demonstrate the current situation in relation to the provision of social and community services in Blarney. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed by third parties, the conclusions reached that residents of the proposed development will have adequate access to the social and community infrastructure are accurate and reliable. Indeed, future residential development will only strengthen the case for enhanced facilities in the town, be they provided by the HSE, the Council, or other Government or State agencies.

The provision of a crèche facility with a capacity for 137no. children will provide for the childcare needs arising from the proposed development and will also serve the wider community.

Finally, we note that the Board's most recent decisions for large scale development in Blarney raised no concerns with the level of social and community infrastructure provision.

In all, we are satisfied that the proposed development is accessible to adequate relevant services and amenities and it is submitted that this issue is not a basis for the refusal of planning permission in this instance.

4.6 Infrastructure Provision

Uisce Éireann have provided both a Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) and a Statement of Design Acceptance (SODA) for the proposed development. As such, we submit that the Board can be satisfied that the site can be adequately served with public water supply and foul drainage systems.

4.7 Active Travel and Parking Proposals

The road works proposed to enhance active travel along Station Road were discussed and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the submission of the planning application. These discussions mean that the proposed works are fully aligned with the emerging designs being brought forward by the Planning Authority themselves under the Blarney Village Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure Scheme, which is due to be presented for public consultation shortly. The Planning Authority's Infrastructure Report on the application confirms this:

The improvement works as submitted as part of this application in conjunction with the recommendations of the road safety audit carried out are welcome and consistent with the Active Travel Proposal as part of the Blarney Village Active Travel project.

These works are to be implemented as part of the overall development. As a result of these works, the proposed development site will benefit from an enhanced active travel linkage to the town centre. They can be carried out independently and in advance of any further works that may form part of the Council's own scheme. Further, the proposed development does not undermine, prevent or preclude any of the above listed schemes.

The provision of a shared cycle / pedestrian path on Station Road will result in the loss of some public parking spaces on the road. To mitigate this loss, and as also agreed with the Planning Authority, an area to the rear of Woodville Terrace has been set aside and reserved for future parking if required. This will be subject to a future planning application.

4.8 Construction Stage

The planning application includes a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan, which address issues such as construction traffic management, hours of working, delivery times, infrastructure reinstatements, parking and the general management of construction in order to

minimise adverse impacts. Traffic management during the construction stage will be managed by a dedicated Traffic Manager who will coordinate and manage deliveries to and from the site.

If deemed appropriate by the Board, the Applicants are happy to accept a condition that specifically addresses HGV movements to and off the site that avoids peak traffic periods. It should be noted that a significant quantity of soil is to be retained and reused on site during construction.

The CEMP also sets out mitigation measures for the protection of amenity and the environment during construction and we submit that satisfactory measures are in place to address the construction stage of the proposed development.

The Planning Authority have concluded similarly, with the Strategic Transport Planning Report stating:

I am satisfied that the technical input provided to substantiate the findings of the assessment and there will be no unacceptable impacts on the receiving road network during the construction phase subject to the delivery of the measures outlined in the Construction Traffic Management Plan, and other proposed planning conditions.

4.9 Residential Density and Housing Mix

The net residential density of the proposed development is 40.2 dwellings per hectare (dph), meeting the target density specified in the *Cork City Development Plan, 2022* (CDP).

As defined in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024*, (the Guidelines) and echoing Strategic Objectives SO1 & SO2, and Objectives 2.31, 3.4 & 3.5 of the CDP, this density underscores a commitment to sustainable neighbourhood development. Moreover, in accordance with the density strategy outlined in the CDP, the proposed density falls within the prescribed range for outer suburban areas in Blarney. Notably, it not only complies with these CDP density targets but also surpasses those for inner urban locales within Blarney.

In achieving a density of 40.2dph, the proposal also appropriately responds to section 3.4 of the Guidelines and objective 3.5 of the CDP, which both prioritise the protection and preservation of existing local environments and residential amenities. This balanced approach ensures that urban density is achieved while safeguarding the established character of the surrounding area.

The proposed development is also fully in accordance with the Development Plan's Housing Mix targets, as confirmed in the Planning Authority's own assessment:

The housing mix for the proposed scheme is acceptable and in compliance with the City Development Plan.

It is thus submitted that the proposed development will facilitate the construction of new homes in a contiguous and compact form of development, which is of an appropriate scale, nature and density and which will provide an

appropriate mix of units catering to a range of people at varying stages of the lifecycle, responding to an existing urgent need.

4.10 Tourism and Built Heritage

The appellants have raised concerns in relation to the impact upon the town's built heritage and tourism.

No plausible impact upon the built heritage of the town or area can be found to arise as a result of the proposed development. The placement of higher buildings at a point where they can be properly screened from views to and from Blarney Castle is conclusively demonstrated in the submitted photomontage views and has met with the approval of the Castle.

Suggestions that the proposed development will impact upon the town's tourism are likewise overstated and misrepresentative.

4.11 Masterplan

The appellants claim that as there is no visible masterplan available to the public, while at the same time appending and critiquing the Applicants' own Masterplan for the wider lands to their appeal submission.

Irrespective, the suggestion that the proposal amounts to project splitting has no basis given that the EIAR submitted with the Planning Application was prepared on the basis of the future cumulative development of the zoned lands in the immediate area.

4.12 Landownership and Validity

The Applicants have submitted a comprehensive planning application which was validated by the Planning Authority.

Clare Forrest the registered owner of Folio CK41642 and she and others have entered into a Commercial Agreement with Clockstrike Ltd. for the joint development of lands at Castlevue, Ringwood, and Stoneview Co. Cork. Clockstrike Ltd. has a legal and equitable interest in Folio CK41642 under the terms of said Agreement and is thereby nominated to make the instant planning application.

The Appellants make reference to leasehold interests on the local authority folio (Ref. CK49834) at the proposed site entrance. Following further review, the Applicants can reaffirm that the red line boundary does not encroach or impact upon these leasehold properties and is confined to the areas outside of same, for which a letter of consent has been secured.

A red line boundary was provided to the Planning Authority prior to their consideration and issuing of their letter of consent. It is acknowledged that any future disposal of Council owned land, if advanced, will be subject to separate and appropriate procedures for such disposal.

Those areas of the public roadway included within the red line boundary are in the charge of the Local Authority. All works are contained within the existing public roadway and no private land take is proposed or required.

We note that Holland J. in *Heather Hill*¹ held where the planning application's red line boundary included the public road, that the consent of the local authority to the works to the road was sufficient and that the consent of the landowners adjoining the road was not required.

We further note that landowners, if necessary, can rely on the reassurances afforded by s.34(13) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, which states:

34(13) A person shall not be entitled solely by reason of a permission under this section to carry out any development.

This is due to be superseded by a similar provision under s.83(3) of the Planning and Development Act, 2024, once commenced.

83 (3) A person shall not be entitled solely by reason of a permission under this Part or an exemption conferred by this Act to carry out any development.

We finally note that s.13(6) of the Roads Act 1993 provides that "A person or group of persons may, with the consent of a road authority, carry out maintenance works on a local road" and that s.2 of the same Act provides that "maintenance" in relation to public roads includes improvement, and that "road" includes a footpath and any other structure or thing forming part of the road and necessary for the safety, convenience or amenity of road users or for the construction, maintenance, operation or management of the road.

4.1 3 EIAR

The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared in this instance addressed cumulative development in the wider area, and identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect effects of a proposed project in relation to the identified range of environmental factors.

The EIA carried out by the Planning Authority concluded that the EIAR was adequate and that proposed development would not have significant effects on the environment.

None of the points made in the appeal statements provide anything that would challenge or undermine these conclusions.

¹ *Heather Hill Management Company CLG v. An Bord Pleanála and Others* [2022] IEHC 146

4.14 Crèche Design

It would appear that the Appellant has not seen or reviewed the revised crèche proposal submitted at Further Information stage. This larger crèche proposal includes a lift.

A lift was not required for the crèche proposed at the application stage, in accordance with Part M 1.3.4.1.1. However, the Further Information Request required an enlarged crèche, which necessitated the inclusion of a lift. Accessible WCs are provided in both iterations.

Nonetheless, the crèche design has been developed in accordance with the Universal Design Guidelines and the Childcare Facilities and Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001. Neither the Planning Authority or the Cork City Childcare Committee raised an issue or objection in relation to same. Indeed, it has been welcomed.

Furthermore, the detailed design and construction of the crèche building will be subject to both Building Regulations and a Disability Access Certification (DAC) process, as required under Part M of the Second Schedule to the Regulations.

4.15 Open Space Areas

The Appellants raise concerns in relation to quality of proposed open spaces within the development. Proposed open spaces are of high quality, fit for purpose and in accordance with all relevant guidance on the development of same in the Planning Authority's policy documentation.

This has been confirmed by the conclusions of the Planning Authority Parks and Recreation Report, which concluded:

Public open spaces have been designed to be passively supervised by the orientation of the dwellings.

Neighbourhood play areas and Local Play Areas – nature based, informal non equipped design solutions imaginatively and practically conceived, will be suitable and adequate to provide children's play needs.

The selection of hard surface materials and fixtures, tree, shrub and herbaceous planting will create an attractive environment, offering seasonal interest and areas where biodiversity will thrive.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for a more detailed response to this matter prepared by the Applicant's landscape Consultants.

4.16 Planning Conditions

The Planning Authority's decision to grant permission includes clear and concise planning conditions, fully in accordance with the Development Management Guidelines, 2007.

These conditions have been reviewed and the Applicants are happy to accept conditions to that effect if the Board see fit to grant permission for the proposed development.

4.17 Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted with the planning application. A detailed 2-dimensional hydraulic model was developed to refine the flood extents in the area and confirm the flood risk for the climate change scenarios and residual risks.

The FRA concluded:

This FRA has determined that the site is wholly located within Flood Zone C and is at a low risk of flooding. The exception is the eastern boundary which has been extended to the Sheen Upper Watercourse to encompass all water infrastructure works, which is considered a water compatible development type. This means that all proposed development at the site is appropriate from a flood risk perspective under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. The Justification Test for Development Management is not required for proposed development.

This Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken in accordance with 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and agrees with the core principles contained within. The proposed development has been subject to a commensurate assessment of risk.

Additionally, it is of note that the flood images submitted by one of the Appellants are not of Station Road.

There have been no flood events on Station Road. The nearest event, some 500m from the subject site, was at Shamrock Terrace in November 2000 and related to a flash flood.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

It is our professional planning opinion and our submission to the Board that the notification to grant planning permission for the proposed development was arrived by Cork City Council following a thorough and detailed assessment of the relevant planning issues pertaining to it.

The submissions made by the Applicants at planning application stage, the Planning Authority's initial assessments, the further information submitted and its subsequent assessment along with the submissions now made at appeal stage all conclusively demonstrate to us that the grounds of appeal raised by the Appellants have either no basis or have been fully and satisfactorily addressed.

Overall, it is our considered view that the appellants have failed to present a realistic or convincing case that there are any fundamental or meaningful grounds for objection to the subject development proposal from a proper planning and sustainable development perspective.

There is thus no reasoned rationale or justification presented in the appeals for the refusal of the application.

At any rate, the Applicants have engaged wholly and openly with both the planning system and the Planning Authority, and on this basis would ask, in the interests of clarity and fairness, that the points put forward in this correspondence are taken into account in the Board's assessment of the subject appeals.

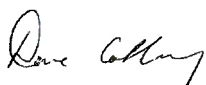
The site development strategy and scheme design can be robustly and comprehensively defended from a planning perspective and we look forward to a detailed review of same by the Board.

The subject proposal's compliance with statutory development plan policies has been demonstrated during the course of the application and has been accepted by the Planning Authority.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the decision of the Planning Authority be upheld in this instance and that permission be granted for the proposed development.

Please direct all further correspondence in this matter to this office.

Is mise le meas,



Dave Coakley

Director

Coakley O'Neill Town Planning Ltd.

APPENDIX 1: SUBMISSION OF MHL CONSULTING ENGINEERS ON ENGINEERING MATTERS

For: Clockstrike Ltd.

Proposed Residential Development (Phase 01),
Ringwood, Blarney



ABP Appeal Response - Engineering Report

February 2025



MHL & Associates Ltd.
Consulting Engineers





Document Control Sheet

Client	Gockstrike Ltd.
Project Title	Proposed Residential Development (Phase 01)
Project Location	Ringwood, Blarney, Cork
Document Title	ABP Appeal Response - Engineering Report
Document No.	21079HD_MHL_Ringwood-Doc10-ABPR
Job No.	21079HD

Rev	Status	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Date
	Internal Draft	D. Murphy	B. Murphy		07 th - Feb- '25
A	External Draft	D. Murphy	B. Murphy	B. Murphy	11 th - Feb- '25
B	Final Report	D. Murphy	B. Murphy	B. Murphy	14 th - Feb- '25

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ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

MHL Project Number:	21079HD
Project Title:	Proposed Residential Development, Ringwood, Blarney
Author:	BH
Planning Ref No.	Cork City Council Pl. Ref. 2443031
Date:	05/02/2025
Subject:	First Party Response to Third Party ABP Appeal



INTRODUCTION

MHL & Associates Ltd. Consulting Engineers have prepared this technical note in response to items raised by a Third Party Object in an appeal to An Bord Pleanála following a grant of planning permission by Cork City Council on the above planning application. This report outlines a response in relation items related to engineering design and reporting.

A summary of the primary issues raised in the various third party observations is presented below, followed by the submitted response for the respective issues.

APPEAL RESPONSE

Construction Traffic - alternative entrances for construction traffic. There are at least two other feasible options that would significantly reduce the impact on Station Road and the R617

Response:

The construction impact of the proposed development is outlined in detail in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and also in the Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA). The CTMP outlines particular restrictions to construction stage HGV movements to the proposed site, undertaking that deliveries to the site by large Heavy Goods Vehicles will be restricted outside of the identified peak traffic period. The impact of the construction traffic volumes will be less than that of the operational development for which extensive traffic modelling is presented in the TTA. As outlined in the CEMP and CTMP that the applicant intends to maintain the majority of earthen material on site to facilitate the construction of future phases of development, ensuring that construction traffic is minimised to/from the site. The applicant is willing to accept a condition from An Bord Pleanála in relation such restriction.

Unsafe Proposed Entrance on Station Road - The proposed entrance is located on a narrow and dangerous stretch of Station Road. The road is in poor condition, with substandard footpaths that do not meet the desired minimum width of 1.8 meters.

Response:

The proposed development entrance onto Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant road and urban design standards and guidelines. The scheme includes for a significant shared cycle/pedestrian facility along Station Road which will improve connectivity for all users. The design has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit to address any possible road safety issues.

ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

MHL Project Number:	21079HD
Project Title:	Proposed Residential Development, Ringwood, Blarney
Author:	BH
Planning Ref No.	Cork City Council Pl. Ref. 2443031
Date:	05/02/2025
Subject:	First Party Response to Third Party ABP Appeal



Station Road, Traffic and Parking - No capacity on Station road for new traffic, construction traffic on Station Road is an issue, reduction of car parking spaces outside Woodville, Issue with signalised junction onto station road – access should be from the R617, Delays in Blarneyville will impact tourism.

Response:

The traffic impact of the proposed development is presented in detail in the TTA that supports the planning application. The TTA presents traffic modelling details for relevant local junctions for a range of future design year scenarios, for both “do nothing and “with development” situation. The proposed signalised junction onto Station road was found to operate within capacity for all design scenarios. The option of providing an entrance at an alternative location, as referenced, is not possible given zoning and boundary constraints.

If this development is to proceed without alterations to the road network, then the increased development traffic and construction traffic (HGV's & associated vehicles) will pose serious road safety issues.

Response:

The construction impact of the proposed development is outlined in detail in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and also in the Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA). The scheme has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit to address any possible road safety issues.

The placement of the proposed signalised entrance to the new development on Station Road is on a bend in the road which will lead to safety concerns, traffic flow issues and influence the ability of residents of Assumption Terrace to exit onto station road.

Response:

The proposed development entrance onto Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant road and urban design standards and guidelines. The traffic signalised junction will also act as a traffic calming device, to control vehicle speeds and also provides safe crossing facilities for vulnerable road users. The design has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit to address any possible road safety issues.

Safety concerns with a shared track for cyclists and pedestrians due to the proximity between cyclists and pedestrians and increased risk of collisions, especially if the separation between the two is unclear or insufficient.

Response:



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ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

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The provision of a shared active travel facility, accommodating cyclists and pedestrians, is in accordance with the NTA Cycle Design Manual standards. This type of cycle/pedestrian facility is appropriate for volume of pedestrians and cyclists currently using the route and for those expected to use the facility post development.

Station Road to North - There are no details of the road to the north of the proposed junction. There is no connectivity to suggest how this development links and improved the road and footpath to the north of the proposed junction.

Response:

The proposed entrance onto Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant road and urban design standards and guidelines. Pedestrian connectivity to the north from the junction has not been addressed as part of this scheme, given that it will require third party lands. As noted in the "Strategic Transport Planning Report", prepared by Cork City Council's Senior Transport Officer the "Phase 1 development proposals include the direct delivery of enhanced active travel provisions on Station Road in advance of the works proposed by Cork City Council".

The design of the entrance and footpath works has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit to address any possible road safety issues.

Station Road Junction Road Safety - There is no indication of the sightline to the north of the proposed junction. The sightline in a current 50KM speed zone does not meet the required 70m to the north.

Response:

The requirement of 70m sightlines relates to a TII standard for uncontrolled junctions in non-urban locations. For urban uncontrolled junction the DMURS standards is applicable. However, at signalised junction these sightlines are not required. As outlined in TII Publication DN-GEO-03044, "The Geometric Layout of Signal-Controlled Junctions and Signalised Roundabouts" *"Due to the control imposed on drivers, the visibility requirements measured from the stop-line for signal-controlled junctions are not as onerous as those for major/minor priority junctions. It is essential however to provide adequate intervisibility for drivers at each stopline, and between drivers at a stop-line and each of its associated exit lanes (and pedestrian crossings), to permit manoeuvres to be completed safely once the driver has entered the junction intervisibility zone."*

The applicants welcomes any supplemental planning conditions on this issue, if deemed appropriate.

The proposed signalised junction has been designed in accordance with TII Publications Design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.

ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

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Station Road Works – The applicant has not provided any cross section to the changes to Station Road. There is no indication as to how the Footpath and the cycle lane will be laid out. There is a lack design detail as to what happens at the end point where the cycle lane meets the northern section of Station Road.

Response:

Extensive details outlining the proposed improvement works on Station Road are presented in the planning application. At the northern end of the shared facility cyclists and pedestrians will be required to stop at the controlled crossing at the signalised junction. Cyclists and pedestrians entering the subject site will cross to the onwards cycle/pedestrian facilities proposed as part of the applicants layout. Cyclists wishing to continue northwards along Station Road will re-join the carriageway at the crossing point and share with vehicular traffic. Pedestrians travelling northwards will continue along the existing footpath.

Parking on Station Road - The application is suggesting on street parking along Station Road that is within the footpaths of persons living in Woodville Terrace - a dimension of the parking lane is 2.1m wide, with no indication of the length or space marking of the parking line. The City Development plan notes that on street parking shall be 2.5x6.0m long

Therefore, the proposed parking lane does not comply with current Development Plan, and cars would be opening doors on to a narrowed carriageway width of 5.5m wide or 2.75m wide per carriageway. Also impact upon driveway and sightlines for houses at Woodville Terrace. The design does not provide any indication of disabled parking bays which should be included here. Under building regulations on street disabled parking bays should be 3.0m wide by 7.0m long. The design does not include any proposal for electrical Vehicle charging bays on station Road.

Response:

The proposed parking space dimensions are in accordance with relevant design standards, as set out in Chapter 7 of the Department of Transport published "Traffic Signs Manual". No disabled parking spaces are provided along Station Road currently. The Development Plan does not set out necessary standards on car parking spaces. The design has been prepared through detailed consultation with Cork City Council's Transportation Department and as noted by Cork City Council's Senior Transport Officer the "Phase 1 development proposals include the direct delivery of enhanced active travel provisions on Station Road in advance of the works proposed by Cork City Council". The proposed works on Station Road have been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.



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Re spaces to rear of Woodville, will there be a legal transfer to residents on station road. Who will provide the spaces, will there be details of the proposed access from the rear gardens to the parking spaces.

Response:

No parking spaces are proposed the rear of Woodville Terrace as part of this application. Space to possibly accommodate some parking to the rear of these houses has been set aside in the scheme. As referenced by Cork City Council's Senior Transport Officer the "Finally, the development proposals have allowed for the future delivery of parking spaces to the rear of Woodview Terrace should they be required as part of Cork City Council's active travel upgrade proposals along Station Road."

Proposed Ramp to Estate Entrance - The proposed ramp to the estate is poorly thought out, given that parking for the 3 Terrace properties is located behind the dwelling - not at the front door. These houses should be omitted.

Response:

The delivery of housing at this location was arrived at following particular requests from Cork City Council for same, aimed at delivering an appropriate urban edge to the development entrance. The provision of a raised table at the location of the proposed development entrance has been proposed as a traffic calming device on Station Road, owing to the increased number of active travel users expected along the route.

EIAR fails to take note of any of the hundreds of HGV SOS Recovery Vehicles that use Station Road – road narrowing will impact their movement.

Response:

Existing traffic volumes, including those from the SOS recovery yard, were recorded in the traffic count data collected to inform the Traffic & Transport Assessment and EIAR. Proposed upgrade works to Station Road have been prepared through discussion and agreement with Cork City Council Transport Department and Local Area Office. The road space designation aligns with the Cork City Council intentions for the delivery of improved cycle/pedestrian facilities on Station Road. The proposed works on Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.

ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

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The unallocated parking area to the rear of Woodville 1-16 was not discussed or consulted with, has title issues, has cost implications etc. that have not been dealt with by way of condition. The condition is left purposefully vague and open to interpretation from title and legal perspectives, whereas SI600 dictates that conditions shall be precise and not open to interpretation. It now leaves a narrow strip of wasteland for the council to maintain when taken in charge..

Response:

The area to the rear of Woodville Terrace is proposed to be a green space, to be maintained by the applicant prior to possible Taking in Charge of the space by Cork City Council. The delivery of supplemental parking in this area may be delivered by Cork City Council as part of a subsequent planning application. As referenced by Cork City Council's Senior Transport Officer the "Finally, the development proposals have allowed for the future delivery of parking spaces to the rear of Woodview Terrace should they be required as part of Cork City Council's active travel upgrade proposals along Station Road."

Condition 34 - It is unclear if the parking zone area to the West of the road is to be taken in charge or not. Existing residents on Station Road have not been consulted about any use or legal agreement of their using this area to the west of the Road.

Response:

The applicant is not proposing to provide any new parking on Station Road.

The entire upper area and traffic flows from the northern section of Station Road. This road is trafficked heavily with Agricultural vehicles, large SOS recovery vehicles, HGV vehicles from Whitechurch and a junction in townlands.

Response:

Existing traffic volumes, including those from the SOS recovery yard, were recorded in the traffic count data collected to inform the Traffic & Transport Assessment and EIAR. Proposed upgrade works to Station Road have been prepared through discussion and agreement with Cork City Council Transport Department and Local Area Office. The road space designation aligns with the Cork City Council intentions for the delivery of improved cycle/pedestrian facilities on Station Road. The proposed works on Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.

The report ignores the reduction of Station Road to 5.5m in the lower section toward Station cross.

Response:



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ABP Appeal Response Engineering Report

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Proposed upgrade works to Station Road have been prepared through discussion and agreement with Cork City Council Transport Department and Local Area Office. The road space designation aligns with the Cork City Council intentions for the delivery of improved cycle/pedestrian facilities on Station Road. The proposed works on Station Road has been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.

The report ignores the need for an improvement at Station cross it ignores traffic volumes of Station Road and the R617.

Response:

Proposed upgrade works to Station Road have been prepared through discussion and agreement with Cork City Council Transport Department and the Blarney Local Area Office. The road space designation aligns with the Cork City Council intentions for the delivery of improved cycle/pedestrian facilities on Station Road. This scheme is alios to tie-in to the planned “Blarney Greenway” running along the R617, as referenced by Cork City Council’s Senior Transport Officer in the Strategic Transport Planning Report on the planning file. The proposed works on Station Road have been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.

It is noted that the report does not deal with the lack of mobility in existing footpath dimensions, where problems exist.

Response:

The proposed works on Station Road include a new 3m wide shared surface, new pedestrian crossings and new public lighting scheme which will provide significant improvements for all active travel users, including mobility impaired users.

It is noted that the report does not deal with the proposed changes to the road widths on Station Road and how they impact on the existing dwellings at Woodville Terrace.

Response:

Proposed upgrade works to Station Road have been prepared through discussion and agreement with Cork City Council Transport Department and Local Area Office. The road space designation aligns with the Cork City Council intentions for the delivery of improved cycle/pedestrian facilities on Station Road. The upgrade works on Station Road include a new 3m wide shared surface, new pedestrian crossings and new public lighting scheme. The proposed works on Station Road have been designed in accordance with relevant design standards and has been subjected to a Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit.



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APPENDIX 2: SUBMISSION OF SYSTRA ON TRANSPORTATION MATTERS



BLARNEY MASTERPLAN PHASE 1

Phase 1 Appeal: Response on Transport Matters

February 2025



SYSTRA

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Clockstrike Ltd
Project	Blarney Masterplan Phase 1
Study	Response on Transport Matters raised at Appeal
Type of document	Report
Date	10/02/2025
Reference number	IE01T23B01 – SCO1
Number of pages	10

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
R001	Author / Checked	Glen Moon	Principal	10/02/2025	Planning Issue
	Approved	Andrew Archer	Director	14/02/2025	

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 SYSTRA has been commissioned by Clockstrike Ltd to provide transport-planning support for a proposed Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) in the Ringwood area of Blarney, which would provide 246 residential units, along with a 61-space early-years childcare facility.
- 1.1.2 The subject application forms Phase 1 of a planned development of a wider land parcel at Ringwood, and further later phases on Stoneview lands to the north of the N20.
- 1.1.3 SYSTRA produce a Transport Assessment for the Phase 1 proposals, which formed part of the overall application package which was submitted to Cork City Council in June 2024 (Ref: 2443031), and consented in December 2024.
- 1.1.4 The application was the subject of a Planning Appeal to An Bord Pleanala in January 2025 (Ref: 321688-25). This note provides a response to each of the transport-related points raised by interested parties.

2. MATTERS RAISED AND RESPONSE

2.1 APPEAL 1: RORY O'KEEFE

ITEM 2: POINT RAISED

Station Road and the R617 are already operating at capacity, as noted by Cork City Council. Phase 1 and phase 2 of the development has the potential to add over 1,000 additional vehicle movements daily onto Station Road and the R617, which are at capacity, according to the Cork City Development plan, exacerbating traffic congestion.

SYSTRA RESPONSE

Phase 1

- 2.1.1 The development's access strategy has been developed in close conjunction with CCC's Strategic Transport Planning team. Throughout the consultation process, SYSTRA liaised closely with CCC to establish the number of units that can be accommodated with access onto Station Road in the first phase of development, as well as the phasing and mitigation strategy required to be implemented to support future phases.
- 2.1.2 Through the modelling assessment undertaken as part of the Transport Assessment (TA) exercise, it is demonstrated that the Phase 1 development is self-contained, and is not reliant on future additional roads infrastructure. The Phase 1 development is predicted to add 151 traffic movements to the R617 / Station Rd junction in the AM peak hour, and 147 traffic movements in the PM peak hour, the equivalent to one additional vehicle every 24 seconds.
- 2.1.3 Video footage, taken as part of the 2022 traffic surveys shows that queues currently build up at the R617 / Station Road junction, but these are generally short-lived, and restricted to the busiest times in the peak hours – in general, the junction operates well throughout the rest of the day.
- 2.1.4 Analysis of the junction in its current form shows that, with the addition of development traffic, the junction is predicted to operate marginally over capacity in the AM peak hour only.
- 2.1.5 Whilst the junction exceeds capacity in the AM peak hour, this predicted level of short-lived congestion is not unusual in an urban setting during the peak hour and limited to Station Road itself. The addition of the development traffic has a negligible impact on the operation of the R617, with only minor predicted increases in queues and delays.
- 2.1.6 The provision of suitable road access is just one strand of the proposed access strategy. As CCC's Transport Planning response notes, the Phase 1 development proposals include for the direct delivery of enhanced active travel provision along Station Road. These will support CCC's wider plans for enhanced facilities on key routes throughout Blarney, which include the R617 and Castle Close Lawn. CCC also acknowledge that the development will support future public transport proposals, set out in CMATS, which include enhanced bus services and a new Blarney Rail Station.
- 2.1.7 In addition, the assumption of continued traffic growth should be considered against national and regional targets to reduce the number of vehicle kilometres travelled annually. Future initiatives such as Cycle Connects Cork, BusConnects Cork, and the NTA's Active Travel Programme will all improve sustainable travel options in Blarney, whilst the proposed Blarney Rail Station will provide a large, positive 'step change' in the area.

Later Phases

- 2.1.8 As part of the proposed next phases of development (Phase 1a and Phase 2), an additional access junction and Link Road is proposed on the R617 to the east of Station Road. This will enable traffic travelling between Station Road and the R617 east to bypass the R617 / Station Road junction, and allow development traffic from Phases 1, 1a and 2 to access directly onto the R617 without using Station Road.
- 2.1.9 The Phase 2 modelling results show that the introduction of the development access junction on the R617, and creation of the alternative route between Station Road and the R617, will reduce traffic pressure on Station Road. The R617 / Station Road junction is predicted to operate within capacity in each of the future years that have been modelled.

CCC Response

- 2.1.10 CCC's Strategic Transport Planning response supports the findings of the TA, noting that *"The proposed development will not cause unacceptable operational traffic impacts in the short term, and any future impacts on the local and national road network will be mitigated through the delivery of the additional planned transport infrastructure associated with the development of the remaining zoned lands at Ringwood (Phase 2), along with the transport infrastructure planned for the Blarney area as presented in the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy"*. The response concludes by **supporting a grant of permission**, subject to conditions.

ITEM 4: POINT RAISED

Construction Traffic - alternative entrances for construction traffic. There are at least two other feasible options that would significantly reduce the impact on Station Road and the R617.

SYSTRA RESPONSE

- 2.1.11 SYSTRA assumes from the submission that the alternative entrances referred to involve the construction of a temporary construction access junction on the R617, and an off-road connection to the Phase 1 site.
- 2.1.12 Whilst such an arrangement would remove construction traffic from Station Road, it would require the construction of a temporary access road of around 850m in length. This is not a practical, or cost-effective solution when compared to the proposed construction access on Station Road.
- 2.1.13 MHL Engineers provided details of the likely construction programme, and the amount (and type) of vehicles involved at each stage. These were based on experience of similar sized sites where they have provided engineering services.
- 2.1.14 The busiest period on site, in terms of HGV movements, are anticipated to be during months 7 to 16). During this period, it is anticipated that there will be a total of 30 HGV trips to the site (60 two-way movements), arriving at an average rate of 6 HGVs per hour, one HGV every 10 minutes, during the working day. This is not considered to be a significant or unusual level of HGV movements.
- 2.1.15 Nearly all construction traffic will travel outside peak hours. Construction workers will typically arrive before the morning peak. HGVs, and other deliveries will be carefully managed to avoid busy times of the day, and other sensitive times, such as when primary and secondary school children are returning home from school.

- 2.1.16 In addition, a positive land-shaping strategy has been developed for the site, which seeks to retain as much spoil on site as possible and reduce the volume of HGV movements off-site during the enabling stage of the project.
- 2.1.17 A Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (FCTMP) has been provided, and a related Planning Condition has been set by CCC. The CTMP sets out construction vehicle and construction staff movements to the site and the mitigation measures proposed to alleviate any potential impacts.

2.1 APPEAL 2: PATRICIA AND DENIS DONOGHUE

ITEM 2: POINT RAISED

Station Road, Traffic and Parking - No capacity on Station Road for new traffic, construction traffic on Station Road is an issue, reduction of car parking spaces outside Woodville Terrace. Issue with signalised junction onto Station Road – access should be from the R617, Delays in Blarney village will impact tourism

SYSTRA RESPONSE

- 2.1.1 The number of parking spaces adjacent to Woodville Terrace, will be reduced as a direct result of the proposed active travel improvements on Station Road. This active travel scheme aligns with CCC proposals, and will form the first part of wider improvements on Station Road.
- 2.1.2 Within the site, an area to the rear of Woodville Terrace, has been reserved for the potential future provision of parking for residents of these properties. Should CCC require it, then the construction of these spaces be the subject of a future planning application.

2.2 APPEAL 3: TREVOR DALY

ITEM 2a, 2b and 2c: POINT RAISED

2a. Massive effect this development will have on the flow of traffic on Station Road, and at Station Road & R617 junction, in particular.

2c. Level of traffic unsustainable, by adding additional cars to an already overburdened minor road and congested / priority junction

2d. References the traffic impact of the development is predicted to exceed the threshold at this junction

SYSTRA RESPONSE

See response to Appeal 1, Point 2.

ITEM 2e: POINT RAISED

2e. References transport infrastructure Ireland submission that The authority is of the opinion that insufficient data has been submitted with the planning application to demonstrate that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the capacity, safety, or operational efficiency of the national road network in the vicinity of the site.

SYSTRA RESPONSE

- 2.2.1 The latest TII plans propose that an upgraded N20 / R617 interchange be provided at the location of the existing interchange. The sub-standard N20 / Blarney Business Park eastbound

slips would be removed, with the Business Park traffic taking access from the new interchange.

2.2.2 TII's concerns relate to:

- A proposed storm water outfall adjacent to the N20, which is not a transport related concern ; and
- The future N20 road scheme

2.2.3 In terms of traffic impacts, the threshold analysis within **Section 6.3** of the TA found that the development's impact at the N20 / R617 roundabout would be around 5% in the AM and PM peak hours.

2.2.4 The junction modelling results in **Section 7** demonstrate that, in its current form, the roundabout will continue to operate well within capacity in future years, with development traffic added. CCC's transport planning response agrees that the development will not cause unacceptable operational issues on the National Road network.

2.2.5 The new N20 interchange designs will provide a full-movement 'dumb-bell' roundabout arrangement, and replace the R617 / Blarney Business Park priority junction with a roundabout. The new designs will be fully compliant with latest TII Design Standards, and will provide additional capacity compared to the existing design, supporting the full buildout of zoned lands in Blarney.

2.3 APPEAL 4: Paul Byrne

ITEM 3a: POINT RAISED

Current layout of the junction of Station Road to the R617 is over capacity, is of poor and aged design, does not meet the currently demand load, and is deficient in that it does not have a signalised junction or a dedicated Right hand turn lane with associated filter lane. the traffic indications and reports are based primarily on desk-based assessments. The Junction of the R617 and Station Road is poorly aligned and requires drastic re modelling or reworking which is not covered in this application. This application is premature until a suitable signalized junction is installed that allow fully for the demand load of the entire lands.

SYSTRA RESPONSE

2.3.1 The junction capacity assessments presented within the TA follows industry standard and best practice. The capacity assessment has been based on traffic survey data collated by an independent third party survey company at the junction. The approach to assessment of the junction has been agreed with CCC as part of transport scoping exercises, with CCC checking and reviewing the findings of the junction assessment.

2.3.2 A discussion of the R617 / Station Road junction capacity is provided in SYSTRA's response to Appeal 1, Point 2.

ITEM 3c: POINT RAISED

Station Road to North – There are no details of the road to the north of the proposed junction. There is no connectivity to suggest how this development links to, and improves, the road and footpath to the north of the proposed junction.

SYSTRA RESPONSE

- 2.3.3 Virtually all of the pedestrian and cycle demand from the development will travel towards, and from, the village centre to the south of the site access junction. New, continuous active travel facilities will be provided to cater for these movements.
- 2.3.4 The proposed signalised access junction will be built to the latest design standards, and will include fully signalised pedestrian crossings on all arms.
- 2.3.5 The full Masterplan area includes lands at Stoneview to the north of the N20 and Railway Line. As these are developed, road; pedestrian and cycle connections to the north of the Phase 1 site will be developed. This will be particularly important to link the proposed Blarney Rail Station with the village centre and residential areas around the R617. These improvements will be subject to a separate future planning application.

ITEM 4c: POINT RAISED

Traffic movements during construction are underestimated

SYSTRA RESPONSE

- 2.3.6 MHL Engineers provided details of the likely construction programme, and the amount (and type) of vehicles involved at each stage. These were based on experience of similar sized sites they have been involved with.

SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

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APPENDIX 3: SUBMISSION OF ARCHITECTS ON ARCHITECTURAL MATTERS

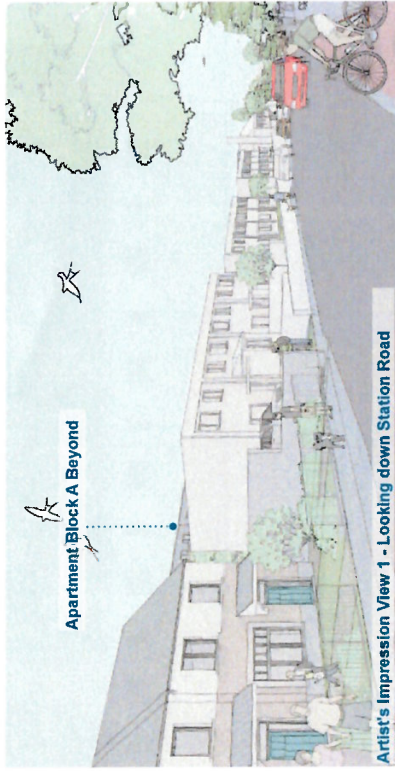
Apartments to the rear of Woodville Terrace

The apartment blocks along Station Road are strategically placed, considering key site constraints and design principles.

Their location minimises visual impact on the surrounding environment, including Blarney Castle, while also acting as a designated entry point to help manage traffic flow and prevent congestion. As this area contains some of the steepest terrain on the site, a stepped design has been incorporated to integrate with the natural topography, which rises from Station Road towards the Ringwood (see contiguous elevation 2-2). Additionally, their positioning provides clear views of communal and open spaces, enhancing passive surveillance and security.

The extended contiguous elevation 1-1 illustrates the relationship between the apartments and the houses along Station Road. The apartments are set back approximately 23m from the boundary, with additional separation provided by the back gardens of the Woodville Terrace houses. With overall separation distances ranging from 33m to 42m, it is inaccurate to suggest a contiguous or overbearing relationship with the Woodville properties exists. To enhance privacy, a landscaped buffer is proposed along the existing boundary. Artist's impressions (Views 1 and 2) show how the apartments will appear from both ends of Station Road, demonstrating that they will not be visually dominant in while travelling in either direction.

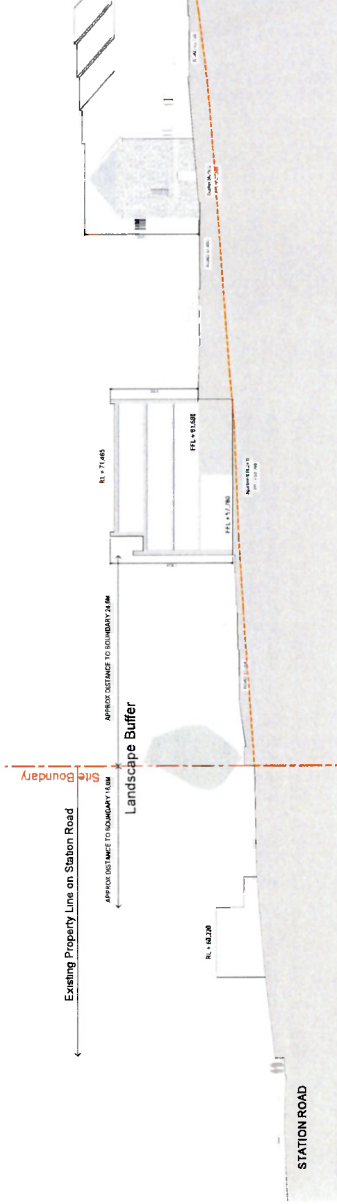
A comprehensive Sunlight and Daylight Analysis Report by DKP Environmental is included in the SHD application. This report assesses the environmental impact of the development against all current European and British standards and guidelines. Chapter 6 examines in detail any potential loss of sunlight and daylight on adjacent properties, providing specific analysis for each dwelling at Woodville Terrace. The report concludes that the development's effect on sunlight and daylight is negligible and falls within the constraints and recommendations of the BRE Report Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (BR209, 2022), deeming the proposed development compliant.



Artist's Impression View 1 - Looking down Station Road



Artist's Impression View 2 - Looking up Station Road



Contiguous Elevation 2-2



Contiguous Elevation 1-1

Duplex Option to the rear of Woodville Terrace

Apartment Blocks A and B

Apartment blocks A and B are located to the rear of the existing mid-twentieth century, two storey, flat roofed, Woodville Terrace. As previously described, placement was strategically located to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding environment. Each apartment block comprises of three storeys plus a penthouse and is located at the lowest elevation of the site. The design of both apartment blocks accommodates the sloping topography. The lower sides step down to provide single storey own door units giving this side a 3-storey with set-back appearance.

Each apartment block consists of 25 residential units, 9nr one bed and 16nr two bed units. Between Blocks A and B, a total of 50 residential units are provided enabling an optimum density.

Duplex D and E Option

An alternative option can be considered which uses two duplex terrace blocks along the western development edge in lieu of apartments, (duplex blocks D and E). Both blocks would have a three-storey split-level configuration with own door access. This design enhances the streetscape by providing a finely detailed street frontage and active frontages

Each duplex unit comprises of a 1-bedroom unit on the ground floor and a 2-bedroom unit on the upper floors. The terrace block consists of 12 residential units, 6 no. one bed and 6 no. two bed units. Between both blocks D and E a total of 24 residential units would be provided.

Massing and Setbacks

As the duplex blocks have pitched roofs, the apex levels coincide with the parapet heights of the apartments so provide a similar massing. The shallower depth of the duplex blocks allows a further setback of c.4m from the existing properties at Woodville Terrace than the proposed apartments in the LRD application.

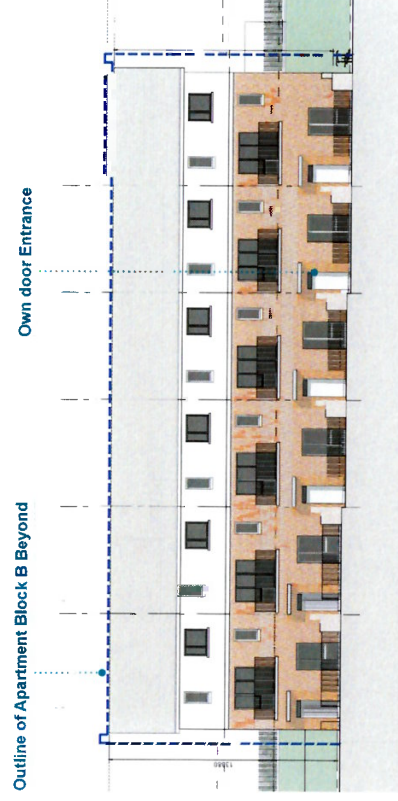
Summary

Implementing the duplex option would result in a drop of a total of 26nr units within the LRD from 244 units to 218 units. This amendment would result in the Net Residential Density dropping from 40.1uph to 35.8uph.

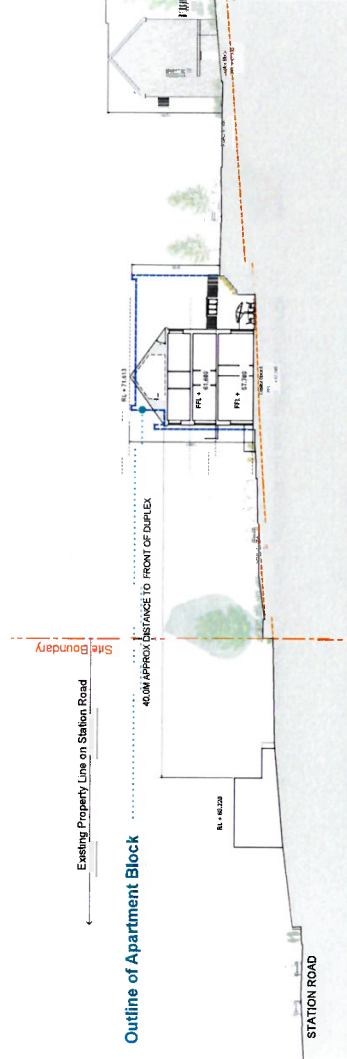
This density continues to align with national guidelines (Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024).



Option of removal of the Apartments and insertion of Duplex Terrace Blocks D and E



West Elevation of Duplex Terrace Block E



Contiguous Elevation 3-3

APPENDIX 4: SUBMISSION OF CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS ON LANDSCAPE MATTERS

CUNNANE STRATTON REYNOLDS

Response to Third Party Appeals on Landscape Matters

In respect of
Ringwood Phase 1 Development, Blarney, Co. Cork

For
Clockstrike Limited