

**ARCHITECTURAL  
& URBAN DESIGN STATEMENT**



Proposed Development of 74 Residential Units  
at  
Cairns Road, Sligo

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION:

This Architectural & Urban Design Statement has been prepared to accompany of the planning application submitted on behalf of Novot Holdings Limited (the applicant) for a new residential development on lands at Cairns Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo.

The proposed development consists of a total of 74 residential units comprising of houses, duplexes and apartments as well as all associated site development works, landscaping, roads, paths, car parking, bicycle parking and supporting services.

The design of this scheme has evolved over the past number of months as part of a multi-disciplinary design team process and has been amended and refined further to pre-planning meetings with Sligo County Council.

The purpose of this Architectural & Urban Design Statement is to provide an overview of the proposed development and outline the factors which have informed the design, including information relating to the context, site layout/ landscaping design, architectural design as well accessibility aspects of the proposed development. The format of this statement follows the “12 Criteria” as set out in the *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, 2009*.

The proposed scheme has been developed in a manner which employs best practice in architectural and urban design with reference to the following government and local authority publications:

- Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023
- Sligo & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (as subsequently incorporated into the Sligo County Development Plan 2017 -2023)
- Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, 2009
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages), 2009
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines, 2020
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, 2007
- Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas,
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2019

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT IN NUMBERS

### 2.1 DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

Total combined site area	22,434 m <sup>2</sup> (2.2ha)
Buildable Residential area (in applicants' control &/or letters of consent received)	2.1ha
Non-buildable area to north-east & north-west (in applicants' control &/or letters of consent received)	0.1ha
Total number of dwellings	74 dwelling units
Childcare facilities	Not Required (this is a sub-threshold development)
Residential density	35 dwellings per hectare (dph)
Plot Ratio	0.38
Site Coverage	22%
Public Open Space	3,540 m <sup>2</sup> (0.36ha) 15.7% of overall lands
Communal Open Space	737 m <sup>2</sup> (0.073ha)
Total car parking spaces	122
Total bicycle parking spaces (residential & visitor spaces)	130

### 2.2 DWELLING UNIT MIX

Dwelling type	Number of units
1-bedroom apartments	5
2-bedroom apartments	19
3-bedroom terrace houses	8
3-bedroom semi-detached houses	14
4-bedroom terrace houses	2
4-bedroom semi-detached houses	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 units</b>

For further details of the internal floor areas, storage areas and private amenity areas of each unit, please refer to the Housing Quality Assessment / Area Schedule provided with the application which demonstrates that all apartment/ duplex units will comply with the spatial requirements of Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines, 2020 and that all house units will comply with the requirements of Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, 2007.

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY OF SITE

Please refer have reviewed the previous planning history pertaining to this site in the past 30 years via Sligo County Council's online planning portal system. Previous valid planning applications on file relating to the lands forming the site for this planning application are as follows:

#### **Sligo County Council Planning Reference No. 97380**

This application relates to the main part of the site – the former agricultural field to the south and west.

Date Lodged:17/06/1997

Development Description:

***“the construction of 34 no. dwellinghouses on an enlarged site (previous planning application reference no. 97/380 refers)”***

Decision/ Status: Withdrawn

Therefore, as per the above there are no relevant planning decision for these lands in the past 30 years.

Please refer to the comprehensive MKO Planning Cover Report accompanying this Planning Application for more details on planning history and planning policy aspects relating to the site.

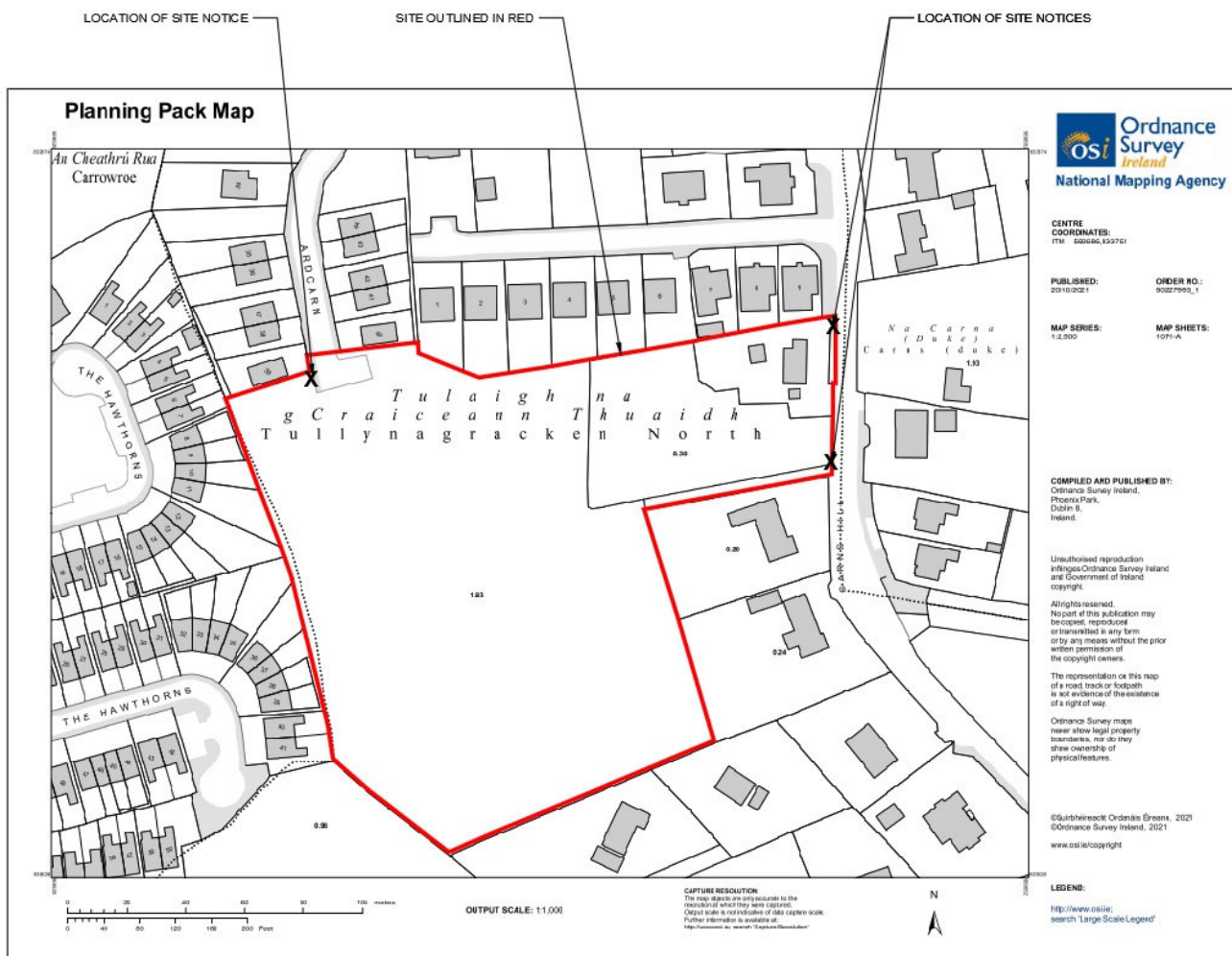
## 4.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD

### 4.1 CONTEXT

#### Site Location & Adjoining Lands/ Developments:

The site subject to the application is situated on Cairns Road (Bothar Charna) (L3602) in the south-eastern part of Sligo town. The site is located on the western side of Cairns Road and currently comprises an existing dwelling house and surrounding garden/ site to the front onto Cairns Road with an agricultural field to the rear (south and west) and includes an area to the north-west at the interface with the Ardcarne estate comprising an existing area of roadway/ turning hammerhead and fringe areas.

The site is in Sligo town, a major regional centre, and is within the area of the Sligo & Environs Development Plan 2010 -2016 which was subsequently incorporated into the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023. The site is located 750 metres (m) south of the junction of the Cairns Road with Pearse Road at Markievicz Park GAA stadium. It is 350m south of the existing S1 Sligo town local bus stop on Cairns Road and in close proximity to a range of existing local services including shop, creche, hotel, leisure centre, restaurants/ cafes, retail park and sports facilities. It also within 2,000 m of the centre of Sligo town and the full range of commercial, social, recreational, educational and transportation facilities of this major county town and regional centre.



OS Site Location Map extract

The site is bounded to the north-east by frontage directly onto Cairns Road. To the west the site directly adjoins the rear gardens of the existing modern two storey plus pitched roof terraced and semi-detached dwelling houses of the neighbouring Hawthorns housing estate. To the north-east the site adjoins the existing Ardcairn housing estate – which is an estate comprising single-storey plus dormer dwellings and two storey houses. To the north the application site adjoins the rear gardens/ sites of the existing single storey and single storey plus attic houses of Hilltop Park, which generally have their ground floor levels at a higher level than the application site.

To the east the site adjoins the rear garden areas of existing single-storey plus pitched roof dwelling houses, which are accessed from Cairns Road. We note that Cairns Road at this location consists of a mix of existing single storey, single storey plus dormer and two storey dwelling houses.

To the south, the application site adjoins the rear garden areas of existing single-storey plus pitched roof dwelling houses, which are accessed from a roadway leading off Cairns Road. To the south-west corner the site adjoins a neighbouring area of undeveloped zoned lands which is independently accessed from a roadway leading off Cairns Road.



**Aerial Photograph with Planning Application Site Outlined in Red**

### **Topography:**

The overall planning application site is made up of three existing areas. The largest part of the site is an existing pastoral grassland field located to the west and south of the lands. The existing field is sloped in nature, rising from the lowest points at the south-east corner (76 m above sea level) and north-west corner (76 m above sea level) to the highest point at the north-east/ east of the field (83m above sea level).

To north-east the site there is an existing single-storey bungalow dwelling house, driveway, outbuildings/ sheds and rear garden/ paddock area. This part of the application site is generally flat in nature (c. 83 – 84 m above sea level) and has extensive frontage onto Cairns Road.

The third part of the site is at the north-west corner. This area is at the interface with the existing Ardcairn estate and consists of the existing roadway hammerhead turning area and surrounding fringe areas. This area is 77 – 78 m above sea level. The majority of the application site (the main former agricultural field area) is in the ownership of the applicant, Novot Holdings Limited, while other areas forming part of the application site are included with the necessary letters of consents from landowners enclosed with this application submission.

## Land Use Zoning:

### Zoning:

Under the Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP) 2010-2016, which we note has subsequently been incorporated into the current Sligo County Development Plan (SCDP) 2017 -2023, the major part of the planning application site area is zoned “**R2 - low/ medium-density residential areas.**”

The R2 zoning has the following objective as set out in Section 5.2.3 of the SEDP:

*“Objective: Promote the development of housing within a gross density range varying between 20 and 34 dwellings per hectare (8 to 13 dwellings per acre)*

*In R2 zones, blanket construction of three- and four-bedroom houses will be discouraged. All new residential development will have to recognise and reflect the changing demographic structure in the house type and design, site layout and the additional facilities proposed.*

*While housing is the primary use in these zones, recreational structures, crèches/playschools, educational facilities, community buildings, sheltered housing and corner shops will also be considered.”*

We note that a portion of the site which currently contains the existing bungalow dwelling house and associated garden areas at the north-east of the site onto Cairns Road is zoned “**RE – existing residential areas.**”

The RE zoning has the following objective as set out in Section 5.2.3 of the SEDP:

*“Objective: Protect and enhance existing residential amenity.*

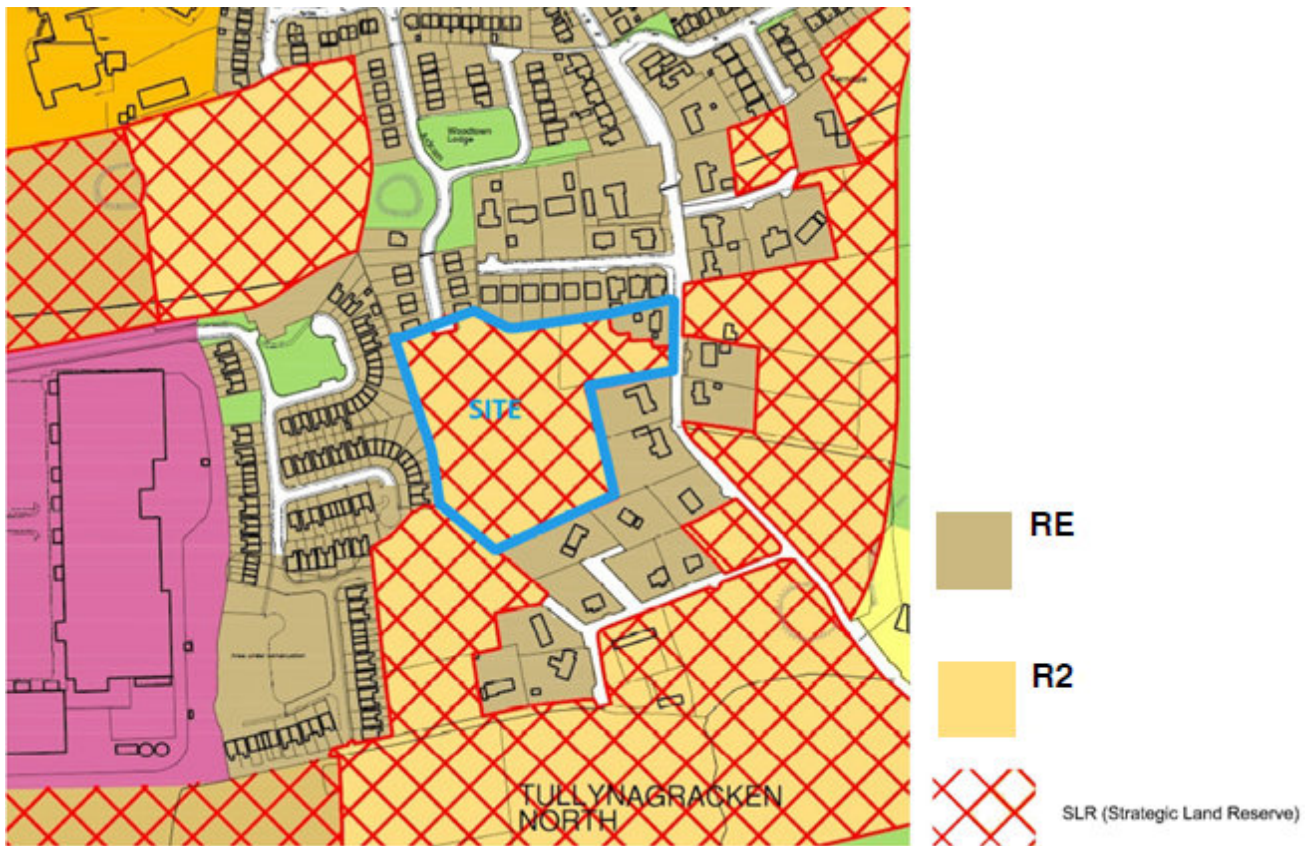
*The introduction of compatible/ancillary uses, redevelopment and regeneration may be considered in these areas, as long as the dominant use remains residential.*

*Increases in density may be considered in the case of redevelopment (depending on the site context) and regeneration of existing residential areas.”*

We also note that the R2 zoned portion of the lands is part of a current *Strategic Land Reserve (SLR)* area as identified on *Amended Map 1* of the SEDP.

Please refer to the comprehensive MKO Planning Cover Report accompanying this Planning Application for more details on the site zoning and the rationale for the release of these lands from the Strategic Land Reserve.





**Site Zoning:**

**Extract/ overlay from Amended Map 1 of the Sligo & Environs Development Plan showing outline of planning application lands & applicable R2 & RE land use zoning and SLR designation areas**

**Existing Site Services**

There is an existing electrical power line traversing the site in a north-west to south-east direction across the with support poles. It is proposed to remove the existing overhead services on site as part of the development and re-route them.

The site has access to all other required public utilities including water and waste water public mains networks. Please refer to the engineering services drawings and reports prepared by Jennings O'Donovan Consulting Engineers accompanying this application for further details.

**Heritage**

Further to an archaeological appraisal, we note that there are no archaeological features recorded or detected on this site. It is noted that in the neighbouring Ardcairn estate, there is an a pre-historic "carn" (ringfort) circular mound structure. This is set within a landscaped area of the adjoining Ardcairn estate and is c.100m metres to the north of the application site. This neighbouring carn is one of a cluster of similar carns in the area, located further to the north and east of the application site, which gives Cairns Road its distinctive name.

Please refer to the archaeological assessment/ report prepared by Fado Archaeology accompanying this application for more details relating to archaeology and heritage aspects of the proposal.

We note that there are no Protected Structure buildings on site and the site is not in an Architectural Conservation Area.

## 4.2 CONNECTIONS

The site is within the built-up area of Sligo as identified in the Sligo & Environs Development Plan and Sligo County Development Plan. The site is in close proximity to Sligo town centre and all of the existing social, commercial, community, healthcare, educational, employment and recreation facilities of this large and important regional town. The site is located within 2,000 metres of the centre of Sligo town, which is the primary regional hub in the north-west of Ireland. The site is a 20-minute walk to the town centre core while it is 6-minutes cycle or a 4-minute journey by car.

The site is also adjacent to a number of existing employment, social, leisure and educational facilities in the immediate local area of Cairns Road and Pearse Road. The site is within close proximity of Sligo Park Hotel, which is a large hotel accommodation, leisure centre, conference centre and restaurant/ bar facility, located 1,000m to the north-west of this site. Sligo Retail Park, a major regional retail park, employment centre and commercial amenity is located 1,500m to the west of the site. Important sporting facilities are also in close proximity including Markiewicz Park, the Sligo county GAA stadium which is 750m to the north and Sligo Racecourse which is 1,500m to the north-east. There is also a local shop (Mace) within 750m of the site on Cairns Road to the north.

The site is served by an existing continuous footpath network extending from the north-east boundary of the site to the north to the town centre. A new footpath along the site frontage with Cairns Road will directly connect to the existing footpath network to the town centre.

The site will be connected to its hinterland and the wider area via the public pathway and roadway on Cairns Road (L3602) to the east. It will be accessible to pedestrians walking on foot with an existing public footpath connection and to cyclists and motor vehicles via the existing Cairns Road which leads directly from the site to the town centre further to the north.

The proposed new linkage to Ardcairn to the north-west will also open up a new pedestrian and cyclist connection which will link the site onwards to Pearse Road to the west. This will create and complete a new pedestrian and cyclist link in the wider urban context linking Cairns Road in the east to Pearse Road further to the west. This will represent a positive improvement and benefit for existing and future residents in the immediate area, allowing them to better connect to the two primary arteries in the area (Cairns Road & Pearse Road), and also improve the overall connectivity of the area in the greater Sligo urban environment/ townscape.

The internal layout of the site and pathway network encourages movement from east to west, moving from the Cairns Road into the carefully designed tree-lined avenue, central public amenity area and then onwards via the new connection to Ardcairn to the north-west linking onto the wider area and Pearse Road beyond.

All parts of the site/ landscaped public areas which will be fully accessible to residents of both this development and the surrounding area. The central amenity area and other complementary amenity spaces have been designed to have a strong and varied amenity value with differing areas including children's play areas, gathering areas and areas for informal sports activities so that they will form part of the everyday lived experience of residents of the in the development and the wider area.

### Transport/ Linkages

The site is favourably located for the implementation of a genuine modal shift away from car-based transport solutions. Alternative modes of transport connections available to access the site include bus, cycling and walking routes and the site is in proximity to Sligo town centre and to local, national and regional public transport rail and bus linkages. The site is located within 2,000 metres of Sligo town centre to the north.

The site is accessible to pedestrians walking on foot with an existing public footpath connection from the site to the town centre leading south along the western side of Cairns Road (L3602). This footpath is proposed to be connected into and in turn extended along the site frontage with Cairns Road. The site is just a 20-minute walk to the centre of the town.

The site is also readily accessible via bicycle and is a short 6-minute cycle to the town centre. Bicycle access is via the existing Cairns Road (with a new link to Ardcairn estate to the north-west also being facilitated). There is a relatively low traffic volume on the L3602 Cairns Road. It is proposed that cyclists from the development

will share the existing carriageways with general traffic in order to gain access to the town centre as per existing arrangements. Cyclists can also utilise the proposed new linkage to Ardcarne to the north-west to link to Pearse Road to the north-west.

There is a frequent (every 30 minutes at peak periods) local Sligo town bus route on the adjacent Cairns Road, with the nearest Sligo town bus (Number S1 bus route) service stop being located just 350m to the north on the western side of Cairns Road (on the same side of the road as this development). This bus route provides a frequent public transport connection into the nearby town centre.

As noted above, the site is in close proximity to the town centre such that walking and cycling are both viable means of day-to-day transport to access all the existing commercial, social and recreational amenities of Sligo town centre as well as the local, regional transport hubs in Sligo town. The site is 2,900m from Sligo main line rail station and regional/ national bus interchange (Mac Diarmuida Station), which is the primary public transport hub connecting the town to the surrounding region and the rest of the country.

These other viable modes of transport will complement connectivity to the site by vehicular based transport via Cairns Road and the wider local, regional and national road network. The alternative means of transport available will actively assist in encouraging and facilitating a genuine modal shift away from private car-based transport to more sustainable public transport, walking and cycling alternatives in line with local and national planning policies.

Vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian circulation connections within the development are based on an interlinked network of spaces rather than on a road-based network in which roads play their part but are not dominant. The progression is hierarchical within the development with increasing priority given to pedestrian movement and lesser dominance of motorised vehicles as one moves into and through the site.

The design of the internal circulation within the site is based on a progressive approach with pedestrian and cyclists generally given priority and low vehicular traffic speeds actively designed for. Vehicular roadways are kept to a minimum width as per national DMURS recommendations and vehicular access concentrated on the primary access road avenue with a deliberate reduction of car priority and increase in pedestrian and bicycle dominance in the circulation areas off the main access avenue. There is a graduated shift in traffic priority away from cars to cyclist and pedestrian dominance moving across the site from the entrance point to north-east to the central amenity area to the centre and the home-zone areas to the north-west and south of the site. The main means of achieve this are:

- Urban streetscape tree-lined Main Avenue with attractive terrace frontages and a more urban 'look and feel' created by the flanking facades of the terrace houses and duplex/ apartment blocks to the north, separation of vehicular traffic from pedestrian pathways by the tree-lined grass verges.
- Change in street paving and partial integration of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the access routes to the south and north-west of the site.
- Homezone courtyards with shared surfaces and pedestrian priority to the north-east and south of the site
- Reduction of car parking in vicinity of the central public area and paved surfaces routeway to the grouped parking areas to south of the central amenity area.
- Exclusion of vehicles from the proposed north-western link to Ardcarne to prioritise pedestrians & cyclists instead of vehicular based transport in this area.

## 4.3 INCLUSIVITY

The proposed overall variety in the mix of dwelling typologies and sizes of the residential units ranging from 1-bedroom apartments, 2-bedroom apartments, 3-bedroom houses and 4-bedroom family homes will create a mixed neighbourhood with a wide demographic profile that can support a variety of people through all stages of their lives and will help to create a balanced, broad-ranging and sustainable community.

All of the houses and apartments have their own-door access points at ground level ensuring ease of access for all. All units have been designed to meet the requirements of Part M (Accessibility & Use) of the Building Regulations and a significant number of units – namely all of the 2-bedroom (4 person) apartment units are single level ground floor units which are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

The public realm is designed to ensure accessibility on equal terms for people of a range of ages and physical mobility levels. The design includes appropriate slopes/ gradients to pathways, areas of shared surfaces and an absence of stepped pathways or high kerbing and use of tactile surfaces at levelled crossing points to allow for full permeability to all parts of the site's public realm and to all unit entrances. Likewise, there are no physical and visual obstacles across the site. The network of paths, roadways and shared surfaces will ensure full permeability throughout the scheme as well connectivity to the amenity areas and connectivity to the adjoining urban hinterland beyond.

All public amenity spaces are designed to be accessible for all and to support a wide-range activities for all age groups. The facilities provided within the development amenity areas include children's play areas as well as other communal gathering and quiet seating areas along with hard and soft landscaping to support a diverse usage patterns including informal sporting/ games activities.

## 4.4 VARIETY

### Housing Mix

There are a total of 74 dwelling units proposed in the development. The overall total comprises of a diverse mix of dwelling unit sizes and typologies. The housing mix includes 50No. houses (67% of overall total), along with 12No. apartments and 12No. duplex apartment units, giving a total of 24No. apartment units (33% of overall total).

The 50No. houses are dispersed through the site are a mix of smaller 3-bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses as well as larger 4-bedroom terraced and 4-bedroom semi-detached houses.

The apartment and duplex units are located in 2No. blocks. The 2 No. blocks (Block H and Block J) are situated to the north-east adjacent to the site entrance on Cairns Road. The apartments/ duplexes blocks comprise of a mixture of smaller 1-bedroom apartments, 2-bedroom (3-person) apartments and larger 2-bedroom (4-person) units.

In summary the mix of unit types (by number of bedrooms) is as follows:

#### ***Smaller Unit Types:***

5No. 1-Bedroom Duplex Apartment Units,  
7 No. 2-Bedroom (3-person) Duplex Apartment Units  
&  
12 No. 2-Bedroom (4-person) Apartment Units =  
**24 No. units (33% of overall total)**

#### ***Larger Unit Types:***

22 No. 3-Bedroom Houses (**30% of overall total**)  
&  
28 No. 4-Bedroom Houses (**37% of overall total**)

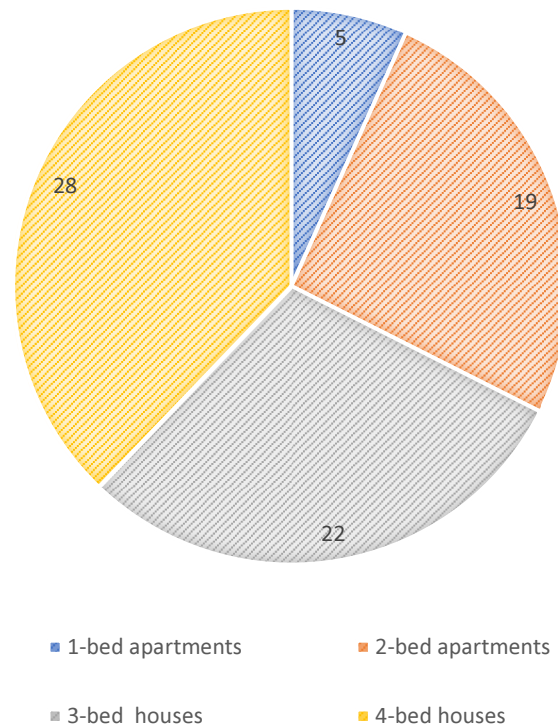
The comprehensive mix of units proposed, both in terms of unit size and unit typology, is designed to cater for a wide demographic of future residents with differing units available to support the varying needs of a wide cross section of the community and differing age profiles across a lifetime.

The proposed unit mix is in full compliance with housing policy GP-HOU-3 of the Sligo & Environs Development Plan, with a minimum of 30% 1-2 bedroom units, a minimum 30% 3-bedroom units and a minimum 20% 4-bedroom+ units being provided.

There are smaller 1-bedroom apartments, and 2-bedroom apartments which have been designed for smaller households including single persons, couples, smaller families and for people wishing to trade down to more manageable units.

The larger 3-bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses and 4-bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses will cater for larger household sizes including larger family units.

**Residential Units Mix Diagram**



All proposed apartments/ duplexes have all been designed to be of a well-proportioned and usable size. To this end we recognize the provisions of the Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020 as outlined by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The apartment sizes proposed meet and in fact exceed these guidelines in all instances to provide high quality apartments tailored to modern demands for better standards in terms of unit sizes, storage, functional layout and private open space. Separate external storage areas for bicycles and waste are proposed in proximity to the apartments. The mix of apartment/ duplex units proposed, being 5 No. 1-Bedroom apartments, 19 No. 2-Bedroom Units is in adherence with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1 (SPPR 1) the Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments, 2020 stating that up to 50% of apartments can be 1-bed units. The unit mix allows for 5No. 1-bedroom units, which equates to 21% of the total number of apartments provided. The number of 2-bedroom (3-person) units is also in compliance with the Apartment Design standards as they equate to less than 10% of the overall number of units on site, being 7No. units out of a total of 74No. units in the development.

All proposed dwelling houses have also been designed to be of a well-proportioned and usable size and adhere to the provisions of the relevant housing design guidelines, namely Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, 2007 as outlined by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The house sizes proposed meet and exceed these guidelines in all instances to provide high quality dwelling houses tailored to modern demands for better standards in terms of unit sizes, storage, functional layout and private open space. Separate external storage areas for bicycles and waste are proposed in proximity to the houses or incorporated within the proposed rear garden areas. The diverse mix of house units proposed, being 8 No. 3-Bedroom terraced houses, 2 No. 4-Bedroom terraced houses, 14 No. 3-Bedroom semi-detached houses and 26 No. 4-bedroom semi-detached houses is in adherence with local and national guidance.

Douglas Wallace Consultants as architects are committed to striving for higher architectural and spatial and unit mix standards in all residential buildings, to create buildings that form the basis of sustainable communities. To this end the units are dual-aspect have been uniquely designed for this site and are laid out and proportioned to include a variety of light-filled internal spaces that are large and flexible enough to cater for the varying demands of different age groups over a lifetime. All primary living, dining and kitchen spaces have been designed and positioned to both visually and functionally connect with the private amenity spaces. The bedroom spaces have been designed to be of a generous size and include the provision of built-in storage wardrobes which are in addition to the main bedroom floor areas.



**View of Proposed Apartment/ Duplex Block (Block J) to north-west of Site**

## **Childcare**

For developments of over 75 No. residential units childcare facilities are required to be provided as per the statutory guidance set out in *Childcare Facilities, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001*. This development of less than 75 units is below the threshold for which as childcare facility is required. We note that there are already a number of existing established childcare/ Creche facilities in close proximity in the immediate context and local area.

## **Part V – Social/ Affordable Housing**

Under Part V of the Planning & Development Act (as amended), social/ affordable housing units are required to be provided as this is a proposed development of greater than 9 units and is on a site greater than 0.1 hectare in area.

The applicant has engaged in Part V discussions with Sligo County Council Housing Section and an agreement in principle to comply with the Part V requirements for this proposed development has been reached. The agreement in principle is for the transfer of social housing units on site. The units proposed to be transferred are identified in the drawings submitted with this application.

## 5.0 SITE

### 5.1 EFFICIENCY

#### Density – Efficient use of Zoned Lands

The proposed residential units are located within the zones designated “R2 - low/medium-density residential areas” and “RE – existing residential areas” in Amended Map 1 the Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP) 2010-2016, which we note has subsequently been incorporated into the current Sligo County Development Plan (SCDP) 2017 -2023 and are the current zonings attaching to these lands.

The R2 zoning has the following objective: “*Objective: Promote the development of housing within a gross density range varying between 20 and 34 dwellings per hectare (8 to 13 dwellings per acre*” as set out in Section 5.2.3 of the SEDP, while the RE “*Objective: Protect and enhance existing residential amenity. The introduction of compatible/ancillary uses, redevelopment and regeneration may be considered in these areas, as long as the dominant use remains residential. Increases in density may be considered in the case of redevelopment (depending on the site context) and regeneration of existing residential areas.*” as set out in Section 5.2.3 of the SEDP.

The proposal is for a total 74 dwellings on the 2.1ha buildable area of the site. This represents a density of 35 dwellings per hectare for this development. We note that the density proposed is in compliance with the national planning policy guidance applicable for the Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations such as this site. The national *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages), 2009* state that a density of 35-50 dwellings per hectare is appropriate for outer suburban/ “greenfield” sites on the periphery of large towns such as Sligo. We also note that the *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines, 2020* sets out that a density of <45 dwellings per hectare is appropriate for residential developments in Peripheral Urban Locations and that such developments will include apartments.

An indicative average density of 20 - 34 dwellings per hectare is indicated in Amended Map 1 and Section 5.2.3 of the Sligo & Environs Development Plan (SEDP) 2010-2016 which has subsequently been incorporated into the current Sligo County Development Plan (SCDP) 2017 -2023 for the lands zoned R2 which includes the major part of the application site as well as other lands to the south-east which are not part of this application, nor in the applicant’s ownership.

No indicative average density is given for the RE zoned lands at the north-east of the site, but we note that in the SEDP the RE zoning objective states that “*Increases in density may be considered in the case of redevelopment (depending on the site context) and regeneration of existing residential areas*”.

The proposed overall density for this application site, being 35 dwellings per hectare (for the buildable area of the site) is slightly more than the up to 34 dwelling per hectare average indicated in the SEDP/ SCDP for the R2 zoning, being one unit per hectare greater. However, we also note that the overall site also includes a portion of lands zoned RE, for which there is no average density range/ cap is indicated in the SEDP.

It is contended that the proposed overall density for the site, including both the R2 and RE zoned areas of the site, of 35 dwellings per hectare (for the buildable area of the site) adheres to the applicable national planning policy guidance and that this is a suitable site for this level of density located in close proximity to Sligo town centre and the existing wide range of public transport and social, recreational, commercial amenities as well of employment centres in this major regional urban centre. The proposed density represents an efficient and sustainable use this site which is part of the limited and finite supply of available zoned and fully serviced greenfield lands for new residential development in the area. The proposed density and site layout will allow for an appropriate balance between delivering much needed new housing while providing high quality public and communal open space on site and also respecting the context and sensitivities of the adjoining residential setting. The density and site layout proposed is an efficient layout and allows for a balanced mix of units including larger and smaller apartment and house units suitable for a wide-ranging demographic of new residents.

The level of density proposed will achieve a critical mass in terms of allowing for a wider range of smaller and larger apartment and house types to assist in the creation of a diverse and vibrant broad-based community.

## **Recycling**

Recycling facilities will be provided in the form of separate refuse wheelie bins to allow for waste segregation of general waste, organic waste and recyclable materials. All semi-detached and end of terrace houses will have individual wheelie bins with access to the rear gardens. For the mid-terrace houses as well as all apartment/duplex units purpose-built recycling and refuse storage facilities will be provided and positioned in various locations across the site so that they are in close vicinity to the building/ unit entrances for the convenience to all residents, while ensuring they are easily accessible to waste collection vehicles and personnel.



## 5.2 DISTINCTIVENESS

The scheme is designed around a number of key concepts and the design aims to create recognisable and distinct spaces that can be described and create a sense of place for the residents:

- Various typologies of buildings to cater for a variety of residential need and to avoid uniformity.
- Main “Urban” tree-lined Avenue with enclosing longer terrace blocks defining the northern edge to act as a tree-lined transitional avenue between the Cairns Road suburban/ intermediate hinterland to the east and the proposed new connection with the Ardcairn housing estate to the north-west of the site (and onto Pearse Road to the west).
- Distinctive homezone courtyards (1no. to the south and 1No. to the north-east of the site)
- Individual streetscapes with varying house/ block types at the edges defining these character areas
- The large Central Amenity Area creates the main focal point and a distinct sense of place and civic heart to the scheme
- Other smaller public amenity spaces included in the scheme are designed with their own distinct identities base on their existing inherent context and heritage features at these locations. A pocket amenity area/is located to the north-west adjoin the northern home-zone, while the amenity area to the east incorporate an existing mature line of trees/ hedgerow and engages with the Cairns Road streetscape and the new Avenue.



***Proposed 3-D Aerial View of Development***

## 5.3 SITE LAYOUT

### Proposed Site Layout – Pre-Planning Stage Design Development & Amendments

The site layout forming the basis of this Planning Application is the product of a process of alterations, refinements and development based on regular multidisciplinary design team reviews and importantly from pre-planning feedback from Sligo County Council over a series of consultations over a number of months.



#### *Pre-Planning Stage Sketch Massing Model View*

Amendments to the layout incorporated further to the pre-planning engagements with Sligo County Council include the reduction in scale of the dwelling and apartment/ duplex buildings along the northern side of the site in order to make a more appropriate transition at the site edges and to closely echo the scale of existing surrounding low scale developments to the north.

As part of the feedback received the layout has altered further to the pre-planning engagements to reduce the scale of the proposed dwellings located at the north-west corner, at the interface with the adjoining existing Ardcairn estate, with the previously initially proposed two-storey plus attic houses in that location reduced in height by one floor to now being proposed as single -storey plus attic/ dormer dwellings. In this way the scale of these block at the interface with Ardcairn now echo the adjoining single storey plus dormer level typology of the existing neighbouring Ardcairn houses and allows for a transitional zone of lower scale blocks between Ardcairn and the proposed two storey plus attic dwelling further to the south (addressing the new central amenity area).

Another significant amendment is the previously proposed three storey apartment/ duplex blocks to the north-east area of the site have been redesigned so that they are now proposed as lower scale two storey blocks with a shallow angle pitched roofs over. This amendment will allow for an appropriate and graduated transition in scale at this location between this site and the existing adjoining dwellings of Hilltop Park to the north and the overall building height for the apartment/ duplex blocks is minimised and will echo the overall height of standard housing.

Further to the pre-planning engagements the housing mix was reassessed and rebalanced. An increased number of smaller units (1-Bedroom and 2-Bedroom units) were incorporated into the overall mix to increase

variety within the scheme and to better reflect current demographic and household formation size patterns and to better address the site's main R2 zoning objective which includes the following requirement as set out in Section 5.23. of the Development Plan:

*"In R2 zones, blanket construction of three- and four-bedroom houses will be discouraged. All new residential development will have to recognise and reflect the changing demographic structure in the house type and design, site layout and the additional facilities proposed."*

The mix now includes 24No. smaller 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units in the form of apartments and duplexes which equates to almost 35% of the overall total units on site, to reflect current demographic trends and smaller household sizes.

The creation and further detailing of planted landscaped buffers along the site boundary as well as the introduction of the pocket park and a Children Play Area to the north-west of the site forms part of the process of refinement and alterations leading up to the current planning application site layout. These moves allied to the redesign of the blocks at the north of the site assist to improve the amenity of the new development and also to protect the amenity of the adjoining residences on all sides.

## **Proposed Site Layout - Application Stage**

The overall concept underpinning the planning application site layout is to create a well-considered design on site that seeks to respond appropriately to the physical and social context of the place it is built and create a new development with a distinct sense of place. The proposed site layout, allied to the architectural expression of the proposed dwelling blocks, aims to create a strong sense of place and a sustainable long-term living community. There are number of means utilised to achieve this aim:

- New tree-lined Main Avenue to create a new pedestrian and cyclist link Cairns Road in the east to Ardcairn in the north-west. Importantly, this new link will complete and form part of a wider urban connection linking up Cairns Road in the east to Pearse Road further to the west via other existing connecting paths and roadways in the wider area.
- New tree-lined Main Avenue lined with flanking terrace blocks to the north to create a distinct more urban type streetscape and sense of place on this key linkage
- Creation of the generous central public amenity area which becomes the focal point and civic heart of the development.
- Creation of other distinct areas/ pockets of public and communal open space within the development
- Using the layout and positioning of the blocks to define strong edges of streetscapes and amenity areas and provide natural passive surveillance to streets, amenity areas and communal areas
- The layout engenders activity on the streets and amenity areas with active frontages and all units having their entrance doors at ground level to address the streets, homezone courtyards or amenity areas.
- Binding of the development with the visual amenity of the natural landscape setting of Sligo and its surrounding hills beyond
- Communal amenity (semi-private) areas placed behind the apartment /duplex blocks front building lines for gradation of privacy
- Creation of home-zone courtyard areas with shared surfaces
- Visually minimising car parking and roadways and instead increasing landscaping and facilitating pedestrian and cyclist dominance within the development.

- Streets designed as distinct places within the development and a hierarchy of spaces and circulation design with less busy routes having pedestrian/ cyclist dominance with paved surfaces and home zone courtyards
- Provision of appropriately sized residential units allied with high quality architectural design of the units/ block faced incorporating attractive and durable materials
- Careful calibration of the layout and positioning of the buildings on the site itself to ensure the residential amenity of future residents and also to protect the residential amenity of existing adjoining dwellings.
- Inclusion of appropriate boundary treatments and planting, screening to integrate the development into the existing receiving environment and project adjacent residential amenity



**Proposed Site Layout Plan**

## 5.4 PUBLIC REALM

### Public Open Space



**Proposed View of Central Amenity Area looking south-east**

The Sligo & Environs Development Plan, in *Section 16.3.7 Public open space*, sets out the requirement for provision of at least 15% of the overall site area for public open space. It states that:

*“In residential developments on greenfield sites, developers should provide communal open space landscaped to a high standard equivalent to a minimum of 15% of the total area.”*

The overall site area of the lands including areas which cannot be built on (namely the existing hammerhead turning area at the north-west corner at Ardcarne and the lateral set-back zone are along the Cairns Road frontage to the north-east) is 22,434 m<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, a minimum of 3,365 m<sup>2</sup>, being 15% of the overall lands area, is required to be provided for this development.

An overall area totalling 3,540 m<sup>2</sup> is proposed to be designated as public open space, which equates to 15.7% of the site area. This level of provision complies with the public open space requirements of the Development Plan.

We note that the above public open space calculation includes the central amenity area, the pocket park/ play area to the north-west and the landscaped area to the east but the calculation does not include secondary areas of landscaped space/ strips along Cairns Road to the east or the landscaped areas at the interface with Ardcarne estate to the north-west corner. It also does not include the large area of Communal Open Space (totalling 737 m<sup>2</sup>) proposed to be provided to at the north-east adjacent the Apartment/ Duplex blocks.

All public open spaces (as well as the communal open space) will receive high quality hard and soft landscaping treatments as set out in detail in the landscape drawings and information submitted with the application. The

public open space and amenity landscaped elements of the scheme are designed with the concept of using the layout of buildings on site to define the large central amenity heart of the scheme as well as other complementary individual pockets of open space.

The open spaces act as distinct character areas of either small intimate pockets of space or as the large central amenity space. These spaces form part of the greater more fluid flow and vistas in the landscape between the residential lands and the adjacent hinterland and hills surrounding Sligo beyond. Movement is encouraged between the open spaces on the residential lands and they link to the proposed pedestrian pathway network within the scheme itself and via the new connecting pathways on Cairns Road and Ardcairn to the wider vicinity in Sligo.

The largest area of public open space is located at the centre of the site and will act as the civic heart of community. This area will benefit from a favourable solar orientation to the south, west and east. All the pathways and connections within the site feed the activity of the main central space. This landscaped public open space is the focal point of the development and is addressed by buildings on the eastern, southern, northern and western sides and is defined by surrounding buildings as a distinctive open area. It is a large-scale space but is designed and sub-divided to support a rich variety of human different activations within smaller distinct areas of the overall space. It is landscaped with areas of trees, vegetation, grass and a dedicated Gathering Area. It has been designed not merely as an attractive area to view from the enclosing dwellings, but its layout allows for a variety of activation patterns in smaller pocket of the overall space. There are paths to enjoy moving through the space, areas of grass for informal sporting activity, an area for residents to gather, a Children's Play area, as well as quieter areas for seating and relaxation.

The other smaller public amenity spaces in the development are fed by the activity dispersing out from the main central area and also have their own character and activation patterns. The pocket park area to the north-west complements the adjoining home-zone area while the open space to the east utilises the existing mature hedge row as a strong visual backdrop to this space. People moving through the scheme become conscious of an architecturally charged concentration of experience in the different defined open spaces, avenue streetscapes and homezone areas created by the clustering of buildings on the edges, before dispersing into the greater hinterland of the site.



***Proposed View of Central Amenity Area including Childrens's Paya area***

## Communal Open Space

For apartment developments, under the Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments 2020, Communal Open Space is required in addition to the public open space requirements. Communal open space is required at a rate of 5 sq. per 1-Bedroom apartment, 6 sq.m. per 2-Bedroom (3-person) apartment and 7 sq.m. per 2-Bedroom (4-person) apartment. Therefore, the required quantum of communal open space required to serve the proposed apartment/ duplex blocks at the north-east of the site has been calculated as follows:

### Overall - Apartment/ Duplex Block H & Block J:

5 No. 1-Bedroom Apartments x 5 sq.m.	=	25 sq.m.
7 No. 2-Bedroom (3-Person) Apartments x 6 sq.m.	=	42 sq.m.
<u>12 No. 2-Bedroom (4-Person) Apartments x 7 sq.m.</u>	<u>=</u>	<u>84 sq.m.</u>

Total Required Communal Open Space for Blocks H & J = 151 sq.m.

### Overall - Apartment/ Duplex Block H & Block J:

Overall Required Communal Open Space = 151 sq.m.

Total Proposed Provided Communal Open Space for all Apartment/ Duplex Blocks = 737 sq.m.  
(which equates to nearly five times the minimum requirement)

The minimum requirement for communal open space is greatly exceeded in the development proposals. We note that communal open space is proposed to be provided for the apartment/ duplex blocks to the north-east of the site (Block H & Block J) in a large area of landscaping directly adjacent to these blocks. This level of provision represents a very high quantum of communal open space, which will greatly benefit the amenity and quality of life of the future apartment/ duplex residents,

The proposed communal open spaces have been designed to the high-quality usable spaces which are located so that they are directly adjacent to the apartment/ duplex block they serve. The communal areas are all set behind the front building lines of the apartment/ duplex blocks they serve to act as semi-private spaces creating a graduation on privacy between the public open spaces and the more intimate communal open spaces.

## Streetscapes/ Avenues/ Homezones



***Proposed View of Northern Homezone area looking south-west***

The creation of attractive streets is a critical part of the overall public realm. The scheme consists of tree-lined avenues as well as home zone shared courtyard streetscape settings and areas enclosing the central amenity areas. All streetscapes and home zones include hard and soft landscaping and trees as an integral part of the design to complement the architectural design of the blocks defining the edges and enclosure of these important public realm spaces.

Roads, pathways and parking areas are carefully considered and designed as an integral landscaped element of the public realm. Car parking is conceived as part of the overall landscaping, streetscape and public realm design and is in accordance with good practice and DMURS guidance. Car parking spaces are set out in short runs of grouped, cluster or in-curtilage periductular spaces. These short runs of parking spaces are surrounded by soft landscaping along with planting and trees between all runs of spaces. For the new northern avenue streetscape lined with dwelling houses and apartments, car parking is mainly set out as on-street car parking along streetscapes rather than as individual spaces in front driveways. This strategy allows for the full area of the streetscape from building edge to building edge to be treated as public realm in line with best urban design practice so that the overall spatial experience of this important streetscape public realm which will link Cairns Road to Ardcairn can be designed at the outset in totality. Importantly, this means they can then be maintained and managed to ensure this key streetscape setting remains as attractive spaces into the future. The overriding approach to new streets is to create new tree-lined avenues and enclosing streets to the central amenity area with a symbiosis and wholistic design incorporating of hard and soft landscaped areas, tree planting, pathways, dwelling entrance areas as well as car parking and roadways.

In the two homezone courtyards located to the north and south of the site, unifying paved surface treatments are proposed to create a shared surface at the same level for vehicular and pedestrian movements as well as car parking, to create a harmonised spatial experience and promote activation of these very low traffic volume spaces.



## **Passive Surveillance of Open Spaces, Streets & Communal Areas**

The public, communal open spaces and streetscapes forming the public realm described above can only be truly successful if they are subject to natural surveillance from the buildings that enclose and define them. This has been provided throughout the scheme. Such natural surveillance has in all cases been considered as an integral part of the overall design quality of the amenity spaces. The principal central amenity area is overlooked by windows from the surrounding houses, apartments & duplexes enclosing this space. The other individual areas of landscaped open and communal space throughout the scheme also have passive surveillance of all activity designed into the proposal by way of overlooking of these spaces from the windows of the houses or apartments/ duplexes at their edges. The scheme has also been designed to provide passive surveillance to all new streetscapes.

The high level of passive surveillance from the large number of units overlooking that has been purposely designed into the scheme will ensure that all public realm and communal area will be overlooked in order to create a natural passive deterrent against anti-social behaviour.

The treatment of the front and end of terrace/ end of block elevations of all the relevant blocks/ units facing onto public spaces, communal spaces as well as the internal streets has been carefully considered. The concept of elevation as a catalyst to observation of adjacent external spaces is manifested through the positioning of the entrances to the end/ corner units within the side elevations of units lining roadways or amenity areas and by incorporated primary fenestration into the composition of the side end of row façades to appropriately address these spaces. These entrances and areas of glazing serve to activate the end elevations of these dual-fronted corner blocks. On the one hand they lend more aesthetic interest to the architecture of the scheme while importantly they also allow for increased passive surveillance of the adjacent open spaces and streetscapes. The passive natural supervision provided by the design of the side elevations creates useable and safe public realm areas.

## **6.0 HOME**

### **6.1 ADAPTIBILITY**

All house types are designed to fulfil the requirements of *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007* and all apartments comply with the requirements of the *Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2020*. In all instances, the internal spatial provision is more generous than the applicable standards and in order to increase the quality of the residential units. This approach to internal spatial planning will allow for necessary flexibility and adaptability in the use of the generously proportioned internal spaces into the future as the needs of residents adapt and change over time.

The shape, proportion and internal layouts of all of the units, including the houses and the apartments and duplexes, are set within regular orthogonal unit envelopes that are very conducive to flexibility and future reorganisation/ re-programming of internal spatial functions and means that the internal layouts/ partition set-outs can be readily adapted or altered in the future.

Dwelling houses account for 50No. of the overall total of 74 units. Houses are in the form of terraced and semi-detached units. These unit types have proven from past experience to be a very flexible residential typology and allow for both internal adaptation as well as future external extensions. The design of the rear facades includes large openings to all house types, which will facilitate future rear extensions without the requirement for extensive structural works to the original envelope. The large rear garden to all houses will allow for any future extensions to be catered for without detracting from the overall quality of the private garden spaces. For a number of 3-bedroom houses where the roof/ attic space is not utilised as accommodation, they have been designed so that they are future-proofed and adaptable and these units will include roof structures, internal roof space heights and roof windows that facilitate future conversion. These include the 3-bedroom semi-detached units and the 3-bedroom terrace houses in Block Type G. Furthermore, the larger 4-bedroom house types are efficiently designed to utilise the roof/ attic space as bedroom accommodation with windows integrated into the design. This allows for the use of the full building envelope of these houses in an efficient and adaptable manner.

All houses and apartments will be built to the latest Part L Building Regulations energy efficiency standards using modern sustainable approaches to construction, insulation and use of renewable and efficient heat sources. All units will be very thermal efficient with high levels of thermal insulation complementing the modern high efficient space heating sources. The high level of thermal and energy efficiency will futureproof these units and ensure they will serve as sustainable homes for the long-term without the need for expensive retrofitting. Please refer to the Energy Statement prepared by Douglas Wallace Consultants accompanying this application for further details.

### **6.2 PRIVACY AND AMENITY**

#### **Private Open Space**

Apart from the public and communal amenity spaces, each unit are designed to have access to their own dedicated private external amenity space. Private open space is proposed to be provided in the form of dedicated private secure rear gardens for all semi-detached and terraced houses in the development. We note that a minimum of 60-75 sq.m. of private open space is required for provided within the curtilage of each dwelling in the form of a rear garden for three and four bedroom houses as set out in *Section 16.3.8 Private open space* of the Development Plan.

All private rear gardens have been designed to be of a large usable size and are no less than 60 sq.m. in area. There is a variety of rear garden sizes within the housing development, with a number of units, particularly at corners of the site have garden areas well in excess of the minimum standards. All areas of private open space are directly accessible from the primary living/ dining areas of the dwelling houses to ensure they are integral to the living experience of the future occupants. Durable garden boundary walls/ fences of a minimum of 1.8 m in height are proposed to ensure privacy, and are 2-m-high where flanking garden walls adjoin a public area.

All of the private open space areas for the apartments are designed to meet and exceed the requirements set out in the *Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments 2020* guidelines, as scheduled on

the application drawings. The private open space external apartment/ duplex terraces are all a minimum of 1.5m deep and run the full width of the units. The apartment/ duplex blocks are designed so that the external terraces all face southwards, which is the most favourable solar orientation, and face onto landscaped areas to the south. For ground floor level units the external terrace amenity areas have a planting buffer zone to the edge (minimum 1.5m in depth) at grade level to create a delineated buffer between adjacent landscaped spaces.

Formal planting areas separated from pedestrian footpaths are provided to the front of the proposed housing units where they directly adjoin the streetscapes or amenity areas in order to create a buffer space between the public realm and the residential units to protect internal privacy.

## **Dual Aspect/ Solar Orientation**

All houses, duplexes and apartments in the development are designed to be dual aspect, i.e. 100% of the proposed units receive natural daylight and ventilation from at least two different solar orientation aspects. We note that this proposed 100% dual aspect provision is well in excess of the 50% minimum requirement relating to apartment developments on green field sites as set out in *Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments 2020*. Dual aspect is achieved by placing fenestration on at least two different sides of all units. This will ensure a variation and nuance in internal lighting levels which correlates with external lighting levels across the day as the sun arcs across the sky from east to west and will increase the amenity of all units and the sense of connection to the natural rhythms of the external environment.

## **Prevention of Sound Transmission between adjoining units**

All houses, duplexes and apartments in the development are designed to comply with the provisions of Part E – Sound of the Building Regulations. Robust and suitably dense separating walls and floors will be constructed to ensure appropriate resistance to sound transfer or reverberations with suitable construction detailing utilised in line with requirements for all separating and flanking elements. As a general design principle compatible room usages in adjoining units have been placed beside each other and at the same level as far as possible so that bedrooms adjoin bedrooms and living/ kitchen/ dining areas adjoin each other.

## **Storage**

All houses, duplexes and apartments in the development are designed to comply with the storage requirement provisions of the relevant national guidance. These dedicated storage areas are all provided in addition to the minimum bedroom and kitchen/ living/ dining floor areas. Storage is in the form of separate rooms/ spaces or as separate permanent built-in storage areas within bedrooms etc., where appropriate. Please refer to the areas schedule set out in the drawings submitted for each unit/ block type for full details and locations of internal storage areas.

All semi-detached and end of terrace houses will have individual wheelie bin storage areas located within their rear gardens with access via private side passages to bring the bins to the designate collection areas. For the mid-terrace houses as well as all apartment/ duplex units purpose-built recycling and refuse storage facilities will be provided and positioned in various locations across the site so that they are in close vicinity to the building/ unit entrances for the convenience to all residents, while ensuring they are easily accessible to waste collection vehicles and personnel.

It is proposed to provide bicycle parking at a rate of 1 space per bedroom for the apartment units, as per national standards and 1 per dwelling for the house units as per the Development Plan requirements. This means there is provision for a total of 93 residential spaces are proposed. Furthermore, it is also proposed to provide visitor bicycle parking at a rate of 1 space per every 2 units, equating to 37 visitor bicycle spaces. Therefore, an overall total of 130 bicycle spaces are proposed on site.

Bicycle parking is designed for the use of residents and visitors alike. For the apartment/ duplex units bicycle parking is provide in the form of secure lockable double-stacked bicycle stores located proximate to the units/ block they serve. For the semi-detached and end of terrace houses bicycle parking is provided by way of Sheffield stands while for mid-terrace units bicycle parking is provided by way of Sheffield stands located proximat to eth units. Visitor bicycle parking is provided by way of Sheffield stands and is dispersed in clusters across the site in smaller groupings to facilitate ease of access to all units.

## **Preventing Adverse Overlooking –**

### **Within the Development Itself**

The site layout and separation distances proposed within the scheme itself will prevent adverse overlooking condition being created between opposing blocks.

Minimum separation distance of at least 22m are implemented between opposing upper-level clear glazed windows of the dwellings to both the front and the rear throughout the site.

We note that where there are closer separation distances between blocks, the windows to the side elevations in these instances are to secondary circulation and/or bathroom areas and are treated with opaque glazing to ensure no adverse overlooking conditions are created within the development.

## **Preventing Adverse Overlooking –**

### **Protecting Adjacent Residential Amenity**

The design of the scheme is also acutely conscious of the need to protect the residential amenity of existing adjoining dwellings. In order to ensure their residential amenity, in terms of both their internal spaces and their private gardens, is not adversely affected there are increased separation distances proposed as well as other design measures to ensure no adverse overlooking conditions are created by this development.

The design of the development and the calibration of the relationship with the existing receiving context has been refined further to the pre-planning consultations.

The site layout and separation distances proposed between new blocks in the scheme and existing adjoining residences will prevent adverse overlooking condition being created between opposing blocks. Minimum separation distance of at least 22m are implemented between opposing upper-level clear glazed windows of the new dwellings and existing adjacent dwellings on neighbouring lands.

We note that where there are closer separation distances between the lateral sides of proposed new blocks and neighbouring blocks, the window to the side elevations in these instances are to secondary circulation and/or bathroom areas and are treated with opaque glazing to ensure no adverse overlooking condition are created within the development.

### **North of the Site – Distance to the rear of Hilltop Park Houses:**

There is a separation distance ranging between a minimum of 23.7m at the north-east & 23.6m at the north-west to a maximum of 31.5m the north central area between the rear of the existing houses of single storey plus pitched roof/ attic level dwellings of Hilltop Park and the rear first floor level facades of the proposed new houses and apartment blocks/ units along the north of the site, namely from proposed unit No. 40 to Unit No. 74.

### **North-West of the Site – Adjacent to Ardcar:**

There is a separation distance of 11.6m between the rear of proposed unit No. 40 (including the first floor/ dormer level windows) and the end/ side wall of the adjoining existing rear garden of No. 40 Ardcar. The proposed unit No. 40 has its entrance to the northern side. We note that the proposed unit No.40/ Block Type E is positioned so that it is angled away from the adjacent No.40 Ardcar and the side gable of the proposed new unit/ block faces towards the existing adjoining roadway/ hammerhead rather than towards the side gable of No.40 Ardcar. The new gable which has first floor windows to the stairwell area and to a bedroom at the front corner is set 19.5m back from the site boundary line/ interface with Ardcar roadway to the front of No. 40 Ardcar. This gable does not directly face the adjoin No. 40 Ardcar to prevent any adverse overlooking occurring.

Proposed Unit No. 39 is located to the side of existing adjacent No.39 Ardcar. A separation distance of between 3.9m to 5.4m is proposed between the existing side gable of 39 Arcarn and proposed House No. 39 in this new development. The relationship is between side gables and the only window at the upper/ dormer level to this northern side is an opaque glazed window to the stairwell area.

#### **West of the Site – Adjacent to The Hawthorns**

To the west the site adjoins the rear of the existing Hawthorns development of two-storey plus pitched roof terraced and semi-detached dwelling houses.

There is a separation distance ranging between a minimum of 23.3m at the north-west & 24.0m at the south-west to a maximum of 36.9m at the west central area between the rear of the existing two storey plus pitched roof terraced houses of The Hawthorns development and the rear first floor level facades/ windows of the proposed new houses along the west of the site, namely from proposed Unit No. 23 to Unit No. 39.

#### **South-West of the Site – Adjacent to adjoining undeveloped lands**

There is an area of undeveloped land to the south-west. It is proposed to maintain a minimum 11m set back distance from the site boundary for the units (No. 19 to No.22) which have rear facades orientated toward the adjoining undeveloped field.

#### **South of the Site – Adjacent to 2no. existing dwelling houses**

There are two existing single storey dwelling houses to the south of the application site. There is a proposed separation distance of 25.3m to the rear of the nearest existing bungalow to the south which is set at an angle facing away from the site boundary. To the south-east the other existing bungalow is set at an angle to the application site with the end gable facing the site. There are no proposed directly opposing windows towards the existing bungalow to the south-west and a there is separation distance of 35.6m to the nearest proposed dwelling (Unit No.11).

In all case there is a minimum distance to the site boundary line of at least 11.4m from the rear of the first floor level of the new houses at the south of the site.

These set back distances and orientation of the new blocks angling away from the existing adjoining houses will ensure that amenity of the adjoining houses.

#### **East of the Site – Adjacent to 2no. existing dwelling houses**

There is a minimum separation distance ranging between a minimum of 48.7m at the north-east to a maximum of 49.2m at the central east between the rear of the existing houses of the single storey plus pitched roof dwellings to the east of the site (which area accessed off Cairns Hill Road) and the rear first floor level facades of the proposed new houses and apartment blocks/ units along the north of the site, namely from proposed Unit No. 1 to Unit No.10.

In all case there is a minimum distance to the site boundary line of at least 12.1m from the rear of the first floor level of the new houses at the east of the site.

#### **North-East of the Site – Adjacent to existing dwelling houses**

There is a minimum set back distance of 25.9 m from proposed Block J to the site boundary to the south on the other side of the landscaped area at the site entrance. This Block is 29.5m from the side gable of the adjacent house on Cairns Road on the other side of the existing screening hedgerow.

The eastern end facade of the dual-fronted Block J looks out onto the public road (Cairns Road) and there is an open field area directly opposite. There is an existing single storey plus dormer level dwelling just to the south on the other side of Cairns Road. There will be no window or terrace in Block J directly opposing this existing house. Block J is 22.3m in an angled measurement away from the corner of this neighbouring dwelling house.

As set out above in relation to all existing adjoining dwellings, no adverse overlooking conditions are created by this development. We also note that the Daylight & Sunlight Assessment report has been prepared for this development by Douglas Wallace Consultants which includes an assessment of the impact of this development on the adjoining houses and private garden amenity spaces. The report has assessed the impact on neighbouring windows and rear gardens and the results demonstrate that they will comply with the relevant BRE Guidelines and have adequate daylight and sunlight levels. Therefore, the design of the development will ensure that adjacent residential amenity is not adversely affected.

## 6.3 CAR & BICYCLE PARKING

The site is favourably located for the implementation of a genuine modal shift away from car-based transport solutions. Alternative modes of transport available to access the site include cycling and walking routes and the site is in proximity to Sligo town centre and to local, national and regional public transport bus and rail linkages.

The site is located within Sligo urban area and in close proximity to Sligo town centre. The scheme proposes a progressive approach to parking with an emphasis on high levels of secure bicycle parking provision to proactively encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport while also providing an appropriate quantum of car parking

### Car Parking

We note that *Table 16.C Vehicle parking requirements* of the Development Plan sets out minimum car parking provision requirements at a rate of 1 space per apartment unit, along with 1 space per 3-bedroom house and 2 spaces per 4-bedroom house units.

The car parking provision strategy for this development is based on adherence to the applicable Development Plan standards for the house and apartment units.

The proposed development includes car parking provision based on the following ratios:

- 2 car parking spaces per 4-bedroom house (in compliance with the Development Plan standards)
- 2 car parking spaces per 20No. 3-bedroom houses (in compliance with the Development Plan standards)
- 1 car parking spaces per 2No. 3-bedroom houses (Unit No. 38 & No. 39) (in compliance with the Development Plan standards)
- 1 car parking space per 1-bedroom apartment (in compliance with the Development Plan standards)
- 1 car parking space per 2-bedroom apartment (in compliance with the Development Plan standards)

Therefore, a total of 122No. car parking spaces are proposed for the development, which complies with the Development Plan requirements.

Parking areas are carefully considered and designed as an integral landscaped element of the public realm. Car parking is conceived as part of the overall landscaping, streetscape and public realm design and is in accordance with good practice and DMURS guidance. Parking is provided in variety of manners including on street parking, cluster parking at home zones as well as in-curtilage car parking for the larger houses. Materials used for parking areas are high high-quality paving and are part of the overall design strategy of using durable and easy to maintain materials in the public realm areas.

For the proposed tree-lined avenue streetscape containing dwelling houses and apartment/ duplex units, car parking is mainly set out as on-street parking along streetscapes rather than as individual spaces in front driveways. The short runs of on street and grouped parking spaces are surrounded by soft landscaping along with planting and trees between all runs of spaces.

In the two homezone courtyards located to the north and south of the site, a unifying paved surface treatments is proposed to create a shared surface at the same level for vehicular and pedestrian movements as well as car parking, to create an integrated holistic spatial experience and promote activation of these very low traffic volume space.

For the larger 3-bedroom and 4-bedroom dwellings to the south of the site, parking is generally proposed to be provided as in-curtilage parking with high quality paved surfaced to match elsewhere in the scheme.

This varying and nuanced approach to car parking allows for different solutions in appropriate to different parts of the site so that the car parking is not dominant and instead is subservient to the overall hard and soft landscaping scheme for the site.

## Bicycle Parking

The emphasis on a modal shift away from car-based transport and reduced car parking provision is actively supported and balanced by ensuring a high level of bicycle parking provision within the development. Bicycle parking is proposed to be provided for this residential development at levels in line with the standards given in the national Apartment Design Guidelines for the apartment units and in line with (& in excess of) the requirements of *Table 16C* of the Development Plan for the dwelling house units in order to proactively promote this alternative mode of transport.

It is proposed to provide bicycle parking at a rate of 1 space per bedroom for the apartment units, as per national standards. In addition, in line with national standards for apartments, visitor bicycle parking is proposed at a rate of 1 space per every 2 units.

This means there is provision for 43 residential spaces proposed (for the 19 No. 2-bedroom units and 5 no.1-bedroom units) for the apartment units. In addition, visitor bicycle parking is proposed at a rate of 1 space per every 2 units, equating to 12 visitor bicycle spaces. This gives a total proviso of 55 No. bicycle spaces for the apartment/ duplex blocks (Block H & Block J). For the apartment/ duplex units bicycle parking is provided in the form of secure lockable double-stacked bicycle stores which are in landscaped areas located proximate to the units/ blocks they serve. Visitor bicycle parking for the apartment/ duplex blocks is provided by way of Sheffield stands and are again positioned to facilitate ease of access to all apartment units.

It is proposed to provide bicycle parking at a rate of 1 space per dwelling for the house units as per the requirements set out in *Table 16C* of the Development Plan. In addition, though it is not required by the Development Plan, it is proposed to also provide visitor bicycle parking at a rate of 1 space per every 2 dwelling houses (which is equivalent to the national visitor bicycle parking standards applying to apartments).

This means there is provision for 50No. residential bicycle spaces proposed for the 22 No. 3-bedroom houses and 28 No. 4-bedroom houses dwelling houses. In addition, visitor bicycle parking is proposed at a rate of 1 space per every 2 units, equating to 25 visitor bicycle spaces. This gives a total provision of 75 No. bicycle space for the dwelling houses. For the semi-detached and end of terrace dwelling houses bicycle parking is provided in the form of secure lockable bicycle stands in the private rear gardens. For the mid-terrace dwelling houses bicycle parking is provided by way of grouped Sheffield stands in landscaped areas located proximate to the units they serve. Visitor bicycle parking for the house units is provided by way of grouped Sheffield stands in landscaped areas located proximate to the units/ blocks they serve.

Therefore, the total proposed bicycle parking provision is 130No. bicycle spaces on site, made up of 93 residential spaces and 37No., visitor spaces. By way of comparison, we note the level of bicycle parking proposed is greater than the level of car parking provision, demonstrating a clear commitment to encourage cycling as a primary means of day-to-day transport for the development.



## 6.4 DETAILED DESIGN



***Proposed View from Central Amenity Area showing a mixture of Semi-Detached, Terrace & Apartment/Duplex buildings with a variety of elevational treatments within an coherent overall palette of materials/finishes***

In terms of the architectural expression and detail design of the buildings the scheme seeks to echo the best examples of traditional and contemporary architecture. The references it draws on range from the traditional methods of buildings in Sligo to contemporary works of architecture. The palette of finishes and materials draws on the best examples from past and present. Brick and render are used as the principal finishes to the elevations. This echoes the predominate use of these materials as a durable weathering finish to the traditional buildings in the county over many centuries. Brick is used as a single type and is used in conjunction with painted render other materials to give visual interest, texture and variation to the elevational composition. In this way reference is made to the historic character of the building materials adopted in the region.

Please note a separate a detailed Materials Strategy document and a Building Lifecycle Report have been prepared by Douglas Wallace Consultants and are included with the application submission giving further details.

The approach to materials adopted is to break down the greater mass through the use of complementary three-dimensional massings of materials to create varied and pleasing elevations. The areas of different materials are enriched by crisply detailed window openings within the facades. The breakdown of the elevation from the scale of the row of dwellings to the level of the individual door or window is aimed at creating identifiable moments of interest within the greater collective composition. These moments of intensity occur where there is a change in massing or material around entrances, prominent corners and principal areas of fenestration. This helps to make individual areas identifiable and gives a sense of ownership to residents of the individual units within the greater composition. These buildings also seek to create a genuine architecture of our time and as such not only seek to reference the core materials used historically in the Sligo context, but also seek to add to the new contemporary architecture of Sligo. Douglas Wallace as architects are committed to high quality and innovative contemporary design. Newer materials such as pressed metal canopies, glass balustrades and aluminium/uPVC widows are used, and are mixed with the traditional ones of brick and render to create interesting and uplifting elevational treatments. The disposition and massing of the blocks represents a clear commitment that

architecture should propose new appropriate to the residential needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The architecture of this scheme seeks to add to the quality of the built environment in Sligo. It seeks to make an appropriate statement of our times.

Please refer to the individual block elevations and overall site context elevation and section drawings prepared by Douglas Wallace Consultants , the 3-D Visualisations prepared by Douglas Wallace Consultants illustrating the design of the scheme and the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Images prepared by MKO Consultants demonstrating how the development will sit in the site and the surrounding streetscape and adjoining context.

The proposed dwelling houses are either two storey plus attic accommodation units or single storey plus attic/dormer level units. This low scale of buildings proposed echoes the existing adjoining scale and context. The 2No. apartment/ duplex blocks are two storey buildings with pitched roofs over. The apartment/ duplex blocks include 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments which are all own-door units accessible directly from external ground floor. The 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom duplex units occupy the first floor level with each having their own door at ground level and an internal private access stairway. All buildings are proposed to be built using traditional standard house building construction techniques. There will be a mix of elevation treatments to the varying block types to create distinct character and a high standard of durable and visually interesting material deployed to facade treatment within the development. The proposed layout and detailed design of elevations and fenestration ensures that dwellings relate appropriately to each other in terms of scale, access, avoidance of adverse overlooking between units as well as the wider context.

High quality public and communal amenity open areas are proposed comprising various forms of hard and soft landscaping and these landscaped areas are integral to the overall design and spatial experience of the development. The location and detailed design of the public and communal open space will facilitate the active use of these spaces. All are located in close proximity the proposed new house and apartment units. The landscaped spaces are accessible via the network of interlinked pathways in the development. The open spaces include varied areas to support different form of activities for all ages including children's play areas, landscaped walkways, seating areas, gathering areas as well as areas for informal play/ sports activities. The detail design of the buildings and landscaped areas have all been designed to be durable for ease of long-term maintenance.

Care has been taken in the design over the siting of refuse stores, bicycle stores and stands so that they are proximate to the units they serve and are detailed so that they do not detract from the overall quality of the external landscaping or the amenity of the residential units. Likewise, car parking areas are considered as an integral element within the public realm design and are treated accordingly. Car parking areas are sited in short runs of perpendicular spaces in varying grouped, cluster, home-zone and in-curtilage arrangement and are surrounded by soft landscaping areas and trees and are designed as part of the overall design of streetscapes or other areas of public realm.

Please refer to the Building Lifecycle Report accompanying this application setting out how the long-term maintenance and management of the building and landscaped areas of development has been considered and designed for into the proposals.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

This proposal has been developed after a careful multi-faceted review of the existing site, planning context of the site, the adjacent context as well as national and local planning policy and proposes a high-quality residential development which meets and exceeds modern spatial standards to provide a new development on site that is designed for the long-term future. Care has been taken in the design of the development in a multi-disciplinary design team approach over a multi-stage design process to ensure the development makes a positive contribution and adds the quality of the built environment in Cairns Road and the wider Sligo town area, while protecting the existing residential amenity of adjoining dwellings/ lands. The development proposes a diverse mix of spacious, well-designed houses, apartments and duplexes residential units along with high quality public and communal amenity areas. The proposed development demonstrates a sympathetic and sustainable means of allowing for the development of a fully serviced greenfield site on zoned lands to create much-needed new residential units in a location benefitting from close proximity to Sligo town centre and a wide range of existing social, recreational, commercial and employment infrastructure, while respecting the character of the area and the adjoining context.

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**March 2022**