

EIA screening Report

For Development at
on behalf of Cork County Council

July 2024



McCutcheon Halley
CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Technical Competency & Experience	4
1.2	Planning History	4
2.	Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects	6
2.1	Site Zoning.....	7
2.2	Need for the Proposed Development	7
3.	Proposed Development	8
3.1	Description of the Proposed Development	8
3.2	Drainage	8
3.3	Surface Water	9
3.4	Foul Drainage.....	9
3.5	External Lighting.....	9
3.6	Site Access	9
3.7	Landscaping	10
3.8	Construction.....	10
3.9	Ecological Monitoring	10
4.	Methodology	11
4.1	Desk-based Studies.....	11
4.2	Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Legislative and Regulatory Context.....	11
4.3	Field-based Studies	12
5.	Receiving Environment	12
6.	Flooding	13
7.	Natura Sites.....	14
8.	Noise	15
9.	Built Heritage	15
10.	EIA Screening.....	16
10.1	Mandatory EIAR Screening.....	16
10.2	Sub-threshold Requirements for EIA.....	17
10.3	Characteristics of the Proposed Development	19
10.4	Location of the Proposed Development	23
10.5	Types & Characteristics of Potential Impacts	25
11.	Conclusion	26

1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley have been appointed by Cork County Council to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening for the proposed residential development and associated works on lands at Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork.

The site of the proposed development, named Ard an Ghleanna, is comprised of an agricultural field of rough vegetation. The subject site has a total site area of 4.52 ha and a net developable area of 3.9 ha. It is bounded by hedgerows to the north, south and east with a steep embankment of scrub and a semi-mature riparian area to the west that adjoins the N72 National Road. The site is accessed via the established and mature Aldridge Heights residential area adjoining St. Joseph's Road.

The location of the proposed development is shown in Fig. 1.1.



Figure 1.1: Site Location

This EIA Screening report has been prepared to consider whether an EIA is required in respect of the proposed development. This screening exercise was undertaken in two stages:

- Stage 1 considers the requirement for a mandatory EIA;
- Stage 2 considers the requirement for a sub-threshold EIA.

As part of the sub-threshold screening exercise, the potential impacts on environmental sensitivities were considered in addition to the interrelationship between those environmental sensitivities.

This EIA Screening Report will be submitted as part of the overall Part XAE planning submission to An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

1.1 Technical Competency & Experience

Mairi Henderson is a Director with McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants with over 32 years' experience in the housing, planning and development sectors. Mairi has extensive experience in planning applications; master planning, policy formulation; policy review and EIAR coordination. She is a corporate member of both the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Matt Williamson is a Planning Consultant at McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants with over 18 months experience. Matt holds a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and Sociology and a Master's in Planning and Sustainable Development from University College Cork. Matt has extensive experience in the preparation of EIA Screening and Scoping reports and works as part of multi-disciplinary teams providing input to Environmental Impact Assessment Reports.

McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants have worked closely with an experienced multi-disciplinary design team, with inputs from Deady Gahan Architects, Walsh Design Group Consulting Engineers, DixonBrosnan Environmental Consultants, ForestBird Design Landscape and Environmental Specialists, John Kelleher & Associates Building Services Engineers and Lane Purcell Archaeologists that have contributed towards the development of this EIA screening.

1.2 Planning History

The site is located in the townland of Spaglen, northeast of Mallow Town Centre, Co. Cork. There are no previous planning applications related to the site as shown in Fig. 1.2, which was extracted from the Cork County Online Planning Register, with the approximate location of the proposed site marked in red.

An extension (Planning ref. 16/6949 and extended under Planning ref. 23/5197) comprising 108 residential units in the townland of Ballyvinitier was granted by Cork County Council. The application for extension notes an expected completion date of March 2024, with permission expiring in September 2024. The construction phase has not been included in the cumulative impact assessment (Section 5.3 of this EIA screening report) as the works are expected to have been completed prior to the commencement of the proposed development at Spaglen. Regard has, however, been had to the impact of the increased housing in assessing the potential operational impacts.

Applications 22/4676 and 24/4243 comprise permissions for residential development located in the townland of Spaglen. These developments do not adjoin the subject site, are located over at least 500m from the subject site and will have separate construction phase and operation phase traffic routes from the subject site. For these reasons, the developments have not been included in the in the cumulative impact assessment (Section 5.3 of this EIA screening report).

A Part 8 road realignment and pedestrian infrastructure enhancements at St. Josephs, Aldworth Heights Junction was approved in 2007.

A list of significant planning applications located in proximity to the subject site is provided in Fig. 1.2.2.

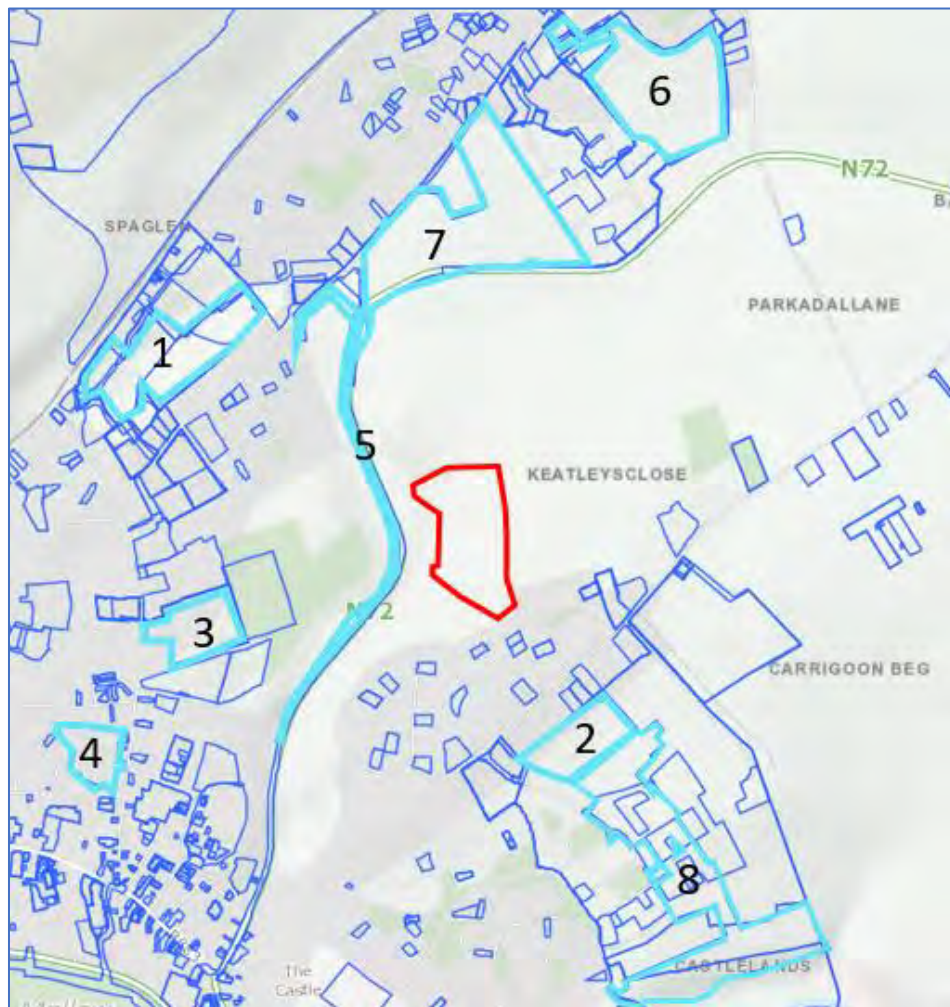


Figure 1.2: Extract from Cork County Online Register, approximate boundaries highlighted.

1.2.1 Cumulation with other existing and/or approved projects

No.	Ref	Description	Location	Status
1	22/4676	Residential development of 96 no. dwelling units and all associated site development works.	within 800m northwest from site entrance	Granted by CCC & Appealed to ABP
2	22/6156	Single storey extension to existing school incorporating a special educational needs base and associated facilities	Approx. 230m south from site entrance	Granted 13/01/2023
3	21/5714	The construction of new prefabricated school building incorporating 4 general classrooms, office, and toilet facilities	Approx. 550m west from site entrance	Granted 17/11/2021
4	19/6345	The development will consist of a part single-storey, part three-storey extension (c. 3,307 m ²) to the existing school building	Approx. 820m west from site entrance	Granted 06/08/2020
5	19/5078	The alteration of Mallow Sewerage Scheme to remove combined sewer overflows from the network. The proposed scheme will include: 1. The alteration of Mallow Wastewater Treatment Plant to provide for wastewater treatment capacity for 22,000pe (increased from 18,000pe) at Ballyellis, Mallow.	Approx 60m from western boundary	Granted 05/12/2019
6	23/5197	Extension to planning ref. 16/6949 for the construction of the unbuilt portion of the original parent permission comprising 108 residential units (Planning ref. 04/2912)	Approx. 1km northeast from site entrance	Granted 08/08/2023, ceases 22/09/2024
7	24/4243	Permission for an LRD comprising 186 residential units, 1 creche and all associated ancillary works. AN NIS was submitted with the application.	Approx 700m north from site entrance	New Application Further Information required
8	24/4519	Permission for 99 residential units, one creche and all associated ancillary works. An	Approx. 340m southeast	New Application, decision

No.	Ref	Description	Location	Status
		NIS was submitted with the application	from site entrance	due 20/05/2024

Figure 1.2.1: Table showing nearby planning applications.

1.3 Site Zoning

The site is located within the townland of Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork on lands zoned under the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 for 'Residential'. Specific Objective MW-R-08 provides for Medium A Density Residential Development.

The town of Mallow is classified as a 'Key Town' under the 'Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy' (RSES) for the Southern Region.

The site borders zones for 'Existing Residential' to the south and the east with 'Residential Reserve' to the north and east and 'Green Infrastructure' to the west. A 'Greenbelt' zone is located approximately 300m to the east of the site. Fig. 1.3 illustrates the Land Use Zonings associated with the site displayed from the Cork County Development Plan 2022.

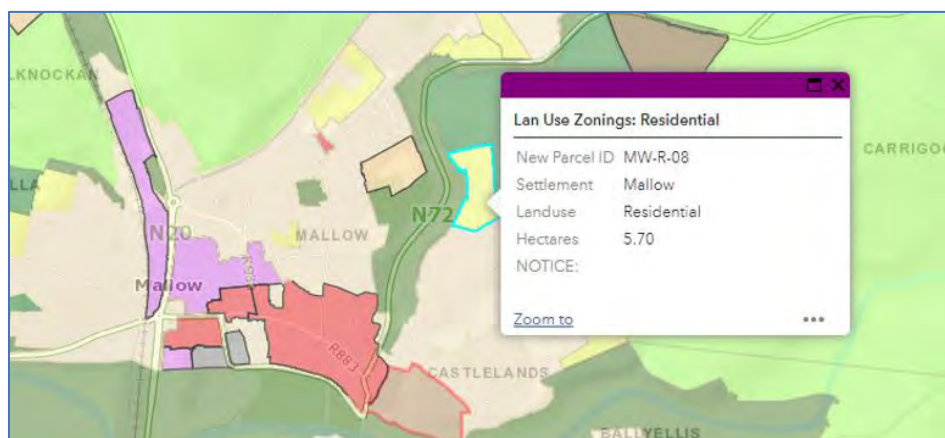


Figure 1.3: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022 Land Use Zoning

1.4 Need for the Proposed Development

According to the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, the current property market in Cork has been characterised by an under-supply of houses and a growing population with the construction of new-build homes in Cork comprising 10.7% of nationally built homes.

A review of the Kanturk-Mallow Municipal District Local Area Plan and the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 identified a number of targets and objectives relating to housing which include the following relevant to the need for the proposed development:

Objective HOU 4-6: Housing Mix:

a) Secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County as a whole to meet the needs of the likely future population across all age

groups in accordance with the guidance set out in the Joint Housing Strategy and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

b) Require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multi-unit residential development in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective. The Statement of Housing Mix should include proposals for the provision of suitable housing for older people and the disabled in the area.

Objective MW-GO-01: General Objectives for Mallow

Plan for developments to enable Mallow to achieve its target population to 20,000 persons.

Objective MW-GO-09:

Provide for the co-ordinated and phased development of the Urban Expansion Areas to the North East and North West of the town to deliver high quality housing/community and employment uses as appropriate.

It can be concluded that the Proposed Development is in-line with the objectives outlined above and is required to meet the housing demands of a growing population at a county and town level.

2. Proposed Development

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is for:

- The construction of 138 residential units on a developable area of 3.9 ha of the total 4.52 ha site, comprising:
 - 4 four-bed semi-detached houses,
 - 14 three-bed semi-detached houses,
 - 20 three-bed townhouses,
 - 36 two-bed town houses,
 - 32 two-bed apartments, and
 - 32 one-bed apartments
- One 42- place crèche.
- All associated ancillary development and works including the one vehicular entrance, footpaths, cycle paths, parking, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas.

2.2 Drainage

This section sets out a description of the proposed surface water drainage. It is proposed to connect to the existing public infrastructure adjacent to the site.

Further details can be found in the Services Infrastructure Report by Walsh Design Group.

2.3 Surface Water

The proposed surface water network will include a storm drainage pipe network, attenuation storage structures and several SuDS features, including nature-based features, which will aid the reduction of runoff volumes by slowing surface water flows, providing the opportunity for evapotranspiration and providing the opportunity for infiltration to ground. Both the interception and attenuation storage requirements of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) will be sufficiently met.

The SuDS features that have been identified as for the Proposed Development are as follows:

- Swales;
- Bioretention Areas;
- Dry Basins and Wetlands; and,
- StormTech Attenuation Tanks

The combination of the above measures will provide for minimum (ca. 5mm) amount of interception storage. Further to these measures it is proposed that a hydrocarbon interceptor is installed upstream of the StormTech attenuation tank. Additionally, grit sumps will be provided upstream of hydrocarbon interceptors and grit chambers will be provided in all road gullies to capture grit high up in the treatment train.

2.4 Foul Drainage

Irish Water drainage records show that there is an existing foul sewer located in the N72 road, southwest of the site and it is proposed to connect the foul water drainage from the Proposed Development to this existing sewer.

The wastewater collection system is designed to ensure self-cleansing velocities will be achieved on all pipe runs. Manholes will be constructed on all pipe-runs at changes in sewer direction, changes in gradients, at significant sewer connections and at a maximum spacing of 90m for 226mm diameter pipes and above 75m for 150mm diameter pipes.

2.5 External Lighting

External lighting has been included as part of the Proposed Development, refer to the Outdoor Lighting report prepared by John Kellehar & Associates for more information. The site lighting has been designed to provide a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and moving vehicles, to deter anti-social behaviour and to limit the environmental impact of artificial lighting on existing flora and fauna in the area.

2.6 Site Access

The site is accessed through the existing Aldridge Heights residential area. It is proposed to include cycle routes through the Proposed Development, with public road crossings located to suit Cork County Council's Active Travel/Greenway Plans in the area. It is also proposed to improve the overall

pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to facilitate enhanced permeability and interconnectivity with the Town Centre.

2.7 Landscaping

A comprehensive Landscape Plan has been prepared by Forestbird Design and submitted with the application.

In line with objectives outlined in the Kanturk-Mallow Municipal District Local Area Plan, to promote green landscapes in the area, a green infrastructure assessment was carried out by Forestbird Design and accompanies this report.

2.8 Construction

During the construction phases of the Proposed Development potential environmental effects will be short-term and localised. Nonetheless, all works will comply with the relevant legislation, construction industry guidelines and best practice in order to reduce potential environmental impacts associated with the works.

An outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) is submitted as part of this application. The oCEMP outlines the measures that are expected to be implemented follow current legislative requirements and best practice guidelines to control the environmental risks that may occur during works. A CEMP will be prepared by the appointed contactor upon engagement and prior to commencement of construction works. The implementation of environmental management measures outlined in the CEMP will ensure that the construction programme will be completed without significant adverse effects on the surrounding environment.

Working hours will be 8:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday inclusive, and Saturday mornings, subject to any conditions set down by An Bord Pleanála. Construction works outside these hours will be limited to works necessary for health and safety reasons, to protect the environment, or with prior agreement with the relevant with the Board. Refer to the oCEMP submitted with the planning application for further detail.

A Waste Management Plan will be prepared by the contractor upon engagement and prior to the commencement of construction works.

2.9 Ecological Monitoring

In the case that construction works do not commence within 12 months of the EIA that accompanies this application, it is recommended that the site be reassessed by a suitably qualified ecological supervisor prior to the commencement of construction works.

3. Methodology

3.1 Desk-based Studies

In undertaking this EIA Screening Assessment, a detailed desk-based study was completed, which included a review of the following information:

- Relevant legislation and guidance;
- The Cork County Council planning portal;
- Kanturk-Mallow Municipal District Local Area Plan;
- The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028;
- Environmental reports produced by DixonBrosnan in support of this application including a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA);
- The EPA Envision website was consulted to obtain details about the site and environmental receptors in the surrounding area.

3.2 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Legislative and Regulatory Context

EIA screening requirements derive from the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU). The amended Directive came into force on 16th May 2017 and regulations transposing it into national legislation were signed into law on 19th July 2018 as the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 [12]. There are no changes to the prescribed project types or EIA thresholds under the amended EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.

To determine whether it is required to undertake an EIA for the Proposed Development, the following legislation was consulted:

- The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended);
- EU Directive 2014/52/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment ('2014 EIA Directive');

In addition, the following guidance documents were reviewed:

- European Commission (June 2017), Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects. Guidance on Screening;
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (August 2003), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for Consent Authorities regarding Sub-threshold Development;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports, and;
- Office of the Planning Regulator, OPR Practice Note PN02: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening.

3.3 Field-based Studies

A habitats survey was undertaken on the 19th September 2022 by Sorcha Sheehy, ecologist. An updated habitat survey was carried out by Sorcha Sheehy on the 15th March 2023.

The habitat surveys undertaken utilised Fossitt's Guide to Habitats in Ireland. The surveys aimed to identify the extent and quality of habitats present on the site. The assessments were extended to also identify the potential for these habitats to support other features of nature conservation importance, such as species afforded legal protection under either Irish or European legislation.

4. Receiving Environment

This section describes the existing conditions at the site.

The site is comprised of an agricultural field of rough vegetation. The land is not actually farmed and is occasionally used illegally for the keeping of horses. The site is bounded by hedgerows to the north, south and east with a steep embankment of scrub and semi-mature trees to the west. The site is located within the development boundary of Mallow Town and is bounded by residential development to the south with agricultural uses to the north and east.

The site is accessed via the established and mature Aldridge Heights residential estate adjoining St. Joseph's Road, with the potential for future connectivity with the established Castle Grove residential estate. The N72 National Road bounds the site to the west with the South Caherduggan River running parallel to the N72 adjacent to the embankment and mature hedgerow/ treeline.

The site is greenfield and Table 4 of the EclA notes that it is of low ecological value in terms of habitat, comprising improved agricultural grassland which in the absence of active management has become slightly more diverse. Fig. 4.1 illustrates the areas of ecological value as the existing hedgerows and semi-mature woodland area that are to be retained as much as possible.



Figure 4.1: Habitats map extracted from EclA.

4.1.1 Flooding

Floodinfo.ie was reviewed on the 15/06/2023 and confirms that there are no flood events likely to occur on the site. Fig. 4.2 outlines rivers with high, medium and low risk of flooding and their extents local to the site. Flood risk from the South Caherduggan River is shown to the west of the site boundary, however, due to the steep elevation between the river and site, there is no risk of flooding within the site from the river.



Figure 4.2: Extracted from Flood Maps (Floodinfo.ie).

4.1.2 Natura Sites

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Areas (SPA) or National Parks adjoining the site, refer to Fig. 4.3. The nearest Natura 2000 sites are laid out in Table 4.1.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance
Blackwater River SAC	002170	900m
Kilcolman Bog	004095	11km

Table 4.1: Identified Natura 2000 sites.

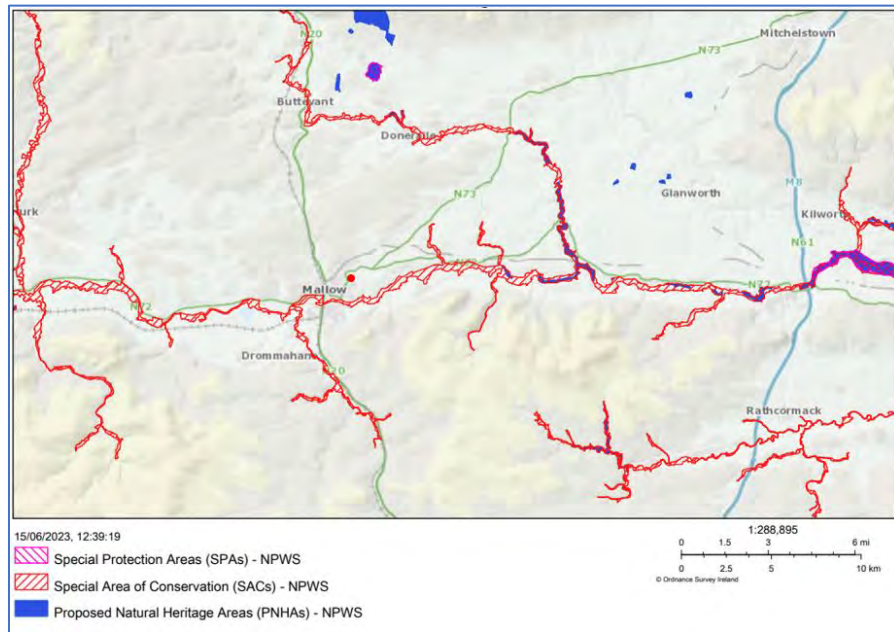


Figure 4.3: Proximity of the Site to Natura 2000 sites. Site indicated by red dot.

4.1.3 Noise

The site does not fall into a strategically noise mapped area for road noise, refer to Fig. 4.4. There are no major rail or airports within 35km of the site which warrant noise mapping under the Environmental Noise Directive.

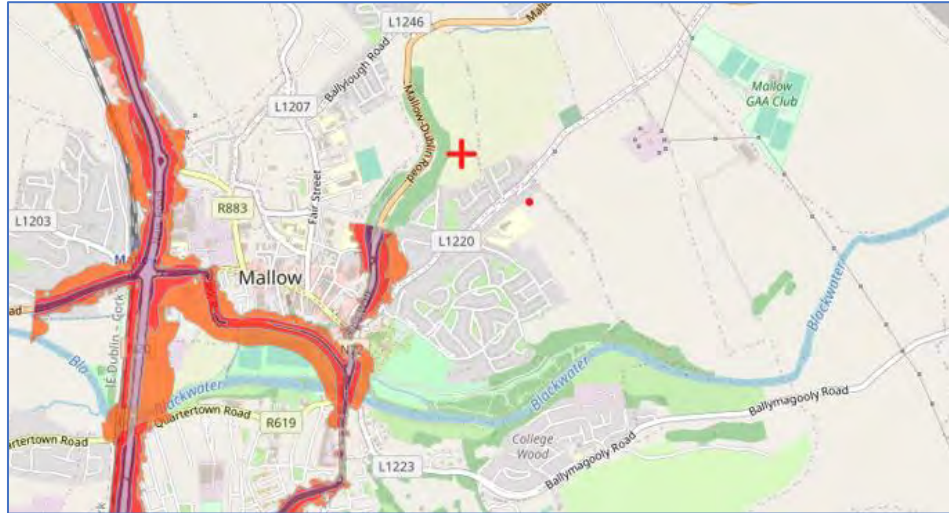


Figure 4.4: Extract from EPA Maps Lden Noise Major Roads. Site indicated by red cross.

4.1.4 Built Heritage

There is one recorded site located approximately 115m to the east of the site. The site (SMR Code: CO033-089) appears on the Sites and Monuments Record as an Enclosure. Fig.4.5 displays the location of nearby archaeological sites and sites that appear on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

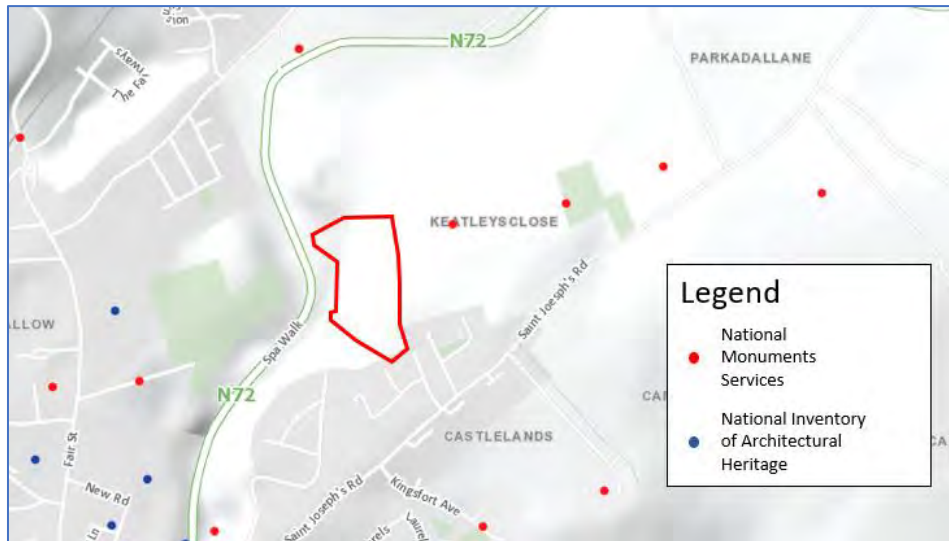


Figure 4.5: Extract from Historical Environmental Viewer. Site outlined in red.

5. EIA Screening

From an EIA perspective, proposed developments can generally be placed in one of the following two groups:

- Those that exceed the regulatory thresholds set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Act and require a mandatory EIA; and,
- Those that are sub-threshold and must be assessed on a case-by case basis to determine if they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Proposed developments not meeting the above criteria do not require EIA for proper planning consent.

5.1 Mandatory EIAR Screening

There are no activities listed within Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations (as amended) which relate to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development subject to this EIA Screening Report, therefore, does not fall within the scope of activities listed in Part 1 of Schedule 5 and a mandatory EIA, as classified under Annex I, is not required.

The relevant class of development within Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) which relate to the Proposed Development fall under section 10 'Infrastructure projects', as presented in Table 5.1 of which subsection 10(b)(i) and 10(b)(iv) are relevant.

Class		Applicability	Screening
Part 2 10(b)(i)	Construction of more than 500 dwelling units.	The proposed development involves the construction of residential development comprising 138 residential units. This does not meet the threshold for an EIA and therefore a mandatory EIA, as classified under Part 2 of Schedule 5 is not required.	EIA Not Required
Part 2 10(b)(iv)	Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)	The proposed development will cover a total site area of 4.52 ha, which is below the threshold of 10ha in the case of developments occurring in part of a built-up area. This does not meet the threshold for an EIA and therefore a mandatory EIA, as classified under Part 2 of Schedule 5, is not required	EIA Not Required

Table 5.1: Screening for Part 2 of Schedule 5

As indicated in Table 5.1, the number of units and site area both fall below the relevant threshold under Section 10, Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended). A mandatory EIA is therefore not required.

5.2 Sub-threshold Requirements for EIA

Developments which correspond to Schedule 5, Part 2 project types but are below the given threshold must be screened to determine whether they require an EIAR. This is done by consideration of criteria set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 7a of the Planning and Development Regulations.

While the mandatory requirements for developments are relatively straightforward, being based on readily observable and definable quantum's of type and scale, the discretionary (or sub-threshold) requirements are based on an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Project and will naturally vary on a case-by-case basis and require greater investigation and diligence in appraisal and precise determination depending on the complexity of the development and the proposed receiving environment.

Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) sets out the criteria for assessing whether or not a project will have "likely" and "significant" effects on the environment, in which case an EIA is required. These criteria include the following:

- Characteristics of proposed development;
- Location of proposed development; and,
- Characteristics of potential impacts.

These criteria, listed in Table 5.2, were considered for the proposed development under the topics recommended in EIAR guidance documents.

1. Characteristics of Proposed Development

The characteristics of proposed development, in particular –

- a) the size and design of the whole of the proposed development,
- b) cumulation with other existing development and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172 (1A) (b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment,
- c) the nature of any associated demolition works,
- d) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity
- e) the production of waste,
- f) pollution and nuisances,
- g) the risk of major accidents, and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge, and
- h) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with regard to –

- a) the existing and approved land use,
- b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground,
- c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - I. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - II. coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - III. mountain and forest areas;
 - IV. nature reserves and parks;
 - V. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and;
 - VI. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
 - VII. densely populated areas; VIII. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

3. Types and characteristics of potential impacts

The likely significant effects on the environment of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 (above), with regard to the impact of the project on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(i)(I) to (V) of the definition of 'environmental impact assessment report' in section 171A of the Act, taking into account—

- a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example, geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- b) the nature of the impact,
- c) the transboundary nature of the impact,
- d) the intensity and complexity of the impact,
- e) the probability of the impact,
- f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact,
- g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or development the subject of a consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1A) (b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment, and
- h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Table 5.2: EIA Screening Criteria as per Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

5.3 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Table 5.3 below details the development characteristics criteria, as set out in Schedule 7 (1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), considered and provides an assessment relating to the same.

Characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	Screening Assessment Summary / Conclusion	EIA Screened In / Out
<p>a) The size and design of the whole of the Proposed Development</p>	<p>The site has a total area of 4.25 ha, with a net developable area of 3.9 ha and is principally designed for residential dwellings in the form of houses and apartments. A crèche, access roads and landscaping have also been included in the design of the proposed development.</p> <p>The size of the development is small to medium scale and appropriate in the context of an existing urban environment and the key town of Mallow. The design of the development is consistent with existing residential developments in the environs. Therefore, a further assessment on potential impacts associated with the size and design of the proposed development is not warranted.</p>	<p>Screened out</p>
<p>b) The cumulation with other existing development and / or development the subject of consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1)(A) (b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment.</p>	<p>The proposed development is approximately 340m from the permitted development at Castlelands (Planning ref. 24/4519) comprising 99 residential units.</p> <p>There is potential that the construction period of the proposed development will overlap with other identified development.</p> <p>A cumulative total of 237 residential units would be developed, which remains below the threshold of 500 units required to undertake an EIA.</p> <p>A CEMP prepared by the contractor, is to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. Given the short-term nature of the construction works, their small-scale nature, separation distance, different immediate receptors and mitigation measures to be provided in the CEMP no significant cumulative effects are likely during the construction phase.</p> <p>There are established housing estates to the south and southeast of the site, including Aldridge Heights and Castle Grove.</p> <p>Volume 5 of the CDP notes a housing requirement of an additional 1,105 new units and has planned services and local infrastructure to accommodate this level of</p>	<p>Screened out</p>

Characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	Screening Assessment Summary / Conclusion	EIA Screened In / Out
	development. The operational phase of the proposed development will be within in planned targets for Mallow to achieve sustainable population growth. No significant cumulative effects are likely during the operational phase.	
c) The nature of any associated demolition works	There are no demolition works associated with the proposed development.	Screened out
d) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	<p>The proposed development will result in a land take of approximately 4.52 ha. This land is under the ownership of the County Council, currently unutilised, is within the urban area and is zoned for residential purposes.</p> <p>The applicant has committed to an outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP). A CEMP and a Waste Management Plan (WMP), prepared by the contactor upon engagement, will ensure these soils are managed accordingly.</p> <p>During the operation of the facility water will be required for the homes and creche. This has been agreed with the competent authority, Irish water, and a preliminary agreement is included with this application.</p> <p>Although the majority of the land proposed for this development is underutilised, a stream, hedgerows and riparian area are within the landholding. Detailed site assessments in relation to biodiversity have been undertaken on the site and the findings of these studies accompany this planning application.</p> <p>No significant effect is likely in respect of the use of natural resources.</p>	Screened out
e) The production of waste	<p>The construction phase of the proposed development will likely generate waste such as plastic wrappings, strips, containers, polystyrene and wooden pallets etc. A CEMP and WMP will be prepared by the contractor upon engagement and prior to the commencement of works of the proposed development to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are implemented onsite to reduce / manage waste throughout the construction phase.</p> <p>The operational phase of the proposed development will generally result in domestic waste which will be under a variety</p>	Screened out

Characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	Screening Assessment Summary / Conclusion	EIA Screened In / Out
	<p>of responsibility. A Taking-in-Charge drawing provided by WDG accompanying this application sets out responsible parties. Turning circles wide enough to allow refuse trucks onsite and bin storage areas have been included as part of the Masterplan to ensure appropriate services for waste are available onsite.</p> <p>It is not envisaged that emissions from heating systems and air conditioning units within the residential units onsite will exceed regulated standards for modern residential developments.</p> <p>No significant effect is likely in respect of the production of waste.</p>	
<p>f) Pollution and Nuisances</p>	<p>The proposed development will be a residential estate and will form a notable receptor for pollution and nuisance. No existing or proposed developments have been identified in the environs which are likely to give rise to pollution or nuisance impacts on future residents.</p> <p>Construction works will be subject to the standard environmental and health and safety controls. A CEMP, prepared by the contractor on engagement, will be followed during construction works, and standard planning conditions for the control of construction stage nuisance for the proposed development will adequately control such works on this site.</p> <p>The proposed development includes for the management of storm and foul waters from the site and landscaping to improve the aesthetic locally.</p> <p>No significant effect is likely in respect of pollution and nuisances.</p>	<p>Screened out</p>
<p>g) The risk of major accidents, and/ or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge.</p>	<p>Potential risks associated with the proposed development include uncontrolled release of pollutants to the surrounding environment via uncontrolled construction works.</p> <p>A CEMP, prepared by the contractor on engagement, will be followed during construction works, and standard planning conditions for the control of construction stage pollutants for the Proposed Development will adequately control such works on this site.</p>	<p>Screened out</p>

Characteristics of proposed development, in particular:	Screening Assessment Summary / Conclusion	EIA Screened In / Out
	<p>The national flood hazard mapping was consulted. Historical, reoccurring, floods were shown along the N72, which bounds the site to the west.</p> <p>Further details can be found in the Services Infrastructure Report submitted with this application.</p> <p>No significant effect is likely in respect of major accidents.</p>	
<p>h) The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).</p>	<p>Potential risks to human health could occur during the Construction Phase. This would largely be limited to those associated with traffic, noise and dust. A CEMP, prepared by the contractor on engagement and a Traffic and Transportation Assessment that accompanies this application include mitigation measures where necessary to ensure that the proposed development will not pose a risk to human health.</p> <p>It should be noted that the re-use of bulk material onsite will significantly reduce construction traffic onsite and therefore, minimise the potential impact on the surrounding road network users.</p> <p>No significant effect is likely in respect to risks to human health.</p>	<p>Screened out</p>

Table 5.3: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

5.4 Location of the Proposed Development

A description of the location of the proposed development, as set out in Schedule 7 (2) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the geographical area likely to be affected is required. Table 5.4 details the criteria considered and provides an assessment relating to same.

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to:	Screening Assessment	EIA Screened In / Out
a) the existing and approved land use	<p>The site is located on lands zoned for 'Residential'. The proposed development is in keeping with this land use designation.</p> <p>Further assessment on potential impacts in the context of an EIA is not warranted.</p>	Screened out
b) the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water, biodiversity) in the area and its underground	<p>The proposed development will not have a significant impact on the quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area.</p> <p>No significant impacts related to the proposed development are predicted with the best practice and mitigation measures outlined in the NIS and EclA in place and therefore, an EIA is not warranted in this regard.</p>	Screened out
c) The cumulation with other existing development and / or development the subject of consent for proposed development for the purposes of section 172(1)(A) (b) of the Act and/or development the subject of any development consent for the purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive by or under any other enactment.	<p>There are no current or previous plans or projects in the immediate vicinity that are considered likely in-combination with the proposed development to result in significant impacts on the Natura 2000 sites following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. For further information refer to the NIS submitted with this application.</p>	Screened out
<p>d) The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:</p> <p>i. wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;</p>	<p>The proposed development does not contain or is not likely to affect any of the following criteria / areas: (ii), (iii), (iv), (vi) and (vii). An examination of the potential effects on the remaining criteria is undertaken below.</p>	Screened out

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the proposed development, with particular regard to:	Screening Assessment	EIA Screened In / Out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. coastal zones and the marine environment; iii. mountain and forest areas, iv. nature reserves and parks, v. areas classified or protected under legislation, including Natura 2000 areas designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive and; vi. areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the European Union and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure; vii. densely populated areas; viii. landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance 	<p>(i) An EclA was prepared for the proposed development to identify the extent and quality of the habitats present on the site. The EclA concluded that following the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, there would be no adverse effect on surface water quality within and surrounding the site and therefore, it can be stated that no wetlands, riparian areas or river mouths will be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>(v) An NIS has been undertaken to determine the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the proposed development in the context of the conservation objectives of European designated sites. The NIS concluded that there were no adverse effects expected at the SAC and SPA Sites as a result of the proposed development following mitigation.</p> <p>(viii) There is one NMS site located c. 115m to the east of the proposed development. The site is noted as an enclosure (NMS code C0033-089).</p> <p>Further assessment on potential impacts in the context of an EIA is not warranted.</p>	

Table 5.4: Location of Proposed Development

5.5 Types & Characteristics of Potential Impacts

The matrix provided in Appendix A describes the characteristics with reference to the EPA (2022) Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. The potential impacts are considered having regard to the criteria set out in Section 3 of Schedule 7 and the OPR Practice Note 02 on EIA Screenings.

The development is fully within Cork County and there will be no transboundary impacts associated with the proposed development. Accordingly, transboundary impacts, and intensity and complexity of impacts are not included within the matrix.

The types and characteristics of possible effects are set out in the Matrix in Appendix A. A summary of the possible effects are as follows:

- Loss of open space character in the landscape as a result of the development of a greenfield site.
- Surface water drainage during the construction and operation phases will be attenuated onsite via a hydrocarbon interceptor to allow for silt or sediment settlement prior to controlled release via attenuation tanks and soakaways.
- There may be short term impacts associated from noise, dust and traffic associated with the construction phase of the development.
- The stripping of topsoil and removal of small amounts of Construction waste will be managed in accordance with the submitted Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- There may be short term traffic impacts associated with the construction phase of the development.
- There may be short term material asset impacts relating to construction waste associated with the construction phase of the development.
- There may be short term impacts relating to population and human health resulting from noise, dust and traffic associated with the construction phase of the development.
- Potential for impact to existing ecology/habitats present on site due to the stripping of topsoil and noise / vibration during construction phase.
- Damage to unrecorded subsurface archaeological features that may exist within the site due to below ground construction works.

No significant negative impacts have been identified through the analysis undertaken in Appendix A. Accordingly a sub-threshold EIA is not required having regard to Schedule 7 (3).

6. Conclusion

This EIA Screening assessment report has reviewed the potential for the Proposed development of 138 residential units and associated works at Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork to be considered as an EIA development.

Based on the findings of this EIA screening assessment, the Proposed Development does not require a mandatory EIAR, nor does it meet the criteria under Schedule 7 where a sub-threshold EIA would be warranted.

Therefore, there is no requirement to submit an EIAR in support of the planning application for the Proposed Development.

Appendix A

Matrix: Type and Characteristics of the potential Impact

Characteristic	Possible Effect	Mitigation Measures to avoid or reduce a significant effect.	Extent	Nature	Significance	Probability	Duration	Cumulative
Landscape	Loss of open space character as a result of development of greenfield area	Landscaping plan retains mature trees and hedgerows where possible	Local	Imperceptible	Not Significant	Unlikely	Permanent	-
Water	Surface water drainage during construction and operation phases will be attenuated onsite via a hydrocarbon interceptor to allow for silt or sediment settlement prior to controlled release via attenuation tanks and soakaways.	A Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed in writing with Council prior to commencement of development.	Local	Neutral	Not Significant	Low	Permanent	-
Air and Climate	There may be short term impacts associated from noise, dust and traffic associated with	A Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed in writing with Council prior to	Local	Negative	Not Significant	Likely	Short Term	Potential minor cumulative impact with the

Characteristic	Possible Effect	Mitigation Measures to avoid or reduce a significant effect.	Extent	Nature	Significance	Probability	Duration	Cumulative
	the construction phase of the development.	commencement of development.						Castlelands development.
Land and Soils	The stripping of topsoil and removal of small amounts of Construction waste will be managed in accordance with the submitted Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.	A Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed in writing with Council prior to commencement of development.	Local	Neutral	Minor	Likely	Permanent	-
Traffic	There may be short term impacts associated with the construction phase of the development.	A Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed in writing with Council prior to commencement of development.	Local	Negative	Minor	Likely	Short Term (Construction Phase) Permanent (Operational Phase)	-
Material Assets (Built)	There may be short term impacts associated with the construction	Under the CEMP, the contractor will appoint a Construction Waste	Local	Neutral	Minor	Likely	Short Term	-

Characteristic	Possible Effect	Mitigation Measures to avoid or reduce a significant effect.	Extent	Nature	Significance	Probability	Duration	Cumulative
Services / Waste)	phase of the development.	Co-ordinator who will be responsible for implementing the construction waste management plan (CWMP)						
Population & Human Health	There may be short term impacts associated from noise, dust and traffic associated with the construction phase of the development. The site within an urban environment and no significant operations	Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed in writing with Council prior to commencement of development.	Local	Negative	Minor	Likely	Short Term	Potential minor cumulative impact with the Castlelands development.
Biodiversity	Potential for impact to existing ecology/habitats present on site due to the stripping of topsoil and noise / vibration	An ecological clerk of works (ECoW) will undertake environmental site inspections as required during the works, to ensure that	Local	Negative	Not Significant	Likely	Short Term	-

Characteristic	Possible Effect	Mitigation Measures to avoid or reduce a significant effect.	Extent	Nature	Significance	Probability	Duration	Cumulative
	during construction phase	they will be completed in line with the mitigation measures detailed within the EclA, and CEMP						
Heritage	Damage to unrecorded subsurface archaeological features that may exist within the site	2 phases of Archaeological testing have been carried out ensuring a comprehensive assessment	Site	Neutral	Imperceptible	Unlikely	Permanent	-

LAPS Section
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

August 2024

Re: Section 177AE application for the construction of 138 affordable and social residential units on a developable area of 3.9ha on a total site area of 4.52ha, comprising a mix of 1,2,3 and 4-bed semi-detached, townhouse, and duplex/apartment units, a 42-place creche, and all associated ancillary development and works including one vehicular entrance, parking, footpaths, cycle paths, bike and bin stores, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas. A Natura Impact Assessment accompanies the application.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We act on behalf of the applicant, Cork County Council, and wish to submit proposals under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for the Section 177AE development of 138 residential units on a developable area of 3.9ha on a total site area of 4.52ha, comprising 4 four-bed semi-detached houses, 14 three-bed semi-detached houses, 20 three-bed townhouses, 36 two-bed townhouses, 32 two-bed first-floor apartments, 32 one-bed ground-floor apartments, one 42-place creche and all associated ancillary development and works including one vehicular entrance, parking, footpaths, cycle paths, bike and bin stores, parking, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas at lands at Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork.

The application is subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) necessitating the preparation of a Natura Impact Assessment (NIS). An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been undertaken by McCUTCHEON HALLEY Planning Consultants that established that the proposed development does not require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), nor does it meet the criteria where a sub-threshold EIA would be warranted. The EIA screening also accompanies this application.

The proposed development, Ard an Ghleanna, will provide 138 much needed new social and affordable residential dwellings to meet a mixture of housing solutions with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised site zoned for residential development within the existing built footprint of Mallow Town.

The scheme has been carefully designed by a multidisciplinary team to ensure a high-quality development that is consistent with all the relevant national, regional and local policies. It will deliver a high-quality affordable and social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing urban environment and sensitive to the natural environment and cultural heritage of the immediate surrounds, achieving a medium-high density housing scheme that will help address the current housing shortages

in a highly desirable key town in North Cork in an accessible location with all amenities, facilities and services within a short walking distance of the development.

A full list of documents and drawings that accompany this application can be found appended to this cover letter.

I trust the enclosed details are sufficient to enable the Council to proceed with a successful Section 179A application and we look forward to receiving a response in due course. Should you require any further details or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Williamson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Williamson

McCutcheon Halley

Appendix 1: Schedule of Documents and Drawings

In addition to the original press notice, a set of two identical hard copies and one soft copy of the application documents have been lodged with this submission. Each pack, of which this is one, contains one of each of the following:

- **Cover Letter** by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants;
- **Press Notice**
- **Site Notice**
- **Notice to Statutory Bodies, including list of bodies notified**
- **Letter of Consent** from Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency
- **Planning Statement** by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants
- **EIA Screening Report** by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants
- **Architectural Design Statement** by Deady Gahan Architects
- **Universal Design Statement** by Deady Gahan Architects
- **Housing Quality Assessment & Schedule of Accommodation** by Deady Gahan Architects
- **Building Life-Cycle Report** by Deady Gahan Architects
- **Site Location Maps** prepared by Deady Gahan Architects
- **Architectural Drawings** prepared by Deady Gahan Architects
 - Site Layout Plan at 1:500
 - Site Sections at 1:500
 - Floor Plans, Elevations and Sections at 1:100
 - Boundary Treatments @ 1:500
 - Boundary Details @ 1:50
 - Creche plans, sections and elevations @ 1:100
- **Engineering Drawings** prepared by Walsh Design Group
- **Civil Engineering Report** by Walsh Design Group
- **Planning Stage Construction Environmental Management Plan** by Walsh Design Group
- **Archaeological Testing Report** by Lane Purcell Archaeology
- **Archaeological Assessment** by Lane Purcell Archaeology
- **Geophysical Investigation** by Apex Geophysics
- **Landscape Development Package** by Forestbird Design
- **Outdoor Lighting Report** by John Kelleher Associates
- **Outdoor Lighting Drawings** by John Kelleher Associates
- **EV Charging Services Drawing** by John Kelleher Associates
- **AA Screening and NIS Report** by Dixon Brosnan
- **Ecological Impact Assessment** by Dixon Brosnan
- **Traffic and Transport Assessment** by Martin Hanley Consulting Engineers
- **Residential Travel Plan** by Martin Hanley Consulting Engineers
- **Signed Road Safety Audit** by Road Safety Matters
- **Photo Montage & 3D Images** by G-Net 3D

Planning Statement

For Development at

on behalf of Cork County Council

July 2024



McCutcheon Halley
CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Document Control Sheet

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Site Context and Development Description	4
2.1	Site Context	4
2.2	Proposed Development	5
3.	Policy Context	9
3.1	National Planning Framework	9
3.2	Regional Spatial Economic Strategy	10
3.3	Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028	10
3.4	Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	16
3.5	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets	17
3.6	Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines	17
3.7	Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001	17
4.	Planning History	18
5.	Assessment of Proposal	20
5.1	Layout and Design	20
6.	Housing Design	22
7.	Boundary Treatments	25
7.1	Recreation, Amenity, Open Space & Biodiversity	25
8.	Biodiversity, Recreation & Amenity Approach	26
9.	Open Space Hierarchy	27
10.	Amenity/Open Space	28
10.1	Traffic and Access	28
10.1.1	Road Safety Audit	29
10.2	Public Transport	31
11.	Bus Service	31
12.	Train Service	32
12.1	Bin & Bike Storage	33
12.2	Car Parking requirements	33
12.3	Water & Wastewater	34
13.	Childcare provision	35
14.	Natura Impact Statement	38
15.	Environmental Assessment	39
16.	Conclusion	40

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants to accompany an application to An Bord Pleanála for a Section 177AE application on behalf of Cork County Council for a proposed affordable and social housing scheme.

The proposed development is for the construction of 138 affordable and social residential units on a total site area of 4.52ha, comprising a mix of 1,2,3 and 4-bed semi-detached, townhouse, and duplex/apartment units, a 42-place creche, and all associated ancillary development and works including one vehicular entrance, parking, footpaths, cycle paths, bike and bin stores, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas at Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork. The net developable area of the site is 3.9 ha.

A design team with extensive experience in residential applications has been appointed by the applicant including McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants, Walsh Design Group Consulting Engineers and Deady Gahan Architects while additional expertise was also secured in relation to Ecology/Environment (Dixon Brosnan Environmental Consultants), Landscaping and Environmental Specialist (Forestbird Design), Building Services Engineers (Kelleher & Associates) and archaeology/heritage (Lane Purcell Archaeology) to ensure a high-quality design and a robust and comprehensive application.

A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared by Dixon Brosnan in respect of the proposed development and accompanies this application.

The proposed development will see the sustainable expansion of Mallow, in line with dwelling targets set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. The design and development of the proposed scheme has been informed by detailed pre-planning discussions with Cork County Council's Planning, Architectural and Engineering Departments. Key design aspects have been shaped directly by feedback and comments received from the council, with the design and in particular the layout having been amended and altered throughout the design process.

The Planning and Design Statement report amalgamates the planning statement and the design statement into a single cohesive document which has been structured as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Site Context & Development Description
3. Planning Policy Context
4. Planning History
5. Assessment
6. Design Approach
7. Conclusion

2. Site Context and Development Description

2.1 Site Context

The site is located in the townland of Spaglen, northeast of Mallow Town Centre, Co. Cork (see fig. 1), and comprises an agricultural field of rough vegetation. The land is not actually farmed. It is, however, occasionally illegally used for keeping horses. The site is bounded by hedgerows to the north, south and east with a steep embankment of scrub and semi-mature trees to the west. The site is located within the development boundary of Mallow Town and adjoins residential development to the south with agricultural uses to the north and east.

The site is accessed via the established and mature Aldridge Heights residential estate adjoining St. Joseph's Road with the potential for future pedestrian/cycle connectivity with the established Castle Grove residential area. The South Caherduggan River bounds the site to the west, running parallel to the N72, adjacent to the embankment and mature hedgerow/treeline.



Figure 1: Site location

The site is located approximately 1km to the northeast of Mallow town centre. The site is located 1.6km from Mallow Train Station and the N74 and is located within walking distance of several bus stops.

The area has a number of local services located within proximity of the site including schools, creches and medical facilities. A number of convenience stores are also located within a 5-kilometre radius of the site.

The site is in close proximity of the 243 (Cork -Mallow) bus route which runs along the N74. This bus service is frequent and operates 6-days per week between 5.55am and 5.30pm at 50-minute intervals throughout the day.

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development will function as a natural extension to the town by consolidating development in the area and ensuring the retention of a compact settlement.

The proposed development will consist of:

- a) The construction of 138 residential units, including 4 four-bed semi-detached houses, 14 three-bed semi-detached houses, 20 three-bed townhouses, 36 two-bed town houses, 32 two-bed apartments, and 32 one-bed apartments and 1 creche;
- b) A total of 183 car parking spaces are provided as part of the proposed development, including nine spaces designated for limited mobility use and 8 spaces designated for visitor parking.
- c) All associated ancillary development including a vehicular entrance, the provision of landscaping and amenity areas, footpaths, cycle paths, lighting, drainage, boundary treatments, bike and bin storage;

The proposed development will see the extension of the Mallow residential area and will promote compact growth in a location where the existing urban footprint/town has already extended beyond the site and where it can be served by public transport, walking and cycling. An existing Part 8 permission for road and pedestrian infrastructure improvements along a section of St. Joseph's Road from Aldworth heights to Kingsfort Avenue will be completed prior to commencement of the subject development to promote active travel and a walkable community.

The proposal seeks to develop 138 residential dwellings on a developable area of 3.9ha within a 4.52ha site (see fig. 2). The proposed development comprises mixed residential typology on a green field site adjoining an existing residential area. The proposed residential development is consistent with the zoning objectives for the site, providing much needed affordable and social housing options in the Key Town of Mallow. All units comply with the standards set out in the CDP, and guidance provided set out in the Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland (NDA, 2015), Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2022) and Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines.



Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout with Character Area Layout (insert)

The site is currently under-utilised, comprising open agricultural land of low ecological value between three separate and distinct residential developments. The proposed development will not result in the removal or interference with habitats that support local biodiversity, with the retention of mature trees, existing boundary hedgerows and communal open green spaces included as part of the overall proposal.

An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) and Test Trenching has been carried out by a Lane Purcell Archaeological Services and identified several features of archaeological interest to the northwest of the site and towards the entrance. The layout design has incorporated the features into the open space to the northwest and to facilitate their protection. The features to the entrance will be recorded and removed from site by suitably qualified archaeologists.

The overall approach of the proposed development at Ard an Ghleanna will secure the delivery of much needed new affordable and social homes in a central location in Mallow, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon footprint. The proposed development makes use of under-utilised land within the existing built envelope of Mallow and includes the provision of upgrades to the existing pedestrian infrastructure, improving the connectivity to the town centre with links to

public transport, employment areas, recreation, community facilities and schools benefitting both existing and future residents.

The proposed dwellings offer a broad range of accommodation choice, in terms of both unit size and configuration. The housing mix will comprise four-bed semi-detached houses, two and three-bed town houses and one and two-bed apartments and duplexes. It is proposed to introduce through this application a wider range of dwelling types and sizes to provide solutions for more diverse housing needs and permit a greater level of mobility within the local area and which encourage aging in place. A number of universal design units are also provided for mobility restricted residents. Residential units meet or exceed the standards set out the County Development Plan and in Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2022.

The proposal is for 138 residential units within a developable area of 3.9ha, resulting in a density of 35.4 units/ha in line with the Medium Density A category, which is consistent with the population thresholds set out in the CDP and the growth targets set for Mallow. The design provides for 26% of the site as open space. Due to archaeological finds to the northwest of the site that will remain in situ, 15% of the site is designated as useable open space. This will include a series of nature-based SUDs measures and inclusive landscaped communal amenity spaces.

The proposed site layout is developed around a parallel set of two primary local streets leading off an entrance road accessed from the Aldworth Heights estate with a third northern street parallel to the northern boundary. Vehicular routes through the site will be calmed through various design measures, including alignment, to reduce traffic speed, with horizontal and vertical deflections introduced as required. Secondary local streets provide vehicular access points to lands zoned as Residential Reserve for future expansion to the north and northeast are located on the northern street with further potential future pedestrian connections along the eastern boundary. 3m footpaths/cycle paths throughout the development provide a pedestrian/active travel focus and permeable residential area.

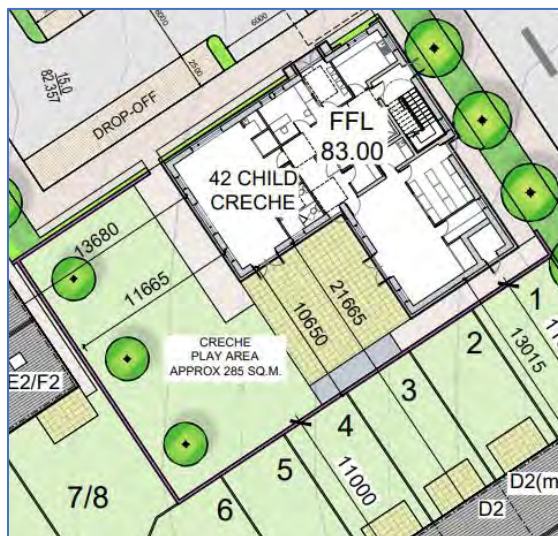


Figure 3: Extract from Creche Site Plan

The proposed development also includes a 42-place childcare facility located towards the entrance of the proposed scheme. A childcare provision assessment indicates that this is more than sufficient to cater for the requirements generated by the proposed development and takes account for the financial viability of a childcare operator. The proposed creche comprises a two-storey purpose built

childcare facility, external play area and a through-flow car park (see fig. 3). The design and the location of the creche has been carefully considered in relation to how it fits within the proposed development in order to create a feature building that is close to the entrance (see fig. 4). Safety has been a key consideration in the design and layout, and appropriate separation distances have been applied, particularly with regards to the external play area. There is no direct route between the creche and the vehicular roads. Parking comprises a mixture of eight parking spaces, including three 3m-wide spaces and a drop-off area and is considered adequate to accommodate both staff and visitors.



Figure 4: 3D View of proposed Creche

The retention of the existing hedgerows along the site boundaries and the semi-mature trees on the western embankment will result in minimal impact on the existing ecology. Where trees/hedgerows are to be removed, it is proposed that new trees/hedgerows will be reinstated. The inclusion of nature-based solutions to urban drainage such as bio-swales will deliver an overall biodiversity net gain.

An existing Part 8 provides for upgrades to the pedestrian infrastructure from the junction of Aldworth Heights and St. Joseph's Road to the junction of St. Joseph's Road and the N72 as part of the development works. These infrastructure upgrades will provide improved permeability of the existing and proposed residential development as well as enhanced connectivity with the town centre, access to the Mallow Parks Network and the potential future neighbourhood centre. It is not anticipated to commence construction of the residential development until the Part 8 infrastructure improvements have been completed to facilitate infrastructure-led development.

3. Policy Context

The town of Mallow is classified as a 'Key Town' under the RSES and as a Main Town in the Kanturk Mallow Municipal District of North Cork, it is recognised in Volume 3 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP) as a major focus of employment and populations growth. The CDP outlines a target population for Mallow as 15,351 within the lifetime of the Plan, representing a population growth of 2,892 people on the 2016 census figure. Table 3.2.3 of Volume 3 of the CDP (fig. 5) sets out requirements for an additional 1,105 new housing units to accommodate the forecast growth.

Name	Housing Requirement			Housing Supply		
	Population Census 2016	Population Target (to 2028)	New Units Required (to 2028)	Housing Supply from Residential and Mixed-Use Zoning including Compact Growth Sites	Housing Supply from Residential Additional Provision Sites	Housing Supply from Residential Reserve Sites
Mallow	12,459	15,351	1,105	1,105	102	1,785

Figure 5: Extract of Table 3.2.3 of the CDP, Volume 3

The following outlines the relevant planning policy context for the proposed development. The proposed development is subject to the following policy documents, as set out by Cork County Council.

3.1 National Planning Framework

The Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, on behalf of the Government, has prepared and published the finalised National Planning Framework (NPF) under Project Ireland 2040, the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of our country.

One of the ultimate objectives of the NPF is to guide the future development of Ireland, taking into account a projected 1 million increase in the Country's population, the need to create 660,000 additional jobs to achieve full employment and a need for 550,000 more homes by 2040.

National Policy Objective 6 states:

...cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area" should be regenerated and rejuvenated.

Section 6.6 on 'Housing' sets out a number of national core principles to guide the delivery of future housing, in particular, prioritising the location of new

housing provision in existing settlements as a means to maximise a better quality of life for people through accessing services, ensuring a more efficient use of land and allowing for greater integration with existing infrastructure.

National Policy Objective 33 states that the NPF:

“Priorities the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location”.

3.2 Regional Spatial Economic Strategy

A key component of the RSES is to strengthen the settlement structure of the Region and to capitalise on the individual and collective strengths of the three cities, the metropolitan areas, and the strong network of towns, villages and rural communities.

The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) identifies Mallow as a key town, noted for being a strategically located urban centre with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context.

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 176 seeks to attain sustainable compact settlements with the “10 minute” city and town concepts whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services. RPO 179 promotes a more diverse and socially inclusive society. RPO 180 seeks to improve equal access through universal design for housing, recreational facilities and the public realm. RPO 182 supports Smart Aging and the National Positive Aging policies to meet the needs and opportunities of an aging population.

In addition to the compact development objectives, policy objectives RPO 122, and RPO 124 promote sustainable urban drainage solutions and green infrastructure within development.

3.3 Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Land Use Zoning

The site is located within the townland of Spaglen, Mallow, Co. Cork on lands zoned as **Residential** (see fig. 6). The objective for this zoning is primarily for housing development but may also include a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities. These are uses that benefit from close relationships to the immediate community and have high standards of amenity, such as creches, open space, recreation and amenity spaces. **Specific Objective MW-R-08** provides for the additional provision of **Medium A Density Residential Development**.

The site borders zones for ‘Existing Residential’ to the south and the east with ‘Residential Reserve’ to the north and east and ‘Green Infrastructure’ to the west. A ‘Greenbelt’ zone is located approximately 300m to the east of the Site.

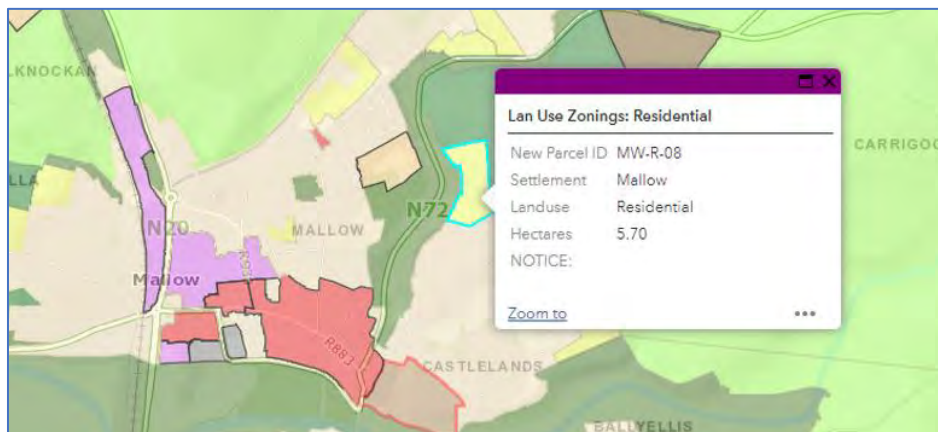


Figure 6: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, Volume 6: Maps

Objective PL 3-1: Building Design, Movement and Quality of the Public Realm:

Support measures to improve building design quality, accessibility and movement including investment in quality public realm across the settlement network of the County

Objective PL 3-3: Delivering Quality and Inclusive Places:

In assessing future development proposals the Plan will implement and promote a series of aims outlined in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and accompanying Urban Design Manual and the Design Standards for New Apartments, which seek to create high quality inclusive places.

Objective HOU 4-6: Housing Mix:

a) Secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County as a whole to meet the needs of the likely future population across all age groups in accordance with the guidance set out in the Joint Housing Strategy and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

b) Require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multi-unit residential development in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective. The Statement of Housing Mix should include proposals for the provision of suitable housing for older people and the disabled in the area.

Objective HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land (fig. 7):

Sets out the new density categories in the CDP and Table 4.1 (fig. 8) sets out the new tiered density approach recommended to respond to the diverse settlement scales within the County's hierarchy:

County Development Plan Objective			
HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land			
	Min Net Density	Max Net Density	Comment
Medium A	30	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable to suburban/greenfield lands of the larger settlements with a population > 5,000 and those planned to grow >5,000 population; In towns with an existing/ planned high quality public transport service a minimum density of 35 units/ ha is recommended. On former Institutional lands which may require concentration of development in certain areas. A minimum of 20% public open space is required at these locations. This category would be the highest density category applicable to the smaller settlements (< 5,000 in population), and would generally apply to central sites within the core of such settlements, unless otherwise stated or where a higher density approach accords with the existing pattern of development; Must include a broad range of unit typologies and normally involves a combination of unit formats including a higher proportion of terraced units and/or apartment type units.

Figure 7: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Table 4.1: Settlement Density Location Guide					
Settlement Type	Settlement	High (50 units/ha+)	Medium A (30-50 units/ha)	Medium B (20-35 units/ha)	Medium C (5-20 units/ ha)
Key Towns* and Large Towns (>5,000 population)	Mallow Clonakilty^		Generally applicable for future development	May be applicable in a limited number of sensitive locations.	
	Bandon Fermoy Kinsale Youghal Charleville^				

Figure 8: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Objective SC 6-4: Social and Community Infrastructure Provision:

“Support and facilitate the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to population targets for the area and in accordance with the Childcare Facilities guidelines for Local Authorities 2001 and regard to the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Centres 2019.”

Objective WM 11-10: Surface Water, SuDS and Water Sensitive Urban Design:

a) Require that all new developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Efforts should be taken to limit the extent of hard surfacing and impermeable paving.

b) Encourage the application of a Water Sensitive Urban Design approach in the design of new development or other urban interventions. Opportunities to contribute to, protect or re-enforce existing green infrastructure corridors or assets should be maximised.

c) *Optimise and maximise the application of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate flood risk, enhance biodiversity, protect and enhance visual and recreational amenity; all in the most innovative and creative manner appropriate and in accordance with best practices. Proposals should demonstrate that due consideration has been given to nature-based solutions in the first instance in arriving at the preferred SuDS solution for any development.*

Objective TM 12-9: Parking:

Secure the appropriate delivery of car parking and bicycle spaces and facilities in line with the Standards set out in Section 12.24 of this document:

Table 12.6 of the CDP (fig. 9) outlines the maximum provision for car parking in residential developments as 2 spaces per dwelling unit and 1.25 spaces per apartment.

Table 12.6: Car Parking Requirements for New Developments (Maximum per sq. m.)	
Development Type	Parking Provision Requirement
Residential: Dwelling houses	2 spaces per dwelling unit
Residential: Apartments	1.25 spaces per apartment unit

Figure 9: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Table 12.8 of the CDP (fig. 10) outlines the minimum cycle parking provision for residential development as 1 space per bedroom for apartments with an addition space per 2 units for short stay (visitor) parking and 1.2 spaces per house.

Table 12.8: Cycle parking for residential development (Minimum)		
Residential Development type	1 long stay parking space per:	1 short stay (visitor) parking space per:
Apartments	1 bedroom	2 units
Houses	1 unit	5 units

Figure 10: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Objective TM 12-12: EV Charging:

All residential development should be constructed to be capable of accommodating future charging points as required within the curtilage of the dwelling where possible.

Objective GI 14-3: Green Infrastructure and Development:

a) *Require new development and redevelopment proposals, to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green and blue infrastructure of the local area in terms of the design, layout and landscaping of development proposals.*

b) *Require all development to submit a green infrastructure statement outlining how the proposal contributes to green and blue infrastructure both within its environs as well as within the wider settlement or rural area. Larger developments (multiple residential developments including Part 8 applications, retail, industrial, mineral extraction, etc) will be expected to prepare a Landscape/ Green (and Blue) Infrastructure Plan including a Landscape Design Rationale. This Plan should identify environmental assets and include proposals which protect, manage and develop green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner.*

Objective GI 14-6: Public/Private Open Space Provision:

a) *Public Open Space within Residential Development shall be provided in accordance with the standards contained in Cork County Council's Interim Recreation & Amenity Policy (2019) and any successor policy, the "Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" and "Making Places: a design guide for residential estate development. Cork County Council Planning Guidance and Standards Series Number 2".*

b) *Promote the provision of high quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open space and promote linking of new open spaces with existing spaces to form a green infrastructure network.*

c) *Apply the standards for private open space provision contained in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG 2009) and Cork County Council's Design Guidelines for Residential Estate Development. With regard to apartment developments, the guidelines on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments will apply.*

Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development:

Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by:

b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments;

c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments;

d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;

Objective HE 16-2: Protection of Archaeological Sites and Monuments:

Secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments and their setting included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (see www.archaeology.ie) and the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally.

General Objective for Mallow MW-GO-01:

Plan for development to enable Mallow to achieve its target population to 15,351 persons. Provide a balance between the provision of housing and employment uses in the town, to support Mallow's development as an integrated live/work destination.

General Objective for Mallow MW-GO-03:

The green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape assets of Mallow include its river corridors, mature trees, wetlands, woodlands and the River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation. New development should be sensitively designed and planned to provide for the protection of these features and will only be permitted where it is shown that it is compatible with the requirements of nature conservation directives and with environmental, biodiversity and landscape protection policies.

General Objective for Mallow MW-GO-04:

All new development will need to make provision for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provide adequate storm water infrastructure.

Surface water Management and Disposal should be planned in an integrated way in consideration with land use, water quality, amenity and habitat enhancements as appropriate.

General Objective for Mallow MW-GO-08:

Improve and enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity throughout the town particularly north / south across the river and east / west across the railway line and N20.

3.4 Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The Design Standards for New Apartments 2022 notes that apartments continue to be an increasingly common form of housing in Ireland’s urban areas. The Guidelines note that the average national household size is decreasing and that apartments can provide appropriate housing for smaller households.

Section 2.4 identifies three different locations which are considered suitable for apartment development. Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations, such as the subject site, are considered generally suitable for residential developments that will include a minority of apartments at low-medium densities.

The Guidelines outline Specific Planning Policy Requirements to guide the development of apartments. SPPR 3 sets out the minimum floor area for one-bed apartments as 45m² and 73m² for two-bed apartments. SPPR 4 requires a minimum of 50% dual aspect units in suburban or intermediate locations. SPPR 5 stipulates a minimum of 2.7m floor to ceiling heights in ground floor apartments.

Section 4 outlines guidance concerning communal facilities in apartments, with access, refuse storage, bike and car parking and communal amenity space having relevance to the subject proposal.

Section 4.7 of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines provides the following guidance in relation to studio and one-bedroom units:

Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), in respect of which review is to be progressed, and which recommended the provision of one child-care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms.

Appendix 1 of the Guidelines sets out minimum floor areas and standards for apartment development.

3.5 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The holistic approach of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets to understand and design the streets as part of the open space network was applied to the proposed development with the intention to promote sustainable transport and encourage social activities and active neighbourhoods.

The four design principles of DMURS are:

- Connected Networks
- Multi-Functional Streets
- Pedestrian Focus
- Multidisciplinary Approach

These design principles have been integrated into the design of the proposed scheme, as discussed in section 5.3.

3.6 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities were published in January 2024.

The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied.

The standards set out in the Guidelines have been incorporated into the design of the proposed scheme, as discussed in section 5.5.

3.7 Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001

Appendix 2 of the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas (Paragraphs 2.4 and 3.3.1 refer). One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The Guidance acknowledges that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

The results of any childcare needs analysis carried out as part of a county childcare strategy should also be considered.

Appendix 2 also states that the threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.

4. Planning History

The site is located in the townland of Spaglen, northeast of Mallow Town Centre, Co. Cork. There are no previous planning applications related to the site as shown in fig. 11, which was extracted from the Cork County Online Planning Register, with the approximate location of the proposed site in red.

A Part 8 road realignment and pedestrian infrastructure enhancements at St. Josephs, Aldworth Heights Junction was approved in 2007.

Other significant planning developments located near the site are included in fig.12.

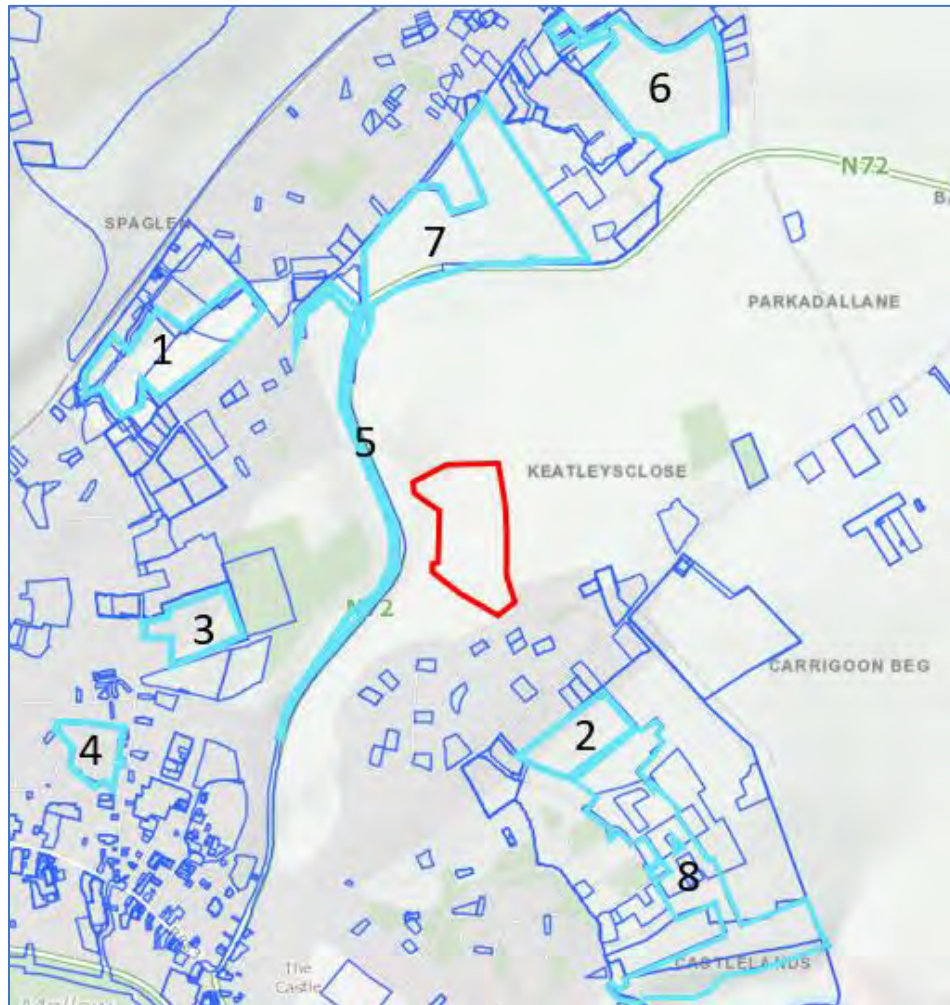


Figure 11: Extract from Cork County Online Register, approximate boundaries highlighted.

No.	Ref	Description	Location	Status
1	22/4676	Residential development of 96 no. dwelling units and all associated site development works.	within 800m northwest from site entrance	Granted by CCC & Appealed to ABP (withdrawn) ⁸
2	22/6156	Single storey extension to existing school incorporating a special educational needs base and associated facilities	Approx. 230m south from site entrance	Granted 13/01/2023
3	21/5714	The construction of new prefabricated school building incorporating 4 general classrooms, office, and toilet facilities	Approx. 550m west from site entrance	Granted 17/11/2021
4	19/6345	The development will consist of a part single-storey, part three-storey extension (c. 3,307 m ²) to the existing school building	Approx. 820m west from site entrance	Granted 06/08/2020
5	19/5078	The alteration of Mallow Sewerage Scheme to remove combined sewer overflows from the network. The proposed scheme will include: 1. The alteration of Mallow Wastewater Treatment Plant to provide for wastewater treatment capacity for 22,000pe (increased from 18,000pe) at Ballyellis, Mallow.	Approx 60m from western boundary	Granted 05/12/2019
6	23/5197	Extension to planning ref. 16/6949 for the construction of the unbuilt portion of the original parent permission comprising 108 residential units (Planning ref. 04/2912)	Approx. 1km northeast from site entrance	Granted 08/08/2023, ceases 22/09/2024
7	24/4243	Permission for an LRD comprising 186 residential units, 1 creche and all associated ancillary works. AN NIS was submitted with the application.	Approx 700m north from site entrance	New Application Further Information required
8	24/4519	Permission for 99 residential units, one creche and all associated ancillary works. An NIS was submitted with the application	Approx. 340m southeast from site entrance	New Application, decision due 20/05/2024

Figure 12: Table showing nearby planning applications.

5. Assessment of Proposal

The proposed development comprises the construction of 138 residential units (fig. 13), one 42-place creche and all associated ancillary development at Spaglen (townland), Mallow, Co. Cork.

The proposal will form a sustainable residential extension to the settlement, seeking to consolidate, retain and reinforce Mallows compact form. It will provide residential development which is appropriate to its setting and of high-quality architectural value and quality, which is viable in development terms and will be attractive to buyers seeking affordable family homes in the area.



Figure 13: Perspective View of Unit B1

The proposed development is considered consistent with the NPF to focus development within the development boundaries of existing settlements, consistent with the RSES to support growth of Key Towns and consistent with strategic objectives for Mallow set out in the CDP to obtain population growth.

5.1 Layout and Design

The overall approach of the proposed housing development at Ard an Ghleanna will be an aesthetically pleasing and highly efficient new residential scheme that will provide homes in proximity to Mallow Town Centre, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon footprint. The proposed development will benefit from enhanced walking connectivity to the town centre (see Fig.14) with links to public transport, employment areas, community facilities, schools, recreation and amenity open spaces including the Mallow Park Network.

The proposed site layout makes efficient use of the available space and topography of the subject site, that is roughly rectangular in shape, sloping

generally to the west, with levels ranging from 85m OD in the southeast to 69m OD in the northwest. The layout is based on two parallel primary local streets that act as the main routes through the development with an access road to the south and a secondary local street to the north of the site that links the parallel streets, creating a loop. Vehicular, pedestrian/cycle access points to lands zoned for as Residential Reserve for future expansion to the north and northeast are located on the northern street. 3m footpaths/cycle paths throughout the development provide a pedestrian focus and permeable residential area, which is consistent with DMURS.

Pedestrian/cycle links to the residential reserve to the east are also provided on the southeastern boundary for future expansion.

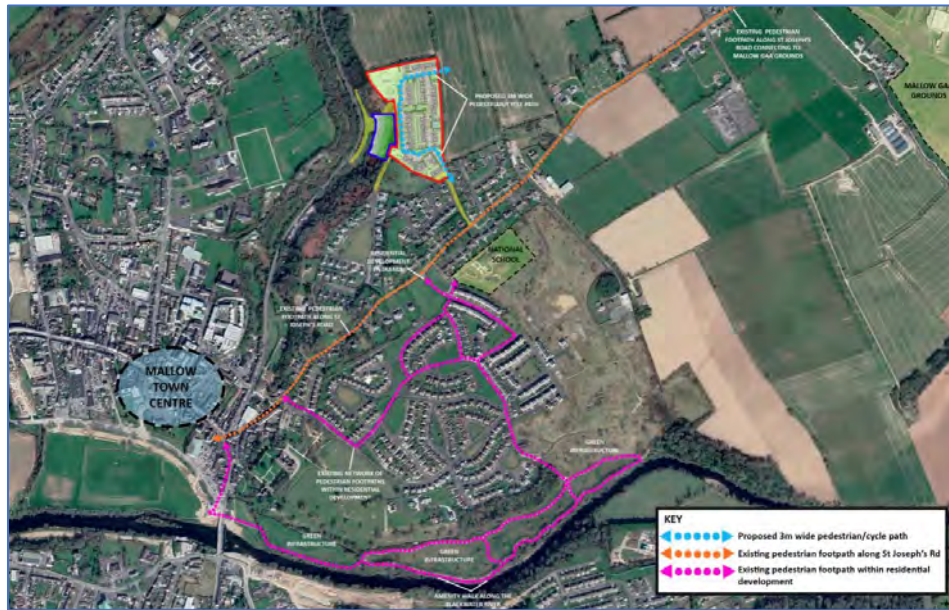


Figure 14: Active travel connectivity to wider area, extracted from the Architectural Drawing Pack



Figure 15: Extract of Landscaping Plan

The net density of the proposed development is 35.4 units per ha. However, a range of densities have been incorporated into the scheme ranging from higher densities that overlook interspersed open spaces, medium-high densities that create feature corner elements (fig. 13) and node points throughout the site and medium densities that back onto the existing buildings to avoid overlooking. The built edge of the development fronts onto the central streets, with higher density apartment buildings fronting onto the western and southern open spaces. The layout provides permeability throughout and access to public open amenity spaces (fig. 15).

The 6m wide primary streets provide avenue-style streets, with integrated cycle/footpaths and shared surfaces that provide direct access to the housing units and are compliant with DMURS. The shared surfaced areas incorporate on-curtilage parking areas, lighting, bin storage and landscaping.

The proposed development will be set within landscaped public and private amenity space. This will include passive open space evenly distributed throughout the scheme and active spaces with a range of age-appropriate play equipment. Nature-based sustainable urban drainage systems will be employed throughout the scheme, integrated within the landscaped amenity areas that will help reduce the reliance on the surface water drainage systems and provide opportunity for biodiversity net gain. The Landscaping Plan is supported by a SUDs plan and a Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by Forestbird Design.

6. Housing Design

The proposed dwellings offer a broad range of accommodation choice, in terms of both unit size and configuration. Open spaces are designed to provide facilities for all age groups and support outdoor activities. The housing mix will comprise four-bed semi-detached houses, two and three-bed town houses and one and two-bed apartments and duplexes (Fig. 16). Ten percent of the units will be allocated as social housing and these will be dispersed to provide an integrated, inclusive and diverse community. The wide range of dwelling types and sizes incorporated into the layout will

encourage a more varied population, permitting a greater level of mobility within the local area and encouraging aging in place. A number of universal design units are also provided for mobility restricted residents. Residential units meet or exceed the standards set out the County Development Plan and in Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2022. Compliance with these standards is demonstrated in the Housing Quality Assessment that accompanies this application. Housing allocated as social housing will be built to the same quality design standards and specification as the affordable units.

ARD AN GHLEANNA - MALLOW					
Unit Type	Description	No. of Bedrooms	Bed Space	Proposed Unit Area (sq.m.)	No. of Unit
A1	Semi-Detached	4	7	134.44	4
B1	Semi-Detached	3	5	101.11	6
B2	Semi-Detached	3	5	100.98	8
C1	Townhouse	3	5	104.24	20
D1	Townhouse	2	4	84.5	2
D2	Townhouse	2	4	84.5	34
E1	Duplex Apartment	2	4	90.2	5
E2	Duplex Apartment	2	4	90.2	27
F1	Ground Floor Apartment	1	2	56.7	5
F2	Ground Floor Apartment	1	2	55.2	27

Figure 16: Extract from Housing Quality Assessment prepared by Deady Gahan Architects

Unit types E1/F1 and E2/F2 comprise three-storey two-bed duplexes over a one-bed ground-floor apartment, located to the west side of the development (Fig. 17). These consist of twin aspect own-door entry with private amenity spaces, including planted buffers and terraces, to the east and west aspect. All duplex units will be provided with a patio and/or balcony space, with each unit having a private amenity space. First floor balconies will provide a porch area for the ground floor entrances. The design and layout of the proposed development will meet the requirements of all relevant documents, in particular Part M of the Technical Guidance Documents which deal with accessibility and inclusivity. In this regard, the design of the proposed development is also guided by the principles of universal design. The proposed dwellings have further been designed to be adaptable and to respond to the potential changing needs over their lifetime. The units are strategically designed to allow the owner to extend into the attic and/or to the rear if they so require.



Figure 17: Perspective view of unit type E2/F2

Due to the steep topographical nature of the site, the layout of the scheme has been orientated in line with the slope of the site in order to achieve Part M access to the dwellings while maximising efficiency and minimising cut and fill. In areas of the site where the existing site levels require an approach that minimises cut and fill, a stepped rear garden arrangement is being proposed (fig. 18). In these areas, the back-to-back separation distances are increased in order to provide adequate usable private amenity space while incorporating a mix of terraced and planted areas within the garden spaces, also minimising the amount of retaining elements required.

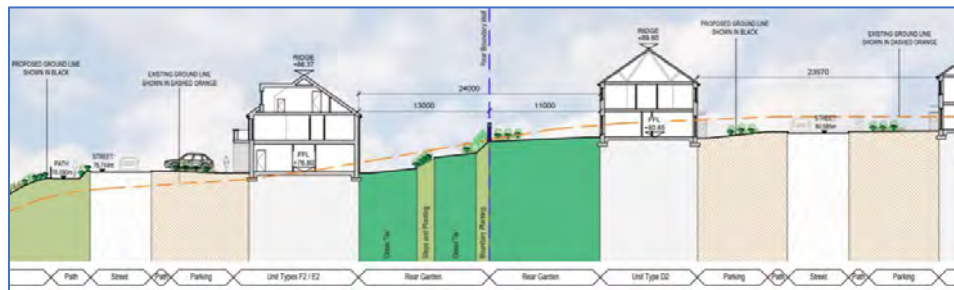


Figure 18: Typical section of stepped approach through private amenity spaces

A restrained palette and selection of material finishes have been selected to ensure a cohesive and coherent aesthetic that will create two distinct character areas. The majority of the proposed facades will consist of a pale coloured render finish to the first floor. Red or yellow brick to the ground floor will define the character area (see Fig. 19). Roofs will be finished with a black composite tile. Doors and windows will be of uPVC. The semi-detached and mid- town houses will include a zinc clad canopy above the front door.



Figure 19: Front elevation of character area 1 (left) and 2 (right) unit types.

All buildings are designed and sited to provide passive surveillance of the public realm, including streets, paths and open spaces. The residential units have been orientated to ensure sufficient daylight into the rooms whilst also minimising overlooking, particularly where the scheme borders Aldworth Heights.

7. Boundary Treatments

A Boundary Treatment Plan, prepared by Deady Gahan Architects, accompanies this application and is supported by the Landscape Plan and Green Infrastructure Statement. The boundary treatment for the proposed development comprises the retention of the existing 2m high weld mesh palisade fence to the west and north of the site and to the west of the site entrance. Additional planting will be added where required. The existing fence will be interrupted on the southern boundary by the construction of a 2m high concrete post and concrete panel fence to the rear of E1/F2 and E2/F2 housing units that rear onto the site boundary to provide privacy between the proposed development and the existing Aldworth Heights estate.

To the east of the site entrance and continuing for approximately a quarter of the length of the eastern boundary, the boundary will comprise the retention of the existing ditch and vegetation, supplemented with a 2m high weld mesh palisade fence and additional planting where required. This treatment will also be adopted where the secondary local street provides the connection for potential future development at the northeast of the site and at the eastern play amenity area. All other boundaries to the east and north of the site will comprise a 2m high concrete post and concrete panel fence to the rear of housing units that rear onto the eastern site boundary to provide privacy between them and any future development.

7.1 Recreation, Amenity, Open Space & Biodiversity

A number of formal open and usable amenity spaces have been designed into the development layout. A Landscaping Pack, including a masterplan and larger scale drawings and a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS), prepared by Forestbird Design, accompany this application in support of landscaping and biodiversity approach to the proposed development.

The site is currently in agricultural use with the boundary defined by mature hedgerows, trees and hedgerows. The landscape design has, where possible

been guided and influenced by the topography, the Ecology and Arboricultural appraisal of the lands and surrounding environment. The GIS identifies the eastern hedgerow as the primary ecological asset to be retained, whilst a minor internal hedgerow will be removed as part of the development. An overall approach of biodiversity net gain will be adopted, and any removal of ecological assets will be replaced.



Figure 20: Extract from Landscaping package showing primary amenity spaces.

The GIS provides for proposed planting, including 265 new semi-mature and advanced trees, including 255 native species and 10 acclimatised Lime trees for climate change adaptability and pollinator benefits identified in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The addition of several thousand pollinator shrubs combined with the reuse of any soil and seed bank removed during the construction phase will result in a long-term positive net gain.

The provision of permeability and improved overall pedestrian movement is one of the core principles of the site layout design. This core principle is coupled with the design objective to provide designed landscape amenity

areas which offer comfort, passive supervision, ease of access in terms of the varying age groups and levels of mobility and a safe amenity space for all end users. Five primary amenity spaces (Fig. 20, outlined in orange) provide a range of amenities including formal and natural play areas, social interaction areas with level activity lawns, a public orchard, seating and biodiversity-focused experiences that will enhance a socially inclusive recreational environment.

8. Biodiversity, Recreation & Amenity Approach

Objective BE 15-6(b) and (c) relates to Biodiversity and New Development and encourages the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments and the use of native trees and particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments.

The Landscape Plan includes a number of biodiversity features to enhance the open space and which incorporate a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions (SUDs). These include features such as attenuation basins to the northwest of the site and a series of swales and smaller attenuation

basins in the central green corridor (Fig. 22). Proposed attenuation swales and basins not only mitigate stormwater but define and enhance the open spaces by means of an additional habitat offering and improved biodiversity.



Figure 21: Extract from Landscaping Package

In accordance with this objective and as shown in the Landscaping Development Package by Forestbird Design, the existing hedgerows along the site boundaries will be retained and protected as far as possible. Where trees/hedgerows have to be removed, hedgerows will be reinstated with primarily native trees so that there is an overall biodiversity net gain and so that any existing biodiversity corridors are maintained. All hedgerows and trees that are being retained will be protected appropriately during the construction and operational phases of the development.

In addition to the biodiversity considerations, the Landscaping Plan also sets out the proposed strategy to the public amenity spaces that include picnic areas, outside seating, natural and formal play areas, level grass areas for more structured sports play (fig 21). The open spaces are designed as inclusive spaces to cater for a range of activities and age groups. Useable open amenity spaces are enhanced with the integration flowering pollinator planting in the wider green infrastructure of the site and the introduction of urban woodland clusters.

A Green Infrastructure Statement by Forestbird Design and an Appropriate Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment has been prepared by Dixon Brosnan Environmental Services which assessed any existing habitats and includes the implementation of appropriate mitigation to ensure that there is an overall net biodiversity gain. These reports have been used to inform the landscape and amenity strategy for the development.

9. Open Space Hierarchy

The following key elements have been considered as part of the open space detailed design and the protection and overall reinforcement of the sites “Green Infrastructure”.

- Create a pedestrian & cycle path network through the site which can be extended over time;
- Provide open space that is overlooked and framed by the residential units providing an attractive setting and passive surveillance;

- Incorporate the objectives of planning policies for the area, in particular, 'Cork County Council Recreation & Amenity Policy';
- Public open spaces with high amenity and visual values, to facilitate both active & passive recreation;
- Promote ecology & biodiversity through the retention and enhancement of existing natural features;
- Respond to both the existing landscape and potential future development by retaining the existing landscape features where appropriate and facilitating linkages through the proposed development.

10. Amenity/Open Space

In total, 5,850m² of the sites developable area (3.9 ha) has been allocated as usable public open space, equating to approximately 15% (fig.22).

Due to the steep topography of the site, sections of the site have been deemed undevelopable. Additionally, there is an existing meadow with an archaeological buffer zone to the northwest of the site. These spaces have been excluded from the public open space calculations but still provide a visual amenity.

The useable public open spaces have been designed to create a sense of community and ownership, with designated play areas and amenity walks integrated into the design.



Figure 22: Extract from Architectural Design Statement

10.1 Traffic and Access

The proposed development is accessed via a single vehicular access point from St. Joseph's Road via the established Aldworth Heights access road and will include the provision of a combined footpath/cycleway throughout the development.

Vehicular routes through the site will be calmed through various design measures including alignment, to reduce traffic speeds, with horizontal and vertical deflections introduced as required. A design speed limit of 20 km/hour has been applied throughout the development in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (function – local road,

context – neighbourhood, pedestrian priority). The existing speed limit for the Aldworth Heights access road is 30km/h with 50km/h speeds on St. Joseph's Road is 50km/h. The proposed development benefits from the existing street hierarchy and established sightlines at the junction between Aldworth heights and St. Joseph's Road.

In addition, a right of way at the southwest site corner provides for potential future pedestrian/cycle connection with the Castle Grove residential area. Future connection points into lands (zoned residential reserve) have also been provided along the northern and eastern site boundaries.

In terms of connectivity and permeability into the wider area, an existing Part 8 includes for improved pedestrian facilities including the installation of dropped kerbs and tactile paving, new pedestrian crossings and improved footpaths along a section of St. Joseph's Road to the west of the subject site from Aldworth Heights entrance to Kingsfort Avenue at Castlelands. The Part 8 improvements will be undertaken prior to the commencement of the proposed development subject of this application to promote active travel and an integrated walkable community.

A Traffic and Transport Assessment and a Residential Travel Plan have been prepared by Martin Hanley Consulting Engineers. The scope of the TTA has been agreed with Cork County Council's Traffic and Transport Department. The site layout has been informed by the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) issued by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport & Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013, and in accordance with DMURS, provides a network of streets, pedestrian priority areas and traffic calming. The Residential Travel Plan recommends a package of measures to encourage and support sustainable travel options amongst residents of the proposed development.

10.1.1 Road Safety Audit

A Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was carried out by Road Safety Matters Ltd, which accompanies this application pack. The RSA has examined and reported on the road safety implications of the proposed scheme and highlights nine issues along with two further observations. These comprise the following:

- Speeds and Traffic calming generally, relating to existing 50km/h along St. Joseph's Road, with no reduced limits on Aldworth Heights;
- Parking provision represents 23% reduction on Development Plan standards, with potential for parking configuration to obstruct intervisibility at pedestrian crossing points;
- Proposed landscaping features impacting intervisibility at pedestrian crossing points and access to play areas;
- No/indicative only fencing show to the western side of the site and associated steep embankments. Some site boundary treatment at tie-in to south considered likely to obstruct visibility;

- Proposed kerbs design/heights and surface water drainage gullies not shown on some drawings. Gradients of roads, footpaths and cycle paths may cause difficulties for some road users, pedestrians and cyclists;
- Swept path analysis demonstrated that the proposed road layout was restrictive for some vehicle sizes. Sharp kerb edges were also shown in some locations.
- The proposed designs showed long sections incorporating relatively steep gradients, including gradients exceeding 8.33% on relatively sharp curves.
- Constrained visibility at tie-in to The Crescent of vehicles egressing from the proposed development by current boundary treatment. Impacts on proposed two-way cycle track.
- Potential for poor intervisibility at crossing points due to proposed landscaping and vehicle parking. Tactile paving only proposed on one side of crossings and poorly orientated. Proposed 3m wide shared VRU route intersects with narrower footpaths without warning tactile paving. Steps proposed without tactile paving and no alternative routes shown. Concerns relating to width of footpaths and informal shared crossing points.
- Lighting columns located in proximity to kerb edges.
- No signing and lining schedule provided.

The RSA provides the two additional following observations:

- No information was provided on existing collision statistics in the vicinity of the site.
- Potential for increasing use of motorised scooters and electric vehicles throughout the site.

In response to the Stage1 & 2 RSA, we would note the following

- Aldworth Heights estate is outside of the development.
- Advisory speed limit signage of 20Km/hr has been introduced and appropriate visibility sightlines have been indicated on the relevant site plan. The proposed horizontal and vertical deflections will support the advisory speed limit
- Detailed parking provision analysis is provided in para 12.2 of this report
- Landscaping features have been adjusted to take account of concerns raised
- Site fencing details have been updated
- Gully locations have been updated
- Existing gradients on site vary between 1:6 and 1:15 over more than 80% of the site. Through well-considered design, we have achieved a traffic layout where no gradient exceeds 1:12 (8.33%) and for significant parts are less than 1:20 (5%). Additionally, we have mitigated conflicts by providing a minimum 3 m wide grass verge between the cycle lane/footpath and road along the majority of the path. We note in particular that cycle lane gradients are discussed in

Part 4.1.5.2 of the NTA Cycle Design Manual 2023. The recommended maximum gradient for cyclist comfort and route attractiveness is 5% (1:20), with an ideal gradient between 0-5%. However, the recommendation does not limit cycle lanes to 5% and the guidelines recognise the need to respond to natural terrain.

Extract from Part 4.1.5.2

"...Gradients will generally have to follow existing topography although there may be opportunities to reduce gradients through appropriate design measures where sufficient space is available. Where steep gradients cannot be avoided due to existing topography, mitigation measures... should be considered."

In response to the RSA, we have also included a resting point along the western cycle lane/footpath halfway up the 210m long path as a mitigation to the unavoidable gradient.

By incorporating these measures, we consider that the cycle lane/footpath layout responds well to and in compliance with the NTA manual:

- All abrupt changes in kerb direction have been removed, curves introduced and revised swept path analysis shows no restrictions.
- The constrained visibility at the tie into the Crescent has been removed and visibility sightlines checked and shown on the appropriate site plans
- The Poor intervisibility at crossing points has been addressed, appropriate tactile paving introduced where required and
- Appropriate turning areas have been introduced at the northern and northwest corner of the development.

The RSA has been accepted by the client. All of the audit recommendations will be included in the detail design stage documents and drawings. A further stage 3 RSA will be undertaken at pre-construction stage to verify the design and stage 4 RSA will be carried out on the project post construction.

10.2 Public Transport

11. Bus Service

There are three bus stops in Mallow, provided at Mallow Hospital, Mallow Train Station and Mallow Town Park (nearest, see fig. 23). Route 243 is the bus service between Mallow and Cork. The route runs from Charleville to the Bus Station at Parnell Place, Cork. The nearest bus stop to the proposed Ard and Ghleanna is Mallow (Town Park), approximately 1.5km from the proposed development entrance, with a walking time of approximately 18 minutes or a 6-minute cycle (Google Maps). Bus services to Cork City are limited to Bus Eireann route 243. There is one morning service that facilitates regular office hours, departing Mallow at 7.33am to arrive at Cork (Parnell Place) at 8.22am. There are four further Bus Eireann 243 services to Cork City.

Mallow is also served by Expressway Route 51, Galway-Limerick-Cork. The service runs approximately every hour on the half hour between Mallow and

Cork from 08.30 – 21.40. A return service runs from Cork, arriving at Mallow between 07.25 – 20.55.

Local Link service, route 522 provides services seven days a week between Mallow and Charleville, while route 523 provides services seven days a week between Mallow and Mitchelstown. A weekday local service link is also available between Mallow and Fermoy.

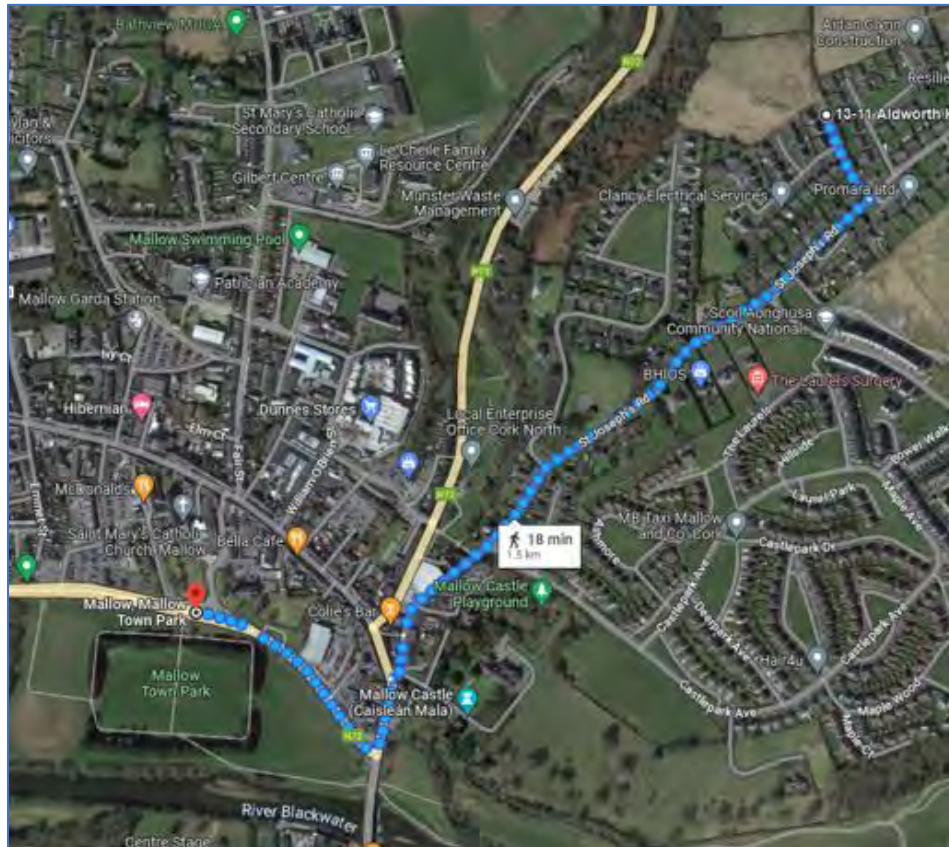


Figure 23: Walking route from site entrance to Mallow (Town Park) Bus stop (Google Maps)

12. Train Service

Mallow train station is located to the west of Mallow, some 2.2km from the entrance of the proposed development at Ard an Ghleanna, with an approximate walking time of 28 minutes or a 10-minute cycle (provision of cycle parking is assumed)) (Google Maps). The Train station provides routes to Cork and Dublin with connections from Cork (Kent Street) to Limerick, Galway and Waterford, with local links to Cobh and Midleton.

Train services to Cork from Mallow begin at 6.55am, with four services arriving in Cork before 9am. Trains run regularly throughout the day to Cork with a local evening service providing a later service than the Cork-Dublin, with the last service arriving in Mallow at 11.24pm. Mallow train station also provides a service to Dublin, as well as Links from Cork to Cobh, Midleton, Waterford, Limerick and Galway

12.1 Bin & Bike Storage

Where direct access to rear gardens is provided, bike and bin storage can be provided to the rear of each housing unit. It is proposed that town houses that do not have direct access to back gardens will have allocated bike and bin storage units located at the front of each residential unit. Communal facilities shall be provided for apartment and duplex units. In accordance



Figure 24: Locations of bin & bike storage throughout development

(5906:2005). The bin and bike stores are located within the layout to benefit from passive surveillance, aesthetic considerations and to ensure that they do not impede on any traffic sightlines (fig. 24).

A separate bin and bike storage to facilitate the creche needs will be provided within the creche play area.

12.2 Car Parking requirements

In line with the standards set out in the CDP and revised within the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines, a total of 183 car parking spaces are provided as part of the proposed development, including nine spaces designated for limited mobility use and 8 spaces designated for visitor parking. Three limited mobility access spaces are located to the front of duplex units to the south of the site. The remaining six are dispersed along the western primary street fronting duplex units. The allocation of parking spaces for housing and apartment units are outlined in Fig. 25.

with standards set out in Table 12.8 of the CDP, including design guidance, the communal bike store will comprise a total of 80 spaces within four lockable and covered purpose-built unit containing a two-tier rack system, located in close proximity to the apartment units. Two additional Sheffield-style bike shelters comprising a further 24 spaces are provided for short-term/visitor use.

Four bin stores will also be suitably located in close proximity to the apartment units. Communal bin storage has been calculated to provide 1000l for the one-bed apartments and 1,700l for the two-bed apartments.

The calculations are based on the British Standard

Separate parking has been provided for the creche totalling eight spaces, including seven standard parking spaces and one limited mobility access space and a drop-off area.

All parking spaces will be capable of accommodating future charging points to future proof a transition to electric vehicles. The car parking provision for the development has been calculated to accommodate, where possible, a minimum of one future on-curtilage charging point per housing unit to facilitate affordable charging via private meters. This will provide an inclusive, lower cost access for transition to electric vehicles for the anticipated future population.

VEHICLE PARKING SPACES - HOUSING			
Unit Types	No. of Units	Parking x Units	Total Parking
4 bed semi-detached	4	2no. parking spaces per unit	8
3 bed semi-detached	14	2no. parking spaces per unit	28
3 bed end townhouse	20	2no. parking spaces per unit	40
2 bed end townhouse	2	1no. parking spaces per unit	2
2 bed mid townhouse	34	1no. parking spaces per unit	34
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE PARKING SPACES	74		112
TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITOR PARKING SPACES			5
<i>This equates to 1.58 spaces per house</i>			
VEHICLE PARKING SPACES - APARTMENTS			
Unit Types	No. of Units	Parking x Units	Total Parking
2 bed duplex	32	1no. parking spaces per unit	32
1 bed GF apartment	32	0.7no. parking spaces per unit	23
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE PARKING SPACES	64		55
TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITOR PARKING SPACES			3
<i>This equates to 0.9 spaces per apartment</i>			
VEHICLE PARKING SPACES - CRECHE			
Unit Types	No. of Units	Parking x Units	Total Parking
42 Child Creche	1	1no. parking spaces per 3no. staff & 1no. parking spaces per 10no. children	8
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES	1		8
TOTAL NUMBER OF CAR PARKING SPACES (ENTIRE SITE)			163
NOTE: The total number of parking spaces can be reduced by 38no. if the 4 & 3 bed units are provided with 1no. parking spaces per unit. This shall reduce the total number of car parking spaces for the entire site to 145no. parking spaces			

Figure 25: Extract from Proposed Parking Layout

12.3 Water & Wastewater

Pre-connection enquiries were submitted to Uisce Éireann (UE) to assess the feasibility of providing water supply and wastewater connections to the site. UE have issued a confirmation of feasibility for both, noting that the water supply connection can be facilitated without any upgrade after the third quarter of 2023. Confirmation of feasibility letters are included in Appendix C of the Engineering Report.

A number of SUDs have been incorporated into the design of the housing scheme to address surface water run-off. The SUDs measures comply with the guidance set out in the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual Within the private realm of the development, measures include the installation of 300l water butts to the rear of each dwelling that has a rear garden. Water butts will collect run-off from the downpipes and will be fitted with a tap for domestic non-potable water uses. Rain garden platers are also proposed for rear gardens that will reduce the velocity of surface water run-off in rain events.

Further SUDs measures will be incorporated in the public realm of the development. These include the provision of permeable paving for all car parking spaces, allowing surface water to soak into the subsoil and ground water, rather than leaving the site via the sewer network.

In addition, it is proposed that bioretention tree pits be located in roadside green areas of the site where a proportion of the surface water for the impermeable road surface and footpaths. The bioretention tree pits offer run-off interception, filtration and water storage as well as other benefits including the promotion of biodiversity and evapotranspiration. Details of the SUDs measures can be found in the Engineering Report prepared by WDG. The overall strategy to green and blue infrastructure, including SUDs measures are outlined in the Green Infrastructure Statement and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Plan, both prepared by Forestbird Design.

13. Childcare provision

Appendix 2 of the ‘Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility per 75 dwellings in new housing areas. One facility providing a minimum of 20 childcare places is considered to be a reasonable starting point in this regard. The Guidance acknowledges that other case-specific assumptions may lead to an increase or decrease in this requirement.

A Childcare Demand Assessment was undertaken to determine the existing childcare facilities within a 5km /10 travel time of the proposed development (fig. 26) and has been carried out in accordance with Cork Couy Council policy and National Childcare Guidelines.

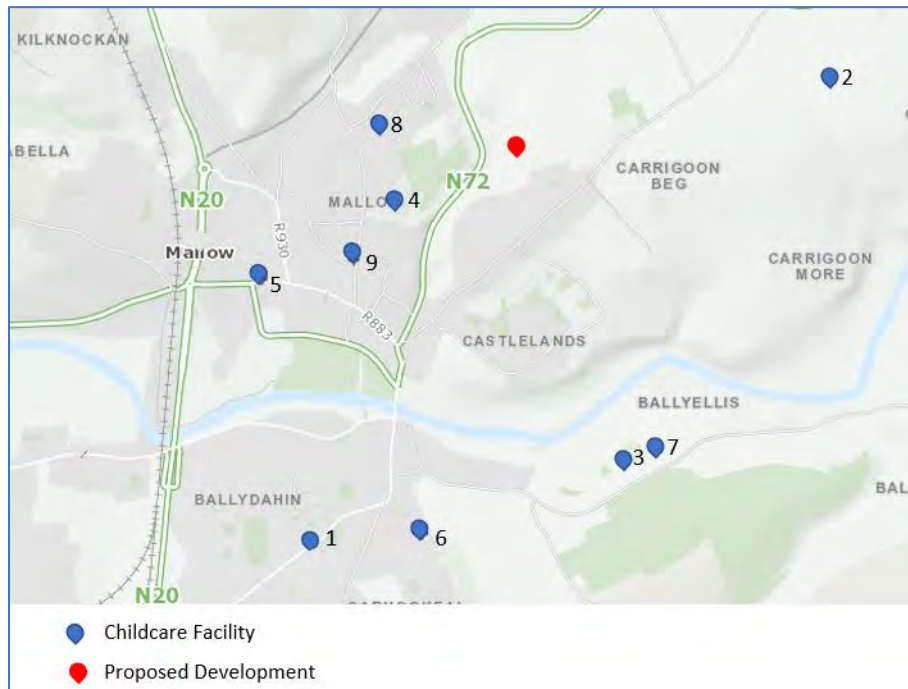


Figure 26: Distribution of existing childcare services

The key findings of the assessment can be summarised as follows:

- Nine pre-school childcare facilities were identified as serving Mallow Town, of which six were successfully contacted. Of the nine identified childcare facilities, eight were considered to be operating at capacity for the academic year 2022-23. Of the nine identified childcare facilities, two had availability for the academic year 2023-24, totalling 85 pre-school places and 8 afterschool places.
- The distribution pattern of the existing identified childcare services may encourage an increase in the use of the private car as a means to commute, where childcare would place an additional demand on the journey.
- Based on statistics provided by the CSO, the 'highest-case' scenario demand for pre-school places generated by the proposed development is 19, however, based on national averages, this is more likely to be much lower, i.e. less than 10.
- Based on statistics provided by the CSO, the 'highest-case' scenario demand for afterschool places generated by the proposed development is 31, however, based on national averages, this number is also expected to be much lower, i.e. less than 10.

The proposed development includes a 42-place childcare facility which is more than sufficient to cater for the indicative requirements generated by the proposed development and takes account for the financial viability of a childcare operator. Given the predicted demand generated by the proposed development and in the context of available pre- and after-school places in Mallow for both the current and next academic years, a crèche is unlikely to be required before the development of phase three of construction.

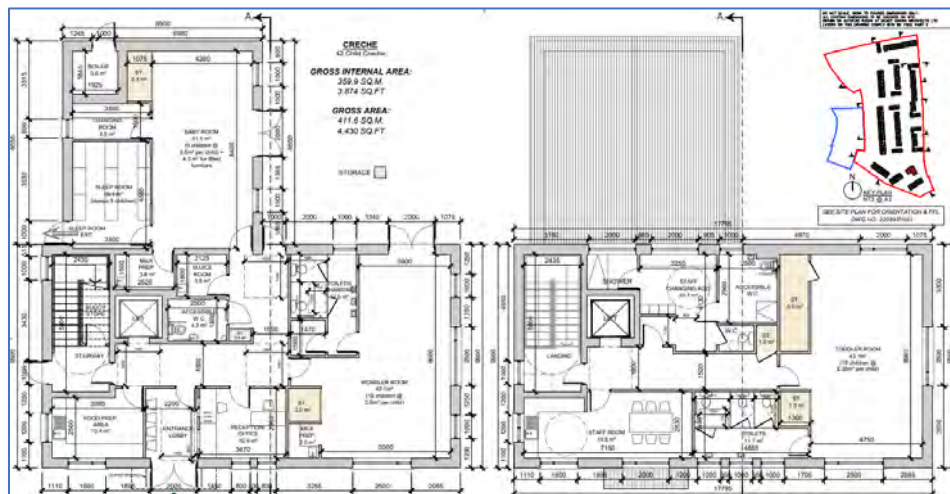


Figure 27: Extract of creche layout

The layout and design of the creche (fig. 27) provides for age-appropriate separated internal areas comprising a baby room and wobbler room on the ground floor and a toddler room on the first floor. A sleep room and milk prep area are located off the baby room whilst separate changing rooms are provided for both the baby and wobbler rooms. Toilets are attached to the first-floor toddler room. A separate food prep area is provided adjoining the

entrance lobby along with the reception office. Staff facilities including a changing area with showers and WCs. A separate staff room is located adjacent to the staff welfare facilities. Transition from ground to first floor is provided by way of both stairs and a lift.

Externally, a play area is located to the south of the creche with screening provided between the F2/E2 housing units to the southwest and the D2 units to the south/southeast. The play area can be sub-divided to segregate age groups. A one-way drive through drop-off area is provided to the north of the creche. Eight parking spaces are provided in this area, primarily for staff members, including three 3000mm spaces for easier access. The drop-off area will provide an efficient system to reduce traffic congestion on the main thoroughfares of the development and remove the potential for parking in the Aldworth Heights estate. Continuous shared cycle/footpaths through the development will encourage the use of active travel to and from the creche.

The creche is accessed via the main entrance to the north of the building which is connected directly to the footpath and the drop-off and car parking area. The creche is separated from the development entrance by means of a wall and green space. A separate bin and bike storage to facilitate the creche needs will be provided within the creche play area.

The design and the location of the creche has been carefully considered in relation to how it fits within the proposed development in order to create a feature building that is close proximity to the entrance. Safety has been a key consideration in the design and layout, and appropriate separation distances have been applied, particularly with regards to the external play area.

14. Natura Impact Statement

According to the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), member states are required to designate areas in order to protect priority habitats and species. These sites are known as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) respectively. Collectively, these sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. An “Appropriate Assessment” (AA), means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge of the potential impacts of a plan, on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the development where necessary of measures to preclude negative effects. The impact assessment must include indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan considered, with any current or proposed activities, development or policies impacting on the site. All plans and projects should aim to identify any possible impacts early in the plan making process and then either alter the plan to avoid them or introduce mitigation measures to the point where no adverse impacts remain.

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon either individually or in combination with other plans or projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implication of the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provision of paragraph 4, the competent National Authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states;

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons or overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The AA screening report prepared by Dixon Brosnan concludes that potential impacts, although improbable, have been identified for the Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC as a result of the proposed development. A stage 2 Natura Impact Assessment has therefore been provided.

The NIS sets out mitigation measures in Section 7 of the report to ensure that any effects on the conservation objectives of the Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC will be avoided during the proposed development such that there will be no risk of adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.

15.Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and current government and EU guidance, the Planning Authority must screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and decide whether the planning application for the proposed development does or does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA).

Having regard to the nature, extent, and the characteristics of the likely impacts we consider that when screened in accordance with EU Screening Guidelines that the proposed development is not a project defined by Part 1 and Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as requiring an EIA and would not warrant a sub threshold EIA in accordance with Article 10 of the Regulations.

With regard to EIA requirements, the proposal is well below the mandatory EIA threshold for residential developments of 500 units (which is the statutory test in this regard) and is also below the 10ha EIA threshold for development within a built-up area. Any potential impact on the environment is likely to be confined to the immediate site area, is likely to be limited in magnitude and the site is not one of special environmental sensitivity.

A formal EIA screening has been carried out by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants and is submitted as part of this application. Based on the findings of the EIA screening assessment, the proposed development does not require a mandatory EIA. With regards to the nature, extent and characteristics of the likely impacts for the construction and operational phase of the proposed development, the EIA screening considers that the proposed development will not give rise to any likely significant environmental effects and accordingly a sub-threshold EIA is not required.

16. Conclusion

The proposed 177AE residential development, Ard an Ghleanna, at Spaglen, Mallow, will provide 138 much needed new residential dwellings with a 42-place creche to meet a mixture of housing solutions with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised infill site within the existing built footprint of the town. The scheme has been carefully designed by a multidisciplinary team to ensure a high-quality development that is in line with all the relevant national, regional and local policies. It will deliver a high-quality affordable and social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing urban environment and sensitive to the natural environment of the immediate surrounds, achieving a medium-high density housing that will help address the current housing shortages in a highly desirable key town in County Cork in an accessible location with all amenities, facilities and services within a short walking distance of the development.