

21 no. Housing Units

Housing Infill at Old Barrack Road, Bantry, Co. Cork

Planning Report



**Cork
County Council**
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Proposed Development

This report relates to a proposed 21 no. unit residential development which is to be developed by Cork County Council at Old Barrack Road in Bantry. Cork County Council seeks approval for Part 8 proposal for the development of 21 no. housing units at Old Barrack Road, Bantry, County Cork.

The proposed development site is 0.285 hectares, and this site adjoins and lies to the northern side of Old Barrack Road, on land within the Town Centre of Bantry. The proposed development consists of a total of 21 no. residential units comprising a mix of 1 and 2 bed houses and 1 and 2 bed apartments. The proposed development consists of:

- 14 no. 1 bedroom units
- 7 no. 2 bedroom units

Within the subject site there are 4 no. existing buildings, sited within the Barrack Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), as designated in the Cork County Development Plan 2022, and the 4 no. buildings within the ACA are to be retained, redeveloped and regenerated into active residential use, with 5 no. of the 21 no. residential units to be developed within the 4 no. existing buildings that front directly onto Old Barrack Road / Marino Street. The proposed development involves a combination of the regeneration of existing buildings adjoining the streetscape and the development of new units, predominantly sited to the rear of the existing buildings.

Site Description, Design and Layout

This 0.285 ha site adjoins Old Barrack Road within the town centre of Bantry, with the southwestern corner of the site adjoining the junction of Marino Street / Old Barrack Road and Barrack Street, fronting onto the junction of the N71 National Secondary Road with the L-4750-0. The eastern end of the site fronts onto Old Barrack Road / the L-4745-0 minor county road and the overall site is sited on land that forms part of the Town Centre of Bantry, as designated in the Cork County Development Plan 2022.

The subject 0.285 ha site is triangular in shape and within this site there is a change in levels, with levels rising within this site by c. 10 m, with levels rising from the southwestern corner towards the highest point at the northeastern corner. In addition to the rise in levels from the southwestern corner to the northeastern corner, levels also rise within this site from south to north, with 2 tiers within the site, where levels rise by c. 4-5 metres in the upper / northern part of the site, to an area that formed part of the old railway platform.

Currently the subject site is not actively used, and this town centre site lies within 200 m of Wolfe Tone Square, the main square in Bantry. This site lies within walking distance of a number of local services and convenience shopping facilities, while also lying within walking distance to Bantry Hospital, medical practices, the local garda station, St Finbarr's Catholic Church and the harbour and bay area. Additionally, this site lies within walking distance of public bus services.

Within this site there are a number of derelict / underutilised buildings, which comprise a mixture of commercial and residential units of varying states of repair. Towards the southwestern corner of this site there are 4 no. established vacant buildings which are sited within the Barrack Street Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The 4 no. buildings sited within the ACA, which range in height from 2 storeys to 3½ storeys are to be retained, redeveloped and regenerated into residential use. Outbuildings and storage sheds within this site which are derelict and in a poor state of repair are to be demolished.

In the immediate vicinity of this town centre site there is a variety of established uses which include residential, retail, commercial and office uses. Buildings in proximity of this site range from two storey to three storeys in height.

The proposed development on this site will retain the 4 no. structures sited within the ACA that front directly onto Old Barrack Road / Marino Street and it is proposed to develop 8 no. units on the southern part of the site, which consist of 5 no. apartments (3 no. 2 bed apartments and 2 no. 1 bed apartments) and 3 no. houses (consisting of 1 no. 1 bed house and 2 no. 2 bed houses), all of which will front onto the streetscape. The apartments and houses at the southern end of the site fronting onto Old Barrack Road / Marino Street will range in size from 50 m² to 78 m².

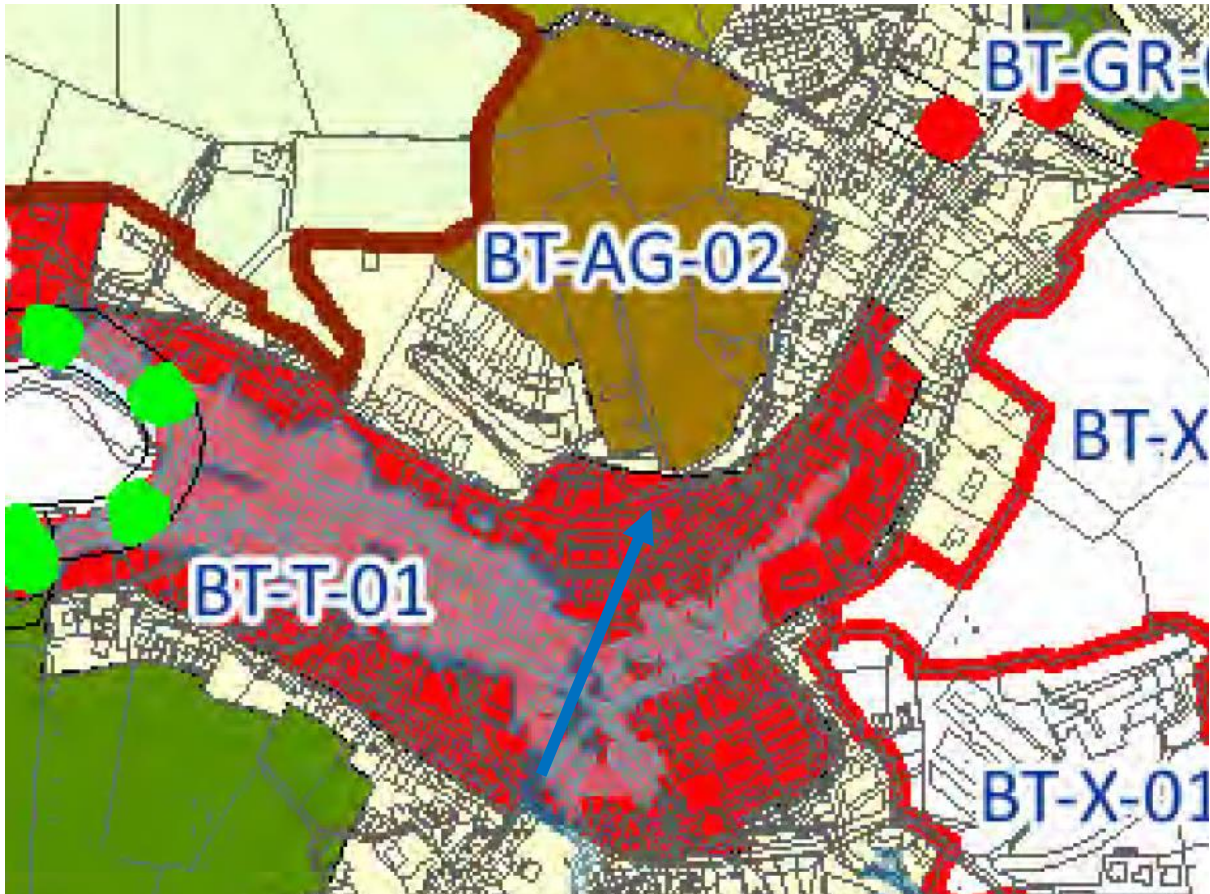
To the northern / upper tier of the site a terrace consisting of 13 no. units is to be provided, which will follow the platform of the old railway line, with the terrace 2 storeys in form providing for 11 no. 1 bed units and 2 no. 2 bed units, with units ranging in size from 47 m² to 72 m². All of the units within the terrace will have direct access to central green spaces. The proposed scheme at the upper portion of the site is designed to have due regard to the old railway infrastructure, retaining as many of the old stone wall and retaining walls as possible.

Policy Context

The proposed development is located within the development boundary of the Main Town of Bantry, as defined by the County Development Plan (CDP) 2022, with the subject 0.285 ha site situated on land that forms part of the Town Centre of Bantry.

The subject 0.285 ha site forms part of the Town Centre of Bantry which extends to 13.7 ha, as set down in the County Development Plan 2022 and to which the specific zoning objective BT-T-01 applies i.e.

Town centre		
BT T-01	Town Centre. Promote the Town Centre as the primary area for retail and mixed-use development, encourage sensitive refurbishment/redevelopment of existing sites and promote public realm improvements whilst protecting the marine environment and built heritage. *	13.7



Extract from Bantry Land Use Zoning Map, as contained in Volume 5 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022

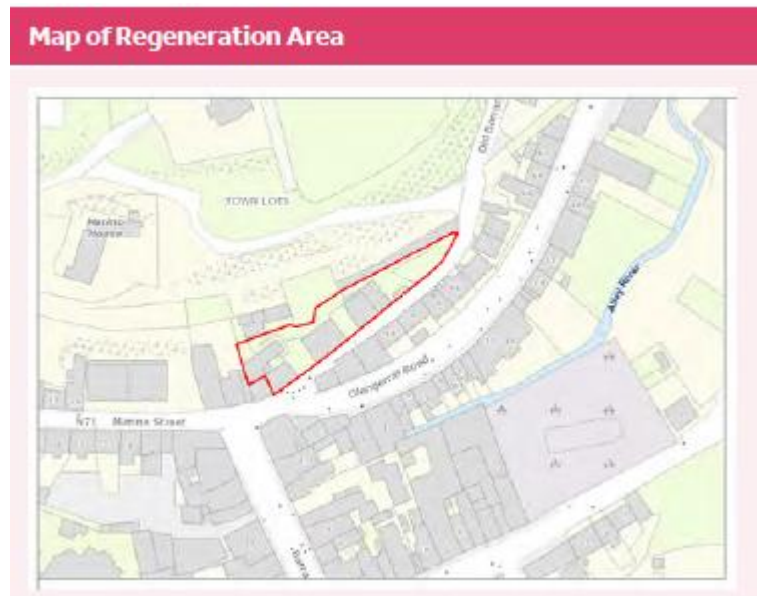
Subject site identified by arrow above within the Town Centre zoning

Bantry is identified in the County Development Plan 2022 as the second largest town in the West Cork Municipal District, which provides commercial, retail and tourism / leisure facilities for an extensive coastal and inland catchment area. The overall strategy for Bantry aims to develop the town as the primary urban centre and gateway for the western part of Cork. Furthermore, the Plan makes provision for the development of the town centre to facilitate retail and other services, while protecting the unique setting of the town on which its attractiveness to tourists depends.

The County Development Plan provides for an enhanced role for Bantry, as a Service Centre in West Cork, and building on the town's strengths, the plan endeavours to support the sustainable growth of the town, to recognise the maritime opportunities that it presents, while optimising the urban development potential of the town. It is an objective of the County Development Plan to plan for development to enable Bantry to achieve its target population of 3,662, as set out in the objective BT-GO-01.

For the period of the County Development Plan 2022, Bantry has a population target of 3,662 representing growth of 900 persons. To accommodate this growth an additional 344 net new dwelling units will be required, of which the Plan sets out that 257 housing units can be delivered on residentially zoned land and the balance of 87 units can be delivered within the built footprint of the town. The Plan also sets out that in terms of delivering units within the existing footprint of the town, a number of options are available include regeneration and infill sites, reuse of vacant properties and 'living over the shop' opportunities and smaller infill sites.

The subject site, within the Town Centre of Bantry on Old Barrack Road, is also identified in the County Development Plan 2022 as a regeneration site, as set out in Table 5.2.9, and is the only regeneration area within Bantry. It is set out in BY-RA-01 that: *“This site is located in the town centre and is occupied by a number of derelict or underutilised buildings which impacts adversely on the visual amenities of the approach road into the town and therefore has been identified as an area requiring regeneration. Proposals for the redevelopment of the site should be guided by the provisions of Chapter 16 Built and Cultural Heritage in Volume One of the Plan”.*



Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022, Volume 5

The proposed development of 21 no. residential units, consisting of a mix of 1 and 2 bed houses and 1 and 2 bed apartments on a brownfield site within the Town Centre of Bantry, on land within a Regeneration Area, and involving the development of 14 no. new residential units and the retention, reuse and redevelopment of existing buildings to provide for 7 no. units within the Architectural Conservation Area is in accordance with the zoning objection BT-T-01 for Bantry.

Given that this site is sited on land that lies within the Town Centre of Bantry, where it is an objective to promote the town centre as the primary area for retail and mixed-use development, to encourage sensitive refurbishment / redevelopment of existing sites and promote public realm improvements whilst protecting the marine environment and built heritage, there are no land use objections to residential development on the subject land.

The proposed regeneration of the subject site would secure the redevelopment and regeneration of an area within the Town Centre identified as requiring regeneration, will add to the vibrancy of the town centre, will give rise to the reuse of vacant properties and the regeneration of the site, as proposed, is supported by and accords with the County Development Plan 2022.

Density of Development

Bantry is classified as a Main Town in the Cork County Council Development Plan 2022, with a population target to 2028 of 3,622. The subject land is sited on land that forms part of the Town Centre of Bantry, with the site also identified as a Regeneration Area in Bantry.

The density of development proposed is in the order of c. 74 units per hectare.

Having regard to the specific objective HOU 4-7 of the County Development Plan 2022, which identifies that a high housing density, with a minimum net density of 50 and with no limit on a maximum net density, which is applicable to town centres of the larger towns with a population >1,500 throughout the county, and accordingly, there are no objections to the density of development proposed.

Furthermore, the Section 28 “Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” 2024 state that “*development in rural towns and villages is tailored to the scale, form and character of the settlement and the capacity of services and infrastructure (including public transport and water services infrastructure).....the density of development at such locations should respond in a positive way to the established context*”. Having regard to the pattern of development in the vicinity of this site, including neighbouring terraces of two and three storey properties in the immediate vicinity, to the intention to re-purpose and re-activate uses within existing buildings within this site in a regeneration area in Bantry town, the density of development proposed is considered to be acceptable, would respond in a positive way to the established context within the town centre and would not conflict with the Cork County Development Plan 2022 or the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. The proposed development will fit appropriately into the urban fabric of Bantry and will provide for high quality public realm and place making design.

Architectural Heritage

There are no Protected Structures or structures recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) within this site.

Part of the subject site is sited within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), as designated in the Cork County Development Plan 2022, and the existing buildings within this site within the ACA are to be retained and regenerated. The Architectural Heritage comments prepared by the Conservation Officer are noted and it is agreed that the proposed development and regeneration of this site is an appropriate design response to the character of the area, which reflects the massing and proportions of extant buildings.

The interventions in the extant buildings onto Marino Street / Old Barrack Road are appropriate and represent an innovative and modern intervention to achieve access and safe movement, without compromising the character of the adjoining street, and respecting the existing heritage character. The interventions are appropriate and have had due consideration of the objectives HE 16-16, HE 16-18 and HE 16-21 of the County Development Plan.

Public Open Space

The public open space requirements of the scheme will be fulfilled by the provision of an overlooked centralised landscaped area, which will connect the new housing units with the existing structures to be redeveloped. The landscaped area will provide for connections between the upper portion of the site with the lower section and will also enable the movement of future occupiers and others through the site onto Old Barrack Road. Provision is also made for seating areas for future occupiers.

The area of public open space to be provided accounts for 17% of the site, which satisfies the requirements of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 and the requirements of Cork County Council’s Interim Policy on Recreation & Amenity. The extent of and quality of public open space to be provided for future occupiers is satisfactory.

Private Open Space

Private open space provisions to serve future occupiers of each apartment meet the requirements for private amenity space provision, as set out in the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines “Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments”, 2023. The provision of private amenity space to serve the new 1 and 2 bed dwellings is also considered to be satisfactory, particularly having regard to the high quality semi-private open space being provided within the scheme to serve future occupiers. Future residents will enjoy a high standard of amenity by reason of the centralised area of open space.

Car Parking/Bike Parking

The maximum car parking stands as set out in the Cork County Development Plan 2022 are set out in Table 12.6, which provides a maximum of 1.25 no. car parking spaces per apartment unit and a maximum of 2 spaces per dwelling unit. It is also set out in Table 12.6 that the car parking requirements for new developments do not apply to development located in Town Centres as identified in this plan where the development involves the re-use / refurbishment of an existing occupied or vacant building, any change of use or where small-scale infill developments (including residential) are proposed.

The subject proposal involves the re-use of vacant buildings on a brownfield site and a small-scale infill development to the northern side of Old Barrack Road in Bantry and is intended to provide residential accommodation for applicants on Cork County Council’s housing waiting list for social housing for the Bantry area, with no on-site parking provision for cars.

Having regard to the sitting of the subject site within the Town Centre of Bantry, with an established footpath along the southern site boundary and the ability to walk to the amenities within the Town Centre, coupled with the proximity of publicly available car parking facilities within the Town Centre, the approach to car parking proposals is considered as acceptable.

A small area of the site, towards the northeastern end of the site, can be used as a flexible set down parking area and fire tended access.

Services

Existing main services for water, foul and electricity will be used to service the 21 no. 1 and 2 bed houses and apartments. Uisce Eireann have confirmed via a pre-connection enquiry that both water and wastewater connections are feasible, without infrastructure upgrades.

There is an existing foul sewer which extends along the L-4745, falling northeast to southwest to the junction with the N71, and is connected into the existing combined sewer system. It is proposed to upsize this portion of the foul sewer pipe to 225 mm, as per the Confirmation of Feasibility issued by Uisce Eireann. A new foul drainage network will be required for the upper terrace of 13 no. units and this is to be designed in accordance with Uisce Eireann’s Code of Practice for Wastewater.

The majority of the proposed surface water drainage from the proposed site is to discharge to a new 225 mm storm water sewer to replace the existing land drain along the repaved section of the local road, the L-4745. Surface water is to be collected via a series of downpipes, channel drains and gullies before discharging into an on-site attenuation tank. Surface water shall be released via a flow controlled hydro break to the new 225 mm public storm sewer. Outflow from the site shall be restricted to greenfield runoff rate. Permeable paving will be provided to all walkways, where

practicable, to facilitate the discharge of surface water runoff at the front and rear of the upper terrace units. Attenuated storage, the provision of water butts and the use of permeable paving are mechanisms to be used into the SuDS surface water management regime.

A connection will be made to the public watermain to serve each of the dwellings / apartments.

Flood Risk

The subject site is not sited in an area of Bantry town that has been identified as being susceptible to flooding and is sited on land that is outside of Flood Zone A or Flood Zone B lands. There are no objections to the proposed redevelopment of the subject site and the provision of 21 no. residential units thereon from a flood risk perspective.

AA Screening

A 'Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination' report has been provided as part of the documents. Based on the Appropriate Assessment Screening process, it has been determined that the proposed project does not pose a risk of causing significant negative effects on any European site. A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

EIAR Screening

A Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report has been prepared and this Preliminary EIA Screening Report has concluded that the proposed development does not fall under any of the thresholds in Schedule 5 Part 1 for mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment and it does not or even meet the threshold regarding 'Infrastructure Projects – Urban Development' as the development occupies 0.285 ha and involves the development of only 21 residential units. The Screening Report concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be necessary for this proposed development.

An EIA assessment has been carried out and this concluded that based on a preliminary examination of the nature, size or location of the development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment and EIA is not required.

Ecology

The subject site not actively used at present and there is some existing vegetation within the site. New trees and planting to be planted in the area of open space should be native species, appropriate to the Bantry area.

Conclusion

The proposed development of the subject site to provide for 21 no. residential units, on a brownfield site identified in the County Development Plan 2022 as requiring regeneration, to the northern side of the Old Barrack Road in Bantry, is considered to be in accordance with the core strategy and objectives of the County Development Plan 2022, having regard to its location within the development boundary of Bantry, on lands within the Town Centre of the town,.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report is not required. Appropriate Assessment has been screened out. It is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie Barry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Ronnie Barry,
A/Senior Planner,
03/10/24.

Appendix A: EIS Assessment

Establishing if the proposal is a 'sub-threshold development':	
Planning Register Reference:	None provided.
Development Summary:	To construct 21 no. housing units at Old Barrack Road, Bantry
Was a Screening Determination carried out under Section 176A-C?	No, Proceed to Part A
A. Schedule 5 Part 1 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 1 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)? (Tick as appropriate)	
No	Proceed to Part B
B. Schedule 5 Part 2 - Does the development comprise a project listed in Schedule 5, Part 2 , of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it meet/exceed the thresholds? (Tick as appropriate)	
<p>Yes, the project is of a type listed but is <i>sub-threshold</i>:</p> <p>Class 10 'Infrastructure projects'. The threshold is the construction of more than 500 dwelling units. The proposed development is for 21 housing units which is substantially below this threshold.</p> <p>The proposed project is considered to be an urban development within the Town Centre of Bantry. The proposed development is 0.285 hectares which is below the 10 hectares threshold in other parts of a built-up area, therefore an EIAR is not required to be produced in accordance with Schedule 5 Part 2 (10) (b) (iv).</p>	Proceed to Part C
C. If Yes , has Schedule 7A information/screening report been submitted?	
No, Schedule 7A information/screening report has not been submitted by the applicant	Preliminary Examination required

Preliminary Examination:		
The planning authority shall carry out a preliminary examination of, at the least, the nature, size or location of the development.		
	Comment:	Yes/No/ Uncertain:
<p>Nature of the development: <i>Is the nature of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i></p> <p><i>Will the development result in the production of any significant waste, or result in significant emissions or pollutants?</i></p>	<p>No, this is predominantly a mixed use area and is sited within a Town Centre zoning.</p> <p>If constructed, the proposed residential development is considered to be modest in scale and will not generate excessive waste beyond the typical municipal type and quantities expected in a domestic setting.</p>	No
<p>Size of the development: <i>Is the size of the proposed development exceptional in the context of the existing environment?</i></p> <p><i>Are there cumulative considerations having regard to other existing and/or permitted projects?</i></p>	<p>The size of the proposal is modest and there are no existing or permitted projects that could give rise to cumulative impacts.</p>	No
<p>Location: <i>Is the proposed development located on, in, adjoining or does it have the potential to impact on an ecologically sensitive site or location?¹</i></p> <p><i>Does the proposed development have the potential to affect other significant environmental sensitivities in the area?</i></p>	<p>The proposed development does not overlap with any European site. There are seven Natura 2000 sites located within the 15 km of the site.</p> <p>No potential pathway for impact which would link the proposed development to 6 no. of the 7 no. Natura sites within 15 km of the site has been identified.</p> <p>The Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC lies approximately 8 km from the site and a tentative indirect hydrological connection was identified due to discharge of treated wastewater from Bantry WWTP to the waters of the inner Bantry Bay was identified. However, the AA Screening Report concludes that the Bantry WWTP has sufficient capacity to accept the additional loading as a result of the proposal and there is no evidence the current situation at the plant is impacting on the status of Bantry Bay, its Water Framework Directive status and European Designated sites which are hydrologically linked. It is concluded that the proposed development will not affect nutrient levels in the Bantry Bay nor will it impact on ex-situ qualifying interest species or qualifying species occurring within the SAC.</p>	No

¹ Sensitive locations or features includes European sites, NHA/pNHA, Designated Nature Reserves, land designated as a refuge for flora and fauna, and any other ecological site which is the objective of a CDP/LAP (including draft plans).

	An AA Screening Assessment has been prepared and on the basis of the objective information provided, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans / projects will not have a significant effect on any European site.	
Preliminary Examination Conclusion:		
Based on a preliminary examination of the nature, size or location of the development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. EIA is not required.		