

## Planning Report- 16 housing units, Distillery Lane, Midleton

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### Introduction

The proposed development envisages the construction of a 6 storey apartment block containing 16 no. dwellings on an urban brownfield site. It is intended that the end users of the building would be elderly residents

The site itself measures 0.11ha is of narrow rectangular configuration. An 3.5m high appealing stone wall defines the site boundaries. It is situated in a mixed use area. To the West of the site is the distillery lane development comprising offices, ground floor commercial and some apartments over. A series of public laneays also run through this area providing linkages to the main street. To the South there is a large surface public car park area and multistorey parking area associated with the distillery lane complex. To the immediate East there is a 3 storey commercial and apartment block and to the North there is a 4 storey residential apartment development

The site is subject to the *Town Centre/Neighbourhood Centre* land use zoning designation under the provisions of the *Cork County Development Plan 2022*. As with much of the town centre, the majority of the site carries a Flood Zone A designation.



Figure 3. View from neighbouring building looking north across the public car park towards site.



Figure 5. Birdseye view showing site. Building location denoted by yellow 'X'.

## Planning History



CCC Planning Register Map Post 2003- Site boundary outlined in red



Historic Register

No previous planning history on the subject site

## **Compatibility of Proposal with relevant Development Plans**

### **Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Frameworks**

A number of key policy objectives are noted as follows:

- National Policy Objective 3(a): Deliver at **least 40% of all new homes nationally within the built-up footprint of existing settlements.**
- National Policy Objective 3(c) Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprint.
- National Policy Objective 4: Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
- National Policy Objective 27: Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.

National Policy Objective 33: Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate

## **Regional Policy**

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

Under the RSES, Midleton is categorised as a ‘Metropolitan Town’. Metropolitan towns are among the fastest growing and youngest (age cohort) towns in the Region

The RSES states that the potential residential yield for Midleton is 5,255 units (including Water Rock UEA- 2,460 units). The proposed development of additional residential units is fully consistent with the policy objectives in the RSES

## County Development Plan 2022

The subject site is located within the built form of Midleton and is subject to the *Town Centre/Neighbourhood Centre* land use zoning designation under the provisions of the *Cork County Development Plan 2022*. In addition, the CDP sets out the growth projections for the settlement up to 2028. Midleton is expected to add a further 2, 648 dwellings over the plan period.

MD-T-01	<p>Town Centre Core area. This is the primary and preferred location for any new retail development in Midleton.</p> <p>a) Promote the development of this area as the primary location for retail and other uses that provide goods or services principally to visiting members of the public and the priority area and preferred location for new retail development.</p> <p>b) Prioritise the development of the Riverside Way Area into a new urban quarter, enhancing pedestrian and vehicular links with Main Street and creating new public realm spaces. Development proposals within this area should support the achievement of the Key Objectives for each Character Area as set out in the Framework Plan.</p> <p>c) Encourage greater use of backland areas and promote the development of brownfield sites within the town centre area where new development can positively contribute to the commercial vitality of the town centre.</p> <p>d) Encourage the use of upper floors of existing buildings for residential and office use.</p> <p>e) Continue to enhance the streetscape and heritage assets of the town centre and continue with environmental improvements.</p> <p>f) Encourage a sustainable mix of land uses in the core retail/town centre area. *</p>
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*Town centre zoning map*

Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, and the zoning of the subject site, the following objectives are also considered relevant

- *County Development Plan Objective PL 3-2: Encouraging Sustainable and Resilient Places*
- *County Development Plan Objective TCR 9-1: Town Centres*
- *County Development Plan Objective TCR 9-2: Vacancy and Regeneration*
- *County Development Plan Objective TM 12-9: Parking*
- *County Development Plan Objective HE 16-18: Architectural Conservation Areas*
- *County Development Plan Objective WM 11-15: Flood Risk Assessments*
- *County Development Plan Objective WM 11-17: Development in Flood Risk Areas*

### **Relevant Guidance Documents**

**The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines** issued in 2024 offer guidance on the design of new residential developments and the density of new developments.

**Design Standards for new apartments** guidelines 2022

**Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (2007)** – Provide best practice advice for layout and design of residential areas including provisions of facilities and recreational amenities.

### **Principle of the Proposal**

In terms of the Core Strategy of the Plan, Midleton is designated as a Metropolitan Town within the Cork Gateway for which the strategic aim includes critical population growth. The vision for Midleton as set out in the County Development Plan is to build on the success of the rail connection and to promote the continued development of the town and its hinterland

The Cork County Development Plan 2022 provides for the town to grow to 19, 423 persons up to 2028. This represents a growth of 6, 927 persons. In order to accommodate this level of population growth, an additional 2, 647 housing units will be required the majority of which are to be provided on the main residentially zoned land clusters across the settlement.

The subject site is zoned as “Town Centre “under the provisions of the CDP 2022. The provision of additional residential development within the town core area is desirable and meets wider aspirations for housing delivery and compact growth. As such I would be satisfied that the development proposed fully adheres to the provisions of the County Development Plan 2022 and therefore accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area

### **Density**

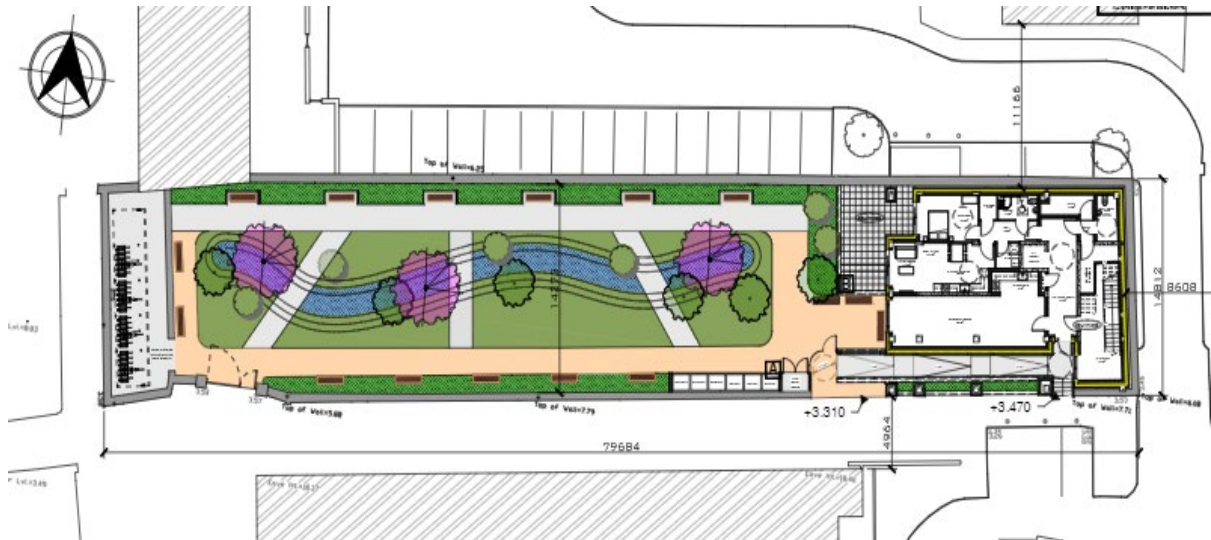
16no. housing units are proposed on an overall site area of 0.11ha equating to an overall density of approx. 138 dwellings/ per ha.

The CDP zoning identifies town centres as being suitable for “high density” development (i.e >50 per ha). In addition, table 3.3 of the recently published “ *Sustainable Residential Developments and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024)* states that “*residential densities in the range 50 dph to 150 dph (net) shall generally be applied in the centres and in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns*”. Outside of this density framework, the “Design Standards for new apartments” (2022) document identifies centrally located urban areas as being the ideal location for apartment developments.

The proposed development therefore meets the key parameters of each of these guiding documents

## Design/ layout

A design statement accompanies the application showing how the proposal has been considered relative to its surrounding context. The architects section has also engaged in early pre – planning on the proposal. Key elements for early consideration included the retention of the appealing site boundary wall, provision of private and public amenity and positioning/height of the block such that neighbouring developments are not unduly impacted



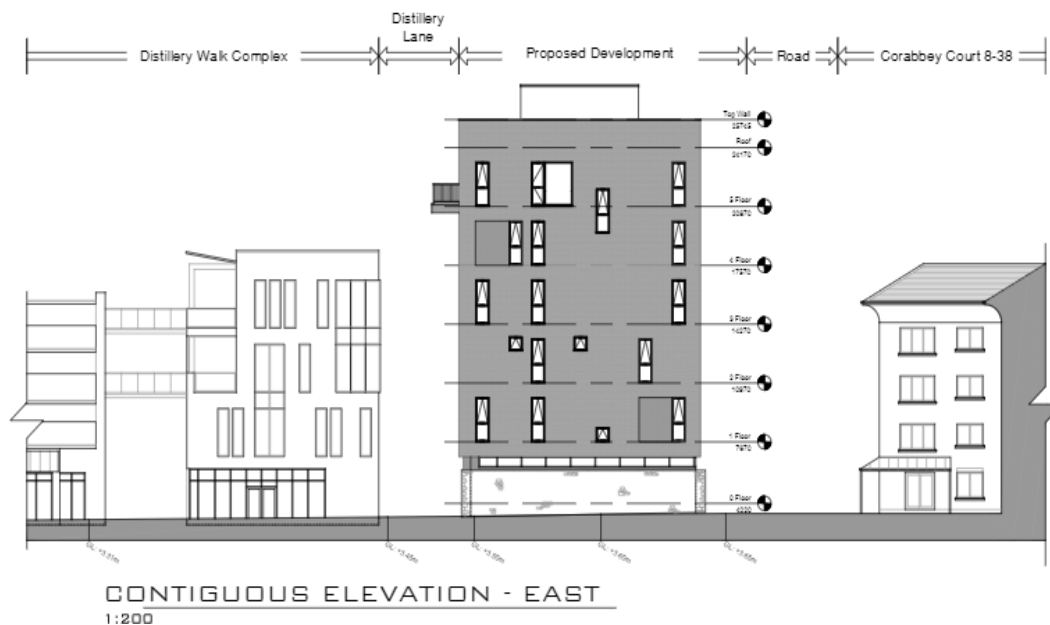
The layout has evolved to meet these identified issues. The proposed apartment block will be positioned on the Eastern end of the holding leaving the Western extent of the site to be developed as an appealing/ generous residents garden enclosed by the existing stone wall boundary (62% of the overall site area). This boundary wall will be supported/ strengthened as part of the construction process. The location of the main building block to the Eastern end helps maximise the separation between the proposed development and the existing built up area to the West and also does not impede the main commercial/mixed use building to the SW. In addition the site positioning and use of a narrower tower also provides a focal point in the context of the adjoining car park area. The proposed development also provides for a community room on the ground floor directly adjacent the proposed garden area. The inclusion of a community room and garden should help foster social interactions across the development as well as providing an appealing amenity space for residents.

Aesthetically, the site is within a designated Architectural Conservation Area thus the architects section also engaged with the conservation officer. The conservation officer has indicated general satisfaction with the design approach (see appendix A). In relation to the materials used the conservation officer has noted that *"A light coloured textured clay brick – brick in various forms is part of the material pallet in the Middleton area, its use here is broadly*



*speaking acceptable. The brick should weather well and retain a sense of high quality finish which is appropriate within the ACA. The windows are proposed to be aluminium and balcony rails to be steel – again this should weather well and retain a strong sense of quality finish over time..”*

The building itself is a six storey structure (22m) though it has a narrow overall width (18.8m). There are 3 apartments proposed for each floor with a single unit and community room on ground floor. Surrounding heights tend to range 3-4 storey. A photomontage has been submitted to support the overall height. While it is taller than its immediate surrounds, it will not be visible from main street nor will it form a conspicuous structure across the wider settlement where taller structures are more readily visible (i.e Midleton Distillery to the East). Furthermore the building also fronts a large surface car parking area thus the character of this area is less defined with a variety of building types and uses in the vicinity. Scope therefore exists for an individual structure of the type proposed.



### **Compatibility with Apartment Design Standards**

With regard the operation of the new apartments, I refer to the Dept of Env publication “Design Standards for new apartments” (2022). This publication sets out minimum standards that should apply in relation to new apartments.

In the main however the overall mix of units provided is considered reasonable and adheres to the specific planning policy requirements as outlined in the guidelines (SPPR 1&2)

While a schedule of accommodation has not been provided, the published standards indicate the minimum floor areas for 1 bed apartments as 45sqm. All the apartments proposed exceed the minimum requirement (55sqm)

All apartments also have a level of private amenity spaces ranging from min 5.4sqm. This meets the minimum requirements set out under the guidelines. All balconies are accessed from the living rooms, something also recommended by the guidelines and the majority of the units (2 per floor) have a dual aspect.

Storage areas are also provided for each of the apartments.

A communal refuse storage area has been provided at ground level as well as a 24no. bike storage lockup on the Western end of the site.

On the basis of the foregoing I am generally satisfied that the proposed development adheres to the requirements of the "Design Standards for new apartments" guidelines

### **Connectivity**

The site is located in Middleton town centre thus the proposed apartments are within easy reach of the main amenities of the town. The site therefore site scores well in terms of a sustainable prospect where walkability will be to the fore

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed development has been considered in terms of its impact on the residential amenity of surrounding property. To this end, it is noted that the majority of the proposed living room/ balcony openings are positioned on the Western side of the building where they face the community garden area. As a result, these balcony areas retain a separation distance of approx. 50m to the neighbouring development to the West do not directly overlook any private garden spaces. The balcony areas are also recessed within the footprint of the building to prevent lateral overlooking of the developments to the N and S.

The most potentially vulnerable development is located to the North (the Corabbey Court development). Openings on the Northern elevation are limited and the narrow overall width of the proposal means the overall span of potentially overlooking windows is concentrated on a relatively small element of the Corabbey court development. The design statement submitted with the drawings notes that there is a separation distance of 16m between these opposing upper floor windows (a distance recommended in the *The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines*) In the instance where it falls beneath that figure, it is highlighted that *the façade of the opposite existing building contains what appears to be a circulation core with no windows to habitable spaces (see images below)*

With regard to overshadowing, the positioning of the structure on the Eastern end of the plot means there will be no significant overshadowing of the distillery lane development to the SW. Similarly, and as noted above, the narrow overall width of the proposal should limit overshadowing of Corabbey court development directly North. An overshadowing analysis has also been submitted which demonstrates this position.

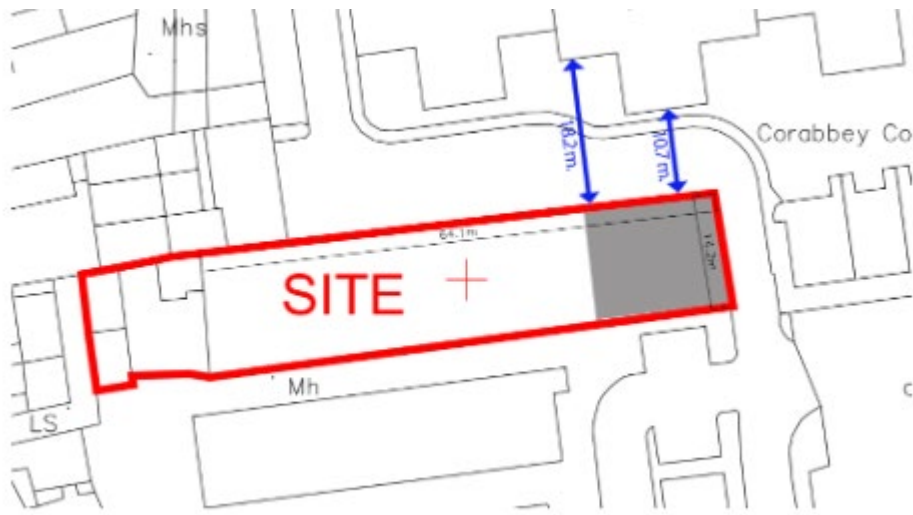


Figure 20. Site plan showing relationship to existing buildings.



Figure 21. Facade of existing apartment building to the north

## Roads/Parking

The applicant has indicated that no on-site parking is to be provided with elderly residents the intended final users.

In general terms and based on current parking requirements as set out under appendix D of the current CDP, 16no. units would typically require 20 spaces (based on 1.25 spaces per unit).

In relation to car parking, the general thrust for all new housing/ apartments schemes within town centres has been to limit the level of parking provision i.e. the “Design Standards for new apartments” guidelines propose a relaxation in parking requirements, particularly where the site is centrally located and close to public transport. The subject site is less than 50m from Midleton main Street and is approx.. 800m from the commuter rail station (Cork-Midleton), CDP parking standards are maximum thus in the context of the new guidelines and the central location of the site a lower parking provision would certainly be justifiable and desirable. I also note item 12.6 (3) as per the CDP (see below). To incentivise town centre redevelopment, parking requirements are waived on suitable sites. Having regard to the foregoing therefore and the relatively small scale of the development, the non provision of parking is deemed acceptable

Finally in relation to car parking I would add that a large public car parking area is located immediately adjacent to the site. This could cater for visitors/ residents etc

A Bike parking lock up has been provided to the Western end of the site. The level of bike parking provided meets CDP requirements

Table 12.6: Car Parking Requirements for New Developments (Maximum per sq. m.)	
Development Type	Parking Provision Requirement
Other cultural / recreational & leisure uses	Dependent on nature and location of use.
Residential: Dwelling houses Residential: Apartments	2 spaces per dwelling unit 1.25 spaces per apartment unit
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the case of any development type not specified above, the planning authority will determine the parking requirement having regard to the traffic and movement generation associated with the development and the other objectives of this plan.</li> <li>2. A reduced car parking provision may be acceptable where the planning authority are satisfied that good public transport links are already available or planned and/or a Transport Mobility Plan for the development demonstrates that a high percentage of modal shift in favour of the sustainable modes will be achieved through the development.</li> <li>3. These requirements 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.</li> </ol>	

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
Sheltered housing	1 unit	5 units
Student Accommodation	2 bedrooms	5 bedrooms

### Servicing

Subject to Irish Water connection agreement. Public services would appear to be available to cater for the development however final connection agreement likely dependent on network upgrades (expected Q4 2025) as per similar developments across the settlement

### Flood Risk

The site is within an area identified as being at risk of flooding (Flood Zone A and B) and the proposed development would therefore be considered “highly vulnerable”. A SSFRA and drainage report has been submitted with the application and I understand the CFP Engineer has been involved in the design process. A justification test has been submitted for the proposal and same would meet the requirements of this test. The SSFRA indicates that the proposal will not cause risk of flooding elsewhere and will also benefit from the Midleton Flood Relief Scheme. SuDS and other drainage mechanisms have been built into the large garden area.

**The CFP engineer will need to review this element.**

### EIAR Screening

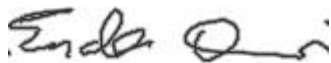
**To be completed by the S/P**

### AA Screening

Ecology section report required


**Conclusion**

The proposal is located within the Middleton town development boundary and will deliver 16 additional dwelling houses to the town centre area. Provided adequate servicing is in place to cater for the proposed development and subject to satisfactory supporting reports from ecology and the Coastal and Flood projects section, there would appear to be no fundamental objection to the proposal from a Planning perspective.



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22/5/2024



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22/5/2024