

*Housing for people with disabilities at No 2,3 and 4 The Gardens,  
Rope Walk, Blackrock, Cork City, Co. Cork.*

## **Design Statement**

06<sup>th</sup> February 2025



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ailtiri Architects Ltd. have been commissioned to prepare a planning application for proposed accommodation for people with disabilities at The Gardens, Blackrock, Cork City, Co. Cork.

This design statement has been prepared to accompany the aforementioned application as it is a new residential development proposal, and it should be read in conjunction with the application drawings, reports and schedules.

The proposed development consists of three single storey three-bed dwellings in total.

### **Development Description:**

*Demolition of the existing semi-detached bungalow, including rear extension, and demolition of existing single-storey shed and front boundary wall, at No.2 The Gardens, Rope Walk, Blackrock, Cork.*

*Construction of a new housing development comprising three number, single-storey, three-bedroom accessible residential units.*

*Shared surface with parking area to include three wheelchair accessible parking spaces, and a pedestrian path providing access to proposed units at No.3 The Gardens and No.4 The Gardens, Rope Walk.*

*All associated site services, including public lighting, drainage, landscaping, re-located gated vehicular entrance and site boundary works, including new front boundary wall.*

*Connection of site services, including connections for foul drainage and surface water drainage systems.*

The design of the development has been informed by the relevant planning policies at local and national level and utilises a site within Blackrock, Cork City, currently occupied by a derelict semi-detached bungalow with a hard landscaped area to the front and a large garden to the rear.

This design statement will address the design principles that have informed the proposed development, how it will affect and be affected by its immediate and wider context, and how the development has been appropriately designed for this specific site.

MAP 06

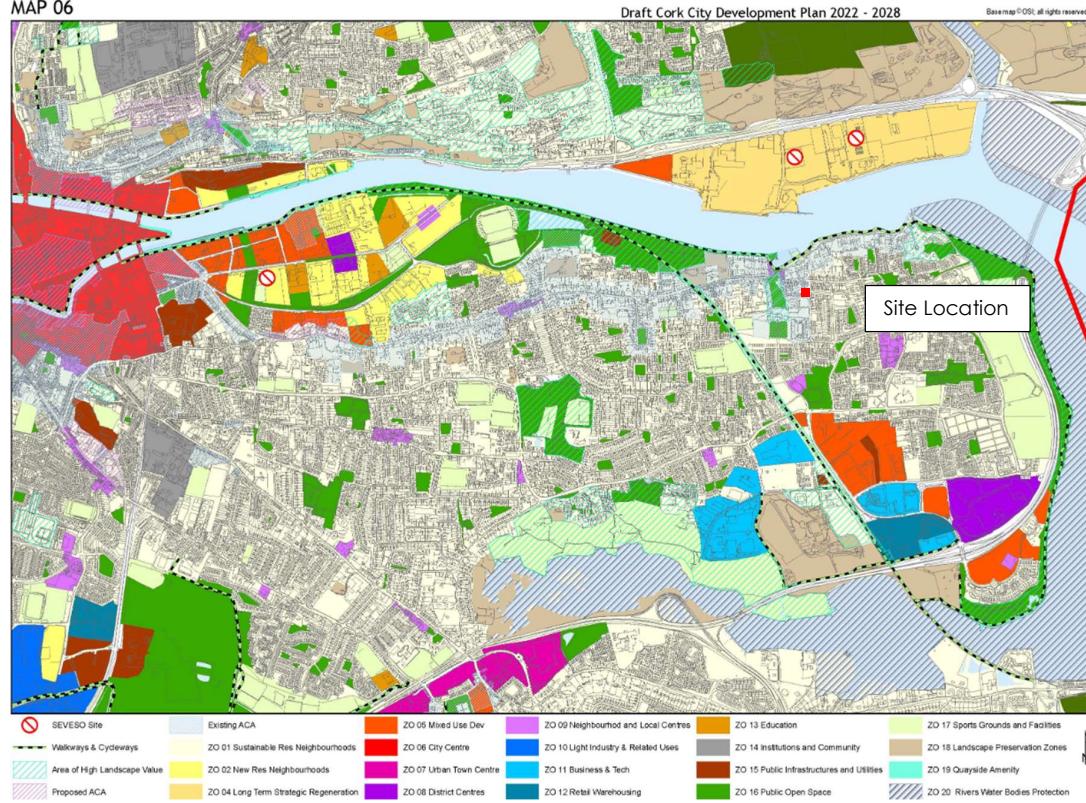


Fig 1: Cork City Development Plan Zoning Map 6 with site location highlighted red. The site is located within Blackrock ACA (ZO 01 – Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods)

### Sub-Area C: Blackrock Village

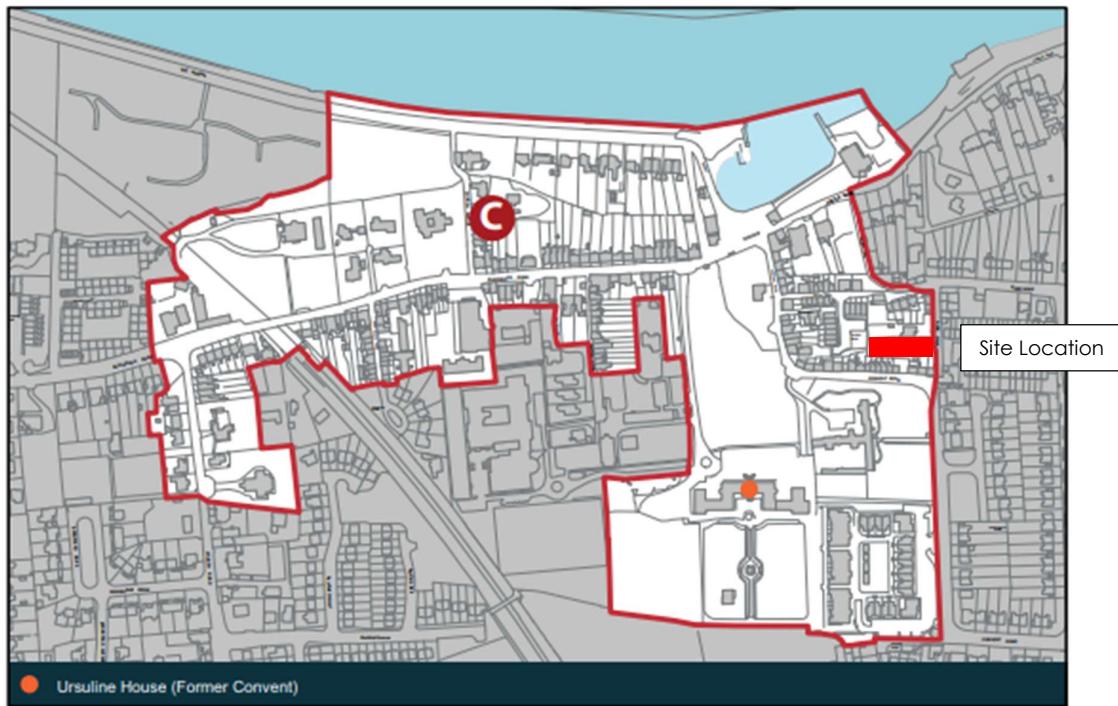


Fig 2: Blackrock ACA Sub-Area C: Blackrock Village, Cork City Development Plan

## 1.1 SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

2317 HOUSING AT THE GARDENS, ROPE WALK						Accommodation Schedule
Unit No.	Type	Area m <sup>2</sup>	Area ft <sup>2</sup>	Beds	Person	Parking Provided
1	A	110	1184	3	5P	1
2	B	104.9	1129	3	5P	1
3	C	99.4	1070	3	5P	1
		314.3	3383.13	9		3
Visitor Parking Provision:						0
*The proposed site features on street parking						
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>314.3</b>	<b>3383.13</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>3</b>

Parking provision of 1 space per unit

Above rate is taken from the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022-28 (Chapter 11 - Zone 3)  
Where maximum parking provision for 3-3+ bedroom units is 2.25 per dwelling.

Fig 3: Schedule of Accommodation by author.

Note: The provision for parking and visitor parking has been met. On-street parking is also available on Rope Walk outside of the property.

## 2.0 SITE

### 2.1. SITE LOCATION

The proposed development site is located within a residential area of Blackrock, Cork. The location of the site is shown in figures 4 and 5 below.



Fig. 4 : Aerial Image taken from Google maps – Edited by author; <https://www.google.com/maps>

Aerial Image taken from original project scope; Lot B. Site outlined in red above is the extent of the property, No. 2 The Gardens, Rope Walk. For the revised redline site boundary refer to the architects site drawing 2317-P-1000-P01.

The brief asked for the design, approval, construction and handover of 3 no. accessible residences, adjusted boundary treatments, landscaping, site development works and ancillary services. The existing derelict building and sheds on site are to be demolished. Demolition and development works will need to include remedial works on the existing boundary wall between the house to be demolished and the adjoining occupied bungalow. The proposed development will adjoin the existing bungalow at No.1 The gardens, and occupy the gardens at the rear of the site with dwellings that have been suitably designed to appropriately respond to their context.



Fig. 5: Site Location Map, site outlined in red (Source: OSI)

## 2.2. SITE SUITABILITY

The proposed brownfield site is located to the East of Cork city and is served by a number of local amenities, including schools (Scoil Ursula Primary School and Ursuline Secondary School), shops at Blackrock Village / Blackrock Pier, Cork Boat Club, Blackrock Castle and walks along the Marina at the River Lee, and Blackrock Railway Greenway Cycle Route. The site is also in close proximity to the Ursuline Convent. The site is well served by public transport, and there is a bus stop on Convent Road a 7-minute walk to the South of the site. The site is approximately a 1 hour walk from Cork City centre.

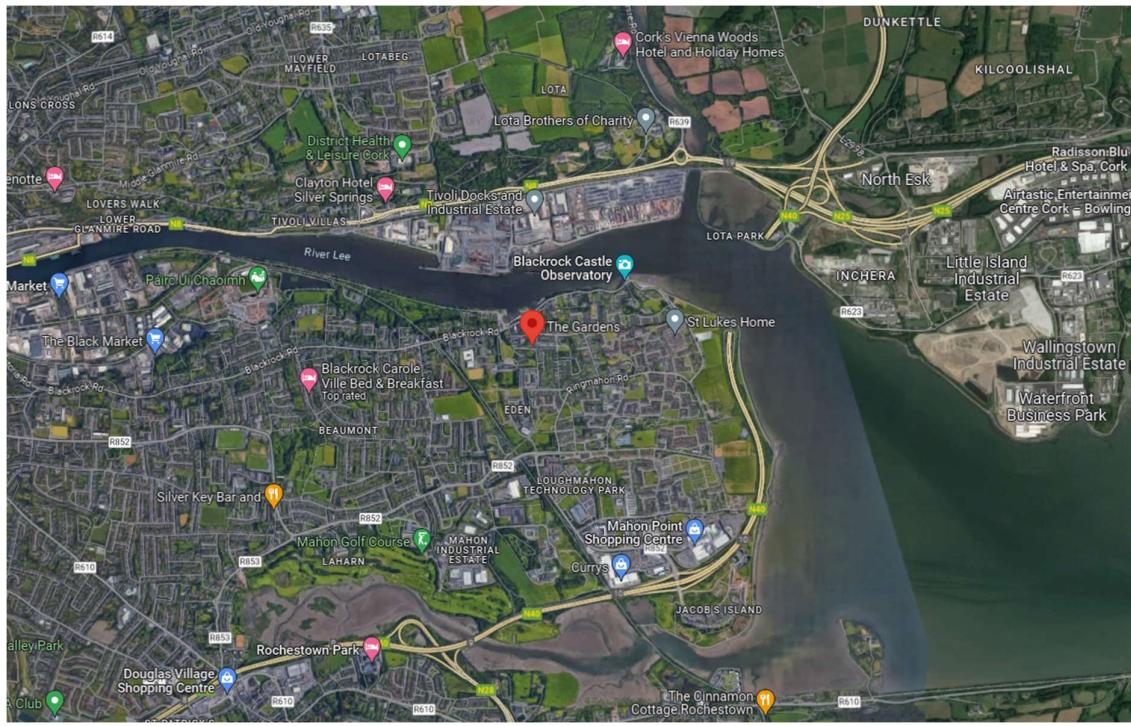


Fig 6: Aerial view showing amenities in the vicinity of the proposed development site (<https://www.google.com/maps>)

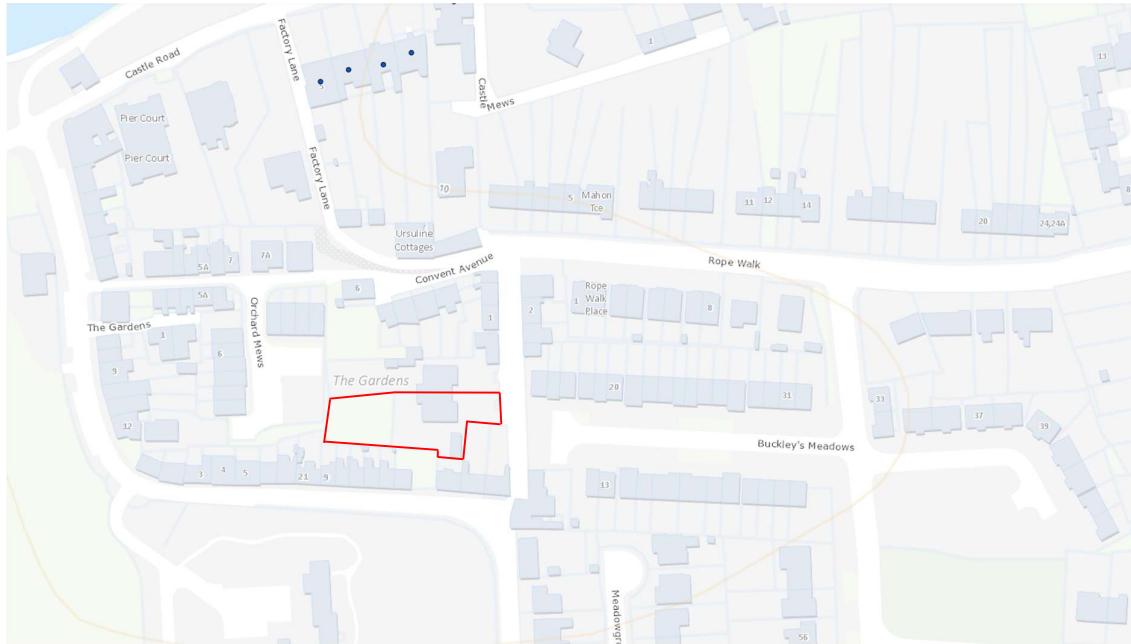


Fig 7: Map excerpt from archaeology.ie indicating any monuments or protected structures in the vicinity.

### 2.3. CHARACTERISTICS

The site is located approximately 4.5km from Cork City Centre and measures 0.104 ha / 1044 sq.m in area. The site has the advantage of a generous rear and side gardens and is bounded by existing units and gardens.

The property is owned by Cork City Council. The site is currently occupied by a derelict semi-detached bungalow with a hard landscaped area to the front and a large garden to the rear, and benefits from a relatively flat topography.

The site boundaries are formed by approx. 2.5m high exposed blockwork wall along the south boundary (which separates the site from the properties located at the Upper Convent Avenue), a palisade fence to the west, and a low level rendered wall with vehicular gate to the front facing onto Rope Walk. The boundary between the site of No.1 and No.2 are formed by low level vegetation/shrub.



Fig. 8: Site analysis by author indicating prevailing wind, traffic noise, vegetation, services & fall of site and context

Access is via Rope Walk, to the East of the site, which currently has no public footpath. A proposed shared surface forms a front yard for the three units. Facing a shared street, the development will be well served with public parking, but with a site area of 0.104 ha it is possible to make provision for on-site parking for the number of units proposed.

The site is located in a primarily residential neighbourhood in close proximity to the Ursuline Convent. The streetscape formed by the 2-storey buildings informs the scale along Rope Walk, in contrast to the semi-detached bungalow set back from the front. Refer to the site photos section overleaf.

## 2.4 EXISTING STRUCTURES

The site is currently occupied by a semi-detached single storey bungalow and a detached garden shed/garage. The footprint of the house measures approx. 110 sqm. No.2 The Gardens, Rope Walk, has been vacant for several years and as a result is now in a near dereliction state. The unit appears to be of masonry wall construction, with cut timber hipped roof construction with cement slate covering. The walls are wet dashed and painted. The building has u-PVC windows throughout. Currently all of the openings have been blocked-up with metal shutters, this has presumably been done as a security measure. In total there are two rendered chimney stacks: one near the junction of the main hipped roof and the porch roof. The second chimney stack is located on the party wall between units No.1 and No.2. The second chimney stack is presumably shared between the semi-detached units. There is a free-standing garden shed/garage located to the west of the unit. The structure consists of single leaf masonry walls with corrugated asbestos sheets on the roof. There are also several garden sheds and a small greenhouse to the rear and the house. Refer to the site photos section overleaf.

## 2.5 SITE PHOTOS



Fig.9 : View of the existing bungalow and adjacent property looking West



Fig. 10 : Rear view of the existing bungalow land adjacent bungalow looking East



Fig. 11 : Detailed view of the existing shed and adjacent property looking South



Fig. 12: View from the West of the site looking Northwest



Fig. 13 : View of adjacent structures from the East of the site looking Southwest



Fig. 14 : View of the site entrance gate looking Northeast

### 3 SITE STRATEGY

The proposed layout places a single storey structure accommodating three 3-bedroom units along an easily accessible communal space, with wide footpaths and patios exploiting the southern exposure of the location. The most eastern unit continues the scale of the existing semi-bungalow in the north and provides an extended frontage to the street elevation.

The orientation of the dwellings has been arranged to obtain the maximum benefits from natural light, but also to address Rope Walk with the Eastern unit. The dwellings address the public green space to the south, while the front façade of unit 1 is facing Rope Walk to the east. The massing and typology of the proposed dwellings is sympathetic and responsive to the surrounding properties. The proposed treatments and finishes incorporate render finishes in contrasting shades to articulate entrances, brick finish in a selected colour to reference the surrounding materiality, and glazing elements in contemporary and robust finishes.

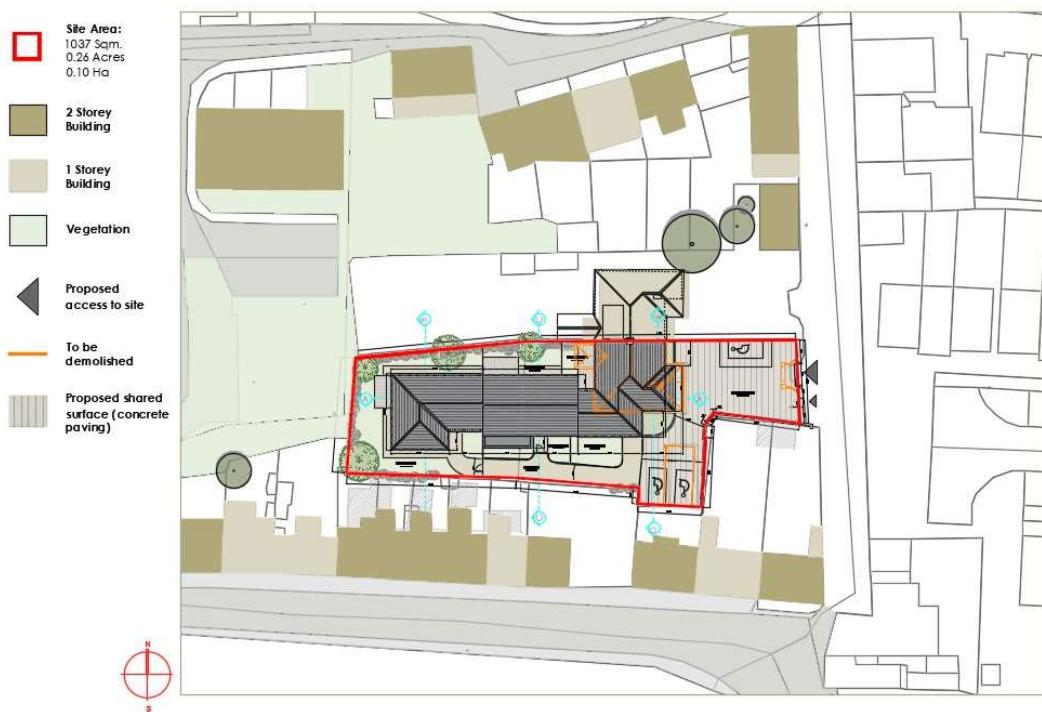
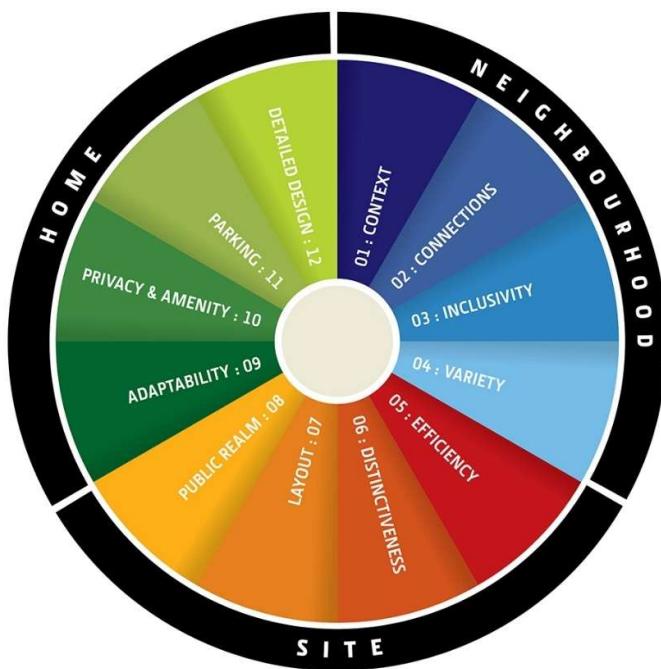


Fig. 15: Proposed Site Strategy Drawing by author.

#### 4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

The proposed development seeks to preserve the distinctive character of the area in accordance with the requirements set out by the Blackrock ACA, and re-use a previously underused residential site, whilst providing quality housing that has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to respond to the site in an appropriate manner. The development seeks to be site-specific, to add to the visual character of the existing community, and to provide well-designed, quality housing that will be beneficial to the existing community.

#### 5 URBAN DESIGN CRITERIA



Quality Housing & Universal Design guidelines, thus making them adaptable for future use as accommodation for people with disabilities in accordance with universal design principles.

The development has been considered and designed under the 12 criteria as outlined in the Urban Design Manual for residential development.

Fig. 16 : 12 Urban Design Principles taken from: Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide.

##### 5.1– Context

The proposed development site is currently occupied by a single-storey, semi-detached dwelling with a very generous garden stretching all the way to the Western boundary. It is proposed to demolish the derelict dwelling, to be able to develop the site with 3 new dwellings of similar typology and form. These dwellings will exceed minimum requirements under the Design Manual for



Fig. 17 : 3D Aerial view of site (Google Maps) indicating the proposed orientation & connections.

The neighbouring properties consist of predominantly two-storey, terraced dwellings / townhouses. The scale of the surrounding houses will be maintained within the proposal. The massing, density, and scale of the proposed dwellings is sympathetic to the neighbouring properties to the south of the proposed communal space. They are also responsive to the existing bungalow by respecting its scale. By addressing Rope Walk to the east it will enhance the character of the streetscape. The proposed scheme respects the existing context through the use of simple forms.



Fig. 18 : Rope Walk streetscape looking South



Fig. 19 : Entrance to Rope Walk looking South from Mahon Terrace



Fig. 20 : View of the Western site boundary from Convent Avenue looking Southeast

## 5.2 – Connectivity

The proposed scheme has regard to the existing character of the area by paying attention to the established building lines, proportion, and materials of surrounding buildings.

The entrance gate into the site will be replaced with a more appropriate design to accommodate easier vehicular access for the residents.

The site is also well served by public transport links, with a bus stop located a seven-minute walk south of the proposed dwellings.



Fig. 21a: Turning analysis of the proposed parking space 1.



Fig. 21b: Turning analysis of the proposed parking space 2.



Fig. 21c: Turning analysis of the proposed parking space 3.

### 5.3 – Inclusivity

All three proposed dwellings have been sized and laid out in accordance with the principles of universal design. They offer level access entrance and private patio areas, with wet room style bathrooms and scope for wheelchair turning in all spaces to offer future flexibility to the residents. The bedrooms indicate transfer zones around beds and turning circles / manoeuvring space at wardrobes. The proposed single storey layouts are ideal for achieving these principles, such as equitable use, flexibility, simplicity and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and appropriate space and size.

The proposed open spaces have ample amenities to support people of all ages and abilities. The proposed communal green space is over-looked by the proposed dwellings and is easily accessible from them. Ample private open space has also been afforded to the rear/side of the proposed dwellings.

### 5.3 – Variety

The proposed development is complementing an already established and existing residential neighbourhood in the area. As such, the proposed dwellings are in keeping with the variety already present within the community whilst affording clean lines and a simple palette of materials. The proposed dwellings are single-storey, extending what was previously present on the site, but with dwellings which have been more carefully and thoughtfully considered, and which are more site-responsive than the existing bungalow to be demolished. (See image below of former dwellings to be demolished).



Fig. 22: Photo of existing bungalow to be demolished.

### 5.5 – Efficiency

The development includes the redevelopment of a currently vacant, but previously occupied site. The density of the corner site will increase to approx. 28 units per ha, with three dwellings being provided to replace the bungalow to be demolished. The proposed dwellings make more efficient use of the plot, addressing both the communal green space to the south, and Rope Walk to the east, and taking more advantage of the orientation to maximise the benefits of natural light. Sufficient car parking is provided within the curtilage of the units, with improved vehicular access. In addition, larger, more usable private open spaces are offered with each unit.



Fig. 23: Street view from Rope Walk of the existing property.

### 5.6 - Distinctiveness

The distinctiveness of the proposed dwellings is primarily derived from their location. The proposed dwellings will occupy a site adjacent to the existing semi-bungalow at No. 1 The Gardens. The development is responding to the scale of the existing dwelling, responding to the existing character of the area by paying attention to the established building lines, proportion, and materials of surrounding buildings. The proposed dwellings address both Rope Walk as well as the proposed communal green space to the south of the units. By taking advantage of this position, the proposed dwellings respect the existing context through the use of simple forms, whilst also providing an interface with the wider context to the neighbourhood.

## 5.7 – Layout

The proposed layout comprises a new terrace of 3 no. single storey 3-bed units with pitched roofs arranged about an L-shape layout. The front unit, facing Rope walk has retained the building line of the semi-detached bungalow. This layout maximises the site configuration while maximising daylight penetration with its north-south orientation. Any risk of overlooking has been minimised by the configuration of the scheme, the retention of the existing boundary walls and the use of a single storey typology through. The layout of the buildings results in the creation of a shared surface to the front which is overlooked by the units. This shared space along the southern façade forms a paved front yard where 3 no. parking spaces have been allowed for. This parking arrangement has direct access from Rope Walk. Each of the units has its own private rear garden. Access to these rear gardens from the street is through each unit, side access has not been allowed for. Bin storage is located to the front of each unit in the buffer zone.



Fig. 24 : Proposed Site Layout by author showing the proposed dwellings & their relationship to the existing bungalow.

Appropriately and sufficiently sized usable private amenity space has been provided to the side or rear of each dwelling, as is outlined in objective 11.5 of the Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028, which requires that houses should have at least 48 sqm of private open space. The proposed layout for the dwellings is shown in figure 24 above.

## **5.8 - Public Realm**

The proposed housing units are linked to a newly proposed shared surface, forming a paved entrance yard at the site entrance from Rope Walk. Separated by a low wall, a sliding gate for vehicular access and a pedestrian gate, this pedestrian-friendly forecourt will contribute to the quality of the existing streetscape along Rope Walk, and it is designed to support any future improvement of this area.

## **5.9 – Adaptability**

The proposed dwellings have been designed to comply with the 2022 Design Manual for Quality Housing and the Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The three units can be used by families of all ages and abilities. In accordance with universal design principles, the proposed dwellings have been designed to be adaptable to future requirements and allow for residents that require a carer, should the need arise. Layouts can also adapt to a different use and have potential to be extended towards the communal open space.

## **5.10 - Privacy & Amenity**

All of the proposed units are provided with private open space in the form of rear gardens and green buffer zone to the South.

The proposed dwellings have been provided with generous private amenity spaces to the rear and front. An inclusion of native shrubs/small trees to the back gardens is also proposed so as to increase the privacy and prevent overlooking. To the front they have been oriented in such a manner as to address the communal green space with the pedestrian access path and Rope Walk, whilst also maintaining their privacy by utilising patios, setbacks or canopies. Windows have been positioned to avoid over-looking of neighbouring properties while maximising light to the interior spaces. The dwellings will be constructed so as to prevent acoustic transfer between the two and separating boundaries between the gardens have been sensitively considered to offer privacy, security and reduce maintenance over the lifetime.

## **5.11 – Parking**

Given the infill nature of the proposed development it is expected that there will be a low level of private car ownership thus a reduced demand for on-site parking. It is proposed that any parking requirements for the new infill housing will be accommodated within the front area of the site (off Rope Walk) within the site boundary. The site is located near a public transport link approx. 300m from the nearest bus stop (Bus Route 212) located in the Blackrock Village, and 750m from Greenway Mahon. The Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 allows for a maximum of 2.25 parking spaces per unit in City Suburbs and Urban Towns. To provide for a diverse range of users, the proposed development has been designed with the provision of one parking space for each dwelling. Additional visitor parking space is available outside the curtilage of the development.

## **5.12 - Detailed Design**

The massing and typology of the proposed dwellings is sympathetic and responsive to the surrounding properties. The proposed treatments and finishes incorporate render finishes in contrasting shades to articulate entrances, brick finish in a selected colour to reference the surrounding materiality, and glazing elements in contemporary and robust finishes. The orientation of the units has been arranged so as to get the maximum benefits from natural light, but also to address the East-West aspect of Rope Walk and Convent Avenue within the existing neighbourhood. The units address a communal green space to the south of the site, and also Rope Walk, to the east. The design and layout of the proposed dwellings will allow for easy maintenance. The location of bin stores has been thoughtfully considered so as to not

negatively affect the visual amenity of the area. In order to fully integrate the adjacent buildings into the scheme, it is proposed to provide new curtilage treatment, providing upgrade/new boundary walls/fences where it is required.

It is envisaged that, by replacing the derelict bungalow at No.2 Rope Walk with a unit complementing the existing bungalow No.1 Rope Walk to the North, and redeveloping the vacant Western portion of the site with carefully designed, quality accommodation, there will be a positive impact on the aesthetic character of the area, and that the development will be a positive and welcome addition to the community.



Fig. 26: Proposed Elevations by author indicating the form, massing and material palette of the proposed dwellings.

## 6 SITE SERVICES

A topographic survey was provided by Cork City Council with the brief documents. An MBS of the existing structures and a GPR survey were carried out on the site in addition to site investigation works. These surveys and reports have all been appended to the Part VIII Application pack.

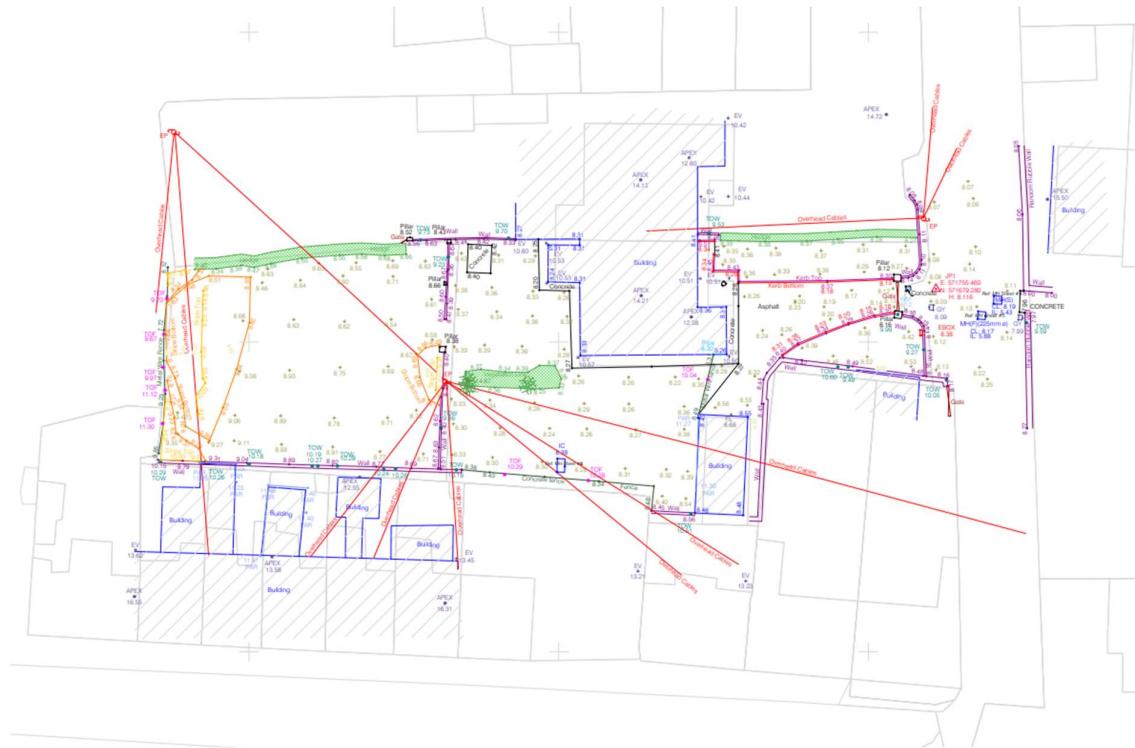


Fig. 27: Example of the site information – Survey carried out of the area.

There is an existing foul sewer located on Rope Walk, to the east of the site. There is also an existing foul private drain traversing the site. It is proposed to discharge the foul effluent from the proposed development to the existing foul sewer on Ropewalk, to the east of the site.

There is an existing surface water sewer located on Rope Walk, to the east of the site.

It is proposed to discharge the surface water from the proposed development to the existing surface water sewer on Rope Walk, to the east of the site.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in the form of permeable paving has been provided to manage the surface water on the paved area of the development. The surface water discharge from the remainder of the site will be attenuated and discharged to the surface water sewer via a flow control device that will limit the rate of discharge.

Please refer to accompanying documents and reports from the relevant engineers for additional/more detailed information relating to site services.

There is an existing 25mm diameter watermain located on Rope Walk located to the East of the site. There is also a 100mm diameter watermain located on Upper Convent Road, which is located to the South of the site. It is proposed to connect the proposed development to the existing 100mm diameter watermain and a new fire hydrant for the development will be provided.

It is proposed that the new units would be afforded space and water heating via air to water heat pumps or similar in accordance with the guidelines of TGD L 2022.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been designed and located to best integrate with its surrounding environment and meets the policies and requirements as outlined in the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

It adheres to residential design standards and guidance contained within the Cork City Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028, and has been designed to provide high quality accommodation, as outlined in the 2022 Design Manual for Quality Housing in addition to the universal design standards.

The proposed development seeks to complement and enhance the existing neighbourhood, and maximise a previously underused corner plot, currently occupied by a derelict semi-detached bungalow, whilst providing quality housing that has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to respond to the site in an appropriate manner. The development seeks to be site-specific, to add to the visual character, security & amenity of the existing plot. In addition, we intend to provide well-designed, quality housing that will be beneficial to the existing community and the end user alike.

## 8 APPENDIX A – QUALITY HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Housing Quality Assessment - Housing at Rope Walk, Co. Cork															Figures taken from Design Manual for Quality Housing (Jan 2022)							
Unit No.	Type	Bed / Person	Target Gross Floor Area per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Gross Floor Area +10% (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Gross Floor Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Ceiling Heights GF	Aspect	Min. Living Room Area per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Living Room Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Min. Agg. Living Area per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Agg. Living Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Min. Agg. Bed Area per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Agg. Bed Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Min. Storage Area per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Storage Area (m <sup>2</sup> )*	Recommended Living Rm Width per QHSC (m)	Provided Living Room Width (m)	Recommended Bedroom Areas per QHSC (m <sup>2</sup> )	Provided Bedroom Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )	Recommended Bedroom Width per QHSC (m)	Provided Bedroom Widths (m)	Fully Compliant
1	A	3 Bed / 5 P	82.0	90.2	110	2.7	E/W	13	41.5	34	41.5	32	39.3	5	6.5	3.8	4.2	13, 11.4 & 7.1	16.7, 13.4 & 9.2	2.8 (double) & 2.1 (single)	3.4, 3.17 & 3.1	Yes
2	B	3 Bed / 5 P	82.0	90.2	104.9	2.7	N/S	13	37.2	34	37.2	32	35	5	8.9	3.8	5.1	13, 11.4 & 7.1	15.8, 11.8 & 7.4	2.8 (double) & 2.1 (single)	4.1, 3.3 & 2.2	Yes
3	C	3 Bed / 5 P	82.0	90.2	99.4	2.7	N/S	13	33.6	34	33.6	32	37.5	5	5.9	3.8	4.2	13, 11.4 & 7.1	15.3, 15.1 & 7.1	2.8 (double) & 2.1 (single)	3.5, 3.8 & 2.7	Yes
TOTAL FLOOR AREA PROVIDED:				314.3																		

Note: Minimum areas or widths can vary by up to 5% provided overall dwelling area is compliant