hw planning

# Density Assessment

## Proposed Residential Development at Cooney's Lane, Grange, Cork.

**Client:** Lyonshall limited

March 2025

Connecting people.

Connecting places.

# Contents

01 //

# Introduction and Site Context

This report has been prepared by HW Planning on behalf of Lyonshall Limited to assess the appropriate density of development for a site located at Cooney's Lane, Grange, Cork. In accordance with Government guidance and national policy this assessment is based on the *Sustainable Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024*.

The subject site comprises an area of c. 0.26 of a hectare and is located to the north of Cooney's Lane. A detached single storey dwelling and associated shed currently occupy the southern portion of this infill site, while the northern portion remains undeveloped as a field. The site is bounded to the north by Clifton Court and Clifton Grange, to the east and west by the long back gardens of Newton Court and Bellevue Lawn residential estates. Approximately 200m to the west is the Scoil Niocláis primary school and the Church of the Incarnation. An existing pedestrian path connects Newton Court with Clifton Grange, acting as a shortcut to the Neighbourhood and Local Centre at Grange Road. The southern boundary of the site fronts onto Cooney's Lane where there is an existing vehicular entrance.


**Figure 1.1. Aerial Image of Site and Surrounding Context**

02 //

# Sustainable Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines

In assessing the appropriate density for the subject lands the City Council must have regard to the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024* (SRDCSG) which since adopted, take precedence over the density standards and recommendations contained in City and County Development Plans. Policy and Objective 3.1 of the Guidelines states that:

> *"It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the recommended residential density ranges set out in Section 3.3 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications, and that these density ranges are refined further at a local level using the criteria set out in Section 3.4 where appropriate."*

Furthermore, Circular Letter: NRUP 02/2024 which accompanied the Guidelines is clear in that Planning Authorities must adopt the new density recommendations stating that:

> *"In support of a plan-led system and to ensure consistency planning authorities are requested to review statutory development plans in force for their functional area as soon as possible (including planning schemes), and to form a view as to whether the plan(s) is materially consistent with the policies and objectives (including SPPRs) of the Guidelines. Where a planning authority is of the view that there is a material inconsistency it is recommended that steps should be taken to vary the statutory development plan under Section 13 of the Act (in the case of a planning scheme, amend the planning scheme under Section 170A) so as to remove the material inconsistency(s) concerned."*

Therefore, where these new recommendations conflict with the Development Plan, the Development Plan must be varied to ensure consistency with the Guidelines.

Based on the definitions contained in the *Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024* the subject site is located within a category iv 'City - Urban Neighbourhood'. 'City - Urban Neighbourhood' are defined below, and the SRDCSG recommends that densities in the range 50 dph to 250 dph (net) are appropriate in such areas:

City - Urban Neighbourhood:

> *'The city urban neighbourhoods category includes:* ***(i) the compact medium density residential neighbourhoods around the city centre that have evolved overtime to include a greater range of land uses,*** *(ii) strategic and sustainable development locations, (iii) town centres designated in a statutory development plan, and (iv)* ***lands around existing or planned high-capacity public transport nodes or interchanges (defined in Table 3.8) – all within the city and suburbs area.*** *These are highly accessible urban locations with good access to employment, education and institutional uses and public transport. It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that residential densities in the range 50 dph to 250 dph (net) shall generally be applied in urban neighbourhoods of Dublin and Cork.'(emphasis added).*

In accordance with these Guidelines we consider that the subject lands are located in an area that meets a number of the criteria, which define it as a City-Urban Neighbourhood.

- The site is located within a medium density residential neighbourhood around the city centre that has evolved over time, and now includes a greater range of land uses including education, commercial and retail;
- The site is located in an area where there is a planned high-capacity public transport node/interchange (BusConnects Corridor STC K);
- The Guidelines highlight that such areas exist within the city and its suburbs.

Figure 2.1, extracted from Table 3.8 of the SRDCSG, lists the various types of high-capacity public transport nodes or interchange to which category iv, highlighted above apply. Of relevance to this site is the inclusion of 'locations within 500m walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects 'Core Bus Corridor' stop'.

**High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange**

- Lands within 1,000 metres (1km) walking distance of an existing or planned high capacity urban public transport node or interchange, namely an interchange or node that includes DART, high frequency Commuter Rail[11], light rail or MetroLink services; or locations within 500 metres walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects 'Core Bus Corridor'[12] stop.
- Highest densities should be applied at the node or interchange and decrease with distance.
- 'Planned public transport' in these Guidelines refers to transport infrastructure and services identified in a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy for the five cities and where a public authority (e.g. National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland or Irish Rail) has published the preferred route option and stop locations for the planned public transport.

**Accessible Location**

- Lands within 500 metres (i.e. up to 5-6 minute walk) of existing or planned high frequency (i.e. 10 minute peak hour frequency) urban bus services.

Figure 2.1. Extract from Table 3.8 SRDCSG – Accessibility

As highlighted on Figure 2.2. the subject site is located 297 metres to existing bus stops that are to be retained in the Cork BusConnects STC K route (Kinsale Road to Douglas) and is also set to benefit from significant increases in bus service frequency to every 5 minutes.

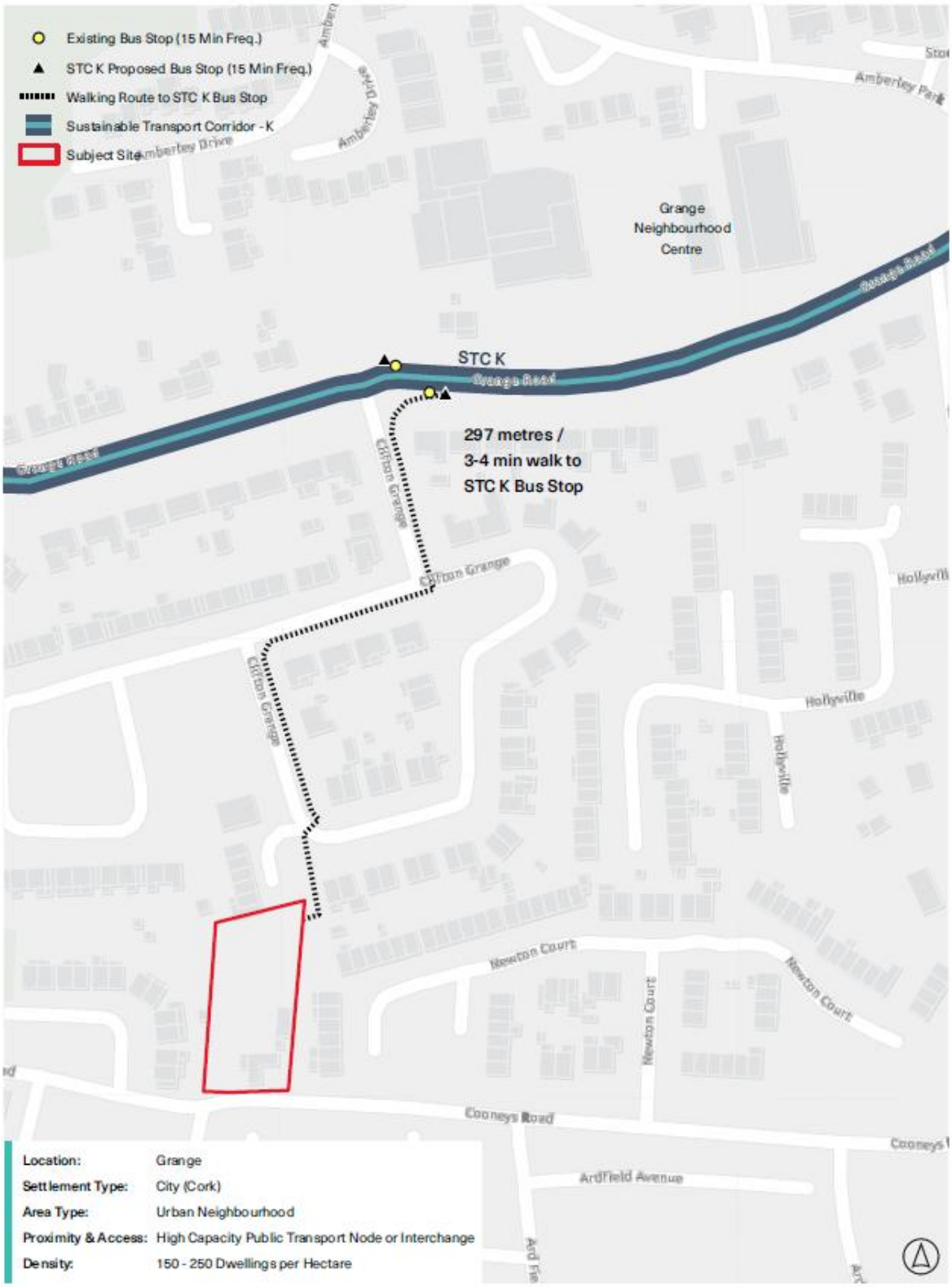


Figure 2.2. Confirmation of Urban Neighbourhood Category for Application Site

In addition to the increase in the frequency of service STC K provides for two-way dedicated bus lanes and cycle lanes also proposed with the BusConnects project will further improve the connectivity of the site. Improvements are also proposed to the existing signalised junctions along Grange Road to enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists

The SRDCSG states that this density range should then be refined based on considerations of centrality and accessibly (Step 1) to services and public transport. Section 3.4.1 of the Guidelines state that:

> *'While densities within the ranges set out will be acceptable, planning authorities should encourage densities at or above the mid-density range at the most central and accessible locations in each area'*
>
> *'Highest densities should be applied at the node or interchange and decrease with distance'.*

Given its location within 500 metres of a planned high frequency urban bus service (STC K) in accordance with the Guidelines it is defined as an "Accessible Location" where the SRDCSG indicate the planning authority should be encouraging densities at or above the mid density range, which is 150 dph, based on the 50-250 density range.

### Responsive Built Form

Appendix D of the SRDCSG, sets out the key indicators of quality urban design and placemaking, with point 4 '*Responsive Built Form'* being of most relevance for considering appropriate densities in the context of individual sites which will be discussed in detail below.

Section 3.4.2 of the SRDCSG indicate:

> *"While it is not necessary to replicate the scale and mass of existing buildings, as most urban areas have significant capacity to accommodate change, it will be necessary to respond in a positive and proportionate way to the receiving context through site responsive design."*

The design of the proposed development has therefore been influenced by the following site characteristics and local context:

- the need to minimise any impacts on adjoining residential properties, and;
- the need to make the most efficient use of the site to provide for much needed housing.

The scale and height of the proposed building heights has been carefully considered having regard to the above factors The Guidelines also specify that following the identification of the appropriate density that the design of the development should be advanced as outlined in Step 2 of Section 3.4 Refining Density to ensure that the quantum and scale of development integrates successfully into the receiving environment. Step 2 indicates that development should not negatively impact on an area in terms of:

a. Local character in terms of scale and mass;

b. Historic environments;

c. impact on the environment and protected species and habitats;

d. amenities of existing residential properties in terms of privacy, daylight, sunlight and microclimate;

e. availability of water and wastewater capacity.

Due to the scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the scheme will not have an impact on the environment and protected species and habitats, nor any protected structure/conservation areas. The impact of the proposed development on the amenities of existing residents is also protected due to the design of the proposed development.

In terms of appropriate building form, we note Appendix D of the SRDCSG contains a Design Checklist for Key Indicators of Quality Design and Placemaking. In particular we note Section 4(iii) – 'Responsive Built Form', which addresses both items when it asks:

> *"Does the layout, scale and design features of new development respond to prevailing development patterns (where relevant), integrate well within its context and provide appropriate transitions with adjacent buildings and established communities so as to safeguard their amenities to a reasonable extent?"*

The Cork City Development Plan in Table 11.1 identifies the prevailing building heights in the Outer Suburbs area to be between 2 and 3 storeys and sets the building height target for new development to between 2 and 4 storeys. The proposed development building heights range from 2 to 3 storeys, which therefore sit comfortably within this area.

The height strategy, of the proposed development demonstrates that the position of the apartment block proposed has been stepped back boundaries with adjoining residential development. Careful consideration of fenestration positions will further ensure that the proposed development will not give rise to any adverse local impacts in respect of overlooking or privacy.

03 //

# Conclusion

The site is located in an area defined as an “Accessible Location” within a ‘City – Urban Neighbourhood’ in accordance with the criteria set out in the Sustainable Residential Compact Settlement Guidelines. Development locations and sites with these attributes have a target density of 150 dph, subject to compliance with the Responsive Built Form Criteria Set out in Appendix D of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024*.

Overall, we consider that the proposed layout integrates well with its context and provides appropriate re-development of the subject site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development therefore represents a “Responsive Built Form” and successfully addressed the questions posed in the Design Checklist - Key Indicators of Quality Design and Placemaking' as set out in Appendix D.

On this basis, the density of the proposed development, which is below the mid-range of the density at 93.4 units per hectare which is considered acceptable given the context of the site and proximity to existing two-storey dwellings along the eastern and western boundaries.


HW Planning
5 Joyce House,
Barrack Square,
Ballincollig,
Cork
P31 KP84

www.hwplanning.ie
info@hwplanning.ie +353
(0)21 487 3250

Directors:
Harold Walsh
Conor Frehill

Company Reg. No. 486211

Accreditations
ISO 9001:2015
ISO 14001:2015
ISO 45001:2018