

Ballincollig Main Street – Assessment of Density

This statement has been prepared by HW Planning on behalf to assess the appropriate density of a proposed development of 8 no. residential units at Ballincollig Main Street, Cork.

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Accreditations

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

The subject site of site area 0.12 hectares is situated on Ballincollig Main Street. The site is currently occupied by an existing derelict dwelling house and is situated at the junction of Main Street and the Inniscarra View residential development. The existing dwelling house on the site is not of any architectural or cultural heritage significance and its replacement will positively contribute to the built environment of the area. The site represents an infill urban site with excellent access to amenities, educational opportunities and employment outlets within a short walking distance.

The policies and objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022 are underpinned by 9 no. overarching 'Strategic Objectives' as set out in the CDP Core Strategy, which will guide the future development of Cork City. Strategic Objective (SO) 1 of the CDP, '*Compact Liveable Growth*' confirms it is a strategic ambition of the Planning Authority to.

'Deliver compact growth that achieves a sustainable 15-minute city of scale providing integrated communities and walkable neighbourhoods, dockland and brownfield regeneration, infill development and strategic greenfield expansion adjacent to existing city.'

CDP Objective 3.4 'Compact Growth' confirms that Cork City Council will

'.....seek to ensure that at least 66% of all new homes will be provided within the existing footprint of Cork. Cork City Council will seek to ensure that at least 33% of all new homes will be provided within brownfield sites in Cork.'

Optimising the potential for housing delivery on all suitable and available brownfield sites will be achieved by:

(e) The development of small and infill sites and the re-use of existing designated and undesignated built heritage assets including those on development sites;'

Section 1.3.2 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2024' (CSGs) describes characteristics of a 15-minute city/neighborhood stating.

'The term '15 minute city' has been used in recent years to describe compact neighbourhoods with a range of local services and amenities and access to public transport all within a short walk or cycle of homes. This should be the overarching objective when planning for sustainable residential development and compact settlements'.

The subject lands are ideally situated to contribute to a 15 minute neighbourhood being within a 15 minute walking/10 minute cycle distance of all areas of the town.

- **Public Transport Opportunities** - The proposed development is also situated immediately adjacent to an existing bus stop for the 220 no. bus route with Ballincollig Main Street which is a 24 hour bus route which runs from Ovens-Carrigaline (via Ballincollig Main Street) operates a peak frequency of every 15 minutes. Ballincollig Main Street is also identified as one of twelve 'Sustainable Transport Corridors' (STC) E, (Ballincollig to City) in Draft BusConnects reflecting that a considerable improvement in bus services is likely to serve the proposed development in the future.
- **Retail Opportunities** - The Castlewest/Ballincollig Shopping Centre is within approximately 10 minutes walking distance from the site as well as the towns vibrant main street which includes a wide variety of retail and commercial opportunities including Quishes Centra, Tesco, and other services, service stations, and beauticians/ hairdressers. Etc.
- **Educational Facilities** – Ballincollig is well served by several primary and secondary schools and other educational outlets. The site is situated a short distance from Colaiste Choilm post primary school with Gaelscoil Ríordáin on the Carriganarra Road being the closest primary school to the site. Other schools within walking/cycling distance to the site include Scoil Barra, Ballincollig Community School Le Chéile Secondary School and Our Lady of Good Counsel School situated at Innishmore and Scoil Eoin on Station Road.
- **Recreational Outlets** – Ballincollig is home a wide variety of recreational, sporting and amenities which are within 10 minutes cycle and 15 minutes walking distance from the subject site including bars and restaurants. Other amenities within this distance include Ballincollig GAA Club, Ballincollig Community Centre and Ballincollig Regional Park. The Oriel Hotel which serves an important local amenity is also situated within a 15 minutes walking distance from the subject site.
- **Employment Opportunities** - Due to the excellent public transport opportunities and established local economy, Ballincollig is a self-sufficient town with a wide range of employment and commercial opportunities with Main Street, the Barrack Square office campus and the various commercial/industrial estates on the Link Road/Leo Murphy Road in particular serving as important employment centres for the town's population.
- **Essential Service/Healthcare** – The subject site is situated within walking distance to Ballincollig Primary Care Centre and other healthcare services including existing GP practices, pharmacies physiotherapists and dentists.

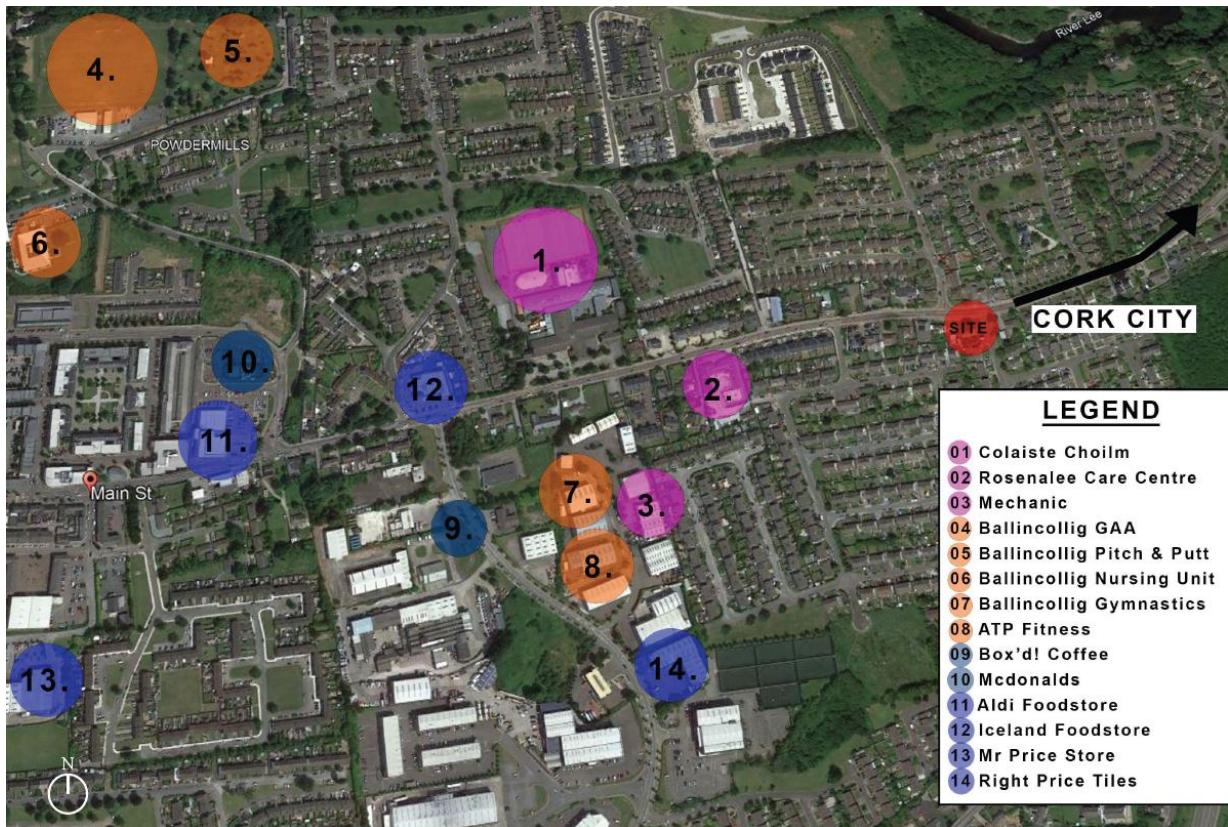


Figure 01. Site Context

The provision of higher density residential development at the subject lands reflects an integrated approach between the provision of sustainable and compact urban development, future public transport upgrades and the promotion of walking and cycling as sustainable modes of transport.

Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024 (CSGs)

In assessing the appropriate density for the subject lands, the City Council must have regard to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines which now 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.

In accordance with the CSG's a density range of 50-250 units per hectare (net) apply to the subject. Ballincollig is situated within the Cork Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) region as defined in the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 (RSES). Ballincollig is defined as a 'Metropolitan Town' in the Cork Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (Cork MASP) with Table 3.3 of the CSG's stating that for 'Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods' that.

*'The centre and urban neighbourhoods category includes: (i) the town centre and immediately surrounding neighbourhoods, (ii) strategic and sustainable development locations, and (iii) lands around existing or planned high capacity public transport nodes or interchanges (defined in Table 3.8). It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines 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.'*

Figure 02, extracted from Table 3.8 of the CSG's, lists the various types of high-capacity public transport nodes or interchange to which category iv 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 Rail¹¹, 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 02. Extract from Table 3.8 CSGs – Accessibility

As stated previously, the subject site on Ballincollig Main Street, is situated on one of the twelve STC's in Draft BusConnects which will constitute a high frequency urban bus service when implemented (STC E – Ballincollig-City) in addition to pedestrian and cycle public realm upgrades.

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?”

Table 11.2 of the CDP identifies the prevailing building heights in Central Ballincollig to be between 2-4 stories and sets the building height target for new development to between 3 and 5 storeys. The proposed development reflects a development of up to 2.5 storeys which therefore sits comfortably within this area.

As detailed in the plans and Architectural Design Statement prepared by Deady Gahan Architects, the proposed layout and dwelling design represents a high-quality, sensitive and appropriately scaled development which responds to the site-specific context. 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.

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 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines 2024.

the proposed development represents the compact, efficient, yet sensitive redevelopment of the site providing a scheme of appropriate design and density having regard to the sites location on Main Street, Ballincollig and the existing scale and pattern of development in the area. The proposed density of 66.7 units per hectare is at the lower end of the range of 50-250 units per hectare as recommended by the CSG’s and it is considered that a development of lower density would represent an inefficient use of an infill urban site with such access to public transport and amenities. However, it is considered that the proposed density and project design achieves an appropriate balance of delivering sustainable compact development in conjunction with the consideration of the sites receiving context and the existing amenities of the area.

It is concluded that the proposed development in accordance with the policies and objectives of the CSG’s and will represent a considerable improvement when compared to the ‘do nothing’ scenario.