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Proposed Housing, Pitcher Lane, Kells, Co. Meath (in the townlands of Townparks and Archdeaconry Glebe)

Housing Quality Assessment & Schedule of Accommodation

September 2022



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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Overview

Craftstudio Architecture have been commissioned by Meath County Council to design 5no. housing units at Pitcher Lane, Kells, Co. Meath (in the townlands of Townparks and Archdeaconary Glebe). The site consists of a derelict detached two-storey dwelling with private open space, which has been subject to vandalism, and is to be demolished as part of the development works. The proposal will regenerate a derelict site in the town centre and address the current housing need in the area.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Demolition of existing unoccupied 2-storey property;
- Construction of a residential development comprising of 2no. 2-bed 2-storey units and 2no. 1-bed apartments arranged in a terraced block and 1no. 1-bed single storey detached unit
- Connection to public foul sewer and public mains water supply;
- All ancillary site works necessary to facilitate the development.

This report should be read in conjunction with the architectural drawings (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), *Housing Quality Assessment & Schedule of Accommodation* (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), engineering particulars (prepared by Alan Traynor Consulting Engineers) and all other planning documentation (forms, notices etc.).

Pre-planning consultations took place in February, July and August 2022 in which the development proposals have been agreed in principle.



Aerial Photograph of Pitcher Lane with site outlined in red

## 2.0 Housing Quality Assessment

### 2.1 Residential Zoning

The site is currently zoned as A1 (existing residential) within the current Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and is situated within the Kells Settlement Boundary. It is an objective of this zone within the plan *‘to protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities.’*

The proposed planning application represents the replacement of a derelict dwelling on a large urban site thus regenerating a derelict site, bringing the land back into use, to address the current housing need in the area. The proposed residential scheme is designed to meet the criteria outlined by Meath County Council fully meeting the standards and guidelines in the current County Development Plan and all relevant guidelines provided by the DHPLG for residential development. The building and access is to be design and constructed fully in compliance with current Building Regulations in particular Part M, access and use and Part B, fire.

### Sustainable Community Proofing

The location of the development on Pitcher Lane within Kells (is walking distance to the town centre which is within 500m, approx. 5mins walk) will provide residents with excellent connections to a wide range of local services and facilities and thus contribute to a sustainable local community. The Kells Playground (public playground) and Fair Green (public green space) is also within 5 mins walk of the site for residents to avail of these facilities. Kells has many historical and cultural facilities also with monastic treasures including being the original home of the Book of Kells.

The proposed front boundary walls (along Pitcher Lane) will be set back further than the existing boundary wall to provide a minimum of 2m wide pedestrian pavement (therefore increasing the width of the current footpath there which ranges from 0.9 to 1.5m wide), this will help to encourage pedestrian movement.

Pitcher Lane and Kells itself has excellent road connections to other towns in the region and further afield to major urban centres including to Dublin (along the M3) or Cavan along the N3.

The site is within 600m (approx 7mins walking distance) of the Town Hall bus stop which provides access to the Bus Eireann service 109 which runs

between Cavan to/ from Dublin (with many local intermediate stops) which has buses running approximately one every hour on weekdays. Dublin and Cavan both provide plentiful connections onwards. This proximity encourages the residents to avail of this public bus service and thus reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on local roads in the area

Each of the residents have private amenity space with direct rear access to allow for their safe storage of their bicycles. This will encourage residents to cycle and thus reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on local roads in the area.

### 2.2 Mix of Dwelling Types

The following mix of unit types is included in the proposed development:

Proposed unit type	No. of units
1 bed unit	3
2 bed unit	2
<b>Total no. of units</b>	<b>5</b>

This mix has been agreed with Meath County Council Housing Department, based upon their assessment of

housing need, the objective to achieve a balanced mix of dwelling types and size, and taking account of location and nature of the proposed development. It is considered that the proposal will make a positive contribution to the existing dwelling mix in the locality by providing dwelling types which are not widely available.

### 2.3 Residential Density

The land of the proposed site (comprising 0.097 ha) is brownfield in nature and zoned for existing residential use. The existing derelict two-storey dwelling which has been subject to vandalism including extensive roof damage. Access to the interior is not possible owing to the risk of collapse of elements of the structure. The remainder of the site is private open space which has been left unkept for some time. Due to the dangerous condition of the existing dwelling it is proposed to demolish it and to construct 5no. housing units (2no. 2bed 4person 2storey dwellings and 2no. 1-bed 2person apartments arranged in a terraced block and 1no. 1-bed single storey detached unit). This adds density to the site and optimises the use thereof whilst still providing ample private amenity space, access and

parking spaces. The site is within a 5min walk of the local playground public open green space (Fair Green) to provide further amenity space. This constitutes an efficient use of the available land on the site. The proposal will regenerate a derelict site in the town centre (the scheme will bring the land back into use) and address the current housing need in the area.



Proposed housing development

### 2.4 Public Open Space

Within Kells there are public parks and walks that are accessible to the proposed residents including Kells Playground and Fair Green (both within 5min walk), St. Columba's Church and Kells Round Tower and St. Colmcille's Well. These are all within 850m of the site.

### 2.5 Separation Distances

The existing dwellings to the north and north-west (along Willie Black Crescent) of the site are single storey. The dwellings along Lord Edward Street/ Carrick Street, to the south-west of the site are one and two storeys in height but are in excess of 22m with the closest point being 32m away from our proposed first floor apartment. Therefore separation distances in excess of 22m between opposing first floor windows as per *DM OBJ 19* is achieved.

### 2.6 Site Safety and Security

Windows to habitable rooms provide passive surveillance of communal external areas within the curtilage of the site including the entrance to the site, parking areas and private amenity space.

A site lighting scheme has been included within the planning submission to ensure safety and security at night.



## 2.7 Accessibility

As required by Part M, Access and Use, of the Building Regulations, the buildings are designed to ensure that people can safely and conveniently approach and gain access to all the units. Where the habitable rooms are not located at ground level (aka the first floor apartment), the stairs provided are suitable for use by ambulant disable persons. Due to the site levels there are ambulant steps within the private gardens of 3no. units to provide access through the rear of their dwellings from the parking, additionally these units are all wheelchair accessible from the front elevation (access to the private gardens is then possible through the dwelling).

## 2.8 Communal Amenity Space

No public open space is proposed on the site in line with DM OBJ 27 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027 (see extract below), however there is public amenity space within a 5min walk of the site - Kells Playground (public playground) and Fair Green (public green space) – these public amenities are accessible and open to all members of the public and will help to promote social interaction. Outdoor lighting will ensure safety on the proposed site.

DM OBJ 27 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027:

*‘Stand alone residential developemtns comprising of 9 residential units or less shall be exempt from the requirement to provide 15% open space. In such cases the private amenity space serving each dwelling shall exceed the minimum requirements’*

## 2.9 Bicycle Storage

For bicycle storage all residents have private gardens for safe storage of these (note- the design does not require bicycle access via a living area as all gardens have direct access from the public areas), this includes for apartment visitor spaces which are required at 1no. visitor bicycle space per two housing units. The bicycle storage encourages a sustainable mode of transport.



Perspective View of proposed gardens in Pitcher Lane.

## 2.10 Car Parking

Car parking is proposed to be to the centre of the site. Parked cars are overlooked by each of the housing units which all have a view towards the public areas of the site. The standalone unit to the rear has direct access to their front door from the parking spaces. The residents within the terraced block have access through their rear gardens into their dwellings for ease of access whilst also have front doors facing the street. Materials used for parking areas are of similar quality to the rest of the development – permeable paving is proposed to the parking spaces to assist with surface water drainage.

In total there are 7 dedicated car parking spaces (including 1no. disabled). This is in line with the

Meath CDP 2021-2027 (\*refer to note below) and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments and is broken down as follows:

<b>Car Parking:</b>				
Unit type	No. of units	Spaces per unit (CDP rates)	Spaces	
			Required under CDP	Proposed
House (2B 4P)	2	2	4	4
House (1B 2P)	1	2	2	1 *
Apartment (1B 2P)	2	1	2	2
Visitor parking		1 (per 4no. apartments)	0	0
<b>TOTAL SPACES</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>7 *</b>

Of the 7no. spaces proposed note also:

- 1no. space will be accessible in accordance with Part M
- 2no. spaces will have the necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future electric vehicle charging points (at a rate of 20% of the total spaces provided as per the CDP)

\* **Note:** Whilst the proposed parking represents a shortfall of 1no. space, the provision of the disabled parking space was considered more beneficial to the

scheme than providing an additional car parking space here in its' place. It is noted within the guidance notes accompanying *Table 11.2 Car Parking* of the *Meath CDP 2021-2027* that '*Residential car parking can be reduced at the discretion of the Council, where development is proposed in areas with good access to services and strong public transport links*' and therefore we would appeal to the Council to relax the standards for this site given the infill nature of the development and town centre location of the site.

Parked cars are overlooked by the housing to maximise natural surveillance for improved security.

Car parking bay sizes are in line with *Table 11.3* of the *Meath CDP 2021-2027*.

residents' own living accommodation and therefore will encourage them to keep it tidy.

## 2.12 Gross Floor Area of Dwellings

All of the proposed units (houses and apartments) achieve and exceed the minimum floor area standard as defined in *Design Manual for Quality Housing (2022)*, *Best Practice Guidelines - Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*. Please refer to the *Schedule of Accommodation* below for more detailed information.

## 2.11 Refuse Storage and Bins

Each of the proposed dwellings have private amenity space sufficient to store their minimum of 3no. bins (i.e. black, brown & green bins). All private amenity spaces have rear direct access so bins do not have to be brought through their dwellings for collection. This will encourage residents to sort and store recycling correctly prior to collection and in turn maximise recycling. Private amenity space is in view of each

## 2.13 Space Standards

The proposed units have been planned to ensure compliance with space standards and guidelines in *Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027*, *Design Manual for Quality Housing (2022)*, *Best Practice Guidelines - Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments in respect of the following:*

- Gross floor area
- Individual room sizes
- Aggregate floor areas
- Principal room dimensions
- Private amenity space

Please refer to the *Schedule of Accommodation* below for more detailed information.

## 2.14 Layouts of individual units

Floor plans included within the planning application drawings (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), demonstrate:

- Typical arrangement of furniture for each room
- Freedom of circulation, appropriate to activities
- Potential for movement of larger items of furniture into and between rooms
- Living space appropriate for small family gatherings, including occasional visitors
- Working area and storage facilities appropriate to likely activities (e.g. the kitchen)

- Door swings do not interfere with other doors, furniture or circulation routes
- Principal room dimensions.

## 2.15 Aspect of dwellings

All residential units are dual or triple aspect. The 2bed house end of terrace unit, 1bed standalone unit and the 1bed apartments are all triple aspect (although it should be noted the Level 01 apartment gable window is opaque to avoid potential overlooking to neighbouring properties whilst still utilising daylight within these rooms and reducing energy usage). The mid-terrace 2bed house is dual aspect.

## 2.16 Ceiling Height

All residential units have a floor to ceiling height of 2.5m to both the ground floor and first floor accommodation. This is in line with *Design Manual for Quality Housing* (2022), *Best Practice Guidelines - Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* and Part F of the *Building regulations*.

## 2.17 Kitchens

Kitchens are located adjacent to dining and living areas. Sizes and layouts have been designed to provide:

- Adequate high and low level storage;
- Adequate worktop surface and space for appliances
- Optimum work sequence.
- Efficient ducting for services.
- Stores are also provided accessible adjacent to kitchens (or close to) which residents can use to store dry recyclables before moving them out to their external bins.

## 2.18 Internal Storage

The *Schedule of Accommodation* below demonstrates that each unit meets the minimum internal storage requirement. In addition to the internal storage we have also indicated a designated location for the internal elements and water storage associated with the heat pumps. This is as recommended in *Design Manual for Quality Housing* (2022) as the target floor areas in *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* did not accommodate heat pumps. This ensures the residents still have the



required amount of internal storage but also ensures use of heat pumps as they have been designed and included at this stage.

### 2.19 Private Amenity Space

Every home within the scheme has access to an area of useable, private amenity space to the rear (or gable) and parking within the site. The boundary wall of the site is 1.8m high concrete walls for privacy. The walls separating the gardens are 1.8m high concrete post and timber fence panels. Each garden to the houses provides in excess of 55 m<sup>2</sup> of private open space for the houses (55.5m<sup>2</sup>, 56m<sup>2</sup> and 78m<sup>2</sup> proposed) and in excess of 5m<sup>2</sup> for the apartments (9.5m<sup>2</sup> and 24m<sup>2</sup> proposed). The useable private outdoor space is directly accessible via each resident's kitchen, living and dining space – with the exception of the first floor apartment which has their amenity space at ground floor level positioned next to their main entrance door. The private amenity space to the front of the terraced housing is in addition to the private areas given above and help to create a buffer zone to the front of the housing from the public road.

The rear private amenity space has direct gated access to and from the parking area for security and to avoid

bringing bins or bicycles through the living accommodation.



Proposed rear gardens

### 2.20 Daylight, Sunlight

All residential units are dual or triple aspect to maximise use of daylight and sunlight on site – refer also to 2.15 *Aspect of dwellings*. The gardens are positioned to face north-west mainly to avail of the evening sun from the west – their position to the rear provides the most privacy for the residents from the public along Pitcher Lane.

### 2.21 Acoustic Privacy

To ensure compliance with Part E, Sound, of the Building Regulations, the form of construction will be in accordance with guidance in TGD Part E, 2014. In general the layout of units ensures that bedrooms are separated from stair lobbies by the entrance hall within each unit. In so far as possible highly serviced areas such as kitchens and bathrooms are located with vertical alignment to facilitate efficient distribution of service pipes and ducts. Windows and patio doors will be specified to provide high acoustic and thermal performance.

## 2.22 Energy Performance

Detailed design of individual dwellings, and the building as a whole, will ensure high levels of occupant comfort, and compliance with requirements expressed in current, relevant parts of the Building Regulations:

- Part F: Ventilation;
- Part J: Heat Producing Appliances;
- Part L: Conservation of Fuel and Energy. In particular the requirement for nearly zero energy buildings and renewable sources of energy will be addressed in the detailed design and construction stages.

- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas; Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2009)
- Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas; (DOELG 1998).
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS 2013)

## 2.23 Design Standards

The following documents have been consulted in the pre-planning design stage:

- Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027
- Design Manual for Quality Housing (2022)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities; (DEHLG, 2007)
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments; Guidelines for Planning Authorities; (DHPLG 2018)

### 3.0 Schedule of Accommodation

To be read in conjunction with the proposed planning drawings by Craftstudio Architecture.

Proposed unit type	No. of units
1 bed unit	3
2 bed unit	2
<b>Total no. of units</b>	<b>5</b>

Type A – 1bed 2 person DETACHED HOUSE (1no. unit)			
	Proposed Area m <sup>2</sup>	Target Area m <sup>2</sup> (minimum)	Percentage variation
Aggregate Living Area	23.1	23	
Aggregate Bedroom area	11.3	11	
Storage (plus heat pump area)	2 (+1.2)	2	
Private amenity space	56	55	
Gross Floor Area	48	44	9%

Type B – 2bed 4 person TERRACED HOUSE (2no. units)			
	Proposed Area m <sup>2</sup>	Target Area m <sup>2</sup> (minimum)	Percentage variation
Aggregate Living Area	31.8	30	
Aggregate Bedroom area	25.1	25	
Storage (plus heat pump area)	4 (+1.2)	4	
Private amenity space	55.5 and 78	55	
Gross Floor Area	86.9	80	8.6%

Type C – 1bed 2 person LEVEL 00 APARTMENT (1no. unit)			
	Proposed Area m <sup>2</sup>	Target Area m <sup>2</sup> (minimum)	Percentage variation
Aggregate Living Area	25	23	
Aggregate Bedroom area	11.4	11.4	
Storage (plus heat pump area)	3 (+1.1)	3	
Private amenity space	24	5	
Gross Floor Area	53 *	45	17%

Note = \* L.00 apartment area excludes the area of the L.01 access stair – refer to the hatched areas within the planning drawings

Type C – 1bed 2 person LEVEL 01 APARTMENT (1no. unit)			
	Proposed Area m <sup>2</sup>	Target Area m <sup>2</sup> (minimum)	Percentage variation
Aggregate Living Area	23	23	
Aggregate Bedroom area	11.4	11.4	
Storage (plus heat pump area)	3 (+1.1)	3	
Private amenity space	9.5	5	
Gross Floor Area	50.5 *	45	12%

Note = \* L.01 apartment area excludes the area of the access stair – refer to the hatched areas within the planning drawings

#### Additional Note:

In addition to the internal storage we have also indicated a designated location for the internal elements and water storage associated with the heat pumps. This is as recommended in *Design Manual for Quality Housing* (2022) as the target floor areas in *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* and *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* did not accommodate heat pumps. This ensures the residents still have the required amount of internal storage but also ensures use of heat pumps as they have been designed and included at this stage.