

Galway County Council - Housing Unit

Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended)

Planning and Development Regulations 2001

(as amended) – Part VIII



Title: **Design Statement**

Project: Cold Weather Response and Medium-term response unit

Location: Vicar Street, Tuam, Co. Galway

Dept. ID No.: TBA

Date: 26th March 2025

1.0 Design Statement

The proposed development consists of (1) Demolition of an existing single storey extension (2) Construction of a 2 storey extension to the rear of an existing 3 storey mid terrace unit and (3) Construction of a 2 storey mid-terrace infill unit together with all ancillary siteworks and services to provide a cold weather response unit consisting of 10 no. beds together with associated facilities and a medium term response unit consisting of 2 no. 3-bed apartments, 1 no. 2-bed apartment and 1 no. 1-bed apartment, reception/office, staff accommodation and storage at Vicar Street, Tuam, Co. Galway and within the Tuam Architectural Conservation Area.

Galway County Council has identified a need to provide supported accommodation in the County of Galway for vulnerable people experiencing chronic homelessness. Short-term accommodation is necessary for people who have a history of rough sleeping and is particularly in demand during the Winter period. The provision of medium-term accommodation that is accessible is essential to provide for persons with complex, multiple issues, particularly those with a dual diagnosis of mental health and addiction issues.

A Tuam Regeneration Masterplan was delivered in 2021 and endorsed by the plenary Council which seeks to address the social, economic, cultural and environment opportunities and challenges within Tuam. It aims to develop the town in a sustainable way, encouraging new development and realising Tuam’s potential as a thriving town in Galway.

The unit layouts are provided in accordance with the requirements of “Guidelines for the Development of new Emergency accommodation – Sept 2022”. This proposal represents an ideal Renovation/Infill construction opportunity within the Town centre.

2.0 Site Constraints /Abnormal Factors

2.1 Site Ownership

The site is in the ownership of Galway County Council under Folios GY132581F & GY133012F.



FIGURE 1 -MAP FOLIO OF LANDS – FOLIO GY132581F (LANDDIRECT.IE)

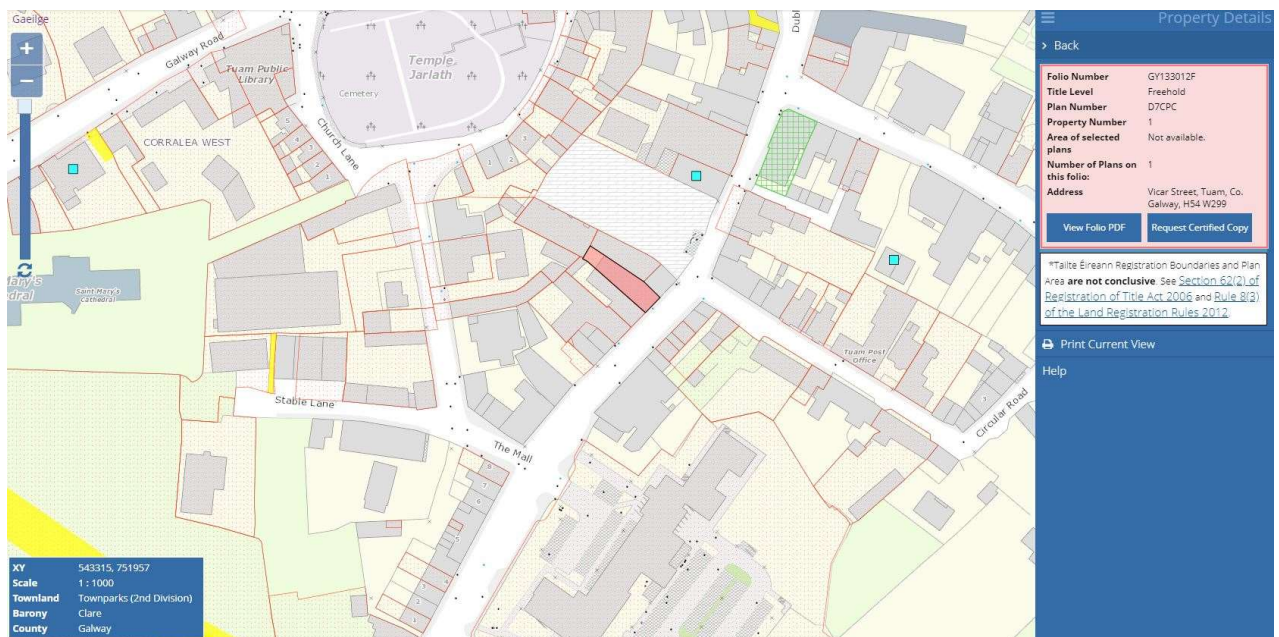


FIGURE 2 -MAP FOLIO OF LANDS – FOLIO GY133012F (LANDDIRECT.IE)

Figure 1&2 -Map Folio of Lands (landdirect.ie)

Adjacent lands to the site consist of the following:

- North-West: Apartments
- East: Existing Public road, Vicar Street. Shop units on opposite side of street.
- North: Take-away restaurant at ground floor and apartments above
- South: Connacht Arms Hotel (Protected Structure) (in use as residential accommodation).

2.2 Site Area

The Site is approximately 429SQM (0.0429Ha / 0.106ac). The area of the site taken up by construction will be 257m² (0.029Ha / 0.073ac) representing 60% of the site area.

2.3 Flooding: No known flood risk within or within the vicinity of the site.

The site is within the area of Flood Zone C (low risk < 1:1000 for river flooding) as identified in the Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029.

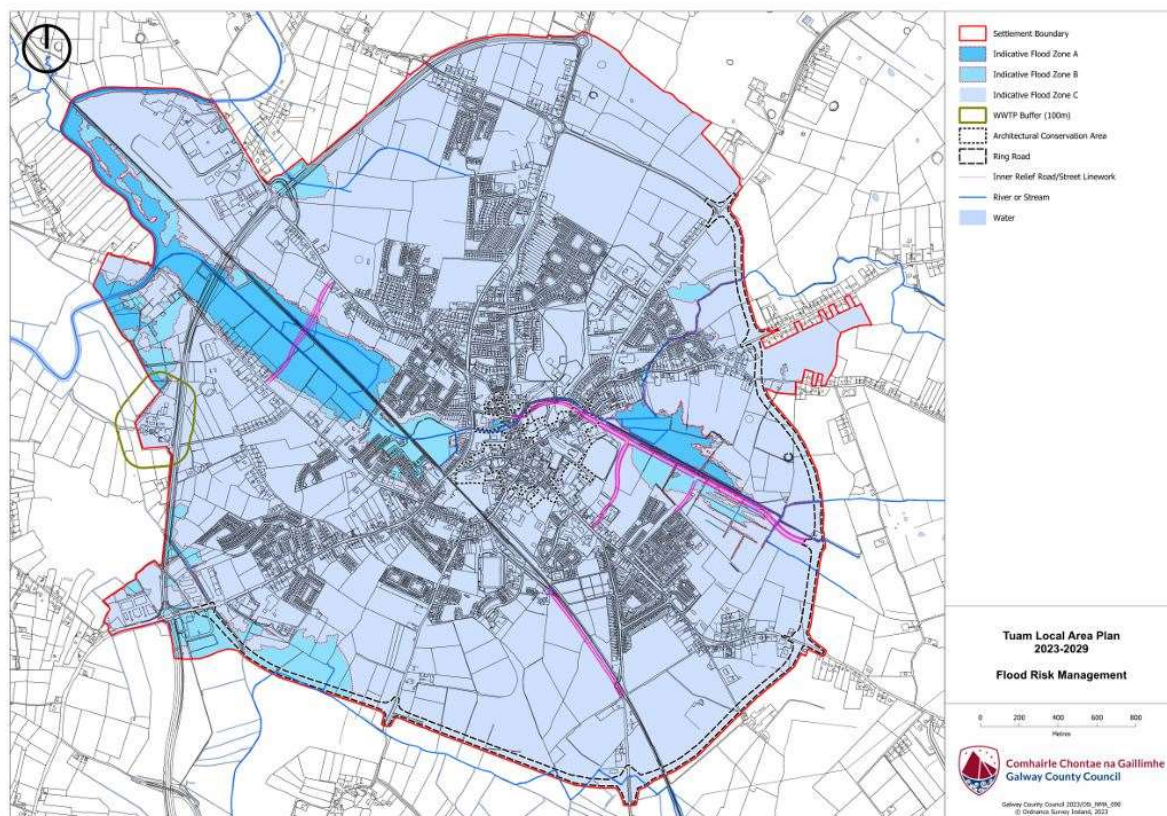


Figure 3 - Flood Risk Map (CFRAM) NTS

2.4 Topography

A topographical survey has been carried out to assist detail design. Concrete foundations from a previous unfinished development exist to the rear of the South building which will require removal. The floor level of the proposed building in the South infill plot will be raised to match that of 'The Bargain Basket'. Footpath levels will require an adjustment in levels to Vicar St. to provide level access to entrance and exit doors. The existing site is relatively flat with site levels to the lowest point at the North West corner of 36.36M increasing towards the South East corner to 36.63M. The exiting finished floor level of 'The Bargain Basket' building is 37.10M. It is proposed to provide a finished floor level of 37.10M throughout the proposed development at Ground Floor level.

2.5 Existing Adjacent Housing

The development forms part of a terrace to Vicar St. in Tuam. To the North of 'The Bargain Basket' building there is an existing take-away shop with 2 storeys of apartments over. This development

runs along the North adjacent boundary of the site in its entirety and faces 'The Shambles' car park in the centre of Tuam town. To the South of the proposed infill development is 'The Connacht Arms' building which is currently operating as residential units. 'The Connacht Arms' building is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for 'Regional' and 'Architectural' values (Ref No. 30331028) and is appraised as follows:

"The Connaught Arms presents an ornate appearance in a street that today has lost much of its historic fabric. The render details to the openings and the quoins add interest and the scale and symmetry of the building give it a grand appearance."

'The Connacht Arms' building is not included on the Galway County Council record of protected structures.

Immediately adjacent to the East of the proposed development is Vicar. St, a busy two way thoroughfare connecting the centre of Tuam town to the Southern urban area.

To the West of the site are existing residential units of heights varying between two and three storeys and a stone wall boundary to a residential courtyard of approximately 3M in height.

2.6 Existing Boundary Treatments

The site adjoins existing residential boundaries. The boundary treatments vary throughout the site with 3 to 4m high stone walls along the South & West boundary. The Northern boundary consists of stone and masonry block wall approx. 7.5m high. The West boundary consists of the building facades onto Vicar St. It is anticipated that some retention measures will be required to support the existing stone boundary walls particularly in areas of proposed development such as the two storey extension to the rear of 'The Bargain Basket' building. The extents of retention required will be established following demolition of the existing single storey extension to the rear of 'The Bargain Basket' building and site investigations at construction stage.

2.7 Existing on-Site Structures

The existing "Bargain Basket" building is a vacant open plan shop at ground level with living accommodation at the first and second floor levels. Following a structural condition report of both buildings, the existing building to the South was found to be in a dangerous condition and has been demolished. Temporary support propping has been installed to protect the buildings on either side.

It is intended to demolish and remove all existing elements within the external walls of 'The Bargain Basket' building including internal walls, doors, stairs, ceilings, finishes, mechanical and electrical fittings, etc. to allow for the construction of the internal layout proposed for the development. It is intended also to demolish the existing single storey extension to the rear of 'The Bargain Basket' building. Bracing supports have been installed to ensure retention of the adjacent gable wall to 'The Connacht Arms' and 'The Bargain Basket' buildings. The condition of the gable wall to the North adjacent 'Golden Pizza' building will be assessed at construction stage to establish the requirements for structural integrity.

2.8 Archaeological:

An Archaeological Impact Assessment was carried out by 'Atlantic Archaeology' in June 2024. The report recommends the following mitigation measures:

"The proposed development is in a landscape rich in archaeological heritage. In accordance with statutory guidance (see Appendix 1, AH1-4 and ARC5) and to mitigate against any potential impacts (refer Appendix 5) the following measures are recommended:

- I. *There is a risk of previously unidentified sub-surface archaeological finds, features or deposits being encountered during ground works. For this reason, and to minimise the risk of archaeological delays during construction phase, advance pre-construction archaeological testing is recommended to fully assess the presence or absence of any sub-surface archaeological layers at this site.*
- II. *The results of a program of archaeological testing will help appraise the National Monuments Service and the developer of any potential risks associated with this site. This can then be used to inform finalised design and required recommendations for construction phase of works.*
- III. *All archaeological testing works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist under a site specific licence from the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.*
- IV. *In the event archaeological finds, features or deposits are encountered during the testing phase all findings to be recorded and a detailed report submitted to National Monuments Service.*
- V. *The current structures potentially scheduled for partial demolition are not subject to any statutory protection. Efforts should be made to mitigate against any potential adverse*

impact to The Connaught Arms Public House (NIAH No. 30331028) to the immediate south during these works.”

The report further recommends that *“Archaeological testing across the footprint of the site to fully assess the presence or absence of any sub-surface archaeological layers will help inform finalised design and required recommendations for construction phase of works.”*

2.9 Conservation

A building conservation assessment was carried out by ‘Architectural Conservation Professionals’ in September 2024 and concluded that, in relation to ‘The Bargain Basket’ building *“There is no doubt that the observed fabric is vernacular in nature and in line with guidance set forth in the national policy document “A Living Tradition – A Strategy to Enhance the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage” and the current Galway County Development Plan objective AH6, should be considered for adaption into the proposed development....namely the original walls of the building (with the noted exception of the rear wall at the first floor) retained with extensions to the rear of theses structures and possible retention of the original fabric where feasible.”*

The following measures are proposed:

- 1. High resolution digital photographs are to be taken on a regular and ongoing basis for the duration of the works and a detailed description of the works undertaken be kept and compiled.*
- 2. A conservation record survey is to be carried out by the Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor on all architectural features including windows and doors in the building prior to works commencing. This will ensure that a comprehensive record of the existing building is established and added to the historical record before any changes are made.*
- 3. Specifications, plans and method statements prepared by the Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor are to be read and adhered to by the Contractor, their staff and all involved with the proposed works.*
- 4. All works on site are to be inspected on an ongoing basis by the Project Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor (Accredited by the RICS and SCSi). A detailed record of works is to be kept and compiled for submission to the building record after proposed works have been completed.*
- 5. All specialist conservation works are to be undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced tradesman e.g. lime works wet trades.*

3.0 Services / Utilities

3.1 Potable Water

Available – public mains. A pre-connection agreement submission has been made to Uisce Éireann and a response is anticipated in the near future.

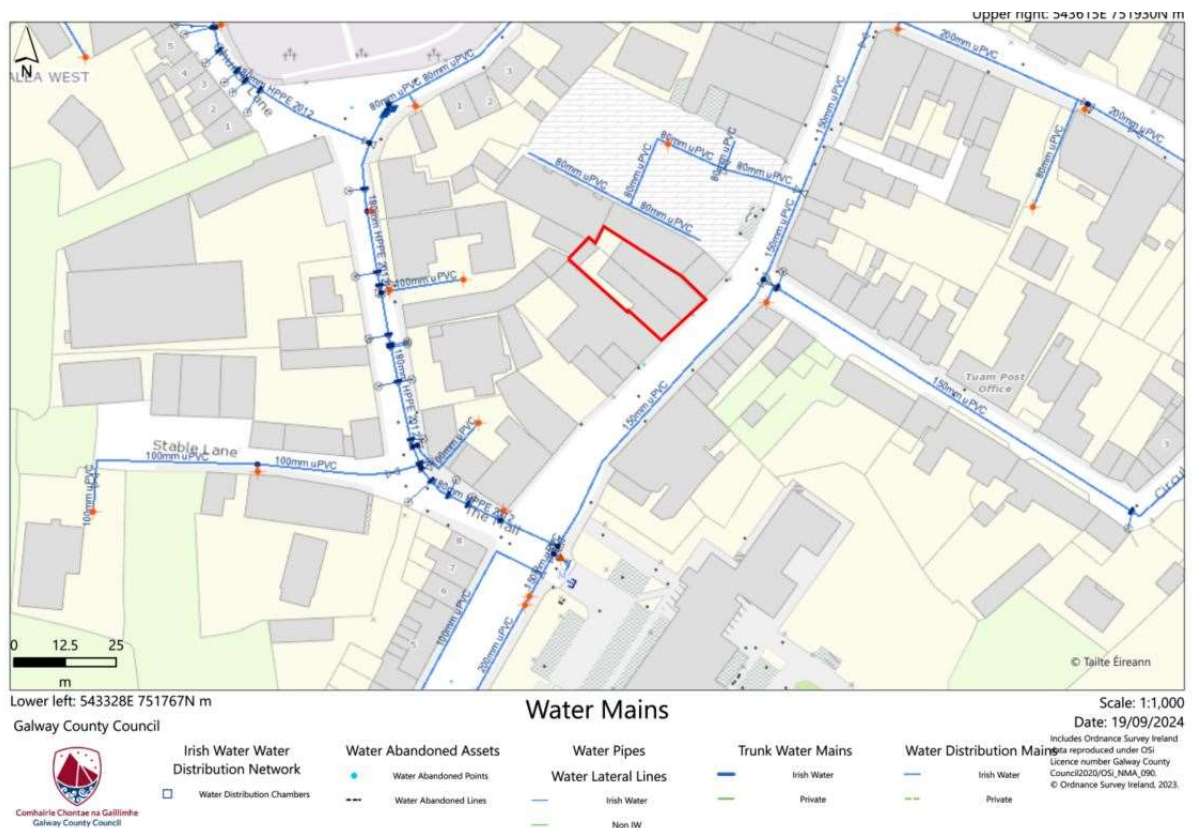


Figure 4- Desktop Water Services Study (Galway Co.Co. Corporate Map Viewer)

3.2 Wastewater

Available – public mains. A pre-connection agreement submission has been made to Uisce Éireann and a response is awaited.



Figure 5- Desktop Water Services Study (Galway Co.Co. Corporate Map Viewer)

3.3 ESB

Available – Existing ESB power lines are over and underground throughout the town

3.4 Public Lighting:

Available – public lighting is provided within the existing street.

3.5 Environmental/Ecology

3.5.1 EIA Screening Assessment was carried out by Enviroplan Consulting Limited in October 2024.

The report concluded *“This EIA Screening Assessment has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant due to the location, nature, and scale of the proposed development. The subject site is not located in an environmentally sensitive site. In any event, the proposed development will implement best practice construction methodologies to avoid any significant impacts.*

The information provided in this EIA Screening Report can be used by the competent authority, to conclude that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the

environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR) is not required in this case”.

3.5.2 An AA Screening Assessment was carried out by Moore Group Environmental Services in October 2024 and concluded that *“It can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site, in the absence of any mitigation. An appropriate assessment is not, therefore, required.”*

3.5.3 Trees / Vegetation

There are no trees or vegetation on site

3.5.4 Invasive Alien Species

There is no known evidence of invasive species (Japanese Knotweed) on visual inspection.

5. Planning History:

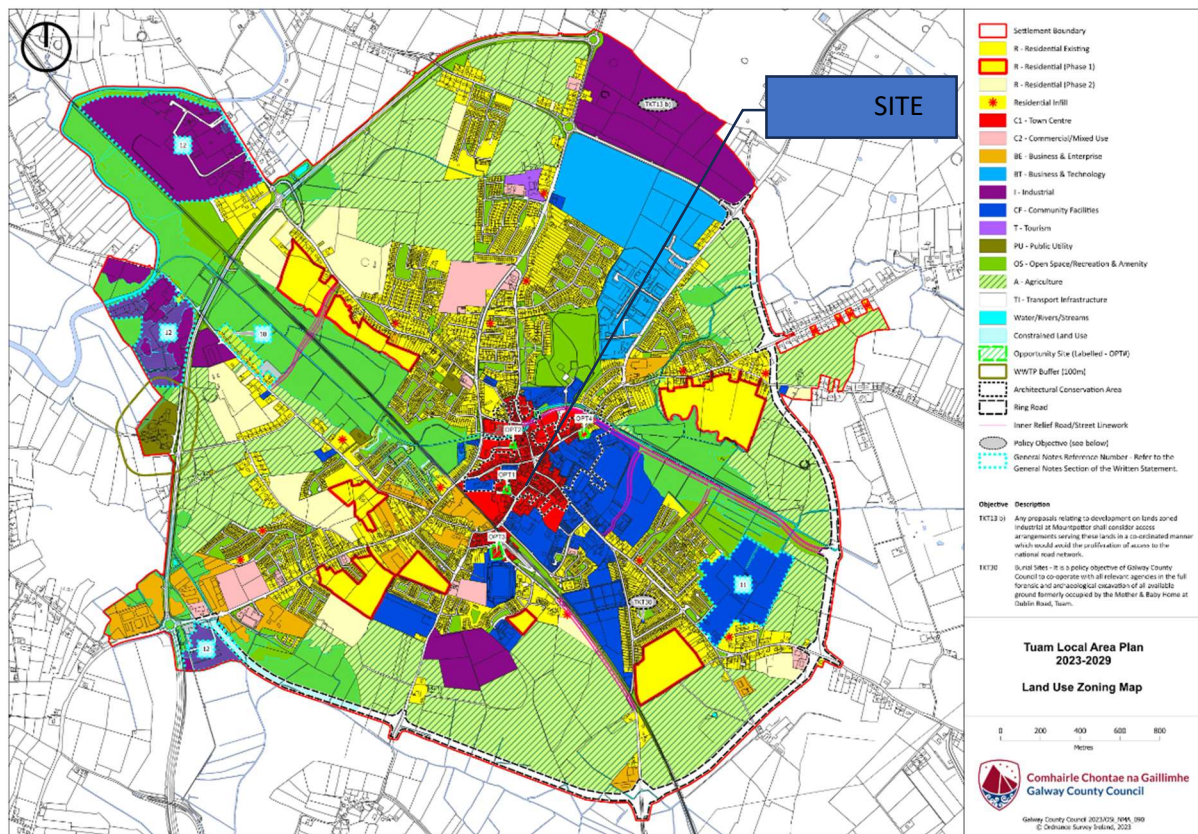


FIGURE 5 - TUAM LAP 2023-2029 – LAND USE ZONING MAP

The site is zoned as C1 - Town Centre. A strategic aim of the Tuam Local Area Plan 2023- 2029 is to *“Promote development of the Town Centre to enhance the vitality and viability of Tuam with a focus on providing for retail, commercial and residential development. Development will be focused within the town centre to act as the economic, social and cultural hub of the town.”* The policy objective for areas zoned C1 is to *“To provide for the development and improvement of appropriate town centre uses including retail, commercial, office and civic/community uses and to provide for “Living over the Shop” scheme, residential accommodation or other ancillary residential accommodation.”* A description of this policy is provided as follows *“To develop and consolidate the existing town centre to improve its vibrancy and vitality with the densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments, ensuring a mix of commercial, recreation and civic uses.”*

Previous Planning Submission

Planning Ref: 071860

Description: for (a) demolition of existing rear extension and construction of a new two storey rear extension consisting of ground floor retail unit and first floor office units; (b) changes to front elevation

Decision / Status: Granted

Appendix A : Site Photos



Figure 6- View from Vicar Street.



Figure 7- View from rear of site



Figure 8- Single storey extension to rear to be demolished.

Appendix B: Drawings

Drawings for development to accompany this document (PDF files).

Drawing titles:

- PL101 Site Location map (1:1000)
- PL102 Existing Site layout (1:100)
- PL103 Existing Floor plans (1:100)
- PL104 Existing South East Elevation (1:100)
- PL105 Existing Side and Rear Elevation (1:100/1:200)
- PL106 Proposed site Layout/Ground Floor Plan (1:200)
- PL107 Proposed First Floor Plan (1:100)
- PL108 Proposed Second Floor Plan (1:100)
- PL109 Proposed South East Elevation (1:100)
- PL110 Proposed North West Elevation & Section A-A (1:100)
- PL111 Proposed North West, South West Elevation & 3D Aerial views (1:100/1:200)

Documents:

- AA Screening Report
- EIA Screening Report
- Newspaper Notice
- Site Notice
- Topographical Survey
- Civils drawing
- Archaeological Assessment
- Conservation Assessment
- Pre-planning report