

HASSETT LEYDEN & ASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTS ♦ CIVIL ENGINEERS ♦ PROJECT MANAGERS



ARCHITECT'S PLANNING REPORT

FOR

HOUSING SCHEME

At

PORTUMNA, CO. GALWAY

April 2025

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HASSETT LEYDEN & ASSOCIATES
ROSLEVAN, TULLA RD
COUNTY CLARE
T. 065 6828422
hlamail@hassettleyden.ie



ENGINEERS
IRELAND

Title

Document Title	Architect's Planning Report for Housing Development at Portumna, Co. Galway
Document Ref	2756-HLA-00-ZZ-DR-A-9000

Date	Edition/Rev	Status	Originator	Checked	Approved
28.04.2025	First	Planning	SS	MK	MK

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Prepared By:
HASSETT LEYDEN & ASSOCIATES
ROSLEVAN, TULLA ROAD
COUNTY CLARE

For: Galway County Council

HASSETT LEYDEN & ASSOCIATES
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INTRODUCTION

This architectural design statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application under Part 8 by Galway County Council for a residential development on lands at St Brigid's Road. Portumna

The application is as follows:

Partial demolition of 11 no. detached dwelling houses and complete refurbishment and extensions to provide 11 No. 2 Bedroom single storey detached dwellings along with external site works and services.

The overall site measures approximately 0.35 hectares and is of irregular shape fronting the main street – St Brigid's Road. On average, the site is 69m deep and approximately 115m wide.

THE DESIGN TEAM

Client	Galway County Council
Architect	Hassett Leyden & Associates
Civil & Structural Engineering	Hassett Leyden & Associates
M&E Engineer	Moloney Fox, Consulting Engineers
Quantity Surveyors	Lawlor Burns
Topographical Surveyor	Control Survey, Limerick
Asbestos	Higgins Consultancy Ltd.
Ecology	Enviroplan Consulting Ltd.

AIMS

The aim of the proposal is to create an inclusive residential community that respects the existing character of the village of Portumna but acknowledges the sustainable growth of the village with an appropriate development for a fully serviced residentially zoned site.

The proposal seeks to respect the existing residential development pattern of the area by aligning the new development. The proposal will be connected to the locality by the use of materials sympathetic with the locality and adapting to the location of the existing streetscape.

Through this architectural design statement, it is aimed to: describe the proposal; outline the conceptual and design process; how the existing site context and landscape is respected; show how ministerial, local authority and development standards are met and how the proposal will be ecologically, economically and socially sustainable.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this design report is to describe the development in detail including information relating to the context, design analysis and concepts, layout responses and

access.

The report has been divided into the following sections:

Section 01 – Site location & description

Section 02 – Site analysis, concept & development regulatory concerns

Section 03 – Design Statement – Neighbourhood

Section 04 – Design Statement – Site

Section 05 – Design Statement-Home

Sections 3, 4 and 5 are structured along the 3 groups and the 12 key criteria considered are set out in the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide 2009.

SECTION 01 – SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 Wider Context - Map

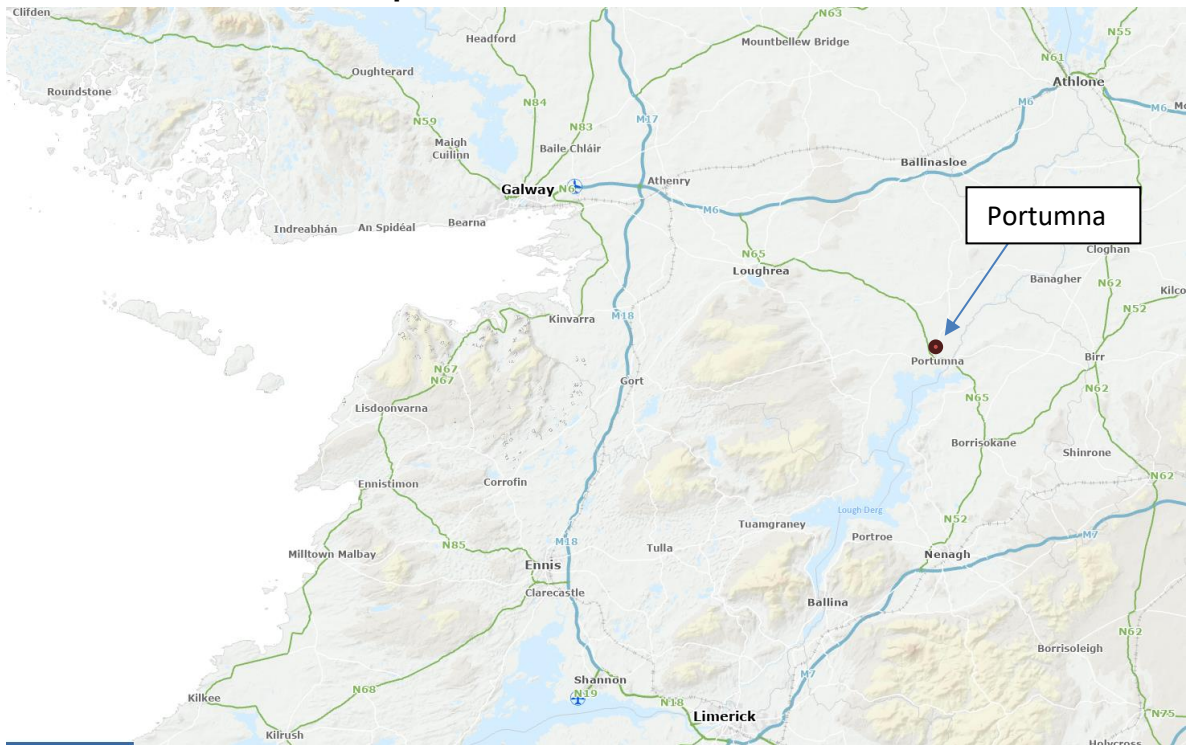


Figure 1 - Map

1.2 Wider Context – Connections Diagram

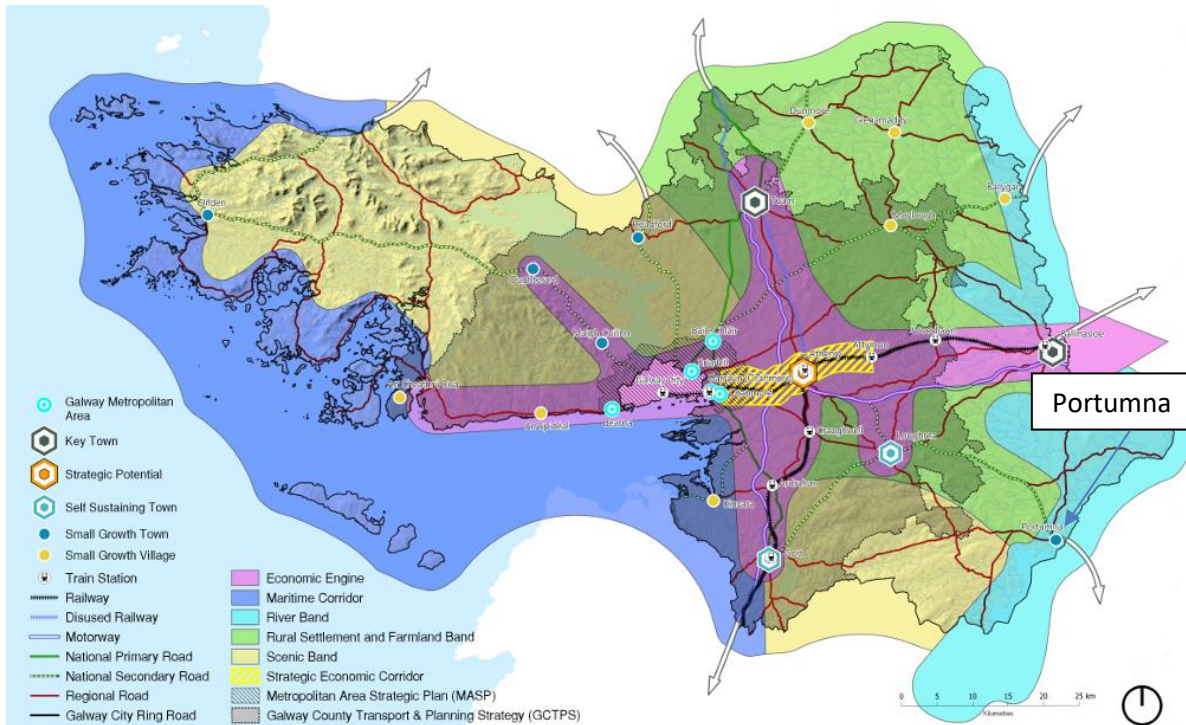


Figure 2 – Extract GCDP 2022-28

1.3 Wider Context – Economic Engine/Corridor

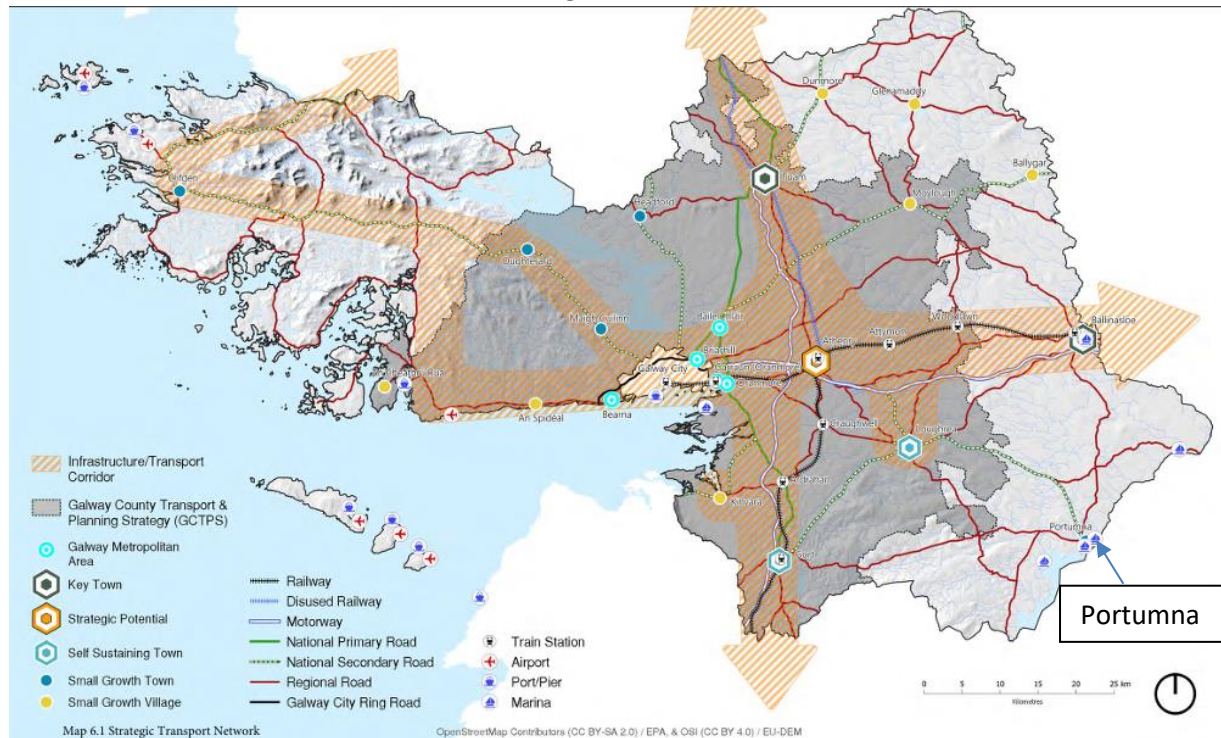


Figure 3 – Extract GCDP 2022-28

1.4 Wider Context – Rural Housing Policy

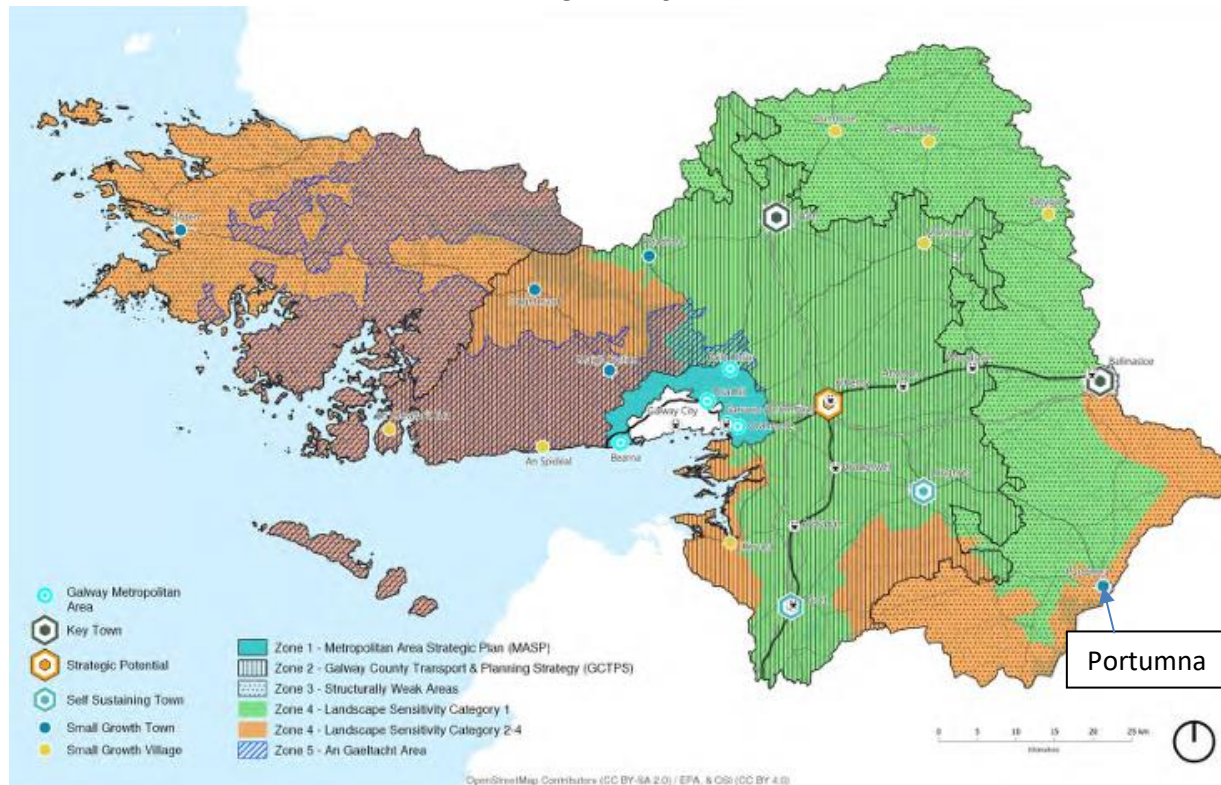


Figure 4 – Extract GCDP 2022-28

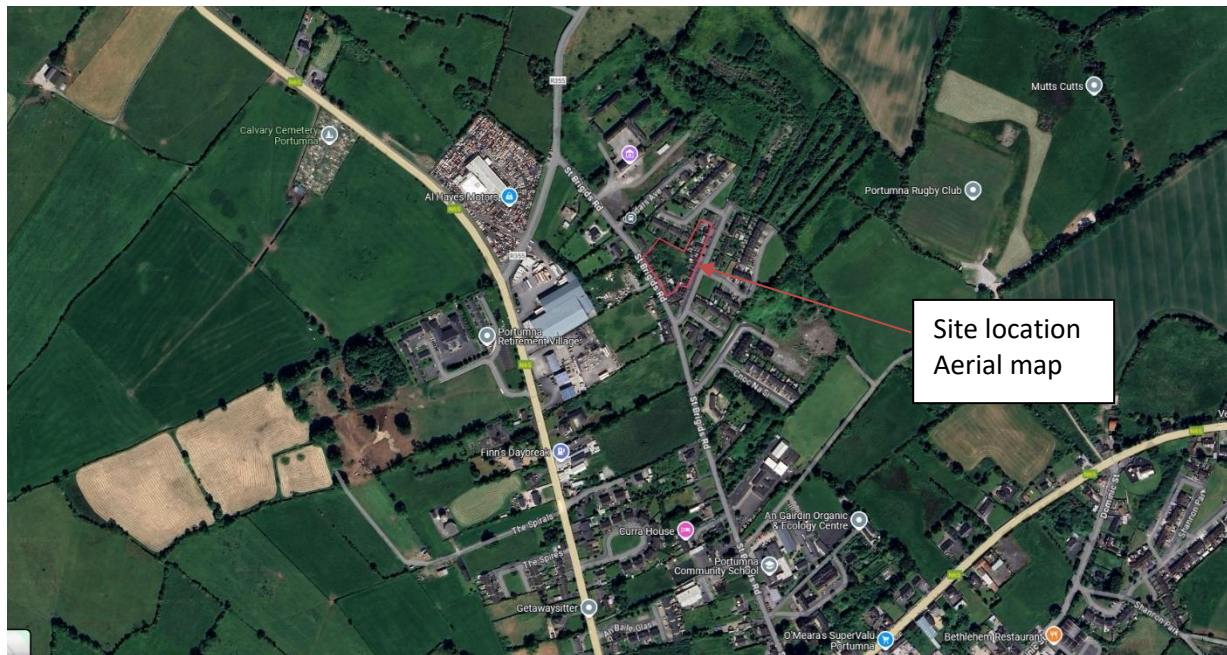
SECTION 02 – SITE ANALYSIS & DEVELOPMENT REGULATORY MATTERS.

2.1 Site Description

The site is situated on the approach to Portumna main village, along St. Brigid's Road. It lies on the northern side of the road, at the edge of the village.

The overall site measures approximately 0.35 hectares and is of irregular shape fronting the main street – St Brigid's Road. On average, the site is 69m deep and approximately 115m wide.

The site currently contains existing houses that are to be refurbished, with doors, windows and roof replacements planned as part of the works. The building height will be increased by approximately 200mm to comply with height requirements. The rear gardens slope slightly, and there is an approximate level difference of 2 metres across the front of the site between houses.



2.2 Existing Buildings & Structure - Photos

The existing building photos have been highlighted in red. All the houses will be retained and re-furbished. There were few houses which have extensions done on rear side over the period of time. All the extensions will be demolished.



Photo of the Site

2.3 Planning & Regulatory Obligations

The applicable development plan is Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021. In particular Chapter 2 -Core strategy, settlement strategy and Housing strategy of the Written Statement Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 have been reviewed and incorporated into design.

Extracts from Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

2.6.4 Housing for Older People, People with Disabilities and/or Learning Disabilities

Residential units will continue to be delivered for particular or identified needs of the population. This will be based on the principle of universal design and lifelong adaptability. These residential units will be located in sustainable locations in the first instance to ensure immediate access to local services and infrastructure and facilitate a greater degree of social inclusion.

HS 2 Social and Affordable Housing

It is a policy objective of the Council to procure vacant homes to ensure their continued use for residential purposes into the future and develop housing in infill and brownfield sites within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision.

Under section 4.6.1

The key objectives of the Council are:

- To facilitate the genuine housing requirements of the local rural community (rural generated housing), subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations;*
- To direct urban-generated development to areas for new housing development in the adjoining urban centres, towns identified in the metropolitan area and the towns and villages as identified in the Settlement Strategy;*
- To support rural housing in areas designated as structurally weak areas*
- To accommodate residential development proposals in accordance with Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.*

2.4 Universal Design Statement

The proposed development scheme must meet the requirements for Part M of the Building Regulations. The Technical Guidance Document (TGD) Part M 2020 provides advice to provide “Prima Facie” compliance with the Building Regulations. This document has been closely followed during the design process and is referenced below to indicate compliance.

The proposed development has also been designed with due regard to the principles of universal design, including the “Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland” and the “Building for everyone” publications.

Also please refer to Section 3.3 Inclusivity in relation to universal design in this document.

Site Access Strategy

The individual access to the housing units will be from the public footpath and will be in compliance with Part M 2010. Further on-street will be provided from where the housing units will be accessed. Dropped kerbs will be provided at appropriate locations to allow for wheelchair access.

Approach to Houses

The approach to the houses from the public footpath will be in compliance with Part M 2020 Technical Guidance Documentation and footpaths will be gently sloped at a gradient of 1:21 for the maximum gradient.

Access to Houses

All dwellings being designed to TGD Part M section 3.3 have a minimum door clear opening width of 800mm and have a minimum level clearance of 1.2m at front doors of all houses.

Circulation within Houses

Each has been designed to be fully compliant with TGD Part M section 3.3. A visitable W.C. is provided to all units at entrance levels associated with habitable rooms.

2.5 Statement of Compliance with guidance on housing design and urban design standards

The proposed scheme is being developed in a manner which employs best practice in urban design and having regard to the following policy documents:

Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes sustaining Communities 2007
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for new apartments-December 2020
Permeability Best Practice Guide-National Transport Authority 2015
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2019
Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide May 2009

Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) Guidelines 2009

Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005.

Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Compliance with 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – 2007' is demonstrated in the housing drawings.

2.6 Possible overshadowing onto adjoining buildings

The proposed housing scheme is designed so that no overshadowing can occur to adjoining properties. The main orientation of the site is north south with buildings facing to the east and west. There are few adjoining properties to the north and south of the site. We are satisfied that the proposed development does not raise concerns of overshadowing onto existing neighbourhoods.

2.7 Planning History

An initial desktop study has shown evidence of previous planning applications to one of the housings units in 2004 for extension

The most recent Planning Application found for the house was in 2004 – Planning Ref: P04/4074. No further Planning Applications were found.

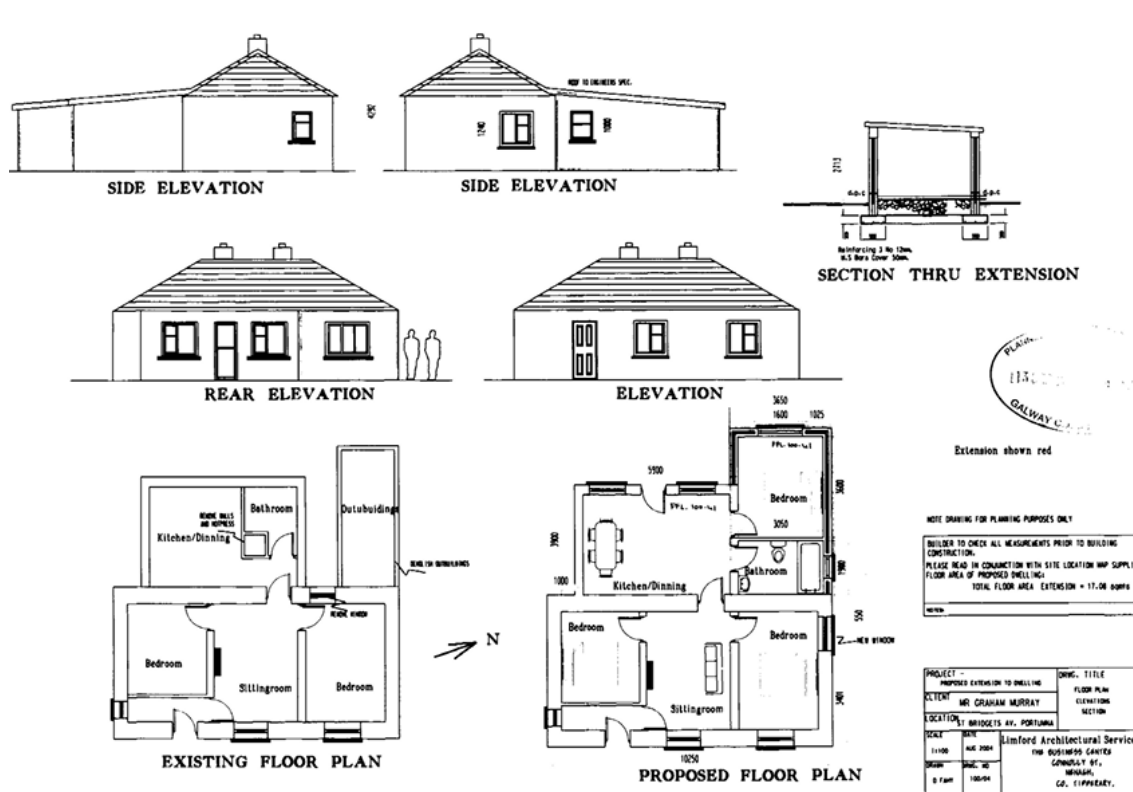
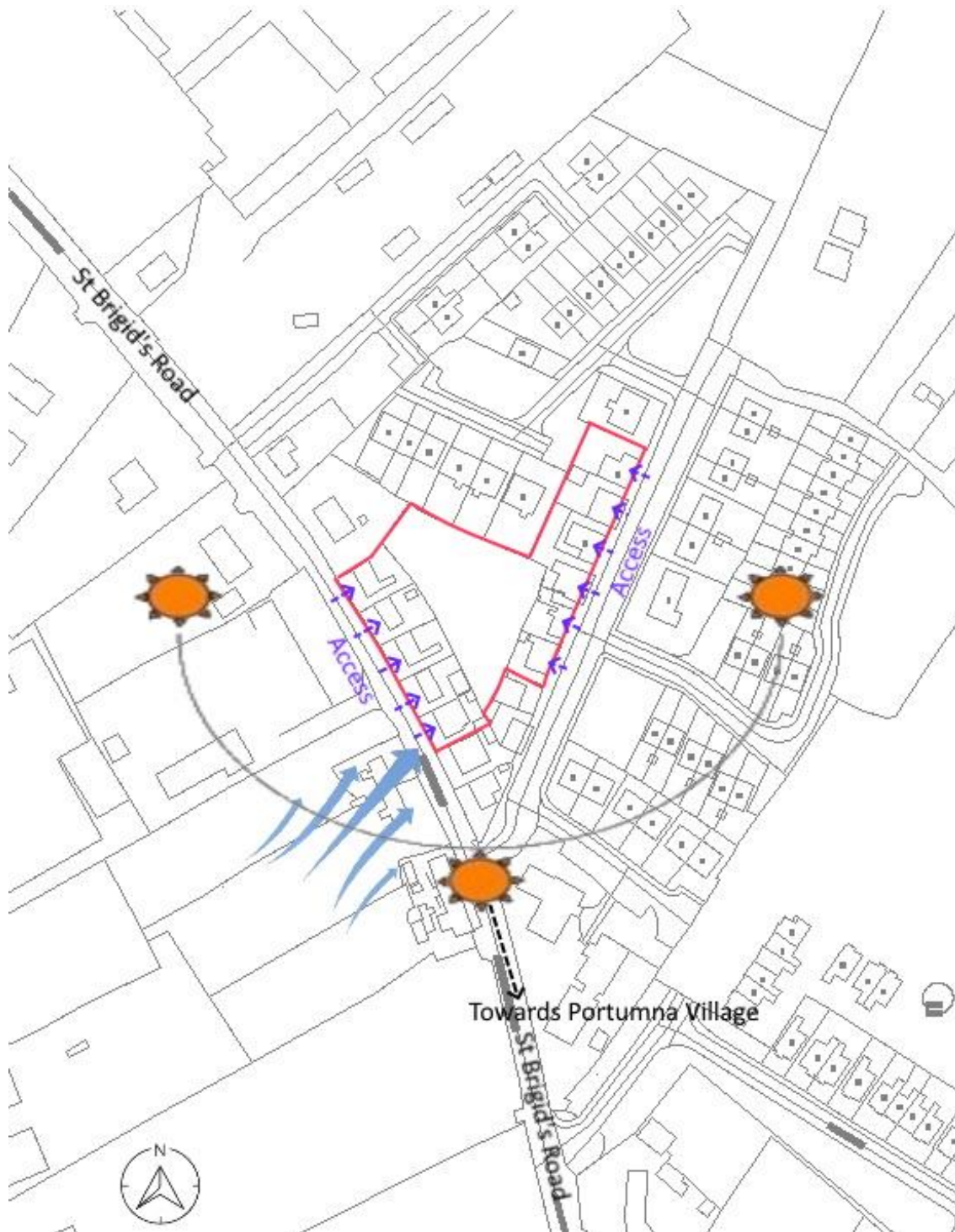


Figure: Planning Permission Extract Ref 2004 / 4074 – Proposed house layout

2.8 Site Analysis – Opportunities & Constraints



2.9 Site Concept & Initial Design Strategy



Design Considerations and Heritage Integration

- The existing building elevations have been preserved to maintain the traditional appearance and character of the village streetscape.
- All external doors and windows will be replaced with heritage-style sash windows and panelled doors to enhance the historical aesthetic.
- As the original houses featured chimneys, the design includes the addition of non-functional (fake) chimneys to retain the look and charm of the original heritage bungalows.
- Due to a level difference along the houses fronting St. Brigid's Road, stair access has been incorporated into the design. These homes will also be fitted with external storage sheds for added functionality.
- The overall building height has been raised by approximately 200mm to meet compliance standards while maintaining visual harmony with the existing village skyline.

SECTION 03-DESIGN STATEMENT-NEIGHBOURHOOD

3.1 Context – How does the development respond to its surroundings?

Portumna's town core is characterised by a high-density layout that has evolved sustainably over time, radiating outward from the main streets in all directions. Residential development has expanded to the north, east, and west of the town centre through the establishment of several housing estates. Additionally, there has been a pattern of infill housing within the town centre and inside the designated development boundary. The existing housing stock in the core area presents a balanced mix of traditional dwellings and newer infill developments, contributing to a diverse and vibrant urban fabric.

Portumna serves not only a local urban population but also a broad rural catchment area. The retail policy objective for the town centre is to sustain its vitality and viability by supporting a suitable range of retail and non-retail services that meet the needs of both the local community and surrounding areas.

The natural, built, and cultural heritage of Portumna significantly contributes to its unique character and identity. The townscape, including its historic street patterns and architectural features, forms an essential component of the area's visual appeal. Accordingly, future conservation and development efforts must prioritise the protection and enhancement of these key elements.

In terms of education, Portumna is home to Portumna Community School, a co-educational secondary school, and St. Brendan's National School, which is also co-educational. These institutions serve the educational needs of the town and its surrounding rural areas.

3.2 Connections-How well connected is the new development?

Portumna is defined by two principal parallel roads—St. Brendan's Street/Clonfert Avenue and Abbey Street—which are intersected by St. Brigid's Avenue and St. Patrick's Street. This grid forms the historic core of the town and serves as its focal point, playing a central role in Portumna's administrative, commercial, cultural, recreational, residential, and community life.

The streets in this area are notably wide in proportion to the height of the surrounding buildings, giving the town a distinct sense of openness and space. The built form is predominantly composed of modest, vernacular-style domestic and commercial buildings, complemented by the more formal neoclassical architecture of key public buildings, creating a balanced and visually engaging townscape.

A range of local amenities is located within walking distance of the site, including shops, cafés, churches, a hairdresser, a children's playground, and a public house, contributing to the convenience and livability of the area.

3.3 Inclusivity – How easily can people use and access the development?

The proposed development has been designed with due regard to the principles of universal design, including the “Building for everyone” publications. Please refer to section 2.6 Universal Design Statement. Main features as follows:

All homes have level access and inaccessible areas have been eliminated as the site is relatively flat with a gentle slope.

The public realm is designed to ensure accessibility on equal terms for people of a range of ages and physical mobility. All level changes will be mitigated as far as possible creating a maximum slope of less than 1:20 to roadways/dropped kerbs/ramps and driveways.

The development consists of 11 no. housing units with 2 no. two bedroom bungalows all of which are semi-detached and 69sq m with the internal layouts gross floor area ranging

All houses comply with TGD M, with 1200 x 1200mm level access areas in front of the main entrances and external footpaths to either side of the dwellings which exceed the minimum required with of 900mm.

The proposed housing presents a positive aspect to passers-by, avoiding unnecessary physical and visual barriers.

3.4 Variety – How does the development promote a good mix of activities

The site is relatively modest in scale with 11 no. housing units but is well situated amongst many established local amenities and facilities. The site is close to the local community centre and within walking distance of the site are shops, cafes, and churches. There is also a GAA club. It is also possible to connect to broadband in the area which will make remote working a possibility for people wishing to work in Galway city and live in the village.

Each proposed house type has a similar internal layout with the external plastered and painted and a roof design in keeping with the rural landscape. On the houses on St Bridig's rd, habitable rooms face onto the main street and onto green fields and onto the private open space (back gardens) behind the units to enhance the passive surveillance.

There is generous circulation space on either side of the proposed houses for bins and bicycles to pass through.

We believe the proposal we are submitting is an adequately varied residential scheme which will increase the viability of this small rural village, bringing much-needed extra commercial activity, people, and sustainability into this rural landscape.

SECTION 04 – DESIGN STATEMENT-SITE

4.1 Efficiency – How does the development make appropriate uses of resources, including land?

The proposed scheme provides a total of 11 much-needed residential units. The houses will be constructed to current building regulation standards delivering at least an A2 energy rating, which we submit is a sustainable use of serviced, zoned residential lands located minutes from the centre of the Village of Portumna.

The proposed development constitutes an efficient use of the development land, zoned for residential use, its amenities within the area, with proximity to major transportation nodes.

The proposed development is appropriate to the zoning and the settlement strategy which is guided by regional and national development strategies. T

4.2 Distinctiveness-How do the proposals create a sense of place?

The contents of the adjoining existing rural character in the village of Portumna has been the stimulus for the material pallet.

The materials being used are a mixture of stonework with plasterwork and paint.

We believe that the proposed material palette is appropriate to this rural context as it creates a unified visual identity and integrates with the surrounding context.

4.3 Layout

We submit the proposal creates people-friendly streets and spaces through the following principles applied to the layout:

Maintaining the building line of the existing adjacent buildings along the main street of Portumna and providing primary elevations in keeping with the other houses along the street.

Main facades to overlook, supervise and define the edge of the site that faces on the main street.

All existing fence fronting the site will be retained and made good in keeping with the village aspect.

Private open spaces are located at the rear of the proposed houses.

Main living rooms face onto the main street boosting passive surveillance.

4.4 Public Realm – How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?

A central theme of this proposal is to maintain the existing building line and increase passive supervision onto the main street of the village, while also maintaining the rural aspect and character of this part of the village.

Given the scale and form of the site, all front facades face onto the main street of the village.

Some soft landscaping has been proposed in front of the main facades which will serve to soften the proposed shared surface parking area and offers a degree of privacy separation between the living room and the footpath outside which would be accessible from the public realm.

All proposed areas facing onto the main street of the village are clearly defined and looked upon by primary facades, providing clarity between public and private realms, ensuring full passive surveillance and safe environments for residents.

SECTION 05-DESIGN STATEMENT-HOME

5.1 Adaptability-How will the buildings cope with change?

All houses are designed to meet the requirements of “Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities” (2007) and typically more generous internal spaces are proposed to increase the quality and adaptability of the houses.

Please refer to the house layout drawing which accompanies this submission. Please also refer to Appendix 02 for housing quality assessments.

The buildings will be constructed of traditional construction, heavily insulated with internal layouts that can be easily adapted in the future.

All houses will be constructed to current building regulation standards delivering at least an A2 building energy rating. Recent changes to the Building Regulations have been issued to bring buildings to nZEB standard. This had been considered within the design with increased wall thicknesses, the heating methodology and renewable energy considerations (solar to roofs).

5.2 Privacy and Amenity-How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity?

Each house proposed in this scheme is served by a generous back garden which will all face east and will benefit from the morning sunshine.

Planted areas and on curtilage parking areas are provided to the front of the dwellings proposed creating a defensible space between the public realm and the built edge.

Separation distances have been maintained in accordance with best proposed practice to avoid overlooking and all houses will be designed to have good levels of thermal performance, comfort, daylight and sound insulation. All houses are dual aspect.

The kitchens are located on the ground floors to the rear facing east and overlooking green fields making maximum use of morning daylight. The main living rooms and main bedrooms are located to the front and will benefit from sunset light in the evening.

5.3 Parking – How will the parking be safe and secure?

There is parking available along the east side of the site, which can be used.

Bicycle parking is also possible in the rear gardens of all dwelling units.

5.4 Detailed Design-How well thought through is the building & landscape design?

The proposed houses are to be built of traditional construction. The proposed houses will be finished to a high standard in materials suitable for the context/location of the scheme. The housing layout proposed ensures that dwellings relate approximately to each other in terms of scale, materials, access and detailed design.

As mentioned previously, the site is within walking distance of all amenities so it will be possible to walk and cycle to all areas. Vehicle and pedestrian access is shared as these are individual dwellings and would therefore have a lighter degree of traffic.

There is bin stores provided to all houses all the houses will have access directly from street, all the existing compound walls and gates will be made good for use.

SECTION 06 – CONCLUSION

This proposed development represents a thoughtful and contextually sensitive response to the unique character and needs of Portumna. Through careful consideration of heritage integration, accessibility, sustainability, and local identity, the scheme delivers high-quality housing that enhances the existing village fabric. The design prioritises human scale, visual harmony, and universal accessibility, while also supporting the economic and social sustainability of the area by attracting new residents and reinforcing the town's vitality. By integrating modern energy efficiency standards with traditional aesthetics, the development offers a balanced and forward-thinking contribution to Portumna's continued growth as a vibrant and resilient rural community.