

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT

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SOCIAL HOUSING FARRANAMARTIN.
AT GALWAY ROAD, TUAM, CO.GALWAY.
FOR GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL.
PROJECT NUMBER: 24.1268.

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1.00 Summary**1.01 INTRODUCTION**

This report has been prepared by Collins Rolston in order to describe the architectural ethos adopted during the design stages of this development and to demonstrate the appropriateness of the scheme with regard to the location and relevant statutory and regulatory guidance.

This report is intended to form part of a planning proposal by Galway County Council (GCC) for a residential development of 66no. units at Farrannamartin, Tuam, Co. Galway. Report references include the '*Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*' and '*Sustainable Urban Housing - New Apartments (2022)*'.

1.02 PROJECT BRIEF

The project brief is to deliver a social housing development of high-quality residential accommodation in the form of houses and apartments and high quality open space across the site. The total area of the site provided by GCC is 1.87 ha.

The scheme will provide 66no. social housing units with a mix of types, siteworks and ancillary services which will provide suitable accommodation to meet a designated need of the local authority in this location as per the current Housing Delivery Action Plan.

1.03 SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

The proposal consists of two & three storey accommodation with a new vehicular entrance to the north-west, off Galway Road. Unit types are as follows;

PROPERTY TYPE	NUMBER OF UNITS
1 Bed	11
2 Bed	14
2 Bed Specially Adapted	12 no. UD
3 Bed	23
4 Bed	1
4 Bed Specially Adapted	1no. UD

Total 62 Total Dwellings

2.00 Site Assessment

2.01 LOCATION

The proposed site is located in Tuam and is accessed from Galway Road, in a predominantly residential area. The site is well served by schools, shops and bus routes.



fig. 01 – Location of subject site within Ireland / in relation to Galway (n.t.s.).



fig. 02 – Existing aerial view showing the site in relation to Tuam town centre.

2.02 SITE HERITAGE

The site does not appear to contain any structures with significant heritage value.

2.03 PLANNING CONTEXT

The site is currently un-developed and appears to have previously been used for agricultural purposes. The site and lands beyond are included within the Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and is zoned for residential use. There does not appear to be any current applications or extant permissions on the site.

2.04 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed site comprises 1.87 hectares and mainly consists of unmaintained grassland and is clear of any existing development. There are a number of stone walls, blockwork walls & fenced boundaries around the extents of the site, some of which border existing residential development and others onto agricultural lands & accesses. There are existing trees located around the perimeter of the

site. The topography of the western portion of the site is reasonably flat / gently sloping whilst the eastern half of the site slopes from west to east.

2.05 SITE CONSTRAINTS

2.05.1 Existing Trees

The majority of the site boundaries are lined by existing trees. It is proposed that a number of these trees will be removed either due to the condition of the trees or to accommodate the development. The removal of the trees outlined in red in Figure 04 are in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (subject to updates) and are required to maximise the ingress of natural light into all dwellings and to accommodate well enclosed, level rear gardens to optimise the useability and security of these spaces, thus contributing to the health and wellbeing of all residents.

Garden sizes (min. 11m) and separation distances (min. 22m) from existing properties have been considered within the design of the scheme's layout to ensure that the removal of trees does not diminish the privacy of existing dwellings.

2.05.2 Site Levels

The topography at the north-western boundary, adjacent to the proposed site entrance, is reasonably flat. Levels start to rise gently approximately 15-20m from this boundary, with a gradual increase in the gradient of this slope as one moves towards the eastern boundary of the site. Levels plateau in the eastern corner of the site.

2.05.3 Pedestrian Routes

Currently the site has no public pedestrian access or permeability beyond the existing public footpath to the north of the site. Pedestrian connectivity between proposed open space areas & Galway Road has been considered as part of the proposed scheme layout.

2.05.4 Access

An existing agricultural gated site access point is located adjacent to the northernmost corner of the site on the boundary with Galway Road. The proposed main vehicular & pedestrian access for the development will be located approximately 6m south of this existing gateway. Proposals have been formulated to accommodate vehicular & pedestrian access beyond the currently proposed scheme so as not to compromise accessibility to lands to the east. Existing overhead power and telephone lines run along the site boundary with Galway Road with 1nr. electric pole positioned to the back of the footway on this boundary. The overhead lines and pole will be retained and protected as part of the development.

3.00 Development Proposal

3.01 STRATEGY

The guiding principles and strategies leading the development of this scheme have been based on relevant guidance documents including the following;

- *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007*
- *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide 2009*
- *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) 2009 – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*
- *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*
- *Sustainable Urban Housing - Design Standards for New Apartments 2022, Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*
- *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)*
- *Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028*
- *Universal Design Guidance for Houses in Ireland, (published by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design)*

3.02 KEY DESIGN STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES

The following key areas formed the basis for the current scheme layout;

- Create a design which promotes community interaction for all ages within an attractive and inclusive outdoor environment.
- Create character areas which assist with wayfinding throughout the site, which complement the surrounding context and which visually communicate the transition between the town and the countryside.
- Create a high quality, contemporary and sustainable residential development with a variety of 'site specific' types to create visual interest & individual identity within an imaginative development with community appeal.

- Maximise benefits of modern methods of construction through standardised layouts.
- Create a development which integrates with the existing surrounding built environment by respecting the existing scale, massing, building lines, density & architectural character of the area.
- Continue the line of the existing street frontage along Galway Road, providing an attractive entrance feature which conveys the key design principles of the new development beyond.
- Provide private open space for each unit in accordance with policy requirements, including a minimum rear garden depth of 11m for two storey units.
- Incorporate communal public open space (at a minimum of 15% of the development area) which provides for a range of needs and a mix of ages, which is south facing & overlooked to provide passive surveillance.
- Improve public safety by creating new adopted footpaths, set back from the main access road where possible, along with the incorporation of an external home-zone & raised crossing points adjacent to the central open space.
- Provide opportunities for future active travel beyond the site.
- Improve site permeability by providing pathways throughout the site, encouraging community interaction and increasing the quality of the adjacent public realm.
- Carefully consider the integration of Universal Design units into the development & provide safe/secure outdoor space/parking.
- Incorporate the principles of the Galway County Development Plan and Tuam Local Area Plan design guidance to create a high-quality scheme that responds to the challenges of this unique site to create a safe and attractive home environment for residents.
- Provide car parking in line with policy requirements (1.5no. spaces per 1-3 bedroom unit & 2no. spaces per 4 bedroom unit).
- Provide appropriate bin/ bicycle storage for each unit in line with Ch. 15 of the Galway County Development Plan.

The above Key Design Principals have been considered in accordance with Sustainable Residential Development & Compact Settlements - Guidance for Planning Authorities.

3.03 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The final scheme proposed provides a total of 62no. units with a range of unit types and sizes. This is in order to provide an appropriate range of tenures to create a vibrant and self-sufficient development with character and a sense of place.

The proposal provides all units with individual areas of outdoor private amenity space, which includes paved areas to the rear of ground floor units with provision for bin storage, bicycle storage and clothes drying along with informal grassed areas. All ground floor residents will also be afforded additional defensible space to the front of their properties (min. 1.5m deep) and apartment residents located on first and second floor level will be provided with balconies opening out from living spaces (min. 1.5m deep). These balconies will provide a minimum area of 6.1m², meeting requirements set out in Appendix 1 of *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2022 - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

Residents of apartments located above ground floor level will be provided with accessible private, securely enclosed bin storage areas at ground floor level and will have use of covered communal bicycle parking in line with requirements outlined within DM Standard 31 under Chapter 15 of the Galway County Development Plan.



fig. 03 – Proposed Site Layout Plan (n.t.s.).

4.00 Landscape Design

4.01 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The intention of the public open space (POS) layout design within this scheme is to provide a hierarchy of predominantly soft landscaped areas with footpaths both connecting and traversing each open space area to enhance connectivity and active travel within the site. Pathways will be kept separate from roadways and where they are required to intersect, raised crossing areas will prioritise pedestrian safety over vehicular movement. All public & semi-private areas will be well lit.

The larger area of POS is located centrally within the scheme and is proposed as a predominantly grassed area with pathways, seating areas & a play park, which is enclosed by low level fencing. This is overlooked by c. 35 dwellings to enhance its safe use. The fringes of this section would be landscaped with trees and some low maintenance shrubbery to provide physical and visual separation to adjoining residential properties and external home zones, maintaining the privacy of existing residents.

A secondary area of open space will be located adjacent to Galway Road and is overlooked by apartment dwellings on plots 1 & 2. This provides an attractive entrance feature, encourages the existing community's interaction with the scheme and softens the visual impact of the development for passers-by Galway Road and residents opposite. Tertiary areas of open space are located to the far eastern corner of the site and is overlooked by plots 43 & 44 and to the south eastern boundary of the site, overlooked by plots 35-37.

These areas of open space will meet the minimum 15% requirement of the overall site.

5.00 Design Approach

5.01 CONTEXT

The subject site is located in Farranmartin, approximately 1km south of Tuam town centre, on the fringe of the townland. Lands immediately surrounding the site to the south east is agricultural and unmaintained grassland, with existing residential development bordering the site on all other sides. This site forms part of a larger area zoned for residential development within the Tuam LAP 2023-2029 which requires the scheme to accommodate potential vehicular & pedestrian access to lands adjoining the site to the east. The positioning of open space and built form of the proposal has been carefully considered to maximise the usability of public & private space, passive surveillance of open space areas and respecting required garden depths & separation distances between proposed development and existing residential dwellings.

This site will include a selection of dwelling types of a similar height, scale and massing as existing residential development in the area, with the predominant use of render with brick detailing in-keeping with development within the area. Dwellings are located generally to align with existing site contours in order to reduce the necessity for retaining structures where possible. Where required, retaining structures will be reduced to minimal heights with an intention for these to be utilised as planters within private amenity spaces to the north.

5.02 CONNECTIONS

The site is located on the edge of Tuam Town. A bus stop is located nearby on the Galway Road (R939) which is served by the 427 & 428 bus routes which run between Dunmore & Galway. Connection to lands to the east has been accommodated at this stage with a small turning head. Public bicycle parking has been proposed centrally within the scheme to encourage active travel to and from these areas.

5.03 INCLUSIVITY

All houses are designed to be compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations and feature level access with flush thresholds to front entrances and rear patio doors. All have visitable bathrooms. The overall site layout has been developed in line with Urban Design Manual and 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland'. Footpath gradients are gently sloped at no greater than 1:21, and the proposed paving surfaces comprise concrete, pavements and tarmacadam.

A public open space arrangement is proposed that allows for flexibility in recreation activity, for social interaction and active play as well as spaces that are quiet, calming, accessible and inclusive for all

ages and abilities. Raised tables are provided with pedestrian priority at all major crossing points into the public open spaces.

Houses are carefully sited to provide passive surveillance of all open spaces.

5.04 VARIETY

The range of units proposed consists predominantly of 1 bedroom apartments, 2 bedroom apartments & bungalows and 3 bedroomed houses, to provide for a very wide variety of people and households.

The range of spaces within the public open spaces contribute to the character and amenity of the development. It will be a central feature for the community supporting a variety of outdoor activities for people of all ages and abilities.

Variety of streetscapes is created through the use of feature brick detailing, the application of which is increased in feature nodal points of the scheme, and contemporary glazed balustrades to balconies. These assist in creating a high quality residential 'street' of appropriate width and proportion along with defensible spaces in order to create a high quality and respectful built environment.

5.05 EFFICIENCY AND DENSITY

The scheme consists of efficiently designed layouts that meet or slightly exceed minimum spatial requirements in order to allow a clear and distinct separation of developed lands and high quality generous open spaces thereby maximising the utility of available lands.

The layout makes use of existing contours in order to minimise cut and fill required and the costs associated with the construction of unnecessary retaining structures.

5.06 DISTINCTIVENESS

A design approach that incorporates the principles of the housing guidance documents noted above along with urban design and planning principles, will create a user friendly environment with a sense of safety and security that greatly enhances the qualitative performance of the scheme.

The inclusion within the scheme of high quality hard and soft landscaped areas with paths and sitting areas, aims to create a pleasant and secure outdoor environment for residents. Creating a sense of a home and socially inclusive environment will increase the sense of personal connection with the scheme and assist in fostering a sense of place and care for that environment.

The scheme relates as closely as possible to existing natural contours in order to visually integrate the scheme into its surroundings.

5.07 LAYOUT

The proposed layout is intended to create a legible and pleasant residential development with a sense of character and identity. The public open spaces are located to areas of the site that are generally flat or very gently sloping in order to maximise the usability of these communal spaces. The built accommodation is therefore located primarily to the fringes site, with buildings orientated to overlook the aforementioned open space areas. This arrangement allows for low level retaining structures, which are necessary to maximise useable private amenity space for each unit to on the northern boundary, to be located out of public view.

The entrance to the layout is located on the western site boundary with Galway Road and is flanked to the southern side by public open space and a landscaped linear space to the north, which is designed to provide appropriate separation between the vehicular entrance road & pedestrian pathway and the dwelling adjoining the site.

5.08 PUBLIC REALM

The layout has been carefully designed to provide passive surveillance and overlooking of public spaces within the scheme. This reduces the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and importantly also creates the perception of safety for residents as 'hidden' areas are not present within the layout. The site layout plan includes pedestrian routes and crossing points which aim to enrich the scheme by providing meeting points and legible nodes by which to orientate oneself. The large grassed central open space area will be of generous proportion to provide opportunities for outdoor play without impacting on proposed and existing dwelling structures. It is important to also provide a space for quiet and peaceful enjoyment for older residents, which will be achieved through the provision of a feature seating area for rest and reflection. This area will draw on the re-use of an existing dry stone wall on

the southern boundary of the site, which will be dismantled to allow the erection of a secure 2.1m high blockwork boundary wall in this area. It is the intention of the scheme to re-use the stone throughout public realm spaces to provide a coherence between each area of open space.

5.09 ADAPTABILITY

The overall scheme provides a mix of unit size, type and location / orientation within the site to ensure the development is in keeping with the requirements of the CDP housing ratios, which has been developed and agreed with GCC. The individual units are designed to meet the latest design standards, including universal design, in order to provide flexibility in use for residents of all abilities. Dwellings have been designed to create simple and regular shaped rooms which maximise flexibility of use so that changing requirements of residents can be accommodated with minimal changes to units.

5.10 PRIVACY AND AMENITY

The proposed development is designed to meet the requirements and standards of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 in respect to private open space in the form of rear gardens or balconies where a minimum 60m² applies for houses with 3 bedrooms, minimum 6m² for 2 bedroom apartments (3 person), 7m² for 2 bedroom apartments (4 person) and 5m² for 1 bedroom apartments.

A hierarchy of spaces is created within the scheme in order to delineate the boundaries of public & private spaces. Defensible spaces are created to all entrances and ground floor windows to provide a high quality residential scheme. The location of windows has been carefully considered to ensure adequate natural light is provided to interior spaces whilst also creating required levels of privacy.

The privacy and amenity of existing residents of properties adjoining the site is respected with the development providing rear gardens of min. 11m in length & 22m total separation distance from opposing proposed & existing first floor windows.

5.11 PARKING AND BICYCLES

Car parking is carefully integrated into the scheme so that it is easily accessible and overlooked but not visually dominant. All parking within the scheme is provided within communal parking bays which are separated at intervals with soft landscaping. This creates a visually coherent and legible layout for residents and visitors alike and contributes to the creation of a safe environment which avoids the movement of vehicles across footpaths. Car parking provision for the proposed development meets the requirements of the DM Standard 31 Section (d) within Ch.15 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The site infrastructure has been designed to facilitate 19no. electric vehicle charging spaces in proximity to the site access & new ESB substation. The future installation of further electric vehicle charging points throughout the site will be accommodated through the installation of ducting from individual dwellings.

5.12 DETAILED DESIGN

The subject site responds to a range of opportunities such as vehicular and pedestrian access, retention of access to lands to the east, and private & public open space in order to create a high quality residential development.

A range of sizes and character of public open spaces is provided to create variety and vibrancy within the scheme and create a sense of a home environment for residents. High quality soft and hard landscaping is provided to create a sense of a 'home' environment in order to foster a sense of identity and connection for residents. This in turn will instil a desire for residents to care for the shared spaces and contribute to the overall sense of a coherent community within this development.

Excellent pedestrian and vehicular access throughout the site ensures good access to all spaces whilst creating a pedestrian dominated space to provide a safe and secure environment.

A simple high quality palette of materials is proposed for the residential buildings including render, double glazed aluminium windows, aluminium rainwater goods and feature brickwork along with entrance canopies and glazed balustrades to balconies, which combine to create a modern and contemporary aesthetic.

Traditional and elegant pitched roof forms are proposed to visually connect and integrate the buildings with the local area. Simple pitched roofs of varying orientations are used to add variety, incorporating

gable front elevations at key nodal points throughout the site. All downpipes will be carefully located at corners or party wall junctions in order to integrate these into the overall design.

Individual bin and bicycle storage areas are provided to the rear of all ground floor units, which have been afforded private amenity space accessed directly from a kitchen/dining/living dwelling space.

Resident of first floor apartments are provided with covered bicycle spaces in view of their homes (in accordance with GCDP 2022-2028 DM Standard 31: Parking Standard Section (f) Bicycle Parking Standards) as well as secured bin store areas (for 3no. bins) either accessed from a public footway or a shared pathway.





Air source heat pumps will be located to the rear of each unit. The scheme will achieve a BER rating of A2 or greater.





6.00 Dwelling Design

6.01 MATERIALS

The following images illustrate examples of materials as outlined in the Employer’s Requirements and project brief. With regard to durability all proposed materials will have life spans specified as per the ‘Employer’s Requirements’.

Example Images :			
	AluClad double glazed window.		Aluminium double glazed window
01		02	
	Precast concrete sill.		Composite entrance door.
03		04	

Example Images :			
	Painted render with brick detailing		Wall mounted metal number signage for individual housing units.
05		06	
	Feature stone wall & signage at entrance to 'Farranna-martin' development .		Flush or panelled internal door with stainless steel lever handle.
07		08	

Example Images :			
	Concrete roof tile.		Aluminium clipped eaves and verge with aluminium gutter.
09		10	
	Powder coated MS vertical railings & handrail.		External concrete steps with stainless steel handrails.
11		12	

6.02 SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The strategy to deliver sustainable, energy efficient design and low cost of use in response to climate change includes the following measures: All units have been designed as compact and efficient forms. The clustered arrangement of units reduces the amount of exposed building surfaces with a consequential reduction in heat loss.

All external envelopes to units will be highly insulated to reduce heat loss.

Windows are double glazed and sized appropriately to balance heat loss and potential solar gain along with achieving a suitable aesthetic appearance.

The detail design will consider the most efficient and appropriate heating system, including air source heat pumps.

High quality materials with long life and low embodied energy are proposed in order to reduce impact on the environment. The energy performance of each house will comply with the requirements of the building regulations, achieving NZEB with a BER of A2 or better.

A variety of suitable new trees and other planting is to be included within the scheme to support and enhance the local biodiversity.



Fig.04 - Example external air source heat pump unit.

7.00 Layout Considerations

7.01 DESIGN MANUAL FOR URBAN ROADS AND STREETS 2019 (DMURS)

7.01.1 STRATEGY

On-street activity is promoted internally along the streets through the adoption of 'own-door' dwellings and close proximately to the street behind soft landscaped defensible spaces of minimum depth of 1.5m.

7.01.2 WAYFINDING

Wayfinding, or legibility, relates to how people can find their way around an area. For pedestrians this is of particular importance as they are more likely to move through an area if the route is clear and understandable. The proposed road & pathway network provides a legible and connected street design with pedestrian routes considered to allow full permeability. The residential units are designed to ensure front facing homes onto the roadway and open space areas which will create and provide passive surveillance which in turn enhances pedestrians feeling of safety.

7.01.3 SIGNAGE AND LINE MARKING

The extent and need for signage and road line marking is minimised within this scheme with the use of a simple and carefully planned layout. Raised crossing areas highlight road junctions in order to naturally control traffic speed and assist in providing a sense of direction.

7.01.4 FOOTPATHS

Footpaths widths through the development are minimum 2.0m which is above the 1.8m quoted in DMURS. Gradients on the internal footpaths do not exceed 1 in 21 (see DMURS 2019 fig 4.34).

7.01.5 PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

All informal pedestrian crossing facilities are at least 2.0m wide. Pedestrian connectivity and safety are fundamental design drivers within the layout of the scheme. This has been addressed through the use of pedestrian routes with suitable dropped kerbs raised crossings in order to facilitate the migration of pedestrians across internal roadways.

7.01.6 ROAD WIDTHS

The carriage widths are in accordance with DMURS. The primary roads and external homezones within the development has been designed with a road width of 5.5m.

7.01.7 PARKING LAYOUT

Car parking spaces are in accordance with DMURS and guidance outlined within GCDP 2022-2028. Accessible parking spaces have a required 1.2m circulation space to the rear and side.



Fig.05 – Proposed 'Site Layout Plan' parking layout extract.

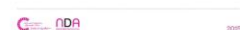
7.02 ACCESSIBILITY

Access to users of all abilities has been considered in terms of external site works, gradients, parking, lighting, signage and wayfinding, level access at all dwelling thresholds along with sufficient spaces for wheelchairs in and around the buildings.

The spirit and requirements of Universal Design Guidelines and TGD Part M have been carefully integrated into the scheme in order to create a vibrant and accessible scheme for all.

A range of house types are included within the scheme to provide a suitable mix of units for the local area in order to satisfy local need and support the local community.

The layout of the scheme and the individual units is designed to be flexible, simple and intuitive, require little effort to navigate and provide an equitable space for all.



7.03 DENSITY CALCULATIONS

Following consultations with GCC, the housing numbers within the development is 62no. The unit mix is in line with the design intent in order to meet actual need in the area whilst also achieving adequate 'dwelling per hectare' density.

The scheme currently provides an overall residential density of c. 33 dph, which is in keeping with Chapter 2 of the GCDP 2022-2028 '*Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy*'.

7.04 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CALCULATIONS

The public open space within the development (totalling approx. 0.297 Ha) has been considered across 4 separate open space areas, (areas A, B, C & D).

Area A = 458m² / 0.037 Ha

Area B = 2141m² / 0.21 Ha

Area C = 322m² / 0.032 Ha

Area D = 179m² / 0.018 Ha

TOTAL = 3,099m² / 0.310 Ha

This equates to 16.6% of the overall site area, which exceeds the minimum allowable 15%.

Other, smaller landscaped areas that are not considerable 'useable' as open space/public realm contribute towards the hierarchy of open space, supporting and extending from the key open space areas. These pockets soften the scheme further, providing attractive avenues & vistas that act as 'green connections' between the key open space areas.



Fig.06 – Key Open Space Areas Key (nts)