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Proposed Affordable Housing Development

Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry

Galway County Council

**Part 10 Planning Application
for approval from An Coimisiún Pleanála**

Design Report

Paul Keogh Architects

June 2026

1. Design Report

Introduction

1.01 In April 2025 Paul Keogh Architects were appointed under an architect – led fully integrated design team framework by Galway County Council. The appointment included an affordable housing development at Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry, Co. Galway, through the accelerated delivery programme stages (i) to (v), delivery by Design and Build.

1.02 The project will be carried out under The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) Public Works Contract, PW-CF2 Public Works for Building Works Designed by the Contractor. This contract is for the provision of 'design and build' housing projects using modern methods of construction.

1.03 The objective of the project is to deliver the site as a high-quality affordable residential scheme, providing a mix of modern user-friendly family houses and a quality environment for the local community.

1.04 The proposed development comprises:

i. Construction of 16 no. residential units located on a greenfield site accessed from an existing housing estate, Páirc na hAbhainn. The proposed dwellings are two-storey in height, comprising of:

- 8 no. three-bedroom semi-detached houses
- 8 no. two-bedroom terraced houses

ii. Construction of hard and soft landscape works including new roadways and paths, provision of 32 no. new car parking spaces, provision of 8no. cycle parking, public open space, public lighting, signage, boundary treatments and all associated infrastructure and site developments work necessary to facilitate the proposed development.

1.05 The report that follows outlines the physical, planning, and historic context, as well as a description of the proposed development, design principles and statutory objectives, presented for approval from An Coimisiún Pleanála in accordance with the provisions of section 177AE(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared for the proposed development.

2. Project Personnel

The Client

2.01 The employer / client is Galway County Council Housing Department. Key project personnel are as follows:

- Galway County Council Housing Department – James Farrell (Executive Engineer); Leo Westra (Executive Technician); Daithi Flood (A/Senior Engineer); John Waters (Affordable Housing); Karen O'Donnell (Senior Executive Officer).

The Design Team

2.02 The integrated design team is led by Paul Keogh Architects. Key project personnel are as follows:

- Architect / Design Team Lead - Paul Keogh Architects: Paul Keogh (Director); Aifric Carroll (Project Architect).
- Quantity Surveyor – Mulcahy McDonagh & Partners Ltd.: James Kinsella (Associate Director); Daniel Conway (Cost Manager)
- Civil & Structural Engineer – Structural Design Solutions Engineers: Connor Daly (Associate Director); Mark Walsh (Project Engineer).
- Mechanical & Electrical Engineer - CBS Consulting Engineers: Rory Yates (Director); Pamela Yates (Senior Engineer); Vishnu Pillai (Design Consultant).
- Employer's Representative – Paul Keogh Architects.
- Project Supervisor for the Design Stage – Paul Keogh Architects.
- Assigned Certifier – Structural Design Solutions Engineers

3. Site / Context

Context

3.01 The site is located on a greenfield site to the south of the existing housing estate, Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry, Co. Galway and accessed via the existing road network in the estate located at Baunmore, a regional road connected to the R347 Dublin Road.

3.02 Páirc na hAbhainn housing estate was constructed in 2015, on behalf of Galway County Council, consisting of 62 no. two-storey semi-detached houses, open green space, on-curtilage parking and on-street parking.

Site Area

3.03 The red line boundary of the site measures approximately 0.651 hectares and is triangular in shape. The site is bound by the rear boundary blockwork walls and timber fencing of Páirc na hAbhainn estate to the north edge, and a natural stone wall to the east and south edges. The western boundary line has no designated fence or wall. The site topography is steep, sloping approximately 5.5 metres from its lowest to highest point. The most significant gradient is located at the north-east corner of the site.



Aerial view of the site (Google Earth)



Existing site plan



View of the existing entrance to the Páirc na hAbhainn estate. (Google Streetview)



View looking towards the proposed access to the site. (Google Streetview)



View of proposed site looking towards the access from the existing Páirc na hAbhainn estate. (PKA)



View of proposed site looking towards the rear boundary walls of the neighbouring dwellings to the northern boundary (PKA)



View of proposed site looking towards the existing stone wall and electricity poles to the eastern boundary. PKA)



View of the proposed site looking towards the existing stone wall to the south-eastern boundary. (PKA)



View of the proposed site looking towards the western boundary. (PKA)



View of the proposed site looking towards the north-western corner. (PKA)

Site Location

3.04 The proposed housing development will be part of an established suburban neighbourhood located to the south of Athenry town centre and close to the R347 Dublin Road. The development is accessed via the existing road network in the Páirc na hAbhainn estate.

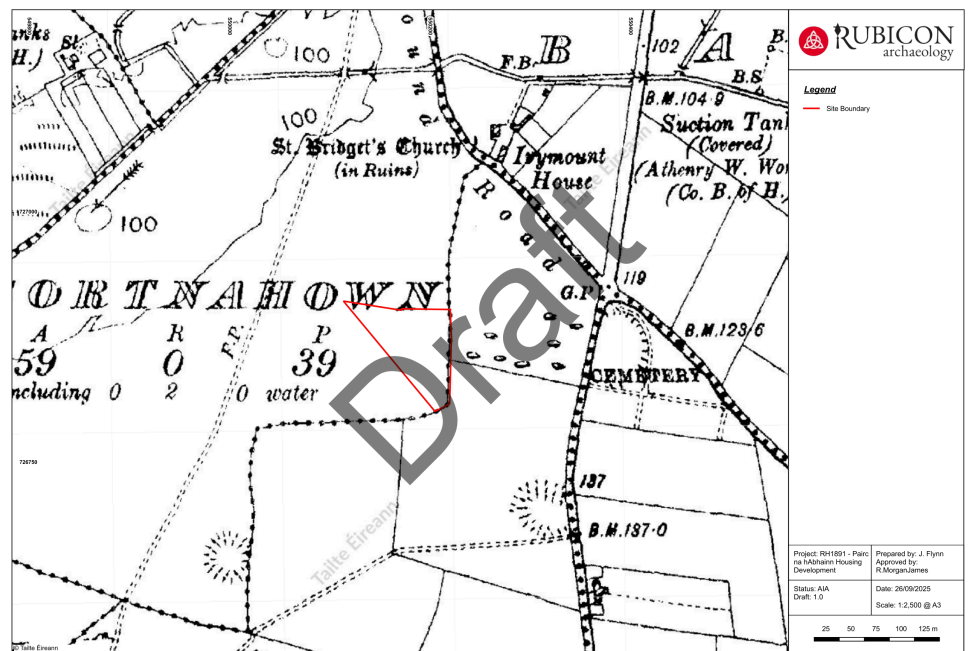
Connectivity

3.05 The site is situated approximately 0.7 kilometres from Athenry town centre with local shops and amenities within walking distance of the site. Athenry offers access to schools, a wide variety of shops, restaurants, sporting facilities and public parks. The site is connected to good public transport links; Athenry train station is approximately a thirty minute walk from the site, connecting to Galway city, Dublin and Limerick. There is also bus services to Loughrea and Galway city and convenient road access to both Athlone and Dublin via the motorway.

Aerial view of wider site area (Google Earth)

Historic Context

3.06 The site is located between two historical townland boundaries, Gortnahown and Farranblake East, to the eastern and southern boundary of the site.



Planning History

3.07 Recorded planning permissions on adjoining / adjacent lands as follows:

- App. Ref. 2561919 refers to permission conditioned for the development of a sports facility consisting of 3no. grassed playing pitches and 1no. all weather synthetic playing pitch. The development includes upgrades to the existing vehicle and pedestrian access including internal footpaths to connect to Páirc na hAbhainn estate. The development adjoins the subject site at the western boundary line. Decision date 21/02/2026.
- App. Ref. 2461699 refers to permission conditioned for the development of 49no. houses in the townland of Baunmore, Gortnahown and Farranablake East together with ancillary works. The development adjoins the subject site at the eastern boundary line. Decision date 04/07/2025.
- App. Ref 2360064 refers to permission of a single storey rear extension with all associated works and ancillary services to house no.30 Páirc na hAbhainn. Decision date 21/04/2023.
- App. Ref 2168 refers to permission of a single storey rear extension and garden shed to the existing semi-detached dwelling at no.9 Páirc na hAbhainn. Decision date 22/03/2021.
- App. Ref 17793 refers to permission of a single storey extension at no.48 Páirc na hAbhainn. Decision date 26/07/2017.

**Appropriate Assessment
Screening Report**

3.08 A Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was undertaken by Ash Ecology on behalf of Galway County Council to assess the potential for the proposed development to impact the Natura 2000 network (European Sites).

3.09 Having undertaken Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment, the report concluded that a likely significant effect on the Galway Bay Complex SAC and the Inner Galway Bay SPA cannot be excluded solely. The report therefore screened in both sites and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was prepared. The report determined a likely significant effect on the water quality-dependent qualifying interests of these sites, via the indirect surface water pathway from the development to the Clarinbridge River. Refer to AA Screening Report for further detail.

Natura Impact Statement

3.10 A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was undertaken by Ash Ecology on behalf of Galway County Council. The NIS has been prepared pursuant to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment to determine whether the proposed development will adversely affect the integrity of the screened-in European sites, Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.

3.11 The NIS included a thorough Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of all potential impacts, including construction and operational phases and in-combination effects with other plans and projects concluded the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the screened-in European sites. Refer to NIS Report for further detail.

**Environmental Impact
Assessment Screening Report**

3.12 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening was undertaken by Ash Ecology on behalf of Galway County Council to determine if an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required based on the characteristics of the development, site location, sensitivity, and potential environmental impacts.

3.13 The EIA screening determined no significant negative effects on the environment have been identified during construction and operational phases that would warrant the requirement to complete a sub-threshold EIAR. Refer to EIA Screening Report for further detail.

**Ecological Impact Assessment
Report**

3.14 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) was undertaken by Ash Ecology on behalf of Galway County Council to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the ecological features present within the site and its surrounding area and propose mitigation measures to avoid or reduce impacts where necessary.

3.15 This assessment demonstrates that the proposed development, with implementation of specified mitigation and enhancement measures, can proceed without adverse ecological impacts. The site's low ecological value as improved agricultural grassland means the development results in minimal habitat loss. The

proposed enhancements will likely improve biodiversity value compared to the baseline condition. Refer to EclA Report for further detail.

Archaeological Impact Assessment

3.16 An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) was undertaken by Rubicon Archaeology on behalf of Galway County Council to assess the importance and sensitivity of the known, as well as the potential archaeological assessment for the proposed development.

3.17 The assessment concluded that the proposed development will have no direct effects on any Cultural Heritage site (CH). However, there remains potential for the presence of unknown subsurface archaeological deposits within the development footprint.

3.18 The proposed development will have an indirect effect on the setting of six Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and an indirect effect on the townland boundary between Gortnahown and Farranblake East.

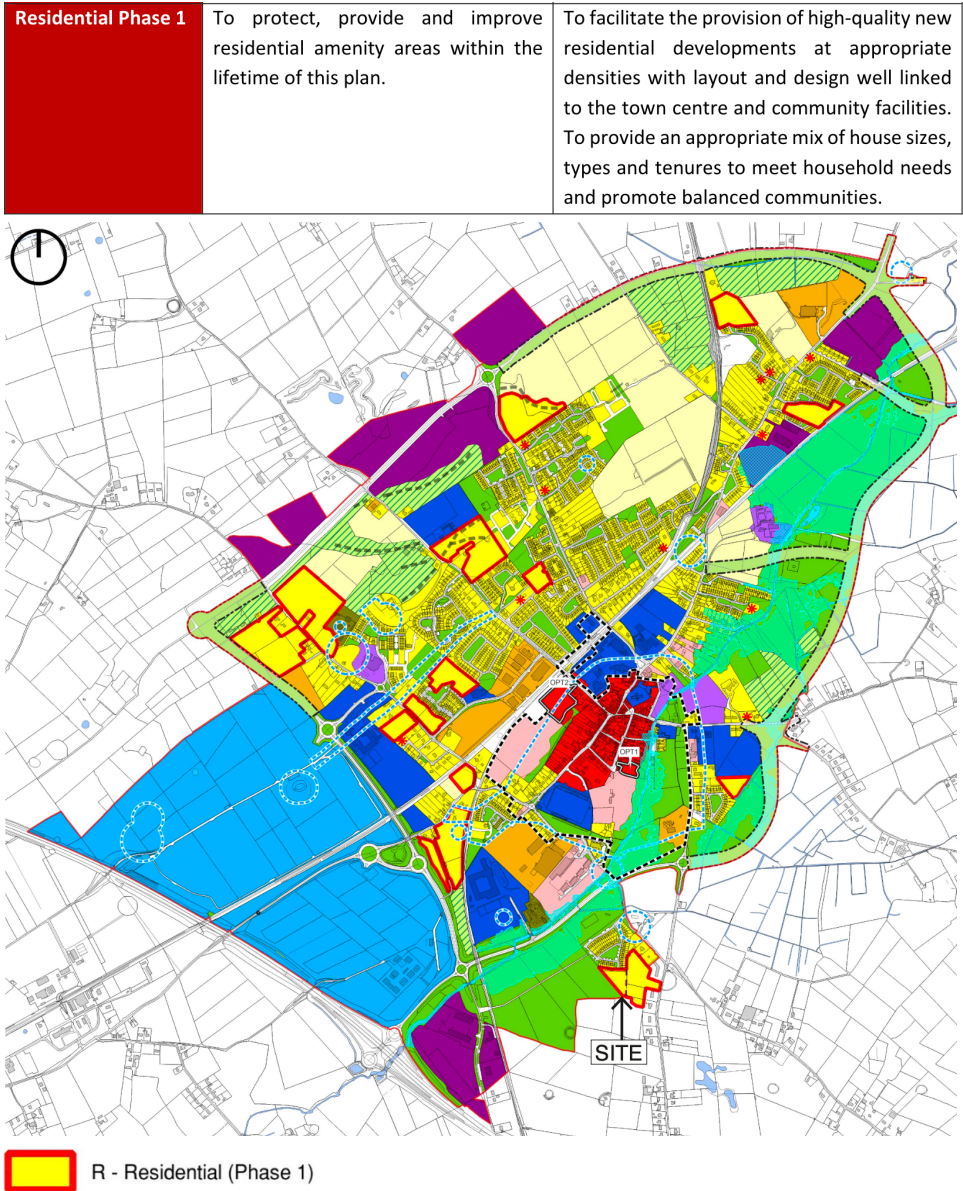
3.19 The report recommended mitigation measures including the following:

- A suitably qualified archaeological consultant will monitor any sub-surface groundworks
- Prior to construction, a combination of advance geophysical survey and advance archaeological test trenching will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Refer to AIA Report for further detail.

4. Planning Policy Context

Land Use Zoning

4.01. The site is zoned residential phase 1 under the *Athenry Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030* ‘To protect, provide and improve residential amenity areas within the lifetime of this plan.’ The proposed development of 16no. units is in compliance with Policy Objective ASP 5 Residential Development Phasing of the Athenry Local Area Plan ‘Support the development of lands designated as Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the plan, subject to normal planning, access, and servicing requirements...’

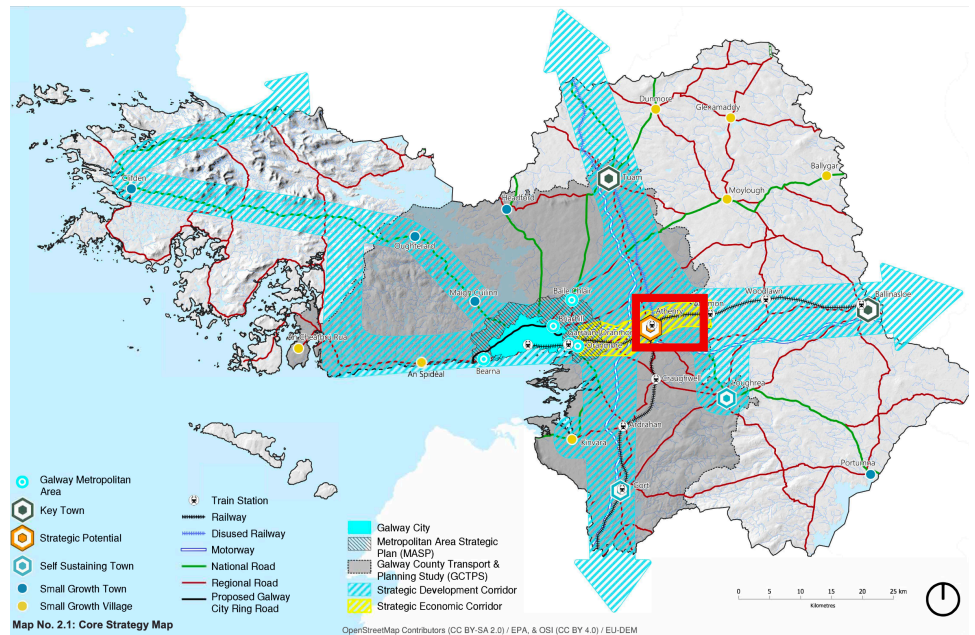


Map 1A Land Use Zoning
Extracts from the Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030

National and Regional Policy

4.02. The national, regional and development plan policies relevant to the proposed development are as follows;

- Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework, Government of Ireland (2018).
- Sustainable Residential Developments and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Urban Design Manual; A Best Practice Guide, A Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009).
- Design Manual for Quality Housing – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2007).
- Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland, National Disability Authority and Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (2015).
- Best Practice Access Guidelines – Designing Accessible Environments, Irish Wheelchair Association, Edition 4 (November 2020).
- National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, Health Information and Quality Authority (2016).
- The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2013).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, (2009).
- Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice, Building Research Establishment (1991).
- Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future. A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020, Department of Transport (2009).
- Cycle Design Manual – Department of Transport and National Transport Authority (September 2023).



Map No.2.1: Core Strategy Map from the Galway County Council Development Plan 2022-2028

Galway County Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028

4.03. Chapter 2 - Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy of the Development Plan identifies Athenry as Level 3 Settlement Hierarchy, Strategic Potential, describing it as a large economically active service centre that provides employment for the surrounding areas. The Core Strategy identifies a significant population growth in Athenry, noting an increase of 1,350 in the populations over the plan period of 2022-2028. This additional population will be accommodated with an additional 544 dwelling units on greenfield sites and 233 dwelling units on infill/brownfield sites.

4.04. In Section 2.3.12 Core Strategy Policy Objectives, the proposed site has been informed by the following core strategies:

- CS 1 Implementation *“To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy in so far as practicable, by directing sustainable growth towards the designated settlement.”*
- CS 2 Compact Growth *“To achieve compact growth through the delivery of new homes in urban areas within the existing built up footprints of settlements, by developing infill, brownfield and regeneration sites by prioritising underutilised land in preference to greenfield sites.*
- CS 3 Population Growth *“To support and manage the self-sufficient sustainable development of all settlements in a planner manner, with population growth and the development of economic, physical and social infrastructure.”*
- CS 7 Active Land Management *“To promote, support and facilitate the re-use of under-utilised or vacant lands, or lands identified for regeneration, through a co-*

ordinated approach to active land management between the council and stakeholders.”

4.05. In Section 2.4.7 Area of Strategic Potential, it is noted that Athenry has good rail links to Galway, Dublin and Limerick. The town is also located within the Oranmore to Athenry Strategic Economic Corridor, which supports the development of Foreign Direct Investment and indigenous industries/ businesses, building on the existing strategic location and infrastructure.

4.06. Policy Objective SS3 Strategic Potential (Level 3) intends to *“Support the development of Athenry as a town of Strategic Potential as outlined in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in order to sustain a strong, vibrant urban centre which will act as an important driver for the local economy, reduce travel demand and support a large rural hinterland, while providing a complementary role to the Key Towns and MASP and the smaller towns and villages in the County.”*

4.07. Relevant housing strategy policy objectives of the Planning Authority in Section 2.5 Housing Strategy that apply to the proposed site are as follows;

- HS 1 Housing Requirements *“...to facilitate the housing needs of the existing and future population of County Galway through the management of housing development in the county in accordance with the Housing Need Demand Assessment, Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.”*
- SH 1 Affordable Housing *“Promote the delivery of affordable housing primarily in sustainable locations in towns and villages across County Galway in the first instance in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.”*

4.08. Key policy objectives for placemaking noted in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living* that apply to the proposed site are as follow:

- PM 1 Placemaking *“To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high-quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place in attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.”*
- PM 8 Character and Identity *“Ensure the best quality of design is achieved for all new development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics unique features of the towns and villages throughout the County.”*
- PM 10 Design Quality *“To require that new buildings are of exceptional architectural quality, and are fit for their intended use or function, durable in terms of design and construction, respectful of setting and the environment and to require that the overall development is of high quality, with a well-considered public realm.”*
- PM 11 Details of Materials *“To ensure that the appearance of buildings, in terms of details and materials (texture, colour, patterns and durability), is of a high standard with enduring quality and has a positive impact on the visual quality of the area.”*

- PM 13 Public Realm Opportunities *“Promote enhanced and increased public realm opportunities including the shared use of spaces, for outdoor experiences, with a priority on pedestrian uses.”*

Athenry Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030

4.09. Relevant policy objectives in *Athenry Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030* are as follows:

- ASP 2 Service Led Development *“Development under the plan shall be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public wastewater infrastructure and potable water infrastructure. Potential developers shall make a Pre-Connection enquiry to Uisce Éireann in order to establish the feasibility of a connection to the public network.”*
- ASP 3 Environment Assessment *“To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the area to have regard to the information, data and requirement of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that accompany this LAP.”*
- ASP 8 Sequential Development *“Endeavour to promote the orderly and phased development of residential development in accordance with the principles of the sequential approach as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages) Guidelines 2009 (or as updated). This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands emanating outwards from the town core and/or sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric of suitably serviced Residential Phase 1 lands within the LAP boundary, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the current County Development Plan.”*
- ASP 15 Social Inclusion and Universal Design and Access

“a) It is the Policy Objective of Galway County Council to support the principles of social inclusion and universal design and access, to ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services and buildings to assist them to participate in and contribute to all aspects of a vibrant life within Athenry.

b) Ensure that housing developments, community facilities, public spaces, public roads, public footpaths and transport services give due consideration to the needs of disabled or mobility impaired people and the requirements of the Disability Act 2005, the Council’s Disability Action Plan 2007-2015 (and any updates to this document), the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and National Disability Authority (NDA) advice notes titled Access: Improving the Accessibility to Historic Buildings and Places 2011 (and any subsequent reviews/updates to these documents).”

- ASP 22 Active Land Management in Athenry *“To promote and facilitate the re-use of underutilized or vacant lands in Athenry or lands identified for regeneration,*

through a coordinated approach to active land management between the Council and stakeholders.”

- ASP 24 Open Space, Recreation and Amenity *“Promote the sustainable management, use and/or development as appropriate, of open space / recreation and amenity lands. This will include: a) Development of open spaces and recreational activities, in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community...”*
- ASP 28 Public Utilities *“Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with the necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate. Development proposals in the vicinity of public utility infrastructure will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.”*
- ASP 29 Water Supply, Wastewater and Combined Drainage Infrastructure *“Support Uisce Éireann in the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal and water supply and the maintenance of existing combined (sewage and surface water) drainage infrastructure, in accordance with EU Directives, to service Athenry. This will include satisfactory capacity for public wastewater and a satisfactory quantity and quality of water supply, Sustainable Drainage System and approaches and techniques with the plan area shall also be supported. The removal of surface water from combined drainage infrastructure is strongly encouraged in order to free up capacity for future development.”*
- ASP 30 Water Supply and Water Conservation *“Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply, promote water conservation to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide for water supply metering in accordance with their connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.”*
- ASP 31 Connections to the Public Sewer and Public Water Mains *“Developments shall connect to the public sewer and public water mains, subject to a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann, to protect all waters in the plan area, consolidate the urban structure and control ribbon development along approach roads in Athenry.”*
- ASP 32 High Quality, Contextually Sensitive Design *“Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, heritage, amenities, environment, and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, urban grain, and definition and through high quality design proposals for buildings/structures/shop fronts, the use of high quality, appropriate materials and the provision of appropriate signage, lighting, landscaping proposals and other such details.”*

- ASP 34 Spatial Definition and Animation *“Ensure that new developments are designed to provide spatial definition and animation to public spaces and streets through the use of appropriate building lines and built forms, responsive building frontages and passive surveillance and high-quality streetscapes and/or landscaping edges to enclose and address public spaces. Perimeter block typologies provide a useful approach in generating good spatial definition, adequate enclosure and a high-quality public realm and the creation of focal points, such as landmark buildings and gateways, also help to improve spatial definition and legibility and will be encouraged in appropriate locations.”*
- ASP 53 Pedestrian and Cycle Network *“Facilitate the improvement of the pedestrian and cycling environment and network so that it is safe and accessible to all, through the provision of the necessary infrastructure. New development shall promote and prioritise walking and cycling, shall be permeable, adequately linked and connected to neighbouring areas, the town centre, recreational, educational, residential and employment destinations and shall adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013), as updated in 2019.”*
- ASP 55 Traffic and Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audits *“Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII’s Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045) 2014 (including any updated/superseding document) and ‘Road Safety Audit’ (GE-STY-01024) December 2017.”*
- ASP 69 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) *“Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in Athenry. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems proposals. To maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers is not permitted. Refer also to Section 3.5 of the accompanying SFRA, “Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy”. ”*

Assessment

4.10. The subject proposal provides for 16 no. affordable residential units on lands, that currently form part of a greenfield site at Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry. The proposed development considers the character of neighbouring buildings; two storey dwellings. The proposal, consisting of 8no. two-storey semi-detached houses and 8no. terraced houses aims to achieve a balance between the provision of higher residential density and sustaining the low-rise architectural form of neighbouring buildings.

- Total Site Area: 0.651 ha (6,509 m²)
- GFA: 2,141.1 m²
- GIFA: 1,629.6 m²
- Plot Ratio: 0.33 : 1
- Total Units: 16 no. units
- Site Coverage: 16 %
- Proposed Density: 25 dwellings per hectare
- Car Parking: 32 no. spaces (incl. 2 no. accessible parking spaces and 2 no. EV charging spaces)
- Visitor Bicycle Parking: 8 no. spaces

The residential units comprises of:

- 8 no. three-bedroom dwellings (5 person)
- 8 no. two-bedroom dwellings (4 person)

Residential Density

4.11. The proposed development considers all aspects of the County Development plan, including land use zoning, the pattern of residential development in the area and the residential policies of the Development Plan.

4.12. It follows the principle that a residential development is in accordance with the *Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030* and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area is put in place.

4.13. In relation to the density, having regard to Appendix B: Measuring Residential Density of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* the use of a net site density is considered the most appropriate means of estimating density. The site area is 0.651 ha. The development of 16 no. units provides a site density of 25 units per hectare. Having regard to the existing pattern of development in the area and considering the area is characterised by low-density residential housing in the GCC Development Plan 2022-2028, this proposal is achieving a suitable net density and can be considered an efficient use of land in this instance.

Private / Communal Open Space

4.14. Private Open Space in the form of private rear gardens at ground level exceeds the provisions set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. Each two-bedroom unit will have in excess of 50sqm private garden space, and each three-bedroom unit will have in excess of 100sqm private garden space.

4.15. Standards for the provision of public open space for residential development are set-out in *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

4.16. The proposed public open space is roughly 20.1% of the site area, comprising primarily of a central communal green space. The central open space will include an attenuation tank below ground level.

4.17. The steep topography along the northern boundary will be planted with dense hedgerow and screen planting to discourage access to the sloped area and provide effective screening from the rear gardens of the existing estate.

4.18. Given the nature of this greenfield site, it is considered that the combination of good quality private open space and communal open space will provide a good standard of residential amenity in-line with overall policies and objectives of The Development Plan.



Proposed site plan



Axonometric of proposal



Axonometric of proposal

5. Architectural Design Statement

Urban Design Rationale

5.01. The proposed development can be viewed as an extension to the existing estate. Two-storey semi-detached houses are arranged along the east boundary to extend the established roadway. The two-storey terraced houses are positioned along the west boundary to minimise over-looking to the neighbouring gardens. The low-rise layout forms an attractive new streetscape, centred around a communal open space, maximising sunshine and daylight to the dwellings.

5.02. The site slopes steeply at the north-east corner of the site. The proposed houses are positioned at the lowest feasible floor level and follow the natural topography of the site. Each terraced unit steps with the gradient, minimising the extent of retaining walls and limiting potential overlooking of the neighbouring gardens.

Dwelling Design

5.03. All proposed houses comply with space standards and design principles set out in the *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* (2007) and the DHLGH's *Design Manual for Quality Housing*, including the minimum dimensions and areas for aggregate living and bedroom areas. Adequate storage and WC facilities have been provided for each unit, including access for persons with disabilities.

5.04. Each dwelling is provided with a private own-door front entrance along the street boundary. Each semi-detached dwelling has private gate access to the rear garden space. Each terraced dwelling is provided with a private bin storage to the front garden space and both end terraced dwellings are provided with a private gate access to the rear garden space.

Design Evolution

5.05. The proposed development was originally considered as all terraced units with on-street parking. After further development with the design team and Galway County Council, and investigation into the site topography, the site layout was adjusted to accommodate the maximum number of semi-detached units with on-curtilage parking, while also reducing any issues of over-looking to neighbouring gardens.

Materials and Finishes

5.06. The design seeks to ensure that the development contribute to the quality of the existing estate and local context. The front elevations will include a light coloured render finish with contrasting blue-faced limestone detailing on the front gables at ground floor level. The proposed low level front garden walls will also have the same limestone finish. The dwellings will have a contemporary and robust design, while remain in-keeping with the local character of the area and the traditional Galway vernacular.

Open Space

5.07. The design seeks to create shared public and semi-public spaces to generate a positive sense of ownership and community among the future residents, and provide amenity space that is functional, manageable, safe and with careful consideration of paving treatments, boundaries, hard and soft landscaping.

5.08. The proposed open space includes a central communal green space, with new tree planting, wildflower meadows and new pathways throughout the site. Street trees along footpath edges are proposed to improve the quality of the streetscape. Native hedgerow planting proposed along the northern boundary will provide screening between the new dwellings and the neighbouring gardens.

Overlooking and Overshadowing

5.09. The proposed house locations and design demonstrate no overlooking issues to the neighbouring buildings. Window openings to side gables of proposed units are to bathrooms only and will include opaque glazing.

5.10. Proposed Unit-01-A contains 1no. window to a bathroom with opaque glazing and no windows to habitable rooms to the side elevation, and no over-looking to No.24 Páirc na hAbhainn.

5.11. Proposed Unit-09-B is approximately 21 metres from No.29 Páirc na hAbhainn when measured from its closest corner. The closest window opening on the first floor of the front elevation is approximately 26 metres from the rear elevation of No.27 Páirc na hAbhainn.

5.12. Unit-06-A and Unit-03-A are approximately 10-12 metres from the closest neighbouring houses of the new housing development to the east boundary. The rear elevation of the proposed units face the side gables of this new development, where window openings are to bathrooms only and include opaque glazing.

5.13. The proposed development will have minimal overshadowing to the neighbouring buildings of Páirc na hAbhainn estate. Proposed Unit-09-B is approximately 1.8 metres higher than No.31 Páirc na hAbhainn at ground level. Refer to PKA's Shadow Analysis Report illustrating the extent of overshadowing to the neighbouring gardens.

5.14. The shadow analysis illustrates little impact to the rear gardens of the neighbouring buildings. No. 27 – 30 Páirc na hAbhainn will have minor overshadowing from the proposed terrace houses in the early afternoon during the winter solstice, when the angle of the sun is at its lowest.

5.15. The *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* note that low-rise housing which meets the recommended separation distances between existing and proposed dwellings is not expected to adversely affect neighbouring properties and does not require a technical daylight and sunlight assessment.

Car and Cycle Parking

5.16. The proposed development includes the provision of 32 no. new car parking spaces and is more than the requirements of the Galway County Development Plan. The parking for 8no. semi-detached houses is on-curtilage, 2no. spaces per dwelling. The parking for the 8no. terraced houses is shared off-curtilage parking, 8no. total spaces, including provision for 2no. wheelchair accessible spaces and 2no. electrical vehicle charging spaces.

5.17. The 2no. dedicated electric vehicle charging point spaces provided for 8no. shared parking spaces is in accordance with *Galway County Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028*, which specifies in DM Standard 31(g) that all developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 20% of the total car parking spaces.

5.18. The proposed development also includes the provision of 8no. visitor cycle parking, in the form of Sheffield racks along the street. All houses include a private front and rear garden for bicycle storage if required.

Safety and Security

5.19. Passive surveillance will be enhanced by ground and first floor windows to the front elevations providing ‘eyes on the street’ around the central open space.

5.20. All houses include a private front garden, and access to rear gardens will be gated, providing security and privacy to residents

Universal Access

5.21. The proposed development has been designed with close adherence to *Technical Guidance Document Part M – Access & Use (2022)* ensuring the proposal meets the needs of its future occupants.

5.22. The dwellings are provided with level access via the front entrance and include a minimum width of 800mm clear corridors, minimum level clearance of 1.2 m at all front doors, and a Part M compliant accessible visitor bathroom on ground floor.

5.23. Proposed roadways and pathways follow the natural topography of the site and have been designed to have a gradient no less than 1:20. Pathways will be a minimum 1.8 metres wide throughout the site.

Energy Efficiency

5.24. The proposed development will comply with *Technical Guidance Document Part L - Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Dwellings (2022)* and aim to achieve an A2 energy rating.

5.25. A provision for ducting for electric vehicle charging points will be made to all parking spaces and there will be 2no. dedicated electric vehicle charging point spaces.



Sketch illustration of proposal

6. Services Design Statement

Roads and Access

6.01. Access to the proposed development will be from the existing estate, via a new 5 metre roadway connected to the existing road network. A two-way car circulation arrangement will circle the central open space and there is a turning head provided to the south of the development. Proposed roadways and pathways follow the natural topography of the site and have been designed to have a gradient no less than 1:20. Traffic calming ramps and stop lines at internal junctions are proposed within the site. An auto-track swept path analysis for a HGV (heavy goods vehicle) has been completed by SDS Engineers demonstrating sufficient access from the site entrance for deliveries and services.

6.02. Traffic and Transport Assessment was undertaken by CST Group on behalf of Galway County Council to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the existing local transport network to ensure that the proposed site access and existing junctions will have adequate capacity to carry the development traffic and the future traffic growth. The predicted development traffic will operate well-below the recommended capacity, even when including traffic growth figures up to a design year of 2043. Refer to TTA for further details.

6.03. A Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was carried out by CST Group on behalf of Galway County Council to identify any features of the design that could be removed or modified to improve the safety of the scheme. The design team has reviewed all recommendations outlined in the RSA. The proposed development ensures priority is given to pedestrians by ensuring the development is properly integrated into the existing footpath network and includes traffic calming ramps and stop lines at internal junctions. Refer to RSA for further details.

6.04. A Mobility Management Plan (MMP) was not required for the proposed development. The recommended threshold in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* is 100 or more residential units and the proposed car parking is more than the requirements of the Galway County Development Plan.

6.05. The new development in the adjacent lands, east of the site, will include a new Belisha Beason controlled crossing and new footpath on Baunmore Road, improving the pedestrian route to the existing R347/R348 road network and the link to the town centre. The *Athenry Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030* also indicates this road will include cycle track and footpath upgrades.

Flood Risk

6.06. The site is identified as Flood Zone C. The probability of flooding from rivers of the sea is less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding under the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* carried out for *Athenry Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030*.

Surface Water and Attenuation

6.07. Infiltration on the site is an unviable option for the surface water treatment due to poor infiltration rates reported in the Site Investigations report. The proposed development will connect to the existing surface water network in the existing estate. SDS Consulting Engineers determined the most sustainable and appropriate attenuation for the site. An attenuation tank will be used for below ground storage and will be located in the central green space on the site. Refer to Engineer's Services Design Report for further detail.

Foul Drainage

6.08. The proposed development will connect to the existing foul water network in the existing estate. The foul drainage will be designed in compliance with the UE standards and will be fully scoped to ensure capacity of existing network. Refer to Engineer's Services Design Report for further detail.

Uisce Éireann

6.09. A pre-connection enquiry was made to Uisce Éireann in relation to a water and wastewater connection for the proposed development. UE advised a water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrades. UE advised a wastewater connection will connect to the wastewater treatment plan in Athenry and will require a network extension of approximately 30 metres. Refer to Engineer's Services Design Report for further detail.

6.10. Existing water and wastewater infrastructure is in private / third party ownership and written agreement is to be obtained for permission to connect to third party infrastructure. An application for foul and water services to be completed, granted and signed.

Public Lighting

6.11. A public lighting layout has been prepared by CBS consulting engineers for the proposed development. Refer to Outdoor Lighting Report for further detail.

7. Statutory Matters

Pre-planning consultation

7.01. The statutory approvals required for the development is planning permission, obtained by way of an application for approval for a Local Authority development made to An Coimisiún Pleanála under section 177AE(4)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

7.02. Pre-planning consultations have taken place with representatives of Galway County Council's planning and housing departments. Comments and recommendations received have been incorporated into the plans now presented for approval. A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in respect of the proposed development.

8. Executive Summary

Summary

8.01. We are confident that the proposed residential development at Páirc na hAbhainn presented herewith is a well-considered response to the project brief, the site context and the specific requirements of the user group as outlined by the applicant, as well as contributing to the quality of the surrounding streets and improving the perception of the estate as a safe and positive place to live.

8.02. The planning drawings appended to this report seek to provide a high quality architectural design that complies with and/or has regard for all the objectives of the Galway County Council Development Plan (2022 – 2028) and in accordance with national and local policy.

8.03. We look forward to An Coimisiún Pleanála determination of this application in due course.

Signed



Paul Keogh FRIAI FRIBA

June 11th 2026