



**New Social Housing  
Hepburn Court, Portlaoise  
Co. Laois**

**Design Statement**

Submitted March 2022



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## 1.0 Introduction

This design statement supports the Planning Application for a social housing development at Hepburn Court, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. This statement explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to the access of the development have been dealt with.

The design principles and concepts have been informed by:

1. Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2018 – 24.
2. Laoise County Development Plan 2017-23.
3. DOEHLG Design Guidelines.
4. Cluid Design Guidelines 2021.
5. This statement has been informed by Pre-Application Discussions with Planning Service and National Roads Authority, which took place on 3rd February 2022. And a meeting with Laois Councilors, which took place 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
6. Review of the site to understand the context, surroundings and potential constraints.

## 2.0 Site Context & Surroundings

- The site is located at Hepburn Court, Ballyfin Road, Co. Laois; it adjoins to existing housing developments and an ESB sub station to the eastern boundary of the site (See **Appendix A** – Site Location Plan).
- A detailed Site Analysis has been undertaken and a copy of this, including photographic survey is attached to this Statement at **Appendix B**.
- The southwestern boundaries are mostly defined by block, partly rendered walls, this is to be retained and made good as part of this application. The eastern boundaries are comprised of metal palisade fence and timber panel fence.
- There are some trees and shrubs along the boundaries of the site.
- There are existing pedestrian paths through the site that link Mountain View Square, Clonroosk View and Hillview Drive – See Figure 1.
- The land within the site is mostly level.
- The surrounding land is primarily residential in character.
- The site is less than one mile from the town centre and Portlaoise Train Station.
- The northern portion of the site is occupied by an existing derelict

housing scheme. A number of homes have been demolished, but six remain which are intended to be demolished to facilitate the proposed development.



Figure 1 – Existing path through the site currently used by local residents

### 3.0 Design Considerations

- The site is located within the residential zone of the Portlaoise Area Plan and is identified as an area of existing open space.
- The developable area of the site within the red line is 2.4 hectares.
- There is an existing vehicular access onto Ballyfin Road and Mountain View Square with adequate visibility, which will be incorporated into the proposed scheme – See Figure 2.
- There is a new proposed development at Clonroosk View of 12 houses which adjoins this Application (See **Appendix C**)
- A new vehicular access is also proposed on to the Mountain View Square. A detailed survey will have to be undertaken to confirm that there are adequate visibility splays.
- The site is bounded to the north by the existing road serving Ballyfin

Road. The new houses along the northern boundary are to be sited to provide appropriate frontage onto this existing road for prominent surveillance.

- There is an ESB station to the eastern boundary of the site. Where private gardens spaces back onto the ESB the existing boundary will be replaced by Precast Concrete Post and Treated Timber Fence.
- The principle open space is to be beside the ESB substation, to facilitate a possible Football & Play Areas, this in turn minimalizes diversion of existing underground services.
- The public open space is to be a minimum of 10% of the site area for the provision of open space in accordance with the expectation of Cluid Housing 3D Volumetric Design Brief.
- A Conceptual Masterplan has been developed which establishes how the application site will relate and compliment the surrounding land uses (See **Appendix D**)



Figure 2 - existing vehicular access onto Mountain View Square

## 4.0 Design Principles Statement

- The need to robustly address Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2018-2024 is one of the key drivers of our concept. The central themes of our proposal are: the protection of existing residential area adjoining the site, the need to integrate open space within the development. The layout has been carefully considered to provide ease of access through the site with clearly defined and legible pedestrian routes being created through safe and defensible public areas.
- A copy of the Proposed Site Plan has been provided with this planning submission at **Appendix E**. We see the existing high levels of pedestrian permeability through the site as being one of the key strengths in this concept. It will firmly integrate our development into the existing residential fabric. Our layout will also retain the strong existing linkage between the Ballyfin Road/Mountain View area and Hill View Drive making it still accessible to the wider community.
- In general our design has been informed by the following Design Principles:
  - a) Street fronts onto the Ballyfin Road and Mountain View Square with open spaces.
  - b) Units orientated to take advantage of views with an outward aspect to create clearly defined, defensible space.
  - c) Generous rear gardens arranged “back-to-back” to best protect residential amenity in line with passive surveillance principles. The principle nodes of the development have been punctuated with dual aspect houses, with windows on gable elevations.
  - d) Density: Our Site plan shows 54 units (22.5 units per hectare) with a generous allocation of 0.38Ha open space (in excess of 15.8% of the total site area). A large open space has been provided that is of “demonstrable recreation or amenity value” for a Proposed location of future Football Area & Play Area.
  - e) Sense of Place: The concept draws heavily on the positive aspects of the character & appearance of the surrounding area in line with Clúid’s Housing 3D Volumetric Design Brief. Our final material selection sees a sensitive palette of self-coloured render on a brick plinth on the main body of the houses with concrete roof tiles. There is a consistent distinct character throughout the site that has been informed by modern influences and the neighbouring vernacular housing schemes.
  - f) Height: Our layout provides a mix of 1 & 2 and storey houses with generous set back from the road. The single storey houses have been reserved for the elderly/complex needs homes and are 5m in

height. The remaining 2 storey housing within the development ranges in height from 8.5m to 9m. The scale and height of the houses are appropriate to the surrounding housing developments and help maintain a consistent domestic scaled skyline.

- g) Architectural Character & Distinction: We believe good design does not cost money and we always look to learn and improve from previous experience. We believe a mixed palette of materials along with creativity applied to fenestration, elevations and gables help give the development a unique sense of place. An emphasis on the gable treatments offers strong architectural character and maximizes natural surveillance. The layout is pre-dominantly semi-detached and terrace units, punctuated with generous soft landscaping.
- h) Scale: The scale of the proposed housing units are consistent with that of the residential areas bounding the proposed development. The units are typical of Cluid's core delivery and comprise of predominantly two storey units of family accommodation. The bungalows are semi detached and are pepper potted throughout the development to provide variation in streetscape and roofline.
- i) Private Open Space: The concept of high quality defensible private space is deeply enshrined in our Design Principles. Gardens are back-to-back or backing onto the boundary throughout with generous separation distances in line with Guidance in Laoise County Development Plan 2017-23. Houses are carefully designed to ensure no overlooking issues or loss of amenity to existing residential areas.
- j) Appearance: We have prepared a series of 3D views to best illustrate the high quality scale, mass, appearance and finish of our proposal and a copy of this has been attached to this Statement at **Appendix F**.
- k) Security: The emphasis of the design is to create a safe, secure community where dwellings overlook all areas of open space & parking. No back alleys have been created & all spaces are overlooked as per Cluid Design Guidelines 2021 & DOEHLG Design Guidelines.
- l) Parking: We have ensured that our proposal exceeds the full parking standards prescribed by DOEHLG Design Guidelines. This is demonstrated by generous allocation of on-street parking & visitor parking serving both the dwellings and open space.
- m) Sustainability: This proposal has been influenced by social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable design. This brownfield site redevelopment will act as a stimulus for community regeneration. The 'Sense of Place' created within this



neighbourhood will give residents a feeling of local identity by building relationships and social networks within the new development and with existing adjoining housing estates. The design layout and arrangement has the safety of residents imbedded within its core principles. The public areas of open landscape are overlooked by dwellings to provide more secure spaces. The road layout provides interesting streetscapes while reducing speed through raised speed tables. This development is ideally located to avail of the existing infrastructure transport links and amenities. The town centre and train station are all within walking distance. In terms economic sustainability, the increased population density will help sustain and improve local services and businesses. All proposed house types will benefit from improved thermal performance of the building's envelope which ensures that residents will have reduced energy bills while decreasing carbon emissions.

## 5.0 Access

- Our design approach has been underpinned by three key principles:
  - I) Inclusivity: An inclusive environment aimed to assist use by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. The design of the house types has removed the barriers to accessibility often present in other dwellings by incorporating a high level of flexibility and adaptability within the design and structure so that the homes can meet a diverse range of needs over time. The proposal therefore will provide for the widest cross-section of individuals within the general population. The high level of accessibility also offers greater 'visitability', so that an individual is not prevented from visiting a household due to the design of the home.
  - II) Accessibility: Inclusive design aimed to give the widest range of people, including those with physical and/or sensory impairments, older people and children, convenient and independent access into and around the built environment (externally and internally). All house types have been provided with level accesses. Pedestrian movement through the site has been carefully considered to insure there are no access issues of age or disability. All approaches to units have a max gradient of 1:20 and therefore can be considered a level approach.
  - III) Adaptability: Our proposed house types have been designed so that they can be easily adapted to meet people's changing needs over time or to suit the needs of different users. Any subsequent adaptations will be more cost-effective because the original design accommodates their



future provision from the outset. Single storey and first floor Units have been designed for the inclusion of bathroom hoists, should the need for installation arise. All 2 storey units have also been designed to accommodate stair lifts (See Images 3 & 4 below).

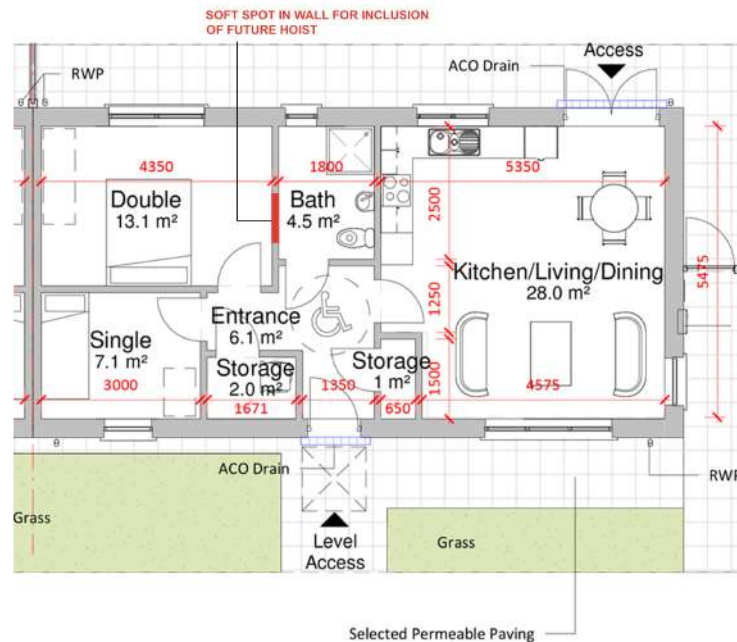


Figure 3 - Single Storey Units showing inclusion for bathroom hoist

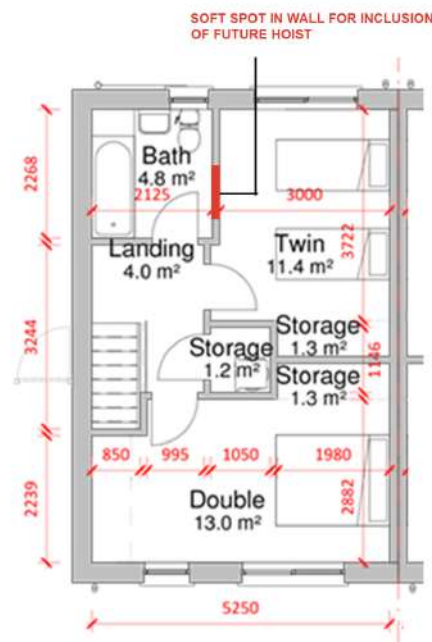


Figure 4 - Two Storey Units showing inclusion for bathroom hoist

IV) Sustainability: the design of our proposed house types promote sustainability in the widest sense of the word as we have incorporated essential accessible elements aimed at meeting current and future needs, including homes, facilities, goods and services – the design of which will contribute to the long term viability of the community. The accessibility, flexibility and adaptability of our proposed house types will help to ensure long term demand for, and desirability of the dwelling. While sustainability is dependent on a range of factors, dwellings that offer this degree of accessibility and flexibility are likely to remain popular over time, for both existing and new households, and can therefore contribute to the creation of stable and popular neighbourhoods and communities.

V) Good Value: Once occupied, the adaptability of our proposed house types should actually save a household money if needs change and the dwelling is quickly and simply adapted to suit the new set of circumstances. Without the non-apparent integral design features have been incorporated into the layouts, the household may be faced with expensive, complicated and disruptive major adaptation works to a dwelling less suited to change; or possibly (in the case of an existing household) face a forced move to a more suitable home. This inherent flexibility also represents better value for the wider economy, as a greater supply of such homes can accommodate the changing needs of the growing population of older people and reduce future need for specialised housing.

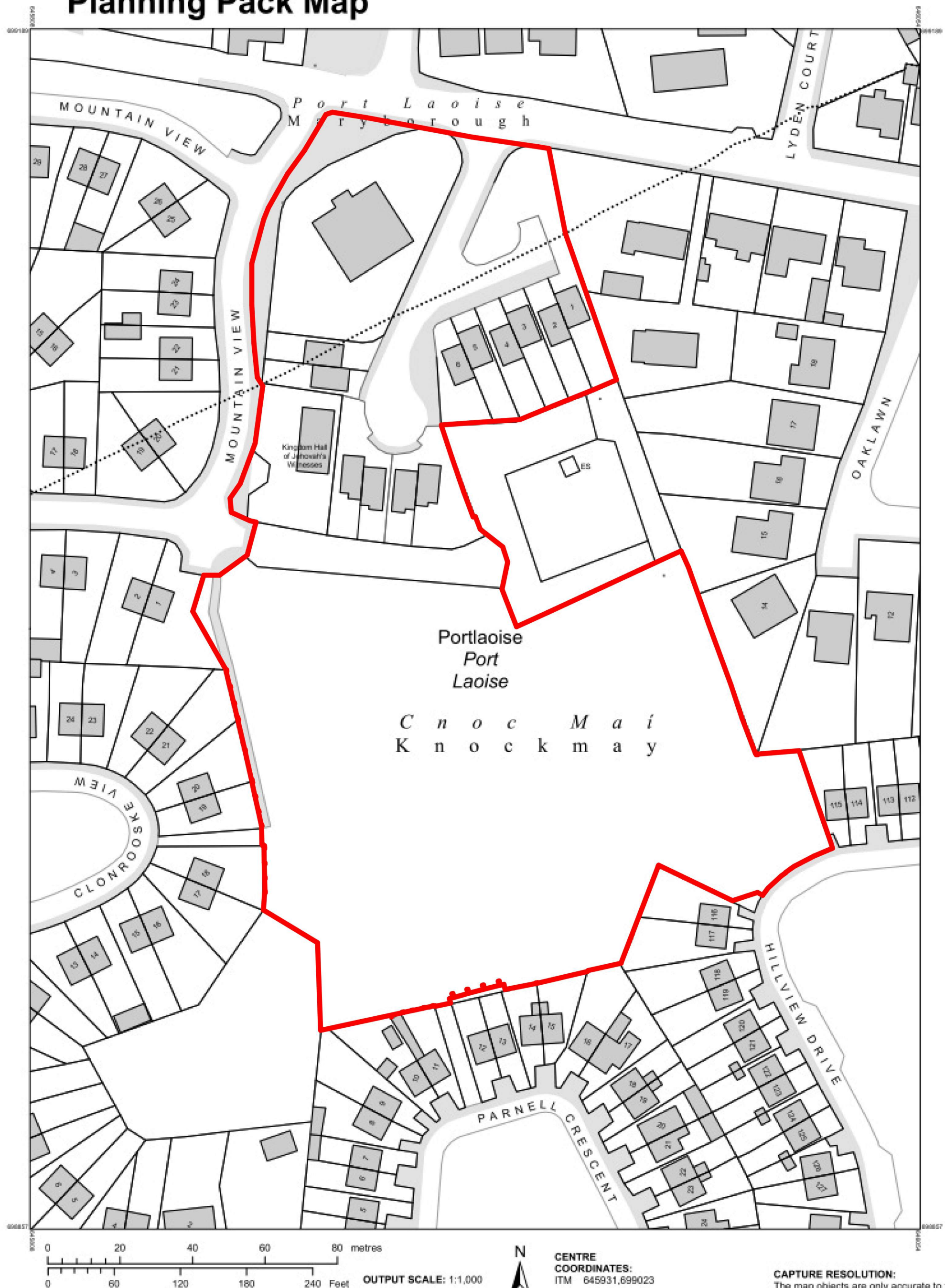
## 6.0 Conclusion

This design and access statement has explained the design thinking behind a planning application and demonstrated an in depth understanding of the context, surroundings and potential constraints relating to the site and wider area. It also illustrates how we have carefully considered how everyone will be able to use the proposed development.

In the context of a pressing demand for housing, a vacant site such as this could bring a welcome use, which also addresses multiple needs housing. At present the site is a catalyst for anti social behavior. Providing a carefully considered layout, retaining the strong existing pedestrian linkage between the Ballyfin Road/Mountain View area and Hill View Drive through the site with clearly defined and legible pedestrian routes created through safe and defensible public areas, can vastly reduce this.

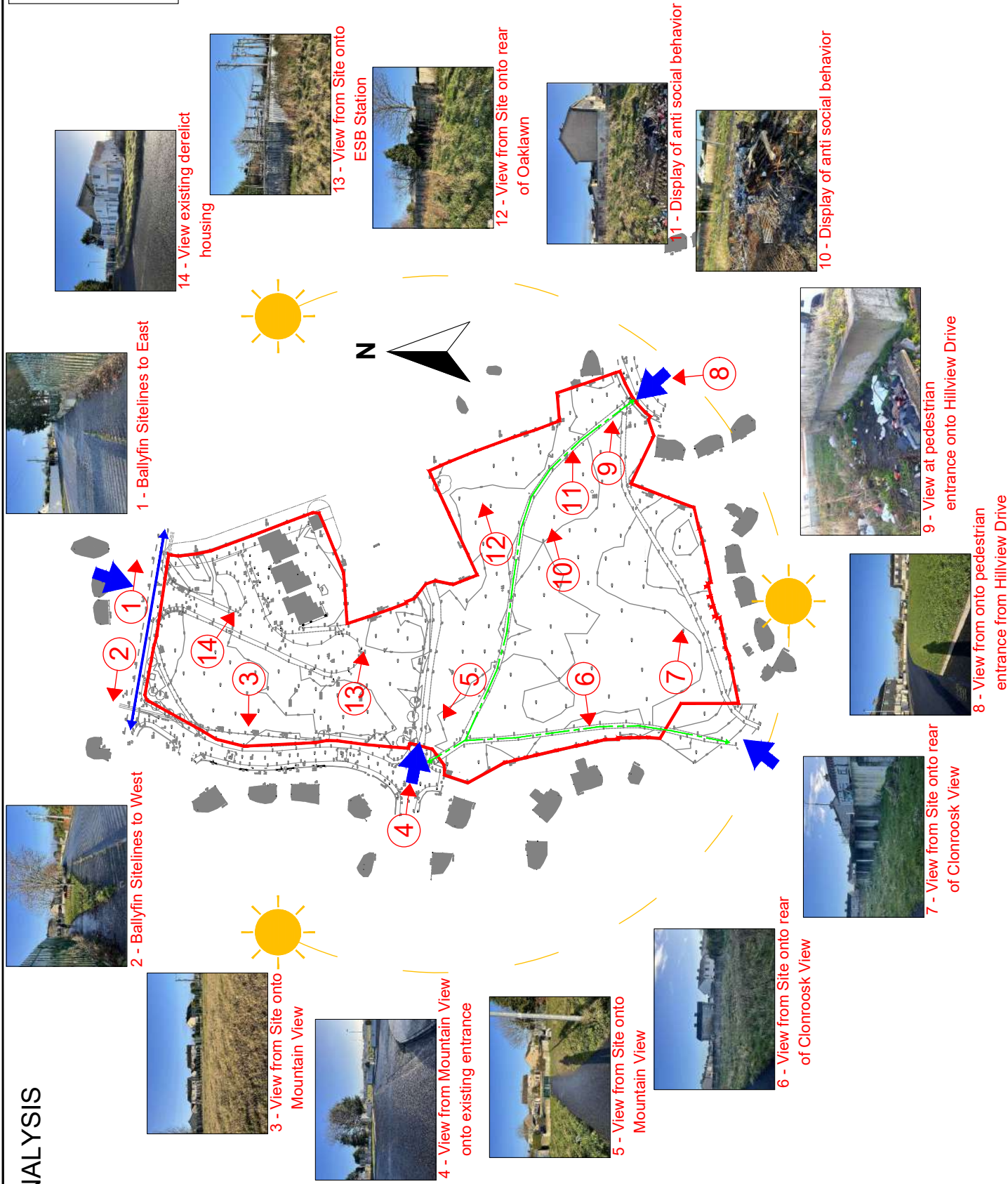
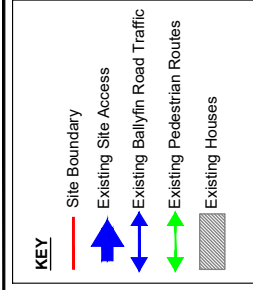
Our design of the individual units provides an inclusive environment aimed to assist use by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. The design of the house types removes the barriers to accessibility often present in other dwellings by incorporating a high level of flexibility and adaptability within the design and structure so that the homes can meet a diverse range of needs over time. The proposed house types have been designed so that they can be easily adapted to meet people's changing needs over time or to suit the needs of different users. This inherent flexibility also represents better value for the wider economy, as a greater supply of such homes can accommodate the changing needs of the growing population of older people and reduce future need for specialised housing.

# Planning Pack Map



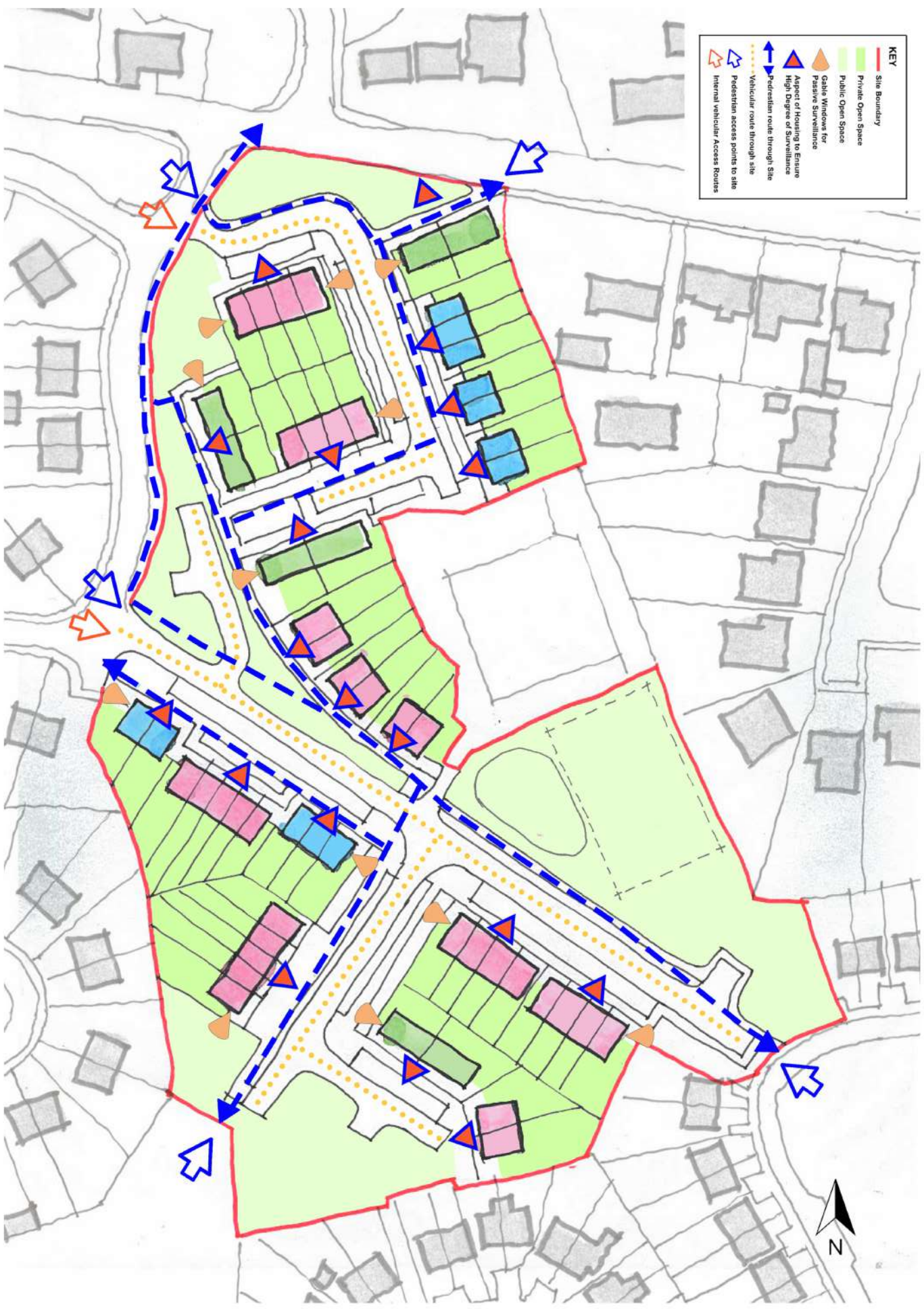


# SITE ANALYSIS



The site plan for the Clonrooske view Development shows a central area outlined in red. This area includes a large green 'Public Open Space 600m²' at the top, a central orange-colored building footprint, and several smaller building footprints labeled 01 A, 02 B, 03 B, 04 C, 05 C, 06 C, 07 C, 08 C, 09 C, 10 C, 11 C, and 12 D. Each building footprint is accompanied by its 'P.O.S.' (Public Open Space) area and 'P.L.' (Plot) number. For example, building 01 A has a P.O.S. of 118m² and P.L. 92.1. Building 12 D has a P.O.S. of 118m² and P.L. 91.9. The site is surrounded by other building footprints and green spaces, with 'Parnell Crescent' labeled on the right side. A 'Screen Planting' area is indicated near the top of the red-outlined site. The plan also shows various boundary lines and dimensions.







GENERAL NOTES:

- A. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, THE SPECIFICATION, AND ALL RELEVANT STANDARD DETAIL DRAWINGS.
- B. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT CIVIL, STRUCTURAL, MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS TOGETHER WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS AND SCHEDULES.
- C. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. USE FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY.
- D. CONTRACTOR MUST VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE SETTING OUT. COMMENCING WORK, OR PRODUCING ANY SHOP DRAWINGS.



- 2 Bed 3 Person Bungalow
- 2 Bed 4 Person House
- 3 Bed 5 Person House
- Site Boundary
- Right of way/Wayleave
- Existing foul sewer
- Existing storm water drain
- Existing power lines
- Gable Windows for Passive Surveillance

	Number	Car Parking Spaces
2BSP Bungalows	8	8
2BAP Houses	12	18
3BSP Houses	34	68
Totals	54	94 (417 visitor)

Site Area 2.4ha  
Public Open Space 3793m<sup>2</sup> (15.8%)

Rev	Description	By	Ctd	Date
A				

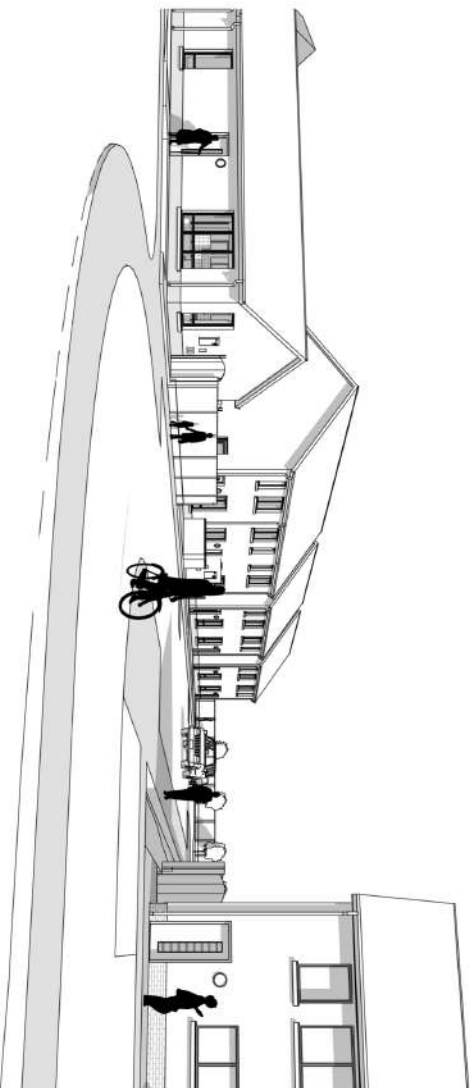


Client	Date	14/03/22
Clui/Adston	Scale @ A2	1 : 1000
Job	Drawn by	MM/NOC
3553 - Hepburn Court	Checked by	TMC

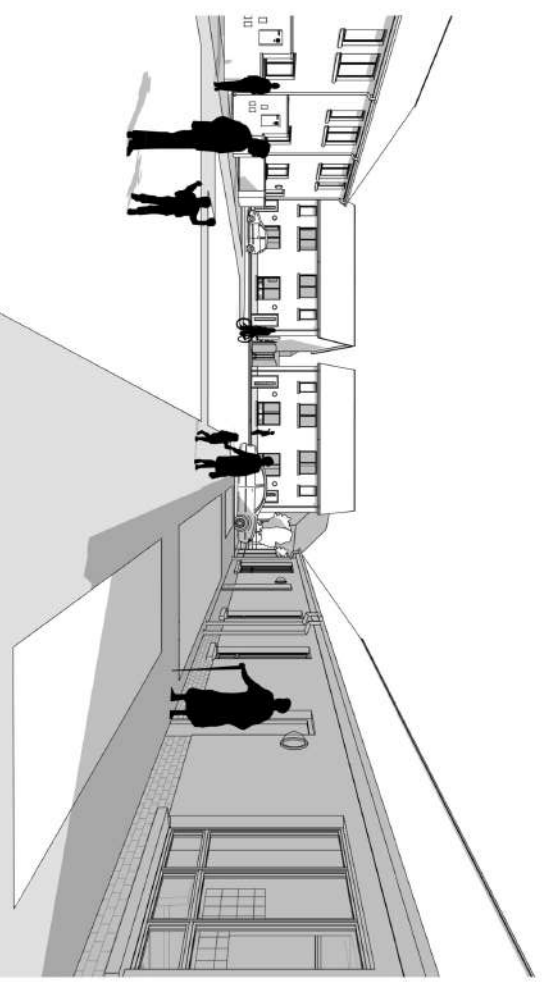
Sheet Title  
Proposed Site Plan

Job No.	Stage	Drawing No.	Suitability	Rev
3553	PL	3553-EML-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-001	S1	





View from Ballyfin Road



View onto amenity space between Blocks F & H