

Proposed Housing, Swan Lane (Eircode C15 RD82),
Balreask Old, Navan, Co. Meath
Planning & Architectural Design Statement

August 2022



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Craftstudio Architecture have been commissioned by Meath County Council to design 6no. housing units at Swan Lane, Balreask, Navan. The site consists of a derelict detached two-storey dwelling with private open space, which has been subject to vandalism, and is to be demolished as part of the development works. The proposal will regenerate a derelict site in the town centre and address the current housing need in the area.

The proposed development consists of the following:

- Demolition of existing fire-damaged two storey property;
- Construction of a two-storey development comprising 2no. 2-bed residential units and 4no. 1-bed residential units;
- Connection to public sewers and mains water supply;
- Erection of bin stores and bicycle store;
- All ancillary site works necessary to facilitate the development inclusive of road/footpath revisions, boundary treatments, vehicular

parking arrangements, SuDS drainage and landscaping.

This report should be read in conjunction with the architectural drawings (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), *Housing Quality Assessment & Schedule of Accommodation* (prepared by Craftstudio Architecture), engineering particulars (prepared by Alan Traynor Consulting Engineers) and all other planning documentation (forms, notices etc.).

Pre-planning consultations took place in February, July and August 2022 in which the development proposals have been agreed in principle.



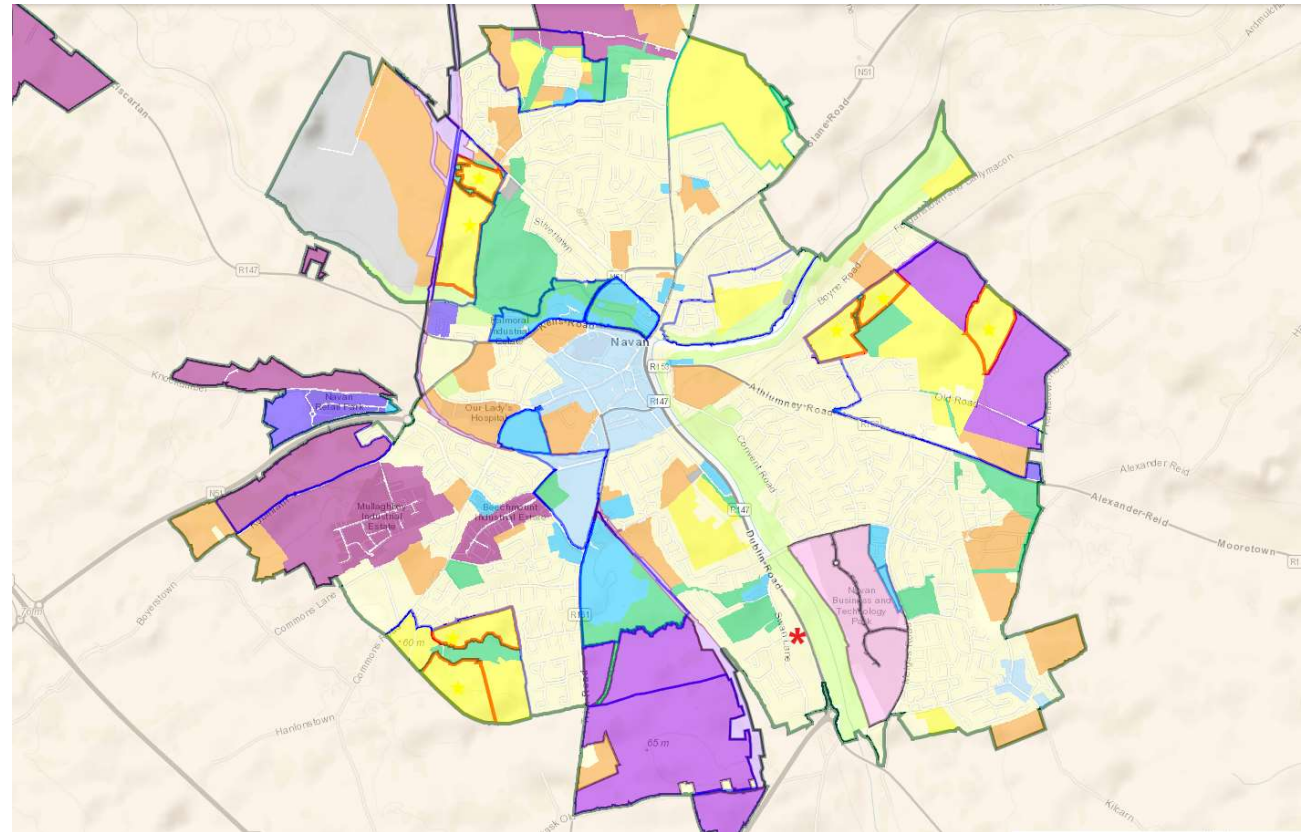
Aerial Photograph of Swan Lane with site outlined in red

2.0 Site Overview & Analysis

2.1 Site Overview

The site is located south-east of the town centre on Swan Lane which is accessible off the R147 Dublin Road which joins the M3 motorway.

The site is currently zoned as A1 (existing residential) within the current Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and is situated within the Navan Settlement Boundary. It is an objective of this zone within the plan *‘to protect and enhance the amenity and character of existing residential communities.’*



Extract from Navan Land Use Zoning Objectives

(Note: the site is denoted with a red asterisk)

Existing trees alongside the north and south

2.2 Site Analysis

The site comprises 0.1227 ha of land and contains a derelict two-storey dwelling which has been subject to vandalism. The remainder of the site is private open space which has been left unkept for some time. Trees alongside the north and south boundaries provide excellent screening and enclosure to the housing development.

It is surrounded on all sides by residential housing (mainly detached two-storey houses). The R147 runs parallel to Swan Lane, with the River Boyne also running parallel to the east of the site. The site is located within the 50km speed limit for the town.

2.3 Site Opportunities

The site benefits from its' location close to Navan town centre. Navan offers a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to a sustainable local community. The site is within an existing residential area.



boundaries provide excellent screening and enclosure to the housing development.

Aerial view of the site

Above - existing site photo: Front of existing dwelling



Left - existing site photo: Hardstanding and existing entrance way to front of the site (view southwards towards the road)



Above - existing site photo: Rear of existing dwelling



Above: Existing topographical survey

2.4 Previous Planning Applications

Previous planning applications on this site relate to the a proposed house and entrance and then retention and completion of 2storey dormer house with proposed extension, i.e. the existing house (ref. no's 931213, 991087) and to a proposed conversion of the existing house for the purpose of child care facility (ref. no's NA20261, NA40168). All of the listed applications were granted with conditions.

3.0 Planning Policy & Assessment

3.1 Core Strategy & Relevant Planning Policy

Navan is classified as a Key Town in the Settlement Hierarchy for Meath in the *Development Plan*. The *Development Plan* outlines key aims of the settlement hierarchy, planning policies and broad objectives of relevance to this planning application. These are as follows:

**SH POL 4 To promote social integration and the provision of a range of dwelling types in residential developments that would encourage a mix of tenure,*

particularly in any State funded house building programmes.

**CS POL 1 To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities.*

**CS OBJ 4 To achieve more compact growth by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within and close to the existing built-up footprint of existing settlements in preference to edge of centre locations.*

**CS OBJ 5 To deliver at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing built-up footprint of settlements.*

**SH POL 8 To support the creation of attractive residential developments with a range of housing options and appropriate provision of functional*

public and private open space that is consistent with the standards and principles set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the associated Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG (2009) and any subsequent Guidelines.

**DM POL 4: To require that all proposals for residential development demonstrate compliance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Cities, Towns & Villages (2009) and the Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide, 2009 or any updates thereof.*

**DM OBJ 12: To encourage and facilitate innovative design solutions for medium to high density residential schemes where substantial compliance with normal development management considerations can be demonstrated.*

**DM OBJ 27: Standalone residential developments comprising of 9 residential units or less shall be exempt from the requirement to provide 15% open space. In all such cases the private amenity space serving each dwelling shall exceed the minimum requirement.*

**DM POL 7: Residential development shall provide private open space Apartment schemes shall in accordance with the requirements set out in Table 11.1. Each residential development proposal shall be accompanied by a statement setting out how the scheme complies with the requirements set out in Table 11.1.*

**DM OBJ 42: Infill development shall take account of the character of the area and where possible retain existing features such as building line, height, railings, trees, gateways etc.*

**DM OBJ 89: Car parking shall be provided in accordance with Table 11.2 and associated guidance notes.*

The aforementioned information sets out a clear pathway for housing development in defined urban areas within the county. Of specific relevance is housing objective CS OBJ 4 which promotes the development of infill and brownfield/ regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within and close to the existing built-up footprint of existing settlements.

The proposed planning application represents the replacement of a derelict dwelling on a large urban site. The Proposed residential scheme is designed to meet the criteria outlined by Meath County Council.

3.2 Regional and National Planning Policy

This planning application has been considered in relation to national and regional planning policy and guidance documents.

The **National Planning Framework** sets out the strategic objectives of development with urban areas, such as Navan. It highlights the importance of strengthening Ireland's urban fabric and supporting urban based communities. The proposed development complies with the broad objectives of the National Planning Framework. Of specific relevance to this planning application is Objective 3A, which pledges to *'deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally within the built-up envelope of existing urban settlements'*.

Rebuilding Ireland was initiated in 2016 as an action plan for housing and homelessness with the

objective to double house construction annually and deliver 47,000 social and affordable housing units in the period up to 2021. Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires similar multi-unit housing developments to contribute to the social housing stock in every county. As such, the proposed development at Navan is consistent with pillars 1-4 of the action plan {Pillar 1 - Address Homelessness, Pillar 2 - Accelerate Social Housing, Pillar 3 - Build More Houses & Pillar 4 Improve the Rental Sector}.

The **Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)** encourage Planning Authorities to promote high quality design in their policy documents and in their development management process. The proposed housing development at Swan Lane is designed and located to *'assist in generating / reinforcing the genius loci' of the area* and *'facilitate the operational viability of the centre'*.

3.3 Local Demographics

Demand for housing in Navan and Meath generally remains consistently high, particularly social housing.

4.0 Design Statement

4.1 Design Principles

This planning application has been designed in accordance with relevant national and local policies and guidelines. Planning permission is sought to provide 6no. housing units (2no. 2bed 4person 2storey dwellings and 4no. 1bed 2person 1storey apartments) with bin stores, bicycle store and all associated site works to include the provision of car parking spaces. The housing block has been positioned further back on the site (beyond the existing house) so that it aligns better with its' immediate neighbours. The apartments bookend the scheme with the houses to the middle of the terrace. The ground floor apartments have their front doors located on the gable elevations, whilst the first floor apartments have doors on the front elevation with private stair behind. This arrangement allows the scheme to appear as a row of houses when viewed from Swan Lane so that it does not appear distinctive from the surrounding dwellings. Private amenity space is provided to the rear of each dwelling with individual gardens at ground floor level and balconies provided for the first floor apartments. The access route incorporates a hammer turning head for safe manoeuvre of vehicles on the site.

Principles dictating the layout and quality of the design are based on delivering a well-integrated housing development respectful of the town's existing characteristics. All residential units are dual or triple aspect.



Proposed layout of Swan Lane

4.2 Design Concept

The proposed housing scheme will be developed in a manner which employs best practice in urban design with specific regard the creation of a distinctive residential neighbourhood integrated into the existing fabric of the town. In addition to the national and regional planning policy and guidance documents previously mentioned, the design is based on recommendations for 'place making' in the following publications:

1. Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027
2. Design Manual for Quality Housing (2022)
3. Best Practice Guidelines - Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities
4. Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities
5. Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
6. Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)
7. Urban Design Manual, A best practice guide (2009)

7. Creating Places -Achieving Quality in Residential Developments

8. Making places – A Design Guide for Residential Estate Developments

9. Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Sustainable Communities

This planning application seeks to create a distinctive residential scheme to regenerate a derelict site in the town centre.



Perspective View of Swan Lane proposed housing

4.3 Context

The site is located south-east of the town centre on Swan Lane which is accessible off the R147 Dublin Road which joins the M3 motorway.

The site is currently zoned as A1 (existing residential) within the current Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and is situated within the Navan Settlement Boundary. The site comprises 0.1227 ha of land and contains a derelict two-storey dwelling which has been subject to vandalism. The remainder of the site is private open space which has been left unkept for some time. Trees alongside the north and south boundaries provide excellent screening and enclosure to the housing development. The existing boundary trees are to be retained (with additional native trees to be added where required) to maintain these established boundaries.

It is surrounded on all sides by residential housing (mainly detached two-storey houses). The R147 runs parallel to Swan Lane, with the River Boyne also running parallel to the east of the site. The site is located within the 50km speed limit for the town.

The proposed housing increases density on the site but the housing has been positioned further back on the site (beyond the existing house) so that it aligns better with its' immediate neighbours. There is no

defined building line along this site of the road but pushing the building back on site respects the neighbouring building immediately to the south. The apartments bookend the scheme with the houses to the middle of the terrace. The ground floor apartments have their front doors located on the gable elevations, whilst the first floor apartments have doors on the front elevation with private stairs behind. This arrangement allows the scheme to appear as a row of houses when viewed from Swan Lane so that it does not appear distinctive from the surrounding dwellings.

Private amenity space is provided to the rear of each dwelling with individual gardens at ground floor level and balconies provided for the first floor apartments. Public open space/ landscaping is provided to the front of the site to coorelate with the character of the neighbouring properties. The proposed parking bays are to be finished with cellular grassed paving to soften the landscaping to the front of the dwellings. Soft landscaping and planting to the front of the site and to the planter between the parking and the housing block provides screening for the residents and breaks up the hard landscaping to the front.

The proposed gable fronted front elevation follows the gable fronted nature of the adjacent neighbours' dwellings to the south of the site.



Aerial Photograph of existing site

4.3 Connections

The location of the development on Swan Lane within Navan will provide residents with good connections to a wide range of local facilities. The entrance to the proposed development (replacing the previous 2no. existing entrances with 1no. central site entrance) has been designed in accordance with DMURS requirements. Sufficient sightlines provide a compliant vision splay along Swan Lane. Given the nature of the development, it is not expected to contribute any traffic issues locally.

The proposed site is within a 30minute walking distance of Navan's town centre. There are pedestrian footpaths which connect to the town centre opposite the site on the junction of Balreask Old and Swan Lane. To allow for the potential future installment of a pedestrian footpath to the front of the site (to the east side of Swan Lane) the boundary walls to the south-west of the site have been set back from the road to allow for this potential connection.

The inclusion of cycle storage on the proposed site (refer also to 4.12 *Parking* below for more detailed information) encourages residents to cycle and thus reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on local roads in the area.

Access to the town's existing bus service can be gained to the south of the site at Kilcarn Bridge – which provides access to bus route N1 (Navan – Town Service) with connections within the town then also to N2 (Navan- Town Service).

Swan Lane and Navan itself has excellent road connections to other towns in the region and further afield to major urban centres including to Dublin (along the M3).

4.4 Inclusivity

The proposed dwellings are a mix of 1no. bed apartments and 2no. bed houses to meet the aspirations of a range of people and households.

The scheme has been developed with due regard to the principles of universal design to achieve a layout enabling easy access by all. All dwellings have level access and any changes in level have been designed in accordance to the recommendations of TGD Part M. The design and layout of all public areas is Part M compliant and easily negotiated internally on foot or by bicycle so that the scheme is accessible and open

to all. There is a clear definition between amenity spaces, footpaths and roads to provide good separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

1no. car parking space is to be designated for accessible users in line with Part M's requirement for at least 5% of the total number of spaces (9no. total spaces proposed) to be designated, with a minimum provision of at least one such space (refer also to 4.12 *Parking* below for more detailed information). The designated space is positioned in the spaces closest to the proposed dwellings for ease of access for the user.

The public open space to the front of the site, although technically not required under DM OBJ 27 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027 (see extract below), is provided at almost 6% of the overall site area to provide additional accessible communal space to the front of the site which is accessible and open to all of the tenants and will help to promote social interaction.

DM OBJ 27 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027:

'Stand alone residential developemtns comprising of 9 residential units or less shall be exempt from the requirement to provide 15% open space. In such cases the private amenity space serving each dwelling shall exceed the minimum requirements'

The general layout of the housing has been considered so that dwellings are orientated to provide passive surveillance over the parking spaces, access road and footpaths and to the public open space within the development. Good passive surveillance is proven to negate anti-social behaviour. New buildings present a positive aspect to passers-by, with no unnecessary physical and visual barriers.



Perspective View of proposed development

4.5 Variety

There are 2 proposed house types within the one building mass – 2no. 2bed 4person 2storey dwellings are located to the centre of the terrace block with 4no. 1bed 2person 1storey apartments which bookend the terrace block, the apartments are stacked to maintain the 2 storey height. Mixed communities can be created by provided a range of unit types as the proposed units will be suitable for both young and old tenants.

The ground floor apartments have their front doors located on the gable elevations, whilst the first floor apartments have doors on the front elevation with private stairs behind. This arrangement allows the scheme to appear as a row of houses when viewed from Swan Lane so that it does not appear distinctive from the surrounding dwellings. The gable fronted end units add variety to the front elevation and roofscape and also respond to the gable fronted nature of the adjacent neighbours' dwellings to the south of the site.

Soft landscaping will incorporate a range of planting of herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees, lawn and wood bark flower beds. This aims to promote biodiversity value and visual amenity and variety all year round.

4.6 Efficiency

The land of the proposed site (comprising 0.1227 ha) is brownfield in nature and zoned for existing residential use. The existing derelict two-storey dwelling which has been subject to vandalism including fire damage. Access to the interior is not possible owing to the risk of collapse of elements of the structure. The remainder of the site is private open space which has been left unkept for some time. Due to the dangerous condition of the existing dwelling it is proposed to demolish it and to construct 6no. housing units (2no. 2 bed residential units and 4no. 1 bed residential units). This adds density to the site and optimises the use thereof whilst still providing ample private amenity space, access, parking spaces and a public open space provision. This constitutes an efficient use of the available land on the site. The proposal will regenerate a derelict site in the town centre (the scheme will bring the land back into use) and address the current housing need in the area.

The proposed density within the scheme takes into account proximity to the town centre as well as the objectives of good design. We feel that this level of density is appropriate for this site so as not to

detract from the quality of living of the residents and protect the established character and amenities of adjacent residential area.

All units within the scheme are designed with efficient use of plot area and in respect of building regulations so that they meet the highest design standards. Gardens have been positioned to the rear of the site to provide maximum privacy for the tenants. Landscaped areas to the front of the dwellings are designed to provide amenity and biodiversity, protect buildings and spaces from the elements and incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems.

Each of the proposed dwellings have adequate provision for recycling facilities in the form of external bin stores. Each unit has the capacity to store a minimum of 3no. bins within their bin store. This will encourage residents to sort and store recycling correctly prior to collection and in turn maximise recycling. The stores are located in to either side of the front elevation, next to the parking, so passive surveillance (from the dwellings and whilst residents go to and from their properties) will be utilised to ensure the stores are kept in good order.

All residential units are dual or triple aspect.

4.7 Distinctiveness

The scheme makes of the most of existing landform and ecological features (e.g. the tree boundaries) to create a distinctive layout that establishes a strong identity for the area and is a positive addition to the locality. A variety of house and apartment types within the proposed building mass ensures that residents can form an emotional attachment to their own home and the wider built environment. Each apartment has their own front door (ground floor apartments have their front doors located on the gable elevations, whilst the first floor apartments have doors on the front elevation with private stair behind) and thus no communal internal circulation is proposed. This allows the residents to take ownership of their entrance and the surrounding accessway.

The proposed gable fronted front elevation follows the gable fronted nature of the adjacent neighbours' dwellings to the south of the site and thus provides a positive addition to the identity of the locality.

At present the application site contains a derelict dwelling with unkept public space surrounding it. When completed it is anticipated that the scheme will become a distinct residential community with a prominent sense of place on Swan Lane.

The public open space to the front of the site will provide a good amenity for the residents.

4.8 Layout

The Layout has been directly informed by planning policy and guidelines in relation to creating vibrant community neighbourhoods. Integration into the wider urban context is achieved through a considered design response to the existing adjacent neighbouring dwellings and site specific conditions such as views, topography and all other influencing factors.

The layout of the scheme focuses activity on the proposed access route by creating active frontages with front doors directly serving the parking area and also directly addressing the public open green space to the front of the site. Generous footpaths are proposed and landscaped spaces so that residents have places to stop and talk to neighbours and not just roads for cars.

The vehicular access is relatively short in length (22m approximately from the road to the end of the hammer turning head) so will discourage high traffic speeds after turning 90degrees off Swan Lane.

Public open space is provided to the front of the site and will be accessible by all. These spaces will be clearly distinguished from the private amenity space for each resident which is all located to the rear of the proposed dwellings to maximise their privacy from Swan Lane.

All residential units are dual or triple aspect.

4.9 Public Realm

The built environment has been designed to be attractive and safe for residents. There is a clear definition between public, semi private, and private space. High quality materials are chosen to define the interfaces between these areas to enhance the overall perception of public realm.

All publicly accessible areas are overlooked by other residents (natural surveillance from windows in the front elevation) who would be able to intervene to prevent crime and maintain public safety.

Roads and parking areas are considered as an integral landscaped element in the design of the public realm.

4.10 Adaptability

All dwellings within the scheme are designed with regard to minimum space requirements set out in the *Design Manual for Quality Housing (2022), Best Practice Guidelines - Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and other relevant guidance documents. The homes are energy-efficient and equipped for challenges anticipated from a changing climate and suitable for adaptation in the future without substantially altering their character or the character of the development. Different unit types provided allow for lifetime living whereby people can trade up or down within the scheme should the need arise. The units are also designed so that they can be easily adapted as the needs of the users change over time.

4.11 Privacy and Amenity

Every home within the scheme has access to an area of useable, private amenity space to the rear and parking to the front. Rear gardens are enclosed by 1.8m high concrete walls for additional privacy, each garden provides in excess of 55 m² of private open space for the houses (56.6m² and 56.8m² proposed) and in excess of 5m² for the apartments (6.7m², 6.7m², 31m² and 59m² proposed). The useable private outdoor space is directly accessible via each resident's kitchen, living and dining space. The ground floor apartments have gated access via the gable elevation to their gardens in addition to this.

The prospect of overlooking into adjacent homes and private gardens is significantly diminished by employing best practice guidelines and minimum separation distances, specifically 22 metres between opposing first floor windows. Planting is utilised and sufficiently wide pavement access is utilised to afford sufficient privacy of ground floor rooms from the parking and access. The proposed dwellings will be constructed to accommodate excellent levels of sound insulation, thermal performance, bin storage (separate from the dwelling) and all conveniences for day to day living.

All residential units are dual or triple aspect providing residents with a great level of amenity within their home. By ensuring that at least part of the unit receives direct sunshine for part of the day, this typology reduces the need to make use of artificial illumination – thus improving the standard of living inside and using less energy.

Homes are designed to prevent sound transmission by appropriate acoustic insulation or layout. The homes are designed to provide adequate storage including space within the home for sorting and storage of recyclables (generally accessible from the kitchen space).

4.12 Parking

Car parking is proposed to be within easy reach of the home’s front door. Parked cars are overlooked by each of the housing units which all have a view towards the public areas of the site to the front. Materials used for parking areas are of similar quality to the rest of the development – cellular grassed paving is proposed to soften the visual impact of the hard surfaces. The cellular/

permeable paving assists with surface water drainage.

In total there are 9 dedicated car parking spaces (including 1no. disabled). This is in line with the Meath CDP 2021-2027 and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments and is broken down as follows:

Car Parking:				
Unit type	No. of units	Spaces per unit (CDP rates)	Spaces	
			Required under CDP	Proposed
House (2B 4P)	2	2	4	4
Apartment (1B 2P)	4	1	4	4
Visitor parking		1 (per 4no. apartments)	1	1
TOTAL SPACES			9	9

Of the 9no. spaces proposed note also:

- 1no. space will be accessible in accordance with Part M
- 2no. spaces will the necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future electric vehicle charging points (at a rate of 20% of the total spaces provided as per the CDP)

Parked cars are overlooked by the housing to maximise natural surveillance for improved security.

For bicycle storage all ground floor tenants have private gardens for safe storage of these. For the first floor apartments (who have balconies not ground floor gardens) there is a secure sheltered bicycle store proposed to the south of the site with bicycle spaces as follows:

Bicycle Parking:				
Unit type	No. of units	Spaces per bed (CDP rates)	Spaces	
			Required under CDP	Proposed
First floor apartment (1B 2P)	2	1	2	2
Visitor parking		1 (per 2no. apartments)	1	4
TOTAL SPACES			3	6

The bicycle storage encourages all types of sustainable modes of transport.



Perspective View of proposed Swan Lane

4.13 Detailed Design

The proposed housing is two storey in height and constructed using traditional building methods. The use of high quality materials, including painted render and fibre cement roof tiles, and external design make a positive contribution to the locality, facilitate easy and regular maintenance and reflect the local character of the area. Care has been taken over the siting of flues, vents and bin storage. The landscape design facilitates the use of the public spaces from the outset.

Soft landscaping will incorporate a range of planting of herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees, lawn and wood bark flower beds. This aims to promote biodiversity value and visual amenity and variety all year round.

5.0 Photo
Visualisations





