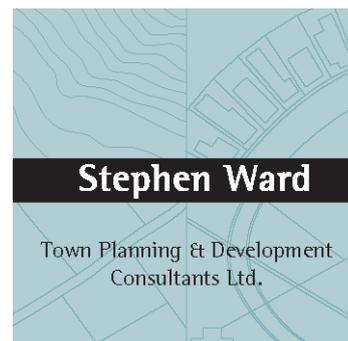


Report on Residential Amenity

Proposed Strategic Housing Development at Clonminch Road, Clonminch/Gayfield,
Tullamore, Co.Offaly



Prepared on behalf of
Steinfort Investments Fund



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Notice of Pre-Application Consultation Opinion issued by An Bord Pleanála in relation to ABP-309529-21 requires “A report that addresses issues of residential amenity (both existing residents of adjoining development and future occupants). Full and complete drawings including levels and cross sections showing the relationship between the development and adjacent residential units should be submitted” (Item 7).

This report has been prepared to address item 7 of the Written Opinion of An Bord Pleanála and provides a summary of items relating to residential amenity. This Report should be read in conjunction with all other documents and drawings submitted with the planning application including the EIAR as the issue of residential amenity is multi-faceted and has been assessed in detail under a multi-disciplinary approach in preparation of this application.

2.0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY MATTERS

2.1 SITE LAYOUT AND BUILDING FORM

As detailed and illustrated in the Architects Design Statement under separate cover, the need to protect existing residential amenity was identified at an early stage of the site assessment. The site layout has been designed to provide a perimeter of one and two storey dwellings where the site meets the existing residential areas of Clonminch Wood and Limefield. Three storey housing to the south of the future Part 8 housing for the elderly is designed to have be two storey to the rear to reduce any perception of overlooking or overbearing. Taller buildings are located towards the northern part of the application site at distance from existing two storey developments and where it can assert its own character.

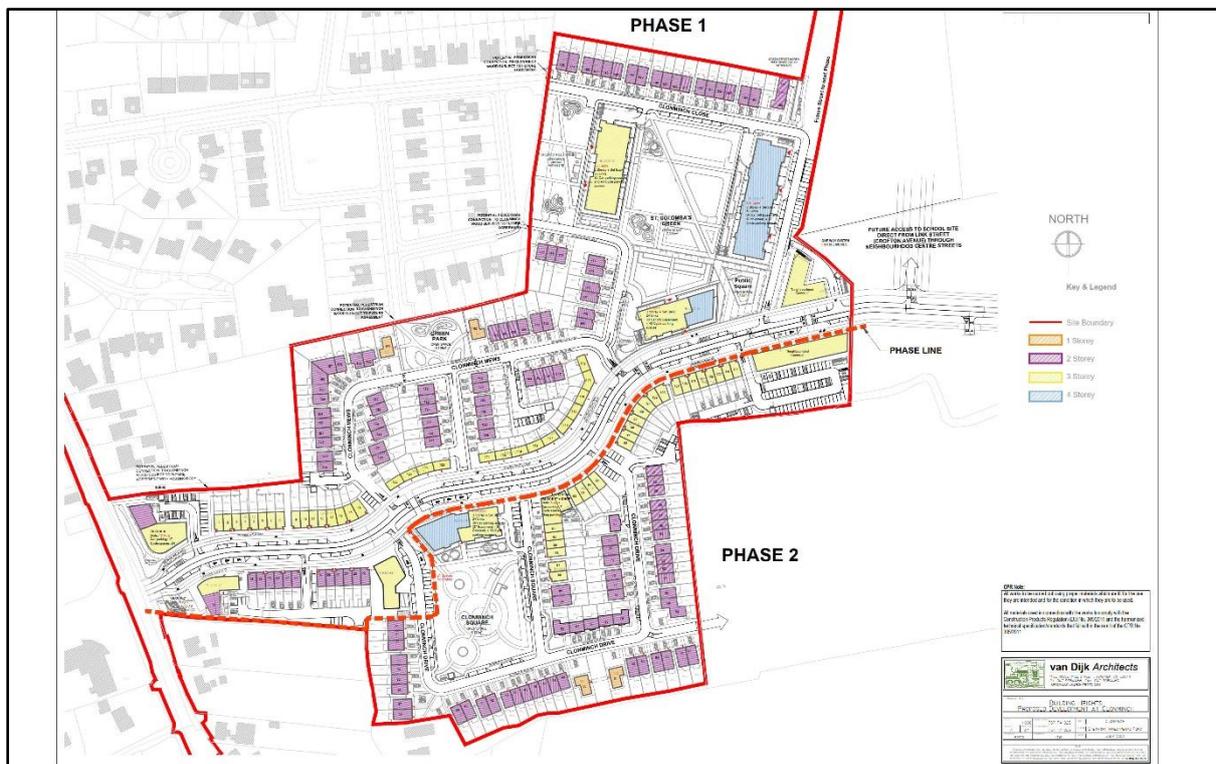


Figure 1: Drawing 1759-PA-025 Building Height



Figure 2: Extract from drawing no. 1757-PA-202 Block 11 demonstrating house design addressing link street – three storey fronting link street and two storey to the rear.

The proposed housing is adequately distanced from existing properties and associated open space areas to maintain residential amenity and ensure the privacy of future occupants. The tallest element of the proposal that bounds existing development is Block D which is 68 metres from existing housing in Clonminch Woods. Please find a detailed examination of separation distances overleaf as identified by figure 2 below.

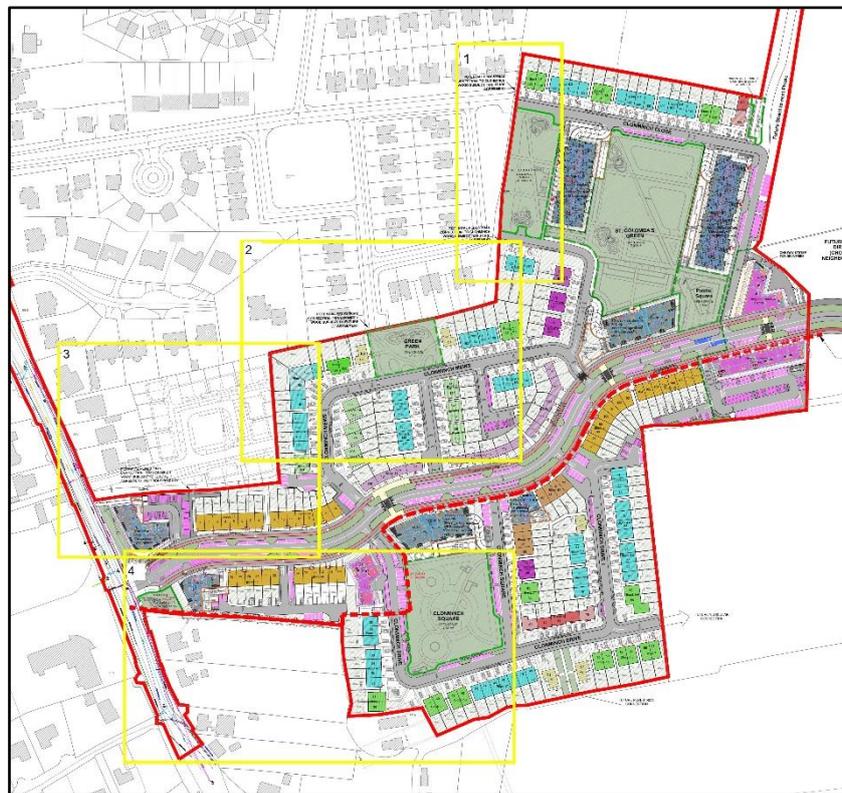
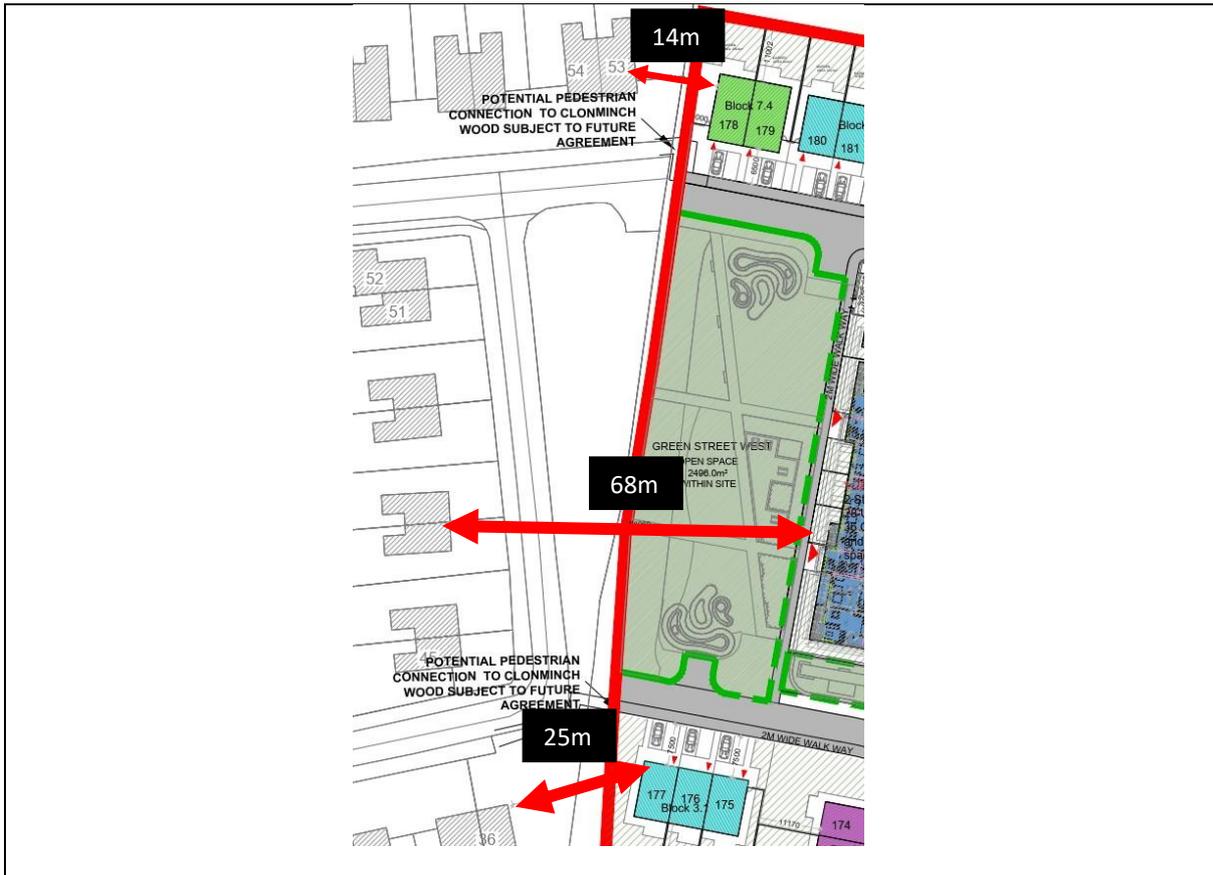
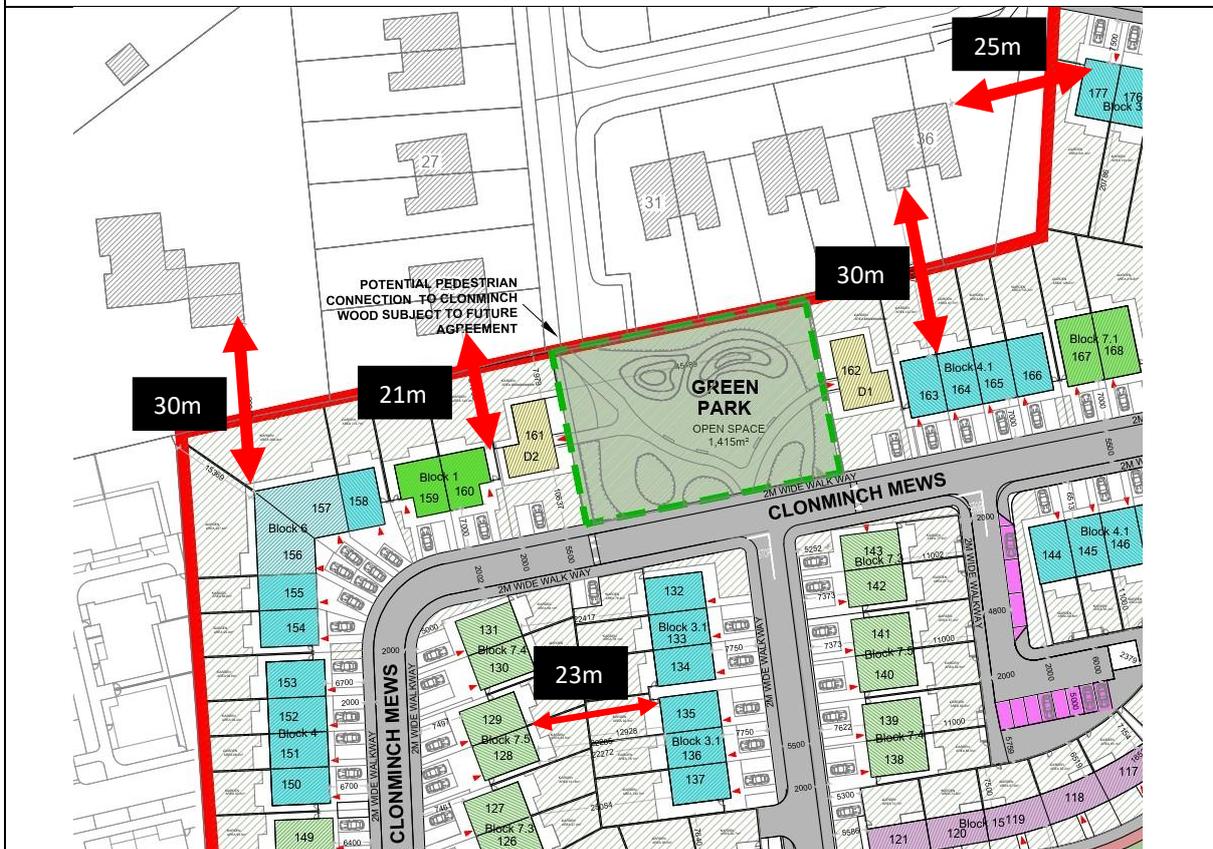
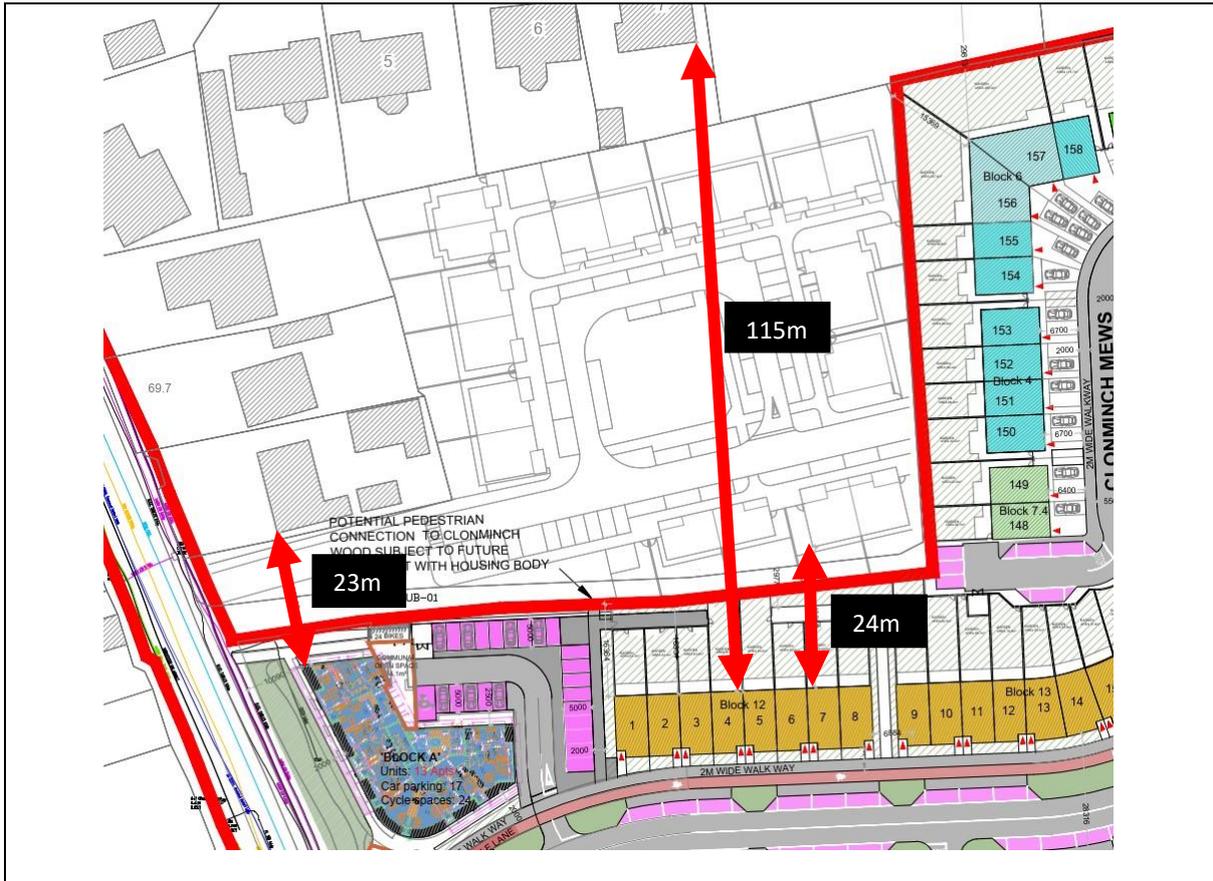


Figure 3: Extract from drawing 1757-PA-003 identifying (section 1 to 4)

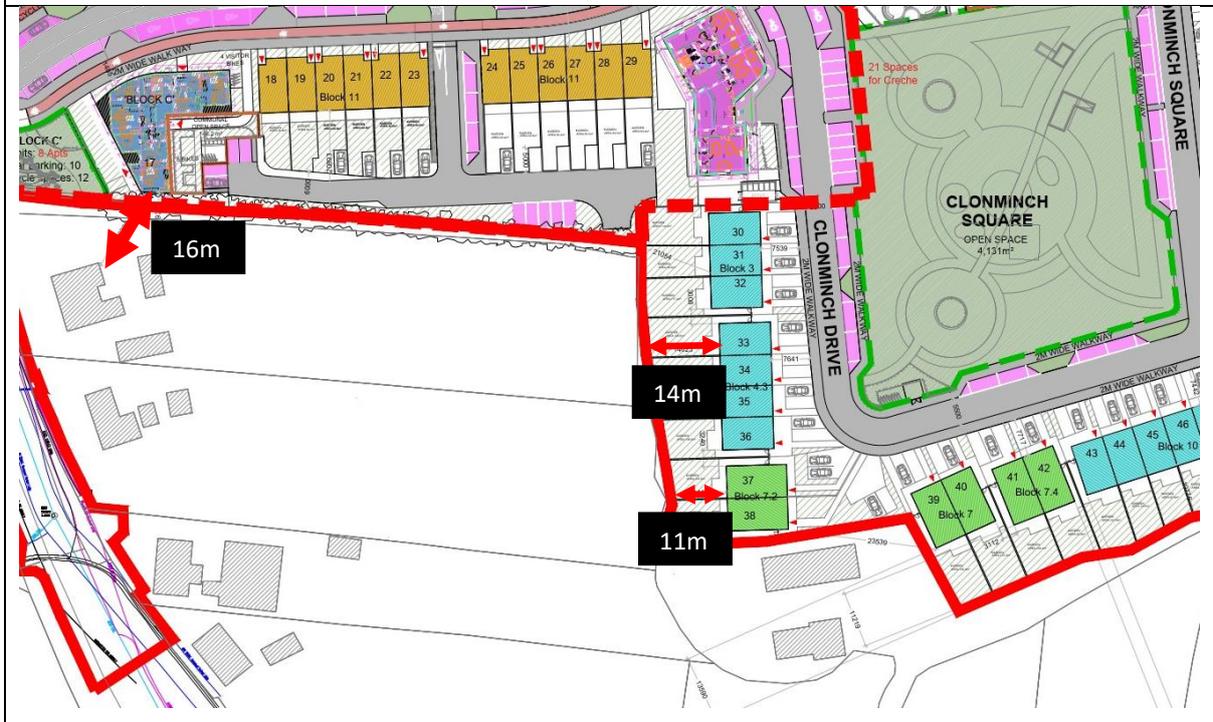


Section 1 above and Section 2 below





Section 3 above and Section 4 below



Apartment building A and C mark the entrance to the application site but also the Eastern Node. It is important to provide an easy identifiable entrance and sense of arrival onto Clonminch Road. The apartment buildings are stepped from two to three storey at the junction with Clonminch Road and curved in their design to provide a welcoming arrival point while protected residential amenity to the north and south which consists of single storey dwellings. Building A is distanced from the closest property to the north by over 23 metres while Building C is 16 metres from the closest dwelling to the south west and will be separated by the existing hedge which is to be retained and supplemented where required. In order to properly address the Link Street within the proposed development and Eastern Node, three storey houses are proposed. While these dwellings are more than adequately distanced from existing residents to the north and south, they drop to two storey to the rear to reduce any perception of overlooking.

As you move through the application site, apartment buildings within the application site are placed to punctuate views along the Link Street and identify the two main public parks. Apartment building B to the north of Clonminch Square is three to four storey in height and the design of apartment building D reflects this approach on the opposite side of the Link Street and to the south of St.Columba's Green. Two apartment buildings are provided in the northern section of the application site. Apartment building D is two storey with a third storey set back and is separated from housing to the west within Clonminch Wood by 68 metres. Between block D and the site boundary is Green Park West (2,496sq.m) which has been designed to knit into the existing public open space within Clonminch Wood in the future with the agreement of Offaly County Council should it be taken in charge. Apartment Building E to the east of St.Columba's Green is three storey with a fourth floor set back providing enclosure to the largest public park proposed and addressing the reserved school site to the east. Block D and Block E are set over 78metres apart ensuring St.Columba's Green is not overshadowed.



Figure 4: View looking east into the site along Crofton Avenue with Apartment Building B marking a transition point.



Figure 5: Block E is shown to the left of this image and shows how the proposed of height of three storey with fourth storey set back is required to enclose this large park. Block D to the right of the image is predominately two storey with third storey set back.

It is submitted that the site layout, building heights and form of residential buildings proposed will not result in any loss of existing residential amenity and will provide an attractive and visually interesting new neighbourhood for future residents to enjoy.



Figure 6: The above image illustrates how building height, scale and massing has been used around Clonminch Square to provide enclosure, address the link street, form a strong urban edge and create visual interest.

2.2 PRIVATE AMENITY SPACE AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

All dwellings have access to their own private open space. Traditional house types have rear gardens that meet and exceed the development management requirements of the TTEDP of between 60-75sq.m. Park Hood drawing number 6473-L-309 details the proposed boundary treatments throughout the site. Rear gardens will be divided with 1.8m high concrete post and panel fencing. 2 metre high block walls with separate back gardens. Where boundary walls address the public realm they feature 2 metre high brick walls. Front garden/in curtilage parking areas are separated with 1.2m railings to define entrances to properties. All housing along the link street or without front gardens have privacy zones with buffer planting and 1.2metre high brick walls or railings.

Apartments have ground floor terrace or balconies on upper floors. Particular attention is given to the landscaping and boundary treatments at ground floor level to ensure the privacy of future occupants. There is a clearly defined private area adequately distanced from the public circulation area around each building.

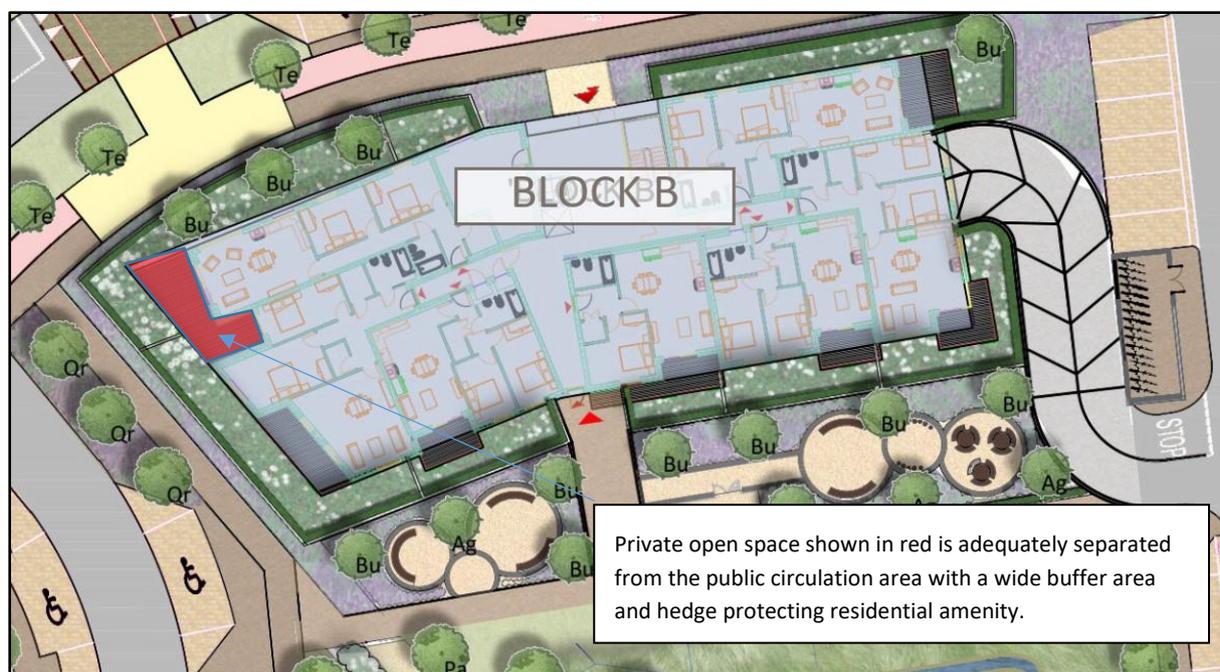


Figure 7: Extract from landscape plan demonstrating division of open space for Block B

2.3 ACCESS TO PUBLIC AMENITY SPACE

The proposed development has been designed as a new neighbourhood with a parkland setting. The provision of high quality public open spaces is central to the site layout and a site wide landscape plan and landscape strategy has been prepared by Park Hood. As illustrated by figure 8 all future residents will be within 150metres of a landscaped and functional public open space. A total of 16,207sq.m of public open space is provided in addition to ancillary areas, communal and private open space. This equates to over 17sq.m of public open space for each resident and 16% of the residential site area.

Name/Character area	Features and Function	Size
Clonminch Square	Children’s Playground and seating areas. The attenuation area is proposed as an informal lawn area with decked seating area.	4,131m ²
St.Columba’s Green	The largest of the parks, this area is more formal in its design with strong desire lines and avenues to the surroundings residential streets and to the Neighbourhood Centre. The park comprises of large informal lawn space, play mounds, break-out spaces for amenity seating and pocket park spaces for quiet amenity. The attenuation areas combine timber walkways and water tolerant planting species to provide visual interest and biodiversity.	7,035m ²
Green Street West	Amenity seating and outdoor exercise area. This area adjoins Clonminch Wood and has been located to allow the existing area of public open space to the west to be knitted into the new neighbourhood centre in the future once Clonminch Wood is taken in charge. The attenuation area will be an informal lawn area with boardwalk.	2,496m ²
Green Park	This pocket park will feature amenity seating and is envisaged as a stopping point/break-out space and provides visual amenity to the passer-by.	1,415m ²
Public Square Neighbourhood Centre	This space will feature a raised lawn which could be used as an event space and public art feature within a hard landscaped plaza.	1,130 m ²
Sub-total	16,207m²/16% residential site area <i>This figure does not include incidental green space.</i>	

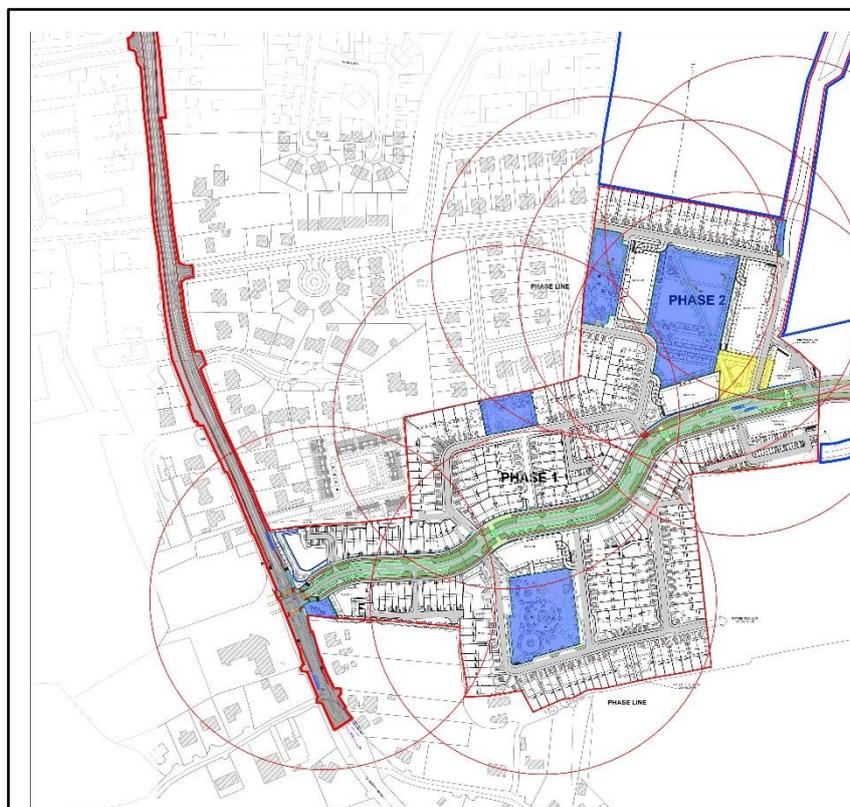


Figure 8: Walkability Plan with 150metre radius imposed on site layout. See also Park Hood Drawing 6473-L-308 enclosed with the planning application

2.4 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

A detailed schedule of internal floor areas is provided as part of this planning application and attached at Appendix A of this statement. This schedule demonstrates compliance with design quality safeguards and Section 28 Guidance. High quality materials and finishes are detailed in the architects design statement to ensure an aesthetically pleasing environment and reduce maintenance for future occupants. The use of SUDS techniques and compliance with Part L help ensure the development takes account of climate change.

2.5 DAYLIGHT, SUNLIGHT AND OVERSHADOWING

The proposed development seeks to maximise access to daylight and sunlight to ensure a high level of residential amenity. This is achieved through orientation of dwellings mainly on an east west access with no single aspect north facing dwellings and ensuring adequate separation distances are achieved. The proposed layout minimises overshadowing and loss of light to existing residents and ensures adequate levels of sunlight reach open space areas.

An assessment of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing was undertaken by IES and is submitted with this planning application under separate cover. The result of this study are summarised as follows-

SHADOW ANALYSIS

The Shadow analysis shows different shadows being cast from the existing and proposed schemes at particular periods throughout the year. Overall the impact of overshadowing would be classed as a negligible adverse impact given the following.

Clonminch Wood - Minor additional shading visible from the proposed development on these residential properties during March and June at 8am to a select few properties and with minimal overshadowing during December to some of the properties. It should also be noted that there is extensive tree coverage between the proposed site and these existing properties and as such during the winter months the shadows cast will be from said trees and not the proposed development. There is no noted overshadowing evident in at any other period.

Limefield - Minimal overshadowing during December to one property (Gayfield House). No additional shading visible from the proposed development on the other existing residential properties (4-7 Limefield) during the months of March, June and December.

Oaklee Sheltered Housing - Minimal additional shading is noted in the early mornings of March and December. No additional shading is visible from the proposed development on the existing properties at any other period.

Clonmimch Road - No additional shading visible from the proposed development on these existing residential properties during the months of March, June and December.

SUNLIGHT TO EXISTING AMENITY SPACES

As mentioned in Section 3.3.17 of BRE's Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight, for a space to appear adequately sunlit throughout the year, at least 50% of the garden or amenity area should receive at least 2 hours of sunlight on the 21st of March.

All of the private existing amenity areas tested out with the development site would continue to be quality spaces in terms of sunlight received exceeding BRE recommendations. The proposed development would have a negligible adverse impact to these existing gardens.

SUNLIGHT TO PROPOSED AMENITY SPACES

On the 21st of March, the proposed amenity spaces provide across the development site for the apartments would receive at least 2 hours of sunlight across 68% of their area, exceeding BRE recommendations.

DAYLIGHT ANALYSIS OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

The Vertical Sky Component for 100% (255 of 257) of the points tested have a value greater than 27% or not less than 0.8 times their former value (that of the Existing Situation), exceeding the BRE recommendations. The points that are below the recommendations are already very low in the existing situation and are as a consequence of the canopy on the existing dwelling and the close proximity to the neighbouring dwelling that is part of the same development.

Given the comments above there would be a minor adverse effect to these proposed neighbouring dwellings with an overall negligible adverse impact from the development as a whole.

ANNUAL PROBABLE SUNLIGHT HOURS

The majority of the main living room windows of the existing dwellings neighbouring the proposed development needn't be included in the APSH assessment as they fall out with the criterion as set out in the BRE guidelines.

The results of the APSH for the dwellings situated in the neighbouring Part 8 development, in particular numbers 7-12 Oaklee, were carried out due to their initial VSC results. The results of the PASH for these properties all lie within 0.8 times their former value, that of the existing or receive more than 25% annual and 5% winter sunlight, with the exception of two windows (9 & 10). Although this is true for these two windows, the results are just outside the recommendations and the existing situation does not meet the criterion. From observations of the neighbouring development the results can be attributed to the overhang in place on the neighbouring development building and the close proximity to another neighbouring property within the same development.

AVERAGE DAYLIGHT FACTORS

Across the proposed development, 93% of the tested rooms are achieving ADF values above the BRE and BS 8206-2:2008 guidelines when Living/Kitchen/Dining spaces are assessed as whole rooms against a 2% ADF target.

Furthermore, 99% of the tested rooms are achieving ADF values above the BRE and BS 8206-2:2008 guidelines when Living/Kitchen/Dining spaces are assessed as whole rooms against a 1.5% ADF target.

It should be noted when the living areas alone are assessed for these spaces that fall below recommended levels (x3) the results are 2.06%,2.03%,2.13% respectively.

2.6 ACCESS TO NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

While it is proposed to develop the application site in two phases, the provision of the Neighbourhood Centre buildings is not restricted by the phasing sequence of the Core Strategy and can be provided at any stage of the development. It is likely that a critical mass would be needed to support such services and facilities and therefore it is provisionally proposed to provide them as part of construction phases 3 and four when the higher density development is provided and the neighbourhood is finalised.

Building F located at the north east corner of Clonminch Square fronts onto the Link Street and contains a local shop at ground floor level (56sq.m). Neighbourhood Centre building 1 (1,274sq.m) is located to the north of the Link Street and is triangular in shape to address the junction. This three storey building is proposed as a business hub with three shops at ground floor level. Neighbourhood Centre building 2 (1,733sq.m) is located to the south of the link street. This three storey building is proposed to have shops at ground floor level to ensure activity on the link street while upper floors would provide a medical centre with consultation rooms, offices and gym. Bus stops are proposed on the Link Street in proximity to the neighbourhood centre buildings. This area marks the start of what will be the neighbourhood centre of the Eastern Node.

2.7 DMURS

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets seeks to put well-designed streets at the heart of sustainable communities (para. 1.1 DMURS). It prioritises pedestrians and cyclists without unduly compromising vehicle movement. The network of streets proposed uses building height and form to orientate people by providing focal points and landmarks as well as key open spaces. Emphasis is placed on the quality of the pedestrian and cyclist environment with a high quality link street connecting local roads across the site. The use of in-curtilage and off street parking reduces the visual dominance of the car and filtered permeability means pedestrians/cyclists have the shortest distances to travel.

In keeping with the principles of DMURS and to encourage a move towards more sustainable modes of transport, the proposed development includes the provision of high quality cycle tracks from south of the application site entrance to the town centre of Tullamore. This will not only benefit future occupants but will enhance the environment of existing residents. Bus stops are provided at the site entrance that could facilitate the existing bus services along Clonminch Road, while proposed bus stops within the application site in proximity to the neighbourhood centre and reserved school site offer the potential for future expansion of services to the new community.

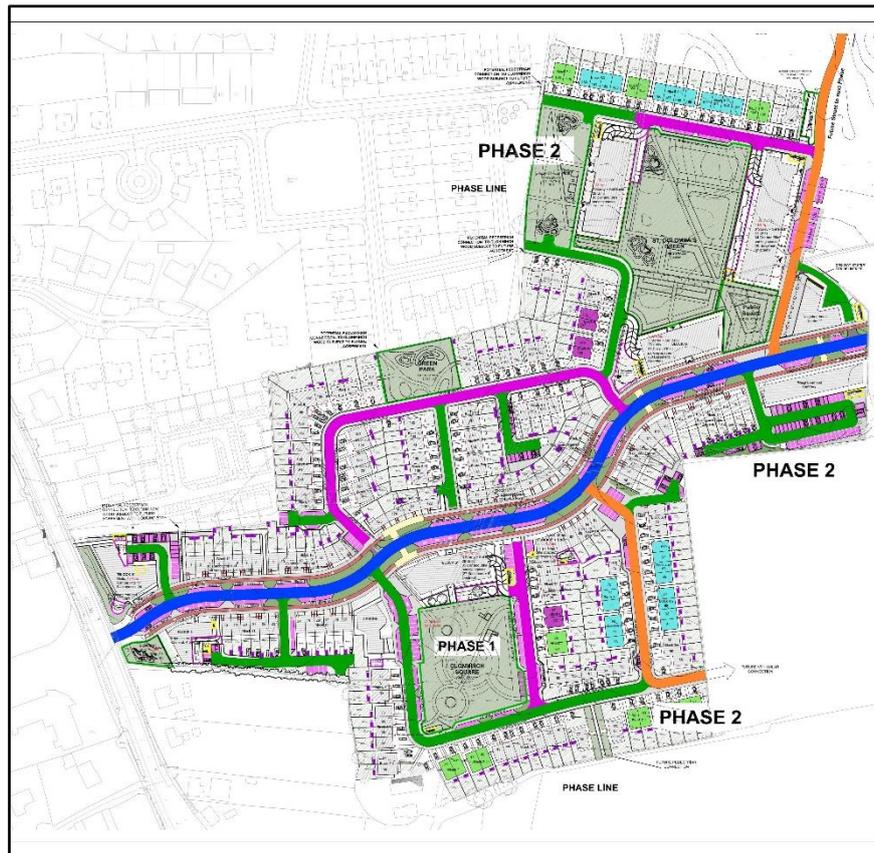


Figure 9: Road Hierarchy – Please refer to DBFL Drawing

2.8 VISUAL IMPACT

Park Hood Landscape Architects have undertaken a landscape and visual impact assessment as part of the EIAR provided under separate cover which is accompanied by verified photomontages. In landscape terms, the proposed development will result in a major change from fields to townscape and parklands but this is not seen as negative. From the Clonminch Road the alterations to the landscape will result in changes to local sense of place but development mostly screened from these areas. As distance from the application site increases, the landscape effects become low to negligible.

The potential visual effects as summarised by Table 14.10 of the LVIA in the context of 8no. representative viewpoints. Views closest to the site are shown in viewpoint 3, 4 and 5 as reproduced below.



Figure 10: Viewpoint 3 - R443 Road to south-west of Application Site on approach to Tullamore

This view shows the proposed development from the R443 which is the main road into Tullamore Town centre from the south. Buildings proposed are set back from the road allowing generous landscaping to be introduced including 20no. trees to the roadside setting. Views into the site are limited and the two and three storey apartment buildings assimilate well into this new urbanised landscape.



Figure 11: Viewpoint 4- R443 Road to west of Application Site travelling south towards Clonminch Roundabout

This view shows the proposed development from the R443 but in the opposite direction to View 3 from the north of the site entrance. Single storey housing fronts the R443 in this location but the proposed three storey elements do not look out of place and is set back within the landscaping proposed and at distance from neighbouring properties.



Figure 12: Viewpoint 5 - View from open space within the Clonminch Wood housing estate in the Gayfield townland

This view looks into the application site from Clonminch Woods the existing housing development that is located on the north western site boundary. Due to the existing mature landscaping in Clonminch Wood and the distance to Block D, the only visible elements of the proposal are two storey houses which will be located on Clonminch Close. Green Park West has been design so that it may be knitted together with the public open space in the foreground of this image should the estate be taken in charge and Offaly County Council agreeable to this. Pedestrian/cycle links are also provided for but not proposed as part of the development.

2.9 BUILDING LIFECYCLE REPORT AND QUALITY OF DESIGN

A building lifecycle report is submitted under separate cover as required by the Section 28 Guidelines Design Standards for Apartments (2020) (para. 6.13) which includes an assessment of long term running and maintenance costs as they would apply on a per residential unit basis. This report considers what measures have been specifically considered by the proposer to effectively manage and reduce costs for the benefit of residents. The long term running and maintenance costs have also been considered in the design of the housing proposed. As detailed in the Architectural Design Statement robust materials are chosen on the basis that they will need no or minimal maintenance. Heating systems fitted will all be compliant with the latest building regulations. A landscape management and maintenance plan is also provided under separate cover to ensure appropriate and high standard for maintenance and management of landscape elements across the site.