



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

# Architectural Design Statement

For

**Construction of 20no. Apartments & 20 no. Semi-detached dwellings (Total 40no. units) complete with new vehicular entrance from the L-2051-1, onsite parking area, connection to existing services & all associated site development works at Ballyhasky, Newtowncunningham, Co. Donegal.**

**Project Ref HCI 0314**

**Prepared by:**

**Housing Capital**

**Three Rivers Centre, Lifford, Co Donegal**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of Report

The Architectural Design Statement, prepared by Donegal County Council, supports the Part 8 application for the development of 40no. Social Housing Units and all associated site developments works at Ballyhasky, Newtowncunningham, Co. Donegal. This report addressed the criteria as set out in the Urban Design Manual, a best practice guide, companion document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement guidelines.

### 1.2 Outline Description of Brief

The site at Ballyhasky, Newtowncunningham, Co. Donegal is owned by Donegal County Council and is approximately 1.45 hectares in size. The proposed social housing development is in direct response to the current housing need in Newtowncunningham, Co. Donegal.



**Figure 01.** Aerial View of the proposed site showing entirety of site outlined in red.

### 1.3 Proposal Accommodation and Standards

The proposal provides for 40no. social housing units, consisting of 4no. 1 bed apartments, 16no. 2 bed apartments, 11no. 2 bed houses, 7no. 3 bed houses, 1no. 4 bed house and 1no. 5 bed house. A breakdown of the types is provided in the table below:

Schedule of Accommodation (based on current Housing Need)		
1-Bedroom Apartment	4	10%
2-Bedroom Apartment	16	40%
2-Bed House	11	27.5%
3-Bed House	7	17.5%
4-Bed House	1	2.5%
5-Bed House	1	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 01.** Schedule of Accommodation.

The proposed scheme has been developed having regard to the following policy and guidance documents:

- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities 2007
- Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide 2009
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement guidelines
- Sustainable Urban Housing - Design Standards for New Apartments
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)
- County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030 (CDP)

## 2. Site Assessment

### 2.1 Location

The site is located between two existing housing estates Meadowfield Manor and Hawthorn Hill. It is within the 50kph speed limit on the local road L-2051-1. The site boundary along the L-2051-1 contains an existing pedestrian footpath along the road – the boundary along the local road is defined by a 1.2m high post and barbed wire fence. A number of larger shrub trees exist along this boundary line.

The western and eastern boundaries are defined by timber fences and a section of block walling. The southern boundary is defined by a post and wire fence running along the agricultural land.

#### General Site Description and Constraints

The site received planning permission in 2019 prior to being owned by Donegal County Council. It can be regarded as a brownfield site as it has a number of foundations and

house footings from a previous incomplete development. The site is a mixture of partially built houses, scrub and field. It is surrounded by residential developments to the north, east and west and agricultural land to the south. The area is served by 1 no. primary school, a primary care centre, churches, a credit union, shop and a garda station all located nearby. A large petrol station containing a post office and restaurant/café is within walking distance. There are existing bus stops nearby.

ITM co-ordinates of the site are as follows: X:631801 Y:916722

### **Proximity to Existing Amenities**

The location of the site in proximity to essential facilities and amenities is as follows:

- Primary Schools: one primary school located 920m from the site.
- Pharmacy: The nearest pharmacy is 150m from the site.
- Convenience shop: The nearest convenience shop is 170m from the site.
- There is a petrol station, a larger shop, café and post office 920m from the site.
- Town Centre/ Shopping: The nearest convenience store and pharmacy are located within 30m and 500m respectively from the site.
- Medical Centres: Newtowncunningham Primary Care Centre is located 800m from the site.
- Places of Worship: There are three places of worship of different denominations within 400m, 420m and 820m of the site.

### **Current Social Housing Need**

There are currently a total of 41 approved applicants for social housing in Newtowncunningham. The area manager of the Municipal District of Inishowen, has provided the following breakdown of approved applicants in the Newtowncunningham area, including their approved accommodation type:

<b>Accommodation Type Approved</b>	<b>No. of applicants</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
<b>One and Two Bed</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Three Bed</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Four Bed</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Five bed</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of social housing demand in the Newtowncunningham area is for two and three bedroom properties. In response to this, it is considered appropriate that the development predominantly consists of two-bedroom apartments, and two and three bedroom units. The Council is satisfied that the proposed development is in keeping with the current need and the trend of need in the area.

**Density**

The proposed development will achieve 28 units per hectare of the overall developable area of the site (1.45 hectares). The site at Ballyhasky is considered an appropriate location for this density based on the following:

- The location of the site and its convenience and proximity to amenities.
- The site is within walking distance to public transport and is strategically well placed along the local road L-2051-1.
- The development is an efficient use of land and has been designed to respond to the social housing need in the Newtowncunningham Area.

**Public Open Space**

Provision has been made for a minimum of 16% public open space within the development with the design strategy to provide communal amenity space.

**Roads and Transport**

Access into the proposed development will be via the existing L-2051-1 serving Newtowncunningham to both Letterkenny and Killea. The road within the development is in compliance with DMURS. The design incorporates traffic calming measures, pedestrian crossings and intervisibility has been considered within the scheme.

**2.2 Site Description and Characteristics**

As outlined in Section 1.2 above, the developable area of the site is 1.45 hectares. The site for the proposed housing development is located between two existing estates. Hawthorn Hill is made up of 54 no. houses and Meadowfield Manor is made up of 28 no. houses. Another private estate – Cornfield Lane consisting of 40no. houses is located across the road from the proposed site.

The site boundaries are currently a mixture of native mature hedging, stock fencing, timber fencing & concrete block walling.

**2.3 Site Constraints****Topography**

The digital land survey received shows a fall of 6m over the length of the site which is 230m long. It is higher to the southern edge and lower where it meets the road at the northern end. Two mounds of topsoil are present from previous earthworks that took place. There will be very little need for extensive earthworks or excavation as the positioning of the proposed new houses have been laid out in reaction to the existing levels – and the existing fall will be utilised with regards stormwater and foul water.

There is no existing watercourse or laying water present – however an existing storm drain to the north of the site will be utilised.

The proposed green space to the west of the development will allow for suitable levels along the western boundary. It is proposed for a soft boundary line between the proposed development and meadowfield manor. Existing trees at the boundary are to be maintained where possible / replaced.

The site did not require a flood risk assessment.

### **3. Development Strategy**

The vision for the development is to provide a high-quality residential community that responds to the existing built environment, but that has its own character. The development has been designed to be sympathetic to the surrounding context. The site is appropriate for a residential development of this scale and is well situated to allow for connectivity to Newtowncunningham and local amenities. The development has been designed to provide sustainable, well designed, low energy, low maintenance social homes, which will be set within a high quality landscaped public realm.

#### **3.1 Developed Proposal**

The presented layout will deliver 40 units on the site. A full breakdown of the unit types and mix is as described above in Section 2.4 The scheme has been designed to achieve 28 units per hectare which is in line with the development plan and the guidelines for sustainable and compact settlements . This density is appropriate to the surrounding topography, surrounding properties and context, existing landscape and for new connections for the site.

The proposal is in line with the requirements of DMURS. Traffic calming measures, along with pedestrian crossing points are proposed and have been introduced to prioritize pedestrian accessibility throughout the development. The internal access roads within the site have been minimized to reduce the impact on the open green space provided for the residents.

All parking has been provided in-street and located to ensure that it is overlooked by residents. Parking is divided into smaller groups and separated by trees to reduce the visual impact within the development.

The site is accessed via the existing local road to the north, with access to all dwellings and parking provided via the internal access road. Permeability through the site will be achieved via pedestrian links breaking through the middle of the site.

The boundary to the south of the development, which adjoins agricultural land will be fenced and planted. The boundaries to the east and west facing onto private housing estates will the planted and fenced.

Public Open Space – The total open space provision is minimum 16% of the area of the site, in accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan. The main public green space engulfs the entirety on the west border of the site – it is overlooked by all dwellings located on the eastern border. The green space on site has been located to achieve maximum natural daylight and is overlooked by the new dwellings to ensure that passive surveillance is achieved. This will also provide the residents with a sense of security and ownership of the public realm. An emphasis has been put on the orientation of the green space and of the houses themselves – the green space is accessible to all residents. The siting of the houses takes into consideration the siting of the existing houses within the private estates at both sides of the proposed site.

### **3.2 Inclusivity**

All apartments are designed to be in compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations and have level access to front entrances. The overall development has been designed in accordance with the Urban Design Manual. A minimum of 30% of the overall dwellings have been designed to be 'UD' - Universally Designed. The development has been designed in line with the 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes in Ireland'. Footpath gradients are gently sloped at 1:21 within the development.

The public open spaces have been designed to accommodate flexible recreational activities for social interaction and active play as well as quiet, calming accessible places which are inclusive for all ages and abilities. Pedestrian priority crossing points are provided into the public spaces.

### **3.3 Variety**

The mix of units provided consists of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom units to cater for the need within the Newtowncunningham area.

The character of the development is enhanced by the positioning of the green spaces and landscaping relative to the dwellings.

### **3.4 Efficiency and Density**

The layout of the development responds to the topography of the site and the existing levels to ensure that the impact on the existing landscape is minimized. The layout and building types allows for efficiency as well as optimizing density within the overall development.

The internal road provides access to all parking and dwelling. The visual impact will be reduced with the introduction of access routes at appropriate locations to improve pedestrian safety within the development.

### **3.5 Distinctiveness**

The development is designed to respond to the surrounding context with the inclusion of green spaces within the scheme. This design also takes advantage of the orientation of the site and maximizes natural daylight to the public spaces and dwellings while optimizing solar gains.

### **3.6 Layout**

The following traffic calming measures will have been included in the design to ensure that pedestrian priority is achieved:

- Adequate access arrangement for maneuvering has been provided.
- Signs, road markings, surface texture or other appropriate measures will be used to manage vehicle flow and speeds.
- The layout of the development and anticipated speed limit, along with the inclusion of raised tables with uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, should be conducive to ensure effective traffic control and calming measures along with the provision of a safe footpaths for pedestrian users and cyclists.

The layout creates active street frontage to the L-2051-1. Good active frontage has been provided to the open spaces to enhance passive surveillance and reduce the potential for anti-social behavior.

### **3.7 Public Realm**

Public open spaces have been located to ensure that they are easily accessible to all residents. They are overlooked by dwellings and in close proximity to dwellings to allowing for enhanced surveillance and a greater sense of security. The public spaces are designed to be inclusive. Tree planting will enhance the environment and make it more attractive and amenable to the public.

### **3.8 Adaptability**

Universally designed dwellings will provide the necessary access and sanitary facilities to deal with life changes from young families with children to older people with possible disabilities.

Early consideration has been given to the impact the proposed development will have on the environment and long-term sustainability and to maximize passive and active technologies to comply with NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) requirements and support the reduction of both Co2 emissions and fossil fuel energy.

Our approach is to maximize passive solar gain, build airtight dwellings with adequate ventilation and the use of renewable energy sources where practicable.



In turn, lower costs are expected for residents in terms of heating charges due to efficiencies which can be accrued over a period. This will assist and support affordable living.

A renewable energy system will provide a greener alternative compared with traditional systems such as boilers and deliver long term savings throughout the life cost of the buildings while providing a cleaner and more sustainable source of heat.

The renewable energy system will be determined having regard to such factors as efficiency, affordability, and environmental impact. For space and water heating this may result in the use of air source heat pumps. A feasibility assessment and a comparative analysis of various systems will be carried out to fully ascertain the most appropriate system for the development.

### **3.9 Privacy and Amenity**

The proposed development is designed to meet the standards as set out in the County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030, in respect of private open space in the form of balconies and to comply with the requirements of the Department of Housing. Distances between windows to the rear of properties will be maintained to avoid views into homes.

### **3.10 Parking**

Provision has been made for 59 off-curtilage parking spaces in total with adequate provision of 4no. accessible parking space for people with mobility issues and disabilities.

Particular care will be given to ensure that off-curtilage parking spaces are landscaped and detailed through greening and planting intermittently across the development.

### **3.11 Detailed Design**

The proposed landscaping and materials, scale and form of the proposed development have all been designed to enhance the existing built environment. The positioning of the landscapes green spaces relative to the dwellings facilities connectivity and linkages within the overall development.

The materials have been selected to complement and enhance the existing surrounding character and context.

The design of the dwellings and materials selected will also ensure that future maintenance of the properties is minimized.