



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

Architectural Design Statement

For

**Construction of 19no. Social Housing units and all associated site
development works at Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí
Doirí Beaga, Dún na nGall.
Project Ref HCG 0824**



Prepared by:

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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 19no. Social Housing Units and all associated site developments works at Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí, Doirí Beaga, Co. Dún na nGall. 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 project brief is to deliver a social housing development of high-quality residential accommodation in the form of houses and apartments across the site. The site is located at Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí, Doirí Beaga, Co. Dún na nGall on the site of the now demolished Errigal View Hotel. The developable area of the land provided is 0.7 hectares.

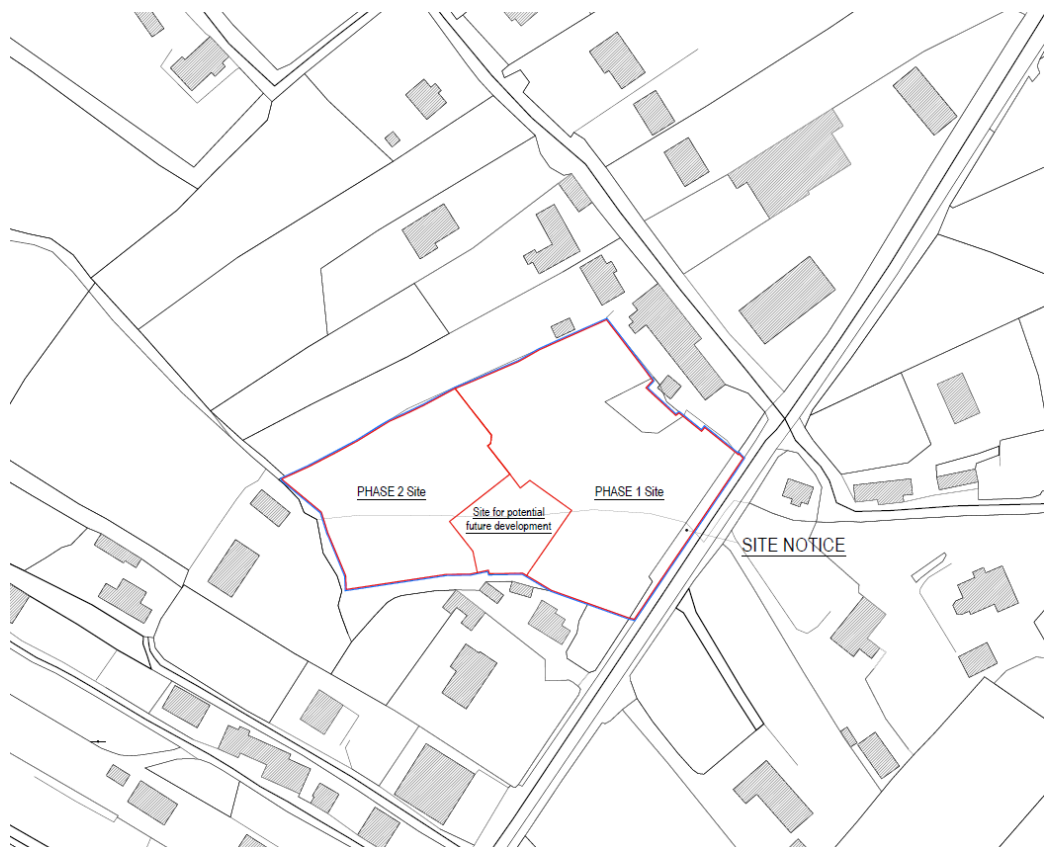


Figure 01. Phase 01 and 02 Site Boundaries outlined in red. DCC Sale Agreed land outlined in blue to be developed in Phase 2

Proposal Accommodation and Standards

The proposal provides new two-story, houses and apartments, comprising of 08no. Houses and 04no. Apartments in Phase 01. Phase 02 of the project can be developed once the site can connect into a mains sewerage network. The proposed on-site wastewater treatment plant required for phase 01 would be removed and this area of the site is then developed as Phase 02. A breakdown of the types of accommodation is provided in the table below:

Phase 01 Schedule of Accommodation (based on current Housing Need)		
1-Bedroom Apartment (2-person)	2No.	17%
2-Bedroom Apartment (3-person)	2No.	17%
2-Bedroom House (4-person)	4No.	33%
3-Bedroom House (5-Person)	3No.	25%
4-Bedroom House (7-person)	1No.	8%
Total	12No.	100%

Table 01. Phase 01 Schedule of Accommodation.

Phase 02 Schedule of Accommodation (based on current Housing Need)		
2-Bedroom Apartment (3-person)	4No.	57%
2-Bedroom House (4-Person)	3No.	43%
Total	7No.	100%

Table 02. Phase 02 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 a brownfield site, located within the townlands of Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí beside the Doirí Beaga ‘town centre’. The Errigal View Hotel was located on the site but was demolished. The area is well served with schools, places of worship, shops, medical centre and a post office, all located nearby. The nearest shop and petrol station is located to the east of the site. The access to the site is via the existing entrance to the Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí estate (Phase 1) off the R257 National Primary Road to Letterkenny.

2.2 Planning Context

The site is located within the ‘settlement boundary’ for Bunbeg-Derrybeg, adjoining the ‘Town Centre’ and within the ‘catchment area for the proposed wastewater treatment system’. (Refer to Figure 03. Map 21.14 Extract from County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030).

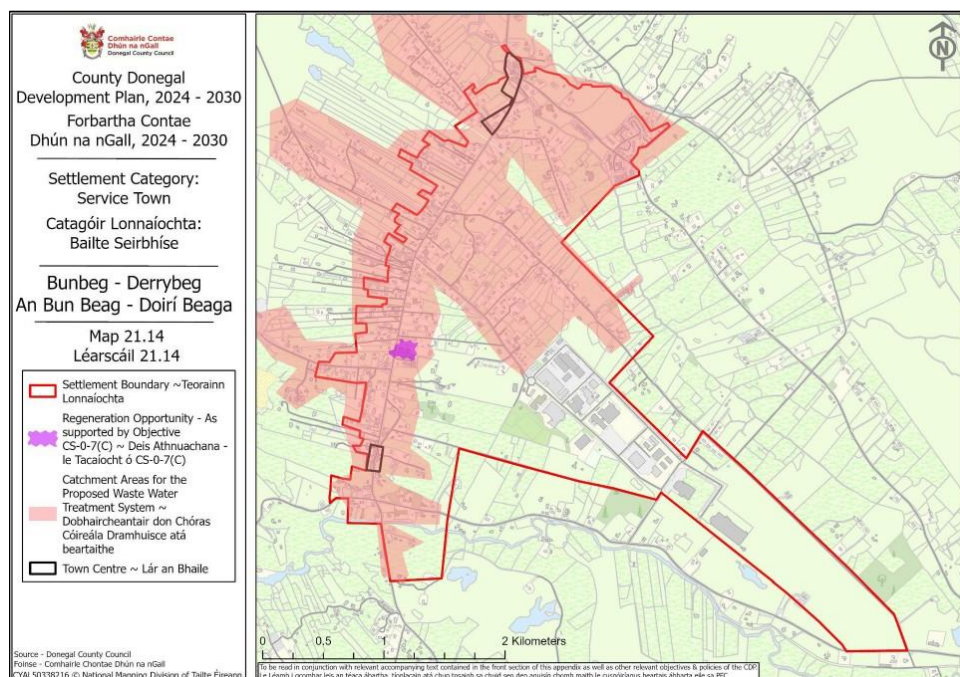


Figure 03. Map Extract – County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030

Density

The proposed development is 28units per hectare of the overall developable area of the site (0.43 hectares) for Phase 01 with 29units per hectare for Phase 02 area of the site (0.24 hectares). The site at Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí, Doirí Beaga is considered an appropriate location for this density based on the following:

- The location of the site and its convenience and proximity to Doirí Beaga ‘Town Centre’.
- The site is within walking distance to public transport and is strategically well placed along the corridor of the R257.
- The availability of a wide range of facilities and amenities – recreation, educational, commercial, retail within walking distance of the site.
- The development is an efficient use of land and has been designed to respond to the social housing need in Doirí Beaga.

Public Open Space

Provision has been made for 17% Public Open Space, which will provide green space for the proposed development at Phase 1, with an overall provision of 21% at the completion of Phase 1&2. This is in excess of the minimum of 15% open space required by Policy UB-P12:

Multiple residential developments shall, in general:

- a. On greenfield sites, include a minimum of 15% of the overall site area reserved as public amenity area;*
- b. In other cases, such as large infill sites or brown field sites include a minimum of 10% of the overall site area reserved as public amenity area; or*
- c. On lands characterised by a large private or institutional building/s set in substantial open lands, include a minimum of 20% of the overall site area reserved as public amenity area.*

Parking

In accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan the minimum requirement for car parking spaces for Phase 01 is 20no. 21no. have been provided within the Phase 01 development. This includes the provision of 2no. accessible parking spaces. The minimum requirement for Phase 1&2 is 31no. with a total of 32no. provided.

Roads and Transport

Access into the housing development will be provided via a new entrance to the Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí estate, off the R257, to the east of the site. The roads within the development have been designed in consultation with Donegal County Council Road Design Office and in compliance with DMURS. A Road Safety Audit has been carried out on the proposal and the outcomes have been incorporated into the design of the scheme. The design incorporates traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossing points throughout the development.

2.3 Site Description and Characteristics

As outlined in Section 1.2 above, the developable area of the site is 0.76 hectares. The site for the proposed housing development adjoins the Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí housing estate to the northeast and greenfields to the northwest, southwest and southeast. Adjacent to the R257 are a number of residential developments, including Lennon View, The Racecourse, Rosemount and Hillview, as well as a number of privately owned dwellings.

The site boundaries consist of hedgerows and a block wall to the existing Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí estate. The site slopes from northeast to southwest.

2.4 Site Constraints

Topography

The scheme has been designed to allow for falls across the site to the waste water treatment plant. Existing trees to the boundaries are to be maintained where possible / replaced.

Maintenance of boundaries– The rear gardens to the new houses and apartments to the northeast of the site have been designed to allow for access for future maintenance of the existing boundary wall.

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 the village centre 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 19 units on the site. A full breakdown of the unit types and mix is as described above in Section 1.3. The scheme has been designed to achieve 28 units per hectares, which has been determined to be optimum for the site, taking into consideration the existing topography, surrounding properties and context, existing landscape.

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 on-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.

Access and Connectivity – The site is accessed via the existing road to the northeast, with access to all dwellings and parking provided via the internal access road. Permeability through the site will be achieved via pedestrian links.

Public Open Space – The total open space provision is 21% of the area of the site, in accordance with the County Donegal Development Plan and includes hard surfaces for play areas, which are accessible. The green spaces on site have been located to achieve maximum natural daylight and are 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.

Landscape strategy – The position of the open space has been carefully considered within the overall development. The locations of footpaths and pedestrian access to the site, play areas and hedges and planting have been designed to ensure the integration of the development into the existing context and landscape.

Boundary treatment – The boundary to the southwest and southeast of the development, will be fenced for security and planted. The existing rendered wall to the northeast of the site will be maintained/ repaired and replaced where necessary.

3.2 Inclusivity

All houses 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. 37% of the 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.

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 to meet the housing need consists of 1,2,3 and 4 bedroom houses and apartments to cater for a variety of people and households. This includes 2-bedroom units at ground and first floor which are designed to be UD.

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 allows for efficiency as well as optimizing density, as does the construction of two storey apartment blocks within the overall development. The dwellings are located in concentrated areas, where the site is relatively flat, minimizing the requirement for cut and fill across the site.

The internal road provides access to all parking and dwellings, minimizing the requirement for turning heads and additional access roads. The visual impact will be reduced with the planting of trees at appropriate locations to separate the amount of hard surfaces 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. The layout has also been designed to provide privacy to the existing and new rear gardens, by aligning the dwellings with the existing boundary to Machaire Gathlán/Ard na gCeapairí (Phase 1) and along the south eastern boundary of the site. 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 layout ensures that the public realm within the development is designed as a place where people are prioritized over vehicles.

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 at corners, with side entrances and windows on exposed gables. Good active frontage has been provided to the open spaces to enhance activity and reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour.

3.7 Public Realm

Public open spaces throughout the site 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. Children’s play opportunities and exercise opportunities for all are provided. 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

There are a variety of different dwelling types and apartments within the development. 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 rear gardens and balconies and to comply with the requirements of the Department of Housing. All houses will be provided with private gardens to the rear of each dwelling with walls or fencing to the boundaries to ensure that privacy and security is maintained. Distances between windows to the rear of properties will be maintained to avoid views into homes.

3.10 Parking

Provision has been made for 32no. off-curtilage parking spaces in total with adequate provision of 3no. accessible parking spaces for people with mobility issues and disabilities.

Car parking provision is considered appropriate having regard to the following:

- The location of the site and its convenience and proximity to Doirí Beaga village centre.
- The site is in walking distance to public transport facilities.
- Availability of a wide range of facilities and amenities within walking distance of the site.

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 dwellings will be constructed with a mix of rendered walls, blue/black slate to the pitched roofs and will incorporate brick at the entrances, which are set back from the fronts of the dwellings, providing a distinctive character and individuality to the overall development. This change of material at the entrances will also provide a sense of hierarchy within the site and will reduce the visual impact of the overall blocks by defining individual dwelling entrances.

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