

Kilkenny County Council

Application for approval for Local Authority Development under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act

Housing at Ladywell / Newtown, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Project Justification

- Rebuilding Ireland, the Government strategy to deal with the national housing shortage, contains five pillars - two of which - Pillar 2 'Accelerate Social Housing' and Pillar 3 'Build More Homes' give context to this development.
- This proposed project has been approved for funding by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government under Rebuilding Ireland, specifically the 'Social Housing Investment Programme' (SHIP)
- The social housing need in Thomastown Kilkenny is demonstrated by the following extract from the approved social housing list as of 30th June 2020:-

Approved housing applicants - first preference location is Thomastown

| House Type / No of Bedrooms | No of Approved Applicants / Families |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 37 |
| 2 | 29 |
| 3 | 14 |
| 4 | 3 |
| | 83 |

Accordingly, the scheme was designed with a variation of housing unit sizes and types in order to meet the types required by the families and individuals seeking homes. The intention is that the scheme would contain people at all stages of life with a variety of needs i.e. families with young children, families with older children, older persons, single persons – so that a sustainable intergenerational community will be formed, with the support of Kilkenny County Council.

- Kilkenny County Council in the **Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disability 2016 – 2020** has committed to providing newly built accessible accommodation within their schemes. A proportion of housing applicants in Thomastown have a physical disability or exceptional medical needs and requires accommodation suitable to their needs. Other applicants, as outlined, are aged over 60, many of whom will require suitable ground floor accommodation to ensure their quality of life in their homes into the future. For this reason accessible units are being provided in this scheme.

- It would be an aspiration of Kilkenny County Council Housing section to encourage existing tenants in unsuitable or oversized accommodation to relocate to units in this proposed scheme – particularly the accessible single storey apartments. This downsizing approach would allow for family homes in existing communities to be freed up to house other families.
 - The site is located close to all amenities, within walking distance of Thomastown Town Centre. There are schools, medical centres, churches, sports facilities and shops all within a 10 to 15minute walking distance of the site.
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2. PLANNING

a. Relevant Development Plan Provisions

- The site falls within a zoning of “New Residential” in the Thomastown Local Area Plan 2019, with an objective to allow for new residential development and other services incidental to residential development.

The permissible uses of Phase 1 Residential as defined under Appendix A Existing / New Residential are : *Bed and Breakfast/Guesthouse, Childcare Facilities (crèche/nursery), Club house and associated facilities, **Open Space**, Playground, **Residential (Apartments)**, **Residential (Houses)**, Residential (Extensions, Granny Flat, etc), Retirement Home*

It is clear that this proposal for housing falls within the permissible uses of the zoning

- Lands to the north of the site are zoned ‘Amenity / Green Links / Biodiversity’, the objective would be to ‘*allow for green links and biodiversity conservation and to preserve, provide and improve recreational open space*’. The presences of a future park close to the proposed scheme would undoubtedly enhance the quality of life for future residents.

b. Relevant Planning History

- Planning permission was granted by Kilkenny County Council to GMT Construction for the development of 13 units on the part of the site [0.3 ha] proposed for the apartment building accessing on to Kilkenny Road in 2003.

- The 2003 permission was subject to an appeal to An Bord Pleanála, and the appeal was not upheld. An Bord Pleanála Reference Number: PL 10.208653 refers.
- Note that the decision refused permission by An Bord Pleanála was on a 0.3 ha site (smaller than this site) with a density of 43 units/hectare. This is a density above that which is currently considered at the high end of the density scale for building in Thomastown LAP (Appendix A) which recommends a density of 20-40 units/hectare. The density of the proposed development is 26 units / hectare.

c. Relevant National Regional and Local Policies

- It is a clear objective of the **National Planning Framework** to encourage the sustainable compact growth of cities, towns and villages which will create less car dependent communities.

This proposal seeks to develop a centrally located, publicly owned site and achieves an effective density to create a new community close to Kilkenny City Centre.