

Proposed Mixed-Use Development at Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Architectural
Design Statement

Prepared by:
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DGA Ref.: 23072

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ARCHITECTS



Location: **Blessington, Co. Wicklow**

Prepared by Deady Gahan Architects



**Proposed Mixed-Use
Development at
Blessington, Co. Wicklow**

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SUMMARY

Site Area (Red Boundary)	6.05ha
Developable area <i>(site area minus the upgrade works on the public road and the open space zoned lands)</i>	5.35ha
Total no. of Units	269no (233no standard units & 36no Later Living units) & 3no commercial spaces
Density (of developable area)	50.3 units/ha
Total Building Gross Internal Floor Area	23,219.1 sq.m. (22,820.1 sq.m. residential & 399.0 sq.m. commercial)
Ground Floor Building Gross Area <i>(including ex. walls)</i>	12,687.1 sq.m.
Site Coverage (Site Area)	20.9%
Site Coverage (Developable Area)	23.7%
Plot Ratio (Site Area)	
Gross Internal Floor Area	0.384
Plot Ratio (Developable Area)	
Gross Internal Floor Area	0.434
<i>* Please refer to TOC's planning report for information on the Compact Growth density calculation for the site</i>	

Site Statistics



Proposed Mixed-Use
Development at
Blessington, Co. Wicklow

00 INTRODUCTION PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This document has been prepared by Deady Gahan Architects on behalf of Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd. in support of a proposed mixed-use development at Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The design of the proposed scheme has been directly informed by the relevant planning policy documents at national and local levels as well as the recently published guidelines for planning authorities, sustainable residential development and compact settlements. The proposed development has been designed to provide high quality housing units that will contribute positively to Blessington and deliver much needed housing to the town.



ilsa rutgers landscape architecture



The proposed site layout focuses on the creation of distinctive streetscapes with different widths and parking formations that helps generate a highly efficient scheme and assists our vision of placemaking.

To ensure the visual integration of the proposed development into the existing context, the scheme promotes the protection and enhancement of areas of high biodiversity value, including existing hedgerows and trees along the site's northern boundary. The proposed scheme has been carefully considered and the layout has been organised into specific areas that are defined by building form and material changes. Double fronted, feature corner units have been used throughout the site and are strategically placed to

create node points within the scheme and provide orientation cues for logical wayfinding.

We consider the proposed scheme will contribute positively to the sustainable growth of Blessington into the near future.

A Design Team with extensive experience in housing schemes has been appointed by the applicant to prepare the planning application including Deady Gahan Architects, DBFL (Civil & Structural), Ilsa Rutgers Landscape Architecture (Landscaping) and Thornton O'Connor (Planning Consultancy) to ensure a high quality design and a robust and comprehensive planning application submission is made.



Panoramic view of the Liffey river from Blessington Bridge.

00 INTRODUCTION

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Marshall Yards Development Company Ltd intend to apply for permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development at this site of 6.05 hectares at Blessington Demesne, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The site is generally bound: to the north-east by undeveloped land and Oak Drive; to the south-east by Saint Mary's Senior National School, Cocoon Childcare and Newtown Centre (across a local street); to the south-west by Downshire Park (across a local street); and to the north-west by the Blessington Inner Relief Road.

The proposed development principally comprises the construction of a mixed-use development with a gross floor area of 23,219.1 square metres and ranging in height from 1 No. to 5 No. storeys that includes: 233 No. residential dwellings (24 No. 1-bed, 103 No. 2-bed, 94 No. 3-bed and 12 No. 4-bed), of which 185 No. are houses (103 No. 2-bed, 70 No. 3-bed and 12 No. 4-bed) and 48 No. are apartments/duplexes (24 No. 1-bed and 24 No. 3-bed); 36 No. 'later living' dwellings (12 No. 1-bed and 24 No. 2-bed), of which 12 No. are houses (all 2-bed) and 24 No. are apartments (12 No. 1-bed and 12 No. 2-bed); a medical centre (224 sq m); a pharmacy (115 sq m); and a café (60 sq m).

The development also comprises: 2 No. multi-modal entrances/exits with junctions at Blessington Inner Relief Road to the north-west and the local street to the south-west; a new pedestrian/cycle crossing to the south-east at the local street; upgrades to the Blessington Inner Relief Road roundabout to the west, including pedestrian/cycle crossings; new pedestrian/cycle crossing at Blessington Inner Relief Road to the north-west; 341 No. car parking space; cycle parking; hard and soft landscaping including public open space, communal amenity space and private amenity space (as gardens, balconies and terraces facing all directions); boundary treatments; 3 No. sub-stations; bin stores; public lighting; PV arrays atop all dwellings; PV array, lift overrun and plant atop the 5-storey mixed-use building; and all associated works above and below ground.



DEVELOPMENT UNIT EXAMPLES

01 SITE CONTEXT

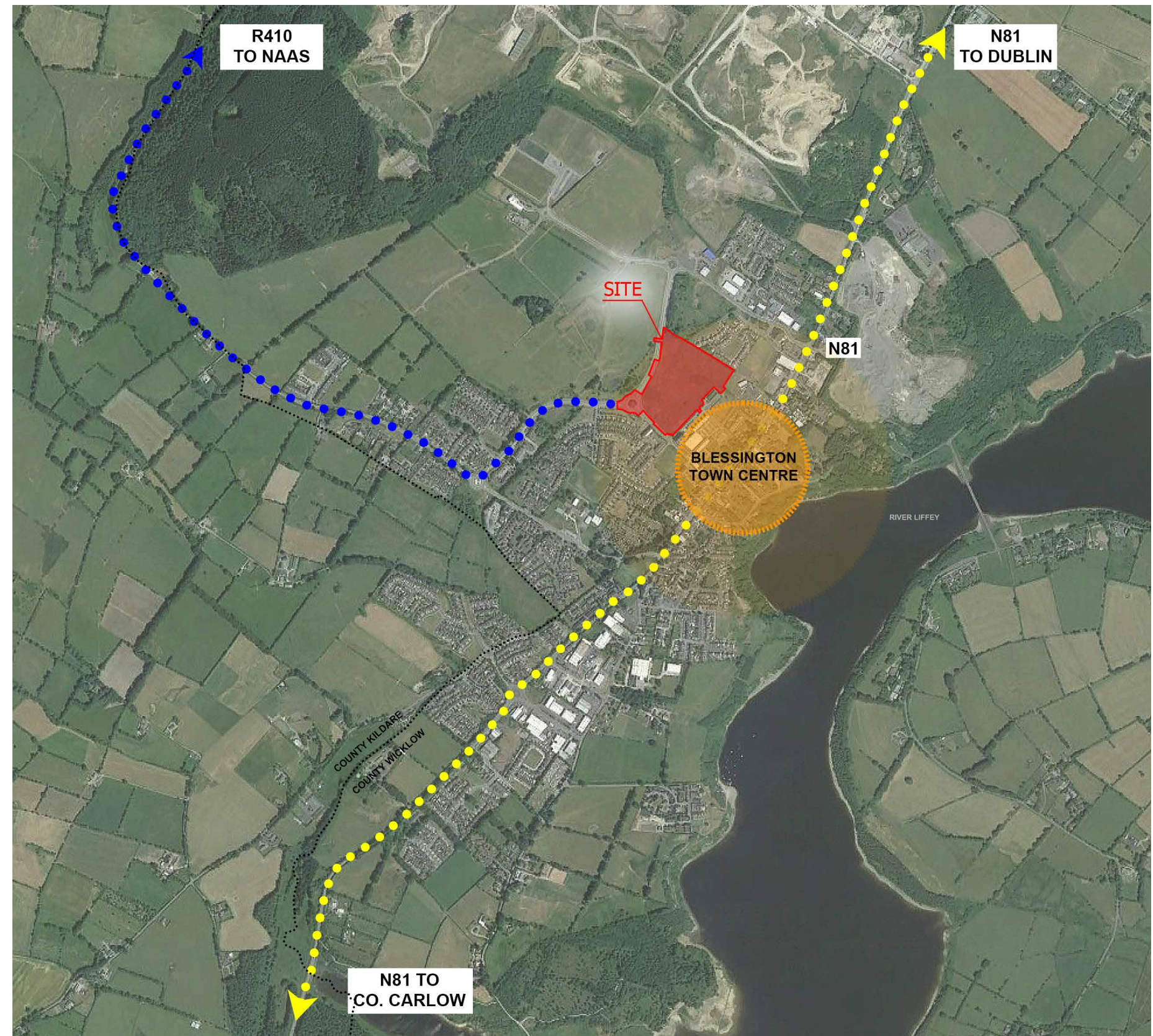
CONTEXT INFO

The site is situated in a prominent location approximately 300 metres North-West of the town centre of Blessington and approximately 50 kilometres South-West of Dublin City Centre.

The site is bounded to the West by the Blessington Inner Relief Road (BIRR or link road) which links the outskirts of Blessington.

The site is a short distance from the N81 which provides a connection to Dublin City Centre and to County Carlow, and the R410 which provides a connection to the town of Naas.

Our design approach is inspired by the distinctive character of the landscape and the existing features of the site and its vicinity. A strategic response to unique boundary conditions and the site characteristics, ensures the distinctiveness and connectivity of the proposed housing scheme. Features such as the existing trees/hedgerow and archaeological features have the potential to give this new development an unmistakable quality.



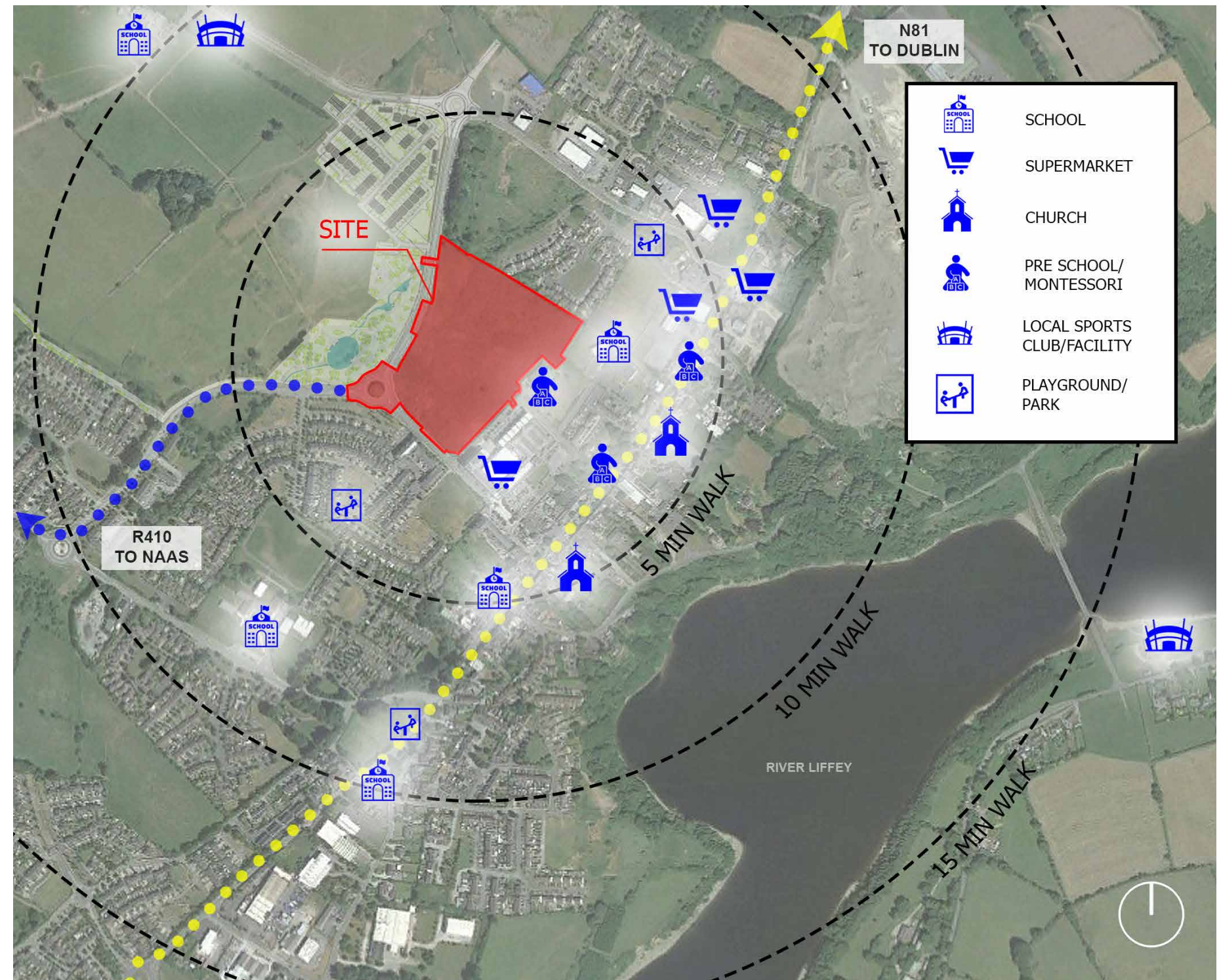
01 SITE CONTEXT

CONNECTIVITY + EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The site is located just west of Blessington main street and within walking distance of a wide range of local facilities including an adjacent crèche, a school and retail units.

Inclusivity and ease of movement through the scheme and the connections to the town of Blessington have been one of the central design principles of the development. A 3m combined cycle/ pedestrian route runs through the site and a series of footpath links have been provided along the boundaries of the scheme in order to ensure that the residents will have easy access to local amenities and cycle routes connecting into Blessington town centre.

Units without direct access to their rear gardens will be provided with secure bike storage, either located adjacent to their front entrance for the houses or in communal areas for the apartments on site. This focus on alternative modes of transport as a substitute to the car ensures that a sustainable development is created.



01 SITE CONTEXT

SURROUNDING ANALYSIS

A review of the surrounding local architectural context and of the landscape of the area has been carried out. This has influenced the final proposal which blends into its context while bringing a new identity and a recognisable character.

To the North East, the site is bounded by an existing residential development known as Oak Drive, to the East/South-East by a school, crèche, retail units, and beyond is the town centre.

The site boundary to the South West is formed by the link road and the North West by the BIRR (Blessington Inner Relief Road). These roads are flanked to the South West by Downshire Park, a residential development, and to the North West by lands where a residential scheme and park have been permitted.

The surrounding context is characterised mainly by medium density residential developments. The existing buildings are defined by a traditional character and the use of a variety of materials in the form of render and brick predominantly.



Image 1
Permitted development (Sorrel Wood). Image from Planning Website

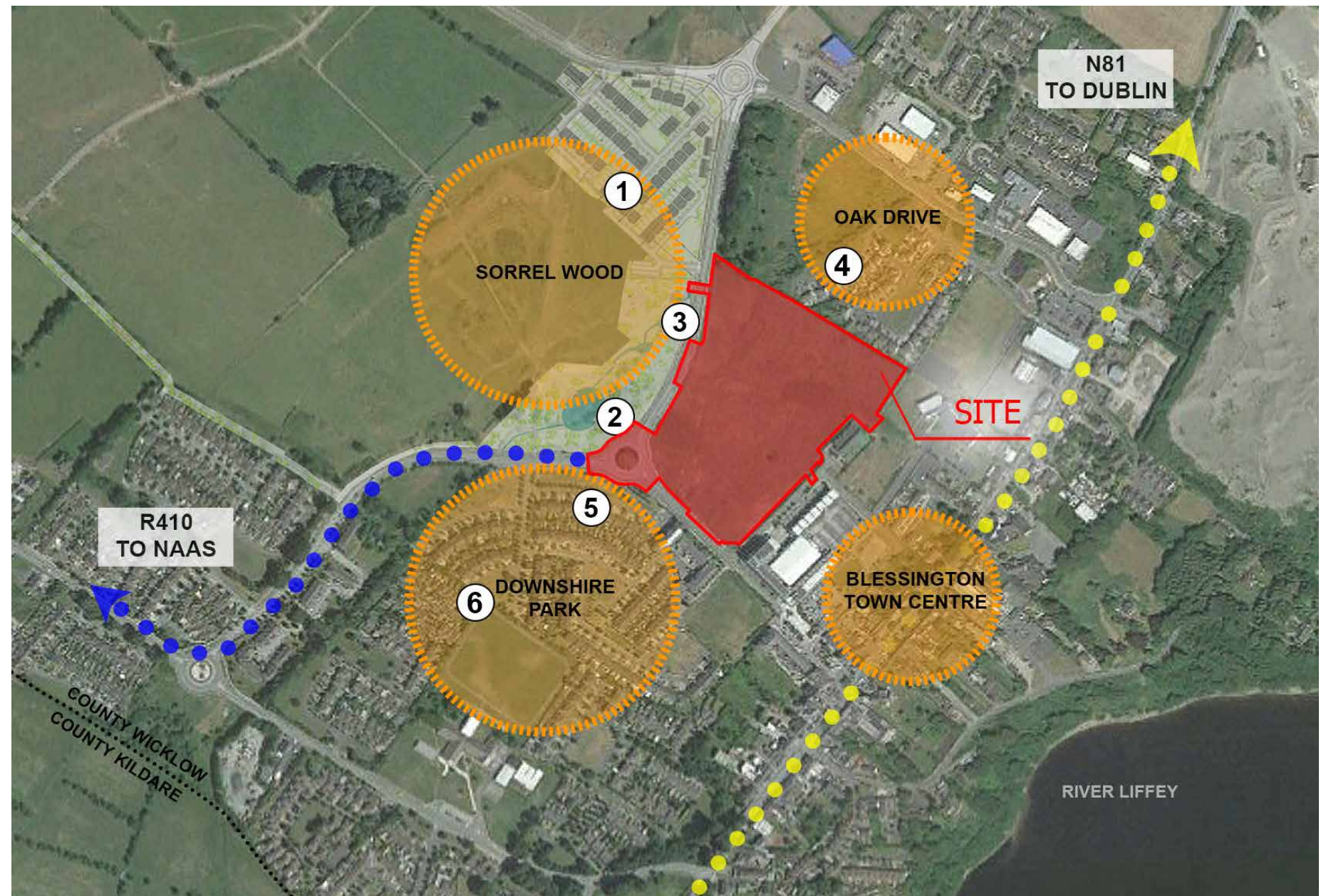


Image 2
View from western corner



Image 3
View from western side



Image 4
Oak Drive



Image 5
Downshire Park



Image 6
Downshire Park

01 SITE CONTEXT

SITE ANALYSIS



The development site, with an area of 6.05 ha, contains existing natural features in the form of vegetation/hedgerows along the northern boundary.

The existing topography of the site is relatively flat with a gentle slope across the site from east to west. A large section of the site's perimeter faces onto the Blessington Inner Relief Road along the north-western and south-western site boundaries. This presents an opportunity to create a new distinctive street frontage in these locations.

Archaeological features

There is a RMP monument on the site to be retained in the design and preserved in-situ.

It is described in the Record of Monuments and Places as:

- WI005-019 - Class: Barrow – unclassified. Circular mound with external annular ditch. No visible surface remains

There is also the site of a former archaeological feature located close to the western corner of the site:

- WI005-013 - Class: Habitation site. A circular mound, an 18thC/19thC landscape feature.

Even though this feature is no longer in place, we have respected the historical significance by forming an open space in this location.

A third monument (WI005-020) features on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland mapping, however, this monument no longer exists.



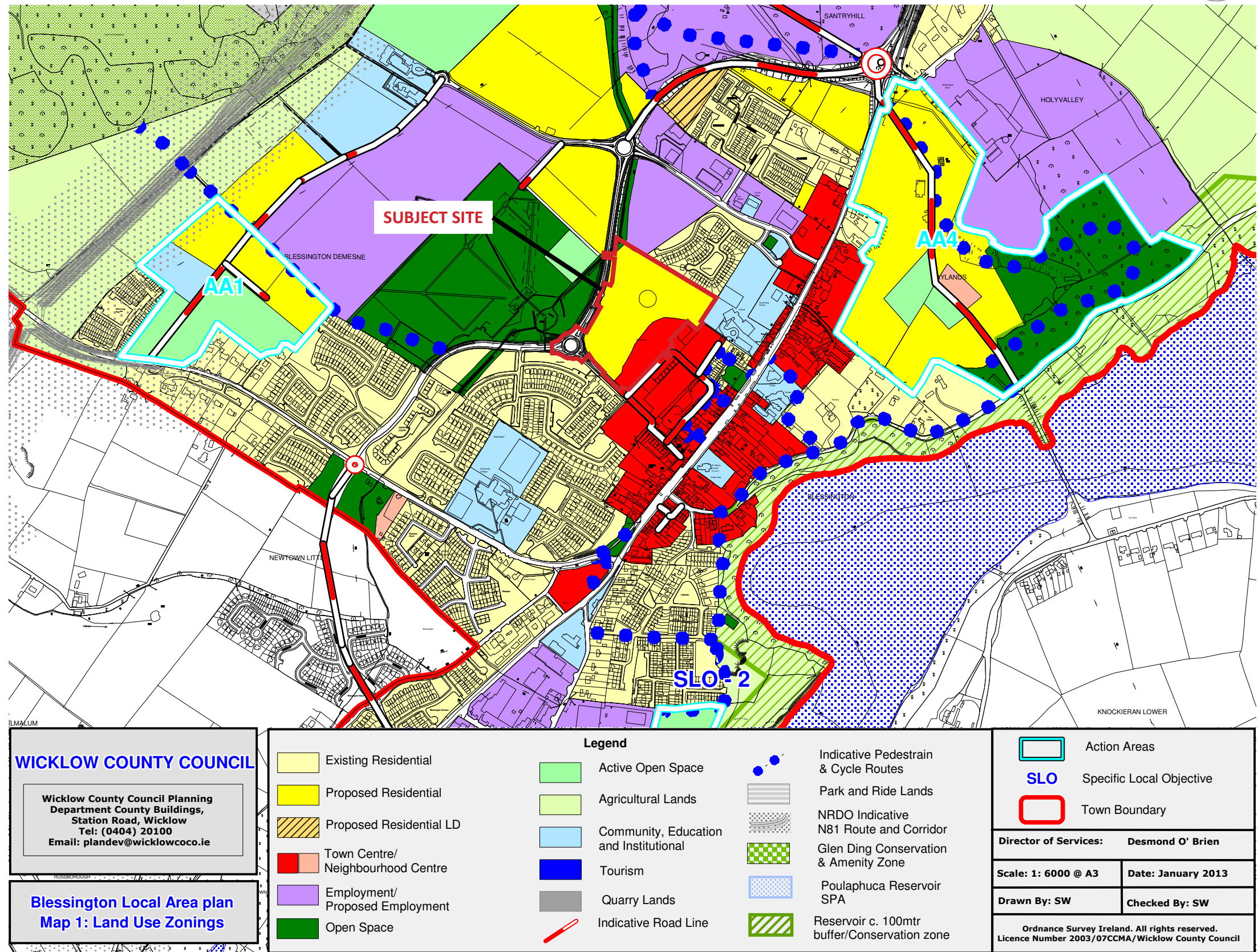
01 SITE CONTEXT

SITE ZONING

The site is divided into 3 different zoned lands. The site is mainly zoned as 'Residential Zoned Lands' with a section of the eastern boundary zoned as 'Town Centre'. There is also a small section of the site zoned as 'Open Space' in the north-western corner.

The mixed-use area of the development which includes a commercial space and Later Living units has been located on the 'Town Centre' zoned lands due to the communal nature of the development.

Units in the residential scheme have been designed to not encroach on the 'Open Space' zoned lands in the north-west.



01 SITE CONTEXT

SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPACT SETTLEMENTS GUIDELINES

The 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements; Guidelines for Planning Authorities' was introduced in 2024 which included a number of additional items to consider when developing a scheme, including some key indicators of quality design and placemaking.

These new guidelines focus mainly on sustainable residential developments and the creating of compact settlements through innovative designs and higher quality public and private amenity spaces. These guidelines consider the renewal of existing settlements and the interaction between residential density, housing standards and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth. The key indicators below, along with the updated density and private amenity policies ensure that a new scheme will be developed to a high standard and in line with existing and future Government policies.

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT

Key principles such as;

- A **permeable and legible urban environment** focusing on sustainable modes of transport,
- Connections to wider urban street and transport networks for **improved connections between communities**,
- The prioritising of **active travel and traffic calming** measures, and,
- The **minimising of car parking** throughout a development,

Will ensure that settlements are vibrant, and will allow vulnerable users to freely travel, and access services both within and around the scheme with ease.

MIX AND DISTRIBUTION OF USES

Key principles such as;

- Planning for the **activation of outdoor spaces and the public realm** to promote more liveable cities and town centres,
- The uses should **cater for public transport, services, and amenities** around a hierarchy of local centres that support residential communities, and,
- The implementation of a **diverse mix of housing and a variety of housing densities** across settlements, with the introduction of innovative housing types that can facilitate compact growth and to cater for a range of users,

Need to be implemented to reduce the need for travel and to create more vibrant and active spaces.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Key principles such as;

- A plan for the **protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural features**, biodiversity and landscape,
- An integrated network of **multifunctional and interlinked urban green spaces**, and,
- The promotion of Urban Greening and **Nature based Solutions (SuDS)**,

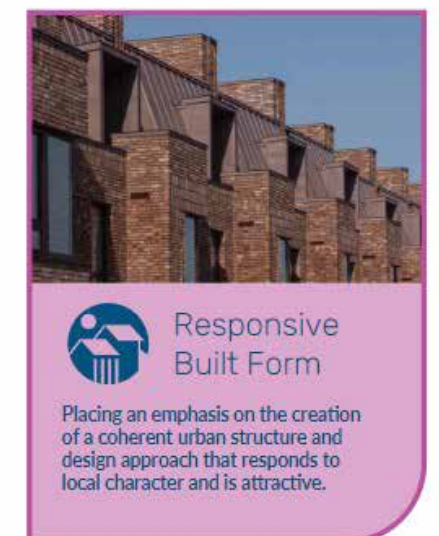
Will deliver ecosystem services and contribute to healthy, low carbon, resilient and connected settlements and places.

RESPONSIVE BUILT FORM

Key principles such as;

- The formation of a legible and coherent urban structure with **landmark buildings and focal points**,
- The establishment of a pattern of development regarding **height, scale, and massing** to positively enhance the area with well **defined built edges and well-overlooked open spaces**,
- The strengthening of the overall urban structure with the **opportunities for new linkages**, and
- The embracing of **modern architecture and urban design** that is innovative and varied, and made of **high quality and durable materials**.

Will need to be addressed to ensure the creation of attractive and well-design settlements.



01 SITE CONTEXT

CONSULTATION WITH WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL AND AMENDMENTS MADE FOLLOWING SECTION 247 MEETING

A S247 meeting was held on the 8th of March 2024, with members of Wicklow County Council's Planning, Roads and Water Services Departments and the Design Team present. This site plan, along with supporting information, was presented at the meeting for comment. The input received from Wicklow County Council following this meeting resulted in the following changes prior to the LRD Meeting, some of which are highlighted below.

1. INCREASED HEIGHT ALONG URBAN EDGE

A 4 storey Mixed-Use building along with additional 3 storey apartment/duplex units were introduced along the southern and western boundaries in order to increase the density of the scheme while creating a strong urban edge to address the adjoining public roads. Corner Duplex units were developed alongside the Mixed-Use building in order to create landmark units which overlook the boundaries and act as nodal points within the scheme.

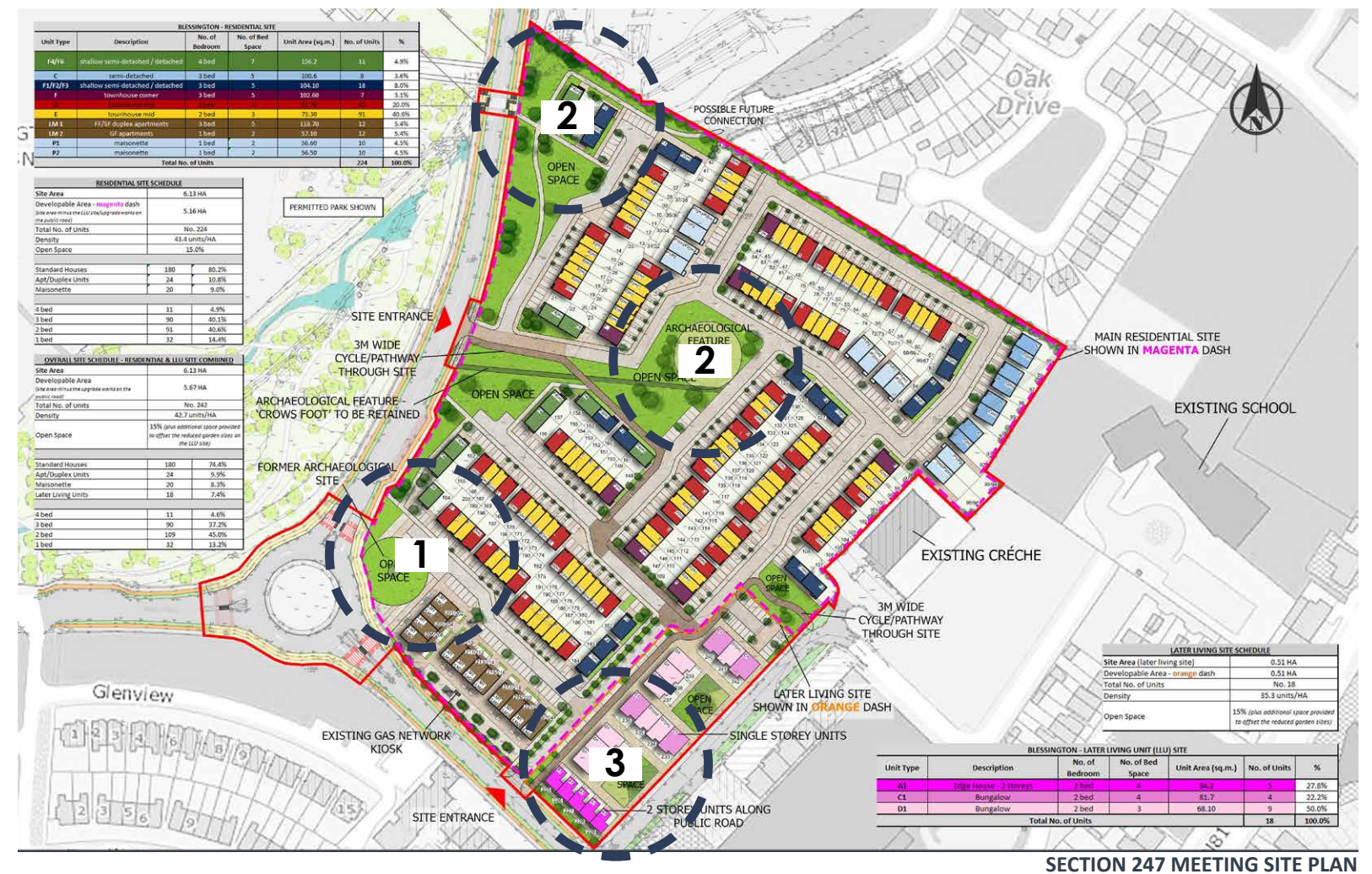
2. INCREASED BOUNDARY PERMEABILITY AND IMPROVED OPEN SPACE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship to the southern and western boundaries were adjusted in order to increase the permeability of the scheme. 3 storey units were orientated along the south-western boundary in order to form an urban plaza which links to the pedestrian crossings connecting the site to the town park and to better address the public realm within the scheme. Units were also relocated to create a buffer to the existing watercourse in the north-western section of the site. The layout was revised to better integrate with the open spaces and to increase passive surveillance. The provision of the shared cycle/pedestrian footpath helps to increase permeability through the scheme.

The shared pedestrian/cycle footpath and open spaces design have been further enhanced and detailed by the work of Ilsa Rutger Landscape Architecture.

3. GREATER DENSITY ALONG THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY AND INTRODUCTION OF A GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL SPACE

The Site layout was revised to further address density and zoning issues raised at the S247 meeting. The southern section of the scheme has been revised in order to increase the scale and density a in order to create an active urban edge with a commercial space introduced on the ground floor of the Mixed-Use building to enhance the communal aspects of the scheme. The commercial space (215.8 sq.m.) located on the ground floor of the Mixed-Use building has been located within the 'Town Centre' zoned lands and helps to create a pedestrian focused key landmark within the scheme.



01 SITE CONTEXT

CONSULTATION WITH WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL AND AMENDMENTS MADE FOLLOWING SECTION 32C MEETING

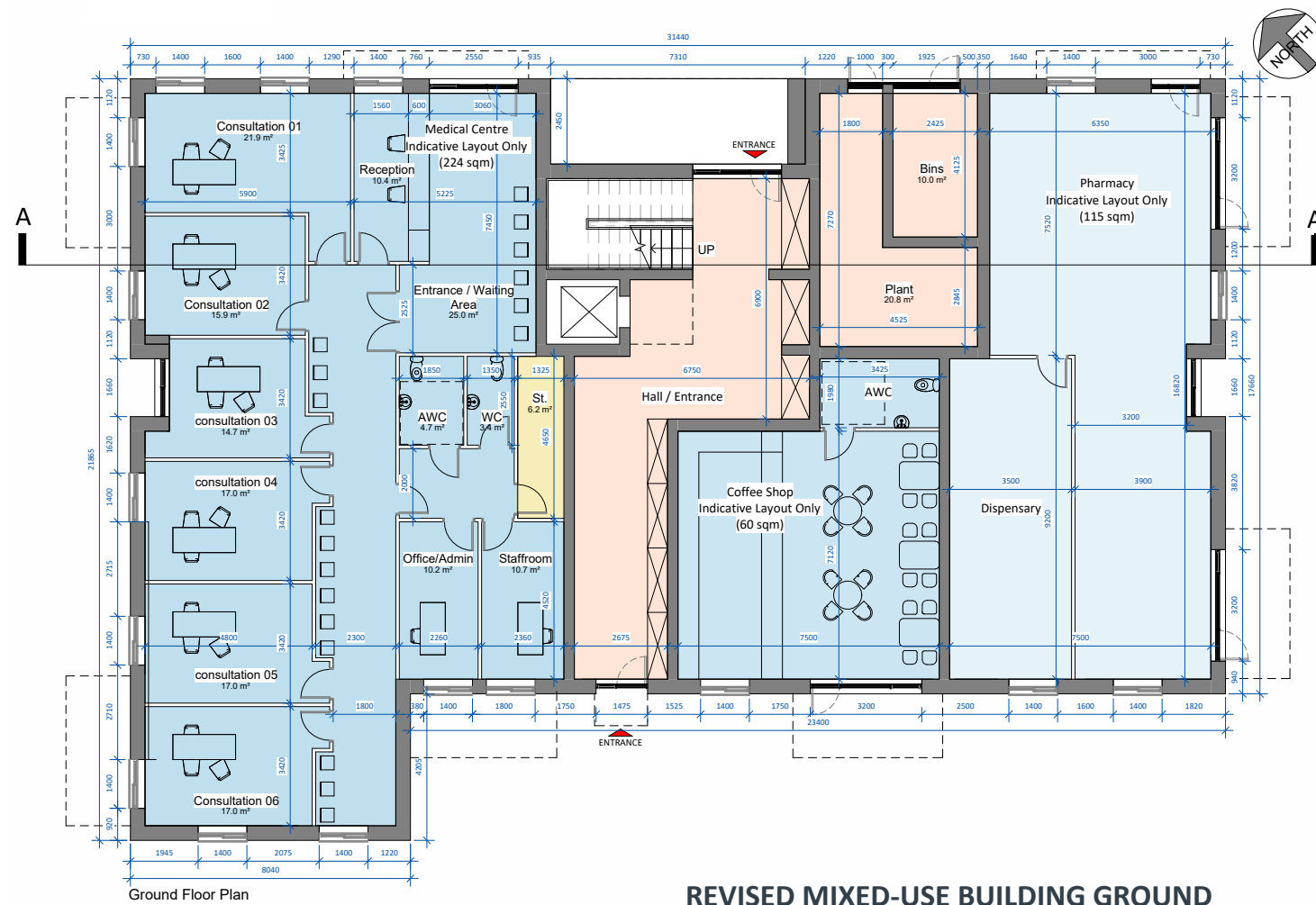
A Section 32C meeting was held on the 20th of June 2024, with members of Wicklow County Council's Planning, Roads and Environmental Departments and the Design Team present. This site plan, along with supporting information, was presented at the meeting for comment. The input received from Wicklow County Council following this meeting resulted in the following changes prior to the final application, some of which are highlighted below.

1. INCREASED SCALE/DENSITY AND LARGER GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL SPACES

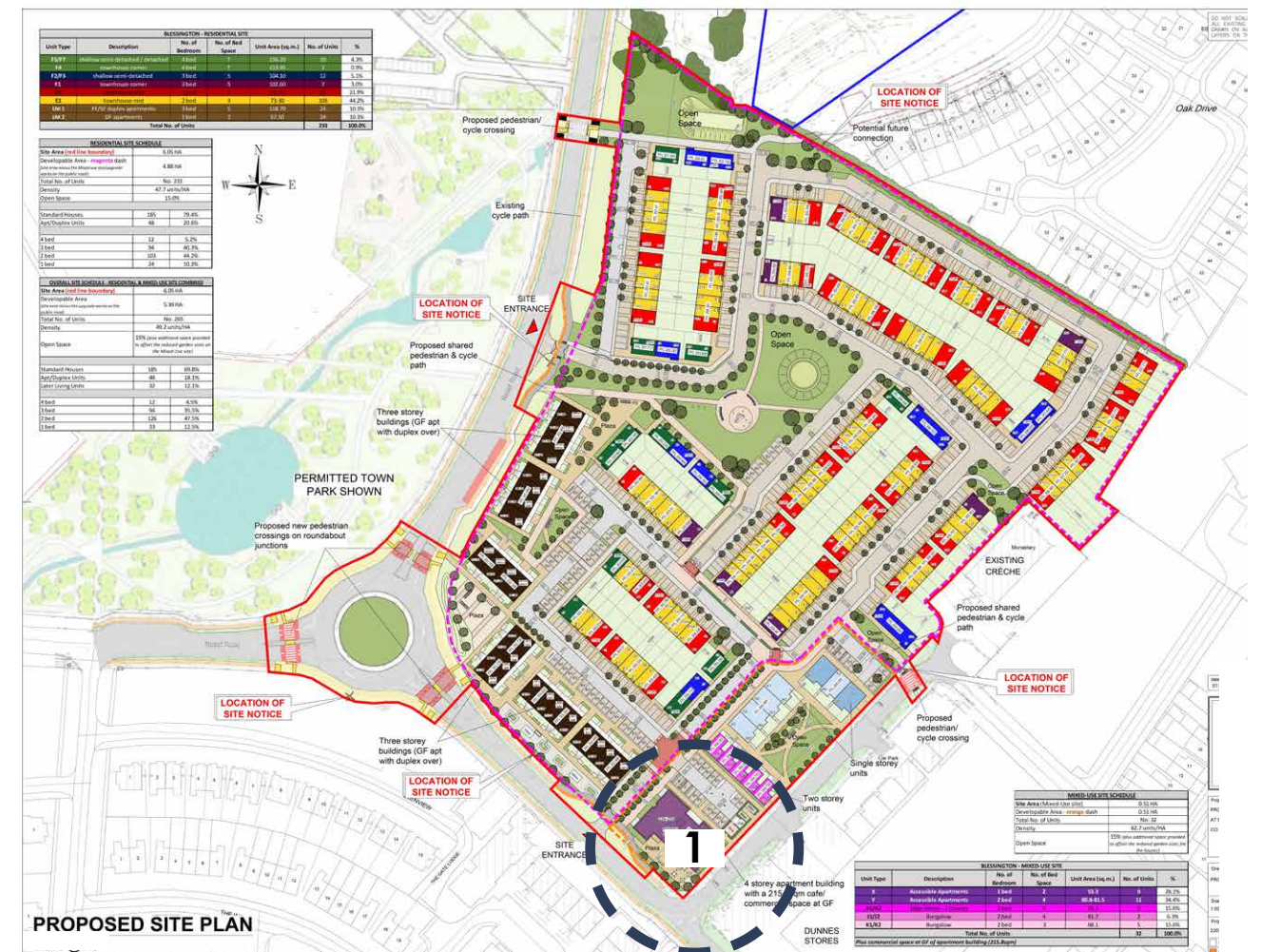
The Mixed-Use building in the southern section of the site has increased in scale from 4 to 5 storeys to create a better relationship to the existing adjacent Dunnes Stores retail unit and the ground floor layout has been adjusted to increase the quantum of commercial space within the proposed scheme.

The ground floor of the Mixed-Use building has been revised in order to facilitate 3 no. commercial spaces including; a coffee shop, a pharmacy, and a medical centre with 6 no. consultation rooms.

These more expansive commercial spaces (now totalling 399.0 sq.m. instead of the previously proposed 215.8 sq.m.) have been located within the 'Town Centre' zoned lands and help to create a pedestrian focused key landmark within the scheme. They are also complementary uses, tying in with the proposed later living units and the creation of an activated frontage at the Link Road.



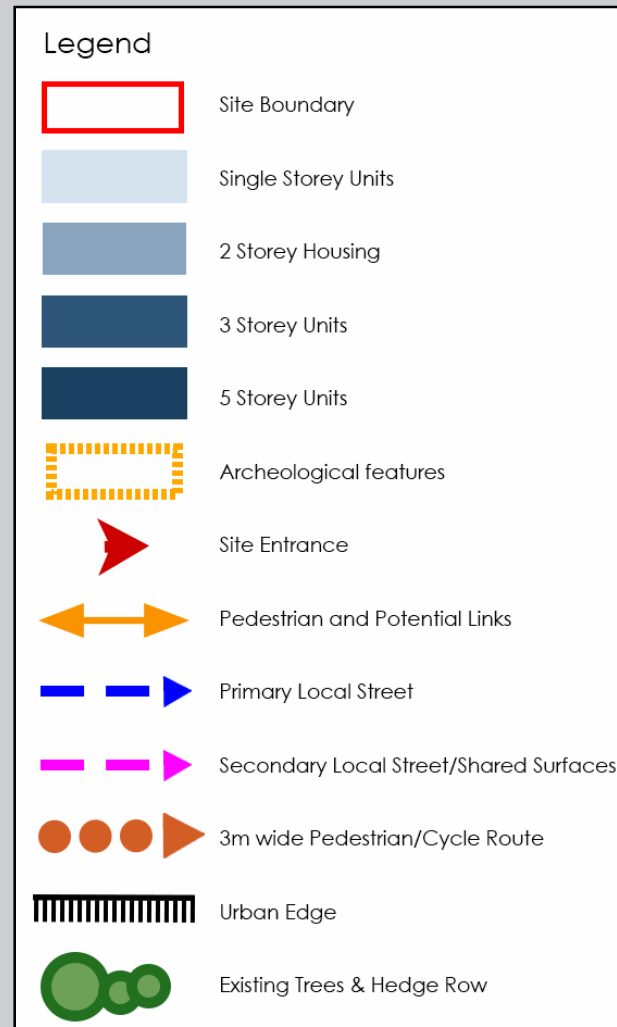
REVISED MIXED-USE BUILDING GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL SPACES



SECTION 32C MEETING SITE PLAN

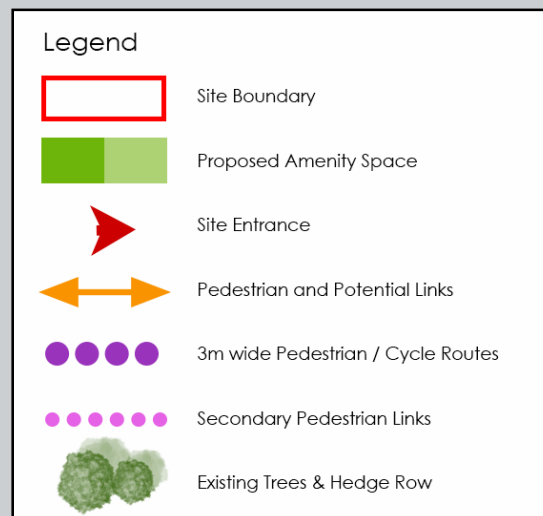


02 DESIGN STRATEGY PROPOSED CONCEPT



02 DESIGN STRATEGY

OPEN SPACES & PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE LINKS



02 DESIGN STRATEGY

OPEN SPACE ALLOCATION

OPEN SPACE ALLOCATION	
MAIN RESIDENTIAL SITE - DEVELOPABLE AREA = 4.84Ha	
Public Open Space	Area (sqm/Ha)
01	1760sqm / 0.176Ha
02	4300sqm / 0.430Ha
03	640sqm / 0.064Ha
04	310sqm / 0.031Ha
05	330sqm / 0.033Ha
TOTAL (15% OF DEVELOPABLE AREA)	7340sqm / 0.734Ha
Communal Open Space	Area (sqm/Ha)
06	520sqm / 0.052Ha
The Communal Open Space requirement for the main site is as follows:	
- 1-bed apartments = 5sqm x 24 no units = 120sqm	
- 3-bed apartments = 9sqm x 24 no units = 216sqm	
336sqm required - 520sqm provided	
MIXED-USE SITE- DEVELOPABLE AREA = 0.51Ha	
Public/Communal/Additional Open Space	Area (sqm/Ha)
07	745sqm / 0.0745Ha
08	250sqm / 0.0250Ha
TOTAL	995sqm / 0.0995Ha
The Public Open Space requirement for the Mixed-Use site is as follows:	
765sqm/0.0765Ha required to achieve 15% of developable area (0.51Ha)	
The Communal Open Space requirement for the Mixed-Use site is as follows:	
- 1-bed apartments = 5sqm x 12 no units = 60sqm	
- 2-bed apartments = 7sqm x 21 no units = 84sqm	
144sqm/0.0144Ha required	
The Additional Open Space requirement for the Mixed-Use site is as follows:	
(to offset the reduced garden sizes for the 5no Type A Later Living units)	
- 2-bed = 15.4sqm x 5 no units = 77sqm (shortfall of 14.6sqm per unit)	
73sqm/0.0073 Ha required	
982sqm/0.0982Ha required overall - 995sqm / 0.0995Ha provided	



02 DESIGN STRATEGY

PUBLIC & PRIVATE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY/MATERIALITY

The layout responds to the topography and features that exist on site with the hedgerow, trees and archaeological features integrated into the overall scheme. Great care has been given in designing the layout to ensure these features have been incorporated into the development. Respecting these items and incorporating them into the site strategy will provide a visual amenity for future residents that is unique to the site location.

The proposed dwellings are orientated to overlook the open spaces and provide passive surveillance for these areas. The open spaces vary with a mix of soft and hard landscaping to further enhance the variety of spaces and the inclusivity for all residents throughout the year.

Each unit will also have access to a private amenity space in the form of a rear garden or terrace/ balcony. The houses have a private back garden and the majority are placed back to back with a distance greater than 8m (16m overall) in line with Compact Growth Design Requirements to achieve privacy. Units like the narrow semi-detached/detached F2-F7 units have been designed with no habitable rooms to the rear at first and second floor level which prevents overlooking into neighbouring gardens and can accommodate shorter rear gardens as a result of this.

All homes will be constructed to prevent acoustic transfer and have been sited to prevent overlooking into adjacent private gardens.



PLAZA PAVING/FINISHES

PLEASE REFER TO IRLA'S LANDSCAPE INFORMATION FOR FURTHER DETAILS



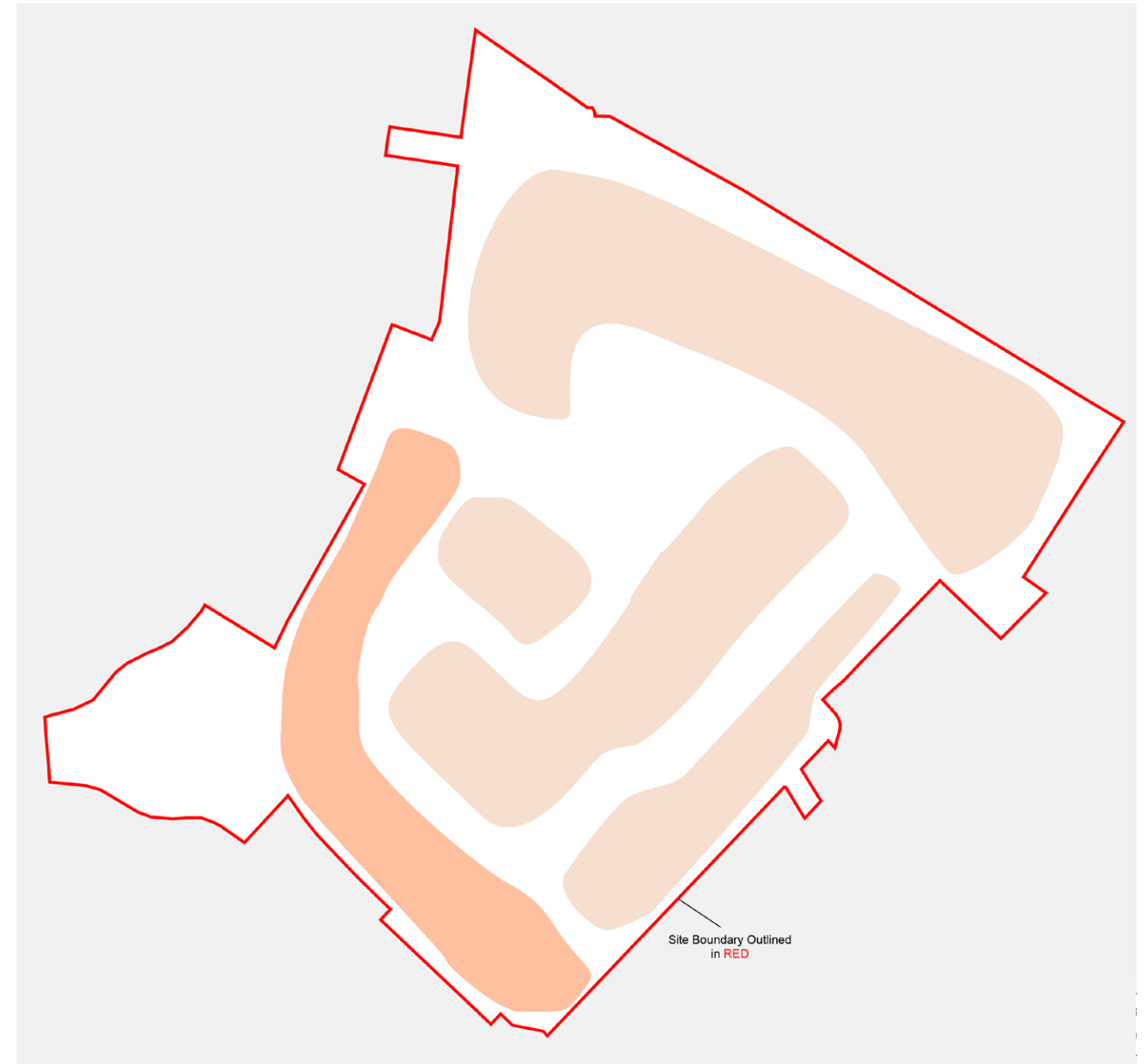
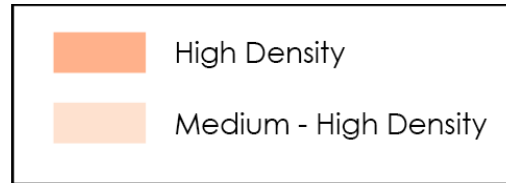
OPEN SPACE PATHWAYS



FEATURE SEATING

* Please refer to ILSA RUTGERS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE landscape information for additional detail

02 DESIGN STRATEGY PROPOSED DENSITY



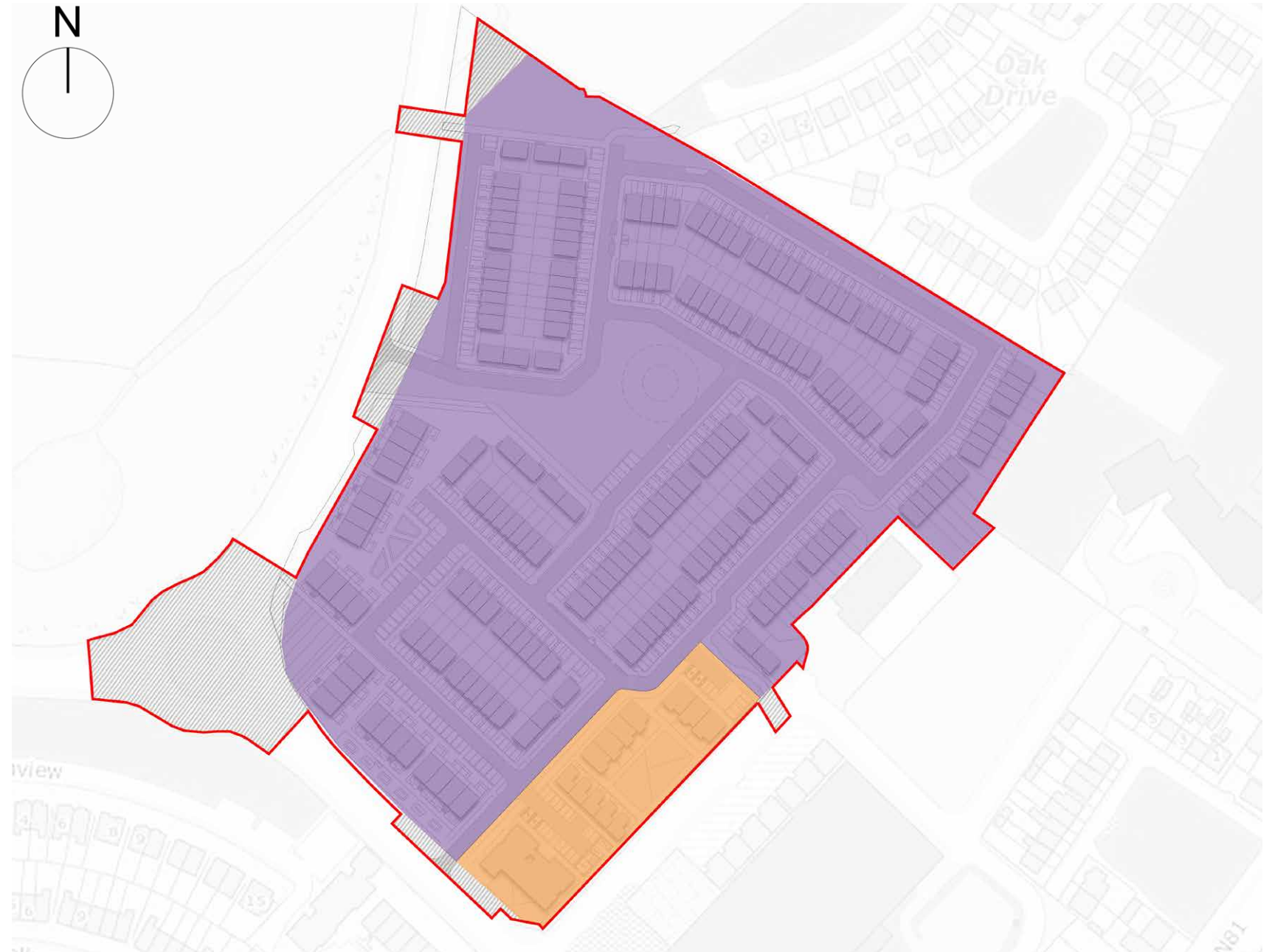
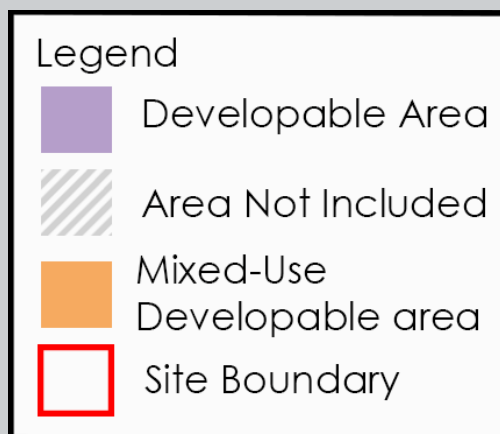
The proposed layout consists of 269 units, yielding an overall density of 50.3 units per hectare. Given the site's prominent location, the abundance of local amenities in Blessington, a higher density scheme is considered appropriate. This scheme incorporates a mix of a commercial spaces, apartment units, bungalows, townhouses, semi-detached and detached units. The higher density units take the form of 3-storey apartment/duplex units and a 5-storey Mixed-Use building, which are strategically placed along the southern and western boundaries to establish a strong edge along the public realm.

The proposed units on site offer a broad range of accommodation choices in terms of both size and scale. The housing density and grain of the proposed development responds to the market demands, supplying accommodation for households of different needs.

This LRD application mix comprises of 36 no. 1 bed units (13.4%), 127 no. 2 bed units (47.2%), 94 no. 3 bed units (34.9%) and 12 no. 4 bed units (4.5%). This mix not only provides a wide variety of accommodation but ensures that a sustainable development and inclusive community is achieved.

02 DESIGN STRATEGY

DEVELOPABLE AREA



DEVELOPABLE AREA CALCULATION

The total site area comprises 6.05 hectares.

We have considered a net developable area of 5.35 hectares. The upgrade works along the public road and the open space zoned lands have been omitted from the developable area calculation.

The overall layout proposes no. 269 residential units, for a density of 50.3 units/HA calculated on the net developable area:

No. 22	3/4-bed semi-detached and detached units
No. 175	2/3/4-bed townhouse and 2 bed bungalow units
No. 72	1/2/3-bed apartment and duplex units

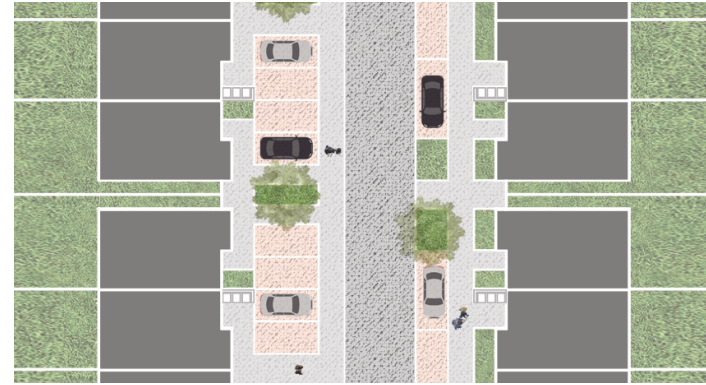
There are also 3no commercial spaces (medical centre, pharmacy & coffee shop - 399.0 sq.m. total) located at GF of the Mixed-Use building on site.

**** Please refer to TOC's planning report for information on the Compact Growth density calculation for the site***

02 DESIGN STRATEGY

STREET HIERARCHY

1. PRIMARY LOCAL STREET



PRIMARY LOCAL STREET FEATURES:

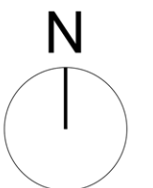
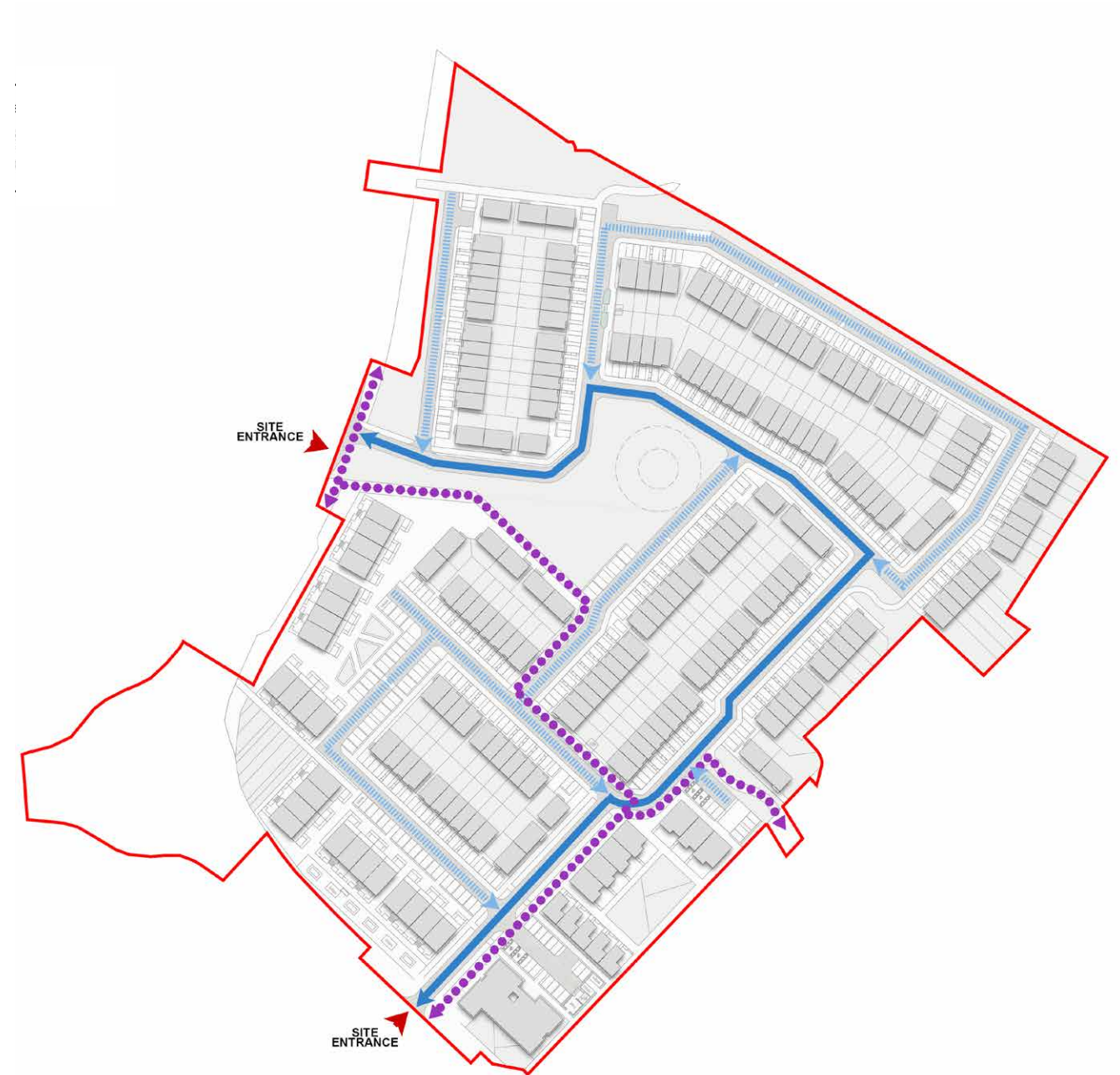
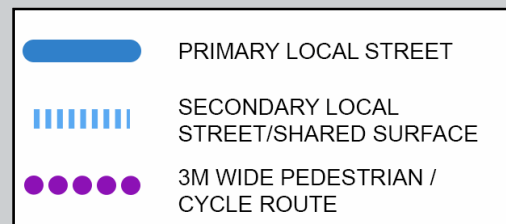
- 5-5.5m ROAD WIDTH
- ROAD-SIDE PEDESTRIAN PATH
- PARALLEL PARKING OR ON-CURTILAGE PARKING
- DIRECT ACCESS TO UNITS
- INCORPORATING LIGHTING, BINS, PARKING & LANDSCAPING

2. SECONDARY LOCAL STREET / SHARED SURFACE



SECONDARY LOCAL STREET/SHARED SURFACE FEATURES:

- 4-8-5m ROAD WIDTH
- ROAD-SIDE PEDESTRIAN PATH OR SHARED SURFACE
- PARALLEL PARKING OR ON-CURTILAGE PARKING
- DIRECT ACCESS TO UNITS
- INCORPORATING LIGHTING, BINS, PARKING & LANDSCAPING



02 DESIGN STRATEGY

INCLUSIVITY- VARIETY- EFFICIENCY

Inclusivity

The proposed layout prioritises access for all, with a public realm based on pedestrian and cycle connectivity throughout the entire scheme. This principle is facilitated and supported also by the proposed streetscapes and shared surface areas.

Variety

The materiality of the buildings is also a vital opportunity to create an unmistakeable identity for distinctive characters in different areas within the new neighbourhood, and to realise the project in flexible stages over a phased time period. The location of materials on the respective units is also subject to their durability and visual aesthetic qualities.

The development is structured to enable the creation of neighbourhoods featuring distinct languages. Each of these character areas is grouped around open spaces, creating a recognisable sense of place by using a mix of landmark housing typologies and a blend of materials unique to that location.

Efficiency

An imaginative and efficient layout design has enabled us to unlock and maximise the potential of new neighbourhoods, and to achieve the right densities for the area. Economic in design, a sequence of distinct streetscapes with different widths and parking formations generate a highly efficient residential scheme and assists our vision of placemaking. The efficient use of high-quality materials and design features achieve superb quality homes that are both beautifully crafted and financially viable.

